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SPECIAL ISSUE: PREVIEWING 1977

SEPTEMBER 1976 $1.00
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5-way 5-driver system

Pioneer HPM-100
4-way 4-driver system

Pioneer HPM-60
4-way 4-driver system

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We think you'll end up agreeing that a good new idea beats a good old idea every time.

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Trutone Records in Northvale, New Jersey always uses the Calibrated Stanton Triple-E for A-B comparisons between tape and disc. They also use the Triple-E to check the frequency response of the cutter head (they’ll record a 1,000 Hz tone and a 10 kHz tone twice a day to check the condition of the cutting stylus and the high end frequency response of the cutter head).

They make test cuts and play them back, using the Triple-E for reference, as high as 15 kHz all the way down to 30 Hz. Carl Rowatti says “We use the Stanton Calibrated 681 series as our total point of reference in our disc mastering operation. Everything in the studio is judged — and we think perfectly judged for quality—with this great cartridge”. Professionals can’t afford to take chances with quality. That’s why they depend on Stanton in their operations.

Each Stanton 681 Triple-E is guaranteed to meet its specifications within exacting limits, and each one boasts the most meaningful warranty possible. An individually calibrated test result is packed with each unit.

Whether your usage involves recording, broadcasting, disco or home entertainment your choice should be the choice of the professionals... the Stanton 681 TRIPLE-E.

Write today for further information to: Stanton Magnetics, Terminal Drive, Plainview, New York 11803

“Carl Rowatti, Chief Engineer, adjusting the Program limiters prior to cutting a master lacquer”.

Lou Rowatti inspects a master lacquer. Adrianne checks the lathe. Carl Rowatti adjusts the pitch computer on the mastering lathe. Carl installs the Stanton Calibrated 681 Triple-E on the playback table. Lou Rowatti (The Prez) adjusting the high frequency limiter in his cutting room.
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The only thing better than being there is being there again

Music. Record it right. On the only premium blank tape good enough to wear the name - The Music Tape by Capitol. It's designed specifically to record music with wide frequency response, low noise and low distortion. Nobody knows music better than Capitol ... knows the subtle colors of treble, bass and mid-range.

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The new Sherwood S7910: State-of-the-Art for under $500.*

In the past few years, good specifications have become a relative commonplace in the consumer electronics industry. And, as the statistical gaps between comparably priced units lessened, other factors gained more importance. Most notably, design and the componentry that's used.

Nothing could suit us better. For twenty-three years, the strength of our reputation has rested primarily on the excellence of our engineering. The new S7910** is a case in point.

With a power output of 60 watts per channel (minimum RMS at 8 ohms from 20-20,000 Hz) with no more than 0.1% Total Harmonic Distortion, the S7910 is clearly equipped to serve as the center point of the most progressive music systems.

More to the point, though, is the componentry that permits this capability. The output devices are paralleled OCL direct-coupled. This configuration, combined with the high voltage and current ratings of the output devices, creates an extremely stable circuit. Additionally, the massive power transformer and twin 12,000 μF filter capacitors, backed by a zener regulated secondary power supply, ensure the S7910's ability to perform well beyond the demands of normal use.

The S7910's IHF FM Sensitivity rating is 9.84 dBr (1.7 μV). That's one of the finest ratings attainable—and it can only be achieved through the utilization of superior componentry: 4-ganged tuning capacitors, Dual-Gate MOS FET's, Phase Lock Loop MPX, Ceramic FM IF Phase Linear Filters. And Sherwood's newly-developed digital detector, which introduces virtually no distortion to the signal and never requires alignment.

The front panel of the S7910 reflects every significant function of current hi-fidelity technology. And again, the componentry behind the faceplate is the finest available. [For example, the 3-stage Baxandall tone circuit employed for the Bass and Treble controls.]

Other features, such as the Master Tone Defeat switch, switchable FM deemphasis and FM Stereo Only, and two front panel tape dubbing jacks, contribute to an operational versatility that is truly outstanding.

In every respect, the S7910 demonstrates the attention to detail, the on-going effort to refine existing solutions and discover better ones, that has characterized Sherwood throughout the years.

You might be able to find another receiver in this price range that offers similar specifications—on paper. But you won't find a receiver that's been more meticulously designed, or more carefully produced.

At Sherwood, we approach the business of creating receivers like an art. Because no approach brings you closer to reality.

Sherwood Electronic Laboratories, Inc.
4300 North California Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60618

For a more complete description of Sherwood's unique approach to audio equipment engineering, write to the address above. We'll mail you a copy of our new brochure, "The anatomy of high performance design," along with detailed information about the new S7910.

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*The value shown is for informational purposes only. The actual resale price will be set by the individual Sherwood Dealer at his option. The cabinet shown is constructed of select plywood with a walnut veneer covering.

**Model S8910 offers identical specifications and features, but is FM only.
High Fidelity Pathfinders

Congratulations on beginning what looks like an excellent series: the “Pathfinders.” Learning about the people who actually built the high fidelity component industry adds a great deal of personality to the world of audio products.

Shane O'Neil
Port Washington, Wis.

Your recent addition of a column about pioneers of high fidelity has rapidly become a favorite of mine. Personally, I would like you to do Roy Allison and Lincoln Walsh.

Terry H. Tilton
San Diego, Calif.

I have missed one name from your mini-biographies, namely David Harter. He was so long associated with the Dynaco name.

Carlos E. Bauza
San Juan, P. R.

Your profile of Rudy Bozak (May) mentions Emory Cook. As one whose subscription to High Fidelity goes back to Volume 1, Number 1, I would like to see a profile of Cook.

E. D. Hoaglan
Omaha, Neb.

There must be a whole lot of “high fidelity pathfinders” out there. People love history (especially me). Keep up the good work.

Joe Casalino
Far Rockaway, N. Y.

Squire and Jon (not Ian)

Thanks to Henry Edwards for his informative review of Chris Squire’s “Fish out of Water” (June). But, as an addict of Yes’s music, I was surprised to find that Mr. Edwards had confused that group’s vocalist/composer Jon Anderson with Jethro Tull’s Ian Anderson. I was also upset with his dismissal of Squire’s lyrics because they didn’t answer his questions about religion and love. Are there any proven answers to those questions?

Despite these flaws, I was delighted to see Squire get the credit he deserves for his influence on popular music.

Andy Widge
Salamanca, N. Y.

Mr. Edwards is astonished at his error—Squire’s association was with Yes’s Jon Anderson and not Tull’s Ian—and he thanks Mr. Widge and others who wrote to point this out. He adds that his comment, that in the album’s lyrics, Squire “poses questions and offers no answers” was a phrase of mere description, neither judgment nor “dismissal.”

Disc Quality: Ups and Downs

A June “Too Hot to Handle” item brought up a peculiar turn of events in the record manufacturing business: the decline in quality of recent Deutsche Grammophon pressings. At this major classical radio station, where we routinely receive all new releases, I too have noticed the sad proliferation of snap, crackle, and pop in the once-pristine DG surfaces. Add to this the jump-on-the-handwagon use of shrink wrap, which is resulting in a large increase in the number of warped discs, and we have the fall from grace of a company whose name was once synonymous with quality.

I don’t think that the Polydor PR office can pass this off as an unavoidable result of increased sales volume, for while DG seems to be in decline, two American labels once exorcized as the essence of poor quality control seem to have caught on to their bad public images and to have done something positive about them. Both Angel and RCA are showing an upsurge in the quality of their full-priced product. The recent compatible quad Angel labels must be the finest pressings to come out of a domestic plant in years. They now possess the silky-smooth, quiet, warp-free surfaces once thought to be the exclusive domain of the imports. Now that RCA appears to have abandoned its Dynaflex (Dynawarp?) process, we actually are getting trackable discs from that manufacturer, plus good-quality surfaces free from pits and bubbles. And both companies have gone to the plastic-lined inner sleeve.

Of course, only time will tell if these changes will be permanent. I, for one, am proud that our own companies are showing the willingness and the ability to put out a product worthy of the music.

John M. Profitt
Program Director
Station KLEF
Houston, Tex.

Edison’s Long-Playing Discs

As an amateur historian of the phonograph, I read Edward Wallerstein’s “Creating the LP Record” (April) with interest. However, the article gives the erroneous impression that the LP was first developed in 1932 by RCA. Such is not the case. “... the Edison company launched a long-playing record in 1926 that would give up to twenty minutes of uninterrupted entertainment per side.” This quotation is from The Fabulous Phonograph by Roland Gelatt, a former editor of High Fidelity. He goes on to describe how Edison’s LP failed, for essentially the same reasons that RCA’s did later on.

Tom Whitmore
New York, N.Y.

Mr. Whitmore’s citation of Mr. Gelatt is accurate but not apt. Wallerstein’s article was not a historical consideration of unsuccessful long-playing records, but a personal narration of his own role in the ult-
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The instruments in this advertisement are new and diverse. They are also selective, deliberately. This is consistent with our attitude — to make components only where we feel we have something to contribute. Then, to give them the finest expression of which we are capable.

Our 330c stereo receiver is the most recent in a series that opened the world of true high fidelity to the music lover with a modest budget. Its predecessor, the 330B, earned extraordinary reviews and recommendations from the leading magazines and the most respected consumer organizations. Nevertheless, when improvement was practical, we replaced it.
The 330c has increased power, tighter phase linearity and wider bandwidth than its immediate predecessor. Yet it is offered at virtually the same price as the original 330, introduced seven years ago.

In its review of the HK1000 stereo cassette deck, *High Fidelity* said, "The HK1000 is the best so far... A superb achievement."

We've gone beyond it.

With the HK2000, performance specifications of the HK2000 are impressive. For example, wow and flutter: 0.07\%(NAB) WRMS. The HK2000 is so sensitive to low frequencies that a subsonic filter has been incorporated which can be used to remove unwanted signals from warped records. But just as in all Harman Kardon amplifiers and receivers, wide band design in the HK2000 produces sound quality that transcends its impressive specifications.

When we introduced our straight line tracking turntable, the ST-7, it was recognized at once as the definitive way of playing records. Precisely as the master was recorded. Without tracking error. Without skating.

The ST-7 was designed for the music lover who had to have the very best—and could afford it.

The ST-6 now joins the ST-7. Straight line tracking, with the demonstrable benefits it offers, is now available to a wider audience—without compromising performance.

The two turntables are virtually identical in appearance and operating capability. They use the same tonearm and straight line tracking mechanism. They are both belt driven and use the same platter and support bearing. Yet the ST-6 is available for little more than the cost of a deluxe record player of conventional design.

We'd like to tell you more about our new instruments and, equally important, about the point of view they represent. Write to us directly—without impersonal reply cards or coupons. We'll respond in kind with full information.

Harman Kardon, 55 Ames Court, Plainview, New York 11803.
The Micro Seiki
DDX-1000.

The Problem.
Any cartridge is subject ultimately to your personal taste. That's why so many serious audiophiles own and regularly use more than one cartridge. But changing cartridges is really a major undertaking. Not any more.

The Solution.
The Micro Seiki DDX-1000. It will accept up to three high quality tonearms. No matter how cultivated and diversified your musical tastes are, the DDX-1000 will let you discern the subtlety of interplay between disc and cartridge, cartridge and tonearm.

A direct drive DC servo controlled motor drives the large, balance-tested platter at near perfect speed. Wow and flutter is an unprecedented 0.025%. Additionally, the neon strobe lamp is driven by an independent built-in 45Hz oscillator with a frequency fluctuation of less than 0.03%.

A unique 3-point aluminum alloy supporting frame and special shock mounting provide optimum stability. The two-layer absorber system (consisting of cushion rubber and insulator balls with built-in springs) eliminates any possibility of acoustic feedback. The completely isolated power supply/control unit eliminates hum and electrical noise. And micro-switches provide fast, exact operational control. The signal-to-noise ratio is greater than 63 dB.

The MA-505.
Pictured is the Micro Seiki MA-505*, the first audiophile quality dynamic balance tonearm. Since it does not depend on gravity to maintain the proper tracking force, it will compensate better for surface and groove irregularities present in many mass produced discs. In addition, the stylus pressure may be adjusted while the disc is playing to assure the best possible reproduction.

*Not included with DDX-1000. Supplied without cartridge.

The DDX-1000 and MA-505. Creative design. Superior execution. The complete turntable system for the most critically demanding audiophile.
"I've got a 60-minute recording studio in my pocket."

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- 60 minutes recording time.
- Capstan drive for constant tape speed, built-in electret condenser microphone, AC bias, record-warning light.
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- Connects to your stereo or full-size recorder with a Compaticord, for both recording and playback.

The Pearlcorder-S performs beautifully in an office, in your car, even on airplanes, and it's backed by the reputation of the Olympus Optical Co., Ltd., a company famous for fine cameras, medical and other precision scientific instruments. The Pearlcorder-S. Carry one. And have a studio with you.

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60 minutes of sound in this actual-size MICROCASSETTE®.

60 minutes recording time.

Other precision scientific instruments.

Talking Instrument

Concerning your recent article on RF interference, I enclose the following from the program notes of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra for March 5-18, 1978:

"A strange tale of a talking instrument passed from musician to musician at a recent Baltimore Symphony rehearsal at the Lyric Theatre."

"It seems the mysterious presence manifested itself to the amazement of Arno Drucker, the BSO's resident pianist, when he was playing the Orchestra's celeste during rehearsal of Lukas Foss's Folksongs for Orchestra, which received its world premiere that evening.

"During a quiet passage, the celeste spoke up in a loud voice. 'Get that man to the jail,' it said. 'Who said that?' asked Maestro Sergiu Comissiona, who heard the voice from the podium twenty feet away. In the world of music, the inspiration of the muses is taken pretty seriously, and celestial advice on the interpretation of a new work is always welcome."

"The mystery of the talking instrument was solved by the sound engineer. An electric keyboard device, the celeste was picking up transmissions on the local police band. Adding a grounding wire effectively laid the perturbed spirit of the police dispatcher to rest, and the rehearsal continued."

W. Rothstein
Baltimore, Md.

Record Riches...Riches...Riches

Before I bought your twenty-fifth-anniversary issue (April) and read "Record Riches of a Quarter-Century," I made a bet with myself that I would find no mention of Mario Lanza. I didn't—and I really find this hard to believe.

Wallace F. Richards
Miami, Fla.

How could you leave out Carole King's classic "Tapestry"?

Jim Borks
Lodi, Calif.

If you don't have a place for Led Zeppelin, I don't have a place for your publication. I hold all of your editors in contempt for your omission of the music of the best no-hype rock-and-roll band.

Alan Hare
Irvington, Tex.

François's Boccherini

Petitioning for a reissue of recordings is almost always a matter of wanting to acquire a new generation of listeners with great performances of the past. The modest but delightful exception to the rule, a recording is the sole custodian of an excellent piece of music: Jean François's arrangements of Boccherini string quartets and cello sonatas for Massine's 1933 ballet La Scuola di Ballo. The piece is too good to lose—elegant, witty and tender, far above the usual pastiches of the time—and the recording (1939 Columbia, Antal Dorati conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra in a very spirited performance) is now all that remains—as I understand it, the score and orchestral parts are lost.

Roni Gersten
Ridgewood, N.J.

Gould on Streisand

Thank you, thank you, thank you for the beautiful Glenn Gould essay on Barbra Streisand ("Streisand as Schwarzkopf," May). It is all so totally, unimpeachably right. He has said everything about this remarkable artist that I would like to have said myself, if I had but known.

Please, Barbra, won't you make another classical album and include the repertoire Gould suggests?

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SEPTEMBER 1976
A Paradise for Record-Collecting Browsers

by John Culshaw

The Art of Browsing is one of the few utterly unrestricted pleasures left to us, or at least to me. If I know precisely what it is I want to buy and exactly where to find it, I can be in and out of a record or book store in approximately the time it takes to say Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in patria five times, although that is an exceedingly uncivilized way to behave. No, much to the rage of store managements the world over, my inclination—or, better, sheer desire—is to browse for just as long as the need for food or some other tiresome bodily requirement allows. (It is precisely to deter browsers that such stores provide neither food counters nor restrooms, and if I were a candidate for government I would run entirely on a ticket to make the provision of such elementary facilities compulsory, which would make my election an absolute certainty, since the army of frustrated browsers is not only gigantic, but united in a way that has no political equivalent whatsoever.)

Browsing in private is, of course, quite another matter, and I have just come across the answer to a record-collecting browser's prayer: The Penguin Stereo Record Guide, compiled by High Fidelity's European editor Edward Greenfield, Robert Layton, and Ivan March. It has 1,114 closely printed pages and claims to assess every stereo record currently available in the United Kingdom. That is the good news; the bad news is that for the time being it will not be available in the U.S. for all sorts of obvious reasons, such as the differences in record labels and numbers. What makes the Penguin Guide different from other books of its kind I have encountered is its notion of awarding a rosette to certain records, rather in the style of the Michelin Guide to French restaurants, which in itself is a browser's paradise.

Each record, graded by its three contributors, can get a maximum of three stars, although in cases of uncertainty about some aspect of either the performance or the recording, one or more of those stars can find itself in brackets. But the rosette is entirely a personal affair, and that is what makes it so interesting. We are not told which of the Norns decreed a rosette here rather than there, but my calculations are that only 81 of the more than 3,500 discs qualified for this ultimate accolade, which my pocket calculator tells me is a rather miserable 2.3%.

You by now doubtless will be bursting to know which records broke the barrier into the rosette grade. I cannot possibly list them all and must further declare my hand: For reasons that you will not find difficult to understand, I
Power, features and performance. That's what the new Sansui 9090 and 8080 stereo receivers are all about.

Listen to what the new Sansui 9090 at under $750.00* has to offer: • A whopping 110 watts minimum RMS power per channel with both channels driven into 8 ohms over the 20 to 20,000 Hz range with no more than 0.2% total harmonic distortion. • Twin power meters to monitor the output for each channel. • Advanced PLL IC Multiplex Demodulator for improved channel separation, eliminating distortion and reducing detuning noise. • Twin signal meters for easy, accurate tuning. • 7-position tape play switch for total creative versatility in dubbing and monitoring. • and many other exciting features. Cabinet finished in walnut veneer.

All in all the Sansui 9090 represents what is probably the most advanced receiver available today. Watt for watt, feature for feature, dollar for dollar, an almost unbelievable value.

Also available is the Sansui 8080 at under $650.00* with 80 watts of continuous RMS power under the same conditions with almost all the same features. Cabinet in simulated walnut grain.

Try, and then buy, one of the new Sansui receivers at your favorite Sansui franchised dealer today. You will be glad you did. For years to come.

*The value shown is for informational purposes only. The actual resale price will be set by the individual Sansui dealer at his option.

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Great ideas never change radically.
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So it has been with Empire turntables. Our latest model, 698, is no exception. Basically, it's still the uncomplicated, belt-driven turntable we've been making for 15 years. A classic.
What we're introducing is improved performance.
The lower mass tone arm, electronic cueing, quieting circuitry and automatic arm lift are all very new.
The rest is history.
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The new 698 arm moves effortlessly on 32 jeweled, sapphire bearings. Vertical and horizontal bearing friction is a mere 0.001 gram, 4 times less than it would be on conventional steel bearings. It is impervious to drag. Only the calibrated anti-skating and tracking force you select control its movement.
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The Motor
A self-cooling, hysteresis synchronous motor drives the platter with enough torque to reach full speed in one third of a revolution. It contributes to the almost immeasurable 0.04% average wow and flutter value in our specifications. More important, it's built to last.
The Motor Drive
Every turntable is approved only when zero error is achieved in its speed accuracy. To prevent any variations of speed we grind each belt to within one ten thousandth of an inch thickness.
The Platter
Every two piece, 7 lb., 3 inch thick, the cast aluminum platter is dynamically balanced. Once in motion, it acts as a massive flywheel to assure specified wow and flutter value even with the voltage varied from 105 to 127 volts AC.
The Main Bearing
The stainless steel shaft extending from the platter is aged, by alternate exposures to extreme high and low temperatures preventing it from ever warping. The tip is then precision ground and polished before lapping it into two oilite, self-lubricating bearings, reducing friction and reducing rumble to one of the lowest figures ever measured in a professional turntable: -68 dB CBS ARL.
The Controls
Electronic cueing has been added to the 698 to raise and lower the tone arm at your slightest touch. Simple plug-in integrated circuitry raises the tone arm automatically when power is turned off. A see-through anti-skating adjustment provides the necessary force for the horizontal plane. It is micrometer calibrated to eliminate channel imbalance and unnecessary record wear.

Stylus force is dialed using a see-through calibrated clock mainspring more accurate than any commercially available stylus pressure gauge.
A new silicon photocell sensor has been added to automatically lift the arm at the end of a record.
New quieting circuitry has also been added. Now, even with the amplifier volume turned up, you can switch the 698 on or off without a "pop" sound to blow out your woofers.

At Empire we make only one model turntable, the 698. With proper maintenance and care the chances are very good it will be the only one you'll ever need.

The Empire 698 Turntable
Suggested retail price $400.00

For more information write:
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Garden City, New York, 11530.

CIRCLE 10 ON READER-SERVICE CARD
looked up certain discs before plowing through the whole thing. What was in my mind was an arrangement with the Master of the Queen's Music, Malcolm Williamson, to have Messrs. Greenfield, Layton, and March beheaded without ceremony at the Tower of London if by some mischance they had not given rosettes to certain records that I am rather proud about. Well, they have emerged with colors, if not exactly flying colors. The Solti Ring gets a rosette; so does the Monteux complete Daphnis, the War Requiem, and the Pears/Britten Winterreise. That is quite enough for my ego for the time being. There are many other worthy efforts with which I had nothing to do at all, and all of them wearing the same rosette: Carlos Kleiber's Beethoven Fifth, Previn's Rachmaninoff Second, La Calisto and lots of other records by Janet Baker. The only Joan Sutherland record to make the grade is Tales of Hoffmann, but the complete Haydn symphonies are there, which is not exactly unexpected, any more than is The Trojans.

Then we come to the surprises. Ormandy's 1812 gets a rosette; Bernstein's Mass does not. Clifford Curzon's Schuberti gets lots of stars but no rosette; Brendel's does. The Tebaldi/Serafin recording of Madama Butterfly, which seems to me one of the really great recordings of our era, does not even rate three unbracketed stars, whereas the newer Freni/Karajan set. which I happen to think is on the whole a right royal mess, gets a rosette. There is a chauvinistic aspect as well, of which I cannot possibly approve. Four Elgar recordings get rosettes, which puts him at least equal with Beethoven. Poor Brahms doesn't even get a foot in the door. Mahler does well with an almost predictable five rosettes.

But then, as with the Michelin Guide, it's all a question of taste. It is enough to say that the book makes for compulsive listening just as Michelin makes for compulsive eating and that, while both are probably bad for you, they are irresistible. Penguin should stop being mean and reset for American publication so that all my browsing friends on the other side of the Atlantic can have in their lives getting mad about the rosettes or the lack of them.

Incidentally, you might like to know who gets the final, eighty-first rosette. Because if he is not already a major figure in your life it is clearly time for you to rectify the matter. His name is Jan Dismas Zelenka, and he lived from 1679 to 1745.

Poor Brahms.

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That's the STR-6800SD at $600. Or, for less power and a few less features—but no loss of fidelity—the STR-5800SD at $500 and the STR-4800SD at $400 (all suggested retail prices).

A sound investment.
Recently RCA issued an album called "From the Pen of Arthur Schwartz" (LPL 1-5121), which sounds like a collection of memos from your accountant. This title will communicate little to a generation that has largely been deprived, through current radio programming practice and the not-so-benign neglect of the record industry, of the opportunity to know Schwartz's marvelous music. The disc is, in fact, a historic recording of Arthur Schwartz singing his own songs.

This delightful LP was made in England, where the composer lives now for much of the year. The arrangements are good, the sound is good, and of course the songs are wonderful. With the exception of two written with Leo Robin, "A Rainy Night in Rio" and "A Gal in Calico," the tunes are the product of Schwartz's long collaboration with lyricist Howard Dietz. "You and the Night and the Music," "Love Is a Dancing Thing," "If There Is Someone Lovelier Than You," "Rhode Island Is Famous for You," "Alone Together," "Dancing in the Dark," "I Guess I'll Have to Change My Plan," "Triplets," "Something to Remember You By," "A Shine on Your Shoes," "By Myself," and "That's Entertainment." This team's work forms a substantial part of American musical culture.

As a composer of lovely and even haunting melodic contours, Schwartz, I feel, is close to Jerome Kern. In fact, in one specific sense I rate him somewhat more highly: Kern sometimes reaches awkwardly for harmonic effects, as in the last four bars of the release of "I'm Old-Fashioned," where he moves swiftly (and, to my mind, rather synthetically) from A major back to F. Schwartz never does that sort of thing. He never makes you aware of the craft, and all his melodies seem to have been discovered or remembered from some other life, rather than carefully and consciously constructed.

His partner Dietz was a member of an elite group of literate people who chose song lyrics as their form of expression and wrote them with consummate skill and felicity. I would include fewer than a dozen other names: Johnny Mercer, Cole Porter, Yip Harburg, Frank Loesser, Lorenz Hart, Al Dubin, and Dorothy Fields. Ogden Nash and Maxwell Anderson almost belong on the list, but their output of songs was too small. I do not include Oscar Hammerstein II, though he was a master of the craft technically; the content of his lyrics was too close to Edgar Guest and greeting-card sentimentality for my taste. Nor do I list Ira Gershwin, because he often twisted language for the sake of an effect or a rhyme.

Dietz has never strained. All his lyrics have the natural order of speech. He never inverts sentence structure to get a rhyme (which even Hart did on occasion, as, for example, in "You're Nearer": "You're nearer than the ivy to the wall is...") He has maintained a dazzling quality in the use of language, particularly rhyme, that perhaps only Stephen Sondheim equals in the present era. And Sondheim's lyrics have a cold cut-glass kind of cleverness that is easier to admire than to enjoy. He never achieves the warmth that Dietz did in--to name just two instances--"If There Is Someone Lovelier Than You" and "Alone Together."

When Dietz is after laughter, as in "Triplets" and "Rhode Island Is Famous for You," where he deliberately uses outlandish rhymes, he is almost incomparable. And consider these lines in "That's Entertainment": "...some great Shakespearean scene/where a ghost and a prince meet./and everyone ends in mincemeat." Every sentence seems natural, almost improvised, and every rhyme has the feeling of being accidental. (Dietz and Schwartz wrote the whole thing in less than an hour.)

English, as it happens, is an impoverishcd rhyming language. For example, there are only four usable rhymes for "love" (if you don't count "of," and you shouldn't, they are "above," "dove," "glove," and "shove"). In French, however, there are fifty-one rhymes for "amour," and, since the terminals in French is usually silent, you can rhyme singulars with plurals--so that gives you, effectively, 102 possibilities for rhyme with a word that is one of the main subjects of all literature. This may well explain why the French, in their songs, write of love with so much more range, flexibility, maturity, and depth than we do. And yet, for all the strictures imposed by our language, Dietz never seems constrained, in either imagination or diction. It is this quality of ease, of beauty or cleverness attained effortlessly, that makes his lyrics a perfect match for Schwartz's music. Their combined work is urbane, intelligent, warm, witty, lovely, and above all civilized.

I have real trouble handling the fact that Schwartz, who was born in Brooklyn on November 25, 1900, will turn seventy-six this year. Tall, black-haired, assured, gracious, he is strikingly handsome. ("He's certainly the best-looking songwriter in the business," Sheldon Harnick told me once.) His speaking voice is a warm baritone. His pronunciation upper-class East Coast. He once taught English in New York City high schools. He is actually a lawyer who took his law degree at NYU and then an M.A. at Columbia.

How did he manage to combine careers in law and music? "Well," Schwartz explained, "I didn't do them at the same time." (Dietz, he pointed out, did combine two careers: He was a vice president of MGM for thirty-five years, and he quipped once that he wrote all his lyrics on MGM stationary.)

"I didn't know when I started to write music whether I'd be very good at it," Arthur said. "I wrote very little in the early years that made me think I should do it as a career. And so I decided to be a lawyer and have something to fall back on. I practiced law for four years."

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As always, reissues are indicated by a 🅀, planned quadriphonic releases by a 🅃.

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### Advent records


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### Angel


*Brahms: Violin Concerto.* Kremer; Berlin Phil., Karajan.

*Brahms: Violin Concerto No. 2.* Scottish Fantasia. Perlman; New Philharmonia, Cobos.

*Delius: Fennimore and Gerda.* Tear, Soderrström, Cook; Danish Radio, Davies.

*Elgar: Symphony No. 2.* London Phil., Boult.

*Haydn: Cello Concertos.* in C; in D. Rosner; London Phil., Giulini.


*Mussorgsky: Pictures at an Exhibition.* Béroll.

*Rachmaninoff: The Bells; Vocalise.* Armstrong, Tear, Shirley-Quirk; London Sym., Previn.

*R. Strauss: Horn Concertos.* (2). Damm; Dresden State O., Holleiser.


*Wagner: Rienzi.* Kollo, Martin, Wonneberg, Adam, Hillebrand, Schreier; Dresden State Opera, Holleiser.

*Waldteufel: Waltzes.* Monte Carlo Opera 0., Boskovsky.

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*Bach: Organ Concertos.* (6; from cantata sinfonias). Biggs; Leipzig Gewandhaus, H.-J. Roitzsch.


*Bartók: Bluebeard’s Castle.* Trojanos, Nimsøger, BBC Sym., Boulez.

*Beethoven: Piano Sonatas.* Nos. 18, 23. Berlin (newly recorded in the U.S.).

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**Genesis**

Dussek: Piano Sonatas Nos. 11, 13, 24, 28. Marvin.

**Golden Crest**

- Bennington: Woodwind Trio.
- Brodie: Saxophone Quartet.
- Cleveland Institute Faculty.
- Composers Quartet. Works by Schuller, Cowell, Swift, Stravinsky, Carter.
- Londeix: Saxophone Recital.
- Nanzetta (flute): Mostly Wilder.
- New York Brass Choir: Gorgeus Brass.
- Philips (tuba): Tribute to a Friend.
- Snyder: American Piano Works.
- Tenn Tech Tuba Ensemble.

**The Grenadilla Society**

Hovhaness: Firdausi, for clarinet, harp, percussion. Husa: Evocations de Slo-vaque, for clarinet, viola, cello.
(All feature Long Island Chamber Ensemble. L. Sobol, artistic dir.)

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**High Fidelity Magazine**
This is no way to nail down a hi-fi bargain.

Some stores think that one of their cost-cutters in assembling a "bargain" stereo system is to install a run-of-the-mill, inexpensive cartridge. After all, who's going to notice a tiny cartridge when it's surrounded by powerful speakers and a dynamite turntable? Unfortunately, some shoppers are reluctant to insist on a better cartridge when buying one of these package specials. But you are made of sterner stuff! And if you insist on a Shure cartridge, "better" doesn't have to mean more expensive. Time and time again, consumer magazines have rated Shure cartridges the best in their price category. As the source of sound for the entire system, that tiny Shure cartridge and its critical stylus determine what you'll ultimately hear. And as bargains go, that's the best tip you'll hear today—or any day!

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But since the frequency range of all our speakers extends well below 60 Hz to beyond 15,000 Hz, why do we even bother mentioning this figure?

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Yamaha's success in achieving a single standard of accuracy in all our speakers is confirmed in the chart above.

Unlike the frequency response curves of other speaker manufacturers which indicate unnatural booming in the bass, added sparkle in the treble, and extreme loudness level variations of as much as 10 dB, Yamaha's frequency response curves show a relatively straight line, which indicates uncolored, natural sound.

Yamaha's musical heritage.

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That's why Yamaha speakers aren't designed to meet objective standards alone, but to meet a higher standard: the ears of the people who make Yamaha's world-famous musical instruments.

CRD (U.K.)


Choral Works (by Dallapiccola, Lidholm, Pergament: The Jewish Song (oratorio).

Larsson: Piano Concerto (plus solo works by Haydn, Mozart). Palsson; Musica Sveciae.


Prokofiev and Franck: Cello Sonatas. Helmersson.

Narins: Cello Recital. Works by Bruch, Medins, R. Strauss.

Zobars: Song Recital.


Luxon; Scottish National O., Gibson. Vivaldi: Four Seasons (on original instruments). Standage, Finnock, cond. 

Beethoven: String Quartet No. 8. Fresko Qt.


Sallinen, Nilsson, Milhaud, Kuisma.

Locke Brass Consort. Works by Mendelssohn, Jacob, Schein.


Zobars: Song Recital.

KAI B A L A

Meditations. Barrows, piano. 


Beethoven: Symphony No. 3. Scottish National O., Paia.


Brahms: Symphony No. 1. Cleveland O., Maazel.

Dvorák: Symphonies Nos. 8, 9. Los Angeles Phil., Mehta.


Luxon; Scottish National O., Gibson. Vivaldi: Four Seasons (on original instruments). Standage, Finnock, cond.

Dances of Renaissance Scotland. Scottish Baroque Ensemble.

HARMONIA MUNDI (France)


UNICORN (U.K.)


Locke Brass Consort. Works by Mendelssohn, Jacob, Schein.

KAIBALA

Meditations. Barrows, piano.

Beethoven: Symphony No. 8. Fresk Qt.

Lung: String Quartet No. 4. Voci e Venti.

J. Holecek, guitar.
Eastman Wind Ensemble, Fennell: Seregnos (Circus Marches).

Bach: Keyboard Concertos (16). Svirsky, piano (three discs).
Benoit: Piano Concerto, Op. 43. Fantasy No. 3. Huybregts; Belgian Nat. O.

Buxtehude: Cantatas. Soloists, chorus, instrumentalists, Ehmann, cond.
Ockeghem: Missa "Ma maistresse"; Missa "Au travail suis"; motets and chansons.
Pomerium Musices, Blachly, cond.
"Au travail suis"; motets and chansons.

Benedict: Piano Concerto, Op. 43; Fantasy No. 3. Huybregts; Belgian Nat. O.

Beethoven: Piano Sonatas Nos. 9, 10, 28. Brendel.
Brahms: Piano Sonata No. 2; Paganini Variations. Arrau.

Brahms: Piano Sonata Nos. 9, 10, 28. Brendel.
Beethoven: Piano Sonatas Nos. 9, 10, 28. Brendel.
Brahms: Piano Sonata No. 2; Paganini Variations. Arrau.
Birthday of Prince Charles. London Sym., Davis.
Gardelli (three discs).
Vivaldi: Oboe Concertos. Holliger; I Musici.

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Beethoven: Violin Sonatas (10). Kovacs, HUNGAROTON (Hungary)
(distributes Hungaroton, Muza, Pearl, and Vivaldi: Oboe Concertos. Holliger; I Musici.
Gardelli (three discs).
Vivaldi: Oboe Concertos. Holliger; I Musici.

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HUNGAROTON (Hungary)

Bach: Concertos (2). Kocsis; orch.
Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 4; C minor Variations. Szegedi; Budapest Phil., Kôrody.
Beethoven: Symphonies Nos. 6, 7. Hungarian State O., Ferencsik.
Beethoven: Violin Sonatas (10). Kôvacs, Baecher.
Durko: Chamber Works.
Haydn: Symphonies Nos. 88, 100. Hungarian State O., A. Fischer.
L. Kalmar: Trio; Sotto voce; Nocturne No. 1. Fellegi et al.
Kodály: Choral Works (two discs).
Lutosławski: Cello Concerto. Martin: Ballade. Farkas: All’antica. M. Perényi; Budapest Phil., Lehel.
Prokofiev: Piano Concerto No. 1; Sonata No. 8; Toccata. Berman.
Ravel and Debussy: Violin-Piano Works. A. Kiss, Lakatos.
Rózsaöölgyi and Csermák: Hungarian Dances. Tátrai, cond.
Schumann: Requiem for Mignon, Op. 98b; Dances. Tatrai, cond.

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MUZA (Poland)

Beethoven: Symphony No. 5. Lodz Phil., Czyz.
A. Bloch: Dialogues; Gilgomesz. Wilkomirska; Warsaw Phil., Markowski.
Chopin: Muzoraks (complete). Bakst.
Gomolka: Tunes to the Polish Book of Psalms. Kajdasz, cond.
Lutosławski: Christmas Carol.

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Chopin Piano Competition 1975: K. Zimerman (Chopin recital and Concerto No. 1 with Polish Radio Sym., Maksymiuik); D. Joffe (Concerto No. 2 with Polish Radio Sym., Maksymiuik); et al.

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PEARL (U.K.)

• Chopin: Piano Works. Paderewski.
Ballads from Queen Victoria’s Time. Round.

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SUPRAPHON (Czechoslovakia)

Donizetti: Lucia di Lammermoor. Piave, Cappuccilli, Pagliucco, Gobbi, Marconi, Labo, Poli, Zimolou.
Ernst and Wieniawski: Violin Concertos. David; Prague Sym., Hlaváček.
Fibich: Piano Quintet; Piano Trio. Fibich Trio et al.
Fried: Moravian Mariage.
Haydn: Concertos. Matougek, Adamec; Prague Chamber O.
Jilek: Spinning Wheel. Ostrava Phil., Trhlik.
Panocha: Concerto No. 2 with Polish Radio Soloists.

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RCA RED SEAL

Berio: Nones; Alleluja II; Concerto for Two Pianos. Canino, Ballisti; London Sym., Berio and Boulez.
Bolling: Concerto for Classical Guitar and Jazz Piano. Lagoya, Bolling.
Brahms: Clarinet Quintet. Stoltzman, Cleveland Qt.
Mahler: Symphony No. 3. Horne; Chicago Sym., Levine.
Monteverdi: Madrigals. Corboz (three discs).
Mozart: Flute Concertos (2); Andante, K. 315. Galway; Lucerne Festival Strings, Baumgartner.
Mozart: Flute Works. Rampall.
Prokofiev: Symphony No. 5. Philadelphia O., Ormandy.
Rimske-Korsakov: Scheherazade. Royal Phil. Stokowski.
Schubert: Trout Quintet. Tashiki et al.
Verdi: La Forza del destino. Price, Domingo, Milanés; London Sym., Levine.

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SEPTEMBER 1976

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VANGUARD "TWOFER"

- The Essential Alfred Deller.
- E. Kunz. German University Songs.

VANGUARD CARDINAL

Brahms: Symphonies (4); Haydn Variations; Academic Festival and Tragic Overtures. Utah Sym., Abravanel (four discs).


- Janáček: Concertino, In the Mist; Mládí; Melos Ensemble.


VANGUARD EVERYMAN

- Bach: "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring." Kipnis, harpsichord; Stokowski and his orchestra.


- Beethoven: Egmont (complete). Davrath; Utah Sym., Abravanel.


- Elman Plays Kreisler.
- R. Hayes: Life of Christ.
- Spanish Guitar. A. Diaz (two discs).

BACH GUILD/HISTORICAL ANTHOLOGY OF MUSIC


- English Madrigals. Deller Consort, Deller (two discs).

- Flemish, French, and Italian Madrigals. Deller Consort, Deller (two discs).

- Tavern Songs—Catches and Glees. Deller Consort, Deller.


Bach: Organ Preludes and Fugues. Newman (two vols.).

Bartók: String Quartets (6). New Hungarian Qt.

- Geminiani: Concerti Grossi, Opp. 2-4. Southwest German Chamber O., Angerer.


- Saint-Saëns: Symphonies; Tone Poems. Luxembourg Radio O., Frument.


- German Romantic Organ Works. Lehndorfer.

Homespun America. Manchester Cornet Band; New Hutchinson Family Singers; Manchester: Quadrille O.

- Italian Organ Works. Sebestyen.


Bruckner: Symphony No. 3. Moscow Radio Sym., Rozhdestvensky.


- Hindemith: Kammermusik No. 5; Viola Concerto. Moscow Radio Sym., Rozhdestvensky.


- Ravel and Shostakovich: Piano Trios. Yedlin, Dubinsky, Berlinsky.

Rimsky-Korsakov: Arias from The Tsar’s Bride and The Snow Maiden. Arkhipov.

- Schubert: Symphony No. 5 et al. Moscow Chamber O., Barshai.


- Laureats of the 4th Tchaikovsky Competition: M. Fujikawa, Lalo, E. Livshitz, piano. Moscow Chamber O., Barshai.

I. Oistrakh: Violin Recital.


September 1976


CBS Laboratories Technical Series Professional Test Records are unique, high-precision tools designed to assist audio and quality control engineers and test and service technicians in the rapid evaluation of audio components, equipment and systems.

Each record has a complete series of tests, which eliminates the need for equipment, saves hours of time, and makes it a productive tool in the laboratory, on the production line, and in field testing.

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- STR-151: Broadcast Test Record—Especially useful for the broadcast engineer, audiophile or service technician seeking a convenient signal source for the testing and adjustment of all audio equipment. $15.00

- STR-170: Microsecond Frequency Response Test Record—Provides a convenient, easily equalized signal for all response and separation measurements. $15.00

- SQT-1100: Quadruplex Test Record—For the calibration, verification and adjustment of SQT encoded decoding equipment. $15.00

Check or money order must accompany your order. No cash or COD's, please. Allow 60 days for delivery.
I am in the process of converting my stereo system to a quadriphonic system. I already own an appropriate four-channel preamplifier, power amplifier, and turntable. I am trying to locate a demodulator unit that is capable of decoding CD-4, QS, and SQ material. Do you know of such a unit?—Jeffrey T. Jones, Ft. Hood, Tex.

A QSD-2 from Sansui will handle both QS and SQ material, but a separate CD-4 unit will be needed. No universal decoder exists.

I have a Marantz 4270 quad receiver (with an SQA-2 decoder), a Philips 202 turntable, a Shure M91E cartridge, and a baffling problem. When I play Columbia SQ records or imported EMI SQ records with the Marantz mode control in the SQ setting, everything sounds great. However, when I play Angel SQ discs, the back channels waver in volume and sound muddy and broken (the same effect I get when I play non-SQ discs through my decoder). My dealer has exchanged the SQA-2 decoder, and yet the problem persists. Is the fault in the Angel records or in my equipment? And, if the latter, can I correct it?—Andrew Fraknoi, Redwood City, Calif.

From the symptoms you describe, we tend to suspect the discs. We have from time to time observed similar effects with some Angel SQ releases.

My Dual CV-40 amplifier is rated at 24 watts [13.8 dBW] per channel at 4 ohms, or 18 watts [12.6 dBW] per channel of continuous output at 1,000 Hz. My Klipsch Heresy speakers seem well adapted to my system (all Dual components: CV-40 amplifier, TG-28 tape deck, 1019 turntable, CT-14 tuner), and I suspect I might be wasting my money if I traded them in for Klipschorns, because my system might not do the Klipschorns justice. But I want the Klipschorns. Will a new amplifier be necessary? Are the other components satisfactory?—Walter Z. Procko, Columbia, S.C.

The Klipschorns are more efficient than the Heresys and will therefore function with less amplifier power, if listening levels are to be kept the same. If your other components are working well, they should do justice to the Klipschorns, although of course, by upgrading your system, you can always make it sound even better.

When I was last in England (September 1975), the Disc Preener was selling there for 45p—i.e., under a dollar. The importer, Elpa Marketing, has set the U.S. price of this device, recently subjected to yet another increase, at an unbelievable $5.95. This 500% markup cannot be accounted for by any legitimate business consideration and must be labeled sheer piracy. The prudent audiophile would pick up a supply of Disc Preeners and other Watts record-care products while passing through England and avoid dealing with Elpa altogether.—Daniel Morrison, Albany, N.Y.

Fine, if you happen to be in England. In any case, the $5.95 price is competitive with that of similar U.S. products, and your argument ignores transatlantic shipping costs.

Recently a friend of mine bought a new unit of the discontinued Tandberg Model 1020-A receiver from Harvey Sound, and it was back within three days for repair. I would have considered this an isolated case, but a few days later I visited International Hi-Fi Expo in New York City, and all the Tandberg receivers on display were in broken down condition. This worries me somewhat, because I have been considering buying a Tandberg or Yamaha—but now it will have to wait until this durability question is clarified.—A. Kumar, New York, N.Y.

Tandberg informs us that its warranty records show only one return immediately after purchase of the 1020 A from the dealer mentioned and that the problem in that case was with the community antenna serving the apartment complex in which the unit was being used. The condition of the samples at the International Hi-Fi Expo can be traced to the neglect of proper maintenance in anticipation of the closing of the exhibit.

I have purchased a Pioneer SA-6500 amplifier and a Technics SL-20 turntable with an Audio-Technica AT-145a cartridge. I am using a friend's pair of BIC Formula 4 speakers and getting distortion through them when loud, high passages are played. A friend says that my cartridge has a frequency beyond what the BICs can take, causing the peaking and distortion. If that is right, do I go about selecting proper speakers now?—Paul Vihonsky, Houlton, Maine.

We tend to doubt your friend's explanation. The BIC Formula 4 speakers should easily accept the full output of the Pioneer SA-6500 with low distortion, extended frequency response of the cartridge notwithstanding. It is far more likely that the cartridge is mistracking or that the disc is faulty. The installation of the cartridge should be checked. If the problem is in fact a defect in the speakers, the distortion will be reduced when the volume is lowered, an action that could not affect the cartridge.

In an attempt to get better tracking of records, I bought a Garrard Zero 100, which did, indeed, track the grooves better than my previous turntable. What the ads, and your equipment reviews, did not mention was that the Zero 100 is incapable of coping with off-center pressings. When playing these, particularly toward the center, the Garrard arm moves back and forth with the groove and, although it tracks nicely in the highs, etc., also produces a variation in pitch similar to wow in the turntable. I have been considering switching to one of the tangential tracking units like B&O, but before I waste any more money I would like to know how this type of turntable handles this problem.—Herbert N. Peters, San Antonio, Tex.

Your complaint makes as much sense as criticizing an automobile for poor handling with a flat tire. Wow due to record eccentricity will be equally bad no matter what arm type is used. It's purely a question of instantaneous groove speed, and thus a function of disc geometry, not that of the arm. A true tangential arm (like the B&O) may have trouble trying to "back up" to follow a severely eccentric groove, a pivoted arm like the Garrard's won't.

My turntable is the AR-XB. I have noticed that, on-off-center records, the stylus cantilever of the cartridge (Shure M91ED) moves back and forth instead of the arm (except for very large deviations, of course). I have been told this is an indication of high arm-bearing friction and causes undue wear for the cantilever. Does this wear significantly shorten the life expectancy of a stylus? And am I thus limited to lower quality cartridges in what I thought was an excellent turntable? In your opinion, can the AR arm allow proper tracking of such cartridges as the Ortofon VMS-20E, Shure V-15 Type III, and B&O SP-12 (my personal favorite)?—Richard Fozzard, Stanford, Calif.

The situation that you describe will cause accelerated wear to both the stylus and the record. AR suggests that the arm friction is a result of insufficient lubrication and that the bearing be oiled as outlined in the instruction manual. AR also feels that the arm will handle the high-quality cartridges you mentioned provided that they are tracked in the range of 1 1/4 to 1 1/2 grams. The M91ED in fact is one of the cartridges that Shure itself recommends for the AR XB. Shure disagrees insofar as the V-15 Type III is concerned, and we tend to as well. Why is everybody playing cock-eyed records anyway? Return them to your dealers!
HiFi-Crostic No. 16

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. Compounds, hyphenated, or compound.

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 separated by darkened squares and recordings or audio.

Solution to last month's HiFi-Crostic appears on page 6.
Victor Brociner might be termed one of the gray eminences of the high fidelity industry. With the exception of a decade or so when his name was also that of an active corporation making equipment, he has worked behind the scenes and without fanfare. Yet the importance of his contribution to the industry is widely acknowledged.

Like others, Brociner found himself helping to launch high fidelity in the 1930s when he could not find work in the field for which he had been trained and turned to making a boyhood hobby pay. He left Columbia University in 1931 with a degree in mechanical engineering. His academic specialty had been the internal combustion engine (he remains a car buff to this day), but cars weren't doing well in the middle of the Great Depression. Vic started a small company to produce photocell devices for controlling industrial processes, yet there was little interest among potential customers.

As a kid, Brociner had monkeyed with radio sets. At the age of fifteen he tried to convert an early Magnavox horn-type loudspeaker into a large cone loudspeaker, and actually got it to make some kind of noise. He continued to study radio and electronics and to experiment. By the mid-1930s, a radio-phonograph set he and an associate, Stanley Bogart, had built seemed to him and some friends more viable as a product than either industrial controls or automotive engines. One of these friends was Avery Fisher (see "Pathfinders," April 1976). The three cooperated in founding the company known as Philharmonic Radio.

Brociner became interested in wideband AM radio (FM was in the experimental stages) and in 1937 built what he describes as the first commercial wideband AM receiver. (One is now in the Smithsonian.) This, combined with a 78-rpm record player using a crystal pickup (tracking force, 30 grams—light for those days!), and a speaker, all housed in a cabinet, sold for "$275 and up." Philharmonic Radio did well, and sales really soared following top ratings by Consumer Research and Consumers Union. At that time (1938), Brociner recalls, the "plant" was little more than a hole in a wall employing three people and distributing directly to consumers. With the outbreak of World War II high quality radio-phonographs became the luxurious leftovers from peaceful times. Philharmonic Radio was bought in 1942 by American Type Founders (later to become Daysym) and converted to military production. At the war's end, Brociner again began thinking of deluxe home audio products, but ATF had no interest in them.

Fisher left in 1945 to form his own company. When ATF sold Philharmonic Radio in 1946, Brociner went back to photocell engineering for another company.

But the hi-fi bug kept gnawing at him. In 1948 he started Brociner Electronics, producing a succession of high-grade components that included the first separate preamplifier-control unit to have variable equalization (to suit the many recording curves then in use), and the Mark XII integrated amplifier—said to be the first consumer audio product in which the wiring was all on printed circuits. Brociner also introduced the Model 4 corner-horn loudspeaker, the only folded-horn design from the Klipschorn available at that time; it used a Lowther driver imported from England. He also built a larger horn system known as the Transcendent (one of which was bought by High Fidelity's first editor and, later, publisher, Charles Fowler). One of the men who worked with him during these years was Stewart Hegeman, who later started his own business.

According to Brociner, "We made a great reputation but not great money." By 1957, Brociner Electronics shut its doors, and Victor began consulting. The term "consulting," he explains, is often a euphemism for "looking for work," but he actually did consulting work for various companies. In 1959 he joined University Loudspeakers and became manager of engineering. University moved to Oklahoma; Brociner wanted to stay in the East, so in 1963 he joined H. H. Scott, Inc., as assistant to the president, eventually becoming vice president of engineering. At Scott he worked closely with Daniel von Recklinghausen, the chief research engineer. As Scott got more and more into solid-state, Brociner pressed for styling to match the transistorized circuitry. He turned the company's emphasis toward receivers, foreseeing the popularity of this component. He also was instrumental in upgrading its speaker line.

The Scott company's troubles in the early 1970s need not be detailed here, but in 1971 Brociner resigned and returned to consulting. One of his clients was a twenty-year-old Providence, Rhode Island, company specializing in audio teaching aids. Its name was Avid, and before long Vic was invited to work there full time. In 1972 he became its vice president of engineering for stereo products and launched the Avid speaker line. He also continues to consult for noncompeting companies.

Although Avid is based in Rhode Island, Brociner still lives in Bolton, Massachusetts, which means a daily round trip of some 120 miles. But this is no chore at all for a car buff who enjoys tooling along the highways.
The S-9910: Sherwood's Super-Receiver


Comment: The receiver is very much a Sherwood and very impressive. Electronically it is exceptionally fine. Physically it's heftier than any Sherwood we have tested—at least in recent years and perhaps ever. Cosmetically it represents the current, quietly styled stage in a tradition that has never been radical, never garish, never obscurantist; the controls are visible and functional, the appearance graceful and inviting.

Basic circuit layout retains the features—multiple dubbing options and quasi-quad "speaker matrixing," for example—that have characterized Sherwood receivers in recent years. Circuit details add new fillips to that basic plan: There is a circuit protector that lights a front-panel indicator when it shuts down the amplifier; a digital FM detector circuit obviates periodic IF stage alignment and cancels noise; the direct-drive amplifier section itself is exceptionally beefy and has a power supply to match (which accounts for a good deal of the unit's heft).

The only real goof in the design, from our point of view, is in the mike input/mixing group. The mono phone jack feeds the mike signal to both channels via a mixer controlled by a boss at the back of the knob in this group. So far so good. But the signal enters the circuit after the tape-recording jacks, so it's useless for taping unless you do so from the preamp-output jacks. It therefore is a mike system more appropriate for public address than for high fidelity use. The balance control—the knob in front of the mixer—is easy to twist out of position when you are altering mike gain, and the inclusion of these two disparate elements on one control adds confusion. We expect that most

REPORT POLICY Equipment reports are based on laboratory measurements and controlled listening tests. Unless otherwise noted, test data and measurements are obtained by CBS Technology Center, Stamford, Connecticut, a division of Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc., one of the nation's leading research organizations. The choice of equipment to be tested rests with the editors of High Fidelity. Manufacturers are not permitted to read reports in advance of publication, and no report, or portion thereof, may be reproduced for any purpose or in any form without written permission of the publisher. All reports should be construed as applying to the specific samples tested; neither High Fidelity nor CBS Technology Center assumes responsibility for product performance or quality.
users will simply ignore the S-9910’s mike features in favor of those on their recording equipment, making the point moot.

The complement of inputs and outputs is opulent: two for phono, one with a three-position sensitivity switch; two aux; complete inputs and outputs—including provision for dubbing in either direction—for two tape decks, one of which can be hooked up via the usual pin jacks, a DIN connector, or (on the front panel) a pair of stereo phone jacks. The speaker knob allows you to select none, any one, or any two of the three speaker-pair outputs; or you can switch to ARS for speaker matrixing, using the A speakers for the front, the B speakers for the back.

The power amplifier puts out its full 100 watts at low distortion, though the distortion readings are not quite as low as the specs might at first make you think. Sherwood rates the amp (at 0.1%) and preamp sections separately; CBS measures through both, so the distortion figures run a hair over 0.1% in many of the full-power measurements. The difference is not appreciable, except in the left channel toward the frequency extremes, and even the worst case (just over 0.5% at 20 Hz in the left channel) can hardly be called high distortion. Linearity is excellent—justifying, for example, Sherwood’s claim that its new phono-preamp circuit delivers RIAA compensation to within ±1/2 dB—and the subsonic filter is extremely efficient, being down only 3 dB at 20 Hz but cutting rumble and other subsonics by 7 dB at 10 Hz and 20½ dB at 5 Hz.

The tuner section is equally good, delivering 50 dB of quieting in mono for a mere 13 dB (2.50 microvolts) of in-
About the dBW and Related Matters...

This term should be familiar to avid readers of tuner specifications. It was introduced in the current standards published jointly by the Institute of High Fidelity and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, and it represents decibels referred to one femtowatt (10^-15 watt or one quadrillionth watt) as more useful units than microvolts for the specification of radio-frequency input—and hence tuner sensitivity. As a result, most tuner sensitivity specs issued recently by the major manufacturers are in dBW, usually with the familiar microvolt equivalent in parentheses. Beginning in this issue, we are doing likewise. Traditionalists need not despair; not only will we continue to retain the microvolts equivalents, but our new sensitivity and quieting graph format is calibrated in both units and can therefore be used as a rough conversion table.

At the same time we are adopting another worthy element of the IHF/IEEE standards: the distinction between noise quieting and noise-and-distortion quieting. We have used only the latter in the past, since this information was (and is) the basis of the traditional 30-dB sensitivity ratings. The new standard adds a second (and, in our opinion, more useful) specification for the point at which noise alone is suppressed by 50 dB. So the 30-dB sensitivity is shown on the curves for noise plus distortion, the 50-dB sensitivity on those for noise only. And by comparing the two curves one can see how input-signal strength affects both noise and distortion when each is measured separately.

To avoid a confusing clutter of curves, we now are showing mono data only up to the mono 50-dB point or the stereo threshold (depending on the relationship between these two in the tuner under test). Since stereo is the way of FM life today, most listeners will be concerned primarily with the stereo figures until signal strength drops too low for good stereo reception—at which point the mono data take over. If you want to know the mono noise and distortion performance of a given tuner for strong stations, you need only look at the S/N ratio and harmonic-distortion figures shown under "Additional Data." These figures are measured at 65 dBW (close to 1,000 microvolts) and can be used to judge where the mono noise-plus-distortion and noise-only curves would fall if they were carried this high.

Note that the new presentation not only makes possible a more detailed picture of how the tuner will respond to various input signal strengths, but gives a more rational basis on which to express these strengths as well. If one tuner has a 50-dB mono sensitivity of 15 dBW (about 3 microvolts) and another measures 20 dBW (5½ microvolts), the first is 5 dB more sensitive. It makes no sense to talk of it as "about 2½ microvolts more sensitive." In this regard the dBW is comparable to the dBW, which allows us to say that one amplifier is so many dBW more powerful than another—a far more useful concept than speaking of it as so many watts more powerful.

About Amplifier Comparisons...

Since the beginning of 1974 our power-amplifier and amplifier-section reports have shown power-bandwidth curves at 0.5% harmonic distortion (in addition to the manufacturers' rated distortion, where that was not 0.5%) as a "common test bed" on which all amplifiers, however rated, could be compared in the same terms. Though we took considerable care in selecting our 0.5% rating point, the levels of measurable distortion in the better amplifiers have been falling dramatically ever since—meaning that now there are many "superamps" that literally must be abused before they reach 0.5% distortion and that our rating system is consequently less useful today than it was when we introduced it.

Beginning in this issue, we are offering a different means for comparison: a set of harmonic distortion curves taken at 10 dBW (10 watts) and replacing the former half-power distortion curves. In almost any system, 10 dBW represents moderately loud to very loud listening levels well within the equipment's capabilities, making it a valid testing point. On those rare occasions when we test equipment rated at less than 10 dBW per channel—equipment that, for this reason alone if no other, represents no better than marginal high fidelity in the first place—we will omit the 10-dBW curves. Since the Federal Trade Commission's rules on amplifier specification have drawn attention away from half-power performance in favor of that at full power (half-power figures are invariably better), our former half-power distortion curves have relatively little utility today, and we can find no reason to retain them.

About the dBf...
put and 30-dB sensitivity of 9.5 dBf (1.6 microvolts), representing an extremely steep set of quieting curves for exceptionally good reception of weak stations. Stereo curves never are as steep. The S-9910's are superior: noise and distortion are down around −60 dB for all signal strengths above about 50 dBf (170 microvolts), while noise drops to −50 dB by the time input has reached 35 dBf (31 microvolts). For reasonably strong signals (65 dBf, or approximately 1,000 microvolts) S/N ratios are 64 dB in stereo and 68 dB in mono—both excellent, though again they show that our sample was shy of Sherwood's specs by an insignificant margin. Distortion, response, and separation of the FM section are equally fine.

It is, in fact, an exceptional receiver all around. We have seldom met a Sherwood we didn't like, and the S-9910 is one of the most likable—and perhaps the most capable ever among receivers. From its quiet, unassuming manner (a sort of Clark Kent with class) to its powerful amplifier (which surely rates as super among receivers) and precise response, this is a job that even the Perry Whites among us must consider well done.

CIRCLE 133 ON READER-SERVICE CARD
Pioneer's PL-510 Offers Performance—and a Low Price


Comment: Direct-drive turntables, once audio exotica with price tags to match, have in recent months come within the reach of music lovers who are less than well heeled. Pioneer—the second major manufacturer to break the $200 price barrier with direct drive—has, with the PL-510, issued a formidable challenge. Performance of the new unit actually surpasses Pioneer's PL-71, an older top-of-the-line model. Further, the PL-510 is close to foolproof in its operation, even for the fumble-fingered.

Speed accuracy of the turntable (after the few seconds necessary for the servo to lock in) is excellent at both 33 and 45 rpm, with no measurable deviation turned up by CBS labs at any test line voltage, once the speeds are adjusted at 120 volts. Should you choose, however, you can adjust the speed by about 5% faster or slower—just shy of a half-tone in each direction. Peak wow is a mere 0.05% average and 0.07% maximum. Audible rumble (ARLL weighted) is practically nonexistent, measuring in at −63½ dB.

Complementing the rotational assembly is a tone arm with negligibly low friction, both laterally and vertically, and excellent damping. The arm resonance (measured with the Shure V-15 Type III pickup) is well controlled—a hair on the low side at 7.5 Hz with only a 4 dB rise. Tracking of warped discs (which seem distressingly ubiquitous) is just fine. The arm is inherently unbalanced laterally, so a corrective weight has been provided. Its setting seems to be not at all critical; the instructions give a procedure for setting it approximately and state that it need not be readjusted even if a different cartridge is installed. The stylus force gauge, calibrated in half-gram steps to 3½ grams, is as perfect in accuracy as could be measured. The antiskating mechanism uses a single scale that seems to be an excellent compromise between the requirements of conical and elliptical stylus. Should it be necessary to interrupt a selection by means of the cueing lever, restart is accomplished with negligible side drift of the tone arm.

Probably the most difficult part of using the PL-510 is the initial setting up, with installation of the cartridge into the headshell perhaps a little more tedious than average. Users who are fickle about pickups would be well advised to invest in extra headshells. There is a seemingly interminable delay (about 3.5 seconds) between actuation of the cueing lever and contact between the stylus and the disc, but the action is nothing if not gentle. The fact that the AC-power switch is integral with the cueing lever might take some getting used to. Other than that, the unit is a pleasure to use, with controls that are clear, effective, and gratifying to the touch. While it is obviously possible to mishandle things sufficiently to damage records or the PL-510 itself, we have found few turntables that are as forgiving of little slips. And we found no difficulties with vibration or acoustic feedback.

So it seems that Pioneer has done it again—improved performance while lowering price. And if that isn't enough, the turntable looks good too.

CIRCLE 132 ON READER-SERVICE CARD
ESS’s Heil-Driver Headphones


Comment: The ESS Mk. 1 stereo headphones are unique in that their drivers are Heil Air Motion Transformers, which ESS has used with great success as tweeters in its loudspeaker systems. The full-range drivers used in this headset are somewhat less efficient electrically than typical dynamic transducers. Recognizing this, and feeling that the typical headphone output will not provide enough drive, the manufacturer has included an adapter that can be connected to the loudspeaker output of a power amplifier. We tried both hookups and found our front-panel output quite satisfactory. Efficient or not, these headphones are capable of high-level output. Driven by their maximum rated input of 14 volts, they produce a hefty output of about 117 dB SPL at the wearer’s ears.

In our listening tests, we found that the ESS headphones produce a sound that is clear and well detailed, if not totally sensuous. There is plenty of sparkle and airiness at high frequencies, but a certain “tightness” in the upper midrange gives violins, for example, a somewhat hard, glassy quality. Also, the sense of ambience seems a bit attenuated.

A check of frequency response using recorded bands of one-third-octave pink noise revealed some irregularities that could account for the listening quality. According to our observations, high-frequency output is strong and clean right up to the limit of our test source, a one-third-octave band centered at 14 kHz. Output in the region of 6 to 4 kHz was somewhat depressed, with a broad peak evident around 2 kHz. Below this the output flattens out well but rolls off rapidly below 80 Hz or so. The frequency response is no more irregular than that of other highly respected phones, but we have heard several other models that add less coloration to reproduced sounds.

The headset is on the bulky side, weighing in at 17 ounces. It is, however, an exceptionally comfortable example of its type, because it remains securely in place, and the ear cushions, though apparently not fluid-filled, have all the pressure-equalizing capability of such designs. While the ear seal is high, the sonic isolation is not quite so high—no doubt because of the rear venting of the driver housings, which allow some ambient sound to reach the listener via the Heil membranes. Yet isolation is far higher than in typical “open-air” vented designs. The cord extends to some 14 feet and coils up neatly, without tangling, when tension is removed.

This is, of course, the first use of an Air Motion Transformer to cover the full frequency range, headphones being a more logical choice for this new application than loudspeakers because of the smaller quantities of air that must be moved at low frequencies. In our view, however, and despite excellent dynamic range, the design does not achieve the exceptionally flat, uncolored reproduction that admirers of the Heil driver principle (among which we must admit to numbering ourselves) may have thought within reach. Still, the Mk. 1 demonstrates that the Heil principle does work for headphones—and well enough to give all but the best of the competition a tussle.

Sonus Blue Label Cartridge

Comment: The Sonus cartridges—Green (spherical-stylus), Red (elliptical), and Blue (Multiradial Label)—bear a familial relationship that is more intimate than that of most product lines, for they are in reality a single cartridge body that can be equipped with different stylus assemblies depending upon the intended application. Since the Green and Red versions ($88 and $104, respectively) are meant for playing only conventional two-channel and matrixed-quad discs, where a cartridge is customarily used with a 47,000-ohm load, majority rule seems to have prevailed, and the CD-4 version optimally requires the same load, except that the recommended shunt capacitance is reduced from 400 to less than 250 picofarads. The unit is relatively insensitive to the slight mismatch that occurs when it is loaded with 100,000 ohms, the impedance rating of the standard CD-4 demodulator input. CBS labs used the recommended load for its tests, something we were not able to do for CD-4 listening.

With a vertical tracking force of 1 gram (the midpoint of the range from ¾ to 1¾ grams prescribed by the manufacturer) the cartridge tracks well. A high-level sweep tone between 20 Hz and 20 kHz, the traditional “torture test,” can be tracked at ¾ gram. But since improvements in frequency response and separation are evident when the tracking force is 1¾ grams, that value was used in most of the tests. Frequency response is flat within ±1 dB from 20 Hz to 15 kHz. The fairly sharp peak present in the carrier range at about 35 kHz has a slight effect in the audible range, raising the response at 20 kHz by 1½ dB. The match between the two channels is excellent—they never differ by more than 1 dB. Channel separation, while setting no records, is very consistent, remaining at 20 dB or better right to 20 kHz. In the CD-4 carrier range, minimum separation is about 15 dB, a figure that (as listening tests confirm) is perfectly adequate for quadrophonic playback.

Examination of the square-wave response shows rise and fall times fast enough to cope with musical transients, and, although a good deal of ringing is present (the designers have deliberately left the peak in the carrier range relatively undamped), the frequency at which it occurs is well beyond audibility. The low-frequency resonance (tested in an SME tone arm) is at 7 Hz and appears to be well damped.

The Sonus Blue Label is extraordinarily free of spurious second harmonics. Up to 5 kHz it is in the superior range for all cartridges and is close to the best we have seen in a CD-4 type. Performance in this respect degrades somewhat at higher frequencies but remains very good. IM distortion is in the ball park for a high-quality pickup. Sensitivity is about average among the cartridges we have tested.

At its best the sound of the Sonus Blue Label is attractive indeed. To a surprising degree, the cartridge is capable of resolving complex orchestral textures into individual instruments, both in two- and four-channel reproduction. The sound is crisp, clear, and clean right through the upper midrange. At the frequencies of the highest orchestral fundamentals a certain edginess begins to creep in. This may well be evident chiefly by contrast with the excellent performance of the unit at lower frequencies, for in a direct A/B comparison with a highly respected two-channel cartridge little difference between the two could be detected. This cartridge certainly merits serious consideration by the quadriphile and would be a good choice as an all-purpose pickup too.

### Sonus Blue Label Additional Data

- **Maximum tracking levels (1.25 grams VTF; re RIAA 0 VU)**
  - 300 Hz: >12 dB
  - 1 kHz: >9 dB
  - 3 kHz: >8 dB
  - 10 kHz: >5 dB

- **Output (for 5 cm/sec groove velocity)**
  - L ch: 3.6 mV
  - R ch: 3.3 mV

### Marantz Warranty Correction

In the April test report on the Marantz 5420 stereo cassette deck, we stated that it was covered by a three-year warranty. Marantz has written us to correct this information. The warranty, which covers parts and labor, is for two years—still generous for a tape deck, but not as generous as we had been led to suppose.

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CIRCLE 131 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Comment: Vac-O-Rec is a device that in its general outlines resembles a large upright plastic clam with a knob (to turn it on and off) and an AC power cord. The user is directed to insert the disc to be cleaned into a slot in the top of the unit after the power has been turned on, leave it there for at least thirty seconds, and remove it with a right-to-left motion before turning the power off. The disc is now ready for playing. For best results, cleaning should be performed before and after each playing.

The motor inside the Vac-O-Rec drives the edge of the record and rotates it between a set of mohair-fiber brushes that sweep microscopic dust particles from the grooves, to be sucked up and blown away by the fan. Accumulated static is conducted to ground via a series of aluminized Mylar strips that bear gently on the disc surface. The instructions call for cleaning of the mohair bristles after every six discs (using a small brush that is provided and with the unit running), but we got better results by cleaning after each use.

The manufacturer claims that a new record treated regularly with this system will undergo no long-term deterioration from dust accumulation. Since this is difficult to check, we sought to determine whether the device is, in fact, capable of removing dust and, through static reduction, keeping the disc dust-free long enough for it to be played.

We trotted out one of our used but (relatively) well-kept test records and measured the noise level in an unmodulated groove, using such filtering as necessary to eliminate the effects of rumble. This level of noise was approximately 50 dB below the RIAA 0 VU, a less-than-great S/N ratio. Next the disc was processed in the Vac-O-Rec for about one minute and the noise level measured again. It had dropped to -52½ dB—a small but significant improvement.

We could not make a direct, quantitative check of the static left on the disc, but we reasoned that a heavily charged record exposed to normal room air would attract enough microdust to show some increase in noise level. Accordingly, we left the disc out on the turntable for about five minutes and checked the noise again. It had not increased, indicating that the record was reasonably free of static. We proceeded next to clean the Vac-O-Rec itself, just in case the bristles had become contaminated, and repeated the cleaning of the disc. The small residue of dust that remained after the first cleaning was noticeably fainter, and the noise level dropped to -53½ dB.

One should at this point take a closer look at the noise found on the surface of a disc. It can be divided into two components, which will be characterized as: 1) an essentially continuous hiss that fluctuates slightly, and 2) intermittent, high-amplitude spikes. Our measurements concentrated on the former, although we kept a rough count of the spikes.

As a point of comparison, we next treated the disc with a widely used and well-respected wet-cleaning device. To our surprise, the noise level increased to -51½ dB and the number of spikes increased significantly. Another run through the Vac-O-Rec, however, reduced the noise to -54½ dB, the best reading we were to achieve, and eliminated most of the spikes. Quite frankly, we cannot explain this apparent synergism between the two methods, nor do we suggest that it always will occur.

But we have established that Vac-O-Rec removes dust from records and makes the surfaces quieter. Our reductions in noise were modest, but then our test record was not very dirty to begin with. A dirtier disc should show a bigger improvement. The way in which the unit handles the discs is quite gentle. (There has been a significant improvement in this respect since the first samples we examined about two years ago.) We suspect that even those who are persnickety about record care will find the few dB of noise reduction they can get with this device well worth the effort—and the very reasonable price.
I never thought I'd get sentimental over a mule, but if it wasn't for Sugar's cool head and sure foot, I wouldn't be here today.

This little adventure actually started when Pioneer began wondering what would happen if they designed an FM car stereo to high fidelity standards.

Well, they turned their engineers loose on the project and now, after two years of research and testing, the Supertuners are here. Four of them. With built-in cassette or 8-track.

They have a 1.8 dB capture ratio to grab elusive signals. 12 dBf useable sensitivity for less noise. Muting to cut out that garbage between stations. And a local/distance switch to pick up what you do want and block out what you don't want.

With something this special, you gotta dream up a special test. So we took a Supertuner to a place where reception is really rotten. The Grand Canyon.

Right on the rim, 65 miles from the nearest FM station, Supertuner sounded like it does in a showroom.

The other models we brought along were rattling off static and background noise. Even at 75 feet below the rim, Supertuner was still sounding great.

I can't give you test results for other spots along the trail because we ran into a blizzard with 50 mile-an-hour winds and I figured it was curtains for all of us.

Now I'm absolutely convinced of two things. Supertuner by Pioneer is the best line of car radios ever built.

And a sure-footed mule is man's best friend.
where QUALITY has been a tradition for over 90 years.

It all started in 1883 in St. Croix, Switzerland where Herman Thorens began production of what was to become the world's renowned Thorens Music Boxes.

For almost a century Thorens has pioneered in many phases of sound reproduction. Thorens introduced a number of industry firsts, a direct drive turntable in 1929, and turntable standards such as the famed Thorens TD 124 Model.

Over its long history Thorens has learned that an exceptional turntable requires a blend of precision, refined strength, and sensitivity. Such qualities are abundantly present in all five Thorens Transcription Turntables. Speaking of quality, with Thorens it's the last thing you have to think about. At Thorens it's always been their first consideration. So if owning the ultimate in a manual turntable is important to you, then owning a Thorens, is inevitable.

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NEW EQUIPMENT
FOR 1977

Forthcoming models offer greater sophistication in the high end,
greater value lower down—and a few things we hadn’t seen before.

by Robert Long and Harold A. Rodgers

If some Rip van Winkle were to awaken this fall after being out of touch with audio for a mere five years, he would find himself in an alien world. He would be hard pressed to discover a familiar gold-anodized faceplate; current circuitry jargon would have little meaning to him; turntables—meaning single-play jobs, though familiar-looking changers would be there too—would sport incomprehensible digital speed readouts or automated selection preprogramming or spidery tone arms or massive (and perhaps transparent) base structures unlike anything he had known; the compact acoustic-suspension loudspeakers would be overshadowed by all sorts of angular shapes whose setbacks represent voice-coil-position phase matching, or by huge flat panels similar to the electrostatics of his youth; and his peers would be examining tape decks designed for something called the Elcaset.

And the prices! Though he could still find familiar-looking equipment at familiar prices, he would note that a new tuner is “only” $1,600, a bargain made possible by removing the frills from a $3,000 design. He would find more loudspeakers in the over-$1,000 class than before. The $100 phono pickup, a premium model when our friend fell asleep, today represents a “good buy” in a fine cartridge. And not only have the prices rocketed for state-of-the-art models in familiar product categories, but a full-function system now might include a myriad of add-ons to fulfill functions that had not even been dreamed of five years ago. There are ambience-simulation systems, dynamic processors, noise reducers, and equalizers—some representing new entries of established companies into old product categories, others representing new concepts.

The high prices that so astonish imply, therefore, equally astonishing capabilities in many instances. If the Van Winkle system were to be built around the same budget for which good moderately priced equipment could have been bought before his sleep, he would find that some of those capabilities have seeped down to his level and have made today’s midpriced componentry, if anything, a better value than it was. Amplifiers are a little beefier with significantly lower distortion, tuners more sensitive and less troubled with noise and distortion, turntables freer from rumble and wow, tape decks flatter and more extended in frequency response than they were at the same price points five years ago. Even the canny fiscal instincts of Rip’s forebears (who bought Manhattan Island for some $24) should be satisfied by such a purchase.

The Electronics . . .

Although premium receivers tend to be bulkier than in past years, and performance and features are being upgraded, most lines retain much of last year’s look. Sansui, Kenwood, Technics, and others have receivers that you wouldn’t spot as new at first glance. But if you compare specs, you’ll find that genuine upgrading has been going on. The Technics SA-5550 that we reviewed last July already is being replaced by the SA-5560. For only about $20 more it offers 19.3 dBW* (85 watts) per channel instead of 17.6 dBW (58 watts), lower rated distortion (0.01% as opposed to 0.03%) in the

Robert Long and Harold A. Rodgers are Audio-Video Editor and Associate Audio-Video Editor of this magazine.

*For more information on the dBW, see the explanatory box in the “Equipment Reports” section.
amplifier section, an added high-blend switch in the FM section (whose omission on the SA-5550 we regretted), and so on. This latest model, it appears, is demonstrably an even better value than the older one, and at only a slightly higher price. Similarly, lines like Nikko and Rotel, for instance, that have traditionally been associated with the more modest price brackets (for example, Harman-Kardon, with its 330c) have added upgraded receivers in the $200–250 bracket.

Similar, lines like Nikko and Rotel, for instance, that have traditionally been associated with the more modest price brackets tend to have new “super” receiver models, while some of the more prestigious names (for example, Harman-Kardon, with its 330c) have added upgraded receivers in the $200–250 bracket.

Some of the lines that stand out by their very newness are Advent (with its first receiver). Fisher (a completely different look, doubtless influenced by its present Japanese ownership, and including everything from compacts to a receiver boasting 150 watts–over 21 dBW–per channel), and B&O, whose utterly unfamiliar-looking Beomaster 1900 is shown on the cover of this issue.

The 1900 is one of the few new receivers to approach the black-look styling that is so much in evidence among separates this year. (Another Scandinavian company, Sonab, has begun selling a black receiver in this country, but it has been available elsewhere for some months.) The most archetypally “professional” (what the black styling is all about) of the new receivers is perhaps Hervic’s new Model HR-250 (digital FM dial, 100 watts–20 dBW–per channel). The black look isn’t new. Sansui has had it for a number of years on some separates, glorified it in the Definition series of separates introduced last year, and has added more in that style this year. Technics has introduced some black high-end Professional series models that have been demonstrated—in prototype—in the past; its parent company, Panasonic, has a few black faceplates even in inexpensive units. Yamaha is offering black-styled options for some previous models and has added the B-2 amp and C-2 preamp to the black separates it introduced in 1975. SAE continues to add black models, including a preamp with a built-in DBX-licensed compander; Quintessence (like SAE, devoted to high-performance separates) has re-emerged under new ownership with all its gold faceplates changed to black.

The most unconventional-looking of the black separates is, perhaps, the Nakamichi Model 620—a low-distortion amp rated at 100 watts per channel and featuring a slanting faceplate that doubles as heat-sinking, into the fins of which are set small lamps to indicate AC-on and output-power levels. But not all companies are going for obviously new styling. Kenwood’s limited-production Professional line of separates is so traditional in appearance that one is tempted to think of it as new wine in old bottles. Scott has made its new receivers and separates more stylish, but without abandoning its high-key silver look. Companies like Dynaco, Sony, Bozak, Dunlap Clarke, BGW, and Great American Sound (an early user of the black look) have dropped new models into their separates lines without taking fresh styling tacks. Audio International has chosen a unique and handsome bronze color—a sort of smoky version of the traditional gold—for the restyled C/M Laboratories separates.

The new GAS preamp, Thoebe, is available with a pre-preamp called Goliath, designed specifically for it to handle low-output moving-coil pickups. (GAS, of course, is the company that named its first amplifier Ampzilla.) The new FET preamp from Infinity also has provision for moving-coil pickups—a feature that is growing in popularity.

There are some new companies in electronics. Analog Engineering Associates of Florida is one. Though it uses the short spelling in its company name, it calls its first product the Analogue 520 stereo preamp. Jennings—the speaker company—is coming out with its first electronic product, called simply The Amp. Another new name is DB Systems. It makes its debut with the DB-1 low-distortion preamp ($350). The company also is coming out with other units and accessories, including an electronic crossover and a pre-preamp for moving-coil pickups.

Amp and preamp circuitry, while benefitting from continual upgrading, this year has no major innovation comparable to Class D operation or the introduction of vertical FETs to boast about. There are some new Class A power amps from Stax (sold here by American Audiopoint) and Mark

NEW EQUIPMENT ON OUR COVER
1) JVC TT-101 direct-drive turntable with digital speed read-out; 2) Nakamichi Model 620 power amplifier; 3) Sennheiser HD-400 stereo headphones; 4) DBX Model 128 expander/compressor audio/tape/disc processor; 5) Teac 860 Dolby/DBX cassette deck, one of the new Esoteric series; 6) Sony EL-7 Elcaset deck, with remote-control unit; 7) Crown International EQ-2 equalizer; 8) B&O Beomaster 1900 receiver; 9) Allison Acoustics Allison Four loudspeaker; 10) Akai GXC-560D cassette deck.
Super preamps get superer. SAE Model 2111 has "parametric equalizer," DBX-compatible compander, calibrated volume.

The ultimate equalizer? In addition to frequency sliders, Technics SH-9090P adjusts center frequencies, contour.

Levinson (a huge amp when one considers its 15-watt—under 12 dBW—rating, but one that is designed for maximum accuracy of reproduction, not raw power). Hitachi has introduced—in a receiver—its Series E circuit, which essentially is designed to add instantaneous headroom so that the music performance of a "big" amp can be achieved without its continuous power rating or cost. One circuit innovation of sorts is the announcement by both Dynaco and Lux of new tubed mono amplifiers—intended primarily for sound-reinforcement and similar applications.

And one final—and again relatively cosmetic—note before we leave the subject of amps and preamps: Stepped controls seem to be as much of a trend as black faceplates. Product after product, including receivers, has a stepped (or at least detented) volume control, often calibrated in 2-dB steps. This increment seems to be the smallest one might ever want, and the calibration gives the user a greater quantitative grasp of how he’s using his system. The approach also is applied to tone and other controls on some models. Whether buyers will consider such a feature important or merely technological window-dressing remains to be seen. It seems to us a nice touch that we easily could do without.

Tuners have innovations too. Phase Linear has announced its first tuner, the Model 5000, which incorporates a dynamic expander to counteract the type of compression regularly used by FM broadcasters. Lux has added a digital model that gives frequency readout both in numbers and in terms of position on the dial—and therefore in imitation of the conventional pointer. Sherwood’s $2,000 digital model, the Micro/CPU, uses the alphanumeric display not only for the actual call letters of tuned stations, but (in conjunction with a preprogrammed servicing computer device) also for internal measurements that a repair shop can use for troubleshooting if the tuner should misbehave. Sequerra has taken the basic circuitry of the Model 1, cut out the whole oscilloscope section, and called the resulting “budget” ($1,600) version the Model 2.

...And Add-Ons

What might be called the accessory-electronics department continues its well-paced march on stardom; the graphic equalizer now commands center stage. With no dearth of such units currently on the market, six prestigious manufacturers have conceived new designs, some with highly ingenious features. The Dynaco Octave Equalizer, a two-channel unit with ten bands per channel, is one of the simpler models. Yet it is equipped with switching that can handle two sources, one of them usable in tape recording. Crown’s EQ-2 has eleven bands per channel with provisions for adjusting the center frequency of each band. It is possible to cascade the two channels to form a full mono half-octave equalizer. Crown also throws in traditional tone controls equipped with variable turnover points; once these have been used to achieve good over-all balance, the octave sliders can address themselves to the fine points.

The ADC-500 from Audio Dynamics Corporation uses twelve bands per channel and has switching arrangements similar to those of the Dynaco. It is also provided with a pair of level meters. The Luxman 5G-12 from Lux Audio also uses twelve bands, but these are individually adjustable for wide or narrow bandpass. An additional control chooses between 10-dB and 2-dB maximum boost or cut, or defeats the unit entirely. Soundcraftsmen has a new consumer-oriented model, the RP-2204, and the elaborate SH-9090P from Technics, designed largely for professional use, has evolved at last to market stage. This model, also equipped with twelve bands, has provisions for adjusting the center frequency of each band by up to one octave and the selectivity—that is, the "sharpness" of the filtering—by a factor of ten.

Several new electronic crossovers are or are about to become available. ESS has two models—one, with a fixed crossover frequency, is meant for use with a pair of ESS AMT-1a Monitor speakers; the other, with adjustable frequencies, is suitable...
One model bucking current styling trends is clean, understated Advent Model 300, the company's first receiver.

Another is the Luxman A-2003 three-way electronic crossover, offering switchable 6- and 12-dB per octave filter slopes.

Bronze, not black, has been adopted for C/M Labs line; note handles, suggesting rack mounting, common on new separates.

for stereo biamplification or mono triamplification. A stereo bi- or triamplification system from Lux Audio (designed around vacuum tubes) must be ordered with the crossover points desired by the user, although plug-in modules are available for conversion to other frequencies. The unit includes controls for fine frequency selection, slope, and level. The Accuphase F-5 (available through Teac) works for stereo triamplification and can be converted to biamplification. It allows the user to choose from sixteen crossover points with adjustable slopes.

Just three matrix decoders were introduced this year, but all are notable. The Sansui QSD-2 is a consumer version of the company's advanced Vario-Matrix decoder that includes the capability of synthesizing quad from two-channel sources as well as decoding QS and SQ records. Four-channel pioneer Peter Scheiber has joined with Deltek, Inc., to make the Model One, a parametric "superdecoder" for SQ-encoded material and promising channel separation on the order of 35 dB, with ambience-recovery and surround-synthesis circuitry as well. And a Vario-Matrix decoder in kit form is being introduced by Photolume.

The DBX line now includes the Model 128, which contains an adjustable compression/expansion system designed to alter the dynamic range of program material and a noise-reduction system for tape recording or playback of encoded tapes and discs. The two sections are arranged so that they can be used in any order.

An LED peak indicator, the new Luxman 5E24, is used for monitoring the output of power amps and preamps. It has an amplifier range from -17 to +26 dBW (0.02 to 400 watts) and a preamp range from 24 millivolts to 1 volt.

Incidentally, the second hottest category of add-ons (after equalizers) appears to be devices for simulating or recovering hall ambience via a second pair of speakers. We have had a recent rash of product introductions in this area, and more are planned, though we know of none that will be brand-new this fall. (Next month we plan to offer a comparative evaluation of four such devices.)

Turntables and Pickups

The big news in turntables is not exactly news. ADC's Accutrac system (see "News and Views," June 1976) for band-by-band preselection of disc contents is the most obvious departure from conventional designs in many years. The 4000 was first announced last spring, and a second, less expensive Model 3000 is promised for the coming winter season.

Less obviously ground-breaking is the Micro Seiki DDX-1000. The Micro line (handled in this country briefly by Tannoy), like the Kensonic/Accuphase line, now is sold here by a special sales branch of Teac of America. (Teac, Micro, and Kenisonic all are separate companies in Japan.) The DDX-1000 is the premier Micro model, a massive direct-drive turntable that sits on three adjustable "pods" (vibration-damping, height-adjustable feet), each of which can hold a separate tone-arm mounting bracket. You can thus fit it with as many as three separate tone arms. If you like to A/B pickups or are very fussy about which pickups you use with which records, this is for you. But though its servo drive theoretically makes any rotation speed possible, only two (33 and 45) are provided, with about 6% adjustment range in either direction. (A company spokesman hints that a wider range—to 78 and beyond—might eventually be available to accommodate perfectionist old-record buffs, to whom the multiple-arm option also is important; but while we can hope the hint has substance, we wouldn't suggest that collectors wait around for it to appear on the market.)
similar tack with its new "manual turntable"-changers. At least, is so firmly associated with high-performance sales-is clearly focused in the single-play turntable (ultra-automated though it is, the Accusor BD-3, also a three-speed belt-drive unit, enters the market at $200, including base, dust cover, and a newly designed arm). KRE finds that the most impressive unit is the belt-drive L-90. Automated features are included in some of the new models. The only "new" unit with widely variable speed is the Fons CQ-30, recently reintroduced here via Audio Dimensions, Weston, Ont., Canada. And the Connoisseur BD-3, also a three-speed belt-drive unit, now is available from Hervic ($200, including base, dust cover, and a newly designed arm).

Since we have yet to mention a single record changer (ultra-automated though it is, the Accutrac will handle only one disc at a time), it would appear that the pizzazz—if not nearly all the sales—is clearly focused in the single-play turntables this year. Dual seems to agree. Of its three new models, all are single-play, making only half of its eight-model 1977 line changers. This is astonishing for a company that, in this country, at least, is so firmly associated with high-performance changers.

BIC would, at first glance, seem to be taking a similar tack with its new "manual turntable"—Model 920 ($80). That’s not what BIC means by "manual," however; the word is there, apparently, simply to suggest that this belt-drive changer can be used manually if you choose. We understand that the semantic curiosity—one of many that turntable buyers have been treated to over the years—will be continued for another, far more sophisticated changer that BIC has yet to announce.

Garrard does have a new single-play unit: the DC-servo direct-drive DD-75 ($230). Its handsome appearance is perhaps more in the tradition of Japanese than British design. The other new Garrard is the GT-55, a changer with Garrard’s tangent-tracking articulated arm ($250 plus housing). It has a DC-servo belt drive and variable cueing rate, making it unique as a record-playing concept. Harman-Kardon also has added a tangent-tracking model, incidentally, though the new Rabco ST-6 model is essentially a somewhat lower-cost variant of the single-play ST-7 announced last year.

If there is a trend in pickups, it seems to be toward moving-coil models with high enough output that they need no pre-preamp. BGW announced one earlier this year: Supereex has begun selling the Satin M-117 series. One of the Satin models (M-117X, $190) has a Shibata-type stylus—the sort often thought of as a CD4 stylus—but is rated for the standard stereo loading of 47,000 ohms. While this would, a year or two ago, have appeared a contradiction in terms, it may now represent another trend: toward treating the Shibata and quasi-Shibata configurations simply as superior styli for any record, rather than as designs engineered for, above all, the playing of Quadradiscs. The new Shure M-24H—the company’s first Quadradisc cartridge, be it noted—does not follow this approach; it’s designed specifically to work into the standard 100,000 ohms of CD-4 demodulators.

AKG has introduced a line of phono cartridges whose novel Transversal Suspension System is claimed to contribute high resolution to the stereo image. And a new Goldring cartridge is available through Hervic for $120.

Tape Equipment

By far the biggest news in this field is the appearance of the Elcaset (see “News and Views,” July ’76). Though the companies involved in equipment for the new format admit that they don’t know exactly how its market will shape up—what sorts of recordists will be interested in it, for what purposes, at what prices, and with what features—they are eager to demonstrate their respective prototypes to a curious (if not altogether convinced) world. The Elcasetems themselves will not be cheap; about $9.00 for a 45-minute length (or, in the new usage, an LC-45) is one price we’ve heard quoted.
putting the tape more or less in the ball park of open reels, though without the high transport speeds—and presumably, therefore, extra recorded quality—of reels. (The Elcasets are used—at least for the present—only at 3¾ ips.)

Nor are the decks cheap. Superscope, which is introducing two Sony models this fall, has prices squarely in typical open-reel territory: $700 and $900. They look very much like slightly oversize cassette decks and obviously are intended for similar home use, though of course their electromechanical sophistication is considerably beyond that of the typical home cassette deck.

Some of the sophistication built into the Elcaset system is not present in the Sony decks, however; there are a number of mechanical switches for functions that the Elcaset can handle automatically. Teac's prototype deck omits the switches in favor of totally automatic operation; Technics' deck adds a memory bank to make use of the cue-tone indexing feature for preprogramming the sequence in which selections are played back. But neither the Teac nor the Technics is yet scheduled for production; and while it seems obvious that they will cost well over $1,000 if they were to be offered for sale, precise selling prices will have to wait upon final designs.

Conventional cassette equipment is represented by a landslide of models, many front loading. The front-cover Teac deck (the Model 860, to be introduced in the new Esoteric series of high-end specialty products) is the first to give the user the option of either Dolby or DBX noise reduction—via a single switch that also has an OFF position. Both systems therefore cannot be used simultaneously (as some readers have said they would like to do for maximum conceivable S/N ratios), but in our opinion this would be neither useful nor desirable. The 860 is loaded with features, including a four-input all-panpot mixer and a speed control that can easily be returned to the factory setting, and will cost more than $1,000.

Akai, whose cassette line has fewer models than in some past years but seems more precisely aimed at the real needs of real (not reel) recordists, has built a couple of novelties into the Model GXC-560D, which also is feature-laden. The more esoteric controls are hidden behind a motorized smoked panel that lifts at the touch of a button. While this is purely cosmetic, one of the controls behind the panel is a fast-wind speed adjustment that allows you to be as gentle or as zippy in tape handling as you want—a nice touch. Hitachi also has a nice touch in its D-800, a front-loader with separate recording and playback headgaps: An illuminated block schematic on the front panel changes with the switching to show signal routing through the unit, so you never are in doubt about what you are monitoring or what the deck is doing.

Unconventional European touch in black. The Lenco C-2003 is first of type for this manufacturer on the U.S. market.

NAB reels are where it's at: This is Uher's entry (also in black), the omega-drive, logic-controlled Model SG-630.

On this and other new over-$400 models, Dolby-level adjustments are making a front-panel reappearance, following several years during which they had been hidden. While Dolby Labs itself had urged the latter course, which admittedly prevents inadvertent gross misadjustment, we continue to believe that hiding the controls did a disservice to the serious and knowledgeable recordist and therefore welcome their reappearance in equipment intended for this sort of user.

Another idea that has reappeared is the Lenco
cassette changer. The PAC-10 (about $580) holds ten cassettes and is suggested for background music systems as well as home use. Far more sophisticated is the $700 three-head, two-motor Model C-2003, which features touchplate (rather than mechanical) switching and very European black styling. The Lenco products are now distributed here by Uher of America, whose Uher products also have had black styling for many years. Its latest Uher model, the over-$1,000 CG-362, is similar to the CG-360 but is a true deck (without the monitor amplifier of the 360). It continues the black styling—as do the CG-320 (a relatively compact home deck) and the CR-210 (the most recent of Uher's extremely compact cassette portables).

Yamaha has a new model with the Bellini (trapezoidal cross-section) styling: the $310 TC-800D, which has a little less flexibility than the TC-800CL but otherwise is interchangeable with it at a lower price. Yamaha also has brought out a conventional front-loader, the $260 TC-511S. And Dual, in the under-$450 C-919, has added a deck without the bidirectional drive of its more expensive first deck.

The field continues to grow, too, in cassette portables. Teac (again, in the Esoteric series) is introducing the PC-10 as its competitor in the high-performance field. Nakamichi has added a "little brother" to its 550 portable: the $350 Model 350. It resembles the recently introduced Model 250 automotive playback unit but will record as well. Both a shoulder carrying case and an automotive mounting bracket are available for it.

As contrasted with the many interesting (though not always particularly unusual) cassette decks scheduled for introduction, there are very few eight-track cartridge decks of any description being brought out. Nor is there a great deal of news in open-reel equipment. Both Teac and Akai are adding models with four-channel track-syncing; other companies confirm the continuing interest in this sort of equipment. Uher has adopted the sophisticated "omega" drive system from videotape equipment in its new SG-630 NAB-reel deck, which costs $1,100. It appears, therefore, that the cassette has won the popularity contest for those areas of home recording where it is competent to operate, leaving the field beyond its competence to the open reel. Whether the Elcaset can find a big enough chink between these two to carve out a market of its own—or whether it will have to look to other than home uses for support—remains to be seen.

There are many new mixers to gladden the hearts of those who like to roll their own recordings—though some of the units turn out, on close inspection, to be more appropriate to disco use than to recording. Russound, in what probably is its most complex product to date, has the PM-12-4, a 12-in, 4-out quadrifonic job with both front/back and left/right panpots for each channel. Sony has added the MX-510, a stylish 5-in, 2-out portable model. Teac, besides expanding its Tascam line of professional accessories, has a sort of miniconsole mount that holds the popular Model 2 Mixer (6-in, 4-out) plus an array of meters, whose omission from the Model 2 itself was regretted by some users.

Some new tape types have been announced. Ampex is introducing the Plus series in all blank-tape formats. It is described as an extra-low-noise/high-output tape for the serious recordist, though in cassettes, for example, 20/20+ remains the company's premier ferric formulation. In open reels, an erstwhile professional-only formulation—Grand Master—will fill that role since it now is being made available through regular retailers. Memorex, too, has added a top open-reel formulation: Quantum, which the company says is no less than the best tape available today to the serious recordist.

The Listening End

Speakers, long reputed to be one of the weak links in the audio chain, seem to have reached a mature level of technology where careful and exacting design, rather than dramatic new breakthroughs, is advancing the state of the art. The cone-type dynamic driver is still king and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future, although the more exotic types of drivers appear to be holding their own. Speaker systems are available with distortion figures that invoke territory hitherto owned by electronics. Crossover networks are now recognized as critical components in the frequency and phase response of the system, and many of them are being designed by computer. And linear phase response has progressed from an item of controversy to an important desideratum of an accurate transducer.

As might be expected, most of the technological innovation is at the high end of the market. The Quantum Line Source, available from Infinity for about $1,100, is (surprisingly) totally non-electrostatic, using an array of samarium-cobalt tweeters and the Infinity/Watkins dual-drive woofer, a design with two voice coils to which power is apportioned by a special network. At close to the same price point, RTR has reintroduced its quasi-electrostatic model DR-1, now featuring a tandem-drive woofer system (using a 12-inch internal-firing driver in addition to the pair of 10-inch drivers that work into the listening space) designed for transient response that matches that of the electrostatic drivers. Andromeda III, a panel-type system from Phase Linear with a separate subwoofer module for the very low bass, uses cone drivers throughout and has (naturally) extraordinary power-handling capability.
Manufacturers have been expanding existing lines—often concentrating on the high end. ESS, for example, has moved a step closer to a full-range Heil driver with the AMT-1a Monitor, which goes down to 850 Hz before crossing over to a cone woofer and is also suitable for biamplification. BIC has added Formula 5 and Formula 7 to its Venturi series, both with amplifier clipping indicators and Dynamic Tonal Balance Compensation, which automatically adjusts frequency response for varying listening levels. Bertagni Electroacoustic Systems has likewise expanded its pistonless Geostatic concept upward with Model d-110 and filled a gap with Model d-75.

Expanding their lines downward, Nakamichi Research and C/M Laboratories have introduced new models—the former a home version of the Reference Monitor, and the latter the CM-10, which incorporates the same servo feedback as the CM-15a. The feedback-speaker idea remains very much alive. Philips has added another model, while Acoustique 3A International (a North American offshoot of the French company) continues to build its organization for distribution here of its line of speakers—feedback and otherwise.

Yamaha has a $250 bookshelf model that sports a beryllium dome tweeter, and Sansui's latest offering features newly designed drivers and speaker stands that are included at no extra cost. Bookshelf designs continue in copious supply, with two new models each from Technics and EPI. And Altec Lansing has a whole new line of bookshelf speakers that, at low to medium prices, complements its higher-cost floor-standing line—which has undergone some redesign and added a member.

KEF of Great Britain (which designs for accurate impulse response rather than steady-state anechoic measurements) is offering domesticated versions of its Reference series. I M Fried of Philadelphia, committed to a similar testing philosophy, has several new models that claim very high output capability in addition to accuracy. IMF International, an independent British company originally founded by Fried, has introduced models in the middle and low end of its line. The new series of Tannoy loudspeakers is cosmetically consistent from top to bottom and is based on a series of coaxial drivers that differ principally in size.

Allison Acoustics has come up with the Allison Three, which uses half the drivers of the Allison One but sounds about the same, thanks to 3 dB of extra room loading provided by its mandatory corner location. The Allison Four, also new, secures the low end of the line. ADS has moved upward with its Model 910, a moderately large, three-way system that is available with an optional stand. Polar response and concomitant stereo imaging are important in the design of the Anthem Array, the latest model from Audioanalyst. Jennings already is moving beyond the Contrara Vector One, offered last summer, with more models.

In addition to filling the space between Interface A and its Sentry, Electro-Voice has reintroduced its component drivers aimed at home constructors—a group that, it finds, has been growing in recent months. JBL, in addressing the same market, has added prefabricated enclosures to its kit line.

Jensen Sound Laboratories, along with three new stereo headphone models, has launched its Spectrum series, a prestige line of speakers meant for home use. Sennheiser's new headphone line includes an open, on-the-ear type and a sealed model intended for monitoring live recording and for use where feedback is a problem. A new series of phones from Koss is intended specifically for the fussy home listener, and Infinity has the Model ES-1, a high-end electrostatic headphone system.

So there's our once-over of the new products. It's hardly a model-by-model account—there are far too many for that—but, rather, a sort of picking out of highlights. The detailed exploration we'll have to leave to you. Enjoy it!
Two leading hi-fi magazines working independently tested a wide variety of cassettes. In both tests, TDK SA clearly outperformed the other premium priced cassettes.

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by Royal S. Brown

An Interview with

Bernard Herrmann
(1911-1975)

In a Hollywood studio, where Bernard Herrmann had been supervising his soundtrack music for Martin Scorsese's Taxi Driver, it had been suggested that the recording be finished on another day. Herrmann insisted, however, that it be completed. That night, on Christmas Eve 1975, Herrmann died.

In the 1930s and 1940s, as a conductor and programmer, he was one of the most important figures in the U.S. in bringing music to mass audiences, via radio. A friend of Charles Ives, George Gershwin, and others in the musical world, Herrmann offered over the airwaves first performances of numerous works, at least one of which—the Gershwin Variations on "I Got Rhythm"—was written especially for him. But his activity as a conductor slackened for a while. Only in the late Sixties did it pick up again, via another instrument of mass communication, the long-playing record, to which he was as fully committed as he had been to radio. And if the composer/conductor no longer championed what might be called "new" music, he recorded several works, including the Gershwin Variations and the Ives Second Symphony, with which he had a ground-floor acquaintance shared by few conductors. Furthermore, in the last years of his life Herrmann became deeply involved in the recording of film music.

It was, of course, as a composer of film scores that Herrmann gained much of his reputation. Orson Welles, who had worked with him on the famous Mercury Theater radio program, insisted that he do the score for Citizen Kane (1940), an amazingly rich first cinematic endeavor for both director and composer. Herrmann caught the young Welles at the height of his talents and also scored the brilliant Magnificent Ambersons in 1942. And what many consider to be the apex of Alfred Hitchcock's career occurred during the period of Herrmann's association with him, starting in 1955 with The Trouble with Harry and ending in apparent rancor in 1964 with Marnie (although a decade later Hitchcock was still publicly praising Herrmann's contributions to his films). Then Herrmann's musical voice all but disappeared from the American cinema for almost a decade.

Ironically, the film world did begin to rediscover him a few years before his death. The first major revival on these shores came via a Hitchcock homage in Brian de Palma's Sisters (1973). He also worked on another De Palma film, Obsession (Déjà Vu in Europe), starring Cliff Robertson and Geneviève Bujold and still unreleased. (London was to have issued his recording of the latter score in early August.)

When Herrmann was in Manhattan in August 1975 to supervise the dubbing of the music tracks for Obsession, I had a chance to talk with him. He was particularly excited about his recordings, both those he had made and those he had intended to make. In addition to the discs released since this interview, for example, Herrmann had planned to record his The Kentuckian and The Endless Night for the Entr'acte Recording Society. He called the latter score, for a recent British film based on an Agatha Christie novel and directed by Sidney Gilliat, a "musical decoy," since with its seascape overture it "leads you to believe you're seeing a romance, but you're not. You're seeing a cold-blooded murderer at work. You can't believe this lush, romantic music accompanies such an evil person."

Although born in the U.S. in 1911, Herrmann had been living in London for about ten years, and I first asked him whether he had chosen that city because of its cultural life.

B.H.: No, I like it. And I can make records there. Where can I make records here? No place. My last album there (["The Mysterious Film World of Bernard Herrmann"]) I had 120 musicians. That would never be done here. You can't make that sound ex-
cept—by the way, you know this terrible record called the complete Citizen Kane [on United Artists]? That's a fake. It's none of my music, it's not the orchestra.... I think it's maybe a sixteen-piece orchestra. It's vulgar. This guy [LeRoy Holmes] never even approached me. Well, Decca [London] will do a complete Kane. With Joan Sutherland singing the arias. She wants to do it. I'm trying to get Orson [Welles]. I spoke to him on the phone; he said he'd introduce the record. He'd say a text, a few words, before the music.

R.S.B.: Is there a possibility of your scoring a new Welles film?

B.H.: I doubt it. Well, I can't worry about that. I don't think there's any chance of my doing a film with him—or Hitchcock.

R.S.B.: Was the Hitchcock break basically the doing of producers who decided you wanted a pop composer?

B.H.: No, it's Hitchcock. He just wanted pop stuff, and I said, “No, I'm not interested.” I told him, “Hitch, what's the use of my doing more with you? Your pictures, your mathematics, three zeros. My mathematics, quite different.” So it meant forget about it; I said, “I had a career before, and I will afterwards. Thank you.”

R.S.B.: Was he doing it mainly for commercial reasons?

B.H.: Well, he said he was entitled to a great pop tune. I said, “Look, Hitch, you can't outjump your own shadow. And you don't make pop pictures. What do you want with me? I don't write pop music.” It's a mistake, I feel. Because he only finishes a picture 60%. I have to finish it for him. But he wasn't happy. I always tell the story: A composer writes a score for a picture, and he gives it life. Like a fellow goes to a doctor, says, “I'm dying,” and the doctor cures him. Then the doctor says, “Aren't you pleased? I cured you.” And the fellow says, “Yeah, that's right, but you didn't make me rich, did you?”

R.S.B.: In your earlier pictures with Hitchcock, you must have had a certain rapport.

B.H.: But he wasn't then working for Universal. He became a different man. They made him very rich, and they recalled it to him.

R.S.B.: Are there any directors you would like to have worked with but never had the chance? Directors with whom you might have had a fruitful collaboration?

B.H.: Well, I was supposed to do William Wyler's The Collector. But he backed out. Says: “I don't want to use a Hitch man.”

R.S.B.: There are a few scores, such as Alex North's 2001 or Henry Mancini's Frenzy, that were commissioned, composed, and even recorded for the music tracks and then never used in the movie.

B.H.: I know about one can, about Mancini. Hitch came to the recording session, listened a while, and said, “Look, if I want Herrmann, I'd ask Herrmann. Where's Mancini?” He wanted a pop score, and Mancini wrote quasi what he thought was me. And you know what? Hitchcock told Ron Goodwin, who did the final score for Frenzy, that he thought his was the greatest score ever written.

R.S.B.: Have you ever written a score that hasn't been used?

B.H.: Yes, Torn Curtain.

R.S.B.: Really? Did Hitchcock even listen to the score?

B.H.: Only the overture. But he wanted the pop tune. It's a shame—it was a good score. I used sixteen horns and eight flutes, among other things. I think he resented the importance of the role my music played in his films. I want to make a record of scores never used. I want to do Antony and Cleopatra of Arthur Bliss, that he wrote for Korda, that he never used; I want to do Torn Curtain; I want to do William Walton's Battle of Britain. It would be an interesting record.

R.S.B.: It would be a fascinating one. Perhaps you could also do a sequel and include the North 2001.
B.H.: I don't know it, but I'll ask North. Well, they spoke to me to do it for them, but I said to Kubrick, "No, if you want me to do it, I'll do it for double my fees, two pictures." Like this guy doing The Exorcist [William Friedkin]. I was going to use an organ, and he said, "I don't want any Catholic music."

R.S.B.: I hear that Friedkin wanted to have equal billing with you for the music.

B.H.: Yes, that he composed it with me.

R.S.B.: What do you think about the use of already existing classical music in a film?


R.S.B.: When you do a film, it's very obviously inspired by what you know of the film itself.

B.H.: Well, cinema music is the cinema. That's part of making the picture, not something that's put in later. I mean, I was just telling Brian [de Palma] today about Obsession—I don't really remember writing it, I was so carried away with the picture. I don't know. I used to write at four o'clock in the morning—it just all came to me, I don't know where from. And I identified with the girl, you know, how she felt it. This I did in a month. It's a very strange picture, a very beautiful picture, very different for me. It's all about time. Has a Proustian, Henry Jamesian feeling to it. The only other score I ever felt this way about was The Ghost and Mrs. Muir; there's the same feeling of aloneness, of solitude. And the [Obsession] score is very different. I use voices—four sopranos and four altos—and that's not done in film scores. The voices are used to delineate the time zones. And I use an organ. Nobody uses an organ in film scores.

R.S.B.: It's quite obvious that in all your music there is a very strong emotional involvement. Reading things that you've written or said in interviews, I notice you keep using words such as "instinct," "unconscious," "emotion."

B.H.: That's funny. Rossini had a talk with Wagner. He says, "I don't have genius, like you do, but I have lots of intuition."

R.S.B.: You've also said that, ideally, film music should be based on phrases no longer than a second or two.

B.H.: I think a short phrase has certain advantages. Because I don't like the leitmotif system. The short phrase is easier to follow for audiences, who listen with only half an ear. Don't forget that the best they do is half an ear. I don't like themes. You know, the reason I don't like this tune business is that a tune has to have eight or sixteen bars, which limits a composer. Once you start, you've got to finish—eight or sixteen bars. Otherwise the audience doesn't know what the hell it's all about.

R.S.B.: Perhaps the only place where a tune might really be in place is in the title shots.

B.H.: That's a different story. Did you see Alice Doesn't Live Here Any More? It starts out very funny. The way Martin Scorsese did it was wonderful. It has to do with the drama. I don't mind if it's related to something that makes sense. Take Mean Streets. Scorsese did Mean Streets like an Italian opera.

R.S.B.: You also always seem to have an instrumental conception of every picture you do.

B.H.: Always. Color is very important. This whole rubbish of other people orchestrating your music is so wrong. . . I always tell them, "Listen, boys, I'll give you the first page of the Lohengrin Prelude with all the instruments marked. You write it out. I bet you won't come within 50% of Wagner." To orchestrate is like a thumbprint. I can't understand having someone else do it. It would be like someone putting color to your paintings.

R.S.B.: I've read statements by several film composers that they have often taken the particular voice, the particular character of an actor or actress into consideration in writing a film score. To take a hypothetical situation: Suppose Hitchcock had used Vera Miles in Vertigo, as he wanted to, instead of Kim Novak. Would your score have been different in certain parts?

B.H.: No, because the thing was the drive of the emotions. I felt Vertigo made one big mistake. They should have never made it in San Francisco. And not with Jimmy Stewart. I don't think he was right for the part. I don't believe that he would be that wild about any woman. It should have had an actor like Charles Boyer. It should have been left in New Orleans, or in a hot, sultry climate. When I wrote the picture, I thought of that. When I do a film, if I don't like it, I go back to the origins.

R.S.B.: You mean you go back to the novel or the play?

B.H.: That's right. I always have done that.

R.S.B.: There does seem to be, these days, a renaissance of interest in the truly good composers.

B.H.: The trouble is, good composers, when they do a film, for some reasons or other, they're brain-
washed, and they write rubbish. They're afraid to write. The only one who isn't is Copland. But generally they say, "Well, this year, the Hollywood style, let's write for it." Of course, that's all wrong.

R.S.B.: Are there any young composers of promise that you see on the horizon?

B.H.: Not that I know of. Well, I tell you what. You have to have a special kind of mentality. I like drama. They like other things. I once gave a lecture on film music, and I said to the audience, "Remember old maps, before World War I? They had big white spots every now and then. You looked down below, it said 'white—unexplored.' That's film music."

I don't see any use to write a language no one understands. I don't understand Boulez—last month in London, when he said, "I will never conduct Tchaikovsky, Strauss, or Puccini." I suppose the crap he's doing is better. I mean, he's a talented man, but he doesn't have any feeling. Like Poulenc had. I knew him very well. I love La Voix humaine. Also the Gloria. Erich Korngold once told me that he said to [Richard] Strauss, "Are you going to Herr Schmidt's?" Strauss said, "Me go to Herr Schmidt's? Are you crazy? Do you know, they actually have a score of Puccini's Tosca in their house?" They're all wrong, of course. Puccini was a very great composer. And Ravel. I always feel sorry that Ravel never did his version of Salome. Because I still think that Strauss's Salome has very great flaws. Like the dance. It's really Franz Lehár.

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The Recordings of Bernard Herrmann

As Composer

(All are conducted by Herrmann unless otherwise noted.)

The Egyptian (in collaboration with Alfred Newman). Alfred Newman, cond. MCA 2029E [from Decca DL 9014].
Vertigo. Muir Mathieson, cond. MERCURY MG 20384 (OP).
Music from the Great Movie Thrillers. Psycho; Vertigo; North by Northwest; The Trouble with Harry; Marnie. LONDON PHASE-4 SP 44126.
The Three Worlds of Gulliver. COLPIX 414 (OP).
The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad. UNITED ARTISTS (England) UAS 29763 (mono only).
Music from the Great Film Classics. Citizen Kane; Jane Eyre; The Snows of Kilimanjaro; The Devil and Daniel Webster. LONDON PHASE-4 SP 44144.
Welles Raises Kane, The Devil and Daniel Webster. UNICORN UNS 237.
The Bride Wore Black. UNITED ARTISTS (France) 36.122 U/A (OP).
The Twisted Nerve. POLYDOR (England) 584 728 (OP).
Citizen Kane: The Classic Film Scores of Bernard Herrmann. On Dangerous Ground, Citizen Kane, Beneath the Twelve-Mile Reef; Hangover Square Concerto; White Witch Doctor. Charles Gerhardt, cond. RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-0707.
The Fantasy Film World of Bernard Herrmann. Journey to the Center of the Earth; The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad; The Day the Earth Stood Still; Fahrenheit 451. LONDON PHASE-4 SP 44207.
Sisters. ENTR'ACTE RECORDING SOCIETY ERO 7001 (quadraphonic).
The Mysterious Film World of Bernard Herrmann. Jason and the Argonauts; Mysterious Island; The Three Worlds of Gulliver. LONDON PHASE-4 SP 21137.
Cabinet Kan. LeRoy Holmes, cond. UNITED ARTISTS LA 372G.
The Battle of Neretva. ENTR'ACTE RECORDING SOCIETY ERS 6501 ST.
Wuthering Heights (opera). UNICORN UND 400.
Moby Dick (cantata). UNICORN UNS 255.
Symphony. UNICORN RHM 351.
Quartet for Clarinet and Strings (Souvenirs of the Voyage). Ariel Quartet; Robert Hill, clarinet. Echoes: Amici Quartet. UNICORN RHS 332.
Psycho. UNICORN RHS 336.
For the Fallen; The Fantasticks (with Delius: A Late Lark; Vaughan Williams: Four Motets). UNICORN RHS 340.
Taxi Driver. ARISTA AL 4079.

As Conductor

Raff: Symphony No. 5 (Lenore). London Philharmonic Orchestra. NONESUCH 71287.
Ives: Symphony No. 2. London Symphony Orchestra. LONDON PHASE-4 SPC 21086.
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Lafayette
Radio Electronics & Shopping Centers
The author, recently released from the State Prison of Southern Michigan, spent nineteen years behind bars, much of it as a result of his experience in separating audio componentry from its owners. Here he relates some of the high points of his career and offers advice on how to prevent others in his former line from making you their victim.

I was introduced to hi-fi theft by a man whom I will call Chauncey Heatherton. Chauncey was an Englishman of the old school, and he looked every bit of it. When I first met him in 1955 he was a spry little old man done up in baggy tweeds and wearing a pair of those steel-rimmed spectacles of the sort you see only on the British and on characters in old Charlie Chan movies. He also sported a toothbrush moustache that gave him something of a raffish air.
He had monkeyed around with radios since they first appeared—and he served his first prison sentence in Wormwood Scrubs for stealing a crystal set from the home of H. G. Wells. After a few years and a few technical advances, Chauncey moved to America to pursue his passion for sound reproduction. He became a fanatic for Atwater Kents. Chauncey was still suspicious of glass triodes (and he almost checked out of felony when solid-state systems came on the scene), but he clung to his major interest and stole everything electronic he could get his hands on. That was no easy task in those days. You not only had to rip off the Atwater Kent, you also had to cart off about a hundred pounds of A and B batteries and a complex system of antennas that looked like a macrame spider web.

Chauncey knew everything a thief could possibly want to know about larceny. But he still nursed a quaint set of prejudices about electronic equipment. I can recall one time when we were wrestling a huge GE console out of a New York apartment. All the way down the stairs he was giving me a lecture about transistors. “They’re not natural,” he concluded. “These things should have real valves and series tuning—the way God intended.”

More than once I found myself struggling single-handedly with a multi-component system while Chauncey prowled the premises in search of some antique that was more to his taste. Moving that stuff all alone is so much work that a fellow would almost be better off going straight, so I’d have to pussyfoot around looking for him and twist his arm to get him back on the job.

Removing equipment from someone’s home is not a gentle process. The idea is to get it out as fast as possible. No matter how neatly people hook up their components, they end up with a rat’s nest of wires, patch cords, speaker lines, and unidentifiable wires running behind bookcases, record racks, shelves, furniture, and potted plants. It’s simply not worth the time and noise to grope around to find out where to unplug what. So a hi-fi thief’s basic tool is a pair of “dikes,” or “diagonal wire cutters.” You grab the main unit and pull out every patch cord that will come loose. The power line is always wedged in some godforsaken place behind a piece of furniture. For this, you reach back about one foot behind the equipment and cut one side of the cord with your dikes. Then, holding the cord open with one hand so you don’t risk a closed circuit and blown fuses, you snip the whole thing just behind the unit. Any remaining leads that are screwed on are simply pruned away.

Once I even had to prune away the guy who owned the stuff. Chauncey and I had skillfully pried open an unlocked window in a suburban home and found the most beautiful Marantz stereo system this side of quadriphonics. While Chauncey was disconnecting the Marantz, I noticed a line running across the carpet into the darker recesses of the living room. This can often mean an expensive auxiliary speaker system. I didn’t want to blink the house up with a flashlight, so I took the cord in my hand and stealthily followed it to the other end. When the slack ran out, I groped for the speaker enclosure. What I found was a face. The owner was asleep on the couch with a pair of stereo earphones crunched to his head.

Discouraging A Heist

If a professional thief is determined to rip you off, there is no single safeguard that will prevent him from doing it—short of your checking all your equipment ‘into a bank vault. But there are a number of precautions that will put the odds against theft very much in your favor. If you show an obvious concern for the security of your residence and your equipment, it will be the other guy, instead of you, who will take the loss.

☐ The most obvious precaution is a good set of locks with dead-bolt mechanisms that can’t be opened by the first amateur who happens by with a strip of celluloid in his pocket. There are many effective locks on the market for sliding glass doors, but the cheapest and most effective method of protection is to fit a length of broomstick into the door track.
☐ Leaving your place empty with all the lights out, or with only the porch light burning, is a sure way to attract attention. At least one light inside will discourage most thieves, and the best place for it is in the bathroom.
Rather than risk tripping on the cord and jerking his neck out of joint, I snipped the wires about three inches below his ear. It's one of the greatest regrets of my life that I couldn't be there the next morning to see his expression.

But that could have turned into a bad situation. Contrary to popular illusions about burglars, I always carried a gun. It was impressively large and very comforting because it could discourage people from trying to beat me over the head with whatever I happened to be stealing. It was only for show, however, and never loaded. I hardly knew one end of the thing from the other, and I would have been a cinch to blow my leg off the first time I tried climbing through a window with it.

Many burglars do carry loaded guns, and they're not at all slow about using them if they think it will save them the inconvenience of being appre-
hended. Those who don’t carry guns share the same strong prejudice against going to jail—they are more likely to improvise a weapon from a screwdriver or even a handy lamp. This is a good thing to bear in mind if you should discover someone walking out the door with your amplifier.

Of course, all is not open windows and clean getaways; thieves have problems, too. Dogs, for instance—and sometimes worse. I remember one night finding a ground-floor window unlocked in an expensive suburban home. I knew the place was empty, because I’d just spent five minutes leaning on the doorbell. So I raised the window and hoisted myself in. I was head and shoulders inside when I noticed two glowing eyes blinking at me in the darkness. That’s the way cats look at burglars. Usually it’s a friendly thing, since cats and burglars have much in common. But these eyes were eight inches apart!

Feeling a little sick, I turned my penlight on them. Staring me dead in the face was somebody’s pet panther. The beast was on a chain, but I still took half the window with me getting out of there.

Generally, I preferred to work apartment buildings rather than private homes. There’s always someone moving in or out, and no one thinks too much about it if they notice you making a few trips up and down stairs with speaker enclosures clutched to your bosom. It’s also easier to spot the best victims. You check the parking lot and see which Porsche or whatever has the best tape deck in it. It is likely that the owner will have comparable (though far more expensive) equipment in his apartment. You keep watch until you’re able to match the car with the owner and the owner with the apartment.

But all thieves have their own preferences and techniques, so it really doesn’t matter where you live. I knew a couple of men, for instance, who specialized in ski lodges. They came to grief when they tried to rip off a lodge in the Sierras one winter. The owners and their friends were partying it up at one of the local resorts, giving the boys all the time in the world to disconnect a huge GE console with multiple auxiliary speaker units. The trouble was, there was a thick snow cover of powder, and they couldn’t possibly drag all those components down the hill to their van. So they decided to lash everything to a toboggan and ride it down the hill.

It worked fine, except for the fact that they couldn’t stop. They zipped past their van in a blur of snow, flashed across another quarter-mile of 30-degree slope, and made about fifty yards across a frozen lake before the whole works dropped through the ice.

Fortunately, I had the good sense not to go on any jobs with those idiots. I prefer to work by myself or with an accomplice who knows his work, even though he might be as balmy as Chauncey.

I have a fond picture in my mind of Chauncey today: a little older and with thicker lenses in his glasses, but still in tweeds and properly British to his larcenous core. He’s tiptoeing past the sauna in one of those huge singles complexes. Beneath one arm he is carrying a 500-watt Panasonic—and lovingly cradled in the other is a 1923 board-mounted model, complete with an ear trumpet speaker. He is on his way home to try tuning in KDKA.

Sentimental old-timers of Chauncey’s breed are fast falling by the wayside. The business is being taken over by coldly efficient thieves who know exactly what they are after and how to find it. So it might be a good idea to check your locks—and maybe take that expensive tape deck to bed with you.
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SEPTEMBER 1976
It may come as a surprise to many that the soprano most-recorded by "pirates" is not Maria Callas. Who is it? The queen of pirated recordings is Leyla Gencer, the Turkish soprano who has never sung at the Met and didn't make her New York debut until April 15, 1973, in Donizetti's Caterina Cornaro at Carnegie Hall. (She sang La Traviata in Philadelphia as far back as 1958 and has sung regularly in San Francisco since 1956.) Her name is virtually unknown to the U.S. public, but for twenty years her performances have been the goal of every American opera fan going to Italy.

The number of complete-opera recordings with Gencer is estimated at more than twenty, some even existing in salable versions by two rival pirates. Among them are Verdi's I due Foscari, from the 1957 Venice production under Tullio Serafin, Donizetti's Roberto Devereux (Naples, 1964) and Lucrezia Borgia (Naples, 1966), Pacini's Saffo (Naples, 1967), and Spontini's Vestale (Palermo, 1969). Verdi's Attila has made the big step from private tapes-available to collectors since a little more than a week after its performance-to pirate album. There also are two pirate recital discs in circulation, and one edition of Donizetti's Maria Stuarda boasts a bonus: an interview with La Gencer herself.

It is lucky for operatic posterity that these recordings exist. Apart from a couple of recital discs on the Cetra label (reviewed in this issue), Gencer's voice cannot be heard on commercial discs. Considering her repertoire of more than sixty operas, and the ease with which she has always moved from Donizetti to Gluck to Verdi to Bellini and even to Mascagni, Ponchielli, Puccini, and Massenet, surely some record company could have found some opera in which to use her. Or so it seems.

Her own explanation to me of this neglect was bitter: "I have always been independent in everything I have done. I have always decided and chosen for myself. And of course I have had to pay for this, in a career that has not been easy, blocked by obstacles put in my way by many of the people with whom I have had to deal. In the theater, I learned to avoid the obstacles, or even to move them aside, but the intrigues that helped keep me out of the recording industry were apparently beyond my power to overcome. And, to be honest, I never really bothered much with the record companies—the whole situation seemed rather ridiculous.

"And don't forget, I arrived in Italy [in the early Fifties] at a difficult moment: There was Callas, and she didn't leave room for anyone else! My voice at the time was that of a light lyric, with a pleasant timbre and precise coloratura, following the bel canto style I had learned from my teacher in Turkey and then Italy, Giannina Arangi-Lombardi. But this type of singing was just not popular then, and so I had to change my voice, my style, for something stronger, different, yet always 'bel canto.' Perhaps by then it was too late to convince the record companies, or they weren't ready yet to record the unusual roles I had added to my list, and, by the time they were, other singers were being used.

"Anyway, I have never been really preoccupied with this problem, and at least there are all the pirate tapes and records. I keep quite a collection myself, supplied by my friends, and although I realize the risk that a bad performance might end up on records (we all have our bad nights!) I am still delighted that these documents of my art exist."

Born "over forty" years ago in Istanbul of a Polish mother and a father from an old and noble Turkish family springing from Anatolia, Leyla had an easy childhood surrounded, as she puts it, by "all the comforts—serenity, governnesses, culture." Nobody in her family, however, had ever followed a career in the arts, and there was some opposition to the idea when it became apparent that she was quite serious about a theatrical career for herself.

"One of the greatest influences on my life," Gencer says, "was my French governness, who gave me..."
my predilection for the Romance languages, particularly French, and through this I developed a taste for poetry and acting. Being a very curious child, I wanted to learn everything, to find new experiences, and so I discovered mysticism, and Plato, and nature, and painting. Again influenced by my governess, I discovered the Church, where she took me to sing in the children’s choir; theoretically, though, I am a Moslem. But for me, all these things, which became part of my life simultaneously, are mixed together: theater and mysticism, Church and poetry.

“And in my constant search for beauty, I have always surrounded myself with friends in the arts, intellectuals, people who have guided or inspired my reading tastes. By the time I was thirteen, for instance, I had already read almost all of French literature, in part because... my first love was a boy who was studying French literature. That is typical of me—I go in cycles. When I am in love with someone or something, this influences what I choose to read. When I was working on Elisabetta, regina d’Inghilterra of Rossini, I re-read all of Stendhal.”

Having concluded her formal academic studies at a private Liceo Italiano, Gencer at eighteen went to the conservatory at Istanbul, which she subsequently left in order to study at Ankara with the celebrated Arangi-Lombardi. "When Arangi-Lombardi left for Italy, I followed her, first to Rome, then to Napoli, where I had a very successful audition. They had me sing Cavalleria at the Arena Flegrea (this was in July 1953), and then I made my official debut in Butterfly at the San Carlo in February 1954. I have done some of my best roles there [the San Carlo]; you can imagine how affezionata I am to that theater. And in Napoli I have friends who have followed me since the very beginning of my career."

From the start, she sang "a bit of everything," from Tosca to Traviata, Freischütz to Forza, Werther to Poulenc’s Dialogues of the Carmelites—in its world premiere at La Scala. She sang in every Italian theater, as well as in those of many cities in other European countries, and crossed the Atlantic to sing at San Francisco and Los Angeles, all in the first five years of her career. As her career progressed, her voice began to be described as “occasionally uneven,” but her musicality and intensity of expression were usually highly praised, and, if glottal attacks gradually became her trademark, so did ethereal pianissimos, soft-grained mezzo voce, and agile coloratura. She has always impressed audiences and critics with her use of foritura, not to show off, but to illuminate a role’s emotional meaning.

Over and over she demonstrated her versatility, adding to her repertoire such diverse roles as Anna Bolena, Massenet’s Manon, and Renata in the Italian premiere of Prokofiev’s The Flaming Angel. In the space of a month she sang in Poliuto, The Queen of Spades, and Don Carlos (1960-61, La Scala), and only a few weeks later Zandonai’s Francesca da Rimini in Trieste was followed by Rigoletto and Puritani in Buenos Aires. The year before, she had already done her first Lady Macbeth, a role she has repeated with ever-growing success and one she confesses she would like to record: "It is perhaps my favorite in all Verdi, because it is so congenial to my type of singing and to my interpretive powers. And I cannot resist that combination of violence and mystery in the character of Lady Macbeth."

By the mid-1960s, it was clear that Gencer was one of the most wide-ranging singers in years, maintaining much of her “standard” repertoire (Ballo, Otello, Trovatore), singing Donna Anna and Donna Elvira in Don Giovanni, and adding to them Norma (1962), Aida (1963), Verdi’s Jerusalem (1963), Bellini’s Beatrice di Tenda (1964), and Donizetti’s Roberto Devereux (1964). This last is another opera Gencer would like to record commercially, "to show the public what were the composer’s real interpretive intentions," she says. "These have nothing to do with the embellishments he did not write, nor with the exaggeration of florid vocalism that destroys the drama of the musical text."

Vocal purity waned as intensity grew, and as Lucia, Rigoletto, Traviata, Sonnambula, and Puritani disappeared from the list of “active” roles in which one might hear Gencer, six new ones joined the ranks, all in 1966 and 1967. The first of these, Lucrezia Borgia, caused a renowned Italian critic, Eugenio Gara, to write, “After... Norma, Roberto Devereux, and this Lucrezia, La Gencer can consider herself, as a stylist, a true specialist in the romantic melodrama.” Only months later, she added Gluck’s Alceste, “another I would love to record,” Gencer says, “an opera I love above all others for the classicism I feel is at the root of my nature.” Monteverdi’s Poppea brought new raves, as did Saffo, Ponchielli’s La Gioconda, and what many consider her greatest role, Maria Stuarda. More recently have come Spontini’s Agnese di Hohenstaufen, Smareglia’s La Falena, and Donizetti’s Les Martyrs.

What all of these interpretations have in common, aside from accomplished vocalism and depth of feeling, is a nobility of bearing that makes Gencer seem taller than she is (a mere five feet four inches) and makes one forget that her gestures are rather commonplace; there is a kind of magnetism that can be best described as enigmatic. And there is an enigmatic quality, too, in the woman herself off-stage. For example, as she says, with a Mona Lisa smile, “I try to see the good in everybody, and I hate vulgarity and intrigues; but those who have tried to harm me and my career—you will see, they will have their comeuppance.”
Philips offers an exemplary premiere recording of Il Corsaro, one of the most adventurous of Verdi's pre-Rigoletto operas.

by Andrew Porter

With this, the latest sortie in Philips' "Verdi crusade," the very high standard of I Masnadieri (6703 064, December 1975) is maintained—by a first-rate cast and first-rate conductor (again Lamberto Gardelli), giving an exciting performance recorded in impeccable focus.

This is another set that should cause some revisions of accepted opinion. Not that I needed any convincing that Il Corsaro is one of the most arresting of Verdi's early operas. That became obvious at its first twentieth-century staging, at St. Pancras in 1966, with Pauline Tinsley as its heroine. (In 1963 there had been an ill-starred concert version in the Doge's Palace in Venice; BBC and then Fenice productions followed in 1971.)

"Most arresting," however, does not mean most successful. Until the St. Pancras production opened our ears, Il Corsaro had always had a pretty terrible press. Francis Toye declared that, "with the exception of Alzira, this is the worst opera ever written by the composer." (One could, of course, agree and still value it very highly; in any case, who is prepared to say which is Verdi's "worst" opera? Alzira is certainly not negligible.) Frank Walker, in Grove, dismissed Il Corsaro as "another piece of hackwork." But hackwork it's not, even though the circumstances of its composition may suggest it.

Il Corsaro, based on Byron's The Corsair: a tale, was planned before Macbeth and I Masnadieri but brought to completion only after them, and after Jerusalem. Verdi dispatched it, from Paris, to discharge a contract with the publisher Lucca that irked him. He did not bring it to the stage himself, and so the score never received those final touches that Verdi was wont to continue making as far as, and even after, the dress rehearsal.

The plot is awkward. In Act I, Conrad the corsair (I'll keep Byron's form of the names) leaves his beloved Medora and sails off to attack the Muslims. In Act II, disguised as a dervish, he penetrates the Pasha Seyd's court but throws away his chance of conquest when he leads his men off to rescue the women of the harem, which has caught fire. Returning with Seyd's favorite, Gulnare (rhymes, in Byron, with "stare"), in his arms, he is captured; so are his gallant men, similarly cumbered with odalisques. In the first scene of Act III, Gulnare, who has fallen in love with Conrad, stabs the sleeping Seyd, and they escape together.
Meanwhile, back home, Medora has despaired of seeing Conrad again and has swallowed poison. In the final scene, Conrad and Gulnare return just in time to sing a trio with the expiring Medora. She dies in his arms, and then Conrad flings himself over the cliff.

The plights and perils are acute, but neither in Byron nor in Piave's libretto are the characters treated in depth. Conrad, whose "heart was form'd for softness—warp'd to wrong," is plainly a descendant of Karl Moor, in Die Rauber—the source of I Masnadieri. The heroes are similarly introduced in the two operas: regretful, in cavatina, of the brigand company they keep; resolute, in cabaletta, as they lead that company to arms. Gulnare is the principal soprano; she defies Seyd and loves Conrad even though he tells her frankly his heart is another's. Seyd, rather like Mozart's Pasha, reflects (in his aria) that, while a hundred delightful virgins have sought his love, the only woman he really cares for refuses him.

What makes II Corsaro exciting is not the drama, but the music. When Verdi sent the score to Lucca, he did so with a laconic note that has a take-it-or-leave-it quality. This is usually interpreted as meaning that he had perfunctorily polished off a tedious commission; the music, however, suggests his awareness that he had written something that was, even by his standards, almost defiantly extraordinary. II Corsaro owes its oddness to the fact that it was conceived (and to some slight extent sketched) before the adventure of Macbeth and I Masnadieri but executed after those works, and after the first-hand experience of French opera. It ought to belong in type with Ernani, I due Foscari, and Alzira—indeed it has echoes of Macheath and premonitions of Rigoletto, Un Ballo in maschera, and even later operas.

Perhaps because II Corsaro never entered the general repertory, Verdi may have felt uninhibited about reworking some ideas first tried there. In the final trio, Gulnare starts singing, in the same key, a descant so familiar as Gilda's to Rigoletto's "Piangi, piangi" that it is almost a surprise when the lines deviate. In the duet for Gulnare and Conrad, the passage of repeated "fuggiam, fuggiamo" phrases points first to Aida and then—as one voice, then the other, then both, sing out over tremolando string chords—to the love duet of Ballo. In an essay that accompanies the set, Julian Budden even remarks anticipations of Falstaff.

Some of the harmonic experiments are audacious rather than successful. In the same duet, over a B pedal, successive bars are B major, E minor, C major, and B major, and the result is more extraordinary than expressive. The tenor has difficulty keeping his melody in tune. Something seems to be wrong; something is wrong—it's not a good progression. On the other hand, the oscillation between C minor and A flat major in Medora's romanzo is both delicate and beautiful, and adds an aptly exotic touch to the maiden's song. In a footnote to the corresponding passage of The Corsair, Lord Jeffrey says:

Lord Byron has made a fine use of the gentleness and submission of the females of these regions, as contrasted with the lordly pride and martial ferocity of the men. . . . There is something so true to female nature in general, and so much of the oriental softness and acquiescence in his particular delineations, that it is scarcely possible to refuse the picture the praise of being characteristic and harmonious, as well as eminently sweet and beautiful in itself.

And exactly the same could be said of Verdi. Budden suggests that the gentle Medora was Verdi's dead Margherita, his first wife, and the spirited Gulnare, who, like Tosca, did not shrink to murder for love, his new mistress Giuseppina Strepponi.

Budden also says (in The Operas of Verdi), of the prelude, that "it is both long and short where you least expect, but the sense of proportion is unerring." The remark could apply to most of the opera, which is packed with formal surprises. In the first soprano-tenor duet, for example (Conrad has one with each of his women), the first section is foreshortened to a single statement from the soprano; when the tenor enters, it is to take up the tempo di mezzo. The two men, Conrad and Seyd, have a duettino in Act II that ends with another surprise—a distinctly comic effect, which makes some sense when one realizes that the tenor is disguised as a dervish. The world of Le Comte Ory suddenly becomes that of Le Siège de Corinthe when the second-act finale gets under way; and the serious Rossini comes to mind again when Conrad's duet with Gulnare is interrupted by a fierce, swift storm (nature's counterpart to the murder that Gulnare has slipped off to commit).

Formally, harmonically, instrumentally, and in its constant concern with thematic transformation, II Corsaro is second-period Verdi, set to a first-period libretto, and mingled with "Donizettian" things that nevertheless carry Verdi's personal stamp. Some of the "experiments" do not come off and then are merely "interesting," as pointers to what followed. Some succeed admirably. And some of the apparently conventional things are wonderfully stirring—in the last scene, for example, after the standard stitnato buildup, with cries of "Oh gioia! e luit!," the ensemble blaze of joy topped by the two sopranos and the tenor in octaves. Who can hear it unmoved?

Jose Carreras is the kind of Verdi tenor we have seldom heard since the young Giuseppe di Stefano—
and Montserrat Caballé as the odalisque Gulnara await cues.

Gardelli, here directing his fifth early Verdi opera for Philips, goes from strength to strength. He and the New Philharmonia leave nothing unrealized. All the colors of a score that has some pretty touches of exoticism, much adventurous instrumentation, and some passages so rudely scored that a borderline between excitement and vulgarity must be trodden with perfect judgment, are vividly presented. The tempos are exactly set. There is no stiff, unfeeling metrical rigidity, but an unflagging pulse responsive to the surges and swells of the music. I question only whether the tempo of the Gulnare/Seyd duet (marked andante assai sostenuto) is not perhaps a shade fast. Seyd is being ironically courteous—like Otello in the "Dio ti giocondi" duet of that opera—and he needs a little more time to suggest what he is at.

When I first saw Stiffelio on the stage, nearly nine years ago, to the exhilaration it provided there was added just a faint note of regret that now there were no more Verdi operas to encounter for the first time, only alternative versions of some of them. But the Philips series makes possible a second and in some ways even more exciting voyage—one of rediscovery, in performances superior to those first twentieth-century revivals. I due Foscari is on its way; that leaves Oberto, La Battaglia, Alzira, Stiffelio (and at least the last act of Aroldo) as treats in store. But also, I hope Jerusalem, which is different enough from I Lombardi to warrant a separate recording. The 1867 Don Carlos, in French? (The promised original-language new production at the Met, with Kiri Te Kanawa as its heroine, will produce a cast that knows at least the passages common to 1867 and 1883 in French.) A Vêpres siciliennes in the original language? The 1847 Macbeth? The unrevised Boccanegra? Perhaps a single disc of the Forza episodes found only in the St. Petersburg version? And, as supplement, the various alternative arias in the operas already recorded?

**VERDI: II Corsaro**

- **Carlo** (José Carreras) (t)
- **Selimo** (Gian-Piero Mastromeri (b)
- **Stefano** (Gian-Carlo Giannini (b)
- **A Black Eunuoch; A Slave** (Alexander Oliver (t)
- **Selimo** (John Noble (b)

Ambrosian Singers; New Philharmonia Orchestra, Lamberto Gardelli, cond. [Erik Smith, prod.] Philips 6700 098, $15.96 (two discs, manual sequence).
In his liner notes for "Sound Forms for Piano" (NW 203), Charles Hamm sounds the theme of this giant undertaking, subsidized by the Rockefeller Foundation with $4 million, with brevity and lucidity. "The most characteristic feature of American music," he writes, "is its eclecticism." Certainly, the first ten of the hundred discs to be released by Recorded Anthology of American Music, Inc. (which surely will become better known by the name of its label, New World Records), makes a brave attempt to mirror our unique contribution to the art "in all its richness and diversity."

Never before have we had in this country the prospect of so comprehensive a representation of American music from its tentative beginnings to the present. Those of us who have been interested in this aspect of our civilization have become keenly aware of the fact that, with rare exceptions, American music simply does not sell, and commercial companies, understandably enough, are interested in commercial products that yield a comfortable financial return. The result of this state of affairs has been totally inadequate documentation of our musical heritage. We know our music only in shreds and snatches. Those who teach the subject in colleges, universities, and conservatories have been dreadfully handicapped by this lack of adequate illustration in sound, and it is this lacuna that New World Records is attempting to fill.

Can it do so? The ground to be covered is vast—some 350 years of American music, and not only what is known as "serious" or "art" music, but also vintage popular music, folk music, jazz, and what-have-you. (It wouldn't surprise me too much if one of the records was devoted to Muzak.) If you think in these terms, one hundred records doesn't sound like such a huge number. Faced with this problem, New World has concluded that there is little point in including American music that is already easily available, no matter how important it might be. Thus, the plan is to record about half the material for the anthology and to dig in the archives for the remainder.

Furthermore, the $4 million grant does not seem quite so enormous when it is understood that it covers a three-year period (1975-78) and includes non-profit distribution of the anthology to various libraries and educational institutions. Ultimately, New World hopes to become self-sustaining and to distribute its releases commercially, but that's some time off in the future. It hasn't yet solved the problem.
The range of American musical activity encompassed by New World’s first release is symbolized here by Olivia Stapp (upper left), who sings works by Charles Tomlinson Griffes (lower left); Alma Gluck (center left), heard in a MacDowell song recorded in 1912; Seneca Indians, recorded and photographed on their reservation in Salamanca, N.Y.; and Robert Miller, preparing a piano for a John Cage work on a disc of experimental piano pieces.

of how archival recordings owned by other companies and released for educational purposes only can be sold, for instance.

Of the first releases, six are completely new, brilliantly recorded discs, and four represent expeditions in musical archaeology. The ancillary materials follow a similar pattern: Each jacket contains a long, well-written, and meticulously researched program note on the subject matter of the record, comments on the individual selections, historical data, a discography, and a bibliography. All this is assembled by the researcher or researchers responsible for the disc, and these have been chosen with great care. The verso of the jacket includes a “historical chart and bibliography” of general nature compiled by Arthur E. Scherr, who may be a good historian but knows very little about music. These rarely illuminate the music, and I consider them expendable.

The six new releases illustrate the tremendous breadth of the field New World is attempting to cover. They consist of experimental music for piano by Cowell, Cage, Johnston, and Nancarrow, with notes by Charles Hamm (NW 203); music of various Indian tribes recorded in the field in 1975 by Charlotte Heth (who did the notes) and a team of ethnomusicologists (NW 246); the “golden age” of the American march, which ended with World War I, as performed by the Goldman Band, with Richard Franko Goldman writing the notes (NW 266); a disc entirely devoted to Charles Tomlinson Griffes, with notes by Donna K. Anderson (NW 273); instrumental, choral, and vocal music of the American Revolution, researched by Richard Crawford, Kate van Winkle Keller, and Raoul Camus, with notes by Crawford (NW 276); and a selection of nineteenth-century organ music performed on the centennial organ in St. Joseph’s Old Cathedral, Buffalo, New York, by Richard Morris, with notes by Barbara Owen (NW 280).

That’s quite a range of material. To my mind, the least interesting (although I might be of a different mind were I an ethnomusicologist) is Heth’s Indian music recording, which must be taken in small doses for best effect. The Goldman Band disc was another disappointment, with the music of such worthies as Adams, Bigelow, Carter, Hall, Mygrant, Seitz, and Weldon melding into a pretty indigestible doughy mass.

The real prize is the Griffes recording, the best single disc devoted to that neglected composer. There also are genuine treasures to be found in the fife-and-drum music and the Harmoniemusik (Billings and Wood are already beginning to sound a little dated, no thanks to overuse of eighteenth-century choral music during the Bicentennial) of the disc devoted to the Revolutionary period. And I am almost ashamed to say that I thoroughly enjoyed Dudley Buck’s Grand Sonata in E flat, Op. 22, for the organ, published in 1866 when Buck was a younger of twenty-seven just returned to Hartford from his studies in Germany.

The four archival releases deal with ragtime in rural America as researched by Lawrence Cohn (NW 235, mono); the American art song from 1900 to 1940, with the research done by David Hamilton and Philip L. Miller, and especially illuminating notes by the latter (NW 247, mono); Robert Kimball’s attempted reconstruction of Sissle and Blake’s historic 1921 Shuffle Along (NW 260, mono); and a survey of bebop by Dan Morgenstern and Michael Brooks, with notes by the former (NW 271, mono). Again, the range of subject matter is very wide.

Easily the most fascinating is the art-song record, which contains some extraordinary gems—Alma Gluck singing MacDowell’s “Long Ago, Sweetheart Mine” in 1912, John McCormack singing A. Walter

How Can You Get the Records?

Simple: You can’t. At the present time they can be obtained only by educational institutions (schools, libraries), and only as a set. To hear the records, find a library or music collection that has them, or pester one into acquiring them.

It is hoped that the records can eventually be offered to the public; an announcement is expected by the end of the year. New World is keeping a file of individuals interested in receiving that information when it becomes available. To get your name into that file write to Rose Connelly at New World Records, 3 E. 54th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

Personal preferences aside, I would have to say that New World’s initial releases are cause for jubilation. They indicate that, despite all the difficulties attendant in such a project, it will turn out to be the most significant contribution of the Bicentennial year to a full appreciation and understanding of our musical heritage. I do, however, seriously doubt the wisdom of attempting to cover all kinds of American music with a hundred-record anthology. I think serious, folk, and popular music will all suffer because of it. My preference would have been for the set to be devoted entirely to art music, with separate additional sets devoted to both folk and popular music.

This was the conclusion reached more than fifteen years ago during some of the more wrestling with the problem by the American Music Recordings Project of the Music Library Association, which devised a similar scheme for the broad coverage of American music in sound.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the MLA plan was widely popularized and enthusiastically endorsed by the National Music Council, the Music Educators National Conference, the Music Teachers National Association, and other professional groups. Both the record industry (Columbia Records, RCA Victor, RIAA, NARAS) and the publishing industry (Pren- tice-Hall, Oxford University Press, Macmillan) were interested in working things out—indeed, Columbia and Victor made cash contributions to help the plan to materialize—and one recording, "The American Harmony" (Washington Records SWR 418), was actually manufactured. The MLA discussed the matter of funding with Norman Lloyd, then of the Rockefeller Foundation, but was advised that the foundation was not in a position to support such a large request. An application was then made to the Ford Foundation for $317,910 to assemble a package of one hundred recordings, about half of them new and half from older commercial releases; to assign twenty-three experts to write 64,000-word monographs on various aspects of the field; and to develop a microfilm archive of historically important American scores. The application was rejected.

It is perhaps churlish of New World Records to imply that it is breaking new ground; it would have been much more gracious to acknowledge that it was following furrows already well plowed. Nonetheless, New World has accomplished what others have failed to do. De mortuis nil nisi bonum. This invaluable anthology is off to a fine start, and let us hope that its subsequent releases will live up to the promise of the first ten.

Dallas Rag (Dallas String Band, 12/8/28); Southern Rag (Blind Blake, c. 10/27); Dew Drop Alley (Sugar Underwood, 8/23/27); Piccolo Rag (Blind Boy Fuller, 4/5/33); Atlanta Rag (Como, 11/12/28); Kill It Kid (Blind Willie McTell, 1949). The Entertainer (Bunk Johnson and His Band, 12/23/47); Maple Leaf Rag (Very, 3/7/46); Mexican Rag (Jimmie Tarlton, c. 1950); Hawkins Rag (Gid Tanner and His Skillet Lickers, 3/29/34); Guitar: The Roy Harvey and Jess Johnson, c. 1934). Chinese Rag (The Spookey Five, c. 1929); Barn Dance Rag (Bill Boyd and His Cowboy Ramblers, 8/13/35); Steel Guitar Rag (China Poplin, 1926); Cannon Ball Rag/Bugle Call Rag (Merle Travis); Randy Lynn Rag (Leser Flatt and Earl Scruggs and the Foggy Mountain Boys). [From Columbia, PAR, Victor, Okeh, Geist, Atlantic, Prestige, Champion, Bluebird, Folkways, and Capitol originals.]
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The major problems arise with the rare nonprofit, truly private, subscription-only organizations bound by contractual agreements against any kind of commercialization or even identifying the actual recording artists, engineers, and processors.

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Gary Graffman—taste and skill for Beethoven.


Sonatas: No. 1, in B minor; No. 2, in A; No. 3, in E; No. 4, in C minor; No. 5, in F minor; No. 6, in G.

Comparisons:
- Buswell, Valenti Van. VCS 10080/1
- Monosoff, Weaver Cam. CRS 2822
- Menuhin, Malcolm Ang. SB 3629

The six sonatas for keyboard and violin—written during that instrumentally productive Cothen period that also gave rise to the solo violin sonatas and cello suites, the gamba sonatas, and the Brandenburg Concertos—are the least alluring works of the lot, or so it has always seemed to me. Elaborately learned, with a full quotient of Bach's rhythmic and polyphonic invention and more textural variety than one would have deemed possible, the sonatas are as austere and as intellectually complex as the solo violin sonatas but not nearly so exciting. They can, in fact, seem downright arid, for all their cerebral richness.

Eduard Melkus and Huguette Dreyfus, who offer correct, straightforward, highly intelligent performances here, do not entirely alleviate this hint of aridity. Melkus' tone is small and wiry, his approach proper and self-effacing. While he avoids the sense of stodginess that creeps into Sonya Monosoff's reading, he views the sonatas as a musical experience rather than a violinistic experience and lavishes on them none of the warmth that James Oliver Buswell does (perhaps a little too fulsomely) and none of the personal intensity that so characterizes Menuhin's wonderfully persuasive performance. The Menuhin set is not without flaws—his phrasing in slow movements is at times so deliberate that it tends to break up the melodic line, and at moments the bow is not under absolute control—but the tone is by far the most beautiful and subtly varied, and through his own special force of personality Menuhin simply manages to make the music more interesting. And, too, he has one enormous advantage: the use of a gamba to support the keyboard, thereby tying the bottom line of the music effectively to the top—a base to the picture frame, as it were.

Melkus and Dreyfus, in short, are eminently respectable and offer strong, "uncolored" Bach. But if you want to be really engaged, Menuhin is the one to turn the trick.

S.F.

Explanation of symbols

- Classical
- Budget
- Historical
- Reissue

Recorded tape:
- Open Reel
- 8-Track Cartridge
- Cassette
The Quartetto Italiano is a little off form in the concluding installment in its Beethoven quartet cycle for Philips. Not seriously so, but some dubious intonation and a rather scruffy ensemble attack—surprising from the Italiano, usually the most refined of ensembles. Exemplary execution and interpretive finesse is preponderantly from the front. One is aware of the rather dry acoustics, of the singer and the orchestra between and behind, and of the ambiance emanating from (I almost said “inset at”) the back speakers. That’s it. The strings do wrap a bit around the sides of the “hall” created in your room, but the sound is preponderantly from the front.

What might have been created, I wonder, had the engineering cues been taken from Canteloube’s highly atmospheric scoring? Had the space in which the music is created been as imaginatively treated and as deli-ciously objective, in such personal music this would have been as imaginatively treated and as delicately objective. In such personal music this would have been as imaginatively treated and as delicately objective.

Berliozian connoisseurs, however, will be better aware of these readings’ weaknesses: no real idiomatic authenticity, slapdash moments, and scant true grace. For what’s skimmed or lost here, turn to the Davis/LSO 1967 versions of Les Franc-Juges, Carnaval romain, and Coraisse (Philips 835 367) and to the Boulez/New York Philharmonic 1973 versions of the Carnaval romain, Benvenuto Cellini, and Béatrice et Bénédict (Columbia M 31799). In its SQ-disc and Q-8-cartridge editions, Columbia’s quadraphony is more strikingly effective than Angel’s back-channels-ambience-only, which in decoded playback adds some airy expansiveness but no significant panoramic enhancements. R.D.D.

Crequit’s Choice

The best classical records

BACK: Brandenburg Concertos (8). Lppard. PHILIPS 6747 166 (2), June.
BACK: Berlioz: Symphonies (9). Kempe. SERAPHIM SH 6093 (8), Aug.
Dutilleux/Lutoslawski: Cello Concertos. Rostropovich, Baudo, Lutoslawski. ANGEL S 37146, June.
Fall: Three-Cornered Hat (complete). Harpsichord Concerto. DeGaetani; Kipnis; Boulez. COLUMBIA M 33970, Aug.
Haydn: La fedeltà premiata. Dorati. PHILIPS 6707 028, June.
Vivaldi: Gloria, Kyrie, Credo. COROZ. RCA GOLD SEAL ACL 1 1340, Aug.
Early Music Quartet: Music of the Minstrels. TELEFUNKEN 6 41928, July.

Critics' Choice

reviewed in recent months

Back: Brandenburg Concertos (8). Lppard. PHILIPS 6747 166 (2), June.
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cately detailed as the orchestrations—if it had not seemed as chained to the acoustics of the studio—it might have worked as an ineffable spell.

R.L.

CHOPIN: Piano Works. Emanuel Ax, piano
(Peter Dellheim, prod.) RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-1569, $6.98.


In most ways, this is an eloquent and impressively played Chopin recital. Ax, who has developed a gooily degree of color and propulsion with its sophisticated near-quotations, has an easy command of all passagework that allows him to put effects into place with almost nonchalant ease. His way with the E major Scherzo, for example, is not highly declamative, but within its seeming rhythmic sobriety one discovers a wealth of nuance and rarefied, confiding introspection.

Details are similarly well-gauged in the ensuing Polonaise-Fantaisie, although here one begins to miss a bit of urgency and sparkling tonal definition in climactic portions. This same half-quickly applies even more strongly to Ax's version of the early Polonaise brillante, Op. 22, a graceful virtuosic piece that ideally requires some crystalline, harder-cored glitter than seems to be forthcoming from this exceptionally reserved young artist. The B major Nocturne Op. 15 is particularly well in this aristocratic reading—understandable enough, since it is the least dramatic of the pieces included here.

It may be unfair to lay all the burden of unassertiveness on Ax's shoulders, for RCA's pleasant enough reproduction is a trifle dull tonally and tends toward dusty breakup at climaxes. On the whole, this release shows gratifying interpretive growth, and I recommend it highly.

H.G.

Dohnányi: Variations on a Nursery Song, Suite in F sharp minor, Op. 34, Bela Siki, piano; Seattle Symphony Orchestra, Milton Katims, cond. [Milton Katims and Glen White, prod.] TURNABOUT TV-S 34623, $3.98.


Comparison—Dohnányi variations: Dohnányi/Boult/Royal Phil. Ang S 35538

Dohnányi and Rachmaninoff, a distinguished pair of musical reactionaries, were both illustrious pianists who live on through their highly derivative creative efforts. Rachmaninoff's god was, by his own admission, Tchaikovsky, though he took his share from Chopin and Scriabin as well. Dohnányi, actually a superior craftsman, wrote in an essentially Brahmsian idiom, but his most famous work—the Nursery Song Variations—ranges over the entire repertory with its lithe virtuosity and structural poise a joy to hear. Milton Katims too brings a welcome touch of rigor to the orchestral framework, though a few anecdotes are lost along the way and the strings sound somewhat thin.

The biggest liability, alas, is Cristina Ortiz. To be sure, she is an efficient pianist, but there is something terribly casual and unformed about her musical and pianistic approach: Tone quality is flaccid, percussive, and mostly unvaried; charm and stylistic distinctions are all but nonexistent.

Her Dohnányi needs greater charm and flexibility, her Rachmaninoff far greater discipline and demonic thrust. And the lack of soft, delicate playing hurts both works.

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This is a good, no-frills recording of a work long overdue for a new recording. Dukas' music is both straighter, more "modern" sort of player than Dohnányi, but his clearly etched finales, with all sorts of lovely nuances and graceful, subtle bending of the tempo: each subsequent variation is endowed with strong but completely unpretentious character. There is more humor, more delicacy, more wit in the Dohnányi/Boult account, and true romantic that he was, the pianist knew instinctively how to set a phrase aloft, to keep motion by subtle rhythmic inflection. (Rachmaninoff does much the same thing in his recording of the Pagani Rhaphody.) Moreover, the recorded sound remains thoroughly competitive. Indeed, balance and details are as clear and often more meaningful than on the later tunings. Recordings like this should be available forever, but don't take a chance: Go out and get your copy today.

Of the two new versions, my recommendation goes to the reasonably priced Turnabout. While not quite as flexible and eloquent as the Dohnányi/Boult, this account at least approximates the earlier one's craftsmanship and musical elucidation. Bela Siki, a longtime pupil of both the composer and Dukas, is obviously a fine artist whose playing ought to be far better known in this country. (His European reputation is well established.) He is a straighter, more "modern" sort of player than Dohnányi, but his clearly etched fingerwork and structural poise is a joy to hear. Milton Katims too brings a welcome touch of rigor to the orchestral framework, though a few anecdotes are lost along the way and the strings sound somewhat thin. In the end, I am glad for the after purposefulness.

An even bigger reason for acquiring the Turnabout release is the oversee orchestral suite, a lovely work that I eagerly well welcome back to the catalogue. Katims' interpretation (this is presumably the same performance once available on Desto) is first-class in every respect: full of fire, responsive in ensemble, shaped with structural penetration. The Vox pressing is excellent, and there is virtually no variation between the suite, recorded in 1967, and the variations, recorded last year—the sound in both is on the cramped side, but the clarity more than compensates.

The new Angel disc is a sonic spectacular, full of sound and fury signifying you-know-what. The young conductor Kazuhiro Koizumi does have craft and flair. He makes the melodramatic introduction to the Dohnányi a menacing, snarling declamation; by itself, this is more impressive than the other versions, but it is both unsubtle and unconnected to what follows. Similarly, the c stumbled in Variation No. 5 commands attention but fails to hold it. (How much more point and delicacy it has in the Dohnányi/Boult version, where it is more firmly registered.) Koizumi scores some of the detail points that Katims misses, but on the whole the garish, overresonant perspective and the unsuitable approach make both works sound like glorified Muzak.
Within less than ten years, three of the nineteenth century's major France-based Romantics each produced a lone three-movement symphony—César Franck in 1886, Ernest Chausson in 1890, and Paul Dukas in 1896. Interestingly, the last-composed is the most conservative. Although there are strains of the rich chromaticism that dominates the efforts of Franck and Chausson, as in the first movement's second theme, Dukas is not as concerned with color (harmonic or instrumental) as he is with a straightforward, often vigorous lyricism carried forward primarily by the strings and brass. And unlike Franck and Chausson, he does not indulge in any cyclicism.

For the most part, Dukas's symphonism has an ingenuous infectiousness to it, whether in the almost swashbuckling heroics of the first movement's theme or in the quiet, elegiac meditation that opens the second. I must say that the symphony seems to run out of inspiration around the middle of the second movement. This is largely compensated for, however, by the crisp and totally committed performance. The orchestral vitality is vital to the rather empty flourishes of the finale, and to every note of the work, via Weller's unflinchingly dynamic interpretation. And everything greatly benefits from vibrantly present, up-close recorded sound. This is not, as is claimed on the jacket, the first stereo version, and I have no doubt that the superiority of both performance and sonics over the Martinon/ORTF version available in France on Pathe (2C 069 12139), it might as well be.

Weller's Sorcerer's Apprentice brought chills to my spine for the first time in many, many hearings of this work, which is one chesnute I've never grown tired of. Both conductor and orchestra bring to this rendition the same incisiveness and dramatic tension that pervade their performance of the symphony, and the way in which the instrumental effects become an integral part of this tension is downright exciting. R.S.B.

**Dukas**

Dinu Ghezzo (born 1941) is a Romanian composer now living in Los Angeles, where he received a UCLA doctorate in composition in 1973. He has developed a style that is largely static—or at least very slow-moving—in harmonic organization and in which themes must stand on rich chromatic instrumental writing, often incorporating aleatory elements. Only one of the four works included here, Thalla, written in 1974 and scored for a seventeen-piece chamber ensemble, confines itself entirely to unaltered instrumental sounds (although an electronic piano is employed). Organized around a central piano cadenza, this work's basic technical feature is the massing of motivic fragments over sustained harmonic complexes.

Rituellen (1969), for piano solo, consists of a dialogue contrasting normal piano tones with "prepared" tones. (Some of the strings are prepared, and others are left unaltered.) The composer, by selecting the proper pitches, can obtain either type of timbre for any given segment from this one instrument.) The strings inside the piano are also used at times for harp-like glissandos. The title is derived from a reiterative, "ritualistic" rhythmic figure that plays a prominent role in the middle of the work's five sections.

More interesting, to my mind, are the two pieces that make use of electronic techniques: Music for Flutes and Trumpet and Krones for flute, cello, and harpsichord. In both of these the instruments are pre-recorded and play with and against themselves, and there also are electronic echo effects (by means of a piece of equipment called an Echoplex). The echo passages are especially effective in Music for Flutes and Trumpet, where inventive use is made of all four members of that instrumental family: bass, alto, soprano (the normal C flute), and piccolo.

All of Ghezzo's music seems rather loosely put together, the individual sections being much more interesting as isolated compositional fragments than as components of a larger design. (This despite the fact that, in the tape pieces, entire sections reappear in recorded form as "accompaniments" to new material.) Nevertheless, the colorful surface, as well as the brilliant instrumental writing, lends the music considerable interest, and the performances are all quite good. The disc is well recorded, and the liner notes are helpful.

**Handel**

It has become fashionable to judge Messiah recordings by the smallness of the chorus and the largeness of the oboe and bassoon sections, by the use of double-dotting and ornamentation. Important as these things are in avoiding Victorian stuffiness, more important to me is the sense that the performers are freshly appraising the dramatic and affective meaning of each movement of this overfamiliar masterpiece. By that criterion, this new Erato-derived issue joins the three or four most interesting Messiahs ever made.

Leppard's musicology is all in order. He uses authentic scoring (edition not specifically identified) free of the Mozart, Proust, or Goossens retouchings. Wind doublings are discreet but basically evident (e.g., the lovely blends of oboes and upper choral lines). Vocal and instrumental forces are moderate in size. Naturally, the work is

**Angel**

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complete in English, with only one alternative setting: "Their sound is gone out" is a tenor aria rather than a chorus. Allo takes over for bass in "But who may abide" though not in "Thou art gone up on high." Continuo is varied between harpsichord (usually on recitatives and slow arias) and organ (for choruses), with cello and double bass plus one or another keyboard instrument on the faster arias. This affords more textural variety than usual and also permits the conductor to officiate from the harpsichord at least some of the time.

Dotted-rhythm fanatics will not be completely satisfied here—again, discretion is the word. The place to go for that device in extremis is Somary (Vanguard VQ 10000/2, a decent bargain-priced set with at least one outstanding performance, from bass Justino Diaz). On embellishment, Leppard stands somewhere between the minimal usage of Davis and Richter and the highly florid manner of Bonynge and Mackerras/Angel. Some may take exception to the bass plus one or another keyboard instrument (usually on recitatives and slow arias) and the occasional use of a harpsichord (angel) and a small tone poem about the god who accidentally killed the beautiful boy he loved: the last movement is an autumnal threnody, a setting, for alto, of a poem by Georg Trakl. It is based—like all the pieces on this disc—on a row with definite tonal colorings, in the form of triadic shapes.

*Wiegenlied der Mutter Gottes* followed at Christmastime; Henze found the words printed in a program book at the local theater, and set them the next day. (They are a translation from Lope de Vega; the note does not mention that Wolf used the same poem, in a different translation, in the Spanisches Liederbuch, as did Brahms for his Geistliches Wiegenlied.) Henze's setting is for unison children's voices and nine instruments—a calm, tender piece, moving slowly, and beautifully harmonized. Henze says he never heard it until he made the recording. He has every reason to be pleased with the way it sounds.

Labyrinth dates from his attachment to the Wiesbaden Ballet, in 1951. It is a brief (under nine minutes), spare score: six short movements for Theseus, Ariadne, and the Minotaur—a "psychological" opera, "a brief story of economical gestures, often MQ in timbre and shape. It seems theatrical enough but is possibly somewhat lean in sound—and too epigrammatic—for use in any but very small theaters.

These early works—predating the opera Boulevard Solitude, which established Henze as Germany's most successful young composer—are perhaps interesting mainly as "documentation." They show his flair, his mastery of techniques, and his thoughtfulness. But it was only after Boulevard Solitude that Henze, still in his forties, established himself in particular, poetic, and rhapsodic voice. The Emperor's Nightingale was written in 1959, on a visit (from Italy) to Germany, while staying in a room—the note says—situated above an aviary with Chinese nightingales in it. Henze uses the fashionable introspection of that time, and the short, breathless, expressive and representational purpose: The rippling flute represents the nightingale, and the piccolo the mechanical nightingale: the tinkle and plink, chatter and boom of modest percussion conjure up the Oriental atmosphere. The piece is associated with a bass clarinet. The work is at once a flute concerto and a theater score (a pantomime rather than a ballet), first staged.
at the Fenice, Venice, in 1959. It is also, one might say, a little demonstration of the power of true lyricism opposed to mere contrivance. The "natural" bird can count, and knows about octave displacement within a row—yet its melodious song is spontaneous and beautiful. The score, whose rhythmic organization is both subtle and clear, should lend itself to puppet presentation.

After the excellent results achieved by Henze and the London Sinfonietta on other discs, these performances are a shade disappointing. Not the Wiegenlied, which is movingly done by all concerned; not Anna Reynolds' grave, warm contribution to Apollo. But neither John Constable, the harpsichord soloist, nor Sebastian Bell, the flute soloist—both of whom I know as first-rate players—sounds quite on top of his music. The recording is carefully made, well balanced, fresh in sound; the surfaces of my copy were impeccable.

**MOZART:** Canons and Songs. Members of the Berlin Soloists, Dietrich Knothe, cond. PHILIPS 6500 917, $7.98.

The canon was for centuries regarded, with the fugue, as the touchstone of the composer's capabilities. Curiously, though, this involved contrapuntal device originated in popular music—the rounds—and, alongside its highly complicated employment from the Netherlands to Schoenberg, the spirit of this popular provenance never disappeared. As early as the seventeenth century we encounter publications of collections of canons with the subtitle "for those who want to study the art of composition," but also "for the pleasant merryment of lovers of music"—that is, canons for social occasions and parlor games.

During the classic era (except in incidental passages and in archaizing church music) canons appeared as musical delicacies in the minuets and trios of cyclic works; as a matter of fact, there seems to have been a sort of tradition of employing canons at these particular spots. But most independent canons were composed for amusement: in letters, dedications, entries in family albums, and jokes, supplying vignettes for the social occasions of the musically sophisticated middle class.

Mozart composed several serious works in this form (not counting the exercises written as a student of Padre Martini), but most of his canons poke fun at someone or something, in scatological barracks poetry of Mozart's own. He was interested in the genre, copying the works of other composers for further study, a practice that at times makes identification difficult. His canons were popular and well disseminated; those addressed to a named person were often applied to others by substituting a different addressee. These little epigrams testify to great if usually hidden skill. They have bite and tang. They are exuberant, uninhibited, and inventive, though uneven in quality.

Aware that the jest is likely to miss fire if there is too much elaboration in its preparation, Mozart used his redoubtable contrapuntal ability lightly, yet the sophistication, perhaps not immediately apparent, is considerable. For instance, he will begin with a simple theme in even rhythm but end it with a fast little pattern of an appendix; as the imitation separates the parts, this little appendix shows up unexpectedly among the comfortably ambling even notes, creating a very comical effect. Some of these tiny compositions are so-called mixed canons, with homophonic inserts; others, like "O du eselhafter Martin," are veritable miniature opera buffa scenes—in canon.

A word must be said about the texts. In their own time no eyebrows were raised because of their bawdy humor. The Austrians were an easygoing lot, addicted to low-life humor, and, while the quality of this humor is not comparable to the elegant frivolities of the French Renaissance chanson, the phenomenon is the same. The great religious composer Orlandus Lassus set to music highly spiced poems that go far beyond the merely scatological, yet it was Mozart's innocent childish smut ("Der schmutzige Mozart," my colleague David Hamilton has wittily called him) that has caused anguish to his admirers. They did not know how to equate it with the Apollonian picture they had of the composer; even his distinguished biographer, Hermann Abert, sidestepped the issue. As soon as the canons reached the north the offending texts were replaced by "decent" ones by Messrs. Breitkopf and Hartel, the publishers themselves.

To my surprise, while the performers on this recording sing all the original texts, the...
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expressive achievement in song-writing. His attempt to match the suggestive verbal music of poets like Blok, Bely, and Solzub leads him to emphasize color, texture, and conclusion, rather than the expansive melody that is so striking a feature of his early songs. The set of fourteen that comprises Op. 34 contains several notable dramatic pieces, like "Discord" and "What wealth of rapture," the latter having a particularly impressive piano part.

Elisabeth Soderstrom, most intelligent of singers, is very responsive to this music. But it is a pity that the sound she produces these days is not more pure and reliable. Her tone is often inadequately supported and there are a few lapses in intonation. The more lyrical songs-e.g., "O cease thy singing"—need a fresher, more plant voice. The "Vocalise" (written for the pure light soprano of Antonina Nezhlanova) is labored in the dramatic and emotionally more complex material (especially Op. 34), Soderstrom's musicianship and intelligence come to the fore: here she is often distinguished, if rarely emotionally convincing.

Vladimir Ashkenazy is a deft and sensitive partner, equally commanding in early and late songs alike. His playing of the important accompaniment to "Daisies" (later arranged by Rachmaninoff as a piano solo) and the postlude to "What wealth of rapture" is very impressive. Fine recording.

For all its flaws, this is a treasurable and irreplaceable recording, decidedly welcome transliterations and translations. D.S.H.

SCHOENBERG: Pierrot lunaire, Op. 21. Erika Stroistry-Wagner, speaker; Rudolf Kolisch, violin and viola; Stefan Auber, cello; Leonard Posella, flute and piccolo; Kalman Bloch, clarinet and bass clarinet; Edward Steuermann, piano; Arnold Schoenberg, cond ODYSSEY Y 33791, $3.98 (mono) [from COLUMBIA ML 4471, recorded September–October 1940].

For all its flaws, this is a treasurable and irreplaceable recording, decidedly welcome back in the catalogues after an absence of a decade. I should like to be able to report that the sound is better than before—it isn't, for this is evidently the same tape dubbing from the 78-rpm originals that was used for ML 4471. (In fact, the Odyssey stamper appears to be only the second one cut from that master tape, which suggests that Columbia didn't sell very many copies of the earlier version.)

In any case, the serious registration flaws are of a sort not easily cleaned up by electronic improvement: balance and dynamic range. The gently audible surface noise, and a bumpy start to No. 18 should not trouble you if you want to hear Pierrot conducted by its composer—the only commercial studio recording he ever made.

Schoenberg was reasonably satisfied with these discs: in 1948, he wrote to Hans Rosbaud about them: "In some respects—tempo, presentation of mood, and above all the playing of the instrumentalists—they are really good, even very good. They are not so good with respect to the balance of instrumentalists and recitation. I was a little annoyed by the idea of overemphasis on the speaker—who, after all, never sings the theme, but, at most, speaks against it, while the themes (and everything else of musical importance) happen in the instruments. Perhaps, because I was annoyed, I reacted a little too violently, out of contrari-ness, and forgot that one must, after all, be able to hear the speaker. So she is really drowned out in several places. That should not be."

Particularly satisfying to Schoenberg was the participation of three old comrades-at-arms, the actress Erika Wagner (wife of the conductor Fritz Stiedry), violinist Rudolf Kolisch (Schoenberg's son-in-law), and pianist Edward Steuermann, all of whom had been performing Pierrot for some twenty years. To Erwin Stein, he wrote in 1942 that "the other members of the ensemble were quite good, but not as good as our men."

I haven't a great deal to add to these rather authoritative criticisms, except to note a further flaw of the balance—the piano and the low instruments are at a decided disadvantage with respect to their colleagues—and my feeling that Frau Stroistry-Wagner is not as musically secure (in terms of ensemble) as a number of singers that have followed her. This recording is not the place to begin an acquaintance with Pierrot. For that, take a modern version that exposes its textures more airily, that requires less work from the listener; I particularly recommend Thomas and Davies (Unicorn RHS 319), DeGaetani and Weis-berg (Nonesuch H 71251), or Beardslee and Craft (Columbia M2S 679). Then you will be in a position to sort out and appreciate the delicacy and elegance of Kolisch's playing, the wit of Stroistry-Wagner's delivery, and— if you listen very carefully—the force and clarity of Steuermann's work at the piano.

You will also own a text and translation, which Odyssey doesn't provide—just a reprint of the notes from the original issue and a good deal of white space, which might at least have been used for some documentation. (They don't even tell when the recording was made) D.S.H.

STRAVINSKY: Oedipus Rex.
Narrator: Jean Cocteau (in French).
Stravinsky's Cologne recording of Oedipus was the first ever, and a very fine one. The soloists are all first-rate; Pears and Rehfuss even more than that; the chorus is vigorous and precise; the orchestra plays with clarity and force. As the then the fashion, the balance is voice-heavy, but surprisingly little is lost, thanks to the clarity of the textures. And Cocteau's elegantly haughty delivery of his narration is quite unforgettable, even in comparison with what we are used to very backward in placement. Few of us. It has been a while, longer sound, often congested and, by comparison, would call it attractive in itself, especially when heard at full volume. Moreover, in the last few years her voice has started to harden and lose suppleness, and the top has become more effortful, harsher in sound.

Te many Western ears Galina Vishnevskaya's vocal production must seem distinctly odd. She produces a rather dead, flat sound, often congested and, by comparison, would call it attractive in itself, especially when heard at full volume. Moreover, in the last few years her voice has started to harden and lose suppleness, and the top has become more effortful, harsher in sound. Vishnevskaya, clearly no mere note-spinner, is just as clearly a great singer. 

It would, I feel, be wrong to overlook these considerations. Luckily, it isn't necessary to do so. Vishnevskaya, clearly no mere note-spinner, is just as clearly a great singer. 

Singapore and Symphony Orchestra, Igor Stravinsky, cond. Odyssey 7 33999, $3.98 (mono) [from Columbia ML 4644, recorded October 1951]

Stravinsky: Oedipus Rex.

Narrator

Michael Wager (in English)

Tatiana Troyanos (me)

Rene Kollo (l)

Shepherd

Frank Hoffmeister (i)

Creon

Tom Krause (i)

Helmuth Krebs (i)

Messenger

Olaf Finzel (i)

OTTO von FRIETH (os)

Harvard Glee Club; Boston Symphony Orchestra; Leonard Bernstein, cond. [John McClure, prod.] Columbia M 33999, $6.98 [from M4X 33032, 1975].
melismatic ending of "If I had only known"—glides from her throat as easily as water from a spring. Yet the glory of her singing is its wide range of colors. In "Sleep, my poor friend" her voice mirrors a whole spectrum of feelings from the consolatory to the anguished: in "Why?" the emotional numbness that succeeds betrayal: in "Was I not a little blade of grass?" the progression of deception. With the exception of "Cradle Song" and "It was in the early spring," all these songs are sad, yet in her hands there is noth-

less. With the exception of "Cradle Song" and "It was in the early spring," all these songs are sad, yet in her hands there is nothing morbid about them, only a clear and illuminating sense that human unhappiness is infinitely curative.

A large share in the success of this recital must be ascribed to Matiaslav Rostropovich, a true partner in his complete identification with the soprano's intentions and an equally great master of tonal variety. His delicacy in the accompaniment of "If I had only known," like his lyricism in the postlude to "Why?" is simply astonishing. This is, in other words, a necessary record. I can only ask Angel not to delay with a Mus-

ical record of songs and Dances of Death. Trans-
ratered texts, translations. D.S.H.

THOMSON: The Plow That Broke the Plains; The River; Autumn*. Ann Mason Stockton, harp; Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Ne-
ville Marriner, cond. [Christopher Bishop, prod.] Angel, S 37300, $6.98 (SQ-encoded disc).

For those who like their Americana mild, without the incisiveness of a Copland or an Ives, the Plow That Broke the Plains (1930) and The River (1937) film-score suites on this disc may have some appeal. Still, it seems to me that neither Virgil Thomson nor the cinema is very well represented in these watery, undistinguished excursions into diverse American idioms, from pseudo-Indian through folksong and blues to cavalry charge. And the use of Neville Marriner, whose interpretations are decisively wooden, seems to have been a gross miscalculation.

I like better the occasionally modal Au-
tumn, a concerto for harp, strings, and percussion composed in 1964 and based on several much earlier works. A good deal of the piece's attractiveness, however, may be due to the inherent charm of the harp, which is underrecorded here to the extent of sounding for the most part like just another instrument of the orchestra. In fact, the recorded sound, which is severely lack-

ing in highs, is about as low fidelity as I have heard on a modern disc (The River, on Side 2, gets much better treatment than the other two works.) R.S.B.

VERDI: II Corsaro. For an essay review, see page 77.

VERDI: Luisa Miller.

Luisa
Fedora
Laura
Rodolfo
A Pleasant
Mario
Count Walter
Wurm

Montserrat Caballe (s)
Anna Reynolds (ms)
Amelita Celine (ms)
Luciano Pavarotti (t)
Fernando Pavarotti (t)
Sherrill Milnes (b)
Bonnie Granick (ds)
Richard Van Allan (os)

London Opera Chorus. National Philhar-
monic Orchestra. Peter Maag, cond. [Ray Minshull, prod.] London OSA 13114, $20.94 (three discs, automatic sequence).

This new recording of Luisa Miller eclipses the RCA set of 1965, which had Anna Moffo, Carlo Bergonzi, and Cornell Mar-

neil as its principals. (The old Cetra ver-

sion, with Lucy Kelston and Giacomo Lauri-Volpi, was never more than stopgap; and a remoto for the tenor's fans.) That much is clear, even though in the casting of the new version only one of the roles, Luisa, is sung with marked superiority to its coun-

terpart on the earlier set: in other respects, the RCA principals are at least a match for, and on occasion better than, London's. So why this definite preference? Because, as

Conrad L. Osborne said when reviewing the RCA (November 1965), it is "one of those recordings whose whole seems somehow less than the sum of its parts": and as

John Steane, reviewing the new version in

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Partly, it is a matter of sound. The Lon-

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ductor. Fausto Cleva was brisk, direct, thoroughly able, not very moving. Peter Maag realizes more strongly the emotional force, the rhythmic tensions, the sharp dra-

matic contrasts, and the eloquent colors of an orchestra that is often asked to "speak" thoughts so intense that the characters can hardly utter them. Much of Luisa is very beautifully scored. Maag also has the inner band: the "National Philharmonic Orches-

tra" is a title for some of London's best players when they come together in the stu-

dio. Conductor, players, and engineers con-

spire to make the most of the score—yet without ever overpowering the singers or intruding in any unseemly way on the vocal drama.

The title-role is difficult to cast. Verdi de-

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...and, indeed, perhaps even Otello and Falstaff might seem transitional if they had had successors. (Though it is hard to imagine!) After the French interlude and Puris-composed Il Corsaro and La Battaglia di Legnano, Luisa marks a return to Italy in a musical as well as a residential sense. There is considerable Donizetti influence on it, not only in "Quando le sere." Moreover, the libretto is by the author of Lucia, Salvatore Cammarano, and it opens with an old-fashioned Rossini-type introduction, presenting the soloists within a choral context. But the experienced librettist worked closely to Verdi's prescriptions, and put all his skill at the service of effective realization of the composer's individual ideas. Musically and textually, Luisa represents not so much retrogression as the advance of Verdi's new dramatic notions into familiar territory, which it then enriches. (The "thematic development," the refashioning of basic motifs from the overture in at least seven other important themes, is one remarkable feature.) And I have never heard it sound so adventurous and accomplished and consistent a score as in this new London performance.

A. P.

WAGNER: Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg (nearly complete recording).

Eva

\[Masa Mulier (s)\]

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From the small print on the album back and from the discreet omission of any descriptive phrase such as “Gesamtaufnahme” (complete recording), the German reading buyer will learn that this Meistersinger recording is a Venus de Milo of sorts. Two segments are missing from the surviving material: in Act I, the Walther/Eva scene and the subsequent byplay of the apprentices, and in Act III, the climax of the scene in the shoemaker’s house. From Sachs “Ein Kind war hier geboren” through the quintet into the beginning of the interlude, this is regrettable indeed, but it may be that we can get no closer to Furtwängler’s way with Wagner. Though the interlude. This is regrettable indeed, but it may be that we can get no closer to Furtwängler’s way with Wagner. Though the interlude

So this is evidently it: even more of a documentary, noncompetitive item than the RAI Ring cycle—though not to be resisted on that account by anyone who admires Furtwängler’s way with Wagner. Though vocally even more of a mixed bag than the Ring, let alone the studio Tristan, it belongs on the same shelf, for the conception is even more of a mixed bag than the Ring, let alone the studio Tristan, it belongs

If this is the case, the orchestra is strongly weighted in favor of the character. When playing opposite Beckmesser, he doesn’t add up to any kind of consistent persona. In the Sachs scene, though he has plenty of strong tone, but he evidently felt the need to conserve his resources some of the time. Whatever we may feel about what was going on in Germany at the time (and perhaps after Vietnam, it is easier for Americans to understand the position of some Germans who remained), we cannot help sensing that the celebration of German art— as distinguished from German power—was some essential sort of anchor to sanity.

Neither chorus nor orchestra quite measures up to the best Bayreuth has offered at other times. But they are good enough—and numerous enough—to make the conductor’s points unequivocally. The recorded sound diminishes as the performance goes on, though naturally the total dynamic range is never very wide. Much stage noise is captured, some of it annoying (Beckmesser’s chalk marks sound more like whip strokes), but most of it contributing tangibly to the atmosphere.

The cast, typically for Bayreuth in the Hitler years, was drawn from the Berlin State Opera. In earlier years, that would have meant the impressive Rudolf Bockelmann as Sachs, but he sang his last Bayreuth performances in 1942. So we have Jaro Prohaska, a puzzling singer indeed. Even at age fifty-two, he could put out plenty of strong tone, but he evidently felt the need to conserve his resources some of the time (it is, after all, a very long part, with much strenuous singing at the end of the evening). Unfortunately, his soft singing is far less satisfying than his belting, and he hasn’t any intermediate possibilities to offer. In Act I he sounds dry and uninfrij, nor is there much bloom for the claves of the Pfeifermonolog. Beginning with “Jerunml!” he starts socking it out and manages to reach the end of the opera with plenty of clout.

Perhaps this made its effect in the theater. To the mere auditor, however, it doesn’t add up to any kind of consistent characterization. When playing opposite the sdler among his colleagues, Prohaska tends to tone his delivery to match theirs. When opposite Max Lorenz’s strained Walther or on his own, restraint is casti to the winds. Between the desiccated, almost
Beckmesserish moments and the beer-hall heartiness, one seeks in vain any consistent resemblance to the shoemaker-poet we know and love.

The bright spot in the casting—we'll hold the other bad news for a while—is very bright indeed: an exquisite, impeccably sung Eva from Maria Müller. (According to EMI's booklet, she was fifty-four at the time, but other sources, including the Kutsch-Riemens dictionary, Baker's, and Harold Rosenthal, give her birthdate as 1898, which seems much more plausible. Can any reader offer authoritative information?) Although this recording is contemporaneous with the Preiser Lohengrin, in which Müller sang a disappointing, apparently over-the-hill Elsa, the role of Eva makes very different demands, all of which she is able to meet. She really knows how to sing conversationally, not throwing the tone away for a verbal effect. Only Schwarzkopf, in Karajan's 1951 Bayreuth recording, draws a comparably complex Eva, suggesting even in the simplest exchanges a woman of not inconsiderable manipulative resources when she wants to get her way—but Müller does it more inwardly, with much less obvious artifice. A lovely performance, capped with a richly wardly, with much less obvious artifice. A

...continued.

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intellectual elite to which its relish mainly has been confined in the past.

Thanks to his television fame, Randall stands a better chance than any previous celebrity of triumphing over that second challenge—especially since Columbia has improved the odds markedly by the inspired choice of that ageless musical genius (himself a mass-public favorite), Arthur Fiedler. Moreover, he’s also had the common sense to provide some guide through the tropical forest of Sitwellian language by augmenting the provided leaflet of printed texts with a glossary defining some eighty of the more obscure terms in the poet’s baroque vocabulary. Why did no one ever think of something as obvious yet as helpful long before now?

Nor does the first challenge bother the (here appropriately) brash Randall, although he has the tenacity to tackle all twenty-one poems by himself. (Usually they are divided between two readers; even when Sitwell, who had previously collaborated with Lambert and Pears, was featured alone in the 1949 Columbia version, now Odyssey Y 32359, she omitted the “Tarantella” entirely and used a surrogata, David Horner, in the “Tango-popadoble.”) Randall wisely makes no attempt to suggest the inimitable Sitwellian profundity and glossolalia in “Black Mrs. Beneath”. “Long Steel Grass,” “Jodelling Song,” etc., that the poet made so uniquely her own. Yet he is plausibly effective in his own way and only occasionally succumbs to what must be an almost irresistible temptation to overact.

Where Randall excels, perhaps better than anyone since Lambert in the c. 1930 record premiere, is in the machine-gun rattling pyrotechnica pallier pieces (“Polka,” “Tango-popadoble,” “Scotch Rhapsody,” etc) where the sense of the words is their sound and rhythmic impact. Even here, comparisons are more than normally odious: Each of the seven or so earlier versions, four of which remain in print, has distinctive individualities, with special appeals in the three in which Sitwell participated and the exceptionally authoritative and stylish 1972 Ashcroft/Scofield Argo recording (ZRG 649) conducted by the composer himself. In the new release, however, the special appeal of soloist Randall is prodigiously augmented by Fiedler’s high-voltage directional snap and taut control, by the truly virtuoso playing of the seven instrumentalists who make up the collaborating rather than accompanying Columbia Chamber Ensemble, and perhaps most significantly by the superb virtuosity and arranging presence of that state-of-the-art stereo recording.

Turin, Arturo Basile, cond.* Turin Symphony Orchestra, Gianandrea Gavazzeni, cond.* CETRA LPL 69001, $7.98 [“recorded June 1956, rechanneled, recorded June 1974” (distributed by Columbia/RCA)]


The program is excellent, but this material makes even more extreme demands on the interpreter’s vocal finish—the ability to shape color. Point at first hearing. Gencer’s almost complete disregard for articulation markings—phrasing, dynamics, and the like—seems appallingly insensitive. Closer listening makes clear that she really hasn’t much choice. When, on occasion, there is a phrase that she is able to sing softly, she may risk it rather than attempt dynamic gradations beyond her powers. In consequence, however, she revitalizes the material (“Donizetti’s exquisite “La Correspondenza amorosa” is a travesty,” especially unfortun

GRANT JOHANNESEN: Bach and Mozart Works. Grant Johannesen, piano. GOLDEN CREST CR50 4142, $6.98 (4-CD boxed set)


With his even fingercost and symmetrical phrasing, Grant makes the last of the most tasteful piano virtuosos. This collection of Bach and Mozart, though engineered uncomfortably closely, comes across with great balance and high performance.

The Bach pieces are played in a pianistic manner that never leaves the listener's restless, linear qualities of the music. Especially like the robust, accented perfor
Variations too are a joy: The proximity of the S. 906 Fantasy. Mozart's Duport more atmospheric sound reproduction here (much) broadening at phrase ends. Perhaps purely enough, and there is some (not the first movement are not projected quite disappointment: The contrapuntal lines in Mozart D major Sonata are there grounds for zart. Piano. SERAPHIM S 60251, $3.98.

As both live performer and recording artist Gérard Souzay has been the public for some thirty years. As it happens, two of his very first 78s—a group of duets with the great Germaine Lubin—have recently been reissued in France, and those fresh, charming performances make melancholy listening after Seraphim's new recital.

Souzay shows so little command over his resources in the openings Schubert group that one can only register astonishment at its inclusion on this disc. Neither the Schumann songs nor the French selections manifest quite the same vocal deterioration, and there are some memorable passages, especially in the latter, when Souzay shows himself capable of summoning enough voice to do his artistic intentions justice: in the "Chanson du pécheur," for example, or again in the four last measures of "Où voulez-vous aller?" But there is hardly a passage where the voice does not sound excessively dry and inelastic; only in the middle register at full volume does he sound comfortable. Souzay's many years of first-rate artistry deserve a better testimonial than this.

Dalton Baldwin, however, is wonderful throughout. The ease and sensitivity with which he plays such difficult assignments as "L'Invitation au voyage" are quite outstanding. The recording is good, my pressing noisy. There are no texts, only inadequate prose synopses in English. D.S.H.

Paul Zukofsky and Bob Dennis: Classic Rags and Other Novelties. Paul Zukofsky, violin; Bob Dennis, piano. SRV 350 SD, $3.98.

Paul Zukofsky is one of the more cerebral violin virtuosos in our midst today, and the prospect of his playing ragtime may at first seem as unlikely as Woodrow Wilson doing the samba. His involvement is more than a passing one, however. The album notes inform us that he has published a set of Scott Joplin arrangements and has been performing rags in concert for several years.

There are some of us who will go to our graves, I suppose, feeling that rags fit the fiddle and that there is something basically gimmicky about the current transplants to solo violin. The pieces simply need the counter-moving line of the piano left hand, and turning the piano into an accompanying voice to the violin's melody line just doesn't accomplish the same thing. Zukofsky, in the foreword to his Joplin edition, pleads a case for the legitimacy of the violinists' claim on ragtime: "We know that the violin was a strong part of Joplin's sonic world, and it cannot be a total coincidence that so many of the right hands of his rags "lie" perfectly for the instruments without any revision." Well, maybe so.

In any case, Zukofsky plays the pieces with grace, though at times in a highly idiosyncratic manner—an extreme slow tempo in Clarence Woods's Slippery Elm Rag, with double stops rendered with much use of portamento; a dangerously slow tempo (and almost sotto voce) in Joseph Lamb's Old Rag. Elsewhere the performances are jauntier in rhythm, more sensuous in tone, more colorful. Not better, mind, you, just flashier.

S.F.
Blue Oyster Cult—the thinking man’s heavy-metal rock band primed for the big kill.

BLUE OYSTER CULT: Agents of Fortune. Eric Bloom, Albert Bouchard, Donald (Buck Dharma) Roeser, Joe Bouchard, and Allen Lanier, vocals and instrumentals. This Ain’t the Summer of Love; True Confessions; (Don’t Fear) The Reaper; seven more. [Murray Krugman, Sandy Pearlman, and David Lucas, prod.] COLUMBIA PC 34164, $6.98. Tape: EL PC 34164, $7.98; PCA 34164, $7.98.

With three studio albums, a double-record set, and a sizable collection of fanatical fans already under its collective belt, Long Island’s Blue Oyster Cult seems primed for the big kill. “Agents of Fortune,” the group’s latest, should be the LP to make that score.

With its first discs, the Cult established itself as a “thinking man’s” heavy-metal rock band. The lyrics, for example, were chock-full of cloaked references to the technocratic age, among other sinister subjects, challenging listeners on both the cerebral and the visceral level. It seems, though, that the group was too smart for its own good; insanely clever lyrics, an awesomely sinister image, and neat playing are a bit much for audiences bred on primitive, three-chord rock.

Here, however, the abstruseness is forsaken. In its place, the Cult’s members are given a chance to flex their individual musical muscles. Guitarist Allen Lanier makes his vocal debut on two of his own compositions, “Tenderloin” and “True Confessions,” with his voice and singing style sufficiently justifying his Rolling Stones roots. Lead guitarist Don Roeser continues to pursue his somewhat ethereal song-writing with “The Reaper,” a cut that takes the group to the fringes of progressive jazz-rock. An unnerving appearance by Patti Smith on “The Revenge of Vera Genuine” does its part in keeping this album suitably off-center.

Yes, there’s something for everyone in this latest outpouring from the Blue Oyster Cult hopper. That’s why it should have the kind of commercial triumph one assumes the group craves.

H.E.

HOYT AXTON: Fearless. Hoyt Axton, vocals, guitars, and songs; instrumental and vocal accompaniment, Larry Carlton, arr. Flash of Fire, Evangelina, The Devil; nine more. [David Kershenbaum, prod.] A&M SP 4571, $6.98. Tape: CS 4571, $7.98; 8T 4571, $7.98.

Here is another distinguished survivor of the fray. “Fearless,” the title of Hoyt Axton’s new album, is my favorite title of the year, but “Heedless” might be more descriptive. One needs heedlessness to continue through the lacquer jungle with heart but without mental malaria, and Axton has been bringing it off for years.

His first major act of survival came at the fading of the folk boom that nurtured him. Baez was another survivor, while the surface groups crumbled: The Kingstons never learned to play; it took John Stewart years afterward.

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Axton does essentially the same thing now that he did then—writes, sings, and plays his guitar and the game. He also goes on the road. (“Idol of the Band”: “And you may just be some small town mother’s daughter, but today for just a moment you were the idol of the whole damn band.”) Though he probably never meant to “stay current,” he grew. His honesty got him through the folk crash, and it will get him through discomania. Listen to him sing Bob Dylan’s “Lay Lady Lay”; I think he understands it better than its composer. Axton found his humor.

Some wonderfully fitting background vocals are headed up by Nicolette Larson. The players are Los Angeles’ finest, and for city/country energy you can’t do better than Jim Keltner, Larry Carlton, Dean Parks, and Larry Muhoberac.

Axton is at the top of his class, and this is the best of his albums.

M. A.

MONTY PYTHON: Live at City Center. Graham Chapman, John Cleese, Terry Gilliam, Eric Idle, Terry Jones, and Michael Palin, with Carol Cleveland and Neil Innes; instrumental accompaniment. Introduction/The Llama, Gumby Flower Arranging; Wrestling; World Forum, Crunchy Frog, Bruces’ Song; Travel Agent, Blackmail, Protest Song, Pet Shop, Argument Clinic, Death of Mary, Queen of Scots; ten more. [Nancy Lewis, prod.] ARISTA AL 4073, $6.98.

Monty Python’s Flying Circus is familiar to millions of Americans as the comedy troupe behind the BBC program of the same name aired over the Public Broadcasting System. This album was recorded live during a New York concert appearance early this year, and it

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contains some of Monty Python's best routines.

Among them are "Crunchy Frog," about a confectioner with peculiar products; "World Forum," in which Marx, Lenin, Che, and Mao are asked questions about British sporting events; "Pet Shop," during which a customer protests that the parrot he bought was dead when he bought it, not a Norwegian parrot "pining for the fiords," as the pet-shop owner claims, and "Argument Clinic," where a man pays to be contradicted. There also are several skits I haven't witnessed before, including "Protest Song," an absolutely marvelous spoof of the Angst-ridden singing of Leonard Cohen. The performer tells his audience, "Ladies and gentlemen, I've suffered for my country. The performer tells his audience, "Ladies and gentlemen, I've suffered for my country. I've been lined up against it, I've been blackballed, I've been blackballed, I've been blackballed, I've been blackballed, I've been blackballed," and flow ("Along the Way"). If she beats her hortoise flower image, she has a real future with words. Jones's influence is strong throughout. TOPP only by Gore's need to be stronger. To the extent that she flows with him and the extraordinary musicians he is able to enlist for his projects (names listed in credits), Gore is brought into the current market. It must have felt like walking off a plank. The truth is that Quincy Jones and Lesley Gore have grown in vastly different directions since those pubescent hits they produced brash swirls of notes that they shared. It is to their credit that the album is as strong as it is.

**Lesley Gore: Love Me by Name.** Lesley Gore, songs and vocals, rhythm, orchestral, and vocal accompaniment; arr. by Quincy Jones, Lesley Drayton, Hodges & Smith, Tommy Bruckner, John Bahler, Dave Grusin, Herbie Hancock. Immortality: Other Lady; Can't Seem to Live Our Good Times Down; six more. [Quincy Jones, prod.] A&M SP 4564, $6.98. Tape: CS 4564, $7.98; ST 4564, $7.98.

Lesley Gore has been around the track. As Donny and Marie Osmond are to the mid-Seventies, so was Gore to the Fifties, an adolescent with massive hits such as "It's My Party and I'll Cry If I Want To." Stardom is nearly always traumatic, but heaven help a star when the time comes for growing up. While I am not unmoved by these matters, neither did I rush to get Gore's new album. I despised the Fifties music that her hits represented.

All those early hits were produced by Quincy Jones, younger but operating on intuition then as now. Jones has great taste, and he's a grower. This got Gore onto my turntable.

The highlight of the album, hands down, is a song called "Love Me by Name," which must have been equally obvious to Jones since it became the title tune. It is a victim love ballad with a fragile, manic lyric by Elliot Weston, Gore's writing partner on all love ballads. They hope "Rebel" will earn worldwide attention. For months, London Records has been running "teaser" ads about the American debut LP of John Miles, an English performer rumored to be a James Dean look-alike. That disc is "Rebel," and Miles turns out to be a twenty-four-year-old composer/performer who had developed a great deal of popularity in the discos and small clubs in the midlands and north of England. He also had achieved a degree of success churning out a hit single or two featuring a "white soul" sound. With these credits behind him, Miles proceeded to London, where he acquired as producer Alan Parsons, who had worked with Pilots and Cockney Rebel. They hope "Rebel" will earn worldwide attention. This disc does have its attractions. Miles, for example, has a strong, pop-oriented voice fully capable of commanding the attention of pop listeners. The coauthor of most of these selections with bass player Bob Marshall, he is also a captivating melodicist. And his synthesizer playing produces brash swirls of notes that are compelling on their own terms.

Nevertheless, this lush, theatrical pop-rock still does not possess the distinction that marks Miles as a true original. Reports from London indicate that he is a powerful live performer. We may have to wait until Miles hits these shores before we decide finally whether he is the standout London Records has proclaimed him to be. H.E.

**Antonio Carlos Jobim: Urubu.** Antonio Carlos Jobim, vocals, keyboards, and orchestral accompaniment, Claus Ogerman, arr. and cond. Boto, Angela, Saudade do Brasil, five more. [Claus Ogerman, prod.] WARNER BROS. BS 2928, $6.98. Tape: M S 2928, $7.97; M 8928, $7.97.

Every musician I know who's worth a damn is hopelessly in love with Brazilian music. For many it is uniquely characterized by Antonio Carlos Jobim, and indeed he casts a strong shadow.

Side 1 of this set is given to a rhythm section comprising Jobim (Fender Rhodes electric piano, vocals), Ron Carter on bass, Joao Palma on drums, and Ray Armando on percussion—plus orchestral settings by Claus Ogerman. As Jobim has mellowed (or not mellowed) with the years, he has become a stunningly good lyricist—in English. While he sings strictly in Portuguese here, he whimsically includes English translations on the jacket. "Ligia" says: "I've never dreamed of you, nor have I even been to the movies, I don't like the samba, I don't like to go to Ipanema, I don't like rain, and I...

**John Miles: Rebel.** John Miles, vocals, guitars, keyboards, and synthesizers, Barry Black, drums and percussion; Bob Marshall, bass. Music; Everybody Wants Some More; Highfly, six more. [Alan Parson, prod.] LONDON PS 669, $6.98. Tape: PSS 669, $7.95; PSB 669, $7.95.

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**Critics' Choice.** The best pop records reviewed in recent months

| Count Basie and Zoot Sims: Basie and Zoot. PABLO 2310 745. June. |
| Great British Film Scores. LONDON PHASE-4 SPC 21149. June. |
| Miles Jackson: Free and in Love. SPRING SP 16709. Aug. |
| Tony Orlando & Dawn: To Be with You. ELECTRA 7E 1049. July. |
| Dory Previn: We're Children of Coincidence and Harpo Marx. WARNER BROS. BS 2928. Aug. |
| Raintree County: Original film score. ENTACTE ERS 6503 ST. June. |
| David Raksin Conducts His Great Film Scores. RCA RED SEAL APL 1-1490. Aug. |
America's birthday, mentioning such figures often very funny songs about a handful of composer has provided a host of intelligent, folksinging. In his best LP in years, the singer/ mincemeat out of the traditions of topical Bicentennial; Summer's Almost Over; Holly-
by the tune of the traditional folk-song "Little Sadie." "Reciprocity" describes a couple who get their kicks by kicking the blazes out of one another. "At Both Ends" and "Wine with Dinner" both detail the conse-
dquences of excess while not exactly disapprov-
ing of it. "California Prison Blues" discusses that state's most famous inmates, including Patty, Charlie, and Squeaky. "Talking Big Apple '75" is a talking blues about New York City, especially its current financial crisis.

As far as instrumentation goes, this record-
ing is less busy than Wainwright's recent ex-
periments with rock and roll, though for the most part it's a good deal more complex
disquieting demonstrations of talent gone
dead. While Cocker's live engagements are still
tents to regain the superstar status he had earned by the end of the 1960s. Cocker, one of the most thrilling, powerful, emotive white blues singers imaginable, had dis-
appeared from view after his brilliant "Mad
Dogs and Englishmen," which had resulted in no profits for the star because of poor fi-
ancial management.

He finally returned with a dismal LP ("Joe Cocker") and a dismal set of live con-
certs. Then three more comeback albums of uneven quality emerged as well as one or two halfhearted attempts to give concerts matching the striking performance of yore. While Cocker's live engagements are still disquieting demonstrations of talent gone to seed, "Stingray" is up to par. Recorded in Kingston, Jamaica, the disc utilizes a num-
ber of the East Coast's most noted musi-
cians and a trio of backup vocalists, all of whom expertly support Cocker's throbbing song stylings. In addition, the entire troupe has been recorded simultaneously in the studio, with no strings, horns, or produc-
tion tricks added to the tracks.

For the most part, on this recording Cocker works within the slow blues/ballad framework, allowing himself to deliver in-
tense but not exaggerated performances, even though on occasion he does work up a

As Washington, Lincoln, Audie Murphy, and Jack Ruby. "Summer's Almost Over" con-
cerns the end-of-the-season need to drain the swimming pool and lose the beer belly. "Hol-
lywood Hopeful" is pretty much as it sounds, but written to the tune of the traditional folk-
song "Little Sadie." "Reciprocity" describes a couple who get their kicks by kicking the blazes out of one another. "At Both Ends" and "Wine with Dinner" both detail the conse-
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DAVID LIEBMANN/RICHARD BEIRACH: Forgotten Fantasies. David Liebman, alto flute and tenor and soprano saxophones; Richard Beirach, piano. Troubled Peace; Repeat Performance; October 10th/4:30; Eugene; Obsidian Mirrors; Forgotten Fantasies [John Snyder, prod.] HORIZON SP 709, $5.98. Tape: CS 709, $6.98; 8T 709, $6.98.

Why lie? I know virtually nothing about David Liebman and Richard Beirach. This kind of ignorance cannot be avoided by reading all PR material accompanying review records before misplacing it, but how many of us are perfect?
The album cover, a cool black-on-black design, is too subtle for me. The back cover is another story: a frank and friendly color photo (by Ian Patrick) of the two artists caught smiling and unposed. Without this photo I would not have played the disc, which is why graphics is such a touchy and critical part of the record industry.

"Forgotten Fantasies" is an unusual project. I don’t know when you last heard a duet jazz album featuring piano and woodwind, but my last time was never. While Liebman and Beirach are fully clothed in their photo, they are fully naked in the music. Liebman is a strong, round-toned reed player. I find him particularly interesting on soprano sax, though I prefer the sound of alto flute. Beirach is an equal craftsman on piano and not afraid to show it. While he can play simply, I would not call him laid-back. His technique is aggressive and not to be ignored.

This is a free-form album. Without a rhythm section, it lacks set grooves—deliberately. Instead, energy is sought from interplay between the two musicians, and what we hear is some highly emotional and personal musical expression.

Ultimately Liebman and Beirach may suffer from intellectualism. This is a dark album, and there are moments when I wouldn’t mind hearing a bit of mindlessness for balance. But it’s a forceful showing. Liebman and Beirach are the kind of artists who garner hard-core fans and hold them.

M.A.

ERIC ANDERSEN: Sweet Surprise. Eric Andersen, vocals and guitar; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Lost in a Song: How It Goes, Dreams of Mexico; San Diego Serradene; Sweet Surprise: Down at the Cantina; Crazy River; Love Will Meet Again. [Tom Sellers, prod.] ARISTA AL 4075, $6.98. Tape: 5301-4075, $7.95; 8301-4075, $7.95.

Eric Andersen has one of the most expressive voices in folk music, but he is cursed with an either/or musical history. That is, he is either very good or quite flat and meaningless.

Over the past decade, Andersen has composed a number of brilliant songs, among them Thirsty Boots, Close the Door Lightly When You Go, and "Blue River." He has also recorded brilliant cover versions of other composers’ songs. He is one of the few singers who can tackle "Dock of the Bay" without doing dishonor to the memory of Otis Redding, who made this tune famous. And in his newest album, "Sweet Surprise," Andersen gives a fine reading of Paul Horn's "Lost in a Song," which has both a lovely melody and a pleasant lyric. Unfortunately, the seventh other songs, the bulk of them composed by Andersen, are dull—love songs imposed upon landscapes, with dignity done to neither. The one possible exception is "How It Goes," a semi-documentary view of a segment of the author’s own life. It is upbeat and, though familiar (how many songs have we heard about how someone lost himself in New York and found himself in the country?), is at least lively.

I have made this complaint often, but it bears repeating: When are contemporary singers going to realize that they would produce better albums and make more money by recording good songs written by others than by recording dull songs written by themselves? There must be a point in an artist's career when he becomes willing to forgo composers’ royalties in order to better please his audience. M.J.

JETHRO TULL: Too Old to Rock 'n' Roll; Too Young to Die! Ian Anderson, vocals, acoustic and electric guitars, flute, harmonica, and percussion; Martin Barre, electric guitar; John Evans, piano; Barriemore Barlow, drums and percussion; John Glascott, bass and vocals. Quiz Kid; Graziered Institution; Saimander; seven more. [Ian Anderson, prod.] CHRYSALIS CHR 1111, $6.98. Tape: MSC 1111, $7.97, MBC 1111, $7.97.

The artistic worth of much of Jethro Tull’s music has been hotly debated ever since group leader Ian Anderson assumed his album's role. As a band of equals. That is, though familiar (how many songs have been for the past part, mechanical and leaden. Indeed, though "Minstrel in the Gallery" was a step back to the successful "Benefit" period—arguably the group's most fruitful music-making time—that album lacked the enthralling musical interplay of "Benefit." Such interaction occurs only when musicians think of themselves as a band of equals.

"Too Old to Rock 'n' Roll; Too Young to Die!" still is dominated by Anderson, yet seems to be an attempt to reappropriate Tull's prior material. Tull's concept album, but the concept is constructed from individual songs rather than a single long piece of music. Nevertheless, the single-minded quality of much of the material makes it all a tedious experience. Anderson here casts himself as Ray Longo, a behind-the-times greedy type who, after winning a TV game show, gets picked up and then dropped by a
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Pretty, upper-class lady. Despondent, he crashes his motorbike and winds up in a hospital. So much for coherence.

Only guitarist Martin Barre rescues the listener from Anderson's self-consciously sung lyrics. Flashes of powerfully played lead guitar, however, do not an album make.

Anderson makes it clear in the liner notes that this entry is Part I of a continuing saga. With any luck, Lomas will evolve into the pop star that Anderson was five years ago and appear in an LP more compelling than this one. H.E.

TAJ MAHAL: Satisfied 'n' Tickled Too. Taj Mahal, vocals, guitar, mandolin, and harmonica; Hoshal Wright, guitar; Rudy Costia, saxophone, clarinet, kalimba, and flute; Kester Smith, drums; Earl Lindo, keyboards; Larry McDonald and Kwasdi Dzdzoroni, congas; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Satisfied 'n' Tickled Too; New E-Z Rider Blues; Black Man, Brown Man; Baby Love; Ain't Nobody's Business; Misty Morning Ride; Easy To Love; Old Time Song—Old Time Love; We Tune. [Taj Mahal, prod.] COLUMBIA PC 34103, $6.98. Tape: ** PCT 34103, $7.98; ** PCA 34103, $7.98

Taj Mahal built his reputation as a young man through his astounding ability to emulate the singing and guitar styles of some traditional country blues figures. Now he seems interested in emulating cocktail-lounge jazz as it was practiced in the 1940s and 1950s. To be sure, he has added modern elements: a trio of female soul singers, fashionable Latin percussion, a polite rhythm-and-blues beat. But by and large the aura surrounding this album is of jazz and cocktails, of Billy Eckstine vintage. In "New E-Z Rider Blues," a Taj Mahal original composition, Hoshal Wright provides a saxophone solo straight out of Cafe Society. "Baby Love" starts out as a Ray Charles-style soul ballad but quickly turns into a peaceful jazz tune, complete with violins. "Easy To Love" is so peaceful, vocal chorus and all, that one would not be surprised to hear it played in an elevator. The occasional departures from this overriding gentility are in the direction of the country blues that won Taj Mahal his audience: the title tune, Mississippi John Hurt's "Satisfied 'n' Tickled Too," and the traditional "Ain't Nobody's Business."

I do not mean to suggest that Taj Mahal's interest in smoother forms of black music is artistically unwise. He is rather good at it, and the album is an enjoyable one. The segue from "Baby Love" to "Ain't Nobody's Business" may be a bit startling, but it is not unpleasant. This jazz and middle-of-the-road music is a sonic balm for the brain, especially after hearing the mishmash that is today's soul music. If Taj Mahal can bring artistry to a field where it is desperately needed, his neglect of blues can be tolerated.

W. C. FIELDS AND ME. Original film soundtrack recording. Composed and conducted by Henry Mancini. [Sonny Burke, prod.] MCA 2092. $6.98. Tape: ** T 2092. $7.98.

It will be nice when certain record companies get past the stage of inserting excerpts from the voice tracks on film-music discs. It is almost impossible to isolate lines of narration or dialogue from a film and not have them sound pretentious at best. On this disc, when Valerie Perrine's voice announces, "I was W. C. Fields' mistress for many years," the whole thing sounds remarkably flat. And the voice of Rod Steiger as W.C. comes out sounding incredibly like Rod Steiger.

Not that it makes a great deal of difference here. Mancini's quasi-walking-music
clarinet theme is a good period piece but hardly deserves the half-dozen repetitions it gets. The "Welcome to Hollywood Theme" is a marvelously bubbly and expertly scored "another opening, another show" pastiche, and the more poignant "Carlotta's Theme" sounds much closer to identifiable Mancini. These three numbers would be appropriate on some sort of anthology, but they certainly don't provide sufficient material for an entire disc, especially with the lousy pressing. R.S.B.

GABLE AND LOMBARD. Original film sound-track recording. Composed and conducted by Michel Legrand. [Sonny Burke, prod.] MCA 2091, $6.98· Tape: ** T 2091, $7.98.

Bleak. Is there no better way to fill a piece of vinyl than with a nice theme repeated ad nauseam in a dozen mildly modified forms? Michel Legrand has again shown his flair for coming up with a pleasant, nostalgic tune filled with Summ-er-of '42-isms. He has also shown his unmistakable penchant for bombastic, superinflated pop-schlock in generally soupy arrangements of his idea fixe. Besides the Legrand monotheme, the disc has some source music enhanced by cocktail-lounge ambiance noise. R.S.B.

** THAD JONES-MEL LEWIS BAND: New Life. Thad Jones, flugelhorn; Al Porcino, Wyman Reed, Sinclair Acey, Ceci Bridgewater, Jon Faddis, Lew Soloff, Steve Furtado, and Jim Bossy, trumpets; Billy Campbell, Janice Robinson, John Mosca, Earl McIntyre, and Dave Taylor, trombones; Peter Gordon, Jim Buffett, Ray Alonge, Julius Watkins, and Earl Chapin, French horns; Don Butterfield, tuba, Jerry Dodgion, Eddie Xiques, Frank Foster, Greg Herbert, Pepper Adams, and Lou Marini, reeds; Robert Gordon, Jim Buffington, Ray Alonge, Julius Watkins, and Earl Chapin, French horns; Don Butterfield, tuba, Jerry Dodgion, Eddie Xiques, Frank Foster, Greg Herbert, Pepper Adams, and Lou Marini, reeds; Roland Hanna and Walter Norris, pianos; George Shearing, guitar; Ross Coggin, bass; Barry Finnerty and David Spinozza, guitars; Leonard Gibbs, congas. Little Rascal on a Swing; Forever Lasting; Cherry Juice; four number medley; "Welcome to Hollywood Theme"; "Vesper's Drag"; "Shame;" "Squeeze Me"; "Viper's Drag." The "Welcome to Hollywood Theme" has been around for a few years in the States during World War II, has spent his entire career there. Early in 1976, when he played his first American engagement in almost thirty years at the Cookery in New York, he recorded this representative collection of his current work.

Turner is, without doubt, the last of the original stride pianists, and at sixty-nine he is still playing the style with vigor and authority. His affinity to Waller is evident in his playing of "Squeeze Me," "Viper's Drag," and "Smashing Thirite." And his feeling for the style extends to Ellington's "Caravan," which he turns into a driving bit of stride. But there are other influences at work, too. His transformation of Art Tatum's lines on "Willow Weep for Me" and "Cones the Wind" adds a rumbling solidity to the normally airy Tatum flow; Earl Hines is present in "Rosetta"; and, significantly, Turner acknowledges the relationship of Thelonious Monk to his own old Harlem school with a remarkable version of Monk's "Well, You Needn't" that is a startling bit of stride playing.

Turner is a somewhat abrupt pianist.

When pianist Joe Turner (not to be confused with Big Joe Turner, the Kansas City blues shout leader) arrived in Harlem from Baltimore fifty years ago, he became a junior member of an informal but close school of blues shouter. This group, which he turned into a driving bit of stride, in its primary significance. Turner transformed and expanded early stride pianists, and at seventy-nine he is still playing the style with vigor and authority. His affinity to Waller is evident in his playing of "Squeeze Me," "Viper's Drag," and "Smashing Thirite." And his feeling for the style extends to Ellington's "Caravan," which he turns into a driving bit of stride. But there are other influences at work, too. His transformation of Art Tatum's lines on "Willow Weep for Me" and "Cones the Wind" adds a rumbling solidity to the normally airy Tatum flow; Earl Hines is present in "Rosetta"; and, significantly, Turner acknowledges the relationship of Thelonious Monk to his own old Harlem school with a remarkable version of Monk's "Well, You Needn't" that is a startling bit of stride playing.

Turner is a somewhat abrupt pianist.

rock approach flow through the performance while an over-all jazz tone is maintained—particularly in Greg Herbert's swinging, confident tenor-saxophone solo. Herbert, as a young musician moving into the group, is part of another "new life" aspect. But most important so far as the disc is concerned are the new writers coming out of the band.

Two of the most interesting pieces are by band members who are not usually heard from as composers. Cecil Bridgewater's "Love and Harmony," his first contribution to the band's book, is built on a charming, catchy theme, implemented by balancing solos by Jones and Frank Foster—Thad warm and glowing on flugelhorn. Foster sinuously urgent on tenor saxophone. In "Thank You," Jerry Dodgion has created a song in the Ellington-Strayhorn mood that might have started as an alto-solo for himself but is developed by a strong plunger-muted trombone solo by Janice Robinson over a rich background of brass and reeds and by Pepper Adams' astonishingly energetic baritone solo, which brings a fiery contrast to the generally gentle mood.

Jones, as usual, has written most of the pieces, including a charming ballad for his own flugelhorn. They are up to his usual standards, but it is the "new life" among the contributing composers that gives this set its primary significance. J.W.S.
whose phrases are more apt to be clipped than sustained. This tendency can sometimes be discontenting but, all things considered, helps to keep his performances moving.

J.S.W.

\* J. R. Monterose: Straight Ahead.

J. R. Monterose, tenor saxophone; Tommy Flanagan, piano; Jimmy Garrison bass; Pete La Roca, drums. Violets for Your Furs; I Remember Clifford; Green Street Scene; four more. XANADU 126, $6.98.

It is surprising—very pleasantly surprising—to learn from Mark Gardner's liner notes that J. R. Monterose is alive and well and living near Brussels. And playing regularly.

The surprise is engendered by the fact that, although Monterose was one of the most interesting saxophonists of the Fifties (for one thing, he did not sound like anyone else), he has scarcely been heard of for almost twenty years. This record, made in 1958, was the last one he made under his own name. The year before that, he played in obscurity in Albany, New York. He spent the following year in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and moved to the West Coast and then to Europe, leaving no recorded evidence of his trail. But here he is on this disc, eighteen years later, sounding as fresh and contemporary as though he were playing today—possibly more so, considering some of the saxophone playing that has been perpetuated in recent years.

Monterose has a soft, warm tone and a style that keeps flowing as it builds. It is more melodic and more structured than has been fashionable for a long time, and it is all the more effective for being different in this sense. Although the musicians with him were picked up just for the record date, they play with such a feeling of affinity that they might have been together for years. Tommy Flanagan's piano solos are fascinating contrasts to Monterose's approach to the same themes and, with Jimmy Garrison and Pete La Roca, he forms a rhythm that is always in proper balance in support of Monterose.

Five British jazz critics have named "Straight Ahead" as one of the "essential" modern jazz records made between 1945 and 1970, and they won't get any argument from me. One hopes that the reissue will be a first step toward getting this major saxophonist out in the open where he belongs.

J.S.W.

\* Chico Hamilton and the Players.

Black Arthur Blythe and Will Connell Jr., saxophones; Rodney Jones, guitar; Steve Turre, bass trombone and electric bass; Abdullah, congas; Chico Hamilton, drums. Mr. Sweets, First Light; Adair; five more. BLUE NOTE LA 622G, $6.98. Tape: EA 622H, $7.98.

The supporting musicians, particularly Darqui and guitarist Joe Diorio, exude the same strong feeling that Sullivan has. They are all of a piece, and there is not a note on this delightful record that I would want changed.

J.S.W.

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THE ABSOLUTE SOUND, in its upcoming issue (48), will be reviewing: The Tryptophic; the Koss Model One; The Gaia Loudspeaker; the 3A bookshelf; the Atlantic One; the Janis sub-woofer; RTI's add-on electrostatic tweeters, and the STR speakers. The electronics we'll be reporting on include Dyna's tube amp, Audio Technica's V1, a pre-amp named Thaddea, as well as Amps & radio's T-95; Son Of Audio Research's Dual 150 basic amp; the db systems pre-amp; Infinity's A-7; Pre-Amp. The SA-2500, the Lecon amp and pre-amp. We'll also be taking a look at a batch of new cartridges, including the EM.T, the Super Suxxor, the Shure V-15 IIIC, the 3A000, all three Sonus cartridges; three (high-output) versions of the Stanton cartridge; the new Sugo, C-G, and the Decca elliptical. We're not fin- ished. Also up for review will be the Grace 707 arm; the Jones Miller—Rabbi SL-8E arm the Starr arm, the Formula 4 and more. Still not tempted? Consider this: In Issue 9 (scheduled for publication this winter), we'll be reviewing three new super-speakers, from Phase-Linear. Infinity. Infin- ity, and Acoustat, the Luxman turntable; the Paragon pre-amp, the Fulton J Modulator; the Dahlquist sub-woofer; and a new laboratory model of the Grado cartridge. The price for a subscription, considering the volume of mate- rial you get, is relatively painless: $10 (for four issues, sent third class mail). Add $5 for first class mailing. Cana- dians: $11 (third class); $15 (first class). Foreign: $16 (air mail). Back issues (1-6): $3.00 each, plus 50 cents for each issue sent first class. The Absolute Sound. Box 5b, Northport, New York 11768.

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SEPTEMBER 1976

In Brief

Roy Harper: When an Old Cricketer Leaves the Crease. CHRYSALIS CHR 11055, $6.98.

In his first American album in years, Harper—the controversial English folksinger and rocker and friend of Led Zeppelin—delivers an earnest though essentially uninteresting set. One suspects that his next outing will be the one that counts.

H.E.

MAJOR HARRIS: Jealousy. ATLANTIC SD 18160, $6.98. Tape: CS 18160, $7.97; TP 18160, $7.97.

Major Harris had a hit with a pretty ballad called "Love Won't Let Me Wait," mostly a repeated tag, in which a girl was heard in the background having a very satisfying time. In this album the same girl appears at the beginning of "I Got Over Love." First she cries softly, then she says, "Oh Major, don't go," and then she sings. It cracks me up. Not my favorite method—rampan for-malization. On the other hand, I liked the hit, so I like the copy. Harris is limited but pleasant.

M.A.

ROGER WILLIAMS: Virtuoso. MCA 2175, $6.98. Tape: C 2175, $7.98; T 2175, $7.98.

Pirating the classics for pop fodder is always rather peculiar, and this recording by Roger Williams is especially so. For he not only borrows classical melodies, but turns them into full-fall rock songs, matching his piano skills against a battery of Arp synthesizers, which presumably he also plays (the liner notes aren't specific). Best is 'Nutrockier,' Kim Powley's usurpation of The Nutrocker Suite.

M.J.

GENE PAGE: Love Lock! ATLANTIC SD 18161, $6.98. Tape: CS 18161, $7.97; TP 18161, $7.97.

Gene Page is a solid West Coast arranger whose success was made even stronger when he took up with Barry White. In this album, Gene and his able brother Billy Page have gone after the disco market with orchestra plus voices laid back in the texture. A very competent if somewhat businesslike album.

M.A.

MAX MORATH: The World of Scott Joplin, Vol. 2. VANGUARD EVERYMAN SRV 351 SD, $3.98.

This is called "The World of Scott Joplin" because only five of the twelve tunes were written by him. Despite the somewhat shadidy dealing of the title, this is a fine, well-played collection of lesser-known ragtime songs.

M.J.

SAILOR: Trouble. Epic PE 34039, $6.98.

The last number performed by the English rock band on this disc, "The Old Nickelodeon Sound," typifies the sound featured, with an instrumentation including bass nickelodeon, marimbas, charango, and Veracruzana harp. Produced by Jeffrey Lesser with Rupert Holmes as associate producer, "Trouble" is for the most part a mellow delight.

H.E.
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