controls plus two large VU meters. All of which helps reduce the dimensions considerably.

Of course, as you can see from the picture, the entire unit is rack mountable. But what you may not have noticed is that the RT-707, unlike any other tape deck, is stackable. It's made to fit right in with the rest of your components.

**AUTO-REVERSE AND OTHER EXTRAS.**

While many tape decks have auto-reverse, chances are you won't find it on other comparably priced 7-inch tape decks. You also won't find a repeat button that lets you listen to your tapes endlessly, or circuitry that allows you to hook the RT-707 up to a timer, so you can make recordings even when you can't be there to supervise them.

Obviously, these are only a few of the virtues of our new RT-707. But there are also things like a highly accessible tape head alignment that lets you adjust and clean the tape heads without removing the cover. Solenoid push-button controls that give you direct function switching, so you can go from one mode to another without damaging the tape. And a floating guide roller that helps decrease intermodulation.

The point is, you'll see a lot of things on the RT-707, that you won't see on any other 7-inch tape deck.

But all this revolutionary thinking wouldn't mean much if the RT-707 weren't built to fit comfortably into your budget. It is. In fact, its price is comparable to any "good" tape deck.

See your Pioneer dealer and get a closer look at the most extraordinary 7-inch tape deck ever built.

We think you'll find the only things that the RT-707 has in common with other 7-inch tape decks is the size of the reels. And the size of the price.
THE ONLY THING IT HAS IN COMMON WITH OTHER 7-INCH TAPE DECKS IS THE SIZE OF ITS REELS.
THE RT-707
UNLIKE OTHER 7-INCH TAPE DECKS
THIS ONE ISN'T FILLED WITH 15 YEARS.

Now there’s one 7-inch open reel tape deck with the kind of technology and features found in some of today’s most sophisticated 10-inch tape decks. Pioneer’s new RT-707.

In fact, the 707, when compared to other 7-inch tape decks, makes them look and sound 15 years old.

THE MOST ACCURATE DRIVE SYSTEM: DIRECT-DRIVE.

The average 7-inch tape deck is equipped with an old fashioned, high speed drive system that works on belts or pulleys. A system that generates excessive heat, wow and flutter and comes with its own nifty little “noisemaker”: a fan. Not the RT-707. It’s driven by a far more accurate and efficient AC Servo direct-drive motor. A motor that generates its own frequency to monitor and help correct variations in tape speed. Which results in incredibly little wow and flutter—0.05% (WRMS). In addition, the drive system of the RT-707 is unaffected by fluctuations in line voltage and won’t deteriorate with age like belt-drive. And because it doesn’t generate heat it doesn’t need a fan. So what you’ll hear is music with a clarity and crispness not possible on any 7-inch, or many 10-inch tape decks.

A FIRST FOR 7-INCH TAPE DECKS: PITCH CONTROL.

Thanks to this extraordinary direct-drive system, it’s also made pitch control possible for the first time on any 7-inch tape deck. Which means that you can regulate the speed of the tape, so your recordings will have perfect pitch even if they weren’t originally recorded that way.

BEYOND THE RANGE OF MOST 7-INCH TAPE DECKS.

In the past, the most you’d expect from any 7-inch tape deck in terms of frequency response was respectability. But Pioneer’s engineers have gone far beyond that. Our super-sensitive tape heads, for instance, will pick up and deliver frequencies from 20 to 28,000 Hertz. The preamplifier, which is built around Pioneer designed integrated circuits, will handle up to 30 decibels more input than any other 7-inch tape deck without distorting. So you can capture all the depth and presence of each and every instrument without losing any part of the music.

A WHOLE NEW WAY OF LOOKING AT TAPE DECKS.

Where most 7-inch tape decks are big and clumsy, new technology has helped us make the RT-707 smaller and more compact.

For example, between the take-up reels on the “dinosaurs” of the past, you’ll find nothing but wasted space. On the RT-707, however, you’ll find this space occupied by a series of highly sensitive.

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

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The chief failing of critics, says author/conductor/critic Robert Craft in his aptly titled book Prejudices in Disguise (Knopf, 1974), is that they don’t know when to retire: "The mortal kind grows stale very quickly, after a year or so at the most...the critic confines his subject more and more to himself." It is a failing, thank goodness, that Craft apparently shares, for his Current Convictions, a hard-to-put-down collection of opinionated critical essays on subjects variously musical, literary, and sociological (Mary Hartman?!) has just been published by Knopf.

It is true that criticism is inescapably subjective, mere prejudice disguised or made plausible, but that is no reason for an able critic to retire after indulging it for only a year or so—let his audience do that. Those who have been persuaded, either by irrefutable logic or natural sympathy, to make his opinions their own do not need further tuteiaige. Those who reject his opinions should find themselves a more congenial teacher. A critic should retire only when it becomes clear that he can no longer replenish his audience.

What we want from critics are strong opinions well argued and well expressed. It delights me when a critic, grown older and broader in office, drops the polite mask of scholarly omniscience, the pose of detached objectivity, in favor of the disquieting candor of those who have nothing to lose. There is a danger in long incumbencies, however, even for critics, for many of them tend to develop Golden Age Syndrome, turning critical of the decayed existence of those others—which is not to say that the oldsters exist in a new competitive context.

There are, as a matter of fact, two Curzon performances by pianists Stephen Bishop, Jacob Lateiner, Artur Rubinstein, Gyorgy Sandor, and Peter Serkin. That makes a total of seven recordings still in the catalog, one with the Budapest Quartet (London CS 6357) and another with the Vienna Philharmonic Quartet, that is just beginning its fifteenth year in the catalog.

There are, as a matter of fact, two Curzon recordings still in the catalog, one with the Vienna group (London CS 6357) and another with the Budapest Quartet (Odyssey 32260019, an even older mono recording). This popular work is also represented in performances by pianists Stephen Bishop, Jacob Lateiner, Artur Rubinstein, Gyorgy Sandor, and Peter Serkin. That makes a total of seven old recordings critic Freed might have compared with the two new ones and didn’t. Why didn’t he?

First, richly comprehensive though I know his record collection to be, I doubt that he had all seven of them on hand, and touting up the missing ones would almost certainly have meant a month’s delay in bringing readers the good news of the two new ones (they are both splendid recordings). Second, the review was just that—a review—and not an article about all the available recordings of the Quintet. (If reviewers of current releases had to be burdened with complete catalog surveys—imagine what that would mean for Beethoven’s Fifth!—reviewers would run out of time and we would run out of space each month before we got fairly started.) Third, the tone of the review convinces me that these two new performances are in no way inferior to any of the others—which is not to say that the oldsters should be forcibly retired, only that they now exist in a new competitive context.

By the way, Curzon’s deservedly popular London disc of the Quintet is being withdrawn (it will reappear in the Stereo Treasury Series), but Clifford Curzon himself, bless his fingers, is not: he will be appearing in concert in the U.S. sometime next spring.

Mandatory Retirement

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Editorially Speaking
By William Anderson
THE MOST IMPORTANT FEATURE IN THESE DECKS IS BASED ON A TIMELESS IDEA.

The features and specifications of TEAC decks have changed, but the timeless constant has been TEAC reliability. Every improvement we've made has added to this reliability. It's our most important feature.

Every TEAC cassette deck from the least expensive to the most expensive is built to last a long, long time. That's been true since the first TEAC was built more than 25 years ago.

Take the new A-103, one of the least expensive TEAC's you can buy. Despite its low price, the A-103 is manufactured to the same tolerances as decks costing three times as much. And, where most decks have a maze of hand-wired switches, harnesses and boards inside, the A-103 boasts an innovative design which replaces all that with a single circuit board directly coupled to the front control panel.

TEAC's more expensive A-640 brings engineering sophistication to a new high with plug-in circuit boards, two motors and electronically operated push buttons for feather-touch, maintenance-free reliability.

People who work with tape recorders know TEAC tape recorders work and keep on working. That's the reason people whose living depends on sound judgement, depend on TEAC. You can, too.

TEAC First. Because they last.
Four years ago last March, ESS, a small California based corporation, electrified the high fidelity world by introducing the AMT-1, the first loudspeaker to incorporate the revolutionary Heil air-motion transformer as its midrange-tweeter. Two thousand AMT-1's were sold in the first ten days; twenty thousand in the remaining nine months of 1973 — more loudspeakers than any similarly priced loudspeaker in the history of the high fidelity industry.

Immediately, fierce controversy swirled around the new loudspeaker principle invented by and named after Dr. Oskar Heil, the musician and physicist who in 1934 invented the FET (field effect transistor). So advanced was that device that only now, long after the patent has expired, is it being used in state-of-the-art electronics. Even as a young man, Dr. Heil's profound insight into the laws of physics put him and his inventions far ahead of their time.

The Heil air-motion transformer, like all great breakthroughs, was not a mere improvement on conventional technology; it was the discovery of a better way. As such, it was as radical an improvement over conventional loudspeaker technology as the jet engine was over conventional propeller technology. And for the same reason. Like the propeller plane, conventional speakers have to move a solid object — a cone or dome — in order to move air. The Heil air-motion transformer, like the jet engine, moves air directly.

No increase in the number of propellers, no amount of research into the materials used in making propellers, no amount of altering the arrangement or placement of propellers, no amount of computer programming of propeller technology could alter the basic inferiority of propeller design. Similarly, no amount of tinkering with the material, or number, or placement, or computer programming of conventional driver design alters the basic inferiority of conventional loudspeaker technology when compared to the Heil air-motion transformer.

The Heil, like the jet engine, moves air directly — but with one major difference: unlike all other speakers, instead of pushing air, the Heil air-motion transformer squeezes it. Dr. Heil has a simple experiment that dramatically illustrates the
superiority of the squeezing motion. Imagine trying to "shot put" or push a light object like a cherry pit with the palm of your hand (Figure 1). It won't travel very far or very fast. Now put the cherry pit between your thumb and forefinger and squeeze (Figure 2). The cherry pit squirts out at high velocity. The physics of the Heil air-motion transformer are as simple and brilliant as this illustration of the principle of leverage.

The Heil owes its great clarity and definition, superb dynamic range, crisp transients and remarkable dispersion — in sum, its audible superiority — to this increase in air motion velocity. It is what ESS calls the "instant acceleration" of the Heil.

Just as power is critical to an amplifier, acceleration is critical to a loudspeaker. Thus, while all loudspeakers are "transducers", and therefore convert electrical energy into acoustic or sound energy, only the Heil is also a "transformer" — a loudspeaker that "transforms" or increases the velocity of the energy output 530 percent.

In its first year, the astounding breakthrough represented by the Heil air-motion transformer midrange-tweeter was obscured by arguments. There are no arguments about the superiority of Transar/atd, the first full range Heil air-motion sound system to unite the Heil air-motion transformer with the new Heil low frequency driver. It is so clearly, audibly, a monumental achievement that Dr. Heil's genius is now firmly and forever enshrined in the annals of high fidelity history.

The technical brilliance of Transar can be explained at great length, but not in a few paragraphs. We do, however, invite requests for ESS's theoretical monogram "Transar: A Study in Genius, A Study in Physics".

But Transar is not the kind of product that stands or falls on theory. Its profound superiority — indeed, its greatness — is something experienced with a sudden "shock of recognition."

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Jefferson Airplane

Congratulations to Josh Mills for his exquisite article on one of rock's all-time great bands, the Airplane. In an age when so many talentless bands are out to make a buck and that only, it is encouraging to remember once again the electric career of a group that cared about its audience and what its songs were saying. Although we still have the Who, the Stones, and (stretching a point) Led Zep, the heart and soul of rock-and-roll has diminished. Reading about the Airplane did my heart and head good. It made me want to give my "Surrealistic Pillow" a few turns; although through years of listening it has acquired the "fireplace effect," the sound is still real and important.

MATT ROTI
Bronx, N.Y.

Frank Sinatra

I wholeheartedly agree with Paulette Weiss ("The Pop Beat," October 1977) that the evening of July 16, 1977, was one of Frank Sinatra's finest hours. After seeing The Man in concert some sixteen times since his "return" in January 1974 at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas, I must admit that he has sometimes been vocally rough (downright woeful). At a concert in Pittsburgh last year he all but ruined the beautiful Embraceable You and turned his very own My Way into something best left unsung. But in recent months his voice has seemed to be back in exquisite form, as at Forest Hills that horribly muggy July night and in two earlier engagements at the Latin Casino in Cherry Hill, New Jersey.

Just one small correction: the King opened the Forest Hills show with Cole Porter's Night and Day, not (as Ms. Weiss had it) I've Got You Under My Skin. And could you tell me why Reprise Records has put "Here's to the Ladies" on "indefinite hold"? What a bumper!

PAUL M. MORE
Avoca, Pa.

Reprise spokesperson said simply, "When Frank says it's ready to go, we go."

Opera Library

I enjoyed George Jellinek's "Essentials of an Opera Library" in the October issue, but I disagree with some of his choices. The best version of Tosca I have heard is the one conducted by Colin Davis for Philips. Herbert von Karajan is a great conductor, but I find his London version of Tosca lacking in drama—and it is a very dramatic opera—compared with the one by Davis. With respect to French opera, I wonder if Mr. Jellinek is anti-Berlioz. There are two fantastic versions of Le Damnation de Faust available on discs, not to mention Davis' complete Les Troyens, which really brings the glory of the opera house into the home.

WILLIAM W. FIELD, JR.
Tucson, Ariz.

Not anti-Berlioz—it's just that none of Berlioz's works are basic repertoire.

The performance preferences listed by George Jellinek in his "Essentials of an Opera Library" I found, in the main, unexceptionable . . . except that one is struck immediately by the preponderance of all those "same old voices." I know that superstars sell records and that they all want to record their whole repertoire before they retire, but shouldn't we be getting just an occasional glimpse of the coming generation of singers anyway?

HERBERT KAUFFMAN
New York, N.Y.

The world's opera houses have been struggling with the question of retirement age for much longer than the U.S. Congress has. Unlike most employment situations, however, this one directly involves the wishes of the public as well as the employer (opera house or record company) and employee (singer). See this month's "Editorially Speaking" for more on the subject.

The photograph that accompanied George Jellinek's Essentials of an Opera Library in (Continued on page 10)

STEREO REVIEW
We've spent 45 years perfecting nothing.

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Nothing less than total accuracy will ever satisfy us.
October caught my eye. Frank Dunand’s photo of Verdi’s Otello at the Metropolitan Opera has done what would seem to me impossible. When one studies the marvelous expressions on the faces of the singers and realizes that not one is obscured from view, it becomes apparent what a task this must have been. The amber overtones and costumes remind me of Rembrandt’s famous painting The Night Watch.

HAL BROWN
Vancouver, Wash.

Who Writes the Songs?

I was so carried away by the charm of Barry Manilow’s Mandy that by the time he worked his way up to I Write the Songs I was really impressed with his ability to write hit songs. So I started buying his albums. And reading the liner notes. And he didn’t.

Write the songs, I mean.

Well, okay, he writes the music for some of his songs, and an occasional lyric; but his skill seems to lie more in selection and arrangement.

For the most part, his hits—like Mandy and Weekend in New England—have been written by other people. I was glad, though, to see the positive review of “Barry Manilow Live” (September), since he has considerable talent whether or not he writes the songs.

Donna Sellers
O’Fallon, Mo.

Reel-to-reel Rawhide

I had just finished checking my oil wells on my ranch in my pickup truck when I read (October “Editorially Speaking”) about this Texas millionaire who tapes his direct-to-disc records. I fail to see how this is possible. Down here we use thin strips of rawhide for recording, not tape. Guess we’re a mite behind you city folk. By the way, my prescription-ground windshiel got busted at the local honky tonk.

Bill Patrick
Pinehurst, Tex.

Barbra

In his October review of Barbra Streisand’s album Superman, Peter Reilly states that Streisand picked up another Grammy for her song Evergreen from A Star Is Born. In fact, it was another Oscar. But my biggest gripe about this review is that Reilly falls in line with the rest of the country’s critics who review Streisand the superstar and not the work she produces. Not once does he deal directly with what Streisand is doing with her voice these days, and, for all the article tells us, the album could have been recorded in Barbra’s Jacuzzi with a cassette recorder. It’s fine to reflect on an artist’s professional motives, but when the reviewer neglects to report whether Streisand sounds nasal, mellow, on key, or whatever, I think it is time to re-evaluate his reason for being a critic.

Greg Mitchell
Wichita, Kan.

Foster’s Hits

In October’s “Pop Rotogravure” Rick Mitz underestimates Bruce Foster’s “Uncle Stephen” in saying that he “hasn’t had a hit single in about one hundred and thirteen years.” In 1940-1941, during a dispute between the broadcasting industry and ASCAP, several versions of Foster’s Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair made the Hit Parade. It might be added that Nonesuch’s two recent discs of Foster songs performed by DeGaetani, Guinn, and Kalish and the second volume in the Gregg Smith Singers’ “America Sings” series for Vox constitute a welcome, if modest, step toward the “comeback” Mr. Mitz mentioned.

Roger A. Bullard
Wilson, N.C.

The Long View

Joel Vance’s choice of 10cc’s “Deceptive Bends” as a “Best of the Month” record for September strikes me as the most unfortunate mistake by one of your reviewers since Tina Turner’s “Acid Queen” earned Peter Reilly’s “BQM” nomination in January 1976. I think an important consideration in choosing records for this category—which often leads to a Stereo Review “Best of the Year” award—should be the music’s ability to endure and delight for many years after the record’s first appearance. Among the September choices Woody Herman, Wagner, and Arriaga probably qualify on this count; 10cc does not.

What is the “charm” in lines such as “Ah, you made me love you/Ah, you’ve got a way”? Lyrics like this are banal, moronic, workmanlike—10cc is a million miles away.
and all but useless, regardless of their context. I suggest that Mr. Vance take a refresher course in song lyrics. He might examine or re-examine the words and their relation to the music in Jethro Tull's "Aqualung," Steely Dan's "Countdown to Ecstasy," or any of the later Beatles albums. These are records that have achieved permanence through quality. I very much doubt that "Deceptive Bends" will do the same.

CONRAD BAHLKE
Clinton, N.Y.

Well, check back in about twenty years.

Heart's Country

In his review of Heart's "Little Queen" in the September issue, Joel Vance said that the group is from Seattle, Washington. In 1976 Heart won a "Juno" award as the most up-and-coming band in Canada. Heart is from Vancouver, British Columbia. Please don't try to steal our thunder.

IAN SAMS
London, Ontario

The Beatles Standard

If Alan Karpusiewicz (October "Letters") really wants to make a case against overpraising the Beatles, saying that the Searchers, the Hollies, and the Escorts (whichever they were) were better is idiotic. The Beatles may not have been the most technically proficient musicians around, but they were not sloppy. Their greatness wasn't really related to this anyway. Their genius was to combine singing, songwriting, and playing with a certain indefinable special quality so as to create pure musical magic that has never been equaled by any other group. The Beatles will always be the standard for judging the accomplishments of any rock group. For what they accomplished and the joy that they provided in the very short period of time they were together, the Beatles can never be overpraised.

JON WOOLSEY
Fairfax, Va.

RFI

While I am glad the FCC is finally deciding the fate of quadcasting, I believe this is the wrong issue at this time. The FCC should now be devoting all its efforts to the problem of radio-frequency interference (RFI). Let quadcasting wait; why take on new problems if you can't solve the old ones?

I was the proud owner of a Fisher Model 634 quad receiver until it was besieged by the local CB operator—now I own a four-channel CB receiver! It is just one year old and it has visited the Fisher factory not once or twice but four times! It has spent more time there than at my house. Fisher went the full route—installing capacitors, rewiring grounds, shielding antenna leads, and installing filters—before giving up. I installed and grounded shielded 18-gauge speaker leads and filtered the FM antenna. But I am still plagued by RFI.

Not about to give up, I took on the FCC. Over the past year I have written twelve letters, but they have taken no action. The FCC seems to have an endless supply of Bulletin 25 (on RFI) and maybe they think it helps solve...
the problem, but believe me, it doesn’t! I have heard that the FCC is understaffed and overworked, but isn’t every federal agency?

Every door of escape from the RFI problem has been shut in my face. Practical anti-RFI measures have been taken with no results, I have been abandoned by the manufacturer of my equipment, and the FCC ignores me, so here I sit with the RFI problem smack in my lap! That is why I would like to see the FCC adopt a quadcasting standard—after the RFI problem is solved! GLENN DRAKELEY

Technical Director Larry Klein responds: Your experience confirms my statement made a year or so ago that the FCC is relatively in-sensitive to the RFI problem, even if much audio equipment isn’t. From your description of your troubles and your inability to effect a cure even with shielding, filtering, and modifications by the manufacturer, it seems likely to me that your “local CB operator” is using illegal amounts of transmitting power. That is the responsibility of the FCC! Do you have neighbors whose TV reception is troubled by the CB'er? Perhaps you can all get together to petition the FCC to send an investigator. (The FCC seems to respond more readily to complaints of interference with television than with audio.)

Have you checked the article on RFI in the May 1977 STEREO REVIEW? You may find some helpful anti-RFI techniques you have not yet tried. (Back issues are available from Ziff-Davis Service Division, 595 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. They cost $1.50 each post-paid; payment must accompany the order.

Listen to the music.

Noise in the form of hiss, hum and rumble—all the things that effectively cloud the clarity of records, tapes and FM broadcasts. Ideally, music should be heard against a silent background. The Phase Linear 1000 achieves just that with two unique systems: AutoCorrelator Noise Reduction and Dynamic Range Recovery. The AutoCorrelator reduces noise by 10 dB without the loss of high frequency music and without pre-encoding. The Dynamic Range Recovery System restores 7.5 dB of the overall dynamic range, without the pumping and swishing associated with other systems. The Phase Linear 1000 represents the most significant improvement in sound reproduction for the money... more than any other single piece of equipment you could add to your system. It is easily installed to any stereo receiver or preamplifier.

Ask your dealer for an audition, and listen to the music.

CSN

- When I first read Steve Simels’ September article, “Regress Report on CSN... and Y.” I was furious. But I reread it several times and find that I agree—in part.

- True, neither new album has the same position in my collection as the first CSN album or “Déjà Vu” by all four of them. But then the music doesn’t have the same frame of reference; that is, it doesn’t remind me of the same period of time. Seven years have come and gone—as have two Presidents, three Vice-Presidents, two national elections, and our involvement in Southeast Asia. The country has changed. It isn’t that the music isn’t good. It’s just that it’s different, and we all will look at it differently.

ROD REEVES

Orient, Iowa

- If Los Angeles is “a living organism growing inexorably eastward,” as Steve Simels calls it in his September review of new records by Neil Young and Crosby, Stills, and Nash, then it is only returning to its origin—New York City, the source of everything cheap and vulgar in entertainment. It is also the source of the “music business” Simels derides because it no longer has a N.Y.C. zip code.

I haven’t noticed any increase in vacuity or tastelessness in records made since the move to Los Angeles—since they could hardly get any worse! The record companies have always been noted for the very low percentage of excellent records they release.

SUE W. MOORE
San José, Calif.

Stereo Separation

- I’ve been reading the letters STEREO REVIEW has been publishing about disc quality and just have to add a complaint no one else has mentioned. I can tolerate pops, clicks and warps, but I can’t tolerate there not being any separation in new records. There is getting to be less separation in stereo records now than when they cost a dollar extra, and as a result I’m buying more older records than new ones. Why have expensive stereo equipment to play mono?

B.R. BILLINGS
Perrytown, Ark.

Have any other readers observed a falling off in stereo separation?

Jethro Tull

- I was astonished at all the fallacies in Lester Bangs’ review in the August issue of the Jethro Tull album, “Songs from the Wood.” First, he did a critique of the group instead of the album. I would be the first to admit that this album is not the best of Jethro Tull’s twelve releases, but it is obvious that Mr. Bangs does not like the group’s style at all. Second, he said that Ian Anderson once heard something of Roland Kirk’s entitled Song for a Cuckoo. It was actually called Serenade to a Cuckoo.

(Continued on page 14)
While everyone else struggles with a first generation of vented speakers, Electro-Voice introduces the second.

No one should compromise on speakers. But until recently you’ve had no choice. Acoustic suspension speakers? They’re large and inefficient. Or, there are vented speakers which give you efficiency but lack really deep bass. And vented speakers have been one-of-a-kind creations. Because no one knew how to design them scientifically. So performance was all over the map.

But in 1973 E-V made a breakthrough with our vented, equalized Interface-A. The first speaker created from the scientific theories of A. N. Thiele. He showed the proper way to design a vented system. The Interface:A we created seemed to defy the laws of physics. It not only had high efficiency, but outstanding low bass and significantly reduced distortion.

Ever since then competitors have been knocking themselves out trying to develop their own Thiele designs. Meanwhile, we’ve been improving on the original. And now we’re introducing the second generation of Interface speaker systems. They’re four years ahead of any other speaker, just like the original A was.

All seven of the new Interface systems give you exceptional bass performance. Our most expensive system goes down to 28 Hz (–3 dB).

Our speakers are four to ten times more efficient than acoustic suspension speakers, which is like getting an amplifier with four to ten times as much power.

All our speakers have exceptionally high output ability. And our finest speaker can reproduce an average sound pressure level of 115 dB in a typical listening room—the level of rock concerts.

We also care about overall accuracy. There’s not only deep bass, but well dispersed, clear highs to provide uniform total acoustic power output.

And our new speakers give you a choice, because they’re priced from $100 to $750. So there’s an Interface speaker for every budget.

To get more information, write for our free 16 page color brochure. Interface speaker systems. They’re a generation ahead of any other speaker you can buy.
Cuckoo. Third, he said that Anderson stole his entire flute style from that one song by Kirk. Poppycock. It was merely the first thing Anderson learned to play on the flute; he liked it so well that he put it on his first album for Chrysalis Records in 1968, with credit to Kirk. If a performer could steal another's style just by learning one of his songs, a lot more people would be buying the Beatles' song books.

CRAIG COLE Garnett, Kan.

Lester Bangs' August review of Jethro Tull's "Songs from the Wood" was like a slap in the face. I generally don't pay much attention to what critics have to say (they are an insulting bunch, aren't they?), but when writers continually knock Ian Anderson it does make me a bit angry and even a little confused. Since its beginning, Jethro Tull has produced good, quality material. Maybe the critics resent Anderson for moving Tull out of its original jazz/blues-influenced style into a more British one. Or maybe they're angry because someone as dull and boring as they say he is actually excites people. Whatever the reasons, Tull's critics are wasting their time on a lot of garbage when they could be listening to classics such as "Thick as a Brick," "Passion Play," or just about anything else Jethro Tull has produced.

KEITH BRODY Miami, Fla.

STEREO REVIEW should help Lester Bangs find a new job. His August review of Jethro Tull's "Songs from the Wood" proved his total incompetence as a record reviewer. As the not-so-proud owner of a copy of this album, I'll easily agree that it is below par. However, it is not reasonable to say, based on this one disc, that Jethro Tull's music has "... never been anything but ugly and trite." Mr. Bangs' characterization of the group's attitude as "up-tight, pretentious, and haughty" is a real example of the pot calling the kettle black. If he were not so busy impressing his very narrow attitudes on us, perhaps he'd have the time and the good judgment to review the music on a record rather than the "pose" and "attitude" of the performers.

DON MERZ Bridgenville, Pa.

Reading Binary

In "Audio's Digital Future" in the July issue, the caption on page 83 gives 00101101 as an example of a binary number and states it is to be read from left to right, "from least-significant to most-significant bit." Binary numbers are interpreted just the opposite; the left-most bit is the highest power of 2, hence it is the most significant.

JOHN Q. DOOLAN Arlington, Va.

Technical Editor Ralph Hodges replies: Digital numbers usually appear in print as Mr. Doolan describes. However, so far as we know there is no iron-clad convention for the sequencing of bits in audio-recording systems of the type discussed in the article. The flow of the diagram in which the number appeared was from left to right. Assuming that the most-significant bit would lead the data stream emerging from the recording system, we reasoned that it should take up the right-most position in the sequence, and the least-significant bit the left-most. We are sorry for any confusion, but we feel that the instructions given for interpreting the number were adequate.

Last Things

In his article "Making the Case for Elgar" (April 1977), Bernard Jacobson stated that in the end Elgar's religious faith turned to ashes and he refused the rites of the church on his deathbed. In his recent biography of the composer in the Master Musicians Series, Ian Parrott comments on the matter as follows: "Since some doubt has been expressed on Elgar's faith at the end of his life, a letter from his daughter to the Musical Times of January 1969 needs quoting: 'Father Gibb, S.J. from St. George's, Worcester, was asked to attend, and to him my father re-affirmed his faith in the Roman Catholic Church.' Peter J. Pirie, in a letter in the same issue, confirms this, adding the significant comment that 'Elgar would utter extravagant things under provocation or pain.'"

JAMES REIDY St. Paul, Minn.

The Editor replies: Yes, and I recall my Irish grandmother commenting that we shouldn't be too hard on those who suffer a late access of piety, for it is simply unwise to take chances when it comes to our "latter end."
FISHER CREATED A SPEAKER SYSTEM TO OUTPERFORM YOUR RECORDS.

THE ST660.

The bandwidth of a typical record is approximately 45 to 15,000 Hz. A commercially recorded tape rarely exceeds 50 to 12,000 Hz. The Fisher ST660 reproduces music from 39 to 22,000 Hz.

Why should a speaker outperform the material it will reproduce? A loudspeaker provides greatest accuracy when not required to operate at the lowest or highest extremes of its bandwidth. The wide response of the ST660 means that even exceptional records, tapes or broadcasts will be reproduced exactly as recorded.

For the same reason, the ST660 delivers greater dynamic range than necessary to recreate the softest as well as the loudest musical passages of any recording. With only 1 watt of power, the ST660 will generate 94 dB at 1 meter (conversation is about 80 dB), demonstrating its flawless reproduction at very low power levels. In a typical living room, a pair of ST660's can generate 113 dB, approximate level of a discotheque, so that the loudest music will also be reproduced without strain or distortion. The end result is that you can use moderate power or super-power receivers to get a roomful of sound-clean sound, accurate sound.

This extremely smooth response curve proves it reproduces music as naturally as is technically possible without coloring sound, without muddying the definition of instruments.

Outstanding components for outstanding sound.

The ST660 includes a 12-inch low frequency loudspeaker, augmented by a 12-inch passive radiator for extended bass. There are, also, two midrange drivers for exceptional clarity, and a pair of dome tweeters for smooth, well-defined high frequency response.

Bass Loudspeaker and Passive Radiator.

The 10-inch bass speaker, having a 1½-inch heat-resistant voice coil and 2½-pound magnetic assembly, is reinforced by a passive radiator, a precisely tuned cone driven by the rear pressure wave of the speaker.

Two Midrange Drivers.

A 6½-inch driver with a 2-inch dome, 2-inch voice coil and 26-ounce magnetic assembly delivers clarity and wide sound dispersion. A rear 6-inch cone midrange, driven by a ¾-inch voice coil and 5.6-ounce magnetic assembly, reflects sound off walls and ceiling to recreate concert hall ambience.

Tweeter Accuracy.

Treble accuracy is provided by two 1-inch dome tweeters. Each has a 1-inch voice coil and 5.6-ounce magnetic assembly for wide sound dispersion and high power handling capacity.

The Fisher tradition

Fisher is credited with starting the high fidelity industry in 1937. The same dedication to excellence that existed then, in a modest New York City facility, still flourishes today in Fisher's ultra-modern 200,000 square foot plant in Milroy, Pennsylvania. Perfection is the Fisher tradition. A tradition that has, over the years, resulted in an incredible number of audio innovations—like the first coaxial speaker system and the first stereophonic receiver. In keeping with this, the Studio Standard (ST) series are Fisher's premier loudspeakers. The ST series consists of the ST660 and the more compact ST640.

To fully appreciate their performance, you will have to audition them for yourself at fine audio stores or the high fidelity section of department stores.

Outstanding components for outstanding sound.

- **Bass**
  - 12" loudspeaker
  - 1½" voice coil

- **Midrange**
  - 6½" (2 dome)

- **High Frequency**
  - 4" and 1" dome

- **Passive Radiator**
  - 12" cone

- **Controls**
  - Midrange Rear Driver 3-position switch
  - Tweeter 3-position switch

- **Dimensions**
  - 29½" x 18½" x 12¼"

- **Weight**
  - 45 pounds

The first name in high fidelity.
New Products
latest audio equipment and accessories

New Full-range Isolating Headphones From Superex

Superex is launching a new line of stereo headphones with the SM-700 "Studio Master," a dynamic headphone using 23/4-inch Mylar-diaphragm drivers in vented enclosures. The 10-ounce headphone has Leatherette-covered foam cushions that rest on the ear, isolating it from outside sounds. The metal headband is also covered with foam padding, and a 15-foot extended retractable cable with a clothing clip is provided.

The frequency response of the SM-700 is rated at 10 to 20,000 Hz ±3 dB. Distortion is rated at 0.25 per cent for a 400-Hz signal at a sound-pressure level of 110 dB. A 0.6-volt (10-milliwatt) input is required to produce this acoustic output. Impedance is a nominal 35 ohms. Price: $65.

First Dynamic Speakers from Koss

Koss has taken the plunge into the dynamic-speaker market with three new systems designed according to Thiele's vented-box loudspeaker theory and using Small’s computer methods to optimize parameters. The new line consists of the CM 1010, a passive raditor system, and the CM 1020 and CM 1030 (shown) ported systems. The CM 1030 is a four-way system with a 10-inch woofer, two 4½-inch mid-ranges, and two 1-inch high-frequency dome drivers for the lower- and upper-treble ranges. Crossover points are at 400, 2,500, and 6,000 Hz. The system has dual ports for supplementing bass output. The high-frequency drivers are loaded with different phase plugs, which increase their efficiencies but restrict their bandwidths, so that one covers the 2,500- to 6,000-Hz range and the other is active above 6,000 Hz. There are three level controls on the CM 1030, for midrange, treble, and high treble. Each is a three-position switch with settings of +3, 0, and -3 dB. Overall on-axis frequency response in the far field is 26 to 20,000 Hz ±3 dB. Far-field response is down 3 dB at 70 degrees off-axis and 6 dB at 80 degrees off-axis. A sound-pressure level of 96 dB is produced at a 1-meter distance on-axis with a 1-watt input; Koss recommends amplifiers delivering between 15 and 200 watts per channel continuous power into 8 ohms. The speaker is fused to prevent overload. Nominal impedance is 7 ohms. The cabinet, which measures 39 x 16½ x 14½ inches, is finished in pecan veneer and has brass lift handles on the sides.

Sony Turntable Uses Carbon Arm

Sony is offering three new quartz-controlled direct-drive turntables, the PS-X7 (shown), PS-X6, and PS-X5. Each has a quartz-crystal oscillator that generates a stable reference signal; this is compared with a signal derived from the platter’s speed, and speed fluctuations are then corrected by a servo system. All three turntables are semiautomatic and have a safety clutch in the tone-arm return mechanism. Operating controls (other than speed and record-size selection) are located on the front panel of the base and can be manipulated with the dust cover closed. The turntable bases are made of an acoustically inert material and mounted on liquid-filled feet to prevent acoustic feedback.

The top-of-the-line PS-X7 features a carbon-fiber tone-arm shaft as well as a liquid-filled turntable mat. Both the PS-X7 and PS-X6 have an optical sensor that triggers the tone-arm return mechanism as well as touch-sensitive front-panel switches for the start/stop and repeat functions. Key specifications are identical for all three turntables and include 0.025 per cent wow and flutter (wrms), better than 99.99 per cent speed accuracy, and a rumble level of -73 dB (DIN B weighting). All three have approximate dimensions of 6 x 17½ x 14¾ inches. Prices are $330 for the PS-X7, $275 for the PS-X6, and $250 for the PS-X5.

New Lower-cost Satin Cartridges

Otsawa announces two additions to its Satin M-18 series of moving-coil phono cartridges. The M-18E and M-18X are basically similar to the M-18BX cartridge already on the market but are lower in cost and have different stylus assemblies. The M-18 series cartridges do not require a pre-preamplifier ("head" amp) since they have rated outputs of 2.5 millivolts, suitable for a standard magnetic phono input. The M-18E and M-18X use the Satin’s fixed-point pivot in the stylus-can-tilever mechanism for improved groove tracing and a specially formulated viscous fluid for damping.

The M-18E, with a 0.2 x 0.8-mil elliptical diamond stylus, has a frequency response of 10 to 30,000 Hz. The M-18X is rated at 10 to 35,000 Hz and is intended for both stereo and CD-4 four-channel use; it has a 0.1 x 2.5-mil Shibata stylus. Compliance is 15 x 10⁻⁶ centimeters per dyne for each cartridge, and the recommended tracking-force range is 0.5 to 1.5 grams. Price of the M-18E is $195; of the M-18X, $250.

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The CM 1020 uses drivers similar to the CM 1030's but in a three-way configuration with one mid-range and one high-frequency driver.

(Continued on page 18)
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.

CIRCLE NO. 77 ON READER SERVICE CARD

The machine for your machine.
The CM 1010 is a two-way system with an 8-inch woofer and a 1-inch dome tweeter; its 10-inch passive radiator can be adjusted for flat response to 35 Hz or for augmented output in the 50- to 80-Hz range (with the rolloff occurring at 40 Hz) using a removable weight attached to the center of the diaphragm. Both of these units are finished in pecan veneer. Price of the CM 1030 is $395; of the CM 1020, $295; and of the CM 1010, $195.

Circle 118 on reader service card

Teac's New Three-head Elcaset Deck

Teac's new elcaset deck, the AL-700, is a three-head, three-motor machine employing the new quarter-track, two-channel cassette format. The AL-700, like other elcaset machines, has a detector that automatically senses tape type (ferric, ferrichrome, or chromium-dioxide) according to coded notches on the elcaset shell, and it sets bias and equalization accordingly. The transport can be started automatically with a timer, and a photoelectric sensor detects the end of the tape and disengages the transport mechanism. A memory function for tape stop and replay is also included. The AL-700 has built-in Dolby noise-reduction circuitry; in addition, it will interface with an external compander and has a front-panel switch for this (Teac offers a dbx face with an external compander and has a reduction circuitry; in addition, it will perform as a radio broadcast) for taping at a particular level of 108 dB at 22,000 Hz for ferrichrome or chromium-dioxide tapes. Improvements of up to 10 dB are realized with the Dolby circuitry. Input sensitivity is 0.25 millivolt for the microphone inputs and 60 millivolts for the line inputs. Output is 0.3 volt into 50,000 ohms. The AL-700 has approximate dimensions of 10½ x 18½ x 13½ inches and weighs 45 pounds. Price: under $1,000.

Circle 119 on reader service card

Triamplified Philips Studio Speaker with Motional Feedback

The RH 545 from Philips is a triamplified motional-feedback loudspeaker system utilizing a 12-inch acoustic-suspension woofer, a 2-inch dome mid-range, and a 1-inch dome tweeter. The feedback system, which operates on the woofer only, consists of a piezoelectric acceleration sensor on the woofer cone. The sensor generates a voltage proportional to the physical movement of the woofer cone, and this voltage is compared with the audio input signal. Any deviation is used to "correct" the signal that drives the woofer. The RH 545 accepts the output from any preamplifier (input sensitivity can be adjusted between 1 and 23 volts into 10,000 ohms) and divides the signal into three bands: below 500 Hz, 500 to 3,000 Hz, and above 3,000 Hz. Adjustable low- and high-frequency filters are provided. The treble roll-off can be set to start at 7,000 or 10,000 Hz with the slope variable between 0 and 20 dB per octave (a pilot light indicates when the treble roll-off is in use). The bass may be either boosted or attenuated below 350 Hz (by ±10 dB at 60 Hz). After the signal is split up, each frequency band is directed to its specific power amplifier. The tweeter is driven by a 15-watt (continuous) amplifier, the mid-range by a 35-watt unit, and the woofer by a 50-watt unit. Maximum total harmonic distortion is 0.2 per cent for each of the three amplifiers. In addition to the bass and treble controls, the RH 545 has response adjustments for room placement. There are three adjustments—for "on floor," "back against the wall," and "side against the wall." These are intended to provide uniform power response in an average listening room. The RH 545 can be driven by amplifiers with power stages (up to 100 watts output) as well as directly from preamplifiers. Power is drawn from a standard 117-volt a.c. line.

The rated frequency response range of the RH 545 is 20 to 20,000 Hz. At full power output it develops a maximum sound-pressure level of 108 dB at 1 meter. Standard phono jacks are provided for the audio inputs, as well as three-conductor DIN jacks for standard type balanced inputs. The black-ash cabinet measures 25½ x 17 x 12½ inches, and the system weighs 67 pounds. Price: approximately $1,200.

Circle 120 on reader service card

Sharp Cassette Deck Has Microprocessor Control Circuitry

Sharp's new RT-3388 cassette deck is a two-head machine incorporating a microprocessor circuit for a high degree of control over the tape-transport functions. The deck has a liquid-crystal display (LCD) panel that acts as a tape counter, timer, and indicator for the built-in Dolby system and the various memory functions. A built-in digital clock operates in either the 12- or 24-hour mode (with AM/PM indicators for the former). The LCD also serves as the clock display. The RT-3388 can be programmed to play any sequence of selections (up to a total of nineteen) on a cassette; it searches out particular selections by counting the blank sections of tape between recorded items. An "editor" function allows the user to insert these spaces in home-recorded tapes. There is a memory-reward feature that permits the user to set the counter to read zero at any selected point on the tape and the rewind function will return the tape automatically to that point. A direct-memory function is used to address any point on the tape (whether between selections or not) and later recall that point for playback. The tape counter can be set to read tape footage or time (in the "time" mode, the readout is in minutes and seconds). The built-in clock can be used for timed switching of accessory devices plugged into the RT-3388's rear-panel a.c. outlet or to switch in a program source (such as a radio broadcast) for taping at a particular time.

(Continued on page 20)
Hail to a totally new concept and technology in headphones. And hail to an Open Audio design that gives you the lightest weight comfort you've ever experienced with headphones that possess truly top quality sound.

These ultra thin headphones have been designed and engineered to meet important professional needs: extreme comfort over long listening periods, a particular wide frequency response, and a broad dynamic range. A major factor in the success of the design is the use of rare earth elements in the compound of the permanent magnets of each earpiece. Besides having superior magnetic properties, these magnets are also of much smaller size, while still allowing Stanton to achieve an improved response over headphones incorporating conventional permanent magnets.

The soft foam cushioned headband is exceptionally comfortable and has a trendy brushed denim fabric covering. The earpiece yokes incorporate specially designed pivots which allow the earpieces to fit perfectly against the ear, whatever the shape of the head.

Write us for the specs — they're magnificent! And ask for a demonstration as soon as possible at your Stanton dealer.

Write today for further information to Stanton Magnetics, Inc., Terminal Drive, Plainview, N.Y. 11803.
New Products

**Ulthathin Speakers Added by Magnepan**

- Magnepan Inc., manufacturers of the Magneplanar MG-II loudspeaker, has added two more Magneplanar speakers to its line, the MG-I and MG-III. These speakers use ultrathin film diaphragms (imprinted with a zig-zag conductor pattern) suspended in a planar magnetic field to produce their acoustic output. The MG-I (shown at right) has two Magneplanar drivers: a 428-square-inch diaphragm for bass and mid-range and a 68-square-inch diaphragm for the high frequencies. The crossover occurs at 2,400 Hz with a slope of 6 dB per octave. The MG-I has less dispersion in the vertical plane and lower slope of 6 dB per octave. The MG-I has less dispersion in the vertical plane and lower slope of 6 dB per octave.

- The MG-III speaker (shown at left) has two drivers: a 1-inch dome tweeter and a 5-inch dome mid-range, and a 68-square-inch driver for bass and mid-range. The crossover occurs at 700 Hz with a slope of 6 dB per octave. The MG-III has a higher efficiency and a lower frequency response of 30 to 15,000 Hz ±3 dB for chromium-dioxide tape and a signal-to-noise ratio of 64 dB (for all tape types) with ferric tape, 40 to 15,000 Hz ±3 dB with ferrichrome tape. Approximate dimensions are 5½ x 17½ x 13 inches; weight is 20 pounds. Price: under $300.

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**Marantz's New Cassette Decks**

- Marantz has three new front-loading cassette decks, each with Dolby circuitry, extended-range level meters, and a defeatable peak-limiter for attenuating sudden high-level inputs. The top-of-the-line Model 5030 is a three-channel system with "full-process" Dolby: two Dolby circuits are provided so that inputs may be encoded for taping and instantaneously decoded for monitoring. Separate level controls are provided for microphone and line inputs, which may be mixed, and there is a master level control. There are LED’s for indicating peak inputs. The tape-transport system, driven by a d.c. motor, is servo-controlled. Key specifications for the 5030 include a wow and flutter figure of 0.08 per cent and overall signal-to-noise ratios (S/N) of 52 dB (Dolby off) and 60 dB (Dolby on). The playback-only S/N is 54 dB. Frequency response is 40 to 13,500 Hz ±3 dB with ferric tape, 40 to 15,000 Hz ±3 dB with chromium-dioxide tape, and 35 to 16,000 Hz ±3 dB with ferrichrome tape. Approximate dimensions are 53 x 17½ x 11½ inches.

- The Model 5025 is similar to the 5030, the major difference being that it is a two-head deck. Key specifications of the 5025 are identical to those of the 5030. The lowest-priced deck in the new Marantz line is the Model 5010, a two-head machine with a single record-level control for each channel. Wow and flutter are 0.1 per cent, and overall S/N is 50 dB (Dolby off) or 58 dB (Dolby on). Playback S/N is 52 dB. The dimensions of the 5025 and the 5010 are identical to those of the 5030. Optional walnut-veneer cabinets are available for all three, as are optional rack-mounting adapters. Price of the 5030 is about $420, of the 5025 about $310, and of the 5010 about $250. A walnut cabinet is $35.
What you should expect from a $700 DC amp and matching tuner: Waveform fidelity.

Introducing the 3080 Series, Technics integrated DC amp and matching tuner. Two remarkable components with waveform fidelity: The ability to reproduce sound waves. Square waves. Even tone burst signals. It's the only kind of performance you should expect from an integrated amp and tuner. Especially for $700.

To create an amp that would accurately amplify waveforms, we took some unusual steps with the SU-8080. Like eliminating all coupling capacitors and thereby eliminating a major source of phase shift, noise and distortion. Another step toward waveform fidelity is a frequency response of DC ~ 100 kHz - 1 dB.

And to complement our unconventional DC integrated amp, we added an extremely quiet phono equalizer complete with Technics own ultra-low-noise transistors. The result: An increased phono S/N ratio of 100 dB at 10 mV with sharply reduced circuit and transistor noise especially when compared to conventional amps. We also added some unconventional concepts. Like a subsonic filter in the phono equalizer and a four-step phono impedance selector.

Equally impressive is the performance of our ST-8080 tuner. To boost sensitivity while greatly reducing interference signal levels, there are two RF stages with low-noise, 4-pole, dual-gate junction FET's as well as a linear FET variable tuning capacitor. At the same time, Technics developed flat group delay filters increase selectivity without increasing distortion.

There's also a new Phase Locked Loop IC in the MPX circuit as well as a pilot signal canceler for razor-sharp cancellation of the 15 kHz pilot signal and ruler-flat high-end response: 20 Hz to 18 kHz (+0.2 dB, -0.8 dB).

Now that you know what waveform fidelity means in a DC amp and tuner, take a look at what waveform fidelity means in the specs.

SU-3080 Amp. POWER OUTPUT: 72 watts per channel min RMS into 8 ohms from 20 Hz to 20 kHz with no more than 0.02% total harmonic distortion. S/N (IHF A): 115 dB. PHONO S/N (IHF A): 100 dB (10 mV).

ST-8080 Tuner, 50 dB QUIETING SENSITIVITY:
Mono: 13.6 dBF Stere: 34.5 dBF SELECTIVITY: 85 dB.
THD: Mono: 0.15%. Stereo: 0.3%. CAPTURE RATIO: 1.0 dB.


Technics Professional Series by Panasonic

CIRCLE NO. 6 ON READER SERVICE CARD
At last... a flawless midrange built to take full power... 300D 3-Way System

THE CORINTHIAN COLUMN

RTR resolves point-source radiation
Originators of column loudspeakers in the United States, RTR has introduced the most meaningful statement of column design since 1970. The RTR 300D 3-Way Speaker System.

What makes the 300D immediately fresh, almost startling, is its "Resolved Point-Source Radiation Field" which projects a stable image regardless of frequency. Musical instruments are reproduced in a virtually stationary position -- just as they were in live performance.

This positive move toward audio reality is the result of significant technological advancements in the design and positioning of each driver within the 3-way system. Primary is the new RTR soft dome midrange system -- the first to successfully integrate smooth response and broad dispersion with outstanding dynamic range and transient response. In consort with the two 10" woofers and solid state amplifiers, the current drawn varies with the highest degree of audial integrity.

Packaged superbly in an acoustically transparent, Corinthian column and affordably priced. Audition the 300D at your RTR dealer.

Electric-bass Input
Q. Is it harmful to play my electric bass through the microphone input of my 85-watt receiver? It seems to sound all right at all volume levels, and my speakers are well known for extended bass response, so that should be no problem.

A. I assume that you know your bass does not have the same tonal quality through your diff system as it does through a bass-guitar amp and speaker. The overload properties, resonances, frequency response, etc. of an electric-bass amp/speaker are all selected to provide special sonic effects, and thus normal "fidelity" rules don't apply.

As for what can go wrong, I don't think your amplifier will run into trouble, but be careful not to drive your speaker cones into excessive excursion. Since your guitar will produce a strong low E with a fundamental tone at 41.2 Hz, you can avoid woofer damage by keeping your levels moderate. Do not turn up your amplifier's bass or loudness control in pursuit of a "gutsier" sound. However, some of the big three-motor open-reel decks may draw considerably more.

One rule of thumb you can use to estimate current consumption is to place it (your thumb) on the unit's case. In general, the hotter the unit the more current it is drawing from the a.c. line. An amplifier, whether power, integrated, or one of those found in receivers, is the big drawer in the crowd. With most amplifiers, the current drawn varies with the audio power output they are driven to. The more audio-signal wattage pushed out, the greater the line current drawn in. I checked my manual files and found these figures: a 25-watt-per-channel quad receiver drew 22 watts with no signal, 300 watts with full power output. A 20-watt-per-channel stereo receiver drew 20 watts with no signal, 85 watts at full power output. A 60-watt-per-channel stereo receiver drew 40 watts with no signal, 356 watts at full output power. A 350-watt-per-channel power amplifier drew 50 watts with no signal and 1,100 watts (!) at full output.

There are several variables (aside from speaker impedance) that affect the amount of current drawn by a component under no-signal and full-output conditions. Although use of a large number of pilot or indicator lamps, or a built-in oscilloscope display, will add watts to the no-signal rating, the major contributing factor is the power amplifier's class of operation.

Class-A operation is the least efficient mode in that it involves a large current flow through all the output transistors whether or not there's an audio signal present. With Class B there's a small "idling" current flowing under no-signal conditions, which increases with the signal level. A high-power Class-A amplifier used five or six hours a day might well cost you as much to run as your air conditioner, whereas the conventional Class AB, D, G, or H amplifiers typically cost perhaps as much as a 75-watt lamp bulb for the same operating time in normal home use.

Hi-fi Shock
Q. I would like your advice on a method to guard my stereo equipment. I live in an apartment building where the floors are marble. I usually get a slight shock on touching the turntable, tape decks, and receiver, but it depends upon the kind of shoes I wear. There is no water pipe or other type of ground.

A. Yes, and with most components fairly easily. You'll find a label on the back panel or underside of most current-consuming audio products that gives its power consumption in watts. Sometimes the information is provided in "VA" or volts/ampere, which is roughly the same as watts. In the absence of labels, you can assume the usual solid-state preamplifier draws perhaps 15 watts, a tuner perhaps 20 or 30 watts, and a turntable anywhere from 20 watts down to 2 or 3 watts for the direct-drive models. All of these figures are very low in respect to current consumption. However, some of the big three-motor...
Technics introduces cassette decks that only sound expensive.

You can build a $200-$250 front-loading deck to look expensive. Or you can build one the way Technics does—to sound expensive. Without those meaningless knobs and gadgets on the outside. But with Technics high-priced, high-performance technology on the inside.

Technology that makes Technics RS-615US and RS-630TUS sound a lot better than you'd expect a mid-priced deck to sound. Both decks give you inaudible wow & flutter: 0.10% RMS for the 615, 0.09% RMS for the 630. The reason: The kind of electronically controlled DC motor found in our more expensive decks.

And instead of tape hiss, you'll hear music, even in soft musical passages. Because Technics low-noise circuitry in addition to Dolby* give both decks a distinctively expensive S/N ratio: –63 dB (C.O., tape).

Both decks also give you long-lasting super alloy heads. Oversized VU meters. Lockable pause control. And automatic pre-timed recording or playback with a standard timer (not included).

The 630 adds a dual-output control. Separate bias and EQ switches to get the most out of normal, C.O., and ferrichrome tapes. And a peak check meter to help avoid overload distortion.

The RS-615US and the RS-630TUS. Everything about them sounds expensive. Except the price.

*Dolby is a trademark of Dolby Laboratories, Inc.

Simulated wood cabinet for RS-630US.

Technics
by Panasonic

CIRCLE NO. 79 ON READER SERVICE CARD
DRY CLEAN THEM.

Some of the widely advertised record cleaners would have you believe that you must use a liquid or chemical preparation to clean your records properly. What they don't like to talk about is the contaminants that are left behind.

Now, at last, there's Pixoff. It can't leave behind any contaminants because it works effectively without liquid or chemical cleaners. Pixoff's specially formulated and patented cleaning surface creates a force so much greater than static force that it actually lifts dust and dirt from the bottom of even the deepest grooves. And Pixoff does it gently and safely!

But what's even more important, you can hear the remarkable difference in reduced pops, crackles and distortion after a Pixoff cleaning. The original sound comes through because the stylus is not road-blocked by pollutants, and can track the grooves precisely. And as a bonus: your stylus lasts longer.

Restore the original brilliant sound of your records—the Pixoff dry cleaning way. Write today for your nearest dealer.

Audio Q. A.

1. Find an electrical ground. If any of your wall outlets accept three-prong plugs directly (without an "adaptor"), the off-center U-shaped hole should provide this (it doesn't always). To check whether it does, insert one of the probe tips of the neon tester into the supposed ground hole and plug the other probe alternately into the two other slots. If the U-shaped hole really is an electrical ground, the bulb will glow when connected to one of the slots (it doesn't matter which) but not to the other. If it doesn't glow when connected between "ground" and either of the slots, the grounding connection has been omitted (this happens sometimes in older houses in which the original wiring was not required to provide the additional electrical ground and the original wall outlet was later replaced with a modern, three-conductor receptacle even though no means of grounding it was available). If you don't have three-prong outlets, however, you may have an electrical ground right at that same outlet box (this would be the case with premium-quality wiring done before 1962). To check for this, touch one test prod to the metal screw that holds the cover plate in place and insert the other alternately into each of the two regular plug slots (be sure you get through any paint on the screw so as to ensure a solid connection). If the light glows, that metal screw can become your grounded test point. If you can't find a ground this way, you'll have to run a wire to a ground clamp attached to a cold-water pipe (electrical supply stores have inexpensive ground clamps). This will then become your ground, but you should be careful not to touch it (or the wire coming from it) and your equipment simultaneously until everything is safely interconnected—you could get a shock.

2. Unplug all audio cables as well as separate ground connections (if there are any) between the components (you don't need to disconnect your loudspeakers, however). Connect a length of insulated wire between one probe of the neon tester and the ground test point as shown. Make sure to wrap insulating tape around the probe/wire connection. With the component plugged in and turned on, see if the tester glows when its other probe is touched to the metal chassis of the component. If it does, reverse the component's a.c. plug in the wall socket and try again. This time it will probably not glow, in which case this is the way to leave the plug inserted for proper grounding. (Put a spot of paint or other mark on the plug and wall plate to insure proper reinstallation if it is ever unplugged.)

3. Repeat this procedure with each of your components, including the turntable. If a given piece of gear doesn't light the bulb in either way, then it doesn't matter which way its a.c. plug is inserted. If it glows both ways, pick the position with the dimmer glow.

4. Reinstall the audio cables between the components (along with any separate ground wires you may have been using between chassis) and see whether your system as a whole would benefit in respect to shock (or hum) from a connection between the test ground point at the wall socket and the chassis ground terminal on your receiver or preamp. Of course, if you have any components with three-prong plugs and your wall a.c. receptacles are grounded, this connection is made automatically through the line cord. In respect to hum testing, switch to phono playback, turn the bass up, the treble down, and set the volume at a level at which hum is clearly audible. If the additional ground to your test point gives you lower hum, make it permanent.

Whale Oil

Q. Recently I have been using Maxell audio tape and am very happy with its performance. Unfortunately, I have just heard that Hitachi, the producers of Maxell tape, use whale oil in their manufacturing process. Could you confirm or deny this for me?

KENNETH LIBBY

Kailua, Hawaii

A. I checked with Maxell's representatives in the U.S. and they assured me that, unlike some yogurts, their tape includes absolutely no "natural" ingredients. In short, it's all "chemicals." Furthermore, my informant went on, Maxell's major executives in Japan are ardent conservationists and would be among the least likely to engage in such practices. I thus suspect the presence of some competitive snake oil in the whale-oil rumor.

NEW
KOOL SUPER LIGHTS

Only 9 mg. “tar” in both sizes.
And KOOL’s refreshing coolness, too.
At last, a low “tar” menthol cigarette with satisfying taste.

mg. ‘tar’ in both sizes.

9 mg. “tar,” 0.8 mg. nicotine, av. per cigarette, by FTC method.
Even before you switch on the STR-7800SD receiver, it'll be receiving. Receiving oohs and aahs.

After it goes on, the accolades will really come in.

After all, it is the finest receiver ever designed by Sony. The 7800 puts you on the receiving end of the most tomorrow-looking technology available today.

You'll receive a feeling of power.

The 7800 brings power to the power-hungry, and can even make the mild-mannered lust for power. Rated at 125 watts per channel, it's powerful enough to drive any speakers—satisfy any need.

The 125 watts, minimum RMS at 8 ohms, is from 20 to 20kHz—with no more than 0.07% Total Harmonic Distortion.

And that's Sony's conservative rating.

How this combination of power and low distortion was achieved, is an example of Sony’s engineering muscle. Let's start with the toroidal coil transformer. A more efficient structure, it fully exploits the high-performance power amp. As do two over-sized capacitors, each 22,000uF.

So the feeling of power throughout the frequency range is unmistakable.

You'll receive tuning that'll leave you swooning.

FM circuitry found usually in separates appears in the 7800. Pardon our initials, but MOS FET's are used in the FM RF amplification. The result: good linearity, low noise and high sensitivity.

For you FM Dolby listeners, a complete FM Dolby noise reduction system, to minimize noise and over-
load distortion. And there's a new local oscillator circuit. Plus our uni-phase IF filters are so advanced, a computer designed them.

A Multipath switch and meter indicate optimum antenna orientation, thereby reducing distortion. An LED dial pointer doubles in length when an FM signal is received for easy tuning.

You'll receive a pre-amp that's pre-eminent.

High marks for our low emitter concentration (LEC) transistor. Designed, made by, and exclusive to Sony. It guarantees low noise, and a wide dynamic range. It also keeps RIAA equalization to within ±0.5dB.

You'll receive power. And the means to control it.

The pre-amp section also gives you the control you need to keep all that power in line.

A presence switch is a special present: it lets you equalize the mid-range.

Importantly, the 7800 was built with a Professional Attenuator Main Volume Control. It eliminates gang error between channels.

Nor have we overlooked a special loudness network, or an audio muting switch.

Some input on the inputs: Phono 1, Phono 2, External Adaptor, Auxiliary, two tape decks—and tape-to-tape dubbing facilities.

Certain pieces of machinery simply ooze quality and power. Such is true of the 7800SD. It'll put you on the receiving end of the living end.
LONG ago, in a movie studio far away, plans for a motion picture to be called Star Wars were beginning to take shape. History records that the studio moguls were not wholly optimistic about the economic possibilities of the film, but it was nevertheless decided to give it the full "wide-screen" treatment. This meant that it would be made available to exhibitors (read "theaters") suitably equipped to handle it as a 70-millimeter print with six-track sound recorded on four magnetized stripes running along either edge of the film. The sound would be Dolbyized (the Dolby A process), and if they hadn't already acquired it, participating theaters could get the necessary Dolby equipment installed and gone over by Dolby technicians. The theater sound system from projector to loudspeakers would also be checked out and equalized.

If you are one of the lucky few living within reach of perhaps ten to twenty theaters in the U.S. that have received this full treatment, you will have the chance to see and hear Star Wars—if you haven't already—in this rather impressive format. Unfortunately, most of the country will see the film as a 35-millimeter print and will hear it in glorious mono, the standard format of movie sound since the days of the Great Depression. But there is an intermediate possibility. The soundtrack on the 35-millimeter movie film is of course optical, meaning that it is a dynamic light pattern to which the film itself has been exposed, and it is intended to be played back by a light beam and photoelectric sensor within the projector. Actually, there are two optical tracks that the typical projector effectively mixes in much the same way as a mono cassette machine mixes both channels of a stereo cassette; the result is mono sound. However, the potential for at least two-channel stereo is certainly there, and some—by no means all—35-millimeter films have taken advantage of this.

Star Wars in fact goes a step further. Not only are the optical tracks of the 35-millimeter print Dolbyized; they are also encoded by the (are you ready for this?) Sansui QS four-channel matrix system. Mind you, this does not mean you’ll necessarily get even a hint of this at your neighborhood theater. Just as anyone converting to multichannel sound must, the theater owner will have to invest in additional amplifiers and speakers to reproduce everything that’s on the "record." Many exhibitors refuse to, in which case they’re free to go on playing the Star Wars soundtrack in mono for as long as they please. But a Dolby spokesman estimates that between one hundred and two hundred smaller movie houses screening the 35-millimeter print have gone along with the new system. This is significant when you consider the exceedingly plodding past progress of movie sound in its history of fifty years plus.

The Jazz Singer of 1927 is usually hailed as the first "talkie," but it didn't even have a soundtrack, unless you consider phonograph records synchronized with the film to be a soundtrack. Within a very short time the "Photophone" process—the archetypical optical soundtrack—took over completely. Nothing much new happened for some time until 1940, when "Fantasound," the first multichannel movie sound process, was developed for and used exclusively by Walt Disney in his animated film Fantasia. There is some (Continued on page 30)
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. SR II, The Mountain, Framingham, Mass. 01701. Patents issued and pending. Cabinets are walnut veneer.
When sonic perfection is the goal, sheer power is not enough. The new “double Dyna” STEREO 416 is—there is no other term—State of the Art. Double the number of output transistors in the most proven high power amplifier, Dynaco’s Stereo 400, to create the most advanced power house without a whisper of limiting. Absolute accuracy into the most difficult loudspeaker loads. 300 WATTS CONTINUOUS AVERAGE POWER PER CHANNEL INTO 4 OHMS*, and over 400 watts short-term continuous power per channel at 2 ohms. Circuits have been further refined with a switchable front end by-pass and close tolerance components for improved detail and smoothness. Two-speed fan cooling, rack mounting, and digital control LED readouts for the most accurate power monitors.

Then add the ultimate: The C-100 Energy Storage System. This supplemental power supply reserve adds 100,000 microfarads of capacitance for perfectionist listeners who distinguish the subtleties of reproduced music that defy conventional specifications. A single C-100 quick-connected to the STEREO 416 improves detail and transparency from the lowest bass to the most delicate highs. At any volume setting from background music to all-out demonstration—if you know your sound, you won’t believe the difference.

Write for the new Stereo 416/PAT-5 BI-FET brochure. Ask your dealer for an in-depth demonstration. Don’t be switched. If not available at your dealer, phone collect at 609/228-3200, or write Dynaco, Dept. SR-12.

*Measured in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission’s Trade Regulation rule on Power Output Claims for Amplifiers.

Audio Basics

debate over what Fantasound actually was (it went through a number of evolutions), but it is clear that in its original form it used at least four optical tracks, one of which was a control track that regulated, from moment to moment, the assignment of different audio tracks to different speakers located throughout the theater.

We now skip twelve years to the three-projector “Cinerama” system, first of the highly publicized wide-screen processes. Cinerama’s original soundtrack was on a separate 35-millimeter magnetic film synchronized with the picture, and it had seven tracks feeding five up-front loudspeakers and as many as eight speakers positioned around the sides and rear of the theater. A year later (1953) “Cinemascope” made its debut with four magnetic tracks applied to the image film itself. Track assignments were made in a way that has become somewhat standard: the first three were left, center, and right, corresponding to appropriately placed loudspeakers behind the movie screen. The fourth, the “surround” track, fed speakers located here and there around the rest of the theater. Inaudible control signals recorded on the surround track along with the audio could switch the track on and off and assign it to different speakers. The apotheosis of the surround track is the curiosity known as “Perspecta Sound,” in which a single (mono) signal can be switched by control tones to any of three loudspeakers.

With “Todd-AO” (1955), which employed a 70-millimeter projection print, the wide-screen productions acquired the six magnetic tracks that are pretty much standard today. A move by Cinemascope the following year to seven tracks (increasing its film width to 55 millimeters in the bargain) tried to up the ante, but in time the industry lapsed back to six tracks. Today the standard formats are 70 millimeters and six magnetic tracks for wide-screen presentations (including those modern films billed as Cinerama productions, such as 2001, Grand Prix, etc.), and 35 millimeters and two optical tracks (as often as not reproduced monophonically) for showing in smaller movie houses.

The six magnetic tracks provide the filmmaker with plenty of flexibility. In Star Wars’ case the track assignments are left, center, right, surround, and two remaining tracks for special low-frequency effects (the deep, seat-shaking roar of battle cruisers, for example). When the 35-millimeter print is reproduced in QS, we get a left-front signal and a right-front signal, while a derived center-channel signal drives the center loudspeaker. Rear-channel information derived from the QS decoder becomes the surround track, feeding speakers (when available) located at the sides and rear of the audience section. Reported, most of this is ambiance information, with only an occasional attempt at side or rear localization.

The evolution of movie sound, of course, is open-ended, and new developments may be in the works. By the time the next installment of Star Wars reaches your local movie screen, some additional sound barrier may have been broken to give audiophiles in the audience a new thrill.
Many of the records you own were mastered with Ortofon cutterheads. That tells you what we know about laying the music into the grooves.

Now we'll tell you what we know about getting the music out.

Our patented VMS Magnetic Cartridges.

At the heart of the VMS (Variable Magnetic Shunt) principle is a unique, low-mass ring magnet. It forms a super-sensitive flux field that responds to stylus movement with incredible accuracy.

What comes out is a sound that sets new standards in spatial realism. You'll actually hear the violins up front left, the basses back right, the brass center rear. All with minimal distortion and maximum clarity. Hear VMS for yourself. It's available at your audio dealer in five Ortofon models, from $35 to $103.

Each will play the music exactly as the music was laid down.

Ortofon, 122 Dupont Street, Plainview NY 11803
THE LOUDSPEAKER WITH A TOUGH ACT
TO FOLLOW: JBL's NEW L40.

For the past 2½ years, we've been making a two-way bookshelf loudspeaker called the L26. The critics loved it. The dealers loved it. The customers loved it. 250,000 times to be exact.

The smart thing to do would've been to just keep cranking out those L26's for the next hundred years. Never change a winner, right? Not if you're JBL.

Meet JBL's brand new L40. It's the best $200 two-way loudspeaker you can buy. Here's why:

The L40 has tremendous power handling capability. Don't let its size fool you. It'll play right up there with loudspeakers twice its size.
Every sound is clean and clear. Listen to the snap of a rimshot, the crash of a cymbal. Pure. Accurate. Perfectly defined. (If you’d like the technical information on the L40, write us and we’ll send you an engineering staff report. Nothing fancy except the specs.)

Go listen to the L40. And ask for it by its first name: JBL. You’ll be getting the same craftsmanship, the same components, the same sound heard in the very top recording studios in the world.

If you’ve been thinking about getting into high performance high fidelity, we know a great place to start: JBL’s new L40. It’s a whole lot of JBL for not a whole lot of money.

Ranked by the number of Top Fifty albums they produced last year, seven of the ten leading recording studios in the world used JBL to record or mix their music. They used our sound to make theirs. Source: Recording Institute of America.
Recording TV Sound

Q. I have tried recording TV programs by using a microphone in front of the speaker, but this leaves a lot to be desired in sound quality. Is there any way I can record the TV audio by hooking the set directly to my receiver?

LUIS BOTAS
Davie, Fla.

A. If your TV set uses a power transformer—and a service man can tell you this from looking at its schematic diagram—you can make an interconnection with safety. Many TV sets have an earphone jack, and this would be the easiest point from which to feed the TV audio to your receiver's auxiliary or tape input. If there is no jack, you could simply clip the inner conductor and shield of ordinary audio interconnection cable to the TV set's speaker wires and then over to the receiver—if the TV set has a transformer.

Many—perhaps most—TV sets today do not use a power transformer, however, and in this case there is a fifty-fifty chance that the chassis of the TV set (to which one of its speaker wires will be attached) is electrically "live," meaning that it carries a 120-volt a.c. charge. The shock hazard is potentially lethal, and you risk possible damage if you try to connect it to your receiver. You can determine whether your TV chassis is "hot" by using an inexpensive (under $1) neon tester, available at any hardware or electrical store. You connect one end of the neon tester to a known electrical ground (a cold water pipe will do) and touch the other lead of the tester directly to the metal TV chassis. If the bulb glows, the chassis is "hot." Reverse the plug from the TV set to the wall outlet and try again. If the lamp lights in either position you have a "hot" chassis. Only when a TV chassis is known to be electrically isolated from the a.c. line is it safe to connect it to a system. (Sorry, we have not tested any of the commercial TV sound adapters.)

Whether all this is worth the effort is a debatable question. All of us have been conditioned to expect a certain kind of sound from the modest, unsophisticated speakers used in TV sets. But played through a hi-fi system, the full horror of the original TV sound becomes apparent. In listening to a TV concert, for example, the volume compression that passes as "normal" through the TV speaker becomes very disturbing—to say nothing of the very high hum levels you didn't hear before because the TV speaker couldn't reproduce the relatively low frequency.

Mixing High Frequencies

Q. Recently I tried playing some of my stereo tapes in mono mode and was surprised to find that all the high frequencies seemed to disappear. The tape sound line in stereo. Is there some connection between stereo and high-frequency response?

TREVOR BRYANT
Cambridge, Mass.

A. The problem you've encountered has nothing to do with stereo or mono per se, but indicates that you have a tape head that is out of adjustment (or defective). If the problem occurs only with tapes you have recorded yourself and not with prerecorded tapes, the record head is at fault; if you experience it with all tapes, the trouble is in the playback head.

The difficulty arises because the two head gaps are not perfectly aligned with each other. This introduces phase differences between channels, and these are most pronounced at the high frequencies. In stereo these phase differences may pass unnoticed, but when the two signals are added together, one may cancel out the other, leading to the treble loss.

Rewind Tension

Q. When I rewind a tape on my reel-to-reel machine, the tape is always very tight. Will this cause a loss of the signal? The fast-forward mode doesn't have this problem.

CALVIN OLSEN
Fair Oaks, Calif.

A. An excessively tight rewind won't cause a loss of the signal itself, but it can lead to physical deformation of the tape, which will show up primarily as an apparent high-frequency loss. If the edge of the tape becomes deformed, the head gap can't remain perfectly perpendicular to it, since the tape no longer has a true edge. The loss of perpen-

(Continued on page 36)
Jensen’s Triaxial® 3-Way Speaker...  
Quite simply, the most advanced car stereo speaker ever.

For the best sound ever in your car. The first car stereo speaker with a woofer, a tweeter and a midrange. Identical in principle to the best home stereo speakers. Jensen’s midrange picks up a whole range of tones lost to any other car speaker.

The result: warm, rich, full sounds you never expected to find in your car.

From Jensen’s Triaxial®, the first 3-way car stereo speaker. For more information and the name of your nearest Jensen dealer, write Jensen Sound Laboratories, Dept. SR-127 4136 N. United Parkway Schiller Park, Illinois 60176.

"Triax" and "Triaxial" are registered trademarks identifying the 3-way car stereo speaker of Jensen Sound Laboratories, Division of Pemcor, Inc.

"SOLID STATE TWEETER"—Space saving and efficient, providing distortion-free high frequency response.

"WOOFER"—Designed to reproduce lower frequency tones just as you would hear them in person.

"MIDRANGE"—It picks up the fine tones between the high and low frequencies that other speakers miss.

JENSEN  
SOUND LABORATORIES  
Division of Pemcor, Inc.
## Dolby: Better Off?

**Q.** I record cassettes with the Dolby switch on. On playback, if I switch the Dolby circuits off, the higher frequencies are much more apparent—the whole recording sounds clearer and better. Why?

**A.** During recording (the “encode” cycle), the Dolby system picks out those high frequencies that are low in level and deliberately boosts them up in amounts that vary, but which may be as much as 11 dB. If, during playback, you do not “decode” the tape, you lose the benefit of the noise reduction, of course, but you get instead a somewhat “brighter” sound in which the originally soft high frequencies have been accentuated. This lends a somewhat crisp, articulated character to the sound that quite a few people besides yourself find preferential to objectively “flat” frequency response. (And, if the combination of your machine and the tape being used does not provide flat response to begin with, you may have good reason to prefer the non-decoded playback.)

High-level (“loud”) treble sounds are not affected by the Dolby system in either the encode or decode modes, but in cassette recording and in normal FM broadcasting they are subject to an overall treble boost (equalization) that often exceeds the capacity of the tape or the maximum permissible broadcast modulation on FM. When such excesses occur, the result is—at the very least—a loss of treble material that, musically speaking, ought to be there. The exaggerated brightness of a non-decoded Dolbyized tape or broadcast might help the ear to overlook this loss.

## Equivalent Tapes?

**Q.** Is there an easy-to-read interchangeability chart accepted by tape manufacturers that provides straightforward information on the compatibility of one “model,” “brand,” or “type” of tape with another?

**A.** Yes, there are such charts—one per manufacturer, and usually jealously guarded to ensure secrecy! And there are great similarities among a number of brands of tape because most manufacturers do not make their own oxide particles, but buy them instead from big chemical companies such as Pfizer and Hercules Powder.

Even if I were able to give you a partial customer list for Pfizer’s very popular No. 2228 (known affectionately in the trade as “two cubed eight”) particle, however, you could get only approximate equivalences, for ultimate performance depends on the individual manufacturer’s binder formulation and coating procedures. And, at the “leading edge” of tape technology there are particle developments in the works that remain—for a time, at least—exclusive to the individual companies that are working on them.

So the best you can do, unfortunately, is to be guided by the periodic test reports on tape that appear in this and other magazines, on the groupings of “recommended tapes” the recorder manufacturers provide, and ultimately on your own experience of what works best for your machine.

## Oral History

**Q.** I am planning to make oral history recordings to be used for libraries and schools (after editing and duplication). The originals will be recorded in the home of the subject—usually an old-timer. Would you recommend that I use a cassette or reel-to-reel?

**A.** My suggestion would be to make the original recordings on a high-quality cassette machine equipped with an automatic recording-level control. When you’re home of an elderly person to interview him on tape, you want your unfamiliar and possibly intimidating paraphernalia to be as inconspicuous as possible. Of course, the subject knows he’s being recorded, but you should prevent him from being distracted by your fumbling with record-level controls or by the sight of reels hypnotically spinning around and “wasting” tape while he struggles to recall something. For best-quality results, you should select a machine that is a.c. operated (to maintain good speed stability) and mechanically quiet (so it can be reasonably near your microphone without its sound being picked up). Don’t put microphone and machine on the same coffee table, or you’ll pick up a lot of rumble.

For editing purposes, you’ll want to dub the original cassettes onto an open-reel machine, preferably half-track (full-track if you’ve recorded in mono and have such a machine), preferably at 15 or at least 7 1/2 ips. This transfer should entail little if any audible loss, and it can easily be edited into a first-class master. Whether you then use the spliced-open-reel tape or a one-to-one copy of it as your duplicating master depends simply on the number of copies you will require. (See “Noise Reducers” in the October issue for devices that may be helpful to you in the duplicating process.)
Nikko's Mix and Match Components

The separate components series from Nikko Audio features two well-designed tuners and three integrated amps. New this year is the NA 550 integrated amplifier with 45 watts* per channel, with less than 0.05% THD.

Also new in the Nikko line is the NA 850 with 60 watts* per channel, and less than 0.05% THD. Both the NA 550 and NA 850 integrated amps have myriad features like responsive VU meters with variable control, 5-position tape control switch (for dubbing), speaker protection circuitry, and Nikko's exclusive circuit breakers. The NA 850 also features a subsonic filter and tone defeat.

The TRM 750 integrated-amp, like all Nikko products, is a superb performer, from its quality features to its built-in reliability. The TRM 750 delivers 55 watts* per channel, and no more than 0.15% THD.

Nikko's NT 850 AM/FM tuner is uncannily quiet and station grabbing. Normal and narrow IF circuitry provides high selectivity and low distortion while a front mounted multipath switch aids in reducing noise.

Last, but not least, is the FAM 450 AM/FM tuner. It's an established performer with excellent specifications and a typically modest Nikko price.

Now that you've read about our exciting separate components, we invite you to write to us for complete product information and the name of a Nikko Audio dealer near you.

Once you have seen and heard Nikko Audio products, we think you'll make this your year of Nikko.

*Minimum RMS per channel, both channels driven into 6 ohms from 20Hz to 20kHz.

Nikko Audio

For those who take their stereo seriously
Nikko Electric Corp. of America
16270 Raymer St., Van Nuys, Calif. 91406
(213) 988-0105 ©Nikko Audio, 1977

In Canada: Superior Electronics, Montreal, Quebec
With the new AD-6800, AIWA attains a flatter than ever frequency response with any tape on the market. For the first time, a cassette deck can use its own circuitry to measure the precise bias figure of every brand of cassette tape. Our new 3-head Flat Response Tuning System (FRTS) and built-in 400 Hz and 8kHz mixed oscillator lets you monitor a tape by watching the 400 Hz and 8kHz output levels. For optimum bias setting, you simply adjust the Bias Fine Adjustment knob to get equal output as you record. Consider too, the many other advanced features in the AD-6800: double needle metering combines the VU level and peak level into a single meter, a Peak Hold button locks the peak metering system preventing distortion-causing peak pulses, and an extraordinarily low wow and flutter of 0.05%.

The AD-6550 has a Bias Fine Adjustment knob to give optimum performance with any brand of LH tape on the market, a Remaining Tape Time Meter that shows
is a flatter response

exactly how many minutes remain on the tape when you record, and an outstandingly low wow and flutter of 0.05%.

And there's a lot more to the AIWA family.

The AD-6500, the first cassette deck to feature an automatic front loading system.

The AD-6300, a manual front loader with all the important features of top quality cassette decks.

The AD-1250, an ultra modern 20° slant-backed deck designed for maximum visibility and ease of use.

The versatile AF-3030 combines all the features of the AIWA line of cassette decks with an FM-AM receiver.

So before you run out and buy a cassette deck, consider the engineering innovation that went into the AIWA family. And weigh AIWA's response carefully.
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Audio Ileum

Of course it was inevitable, but to have it happen this soon concerns us all. The video disc has gone audio. The companies involved are Mitsubishi, Teac, and an outfit known as Tokyo Denka. The happening was a series of demonstrations in Japan recently of a music reproduction that turns out, upon even casual examination, to be a direct adaptation for audio purposes of the Philips-MCA video player, with its 1,800-rpm speed and its scanning laser. The recorded information takes the form of pulse-code modulation which is converted by electronics within the machine’s base to an analog signal that appears at the output dividers (also available $600 per unit). (The demonstrations reportedly involved two-channel material only, but this does not preclude the addition of more channels.)

As a system, the optical audio machine provides a frequency response of 10 to 20,000 Hz and $25 per disc total annualized cost or $600 per disc. Projected prices are in the neighborhood of $600 for the player and $10 for each disc. A Teac spokesman was hopeful that record companies will be willing to loan master tapes (possibly on a royalty basis) which can be turned into audio-only “video” discs—even though they will fall short of the new medium’s technical potential. (Incidentally, Philips and MCA just announced an improved version of the video disc which now has a playing time of at least one hour, utilizing both sides of the disc. This implies that any future audio disc will play at least as long as a conventional LP. Magnavox plans to begin regional marketing of the video players, and MCA’s Disc-O-Vision division will be selling the sound-and-sight video disc in the fall of 1978.)

We would suggest, however, that readers refrain just now from holding their collective breaths against the day the audiostream disc takes over the market. Reflect: is it likely that record companies will invest in an entirely new recording and playback technology because it is “better” when they won’t take the (relatively) simple steps necessary to improve their current product? If the record companies believed that a new format—or a better product—would result in substantially increased sales, quality would improve overnight. However, the companies will hardly be rushing into an entirely new and expensive recording format (especially one which would also require new consumer playback equipment) without the assurance of a reasonable (and fairly prompt) return on investment.

When the video-playback disc becomes a mass-market product sometime in the next ten years, then our 1974 prediction of a dual-purpose video/audio disc player should come to pass. Such a machine would, depending upon the kind of “record” placed on its turntable, play either a color program with stereo sound through your TV or an hour or more of multichannel sound through your audio system. The fact that an audio/video disc is now technically feasible has little bearing on its immediate commercial viability.

—Larry Klein and Ralph Hodges

Russian Interference

STereo Review’s article on radio-frequency interference (RFI) and its cures last May reminded me of a recurring problem I’ve been having with my hi-fi. One night about a year ago I turned on my equipment (a modest assemblage by purist audiophile standards, worth only about $6,000) to play some new records only to be greeted by a rhythmic ticking sound. At first I thought it was a leaky capacitor charging and discharging, but as I investigated further I found I could not trace it to any piece of my equipment, and so had to conclude that it was some sort of RFI.

Which mystified me all the more, for there were no voices, no one saying, “Breaker, breaker,” nor was there any Morse code. The noise was a very distinct ticking at a rate varying from about one to three per second, and it would come and go at random intervals during the day. At first I thought the signal was being generated by some sort of malfunctioning machinery or even a nearby neon sign, but the actual source finally turned out to be a bit farther away—in Russia!

While reading the CB/ham column in my local paper I noticed a letter by a ham complaining about interference on certain frequency bands, and what he described was identical to my problem. The editor of the column replied that the RFI (nicknamed “The Woodpecker”) is man-made and is being heard all over the world. As far as anyone can determine, it is man-made and is being heard all over the world. As far as anyone can determine, it is caused by the Russians’ testing of a new “over-the-horizon” radar system! All of the pieces of the puzzle now fell into place. This explained the ticking sound, the change in repetition rate, and the unusual times of day I picked it up.

The solution? I have none. The noise is very broad and so powerful I can hear it in my speakers with my power amps turned off! Let me hasten to explain (before someone accuses me of spending too much time in a John Birch Society Reading Room) that my loudspeakers are of the electrostatic type and have their power supplies on all times to maintain charge. The wires from the power amp pick up enough signal to generate an audible (though faint) ticking. Fortunately, my listening and the Russians’ testing schedule haven’t coincided too much recently, but if the problem gets any worse, I’ll make a suggestion to Jimmy that the matter be brought up at the next round of the SALT negotiations.

—Charles Repka

Quadcasting

If you act quickly, you may have one last chance to help rescue four-channel sound from its current parlous plight—or, if you prefer, pound another nail into its coffin. The Federal Communications Commission, presently inviting comment from all interested parties on the desirability and feasibility of quadraphonic FM broadcasts, has extended its original September 30th deadline for receipt of comments on the subject to December 16. The FCC is particularly interested in whether there is sufficient active support for four-channel amongst the general public and broadcasters to justify the creation of a standard or “discrete” staggered quadraphonic FM transmission and, in particular, whether both parties are willing to spend the money necessary (for equipment adaptation or replacement) to make use of such a system.

At the moment, of course, broadcasts of four-channel are either experimental or inaction—is bound to affect the fortunes of four-channel equipment, which has been a little scarce recently. And it couldn’t help but have a positive influence on software manufacture as well.

The FCC’s inquiry therefore shapes up as an excellent opportunity for you to strike a telling blow, pro or con, for four-channel’s future. Comments must be received by the FCC on or before December 16 to be considered. If you wish all responsible members of the FCC staff to see your letter, you should send a total of six copies. Address—Re: FM Quadraphonic Broadcasting (Docket 21310), Federal Communications Commission, 1919 M Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20554.

—Ralph Hodges
Installation of the Month
By Richard Sarbin

Moving to a new home in Lansing, Michigan, gave audiophile Karl Weathers the necessary motivation to get down, finally, to constructing this rugged and efficient audio installation. Working from a design in an 8:1 scale balsa-wood model, Mr. Weathers built the one-piece, slant-top console in a week's time using 3/4-inch plywood over a frame of two-by-fours. All exterior surfaces are covered in rosewood-grain formica to provide an attractive finish and protection against possible heat or water damage.

Nine rectangular cutouts in the central equipment section accommodate the basic system. The all-McIntosh lineup in the bottom row includes (left to right) an MC 2105 power amplifier, an MPI 4 performance indicator, a C 28 preamplifier, and an MR 74 tuner. In the top row are (left to right) a McIntosh MQ 101 equalizer, a Heath IG-18 sine-wave test generator, a dbx 119 dynamic-range enhancer, a switch panel (to control lighting, speaker-system selection, and reverb level), and a Panasonic eight-track cartridge deck. To maintain proper cooling, the cabinet is vented with 4-inch-square screens at each end while an exhaust fan positioned above the power amplifier draws a steady flow of air over the equipment.

The recessed center and the angled top of the main housing were designed to create a space-age look and offer the system's "navigator" sufficient room in which to operate his program sources. Its ample interior provides easy access to all the equipment for repair or system-rewiring projects.

Resting on the tops of the left and right storage cabinets are a B&O 4001 radial-arm turntable with B&O cartridge and a Nakamichi 700 cassette deck. Below each of these units are drawers containing both cassettes and eight-track cartridges as well as equipment-maintenance materials. Lights built into the side walls of the record cabinets illuminate the titles of Mr. Weathers' collection of rock, classical, and easy-listening discs. The doors to both side cabinets and the central housing unit are equipped with spring-loaded hinges and are therefore self-closing.

Two ESS amt-3 speakers positioned directly across the room from the equipment complex serve as the main (front) speakers for the system. A pair of smaller Genesis II bookshelf speakers mounted in the left and right walls face each other at ninety-degree angles to the main speakers. A synthesized "ambiance" rear channel based on the difference signal between the right and left front channels is achieved by connecting the positive leads of each bookshelf speaker to the amplifier and the negative terminals of each speaker to each other.

Mr. Weathers, a purchasing agent with Delta Dental Plan of Michigan, reports that the basement of his new home was specially designed to accommodate the sizable audio console and to serve as an acoustically correct listening environment. Although satisfied with the overall performance of his system, he is preparing to upgrade it with a McIntosh MC 2205, which has twice the power output of his current amplifier.
WHY MOST CRITICS USE MAXELL TAPE TO EVALUATE TAPE RECORDERS.

Any critic who wants to do a completely fair and impartial test of a tape recorder is very fussy about the tape he uses.

Because a flawed tape can lead to some very misleading results.

A tape that can’t cover the full audio spectrum can keep a recorder from ever reaching its full potential.

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And a tape that doesn’t sound consistently the same, from end to end, from tape to tape, can make you question the stability of the electronics.

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And if a cassette or 8-track introduces wow and flutter, it’s apt to produce some test results that anyone can argue with.

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CIRCLE NO. 23 ON READER SERVICE CARD
PHONO-CARTRIDGE LOADING: Over the years I have written several articles dealing with the problems that arise at the interface between the preamplifier and the cartridge (including one way back in February 1972 on the little-appreciated effects of phono-cartridge inductance on high-frequency performance), but the matter has continued to be neglected by many preamp designers and test laboratories. In recent months, however, the effect of the load impedance on the frequency response of a magnetic phono cartridge has been receiving some long-overdue attention in the audio press, and capacitive/resistive/cartridge-load adjustment is the item showing up regularly in the latest equipment.

To appreciate why the load (the capacitance and resistance seen by the cartridge before—and at—the preamplifier's phono input) can have such a strong effect on conventional magnetic cartridges (moving-coil cartridges and those not based on magnetic principles are relatively immune to such effects), it is necessary to understand the electrical equivalent circuit of a magnetic cartridge. This is shown in Figure 1, greatly simplified by the omission of the cartridge's internal resistance and stray capacitances.

In this circuit, the voltage $E_G$, generated by the cartridge as a result of stylus motion, is assumed to be a faithful replica of the recorded program waveform. At some frequency, usually in the highest audible octave or even at an ultrasonic frequency, the coil inductance $L_C$ will resonate electrically with the total circuit capacitance $C_L$. This causes a frequency-response peak at the resonance frequency. The amplitude of this peak is reduced by the load resistance $R_L$. If this resistance is made small enough, there will be no output rise at all, but rather a steady decrease in output as the frequency increases.

As a rule, the cartridge's electrical resonance is used to compensate for other response aberrations arising from the mechanical operation of the system. A real stylus and generating system will usually have its own mechanical resonance, between 15,000 and 25,000 Hz, which can affect the tracking ability as well as the frequency response of the cartridge if it is not controlled. Some form of mechanical damping is normally applied within the cartridge structure to reduce the effect of the stylus resonance. This also tends to reduce the high-frequency output, just as a heavily damped electrical circuit does.

By locating the electrical resonance peak at the correct frequency in relation to the mechanical resonance, and by adjusting the amplitude properly, the cartridge designer can compensate for much of the mechanical high-frequency loss by using the boost from the electrical resonance. If all goes well, the result is a flat response through the audio range.

To ensure the correct frequency and amplitude for the electrical resonance, the cartridge designer must specify the proper resistance and capacitance loads. In most cases, the resistance is the now-standard 47,000 ohms (nominally 50,000 ohms) used in all phono-preamplifier input stages (100,000 ohms for CD-4 cartridges). The capacitance is much more difficult to predict, however, owing to variations in the length and type of shielded cable connecting the record player to the amplifier and similar differences in the wiring within the tone arm. In addition, the capacitance of the input circuits of phono preamplifiers is far from standardized and can be almost anything from nearly zero to hundreds of picofarads.

A typical stereo cartridge is designed to operate with a capacitive load of 250 to 300 pF. This matches fairly well the actual situation existing in a hi-fi installation. Fortunately, the exact capacitance is not very critical. Some manufacturers, notably Shure and Ortofon, in their non-moving-coil models, design their cartridges for flattest response when loaded by 400 to 500 pF, and many music systems will require the addition of external capacitors to achieve these values.

What is the actual result of a load-capacitance mismatch? The effect depends to a great extent on the inductance of the cartridge's coils as well as other characteristics. A low inductance implies less dependence on critical loading for a correct frequency response (unfortunately, it also implies a lower output voltage, all else being equal). We made frequency-response measurements on a cartridge having the moderately low inductance of 580 millihenries and whose specifications are based on a 275-pF capacitive load in parallel with 47,000 ohms. The results of changing the total capacitance from 160 to 400 pF, with the resistance maintained at 50,000 ohms, are shown in Figure 2.

The effect of the capacitance change, though hardly of major magnitude, might change the sound of the cartridge enough to influence some people's choice, and it might easily be overlooked by many others. The correct load of 275 pF gave a response curve essentially identical to the one shown for 160 pF. Notice that a higher load capacitance does not reduce the apparent high-frequency response of the cartridge. Quite the contrary: it gives about 2 dB more output in the most audible part of the high-frequency range, and on many systems will make most records sound brighter, more "open," more "detailed," and so forth. The output loss above 15,000 Hz is much less likely to be audible.

When we fixed the capacitance at 250 pF and varied the resistance termination from 25,000 ohms to 100,000 ohms, the effects were much more pronounced. Figure 3 shows the impressively flat response obtained with the rated load of 50,000 ohms. Despite its specification, the actual input resistance of an (Continued on page 46)
"My, my, how complicated."

"So many pieces and parts! That's what I used to think about turntables that could change records. And you know something? I was right for once. Until B·I·C came along. But when I looked at the underside of a B·I·C turntable and compared it with the (name deleted) I was amazed. The B·I·C has fewer parts and linkages than other changers. And fewer than many turntables that won't change a record. It looks simple and it is. Even I can understand that fewer parts mean fewer potential problems. The B·I·C is truly a triumph of American ingenuity. (It's made in the USA.) And it has a two-year warranty which gives you a nice warm feeling. Fewer parts. More functions. I never thought I'd see the day. B·I·C certainly un-complicated my life."

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amplifier may differ somewhat from the nominal 47,000 ohms. According to the results of a survey of twenty-six different phono preamplifiers printed in the Boston Audio Society's Speaker in April 1977, input resistances fell between 35,000 and 60,000 ohms. Judging from the curves we measured at 100,000 and 25,000 ohms on this cartridge (it is quite typical in its reaction to load changes), audible response might be affected materially by the choice of amplifier.

There is yet another effect to be considered. The cartridge's coil inductance can interact with the RIAA equalization circuits of some preamplifiers in such a way as to alter the internal equalization accuracy of the amplifier. The curves in Figure 4 show the typical range of variation we have found in a number of preamplifiers when the measurement is made through the coil of a phono cartridge. This change should be added to whatever curves result from the specific resistive and capacitive loads to obtain the net response of the cartridge/amplifier system. (In each case it is assumed that the cartridge and amplifier, in themselves, have a perfectly flat frequency response curve when measured separately.)

Note that these changes can improve the sound in many cases by bringing a system's overall response closer to flat. And although only the frequency response is affected by the interface mismatch, many subjective effects (openness, nasality, harshness, etc.) resulting from frequency-response aberrations are charged against other, sometimes mystical, factors. I would suggest therefore that many—if not most—of the apparent differences between cartridges and/or phono preamplifiers are really the result of these and similar random interface problems. No wonder there is so much disagreement as to the specific, or comparative, sound properties of these components!

A final note: there are other cartridge properties, such as distortion and channel separation, that have not been covered in this discussion because they are determined largely by the design of the cartridge and are affected only slightly, if at all, by external electrical load conditions.

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**Equipment Test Reports**

**By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories**

**Akai GXC-725D Cassette Deck**

*The Akai G XC -725D is a moderately priced, front -loading, three -head cassette deck powered by a single electronically controlled d.c. motor. The transport mechanism is operated by the familiar row of levers below the cassette opening. Akai has arranged things so that the levers of the GXC -725D can be used in any sequence without going through STOP. A single lever serves for both STOP and EJECT functions; the first pressure (even a very light one) stops the tape, and releasing it and pressing again opens the cassette door.*

*The cassette opening at the left of the panel is flanked by a pushbutton power switch and an index counter with reset button. The upper right portion of the panel is devoted to two large illuminated VU meters calibrated from -20 to +5 dB. Between them is a PEAK LEVEL* (Continued on page 48)

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How does that sound?

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Accuphase P-300 Power Amplifier • Accuphase C-200 Preamplifier-Control Center • Accuphase T-100 FM Stereo-AM Tuner • TEAC A-7300 Open-Reel Tape Deck • TEAC 860 Cassette Deck • Loudspeakers: 2 Infinity Quantum 2 and 2 Visonic D-80 • Micro Seiki DDX-1000 Turntable • Tone Arms: Micro Seiki MA-505, Infinity "Black Widow," and Audio Technica AT-1009 • Phono Cartridges: Sonus Blue Label, Audio Technica AT-20 SLA, and Ortofon MC-20 Moving Coil (with MCA-76 Preamplifier) • Soundcraftsmen RM-2212 Equalizer • Audio Pulse Model One Digital Delay • dbx 3BX Range Expander • Micro Seiki MX-1 Headphones • 2 TEAC ME-120 Microphones • 2 TEAC Remote Control Units • TEAC Cable Kit • TEAC Dust Cover • TEAC Recorder Maintenance Kit • TEAC Demagnetizer • Discwasher System and Discwasher Zerostat Ion Generator • Ampex Grand Master 10½" Open-Reel Recording Tapes and 20/20 + Cassettes—1 carton each • Direct-To-Disc Albums: The catalogs of Sheffield, Umbrella, and Crystal Clear • And best of all, an Accuphase T-shirt and halter!

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4. Employees of TEAC Corporation of America (distributor of Accuphase), affiliated companies, and sales agents, and the families of any such employees are not eligible. Void where prohibited or restricted by law.
5. Any request for the name of the winner should be mailed after February 26, 1978, to: Accuphase Super System TEAC Corporation of America 7733 Telegraph Road Montebello, California 90640

CIRCLE NO. 1 ON READER SERVICE CARD
light that flashes when brief signal peaks reach +7 dB.

Below the meters are the two recording-level controls and a single playback-level control. Two indicator lights show when the machine is set for recording and when the Dolby system is turned on. Across the bottom of the panel, to the right of the transport controls, are pushbutton switches for MONITOR (delivering either the input source or the playback-out signal to the line outputs), DOLBY noise reduction, and the MPX FILTER that removes any 19-kHz pilot signal remaining in an FM stereo program, which might affect the operation of the Dolby circuits. There is a TAPE SELECTOR knob that simultaneously changes bias and recording and playback equalization for four basic tape formulations. These are identified as LN (low noise), LH (low noise/high output), CrO2, and FeCr. A stereo headphone jack and two microphone jacks complete the front-panel features. The line input and output jacks are in the rear.

The instruction manual for the Akai GXC-725D contains complete performance specifications, which are too lengthy to repeat here. It also has a table listing the recommended settings of the TAPE SELECTOR for some twenty-five types of tape and shows the "reference" tape used for each of the switch settings to establish the recorder's performance specifications. The Akai GXC-725D is supplied in a vinyl-clad wooden cabinet finished in simulated walnut grain. It is approximately 17½ inches wide, 11¼ inches deep, and 6½ inches high and weighs about 15 pounds. Price: $399.50

- Laboratory Measurements. The playback frequency response was measured using TDK AC-331 and Nortronics AT200 test tapes for the "standard" 120-microsecond equalization, and Teac 116SP tape for the 70-microsecond equalization used with CrO2 and FeCr tapes. In both cases the response was within ±1 dB over the full range of the tape (31.5 to 10,000 Hz), most of the variation being at the lower frequencies.

The record-playback frequency response was measured for each of the tape-selector positions using the recommended reference tape or a close equivalent. For the LN and LH tapes, we used TDK SD and Maxell UD-XL in place of the specified Fuji FL and Maxell UD tapes. We also tried a Scotch Master tape with the LH setting. It is interesting to note that the CrO2 performance of the recorder is specified only with cobalt-treated ferric "chrome equivalents" such as TDK SA and Maxell UD-XL II, and no actual chromium-dioxide tapes are listed in the table. We tested the machine with the recommended TDK SA and also with BASF Chromdioxid Super. Finally, the FeCr position was checked with the recommended Sony Ferrichrome and the alternate Scotch Classic.

Although there were of course differences in frequency response between the tapes, the similarities between them were striking. For example, the overall response of the TDK SD and Maxell UD-XL were virtually identical over most of the audio range. Most of the deviation from flatness was in the low-frequency "ripples" caused by the head geometry. The overall response was within ±2 dB from 36 to 13,000 Hz with SD and from 34 to 15,000 Hz with UD-XL. Scotch Master (LH) had a mild high-frequency rise and a ±2-dB variation from 35 to 15,000 Hz. The TDK SA, used as a CrO2 tape, had a slightly stronger and extended high end, with a ±1.5-dB variation from 37 to 16,500 Hz. The BASF chrome tape had a more pronounced high-frequency rise above 4,000 Hz, giving it a ±2.5-dB variation from 35 to 18,500 Hz. The ferrichrome tapes gave the widest and flattest frequency response. Sony FeCr was within ±1.5 dB from 36 to 19,000 Hz. Scotch Classic had a very smooth, linear response which sloped downward slightly. It was within ±3 dB from 34 to 17,000 Hz. All these figures result from the tape/machine interface and do not necessarily reflect results that would be obtained with the same tapes on other machines.

All measurements were made at a -20-dB recording level. At a 0-dB level there was the expected rolloff of high-frequency response due to tape saturation. However, the loss of highs was much less than we normally measure on cassette decks, and the 0-dB curve remained above the -20-dB curve at all times instead of intersecting it, as usually happens with cassette recorders. This can undoubtedly be credited to the use of separate recording and playback heads whose gaps have been optimized for their particular functions.

The MPX FILTER cut off sharply above 13,000 Hz, reducing the recording response at 19,000 Hz by nearly 20 dB. The "tracking" of the Dolby circuits was excellent, with no more than a 2-dB difference between frequency-response curves run with and without the Dolby system at levels of -20 and -30 dB.

The GXC-725D uses a "double-Dolby" system with separate Dolby circuits for recording and playback functions, so that programs can be monitored from the tape as they are made and heard with the correct frequency response and noise levels.

For a 0-dB recording level, the required input was 53 millivolts at the line jacks and 0.18 millivolt at the microphone jacks (the microphone amplifier overloaded at 43 millivolts input). The meters were calibrated so that the Dolby level of 200 nW/m registered +3 VU as marked. Their ballistocardiographs were exactly as specified for VU meters, so that they indicated 100 per cent of steady-state readings when driven with 0.3-second tone bursts once per second. The PEAK LEVEL light began to glow at +7-dB input.

The 1,000-Hz, 0-VU playback distortion was only 0.25 per cent with TDK SD (LN), about 0.45 per cent with Maxell UD-XL (LH) and TDK SA (CrO2) and 1 per cent with Sony FeCr. All of these are well below the rated distortion levels for the recorder. The reference distortion level of 3 per cent was reached at an input of +9 dB for LN, +10 dB for LH, +7 dB for CrO2, and +6 dB for FeCr.

The signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) was measured for each tape using unweighted measurements, 10,000 Hz, VU meters, CCIR weighting, and CCIR with Dolby noise reduction. The differences between tapes were slight, with only about 2 dB separating Maxell UD-XL from TDK SD in a weighted measurement with Dolby. Considering that the worst S/N we measured under those conditions was a very good 64.6 dB, it seems that "noisy" is hardly the proper adjective to use when discussing either the machine or any of the tapes! The noise level increased by 8.5 dB (Continued on page 50)
Not everyone can afford the Marantz Model 940. In fact, you'll find that you have to spend a little more for any Marantz audio product. But when you do you'll possess the vital ingredient that makes Marantz the finest audio equipment in the world.

That vital ingredient is true musical sound. A sound that comes from better engineering and better quality. You experience it completely with the Marantz Design Series Model 940... the ultimate in performance and beauty.

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Comment. Before making any measurements on the Akai GXC-725D, we connected it to a music system and put it into operation. Its quality was immediately audible, to the extent that the later measurements did not surprise us at all. For example, we could record interstation FM tuner hiss and hear almost no difference between the input and playback signals from the recorder at a -10-dB recording level. Instead of the usual dulling of the highs, the major change in the playback quality was a slightly heavier low end, perhaps

from the cyclic response variations below 100 Hz. In this test, the performance of the GXC-725D was closer to that of an open-reel tape deck than to other cassette decks (especially those in its price range).

We noticed that recording levels can be set up without placing the machine in the record mode (or even loading a cassette). The "headroom" is considerably greater than is common in cassette recorders, so that it was safe to let the meters reach 0 dB regularly (which resulted in an occasional flash from the PEAK LEVEL light) when recording from FM or records. Of course, with live program material having greater dynamic range, one should keep the average levels a bit lower.

It was also apparent that the bias and equalization characteristics had been chosen to make the machine compatible with a variety of tapes, unlike some machines whose proper performance can be realized only with the specific type of tape for which they have been adjusted.

The GXC-725D lacks a few features found on some other deluxe cassette decks. For example, it has no "memory rewind" or provision for unattended recording with a timer switch. Its Dolby circuits cannot be used to decode an FM Dolby broadcast for listening only. Some of these features may be of importance to some people. To us, in view of what the GXC-725D did do and how well it did it, their absence was hardly noticed.

The Akai GXC-725D is a rare combination of an absolutely first-rate recorder (which sounds every bit as good as it measures) with a highly affordable price tag. This caliber of performance is available in a very few other cassette decks, all of which are much more expensive than the GXC-725D. It is also worth mentioning that this machine, or surpassed—usually by a wide margin—every one of the ratings for which we were able to test, and it had not a single idiosyncrasy or "bug" that we could find. This might seem to be no more than one would expect from any well-made product, but it is nonetheless rare, and it contributed to our totally positive feeling about the GXC-725D.

Circle 105 on reader service card

Acousti-phase Phase III+ Speaker

Compared with some widely sold and longer established speaker brands, the Acousti-phase name is perhaps not very well known to American audio hobbyists. This is partly because of the marketing policy of this relatively new, Vermont-based company, which limits its distribution to a single dealer in each geographic area. The Acousti-phase line includes models priced for budget systems and goes all the way to high-performance systems designed to compete with some of the most highly regarded brands.

The Phase III+ which we tested is one of their top models. It is a conventional three-way ported system in a walnut-veneer cabinet suitable for floor or shelf mounting. The brown foam-plastic grille is held in place by Velcro fasteners and is easily removable. A single 12-inch woofer is employed, and the enclosure’s ducted port opens to the rear. Middle and high frequencies are handled by a 5-inch cone driver and a 1-inch Mylar dome tweeter. There are 12-dB-per-octave crossover points at 900 and 5,000 Hz. Inset in the rear of the cabinet are the speaker terminals, a continuously variable tweeter-level control, and the reset button for a circuit breaker that protects the mid-range and high-frequency drivers against overload. Minimum and maximum continuous-power ratings are 8 and 100 watts. The speaker carries a 5-year unconditional and transferable warranty covering all defects not resulting from abuse, neglect, or accident, without charge for parts or labor. The Acousti-phase Phase III+ is 25 inches high, 15 inches wide, and 13 3/4 inches deep. It weighs approximately 41 pounds. Suggested retail price: $289 in walnut veneer, $349.95 in solid-wood butcher block.

Laboratory Measurements. The reverberation field response of the Acousti-phase Phase III+, with the tweeter-level control set at maximum, was within a 5-dB overall range up to about 5,000 Hz and rose smoothly at higher frequencies.

A close-miked measurement of the woofer response by itself showed a rising output with decreasing frequency down to the resonant frequency of about 80 Hz and then a steep fall-off at lower frequencies. This is a characteristic of ported systems, whose output goes to a null at some low frequency (in this case 37 Hz). The measured port radiation, corrected for the relative diameters of the port and the cone, was dominant below 45 Hz but was at a much lower level than the mid-range output of the woofer. When the curves were combined, the overall frequency response of the Phase III+ was +3 dB from 60 to 5,000 Hz, with the output rising to a maximum of +8 dB at 12,000 Hz and falling rapidly below 60 Hz.

The tweeter-level control had a maximum range of about 10 dB and affected frequencies above 1,500 Hz. The tweeter dispersion was only fair, with a noticeable decrease in extreme top-end response at angles of 30 degrees or more off the central axis of the speaker. The system efficiency was quite high, with a sound-pressure level of 92 dB delivered at 1 meter from the grille when the system was driven by 1 watt (at 8 ohms) of random noise in the octave centered at 1,000 Hz.

(Continued on page 52)
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Since the bass distortion was measured only at the woofer cone, the test was valid only down to 45 Hz or so. At a nominal 1-watt input, the distortion was very low (under 0.5 per cent) at 100 Hz and higher frequencies, increasing smoothly to 4 per cent at 50 Hz and 14 per cent at 40 Hz. At a 10-watt drive level, the low-frequency distortion was approximately doubled, but it was not affected significantly above 100 Hz.

The impedance of the Phase III+ should be rated at 4 ohms, according to our measurements. That impedance value was found in the 30- to 40-Hz and 100- to 200-Hz ranges and above 1,500 Hz. There was a rise to 10 ohms at the lower measurement limit of 20 Hz (and it probably increased at still lower frequencies), a fairly sharp peak to 18 ohms at 75 Hz, and a broad plateau of 10-ohms at 600 Hz.

Tone-burst measurements at low and mid-frequency showed a fairly slow rise and fall time, covering one or two cycles at 100 and 1,000 Hz, with sustained ringing between bursts. The 5,000-Hz burst response was much better, with little interburst ringing.

Comment. The smooth frequency-response curve and slightly rising high-end response were good clues to how the Phase III+ would perform in our simulated live vs.-recorded listening test. We have found that a measured rising high-frequency characteristic is generally associated with accurate reproduction of the highest audible octave in a normal listening room, and in this test the Phase III+ proved to be very good. The extreme top end, in fact, was outstanding, although on some "hot" program material a slight reduction in the tweeter level was desirable. Overall, the sound was smooth and free of the lower mid-range colorations heard from many speakers when their sound is compared directly with the original.

It is obvious that the Phase III+ was designed to compete with some of the popular and expensive speakers having the so-called "West Coast" sound. It has clarity, high efficiency, smoothness, and an adequate bass response. It can be played very loud, if that is your preference, but it is equally at home with chamber music because of its smoothness and lack of coloration. We felt that the venerated finish of the cabinets left something to be desired in that it appeared to be more or less unfinished walnut. It was explained that there is an ultra-thin (and virtually invisible) protective coating over the veneer that shields it from stains—but prevents further finishing.

We operated the Phase III+ on the floor, on shelves, and on tilt stands that raised the speaker about a foot from the floor. In our room, the differences were slight, but it is always worth experimenting with speaker placement to obtain the best bass response in a particular room. Although, according to our measurements, the Phase III+ is not a speaker with a strong low bass, it certainly gave no audible hint of weakness in that area. Likewise, although its high-frequency dispersion properties were not outstanding in our test, in our listening room it gave no sign of audible beaming of highs. In general, it delivers a smooth, well-balanced sound without unnatural emphasis on any one frequency range.

Judging from several months of use tests, we would have to say that the total audible performance of the Phase III+ is considerably better than might be inferred from some of our measurements. As a matter of fact, these speakers "wear extremely well," and we enjoyed listening to them for extended periods—which certainly cannot be said for all speakers that come our way.

Circle 106 on reader service card

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Tone-burst response of the Phase III+ at (left to right) 100, 1,000, and 5,000 Hz. The upper trace is the input signal and the lower trace the output of the speaker.

Sound Concepts SD550 Time-delay System

TIME-DELAY devices have long been used to provide a more convincing illusion of reality in musical reproduction by simulating a concert-hall ambiance. In fact, years before stereo, acoustically driven spring devices were offered as "reverberation" accessories for home music systems. They usually imparted an unnatural "boingg" sound to the program, however, and never met with much success in the marketplace. These crude devices should not, of course, be confused with the sophisticated (and expensive) mechanical delay devices made by AKG and others for professional use.

Several years ago, all-electronic time-delay devices began to appear on the professional market, but the first intended for consumer use was the Sound Concepts SD-50, a product of a small, newly formed company in Brookline, Massachusetts. It was based on the so-called "bucket-brigade" principle, employing charge-coupled devices (CCD) to delay the program signal. The CCD is an integrated circuit containing hundreds of small capacitors separated by semiconductor switches which are opened or closed by signals from an external "clock" or timing oscillator. The signal waveform is sampled at regular intervals, and the first capacitor element is charged to the instantaneous amplitude of the signal. The next clock pulse causes the transfer of the stored voltage to the next capacitor, and the first element is then ready to sample the program level at the next moment of time. Every other clock pulse causes the stored signal to be shifted from one capacitor to the next and enters a new signal sample at the input to the CCD (the analogy to a fire-fighting "bucket brigade" is obvious).

Depending on the frequency of the clock pulse, the time it takes a signal to pass through the CCD array can be adjusted over a wide range. However, the clock frequency must be at least twice the highest program frequency, which sets a limit on the maximum

(Continued on page 54)
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Power/ OHMS</th>
<th>Band Width</th>
<th>Total Harmonic Distortion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA-1115</td>
<td>15/8</td>
<td>20-20,000 Hz</td>
<td>no more than 0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA-1125</td>
<td>25/8</td>
<td>20-20,000 Hz</td>
<td>no more than 0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA-1135</td>
<td>35/8</td>
<td>20-20,000 Hz</td>
<td>no more than 0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA-1150</td>
<td>50/8</td>
<td>20-20,000 Hz</td>
<td>no more than 0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA-1175</td>
<td>75/8</td>
<td>20-20,000 Hz</td>
<td>no more than 0.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA-1200</td>
<td>120/8</td>
<td>20-20,000 Hz</td>
<td>no more than 0.08%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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delay. There is also a potential loss of high-frequency response and an increase in noise level as the delay time increases.

Time-delay units have also been made with digital circuits which first convert the analog program into a series of digital pulses. These, in turn, are passed through a series of digital memories or "shift registers," at a rate determined by the internal clock, before being reconverted to analog form. Both types of delay systems (analog and digital) operate in much the same manner, although they have their advantages and disadvantages. One feature shared by all presently available time-delay units is their high price—$600 and up—because of their circuit complexity, which far exceeds that of any other hi-fi component.

Sound Concepts is now producing their second-generation time-delay unit, the SD550. Based on the same bucket-brigade principle used in the original SD-50, its control features have been extensively redesigned to increase its versatility, and it has been completely re-packaged. The SD550 is intended to be connected between the preamplifier and power amplifier (it can be placed in a tape-monitor loop, but since it does not duplicate the tape-monitor switching this capability would be lost without the aid of an external tape-switch box). The incoming signal is connected to rear terminals marked FRONT IN; the adjacent terminals marked FRONT OUT go to the front-channel power amplifier. Normally, there is a direct connection internally between these jacks, so that the SD550 has no effect on the stereo program going to the front speakers.

Within the SD550, each channel of the incoming signal passes through a 10,000-Hz low-pass filter, a pre-emphasis network, and a 2:1 compressor before reaching the CCD delay circuits. After the delay, there is a 2:1 expansion (complementary to the compression) and a de-emphasis network. The purpose of these circuits is to reduce to inaudibility any noise added to the delayed program by the CCD. The delayed signals then go to the rear OUT jacks.

There are separate time-delay circuits in each channel, both of them set by the same clock signal. A portion of each delayed output can also be fed back to the input of the opposite channel, where it is again delayed, and so on. This multiple delay technique adds reverberation effects to the sound. It is also possible to mix a selected fraction of the delayed rear signals with the otherwise unmodified front signals. Under certain circumstances this can enhance the overall effect, and it can also add delay and reverberation to the signal for stereo headphone listening or recording.

The rear-out signals go through another amplifier to a second pair of speakers located toward the rear of the room. Since the entire configuration then closely resembles a conventional four-channel playback arrangement, the SD-550 has been designed to interface easily with a four-channel amplifier and speaker systems. It even has front-panel controls that switch the listening arrangement between four-channel and delay-enhanced stereo.

The front panel of the SD550 contains five vertical slider controls and four rocker switches. The DELAY TIME slider varies the internal clock frequency, and thus the delay time, between limits of 5 and 50 milliseconds (roughly corresponding to physical path-length differences of 5 to 50 feet). Next to it is the REVERBERATION control which varies the amount of cross-feed between the channels from 0 to 100 per cent. The HI FREQ ROLLOFF is a specialized tone control affecting only the rear (delayed) signals. At its 0-DB setting, the high-frequency rolloff of the rear channels increases as the time delay is increased. This corresponds to the normal attenuation of highs experienced as one moves back in a concert hall, where a greater portion of the high-frequency energy is absorbed by the surroundings. If one wants to retain the flattest frequency response, the HI FREQ ROLLOFF control set to one of the "plus" positions boosts the rear-channel high-frequency response to compensate for the loss of highs at long delay times. The control is calibrated both in decibels (+6 to −3) and in milliseconds (5 to 50) to correspond to the settings of the DELAY TIME control for which it compensates.

The remaining sliders are level controls. The FRONT MIX LEVEL adjusts the fraction of the delayed signal that can be added to the front outputs. REAR LEVEL is a level control for the delayed outputs. Most of the rocker switches are used to convert the system for either four-channel or time-delay operation. An INPUT switch feeds the time-delay circuits with either the front-channel program or with the rear-channel program from a quadraphonic source. The FRONT OUTPUT switch connects the front-channel input and output jacks directly or mixes the delayed program with the front outputs under the control of the FRONT MIX LEVEL slider. The REAR OUTPUT switch connects either the delayed signals or the rear channels of a quadraphonic preamplifier to the rear-output jacks. The DELAY RANGE switch has positions for 50 (normal) and 100 milliseconds. However, the two stereo channels can be connected in tandem for very long delays, and they are driven by a summed signal (L + R) to give a monophonic delay of up to 100 milliseconds.

The Sound Concepts SD550 is 3⅛ inches high by 9 inches deep and either 15½ or 19 inches wide, depending on whether the standard or rack-mount version is used. The entire unit is finished in black with white panel markings. It weighs 7 pounds and consumes 10 watts from the power line. It has no power switch, and the manufacturer suggests that it be left on continuously to eliminate any turn-on transients that might be fed to the rear speakers.

The gain of the unit is factory-set to 1, but it can be adjusted by screwdriver controls accessible in the rear. The input and output impedances are, respectively, 60,000 and 300 ohms. The rear-channel frequency response is rated at ±1 dB from 20 to 5,000 Hz with 5 milliseconds delay and a 0-DB high-frequency rolloff. With the rolloff set to match the delay, the response is down 3 dB at 8,000 Hz for all delay settings. The A-weighted output-noise level is at least 85 dB below 1 volt. The 1,000-Hz distortion at 1 volt is less than 1 per cent and is almost entirely second harmonic. The manual accompanying the SD550 is complete, written in a straightforward, "no-nonsense" manner, and we cannot take issue with anything in it. Price: $675 in either panel size.

● Laboratory Measurements. Since the reasons for using time-delay enhancement are largely psychoacoustic, conventional measurements are not too informative. We did make frequency-response measurements through the rear delayed channels with various control settings. The manufacturer points out that the internal compander action will exaggerate any frequency-response variations measured with sine-wave signals. Taking that into account, our measurements nevertheless agreed closely with data supplied by Sound Concepts.

Using 0-DB rolloff, the response was flat within about 1 dB from 20 up to 6,000 Hz with a 5-millisecond delay, falling to −6 dB at 9,000 Hz (the equivalent of the −3-DB frequency in the equipment specifications, measured in a different manner). A 50-millisecond delay reduced the −6-DB frequency to 7,000 Hz; at 50 milliseconds it was 5,000 Hz. The HI FREQ ROLLOFF control could be used to restore the response at any setting of the DELAY control to approximately the 9,000-Hz value which was measured at minimum delay.

The distortion was, as claimed, virtually all second-harmonic, which is recognized as being least objectionable to the listener. At 1,000 Hz it varied from 0.28 per cent at 0.1 volt to 0.79 per cent at 1 volt and 1 per cent at 3 volts. The distortion at 10,000 Hz was roughly the same. Noise levels could not be measured directly because the noise level of (Continued on page 56)
What the legendary B.B. King's rapid guitar picking style did for players like Eric Clapton, Mike Bloomfield and Alvin Lee is music history. He fathered a generation of blues-influenced rock guitarists.

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our active "A"-weighting network was greater than that in the SD550. We could see that the "noise" in its output was entirely composed of clock pulses at a frequency which varied between approximately 30 and 300 kHz, depending on the setting of the delay control. Hum and random noise were substantially lower than -80 dB relative to 1 volt, although we could not establish the actual figure.

By driving the SD550 with a four-cycle tone burst of a 400-Hz signal, we were able to verify the accuracy of the delay time calibration and the effect of the reverberation control. The oscilloscope photos were taken with a time base (horizontal) of 10 milliseconds per division. The upper burst is the signal going into the unit and the lower one is the delayed output. Note that the actual time delay was very close to the control settings of 5, 25, and 50 milliseconds. When maximum reverberation is used, a series of successively weaker pulses can be seen in the rear output following the delayed pulse. Note that a similar series will appear in the other (undriven) channel at slightly different times. The short delay of 5 milliseconds was chosen for this so that several delayed signals could be seen in their correct relationship to the primary pulse. At the longer delays that would normally be used, the reverberant pulses could cover a much longer time span.

Comment. Measurements on a device such as the Sound Concepts SD550, though interesting to make, really do little more than confirm that it is operating properly. Any real judgment of its worth must be based purely on subjective impressions. We became aware of the advantages of time-delay systems when we first used the Sound Concepts SD-50 a couple of years ago, although the unit lacked the convenience of the former with the performance of the latter. It also provides a few advantages peculiar to itself. At present, all the tapes are made by Sony, but each of the participating manufacturers (and some of their subsidiaries and affiliates) produces a line of elcaset decks that use them.

Although the SD550 controls can be set to produce unnatural effects, its continuous adjustments make it easy to find the exactly correct delay, reverberation, and level that will yield satisfactorily natural ones. One advantage of the SD550 is the fact that it cannot be overloaded by any signal that is likely to exist between a preamplifier and a power amplifier and therefore needs no input-level controls. And it is quiet—under no conditions could we have any noise from the rear speakers. Anyone who has not heard a time-delay system might wonder just what it does for the sound. In our experience, the ambiance contributed by a properly adjusted time-delay system does more to provide an illusion of reality in reproduced music than anything else we know of. Theoretically, good quadraphonic program material feeding a high-quality reproducing system should do as well or better, but in practice this hardly ever happens. Furthermore, time delay imparts the same qualities to any stereo (or even mono) program instead of being limited to special quadraphonic program material.

At its best, a time-delay system gives a sense of life and openness to the program, providing a spaciousness that simply cannot be realized naturally in a normal-size listening room. To achieve this, the channels must be balanced so that one does not hear the rear speakers as discrete sound sources, for this would completely destroy the illusion of reality. So, whatever one's choice of delay and reverberation conditions, the rear level should first be turned up until the rear speakers can just barely be heard, and then backed off until they cannot. If you doubt that the system is functioning, switch off the rear speakers while music is playing. The loss of reality is not at all subtle—it is so devastating that you will wonder how you ever got along without a time-delay system.

The Sound Concepts SD550 is not inexpensive, and when the cost of another stereo amplifier and a pair of speakers (which do not have to have the range of your main speakers) is included, a delay system can run to well over $1,000. Is it worth it? If you can afford it, yes! One thing is certain: you are not likely to be able to improve the sound of your present system, if it is already of reasonably high quality, by a comparable degree with any other expenditure of a lesser amount.

Circle 107 on reader service card

Sony EL-5 Elcaset Deck

Well over a year ago, the elcaset format was announced to the audio world. The name is derived from L(arge) cassette, which is a fairly apt description of this new tape format. Developed by a consortium of Japanese manufacturers—JVC, Technics, Sony, and Teac—it is intended to bridge the gap between cassette and open-reel recording, to combine the convenience of the former with the performance of the latter. It also provides a few advantages peculiar to itself. At present, all the tapes are made by Sony, but each of the participating manufacturers (and some of their subsidiaries and affiliates) produces a line of elcaset decks that use them.

The elcaset cartridge is considerably larger than the familiar compact cassette, which it resembles in general configuration. Measuring roughly 6 x 4 x ¾ inches, it is slightly larger than a standard eight-track tape cartridge. It

(Continued on page 59)
I want low tar. But taste is a must.

I wanted less tar. But not less taste. I found Winston Lights. I get the low tar numbers I want, and the taste I like. If it wasn’t for Winston Lights, I wouldn’t smoke.
contains standard-width 1/4-inch tape, which in the elcaset format is recorded in four parallel tracks, a pair of stereo tracks running in each direction of tape movement. In addition, there is provision for recording two narrow control tracks between the pairs of signal tracks; these might be used for controlling slide projectors or operating sophisticated signal processors in any machine designed to make use of them. At present, elcaset cartridges are available only in LC-60 and LC-90 lengths, or 30 and 45 minutes of program in each direction, respectively.

Unlike the cassette, with its 1 1/2-ips tape speed, the elcaset is designed to operate at 3 1/2 ips. The combination of nearly doubled tape track width and doubled tape speed gives the elcaset format a powerful advantage over the standard cassette in terms of freedom from high-frequency tape saturation, which is probably the most serious technical limitation of the cassette medium. Another important makes accidental movement impossible). The internal tape hubs are locked in place when the cartridge is removed from the elcaset recorder, thus preventing the creation of tape slack during shipping or handling.

The Sony EL-5 is probably the most basic elcaset machine presently available. It has no automatic parameter-selection features and uses a two-head configuration that has a combined record/playback head (as mentioned above, the elcaset format makes three-head tape transports perfectly practical, and Sony does make a more expensive model with that feature). Physically, the Sony EL-5 is very much resembles a front-loading cassette deck. It is 17 inches wide, 6 1/4 inches high, and 12 1/4 inches deep; it weighs about 23 pounds. The cartridge loads vertically behind a transparent hinged door at the left of the front panel; an EJECT button opens the door. Below the door are light-touch pushbuttons that control the usual transport functions through solenoids: rewind, fast forward, play, record, and pause. Colored symbols above the buttons glow to show the operating mode of the machine, and a logic system allows the buttons to be operated in any sequence without damage to the tape.

To the left of the elcaset door is a pushbutton for the record/playback switch, which controls the record and playback modes, changing the recording bias and equalization for the three available types of elcaset tape. A third switch, which is located at the bottom of the machine body, is used to switch the Dolby system on and off. The Dolby circuitry is inserted into the playback path only when Dolby is used.

The rear panel bears the LINE input and output jacks, a level adjustment for the line outputs, two FM CAL level controls, a switch for an optional remote-control accessory, and one microphones and one unscheduled accessory outlet. Suggested list price for the EL-5 is $630. Elcaset tapes range in price from $7 to $12, depending on type and length.

Laboratory Measurements. The Model EL-5 elcaset deck we tested came with a pre-recorded demonstration tape and samples of several blank elcaset cartridges. Since there are no standard playback test tapes as yet for the elcaset, we made all our measurements by recording and playing back the same tape.

With the Sony SLH tape, the record/playback frequency response at a -20 dB level was within ±0.5 dB from 60 to 20,500 Hz. It was down 4 dB at 20 and 22,400 Hz. At a 0 dB recording level, the playback output dropped rapidly above 10,000 Hz owing to tape saturation. The superior high-frequency qualities of the ferrichrome tape were dramatically demonstrated by its frequency response, which was within ±0.5 dB from 60 to 24,000 Hz at -20 dB and down 4 dB at 20 and 26,200 Hz. Even at 0 dB, the FeCr tape revealed little evidence of tape saturation. The superior high-frequency quality of the ferrichrome tape were dramatically demonstrated by its frequency response, which was within ±0.5 dB from 60 to 24,000 Hz at -20 dB and down 4 dB at 20 and 26,200 Hz. Even at 0 dB, the FeCr tape revealed little evidence of tape saturation. The superior high-frequency quality of the ferrichrome tape were dramatically demonstrated by its frequency response, which was within ±0.5 dB from 60 to 24,000 Hz at -20 dB and down 4 dB at 20 and 26,200 Hz. Even at 0 dB, the FeCr tape revealed little evidence of tape saturation. The superior high-frequency quality of the ferrichrome tape were dramatically demonstrated by its frequency response, which was within ±0.5 dB from 60 to 24,000 Hz at -20 dB and down 4 dB at 20 and 26,200 Hz. Even at 0 dB, the FeCr tape revealed little evidence of tape saturation.
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Frequency response: 4-140,000Hz.
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In sonic terms, ultrawideband components deliver two important benefits. Phase linearity and outstanding transient response.
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Most people think only expensive separates can give you wideband response and twin power supplies.

Except for these two receivers, they're right.
Comment. There can be no doubt that the \textit{caset}, especially with the FeCr tape, is a medium that is technically superior to the compact cassette, especially with respect to high-frequency recording headroom. Operating at 3\frac{1}{2} ips, the \textit{caset} matches the performance of some open-reel decks operating at 7\frac{1}{2} ips. Of course, much of the credit for this must go to the FeCr tape, which is not generally available for open-reel machines (nor are such machines, with the exception of one or two Sony models, equipped to use it). Nevertheless, judged solely on its own merits, the \textit{caset}, even in the form of the modestly priced EL-5, appears to be a no-compromise high-fidelity recording medium for the mid-priced EL-5, appears to be a no-compromise high-fidelity recording medium for the home recorder. Only the best cassette recorders can approach its overall performance, and then only when their recording levels are carefully monitored.

We found the Model EL-5 to be a very easy deck to use. The absence of a third head for monitoring caused us some concern at first, but we soon found that the entire recording process was so noncritical that there was little need to monitor while recording. The \textit{caset} is as easy to handle as a regular cassette (perhaps easier, because of its larger size). Presumably it could be spliced and edited like open-reel tape, although we would have misgivings about withdrawing any substantial amount of the tape from an \textit{caset} housing.

We have given considerable thought to the place of the \textit{caset} in the audio market. Our first reaction to its announcement was one of skepticism. After all, who needs a "better" cassette? But, having lived with the EL-5 for some time now, we appreciate how much of a "better cassette" it really is. The FeCr cartridge is really a full equivalent of 7\frac{1}{2}-ips open-reel tape in terms of overall performance. In contrast to the handling clumsiness of open-reel tape, the \textit{caset} offers all the convenience of use that has helped make the compact cassette so popular. Further, the \textit{caset} recorder is closer in size and weight to a cassette deck than to an open-reel machine.

One should be aware that, for dubbing most phonograph records and FM broadcasts, the \textit{caset} does not offer any quality advantage over the compact cassette. Only when the dynamic range of cassettes is inadequate or marginal (as in the case of most "live" recording) does the \textit{caset} audibly demonstrate its superiority. There are no commercially recorded \textit{caset} tapes on the market, and we would not expect any significant number to be produced. The \textit{caset} is strictly for the do-it-yourself tape enthusiast who has access to the finest recorded program material or to the real thing—live music. In respect to the big question—Which of the three formats is best for any individual's purposes?—the answer is obvious; it is a simple matter of weighing each format's pros and cons (including cost and available recording and playing time) against the requirements of the recordings you want to make. 

\textit{Circle 108} on reader service card

\textbf{ADC ZLM Phono Cartridge}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{adc_zlm.png}
\caption{ADC ZLM Phono Cartridge}
\end{figure}

\section*{ADC ZLM Phono Cartridge}

Several major manufacturers are now producing stereo phono cartridges whose stylus shapes were derived from the special stylus originally developed for playing CD-4 records. These stereo versions are not quite so extreme in their edge contours as the Shibata and similar designs, but like them they contact a much longer portion of the groove wall than conventional elliptical or conical shapes do. The result is extended high-frequency response, reduced distortion (since the stylus does not contact a much longer portion of the groove wall, is 1.5 mils. ADC makes the claim of "zero record wear" for the ZLM. They justify this by pointing out that the average record is played only about sixty times during its life, and microscopic examination of records played with the Alipic stylus show no wear after seventy-five or more plays. Thus, (Continued on page 64)

In the graph at left, the upper curve represents the smoothed, averaged frequency response of the cartridge's right and left channels; the distance (calibrated in decibels) between it and the lower curve represents the separation between the two channels. The inset oscilloscope photo shows the cartridge's response to a recorded 1,000-Hz square wave (see text), which indicates resonances and overall frequency response. At right is the cartridge's response to the intermodulation-distortion (IM) and 10.8-kHz tone-burst test bands of the TTR-102 and TTR-103 test records. These high velocities provide a severe test of a phono cartridge's performance. The intermodulation-distortion (IM) readings for any given cartridge can vary widely, depending on the particular IM test record used. The actual distortion figure measured is not as important as the maximum velocity the cartridge is able to track before a sudden and radical increase in distortion takes place. There are very few commercial phonograph discs that embody musical audio signals with recorded velocities much higher than about 15 cm/sec.
Now there's a speaker at $139 ($145 east of the Mississippi) that has actually been compared to our phenomenal $1200 Quantum Line Source™.

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You can record and playback in both directions, fade in and out while you listen and install it six different ways.

And that's just the introduction to the innovative new Dual 939 cassette deck.

The more experience you've had with tape decks, the more you're likely to appreciate the performance and versatility of the Dual 939.

Apply the most demanding musical tests—sustained piano tones for flutter; extreme highs and lows for frequency response; soft passages for signal-to-noise ratio—and you will hear no difference between the original disc and a tape made on the 939. All of which brings to life the 939's impressive specifications for wow and flutter (0.05%), signal-to-noise (65 dB) and frequency response (20-17,000 Hz.)

We assume you'll want to audition the 939 yourself. For now we'd like to take you through its astonishing array of design and operating features. You won't find many of them available on any other cassette deck.

Auto/reverse playback, bi-directional record.
The 939 reverses automatically in playback, which means a C-90 cassette will play a full 90 minutes. The 939 can also be set for continuous play.

Recording is bi-directional. When the tape reaches the end, you don't have to stop the machine and flip the cassette. You simply reverse direction.

Errors can be faded away.
With any other deck, there are just two things you can do with an unwanted commercial on a tape, an announcer who interrupts the music, or jumpy starts and sudden stops. You can live with them or erase them abruptly—without being able to hear what you're doing. Until it's too late.

With the 939's unique fade/edit control, you can fade out those annoyances gradually, smoothly and permanently. And then fade back into the music. While listening to the entire process. Because it's all done during playback.

LEDs and uncompressed limiting.
Meter needles can't move fast enough to keep up with musical signals. Which is why the 939 uses instantaneous-reacting LED (light-emitting diode) record-level indicators. They can be switched from VU to peak read-out. They tilt to the best viewing angle. And they are visible from across the room.

For still more insurance against distorted recordings, a special limiter can be switched in to protect against overload—without compressing normal dynamic range.

Still more features.
Separate slider controls allow mixing of live material from microphones with other material fed into the line inputs. There's Dolby® NR plus Dolby FM decoding with calibrations that automatically set the correct record-level for FM broadcasts. Also: memory stop; unrestricted tape-direction switching without going through stop; output and headphone level controls.

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A C-90 cassette fast-winds in just over a minute, the time other decks need for a C-60.

Hard permalloy tapeheads are used for their extended life and superior magnetic linearity at both high and low signal levels. The four-track record/playback head switches electronically when the tape changes direction; it never shifts position. The result: perfect tape alignment in both directions at all times.

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Which way would you find more convenient to load a cassette: from the front or the top? You can install the 939 either way, plus three other angles. And you can also hang it on a wall.

The last word.
You've probably noticed that we haven't attempted to lean on Dual's reputation for fine turntables. We didn't think we had to. The 939 will build its own reputation, on its own merits.

Price: less than $550.†

†Actual resale prices are determined individually by and at the sole discretion of authorized Dual dealers. *TM Dolby Laboratories.
for all practical purposes, they feel, the ZLM cartridge will never wear out a record in home use.

The ADC ZLM is designed to track at forces between 0.5 and 1.25 grams. Its rated frequency response, when terminated in 47,000 ohms and 275 picofarads, is within ±1 dB from 10 to 20,000 Hz, or ±1.5 dB from 20 to 26,000 Hz. The rated output voltage is 1 millivolt per cm/sec of stylus velocity, and the nominal channel separation is 30 dB at 1,000 Hz and 20 dB at 10,000 Hz. Physically, the ZLM resembles the XLM series for which 20 Hz and 20,000 Hz. The low-frequency response is relatively flat, with a slight downward slope as the frequency increased. Overall, the response was within ±1 dB over the full 40- to 20,000-Hz range of the test record. Channel separation averaged 20 to 25 dB through the 20,000-Hz range of the test record. Channel separation averaged 20 to 25 dB through the mid-range, 15 to 18 dB at 10,000 Hz, and 13 dB at 20,000 Hz. The low-frequency resonance in the test arm was at 9 Hz with a 6-dB amplitude. Although most arms are slightly more massive than the one we used, we would expect the resonance to occur above 7 Hz in most any arm.

Tracing distortion was measured with two Shure test records, the TTR102 (IM distortion) and the TTR103 (high-frequency tracking of a 10.8-kHz tone-burst signal). The IM was a moderately low 1 to 2 per cent up to about 18 cm/sec velocity, increasing to 8 per cent at 27 cm/sec. The high-frequency distortion was very low, increasing smoothly from 0.7 per cent at 15 cm/sec to 1.6 per cent at 30 cm/sec. In this test the ZLM ranked with the best cartridges we have tested.

A subjective tracking test with Shure's "Audio Obstacle Course—Era III" essentially confirmed these measurements. The musical sections, whose highest levels frequently overtax the tracking abilities of even very good cartridges (musical bells, sibilants, and violin), were played easily by the ZLM at 1.25 grams. In particular, the very difficult sibilance test, which tends to sound "sandpapery" on its highest level when played by most cartridges, was reproduced flawlessly by the ZLM. On the other hand, the bass drum proved to be too much for the ZLM. There was a slight buzz on level 4 and a definite rattle on level 5.

**Comment.** ADC cartridges, including the ZLM, have a flat bottom that lies just above the plane of the record. This requires that the cartridge be exactly parallel to the record or the cartridge body will contact the record surface. Since the stylus protrudes only slightly from the bottom of the cartridge, it is not possible to operate the cartridge significantly above its rated maximum force, which would cause the stylus to retract within the protective body.

Aside from its test-record performance, we found the sound of the ADC ZLM to be absolutely first-rate on music records of all types. High-velocity test records greatly exceed the maximum recorded levels one is likely to find on a music record, so that an inability to track a particular test band does not necessarily rule out the cartridge for critical music listening (most of the highly touted moving-coil cartridges do not do well on test records, but they are esteemed by critical listeners).

In particular, we listened on music for signs of low-frequency mistracking, since that seemed to be the weakest part of the ZLM's performance. Even with the drums on some of the Sheffield direct-to-disc recordings we heard no sign of distress from the cartridge. And at high frequencies it was superb, with the effortless transparency that comes from low tracking distortion and a ruler-flat frequency response.

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This year, with the addition of new Formula 3 and 6 models, we've closed the gaps in our line. The seven B·I·C VENTURI Formulas are shown here in ascending order.

Formulas 1 through 4 offer a choice between two-way and three-way systems of different performance capabilities. While models 5 to 7 add the system monitor technology to speakers of increasing size and sophistication.

Thus, whatever level of refinement a music system has reached, there's a B·I·C VENTURI Formula that can upgrade its performance. And together they offer a range of choice (and price) that is unique in the industry.

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In just four years, B·I·C advancements had twice marked the path for future speaker evolution. And, quite by design, all this was managed within a line of speakers most enthusiasts can realistically afford.
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The Pop Beat

By Paulette Weiss

DISCOMANIA

The hottest item at a rock-'n'-roll convention in New York City several months ago was a tee-shirt bearing an extremely obscene comment on disco. Most rockers just don't take kindly to disco music. They act as though its very existence was a personal affront, and they tell whoever will listen that it is soulless, mechanical, and likely to cause softening of the brain. One frustrated rocker known only as La Lumia has actually organized a nationwide movement called "Death to Disco." He provides buttons and bumper stickers bearing the grisly slogan, plus a manifesto stating his creed. (If you're interested, Mr. La Lumia is available for lectures and rallies.)

And it's not just the rockers who have gone off the deep end on the subject of disco. Jazz purists, too, complain that disco is not only a cheap form of music, but that it has robbed them of fine musicians who have "sold out" their art in crossing over to the greener pastures of commercial success it offers. The complaints come fast and furious; disco wipes out an artist's individuality, mashing his efforts into the pulp of its monotonous sound; disco is fickle and trendy—last night's hot platter is tonight's cold potato; and so on.

Even though it may be true up to a point, complaining is as futile as shaking your fist at a hurricane. Disco is an outgrowth of the times, which are confusing, often depressing, and not likely to change quickly. What disco provides is a little vacation from all that—and it's fun. It tends to be mindless fun, but there lies its appeal. Its emphasis is on the feet, not the head, and dancing to it is an escape from the heavy burdens of both the day and the decade. Discotheques are glittering little fantasy worlds where elaborate lights and hypnotic music conspire to make every patron the star of his own romantic scenario for a night.

Disco does have its virtues. It has provided a shot of vitamin B12 to the careers of both new and established artists and to a number of small record companies. It has rejuvenated the night life of urban centers, boosted the fashion industry, added a little spice of glamour in places where there was none before, and probably trebled the income of Arthur Murray Dance Studios throughout the land.

Yes, some jazz artists have sold out for commercial success (hardly a new phenomenon, by the way). But some have simply temporarily gone after the rewards that, sadly, artistic integrity never brought them. Take the case of jazz keyboardist Herbie Hancock, who was ripped into by jazz critics in 1973 for his first patently commercial (and enormously popular) album, "Headhunters." This year he had money in his pockets and the grin of a satisfied man on his face when the same critics who had mourned his loss to jazz were bowled over by his latest release, "VSOP."

Disco has resurrected and similarly rewarded neglected r- & b performers like Thelma Grace Jones: disco's Most Promising Female Vocalist, 1977
Houston and Loleatta Holloway, who have returned the favor by breathing life into its often rigid form. Unfortunately, solo artists whose fame rests solely on disco tend to disappear in the overall crush of heavy orchestration favored by most disco producers. The vocals of Carol Douglas, Silver Convention, and the relentlessly loving Barry White, for instance, are reduced to premeasured structural blocks slipped into premeasured holes in assembly-line songs. Occasionally a Vicki Sue Robinson or a Savannah Band will appear with the ability to soar above the formula, but they are the exceptions.

But whether disco music makes your feet tap or your flesh crawl, it's here to stay for a while. As an industry, it grosses four to five billion dollars annually, second only to organized sports in the entertainment field. There are over 11,000 discotheques in the U.S., nearly 1,500 in Europe, and even the Soviet Union, at last report, sports a pair. Thirty-five per cent of the records currently sold in the U.S. are disco oriented, thirty million people listen to them, and approximately fourteen million dancers flock to discotheques every week.

Four days in September, Disco III, a forum sponsored by the music trade magazine *Billboard*, brought home the growing clout disco has in all areas of the entertainment business. The panel discussions and exhibits left the impression of a young and booming industry delighted with its success and groping for a formula to insure it. Artists, producers, record-company representatives, club owners, disc jockeys, and equipment manufacturers participated, and some of the news they imparted was pretty impressive.

If you thought disco was just an urban phenomenon, think again. Mobile discotheques have been bringing joy to hundreds of pairs of suburban and rural feet. The mobile units are equipped with sound systems, portable lighting equipment, and sometimes even with portable dance floors and smoke machines. Usually rented by schools, charitable organizations, and such, the units can set up a functional, parking-lot disco in nothing flat.

The exhibit areas at Disco III featured other eye-opening developments. Many clubs employ the very latest in modern electronics, and the advanced sound systems, the astonishing array of lighting equipment, and the matter-of-fact use of holography, lasers, and large-screen TV projections were all but mind-boggling.

Top disco acts (Gloria Gaynor, Tavares, and the SalSoul Orchestra, among others) provided entertainment each evening, and the four-day affair culminated in an awards dinner as boringly predictable as any tedious organizational function you can imagine. One high point (if one can call it that) of the awards ceremony was singer Grace Jones' acceptance of the Most Promising Female Vocalist plaque while her purse was being stolen from her seat on the dais six feet from where she stood. The incontestable low point was the seemingly endless parade of disc jockeys accepting awards (there must have been at least one platter handler from each state in the union).

In short, disco is not about to go away, so you might as well give in, dress up, and accept Irving Berlin's invitation to "face the music and dance." Who knows—you might just get to like it.
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**Going on Record**

**By James Goodfriend**

**FROM SWEDEN WITH LOVE**

This past summer, in conjunction with Sweden's challenge for the America's Cup and under the patronage of the royal family, the Swedes decided to send us, on loan, their Michelangelo Pietra, their Seythian gold, their Mona Lisa, their Laurence Olivier, their Noel Coward, their Edith Piaf, their Dylan Thomas, and their Bob Dylan. He arrived in July to begin a brief tour, five concerts of "A Swedish Musical Odyssey" in Newport, Rhode Island, Saratoga Springs, Washington, D.C., New York, and Detroit. He is Sven-Bertil Taube, actor, singer, reciter, and balladeer, and as charming a personality as ever graced a concert stage.

To say that Taube is one of the premier entertainers of the world is only to state what is obvious after seeing and hearing him. If he is not yet a household word throughout the western world, it is only because not everyone has yet seen and heard him. He is the latest in a long series of fine Swedish exports: Jenny Lind, Ingrid Bergman, Jussi Bjorling, Carl Mikes, Birgit Nilsson, Ingmar Bergman, Bjorn Borg. If he has been slower in coming to us, it may just be because the Swedes have held on to him more tightly. Certainly, they have bought more of his records than those of any other musical artist, classical or popular, including the Beatles. But Taube has now stepped upon a wider stage; what he does is international.

To explain precisely who and what Taube (pronounced "tohbb") is, and what he represents, is a complex task. "I come from a tradition," he has said—meaning one specific thing, the balladeer, but unintentionally implying a whole range of possibilities. Certainly, he is the embodiment of traditions, many of them. He is the son of Evert Taube, the late composer of ballads that are so revered in Sweden they seem to have become, at the very moment of their creation, an integral part of the history of Swedish culture. Evert Taube himself was in the tradition of that fascinating eighteenth-century poet and troubadour Carl Michael Bellman, whose songs—

Swedish balladeer Sven-Bertil Taube and conductor Ulf Bjoerlin
same way a jazz musician drops into a new rhythmic groove.

Taube was a leading actor with the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm, under the direction of Ingmar Bergman, for ten years. He has made films and television appearances in England as well as in Scandinavia. He has given concert performances in many places in Europe. In New York he appeared with the American Symphony Orchestra, conducted by his friend and associate Ulf Bjorlin, an excellent musician who frequently guest-conducts the Stockholm Philharmonic and who has a recorded discography of over two dozen discs, from Johann Helmich Roman to Webern. The orchestral part of the program comprised Handel, Blomdahl, Ibert, and Wagner; Taube sang (with the full orchestra) and recited Bellman and Evert Taube, plus poems by the Nobel prize-winning Harry Martinson which were interspersed with sea chanties. The orchestra played as well as I have ever heard it; Bjorlin's arrangements were altogether splendid; and Taube himself was completely winning.

Just to watch him on stage is an object lesson in what to do with your hands while performing, and his wordless interpretation of an orchestral postlude—standing, one hand in his pocket, his back three quarters to the audience, seeming to gaze at some far-distant scene located about ten feet up on the rear wall of the stage—had the audience "seeing" pictures that were not physically there. The vigor of his songs—with elegant articulation in English (a trace of Winston Churchill in the sound), French, Swedish, high and low German, and Spanish—wonderful waltzes, marches, dramatic ballads, chanties, and all was completely captivating. Through everything came the feeling of a real and unique personality—rooted in historical tradition, yes, but very much a contemporary—who can play at will with the space created by an intimate performing medium and a large orchestra, hall, and audience.

I arranged to have lunch with Taube the following week. I was delighted that he brought with him his latest recording (HMV England 862-35135), but somewhat nonplussed when it turned out to be songs of the Greek political writer Mikis Theodorakis, which Taube sang in English accompanied by a guitar consort and a bouzouki. I confess that when I heard it I understood for the first time (no printed lyrics were necessary) just what those songs were all about—the irony of bitter lyrics coupled with infectious music. It was fascinating to match that with Taube's admitted major concern: he did not want the songs he sang, whatever their origin, to be less in English than they were in their native tongues.

Taube has made over a dozen records, mostly in Swedish and mostly for the Swedish HMV label (EMI Svenska). While more than half of them were at one time imported, they do not seem to be so today. Obviously, that situation will soon be remedied as Taube's star rises. There is, at present, one record on the domestic Fiesta label (Fiesta 1589) on which he performs music of his father. The Theodorakis record will certainly find its way into stores that do direct importing, and it may yet be released over here. And the "Swedish Musical Odyssey" concert has been recorded and released in England and is under consideration for American release. Most important, Taubes himself will be back in person. Watch for him.

It's the opening of a new season of Earplay, a series of plays written and produced especially for radio. The idea itself isn't new, but the approach is. If you've never listened to an earplay before, you may be surprised.

Earplay commissions original works from some of America's foremost writers. The season opens with Arthur Kopit's Wings starring Mildred Dunnock. Other plays in the series include works by John Gardner, David Mamet, Richard Howard and Mark Medoff.

The plays are produced in stereo using the most sophisticated recorded techniques available—you'll find it hard to believe you're listening to the radio. Stereo speakers are good, headphones are better. But all you really need is a radio.

Dress up if you want. Have a big-deal dinner. But be sure you're back home in time for our opening. Contact your National Public Radio member station this month for scheduling information.
A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO HI-FI

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- a clear idea of your own requirements
- a properly directed use of your time and energy
- a little old-fashioned common sense

By Robert N. Greene
Choosing audio equipment isn’t the easiest thing in the world, especially for the novice. Because there are usually no clear-cut rights and wrongs about it, many people need help when it comes to deciding what equipment to plunk their money down for. Can we help? Yes. Can we make your selection for you? No, because there are no easy answers. But we can give you some guidelines on how to buy, we can alert you to things to look for and warn you about things to watch out for.

Part of the problem is that there’s almost too much technical information available about hi-fi equipment, probably because the hi-fi world is composed largely of hobbyists who enjoy the same technical jargon that the novice finds bewildering. We can’t make anyone an expert with a few well-chosen words, but we can pass on some practical information that, combined with common sense, can make selecting equipment a lot less intimidating. And for those of you to whom much of the following lecture may seem very elementary, please bear with us; we might just come up with one or two new ideas helpful to you too.

To start with, let’s puncture a couple of balloons some of you may be carrying around unknowingly in the back of your mind. The first is that there’s something magical or mysterious about audio equipment or the stores and people who sell it. There isn’t. Receivers, speakers, and all the rest are only merchandise manufactured to be sold for profit, and the primary function of the audio salesman is to sell that merchandise. Is this intended to warn you that the industry is out to fleece the unwary? Not at all, but when you’re spending money on anything it’s best not to have too many stars in your eyes (but please keep a few—it’s part of the fun!). Just bear in mind that the rules of judicious “consumerism” apply to audio as much as to any other buying.

Another balloon that may need popping is the one with BEST printed on it in bright red letters. Even if you’re lucky enough to have unlimited funds available, the quest for that elusive quality can lead into a blind alley; there is no “best.” While a $1,000 amplifier, for example, may be of better quality and greater performance capability than a $250 one, it might well not be preferable in your particular circumstances. And even with all other things being equal, you’d have trouble getting any two experts to agree on the “best” unit for a given situation; their personal prejudices will lead them in different directions. In short, setting out to find any single, objectively “best” item of equipment is unrealistic. All we can try for is that which is best for our own purposes.

One more preliminary point: we’ll be concerned in this discussion solely with separate audio components. Consoles, “compacts,” and the like certainly have their appeal, but it is components that are looked upon as “defining” high fidelity, and we’re concerned here with how you can get the most accurate sound for your money.

Getting Ready

Since our stated intent isn’t instruction on what to buy but how to buy, our first suggestion is that you not go into an audio shop right away. Experienced or not, you might not yet be ready to face shelves full of equipment. All those dials and knobs and switches can overwhelm even the hardiest shopper among us, and this is exactly what we’re trying to help you avoid. The more comfortable you are once you do get into the store, the better your chances of ending up with a system suited to your requirements. The logical first step, then, is to figure out in advance what those requirements are as well as the limitations you’ll have to work with in meeting them.

- **Money**: If you’re thinking of high-fidelity equipment that will do reasonable justice to present-day records and FM broadcasts, you really have to prepare yourself for a minimum investment of at least $300 to $500. And the figure for what might be considered a notably good system increases to $1,000 or more pretty rapidly. These are realistic price ranges to figure on in advance. The potential maximum is anybody’s guess, but most of us can’t work at those rarefied levels anyway—nor, we hasten to assure you, do any of us have to.

How much cash you’ll be putting into this enterprise is of course up to you, but it’s prudent to set at least a ballpark limit and stick to it as closely as possible; don’t let yourself get carried away when you’re in the presence of all that enticing equipment. The fact that you’ve established a general dollar figure will also be helpful to a salesman or anyone else you may enlist in helping you make a selection. Don’t, incidentally, be above asking for help from friends and acquaintances. But even here be a bit wary: this is the kind of hobby that tends to breed “experts” who may be far from that; just be sure that those you listen to have some kind of reasonable credentials.

- **Space**: There are two kinds: the equipment installation space and the space to be filled with sound. The latter refers to the size of the room in which you’ll install your system—information your salesman or other advisor should be aware of also. More on this later; for the moment we’ll just suggest that you note down room dimensions, including ceiling height.

Space for the equipment itself is a nuts-and-bolts matter that won’t determine the sound of your system, but it can influence your choice nonetheless. Some components are fairly sizable, and they tend to look smaller in the store than they actually are, so measure carefully just how much space you can make available. A matter of one inch of shelf depth, width, or height that you don’t have could very well put a number of units out of the running for you—and no matter how great the component, a seventeen-inch anything

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The amount of space you have to fill up determines the amount of amplifier output power you’ll require. The efficiency of the speakers (the amount of sound that comes out for the amount of power that goes in) is of course another factor. If your listening room is acoustically "dead" (lots of sound-absorbing drapes, carpeting, and soft furniture), the power required from your amplifier will be somewhat greater. In this case, speakers with a greater high-frequency output potential (which can be turned down if required) may also be desirable since the highs get soaked up by sound-absorbent materials more readily than the bass does.

If, on the other hand, your room is very small and you install a system that would almost fill a ball park with sound, you’ll probably be paying for more power and loudness potential than you could ever need or use. Since amplifiers produce less distortion when run below their maximum output, it is desirable to have much more power available than the minimum required, but carrying this to excess can be uneconomical and may even, conceivably, endanger your loudspeakers. (Incidentally, you can also damage your speakers by use of an underpowered amplifier that you are driving into overload in an effort to get it to play loud enough.) A very rough rule of thumb seems to be that in an average-size room, with speakers of average efficiency, background music takes about 2 watts on peaks, normal loud listening may require 20 watts, and for disco levels 200 watts may not be enough. These figures refer to the amplifier’s output on short-lived loud peaks. Music practically never requires sustained outputs at these levels. (An amplifier’s inability to deliver a signal that exceeds its power capability is not crucial unless the excessive signals are frequent and very strong. In that case, distortion and possible damage to your speakers can result.)

Speaker manufacturers generally provide some information on the power requirements and capacities of their products, and your audio salesman can help with advice on what equipment will suit your acoustic environment (remember our earlier suggestion to note down your room size).

3. Your listening habits: Have a very good idea in mind of what kind of music you are going to be listening to. Pop ballads and chamber music are one thing; heavy rock and full classical orchestra are quite another. And as for disco sound, well . . .

Beginning Your Selection

Let’s assume that you’ve now begun to form some idea of the nature of your basic audio requirements. It seems reasonable to assume that you’ve seen a certain amount of product literature and advertising, if only that scattered throughout this magazine. Advertisers quite sensibly want to convince you that their products are better than all the others. Result: probable confusion and possible panic. How can you begin to choose what’s right for you amid this welter of conflicting claims? (Note the phrase, “right for you,” rather than “best,” and keep in mind our earlier comment on that.) Well, it should help calm you somewhat to learn that you’ve already begun.

Selecting an audio system is, like any other selection, largely a process of elimination. Our earlier comments were aimed at exactly that, so you’ve already effectively narrowed the field of choice considerably. Just remember that most of the equipment available in the marketplace, regardless of quality, simply isn’t suitable for your purposes.

And another thing to help ease your mind: even though there’s a fair amount of money involved, choosing Brand A as opposed to Brand B or C isn’t really a matter of life and death. This is a competitive field, so an electronic component of a given price from one company is not going to be worlds apart from a similarly priced unit from another. Performance tends to be fairly comparable in a given price range, and manufacturers’ reputations count a great deal with them; you needn’t, in other words, worry about their being out to cheat you.

But, even so, how do you complete the process of elimination if you’re unable to do it on your own and lack friends capable of real guidance? This
"most of the equipment available in the marketplace, regardless of quality, simply isn't suitable for your purposes."

"If you've done any investigating at all, you've already learned that most dealers offer discounts of one sort or another from "suggested list prices." This may be most economical and attractive, but common sense should lead you away from the discount that looks too good. A very large discount may leave the dealer with too small a profit margin for him to put much—or any—time into helping you make a selection or to provide any sort of after-sale service or consultation.

Conversely, if you can determine that a large discount is based on a unit's being discontinued, or "dumped" in an effort to raise quick cash, it could be you're onto a good thing. Audio equipment doesn't generally undergo radical improvement in relatively short time periods—it's more of an evolutionary process. Last year's model could therefore prove to be an excellent purchase.

Salesmen, as we noted earlier, are there for the primary purpose of selling, but most of them are knowledgeable about at least the equipment in their stock (it is simply unreasonable to expect any one person to know everything about all equipment) and how to match it to your needs and pocketbook. If, however, you get the feeling a salesman is pushing too hard in one special direction, particularly if it's away from equipment well recommended by other sources, be cautious. He may very well be directing you toward his honest personal preference and it just happens that he holds a minority opinion; that
doesn't necessarily make him either wrong or unethical—in fact, he may indeed be more honest than some other salesmen you've met. But, on the other hand, he may be trying to sell off a back room full of off-brand lemons.

Unless you're in a position to walk into a store with a list of model numbers on which you've already decided, it's wise to stay away from stores in high-traffic areas that rely on fast turnover of customers, for the salespeople in such places simply may not have the time to spend with those needing help. And if you require much of a salesman's time, try to get to the store at other than peak business hours so he won't be forced to rush you.

Look for a dealer with a fairly broad range of brand names that you recognize (the names advertised in this magazine, for instance). There are also shops set up to cater to the audio connoisseurs, but though these give good service, they also generally handle rather expensive equipment and rarely discount. The dealer who limits his line for profit purposes will sometimes have a number of convincing-sounding (usually spurious) reasons why the lines he doesn't carry aren't any good ("poor performance," "unreliable," "doesn't meet stated specifications," "company doesn't honor warranty," and so forth). But, at the very least, his policy places an arbitrary limitation on your field of choice. With the dealer who vigorously promotes obscure brand names, however, exercise the greatest caution. Unknown brands often prove to have unknown repair facilities when servicing becomes necessary.

In your searching around you'll probably find some prearranged equipment packages being offered at prices lower than the total would be if the components were purchased separately. While these can be excellent buys (and incidentally relieve you of the problem of making up your own package), at times they are not. The package price may be low because some one of the units isn't up to the quality level of the others. A system, like a chain, is no stronger than its weakest link, so check out the individual pieces. You might consider investing a couple of bucks in a copy of the new 1978 Stereo Directory & Buying Guide [available for $2.50 on newsstands or from the Ziff-Davis Service Division, 555 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012], it's a handy reference that describes just about all the current equipment and gives the prevailing "list" prices.

When you think you have about decided on some unit, be sure to check its warranty and how it is implemented. Some dealers sell you a sealed box, bid you good-bye, and won't know you if you return with an unfortunately defective unit. As mentioned earlier, this can be the result of a very large discount, but it is not an inevitable consequence. There are dealers offering both service and discount, though perhaps not quite so large a discount. It's up to you which you want or can afford. (For the novice, it's often worth sacrificing some discount for a larger degree of service before and after the sale.) Certainly, working with a dealer who can put a bad situation to rights for you quickly through replacement or repair is to be desired. The next step down would be the dealer who will at least return a defective item to factory or warranty station for you. This is a more complicated and time-consuming situation, but it will save you packing up the unit and shipping it off yourself. And remember that if return to the factory or warranty station is required, it could be weeks before you see your equipment again.

If you know from the outset that you're going to be entirely on your own should the worst come to pass, either in or out of warranty, it could possibly determine what brand of equipment you choose. All things being equal, manufacturers having authorized repair facilities close enough for you to bring in your defective unit would logically be more appealing than those requiring cross-country shipment.

Where to Start

Let's say that you're now up to the point where you have to begin thinking about the equipment itself. Unless you're going to buy a prepackaged system already put together by a dealer, it's entirely up to you how to go about this. The most logical starting point is the component having the greatest influence on the overall sound of your system. This is the loudspeaker—the component that, audibly and measurably, is the greatest variable in a sound system. The loudspeaker provides you with an excellent opportunity to make a bad choice, whereas with most of the

Recommended Reading

The books listed below are mostly on an introductory level. If they are not available in your local bookstore, hi-fi shop, or library, they can be ordered directly from the publishers at the addresses given. Remember to include all local sales taxes when ordering.

- Hi-Fi in the Home, John Crabe, 271 pp., illus., hardcover, $8.75 plus 81¢ postage. Transatlantic Arts, Inc., North Village Green, Levittown, N.Y. 11756.
- Official Guide to High Fidelity, Institute of High Fidelity, 175 pp., illus., paperbound, $2 postpaid. The Institute of High Fidelity, 489 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10036.
- Master Hi-fi Installation, Gordon King, 148 pp., illus., paperbound, $5.45 postpaid. Hayden Book Co., Inc., 50 Essex St., Rochelle Park, N.J. 07662.
other components you are not likely to go terribly wrong if you stick to name brands. In addition, the choice of speaker will have a bearing on other characteristics of the system—the amplifier-power requirements, for example—and to a certain extent the overall quality appropriate for other components such as the turntable.

These days, when a dealer puts together a package system, the only component he can realize a sizable profit on is likely to be the speaker, since the standard-brand amplifiers, receivers, and record players are likely to be deeply discounted. Speakers are "blind" items, in that there is no FTC rule (as there is for amplifiers) that requires a manufacturer to state his specifications in such a way that you can make valid comparisons between brands. Furthermore, there is no way to tell from the outside of the speaker cabinet the relative cost or quality of the drivers installed inside it.

Well, you can at least trust your ears, can't you? No, not really—particularly when you don't have a chance to listen under carefully controlled conditions. And, in any case, the novice buyer seldom has any idea of what specifically to listen for during speaker demonstrations. Ideally, a speaker should be "accurate," meaning that it should not add to (or subtract from) the bass, treble, or mid-range tones engraved in the record grooves. Boomy or screechy speakers are sometimes impressive on first hearing in a showroom, but they are not likely to be very satisfying in the long run in your home.

A loudspeaker's accuracy of reproduction is not a subjective matter, and if all loudspeakers were absolutely accurate, they'd all sound alike—assuming they were playing in the same location in the same environment. However, this being a somewhat less than perfect world, speakers display a variety of tonal characteristics, some of which are closer to accuracy than others. This is where "taste" comes into the picture—in your choice of which sonic aberrations are the least disturbing to you—but keep in mind that sound preference isn't all a matter of taste. Experienced listeners tend to agree on which speakers are good (accurate) and which aren't. You should also remember that since the room in which the speakers are used literally becomes part of the acoustical system, it will introduce some variables in speaker performance. Most speaker systems have controls permitting a degree of adjustment of such variables. All of this is by way of telling you that you must hear, compare, and debate your own tastes and your own music before you commit yourself to a system he'll enjoy all the more for knowing that he "did it all himself."

"...selecting audio equipment intelligently isn't something that only engineers or advanced audiophiles can do."

and from then on the sky's the limit: expanders, noise suppressors, frequency equalizers, etc.

Extracurricular Research

When you've finished with this beginner's guide, flip back to this month's equipment test reports. These will help to acquaint you with the nature of at least a few of the units available in a given price range as well as providing some specifics on particular units worth investigating. If you don't care to wade through the technical data, just read the "comment" portion of the review. This will give you a good idea of how the test lab felt about the unit. Notice that not all the products reviewed are given uniformly high marks—a careful comparison of the comments will indicate that some units are clearly more highly thought of than others. A stamped, self-addressed long envelope and 25¢ sent to STEREO REVIEW Dept. TRI, One Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016, will bring you an index of all the test reports that have appeared in this magazine since 1965 as well as information about how to get copies of whatever back issues are available. And something else that will help you: on this page you will find a list of articles (available as reprints) that go into more detail about how to buy specific kinds of components (cassette decks, receivers, and so forth) and on the facing page are some recommended books for further study.

Now that you've read all this, where does it leave you? We hope with the well-established conviction that selecting audio equipment intelligently isn't something that only engineers or advanced audiophiles can do. All you need is a clear idea of your own requirements, a properly directed use of your time and energy, and a little old-fashioned common sense. These, of course, are available to virtually all of us, and they are quite enough to steer any buyer to a system he'll enjoy all the more for knowing that he "did it all himself."
ROOTS OF JAZZ

Amazingly, some of the artists who started it all are still around, offering living proof that jazz is not as ancient as our ears might lead us to believe.

Its roots run deep and wide, its branches have touched virtually all twentieth-century music, and somehow it seems as if JAZZ has been with us longer than anyone can remember. That is, of course, partly because of the so-called "modern" jazz—newer music that the term no longer covers from its earliest forms that many critics and musicians—with some justification—feel that the term no longer covers the music.

The turning point was bebop—the first so-called "modern" jazz—which emerged in the early Forties and immediately produced a cry of "foul" from the traditionalists, some of whom had yet to accept fully the swing style of the Thirties. As World War II ended, a jazz war was declared: "Hot versus Cool" band battles were staged on records, on the radio, and in clubs by enterprising critics and producers who saw commercial value in the conflict. But the polemics eventually died down, and by the late Fifties, when Ornette Coleman entered the jazz arena, most people had agreed that old and new jazz could lead a healthy coexistence.

Coleman's music—a free-form style that disregarded chord changes and a regular beat—mades (as it was now called) sound conventional by comparison, and, as this natural evolution has continued, some of today's music makes even Coleman's music of eighteen years ago seem amazingly accessible. It can be argued, as before, that some improvised music—such as that fostered by Chicago's outre AACM (Association for the Advancement of Creative Music)—just isn't strictly speaking, jazz. That particular music certainly is a far cry from the music originally named jazz, but no one can deny that even this "new music" at least has its roots in the works of the early jazz pioneers.

Amazingly, some of the artists who started it all are still around, offering living proof that jazz is not as ancient as our ears might lead us to believe. More to the point, some of these survivors—and that is an apt term when one considers the rigors a life in jazz has traditionally entailed—are not only alive and well but still performing. Best known, and probably the oldest of these almost legendary stalwarts, is the composer/pianist Eubie Blake, who this February will be celebrating his ninety-fifth birthday. A frequent guest on TV's Tonight show, Blake was composing rags and playing them in Baltimore sporting houses before the turn of the century. In 1921, Blake and his long-time partner, the late Noble Sissle, co-produced and wrote the music for Shuffle Along, a black musical that was a smash success and pointed the way for Broadway productions to follow. Of its hits, I'm Just Wild About Harry, was to become Harry S. Truman's campaign song twenty-seven years later, and its star, Florence Mills, became one of the most beloved figures in the black entertainment world before her premature death in 1927.

Eubie Blake himself, a slender man of great wit and remarkable agility, was at his peak fifty-five years ago, but to see him perform today—charming his audience with humorous reminiscences and racing his nimble fingers across the keyboard to produce rags he wrote before our parents or grandparents were born—one would never guess it. A tireless traveler, Mr. Blake—who is managed by his "eightyish" wife, Marion—spent three weeks performing in Oslo and Copenhagen this past summer. He has been booked for the New Orleans Jazz Heritage Festival this coming April, and has also just received an offer to give concerts in Australia. Will he go? But of course.

By Chris Albertson

At eighty-two, singer Alberta Hunter and bandleader/pianist Sam Wooding are not far behind Mr. Blake; they too began performing in the jazz idiom before the term was coined, and they share with their older colleague the belief that retirement is analogous to doom. "I have worked all my life," says Miss Hunter, who became a nurse when she first left the entertainment field twenty years ago, "and I just can't see sitting around doing nothing and talking about one's yesterdays." Mr. Wooding concurs: "My love affair with music has been going on for too long, and it's too deep for me to even consider breaking it off now. This business of retiring at sixty-five is plain nonsense—looking back will make you an old man, and who wants to be an old man?"

It was to help her mother, who was born into slavery, that Alberta Hunter left her Memphis home around 1909 and ran off to Chicago. "I used to sing in school, and they told me I was pretty good," she recalls, "so, when I heard that girls were making ten dollars a week singing in Chicago joints, I decided to catch a northbound train and make some money for my mother." On the day of her arrival, an extraordinary stroke of luck put her in touch with an old family friend. "It must have been fate," she says, "because I had no idea where this woman lived. I was so naive that I thought all you had to do was to go to Chicago and ask around. Well, I walked into this office building and asked this cleaning woman if she knew where my friend lived. Don't you know, she was able to take me right to her. God was putting his arms around me."

With her friend's help, little Alberta was soon earning her room and board peeling potatoes and washing dishes for a boarding house, but she hadn't lost sight of her goal. Adding a few more

Young pianist/composer Eubie Blake appeared with the Boston Pops last year.
His Orchestra.

Sam's Jam; Either You Do, or Else

SAM WOODING/RAE HARRISON

Give You Anything but Love; Bull Foot
Shuffle; Alabamy Bound (two takes);

Wooding and His Chocolate Kiddies

SIC 00 EBM-4

Struttin' Fool; Boo Hoo Hoo; Down
Red, White, and Blues; I'm a Doggone
Blues; I've Got the Blues; I've Got the

ing for That Kind of Love; Bandana
Buzz; Love Will Find a Way; I'm Crav-
ging for That Kind of Love; Bandana
Days; Pickaninny Shoes; Broadway
Blues; I've Got the Blues; I've Got the
Red, White, and Blues; I'm a Doggone
Struttin' Fool; Boo Hoo Hoo; Down
Hearted Blues; Whutin' for the Evenin'
Mail; Sweet Henry. EUBIE BLAKE MUSIC
@ EBM-4 $6.95.

SAM WOODING: Sam Wooding and
His Chocolate Dandies [sic]: Sam
Wooding and his Chocolate Kiddies
Orchestra. O. Kathirina; Shanghai
Shuffle; Alabamy Bound (two takes);

By the Waters of Minnetonka; I Can't
Give You Anything but Love; Bull Foot
Stomp; Carrie; Tiger Rag; Sweet Black
Blues; Indian Love; Ready for the Riv-
er; Mammy's Prayer; My Pal Called
Sat; Krazy Kat; I Got Rhythm. BIO-
GRAPH @ BLP-1025 $6.98.

SAM WOODING/RAE HARRISON
ORCHESTRA: Bicentennial Jazz Vis-
tas. Sam Wooding and his orchestra
(instrumentals); Rae Harrison (vocals);
Sam's Jam; Either You Do, or Else
You Don't; Blah Blah; Funky Joe;
Love Is Just a Pretty Thing; Echoes of
the Republic. TWIN SIGN TS-1000A
$5.95 (from Twin Sign Records, P.O.
Box 713, Radio City Station, New
York, N.Y. 10019).

JACK JACKSON: Jack Jackson and
His Orchestra. Jack Jackson and his
Orchestra (instrumentalists); Alberta
Hunter (vocals). Make Those People
Sway; I'm Playing with Fire; Long May
We Love; I Travel Alone; Come On, Be
Happy; Miss Otis Regrets; I'm Gettin'
Sentimental Over You; Two Cigarettes
in the Dark; Dixie Lee; Two Little Flies
on a Lump of Sugar, Settin' in the
Dark; What a Little Moonlight Can
Do; Stars Fell on Alabama; Blue River;
Roll On, Be Still. My Heart; Let By-
gone Be Bygones. WORLD RECORDS
@ SH 210 $6.98 (British label, avail-
able at stores dealing in direct imports).

That's how Sophie Tucker got most of
her stuff. She 'borrowed' Alberta's
songs as well as her style. However,
we were making so much money at the
time that we really didn't care."

As the Roaring Twenties began and
Prohibition went into effect, both Miss
Hunter and Mr. Wooding found their
way to New York City, he with his
band at Barron's in Harlem, she to
launch what would turn out to be a
prolific recording career. The first Al-
berta Hunter records were made for W.
C. Handy's Black Swan label, which
boasted in its advertisements that it
was "The only genuinely colored rec-
ord—others are only passing." But a
couple of months later she moved to
Paramount Records (a subsidiary of
the Wisconsin Chair Company), where
she recorded her own Down Hearted
Blues.

It was a big hit, but it did even better
in Europe. "Willa Smith, who record-
it on her first Columbia session and saw
it sell some 800,000 copies.

By the summer of 1929, Miss Hunter
had also graced the studios of Okeh,
Victor, and Vocalion, recording over
seventy-five sides with accompaniment
by such outstanding artists as King
Oliver, Fletcher Henderson, Fats Walker,
and Louis Armstrong—not to men-
tion her two fellow "survivors," Eubie
Blake and Sam Wooding. She had also
starred in a couple of Broadway shows,
headlined in some of New York's big-
gest black-oriented night clubs, and, as
she puts it, "made a pile of money"—

enough to take a well-earned vacation
in Monte Carlo.

SAM WOODING hadn't done so badly
either. In 1925, while his band was
engaged at the famous Club Alabam
(where it had replaced the Fletcher
Henderson Band), his unusual arrange-
ments caught the ear of a famous Rus-
sian impresario, Dr. Leoni Leonidof,
whose clients included Feodor Challa-
pin and George Balanchine, had come
to the U.S. to recruit a black show for a
European tour. Arthur Lyons, a well-
known American theatrical agent of the
day, brought Leonidof to the Alabam,
and the Wooding orchestra was hired
on the spot. "The show was called The
Chocolate Kiddies because we saw a
billboard advertising a chocolate by
that name when we got to Germany,"
Wooding recalls, "but it wasn't a
scripted, story-telling show, just a
bunch of acts put together."

They opened in Berlin's Admirals
Palast on May 6, 1925, in an assembly
of forty musicians, dancers, singers,
and jugglers. It was a première Sam
Wooding will never forget: "We had
picked By the Waters of Minnetonka
as our overture, and we really played it
that night, but instead of the immediate
years to her appearance with a new
hairdo and a dress borrowed from an
older woman, she spent her nights
making her singing talent known to
club owners on the South Side. Soon
she was singing at Dago Frank's, a
gathering place for white hookers, who
were known to brush tears from their
eyes as little Alberta poured her mem-
phic soul into such popular fare of the
day as Where the River Shannon Flows.

At first she knew only two songs, but
she made it a point to learn a new one
every night until she had built up a
good, varied repertoire.

While Alberta Hunter was using
Chicago's South Side dives as a train-
ing ground, Sam Wooding had moved
from Philadelphia to Atlantic City,
where he made his living performing
under most unusual circumstances.

"They used to call us pianists 'profi-
sors,' " he recalled recently, "and we
would hang out on a street corner until
one of the working girls in the area sent
her maid to get one of us. The girl
would have a client in her room, and a
screen separated her bed from the pi-
nano. It was our job to accompany them
as they made love. Through a crack in
the screen, we were able to follow their
action and provide the appropriate sen-
uous music. Naturally, as they worked
themselves up, I brought the
music to a sort of crescendo. It was in-
teresting—like playing for a silent mov-
ief." Mr. Wooding's next job offered a
change of pace; he traveled to Europe
as a member of Lt. Will Vodery's 807th
Pioneer Infantry Band.

In 1919, Wooding, once again a civil-
ian, formed his first band. That same
year, Alberta Hunter—having gradu-
ated from Chicago's Deluxe Cafe and
Panama Club (where one of her co-
workers was Florence Mills)—became
a featured artist at the Dreamland
Cafe, the finest of Chicago's many
black-oriented night clubs, and, as
she puts it, "made a pile of money"—
applause we were used to there was a stillness when we finished. Then, like a clap of thunder, the audience started banging their feet and shouting 'Bis nochmal hoch, bravo,' and the din was so great that 'bis' ['more'] sounded like 'beast' to us and some of the boys were about to run out of the orchestra pit before we realized that they were being complimentary."

The show created a sensation, and it gave many music critics their first taste of a live jazz orchestra. From Berlin, the Chocolate Kiddies revue moved on to Hamburg's Thalia Theater and Copenhagen's Cirkus. The reviews were uniformly enthusiastic, if somewhat confused: "It's something completely insane, fantastic, incomprehensible," wrote a bewildered Danish critic. "The black musicians toil so that only the whites of their eyes are showing, while Sam Wooding, quite aloof, waves his white stick and conducts with seriousness and reverence, as if a symphony were being performed. It is the wildest cacophony. One is angered, insulted, and ready to tear one's hair out. But listen! Out of this confused noise there rises a tone so clear and fine that it fills the ear with joy. Why, it's Tannhäuser!" And indeed it was. Sam Wooding was fond of presenting what he called "a syncopated synthesis" of the classics. "Du hlder Abendstern syncopated!" continued the reviewer. "It's sheer blasphemy—and yet, out of all this mess one hears the most beautiful harmonies, the clearest tones. They are musicians, after all, and they know their stuff. It's not the monotonous pling-plang of the East. It's premeditated rape of the ears. . . . Intoxicated, anesthetized, and overwhelmed, one stumbles out of the theater." The rest of the show received equally enthusiastic reviews, prompting some of the acts to leave the show early and go out on their own. A replacement for one such deserter was a young English lady named Mabel Mercer.

After the breakup of the Chocolate Kiddies, Wooding decided to stay in Europe with his band. They played all over the Continent, visited Moscow and Leningrad (decades before Benny Goodman's allegedly pioneering trip there in the Sixties), and even took a "side trip" to South America via Africa. In 1925, the band made a series of recordings for Vox in Berlin (thus becoming the first black American band to record outside of the U.S.), followed, in 1926, by a series for the German Polydor label, ten imaginative sides recorded for Parlophone in Barcelona in 1929, and numerous Paris sessions for Pathé and Polydor.

While Wooding spread his jazz to different parts of the world, Alberta Hunter, still vacationing in Monte Carlo, received a telegram from Noble Sissle suggesting that she make a stopover in London to perform at a much-heralded, star-studded, flood-relief benefit. "I jumped at the chance," she recalls, "because I had wanted to perform in England but couldn't get the required work permit." As luck would have it, the benefit was attended by Oscar Hammerstein II and Jerome Kern, who obviously liked what they heard. "I was staying with Marion Anderson, and Mr. Hammerstein called me there the next day, asking me to come down to the Drury Lane Theatre. Next thing I knew I had the part of Queenie in the London production of Show Boat, which had a wonderful cast, including Paul Robeson, Edith Day, and Sir Cedric Hardwicke."

The Kern/Hammerstein musical finished its one-year run at the Drury Lane, and Miss Hunter literally began commuting between New York and various European capitals. Showing her versatility, she became a sultry, sophisticated ballad singer when she recorded and performed, at the posh Dorchester Hotel, with Jack Jackson's Orchestra in the fall of 1934, adding to her growing coterie of fans the Prince of Wales and Noël Coward. Her elabo-
It was my first appearance in Zurich in fifty-two years. It never hurts to make yourself a little scarce."

rate cabaret act, which featured a white chorus of feathered girls perched on a bar inside a giant birdcage, was a huge success from the Casino de Paris to Copenhagen's National Scala.

Also in 1934, Miss Hunter made history by appearing in the first English film to feature color, Radio Parade of 1935. Formulated after Hollywood's Big Broadcast films, its plot was designed to showcase some of England's favorite variety artists, and the color—a new and ill-fated process called Dufaycolor—was seen only in the film's last segment, when Miss Hunter sang a negro spiritual. "I don't know if the film was shown here at home," she says, "but I was getting so much publicity in Europe, and that made the people at home appreciate me more." In 1937 NBC signed her up to do broadcasts from New York and—via transatlantic cable—London. In 1939, while appearing in a dramatic role in Mamba's Daughters with Ethel Waters at New York's Empire Theatre, Miss Hunter also made her television debut with NBC and, reverting to the blues, was reunited with Lil Armstrong for a record session at Decca.

SAM WOODING had returned to the U.S. in 1935. "With Hitler on the loose, things were getting too hot over there," he recalls, "and one of our fans, who turned out to be a Gestapo man, knew what was brewing. So he told my agent 'Get Sam out of here before it's too late.'" Finding American audiences less receptive, and, one supposes, the competition stifler, Wooding disbanded his orchestra the following year; four decades would pass before he formed his next big band.

While studying at the University of Pennsylvania for his bachelor's and master's degrees, he led his own Southland Spiritual Choir, a group partly inspired by the Cossack choirs he had heard in Russia. "We were about to depart on a world tour, sponsored by the International Baptist Association in London, when World War II broke out," he recalls, "so we just toured the U.S. and Canada instead." Wooding entered the Fifties teaching music. Among his students (at Wilmington High School, Delaware) was a young man named Clifford Brown, who, before his premature death in 1956, pointed the jazz trumpet in a new direction. "There was another trumpet in my class," muses Wooding, "and he was really much better. I suppose he's driving a truck now."

Alberta Hunter spent the war and postwar years entertaining troops from Burma to Berlin. She toured the U.S. and Canada in the early Fifties, worked with Eartha Kitt in the 1954 Broadway production of Mrs. Patterson, and retired from show business in 1956. "I made no big fuss over it, I just quit. The Lord had blessed me with a wonderful life, and I thought I should do something that would help others, so I studied nursing." Miss Hunter's only musical activity over the past twenty-one years has been to record two albums (in 1961, for the Prestige and Riverside labels), but, as this issue goes to print, that has begun to change. Earlier this year, after twenty years of service, Alberta Hunter left her job at New York's Goldwater Memorial Hospital and returned to her first love: music. Barney Josephson, whose Café Society clubs featured some of the greatest talent around during the swing era, booked her to open at his Greenwich Village supper club, the Cookery, this past October. As of this writing at least two major magazines, Newsweek and the New Yorker, are planning feature stories on Miss Hunter's return. The Today show has booked her, and producer John Hammond has plans to record her.

STRAINING enough, though their paths have often crossed, Alberta Hunter and Sam Wooding have not seen each other in over forty years. But don't be surprised if you see them sharing a billing in the future, for Wooding is back in full swing too. His new eleven-piece band, the Sam Wooding and Rae Harrison Orchestra, made a triumphant appearance at the Zurich International Jazz Festival last September, and returned home for a tour of the southern states later that same month. "They loved us in Zurich," Wooding beamed upon his return, "and they were even more enthusiastic this time around. I suppose that's because I brought over a fresh band of young musicians whose solos they hadn't heard before. It was my first appearance in Zurich in fifty-two years," he added with a smile. "It never hurts to make yourself a little scarce." Who said jazz was old?
one of the best-kept secrets in the record business. Since 1970, the Special Products division of Columbia Records has quietly (because they have no advertising budget) and with some regularity selected "the most sought-after albums from the archives of Columbia Records" and restored them to the catalog in a "Collectors' Series" that now numbers over 250 albums.

Most sought-after is a little misleading, for many of the restored items are, in fact, quite esoteric; one can, for example, hardly imagine a big market for "An Evening with Alistair Cooke at the Piano" (AML4970) or "Bantu Music of East Africa" (91A02017). But on the other hand, 91B02058, a two-record set of heartbeats (mono only) is reported to be doing quite well in medical circles. Also doing well are soundtrack and original-cast albums and many of the catalog's resurrected Masterworks discs, which range from Vivaldi to Imbrie. In the area of jazz (yes, Columbia used to record honest-to-goodness jazz!) there are now over sixty albums in the Collectors' Series, including some recently known to have commanded five to ten times their original price on the out-of-print market.

Among the more outstanding jazz albums thus brought back are: "Ellington Jazz Party" (JCS8127), a spirited meeting of the Ellington orchestra with Dizzy Gillespie, Jimmy Rushing, and nine0three0players drawn from the symphonic world; "The Sound of Jazz" (JCL1098), the Count Basie Band, Billie Holiday, the Jimmy Giuffre Trio, Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Jimmy Rushing, and Henry "Red" Allen, among others, performing the music heard on the 1957 TV show of the same name, a show that remains, visually as well as aurally, the quintessence of American TV jazz presentations; "Louis Armstrong Plays W.C. Handy" (JCL591), 1954 recordings containing some of the trumpeter's post-war performances; "Paris Concert" (JLA16009), featuring the 1958 edition of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, with Lee Morgan and Bobby Timmons; and "Facets" (JP13811), an album of Miles Davis recordings made between 1955 and 1962 and compiled especially for this release.

For those wishing to dig even deeper into the jazz past, "The Sound of New Orleans Jazz 1917-1947" (JCL300, three discs, $17.94) and "Swing Street" (JSN6042, four discs, $23.92) combine rare and well-known recordings to form fine anthologies of how it all began and developed, while "Stringing the Blues" (JCL224, two discs, $11.96) offers thirty-two 1927-1932 sides by violinist Joe Vennuti and guitarists Eddie Lang and Lonnie Johnson with all-star supporting casts. The Collectors' Series has a list price of $6.98 per single album. A full catalog, listing dealers in your area, can be obtained from Columbia Special Products, 51 West 52nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10019.

In 1976 Columbia initiated the "Encore Collection," a $4.98 series (also previously available on LP's. Though details of the new releases are not available at this writing, they will probably bear some kinship to the series' biggest sellers so far.

Toppling that list is "Johnny Mathis: A New Sound in Popular Song" (EN 13089, © ENA 13089), the singer's recording debut, made over twenty years ago with various orchestras. Among the musicians are Buck Clayton, Art Farmer, Phil Woods, and Hank Jones; among the arrangers are John Lewis, Manny Albam, and Gil Evans. The voice, though unmistakably that of Mathis, hasn't the tone quality he later developed, but no one concerned need feel bad about this reissue, and the arrangements make good use of the talent on hand. The second-best-selling item in the Encore series is an equally mellow 1970 outing called "Sarah Vaughan in Hi-Fi" (EN 13084, © ENA 13084), featuring the Divine One with an eight-piece Jimmy Johnson band including Miles Davis, Benny Green, and Bud Johnson. Sarah too has sounded better since, but she is wonderful here all the same, and the accompaniment is, of course, choice.

Of richly violined, romantic love ballads perceptively sung are your cup of tea, you will welcome back "That's All" (EN 13090, © ENA 13090), which represents the early Sixties Columbia debut of Mel Tormé. There was more velvet than fog in Tormé's voice at that time, and his performance is as enduring as the songs he sings. Trail following Tormé in sales is "Johnnie Ray's Greatest Hits" (EN 13086, © ENA 13086). They're all there just as he originally cried them, selling neck-to-neck with an unusual meeting, which actually never took place, between Rosemary Clooney and the Duke Ellington Orchestra. "Blue Rose" (EN 13085, © ENA 13085) was recorded by Ellington's orchestra and Clooney on separate occasions in 1957, before multiple tracks made such trickery common practice. The result obviously lacks any kind of rapport between singer and orchestra, and it does justice to neither. Ellington, however, went on to record some very fine albums for Columbia, such as "Hi-Fi Ellington Uptown," "A Drum Is a Woman," and "Such Sweet Thunder," all of which—as CCL830, JCL951, and JCL1033, respectively—are back by way of the Collectors' Series. Other Encore albums feature the Hollies, polkas by Frankie Yankovic, Gary Puckett's soft rock of the late Sixties, stringy MOR sets by Kostelanetz and Percy Faith, a Harry James set with Rosemary Clooney, and, for older feet, some pre-disco dance music by the Les Elgart Orchestra. Future plans call for a generous amount of good jazz in the Collectors' Series, from that distant past when Columbia was less chart-conscious.

—Chris Albertson
A Little
During Christmas week the postman often delivers a package out of which tumble a number of smaller, gaily wrapped packages of various sizes—assorted gifts chosen to appeal to the various ages and tastes of the entire family. They may range from simple "stocking stuffers"—fun and games—to impressive and finely wrought objets d'art. It is just such a package that has recently arrived from Columbia Records. Called "A Renaissance Christmas Celebration with the Waverly Consort," its dozen varied carols, chorales, dances, and motets were selected and most elegantly "wrapped" in the multicolored timbres of Renaissance instruments by director Michael Jaffee and his excellent group of singers and instrumentalists. The Waverly Consort (six singers and four instrumentalists, here augmented by seven additional performers) specializes in medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque music and has acquired an international reputation for the beauty, vitality, and authenticity of its performances.

Much of the music making of the Renaissance sprang from the art of skillful arrangers working with old, familiar melodies—liturgical chants, dance tunes, popular songs, and traditional carol or chorale melodies. And even when a composer had completed a new score, its performance again became an arranger's art, a matter of "orchestration," for the choice and disposition of voices and instruments for the various parts were left to the imagination and taste of leader, conductor, or chapel master. "Definitive" performances of these works are therefore no more possible than would be for contemporary popular songs.

This art of arranging was described in detail in the writings of Michael Praetorius (1571-1621), prolific composer and musical scholar, eight of whose works are included in this Columbia program. His flair for the possibilities of vocal and instrumental colors, varieties of sonority, contrasts of weight and texture, plus sheer sensuous pleasure—all characteristic of the musical taste of his time—parallels Berlioz's gift for orchestration two centuries later. The possibilities of combining solo voices with the instruments included in this recording (viola da gamba, organ, harp, shawm, recorder, dulcian, lute, sackbut, cornetto, Baroque trumpet, bells, tambour de Basque) are literally inexhaustible—if not all equally successful.

Two of the Praetorius arrangements included here are lively and sometimes rhythmically intricate dances. The other six are arrangements of some of the most familiar old Christmas melodies, varying from the simple, eloquent harmonization of "Es Ist ein Kuss" ("Entsprungen") to the large-scale, elaborate, one might almost say "concertato-fantasia" treatment of In Dulci Jubilo, where a succession of quickly changing textures and styles—now two or three voices, now seventeen; now polyphonic imitation, now homophonic sonority; now melodically simple and syllabic, now more elaborately ornamental—builds a sonorous architecture of multispaced and multicolored jubilation.

The program begins with three anonymous Spanish villancicos—popular, rustic dance songs with irresistibly "catchy" hemiola rhythms (three beats against two, or vice versa), breezy refrains alternating with solo verses. Simple strophic harmonizations of the melody acquire a new luster and beauty through the changes of instrumentation from stanza to stanza.

Side one includes the impressive eight-voice motet Om Magnum Mysterium of Giovanni Gabrieli, the Venetian master of musical chiaroscuro, and the program concludes with Josquin's motet Ave Maria, a most eminent model of classical Renaissance serenity, poise, equilibrium, and unruffled eloquence of expression. In this performance the voices are unobtrusively reinforced by instrumental color that adds clarity to the individual vocal lines, and this in turn gives a new and exciting dimension to the word "counterpoint." Not only does one hear the familiar simultaneous unfolding of four separate melodic strands, but one also hears their "fitting together"—intervals of various sizes slipping easily into place as blocks of stone do when a mason fashions an intricate and varied pattern in a building facade. Here is "musical architecture" that is no longer a mere metaphor, a structure made possible as much by the singers' vibratoless tone production and faultless intonation as it is by Mr. Jaffee's fine understanding of the compositional style and craft of the early sixteenth century. This is an album that deserves a permanent place of honor in anyone's collection of Christmas-music perennials.

Another of the record business' major contributions to the Christmas season this year is Angel's stunning new recording of Bach's Christmas Oratorio performed by the Choir of King's College, Cambridge, the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, and four superstar soloists and conducted by Philip Ledger, director of music at King's College.

The Christmas Oratorio was conceived as a set of six cantatas to be performed successively on the six feast days and Sundays of the Christmas season in the two major Leipzig churches in 1734. The Biblical story was thus narrated in six episodes: the Nativity, the Annunciation to the shepherds, the Adoration of the Magi. Though it appears to be a succession of six independent and self-contained pieces, it is everywhere obvious that Bach conceived it as a single, unified, and thoroughly integrated largescale work similar to the Passions.

Much of the music consists of the reworking of movements from previously composed cantatas, especially those for the birthdays of the Elector and the Electress-Queen of Saxony of the previous year. Because of this fact, it has been assumed that the music is therefore less "inspired," that Bach was taking the easy way out. But this was always a part of Bach's compositional procedure and, indeed, of Baroque composers in general. Further, with respect to this work, there is evidence that the music of the birthday cantatas was originally conceived with an eye toward subsequent use in the oratorio. In all, the Christmas Oratorio is no secondary work and stands only slightly below the B Minor Mass and the St. John and St. Matthew Passions as crowning achievements of Bach's liturgical music. Though the episodes of the story are not as dramatic as those of the Passions, the music is nowhere inferior, it is no less varied, nor is it less probing of the infinite

Members of the Waverly Consort pose with their instruments before the tree erected each Xmas season in the Medieval Sculpture Hall of the Metropolitan Museum.
Xmas Music...

subtleties and ambivalences of the Christian faith.

There are at least two traditions of oratorio and oratorio performance. The first, that established by Handel out of Italian models, might be called the heroic-epic type. Based on Old Testament stories recounting the great deeds of heroic characters and intended for concert performance, it has small choruses and the great vocal art of renowned virtuoso singers, both male and female—those super-mortals who rise in august solemnity before the footlights, full-chested, with book in hand, fully conscious of their almost oracular responsibility. It is typically Baroque in that its aim is the marshaling of artistic effect to overwhelm the beholder.

The second tradition, established in Germany by Schütz from liturgical drama origins and continuing through Bach, might be called the liturgical-hermeneutic type. Since it was intended for performance as part of the liturgical service, its performing forces were relatively small and its soloists were generally choir regulars (all men and boys). The adventures of its nonheroic characters are told and immediately transposed and interpreted to become moments in the inner atmosphere, and color of what follows. The clarity and ease with which they negotiate the rapid ornamental figures in the opening chorus is breath-taking. So also is the whole of the chorus "Ehre sei Gott" whose jubilant shouts and antiphonal responses issue into a fugue of irresistible momentum and cumulative drive. The trebles achieve an almost clairion brilliance and power, and these are matched by the strength and clarity of the altos.

All of the recording companies have enlisted first-rank singers for the solo arias. Those of Angel (Elly Ameling, Janet Baker, Robert Tear, and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau) are artists of enormous stature and unquestioned artistry. If I have some reservations with respect to Mr. Tear and Miss Baker, it is not because their singing is not brilliant (it is, but because they were most) but because they have voices of heroic size suited to the heroes of Handel and of Italian opera. Their virtuoso presence keeps them in the foreground, and one loses sight of the story, the inwardness of the sentiment, and the earnestness of each character’s stance. My preference is for Christa Ludwig (DG Archive 2710004), who has achieved a remarkable warmth, intimacy, and simplicity appropriate to the characters she portrays. And I also prefer Fritz Wunderlich (Archive as well) with his much more lyrical and flexible approach to the passionately bravura tenor arias. Tear’s performance seems much more robust, aggressive, even violent, not only in the two arias of part six, where there is some justification, but also in others where there is not. Admittedly, this is a bravura role, but there are many qualities of bravura besides rage and vengeance.

Miss Ameling and Fischer-Dieskau both give superlative performances throughout the new Angel recording. Ameling’s almost childlike fascination and play with her double echo (oboé and treble) in the dialogue aria of part four is sheer delight, and Fischer-Dieskau’s ability to turn mere words into living beings, each with a character, shape, and life of its own, is again apparent here. He too subordinates his voice and artistry to the spirit and intimacy of the texts. Too word conscious? Not. I think, for Bach.

Special comments must be directed to the brilliant performance by the instrumentalists of the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields. Not only are they not suppressed by the engineers in order to give prominence to the voices, they are everywhere co-partners, equal in virtuosity, eloquence, and beauty of sound. Special honors must go to oboists Tessler Miller and Celia Nicklin. Nor where have I heard Bach’s poignant oboe d’amore melodies played with greater beauty of sound, subtlety of articulation, and gracious expression. It is worth the price of the album for these movements alone. No less rewarding are the contributions of the other soloists, especially on trumpet and horn, from whom Bach demanded the almost impossible. But it is the perfection of the ensemble (especially in the concerto style movements) that gives this oratorio of joy and praise the radiance appropriate to the Christmas story.

A final word about the ambiance of the performance. It was recorded in the King’s College Chapel, where there is a very lively reverberation which is sometimes exciting in the afterglow of the brilliant choruses but slightly disturbing elsewhere. At the opening, the quintette generates an almost too voluminous volume of sound, and occasionally—but only occasionally—the reverberation intrudes during the course of a movement, especially as a third and unwanted echo in the soprano aria of part four. Otherwise it contributes to the very live quality of the recording.

All in all, and in spite of the few reservations voiced above, I find this a highly satisfying version of the oratorio, sometimes breath-taking and electrifying, sometimes tremendously moving, and almost always sensuously beautiful. The package includes the usual text with translation and two pages of useful notes.


J. S. BACH: Christmas Oratorio (BWV 248). Elly Ameling (soprano); Janet Baker (alto); Robert Tear (tenor); Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (bass); Choir of King’s College, Cambridge; Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Philip Ledger cond. ANGEL SC 3840 three discs $23.94.
The new Toyota Celica. It's here now. A car which meets or exceeds all 1980 Federal fuel economy and safety standards. The latest in Toyota engineering advancements and wind tunnel refinements have produced an aerodynamic work of art. The Celica GT Liftback (pictured), GT and ST Sport Coupes.

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Royes Fernandez partners ballerina Lupe Serrano in the American Ballet Theatre's production of Swan Lake, the Beethoven's Fifth of ballet.
BY the 1960’s and early 1970’s the growth of ballet in the United States had become truly phenomenal. An article in the Wall Street Journal of March 14, 1968, bore the headline “The Dance: Signs of a Boom Market.” In 1972 the New York Times published statistics showing that attendance at ballet and modern-dance events had increased 500 per cent since 1965. New York no longer contained the majority of the dance audience—73 per cent of it was spread across the country. The young were especially prominent in this larger audience, and a survey made by the Association of College and University Concert Managers yielded the incredible bit of information that, on the 140 campuses included in the study, more ballet performances were sold out than rock concerts.

In the years since the Thirties the sissy image that once plagued ballet has almost disappeared, probably because of the emergence of such virile dancers as Jacques d’Amboise and Edward Villella, who were capable of performing feats of strength and endurance that few professional athletes could duplicate. The elitist label persisted a bit longer.

In its origins and for much of its history ballet was indeed elitist. It was a court entertainment, whether the dancers were the ladies and gentlemen of the court of Louis XIV of France or professionals hired to dance for the imperial court of czarist Russia. But the government that have replaced those royal courts have since used ballet companies as cultural ambassadors to friendly nations—not to dance for audiences made up only of heads of state and cabinet members, but to convey to the public at large the message that “our country is cultivated, our men are strong, and our women are beautiful.”

As for the performers, such gifted dancers as Mikhail Baryshnikov and Gelsey Kirkland may belong to an elite, but it is the same elite that includes soccer players Shep Messing and Pelé, tennis players Virginia Wade and Jimmy Connors, football’s O. J. Simpson, baseball’s Tom Seaver, God, the supreme elitist, has endowed these lucky few with physical and mental skills that enable them to do certain things better than the rest of us. The public, always fascinated by excellence, is willing to pay for the excitement of seeing that excellence demonstrated, whether in arena or theater.

It is not unusual at dance events in New York and Washington to spot such diverse public figures and Beautiful People as Jacqueline Onassis, Woody Allen, Betty Ford, Katharine Hepburn, Paul Newman, and Joanne Woodward. Neither is it unusual to see a sprinkling of such celebrities at a tennis match. But the majority of the audience for ballet, as it is for sports, is made up of the rest of us plain clumsy folks.

Happily, television, the Medium of the Common Man, is now taking the best the dance world has to offer into the homes of those who lack the funds, transportation, or energy to attend live performances. There have been some fabulous programs in Exxon’s distinguished Dance in America series, and the American Ballet Theatre’s performances of Swan Lake and Giselle in the Live from Lincoln Center series (also sponsored by Exxon) got ratings among the highest recorded for any “cultural” program disseminated by the Public Broadcasting Service. Swan Lake even won an Emmy this summer.

Happily, too, the greater part of the music for the “classical” dance repertoire is available on discs, and the recording companies are responding to the increase in the size of the audience by bringing out more ballet on records.

BACKGROUN

governments that have replaced those royal courts have since used ballet companies as cultural ambassadors to friendly nations—not to dance for audiences made up only of heads of state and cabinet members, but to convey to the public at large the message that “our country is cultivated, our men are strong, and our women are beautiful.”

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“Our country is cultivated, our men are strong, and our women are beautiful.”

Ballet Disco

A BASIC LIBRARY OF SELECTED RECORDINGS COMPILED BY WILLIAM LIVINGSTONE

Disco dancing has become so much a part of American life in America as the world’s leading dance power. They are not referring to the billion-dollar disco industry, but to the enormous increase in the popularity of ballet and related forms of theatrical dance that has taken place in this country since World War II.

Much as I love ballet, it strikes me as incongruous that such a traditional art form should flourish and appeal to wide audiences at just this time. Ballet requires rigorous training, extreme discipline, and great virtuosity, yet its significant expansion has come during the last three decades, a period when practitioners of other arts rejected traditional forms and techniques in favor of “self-expression” and “getting loose,” creating meterless poetry, non-objective art, and junk-yard sculpture.

One explanation of this paradox was offered by Lincoln Kirstein, general director of the New York City Ballet, in an article in the Schwann record catalog of May 1974. Kirstein said that, in a world rendered anxious by random absurdity and disorder, “the ballet represents humane order, or at least a metaphor, on an active plane of an ordered and civilized practice.”

I agree, but I think the appeal of ballet is more basic than that. Dance, like song, is one of the elemental forces that animate all music, and just as sculpture is a more primitive art than painting, dance is more primitive than song. Ballet dancers communicate with their audiences in a heightened form of body language that is curiously satisfying.
Ballet...

ing on some primitive, nonverbal level. Similarly, I find that music for the ballet stimulates not only the mind and the heart, but the very muscles and sinews of the listener. It's exhilarating. While listening to records to compile the basic library of ballet music that follows, I found it very difficult to sit still and had to get up periodically and leap over the coffee table.

Choreographers today do not limit themselves to music written specifically for ballet, but choose as their scores anything from Bach to the Beach Boys. The dividing line between ballet and modern dance has become very fuzzy as ballet dancers have become so versatile that the same companies that perform Giselle, Coppélia, and Swan Lake can also perform works by such modern-dance choreographers as José Limón, Alvin Ailey, Paul Taylor, and Twyla Tharp. I have limited this basic library to works composed or specially arranged for ballet, and this eliminates the scores for such popular ballets as Balanchine's Symphony in C and Concerto Barocco and all those works commissioned by Martha Graham and other modern dancers.

The list below is nearly the same as the one Clive Barnes and I prepared for a similar article in STEREO REVIEW ten years ago. The works included are perennial favorites representative of major periods from the eighteenth century to the present, and with few exceptions they are still danced regularly by major companies. Where possible, I have avoided suites of excerpts and have looked for complete performances. The choices reflect my own tastes, of course. When several recorded versions of a given work were available, I've tried to select those that suggested the theater rather than the concert hall, recordings that made me want to get up and dance.

In the last ten years there have been many first recordings of unusual ballet scores. Richard Bonynge has been especially active in recording nineteenth- and early twentieth-century works for London, and Angel and Columbia have released some fascinating items from the Russian Melodiya catalog. A selection of my preferences among these less usual works is appended for those who wish to go a little beyond the basics. All these records have given me immense pleasure, and I hope they will do the same for you. But move some of the furniture out of the way before you start listening.

- **HEROLD: La Fille Mal Gardée** (excerpts). Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, John Lanchbery cond. LONDON CS 6252.

The only ballets of the eighteenth century still performed are the comedies Whims of Cupid and the Ballet Master (preserved by the Royal Danish Ballet) and La Fille Mal Gardée, which has been danced in recent years by American Ballet Theatre, the Joffrey Ballet Company, and the Royal Ballet of Britain. Dating from 1789, La Fille Mal Gardée is the oldest ballet in the international repertoire. Its story about a vivacious peasant girl who circumvents her mother's plans to marry her off to a rich suitor still amuses audiences.

The score for the first production in Bordeaux was the work of various hands. Louis-Joseph-Ferdinand Hérod provided a new score in 1828, and Peter Ludwig Hertel composed yet another in 1864. This recording derives from the Hérod score as arranged by conductor Lanchbery for Frederick Ashton's new version of the ballet premiered in 1960 in London. It includes a clog dance from the Hertel version and some melodies borrowed from Donizetti operas and interpolated for Fanny Elssler in 1837. It's a witty, melodious score conducted authoritatively by Lanchbery. Be careful going over the coffee table.

- **ADAM: Giselle.** London Symphony Orchestra, Anatole Fistoulari cond. MERCURY SRI 2-77003 two discs.

In discussing ballet, the terms "Romantic" and "Classic" do not conform to the period to which they refer in music history. In ballet the Romantic period occurred in the middle of the nineteenth century when Paris was the dance center of the world. The Classic period came later in the century and reached its culmination in Russia. But the music composed for ballets in both periods is Romantic.

Giselle, premiered in 1841, was not the first Romantic ballet, but it has been the most enduring one. Sometimes described as the Hamlet of the ballet repertoire, it has a mythic quality that goes beyond its rather simple story of a peasant girl betrayed by her aristocratic lover. Dancers who have specialized in the roles of Giselle and her lover Albrecht have been among the most famous in history, and balletomanes argue endlessly about Carla Fracci's Giselle as compared with Natalia Makarova's, about Igor Youskevitch's Albrecht as compared with Erik Bruhn's.

No ballet season is complete for me unless I get a few more performances of Giselle under my belt. I love Adolphe Adam's charming, theatrically effective score, and I love Fistoulari's recording of it. He toured with Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, and his experience conducting for dancers is evident in this very idiomatic, "dancey" performance. It is the same one recommended in our 1967 basic library, but it has since been subjected to a sensational remastering job and is now available in excellent sound on European pressings in the Mercury Gold Imports series.

My only quibble with this recording has to do with the edition Fistoulari conducts. It observes most of the cuts that are standard in performances in the theater—and then some. Where for example, is the repeat of Giselle's first dance when she emerges from the grave in Act Two? A more scholarly version, which includes some music I'd never heard before, is conducted by Richard Bonynge on London 2226, and some listeners might prefer that one—but mostly for its completeness.
DELIBES: Coppélia. Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati cond. MERCURY SR1 2-77004 two discs.

Like Giselle, Swanilda, the heroine of Coppélia, is a peasant girl in love, but she is a great deal more practical than Giselle, and after a suitable amount of intrigue and dancing around, she gets her man. Giselle is the great tragedy of ballet's Romantic period; Coppélia is the period's great comedy.

Musically, Coppélia is considered a landmark in ballet history because of the high quality of its score, which is more sophisticated than most of the ballet music that preceded it. In Coppélia the music was integrated with the story as never before in a narrative ballet. The melodies that seem hackneyed when played as salon music in Muzak-like arrangements are still fresh and sparkling in a good performance of the complete score, and Delibes is ranked with Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky in the triumvirate of great ballet composers. In 1967, Mr. Barnes and I lamented the deletion from the catalog of the Mercury recording of Coppélia conducted by Antal Dorati, who, like Fistoulari, paid his dues as a conductor in the pit of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. I am happy to report that this performance has been restored in Mercury's Golden Imports series. The remastering, though less impressive than that of Fistoulari's Giselle, is satisfactory.

My second choice would be Yuri Fayer's performance on Melodiya/Angel SRB 4111, which has a good bit of theatrical snap and brilliance. The brand new recording by Jean-Baptiste Mari (Angel SB 3843) has a great deal of silkier Gallic elegance to recommend it, but there is insufficient brio for my taste. Ernest Ansermet's somewhat gentle performance is a good buy on London's budget-price Stereo Treasury series (STS 15371/2).

TCHAIKOVSKY: Swan Lake. Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, Anatole Fistoulari cond. LONDON PHASE FOUR 21101/2/3 three discs.


It sometimes seems that everything Tchaikovsky ever wrote, except his letters to Mme. von Meck, has been used at one time or another for a ballet score—symphonies, piano concertos, fantasy overtures, tone poems, orchestral suites, and piano pieces. But these three monumental works of ballet's Classical period suffice to give Tchaikovsky the status in the dance world that Verdi and Wagner have in opera. Swan Lake, Sleeping Beauty, and The Nutcracker, all three with fairy-tale librettos, simply are ballet to many dance fans, and they would cheerfully go to see one or the other every night. Swan Lake and Sleeping Beauty made the first music reputation of England's Royal Ballet, and they have sustained it. All three of these works are now in the repertoire of American Ballet Theatre. The New York City Ballet's Nutcracker has become new in this listing is Fistoulari's Swan Lake, and I react to it as I did to Carlos Kleiber's recording of Beethoven's Fifth. It's the aural equivalent of seeing a familiar painting cleaned of years of accumulated grime. It sparkles, it glitters, and best of all, it dances. A lot of scholarship has gone into reconstructing the score of Swan Lake as it was initially presented (unsuccessfully) in 1877. I am not a purist about this score and would actually prefer to have the music from the end of Act One (beginning on side two of Fistoulari's recording) placed where it is customarily performed as the music for the Black Swan pas de deux in Act Three. But the music is all there somewhere on the records, the original Act Three music on side five is quite beautiful, and Ruggiero Ricci's solo violin playing is glorious. If you buy only one recording from this list, I suggest that you celebrate the centenary of Swan Lake by acquiring this one.

CHOPIN: Les Sylphides, Philharmonia Orchestra, Charles Mackerras cond. ANGEL S 35833.

Chopin never composed ballet music, but a group of his piano pieces was orchestrated to form the score of Michel Fokine's plotless evocation of the Romatic ballet. The first work ever performed by the American Ballet Theatre (in 1940), Les Sylphides is a repertoire staple in that company and many others. I have seen so many bad performances of it that I feel about Les Sylphides the way I do when confronted with Puccini's Tosca in the opera house—oh, not that damned thing again! But a good performance of Sylphides, like a good Tosca, grabs me every time. Mackerras has theater sense acquired as a conductor of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, and, as you must have figured out, I give extra points for that. His recording of Sylphides, though not new, has proved to be very durable. Its inclusion...
Rossini wrote a great deal of ballet music to be included with his operas, and a good recording of it is available on Philips 6780 027, a two-disc set with Antonio de Almeida conducting the Orchestre National de l’Opéra de Monte Carlo. But La Boutique Fantasque with a score of Rossini melodies arranged by Ottorino Respighi was among the great ballets Boris Lermontov (Anton Walbrook) promised to revive for Victoria Page (Moira Shearer) in the movie The Red Shoes. Was it such a great ballet? I don’t know; I’ve never seen it. Like The Three Cornered Hat, it could do what he could not. Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes and is not often performed today. But its lively score endures on records, and Solti’s is the most durable performance.

Rossini’s popular score.

Jorge Donn leaps athletically in Maurice Bejart’s version of The Rite of Spring, set to Stravinsky’s popular score.

Stravinsky was the greatest ballet composer of the 20th century. With his music, he created some of the most memorable and influential ballets, including Le Sacre du Printemps, Petrushka, and The Firebird.

Stravinsky’s drive for innovation and his love of the Parisian ballet scene led him to collaborate with Diaghilev. Their partnership resulted in some of the most admired ballets of the 20th century, including Pulcinella and Les Noces.

Stravinsky's music has had a lasting influence on ballet music, and his contributions to the genre are still celebrated today. The Royal Ballet, for example, continues to perform his ballets, and many other companies have incorporated his works into their repertoires.

Stravinsky’s music is also notable for its technical complexity and its ability to engage the ears of listeners who are not necessarily ballet enthusiasts.

The Royal Ballet performed the complete Firebird, set to Stravinsky’s music, in 1974. The performance was considered a landmark event in the history of ballet and helped to establish Stravinsky as a central figure in the development of the modern ballet genre.

Since the 1970s, Stravinsky’s ballets have enjoyed a resurgence of interest, and many of his works are now performed regularly by leading ballet companies around the world.

Stravinsky’s music remains a vital and dynamic force in the world of ballet, and his influence continues to shape the music and choreography of ballets today.
season were two Americans, Eugene Loring and Agnes de Mille, both relatively young and unknown. Their first works for the company disappeared quickly, but his *Billy the Kid* and her *Rodeo*, both created (for other companies) to scores by Aaron Copland, became among ABT’s greatest hits. Just as Copland’s music incorporated American folk elements, their choreography included American dance forms and movements then thought to be more appropriate to modern dance than classical ballet. Ballet in America has never been the same since. They opened doors and Jerome Robbins was quick to come through it in 1944 with *Fancy Free*, a ballet about three sailors on shore leave, set to a jazzy score by Bernstein. The public loved it so much that Bernstein and Robbins expanded it into the Broadway musical *On the Town*. Both Miss de Mille and Robbins had great success choreographing musical comedies, but they did not turn their backs on ballet. Their artistic progeny, who have continued to narrow the gap between modern dance and ballet and to widen ballet’s range of subject matter and style, are too numerous to mention.


Richard Bonynge has been tireless in searching out and recording the big solos and pas de deux with which great dancers have thrilled their audiences, and many of these star turns are recorded here for the first (and only) time. Anna Pavlova, one of the greatest ballet dancers in history, was very astute in selecting what would show her work off to best advantage, but her choices were often hard to defend on purely musical grounds. Dame Alicia Markova worked with Bonynge on “The Art of the Prima Ballerina...” and all three albums have a fine exhibitionistic authenticity. Compared with such a great score as Prokofiev’s *Romeo and Juliet*, many of these excerpts and short pieces are ballet’s equivalent of disco. Much of the music is trashy, but it’s a lot of fun. If you are too inhibited to do *pièces* and pirouettes in the family room, I think you will find that this very rhythmic music will speed up such chores as washing windows and painting, and it’s marvelous accompaniment if you go in for morning push-ups and sit-ups. After all, it helps keep dancers in great shape.
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"His execution . . . killed the gold fishes and stunned the canaries all the way out to the packing plant. . . ."

The sort of exultant, unabashed virtuosity exhibited on a new Nonesuch disc called “Cousins—Polkas, Waltzes, and other Entertainments for Cornet and Trombone” is always a delight in itself, but it is doubly delightful to have it lavished on such a surprising and altogether irresistible souvenir of a vanished era. Where, today, does one come across these gems—or, coming across them, can one hear them played with such spectacular aplomb? That they should be taken up with obvious affection by principals of the New York Philharmonic (trumpeter Gerard Schwarz) and the Boston Symphony (trombonist Ronald Barron) is only fitting, for they are for the most part challenging display pieces written by the most celebrated performers of their time—the brilliant Herbert L. Clarke, the immortal Arthur Pryor.

Robert Offergeld’s characteristically thorough annotation, easily worth the price of admission in its own right, identifies the composers, some of whom did not play these instruments (one of them was even a music critic), but the good-natured brilliance of the music is something that really cannot be described. (Not that some have not tried. The notes quote an Omaha newspaper review of boy-wonder Pryor in the 1880’s: “His execution set the prairies afire; his vibrating pedal tones rattled the windows of the Theater and killed the gold fishes and stunned the canaries all the way out to the packing plant. . . .”) The rapid-fire triple-tonguing and swells of pure golden tone, the cantabile sections, the sassy “smears” in Henry Fillmore’s outrageous Trombone Family, the feeling of exuberant comradeship in the duets and trios—these are enough to enchant the heart of anyone who might have thought his allegiance was only to Du-fay, Dvořák, or Dallapiccola.

Sensational as the brass players are, Kenneth Cooper’s stylish keyboard accompaniment identifies him as a full and splendid partner, and the extremely lifelike sound is the final touch in making this happy package so extraordinarily effective: it is ideally focused, comfortably “open,” and, combined with the unusually silent surfaces, presents an all but visible image of the burnished brass. In short, this disc is a knockout.

—Richard Freed

Cousins—Polkas, Waltzes, and other Entertainments for Cornet and Trombone. Clarke: Cousins; The Maid of the Mist, Polka; Twilight Dreams, Waltz Intermezzo. Pryor: Blue Bells of Scotland; Polka, Exposition Echos; Thoughts of Love, Valse de Concert. Hanneberg: Triplets of the Finest, Concert Polka. Fillmore: Trombone Family. Gum-
PLACIDO DOMINGO

BERT: Cheerfulness. BUCHTEL: Polka Dots. SMITH: The Cascades, Polka Brilliant. GERARD SCHWARZ, ALLAN DEAN, AND MARK GOULD (cornets); RONALD BARRON, NORMAN BOLTER, AND DOUGLAS EDELMAN (trombones); KENNETH COOPER (piano). NONESUCH H-71341 $3.96.

TITO GOBBI

PUCCINI: Gianni Schicchi. Tito Gobbi (baritone), Gianni Schicchi; Ileana Cotrubas (soprano), Lauretta; ANNA DI STASIO (contralto), Zita; PLACIDO DOMINGO (tenor), Rinuccio; FIORINDO ANDREOLI (tenor), Gherardo; SCILLY FORTUNATO (soprano), Nella; ALFREDO MARIOTTI (baritone), BETTO; GIANNARO LUCCARDI (bass), Simone; STEFANIA MALAGU (mezzosoprano), La Ciesca; LEO PUDIS (baritone), Spinelloccio; GUIDO MAZZINI (baritone), Notary; others. LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, LORIN MAAZEL cond. COLUMBIA M 34534 $7.98.

Benjamin Luxon:

Benjamin Luxon: Rocked in the Cradle Of the Deep and Other Maligned Old Favorites

Benjamin Luxon is a baritone whose striking vocal and dramatic gifts have been heard in English-made recordings of operas and art songs from Delius to Moussorgsky. In a new two-record set from ARGO called "Give Me a Ticket to Heaven," he applies his marvelous voice and exceptional talent for interpretation to a program made up largely of forgotten ballads whose composers were destined to remain less famous than the poets (Kipling, Tennyson, and others) who supplied the texts. Even those songs that have not been completely forgotten, hardy perennials from a more sentimental age,
have never sounded so good—Rasbach’s setting of Joyce Kilmer’s Trees, for example; Huhn’s of W. E. Henley’s bloody, unbowed, and still impressively stoical Invictus; or the two-hundred-proof Irish of Clover’s Rose of Tralee.

Luxon sings all these warhorses, long since put out to pasture, with a power and a conviction that are simply overwhelming. He does the same for Mascagni’s Ave Maria, for the anonymous but utterly charming children’s ballad Mr. Shadowman (where he supplies a jauntily whistled chorus), and for a number of other songs, both secular and religious, which once brought tears to the eyes of nineteenth-century recital audiences on both sides of the Atlantic.

It may be argued that some of these items richly deserve forgetting; I will merely point out that it is a proposition impossible to entertain while Mr. Luxon, superbly accompanied by pianist David Willison, is singing them. It is, as far as subject matter goes, a rather melancholy concert, but it is a splendid one nonetheless, entirely free of arch kid-ding or of camp. And remember that if we judge our forebears solely by the music they listened to, someone is bound, one day, to do as much for us.

—Paul Kresh

Cleo Laine with an Audience: More Color, More Drama, More Feeling

My last high note knocked my ear-ring off,” Cleo Laine announces to her cheering audience just after she’s finished a performance of Noel Coward’s London Pride that the master himself would have loved. That moment is preserved on her new RCA album “Return to Carnegie,” along with a collection of songs that will knock your head off and permanently dispel any reservations you may still have about her being only a cult artist revered by musicians but just-too-Damned-Much for everyday listening.

I will here confess that this was exactly my opinion for a long time. It began to change only recently, most particularly after hearing her spectacular work as Bess in the jazz version of Gershwin’s Porgy and Bess RCA released last year (CPSZ-1831). Mostly, though, I’ve had to deal with my grudging admiration for the technical ability she has displayed in her recordings even as I wished she’d stop fiddling around with lyric meaning whenever it got in the way of showing off her vocal range. No such trouble on the present “Return to Carnegie” however—just an extraordinarily gifted actress-singer radiating first-class musicianship, enormous intelligence, and wit.

The presence of an audience seems to ignite Laine in a way that I’ve never heard in her other recordings. She takes command from the moment of her entrance with Blues in the Night and doesn’t let go of our attention until the final chord of her closing song, Be a Child. In between she sings such things as Streets of London and the aforementioned London Pride with all the show-stopping excitement of a Thames-side Judy Garland. She also busses Sigmund Romberg’s slumbering One Alone into living, breathing pop life and weaves two extended medleys in each of which she manages to make a long-neglected piece of the musical past unforgettable (Gershwin’s By Strauss for one, and a little bit of nonsense called Broadway Baby for another—it is an exquisite send-up of all those singers of dread memory who are given to onstage attacks of the Pouting Cutes).

Through it all, there is the glory of Laine’s voice, big, flexible, and gloriously secure as always—except that this time out I notice many more mood-filled colorings, more levels of dramatic meaning, and more nuances of feeling.

(Continued overleaf)
So okay, Cleo, you’ve got me. Now just what do you intend to do with me?
-Peter Reilly

CLEO LAINE: Return to Carnegie. Cleo Laine (vocals); orchestra. Blues in the Night; How Long; Streets of London; London Pride; Direction; Medley—Company/Miller’s Son/Broadway Baby; Being Alive; Born on a Friday; One Alone; Medley—I Got the Music in Me/Fascinating Rhythm/Jazzman/By Strauss/I Gotta Right to Sing the Blues/Don’t Mean a Thing If It Ain’t Got That Swing/Playoff; Be a Child. RCA APL-1-2407 $6.98. ® APS1-2407 $7.95, APK1-2407 $7.95.

George Jones:
The New King of Country Music Wants to Sing

Is that Roy Acuff I hear, making a move to turn in his yo-yo? Those who’ve already taken to calling George Jones the king of country music are going to do it even louder when they hear Jones’ new “I Wanta Sing” for Epic.

This may not be the album we’ve been waiting for Jones to make, but it’s an album we’ve been waiting for, one in which several good things about Jones’ talent and about country music coalesce, and it comes at the crest of a new excitement about Jones. A few more efforts like this and he will have bent the future of Nashville.

Every now and then country music “discovers” someone who has been around for years (in some cases selling a lot of records for those same years) and gets all in a dither about how underrated this great artist has been in the past. It happened to Charlie Rich not too long ago, you’ll recall. It’s happening to George Jones now, and he is (has been) every bit the talent they say he is and—more portentous for the immediate future of the genre, copy cats thriving in it as they do—he will influence the music back toward hard country, the opposite direction, roughly, from that taken by jazz singer Rich. Jones is produced by Billy Sherrill these days, and Billy likes to layer on globs oforchestrated Nashville Sound—but he hasn’t this time. Here he has gone with George’s instinct for traditional country, and the result is a sad and funny album of some integrity.

Jones comes about as close as any singer I’ve heard to actually bleeding for his art. The way he sings, back to back, Please Don’t Sell Me Anymore

Whiskey Tonight and They’ve Got Millions in Milwaukee (“... thanks to guys like me”) creates some of the keenest pathos one could get from any toast of Nashville. Here’s Jones, with a real drinking problem that may yet become as well publicized as Farrah Fawcett-Majors’ chevelure, and here are these two would-be “fun” songs on that same subject, one a sort of set piece for a melodrama on the order of Please Daddy Don’t Get Drunk This Christmas, and the other a standard country novelty tune, honky-tonk division, turning mainly on a wry and (the writers surely hope) catchy phrase. You wouldn’t dream of taking either seriously with 99 per cent of the singers singing them, but Jones is going to make your response a lot more complicated, a lacy pattern of contradictions, for he manages to get all the meaning out of them.

So you get that Old King Kong as well, the sort of country joke he and Buck Owens used to try to top each other doing. There’s also a song that touches bases with both CB radio and Jesus, some good, solid, three-chord country songs in between, and the most impressive singing anybody’s recorded in years. If you’re willing to cut up the back of the jacket (“It’s OK, it’s yours,” the instructions say—I love that), you also get a cardboard model of George Jones’ bus. —Noel Coppage
B. J. Thomas Delivers Some of the Best Pop Vocals to Be Heard on This Planet

Give a cheer, ladies and gents, for a pro. On his eponymously titled latest recording, B. J. Thomas delivers some of the best pop vocals to be heard on this planet. He has been doing this for quite some few years now, and with the recent loss of Elvis Presley it is probable that Thomas can be ranked as the most artistically important pop baritone in this country.

The comparison between Thomas and Presley is not whimsical: Presley had a unique feel for the pop song, which he used as a showcase for his voice and as a challenge for his interpretive artistry. In pop-rock, both Presley and Thomas (Sinatra and Crosby do the same in straight pop) emphasize lyrical content, and this requires that the singer concentrate on the text, that he know and feel the emotions of the song. This means he must size up the character doing the singing, imagine the other character(s) he is singing to, and create a credible dramatic situation. The tools he uses are phrasing, vocal color, rhythm, ornament, and dramatic intensity, and in expert hands these are not wasted even when applied to the simplest materials.

Presley seldom gave a bad performance of a song no matter what its merits. The same holds true for Thomas. When a singer with Thomas' skill and insight continues to practice his art so well for so many years, there is a tendency to take him for granted. He shouldn't be: these days we need all the superior pop singers we can get. Starting in the very early Sixties (when he recorded I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry at a small Texas studio), on through the middle and late years of that decade (when he hit with Hooked on a Feeling and Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head), and now into the Seventies (with Somebody Done Somebody Wrong Song), Thomas' mellow and agile baritone has graced whatever material he sang. It is not only that he often had good, sturdy tunes to sing, but that he sang them so well.

His current album is a case in point. The featured song, Don't Worry Baby, is a fine Sixties Beach Boys tune. Most of the rest of the material, contributed by various writers including Mac Davis, Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil, Troy Seals, Dennis Linde, Donny Fritts, and others, is also of A-1 quality. There are only two dog tunes on the whole album, but even with them Thomas pulls off convincing performances. The album does not pretend to be a work of art; it is straight-ahead, top-forty pop meant for an adult audience, with a few uncompromising references to The Kids tossed in as freebies. But it is so well constructed as a program and so perfectly tailored to Thomas' gifts that it can stand as a definitive example of first-class production and of first-class pop singing.

—Joel Vance
BE-BOP in the Air Age; Ships in the Night; Piece of Bop Deluxe (vocals and instrumentals). Life to stimulate an appetite for more.

...crossover type. While a dash of red jazz touches in its arrangements, mostly of old Fifth Dimension, which employed the others; Saundra “Pan” Alexander exhibits among four of them. Some sing better than girls) perform with exuberance, and their though unexciting, material and a battery of the spice was provided by producer Wayne Henderson, who came up with pleasant, though unexciting, material and a battery of veteran back-up musicians.

The five newcomers (three guys and two girls) perform with exuberance, and their voices blend well, with the lead shifting among four of them. Some sing better than others; Saundra “Pam” Alexander exhibits the most talent. Allspice is funkier than the old Fifth Dimension, which employed the same sexual mix, and there are occasional jazz touches in its arrangements, mostly of the soul-crossover type. While a dash of red pepper might have heightened the flavor of Allspice’s debut album, it is sufficiently tasty to stimulate an appetite for more. P.G.

BE-BOP DELUXE: Live! In the Air Age. Be-Bop Deluxe (vocals and instrumentals). Life in the Air Age; Ships in the Night; Piece of Mine; Fair Exchange; Shine; Sister Seagull; and five others. HARVEST SKB-1166 $6.98, © 8XTT-1166 $7.98, © 4XTT-1166 $7.98.

Performance: Promising
Recording: Very Good

According to the dictionary, allspice is a “mildly sharp” condiment made from the berry of an aromatic tropical tree. Well, the new group of that name is mildly sharp in its appeal, and at least a heaping tablespoon of the spice was provided by producer Wayne Henderson, who came up with pleasant, though unexciting, material and a battery of veteran back-up musicians.

The five newcomers (three guys and two girls) perform with exuberance, and their voices blend well, with the lead shifting among four of them. Some sing better than others; Saundra “Pam” Alexander exhibits the most talent. Allspice is funkier than the old Fifth Dimension, which employed the same sexual mix, and there are occasional jazz touches in its arrangements, mostly of the soul-crossover type. While a dash of red pepper might have heightened the flavor of Allspice’s debut album, it is sufficiently tasty to stimulate an appetite for more. P.G.

ELVIN BISHOP: Raisin’ Hell. Elvin Bishop (guitar, vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Raisin’ Hell; Rock My Soul; Sure Feels Good; Calling All Cows; Jake Joint Jump; Hey, Hey, Hey, Hey; Joy; Stealin’ Watermelons; Little Brown Bird; Yes Sir; and five others. CAPRICHOR 2CP0185 two discs $9.98, © L80185 $9.98, © L30185 $9.98.

Performance: Very good
Recording: Very good

Elvin Bishop is a fine, rowdy fellow with a good-old-boy attitude toward his audiences that his band apparently shares. The cuts from this live album are from five different cities and were recorded over a period of a year.

Bishop’s performances, and those of his hardy and hearty band, are commendable for their cheeriness and stamina. Being on the road is a rough way to go, but this outfit seems to make the best of it—at least they sound glad to be wherever they’re playing. I am usually suspicious of live albums on the grounds that the performances are most often not as good as the studio versions of the same tunes and that one is generally released when the label and/or performer doesn’t know what else to do. But “Raisin’ Hell” really does communicate the excitement of Bishop’s live performances, perhaps because the stage is really more comfortable to him than the studio and his music is meant for howlers and stompers rather than stay-at-homes. The material provides a sturdy background for some shouting and prancing, with the notable exception of Footed Around and Fell in Love, which stands on its own. If by chance you’ve never caught a Bishop concert, this two-disc set is, truly, the next best thing to having been there. J.V.
improved technically, for what that's worth.

Jessi Colter's singing is an acquired taste—it's 8XT-11583 $7.98, 4XT-11583 $7.98.

EPILOGUE

8301-4124(H) $7.95, © 5301-4124(H) $7.95.

Performance: Bloated

Recording: Good

Once upon a time, Eric Carmen was a modest young man who had a knack for crafting catchy little homages to Paul McCartney, Brian Wilson, and the Brill Building staffers of the Sixties plus a nice little flair for the pop single. Eric is still a modest young man (who, as Churchill put it, has much to be modest about), but now he is suffering from terminal Neil Diamonditis, a particularly nasty syndrome that transforms talented purveyors of pop music for Norton Buffalo.

N.C.

ERIC CARMEN: Boats Against the Current. Eric Carmen (vocals, keyboards, guitars); David Winton (bass); Jeff Porcaro (drums); other musicians. Boats Against the Current; Marathon Man; Nowhere to Hide; She Did It; and four others. ARISTA AB 4124 $7.98, © 8301-4124(H) $7.95, © 5301-4124(H) $7.95.

Performance: Bloated

Recording: Good

LET me read a little something to you if I may:

"See the Stone Poneys. See Linda Ronstadt. Linda is pretty. Linda sings. Linda sings like Mary. I like Peter, Paul, and Mary. Do you like Peter, Paul, and Mary? The Stone Poneys like Peter, Paul, and Mary. The Stone Poneys try to sing like Peter, Paul, and Mary. The Stone Poneys are copy-cats. I don't like the Stone Poneys. I don't like copy-cats. Do you like copy-cats? Then you may like the Stone Poneys. Have you bought every album Peter, Paul, and Mary have made? You have? You have a lot of money. Spend your money. Buy tapes of Peter, Paul, and Mary. Forget the Stone Poneys. But see Linda Ronstadt. Linda is very, very pretty."

That was Peter Reilly reviewing the Stone Poneys (Capitol ST 2666) in Stereo Review in May 1967. If it transgresses slightly against the Reviewer's First Commandment—"Thou shalt review the art, not the artist!" (the Second Commandment is "Thou shalt not review the audience")—it perhaps does so because there was, at the time, very little art to review. But that has all changed now: Dick and Jane are married and living in Phoenix, the Stone Poneys have been forgotten, and the little ffilly who sang with them has gone on to become a consistent winner in the pop-vocal sweepstakes. She is still pretty, and that prettiness is still noticed, not as much as her vocal artistry is. She no longer sounds like Mary Travers but like herself, a finished musician who has polished her abundant natural gifts by "tending to business" as much as Elvis ever did.

One characteristic of those gifts is her habit of pouncing on a song with the first lyric line in such a way that your attention is immediately seized. It is, I would judge, an even more effective way of getting attention than (merely!) being pretty: it seems to work even when the song she is attacking is scarcely worth the trouble—and you appreciate the effort all the more. Her latest album, "Simple Dreams," is a case in point. For me, its weakest songs are Warren Zevon's tuneful CARMELITA (a very personal topology—Ensenada, Echo Park, Alvarado Street, the Pioneer Chicken stand—make it impossible for anyone but provincial Los Angeles to relate to). It's Poor Poor Pitiful Me (famously marred by a sily, set-up rhyme—"He was a credit to his gender! . . . So of a Waring blender"). and Mick Jagger and Keith Richards' mock-macho Tumbling Dice (cleverness for cleverness' sake—"I don't need your jewels in my frown") . . . yes, that's flawed. Despite their unpromising first lines ("I hear mariachi static on my radio," "Well, I lay my head on the railroad track," and "People try to rape me," respectively), Ronstadt manages to hold your attention and make you care (a little) how they come out.

WHAT she can do with a good song, however, is just marvelous. If you want to know what happened to rock-and-roll (it's sick and living in London, according to Rolling Stone), Ronstadt tells you, not very subtly, here: they stopped writing songs like Buddy Holly and Norman Petty's It's So Easy (To Fall In Love), a lovable song lovingly performed. The traditional I Never Will Marry is poignantly, tenderly impressive, quite enough, with Dolly Parton (!) contributing folk harmony, to give the McGarrigle sisters a turn. And who else but Linda Ronstadt would be bold enough to close her program with an affectionate reading of that almost forgotten cowboy lament Old Paint? The first lines of these three are "It's so easy to fall in love," "They say that love's a gentle thing," and "I ride an old paint." None of them are what you would call a piece of cake in the attention-grabbing department, but you wouldn't dream of cutting them off once Linda gets those first few notes into your ear.

The album was mixed using a psychoacoustic something called the Aphex Aural Exciter system. I don't know just what it is, or even what it does, but I think you will like it. —William Anderson

LINDA RONSTADT: Simple Dreams. Linda Ronstadt (vocals, guitar); Dan Dunmore (acoustic guitar); Waddy Wachtel (electric guitar); Kenny Edwards (bass); Rick Marotta (drums); other musicians. It's So Easy; CARMELITA; Simple Man; Simple Dream; Sorrow Lives Here; I Never Will Marry; Blue Bayou; Poor Poor Pitiful Me; Maybe I'm Right; Tumbling Dice; Old Paint. ASYLUM 6E-104 $7.98, © ET-8104 $7.98, © TC-5104 $7.98.
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but she writes a very nice tune now and then, and a little less often she comes up with an affecting lyric. Writing is her stronger suit, and here she's done what appears to be about two-thirds of a "songs of faith" album from scratch. It not only has an odd mix of songs, but there is an interesting secular tone to the ones about God. The ability to come to the edge, lean over, and look into the Gulf of Bads Taste sometimes serves Colter well, particularly in For Mama, a strange, raw thing. A lot of her tunes sound a little tired, though, and trying to figure out what in the (pardon the expression) hell she was trying to accomplish with the overall theme is maybe a little more trouble than it's worth.

N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT
RY COODER: Show Time. Ry Cooder (vocals, guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. School Is Out; Alimony; Jesus on the Mainline; The Dark End of the Street; Viva Sequin/Do Re Mi; Volver, Volver; and two others. WARNER BROS. BS 3059 $6.98, © M83059 $7.98, © M53059 $7.98.

Performance: Excellent
Recording: Clean

I continue to marvel at Ry Cooder's nice sense of antiquity in his choice of material. The program on this, his first released live album, includes two Fifties r&b/rock-'n'-roll top-forty numbers, School Is Out and Smack Dab in the Middle, as well as a Thirties spiritual (Jesus on the Mainline), two Dustbowl ditties (from the Great Depression (Do Re Mi and How Can a Poor Man Stand Such Times and Live), and a jump-dance tune and romantic ballad from Mexico (Viva Sequin and Volver, Volver). I have no idea where Cooder found the bitter and hilarious Alimony but I'm glad he did. To complete the roundup there is the brilliant The Dark End of the Street, a Sixties ballad of adultery and guilt written by Dan Penn and Chips Moman.

Cooder is not much of a singer, but he doesn't let that stand in his way. He presses on valiantly and manages to be true to the sentiments of the song. As a guitarist, though, he is something else again. People are used to hearing pop guitar players make a lot of noise or play flurries of notes to demonstrate their agility. Few guitarists today understand the use of tension and relaxation in playing, especially at medium tempos. Where there is space in a tune—a hole to fill—most pickers try to stuff it with bluster because they don't have the imagination to do anything else. Cooder, however, is an expert at filling the holes with exquisite ideas, short phrases, sustained and stretched tones, and dramatic inchings toward the resolution of a solo idea—in other words, this man thinks as he plays, making knowledgeable decisions that are right for the tune he is playing. He is, God be praised, a real musician.

J.V.

DONOVAN. Donovan Leitch (vocals, guitar, harmonica); instrumental accompaniment. Lady of the Stars; Sing My Song; Maya's Dance; The Light; Astral Angel; Dare to Be Different; and four others. ARISTA AB 4143 $6.98, © 8301-4143 $7.95, © 5301-4143 $7.95.

Performance: Fair
Recording: Excellent

Poor Donovan. Only a few years ago he seemed to be one of the few pop poets deserv-
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Andy Pratt: Cheer Up—You're a Winner!

Do you want to... get in control of your life? get in touch with the better part of your character? let love conquer all? Well, you can, if you believe Andy Pratt. He says that all that happened to him after he enrolled in the Boston Life Institute. "It's magic," says Pratt, who makes records as well as promises. "It changed my life."

Enthusiastic converts usually write boring books or record ponderous albums. Not Pratt. Even though his recent albums have been about his transformation, he sings about it without preaching. Pratt is a man with a past. In the music business, he had what is known as a Bad Rep. He has been described as, among other things, confused, frustrated, and at loose ends, and his history bears these characterizations out. In 1973 he quit right in the middle of a successful tour because he was feeling, he said, "aimless, scared, and confused."

When his band broke up, he very nearly had a nervous breakdown. Pratt would take an uneasy two or three years between albums back then, and he went through more therapy than you could shake a couch at. It all became just too much to handle in 1975 when his father died and Columbia Records suddenly dropped him. That's when he entered the Life Institute. It must have done something good for him, since he popped up last year with an astonishing, superb comeback album, "Resolution."

And now he's followed that one up with "Shiver in the Night."

You shouldn't need to know someone's psychiatric history to judge his artistry, but with Pratt they are too close to untangle. In the bad old days, he conveyed his pain in every cut on his records. There was a tentative-ness about his work, so that as you listened to side one you wondered if he would make it all the way through to the end of side two.

That's all different now. "Shiver in the Night" is so stunning, so positive, so—right, I'll say it—so uplifting that it makes me smile. "The song has been written as if on a loom, in layer upon layer of orchestration, solo instruments, voice, and more voice, all carefully integrated. It's not a concept album, but each song is a collage of musical elements, as though Pratt and Mardin started out to make a simple soup but kept adding ingredients until they created a gourmet treat—an album which nonetheless somehow manages to retain the basic flavor of the original recipe. For all its complexity, this is rock-and-roll in the purest sense. "Shiver" shimmers."

Plainly, Pratt is more comfortable, more relaxed with himself than ever before, for "Shiver in the Night" is loaded with love songs. They are addressed to various people, but ultimately they are all paens of self-affirmation. One of the most exciting is Rainbow: "Deep inside there's a song so bright/Take me higher in its rainbow flight/Oooh Jesus—I got a rainbow in my life. . . ." The most touching and eloquent song is the final cut, Born to Learn, a sweeping statement of commitment.

PRATT'S music is full of contradictions, full of tension: love lyrics are set to harsh chord arrangements and fast-tempo tunes, tender words are set to grand melodies, and the simple line "I wanna see you dance" is turned into a taunt. Yet there is a basic sweetness to all these songs, and not a touch of bitterness. The album cover photo haunts me, though. Pratt looks so pained, so vulnerable, that I was afraid to remove the plastic shrink wrap; So Faint; Keep Your Dream Alive; Landscape; What's Important to You; Mama's Getting Love; Dreams; Born to Learn. NEM-PEROR NE 443 $6.98, © NE-TP 443 $7.97, © NE-CS 443 $7.97.

Andy Pratt: Shiver in the Night. Andy Pratt (vocals, piano); instrumental accompaniment. All I Want Is You; Rainbow; I Want to See You Dance; My Love Is So Tender; So Soft; Keep Your Dream Alive; Landscape; What's Important to You; Mama's Getting Love; Dreams; Born to Learn. Nem-Peror NE 443 $6.98, © NE-TP 443 $7.97, © NE-CS 443 $7.97.

Geoffrey Jones: I Want a Winner (see Best of the Month, page 96)

Engelbert Humperdinck: Miracles. Engelbert Humperdinck (vocals); orchestra. I Believe in Miracles; Look at Me; Without You; You Are There; What I Did for Love; and six others. Epic PE 34730 $6.98, © PEA 34730 $7.98, © PET 34730 $7.98.

Performance: For fans

Recording: Good

One of the lesser glories of Western civilization here endows the world with another album of musical bon-bons. Humperdinck's approach to a song has an elephantine logic about it: if he can't goos it to life with his trumpet, then he gingerly tips it over with one enormous foot. If all else fails he sits on it with an enormous thud and presumably thinks about peanuts—which is obviously what he's resorting to here in Without You and Look at Me. What he does to Marvin Hamlish's show-stopping What I Did for Love from A Chorus Line should be enough to send Marvin's mother out with an elephant gun. P.R.

Recording of Special Merit

Danny Kirwan. Danny Kirwan (vocals, guitars); Steve Emery (bass); Jeff Rich (drums); John Cook (piano). I Can Tell, Life Machine; Let It Be; Angel's Delight; Misty River; and six others. DIM DJLPA-9 $6.98.

Performance: Lovely

Recording: Good

Danny Kirwan was responsible for nudging Fleetwood Mac away from blues purism and toward the blatantly pop style they have now parlayed into big bucks. Since his departure from the band, he's become something of a cult figure, and justifiably so; he's an impeccable craftsman both as a guitarist and as a writer. There's more than a bit of Paul McCartney in his basic approach, and at the risk of committing critical heresy I'd venture to say he's probably got more talent than the estimable Buckingham/Nicks team that replaced him.

His new solo effort is more or less a continuation of his work on the two Fleetwood Mac LP's he fronted. The songs have cheerily friendly melodies that take a little listening before they sink in, the vocals are warm and ingratiating, and there are layers upon layers of shimmering guitar lines that never sound cluttered. It's a very laid-back, California kind of music, with an enormous thud and presumably thinks about peanuts—which is obviously what he's resorting to here in Without You and Look at Me. What he does to Marvin Hamlish's show-stopping What I Did for Love from A Chorus Line should be enough to send Marvin's mother out with an elephant gun. P.R.

Recording: Strident

Performance: Good

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Lovers. Jonathan Richman (vocals, guitar, saxophone); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Ice Cream Man; Rockin' Rockin' Leprechauns; Roller Coaster by the Sea; Dodge Veg-O-Matic; Egyptian Reggae; Afternoon; Summer Morning; and six others. BE- DODGE Veg-O-Matic; Egyptian Reggae; Afternoon; Roller Coaster by the Sea; paniment. Ice Cream Man; Rockin' Rockin' Lovers. Jonathan Richman (vocals, guitar, saxophone); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Ice Cream Man; Rockin' Rockin' Leprechauns, in which he exhibits the mental prowess of a four-year-old. I look forward to the album in which he at length returns to the word play and offers his cracked-voice insights into the utterine mysteries.

—Lester Bangs

THE RUMOUR: Max. Rumour (vocals and instrumental); other musicians. Mess with Love; Hard Enough to Show; Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me; Looking After No. 1; Airplane Tonight; and five others. MERCURY SRRM-1-1174 $6.98. © MC-8-1-1174 $7.95. © MCR-4-1-1174 $7.95. 

Performance: Good, but . . . 

Recording: Good

It must be fun being Graham Parker and the Rumour. Parker gets the services of a superb back-up ensemble of the finest British-pub-scene refugees who do a bang-up job of complementing his terrific tunes and impassioned singing, and the Rumour get to do solo albums of their own material, thus avoiding the usual jealousy and competitiveness.

Anyway, the Rumour’s first effort on their own is not as exciting as the two albums they’ve done with Graham, or even quite as consistent as the ones they made when they were Ducks Deluxe and Brinsley Schwarz (which are well worth checking the bargain import bins for). It is, however, a solid piece of r-b that sounds more like the Band, surprisingly, than the Stax/Motown synthesis they had previously been pursuing, and Bob Andrews continues to shine as one of the most thoughtfully lyrical organists in all of rock. It seems silly to call them a “promising” band, as they’ve already more than fulfilled their promise, with Parker, so let’s just say that although “Max” is a fun record, it lacks the total commitment of their work with him. I hope their next one will be a little more intense.

S.S.

LEON AND MARY RUSSELL: Make Love to the Music. Leon Russell (vocals, keyboards, guitar); Mary Russell (vocals); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. Easy Love; Joyful Noise; Now Now Boogie; Say You Will; Make Love to the Music. Leon Russell (vocals, keyboards, guitar); Mary Russell (vocals); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. Easy Love; Joyful Noise; Now Now Boogie; Say You Will; Make Love to the Music. Leon Russell (vocals, keyboards, guitar); Mary Russell (vocals); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. Easy Love; Joyful Noise; Now Now Boogie; Say You Will; Make Love to the Music. Leon Russell (vocals, keyboards, guitar); Mary Russell (vocals); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. Easy Love; Joyful Noise; Now Now Boogie; Say You Will; Make Love to the Music. Leon Russell (vocals, keyboards, guitar); Mary Russell (vocals); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. Easy Love; Joyful Noise; Now Now Boogie; Say You Will; Make Love to the Music. Leon Russell (vocals, keyboards, guitar); Mary Russell (vocals); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. Easy Love; Joyful Noise; Now Now Boogie; Say You Will; Make Love to the Music. Leon Russell (vocals, keyboards, guitar); Mary Russell (vocals); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. Easy Love; Joyful Noise; Now Now Boogie; Say You Will; Make Love to the Music. Leon Russell (vocals, keyboards, guitar); Mary Russell (vocals); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. Easy Love; Joyful Noise; Now Now Boogie; Say You Will; Make Love to the Music. Leon Russell (vocals, keyboards, guitar); Mary Russell (vocals); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. Easy Love; Joyful Noise; Now Now Boogie; Say You Will; Make Love to the Music. Leon Russell (vocals, keyboards, guitar); Mary Russell (vocals); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. Easy Love; Joyful Noise; Now Now Boogie; Say You Will; Make Love to the Music. Leon Russell (vocals, keyboards, guitar); Mary Russell (vocals); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. Easy Love; Joyful Noise; Now Now Boogie; Say You Will; Make Love to the Music. Leon Russell (vocals, keyboards, guitar); Mary Russell (vocals); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. Easy Love; Joyful Noise; Now Now Boogie; Say You Will; Make Love to the Music. Leon Russell (vocals, keyboards, guitar); Mary Russell (vocals); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. Easy Love; Joyful Noise; Now Now Boogie; Say You Will; Make Love to the Music. Leon Russell (vocals, keyboards, guitar); Mary Russell (vocals); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. Easy Love; Joyful Noise; Now Now Boogie; Say You Will; Make Love to the Music. Leon Russell (vocals, keyboards, guitar); Mary Russell (vocals); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. Easy Love; Joyful Noise; Now Now Boogie; Say You Will; Make Love to the Music. Leon Russell (vocals, keyboards, guitar); Mary Russell (vocals); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. Easy Love; Joyful Noise; Now Now Boogie; Say You Will; Make Love to the Music.

Performance: Mechanical

Recording: Murky

Since the mid-Sixties, as pianist, singer, writer, arranger, producer, and organizer, Leon Russell has been responsible for some minor gems as well as a lot of paste. His 1971 recording of his own tune, Delta Lady, is a lone, superb example of what the man can do with all his skills and talents when he is able to focus them.

Russell’s finest achievement as an organizer was the Joe Cocker tour of the late Sixties, which was the peak of Cocker’s brief and sad fame. In the decade since, Russell has released a number of solo albums on his own labels, all of which contain at least one outstanding cut. But that is just the puzzle, for he surrounds these successes with more mere filler than most other mortals would dare try to pass off. Perhaps he just wants to seem busy all the time. The puzzle is whether we should wait for him to do something marvelous again or abandon the lifewatch. Is he a first-rate man or just slow to come to a boil?

Unfortunately, the present outing does not provide any answers. There are tunes that
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Compelling Millie Jackson

The cover of Millie Jackson's latest album, "Feelin' Bitchy," bears the admonition "Please audition before airing." That's polite enough but hardly sufficient to prepare an uninitiated listener for the potent raunch that is Millie Jackson's standard fare. She might well be called the Cassandra of the Bedroom. She talks almost as much as she sings, prophesying doom for trifling women who spend so much time watching soap operas that they overlook their men's needs and making equally dire predictions for lazy men who do not extend the boundaries of their love-making technique.

What elevates Jackson's raunch above the merely obscene is its natural, even humorous, manner of expression. Her spicy comments are as spontaneous as a conversation overheard on a Saturday afternoon in a Black Belt beauty shop, replete with profanity, sexual references, and grammatical imperfections. And she is as relentless as a telephone gossip. Of all the popular soul artists on the scene, Millie Jackson most closely approaches the fundamental earthiness of the classic blues singers, translating their enduring man-woman themes into modern terms and adding the trappings of solid rhythm-'n'-blues.

"Feelin' Bitchy" is fully representative of her talents, with songs and commentary flowing together logically. Though Jackson has written much of her own material in the past, this album is enhanced by the songs of other singers, translating their enduring man-woman themes into modern terms and adding the trappings of solid rhythm-'n'-blues.

While some might be titillated by the explicit sexual references of the long opening track, All the Way Lover, the real highlight of this set is the concluding number, Feelin' Like a Woman, which summarizes what Millie Jackson is all about. Here her singing talent is most apparent. Equipped with a voice that sounds like it's been soaked in whiskey over-night, Millie Jackson can transform even the simplest song into an intimate, compelling statement.

-Millie Jackson: Feelin' Bitchy. Millie Jackson (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. All the Way Lover; Lovin' Your Good Thing Away; Angel in Your Arms; A Little Taste of Outside Love; You Created a Monster; Cheatin' Is; If You're Not Back in Love by Monday; Feelin' Like a Woman. Spring SP-1-6715 $6.98.

The music on "Fork It Over" is an amalgam of pop, rock, light jazz, and what can only be described as "the West Coast sound." As played by the Section, it is pixelated and sometimes gently hilarious. They have fused all the arrangements they've ever heard or been required to play—from neo-folk to fake-symphonic—and transformed them into satires. Suckers on Parade and Hamsters of Doom are two especially satisfying examples.

The album is nearly all instrumental, but David Crosby sings wordless ooh-be-doo stuff on Magnetic Lady and James Taylor, an old chum and bandmate of Kortchmar's from the 1967 Flying Machine days, takes on the daffy lyrics of Bad Shoes. This album is well worth several hearings.

-Strawbs: Burning for You. Strawbs (vocals and instruments). Burning for Me; Cut Like a Diamond; I Feel Your Loving Coming On; Barcarole; Alexander the Great; Keep On Trying; and four others. Oyster OY-1-1604 $6.98, ® 8T1-1604 $7.98, ® CT1-1604 $7.98.

Performance: Witty
Recording: Very Good

Messrs. Kortchmar, Kunkel, Doerge, and Sklar are Los Angeles studio musicians; among them they have backed up just about every major or minor artist who ever cut a record in that town. It is perhaps surprising that the quartet has much energy left, having ploughed through thousands of sessions over the years, but studio men are a hardy breed.

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-J.V.
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Julian S. Martin
HI-FI STEREO BUYERS' GUIDE, March-April, 1976
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The Len Feldman Lab Report
TAPE DECK QUARTERLY, Winter, 1975
"Response of these phones extends uniformly from 20 Hz to over 22,000 Hz with no more than ±2dB variation over this entire range...this is nothing short of incredible."

New Equipment Reports
HIGH FIDELITY, January, 1976
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Recording of Special Merit
JOHNNY WINTER: Nothing but the Blues. Johnny Winter (vocals, guitars); Muddy Waters (vocals); James Cotton (harmonica); "Pine Top" Perkins (piano); Bob Margolin (electric guitar); Charles Calmese (electric bass), Willie "Big Eyes" Smith (drums). Tired of Tryin'; TV Mama; Sweet Love and Evil Women; Everybody's Blues; Drinkin' Blues; and four others. BLUE SKY PZ 34813 $6.98, © PZA-34033 $6.98, © PZ1-34033 $6.98.

Performance: Excellent
Recording: Good

Johnny Winter was the victim of late-1960's hype in which he was cast as the guitarist, the one who would put everyone else out of business. Despite the inevitable negative results of the hype, he built up an audience over the years by issuing a stream of albums on which he played flashy guitar and growled his way through vocals. His albums have generally been facile but dreary—until this one.

Here Winter plays the post-World War II urban blues personified by Muddy Waters (who is along on this date), Elmore James, Howlin' Wolf, Little Walter, and others. For the first time in his recording career, Winter cuts out the fooling around and just plays, and much of what he does is perfectly fine. With the exception of Waters' Walking thru the Park, the material is by Winter, and he closely follows the models of the masters. He is nobly aided by pianist "Pine Top" Perkins, harmonica man James Cotton, and drummer Willie "Big Eyes" Smith, all veteran bluesmen. This is a surprising and uplifting Winter album, doubtless the best he has ever made.

J. V.

MECO: Star Wars and Other Galactic Funk. Meco (instrumentals). Title Theme; Imperial Attack; The Desert and the Robot Auction; The Princess Appears; The Land of the Sand People; Princess Leia's Theme; and four others. MILLENIUM MNLP 8001 $6.98, © MLN8-8001 $7.98, © MLN5-8001 $7.98.

Performance: Fun
Recording: Could be spacier

Well, everybody, here's your chance to dance your way through a movie. The movie is Star Wars and the beat is disco. You can close your eyes and pretend you're in outer space (or Hollywood at least) as most of the impor-
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CIRCLE NO. 13 ON READER SERVICE CARD
A new album titled "Analine" on the Takoma label is a sort of busman's holiday for Mike Bloomfield, a facile and versatile guitarist. Takoma was founded by master guitarist John Fahey as a haven for pickers who were not ready for, wanted by, or comfortable with the large commercial labels. Bloomfield's career has taken him through associations with many bands and labels, and he seems to have approached this album as a kind of recorded spiritual retreat.

The selections range from the title ballad to blues to gospel to border Latin to jazz to . . . well, to guitar music for its own sweet sake. First out is Peepin' an a Moanin Blues, a funny, erotic entry with antecedents in the scatological blues of the Twenties; its construction is similar to that of many blues tunes penned in that era by such prolific writers as Thomas Dorsey and Perry Bradford. Big "C" Blues, also by Bloomfield, is about cancer; it recalls the way Jimmie ("The Father of Country Music") Rodgers referred to tuberculosis (of which he was dying) in several of his songs. Mood Indigo, the superb melody by Duke Ellington and the great clarinetist Barney Bigard, is here given a mellow and relaxed treatment.

Analine is the production number of the album, with Bloomfield aided by cronies and mates from the old Electric Flag band, among them Nick Gravenites, Roger Troy, and Mark Naftalin. Although the vocal is credited to Gravenites, who wrote the tune, it sounds very much like Troy doing the singing. Either he and Gravenites share similar timbres and phrasing or the personnel listings are as- 

乽The album's opening track, 乴anoine,乿 is a slow, sweet thumper building up to a repeated chorus that tempts one to sing along. Bloomfield obviously enjoyed his working vacation, and we can enjoy its fruits.乿

乽Takoma B-1059 $6.98.乿

乽OTHER RECOMMENDED DISCO HITS乿

乽ASHFORD & SIMPSON: Send It. WARNER BROS. BS 3088 $6.98.乿

乽CHOCOLATES: King of Clubs. TOM & JERRY TJS-4500 $6.98.乿

乽EDDIE HENDERSON: Comin' Through. CAPITOL ST-11671 $6.98.乿

乽EVELYN CHAMPAGNE KING: Smooth Talk. RCA APL1-2466 $6.98.乿

乽MANDRILL: We Are One. ARISTA AB 4144 $6.98.乿

乽(List compiled by David Mancuso, owner of the Loft, one of New York City's top discos.乿

乽JAZZ乿

乽RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT乿

乽CHICK COREA/DAVID HOLLAND/BARRY ALTSCHUL: ARC. Chick Corea (piano); David Holland (bass); Barry Altschul (percussion). Games; Nefertitti [sic]; Vedana; and three others. ECM ECM-1-1009 $7.98, © 8T-1-1009 $7.98, © CT-1-1009 $7.98.乿

乽Performance: Good old Chick Recording: Excellent.乿

乽When I first listened to this album, my immediate thought was that Chick Corea had at last come to his senses and returned to good taste and musicianship. But then I noticed the recording date, 1971. That was, of course, before he formed Return to Forever, the cross-over group I'd like to see him abandon forever. This, then, is Chick without the cheap (Continued on page 116).乿
When it comes to a super-powered receiver, people know a good thing when they hear it.

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hesitatingly recommend. This is not a commercial album, but it is one that I can unhesitatingly recommend.

LARRY CORYELL/ALPHONSE MOUZON:
Back Together Again. Larry Coryell (guitar, vocals); Alphonse Mouzon (drums, vocals); other musicians. Transvested Express; Mr. C; The Phonce; Beneath the Earth; Rock 'n Roll Lovers; and five others. ATLANTIC SD 18220 $6.98. © TP 18220 $7.97. © CS 18220 $7.97.

Performance: Not so together
Recording: Very good

You may have heard Larry Coryell and Alphonse Mouzon together in the former’s Eleventh House group, and you may well have liked what you heard. I did. But this reunion is a great disappointment. Both men are excellent musicians, and I can find no fault with their individual performances here, but this is a bland collection of “original” material and the commendable solo efforts simply drown in a sea of all-too-familiar crossover sounds.

C.A.

CHICO HAMILTON: Catwalk. Chico Hamilton (drums, percussion, vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. August Tempest; Theme from Big Blue Marble; Forked Tongue; The Baron; and five others. MERCURY SMLR-1-1163 $6.98. © MC-8-1-1163 $7.95. © MCR-4-1-1163 $7.95.

Performance: No frills
Recording: Very good

The arrangements here are simple and the playing is straightforward. Except for a disorganized (purposely so, one presumes) children’s chorus on Theme from Big Blue Marble, there are no gimmicks. Chico Hamilton’s drums are a joy throughout, and his brushes are excellent on Forked Tongue. There is also good solo input from the two guitarists, Michael Santiago and Marvin Horne, and from Hamilton regular Arthur Blythe on saxophone. The tunes are short and the album seems brief, but that is partly because the music is never boring. This is not Chico Hamilton’s best, and, like his other albums of the past few years, it cannot remotely stand comparison to most of his Impulse releases. But it is honest, and that is rare today.

C.A.

PAUL HORN: Inside the Great Pyramid. Paul Horn (alto flute, “C” flute, piccolo, vocals). Initiation; Meditation; Enlightenment; Fulfillment. MUSHROOM MRS-5507 two discs $7.98.

Performance: Secondary
Recording: Excellent

As regular readers of these pages know, I hold the music of Paul Horn in high esteem. The former Sauter/Finegan and Chico Hamilton sideman has been making eloquent statements on his own for some time now, and he has always done so with admirable imagination and taste. Almost ten years ago, Paul Horn made what I have described as the ultimate mood album, a series of solo improvisations recorded inside the Taj Mahal, but this time he has chosen surroundings that make even that three-hundred-year-old Indian mausoleum seem comparatively recent: the Great Pyramids at Gizeh.

The star here is the environment rather than Horn himself. But that is no reflection on Horn’s music, for the awesome four-and-a-half-million-year-old structures would dwarf anybody’s playing. Horn’s flute improvisations and chants are lyrical and appropriately reverent, but I venture to guess that even Bobbi Humphrey—who isn’t exactly my favorite flutist—might have come away from the pyramids with a tape worth listening to.

The sound of Horn’s flutes and voice gains weight and takes on an eerie dimension as it bounces off the ancient walls of the Cheops (sides one through three) and Kehphren (side four) pyramids, sometimes traveling through passageways, to return new sounds from other chambers; it is often as if several flutes were being played at once. The result is quite extraordinary, but four sides of it is more than enough, and I am not sure that the proposed follow-up album—featuring recordings made in the Kehphren and Mycerinus pyramids—is such a good idea.

C.A.

BARNEY KESSEL/HERB ELLIS: Poor Butterfly. Barney Kessel and Herb Ellis (guitars); Monty Budwig (bass); Jake Hanna (drums). Dearly Beloved; Brigitte; Poor Butterfly; Make Someone Happy; Early Autumn, and four others. CONCORD JAZZ CJ-34

(Continued on page 118)

Crown

The different distortion indicator

The Input-Output Comparator (IOC) now available on Crown D-150A and DC-300A amplifiers is a significant departure from traditional overload indicators. The IOC reports all types of overload distortion by telling the user that the output waveform no longer matches the input waveform. The IOC is so sensitive that distortion is reported before it is audible.

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Overload distortion, however, results from some circuit component operating beyond its linear range. The correction signal cannot change the characteristics of the component, so the input IC continues to generate a large correction signal. This will happen regardless of the kind of overload—clipping, TIM or protection circuit activation.

The IOC was designed by Crown engineers to take advantage of this behavior, and to use it to report significant information about overload distortion to the user of the amp. The Crown IOC analyzes the correction signal and reports the existence of non-linearities in the output waveform through a front-panel LED.

The IOC is highly sensitive and detects overload distortion that is a great deal less than the .05% THD and IMD ratings of the D-150A and DC-300A. The user is thus notified about overload distortion before it is audible. The user also knows that the Crown IOC is reporting distortion of a waveform, not just a laboratory test signal. Maximum useable gain for the D-150A or DC-300A can be determined by adjusting gain so the front panel LED’s stay off, or come on briefly during the highest music peaks.

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Pianist Dick Wellstood

Pianist Dick Wellstood may not have a recognizable individual style, but he does have good technique and he can whip up a fine blend of two-fisted piano music that shows traces of the colleagues he admires. One thing I've always liked about him is his wide-ranging taste, and he is obviously a man who listens with his mind as open as his ears. Two new albums—"This Is the One" and "Some Hefty Cats!"—were recorded. The engineer grants Wellstood some presence on a couple of the band tracks and on his two solo efforts, Carolina Shout and Snowy Morning Blues, but Smith—who has a delightful Armstrong/Eldridge style—is relegated to the background throughout the seven tunes where he appears. All this is particularly regrettable in view of the good musical quality. Ind, who has recorded with numerous top artists both here and in England (from the superb Lennie Tristano to a disastrous Pres), Playing by himself and with a band consisting of four of England's finest mainstream musicians, it's a shame that the balance on the ensemble album, a British import, is so bad, for the musicianship is mostly excellent. Reed player Ian Wheeler and bassist Peter Ind are so dominant in volume on some tracks that trumpeter Keith Smith and Wellstood himself appear to be playing in another room of the Copley Arms, the inn near Plymouth where all but one track of "Some Hefty Cats!" were recorded. The engineer grants Wellstood some presence on a couple of the band tracks and on his two solo efforts, Carolina Shout and Snowy Morning Blues, but Smith—who has a delightful Armstrong/Eldridge style—is relegated to the background throughout the seven tunes where he appears. All this is particularly regrettable in view of the good musical quality. Ind, who has recorded with numerous top artists both here and in England (from the superb Lennie Tristano to a disastrous Prestige vocal session with actor Billy Dee Williams) is the featured soloist on Don't Get Around Much Any More. His solid, driving bass is prominent throughout the album, which, despite the improper balance, is worth acquiring.

The solo album, recorded in October 1975, is called "This Is the One" because Wellstood feels that way about it. I am inclined to agree, for rarely have I heard the pianist sound so relaxed and loose. Reflecting his catholic taste, the program ranges from tunes by Fats Waller, Earl Hines, and James P. Johnson (three Wellstood favorites) to more recent compositions by John Coltrane and Steve Wonder—all played with joyous stride and élan. Much is made of the technical aspects of this recording (there are two paragraphs about it and a photo of engineer Dick Burwen on the back cover), but it too leaves something to be desired in the way of presence. That is easier to cope with in the case of a solo recording, but it is nevertheless disappointing considering that today we have technology that allows superb recordings to be made even on relatively inexpensive home equipment. Dick Wellstood deserves better.

—Chris Albertson

DICK WELLSTOOD: This Is the One. Dick Wellstood (piano); Peter Ind (bass); Don Moyes (tenor saxophone); Keith Smith (trumpet); Ian Wheeler (clarinet, alto saxophone). Audiofile AP-120 $15.00 (from Decibel Records, P.O. Box 631, Lexington, Mass. 02173, or through Burwen Research dealers).

$6.98 (from Concord Jazz, Inc., P.O. Box 845, Concord, Calif. 94522).

Performance: Excellent

Recording: Very good

Like fish in familiar waters, the nimble-fingered and complementary Messrs. Kessel and Ellis swing ever so lightly through a mostly familiar repertoire, making this a very pleasant and enduring set. The assistance rendered by bassist Monty Budwig and drummer Jake Hanna is predictably kindred in spirit. We could well do with a few encore albums and perhaps the quartet could be augmented to recall some of the fine sessions Ellis did for the Epic label fifteen years ago.

C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

STEVE LACY: Trickles. Steve Lacy (soprano saxophone); Roswell Rudd (trombone, chimes); Kent Carter (bass); Beaver Harris (drums). I Feel a Drafted; Papa's Midnight Hop; Robes; and two others. Black Saint BS-0008 $7.98.

Performance: Excellent

Recording: Very good

Steve Lacy wrote all the music in this album, but all four members of this excellent quartet are given equal billing. Perhaps they are known collectively as "Trickles"; it's hard to tell album titles from group names these days. Anyway, who cares? The important thing is that this set—recorded in New York last year and imported from Italy—is one of the most delightful jazz albums I have heard in a long time. The musicianship is of the highest caliber, the material is uniformly interesting, and the quartet's members are very compatible.

This is modern, sometimes free-form jazz, but it is also music that bares its roots, and one reason for this is undoubtedly that both Lacy and trombonist Roswell Rudd started out playing music that was already old-fashioned when they were born, in the mid-Thirties. I hope this quartet does not turn out to be a one-album group. It should be recorded again, preferably by an American record company that can give it the distribution and promotion it deserves.

C.A.

OSCAR PETERSON, JOE PASS, AND RAY BROWN: The Giants. Oscar Peterson (piano, organ); Joe Pass (guitar); Ray Brown (bass). Sunny; Caravan; Jobim; Riff Blues; and four others. Pablo 2310-796 $7.98, © S10-796 $7.98, © K10-796 $7.98.

Performance: Generally excellent

Recording: Unbalanced

Pablo regularly Peterson, Pass, and Brown probably couldn't make a bad record together even if they wanted to, but even the greatest performances can be marred by poor engineering. Whoever operated the console for this session clearly discriminated against the piano. Much as I twiddled my own knobs and controls, I found it impossible to bring Peterson out of the background, even when he was taking a solo. Assuming that at least three tracks were used, I'd say that a remix could probably correct the balance, and in this case the music is worth the expense. Peterson's organ performances—on Blues for Dennis, Eyes of Love, and Sunny—get the same treatment, which almost makes these tracks sound like those Music Minus One records. (Sunny, incidentally, is credited to Kern/Hammerstein)

(Continued on page 120)
Last year, Technics gave you everything you wanted in direct drive. This year we're giving you less.

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Technics by Panasonic
harm, who wrote a tune by that title in 1925, but it is actually the Bobby Hebb song of the late Sixties.) If the balance were corrected, this would be a very fine album of unpretentious, often dazzling swing and mellow, bluesy sway delivered in a style that will sound fresh forever.

C.A.

JACK TEAGARDEN/TEDDY BUCKNER: Sessions, Live. Jack Teagarden (trombone, vocals); instrumental accompaniment. Dixieland One Step; After You've Gone; If I Could Be with You; That's a Plenty. Teddy Buckner (trumpet); instrumental accompaniment. Honky Tonk Parade; Mood Indigo; When the Saints Go Marching In; Just a Closer Walk with Thee. Calliope CAL 3004 $6.98 (from Calliope Records, Inc., P.O. Box 5698, Sherman Oaks, Calif. 91403).

Performance: Poor to good
Recording: Phony

Don't buy this album. It's a gyp. It is advertised as "live," but the applause at the end of each selection was obviously recorded separately and just tacked on. The total length of the Jack Teagarden side is ten minutes and eighteen seconds and that of the Buckner side is twelve minutes and thirty-eight seconds, for a grand total of twenty-two minutes and fifty-six seconds—about half the playing time a consumer would normally expect (and have a right to expect) on an average LP. The grooves are spaced wider than usual to give the visual impression that each side is chock-full of music—a shabby trick first used on pop albums in the mid-Sixties.

The Teagarden selections are fine—it would be hard to find anything he recorded that was certifiably lousy—but the Buckner sessions are examples of sloppy Dixieland in which the players (who are not credited on the album, nor are Teagarden's sidemen) sound bored and half in the bag.

J.V.

COLE PORTER: Classic Cole. Jan DeGaetani (mezzo-soprano); Leo Smit (piano). At Long Last Love; I've Got You Under My Skin; Just One of Those Things; Easy to Love; It's Bad for Me; Night and Day; I Get a Kick Out of You; Good-bye; Little Dream; Good-bye; Love for Sale; and ten others. Columbia M 34533 $6.98.

Performance: Musical misalliance
Recording: Excellent

The notion of a mezzo-soprano with a voice so lovely and melodic that they manage to straighten out its assignments: DeGaetani should have been hired to do the art songs Barbra Streisand turned into such disasters in "Classical Barbra" and Barbra herself should have been encouraged to come in and take over "Classic Cole."

DeGaetani's attempts to make art songs out of Night and Day, I've Got You Under My Skin, and Love for Sale misfire hopelessly; the sizzle goes out as the "art" goes in. When the singer gets operetta-arch on the more carefree ballads such as I Get a Kick Out of You, Ridin' High, and Just One of Those Things, the results are plain embarrassing. Her version of It's Bad for Me, from the charming score of Nymph Errant, made me long for Gertrude Lawrence, who could barely sing but who knew exactly what to do with a Cole Porter song. DeGaetani doesn't. Leo Smit's pristine accompaniments are equally inappropriate to the material, and his "pointifical" liner notes, in which, with apparent earnestness, he presumes to trace the Porter tunes to Tchaikovsky, J. S. Bach, and other classical sources, are an example of pretentious academicism at its worst. The songs themselves are so witty and melodic that they manage

(Continued on page 124)
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somehow to survive even this mistreatment, and I must admit I enjoyed those stanzas of Find Me a Primitive Man sung in impeccable French. Most of the time, though, I just wished Merman or someone else were in there belting away.

P. K.


Performance: Gala nostalgia night
Recording: Very good

A quarter of a century ago, a musical revue opened on Broadway that was a joy from start to finish. It was called Leonard Sillman's New Faces of 1952, and my own memory of it is so sweet that I was almost afraid to spoil it by placing this reissue of the original-cast recording on the turntable. You know how it is with memories.

Mr. Sillman has so far produced thirteen such shows, starting back in 1934, with the latest edition coming out this year. But 1952 was a landmark. Folks just around the bend from their dotage, like myself, still mumble nostalgically about Alice Ghostley's devastating performance of The Boston Beguine, which almost put an end forever to on-stage dancing of beguines. They will tell you of the tear that came to the eye when the ensemble sang Love Is a Simple Thing. If you let them, they will wax ecstatic over the nostalgic charms of that tribute to the whims of childhood, Penny Candy. They will sigh as they describe the tingling thrill of hearing Eartha Kitt, who could clip a syllable like nobody else in the business, turn the attention of her feline talent to a song called Monotonous. Some even pine to this day for the running gag of the show, a song for a businessman's mistress called He Takes Me Off His Income Tax, which Virginia de Luce was never allowed to finish. There are women who insist that no personality has ever appeared on a stage as winning as the pint-size Frenchman Robert Clary (certainly nothing "cuter" ever has; the Fifties were a time when whimsy had not yet been run out of town). And there are those still angry because RCA left out of the earlier version the duet for two spinsters of a bygone age, a ballad titled Time for Tea, which afforded a full and equal opportunity to the satirical gifts of June Carroll and Alice Ghostley.

Well, they needn't fret any longer. The missing number has been restored, and this disc contains every item RCA was sensible enough to record at the time, although why they left out the parody of Menotti called The Great American Opera I'll never know. But here you'll find all the above and more, rounded out by the directing genius of John Murray Anderson and the music, lyrics, and dialogue of Ronny Graham, Sheldon Harnick, Michael Brown, and Peter de Vries, of all people (he collaborated on the text of the opening number, which contains the great-vintage line, "Love is the lotus/That turns into lettuce.").

Nourishing fare.

P. K.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THE CHIEFTAINS: LIVE! The Chieftains (vocals and instrumental). The Morning Dew; George Brabazon; Kerry Slides; Carrickfergus; Carolan's Concerto; The Foxhunt; and five others. ISLAND ILPS 9501 $6.98.

Performance: Vigorous
Recording: Excellent

The Chieftains, portrayed on their album cover with a full panoply of bodhrans, concertinas, tin whistles, Irish harp, uilleann pipes, and all manner of other Irish instruments surrounding them, and rigged out in heavy woolen sweaters, look as if they're going to sound like every other Irish group who ever made a record. As it turns out, they don't at all, something their work on the Barry Lyndon soundtrack should have prepared me for. This
listener, who can take his Irish jigs or leave them alone, has never heard a reel or a Kerry slide piped out with greater skill or energy. I tell you, these lads get to you. They really whoop it up, and between the numbers they provide brisk descriptions of whatever’s coming next. Most of the time it’s purely instrumental except for a vigorous chorus here and there, and the pace never flags. The album was apparently recorded live, and the enthusiastic response from the highly audible audience is richly deserved.

**THE CHIEFTAINS:** whooping it up with skill and energy

**JEAN RITCHIE:** None but One. Jean Ritchie (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Fair Nottamun Town; Too Many Shadows; Black Waters; None but One; and seven others. SIRE SA7530 $6.98, ® 8147-7530 (H) $7.95, © 5147-7530 (H) $7.95.

**Performance: Likable**
**Recording: Very good**

For some time now, folk singers seem to have been paying less and less attention to traditional folk songs and more and more to inventing their own. The new product, usually self-conscious as well as socially conscious, tends to combine the bucolic sound of the backwoods ballad with lyrics exhorting the listener to come out four-square against environmental pollution or police brutality. On this new record, Kentucky-born Jean Ritchie, who in the past has generally occupied herself with traditional songs, sings several songs she has written herself, including a couple of religious hymns. The message in Ritchie’s title song is that “all of us are one.” Leave it to a folk singer to stumble on a home truth like that and make a song out of it! Her voice was never remarkable, being a resonant but rather nasal instrument, and her own songs are certainly simplistic, but her wholesome, forthright manner is a likable one. Whether she is resurrecting a nineteenth-century ballad about starving orphans who must join their mother in heaven or lamenting “sad scenes of destruction” along the blackened waters of Kentucky rivers, her open, honest style is consistently winning. One feels that the celebrated colleagues she invited to join in just couldn’t refuse her. They include Janis Ian with vocal support in Black Waters, Oscar Brand, who chimes in during The Riddle Song, and Susan Reed, who turns up with her own madrigal group to join the choir in Wondrous Love. For a folk-music record, there is also an unusually large group of instruments employed—mandolin, electric guitar, electric bass, drums, fiddle, banjo, cello, and a dulcimer. It’s quite a production.

(Continued on page 129)
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RIFLING through the Sixties and Seventies with Judy Collins, as one does listening to "So Early in the Spring, the First 15 Years," a retrospective collection from Elektra, is a vivid experience. Memories of places, people, events, politics come up with one rush after another. The people, especially: it turns out there's a whole string of them in my personal life, and probably in yours too, associated with something Judy Collins was singing at the time—Pretty Saro back in 1961, or Both Sides Now in 1968, or whatever. Judy Collins has always been there, it seems, through almost two tumultuous decades, and I now realize that I regularly heard her on the subject (whatever the subject was) and filed away a set of impressions and associations without pausing to consider what a constant of the times she was.

This retrospective album takes you by the shoulders and gives you a shake. You can't help reflecting on what a presence Collins has been when you hear such a concentrated version of those fifteen years. The album is so rich in good tunes, compared to 90 per cent of the other four-sided albums in captivity, that your mind doesn't wander when it's playing. All her clinkers (a real dog about Vietnam) stand out in my memory, as does almost one entire side of the album "Judith") are edited out of this one, of course. But the collection is not only selective about content, it is also carefully set up. Side one is largely public-domain folk stuff; side two is "folk" music formally written down by early-Sixties troubadours and is mostly political; side three is about relationships and the "revolution" being more cultural than political in the old sense; and side four is about a lot of things—dreams, visions, personal growth, all probably summed up best in "Maid of Constant Sorrow," "Searching for myself.../Searching for my life." Side four is also entirely written by Judy Collins. And not only is the music carefully selected and ordered, but it is all carefully packaged; there are jacket photographs by Richard Avedon, and the liner notes were specially written by Judy herself.

Since she continued to record traditional folk songs throughout this period and since she recorded manufactured "folk" songs fairly early on, the organization of the album doesn't jibe with chronology until you get to side four, and that's only because Collins has been a late bloomer as a songwriter. The way it is organized is a good thing, though, if you want to indulge in the pastime of charting how Collins' singing style has evolved right under our noses. Pretty Saro of 1961 and Farewell to Tarwathie (the one where she's backed by whales), released eleven years later, are on the same side. The proximity makes it easier to see how her style has drifted from a kind of earthiness toward a more ethereal, pastel, classical-leaning, queenly presence. You don't have to have heard her pronounce earlier this year that she no longer considers herself "just a folk singer to catch her drift. She has gone from folk music in the basic sense (that is, homemade, which is to say made by generalists) toward a more urbane music (made by professionals, which is to say specialists), and her sound has changed just as her material has. She used to have a kind of bite, or verve, in her voice in the days of Prickie Bush; now she's not only singing the kind of satin-shirt song Stephen Sondheim writes but is singing it in a way that puts it into soft focus, puts the sonic equivalent of gossamer veils and subtle lighting between herself and her audience. Strictly speaking, she has moved toward some idea of purity, which by definition involves becoming less personal, but she has not in the process exactly moved away from us. It is a most delicate and curious situation.

The elusive nature of this relationship with the audience is echoed in the long, well-written liner notes. A series of essays on what her life has been like, daring chronologically back and forth as the album gleanings in the collection do, they appear on the surface to deal with the surface of things, but by some devious means they manage to convey that Collins felt a lot—if not exactly what she felt—about the times and lives she passed through.

And listening to "So Early in the Spring," I find it so damned pretty and so well connected to the times of my own life that I conclude that, well, we all have to evolve in some direction, like it or not, and if Collins still sounded like the original "Maid of Constant Sorrow" we'd certainly find that unsatisfactory. Any- way, there's no particular breach of integrity in the way she's drifted. She was the daughter of a blind minstrel, but she was trained in classical piano as a kid; a couple of teachers thought she might amount to something before she got hooked on folk music. It isn't too surprising that she'd eventually write wailing, gothic-staircase melodies such as the one in Secret Gardens or (not included here) Che, and that they'd sound so nice with cellos. She's also kept in touch with the times of her life. Like any good folk artist, she's part journeyman, and what has happened over the years (with the technical exception that she actually held pitch a little truer when she had the old earthiness) is the folk process personified. This album, all things considered, is a class product from a class person, extremely pretty to listen to, and an emotion-charged recapitulation of some of the most interesting times anybody ever lived through.

—Noel Coppage

JUDY COLLINS: So Early in the Spring, the First 15 Years. Judy Collins (vocals, guitar, piano); instrumental accompaniment. Pretty Polly: So Early, Early in the Spring; Pretty Saro; Golden Apples of the Sun; Bonnie Ship the Diamond; Farewell to Tarwathie; The Hostage; La Colombe; Coal Tattoo; Carry It On; Bread and Roses; Marble Sade; Special Delivery; The Lovin' of the Game; Both Sides Now; Marieke; Send in the Clowns; Bird on a Wire; Since You've Asked; Born to the Breed; My Father; Holly Ann; Houses; Secret Gardens. ELEKTRA 8E-6002 two discs $9.98. © T8-6002 $9.97. © C2-6002 $9.97.
It was sort of like one of those old Ruby Keeler movies in which the leading lady breaks her leg and the chorus girl has to go on in her place. This time the scenario went like this: Alice Cooper's boa (which performs with him on stage) died after its breakfast (a live rat) turned on the snake and tried to eat it. Alice, heartbroken, ran a contest (see photo) for a replacement. But choosing a winner wasn't the end of it. The chosen boa, a cuddly thirty-foot-long cutie named Angel, turned out (a) to be pregnant and (b) serpens non grata in Canada (she didn't have the correct papers). To complete this comedy of miscalculations, the indigenous reptile Alice hired as an understudy refused to go on stage for the final Canadian concert. If you missed it, you can still curl up with Alice's "Lace and Whiskey" album (Warner Bros. BSK 3027), but you'll have to provide your own snake.

It's pop ecology, energy-conservation division. When ZZ Top, those nonstop touring Texas rockers, were performing in Florida they were met at the airport not by the usual fleet of limousines, but by a small flock of minibikes. Seems that someone decided that the limos were "too pretentious," and something more down to earth would be preferable. The guys pedaled off to their gig, but they weren't smiling much.

Marge and Gower? Fred and Ginger? No, it's Elton and Kiki! This chip-off-the-old-Lindy executed by Elton John (in shorts) and his high-kicking partner Kiki Dee was the high point of a party thrown in New York by their manager John Reid. Reid tossed the gala for Kiki's record label, Rocket, which Elton just coincidentally happens to own. Her latest album is "Kiki Dee" (PIG-2257), his is "Greatest Hits, Vol. Two" (MCA 3027). There is no recorded evidence of any dancing, not even of the disco variety, on either.

Submariner Jacques Cousteau and troubadour James Taylor met backstage after Taylor (whose latest album is "J.T."
(Columbia JC 34811) headlined a benefit concert in Houston for the noted oceanographer and filmmaker. From the evidence of this photo, J.C. and J.T. had a whale of a time.
Shaun Cassidy, a Hardy Boy on the ABC TV series, has become, like his brother David before him, an idol of the Teen Mob. Shaun was mobbed by fans this summer in Detroit, right after he was mobbed in Australia, and right before he was mobbed in San Francisco. His second album, due shortly from Warner Bros., is tentatively titled “Shaun Cassidy,” and it should cause more of the kind of outrage documented by this photo taken at a Detroit radio station. Shaun is under the headphones, probably to block out the screaming, but they won’t do him much good if that glass should happen to break.

“Here’s to the Ladies” is not only the title of an upcoming Frank Sinatra album, but also of an exhibit saluting our “unsung women songwriters” at New York’s Songwriters’ Hall of Fame. Mae Boren Axton, who wrote the late Elvis Presley’s hit “Heartbreak Hotel,” and Andrea McArdle, who’s been breaking hearts of Broadway audiences in the title role of “Annie,” got together for some show-biz chatter at the opening of the exhibit. These days, Mae, mother of country musician Hoyt Axton, has been active writing songs and heading up her own publicity firm in Florida. These nights, Andrea keeps herself busy singing on stage, but she can be heard any time on the Columbia original-cast album of “Annie” (PS 34712).

Beach Boy Dennis Wilson cuddled up with principals of the Joffrey Ballet one night after the company had danced to his song “Cuddle Up.” The number is the final movement of “Deuce Coupe II,” a thirty-minute montage of Beach Boys hits choreographed by Twyla Tharp. The number’s latest pas de cinq is “The Beach Boys Love You” (Warner Bros. MSK 2258), and Dennis has leapt gracefully into solo recording with “Pacific Ocean Blue” (Caribou PZ 34354).

A month before his death, Elvis Presley received a framed copy of his album “Moody Blue” (RCA AFL1-2428), which just happened to be the two-billionth record to roll off the presses of RCA’s Indianapolis plant. Pressed in blue vinyl, “Moody Blue” was the last Presley album released during his lifetime, and when the King died RCA could not stamp them out fast enough to meet the demand. In this country alone, twenty million records from the Presley catalog were sold on the day following his death. Pictured here with Elvis in Indianapolis are Ernie Ruggieri, RCA division vice president of manufacturing (left) and Elvis’ father, Vernon Presley.

What’s wrong with this picture? Well, let’s see: Phyllis Hyman (right) is missing a shoe, Mick Jagger seems to be missing a few buttons, and Roberta Flack apparently thinks that Mick is her long-lost brother. Actually, Flack and Jagger came backstage to greet singer Hyman after a recent New Jersey concert, though it looks more like they’re greeting each other. Hyman’s new album is cleverly called “Phyllis Hyman” (Buddah BDS 5681), and the Stones’ new one (with cover art by Andy Warhol, no less) is “Rolling Stones Love You Live” (Rolling Stones COC 2-9001). Flack, after a long absence from the recording studio, has an album due any minute.
J. S. BACH: Sonata in B Minor for Flute and Harpsichord (BWV 1035); Sonata in A Major for Flute and Harpsichord (BWV 1032); Trio Sonata in G Major for Flute, Violin, and Continuo (BWV 1038); Sonata in E Minor for Flute and Continuo (BWV 1034); Sonata in E Major for Flute and Continuo (BWV 1035); Trio Sonata in G Major for Two Flutes and Continuo (BWV 1039). Leopold Stastny, Frans Brüggen (flutes); Alice Harnoncourt (violin); Nikolaus Harnoncourt (cello); Herbert Tachezi (harpsichord). TELEFUNKEN 6.33339 two discs $15.94.

Performance: Echt!
Recording: Excellent

As we have come to expect from this Telefunken Bach series, the presentation is exquisite: the box is strong and handsome; the historical notes are detailed, copious, and trilingual (German, English, and French); scores are included; and the manuscript of Herbert Tachezi's excellent reconstruction of the first movement of the A Major Sonata is reproduced. The music is performed on original instruments, and articulation and ornaments are executed with the utmost historical accuracy.

All of this is, of course, admirable. But there are some serious musical problems. In the two sonatas with harpsichord obbligato, for example, the performers seem to be at odds about rhythmic alterations. Although both articulate clearly, Tachezi favors rhythmic alterations that conflict with Leopold Stastny's even flow of notes. Also, some of the tempos are misjudged. In the B Minor Sonata, the first movement sounds nervous because of a too-quick tempo, and the slow movement lacks grace and repose because of a pushed andante rather than the largo Bach calls for.

Alice Harnoncourt joins in for the G Major Trio Sonata with a sound that is so deliberately devoid of vibrato and warmth that the result is overwhelmingly disappointing. Musically the two continuo sonatas come off better, especially the one in E Major. Here Stastny, as soloist, apparently feels free to make music the way he likes without worrying about what his peers are up to. The finest reading in the collection is of the G Major Trio Sonata for two flutes and continuo. Stastny and Brüggen think alike, and the continuo players have no choice but to accompany them without interference.

The album as a whole, then, is for the music history buff only. Presence, projection, and individual interpretation are often completely lacking. The hoops, wigs, and lace have been donned, but the wearers have not yet learned to move naturally in them.

S.L.


Performance: Excellent
Recording: Clean but a mite constricted

These sonatas by Amy Marcy Cheney (Mrs. H.H.A.) Beach (1867-1944) and Arthur Foote (1853-1937) are thoroughly representative examples of what the pre-World War I group of American composers centered around Boston was turning out. Within a stylistic framework bounded essentially by Schumann and Brahms, both works display a high level of craftsmanship and by no means lack innate vitality. My own preference between the two is for the Foote. His 1890 sonata dates from his forty-seventh year; regardless of the Brahmsian elements, there are terseness and rhythmic vitality in the opening movement and integrity in the siciliana scherzo. Brahms is much to the fore throughout the adagio, but Foote the organist-choirmaster emerges triumphantly in the finale, which builds up around a fugato texture and concludes in a splendid blaze of Victorian hymnody.

Mrs. Beach's 1896 work is notable for its predominantly lyrical first movement, a charming lightweight scherzo, and, most especially, the eloquent closing pages of the slow movement. Like Foote, she included a healthy dose of fugal writing to spur the pace of her finale. However, I do find the level of her thematic material occasionally undistinguished compared with Foote's.

In the performances here, Boston Symphony orchestra concertmaster Joseph Silverstein displays a small but well-focused tone, ample rhythmic vigor, and right-on-target intonation. Gilbert Kalish negotiates in sterling fashion the highly elaborate piano writing in both sonatas (they are billed as for piano and violin, in the German Classical manner). The recording, done at Columbia's New York studios, is very clean, but I do wish there had been a bit more audible acoustic space. This kind of music can use it.

D.H.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEETHOVEN: Lieder. Maigesang; Marmor; Neue Liebe, Neues Leben; Wolfens Wahnmut; Sehnsucht; Mit einem Gemalten Band; Fremdvol auf und Liebl; Ich Denke Dein; Aus "Faust" (Flohlied); Urians Reise um die Welt; Die Liebe; Gellert-Lieder, Op. 48, Nos. 1-6; Opferlied; Des Kriegers Abschied; Das Blumen Wunderhold; Die Laute Klage. Peter Schreier (tenor); Walter Olbertz (piano). TELEFUNKEN 6.41997 $7.98.

Performance: Excellent
Recording: Excellent

Beethoven wrote nearly a hundred songs, but, except for the An die Ferne Geliebte cycle and a handful of others, few singers seem to favor them. A notable exception is Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, whose collection on Deutsche Grammophon 139 197 includes some of the better-known individual songs in addition to the cycle. This new release by tenor Peter Schreier duplicates none of Fischer-Dies-
kau's choices, which means that lieder aficionados who own both discs have about half of Beethoven's total output. Schreier's choices for this disc, labeled Volume 1, are mainly early songs, from the period of about 1793 to 1811, and nine of them are settings of Goethe texts.

I find this a virtually flawless recital. Schreier's tone is not particularly sensuous, but he can achieve exquisite effects through means that are tasteful and unfailingly musical. Very properly, he does not over-romanticize these songs, which are closer in spirit to Mozart than to Schubert. They call for a Mozartian command of tonal purity and sensitive control of dynamics, which the singer supplies in abundance. He also rises with virtuosic ease to certain technical challenges, such as the delicate transitions from full voice to head tone in *Neue Liebe, Neues Leben*. I would prefer the solid weight of a baritone voice for the solemn utterances of the six Gellert songs (among them the reasonably familiar *Die Ehre Gottes aus der Natur*), but Schreier surely delivers them as effectively as any tenor can.

Pianist Walter Olbertz, who excelled in the singer's recent Mendelssohn collection, again provides distinguished support, and the engineering is splendid. Texts are provided in German only and there are no notes. Just the same, bring on Volume 2!

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**


ANGEL S-37266 $7.98.

**Performance:** Superbly fluent

**Recording:** Good

Word had it some years ago that Russia's Sviatoslav Richter was not happy recording under studio conditions and that those who wished to document his interpretations for public issue would have to take their chances with his concert performances. But to judge from the production/engineering credits on the jacket of this Angel disc, it appears that he was lured into EMI's Paris studios in the course of a European tour, and the result is as lovely a pair of readings of early Beethoven sonatas as you'll ever hear.

Typically, Richter enjoys making the most of the potential for contrast inherent in the works, so he chooses a very deliberate tempo for the minuetto of Op. 2, No. 1, which enhances the stunning brilliance and dazzlingly smooth passagework he brings to the final prestissimo. In Op. 10, No. 3, the high point is the great largo e mesto slow movement, the first of Beethoven's many profound essays in this vein, and Richter plays it wonderfully.

EMI's Paris recording team has managed the body and presence of the piano tone nicely, with just enough room coloring to provide a necessary aura of warmth. The slightly hard middle-register tone in forte passages I am inclined to ascribe to the instrument rather than to the performer or producers. A touch of equalization adjustment may help, especially if your listening room happens to be on the live side, as mine is.

**D.H.**

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**BERLIOZ: L'Enfance du Christ, Op. 25.** Janet Baker (mezzo-soprano); Thomas Allen (baritone); Eric Tappy (tenor); Jules Bastin (bass); (Continued on page 136)
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The first time I played continuo in Bach's Brandenburg Concertos was an extremely startling experience. The orchestra started out bravely, and then, suddenly, the horns went wild; a veritable fox hunt seemed to be going on at their end of the stage. A glance at the score revealed that was how it was supposed to be; the notated hunting calls and tattoos were right there, even though in all the times I had heard these wonderful concertos I had never really heard the horns sound that way. I never heard them sound that way again until I listened to the superb new ABC/SEON recording of the concertos conducted by Gustav Leonhardt. It is the clarity of the inner parts that gives these works their very life.

This inner clarity stems both from the use of original instruments and the carefully executed Baroque articulation. In the First Concerto, Bach set up opposing choirs of strings, oboes, and horns. Modern instruments used according to the precepts of modern orchestral blending produce a smooth, homogenized sound. Bach's ideal, however, was not homogeneity but colorful contrast, which can be achieved only with raw-sounding natural horns, cutting oboes, and vibratoless strings. Performed by such forces, as it is here, the concerto becomes a lively dialogue. In the Third Concerto the contrast between the choirs is more difficult to bring out, since all three choirs are made up of strings, but in Leonhardt's reading the contrast is as clear as I have ever heard it.

With the various solo instruments in the concertos the problem is not contrast, but blending and balancing the different timbres. Rarely, for instance, do the recorder and the trumpet of the Second Concerto come off as equal partners, and one often wonders if Bach was not asking for the impossible when he placed them side by side. It is not impossible, however, for this recording accomplishes it.

Perhaps the most ravishing sonority of the entire set is to be found in the Fifth Concerto. Bach himself was surely aware of this, for there are many passages in the first movement where the harmony and figuration become static and only the sonority carries the music forward. Such sections of implied chordal patterns are beautifully presented in this performance, and the recording by the German SEON company has caught them perfectly.

Research and experience have taught us that intricate Baroque figuration can be heard best when it is highly articulated. But when the articulated units become too small and detached, because there is too much diminuendo on each unit and too much space between units, the phrase is lost and the result is incompatible with today's tastes. Many contemporary groups that play original instruments fall into this trap; the Leonhardt ensemble does not. Just the right balance is achieved: detail is underlined by articulation, and a long line is produced by a controlling overall sense of phrasing.

In a delightfully whimsical essay included in the notes, Leonhardt modestly points out that we will never know exactly how music was performed in Bach's time and that therefore no performance—including this one—can ever be definitive. It is this sort of modesty that makes these records so wonderful. Nothing is pushed for effect or brilliance; the music expands in its own world unhindered by any pressure from without. The result is a completely believable performance.

Obviously, this new set of the Brandenburgs must be seriously considered no matter how many other fine recordings of the works one already has. And, as a special enticement, there is included a full-size reproduction of Bach's complete autograph score as it was exquisitely copied out and presented to the "Marqugraf de Brandenburg." It is a thrill to follow this music, superbly performed, from the master's own score. —Stoddard Lincoln


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Performance: Radiant  
Recording: Mushy  

Sir Thomas Beecham's première recording of this work is still in circulation (Odyssey 32 16 0206), and that performance still carries unique power and conviction. But the recording, now in artificial stereo, was made nearly twenty-five years ago, and sonic considerations are especially meaningful in this case. Indeed, it may be that sonic differences, almost as much as actual interpretive ones, account for the different effects made by Colin Davis' 1969 Philips recording (839 790L Y) and the new Barenboim one. For the sake of brevity, it might be said that Davis emphasizes the work's dignity and grandeur and Barenboim its radiance. Both are intense, well organized, obviously committed performances. The new Columbia recording was made in the Eglise de Saint Eustache, the site of the Te Deum's 1855 première, and the somewhat over-reverberant acoustics tend to blur some of the orchestral punches. The sopranos and the boys' choir all but inintelligible, rendering the orchestral punches a little mushy, and even swallowing up some of the instrumental solos (I found more or less the same effect in SQ playback as in two-channel stereo). The site of the Philips sessions, presumably one of the town halls or large churches regularly used for recording in London, made for a cleaner sonic frame in which every syllable is understandable and the orchestral wallop are not diffused. There are some clear musical advantages in Davis' majestic presentation, too: the London Symphony is a more precise ensemble than the Orchestre de Paris, Franco Tagliavini's fervor is more appealing than Jean Dupouy's stylish but very cool singing of the solo part, and at the very end Davis leaves the listener with a feeling of noble uplift, while Barenboim's handling of the final bars leaves one wondering if they ought to sound quite so much like the end of Ives' Second Symphony. The Te Deum is a work that deserves far wider circulation than it has so far enjoyed; those who haven't made its acquaintance are urged to remedy that oversight—via the Davis recording on Philips. 

R. F.  

BRAHMS: A German Requiem, Op. 45; Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Op. 56a; Tragic Overture, Op. 81; Anna Tomowa-Sintow (soprano); José van Dam (baritone); Vienna Singverein; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. ANGEL SB-3838 two discs $15.96.  
Performance: Orchestraly superior  
Recording: Good except for overture  

Karajan's third go at the German Requiem (his earlier essays were in 1948 and 1965) is superior to the others in point of orchestral balance, particularly in the timpani department, but comparison with Klemperer's monumental 1962 reading for Angel finds the Vienna chorus hopelessly weak next to the magnificently trained Philharmonia group. Only in the evocation of the Last Judgment do the Viennese work up a real head of steam and bring to Brahms' music the elemental power it deserves. As for the soloists, Anna Tomowa-Sintow is no match for Gundula Janowitz (in Karajan's earlier DG recording) when it comes to floating the ethereally lovely lines of "Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit," nor does José van Dam command the magisterial quality of Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (in Klemperer's version) in "Herr, lehre doch mich." On the other hand, Karajan's orchestra plays magnificently throughout, and the recording, particularly in the lower end of the frequency spectrum, is absolutely stunning in power and body—which shows up all the more the weakness of the Vienna Singverein. 

Karajan's tempos differ only marginally from those of his 1965 DG recording, and there is somewhat more spontaneity in the handling of dynamics, though the opening "Selig sind" is all but inaudible in my copy. Oddly enough, Klemperer, usually associated with slow and ponderous pacing, is no slouch in his handling of this score, being slightly faster than Karajan in all but "Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen." Indeed, I find far more dramatic urgency throughout the whole of Klemperer's reading, which remains the one I prefer. 

Karajan's treatment of the Haydn Variations is as elegant as ever, but I'd like a bit more starkly granitic approach to the Tragic Overture. The two orchestral tracks were evidently recorded in different locales. The rather obtrusive reverberation characteristics in the Tragic Overture indicate an early 1970's recording date, when the Karajan sessions were still being favored with rather chunky acoustics. 

D. H.  

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT  


MAURICE ABRAVANEL: an appealing combination of vigor and expressiveness  

Utah Symphony Photo
a bit short of first-rate, but, in compensation, Abravanel has been directing it for so long that they make a real team.

There's no heavy, long-beard stuff here; Abravanel's Brahms is "up." It is also rather sensitively worked for both detail and broad shaping. When Abravanel wants to shade the tempo—which he does often and nearly always to good effect—the musicians are right there with him. This combination of vigor and expressiveness is appealing, and something of the mentality actually functioned, is a valuable extra.

E.S.


Performance: Refined
Recording: Variable late-Forties mono

These Brahms sonatas, together with Bruch's G Minor Concerto done with the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra under Carl Schuricht, were the last recorded performances by Georg Kulenkampff before his death in 1948 at the age of fifty. Kulenkampff had previously enjoyed a distinguished career as soloist and teacher and recorded a goodly portion of the classic violin solo and concerto repertoire, chiefly for Telefunken.

Young Georg Solti had just been appointed conductor of the Munich Opera—a first major step toward his present superstar status. The original English Decca '58's of the Brahms sonatas were transferred to long-play format in 1965 and issued in England when Solti was at the peak of his Covent Garden career.

Kulenkampff plays Op. 78 and Op. 100 in a warm but somewhat over-refined fashion, striking sparks of genuine passion only in the great D Minor Sonata. Solti is an able and, for the most part, sensitive keyboard partner, but he is relegated to the background in the Op. 78 recording. Balances in the other two works are more just. In any event, none of these performances effaces for me the rugged pre-LP versions of Opp. 78 and 100 by Busch and Serkin, or of Op. 108 by Szigeti and Petri, not to mention such more contemporary recordings as those by Suk and Katchen. The recorded sound varies from dim in Op. 78 to relatively good in Op. 108.

D.H.


Performance: Forthright
Recording: Very good

Karl Böhm’s Dresden recordings of the Fourth and Fifth were among the few complete Bruckner symphonies to appear on 78's: his Vienna Philharmonic concert take of the Seventh (now in Vox set VS914) was one of the first to appear on LP. More than twenty-five years went by before he began what was announced as a complete Bruckner cycle with the Vienna Philharmonic for London/Decca, but it got only as far as Nos. 3 and 4. Now, with the same orchestra, Böhm's Bruckner is continuing on Deutsche Grammophon. What is more surprising than the change in affiliation is DG's issuing these particular sympho-
sters plus level on each of two
acoustics with 10 frequency con-
sider the listener at once feels a safe and satisfying
journey is under way. By and large, that im-
pression has been justified by the end of the
Eighth, but one may also have a feeling that
the journey has been rather uneventful.

The word that best suits these perform-
ances is probably "forthright." There is un-
questionable integrity and a gratifying absence of interpretive clutter in Bohm's ap-
proach, and the playing itself is glorious, set
off in a laments, clear acoustic frame. What is
missing is the sense of exaltation one expects
from this music. This is not the same thing at
all as grandeur of execution and glory of
sound (which can be, and here are, exhilarat-
ing in themselves). Rather, it is the mystery of
what Bruckner is all about, and it requires a
bit of indulgence in the way of dramatic shap-
ing, of softer playing here and there where
Bohm apparently asks from his orchestra, and
of greater subtlety in building to so crucial a
climax as that of the great adagio of the Sev-
enth Symphony. Better by far Bohm's noble
forthrightness (which is far from bland, and
which some will find purifying) than the sort
of "Brucknerism" characterized by abrupt
gear-shifting and dynamic excesses; but bet-
ter still the passion that illumines the recorded
readings of Haitink, Horenstein, Jochum, and
Karajan.

CARPENTER: Adventures in a Perambulator.
MOORE: The Pageant of P. T. Barnum. NEL-
SON: Savannah River Holiday. Eastman-
Rochester Orchestra, Howard Hanson cond.
MERCURY SRI 75095 $7.98.

Performance: ingratiating
Recording: Excellent

This ressue of material from the Mercury ar-
chives features American symphonic music at
its most winning and agreeable. The stunning
Hanson/Eastman-Rochester performance of
John Alden Carpenter's Adventures in a Per-
ambulator was out of the catalog for a while.
Now it is back on two labels: the ERA label,
backed by Burrill Phillips' Selections from
McGuffey's Readers, and this Mercury Gold-
en Imports release.

Carpenter's contribution is by far the most
interesting of the three pieces here. The Har-
vard graduate who wrote it lived from 1876 to
1951, and when he wasn't managing his fa-
ther's mill, railway, and shipping supplies
business he composed some of the most in-
ventive scores ever produced in this country.
It is a pity that his songs, his orchestral suite
Krazy Kat, and his elaborate, high-voltage
ballet score Skyscrapers (represented only by
a thin, abridged performance on DE) are not
more readily available on records today.
It is certainly good at least to have Adventures
in a Perambulator back. Written in 1914, this
suite of sketches depicting a baby's day in his
carriage is impressionism translated from the
French into a distinctly American idiom.

Douglas Moore's The Pageant of P. T. Bar-
num, the first work still extant by the compos-
er of The Ballad of Baby Doe, evokes episo-
des in the life of Barnum: here are the coun-
try fiddles of his boyhood, a flute solo sug-
gestive of the coloratura of Jenny Lind, a mock-
military allegro depicting General and Mrs.
Tom Thumb, and a full-fledged circus parade,
with an out-of-tune clarinet caricaturing the
caliope. It is delightful stuff, as is Ron Nel-
san's Savannah River Holiday, an eight-
minute revel replete with the spirit of sum-
er. The performances all have that incisive
excellence Hanson drew from the Eastman-
Rochester Orchestra, and technically they
reflect the high quality of recording achieved
by Mercury way back there in the Fifties. The
surfaces are flawless.

P.K.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

53, Sviatoslav Richter (piano); Bavarian State
Orchestra, Carl Schuricht cond. ANGEL
S-37239 $7.98.

Performance: Grand
Recording: Quite good

Presumably on the premise that everyone
knows who Richter is by now, Angel has
printed a jacket blurb about the conductor but
(Continued on page 144)
fact:
one mistrack damages
grooves more than
25...50...even 100 plays.

The Optimist's View:
The cartridge that tracked the grooves shown in the top photomicrograph caused no PERCEIVABLE wear after 75 plays. But because these grooves are cut at relatively low velocities and have a continuous 20 kHz signal (only on one channel), they don't present a very challenging test. As a matter of fact, any reasonably good cartridge should produce the same results. However, under greater magnification these same grooves would probably reveal some amount of record wear (although not enough to alter sound quality). That's because record wear is a gradual but constant phenomenon like tire wear every time you drive.

The Terrible Truth:
The middle photomicrograph shows a record of musical material cut at today's "hotter" velocities after only one play with a well-known competitive cartridge at its rated tracking force. This cartridge mistracked the record. Clearly, critical damage resulted. Notice the deep gouge marks on the groove walls. A single mistrack can result in MORE damage than 25, 50 or even 100 plays of a record! Continuing our tire analogy, a mistrack is like a blowout. Once your cartridge mistracks a record passage, the damage has been done and that passage will never sound the same. TRACKABILITY is the single most meaningful yardstick by which to measure cartridge performance. That's because TRACKABILITY encompasses virtually every performance factor by which a cartridge is judged... including velocity of the recorded signal, frequency, compliance, and effective mass.

The bottom photo shows the same groove played 50 times with a V15 Type III at a record- and stylus-saving force of only one gram. Clearly, there is no cartridge you can buy — for any amount of money — that will protect your record collection more from the damage of mistracking than the Shure V15 Type III.

Shure V15 Type III
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Shure Brothers Inc., 222 Hartrey Ave., Evanston, IL 60204, In Canada: A. C. Simmonds & Sons Limited Manufacturers of high fidelity components, microphones, sound systems and related circuitry.
Jean-Baptiste Lully. What a name to conjure with! Born in Florence in 1632, he came to Paris at the age of eleven and had careers as a dancer, violinist, and music director for the king before he turned to opera in 1672. Louis XIV promptly took the Théâtre de l'Opéra and gave it, lock, stock, and barrel, to Lully. No one else in the history of opera, not even Wagner, ever held such power. The king's patent granted Lully a virtual monopoly on opera in France for the rest of his life.

Working with the poet Philippe Quinault, the designer-engineer Vigarani, and the resources of the grandest court in Europe, Lully ran the most magnificent show-business establishment of all time. Nothing was left out: there were arias, recitatives, and choruses, huge casts and big orchestras (including the largest string section in Europe, plus ample winds and percussion), extensive dances and ballets, magnificent scenery and costumes, and spectacular stage effects (storms, gods descending, a maritime festival, the siege of a fortress, and the fires of hell all appear in Lully's Alceste).

Alceste's subtext involving a young lady whose enthusiasm in love is fickleness. One's first surprise, given Lully's reputation, is the popular character of Alceste's libretto. Like Shakespeare, Lully and his librettists were not afraid to mix the learned and the contemporary, the formal and the emotional, the tragic and the comic, the courtly and the popular—and the mix is pleasing. Similarly, Lully's music blends the formal and the free, the declamatory and the melodic in a particularly satisfying way.

Of the opera's fall from grace, one can only suppose that the old court tradition seriously deteriorated after Lully's death and everything began to seem terribly old-fashioned. The very continuity of the vocal lines, gliding so smoothly from recitative to heightened speech-song to a truly Baroque melodic flowering, must have contrasted sharply with the simplicity and clarity of the new Italian style, in which everything was arranged in neat, easy-to-grasp tunes. To make matters worse, French singing had declined in quality (some say it has never recovered), and performances had become encrusted with layers of fossilized tradition.

To recover Lully's original from under the grime of centuries was certainly no easy task, but it has been admirably accomplished by Jean-Claude Maigoire and an excellent cast. As is often the case in old vocal music, the men make a stronger impression than the women, particularly the two tenors—John Elwes, an Englishman, and Bruce Brewer, an American—and the versatile Dutch baritone Max von Egmond. The English soprano Felicity Palmer is effective in the (surprisingly small) title role, and the coquette Céphise is charmingly sung by Anne-Marie Rodde. The key element in the success of the recording is Malgoire's direction, for he has recaptured the exquisite flow of vocal and instrumental music with an unerring sense of tempo, phrase, and color. The results are impressive. Lully is not, as we thought, grand and cold. Quite the contrary: he is grand and warm.

—Eric Salzman
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THE END OF THE
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CIRCLE NO. 14 ON READER SERVICE CARD

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Rudolf Firkusny’s contribution here is certainly a major milestone in Vilem Kurz’s career, but Rudolf Firkusny, in his authoritative approach would appeal to me a little more than the more expansive, grander interpretation of the Czech milieu, whereas a single recording of the concerto, the greater intimacy and straightforwardness of their authoritative approach would appeal to me a little more than the more expansive, grander interpretation.

The performance is symphonically conceived and thoroughly integrated between soloist and orchestra from first note to last. It is on a very grand scale, and may strike some listeners as a little larger than life, but its integrity and sweep easily sustain the expansive proportions. My one disappointment is the reticent quality of the horn solo that opens the second movement, and even this is almost forgivable in view of the excellent playing by the winds in their exposed passages.

The annotation states that this is the “first time the solo score is played without the winds.” It seems to be accurately positioned from left to right...”

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E X C I S T I N G  D I M E N S I O N S

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CIRCLE NO. 55 ON READER SERVICE CARD

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT


With this disc Rafael Kubelik completes his traversal for Deutsche Grammophon of the four Dvořák symphonic poems based on folk ballads of Karel J. Erben, the others being The Golden Spinning Wheel, Op. 109, and The Wood Dove, Op. 110. Dvořák’s mastery of his musical material for the symphonic poems, particularly in terms of thematic metamorphosis and harmonic coloring, was absolute. A singularly striking aspect of The Noonday Witch is the composer’s use of speech rhythms and dissonance in a way that looks forward to the late works of Leos Janáček.

Kubelik has the Bavarian Radio Orchestra performing in a manner reminiscent of the Czech Philharmonic in the palmy days of Václav Talich. His readings are extraordinarily dramatic, making the London Symphony recordings by the late István Kertész seem tame in comparison. Dynamic and dramatic contrast also characterizes the Kubelik treatment of the colorful Symphonic Variations, composed nearly twenty years earlier than the symphonic poems. Whether one prefers the dance emphasis in Kubelik’s reading or the marvelous flow of the 1969 Colin Davis performance with the London Symphony for Philips (for the moment out of print) is a matter of taste.

The DG sound has both richness and brilliance, though the deepish stereo perspective may offer just a shade less immediate detail than the Kertész London discs of the symphonic poems. But for performance of these works, Kubelik is tops. D.H.

FALLA: The Three-Cornered Hat. Teresa Berganza (mezzo-soprano); Boston Symphony Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 823 $8.98, © 3300 823 $8.98.

Performance: More brilliant than authentic. Recording: Orchestrally excellent.

Ozawa and the Bostonians have some hot competition in recordings of Falla’s fascinating and witty ballet score about the ups and downs of young love and the discomfiture of middle-aged lust. Ansermet, whose 1962 London recording also has Teresa Berganza as vocal soloist, conducted the world premiere in 1919. In Angel’s Frühbeek de Burgos and Everest’s Enrique Jorda, we have Spanish conductors born and bred to the Falla idiom. And then there is the Columbia recording with the New York Philharmonic led by the formidable Pierre Boulez, who in his ballet recordings has displayed a striking feel for the theater along with remarkable musicianship.

I had only the Everest disc on hand for detailed comparison, but I remember the others, and I would sum up the Ozawa performance as long on orchestral virtuosity and somewhat... (Continued on page 146)
If you believe that perfection is a thing of the past, take a good look at the Nakamichi 410 Preamplifier, 420 Power Amplifier and 430 FM Tuner—the most elegantly compact, best performing trio of components on the market today.

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The most pleasant surprise will come when you price the Nakamichi 410, 420 and 430—they are amazingly affordable. So, if you're limited by space or budget, but unwilling to compromise on quality or performance, nothing could be more perfect. See and hear them at your Nakamichi dealer soon. For further information, write Nakamichi Research (USA), Inc., 220 Westbury Ave., Carle Place, N.Y. 11514.

Perfection...from Nakamichi

*Dolby is a Trademark of Dolby Laboratories, Inc.*
short on authenticity of feeling. The opening shouts of "Olé!" and the handclapping that set the atmosphere come off rather tamely, as does Mme. Berganza’s following solo. The recording is up to the best Deutsche Grammophon standard, if I were to choose a recording of The Three-Cornered Hat it would be—on the basis of the best combination of sound, vitality of performance, and style—Frühbeck de Burgos’ version by a very narrow margin over Boulez. D.H.


Performance: Fine
Recording: Symphony good, concerto suspect

This record is my first exposure to the music of Jindřich Feld (born 1925), a Czechoslovak composer noted in Baker’s Biographical Dictionary of Musicians for his “chamber music in a neo-Baroque manner.” On the evidence offered here, he is a brilliant craftsman, and imaginative too, though not particularly original. Throughout his First Symphony (1970) one is constantly imagining oneself in the domain of some other composer or work, the Shostakovich First Symphony intruding with special prominence among echoes of Bartók, Honegger, Stravinsky, Ravel, and others. It is nevertheless (or perhaps because of these elements) a most attractive work—taut, balletic, a symphony in name only whose five movements (Prologue, Scherzo, Passacaglia, Interludio, Epilogue) have a dramatic thrust suggesting incidental music for a play. Antonio de Almeida, who conducted the premiere in 1972, makes a strong case for the work, and the sound is as fine as the performance.

Jean-Pierre Rampal has spoken with enthusiasm of Feld’s Flute Concerto of 1954, and it is likely that this recording dates from the time he played the premiere. It sounds like artificial stereo to me, though it is not so labeled, but it is well managed for all that, with ample smoothness and detail. Actually, the work is not given in its entirety; this extraordinary note appears on the jacket: “We have included only the first and third movement[sic] of the work because 1) the total length of the work would demand more record space than Serenus can provide; 2) the movement is so reminiscent of the symphony of another great earlier composer that, as capably as it is written, it might be subject to critical misinterpretation, something we believe Feld does not deserve; and 3) the work has enough slow, moving [sic] parts in the two present movements that a slow movement might actually seem redundant; plus the fact that parts of the second movement are repeated in the third.”

Again, though, it is a really attractive work, with no dead weight (at least in the two longish movements offered here), but with an abundance of echoes and "reminiscences." The writing for the flute is sinuous and silky, and it is effectively contrasted with the generally driving orchestral material in the first movement (where the spirit of Honegger seems ever-present) and the more cantabile tuttis and greater rhythmic and color variety in the third (where Poulenc seems to peep through). The flute has hardly any rests and is called upon for the sort of endurance and big gestures one hardly associates with the instrument—no wonder Rampal loves the work!

(Continued on page 150)
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.

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**Calendar of Classical Composers**

Music Editor James Goodfriend's Calendar of Classical Composers is a listing of the most important composers from the year 1400 to the present, grouped according to the stylistic periods-Renaissance, Baroque, Classic, Romantic, etc.—in which they worked. This 12 x 24-inch aid, guide, and complement to your music listening is printed in color on heavy, non-reflecting stock suitable, as they say, for framing. A key to the calendar, consisting of capsule accounts of the principal stylistic characteristics of each musical period, is included. The whole will be sent rolled in a mailing tube to prevent creases; we pay postage. All you do is send 25¢ to:

Calendar of Classical Composers
Stereo Review, 1 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016

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**Kreisleriana**

The simultaneous appearance of three gen-

erous helpings of "Kreisleriana" (a fourth, an Elman reissue, is pending from Vanguard) points up once again the enduring appeal of Fritz Kreisler's violin miniatures, virtuoso pieces that dazzle while they delight. Unlike Paganini, Kreisler never sets up a bra-
vura challenge that cannot be met without sacrificing beautiful sound. No one ever wrote for the instrument more lovingly.

It is part of the virtuosic challenge of the Kreisler repertoire that the pieces be performed with seeming effortlessness—the debu-
noir charm of Kreisler's own recordings shows the way. This is easier said than done, for the violin writing harbors treacherous reefs under its smooth surface. Mendelssohn's *May Breezes* is a good case in point. Its basic songfulness would seem to make the ar-
ranger's lot relatively easy, but Kreisler wrote virtually the entire piece for the violin's D and G strings. To achieve the required cello-like sonorities, the fiddler must constantly play in the highest and most exposed positions—and sound effortless, of course.

Izhak Perlman in his second Kreisler album manages all this and more with stunning ease. He plays not only elegantly but also in the Kreisler spirit of romantic abandon, ca-
ressing his phrases and fearlessly using Kreisler's brand of old-fashioned portamen-
to. But his innate taste allows for no exagger-
ation with the Kreisler world is missing. There is plenty of dazzle and even

erous

slight edge. Izhak Perlman (violin); Samuel Sanders (piano). ANGEL □ S-37254 $7.98.

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**EUGENE FODOR PLAYS FRITZ KREISL**

Fodor: Praedulium and Allegro (in the Style of Pugnani); Sicilienne and Rigaudon (in the Style of Francois); Menuet (in the Style of Porpora); La Chasse (in the Style of Car-
tier); Recitativo and Scherzo; The Old Re-
frain; Caprice Vienois; Tambourin Chinios; Schön Rosmarin; Liebesfreud; Liebesleid; La Gitana. Eugene Fodor (violin); Stephen Swedish (piano). RCA ARL 1-2365 $7.98.

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Now I'm really curious about that omitted slow movement, and (bearing in mind that one man's "eclectic" is another's "derivative") I'd like to hear more of Feld's music—which Serenus will be offering, apparently, since this disc is labeled "Volume 1."  

**FOOTE: Sonata in G Minor for Piano and Violin, Op. 20 (see BEACH)**

**GOUNOD: Faust.** Montserrat Caballé (soprano), Marguerite; Giacomo Aragall (tenor), Faust; Paul Plishka (bass), Mephistopheles; Philippe Huttenlocher (baritone), Valentin; Anita Terzian (mezzo-soprano), Siebel; Josephine Taiton (mezzo-soprano), Marthe; Jean Brun (baritone), Wagner. Chorus of the Rhine Opera; Strasbourg Philharmonic Orchestra, Alain Lombard cond. RCA FRL4-2493 four discs $31.98.  

**Performance:** Vocally compelling  
**Recording:** Very good  

In "Essentials of an Opera Library" (October 1977 Stereo Review), George Jellinek said that this new Faust (he had heard the advance pressings) would not replace the old De los Angeles/Gedda/Christoff/Cluytens Angel recording as his favorite. Well, I would agree, but there are more than a few things to be said for the new RCA recording nevertheless. Montserrat Caballé's Marguerite is special: sweet, gentle, exquisite. There's no passion, but then there's not much real depth in the role to start with. Her portrayal is close to a certain kind of perfection; almost the only jar

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**Performance:** Superb  
**Recording:** Very good  

Susan Starr, trained at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, is yet another of the crop of younger-generation pianists to be reckoned with—and not just on the basis of virtuoso equipment but of innate musicality as well. I especially enjoyed Starr's handling of the Ravel masterpiece, inasmuch as she gives its poetic essence fully as much attention as its neo-Classic aspects. The music gains enormously thereby. And if it's sheer brilliance you're after, her playing of the final toccata will stand up against any other performance available on discs.  

But the Griffes side of the disc gives me even more pleasure. I have been a strong partisan of the fierce and power-packed sonata ever since I heard Harrison Potter play and record the piece back in the 1930's. There was a spate of early LP recordings of the work in the 1950's, but no stereo version appeared until 1976, when the enterprising British pianist Clive Lythgoe recorded it for Philips as something of a Bicentennial tribute. Miss Starr's performance of the sonata is dynamic and brilliant, and an added attraction of her disc is the first stereo recording of the Op. 5 Tone-Pictures—Le Lake at Evening, The Vale of Dreams, and The Night Winds—in their original piano version (the woodwind-piano-harp arrangement was issued in 1976 by New World Records). In contrast to the Scriabin-influenced style of the sonata, the Tone-Pictures are delicate and masterly impressionist essays. Miss Starr's playing is for me beyond criticism throughout, and the recording quality is altogether first-rate.  

No. 8; Trio Sonatas for Two Oboes and Continuo No. 2, in D Minor, and No. 3, in E-flat Major. Ronald Roseman and Virginia Brewer (oboes); Donald MacCourt (bassoon); Timothy Eddy (cello); Edward Brewer (harpsichord). NONESUCH HK 71339 $3.96.

Performance: Sensual
Recording: Clear

Ronald Roseman brings to these sonatas of the youthful Handel the kind of Italianate exuberance that went into their composition. Treating them more as sketches for controlled improvisation than as specific notations for exact readings, Roseman spins garland after garland of sensuously ornate phrases, especially in the slow movements. Performed in a seamless legato with a rich tone, the music emerges with the effect of inspired rhapsody. Although the amount of ornamentation is necessarily curtailed in the trio sonatas, Virginia Brewer is an excellent foil and expertly tosses back whatever challenges come her way.

The balance of the ensemble is excellent, and the use of a cello continuo for the solo sonatas and a bassoon for the trio sonatas is an admirable notion. Edward Brewer's harpsichord realizations are beautifully wrought and discreetly performed, the hallmark of good continuo playing. Although the trio sonata is to Baroque chamber music what the string quartet is to Classical chamber music, there are very few really good recordings derived from this vast and rich repertoire. This disc is a valuable addition to the catalog. S.L.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JANAČEK: Katya Kabanová. Naděžda Kniplová (mezzo-soprano), Marfa Kabanova; Vladimir Krejčík (tenor), Tichon; Elisabeth Soderström (soprano), Katya Kabanová; Dalibor Jedlička (bass), Diko; Petr Dvorsky (tenor), Boris; Libuše Márová (soprano), Varvara; Zdeněk Švihla (tenor), Vána; others. Vienna State Opera Chorus; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Charles Mackerras cond.

Performance: Very good
Recording: Excellent

By the time Leoš Janáček began Katya Kabanová, his sixth opera, in 1917, his style was fully formed; it is characterized by brief, fragmentary vocal melodies growing out of speech patterns, a combination of parlando devices and folkloric elements, and a frequent use of motivic reiteration. The sparse orchestration occasionally takes on an unexpected brilliance, which, combined with biting and slashing sonorities, can result in unforgettable striking effects. The curious thing about Janáček is that what may initially seem like a primitive device will often turn out to be cunningly sophisticated.

Katya Kabanová is based on Alexander Ostrovsky's play The Storm. (Tchaikovsky, who often turned to Ostrovsky's writings for inspiration, had written a programmatic concert overture on the very same subject.) The plot: caught in an unhappy marriage and savagely hounded by an evil mother-in-law, Katya seeks solace in a love affair, but she cannot live with her guilt and destroys herself.

Unquestionably, this makes for powerful theater despite the highly condensed and not very skillful libretto (Janáček's own). The river Volga and the gathering storm are used with great tone-painting art to provide a frame for the catastrophe. There is a sense of inevitability to the drama, and though the libretto does not allow for enough character development, the conflicts are real and full of impact.

In this performance the impassioned conducting of Charles Mackerras (pupil of the great Václav Talich and an authority on this music) must be singled out for special praise. He communicates the tenderness as well as the power of Janáček's quirky writing with a sure hand, drawing magnificent sounds from the Vienna Philharmonic. In the title role, Elisabeth Soderström, that exceptional singing actress, seizes our sympathy with Katya's yearning first-act aria and never lets go. Moreover, as the only non-Slav among the principals, she has mastered the Czech sounds remarkably well.

The other members of the cast appear thoroughly at home with the idiom. They form a very strong ensemble with certain standouts: Naděžda Kniplová as the monstrous mother-in-law is formidable yet laudably short of overdrawing the part, Petr Dvorsky is convincing as the decent and not too bright lover caught in the triangle, and Dalibor Jedlička is colorful and sonorous as Boris' uncle.

Like all of Janáček's operas, Katya Kabanová cannot be related to any Italian, French, or German models. Its closest frame of reference is the same composer's earlier Jenůfa. Of the two I find Katya Kabanová more successful. It may not instantly conquer you, but it will grow on you.

G.J.

(Continued overleaf)
Il Trovatore

Recorded at the Royal Festival Hall, London, 1975

Sang, Chorus, and Orchestra: the London Opera Company

Performance: Enchanting
Recording: All right

Svetlanov came surprisingly close to the standard set by Sir Thomas Beecham in his recent recording of one of Beecham’s specialties, the Balakirev Symphony No. 1 (Meldiya/Angel SR 40272), and this enchanting re-alization of the Kalinnikov First strikes me as the finest thing he has done on records so far. There is a firm but subtle hand in control here, encouraging the various wind soloists in particular to shape phrases freely and alluringly and infusing the proceedings with an altogether captivating air of spontaneity. The Borodin second theme in the first movement has a fine spring to it, and the andante, with the tasteful caressing of Kalinnikov’s imaginative writing for harp, solo oboe, English horn, and clarinet (in that sequence), is sheer poetry. But the entire performance may be so described. The final movement is taken at a lick that will strike some listeners as excessively fast for the allegro con moto marking, but I think it is beautifully, generating a sweeping excitement that is ever so much more winning than the deliberately paced monumentalism usually visited on this dazzling piece. The recording could be richer, and the orchestra (probably the same one usually billed as the USSR Symphony Orchestra) shows some rough spots, but the shortcomings are easily overlooked amid the overall persuasiveness of the performance—which stands up splendidly in repeated hearings.

R.F.

Recording of Special Merit

Kalinnikov: Symphony No. 1, in G Minor
State Academic Orchestra, Yevgeny Svetlanov cond. Columbia/Melodiya M 34523 $7.98.

Performance: Enchanting
Recording: All right

Svetlanov came surprisingly close to the standard set by Sir Thomas Beecham in his recent recording of one of Beecham’s specialties, the Balakirev Symphony No. 1 (Melodiya/Angel SR 40272), and this enchanting realization of the Kalinnikov First strikes me as the finest thing he has done on records so far. There is a firm but subtle hand in control here, encouraging the various wind soloists in particular to shape phrases freely and alluringly and infusing the proceedings with an altogether captivating air of spontaneity. The Borodin second theme in the first movement has a fine spring to it, and the andante, with the tasteful caressing of Kalinnikov’s imaginative writing for harp, solo oboe, English horn, and clarinet (in that sequence), is sheer poetry. But the entire performance may be so described. The final movement is taken at a lick that will strike some listeners as excessively fast for the allegro con moto marking, but I think it is beautifully, generating a sweeping excitement that is ever so much more winning than the deliberately paced monumentalism usually visited on this dazzling piece. The recording could be richer, and the orchestra (probably the same one usually billed as the USSR Symphony Orchestra) shows some rough spots, but the shortcomings are easily overlooked amid the overall persuasiveness of the performance—which stands up splendidly in repeated hearings.

R.F.

Performance: Scruffy
Recording: Thin

These two mid-nineteenth-century flute concertos are musically akin to the Hummel piano concertos and the Spohr clarinet concertos. Their gesture is pompous and serious, their form overblown, and their idiom padded with endless figuration and embroidery. But despite their old-fashionedness, they offer a fine flutist great moments of virtuosic revelry.

John Wion is a good flutist who employs a seamless legato appropriate to the style and, for the most part, gets around easily. There are, however, times when his pitch goes awry or his breath runs out and rhythmic smoothness vanishes in the interest of simply getting through long and difficult passages.

The orchestral sound is far thinner than that required in music of this bombastic period, and I wonder if this obvious pick-up group had sufficient rehearsals to give a confident reading and full support. Nonetheless, the concertos make a welcome addition to the early Romantic recorded repertoire, and John Wion deserves some credit for digging them up and having the patience to learn them.

S.L.

MOORE: The Pageant of P. T. Barnum (see CARPENTER)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MOZART: Piano Concerto No. 14, in E-flat Major (K. 449); Piano Concerto No. 23, in A Major (K. 488). Ivan Moravec (piano); Czech Chamber Orchestra, Josef Vlach cond. SUPRAPHON 11 10 1768 $7.98 (from Qualiton Records Ltd., 65-37 Austin Street, Rego Park, N.Y. 11374).

Performance: Poetic
Recording: Good

The stunning recording Moravec and Vlach made of the Concerto No. 25 with the Czech Philharmonic (Vanguard SU-11, reviewed here in February 1976) encouraged me to hope for more Mozart from the same team, and this pair of performances is every bit as distinguished as that earlier one. The K. 449 concerto lends itself especially well to the chamber-music approach it receives here—exquisitely balanced, marvelously integrated, giving one the feeling that Moravec and every member of the orchestra are actually listening to each other and playing as beautifully as they can for each other's pleasure. Moravec and Vlach take the adagio of K. 488 very slowly indeed; it is by no means heavy or thickened, though, but is tempered by the same aristocratic restraint as the arias of the Countess in Figaro, to whose music this concerto, its slow movement in particular, is so intimately related. The outer movements, too, are somewhat restrained, but never at the expense of their innate vitality. Both of the Serkins have given us similarly distinguished (and more imaginatively coupled) versions of K. 449, and Brendel and Pollini are equally persuasive in K. 488. But those to whom this particular coupling appeals, or whose en...
thrust for exceptional Mozart playing is not dimmed by the prospect of a duplication or two, may regard purchase of this well-recorded disc as one of the safest investments they are likely to make.

R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT
MOZART: Violin Concerto No. 3, in G Major (K. 216); Violin Concerto No. 5, in A Major (K. 219, "Turkish"). José Luis García (violin); English Chamber Orchestra, José Luis García cond. HNH 4D30 $7.98 (from HNH Distributors, Ltd., P.O. Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60204).

Performance: Superb
Recording: Flawless

These two Mozart violin concertos have more than their share of outstanding recorded performances. But José Luis García, long associated with the English Chamber Orchestra, especially in Baroque repertoire, doubles as soloist and conductor and comes up here with as fine a realization of these delectable works as I have heard anywhere. His tone has sweetness and warmth without ever becoming cloying, and it is quite clear throughout the orchestral tuttis and ritornellos that conductorially he can keep things moving in an effortless ebb and flow. Especially in the slow movements, he melds the solo and orchestral dialogue into a truly organic whole. Superb recorded sound and noiseless playing surfaces add to a production that gives unalloyed pleasure from start to finish.

D.H.

NELSON: Savannah River Holiday (see CARPENTER)

Performance: Heavy going
Recording: Very good

Andreï Petrov, born in Leningrad in 1930, is one of the younger composers in the Soviet Union seeking recognition in the face of the dominance of the modern big six: Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Khatchaturian, Kabalevsky, Miaskovsky, and Glière. In 1968, Petrov wrote a letter to a Soviet newspaper suggesting that it was time some attention was paid to works by younger men. Well, this Soviet recording introduces us to Petrov's own work. He is a skilled orchestrator and an unabashed melodist and colorist deeply influenced by the messiaenic and Baroque repertoires. Leningrad. This is restless, belligerent, and percussive. Leningrad Philharmonic, Arvid Yansons cond. R.P.

Performance: Churcy
Recording: Resonant

If the first side of this album plunges you into a fit of depression with its unmitigated gloom, the second side will return you to a normal state of cheerfulness with its joyous verse anthems that so pleased the restored monarch Charles II. As one expects from the Choir of King's College, the choral sound is clear, but it is rather on the subdued side. Though the blend is particularly rewarding in the homophonic passages, the sound loses its richness in much of the contrapuntally conceived sections. In an effort to bring out various points of imitation and interesting individual lines, Ledger allows the sound to fall apart and become scruffy at times. The solo work by the countertenor, tenor, and bass is fine, but the various boy sopranos seem inadequate.

Perhaps the most frustrating aspect of this performance is the churchy approach to the music. Purcell was a full-blooded, lusty composer equally at home in chamber, church, or theater. He used much the same style for each, underscoring the meaning of the words with his music. Joy is joy whether it is in the choir stall or on the boards, and it must not be played down just because the text is biblical; Solomon's amorous expressions are just as sensuous as any uttered by rakes and shepherds. The King's College Choir seems to forget this, and as a result Purcell's passionate musical language suffers from unnatural restraint and understatement.

S.L.
RAVEL: Le Tombeau de Couperin (see GRIFFES)


Performance: Fluent
Recording: Good

It brought me up short to see "The Music of Vittorio Rieti, Vol. VI," printed across the top of the jacket, but this is indeed the sixth generously filled disc of Rieti's works in various forms to be offered by Serenus in the last few years. The three works here are as ingratiating and solidly wrought as the better-known Harpsichord Partita (Sylvia Marlowe's remake of this is now preserved on CRI 3125SD, together with the Harpsichord Concerto). Gold and Fizdale's recording of the Second Avenue Waltzes (1941) on an early Columbia LP (ML 2147) has become a collector's item, so this new recording of the work, delightfully played by two Italian pianists, is especially welcome. The Sestetto pro Gemini (for flute, oboe, two violins doubling viola, one cello, and piano) was written only a few years ago for a Dutch chamber group whose personnel includes two sets of twins from the same family; of its four brief movements, the vivacious second and lyrical third are especially intriguing, but all four are graced with real tunes and lovely, fresh colors. These seem to be the most prominent qualities of Rieti's music, as they are again in the Conundrum ballet suite of 1964, whose dramatic episodes and propulsive momentum seem to contradict the information that it was composed without a specific scenario. All three performances are fluent, involved, and of a quality to delight any composer's heart. Altogether a handsome and enjoyable package.

R.F.

ROMBERG: Concerto in B Minor for Flute and Orchestra, Op. 30 (see MOLIQUE)

SCHUBERT: Lieder (see Collections—Ian Partridge)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT


Performance: Splendid
Recording: Vivid

This would appear to be the first recording of Macbeth since Henry Swoboda's 1950 version for Westminster, which means it is only the second ever; it is curious that the work could have been neglected for so long, but then Strauss himself seems not to have bothered with it much either in conducting his music. It is an early work, as the opus number indicates, antedating Don Juan by a year in its original form, and even the revision made two years later shows more Lisztian characteristics than one finds in Straus's other tone poems. Both historically and for its own worth, it is too valuable a piece to be abandoned, and it could not be in better hands than it is here. The Dresden orchestra, Strauss' own favorite, is justifiably proud of its unique tradition in performing his music, and Kempe too was more closely associated with the works of Strauss than one finds in Strauss' other tone poems. Both historically and for its own worth, it is too valuable a piece to be abandoned, and it could not be in better hands than it is here.

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CIRCLE NO. 63 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Stereoplay Review, July 1977 Hirsch-Huck Laboratories Reports

CIRCLE NO. 74 ON READER SERVICE CARD
Strauss than with those of any other composer. His magnificent cycle of all Strauss' orchestral works, from which these two splendid performances are drawn, is surely his finest memorial, and Angel is more than generous in making portions of it available on the low-price Seraphim label. Both sides shine with authority, conviction, and commitment, and the sound has a burnished glow—more mellow than brilliant, but agreeably rich and well defined. In view of the uniqueness of the coupling, this Don Juan might head the list of the versions now available.

R.F.


Performance: Pretty Recording: Good

There was a big demand for do-it-yourself piano music in the nineteenth century, and Tchaikovsky composed quite assiduously and successfully for this market. His own style and inclinations made him the perfect master of the lyrical small form. His innumerable salon and genre piano pieces combine the poet-meditative style of the early Romantics with the picturesque genre piece of the late nineteenth century. Silent-film pianists rapped off this music and almost killed it; no one has taken it seriously for a very long time.

Nevertheless, its appeal can be strong as ever. Comeback was inevitable. Danielle Laval, a young French pianist, plays this music without affectation and with real charm. She is not brilliant or flashy, but there is warmth and just the right touch of sentiment in her performance. Not only is this disc engaging to listen to but it should send those home pianists still left among us rushing back to the keyboard, Tchaikovsky scores in hand. E.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT


Performance: Suave Recording: Smooth

In his ingeniously liner notes for this record, Christopher Hogwood argues that these concertos were designed to be played as chamber music, with one instrument per part. And so they are performed here with excellent results. Moreover, these performers play original instruments and obviously feel at home with them. Vivaldi knew exactly how to get the effects he wanted with the instruments he had. His music, therefore, is best presented by using the instruments he had. Only the original instruments can produce the flat, eerie sound that was obviously what he wanted in the slow movement of the Second Concerto (La Notte) or the bird calls of the Third Concerto (Il Gardinello). But all is not imitative effect here. There is a great deal of art involved in both composition and performance, and, while the music is admittedly lightweight Vivaldi, the Academy of Ancient Music elevates it to the level of edifying amusement.

S.L.

COLLECTIONS

Cousins: Polkas, Waltzes, and other entertainments for cornet and trombone (see Best of the Month, page 93)


Performance: Fairly good Recording: Acceptable mono

Thinking of such fabulous Armenian singers as contralto Zara Dolukhanova and baritone Pavel Liubtian, I approached this disc with keen anticipation. Well, I did not find their equal in Dicran Jamgochian, but I did find him to be an experienced and versatile artist with a bright and resonant sound and forthright delivery. There is quite a wide range of reper-

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...fishes, paying careful attention to Schubert's delicate ornamentations along the way. There aren't as many Schubert recital discs in the current catalog as one might think, and surely not many that contain such an abundance of "hits." With its full texts, translations, and excellent surfaces, this one therefore has my recommendation.

G.I.


Performance: Pleasant
Recording: Excellent

Looking over the list of nearly a dozen albums that Jean-Pierre Rampal has recorded in the past few years, one might suspect that this gentleman is determined to transcribe the entire classical repertoire for flute. Where is the line to be drawn? Certainly the flute's allure is evident in the languorous Ravel Habanera, the Chopin Nocturne and Minute Waltz. Debussy's opulent Clair de Lune, and the variations on a Japanese theme so adroitly transcribed by Masao Yoshida. Yet even so versatile and songful an instrument has limitations that even the supple skill of Rampal can...
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not entirely conceal. It cannot, for example, compete with the violin in seductiveness, as becomes obvious in the transcriptions of Kreisler's Liebesfreud and Liebesleid and in the Carmen Fantasy. When it comes to Carnival of Venice, on the other hand, the banalities are built right into the score. In all, though, Rampal's elegant playing makes for pleasant listening throughout, especially with the alert piano accompaniments of Futaba Inoue.


Performance: Overdressed but lovely

Recording: Superb

Over the years—and there certainly were many of them—the late Leopold Stokowski occasionally took time out from the podium to apply a felicitous if florid hand to transcribing for orchestra some of his favorite non-orchestral works. Purists have held their ears in horror. Most of the rest of us have rather enjoyed the odd experience, especially when the white-maned maestro himself coaxed some giant orchestra to draw sensuous floods of sound from the page. This time around, with the National Philharmonic at his disposal, Stokowski for once gave the Bach Toccata over the years—and there certainly were many of them—the late Leopold Stokowski occasionally took time out from the podium to apply a felicitous if florid hand to transcribing for orchestra some of his favorite non-orchestral works. Purists have held their ears in horror. Most of the rest of us have rather enjoyed the odd experience, especially when the white-maned maestro himself coaxed some giant orchestra to draw sensuous floods of sound from the page. This time around, with the National Philharmonic at his disposal, Stokowski for once gave the Bach Toccata

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CIRCLE NO. 18 ON READER SERVICE CARD

STEREO REVIEW
When the startling news that Maria Callas had died was broadcast in New York, several friends called me to commiserate as though I were a member of the bereaved family. But, although I admired Callas enormously, I didn’t know her personally and had never so much as written her a letter. On the few occasions in the Fifties and Sixties when someone offered to introduce me to La Divina, out of shyness I always declined. I was afraid that confronted with such a great artist who had moved me so deeply I would lose all dignity and self-control and say something dumb like “Gee, Mme. Callas, I think you’re grand!”

I heard her at every stage of her international career, beginning in Mexico City in 1951 before her name was a household word. She sang Aida and La Traviata there, and although I enjoyed her performances, I blush to confess that I did not foresee the great career that lay before her. I was young and hadn’t been to the opera very much. Pretty voices, that’s what I liked, and Callas’ voice sounded strange to my inexperienced ears. I simply was not sensitive enough to appreciate her musicality, the purity of her diction, her genius for phrasing. Now when I listen to pirated discs or tapes of her Mexico City performances, I think I must have been not only young, but deaf.

My hearing improved greatly as her Angel recordings came out—Lucia, Puritani, Tosca, Forza, and Norma—and they sharpened my perceptions a great deal. Through them I found the beauty in her voice and realized that for me the most significant of her many gifts was an unparalleled ability to act with the voice and communicate feeling through music.

By the time I got to La Scala in Milan for the first time in 1955, I was an avowed Callas fan, and the first performance I attended in that historic theater was Bellini’s Norma with Mario del Monaco, Giulietta Simionato, Nicola Rossi-Lemeni—and Callas in her prime. It took me several days to recover, and then I went back to see them do it all over again.

So much has been written about Callas the actress, and there is so much drama in her singing on records, that many people who never saw her think she must have caromed about the stage and clawed the scenery a lot. Nothing could be further from the truth. Her acting was marked by delicacy, vulnerability, and taste. She always knew when a small gesture would make a greater effect than a large one, and she could command more attention by standing still and listening to a colleague than most singers get by rending their garments and tearing their hair.

Over the next decade, although I bought her records as they were issued, I saw her only intermittently in the opera house, but I was present at her last performance at the Met in Tosca on March 25, 1965. Some vocal decline was undeniable, but the magic was still there. In his memoirs, the Met’s general manager Rudolf Bing wrote of that last evening: “She did not sing well, but it made no difference whatever—never had there been such a Tosca.”

After years of inactivity Callas returned to New York to give a series of master classes at the Juilliard School in the season of 1971-1972, and they were also unforgettable performances. It gave me goose flesh to see her walk across the stage or hear her sing a few lines to illustrate a musical point. I don’t know how much her young students profited from her coaching, but fortunately Callas’ great career began simultaneously with the introduction of the long-playing record, and a (Continued on page 168)
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The Opera File . . .

large body of her work is permanently documented not only for the pleasure of future record collectors but for the instruction of future students of singing as well.

My list of essential Callas recordings includes her Lucia (Serafin 1B-6632), Norma (Serafin Chess IC 6073), and Tosca (Angel 3598). I prefer these mono versions because here she is vocally more secure than in the later stereo remakes. Recorded in the early years of the bel canto revival, the Norma and Lucia make clear how Callas helped to bring that revival about. The Tosca with Giuseppe di Stefano and Tito Gobbi is generally regarded as the most nearly perfect operatic recording ever made. A vocal collector should have at least one of her Verdi operas, perhaps Rigoletto (Angel 3537), for her dramatic yet girlish Giulietta. Or Ballo in Maschera (Serafin IC 6087), for the intensity of her more mature Amelia.

Among the many recital discs, I would choose “Art of Maria Callas, Volume 3, Coloratura/Lyrical” (Angel 35233) for its display of her versatility. One must also have “Verdi Heroines” (Angel S-35763) for her Sleepwalk Scene from Macbeth and “Mad Scene” (Angel S-35764) for the excerpts from Bellini’s Il Pirata and Thomas’ Hamlet. “Great Arias from French Operas” (Angel S-35882) is uneven, but the two Carmen arias are splendid examples of her feeling for rhythm and musical line, and “Printemps qui commence” (Angel S-35883) is quintessential from Saens’ Samson et Dalila is quintessential Callas.

To list and analyze what Callas has left us on records would take a book. That book has been written. Published on September 12, only four days before her death, it bears the unintentionally apt title The Callas Legacy (Scribner’s, 224 pages, $12.50). It was written by John Ardoin, music editor of the Dallas Morning News, a critic who has admired Callas and studied her work for years. In his new book Ardoin examines every available bit of her singing that has survived, whether on private tapes, or on Zepp directly, or on printed scores and old recordings. He points out faults as well as virtues, and makes an allowance for the display and documentation not only for the pleasure of future students of singing as well.

As I read The Callas Legacy, I realized that every time I saw her was such an important event in my life that I can still remember who attended each performance with me. And it occurred to me that just as a lot of my contemporaries conducted the love affair and close friendships of their youth and early manhood to the musical accompaniment of Frank Sinatra or Mabel Mercer, I spent countless pleasant hours with the people I have loved most in the world listening to Callas records. Then it dawned on me that I was indeed a member of a large bereaved family, her public.

In the epilogue to his book Ardoin quotes Richard Dyer’s review in The Nation of Callas’ appearance in Boston on her disastrous final concert tour with Di Stefano in 1974: “Now in her struggle and in her exhaustion she asks and earns . . . what she has never before seemed to need, our love.” It made me bitterly regret that I had never touched her hand, looked into her eyes, and said, “Gee, Mme. Callas, I think you’re grand!”
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