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<th>SX-1010</th>
<th>SX-939</th>
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<td>FM Sensitivity (I-IF)</td>
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<td>Signal/Noise Ratio</td>
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CIRCLE 18 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INPUTS</th>
<th>SX-1010</th>
<th>SX-939</th>
<th>SX-838</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tape monitor/4-ch. adaptor</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Phono</td>
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<th>OUTPUTS</th>
<th>SX-1010</th>
<th>SX-939</th>
<th>SX-838</th>
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<td>Speakers</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Tape Rec./4-ch. adaptor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Headsets</td>
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<td>Noise reduction</td>
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<td>4-channel MPX</td>
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CIRCLE 32 ON READER-SERVICE CARD
Karajan and the Second Vienna School 61
More on Videodiscs 26
Why Buy Soundtrack Albums? 49

Music and Musicians
Mr. Lucky Gene Lees At fifty, Henry Mancini has realized his dreams but isn't slowing down 12
Behind the Scenes Guns of Navarraise . . . Informal Israelis . . . Electrifying Stocky 16
Soundtrack Albums: Why? Royal S. Brown The worth of film music appears when it is parted from its movie 49
The Street People Have Taken Over the Discotheques! Henry Edwards 56
At Home with Hype David Dachs You can't promote a pop recording without a gimmick 59
Aksel Schiotz (1906-1975) Paul Moor 84

Audio and Video
Too Hot to Handle 24
News and Views New tapes in town . . . Five-channel movie sound 26
Equipment in the News 30
Equipment Reports 37
Sansui Model QRX-7001 four-channel receiver
Sony Model TAN-550 power amplifier
RTR EXP-12 speaker system
Stanton 681EEE phono cartridge
Telephony Model TEL-101J quadriphonic headphone
Tone Arm Damping James Brinton This overlooked feature can offer better sound for a small investment 45
Do-It-Yourself Tone Arm Damping 47

Record Reviews
Karajan Encounters the Second Vienna School David Hamilton DG offers a four-disc set 61
A Tchaikovsky Deluge Philip Hart Quantity is more noteworthy than quality in a flood of releases 63
Ravel: The Real Thing Royal S. Brown Skrowaczewski and Vox produce a fine set of his orchestral works 66
Classical Blegen and Von Stade . . . Perahia's Mendelssohn Concerto . . . Baroque bassoon 69
The Tape Deck R. D. Darrell How to sing Handel . . . The pianiste mystique . . . Gershwin by others 102

Et Cetera
Letters More Russian opera . . . Bravo Louisville . . . Brandenburg travesty 6
Hi-Fi-Crostic 34
Product Information An "at-home" shopping service 28, 77
Advertising Index 76
A special issue for the tape fancier. HOW TO FALSIFY EVIDENCE AND OTHER DIVER SIONS is a guide to editing your tape so that it sounds like a perfect take. THE GRASS IS ALWAYS GREENER ON THE OUTTAKES reports the surprising results of a test conducted by Glenn Gould to see whether musicians, technicians, or laymen can detect splices best. SYMPHONIC CONCERTS ON THE AIR shows how transcription services tape programs by our major orchestras for broadcast. The equipment report section analyzes six tape-related products. In addition, the issue reviews RCA's six-album collection of Heifetz recordings from 1917-55 together with MEMORIES OF HEIFETZ by editor Leonard Marcus.
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Vanishing Louisvilles

Gabrielle Mattingly's April article on "The Vanishing Louisvilles" was much needed: as an early subscriber to the Louisville Orchestra series, as well as a recipient of a commission, I found it especially interesting.

Working with Jim Hicks on the business side and the multitalented Jorge Mester on the creative end, I can attest to the fact that any composer involved with the Louisville Orchestra is fortunate indeed. In addition, over the years the records I have received from the series have nearly always amazed and pleased me. As a good example, the first time I ever heard of Peggy Glanville-Hicks was when I received a Louisville disc devoted to her work. To my knowledge the LO commissions and recordings are the only ones of their kind in America. As such they deserve the support of not only the people of Louisville, but lovers of good music everywhere.

Rod McKuen
Beverly Hills, Calif.

Delighted to see Gabrielle Mattingly's article. My brother and I have been avid collectors of the marvelous Louisville recordings for many years, and we both have substantial collections, including—believe it or not—duplicates of some of those rare deleted items mentioned in the article. Thank heavens for such blessings as the Louisville releases, the long-defunct American Recording Society (re-released on the Desio label), the Musical Heritage Society, Music in America—and all the organizations that have the courage to make these neglected treasures available to serious lovers of music!

H. Jack Adams
Westboro, Mass.

I am a music teacher living in the Louisville metropolitan area and have been a subscriber to the Louisville Orchestra's series for years. I was glad to see that someone has finally told the Louisville story in its true context. Ms. Mattingly grasped the situation as the natives of Louisville know it, but somewhere along the way she failed to give us Louisvillians credit for our continuing support of our orchestra—even if and when we don't approve of some of the music we're forced to listen to.

Also, it's nice to see someone get the facts straight. (The chapter on Louisville records in Philip Hart's Orpheus in the New World is full of inaccuracies and assumptions that aren't quite right.) I would like to point out, however, that Howard Scott is no longer the producer of First Edition Records; it's likely your article was written before this change in personnel took place.

[Andrew Kazdin, formerly of Columbia Records, is now the producer.—Ed.]

Another point I would like to make is that, although it's true the Louisville critics have been negative about the recording series over the years, they and their papers—the Courier Journal—have always supported the orchestra.

Mary M. Sullivan
Jeffersonville, Ind.

More Russian Operas

Conrad L. Osborne's two-part article on Russian opera was quite fascinating. It would be helpful to the readers, however, if the criteria used for exclusion of recorded works were explained. Not only are works by listed composers (e.g., Tchaikovsky's Mazeppa) not mentioned, but we and their composers (e.g., Shaporin's The Decembrists) are missing.

Stanley E. Babbs Jr.
Norman, Okla.

Regarding Mr. Osborne's Division of Records and Statistics: The range of four octaves and a semitone that he estimates over is matched in any recording of Ariadne auf Naxos (Scaramuccio's low E flat to Zerbinetta's high E). It is surpassed in any complete recording of Abduction from the Seraglio (Osmin's low D to Zerbinetta's high E). Indeed the Richmond recording conducted by Krips has Osmin interpolate a low C (in the middle of the duet with Blondchen), making an impressive total range of four octaves and a major third.

Carl Saloga
East Lansing, Mich.

Mr. Osborne replies: First, I must express my appreciation to everyone who has written. I wish I had time to reply individually, but the response has been very heavy, and it's not possible. Personal note: I do hope the record dealer (I believe in Indiana) who so kindly sent me a copy of the Western Marriage will drop a line, as I have misplaced his address and would like to personally thank him.

Now to the specific questions raised. Mr. Saloga and several other correspondents have entered Entfuehrung in the vocal long-distance event, and in my capacity as official statistician and solo arbiter in such matters I accept the candidate—note, though, that the criterion is "sustained singing tone." I haven't the energy at the
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moment to refresh my memory as to which Osmins and Blondchens actually do either sustain or sing their low Ds and high Es.

No one, Mr. Sologa, accuses me of "effusing over" anything, especially if they have their facts wrong. Scaramuccio is a tenor role and of course does not include a low E flat or anything near it. Truffaldin does have a low F, but it is on a sixteenth note in an ensemble, and in any case it falls short of the four-octave mark and thus flunks the qualifying heat.

Mr. Babb raises a legitimate point, for which I have the following shameless answer: We included all those recordings whose existence we were able to determine, which had at some point circulated outside Eastern Europe, and on copies of which we were able to lay our mitts, up through the final copy deadline. I am grateful to the many writers who have pointed to the existence of other sets, several of which are obviously important. I especially regret the omission of Mazeppa, which I knew had circulated in England but whose domestic incarnation somehow escaped me, and a mono Khovanschina that used an edition different from Rimsky's.

The discography grew far beyond our original planned limits, and as it is the publisher has been indulgent in not billing me for paper and ink.

Brandenburg Travesty

Recordings of the Brandenburg Concertos that I made for the old Unicorn label in 1956 have recently appeared as a reissue on the Olympic label. I would like all record collectors to know that the performances of Nos. 1, 2, and 3, which appear on Sides 1 and 2, are complete travesties of my original recordings. For some reason, which I am trying to ascertain, the speeds of all the movements have been altered—some, believe it or not, by as much as three minutes—but strange to say the pitch has been correctly retained. The result sounds rather like P.D.Q. Bach. I would not have thought this possible, but the experts tell me that such a thing can now be done on the very latest apparatus. I have tried to get an explanation from Olympic but have as yet heard nothing from them.

In order to defend my reputation as an artist, I have no recourse but to write to you so that your readers can be aware of the facts. Anyone playing the Olympic version of these three concertos would think that I had completely lost my senses. Some of the tempos are much faster and some much slower, but all have been altered. It seems to me a strange thing that such travesties can be issued to the record-buying public while the artist can do nothing in self-defense.

The strangest thing of all is that the second record (Sides 3 and 4) has not been tampered with in the least.

Boyd Neel
Toronto, Ont.

Film Music Collection

I read with a great deal of interest and a great deal of disappointment Royal S. Brown's April review of the first release from the Elmer Bernstein Film Music Collection. Max Steiner's Helen of Troy and A Summer Place. I am a member of the Film Music Collection, and, while I agree that neither of the scores represents Steiner at his finest or even near-finest, they were apparently consensus choices.

It may interest readers who are not members to know that the first notification we received from Mr. Bernstein was that the first album was to be Steiner's King Kong and Bernstein's To Kill a Mockingbird. I protested this vigorously. I thought it altogether fitting that the first record(s) represent the work of Steiner (after all, he is the "father of film music") and Bernstein (it was through his efforts that we film music buffs were to receive this opportunity), but I failed to understand those particular choices. Apparently a lot of other members protested too. The Miracle, however, was one of the first choices and, as it has never before been available, I am thrilled that we will soon have it.

I agree with Mr. Brown's complaints about the annotations and the absence of selection listings (a serious shortcoming of many commercial soundtrack releases too), but the Film Music Collection is a new undertaking, and one hopes it will improve as it matures. It seems to me unfair to chop it to shreds on the basis of the first release.

Stephen L. Richey
Durham, N.C.
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CIRCLE 19 ON READER-SERVICE CARD
Mancini at Fifty—Mr. Lucky

About forty years ago, a small boy, the son of an immigrant steelworker, played flute in a Sons of Italy band in West Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, and dreamed, as most boys do. He dreamed of writing arrangements for big bands, of being a successful and famous composer of movie music, and of living happily ever after with a beautiful girl.

All of Henry Mancini's dreams came true. And that is something very rare.

He has a beautiful blonde wife, Ginnie, who sang with the Tex Benecke band when Mancini was its arranger and pianist. (She still works as a studio singer and vocal contractor.) Their three children are grown, healthy, and on their way into their own lives. The couple have houses in Beverly Hills and at Malibu, and they are at the top of Hollywood's rather subtly delimited social order. The name of one of their daughters sums it up: Felice. It means "happy."

I first became conscious of Mancini, no doubt like most people, through the scores of the Peter Gunn and Mr. Lucky television shows. (He had already worked on the scores of more than a hundred pictures, but anonymously, for the most part.) Peter Gunn was that one stroke of pure luck that every career seems to need. As Mancini was leaving a barbershop one day, he encountered producer/writer/director Blake Edwards, who said he was doing a TV series about a private eye and, on that moment's impulse, asked Mancini if he would be interested in writing the music. "I've since wondered," the composer has said, "what would have happened if I hadn't needed a haircut that day." Music from the Gunn scores not only became a best-selling album, but led to a number of films with Edwards, including The Pink Panther, one of Mancini's most melodic scores.

He is one of the few film composers to be a successful recording artist, and his forty-seven albums for RCA Victor have won twenty Grammy awards. His film scores, which have won him three Academy Awards, have produced such songs as "Moon River," "Charade," "Two for the Road," and "Days of Wine and Roses" that mark him as one of the great melodists in American popular music. He has literally changed the style of movie music.

He's fifty now, but his career shows no signs of slowing. In fact, his fifty-first year has turned out to be one of his busiest yet, during which he scored seven films while working a grueling schedule of concerts. He loves work. ("I don't really enjoy the work process," says fellow composer Johnny Mandel, "but Hank does.")

"I thought you were supposed to slow up when you got a little older," Mancini said with a sigh in an interview. "I've never worked so much. I'm tired." He had played a concert the night before in San Francisco; next morning he was leaving for London to conduct the score for The Return of the Pink Panther, which he had written in two weeks on an electric piano in his room at the Sherry-Netherland in New York while performing in the evenings with Anthony Newley at the Uris Theater. That was after he had flown to London to see a print of the picture and "spot" it—that is, time the sequences and select the appropriate places for music. And he had made that trip the day after he conducted his score for Once Is Not Enough at Paramount Studios in Hollywood.

"The only concern I have is that I won't do everything that I want," Mancini said when asked about reaching that age plateau. "Time starts to get short.... But it's not physically that I'm worried. I'm just worried about trying to keep doing what I'm doing and yet not fall too hard into a mold.

"And I'm in a mold now. I'm definitely a product of my own creation and everything that's gone before me. ... I'm trapped by my own education and environment.

"I'd like to meet another Blake Edwards and have something of that kind happen.... Maybe I'd go out and do something for the concert stage or Broadway. I'd love to break the style and just do something that isn't me."

"Fortunately, I'm still at the point where the next assignment is very exciting for me," Mancini continued. "I'm doing all different things. Like The White Dawn. In a way I can shed my musical identity in some of these assignments. In a modern score, of course, I can give them the flutes and the French horns and the harmonic progressions that are me. But when I
do The White Dawn, which is set in 1890 up in Baffin Bay, I can't do that. They didn't know what a flute was. If they saw one, they'd start to dig snow with it. All they had were some bones and a skin and their own voices. So that was a big challenge, and that was a score you would never know..... And that's one way I have of breaking out."

"You once told me you never really wanted to do anything but write film music," I said.

"Yes, as far back as I can remember," Mancini replied. "The thing that started me on this road, if there was ever one thing, was a movie called The Crusaders, with Henry Wilcoxon. It had a score, boy! It was an epic of major proportions, and I saw it many times, because I couldn't believe what was happening. Long lines of the Crusaders going forth and back, and that music.... There was magic coming from the screen, and it wouldn't have happened without the music."

Obviously, he thinks about other young people who might get bitten by the same bug. He wrote a book, Sounds and Scores, which is one of the best available practical guides to recording orchestration. And he has set up scholarship funds for young composers at Juilliard and UCLA. The Juilliard grant is for classical composers; that at UCLA is for those aspiring to film composition. When the UCLA scholarship committee finished its selections last year, it submitted to Mancini the works of two students, a young man and woman, both very talented. Mancini couldn't turn down either one, so he awarded two scholarships.

"I got into a stupid argument about you the other night," I told Mancini, mentioning a mutual acquaintance, a lady of strong mystical persuasions.

"She said you were the reincarnation of Verdi. And I said, 'Nonsense. If he's the reincarnation of anybody, it would be Puccini.' "

He laughed. "She was right. I was regressed once, and that's what they said. It was in '45, in Nice, after the Air Force bands broke up.... This Swiss fellow... was very into mysticism and reincarnation and all that. He put me back, and one of the most recent lives we figured to be Verdi. But I wouldn't believe me under those circumstances."

"You were born in 1924, right? That was the year Puccini died," I said, still arguing my case.

Hank laughed again. "Yeah, well, I'll take him too. I was in Montezuma's court, and in another life I had a hand in building the great pyramid, so you can see, I've had pretty active lives."

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And finally, Len Feldman, writing in Tape Deck Quarterly, summed it up with, "...it has become a bit of a cliche on the part of many top quality cassette deck manufacturers to compare their product's capability with that of the finest open reel decks. Nakamichi refrains from making that statement... though if anyone comes close to justifying (it), they certainly do."

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PERFECTION THROUGH PRECISION.

Guns of Navarraise. Last month we reported RCA's plans to record Massenet's little-known La Navarraise in London this summer with Marilyn Horne, Placido Domingo, and Sherrill Milnes, Henry Lewis conducting the LSO. Well, the opera may not be little known for long. Edward Greenfield reports from London that CBS got off the first shot by recording that opera, in that city (at EMI No. 1 Studio), with that orchestra, last spring.

"Antonio de Almeida, fresh from troubled Lisbon," writes Greenfield, "conducted with passion. On the first day at least (when I attended), conductor Paul Myers' main concern was whether all the soloists would arrive on time from late engagements all over Europe. Fortunately they did: Lucia Popp as the heroine, Richard Cassilly as the hero, Gerard Souzay as his father, with Michel Senechal, Vicente Sardinero, and Claude Molino making up the rest of the cast."

The work, "obviously designed to cream off the Carmen public with its atmospheric Spanish dances and melodramatic story of the Carlist war of 1874," takes two acts, but it is so compact it will be easily contained on a single disc.

A pair of suits. Two items about legal squabbles caught our eye in the April 12 issue of Billboard. One we'd been aware of, the other was news to us, but we thought we'd pass the stories along to you for whatever benefit you might find in them.

RCA and Toscanini's heirs are suing the Arturo Toscanini Society to prevent the latter from distributing any more of the Maestro's recorded performances. Plaintiffs claim that RCA has exclusive, contractual rights. (The ATS's records are generally taken from broadcasts.) The Society, by the way, has been in business for years, primarily as a small mail-order distributor of material otherwise unavailable, and RCA had been treating it as a sleeping dog. During the past year, however, we had been noticing these records turning up in record stores, blatantly competing with RCA's own. At that point, we suspect, RCA changed proverbs to cave canem!

Also named in the suit were Everest Records, whose Olympic label has a set of Beethoven symphonies, and Vox, which has issued the Brahms symphonies and the Verdi Requiem under the Society's aegis. (Both Olympic's and Vox's sets came from the Society.)

We remember the late Walter Toscanini in the mid-1960s waxing enthusiastically over the Society's enthusiasm, but apparently he later signed a contract giving RCA exclusive rights for five years to any noncommercial recordings of his father that he edited or otherwise "improved," generally for radio broadcasts. That contract, we understand, has expired. At any rate, in March Vox voluntarily withdrew its Toscanini records for two weeks, and in April a restraining order put a damper on both Vox and Olympic until the matter is straightened out.

Muddying the waters still further is the fact that the Brahms set, emanating from 1949, is played by the New Philharmonia Orchestra. In 1949 the Philharmonia had an exclusive contract with EMI!

The other Billboard item noted that Peter Blair Noone was suing Anthony Green, Derek Lenteby and Jan Barry Whitwam to prevent their using the appellation they jointly went under when all four were as friendly as 1965 Beatles. The three suees were the "Hermits." Peter Blair Noone was "Herman."

In case you hadn't noticed, Bette Midler, pop record superduperstar, hasn't had a recording out in nearly two years. Not that she hasn't been working in the studios, with producers Paul Simon of Columbia and Hal Davis of Motown, and she has a least planned some sessions with independent hit-maker Tony Sylvester. But in each instance production was held up by some problem or other—Midler's contract with Atlantic, for example. Currently in a smash one-woman Broadway show, she is hesitant to record it before she takes it on tour, insiders say, because she is afraid a recording will rob it of its "synchronous surprises."

Informal Israelis. The Israel Philharmonic has signed a new contract with Decca/London, the first fruits of which were what one observer called "the wackiest sessions in years." Zubein Mehta was in charge of the orchestra for recordings of Schubert's "Great" C major Symphony and Bartok's Concerto for Orchestra. While the Decca/London team has recorded the Israelis before, this time they were...
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taken aback by the musicians' sublime unawareness of time schedules. Israel may be a socialist country, but there is no question of union restrictions inhibiting the orchestra. Recording breaks just happened when people thought they might. And as if to evoke a hoary local joke ("Put three Israelis together and you get four political parties"), each player voiced a different opinion as often as he could about how the music should go ("twenty players, twenty opinions," was one comment). At one point, Mehta asked, "Can I have a note?" He got fifty. But at the end everyone seemed happy. Decca's chief producer Ray Minshull is a very patient man.

Marching through the Bicentennial. Nonesuch's long-standing interest in Americana has already produced such notable items as a disc of Stephen Foster songs, the various piano ragtime records, and Joan Morris' "After the Ball" collection with William Bolcom. So when Nonesuch director Tracey Sterne says she's onto someone whose name is going to become big, we listen.

The name in question is Henry Clay Work (1832-84), who doesn't even rate a mention in Grove's. But Baker's describes him as "a printer by trade; entirely self-taught in music; his first success was We are coming, Sister Mary." Among his other songs: "Grandfather's Clock" and "Marching through Georgia." The Morris-Bolcom "After the Ball" team will be joined by chorus.

It's quite a jump from "We are coming, Sister Mary" to Milhaud, but that doesn't faze Nonesuch's renaissance man Bill Bolcom, who has a disc of his onetime teacher's piano works in the works.

Berman coming. It has been thirteen years since Harris Goldsmith reviewed in these pages an Artia-MK recital recording by a "titanic" Russian pianist with "a big, assertive style similar to Rachmaninoff's," whose Debussy "eight-finger" etude "leaves all rivals far behind," whose Chopin "is brilliantly headlong" and "grandly inflected," and whose Scriabin is "superbly done." The titan's name? Lazar Berman, and that was the only recording of his that we ever found generally available in the U.S. What ever happened to him? In Russia, he's a major concert attraction and has made a few other Melodiya recordings, but here he has been known to only a few piano aficionados, to whom he has become a sort of cult figure.

Next January, Berman, now forty-five, will make his first American tour, and he is expected to return the following fall. Plans are also afoot for him to cut his first Western-made discs.

The electrifying Stoky. Ninety-three-year-old Leopold Stokowski is still going strong. You may recall that it was only a few years ago that he left the U.S. for his native England because there wasn't enough recording activity going on here. At any rate, he is still making records, although he reportedly has "only now given up the idea of conducting live concerts."

Our reporter, Edward Greenfield again, attended Stoky's latest session, a Scheherazade with the Royal Philharmonic for RCA.

He reports: "Normally the visitor to recording sessions has to swallow the frustration of never hearing a work complete, or at least hearing it only in chopped-up form. Imagine my delight when Stokowski launched into the four movements in sequence. The night before, the RPO had played this very work under its principal conductor, Rudolf Kempe (about to move to the BBC Symphony, to be succeeded by Antal Dorati who is relinquishing his post at the National Symphony in
Fact: the lowest cost way to improve your whole high fidelity system is simply to upgrade the source of sound—the cartridge! If you’re on a temporary austerity program, the Shure M44E can make a significant difference in sound over the cartridges supplied with many budget component systems. If your budget is a trifle more flexible, an M91ED can bring you into the area of high trackability (with performance second only to the V-15 Type III). And for those who can be satisfied with nothing less than state-of-the-art playback perfection, Shure offers the widely acclaimed V-15 Type III, the recognized number one cartridge in the industry, which, in truth, costs less than a single middle-of-the-road loudspeaker. To read about what a Shure cartridge could do for your system, write:

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In comparing your report on the Sequerra FM tuner [January 1975] with that on the Yamaha CT-7000 [March 1975] I get the impression that the Sequerra is better, although the measurements don’t seem to confirm this. Is it true?—R. Baboushkin, Forest Hills, N.Y.

No. Both are extremely fine performers, and the Yamaha, in fact, has some refinements (notably the IF bandwidth switch) that can be quite useful under certain conditions and that aren’t included in the Sequerra. The Sequerra has an oscilloscope system that—if you include the optional RF-scan feature—is unique and utterly fascinating. As a result, it not only has unusual capabilities, but is, perhaps, the most enjoyable to use of any tuner we’ve ever tested. The scope contributes only indirectly to performance, however; and on the basis of reception quality alone we feel that these two models represent performance seldom approached and never significantly bettered in FM equipment.

I have a Sony TC-165 cassette deck that I now use with the Dolby circuitry in a Marantz 4270 receiver. What brand of chromium dioxide tape would be best suited to this combination? I have been using Ampex, Memorex, and Advent, but in making the Dolby adjustments for some of the Ampex cassettes the two sides of the cassette seem to require different settings. Is this possible?—Larry Bronfman, Neshanc, N.J.

Most brands of chromium dioxide (including the three you mention) are so similar electromagnetically that they can be considered interchangeable in this respect. We can think of one exception: BASF, which seems to have less sensitivity than average and therefore may require that the Dolby controls be re-adjusted for good tracking. But the mechanical construction of the cassette can alter performance too. For example, if the pressure pad is slightly askew, it can produce better tape-head contact (and therefore higher output) on one side of the tape than the other. Something of this sort may be the explanation of your problem with some Ampex samples.

The turntables article in the April issue states that the Rabco ST-4 has “simplified the means by which the arm is moved across the record (vs a via the servo drive system in the SLB), but only by adding complications elsewhere in the design.” I am a satisfied owner of a Rabco ST-4 and have been using it for approximately four years with great pleasure. Have I been living in a fool’s paradise?—Edward J. Sack, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Obviously not, if it has given you that much pleasure for four years—and we were pleased with it when we tested it (for the April 1971 issue). The design does require more bearing, more motion, and more positive drive (to turn the shaft on which the arm rides) than a conventional arm, and it has not been universally received with as much enthusiasm as you (and we) felt for it.

Since that article appeared, Harman-Kardon has corrected some information it gave us about both the old and the new Rabco models. It has discontinued the SLB 8E servo arm (not the ST-4 turntable/arm assembly, as stated in the article), and it calls the new assembly the ST-7 (not the SL-7). At this writing we have seen only prototypes of the ST-7; but however exciting the new model may be when it appears, we’d urge you not to think of replacing a model you’re delighted with just because somebody else isn’t.

I’m trying to choose between the Teac 2300S (open-reel deck) and the Dokorder 7100. Is the Tek worth the extra $100?—Albert Pessot, Brooklyn, N.Y.

We haven’t tested the 7100 specifically and therefore can give you only a generalized answer. In examining construction of the two lines we have found Teac decks to be exceptionally sturdy, the Dokorders only average in this respect. Dokorder, on the other hand, packs a surprising number of features and capabilities into its equipment of any given price class. Presumably you don’t need any “extras” that the Dokorder may offer or you wouldn’t be considering the Teac. In that case, and assuming that you plan to give your deck heavy use and want long-term reliability, the construction of the Teac probably will be worth the extra $100 to you.

The DBX 117 Dynamic Range Enhancer [HF test reports, November 1972] is, I gather, a two-way noise-reduction system just like Dolby B. But can it also be used with programs that were not originally encoded with the DBX system? If not, what is the difference between using the DBX in playback alone and not using it at all, in terms of the sound coming from the speakers?—Pongsak Srissa-an, Stillwater, Okla.

The DBX 117 is similar to Dolby B in that it can be used to compress the program during recording and then re-expand it during playback to reduce the audibility of noise picked up in the process. But it is not “just like” Dolby B, since it operates over the full frequency range, while Dolby B action is specifically tailored to the suppression of the noise in the high frequencies where it is most troublesome in tape recordings.

The DBX 117 can be used in playback alone to increase the music’s dynamic range. That is, it increases the difference in level between the loudest passages and the quiet ones, including any noise that is audible in the quiet passages. Set for a moderate amount of expansion, it will give the music somewhat more impact and make the recording seem somewhat more noise-free; set for extreme expansion, it will make dynamic contrasts seem exaggerated and may produce some audible “pumping”—particularly if the noise levels in the recording are very high.

Could you please tell me whether my Dual 1218 turntable equipped with a Grado FTR + 1 cartridge and a Marantz CD-4000 demodulator is capable of playing CD-4 Quadradiscs? I’ve been told that the Dual’s capacitance is too high. Listening tests certainly reveal a lack of separation with the present setup.—Don Mullis, address unspecified.

We doubt that your problem is due to lead capacitance. We’ve used the older Duals (that is, the pre-Q) models, whose leads were not designed for particularly low capacitance) successfully with regular CD-4 pickups, and Grado claims that its cartridge is uniquely insensitive to this factor—and hence that it will provide good carrier recovery even with leads of relatively high capacitance. We’ve never tested the other CD-4 demodulators, however. If the separation sounds poor to you, it could be because of one or the other, or because you’re expecting more obvious separation than is “built into” the recordings you’re using in your listening tests. And since you don’t have distortion (another result of poor carrier recovery), we suspect the recordings rather than the equipment.

Is it always best to set the vertical tracking force of a tone arm to the lowest value possible? The Miracord 45 allows adjustment to as low as 1/2 gram. Will this result in good tracking?—Walter Laning, Garden Grove, Calif.

To reiterate the oft-repeated rule: You should never set the tracking force lower than the minimum recommended by the pickup manufacturer. If, for example, the pickup specification calls for a tracking force of 1 to 2 grams, you might start at 2 grams and gradually reduce the setting until you encounter mistracking or audible distortion attributable to poor stylus-to-groove contact, then raise it slightly (perhaps by 1/4 gram). If you cannot get good tracking within the pickup’s specified range, you have a problem: The pickup is a poor choice for the arm or you are trying to track excessively warped records, etc. A setting that is a little too low is worse (both sonically and in terms of record damage) than one that is a little too high. An extremely low minimum setting on the arm simply allows for a wider range of cartridges than an arm whose settings are too high. And since you do have distortion (another result of poor carrier recovery), we suspect the recordings rather than the equipment.

I recently purchased a Sony TC-161SD Dolby cassette deck, with which I am very pleased. Could I use the Dolby circuitry, with some minor surgery, to receive Dolby FM broadcasts on my Dynaco FM-57?—Neil K. Disney, Annapolis, Md.

We wouldn’t advise it. The surgery will void your warranty and might compromise performance of the deck. And if a repairman should later try to service your altered deck following an unaltered service manual, it could be disastrous.
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Scuttlebutt in the Video Pressroom

Following the almost-simultaneous demonstrations of the Philips/MCA and RCA video disc systems (see "News and Views," June), there naturally has been a good deal of off-the-cuff comparison of the two. Our man on the scene attests that both worked satisfactorily but adds that the Philips/MCA demonstrations were more impressive simply because of the quality of the program material available for the video/cinema software business.

One observer with years of experience in the television industry tells us that in his opinion RCA seems to have a significant edge in terms of player manufacture and wonders whether the laser scanner that the Philips people talk of so confidently may not prove far more difficult to produce than the RCA capacitance transducer—particularly if Philips and MCA plan to stick to the announced selling prices. But he and others have some doubts about how RCA may handle its product, however viable. One slyly suggested it might be called DynaVision instead of SelectaVision—a reference to the disappointments to which RCA's marketing subjected the basically good Dynagroove concept of disc cutting.

Recently, Philips/MCA has announced that Magnavox will market its optical scan Videodisc system. Test marketing will begin in 1976; the formal on-sale date is tentatively set for 1977. Two years away. In that time anything can happen.

New Cassette Tapes in Town . . .

One is called Super Avilyn and is made by TDK, the other is called UDXL and is made by Maxell, and both really are different. Each is a cobalt formulation. TDK says that Super Avilyn contains an "entirely new magnetic particle" using ferric oxide plus cobalt (although not in the familiar "doping" manner) plus other "proprietary elements." Maxell claims to have developed "a unified crystal growth with ferric oxide inside and cobalt ferrite outside" so that "the dispersion of the two substances becomes absolutely complete and uniform." Each contends that its tape surpasses chromium dioxide in performance and head-wear characteristics.

Super Avilyn requires the bias and equalization characteristics of chromium dioxide and comes in cassettes having the CrO₂ key well for automatic switching in decks so equipped. To this extent, then, it appears to be interchangeable with chromium dioxide. There is, however, one difference that shows up among the highly encouraging data being given out by TDK: sensitivity 1½ dB or more above that of popular CrO₂ brands. That is, a signal recorded at the same level on both will reproduce more than 1½ dB higher from Super Avilyn than from the chromes. This suggests that Dolby tracking of the chrome setting...
BANG & OLUFSEN CREATED
THIS HIGH PERFORMANCE AUTOMATIC TURNTABLE
FOR THE CRITICAL LISTENER.

DON'T BE MISLED BY ITS SIMPLICITY.

THE BEOGRAM 3000.

At Bang & Olufsen, we understand that many listeners seeking high specification audio equipment are comforted by the sight of an array of knobs and levers, topped off by an impressive counterbalance.

We also know that such an arrangement can hamper smooth performance by getting between the listener and the music.

So we designed the Beogram 3000 with many of these technical functions out of sight. And made them automatic, as well. Anti-skating, for instance, is controlled by a ball-bearing system within the tone-arm assembly. It’s fully automatic because we created our own cartridge and tonearm to form a single system. Thus, superior tracking is assured. And distortion is avoided. Engineering each component this way explains why the cartridge is part of our $300 price. As well as the base and dust cover.

A simple activator-disc controls most of the turntable operations. It starts the platter at the correct speed, lowers, cues, suspends and returns the tonearm.

Design that grows out of such logic has placed eight Bang & Olufsen products in the permanent design collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

We’ve made it all quite simple for this simple reason: since you can’t hear knobs and levers, why should you see them? (Or bother with them?) What you will hear is the uncompromising reproduction of sound. Swiftly and effortlessly.

Which leaves you with only one fearsome intellectual challenge.

Mahler or Midler.

Bang & Olufsen
Narrowing the gap between man and music.
should be readjusted for optimum use with Super Avilyn.

UDXL needs no special biasing, and Maxell's figures—which are not directly comparable with TDK's—show that its new tape, at 1,000 Hz, has 5 dB greater dynamic range than "conventional high quality cassettes," with an "improved output level of 4 dB at low and mid frequencies and 6 dB at high frequencies." As a bonus, the leader at each end is five seconds of head-cleaning tape. And Maxell is making a big point of the fine tolerances and precision of UDXL's new cassette shell itself.

The C-60 size of Super Avilyn sells for $3.59, of UDXL for $4.89. UDXL's C-90 costs $6.89; Super Avilyn's is still to come.

...And More on the Way

Fuji tapes are expected on the American market this summer. These tapes, which are made by the same company as Fuji films, are considered a quality line in Japan but have been available here only in limited quantities and marketed under other brand names.

And yet another new tape may be in the offing from TDK. Following its announcement of Super Avilyn (above), it circulated samples of an experimental formulation that—like Maxell's UDXL (also above), to which it seems comparable—is supposed to outperform conventional ferrics without the need for special biasing and/or equalization. No type designation (other than a factory lot number) has been assigned to it yet though a TDK spokesman referred to it (unofficially) as a "super ED."

High Fidelity Goes to the Movies

Sansui's QS quadriphonic matrixing has shown up in an unexpected place: the movie theater. More unexpected, perhaps, is that it's part of a five-channel sound system.

The soundtrack of the screen version of Tommy (the rock opera written by Peter Townshend and The Who), released by Columbia Pictures, consists of three tracks, two of which are QS-matrixed so that they can be reproduced like home quadriphonics; the third track feeds speakers behind the screen for the fifth channel. To further enhance the sonics, the recording uses DBX noise reduction—partly to free the sound from the heavy compression that traditionally has been considered necessary in cinemaphonics and has stifled the impact of many a movie score.

Speaking of noise reduction, the first "Dolby movie" we know of is Steppenwolf, starring Max von Sydow and Dominique Sanda, which was released last December.

Meanwhile the Earthquake soundtrack, which is reproduced via loudspeakers built by Cerwin Vega and BGW amplifiers, has won an Oscar. High fidelity seems to be going Hollywood—or vice versa.

Equipment in the News

ESS introduces high-efficiency Tempest series

There is a fresh group of Heil Air Motion Transformer loudspeakers available from ESS through its new Tempest Division. Even the most ambitious, the Tempest Lab Series 1, is said to require little more than 10 watts (per channel) in the driving amplifier, though it is rated to handle 60 watts (continuous). That model is rated for a response of 30 Hz to 25 kHz and has a 12-inch woofer. Three other systems are somewhat smaller, but all use the new "power ring" tweeter and are rated for 120 degrees of horizontal dispersion, 40 degrees vertical. Prices start at $99.

Audio signal processing center from Bozak

The latest in Bozak's recently introduced line of home electronics is the Model 919, an unusually flexible stereo preamp-control unit that includes mike input with pan pot, mixing of up to three inputs (phono 1, mike, and one other: phono 2, tuner, aux, or either of two tape inputs), three-range (base, mid, treble) tone equalizers for each channel, and a blend control that can be varied continuously from mono to augmented stereo. In addition, a "cue selector" allows previewing one input via the monitor system while another is selected—and, for example, being recorded via the tape outputs. The Model 919 costs $797; the walnut case is optional.

CIRCLE 150 ON READER-SERVICE CARD
Are we really number three?

A recent survey by the leading audio magazine found Sherwood in third place among all stereo receivers, in terms of the "brand bought most last year."

This report both pleased and confused us. Since we barely showed up in previous annual tallies, the evidence of sudden fame and popularity was certainly welcome.

Unfortunately, it didn't make any statistical sense. After all, we're the people who make this gear, and we ought to know how many units we put together in a year's time, and we promise you that the total doesn't even approach what the giants are doing.

Maybe there was another message in that score.

So we reviewed the survey a little more closely, and remembered that it was a subscriber survey, meaning that it automatically did not include the large general mass market for high fidelity equipment, where most of the big volume is.

In other words, the survey was biased, in favor of the sophisticated, expert, deeply involved audio enthusiast: the man who takes his listening seriously.

Among this specialized group, Sherwood registered a third place position.

Which would make sense statistically, since the numbers are smaller.

And on a performance-per-dollar basis as well, since the standards are higher.

S7210
Minimum RMS power output @ 0.8% maximum total harmonic distortion, both channels driven: 26 watts per channel @ 8 ohms, 20-20,000 Hz.
Front panel switching of 4-channel decoder [doubles as second tape monitor].
Price: $299.95

For color brochure on Sherwood's complete line, send $25 (handling & shipping) with your name and address to: Sherwood Electronic Laboratories, 4300 N. California Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60618.

SHERWOOD
The word is getting around.
New Thorens features electronic shutoff

The latest Thorens turntable, the TD-145C, incorporates an electronic sensing system that responds to rapid arm motion at the leadout groove, or when the arm is accidentally knocked out of position, by raising the arm and shutting off the unit's slow-speed hysteresis drive motor. The two-speed (33 and 45) belt-drive system has dual shock suspension; the arm is equipped with a magnetic antiskating device. The price is $299.95 from Elpa Marketing, which imports all Thorens products.

CIRCLE 146 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Pickering's "second-generation" CD-4 pickup

The XUV/4500Q phono cartridge from Pickering, unlike many models capable of playing CD-4 Quadradiscs, will track in the vicinity of 1 gram VTF, according to the company. Pickering adds that experience with its first round of CD-4 pickups has led to new design approaches and hence to an entirely new design. The Quadrahedral stylus-tip configuration has been retained. The pickup retails for $139.95.

CIRCLE 147 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Medium-priced receiver added by Harman-Kardon

The 430 is the newest stereo FM/AM receiver in the Harman-Kardon line. Its amplifier section is rated at 25 watts per channel at 0.5% THD with a power bandwidth of 10 Hz to 40 kHz and response from 4 Hz to 140 kHz and excellent square-wave response. FM sensitivity is rated at 1.9 microvolts and capture ratio at 1.7 dB. Ultimate signal-to-noise ratio is said to be 77 dB, and tuner THD 0.7% even in stereo. The 430 is priced at $319.95.

CIRCLE 148 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Advent makes a mono radio—FM, of course

The newest model from Advent is the 400, an extremely compact two-piece FM radio designed specifically for optimum mono performance. By taking this approach, Advent claims, it has been able to achieve performance beyond that to be expected in circuitry that makes compromises between the demands of stereo and those of mono. The sleek ensemble, housed in matching white molded cases, retails for $125.

CIRCLE 149 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

AKG designs a "bio-acoustic" headset

In introducing the AKG K-140 headphones, Philips Audio Products points to the joining of the lightweight self-adjusting headband and the specially designed transducers as features that make the model uniquely adapted to the anatomic and physiological needs of its users. Bass response, for example, is said to be unaffected by the shape of the wearer's ears. The new model is priced at $34.50.

CIRCLE 149 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Russound announces its superswitcher

We knew this one was on the way many months ago, but now that it's finally here we're still startled by it. Russound calls it the QT-1 Master Audio Control Center and Patchbay: a quadriphonic signal-switching box with provision for equalizer, noise reduction (encode/decode or single-ended), matrix decoder, or CD-4 demodulator—any sort of signal-processing device. It can be switched for mixing, dubbing, playing, recording—whatever. It costs $249.95.

CIRCLE 151 ON READER-SERVICE CARD
The new Heathkit AA-1640 is one powerful stereo amplifier—200 watts, minimum RMS, per channel into 8 ohms at less than 0.1% total harmonic distortion from 20-20,000 Hz.

That massive power virtually eliminates one of the most common forms of distortion—clipping. Driving low or medium-efficiency speakers (like acoustic suspension) to a moderate listening level may require 20 watts per channel. But a momentary musical peak that's twice as loud as the average level requires 10 dB more power—that's 200 watts per channel. If your amplifier can't deliver that much, the peak is "clipped" off. That destroys the music's dynamic range, making it sound dull, constricted and unrealistic. Clipping also produces rough, raspy harmonics that can actually damage tweeters. You simply won't believe how good "unclipped" music can sound until you hear the AA-1640.

And what you don't hear sounds good, too. Harmonic and intermodulation distortion are under 0.1° at any power level from 0.25 watts to full power. We think that makes them absolutely inaudible. Hum and noise are also inaudible—100 dB below full output. And you can enjoy all that quiet because the AA-1640 requires no fan. Even as a PA amplifier, its massive heat sinks need only normal ventilation.

The optional backlit meters are unusually useful. They monitor the power output directly in watts from 0.2 to 200 watts into 8 ohms and in decibels from 30 to +3 dB. Special ballast circuitry allows the meters to respond to peaks as short as a record click, making them extremely effective overload indicators. The meters can be added to the basic AA-1640 during or after construction.

It almost takes an engineer to appreciate the AA-1640's conservative, reliable design—direct-coupled, differential input amplifier, 16 output transistors (8 per channel) in parallel, quasi-complementary configuration, 12 pounds of diecast heat-sinking, a 25-pound power supply transformer, dissipation limiting, automatic thermal shutdown, and output compensation to make the AA-1640 unconditionally stable with any load. A special relay circuit prevents power on/off thumps from reaching your speakers and protects them from DC and extremely low frequency AC. In an exclusive Heath design, speaker fuses are located in the primary feedback loop where they don't degrade bass clarity by lowering its greater than 50 damping factor. And its 1.5V input sensitivity is compatible with most stereo preamplifiers.

But it doesn't take an engineer to hear how great the AA-1640 sounds. Its massive power and incredibly low distortion make a big difference. For the first time you'll hear how good your system really is—solid bass, free of boom and distinct, note for note...spacious, effortless, mid-range...realistic, high-definition treble. Combine that with the exciting dynamic range that rivals a live performance and inaudible distortion and you've got sound that's nothing less than spectacular.

And when you compare performance and reliability, we think you'll agree that the price is spectacular, too—just $439.95 in kit form. The optional AAA-1640-1 meter accessory kit is just $69.95 and if you buy the amplifier and meters together you pay just $489.95—a savings of $20.

Build the Heathkit "Super-Amp"—make your music sound its very best.

Send for your FREE 1975 Heathkit Catalog—the world's largest selection of electronic kits!
HiFi-Crostic No. 2

by William Petersen

DIRECTIONS

To solve these puzzles—and they aren’t as tough as they first seem—supply as many of the Output words as you can in the numbered dashes following the Input. Unless otherwise specified in the Input, the Output consists of one English word. "Comp." means compound, or hyphenated, word.

Transfer each letter to the square in the diagram that bears the corresponding number. After only a few correct guesses you should begin to see words and phrases emerging in the diagram, which when filled in will contain a quotation related to music, recordings, or audio.

The words in the quotation are separated by darkened squares and do not necessarily end at the end of a row.

Try to guess at these words and transfer each newly decoded letter back to its appropriate dash in the Output. This will supply you with further clues.

A final clue: The source of the quotation—the author and his work—will be spelled out by the first letters in the Output, reading down.

The answer to HiFi Crostic No. 2 will appear in next month’s issue of HIGH FIDELITY.

Solution to last month’s HiFi-Crostic appears on page 4.
We make receivers, tape recorders and speakers. We're good at it. Because we've been putting most of our energy into our products. Not our advertising.

After all, if our products weren't any good then you wouldn't want them. No matter how big our name was.

But the fact remains someone can make the best components in the world and still not sell many of them because not enough people know about them. That doesn't mean we're going to tell you our components are the best in the world. No one can say that.

What we're saying is this: We're going to start telling you more about them. But there's going to be no false promises, no empty claims. We're going to tell you exactly what we make. And how to get the most out of it.

We're going to prove that a sale doesn't end when you walk out of the store. We're going to do some things to shake up this business. And turn a few heads.

We have some big names to compete with. You know who they are. So from now on the underdog is going to look more and more like the topdog.

Because that's exactly what we intend to be.

If you're going to get big, you gotta be good.

We're good.

AKAI
An open and shut case for owning this incredible new $125 cartridge.

Designed for only the most sophisticated stereo and CD-4 equipment.

Our new Super XLM MK II is the finest cartridge you can own. It was engineered solely for the true audiophile and the serious music listener who own the very finest components.

It embodies principles found in no other cartridges, as evidenced by our U.S. Patent. It features a unique “induced magnet” whereby the magnet is fixed and the magnetism is induced into a tiny hollow soft-iron collar. This collar in turn moves between the pole pieces thereby allowing for a major reduction in the mass of the moving system. This LOW MASS permits the Shibata type stylus to trace the most intricate modulations of stereo and CD-4 record grooves with a feather-light tracking force—as low as ¾ of a gram.

This results in super-linear pick up especially at the higher frequencies of the audible spectrum, which other cartridges either distort or fail to pick up at all. This low tracking force also assures minimal erosion and a longer playing life for the records.

This family of LOW MASS Cartridges is also offered with elliptical diamond stylus for stereo play exclusively—the XLM MK II ($100) and VLM MK II ($75).

Audition the ADC MK II cartridges at your hi-fi dealer and hear the incredible improvement. For specifications, write ADC.

AUDIO DYNAMICS CORPORATION
A BSR Company • New Milford, Conn. 06776

Comment: We've been waiting for this one for quite some time. It includes Sansui's Vario-Matrix circuitry, which is similar in intent (though not in operation) to "logic" in matrix decoders. The logic circuits lean heavily on what is known as "gain riding"—electronics that automatically adjust levels in the four channels from moment to moment to achieve a psychoacoustic effect of increased separation; Vario-Matrix varies the blend coefficients of the matrix circuitry instead, also for the purpose of giving an impression of greater separation in the perceived sound of complex quadriphonic placements. The present Vario-Matrix system evidently is the result of some refinement by Sansui and its semiconductor suppliers. Interim versions have been used in demonstrations for many months and appear to have been built without benefit of the full integrated-circuit complement or the precise circuitry incorporated in the QRX-7001.

It's not just a matrix decoder unit, of course, but an exceptionally versatile receiver. The FM scale (with Sansui's usual equidistant spacing between channels) and that for AM are below a series of lighting indicators, one for stereo FM reception and the remainder for operation mode, including one that lights up on detection of a CD-4 carrier. At the left of the dial are signal-strength and channel-centering meters; to the right are a 2/4-channel indicator and the tuning knob.

Immediately below the dial are power on/off switch, high and low filter buttons, mode buttons (CD-4/discrete, SQ, QS, surround synthesizer, hall synthesizer, 2-channel front-only, and a back on switch for stereo use), and three coin-slot rotary controls for adjusting CD-4 performance (carrier level, left separation, right separation).

Across the bottom are the remaining controls. The speaker switch has positions for two sets (separately or together) and off. Stereo headphone jacks are provided for front and back signal pairs. There are separate calibrated bass and treble controls for front and back signal pairs, ganged front and back left/right balance controls, and a separate front/back balance. The remaining knobs are for volume and selector (phono, FM auto, FM mono with no muting, AM). Between them are pushbuttons for loudness compensation, tape monitors 1 and 2, and aux input selection.

The aux and both tape inputs are quadriphonic sets, as are both tape outputs; the phono input is, of course, stereo only. All are pin jacks. There is a DIN input/output jack as an alternate for the tape-2 front connections, an FM discriminator output (another pin jack) is provided for a quadriphonic broadcast adapter, should a discrete method be approved by the FCC. Antenna connections for 300-ohm FM lead-in or long-wire AM are knurled binding posts that accept bare wires or spade lugs; a screw-and-clamp connector is provided for 75-ohm FM antennas. The speaker terminals are the spring-loaded type intended for bare-wire leads. There are two AC convenience outlets, one of which is switched by the QRX-7001's on/off button.

In the lab the electronics with which the receiver accomplishes all its basic tasks turn out to be better than the specifications in all but a few particulars. The amplifier section, for example, is rated at 35 watts per channel (a good deal of muscle as 4-channel receivers go) at 0.4% THD. It meets these specs with room to spare at all test frequencies and output levels. Intermodulation, too, is well below the 0.4% spec, and response is both more linear and broader in range than the specs suggest.

In the FM section the mono performance exceeds the specs (although capture ratio, at 2.3 dB, proved a little poorer than the claimed 1.5 dB) and the mono quieting curve is exemplary for a product of this type. Stereo performance is not as good. Response and separation both are excellent. But distortion in our test sample, even at 1 kHz, measures a little higher than the under-0.5% specified and apparently contributes to the unimpressive stereo quieting curve, which shows that fairly strong (55-microvolt) signals are needed to receive stereo at all and that noise and distortion remain somewhat higher than

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ideal (50 dB of quieting constitutes fine performance; our test sample measures about 40 dB) even at high signal strengths.

The proof of this particular pudding is in its quadriphonic performance, however. The Vario-Matrix is certainly among the most satisfactory matrix decoders we have worked with. It does enhance apparent separation and closely approximates the unequivocal placements of discrete quadriphonics. But like even the best SQ logic systems, it is not without some audible side effects; specifically, there are times when one can hear the Vario-Matrix "action" working. We have yet to encounter an enhanced matrix playback system about which we have not—in some setup and with some program material—found this to be true. But we have heard none demonstrably superior to Vario-Matrix.

The data for QS performance most vividly suggest what Vario-Matrix will do. Those for SQ are not as good, though in theory (and assuming equally well designed basic matrix circuits) the system should enhance both equally. The limiting factor here appears to be the SQ matrix section itself, rather than the Vario-Matrix enhancement applied to it.

In QS, then, Vario-Matrix achieves approximately Sansui's talked-about design goal of 20 dB of separation among all four channels at 1kHz. In testing with "center" signals (equal signals recorded in adjacent pairs of channels) the separation measures about 20 dB or better front-to-back and back-to-front, in the neighborhood of 10 dB side-to-side. Separation figures in this latter test measure only about half as good in SQ. Noise and distortion measurements also are not quite as good in SQ as in QS.

A comparison of response and separation figures measured through the QRX-7001 show good linearity: better than ±3 dB in all channels but right front for QS, and all but left back in SQ. Note that phono signals do not reach the matrix section via the CD-4 demodulator in the 7001 than ±3 dB in all channels but right front for QS, and all but left back in SQ. Note that phono signals do not reach the matrix section via the CD-4 demodulator in the 7001. The midband range separation, too, confirms the fine 20-dB figure. "Midrange" here (and in both QS and SQ) should be taken as the range between about 400 and 6,000 Hz. Beyond these points the separation dissolves quite rapidly in most of the measurements—as it does in other quadriphonic equipment (including CD-4) we've measured. (As we've pointed out before, it is the midrange in which the primary aural localization clues take place; separation outside this range is far less important for that reason.) The midband separation figures shown under "Additional Data" are, of course, all "worst-case." For example the 7 1/4 dB of QS separation shown in the LF channel was measured at 6 kHz with an LB input; other separation figures with this input, and those with the RF input, were approximately twice as high, while those with the RB input all were above 29 dB.

The CD-4 demodulator section of the QRX-7001 is unlike any we've tested before. Using our "standard" JVC pickup and the setup disc supplied with the receiver (and cut for Sansui by JVC) as a reference, we had difficulty achieving optimum settings of the subcarrier and separation adjustments. With one sample we lost subcarrier lock altogether in trying to adjust separation with Sansui's disc. But with regular Quadradics, we have used two samples for satisfactory playback with a variety of cartridges. In one instance we found we were getting adequate quadriphonic reproduction with a regular stereo cartridge, though the demodulator had been preset for a different (CD-4) pickup! And curiously, poor settings of the CD-4 adjustments for the cartridge in use made themselves felt more as a loss of clear separation than as the gross distortion that we have experienced with other demodulators. Hence Quadradisc reproduction with a poorly adjusted setup seems less likely to be aurally offensive with the QRX-7001.

The data shown in the curves and under "Additional Data" were measured by setting up the unit using our own test record (rather than the supplied record) and a certain amount of cut-and-try. We ended up with the carrier adjustment set three calibration points below full clockwise rotation and the separation controls full clockwise. The optimum setting will, of course, vary with the cartridge used; those having a higher output should be easier to set up for that reason.

We had been highly impressed with past Vario-Matrix descriptions and public demonstrations and had hoped to
### Sansui QRX-7001 Additional Data

#### Tuner Section
- **Capture ratio**: 2.3 dB
- **Alternate-channel selectivity**: 70 dB
- **S/N ratio**: 73 dB
- **THD**: Mono L ch: 0.13% R ch: 0.69%
- **IM distortion**: 0.16%
- **19-kHz pilot**: -65 dB
- **38-kHz subcarrier**: below -67 dB
- **Frequency response**
  - Mono: ±1 dB, 25 Hz to 15 kHz
  - R ch: +1, -1/4 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz
- **Channel separation**: >40 dB, 130 Hz to 3.8 kHz
  - >30 dB, 36 Hz to 10 kHz

#### Amplifier Section
- **Damping factor**: 23
- **Input characteristics (for 35 watts output)**
  - Sensitivity phono: 2.25 mV 67 dB
  - aux: 95 mV 86 dB
  - tape 1 & 2: 95 mV 86 dB
- **Total harmonic distortion**: 35 watts output <0.17%, 20 Hz to 20 kHz
  - >0.11%, 20 Hz to 20 kHz
- **Intermodulation distortion**
  - 8-ohm load: <0.18% for 50.4 watts
  - 4-ohm load: <0.20% for 66.5 watts
  - 16-ohm load: <0.17% for 35.6 watts
- **RIAA equalization accuracy**
  - +1, -1/4 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz

#### QS Decoder Section
- **Relative response at 1 kHz**
  - LF ch: ±3 dB, 40 Hz to 15 kHz
  - RF ch: ±3/4 dB, 40 Hz to 15 kHz
- **Frequency response**
  - LF ch: ±2% dB, 40 Hz to 15 kHz
  - RF ch: ±3% dB, 40 Hz to 15 kHz
- **Harmonic distortion**
  - LF ch: 1.2% RF ch: 1.2% 
  - LB ch: 1.5% RB ch: 1.5%
- **S/N ratio (re 1 kHz 0 dB; preamp, decoder, & power amp)**
  - LF ch: 59 dB RF ch: 59 dB 
  - LB ch: 57 dB RB ch: 57% dB

#### CD-4 Demodulator Section
- **Relative response at 1 kHz**
  - LF ch: ±4 dB, 70 Hz to 10 kHz
  - RF ch: ±5 dB, 70 Hz to 10 kHz
- **Frequency response**
  - LF ch: ±4 dB, 70 Hz to 10 kHz
  - RF ch: ±5 dB, 70 Hz to 10 kHz
- **Simultaneous-tone "crosstalk"**
  - LF ch: <0.1% RF ch: <0.1% 
  - LB ch: <0.1% RB ch: <0.1%
- **Channel separation, 400 Hz to 6 kHz**
  - LF ch: >7% RF ch: >6% 
  - LB ch: >13% RB ch: >14%
- **S/N ratio (re 1 kHz 0 dB; preamp, demodulator, & amp)**
  - LF ch: 52 dB RF ch: 42 dB 
  - LB ch: 53 dB RB ch: 43% dB

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*Figures shown are "worst-case"; average separation within the specified range is much better. See text for example.*

*S/N measurements are unweighted. When hum was filtered out, the two matrix decoder sections measured about 1 to 2 dB better in all channels, the large component of the total noise—though, because of its low frequency, not necessarily of the audible noise—in the demodulator.

find this receiver the best all-around quadriphonic model to date. In working with specific samples we can say unequivocally that the QRX-7001 easily has the finest QS section around, and its simulation section (the hall and surround effects) is probably the most versatile and useful of any on the market. But our reservations about the CD-4 and SQ sections prevent declaring this model a clear winner. It represents, rather, one important development in the current state of the quadriphonic art.

CIRCLE 145 ON READER-SERVICE CARD
A Moderately Priced Bookshelf Speaker from RTR

The Equipment: RTR EXP-12, a full-range speaker system in wood enclosure. Dimensions: 25½ by 14¼ inches (front); 11½ inches deep. Price: $139. Warranty: three years parts and labor; shipping paid one way. Manufacturer: RTR Industries, Inc., 8116 Deering Ave., Canoga Park, Calif. 91304.

Comment: The RTR EXP-12 is a recent entry in the "middle price" range of air-suspension speaker systems. It uses a 12-inch woofer and a 4-inch tweeter. (RTR also offers an 8-inch version, the EXP-8 at $89.) The unit is fairly conventional in appearance, but a novel feature is the inclusion of a circuit breaker at the rear as a safety device against possible overload. The rear also contains the connections (red and black colored binding posts) and a continuously variable tweeter level control. The EXP-12 may be positioned horizontally or vertically.

Rated for 8 ohms impedance, the EXP-12's measured nominal impedance (just above the bass rise) is 7 ohms. Above the rating point the impedance increases gradually across the band. Efficiency is moderately low, though not as low as in some air-suspension systems. The EXP-12 needs 3 watts of input to produce the standard output test level of 94 dB (at 1 meter on axis). It can handle steady-state power to 32 watts, for an output of 105 dB, before distorting excessively. The circuit breaker trips short of the rating point (between minimum and maximum rotation) at about 100 watts in this test. With pulsed input the speaker handles up to 193 watts (average), to produce an output of 116 dB, before excessive distortion. The data here, in sum, indicates good dynamic range. The manufacturer recommends driving the unit with amplifiers or receivers rated for 20 to 80 watts per channel, and the lab measurements confirm this as an appropriate rating.

The measured frequency response—for which CBS Labs sets any controls at their midposition when, as here, no specific recommendation is supplied with the product—shows a gradually rolled off high end that can be brought up somewhat (about 5 dB in on-axis measurements) by rotating the rear balance control to its maximum (number 10) position. This control's effect starts with a 1-dB difference (between minimum and maximum rotation) at about 1,000 Hz and increases up the scale, with maximum effect (8 dB) between 6,000 and 10,000 Hz. There are approximately 5-dB differences from 3 to 5.5 kHz and from 11 to 20 kHz. An instruction sheet furnished with other samples of the speaker, however, recommends leaving this control at or near the maximum (10) position for average listening conditions, and we agree. In this position the EXP-12 "listens" far better than the curves look.

The output generally is well dispersed. At about 4 kHz a moderate amount of directivity becomes evident, but it doesn't increase significantly as you move up the scale. A 10-kHz tone is clearly audible well off axis of the system; so is a 12-kHz tone, but within a narrower angle. Tones above 12 kHz are audible primarily on axis, with an apparent dip to inaudibility beginning at about 14.5 kHz.

At the low end of the response band, doubling begins at about 50 Hz and continues increasingly as frequency is lowered. Deep bass response is, of course, affected by speaker placement. With the unit on a shelf and near a corner, we judged it clean and firm (above average perhaps, for the price class); with floor placement, some listeners found it on the weak side and output below about 40 Hz to be mostly doubling.

The RTR EXP-12 precipitated sharply divergent opinions in our listening panel. Some listeners found the treble entirely adequate; others felt that it could use a little more brightness even in the maximum position. The latter group tended to complain of some "boxiness," while others commented on the speaker's freedom from boxiness. A/B comparisons between the EXP-12 and another (three-way) system at a somewhat higher price seemed especially revealing. One listener in particular found the EXP-12 wanting in highs by comparison but commented that he believed it to be the "more musical" and the one he would prefer.

RTR EXP-12 Harmonic Distortion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output (dB)</th>
<th>80 Hz</th>
<th>300 Hz</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% 2nd</td>
<td>% 3rd</td>
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<tr>
<td>70</td>
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<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Distortion data are taken on all tested speakers until distortion exceeds the 10% level of the speaker produces the spurious output known as buzzing, whichever occurs first.
prefer to "live with." The explanation seems to lie in its freedom from midrange coloration—which, subjectively, makes the sound seem to have "less highs"—and from midrange ("presence") emphasis.

Obviously we can't tell, on the basis of our tests, how Stanton Makes Its Best Better


Comment: There can be no doubt that the latest 681, the "Triple E," is the best stereo pickup offered by Stanton and certainly one of the very best we have ever tested. It is the most recent model in Stanton's "calibration standard" series, which for some time has designated the company's top-of-the-line stereo pickups. Each one is tested individually by Stanton, and the performance data is enclosed with the unit. The deluxe packaging includes a screwdriver that is uniquely stylish, plus a small pillbox for holding extra styli (the 681 body accepts conical and 78-rpm styli, also made by Stanton) and mounting hardware. The cartridge comes with Stanton's "long hair" brush that sweeps the record groove ahead of the stylus. The stylus itself is a true elliptical with, in the words of CBS Labs, "excellent geometry" and measures 0.8 by 0.3 mils.

The manufacturer recommends a vertical tracking force range of 34 to 1.5 grams. In the SME arm (used in all CBS Labs pickup tests), the 681EEE was found to perform optimally near the middle of that range, at 1 gram, although it needed only 0.6 gram to negotiate the "torture test" bands of test records STR-120 and STR-100. Measurements were made using the 47,000-ohm load and 275-pifarad cable capacitance specified by Stanton. The results show unusually linear frequency response across the audio band, very close channel balance, and stereo separation consistently averaging better than 25 dB to beyond 10 kHz.

Output voltage (for a recorded velocity of 5 cm/sec peak) measures 3.3 and 3.2 millivolts on left and right channels, respectively—values that are well balanced and well suited for typical magnetic phono inputs on today's high-quality amplifiers or receivers. Vertical angle measures 18 degrees, and low-frequency resonance in the SME arm is adequately low at 7 Hz. Distortion measurements—both harmonic and IM—are lower than average. In maximum tracking level tests, the 681EEE handles signals of up to +12 dB (RIAA) at 300 Hz and at 1 kHz, and better than −5 dB in the 10 to 20-kHz region, with no signs of mistracking in this difficult high-frequency area.

In direct comparison with its predecessor, the 681EE, the Triple E exhibits definite improvement over an already very good pickup. In the newer model, response is smoother and separation more consistent, while such characteristics as distortion and groove-tracing ability are at least as good.

As may be expected, the cartridge "listens" as beautifully as it measures. The manufacturer states that it is designed for "critical listening," and we agree. It strikes us as a truly neutral pickup that can elicit the full range of sound engraved on a disc, and without faltering at the most demanding of groove modulations. It is the kind of pickup a sound enthusiast will want to try on such sonic blockbusters as the Solti / Chicago Symphony Orchestra recording of Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring (London CS 6885) or, for a different kind of sonic satisfaction with equal felicity, the demanding piano work in Beethoven sonates recorded by Claudio Arrau (Philips 6599 308).

Sony's Luxurious Vertical-FET Power Amp—A First

The Equipment: Sony Model TAN-8550, a basic stereo power amplifier in metal case with wood ends. Dimensions: 17 7/8 by 6 1/2 inches (front); 15 1/4 inches deep plus allowance for controls and connections. Price: $1,000. War-
ranty: two years, parts and labor. Manufacturer: Sony Corp., Japan; U.S. distributor: Sony Corp. of America, 9 W. 57th St., New York, N.Y. 10019.

Comment: FETs, long the darlings of preamp and FM-tuner design, now are making it in power amplifiers thanks to the so-called vertical FET, which can handle far more current than conventional FETs. Sony was not the first (nor the last) company to announce an FET amp for high fidelity purposes, but to our knowledge it was the first to produce one. There are, in fact, two: the present model and the TA-4650 integrated amp.

The basic claim made for FETs and VFETs vs. bipolar transistors is basically similar to that frequently made for tubes vs. transistors (which, until now, has meant strictly bipolar transistors in power circuits): that their broad area of linear response makes possible circuitry of extremely low inherent distortion without massive "corrective" feedback and that their wide dynamic range passes instantaneous peak "overloads" with less trouble.

The distortion in the TAN-8550 is indeed extremely low—so low that it puts a severe premium on the quality of the test equipment used to document it. CBS Labs measured nothing higher than 0.03% THD at the rated 100-watt output and at any frequency! At 1% of rated power the measured distortion (which in many amps is driven up at low power by noise content in the output) is virtually identical to that at full power; at half power midrange distortion is lower still. IM, too, is extremely low. With an 8-ohm load it remains below 0.02% over the entire operating range and actually drops to half this figure at the minimum output tested by the lab (0.125 watt). As usual in solid-state amps, IM is a little higher with a 4-ohm load, a little lower into 16 ohms; but all of the IM measurements made by the lab are below 0.1%!

The operating controls are somewhat unconventional. The front panel has an on/off pushbutton with a built-in pilot light. Near it is a peak-reading light-beam metering system similar to that of the TAE-8450 preamp (HF test report, March 1975), but without its multiple-mode (including peak-hold) options. Below, in a recessed section of the front panel, are a rotary speaker selector (B/off/A/A+B), a level control that is used only for the B output when it is used alone, meter-sensitivity buttons: "X 1," which shows output-level values from 1 to 200 watts, and "X 1/10" for use at lower levels and measuring outputs between 0.1 and 20 watts. Meter calibration is for 8-ohm loads. Since the meter essentially responds to output voltage, rather than to power itself, correction must be made for other load impedances, as explained in the exceptionally good owner's manual. At the right are separate level knobs for each channel and affecting all positions of the front-panel selector. That is, the knob for the B output is in series with these separate knobs; when it is at full rotation the B output still is attenuated by the separate knobs.

Actually, however, there are three sets of speaker terminals (a positive-latching design, suitable for bared-wire leads, that we had not seen before) on the back panel: A, B, and "direct." The direct feed is live at all positions of the front-panel selector switch (even "off"); when that switch is in the B position the direct feed, like that for the B speaker pair, is affected by the B-speaker level control. Thus if you want to disable all speakers (perhaps for headphone listening) you can use the A and B connections alone; if you always have your main speakers on you can connect them to the direct output and run extensions off A and B; if you're such a purist you need two pairs of speakers for either/or use (depending on the type of music), you can connect the less efficient pair to A and use B for the more efficient pair, compensating for the efficiency difference at the B level control. The direct connection, because

Square-wave response. Upper 50-Hz photo made in "normal" mode, lower one in "test."
The "head amp" that isn't: The Sony TAE-8450 Preamp Revisited

Last March, in reviewing the preamp from the new premium Sony separates line (which also includes the power amplifier reviewed here), we commented on what Sony calls the preamp's "head amplifier" and which for that reason we took to be designed for use with direct feed from a tape deck's playback head. It is not.

It is intended as what is variously called a pre-ampifier or a microamp—amplification device for use ahead of the normal phono preamplifier with phono pickups of ultralow output. Unless given the extra boost—which may, alternatively, be supplied by a matching transformer—these signals are insufficient to drive the preamp (and hence the power amplifier) to rated output. They are, in other words, below the sensitivity rating of a normally-designed preamp.

A few companies (notably Ortofon) have offered such pickups over the years, and Sony evidently felt that a complete state-of-the-art preamp should allow—via built-in electronics—for their use. Hence its provision of the extra gain and the switchable input impedance to encompass the needs of virtually any such pickup. To repeat: The feature is not intended for use with tape heads, and our statements based on the assumption that it was are incorrect.

Sony TAN-8550 Amp Additional Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Damping factor</th>
<th>Sensitivity</th>
<th>S/N ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>157 (&quot;direct&quot;)</td>
<td>1.0 V</td>
<td>105 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 (&quot;A&quot; output)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The Telephonics "Fixler Effect" Headset—And Its Quadramate Simulator


Comment: We have been very unimpressed with the quadriphonics in most of the four-channel headsets we've tried and, frankly, approached the present model with a good deal of skepticism. Telephonics' statements implying that the TEL-101F would produce a four-channel effect closely comparable to that obtainable from loudspeakers seemed to invite faultfinding. Indeed, we found some faults; but in spite of them we're prepared to report, after testing the headset with a wide variety of quadriphonics both real and simulated, that it is the most satisfactory model we have worked with to date.

The element that seems to set the Telephonics apart is its Fixler Effect design, named after Jon Fixler (who had much to do with early breakthroughs in matrixed quadriphonics) and specifying a combination of driver placement within the earpieces and blending electronics. Each oversize earpiece contains two drivers—one toward the front and one toward the back of the shell. They are literally "front and back speakers on each side" like those of a quadriphonic speaker setup except that the headset's electronics must be relied on as a substitute for the acoustic blending that takes place in loudspeaker listening. A knob at the bottom of the left earpiece controls the degree of blend.

The Quadramate accessory is used where true quadriphonics are not available. It has a "perspective" slider that has much the same function as the headset's blend control plus a "focus" slider that controls relative separation in the quasi-quadriphonic output. At the lefthand position the slider reduces side-to-side separation and emphasizes front-to-back effects. As you move it to the right the left-to-right spacing opens up and even becomes somewhat exaggerated (apparently due to a phase difference introduced between channels) at the extreme right position.

The only other control on the Quadramate is a two-channel/four-channel switch. The input is, of course, stereo, and the effect remains similar to that of conventional stereo headphones with the switch in the two-channel position. When the switch is moved, the circuitry introduces front-to-back differentiation in the signals coming from the Quadramate's dual output headphone jacks.

Some of our test listeners confirmed that they heard sound that seemed to come from all around them—as in loudspeaker listening. Some found that they could hear sounds at the back but that front-centered soloists, for example, emerged toward the top of the head, rather than at the front. Others had a little difficulty with back-center sounds as well. The consensus was, however, that the imaging was superior to that from any quadriphonic headphone we have tried so far, though not always equal to that with loudspeakers. Certain sounds (in the original Chase record, for example) that are supposed to fly in a circle around the room, while fairly convincing in loudspeaker listening, proved difficult to image as a full circle via the headphones.

We have found before that subjective evaluations of headphones vary over a wider span than, perhaps, those for any other component. Some listeners seem basically to dislike the headphone experience; others prefer headphones to speakers. Our experience with the Fixler Effect phones carries this divergence of individual response into new areas, with the differences between the way various listeners heard the quadriphonic placements both striking and fascinating. Opinions about the Quadramate, too, were divergent. There seemed to be agreement that it is about oh a par with other simulation devices, but opinions tended to be colored by how satisfactory each listener found the basic experience of headset quadriphonics. One disserter says he prefers "to move around in" the four-channel image instead of having it "move with my head"—as it must with headphones. Another listener points out that headphones keep him at "optimum position" wherever he moves—which speakers don't.

The sound of the TEL-101F is good, considering the $60 price and the double driver complement, but we found it somewhat wanting in deep-bass response. With a strong bass boost (about 10 dB at 50 Hz) at the tone controls we were more satisfied with the sound; the high end, which is quite smooth, open, and extended, needed no touchup. So by contrast to comparably priced (say, about $35) stereo-only headsets we found the bass a little below average, the treble better than average. Though the TEL-101F is relatively bulky, it is light (just over 1 pound, less cord) and reasonably comfortable. The foam cushion that rests on the ears produces some earmuff effect, but none of our listeners made serious complaint of overheated ears. The four-channel effect is, however, what this model is all about; and in that respect the Fixler Effect proves the biggest winner so far.

REPORTS IN PROGRESS:
- Nakamichi 550 battery-portable stereo cassette deck
- Dual auto-reverse stereo cassette deck
- Marantz 2325 Dolby-B stereo receiver
- Heath TM-1626 stereo mixer kit
Tone Arm Damping

The Overlooked Feature

Proper damping means better tracking, cleaner reproduction, reduced distortion, and clearer stereo.

by James Brinton

For most of us, half the fun of buying a new component is boning up on terms and specifications. Most audiophiles are steeped in "effective mass," "pivot friction," "skating force," and other tone-arm terms but have heard little about arm damping. Yet given a good design to start with—that is, one with low effective mass and low pivot friction—damping could contribute more to playback performance at less additional cost than almost any other tone-arm feature.

A properly damped tone arm and cartridge, compared with an otherwise identical combination, has these advantages: better tracking of warped records, cleaner reproduction of low-frequency information, greater immunity to shock and vibration, reduced high-frequency playback distortion, and—particularly with some of today's very-high-compliance phono cartridges—a dramatically solidified stereo image. In addition, because damping reduces or nearly eliminates the subsonic resonances characteristic of most arm-cartridge combinations, the once irksome task of matching an arm to a cartridge becomes simpler.

Damping appears under several labels. Pivot damping and viscous damping generally mean the same thing. There also is a related approach called "counterweight decoupling," which is far more common than viscous damping.

If damping is known to audio designers, and if it has all these advantages, why haven't manufacturers adopted it before? They have, in fact, and have been using it since the 1950s and perhaps before then, although never very widely.

Early examples of damped arms would be the 1960-vintage Weathers and ESL models; the Weathers unit (now reincarnated by Win Laboratories) was viscous damped while the ESL used a decoupled counterweight. Today, a list of damped tone arms would include British designs like the Decca, the KMAL, and the Audio and Design arms—all with viscous damping in one form or another. Arms with decoupled counterweights are widely available today on record changers and single-play units (Dual and Lenco, for example, have applied the idea with considerable success), and separate arms with this form of damping include the SME, the Audio-Technica, and the Connoisseur.

This is far from a complete list, since damping isn't one of those characteristics raved about in advertisements. Even if the engineering department realizes its value, the fact that damping is part of a design often gets lost somewhere in the sales and advertising departments. Thus, a feature that might help sell a tone arm can become a well-kept secret.

There is, to the sales-oriented executive or retailer, a rationale for ignoring viscous damping. It can be difficult to manage in shipment; perhaps worse, the inexpert audiophile might mistake the "feel" of an arm with viscous damping for that of one with high mass or friction, with the possible result being a lost sale.

How Arm Damping Works

Because counterweight decoupling is easier to manage in the factory, during shipment, and in the store, it is employed more often than viscous damping. It usually consists of a flexible coupling...
between the counterweight and the body of a tone arm—perhaps a sleeve or rod or doughnut of rubber or plastic. This allows the arm and the counterweight to vibrate independently to some extent. In practice, with a simple decoupled counterweight, an arm-cartridge combination will have two lower-amplitude resonant peaks instead of the single higher-amplitude peak that would have appeared without decoupling. So decoupling ameliorates, but does not fully eliminate, the problem of subsonic resonances.

Harder to implement, and less convenient for maker and retailer, viscous damping can do a much more thorough job of solving the resonance problem. In its simplest form, viscous damping, or pivot damping, consists of a drop or two of very thick fluid—heavy petroleum or one of the ubiquitous silicones perhaps—placed in the tone arm's bearings. The fluid serves two purposes: First, it reduces whatever friction there is in the pivot; and second, it drastically reduces the effect of sudden or large movements on the motion of the arm. But the smaller, slower movements necessary for accurate tracking even of warped records are not interfered with. This selectivity is pivot damping's most desirable feature. Shock, vibration, and resonances are damped out quickly; the desirable arm movements actually become smoother and less encumbered by friction.

Thus, viscous damping has the same relationship to the vibrations and movements of your tone arm that shock absorbers do to those of your automobile.

Anything mechanical vibrates. Obviously, if the tone arm vibrates while you are playing a record, the vibration is going to be coupled to the stylus cantilever of the phono cartridge. Think of the stylus tip as analogous to a wheel on an automobile and the semi-elastic cantilever suspension as an automobile spring. Shock can be transmitted both from the road to the auto body and from the body to the wheel via the spring.

Any stylus cantilever motion not due to groove modulations is—or becomes—distortion in the cartridge's output. The cartridge, after all, can't be expected to tell the difference between motion caused by the groove and that caused by the movements of the arm alone. Now while it is just about impossible to keep a mechanical system like an arm and cartridge assembly from vibrating, viscous damping can be used not only to keep the level of the vibration low, but also to make the arm-cartridge system stop vibrating sooner than it ordinarily would have. With today's very-low-friction arms, this is important.

When an arm-cartridge combination is "excited" into vibration by acoustical feedback, a warp, or a shock, it continues to move up and down or from side to side about its pivots at its resonant frequency—say, anywhere from about 15 Hz down, depending on the cartridge used, the mass of the arm, and other factors. The length of time it will continue bouncing will be inversely related to pivot friction. With current low-friction designs, a single shock can engender movements that might take minutes to die away naturally. Something else is needed, like a shock absorber, to stop the bounce quickly. Viscous damping does the job. Because it does, the cartridge will convert far less of the arm's movement into unwanted electrical output. And that means less distortion.

**Some Practical Tests**

How important is this? After all, you can't hear "sounds" below 20 Hz. True, but you can hear their effects—and enjoy their absence.

Lately the Boston Audio Society, with the guidance and encouragement of Dr. S. L. Phoenix of Cornell University's Department of Mechanical Engineering, has been experimenting with viscous damping. The results have been exciting.

Usually damping was added to existing tone arms, since it is a rare audiophile who has enough know-how to build his own arm. This was a sometimes sticky job (see the box for do-it-yourselfers), but the payoffs often were dramatic.

Some members of the group had experienced difficulties using the ADC XLM cartridge, for example. The cartridge got rave reviews and turned into something of an audio cult symbol. But its users had found that in some arms it could bottom out on warps, mistrack, or otherwise disappoint. With the tone arm damped, however, the XLM sailed unperturbed over warps and traced grooves with less distortion than ever.

Similarly, some members had complained that the Shure V-15 Type III (which also has plenty of admirers so appreciative as to represent something of a cult) produced "a somewhat vague
stereo image." Directionality and placement of instruments weren’t as sharp as with some other cartridges, they had felt. But when it was mounted in a damped tone arm, the Shure gave what its users now felt was near-pinpoint localization.

There were other experiences with other cartridges. Some experimenters reported cleaner, tighter bass reproduction. Some appeared to suffer less preamplifier overload in critical pickup-input combinations. A few reported no striking difference in performance, but almost all of these either had outdated tone arms with high mass or friction, or were using low-compliance phono cartridges.

The most demanding audiophiles—those with the most advanced arms and most compliant cartridges—noticed the most improvement. Could it be that the better the record-playing equipment, the greater the need for damping?

There was another side to these admittedly informal tests. Some of the group used good cartridges in marginal arms, added damping, and no-

Do-It-Yourself Tone-Arm Damping

If you are the adventurous sort—and handy—you can duplicate the experiments mentioned in the body of this article. They involve little investment in either time or money and can pay large dividends in improved phono reproduction.

Although several approaches were tried, the easiest to manage is the one described here. Not only is it simple to apply, but it also allows the user to vary the amount of damping and thus approach the optimum amount for his arm and cartridge. It was developed by Robert Graham of the MIT-Lincoln Laboratory.

The parts required are a nylon cable clamp, a nylon nut and bolt, some stiff brass wire, and a small amount of brass sheet stock. Lighter metal could be used and would, in fact, be preferable. Also necessary is a small trough—say, 1 inch in both depth and width and about 2½ inches long—capable of holding about half a cup of STP motor-oil additive.

The figure shows how these elements go together to form a tone-arm “damper.” Note that the amount of damping can be varied by pushing the clamp closer to, or farther away from, the arm’s pivots. In practice, the distance of the damping paddle from the pivots will be decided by the space between the turntable and the arm’s vertical shaft; the paddle must move freely with the arm as it tracks to the inner grooves of a record—it shouldn’t touch anything but the STP damping fluid.

Horizontal damping appears to be a bit less critical than vertical damping, so begin your experiments by epoxying a paddle at right angles to the wire and making it about ½ inch square. Attach the damping assembly to your arm and—carefully—pour the STP in the trough, covering the paddle. Leave room below the lip of the trough so that the fluid won’t lap over when you move the arm. (This is the messy part of homemade damping; but if you don’t spill, you won’t have to clean up.)

Now check for improved tracking of warped discs; with near-optimum damping, no movement of the stylus cantilever should be visible. The stylus cantilever and the cartridge body should appear to move as a unit. Increase or decrease the paddle area until you achieve this condition. If you have a set of test records, you might go further and optimize the paddle area for best low-frequency tracking or square-wave response.

Chances are that you will slightly over- or under-damp your arm, but your approximation will be close enough. After obtaining the correct amount of horizontal damping, add a vertical paddle and experiment with it until there is as little side-to-side cantilever movement as possible when playing warped or off-center records.

If all this seems a little bit ad hoc, bear in mind that it will give good results cheaply. But be warned: The experiment may convert you to an avid arm-damping enthusiast (as, obviously, it did me).—J.B.
ticed improved performance. Does this make damping a cure for so-so tone-arm design? No, but it might indicate that the movement of the past few years toward ever lower masses and friction may have reached a point of diminishing returns: Some resistance to arm motion may be desirable.

But why did things sound different? The group still is trying to answer this to its satisfaction, but there are some pretty fair guesses.

There are no absolutely flat records; arms and cartridges are continually being forced into resonance by nearly invisible warps. Higher-quality arms and cartridges, especially, respond readily to them. And there is no such thing as perfect acoustic isolation for any record player. Again the result is resonant vibration, this time triggered by shock, room vibration, and acoustic feedback.

Just getting these resonance products out of the cartridge's output should have cleaned up the sound, and seemingly did. After all, there was now less subsonic material and consequently less audible intermodulation between the resonances, their harmonics, and the music.

This freedom from subsonics may be especially important to owners of some super-preamps with response reaching almost to DC. Unless they are removed by damping, or filtered out electronically, signals due to arm-cartridge resonances not only could enter the preamp at levels several times as high as midrange musical signals, but also could be boosted by as much as 60 dB by RIAA equalization that (incorrectly) continues its rising bass characteristic into the subsonic region. Some of the better preamps offer a switchable subsonic filter as a preventive for the severe overloading that resonance-rumble interaction can cause in phono preamp stages—even those that have plenty of headroom at higher frequencies.

There are other, less obvious payoffs, some still being explored, such as damping's effect on tracking-force variations. Among the advantages that may emerge is reduced record wear due to the suppression of instantaneous tracking-force extremes.

Like other electromagnetic transducers, a magnetic phono cartridge has a region of best performance—its so-called linear region—within which it accurately transforms the movements of its stylus cantilever into an electronic equivalent of the groove modulations. Tracking forces are specified not only to assure decent groove tracing, but also to place the stylus cantilever in about the center of its linear range of motion (that is, of vertical flexing) with respect to the cartridge body. But tracking force is a static specification, and record playing is a dynamic situation; when a rising warp is encountered the effective tracking force will be increased as the arm is forced upward and/or the cantilever spring flexed toward the cartridge body. As the record surface descends, the effect is reversed. Thus begins the so-called Pogo-stick effect that, particularly in an undamped arm, can cause continuing variations in instantaneous tracking force and even make the stylus hop out of the groove altogether.

Incorrect tracking force, whether it is too low or too high, momentarily moves the cantilever out of its optimum location. Either way, tracing suffers. There may be repeated, if momentary, losses of contact with either or both groove walls and repeated instants at which tracking force exceeds the bearing strength of the groove walls. And the angular flexing of the cantilever will produce what is aptly known as "warp wow"—a change in relative stylus-groove velocity and hence a waver in the music's pitch. With damping, this sort of abuse seems to be greatly reduced because the stylus more consistently is in good contact with the groove walls and its cantilever less often is deflected outside its optimum range of movement.

One listener felt that, simply because the stylus no longer was being subjected to as much unwanted movement at resonant frequencies, the effect was as if someone had stopped fiddling with his system's volume and balance controls. It was, to him, similar to switching from a turntable with his system's volume and balance controls. It was, to him, similar to switching from a turntable with flutter to one without—only the difference was not in pitch, but in space. The feeling of "uncertainty" was gone.

Another reason for apparently cleaner sound may be that, because of improved tracing, there is less of the high-frequency "chatter" usually caused by the stylus rattling about in the groove. Although mostly above 20,000 Hz, this chatter could be indirectly responsible for some audible distortion.

On the basis of these experiments, then, the desirable properties of arm damping seem amply confirmed. But, like most techniques, it can be abused. Too much damping, for example, can make a tone arm respond arthritically to warps and shocks and (though it might make for a nearly nonresonant arm-cartridge combination) reintroduces excessive cantilever flexing and hence some tracking problems. It's a question of finding optimum values.

In practice, the buyer of a damped tone arm needn't worry about overdamping. The arm designers have taken the problem into account and generally will have picked an amount of damping that will fill the needs of a wide variety of cartridges. The arm may overdamp or underdamp slightly without causing problems, while still obtaining nearly all of damping's advantages.

If there's no viscous-damped arm available for your particular needs, you can compromise by selecting one of the many good designs using counterweight decoupling. But bear in mind that, while decoupling lessens resonance difficulties, it may not be as complete a solution as viscous damping.
"Film music cannot be fully appreciated until it is separated from its movie."

Accompanied by Alan Price's sardonic rock score, Malcolm McDowell makes his escape from the mob in O Lucky Man.

It stood to reason that sooner or later the special group of music lovers devoted to the harmonies and melodies coming from behind the movie screen would have their day. After years of putting up with overpriced cutouts, often dismal sound quality, and tapes made from TV showings of films whose music could not be heard in any other form, film music aficionados in the past few years have suddenly had the luxury of important reissues (especially from Angel and United Artists), some of the best recorded sound to be heard anywhere (in the RCA Classic Film Scores series and, less spectacularly, on some London Phase-4 issues), and offerings of previously unavailable but absolutely vintage wine in new bottles (RCA and Phase-4 again, plus United Artists, which is beginning a series conducted by Leroy Holmes that will offer, among other things, a complete Max Steiner King Kong).

In addition to this, the Entr'acte Recording Society and Elmer Bernstein's Film Music Collection* are making available film scores both old and new and are accompanying their efforts with informative quarterly periodicals. I could also mention some rather hair-raising piratings, at least one of which—of Bernard Herrmann's score for Alfred Hitchcock's Marnie (on clear red vinyl, yet!)—is taken from the actual studio music track for the film.

*For information, write to Entr'acte Recording Society, P. O. Box 2319, Chicago, Illinois 60690, and Elmer Bernstein's Film Music Collection, P. O. Box 261, Calabasas, California 91302.
But in spite of the generally more enlightened attitude shown toward film music these days, the art has yet to be taken seriously by most critics and by a large portion of the movie industry—Hollywood continues to show unflagging skill for bestowing its Oscars on the most mediocre scores. (This year was no exception; four out of five of the original scores nominated were worthy of the award; Hollywood chose the fifth.*) Why, people ask, would anyone risk apoplexy, as many film music buffs seem to do, over music written for a specific function from which, as many (including some film composers) have suggested, it has no business being separated? And how, the detractors continue, can music that is often composed to split-second timing be expected to represent anything but pure hack work? For many, the old argument that film music should be seen but not heard, so to speak, still holds. One particularly uninformed editorial recently offered as proof of film music’s lack of artistic viability the fact that the author had never seen a film review that mentioned the score.

Of course, the film critics’ general snubbing of the musical scores is nothing to be proud of. As it happens, most critics don’t talk very much about camera work either; but this in no way detracts from the often exceptional artistic quality of much cinematography, and it is just as unfortunate for us not to have stills from some of Laszlo Kovacs’ fine efforts as it is not to have a recording of a major movie score by Erich Korngold. The cinema is certainly the most composite of all arts, and if the actors and directors get the lion’s share of the credit (which suits the socio-theatrical proclivities of most film critics) this does not mean that the cinematographers and composers should be reduced to the rank of mere artisans working in the orbit of an artistic giant. If passive “enjoyment” of a movie seems to involve not “noticing” the music or the camera work, there is no excuse for those more deeply involved in the medium not to take into full account the separate arts, each viable in its own right, that go into making up the composite work.

Film Music as Art

Although it rarely tries to break any new ground (a criterion of questionable validity in the first place), film music at its best—and often at its less than best—is a perfectly viable art form that often cannot be fully appreciated until it is separated from its movie. Certainly nobody has ever complained about the separation of incidental music from the plays it was written for. But then, most plays were not originally conceived to take musical accompaniment; most incidental music was written by composers much more famous for their concert compositions; and most incidental music has been arranged into a series of formally organized pieces.

Such is rarely the case for film scores; indeed, when they are arranged into a suite, much of the pure background music most film-music buffs wait in frustration to hear frequently is excluded. For example, as good as it was, the lamented Mercury album (MG 20384) of Herrmann’s Vertigo included none of the moody, droning passages that accompanied the scenes in which Jimmy Stewart followed Kim Novak in his car. Nor did Mercury record any of the ominous passages that included an organ in the instrumentation. Not one note of Henry Mancini’s suspenseful background music for Charade is contained in the RCA recording (LSP 2755, out of print), which, apart from the excellent title theme, is filled up with mindless, pop-tune Parisiana schlock.

In a film score, even a so-called bridge can have a druglike ability to give reality a certain color, a certain inevitability found in almost any work of art but rarely with such deliberate immediacy. The film score is ordinarily expected to create just the proper ambience at just the right time, and rarely is it given anything resembling normal musical temporality to establish it.

While most incidental music fills empty spaces (such as between scenes) or accompanies specific scenes where music would be “realistically” present, movie music comes much closer to the function that can be performed by the orchestral accompaniment of an opera, where the over-all dramatic effect frequently arises from the juxtaposition of the developmental movement with the accumulation of diverse musical episodes. The musical unity tends to be created motivically, a technique many film composers have adopted as their own, but within a frighteningly choppy framework. Most films have long sections without any music; when it is used, it is sometimes keyed down to the split second to fit a specific action, only to be abruptly cut off or faded out without the benefit of anything like a cadence. In fact, when cadences are added to a film-score suite, they often sound ludicrously out of place.

Creating an Atmosphere

But can such fractionalized music stand on its own? Is it true, as one composer has suggested, that you can’t make an LP out of forty-nine bridges? Well, perhaps not forty-nine. But I think it is naive to assume that today’s listeners are looking only for attractive themes in sustained, “coherent” musical structures. Musical temporality, harmony, rhythm, and instrumentation have by now been expanded (or annihilated) in so many different ways that I don’t find it unreasonable to

*Rota/Coppola: The Godfather, Part II. The other nominated scores were Goldsmith’s Chinatown, North’s Shanks, Williams’ The Towering Inferno, and Bennett’s Murder on the Orient Express.
Alan Price

Presume the existence of an audience capable of listening to a bridge—particularly a well-built one—for the sheer joy of its sound combinations or for its concentrated core of feeling. And certainly, composing for a specific time period is no more of a restriction than other limitations, of form, structure, harmony, etc., that great composers have always been able to turn to their own advantage. Furthermore, I know of few film scores that do not contain a number of passages, even if they are eventually cut up, of a more extended nature intended to communicate more generally a particular mood or ambience rather than to punctuate the action.

Add to all this the capital importance played by instrumentation, and you have another strong justification for the recording of film scores. Once again, it is the use of the device very much for its own sake that helps create the film-ambience immediacy. Take the type of violin glissandos heard in the scherzo of Prokofiev's First Violin Concerto, spread them out through an entire string orchestra, repeat them over and over again, and you have the gruesome background accompaniment for murder scenes in Hitchcock's Psycho. (Imagine the same sequences to the tune of, say, one of Maurice Jarre's anodyne concoctions.) And when you have the mixed-genre delights of Nino Rota's part circus, part pop, part classical, and generally surrealistic scores for Federico Fellini's 8½ or Juliet of the Spirits, there is matter for a high fidelity feast you'll rarely hear in its full splendor in the movie theater. But even if it is the simple piano solo or flute and harp combinations of Elmer Bernstein's To Kill a Mockingbird, the isolation of these sounds on a recording, combined with the child-like beauty of the themes they orchestrate, can recreate the entire emotional atmosphere of the film.

This atmosphere counts. Most film-music lovers I know are also movie buffs. Even if fans of a certain composer are delighted to hear scores by him for movies they have never seen, love for film music usually begins in the movie theater or before the TV screen. Besides eliciting a general feeling for the cinematic pace and modes of presentation, the score in fact implies the voice of a Bette Davis, it is the psychological anguish of a man seeking the incarnation of a dream within a labyrinthian San Francisco. A snippet of film music can in many cases jolt the listener into reliving all or part of the picture associated with the music, affording him a kind of instant emotional replay. Because of the immediacy involved, I doubt that even the advent of ready access to films in the home will ever destroy the desire for soundtrack recordings.

With this in mind, I would like to propose that one of the best places to sell film-music records and tapes would be in the theaters. There are, no doubt, solid commercial reasons why, in our various culture emporiums (cinema and concert halls alike), we are glutted with overpriced candy and drinks, programs written by fashion designers,
and souvenir Empire State Buildings rather than relevant recordings, scores, and printed information dealing with the works presented. But it strikes me that offering discs and tapes containing music an audience has just heard and very possibly liked, along with or even in spite of the film, could not only supplement profits, but also represent good public relations, particularly if sold with some kind of program material giving full credits (often cut off by curtain-closing, light-raising management) and anecdotal information on how, when, where, and why the film was made.

If not enough different musical segments have been written to justify an entire LP, the producers could take advantage of the 45 single or the EP, even for non-pop, non-title-theme scores. This is still done frequently in Europe and has been responsible for some real treasures, including Antoine Duhamel’s *Pierrot le fou*, Georges Delerue’s *Le Mépris* (Contempt), and Ennio Morricone’s *Sons mobile apparent* (Without Apparent Motive). An alternative or supplement to 45 releases would be multiple soundtrack recordings such as Capitol used to make. Two Michael Winner films—*Scorpio* and *The Mechanic*—that played recently as a double feature contained excellent Jerry Fielding scores that would make an attractive coupling. (And why was none of Fielding’s music for Sam Peckinpah’s *Straw Dogs* ever recorded?)

In any format—full LP, split LP, or 45—I would hope that, instead of several perhaps varied repetitions of two or three principal themes, soundtrack releases of the future could include at least a few of the bridges. Their lack is sorely missed in some of the recent RCA projects, in which we never really hear, for instance, the full breadth of Erich Korngold’s instrumental inventiveness or the complete spectrum of the dramatic moods created so skillfully by a Franz Waxman or a Miklós Rózsa. Their presence, however, is one of the beauties of the Entr’acte Recording Society’s release of Bernard Herrmann’s score for the Brian de Palma film *Sisters*. To such “complete” recordings could be added sequences written for but not used in the movie, as is the case on the Stanyan reissue of Rózsa’s *Spellbound* score (SRQ 4021).

One reason for the commercial failure of many film-music recordings is that they generally tend to get marketed with pop-music releases and promoted by people with little or no idea of what they are selling. Nor should they be sold and listed as “classical” music. It is just as ludicrous to group John Lewis and the Modern Jazz Quartet with Beethoven as it is to lump together William Walton and the Rolling Stones. Parcelling out film music among the pop, classical, and jazz categories would only make matters worse, particularly since there is a lot of overlapping. (How would you classify André Previn’s *Two for the Seesaw*, Alex North’s *Streetcar Named Desire*, or Nino Rota’s *8½*, for instance?) Film music needs to be considered as an entity unto itself.

Finally, I would like to make a plea to film-music buffs to stop bad-mouthing just about everything that is being written today. Every generation creates its own excesses. I shiver to think how much more overpowering two Hitchcock masterpieces—I *Confess* and, especially, *Strangers on a Train*—would be if they were not polluted by the “old school” schlock written by Dimitri Tiomkin. And a great symphonic score can be horribly misused by a director, as was the case with Herrmann’s music for François Truffaut’s *The Bride Wore Black*.

Granted, the era of Max Steiner and Erich Korngold has passed, but then, so has the era of the fresh and relatively unjaded romanticism and heroism that justified their sumptuously romantic and heroic scores. Actors now frequently play, not Philip Marlowe, but Humphrey Bogart—even that or they give us an anti-Philip Marlowe, as in Altman’s *The Long Goodbye*. And scores taking themselves completely seriously have no place within this new and often cynical perspective.

But the partial demise of symphonic film music—and even some second-generation composers such as Rózsa and Herrmann are still producing excellent scores—has not left a vacuum. If anything, the opening up of the variety of musical genres accepted within the cinematic medium can bring about a more nearly perfect marriage of artistic styles than was possible in the past. Try to imagine a film such as Alan J. Pakula’s *Klute* without the excellent score (once scheduled for release by Warner Bros. and then dropped) by Michael Small, who deployed everything from rock to a haunting love theme and weird, icy filigrees and ostinatos to heighten the film’s suspense and emotional content. Furthermore, there is at least one new film composer, Richard Rodney Bennett, who has taken the symphonic film score in extremely fruitful directions in such works as *Far from the Madding Crowd* (MGM SIE 11ST, out of print), *Lady Caroline Lamb* (Angel S 36940), and *Murder on the Orient Express* (Capitol ST 11361).
The Current Generation

The following extremely selective list of composers offers examples, presented in no particular order, of relatively recent movie music that I feel is especially successful in both the film and the disc media. I would like to stress that my omission of most of the “classic” composers, who have had numerous articles devoted to them in recent years, in no way implies anything resembling disdain.

In most, but not all, cases, I have singled out scores that have made their way to recordings at one time or another. But as everybody knows, film-music albums go out of print faster than yesterday’s Top Forty, and what is $5.98 today may cost $50 tomorrow. More and more stores, however, are tending to hang onto cutouts, and in many places—particularly in New York City and Los Angeles—you are just as apt to find a sought-after deletion at half price or less as you are to discover it as an overpriced collector’s item. Out-of-print (as of April 1975) recordings are indicated with an asterisk, while foreign LPs, which are still poorly distributed on these shores but can usually be obtained from such outfits as Peters International in New York, are indicated with a double asterisk.

Ennio Morricone. Few recent film composers have been as prolific or have shown the inventiveness of Morricone, who studied composition with Goffredo Petrassi. Characteristic Morricone scores seem to synthesize the Italy of the past, as heard in his frequent churchlike chorales, with the Italy of the present, as heard in the often weird and highly inventive instrumentation, the obsessive ostinato beats or jazz rhythms, and the sometimes jarring harmonies.

Morricone had particularly good success with director Sergio Leone—the collaboration has produced one of the best film scores of the last few years, Duck, You Sucker (United Artists LA 302-G), along with Once Upon a Time in the West (RCA LSP 4736) and A Fistful of Dollars (RCA LSO 1135). Another masterpiece is Sacco and Vanzetti (*RCA LSP 4612), while Morricone can be heard in a more lighthearted, bossa-nova vein in Metti, Una Sera a Cena (The Love Circle, **Cinevox MDF 3316). Also strongly recommended are three recent United Artists releases, Burn (LA 303-G), The Battle of Algiers (LA 293-G), and The Big Gundown (LA 297-G). The Red Tent (*Paramount 6019), on the other hand, is much too slushy for my taste. A marvelous sampling from twenty-six of his scores can be heard on a two-disc RCA Italiana set (**DPSL 10599[2]) entitled “Ennio Morricone, Un Film Una Musica,” which contains such themes as Metti... Violent City, The Battle of Algiers, Sacco and Vanzetti, and The Sicilian Clan. The latter, one of his best efforts, once was available on 20th Century-Fox (*TFS 4209).

John Barry. Barry is probably best known for his brassy, frenetically paced James Bond scores. Perhaps his best composition for the movies, however, is his subtle, night-jazz music for Richard Lester’s Petulia, once available on Warner Bros. (*WS 1755).

The James Bond flicks would not have been the same without the Barry scores, and such United Artists albums as Goldfinger (5117), Thunderball, with its gloomy underwater music (*5132; now available only on eight-track cartridge, UA 3012), From Russia with Love (5114), and You Only Live Twice (LA 289-G) create enough atmosphere to keep you on a 007 jag for months. And United Artists now has a two-disc set offering extensive selections of Bond music (UXS 91), including the Monty Norman theme.

In a totally different vein, Barry can be heard in the dramatic score for A Lion in Winter (exceptionally well recorded on Columbia OS 3250), which makes excellent use of an “instrument” rarely heard on soundtracks: a chorus. (David Snell’s entirely a cappella choral score for Robert Montgomery’s Lady in the Lake should certainly be included on an album sometime—say, one devoted to Philip Marlowe scores.)

Barry’s Ipcress File (*Decca DL 79124) and Deadfall (*20th Century-Fox S 4208) definitely deserve re-release. The latter, the result of one of his frequent collaborations with director Bryan Forbes, contains Romance for Guitar and Orchestra written for a concert hall sequence in the film.

Nino Rota. The Rota-Fellini combination produced some extraordinary music, and both 8% (*RCA FSO 6) and Juliet of the Spirits (*Mainstream 56062) should have remained in the catalogue if for no other reason than to document the fertility and vitality of the Italian new wave. Still available is the weird score for Fellini’s Satyricon (United Artists 5208), which offers some of the strangest, most intriguing, nonstop sounds you’re apt to hear from a soundtrack album. Likewise worth the listening are The Clowns (*Columbia S
Francis Lai. Fellini's Roma (United Artists LA 052F), and Amarcord (RCA ARL 1-0907).
Avoid at all costs Rota's gooey music for Franco Zeffirelli's even gooier Romeo and Juliet (Capitol ST 400). On the other hand, The Godfather (Paramount 1003) has some good moments.

Three Pop-Oriented Scores. To me, one of the best rock scores ever done for a film is Pink Floyd's often hypnotic and psychedelic soundtrack for Barbet Schroeder's More (Harvest SW 11178). The recording of Alan Price's sardonic musical commentary for Lindsay Anderson's O Lucky Man (Warner Bros. 2710) documents an extremely original incorporation of music into a film. And besides John Barry's poignant harmonica theme for Midnight Cowboy, the United Artists (5198) album contains his perfect selections of existing pop material for the film, including Nilsson's "Everybody's Talkin'" and the Elephants Memory's psychedelic "Old Man Willow."

Jerry Goldsmith. Some of Goldsmith's best scores—The General with the Cockeyed Lid and Seconds—have never been recorded. Others, such as The Blue Max (*Mainstream 50601), are out of print. But The Planet of the Apes (Project 3, S 5023), with its eerie wind and percussion combinations, certainly stands as one of the most inventive and appropriate scores of the last decade, and Papillon (Capitol ST 11260) has both a beautiful title theme and a good measure of vintage Goldsmith sounds, as does Chinatown (ABC 848). The Patton disc (20th Century-Fox 902) offers another good Goldsmith score and George C. Scott's famous opening speech in the film.

Vince Guaraldi. The best of Guaraldi's bouncy, nostalgic, jazzy, and otherwise delightful music for the Peanuts animations can be heard in the Warner Bros. album entitled "Oh Good Grief" (1747). It contains music for the original television series, much of which has been reused, along with a good deal of new material, in the feature-length films.

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Henry Mancini. A lot of what's wrong with recent film scoring has been blamed on Mancini; and there is certainly no denying that the bass-ostinato-under-jazz-theme genre established by the Peter Gunn TV music set is an overworked trend. This takes nothing away from the fact that not only is Mancini capable of writing some of the best melodies being turned out for any medium these days, but he has also been responsible, via his scores, for much of the mood and atmosphere of pictures ranging from the tragedy of Days of Wine and Roses and Soldier in the Rain to the wit and irony of Shot in the Dark and the suaveness of The Pink Panther. (The more or less complete soundtrack of the latter is available on RCA LSP 2795.)

An excellent selection of many of Mancini's finest movie and TV themes, if not the "background" music, can be heard on the two "Best of Henry Mancini" albums put out by RCA (LSP 2693 and 3557). Relatively complete scores currently available include The Thief Who Came to Dinner (Warner Bros. 2700) and Visions of 8 (RCA ABL 1-0231). And then there is the apparently Herrmann-esque score Hitchcock rejected for Frenzy.

Some Jazz Soundtracks. Elmer Bernstein's ominous Man with the Golden Arm, one of the first jazz soundtracks to receive wide recognition, is still available on Decca (78257). A pioneering and utterly successful experiment was done in 1958 by Louis Malle for his first film L'Ascenseur pour l'échafaud (Frantic), for which Miles Davis and four other musicians improvised a taut, bluesy score during a screening (Columbia Special Products JCL 1268). Another classic is the strange, bleak music written by John Lewis for Robert Wise's Odds Against Tomorrow (United Artists 5061), which should certainly be reissued along with Lewis' score for Vadim's Sait-on jamais? (No Sun in Venice, Atlantic 1284).

The vogue for jazz is definitely dying out in the cinema, and when it is used these days, such as in the Charlie Parker-Sidney Bechet score for Malle's Murmur of the Heart (Roulette 3006), it tends to be "source" music. Most of the best jazz or jazz-oriented movie music on disc—including Ellington's Anatomy of a Murder (*Columbia CS 8166), Previn's Two for the Seesaw (*United Artists 5108), Art Blakey's Les Liaisons dangereuses (*Epic 16022), Bernstein's Walk on the Wild Side (*Mainstream 6083), and Leith Stevens' The Wild One (*Decca 8349)—has been long deleted from the catalogues. But United Artists has just revived Johnny Mandel's searing score for I Want to Live! (LA 271-G).

Elmer Bernstein. One of the greatest of the many sins committed in the name of the Academy Awards took place when the pseudo-Arabian pomp and bombast written by Maurice Jarre for Lawrence of Arabia, still in print on disc (Bell S-1205), beat out Bernstein's beautifully simple To Kill a Mockingbird (*ava, AS-20). Currently in-print Bernstein scores include the exciting The Great Escape (United Artists 5107), with its delightful title theme, and Return of the Seven (United Artists 5146); a recording of the original Magnificent Seven was scheduled but never released.

One can only regret that another Bernstein (Leonard) has written just one film score—for Kazan's On the Waterfront—a symphonic suite from which can be heard on Columbia (MS 6251).

Lalo Schifrin. Along with Morricone, Schifrin has proven to be one of the most innovative instrumentalists for recent film scores. This combined with his often striking themes has helped him create some of the most intriguing and attractive movie and TV scores done in the Sixties, the best of which include The Fox (*Warner Bros. 1738) and Cool Hand Luke (*Dot 25833), not to mention the popular music for the TV series Mission: Impossible (*Dot 25831). Unfortunately, the only Schifrin soundtrack currently in print is Enter the Dragon (Warner Bros. 2727)—mediocre, but good clean fun.

Pierre Jansen. Of the many other composers I could mention to conclude this all-too-brief listing, I would like to single out a French artist who has worked almost exclusively with one director, Claude Chabrol, for whom he has scored over twenty films since 1960. Jansen's music demonstrates that the so-called "classical" film score is neither dead nor doomed to eternal self-mimicry. Working in a style that generally falls somewhere between chamber and symphonic music, he has ranged from the subtle atonality of La Femme infidele to the neurotic disjointedness of La Rupture (which features an ondes martenot in the instrumentation). He has produced some first-class cloak-and-dagger music as well for Chabrol's middle-period films. In the U.S., perhaps only Leonard Rosenman, in the first twelve-tone Hollywood score, The Cobweb (*MGM E 3501 ST), has written film music with a similarly sophisticated "classical" orientation.

If Jansen's name remains obscure, it is because, incredibly, not a single note he has written has been recorded, as far as I know, and because Chabrol's beautifully crafted and often brilliantly original films have, like many European movies, been getting rotten distribution, although the situation seems to be improving. So deeply is director Chabrol committed to music (he once said that, if he hadn't become a film director, he would have been a conductor), plans apparently exist for a Jansen opera based on a Chabrol libretto. I can't wait!
The music blares! The lights flash! And the packed room pulsates with energy and excitement. Crunched into Le Jardin, the trendy, funky basement disco club on Manhattan's West Side are thousands of happy, sweating, gyrating disco dance fans, sharing in common a passion for fancy stepping and a keen sense of anticipation about this evening's particular highlights. The polyglot assortment, even by sophisticated urban standards, consists of young whites and an equal number of blacks and Latinos as well as many gays representing all three groups. Television crews from each of New York City's major networks and a horde of photographers and reporters are also present to document the festivities.

Tonight, after all, twenty-four-year-old rhythm-and-blues songstress Gloria Gaynor will be crowned the nation's first Queen of the Discos by the National Association of Disco Disc Jockeys. And after her coronation she will please her adoring subjects by performing a disco-soul set highlighted by her rendition of "Never Can Say Goodbye." This pulsating "crossover" superhit made its first impact not with black rhythm-and-blues fans, but with the white-oriented "easy-listening" audience. From there it scaled the national popular-

R&B has taken on a slicker, sweeter sound as disco soul, which is churning up dance fans in discoteques across the country. Tops on the circuit are, from left, Love Unlimited founder Barry White, who does it all, Queen of the Discos Gloria Gaynor, and the flamboyant trio Labelle.
And have created new stars and hits

This unknown record to local radio stations. The stations began to play it. Its popularity then began to spread across the nation; another major disco-soul hit had been born.

Time and time again, for the past two years, this pattern has been repeated. And it has not only launched the most potent pop-music trend of the 1970s, but also created a galaxy of new stars and a thirty-one-city disco circuit, each with a disco to feature these stars in concert, paying them the same fees they would command in a concert hall or a more conventional rock club.

Besides Gaynor, the new disco-soul stars include twenty-nine-year-old, six-foot-three-inch, two-hundred-seventy-pound Barry White, a composer, performer, arranger, and producer. White established himself as the sultan of disco soul, when his lilting "Love's Theme" became the first disco-soul hit. The multitalented musician then went on to form the Love Unlimited Orchestra and a female rhythm-and-blues trio, Love Unlimited. Five discs featuring White as soloist or the LUO or LU have been certified "gold," each having sold more than a million dollar's worth of copies. And it all started in the tiny, palpitating discos. Credit these clubs for also establishing the female r&b trio, Labelle, formerly the 1960s "girl's group" Patti LaBelle and the Bluebelles. This trio is currently enjoying the nation's most popular record, the bawdy, energized, witty portrait of a hooker, "Lady Marmalade." With them are a host of other new disco stars. They include soloist Carol Douglas as well as the soul groups B.T. Express, Shirl and Company, Ecstasy, Passion & Pain, and the re-emergence of that madcap hairdresser of the 1960s, Monti Rock III, now a disco-fave-rave.

Taken Over the Discotheques!

It is one of the many current superhits discovered first by the disco DJ's who spin the records in these clubs. They liked "Never Can Say Goodbye," and played it six or seven times a night for weeks on end. And when their dancing-dervish-patrons had become thoroughly intoxicated with the song, these dance-o-manics converged on their local record stores to purchase the record for home play. (Disco play in the New York City area alone can result in the sale of 75,000 copies of a record.) The record stores then reported the popularity of under his new moniker, Disco Tex and the Sex-olettes.

Each has created one or more disco hits. Each is a major exponent of disco soul. All have created music that shares common characteristics. Their tunes have hypnotic melodic hooks. Essentially r&b, they also possess devilish, persistent, danceable, repetitive rhythms. However the gritty, more soulful components of traditional r&b singing and production have been replaced by a smoother, silkier, slicker sound. This slickness is encouraged by globs of musical whipped cream—soaring strings, mellifluous horns—that amplify.
the rhythm, emphasize the musical hooks, and are attractive enough to woo white fans without alienating blacks. The result: lightweight soul-pop possessing enough rhythmic fervor to get anybody's toes a-tapping while dealing attractively with the traditional and sentimental themes of loving, losing, and loving again.

This formula is exactly the one by which Queen of the Discos Gloria Gaynor conquered the pop, easy-listening, and R&B markets with the same tune. Indeed, the entire first side of her LP “Never Can Say Goodbye” is nonstop disco dance music, an innovation that wowed the nation's growing horde of disco dance fans.

Gaynor herself, after her coronation, tried to put her thoughts together about the musical phenomenon she was helping spearhead. She had sung in small clubs and had made an album for Columbia Records that had been a minor success. It was not until the discos picked up on her, however, that she found the means to achieve authentic pop stardom.

“The discos release a lot of tension,” she observes. “They give you a chance to work off your anxiety and forget about the disquieting economy. The best disco records are motion-motivated. They have lyrics dealing with finding or losing love and they also deal with sex, but the main concern of all of them is to get you moving.”

When asked about the fact that both blacks and whites were enjoying her records, she comments, “It was inevitable. With integration taking place in the big cities, it was only a matter of time before blacks and whites exchanged backgrounds, heritages, and tastes. I was surprised the same as you probably were when whites were the first to pick up on “Never Can Say Goodbye.” I’ve just finished a nationwide tour of the discos and all the audiences are integrated, sharing equally in the pleasure of music that you can enjoy listening to and are also happy to dance to.”

Of the discos themselves, she remarks revealingly, “They’re mostly gay clubs and I enjoy playing them. The audience is more responsive, more receptive. They yell and scream and don’t mind letting you know that they dig you.”

Patti LaBelle, Labelle’s fiercely energized lead singer, shares Gaynor’s feelings and opinions. In the early 1960s, she had led her Bluebelles to triumph by singing soulful versions of tunes like “Over the Rainbow” as well as such novelties as “I Sold My Heart to the Junkman.” Known as The Sweethearts of the Apollo because the group was a much-beloved attraction at that venerable New York City black variety house, it was considered washed up as rock became increasingly more complicated, intellectual, and articulate. The trio would not give up, however. It transformed itself into a contemporary soul-rock unit singing and writing tunes packed with drama and insight. As contemporary-sounding as a brand-new act, the trio still could not find success either on the Warner Bros. or RCA label. They decided to play the Continental Baths—the Manhattan gay bathhouse that had launched Bette Midler—where they were an instant smash. They developed a devoted national gay following. When Epic Records picked them up, they were booked into the Metropolitan Opera House, the first soul act ever to play this bastion of high culture. Appearing as three spacewomen dressed in gleaming silver costumes, they received roars of approval from an audience consisting of gay men in makeup, wigs, and beards sprinkled with glitter, “golden-oldies” fans who remembered them from their first musical existence, soul freaks, and many, many disco cultists.

The sold-out house cheered them as spacewomen and went berserk when they re-emerged as wildly plumed nightbirds. This audience, cutting across all traditional boundaries, has supported the trio, enabling it to climb to the top of the popularity charts with a record that received its first and substantial play in the discos.

“We bring feeling to our music, tell stories of what life is like and can be,” Patti told me. “You can feel us and you can dance to us. Audiences need more feeling than they’ve ever needed before. They need theater. We played gay clubs and we loved it because gays are into theater. And now we’re breaking big because we’ve learned how to put on a show. Our audiences are a spectacle themselves. And we give them a spectacle in return!”

Summing it all up is Barry White, the astounding one-man disco-soul industry. The gravel-voiced spokesman for “love” has crooned his way to superframe and superfortune with hit after hit. “It’s not black music for black people, baby,” he explains. “It’s love music for everybody. My message is love. I’ve found a new way to tell you about love and my music can be soaked up by your system. And you can dance to it, but more important, you can dig it.

“If it weren’t for the discos, the message would have taken much longer to get out. They found the message before the radio stations did. They’re hip and bright, and they’re the ones who make things happen.”

They certainly are. Proof can be found on radio, in the record stores which have established huge “disco” sections, in the music trade papers, which now survey the discos to find out what the hits are before they become hits, in the club scene where every day another club “goes disco.” In the mid-1960s discos like Arthur, that Manhattan trendsetter, were the homes of the international jet set. In the mid-1970s, the new discos are the homes of people from the streets who have energy to spare and have found a throbbing, twitching, shoulder-shaking release.
At Home with Hype

The promotional giveaways that accompany the release of a pop recording are often more interesting than the disc itself.

by David Dachs

In my boy Joshua's room, there's a pale green GI plastic helmet covered with ominous jungle-type netting, hanging on a Colonial ladder-back chair. It's from a rock group called War.

When I'm in doubt about postal regulations concerning first-class, bulk-rate, certified mail (which unfortunately keep changing), I can consult a handy card once put out by ingenious publicity people ballyhooing the Ace Trucking Company.

When my wife, Julie, makes shopping lists, she makes them on memo paper mailed to me by United Artists in behalf of the Family. The group's name is lettered in gilt on the stippled leatherette cover.

In a drawer is a blue rubbery noisemaker sent out to publicize a Polydor LP, "And That's the Truth," which featured Lily Tomlin as the cheeky little girl of Laugh-In fame who sat on a rocking chair and cast an unruly eye on things, ending her monologues with a rude Bronx raspberry.

These promotional giveaways brighten up the world of pop publicity. As a writer on pop music, I receive press releases, biographies, and 8-by-10-inch glossy photos that pour out of the public relations departments of record companies as ceaselessly as coffee from an espresso machine in a prosperous coffeehouse. But I like it best when the press agents turn Santa Claus and send out playful things.

Souvenirs, one press agent says, "hang around the house and cause talk." To whoop it up for new records and pop artists, press agents frequently resort to this materialist technique that appeals to the child in all of us. Atlantic once mailed me a genuine working zipper. It was to trumpet the news that the company was now distributing records in the U.S. of the best-selling British expatriate group, the Rolling Stones. But why the zipper? Anxious to make a big splash, Atlantic, famed for its excellent graphics, commissioned Andy Warhol to design the cover of the first release. The Audubon of the sexual wilderness conceived a unique cover for "Sticky Fingers." It consisted of a close-up of the crotch of a pair of slacks. And right there, where it should have been, was a zipper, an actual zipper.

Liberty/UA sent some marvelous blue denim patching cloth. The idea was to create talk about the album "Hooker 'n' Heat." The PR people wanted to project an image of earthy blues roots, and they did so by packaging a "promo kit" (press releases, bios, photos) in a portfolio whose cover depicted blue denim work clothes. My wife is waiting for Josh to rip his jeans.

A popular standby that arrives with the advent of each school year are glossy, attractive book jackets decorated with photographs of performers being promoted by the record manufacturers.

The souvenir publicity gimmick goes way back in pop music, further than polyethylene-wrapped LPs. In the 1950s, veteran press agents Sid Ascher and Paul Brown would give away roses on opening days to girls attending Tony Bennett's stage shows at the now-defunct New York Paramount. "We also used to give away handkerchiefs printed with the words, 'This Was Borrowed from Tony Bennett,'" says Brown, currently a college radio promotion specialist.

While some of the giveaways fell into the hands of pop fans, most were aimed at those who could play a record on radio or write a story about an artist. Through the years Brown has given away a virtual John's Bargain Store of items—key chains, combs, sewing needles and thimbles—all with the name of the artist who employed him.

"Everyone likes something for nothing," he says. "You look at those things and you think so-and-so is a nice person. Also people talk about it."
When Godspell was just an off-Broadway rock musical, Brown gave away 600 gray sweatshirts with the name of the show printed across the chest. "I sent them out to 600 college radio stations along with the album," he says. "It had a great response. . . . And the thing paid off. The kids at the stations wrote, saying, 'Naturally, I'm playing Godspell.'"

Such promotional campaigns can be done economically, or they can mount up to $5,000 or more. Years ago, for example, a press agent thriftily sent along 25-cent mirrors with copies of a Frank de Vol album, "Portrait of Yourself." The promotion cost about $100, less than an organic meal for four. However, the Godspell campaign, financed by Bell, cost a princely sum. According to Paul Brown, a review copy of the musical based on the Gospel According to St. Matthew, cost about $1. The sweatshirt cost about 75 cents. To mail the package involved special packaging that ran about 10½ cents. The postage totaled 20 cents. The complete mailing, including press releases, ran about $2. Not much. But sent to countless college and commercial stations and similar pop tastemakers, the costs add up.

Pop PR woos the mass media with an ardor that would do credit to an honors student at a group-grope seminar. Even the counterculture artists resort to hype, for they know they are in a hotly competitive field where perhaps 90% of the records do not earn enough to cover their production costs. So the record companies, PR firms, the artists, the talent managers, the music publishers—everybody who has a stake in a particular artist, group, record, or song—try everything in the publicity handbook: print publicity, radio and TV guest shots, phone interviews with disc jockeys, and the ritualized press parties where they serve bacon wrapped around prunes, Baskin-Robbins ice cream, and champagne. And, of course, there's the mailing of what some call "advertising specialties."

Sol Handwerger, skilled MGM Records promotion executive who has done everything in pop publicity but send Leo the Lion around to radio stations with new releases, is a great believer in imprinted specialty items. He has employed balloons, ballpoint pens, cufflinks, and cigarette lighters to sell pop artists. And buttons—lots of buttons. These change from "I LOVE THE COWSILLS" to "I LOVE THE OSMONDS" to whatever group is currently trying to make it. In the world of pop PR, love is as transferable as a decal.

"Once I had a key chain made up in the shape of a piano to publicize Erroll Garner," Handwerger says. "And for another group, the Four Coins, I had a key chain made up attached to four new pennies."

Years ago I received a paper gun to publicize a comedy tune, "O.K. Louie, Drop the Gun." And I still have a souvenir of the '50s sent me by the Kingston Trio. It is a rather fancy English morocco leather wallet, inset with a Swiss watch that has seldom kept accurate time, and embossed with the words, "Gratefully—The Kingston Trio."

Some time ago, Bell Records, which has really been ringing the tocsin with promotional items, created a mammoth collection of goodies to promote a comedy album, "The Jewish-American Princess." Along with a record that was described as a "comical look at the life-style of the typical American housewife, be she Jewish, Irish, Italian, Negro, or W.A.S.P.,” this is what came in the mail, neatly packaged in a miniature shopping bag: a menu from the Stage Delicatessen, a brochure from Grossinger's, Jewish-American fortune cookies, a map of Fire Island (along with the Fire Island ferry schedule), clothing labels from famed designers and stores, and a shopping bag from Lord and Taylor's.

Of course, promotional giveaways are generally part of a thought-out publicity game plan. Take the plastic war helmets referred to earlier. A story issued by United Artists Records bore the headline:

UNITED ARTISTS DECLARES WAR ON THE RECORD INDUSTRY

Merchandising and Promotional Campaign One of the Most Extensive in Company's History

The helmets—10,000 of them—were part of a campaign that included saturation of trade and underground press with "War Is Coming" ads and stickers on all mail originating at the company.

This is par for the course, since there is much at stake as record companies vie for the consumer dollar. Sales of records and tapes covering pop, rock, jazz, shows, classical, country, total in the billions of dollars. That's a lot of money, and a lot rides on competition for air play and print publicity.

A word must be said about record press agents. Having been one myself, I am most sympathetic to them. The disc companies couldn't function without PR people, who are frequently clever and resourceful. Operating with penny-candy budgets compared to GM or the Pentagon, they create quite a stir. And they are generally unappreciated. When an artist reaches the Top Ten it's on his talents, not the PR man's. But when he does not sell, it's the fault of poor publicity.

Unmistakably, the world of records would be pretty bleak if it weren't for the countless PR men and women and their catchy, inexpensive publicity placebos.
The Second Vienna School Eases into the Repertory

Karajan's four-disc set of works by Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern represents a distinct upgrading of their general level of performance.

by David Hamilton

Nearly every month now, we confront a significant contribution to the recorded Schoenberg literature—a marked contrast to the Ives situation, where the big hurrahs preceded the centennial. Since the Schoenberg anniversary, we have been treated to Gielen’s admirable Moses und Aron, the Fires of London’s brilliant Pierrot lunaire, and Paul Jacobs’ superb traversal of the piano music. Still to come are the Gurre-Lieder and Moses that Boulez recorded in London, the Juilliard Quartet’s remake of the quartets (worth waiting for, if the stunning concert performance of Nos. 1 and 3 that I recently heard is a fair sample of what will go on the discs), and perhaps the London Sinfonietta’s box of chamber works, containing several previously unrecorded items.

This month’s largesse comprises Herbert von Karajan’s first recorded encounter with the Second Vienna School: Schoenberg’s Pelleas (also available separately as DG 2530 485), Verklärte Nacht, and Orchestral Variations, and a disc each of Berg and Webern. Nearly all of this is valuable, even if it does not make up anything like a “complete” set of these composers’ orchestral works—the most obvious omissions being Schoenberg’s two Chamber Symphonies and the Op. 16 Orchestral Pieces, and Webern’s Variations, Op. 30. Karajan and his superior orchestra obviously have much to bring to this music, especially in the realm of precision and polish; with the exception of the late Hans Rosbaud’s now unavailable performances (and, in the case of Verklärte Nacht, several others), hardly any recordings of this music have been so finely crafted, have offered so much sheer tonal allure.

This is important. For all that the men of the Second Vienna School are thought of primarily as “brainy” composers, all three had piercingly imaginative ears for orchestral sound. Their music is full of timbral wizardry—much of it devilishly difficult to
bring off—involving unconventional playing techniques, extremes of register and dynamics, complex balancing of multiple lines, and asymmetrical, at-war-with-the-barline rhythms.

Given this, and the still scanty performance history of the works, it is impossible not to admire what Karajan and the Berlin orchestra have achieved here. In the case of Schoenberg's Pelleas, one has no reservations at all: The enormously long line of the piece is sustained, the climaxes finely judged, the extraordinary density of texture brilliantly realized. This is a symphonic poem as long as Ein Heldenleben and many times as dense. Here, for once, it sounds like a million dollars: expansive, lush, dramatic, mercurial, and always utterly enthralling to ear and mind. Verklarte Nacht, a much-trodden path, also comes off well—a committed, beautifully played performance, rendered just slightly overripe by the recorded sound's tendency to exaggerate a degree of swoopiness in the string playing.

The Variations are a tougher nut to crack and, for all its virtuosity, this performance doesn't quite convince. Surprisingly, it is not the finale that is problematic, for Karajan keeps a viable momentum going through the numerous tempo changes. Rather, the individual variations sometimes become so self-absorbed that the piece doesn't quite hang together. Contributory to this may have been the circumstances of recording: In order to achieve optimum balances of these tricky ensembles, each variation was recorded with a special orchestral seating (and, no doubt, microphone setup), yielding some disconcerting Phase-4-ish effects. (For all I know, the separate parts of the finale were also recorded in independently seated takes, but the same problem of line and urgency has not resulted.) Still, this is in many ways the best recording we have of this piece, the twentieth century's answer to Brahms's Haydn Variations; Hans Rosbaud's live-performance version (last seen on Heliodor 2549 008) was more stylish and impressive but also suffered various minor disasters of execution.

Stylistically, in fact, Schoenberg is the most problematic of these three composers, for he is more Janus-faced than either of his students. Karajan is clearly more comfortable with the still-retrospective aesthetic of Berg (and early Schoenberg) than with that of the Variations or of the later Webern. Given the variables of recorded balance as well as those of execution and interpretation, I am reluctant to assign a clear first place among the three current recordings of Berg's orchestral pieces (Boulez and Abbado are the other two). All of them score valid points and, after studying them in some detail, I can imagine a recording still better than any of them (or the now-deleted Rosbaud, Craft, and Dorati versions). And the three very difficult transcriptions from the Lyric Suite are strikingly played, if recorded with less than ideal focus; there is at present no other available version, but a Boulez/Philharmonic performance is awaiting release at Columbia.

Boulez must be mentioned in connection with Webern too, for his recordings of all these works have been in the can for some time now. Karajan achieves a particularly powerful effect with the early Passacaglia, but by the time we get to the Op. 21 Symphony he seems at sea: All the notes are there, but none of the music.

A mixed bag, then, but well worth hearing—and at least the single disc of Pelleas is worth hearing often. These are almost all instructive, thoughtful performances, and you will not fail to be impressed by them, even if you have heard this music many times.

The program booklet includes sketchy notes by H. H. Stuckenschmidt and a biographical note on the conductor, by the same author, that deserves a place of honor in the annals of euphemistic disingenuousness: We read that Karajan's "successes between 1937 and 1945 caused him to be banned for conducting." Just think about that.


IN HIS ADMIRABLE NOTES for Vox's collection of virtually all of Tchaikovsky's symphonic music, Richard Freed recognizes that, despite the indifference or hostility of critics, Tchaikovsky's most popular music retains its firm hold on public affection. Some ten months of listening to more than a hundred recorded performances of the symphonies and symphonic poems has left me sympathetic to my jaded colleagues—and yet still admiring of the composer's strongest qualities.

Much of the ennui can be blamed, I suspect, not so much on Tchaikovsky as on his interpreters. The proportion of truly sympathetic and musically effective readings on records is distressingly low. There are a good number of simply dull performances, even by internationally renowned conductors and orchestras, and all too many in which the conductor seems to be using Tchaikovsky for his own meretricious ends.

As a symphonist, Tchaikovsky started out in the Germanic tradition, especially influenced by Mendelssohn in his first three symphonies. At the same time, he was writing symphonic poems, often called fantasies, in which the influence of Berlioz is very strong, both in orchestral technique and in his conception of program music. Finally, in Manfred and the last three symphonies, he found his own very characteristic fusion of these two influences. Berlioz, possibly because of his well-received visits to Russia, had a very strong impact on all the major Russian composers of the time, but Tchaikovsky developed an orchestral style that was considerably simpler than that of Berlioz or of his Russian contemporaries. Moreover, in using symphonic music as a vehicle for descriptive or emotional expression, he was much more naive and direct than Berlioz.

Tchaikovsky was sentimental, often to the point of banality, but this has often been worked to death by his interpreters. His simplicity of expression and musical technique has unquestionably tempted conductors to narcissistic excess: His most popular pieces are all too easy vehicles for arousing audience response and conductor worship. Some conductors have resisted this temptation by going to the opposite extreme: playing the music so straight as to drain its essential emotional expression. The vast Tchaikovsky discography offers a wide variety of approaches between these extremes.

**The Abravanel and Rozhdestvensky cycles**

The immediate occasion for my intensive survey of Tchaikovsky's symphonic music has been the release of extensive collections by Maurice Abravanel (Vox) and Gennady Rozhdestvensky (Melodiya/Angel).

Abravanel's three three-disc boxes include the six symphonies, Manfred, the 1812 Overture, Marche slave, and three symphonic poems, the most compre-
hensive collection ever issued. Rozhdestvensky's cycle comprises only the six symphonies plus Manfred, issued only as single discs. (In addition, a large number of individual performances have appeared in the time I have been listening to these works; they are reviewed in the discussions of separate works below.)

For the past quarter-century, Abravanel has devoted himself to one of this country's finest "provincial" orchestras, retaining all the while his stature as one of the foremost musicians of today's conductors. On strictly musical grounds, these performances show an extraordinary understanding of Tchaikovsky and achieve an exceptionally satisfying result throughout.

The Utah Symphony is not in the same class, quantitatively or qualitatively, with our major orchestras of international stature. Even so, Abravanel has developed it into a very cohesive ensemble, obviously responsive to his interpretive demands. The orchestra plays exceedingly well, within its personnel limitations. The shortcomings are unfortunately emphasized by a rather dry recording acoustic; more resonance and "air" around the orchestra would have produced a warmer and richer sound, closer to what one hears in concerts in the Mormon Tabernacle. The price of the Vox sets is an undeniable attraction—and they might well be recommended as supplementary recordings of these works.

Rozhdestvensky's demonstrated musicianship and flair certainly arouse considerable interest in his new cycle, which contrasts interestingly with the work of his current Russian colleagues. He is less wayward than Svetlanov (in Melodiya/Angel's previous series of the six symphonies-plus Manfred) but not nearly as individually sensitive as Mravinsky (in his early-stereo DG versions of the last three symphonies). In fact, his Tchaikovsky is basically cool and straight, with interpretive liberties that at times seem anachronous.

Unfortunately Rozhdestvensky, like Abravanel, has an orchestra of less than top quality. He is, however, a superb disciplinarian, and he gets his Moscow Radio Symphony to play together better than other Moscow orchestras (better, in fact, than they have often played before on records), although intonation is sometimes a problem. But the players simply do not measure up to those of Mravinsky's Leningrad Philharmonic, not to mention the many top-line international ensembles represented in the Tchaikovsky discography.

The Moscow recording ambience has improved in recent years, being less "boxy" and wider in frequency and dynamic range. Nevertheless, stereo effect is minimal by current standards. I am afraid that this cycle really is not competitive at full price, either as a whole or singly. If you want a good sample, Rozhdestvensky's approach seems most consistently thought-out in the later symphonies and Manfred, but then that's where the competition becomes keenest.

The other symphony cycles

I find Lorin Maazel's performances for London (available singly or as a set) rather cold and lacking in musical sensitivity, though the Vienna Philharmonic plays superbly. Antal Dorati's Mercury series with the London Symphony (formerly available as a six-disc set, now gradually being replaced by single-disc issues in Mercury's Golden Imports series) is also well played, but it suffers even more from the conductor's insensitivity to the music.

Leonard Bernstein's Columbia performances with the New York Philharmonic (available singly or in reduced-price boxes of the first three and last three symphonies) are typically strong ones, though occasionally oversentimentalized and theatrical. (Bernstein, by the way, has re-recorded Nos. 4 and 6.) Yevgeny Svetlanov is very expressive and often has interesting ideas, but his U.S.S.R. Symphony is no better than Abravanel's Utah Symphony, and Abravanel is a better musician—not to mention less expensive.

The individual symphonies

Symphony No. 1. Rehearing Michael Tilson Thomas' performance with the Boston Symphony (DG 2530 078) only reinforces my previous opinion that his is an utterly delightful account, superbly played and recorded, with just the right combination of vitality and sentiment.

Symphony No. 2. Igor Markevitch (Philips 835 390) has some interesting if unconventional ideas about phrasing here, and the London Symphony plays very well. André Previn's recently deleted RCA reading with the same orchestra is more conventional and somewhat better recorded. The New Philharmonia plays very well for Claudio Abbado (DG 139 381), but his Karajan-style suavity deprives this score of some of its punch. Bernstein is a bit brash, an approach that suits this symphony better than it does the First or Third.

Symphony No. 3. This has always impressed me as Tchaikovsky's weakest symphony. His effort to expand into larger areas lacks the substance to support it. Moshe Atzmon's recent DG version with the Vienna Symphony has much to recommend it, as he emphasizes the lyric element, but the acoustic ambience is excessively resonant. Though not as good as his Second, Bernstein's strikes me as the best all-around Third. Abravanel finds more gentle beauties in this score than he does.

The "Big Three." So far as the general public is concerned, the last three are the Tchaikovsky symphonies, and they provide a field day for conductors. In them he consolidated the purely traditional elements of Mendelssohn and Schumann with the descriptive features of Berlioz. Though they lack overt programmatic reference, they are all really highly personal symphonic poems. Such is their popularity that a number of conductors have recorded all three for release singly or in sets.

Though Eugene Ormandy's approach to Tchaikovsky has been rather consistent over a period of years, if not decades, I find his new RCA versions of the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies musically inferior to those recorded some years ago for Columbia and still available in a variety of packages. The crucial first movement of the Fourth is now very labored and at times structurally disjointed. The Fifth
is a better performance, more like the earlier recording. Of course, the Philadelphia Orchestra plays beautifully, with a smoothness that no other matches, but RCA's recording is downright brash-brassier than this orchestra sounds in the Academy of Music and occasionally harsh in the treble. However, these are better recorded than RCA's earlier effort with the Pathétique (LSC 3058), which was very poorly focused.

To many, Otto Klemperer's Tchaikovsky readings are unyielding and lacking in tonal warmth, but I find his Fourth (Angel S 36134) one of the most satisfying on records. Herbert von Karajan's two series, on DG and Angel, are completely typical of his style—superbly controlled playing by the great Berlin Philharmonic but rather too subtly blended in tone and lacking, for my taste at least, in rhythmic impact. His more recent Angel versions are more brilliantly recorded.

I would not recommend any of the conductors listed in Schwann for all three symphonies. However, the classic Mravinsky/Leningrad Philharmonic performances have just been reissued domestically by the International Preview Society (175 Community Drive, Great Neck, New York 11025), and all three of those readings are competitive with the best.

Symphony No. 4. This strongly personal but structurally conventional symphony calls forth, as noted, the best of Klemperer's performances. However, my favorite current version is an older Pierre Monteux record with the Boston Symphony (RCA LSC 2369), which succeeds in purely musical terms as no other does.

Symphony No. 5. Despite its audience appeal, the obvious sentimentality and empty grandiosity of the Fifth plunge me into boredom more easily than any of Tchaikovsky's major works. George Szell's straightforward and superbly played reading with the Cleveland Orchestra (Odyssey Y 30870) makes more of this score musically than any other I have heard. At the opposite extreme is Stokowski's Phase-4 performance (London SPC 21017), which reaches heights—or depths—of lurid interpretation and sonic detail. At present, Yevgeny Mravinsky's fine performance is available only on eight-track cartridge and, as noted, in the International Preview Society set. A more overtly "expressive" performance, it ranks for me alongside Szell's. RCA would do well to reissue Serge Koussevitzky's uniquely compelling Fifth.

Symphony No. 6. There are two unique and indispensable discographic documents here, dating thirty-six years apart—Wilhelm Furtwängler's legendary 1938 performance with the Berlin Philharmonic and Leopold Stokowski's most recent recording with the LSO for RCA. Seraphim's reissue of the Furtwängler is a better transfer than the previous COLH version on Angel, and it is offered at a budget price. Despite its age, this unique performance deserves a place in every record collection, even of those who don't particularly like Tchaikovsky. Furtwängler seemed to have rethought this work in every detail and came up with a reading that is extraordinarily responsive to the composer's emotionally laden expression without indulging in excessive sentimentality.

Stokowski's new RCA version is completely typical of this remarkable nonagenarian: In a sense, it epitomizes his whole approach to music-making for more than six decades. All his wonted emotional excess, oversentimentalization, flamboyant theatricality, and incredible use of orchestral color for expressive effect are summed up in a performance of fascinating impact. Stokowski's treatment of the soaring second subject of the first movement is only one instance of many in this reading that provide an example of a completely unique Tchaikovsky style. In its integral unity of conception and performance, this is a far better representation of this conductor's legendary mastery than his other Tchaikovsky records currently available. Not to everyone's taste, to be sure, but completely spellbinding.

Carlo Maria Giulini's performance with the Philharmonia (Seraphim S 60331) matches Furtwängler's in basic musicianship, producing an equally probing, but quite different, interpretation. Abbado's new DG version with the Vienna Philharmonic is very good, but Karajan does a more complete job with the same sort of approach; in fact Karajan's Pathétiques are for me the best of his Tchaikovsky recordings. For those who prefer a more straightforward reading with emphasis on structure rather than sentiment, Fritz Reiner's Chicago Symphony performance (RCA LSC 3296) is very good and much more sympathetic than Arturo Toscanini's brittle reading (Victrola VIC 1268, mono).

Seiji Ozawa's new Pathétique just misses placement in the top rank of currently available versions—ranking, in other words, just below Bernstein, Haitink (Philips 6500 081), Karajan, and Reiner, and well short of the exceptional Furtwängler, Stokowski, and Giulini versions.

The first movement of Ozawa's new reading starts very well, with very fine atmosphere, and its individual sections are well conceived, but in the end I did not sense a really integral over-all statement. Of the two middle movements, the Allegro con grazia is rather stiff in its handling of the 5/4 meter, but Ozawa is at his best with fine detail and control in the oft-abused Allegro molto vivace. The finale does not convey the necessary sense of desperate exhaustion, partly because it is played or recorded too loudly and partly because the string tone is too rich.

The Ormandy Fourth and Fifth in quadriphony: The Quadradisc editions, like other Philadelphia Orchestra recordings, use the back channels to capture "hail sound." The Fourth is a little more distant in perspective, though the focus and clarity of texture are slightly better than in the Fifth, which is recorded with relatively high levels in the back channels so that instrumental placements sometimes seem to "bleed" in that direction. In terms of extraneous noise and distortion, however, one review sample of the Fourth was only fair and another was very poor.

Robert Long

The Stokowski Sixth in quadriphony: RCA—or more probably Stokowski—treats the orchestra to a wraparound perspective relatively new for RCA's quadraphonic symphonic recordings. Though the seating is unconventional (how often has Stokowski's been otherwise?), it works well, with a fine sense of space, balance, and detail.

Robert Long
Marche slave. Chances are that this will be bought as a filler on some other Tchaikovsky record, but if the reader's choice will be determined by this piece, he can't go far wrong with Reiner, Previn, or Haitink.

**Tchaikovsky:** Orchestral Works. Utah Symphony Orchestra, Maurice Abravanel, cond. [Marc J. Aubort and Joanna Nickrenz, prod.] Vox QSVBX 5129/31, $10.98 each three-disc set.

**Tchaikovsky:** Symphony No. 6, in B minor, Op. 74 (Pathétique). Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Claudio Abbado, cond. [Rainer Brock, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 401, $7.98.

**Tchaikovsky:** Symphony No. 6, in B minor, Op. 74 (Pathétique). Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Wilhelm Furtwängler, cond. SERAPHIM 60231, $3.96 (mono) [recorded 1938; from ANGEL COLH 21, 1961].

**Tchaikovsky:** Symphony No. 6, in B minor, Op. 74 (Pathétique). Orchestre de Paris, Seiji Ozawa, cond. PHILIPS 6500 850, $7.98.

**Tchaikovsky:** Symphony No. 6, in B minor, Op. 74 (Pathétique). London Symphony Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski, cond. [Richard Mohr, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-0426, $6.98. Tape: ARK 1-0426, $7.95. ARS 1-0426, $7.95. Quadriphonic: ARD 1-0426 (Quadradisc), $7.98; ART 1-0426 (Quadradisc), $7.98.

**Tchaikovsky:** Francesca da Rimini, Op. 32; Hamlet, Op. 67a; 1812 Overture, Op. 49. Available separately: Manfred Symphony (Canadee QCE 31079, $4.98); Romeo and Juliet, 1812 Overture (Turnabout QTV-S 34554, $3.98).

**Tchaikovsky:** Symphony (6), Manfred Symphony, Op. 58. Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, cond. [Semen Primak, prod.] MELODIYA/ANGEL SR 40261/7, $6.98 each.


**Tchaikovsky:** Symphonies: No. 4, in F minor, Op. 64. Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. [Max Wilcox, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-0665 and 1-0664, $6.98 each. Tape: ARK 1-0665 and 1-0664, $7.95 each; ARS 1-0665 and 1-0664, $7.95 each. Quadriphonic: ARD 1-0665 and 1-0664 (Quadradisc), $7.98 each; ART 1-0665 and 1-0664 (Quadradisc), $7.95 each.

**Tchaikovsky:** Symphony No. 6, in B minor, Op. 74 (Pathétique). Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Claudio Abbado, cond. [Rainer Brock, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 350, $7.98.

**Tchaikovsky:** Symphony No. 6, in B minor, Op. 74 (Pathétique). Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Wilhelm Furtwängler, cond. SERAPHIM 60231, $3.96 (mono) [recorded 1938; from ANGEL COLH 21, 1961].

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**Tchaikovsky:** Symphony No. 6, in B minor, Op. 74 (Pathétique). London Symphony Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski, cond. [Richard Mohr, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-0426, $6.98. Tape: ARK 1-0426, $7.95. ARS 1-0426, $7.95. Quadriphonic: ARD 1-0426 (Quadradisc), $7.98; ART 1-0426 (Quadradisc), $7.95.


One of the delights of Vox's splendid new collection of Ravel orchestral works, which contains four records for the already low price of the usual three, is the sound quality, not just from the standpoint of the engineering, but also in the manner conductor Stanislaw Skrowaczewski has managed for the most part to create a perfect Ravelian orchestral ambience. On the one hand, this ambience involves a certain largeness, a certain expansiveness that grows from an atmospheric quality of deep, frequently dark-woody resonance the composer has created (and the truly superlative string section of the Minnesota Orchestra must be singled out for its contributions here). On the other hand, Ravel constantly deploys solo instruments or small groupings that stand out against the velvety, large orchestral effects, and it is the lines and motives played by these individualized instruments that give the music much of

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**by Royal S. Brown**

**Ravel in Minnesota:**

**The Real Thing**

Conductor Skrowaczewski and Vox's recording team combine to produce a sensitive and beautifully registered set of the orchestral works.

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This new Philips record is of course more vividly reproduced than my preferred interpretations. Though beautifully balanced in recording and performance, the Orchestre de Paris still shows some weak spots in its playing and the trumpets are especially coarse in the climaxes.

**The symphonic poems**

*Manfred* is a genuine symphony in the Berliozian tradition. Coming between the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies, it is a full-scaled four-movement work of considerably greater merit than the Fifth, more diffuse formally than the Fourth, and less original in structure than the Sixth. Abravanel's version, available separately, is very much worth acquiring. Both Maazel and Svetlanov suffer from the deficiencies noted in connection with their symphony cycles.

*Roméo et Juliette.* The choices approach infinity here, and the listener may be influenced by couplings. My favorite is Charles Munch's version with *Francesca da Rimini* (Victrola VICS 1197), both superbly played in the best Romantic style.

*Francesca da Rimini.* Dorati's recent version with the National Symphony is rather bleak—hardly in a class with Munch's, interpretively or orchestrally.

*Hamlet.* None of the performances of this admitted lesser work strikes me as compelling. Aside from Abravanel's very musical reading, Svetlanov's more dramatic performance would be the best choice. Dorati's recent record suffers from the same defects as his Francesco.

*The Voyevode.* Since this is not in the Abravanel set, Dorati and the National Symphony have the field pretty much to themselves. (I have not heard Janos Fürst's new Turnabout version.)

*The Tempest.* This is currently available only in Svetlanov's coupling with *Roméo et Juliette,* both rather melodramatically interpreted with an inferior orchestra.

1812 Overture. Reiner's (RCA Victrola VICS 1025) is a very impressive performance but without additional brass band, used by both Bernard Haitink (Philips 6500 643) and Previn (Angel S 36690).
its contour. Skrowaczewski generally maintains a delicate equilibrium between these two extremes, marvelously backed up in his efforts by the recorded sound, which produces a superb sense of depth, spaciousness, and detail.

Here and there, I would have liked a bit more presence from a solo instrument (such as the oboe in the "Petit Poucet" section of Ma Mère l'Oye) and some additional bass. Furthermore, the exceptional pianissimos Skrowaczewski gets at the openings of Bolero, La Valse, and Rapsodie espagnole are all but obliterated by the struggle between the low recording level and the ambient noise. All in all, however, this is some of the best Ravel sound I have heard in some time. (Sampling the sound quadriphonically, I found the result less satisfactory than in regular stereo, at least with a Lafayette LR 4000a receiver. Occasional rear-emanating percussion instruments merely distracted me.)

But the quality of this set goes well beyond its fine sonics. Skrowaczewski's thoughtful, frequently intense, and exceptionally well-rounded interpretations consistently complement and highlight each subtle direction taken by the Ravelian idiom. Only in his somewhat perfunctory Barque sur l'océan and in some strangely deliberate sections of the Valses nobles et sentimentales does he seem to miss the point. And even in the latter, there is an obvious intent to bring out the episodic, almost interrupted side of the piece that is not altogether inappropriate, even though the essential waltz pace all but disappears much of the time.

Skrowaczewski does not, however, make a philosophy of slow tempos. In Ravel's other major vision of the waltz, La Valse, the conductor establishes a marvelous Viennese buoyancy that nonetheless never loses the colors imparted by the composer's dream filters. In other of the dance-oriented works as well, particularly parts of the Ma Mère l'Oye ballet, the warmly lilting, occasionally wistful Tombeau de Couperin, and the multihued "Feria" from the Rapsodie espagnole, Skrowaczewski's rhythmic vitality quite simply seems to demand dance and movement.

Furthermore, taking full advantage of extremely broad dynamic contrasts, and shaping the melodic motives into full, supple lyrical phrases, he communicates more of the music's dormant passion than any conductor has done in quite some time. Indeed, this is perhaps the most original touch Skrowaczewski brings to the music. His Suite No. 1 from Daphnis et Chloé, for instance, ranges from a sumptuously evocative, ultra-misterioso "Nocturne" to a frenetic, quickly paced "Danser guerrière" that has an almost disjointed quality to it. (But why in the world does the chorus use a syllable that sounds like "loo" in the "Interlude"?) In Bolero as well, he molds the slow, Dionysiac buildup into a gradual accumulation of tension that is never guilty, as are so many interpretations of the work, of a premature climax.

My one screaming objection is the omission of the first third of Daphnis et Chloé. I could not agree less with Roland-Manuel's appraisal (quoted in Richard Freed's excellent and thoroughly informative program booklet) that the two concert suites "contain... the essential and best-written part of the work." Even if this were true, there is no excuse for an album claiming to contain all Ravel's works for orchestra to exclude a major portion of a major work. (There is, of course, an unpublished Shéhérazade Overture that was recently premiered in the U.S.) On the other hand, this set includes the only currently available version of the fanfare for the collective ballet L'Eventail de Jeanne (Jeanne's Fan), written in 1927 as a musical offering of sorts for Madame René Dubost.

With so many excellent performances and interpretations, and with the outstanding sound quality, this Vox Box offers an enticing and convenient solution for those who are putting together a more or less complete Ravel discography. I can only hope that the Minnesota Orchestra and Vox will continue in what promises to be an eminently fruitful direction.
PHILHARMONIC: A HISTORY OF NEW YORK'S ORCHESTRA. Howard Shanet.
A clear, readable account by this Columbia University musicologist of the growth and development of the Philharmonic, with penetrating evaluations of its great conductors—including Viennese, Toscanini, Bernstein. An invaluable reference volume, and good reading.
No. 561...$20.00

Famed New Yorker author Wechsberg writes of his great love, the violin, and touches many bases. The great makers, the secrets of wood and varnish, the business of buying, selling (and cheating), the mysterious matter of tone, the noted virtuosos—all are dealt with in lively style. A fiddle fancier's delight.
No. 341...$8.95

GLENN MILLER AND HIS ORCHESTRA. George T. Simon.
One of America's most informed jazz critics bas this book on interviews with friends and colleagues of Miller. What emerges is a good portrait of this complex musician, with his faults as well as his strengths revealed. "Not a man to have over to Sunday dinner," Miller writes in his foreword, it is an "act of homage to my life and learning—decades indirectly and impersonally brought to a transcendent artist who for almost four decades defended and exhilaration of these taping sessions are recorded for DG. The wear, tear, and the casual fan. Its rare survey of various territory bands of the American 20s and 30s reveals with historical perspective just where some of the jazz greats got their start. McCarthy's is a different approach to jazz history, and rewarding.
No. 541...$15.95

THE CARMEN CHRONICLE: THE MAKING OF AN OPERA. Harvey E. Phillips.
Leonard Bernstein, James McCracken, Marilyn Horne were the all-star team that opened the Met with Carmen in 1972 and went on to record the performance for DG. The wear, tear, and exhalation of these taping sessions are captured here with humor and a fine eye for detail. Many photographs. No. 412...$8.95

This is the first full-length biography of a pre-dominating figure in American dance, whose influence in her own field has often been compared to Picasso's and Stravinsky's in theirs. The author traces her life in repertorial style, bringing into the picture the not-so-peripheral people who influenced and supported her.
No. 452...$10.95

THE GERSHWINS. Robert Kimball and Alfred E. Simon.
A lavish and beautifully produced book honours the seventy-fifth anniversary of George Gershwin's birthday, with an introduction by Richard Rodgers. Containing many photographs, the volume is a combination of scrapbook, journal, and lively biography.
No. 413...$25.00

BIG BAND JAZZ. Albert McCarthy.
This book by an English jazz scholar and critic is directed at both the serious jazz buff and the casual fan. Its rare survey of various territory bands of the American 20s and 30s reveals with historical perspective just where some of the jazz greats got their start.
No. 511...$9.95

SEASON WITH SOLTI. William Barry Furlong.
A sustained, close-up look at the Chicago Symphony, what makes it work, and who. A short history of the orchestra, plus numerous profiles of important players and a revealing view of conductor Georg Solti. Human and readable.
No. 512...$12.50

An attractive coffee-table volume, with photographs enhanced by a short text by the Chicago Tribune's music critic. Interesting to any orchestra-watcher, but particularly so to Chicagoans to whom the Symphony has become a way of life.
No. 531...$12.95

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BACH: Cantatas, Vol. 9. Boy soprano and alto from the Vienna Choir Boys; Paul Esswood, countertenor; Kurt Equiluz, tenor; Siegmund Nimsgern, baritone; Vienna Choir Boys, Chorus Viennensis; Vienna Concentus Musicus, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, cond.* TELEFUNKEN SKW 9, $13.96 (two discs, manual sequence).

BACH: Cantatas, Vol. 10. Boy soprano from the Vienna Choir Boys; Paul Esswood, countertenor; Kurt Equiluz, tenor; Ruud van der Meer, bass; Vienna Choir Boys, Chorus Viennensis; Vienna Concentus Musicus, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, cond. TELEFUNKEN SKW 10, $13.96 (two discs, manual sequence).

The latest installments of Telefunken's Bach cantata series keep its high standards intact. Vol. 9 is divided between performances of Harnoncourt's Vienna Concentus Musicus and the Leonhardt Consort, providing certain stimulating comparisons between Harnoncourt's robust baritone soloist (Siegmund Nimsgern) and Leonhardt's sweet-toned, less assertive one (Max van Egmond, who collaborates marvelously with the boy soprano in the jubilant "Gone Is Sorrow" duet in No. 32), and between the smoother rhythmic flow of the first group and the more heavily accented, sometimes slightly laborious drive of the second.

The listener who takes these eight cantatas more or less at one sitting will find most of the pulse-quickening music in the first set. The triumphant spirit of trumpets-and-timpani scoring occurs in Nos. 31 and 34. For the rest, the soul-searching timbre of strings and/or oboes prevails, encompassing texts that dwell on themes of sorrow and suffering. Various movements of high individuality stand out: the second tenor aria of No. 36, where the soloist has his work cut out for him vis-à-vis a pair of busy oboes over which he must prevail (and does); the soprano/alto canon of No. 37; the anguish-chromaticism of the fugal chorus opening No. 38; the terzetto (soprano, alto, bass) of the same cantata, curiously gripping in the peculiar timbre of these combined voices.

The cantatas cover a broad compositional time span, from Weimar of 1715 (No. 31) through three Leipzig cycles of the mid-1720s to the reworking in the early 1740s of No. 34, first written as a wedding cantata in 1726.

Richter's new recording of the Bach concertos for three and four harpsichords is among the best available but not, it seems to me, up to his own standards. Ensemble playing is polished and assured; tempos are appropriately brisk. However, that dramatic intensity for which Richter has long been famous has been drastically subdued here in favor of rich, luscious string sound. It is a very attractive sound, and some listeners may actually prefer it to the leaner textures of the Leonhardt performances (in his five-disc set of all the harpsichord concertos, Telefunken SCA 25). I prefer the more incisive playing of Leonhardt's group and miss the intensity of many of Richter's earlier Bach recordings. Still, this is a welcome addition to the catalogue.


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C.F.G.

The basic Bach solo-flute repertory of the six sonatas S. 1030/5 usually is augmented by the unaccompanied sonata (or partita) S. 1013 and sometimes also by the very early (c. 1703) S. 1020 sonata for flute or violin and continuo. Over the years, there have been several first-rate recorded collections, notably the 1955 mono set by Wummer and Valenti for Westminster and the still in-print 1965-66 Shaffer/Malcolm stereo set for Angel. But those by Rampal and Veyron-Lacroix (first in mono for La Bofte a Musique and London/Ducretet-Thomson, later in stereo for Epic in 1963, currently reissued as Odyssey Y2 31925) always have been ranked close to if not at the top.

Their latest version has the added attractions not only of gleamingly clean, up-to-date, not oppressively close recording and an acoustical ambience more expansively open than is usual for chamber music, but also three works more than the standard eight. These are the somewhat meandering S. 1038 sonata for intertwined flute and violin (quite possibly the composition of a Bach student rather than the master himself) and the more distinctive, now plain- tive, now bubbling S. 1039 sonata for two flutes, plus the more debatably pertinent, but altogether right, S. 997 partita usually considered to have been intended either for lute or harpsichord solo.

A rich feast indeed—and everything is done with the familiar Rampal/Veyron-Lacroix mastery of phrasing and tonal-coloring techniques. The deftly collaborating violinst in S. 1038 and flutist in S. 1039 are perhaps just a bit too modest in unobtrusively blending their parts with Rampal's, but Violist Savall is more outspoken than most continuo gambad players. My only (quite minor) adverse criticisms are of some lack of personal involvement on Rampal's part and that the playing—in both style and smoothly contoured tonal coloring—is more characteristic of today's highest standards than those, undoubtedly less "perfect," of Bach's own time. Compare, for example, this beautifully restrained and polished performance of the greatest of all the flute works. S. 1038, with the recent more boldly personal and eloquently outspoken Holliger performance of the same music in a reconstructed oboe version. (Philips 6500 618.)

Robert Veyron-Lacroix

BACH: Organ Works. Michael Murray, organ (Von Beckerath organ of the First Congregational Church, Columbus, Ohio). ADVENT 5010, $6.98.


Michael Murray arrived on the scene some months back with two superb records of French Romantic organ music [December 1974], played with surefire and exciting technique and a very attractive, no-nonsense approach to the music. I find his first Bach record irresistible too, despite various reservations. Murray does not search for profound "inner meanings": he seems equally unconcerned with Bach's ceaseless architectural master strokes and with the intricate matter of baroque performance practices. Nevertheless, his Bach renderings have tremendous surface appeal: his technique is dazzling, and he plays with wonderful energy and excitement: clean articulation, and an abundance of rhythmic drive.

The best performances are on Side 1: the famous D minor Toccatas and Fugue and the A minor Vivaldi-Bach concerto. In both Murray sets very fast tempos and keeps them going without a suggestion of difficulty. There's scarcely any rhythm inflection, even in the free fantasy sections of the toccata, but he uses the rhythmic regularity to build a tremendous amount of tension and excitement.

The D major Prelude and Fugue, taken somewhat less briskly, is only a bit above the ordinary. The B minor Prelude and Fugue has in common with Bach's other very late works the most profound emotional content expressed in the most complex musical structure. The music itself has great depth and comparatively little surface appeal, and Murray's style, at least at present, is the opposite. All but one of the works here were recorded on a 1972 Von Beckerath tracker organ in Columbus, Ohio, with which Murray seems somewhat uncomfortable. He plays it with the surface touch of a player accustomed only to electric actions, seemingly insensitive to the more subtle possibilities of a mechanical action. The three-manual instrument has forty-six stops, dominated by two ranks of chalumeau Spanish trumpets. The basically German classic design has cornets added to all three manual divisions, giving it a great deal of flexibility. It is not, however, a particularly distinguished instrument. Specifically, it has several badly scaled (or poorly regulated) ranks of high-pitched pipes, which destroy the cohesion of the full ensemble.
and give it a rauccous, unrefined sound.

Murray also gives an eloquent reading of an organ transcription of the Sinfonia to Cantata No. 29 (complete with gradual closing and re-opening of the swell shutters, à la Virgil Fox). That performance is on the organ of St. Meinrad Archabbey in Indiana, the same instrument he used on his Franck disc.

C.F.G.


This disc, the first installment in a complete cycle of the Beethoven violin sonatas, leaves the subtle but unmistakable impression of a piano-dominant partnership. It is not really a matter of loudness; the recorded balance is very considerate of both instruments. Rather Ashkenazy exerts an added measure of authority through minute control of musical character, delineation of phrases, articulation, and texture. He is completely responsive to sudden mood changes, to shifts among staccato, legato, and portamento. His incisive playing displays a constantly probing mind aware of all sorts of fine points often passed over in the average—even or above average—performance. For example, in the variation movement of the Kreutzer, the beginning of the coda is made more effective by the astute observance of both sforzando and the forte that follows it in the reliable Henle urtext edition (some versions print only the sf)—a seemingly small point that nonetheless has a revelatory impact.

Perlman is a substantial virtuoso, but his playing is in the main just that bit more generalized than Ashkenazy's. The violin playing is muscular, musically, and straightforward, but ever so reliant on a constant, plumpy vibrato—lacking, in other words, the variety of color and intensity needed to match the incisiveness of the piano part.

Op. 12, No. 2, is beautifully worked out from an ensemble standpoint. The first movement, such an exciting scramble in the old Szegedi/Arreau version, is spectacularly together here. This is clean, direct, completely unperturbable music-making.

In the Kreutzer, I would welcome more fervor. (How many works, after all, have two Presto movements?) Even so, the Perlman/Ashkenazy version is anything but slow-footed and Brahmsian. There is bite to the sonority and ample vigor and classical contours. Perlman and Ashkenazy also show many of the bad habits of generations and generations of performers; they don't, for instance, anticipate the ritards in the third movement's second theme.

So if there must be a tinge of disappointment, it is at the highest level: I can imagine a Milstein or Kyung-Wha Chung matching Ashkenazy phrase for phrase. Still, this should be a fine series indeed.

H.G.


Comparison: LaSalle Quartet DG 2530 283.

The Alban Berg Quartet was founded in 1970 by four professors at the Vienna Hochschule fur Musik. The first and second fiddles were former concertmasters of, respectively, the Vienna Philharmonic and the Vienna Symphony Orchestra. They resolved to perform in every recital a piece by Berg, Schoenberg, Webern, or a contemporary composer. And for a year, according to a note on the sleeve of this record, these Viennese players went to Cincinnati to study interpretation and execution of the Second Vienna School with the LaSalle Quartet. The LaSalle's splendid album of the complete string-quartet works of Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern for Deutsche Grammophon was welcomed in these pages by David Hamilton, in March 1972. Some of it is also available separately.

and one of the separate discs (2530 283) presents the same coupling—Berg's string quartet and Lyric Suite—as the Berg Quartet's record under review. The sleeve remarks that "it would be presumptuous to claim that at this stage the musicians from Cincinnati have already been surpassed." Nevertheless, I think perhaps they have been, in the performance of the string quartet. But not in the Lyric Suite. So neither disc is clearly preferable to the other. Both are first-rate recordings of first-rate performances.

Anyone who owns the Lyric Suite already in, say, the (recently deleted) Juilliard Quartet version may like to hold for the Telefunken version of the quartet. The timbre of the LaSalle playing is bewitching—four beautifully matched musicians playing four beautifully matched Amati instruments, aristocrats in sound, in delicacy and finesse of phrasing, in the polish of their discourses. But in the Berg Quartet's interpretation of the work, the bones of the structure are somewhat nearer the surface, and that, it seems to me, is what the piece needs. Schoenberg, in the famous "testimonial" to his former pupil, wrote of "...the fullness and unconstraint of the string quartet's musical language..." The LaSalle version for its uncannily beautiful performance of the Allegro maestoso with its string writing that Elliott Carter would mark scorrevole (the Berg Quartet produces a slightly more sobriquet rustle), and for the serenity and evenness of those wonderful final pages that succeed the big climax (the beauty of the LaSalle sound here is surely unsurpassable). Other small points of difference: The LaSalle's cellist, Jack Kirstein, begins the Adagio appassionato rather more expressively, but the Berg's cellist, Valentin Erben, begins the Largo desolato, with a slightly heavier, and slightly more affecting, pianissimo tread.

It is interesting to note that, after the first performance of the Lyric Suite, Berg wrote to Schoenberg reporting, with pleasure, that there had been applause after each movement from the second on. Audience habits have changed. In the same letter, Berg gives the duration of his work as 35-35 minutes; the score suggests about 32; in both the recorded versions, the timing is about 28 minutes.

A.P.

BERG: Three Orchestral Pieces, Op. 6; Three Pieces from the Lyric Suite. For a feature review, see page 61.

71

JULY 1975
Among the various operatic recordings on the Odyssey label that bear the rubric "Legendary Performances," this, I venture to say, is virtually the only one to deserve an accolade. It wasn't the first American performance of Wozzeck, Stokowski did that back in 1931, a fully staged production in Philadelphia and New York, but the Depression and the war forestalled any significant consequences. The Mitropoulos recording of Wozzeck, April 1951, is probably the only one to benefit the orchestra's pension fund. For over a decade, it was the only recording of Wozzeck, and can still be heard with pleasure and profit.

Most importantly, it is a "real" performance— that is, it conveys the presence of something really happening, with compelling force and immediacy. Mitropoulos certainly grasped the shape of the opera as well as any conductor ever to undertake it, and he drew from the Philharmonic much brilliant and remarkably accurate playing.

Even for a conductor of Maazel's unflagging musicianship and executant competence, it is admirably accompanied too, with the continuo parts effectively varied from the usual harpsichord/gamba combination to lute/gamba (in Nos. 2 and 4) and for one work (No. 7) to harpsichord/lute/gamba.


Even for a conductor of Maazel's unflappable professionalism, the Filth is a pretty fearsome choice for a first Bruckner recording. Quite aside from the length, matched only by a slow performance of the Eighth, this score offers the conductor such challenges as smoothly integrating the alternate adagio and allegro speeds of the opening movement; managing the frequent four-against-six rhythm in the slow movement; holding a rock-steady beat in the finale, while making sure that all the permutations of scoring within which the two fugal subjects embed themselves are clearly heard.

Maazel's concert performances last season with the Cleveland Orchestra, technically polished though they were, somehow failed to mesmerize, which made me all the more curious about the recording. I must begin by stating that, in its general level of musicianship and executant competence, it is far more satisfactory than London's ear-
The excitement of the stage—on record.

MASSNESET
LA NAVARRAISE
complete opera
Popp-Vanzo-Souzay
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Coming this summer: Janet Baker, Bernstein and Mahler, Michael Tilson Thomas and Beethoven, Boulez and the Firebird.
lier effort with the Vienna Philharmonic-Knappertsbusch's (Stereo Treasury STS 15121/2), which is in any case disqualified by its use of the Schalk brothers' butchery of the score. Furtwängler's VPO concert performance (Rococo 2834) is intriguing for its uncharacteristic driving dynamism and many expressive moments, but it is ragged and undisciplined and the sound is atrocious. Joachim's Fifth (DG 27107 020) is romantic and atmospheric, but it too is disjointed—in a work that depends on rigorous formal cohesion.

That leaves, in addition to Maazel, the quite different but magnificently played and recorded versions of Haitink and Klemperer. The London recording, to begin with, offers a more generalized orchestral perspective than the other two. Though wide in range and clean enough, the sound here does not allow the trombones and tubas to emerge with the crisp, snaring edge they have with Klemperer or to maintain individual timbre as they do in the tighter and more backward ambience of the Haitink version. Actual problems of execution and intonation aside, minor enough in the string tone is perhaps the warmest and loveliest of all, but I find over and over that the Concertgebouw performance is more attentive to nuances of phrasing, dynamics, and articulation, while the New Philharmonia has been captured by EMI's engineers with more presence and transparency.

Maazel takes the first movement at a moderate pace. The changes from adagio to allegro are less mercurial and exciting than Haitink's. I'm sorry that Maazel overlooks the ritardando at bar 307, and I don't care for the crescendo he introduces from bar 45 to 50. At least he avoids the slowdown for the pizzicato theme, a trap into which Klemperer falls, leaving nowhere to go when ritards are called for.

In the slow movement, Maazel begins at nearly Klemperer's vigorous, andante-like tempo. But unlike Klemperer, who kept up that pace, he broadens at letter B, where Bruckner marks sehr kraftig. He winds up taking almost as long as Haitink, with his broader basic tempo. Maazel is generally the most flexible of the three in this movement, and in the Allegro. The middle section, where many players broaden out rhetorically, but conversely she could have kept the line of the opening melody longer and more urgently directional. For me she doesn't fully project the magnificent power and severity of this scherzo.

Haitink plainly has her own view of these oft-played works, and her assured, completely natural pianistic command, her lyrical instinct, her glistening passagework are completely musical and a pleasure to hear.

H.G.

Martha Argerich
Completely musical.


Martha Argerich's tempestuous, even rashly aggressive recording of the Chopin B flat minor Sonata (DG 139 317) prepared me for a similar approach to the far more dramatic B flat minor. And yet she sounds relatively cool and collected this time.

The overall effect calls to my mind the venerable recordings of Rachmanninoff (Victoria 1534 or RCA ARM 3 0294) and Cortot (his earlier, better version, never transferred to LP), though the treatment of detail is different and of course the approach is thoroughly modern in its respect for the composer's written indications. It is largely a matter of timing and pedaling. In the "wind over the grave" finale, Argerich's command is fantastic, giving a large, spanning conception with individual notes bound together into sweeping sinuous waves. A certain spookiness pervades the first three movements too, but never to the detriment of poetry or structure. The leaps in the scherzo are unfailingly strong and accurate. This is definitely one of the most absorbing demanding sonatas to come my way recently. Argerich, incidentally, takes the prescribed soft dynamic.

The Andante spianato and Grande polonaise gets a rather angular, deliberate reading. The pedaling is sparse, the colors sober: again structural articulation is uppermost. I have heard brighter, more rippling performances of this early work, but Argerich, by underplaying the salonish qualities, manages to endow the piece with impressive intellectual weight and stature.

The B flat minor Scherzo is one of the most Beethovenesque of Chopin's works; it tends to be built up with motivic figurations and dynamic contrasts. Argerich navigates a rather severe course in the middle section, where many players broaden out rhetorically, but conversely she could have kept the line of the opening melody longer and more urgently directional. For me she doesn't fully project the magnificent power and severity of this scherzo.

Argerich plainly has her own view of these oft-played works, and her assured, completely natural pianistic command, her lyrical instinct, her glistening passagework are completely musical and a pleasure to hear.

**Dvořák: Mass in D (original version).** Neil Ritchie, boy soprano; Andrew Giles, boy alto; Alan Byers, tenor; Robert Morton, bass; Nicholas Cleobury, organ; Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. Simon Preston, cond. [Michael Bremner, prod.] Argo ZRG 781, $6.98. Comparison: Smetáček / Prague Sym. Supr 1 120981/2

Dvořák composed this Mass for the consecration of a private chapel, where it was premiered in 1887 in the organ-accompanied form here recorded by Argo. For its publication in 1892, Dvořák orchestrated the Mass, and that version can be heard on Smetáček's Supraphon recording (which features the same conductor, chorus, and orchestra as, but different soloists from, an earlier Musica Sacra recording).

Both versions have staunch adherents. I find that the orchestration adds little to the Gloria, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei, while some of the woodwind writing in the Kyrie and the brass effects there and in the Credo are more impressive in both (there's not the only difference between the two recordings. Argo uses boy soloists for the soprano and alto parts, yielding a more celestial and sweet sound, with occasional pitch imprecision, in contrast with the lusher and more professionally polished quality of Supraphon's female soloists.

Each reading is devoted and stylish in its own way, and both have spacious sonics, with Argo's perhaps more close up and translucent. There is no dearth of bass response in either, the organ registering quite strongly in both (it has a part to play in the orchestral version).

The work itself is by and large rather sober and austere. The Dvořák of the symphonies and Slavonic Dances, the tone poems and concertos, even the mature symphonic masterpieces, rarely emerges. Many of Dvořák's other sacred works are more characteristic: the Stabat Mater and Requiem, with their vein of heartrending lyricism; the Te Deum, with its supercharged vitality and abandon; the enormously dramatic oratorio St. Ludmila, with its expressive range and grandeur. The Smetáček reading of this Mass shares a two-disc set with the Te Deum. Psalm 149, and the five Biblical Songs. That album and Supraphon's St. Ludmila (SUAST 50585/7) deserve highest consideration for domestic release by Vanguard.

**Gesualdo: Nine responsories and other chants marking Holy Saturday.** Prague Madrigal Singers, Miroslav Venhoda, cond. Telefunken SWT 9913, $6.98.

High Fidelity Magazine
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The fact is, 2 out of 3 automatic turntables in the world are BSR.
Don Carlo Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa (c. 1561-1613), is best known for his six books of five-voice madrigals (147 in number) and especially for the later ones in which he experimented with unique, bold, and—especially today—startling chromatic phrases. Besides these secular works, he also published two books of Sacere Cantiones in 1603 (one of the books survives only in incomplete form) and a book of Responsoria et alia ad Officium Hebdomadis Sanctae Spectantia in 1611, the same year that saw the publication of the fifth and sixth books of madrigals.

The twenty-seven six-voice responsories, plus a psalm and a canticle, contained in this late publication have a strictly liturgical function. On certain of the more important church holy days, for which the daily liturgy has retained its full form, the Office of Matins is divided into three nocturnes. Each of the nocturnes includes three readings or scriptural lessons, and each of these lessons is followed by a sung responsory, the text of which is partly Biblical and partly free verse. The texts of Gesualdo's twenty-seven responsories are those for the three nocturnes of Matins in Tenebrae (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday). This new Valois Telefunken disc makes available for the first time the third group of nine, proper to the three nocturnes of Matins of Holy Saturday, plus the psalm and the canticle.

The Gregorian responsories all consist of two sections, the respond (sung by the choir) and the versicle (sung by soloists or soloists), after which the respond is repeated either complete or, more often, from some mid-point. Gesualdo followed this structure precisely in each of his polyphonic settings, even frequently reducing the normal six-voice texture of the respond to a lower voice in the verse. The boldly expressive chromaticism of his late madrigals is employed in the same manner, and to about the same degree in these works, the expressiveness here illustrating the story of Christ's Passion, with which these three most solemn days of the Christian year are concerned.

As a kind of addendum to the publication, Gesualdo included six-voice polyphonic settings of Psalm 50 (Misere mei) and a canticle (Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel). Both are proper to the Office Hour of Lauds on all three days in Tenebrae. In both cases Gesualdo has followed the tradition of setting only the odd-numbered verses, leaving the alternate verses to be chanted to the appropriate psalm tone. The two pieces are performed in that manner on this recording, and the proper antiphons are even included before and after the psalm and canticle (O mors with Misereare, and Muilieres sedentem with Benedictus).

I wish I could be as enthusiastic about the actual performances here as about the music and the over-all production. The Prague Madrigal Singers number twenty-two, and Miss Varsi is thoroughly up to the demands of the music and the unlikelihood of another recording in the near future. I will recommend this one anyway. We need recordings of the Maundy Thursday and Good Friday segments before we ask for a new recording of this group.

The recorded sound is fairly good, though individual singers with unattractive voices are miked rather too closely. The jacket notes include complete Latin texts but no translations.


There was a good idea behind the programming of this recital: three Belgian composers performed by a Belgian violinist. The composers, moreover, are related to each other in a hierarchical fashion. Vieuxtemps having taught Ysaye, who in turn was a mentor of Guillaume Lekeu (1870-1904).

The trouble is, three-quarters of the disc is consumed by the Lekeu sonata, an arch-Romantic piece awash in luxuriant melody that never seems to get anywhere, fulsomely scored in the piano part, broad, rhetorical, and interminable. Lekeu, who wrote the sonata at twenty-two and died of typhoid at twenty-four, might have tightened up his style eventually, but the piece made me feel as if I were swimming in oatmeal.

The Ysaye is short, gentle, and slightly Debussy-ish; the Vieuxtemps, thank heavens, is first lean and spare, then (in the Polonaise) genuinely brilliant, diverting, and direct in its grandstand gestures. Vieuxtemps knew just where he was going.

Grumiaux performs the works in a rich and impassioned manner, as is his wont, and Miss Varsi is thoroughly up to the demands made on her, which are considerable.


Liszt's two symphonies were written in the same period, with the composition of the Dante score falling between the beginning and the final revision of the more familiar Faust Symphony. Those who admire that work should find much to please them in this one, for they are very much alike: robustly Romantic scores, more tone poems than symphonies on classical models, that are alternately dramatic, erotic, pious, and exotic in the Lisztian manner (with occasional Wagnerian overtones). In any well-conducted Romantic revival the Dante Symphony would return to the repertory, and this recording may assist that process since it puts the work in the catalogue in a thoroughly effective and sympathetic statement that is enhanced by good use of four-channel techniques. (My, what a splash Liszt's orchestration makes when you have
It's hard to see to whom this rerelease is addressed. Those whose primary interest is the opera itself will gravitate to the Rudel recording, which is well cast, sonically up to date, and uncut. Those who are attracted to elegance (or are budget-minded) will opt for the Monteux.

Perhaps the Richmond set is designed to appeal to those with a nostalgia for European broadcasts of a quarter-century ago. Not that this Manon derives from a broadcast. It simply sounds like one, having been furnished with the sort of benign commentator who once upon a time used to mediate between listeners and performance by setting the scene and explaining the action—particularly during those passages when the orchestra is above playing (it is possibly to accommodate this additional role that the score has been so heavily cut.)

The performance itself is pleasing enough: it achieves the level you might have encountered on a good night at the Opera Comique around 1980. Albert Wolff keeps everything deft. Janine Michigan lacks allure, but she is an affecting Manon and is more idiomatic than either Sills (ABC) or De los Angeles (Seraphim). The Swiss tenor Libero de Luca has a decent enough voice but is off pitch a lot of the time. Roger Bourdin, however, is a first-rate Lescaut. The small roles are convincingly done, and the orchestra and chorus are creditable. Text and translation, including the narrator's role.

D.S.H.


It is often noted that Mendelssohn's famous E minor Violin Concerto (1844), by dispensing with the opening tutti exposition and presenting the initial theme straightaway on the violin, helped revitalize the concerto idiom, which had been faltering since the days of Beethoven's Emperor Concerto (1809) and, to a lesser extent, the diverse concerto works of Weber. Yet the Mendelssohn piano concertos are in most ways every bit as innovative.

The G minor begins, after a short, nervous introduction in the orchestra, with an immediate statement on the piano of the opening thematic material, and it is likewise the piano that introduces the calmer and more unified second theme. While the orchestra has a more important role at the
beginning of the D minor Concerto, it by no means gives a complete statement of the main themes before the piano returns. Both concertos feature a fairly equal interplay between piano and orchestra in the first-movement expositions, in which repetition is an element of the thematic structure and development (notice how many of Mendelssohn's melodic fragments are repeated immediately, either literally or in sequence) and not of the form. Furthermore, in both works Mendelssohn solves the cadenza problem by simply eliminating it altogether.

But the amputation of the cadenza is by no means a copout. Perhaps because of the innately difference between the piano sound and that of the instruments of the classical orchestra, Mendelssohn tends to use the solo instrument as a different element of the orchestral sound, thereby integrating it with the orchestra in a much more thorough fashion than perhaps had ever been done before; a cadenza would have tended to unbalance the works. And one is struck, in listening to these concertos (especially in the outer movements), by surprisingly frequent changes in configuration in the solo instrument vs. orchestra relationship. Compare this with the style of the two Chopin piano concertos, written slightly earlier (in 1829 and 1830).

Perhaps as a consequence of this piano-orchestra integration, these works often lack that solid, lyrical flow one comes to expect from the Romantic concerto. But it seems to me that the composer more than makes up for this by the exhilarating sense of drama and movement he creates not only through the soloist-orchestra structures, but also in his harmonic language, which constantly establishes an atmosphere of expectation. What the listener finally ends up with is the impression of an integral, highly dynamic, rather non-Romantic structure particularly resistant to the isolation of its individual parts.

I have heard no performer capture the drama and tension of these concertos as thoroughly as Rudolf Serkin, whose recording is marked by strikingly brisk pacing and by an exceptionally full and rich accompaniment by the Philadelphia Orchestra. Yet, as Harris Goldsmith once pointed out, the Serkin renditions lack—although not entirely, to my mind—an essential Mendelssohnian lightness and grace. And while it would not be without his interpretations, there is certainly room for the much more idiomatic approach of Murray Perahia and Neville Marriner, who sacrifice little to Serkin in terms of pacing and briskness but do clear up the storm clouds from time to time and allow milder breezes to blow.

Compare, for instance, the simple, unobtrusive way Marriner and his excellent orchestra present the opening theme of the D minor Concerto's second movement with the almost glibly splashy pose of Ormandy and the Philadelphia. Or compare the definition and leaflike softness of Perahia's figuration to Serkin's magnificently phrased, all-in-one-piece runs. In the present recording, both soloist and conductor seem to make a constant effort to maintain a structurally reasonable dynamic relationship both between the piano and the orchestra and between the diverse episodes of the musical development.

Occasionally, Marriner becomes a bit too dry (as in parts of the G minor's first movement). And I am less than fond of the lifeless impression left by Perahia's playing of those ever-so-typical Mendelssohn scherzo chords used in the opening theme of the D minor's finale. But, considering the fine recording quality (literally, precision, and idiomatic transparency of the performances, Columbia's second-round with the Mendelssohn piano concerto makes a perfect complement to its Serkin/Ormandy Round 1.

R.S.B.

Mozart: Concertos for Horn and Orchestra, Hermann Baumann, valveless horn Vienna Concertus Musicus, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, cond. TELEFUNKEN SAWT 9627. $6.98.

Concertos: No. 1, in D, K. 412; No. 2, in E flat, K. 417; No. 3, in E flat, K. 447; No. 4, in E flat, K. 495.

Most Mozartsians who share my conviction that the horn concertos are the most rousingly invigorating of all his "occasional" works probably have been won over by the now nearly legendary recordings featuring those prodigiously gifted, tragically short-lived virtuoso Dennis Brain, still in print as Angel 35090. (A few veterans among us go back a couple of decades earlier, making their delighted first acquaintance with a Mozart horn concerto as played by Dennis Brain's father, Aubrey Brain.) But there have been many other worthy recordings in recent years of the standard four works, sometimes augmented by one or two additional fragments. The Brain/Karajan version aside, the preferred choice today is a tossup between the 1972 Tuckwell/Marriner set (Angel S 30496) and the 1973 Civil/Marriner set (Philips 6500 325), but not far behind are earlier versions by Tuckwell and Civil (with, respectively, Maag and Klemer, London CS 6403 and Angel S 35689), and also the 1965 Jones/Ormandy set (Columbia MS 6785) and 1981 Linder/Sawrowsky (Vanguard Everyman SRV 173 SD) versions.

One thing none of these gives us (except Mason Jones, but only in the Rondo of K. 412) is the sound of the instrument Mozart actually wrote for: the natural (i.e., unamplified) horn. And while one is likely to claim that the older instrument is preferable to its successor, no one can deny that it was tonally different, partly as a result of the crook changes required for every key change, but mostly because of the compass limitations and the necessity for bringing certain notes into tune by the adroit use of the player's hand in the horn bell, inevitably involving some tone-muffling. Hence it's a matter of considerable interest to Mozartsians to hear what these concertos sound like not only from a natural horn, but also as accompanied by an appropriately small orchestra (fourteen strings, eight winds) made up entirely of period-instrument players.

The results are arresting enough as far as sound. Hermann Baumann is concerned: He's master of fine big, buoyant horn-tone qualities; he's amazingly skilled at achieving as homogeneous a blend of open and stopped tones as is humanly possible; and he brings an infectious bluff, swaggering, personal relish to his performances. His own cadenzas for the Third and Fourth Concertos are admirably in keeping except for the anachronistic introduction of a double-note chord or two—or did any player of Mozart's time, such as his friend Leutgeb, know this trick of playing one note while singing another into the horn? Apart from the solos, cleanly open recording, and smooth-surfaced disc processing, however, there is more here to relish than to attract nonhistorically minded listeners. The old string instruments tend to sound wavy-toned or even shrill-toned in loud upper-register passages. Worse, conductor Harnoncourt is nervous throughout, "leaning" too heavily on accents, too often pressing tempos, too often jerky or surgically expressive. Too bad—Baumann, to say nothing of Mozart, deserves better.

R.D.D.

Puccini: Madama Butterfly.

Co-Cio-San
Suzuki
Kawamura
Goro
Tomio

Inoue
Renauro Ercolani
Renato Bruson

Rome Opera Chorus and Orchestra. Gianandrea Gavazzeni, cond. SERAPHIM IC 6090. $11.94 (three discs, mono, automatic sequence) [from RCA VICTOR LM 6121, 1955, and CAPITOL GCR 7137, 1959].

Time does odd things to one's ears. Listening to this Butterfly after more than a decade, I find that the singing of Victoria de los Angeles, which once seemed exceptionally beautiful to me, begins to sound unnervingly mannered. I can only suppose that, blemished by the glorious quality of the soprano's middle register—uniquely caressing in timbre, rich, wonderfully liquid—one did not in those days notice so quickly the tricky use of slightly flat intonation, a device also much employed at the time by Viennese singers like Imgrund Seefried, to create dramatic emphasis. Today, unfortunately, the effect smacks less of vivid character, than of coyness and sentimentality. The result is that De los Angeles' Butterfly fails to convince one of its sincerity. Matters are not helped by the soprano's
hard-driven top register, a constant technical problem throughout her career, or by her rather placid temperament, which prevents her from committing herself to the full emotionalism of the final scene.

Tito Gobbi, too, is very disappointing. Like De los Angeles, he falls back far too readily on the device of flatness, and a lot of his vocal acting brings him dangerously close to parlando. His characterization of Sharpless, moreover, is singularly unattractive in its loud, monotonous sternness, especially in the scene with Butterfly in Act II, where a certain amount of tenderness and delicacy is surely called for.

Giuseppe di Stefano, on the other hand, sounds splendid. Time has done nothing to diminish the mastery of this Pinkerton: vocally golden, spontaneous, and youthful, thoroughly and convincingly characterized. The minor parts are idiotically done. Gianandrea Gavazzeni leads a competent, unardent performance.

Text and translation, the latter a "singing" version and therefore only approximate. D.S.H.


The biggest question here is technological: Unlikely as it would seem, especially for so sound-conscious a label, the 37:35 Rachmaninoff Second Concerto has been accommodated on a single side.

A little proviso says that although there is "no loss of sound quality... you may find it necessary to increase your volume control slightly." Even if the claim is not entirely fulfilled, the results are pretty tolerable. The piano is sonorous enough and the signal-to-noise ratio good enough to withstand the necessary decibel boost. Nonetheless one has only to sample the overside Paganini Rhapsody to hear the ill effects of London's overcrowding. The concerto lacks the Rhapsody's finely etched detail, the spacious expansiveness, the comfortably wide dynamic range. Some of the blame undoubtedly traces back to the original recording and mixing, for the recorded balance has the piano far to the front with the orchestra relegated to painted-backdrop generality.

Vered is not the most disciplined of pianists, and certain notorious "hot spots" in the concerto sound either a shade overextended (the first-movement development) or simplified (the third movement's first theme). She also tends toward percussiveness in forte passages and favors a rather garish type of rubato phrasing. The concerto's alla marcia first-movement reprise, for example, is subjected to an overemphasized hauling about, and more than a few of the best-known melodic bits are rather lavishly smeared with strawberry jam.

On the whole, however, I rather enjoyed Ms. Vered's approach to all three works. She has flair, communicativeness, a truly atmospheric pianissimo (which she em...
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It is something of a mystery why Angel, which issued Svetlanov's Rachmaninoff First and Third Symphonies, shield away from this Second, but here it is, even if on a different label.

Those who must have a bargain price are directed to Wallenstein (Seraphim S 60133). Nor does Svetlanov offer either textual completeness or the most up-to-date sound, both of which are provided by Previn (Angel S 39954) and Kletzki (London CS 6569)—neither, it happens, any disgrace as a performance. Even for a "Russian"-style performance there is the option of Sanderling (see my September 1974 review of his three-disc Everest symphony cycle), less conveniently accessible and a poorer recording, but with a greater orchestra (the Leningrad Philharmonic) and a bolder, more sweeping conception of the music. Svetlanov seems to be following a similar "heart-on-sleeve" approach, but with more tentative commitment.

Still, taken absolutely by itself, Svetlanov's is a more than satisfactory Rachmaninoff E minor. There's plenty of warmth, sensitivity, "give" in the handling of lyrical lines, and bracing energy. The fairly good Bolshoi orchestra plays idiomatically, and the engineering—which must date back about a decade—is a good example of Soviet technology of its vintage. The cuts in the first three movements are opened, but the finale is conventionally truncated (with the composer's authorization, of course).

RAVEL: Orchestral Works. For a feature review, see page 66.


Comparisons: Ciccolini, Baudo/Orch. de Paris (Nos. 1-5) Sera. SIC 6081; Rubinstein, Ormandy/Philadelphia (No. 2) RCA LSC 3165.

These excellent performances are rather similar in style to those in the Scherzian album of all five Saint-Saëns piano concertos by Aldo Ciccolini and Serge Baudo. In other words, Tacchino and Froment apply patrician rhythm, nimble dexterity, phraseological symmetry, and other prerequisites of the "French" style in place of the more headstrong bravura that, say, Artur Rubinstein brings to his account of the G minor Concerto (the recording with Ormandy is the better of his two).

It's about time somebody said straight out that Saint-Saëns's Samson is one terrific opera. Even its defenders praise it with condescension. Martin Sokol, in his otherwise reasonable liner note for RCA's issue of the recent Eurodisc Samson, reopens the silly opera-oratorio argument and winds up with a definition of oratorio that would embrace at least half the operatic repertory. No, there will be no apologies for the opera here. It would be nice, though, to have a recording that fully projects its grandeur.

For an opera of Samson's quality, the disc surpasses the admirable Seraphim, which is sound in conception and merely uneven in execution. That might serve aptly for those who don't much like the piece, but it seems to me farther off the mark than the Romanian recording on Electrecord, which is sound in conception and merely uneven in execution. That's often the case when BARDs stay indoors in inclement seasons; it's perfect in an apartment music through the holidays. On party music in the summer and seaside housing, a pair of BARDS can be left out and the size of the "French" style in place of the
leaves the two French recordings, which have quite a lot to offer. The Angel stereo set, conducted with a solid sense of shape, has an altogether grand Dalila (Gorr) and High Priest (Ernest Blanc) and a good bass (Anton Diakov) doubling Abimelech and the Old Hebrew. Its most conspicuous weakness, the slurping Samson of Jon Vickers (who at least had the voice for the part), is admirably complemented on the 1946 Fourestier set by the strong, cleanly focused work of Jose Lucciotti. That set, though necessarily constricted in sound, has a fine sense of style and a strong idiomatic cast.

If anyone is contemplating a new recording, I would point out that the most problemmatic role, Samson, currently has one of its ablest exponents in James McCracken. The sound on the RCA version is much the same as the Eurodisc, for better or worse. Complete texts are included. K.F.

SCHOENBERG: Pelleas und Melisande; Verklarte Nacht; Variations for Orchestra. For a feature review, see page 61.


Even in his eighties, Kempff remains capable of great performances. These can, alas, be separated by considerable lapses from grace. Like some of his great predecessors—Cortot, for example—this distinguished artist can be perplexingly schizophrenic. Even on his first New York visit in 1964, I heard him follow up horrendous, brutal accounts of the Schubert D. 845 Sonata and Schumann Davidsbandler with as perfect an account of the Brahms Op. 5 Sonata as I expect ever to hear.

Something of the same sort happens on these two, presumably contemporaneous, records. The Kempff/Kubelik Schumann concerto is, to put it bluntly, awful. It is not so much Kempff's square, idiosyncratic treatment of phrasing and rubato as the labored, unsupple playing, the lack of any fluidity and grace in the passagework. Kubelik supports it in a clear, cautious, ostensibly sympathetic fashion, but surely the conductor must have been on pins and needles, scarcely knowing what would happen next. Such expressive details as the cellos in the second movement are throttled and inexpressive. Moreover, the balance between piano and tutti sounds precarious at times (especially in the first movement), with the solo a bit too distant in relation to accompanying instruments. Certain orchestral passages, like the fugato in the third movement, are magnificently clarified by the engineering, but the piano throughout sounds pingy and harsh.

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Occasionally—very infrequently—a musical performer appears who for one reason or another establishes himself in a category apart from almost all his colleagues. Thanks to his voice, his musicality, his intelligence, and to the medium of phonographic recording, the great Danish tenor Aksel Schiotz, whom leukemia and an intestinal cancer finally vanquished in Copenhagen on April 19 at the age of 68, belonged in such a category. Admirers who knew his recorded repertoire regarded him, to put it simply, as unique. Relatively few, though, knew the details of the tragic episodes that restricted that great singing largely to recordings.

And what records! When they were imported to New York in 1946 or 1947, they caused—especially two breath-taking Messiah arias—a true sensation among collectors, repeating an earlier sensation in England. Fortunately, before illness abruptly canceled his public career soon after the war, HMV in Denmark and England had recorded a lengthy repertoire, including two complete major Lieder cycles, Schubert’s Schone Mullerin and Schumann’s Dichterliebe, with Gerald Moore at the piano.

Outrageous fortune surely has plagued few artists—few human beings—as it repeatedly did Aksel Schiotz. Starting adulthood as a provincial schoolteacher, he had a rich tenor voice full of vibrato but free of tremolo, with an uncanny baritone timbre throughout its range. Many admirers thought that voice justified a full-time professional career, but the three children Schiotz and his admirable, stalwart wife, Gerd, had to feed and clothe made him hesitate. (And later, twins made their responsibilities even more sobering.) Finally, however, he took the plunge.

The morning after his professional debut in Copenhagen, Dances woke up to find their little country occupied by Hitler’s Wehrmacht. With foreign appearances now impossible, Schiotz set about using his art for the comfort and reassurance of his countrymen. As a patriot, he dropped his entire German repertoire for the duration—a crippling sacrifice for a Lieder specialist. To fill that void he revived much very worthwhile but neglected, or even forgotten, Danish music. He sang everywhere—in schools, in churches—sometimes defiantly, such as at the funeral of the patriotic writer Kai Munk, whom the Germans had killed. After the war the king of Denmark awarded Schiotz the country’s equivalent of a knighthood. Literally everyone in Denmark knew him, admired him, and loved him.

Wartime broadcasts of Schiotz’s early recordings had caused important ears to prick up in England. As soon as possible, HMV brought him to London for extensive recording, and at Glyndebourne’s world premiere of The Rape of Lucretia, which had dual casting in all roles, he alternated with Peter Pears as the Male Chorus. That summer began lifelong friendships with Benjamin Britten, Kathleen Ferrier, and Pears. It also brought the first symptom—double vision—of a tumor acusticus, the same type of growth behind the ear that had killed George Gershwin.

Schiotz survived the operation he had in Stockholm, but the surgeon’s unavoidable severing of a nerve cable affected his body as if a guillotine had sliced it in half frontally from head to toe, leaving the right half blind, deaf, and lame. The surgeon said that Schiotz would never sing again but that, with luck, he might walk again.

In 1948, after months of recuperation during a tramp-steamer voyage, indubitably Aksel Schiotz gave a comeback recital in Copenhagen. He was brought to New York soon thereafter for three Town Hall recitals. The first sold out immediately, the second attracted about half capacity, the third drew virtually no one who had paid for his ticket. Some years later, Schiotz attempted another comeback as a baritone. Tapes he made then in America (where he taught) of Schubert’s Winterreise cycle—never, unfortunately, released on discs—proved that nothing had affected that great artistry. He called the book he wrote simply The Art of Singing, and he could lay more legitimate claim to that title than could, or can, the vast majority of his colleagues.

And now at least we have those magical, those unique recordings made almost thirty years ago. As long as people set styli to disc, they will remain treasures beyond price, inimitable examples of what the human voice, in very rare instances, can communicate.

STRAUSS, J.: Die Fledermaus.

Vienna State Opera Chorus, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Karl Bohm, cond. LONDON OSA 1296, $13.96 (two discs, automatic sequence).

Once again, Fledermaus casting turns out to be something of a closed shop here. We have Renate Holm as Adele for the third time in a row, to which there can be little objection (except perhaps from other coloraturas who may resent her apparent monopoly). Erich Kunz still manages Frank pretty well; with earlier appearances in this part, as Falke, and twice as Frosch, he retains the Golden Bat trophy.

The overside Introduction and Allegro appassionato is altogether better. Kubelik is more assertive; Kempff, though still rather square-cut, plays with greater energy, and the total balance is more convincing. Yet even here, I suspect that Kempff would have given a better account of himself fifteen years ago. This will not supplant the magnificent Serkin/Ormandy performance (Columbia MS 6688, also coupled with the concerto).

But from the very first phrase of the Brahms Op. 10, No. 1 Ballade, Kempff sounds like his old self. He gives the “Edward” piece a grim, assertive rendering—full of dynamism and energy. His approach to phrasing is again rather square, but in early Brahms this Germanic way is all to the musician’s good. In the three remaining ballades, some of his tempos are slower than one usually hears, but the symphonic clarity and strength of the playing are incontestable. And within the deceptively inflexible ground plan, Kempff manages all sorts of supple adjustments and caressing nuances. He remains a supreme master of pedaling. This Brahms playing is in the best German tradition, a more poetic counterpart to Bachhaus.

The overside Schumann pieces are done with appropriate fervor. Some might prefer a less metronomic account of the second Op. 28 romance, but Kempff’s is broad and expansive even so. He is even more to the point in Op. 28, No. 1, and in the marchlike No. 3 (so very like the first Op. 21 novelette). His “Vogel als Prophet” is presumably excerpted from the recently issued complete Walckerei (I didn’t compare them and thus cannot say for sure). Again, the playing is rather sparse and plain, yet suitably poetic in the marginal harmonic turns of the central section. The little “Novelette” from Bunte Blatter gets a more caustic sort of treatment than on the ripping, suavely executed old Gabrilovitsch version. In some ways, I like it even better than that classic—indeed, there, a great stylist is at work.

The reproduction on the solo disc is splendid, with a welcome return to the solid, spacious type of piano sound heard on Kempff’s many sonata recordings. Both discs are impeccably pressed.

H.G.
Hard on Kunz's heels is Eberhard Wächter, once a Frank and a Falke, adding a second Eisenstein to his total—not, it turns out, a very wise move. In fact, I don't think he should get full credit this time, considering how few of Strauss's notes he sings. The part is for tenor, of course, and Wächter's first attempt (on the now-deleted Danon set for RCA) was a calculated risk on his high extension. The risk has now become a distinctly bad one; the only things worse than the innumerable lowered vocal lines for Eisenstein in this recording are the ones left unaltered—and lunched at with rough, ugly tone.

Kmentt's Alfred is somewhat more tolerable, although the tone isn't sweet enough to convince us that he's really the narcissistic Alfred. There is, however, some new blood. Gundula Janowitz, despite a few phrases of overrefined, almost private singing, does have some elegant and stylish work, unleashing a fetching Hungarian accent in the Watch Duet (where, unfortunately, Wächter is most tried and most trying). As Orlowski, we have the late Wolfgang Windgassen—no, that is not a printer's error—singing well enough to make us wish he were doing Eisenstein; there is nothing like a sound, professional vocal technique for withstanding the onset of age. The Falke and Blind are routine; the latter is also listed for the speaking role of Frosch, but I can detect no iota of his work in that part, for all the spoken dialogue (save Kunz's melodrama in Act III) has been omitted.

Since the other current stereo recordings of Fledermaus all include dialogue, this may in itself be a deciding factor for you one way or 'tother. (Also worthy of note, textually, is the substitution of the polka Unter Donner und Blitz for Strauss's original ballet music—rather an explosive intrusion after the sentiment of the "Duidu" ensemble. The "standard" musical cuts are also made.)

As you may have gathered, this is vocally a rather uneven affair. Not so the orchestral playing that Bohm elicits from the superb orchestra: beautifully tuned, balanced, blended, and unified at nearly every point. The rhythmic impulse of Orlowski's couples has rarely been so well defined, and the tempos of the Watch Duet are very smoothly integrated. On the debit side are a few failures of ensemble and the slightly bary trumpets of the "Duidu" number, plus a slight but pervasive stodginess—it's all very neat and highly refined, but with little of the relaxed warmth that pervades Krauss's mono version (Richmond RS 62006, also lacking dialogue). At any rate, the recorded sound is fine: clean, clear, with a nice tight definition to the bass and unobtrusive, natural balances.

The libretto booklet reproduces the essay, plot summary, and relevant parts of the libretto from London's Karajan set (OSA 1319 with the "gala" sequence, OSA 1249 without), vocally a more satisfactory enterprise than this one, if somewhat overgrandly conceived.

**SUPPE AND STRAUSS: Overtures.**

**Johann Strauss Orchestra of Vienna, Willi Boskovsky, cond. ANGEL S 37099, $6.98. Tape.**

If our printers could supply a "1/2-R" symbol, it would be appropriate here, since three of the Suppe overture performances are reissues from Vols. 1-3 of Boskovsky's 'Music of Vienna' series. However, the other recordings are appearing in this country for the first time; the fourth Suppe overture, Ein Morgen, ein Mittag, ein Abend in Wien, and the two Strauss overtures, the fine, too seldom heard Eine Nach in Venedig and the almost totally unknown (in this country at least) Blindekuh.

**Suppe:**


The latter, surely a recording first, is less a dramatic curtain-raiser than a potpourri of the 1878 operetta's hit tunes. And while I have no idea what the "story" may be of a theater work whose title translates literally as Blind Cow, its now gay, now seductively lyrical tunes and toe-tapping rhythms surely must rank among the most engaging Strauss ever created. If they're characteristic of the whole operetta, I can't imagine why Blindekuh has been allowed to fade so deeply into obscurity.

As anyone who has heard the earlier three Suppe overtures might expect, the new performances are just as invigoratingly and catchily vivacious. The recordings just as cleanly bright.

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present disc surfaces, however, are unde-
niably rough.  R.D.D.

**Tchaikovsky:** Orchestral Works. For a fea-
ture review, see page 63.

**Vieuxtemps:** Ballade et Polonaise—See
Lekeu: Sonata for Violin and Piano.

**Vivaldi:** La Stravaganza, Op. 4. Carmel
Kaine and Alan Loveday, violins. Academy of
St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner,
cond.  [Michael Bremner, prod.] ARGO ZRG
800/1, $13.96 (two discs, manual se-
quence).

Of Vivaldi's some 300 violin concertos,
neither 200 of them for one rather than two
or more violin soloists, the best known are
those in the enticingly named collections:
first, Il Cimento dell' armonia e dell' inven-
tione, Op. 8 (especially for its leadoff Four
Seasons concertos), then, Le Guitarr, Op. 9;
and, trailing a bit behind, the present
Stravaganza, Op. 4. Despite this collection's
tune-on title, which applies more to its
extravagant display of harmonic and formal
inventiveness than to spectacular
virtuoso showmanship, there have been
only two previous complete recordings the
pioneering Harchel/Reinhardt/Vox mono
version of 1954 (currently available in an
"electronic- stereo" rerelease. Vox SVVX 531)
and the Ayo/Music/Philips stereo set of
1965, which was accompanied with the last of the
domestic Philips pressings.

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Many moods are struck, for some of this music is illustrative: Sonata No. 2 contains a Melancholia and a Dance of the Fairies, and No. 5 a Rustic Dance; the Ballade of No. 3 is a masterful and contemplative introversion, and many other pages are outright pure "fiddle" music.

Ricci is at his best in the robust, vigorous movements. The more subtle colorations elsewhere might have been handled with greater sensitivity and range of palette, but taken as a whole the recording makes its point. These sonatas are an attractive segment of the violin repertory. Where have they been all this time?  S.F.
Like Bernard Shaw, Sir Thomas Beecham at times appeared to act on the premise that a major English artist would not be taken seriously unless he played the part of an outrageous clown. But that is only part of the Beecham legend, and these six reissues from Odyssey constitute a welcome reminder of the real substance behind the legend.

Many consider Beecham's attitude toward musicologists misguided, yet he had real contempt for them only when their scholarly views conflicted with his own artistic insights or his conception of what the public wanted to hear. His outrageously inflated last recording of Messiah often causes us to forget that his earlier ones were considerably more "proper" musically and dramatically.) The Handel-Haydn record (Y 33285) is a case in point. In arranging his suite (mostly) from II Pastor fido, Beecham exchanged what he considered an acromic scoring of oboes and strings, delightfully expanded Handel's orchestration to a nineteenth-century-size ensemble. Echt Handel this certainly is not, but it is a vehicle for Beecham at his most extrovertedly original; he must have relished this venture greatly, for he performs the suite with incredible gusto.

His disregard for recent Haydn scholarship was less outrageous: if he ignored textual criticism, he at least did not restore the symphonies, though his textures are somewhat richer than most musicologists would approve. Nevertheless, his Haydn performances were more perceptive than those of most of his contemporaries—their joy and vitality reveal real sympathy with the composer. No one else, for instance, has perceptively expanded Handel's orchestration to a nine-teenth-century-size ensemble. Echt Handel this certainly is not, but it is a vehicle for Beecham at his most extrovertedly original; he must have relished this venture greatly, for he performs the suite with incredible gusto.

If composers were more practical in choosing their performing forces, there would be no need for chamber music societies. As it is, however, do we get a clear concept of the repertoire? It is all but inevitable that a sampling of Beecham's music will not be representative. The Royal Philharmonic was his orchestra (as the London Philharmonic had been before the war), and it remained supreme to him. The sonatas were considered good for their time, and in selected comparisons I found the sound of these Odyssey reissues, if anything, slightly better.

P.H.
Society's wind soloists meet that challenge. The trio of flutist Paula Robison, oboist Leonard Arner, and clarinetist Gervase de Peyer turns in two of the set's best offerings: Elliott Carter's Eight Etudes for woodwind quartet (with bassoonist Loren Glickman) and Saint-Saëns's breezy Caprice on Danish and Russian Airs (with the Society's artistic director, Charles Wadsworth, at the piano). I'm not wild about Arner's thick, English-horn-ish tone, but these virtuosos sail through both works with gusto, precision, and sensitivity. But why, oh why, didn't they include the Fantasy that goes with the Carter Etudes? The composer did provide elaborate instructions for partial performances of the Eight Etudes and a Fantasy, but a quarter-century later are there still listeners willing to settle for less than a complete Carter work—particularly on records? More's the pity, for the performance is so vital and comprehending that it should have superseded the one by members of the Dorian Quintet (Candide CE 31016), whose slight rhythmic and intonation uncertainties make the work sound forbidding, which it isn't at all. But the Dorian's remains the only recording of the Fantasy.

The woodwind trio's string counterpart—violinist Charles Treger, violist Walter Trampler, cellist Leslie Parmas—is less successful. The players aren't especially well matched stylistically, nor do they attend ideally to the stylistic requirements of the classical repertory they are tackling. The performance of the Haydn Op. 53, No. 1 Trio is bigger in sound, with wider contrasts of tempo and dynamics, than the recent one on Archiv 2533 136, and yet the German musicians' more sober treatment works better. The musical materials of this piano-sonata arrangement are too slight to fill out the Americans' more grandiose framework. (The Germans are also far more generous with repeats, which helps them get the proportions right.) The Beethoven Op. 9, No. 1 Trio is efficient, if not particularly distinguished.

The Mozart E flat Piano Quartet, however, goes rather nicely. It's a frantic, knock-em-dead performance, solidly anchored by pianist Richard Goode's splendid rhythmic pulse. The effect is partly spoiled, though, by faulty recording balance, which renders the piano barely audible. (This unfortunately also is true of the other works in which Goode participates, which is a great pity. He's one of the most consistently interesting pianists around, and we have heard all too little of him on records; but I'm afraid we don't get to hear much more of him here.)

Treger makes a more positive impression in the Moszkowski: G minor Suite for two violins and piano (with Jaime Laredo and Wadsworth), a delightfully big and sweaty piece of Romantic sound-and-fury. It winds down rather badly in the Molto vivace finale, but the performers might have done more to divert attention from the thin musical substance:

The democratic virtues of a chamber music society show to good advantage in the Bach violin-and-oboe concerto and the two Brahms Op. 91 songs. The Bach is pleas-

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91
antly vigorous and robust; most one-player-to-a-part baroque performances use that awful dry "authentic" style. Maureen Forrester has been singing the Brahms songs quite a while now, and her un-self-conscious textual authority, combined with the sumptuous ease of the voice, makes the songs sound less turgid than I have ever heard them. What results is a viola obbligato for once gets its sonic due, and Trampler makes the most of the opportunity. But here again I sense an opportunity missed: isn't this kind of collection the ideal place to juxtapose Brahms's "Geistliches Wiegenlied" with Wolf's nervous, intense "Die ihr sehnet?"? The two songs have much in common, except that they happen to be settings of the same poem, a startling instance of two composers responding to a poem in completely different ways. (Do make the comparison, though, with Jan DeGaetani's miraculously precise performance on her disc of Spanish Songbook selections. None such H 71296.)

It is appropriate that Schumann is represented twice in this collection, for unusual combinations of tone colors often characterize his unique flights of musical fancy. The Fantasia Pieces for piano quintet have never much appealed to me; this seems to me one of those cases where Schumann's fertile imagination lagged behind his coloristic imagination. De Peyer plays quite beautifully, but with no revelations of purpose or poetry, and Goode, as noted, sounds as if he's playing in the next room.

Unlike the Fantasy Pieces, Schumann's Andante and Variations leaves no doubt of its greatness, even in the composer's "more practical" reworking for two pianos alone. The original version, however, is one of the great Romantic conceptions—the cello and horn parts are integral to Schumann's precisely imagined brooding and soaring. The performance is serviceable but not very vividly characterized, both competing recordings communicating the work more fully.

The double representation of Fauré is less understandable. Robison and Wadsworth give a first-rate account of the pair of flute pieces, but the music seems to me utterly devoid of personality, especially following (as it does here) the Bach concerto. The Dolly suite for piano duet, on the other hand, is a thoroughly charming collection of miniatures. But the Browning/Wadsworth performance is serviceable but not very well played or recorded, in my opinion. De Peyer plays quite beautifully, but with no revelations of purpose or poetry, and Goode, as noted, sounds as if he's playing in the next room.

The only fault one might find with this recording is that it is not available on a single CD. The Donizetti duet (as it does here) is a rich, expressive work, but the Browning/Wadsworth performance is serviceable but not very well played or recorded, in my opinion. De Peyer plays quite beautifully, but with no revelations of purpose or poetry, and Goode, as noted, sounds as if he's playing in the next room.

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Von Stade, Blegen, et al:  
A Vocal and Musical Delight  
by Dale Harris

Columbia here offers us a program of solos and duets that is thoroughly delightful—above all for its intense musicality. Not only have the artists, vocal and instrumental, placed themselves selflessly at the service of the composer, but the choice of material and its ordering bespeak great sensitivity. Except for "Non so più—none of the music is exactly over-familiar, and even the Mozart aria is given new interest by being performed in the composer's version for mezzo-soprano, violin, and piano. There is admirable catholicity in the taste that can recognize the quality of Saint-Saëns's "Le bonheur est chose légère" and, moreover, evidence of a fine instinct for programming in placing it between "Non so più" and the Brahms duets. The roughly forty minutes of music on this disc unfolds with commendable variety of style, mood, and texture.

Judith Blegen and Frederica von Stade give great pleasure. They have chosen not a single piece that is beyond their capacity in either vocal stamina or interpretive skill. They command the necessary gifts of nuance and color to bring these songs to life, they clearly understand what the texts are about, and their pronunciation of French, German, and Italian is exemplary. My only reservation is that both artists are sometimes afflicted with excessive vibrato, and on account of this slow, sustained songs like Blegen's "Die Verschworenen" and Von Stade's "Chanson perpetuelle" lose a portion of their beauty. On the other hand, fast numbers like Blegen's "Se geloso è il mio core"—an aria from Alessandro Scarlatti's cantata Endimione e Cinto, with accompaniment by an instrumental ensemble—and Von Stade's "Non so più" sound splendid, and in all the duets, whether fast or slow, the voices blend beautifully.

One of the great virtues of this recital is the quality of the accompaniments. Charles Wadsworth, on both piano and harpsichord, is particularly fine. There is some sensitive violin playing from Jaime Laredo (whose identity is mysteriously concealed behind the anagram "Joe del Maria") in the Saint-Saëns, and Gerhard Schwarz's trumpet is brilliant in the Scarlatti.

There are texts (not very carefully proofread) and translations. The liner notes refer to Schumann's "Botschaft," which of course means "Message," as a "boat song"—an identification that leaves me very puzzled.

Judith Ble gen and Frederica von St ade; Arias and Duets. Judith Ble gen, soprano; Frederica von St ade, mezzo-soprano; Charles Wadsworth, piano and harpsichord. [Thomas Frost, prod.] COLUMBIA M 33307, $6.98.

**ROYAL S. BROWN**

**HENRY EDWARDS**

**JOHN S. WILSON**

**R. D. DARRELL**

reviewed by

**JIM GOSA**

**MORGAN AMES**

**ROYAL S. BROWN**

**R. D. DARRELL**

**HENRY EDWARDS**

**JIM GOSA**

**MIKE JAIN**

**JOHN S. WILSON**

**HOYT AXTON: Southbound.** Hoyt Axtion, guitar and vocals; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. I Love to Sing; Southbound; Lion in the Winter; Blind Fiddler; Greensleeves; No No Song; Nashville; Speed Trap; five more [Hoyt Axtion and Henry Lewy, prod.] A&M SP 4510, $6.98. Tape: CS 4510, $7.98; 8T 4510, $7.96.

Those who have not had the privilege of attending his concerts may know Hoyt Axtion only as the man who wrote several hit records for the pop rock group Three Dog Night, including "Never Been to Spain" and "Joy to the World."

Axtion has a deep, resonant voice and a strong feeling for country music and folk, which he blends with elan on this LP. Best are the opening two songs, the gospel-influenced "I Love to Sing" and the jaunty "Southbound." The humorous ballads "Speed Trap" and "No No Song," the latter a hit as recorded by Ringo Starr, are most enjoyable. Axtion's sly merging of "Greensleeves" and "The House of the Rising Sun" is handled adroitly; and "Nashville," a fine country song, should give pause to some of the major Nashville figures.

The name of Hoyt Axtion is not yet a household item, but, if he keeps producing records of such high quality, it will be. M.J.

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**LONNIE LISTON SMITH AND THE COSMIC ECHOES: Expansions.** Lonnie Liston Smith, keyboards and electronics. FLYING DUTCHMAN BDL1 0934, $5.95.

"Expansions" is a very apt title for this album by a constantly emerging, expanding musician. Smith's use of a vast variety of percussion and electronic instruments gives this music vivid color and a wide range of rhythms and shifting accents.

Lonnie Liston Smith has come through the ranks of mainstream jazz (Art Blakey, Max Roach) to the avant-garde (Miles Davis, Pharoah Sanders, Gato Barbieri) and is finally ready to start making his own statements. He is very much in the flow of such contemporaries as Herbie Hancock and George Duke, who are applying the musicianship of their jazz experience to new channels. J.C.

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**HERB ALPERT & THE TIJUANA BRASS:**

Coney Island. Herb Alpert and Bob Findley, trumpets; Bob Edmondson, trombone; Dave Frishberg, piano, Steve Schaeffer, drums; Papi Hernandez, bass, instrumental accompaniment. Coney Island; Sweet Georgia Brown; Ratatouille; Catfish; This Masquerade; Carmine; six more. [Herb Alpert, prod.] A&M SP 4521, $6.98. Tape: CS 4521, $7.98; 8T 4521, $7.98.

For a number of years, Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass have provided a great deal of smooth, popular jazz, some of it with Mexican influences, some without.

This newest recording is one of Alpert's best. It mixes easily the flavor of Dixieland with the smoothness of what we have come to call cocktail jazz. Especially noteworthy are the piano contributions of Dave Frishberg and the trumpet solos of Alpert and Bob Findley. "Sweet Georgia Brown" and the spunky "Ratatouille" are highlights. M.J.

---

**AMERICA: Hearts.** America, instruments and vocals, vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Daisy Jane; eleven more. [George Martin, prod.] WARNER BROS. BS 2852, $6.98. Tape: M 52852, $7.97; M 82852, $7.97.

America is a pop trio that apparently considers itself so famous it no longer needs to list the names of its members on the album jacket. One is therefore left with several photographs, allowing only the judgment that, though the boys be nameless, they consider themselves terribly cute.

America takes sweet pop folk music of the sort exemplified by Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young and adds to it an extra dose of confection. That sweetness is about the only distinguishing feature of the music. Melody and lyrics both seem secondary considerations, and the quality of the instrumental performances is only adequate. The songs are all very much alike.

If one succeeds in wading through this LP, one is left with a feeling not unlike that which results from the ingestion of too much marzipan. M.J.

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**KEITH CHRISTMAS: Brighter Day.** Keith Christmas, electric guitar, cabasa, tambourine, acoustic guitars, congas, flexitone, and vocals; strings, rhythm, horns, keyboards, and synthesizers accompaniment. Brighter Day; Foothills; Country Farm; six more. [Greg Lake and Pete Sinfield, prod.] MANTICORE MA 6 503, $6.98.

"Brighter Day" was produced by Emerson, Lake, and Palmer's Greg Lake and Pete Sinfield, the perceptive lyricist who has written for both King Crimson and ELAP. Together they have provided subtle, gentle backgrounds for the original compositions of folk-oriented Keith Christmas. The composer, nonetheless, offers up a spotty set of songs ranging from the trie title tune to the haunting "Country Farm," which surges with the restlessness of a wanderer who hopes someday to settle down to a peaceful life of working the earth.

The same theme turns up on "Song of a Drifter." Interminably sincere observations and clichés, Christmas somehow manages to make the song work. He is equally effective giving a winning reading of the much-loved Smokey Robinson golden-oldie "My Girl."

"Brighter Day" is an enthusiastic crea-
tion that suffers from lack of variety. Christmas must utilize the brighter colors of his song-writing palette. He, Lake, and Sinfield, seem to be achieving to cut loose but denying themselves the opportunity. Bright boys, one and all. One can be sure that Keith Christmas' next LP will be a more energized experience.

H.E.

* Bob James: Two. Bob James, keyboards and arrangements. Take Me to the Mardi Gras; I Feel a Song; Farandole; Golden Apple; two more. [Creed Taylor, prod.] CTI 6057, $6.98. Tape: CTI 6057, $7.98.

Bob James is a brilliant musician, an arranger/composer/pianist who has quietly and steadily honed his skills for ten or a dozen years. Leaning strongly toward jazz as a pianist, he has been carving out a career primarily as an arranger. His success in that area, particularly for Grover Washington and other CTI stablemates, has been rewarded with two albums of his own. "One" made the charts of national hits, and -- "Two" cannot be far behind.

This recording has a little something for everybody: Paul Simon's "Take Me to the Mardi Gras," the pop hit "You're as Right as Rain," a nice soulful ballad featuring singer Pattie Austin. Even Bixet has his day (pardon me, Les Brown) with James's pop reincarnation of "Farandole" from the second L'Arlesienne Suite. There also are two very good Bob James originals, although I must confess that restoring the classics in the old style, unfettered by lush strings, vocal choruses, or sweetness of any kind.

* Supertramp: Crime of the Century. Bob C. Benberg, drums and percussion; Roger Hodgson, vocals, guitar, and pianos; John Anthony Hellwell, saxophones, clarinets, and vocals; Dougie Thomson, bass; Richard Davies, vocals, keyboards, and harmonica. School; Bloody Well Right; Hide in Your Shell; five more. (Ken Scott and Supertramp, prod.) A&M SP 3647, $6.98. Tape: CS 3647, $7.96; BT 3647, $7.98. This English rock quintet enjoys enormous popularity in its home country. Not only has "Crime of the Century" topped the English pop charts, but one of its selections, "Dreamer," also became a hit single.

With the American release of the LP one can readily understand Supertramp's popularity. This music is "art rock." in the tradition of such English bands as Genesis. The album comprises a suite of moody rock songs, each exploring the despair of a dreamer who has difficulty coping with the realities of a mundane life. The concept may be trite, but Supertramp's musicianship has enough vitality to overcome the ordinariness of its "theme." Powerful singing, clever writing, and superior musicianship combine to produce a result that on many occasions is legitimately haunting. Supertramp seems to have the potential to become a major force in the pop-rock arena. Meanwhile, "Crime of the Century" should win the group the solid support of the many American fans of progressive British rock.

H.E.

* Roy Acuff: Smoky Mountain Memories. Roy Acuff, vocals, vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Smoky Mountain Memories; Take Me Home, Country Roads; Tennessee Central (Number 9); Rooftop Lullaby; Thank God; six more. [Wesley Rose, prod.] HICKORY H3G 4517, $5.98. Roy Acuff, one of the best-known figures in country music, records rarely, and when he does it is always an event. Such is the case with this superb collection of eleven songs. The album is an eclectic one, ranging in material from the old-timey "Tennessee Central (Number 9)" and the lively spiritual "Thank God" to a fine, sensitive reading of John Denver's "Take Me Home, Country Roads."

Throughout, the arrangements are as tasteful as the material. A small country band backs up Acuff, whose thoughtful vocals are augmented only by some appropriately ragged background vocalizing, apparently by members of the band. This album contains pure country music of the old style, unfettered by lush strings, vocal choruses, or sweetness of any kind.

* Al Kooper: Al's Big Deal/Unclaimed Freight—An Al Kooper Anthology. Al Kooper, keyboards and vocals; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. I Can't Quit Her; I Love You More Than You'll Ever Know; Without Her; Season of the Witch; the 59th Street Bridge Song; The Weight; I Stand Alone; I Got a Woman; nine more. [John Simon, Bob Johnston, and Al Kooper, prod.] COLUMBIA PG 33169, $7.98 (two discs). Tape: PGA 33169, $8.98.

This two-disc set includes a fine selection of previously released recordings, including half of "Child Is Father to the Man," the first Blood, Sweat, & Tears album, and one song from a Bob Dylan recording on which Kooper played piano. Kooper is an exceptionally talented pop keyboard player and songwriter. He ain't a bad singer either, if one is willing to love the sounds that might be heard from an exaggerated goal. The tracks on these two discs contain a fair sampling of his recording career since 1967. His Blood, Sweat, & Tears

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material contains some of the best pop sounds heard during the 1960s. Kooper's blues-oriented jams, especially "Season of the Witch," are also a treat.

The advantage of this collection over the albums on which the tunes contained herein were previously released is that the new issue eliminates many songs of lesser import.

M.J.

MAGGIE BELL: Suicide Sal. Maggie Bell, vocals, rhythm, strings, keyboards, horns, and vocal accompaniment. "Wishing Well, Suicide Sal; I Was in Chains; seven more. [Mark London, prod. ] SWAN SONG SS 8412, $6.98. Tape. ¥ CS 8412, $7.97. TP 8412, $7.97

"Queen of the Night." Maggie Bell's debut American solo disc, offered the much-praised British blues-rock singer in the guise of a rhythm-and-blues queen. Valiantly performing a set highlighted by a thumping version of Ringo Starr's "Oh My My," she impressed as a singer with powerful pipes and an awesome sense of dynamics. Nevertheless, that soul extravanza just did not work.

The singer returned to London and promised an LP that would stress her rock and rock-blues talents. The result, "Suicide Sal," is a definite improvement. With Mark London as producer, Maggie roars her way through ten tunes that include Leo Sayer's "In My Life," the Lennon-McCartney "I Saw Her Standing There," and the title track, a Maggie Bell original. With the ability to produce gravelly low notes and piercing high notes and everything else in between, she can once again be accurately labeled "impressive."

This set has been arranged admirably to dish up rock and blues basics with no frills and plenty of musical honesty. In addition, Maggie supplies a performance that is a model of restraint, and her discipline works exceedingly well in many places. Blues-rock queens have always been notoriously difficult to record. One expects freedom and lack of restraint; one also demands tastefulness. "Suicide Sal" is tasteful. On occasion, however, Maggie should have been allowed to really cut loose.

H.E.

NICO: The End. Nico, vocals, harmonium; Phil Manzanera, guitar; Eno, synthesizer; John Cale, bass, xylophone, guitar, synthesizer, organ, marimba, triangles, cymbas, glockenspiel, and piano; Vicki Wood and Annagh Wood, vocals. "The End; Das Lied der Deutschen; six more. [John Cale, prod.] ISLAND ILPS 9311, $6.98. Tape. ¥ Y 9311, $7.98.

Nico is a sometime actress who sometimes sings. Perhaps "vocalizes" would be a more precise word—Nico makes noises that apparently come from her mouth, but one hesitates to call these auditory disruptions "singing."

This semantic distinction does not necessarily imply condemnation. In Nico's case, a finely tuned voice would be a detriment. Her wavering, gutteral monotone is perfectly adapted to the rather dire nature of the material she sings: all eerie, foreboding, and strained. The accompaniment—beautless and heavily laden with synthesized sounds—is reminiscent of the organ at the Cathedral of Notre Dame, played by the Hunchback. Who else but Nico would tackle the late Jim Morrison's epic "The End," as calamitous and gloomy a piece of music as any committed to disc, and then follow it with an equally disconsolate reading of "Das Lied der Deutschen? Sometimes her approach is unsettling and thought-provoking, an effect one assumes she desired. On "The End" and its Aryan follow-up, the result is merely ludicrous.

Nico's new LP is hardly disco fodder, and that may be its saving grace. At long last, a pop record you can't dance to.

M.J.

* Tom Scott and the L.A. Express: Tom Cat. Tom Scott, woodwinds and synthesizer; Robben Ford, guitar. Larry Nash, keyboards, Max Bennett, bass, John Guerin, drums. Rock Island Rocket, Keep On Doin' It; Retired, Mondo, Love Poem. Tom Cat. Ode SP 77029, $6.98. Tape. ¥ CS 77029, $7.98; ¥ BT 77029, $7.98.

This is the second album by this group, comprising highly talented individuals welded into a tight, cooking band whose sound and "feel" are somewhat derived from the Crusaders.

Leader Tom Scott is a versatile, volatile player, much in demand on studio dates. An alumnus of the Don Ellis band, he has also worked with Oliver Nelson and in the past four or five years led various groups on his own. He has a powerful tenor tone with an incisive, biting edge to it and has come into his own as a ranking soprano-sax player.

The other members are equally outstanding: Larry Nash (replacing Joe Sample) is a veteran jazz pianist; guitarist Robben Ford (in for Larry Carlton) has a
very contemporary blues-rock sound; bassist Max Bennett is another jazz stalpe, and drummer John Guerin is an energetic, potent percussionist.

I.A. Express is loaded with high energy and seldom cruises at anything less than full speed ahead. There's not much laid-back— everybody's cooking all the time. The tunes are pretty much in the same bag, with the exception of "Love Poem," a pretty, reflective piece featuring a vocal obbligato by Joni Mitchell. "Mondo" is the one extended performance that has moods and variations not touched upon in the rest of the album.

This is primarily music for fun-funky, groovy, good times all the way to the end.

J.G.


This album has been designed to showcase the composing and multifaceted keyboard skills of Michael Quatro. Following Rick Wakeman, who has successfully created a number of keyboards rock opuses based on either classical or literary themes, Quatro has conceived the first side of this disc as a sequence of thirteen musical selections inspired by different classical gods. His tributes to Ram, Pluto, Loki, Ares, Bacchus, Circe, Venus, Mercury, Neptune, Mars, and Thor are each carefully and distinctively composed. The melodies are fresh and attractive and are skillfully amplified by the composer's considerable instrumental abilities.

On the second side of the disc, Quatro offers five somewhat more conventional items—if you consider a rock version of "Ave Maria" conventional. Here too there is discipline as well as freewheeling, fanciful imagination.

"In Collaboration with the Gods" is a classy, classically oriented rock LP. If the American public wants a homegrown Rick Wakeman, Quatro's disc is a legitimate bid.

H.E.

WET WILLIE: Dixie Rock. Jimmy Hall, vocals, harmonica, and saxophone; Jack Hall, bass; Ricky Hirsch, guitar; John Anthony, keyboards, guitar, bass; Lewis Ross, drums; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. She's My Lady; Poor Judge of Character, eight more. [Tom Dowd, prod.] CAPRICORN CP 0149, $6.98. Tape: ** M 50149, $7.97. ** M 80149, $7.97.

When there are already nine million soul musicians playing bad music, badly, or both, it is beyond me why anyone else would want to join them. But here is Wet Willie doing just that.

There is no best song on this clump truck. There is, however, a worst. It's called "Poor Judge of Character." I would suggest it be retitled "Poor Choice of Vacation." M.J.


John Barry's music for Charles Jarrot's The Dave, a film produced by Gregory Peck, is a typically multifaceted effort that proves to be one of his most attractive—and certainly one of his most amiable-scores. The flowing title theme immediately surprises with an unexpected nonmodulation, and it tends perhaps to stay too close to the same key (as do many Barry melodies) it nonetheless has an appropriate ingenuousness that can also reflect in the jaunty, pastoral "Hitchhike to Darwin" theme, first heard played on a harmonica. There is also a vocal entitled "Sail the Summer Winds," breathy sung by Lynn Paul, which begins in a vein similar to that of Fred Neal's "Everybody's Talkin'." used by Barry in Midnight Cowboy.

In addition to these three themes, several themless cuts show Barry's ability to sustain mood and tension with motivic devices and ostinatos that are mostly instrumental and rhythmical in character. Particularly disquieting elements is "Alone on the Wide, Wide Sea," in which a nontonal, five-note figure obsessively affirms its presence against a bleak, tonal canvas punctuated toward the end by the rapid patter of high pitched drums moving back and forth within this strange seascape. And throughout, familiar Barry sounds—the low brass outbursts, the inevitable xylophone coloration—keep appearing.

It is all performed with flair, if not the last word in precision, and the recording is beautiful though perhaps a bit overpresent.

R.S.B.

SPELLBOUND: Classic Film Scores of Miklós Rózsa. Ambrosian Singers; National Philharmonic Orchestra, Charles Gerhardt, cond. (George Korngold, prod.) RCA-RED SEAL, ARL 1-0911, $6.98. Tape ** ARK 1-0911, $7.95, ** -ARSI 1-0911, $7.95. Quadraphonic: ARL 1-0911 (Quadracord), $7.98. ART 1-0911 (Q-8 cartridge), $7.95.

The Red House; The Thief of Bagdad; The Last Weekend; The Four Feathers; Double Indemnity. Kenmore of the Round Table; The Jungle Book; Spellbound; Ivanhoe.

SPELLBOUND: Original film score by Miklós Rozsa. Conducted by Ray Heindorf. STANYAN SRO 4021, $6.98 (SO-encoded disc).

At the risk of sounding like an ingrate—and RCA's Classic Film Scores series has certainly given us plenty to be grateful for—I must say that I find "Spellbound" fairly unrepresentative of Miklos Rozsa, who along with Bernard Herrmann was one of the first film composers to move away from the nineteenth century toward a more modernistic style. Although Rozsa has always been capable of writing good melodies (the opening theme of the violin concerto's second movement, used after the fact by Billy Wilder as the love theme in The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes, is one of the most poignant examples of pure lyricism I know of), it seems to me that his indisputable triumphs at least in music lies in the tense and ever sweeping dramatic movement he is able to create. Yet, as in the Franz Waxman album ("Sunset Boulevard," ARL 1-0701), conductor Charles Gerhardt and producer George Korngold have exaggerated the composer's romantic side. Where one would expect at least some of Rozsa's most brilliant scores, The Thief of Bagdad, which could have stood an entire disc instead of a single, uninspired cut, and over-weighting the skimpv selections from Double Indemnity and Spellbound so strongly in favor of the romantic as to give an utterly false impression of the scores as a whole and the films they were written for.

The heavy-handed interpretations of the various love and happy-ending themes do not help much. Gerhardt makes Miklos Rozsa sound like Max Steiner (note the Fied House love theme, for instance), and there is something rather pitiful in this. And rarely have I heard anything as shrilly as the violin solo at the end of Lost Weekend. Another frustration: Why couldn't an instrument sounding more like a theremin, if not a theremin itself, have been used in the Red House, Lost Weekend, and Spellbound selections? In the latter especially, the dream-sequence theme (played an octave higher than in the film's music track, if memory serves me) loses a great deal of its macabre quality.

On the positive side, some of Rozsa's best film music can be heard in The Four Feathers, whose score was destroyed during the war. Fortunately, film music authority Christopher Palmer was able to reconstruct the parts and instrumentation by listening to the soundtrack. The musical language of the two themes recorded here—"Sunstroke" and "The Conspiracy"—stands in strong contrast to the pseudo-cinematic gloss that tends to give many of the Classic Film Scores selections a sheen of sameness that does little justice to the composers involved.

Also particularly welcome on the RCA album is the music for Delmer Daves' 1947 The Red House. Perhaps one reason this selection works so well is that enough of the score is given to communicate the full range of its diverse moods—even though the composer's parts and instrumentation are piecemeal in the films themselves, they are usually conceived as a unified whole.

Despite an apparent consensus that the RCA series should concentrate on more selections from fewer scores. Gerhardt and Korngold persist in going after less and snatches that serve mainly to remind us of what we are missing the marvelous animal characterizations Rozsa did for the Korda's Jungle Book, what I had thought was the principal theme of Lost Weekend, more sequences from Ivanhoe, whose rousing and exciting overture is nonetheless one of the high points of this disc. (A mono-only
reissue of a nearly complete Ivanhoe score has been released by MGM in England, coupled with three illustrate Bovary and Plymouth Adventure.

Stanyan's reissue of the Spellbound music is another story altogether. I have always felt that the original 1958 Warner Bros. release, which was a new recording of the music, was conducted by Ray Heintz and was a prototype of sorts for good soundtrack albums. And whatever you may think of what Rozsa's music does or does not do for Hitchcock's "Freud for the Moviegoer," Spellbound remains one of the most remarkable and remarkable of all film scores.

To begin with, much of its schizophrenic orientation is quite subtly communicated by the ingenious similarity between the love theme and the psychosis theme. The latter generally is played on strange electronic instrument, the theremin (performed on this recording, as on the original music track, by Dr. Samuel J. Hoffman, although Stanyan gives no credit) while the famous love theme is left to more "normal" instruments. Furthermore, using this thematic material as a point of departure, Rozsa develops an exceptionally intriguing sequence of shifting musical moods, some of which are spine-chillingly weird and surrealistic. It is one of the great beauties of this disc that just about all the music is represented, plus some that's not even used in the film, including a pop arrangement of the title theme and a scherzo that is only hinted at when Gregory Peck and Ingrid Bergman take their first walk in the country.

Stanyan has done a superb, even spectacular, job of remastering the original sound, which was quite decent to begin with. No indication is given as to how the quadrophonic mix was done (I was unable to hear the disc in this mode), but I strongly suspect the existence of a multitrack tape.

I sincerely hope this will not be Stanyan's only reissue from the old Warner Bros. discs.

R.S.B.


Vol. 2 continues Columbia's chronological collection of its Ellington recordings. This set starts in December 1947 and moves rapidly—without missing a beat—to the recording ban of 1948 and to a subsequent lack of interest on Columbia's part in recording Ellington—May 1951.

Even though the set projects an aura of completeness—to the extent of including several indifferent pieces that seem to be the Ellington attempt to accommodate current popular taste—two recordings from the period with vocals by Al Hibbler are omitted, as well as four extended versions of the Duke's major standards (originally released on Columbia's Masterworks label). However, it does include three pieces that were not released at the time.

Half of the four-sided set was made by the basic, original Ellington band in its extreme, final stages—that is, after it had lost Cootie Williams, Red Stewart, Tricky Sam Nanton, Ben Webster, Barney Bigard, and Jimmy Blanton in the early Fifties but still had such stalwarts as Lawrence Brown, Johnny Hodges, Harry Carney, and Sonny Greer, and the more recently arrived Ray Nance, Shorty Baker, Russell Procope, Tyrone Glenn, and Quentin Jackson. The most drastic personnel occurred in 1951, when Brown, Hodges, and Greer—all the remaining veterans except Carney-left, a move countered by the arrival of Paul Gonsalves and Britt Woodman. As this collection shows, the band upheld its standards through this change, but it no longer had the personal identification that Brown or Hodges could give it.

I.S.W.

Marian McPartland: Solo Concert at Haverford. Marian McPartland, piano. Haverford Blues; Pick Yourself Up; I'll Be Around; six more. HALCYON 111, $4.98 (Halcyon Records, 302 Clinton St., Belmore, N.Y. 11710).

Marian McPartland's advance from Dixieland (with then husband Jimmy McPartland) to rather precise modern jazz is a strong, positive personal expression—a development that has been going on for more than twenty-five years—is still in progress. In fact, one of the things that makes Miss McPartland one of the few really exciting jazz musicians playing today is that she continues to grow. When you go to hear her, you can never be sure precisely what will occur. Anyone who has followed her for at least the past ten years knows to expect a high level of quality and, beyond that, new areas, new levels, new challenges.

This record is an interesting example of Miss McPartland's stature as a solid, established pianist who reaches into fresh areas. A good deal of it holds to the high quality that one expects of her—and in an anticipated groove. But then one comes to Stephen Sondheim's "Send in the Clowns," a tune (and song) that has turned out to be a watershed for singers and instrumentalists alike. This is, to my mind, three exemplary interpreters of this piece—vocally, Glynis Johns (its first exponent, in A Little Night Music) and Mabel Mercer and, instrumentally, Marian McPartland, as performed on this disc. Like Miss Johns and Miss Mercer, she understands the song and even without Sondheim's excellent lyrics it conveys the feeling of the words. There is also an original by Miss McPartland, "Afterglow," in which she wraps up and throws away the avant-gardists who crawl into the piano woodwork and pluck at the strings, by using their gimmick in a really purposeful fashion.

Over-all, this record leaves the impression that Miss McPartland, having developed an acceptable swing approach as a pianist, is now going well beyond that with her projection of delicate, sensitive nuances.

I.S.W.

Freddie Hubbard: Polar AC. Freddie Hubbard, trumpet; Don Sebesky and Bob James, arr. Polar AC; People Make the World Go Round; Betcha by Golly Wow; Naturally; Son of Sky Dive. CTI 6056, $6.98. Tape: CTC 6056, $7.98; CTA 6056, $7.98.

Any new Freddie Hubbard album promises to deliver music of substance, even one such as this, which is somewhat dated. Since "Polar AC" was recorded for CTI, Hubbard has moved on to Columbia and already has a couple of very successful albums there.

This delayed release contains two r&b pop tunes of a few years back, "People" and "Betcha by Golly," which would seem to give the recording a commercial orientation. But they're by no means bad performances, with skillfully wrought string arrangements by Bob James. Don Sebesky also contributes two of his fine arrangements on "Naturally," written by Nat Adderley, and the title track, composed by jazz pianist Cedar Walton.

Most of the stretching out comes on "Son of Sky Dive," which is filled with Hubbard's pyrotechnics. Throughout, such jazz luminaries as Ron Carter, George Benson, Jack DeJohnette, Billy Cobham, Lenny White, George Callies, and Junior Cook not only provide excellent solo and ensemble work, but prod Hubbard into staying on top of his game.

When he's in top form, there's hardly anybody in the same league with Freddie Hubbard. There's an almost athletic excitement to his playing. It's like watching Jim Brown carry the ball. Anything the horn is capable of, Hubbard can do. He has
ironclad chops, great inventiveness, and a highly evolved personal style that’s projected with élan.

I feel this album is a little confining for Hubbard—with the exception of “Polar AC” and “Son of Sky Dive,” where he really gives off sparks from his electrifying skills. All in all, a worthwhile recording. [JG]

GERRY MULLIGAN/CHET BAKER: Carnegie Hall Concert, Vols. 1–2. Gerry Mulligan, baritone saxophone; Chet Baker, trumpet; Bob James, piano; Ron Carter, bass; Harvey Mason, drums; John Scofield, guitar; Dave Samuels, vibes and percussion; Ed Byrne, trombone. CTI 6054 and 6055. $6.98 each.

The November 24, 1974, Carnegie Hall reunion of Gerry Mulligan and Chet Baker, twenty-two years after they had formed half of the Gerry Mulligan Quartet, the group that launched Baker’s career and elevated Mulligan to the stardom he has retained ever since, was the first time the two had played together in ten years. Each performed with his own group before joining forces to re-examine material from their Mulligan Quartet days—“Bernie’s Tune,” “Line for Lyons,” and “My Funny Valentine.”

CTI’s recording of the event has been jumbled up so that the concert’s sense of continuity is lost (and why, in this era of double albums, the two discs should be issued separately is a mystery): The set consists of one piece by Baker’s group, three by Mulligan’s, and four by the jointly led group (the three nostalgic recollections plus Mulligan’s recent piece, “It’s Sandy at the Beach”).

Not surprisingly, the dominant figure throughout is Mulligan, playing with sheer lyrical beauty, with tremendously invigorating drive, and with a tone that, in recent years, has acquired a magnificence that not only rivals that of the late Harry Carney, but in some respects surpasses it (his warm and robust quality, for example, on “Song for Strayhorn,” one of three excellent Mulligan originals included in the set). Interestingly, Bob James on piano and John Scofield on guitar prove very provocative soloists playing with Mulligan alone than when Baker joins the group.

Baker, for his part, is what he always was—a thin-toned, bloodless, rather shaky trumpet player who occasionally rises to a few crisp passages and, when he is not under the awesome shadow of Mulligan, manages a gracefully flowing solo with his own group on “There Will Never Be Another You,” which, unfortunately, he sings. [J.S.W.

**JIMMY ROWLES: Special Magic**

Jimmy Rowles, piano; Rusty Gieler, bass; Lotus Blossom; Restless, The Peacocks seven more. HALCYON 110, $4.98 (302 Clinton St., Bellmore, N.Y. 11710).

Jimmy Rowles’s light touch and rhythmic sense of phrasing have made him an accompanist to such peers as Ellis Larkins. And, like Larkins, he uses these same techniques brilliantly as a soloist. The only problem about Rowles’s solo work is getting him in the proper circumstances and with the proper material to bring out the best of his talent. The great merit of this disc is that it offers him in his best light—imaginative, wryly explorative, polished, and relaxed, with bass accompaniment that wraps warmly around his playing.

The essence of Rowles’s is very neatly summed up in the opening track, Carl Perkins’s “Grooveyard,” a beautifully floating, swinging piece of jazz that has real substance rather than the wispy puffery that often comes out of such a gentle approach. (The parallel, again, is Larkins.) But that is simply an introduction. Jerome Kern’s “Remind Me,” a wortly tune, is redesigned by Rowles without losing any of its individual qualities. A pair of Ellington pieces are also put through much the same process: “Cottontail,” successfully slowed down from the customary full-cry saxophone attack to take on new colors, and “Rockin’ in Rhythm,” less successfully adapted, possibly because it does not get quite far enough from the original.

There are also a couple of Rowles’s close-up, murmured vocals—“Sunday, Monday” and “Mah Lindy Lou”—which, not surprisingly, show that his vocal thinking is much like his pianistic thinking, even though limited by a less adequate instrument. [J.S.W.

**TOOTS THIELEMANS: Captured Alive**

Toots Thielemans, harmonica; Joanne Brackeen, piano; Cecil McBee, bass; Freddie Waits, drums. Dr. Pretty, Airgeitn, Snooze; live more. CHOICE 1007, $6.98.

Toots Thielemans and Joanne Brackeen are recorded so infrequently that this disc takes on a double value in presenting them together in an atmosphere in which they supplement and complement each other. Toots forgoes his guitar and his whistling to concentrate on the harmonica, possibly the first time that an entire jazz album has focused on that instrument. It may sound like a little too much of even a good thing, but Toots has such taste, imagination, and virtuosity that the fact that his instrument is a harmonica quickly disappears from one’s consciousness (especially when one thinks of the innumerable saxophone and trumpet jazz albums that have not contained as much as 1% of the musical creativity that Thielemans offers).

The set gets off to a relatively routine and, therefore, misleading start with “Days of Wine and Roses,” which simply brings out the mellow side of Toots, although it serves to introduce the loping, rolling vitality of Miss Brackeen’s piano. But with “I Never Told You,” a lovely Johnny Mandel melody that might have been another “Wine and Roses,” Toots begins to open up, to stretch out, to reveal the capabilities he has found in the harmonica. It is a fascinating performance, and from there on things get better and better.

The second side of the disc is flawless. It includes two Brackeen compositions—a dark, haunting “images” and (the gem of the disc) “Snooze,” a fascinatingly “Carmen-esque piece-plus a glorious Toots flight on the Ellington-Strayhorn “Day Dream” and a probing, largely unaccompanied, ad lib exploration of Coltrane’s
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Joe Droukas: Shadowboxing. Southwind SWS 6400, $6.98.

Joe Droukas writes rambling, personal songs in the style of Bruce Springsteen. Though Springsteen's songs are the epitome of self-indulgence, they demonstrate a flair for quirky observation. Droukas is not as self-indulgent—but not as interesting.

H.E.

Junie: When We Do. Westbound W 200, $6.98.

Junie is Walt Morrison, a musician in his early twenties, once a member of a group called The Funky Worm. He also was with the Ohio Players, and his solo LP finds him creating agreeable disco-soul music in that supergroup's style. "When We Do," while no trailblazer, has its engaging moments.

H.E.

Nils Lofgren: A&M SP 4509, $6.98. Tape: CS 4509, $7.98; BT 4509, $7.98.

Lofgren wrote all but one of the songs on this recording and is also credited with lead vocals, backup vocals, acoustic and electric guitars, piano, and organ. Yet, to my ears, he is a believable treasure and rarities—also LP Records, also music that is energetic and not particularly distinctive. "Love is..." will please those—and only those—who are Latin-music fans.

H.E.

HUGO MONTENEGRO: Others by Brothers. RCA APL 1-0784, $6.98. Tape: APK 1-0784, $7.95; APS 1-0784, $7.95. Quadraphonic: APX 1-0784 (Quadracord), $7.98; APT 1-0784 (Q 8 cartridge), $7.95.

What's happening here is that popular soul hits by Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, Billy Preston, and others (hence the title) have been programmed into a synthesizer, augmented by some good licks from some high-caliber rock and jazz players, with a sort of Percy Faith-flavored section thrown in for good measure. A put-on, perhaps? In any event, Montenegro is a sincere, skillful musician, and it's not altogether unpleasant.

J.G.

CHRIS DE BURGH: For Beyond These Castle Walls. A&M SP 4516, $6.98. Tape: CS 4516, $7.98; BT 4516, $7.98.

Attractive writing and singing appear often on this debut disc. Nevertheless, twenty-six-year-old composer/performer De Burgh has a long way to go before one would consider his work either fresh or inspired.

H.E.

SEGUIDA: Love Is. Fania XSLP 00478, $7.98. Seguida consists of twenty-nine musicians who create Latin music that is energetic and

P.S.W.
High Fidelity Magazine

by R. D. Darrell

The Tape Deck

How—and how not—to sing Handel.
It's good to be reminded that it's not essential to have famous performers, actual period instruments, or stylistic musicologist/conductors to achieve thrilling vocalizations of late baroque-era masterpieces. All that is needed is sound musical sensibility enlivened by infectious zest, such as we are prodigally given by Paul Steinitz's apparently young and certainly enthusiastic Bach Society singers and players in the first tapings of a spectacular Handelian showpiece coupled with one of the very earliest, yet best, of Bach cantatas: Nonesuch/Stereo tape NST 71294 C, 7½-ips reel, $7.95.
Handel's wedding anthem of 1736, Sing unto God, is a dazzler, especially in its opening duo for countertenor (Paul Esswood) and high trumpet, its exhilaratingly buoyant chorus, "Lo, thus shall the man be blessed," and its bring-the-house-down finale for brahva tenor (Neil Jenkins) and chorus. Bach's Cantata No. 131, Aus der Tiefe, is less overtly exciting but far more intimately and profoundly moving. It's particularly fascinating for its movements that fuse verses from the psalm De profundis (set as solo airs) with those from a Lutheran chorale. The admirably open recording is notable both for its lovely "floating" of choral tone and for its vivid capturing of delectably piquant obbligatos by an unjustly unaccredited oboist.

That darling of the mass public, the old-fashioned elephantine Handel of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, long has been an object lesson in aesthetic wrongness. Now even the Tabernacle's smaller traveling choir, recording with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, proves that soon-to-retire veteran organist/conductor Richard Condie has learned nothing and forgotten nothing over the years. These "Great Messiah Choruses" are insufferable in stereo (Columbia MT/MA 32935, Dolby-B cassette/cartridge, $7.98 each) and only sonically a bit more impressive in quadraphony (MAQ 32935, Dolby-B Q-8 cartridge, $7.98).

Wrong in a different way are the far more—indeed too—energetic performances and ultrareverberant, sharply-edged brilliant recordings of "Great Handel Choruses" by the British Handel Opera Chorus and Orchestra under Charles Farncombe: London/Ampex O 521106/O 821106, Dolby-B cassette/cartridge, $7.95 each. E 421106. Dolby-B 7½-ips reel, $8.95. Here familiar Messiah excerpts are augmented by less hackneyed ones from Jephtha, Solomon, Saul, etc., but most of them are done unrelievably fast and loud.

Equal rights for pianistes. The very oddity today of the term pianiste is an indication of some progress in eliminating sex discrimination among keyboard players. Yet only very few female pianists (like Alicia de Larrocha) currently win discographic best-sellerdom. And in the central Chopiniana repertory too many of them seem as steely fingered and sternly nonromantic as their male colleagues. Hence my welcome for a distinctive exception: a relative newcomer, the Israeli-born Ilana Vered, who brings to Chopin's Third Sonata, Fourth Ballade, and four shorter pieces unashamedly feminine warmth and genuinely romantic grace in rubato tempo elasticities, as well as a nowadays-taken-for-granted sure-fingered virtuosity: London/Ampex E 421119, Dolby-B 7½-ips reel, $8.95. O 521119/O 821119, Dolby-B cassette/cartridge, $7.95 each.

In glowing personality projection and poetic persuasiveness Vered well may console Novaes devotees for the current recording inactivity of their idol. She stimulates me not only to anticipate what promises to be an extensive series of brightly ringing Phase-4 recordings, but also to dig up her two earlier releases for Connoisseur Records, one of which—the complete Chopin etudes—has been taped by Advent (E 1018, Dolby-B cassette, $6.95).

Is it discriminatory to tilt just a bit toward one sex or the other as preferable interpreters for certain works? I must confess that for me no man (well, save possibly Gieseking) has ever fully captured the lyric grace and lilt- ing vivacity of Franck's Symphonic Variations. Even André Watts and Erich Leinsdorf are no exceptions, although the soloist at least plays with admirable fluidity and éclat. On the other hand, I just can't imagine any woman pianist, no matter how expert, evoking all the grim terror of Liszt's Totentanz. But perhaps that's because I've never forgotten my first hearing it as a high school boy mesmerized by the formidable mien as well as technical prowess of the now legendary Alexander Siloti—an experience (I've just realized as I write) that took place by one of life's unnerving coincidences, fifty-three years ago to the day! Since that time the first performance to come, for me, even close to Siloti's is this new one by Watts, again with Leinsdorf and the London Symphony, incongruously paired with the Franck Variations. It's impressively powerful even in stereo (Columbia MT/MA 33072, Dolby-B cassette/cartridge, $7.98 each), but it's only in quadraphony that both this ultra-bravura performance and Liszt's apocalyptic music achieve appropriately fearsome panoramic breadth and dramatic impact (MAQ 33072, Q-8, $7.98).

Gershwin without George's doing it. Few and poor as the recorded examples (none on tape that I know) of Gershwin's own playing may be, they're enough to prove that it was unique. But at least the very different approach of William Bolcom reminds us of the wealth of melodic and rhythmic invention in the eighteen composer's own Song Book transcriptions, plus the three preludes and six less-familiar original piano solos. For those who never heard George himself, these hearty but far less elegant performances may be quite satisfactory, and for everyone they're brightly attractive sonically even if quadraphony adds only slightly enhanced airiness: Nonesuch/Stereo tape NST 1284 QC, 7½-ips Q-reel, $8.95.

In the repertory of concerted Gershwiniana I've always liked (despite considerable unevenness) the 1961-62 Earl Wild/Fiedler series. Long out of print in both 7½- and 3¼-ips reel editions, it's now resuscited with the earlier Cuban Overture replaced by Robert Russell Bennett's "symphonic picture" of Porgy and Bess, recorded by the Boston Pops in 1968. Outstanding here is the Concerto in F, in a more magisterial version than any other available today. And the Porgy and Bess is surely the best and most idiomatic of Bennett's popular pastiches—which like most Gershinians I find less satisfactory than the composer's own, far less slickly scored suite, former available on tape in Abravanel's 1959 Vanguard recording. The Rhapsody in Blue, An American in Paris, and Variations on "I Got Rhythm," which are also included, still rank among the better versions around, even if none of them is ideal by my standards.

The recordings themselves, which (except for the later Porgy "picture") were among the first to be made on the floor rather than the stage of Boston's Symphony Hall, stand up quite well. But my old bête noire tape editor is back with implacable Solomonic shears to break brutally the concerto's first movement midway (RCA Red Seal CRK/CRS 2-0783, double-play cassette/cartridge, $9.95 each).
"A Marantz Imperial 8 speaker can handle 125 watts of integrated program material, but reproduces full realism with a fraction of that."

In August, 1974, sound engineers and audiophiles were invited to examine and discuss the Marantz Imperial 8 Floor-Standing Speaker System. The following comments were taken from that taped discussion.

"Because Imperial 8's are so efficient, they offer a wider dynamic range for any given amplifier. Even if a guy has a 30 watt amplifier he'll get full realism for that amp. With the Imperial 8 Speaker System he'll never have to go to multiple amps to get the kind of sound pressure he's looking for."

"These speakers are of a bass reflex design so they're inherently more efficient."

"The port tends to reinforce the loading when the speaker moves. There's lots of control over the cone which means it follows the program material very accurately and lowers the distortion."

"Clean sound...plenty of sock. Ultimate realism and maximum high-power handling capabilities."

"Each speaker has a custom manufactured 12" woofer with a variable density cone—a stiffer cone with less doubling."

"The most unique feature here is the rotatable array consisting of three mid range and two tweeter elements. This allows excellent mid and high frequency coverage characteristics regardless of speaker placement."

"Marantz calls the rotatable array mirror imaging—mid range and tweeter elements can be adjusted so that they're exact mirror images of each other for proper dispersion and the best possible stereo separation."

"There's 360 degrees of change possible by simply rotating the array. This means you can adjust the angle of dispersion to get the most high frequency material in any given area."

"When you consider that no two rooms are exactly the same, the more adjustments you have within a speaker the better the sound is going to be. Imperial 8 Floor-Standing Speakers have more flexibility, more control, more variables to compensate for differences in room configurations."

The Marantz Imperial 8 Speaker System is just one of two exciting Marantz floor-standing speaker models. The step-up model Imperial 9 with two 10" woofers is designed for higher power handling capabilities as well as high efficiency and mirror imaging. Both models reflect the kind of technical expertise and engineering excellence that has made Marantz the choice of professionals world-wide. Stop by your local Marantz dealer and see the complete line of floor-standing and bookshelf speaker systems starting as low as $59.95. Each features an exclusive five year guarantee on parts and labor. Marantz. Ask an expert.
The single-play turntables only a great changer company could have made.

Garrard Zero 100SB, $209.95

Garrard's new single-play turntables are so advanced in their solution of basic engineering problems that only a leading manufacturer of automatic changers (yes, changers) could have produced them. This may sound paradoxical to the partisans of single play, but it's a perfectly realistic view of the situation. The truth is that it's easier to make a single-play turntable that works (never mind outstanding performance for the moment) than a record changer that works.

The very qualities that make the single-play turntable the preferred choice of certain users — straightforwardness of design, lots of room for relatively few parts, fewer critical functions, etc. — also permit an unsophisticated maker to come up more easily with an acceptable model. Take a heavy platter and a strong motor, connect them with a belt...you get the picture.

As a result, there are quite a few nice, big, shiny and expensive single-play turntables of respectable performance in the stores today.

A thoroughbred single-play automatic is another matter.

We're talking about a turntable that gives you not only state-of-the-art performance in terms of rumble, wow, flutter, tracking and so on, but also the utmost in convenience, childproof and guest-proof automation, efficient use of space, balanced good looks and, above all, value per dollar.

Here we're back on the home grounds of the changer maker. He alone knows how to coordinate a lot of different turntable functions and niggling little design problems without wasted motions, space and expenditures. The kind of thing Garrard is the acknowledged master of.

No other proof of this argument is needed than a close look at the new Garrard Zero 100SB and 86SB.

Yes, they have heavy, die-cast, dynamically balanced platters. Yes, they have belt drive. Yes, they have -64dB rumble (DIN B Standard). And the Zero 100SB has Garrard's unique Zero Tracking Error Tonearm, the first and only arm to eliminate even the slightest amount of tracking error in an automatic turntable.

But that's not the whole story.

What gives these turntables the final edge over other single-play designs is the way they're automated.

Both are fully automatic in the strictest sense of the term. Your hand need never touch the tonearm. The arm indexes at the beginning of the record, returns to the arm rest at the end of the record and shuts off the motor, all by itself. The stylus can't flop around in the lead-out groove.

There are also other subtle little features like the ingeniously hinged dust cover (it can be lifted and removed even on a narrow shelf), the integrated low-profile teak base, the exclusive automatic record counter (in the Zero 100SB only) and the finger-tab control panel. Plus one very unsubtle feature.

The price.


CIRCLE 22 ON READER-SERVICE CARD