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Critics called it "lascivious, unmusical, and tasteless."

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In 1875, the reviews of Carmen were so bad that after 33 performances Bizet became ill and depressed, and died.

One critic said it was licentious, an incarnation of vice. Another (Tchaikovsky) said it would become one of the most popular operas in history.

"They were both right," says maestro Jesús López-Cobos.

"As a Spaniard, I can empathize with the themes. But as one whose background is mostly operatic, I know the motivation of the music. For instance, Don Jose's music should sound 'sarcastic'. And Carmen's themes should, indeed, be sexy. The work should evoke visual as well as musical images. Listen, and you will see them."

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Send check for $5.00 (U.S) for shipping to: Boston Acoustics, Dept. S, Box 628, Holman, PA 19043. Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. Offer good until April 30, 1992 or while supplies last.
The Yamaha KX-930 is one of many high-performance analog cassette decks available today. See page 55 for a buying guide to blank tape and cassette decks and page 44 for tips on how to select the optimum tape for your machine.
DDDead?
The SPARS code—a three letter designation (such as ADD) indicating whether analog or digital technology was used, respectively, in recording, mixing, and mastering a CD—could be history soon if the group that invented it has its way. The Society of Professional Audio Recording Services recently recommended that the code be discontinued, arguing that current audio technology is too complex for the code to explain accurately what went on throughout the record-making process.

Nipper's New Recruit
BMG Classics’ top-of-the-line label, RCA Red Seal, is probably the most prestigious in the history of recording classical music. Among the artists presented on RCA Red Seal have been the singers Enrico Caruso and Leontyne Price, the conductor Arturo Toscanini, the pianists Artur Rubinstein and Van Cliburn, and the flutist James Galway. The latest performer added to the Red Seal roster is General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, who was the commander of allied forces in the Persian Gulf War. General Schwarzkopf, now retired, is making his RCA debut as the narrator of Aaron Copland’s Lincoln Portrait in a recording by the Saint Louis Symphony conducted by Leonard Slatkin. It is due in stores on February 11, the day before Lincoln’s birthday.

Stamp Out Technophobia
To reduce consumer confusion and "technophobia," the Electronic Industries Association’s Consumer Electronics Group (EIA/CEG) has published the new Consumer Electronics Terminology Dictionary. Designed as an educational tool for sales personnel so they can help consumers make informed buying decisions, it is useful for anyone interested in home audio or video, mobile electronics, television, computers, and so forth. For nonmembers of the EIA single copies of the 78-page, soft-cover book cost $4.50 postpaid from Electronic Industries Association, CEG Office of Member & Industry Relations, 2001 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20006-1813. Reduced prices are available for bulk orders and for EIA members.

Best Sellers
The Recording Industry Association of America has certified as multi-Platinum (for multimillion sales) the following recordings: Garth Brooks, "Ropin' the Wind" (Capitol), five million; Michael Bolton, "Time, Love and Tenderness" (Columbia), four million; Guns N' Roses, "Use Your Illusion II" (Geffen), three million; Madonna, "The Immaculate Collection" (Sire), three million; Bonnie Raitt, "Lucky of the Draw" (Capitol), two million.

Sound Environment
Koss Corporation, the maker of Koss Stereophones, is distributing free ear plugs at music and sporting events as part of its on-going effort to make the public aware of the long-term effects of exposure to sound-pressure levels above 95 dB and to teach people ways to protect their hearing. The new program, called "Support Your Right to a Sound Environment," began at a Metallica concert where sound levels as high as 116 dB were measured. Koss distributed 10,000 sets of earplugs. The campaign will last through 1992.

Mega Music on PBS
On February 24, PBS will telecast a concert by the tenor Luciano Pavarotti and his friends, "Pavarotti Plus," in the Live from Lincoln Center series, now a General Motors Mark of Excellence presentation. It is the one-hundredth broadcast in the series, which has won seven Emmy Awards.

On March 2, on PBS, Live from Lincoln Center will present a celebration of the Rossini Bicentennial (no, Virginia, Mozart wasn’t the only one). The world-beating cast includes Marilyn Horne, Jane Anderson, Thomas Hampson, and Samuel Ramey. Other PBS musical shows in March include Natalie Cole singing the songs of Nat King Cole in the Great Performances series, now underwritten by Texaco, on March 7. Also on that date will be a special concert by Crosby, Stills, and Nash and another by Neil Young.

On March 10 a nostalgia blowout called "Those Fabulous Forties" will feature Doc Severinsen, Jack Jones, and Tony Tennille. (Sonny Tufts isn’t listed, but we’re hoping.)

On March 11, Juliet Prowse and Bobby Short host the "Big Band Ballroom Bash," and there is a documentary called "The Magic of Bing Crosby" and a concert by Neil Sedaka. Check local listings.
Introducing a receiver with so much going for it, there's hardly enough room to do it justice.

Due to Yamaha's patented HCA Circuitry, the RX-950 delivers pure Class A performance, yet runs exceptionally cool. The amplifier in Yamaha's new audio-dedicated receiver will never degrade to Class AB, no matter how high the output.

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Integrated Multi-Function LCD Display

The RX-950 features Yamaha's Direct PLL IF Count Synthesizer, a microprocessor-controlled tuning system to lock onto the weakest broadcast frequencies.

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The new RX-950 combines the performance of the finest separates with the convenience of a receiver.

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Ozzy Osbourne       No More Mr. Nice Guy       Quid Riot         Mellow Yellow
Ted Nugent           Full Blown                Quiet Riot        Little Jealousy
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Stereo Review® is published by Hachette Magazines, Inc.

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Nakamichi

Nakamichi's first all-in-one stereo system, the Soundspace 7, combines a CD changer and a receiver in one chassis with a pair of matching two-way speakers. The changer features the company's MusicBank system, which enables the user to store six CD's in the unit while playing a seventh in the single-disc tray. The player has fifty-track programming, three random-play modes, and four repeat modes. The amplifier uses Harmonic Time Alignment circuitry for lower distortion; the quartz-lock tuner has ten station presets. Input and output jacks are gold-plated, the fluorescent display has an automatic dimmer, and there is a 60-minute sleep timer. Dimensions of the receiver/CD changer unit are about 21 x 4 1/4 x 12 1/4 inches; the speakers are about 11 1/4 x 17 1/4 x 9 inches. Price: $2,200 complete. Nakamichi America Corporation, Dept. SR, 19701 S. Vermont Ave., Torrance, CA 90502. Circle 120 on reader service card

Onkyo

The TA-RW909 is the first Onkyo dual-well dubbing deck to carry the company's top-of-the-line Integra designation. Each transport has three motors and circuits for Dolby B and Dolby C noise reduction as well as Dolby HX Pro headroom extension. Onkyo's Accubias control enables the user to fine-tune recording bias. Other features include Power Glide tape loading and random play (usually found only in compact disc players). The deck has a fluorescent display and comes with a full-function wireless remote control. Price: $700. Onkyo, Dept. SR, 200 Williams Dr., Ramsey, NJ 07446. Circle 121 on reader service card

Technics

The SL-XPS900 is the first Technics portable CD player to use the company's 1-bit MASH digital-to-analog conversion system. It also features twenty-four-track programming, a wireless remote control, a headphone-cord remote control, and an optical digital output. When the supplied rechargeable batteries are used in tandem with a pair of AA alkaline batteries, the unit can play up to 10 hours continuously. The player's S-XBS circuitry is said to enhance low-frequency response, and a Live Sound function adds ambience effects. A soft carrying case, multivoltage AC adaptor, and system connection cord are included. Price: $369. Technics, Dept. SR, 50 Meadowlands Parkway, Secaucus, NJ 07094. Circle 122 on reader service card

Pinnacle

The Pinnacle PN50 two-way bookshelf speaker system uses the company's Diaduct port technology. Magnetically shielded, it can also be used for the center channel in a surround-sound system. The PN50 has a 5 1/4-inch mineral-filled polycone woofer and a 1-inch ferrofluid-cooled metal-dome tweeter. Bandwidth is given as 45 to 21,000 Hz, sensitivity as 87 dB. Nominal impedance is 8 ohms, and recommended amplifier power is 10 to 125 watts rms. The cabinet has rubber feet to protect supporting surfaces. Dimensions are 7 1/4 x 14 1/4 x 6 1/4 inches. Price: $125 each. Pinnacle Loudspeakers, Dept. SR, 255 Executive Dr., Suite 310, Plainview, NY 11803. Circle 123 on reader service card
**Carver**

The five-channel HR-895 is Carver's first audio/video receiver with Dolby Pro Logic decoding. It is equipped with seven audio inputs, four composite-video inputs, and three S-video inputs. Other ambience modes include Hall, Matrix, and simulated stereo. The main front channels are rated for 110 watts each, the center channel for 75 watts, and the rear channels for 35 watts each. Different sources can be selected for different rooms at the same time. The tuner features Carver's proprietary Asymmetrical Charge-Coupled FM Detection technology for improved reception of poor stereo signals. Price: $1,200. Carver Corporation, Dept. SR, P.O. Box 1237, Lynnwood, WA 91763.

**Coutie**

The Coutie RTA-33 is a digital one-third-octave graphic equalizer and real-time analyzer that can be custom-mounted in a car's dash; the chassis pulls out for security. Using a high-speed digital signal-processing (DSP) circuit to handle data, it can average 256 pink-noise response measurements in just 10 seconds and store the result for comparison with other measurements. Other features include selectable input sensitivity, a parallel printer port, a pink-noise generator, and a peak-hold switch. Price: $1,395. Coutie, Dept. SR, 4260 Charter St., Vernon, CA 90058-2596.

**Liftdisplay**

The Liftdisplay Junior Cabinet from Liftdisplay holds a total of 160 compact discs in eight compartments with slide-out trays. Each CD case is held in its own slot so that users can flip through a tray. The tempered glass door is opened by a touch latch. Dimensions of the matte black, wood-laminate cabinet are 14 1/2 x 29 1/2 x 12 1/4 inches. The Liftdisplay Junior comes ready to assemble. Price: $149. Liftdisplay, Dept. SR, 115 River Rd., Suite 105, Edgewater, NJ 07020.

**Canton**

The Ergo 100 is part of Canton's new series of floor-standing bass-reflex speakers. The three-way system has two 9-inch woofers and a 6-inch midrange, all made of graphite-reinforced polypropylene, and a 1-inch tweeter. The midrange driver is isolated in a separate chamber and positioned above the tweeter to correspond with the listener's ear level. Frequency response is given as 18 to 30,000 Hz, sensitivity as 93 dB. Nominal impedance is 4 ohms. Maximum recommended amplifier power is 250 watts per channel rms. The cabinet measures 45 x 11 x 13 inches and is available veneered in black or white ash, walnut, oak, or mahogany; high-gloss black, white, and mahogany are extra-cost options. Grilles are perforated steel plates that can be painted to match the cabinet. Price: $3,500 a pair. Canton Electronics, Dept. SR, 915 Washington Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55415-1245.

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LETTERS

Combi-Players
While "Combi-Players" by Michael Riggs and Julian Hirsch in January was quite informative, it did not address the issue of whether any combi-player can play discs encoded with graphics (CD+G). Why the oversight?
Michael A. Marks
Dunn Loring, VA

Was the Realistic MD1000 ($500) purposely left out of the test of moderately priced combi-players? I don’t think it skimps on the main features, and its horizontal resolution is specified as 425 lines. Is there any way of checking that?
Daryl K. Morris
Philadelphia, PA

Parasound Preamp
With reference to the recent Julian Hirsch review of the Parasound P/FET-900 II preamplifier (January), we would like to make the following comments.
First, the price. While we tried to telephone your editor in time to catch our announced price increase from $425 to $455 effective January 1, 1992, apparently our call went astray. Still and all, even at the slightly increased suggested retail, this unit represents "an excellent value...at a truly affordable price."
Second, concerning the "strange problem" Mr. Hirsch encountered in his testing—a succession of blown fuses on plugging the unit into a power amplifier, a problem not encountered with the second unit shipped to STEREO REVIEW—this was simply a case of a miswiring of the AC fuse with the AC switched outlet peculiar to the first fifty units we received from the factory. We caught it in our U.S. quality-control operation, but we did not QC the unit Mr. Hirsch received. We are firm believers in "telling it like it is" and shipping stock production units for testing, not "tweaked" one-of-a-kind samples.
Third, and finally, the 1.2-dB "dip" Mr. Hirsch found at 20 Hz in the phono...
Acoustic Modeling

Ken Pohlmann's December "Signals" column on the Bose Modeler program was quite interesting, but the folks at Bose aren't the only ones using such software to model the acoustics of performing spaces. Dan Healy, the sound engineer for the Grateful Dead, uses a program called Autocare, along with architectural layouts and loudspeaker specs, to customize the sound system for every venue the band plays—more than thirty different venues a year! Whether they perform in a 10,000-seat hockey rink or a 70,000-seat stadium, the Grateful Dead have unmatched live sound.

LARRY PERRY, JR.
Hamden, CT

Are there any programs available to the public similar to Bose's Modeler that will run on an IBM-compatible personal computer?

Dwight H. Mulcahy
Dallas, TX

Correction

In the February "New Products" item on Tree Dimensions' Stack Racks (page 14), the prices given were incorrect. The suggested retail price of the SR 02 unit is $39.95, and the SR 03 and SR 08 units are $49.95. We regret the error.

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Taking Control

Tuners and preamplifiers—fifth

in a series on the practical business

of buying audio equipment

Audio systems take many forms, from the basic all-in-one electronic package with a couple of speakers to a full array of separate components, each with one specific job. The merits of combinations versus separates have been argued for decades and will no doubt continue to be discussed long after we are all hearing our harp music live, but all hi-fi systems, whether they come in many boxes or few, have to provide for several basic functions.

First of all, there has to be some means to control what's playing. It's a rare listener who wants to hear music from only one source. These days, a typical system includes cassette and FM capabilities, and most of us still have turntables. Add a CD player and perhaps a hi-fi VCR, and the need for a convenient method of selecting and routing signals is clear. That's one job of a preamplifier. Another is to offer some control over whatever signal has been selected: at least a volume control and usually left/right balance too.

Most preamps also include some form of equalization that can compensate for small acoustic problems or quirky program material. The simplest form is the familiar pair of treble and bass tone controls, but built-in multiband equalizers are available as well. It's easy to be seduced by such preamplifier features, so remember that excessive equalization usually results in worse sound, rather than better. Unless your equipment or room has specific problems that must be addressed, it's better to opt for simplicity in this area.

Beyond the basic functions of program selection, volume and balance adjustment, and tone control, most preamps still provide the special circuits required to deal with the signal from a phono cartridge, and most offer input/output switching for at least one tape recorder. More elaborate models provide considerable flexibility in routing signals from one component to another to facilitate things like tape-to-tape dubbing.

Like preamplifiers, FM tuners are often built into other components, particularly receivers, and they usually add little cost. It is certainly possible to put together an audio system without radio capability, but few of us choose to do so, even if we listen to radio only on rare occasions. In most situations, a minimal-performance tuner is all that's required, and, in fact, today's tuners don't vary much in the level of performance they offer. Still, difficult reception locations or special requirements (like the need for many preset stations) might well lead you to a more ambitious separate tuner. Either way, the things you should consider in shopping are basically the same.
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Disclosure Box

The information about the costs of the card described in this application is accurate as of December 1991. This information may have changed since then. Please call us at PO Box 6116, Sioux Falls, SD 57117-6116 for the latest information.

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<th>Grace Period for Repayment of the Balance for Purchases</th>
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<td>1.111111111M</td>
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Card holder may be charged a $10 late payment fee on an account late in a billing cycle. Card holder may be charged a cash advance fee of $0.50 plus of $0.20 per $100 advanced, up to a maximum of $20. Card holder may be charged a finance charge of 1.8% per month of the average daily balance. A monthly finance charge will be assessed if a periodic balance is not paid in full. Annual percentage rate of 18.9% is based on a $10 average daily balance. The periodic rate is determined with a current rate of 14.99%. The Finance Charge is based on the highest annual percentage rate in effect for the billing cycle. A Finance Charge will not be assessed if a periodic balance is paid in full each billing cycle.

**Without complete application, an application cannot be processed.**
WHAT MATTERS
When it comes to preamplifiers, it might be said with some justice that everything matters. It is your system's control center, after all, and any problems with it will affect everything you listen to. Fortunately, the state of audio design is such that the performance of "pure" electronic components like preamps and power amps is almost always as close to perfect as it needs to be. Tuners are pretty straightforward as well, and, in fact, many manufacturers use the same integrated tuner circuits. Nevertheless, there are definitely some specs and functions worth looking into.

- INPUTS AND OUTPUTS. The most common complaint about preamps is that they don't let you hook up enough source components, and the number of devices you might want to connect is getting larger every day. So make sure that any preamp you consider has enough inputs to do what you want, and then some—extra inputs are cheap. And if you intend to create an integrated audio/video system, check out the video switching capabilities offered, if any. It is possible to switch video signals externally, and sometimes that's preferable, but in most cases it's more convenient to switch everything together.

- SENSITIVITY AND SELECTIVITY. Most FM tuners work well in most situations, but if you live far away from your favorite station, or if the station you want to hear is crowded up against another one on the FM dial, differences in tuner sensitivity and selectivity may be important. The two factors often work together, but good sensitivity is more important for pulling in distant stations, and good selectivity is necessary to reduce interstation interference. For sensitivity, lower numbers are better; for selectivity, go for higher values.

- REMOTE CONTROL. There is no longer any need to hover over your hi-fi equipment to run it, as remote controls are now almost universal. But they differ widely in what they do and in how easily they do it—some are complicated enough to make an airline pilot weep. Make sure that the remote control supplied with your preamp will let you do what you want, or invest in a multipurpose remote to control the whole system.

Increasingly, systems are being designed to provide sound to more than one room, with control from several locations. There are numerous ways to obtain multirroom audio, but only a few are likely to suit your particular needs and budget.

WHAT DOESN'T
Because electronic audio components have reached the point where there's little mystery to their design, few of them differ widely in what they do and in how easily they do it—some are much more convenient to switch everything together.

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The Lingo

Most of the vocabulary used to describe tuners and preamplifiers is shared by other audio components as well, particularly those that, in fact, contain tuners and preamplifiers, such as receivers.

TUNER. A device that detects radio signals and turns them into line-level audio signals. In most cases both the AM and FM bands are handled, although AM performance is usually minimal. A handful of FM-only tuners exist at the high end of the price scale. If a tuner also contains some control functions, it is a tuner/preamp; if it has a power amplifier on the same chassis as well, it's a receiver. At one time, manufacturers talked about "digital" tuners, which had nothing to do with digital audio but meant that the station frequencies were displayed numerically (in digits) rather than by a pointer on a horizontal scale.

PREAMPLIFIER. The "pre" refers to this device's position in the audio chain—before the main (power) amplifier—rather than to any of its functions. It's sometimes called a "control amplifier," which describes the function more clearly. One special type is the phono preamp, which applies the appropriate processing to the signal coming from a phono cartridge. Phono preamps are usually integrated with control amplifiers but may be separate components. A "pre-preamp" (or "head amp") is a device that boosts the signal from a moving-coil cartridge so that it can be dealt with by a conventional phono preamplifier.

TAPE-MONITOR LOOP. Tape recorders are both sources and destinations, so they have distinctive requirements when it comes to connection with a preamplifier. In most cases, whatever has been selected by the input control is fed both to the later stages of the preamp and to a pair of jacks connected to a tape deck's inputs, so that whatever is being listened to can be recorded at the same time. The deck's outputs are connected to a second set of jacks on the preamp. A monitor switch feeds either the direct input or the signal from the tape recorder to the later circuits of the preamp, which provides a sort of secondary input selector that enables you to switch between a tape and something else. When recording, however, the main input selection is routed through the tape recorder—and sometimes the tape as well—which lets you hear what you are recording. Some preamps let you select different sources for recording and listening.

QUIETING. To a point, FM radio reception is insensitive to signal levels: As long as there's enough signal reaching the antenna terminals, the signal-to-noise ratio will be good, and increasing the input level won't improve it. Below a certain level, however, noise increases dramatically, especially in stereo, which is inherently noisier than mono. A plot of audio output S/N versus RF input level is called a quieting curve. Tuner manufacturers specify sensitivity as the minimum signal level needed to achieve a certain degree of quieting (usually 50 dB nowadays), the lower the better. There are various ways to state this level, the most useful being in decibels referred to 1 femtowatt, or dBf. Sensitivities of about 12 dBf in stereo or 36 dBf in mono are excellent. Be careful, however, not to confuse this with the less stringent "usable sensitivity" specification, which will always give better figures.
Remote controls are universal, but they differ widely in what they do and how easily they do it. Some are complicated enough to make an airline pilot weep.

the usual quality indicators mean very much. The manufacturers aren't any less enthusiastic about their specs and features, but many you can ignore.

• NUMBERS. It is relatively easy to measure what appear to be quite gross differences between components in characteristics like harmonic distortion and noise, and such comparisons are routinely made. But if both the good and the “bad” numbers represent errors well below the threshold of audibility, it hardly matters. If one phono section boasts a signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) of 80 dB, guaranteeing that its noise contribution will be so far below the surface noise in any record as to be completely inaudible, pushing it down to 90 dB serves only to show it can be done. Some FM tuner specs are indeed important in a limited sort of way (see above), but many are not.

• EXOTIC CIRCUITS AND FUNCTIONS. It follows that if most variations in electronic performance are inaudible, the way an audio designer chooses to put together a particular piece of gear should be irrelevant. It may please you to show off a preamplifier bristling with vacuum tubes, for instance, and there's nothing wrong with that as long as you are under no illusions as to their effect on performance. By the same token, unusual materials for connectors and internal wiring are unlikely to pay immediate sonic dividends, although gold connectors are slightly less prone to oxidation than their more mundane cousins. Other circuit subtleties do have their place but are of interest only to a minority of users. Techniques to alter the sound stage may be pleasant and appropriate for certain sorts of material, for instance, but in some cases they may represent a reduction of fidelity rather than an enhancement of it. Built-in digital-to-analog (D/A) converters may have some theoretical benefit, but for most users they are a solution to a problem not a problem to begin with. D/A converters are a necessity, however, if the preamp includes digital signal processing (DSP) functions and a convenience in any preamp that provides digital inputs and outputs for a digital recorder.

• TUNER OVERLOAD. Although real overload—the front-end kind—is important, what we're talking about here is unnecessarily elaborate features in an FM tuner. More than a handful of preset stations, for instance, is probably more than you'll ever use—how many stations do you listen to regularly? And how difficult is it to tune in a new one now and then? Tuner makers seem to think it's a pain, and they offer massive memory banks and a proliferation of auto-tuning schemes. These do work, and if you really need them, fine. But they also cost money that might well be better spent elsewhere in the system.

• COST AND CAPABILITY. It's natural enough to drool over the massive and hyperexpensive equipment that holds a place of honor in the audio store but basically gathers dust. If you can afford the really exotic stuff, you can be sure that it will perform superbly and be a worthy part of a high-quality sound system. Less expensive equipment, however, usually performs just as well in every meaningful respect; whatever differences there are rarely have much relation to differences in cost.

In some areas, added cost sometimes does result in sonic improvement, as when you buy a more powerful amplifier or a larger speaker with deeper bass response and better power-handling capability. But when it comes to straightforward components like tuners and preamps, you are usually safe putting your money toward extra features—if you want them—and taking a high level of performance for granted.

GET WITH IT

The central components of an audio system tend to be fairly self-sufficient, so add-ons and maintenance products are seldom required. Nevertheless, as elsewhere, good cables (usually supplied) are a must, and some means of cleaning contacts and controls from time to time can be useful. You may need some form of antenna other than the T-shape dipole supplied with most tuners, but you won’t be able to judge that until you have taken the tuner home and tried it out. Otherwise, shelves that place the buttons where you can get at them are the best enhancement for control components.

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The RM 3000 system, shown here without the subwoofer, is available with satellite finishes of Black Matrix, with the look and feel of marble, or the equally elegant Gloss Piano Black or White.

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HIGH-END cassette decks, which seemed like an endangered species for a while, have taken a new lease on life in the Pioneer Elite CT-93. From its wood-veneer side panels to its copper-plated chassis, from its one-chip Dolby S circuits and one-touch tape-optimization button to its pressure-pad-release head design and switchable Dolby HX Pro headroom-extension system, the CT-93 exudes quality in its appearance, ease of use, and up-to-the-moment engineering.

At first sight, the CT-93’s head design seems conventional: Separate recording and playback head elements, with a shielding spacer between them, are contained within a single case. Such a three-head “sandwich” (the erase head, upstream, is the third) enables instant source-vs-tape comparisons. It also enables the designer to select head elements whose physical and electrical characteristics best satisfy the different requirements for recording and playback.

What makes the CT-93’s sandwich head far from conventional, however, is a series of small, projecting nodules, or bosses, along its top and bottom edges, just above and below the actual tape path. These bumps hold back the cassette’s felt pressure pad, keeping it from pushing against the back of the tape as it normally would. Over the years, just one manufacturer besides Pioneer seems to have recognized that the pressure pad in a cassette is needed only to mask shortcomings in the design of a deck’s mechanical system. More important, the force that the pressure pad exerts at the point of contact between tape and head creates “stiction,” which increases modulation noise and thus muddies the sound. Musical clarity often lies in such engineering details.

The CT-93’s transport uses the proven technique of belt-coupling a DC servomotor to dual capstans. This isolates the short section of tape passing across the heads, which helps minimize wow and flutter. A spring-loaded stabilizer platform tightly squeezes the cassette in place when the door is closed, damping any vibrations that might arise in the shell itself. A second DC motor powers the reel hubs, and a third motor is used for the power-assisted functions.

Any initial tape slack in the cassette is automatically taken up when the power-assisted door is closed. The door is not easily detachable, however, which makes head cleaning and demagnetizing slightly less convenient than usual. Label visibility in the cassette well is marginal, but an illuminated panel at the back of the well makes it easy to see how much tape remains on a side. Sensors inside the cassette well detect the tape type in use and set the appropriate bias and equalization. A dual-range, sixteen-segment-per-
Introducing 20/20 hearing.

The new L-Series. JBL's signature sound breaks out of the box. The shape's taller, narrower. And sound is pushed through the highest performance system we've ever built. Listen. And you'll never look at sound the same again.
FEATURES

- Separate recording and playback heads with pressure-pad release
- Three-motor, dual-capstan transport
- Dolby B, C, and S noise reduction
- One-button optimization for bias, Dolby level, and equalization
- Dolby HX Pro headroom extension
- Dual-range peak-level indicators with hold switch
- Fifteen-selection program search with return-to-zero button
- Line/straight switchable input
- Switchable FM-multiplex filter
- Powered cassette-well door
- Facilities for external-timer operation

LABORATORY MEASUREMENTS

Fast-forward time (C-60): 81 seconds
Rewind time (C-60): 81 seconds
Speed error: + 0.42%
Dolby tracking error: Dolby B, ± 0.3 dB; Dolby C, ± 0.5 dB; Dolby S, ± 0.5 dB
Wow-and-flutter: 0.022% rms, 0.042% DIN peak-weighted
Line input for indicated 0 dB: 62 mV
Line output at indicated 0 dB: 0.34 volt
Meter indication at 3% THD + noise: ± 6 dB
Signal-to-noise ratios (in decibels):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tape Type</th>
<th>Unwtd</th>
<th>A-wtd.</th>
<th>CCIR/ARM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NR off</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>60.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dolby B</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>70.5</td>
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<td>Dolby C</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>78.1</td>
<td>78.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dolby S</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>80.3</td>
<td>80.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Tape: TDK SA (Type II, chrome-equivalent)
IEC 0-dB distortion: 1.8%
Meter indication at 3% THD + noise: + 10 dB
Signal-to-noise ratios (in decibels):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>A-wtd.</th>
<th>CCIR/ARM</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NR off</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>62.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dolby B</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>72.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dolby C</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>80.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolby S</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>83.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Tape: TDK MA (Type IV, metal)
IEC 0-dB distortion: 1.0%
Meter indication at 3% THD + noise: + 10 dB
Signal-to-noise ratios (in decibels):

<table>
<thead>
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<th>A-wtd.</th>
<th>CCIR/ARM</th>
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<tr>
<td>NR off</td>
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<td>65.6</td>
<td>62.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dolby B</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>74.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dolby C</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>80.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolby S</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>83.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Tape: TDK AD (Type I, ferrie)
IEC 0-dB distortion: 0.58%
Meter indication at 3% THD + noise: + 8 dB
Signal-to-noise ratios (in decibels):

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Dolby B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dolby C</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>77.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolby S</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>79.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Facilities for external-timer operation

- Powered cassette-well door
- Switchable FM-multiplex filter
- Line input for indicated 0 dB: 62 mV
- Line output at indicated 0 dB: 0.34 volt
- Meter indication at 3% THD + noise: ± 6 dB
- Signal-to-noise ratios (in decibels):
  - NR off: 57.3 dB
  - Dolby B: 58.3 dB
  - Dolby C: 60.3 dB
  - Dolby S: 63.8 dB

The display automatically holds signal peaks for approximately 1 second, but pressing the HOLD MODE switch will keep the highest signal peak registered indefinitely. This makes it easy to determine the maximum signal level on a CD or record you want to dub without having to stare at the display through a dry run.

Unfortunately, Pioneer chose to set the 0-dB point on the displays at the outmoded Japanese reference level of 160 nanowebers per meter (nW/m) rather than the more up-to-date IEC level of 250 nW/m. So with any modern high-quality tape, you must mentally adjust to using the + 4-dB indication on the CT-93's level display as your real 0-dB reference.

The four-digit tape counter can be set to show counter units, running time, or time remaining on the side. A pushbutton lets you set the remaining-time range for C-60, C-90, C-46L, and C-80L cassettes. The display panel also provides indicators for tape-motion status, tape or source monitoring, tape type, noise-reduction and Dolby HX Pro status, and whether the deck has been optimized for the specific tape in use. If such a welter of information seems too much for your taste, all but the counter display can be turned off at the touch of a button.

To optimize the CT-93's internal settings for a specific tape you press a single button (twice, to prevent accidents) and wait for 10 seconds as the bias-control knob rotates back and forth, apparently of its own volition. Actually, it's being motor-driven from within by the CT-93's microprocessor-controlled Super Auto BLE (bias-level-equalization) system. The system records, plays back, and level-checks dozens of combinations of three frequencies (400, 3,000, and 15,000 Hz), instead of the usual two, to find the bias and equalization settings that will produce the flattest frequency response.

To keep the Dolby noise-reduction systems tracking accurately, the Super Auto BLE system also compensates for differences in tape sensitivity (the playback output level for a given
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input. At the end of the process the tape rewinds to the point at which the tests began, and you’re ready to record. If you wish, you can manually override the BLE bias setting; for our tests, we didn’t.

The new Dolby S noise-reduction system joins the familiar Dolby B and Dolby C in the Elite CT-93. In conventional signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) measurements, Dolby S adds only 2 or 3 dB to the numbers. To hear its effectiveness, however, you have only to crank open the recording-level control and turn up your amplifier’s gain while recording and playing back a tape with no input signal. Switching from no Dolby to Dolby B will reduce the recorded hiss level significantly, and switching into Dolby C will lower it much further. At this point, however, you will hear a gravelly low-frequency “grunge” that no one would want as a constant background accompaniment to, say, a delicate harpsichord recording. Switch in Dolby S, and the grunge disappears—the audible effect is positively astonishing.

Most deck manufacturers who offer the Dolby HX Pro headroom-extension system hard-wire it into the deck’s circuitry. On the CT-93 you can switch it off if you like, but since it contributes significantly to preserving high-level treble information without harming other performance characteristics, I don’t see any reason you’d ever want to exercise this option.

Operation of the main transport control buttons is conventional except that if you press fast-forward or rewind while playing a tape, you move only to the next selection. By repeatedly pressing these buttons while the tape is moving, you can skip forward or back as many as fifteen selections. The fast-winding modes work normally if the tape is stopped, however, and a return-to-zero (RTZ) button lets you go directly to the zero point on the tape counter.

The front-panel headphone jack has its own volume control, but the main output levels are not adjustable. A LINE/Straight switch is provided to bypass the recording-balance control to insure maximum channel separation. The usual switch is provided for external timer operation, and another switch is supplied for synchronized dubbing from compatible Pioneer CD players. The stereo FM-multiplex filter switch is located on the rear, as are the jacks for input and output signals and for a remote-control accessory.

The Pioneer Elite CT-93 measures 18 inches wide, 14 inches deep, and 5 1/4 inches high, and it weighs 23 pounds. Price: $1,200. Pioneer Electronics (USA), Inc., Dept. SR, P.O. Box 1720, Long Beach, CA 90801.

**Lab Tests**

Measured with our calibrated IEC-standard BASF test tapes, the CT-93’s playback response was very flat across the entire audible band, with no pronounced peaks or valleys.

The deck’s overall record-playback frequency response, using our standard samples of TDK AD (Type I, ferric), TDK SA (Type II, chrome-equivalent), and TDK MA (Type IV, metal) was, if anything, even flatter. At the usual –20-dB reference level, response was within ±1 dB or better for all three tapes, which is proof not only of well-designed heads but of the effectiveness of the Super Auto BLE optimization system. At the 0-dB level, with Dolby HX Pro on, there was slightly less treble rolloff than we usually find. As the accompanying graph documents, with Dolby S switched in, overall metal-tape response at 0-dB was within +0.5, –2 dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz.

The A-weighted signal-to-noise ratios were exceptionally high, ranging from 79.9 dB (TDK AD) to 83.3 dB (TDK MA) with Dolby S engaged. Decks with poorly designed recording heads do not show so marked an increase in S/N when switching from ferric to metal tapes, as the heads themselves begin to saturate (and contribute distortion to the measurement) before the metal-particle tape reaches its limit. The CT-93 was commendably free of this fault.

Its wow-and-flutter measurements of 0.022 percent rms and 0.042 percent IEC/DIN peak-weighted also place the CT-93 in a class with the best. The absolute speed error of 0.42 percent was slightly higher than we would have expected, but it should be inaudible to any normal listener.

The CT-93’s sensitivity and output levels were entirely conventional, and its fast-winding times were good. The Dolby tracking error was exceptionally small, a tribute to the accuracy of both the BLE system and the Dolby chips themselves.

**Comments**

In both its human engineering and its sonic performance, we found the Pioneer CT-93 very difficult to fault. True, the placement of the multiplex-filter switch on the rear of the deck is inconvenient, but it should be needed only in exceptional situations. And the 0-dB point should have been set where the unit’s display now shows +4 dB, a much more realistic reference point with today’s tapes. Still, these are minor grouseings. The controls are well laid out and worked smoothly, the deck’s operation was quiet and sure, and the Super Auto BLE system is so quick, easy, and accurate that there’s no excuse at all not to use it to optimize every recording you make.

Playing prerecorded tapes and dubbing a variety of sources, from CD’s to FM interstation hiss, the CT-93 was as close to flawless sonically as we could hope to find. With any analog copying process there is always some loss, and it is always possible to find source material where a direct A/B comparison will disclose some audible difference between the copy and the original. But the deck’s extremely low levels of wow, flutter, and noise enabled even a pure 3,000-Hz sine wave—a terribly tough test for an analog recorder—to come through the record-playback process almost completely unscathed. With musical material the imaging was solid, the frequency response as nearly perfect as we could detect, and the noise, with Dolby S, inaudible. We welcome the Pioneer Elite CT-93 to that very small company of decks we can recommend to the most serious audiophile without reservation.
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Advent New Vision Model 350
Loudspeaker System

Julian Hirsch, Hirsch-Houck Laboratories

Advent's Model 350 speaker system, which heads the company's New Vision series, is a floor-standing two-way column speaker measuring 43 2/3 inches high, 13 3/4 inches wide, and 9 9/16 inches deep. Each speaker weighs about 43 pounds.

Unsnapping the black cloth grille reveals two 6½-inch woofers just above the midpoint of the speaker panel, which, like most of the cabinet exterior, is finished in a teak veneer. A 1-inch soft parabolic-dome tweeter is at the top of the panel. The wooden cabinet rests on a separate rectangular base plate, 15 inches wide and 12 inches deep, that is finished in a glossy black. The top of the cabinet is also covered by a glossy black acrylic surface. The hexagonal cross section minimizes internal resonances.

The bottom of the speaker cabinet is supported by feet about an inch above the base. The woofer enclosure is vented at the bottom and couples to the room through the gap between the cabinet and the base. The speaker connectors, insulated binding posts that accept single or double banana plugs as well as stripped wires or spade lugs, are recessed into the lower portion of the back panel.

Advent rates the frequency response of the Model 350 as 41 to 23,000 Hz ± 3 dB and claims that the tweeter response varies less than ±1 dB over a 30-degree angle (either horizontal or vertical) up to 13,000 Hz. The usable lower limit to the response (the −8-dB point) is given as 35 Hz, and 23,000 Hz is said to be the upper limit (−3 dB). Nominal impedance is 6 ohms, with a 4-ohm minimum, and the system is rated to handle a peak input of 500 watts and an average input of 125 watts.

Sensitivity is rated as 89 dB sound-pressure level (SPL) at 1 meter with an input of 2.83 volts. The woofer resonance frequency is 65 Hz (±5 Hz), and the crossover to the tweeter takes place at 3,000 Hz. Price: $699 a pair.

Lab Tests

Aside from the usual irregularities from room-boundary effects, the averaged room-response curves of the two Advent Model 350 speakers showed a relatively uniform response from 70 to 1,000 Hz and from 2,500 to 20,000 Hz. However, the output between 1,000 and 2,500 Hz was 5 to 10 dB lower than that in the octaves immediately above and below that range.

The close-miked woofer response was flat within ±3 dB from 50 to 800 Hz. Because of the proximity of the microphone to the speaker cones, measurements at higher frequencies were invalid, though they clearly showed a depressed output from 1,000 to 3,000 Hz and a rapid drop above that frequency, matching the room-response curve. The composite curve, formed by joining the bass response to the room response, showed an elevated output from 60 to 800 Hz, a depression of 5 to 8 dB from 800 to 2,500 Hz, and a relatively constant response (±2.5 dB) from 2,500 to 20,000 Hz. The woofer response was at 65 Hz.
Symmetry™ is the world's only modular, computer controlled, fully interactive mobile electronics system. It combines the performance of Rockford Fosgate amplifiers and signal processors with a powerful 16 bit microcomputer. Symmetry offers virtually unlimited expansion with signal processors and function modules that simply plug into the controller housing. Symmetry's microcontroller automatically integrates the new modules into your system. With no additional wiring.

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exactly as specified, and that is also
where the impedance was at its maxi-
mum of 15 ohms. The minimum im-
pedance, 3.8 ohms, occurred at 180
Hz, and average impedance over the
audio range was very close to the
system's 6-ohm rating.

The tweeter dispersion was good,
with an output change of less than 3 dB
over a 45-degree horizontal angle up to
10,000 Hz. Off-axis response fell to
-5 dB at 12,000 Hz and -18 dB at
20,000 Hz.

The system's sensitivity was 90.5
dB, slightly better than rated. Woofer
distortion, measured with a constant
input of 2.7 volts (equivalent to a stan-
dard output level of 90 dB), reached a
minimum of 0.3 percent at 150 to 200
Hz and remained under 1 percent up to
1,000 Hz. At lower frequencies the
distortion increased gradually, to 1
percent at 57 Hz, 2 percent at 50 Hz,
and 4.5 percent at 40 Hz.

In pulse power tests, the woofer
cones "bottomed" audibly with a 100-
Hz input of 430 watts into their 4.6-
ohm impedance. At higher frequen-
cies the amplifier clipped before the
speaker showed any obvious signs of
distortion, reaching 970 watts into a
6.5-ohm impedance at 1,000 Hz and
880 watts into 7.2 ohms at 10,000 Hz.

Comments
During our initial listening to the
Advent Model 350, before making any
measurements, we found the overall
sound to be smooth and not obviously
colored, but with a "soft" quality that
suggested a broad emphasis of bass
and lower middle frequencies (or the
equivalent condition of smooth but
reduced-level highs).

Our measurements confirmed that
impression. The upper-midrange de-
pression gave the sound stage a some-
what distant character, although the
sound was not as bass-heavy as that of
many other speakers with a similar
response elevation in the 100- to 200-
Hz range, which can add a muddy or
boomy quality to the sound.

We were fortunate to have Advent's
own performance data and response
curves on our test samples. Although
the company's test environment is
certainly very different from ours, the
supplied curves also showed the mid-
range depression and several other
details of response variations that ap-
peared in our measurements.

Overall, we found the Advent Mod-
el 350's to be thoroughly listenable and
comfortable to live with. There was no
lack of deep bass or extreme highs in
spite of the slightly soft sound quality.
Given their size and handsome ap-
pearance, we had to remind ourselves
constantly that these are actually quite
inexpensive speakers, priced just
above the typical small bookshelf sys-
tem. While they cannot fully match the
sound of most speakers that cost two
or three times as much, the difference
is surprisingly small. All in all, the
Advent Model 350 is an excellent val-
ue in today's speaker market.
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Surround II delivers dipole radiator, surround sound performance at a fraction of the cost of competing speakers using similar technology.

The Ensemble II subwoofer-satellite speaker system is the latest version of what Audio magazine said, "may be the best value in the world."

Introducing The In-Wall Ambiance™ Speaker System.

Ambiance In-Wall provides overall performance (particularly deep bass response) unmatched by its competitors. Unlike many in-wall speakers, Ambiance In-Wall uses a true acoustic suspension enclosure. We know of no other in-wall system that can match its bass performance. Henry Kloss designed Ambiance In-Wall with a very wide dispersion tweeter that delivers accurate response over a very wide area. So you can place Ambiance In-Wall where it looks right in your wall (or your ceiling), and still have it sound right no matter where you are in the room. Stereo Review said Ambiance "easily held its own against substantially larger, more expensive speakers."

Ambiance In-Wall is also very simple to install—it's a custom installer's and do-it-yourselfer's delight. For those who want all-out bass response, it is also compatible with our Ensemble subwoofer systems. At $329 a pair ($165 each), direct from the factory, it's an outstanding value.

What Stereo Review Has To Say About Ensemble® II.

Stereo Review said "The Ensemble II, like its companions in the Cambridge SoundWorks lineup, performs so far beyond its price and size class that it can be compared only with much larger speakers at substantially higher prices. The Ensemble II is appreciably cheaper than its competitors, yet in our opinion it can hold its own against any of them in overall performance. It represents an outstanding value."

Apparently the buying public agrees because Ensemble II, at $399 pr., is well on its way to becoming one of the best-selling speaker systems of all time.

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SEVERAL years ago, a scientist at Hughes Aircraft Company (a division of General Motors) developed a new stereo-enhancement system called the Sound Retrieval System (SRS). Although SRS was originally developed for car audio, it appeared to have application to home systems as well, especially when the listening room could not accommodate normal speaker spacings.

Initially, Hughes licensed SRS to Sony (and later RCA) for use in TV receivers, a logical application since SRS was said to create a stereo sound stage extending well beyond the speaker boundaries. The advantages of creating fully spread stereo images from the closely spaced speakers of a TV set are obvious.

More recently, Hughes formed an Audio Products Division, which is marketing a component using an enhanced form of SRS under its own name for use in home music systems. The Hughes AK-100 measures approximately 17 inches wide, 1 1/2 inches deep, and 4 inches high and weighs about 8 1/4 pounds. It is designed to be connected into a tape-monitor or external-processor loop of a preamplifier or receiver. Its only signal connectors are back-panel input and output phono jacks, plus jacks that replace the normal function of the tape or processor loop used for connecting the AK-100.

The front panel contains a large grid display that shows the spatial distribution of the audio signal by luminous green dots that extend horizontally and vertically from the bottom center. The horizontal row of dots indicates the relative level and direction of the difference components (L – R and R – L) of the processor's output signals. These are responsible for the directionality and ambience in a stereo program. The vertical column of dots indicates the relative level of the center (L + R, or mono) component of the output signals.

Control knobs on the panel adjust the relative levels of the CENTER and SPACE components and the AK-100's overall output level. The other controls are pushbuttons, whose activation is indicated by small lights beside them. In addition to the power button, there is a bypass switch and a 3-D MONO switch to create a stereo-like sound from mono sources. With some stereo TV or video programs, a low-frequency rumbling noise can be heard. Pressing the FILTER switch reduces this noise; if it persists, the program may be in mono, rendering the filter circuit ineffective (the 3-D MONO switch should be used in that case). The REVERB TRIM button slightly reduces the amount of reverberation in the program. A LOOP SELECT button engages the AK-100's own external-processor loop, replacing the function of the corresponding circuit (or tape-monitor loop) in the amplifier to which it is connected. The remaining buttons turn the display on and off and select a bar or dot display pattern.

The AK-100's operation is based on the psychoacoustics of human hearing. A listener's localization of a sound source is based primarily on the sound's arrival times and levels at his ears (which will be different for each ear unless the source is directly ahead of, above, or behind the listener).

A secondary factor is the variation of the ear's frequency response for sounds arriving from different azimuth and elevation angles, which helps the listener determine whether a source is ahead, above, or behind him. A normal stereo program lacks the ability to convey this information, so that the perceived sound stage is usually limited to the front of the room, possibly...
**SALUTE TO THE ROCK & ROLL HALL OF FAME**

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<td>2006</td>
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<td>A&amp;M, 50315</td>
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<tr>
<td>Misty</td>
<td>1996</td>
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<td>BMG Music Service</td>
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<td>I am most interested in the music category checked here - but I am always free to choose from any (check OM only):</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLASSICAL</td>
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<td>POP/SOFT ROCK</td>
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<td>LIGHT SOUNDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>QECDVC</td>
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EXTENDING SLIGHTLY BEYOND THE SPEAKERS AT EITHER SIDE AND SOMETIMES ENHANCED BY SURROUND TECHNIQUES THAT RESTORE SOME AMBIENCE OR FRONT-TO-BACK DIRECTIONALITY TO THE SOUND.

Hughes says that SRS processing restores a stereo signal's missing spatial cues. By matrixing the left and right channels it creates a sum signal (L + R) and two difference signals (L – R and R – L). Hughes does not give specific details of the subsequent processing, except to say that it does not involve delay or artificial reverberation, harmonic regeneration, or phase correction. Apparently the SRS circuit extracts information regarding a program's ambience and spatial characteristics from the difference signals, and about its vocal and other center-positioned sounds from the sum signal, then uses this information to guide some undefined processing and equalization. Finally, the modified signals are rematrixed into a new two-channel stereo output.

In addition to giving the user independent adjustment of the CENTER and SPACE (difference) components, the AK-100's SRS circuit has what Hughes calls an "automatic directivity servo," which it says establishes and maintains a source position, even when it is in motion, without modifying the apparent positions of stationary sound sources. The SRS process is said to enhance program dynamics and to create a sound stage that does not change as a listener moves about the room. Price: $449. Hughes Audio Products, Dept. SR, P.O. Box 7000, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688.

Lab Tests

The AK-100's specifications are limited to its noise and distortion levels and its input and output levels and impedances. Hughes points out that, as with many other signal-processing devices, normal frequency-response measurements cannot be applied to the AK-100 and simply states that its passband is 20 to 20,000 Hz.

For the most part, our bench tests were limited to verifying the manufacturer's ratings, which were approximately correct. The AK-100 had a rather low input-overload level of 1.35 volts, a potential source of trouble with CD players (whose standard 0-dB, or maximum, output is 2 volts). On the other hand, we never heard any signs of overload or clipping during our use of the processor, so this characteristic is probably not a significant fault. The output clipped at 3.6 volts.

The A-weighted noise level varied quite widely with control settings. The worst-case reading of –78.5 dB referred to a 0.5-volt input was obtained with all level controls at maximum, an unrealistic setting. At the manufacturer's reference settings, the noise was –82.7 dB, and at our usual listening settings it was –87.7 dB. Most of the noise energy was above 20,000 Hz, and power-line hum components were at least 100 dB below 0.5 volt. In other words, the AK-100 will not add audible noise in normal operation.

With centered controls, the processor's frequency response was perfectly flat from 20 to 7,000 Hz and down only 1 dB at 20,000 Hz. Its phase shift was slight, not exceeding 30 or 40 degrees even at 20,000 Hz. In the 3-D MONO mode, the frequency response was somewhat altered, but the variation of less than ±4 dB over the full range was not unreasonable for this type of product. At a 1-volt output, a 1,000-Hz signal generated total harmonic distortion (THD), not including noise, of 0.057 percent, consisting mostly of the third harmonic.

Comments

Conventional measurements of a device such as the Hughes AK-100 are of little value in judging its worth. For that, one must rely mainly on listening tests. We installed the AK-100 in a good music system and listened to a variety of program material, both stereo and mono, from CD's and FM broadcasts. The two pairs of speakers we used were both very good, with excellent imaging and tonal balance.

The SRS processing had an unmistakable effect whose magnitude and specific characteristics depended on the relative and absolute settings of the CENTER and SPACE controls. To some degree, the processing did extend the sound stage, but the most obvious effect was an increased warmth from an emphasis in the lower-middle and bass ranges.

We especially listened for an extension of the stereo stage beyond the speakers (which were about 9 feet apart in a room 15 feet wide), but it was so slight as to be unnoticeable with most stereo material. At no time did the stereo program appear to come from the sides or rear, as has been implied by some publicity on the system. The effects of the SRS processing depended strongly on the settings of the CENTER and SPACE controls, making it very difficult to establish any meaningful norm. Furthermore, the processing almost always increased the apparent sound level together with its other effects, making A/B bypass comparisons difficult or impossible.

It may be, of course, that my preference in sound quality is so different from that of the SRS designers that I did not perceive its effects as an improvement. The resulting sound was certainly different, and it might well appeal to many listeners.

The AK-100 did achieve impressive results with mono program material, however. Engaging the 3-D MONO button not only changed the normal center location of a mono source but spread it out beyond the speakers, along the sides of the room all the way to the rear where I was listening. The effect was startling, to say the least.

There was a slight "phasiness" in the sound, but the spatial effect was strong over a considerable range of listening positions. This was more or less what I had hoped to hear with stereo sources but never did.

By placing the speakers very close together (about a foot apart), I could also appreciate the benefits of SRS in TV applications, especially with the usual mono sound program. The result was a convincing example of apparently full-stage-width "stereo" from FM broadcasts that has been blended to mono in the tuner. Even when the program was returned to stereo and the 3-D MONO switch was turned off, the closely spaced speakers produced a stereo stage whose width was many times their spacing.

The bottom line here seems to be that the Hughes Sound Retrieval System, as implemented in the AK-100, is an ingenious signal-processing scheme that can make substantial changes in the spatial balance of a stereo program and an enormous improvement in mono programs. When fed stereo signals, it appears to be most effective with closely spaced speakers and decreasingly so (to the point of making almost no difference spatially) as they are moved to more usual positions.
Since its introduction a few weeks ago, Maxell's new XLII-S has been blowing away critical listeners.

It has also had a major impact on listening critics.

In a recent analysis of 27 tapes conducted by CD Review magazine, they named Maxell XLII-S first
choice in the Type II high bias category, placing it, in the words of their reviewer, "Head, shoulders and torso above the rest."

"Bass response that doesn't stop, staggering dynamics, real music," is how CD Review described the listening experience. But don't take their word for it. Don't take our word for it. Pick up a Maxell XLII-S cassette and try recording your most challenging CD. One you thought was uncapturable by any cassette tape.

See if you don't find your ears picking up things you never noticed before. Like plaster dust.
A couple of years ago, Bob Carver startled the audio world with the introduction of a gigantic and very expensive tube amplifier, the Silver Seven. On the face of it, the Silver Seven appeared to be the antithesis of Carver Corporation's line of compact, light, affordable amplifiers based on Carver's innovative Magnetic Field power supply. The amplifier was named the Silver Seven because all of its internal wiring is silver, and all the other components in it are of similarly premium quality.

The Silver Seven is a large, heavy monoblock (single-channel) amplifier with fourteen KT88 or 6550 power tetrodes in its push-pull Class A output stage. A fifteenth tube serves as a screen-voltage regulator for the others. A huge output transformer, with output taps for driving 8-, 4-, or 1-ohm loads, is at the rear of the chassis, and the three low-level tubes near the front (a 12BY7 input stage and a pair of 12BH7 drivers) are partially concealed by a thick aluminum slab that carries the Carver logo and the amplifier's name. The single knob control adjusts the amplifier's input sensitivity.

On the sloping front of the Silver Seven's separate power supply is a meter indicating the combined plate current of the fourteen output tubes (normally about 300 milliamperes but adjustable over a wide range by a screwdriver control on the rear of the amplifier). There are no tubes in the power supply (the solid-state rectifiers are inside the unit), and a husky power transformer is its dominant feature.

Carver does not stress the Silver Seven's specifications other than to point out that it has a very conservative power rating of 375 watts into any matched load and an A-weighted noise level better than 110 dB below 375 watts (corresponding to 84 dB below 1 watt).

Each amplifier and power supply is supported by a thick slab of black granite, polished to a mirror-like surface; a soft rubber isolating pad is between each base and chassis. Each amplifier alone weighs 47 pounds, and a power supply weighs 44 pounds. The combined weight of the four bases in a stereo pair is 108 pounds, making a complete two-channel Silver Seven a 290-pound ensemble that occupies a horizontal space approximately 6 feet wide and 2 feet deep.

The Carver Silver Seven clearly is not an amplifier for the average audiophile, even a wealthy one. Aside from its extraordinary size and weight, a pair of Silver Sevens costs $17,500 with Type 6550 output tubes and even more with KT88 tubes. Nevertheless, the amplifier has earned an enviable reputation among those golden-eared audiophiles who have been fortunate enough to own a pair or who have listened to it at length.

Obviously, Bob Carver did not expect the Silver Seven to become a significant part of his line, or (probably) even a profitable one. He had another purpose in producing it, one related to his long-time thesis that the sonic differences between amplifiers, which can be real in some cases, if not always significant, are primarily related to their transfer functions.

An amplifier's transfer function is the mathematical relationship between its input and output. A perfect amp would not change a signal, no matter how complex, in any way other than its level—no phase shift, no change in response at different frequencies, no distortion or noise, and
WE’VE SPIKED THE PUNCH.

Klipsch speakers have always had a singular impact on listeners fortunate enough to own them. Now the unique Klipsch sound and legendary craftsmanship are available in new sizes and designs. Witness the Klipsch® kg 5.2 and kg 4.2 speakers. Both feature our new Tractrix™ tweeter horn which helps create an even more crisp and lifelike sound. In addition, both speakers have a unique spike and foot combination for better bass coupling with any floor surface. Or enjoy the Klipsch kg SW Passive Subwoofer that delivers exceptional low frequency reproduction. Ask for a demonstration of the kg series at your authorized Klipsch dealer today. Your eyes may not believe they’re from Klipsch. But there’s no fooling your ears.
so on. That perfect amplifier has yet to be made, though most nowadays come close enough to satisfy the human ear.

Carver's thesis is that if two amplifiers, perfect or not, have identical transfer functions, they must sound alike. There can be no rational argument with that. Since no amplifier has a truly perfect transfer function, the question is: How much change can be tolerated in a signal before it becomes audible?

Carver believes (and many others, including me, agree) that audible differences among amplifiers can best be demonstrated by a null test, in which the outputs of two amplifiers drive opposite sides of the same load, such as a loudspeaker. If the two amplifiers are indeed identical, there will be no net voltage across the load, and no sound will be heard. What little sound can be heard in such a test also gives a clue to the nature of the difference, whether it is a matter of frequency response, noise, or distortion.

Carver claims, and has demonstrated, that it is possible to tweak an amplifier so that its transfer function matches that of another amplifier within close limits — so close, in fact, that the two cannot be told apart by an experienced listener. That was the real reason for the Silver Seven: to be a reference transfer function for Carver to duplicate in a much less expensive transistor amplifier, which would then deliver the same performance as a state-of-the-art tube amplifier.

The result was named the Silver Seven-t (the "t" stands for Transfer Function Modified), which was recently revised to the current Silver Nine-t Mark II. Like the tube "original," it is a monoblock amplifier, though a much smaller and lighter one. It is also styled somewhat like the Silver Seven, although its Magnetic Field power supply is integral rather than on a separate chassis. Carver claims that the transfer function of the Silver Nine-t is so close to that of the Silver Seven that the outputs of the two can be nulled to a depth of at least 40 dB into a loudspeaker load.

Nonetheless, the two amplifiers do not really have identical electrical characteristics. The Silver Nine-t is considerably more powerful than the Silver Seven, especially into low-impedance loads, occupies a fraction of the space, weighs a mere 16 pounds including its built-in power supply, and sells for about one-tenth the price of the Silver Seven — $2,000 a pair. Carver Corporation, Dept. SR, P.O. Box 1237, Lynnwood, WA 98046.

**Lab Tests**

The sheer logistics of handling both of these amplifiers together required a slight modification of our normal testing procedure. A pair of Silver Sevens (in six heavy boxes) and a pair of Silver Nine-t's were brought to our laboratory by Bob Carver and his local sales representative, who unpacked them and set them up. There was room on our test bench for only one Silver Seven with its power supply and one Silver Nine-t.

We made our customary basic measurements on both amplifiers. In addition to frequency response, distortion, sensitivity, and noise, we also measured each amplifier's output impedance. This was necessary because one of the very few external factors that can affect the sound of an amplifier, though in a rather subtle fashion, is the interaction between the load (speaker) impedance as a function of frequency and the amplifier's source impedance, or its damping factor (the source impedance divided into a typical speaker load of 8 ohms). If two amplifiers are to give identical sound, or a deep null when their outputs are combined in a loudspeaker load, it is necessary that their damping factors, as well as their basic frequency-response and (to a lesser degree) distortion characteristics be very nearly identical. (In the case of damping factor, it suffices if

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**Laboratory Measurements**

**Silver Nine-t Mark II**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurement</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Output power at clipping (1,000 Hz):</td>
<td>680 watts into 8 ohms, 1,050 watts into 4 ohms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clipping headroom:</td>
<td>0.73 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity (for a 1-watt output):</td>
<td>50 mV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic power output (1,000 Hz):</td>
<td>625 watts into 8 ohms, 1,010 watts into 4 ohms, 1,360 watts into 2 ohms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic headroom (relative to rated output):</td>
<td>0.36 dB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maximum distortion at rated power (20 to 20,000 Hz into 8 ohms):</td>
<td>2% at 20,000 Hz</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-weighted noise (referred to a 1-watt output):</td>
<td>-75 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency response (into 8 ohms):</td>
<td>+0 - 0.18 dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>damping factor:</td>
<td>9.2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The Silver Seven and Silver Nine-t Mark II exhibit very flat frequency response into a purely resistive load, but because of their unusually low damping factors (typical of tube amplifiers), their response varies somewhat into more complex load impedances.
It's a combination of Disney World, Epcot Center, the World's Fair, Hollywood, Woodstock, Broadway, the Smithsonian and the Land of Oz.

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this is high enough in both amplifiers to keep any response differences brought on by interaction with the load impedance small enough not to be audible.) One of the main goals of our test of these two amplifiers was to determine how well the Silver Nine-t actually matches the Silver Seven in these respects.

The Silver Seven's power output into 8 ohms at 2 percent total harmonic distortion plus noise (THD + N) was about 420 watts from 30 to 5,000 Hz, dropping to 340 watts at 20 Hz and 200 watts at 20,000 Hz. With a slightly higher idling-current setting (close to true Class A operation), the output was about 430 watts from 20 to 13,000 Hz, falling to 215 watts at 20,000 Hz. We used the lower (standard) current throughout our other tests, however. The dynamic power output was 500 watts.

The amplifier's distortion at its rated 375 watts was 0.5 percent from 40 to 1,000 Hz, increasing to 1.3 percent at 20 Hz and 2.7 percent at 20,000 Hz. At 1,000 Hz, the distortion was a minimum of 0.18 percent between 10 and 30 watts output, rising to 0.43 percent at 1 watt and 0.6 percent at 410 watts, at the verge of clipping. Damping factor was a very low 8.6 at 1,000 Hz, which is typical of tube amplifiers. Input sensitivity for 1 watt output was 50 millivolts at the maximum gain setting, and the A-weighted noise output was -88 dB referred to 1 watt.

The Silver Seven's frequency response at 1 watt output into a standard 8-ohm resistive load was flat from 30 to 10,000 Hz, falling to -0.1 dB at 20 Hz and -0.3 dB at 20,000 Hz. It fell off more rapidly at higher frequencies, to -3 dB at 60,000 Hz. Given the amplifier's high output impedance (low damping factor), we were not surprised to find that its frequency response into loudspeaker loads reflected their impedance curves, with typical variations of a decibel or so at various frequencies in the audio range.

Similar measurements of the Silver Nine-t showed that the two amplifiers had identical frequency responses (within 0.01 dB) from 20 to 4,000 Hz, which encompasses the range in which the ear is most discriminating. They diverged slightly at higher frequencies, with the Silver Nine-t's output being higher by 0.09 dB at 10,000 Hz and 0.18 dB at 20,000 Hz.

The Silver Nine-t was substantially more powerful than its vacuum-tube progenitor. The 1,000-Hz output clipped at 680 watts into 8 ohms and at 1,000 watts into 4 ohms. We didn't have enough suitable power resistors to form an adequate 2-ohm load, which would have had to handle far more than 1,000 watts.

At a constant 1 percent THD + N, the Silver Nine-t's output was 640 watts from 20 to 13,000 Hz, falling off rapidly at higher frequencies to 100 watts at 17,000 Hz. At its rated 575 watts into 8 ohms, the distortion was between 0.06 and 0.1 percent from 20 to 1,500 Hz, rising to 0.45 percent at 10,000 Hz and 2 percent at 20,000 Hz.

The Silver Nine-t's damping factor was 9.2, very close to that of the Silver Seven. Most modern transistor amplifiers have damping factors on the order of 100 or more, which is probably a major cause of any sonic differences between them and tube amplifiers, since a very low damping factor will result in much larger frequency-response variations into the impedances presented by different speakers.

Other measurements of the Silver Nine-t included a sensitivity of 50 mV for a 1-watt output (identical to that of the Silver Seven) and a noise level of -75 dB (slightly, but not audibly, higher than that of the Silver Seven). The Silver Nine-t's dynamic power was especially impressive: 625 watts into 8 ohms, 1,010 watts into 4 ohms, and 1,360 watts into 2 ohms.

The final test was the nulling of both amplifiers into a KEF Model 105.2 speaker, using both sine-wave and music signals. The output power from the amplifiers was a few watts (a comfortable listening level). Critical adjustment of the Silver Seven's level control brought the speaker's output down to a barely audible whisper, which seemed to consist mostly of program rather than distortion. If we had been able to trim the phase difference between the two amplifiers, perhaps the null would have been even deeper. It was certainly at least 40 dB deep as Carver had claimed.

Comments

Several things were proved by this comparison, though many other questions were not addressed at all—how the amplifiers "sounded," for example, which probably has no definitive answer given the dependence of their frequency responses on the impedance characteristics of the attached loudspeaker. Our major goal was to verify that two totally different amplifiers can be made to sound identical by careful matching of their transfer functions (as Bob Carver has been claiming, and demonstrating, for some years), and this was shown beyond a doubt. Although we cannot comment generally on the sonic characteristics of either amplifier, we can say with assurance that they are absolutely alike in this regard, despite their totally different circuit designs.

Some very critical listeners have found the Silver Seven to be a superb-sounding amplifier, however. I can testify that, overkill or not, it is a magnificent piece of audio hardware, as beautiful as it is potent, and, except for the problems of paying for it, satisfying its thirst for electricity, and finding the room for it, I would be most happy to own a pair.

But there is an obvious message in our test results. You don't have to buy a $20,000 amplifier (our test sample was fitted with the premium-price KT88 tubes) to enjoy everything it can do, and more, without the by-product of heating your house electrically. The Silver Nine-t was the real winner in this comparison. Lacking most of the glamour, bulk, back-breaking weight, and cost of the Silver Seven, the solid-state Silver Nine-t is the clear choice for the audiophile with Rolls-Royce taste and a Ford income who wants vacuum-tube sound without the hassle and expense of retubing periodically. Besides the Silver Nine-t Mark II, Carver's line now includes four more conventional and less costly stereo power amplifiers whose transfer functions have also been adjusted to match that of the Silver Seven.
Nineteen dollars?! For that kind of money, it would have to be the best tape in the world.

It is.

Ask Audio magazine. After subjecting 88 different audio cassettes to every test imaginable, they found that the TDK MA-XG is not only the best of any metal tape. But the best of any tape. Period.

We were happy, but not surprised. A few years ago, we gave our engineers a clean sheet of paper and a mission: to create the world's best tape, with money as no object.

They came to us with a tape so advanced, we had to give it a manufacturer’s suggested retail price of $19.

If you took the TDK MA-XG apart (you'd need some patience for this: it's held together by enough screws to open a hardware store), you'd see why.

It's not just a tape. It's a tank.

The shell is an unprecedented super-rigid five-piece
mechanism with an inner layer of fiberglass-reinforced plastic for strength, and a non-rigid plastic outer layer to reduce resonance. A precisely balanced system of internal sound stabilizer weights serves to reduce modulation noise even further.

All this technology surrounds a unique dual-layer metal tape that provides the highest output and lowest noise of any tape in TDK’s history. In other words, the ultimate digital-ready tape.

If you still can’t bring yourself to spend the better part of your paycheck on the MA-XG, we have good news. Everything we’ve learned from making the best tape in the world has gone into our less outrageously priced tapes. Which may explain why Audio magazine’s tests also revealed TDK not only has the best normal bias tape, but the best high bias tape (in lowest noise and widest dynamic range) in the world.

If, after hearing all this, you’re still not using TDK, we have just one question. How many times do you have to be told before you listen?

TDK
As Serious As You Can Get.
Choosing the Right Tape

Besides price and playing time, what should you consider when buying tape for your cassette deck? Are some types of tape a better choice for the kinds of music you want to record? And are the user-adjustable bias and sensitivity controls that adorn the front panels of so many decks really worth the bother?

To answer these questions requires looking at the basic types of tape available, the variations among tapes of the same type, and the way in which tapes interact with the recorder. Let's start with the differences among the three major tape types, since that also provides an opportunity to explain some of the underlying

To make good recordings, make sure your tape and deck work as a team.

By Craig Stark
The clear winner at high frequencies is Type IV metal-particle tape.

However, severely reduces the tape's high-frequency storage capacity. With cassettes, especially, relatively small changes in bias can make large differences in treble response, so it is very important that the bias be set properly for the particular tape you are using.

Type II tapes use chromium-dioxide (CrO₂), cobalt-enriched ferric-oxide (chrome-equivalent), or, in a handful of cases, pure metal particles as their magnetic material. Type II cassettes are known as "high bias" tapes because their optimum bias level is approximately 50 percent greater than that for Type I cassettes.

The inherent advantage of Type II tape over Type I is that it can hold considerably more high-frequency signal. At the time high-bias cassettes were introduced, tape hiss was a much more serious problem than it is today (Dolby B noise reduction and chromed tape came simultaneously to cassettes with the introduction of the ground-breaking Advent Model 200 cassette deck in 1970). For this reason, the treble gain provided by Type II tapes was spent, so to speak, in reducing tape hiss by changing the playback equalization from the Type I standard of 120 microseconds to 70 microseconds. The effect of the modified playback equalization is to reduce tape noise by approximately 4½ dB through most of the high-frequency range.

Although there were (briefly) some Type III dual-layer "ferrichrome" tape formulations, the most significant further improvements in overall performance came with the development of Type IV cassettes. Type IV tapes use pure-metal particles rather than oxides as their magnetic material. Metal-particle tapes use the same 70-microsecond playback equalization as Type II tapes, but they require about twice as much bias current.

Type IV tapes can produce, at all frequencies, a much higher output than either Type I or Type II formula-input level no longer produce any increase in output level. (Indeed, increasing input level beyond saturation at high frequencies actually reduces the output level.) Unfortunately, the level of bias current that maximizes low-frequency MOL also lowers the tape's high-frequency MOL. Thus, in determining the optimum bias for a given tape there is always some trade-off between maximizing S/N and maintaining high-frequency response at high recording levels.

Choosing a Tape Type

If you have to choose a tape on the basis of type alone, are there any general rules to guide you in your selection? Figure 1 (facing page) helps provide an answer. It shows response curves obtained by recording frequency sweeps on representative samples of the three tape types both at a low level (-20 dB) and at a high level (0 dB). At -20 dB (used for standard cassette-deck response measurements because the results correlate well with performance when recording typical music), the differences among the three tapes are negligible. At the 0-dB level, however, differences in high-frequency MOL among the three tape types are apparent in the relative amounts of treble rolloff.

It takes no engineer to see that the clear high-frequency winner is the metal-particle tape. And, though not indicated in the graph, Type IV tapes also yield higher signal-to-noise ratios. Rule 1, then, is that where high-level high-frequency response and maximum dynamic range are critical—as they often are when dubbing CD's—the price premium for metal-particle tape is worth it.

Figure 1 also shows that the difference between the high-frequency MOLs of the Type I and Type II tapes is much less marked. The normal-bias Type I ferric tape does have a small edge (about 1½ dB at 8,000 Hz) in the high frequencies, largely because of its 120-microsecond playback equalization. This should (and usually does) result in a signal-to-noise advantage for Type II tape, however, because of its 70-microsecond EQ. On the other hand, Type I tapes have improved dramatically in both noise level and high-frequency performance.

Thus, the practical differences between Type I and Type II cassettes are relatively subtle. If your musical taste runs to classical music, in which there are often very quiet passages (or complete silence), a Type II cassette will usually have a slight overall advantage.
over Type I. On the other hand, if the music that appeals to you contains moments in which hiss could obtrude on silence, but top-hat cymbals play a big role, a Type I cassette may be a slightly better choice. Neither, however, can do as good a job as a Type IV cassette.

There is one consideration (apart from price) that might lead you to forgo the advantages of a metal-particle tape. All cassette decks—even the least expensive battery-operated portables—can use Type I tapes, and all but the least expensive portables have switchable bias and equalization for Type II cassettes. But even when they nominally support the use of Type IV cassettes, some decks cannot take advantage of all that metal-particle tapes have to offer.

The reason is that the high bias levels required by Type IV tapes, combined with the hot audio signals for which one normally would choose them, put a premium on the design of the deck's recording head. An inexpensive tape head can begin to run into distortion-producing magnetic saturation before the metal tape does. The problem is more likely to afflict two-head decks than three-head decks, but the latter are not automatically immune. You can spot such marginal machines by looking at their signal-to-noise figures. If there is not at least a 2- to 3-dB increase in S/N between chrome-equivalent Type II cassettes and metal-particle Type IV cassettes, the deck cannot take full advantage of Type IV formulations.

Optimizing for Your Tape

Whichever tape type you choose, if you're not using the specific brand and formulation within that type that the manufacturer used to adjust your deck at the factory, you're probably not getting optimum performance. Within each type there are important differences between specific tapes that can significantly affect performance. Just how important these differences can be is apparent in Figure 2, which shows the overall record/playback frequency response of two metal tapes, measured at the customary −20-dB recording level, with and without Dolby C noise reduction. The 20,000-Hz response of Tape A, for which the deck was adjusted, is down by less than 1 dB without Dolby and less than 3 dB with Dolby C switched on. In the same deck with the same settings, the response from Tape B,
also a top-brand metal tape, is down by 9 dB at 20,000 Hz without Dolby and a whopping 17 dB with Dolby C.

Figure 3 shows the performance of the same two tapes, this time with the deck's bias and sensitivity optimized for Tape B. Now Tape B has the flat response, while Tape A shows a 4½-dB high-frequency rise without Dolby and a screeching 9-dB boost at 20,000 Hz when the Dolby C circuits are activated.

Admittedly, most brand-to-brand differences within the same tape type are not as dramatic as in our example. It is important to note, however, that the curves in Figures 2 and 3 show that the Dolby noise-reduction system magnifies the frequency-response errors that arise from mismatches between tape and recorder. Since you will almost certainly be using one of the Dolby systems for every recording you make, even relatively small brand-to-brand differences can become audibly significant.

The front-panel controls that manufacturers put on many of their tape decks give you an opportunity to minimize the effects of brand-to-brand variations within tape types. Ideally, three controls should be provided: bias, recording equalization, and tape sensitivity. Ideally, too, the deck should supply calibrated test tones with which to make the adjustments.

The setting of the bias control affects the extreme high frequencies the most. A recording-equalization control (rarely provided) helps fine-tune the treble response, but it's usually possible to do pretty well in this regard with just a bias adjustment. A tape-sensitivity control enables you to compensate for the fact that different formulations often produce different overall output levels from the same input signal. This is important because the operation of the Dolby noise-reduction system is level-sensitive and will be thrown off if a deck's recording circuits are not properly calibrated to the sensitivity of the tape you use. In fact, it is the prevalence of such mismatches and the response errors they create that led Dolby Laboratories to require that decks incorporating its new S-type noise-reduction system provide means for optimizing both bias and sensitivity.

Most cassette decks supply a bias control only, however, and most also require you to make your adjustments by ear rather than by meter. Under this scheme, optimum bias is taken to be the control setting at which there is no audible difference in high-frequen-

If you must make your adjustments this way, the easiest and most reliable approach is to use FM interstation hiss or a noise band on a test CD, not music, as your test signal. You should make sure your deck's tape-type selector is set properly for the cassette you are using (though many now switch automatically) and set the recording-level control for a reading of approximately −10 to −20 dB on the meters to insure against possible treble overload while you're making the bias adjustment. Since FM hiss or the noise band of a test CD not only contains a large high-frequency component but also tends to sound consistently the same, you can use this technique even with a two-head deck, which requires you to rewind the tape before you can listen comparatively to the result of recording at various bias-control settings.

The greatest difficulty with using your ear as a measuring instrument is that slight differences in tape sensitivity can easily be perceived as differences in frequency response. If your deck includes a sensitivity control, adjust it before you try to optimize the bias, and check it again afterwards.

Happily, some top-of-the-line decks automate the optimization process entirely, using a microprocessor to generate and analyze the necessary test signals. This yields far more accurate results than any amount of "earballing," and in just a fraction of the time.

If your recorder is getting on in years, you might want to consider looking not only for the right tape but for a new deck as well.

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Even if your deck provides no means of adjustment, or you can't afford one that does, you're not entirely out of luck. Go out and buy cassettes of various grades from a number of the major tape manufacturers. (If you're really lucky, your deck's owner's manual may get you started with some explicit suggestions, but don't rely on those exclusively.) Then try the live-versus-recorded noise comparison described above with each of them to help you choose the one that is best matched to your deck's factory settings. Such comparisons require patience and a willingness to throw away a little money up front on test cassettes, but over the long haul you'll wind up with much better recordings than if you just take potluck on tape selection.
TO hear many prophets of audio tell it, the DAT (digital audio tape) format might just as well be called DOA. The mass-market introduction of DAT, which enables users to store up to 2 hours of digital audio on a remarkably tiny cassette, was long delayed by record-industry protests that home “cloning” of compact discs would result in billions of dollars in lost revenue. The industry never proved its case, but it did flex a lot of muscle, effectively keeping the format out of the U.S. for years. The handful of DAT decks marketed here were unveiled gingerly, at high prices, blank tapes are still very expensive, and very few prerecorded tapes have been released.

A few smart, well-traveled, impatient folks who bought their decks in Japan started the DAT buzz in the professional-recording community, and, truth to tell, that’s still where most of the buzz is. The recent “royalty” agreement between equipment manufacturers, record companies, and music publishers may mean a wider availability of DAT decks, but the impending introduction of the Digital Compact Cassette (DCC), digital audio recordings on cassettes the size of today’s analog tapes and decks that will play both analog and digital cassettes, has stolen almost all of DAT’s thunder. Many predict that because of the newer format’s backward compatibility, DCC will leave DAT in the dust.

Don’t count on it. DAT will remain strong for pro and semipro applications. And some audiophiles (at least those who approve of digital recording in the first place) wrinkle their noses—actually, they scream bloody murder—at the idea of data-compression techniques like the one used in the DCC format. Today’s DAT aficionados love it for three reasons: its quality, its versatility (aside from audio, DAT can also store still video and alphanumeric data), and its engineering sophistication. These are precisely the qualities that attracted videophiles to such once market-moribund technologies as the laserdisc and 8mm video. While DAT may never become a mass-market item, it’s not going the way of the dinosaur either. The following look at some of the impressive DAT decks now available should give you an idea why DAT is still an attractive option.

BY GLENN KENNY

Sony offers the widest range of DAT equipment. Shown here, clockwise from top, are the $650 DTC-700 home deck, featuring 1-bit A/D and D/A conversion; the $450 DTX-10 for car systems, which includes a built-in tuner; and the TCD-D3 DAT Walkman ($850), with a mike input, attenuator, and backlit level display to facilitate live recording.
The HD-S100 portable from Aiwa ($950) weighs little more than a pound but uses the same 30-mm head drum as home decks. It features 1-bit D/A and A/D conversion, a wired remote control, separate recording-level controls for each channel, and a 6-volt rechargeable battery.

JVC's XD-Z1010TN ($1,700) features a K2 interface, which is said to eliminate noise in the digital signal before it reaches the D/A converter or the analog circuits. It also offers an 18-bit digital-bias D/A converter, facilities for mixing the stereo line and microphone inputs, and sophisticated editing capabilities.

The RX-P1 from Sharp is a multipurpose player/recorder designed to work equally well at home, in a car, and on the go. It features dual 1-bit D/A converters and comes with a cassette adaptor for car use, a full set of connection cables, a rechargeable battery, an AC adaptor, and a carrying case. Price: $1,500.

Aiwa's XD-S260 ($1,100), a home deck compatible in style and synchro operations with the company's line of mini systems, offers 1-bit A/D and D/A conversion, a three-motor drive system, and a plethora of subcode functions.
Denon's $1,000 DTR-2000 home deck features 20-bit, eight-times-oversampling Lambda D/A converters, three record/playback sampling rates, ID subcode editing, search at 250 or 400 times normal speed, and both optical and coaxial digital inputs and outputs.

The DTR-80 portable player/recorder from Denon has dual 18-bit, eight-times-oversampling D/A converters, stereo mini jacks for microphone input and headphone output, high-speed search, and a backlit display. It can operate for about 4 hours on four alkaline batteries; an AC adaptor is included. Price: $900.

The Model 1000 recorder ($5,900) and the Model 1000p digital audio processor ($5,100) combine to form Nakamichi's Digital Audio Recording System. The recorder features a four-head design and many sophisticated operating conveniences as well as the company's Fast Access Stationary Tape Guide Transport mechanism. The processor features a high-precision 20-bit D/A converter.

The $800 Technics SV-DA10 features the company's MASH 1-bit D/A and A/D conversion system. A shuttle-search dial enables the user to search tapes at up to 400 times normal speed, and a wireless remote control is supplied.

The DT-901 ($1,100), part of Onkyo's Integra line, features ultra-high-speed search, and high-performance amorphous heads. It uses 1-bit A/D and D/A converters and has optical and coaxial digital inputs as well as an optical digital output.

The $800 Technics SV-DA10 features the company's MASH 1-bit D/A and A/D conversion system. A shuttle-search dial enables the user to search tapes at up to 400 times normal speed, and a wireless remote control is supplied.
Jean-Pierre Rampal, the French flutist who celebrated his seventieth birthday on January 7, 1992, holds a unique distinction—he is the first modern practitioner of his instrument ever to rise from the orchestral ranks and lead a flourishing career as a solo virtuoso. Only James Galway, his younger Irish rival, has had similar, if somewhat later success. While there is no love lost between the Gaul and the Gael, together they have made the flute the world’s most popular woodwind.

Rampal’s concerts, which have been taking him around the world these last forty years, are usually sold out and generally packed with young people who find a unique enchantment in the music so lucidly played by the portly, balding Frenchman. His suave, supple tones contrast oddly with his bear-like physique and businesslike stage demeanor.

“You must have personality—that is what the audiences want to hear,” he remarked affably in his Marseilles-flavored English during a recent visit to New York. “It is hard to explain personality—I cannot do it myself. Maybe you have to ask the audiences. But I am very proud that young people keep coming to hear me. Some maybe have become a little older, but they still look young to me!”

Rampal is currently playing some ninety to one hundred concerts a year (“I never count them,” he insists), gives master classes when he has time, has taken up conducting, and turns out recordings by the dozen, with an exclusive contract since 1981 with Sony Classical. Sony will mark his seventieth birthday by putting out a three-CD package called “Great Flute Concertos.”

The formal observance in New York of Rampal’s birthday will come on February 3 at Avery Fisher Hall, when he will be joined in a special program by his friends the violinist Isaac Stern and the cellist Mstislav Rostropovich. “We all played together for each other’s sixtieth birthday,” he explained, “and we are doing the same for our seventieth.”

Rampal came to his instrument naturally, for his father was first flutist of the Marseilles Symphony Orchestra and professor of flute at the Marseilles Conservatory. Jean-Pierre entered the conservatory at age twelve and also studied with his father, making a formal debut in recital at fifteen. Nevertheless, he was destined by his parents for a career as a surgeon and was actually in medical school when the Germans occupied France. He says he “hid out” in Paris during the war, entering the Conservatory, where he eventually won first prize for flute. He played for several years in the Paris Opéra orchestra but soon began trying solo recitals.

Although Rampal makes no pretense to modesty, he thinks that he and his flute came along at just the right time. “I think the revival of the flute as a solo instrument was tied into the general awakening of interest in Baroque music that took place after [World War II],” he explained. “Europeans needed to discover the Baroque at that time. After what they had been through, it was necessary for their balance of mind to find that kind of equilibrium.

“But I always had the feeling that some day it would happen that the flute would become a solo instrument. We have a beautiful repertory, and now more and more contemporary composers—contemporary, not avant-garde!—are writing for it. I have had pieces written for me by Poulenc and Jolivet in France, David Diamond and Ezra Laderman in the United States. Now Krzysztof Penderecki is working on a concerto, but he is very slow.”

Repertory, of course, is something of a problem; beautiful though it may be, the flute repertory is not overly extensive,
necessitating transpositions and adaptations of music composed originally for other instruments. "I'm not against transcriptions," Rampal said, "but only when it is necessary, possible, and proper."

Two of his most recent Sony CD's illustrate the point admirably. One is devoted to concertos for two flutes in which Rampal is joined by Shigenori Kudo, a young Japanese whose work he admires. Three of the concertos—by Cimarosa, Vivaldi, and Anton Stamitz—were indeed written for two flutes. The fourth, however, is Mozart's Concerto for Two Solo Violins, which, it must be admitted, takes on a new level of interest when transposed for two flutes. The other Sony CD is devoted to flute transcriptions of relatively neglected music by Mozart, including such odd pieces as the Andante for Mechanical Organ (K. 616) and a Rondo for Soprano.

Rampal has always expressed a predilection for Mozart's music, which he said is growing "more and more." He refuses to credit the oft-repeated story that Mozart really hated the instrument. "He may have made some kind of crack about it in a letter he wrote," Rampal said. "But that was because this guy who commissioned a flute of crack about it in a letter he wrote," Rampal said. "But that was because he calls 'Jeemee' in his accented English, he observes that the Irish transcriptions he refuses to play. In an apparent dig at James Galway, whom he says he's even ready for digital recording. He should be: He's been doing it long enough. His studio activities encompass the 78-rpm, LP, and CD eras, and he says he's even ready for digital tape. "I love recording," he said. "Unfortunately, I don't even have all the old wax recordings that I made myself. I gave them to friends, and there are some I was left without. I remember the first recording I ever made, the Mozart D Major Concerto in Paris. It's like making a movie—you have to put it. "More and more, they seem to be developing." Asked for names, he began to reel them off: Ransom Wilson, Shigenori Kudo, Carol Wincenc, Paula Robison, Robert Stallman..."I could give fifty," he said, "but just to give some, that's not very nice for the others."

Rampal has nothing but praise for today's crop of younger players, however. "There is an enormous number of fantastic flutists," was the way he put it. "More and more, they seem to be developing." Asked for names, he began to reel them off: Ransom Wilson, Shigenori Kudo, Carol Wincenc, Paula Robison, Robert Stallman..."I could give fifty," he said, "but just to give some, that's not very nice for the others."

In any case, Jean-Pierre Rampal has no doubt that the future of the flute as a virtuoso instrument is assured. But those who intend to pursue solo careers can count on continuing to face at least one formidable rival—Rampal himself. He said he feels fine at age seventy—just about the same as he did at age sixty—and has no thought of retiring. "When I feel it is time, I will stop," he said. "But not yet. I will feel what I did when I started: The flute isn't the end for me. The music is..."

Rampal's conducting is generally confined to works in which he is also appearing as flute soloist, but he says it is an aspect of music making that he thoroughly enjoys. "I do it as much as I can—whenver they ask me," he said. "But I will not say to anybody that I will play only if you ask me to conduct, too. There are people who say that, you know? Or they say, 'If you engage me, you must engage my wife, or my girl friend.' I hate that."

Unlike string players, who like old instruments, most woodwind players prefer modern ones. Rampal plays a 14-karat-gold flute made by Haynes of Boston. He believes gold imparts a warmer, darker, and more mellow sound than does silver, which he acknowledges is more brilliant, or platinum, which he considers "very cold." The most famous champion of the platinum flute was the late William Kincaid, the great flutist of the Philadelphia Orchestra a generation ago. On one point at least Rampal is in agreement with Kincaid, who once remarked that the flute was "the easiest instrument to play badly and the hardest to play well."

"That probably can be said of all instruments, but especially of the flute," Rampal remarked. "From the eighteenth century on amateurs have found it quite easy to blow into the instrument and make a bad sound."

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Herbert Kupferberg, a senior editor of Parade magazine, is the author of The Book of Classical Music Lists (Penguin) and other books on music.
compact discs may be spinning like there's no tomorrow, analog cassettes are still the most popular format for recorded music. When you consider that more than half a billion blank and prerecorded cassettes were purchased last year, it's no wonder that the tape deck remains a stereo-system staple. Plain and simple, cassettes are the practical medium for making copies of CDs, LP's, or other tapes, and they will continue to be until recordable-CD technology becomes affordable or the new Digital Compact Cassette or Mini Disc proves itself in the marketplace. The following guide lists the available blank cassettes, analog and DAT, and gives a representative sampling of today's analog decks for home use; see page 49 for DAT decks. (Open-reel equipment and tapes are used mainly by professionals nowadays.) Specifications and features were provided by the manufacturers, and all prices are suggested retail, so actual selling prices may vary. Now, hit that play button.

—Bob Ankosko
**Digital Audio Tapes**

**Metal Cassettes**
- HD6-100, 100 min: $3.50
- HD6-90, 90 min: $3.25
- HD6-74, 74 min: $2.75

**HD6 High-Bias Cassettes**
- HD6-100: $3.50
- HD6-90: $3.25
- HD6-74: $2.75

**DX1 Normal-Bias Cassettes**
- DX1-90: $2.25
- DX1-60: $1.75

**DIC**

Digital Audio Tapes
Fabricated with densely packed, ultra-fine-grain magnetic metal particles.

**Metal Cassettes**
- 120XR, 120 min: $11
- 90XR, 90 min: $9
- 60XR, 60 min: $8
- 46XR, 46 min: $7
- 30XR, 30 min: $6
- 15XR, 15 min: $5

**DYSAN**

Features lightweight, space-saving cases and a unique labeling system.

**Metal Cassettes**
- 110 min, 2 pk: $6.99
- 90 min, 2 pk: $5.99

**Digital Audio Tapes**
Super-Fine Metallisix formulation.

**Dat (R-120D), 120 min:** $12.95
**Dat (R-90D), 90 min:** $11.95
**Dat (R-60D), 60 min:** $10.95

**FR Metal Series Cassettes**

**High-bias metal tape.**
- FR (C-90), 90 min: $5.99
- FR (C-60), 60 min: $5.49

**FR-II PRO Series Cassettes**

High-bias double-coated tape in a heat-resistant shell.
- FR-II PRO (C-100), 100 min: $5.49
- FR-II PRO (C-90), 90 min: $4.99
- FR-II PRO (C-60), 60 min: $4.49

**FR-IIx Series Cassettes**

High-bias double-coated tape.
- FR-IIx (C-90), 90 min: $3.99
- FR-IIx (C-60), 60 min: $3.49

**FR-II Series Cassettes**
High-bias double-coated tape.
- DR-II (C-100), 100 min: $3.49
- DR-II (C-90), 90 min: $2.99
- DR-II (C-60), 60 min: $2.49

**DR Series Cassettes**
Normal-bias tape.
- DR-I (C-90), 90 min: $1.99
- DR-I (C-60), 60 min: $1.49

**JVC**

Digital Audio Tapes
Three-layer metal-powder coating and ABS shell.

- R-120XD, 120 min: $14
- R-100X, 100 min: $12.70
- R-90XD, 90 min: $12
- R-60XD, 60 min: $10

**XFIV Cassettes**
Ultra-fine metal particles, oblique hubs, and precision-engineered shell.
- XFIV-90, 90 min: $3.90

**AFI Cassettes**

High bias with tensilized polyester-base film.
- AFI-90, 90 min: $2.50
- AFI-60, 60 min: $2.20

**GI Cassettes**
Normal bias with polyester-base film.
- GI-90, 90 min: $1.55
- GI-60, 60 min: $1.30

**LORAN**

Digital Audio Tapes
Made to custom lengths with 10-tape order.

- Pro-DAT, 120 min: $10.50
- Pro-DAT, 60 min: $7.50
- Pro-DAT, 30 min: $5
- Pro-DAT, 10 min: $5

**ESQ Series**
High bias; polycarbonate shell.
- ESQ-90: $4.99

**MAXELL**

Digital Audio Tapes
Features Ceramic-Armor metal particles.

- R-120DM, 120 min: $14.99
- R-90DM, 90 min: $12.99
- R-60DM, 60 min: $10.99
- R-46DM, 46 min: $8.99

**Metal Vertex**
MV-90, 90 min: $14.99

**MX Series**

- MX-S 100, 100 min: $5.99
- MX-S 90, 90 min: $5.29
- MX-S 60, 60 min: $4.39

**MX Metal Cassettes**

- MX-110, 100 min: $4.49
- MX-90, 90 min: $3.99
- MX-60, 60 min: $2.99

**XLII-S Epitaxial High-Bias Cassettes**
60 min-100 min: $3.59-$4.99

**XLII Epitaxial Cassettes**
High-bias chrome tape.
- 46 min-100 min: $3.29-$4.39

**UD-II Epitaxial High-Bias Cassettes**
- 46-100 min: $2.49-$3.69

**XLII-S Epitaxial Cassettes**
Normal bias.
- 60 min-90 min: $3.59-$4.39

**UD-I Epitaxial Cassettes**
Normal bias.
- 46 min-120 min: $1.49-$2.79

**MEMOREX, BY MEMTEK**

CDX II High-Bias Metal Cassettes
- 90 min: $4.79

**DBS Normal-Bias Cassettes**
- 110 min: $3.29
- 120 min: $1.94
- 90 min: $1.39
- 60 min: $1.09
- 45 min: $1.04

**CDX Type IV Metal Cassettes**
- 110 min: $3.25
- 90 min: $2.99

**HBX II High-Bias Cassettes**
Ferricobalt tape.
- 60 min-90 min: $2.79-$3.69

**HBS II High-Bias Cassettes**
- 110 min: $2.79
- 100 min: $2.59
- 90 min: $2.29
- 76 min: $1.99
- 60 min: $1.79
- 46 min: $1.59

**MX1 Normal-Bias Cassettes**
Full lifetime warranty; clear shell.
- 90 min: $1.99
- 60 min: $1.79

**Mrx I Normal-Bias Cassettes**
For general-purpose recording; clear shell.
- 120 min: $1.99
- 90 min: $1.49
- 60 min: $1.19
- 46 min: $1.10

**REALISTIC, BY RADIO SHACK**

**MIV Metal Cassettes**
Fine-grain metal particles, 5-screw housing, and hinged storage box.
- 60 min-90 min: $4.99-$5.99

**MI1 Metal Cassettes**
Head-cleaning leader.
- MI1-100: $4.99
- MI1-90: $4.99
- MI1-76: $4.79
- MI1-60: $4.49
- MI1-50: $3.99

**HD High-Definition Cassettes**
High-bias chrome-equivalent tape with head-cleaning leader.
- 60 min-100 min: $3.99-$4.99

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOTON</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SX 100 Cassettes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal-bias tape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SX 100-10, 10 tapes, 100 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SX 100-2, 2 tapes, 100 min</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High-Bias Cassettes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UX 90-10, 10 tapes, 90 min</td>
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<tr>
<th>SCOTCH, BY 3M</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital Audio Tapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotch DAT-120, 120 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scotch DAT-90, 90 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scotch DAT-60, 60 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scotch DAT-46, 46 min</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>High-Bias Cassettes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scotch XS II-S, 90 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotch XS II-S, 60 min</td>
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<tr>
<th>Normal-Bias Cassettes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scotch CX, 90 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scotch CX, 60 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scotch BX, 90 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scotch BX, 60 min</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>SONY</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Digital Audio Tapes</td>
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<tr>
<td>120 min</td>
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<td>90 min</td>
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<tr>
<th>Metal Master Cassettes</th>
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<tr>
<td>90 min</td>
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<tr>
<th>ES Series Cassettes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metal</td>
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<tr>
<td>100 min</td>
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<td>90 min</td>
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<tr>
<th>High Bias</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>90 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>74 min</td>
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<td>60 min</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normal Bias</th>
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<td>100 min</td>
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<td>90 min</td>
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<tr>
<th>SR Series Metal Cassettes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>90 min</td>
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<td>60 min</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UX-Pro Series High-Bias Cassettes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90 min</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>UX-Turbo Series High-Bias Cassettes</th>
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<tr>
<td>100 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>90 min</td>
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<td>60 min</td>
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<tr>
<th>CDu Series</th>
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<tr>
<td>Metal</td>
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<tr>
<td>100 min</td>
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<td>94 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>74 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>54 min</td>
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<tr>
<th>High Bias</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>100 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>74 min</td>
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<td>54 min</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>UX Series High-Bias Cassettes</th>
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<td>100 min</td>
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<td>90 min</td>
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<tr>
<th>HD-F Series High-Bias Cassettes</th>
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<tr>
<td>120 min</td>
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<td>90 min</td>
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<td>60 min</td>
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<th>TDK</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MA-XG Metal-Alloy Cassettes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual-layer metal Finavinx tape formulation housed in 5-piece mechanism.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DA Digital Audio Tapes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Super Finavinx pure-metal tape formulation with compound binder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA-R120, 120 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA-R90, 90 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA-R60, 60 min</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>MA Metal-Alloy Cassettes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ultrafine Finavinx tape formulation in antiresonance mechanism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA-X 100, 100 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA-X 90, 90 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>MA-X 60, 60 min</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA Metal-Alloy Cassettes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ultrafine Finavinx tape formulation in antiresonance mechanism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA-X 110, 110 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA 90, 90 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA 60, 60 min</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA-H High-Bias Cassettes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dual-coated Super-Avlyn tape in antiresonance mechanism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA-X 100, 100 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA-X 90, 90 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA-X 60, 60 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA-X 50, 46 min</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA High-Bias Cassettes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Super Avlyn tape formulation in antiresonance cassette shell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA 100, 100 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA 90, 90 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA 80, 80 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA 60, 60 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA 50, 46 min</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>SD High-Bias Cassettes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avlyn tape formulation in multiface shell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD 100, 100 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD 90, 90 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD 80, 80 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD 50, 46 min</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DS-X Normal-Bias Cassettes</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonporous ferric tape formulation in multiface shell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DS-X 100, 100 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DS-X 90, 90 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>DS-X 60, 60 min</td>
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<tr>
<th>D Normal-Bias Cassettes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fine pure-grained ferric tape formulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 120, 120 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 90, 90 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 60, 60 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>D 50, 46 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>D 30, 30 min</td>
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<tr>
<th>3M BLACK WATCH</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Black Watch tapes feature a lifetime warranty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7707 Digital Audio Tapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proprietary pure-metal-particles formulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DT-120, 120 min</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>40-40 Metal Cassettes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 min</td>
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<td>74 min</td>
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<tr>
<th>2020 High-Bias Cassettes</th>
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<tr>
<td>100 min</td>
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<td>74 min</td>
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</table>
ACOUSTIC RESEARCH

TD-66 Cassette Deck
Doby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features brushless, direct-drive DC servomotor; sendust-core record/playback head; ferrite-core erase head. Bias control; record-balance function; optional remote control. S/N: 55 dB (no NR), 64 dB (Doby B), 73 dB (Doby C); W&F 0.02% (DNR); FR: 30-20,000 Hz ± 3 dB (metal). 17 x 4 1/16 x 13 in; 12.4 lb . . . $500

A I W A

AD-FB10 3-Head Cassette Deck
Doby B, C NR and HX Pro. Dual-capstan design; bias shield head block; tape-stabilizing mechanism; sendust erase head; PC-OCW wire head coils; auto rec mute; auto tape-bias selector; direct CD/DAT inputs; headphone jack with level control; IC-logic feather-touch controls; memory level/ repeat; independent L&R FL peak-level meters; timer record/playback; manual bias and recording sens controls. FR: 10-19,000 Hz ± 3 dB (normal bias), 10-20,000 Hz ± 3 dB (high bias), 10-21,000 Hz ± 3 dB (metal); S/N (metal): 65 dB (Doby B), 78 dB (Doby C); W/F 0.035% w rms. 17 x 5 x 1 1/16 in; 11.2 lb . . . $400

AD-WX717 Double Cassette Deck
Doby B and C NR. Features one over reverse deck; tape-stabilizing mechanism; auto rec mute; auto tape-bias selector; headphone jack. IC-logic feather-touch controls; high-speed dubbing; continuous playback mode; music search; tape loop; timer search/playback; bidirectional auto wind; wireless remote control. FR: 20-16,000 Hz (normal bias), 20-17,000 Hz (high bias), 20-18,000 Hz (metal); S/N: 78 dB (Doby C; metal); W/F 0.065% w rms. 17 5/8 x 5 1/10 x 10 1/16 . . . $300

AD-R707 Cassette Deck
Doby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features autoreverse; tape-stabilizing mechanism; auto rec mute; auto tape-bias selector; headphone jack. IC-logic feather-touch controls; electronic tape counter; FL peak-hold level meter; bias fine-tuning; music sensor; blank skip; timer record/playback; bidirectional auto wind; wireless remote control. FR: 20-16,000 Hz (normal bias), 20-17,000 Hz (high bias), 20-18,000 Hz (metal); S/N: 78 dB (Doby C; metal); W/F 0.065% w rms. 17 5/8 x 10 in; 8.8 lb . . . $275

BANG & OLUFSEN

Beocord 6500 Cassette Deck
Doby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features autoreverse; sendust head; auto search and record level. FR: 30-18,000 Hz ± 3 dB (high bias); W/F 0.09% w rms; speed deviation ± 1%; S/N (normal bias): 63 dB (Doby B; SN (high bias): 65 dB (Doby B), 74 dB (Doby C); S/N (metal): 64 dB (Doby B), 73 dB (Doby C) . . . $1,250

CAMBRIDGE AUDI0

CT50 Cassette Deck
Doby B, C NR and HX Pro. Full-logic tape transports; 2 motors; lamina-ribbon record head; trim control. Output voltage 500 mV; input sens 80 mV; W/F 0.076%. 16 1/2 x 5 x 11 3/4 in; 10 lb . . . $500

CARVER

TD-1700 3-Head Cassette Deck
Doby B, C NR and HX Pro. Dual-capstan transports; oxygen-free rec/play head core; MPX filter. Auto bias adjustment; high-speed dubbing; dual FL meters; memory rewind/repeat; mute; headphone jack; wireless remote control. 19 3/4 x 11 1/16 x 15 lb . . . $600

TDR-2400 Double Cassette Deck
Doby B, C NR and HX Pro. Full-logic control; dual autoreverse transports; MPX filter. Auto tape-bias selector; high-speed dubbing; LED meters; memory rewind/repeat; mute; headphone jack; wireless remote control . . . $520

DENON

All Denon cassette decks feature Doby B and C NR, bias fine-tuning; full auto stop; auto space; headjack, and compatibility with Denon's IS-system remote control.

DRW-850 Double Cassette Deck
Doby HX Pro. Features dual autoreverse transports; 2-motor transports with nonslip reel drive; revolving amorphous-alloy heads; dual power supply; dual-recording mode to make 2 simultaneous copies of an external source; autoreversing relay-record and relay-play modes. Peak-reading FL meters; high-speed dubbing; output-level control

DENON

DRW-850 Double Cassette Deck
Doby HX Pro. Features dual autoreverse transports; 2-motor transports with nonslip reel drive; revolving amorphous-alloy heads; dual power supply; dual-recording mode to make 2 simultaneous copies of an external source; autoreversing relay-record and relay-play modes. Peak-reading FL meters; high-speed dubbing; output-level control

DUAL

CC-5850RC Cassette Deck
Doby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features amorphous record/playback head; computer-controlled 2-motor drive. Bias control; auto tape-bias selector; music search; electronic counter with memory; level display with peak hold; record mute; balance control; reset play; headphone jack; remote-control capability with CR-5950RC receiver. FR: 25-16,000 Hz (normal bias), 25-18,000 Hz (high bias), 25-19,000 Hz (metal); S/N (normal bias): 65 dB (Doby B), 73 dB (Doby C); S/N (metal): 68 dB (Doby B), 76 dB (Doby C); W/F 0.05% w rms. Black anodized finish . . . $505

CC-8065RC Cassette Deck
Doby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features computer-controlled 2-motor drive. Bias control; auto tape-bias selector; programmable music search; record mute; timer; 4-digit counter with memory; headphone and mic jacks. FR: 25-15,000 Hz (normal bias), 25-17,000 Hz (high bias), 25-18,000 Hz (metal); S/N (normal bias): 64 dB (Doby B), 71 dB (Doby C); S/N (metal): 67 dB (Doby B), 74 dB (Doby C); W/F 0.06% w rms. Black . . . $440

FISHER

CR-9070 3-Head Cassette Deck
Doby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features switchable MPX filter; full-logic controls; metal-tape compatibility; 2 motors. Input and record-level controls; blank skip; linear tape-counter; headphone jack; remote control. FR: 15-20,000 Hz ± 3 dB (normal/high bias); S/N: 52 dB (no NR), 62 dB (Doby B), 72 dB (Doby C); W/F 0.056% w rms. Black. 17 3/4 x 5 3/4 x 10 1/16 in; 11.5 lb . . . $500

CR-9030 Cassette Deck
Doby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features switchable MPX filter; full-logic controls; metal-tape compatibility; pulse counter; 2 motors. Input and record-level controls; blank skip; headphone jack; remote control. FR: 20-17,000 Hz ± 3 dB (normal bias), 20-18,000 Hz ± 3 dB (high bias), 20-18,000 Hz ± 3 dB (metal); S/N: 78 dB (Doby C; metal); W/F 0.035% w rms. Black . . . $400

CR-W905B Double Cassette Deck
Doby B and C NR. Dual autoreverse transports; full-logic controls; switchable MPX filter; metal-tape compatibility; 1-touch high-speed dubbing; sequential playback; intro scan; blank skip; digital tape counter; remote control. FR: 40-15,000 Hz ± 3 dB (normal/high bias); S/N: 62 dB (Doby B); W/F 0.06% w rms. Black . . . $350

HARMAN KARDON

All decks have an MPX filter and Doby B and C NR; FR specification covers all types of tape unless otherwise noted.

TD4800 3-Head Cassette Deck
Doby S NR and HX Pro. Features closed-loop dual-capstan transport, isotropic heads; bias tone generator. Record-calibration and output-level controls; headphone jack; auto tape-bias selector; music search; intro scan; record mute; remote control. FR: 20-22,000 Hz ± 3 dB . . . $1,199

TD4600. 2-motor version of above

TD4500. As TD4600, without Doby S . . . $549

DC5700 Double Cassette Deck
Doby HX Pro. Features dual autoreverse transports; isotropic heads; cross-Doby recording. 1-
TD4400 Cassette Deck
Dolby HX Pro. Features solenoid transport; isotropic heads. Bias control; record mute; auto tape bias selection; music search; intro scan. FR: 20-20,000 Hz ±3 dB. $419

JVC TDV-541TN 3-Head Cassette Deck
Dolby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features computerized full-logic control; closed-loop dual-capstan design with direct-drive motor; PC-occ coil and lead wiring in heads; cassette-shell stabilizer; powered tape-well lid; auto recording-level adjustment with compatible CD player; CD-direct input; headphone output. Bias control; switchable MPX filter; peak-level search; FL display with peak-level meters; music scan; auto rec mute; timer recordplay; auto tape bias selection; gold-plated terminals; balance control; Compu Link system compatibility. FR at −20 dB: 15-17,000 Hz ±3 dB (normal/high bias), 15-19,000 Hz ±3 dB (metal); SN: 59 dB (NO NR, metal); WAF: 0.033%; crossstalk: 60 dB at 1,000 Hz; ch sep 40 dB at 1,000 Hz. 17 5/8" x 5 5/16" x 13 11/16"; 12 lb. $380

Super Digifine Series
TD-Y1050TN 3-Head Cassette Deck
Dolby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features high-density base, precision-finished aluminum die-cast tape-drive base, airtight tape-well sealing, and cassette-shell stabilizer to minimize resonance and vibration; dual-capstan drive with direct-drive motor; PC-occ head coils; low-impedance regulated power supply; headphone output with volume control; CD-direct input; adjustable bias and level calibration; FL display with peak display, level meters, and auto shutoff; time-taking and elapsed-time displays; peak-level search; 4-digit linear counter; music scan, balance control; gold-plated terminals. Compu Link system compatibility; remote control. FR: 15,19,000 Hz ±3 dB (normal/high bias), 15-21,000 Hz ±3 dB (metal); SN: 61 dB (metal); WAF: 0.022%; 17 5/8" x 5 11/16" x 13 11/16"; 17 lb. $700

KENWOOD
KX-W8030 Double Cassette Deck
Dolby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features dual autoreverse record/playback, full-logic computer-controlled transports with independent controls; auto-bias adjustment; switchable MPX filter. 1-touch high-speed dubbing; timer record/playback; computer-controlled CD recording system; multifunction program search; separate record-level and balance controls; continuous relay play; index scan; auto tape bias selection; multifunction FL display; auto rec mute; headphone jack; remote controllable. 13 lb. $379

MITSUBISHI
M-T5010 Double Cassette Deck
Dolby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features dual autoreverse transports; twin amorphous tape heads; high-speed synchronous dubbing. Auto tape-bias selector; variable intro scan; music search; counter search; record mute; blank skip. Programmable menus on video monitor in AV systems; remote control. $699

NAD
Model 6110 Cassette Deck
Dolby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features Dyneq range expansion; NAD/Dolby-developed Play Trim to optimize high-frequency playback response; full-logic controls; bias fine-tuning; remote control. Rack mountable. $499

Model 6340 Cassette Deck
Dolby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features Dyneq range expansion; full-logic controls; bias fine-tuning. $399

NAKAMICHI
CR 7A 3-Head Cassette Deck
Dolby B and C NR. Features asymmetrical dual-capstan transport; 3 motors; manual azimuth fine-tuning; elapsed-time and remaining-time meters. Output-level control; memory stop/play; LEDs; soft-touch controls; headphone jack; rec mute; auto and manual tape/eQ selection; auto fader; auto repeat; wireless remote control. WAF: 0.027% w rms; FR: 18-21,000 Hz ±3 dB (high bias); SN: 66 dB (metal); 72 dB (Dolby B). 17 5/16" x 12 in; 19 lb. $1,800

CassetteDeck 1 Cassette Deck
Dolby B and C NR. Features asymmetrical dual-capstan transport; DC servo capstan motor; pressure-pad lifter; auto slack-tape takeup; integrated construction of head and playback amplifier; multiregulated power supply; defeatable MPX filter; azimuth and bias fine-tuning controls; gold-plated input/output jacks. Bidirectional auto search; auto repeat; timer record/playback; record mute; output-level control; tape selector with interlocked EQ selection; system remote compatibility; 4-digit tape counter. FR: 20-20,000 Hz ±3 dB (SN:metal); 72 dB (Dolby B). WAF: 0.035%; THD 0.9%. 17 4 x 12 1/2" in; 13 lb. $584

CassetteDeck 1.5 3-Head Cassette Deck
Dolby B and C NR. Features asymmetrical dual-capstan transport; DC servo capstan motor; pressure-pad lifter; auto slack-tape takeup; integrated construction of head and playback amplifier; multiregulated power supply; defeatable MPX filter; azimuth and bias fine-tuning controls; gold-plated input/output jacks. Bidirectional auto search; auto repeat; timer record/playback; record mute; output-level control; tape selector with interlocked EQ selection; system remote compatibility; 4-digit tape counter. FR: 20-21,000 Hz ±3 dB; WAF: 0.035% w rms; SN: 66 dB (Dolby B). 72 dB (Dolby B). $599

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Cassette Decks

**Integra TA-RW909 Double Cassette Deck**

Dolby B and C NR. Features Dolby B, C Nit, and HX Pro. Features logic-controlled transport mechanism; 10-bit A/D, D/A converters; record calibration; stereo play; headphones output; remote control. FR: 20-20,000 Hz (normal bias), 20-18,000 Hz (high bias). 19 x 5 7/8 x 11 in; 16.5 lb. $700

**Integra TA-2800 3-Head Cassette Deck**

Dolby B, C, and X. Features electronic transport control; 20-20,000 Hz (metal); SIN: 60 dB; W&F 0.047%. 17 1/2 x 5 5/8 x 14 1/2 in; 14 lb. $650

**Integra TA-207 3-Head Cassette Deck**

Dolby B, C, and X. Features electronic transport control; 20-20,000 Hz (metal); SIN: 60 dB (no NR, metal); W&F 0.045%. 17 1/2 x 5 5/8 x 14 1/2 in; 15 lb. $530

**PIONEER**

**CT-610 3-Head Cassette Deck**

Dolby B, C, and X. Features electronic transport control; 20-20,000 Hz (metal); SIN: 60 dB; W&F 0.047%. 17 1/2 x 5 5/8 x 14 1/2 in; 15 lb. $399

**Pioneer CT-WM77R**

3-mode meter range; headphone output; remote control. FR: 20-17,000 Hz (metal); SIN: 48 dB; W&F 0.025%. $1,200

**CT-41 3-Head Cassette Deck**

Dolby B, C, and X. Features Super Auto BLE; Z-tape transport mechanism; digital tension servo; auto monitor; FL peak-hold meter; record mute; tape selector with interlocked selection; 10-bit A/D, D/A converters. FR: 20-17,000 Hz (metal); SIN: 60 dB; W&F 0.055%. $800

**CT-W51 Double Cassette Deck**

Dolby B, C, and X. Features Super Auto BLE; Z-tape transport mechanism; digital tension servo; auto monitor; FL peak-hold meter; record mute; tape selector with interlocked selection; 10-bit A/D, D/A converters. FR: 20-17,000 Hz (metal); SIN: 60 dB; W&F 0.055%. $800

**Optimus, by Radio Shack**

SCT-89 Double Cassette Deck

Dolby B, C noise reduction and HPX headroom extension. Features full-logic control; auto tape-bias selector; high-speed dubbing; repeat sequential play; record mute; mic jacks; recording-level meters. FR: 20-17,000 Hz ±3 dB (metal); SIN: 60 dB; W&F 0.035% rms. 17 1/4 x 5 11/16 in; 11 lb. $380

**PARASOUND**

D/HH-550 Double Cassette Deck

Dolby B, C, and X. Features hard alloy head; polystyrene capacitors; record trim control to optimize tonal balance. FR: 20-19,000 Hz; SIN: 67 dB (Dolby B); 78 dB (Dolby C); input imp 30 kilohms; output imp 600 ohms. 17 1/4 x 4 1/4 in; 12 lb. $265

**PHILIPS**

FC-60 3-Head Cassette Deck

Dolby B, C, and X. Features electronic real-time counter; mode display; digital peak-level display with peak hold; bias fine-tuning; record-calibration controls; Philips RC-5 remote-control compatibility. $549

**FCR-515 Double Cassette Deck**

Dolby B and C NR. Features dual-deck continuous record/playlist for up to 3 hours. Auto 2-way recording; simultaneous/sequential recording on both decks for up to 3 hours; high-speed dubbing. Music search; memo function; blank skip; Philips remote-control compatibility. $499

**FCR-50 Cassette Deck**

Dolby B, C, and X. Features logic-controlled transport mechanism; alloy flywheel; hard Permalloy head; switchable MPX filter. Music search; auto music scan; blank skip; auto space; record mute; Philips remote-control compatibility. $399

**PIONEER**

Auto BLE refers to Pioneer's one-touch microcomputer-controlled automatic bias, level, and equalization optimization. Super Auto BLE refers to a similar system for 3-head models performing equalization optimization at 2 frequencies.

**CT-W77R 7-Cassette Changer**

Changer with 6-cassette magazine-type well and single-cassette well. Features Dolby B and C NR; Dolby HPX; NR memory; auto-reverse; 9-hr continuous play/record; large insulator (feet); random play; cassette scan; all-rewind mode; CD-to-tape synchro recording; auto tape-bias selector; auto space; track skip search; blank skip; timer relay record/play; high-speed dubbing; edit dubbing; FL peak-hold meter; 4-digit counters; headphone output; remote control. FR: 20-17,000 Hz (normal bias), 20-18,000 Hz (high bias); 17 1/2 x 5 5/8 x 14 1/2 in; 16.5 lb. $385

**Elite Series**

**CT-93 3-Head Cassette Deck**

Dolby B, C, and X. Features bias oscillator; Super Auto BLE; amorphous heads; dual-capsan design; peak-level calibration system; digital tension servo. Auto monitor; auto tape-bias selector; auto space; record mute; 15 x 5 x 10 1/2 in; 10.1 lb. $385

**Pioneer CT-WM77R**

Hold mode switch; 2-mode meter range; headphone with volume control. $1,200

**CT-41 3-Head Cassette Deck**

Dolby B, C, and X. Features Super Auto BLE; Z mechanism; hard Permalloy heads; dual-capsan design; digital tension servo; auto monitor; auto tape-bias selector; auto space; record mute; 15 x 5 x 10 1/2 in; 10.1 lb. $800

**CT-W51 Double Cassette Deck**

Dolby B, C, and X. Features Super Auto BLE; Z-tape transport mechanism; digital tension servo; auto monitor; FL peak-hold meter; record mute; tape selector with interlocked selection; 10-bit A/D, D/A converters. FR: 20-17,000 Hz (metal); SIN: 60 dB; W&F 0.055%. $510

**CT-S709 3-Head Cassette Deck**

Dolby B, C, and X. Features Super Auto BLE; Z-tape transport mechanism; digital tension servo; auto monitor; FL peak-hold meter; record mute; tape selector with interlocked selection; 10-bit A/D, D/A converters. FR: 20-17,000 Hz (metal); SIN: 60 dB; W&F 0.055%. $510

**ONKYO**

Integra TA-R500 Cassette Deck

Dolby B, C, and X. Features electronic transport control; 20-20,000 Hz (metal); SIN: 60 dB (no NR, metal); W&F 0.045%. 17 1/2 x 5 5/8 x 14 1/2 in; 15 lb. $530

**Integra TA-RW470 Double Cassette Deck**

Dolby B and C NR. Features 2 motors; auto-reverse; real-time tape counter; standard and high-speed dubbing; continuous play; R1-system remote-control compatibility. $500

**Integra TA-R500 Cassette Deck**

Dolby B, C, and X. Features full-logic 3-motor auto-reverse transport; 3 independent power supplies; low-impedance linear-switching power supply for audio path. Auto tape-EQ selector; switchable MPX filter; real-time counter; FL peak-hold level indicators; auto space and record mute; bidirectional music search; block repeat; R1-system remote control. $450

**Integra TA-R410 Cassette Deck**

Dolby B, C, and X. Features full-logic 3-motor auto-reverse transport; 3 independent power supplies; low-impedance linear-switching power supply for audio path. Auto tape-EQ selector; switchable MPX filter; real-time counter; FL peak-hold level indicators; auto space and record mute; bidirectional music search; block repeat; R1-system remote control. $450

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**TAPE DECKS**

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skip; high-speed dubbing; relay record/play; timer record/play; FL peak-hold meter; dual 4-digit digital counters; headphone jack; switchable reverse mode; dubbing-level adjustment; SR-system remote-control compatibility $370  

**PROTON**  
**AD-630 Cassette Deck**  
Dolby B, C NR, HX Pro, dbx. Features autotrace; 3-motor IC-logic mechanism; horizontal-drawer tape mechanism; switchable MPX filter; headphone output; microphone input jacks. Real-time tape counter; repeat; music search; bias selector; audio tape bias optimization; record mute; record-level meter; output-level control. WAF 0.05%; SN (normal bias): 50 dB (no NR), 60 dB (Dolby B), 70 dB (Dolby C), SN (high bias): 54 dB (no NR), 66 dB (Dolby B), 70 dB (Dolby C); FR: 30-17,000 Hz ± 3 dB (normal bias), 30-18,000 Hz ± 3 dB (high bias). $800  

**AD-431 Cassette Deck**  
Dolby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features Permalloy heads; autotrace; MPX filter; headphone output. Digital tape counter; auto music search. Remote-control compatibility with AV-445 receiver. WAF 0.06%; SN (normal bias): 50 dB (no NR), 60 dB (Dolby B), 70 dB (Dolby C), SN (high bias): 56 dB (no NR), 66 dB (Dolby B), 70 dB (Dolby C); FR: 30-17,000 Hz ± 3 dB (normal bias), 30-18,000 Hz ± 3 dB (high bias). $300  

**AD-430 Cassette Deck**  
Dolby B and C NR and HX Pro. Features 2-head, 2-motor IC-logic transport. $280  

**REVOX**  
**H1 Cassette Deck**  
Dolby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features 3 microprocessors for control of bias, level, EQ, transport, and real-time counter; 3 motors; digital memory of bias, level, and EQ setting for 6 tape formulations; azimuth-stable pivoting head-block. Auto/manual record-level setting; 2 programmable locate buttons; loop mode; auto start-of-record scan; counter to compute elapsed time on partially-wound tapes. WAF 0.1%; SN (normal bias): 57 dB (no NR), 65 dB (Dolby B), 72 dB (Dolby C). 185 x 5 1/4 x 14 in; 20.3 lb. $1,990  

**ROTEL**  
**RD965BX Cassette Deck**  
Dolby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features 2-motor full-logic control; Permalloy-core record/playback head; ferrite-core erase head; stable power supply; selected high-quality components in rigid metal chassis with extruded-aluminum front panel. FL peak-level display; record mute; bias fine-tuning; jacks for connection to other Rotel components. FR: 30-16,000 Hz ± 3 dB (normal bias), 30-18,000 Hz ± 3 dB (metal); WAF 0.035%; SN (normal bias): 55 dB (no NR), 75 dB (Dolby C). 17 x 4 1/4 x 13 in. $399  

**RD955AX. As above, without bias fine-tuning or record mute. 17 x 4 1/4 x 11 3/4 in. $349  

**SANSUI**  
**D-X311WR Double Cassette Deck**  
Dolby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features dual autotrace transports; switchable MPX filter; bias control; hard Permalloy record/playback heads; double-gap ferrite erase head. High-speed dubbing; 16-song program search; auto tape-bias selection; auto record mute; tape lead-in; memory stop; 8-cycle relay play; manual recording-level control; FL peak-level indicator; 4-digit electronic tape counter; timer record/play; headphone output. FR: 20-21,000 Hz (metal); WAF 0.06% w rms; SN (metal): 58 dB (no NR), 65 dB (Dolby B), 75 dB (Dolby C); 16 x 4 1/4 x 10 1/2 in; 10.9 lb. $330  

**D-X11WR Cassette Deck**  
Dolby B, C NR and HX Pro. Autotrace; switchable MPX filter. Auto music search; auto record mute; auto tape lead-in; peak-level indicator; high-speed dubbing; synchro dubbing. FR: 20-20,000 Hz (metal); WAF 0.09% w rms; SN (metal): 58 dB (no NR), 65 dB (Dolby B), 75 dB (Dolby C); 17 x 5 x 10 1/4 in; 10.5 lb. $280  

**TC-W580R**  
 mute; auto tape lead-in; peak-level indicator; high-speed dubbing; synchro dubbing. FR: 20-20,000 Hz (metal); WAF 0.09% w rms; SN (metal): 58 dB (no NR), 65 dB (Dolby B), 75 dB (Dolby C); 17 x 5 x 10 1/4 in; 10.5 lb. $280  

**TC-W970ES Double Cassette Deck**  
Dolby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features dual autotrace transports with one deck record/playback and other deck playback only; high-gain tape head; 2-motor design for each deck. Selectable continuous relay play; blank skip; high-speed dubbing; auto music search; synchro record and dub; timer record/play; mic input with mixing control; auto tape-bias selector; headphone jack. FR: 25-16,000 Hz ± 3 dB (normal/high bias), 25-17,000 Hz ± 3 dB (metal); SN: 65 dB (Dolby B), 74 dB (Dolby C). 17 1/4 x 5 1/4 x 9 1/2 in; 12 lb. $250  

**TC-K870ES 3-Head Cassette Deck**  
Dolby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features 3 motors; direct-drive rotary mechanism; switchable MPX filter; remote-control compatibility. FR: 25-20,000 Hz ± 3 dB (metal); WAF 0.06%; SN (metal): 59 dB (no NR), 74 dB (Dolby C). 17 x 4 1/4 x 11 1/4 in; 10.4 lb. $330  

**TEAC**  
**V-7000 3-Head Cassette Deck**  
Dolby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features closed-loop dual-capstan design; large capstan flywheel; full controls; auto tape lead-in; peak-level indicator; high-speed dubbing; synchro dubbing. FR: 20-20,000 Hz ± 3 dB (metal); WAF 0.06%; SN (metal): 59 dB (no NR), 74 dB (Dolby C). 17 x 4 1/4 x 11 1/4 in; 4.1 lb. $330  

**V-5#00 3-Head Cassette Deck**  
Dolby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features 2-motor full-logic control; Permalloy-core record/playback head; ferrite-core erase head; stable power supply; selected high-quality components; dual autotrace transports; 3-motor design for each deck; laser amorphous heads; bias control. High-speed dubbing; relay play; tape counter; switchable MPX filter; FL display; remote-control compatibility. FR: 20-20,000 Hz (metal); WAF 0.06%; SN (metal): 59 dB (no NR), 74 dB (Dolby C). 18 1/4 x 5 in; 16.6 lb. $600  

**V-3000 3-Head Cassette Deck**  
Dolby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features high Permalloy head; closed-loop dual-capstan design; large capstan flywheel; switchable MPX filter; gold-plated line input/output. Independent L/R-channel bias and level adjustment; switchable MPX filter; gold-plated CD-direct input; electronic tape counter; CD synchro recording; program search; CD recording-level control; auto monitor; record mute with auto spacer; wireless remote control. $800  

**V-580R Double Cassette Deck**  
Dolby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features dual autotrace record/playback transports; dual hard Permalloy record/playback rotating head system; 2-motor 2-DC servo motors; 2-motor IC-logic tape transports. Dual-continuous record/playback; dual parallel/series recording; high/normal-speed one-touch autotrace dubbing; 180-channel bias and level adjustment; switchable MPX filter; gold-plated line/input/output. $660  

**STEREO REVIEW MARCH 1992 61**
After a long absence Dynaco is back. Our first product is a new, updated version of the most popular and best-selling tube amplifier of all time, the 

TECHNICS
RS-9605 3-Head Cassette Deck
Dolby B, C NR, HX Pro, dbx. Features digital servo quartz direct-drive motor; dual-capstan closed-loop transport; full-logic control; aluminum die-cast transport chassis; amorphous PC-OCC-coil record/playback heads; isolated circuit blocks; Class AA record amp, phase-compensation circuitry in playback amp; independent power supplies; cassette stabilizer; powered cassette loading. Real-time electronic counter with memory stop/-repeat; record-level control; CD-direct input; semiautomatic bias/rec-level calibration with 400/10,000-Hz test-tone oscillators; switchable MPX filter; auto tape/source monitor select; program search; auto tape-bias selector; rec mute; master record-level and balance controls; timer record/playback; headphone jack with level control. FR: 20-20,000 Hz (normal bias), 20-22,000 Hz (high bias), 20-23,000 Hz (metal); SN: 57 dB (no NR), 66 dB (Dolby B), 74 dB (Dolby C), 92 dB (dbx); wAF 0.05% 17 x 5 3/4 x 11 1/2 in; 14 lb

$700

RS-TR555 Double Cassette Deck
Dolby B, C NR, HX Pro, dbx. Features dual autoreverse record/playback transports each with 2 motors; full-logic control; dual-range FL peak-level meters with precision switchable to 1/2 dB steps. Simultaneous parallel recording; series recording; high-speed dubbing; program search; syncrony start/stop; auto rec mute; dual electronic tape counters; CD synchro dubbing with select Technics CD players; auto tape-bias selector; LR recording-level controls; timer record/playback; headphone jack; remote compatible with select Technics receivers. Brushed-aluminum front panel. FR: 20-18,000 Hz (normal/high bias), 20-19,000 Hz (metal); SN: 56 dB (no NR), 66 dB (Dolby B), 74 dB (Dolby C), 92 dB (dbx); wAF 0.07%. 17 x 5 3/4 x 11 1/2 in; 12 lb

$400

RS-BX606 3-Head Cassette Deck
Dolby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features digital servo quartz direct-drive 2-motor transport; full-logic control; real-time electronic counter with memory stop/repeat; repeat play; bias fine-tuning; dual-range FL peak-hold meters; switchable MPX filter; auto tape/source monitor select; program search; auto tape-bias selector; rec mute; master record-level and balance controls; timer record/playback; headphone jack with level control. FR: 20-19,000 Hz (normal bias), 20-20,000 Hz (high bias), 20-21,000 Hz (metal); SN: 57 dB (no NR), 66 dB (Dolby B), 74 dB (Dolby C), 92 dB (dbx); wAF 0.05% 15 x 5 x 11 3/4 in $300

VECTORS RESEARCH
VX-270 Cassette Deck
Dolby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features 2-motor logic transport; high-frequency trim and bias fine-tuning controls; switchable MPX filter; headphone jack with volume. FR: 30-17,000 Hz; SN: 67 dB (Dolby B), 75 dB (Dolby C); wAF 0.05% wrm. 16 x 4 1/4 x 11 1/4 in; 12.5 lb

$280

YAMAHA
All decks compatible with Yamaha's RS system remote control.

KX-W952 Double Cassette Deck
Dolby B, C NR and HX Pro for both decks. Features dual autoreverse record/playback transports; 12-layer amorphous record/playback heads; sorothane-stabilized aluminum cassette doors; independent decks allowing simultaneous recording of 2 different sources and playing of one deck while other is recording. One-touch simultaneous or relay recording; play trim; separate controls, meters, and displays for each deck; high-speed dubbing; normal-speed cross-Dolby dubbing; random-program, manual, and skip dubbing; 15-selection both-deck random program play; headphone jack with deck selector, level control, and dedicated amplifier, auto tape-bias selection; intro scan; auto rec mute; rec return; blank skip; selectable reverse mode; 4-digit time counter; remaining-time indication; peak-level meters with hold. 17 3/4 x 5 1/4 x 14 1/2 in $699

KX-930 3-Head Cassette Deck
Dolby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features dynamic bias servo; closed-loop dual-capstan transport; 12-layer amorphous heads with PC-OCC coil windings; full-logic controls; optical-balance tuning for bias and tape sense. Auto tape-bias selector and monitor; direct music search; 9-selection program playback; timer record/playback; repeat; memory stop; intro scan; play trim; bias control; 18-segment LCD meter with peak hold; master fader; 2-speed fast winding; optimum record-level indicator; headphone jack with level control; wireless remote control. Finished in black $599

KX-W602 Double Cassette Deck
Dolby B, C NR and one deck HX Pro. Features dual autoreverse record/playback transports; full-logic 2-motor transports for each deck; amorphous record/playback heads. Peak-level meter; 4-digit counter; manual, normal, high-speed, auto, skip, and random-program dubbing modes; remaining-time display; relay play for 24-hr control; relay record; 9-selection random-program playback; wireless remote control. Finished in black. 13 lb $519

KX-R730 Cassette Deck
Dolby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features autoreverse with optical sensor; 4-motor transport; microcomputer-controlled auto record level with digital level indicator; amorphous play/record head. 13-segment LCD peak-level meter; LCD time counter; auto fader; MPX filter; 2-speed fast winding; bidirectional intro scan; auto tape-bias selector and rec mute; rec return; memory stop; remote-control eject/clone; headphone output with level control; music search; repeat; wireless remote control. Black finish $499

KX-W332 Double Cassette Deck
Dolby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features one deck with autoreverse record/playback, other deck playback only; full-logic 2-motor transport for each deck; 12-layer amorphous record/playback heads in one deck, hard Permalloy playback head in other. Peak-level meter; one-touch dubbing; auto rec mute; music search; full repeat; record return; relay play; auto tape-bias selector; headphone jack. Black finish $399

KX-330 Cassette Deck
Dolby B, C NR and HX Pro. Features 2-motor design; amorphous playback/record head. 13-segment LCD peak-level meter; 3-digit LCD time counter; MPX filter; play trim; bias adjust; record-level balance control; optimum-record-level indicator; bidirectional intro scan; auto tape-bias selector; memory stop; headphone output; music search; repeat; wireless remote control. Black finish $299
Musical Articulation. Detail. Elusive qualities of superior sonic reproduction that are rarely found in ever the most expensive subwoofers.

Until now! M&K's new MX subwoofers bring you these high-performance qualities—in a smaller cabinet and at a lower price.

In a cabinet the size of a bookshelf speaker, two new proprietary 12" subwoofer drivers produce the massive amounts of bass only expected from much larger cabinets. Better yet, M&K's Push-Pull design produces a much higher quality of bass by virtually eliminating even-order harmonic distortion.

MX-100, MX-90, MX-80 & MX-70

Four MX models, with internal amplifiers between 75 and 200 watts RMS, provide an ideal match for your system.

Building On Excellence

Seventeen years of M&K experience in Satellite-Subwoofer systems comes together again to create a new subwoofer performance standard. And with the 18" x 10" x 13.5" MX-70, M&K creates a new compact subwoofer standard.

The Ideal Choice

The unprecedented musical articulation and "ultra quick" sound of the MX subwoofers make them the perfect choice to complete any audio or audio/video system.
Luka Bloom Takes
A Ride

Luka Bloom is such an irrepressible singer, songwriter, and life
force that you feel as if you know him, or at least would like to,
simply from listening to his records. His second Reprise album,
"The Acoustic Motorbike," builds on the unaccompanied acoustic sound of
his first, adding small embellishments here and there without sacrificing the
intimacy that is so central to his appeal. A touch of mandolin, for in-
stance, adds a note of tartness to the forlorn yearning of You. The hand-on-
skin thump of African drums sets up a loping beat in I Need Love, and a
plangent fiddle underscores Bloom's plea. Sometimes Bloom's dynamic
touch on the strings of the guitar makes you imagine you're hearing a
band when there isn't one.

Irish by birth and a New Yorker by choice, Bloom harks back to the days
when troubadours converged on the Big Apple with beat-up guitars and a
headful of dreams and ideals. What sets him apart is his refreshingly un-
fashionable zeal for life, which rippled all over "Riverside," his debut album
of two years ago. Although he's notably more subdued in "The Acoustic
Motorbike," his downbeat songs don't reflect a loss of faith in life's
goodness so much as a profound sadness at its wasting.

Bloom is not, it turns out, a reflexive optimist, and he squarely faces down
some somber moments here. Bones, for instance, is a chilling song about
disillusionment ("Someone's murdered the child in me") that segues into
Bridge of Sorrow, a folk-rap offering counsel to an acquaintance trapped in suicidal despair. Be Well
closes the album on a forbidding note similar in tone to Richard Thompson's
Lullabye or one of the late Nick Drake's more doleful threnodies.

The quest for faith and cheer in a faithless world may be Bloom's preoc-
cupation, but there are moments of respite and transcendence scattered
like steppingstones throughout "The Acoustic Motorbike." In the title song
he recounts a bicycle ride across the
Irish countryside so vividly that you
can feel the wind in your face, see the
scenery, feel the ache in your legs. You
also share the biker's disgust with the
modern, mechanized rat race as
cars and trucks whiz by him. But the
predominant emotion is one of liber-
a tion—from the car and petroleum de-
pendancy, from the daily grind, from
his own too-serious mind. "Pedal on,
pedal on, pedal on for miles, pedal on"
is his delightfully hypnotic chant to the
brisk accompaniment of a chugging
acoustic guitar. Then there's a quite
touching straight-faced acoustic ver-
sion of (I Can't Help) Falling in Love
(yes, the Elvis Presley weeper), and I
Need Love is as unabashed an appeal
for true love and the commitment and
values it entails as you'll ever hear a
singer put on record. Everything
Bloom sings is shot through with an
emotional honesty that makes him one
of the brightest and worthiest new faces on the music scene.

Parke Puterbaugh

Luka Bloom: The Acoustic Motorbike.
Luka Bloom (acoustic guitar, vocals); other musicians. Mary Watches Every-
ing; You; I Believe in You; I Need Love; Exploring the Blue; This Is Your Country;
Acoustic Motorbike; (I Can't Help) Falling in Love; Bones; Bridge of Sorrow;
Listen to the Hoof Beat; Be Well. Reprise © 2-26670 (46 min). © 4-26670.
Datawave's Breakthrough Design For Wireless Speakers Revolutionizes the Home Entertainment Industry.

TECHNOLOGICAL BREAKTHROUGH
At the 1990 Consumer Electronics Show the convention floor was buzzing with the news of Datawave's WS7 Wireless Speaker System. This product has been touted in a number of electronics magazines as one of the most exciting new products of the 90's. The heart of Datawave's breakthrough design is a patented FM technology which broadcasts music wirelessly from a small transmitter to satellite speakers. The transmitter, about the size of a paperback book, broadcasts music from virtually any sound source to a receiver built into the speaker - no speaker wires are needed!

Imagine being able to listen to music anywhere in your home or even outdoors without having to run miles of speaker wire. You can listen to any component of your stereo system (CD's, albums, cassettes, reel-to-reel, AM/FM stereo, etc.) throughout your home. These speakers have their own built-in amplifier, so you can switch them on and off and control the volume independently at each speaker. Best of all, the speakers sound great, with deep, rich bass and crystal clear highs.

STATE-OF-THE-ART DESIGN
The Datawave Speaker system is of the highest quality design. The speaker is mounted in a bookshelf-size, acoustically constructed cabinet providing a convenient design for placement in any room. The 8.5 x 4.5 x 4.5 inch cabinet, with its full range 4 inch driver mounted at the top, provides a 360 degree surround sound pattern. In addition, the speakers operate on two selectable frequencies, insuring static-free transmission throughout your home. The speakers are self-powered, with a 150 foot range through walls, providing total coverage in even the largest homes!

These state-of-the-art speakers simply tap into the signal your stereo already generates through a simple connection to any audio output or headphone jack. Since they are self-amplified they will work with any stereo system regardless of its wattage - they cannot be blown out! You can broadcast both left and right channels to utilize one speaker in a room. You can also use two transmitters with two speakers to get full stereo separation. The choice is yours, you can configure your wireless speakers to meet your needs.

ENJOY MUSIC ANYWHERE
These wireless speakers are totally portable, as they operate on 4 C-batteries, which will power the speakers for about three months. They can also operate with an AC adaptor.

The speakers have an amazing built-in detection circuit which will automatically cut off the speakers around your home if you turn off the stereo. Enjoy music on your patio, by the pool, in the bedroom, bathroom or while working in the garage. You can operate as many speakers as you like on one transmitter, without the trouble of running wire endlessly throughout your home. Place one or more speakers in a room, or put a speaker in every room of the house. The possibilities are endless for you to fill your home with music.

RISK-FREE TECHNOLOGY
We think you will be amazed by these technological marvels and back them up with a risk-free 30-day trial offer. The offer is simple - try these speakers for 30 days and if they are not everything we say they are return them to us for a full refund, including shipping and handling charges. Plus, these speakers carry a full 90-day manufacturer's warranty. There is no reason that you can't begin to enjoy music anywhere in your home if you take us up on our risk-free offer.

EXCLUSIVE MANUFACTURER'S OFFER
For a limited time we are offering the Datawave WS7 speakers directly to consumers. The Datawave wireless speakers with transmitter will carry a list price of $139 when they become available in stores, but to introduce this breakthrough product to the public we are offering a special promotional price. You can order the Datawave WS7 with transmitter for $99 ($6 S&H) and, if you order more than one speaker, additional speakers are just $60 ($6 S&H). So act now and save!

ORDER TODAY!
So take advantage of Datawave's amazing new wireless technology surrounding you with music throughout your home. Your order will be shipped within 72 hours via UPS direct to you. For fastest service order by phone and use your VISA, MC, AMEX or DISC card. Please mention promotional code SR101.

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The Record Art Collection is a treasure trove of nostalgia as well as a unique collection of fine art. Spanning thirty years of rock-and-roll history, it is the first comprehensive series of limited edition lithographic prints ever derived from vintage rock-and-roll record album covers. Only 9,800 prints of each work will be created for worldwide acquisition, after which the printing plates will be destroyed.

A Superb Collection of 18 Prints:
Sharon Isbin Plays Rodrigo

The first recording by the guitarist Sharon Isbin to come my way was Rodrigo's Concierto de Aranjuez on Denon, with the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra under Hideomi Kuroiwa. It made a fine impression, but there were so many recordings of this deservedly popular piece. Now, of course, there are still more, but her stunning remake on Virgin must surely be ranked among the very best.

In both the Concierto de Aranjuez and the Fantasia para un Gentilhombre, Isbin is absolutely in her element: The music unfolds with spontaneity, flair, and affection, and with the sort of commitment that calls attention to the music rather than the performer. Lawrence Foster, always an especially sympathetic concerto partner, has the Lausanne Chamber Orchestra in beautiful shape, not merely playing well but truly responding. There is a stimulating sense of give-and-take throughout the performances, and the recording itself could hardly be better in terms of balance or vividness.

The Vivaldi Concerto in D Major that rounds out the disc is the one usually favored by guitarists, the Lute Concerto, RV 93/P. 209, in the Pujol arrangement, edited further by Isbin. Not the most imaginative make-weight, you might think, but it, too, is a knockout performance, striking enough to be the deciding factor for more than a few listeners.

Richard Freed

Rodrigo: Concierto de Aranjuez; Fantasia para un Gentilhombre. Vivaldi (arr. Pujol and Isbin): Concerto in D Major (RV 93). Sharon Isbin (guitar); Lausanne Chamber Orchestra, Lawrence Foster cond. Virgin ® 91192-2 (58 min).

The Multifaceted Abbey Lincoln

Each new album by Abbey Lincoln not only contains exquisitely crafted music but rounds out our image of this jazz singer who is also a composer, actress, poet, and political activist. The rich fruits of her experience abound in her new Verve release, "You Gotta Pay the Band," a worthy successor to 1990's "The World Is Falling Down," her first on a major label after several years' hiatus.

Five of the ten selections in the new album feature Lincoln's own words and music, and she also supplied the arrangements with assistance from Randolph Noel. Lincoln chose instrumentalists with a keen eye for those whose artistry would best complement her own, especially the late Stan Getz, whose lush tenor saxophone and masterly phrasing are major contributions to the set. Other assets are the quintessentially tasteful piano work of Hank Jones and the venerable Charlie Haden's bass.

Yet the focus remains on Lincoln's singular vocal style. Like Billie Holiday, to whom she is often compared, Lincoln has a distinctive voice, not pretty in the conventional sense, but...
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Bach, Sonatas, Rondos & Marches • Bach, Sonatas, Rondos & Marches. Gustav Leonhardt, harpsichord. (Sonor) 26548

Bach, Brandenburg Concertos Nos. 1, 2, & 3 • Philips, The Harmonie. (Nimbus) 54123

Bach, Brandenburg Concertos Nos. 4, 5, & 6 • Philharmonia Virtuosi/Kapp. (Essay) 34759

Finnish National Radio Orchestra/Masur. (Teldec) 20716

Citizen Kane • Kiri te Kanawa, soprano. Charles Gerhardt conducts. (RCA) 07541

Climacteri • Italiano • Henry Mancini, conductor. "From the Godfather," more. RCA 24739

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Shubert, "Trout" Quintet • Peter Serkin, piano. Alexander Schneider, violin, others. (Delos) 44306

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Leonard Slatkin's Vaughan Williams

Leonard Slatkin's new RCA Victor CD of the Vaughan Williams Fifth and Sixth Symphonies with the Philharmonia Orchestra is a stunning success, both musically and sonically. Indeed, it's hard to believe that this is Slatkin's first recording of major works by the great English composer.

The Fifth Symphony was completed at the height of the Nazi air blitz against London, but it evolved during the years when Vaughan Williams was preoccupied with his opera on Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress. There is much more Bunyan than blitz in the Fifth, and most performances have tended to emphasize the pastoral and spiritual element. But in recent years conductors such as Yehudi Menuhin have explored the tensions that underlie the surface of the predominantly serene score. Slatkin takes the same approach, in his own fashion, and at marginally faster tempos than in Menuhin's recent recording on Virgin, save in the seraphic third movement (Romanza), where some may question his unusually deliberate pacing. Where Slatkin and the Philharmonia players achieve glory is in the Presto misterioso scherzo, an amazing amalgam here of atmospherics and orchestral virtuosity. The performance as a whole belongs among the best.

The reading of the apocalyptic Sixth Symphony, begun in the closing years of World War II and completed in 1947, is a genuine triumph. The first movement goes at a fast clip, avoiding any lumpiness, yet there is no sense of skating over the surface of the music. The atmosphere generated in the sinister second movement is simply bone-chilling, and the strenuous polyphony of the sardonic scherzo comes across with the utmost power and brilliance. The big test is the eerie and extended epilogue finale, according to the composer an evocation of Prospero's valedictory in The Tempest. The music rarely rises above a pianissimo level and constitutes a singular exercise in stamina and control for the players. Its realization here is flawless.

The recording was made in Watford Town Hall, London, which proves to be virtually ideal, both warm and spacious, and the microphone placement provides superb imaging. The epilogue of the Sixth Symphony makes a telling justification for noise-free digital recording technology, for such remarkably detailed low-level dynamics could never be heard in concert. In a word, don't pass this one by.

David Hall

A remarkable album by a great vocal artist who is finally coming into her own.

Phyl Garland

ABBEY LINCOLN: You Gotta Pay the Band. Abbey Lincoln (vocals); Stan Getz (tenor saxophone); Hank Jones (piano); Charlie Haden (bass); Marcus Johnson (drums); Maxine Roach (viola). Bird Alone; I'm in Love; You Gotta Pay the Band; Brother, Can You Spare a Dime; You Made Me Funny; And How I Hoped for Your Love; When I'm Called Home; Summer Wishes, Winter Dreams; Up Jumped Spring; A Time for Love. VERVE @ 314 511 110-2 (59 min), © 314 511 110-4.

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Adcom announces the cure for the common receiver.

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ASTER AWEKE: Kabu. Aster Aweke (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. Yedi Gosh (My Guy); Yaz-Oh (Grab It, Get It On); Kabu (Sacred Rock); Kezita; and four others. COLUMBIA ® CK 47846 (47 min), © CT 47846.  
Performance: Compelling  
Recording: Satisfactory  

Aster Aweke's music is not quite like anything you've ever heard, unless you've already been exposed to her extraordinary vocal artistry. The album represents a most unusual fusion of traditional Ethiopian music, with lyrics in that country's language, and elements of Western pop. Like an ancient enchantress, Aweke unleashes her inner self, uttering oddly twisted wails and singing intricately elaborated melodic lines that can be as lovely as a piece of lace or as tough as a spider's web. Occasionally she sounds like the young Miriam Makeba in a higher, thinner register, but the keening quality and complex ornamentation distinguish her sound from other types of non-Western music that have found an audience in this hemisphere. Aweke's British producers, Iain Scott and Bunt Stafford Clark, have provided her with instrumental settings that are at times quite close to American pop, as in Yedi-Gosh (My Guy), an exuberant celebration of romantic attraction, and there are even traces of African-American gospel cadences in Bitchengna (Loneliness). But most of the time Aweke's exotic original style prevails, and the instrumentals are fashioned around it. Most impressive is the hypnotically beautiful title song, Kabu (Sacred Rock). All in all, Aster Aweke is so compelling a singer that somehow it doesn't matter if we don't understand a word. PG.  

LUKA BLOOM: The Acoustic Motorbike (see Best of the Month, page 65)  

MICHAEL FEINSTEIN: Sings the Jule Styne Songbook. Michael Feinstein (vocals); Jule Styne (piano, vocals). I've Heard That Song Before; I Don't Want to Walk Without You, Baby; It's Magic; The Music That Makes Me Dance; I Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out to Dry; and twenty-eight others. ELEKTRA NONESUCH ® 79274-2 (58 min), © 79274-4.  
Performance: Stylish  
Recording: Crisp  

Here, in the second of what is proving to be a unique and historic series of albums surveying American show music with the participation of the composers themselves, Michael Feinstein serves up no fewer than thirty-three songs by the too-long-underappreciated Jule Styne. Styne, of course, is the composer of the Broadway hits Gypsy, Funny Girl, Gentlemen Prefer Blondes, and Bells Are Ringing as well as more than eighty film scores—from Anchors Aweigh and Romance on the High Seas to the long-forgotten Sweater Girl and Puddin' Head. The new album is even better than the worthy "Burton Lane Songbook," which inaugurated the series—partly because Styne is a more versatile pianist (and livelier occasional co-vocalist) than Lane, and partly because Feinstein himself digs into the songs more convincingly. Particularly interesting are two previously unrecorded Styne-Sondheim songs, Home Is the Place and Nice She Ain't (cut from Gypsy). And the liner notes—a conversation between Styne and Feinstein—are chock-full of fascinating, surprisingly frank revelations about Styne's working relationships with his collaborators and musical interpreters over the years. R.H.  

PATTI LABELLE: Burnin'. Patti Labelle (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Feels Like Another One; Somebody Loves You Baby (You Know Who It Is); When You Love Somebody (I'm Saving My Love for You); Doin' Duets; Temptation; and six others. MCA © MCAD-10439 (59 min), © MCAC-10439, LP MCA-10439.  
Performance: In top form  
Recording: Very good  

This is one of the best albums Patti LaBelle has released in some time, consistently excellent in both performance and material. The songs are probably the more important ingredient, since LaBelle could generate excitement singing scales. But "Burnin'" features the kind of sassy, sweet, soul music that helped make her a star in the first place. Bunny Sigler composed and produced two of the very best numbers, Somebody Loves You Baby (You Know Who It Is) and the title track, Burnin' (The Fire Is Still) Burnin' For You. Both are steeped in a searing sensuality and climax in the sort of swirling high passages that are LaBelle's hallmark. Then there's the captivatingly tuneful When You Love Somebody (I'm Saving My Love for You) by Jonathan Butler, the South African pop wiz, two songs co-written by Nona Hendryx (a former colleague in the landmark soul-rock group LaBelle), and the intoxicatingly offbeat I Hear Your Voice by Rosie Gaines and Frances Jules of Paisley Park. There are two duets. The one with the equally formidable Gladys Knight, in the Hamilisch-Bergman ballad I Don't Do Duets, does full justice to both singers, and that is saying a lot. Equally successful is the pairing of Michael Bolton's rusty baritone with LaBelle's soulful wail in his romantic lament We're Not Makin' Love Anymore.  

LaBelle truly demonstrates her versatility in the hip-hop-flavored Feels Like Another One and the inspirational When You've Been Blessed (Feels Like Heaven), highlighted by dazzling choral effects. A winner all around. PG.  

THE NEW YORK ROCK AND SOUL REVUE: Live at the Beacon. Donald Fagen, Michael McDonald (vocals, piano); Boz Scaggs, Phoebe Snow, Eddie and David Brigati (vocals); other musicians. Intro; Madison Time; Knock on Wood; Green Flower Street; Shaky Ground; At Last; Lonely Teardrops; and eight others. GIANT ® 24423-2 (67 min), © 24423-4.  
Performance: Sleek  
Recording: Excellent  

The enigmatic don of Steely Dan, Donald Fagen, rarely set foot on a stage with that...
If there were a special Grammy Award for persistence, Southside Johnny Lyon would deserve to win it. Through lean and fat times, he has never stopped recording or taking to the stage with his band, the Asbury Jukes. His first three albums remain his best (and best known), and for good reason: great singing, a killer horn-packed band, tough tunes and production by Miami Steve Van Zandt, who now goes by the name Little Steven, and considerable songwriting input from fellow Jerseyite Bruce Springsteen. Despite some fine moments, Southside's output in the Eighties never quite scaled those same heights, and the old gang went their separate ways. Happily, the new "Better Days" reunites Southside, Little Steven, Springsteen, and the Jukes Horns; the Jukes Horns; other musicians.

Together again: Springsteen, Southside, and Little Steven

"Better Days" is a survivor's album. In most of the songs the protagonists either look back at the old days, when they led penniless but uncomplicated lives, or vow to keep their heads above water as they face an uncertain future. The rasp in Southside Johnny's voice is a sign of the miles he's logged, and the soulful grit of the horns and guitars underscores his message. Former E Street Band drummer Max Weinberg's eloquent fills and powerful rolls give the material a wallop and momentum that's perfectly in sync with Little Steven's Phil Spector-style production. "Better Days" is more like a mural than a Wall of Sound, offering vignettes of success and failure, will power and determination, and a struggle for transcendence of Born to Run proportions.

In fact, Southside Johnny, Little Steven, and Springsteen raise their voices together in It's Been a Long Time, a song that just might be the equal of that earlier epic. Their exchange can't help but bring a tear to the eye, especially when they sing, "Raise your glass for the comrades we've lost/My friend it's been a long, long time." It's a near perfect song, and the power and commitment that undergird it are sustained throughout "Better Days." (P.S. to Springsteen fans: He also wrote All the Way Home, a pretty midtempo ballad, and plays keyboards and guitars in it. His appearances here are the only ones he made on record in the last year.)

Parke Puterbaugh

Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes: Better Days. Southside Johnny (vocals, harmonica); Little Steven, Bobby Bandiera (guitar); Bruce Springsteen (vocals, guitar, keyboards); Rusty Cloud (keyboards); Gary Tallent (bass); Max Weinberg (drums); Rusty Bose, Boz Scaggs proves he's still got his chops, and ex-Rascal Eddie Brigati and his brother lead the way through spirited versions of the blue-eyed-soul classics Groovin' and People Got to Be Free. The album won't change the world, but Fagen's New York Rock and Soul Revue is good, cleanly recorded fun. As for the future, however, I hope this replaces a fond look backward and not the death of ambition for Fagen.

P.P.

NIRVANA: Nevermind. Nirvana (vocals and instruments). Smells Like Teen Spirit; In Bloom; Come as You Are; Breed; Lithium; Polly; Territorial Pissings; Drain You; and four others. DGC © DGC-24425 (59 min), © DGC-24425, LP DGC-24425.

Performance: Aggressive Recording: Rough

Nirvana, a punky, metallic, hard-rock trio from Seattle, has made a huge splash with "Nevermind," their first major-label release, which came out of nowhere to kick and spit its way into the Top 10 on the album charts. "Here we are now/entertain us/I feel stupid and Android" screams leader Kurt Cobain in Smells Like Teen Spirit, the sensational first single. Someday people might look back at this line as the Nineties equivalent of "I can't get no satisfaction." Smells Like is a roaring, gloriously snotty tune, stomping from adolescent petulance to bored self-contempt before panting out screams leaner. "I found it hard/It was hard to find/Oh well, whatever/Neinvermind." No other song here quite matches that one for spunk and spite, but all of the same musical elements burst out elsewhere—from the furious speed metal of Breed to the herky-jerky punkiness of Territorial Pissings. The pounding eases only a few
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times, most notably in Lithium, a song about a paranoid schizophrenic that contains the lines, "I kill you/I'm not gonna crack."

Cobain's thick, surging guitar meshes perfectly with Chris Novoselic's melodic bass and David Grohl's intensely snappy drumming. The trio's ability to punch up the music and shift it back down on a dime enhances the catchiness of the music beneath the snarling. Even when you don't understand the words coming out of Cobain's mouth—and that happens a lot—you can't help but be riveted by his performance. He takes his singing to an extreme, beyond angst and frustration to near incoherence. For Nirvana, what you screech is evidently less important than how you screech it.

SMOKEY ROBINSON: Double Good Everything. Smokey Robinson (vocals); Stewart/Gaskin: Spin. Dave Stewart (keyboards and rhythm programming); Barbara Gaskin (vocals); other musicians. Walking the Dog; The Cloths of Heaven; 8 Miles High; Amelia; Trash Planet; Golden Rain; Your Lucky Star; and three others. Ryko © RCD 2013 (60 min). © RC 2023.

Performance: Cool and playful
Recording: Sparkles

STEWARD/GASKIN: Spin. Dave Stewart is somewhat masculine in its high register, marked by an eternal edge of youthful anticipation. Nobody else sounds quite like him, and what a wonderful sound it is! As a songwriter, he ranges from the pulsating ironies of Skid Row through the boundless ebullience of the title song, Double Good Everything, and the gospel-inflected insistence of I Can't Get Enough. Every word, every note rings true. All of his mastery comes into sharp focus in the shimmering I Love Your Face, certainly one of the loveliest ballads he has ever written.

With this release, Robinson reaffirms his greatness. Not only has he maintained a high level of performance over several decades, but his new work suggests that the best is yet to come. P.G.
Elvis Presley soundtrack item sung by actress Julee Cruise, co-produced by David Lynch, and as haunting and strange as an episode of Twin Peaks.

U2 supplies the title track (which also appears in their own "Achtung Baby"). There are also worth songs from Depeche Mode, Daniel Lanois, Jane Siberry, Nick Cave, and the German band Can. But the soundtrack's hands-down classic is Lou Reed's "What's Good." Framed by a symphonically dynamic guitar figure, the song finds him posing a series of penetrating questions and answering with this parting shot: "Life's good, but not fair at all."

WEBB WILDER: Doo Dad. Webb Wilder (vocals, guitar); other musicians. Hoodoo Witch; Tough It Out; Meet Your New Landlord; Sittin' Pretty; Big Time; Sputnik; Run with It; and five others.

Performance: Sci-fi fantasia
Recording: Very good

Do we really need—or even want—another version of Pete Seeger scratching on the banjo and declaring This Land Is Your Land? Probably not, but the rest of these performances from the Newport Folk Festivals of 1989 and 1990 are another matter. Despite the intriguing list of stars, including Michelle Shocked, Richard Thompson, Shawn Colvin, Luka Bloom, and Sweet Honey in the Rock, almost none of the performances represent the artists at the top of their form. But there are still lovely moments aplenty, including the Indigo Girls' a cappella version of American Tune (nearly as affecting as Paul Simon's), Luka Bloom's intense and libidinal Delirious, Robert Earl Keen, Jr.'s moving portrait of a Mexican gardener in Mariano, Rich-

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STEREO REVIEW MARCH 1992
ard Thompson's eerie and compelling She Moves Through the Fair, Cheryl Wheeler's literate and sensual Arrow, Greg Brown's clever, percolating Good Morning Coffee, and Michelle Shocked's pitched vocals in Steve Goodman's Buddy of Penny Evans. Here, too, is a chance to hear Flaco Jimenez without the rest of the Texas Tornados, even if a little squeeze box goes a long, long way. The selections have everything a good folk festival should have—songs that raise your consciousness, give rise to your dreams, and, ultimately, nourish your soul. No argument here. A.N.

Jazz

CHET BAKER: Out of Nowhere. Chet Baker (trumpet, vocal); Frank Adams (alto saxophone); Ted Adams, Ron Adams (bass); Wade Robertson (drums). Fine and Dandy; Au Revoir; Lady Be Good; There Is No Greater Love; and four others. MILESTONE © MCD-9191-2 (50 min), © 5M-9191.

Performance: Topnotch
Recording: Wanting

The silky tone of Chet Baker's lyrical trumpet graces some of my favorite jazz recordings, beginning with the great 1952 piano-less Gerry Mulligan Quartet sides on the Pacific Jazz label. Baker's career blossomed after that as his frail, sensuous singing voice reached beyond the confines of the jazz world and garnered him considerable commercial success. But in the Sixties he began a downhill slide—a long bout with drugs and all that goes with them.

"Out of Nowhere" is a new Milestone release recorded during a 1982 Christmas Eve club date in Tulsa, Oklahoma. One could wish for greater presence, technically, but the performance is top-notch. Leading a hastily assembled quartet of local musicians, Baker plays with all the lyricism and finesse that marked his earlier work, and the group is right up there with him. Too bad that in his single vocal, There Will Never Be Another You, he's singing off-mike, because it features some engaging, atypical scatting. The trumpet recording also lacks presence, but you don't have to strain to hear.

It is said that when a somewhat wasted Baker met jazz pianist Aldo Mussolini (the dictator's son), he whispered in that quiet voice of his: "Hey, man, I heard what they did to your dad—what a drag." I love that quote, and I recommend this album to anyone who loves good, straight-ahead jazz. C.A.

STAN GETZ: The Best of the Verve Years, Vol. 1. Stan Getz (tenor saxophone); Dizzy Gillespie (trumpet); J.J. Johnson (trombone); Gerry Mulligan (baritone saxophone); Chick Corea, Oscar Peterson, Bill Evans (piano); Herb Ellis, Charlie Byrd (guitar); Ron Carter, Ray Brown (bass); Connie Kay, Max Roach, Shelly Manne (drums); Ella Fitzgerald, Astrud Gilberto (vocals); other musicians. Early Autumn; Desafinado; Con Alma; Girl from Ipanema; Summertime; My Funny Valentine; You're Blase; Blues for Mary Jane; Flamingo; Here's That Rainy Day; Insensatez; and thirteen others. VERVE © 314 511 468-2 two CD's (143 min), © 314 511 468-4 two cassettes.

Performance: Lofft Recording: Generally very good

When Stan Getz's soft, ethereal sound rose from the bosom of the 1947 Woody Herman Herd in a recording of Summer Sequence, Part IV (later renamed Early Autumn), he stepped into a spotlight that would follow him for more than forty years. A superb ballad player, Getz won a large following outside the jazz world, but he was also a gutsy improviser who could please the most discriminating modern jazz fan. "The Best of the Verve Years" presents the tenor saxophonist in a wonderful variety of contexts, all of which suit him perfectly. There is Getz the combo player, doing amazing things to such familiar songs as Stella by Starlight, Here's That Rainy Day, and My Funny Valentine. Then there's Getz the orchestral soloist, brilliantly stepping up front for Early Autumn with Russ Garcia, Marsha de Carnival with Gary McFarland, and an Eddie Sauter composition, I'm Late, I'm Late, with strings and woodwinds. And, of course, there is also Getz with fellow giants like Dizzy Gillespie, Gerry Mulligan, Oscar Peterson, and Ella Fitzgerald.

The scope of Getz's recorded work was such that even a double albumbarely scratches the surface, but this is only one volume in what I hope will be a comprehensive series of Getz reissues on Verve. And let us not forget his many great performances for other labels as well. More, please. C.A.

ABBY LINCOLN: You Gotta Pay the Band (see Best of the Month, page 68)

BRANFORD MARSALIS: The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born. Branford Marsalis (soprano and tenor saxophones); Wynton Marsalis (trumpet); Courtney Pine (tenor saxophone); Robert Hurst (bass); Jeff "Tain" Watts (drums). Roused About; Xavier's Lair; Cain and Abel; Gilligan's Isle; and four others. COLUMBIA © CK 46990-2 (78 min), © CT 46990-4, LP 46990.

Performance: Solid
Recording: Very good

I have always thought Branford was the more musically interesting of the Marsalis brothers. In his latest album, "The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born," he opens with two soprano-saxophone improvisations—the title tune and Roused About, dedicated to the late Charlie Rouse—accompanied only by bassist Robert Hurst and drummer Jeff "Tain" Watts. It was Coltrane who brought the soprano sax to modern jazz, so it is not a coincidence that most current soprano players are smitten with his style. Roused—written by Hurst, who also soloed passionately—has the most Coltrane-esque romp, but there is also much that is Branford in it. The title track is quite different in mood; almost a dirge at first, it remains ever so somber after perking up somewhat, and it takes its theme from a Brahms symphony (the third movement of the Third Symphony, if memory serves). Here it is only the length of the solo that brings Coltrane to mind.

Branford's tenor comes on strong after that, soaring beautifully into Xavier's Lair, a piece that really displays his satisfying combination of technical and creative skills. Brother Wynton joins in for the next tune, which Branford with a touch of humor has named Cain and Abel. No sibling rivalry here, just engaging harmony. Gilligan's Isle has Branford's tenor glowing again, flowing freely above, into, and under a strolling rhythmic base. This is a wonderfully laid-back performance of considerable substance.

A battle between solos is a jazz tradition, and we have one here in Dewey Baby, a fierce up-tempo bout in which Branford faces British tenorman Courtney Pine. Both are formidable players, but Pine tends to step a mite too hard on the Coltrane circular-breathing treadmill, while Marsalis is more individual. The duel would have made a perfect ending for this album, but there is more, a strutting, peakish soprano trek called Beul's Remark. Add it all up and you have 78 minutes of intriguing music by one of the most gifted young players on the scene today. C.A.
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**BRUCKNER:** Symphony No. 7, in E Major. New York Philharmonic, Kurt Masur cond. TELDEC ® 73243-2 (63 min).

**Performance:** Enlivening  
**Recording:** Homogenized

Teldec has lost no time in documenting Kurt Masur's new identity as music director of the New York Philharmonic. This Bruckner Seventh was recorded the free of gratuitous mysticism. Clearly, was in the stores less than two months last fall, at the opening concert of his rector of the New York Philharmonic. Kurt Masur's new identity as music di-

**Graph:**  
**Recording:** Excellent  
**Performance:** Mostly superb

Masur and the New York Philharmonic well as more brightness in the playing, than in his earlier recording of the work with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra. At the same time, there is a mellow-

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Here convey the sweetness, the grace, and the solidity—if not the depth and grandeur—of these works. They're not the kind of performances that will sell
this music to the unconverted but are admirable nonetheless. Sensitive playing, excellent sound, and a nice bonus in the form of Mozart’s best concerted music for violin and orchestra.

E.S.

LISZT: Mephisto Waltz No. 1; other piano works (see FRANCK)

MAHLER: Lieder eines Fahrenden Gesellen; Kindertotenlieder; Five Rückert-Lieder. Thomas Hampson (baritone); Vienna Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON @ 431 682-2 (68 min).

MAHLER: Lieder eines Fahrenden Gesellen; Kindertotenlieder; Four Rückert-Lieder. Andreas Schmidt (baritone); Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Jesús López-Cobos cond. TELARC @ 80269 (56 min).

Performances: Both good
Recordings: Both excellent

The orchestral songs reveal the essential Mahler: his anguish, his torments, and his unique mix of simplicity and sophistication. The conductors of these two new recordings, however, offer divergent views of the music. Jesús López-Cobos attempts the near-impossible: an objective approach to this intensely subjective, not to say neurotic, composer, achieved by unusually brisk pacing and emotional restraint. That, obviously, was not Leonard Bernstein’s way with Mahler. His tempos here are slower than those of any other conductor known to me (Furtwängler excepted), rubatos abound, and emotions are given free rein. Interestingly enough, for all his objectivity, the López-Cobos reading is neither prosaic nor superficial, while Bernstein’s, for all his excesses, is still uniquely compelling.

Of the singers, both very good indeed, Andreas Schmidt has the truer baritonal voice and of the two, he delivers the best Mahlerian reading. López-Cobos finds more expressive nuances under his less resonant, Thomas Hampson (see above). Bernstein, for all his approach the work as if it were Mozart’s last opera, and his rather Mahlerian reading is far more romantic than Don Giovanni. Not only does he employ a large chorus, large orchestra, and large-voiced soloists, but he wrings as much contrast and pathos out of them as possible. While not everyone will like this approach, it is realized with utter consistency and considerable artistry.

I usually prefer authentic-instrument performances, but I was won over by the sincerity of this one. It has been a long time since I’ve heard the Mozart Requiem performed by forces that sound like they really mean it. D.P.S.

MOZART: Rondo in C Major, K. 373 (see HAYDN)


Performance: Brilliant
Recording: Crisp

This disc winds up Esa-Pekka Salonen’s somewhat hectic traversal of the six symphonies by Denmark’s Carl Nielsen, and for me it is the most successful.

Salonen gets things off to a rousing start with a high-spirited opening movement of the “Sinfonia Espansiva.” The pantheistic slow movement, with its off-stage duet-vocalise, is superbly atmospheric. The bittersweet third movement is notable for its contrapuntal clarity. Only in the processional finale does the conductor let us down with rather too pompous pacing.

The last of the Nielsen symphonies, No. 6 from 1924-1925, is the work of an artist face to face with his own mortality, doubtless both of his own achievement and of the fate of music itself as he has known it. The glittering glockenspiel at the opening paves the way for the first movement’s icy polyphonic ruminations. The “Humoreske” second movement, for winds and percussion only, is a savage commentary on the musical avant-garde of the time. The slow movement, again intensely polyphonic in texture, is resigned lamentation, and the finale is a set of variations ranging from the simplistic through the horrifying to the grimly sardonic. Salonen seems to have just the right temperament for this piece, bringing to it a hard and volatile brilliance that heightens its emotional impact, and his reading is complemented by the bright and crisp acoustic of Stockholms Berwald Hall. The Swedish Radio Orchestra plays with great verve throughout.

D.H.

PROKOFIEV: The Fiery Angel, Op. 37

Nadine Secunde (soprano), Renata; Siegfried Lorenz (baritone), Rupert; Heinz Zednik (tenor), Agrippa, Mephistopheles; Ruthild Engert-Ely (alto), Fortune-teller, Mother Superior; Kurt Moll (bass), Inquisitor; others. Gösta Olin's

Christian Tetzlaff: attractive Haydn and Mozart
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Performance: Very strong
Recording: Good

The Fiery Angel was the greatest disappointment of Prokofiev's career. It is a sprawling music drama written in the early Twenties after an obscure Russian symbolist novel about a hysterical young woman, who either has or has not been seduced by Satan, and a young man by the name of Ruprecht, who consorts with necromancers—he even hangs out with Faust and Mephistopheles—in the vain hope of winning her love. In the final scene, she manages to organize an orgy in a convent right in front of Ru-

precht and the Grand Inquisitor, who orders her to be burned at the stake. Curtain. I am not making this up.

Whatever possessed (so to speak) Prokofiev to spend years of his life on this ill-fated project—he wrote both the libretto and the music—will never be known for sure. The work was never performed in his lifetime (he recycled some of the music into his Third Symphony) and had its first concert and theater performances only in the mid Fifties. Opennyj Angel—to give it its original Russian name—is, in fact, fatally flawed: heavy and melodramatic but without any real conflict or dramatic motor to drive it along. Ruprecht is mad for the girl, and the girl is mad—period. All the cards are on the table in the very first scene, and nothing changes thereafter. Composers should probably not be allowed to write their own librettos.

The score is powerful, relentless, suffocating. It is not particularly Prokofievian. It was called Wagnerian from the beginning, and, although Prokofiev objected, Wagnerian is what it is. Perhaps its biggest fault is that the composer never finds a consistent tone or character that responds to the subject matter. There is anguish. The powers of darkness are ever present. But there is no magic, no mystification, no surprise, few shadings or subtleties, no real struggle. We experience the torture of these damned souls but never get a glimpse of what goes on inside.

This recording, made in Sweden with a non-Russian international cast, is sung in the original language. Everyone involved deserves a merit badge just for the effort. The part of Renata, without a doubt one of the most challenging in all of opera, is strikingly performed by Na-dine Secunde, an American soprano who has made a considerable reputation in Europe. Siegfried Lorenz, one of the best singers to come out of the old East Germany, is a strong presence in what is virtually a heldentenor role. Among the secondary characters, Kurt Moll is out-standing as the Inquisitor—inevitably an ominous bass. Everyone is caught up in the seething energy and violent heaving of this tremendous, agonizing score. I can’t imagine a better realization of an impossible piece of music. E.S.


Performance: Bravura
Recording: Very good

Telarc's latest release featuring Horacio Gutiérrez offers the two most famous Rachmaninoff piano concertos, with Lorin Maazel and the Pittsburgh Symph -ony as formidable collaborators. If you like a bravura approach to these pieces, Gutiérrez is your man. He's fleet-fingered, totally in control of the most exacting passage work, and shows splendid rhythmic address in the final movements. He may seem a bit wanting in poetry, at least in the rather brisk opening movements, but he does let up on the tension to bring us very lovely tone and phrasing in both adagio movements. In the Third Concerto, he plays the shorter of the two cadenzas Rachma-ninoff provided, and he turns on the fireworks with a vengeance.

The microphone placement is fairly close, giving a strong sense of presence to the piano, but without putting the orchestra in the shade. I felt as if I were surrounded by the orchestra rather than in, say, a first-row balcony seat. D.H.

RAVEL: Valses Nobles et Sentimentales; Miroirs; Gaspard de la Nuit. Christopher O’Riley (piano). ALBANY @ TROY052-2 (67 min).

Performance: Cool and objective
Recording: Nondescript

RAVEL: Valses Nobles et Sentimentales; Gaspard de la Nuit; Menuet Antique; Sonata. André Laplante (piano). ELAN © CD 2232 (61 min).

Performance: Chopinesque
Recording: Warm and excellent

It's hard to imagine two more different approaches to Ravel. Christopher O’Riley, a young American pianist who has made a career for himself as both a virtuoso soloist and a chamber musician after winning prizes in the Leeds and Van Cliburn competitions, seems most concerned with the music's abstract qualities, its lace-like form and use of exotic modes. He may have been influenced by the ultra-transparent recordings of French music by Pierre Boulez, particularly in his slowish tempo for Alborada del Gracioso, which he seems to be examining under a microscope.

There are no significant revelations resulting from this scrutiny, however. Among Laplante, whose career was launched after winning the silver medal at the 1978 Tchaikovsky Competition, seems less concerned with Ravel as an innovator; he approaches the music as one of the composer's contemporaries might have. No other recording I've heard of Gaspard de la Nuit has so gener-ously infused it with a Chopinesque rubato or used this technique so effectively to give the music an almost physical sense of movement. Laplante's consid-erable coloristic skills and almost luxuriously spacious tempos enable him to bask in the shimmering resonance of Ravel's harmonies. The result reminds us of Ravel's debt to Debussy and Fauré. I've never heard anything quite like it, with the possible exception of Alfred Cortot's 1931 recording of Sonatine.

Laplante's performances are flattered by the warm acoustics of Gaston Hall in Washington, D.C., but O’Riley's are under-cut by the slightly boxy, impersonal acoustics of the Barn in Bedford, New York. In sum, Laplante's recording is a valuable addition to the Ravel discography, while O’Riley's is an elegant but earthbound misfire, which is curious considering what an electrifying per-former he is in concert. D.P.S.

RODRIGO: Concierto de Aranjuez; Fantasia para un Genilhimbre (see Best of the Month, page 68)


Performance: Affectionate
Recording: Good to excellent

This release is labeled "Horowitz the Poet," and that heading is in large mea-
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sure justified by the insights and affection apparent in the performances, the Schumann in particular. *Kinderszenen* was a favorite of Horowitz's, and its best-known section, *Traumerei,* was one of his most frequent encores. The performance here, from a recital given in Vienna in May 1987, has been in circulation for a year or two in video formats. This is its first appearance on CD, though, as it is also for the Schubert, a New York studio recording made a little more than a year earlier. Horowitz shows his affection in the most convincing way, by approaching both works fairly straightforwardly. There is even a bit of understatement in the Schumann, as if he were simply touching chords of memory—but it is enough to bring the music fully and warmly to life. The occasional coughs from the audience should disturb no one, but what a pity to have the enchantment broken by the applause at the end.

There is neither coughing nor applause to mar the Schubert, which is also recorded a little more richly. Not a "basic" version of this great valedictory work, perhaps, but more persuasive than Horowitz's own earlier one (from his 1953 Carnegie Hall recital) and in its own right full of interesting things. Horowitz took the repeat in the first movement but kept the music moving to insure its welcome. Some listeners may miss the tragic emphasis other pianists bring to the slow movement; my own feeling is that the unforced resignation in Horowitz's performance rings truer. Throughout the work I like the way the music is allowed to speak for itself without being fussed over or overinterpreted, while at the same time inner voices and contrapuntal lines are exceptionally clear.

**R. STRAUSS: Salome**

Eva Marton (soprano), Salome; Bernd Weikl (baritone), Jochanaan; Heinz Zednik (tenor), Herodes; Brigitte Fassbaender (mezzo-soprano), Herodias; others. Berlin Philharmonic, Zubin Mehta cond. SONY CLASSICAL @ SZK 46717 two CD's (101 min).

**SCHUMANN: Kinderszenen**

(see SCHUBERT)

R. STRAUSS: *Salome.* Eva Marton (soprano), Salome; Bernd Weikl (baritone), Jochanaan; Heinz Zednik (tenor), Herodes; Brigitte Fassbaender (mezzo-soprano), Herodias; others. Berlin Philharmonic, Zubin Mehta cond. SONY CLASSICAL @ SZK 46717 two CD's (101 min).

**Performance:** Very good

**Recording:** Very good

R. STRAUSS: *Salome.* Cheryl Studer (soprano), Salome; Bryn Terfel (baritone), Jochanaan; Horst Hiestermann (tenor), Herodes; Leonie Rysanek (soprano), Herodias; others. German Opera Orchestra, Berlin, Giuseppe Sinopoli cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON @ 431 810-2 two CD's (101 min).

**Performance:** Outstanding

**Recording:** Outstanding

Both of these new sets are estimable, but the Giuseppe Sinopoli-Cheryl Studer version yields more of the qualities I look for in Salome. While the Sony recording is entirely acceptable, the Deutsche Grammophon is crisper and more brilliant, capturing more of Strauss's orchestral coloration. Some of this difference may lie in microphone positioning, but I suspect that Sinopoli's approach to the score is also a factor. In contrast to Zubin Mehta's solid but essentially "standard" reading, Sinopoli's comes across as a fresh realization of the familiar music. One is sharply conscious of the interplay of orchestra and voice and of the use of voice as an instrument, sometimes melding with the total musical texture only to emerge at climactic moments with striking clarity.

Any performance of *Salome* is inescapably dominated by the interpretation of the protagonist, a soprano role requiring endurance, a range of well over two octaves, and a mastery of vocal acting. Admirably coloring her voice to reveal her character's changing personality, Cheryl Studer is undaunted by the music's range, tessitura, or length of line. It is a vocally luminous and dramatically cogent performance. Eva Marton sings the role with thoughtful dramatic intent and for the most part with musical accuracy. At this stage in her career, however, she does not sound comfortable with her part's range. She breaks phrases sometimes, or delivers them as though they were unrelated to what precedes or follows. The effect is to sunder the soaring musical line.

Bernd Weikl's Jochanaan is creditable; in full-bodied tone he pours out the prophet's faith, sanctity, and final horror. As with Marton, the role seems high for him, and often his warmth of voice becomes woofiness. Sinopoli's Jochanaan, Bryn Terfel, commands a clearer baritone; his top notes have a "ping," and his words are more intelligible. Both Heinz Zednik and Horst Hiestermann are fine musically as Herodes, but Hiestermann makes more of the text.

There is a tendency to overplay the part of Herodias, to over-infect, to make ugly sounds of Strauss's music. Both Brigitte Fassbaender and Leonie Rysanek avoid these pitfalls, and, indeed, both offer satisfying performances. But Rysanek is such an experienced, schooled artist that her portrayal is more nuanced than Fassbaender's, and it is free of the latter's occasional vocal exaggeration. The celebrated Dance of the Seven Veils, one of the best sections in Mehta's recording, is summarily played in both sets.

**VIVALDI Concerto in D Major**

(see Best of the Month, page 68)

**VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: Symphonies Nos. 5 and 6**

(see Best of the Month, page 69)

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**Performance:** Refined

**Recording:** Luscious

A small bunch of years ago, when I produced the "Tango Project" albums for Nonesuch, virtually no attention was paid in this country to the serious, European side of Latin music—tango and such. Since those days, and the success of the show *Tango Argentino,* this kind of music gets a lot more attention. It is certainly taken seriously and for the beautiful music that it is by Carlos Franzetti and his Orquesta Nova.

Franzetti is from Argentina, and he has either composed or arranged ten of the fourteen numbers on this beguiling disc—mostly Argentine tangos and milongas and Venezuelan waltzes, with Cuban son and danzón and some Jobim bossa nova in between. The arrangements have a refinement that is almost the opposite of the usual Latin clichés yet is also true to the Latin spirit. Listen to the opening dark Piazzolla piece or the minor-key tango at the end; the strictness, delicacy, and rhythmic edge combine to make a powerful impression.

All but one or two of the players are non-Hispanic New York musicians, but they are individually excellent, and Franzetti has welded them into a convincingly Latin ensemble. The recording, made at the General Theological Seminary, is luscious. To think that the tango, once denounced from every pulpit in the country, is now so sensuously recorded in a seminary!

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M a r c h
Abbey Lincoln has remained a strong voice in jazz for four decades, from her early days performing in clubs in Hawaii under the name Gaby Lee to her latest Verve release, "You Gotta Pay the Band" (see review in "Best Recordings of the Month"), featuring the late Stan Getz in his last studio recording. "Having him on the session really affected my own instrument," Lincoln said of Getz, with whom she had never before worked professionally. "He brought everything he had to the session and helped make the whole thing very easy," pianist Hank Jones, bassist Charlie Haden, drummer Marc Johnson, and violist Maxine Roach are also featured in the new album. Lincoln herself handled the arrangements and wrote half of the songs.

Just before the album's release, the Black Filmmakers Association presented the world premiere of the documentary You Gotta Pay the Band: The Words, the Music, and the Life of Abbey Lincoln, which highlights Lincoln's status as a role model for young black women.

OPJAZZ singing stars and classical cellists don't often cross paths, but Bobby McFerrin and Yo-Yo Ma were both at Tanglewood for Leonard Bernstein's seventieth-birthday gala in 1988. They became friends and have since performed together in concerts in San Francisco and Boston. Recently they teamed up for a Sony Classical recording in which McFerrin's vocal improvisations join Ma's cello in light classical pieces such as the Bach-Gounod Ave Maria and The Flight of the Bumblebee and in several of McFerrin's compositions.

Soul singer/preacher Al Green joined singer/songwriter/producer Arthur Baker for Leave the Guns at Home in Baker's recent debut album on RCA, "Give In to the Rhythm." The pro-gun-control song was also featured at a press conference last fall held at New York City's Abyssinian Baptist Church and co-sponsored by RCA Records and the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence. At the press conference, Green and Baker were joined in performance by a chorale of children who have lost family members to handgun homicide. RCA is currently taping public-service announcements about handgun control for music-video and news programs. Besides Green and Baker, artists involved in the project to date include Queen Latifah, MC Lyte, Yo Yo, Africa Bambara, Salt n' Pepa.

The renowned basso Samuel Ramey stars in the first new recording in Sony Classical's Broadway line, a remake of Kisset that also features opera singers Julia Migenes, Jerry Hadley, and Ruth Ann Swenson and Broadway star Mandy Patinkin. Sony Broadway is also reissuing original-cast albums from the old Columbia Masterworks catalog. Among the first titles, many on CD for the first time, are Gentlemen Prefer Blondes with Carol Channing, The Most Happy Fella, Irma la Douce, and the classic 1956 recording of Candide with Barbara Cook.

Kurt Masur, the New York Philharmonic's new music director, has signed an exclusive contract with Teldec Classics for thirty-two recordings with the orchestra over the next six years. The first release was Bruckner's Seventh Symphony, recorded live at Avery Fisher Hall last September. A CD of Dvořák's "New World" Symphony and Slavonic Dances is due this month. Planned for release later this year are four live recordings of works by Ives, Brahms, Reger, Franck, and Mahler.

Terri Nunn, the former lead singer of Berlin, is finally stepping out on her own with "Moment of Truth," her solo debut on Geffen. Nunn left Berlin in late 1987, after sharing in the acclaim for such hits as The Metro and Sex (I'm a ... ) from 1983's "Pleasure Victim" and the Oscar-winning Take My Breath Away from the Top Gun soundtrack. "I hid in Berlin," she says. "I didn't expose a
lot of myself. Now everything’s different. Success is not as important as challenge.”

Nunn co-wrote more than half of the songs in her new album, touching on such deeply personal subjects as her father’s suicide when she was fourteen. Her other recent projects include a cameo in the upcoming film Gift, which was written and directed by Perry Farrell, lead singer of Jane’s Addiction.

MEZZO-SOPRANO Marilyn Horne, virtuosic champion of the music of Rossini, will take part in a 200th Birthday Gala at Lincoln Center (move over, Mozart!) on the composer’s actual birthdate, February 29. Some of those set to join Miss Horne in the festivities are fellow Rossini lovers Frederica von Stade, Thomas Hampson, June Anderson, Chris Merritt, and Samuel Ramey, with the Orchestra of St. Luke’s conducted by Roger Norrington. A repeat performance of the Rossini birthday bash will be televised in the PBS Live from Lincoln Center series on March 2.

Just released is Horne’s new all-Rossini song disc on RCA Victor Red Seal. And for a break from bel canto, she recorded an album of lullabies from around the world, which RCA will release later this year. The cast includes Barbara Hendricks, Jerry Hadley, and June Anderson. The boxed set of Sixties material by the Hollies, originally scheduled for release by EMI in time for Christmas, has been delayed so that original members Allan Clarke, Tony Hicks, and Graham Nash can finish some new songs to be included (just like the old days). EMI is also readying yet another Yardbirds reissue, with all of the Jimmy Page cuts that were left out of the recent Columbia/Legacy Yardbirds package. The Japanese violinist Kyoko Takezawa’s first two releases under her new exclusive RCA Victor Red Seal contract are a disc with Tchaikovsky’s First Violin Concerto and Prokofiev’s Second and a recital disc including works by Bartók and Brahms. A tribute album of star performances of songs by cult favorite Richard Thompson is due this spring from Capitol. It will feature R.E.M. (whose version of Thompson’s Wall of Death is already finished), Chrissie

Spinal Tap, the world’s most famous fictional heavy-metal band, is back. First seen in Rob Reiner’s hilarious 1984 “rockumentary” This Is Spinal Tap, the group has signed a recording contract with MCA, and an album is scheduled for early this year. Original Tap stars Nigel Tufnel (actor Christopher Guest), David St. Hubbins (comedian Michael McKean), and Derek Smalls (saratist Harry Shearer) will all be on hand for the new record, as well as an as yet unnamed celebrity drummer chosen in a public audition at the Los Angeles Coliseum (Tap’s previous drummers have either exploded or died from spontaneous combustion). Mick Fleetwood, ex-Go-Go Gina Schock, and ex-Monkee Mickey Dolenz are said to be the front runners. A video of Tap’s forthcoming concert tour is also reportedly in the works.

Horne: celebrating Rossini

RCA Victor Red Seal. And for a break from bel canto, she recorded an album of lullabies from around the world, which RCA will release later this year. The cast includes Barbara Hendricks, Jerry Hadley, and June Anderson. The boxed set of Sixties material by the Hollies, originally scheduled for release by EMI in time for Christmas, has been delayed so that original members Allan Clarke, Tony Hicks, and Graham Nash can finish some new songs to be included (just like the old days). EMI is also readying yet another Yardbirds reissue, with all of the Jimmy Page cuts that were left out of the recent Columbia/Legacy Yardbirds package. The Japanese violinist Kyoko Takezawa’s first two releases under her new exclusive RCA Victor Red Seal contract are a disc with Tchaikovsky’s First Violin Concerto and Prokofiev’s Second and a recital disc including works by Bartók and Brahms. A tribute album of star performances of songs by cult favorite Richard Thompson is due this spring from Capitol. It will feature R.E.M. (whose version of Thompson’s Wall of Death is already finished), Chrissie

Spinal Tap lives!
A Few That Got Away

WHILE cleaning house the other day (and not otherwise distracted by MTV's "The Making of Kurt Loder's 'Keith Richards and the X-Pensive Winos Live' Liner Notes" special), I suddenly confronted a sobering truth. To wit: Over the last year or two, I had accumulated stacks of CD's, in all sorts of pop genres, that I really liked but for one reason or another had never written up in these pages. Well, better late than never and all that, so now—with apologies to the artists involved—here's a retrospective roundup of a few of my favorite things from the early Nineties.

- Otis Ball: I'm Gonna Love You Till I Don't (Bar/None). First-rate, witty, hook-laden pop rock from the finest singer-songwriter currently living in Hoboken, New Jersey. Imagine Nick Lowe without the cynicism or Squeeze without the cleverness for its own sake and you'll have an idea of how charming and accessible Ball's best stuff is. Pick hit: the simultaneously optimistic and melancholy title track, a gem that some smart above-ground artist—Cheap Trick, perhaps, or Susanna Hoffs—really ought to cover.

- MC5: Kick Out the Jams (Elektra). Post-modern youngsters (defined here as anybody born after the release of the Partridge Family's hit single I Think I Love You) may not be aware of this, but the MC5 was the only American group of the Sixties fit to be mentioned in the same breath as the early Who or the Yardbirds. In other words, it was among the most exciting outfits ever to commit loud noise to tape, and "Kick Out the Jams"—the Five's live debut album from 1968—can now be seen as a stunning precursor of both heavy metal and punk. The new CD version also makes a nice memorial for lead singer Rob Tyner, who died last year (although not before contributing wonderfully over-the-top liner notes). Sure, the album's revolutionary politics are dated, but its sound and fury remain overwhelming.

- The Questionnaires: Anything Can Happen (EMI). Here's an amazing anomaly: a mainstream rock band that writes melodically memorable songs, makes interesting guitar-based noises, and largely eschews cliché while still sticking to the rock-and-roll verities. And they know how to make records, too. How do they get away with it in these debased times? Darned if I know. I do know, however, that lead singer and songwriter Tom Littlefield deserves a lot of credit, that a band that can sift influences as varied as the Georgia Satellites and the Beach Boys deserves a wider hearing than the Questionnaires have gotten, and that this album's In the Back of My Mind is the most gorgeous lost-love ballad in years. Your move, kids.

- Monty Python Sings (Virgin). At last, on one convenient CD, all the best musical numbers from the Pythons' various films and albums, including the sublime Sit on My Face, the theme from The Meaning of Life (sung—unaccountably but hilariously—by Eric Idle in a bad French accent), and, of course, The Lumberjack Song. A lyric sheet, amusing in itself, is included, so feel free to join in with the lads when the spirit moves you.

- The Grifters (original soundtrack recording, Varese/Sarabande). Director Stephen Frears's atmospheric realization of a Jim Thompson pulp novel is one of the best American movies of recent vintage, but its secret weapon just may be veteran composer Elmer Bernstein's wow of a score, an eerie combination of Fifties Naked City-style jazz and Threepenny Opera-period Kurt Weill played by a small orchestra plus electronics. It's not quite like anything you've ever heard before, and it works like a charm even without the film's accompanying visuals.

- Screamin' Jay Hawkins: Black Musk for White People (Rhino/Bizarre). Rock's original (and apparently ageless) wild man returns here with inimitable deconstructions of songs by Jerome Kern and Tom Waits (among others). And while we're on the subject, check out Rhino's Best of Hawkins compilation ("Voodoo Jive") and "At Home with Screamin' Jay Hawkins" on Legacy. You'll thank me for it, I promise.

- Negativland: U2 (SST). A hysterical parody of the world's most self-righteous band, intercut with foul-mouthed Casey Kasem outtakes from America's Top 40, that's sort of a cross between the Firesign Theater and the Beatles' Revolution Number 9. Unfortunately, this may be the funniest CD you'll never be able to buy, since U2 sued and had it pulled from stores.
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