

How to Buy a Stereo System & Not Get Stung

HIGH FIDELITY

JULY 1978 \$1.25

ICD © 08398

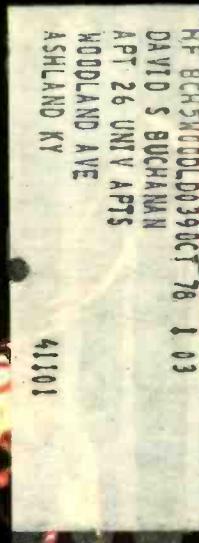
In Back Beat

Foreigner's Platinum Fever

Can They Sell 3 Million Again?

Audio: Male-Chauvinist Bastion?

Kurt Weill's Berlin Years



measuring equipment.

A totally unique tuning system.

Deep inside the SX1980 there's a quartz crystal generating the perfect frequencies of every FM station in the United States and Canada.

As you rotate the tuning dial, a special Pioneer integrated circuit compares the station you're trying to tune to its perfect frequency. When the station is tuned exactly right (all this

multipath button for adjusting your antenna to eliminate multipath distortion. So even tall buildings won't stand between you and better sound. (FM sensitivity is an incredible 1.5 microvolts; the signal to noise ratio is an equally superb 83 decibels. Both better than most separate tuners.)

Still other innovations.

When we designed the SX1980, we knew it would represent a remarkable engineering achievement. But it also represents the kind of thinking and value you get in every high fidelity component we make.

That's why besides everything else, the SX1980 features a suggested price of less than \$1250.**

Which only sounds expensive until you hear what our competition is asking for other high powered receivers that lack this kind of sophistication.

The SX1980 is currently inspiring awe at your local Pioneer dealer.

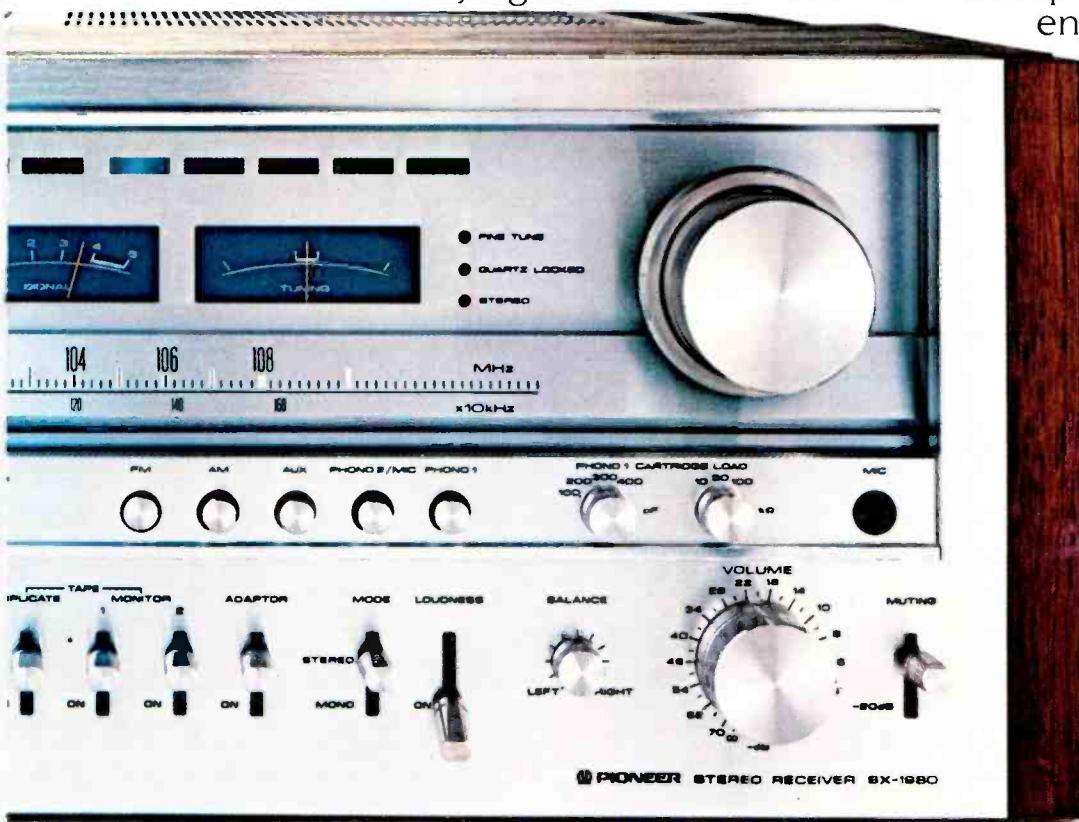
But before you go listen be forewarned: it'll spoil you for anything ordinary.

High Fidelity Components
PIONEER®
We bring it back alive.

takes about half a second), a "fine tuned" light comes on; the receiver then senses when you've let go of the tuning dial and automatically "locks" onto that broadcast.

Luckily, the benefit of all this is far easier to explain than the technology: FM drift is eliminated. A fact that's easily appreciated by anybody who's ever tried to record a long concert off a less formidable receiver.

In addition, the SX1980 features a five gang variable capacitor that helps pull distant FM stations into weak areas. And there's also a



CIRCLE 29 ON PAGE 89

©1978 U.S. Pioneer Electronics Corp., 85 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, N.J. 07074.

**Suggested retail price. The actual price will be set by the dealer.

But Pioneer isn't just any company. And our 270* watt SX 1980 is somewhat better than remarkable.

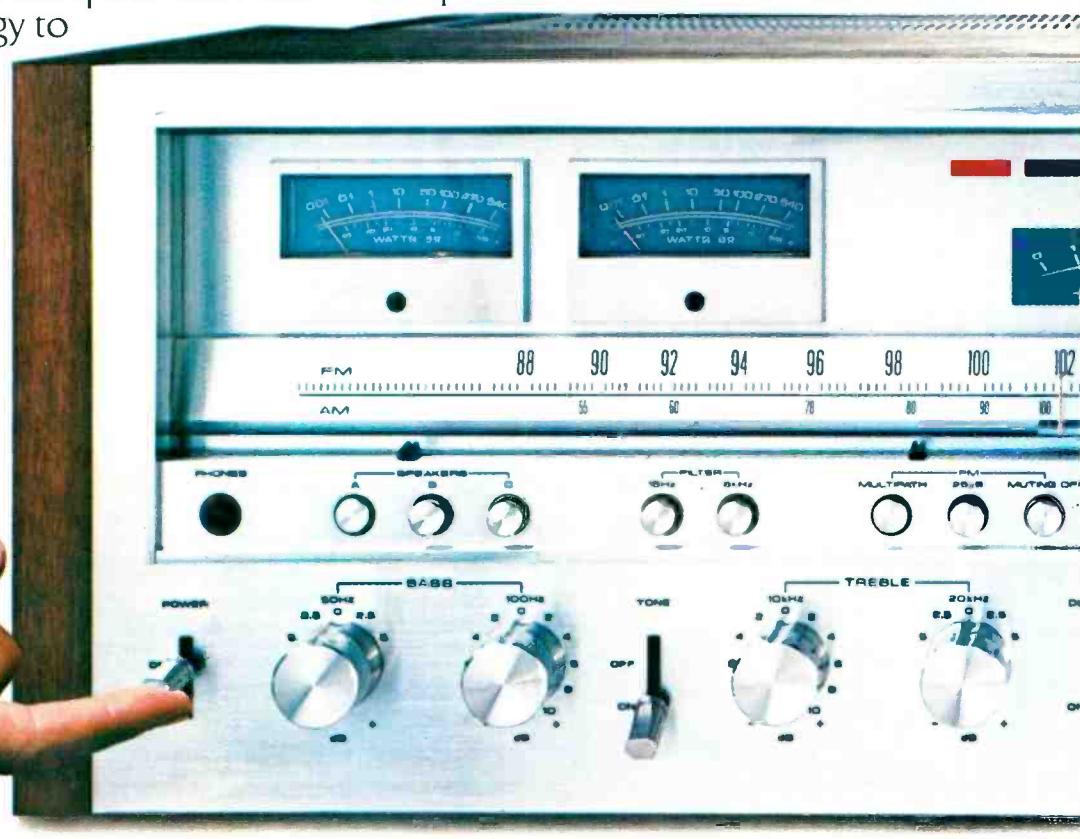
Every month, somebody introduces something called "the world's most incredible hi fi receiver."

Yet when you compare their features and technology to Pioneer's SX1980, these "miracles of modern science" begin to look, and sound rather pedestrian.

The greatest DC power story ever told.

It's a simple fact of life that the more pure power

Where some high powered receivers try to get by with ordinary transformers, Pioneer has developed a 22 pound toroidal core transformer



a receiver possesses, the easier it can reproduce music without straining.

And at 270 watts per channel, even the most demanding piece of music will hardly cause the SX1980 to flex its considerable muscle.

But when we built the SX1980, we did more than just create an incredibly powerful receiver. We created a whole new high powered technology.

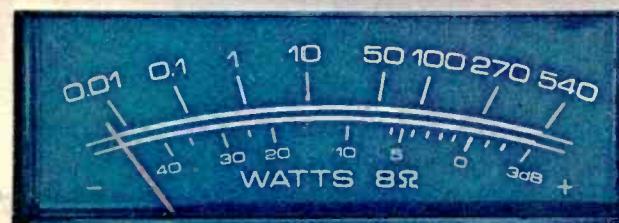
Each channel, for example, has a separate DC power configuration that helps to provide richer and more accurate bass.

that's far less susceptible to minor voltage variations. So you get cleaner, clearer sound.

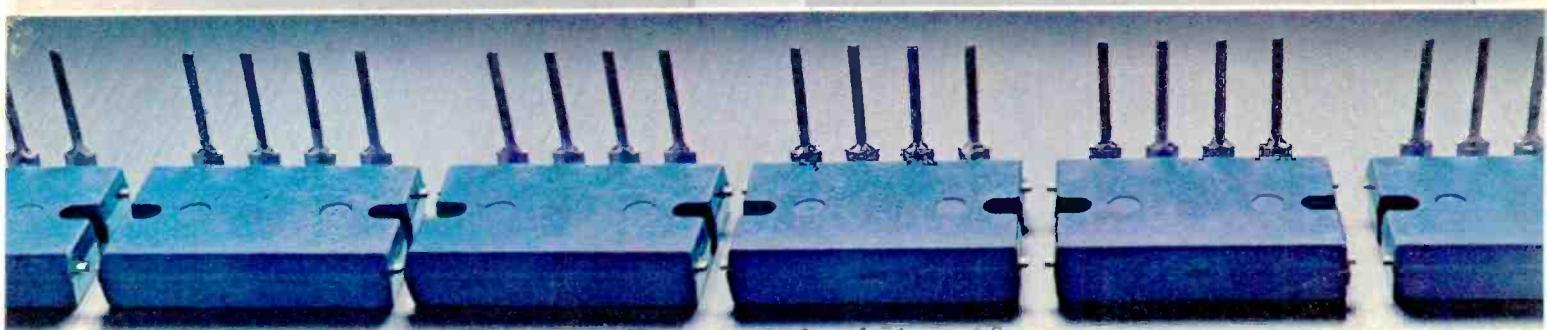
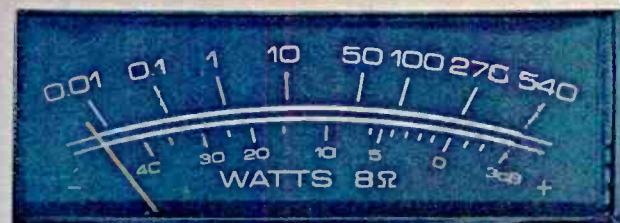
And instead of pushing conventional power transistors to their limits (the way some manufacturers do), we've actually invented new transistors that last longer and eliminate the need for fans that can cause electrical interference.

All told, these innovations give the SX1980 a total harmonic distortion level of less than 0.03% from 20 to 20,000 hertz. A figure that not only taxes the imagination, but also the abilities of most scientific

Most companies would consider a receiver with any one of these innovations remarkable.



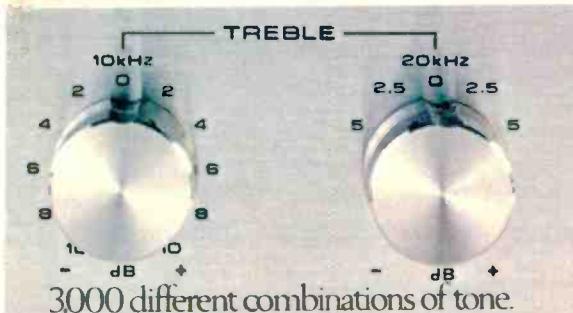
Wattage meters that let you see what you're hearing.



High powered transistors that don't need fans.



Impedance switches
that let you get the most out of
your cartridge.



3000 different combinations of tone.

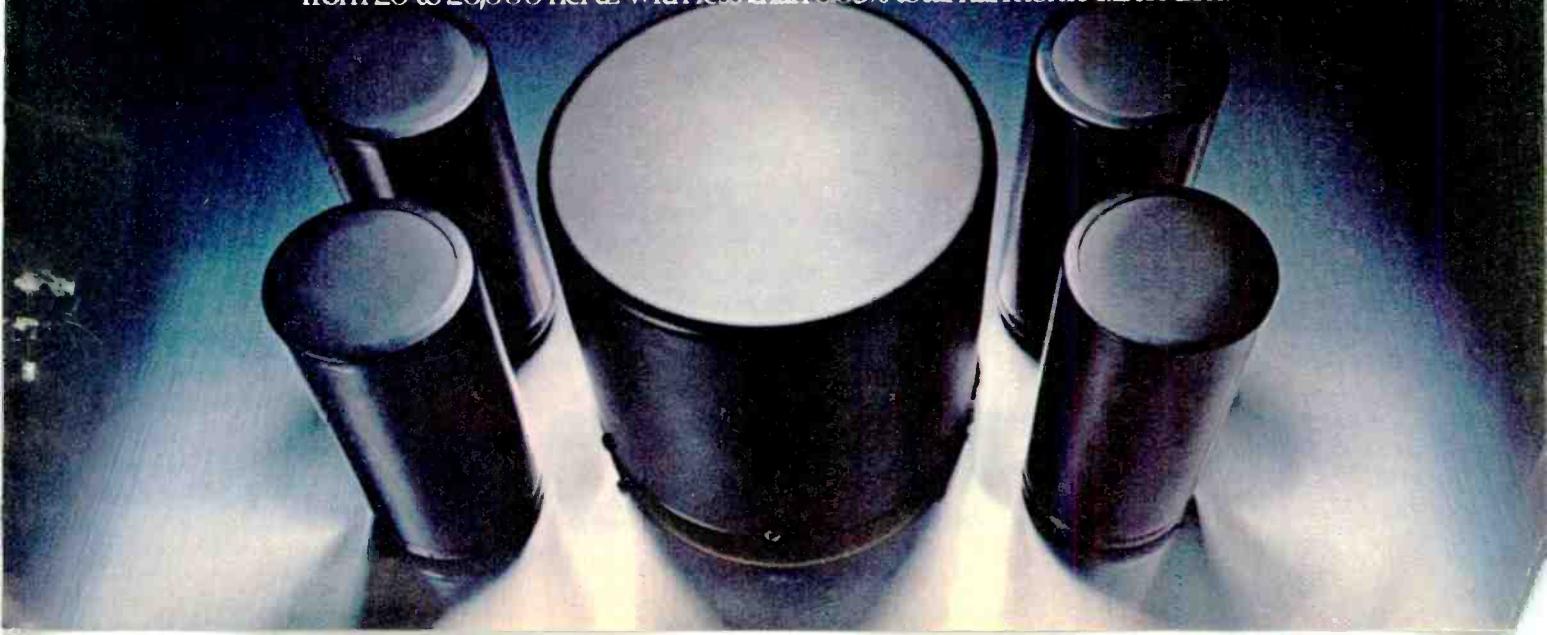
● FINE TUNE

● QUARTZ LOCKED

● STEREO

Quartz sampled tuning
for near perfect FM reception.

*A power section that puts out a continuous power output of 270 watts per channel
from 20 to 20,000 hertz with less than 0.03% total harmonic distortion.

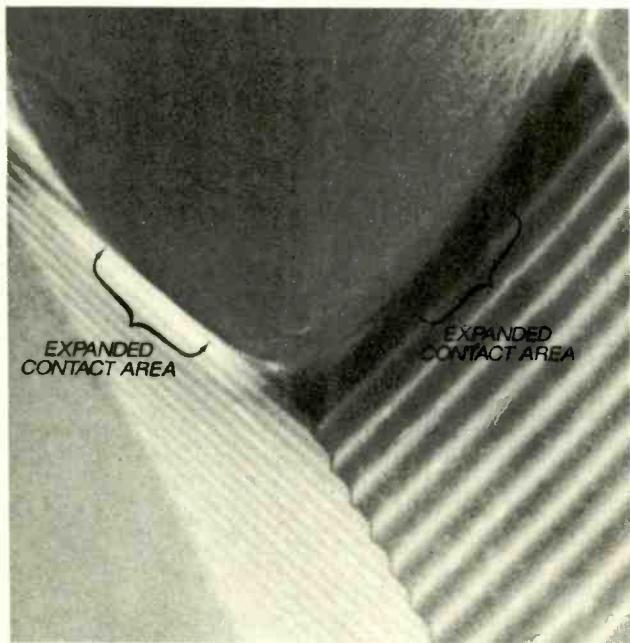


PROFESSIONAL

**WUHY-FM, Philadelphia, rates Stanton's
881S superior in every aspect!**



Disc Jockey, Stephen Brooks at the mike.



Scanning Electron Beam Microscope photo of Stereo-hedron® stylus, 2000 times magnification; brackets point out wider contact area.

© Stanton Magnetics, Inc., 1977

The Stanton 881S cartridge has been rated, worldwide, as the outstanding stereo cartridge of its time. So, it ought to be a rather delicate pick-up. Not so, says WUHY . . . outstanding National Public Radio FM Station in Philadelphia. Mr. Ajit George, Director of Development and Awareness, quotes his Engineering Staff in this way:

- 1) The 881S is rugged . . . we back cue with no damage to the stylus.
- 2) It has excellent flat frequency response.
- 3) It handles high level complex music passages with complete freedom from mis-tracking.
- 4) The 881S has the highest output compared to average high quality magnetic cartridges, plus the fact that it gives superior signal-to-noise ratio from the phono preamp.

We are in total agreement with all of the above except, honestly, the 881S was not designed for back cueing.

Stanton guarantees each 881S to meet the specifications within exacting limits. The most meaningful warranty possible, individual calibration test results, come packed with each unit. Whether your usage involves recording, broadcasting or home entertainment, your choice should be the choice of the professionals . . . the Stanton 881S.

For further information write to: Stanton Magnetics, Terminal Drive, Plainview, N. Y. 11803



STANTON!

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HIGH FIDELITY

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HIGH FIDELITY



On the cover: Foreigner—(clockwise from top) Al Greenwood, Ian McDonald, Mick Jones, Lou Gramm. Photos: Neal Preston/Mirage.

The Musical Equivalent of Morality

Last month I promised (threatened?) to discuss the relevance of ethics to aesthetics and to give my thoughts on what are "musically valid reasons" for altering a composer's music. Well, let's see what we can put down in this limited space.

Since researchers learned that chimpanzees can invent tools and "talk" symbolically and that even chickens react to music, we have been more hard pressed than ever to distinguish man from the beasts. But one attribute which still seems uniquely ours, at least as of this writing, is that very desire to know and understand such things. It is not merely the cat's curiosity for the obviously hidden, but a passion to relate, in an emotionally satisfying way, the unknown or incomprehensible in familiar terms. And what is unknown? Practically everything but the effect of "reality" on our senses or on those instruments we have created as extensions of our senses. (We know what 400 Hz sounds like but need equipment to tell us what 40 kHz "sounds" like.)

This metaphorical process of translating the unknown in terms of human experience is common to all branches of lore, and the less familiar something is, the greater the reliance on the metaphor. Thus scientists, to explain puzzling patterns of chemical behavior, invented the visual metaphor of atomic nuclei and electrons; mystics, to account for external and internal phenomena, generated such metaphors as forbidden fruits, fiery chariots, and gods of war and music.

The source of the creative artist's lore, for which he constantly searches, is neither the God of Objective Reality nor the God of a Holy Book, but his own experience. And it is the similarity of human experiences that makes Job relevant, atomic theory "understandable," and art communicative. The scientist and theologian may call their metaphors Truth while the artist calls his Beauty, but they are all the same thing, as the poet said. In the music community, the composer is the prophet who has tapped the common experience for metaphorical expression in sound.

During the past century this religious implication of music has become both more organized and more orthodox. Performers have become the prophets' priests, and the congregation of music lovers expects them to behave like priests, to study the scriptures with devotion and purge their techniques of human inadequacies in order to maintain the holy metaphors in their pristine states. Today it is the rare, and courageously heretical, performer who will go beyond the metaphor to the source itself.

What makes a great piece of music feel "right" is its ability to parallel human experience without a misstep. Yet not everything even in a masterwork is necessary to its metaphorical "rightness." There are countless works we feel as masterpieces, from the medieval, Renaissance, baroque, classical, and Romantic eras, where we are not sure of the "correct" instrumentation, accidentals, embellishments, tempos, or even if something is intended as a vocal or instrumental composition, yet which satisfy us musically in any number of approximations. If one of these approximations was shown to be the one its composer intended, that might satisfy our religious orthodoxy, but it doesn't seem to have an effect on its communicability as music.

When a knowledgeable and experienced performer finds himself on the same wavelength as the music and wants to translate the metaphor into terms he feels will enhance its communicability—through modern and familiar means of expression, contemporary instruments, or whatever his musical instinct suggests—I for one will accept and encourage it. Who knows? I may even enjoy it.

Leonard Marcus

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A paper towel that could scratch. A piece of velvet that slips. A cloth of any kind that leaves telltale lint.

Until now, that's all you've had to lay your record on when you wiped, sprayed or buffed it.

Now you've got some-



work pad, when you have to.

Use it as you're meant to, and your records will never take another beating.

Like all Sound Guard products, the Sound Guard record care work pad is sold in audio and record outlets.



The pad protects one side of your record while you're working on the other.



The pad holds the record gently in place for buffing or wiping.

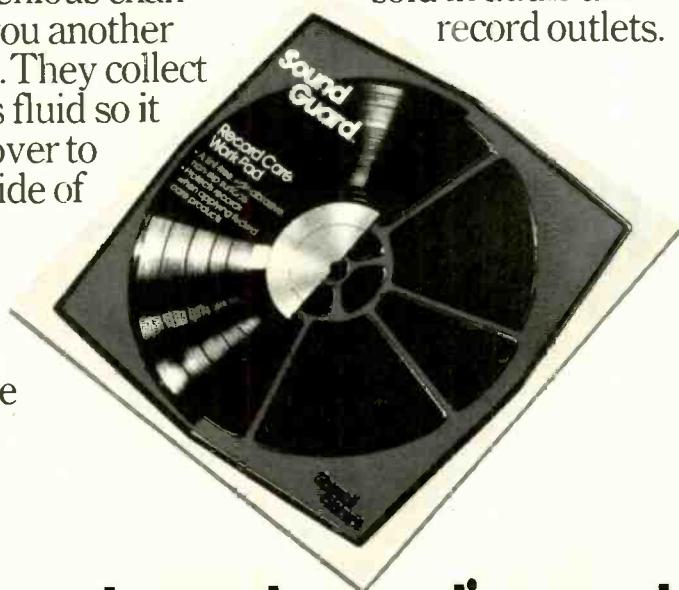
thing that takes care of one side of your record while you're working on the other side. It's non-conductive to resist picking up particles

from dirty records. It's not a fabric, so it has no lint to spread around. And it's non-abrasive to avoid scratching and slipping when you're buffing.

Its ingenious channels give you another advantage. They collect any excess fluid so it won't run over to the other side of

your record—or onto your furniture.

Wash off your record care



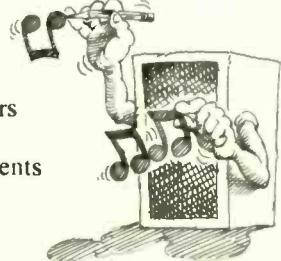
Sound Guard® keeps your good sounds sounding good.



Sound Guard® preservative—Sound Guard™ cleaner—Sound Guard™ Total Record Care System—Sound Guard record care work pad
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How to recognize the 5 most perplexing problems in high fidelity speakers:

It is not the purchase price that gives value to an audiophile quality speaker but its ability to overcome the major problems inherent in reproducing sound. Recognize these problems, and the solution to determining a speaker's worth becomes readily apparent.



One. Coloration: Speakers should be seen and not heard. Speaker cabinets and components can "color"—add their own tones—to a musical piece.



Two. Sonic instability: Standard alignments of woofer, midrange and tweeter can cause orchestral musicians to seem out of place. Piano and violin solos often seem to be played by two or more instruments.



Three. Vocal passivity: No instrument is more expressive than the human voice. And none is more difficult to reproduce.



Four. Volume distortion: If it cannot reproduce music faithfully with the volume adjusted either up or down, a speaker cannot offer audiophile responsiveness.



Five. Unnatural nature: The sounds of creation are also music to the ear. A warbling bird, babbling brook or clapping hands that do not express immediacy take the very life from nature.

How to eliminate the 5 most perplexing problems in high fidelity speakers:

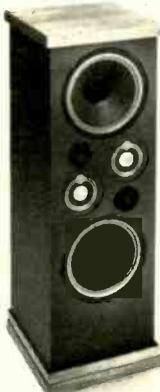
The solution is RTR's new D-Series speakers. From the Corinthian columned 300D and 600D to the curvilinear 100D bookshelf, every component is RTR designed, manufactured and assembled for problem-free performance.



True clarity and natural warmth so apparent in the D-Series start with RTR's new 1.5 inch soft dome midrange. This break-through system offers optimal midrange response and broad dispersion while eliminating crossovers in the critical 1500-3000 Hz range. Nothing enhances, colors or subtracts from programmed material.

This same devotion to musical purity extends to the performance of the newly-stated RTR woofers and articulate dome tweeters. Throughout the system, reproduction is faithful to the human voice, musical instruments and natural sounds.

As a final triumph for the D-Series, RTR incorporates "resolved point source radiation field"—achieved by uniquely repositioning woofers, drivers and tweeters to create an almost unbelievably stable sonic image. Instruments and voices remain positioned as they were live.



Audition the 100D, 300D and 600D at your RTR dealer soon. And ask why RTR not only designs and assembles all of its components but manufactures each as well. That's "Total Capability"—the big difference between RTR and other makers of audiophile-quality speakers. At RTR we don't just build speakers, we build solutions.



**Listen...
you'll be hearing
more from RTR.**

RTR Industries
8116 Deering Ave.
Canoga Park, CA 91304

COMING NEXT MONTH

In the equation that spells good (or disappointing) tape copies for your personal music library, one factor is often overlooked: the cassette tape itself—its headroom and sensitivity characteristics, its bias requirements, its print-through liability. Help is on the way: in August, Consulting Editor Edward J. Foster unveils the results of Tests of 24 Leading Cassette Tapes. There is more practical aid for the tape hobbyist: Edward M. Long's and Ronald J. Wickersham's How to Make Natural-Sounding Stereo Recordings at Home. We celebrate Leonard Bernstein's Sixtieth Birthday (yes, 60th) with a retrospective of his career by John Ardin, music critic for the Dallas Morning News. BACKBEAT takes us inside a music-biz professional's home recording studio and examines the multifaceted record-business life of Warner Bros. producer Jerry Wexler. Plus Lees Side, Culshaw at Large, laboratory/listening reports on new tape equipment, record reviews, and more.

SOLUTION TO HIFI-CROSTIC

After a month's absence, the HiFi-Crostic resumes in this issue on page 41. The solution to HiFi-Crostic No. 36 will appear in this space next month.

ADVERTISING

Main Office: Robert J. Ur Sr., Director of Advertising Sales, The Publishing House, Great Barrington, Mass. 01230. Telephone: 413-528-1300.

New York: ABC Leisure Magazines, Inc., 130 E. 59th St., 15th floor, New York, N.Y. 10022. Seymour Resnick, National Advertising Manager, 212-826-8381. George Dickey, 212-826-8383. Classified Advertising Department, 212-826-8394.

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Editorial correspondence should be addressed to The Editor, High Fidelity, Great Barrington, Mass. 01230. Editorial contributions will be welcome, and payment for articles accepted will be arranged prior to publication. Unsolicited manuscripts should be accompanied by return postage.

"Get everything that's coming to you!"



Everything but background noise and lost dynamics in home recording with The MXR Comander.

Imagine this: You've come to that wonderful point where you can tape record your favorite discs or radio programs. Now you can build up that super sound library you've always wanted, right? Wrong. Funny, but when you play back what you've so painstakingly recorded, you get that ever present background noise that drives you up the wall.

And imagine this: You've taken every step you know to make your home recordings as pure as possible. Perhaps you've got built-in noise reduction. The best tape. Perfect source materials. But still, playback isn't perfect. Musical peaks distort. Highs are chopped. And you wonder just how much more you have to spend to finally get the clarity and quiet you so richly deserve.

About \$130 will do. That's the price of the MXR Comander. It's the most effective noise reduction component you can buy. And it can double the dynamic range of most open reel and cassette tape decks.

The MXR Comander compresses the dynamic range of signals being recorded on your tape. This keeps the music away from tape noise at all times. Upon playback, the Comander expands the music. This allows musical peaks to be reproduced without distortion. And those quiet passages aren't lost in the background noise.

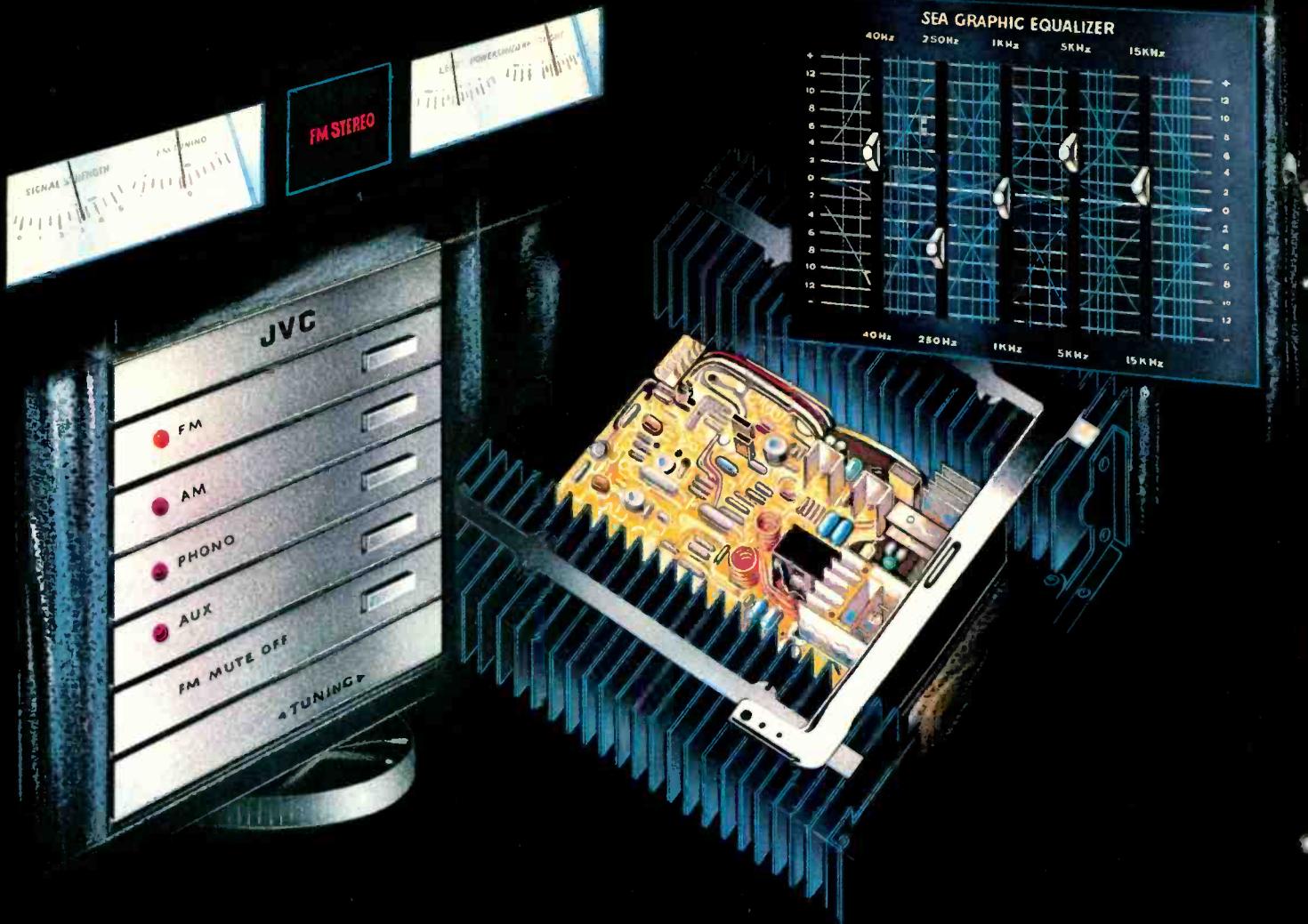
The MXR Comander is part of a great family of home audio components. Take our Stereo Graphic Equalizer. It makes up for poor room acoustics, poor speakers and poor program quality.

Hear everything we make at many fine audio dealers. Or direct inquiries to MXR Innovations, Inc., 247 N. Goodman St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607. Or call us at 716-442-5320. When it comes to sound, we only think of everything.

Also distributed in Canada by White Electronic Development Corporation, 6300 Northam Drive, Mississauga, Ont.



Consumer
Products Group



THE JVC RECEIVER.

Every bit as revolutionary as they look, and then some.

In our case, looks are never deceiving. Because all our new DC integrated stereo receivers combine unprecedentedly revolutionary styling with electronic design features that reflect JVC's more than 50 years' experience in audio development and innovation.

DC POWER AMPLIFIER DESIGN

Usually found only in costlier separates, JVC offers DC amplifier circuitry in all four of our new receivers. By eliminating distortion-causing capacitors in our interconnecting circuit sections, JVC designers have created an amplifier that offers virtually distortion-free performance (0.03% THD) not only over the entire audio spectrum, but above and below it. As a result, all the sounds you hear are clearer, cleaner and crisper. Moreover, our DC design improves square wave performance and eliminates phase-shift—both factors being of paramount importance in distortion-free music reproduction. In addition, Triple Power Protection circuits and dual power meters give you safety and full indication of receiver operation. There are four new JVC DC integrated receivers, offering your choice of 120, 85, 60 and 35 watts/channel* respectively.

S.E.A.—ALL THE WAY

JVC was the first receiver manufacturer to offer a built-in S.E.A. Graphic Equalizer in a quality receiver, and we continue this tradition by incorporating this convenient feature in our entire new receiver line. Far superior to even triple tone controls, this JVC exclusive gives you complete control over the entire musical spectrum. You can attenuate or accentuate any of five separate bands, covering the entire audible range of music. And as an added feature, we've incorporated a special button

so that the S.E.A. equalizer circuit can also be switched to your tape deck, so you record exactly what you hear.

PUSHBUTTON SOURCE SELECTORS

Unlike conventional receivers, ours incorporate an advanced pushbutton source selection panel. Color-keyed LEDs indicate the program source, and a full-function horizontal pushbutton panel provides total control over all receiver operations. Professional-type slider controls set volume and balance.

SUPERIOR TUNER SECTION

High sensitivity and tuning precision are featured in all four new JVC receivers. Multi-gang FM tuning capacitors, PLL MPX demodulators and other circuit refinements provide optimum frequency response and stereo separation for FM, with maximum sensitivity for AM reception—a feature often neglected in receiver designs. A thumb-control tuning wheel and accurate metering make station location and fine-tuning easy.

Other features include Mode/Loudness/Subsonic Filter switches and provision for connecting two sets of speakers.

Features, styling, innovation and performance: the four main things to look for in a DC integrated stereo receiver. And you'll find them all in a JVC. JVC America Company, Division of US JVC Corp., Maspeth, N.Y. 11378. In Canada, JVC Electronics of Canada, Ltd., Ont.

JVC

We build in what the others leave out.

JR-S501 (featured at left); Below: JR-S401 (top); JR-S201 (bottom left) & JR-S301 (bottom right).



* @ 8 Ohms, both channels driven from 20Hz-20 KHz, with no more than 0.03% THD

CIRCLE 19 ON PAGE 89

Letters

Supporting the Arts

Leonard Marcus' editorial "1040, 1042, and All That" [April] neglects to point out some very serious flaws in the "Richmond arts and education checkoff bill." The idea of raising money through, but without cost to, the government is certainly appealing, but: 1) it would expand government control to one more major sphere of activity; 2) it would get the politicians into the act because, with that kind of kitty, they wouldn't be able to keep their hands off it; 3) Who would decide who the beneficiaries of this largesse would be: another coterie of bureaucrats appointed by politicians?

I think HIGH FIDELITY should back off from this endorsement.

Ralph Seferian
Winchester, Mass.

Mr. Marcus replies: The Richmond bill specifies that the money would be disbursed through the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities. As of now, 20% of the Endowments' funds are allocated equally among the states (and the state arts councils). The rest of the available money is distributed after an advisory panel of professional peers has recommended to the National Council on the Arts those programs in their respective fields that they think should get Endowment funds. The members of the Council are three-year appointees of the President; while you could call them bureaucrats, they generally follow the advice of the panels, made up of professional museum curators, or musicians, or whatever else is appropriate to the application under consideration for funding. So far these procedures have worked pretty well. The lack of a guarantee that all the additionally generated money will be spent wisely and efficiently is no argument for generating none at all.

"English Roots": Our Readers Dig

I'm used to reading a good deal of nonsense in Gene Lees's column, but "Our English Roots" [April] is a discredit to the magazine. We Celts were originally Gallic tribes, not Teutonic as Lees states, and migrated northward from Italy and France before the advancing Latins. The invasion of Britain by the Romans and later by the Anglo-Saxons drove many of us to Wales, Scotland, and Ireland; many others stayed, and Celtic blood still flows in English veins. This amalgam of cultures and temperaments, expanded with the Norman conquest 500 years later, was the blessing that gave us the English language and the great diversity of English culture.

Lees seeks to defend the "Celtic" contribution to British culture by diminishing the "Anglo-Saxon" one, listing some impressive names to prove his point. Yet there is no mention here of Shakespeare, Donne, Milton, Johnson, Austen, Keats, Shelley,

Wordsworth, or Dickens. No mention of Hogarth, Blake, Reynolds, Constable, or Turner. Nor do I see Olivier, Gielgud, Richardson, or Finney on the list. Are these Englishmen less important? No, nor are they necessarily more important. They are simply part of a whole that Lees refuses to recognize.

We Celts do not need to be "defended," least of all by Gene Lees. The British have every reason to be proud of their contribution to Western art. It is the summation of the diverse cultural and temperamental influences coexisting within those tiny islands that has made their contribution so great.

Geoffrey Owen
Setauket, N.Y.

I defer to no one in my admiration for Gene Lees as a writer on American popular music. But when he gets seriously out of his depth, he should confine his utterances to the privacy of his living room and the ears of tolerant friends.

Lees purports to tell us about the English roots of our native music, and I for one shall not quarrel with him when he compares British studio musicians with American ones. But when he attempts to deal with broader areas of history, he lands flat on his face. Perhaps Lees is working from more recent findings than I have at hand. My sources tell me that in the ninth century the Danes captured both Dublin and Cork, already apparently thriving towns. That the amalgam of various Germanic peoples after 1066 came to be known as Britons, save in jest, is news to me, I having imbibed with my mother's milk the notion that the Britons were precisely the Celts encountered by Caesar.

The Lees History of English Music seems to have been cribbed from old notes for Music Appreciation I (c. 1938?), which apparently had not caught up with the unearthing of such names as Dunstable, Taverner, Tallis, Dowland (possibly Irish, to be sure!), Bull, Gibbons, and Morley. True, the eighteenth century was dominated by Germans and Italians, and so England did not produce its quota of Fasches and Manfredini and Boismortiers. True, the nineteenth century was dominated by Mendelssohn, Queen Victoria, materialism, and positivism. But Lees's remark that "the English have yet to produce a major classical composer" makes him an easy mark in an open plain surrounded by hostile machine gunners.

David M. Greene
Bethlehem, Pa.

Though for years I have enjoyed Lees's well-put putdowns of phony fads in pop music, I feel he overstepped his boundaries in his column "Our English Roots." The idea that a stiff upper lip could prevent the writing of important music should come as a surprise to Finns and other people who consider Jean Sibelius, for example, one of the giants of music. And to use antediluvian quotes about Sir Edward Elgar ("watered-down Wagner," "master of tedium") is quite gratuitous in light of the recent striking renaissance of his reputation.

Please, Mr. Lees, confine your opinions to



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CIRCLE 39 ON PAGE 89

the music you know best—else we critics in the classical field might try getting into your act and telling people what rock and roll really sounds like!

Bill Zakariassen

Music Critic, New York News
New York, N.Y.

"Our English Roots" as traced by Lees contains so much misinformation and shallow reasoning that it must have been written in haste. When Lees renders his snap judgments about English classical composers, he really comes a cropper. Walton's scores for *Henry V* and *Hamlet* are worth more than all the movie music Hollywood ever produced.

Delius did not live "most of his life in Paris," nor did he "associate himself with French musical developments." He lived in Grez-sur-Loing in Nietzschean isolation from French and all other musical associations.

Vaughan Williams is surely a major composer, and his friend George Butterworth's "The Banks of Green Willow" an exquisite gem if perhaps "minor." But one has to go back to the eighteenth century, to Boyce's little symphonies, for all the warmth, wit, and jollity of a once merry England now turned gray.

David Wilson
Carmel, Calif.

Mr. Lees replies: First, I want to thank the knowledgeable people who wrote expanding on points I made or offering correction of details, such as the origin of the Celts. Naturally, such matters are hardly an exact science; nonetheless, though the Celts evidently came from southeastern Germany, they seem not to have been a Teutonic people. As for Dublin and Cork, my sources indicate that they were relatively minor settlements before the Vikings captured and fortified them. My reference to the Britons was to today's Britons—perhaps a lapse in clarity on my part. And, of course, Delius did not live most of his life in Paris.

To my detractors, I must point out that my column said quite clearly that there is a long silence in English classical music that is not broken until the twentieth century—and even then by less than major figures. I still maintain that, if you were able to sink England beneath the waves at, say, the time of the Spanish Armada, the history of music would be altered hardly at all. By contrast, if you drowned at birth any number of Continental European composers, it would be profoundly altered indeed—Monteverdi, Haydn, Mozart, Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Wagner, Debussy, Ravel, Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Berg, Webern, Bartók, and even Varèse, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Messiaen. It could be argued that originality and influence are not the only criteria of musical importance. But they assuredly are important, and England even now has yet to produce a substantially influential classical composer. Incidentally, I have tried in this series to keep personal opinion—which is not the same as speculation—to a minimum. But here I don't feel so constrained. Frankly, some of the "important" English

composers named in these letters impress me as being overrated.

Rundgren Redux

Hurrah! At last an article about one of America's least acknowledged musical geniuses! I'm referring to Michael Bloom's article on Todd Rundgren [BACKBEAT, March]. For fans like myself and my husband, it's a thrill to read about Todd and his musical capers. Thanks for adding a little sparkle to an otherwise humdrum day.

Liz Sifrit
London, Ohio

I would like to thank Michael Bloom for his article on Todd Rundgren. Counting myself among Rundgren's devoted fans, I think there is one point that needs clarification: the impression Bloom gives that Rundgren's desire to change the world is a grandiose fantasy.

Rundgren realizes that change must begin from within the person and that only when enough enlightened individuals work together can the world be affected. Through his music, he gives each of us tangible formulas to work toward that collective end. He urges us to straighten out our specific problems so that we may practice compassion in our dealings with others. Listening to him has helped me to work on my life. If my experience were multiplied by 100,000, then perhaps, to paraphrase Bloom, Rundgren could change the world with just his guitar.

Gail A. Peroni
Minneapolis, Minn.

Record Pricing: Other Views

While I sympathize with correspondent W. Sawrey's dismay over the increase in the price of recordings by Philips and DG ["Letters," March], I feel he is overreacting. At a time when we are needlessly concerned with the length of life without any real regard for its quality, I know of no other purchase that can contribute so mightily to our enjoyment for so little money. Philips, in addition, markets the most consistently technically perfect records that I have been able to find.

Next time Mr. Sawrey plunks down \$4.50 for the dubious pleasure of viewing a movie, perhaps the few dollars he pays for a record—which gives him instant and repeated access to the artist and performance of his choice—will seem less excessive.

Roy Plotkin
Short Hills, N.J.

Rather than protesting the \$8.98 list price of DG and Philips records, reader W. Sawrey should be grateful that these records are sold for much less in the U.S. than in the country of manufacture. For example, new single-disc issues from these labels have a list price of 25 Deutschemarks in Germany. At current exchange rates, this is about \$12.50. This price applies as well to labels whose U.S. equivalents are listed at only \$7.98. Moreover, discounts are generally smaller and more difficult to find in Germany. My knowledge of the situation in the Netherlands and in Switzerland is limited

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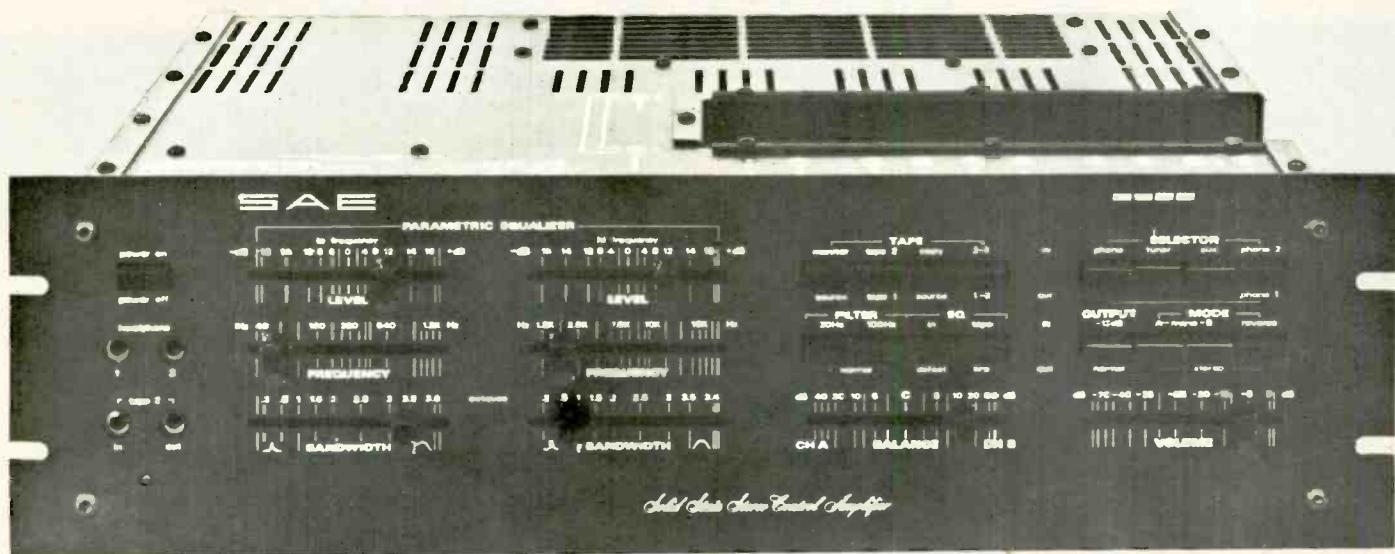
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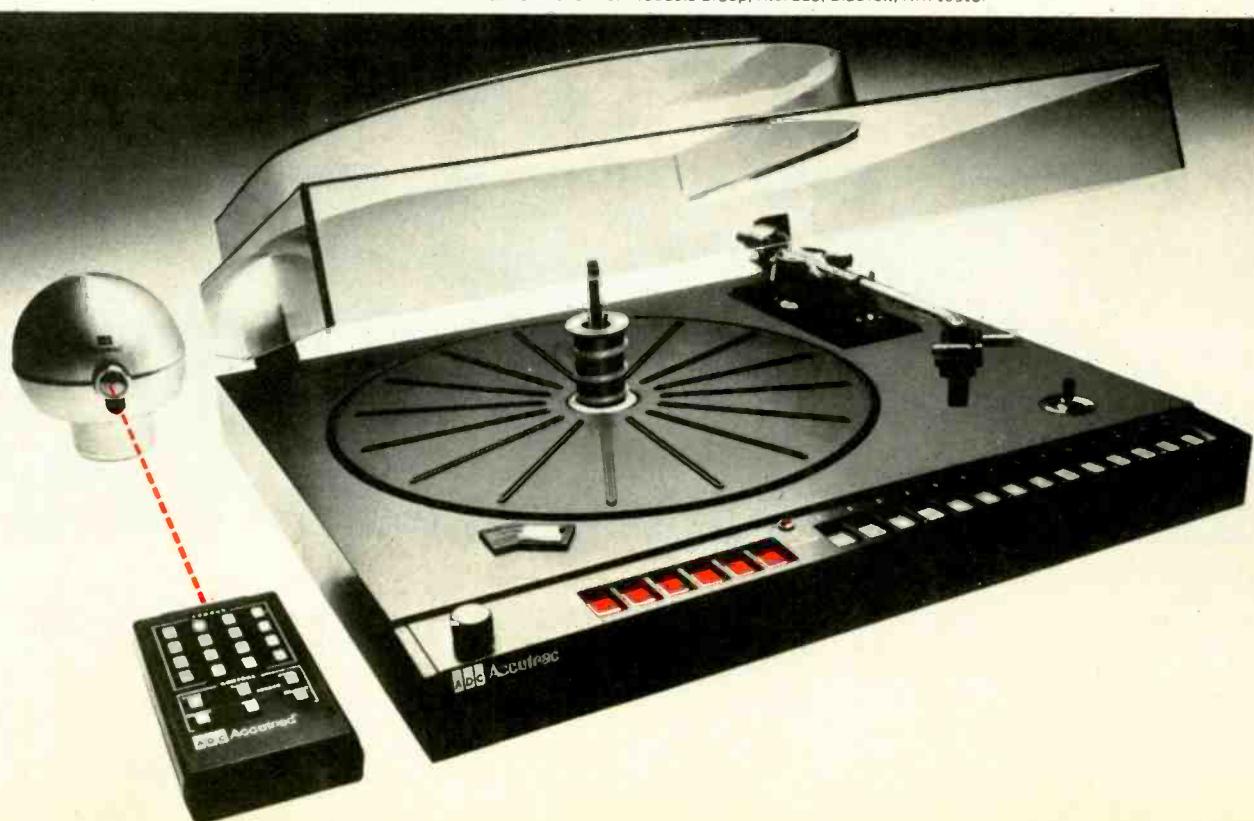
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and based on windowshopping, but the prices there seem to be similar to those in Germany. Multiple-record sets are priced somewhat lower (e.g., 59 DM for a three-record opera set) and some older material is reissued on midpriced labels that are not available in the U.S., but on the whole our prices are lower here.

James B. Mehl
Newark, Del.

Ben-Hur

In his fine review of the new recording of Miklós Rózsa's Ben-Hur film score [April], Robert Fiedel errs in suggesting that the cut "Ring for Freedom" is "previously unavailable music." In fact it is virtually identical to "Memories" on Vol. 2 of the soundtrack album, though the harmonies in this selection are in the major key.

Fiedel also touches on the controversy as to whether Rózsa or Erich Kloss conducted Vol. 2. Last September, at a reception following a concert of Rózsa's music in Ontario, the composer admitted to a group of fans that he did conduct the "Kloss" recording. However, the plot thickens, since there is another Kloss record, on MGM-Lion L/SL 70123, with selections identical to those on MGM S/IE1, led by Carlo Savina. Evidence that Rózsa conducted the Lion version is strong in light of the fact that the tempos of the Prelude and "The Rowing of the Galley Slaves" are the closest of any of the recorded versions to the actual film soundtrack.

Michael Quigley
Vancouver, B.C.

National Public Radio

The column "Radio and 'the Public Interest'" by Gene Lees [March] comments more intelligently on BBC programming than any general circulation publication I have seen, but it also has a statement that should not go by without remark. Lees says that "there is no publicly owned radio network of comparable power" to PBS in television. Literally and strictly, the statement is true, but I think Lees should have acknowledged the existence of National Public Radio, its rapid growth, and the fact that it is doing some of the very types of programs whose absence on the U.S. airwaves he decries.

It is true that NPR does not now have the audience clout of PBS, but it is a younger service, has not yet had a Sesame Street or Masterpiece Theatre to draw attention to it, and was not lucky enough to offend the Nixon White House as PBS did.

Walter B. Sheppard
WTTF-TV/FM
Hershey, Pa.

Correction

An incorrect address was given for Kenwood Electronics Corporation in our May equipment report on the KX-1030 cassette deck. The proper address is 1315 E. Watson Center Rd., Carson, Calif. 90745.

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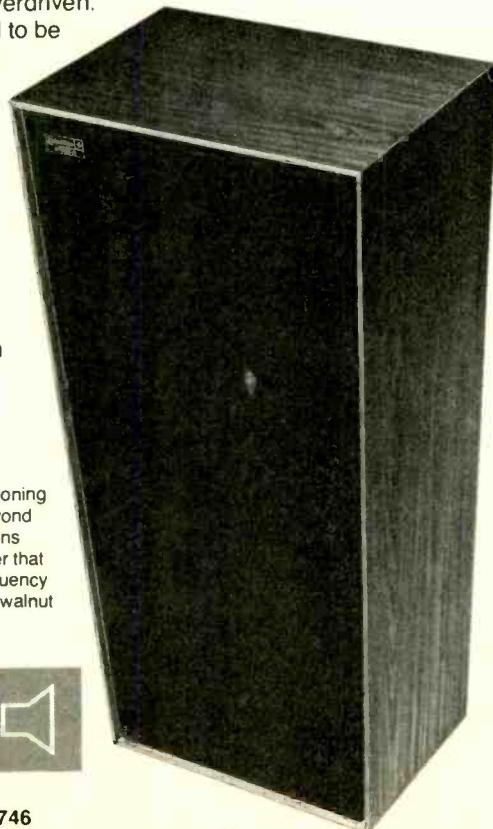
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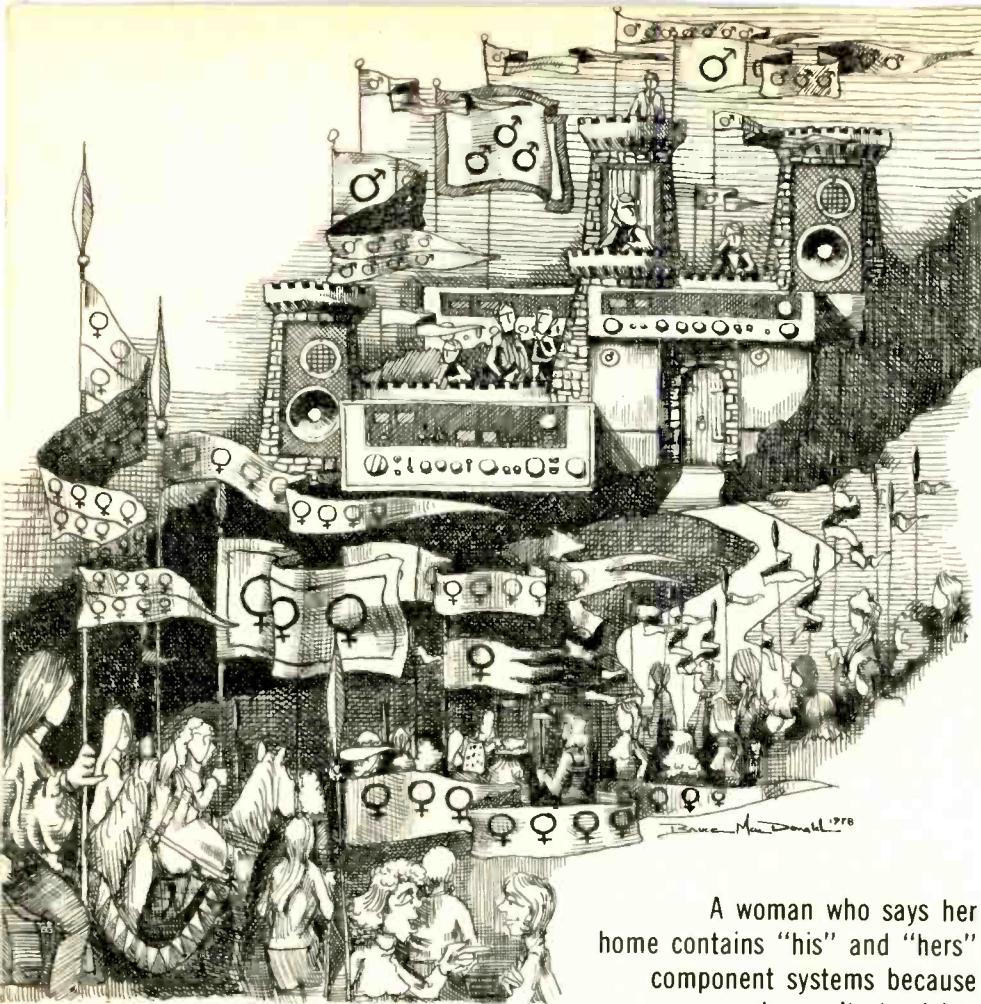
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A woman who says her home contains "his" and "hers" component systems because she can't stand her

husband's choices? Dealers who say women are "more serious buyers" and "better credit risks"? An informal consumer/retail survey turns up some surprising facts and attitudes about

Women and the Man's World of Audio

by Cynthia Pease

EVER SINCE the women's movement became implanted in the soil of American life, researchers have been avidly compiling statistics, developing demographics, and otherwise charting the habits of the burgeoning number of females who embrace liberation. The results of such research are important not only to sociologists, but to big businesses—and thus eventually to consumers—as well. One of the greatest effects of the movement has been an increase in the number of women joining the work force—and cashing a weekly paycheck. What will they spend that money on?

The audio industry is among those concerned with the financial ramifications of women's liberation. Technical and scientific matters tradition-

ally have been the domain of men, and this certainly has been true in the world of audio. Men have considered women—and, significantly, women have considered themselves—either not intelligent enough or not curious enough to be involved. The fact is that, until recently, they have neither been encouraged nor had the time and financial resources to pursue the study of circuitry and equipment design. There is an important corollary here: music. Listening to music is a universal preoccupation, not bound by gender, class, age, or ethnic limitations. The component manufacturer's concern is how people—regardless of sex—are listening to music: on compact systems or on components. If compacts, why? Because they're less

expensive? Because it is simpler not to have to learn how to hook up and maintain componentry? Or because some may not be aware of the advantages of componentry? Presumably the answers to these questions should apply to both men and women.

That women are becoming a factor in the field of audio was evident at the Institute of High Fidelity Top Management Seminar on High Fidelity Expansion in October 1977. "Females aged eighteen to twenty-four" were listed near the top of potential market groups by John Hall of U.S. Pioneer Electronics Corporation. Don Drury of the Newspaper Advertising Bureau, Inc., and John Koss of Koss Corporation both urged manufacturers to broaden their advertising appeal in an attempt to attract women to component-buying. Patricia Carbine, publisher and editor in chief of *Ms.* magazine, started with the assumption that there is a women's market and advised the industry on ways of exploiting it.

There were statistics in abundance at the seminar. For example, according to Carbine, a surprising 47.7% of the readers of *Ms.* own separate stereo components. But for me such a statement evokes visions of little per cent signs with legs, ever after to be defined by a (perhaps arbitrary) response to a statistical survey. Admittedly, statistics are valuable in research of any kind. But in quoting numbers, it is easy to lose sight of the individuals who make up the statistics. Who are they, and what are their personal feelings and concerns?

It was with these questions in mind that I talked with exhibitors and visitors at the public New York High Fidelity Show in November 1977 and the trade Winter Consumer Electronics Show early this year. Of the women consumers I talked with, at the New York show, roughly one-quarter attended because they were in the market for stereo components and wanted to see what was available before going to a dealer.

I asked them about their initiation into component-buying. Many were musicians (or were related to musicians) who had learned through their colleagues and friends the value of having a quality tape deck, amplifier, and speaker system to use in evaluating their performances and making their own demo tapes. Others were not new to audio, having grown up in male-dominated households where there was an active interest in the field. One woman told me, "My father has been an audiophile as long as I can remember. He assembled my first

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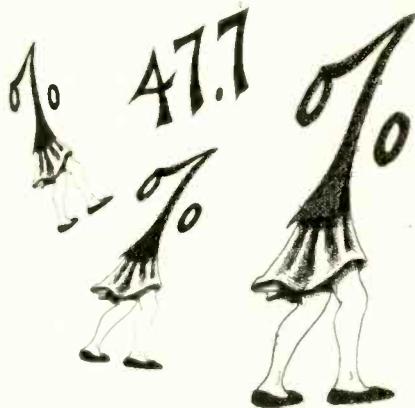


stereo system as a college graduation present. Out of curiosity, I asked him why he had chosen each component. In that way, and through reading his audio magazines, I eventually was able to do the updating myself."

Some happened upon separates by accident. One woman was looking for a compact system when she wandered into a components-only store. She was at first turned off by the higher price of separates, but after reading literature, auditioning units, and consulting with the dealer, she decided that the extra expenditure would be worthwhile. She has been an audiophile ever since.

Still others learned about components the hard way. Impressed with the quality of the sound from a friend's system, they went out and bought exactly the same equipment, with the result that they were disappointed with its performance with their own recordings in their own homes. This, they agreed, was a good if expensive lesson in the personal nature of component-buying.

Of the married women—a minority in this group—most said the selection of equipment was shared with the husband. Neither made a purchase without the other's knowledge and



consent. But one woman said her household contained "his" and "hers" systems, because "our musical and sound tastes are different. We both earn good money, so we decided to go our separate-component ways."

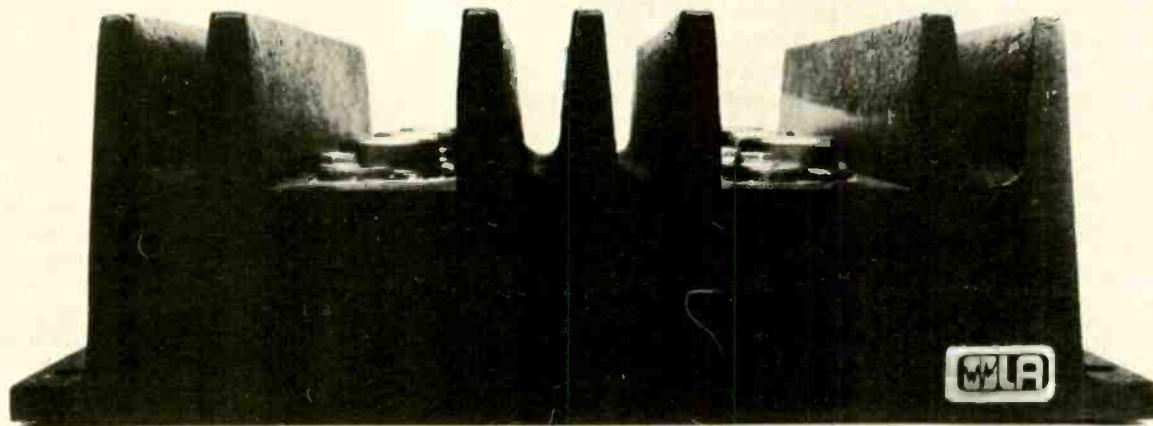
Women tend to anticipate a patronizing attitude from audio dealers, but indications are that times are changing, that such stereotypes do not confront a potential woman purchaser as often as the doctrinaire among us would have us believe. "I bought my first stereo system ten years ago," one woman related. "When I went into the dealer's and told him I was shopping for a system, he laughed and said I'd

better send my boyfriend in and let him do the shopping for me. But I would expect that response to be different today. At any rate, when I let the salesman know that I knew what I was talking about, the situation changed, and we got on very well." In fact, most of these women had positive experiences in audio stores—because they knew what they were looking for. For one thing, these are women who read audio journals on a fairly regular basis.

They also read ads for equipment, and there are two points on which they agree: that manufacturers would do well to spread their advertising dollars to forums where more women are likely to see them, and that ads are still by and large directed toward men. An ardent feminist said she absolutely refuses to patronize companies whose ads are what she considers sexist. And though most do not base their buying decisions solely on ads, one woman admitted: "The ads do influence the units I audition."

The reactions to my question about how cosmetics figure in the buying decisions of this group varied greatly. Some insisted that the equipment must fit the decor of their homes; others said they might initially be at-

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CIRCLE 21 ON PAGE 89

tracted to a certain model because of its looks but ultimately wouldn't purchase it on that basis alone; a few said they couldn't care less about the appearance as long as the component sounded good.

Another segment, also comprising about a quarter of all the women I interviewed, were not experienced component buyers but were curious about different types of equipment and eager to learn more. Many were college students who expect a high fidelity system to be their first major purchase

when they start making a regular income—an indication that the percentage of women consumers may be due for an upsurge.

Most of the women in this group knew little, if anything, about audio technology. None read an audio magazine regularly and few recalled ever seeing an ad for equipment in the magazines they did read. Those who were familiar with ads found them intimidating. A typical remark was, "The ads make it look like only an engineer can appreciate the equipment. I

don't understand the numbers, but I have a feeling that, even if I did, it wouldn't make a difference in how the thing sounded."

All owned either a compact system or a component system assembled by someone else. None was married; the women who were sharing quarters with a man on a more or less permanent basis said their stereo systems were purchased jointly, although the man had selected it and set it up. There was at least a hint of dissatisfaction with this state of affairs. "I'm not crazy about the sound of it," one of them told me. "I want to learn more so that next time we buy something I'll have more of a say."

Most in this group were not overtly concerned about cosmetics. Only one of these women had ever been in an audio store without a male companion. She thought she benefited from the experience, though she did not make a purchase. And, again, the familiar picture of the sexist dealer/ogre and the put-upon female did not materialize. "I had a good rap with the dealer," she said. "I admitted straight out that I didn't know from dBs, and he was very patient. Now it's kind of a hobby of mine to go into stores and rap with the dealer." Yet all of these women said they would feel much more at ease going to an audio store that employed female sales clerks. "It's like going to a woman doctor: You get the feeling that she has been where you are now and will be much more sympathetic than a man."

The rest of the women I spoke with, roughly half, were at the show mainly because their husbands or boyfriends wanted to go. All of the married women said that buying audio equipment was the husband's responsibility, though he rarely made a purchase without consulting her. They had no plans to buy a component system themselves, but a few admitted that their thinking might change if they were to find themselves on their own again. Generally, they were "not fussy about the sound, as long as music comes out." None recalled ever seeing an audio ad in the magazines they read, but some said they probably wouldn't have noticed anyway.

Are cosmetics important to these women? To the majority, yes. Many audiophile husbands had separate listening rooms, in which case the wives didn't care what the equipment looked like. But the bottom line was, "When you knock yourself out to make your home look good, you don't want a bunch of ugly boxes sitting around." One woman added, "My



CLEAN & FAST

Engineers around the world frequently use the term "Clean & Fast" to describe the performance of Tandberg's Series 2000 stereo receivers. We are very pleased, because this is a rather unusual term to apply to integrated receivers.

Today there are new standards of measuring amplifier performance under actual music listening conditions being applied to the more advanced separates: Rise Time, Slew Rate, DIM (Dynamic Intermodulation) and PhaseLinearity. The four models in Tandberg's Series 2000 are the only receivers to excel in these new measurements normally associated with exotic separates, earning the reputation "Clean & Fast."

An adequate description of these new measurements is not really possible in this limited space, so we invite you to request our very thorough brochure "An Introduction to Tandberg Series 2000 Receivers" from your authorized dealer. We think you will be impressed, particularly when you compare our specs with the most sophisticated separates.

The Series 2000 receivers stand out in many other traditional, but still important areas of specifications as well. Again, they are too numerous to adequately mention here, but we're tempted to list just a couple: An FM tuner on its own chassis that exceeds the performance characteristics of most separate tuners; a pre-amplifier with low noise, dynamic range and distortion characteristics of the very best separates.

For your nearest dealer, write: Tandberg of America, Inc., Labriola Court, Armonk, N.Y. 10504; or call toll-free 800-431-1506.

TANDBERG

Soundcraftsmen

new class 'H' 250 w. amplifier

TEST REPORTS

PRAISE IT

CUSTOMER CARDS

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"Incredible Dynamic Headroom into 4 ohms"...

"Transparent, uncolored sound"..."Outstanding amp"...

"Perfect reproduction of my own Direct-to-Discs"...

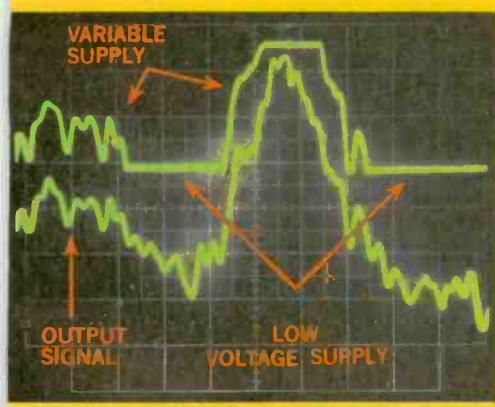
"An outrageous amp"..."Great—don't change it"...



MADE IN U.S.A.

GUARANTEED SPECIFICATIONS

250 watts RMS/Channel 20-20KHz both driven into 8 ohms, < 0.1% THD...
Transient I.M. < 0.02%... S/N > 105 dB... Damping Factor > 100...
Slew Rate > 50... Frequency Response ± 0.1 dB 20-20KHz...
Fantastic Dynamic Range (Headroom) into 4, 8, or 16 ohms...



MATCHING PREAMP-EQUALIZER



Now the PE2217 rated "State-of-the-Art" and "Best Buy" in magazine Test Reports is available as the PE2217-B in rock silver-black form as a matching mate for our new amplifier. With the control flexibility of pushbutton patching for tape monitoring and tape dubbing between two or three machines together with tape and program discrete-octave equalization, the PE2217-B is still the **MOST POWERFUL and FLEXIBLE** Preamp available at \$549.00.

VARI-PORTIONAL SYSTEM™

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION: A brief explanation of the VARI-PORTIONAL™ SYSTEM is that its computer-like ANALOG LOGIC CIRCUITRY senses and calculates the amount of voltage required in accordance with the amplifier's rising or falling output power level, and it then directs the power supply to make available precisely the amount of voltage required, with no wasted energy. The 'scope photo illustrates this Patent Pending system by showing a loud rock music signal generating the upper voltage supply and also showing the supply **VARIABLE** increasing **AHEAD** of the signal.

VARI-PORTIONAL™ CIRCUITRY-BENEFITS:

- a. enables 350 watts of 4 ohms, 250 watts of 8 ohms, at very low cost.
- b. reduces AC line current requirement to save 1 kilowatt every 5 hours, yet provide full power whenever needed for high level output.
- c. combined with ultra-fast output circuitry, provides extremely low T.I.M. for clean undistorted sound, with a **SLEW RATE** of better than 50 volts per microsecond, for exceeding most other amplifier circuits.

VARI-PORTIONAL™ L.E.D.'s: When either channel's output level reaches approximately 50% of total power, the green L.E.D. will start to flash. It is indicating that the ANALOG LOGIC CIRCUITRY is actuating the second power supply, a VARIABLE high voltage supply, and the A.L.C. is controlling that supply's voltage IN ANTICIPATION of a potentially higher output level requirement. The L.E.D. will glow proportionally brighter, showing the voltage supply increasing, as the metered power output rises above approximately 50%. When the green L.E.D. IS NOT ON, the low voltage power supply is in continuous operation, and the amplifier is operating in its most efficient mode, drawing very little AC line current and therefore saving energy costs (for example, you save approximately 1 kilowatt every 5 hours over a conventional Class B or AB amp, both operating at ½ power).

CLIPPING INDICATORS: The red L.E.D.'s, indicating clipping, are able to respond to signals much faster than meters can, and the clipping lights will flash dimly as clipping begins. When the clipping lights are bright, the amplifier is exceeding its rated power output. (Clipping will occur at varying power levels, from somewhat over 250 watts of 8 ohms, to over 360 watts of 4 ohms.)

3 MODELS: AMP-QUALIZER, METER AMP, POWER AMP—

PRICED FROM **\$649.00**

"AUTO-CROWBAR™" INSTANTANEOUS OVERLOAD PROTECTION: This Soundcraftsmen AUTO-CROWBAR™ protection circuitry is unique among amplifiers. If uses no relays, no circuit breakers. AUTO-CROWBAR™ circuit will automatically and continuously attempt to reset itself every second or two, until the overloaded condition is removed.

NON-LIMITING CIRCUITRY protects speakers from limiter-caused distortion that results from overdriving in amplifiers that use current-limiting circuitry.

DIRECT-COUPLED output.

SPEAKER-PROTECTING Input circuitry with automatic blocking of input below 1 Hz. This prevents DC from any input source from blowing out speaker cones.

CERTIFICATE OF INSPECTION: Actual measurements of each unit are enclosed with each unit to show actual measured rms output per channel, actual measured distortion per channel, actual measured slew rate per channel, etc.

REMOTE TURN-ON TRIAC-ACTUATED delay circuit eliminates turn-on surge at time of switch closure, enables REMOTE AC turn-on plug-in for switching from your preamp.

INPUT LEVEL CONTROLS: The input level controls are designed to assist in system operation by providing input voltage control from 0 to full. This capability is particularly valuable in public address, sound reinforcement, and amplified musical instrument applications where many long cables are in use and where ground loops and other unwanted conditions might exist.

METER RANGE: When the meter range "times 10" button is depressed, the meter will indicate approximate power output in percentage (100% = 250 watts, assuming an 8 ohm load at the speaker output terminals).

It's true. Quanta turntables by BSR are good looking. But many people think our specs are even better than our bodies.

For instance, consider the 500. It's a single-play turntable with an exclusive feature. "The Final Touch." What is it? Well, at the end of a record, the power shuts off. Then, magically and silently, the arm rises from the record and returns to its rest position. Automatically.

The 500 is made with DC Servo-Controlled Motor, which is the quietest motor made. It's belt driven. And it's got electronic speed control to assure you constant record speed. Wow and flutter are less than .06% (WRMS). Rumble is better than -65 dB (Din B).

If you like those specs but prefer a multiple play turntable, then think about Quanta's 550-S.

Of course, both the 500 and the 550-S have a few things in common with our other Quanta turntables. Great value as well as great beauty. So come take a look at the entire Quanta line at your nearest Quanta dealer.

We give you a lot to choose from because we want you to like us for more than our good looks.

BSR
BSR CONSUMER PRODUCTS GROUP
Route 303, Blauvelt, N.Y. 10513

Beauty and the best.



QUANTA™
by BSR

CIRCLE 6 ON PAGE 89

husband is just as concerned about that as I am—maybe more so. He's an interior decorator."

Sampling the situation from the other side of the fence, I found that the dealers, all of them male, had their share of unexpected responses. The majority agreed that women make good audio customers. In fact, some thought they are better customers than men are. Why? Their reasons were diverse:

"They're not as price-conscious—the single ones, anyway. Most of my male clients are married, and you can tell they're scared of spending more than the wife has agreed to."

"They're better credit risks. They have to be, because it's harder for them to get credit in the first place."

"I've found women to be far more rational and trusting—they seem to appreciate my role more than men do, and that makes the communication between us more effective."

"Women are more serious buyers; they generally don't come in unless they plan to make a purchase."

"They don't waste my time showing off how much they think they know. If they don't know anything about audio components, they admit it and are very open to suggestions as to how to learn more."

Many retailers said that, in their opinion, women are better equipped than men to appreciate the advantages of componentry because they have better hearing than men and are more sensitive to musical values.

It seems to be an accepted fact that women working in retail stores attract a larger female clientele, and several audio dealers said they would welcome women on their sales staffs. According to one retailer, "We've had a lot more women customers in the past two years, peaking when we had a saleswoman. When she left, they dropped off a bit."

But apparently it isn't easy to find women interested in working in an audio store. One reason offered by a person in marketing was that "women aren't as willing to work on commission. Right now they need the security of an assured income."

The dealers generally agreed that manufacturers have not yet properly tapped the women's market, that advertising is mainly directed at men, and that more ads should be placed in so-called women's magazines. "It shouldn't be a matter of a men's market vs. a women's market," a woman involved in public relations said. "There is one basic market—people who enjoy listening to music and want the best sound reproduction....

The new Bose® Model 501. It shapes the sound to fit your living room and your music.

The new Bose Model 501 Direct/Reflecting® speaker captures the realism of live music by using room-wall reflections to recreate the balance of reflected and direct sound you hear at a live performance.

At the same time, the ex-

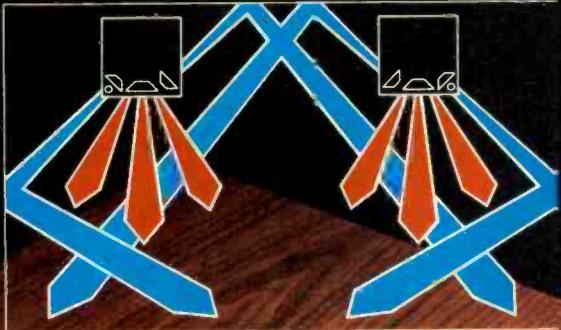
clusive Bose Direct Energy Control lets you adjust the radiation pattern of the outward-firing tweeter for the size and shape of your room, and for your music. Broader, for the sweep of a symphony, or tighter, for the intimacy of a vocalist.

Two extended-range, 3-inch tweeters deliver crisp, clean highs, while the high-performance 10-inch woofer produces very deep, powerful bass with practically no distortion. And an innovative Dual Frequency Crossover™ network lets tweeters and woofer play simultaneously over more than an octave, for smooth, open midrange.

Hear the new Model 501, the speaker that shapes the sound to fit the way you listen to music, at Bose dealers now.



The Direct Energy Control lets you adjust the radiation pattern of the outward-firing tweeter.



The Model 501 speaker is designed to create a life-like balance of reflected and direct sound.

BOSE
Better sound through research.

For a detailed description of the Model 501 and the technology behind it, send \$1.00 to
Bose Corporation Dept. PVN, The Mountain, Framingham, Mass. 01701. You will receive a full-color Model 501 brochure,
a 12-page owner's manual, and a copy of Dr. Amar Bose's article on "Sound Recording and Reproduction," reprinted from *Technology Review*.
Cabinets are walnut-grain vinyl veneer. Patents issued and pending.

INTRODUCING THE TEAC C-1.

We took a data recorder made for computers and built a cassette deck made for connoisseurs.



If you're critical about what you listen to, you should see the new TEAC C-1.

The C-1 has a transport directly derived from recorders built by our Instrumentation Division for the world's major computer manufacturers.

Its motors are rated for thousands of hours of continuous use. Servo controls have a reliability factor of 10^8 and function switches are built to withstand repeated use in excess of 100,000 times.

WHY THE TRANSPORT IS SO IMPORTANT

For the C-1 to deliver the kind of virtuoso performance we promise, it has to meter—not pull—tape with the utmost reliability. And that's a matter of mechanics, not electronics.

The sad fact is, many tape recorders are built by electronics companies with a short history of transport design. And transport mechanics is where most tape recorders break down.

Transport design—using materials that move and interact—is no simple science. It's an art that takes a long time to learn.

The art of mechanical design is one we've been practicing for

more than 25 years. And it reaches a high point with the C-1.

THE TRANSPORT

The C-1 transport is a 3-motor/3-head dual capstan system. The closed loop dual capstans are linked with twin belts to produce a wow and flutter spec of just 0.04%. The capstan motor is phase-locked loop, so it's free from voltage and frequency fluctuations.

C-1 pinch rollers are self-adjusting to get optimum tape pressure onto the capstans. Transport controls are LSI logic-operated and positive. Separate right and left input controls are cross-gearied with friction coupling for one-hand control of channels.

A pitch control lets you vary tape speed up to $\pm 4\%$ (because tapes you get from others may not be as accurately recorded as those you give).

THE ELECTRONICS

There isn't a cassette deck made that can beat this combination of specs: overall frequency response with CrO₂—20-20kHz, other—20-18kHz; Wow and Flutter—0.04% NAB, weighted; and Signal-to-Noise ratio— -70dB with Dolby at 5kHz and up to -90dB with optional dbx interface module (Rx-8).

Another unique feature to the C-1, are plug-in bias EQ/cards that let you optimize the electronics to a specific brand of tape. Additional cards are available for various brands of tape. For distortion-free recording, peak program meters respond to signals with an attack time of 10 milliseconds in all audio frequencies and give you an accurate display of peak level up to $+5\text{dB}$.

Other C-1 features include an input selector switch for Mic/Mic-with-attenuation (20dB pad)/Line; a timer control for automatic record/playback start; a memory function for Auto-Stop/Repeat; and a folding stand for vertical or angled use. Naturally, the C-1 can also be rack mounted.

HOW MUCH

The TEAC C-1* has a suggested list price of \$1300, a lot of money by some standards. But when you consider its computer/instrumentation heritage—and what that means in terms of how long and how well it will run—it could be the most inexpensive tape recorder you can buy.

TEAC®

First. Because they last.

©TEAC 1978

*Also available in brushed aluminum.

I think men are just as offended by ads that show women draped over equipment as women are. It's like saying that the only way you can appeal to men is through their sexual instincts. It's just as discriminatory as suggesting that women are *only* interested in what a piece of equipment looks like."

It would be impossible to draw any hard and fast conclusions from this admittedly unscientifically conducted research project. But I was left with the impression that audio dealers are much more confident in the potential of women as component purchasers than the women are themselves. Pioneer and Teac Corporation of America are among the companies that already are beginning to do something to change that, to inform and encourage women. Lesley Neff, working out of Pioneer's West Coast office, conducted a series of seminars for women at colleges and high fidelity dealerships. With the aid of Pioneer's book *Understanding High Fidelity*, the sessions focused on subjects ranging from the basic elements of a system to careers for women in high fidelity. Engineer Linda Feldman told me about Teac's road show "The Care and Feeding of Your Tape Recorder," which she took around the country several times. Though the show was not specifically for women, many attended and expressed great interest—not only in recording, but also in Feldman's technical background and in the possibility of a future career in audio for themselves.

What does all this mean to audio consumers in general? It doesn't mean that wholesale change is shaking the foundations of the traditionally male-dominated audio industry, at least not yet. But it does mean that the consumer may see some straws in the wind. Perhaps those ads showing scantily clad, starry-eyed females stretched across a hunk of broadloom and with a half nelson on a glistening component will disappear from magazines and newspapers altogether. (They are already in short supply.) Perhaps the consumer will notice that women are really welcome in the local audio store, or will deal with an audio saleswoman for the first time.

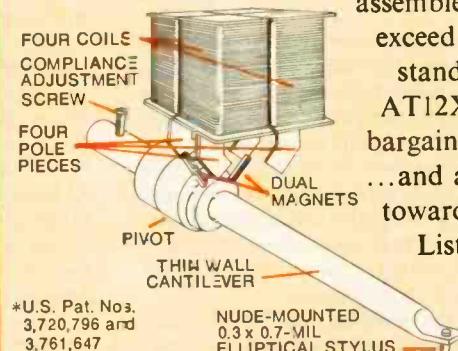
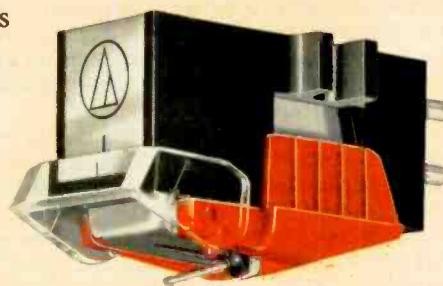
The immediate impact of these things may be slight, and it may be a long while before they find their counterparts in the laboratories and offices where audio-component design—not marketing—decisions are made. But few, even now, doubt that the greater involvement of women in the field can make a notable contribution to the continued existence of a healthy industry—can and will.

Q • Where should you start in your search for better sound?

A • At the beginning. With a new Audio-Technica Dual Magnet™ stereo phono cartridge.

Our AT12XE, for instance. Tracking smoothly at 1 to 1-3/4 grams, depending on your record player. Delivers smooth, peak-free response from 15 Hz to 28,000 Hz (better than most speakers available). With a minimum 24 dB of honest stereo separation at important mid frequencies, and 18 dB minimum separation even at the standard high-frequency 10 kHz test point. At just \$65 suggested list price, it's an outstanding value in these days of inflated prices.

Audio-Technica cartridges have been widely-acclaimed for their great sound, and for good reason. Our unique, patented* Dual Magnet construction provides a *separate* magnetic system for each stereo channel. A concept that insures excellent stereo separation, while lowering magnet mass. And the AT12XE features a tiny 0.3 x 0.7-mil nude-mounted elliptical diamond stylus on a thin-wall cantilever to further reduce moving mass where it counts. Each cartridge is individually assembled and tested to meet or exceed our rigid performance standards. As a result, the AT12XE is one of the great bargains of modern technology ...and a significant head start toward more beautiful sound.



Listen carefully at your Audio-Technica dealer's today.



audio-technica
INNOVATION □ PRECISION □ INTEGRITY

AUDIO-TECHNICA U.S., INC., Dept. 78 H, 33 Shilawassee Avenue, Fairlawn, Ohio 44313
In Canada: Superior Electronics, Inc.

U.S. Digital Recordings to Appear on Disc

Discs made from master tapes recorded via the digital system designed by Soundstream Associates, Inc., will soon be available from Orinda Recording Corporation of Orinda, California, and Telarc Records of Cleveland. Orinda's "A Tribute to Ethel Waters," featuring Diahann Carroll with the Duke Ellington Orchestra directed by Mercer Ellington, represents the first commercial digital recording made in the U.S., the first commercial use of a sixteen-bit system anywhere in the world, and the first digital recording made here with such famous artists.

Almost as historic was the recording session held on April 4 and 5 in Cleveland's Severance Hall, in which Telarc, the company that broke ground by recording the Cleveland Orchestra direct to disc, set about topping its earlier act with the first commercial digital recording of a symphonic ensemble in the U.S. Frederick Fennell directed a group of wind players, mostly from the Cleveland, in the Suites for band, Nos. 1 and 2, by Gustav Holst, with strings joining the ensemble later for Handel's Royal Fireworks Music.

On both of these occasions the digital equipment was operated by Soundstream's Dr. Thomas Stockham, assisted by engineer Bruce Rothaar, who designed and built the hardware around Stockham's concept. The recorder, which was described in our March issue ("An Old Show with New Numbers," by Harold A. Rodgers), boasts a signal-to-noise ratio of better than 90 dB and negligible distortion and flutter.

Listening to the playback was a most uncanny experience. Everyone present at the Telarc session agreed that the direct monitor and digital playback sounds were indistinguishable, a surprising admission from people—including us—who are proud of their discerning hearing. Just after auditioning a take of the tumultuous conclusion of the Handel from the "hot seat" (Telarc recording engineer Jack Renner likes to work very close to the monitor speakers so that room effects do not substantially influence his judgments), Fennell exclaimed, "I'm glad to have lived long enough to have recorded that kind of sound!"

Further vindication of the listening quality had come earlier that afternoon as the Cleveland Orchestra, rehearsing with the recording setup in place, agreed to make a ten-minute demonstration tape containing excerpts of the Shostakovich First Symphony. (One musician reportedly expressed concern that the entire work might be "cloned" from the ten-minute segment, but, as is usual in such circumstances, the tape was destined for eventual erasure.) The sound was an ear-opener for us, showing in no uncertain terms how vivid and realistic a recording can be when the dynamics, down to the most minute nuances, are untouched by compression.

While conditions were far from identical on the two occasions (Orinda used some forty microphones and a complicated real-time mix, compared with the three-point mixing technique used by Telarc), everything was virtually the same after the output of the mixing board. Both Orinda producer Michael Robert Phillips and Telarc producer Bob Woods ex-



Dr. Thomas Stockham, Telarc engineer Jack Renner, and conductor Frederick Fennell audition a take at the mixing console.

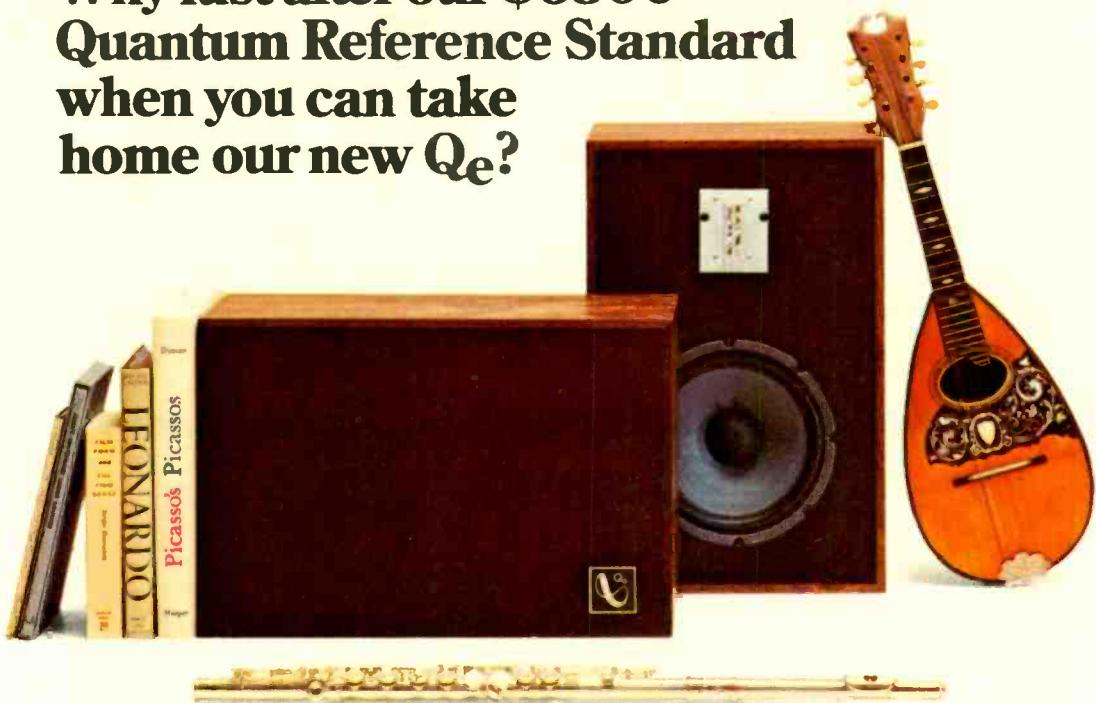
pressed enthusiasm for the Soundstream system.

Of course the finest master tape in the world would be of little use to a record company if it could not be successfully transferred to disc, and both companies are paying special attention to the process. Stan Ricker of the JVC Cutting Center in Los Angeles, who will cut the Telarc master, was on hand at the session to be sure that the recording would fall within the rather rigid limits prescribed by his equipment. Somewhat surprisingly, none of this seems to require any constraints on musical dynamics or (horror!) the use of gain-riding—only care with respect to the relative orientation of the instruments and microphones.

As a case in point, Ricker explained that a bass drum (one of the chief sources of low-frequency energy in an orchestra), when placed in its usual attitude at right angles to the front of the stage, radiates out-of-phase signals to the left and right microphones and virtually no sound toward the conductor—or the center fill microphone, if one is used. The net effect is that the drum sound is transferred to the disc as vertical modulation, which, if excessive, can either damage the cutting equipment or throw the playback stylus out of the groove. Ricker solves this problem by turning the drum so that the head faces the podium. Now the modulation is in phase between the two channels and shows up as a lateral movement of the stylus in cutting and playback. Interestingly, he says, the Cleveland percussionists found the acoustic effect of this change worthy of attention.

Ricker will cut the master disc at half speed, thereby lowering both distortion and power input to the cutting head. Implementation of this process will be delayed until Soundstream has made the necessary alterations in the digital playback hardware. In the meantime, Telarc will prepare an edit of the analog tape that was made simultaneously with the digital

Why lust after our \$6500 Quantum Reference Standard when you can take home our new Qe?



\$105* and it will sit on your bookshelf.

If you thought the Infinity Qa was an incredible speaker—and an incredible buy at \$150—wait till you hear our new Qe.

The least expensive Infinity speaker, it has the clarity and sweetness in the upper registers; the definition and delicacy in the mid-range; and the tight, clean bass that is characteristic of all Infinity speakers.

This is a true audiophile component. No speaker at its price has ever come close to its accuracy, openness and transparency.

The reason is simple: Qe is the beneficiary of Infinity state-of-the-art technology. It has our EMIT™ Electromagnetic Induction Tweeter (same as all our much more expensive Quantum and Q Series speakers). It has an 8-inch version of the remarkable Q-woofer™ (with its phosphor bronze voice-coil former, butyl surround and special cone treatment) found in our highly acclaimed Qa and Qb.

Equally important, Qe has had built into it a year of sonic measurements, creative listening and critical adjustments by our scientist/musician

designers, in order to optimize its sound for bookshelf rather than open floor space, and to create an unparalleled bookshelf instrument.

Test Qe with your most demanding records in an Infinity dealer's listening room. It will be a revelation. You'll hear orchestral colors, subtle nuance of inner voices and a sense of three-dimensional depth you've rarely heard from records.

The Maazel/Respighi *Feste Romane* on London, for example: the massive, stabbing trombone pedal tones are clear and undistorted; the soaring violins are forte but un-screechy. Listen to the liquid warmth of Janet Baker, the hard-driving rock lyricism of the Bee Gees, the solid velvet-edge of Chuck Mangione—all revealed with a musicality never

before possible from a speaker of such modest size and price.

Just 18 by 12 by 10 inches, the Qe speaks from 47 Hz through a spectacular 32,000 Hz ±3 dB and can live happily ever after with amplifiers or receivers of from 12 to 100 watts of RMS power per channel.

A formidable achievement. And, at \$105, a remarkable price.

So don't worry about not having the space for a set of our 6-foot 6-inch Quantum Reference Standard speakers. Now you have the Qe.

A free call to 800-423-5244 (in California: 800-382-3372) gets you Qe literature and the name of your nearest Infinity dealer. Run, don't walk.

About that "e" in Qe:
This is the speaker for everyone.

 **Infinity** • Q_e

We get you back to what it's all about. Music.

version and forward it to Soundstream, which will use it as a model for the digital equivalent. (Phillips and Woods indicate that the editing capability of digital recording is a major reason for preferring it to direct cut.) Eventually both versions will be released, the more expensive digital first.

Orinda apparently does its cutting at full speed but takes extraordinary steps in the pressing process, such as retiring stampers when fewer than 1,000 discs have been produced from each. In addition, a special vinyl formulated for minimum surface noise will be used. Each disc produced in the initial run will be given a serial number.

Both companies say that they will adhere to rigid standards of quality control. All of this will not come cheaply, of course. The Orinda discs will be priced around \$13; the Telarc records will cost \$15 in the digital version, about \$8.00 in the analog version.

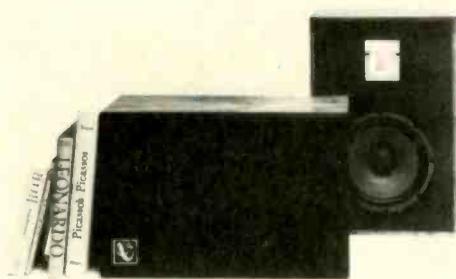
Digital recording is obviously in its infancy, and its full effect

on the music industry would be difficult to predict at this point. For one thing, a disc made from a digital master tape can be expected to strain or exceed the capabilities of most consumer playback equipment. But having seen and heard the system in action, we are left with the feeling that the recording art has passed over a watershed and will never again be quite the same.

Marantz Leaves Full-Time Post

Dahlquist, Inc., of Freeport, New York, has announced the resignation of Saul Marantz, a beloved and revered pioneer in the high fidelity industry, from his position as company president. Marantz, who served with the company for five years, indicates that he will continue in the role of consultant. His plans include travel with his wife, Jean.

Equipment in the News



Infinity offers economy speaker

Infinity Systems' Q series includes the Model Qe bookshelf speaker. The Emit tweeter, which Infinity claims offers outstanding clarity and dispersion, is rotatable so that the speaker may be placed either horizontally or vertically. The recommended input power range is 10 to 100 watts (10 to 20 dBW) per channel. Price of the Qe system is \$105.

CIRCLE 137 ON PAGE 89

DB Systems introduces preamp

The DB-1 Precision Preamplifier from DB Systems, containing only audio circuits, must be run on an external power supply. Total harmonic distortion is said to be less than 0.0008% across the audio band; from 10 Hz to 20 kHz, RIAA equalization is asserted to be within ± 0.15 dB. The preamp features high- and low-frequency filters, tape monitoring, and a buffered tape output. Performance specs are included in the five-year transferable warranty. The price is \$397, and a power supply and walnut cabinet are available for \$78 and \$35, respectively. A rack-mountable version, the DBR-1, costs \$423.25.

CIRCLE 138 ON PAGE 89



Portability and convenience in Uher tape deck

The Uher CR-240 is a front-loading portable stereo cassette deck incorporating Dolby noise reduction and photoelectronic drive control. A plug-in power supply fits inside the unit to adapt it to home use. Features include a three-position tape selector, peak-reading level meters (one of which is also a battery voltage tester), stereo power amplifier, and built-in condenser microphone. Transport functions, indicated by LEDs, are controlled by a single lever. The CR-240, which can be operated via an external remote-control device, costs \$780.

CIRCLE 139 ON PAGE 89

(more)

To get a superb performance, you need a precision machine.

To command a great performance, a cassette shell and cassette tape must be engineered to the most rigorous standards. Which explains why we get so finicky about details. Consider:

Precision Molded Cassette Shells—are made by continuously monitored injection molding that virtually assures a mirror-image parallel match. That's insurance against signal overlap or channel loss in record or playback from A to B sides. Further insurance: high impact styrene that resists temperature extremes and sudden stress.

An Ingenious Bubble Surface Liner Sheet—commands the tape to follow a consistent running angle with gentle, fingertip-embossed cushions. Costly lubricants forestall drag, shedding, friction, edgewear, and annoying squeal. Checks channel loss and dropouts.

Tapered, Flanged Rollers—direct the tape from the hubs and program it against any up and down movement on its path towards the heads. Stainless steel pins minimize friction and avert wow and flutter, channel loss.

Resilient Pressure Pad and Holding System—spring-mounted felt helps maintain tape contact at dead center on the head gap. Elegant interlocking pins moor the spring to the shell, and resist lateral slipping.

Five-Screw Assembly—for practically guaranteed warp-free mating of the cassette halves. Then nothing—no dust or tape snags—can come between the tape and a perfect performance.

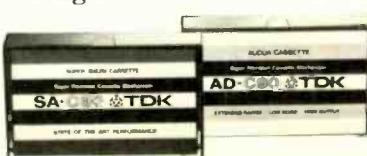
Perfectly Circular Hubs and Double Clamp System—insures there is no deviation from circularity that could result in tape tension variation producing wow and flutter and dropouts. The clamp wedges the tape to the hub with a curvature impeccably matched to the hub's perimeter.

Head Cleaning Leader Tape—knocks off foreign matter that might interfere with superior tape performance, and prepares the heads for...

Our famous SA and AD Tape Performance—two of the finest tapes money can procure are securely housed inside our cassette shells. SA (Super Avilyn) is the tape most deck manufacturers use as their reference for the High (CrO_2) bias position. And the new Normal bias AD, the tape with a hot high end, is perfect for any type of music, in any deck. And that extra lift is perfect for noise reduction tracking.

TDK Cassettes—despite all we put into them, we don't ask you to put out a lot for them. Visit your TDK dealer and discover how inexpensive it is to fight dropouts, level variation, channel loss, jamming, and other problems that interfere with musical enjoyment. Our full lifetime warranty* is your assurance that our machine is the

machine for your machine. TDK Electronics Corp., Garden City, N.Y. 11530. Canada: Superior Electronics Ind., Ltd.



TDK
The machine for your machine.

*In the unlikely event that any TDK cassette ever fails to perform due to a defect in materials or workmanship, simply return it to your local dealer or to TDK for a free replacement.



DP-6700

Direct-drive turntables have a hidden problem—the very subtle pulses caused by DC servo loops in the speed control system. By definition these pulses are directly coupled to the platter, and many investigations show such pulses add small amounts of audio contamination.

So Denon knowledge has dumped the DC speed control system.

Denon has developed an AC perceptor that reads how fast the platter is turning, not how fast electrons are turning in a DC servo loop.

Results:

1. The advantage of direct drive.
2. Elimination of DC servo pulses.
3. The most accurate speed control available—anywhere.

Denon knowledge is available on all turntables by Denon, not just the most expensive. See your franchised American Audioport Dealer for proof.



DP-1200

DENON KNOWLEDGE:

A Cure for the Unknown



DP-3500



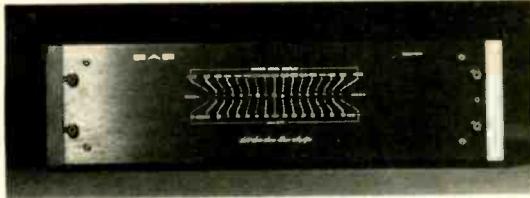
DP-755

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SAE's new 3100 power amp



The Model 3100 power amplifier from SAE offers fully complementary circuitry, from the differential input to the output stage. Rated output power is 50 watts (17 dBW) per channel into 4-ohm or 8-ohm loads. Total harmonic and intermodulation distortion are said to be 0.05% maximum in the audio band. A front-panel LED display monitors power output. Rated frequency response is $\pm \frac{1}{4}$ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz. The SAE 3100 costs \$350.

CIRCLE 151 ON PAGE 89

Sound from the Source

Sound Source's top-of-the-line model Source 4a loudspeaker system employs a 12-inch woofer, 5-inch midrange, and 1-inch tweeter, with an ambience (level) control for each of the upper drivers. The manufacturer credits its proprietary Rear Frequency Time Line enclosure with tight transient response and reproduction of frequencies below 20 Hz. In order to improve stereo imaging and reduce room-placement problems, the drivers are mounted high in the enclosure. Rated frequency response is ± 3 dB, 20 Hz to 22 kHz. Nominal impedance of the system is 8 ohms. The 4a costs \$450; other models start at \$170.

CIRCLE 141 ON PAGE 89



Pioneer launches a new component

Encouraged by the recently improved TV audio transmission bandwidth to 15 kHz, Pioneer has developed a tuner that brings in the sound portion of a television program and routes it through a high fidelity system. The TVX-9500 can receive all current VHF and UHF broadcast channels. The tuner has a rated frequency response of 50 Hz to 10 kHz, $\pm \frac{1}{2}$ dB, -1 dB, and a signal-to-noise ratio of 65 dB at an 85-dBf input. Price of the TVX-9500 is \$250.

CIRCLE 150 ON PAGE 89

Environmental Sound's turntable makes U.S. debut

Being distributed in the U.S. by RNS Special Products is the EST-6 turntable made by Environmental Sound, a British company. The EST-6 is a high-performance direct-drive system with both speeds (33 and 45) electronically variable. The platter consists of metal discs filled with a nonconductive material said to reduce static. Stroboscope dots on the bottom of the platter can be viewed in a mirror in the base. The turntable comes with two tone-arm mounting discs, one of which is precut for Infinity and SME arms. Complete with base and dust cover, the EST-6 costs \$324.95.

CIRCLE 142 ON PAGE 89



First electrostatic headphone from Beyer

Hammond Industries is distributing the first electrostatic headphone from Beyer Dynamic, the Model ET-1000. This listening system includes a separate power pack, the N-1000, that can accommodate two headphones simultaneously. According to Hammond, the ET-1000 has a response range of 10 Hz to 25 kHz and, by virtue of its extremely soft earpieces, padded headband, and light weight, offers exceptional comfort. Weighing 14 ounces, the ET-1000 costs \$280 with the power pack.

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(more)



Ace Audio's subsonic filter

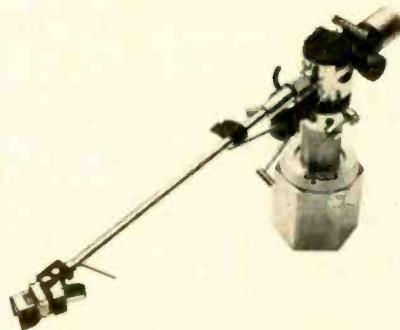
The Model 4000 from Ace Audio is a sharp-cutoff subsonic filter designed to suppress low-frequency signals from record warps, stylus drops, rumble, and cartridge/tone-arm resonances. According to Ace, the 4000 provides rolloff of 18 dB per octave below 20 Hz with typical distortion of 0.005% and noise 86 dB below 1 volt input. The circuitry features Class A operation and, to avoid interface problems, has high input impedance and low output impedance. The Model 4000 kit costs \$59.25; a wired version is available for \$89.50.

CIRCLE 140 ON PAGE 89

User's choice with Audio Craft tone arm

The Audio Craft AC-300 Mk. II tone arm distributed by Osawa is supported by a vertical needlepoint pivot that also incorporates adjustable viscous damping and an antiskating control. The front section of the arm is user-replaceable, allowing selection of S-shaped, straight, or graphite arm "pipes." A lateral balance adjustment ensures correct stylus orientation with different cartridges and arm sections. The AC-300 Mk. II comes with a straight tubular arm and costs \$325. Additional arm sections are \$60 each.

CIRCLE 144 ON PAGE 89



Add-on "ear" for synthesizers

The AR-333, a pitch and envelope follower from Aries Music, is designed for use with most synthesizers. It converts input signals—ranging from the human voice to single-note musical instruments—into control voltages. A one-octave change in the input will result in a 1-volt change at the output of the module, permitting an unlimited variety of control possibilities for synthesizer oscillators, filters, pulse-waveform shapes, and filter resonance range. The AR-333 includes a low-distortion compressor and sufficient adjustments and patch points for good flexibility. It is available in kit form for \$349 or prewired with its own case and power supply for \$550.

CIRCLE 145 ON PAGE 89



Onkyo receiver features Accutact

New from Onkyo is the TX-4500 Mk. II stereo receiver. The quartz-locked tuning system, said to ensure perfect tuning, is made automatic by Onkyo's proprietary Accutact control. A Dolby-FM de-emphasis switch is provided, as well as high and low filters. The receiver is rated at 60 watts (17 1/4 dBW), from 20 Hz to 20 kHz, with no more than 0.1% total harmonic distortion. Rated frequency response is ± 1 dB, 15 Hz to 30 kHz. The TX-4500 Mk. II is priced at \$460.

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Nakamichi introduces Audio Analyzer

Nakamichi's T-100 Audio Analyzer is a portable test instrument for measuring distortion, frequency response, speed, and wow and flutter as well as audio levels. The built-in low-distortion oscillator provides twenty-one frequencies from 20 Hz to 20 kHz. Levels are indicated by the plasma displays as peak or VU, and in volts, watts, or dB. The T-100 can also be used to supplement level meters on tape decks and to monitor outputs of power amplifiers. Cost, including carrying case, is \$800.

CIRCLE 146 ON PAGE 89



CIRCLE 31 ON PAGE 89 →

The importance of being earnest.



matched walnut veneer enclosures

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

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

A large number of listeners, including many "golden ears," determined when distortion was audible and when it was objectionable. These results were fed into a computer which then generated the

design parameters and engineering specifications of the lowest distortion and greatest accuracy speakers.

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

Write to us for the name of your nearest Leak dealer and ask for full product and technical literature. Choose from the Leak 3080, 3050, 3030 and 3020 models. One is certain to suit both your budget and listening needs.

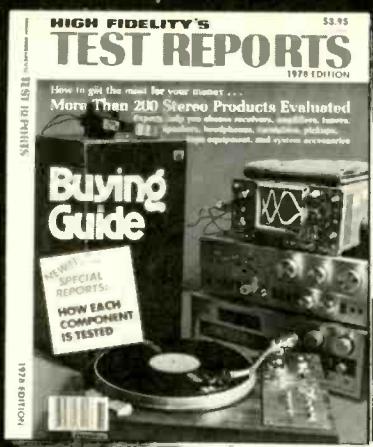


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Too Hot to Handle

To one who plans on substantially upgrading his or her system, digital encoding offers both excitement and confusion. Two options are open: Buy for the present (which in my case means buying a Yamaha CR-820 receiver and Bose 601 speakers to supplement my B.I.C. 960 turntable), or try to decide which of today's components will do justice to digital sound. Of course, they must be compatible with the digital tape decks and PCM disc players that soon will be available. Which components and what minimal specs should I look for in PCM-compatible equipment?—Bernard Kuslansky, Jamaica, N.Y. Unless you mean to contemplate silence for some time, buy for the present. You'll probably find that today's equipment will work fine with digitals (when they come) because the digital-to-analog conversion will be built into any digital equipment, which therefore will feed your existing system exactly the sort of diet it's designed for.

I own a Shure stylus force gauge (SFG-2), a Pickering XSV-3000 cartridge, and a Shure M-91ED cartridge mounted with a Discraker on the headshell. How can I use the gauge to set the XSV's tracking force? (The dust brush on this cartridge touches the turntable's platter and prevents the gauge from balancing.) Does it matter if the bottom of the Discraker touches the stylus gauge when setting up the Shure?—Matt Markovich, Whiting, Ind. You may not be able to do it. For an accurate result, the stylus tip of the XSV-3000, the tip of the brush, and the Discraker all must clear the platter surface so that the gauge registers their total. The correct setting for vertical tracking force is that required by the cartridge, plus 10 millinewtons (1 gram) to compensate for the brush, plus 6 millinewtons (0.6 gram) for the Discraker.

We are planning to build a new house and in order to optimize the sound system I need some information. It is generally agreed that the best bass response is provided by floor-standing speakers, as opposed to wall- or shelf-mounted. But if the speakers have to be positioned slightly off the floor (less than a foot), what support medium (wood, concrete, etc.) between speaker and floor will minimize loss of bass response? Are there any advantages or disadvantages, in terms of sound quality, to having speakers partially or fully recessed into a wall?—J. M. Johnston, Silver Spring, Md.

As long as speaker supports are rigid and do not vibrate or resonate, the material from which they are made is of no consequence. The position of the speaker with respect to the floor is what affects bass response. Recessing conventional box-type speakers into a wall can help to smooth the bass and mid-

bass response, but the speaker must fit the recess fairly exactly. This can be a nuisance if you ever want to change speakers. Incidentally, your assertion about floor-standing speakers vs. wall- or shelf-mounting is not always true.

There seems to be some confusion in the audio industry as to the proper frequency at which a tone arm and cartridge combination should resonate.

Joseph F. Grado wrote in the October 1977 issue of *Audio* that "there is only one proper mass for a tone arm with a given pickup. That particular mass is determined by the compliance of the pickup and the mass of the tone arm which results in the desired low frequency of 8 to 10 Hz."

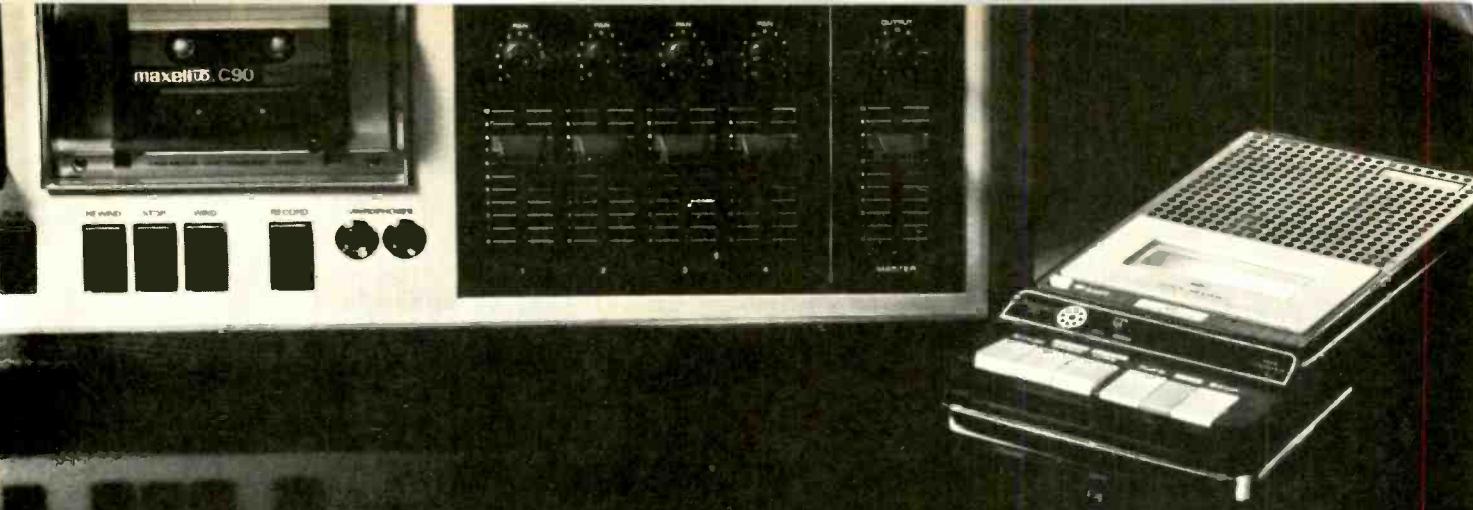
Edward J. Foster, in the April 1977 issue of *HIGH FIDELITY*, stated: "The ideal range for arm resonance is 10 to 15 kHz." (Should this be Hz instead of kHz?)

A reviewer in your November 1977 issue stated that the Pioneer PL-570 turntable with a Shure V-15 Type III cartridge "resonates at 8.5 Hz—lower than 'ideal' but no cause for alarm."

In addition, Julian Hirsch has said: "The best place for a combined arm-resonance is therefore about 10 Hz or a bit higher."

Can you unequivocally state what is correct?—Neville A. Gracie, Brooklyn, N.Y. Foster's statement in our April issue should have read: "The ideal range for arm resonance is 10 to 15 Hz." The "kHz" was a typographical error; otherwise the statement expresses our view. But this "ideal frequency" is not nearly as critical as you seem to believe. Resonance should be above 4 to 6 Hz, where subsonic rumble and warps are worst, and below 20 Hz, where there may still be some music. Besides that, there is the magnitude of the resonance to consider. If the resonance is highly damped (and therefore of low amplitude), its exact location matters even less. In practice, this means that the vast majority of cartridges will work in practically any tone arm of reasonable quality. When a mismatch does occur, the effect is normally gross, as, for example, the inability to track mildly warped discs or heavy distortion on loud bass passages.

I desperately need your help before I purchase a product that may ruin my speakers. I have a Pioneer SX-838 50-watt-per-channel receiver and Marantz 6G two-way speakers, which can take only 50 watts of continuous power. I want to buy an RG-1 range expander, but will the 14-dB increase it gives hurt my speakers?—Richard Lipp, Pittsburgh, Pa. Not to worry. An expanded signal is not as dangerous to your equipment as a compressed one played loud. Expansion does not



It's hard to find a \$1,000 tape deck that doesn't use Maxell. Or a \$100 tape deck that shouldn't.

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Long known by audiophiles for incredibly pure sound reproduction, ADC cartridges have also proven their amazingly low record wear. This year, they have even surpassed themselves.

First, there's the remarkable new ZLM with the unique ALIPTIC® stylus. It combines the better stereo reproduction of the

elliptical stylus shape with the longer, lower wearing, vertical bearing radius of the Shibata shape. As a result sound reproduction is completely transparent and clean. Individual instrument placement is more easily identifiable. And frequency response is ruler flat $\pm 1\text{dB}$ to 20 kHz and $\pm 1\frac{1}{2}\text{dB}$ to 26 kHz. It tracks at $\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{4}$ grams.

Then there's the new XLM MK III with the same reduced mass, tapered cantilever but with a true elliptical shaped nude diamond tip. It has 50% lower mass than our previously lowest mass XLM MK II. It tracks at $3\frac{1}{4}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$ grams.

The Q M 36 MK III with the innovative Diaxa elliptical nude tip also has excellent frequency response, wide separation, and an incredibly clean sound. It also tracks at $3\frac{1}{4}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$ grams.

The QLM 34 MK III offers elliptical shape and tracks as low as

1 gram with flat response out to 20 kHz $\pm 2\text{dB}$.

The QLM 32 MK II is a 2-4 gram elliptical with great sound. It's one of the best budget ellipticals around.

And ideal for automatic changers, the QLM 30 MK II is a 3-5 gram conical stylus that's compatible with a wide range of stereo equipment.

The ADC cartridges. Think about it. You probably don't even know what you're missing.



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increase the average power of a signal as much as it changes the peak-to-average ratio. Thus, while your speakers are probably safe, there is the possibility that your amp will clip a bit more often and more distortion will be audible. The solution to this is a bigger amplifier. A speaker system that can accept 50 watts (17 dBW) continuously is probably safe with short-term peaks approaching 500 watts (27 dBW). Also, you probably won't want to use the full expansion of the RG-1 all the time.

Recently I purchased an Accuphase P-250 power amp to replace my Hitachi HA-610 integrated amp. Due to lack of funds, I will have to postpone getting a new preamp. In the meantime, I have been using the preamp section of the Hitachi and not feeding any signal to the power section. Since the Hitachi is a Class A power amp, should the power transistors be disconnected from any power source in order to save their wear at full output and also to save electricity?—Gary Yurkovich, Richmond, B.C.

The Hitachi HA-610 is not a Class A amp. Even if it were, an arbitrary modification such as the one you describe poses a far greater risk (and probably loss of resale value) than any wear and tear that might result from running with no load. The difference in power consumption will not be a significant factor. We suggest that you leave well enough alone until you can afford the new preamp.

I own a Sherwood Model S-7050 receiver and am very pleased with its performance. I am now interested in having more control flexibility. My present system includes a Miracord turntable and a Hitachi cassette deck. I would like to add an open-reel unit so I can record either deck, from the receiver or from the other deck, while monitoring either deck. Are there outboard switching devices that will allow this, or will it be necessary for me to purchase a new receiver with this flexibility built-in?—E. Raven Ellis, Eden, N.C.

We'd suggest you look into the Russound SP-1 switching and control center reported on in our January issue, or possibly the Russound TMS-1 or TMS-2.

I have a Pioneer SX-850 and a Technics integrated amp, and both owner's manuals say that headphones of low impedance should be used (4 to 16 ohms). I have been unable to get a good answer as to why from either company—only that no damage would result if high-impedance phones are used. I find this disturbing nonetheless, since most high-quality headphones are far above 16 ohms. What do you have to say on the matter?—Bruce Campbell, Port Jefferson, N.Y.

High-impedance phones may not draw enough current (and, therefore, power) from the amplifier to produce a high enough listening level. But most headphones designed for music listening will work adequately with a receiver output.

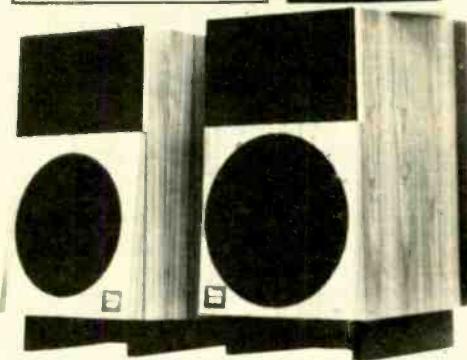
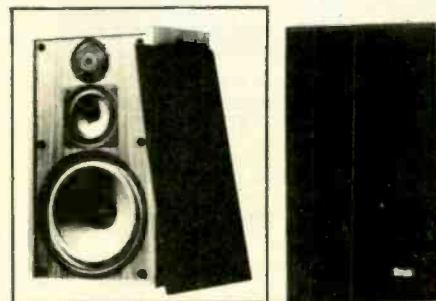
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Video Topics

VHS (Vidstar) VCR format: the four-hour slow-speed option. Isn't the possibility of recording the whole Superbowl while you're away from home a strong selling point in a video-cassette deck?

Possibly, but that's not the whole story, says JVC, pointing out that the slow speed results in a considerable—unacceptable, as far as the company is concerned—loss of picture quality. Beyond that, the four-hour option precludes features that would make the VHS format particularly flexible. Indications are that JVC will introduce a VHS recorder capable of stop-frame action, slow motion, and double-speed playback with the audio processed to get rid of the "Donald Duck" effect. In fact, by the time you read this, the machine will probably have been demonstrated.

Tapes, tapes, tapes. Gillette, in a classic marketing ploy, is said to have invented a cheap safety razor and sold it at cost in order to clean up on the razor-blade aftermarket. That gimmick won't work in video tapes because just about every major tape brand is in there slugging for the VCR market; the blades are anything but a proprietary monopoly. At least that's the way it's shaping up for the Beta and VHS formats. As for the others—

Barometer. After our May-issue item about runaway demand for home video recorders, the market seems to have calmed down a bit. The post-Christmas figures, received only after our last column, show a marked letup. It's nothing to worry about, say insiders—just a midwinter breather before the steady gains expected as 1978 goes on.

Software. Two video-software companies have sent us interesting material about their wares. Visiondisc Corporation of New York is producing a series of shows specifically for video-cassette distribution. Talent for the musical series will include Mary Lou Williams, Alberta Hunter, Dakota Staton, Hildegarde, Rose Murphy, and Carol Williams and the Great American Dream.

Meanwhile, Discotronics, Inc., of Cranbury, New Jersey, has sent a bulletin of its feature films (listing in the \$50-\$70 range), running the gamut from Doctor Dolittle to an opus called *Voluptuous Vixens '76*. The company has an exchange policy that will let you view and return tapes for charges that can work out to as low as \$10 per film.

But even more interesting to us is the fact that both companies seem to have been a mite premature in choosing their names.

We just raised the standard of the industry.



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The new Koss PRO/4 Triple A.

We did it again. We took the incredible sound and precision craftsmanship of the Koss PRO/4AA that has long made it the standard of the industry and made it even better. Because the PRO/4 Triple A's extra large voice coil and oversized Triple A diaphragm reproduce a dynamic, full bandwidth Sound of Koss that carries you back to the live performance like nothing you've ever heard before. You remember it all: the expectant hush of the crowd . . . until suddenly . . . the night explodes with the glittering splendor of the all engulfing

performance. You're drawn to the full blown fundamentals and harmonics of each instrument. To the spine-tingling clarity of the lead singer's magical voice. To the rhythmic kick of the drum and the throbbing of the bass.

You see it and hear it all again, yet you're relaxed at home in your own private realm of listening pleasure. The PRO/4 Triple A's extra light construction and unique Pneumalite® suspension dual headband make wearing them as much of a pleasure as listening to them. And all the while, the Triple A's special, human-

engineered, direct-contoured Pneumalite® earcushions create a gentle yet perfect seal for flat, low bass response to below audibility.

It's a whole new experience in stereophone listening. A new performance standard for those who set their standards high. Write c/o Virginia Lamm for our free full-color stereophone catalog. Or better yet, take your favorite records or tapes to your Audio Dealer and listen to them like you've never heard them before . . . live on the new Koss PRO/4 Triple A.

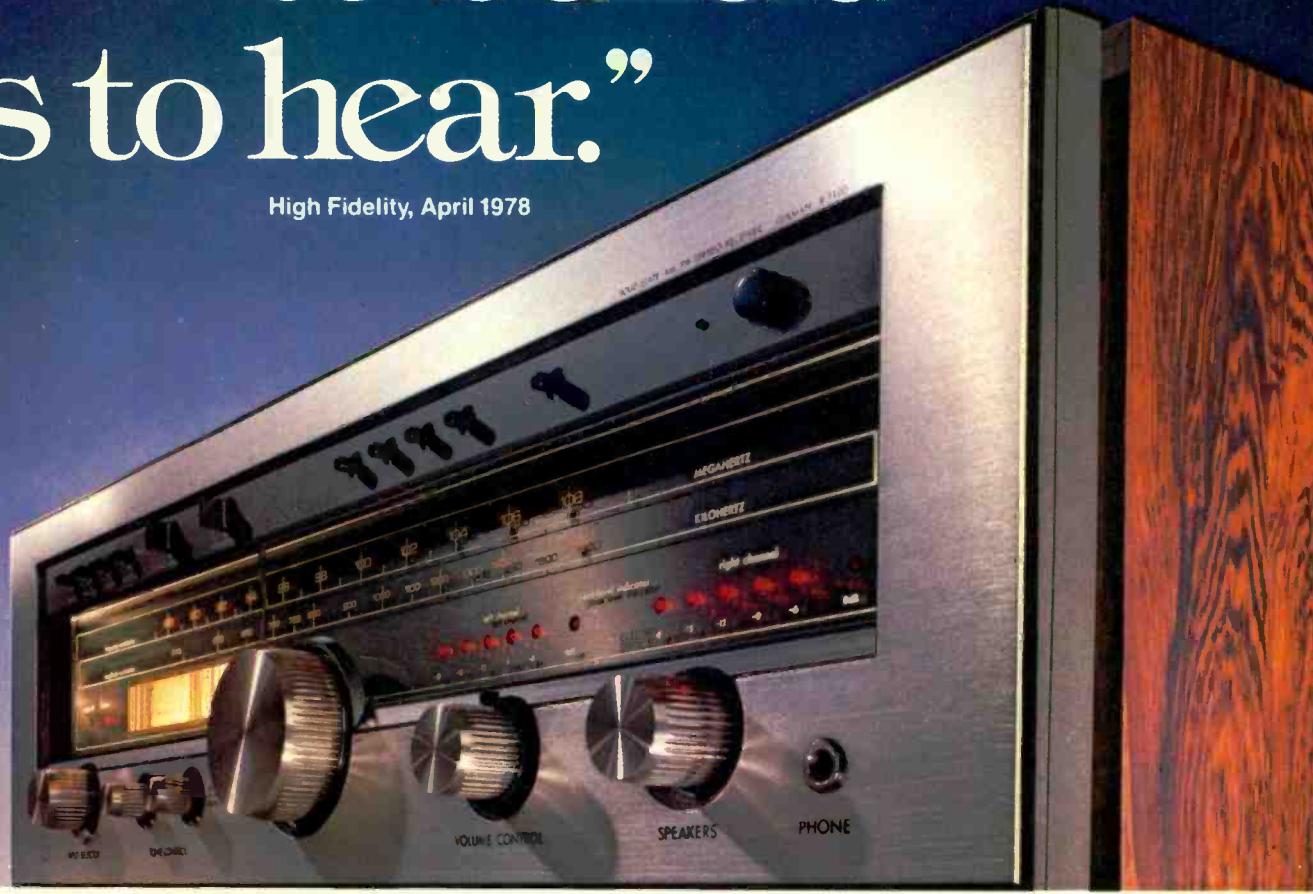


KOSS® stereophones hearing is believing™

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CIRCLE 22 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

"As beautiful to behold as to hear."

High Fidelity, April 1978



Luxman R-1120 tuner/amplifier

Like other manufacturers, we feel we know our products better than anyone. Yet given the opportunity, we prefer to let independent test labs and technical editors describe our products to the consumer. The following excerpts from reports on the Luxman R-1120 tuner/amplifier will tell you why.

First from *High Fidelity*:

"There is an effortless quality to the sound that just radiates class...the appearance of the product and its thoughtful constellation of features reinforce this impression. Here is a receiver—sorry, a tuner-amplifier—that the discerning listener will surely enjoy.

"...the FM tuner is impressive,

to say the least. Stereo quieting is pushed to 60 dB by only 45½ dBf of input, which promises enjoyable listening in all but the deepest fringe areas."

And here's what *Consumer Guide* says about the R-1120's power amplifier: "...very conservatively rated. At mid frequencies ... produced 137 watts. Even at 20 Hz and 20 kHz (it) pumped out 130 watts before reaching its rated harmonic distortion figure."

(Please note that the R-1120 is rated at "only" 120 watts per channel, 20-20,000 Hz, 8 ohms, with no more than 0.03 percent total harmonic distortion.)

Now for some words of our own. Glance at the photo and

you'll see a feature unique to LUX tuner/amplifiers: an array of LED peak-power indicators—six per channel. They'll make sure you don't drive the amplifier into clipping and overload.

Also: negative feedback tone controls, switchable turnover frequencies, electrostatic speaker connections, tape-to-tape dubbing and optional Dolby®.

Although LUX is known primarily for separate amplifiers and tuners, you can now appreciate why our new tuner/amplifiers have led many music lovers to simply upgrade their receivers.

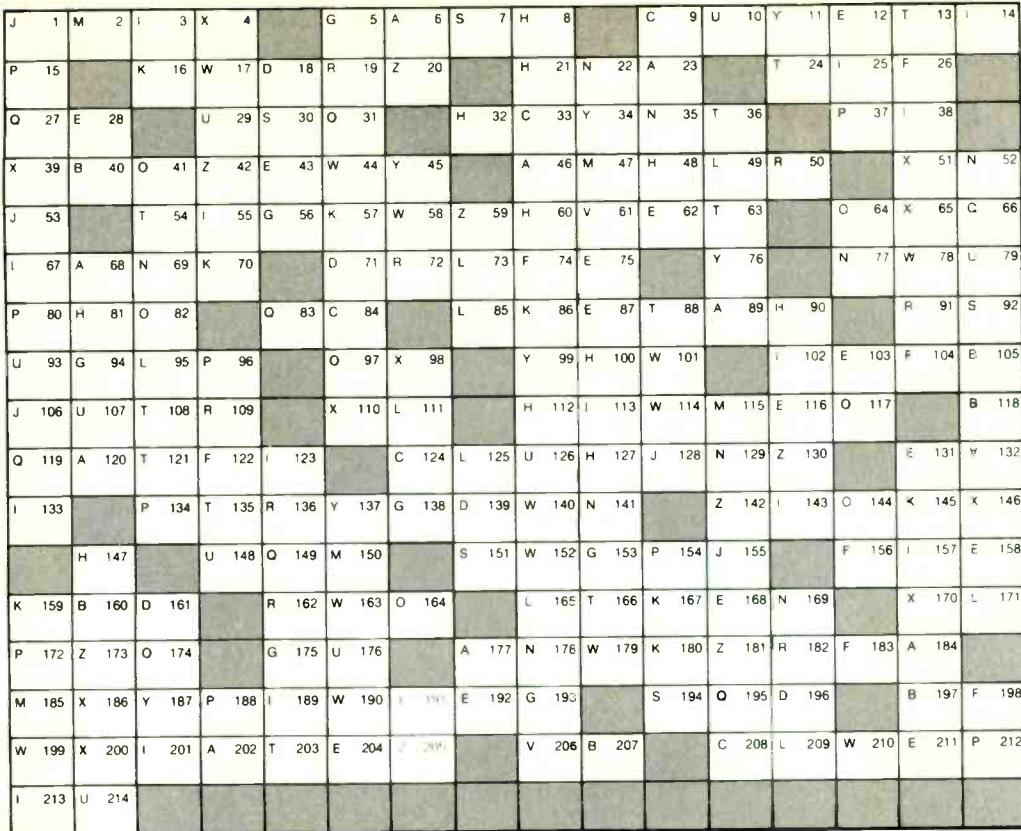
A visit to one of the very select LUX dealers will help you decide what your next step up should be.

LUX Audio of America, Ltd.

160 Dupont Street, Plainview, New York 11803 • In Canada: White Electronics Development Corp., Ontario

HiFi-Crostic No. 36

by William Petersen



DIRECTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

The answer to HiFi-Crostic No. 36 will appear in next month's issue of HIGH FIDELITY.

INPUT	OUTPUT	INPUT	OUTPUT
A. Gaby or Robert	184 89 202 6 177 68 46 120 23	N. Average pitch of a vocal part (It.)	169 141 77 69 35 52 129 178 22
B. Near future	40 207 105 197 160 118	O. Of tempo, hurrying (Fr.)	174 82 41 144 31 64 117 164
C. Type of bass role (It.)	9 33 208 84 124	P. Vigorous English country dance in 2/4 time (Fr.)	134 188 37 96 15 172 212 154 80
D. Jazz trumpeter Lewis (2 wds.)	71 139 161 18 196	Q. Flutist Aurèle	195 97 66 83 119 149 27
E. Cole Porter musical (4 wds.)	62 192 211 103 75 12 43 131 168 204 87 28 158 116	R. Racing horses of a particular type	182 136 91 109 162 72 19 50
F. Cole (2 wds.)	104 74 26 122 183 198 156	S. Rocky's wife	30 194 151 92 7
G. A_____of Fashion, ballet set to Eugene Goossens' Kaleidoscope	175 94 153 5 56 138 193	T. Italian baritone, recorded / Puntani for London	121 13 54 24 135 108 36 166 63 88 203
H. Speaks hesitantly (3 wds.)	127 60 32 8 81 48 90 100 147 21 112	U. German-American pianist (1881-1962), taught at Cornell, Mills College (full name)	93 214 176 148 126 10 29 79 107
I. Berlioz' oratorio: L_____ (3 Fr. wds.)	189 201 38 143 213 67 3 133 25 102 55 14 157 123 113	V. piu andrai Figaro aria (It.)	61 206 132
J. English tenor, recorded Ives's The Celestial Counter for CRI	128 106 1 155 53	W. Opera by C. G. Neefe (2 wds.)	199 152 101 44 17 58 78 163 210 140 179 190 114
K. Feature of Louis XIV's most famous prisoner (2 wds.)	159 167 16 57 180 86 70 145	X. Instruments with several reeds attached to a windbag (2 wds.)	65 4 186 110 98 170 51 39 200 146
L. Cross fingering (Ger.)	73 95 85 209 171 49 125 191 165 111	Y. Relative pieces of radio or TV programs	45 76 99 137 187 11 34
M. Wallis	2 47 150 115 185	Z. Peruvian-American soprano with a range down to low baritone (full name)	205 142 20 130 42 59 181 173

Empire's Blueprint for Better Listening...

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

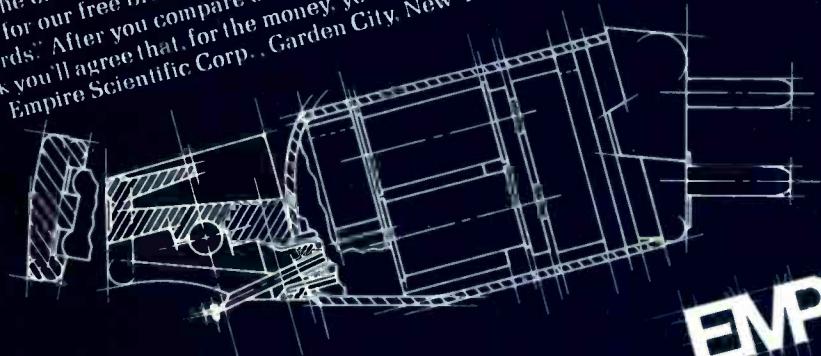
The advantages of Empire are threefold.

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

Two, you get better separation. The small, hollow iron armature we use allows for a tighter fit in its positioning among the poles. So, even the most minute movement is accurately reproduced to give you the space and depth of the original recording.

Three, Empire uses 4 poles, 4 coils, and 3 magnets (more than any other cartridge) for better balance and hum rejection.

The end result is great listening. Audition one for yourself or write for our free brochure, "How To Get The Most Out Of Your Records." After you compare our performance specifications we think you'll agree that, for the money, you can't do better than Empire.



EMPIRE

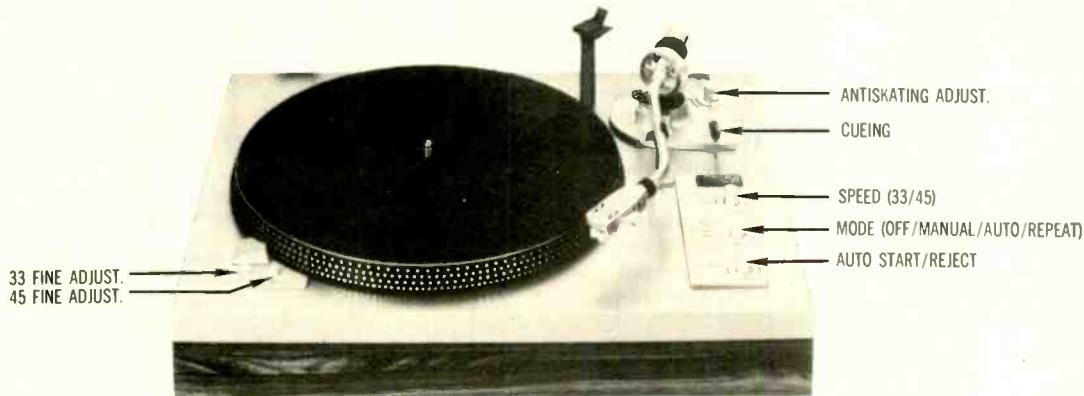
Already your system sounds better.

MODEL	4000 D/III	4000 D/	2000Z	2000T	2000 E/III	2000 E/II	2000 E/I	2000 E	2000
FREQUENCY RESPONSE	10Hz-50kHz ± 3 dB	15Hz-45kHz ± 3 dB	20Hz-20kHz ± 2 dB	20Hz-20kHz ± 1½ dB	20Hz-20kHz ± 2 dB	20Hz-20kHz ± 2 dB	20Hz-20kHz ± 3 dB	20Hz-20kHz ± 3 dB	20Hz-20kHz ± 3 dB
TRACKING FORCE RANGE	1/2-1 1/4 gm	1-1 1/2 gm	1/2-1 1/4 gm	1/2-1 1/4 gm	1/2-1 1/4 gm	3/4-1 1/2 gm	1-2 gm	1 1/2-2 1/2 gm	1 1/2-3 gm
SEPARATION									
15Hz to 1kHz	28 dB	24 dB							
1kHz to 20kHz	23 dB	20 dB							
20kHz to 50kHz	15 dB	15 dB							
20Hz to 500Hz			20 dB	18 dB	20 dB	20 dB	18 dB	18 dB	16 dB
500Hz to 15kHz			30 dB	27 dB	28 dB	25 dB	23 dB	23 dB	21 dB
15kHz to 20 kHz			25 dB	22 dB	20 dB	18 dB	15 dB	15 dB	13 dB
1M DISTORTION (@ 3.54 cm/sec)	2% 2kHz-20kHz	2% 2kHz-20kHz	0.8% 2kHz-20kHz	0.8% 2kHz-20kHz	1% 2kHz-20kHz	1.5% 2kHz-20kHz	2% 2kHz-20kHz	2% 2kHz-20kHz	2% 2kHz-20kHz
STYLUS	2 mil bi-radial	2 mil bi-radial	2 x 7 mil elliptical	2 x 7 mil elliptical	3 x 7 mil elliptical	7 mil spherical			
EFFECTIVE TIP MASS	4 milligram	4 milligram	2 milligram	2 milligram	6 milligram	6 milligram	6 milligram	9 milligram	1 milligram
COMPLIANCE	30x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	30x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	30x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	30x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	20x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	18x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	17x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	16x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	14x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne
TRACKING ABILITY	32 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 1 gm	30 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 1 1/2 gm	38 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 9 gm	38 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 1 gm	32 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 1 gm	28 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 1 1/4 gm	28 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 1 1/2 gm	28 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 1 1/4 gm	32 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 2 gm
CHANNEL BALANCE	within 1 dB @ 1kHz	within 1 1/2 dB @ 1kHz	within 1/4 dB @ 1kHz	within 1 dB @ 1kHz	within 1 dB @ 1kHz	within 1 1/4 dB @ 1kHz	within 1 1/2 dB @ 1kHz	within 1 1/2 dB @ 1kHz	within 1 1/2 dB @ 1kHz
INPUT LOAD	100k Ohms/ channel	100k Ohms/ channel	47k Ohms/ channel	47k Ohms/ channel	47k Ohms/ channel	47k Ohms/ channel	47k Ohms/ channel	47k Ohms/ channel	47k Ohms/ channel
TOTAL CAPACITANCE	under 100 pF/channel	under 100 pF/channel	300 pF/channel	300 pF/channel	400-500 pF/channel	400-500 pF/channel	400-500 pF/channel	400-500 pF/channel	400-500 pF/channel
OUTPUT (@ 3.54 cm/sec)	3 mV/channel	3 mV/channel	3 mV/channel	3 mV/channel	4.5 mV/channel	4.5 mV/channel	7 mV/channel	7 mV/channel	7 mV/channel

Preparation supervised by
Robert Long, Harold A. Rodgers,
and Edward J. Foster
Laboratory data (unless otherwise noted)
supplied by CBS Technology Center

New Equipment Reports

A CONSUMER'S GUIDE



From Garrard, a Changer—Plus

Garrard GT-35, a two-speed (33 and 45 rpm) automatic multiplay turntable, with base and removable dust cover. Dimensions: 16½ by 13 inches (top plate); 7½ inches high with dust cover closed, 18½ inches vertical clearance and 4½ at back with cover set in vertical position. Price: \$219.95 without cartridge, \$279.90 with Shure M-91ED. Warranty: "limited," three years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Garrard, England; U.S. distributor: Garrard Division of Plessey, Inc., 100 Commercial St., Plainview, N.Y. 11803.

Despite the fact that the Garrard GT-35 is equipped with a changer mechanism, in its heart of hearts it is a manual player. Unlike many units, in which the addition of a changer necessitates some significant compromises in the manual mode, the GT-35 is capable of standing on its own as an automatic single-play turntable, and Garrard makes it available that way at somewhat lower cost as the GT-35P, also with or without the cartridge.

One strong point of the GT-35 is its tubular, S-shaped tone arm, one of the lowest in mass of this general type that we have ever encountered. (The detachable headshell is of an extremely light magnesium alloy.) In combination with the Shure V-15 Type III cartridge the arm shows a low-frequency resonance well into the "safe" frequency zone. More important, the system is so well damped that the rise is only 2 dB, and almost all of it is in the lateral plane; the vertical resonance—which has a much greater effect on tracking than the lateral—is barely detectable. Pivot friction is insignificant, and the stylus force required for automatic trip at the end of a side is a small fraction of that called for even by feather-touch phono cartridges.

Antiskating bias is provided, using two scales (one for el-

iptical styli, the other for Shibatas and variants thereof) and values of force in the normally accepted range. The cueing device acts a bit abruptly on liftoff but is quite gentle on setdown and has no significant side drift. There are separate fine-speed adjustments for 33 and 45 rpm. Peak flutter and audible rumble both are above reproach.

When we hooked up the GT-35 and put it to work, we decided to challenge its tone arm with a top-of-the-line, highly compliant pickup that had misbehaved slightly in other installations. As we had expected from the lab data, the two got on exceptionally well together. The base of the turntable, while less massive than the megaliths used by some of the competition, seems suitably nonresonant. The suspension system allows sufficient isolation for listening at robust levels with no detectable acoustic feedback and, at the same time, proves immune to heavy-footed stamping in the vicinity.

The changer section works well enough, imposing no parasitic drag on the drive system while records are actually playing. Only when a disc is rejected in midplay is any wavering in pitch detectable, and then only briefly. Enough torque is sup-

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.

plied to the platter to keep the speed correct even with the full rated load of six discs. Cycle time is about average. The set-down point in automatic operation is keyed to the speed setting: 45 rpm indexes to a 7-inch disc, 33 to a 12-inch. The manual mode must be used if you want to play the relatively rare 7-inch LPs or 12-inch 45s. An automatic-repeat feature is provided.

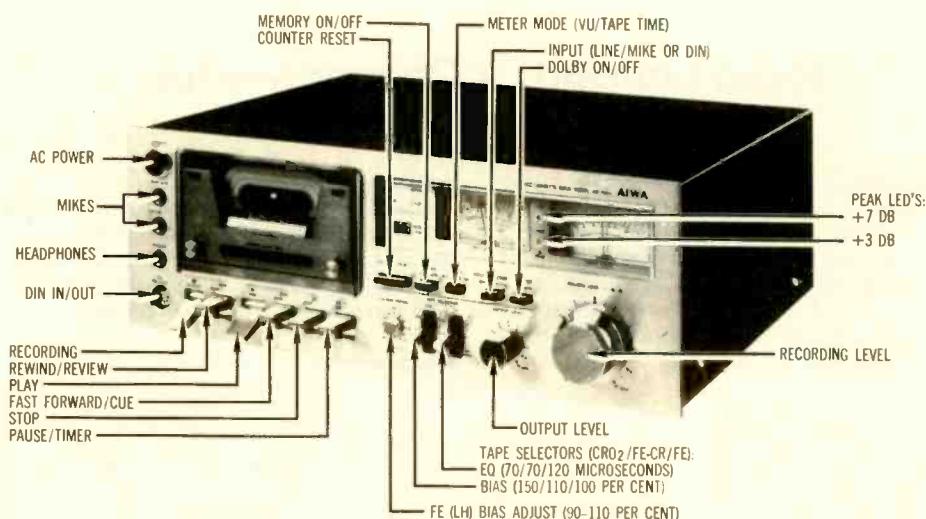
The changer apparatus suffers from a problem found generally in the breed: If there is an appreciable amount of static electricity on a record held in readiness to be played, the resultant attraction lifts the tone arm away from the record that is playing and reduces the tracking force, often to the point where mistracking begins. So far as we know, neither Garrard nor anyone else has a foolproof solution for this; the best that we can recommend is the use of an ion gun or damp cleaning before the record is put into position.

With a machine like the GT-35 our own tendency would be to use it principally in the manual mode—for which both stub spindle and an adapter for large-hole 45s are provided—and resort to the changer (and the changer spindle) chiefly when confronted with a work requiring several discs. For such use its behavior is just fine. We find nothing about its sound to complain about and are delighted that it does not bar us from using cartridges that demand first-class treatment from a tone arm. In our opinion, this turntable represents good value—with the changer or without.

CIRCLE 136 ON PAGE 89

Garrard GT-35 Changer/Turntable

Speed accuracy	no measurable error, for either speed, at 105, 120, & 127 VAC
Speed control range	
at 33	-2.8 to +5.0%
at 45	-3.8 to +7.7%
Weighted peak flutter (ANSI)	
average	0.06%
maximum	0.10%
Total audible rumble (ARLL)	-60 dB
Arm friction	negligible
Stylus gauge accuracy	no measurable error
Stylus force required for automatic trip	0.16 gram (1.6 millinewtons)
Tone-arm resonance & damping (with Shure V-15 Type III)	8.5 Hz, 2-dB rise



Aiwa's AD-6550: A Willing Cohort

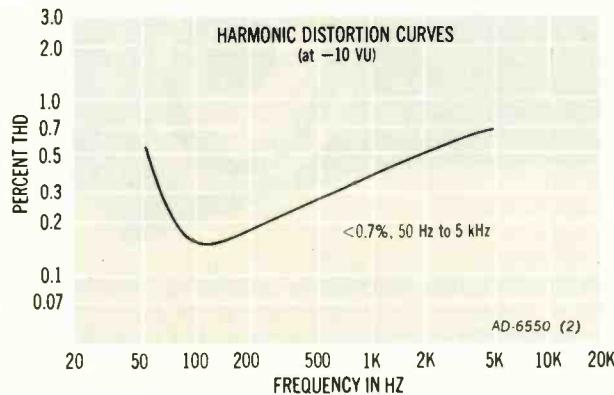
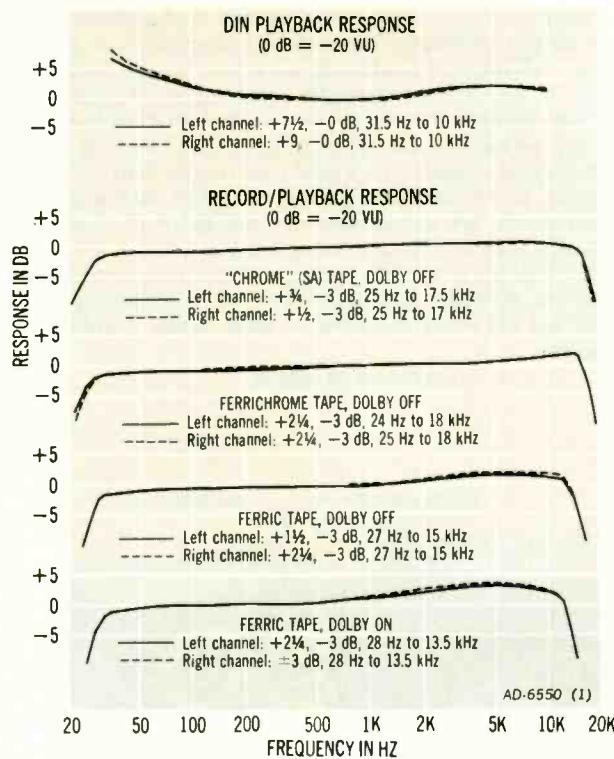
Aiwa AD-6550, a stereo cassette deck in metal case. Dimensions: 5 15/16 by 16 9/16 inches (front panel), 13 inches deep. Price: \$470. Warranty: "limited," two years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Aiwa Co., Ltd., Japan; U.S. distributor: Meriton Electronics, 35 Oxford Dr., Moonachie, N.J. 07074.

Of all the human/hardware interfaces that occur in high fidelity, the one between a recordist and his tape deck is probably the most critical. Like photography, recording is often subject to those inflexible aspects of reality that deny second chances: If the machine or the man "blows it" in any significant way, something irreplaceable is lost or at least badly de-

faced. Thus, a well-engineered set of convenience features substantially enhances a tape deck, particularly if—as is the case with the Aiwa AD-6550 cassette recorder—the basic performance is highly respectable.

Laboratory assessment of the transport and drive system of the Aiwa shows highly satisfactory results. Tape speed is slightly faster than standard, which means that a normal prerecorded cassette would play back slightly above the correct pitch—a bit more than one-sixth of a semitone. (Recordings made on the same machine are, of course, exact in pitch.)

The heads and associated electronics measure up well too,



yielding a signal-to-noise ratio through record and playback that just about reaches the magic 60-dB level with Dolby noise reduction in use. In playback only, the S/N ratio is average or somewhat better; frequency response tends to be slightly erratic, the outmoded bass turnover of the standard test cassette notwithstanding. Measured erasure and channel separation are both good, and the sensitivity of the microphone and line inputs suggests no particular problems in matching with other components. Neither does the playback output level.

In its metering the AD-6550 eschews the trend to peak-reading indication and opts for conventional VU-type ballistics. Fortunately, to our way of thinking, flashing lights display peaks at nominal values of +3 and +7 dB. The meters provide some additional safety factor (though less accuracy) by reading 0 VU for a level 4 dB below the DIN reference.

Total harmonic distortion through record and playback is a solid point with this deck. All of the recommended tapes

Aiwa AD-6550 Cassette Deck

Speed accuracy	1.3% fast at 105, 120, & 127 VAC
Wow and flutter	playback: 0.04% record/play: 0.05%
Rewind time (C-60 cassette)	88 sec.
Fast-forward time (same cassette)	91 sec.
S/N ratio (re 0 VU, Dolby off; CBS weighting)	
playback	L ch: 53 dB
record/play	L ch: 50 dB R ch: 54½ dB
Erasure (333 Hz at normal level)	69 dB
Channel separation (at 333 Hz)	
record left, play right	32 dB
record right, play left	32 dB
Sensitivity (re DIN 0 VU)	
line input	L ch: 94 mV
mike input	L ch: 0.40 mV R ch: 0.38 mV
Meter action (re DIN 0 VU)	L ch: 4 dB high R ch: 4 dB high
Maximum output (re DIN 0 VU)	L ch: 1.25 V R ch: 1.40 V

achieve extended and reasonably flat response, the flattest coming from TDK SA with the CRO, settings; Sony Duad was used for the ferrichrome curves and Sony UHF for the remaining measurements.

This deck's cosmetics suggest serene luxury, and using it is pleasant indeed. The REVIEW feature allows the operator to push REWIND while FORWARD is engaged, thereby spooling the tape in reverse. When the control is released, the forward motion resumes. FAST FORWARD is similarly designed so that rapid and convenient forward cueing is also possible. Automatic stop occurs at the end of the tape or the memory wind index point (set in the conventional manner via the tape counter). The transient produced when PAUSE is activated is slight enough to allow this control to be used as an editing device except in very soft music.

One feature we especially appreciate is the readout of remaining tape time, available on the left channel meter at the touch of a button. The system works by sensing hub speed and calculating the tape left in the supply pack. A quick check shows the readout to be usefully accurate, erring in the conservative direction and thus leaving a few seconds of safety margin. For the buyer willing to purchase a matching turntable, there is an automatic start for recorder and turntable at the release of the CUE lever. And the design allows for automatic recording (or playback) via a timer.

When we put the unit to work dubbing selections from some rather demanding discs, we were pleased to find that, regardless of tape type, our copies were excellent likenesses of the original. As might be expected, tapes designed for high bias and 70-microsecond equalization gave the best reproduction of high partials of cymbals, brasses, and the like, the most freedom from compression of dynamic range, and the least distortion. Ferrichromes ran generally second, and conventional ferrics (normal bias, 120-microsecond EQ) behind

them. But the conventional ferrics performed somewhat better on high frequencies than one would expect, perhaps largely because the recording bias can be optimized for each tape. The instruction manual suggests settings for various tapes, and they seem quite reasonable. Furthermore, it tells you how to adjust for any tape by matching the sound of recorded FM interstation noise to the sound of the source—a technique we often have used in the past and found very helpful, though this is the first time we have seen it in an owner's manual. Note that bias can be fine-tuned only for the ferrics; adjusting the control does not "detune" the settings for ferrichromes or for the "chrome" group.

For setting recording levels on the AD-6550, the peak indicators give the most reliable information. Following the instructions, we set the level so that the yellow warning light

flickered repeatedly and the red light hardly at all and got the results already described. The meters, incidentally, can give readings well within the safe area while the red light flashes merrily. Thus, while the meters give a reasonable indication of subjective loudness, they are not very useful for setting levels.

Overall, we found ourselves growing fond of this deck. Its record/playback capability is a solid notch better than par for the course, and its convenience features, while not complex and exhaustive, are well-thought-out and genuinely useful. Specifically, they lie naturally enough at hand that in a tight spot the machine is your ally, not part of the opposition. The price of the AD-6550 does not make it the biggest bargain around, but the contents of the package render it entirely competitive.

CIRCLE 135 ON PAGE 89

A Loudspeaker that Bends the Rules



JVC Model SK-1000 loudspeaker system, in cabinet with simulated walnut finish. Dimensions: 15 $\frac{1}{4}$ by 25 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches (front), 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches deep. Price: \$250. Warranty: "limited," five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Victor Co., Japan; U.S. distributor: JVC America, Inc., 58-75 Queens Midtown Expressway, Maspeth, N.Y. 11378.

Without surprises, life would be dull indeed, and some surprises in the data on the JVC SK-1000 give us cause to re-examine our preconceptions. It is a three-way system in a ducted-port enclosure. (JVC prefers to call it a bass reflex—an equally apt and time-honored term.) The woofer is larger than average (nominal 12-inch) for this box size and operates to a much higher frequency (1 kHz) than is customary for a 12-incher. The 5-inch cone midrange driver covers the full decade from 1 to 10 kHz, where it crosses over to a 1-inch dome tweeter. This too may lift eyebrows: Usually the tweeter comes in at a much lower frequency in a three-way system.

Vented speaker systems are normally characterized by twin peaks in the low-frequency impedance curve. Data taken at CBS indicate only one peak within the audio band: at 73 Hz, where the impedance reaches 20 $\frac{1}{2}$ ohms. At 20 Hz, the impedance has just begun to rise again—evidently the second peak is at a very low frequency indeed. From the 7-ohm "nominal" value, impedance rises slowly to 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ ohms at 700 Hz

before the effect of the midrange driver shows up. From there, it trails off to 4 ohms at 15 kHz and above. The 7-ohm figure fairly represents the audio-band average, but because the high-frequency impedance does fall to 4 ohms, we'd have some reservations about driving parallel pairs of these speakers from an amplifier.

On past experience, we might have expected some response irregularities and perhaps an increase in midband distortion with a 12-inch woofer operating to 1 kHz. The SK-1000 gives no sign of them. The lab data indicate an exceptionally smooth response and extremely low distortion throughout the woofer's range. In fact, the average omnidirectional response in the anechoic chamber is within ± 2 dB from below 60 Hz to 1 kHz and within a fraction of a dB in the decade between 63 and 630 Hz. Below 63 Hz, anechoic response falls at about 18 dB per octave; above 1 kHz, it remains quite smooth to 4 kHz and then drops 5 or 6 dB to a lower plateau.

Generation of spurious second and third harmonics is very low. At the 0-dBW (1-watt) level, harmonic distortion generally is less than 0.5% from 50 Hz to 10 kHz. Over most of that range, the distortion is less than 0.25% and, even at 30 Hz, remains below 2%. Even more noteworthy is that the distortion hardly increases at a power input equivalent to a sound pressure level of 100 dB at 300 Hz. It still is below 0.5% from 100 Hz to 10 kHz and below 2% down to 30 Hz.

The SK-1000, a relatively efficient speaker, will take large power levels in stride. A continuous 20-dBW (100-watt) input produces 113 dB SPL at 300 Hz with no sign of dross, and at least 7 dB more output can be had on a pulse basis (at which point the lab amp was putting out its maximum of more than 500 watts peak). The tone-burst response is good, with a trace of ringing apparent on a 3-kHz pulse.

Our listening gave us little cause to question the lab's distortion data: The SK-1000 is an exceptionally clean speaker. If we were taken unaware by anything, it was the bass—audibly richer and more extended than the anechoic response measurements suggest. There was some indication of low-frequency resonance (perhaps a characteristic of our listening room) that added a roundness of sound in the lower register. After some shuffling, we placed the speakers against the wall, well away from the corners. (The bass, uncharacteristically, was slightly tighter with the speakers in this location than with them free-standing, away from the wall.) We also preferred the midrange and tweeter controls set slightly above the center points at which the lab took its measurements.

The stereo imaging is excellent both in width and in depth, perhaps the practical result of JVC's Phase Moiré Propagation studies—a computer technique for investigating phase relationships. Transient response is fairly good, and the sonic definition is excellent: The most texturally complex passages unravel with clear delineation of instrument and musical line. More specifically, the system reproduces the piano with a rich bass register, good attack, and sparklingly clean middles and highs, and handles voices equally well.

The SX-1000 sounds smooth, sweet, and rich—never harsh, never irritating. It is mellow but not marshmallow, warm yet clean: in short, a speaker with a most pleasant personality.

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JVC SK-1000 Loudspeaker System

Average omnidirectional output, 250 Hz to 6 kHz
87 dB SPL for 0 dBW (1 watt) input

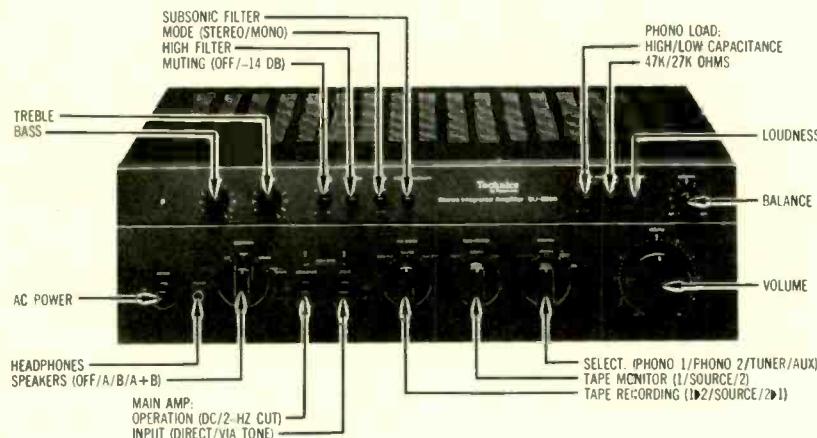
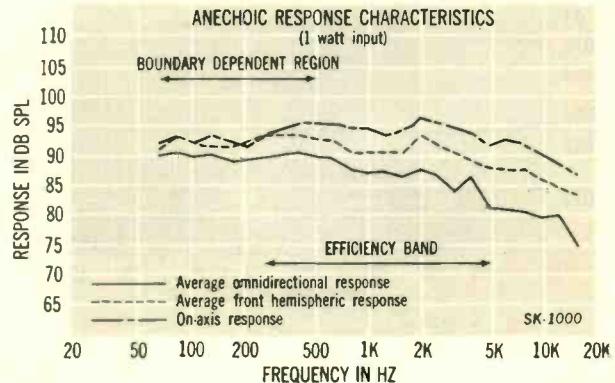
Continuous on-axis output at 300 Hz
113 dB SPL for 20 dBW (100 watts) input

Pulsed output at 300 Hz
120 dB SPL for 27 dBW (514 watts) peak

"Nominal" impedance 7 ohms at 160 Hz

Approximate MIDRANGE control range (re "flat")
+1 1/2, -4 dB, 800 Hz to 4.5 kHz
+3, -10 dB, 4.5 to 12 kHz

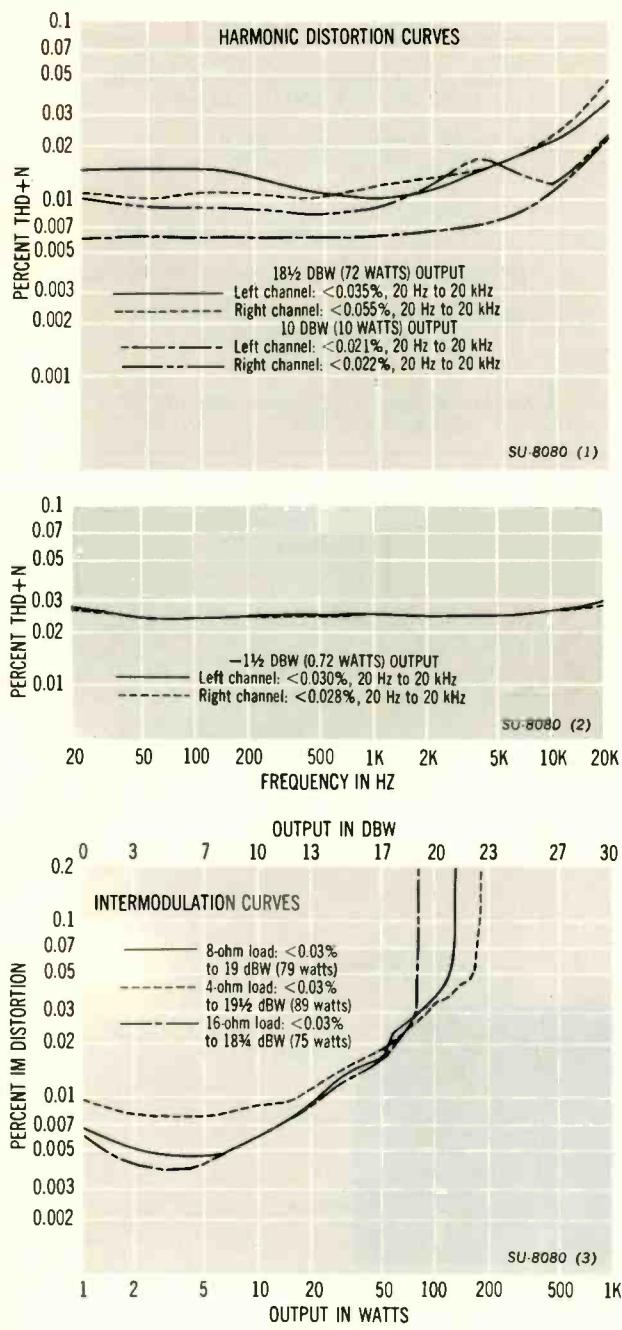
Approximate HIGH RANGE control range (re "flat")
+3, -9 dB at 15 kHz



Integrated Utility, Plus a Touch of Class

Technics SU-8080 stereo integrated amplifier in metal case. Dimensions: 17 1/4 by 5 1/8 inches (front panel), 12 1/8 inches deep (case). AC convenience outlets: 1 switched (200 watts) 2 unswitched (400 watts total). Price: \$459.95. Warranty: "limited," two years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Matsushita, Japan; U.S. distributor: Technics by Panasonic, 1 Panasonic Way, Secaucus, N.J. 07094.

In pursuit of sonic excellence, audio engineers have come to eschew the use of coupling capacitors. Technics is one of the prime movers of this "direct-coupled" trend, abbreviated as DC. (Some manufacturers take the initials as standing for "di-



rect current" since, without coupling capacitors, an amplifier theoretically can be made to amplify all frequencies down to 0 Hz, or DC.) The present model in the Technics DC line is the SU-8080 integrated amplifier rated at 72 watts (18½ dBW) per channel at a total harmonic distortion of 0.02%.

For minimum low-frequency phase shift, one may select the direct-coupled mode of operation via the front-panel OPERATION switch. In this mode Technics claims a phase error of less than ± 10 degrees from 1 Hz to 20 kHz and a frequency response that is flat to below 1 Hz. If a DC offset exists in the source signal, the direct-coupled mode is inappropriate and the alternate capacitor-coupled setting should be used, raising the cutoff frequency to 2 Hz. A second switch (INPUT) either routes the signal via the tone controls and high-cut filter

or bypasses them and feeds directly from the volume/balance stage to the amplifier. LED indicators above each switch denote the direct-coupled options of each.

The preamp and the power amp are linked by removable jumpers on the rear panel. To activate this preamp output, INPUT must be in the VIA TONE position. Thus the tone controls, mute, and high filter all function in controlling the preamp-output signal. Signals applied to the MAIN IN jacks are either directly or capacitively coupled into the power amp as determined by the OPERATION switch.

Two phono inputs are provided. In step with the times, a choice of cartridge loading is offered. The terminating resistor may be either 27,000 or 47,000 ohms, and two (unspecified) input capacitances are also available. The switchable subsonic filter (marked EQUALIZER SUBSONIC, evidently because it is included in the RIAA equalizer stage) is effective.

On the CBS test bench the SU-8080 acquitted itself well. Even measuring through both the amp and the preamp (Technics specifies for the two individually), the total harmonic distortion (THD + N) remains safely below the 0.02% spec throughout most of the band at rated output, edging higher only at 10 kHz and above. Harmonic distortion at the 10-dBW level averages well under 0.01% and just touches the 0.02% mark at 20 kHz. At 20 dB below rated output the respectable THD + N figures over most of the band probably reflect the unit's residual noise level (rather than the true distortion). The amplifier's clipping headroom (measured with a continuous tone) is about $\frac{1}{4}$ dB. Dynamic headroom (with tone bursts to simulate music) is $\frac{3}{4}$ dB—meaning that on music the unclipped output is equivalent to 19¾ dBW (84 watts).

The SU-8080's admirably high damping factor means that it should retain a firm grip on the loudspeaker at its resonance. Frequency response is equally impressive; RIAA equalization remains virtually perfect across the audio band, and the phono input is essentially overload-proof.

The tone controls are rather limited in range (± 8 dB at 50 Hz and ± 7 dB at 10 kHz), but they should be adequate for all but the most boost-happy listener. The turnover points are

Technics SU-8080 Integrated Amplifier

Power output at clipping (channels driven simultaneously)

L ch	18½ dBW (75 watts)
R ch	18½ dBW (76 watts)

Frequency response $\pm \frac{1}{4}$ dB, 20 Hz to 40 kHz
+ $\frac{1}{2}$, -2 dB, 10 Hz to 100 kHz

RIAA equalization + 0, - $\frac{1}{4}$ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz

Input characteristics (for rated output at full gain)

	Sensitivity	Noise	S/N ratio
phono 1, 2	2.7 mV	-58½ dBW	77 dB
tuner	195 mV	-77½ dBW	96 dB
aux	195 mV	-77½ dBW	96 dB
tape 1, 2	195 mV	-77½ dBW	96 dB

Phono overload (clipping point) 285 mV at 1 kHz

Damping factor at 1 kHz 113

Subsonic filter -3 dB at 26 Hz; 18 dB/oct.

High filter -3 dB at 13 kHz; 6 dB/oct.

rather higher in frequency than is customary, and they appear to be located so that the controls do not interact. The lab data indicate that the subsonic filter's rolloff is even steeper than the 12 dB per octave claimed by Technics; in any event, it effectively bans "signals" induced by record warps from the preamp. The high filter is more gradual in its attack, and Technics has opted for an unusually high cutoff frequency. This preserves most of the music but, of course, has less effect than average on hiss. We do find the filter useful in mellowing the response of a peaky phono cartridge, though this is not normally a function of a filter. And for quieting a noisy cassette, the SU-8080's high filter is less than ideal. The loudness control is emphatic in its action (+9 dB boost below 50 Hz) and functions only in the bass region.

In our listening room, the SU-8080 gave us a few surprises. The speaker connections are to be made with stripped (bare) wire, inserted into a center hole in the color-coded post, which is then tightened and holds the wire quite firmly. From what we can see, it is virtually impossible to short the output if the connection is properly made.

All the controls operate in a silky-smooth manner. The volume-control taper strikes us as particularly well chosen. With phono cartridges and speakers of average sensitivity, the control is about halfway up at a reasonably loud listening level. (In our opinion, too many amplifiers are designed with an excessively compressed taper so that most of the usable range lies within the first 45 degrees of rotation. This may lead the con-

sumer to think that the amplifier is super-powerful. In reality, a tightly tapered volume control has nothing to do with power capability, and it is a nuisance to use.)

The tone controls are detented (eleven positions), and we like both their range and their turnover frequencies. Theoretically, the subsonic-filter cutoff frequency could have been lower without compromising its intended use. Nonetheless, few records contain music signals below 35 Hz (the 1-dB-down point of the filter), and it is unlikely that any audible music is lost by the filter's action; we found it hard to tell when it was in the circuit.

A change of phono-input resistance or capacitance has a more discernible effect on the tonal balance. Decreasing the resistance or increasing the capacitance reduces the relative brilliance of the treble, and we think that the user will find these controls quite helpful in eliciting the best performance from his cartridge. For the majority of pickups, the 47,000-ohm choice is best; without specific knowledge of the input capacitance (and the requirements of the cartridge), one should experiment with the setting.

The Technics SU-8080 affords a full complement of preamp controls—including two-way tape dubbing that is independent of the source to which you are listening—in a slim, trim, relatively lightweight package that runs cool and looks elegant, if a bit stark. We believe it will appeal to many of our readers not just for its looks, but also for its versatility and its notable sonic qualities.

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A "Classic" Turntable Reappears

AR-77XB, a two-speed (33 and 45 rpm) single-play turntable assembly, with base and removable dust cover. Dimensions: 16½ by 12½ inches (top plate); 5½ inches high with dust cover closed, 15½ inches vertical clearance and 3½ at back with cover set in vertical position. Price: \$150 without cartridge, \$175 with Shure M-91ED. Warranty: "full," five years parts and labor (drive belt and form mat excluded). Manufacturer: Teledyne Acoustic Research, 10 American Dr., Norwood, Mass. 02062.

If there is virtue in simplicity, the AR turntable design—of which the AR-77XB is the present and only slightly modified incarnation—has to be one of the most virtuous products on the high fidelity market. The 77XB concedes some modern amenities: a damped cueing system that is adjustable in both height and action speed, a detachable (though nonstandard) headshell, and a two-speed drive system. But even the latter eschews pushbutton luxuries: You must remove the platter and reroute the drive belt to change speeds. The lid is unhinged and can be removed altogether or propped vertically in a channel along the back of the base.

AR long ago turned its back on the massive-platter-cum-hefty-motor school of turntable design, preferring an intrinsically accurate motor with just enough muscle to do the job, plus a belt drive. If the drive system is good enough, the manufacturer reasoned, no overriding flywheel action is needed to smooth its "rough places," and the cost will be less. In this, as in its suspension, the AR design has had many imitators. The



suspension mounts arm and platter on a single sprung assembly that is thus isolated from the top plate and base, which are a single rigid assembly, to reduce the total sprung weight and the area over which acoustic energy can be picked up to induce feedback via the tone arm.

The arm itself has a single counterweight that doubles as a tracking-force adjustment. A VTF gauge (with plastic weights for ¼, ½, 1, and 2 grams) is supplied. The user chooses the appropriate combination and adjusts the arm counterweight until the gauge balances. AR has long argued that antiskating is problematic at best, and here it again has rejected the complication, the additional expense, and the opportunity for misadjustment that an antiskating compensation system implies. Whether AR is right to do so is a question that precipi-

tated some rather heated debate when we came to review this turntable. Suffice it to say that points can be scored on either side but that, if minimum complication and cost are among the priorities under consideration, AR has a strong case.

Also provided with the AR-77XB are lubrication oil, an adapter for large-hole 45s, and a small screwdriver—again, little luxuries that lurk behind the basic no-frills personality. In use, for example, there appear to be no operating controls beyond the on/off switch, which AR even suggests be obviated by plugging the line cord into a switched convenience outlet. And the model comes on more as a single-speed design with a "secret" second speed option than as a normal two-speed one—mirroring the needs of many collectors who own only a few 45s among the welter of LPs.

The actual performance is very good indeed. The synchronous motor (we understand that AR, at least in the beginning, literally used a clock motor) shows no sign of speed variation with varying line voltages, though it measures fast at all the test voltages. Flutter and rumble are excellent. Fitted with the Shure V-15 Type III (our standard in the lab), the resonance is excellently controlled, though a little low in frequency. The Shure M-91ED, currently being sold as part of a ready-to-go package with the AR-77XB, appears to raise the frequency a little higher, away from "warp information"; our in-use tests with the latter pickup confirm that the combination handles warps well.

We also tried to get the suspension to misbehave. In the past we had found that the design did indeed make the ensemble relatively free of acoustic feedback and insensitive to shock on the base. But in rooms with "bouncy" floors, a resonance of approximately 0.5 Hz in the suspension could be excited, bouncing the arm about and causing severe mistracking from even gentle footfalls. No design escapes unscathed in such a room (the cure involves extraordinary mounting

AR-77XB Turntable

Speed accuracy at 33	0.1% fast at 105, 120, & 127 VAC
Speed accuracy at 45	0.0% fast/slow at 105, 120, & 127 VAC
Weighted peak flutter (ANSI) average	0.04%
maximum	0.04%
Arm friction	negligible
Total audible rumble (ARLL)	-62 dB
Tone-arm resonance & damping (with V-15 Type III)	7.5 Hz, 1 dB rise

measures), but the old AR seemed below average in this respect. The new one still shows a tendency to bounce at about 0.5 Hz, but either our floors have stiffened up or AR's suspension is better damped in this mode than before. We would now rate performance average or better in this test.

As we say, this is a model about which feelings run high. In particular, the omission of antiskating seemed the ultimate index of sanity to some commentators, a cavalier retrogression to others. Many other features—or the omissions thereof—might be approached in the same manner in assessing the AR-77XB. Perhaps it might be called a turntable for the backpackers among us. We know it can deliver excellent sound; questions of "personality" and convenience must be left to individual tastes.

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A Tabletop Antenna that Works

B.I.C. Beam Box indoor FM antenna. Dimensions: 14½ by 4½ inches (front panel), 14¾ inches deep. Price: \$89.95. Warranty: "limited," two years parts and labor. Manufacturer: British Industries Co. (division of Avnet, Inc.), Westbury, N.Y. 11590.

The high fidelity industry is not characterized by snake-oil salesmen, but some lurk on the fringes—particularly in the Magic FM Antenna booth. For years the unwary have been sold gizmos that purport to turn everything from bedsprings to plate-glass windows into an "electronically powered indoor aerial." Well, the B.I.C. Beam Box is an indoor FM antenna that does work. It does not set itself up as a high-gain, deep-fringe antenna better than anything you can put on the roof. It does claim to be—and, in our experience, is—a more efficient indoor antenna for metropolitan/suburban use than any other generally available. And it is entirely passive; unlike "boosters" (which amplify both the signal and unwanted noise and interference), it requires no AC power.

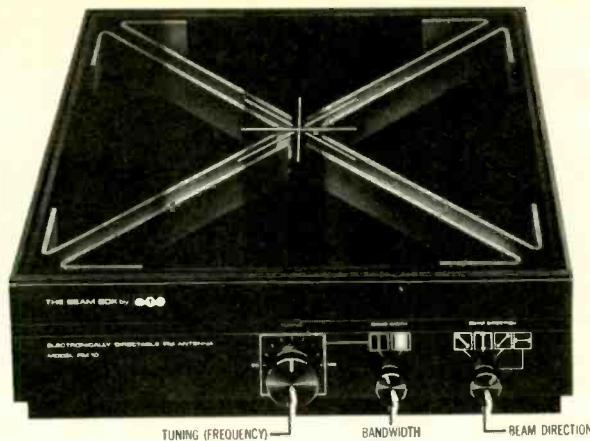
The majority of high fidelity receivers find their home in or near the city, aimed primarily at local stations. And, for the most part, modern receivers are extremely sensitive. They don't need strong signals as much as they need clean ones. The Beam Box is designed—obviously by engineers who know their stuff—with this in mind. Essentially, it uses two 1/8-wave-length dipole antennas oriented at right angles to each other.

The signals from the two dipoles are combined, via the BEAM DIRECTION switch, to yield one of four effective orientations (0/180, 45/225, 90/270, and 135/315 degrees with respect to any of its axes; the dipoles are equally sensitive in two opposite directions, of course).

In combining the signals from the antennas and in matching their impedance to that of the receiver, tuned circuits are used, with controls for both frequency and bandwidth, much as you might find on a tuner. In the narrow-band mode, the Beam Box acts as another stage of RF selectivity. In this mode, the device claims to be approximately sixteen times more responsive to the desired station than to other frequencies in the FM band. (The 3-dB bandwidth in this narrow-band position is specified at 3 MHz.) The tunability is, of course, particularly important with a so-so tuner or tuner section since it minimizes the signals—including those outside the FM band—that can cause images and other interference within the tuner itself.

With the Beam Box in the wideband mode and the receiver tuned to the desired station, the user manipulates the BEAM DIRECTION switch to yield the strongest signal (as indicated by the signal-strength meter on your receiver or tuner). Then he switches to the narrow-band mode and adjusts the TUNING knob for the strongest signal again.

The antenna gain is 12 dB less than that of a simple dipole in the broadband mode, 5 dB less in the more selective posi-



tion. Neither of these figures compares favorably with an outdoor Yagi, but two facts must be borne in mind: There is virtually no signal lost in the lead-in wire and, again, gain often is not the overriding criterion. Besides, few apartment dwellers are permitted the luxury of an outdoor FM antenna and rotator even if they feel like laying out the cash.

Our use tests were conducted in a semi-fringe area about forty-five miles from two major cities but closer to the transmitters of some smaller ones. We used several tuners and receivers, ranging from inexpensive to moderate. In each case, we used the 300-ohm antenna connection. (A 75-ohm connection is also provided on the back panel.)

Subjectively, we find the Beam Box to be much more convenient than the twinlead dipole normally packaged with a receiver and a viable alternative to a directional outdoor antenna, despite the latter's undoubtedly stronger signal. For example, there are two stations (about forty-five miles away) that we have considerable difficulty receiving satisfactorily in

stereo even with an outdoor antenna. Mono reception, which requires much less signal, is generally fine. While the Beam Box cannot quite match the outdoor Yagi in stereo, there is little difference between the two for mono reception. So what would we have gained with the Yagi when we are forced to listen in mono in either event? Assuredly, there are situations in which a signal a few dB stronger would make the difference between acceptable and unacceptable reception, but in many cases essentially the same quality of reception is available to either the outdoor antenna or the Beam Box.

Using the Beam Box is quite simple if you follow the manual's recommended procedure. (With one receiver, we found that it could not be tuned properly. We suspect that the input impedance of this receiver is not 300 ohms and that the mismatch affected the tuning circuits of the antenna.) Occasionally, we find it helpful to rotate the box to minimize multipath reception. In doing so, we are probably orienting the antenna to place the offending signal squarely into the null of the directivity pattern just as we would by rotating an outdoor antenna. Although this orientation may not produce the strongest signal, it does provide the cleanest one. To receive the weakest stations, we came up with another trick: We oriented the antenna to provide *minimum* signal strength (that is, we adjusted for the relatively narrow null) and then switched to the antenna position 90 degrees away (the center of the relatively broad maximum). We find that the Beam Box works best when not in direct contact with metal. Even placing a hand on its top surface affects the signal strength, and rubbing its plastic cover results in static.

For the apartment dweller or suburbanite who can't (or doesn't wish to) put up an external antenna, it seems to us that the Beam Box provides a nifty solution to a perennial problem. It surely beats trying to reorient a flimsy five-foot length of twinlead.

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For more reports on equipment, see BACKBEAT.

Manufacturer's Comment

We invite rebuttal from those who produce the equipment we review. The comments printed here are culled from those responses.

Apt Holman Preamplifier (May 1978): The newly proposed IHF amplifier standard goes a long way toward explaining why the editors of HIGH FIDELITY find our preamplifier "superbly quiet and better than the lab's respectable noise figures suggest." There are three differences between the way CBS Technology Center makes noise measurements and the approach preferred by us. First, CBS labs' signal-to-noise ratio is not related to input sensitivity. This produces better numbers with lower gain amplifiers (at the expense of utility), and it does not allow for easy comparison of various units. It is akin to a listener turning the volume all the way up and pronouncing a unit quiet or noisy without reference to the system gain (including loudspeaker efficiency). Second, the lab measurement is made with a shorted input; we believe a far more realistic approach is to use a real cartridge (or its equivalent) as an appropriate source impedance. Finally, the CBS measurement is not weighted for the psychoacoustic annoyance value of the noise spectrum (high-frequency noise in the audio band is more perceptible and annoying than low-frequency noise). Weighting has received a bad name since it tends to produce "better numbers," but it is, in fact, essential if we are to produce the most desired result: a measurement of perceived noise. While debate con-

tinues on the most appropriate weighting function, it is clear that any of the widely accepted functions is better than none at all.

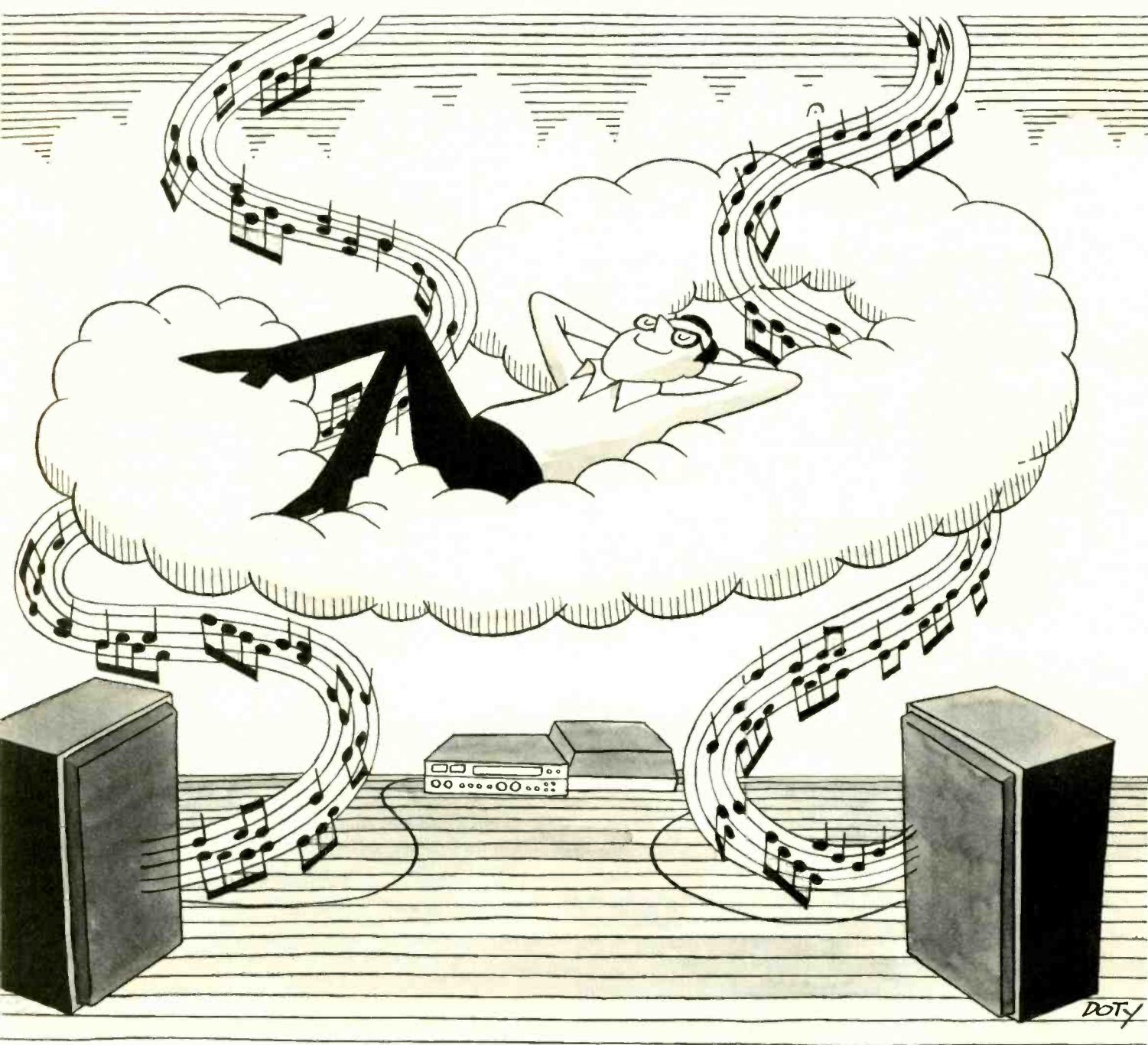
With these methods, it is possible to compare the noise inherent in the cartridge (properly loaded) with the noise produced when the cartridge is connected to the preamplifier. This answers the most appropriate question: How much perceptible noise is the preamp adding to the theoretical noise level of the system?

Widespread use of the new IHF standard will make signal-to-noise ratios more meaningful. It should be noted that quoted S/N ratio numbers are likely to look worse under the new standard, while actual performance will get better.

TOMLINSON HOLMAN
Director of Engineering
Apt Corporation

HF replies: In the same issue with our review of the Apt preamp we published a synopsis ("New Math vs. Old Myth," page 74) of the IHF amplifier/preamplifier test specifications and expressed our admiration for the often radical ways in which it improves over "standard" measurement techniques. A few specifics of the new standard were adopted immediately for our test program. Some provisions, while admirable, required additional preparation time. The preparations now are complete, and our next tests of amplifiers, preamps, and receivers will adopt the loading and noise-measurement techniques that Mr. Holman supports. His advocacy has, in fact, been important in getting many engineers—and, of course, the IHF Standards Committee—to think along these productive lines.

**HIGH
FIDELITY**



by Howard Roberson

How to Buy a

"Joy," SAID SOME POET or other, "is not discovered, but earned." If so, the enduring joys of a good component system are earned by putting up with the relatively brief trauma of shopping for it. Duck the rigors of that chore, and you can easily be buying yourself woes later on: the nagging knowledge that your system doesn't sound as good as you think it should, the "can't they ever fix it?" syndrome, the aggravation of coping with little annoyances in controls or operation.

The first line of defense against these potential ills is psychological. Even if you think of yourself as having a "tin ear," that doesn't make you a hopeless case. Some of your musical preferences may be based upon tone color, dynamics, and so on that will help you judge what you hear. Whether neophyte or devotee interested in moving up to a better sound system, you will find it invaluable to have confidence in your own subjective reactions. If you mistrust them, try to get more practice at critical listening.

If you have an inadequate system, take advantage of opportunities to listen to those of your friends. Pay particular attention to music that you have an affinity for, and note the changes in the sound of individual instruments and ensembles from one record to another, directly or via FM. Live performances will give you another frame of reference. In the process of critical listening, keep in mind that the goal is enjoyment and satisfaction: You want to know what negative properties detract from good listening, not how many sonic defects—no matter how minor—you can identify.

At Home with Hardware

Your neighborhood will determine some of the practical criteria for the system you choose, and you can learn from your neighbors or—particularly if you are moving into a new apartment—the building manager. For example, you will want to know what the local line voltage is and whether it is stable; it may stay within five volts of the nominal 120 most of the time, but you can't be sure it will. In some locations, the supply—though stable—is noticeably higher than 120 volts closest

to the distribution transformer and quite low at the end of the line because of losses. Where generating and distribution capacity is not sufficient for maximum loads, voltage levels can rise and fall, sometimes quite rapidly. The effects are most obvious with some tape recorders and turntables, which will change speed. Amplifiers, too, can be affected, losing maximum output power and increasing in distortion as the supply voltage drops.

There are remedies for these problems. For instance, where the line voltage is steady but too high or low, you can buy an autotransformer to adjust it. (The autotransformer's power rating will have to be much higher if it must handle the amp than if it is used just for recorders and turntables.) In the unlikely case of chronically high line voltages—which can make circuitry run relatively hot, reducing life expectancy—amplifiers and other components that are especially rugged would be good choices. And selecting one of the many tape recorders and turntables that are quite insensitive to voltage variations will obviate the need for an autotransformer to stabilize speeds.

FM tuners and receivers often incorporate antennas in their AC line cords. Such power lines can pick up FM signals, but their level may be very low if (particularly in large apartment buildings) the distribution transformer is located within the building. Adequate FM reception can be obtained by other means: an indoor antenna, an in-window unit, a feed from a distribution system, an on-roof antenna, or a selection of stations from a cable-TV system.

Some of the new indoor antennas yield greatly improved performance over what has been available in the past, but few will solve problems of severe multipath (caused by strong reflections) or of extremely low signal strength. Though an in-window unit might work fairly well for apartment dwellers, be certain that there is no restriction on its use in your building and that other tenants have had success with it. The feed from a distribution system can be very good—or very poor. Many times it is designed primarily for television, to the detriment of FM. Cable-TV feeds sometimes deliver only marginal FM signal strengths and con-

Trouble-Free Component System

trol of interference; more often they include only a limited number of FM stations. Check both the quality and the selection before concluding that the cable system will suit your needs. If you can manage it, having your own on-roof antenna—preferably with a rotator to control multipath—will give you the best FM reception. Avoid strapping the mounting mast to the chimney, where combustion products will attack the parts and connections; a guyed free-standing mast is best. Be sure that there is room to mount it away from any other antennas and that the downlead is adequate.

In any case, listen to neighbors' systems, taking note of the noise level for various stations, especially in stereo. This should be a better guide in this respect than a dealer could provide, unless he has coped with the specific conditions of your exact location.

Knobs, Boxes, and Discs

Your listening education should encompass three important goals. The first is attaining experience with switchable functions. To the extent that your friends will allow it, operate each component in their systems, getting the feel of controls, switches, and levers. Listen carefully to the effect of any changes you make. Ask your friends what they like and dislike about their systems, what features they value, and what features they wish they had. And above all, consider your own listening habits and the ways in which each control relates to them. This is the only way to judge your own control priorities realistically.

The second goal is to develop some expertise in loudspeaker/room relationships, which is fundamental to much of what is ahead of you. Once again, don't undervalue your own perceptions. A few principles hold true for every setup: 1) The maximum sound pressure level (SPL) in a room is a function of the electrical power output of the amplifier and the efficiency of the loudspeakers in converting it to acoustic power; 2) With the same speakers driven at the same electrical level in a room with the same wall finishes and furnishings, the larger the room, the lower the SPL; 3) For the same drive to the same speakers, the SPL will be higher in a room with mostly hard, reflective surfaces and few furnishings than in the same room with many soft, absorbent surfaces; 4) The level and smoothness of the speakers' bass response can be affected greatly by their placement within the room; 5) Excessive response at certain lower frequencies, resulting from the creation of what are called standing waves, is related to the dimensions of the room and is worst when two dimensions are the same.

In listening to your friends' systems, make notes of the sonic qualities of the equipment and of its

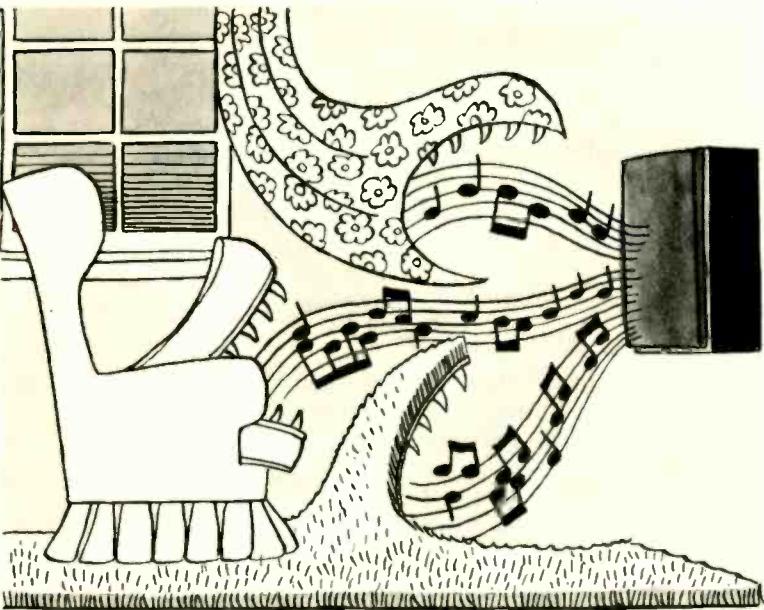
surroundings—room dimensions and furnishings. Find the range of levels at which listening is enjoyable. Is there any evidence of some form of overload distortion at the higher levels? (If your listening room is similar, the system would show similar limitations in it.) Listen from various points in the room, moving back and forth across the room and nearer and farther from the speakers. Are there changes in the higher frequencies as you move? Does some of the liveness disappear as you get closer to the speakers?

Tune the FM to interstation noise (defeat the muting, if necessary) and try the walk-around tests again. (Because this source does not change from second to second as music does, it is easier to hear altered response when you change listening position.) The sound should be sh-sh-sh in nature, not s-s-s or rumble. The practice sessions will help you to identify such defects as bass that is too boomy, a midrange that sounds nasal, or perhaps a spine-tingling but harsh high end. Don't be overly concerned about terminology, but try to come up with concrete descriptions of your own for both good and bad qualities in the sounds you hear.

The third aim in the listening phase is to acquire test sources you can take with you to the dealer. Perhaps you will be able to use some of your own recorded selections. Lists of records recommended for evaluation purposes have been published in many magazines, but you will get the best handle on a system's ability to preserve the musical qualities you admire (and you will enjoy the audition sessions more) if you stay with your own favorites. Try to pick discs that have been praised for their sound. Do not use tapes; discs generally are of better quality, and tapes raise more questions about the accuracy of reproduction on the dealer's equipment.

If you are planning to buy a system costing \$500 or more, an inexpensive sound level meter probably will be a worthwhile investment. Perhaps you can borrow one for the few days you will need it. The first use you make of it should be to measure the maximum SPL you would ever listen to. Most inexpensive meters have A-weighting only, but C-weighting is more appropriate for checking maximum levels; use that if the meter has it. Note the results for comparison and for adjusting levels in the retailer's demonstration room.

If you are going for a no-dollar-limit system, you might consider renting (or persuading your dealer to lend you) an octave-band real-time analyzer (RTA). Such a device shows relative levels across the audio spectrum so quickly and so graphically that the effect of moving away from the loudspeaker axis, for example, is immediately and unequivocally manifest. Some dealers will have such equipment and will be willing to let trustworthy customers use it.



There are many test records that can be used to check out a system, but most of them are difficult to use with little or no test equipment. By contrast, Soundcraftsmen's record containing octave bands of pink noise can be used without any test apparatus—although greater accuracy is possible with a sound meter. In this case, the meter must be operated on C-weighting or FLAT; A-weighting will cause gross errors.

When You Enter the Store...

If you are looking for minimum potential trouble, you must forget about minimum price. Consider the dealerships available to you very carefully and avoid outlets that emphasize "fantastic bargains." The dealer should put the emphasis on such things as checking equipment to verify proper operation and adequate in-home warranty repair service on the product lines he handles, and he should have demonstration rooms not totally unlike your listening room. He should carry products of well-established manufacturers and not simply try to push the latest minor improvement or exotic equipment for the sake of its oddness and should offer models on a trial basis so that you can use them long enough to be sure that their performance satisfies you.

It is a good idea to visit a few dealers and try to get an idea of what each is like. When you feel a bit at home, ask about pricing policies. Determine whether the store is a warranty repair agency, and for which brands. Ask to see the repair facilities. You may not be an expert on test equipment, but if you have even a little expertise, a fast look may re-

veal whether there is at least some of the sophisticated gear needed to meet current maintenance requirements and whether there is a hopeless backlog of unfinished work. Find out which components can be purchased on trial and what the return policies are.

A dealer who spends time on the customer and provides service for his equipment cannot sell at the same low prices that others may. You might save money at a discount house, but would the salesman spend the time to ensure that you make the right choices in the first place? If anything goes wrong or the system is unsatisfactory, will the discounter help to correct the problem? If you are impressed by the dealer but the total cost of what you first select is above your budget, pick out a less costly system or postpone buying some components rather than compromise your feelings about the suitability of the retailer.

A number of manufacturers, though not very well known, produce excellent components with outstanding reliability. If you are not certain of a particular model yourself, don't confuse sales exuberance with fact, but don't reject an unfamiliar name out of hand. Keep in mind that brand-new designs are more likely to have unsolved bugs than older ones. Avoid special features you don't really need; the extra complications can increase the likelihood of failures. Minor differences—and sometimes major ones—in specifications may be attributable more to differences in the way the specs are written than to actual differences in the products themselves.

Be especially wary of what is known as "bait and switch." This sales approach, which has been used with all types of merchandise, is not only deceitful, but illegal. The dealer runs ads with very low prices on a well-known brand to bring customers to the store. Then the sales personnel push other products, often disparaging the one used as "bait." They may be actually unable to supply the advertised product at the stated price or may simply make a better profit on the line they want to switch you to. (Be aware that some salesmen work on commission.) If a dealer no longer carries a line he once did, perhaps the manufacturer dropped him, rather than the other way around, so be suspicious of bad-mouthing. The thing to remember is that overall quality and performance on the majority of products are comparable at any given price point.

Shopping for a dealer first can help you in setting the guidelines for the equipment itself. For instance, you will learn about prices. Choose a budget range that goes from what you would like to spend (be realistic) to the maximum dollar figure you can afford. Don't forget the list you made of the features you liked during the listening experience: It is quite easy to overlook an important re-

quirement in the excitement of looking at new equipment.

There is nothing so frustrating as finally buying your components and finding that they don't fit into your room. First determine where you want to place your system. Take a scale drawing of your listening room and a pocket rule with you to the dealer's. Not only will the components probably look smaller there, but you will want to check the space needed for connectors, cables, and handles, usually ignored in the specified dimensions.

Loudspeakers and Electronics

Because of the fundamental significance of the loudspeaker/room interface, the selection of the speaker is of primary importance. And since the loudspeaker's sensitivity determines the amplifier power needed for an acceptable SPL within a room, the amplifier should be considered at the same time. Few loudspeaker manufacturers provide very helpful information in this regard, but this seems to be changing for the better.

Acoustic Research, for example, in its specifications for the AR-11, states: "efficiency, 1 watt [0 dBW] for 86 dB SPL on axis at 1 meter. Amplifier power requirements: minimum 25 watts [+14 dBW] for an average room. For close approximation of continuous power per channel needed, divide volume of listening room in cubic feet by 100. 25 watts [+14 dBW] to one speaker only will produce 100 dB SPL in a 3,000-cubic-foot room of average reflectivity (absorption coefficient 0.15). May be used with amplifiers capable of delivering up to 150 watts [+22 dBW] continuous power per channel being driven to clipping 10% of the time on normal music material." Applause, please—that's the way to do it.

From these specifications, we can easily derive other helpful information. With both speakers driven at 14 dBW, the sound power will be doubled, increasing the level by 3 dB to 103 dB SPL. If both speakers are driven at 20 dBW (100 watts), the level in the room would be quadrupled to a very high 109 dB SPL. A measure of the needs and resultant levels from other speakers can be gained by comparing their sensitivities (in dB SPL at 1 meter with 0-dBW drive) with the 86-dB SPL rating of the AR-11. Just keep in mind that for any decibel difference in sensitivity, there will be the same decibel change in the SPL in the room with a given drive power from the amplifier. Note that these levels are comparative rather than absolute. In practice, to deliver a music signal at an average power of 1 watt (0 dBW) an amp would require a rating 10 to 14 dB greater. Since any amplifier has at least 3 dB more capability on a peak basis than on an average, an extra 7 dB (five times the desired power) will do in a pinch.

The impedance of the loudspeaker is of some

significance in terms of the maximum power that an amplifier can supply to it without overload. If you would like to add remote speakers on the same amp output, remember that the combined impedance of all speakers connected in parallel must not be below the amp's minimum acceptable load. The combined rated impedance can be figured as the reciprocal of the sum of the reciprocals of the individual speakers. Thus if their impedance ratings are A, B, and C, their combined rating is:

$$\frac{1}{\frac{1}{A} + \frac{1}{B} + \frac{1}{C}}$$

It's vital that you listen to more than one set of speakers. (Caution: Some dealers have been known to equalize a speaker they are pushing in order to smooth out its response. One clue to "tweaking" may again be if they insist on telling you how much better a particular model sounds and seem to disparage the others.) Speaker placement affects performance in the bass region, so check to see whether any recommendations by the manufacturer can actually be met in your listening room.

Once you have determined your amplifier power requirements, you must decide whether to buy a separate amp, an integrated amp, or a receiver. Separates are not inherently better, but the integrated units may involve a few tradeoffs: They may occupy less total space, but they tend to offer less versatility of placement.

Make certain that the rated output of a separate preamp is at least twice the rated sensitivity of the amplifier. Again, check for functions of special interest to you, and operate all knobs and switches to help you judge their quality and reliability.

Consider all options. Though there tends to be a relationship between performance and cost, it is sometimes possible to upgrade performance inexpensively. Adding an outdoor antenna with a rotator is cheaper than chucking out a tuner or receiver; a better phono cartridge, if it is compatible with the rest of your record-playing equipment, can do wonders to improve the sound of your system; if you want Dolby noise reduction, consider whether to get it as part of your tuner, as an outboard unit, or as a Dolby-FM feature in a cassette deck.

Include AM in the tuner if you need it. There is not that much difference in performance from one model to another, especially among receivers.

Playing and Recording Equipment

If you are certain that you will not use the automatic changing feature of a turntable, don't buy a record changer. The extra complexity can be a source of trouble, even if unused. Automatic start and arm return, however, can be recommended as



usually gentler on discs than we humans are. At the very least, get a turntable with cueing.

Useful features include antiskating, built-in illuminated strobe (if there is a fine-speed adjustment), and an easily operated dust cover. A removable cartridge shell will aid in troubleshooting (and taking a suspicious stylus to the dealer for a check) though it adds some mass to the tone arm. Another good feature is a slip clutch or similar scheme that prevents damage when the arm is restrained by hand or clamped in the rest post during its cycle.

There are many excellent cartridges to choose from, but the choice must be compatible with tone arm, the preamplifier, and the loudspeakers. Listening through the total system you are considering is therefore in order. (You might be interested in those preamps with selectable termination for the best response from various cartridges with different electrical characteristics.) In matching the pickup to the arm, use the manufacturers' recommendations as a guide.

For the fewest problems combined with the highest fidelity in the tape format, the open-reel recorder still wins handily over the cassette deck. But if the physical handling or storage or the cost of tape seem too much for you, a cassette deck is a better choice. And cassette recorder heads last longer, so the need for replacement is much less likely. Just be sure to check out any model carefully—it is difficult to clean the heads on some decks, particularly front-loaders. Another advan-

tage of cassette decks is that many have features, such as memory, pause, and timer control, that many open-reel machines lack. The additional complexity may increase the probability of some sort of failure, but the lack of operational convenience can make the open-reel deck appear troublesome.

The cassette medium requires the Dolby noise-reduction system to get signal-to-noise ratios that one can live with. For best performance with Dolby, the user should either stay with tapes whose sensitivities are within a narrow range (say, ± 1 dB) to match the deck's Dolby adjustment—many manufacturers supply lists of recommendable tapes in the owner's manual—or choose a model with adjustable Dolby tracking, which still may not encompass all available tapes of a given type. Deck/tape matching of bias and equalization also is more important on cassette machines than with open-reel.

A three-head design improves overall performance by optimizing the recording and playback gaps for their single functions. There are two-head cassette decks with excellent record/playback response, however, and they should not be downgraded because of their theoretical limitation. To avoid tape skew in a three-head system, the recording head has to be aligned to the playback head with each new cassette. Some recent decks have both gaps in the same head structure, which eliminates the extra work but poses limitations of its own.

Whatever recorder type you consider, check out the action of all switches, knobs, levers, logic switching, etc. Pay particular attention to tape motion control and look for any indication of thrown tape loops, excessive tension, or poor braking. The pause control, if there is one, should disengage the drive and stop the tape without leaving a "pop"; avoid models whose pause control simply turns off the motor but leaves the drive engaged, which sooner or later is likely to cause deformation of the pinch roller and allow the tape to move erratically as it passes the heads.

Maintain a healthy skepticism about claims for any piece of equipment you audition and be willing to trust your judgment. Fundamentally, it is up to you to take responsibility for your choice of components and their operation as a system, so don't look for shortcuts. Each unit whose purpose and function you don't understand and whose interconnections with the rest of the system seem fiendishly occult is a pitfall just waiting for you to misstep. This is where the dealer comes in—one who will provide assistance in selecting equipment that will satisfy you. On the other hand, if you elect to buy from salesmen who stress price over service, be certain that you know what you are buying and why. Above all, keep your ears and mind open.

The Audiophile

by John Borwick



in Albion

IN SPITE OF many indications to the contrary, British audio and audiophiles are alive and well as I write. True, the shoppers, except for a lucky few, have been counting their pennies for the past year or two, so they will settle for fewer watts per channel and resist the blandishments of top-price direct-drive turntables if a cheaper belt-drive model seems to do all they want. And if they are music lovers rather than audio buffs (yes, we have both species—or are they mutants?), they will continue to buy records but make the audio rig do for a little longer.

The shopkeepers too are having their share of difficulty. They have had to contend with rising overhead, choosy customers, and a mushrooming of discount houses and other hard-sell operations previously regarded as something that "foreigners" do but Britshers do not. So importers from the Far East and elsewhere have been able to move in with offers of attractive profit margins that the hard-pressed shopkeepers have found very hard to refuse.

On top of this, British audio products have been difficult to get. British manufacturers seem to enjoy an avid demand (or is it that they cannot or will not make things fast enough?). Also, the drop in foreign exchange rates for the pound has made it more profitable (as well as seemingly more patriotic) to export than to sell at home. Therefore the home dealer has found it risky to stock British models when future supplies are uncertain and has filled his windows and demonstration rooms

A native son takes a look at the British audio scene today—and shows that it's a lot more than sticky wickets.

with imports. But I'll come back to the manufacturing and exporting question later.

In many ways, Britain has always been a haven for those interested in high quality sound, and it continues to be so. We had our share of early pioneers. As long ago as 1924, Percy Wilson was telling readers of *Gramophone* how to upgrade the performance of their acoustic reproducers. In the early 1930s A. D. Blumlein was demonstrating workable stereo on disc, Cecil E. Watts pioneered lacquer-coated metal discs for mastering, Harold Leak produced the world's first 0.1%-distortion amplifier (aptly named the Point One), and Peter Walker coined the name Quad (meaning Quality Amplifier, Domestic!) for the first of his very successful amplifier designs and launched the world's first full-range electrostatic loudspeaker.

The British Broadcasting Corporation, since the early 1920s, has built up a worldwide reputation for quality and integrity in programming as well as technical quality. The high proportion of air time devoted to serious music, the balanced and accurate news presentation, and the high technical standards are the envy of less fortunate nations. And all this is funded by public license without a scrap of advertising.

Almost everybody has access to transmissions of superb quality on VHF stereo FM. Being a small, tightly packed island helps, of course, by skirting the problems of vast distances and difficult terrain, but the imaginative use of PCM (pulse code modulation) studio-to-transmitter links nationwide means that signals are transmitted without the response, noise, and distortion degradation intro-

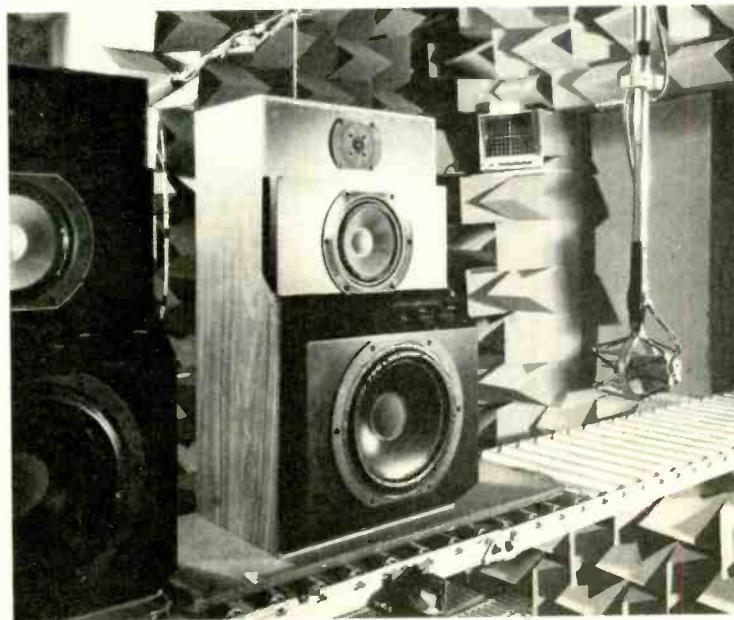
John Borwick is audio editor of Britain's *Gramophone*.

duced by all the other types of landlines or radio links. The BBC uses the wide-band links already developed for television distribution.

At the sending end, the analog waveform of the signal is sampled at some suitably high rate (at least twice the highest desired audio frequency). Each sample is compared with a scale of discrete "quantizing levels" and assigned a reference number in binary code, consisting of pulses and "zero" blanks. [For a detailed explanation, see "An Old Show with New Numbers," HF, March.—Ed.]

All that the receiving terminal has to do is distinguish between a pulse and a zero, which it can do even when the noise level is as high as 50% (that is, a transmission S/N ratio of only 6 dB), to reconstitute the analog signal virtually as good as new. The order of fidelity that can be achieved depends on the number of quantizing levels. The BBC uses a thirteen-bit code, allowing 8,192 levels, which can offer a very respectable decoded signal-to-noise ratio of 78 dB. Although this makes heavy demands on bandwidth, the BBC links can accommodate thirteen PCM channels simultaneously plus a data channel for passing transmitter switching and other information.

Besides high-quality radio, the British buff benefits from our prodigiously successful recording industry. The expertise of British recording engineers and producers is well known in both pop and classical music (from George Martin's recordings of the Beatles to John Culshaw's of the Wagner Ring). British mixing consoles are exported to studios worldwide, and for the last eighty years British engineer/producer teams have been visiting the world's musical centers to bring back superb masters. Studios in and around London are also popular with overseas producers for their working efficiency and highly polished session musicians.

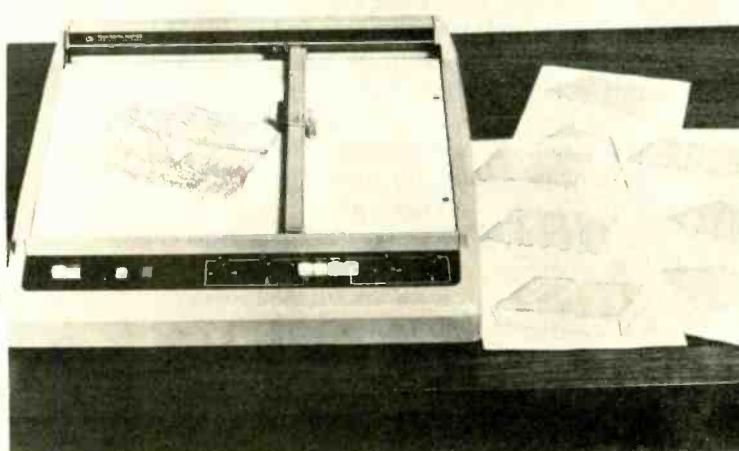


Anechoic chamber in B&W production line, Worthing, Sussex

Who Makes What?

In audio equipment itself, loudspeakers have always been something of a specialty for the U.K. The almost legendary G. A. Briggs [see "News and Views," HF, June] of Wharfedale Wireless Works was still going to his office regularly until the day before his death in January at the age of eighty-seven. Apart from his many loudspeaker designs, Briggs reached out to a wide public with his books and, of course, by pioneering modern aspects of the live-vs.-recorded demonstration. By putting on these highly persuasive shows at the Royal Festival Hall in London, Carnegie Hall in New York, and elsewhere, he undoubtedly won many converts to the pleasures of good music reproduced through so-called state-of-the-art equipment.

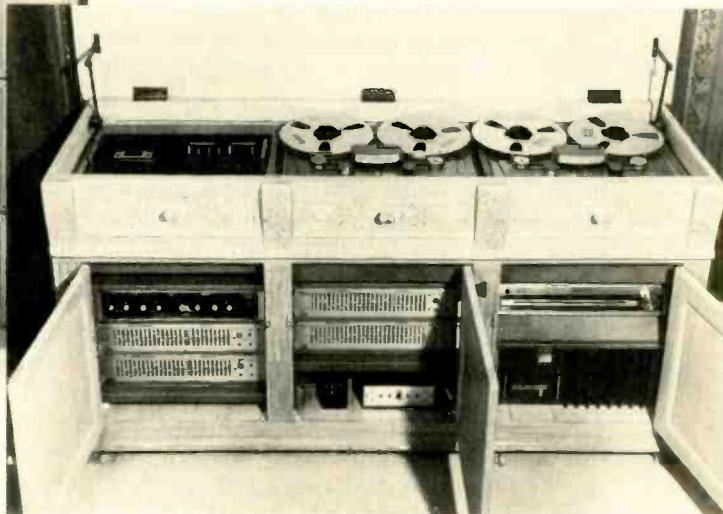
Raymond Cooke worked with Briggs for a number of years before starting his own loudspeaker company, KEF Electronics. The pioneering spirit has rubbed off on him too, and he has made great strides in harnessing a computer to speaker design and testing. The resulting three-dimensional displays (with coordinates of amplitude, frequency, and time) pinpoint resonances and other features very accurately. John Bowers of B&W Electronics is another British speaker designer/manufacturer with a huge computer installation as part of his development laboratory. But the list of home-turf manufacturers goes on and on: Keith Monks, makers of high-end tone arms and record- and tape-care accessories; Gale, of turntable and loudspeaker fame, and now a manufacturer of limited-edition premium-quality discs; Rola Celestion, producer of the well-known Ditton loudspeaker line; A. R. Sugden & Company, whose Connoisseur



Cumulative-spectra loudspeaker "contour maps" at KEF



Alastair Robertson-Aikman's listening room (described below in text) was built onto his house specifically for this purpose. Speakers and power amplifiers (above) are normally hidden by curtains during listening. Tape/equalizer console (right) also holds electronic crossover and Dolby A unit.



turntables have included one of the few kits ever offered; electronics companies like Armstrong Audio, Sinclair Radionics, Acoustical Manufacturing (Quad), and Cambridge Audio; and so on. Though relatively few British companies have been absorbed by large international concerns, both Wharfedale and Leak are now part of the Rank Organisation, and Tannoy is owned by Harman International.

Until recently, British high fidelity manufacturing was carried out by such small establishments that it could, only half-jokingly, be described as a "cottage industry"—like making tartan rugs. But the urge to export has encouraged such a growth in the scale of operations that mass-production techniques have been introduced.

Production in quantity has always been a feature at BSR and Garrard. Between them they have supplied about a quarter of the world's popularly priced changers and single-play turntables for a good many years. As an example of a more specialized product, the SME tone arm has walked off with awards and the acclaim of enthusiasts in all corners of the world. And its latest manifestation, the SME-3009 Series III, looks like it will do the same.

While on the subject of SME, Ltd., I cannot resist describing the listening room that its managing director, Alastair Robertson-Aikman, has built onto his home. As a general rule, most British manufacturers pay a great deal of attention to the sound of their products (and their competitors'), so an acoustically satisfactory listening room often is a focal point of the factory. Robertson-Aikman has pushed this idea to the limit. His home, less than a mile from his model factory in the Sussex countryside, makes an idyllic setting for music listening.

The room measures 36 by 22½ by 10 feet high

and is sumptuously furnished. The floor is solid concrete covered with wood blocks, and the ceiling too consists of fifty tons of concrete. Hand-made limed oak cabinets contain the equipment: two Technics SP-10/II turntables, SME Series III arms, Nakamichi MC-1000 and Shure V-15 Type IV cartridges, two Luxman C-1000 control centers (for front and back speakers), four UREI 527A third-octave equalizers, two Studer B-62 professional tape recorders, Dolby A noise-reduction gear, a Nakamichi TT-1000 cassette deck, two Luxman M-6000 and two M-4000 stereo amplifiers (a total of 1,320 watts), two SAE 400 power amplifiers (for the subwoofers), two SAE Mk. 1M control devices, and two Lexicon Model 102 digital-delay units.

The loudspeaker plan is very ambitious. For front left and right there are two vertical banks of four Quad electrostatics, mounted on a rigid frame following the speaker curvature, with eighteen-inch Infinity woofer units fitted in cubical sand-filled enclosures one meter per side and weighing 1¼ tons each. The delayed signal is fed to speaker arrays just behind the listening position. These consist of two vertical banks of three Quad electrostatics but with the speakers mounted on their sides to beam their characteristically narrow vertical dispersion angle slightly away from the listener. There also is a control panel for lighting, stage curtains, and indeed every luxury. And the sound? It is superb.

The Sound and the Furor

Apart from negotiating distributorships abroad, the British industry—through its representational body, the Federation of British Audio—has begun to make a bigger and better showing at consumer

electronics exhibitions, such as the shows in Tokyo, Berlin, Paris, and Chicago. The FBA has sixty-six member firms, about half represented at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago again this year.

Insofar as there are national and local tastes in high fidelity sound (as there certainly are in terms of styling and decor), the typical British sound is conservatively natural and unspectacular. It might be argued that British manufacturers should work harder to study the local markets and then rebalance their loudspeakers and alter their switching options and soon to suit local taste. Yet there is a danger that, in producing a German or U.S. version (all "boom and tizz" for the one and heavy bass for the other, some would insist), the original character of the sound would be lost. So apart from some concessions to finish and ornament, British manufacturers tend to adopt a "take it or leave it" attitude. They expect their customers, wherever they live, to have chosen their equipment for its British characteristics of sound, looks, and feel. Changing their products to suit different markets would blur the image and would mean, in any case, confronting the Japanese head on—something that even American and multinational companies have found difficult.

A kind of guerrilla warfare has been waged in recent months by young writers in the smaller, more sensational audio press. They have been sniping at most of the established audio concepts and have aroused wrathful responses from some of the long-established British manufacturers and experts. These young "golden ears" claim that they can hear differences between units even when the standard test measurements would suggest that no such differences exist. For want of a better name, these hard-to-define differences have been called "musicality."

An early target was turntables, and elaborate demonstrations were set up to show that they all "sound different." It is no new notion that the performance of a turntable can affect the overall quality in a disc-playing system. Reviewers and designers have devised special test techniques—with standard turntables and test discs—to check out cartridges; similarly, the pickup needs to be standardized when checking turntables, and so on. Where the "musicality" camp has gone wrong is to draw far-fetched conclusions about the inferiority of direct-drive motors, the superiority of certain turntable mats, etc. Yet their constant nagging has revealed important aspects of acoustic feedback in turntable/arm combinations, for example, which can certainly degrade bass definition, stereo imaging, and general clarity of reproduction. Designers of future state-of-the-art turntables will do well to take all these factors into account.

The present fixation is with amplifiers, and a January meeting of the Audio Engineering Society

(British section) witnessed a confrontation between two "establishment" experts and two "musicality" exponents. The packed audience first heard the experts (Walker of Quad and Peter Baxandall of tone-control fame) defending objective testing methods. Apart from distortion and frequency-response tests, they stressed the effectiveness of a null test: The amplifier under test is compared with a standard amplifier, and their outputs are paralleled out of phase so that identical voltages cancel and only the differences are left. If these differences are too insignificant to measure or hear, surely it is fair to say that the amplifiers are, for all practical purposes, identical.

The opposition would not agree: They had heard important differences in their listening tests—which the experts suggested had not been conducted under sufficiently controlled scientific circumstances. Contributions from many well-known and some relatively unknown members of the audience scored points for both sides, leaving the whole question far from resolved.

I am not keen to take sides at this stage since I have been asked to participate in a serious test intended to settle the argument once and for all. I can see virtues in both attitudes. I have the greatest respect for the subtlety of the human hearing mechanism—it seems eminently possible that our crude test procedures do not reveal small differences that keen ears can latch onto. On the other hand, subjective listening tests are meaningless unless strict scientific and statistical methods buttress them. Otherwise, emotional response, fatigue, biological cycles, personal prejudices, individual hearing idiosyncrasies—or even the odd $\frac{1}{2}$ dB of level difference—will unbalance the results.

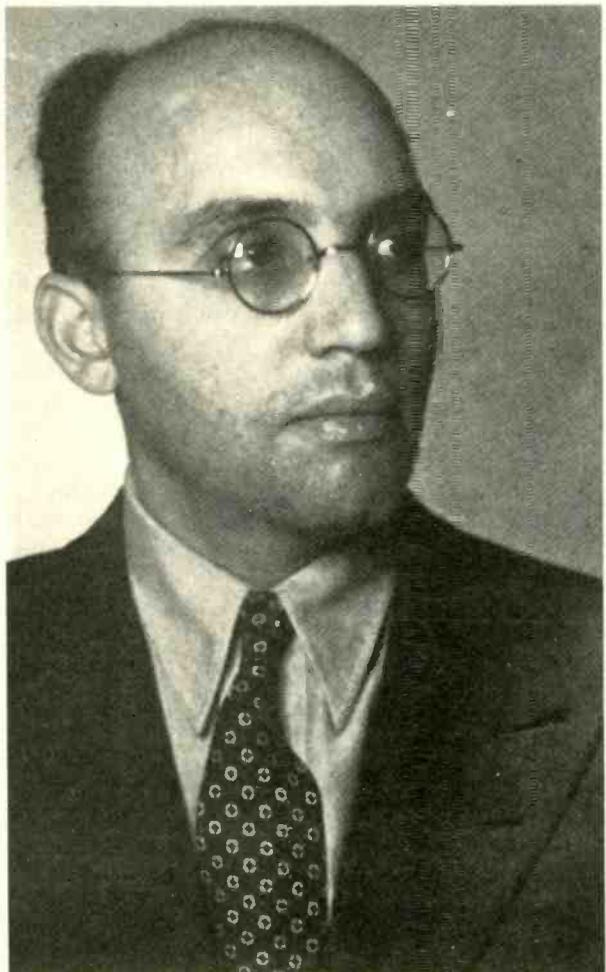
This is definitely the age of the high fidelity myth (think of the thousands of words now being written about the merits of using certain special wire for loudspeaker hookups), but we should not scoff without bringing scientific proof to bear on all these arguments. For instance, the story is circulating that professional studio consoles "sound different." To settle the matter, the engineers at AIR Studios in London's Oxford Street recently heaved an enormous Cadac mixer desk in alongside their existing twenty-four-track Neve console with full NECAM computer-assisted mixdown automation. Of course the desks measured identically—and to superprofessional standards that would make a home-audio buff green with envy: frequency response, 20 to 20,000 Hz, ± 0.1 dB; equivalent noise less than -125 dB; distortion less than 0.075%. Then came the listening tests, and—you've guessed it—they did sound different to some ears.

So, though many share my view that British audio is in pretty good shape, there are some choosy British ears that think it could be made to sound even better.

A critical discography
by Kim H. Kowalke

Kurt Weill's European Legacy

Beyond Brecht and *Threepenny* — premiered half a century ago this year — lies a singular body of fascinating music, much of it available to record collectors.



AT A MASS MEETING in Augsburg in 1930, Adolf Hitler virulently denounced the alien cultural influences rampant in Germany; his list of the decadent, "unvölkische" forces to be overcome was headed by Albert Einstein, Thomas Mann, and Kurt Weill. By chance Weill was present at that rally, and he later recalled how he had feared that the howling mob would attack him then and there. But at the mention of his name, he quietly slipped away unnoticed and unharmed.

For the next three years Weill was victimized by a systematic political campaign led by Goebbels himself. Carefully planned riots greeted his premieres, stink bombs often clouded the perceptions of his audiences and critics, overt censorship mutilated his works. Nevertheless, Weill's melodious voice was not silenced, nor even much muted, until Hitler was appointed chancellor in January 1933; a ban against all performances of his music was one of the new government's most unpopular decrees. Several sympathetic conductors and producers abruptly forfeited their podiums and posts.

Only days after the Reichstag burned later that year, Weill and his wife, Lotte Lenya, having received a tip from a well-placed friend, surreptitiously drove to Paris—a few hours before the inevitable knock of the Gestapo on the door of their Berlin home. But even in exile the Nazi threat could not be shunned; at Weill's first concert in Paris, the French composer Florent Schmitt greeted his songs with shouts of "Vive Hitler!" Then, in 1935, Weill and Lenya came to New York at the invitation of the Austrian theatrical producer and director Max Reinhardt to complete the score for his pageant *The Eternal Road*. As a new era in the composer's career began in America, Hitler asked all foreign gov-

Kim H. Kowalke, an assistant professor of music at Occidental College in Los Angeles, received his Ph.D. from Yale with a dissertation on the European career of Kurt Weill.

ernments to confiscate and return to Germany for destruction the scores of this "cultural Bolshevik" and "smutty cabaret talent."

For anyone who sees Weill as a complaisant outfitter of Bertolt Brecht's ideas in music or a commercial Broadway tunesmith, the turmoil he aroused in both the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich must seem inexplicable. But from 1925 to 1933, Weill could not be casually dismissed. He was numbered among the leaders of the New Music and hailed as the outstanding composer for the theater of his generation. Music journals minutely monitored performances of his music throughout Europe. Composer George Antheil reported back to the U.S. that "all over the Continent one can hear almost every shopgirl singing Weill's melodies." His works were championed by a host of illustrious conductors: Klemperer, Scherchen, Walter, Weingartner, Steinberg, Stokowski, Stiedry, Zemlinsky, Busch, Kleiber. By age twenty-five Weill had attracted his own cluster of composition students that included Maurice Abravanel and Claudio Arrau. When he fled his homeland, he had completed two string quartets, a cello sonata, a violin concerto, six orchestral works, two song cycles, four cantatas, and no fewer than twelve major works for the stage. And his influence was not restricted to music. As a member of the November Group, the exclusive association of left-wing intellectuals and artists in Berlin, and a prolific journalist, Weill was a prominent spokesman for the aesthetic, cultural, and social positions that Hitler found so abhorrent.

Only fragments of his celebrated but controversial European career survived his emigration to the U.S. After the dismal failure of the production of *The Threepenny Opera* in New York two years before his arrival, he had no hope that he could adapt his Berlin concerns to a foreign cultural milieu. Weill squelched the few subsequent attempts to revive his German works here and instead dedicated himself to the creation of a uniquely American operatic genre. At the time of his death in 1950, it appeared that the greater part of his European works would be buried forever. Marc Blitzstein's successful off-Broadway English adaptation of *Die Dreigroschenoper* (1954), Lenya's classic recording for Columbia of Weill's Berlin theater songs (1955), and the concurrent Brecht renaissance sparked only sporadic interest in the music of the early years, and a record catalog as recently as ten years ago would hardly have suggested that Weill was a major figure in contemporary music. But since then, several more of his early masterpieces have surfaced from the ruins of the Nazi Reich, and a great many of them have become available on commercial recordings. Now it is possible to derive a reasonably just estimation of Weill's achievement by listening to recordings.

Although from the time he was nineteen Weill considered the theater his special field of musical activity, his first large-scale works to survive are three instrumental compositions: the String Quartet in B minor (1919), the Sonata for Cello and Piano (1920), and the Symphony No. 1 (1921). All were composed after he had broken off study with Engelbert Humperdinck at the Berlin Hochschule to work as a coach and conductor at provincial opera houses. Thus the first two were written before his period of study with Ferruccio Busoni (from late 1920 to 1924) started, and the symphony was largely complete before Busoni's effect began to be felt. None of

Bettmann Archive



Bertolt Brecht—
a 1927 photo

the three was performed or published during his lifetime, yet each displays masterly control of the musical language and instrumental technique of late romanticism. Reminders of Mahler and Reger, both of whom Weill admired greatly, do not render these works derivative, for atonal passages frequently occur within the overall tonal fabric. The string quartet and cello sonata, still unpublished and unrecorded, are only marginally less distinguished than the remarkable symphony.

Symphony No. 1 is something of a misnomer for the 1921 work, because Weill put that designation on the symphony he wrote in 1933 (now dubbed Symphony No. 2) and because it might be more accurately described as a one-movement symphonic poem. Its title page originally bore a motto from an Expressionist play by Johannes R. Becher, and its shape closely corresponds to the outlines of Becher's socialistic treatment of war's effect on modern society. Weill's explosive score—believed lost until it was retrieved in 1955 from an Italian monastery, where it had weathered the war—exemplifies his youthful preoccupation with quasi-religious mysticism.

Although David Drew's edition of the First Symphony was not published until 1968, there are already two excellent recordings: Gary Bertini's with the BBC Symphony (Argo ZRG 755) and Edo de Waart's with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra (Philips 6500 642). Both readings are intelligent realizations of the demanding score, and the interpretations differ only in minor details. Bertini, long associated with revivals of Weill's neglected works, leads a well-paced performance distinguished by careful handling of orchestral color—heard to special advantage in the elaborate divisi string passages and the solo sections that resemble chamber music. De Waart's account is perhaps dramatically more taut and reaches higher expressive peaks. The Argo recording boasts extensive insert notes by Drew, one of the foremost Weill scholars.

His first composition for the theater to be performed was the ballet-pantomime *Die Zauberwahl* (1922), commissioned by a Russian troupe for a children's theater production in Berlin. The seventy-five-minute ballet, scored for an orchestra of just nine players, attracted almost no critical attention and was never published, but Weill considered it the first mature score in which his later "simple" style could be discerned. Its use of traditional dance forms foreshadowed his later



It was rare that the camera caught Weill and Brecht together, but here, during a rehearsal for the "Little Mahagonny" in Baden-Baden in 1927, the composer stands at the extreme left and the poet at the right. On-stage, at left, is Lotte Lenya, and Paul Hindemith is second from the right in the group with Weill.

incorporation of the idioms of American jazz in operatic scores such as *Royal Palace* (1926) and *Die Dreigroschenoper*. A full score of the ballet has not survived, but fortunately he salvaged portions of it for an orchestral suite published in 1926 as *Quodlibet: Eine Unterhaltungsmusik*. Its four multi-sectional movements for full "double wind" orchestra juxtapose and rework widely separated segments of *Die Zauber Nacht*—hence, the title *Quodlibet*. Although it retains none of the religious overtones of the symphony of 1921 or the *Sinfonia sacra* of a year later, *Quodlibet* has Reger-like sections of trapuntal complexity, and the Funeral March in the third movement once again pays homage to Mahler. Siegfried Landau's recording (*Candide* QCE 31091) with the Westphalian Symphony fails to capture the gestic accent of Weill's propulsive rhythmic drive and lacks genuine theatrical tension. There are numerous problems with balance and intonation, and the transparent texture is sabotaged by muffled acoustics. Nevertheless, the disc affords the opportunity to hear this attractive and skillful product of the twenty-three-year-old composer.

The remainder of his output while studying with Busoni reflects the Neoclassical influence of his mentor. Busoni insisted that the pacing of the stage had to be unmistakable in Weill's orchestral and chamber music before he could attempt opera. Therefore, with the exception of *Die Zauber Nacht*, Weill's music during this period was exclusively nontheatrical. The String Quartet No. 1, the song cycle *Frouentanz* for soprano and five instruments, *Recordare* for a cappella mixed chorus and boys' choir (all written in 1923), and the Concerto for Violin and Winds (1924) testify to his attempt to perfect his musical language in a wide range of nonoperatic idioms.

Unfortunately this segment of Weill's career is the least documented on recordings: Only the violin concerto is available commercially. Composed for Joseph

Szigeti, who never performed it, the three-movement concerto posed such technical obstacles that it became almost exclusively the showpiece of a single virtuoso, Stefan Frenkel. Its musical language, saturated with dissonant counterpoint and atonal constructions, is as complex as Weill ever devised. Scored for ten winds, percussion, and double bass, the work is currently offered on two recordings, but Robert Gerle's sloppy rendition (with Hermann Scherchen conducting, Westminster Gold WG 8269) is no match for Nona Liddell's in the London Sinfonietta's landmark three-disc Deutsche Grammophon set (2709 064, reviewed at length by Andrew Porter in May 1977) conducted by David Atherton. It contains authentic, glowing performances of seven Weill works dating from 1924 to 1929 and a substantial booklet meticulously assembled and annotated by Drew. Liddell dispatches the multiple stops, dazzling passagework, and chains of trills with assured ease, technical bravura, and extraordinary musical insight. The performance eloquently argues for a recording of the concerto's chronological neighbors, especially *Frauentanz* and *Der neue Orpheus* (1925), a cantata for solo soprano, violin, and orchestra.

Contrary to popular misconception, Bertolt Brecht was neither the first nor the most favored among Weill's lengthy list of illustrious collaborators. Georg Kaiser, the most prolific German Expressionist playwright, provided the libretto for his first opera, the one-act *Der Protagonist*. A twenty-minute ovation, more than forty curtain calls, and reviews nearly unanimous in their praise greeted its premiere in Dresden in 1925 under Fritz Busch. It quickly became Weill's most often performed opera, and as late as 1933 it was challenged only by the *Dreigroschenoper*. In 1927, the pair added a comic companion piece, *The Czar Has His Photograph Taken*, and after the always rocky four-year collaboration with Brecht disintegrated, in 1931, in aesthetic and political disagreements, Weill again turned to Kaiser for

the libretto of the last opera he completed in Germany, *Der Silbersee* (1933). These three operas represent a more characteristic sampling of Weill's German career than the Brecht-Weill works, but none has been recorded in its entirety.

Two excerpts from *Silbersee* are in Columbia's two-disc "Lotte Lenya" album, MG 30087, which includes the aforementioned recording of Berlin theater songs and a later one of songs taken from Weill's American stage works. And the DG set contains a fascinating excerpt from *Der Protagonist*. The opera explores an actor's inability to separate the imaginary world of artistic performance from the reality of daily life. Kaiser and Weill treated the two plays performed within the opera as pantomimes. The composer used two distinct orchestras to reinforce this nested structure: the on-stage wind octet accompanies only the pantomimes, in which the singers are rendered inarticulate except for monosyllabic vocalization. The first pantomime, a bawdy commedia dell'arte sketch, is set to music as a theme and variations in an intentionally grotesque style. The London Sinfonietta perfectly captures the flavor of the piece, but the listener who is unfamiliar with the rest of the opera will have difficulty establishing its proper context. Perhaps this "appetizer" will encourage complete recordings of the Kaiser-Weill operas, all of which have enjoyed successful revivals in Europe recently.

All of the Brecht collaborations have been recorded, with eight of the nine major works currently listed. (Only the school-opera *Der Jasager*, last available on Heliodor HS 25025, is out of print.) Their popularity has exaggerated their importance in Weill's career and obscured his independent identity. But now that his own literary works have been published in part, it is no longer possible to dismiss him as Brecht's musical amanuensis. In fact, his views often contrast markedly with Brecht's. Perhaps it was precisely this conflict of opinion that bred the creation by the two men of a wide vari-

ety of works distinguished by double-edged poignancy and assertive irony. Their collaborations seem to embody an ongoing dialectical process, a perpetual tension between text and music.

Their association began in 1927, when Weill was asked to contribute a one-act chamber opera to the Baden-Baden music festival. The composer rejected scenes from *King Lear* and *Antigone* as possible librettos in favor of a new format, a "Songspiel" based on the five Mahagonny-Songs in Brecht's collection of poetry *Die Hauspostille* (*The Domestic Breviary*). Brecht supplied a concluding text, and Weill linked the poems with orchestral interludes to yield the thirty-five-minute *Mahagonny Songspiel* or "Little Mahagonny." Although the song-play elicited a tumultuous reaction at its premiere, it was neither revived nor published during Weill's lifetime because he considered it only a sketch or "style test" for the full-length *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (*Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*) of 1930.

The *Songspiel* is a miniature masterpiece. Within the last year, two recordings have been released: Lukas Foss's with the Jerusalem Symphony on Turnabout (TV 34675) and Atherton's in the DG set. The London Sinfonietta's almost perfect rendition is marred only by a few arbitrary and, in my view, unnecessary cuts, but it is difficult to imagine a more stylistically accurate or theatrically exciting performance. The vocalists sing with impeccable diction, and the acoustical quality of the recording is splendid—if anything, the dynamic range is too wide. Foss's reading is somewhat less successful. It also involves cuts and inexplicably corrects Brecht's marvelous Pidgin English. Foss chose tempos often too fast for his performers to negotiate; ensemble and diction suffer as a result. The balance between the small orchestra and the six solo singers is sometimes faulty: The piano's domination of the accompaniment is particularly objectionable.



Theater Museum, Cologne



At left, Trude Hesterberg as Begbick and Lenya as Jenny in *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, at the Theater am Kurfürstendamm, Berlin, 1931.
Above, Kurt Gerron and—you guessed it—Peter Lorre in the world premiere production of *Happy End*, at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm, 1929.

When it was issued in the Fifties, Columbia's recording of the "Big Mahagonny" (K31, 243, three discs, mono) was a welcome introduction to the most monumental of the Brecht-Weill works and is still indispensable to any library of Weill recordings. But now that the opera has become entrenched in the repertory, the shortcomings of that version, conducted by Wilhelm Brückner-Rüggeberg and with a cast centered on Lotte Lenya, are more apparent. A new recording is called for, one that pre-

serves the stylistic authenticity Lenya brought to the role of Jenny but restores the role to its original soprano range—providing the necessary musical and dramatic contrast with Begbick, the other female principal. The transposition down an octave for Lenya is particularly damaging to the beautiful "Crane Duet."

The *Threepenny Opera* has always been the most popular of Weill's works: Within five years of its premiere in 1928 it had been translated into eighteen lan-



Maurice Abravanel Remembers Kurt Weill

IT WAS IN BERLIN, in May 1922, that I was introduced to Kurt Weill, then twenty-two years old, short, with questioning eyes behind very big glasses. He agreed to teach me harmony and counterpoint, charging half a pound of butter per lesson. He did not expect me to bring butter, but this was the prevailing wage in those days in Berlin, as prices changed almost daily.

Weill crisscrossed the city in the streetcar to give his lessons. His textbooks were the Bussler books then in use at the prestigious Musik Hochschule, where he had studied for a short time with Humperdinck. Those textbooks were a compendium of rules and regulations without any regard for the reasons underlying them, but they were orthodox. Kurt told me to buy the Schoenberg *Harmony*, which I did immediately, but he never again referred to it.

Having been exposed to Ernest Ansermet's performances of the music of Stravinsky in Switzerland, I had the miniature scores of *Firebird*, *Petrushka*, and *Sacre du printemps* on my rented upright piano. When Weill first saw *Sacre* (Germany had been totally isolated musically), he said I was losing valuable time looking at such "dreck." Later, of course, he became an ardent admirer of Stravinsky.

I had been to *Parsifal*, which the Staatsoper was playing every night the week before Easter. He saw the piano-vocal score, a very small volume, on my pi-

ano and asked me how long it took. I told him a little over five hours. Then he asked how long my *Meistersinger* score was. Well, about the same. Then, in a gesture I will never forget, he held the *Parsifal* score on the palm of his left hand and the *Meistersinger* score on his right, as though balancing them on a scale—with the latter many times thicker and longer than the other—looked at me, and said, "So?" I was taken aback by that way of comparing works of art. It did not make any dent in my addiction to the sensuous mysticism of *Parsifal*, but I was disturbed to know that for a composer the fact that it has mostly slow tempos and very long held chords, while *Meistersinger* is bubbling with so many notes, so many lines, and so many faster tempos, somehow had something to say about the opera's musical contents.

Weill would bring sketches of his string quartet for me to play as he advanced his work on it. It was performed at the first International Society for Contemporary Music Festival in Salzburg in 1923. It got very favorable reviews, citing his debt to Stravinsky—of whom he did not know a note at the time.

While all my written counterpoint exercises were letter-perfect according to the rules, my work at the piano—Bach chorales, score playing—was much less good, but he still felt it was time for me to find a job in an opera house. I asked him about conducting. He himself had been a coach for a year and had conducted a little in a very small municipal theater. He said to me, "Well, you know 2/4, down

and up, and 3/4 and 4/4." I asked about 5. He answered, "5 is only in Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique*, and that is 2 and 3."

During that time he composed and conducted a Christmas pantomime, *Die Zaubernacht*, easy and serviceable music that was performed every day for a week or so in Berlin. Busoni, his teacher, went to one performance, and his only comment was that Kurt had conducted it well.

We exchanged two or three letters while I had my first engagement. I bumped into him at an opera performance, and we talked excitedly at intermission. It was not until 1926 that we met each other again, on a train from Berlin to Leipzig, and he told me he had written an opera, *Der Protagonist*, with Georg Kaiser, then a foremost German Expressionist playwright. The Dresden Opera, which was giving more premieres of Richard Strauss than any other, performed it under Fritz Busch. Those German critics who were against the avant-garde slaughtered it mercilessly. But those who were with the avant-garde gave it rave reviews, and Kurt got a contract with Universal Edition by which he would get a monthly stipend for life and Universal would publish anything he wrote in any medium.

I saw him rarely while I was conducting in the provinces, but whenever I went to Berlin he would play for me some of the things he had just composed. In the meantime, of course, *The Threepenny Opera* (1928) came out and was performed all over Germany, and all the critics who had championed Weill rejoiced in an "I told you so" way; however, when it became a lasting success and had been performed in about eighty-five theaters and made into a sound movie in both German and French, the reviewers decided that Kurt was a traitor. How could anything that large audiences took to their hearts be of any value? But this did not bother Kurt, who wanted to reach audiences and didn't mind losing his avant-garde supporters.

We met again in the spring of 1933 in Paris. The previous December, the Sérénade, a society that had presented many works of Milhaud, Poulenc, and other avant-garde composers, wanted to organize a whole evening of Kurt Weill with the "Little Mahagonny" and the school opera *Der Jasager*. He was invited to go to Paris for it, and he accepted on the condition

Maurice Abravanel is conductor of the Utah Symphony Orchestra.

guages for more than 10,000 performances. The five recordings available provide a wide choice of performance styles. In its *Dokumente* series, Telefunken recently released excerpts from the opera recorded in 1930 by members of the original Berlin cast—Lenya, Kurt Gerron, Erich Ponto, Willy Trenk-Trebitsch—and the original pit orchestra, the Lewis-Ruth Band under Theo Mackeben. Although it is incomplete and most of the numbers are abridged, the recording (Telefunken

6.41911, imported by German News Company) is a revelation. Lenya is an absolutely stunning Polly; she sings the role in its original soprano range with infallible timing and inimitable finesse. Bending Weill's rhythms to their breaking point, she declaims every word with pointed enunciation and perfect pitch. Trenk-Trebitsch's Macheath is an eye-opener: He sounds more like Joel Grey's sinister emcee in *Cabaret* than the virile baritone we have come to expect. The acoustical distor-

that I conduct. Now, "Little Mahagonny" was for very small instrumental ensemble. When Weill and Brecht had enlarged it to a three-act opera, they added the songs "Moon of Alabama" and "Wie man sich bettet," orchestrated for the normal forty- or fifty-piece orchestra. Since Kurt was very busy, he asked me to condense the orchestration of the two pieces for small ensemble. The condensation was very obvious, and Kurt fully approved it. This new *Mahagonny* was an incredible success both at the Vicomtesse du Noailles's salon and at the Salle Gaveau the next day.

At this preview of *Mahagonny*, Stravinsky expressed his admiration for it, preferring it to the three-act version. He said it had a much higher density. Later, when we were approached to take a touring company to Spain and possibly to Italy, Stravinsky wanted *L'Histoire du soldat* as a companion piece. An ideal bill, he called it. Several others wanted to write something with Kurt, including André Gide and Jean Cocteau. Kurt said to me at the time: "All right. They won't accept me as a serious composer. Maybe I can be a new Offenbach."

While the Ballet 1933 of Balanchine was having its glamorous season—first in Paris, then in London—with new scores by Milhaud, Sauguet, Rieti, and Koechlin and with sets by Derain, Kurt's *Seven Deadly Sins* also was being well received, but there was some rumbling at the back of the house. Paris was full of expatriates, and some French composers did not like the competition.

In the fall of 1933, I was to conduct the Orchestre de Paris in two concerts, and the manager insisted that I perform something by Weill, whose name would guarantee a very large attendance. I begged Kurt to write something or at least let me use anything he had composed, and he said, "Look, I had a big success with *Mahagonny*, but already, at the *Seven Deadly Sins* performances, there are protests. Don't play anything of mine right now. People are jealous, and it doesn't do you any good." I offered new works by Krenek and Hindemith, but the manager persisted—nothing would do except Weill. Finally, Kurt gave in, and I programmed three songs from *Silbersee*, for which Madeleine Grey, at the peak of her fame for doing the Songs of the Auvergne

by Canteloube, was engaged: Madeleine Milhaud translated the songs into French.

I will never forget that performance at the Salle Pleyel. Great applause after each song and, at the end, a real triumph, with shouts of "bis." But to my ears, louder than all that was a voice yelling, "Vive Hitler!" Grey, bless her soul, focused on the cheers, and she prompted me to go back on-stage. Again there were bravos, but this time they were clearly overshadowed by Florent Schmitt's and his friends' insults. Kurt came backstage with an infinitely sad look. "Did I need that?" he said.

There was nothing I could say. I wandered through the streets, missing one commuter train after another. I was staying then with my parents in a suburb and finally caught the 5:00 a.m. train, after seeing all the bales of morning papers in the station with big front-page headlines about the incident. I slept about two hours, then Kurt was on the phone, and I went back to town to have coffee with him. He was very sad. Obviously we would have to go elsewhere.

The next time I saw Kurt was in New York. *The Eternal Road*, an epic work by Franz Werfel, was being lavishly produced by Max Reinhardt, who practically gutted the Manhattan Opera House to make room for it. The idea was a marvelous one: A family would be in the orchestra pit and, while threatened by mobs, would read the Bible: on the big stage some of the most memorable happenings in Jewish lore—Jacob's Ladder, the Flight from Egypt, and so on—would be portrayed.

Kurt was as happy as a child. Reinhardt's staging meant that the pit did not have room for musicians. The orchestral score would be recorded, possibly with the New York Philharmonic, and the principals and the chorus on-stage would sing to that accompaniment. "Think of it," Kurt said. "No worries with those musicians who play wrong notes. And to have the best orchestra in the world—"

But the union didn't permit it, so an orchestra had to be hired to perform somewhere high up in the building, with the conductor using earphones and with loudspeakers on the stage. When you went into the opera house, you saw that enormous, practically bare stage. What Reinhardt did was spectacular for a the-

ater but very poor compared with a movie set, and subconsciously you felt that you were hearing canned music and that you were in a movie house.

In spite of some wonderful music, *The Eternal Road* was not a success. Also, many who knew Kurt only from *Three-penny Opera* felt it all wrong for him, rather than, say, Ernest Bloch, to have been asked to write the music.

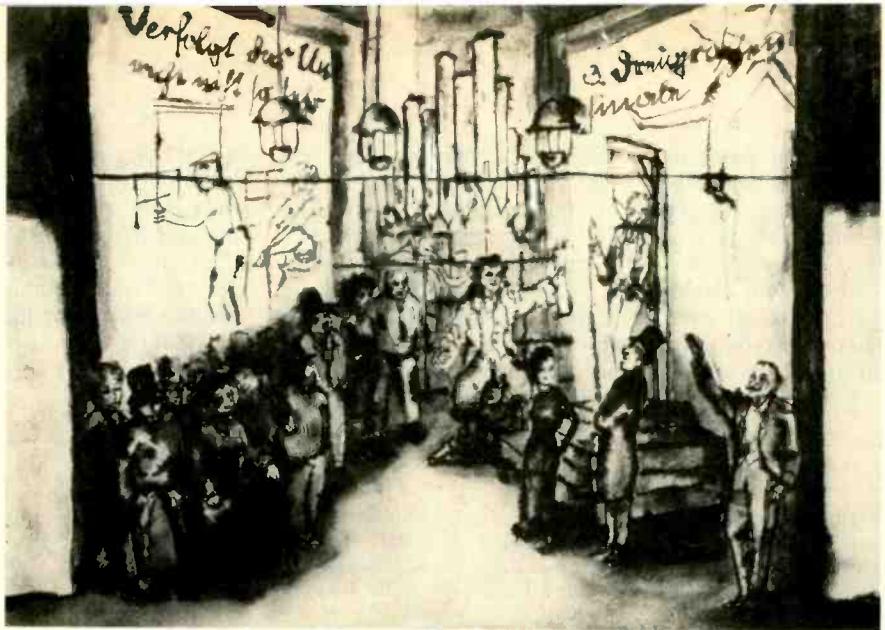
Before opening *Knickerbocker Holiday* (1938), *Lady in the Dark* (1940), *One Touch of Venus* (1943), and *Street Scene* (1947), all of which I conducted, there were tryouts "out of town," usually in Boston or Philadelphia. Sometimes I would want to cross the street against the traffic, but Kurt, with a composer's complete self-centeredness, would yell, "Maurice, not before the premiere!"

Sometime during 1943–44, he took his examination to be naturalized. He was quite shaken by a question he was asked: If we were fighting Russia, would you take up arms against her? It seems that Brecht, a Marxist, was also in America and was well known for his violently anti-American views. So Kurt, who had written so much with him, was suspect because of his former association. Actually, Kurt was so enthusiastically American that it would infuriate him if anybody would start speaking German to him. In a drugstore he would admire the big containers of ice cream, marveling at the abundance of his new homeland. I don't remember him ever criticizing anything American.

After each success we would walk near his home, and I would say, "Now Kurt, you write an opera." And he would say, "First I must write something for Lenya." By a strange twist of fate, any time Kurt or any one of his playwright friends wrote a part for Lotte Lenya, his wife, the play was a failure, but a year after Kurt's death her unique talent was fully recognized.

Much has been said by the admirers of his European style against the way he adapted so readily to Broadway. It is too easy to forget that "September Song" is much closer to, say, "Surabaya-Johnny" than to any Broadway music of the time. Kurt Weill had an enormous success in America, respecting American theatrical ways—he never tried to show himself superior—and yet never betraying his own inner voice.

Rendering of the final scene of *Dreigroschenoper* for the world premiere, Berlin, 1928, by Caspar Neher, who designed the production.



Theater Museum, Cologne

tions of the 1930 recording somehow enhance the sleazy effect of the Lewis-Ruth Band, playing as if it were midnight in a smoke-filled German cabaret. Because this is the only recorded performance of any of Weill's European works made under his supervision, it is required listening for interpreters.

The standard complete recordings of the original German version and of Blitzstein's American adaptation are Columbia's two-disc Berlin set under Brückner-Rüggeberg (now on Odyssey Y2 32977) and the MGM original-cast recording (SE 3121 OC). An interesting alternative, Vanguard's single-disc recording with Vienna State Opera forces (Everyman SRV 273 SD, rechanneled), is the most faithful to Weill's score: It preserves the original orchestration, which has the eight-member band doubling on twenty-one instruments. But, musico-logical rectitude aside, the tempos are sluggish and the performances flat. The Vienna singers demonstrate the folly of casting *Die Dreigroschenoper* with operatic voices (cabaret singer Liane is the only soloist not opera-trained), whose mushy diction and corpulent tones swamp the lyrics; this work and *Happy End* were intended for singing actors, not the acting singers required by other Weill scores.

The newest competitor for the Threepenny dollar is Columbia's original-cast recording of the New York Shakespeare Festival's 1976 production (PS 34326). Ralph Manheim and John Willett provided a new English translation that producer Joseph Papp trumpeted as "the real Threepenny Opera in its original and uncensored form" in comparison with Blitzstein's "sweetened adaptation." Unfortunately the lyrics of this translation—often unsingable and occasionally vapid—are seldom preferable to Blitzstein's. The score fares even less well than Brecht's script at the hands of director Richard Foreman, conductor Stanley Silverman, and their generally miscast performers. Ellen Greene's caterwauling Jenny and Elizabeth Wilson's catatonic Mrs. Peachum are downright embarrassing. Silverman has deranged Weill's score: He recomposes "Mack the Knife" as a choral number, omits most of the brilliant and essential "Third Threepenny Finale," reorchestrates and reassigned much of the music, and distorts everything with erratic and frenetic tempos. Whatever the redeeming assets of the production itself, the recording has few.

Kleine Dreigroschenmusik is a seven-movement instrumental suite based on ten numbers of *Threepenny*. For years Otto Klemperer's EMI recording (currently available through Peters International as a British import, SXLP 30226) has been considered the definitive interpretation not only for its intrinsic worth, but also because Klemperer himself commissioned the suite in 1929. He also helped Weill to expand the instrumentation to a larger wind ensemble and then conducted the premiere with the orchestra of the Berlin Staatsoper. Now this performance has been challenged and perhaps superseded by Arthur Weisberg's superb recording with the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble on Nonesuch H 71281. Both conductors adhere closely to Weill's metronome markings and impart kinetic rhythmic animation without imposing spurious jazz mannerisms upon the piece. Landau generally uses faster tempos for his version, coupled with the *Mahagonny Songspiel* on Turnabout TV 34675 or with Robert Kurka's *Good Soldier Schweik Suite* on Candide CE 30189, but attains neither the vibrancy nor the intensity of Klemperer and Weisberg.

The Weill selection on Bernard Herrmann's "Four Faces of Jazz" disc (London Phase-4 SPC 21077), until recently listed erroneously in SCHWANN as *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*, is actually an inauthentic arrangement by an anonymous hand of six songs from *The Threepenny Opera*. (It is now listed under that rubric.) Atherton's performance of *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik* on DG is the least appealing in that collection.

The DG set also has gripping accounts of two Brecht-Weill cantatas that had not been recorded previously: *Vom Tod im Wald* (1927) for bass soloist and ten winds and *Das Berliner Requiem* (1929) for three male voices and wind orchestra. In setting Brecht's poem *Vom Tod im Wald* of 1918, Weill maintained a consistently dark instrumental texture by exploiting the lower registers of clarinets, bassoon, contrabassoon, horns, trumpets, and trombones. The starkly dissonant musical language of the single-movement work parallels the poem's atmosphere of death amid the black fir trees of a Mississippi forest. Its premiere by the Berlin Philharmonic in 1927 was the only performance during the composer's lifetime. The *Berlin Requiem*, a modern statement about death in a series of dirges and epitaphs, was his second composition commissioned specifically for radio broad-

cast. But censors delayed its premiere and then restricted its transmission so that Berlin was denied hearing the Requiem that bore its name.

Another cantata, called variously *Der Lindberghflug* and *Der Ozeanflug*, has become available only recently, in a recording on the German Thorofon label (MTH 118). This forty-minute topical work, with a scenario based on Lindbergh's 1927 transatlantic flight and scored for three male soloists, chorus, and orchestra, has a labyrinthine history. Brecht's libretto was originally set to music as a radio cantata jointly by Weill and Paul Hindemith. After its premiere at the 1929 Baden-Baden festival, both composers withdrew their portions of the score. Weill then published his own complete setting and designated it a "didactic cantata" for performance in schools. Klemperer introduced that version, also in 1929, and Stokowski conducted a performance by the Philadelphia Orchestra over an American radio network in 1931. Weill even sent Lindbergh a copy of the score with the inscription, "Dedicated to Charles Lindbergh with great admiration by Kurt Weill." In 1950, however, Brecht changed the title to *Der Ozeanflug* and deleted all references to Lindbergh, having been chagrined at the aviator's noninterventionist sentiments vis-à-vis Nazi Germany in the Thirties. It was this revised text that was used for the recording by the orchestra and chorus of the University of Göttingen, conducted by Hermann Fuchs, a first-rate performance of a fascinating oddity.

The remaining work that Brecht and Weill completed in Germany was *Happy End* (1929), a play with music that recently turned up on Broadway in Michael Feingold's American adaptation. Commissioned by Ernst Josef Aufricht, the producer of *Die Dreigroschenoper*, to capitalize on that success, it had its premiere in the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm almost exactly one year after its illustrious predecessor. Even though Aufricht reassembled most of the artistic staff and cast of *Threepenny* for *Happy End*, its beginning was anything but happy. Helene Weigel, Brecht's wife, interrupted the premiere to read excerpts from Communist pamphlets; riots ensued and forced the production to close after only three performances. Yet the score contains some of Weill's finest songs, "Surabaya-Johnny," "Sailor Tango," and the "Bilbao-Song" among them. Lenya's memorable solo rendition of the score is still available from Columbia Special Products (COS 2032), but the DG set distributes the songs to the proper characters. Regrettably, it omits "Bilbao-Song," and the singers miss the parodic humor of the play, a 1920s *Guys and Dolls* tale of a Salvation Army lass who falls in love with a Chicago gangster. Though there is room for a good authentic theatrical recording, we are lucky to have been spared an original-cast album from the 1977 Broadway production.

The partnership between Brecht and Weill ended bitterly in 1931, the poet publicly denouncing the composer as a "phony Richard Strauss," but it was briefly revived in 1933, when they suffered the common fate of exile. Weill had been commissioned to write a ballet for Balanchine's *Les Ballets 1933*, and the result was *The Seven Deadly Sins*, perhaps the most accomplished of the duo's works. The role of the singing "half" of the schizophrenic Anna was written for Lenya, so her haunting performance (available from Columbia Special products as CKL 5175) carries historical weight. But

Gisela May's more recent recording (DG 139 308) is even more compelling. She matches Lenya's brittle edge and flawless diction but brings more vocal flexibility, nuance of color, and psychological depth to the demanding role. This recording by the Leipzig Radio Symphony under Herbert Kegel deserves its many awards, including the Grand Prix du Disque and the Premio della Critica Discografica Italiana, and such recognition as its selection by HIGH FIDELITY as one of the outstanding recordings of the past twenty-five years.

The completion of Symphony No. 2 (1934) and two theatrical works, *Marie galante* (Paris, 1934) and *A Kingdom for a Cow* (London, 1935), marked the end of Weill's European career. These two last scores have not been recorded (only "I Wait for a Ship" from *Marie galante* is included in Paramount's "Berlin to Broadway," PAS 4000), and this survey of his recordings comes full circle with another consideration of Bertini's and De Waart's accounts of the two symphonies. First performed by Bruno Walter and the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra in October 1934 under the title *Symphonische Fantasie*, the three-movement symphony is radically different from the First. Its dance rhythms, songlike melodies, and theatrical overtones represent a synthesis of Weill's Neoclassical ideals. In this case, De Waart's faster-paced crisper performance on Philips has the edge.

We have come a long way recently in rediscovering the masterpieces of Weill's European career, but dozens of extraordinary compositions from this period have yet to be recorded. There is, similarly, a surprising dearth of recordings of the American stage works: *One Touch of Venus*, *Down in the Valley*, and *Knickerbocker Holiday* are not available at all; Columbia Special products maintains *Lady in the Dark* (COS 2390) and a mono *Street Scene* (COS 4139), and MCA still lists a mono *Lost in the Stars* (2071, rechanneled). Even so, it is now possible to evaluate more accurately the significance and range of his talent. Each listener can decide for himself if Schoenberg was correct in saying that "Weill's is the only music in the world in which I can find no quality at all." Personally, my judgment corresponds to that of Hans Redlich's obituary of Weill in 1950: "A composer of unmistakable originality and irrepressible genius—one of the few essential forces in the music of this century."



Surabaya-Johnny
at ease—
Neher's conception
for *Happy End* (1929).

Theater Museum, Cologne

Odyssey to tape! The latest label to make its music cassette debut is one of the most welcome on several counts. The new Odyssey tapings are budget-priced at \$4.98 each; the available repertory (mostly reissues of celebrated older recordings) is a true treasure house; on the impressive first release list are no fewer than fifty cassettes, in Dolby, of course, that bring back to tape some memorable works long out of print in onetime Columbia and Epic open-reel editions and that include others never issued in any tape format until now. The tape revivals are dominated by a full fifteen programs by the late great George Szell and his Cleveland Orchestra at the height of its powers; there are also ten, including the four Brahms symphonies, by the beloved Bruno Walter. And among the programs appearing for the first time on tape are eleven starring flutist Jean-Pierre Rampal and three representing Max Goberman's pioneering Bach and Vivaldi recordings.

Perhaps nothing could better exemplify the combined musical/executant/technical qualities of the incomparable Szell, his orchestra, the original Epic/Columbia audio engineering, and the Odyssey cassette processing than their Dvořák *Slavonic Dances* (YT 35626/7), here truly complete and paired with the *Carnival Overture*, as in the original 1965 two-disc edition. (A later single-disc issue excised the repeats.) Sonically, this version remains remarkably bold, vital, and open.

Szell's admirable, if more objective c. 1964 version of the Mussorgsky-Ravel *Pictures at an Exhibition* also remains sonically effective. But this cassette (YT 32223) is a must for its coupling: the miraculous mono recording of Sviatoslav Richter's 1958 live performance of *Pictures* in the original, unelaborated piano score. The Bulgarian audience coughs steadily, and the sound is dated (although cleaned up better here than in earlier disc releases), but the playing, as well as the revelatory musical insight, must rank among the supreme triumphs of recorded-performance history.

Non-Straussian Viennese nights. The first new Viennese Light Music Society release I've received since the Society's fabulous music cassette catalog became available via an American representative suggests what a wealth of light music (over and above that by members of the Strauss family) remains unknown or inaccessible to American listeners. Every one of the present program's nine works is new

by R. D. Darrell

The Tape Deck

to me, and many of them probably are record firsts: Offenbach's *Salon Pizzelberger* and *Regimentszauberer* Overtures (the former an extraordinarily poetic yet spirited work); Suppé's *Jagd nach dem Glück* waltz, lusty *Stella* polka, and lightweight *Light Cavalry* ballet music; Zeller's appealing *Kellermeister* waltz and catchy *Schlagworte* polka; the festive *Polonaise* from Heuberger's *Der Opernball*; and the disarmingly old-fashioned yet brilliant theatrical *Mam'zelle Nitouche* ballet music by the forgotten "creator of French operetta," Hervé (1825-92). Otto Schulz's Biedermeyer Concert Orchestra is not the most polished little ensemble of its kind, and the robust, open recording exposes some moments of tonal coarseness and heavy-handedness, but everyone has an idiomatically just-right understanding of this music, and the cassette processing (in Dolby) is exemplary. This BDR 141, like every VLMS cassette, is available by mail order only (\$9.00 postpaid) from the K.C. Company, Box 793, Augusta, Maine 04330.

Invariably magisterial. Bernard Haitink may be no match for some other conductors in sensationalism, in highly idiosyncratic personality projection, or in heart-on-sleeve emotionalism. But I know of no one else today whose performances are as consistently admirable on first encounter and prove to be as profoundly rewarding on repeated hearings. (Few if any conductors are as consistently well recorded, either.)

Among Haitink's latest Philips cassettes (\$8.95 each), several individual Beethoven symphonies and piano concertos (the latter with Alfred Brendel) will be discussed later when both series appear as Prestige Box sets. But one Brahms and two Ravel programs warrant immediate, unqualified praise. Brahms's First Serenade, Op. 11, surely never has been given more glowing radiance than in 7300 584, where it is coupled with the earlier (1970), sonically darker, but magisterially authoritative *Tragic Overture*. And if Haitink's earlier ventures into the impressionistic French repertory were somewhat tentative, he now has achieved complete Ravelian mastery:

Even the hackneyed *Bolero* and *La Valse* (in 7300 571) reveal distinctively fresh, non-Gallic insights, while the familiar *Alborada del gracioso* and *Rhapsodie espagnole* (in 7300 573) are performed with incomparably enchanting tonal beauty, especially in their *sotto voce* passages, by his Concertgebouw Orchestra.

More blockbusters: German and Spanish. I'd scarcely rested from the hours spent with Georg Solti's London/Stereotape *Meistersinger* reels, for my April column, when I was called back for more: first, the same performance in its four-cassette Prestige Box edition (London OSAS 1512, \$39.95), also excellently processed and here supplied with larger-print notes and texts; then, the rival version from Berlin conducted by Eugen Jochum, starring Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau as Sachs and Placido Domingo as Walther (Deutsche Grammophon five-cassette Prestige Box 3378 068, \$44.90). The two approaches are so different in almost every respect that they really aren't comparable. The best I can say is that Solti excels in golden orchestral and choral sonority, while Jochum provides a more consistently gripping theatrical performance in leaner, sharper-focused sonics. Either choice is a good one; to be able to hear both is a memorably illuminating education.

Most Wagner connoisseurs already are familiar with the many warm appeals of the 1966 Bayreuth Festival *Tristan und Isolde* conducted by Karl Böhm and starring Wolfgang Windgassen and Birgit Nilsson in the title roles. Once available in an Ampex open-reel edition, it now makes a welcome return to tape in DG's five-cassette Prestige Box 3378 069, \$44.90, which, unlike the earlier reel edition, includes the original disc set's tenth-side rehearsal session with Böhm's directions helpfully translated in the accompanying booklet.

From Wagner to Albéniz is a big jump, but the latter's greatest achievement is a monumental work too. Indeed, the piano suite *Iberia* and its companion *Navarra* evoke the soul of Spain no less magically than *Die Meistersinger* and *Tristan und Isolde* give eternal musical life to Nuremberg and Cornwall. A comparably magical interpreter is pianist Alicia de Larrocha, whose latest (1974) and most vividly recorded versions of Albéniz' masterpieces, augmented by the lighter-weight *Cuentos de España*, finally has reached tape in the London two-cassette Prestige Box OSAS 2235, \$15.95.

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(in 1855) and
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Berlioz' Enchanting Summer Nights

The tangled history of *Les Nuits d'été* has an important bearing on the problems of performing the first song cycle with orchestra.

by David Hamilton

THE ENCHANTMENTS of Berlioz' *Les Nuits d'été* have graced the record catalogs so consistently since 1950 that we may easily forget how unfamiliar they were before then: The 1953 Steber/Mitropoulos performances at the Philharmonic were, in fact, the first complete ones ever given in New York. True, there had been 78-rpm recordings of individual songs, including an acoustic version of "Absence" by Edmond Clément and electrics of that same song by Germaine Cernay and of "Villanelle" by Ninon Vallin (I've heard only the Cernay, capable but rather stolid). Just before World War II, Maggie Teyte's Gramophone Shop recording of "Le Spectre de la rose" and "Absence" (recently reissued in EMI RLS 716, a valuable Teyte retrospective) made a major impression—vocally frail by some later standards, it remains personal and unforgettable in diction and coloring.

Since 1950 there have been eight complete recordings of the songs, and by some strange quirk all of them are currently available. This circumstance, along with the appearance in 1975 of a critical edition of the music, edited by Ian Kemp as part of the New Berlioz Edition, makes the appearance of the latest version a useful occasion to consider some aspects of the work and its performance.

The story begins in 1838, when Théophile Gautier

published *La Comédie de la mort*, a collection of poetry from which Berlioz selected six poems, setting them for voice (mezzo-soprano or tenor) and piano. Precisely when he did this is not clear, though two of them ("Le Spectre" and "Absence") were announced for performance at a Paris concert in November 1840, an autograph of "Villanelle" is dated 1840, and the whole lot was published in June 1841. Given these terminal points, the composition dates of 1832 and 1834 advanced in various liner notes (both Londons, Odyssey, both RCAs, and Angel) are certainly wrong; even though some of Gautier's poems were published individually before 1838, Kemp has established that Berlioz definitely worked from the versions in the 1838 collection.

Of Berlioz' four published groups of songs, two (*Fleurs de landes*, Op. 13, and *Feuillets d'album*, Op. 19) are mere arbitrary gatherings, while *Irlande*, Op. 2bis, though set to the words of a single poet (Thomas Moore, in French translation), includes duets and choruses as well as solo songs. If *Les Nuits d'été* doesn't have the narrative coherence of Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin* or *Winterreise*, its central focus on yearning—optimistically treated in the outer songs, more morbidly in the central four—makes it hang together in much the same way as, say, Schumann's Eichendorff *Liederkreis* (written at about the same time, though not published until

1842). When, at the end of Berlioz' last song, the fair maid asks to be taken to "the faithful shore where love lasts forever" and the poet tells her, "that shore is hardly known in the land of love," the earlier songs all fit into place. There are also significant elements of musical coherence, to which we will return later.

In 1843, while on his first concert tour of Germany, Berlioz orchestrated "Absence" for Marie Recio, who was traveling with him and would later, after the death of the estranged Henrietta Smithson, become his second wife. Marie was an indifferent singer, but her pretensions were considerable, and troublesome to Berlioz; it seems probable that this orchestration was made to slake off more ambitious and potentially more disastrous undertakings on her part during the tour. In any event, at the Leipzig premiere, according to Berlioz, she "sang really very well," and the song, he found, "was ten times more effective than on the piano." It served him well on this and other occasions (later the same year, in Paris, "Absence" was sung by Duprez, the original Edgardo in *Lucia* and Berlioz' first Cellini).

Orchestrating the entire set of songs apparently didn't occur to Berlioz at this time, nor even later, around the end of 1855, when he scored up "Le Spectre de la rose" for a concert at Gotha on February 6, 1856. The soloist was a mezzo named Falconi, and it was presumably to suit her that he transposed the song down a minor third, from D to B; he also added eight introductory bars. This performance apparently went well, and the Swiss publisher Rieter-Biedermann asked for orchestral versions of the remaining songs, which Berlioz made in March; the whole set was published later that year, along with a piano reduction.

Thus the form in which *Les Nuits d'été* is familiar to us came about in piecemeal fashion, and a question suggests itself: Did Berlioz think of the orchestral *Nuits* as a musical entity or as a publishing convenience? Did he mean it as a work to be played in its entirety, or merely as a repository from which songs could be drawn on suitable occasions? (There was certainly no precedent at the time for a song cycle with orchestra, and the precedent that Berlioz inadvertently created seems not to have been followed up until Mahler and Chausson.)

External historical evidence on this point is far from conclusive. The 1856 title page describes the work (in German) as "Six songs of Th. Gautier... for one voice with accompaniment of small orchestra or piano." That phrase "one voice" evidently means "one voice at a time" (i.e., no duets or ensembles), for inside the score the individual songs are assigned to various vocal categories and alternatives, apparently precluding the use of just one singer (see table adjoining), and each one is dedicated to a different singer, an exemplar of the vocal category of preference.

In a letter of June 1856, Berlioz speaks of the orchestral version as "mon petit ouvrage *Les Nuits d'été*, six morceaux de chant de divers caractères" ("my little work *Les Nuits d'été*, six vocal pieces of diverse characters")—and adds that "curiously, it demands a considerable delicacy of execution." Later that year he writes to someone: "Of the *Nuits d'été* I recommend 'Le Spectre de la rose'; I heard it for the first time in my last visit to Germany and was quite surprised by it"—hardly the terms in which a composer insistent upon the unity of a new work would be likely to express himself. And there is the fact that no complete performance (nor, indeed, any performance whatsoever of the four songs orches-

trated for Rieter-Biedermann) under Berlioz' direction or in his presence has ever been traced, though he conducted "Le Spectre" twice the year after its publication and "Absence" again as late as 1867 in St. Petersburg.

Against this must be weighed the undeniable relationships among the songs. Take the two "nautical" ones, for instance: "Sur les lagunes" and "L'île inconnue." Both are in the "boating" meter of 6/8 (though it's treated quite differently: one slow and in minor, the other buoyant and in major); both prominently feature a descending scalar melody (in the first as a persistent refrain, "Ah, sans amour s'en aller sur la mer!" in the second as opening phrase, later repeated and varied); and they share at least one other conspicuous motive ("Que mon sort est amer!" in the first becomes "Est-ce dans la Baltique?" in the final song).

One of the most haunting features of that spectral landscape "Au cimetière" is its harmonic ambiguity (matched, incidentally, by a rhythmic one, teetering between triple and duple): The D major of the opening continually threatens to tip, not merely into D minor, but all the way over to B flat major. The vocal line expresses this early on, as the first phrase, ascending in the major scale (D, E, F sharp), is answered by a parallel

THE VERSIONS OF LES NUITS D'ÉTÉ

	1841 key	1856 key	vocal range
1. Villanelle	A major	A major	ms/t
2. Le Spectre de la rose	D major	B major	a
3. Sur les lagunes	G minor	F minor	b/a/ms
4. Absence	F# major	F# major	ms/t
5. Au cimetière	D major	D major	t
6. L'île inconnue	F major	F major	ms/t

phrase in the minor (D, E, F natural). Now this juxtaposition of F natural and F sharp involves exactly the same pitches (in exactly the same vocal register) that are so prominently displayed in the distinctive refrain of the preceding song, "Absence": "ma bien-aimée!" (where, as leading tone resolving to tonic, they are written as E sharp and F sharp). And these same notes are also juxtaposed prominently in "Villanelle": The first phrase leads unexpectedly to F natural ("...disparu les froids") and the second one starts ("Tous les deux...") on an F sharp that, though it's a perfectly normal note in A major, is surprisingly harmonized with a foreign chord. (These points are only, as it were, the melodic tip of a substantial iceberg of relationships, but I suspect that sensitive listeners, once on the track, will notice other things—and perhaps more easily than if I encumber them with too much performative technical language.)

Everything I've said so far applies equally to the two versions of the songs. As the table shows, Berlioz retained the transposed "Spectre," in B major, for the complete set, thus putting it in a new relation to its neighbors. In the piano version, the first three songs are in closely related keys, and the juxtaposition of G minor to F sharp major at the start of "Absence" is something of a jump, obviously meant to place this song in high re-

lief. The transposition of "Spectre" undoubtedly breaks up the close relationship of these first three songs. And Berlioz went further when he orchestrated "Sur les lagunes," moving it down a whole tone to F minor, which leaves "Absence" still a surprise but is also about as far as possible from the key of "Spectre."

It may well be that the sole reason for this second transposition was to suit the "deep baritone" (as Kemp describes it) of Milde, the Weimar singer to whom "Sur les lagunes" is dedicated. But Berlioz has also strengthened the coherence of his group of songs in important ways. Now the two "nautical" songs share the same tonic of F; indeed, the descending scale melody in "L'Ile inconnue," at its second appearance (using a minor scale), is actually on the same pitches as the refrain of the earlier song. And the most prominent high notes of "Sur les lagunes"—the note that begins the refrain and the highest note of the piece ("Je n'aimerai jamais . . .")—are now identical to the F natural and F sharp that figure so prominently in other songs.

All this may seem abstruse, but it has a bearing on the performance of the piece. And it equally bears on how we listen to it, for such factors do play a role in the effect of music: You may think that you don't know the key of E flat major from the proverbial hole in the ground, but you'd find the *Eroica* Symphony a vastly different experience were, say, its last movement played in E major (to begin with, the first note would appear to be the keynote rather than missing it by a half-step). What I've tried to show—in their most easily graspable aspects—are the kinds of musical coherence that Berlioz put into his two versions of *Les Nuits d'été*.

It seems entirely possible that the composer never consciously envisioned the prospect of the whole cycle being performed together in its orchestral garb, but the fact that he wove significantly related musical materials into his settings of these thematically related poems means that there is a tangible gain in complete performance: The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Kemp, in his preface to the new edition, draws the following conclusion: "When performed as published [i.e., with different voices, as specified in the score] the orchestral version undoubtedly presents a coherent unit. . . . All the same, performances of the orchestral version in the original keys [i.e., those of the 1841 piano version], with a single voice . . . constitute a legitimate attempt to restore his original conception."

Of course there is an aesthetic difference between performances with several singers and those with only one: A "populated" song cycle is inevitably less intimate than a solo version, and the orchestra, as the only continuing protagonist, assumes a more central perceptual position. Granting the point of Kemp's suggestion that "the unexpected and dramatic sequence of voices" requested by the 1856 score helps disguise its several abrupt key relations, I think that there is also room for performances of that version as written by a single singer. For one thing, the pitch relationships I have discussed are certainly more explicit if the same voice, with the same timbral and registral characteristics, is heard throughout. I don't think Berlioz would have minded any of these three possibilities, provided that none of them was used exclusively—and provided that the performances were good.

So let us turn to the eight recordings, which group themselves neatly into four groups of two each, corresponding to those three possibilities and also a fourth,

unsatisfactory one. First, recordings in which multiple voices are used in conformity with the 1856 score: Colin Davis, who assigns Nos. 1 and 5 to tenor Frank Patterson, No. 2 to mezzo Josephine Veasey, No. 3 to baritone John Shirley-Quirk, and Nos. 4 and 6 to soprano Sheila Armstrong; and Pierre Boulez, who makes do with two singers, relying on Berlioz' alternative suggestions and using a tenor (Stuart Burrows) for Nos. 1, 4, and 5, a mezzo (Yvonne Minton) for the others. Though Davis seems to be violating the score's specifications by using a soprano, he is evidently trying to observe Berlioz' distinction between contralto and mezzo, using Veasey for the contralto song and giving the mezzo assignments to Armstrong.

It must be said that neither of these recordings ranks high among the eight for distinguished vocalism, but there is no doubt that Boulez' is the less effective. The lay of the lines hits Burrows at the worst patch in his present vocal estate: those upper F sharps in "Absence" are no fun for him or for his listeners. Minton sounds much healthier, but she lacks dynamic variety and occasionally sings under the note. What really sinks this recording, however, is the deadpan, metronomic, underarticulated orchestral performance: although each song has been done more slowly by someone else, it is always Boulez who seems slowest, because there's insufficient spark or impetus in the playing.

Davis' tempos are in fact among the slowest, but the pieces do move and there's a lot to hear, because the textures are so transparently balanced. I've grown to admire this performance more than I did at first (HF, February 1971). True, Shirley-Quirk's voice is effortful and chewy, but his manner is eloquent: Patterson's tenorino may be basically a less suitable instrument than Burrows', but it's in good working order as far as it goes; and the ladies create less magic than some of their competitors. But orchestrally it remains the most expert and idiomatic version, with the most careful attention to dynamics, and the singing is at least competent.

Turning now to performances of that same score with only one singer, we find two sopranos: Suzanne Danco and Victoria de los Angeles. (There's no reason why a tenor couldn't undertake this version—or, perhaps more easily, the next one—but none ever has on commercial records, though I understand there's a pirate version by Nicolai Gedda floating around.) De los Angeles is without question the most impeccable vocalist on any of these recordings: at that time (around 1954) her lovely voice was in perfect adjustment, and she could negotiate all those crucial notes around upper F and F sharp with utter facility. Danco's sound is less substantial, especially in the lower register, but still often attractive. Both ladies are musical, accurate, sensitive, and also on the bland side: in fact, I would be inclined to characterize De los Angeles as "placid" until she bestirs herself in the last song (again, this isn't a matter of tempo, for hers are pretty consistently among the fastest). In both cases, the orchestral work is competent but not much more.

Two sopranos elect the keys of the piano version, thus sparing themselves several notes below middle C while adding only an additional half-step (to A flat) at the top. I have always been fond of Eleanor Steber's recording: it was my first acquaintance with the piece, and it's certainly the way I want to remember her voice, at its most limpid and creamy. Her French is very idiomatic indeed (more so than that of De los Angeles, in fact), but she reads the lines without much imagination. Her strongest

responses are to musical matters (she really feels the modulation at "Elle s'en retourna" in "Sur les lagunes," for instance), and, while this is no bad thing, the totality is rather generalized, rarely vivid or specific. (Incidentally, Dimitri Mitropoulos is the only one among these conductors to take "Villanelle" as slowly as Berlioz' metronome marking; Davis comes closer than any of the others, however, and the LSO's sparkling articulation means that the effect is as lively as could be desired.)

Leontyne Price provides more sheer voltage than Steber, but it's not very focused, and her occasionally strenuous singing is short on dynamic variety. Fritz Reiner gets superior work from the Chicago Symphony, though it's not as idiomatic as what the LSO does.

Finally, we come to two individualists. Régine Crespin and Janet Baker earn that appellation for two reasons: First, they project by far the most characterful, personal senses of both poetry and music, and second, each has chosen to make her own adaptation of the score, capriciously transposing some of the songs and seriously undermining the work's coherence. Crespin also moves "Absence" in front of "Sur les lagunes," and her resultant key sequence (A flat, B, F major, F minor, D flat, and F) is flatter in both pitch and color than either original and also unduly centered on F. Her slight transpositions (only a semitone) at least generate few orchestral problems, whereas Baker's more extreme drops must have kept some arranger working overtime, for they push quite a number of notes below the compass of their assigned instruments (thus, the clarinet doubling the cellos under the third stanza of "Villanelle" becomes a bassoon in this version, and so on). Baker's sequence is F, B, F minor, F sharp, B, and E, which also pretty thoroughly jumbles Berlioz' relationships.

Nonetheless, song for song, these two surely give the most sensitive, alert, and varied performances of the vocal part—and they are complementary in style, too, for Crespin responds most vividly to the elements of morbidity, Baker to the lighter aspects (a difference that, in their identical couplings of Ravel's *Shéhérazade*, translates into an advantage for Crespin). Baker's French is every bit as idiomatic as her colleague's, and she has been recorded more clearly; the echoey ambience in which London's engineers have cloaked Crespin obscures some of her subtlety (as well as some detail in the neat if hardly aggressive accompaniments of Ernest Ansermet). What a shame that both these imaginative singers have so casually ignored the integrity of Berlioz' work! (I'm not even convinced it was vocally necessary; both of them manage a respectable high B flat in their Ravel couplings, so the G that is the top note of the 1856 score cannot really have been a problem; doubtless it was more a matter of comfort than absolute range.)

None of these performances, then, is totally without merit, though one might well regard Boulez, Danco, and Price as expendable exemplars of their particular categories. We all know better than to talk about "best" recordings: a parlay of Davis with either Baker or Crespin will probably give you the broadest sense of the potential inherent in this rich and special work—and by all means hear Maggie Teyte's two songs as well, for the flow of the rhythm in her "Spectre" hasn't really been matched by anyone else. Perhaps the future will bring still other performances that unite the respective virtues of all of these.

(In fairness to Minton and Boulez, I must add that their performance of the early cantata *Cléopâtre* is distinctly more successful than its coupling—poignantly declaimed and excitingly played. But here, too, the competition is formidable, and Janet Baker's even more plastic and eloquent performance is coupled with an extremely moving account of the final scene from *Les Troyens*.)

Record-publishing manners are important, too, and these eight discs raise important questions on several fronts, questions to which I am afraid we reviewers often give too short shrift. Gautier's poems are distinguished in their own right, and Berlioz' settings are full of fine detail. Accurate translations are a must; stylish ones would not be amiss. With the De los Angeles recording, RCA offers none at all, which might be just barely forgivable in a low-priced reissue, were it not for the fact that London manages an insert with the Danco version (it's a reprint of the Crespin, though a few lines have strayed out of place in the process of restoring the correct order of the songs). Odyssey manages it, too, though its ridiculously free renditions in yucky rhymed "poesy" are almost as bad as nothing at all—and I'm sorry to report that these horrors are reprinted for the new Boulez version. London, Price/RCA, Angel, and Philips all provide English versions of moderate accuracy, with minor decorations and suppressions of the original meanings that may or may not be the result of trying to avoid cribbing too much from one another. At a couple of tricky points the Philips version is clearer, but there's not much in it either way. When it comes to commentary, David Cairns's contribution for Philips stands head and shoulders above the varieties of slush and nonsense purveyed by most of the others.

Since the Davis and Reiner versions (not the shortest) are each complete on one side, there seems no real reason why the others could not have been. At any rate, if the piece is to be split over two sides, the worst possible distribution is that achieved in the De los Angeles version: The first song is tucked at the end of the A side, so that you have to get up and flip the record barely two minutes after the piece has begun. Somewhat less annoyingly, the two London versions give you two songs before the turnover. Angel, Columbia, and Odyssey begin the A side with *Les Nuits d'été*, thus avoiding an initial stylus drop close to the center of the record, and giving the work and performance some chance to build atmosphere before the interruption. What is worse, on nearly all these discs the separating bands are so mingy as to be virtually invisible—I'd gladly sacrifice bands between the individual songs if that's the price we have to pay for a useably large one separating the major works. One frequently wonders if the people who make records actually use them!

BERLIOZ: *Les Nuits d'été*, Op. 7*; *Cléopâtre*. Yvonne Minton, mezzo-soprano; Stuart Burrows, tenor*; BBC Symphony Orchestra, Pierre Boulez, cond. [Paul Myers, prod.] COLUMBIA M 34563, \$7.98.

Comparisons—*Les Nuits d'été*:
Danco, Johnson/Cincinnati Sym.
Steber, Mitropoulos/Columbia Sym.
De los Angeles, Munch/Boston Sym.
Crespin, Ansermet/Suisse Romande
Price, Reiner/Chicago Sym.
Baker, Barbirolli/New Philharmonia
Various singers, Davis/London Sym.
Comparison—*Cléopâtre*:
Baker, Gibson/London Sym.

Lon. Tr. R 23196
Odys. Y 32360
Victr. AVM 1-1412
Lon. OS 25821
RCALSC 2695
Ang. S 36505
Phi. 6500 009
Ang. S 36695



Georg Kulenkampff

Schumann's Elusive Violin Concerto

The release of three recordings occasions some reflections on the eighty-four-year suppression of Schumann's last major composition.

by Harris Goldsmith

THE LATE PEDAGOGUE Rosina Lhevinne once described Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations* as "much discussed but seldom performed," but if any composition qualifies for that characterization it is Schumann's violin concerto.

The work was composed in two weeks—from September 21 to October 3, 1853—but waited more than eighty-four years for its first public presentation. Musicians have alternately regarded it as a skeleton in Schumann's family closet and a precious jewel to be viewed only by special people on special occasions. I have seen tears well in the eyes of cognoscenti recalling some of the concerto's beautiful melodies, and yet, in all my years of extensive concert-going, I have never encountered a live performance of it.

In the summer of 1853, Joseph Joachim, then an up-and-coming young virtuoso, wrote to Schumann urging him to try his hand at a concerted work for violin: "I wish that you would follow the example of Beethoven and provide the poor violinists, who have such few opportunities, besides chamber music, to show their instruments, with an opus out of the deep shaft of your creative genius."

Within a short time Schumann was able to inform Joachim that he had composed a Fantasy in C major for violin and orchestra. With the draft of that composition he sent a note admitting his inexperience in matters violinistic: "During my work I have often thought of you.... This is my first effort of this type for violin. Tell me if you should find something technically impracticable ... and, in the manuscript, please mark the bowing at the arpeggios and elsewhere." The floodgates of creativity had opened, and, encouraged by Joachim's warm acceptance of that piece, Schumann composed the concerto.

The Fantasy, duly revised by Joachim and Schumann, was premiered on October 27, 1853, but the concerto's

career was blighted from the start. Being a far more ambitious composition, as Sir Donald Francis Tovey has pointed out, "it imposes an obviously greater strain upon Schumann's powers of construction and its weaknesses are accordingly more obvious." Joachim's initial response was unmingled delight, but as the years wore on he grew increasingly ambivalent, perhaps influenced, in hindsight, by the knowledge that Schumann had become insane shortly after completing this last major work.

The dedicatee kept the manuscript and from time to time played the work in private for friends, but these performances became less frequent, and in his later years he was loath even to discuss the music, which by then had acquired obviously painful associations for him. His last word on the matter, in a letter to his biographer Andreas Moser dated August 5, 1898, has become famous, and when he died the concerto passed into the hands of his eldest son, who sold it to the Prussian State Library in Berlin with the stipulation that it not be played or published until 1956, the centenary of Schumann's death. Apparently both Clara Schumann and the Schumanns' close friend Johannes Brahms shared Joachim's reservations: Schumann's youngest daughter Eugenie relates that "never shall I forget the moment in our home in Frankfurt-on-Main when my mother came in to us and said with deep but suppressed emotion on her face, 'I have just settled with Joachim and Johannes that the concerto is not to be published, not now, or at any time. We are quite agreed on the subject.'"

In the 1930s various efforts arose to retrieve the work, including one by Joachim's great-niece, the violinist Jelly d'Aranyi, who professed to be unaware of the concerto's existence until she was entrusted with her mission in visitations by the departed spirits of Schumann and Uncle Joseph! The young Yehudi Menuhin also

Joseph Joachim



picked up the scent, but the Nazi government insisted that the world premiere be given on home soil. Thus the honor of introducing the work fell to Georg Kulenkampff, with the Berlin Philharmonic, on November 26, 1937.

Kulenkampff recorded the concerto shortly after the event, but subsequent recordings have been few. (Since the 1973 deletion of Henryk Szeryng's Mercury recording, the work has not even been listed in SCHWANN.) So it is a shock to confront three at once: a Telefunken LP reissue of the Kulenkampff performance and two new recordings, by Susanne Lautenbacher (in a Vox Box gathering all of Schumann's works for solo instrument and orchestra) and Patrice Fontanarosa (a Société française du Son production released domestically by Peters International).

Vox's conscientious annotator, Richard Freed, has put us in his debt by printing in full Joachim's description of the score. This essay makes fascinating reading, offering not only valuable insight into the music, but a cherishable glimpse into nineteenth-century musical habits. How many of today's writers on music—or, for that matter, today's performers—involve themselves so passionately? Joachim's use of the phrase "goes over into" (as in "the first tutti goes over effectively into a second tender theme" and "the composer . . . pulls himself together and, with an accelerated tempo, goes over into the finale") suggests a kind of boiling, coursing energy, a plasticity of tempo familiar from historical performances of Romantic music and, sadly, all but lost by later exponents who, in their zealous pursuit of accurate note values and the like, have tended to freeze and congeal the musical pulse. What Joachim implies contrasts even more markedly with a still younger generation, which—in reacting against the constraints of literalism—has affected a lazy, shapeless, self-indulgent mode of "expression" that dishonors the authenticity of style it ostensibly tries to recapture.

Joachim's reservations were threefold. His first complaint, that some of the solo writing is miscalculated in placement and tonal registration, is fully borne out by the score. This surely results from that same inexperience with the instrument that Schumann declared to Joachim in connection with the Fantasy, and not from any mental deterioration.

But Joachim did detect evidence of that decline, and this is not borne out by the score. Would he have found "vexatious brooding" ("kränkelnde Grübelei") in the

latter part of the slow movement had he been unaware of the composer's sad fate? What I hear in that movement is piercing beauty and exaltation, making it a worthy companion to the G major movement of the near-contemporaneous *Fairy Tales* for clarinet, viola, and piano. Tovey argued convincingly that Schumann's most morbid writing is in fact in his early piano works, highly cryptic and filled with extramusical anagrams.

Finally, Joachim lamented Schumann's structural failings, finding much of the first-movement development too intimate in scale for a concerto and most of the third movement tediously mechanical and repetitive, with "a certain characteristic rigidity of rhythm." He conceded that "certain parts (how could it be otherwise!) give evidence of the composer's deep feeling, but these contrast with the work as a whole in a way that is all the more distressing."

While weighing the merits of Joachim's assessment, one is forced to ponder the morality of his—and Clara's and Brahms's—censorship. No one questions the honorable intentions of Schumann's intimates, but does anyone but the composer have the right to withhold from the world the creation, however flawed, of a genius? No definitive answer to that question will ever be found, but this case reminds us of how tastes change. What may have seemed reasonable by the last century's criteria can appear pompously authoritarian today. Schumann's violin concerto may, for example, have seemed to nineteenth-century ears to lack clarity of workmanship, but its patterns are concision itself when set alongside, say, Elgar's well-regarded, and in some ways rather similar, concerto. Without the stigma attached by Joachim, Clara, and Brahms, the concerto would probably have won the recognition it clearly, if reservedly, merits.

One can also question the morality of giving the premiere of a work in an edition replete with cuts and wholesale revisions. Kulenkampff's version is both perplexing and deeply moving. His is, by far, the most possessive interpretation and also, in many ways, the most comprehending. As with Casals in the Schumann cello concerto, he willfully distends phrases—a lingering tenuto will be followed by a nervously agitated rubato—and those who object might suggest that he loves the music to death. He also uses a heavily edited text, although it is not clear whether the editing was done by him or by Georg Schünemann, the Prussian State Library curator who prepared the manuscript for publication. Double stops are added, certain phrases are shifted up an octave, and some figurations are altered and elaborated to make them showier.

Kulenkampff's most radical departures from the manuscript, and his most effective ones, occur in the first-movement development—the passage with the pedal point that Joachim found both flawed and inspired. By filling out and redistributing, he effectively strengthens what Joachim said "could produce a great effect but falls short of it because of the position in which the violin part is written, and because the instrumentation does not lend sufficient support to the increasing intensity of the material."

More open to question are the two cuts in the first-movement ritornellos (bars 129–52 and 228–40), which, though skillfully made, tend to alter the structure from that of a full-fledged orchestral work to that of an accompanied violin vehicle. I am also disturbed by

Kulenkampff's highly mannered approach to the finale. His rather unclear rhythmic pulse and preciously teased phrasing transform Schumann's sturdy *alla poluccia* into a neurotic mazurka. Joachim's stricture about "monotony" and "rigidity" is certainly circumvented, but the cure, it seems to me, is far worse than the malady.

However, Kulenkampff's silky-smooth, Kreisleresque sonority and, for all his license, great artistry make his performance one not to be missed. The recording would be worth acquiring for the sublime, spacious account of the meditative slow movement alone. The sound is not too bad, everything considered: the high frequencies are sufficient to preserve the violin's overtones, although the Berlin Philharmonic, of course, sounds tubby and muffled.

The Peters International recording scores by way of its orchestral strength. For the first time on records, Schumann's orchestration is flatteringly conveyed in a big, sonorous, well-balanced sound, full of physical power and delicate light and shade. The usual problems of excessive string domination (which hampered even the sleekly proficient Szeryng/Dorati issue) and lack of tonal contrast are triumphantly avoided by conductor Paul Capolongo and his forces. There is attractive rhythmic tension here, and the little subordinate melody for horns and clarinets at the end of the third movement is better clarified than in any of the other recordings. Soloist Fontanarosa contributes efficient playing, but his phrasing lacks refined shaping and his tone sounds rather coarse and husky. While the pervading vitality makes an immediate appeal, I miss the sense of special pleading that this problematical concerto ideally demands: In ramming the third movement brusquely past all obstacles, the opposite of the Kulenkampff approach, Fontanarosa and Capolongo accentuate the very rigidity Joachim complained about. Though I much prefer their basic approach, a little more repose and breathing space—and, yes, a slightly slower tempo—might have alleviated the mechanical feeling their reading produces.

Vox's Lautenbacher is a good, workmanlike violinist in the worst German tradition. Her bow arm is absolutely steady, and her dynamic range is severely limited to a constant, unrelenting mezzo-forte. Rhythmically, too, her playing is square and unenlivening. What emerges is a certain Bachian linearity, which is a part of Schumann's style here, but the attempt to clarify precisely what Schumann meant to be ambiguous—e.g., the syncopated cello theme of the slow movement—destroys the rapturous, soaring quality that Kulenkampff projects so memorably. The provincial, scrawny orchestral framework is no help either.

Of the bygone versions, Peter Rybar (Concert Hall) played with fervent comprehension but was handicapped by the choppy, lethargic work of the Lausanne Symphony. Szeryng had a luminously clean, pure sound and tasteful phrasing but tended to keep the music's emotional content at arm's length. It is strange that Menuhin never rerecorded the piece, for, apart from some lethargy in the third movement, his 78-rpm RCA version with Barbirolli and the New York Philharmonic captures him in one of his finest moments. The young Menuhin combines Kulenkampff's involvement with Szeryng's shapely poise, adding a frankness and unaffected freshness uniquely his own. The engineering was

powerful for its time—less sweet-toned than the Telefunkens, but with far more bigness and impact.

As for the other music attached to these recordings, the two versions of the Schumann Fantasy are rather evenly matched. While both are more than adequate, I slightly prefer the Vox performance by Ruggiero Ricci and Kurt Masur (which I first reviewed in January 1976, when it filled out the Ricci/Masur Brahms double concerto on Turnabout TV 34593), a bit suaver tonally and more granitic orchestrally than the Fontanarosa/Capolongo performance, which is similar to that of the concerto.

The best item in the Vox package, apart from Freed's annotations, is the lively, vigorous account of the Konzertstück for four horns, apparently the only performance in the set that has not previously appeared separately. (Knowing the quality of the Chicago Symphony's brass section, I look forward to hearing the Konzertstück in Daniel Barenboim's new Schumann symphony set, DG 2709 075.) Laszlo Varga plays tastefully in the cello concerto, but as in the violin concerto the sound is cramped and the accompaniment provincial. Peter Frankl's temperate accounts of the piano concerto and the Op. 92 and the Op. 134 Introduction and Allegro, a bit loose-limbed rhythmically, might have made more effect with halfway decent recorded sound; something is radically wrong here, with the front channels as well as the rear ones seemingly containing only ambience. The low recording level also highlights the scrunchy disc surfaces.

Kulenkampff's Beethoven concerto with Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt is a wonderful lyrical performance that approximates the 1926 Kreisler/Blech account even more closely than Kreisler's own 1936 remake with Barbirolli. The F major Romance is equally well performed. In Mozart's K. 219 Concerto, however, Kulenkampff lacks rhythmic virility and his tone becomes rather cloying. Moreover, his practice of playing appoggiaturas as common grace notes—short and before the beat—recalls the bad old days when most performers were naive in stylistic matters.

SCHUMANN: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in D minor; Fantasy for Violin and Orchestra, in C, Op. 131. Patrice Fontanarosa, violin; Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Paul Capolongo, cond. [Ivan Pastor, prod.] PETERS INTERNATIONAL PLE 003, \$7.98 (QS-encoded disc). Tape: ■■■ PCE 003, \$7.98.

B **SCHUMANN:** Works for Solo Instrument and Orchestra. Various performers. Vox QSVBX 5145, \$10.98 (three QS-encoded discs).

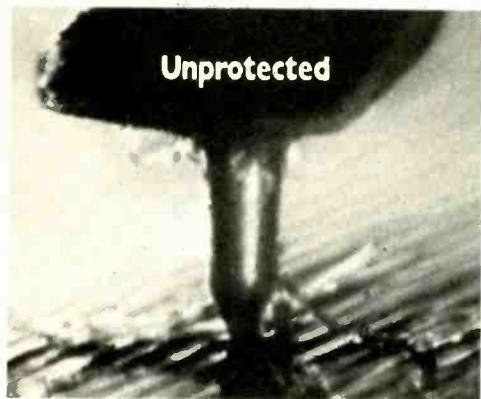
Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, in A minor, Op. 54; Introduction and Allegro, in G, Op. 92; Introduction and Allegro, in D minor, Op. 134 (Peter Frankl, piano; Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, Janos Fürst, cond.; from Turnabout QTV 34559, 1976); Concerto for Cello and Orchestra, in A minor, Op. 129 (Laszlo Varga, cello; Westphalian Symphony Orchestra, Siegfried Landau, cond.; from Turnabout QTV 34631, 1977); Fantasy for Violin and Orchestra, in C, Op. 131 (Ruggiero Ricci, violin; Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Kurt Masur, cond.; from Turnabout TV 34593, 1975); Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in D minor (Susanne Lautenbacher, violin; Luxembourg Radio Orchestra, Pierre Cao, cond.; from Turnabout OTV 34631, 1977); Konzertstück for Four Horns and Orchestra, in F, Op. 86 (Francis Orval, François Tommasini, Robert Desprez, and Robert Janssens, horns; Luxembourg Radio Orchestra, Cao, cond.; not previously released).

H **GEORG KULENKAMPFF:** Violin Concertos. Georg Kulenkampff, violin, various orchestras and cond. TELEFUNKEN 26.48013, \$15.96 (two discs, mono, manual sequence) [from various originals, 1932–39].

BEETHOVEN: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in D, Op. 61 (Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt, cond.); Romance No. 2, in F, Op. 50 (Berlin Philharmonic, Paul Kletzki, cond.). **Mozart:** Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 5, in A, K. 219 (Orchestra of the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Arthur Rohrer, cond.). **SCHUMANN:** Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in D minor (Berlin Philharmonic, Schmidt-Isserstedt, cond.).

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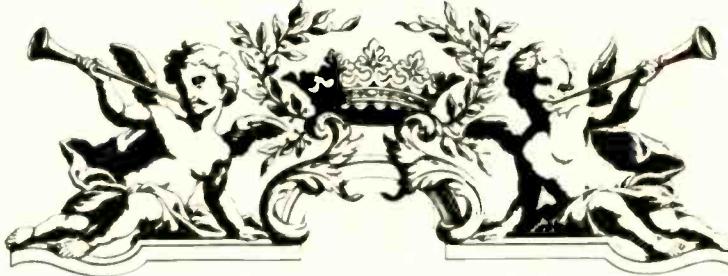


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reviewed by
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 PETER G. DAVIS
 ROBERT FIEDEL
 SHIRLEY FLEMING
 ALFRED FRANKENSTEIN
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 HARRIS GOLDSMITH
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Classical



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 SUSAN THIEMANN SOMMER

BACH, J. C.: Concertos for Clavier and Orchestra: in E flat, Op. 7, No. 5; in B flat, Op. 13, No. 4. Peter Basquin, piano; Rome Chamber Orchestra, Nicolas Flagello, cond. [Jeffrey Kaufman and Albert Schwartz, prod.] PETERS INTERNATIONAL PLE 025, \$7.98. Tape: •• PCE 025, \$7.98.

The "London" Bach's earliest clavier concertos (Op. 1, 1761) were expressly designated for the harpsichord, the later ones for harpsichord or pianoforte—but the type of piano he had in mind certainly was tonally much lighter-weight than those of today. Neither Peter Basquin's instrument—bright if somewhat brittle in tone—nor his robustly bravura playing (to say nothing of Nicolas Flagello's often overvehement accompaniments) gives us any adequate notion of the characteristic rococo grace and elegance of these two fine works.

This vividly recorded coupling of what probably are the best known of Johann Christian's thirty-seven clavier concertos does provide alternatives to the usual harpsichord versions. But I strongly suspect that the best representations of both these diverting works are in Philips' three-disc series, not released domestically, of all twelve concertos in Opp. 7 and 13 (6500 041, 6500 042, and 6500 043), performed by Ingrid Haebler (on a period fortepiano) with the Vienna Capella Academia under Eduard Melkus. R.D.D.

BACH: Magnificat—See Vivaldi: Kyrie.

BEETHOVEN: Sonatas for Violin and Piano (10). Itzhak Perlman, violin; Vladimir Ashkenazy, piano. LONDON CSA 2501, \$39.90 (five discs, manual sequence). Tape: •• CSA 5 2501, \$39.95.

Sonatas No. 1, in D, Op. 12, No. 1; No. 2, in A, Op. 12, No. 2*; No. 3, in E flat, Op. 12, No. 3; No. 4, in A minor, Op. 23; No. 5, in F, Op. 24 (Spring); No. 6, in A, Op. 30, No. 1; No. 7, in C minor, Op. 30, No. 2; No. 8, in G, Op. 30, No. 3; No. 9, in A, Op. 47 (Kreutzer)*; No. 10, in G, Op. 96. (*from CS 6845, 1975.)

Having heard most of the Beethoven cycle that Perlman and Ashkenazy gave this season in New York, I am struck by how much more effectively they project the music on records. The performances actually strike me as rather similar, but with the added focus and impactiveness of the recording the blandness that bothered me in the vast reaches of Carnegie Hall is much less obtrusive.

Moreover, the violin sonority heard on these well-processed records is subtly rounder and less edgy: I don't know whether Perlman's instrument was slightly out of adjustment in the live performances or he was forcing in order to be heard.

Sonata No. 1 is played on a far larger scale than usual. With a full complement of reverberant ambience, the writing seems almost too romantic and overblown. No. 2, which would lend itself less well to such inflation, is happily given on a more modest scale. The fast-moving passagework at the beginning of the first movement is rendered with chilling precision. (Contrast the scrambled but exciting mess in the old Szegedi/Arrau version from the Library of Congress, in Vanguard Everyman SRV 300/3.)

Perlman and Ashkenazy evidently regard No. 3 as counterpart to the *Eroica* Symphony—both works of turbulence and breadth, and both in E flat. I particularly admire the first movement, with the almost insolent ease of its downward swirling runs. No. 4, the little Schumann-esque A minor Sonata, is again a bit inflated, but not disturbingly so, and the part-writing is rendered with crystalline precision.

The Spring Sonata can be performed with more intensity, but there is nothing serious amiss here. In Nos. 6 and 8, the first and third of the three Op. 30 pieces, an attractive lyrical ease tempers the technical precision without hindering it, and the fleetness of this performance of No. 8 puts it among the best. The big C minor Sonata (No. 7), however, sounds a bit aggressive in its *Sturm und Drang* emphasis, and the tone is a little colder and more acerbically metallic than in the companion works of Op. 30.

The Kreutzer has its good points, as I noted in my July 1975 review of the separate issue that preceded this set; one point, the

seldom-heeded differentiation between sforzando and forte at the start of the second-movement coda, deserves to be mentioned again. This time through, however, I found that, as in the concert performance, the tempos drag a little and that the sonata's white heat is tempered in a slightly characterless way. Op. 96, on the other hand, was the best thing in the live cycle, and it fares equally well here: a radiant, sunny, gentle reading, although less distinctive than the best recordings—for example, the Szegedi/Schnabel (which was included in Columbia's 1972 six-disc Szegedi tribute), Goldberg/Kraus, and Menuhin/Kempff (DG 2530 346).

Most, but not all, of the repeats are observed. H.G.

BERLIOZ: Les Nuits d'été. For a feature review, see page 73.

BOITO: Mefistofele: Prologue—See Liszt: A Faust Symphony.

BRAHMS: Symphony No. 1, in C minor, Op. 68. Boston Symphony Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa, cond. [Rainer Brock, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 889, \$8.98. Comparisons: Horenstein/London Sym. Quin PMC 7028 Levine/Chicago Sym. RCA ARL 1-1326

BRAHMS: Symphony No. 4, in E minor, Op. 98. Chicago Symphony Orchestra, James Levine, cond. [Thomas Z. Shepard, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-2624, \$7.98. Tape: •• ARK 1-2624, \$7.98; • ARS 1-2624, \$7.98.

Ozawa's Brahms First would be a welcome, and recommendable, issue were the catalog less swollen with editions of this symphony. A great orchestra plays here at peak efficiency, with reasonably state-of-the-art sonics. A conductor with a clear beat, comfort with the style, and no personal axes to grind steers his forces through the familiar terrain with an approach of the brisk, medium-density type. The first-movement repeat is not taken (few will miss it), and only minor broadening for emphasis occur at the ends of the second and third movements, aside from the common rhetorical slowing of the chorale tune at the coda of the work.

What's missing? A touch of the kind of contained, hairsbreadth tension that sim-

Explanation of symbols

Classical:



Budget

Historical

Reissue

Recorded tape:



Open Reel



8-Track Cartridge



Cassette

mers beneath the mellowed surface of the wonderful Horenstein/London Symphony reading (a bargain recommendation if there ever was one, since its appearance on Quintessence). Or the special vibrancy, drive, and scrubbed-clean clarity and freshness that informs the Levine/Chicago performance on RCA.

Levine is still working miracles of Brahmsian restoration. The latest installment in his symphony cycle is a Fourth that hauls this frequently arthritic and tired, if mellow, senior citizen of the repertory out of the rest-home rocking chair and outdoors for a rejuvenating jog around the autumnal woods. The secret of this persuasive art seems to be Levine's not surprising sense of operatic melos combined with a keenly analytic ear for crisp, biting string articulation. So for once those gorgeous melodies in the first two movements sing without swooning or curdling.

Details are kept tightly in place (e.g., the p leggiere string accompaniment to the woodwind recitatives after bar 95 in the first movement). The close miming of some really virtuosic timpani playing (note the splendidly detached triplet figures) makes Levine's scherzo one of the most ferocious and proud on records. The other amply evident aspect of his talent is his incredibly secure inner rhythmic pulse, which, combined with a disdain for structurally disruptive expressive mannerisms, makes this finale about the most rock-steady (and therefore cumulatively majestic) I've encountered on modern disc.

A.C.

CAGE: Quartet for Strings. **LUTOSLAWSKI:** Quartet for Strings. LaSalle Quartet. [Rainer Brock and Karl Faust, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 735, \$8.98.

If there were a prize for the coldest piece of music ever written, John Cage's string quartet would win it hands down. Its frigidity arises in part from the fact that its four movements are played without vibrato. Furthermore it is totally monodic for long minutes together, and the tempo indication for its ten-minute third movement—as long as the other three put together—is "nearly stationary." This immovable iceberg is surrounded by some lovely glitter elsewhere: the work as a whole is one of the most inventive of Cage's early pieces (it was written in 1949).

The quartet by Lutoslawski, which dates from 1964, calls for a totally different metaphor. It is like one of those abstract Expressionist paintings done with a hurricane of small strokes in different colors, tints, and tones. Its vigorous brilliance explores—one is almost tempted to say exhausts—every possibility of timbre within the framework of the string quartet, and its polyphony is as richly expressive as it is complex.

Both performances seem first-rate. Since I have nothing to compare them with, I can't be dogmatic about that, but one can be sure that the LaSalle Quartet knows its business inside out.

A.F.

d'un faune; Marche écossaise; Rhapsody for Clarinet and Orchestra*. George Pieter-son, clarinet*; Concertgebouw Orchestra, Bernard Haitink, cond. PHILIPS 9500 359, \$8.98. Tape: •• 7300 586, \$8.95.

DEBUSSY: La Mer; Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune. **RAVEL:** Bolero. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. [Michel Glotz, prod.] ANGEL S 37438, \$7.98 (SQ-encoded disc). Tape: •• 4XS 37438, \$7.98.

Comparisons—La Mer: Faune:

Karajan/Berlin Phil. DG 138 923
Ansermet/Suisse Romande Lon. Tr. STS 15109
Boulez/New Philharmonia Col. MS 7361
Solti/Chicago Sym. Lon. CS 7033

DG 138 923
Lon. Tr. STS 15109
Col. MS 7361
Lon. CS 7033

Karajan's new *La Mer* is more broodingly spacious than his DG stereo recording and times out even longer than his old Angel mono with the Philharmonia. I am less troubled by the tempos than by the lack of resiliency at transitional points, the ponderousness of certain climaxes—e.g., the end of the opening "De l'aube à midi sur la mer" and the central section of the concluding "Dialogue du vent et de la mer"—and the rhythmic stolidity notable in the lyric pages of the "Dialogue" or the habaneralike episode (at No. 12) of "De l'aube."

There are also some bothersome executive flaws, such as the sour oboe after No. 33 in the second-movement "Jeux des vagues." On the other hand, I do appreciate Karajan's atmospheric treatment of the très

soutenu horn passage at No. 53 in the "Dialogue" and his correct shifting of the loudest dynamics from the climax at No. 9 in "De l'aube" to the next cresting wave, at No. 11.

Haitink's *La Mer* has more stride and attentiveness to subtleties. The various shifts of movement in "De l'aube" are flawlessly judged, and all sorts of wind detail sounds properly even in heavily scored passages. The famous divided cellos at No. 9 dig into their rollicking song with splendid incisiveness. In the "Jeux des vagues," there is much nimble articulation from flutes, clarinets, and violins, and the successive climaxes are nicely built and individually characterized. A few times I found the horns too forward, a problem that recurs in the finale, where indeed I hear only horns—i.e., no trumpets—in the brass calls that Debussy added, after the score was published, between Nos. 59 and 60. (Those added brass parts have been included by perhaps half the conductors who have recorded *La Mer*, among them Karajan.) I'm also struck by Haitink's almost Mozartean delicacy of the finale's storm music, though the climaxes are suitably fierce.

Karajan's new *Afternoon of a Faun* has more limpid warmth of tone and fullness of sound than his DG reading, but there is still a lack of choreographically undulating motion. Haitink too brings to bear a degree of stillness and solemnity more appropriate to



The most noteworthy releases reviewed recently

BACH: Cantatas, Vol. 17. Harnoncourt, Leonhardt. TELEFUNKEN 26.35335 (2), May.

BEETHOVEN: Leonore. Moser, Cassilly, Adam, Blomstedt. EMI SLS 999 (3), Apr.

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 6. Dorati. MERCURY SRI 75119, May.

CILEA: Adriana Lecouvreur. Scotto, Domingo, Levine. COLUMBIA M 34588 (3), May.

DVOŘÁK: Symphonic Variations; Symphonic Poems. Kubelik. DG 2530 712, June.

FALLA: Seven Popular Spanish Songs. De los Angeles, Soriano. ANGEL S 37425 (with Granados: Tonadillas). Berganza, Yépes. DG 2530 875 (with Lorca songs). Apr.

HAYDN: Piano Works, Vols. 2–3. Kocsis, Lantos, Falvali, Szegedi. HUNGAROTON SLPX 11618/22 (5), 11800/2 (3), June.

HUMPERDINCK: Königskinder. Donath et al., Wallberg. EMI 1C 157 30698/700 (3), May.

MOZART: La Clemenza di Tito. Baker et al., C. Davis. Philips 6703 079 (3), May.

MOZART: Symphony No. 29; Serenades Nos. 6, 13. R. Thomas. CRD 1040, June.

NIELSEN: String Quartets, Opp. 13, 44. Carl Nielsen Qt. DG 2530 920, June.

PUCCHINI: Il Tabarro. Scotto, Domingo, Wixell, Maazel. COLUMBIA M 34570, June.

SCHUBERT: Piano Sonatas, D. 557, 959. Lupu. LONDON CS 6996, June.

SCHUMANN: Kreisleriana; Waldszenen. Béroff. CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY CS 2138. Symphonic Etudes. Cherkassky (with recital). OISEAU-LYRE DSLO 15, May.

TCHAIKOVSKY: Symphony No. 6. Solti. LONDON CS 7034, May.

TELEMANN: Methodical Flute Sonatas. Robison, Sanders, Lesser. MHS 3704/5 (2), June.

VERDI: I due Foscari. Ricciarelli, Carreras, Gardelli. PHILIPS 6700 105 (2), June.

VERDI: La Traviata. Callas, Di Stefano, Giulini (1955). CETRA LO 28/2 (2), June.

VILLA-LOBOS: Bachianas No. 3; Mômo precóce. Ortiz, Ashkenazy. ANGEL S 37439, June.

BUDAPEST QUARTET: The EMI Recordings, 1932–36. Odyssey Y4 34643 (4), May.

EUGEN DOMBOIS: Baroque Lute, Vol. 2. ABC/SEON AB 67019, Apr.

IGOR KIPNIS: Capriccio (program music for harpsichord). ANGEL S 37307, June.

TREVOR PINNOCK: At the Victoria and Albert Museum. CRD 1007, May.

BENITA VALENTE: Song Recital. Goode, piano. DESMAR DSM 1010, Apr.

STAR WARS; CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND. Gerhardt. RCA ARL 1-2698, June.

DEBUSSY: La Mer; Prélude à l'après-midi



The Beaux Arts Trio—lifting Haydn's trios from the shadow of doom

the *Parsifal* Prelude, but I'd still put his *La Mer* and *Faun* in the highest group, along with Ansermet (his second LP versions, on London Treasury coupled with Ravel's *Rapsodie espagnole*), Boulez (with *Jeux*), and Solti (with Ravel's *Bolero*).

Karajan's disc, like Solti's, is filled out with *Bolero*, which he plays steadily and (unlike Solti) almost slowly enough and with a reasonably terraced crescendo. Haitink, sticking to Debussy, offers more interesting fare. The saucy Scottish March is a natural for the Concertgebouw's woodwinds and first trumpet, as anyone who recalls Van Beinum's lovely mono performance on Epic knows. Haitink's reading is elegant and joyous, though some momentum is lost in the middle part of the piece. And while George Pietersen isn't the most mirthful of soloists, the Clarinet Rhapsody does sound handsome here.

A.C.

DVOŘÁK: Symphony No. 9, in E minor, Op. 95 (*From the New World*). Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Carlo Maria Giulini, cond. [Cord Garben and Günther Breest, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 881, \$8.98. Tape: •• 3300 881, \$8.98.

B **DVOŘÁK:** Symphony No. 9, in E minor, Op. 95 (*From the New World*). Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Antal Dorati, cond. TURNABOUT TV 34702, \$3.98.

DVOŘÁK: Symphony No. 9, in E minor, Op. 95 (*From the New World*); Carnival Overture, Op. 92. San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa, cond. PHILIPS 9500 001, \$8.98. Tape: •• 7300 419, \$8.95.

Comparisons:

Giulini/Philharmonia
Toscanini/NBC Sym.
Karajan/Berlin Phil.
Dorati/New Philharmonia

Sera. S 60045
RCA (Germany) AT 114
Ang. S 37437
Lon. SPC 21025

Carlo Maria Giulini's earlier *New World*, with the Philharmonia, had an attractive lyrical warmth, and at the Seraphim price it remains a formidable contender—even

more for the vital account of the Carnival Overture included as a bonus.

The Chicago remake is on an obviously higher plane. Without sacrificing any of his former affectionate cantabile in the slow movement, Giulini has galvanized his dynamic peaks and firmed up his architectural sense. He gets remarkable tensile thrust from his responsive players, and, while melodic lines are given plenty of breathing room, the symphonic outlines are concise and are delineated with a minimum of gear-shifting. The first-movement flute theme, which Giulini used to broaden considerably, is taken practically in tempo, and there is similarly less "adjustment" for the subordinate theme of the scherzo. The overall effect, while heavier in tread and sunnier in spirit, is not unlike that of Toscanini's recording—indeed, I can easily imagine a Toscanini/New York Philharmonic reading from the 1930s sounding like this. Giulini now observes the first-movement repeat; with DG's resonant yet closely focused reproduction, this is an electrifying disc.

Antal Dorati's new recording of the *New World* is, by my count, his fourth: The 1967 London Phase-4 version with the New Philharmonia was preceded in SCHWANN by a Philips mono performance with the Hague Philharmonic (released domestically on Epic), and a Philips stereo recording with the Concertgebouw (from about 1961) never appeared here. The new performance, civilized and well disciplined, is quite similar to the Phase-4 one. Fine-grained and sympathetic though the Royal Philharmonic's playing is, it impresses me as rhythmically exaggerated and missing both charged excitement and inner glow. The performance has organization of a sort but not the inexorable thrust, the purposeful distinctions between yielding lyricism in concertante passages and fierce climaxes in the tutti, so splendidly achieved in the Giulini/Chicago, the Toscanini, and the latest Karajan read-

ings. The word for this one is "sober." Again the repeat is taken (as it was in Dorati's Phase-4 account, but not in the Epic). The reproduction is a bit thin-toned and lacking in coloristic variety.

Seiji Ozawa made few recordings during his San Francisco tenure; his *New World* and the earlier Tchaikovsky/Berlioz/Prokofiev Romeo and Juliet disc for DG (2530 308) are the most successful of them. Ozawa's conception is not quite what I might have predicted: The tempos are rather broad and emphatic, with some attractive detailing of lower strings and brass and also some tasteful shifting of gears. He too observes that once-rare first-movement repeat, and he has a slightly old-fashioned, Klemperer-like way of delineating phrases without distorting them. The San Francisco Symphony has come a long way since the drab days of Alfred Hertz and the frustrating ones of Papa Monteux; still, its expertly drilled playing lacks the easy curve and sensuous warmth taken almost for granted in Berlin, Chicago, or Boston. The sound, too, is a bit cramped and unalluring, though this is a pleasing record by any but super-standards.

H.G.

HAYDN: Middle Trios. Vienna Haydn Trio; Walter Büchsel, flute (in H. XV:15–17). TELEFUNKEN 46.35332, \$31.92 (four discs, manual sequence).

Trios: In F, H. XV:2; in G, H. XV:5; in F, H. XV:6; in D, H. XV:7; in B flat, H. XV:8; in A, H. XV:9; in E flat, H. XV:10; in E flat, H. XV:11; in E minor, H. XV:12; in C minor, H. XV:13; in A flat, H. XV:14; in G, H. XV:15; in D, H. XV:16; in F, H. XV:17.

HAYDN: Trios for Violin, Cello, and Piano. Beaux Arts Trio. PHILIPS 9500 035, 9500 325, 9500 326, and 9500 327, \$8.98 each.

9500 035: Trios: in C minor, H. XV:13; in D, H. XV:16; in F, H. XV:17. 9500 325: Trios: in F, H. XV:2; in F, H. XV:6; in B flat, H. XV:8. 9500 326: Trios: in D, H. XV:7; in A, H. XV:9; in E minor, H. XV:12. 9500 327: Trios: in G, H. XV:5; in E flat, H. XV:10; in E flat, H. XV:11.

HAYDN: Trios for Violin, Cello, and Piano: in G minor, H. XV:19; in C, H. XV:27; in E flat, H. XV:29. Amade Trio. [Ralph Dopmeyer, prod.] TITANIC Ti 12, \$8.00 (Titantic Records, 43 Rice St., Cambridge, Mass. 02140).

When Charles Rosen wrote his enormously admiring chapter on the Haydn piano trios in *The Classical Style*, he remarked: "It is odd to have to defend some of the greatest music ever written. In any case the Haydn trios are doomed. Only pianists will ever want to play them, and the modern piano recital is no place for them." Fortunately, Rosen's crystal ball was slightly clouded; almost on the heels of his book the Beaux Arts Trio began its complete recording project for Philips and thereby lifted the shadow of doom from these fascinating and challenging works.

HIGH FIDELITY began reviewing the single discs, as they emerged, in 1973, and in the intervening five years the Beaux Arts has had the field virtually to itself. A few months ago the Amade Trio contributed a recording of three trios, and now the scene is further enlivened by the arrival of the four-disc set by the Vienna Haydn Trio, covering the middle-period works (1784–90). The Haydn Trio, whose violinist and cellist are principals of the Vienna Symphony and whose pianist, Heinz Med-

jimorec, teaches at the Vienna Academy of Music, is an electrifyingly good group, and any listener who has been following the disc-by-disc revelation of this little-known repertory via the Beaux Arts will want to give serious consideration to the newcomers as well.

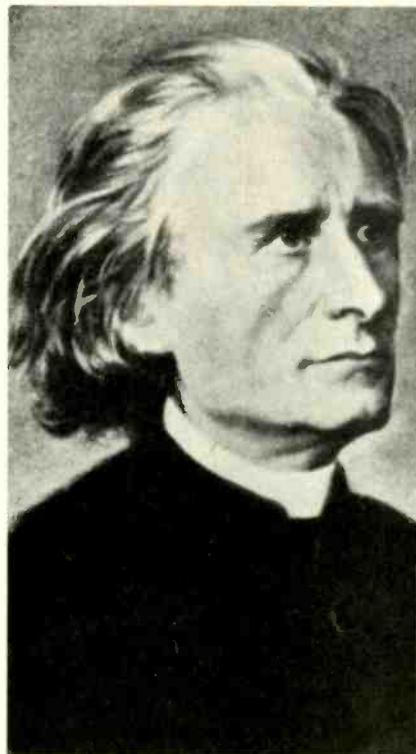
Not to reiterate at great length observations already made in preceding reviews, it must at least be said that these works are wonderfully spontaneous-sounding, full of surprises in their modulations, and in general reveal Haydn in a remarkably probing state of mind. They make great demands on the pianist, who carries the burden of the argument and often takes off on free, rhapsodic journeys. "Middle period" is a somewhat misleading designation—Haydn wrote very few piano trios in an "early period," and the "middle" works coincide with the compositions of the "Paris" Symphonies and immediately precede the first set of "London" Symphonies. Haydn was fifty-two in 1784 and had already written forty-odd string quartets. He was, in short, thoroughly seasoned.

It is true that the main criticism against the piano trios cannot be argued away: They relegate the cello to what amounts to an old-fashioned continuo part, and even the violin defers to the keyboard. But the music needs no apology—it is unusually long-lined, sometimes quite grave and contemplative, sometimes wonderfully funny. No. 8 (in the Hoboken numbering), to pick an example almost at random, opens heroically and abounds in big, bold melodic gestures throughout the first movement. No. 6 contains a beautiful, grave, and stately second movement, and No. 9 opens with a lovely, expressivo Adagio.

One of the most striking trios is No. 12—dramatic, craggy of line, almost Beethovenesque, hinting of *Sturm und Drang*. One of the funniest is No. 29 (on the Amadé disc, not one of Telefunken's middle-period works), whose irrepressible finale, a kind of German country dance that must have been accompanied by some bold beer-drinking, almost bursts its seams. Such humor, as Rosen points out, was possible in the non-public environment of the piano trio, which was intended for accomplished amateurs. It was unsuited to the public-minded symphony and even to the string quartet, which was, in Rosen's words, apt to be too highfalutin.

Three of the middle trios, Nos. 15–17, incorporate a flute instead of a violin and are so heard in the Telefunken set, with flutist Walter Büchsel. In the Beaux Arts performances (No. 15 on Philips 9500 034, Nos. 16 and 17 on 9500 035), the flute part is taken over quite successfully by violinist Isidore Cohen.

As satisfying as the Beaux Arts performances are, the Haydn Trio has a slight edge, I think, in pungency of tone and split-second polish of ensemble. The Beaux Arts sounds a little surfacy in comparison, and not quite so elegant in its synchronization. The Haydn Trio occasionally makes some daring decisions that might or might not have been made by an eighteenth-century ensemble. An example is the Vivace of No. 6, where the violin enters with great emphasis on a repeated, sustained note that is be-



Liszt in 1863
Saved from the second-rate?

low the register of the piano right hand and is merely an accompanying note; but the richness given to this note adds an element of strength and sonority to the score that the music itself can easily support. It is the kind of playing that makes this Haydn experience doubly rewarding.

The Cornell-based Amadé Trio (pianist Malcolm Bilson, violinist Sonya Monosoff, cellist John Hsu) deserves comment of its own, for its performances, unlike the Beaux Arts's and the Haydn Trio's, use restored or reconstructed instruments. (A Valois set of the last sixteen Haydn trios performed on period instruments—available on Musical Heritage Society MHS 1522/5—was greeted with limited enthusiasm by H. C. Robbins Landon in August 1973.) The keyboard instrument is a modern copy of an eighteenth-century Viennese fortepiano, and the stringed instruments have been returned to their original proportions. Pitch is approximately a half-tone lower than today's norm. The resulting sound is quite distinct—the fortepiano somewhat nasal and metallic, the violin tone a bit wiry. The Trio plays with an acute rhythmic zest and great affection for the music; the players' delight in the aforementioned finale of No. 29 is contagious, and the grander, more flowing movements like the Adagio of No. 19 unfold with a fine feeling for the melodic line. S.F.

LISZT: A Faust Symphony.* **BOITO:** Mefistofele: Prologue.* Kenneth Riegel, tenor^o; Nicolai Ghiaurov, bass^t; Tanglewood Festival Chorus, Boston Symphony Orchestra^{*}; Gundolfkirchner Spatzen, Vienna State Opera Chorus, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra^t; Leonard Bernstein, cond. [Thomas W. Mowrey, prod.^o; Günther Breest and Hans Weber, prod.^t] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2707

100, \$17.96 (two discs, manual sequence). Tape: ■ 3370 022, \$17.96.

Comparisons—Liszt:

Bernstein/N.Y. Phil.	Col. M2S 699
Ansermet/Suisse Romande	Lon. Tr. STS 15296/7
Horenstein/S.W. German Radio	Turn. TV 34491
Beecham/Royal Phil.	Sera. SIB 6017
<i>Comparisons—Boito:</i>	
Ghiaurov, Varviso/Rome Opera (abr.)	Lon. OS 26021
Moscona, Toscanini/NBC Sym.	RCA (Germany) AT 131

In an interview quoted in DG's liner notes, Leonard Bernstein speaks of the *Faust Symphony* as the one piece that saves Liszt from the status of a second-rate composer—and then restates the judgment in a less debatable form: "perhaps the one authentic orchestral masterpiece that Liszt ever wrote," thereby making a loophole for the piano music, if not for *Orpheus*, which some of us would also consider a masterpiece.

However, I'm here to review not Bernstein's opinions, but his performance. This one is rather different from his 1960 New York recording—even textually, in fact, for the Boston version trims in half the reprise of the first movement's introduction; under the "heroic" theme Bernstein now plays the timpani parts given in the Eulenburg edition; and he restores a brief cut near the end of "Gretchen." There does seem to be an editorial problem in this work, doubtless because Liszt revised it after the first publication so that variant scores are in circulation: all the recordings manifest minor differences, none so crucial as to warrant extended discussion or to form a clear ground for choice among them.

Bernstein's tempos are now marginally more spacious than before. The "Gretchen" movement's *andante soave* is thus transformed into an unequivocal adagio, which the players have a very hard time sustaining firmly. Ansermet (on London Treasury) gets through this movement in slightly less than sixteen minutes, which is quite as hard for his Suisse Romande as Bernstein's nearly twenty-three minutes is for the Boston players—but neither extreme commands itself, even discounting the respective executive deficiencies. The outer movements are effective enough in the new recording, though not arguably superior to the old one, and the full, clear recorded sound transmits all too well a good deal of conductorial stomping.

In any case, considering that all the *Faust Symphony* competition is currently in the bargain basement, DG's would have to be remarkably superior to warrant the premium price. Horenstein's super-bargain—not only Turnabout-priced, but on a single disc, which entails a turnover in the slow movement—offers a really exciting, vividly and transparently played first movement, a forward-moving but not frantic "Gretchen," and then disappoints with a characterless if neat "Mephistopheles." The sound is clear if dynamically limited. Beecham's 1958 version on Seraphim still sounds fine: it begins somewhat conventionally, but "Gretchen" is ravishingly played and the last movement is brought off with great panache and mordancy. The tenor soloist, Alexander Young, is a disappointment, but the choral climaxes are well made and the end appropriately imposing. (It must be said that only Horenstein's Ferdinand Koch

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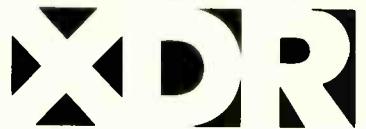
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brings the proper heft to this solo; the rest sound like boys sent to do men's work.)

These two are, I think, the pick of the crop, and Beecham includes a fine version of *Orpheus* as a filler, thus giving you my favorite Liszt orchestral work as well as Bernstein's. Ansermet's filler is the *Two Episodes from Lenau's "Faust,"* of which the second is the familiar Mephisto Waltz, the first a striking depiction of "The Procession by Night"—more of an incentive to purchase than the often flaccid if plangently recorded principal work. (That incentive is now somewhat diluted by the existence of a Turnabout version of the Lenau pieces, though I haven't come across a copy as yet.) Bernstein's Columbia coupling was *Les Préludes*.

Bernstein has now chosen to stick with Mephistopheles rather than Liszt for his coupling. The Boito *Mefistofele* Prologue is well played and sung (the boys' chorus particularly fine), impressively recorded, and a bit indulgent in its tempos. One such relationship is simply wrong: The trio of the scherzo movement ("Ave, Signor") is specifically indicated to go a bit faster than the main section, but Bernstein takes it slower, proving that the composer was right. Fans of Nicolai Ghiaurov will find the basso in better voice on his old disc of excerpts from the opera (London OS 26021): here the opening phrase, with slides up to the notes and a pronounced beat under pressure, is a harbinger of things to come, which include a modicum of unconvincing license and little wit. (Do note, however, that the excerpts disc gives only a truncated version of the Prologue, omitting most of the orchestral prelude and ending after Mephisto's conversation with the Deity.) At the moment, the only separate recording of this scene is Toscanini's, in boxy mono sound but with a degree of purpose and intensity that has eluded Bernstein: The Victrola edition appears to have been deleted, but the German RCA version (imported by German News) should not be hard to find.

Texts and translations are provided, but the famous lines that close the *Faust Symphony* are not well translated as "The ever-Womanly leads us anon!" The best analytical note for the Liszt is Seraphim's by Humphrey Searle, complete with musical examples: the worst is Turnabout's anonymous one, cribbed from Searle and festooned with biographical misconceptions.

D.H.

LISZT: Sonata for Piano, in B minor. Mephisto Waltz No. 1. Transcendental Etudes: No. 5, Feux follets; No. 12, Chasse-neige. Janina Fialkowska, piano. RCA RED SEAL FRL 1-0142, \$7.98.

Janina Fialkowska, born in Montreal of Polish and English parents, is the young pianist whose playing reputedly most pleased Arthur Rubinstein at the first competition bearing his name. Rubinstein has been quietly helping her career, for without the publicity attending first prize, the road for an aspiring artist can be full of barren stretches.

The winner of that competition was Emanuel Ax, who has been recording actively for RCA, but both of them are deserv-

ing musicians. How barbaric and shortsighted it is to apply the winner-take-all ethic of the sports arena to artistic endeavors. I am not advocating that competitions be abolished—some outrageously mediocre performers with no contest credentials but with influential connections have been foisted on the public—but simply that people (including concert managers) listen with their own ears. Another recent example worthy of mention is the Cliburn non-prizewinner Yuri Egorov, whose extraordinary and little-heralded New York debut left little doubt that a major artist had arrived on the scene.

Fialkowska's Liszt disc shows her to be a fleet, imaginative, and sometimes passionate exponent of the high Romantic literature. She is a lyric virtuoso, but that description in no way precludes drama and strength. The B minor Sonata emphatically joins the roster of distinguished versions made by artists still in their twenties: Horowitz (Seraphim 60114). Fleisher (Epic, deleted). Argerich (DG 2530 193). Vasáry (DG, deleted), and Slobodyanik (Columbia/Melodiya M 33119). Fialkowska's version is richly colored, solidly proportioned, and structurally convincing. She commands an impressive dynamic range, but for all the glint and kinetic brilliance the sound remains at all times singing and luxuriant. Tempos are rather conservative, neither rushed nor mauled, and the overriding impression is of communicative musicality rather than theatrical hypertension. Stylistically this performance has a certain kinship with those of Argerich and Vasáry.

The two *Transcendental Etudes* too are convincingly rendered. Fialkowska eschews the monolithic power that both Arrau (Philips 6747 412, February) and, on a less perceptive level, Berman (Columbia/Melodiya M2 33928) bring to "Chasse-neige," but her sonority—fluffy and sensitively caressing—gives this innovative composition an engagingly fleet musicality. "Feux follets" similarly benefits from her volatility and impeccable technique: she brings off a rather mercurial tempo with gossamer lightness and much character. If the Mephisto Waltz is less of a piece, there too one can admire the elegance and proficiency.

The recording, made in France, tends toward plangency but nonetheless has plenty of atmosphere and dynamic range. Much of the playing on this debut disc is quite magical indeed, and I look forward to hearing more from Fialkowska.

H.G.

LUTOSLAWSKI: Quartet for Strings—See Cage: Quartet.

MOZART: Early Quartets. Amadeus Quartet. [Wolfgang Mitlehner, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2711 020, \$35.92 (four discs, manual sequence).

Quartets for Strings: No. 1, in G, K. 80; No. 2, in D, K. 155; No. 3, in G, K. 156; No. 4, in C, K. 157; No. 5, in F, K. 158; No. 6, in B flat, K. 159; No. 7, in E flat, K. 160; No. 8, in F, K. 168; No. 9, in A, K. 169; No. 10, in C, K. 170; No. 11, in E flat, K. 171; No. 12, in B flat, K. 172; No. 13, in D minor, K. 173. Divertimentos: in D, K. 136; in B flat, K. 137; in F, K. 138.

MOZART: Quartets for Strings: No. 20, in D, K. 499; No. 21, in D, K. 575; No. 22, in B flat, K. 589; No. 23, in F, K. 590. Alban Berg

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Mozart's first quartet, K. 80, is a curious loner; the fourteen-year-old even painstakingly dated it: "Lodi, March 15, 1770, at 7 o'clock in the inn." He was on his first Italian journey, and this work reflects the strong impressions he was absorbing, for it is altogether Italianate. But K. 80 also reflects something else. The youngster who had already composed a number of divertimento/serenades and symphonies now took up a genre with which he was not familiar. Apparently he immediately realized

that his approach to the form was not quite right, for he took a two-year pause for reflection, after which he went to work on the composition of quartets in earnest, producing twelve of them in as many months.

The first batch of the quartets from 1772-73 (K. 155-160) shows an astounding change: though still Italianate, the compositions throw all conventions to the winds as the young master advances into unknown territory. The final six works (K. 168-73) were composed in Vienna, and in less than a year after his first serious attempt at the quartet he has found himself. In the meantime he became acquainted with Haydn's "Sun" quartets (Op. 20) and with his seis-

mographic sensitiveness immediately recognized the virtues of Haydn's procedure; the sweet Italian playfulness is now relieved by disciplined quartet work. These works are not expendable juvenilia: The Mozart we know is here in good measure, and the determination of the young genius to get at the core of this quartet business is wonderful to behold.

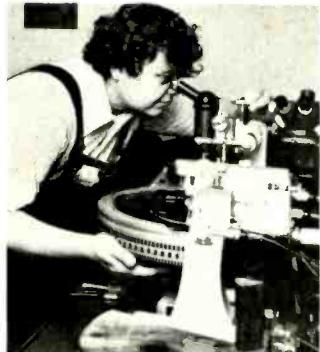
The three delectable divertimentos (K. 136-38) defy precise generic definition. They seem to be quartet-symphonies, and while performance by a string quartet, as it is done here, is quite proper, Neville Marriner with his fine little orchestra has demonstrated (Argo ZRG 554) that the orchestral version is preferable.

Now Mozart reached a cul-de-sac, as did every quartet composer all the way to Brahms: How does one make peace with Haydn, the creator of the string quartet? As Beethoven was also to do, Mozart declared a moratorium on the composition of string quartets in order to get his bearings. (Brahms just burned his early quartets.) Ten years later he returned to the form, and then came the masterworks. In his dedication of the six "Haydn" quartets to the admired mentor and fatherly friend, Mozart offers them to him as "the fruit of long and difficult labors."

These magnificent works show that, with all his indebtedness to Haydn, Mozart differs basically from the older master. His growth is not methodical like Haydn's; he finds his means instinctively and always picks what he needs for the moment. Haydn plans ahead; Mozart, totally immersed in what he happens to be about, is not concerned about the future. There is something incantatory in his chamber music. He retained all the elegance and playfulness of the declining rococo, at the same time overcoming its shallowness. This dichotomy stays with him, yet it is dissolved in the freely creating artist who simply appropriates everything around him, effortlessly, but always on his own terms. It was after hearing the first three of these quartets that Haydn said to Leopold Mozart, "I declare to you upon my honor that I consider your son the greatest composer I have ever met."

After another gap, in 1785 Mozart suddenly returned to the string quartet. K. 499 is for some reason not among his most popular quartets, yet it is one of the greatest. Indeed, everything about it is exceptional. It was written and published as an individual quartet at a time when chamber music was invariably composed in sets. Mozart not only retains, but enhances the high standards he reached in the "Haydn" quartets. This genial work is so "loose" and at the same time so artful, with its half-hidden contrapuntal maneuvers, that the listener with little experience in the finesse of compositional craft will have to live with it for some time before he can discern the extraordinary in the ordinary. Mozart is capricious and whimsical in this singular work, but the abundant humor is purely and sophisticatedly musical. In the finale three themes are developed as if they were characters in an opera, and indeed the proximity of Figaro is palpably felt.

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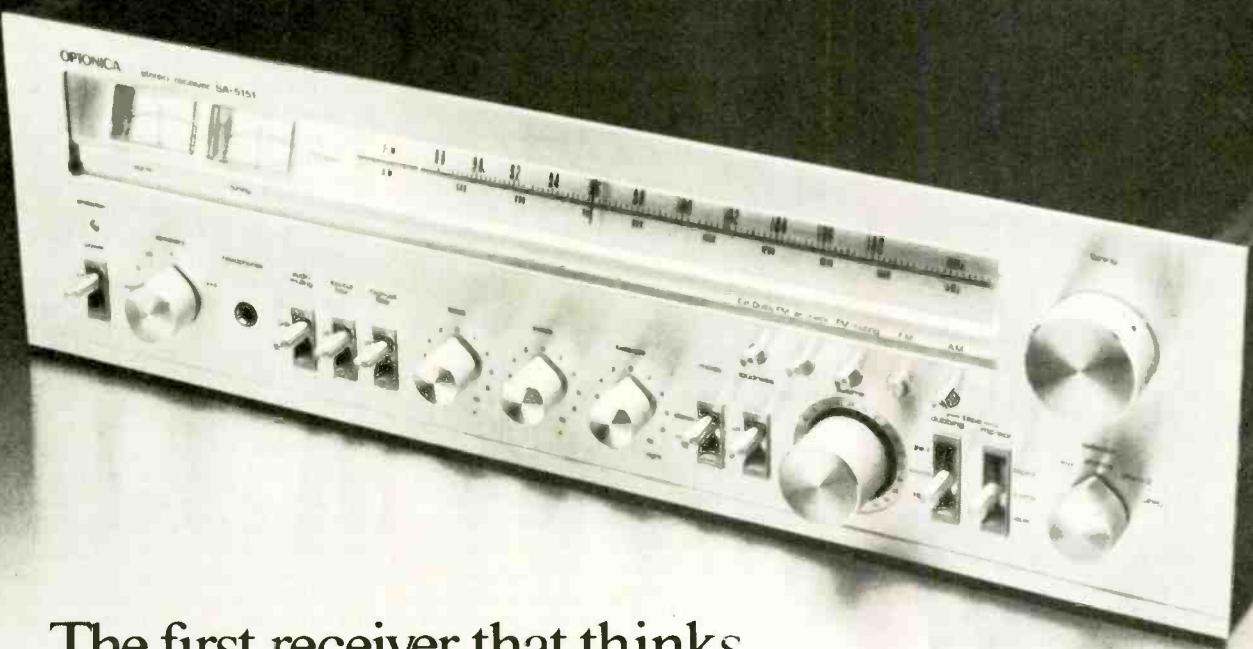
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There is a certain distant kinship between K. 499 and K. 80; both are solitary works and both challenge genre, tradition, and the future. The probability is that Mozart would have ceased composing quartets after this wonderfully rebellious work; he went back to the genres within which his works were sovereign, composing the fine last violin sonatas, piano trios, the great string quintets in C and G minor, and the divertimento/string trio (K. 563), which with its quintessential intimacy seems to be a farewell to chamber music. But then in 1789 a specific commission drove him back to the abandoned quartet.

Frederick William II, king of Prussia, was not only extremely fond of chamber music, but as a capable cellist liked to participate in it. Boccherini was his court composer, charged with supplying quartets and quintets, and among others Haydn also dedicated a set of quartets (Op. 50) to the king. All these composers could count on a nice cash reward, and the perennially penniless Mozart accepted a commission for six quartets—but he never completed the undertaking. After three of the six were finished, he sold them to the publisher Artaria for a "ridiculous fee": he was hard-pressed financially and needed the money, any money, instantly.

However, there was more to this distress sale. Mozart called the composition of these quartets (K. 575, 589, and 590) "a wearisome labor," a puzzling statement coming from him, though, as we have seen, he made a similar remark about the "Haydn" quartets; yet not the faintest trace of intellectual discomfort can be found in these radiant masterpieces. Naturally Mozart, like all the other composers who dedicated chamber music to the king, tried to flatter him by allotting important music to the cello parts. What immediately attracts in these "Prussian" quartets is their warmth of expression and their singing quality; everything seems to be derived from the central slow movements, where the king had his innings.

Mozart here actually relies more on melodiousness than on thematic development, though the counterpoint is scintillating. The first three movements of K. 575 are brief and gentle, but the rondo finale, robust and polyphonic, is a tremendous piece. The B flat Quartet, K. 589, is more relaxed than the previous one, beginning with a minuet-like Allegro. The *pièce de résistance* is the rondo finale, with its frolicsome tone and contrapuntal virtuosity. The third quartet, K. 590, seems to return to the opening theme of the first of the set, obviously not by accident, but by a simple change in dynamics the theme acquires a different physiognomy. Once more the finale crowns the work—this time it is not a rondo, but an elaborate sonata structure, so intensely symphonic that the developing begins right in the exposition.

Though there is no hint of "wearisome labor" in the works themselves, the story of their genesis does give such a hint. The first quartet was composed in June 1789, the second almost a year later—an unusually long pause for Mozart when working on a set. (The last three great symphonies, com-

posed between K. 499 and K. 575, took less than three months!) In between, he went back to the quintet, in which he really found his fulfillment as a chamber music composer, giving us the heavenly clarinet quintet. Preceding the last quartet, K. 590, there are two quartet fragments that were probably intended for K. 590 but rejected, again showing an uncharacteristic hesitation, for at this stage of his career Mozart was nearly infallible in selecting his materials.

All this may contribute to the story of these works, and to Mozart's curious attitude vis-à-vis the string quartet as a genre, but it is puzzlingly contradicted by the security with which he proceeds, the iridescent quartet sound, the endless imagination, the invention and expressive tenderness, and the fabulous craftsmanship that went into their making. The most fascinating aspect of Mozart's quartet style, its *vis matrix*, is the uncanny and unparalleled ability with which he steps in and out of homophony to polyphony and vice versa; the dividing line is of gossamer fineness, and this "obscure clarity that falls from the stars" (*The Cid*) cannot be grasped by any known sort of analysis.

The Amadeus Quartet plays the early quartets well. Its highly developed technique is present everywhere, but there are also some flaws. The trills, which are so important in this style, are at times just hung on the notes without being incorporated into the melodic flow, and the able first violinist, Norbert Brainin, does a little sliding, which is not permissible this side of Saraste. Curiously, the lovely divertimentos are the least successfully played. This is a special branch of entertainment music that the Germans call *Spielmusik*, an untranslatable term that we may interpret as referring to the sheer joy of making music. The Amadeus is not quite loose enough, taking things a bit too seriously instead of just letting go. As we advance toward the more substantial quartets, its stylistic sense becomes more secure, and we are treated to first-class playing.

In the late quartets the Alban Berg Quartet plays with patrician taste. Ensemble is impeccable, phrasing aristocratic, and sense of tempo exemplary—notably the admirable distinction among the various types of allegro. My only mild demurral is directed at Gunther Pichler's occasional sliding; he does it discreetly, more like a soupçon rather than the old-fashioned fiddler's soulful skating on the strings, yet even the slightest indication of this romantic device is alien to this music and immediately obtrudes. But make no mistake, this is quartet-playing in *excelsis*.

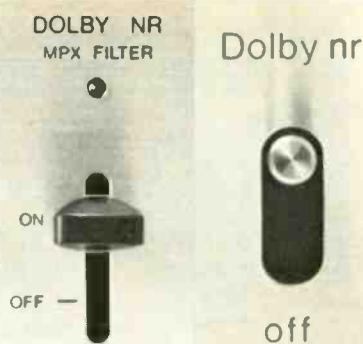
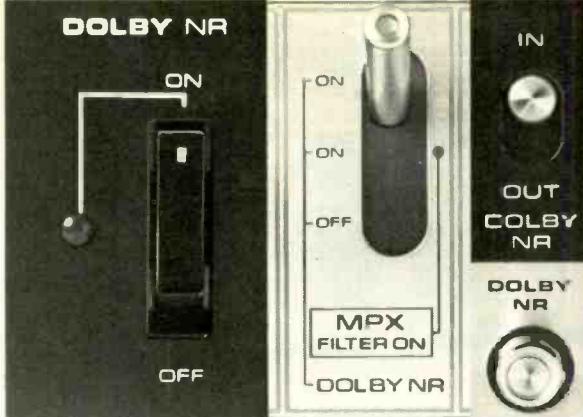
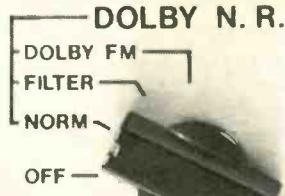
These are recordings to treasure, but do not listen to them in one sitting; the quartets should be enjoyed like old brandy, sip by sip.

P.H.L.

NIELSEN: Maskarade.

Leontine
Pernille
Flower Boy
Magdalene
Leander
Arv
Jeronomus

Edith Brodersen (s)
Tove Hyldgaard (s)
Peter Bach-Mortensen (bass)
Guri Plesner (ms)
Tonny Landy (t)
Christian Sørensen (t)
Ib Hansen (b)



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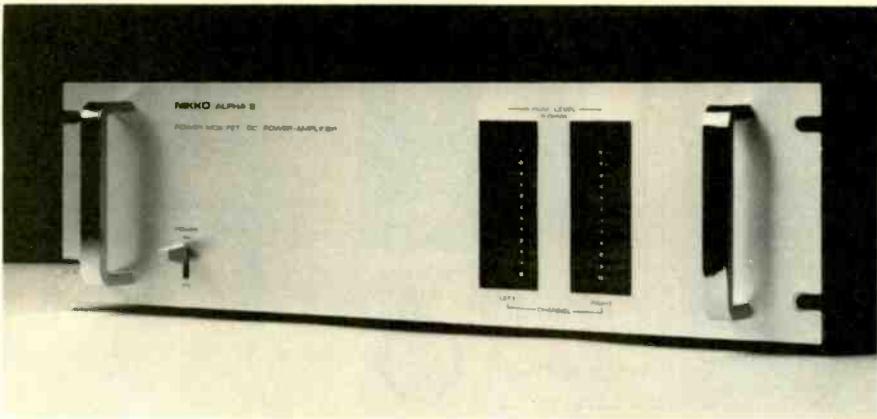
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An Officer Birger Brandt (bs-b)
Master of the Masquerade Aage Haugland (bs)
Nightwatchman Jørgen Klin (bs)
A Tutor Ove Verner Hansen (bs)
Doorman at the Playhouse Hans Christian Andersen (bs)

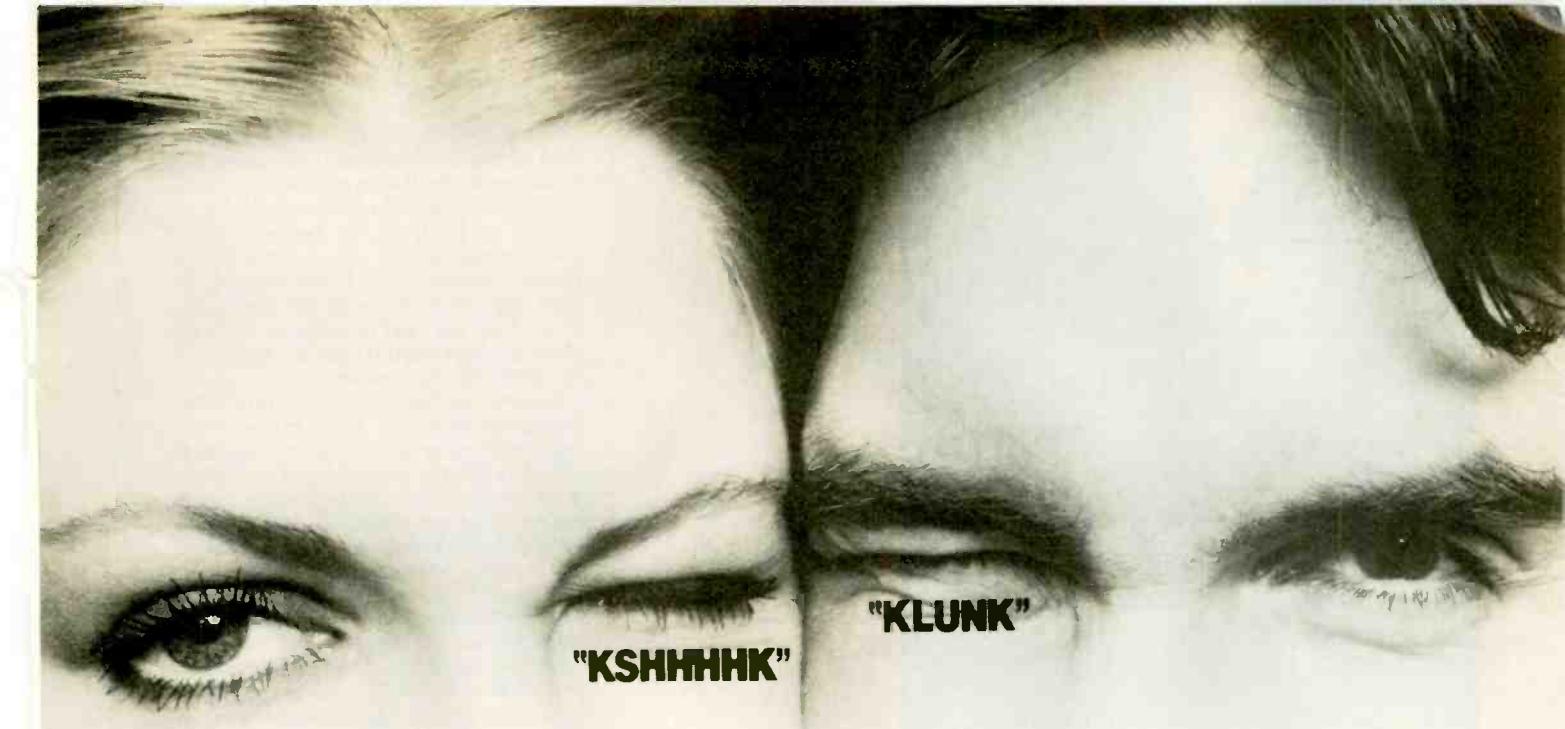
Danish Radio Chorus and Symphony Orchestra, John Frandsen, cond. [Peter Willemoes, prod.] UNICORN UN3 75006, \$23.98 (three discs, manual sequence).

The second of Carl Nielsen's two operas, *Maskarade*, was completed in 1906. Vilhelm Andersen's libretto, after the 1724 comedy by Ludvig Holberg, takes place in the Copenhagen of that era, where the innovative ritual of the title had recently been instituted. Jeronimus, a solid citizen, typifies the Establishment's attitude toward this radical carousing, especially since his son Leander has fallen madly in love with an unknown woman met just before the action begins, even though an arranged marriage is in the offing for him. The masquerading flouts conventional morality, the entrenched authority of the town patriarchs, and the peace and quiet of the neighborhood.

The plot is set in motion as Jeronimus' servant, Arv., is dispatched to foil the would-be elopement; Leander's valet, Henrik, attempts to foil Arv's machinations; the betrothed Leonora's father, Leonard, wavers in opposing the freedom-of-choice notion; and Leander's mother, Magdalene, wavers in obedience to her husband. Jeronimus, perhaps vicariously coping with her midlife crisis by identifying with the younger generation's ways. At the end, everyone is unmoved, and it is discovered that the sobriety and monogamy of the elders is honored more in the breach, so to speak, while Leander's defiant passion has all along been directed at the very Leonora prescribed for him by parental fiat. Thus does the libretto gently prod us to remember that, hypocritical though conservative righteousness may be, the rebellion of the adolescent counterculture can disguise a need to conform to, and be guided by, the powerful father who knows best.

The elements of generational conflict, disguise, elopement, and vanity are the surefire stuff of opera buffa. Nielsen's musical sympathies are clearly with the unifying warp and woof of national tradition, and the opera thus succeeds on many levels. The complexity of youth's reaction to authority is a case in point. The image of Jeronimus as tyrant, for example, exists more in the perceptions of the younger generation than in reality: Thus the valet Henrik imagines Jeronimus' reaction to news of his son's disobedience to the tune of Gluck's chorus of furies from *Orfeo*, but when the flustered burgher shows up at the masquerade determined to put his errant son in his place, it is Hans Sachs's cobbling song that is slyly suggested. Indeed, that whole part of the opera is enclosed by a Nightwatchman's rounds, making the Meistersinger parallel more inescapable—and *Maskarade* is regarded as the great Danish national opera, filled with tributes to that land's song and dance forms.

As a tour de force of compositional vir-



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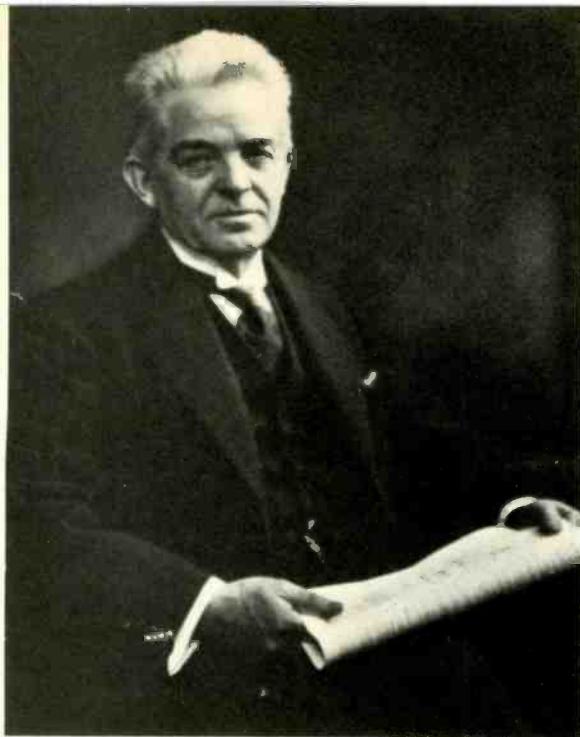
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Carl Nielsen
A wise and lovable masterpiece

tuousness, this is a masterly work. There is never a suggestion of stasis in the ebb and flow of movement, the sharp contrasts of sonority and density. If the basic manner is wide-eyed, noble lyricism, it is within that context that Nielsen again and again thrusts forth moments of the bizarre, the exotic, and the sweepingly festive. The overture has attained concert status, but the Act II curtain-raiser is a superbly exalted bit of nocturnal mood painting, and the Act III dance divertissements are of notable invention and contrast.

The choral writing lends sweep and a sense of building excitement to the climactic second night of the masquerade. The vocal writing ranges from the powerful bass declamation of the Master of the Masquerade through the coloratura writing of Magdalene's Dance Scene to the falsetto hilarity of Arv's music and the Papagena/Papageno-like duet of Henrik and Pernille. Too brief is the Act III love encounter between Leander and Leonora, or is that very brevity a sly comment on the human condition? The unmasking episode, in which a deathlike character calls for all costumes to be dropped in the urn, throbs movingly with its profound acceptance of our fallibility.

The too-long-deferred disc premiere of this wise and lovable masterpiece is more than reasonably successful. First of all, the work is given in Nielsen's original, uncut form, without the rearrangements of Acts II and III (omitting some twenty minutes of music) hurriedly made before the 1906 premiere. Conductor John Frandsen organizes the music cohesively and lovingly and gets excellent results from his Danish Radio forces.

As Leander, Tonny Landy's sustained ardor of characterization and the plangent glow of his well-managed lyric tenor voice give much pleasure, lessening one's regrets that Aksel Schiøtz didn't record more than his tiny bit in the HMV 78 version of Magdalene's Dance Scene. Ib Hansen's Jeronimus is a fully believable character, though he

made more of the role of Henrik in a 1964 Danish Radio performance (of the abridged edition) that has circulated in the underground. The Henrik of the commercial recording, Mogens Schmidt Johansen, isn't quite in that league. On the other hand, Unicorn's Gurli Plesner negotiates Magdalene's oft treacherous part more confidently than Inge Frey did in the 1964 performance, and the other sopranos—Edith Brodersen as Leonora and Tove Hyldegaard as Pernille—are in pleasing estate. Christian Sørensen will do just fine in the buffo tenor role of Arv, even if he is less riotously funny than Paul Karskov in the 1964 air check. To keep things in perspective, nobody in Unicorn's cast is less than satisfactory, musically or technically.

The combined teams of Unicorn and the Danish Radio have produced not only a fine performance of the opera, but also an exemplary registration of it. Voices are comfortably forward, though not obtrusively or unnaturally so. Instrumental details are subtly translucent, and the whole ambience has a brightness, clarity, and depth of focus that ought to be standard for today's state of the recording art. The pressings—by HNH Records—are clean and quiet. Informative notes, synopsis, and bilingual libretto are provided. A.C.

B PURCELL: *Airs and Duets*. Jeffrey Dooley, countertenor; Howard Crook, tenor; David Carp, recorder; Dennis Godburn, recorder and bassoon; Louise Shulman and Daniel Reed, violins; Mary Springfels, viola da gamba; Edward Brewer, harpsichord. [Marc J. Aubert and Joanna Nickrenz, prod.] NONESUCH H 71343, \$4.96.

PURCELL: *The Indian Queen*; *Timon of Athens* (incidental music). Honor Sheppard and Jean Knibbs, sopranos; Alfred Deller and Mark Deller, countertenors; Paul Elliott and Malcolm Knowles, tenors; Maurice Bevan, bass; Deller Choir, The King's Music; Alfred Deller, cond. HNH RECORDS 4035/6, \$15.96 (two discs, manual sequence).

While Purcell's incidental music for *The Indian Queen* is of no great consequence to the drama's plot, it does produce something of a curious effect when separated from the context of the play. As performed here (without the last-act music composed by Purcell's brother, Daniel), the isolated musical sections are too brief and fragmented to produce any kind of coherent dramatic effect, and one is left feeling less than satisfied with the whole experience.

Matters are made worse by this rather flawed performance, for while there is some lovely playing from the instrumentalists (the sound of the recorders and strings is exquisite), much of the singing is distinctly under par. Sopranos Honor Sheppard and Jean Knibbs are ideally matched, and both sing with great artistry—the solos "I attempt from love's sickness to fly" and "They tell us that your mighty powers" are warbled most fetchingly—but countertenor Mark Deller and bass Maurice Bevan are a trial. Deller's painfully uneven voice often has a nasty cutting edge, and Bevan's wobbly woof is frankly embarrassing.

There are fewer vocal problems to endure in the masque from *Timon of Athens*, and here we at least have a self-contained dramatic entity. Overall, though, I can't help wondering whether this album offers enough of positive value to justify its cost for any but devoted Purcellians.

I have no such reservations about recommending Nonesuch's new "_sampler" of Purcell airs and duets, for here I found much to enjoy. Both Jeffrey Dooley and Howard Crook have pleasant and agile voices, and they work together beautifully in the duets; I was bothered only by Dooley's occasional strain on high notes and by Crook's unfortunate habit of swallowing consonants. The accompaniments are stylishly sprightly—the restraint with vibrato is especially welcome—and harpsichordist Edward Brewer is admirably fluent. The recorded sound, moreover, is above reproach, and complete texts are provided on an insert. S.C.

RAVEL: Bolero—See Debussy: La Mer.

SCHUBERT: Symphony No. 9, in C, D. 944. Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Carlo Maria Giulini, cond. [Cord Garben and Günther Breest, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 882, \$8.98. Tape: •• 3300 882, \$8.98.

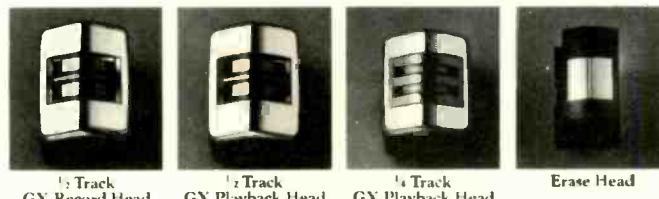
Comparisons:
Karajan/Berlin Phil. DG 139 043
Toscanini/Philadelphia (1941) in RCA CRM 5-1900
Toscanini/NBC Sym. (1953) RCA (Germany) AT 151

Few works have suffered as much from "tradition" as Schubert's "Great" C major Symphony—none of that tradition, of course, traceable to the composer, who never heard the work performed. Giulini commendably rejects many of the tempo changes and mannerisms encountered in "standard" readings, and he does convey some of the toughness and rapt lyricism I have always wanted to experience in this music. Unfortunately, his performance is compromised for me by a tendency to put

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Haitink's Memorable Shostakovich

by Royal S. Brown

To listen to Bernard Haitink's new recording of the Shostakovich Tenth Symphony, one would think that the conductor had chosen every instrument in the orchestra with the care and attention shown by members of a string quartet in attempting to match the tone qualities of their violins, viola, and cello. From the softest passages to the tutti climaxes, he has managed to create an elegant, blended continuity of timbres in which every entrance is felt as a part of the overall sonic fabric. And this is not simply due to the excellence of the London Philharmonic's musicians, for I have heard Haitink do the same thing recently with the New York Philharmonic, a difficult group to jell if ever there was one.

Nor is the quality of the performance due merely to this perfect tonal control. This is not an easy score to tame. In the first movement, for instance, Shostakovich seems almost to have been working on a dare to create the impression of a broad symphonic fresco with the sparest material. Much is expressed in woodwind duets—clarinet against clarinet, bassoon against bassoon (with some contrabassoon doubling), and, ultimately, piccolo against piccolo. In the movement's twenty-five minutes Shostakovich uses but three principal themes: a gloomy introductory motive usually heard in the low strings, a wistful melody first given by the solo clarinet, and an acidic, chromatic waltz figure first presented by the solo flute. Instead of climaxing at the end of the movement, these materials reach a peak of intensity that is maintained throughout most of the central development section. The recapitulation fades away, archlike, into the bleak musical space defined between piccolos and low strings at the end.

Yet Haitink never loses control.

Not afraid to reduce the dynamic to a minimal level, he keeps such quiescence in perspective by substituting, in the more dynamic passages, instrumental presence for mere loudness. This he manages even in the frenzied second-movement scherzo, an almost continuous—and to my mind ominous—rush of manic musical energy. In the third movement, he maintains a sense of follow-through even as the initially smooth (if off-beat) flow is fragmented by horn calls, reminiscences from the first movement, violent chordal outbursts, and an obsessive, monogrammatic theme that ultimately takes over. So skillfully does Haitink maintain the sometimes bitter, sometimes tragic, but always somber mood injected by the composer into the first three movements (and the beginning of the fourth) that, by the time the finale turns into a burlesco, this change in tone, which I have always found somewhat inappropriate, has the effect of an inevitable release. To all this I might add the simple but important detail that, unfailingly, his choice of tempos and his pacing seem to me a perfect realization of Shostakovich's intentions.

Haitink, the London Philharmonic, and Decca/London (with its usual brilliant, present, and full-bodied sound reproduction) have finally given us a modern recording fully worthy of this masterpiece, the last of the composer's purely instrumental "tragic" symphonies. I hope that future installments in Haitink's Shostakovich cycle will live up to the standard of this initial one.

SHOSTAKOVICH: Symphony No. 10, in E minor, Op. 93. London Philharmonic Orchestra, Bernard Haitink, cond. [Richard Beswick, prod.] LONDON CS 7061, \$7.98. Tape: CS5 7061, \$7.95.

intellectual precepts ahead of intuitive musicality.

During the intermission of the Chicago Symphony broadcast that included his concert performance of the Schubert symphony, Giulini discussed some of his interpretive choices in this work and in Haydn's *Surprise Symphony*, which opened the concert. His defense of a slowish tempo for the minuet of the Haydn was altogether convincing: He rightly considered the *Ländler* character of the music as important as Haydn's controversial *allegro molto tempo* marking.

But in the Schubert, I found his reasoning more questionable. He defended his measured tempo for the second movement by drawing an analogy with the second movement of Mozart's Symphony No. 39, also marked *andante* (but not, it should be noted, "*con moto*"). "No one," Giulini continued, "would think of taking the Mozart at this tempo," and he sang its beginning at a faster-than-usual clip. Actually, Toscanini did take the Mozart at that tempo, and the performance was a disaster; as Giulini is doing here, he was performing an idea—an *andante* that wasn't too slow—instead of trying to find a tempo implied by the music's content and mood.

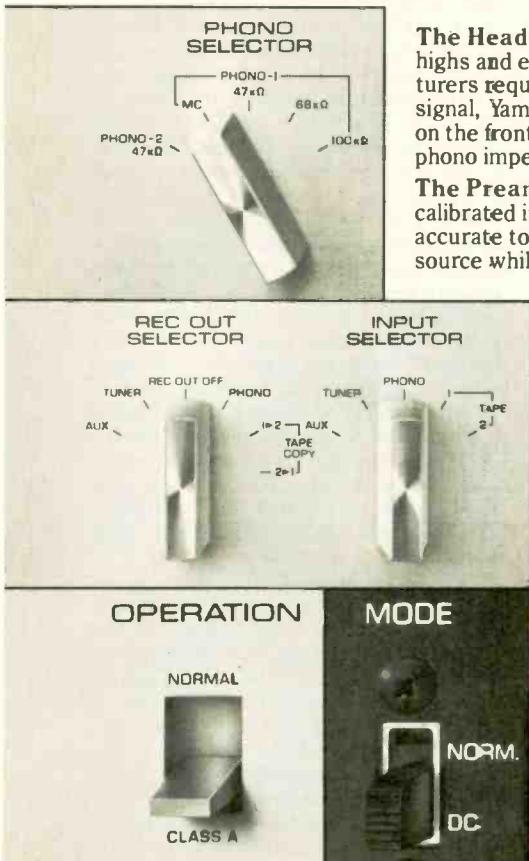
I admire Giulini's attempt in the first movement to establish a metric common denominator between the *andante* introduction and the main *allegro*, but I find that he runs afoul by failing to modify that conception as the music's content subtly implies. The opening finds him too intent on conveying that the meter is *duple* rather than *quadruple*, and the result is a feeling of light-headedness when the main theme returns embroidered with string triplets.

Similarly, parts of the *allegro* sound constricted, their sense of elation and climax sacrificed to Giulini's insistence on maintaining exactly the tempo of the *andante*. In basic interpretive approach his first movement is not that different from those of Karajan (in his DG recording) and Toscanini (in his 1941 and 1953 recordings; his 1947 account resembles Giulini's in its feeling of rigidity), but they achieve a more convincing sense of transition.

No conductor in my experience has done the second movement as Giulini leads it here. The mood is oppressively somber—a heavy, sodden tread similar to the opening "Gute Nacht" from *Winterreise*. The *alla marcia* nature simply vanishes because the rhythmically accurate playing is square and unpointed. Though I was less disturbed this time than when I heard the broadcast, this is not a performance that I would care to experience often; its emotional aura seems to me more appropriate to Mahler's Ninth than to Schubert's.

In the scherzo, Giulini's slowish tempo bothers me less than his decision to take every repeat. The movement becomes almost interminable; surely its large scale can be conveyed with equal (and perhaps superior) force without every repeat. Finally, after having held everything down for three movements, the conductor pulls out all the stops in the finale. The movement, taken by itself, is thrillingly played, but in this unusual context it seems too jaunty.

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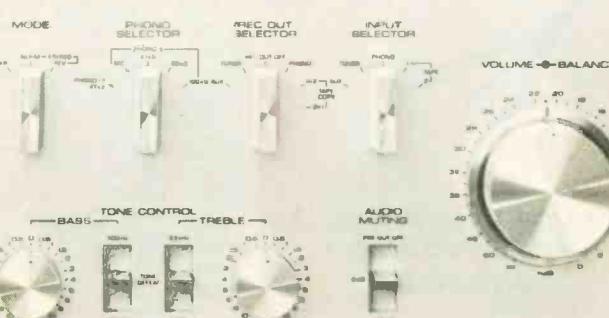


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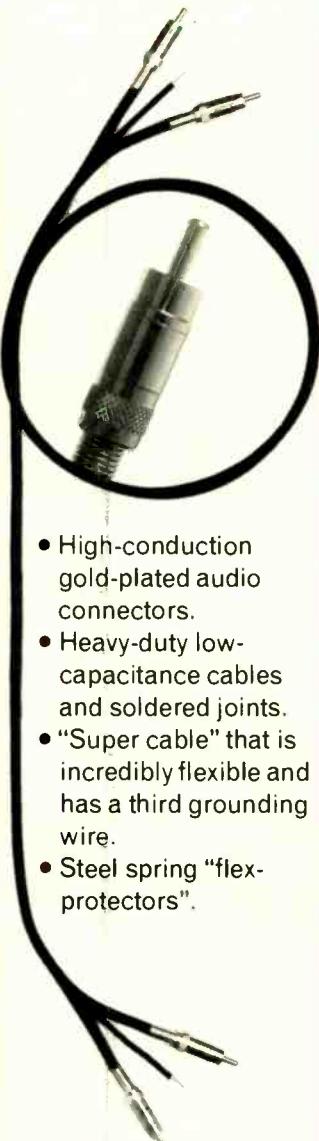
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The Chicago Symphony plays with magnificent thrust, weight, and commitment, and the recording admirably serves both the trombone-laden climaxes and the more introspective portions where winds, violins, and lower strings sing lustrosly. In its way, this is an exceptional performance, but I would place Toscanini's and Karajan's ahead of it. (It will be interesting to see how the latter's EMI remake compares with the superlative DG account.) H.G.

SCHUMANN: Works for Solo Instrument and Orchestra. For a feature review, see page 77.

SHOSTAKOVICH: Symphony No. 10. For a review, see page 98.

SIBELIUS: Symphony No. 4, in A minor, Op. 63; *Tapiola*, Op. 112*. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. [Michel Glotz, prod.] ANGEL S 37462, \$7.98 (SQ-encoded disc) [*from S 37408, 1977].

Comparisons—Symphony No. 4:

Karajan/Berlin Phil. DG 138 974
Maazel/Vienna Phil. Lon. CS 6592
Davis/Boston Sym. Phi. 9500 143

SIBELIUS: Symphony No. 5, in E flat, Op. 82; *En Saga*, Op. 9*. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. [Michel Glotz, prod.] ANGEL S 37490, \$7.98 (SQ-encoded disc) [*from S 37408, 1977]. Tape: 4XS 37490, \$7.98.

Comparisons—Symphony No. 5:

Karajan/Philharmonia Ang. S 35922
Karajan/Berlin Phil. DG 138 973
Davis/Boston Sym. Phi. 6500 959

Since I am not overly fond of Karajan's performances of the two symphonies, I should note that his excellent *En Saga* and *Tapiola* are already available, more attractively coupled with *Finlandia* and *The Swan of Tuonela*, on Angel S 37408, reviewed just this past March.

Karajan's third recording of the Fourth Symphony (the second in stereo) is even slower than its predecessors, most conspicuously in the scherzo (which was quite mercurial in his deleted Angel mono recording with the Philharmonia) and somewhat so in the finale, although he has not gone as far as Leonard Bernstein (Columbia M 32843) in the application of dirge-like lugubriousness. There are, however, misplaced romanticisms in this rendition, most surprisingly the plentiful string glissandos in the third movement. There are also some problems of instrumental balance and ensemble, notably before the finale's big climax, and I find the tone of the Berlin oboist even less pleasant than in Karajan's DG recording. My preferences for the coupling of the Fourth and *Tapiola* remain Lorin Maazel's London disc with the Vienna Philharmonic and, with the reservations noted in my March review, Colin Davis' Philips disc with the Boston Symphony.

Footnotes on two textual choices facing conductors of the Fourth: In the finale Karajan remains consistent in using glockenspiel rather than tubular chimes. As for the flute solo after F in the Largo, he reverts

here to the more common D-flat reading of the second note heard in his first Angel recording. The D-natural variant, used by Karajan in his DG edition and by Paavo Berglund in both his recordings (for British Decca and EMI, neither released domestically), seems more sensible to me—and Davis indicated to me that he has had second thoughts since recording the D flat.

Karajan's new Fifth is his fourth recording (the third in stereo), and again the conception has progressively broadened—not so much in basic tempos as in restrained treatment of the brisker episodes of the slow movement and finale. Also, a certain metrical steadiness here replaces the more restlessly groping rhythmic pulse of the two previous stereo versions. (I did not have the earlier Angel mono at hand for direct comparison.) The balance of the new recording, at least as heard in the Angel edition, has the strings rather backward, which brings to almost concertante prominence the lugubrious bassoon solo in the opening movement, while making the Beethovenian "fate" motto that closes that movement hard to detect among the more forward brass.

I still find Karajan's Fifth dour and unsmiling, unresponsive to those sudden shafts of darkness and radiant breakthroughs of sunlight that dot the harmonic terrain throughout. In the middle movement in particular—with its delightful, if subtle and perhaps even unconscious, Handelian allusions (e.g., "For unto us" in the closing measures)—affectionate molding of phrase and texture can go a long way. The Davis recording remains unchallenged in these respects as well as in its masterly realization of the symphony's tempo relationships.

A.C.

TCHAIKOVSKY: The Queen of Spades, Op. 68.

Lila Gailina Vishnevskaya (s)
Prilepa Lucia Popp (s)
Masha Christine Milteneher (s)
The Countess Regina Resnik (ms)
Paulina; Milovoz Hanna Schwarz (ms)
The Governess Eva Dobrovská (ms)

Ghermann Peter Gougaloff (t)
Chekalinsky Fausto Tenzi (t)
Chapilitsky; Master of Ceremonies Helmut Kruse (t)
Yelotsky Bernd Weikl (b)

Tomsky; Zlatogor Dan Jordachevici (b)
Surin Dimitri Petkov (bs)
Narumov Rudolf Alexander Sutay (bs)

Choeur Tchaikovsky, Maîtrise de Radio France, Orchestre National de France, Mstislav Rostropovich, cond. [Cord Garben, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2711 019, \$35.92 (four discs, manual sequence).

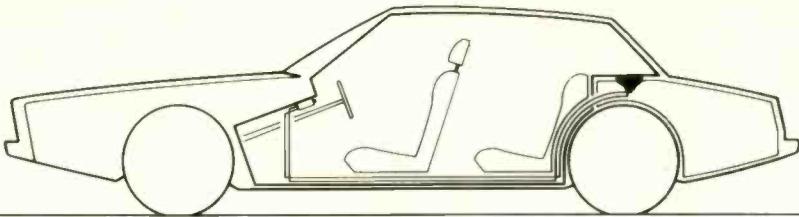
Comparisons:

Smolenskaya, Borisenko, Nelepp, Lisitsian, Ivanov, Melik-Pashayev Mel. (U.S.S.R.) D 05158/63

Milashkina, Arkhipova, Andzhapardze, Mazurok, Kisilev, Khaikin Mel./Ang. SRDL 4104 (OP)

Milashkina, Borisova, Atlantov, Fedoseyev, Valaitis, Ermier Col./Mel. M 333828

Rats. After missing one deadline for this review, and then doing some more listening, I thought I had finally figured out what to suggest you do about *Queen of Spades*. I was going to tell you that, while all three Bolshoi LP performances as well as the new DG release have virtues, the most persuasive performance—by a comfortable margin—is still the middle Bolshoi version. The



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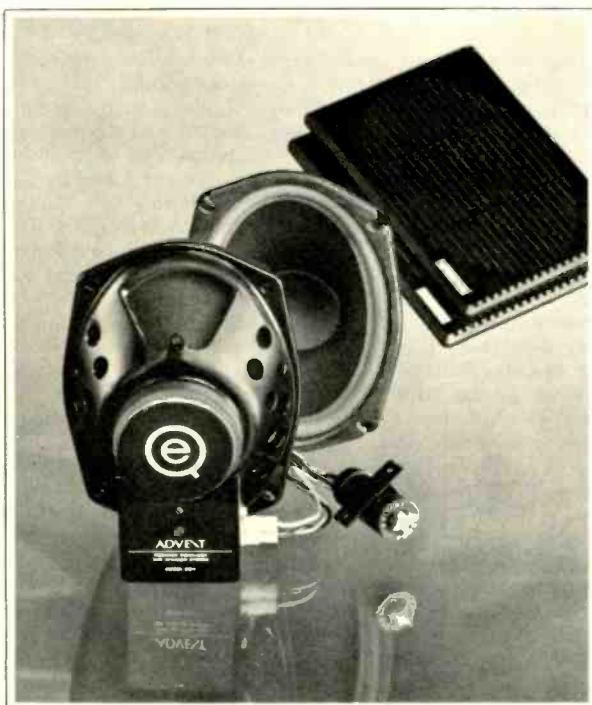
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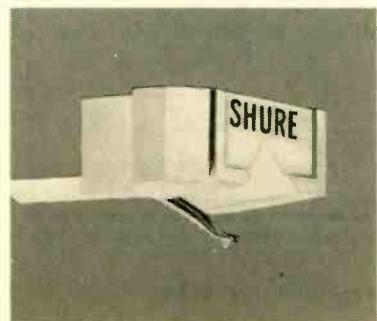


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CIRCLE 54 ON PAGE 89

stereo set conducted by Boris Khaikin. Then I glanced at the April SCHWANN and saw the black diamond. I'm going to need a few moments to regroup here: you might use the time to see if you can scare up a copy of the Angel set.

Queen of Spades reached the stage within four years of Verdi's Otello, and it occupies a similar position among Tchaikovsky's dramatic works. Yevgeny Onegin, written a dozen years earlier, is a great opera, just as La Traviata, written some thirty-four years before Otello, is. Both earlier operas are masterpieces of social and psychological observation, centered around their heroines' search for a habitable niche within a rigidly conventional society, and both make resourceful use of chorus, orchestra, and some healthy lyric voices.

Both of the later operas shift their focus to the tormented heroes, delving into the darkest regions of the psyche and, not coincidentally, showing a marked interest in the physical environment. (Storms, for example, play an important role in both works.) Both composers correspondingly expanded their musical arsenals, demanding elemental dynamism as well as delicacy from the chorus and orchestra and writing for voices of heavier caliber. Indeed, Ghermann is as difficult to cast as Otello, calling for a dramatic tenor of the highest theatrical sensitivity. Like Desdemona, Lisa can be "managed" by lyric sopranos but properly belongs to spintos. Even the roles of Paulina and Yelensky, basically similar in tessitura and weight to Olga and Onegin, draw more heavily on the singers' lower ranges.

As the Bolshoi recordings attest, the demands of Queen of Spades have been met only partially even on native ground, and it is hardly reassuring that Bolshoi III, the Columbia/Melodiya set reviewed in April 1976, is in most ways the least satisfactory of them. Outside Russia the requisite voice types are if anything less plentiful (how many great Otellos do we have?), and foreign singers face the additional handicap of stylistic distance—linguistic, temperamental, and even, to some extent, purely vocal. Given the scope of these difficulties, it is perhaps surprising that Mstislav Rostropovich has done as well as he has with Queen of Spades in Paris.

But it must be acknowledged straight off that the recording venue is a handicap. The Orchestre National plays well, and the polished string playing helps Rostropovich maintain tension in the intimate scenes—in the Countess' bedroom (II, 2), in the barracks (III, 1), and by the canal (III, 2)—that propel the drama to its climax. But there is no power, no thrust. Even the canal scene loses force through the saxophonelike sound of the horns (a problem familiar from the brass playing in Georg Solti's Paris Opera Otello), and for that matter almost everything Rostropovich does well was done better by Khaikin and Alexander Melik-Pashayev, conductor of the mono Bolshoi I. The larger scenes, lumbering rhythmically, seem to me pretty much to escape him: the choral writing of Acts I and II, one of the opera's glories, comes out limp and soggy, a

weak echo of what we have heard from the Bolshoi chorus at its best.

The difference may not seem that great measured against Bolshoi III, in which conductor Mark Ermler drew slack and sloppy playing and singing from the Bolshoi forces (if Rostropovich's Queen of Spades resembles John Barbirolli's Otello recording, Ermler evokes Alberto Erede). This is a far cry from the electrifying power and precision Yuri Simonov generated during the Bolshoi's 1975 New York season.

To my knowledge Simonov has yet to record a complete opera, which I find incomprehensible, but we do at least have Khaikin's Queen of Spades on disc, precise and loving in detail (the Act II intermezzo, for example, is beautifully done by Rostropovich—here the French quality is quite appropriate—but Khaikin adds extra measures of dash and songfulness) and at the same time imaginative and compelling in its larger contours. The more orthodox Melik-Pashayev takes fewer chances but respects the work's pace and scale; Bolshoi I is rather like a good Tullio Serafin performance (i.e., not the latter's Otello recording, although some of the problems are similar).

DG's most interesting casting initiative is the Ghermann, the Bulgarian tenor Peter Gougaloff, whom I have heard previously only as the Radames of an Aida recording taken from the soundtrack of a film of a 1976 Orange Festival performance. The voice seems of good size, capable of a plausible legato: the sound is full, clear, and rather attractive even around the break, which is negotiated with a degree of success that, by contemporary standards, marks Gougaloff as something of a technical marvel—although his production is not free of strain and becomes increasingly effortful above G and G sharp. (The high B is there when needed, and a potent sound at that, but it is not exactly comfortably integrated into the voice.) I find him vocally pleasanter than Bolshoi III's Vladimir Atlantov, and interpretively he is far more alive. I still prefer Zurab Andzhaparidze's somewhat strained yet gripping performance in Bolshoi II (I may, however, be the only Andzhaparidze fan in the Western world), but on the evidence of Gougaloff's recordings I'm curious to know what he's like in the theater.

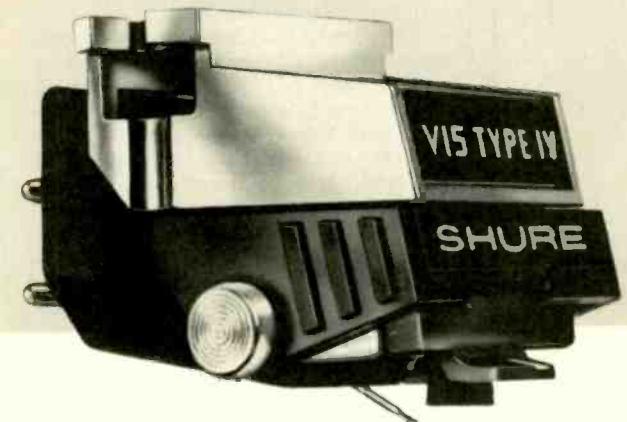
I have no doubt that Galina Vishnevskaya's Lisa would have more impact in the theater. There is no question of her grasp of the role, and the voice is certainly of the right size. But on records it is hard to overlook the fact that nearly all her singing is painfully vibrato-ridden. Singing softly she can be touching, as in the brief reconciliation with Ghermann in the canal scene, but the louder—and higher—she gets, the more obtrusive the wobble. Tamara Milashkina, in Bolshoi II and III, brings to Lisa a voice of the right caliber, a winning personality, and an ingratiatingly Italianate approach (she has considerable experience of Italian opera). The earlier performance, which captures her in substantially fresher voice, is altogether first-rate.

DG's finest voice belongs to the Yelensky, Bernd Weikl, whose glorious lyric baritone is heard to good advantage in the aria,

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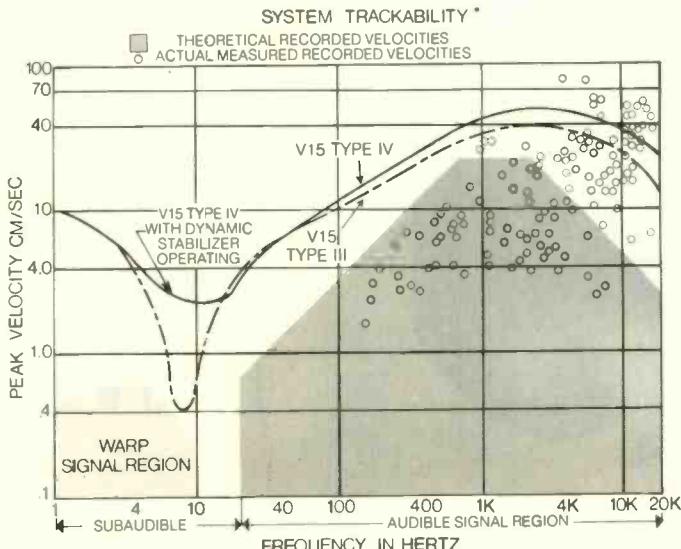


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where he can simply let the sound pour out. But as usual he runs into trouble when anything more is required: even the aria—which is undoubtedly a supreme lyric effusion but is also a brilliant piece of character portrayal—sounds stiff and oafish alongside the elegantly phrased and shaded performance of Pavel Lisitsian (Bolshoi I). Weikl makes almost no effect in his brief appearance in the first scene, so hauntingly etched by Lisitsian, and he sounds hardly ruffled in the climactic gambling-house scene.

Yeletsky is a wonderfully drawn character. As a representative of established order he could easily have been reduced to caricature, but Tchaikovsky did the opposite: He used every opportunity to make

Yeletsky mesmerizingly appealing—not only physically imposing, but gracious, bright, sensitive, and modest to boot. The more attractively he is portrayed, the more acute Lisa's dilemma becomes: It would be a simple matter to reject the prince for the forlorn stranger if the prince were a clod. No other Yeletsky comes close to Lisitsian, but Weikl—very nearly his equal in vocal endowment—falls farther from the mark than Yuri Mazurok (Bolshoi II) and Andrei Fedoseyev (Bolshoi III).

Hanna Schwarz copes sumptuously with Milovzor's music in the intermezzo, and her darkish mezzo is marginally better suited to Paulina than the lighter voice of Galina Borisova (Bolshoi III), a matchless Olga but

slightly out of her depth here. Borisova is, however, an endearing performer and has her voice under better control in Act I, where Schwarz's unsteady tone spoils the great romance. Irina Arkhipova's dramatic mezzo (Bolshoi II) once seemed to me too large and dark for the role, but it now strikes me as very much what Tchaikovsky intended. The tessitura, after all, does ride low: The romance is in E flat minor and is thus actually anchored below the break, which implies a voice of dramatic weight, with an attendant somber coloration that goes beyond melancholy into gloom.

Neither the Countess nor Tomsky has been taken to much effect in these recordings. DG's Regina Resnik sounds surprisingly little diminished since she last essayed the Countess at the Met, but she was already severely reduced back then. She conveys crustiness but not much more. The Romanian baritone Dan lordăchescu is perhaps below average for Tomsky, a role in which the "average" isn't too terrific. The voice is now dry and increasingly unsolid as it rises to and over the break: the Es and Fs are gotten out through sheer willpower.

Lucia Popp sings the role of Prilepsa in the intermezzo charmingly, holding her own with the excellent Vera Firssova (Bolshoi I and II) and the larger-voiced Makvala Kashashvili (Bolshoi III). The rest of the supporting cast is routine, although Fausto Tenzi manages a few of Chekalinsky's lines with unexpected presence.

DG's sound is okay, probably better than any of the Soviet efforts, and the booklet contains notes and texts. Which brings us back to the original problem: Which recording to buy? Although Bolshoi II is currently available in England (as HMV/Melodiya SLS 5005, three discs) and Bolshoi I has been around recently as a Soviet import (with an English synopsis but no texts), the practical choice is between Bolshoi III and DG.

The DG set, on four premium-priced discs, lists at twelve dollars more than the three-disc Columbia, but the four-disc format (also used in the Angel edition of Bolshoi II) accommodates the opera much more conveniently. DG has the better conducting and sound. Bolshoi III overall the more convincing cast—but the margin is hardly decisive either way. Pressed to a choice, I suppose the Lisa of Milashkina, even in less than peak form, would incline me toward Bolshoi III. [At press time word arrives that MHS will reissue Bolshoi II. All right!—K.F.]

VARESE: Amériques; Arcana; Ionisation. New York Philharmonic, Pierre Boulez, cond. [Andrew Kazdin, prod.] COLUMBIA M 34552, \$7.98 (SQ-encoded disc). Tape: •• MT 34552, \$7.98; • MA 34552, \$7.98.

Comparison—Amériques:

Abravanel/Utah Sym.

Comparisons—Arcana:

Craft/Columbia Sym.

Mehta/Los Angeles Phil.

Comparison—Ionisation:

DesRoches/N.J. Percussion Ensemble

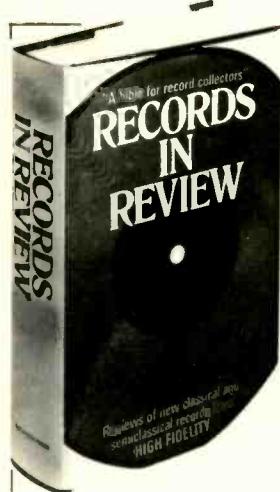
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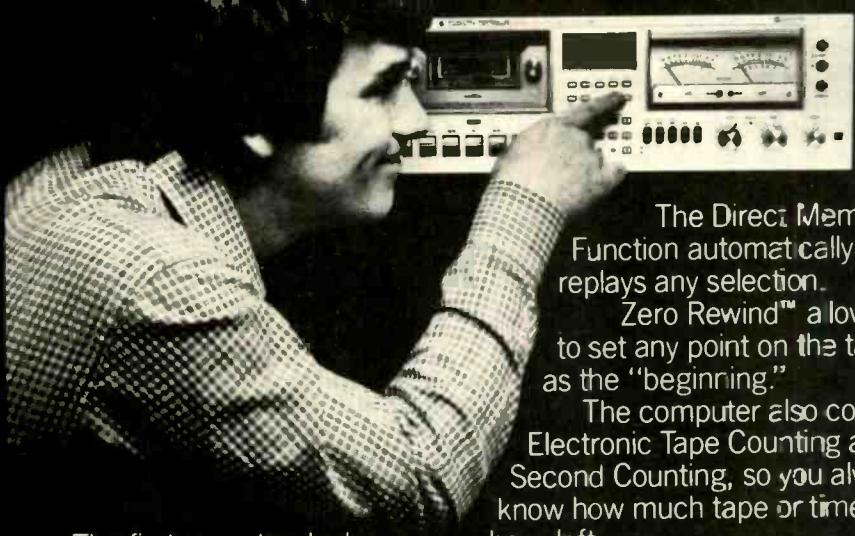
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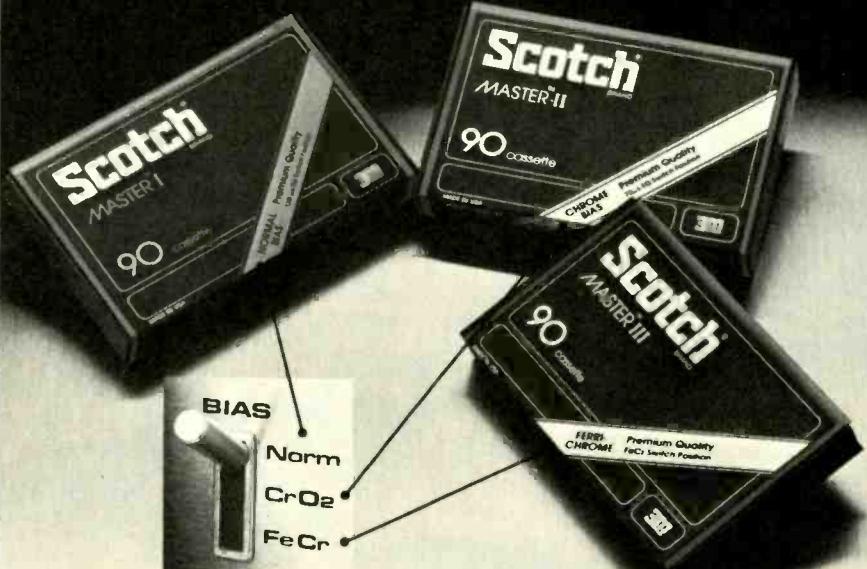
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ensembles of varying makeup, his two orchestral works stand out like giants. Not only are *Amériques* (1921) and *Arcana* (1927) scored for enormous instrumental forces, including a percussion section of unprecedented dimensions and variety, they are both works of unusual scope for this composer. Moreover, they are extraordinarily complex in conception, even by Varèse's standard, and make staggering demands upon conductor and players. It is not surprising, then, that performances have been exceedingly rare and that there have been relatively few recordings of either work.

The appearance of *Amériques* and *Arcana* in excellent readings on a single disc is thus especially welcome. Pierre Boulez, aided by his extensive background in the interpretation of complex twentieth-century works, has obviously thought through this music with meticulous care. His attention to detail is evident throughout, as is his grasp of larger formal connections. We are offered two performances of remarkable authority that represent important additions not only to the Varèse catalog, but to the list of essential recordings of twentieth-century music in general.

What stands out first is their clarity, and this is perhaps the single most important attribute of a successful rendering of these works. Both pieces feature dense textures made up of multiple layers of independent orchestral activity, layers that not only must be projected clearly in their own right to be properly heard, but also must be welded together into a convincingly coordinated tonality. Otherwise the music quickly degenerates into undifferentiated chaos. Boulez' balancing of the various forces competing against one another, producing an orchestral surface characterized by almost unrelieved tension, is extraordinarily effective.

He also manages to control the larger pacing so that the overall formal progress emerges with compelling force. The listener is given more than an unconnected series of striking orchestral effects. He experiences a larger continuity, which, due to the constant interruptions produced by Varèse's technique of abrupt cross-cutting and juxtaposition, must be put together out of bits and pieces of heterogeneous elements.

The Boulez readings represent a marked improvement on the other available recordings of these scores. Maurice Abravanel's *Amériques*, the only other SCHWANN listing, is in many ways excellent, but the playing of the Utah Symphony is clearly outclassed by that of the New York Philharmonic. And both Robert Craft's and Zubin Mehta's renderings of *Arcana* are left far behind. Only the excellent old Jean Martinon/Chicago Symphony version of the latter work on RCA, now unfortunately deleted, is able to hold its own with this new one. Martinon avoids the cool detachment so characteristic of Boulez without sacrificing either precision or formal cohesion. Indeed, the smoother, less angular quality of the Chicago performance will seem preferable to some listeners. My own feeling is that both versions are invaluable, complementing one another perfectly.

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The performance of *Ionisation* that fills out one side is also a miracle of textural balance and lucidity. Here, however, there is very stiff competition in the Nonesuch recording made by the New Jersey Percussion Ensemble under Raymond DesRoches. Although Boulez matches the clarity of this version, his reading lacks its bite and strong rhythmic thrust. Nevertheless, it makes a welcome addition to this essential new disc.

R.P.M.

technique (to which Georg Ratzinger, the boys' choirmaster, must have contributed materially): he is aware at all times of the limitations of his small forces and has scaled the entire performance to their capabilities. The result is a judicious and delectable balance of all factors. The part-writing is always distinct; the boys have been taught to savor the sensuous dissonances caused by suspensions, always making just the right little crescendo to emphasize the changed significance of the held notes while the harmony shifts underneath them. The fugues in the "Gratias agimus" and the "Cum sancto spiritu" are a joy to hear; every entry and imitation in the middle parts is clear, and so is the structure.

These Archiv performers follow the articles of faith of "historical authenticity" and yet avoid the often sepulchral respectability of such performances, because they know the difference between simplicity and sparseness. To be sure, on the sleeve the pedigree, maker, and player of every one of the sixteen instruments is duly named, down to the bassoon, which merely trots along with the bass, but the three very able boy soloists are just nameless sparrows. I suppose they cannot be historically authenticated, but they surely deserve to be identified even if they were not made in 1711. This is an outstanding addition to the Vivaldi discography and a delight to the ear.

The Angel and Argo discs contain different forms of Vivaldi's *Magnificat*. Angel offers his third and final setting (in Malipiero's edition), in which he exchanged five of the nine numbers—originally all choral, and so heard in the Argo version—for solo arias and, interestingly, named the girls who were to sing them.

This final form of the *Magnificat* is one of Vivaldi's greatest vocal works, in which serene Palestrinian counterpoint choral sections alternate with lovely arias. The "Palestrinian" adjective must be taken in Verdi's sense ("we are all descendants of Palestrina"), for of course the harmonies are modern, but the suave polyphony vindicates Verdi's seemingly outré statement. And this polyphony is sensuous, glorying in the attraction of dissonances obtained by suspensions, which are much smoother sung than played. Listen to the rising minor sixths and major sevenths in the "Et misericordia," then again to the "Fecit potentiam," starkly in unison.

Teresa Berganza sings the difficult arias in both the *Magnificat* and the *Gloria* very well, although she has a little trouble with the trills. Lucia Valentini-Terrani matches Vivaldi's Ambrosiana, who reputedly had a particularly deep alto. The unnamed trumpeter and Gordon Hunt, the oboist in the *Magnificat*, are both very good, and the continuo is audible. Yet this performance is not altogether satisfying. The recording lacks clarity, the choral sound tends to thicken in the middle, and the whole is a little bottom-heavy. And even so excellent a conductor as Riccardo Muti adopts the nineteenth-century mannerism of illogically pausing before final chords, allowing the whole thing to fall apart. Every eighteenth-century writer admonishes musi-

cians to "slow down a little in the last four or five measures" (Quantz), but there is not a single mention of that silly hiatus.

The Argo recording, like the Archiv, uses boys as soloists and choristers, and the British performance is more sonorous. But Argo's King's College boys cannot touch their Regensburg brothers; they are typical English choirboys with well-disciplined but immature and colorless voices. As choral trebles and altos they are, however, well above the average: the ensemble is good, and so is the choral sound (except for a disturbing echo) and intonation. Philip Ledger "directs" knowledgeably, even if his performances lack the zeal and spontaneity of Schneidt's for Archiv.

Argo's coupling is Bach's *Magnificat*, performed in an edition by Alfred Dürr, one of the foremost Bach scholars, who carefully reconstructed the original shape of the work and included the four numbers the composer later added. This is a welcome bonus for all admirers of Bach.

Regrettably, the clarity and euphony of the Vivaldi *Magnificat* are now gone. It would be easy to blame the annoying echo, which undoubtedly contributes to the opaqueness, but, at the risk of being charged with high treason, I think that the fault lies with Bach himself. The *Magnificat*, Mary's hymn of praise at the Annunciation, was memorialized in untold versions by both composers and painters: perhaps the most arresting is the one where Botticelli's Mary rests her slender finger on the words as they appear on the open pages of a Bible. Though Bach composed great music for his *Magnificat*, it does not have the gentle joy and welling gratitude that Botticelli so beautifully expresses.

In the five-part choruses Bach shows monumental inattention to euphony: he writes for the voices as if they were violins and oboes, and the tug between the severe adherence to the polyphonic concept and the principles of vocal composition is very much in evidence. Bach, who could, if he so desired, treat voices as suavely as the best Neapolitan, was equally prone to abstract writing; much in the *Magnificat* is on this order, and one marvels at the doggedness with which he gives preference to the logic of part-writing over the rights and privileges of the voices. Even with the New Bach Society score in front of me, I was unable to sort out the parts after the third voice entered in a fugue. It seems doubtful that this dense and thickly encrusted texture can ever be performed to satisfaction (though I would like to hear the Regensburgers try it). One would think that, if it could be done, it would be in a recording.

Helen Watts is the outstanding performer among the Argo soloists: she is not inconvenienced by her part and knows how to cheat discreetly in order to breathe. Felicity Palmer, though toiling valiantly, is at times short of breath. Still, together they manage to sing a beautiful duet (No. 6). Tenor Robert Tear is adequate, and so would bass Stephen Roberts be if he would only cease trying to trill. The organ continuo is good, but surprisingly, when Francis Grier shifts to the harpsichord, he is

all over the place, vaunting his silly curlicues and runs. This is not historical accuracy, but meddling with the composer's creation: Bach wrote pauses to be heard as pauses, not filled with meaningless tinkling.

I cannot end without singling out one magical spot. In No. 10 ("Suscepit"). Bach surrounds a treble/alto group of singers with a trumpet and violins and violas in unison. The effect is beatific, and the wonderful piece comes off perfectly—another proof that, when the Archcantor wanted to charm, he could do it as well as anyone who ever put pen to music paper. P.H.L.

Recitals and Miscellany

RASMA LIELMANE: Violin Recital. Rasma Lielmane, violin; Marina Baltere, piano. [John J. Uhl, prod.] KAIBALA 60F03, \$7.98.

KENINS: Sonata. **KEPITIS:** Nocturne. **RAVEL:** Tzigane. **SIBELIUS:** Nocturne. Novelle, Op. 102, No. 1. **VITOLS:** Romance in D minor, Op. 15.

MICHAEL DAVIS: Violin Recital. [Giveon Cornfield, prod.] ORION ORS 78293, \$7.98.

BADINGS: Sonata No. 3. **BEN-HAIM:** Sonata in G. **BERKELEY:** Introduction and Allegro. **PROKOFIEV:** Sonata for Solo Violin, Op. 115.

The Kaibala disc introduces three Latvian composers to American record buyers. Talivaldis Kenins, now based in Canada, where his music is often heard and recorded, has fashioned an arresting single-movement sonata. The first of its interconnected three parts is in a Hindemithian style, gaunt and spiky, and that idiom returns in the exciting fugal finale. Jazeps Vitols and Janis Kepitis, who remained in Latvia (some of their music has been recorded on Melodiya), are also worth acquaintance: the morsels sampled on this disc are charming and craftsmanlike.

The two Sibelius selections offered here are rarefied delights, perhaps the most striking violin-and-piano works I've heard from the composer, and they are persuasively championed by Rasma Lielmane, a technically secure violinist with a lustrous and powerful tone and a lot of temperament. What better tribute can I pay than to describe her performance of the Ravel Tzigane as reminiscent of the interpretation of Christian Ferras? Pianist Marina Baltere is capable, and the recording is excellent.

Michael Davis, an English-born violinist who now lives in Ohio, is a somewhat lesser virtuoso than Lielmane. His intonation isn't quite perfect in the more abrasive passages of his stimulating and difficult Orion program of unaccompanied modern works. Yet he deserves thanks for bringing to our attention Henk Badings' conservative but rousing sonata and Paul Ben-Haim's challenging sonata, with its muted slow movement and vigorous finale. Lennox Berkeley's Introduction and Allegro is



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less interesting. Prokofiev's exotic and seductive solo Sonata, Op. 115, while perhaps more familiar, is still worth having again.

A.C.

JEAN-PIERRE RAMPAL AND ALEXANDRE LAGOYA: In Concert, March 27, 1977. Jean-Pierre Rampal, flute; Alexandre Lagoya, guitar. [John Pfeiffer, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 2-2631, \$15.98 (two discs, automatic sequence). Tape: • ARK 2-2631, \$15.98. • ARS 2-2631, \$15.98.

The growing popularity of flute-and-guitar recitals combined with the magnetism of such masters of these instruments as Rampal and Lagoya (intensified by the latter's ten-year absence from the U.S.) guaranteed the success of their joint New York appearance in March 1977. The recorded documentation of that concert should be no less successful, for its vividly close-up recording not only captures every detail of the invariably polished performances, but minimizes the crowd rustlings and coughing (like most March New York audiences, this is indeed an "appreciative and bronchial" one!), at least until the disc-side endings, when genuinely thunderous applause is permitted.

Three relatively large-scaled works are featured: Ravi Shankar's well-named *Enchanted Morning* based on Raga Todi (originally for flute and harp); Giuliani's Grand Sonata in A, Op. 85, for violin (or flute) and guitar; and a fine, quintessentially Paganini concerto sonata of 1804, also originally scored for violin and guitar. The most novel "original" is a rare recorded representation of Christian Gottlieb Scheidler (1752-1815), a largely forgotten German lutenist. But the rather routine Sonata in D, Op. 21, is much less interesting musically than Ibert's evocative *Entr'acte*. There is also the inconsequential, plaintive Beethoven *Sonatina* in C, WoO. 43, originally for mandolin and cembalo. In solo performances Rampal is heard in a C. P. E. Bach Sonata in A minor and Debussy's familiar *Syrinx*; Lagoya in mostly familiar short pieces by Sanz, Sor, Tárrega, and Villa-Lobos.

The sonically identical double-play Dolby cassette edition is admirably processed except for a side break barely a minute before the end of the Shankar *Enchanted Morning*, but its purchasers are unfairly denied Shirley Fleming's informative musical annotations.

R.D.D.

H ERNESTINE SCHUMANN-HEINK: Mme. Schumann-Heink on the Air. Ernestine Schumann-Heink, alto; orchestral accompaniment. PELICAN LP 2008, \$6.98 (mono) [from radio broadcasts, 1934] (Pelican Records, Box 34632, Los Angeles, Calif. 90034).

BRAHMS: Wiegenlied; *Sapphische Ode*. **GRIEG:** Ich liebe dich. **SCHUMANN:** Widmung. **TCHAIKOVSKY:** None but the lonely heart. **WAGNER:** Wesendonck Lieder: *Träume*. **R. STRAUSS:** Traum durch die Dämmerung. **GRUBER:** Stille Nacht. **MACFAYDEN:** Cradle Song. **LANG:** Irish Love Song. **CADMAN:** At Dawning. **LIEURANCE:** By the waters of Minnetonka. **FOSTER:** Old Folks at Home. **BOND:** I love you truly. **TRAD:** Taps.

Ernestine Schumann-Heink is one of the near legendary figures in the history of op-

eratic singing. Though she was an exact contemporary of Melba, she made her debut in 1878 at the age of seventeen (as Azucena, remarkably enough), nearly ten years before the latter made hers, and she gave her farewell operatic performance in 1932 at the age of seventy-one (as—even more remarkably—Erda in *Siegfried*), six years after Melba's retirement from the stage.

During her long, distinguished career she sang with success all over the world, under conductors who included Von Bülow, Mahler, Mottl, Richter, Muck, and the youthful Bruno Walter. At her Met debut as *Ortrud*, in 1899, her colleagues were Nordica, David Bispham, and the De Reszke brothers. Ten years later in Dresden she created the role of Klytemnestra at the world premiere of Richard Strauss's *Elektra*. Schumann-Heink's recording career was no less noteworthy, her first commercial discs being made for Columbia in 1903 and her last for Victor in 1931. In 1929 she recorded Erda's narrative from *Das Rheingold* and Waltraute's from *Götterdämmerung*, performances of awesome musical authority, if of diminished splendor.

At the end of her life Schumann-Heink achieved a new kind of popularity with a weekly radio program in which she could not only sing, but talk. Her heavy German accent, her roguish sense of humor, and her maternal personality—not to mention her still impressive, utterly individual voice—appealed to vast numbers of people. The record under review preserves several selections from these broadcasts, as well as one complete quarter-hour program. During the course of the latter Schumann-Heink talks about her forthcoming seventy-third birthday, jokes with the announcer, lends her support to his pitch for Gerber products, thanks "Herr Kapellmeister and your boys," refers to herself as "Mother Schumann-Heink," and sings Brahms's "Wiegenlied" and—for all that it was then the middle of June—"Silent Night" (in German). Other cuts include such comments as that Brahms "was the greatest composer who ever lived" and that "*Träume*" "contains many of the melodies that Wagner later used in his *Tristan und Isolde*."

In other words, this is not a record one would want to play in its entirety very often. It is, however, a fascinating and moving document. Schumann-Heink's voice is plainly old. The tone is forced; the top register is uncertain; there is a hole in the middle of the voice. Yet the amplitude of her tone, especially at the lower end of her scale, is still something to be wondered at; her enunciation is a model of clarity, and her legato is hardly impaired. The Schumann "Widmung," despite its strenuousness of manner and its frequent glottal strokes, is a vivid performance of a song she never recorded commercially. Brahms's "*Sapphische Ode*" is wonderfully magisterial in manner. "Taps" (the last title she had recorded for Victor, three years previously) is an extraordinary example of sustained singing; it is also a monument to camp.

There is nothing of pathos about this record, only a sense of pleasure and enduring energy. The sound, considering the provenance of these selections, is clear.

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Rock beat



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Foreigner: Unruffled by Platinum Pressure

by Sam Sutherland

Speaking quietly over the hum of a transoceanic phone connection, Foreigner's Mick Jones doesn't seem the least bit threatened by the musical and mercantile similarities I point up between his group and another phenomenon, Boston. "It's funny you mentioning Boston," says the veteran English songwriter/arranger/guitarist. "When their album came out we were well into making ours, and I

thought, 'Is there going to be room for somebody else to do something like they did?' It was a bit of a strange feeling, because I was very confident of our thing, but I didn't know whether two phenomenons like that could happen."

Normally, they don't—or didn't until very recently. But after runaway sales of their first LP—3 million to date—and concert receipts that place the

young sextet in rock's pantheon of money-makers, Jones no longer worries about whether there is room for Foreigner.

While the band's Atlantic debut in March of '77 may not have vaulted up the charts quite as rapidly as Boston's did, within a year after its release "Foreigner" had racked up a no less impressive vote of popular acceptance. Three consecutive hit singles—*Feels like the First Time*, *Cold as Ice*, and *Long, Long Way from Home*—have yet to exhaust its potential for radio play. And sales will almost certainly mushroom on a global scale in the wake of the group's first world tour, which began in the Far East in March and continues with European and extensive U.S. dates.

Inevitably, the story behind Foreigner embodies a central pop myth, the overnight success. Yet although formed just two years ago in New York by Jones and another expatriate Briton, Ian McDonald,

**"I wanted to work
with people who
had not been through the mill . . .
that weren't completely
disillusioned with things."**

the group is really the beneficiary of the two players' experience performing in the shadow of other, better-known musicians. As principal songwriter for the band, Jones in particular views Foreigner as a personal vindication. Whereas reed player/guitarist/arranger McDonald was typecast as a progressive rock player because of his brief tenure in the original King Crimson and several subsequent production chores for more obscure British bands, Jones showed a somewhat more checkered background at the time of Foreigner's emergence. In the U.S., he was probably best known as guitarist for the final incarnation of Spooky Tooth, a project that had grown from his earlier collaboration with that band's founder Gary Wright, in Wonderwheel. Association with Wright put him in the ranks of English progressive rockers, a far cry from his earlier role as guitarist/songwriter/arranger for French pop idol Johnny Hallyday.

Jones had emigrated to France to work with Hallyday, whose stature on the Continent made the assignment a decidedly attractive and secure one. After several years, however, security became insufficient compensation. "That's why I went back to England," he says. "I really felt that I wasn't fulfilling myself musically. I was pretty successful over there—I was writing, and that's really where my songwriting started—but basically I just wasn't getting any fulfillment. I

started meeting with Gary at that point, and it was incredible. He was doing exactly what I felt I should be doing with the music. We definitely had a heavy few years when each of us was into what the other was doing, and it had a positive effect on me."

If Jones views Hallyday and Wright as instructive chapters in his own development, he also admits both periods ended in frustration. In the latter case, Spooky Tooth had moved to New York after a switch in management, hoping their proximity to U.S. concert halls and record companies would help signal a new period of success. Instead, they disbanded (for the last time) and Jones moved on to brief encounters with Peter Frampton, Leslie West, and a string of lesser artists that offered session work. Production assignments likewise failed to provide a satisfying alternative to earlier posts as arranger and accompanist.

He met McDonald during recording sessions for a solo LP by vocalist Ian Lloyd. At the time, Jones had begun writing a new group of songs. In McDonald, he found a kindred spirit: "He seemed to be in the same state of mind I was in, looking to really get something important happening. He didn't quite know what he wanted to do, whether it was a solo thing or whatever, and I was in the same position, having just come out of a band."

They decided to try a band format, despite earlier disappointments. "I got the songs together and from that point onwards I started auditioning," Jones says. "setting rehearsals with people. Al [Greenwood, the group's keyboard and synthesizer player] was the first to come down, the first to actually become a member of the band. Ian came into the picture as sort of co-founder with me, because basically, in terms of arrangements and the direction of the band, it was shared between us. And I made the decision that it was going to be a stage band, once I'd committed myself to being in a band again."

Lou Gramm, a New Yorker who had sung lead vocals for Black Sheep (a British-flavored hard-rock outfit), bassist Ed Gagliardi, and a third Briton, drummer Dennis Elliott, completed the lineup. Elliott had drummed for If and Ian Hunter, so both he and Gramm had had some experience, while Greenwood and Gagliardi were comparatively young. "I think,

**"I don't think Foreigner has
done anything consciously
'commercial.' "**

really, evaluating it now, that was one of the important things." Jones says of the veteran-rookie combination. "I definitely wanted to have fresh input. I



Mick Jones and Lou Gramm—a polished stage act was part of the plan

wanted to work with people who had not been through the mill, as it were, that weren't completely disillusioned with things."

The more seasoned players helped cushion the potential trauma of the rapid graduation to larger concert halls as the newly formed Foreigner assembled a stage act during their first months together. Only after several months of rehearsals did Jones and McDonald begin approaching record companies. Once signed to Atlantic, they entered the studio with material and arrangements already considerably polished.

While critics initially greeted with cynicism Jones's and McDonald's apparent switch from windy progressive rock to economical, melodic singles, both musicians had viewed themselves in broader terms all along. A month before the album's release, Jones himself offered what now seems a remarkably objective assessment of his approach. "I think there are two directions you can take. You can try to become completely avant-garde or a real pioneer . . . or there's the semicommercial way. I don't think Foreigner has done anything consciously 'commercial'—with a few exceptions. It's just that after the kind of experience we've had, we find that songs have to have a certain

structure about them to make them special."

McDonald himself, in the same context, accurately saw the LP's songs as "very accessible . . . rather than being spacy and intellectual. They are just very good songs. At face value, they are simple because they're easily grasped, but the more you hear them,

**Jones expresses
less surprise at
Foreigner's popularity than
a canny publicist
might hope for.**

the more you hear how we've worked on the arrangements."

His concern with that aspect mandated another six weeks of rehearsals following the album's completion. But Foreigner was on the road shortly after its release, and the interplay between live dates and the album and its single produced considerable momentum. And Atlantic, which had reaped broad success and a new identity through a number of English rock

acts from the late '60s on, quickly blanketed the market with advertising and tour support. That show of strength heartened Foreigner but also triggered some criticism of the act as a marketing hype.

Jones doesn't quite bristle at the latter suggestion, but he is clearly relieved at the observation that, however ubiquitous Atlantic's sales efforts may be, no one can really accuse him or the other members of consciously attempting to create a media image. Although Jones himself is acting spokesman, neither he nor the others has pursued much personal celebrity; in contrast to more raucous artists who enjoy hurling TV sets through hotel room windows or pop mystics who cloak their work in various ideological guises. Foreigner's approach to date has been surprisingly old-fashioned. They've worked hard making records, harder still on the road, and they want to keep up that kind of pace. "You know," Jones argues, "in creating a mystique or an aura about yourself—that happens naturally, either you do or you don't, you have it or you haven't. As far as being obnoxious . . . that went with the '60s." Likewise, he has avoided the blush new acts feign. Without making sweeping claims for the group or its music, he expresses less surprise at Foreigner's popularity than a canny publicist might hope for. Although the triple platinum barrier was hardly part of the plan ("selling a few hundred thousand albums" was his original expectation), he's quick to stress. "We were definitely very positive about it, and as things got better, we got better. Our aims were pretty high—we wanted to become very important."

Still, there is the inevitable question of how Foreigner can follow their own act—a question Jones is acutely aware of, but again, hardly shy in answering.

"There was extreme pressure. . . . Everybody's opening line was, 'Oh, you got The New Album ready yet?'"

Just as he was "confident we'd done a good job" when Foreigner finally emerged from the studio the first time, he's satisfied with a successor he feels is probably stronger. "There was extreme pressure at one point," he admits. "Everybody's opening line was, 'Oh, you got The New Album ready yet?'" But he asserts that pressure may well prove to be another positive. "I think I definitely respond much better, and work much better, under pressure. And I think the band does, too."

For the new album, "Double Vision," Foreigner had to adapt to a tighter schedule. "Unlike the first time, we really didn't have that much time to spend getting the fine points down in rehearsal, so we had to

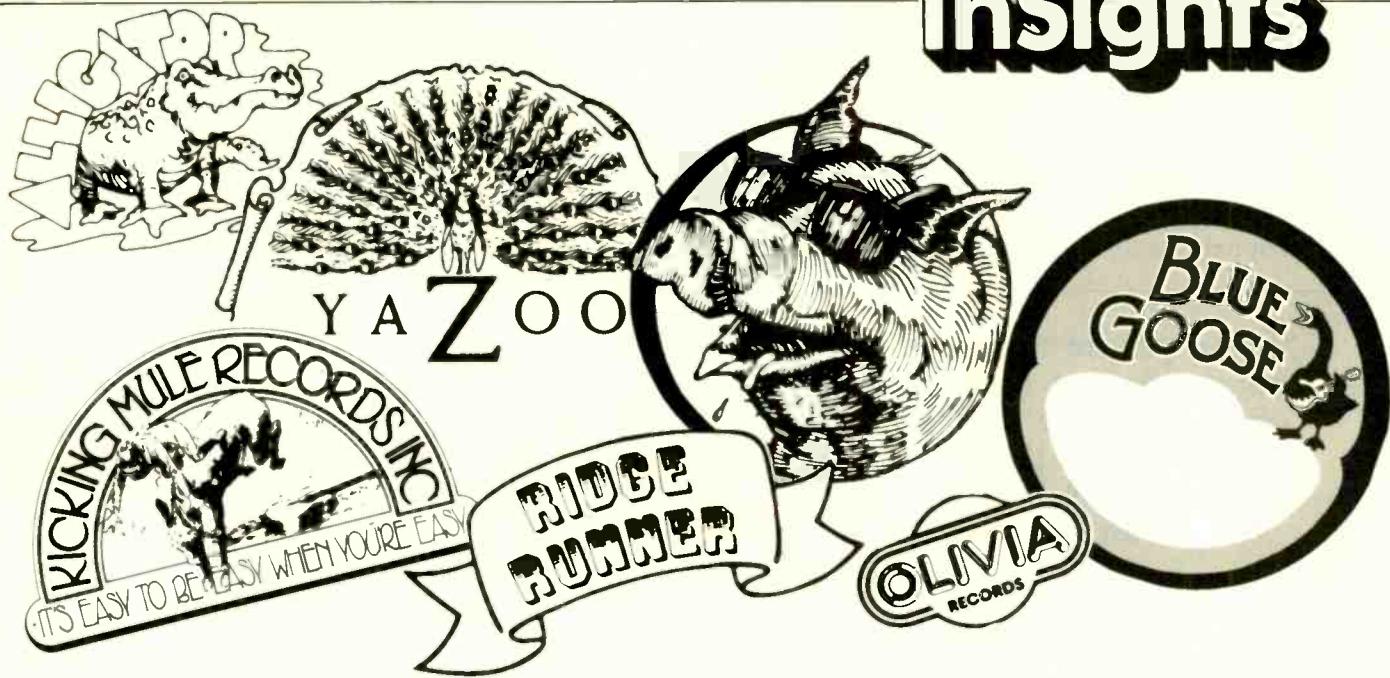
spend a little more time in the studio," Jones says. Whereas English engineer-producers Gary Lyons and John Sinclair were associate producers on the first LP, this time McDonald and Jones teamed with Los Angeles-based Keith Olsen, whose crisp production for Fleetwood Mac and the Grateful Dead might suggest a significant aural facelift for Foreigner. According to Jones, however, the band's cofounders are remaining very much in the front line. Significantly, Olsen, who has previously insisted on working in those West Coast studios he's most comfortable with, agreed to fly east for sessions at Atlantic's studios in New York, where the group's first record was cut.

"Keith is coproducing with us," Jones explains, going on to note Olsen's clear enthusiasm for the project and adding that "in temperament and in some of the things he's already done, he really seemed to be what we were looking for." Jones also asserts that the band consciously refuses to "studio-ize" its sound very much with dramatic recording effects. As before, greater emphasis has been on developing subtle instrumental effects that work equally well in the studio or on stage. "There's going to be a familiar feel to this album, because Ian and I still play a pretty important role in that area. In fact, the only unfortunate thing this time is that we haven't had time to be present at the mixes, due to this tour."

That "familiar feel" will doubtless rekindle some skepticism about conscious self-imitation, yet Jones denies feeling inhibited by the sweeping popularity of "Foreigner." "I wrote those songs," he says, "so it's probable that part of my current style of writing came out of them. But as far as copying any sort of format, we haven't done that at all. I think there's a little more aggression, even, in this album, and I think the mellower moments—the 'shade' parts—are probably more emotional. . . . We've improved the balance, I think."

Other members of the band also act as songwriters on "Double Vision." "I happened to write a good deal of the songs," Jones says, "but a lot of them I wrote with Lou, and Lou and Ian wrote one together." Keyboardist Greenwood also gets a turn, leading to Jones's proud claim that the other members' talents are now blossoming.

With Foreigner's live performances beginning to win the respect of some of their most skeptical critics, and anticipation for the new album running high, Mick Jones's quiet confidence is persuasive. Foreigner clearly does take their work "very, very seriously," as he has observed, yet that attitude appears, as yet, not to have extended to individual egos. Perhaps it's because this one-year-old phenomenon hasn't really had time to slow down and let the scope of its success catch up with its creators. Or perhaps it's merely another old, but in this case appropriate, slice of folk wisdom that explains their single-minded determination: All work and little play may not make Foreigner provocative celebrities, but it has paid off. ■



Make Way for the Independents

by Diane Sward Rapaport

Flying Fish, Arhoolie, Pleiades, Kicking Mule, Nirvana, Blind Pig, Olivia, Blue Goose, Zap, Ridge Runner, Yazoo, Biscuit City, El Rauncho, Alligator. No sparks of recognition? Small wonder. They're not exactly household words. These are the names of just a few of the hundreds of independent record labels in the country today. What they lack in distribution and marketing muscle, they make up for in musical individuality and imagination. In fact their distinguishing characteristic is their freedom from any marketing strategy that would limit their creative directions. As a result, they produce some of today's most innovative music.

Browsing through a collection of independents' offerings in a record store is something like visiting the gourmet food section in a supermarket. You would find such gems as Souleman Rowgie's "African Lady: Highlife Music from West Africa," Duck Baker's "There's Something for Everyone in America," Masayuki Koga's "Shakuhachi," Steven Halpern's "I: A Cosmic Attunement," or Rose Maddox's "Reckless Love and Bold Adventure." (Maddox's most famous protégée is Dolly Parton.) One of my personal favorites is Malcolm Dalglish's and Grey Larson's "Banish

Misfortune," which features a hammer dulcimer, English concertina, guitar, flute, tin whistle, and recorder. But though some of the major chains (such as the West Coast-based Peaches) provide catchall bins for independent labels, you won't find many of these albums at your local record store. Some of the better-heeled labels place their recordings in small specialty stores through independent regional distributors. But for the most part, independents sell their LPs directly at live performances or by mail order.

What they lack in
distribution and marketing
muscle, they
make up for
in musical individuality.

Since they're not set up to compete with the majors in distribution, attention from the press, or airplay (not that much of their music conforms to the three-minute hit-single format), the keys to the independents' survival are lower production costs and fewer middlemen. Compared to a range of \$75,000 to \$125,000 for a commercial LP's recording budget, an independent's studio costs run as little as \$750 and seldom more than \$18,000. How do they do it? Less time spent in recording; minimal orchestration; avoiding

Ms. Rapaport is co-editor and publisher of Music Works—A Manual for Musicians. She is the author of The Inside Track: Making and Selling Your Own Record, published by Crown and due out in the fall.

state-of-the-art studios with computerized boards, jazzy cuzzis for shattered nerves, and the like; and persuading musician friends to either donate or discount their services for the cause. As a result, whereas a major-label LP must sell in excess of 60,000 units before making a profit, many independent albums don't even achieve a total sale of 50,000, yet most manage to turn a profit long before they approach that point. Addi-

"Some people still respond in a condescending manner to those of us who have started our own labels . . . as though we just weren't good enough to record for the majors."

tionally, with fewer middlemen getting a piece of the action, an independent can collect from about \$2.40 a record up to full list price, depending on whether they use an outside distributor. Contrast this with the average twenty-five-cent artist royalty on a major's disc, and it becomes clear that many of these labels can fully support both themselves and their artists—which are often one and the same anyway.

But profit is seldom their principal motive. Rather, it is the desire to control their own artistic destiny. Most of these labels are fiercely and willfully independent, conjuring up an image of the flinty old Yankee entrepreneur—self-sufficient, stout of heart, and staunch in the work ethic. One such is Chris Strachwitz, owner of Arhoolie Records, a one-man operation in Berkeley, California, with more than 200 titles in its catalog. Like Edward Curtis, the great photographic chronicler of the American Indian (who also made some of the first recordings), Strachwitz set out eighteen years ago to try to preserve what he felt were vanishing traditions in rural southern music. He particularly loves Louisiana Cajun music, Mississippi Delta blues, and Tex-Mex border songs (see page 128), hunting down representative artists like Lightnin' Hopkins, Clifton Chenier, Mance Lipscomb, Bukka White, and Juke Boy Bonner. "I wish everybody could make their hobby their work," Strachwitz says. "When you love what you do, it's not work at all. I love it from the minute I get up in the morning 'til I quit . . ."

Strachwitz records most of his subjects on location with a portable tape recorder and either an old Capps condenser microphone or a Neumann KM-861. Five years ago he bought a Nagra recorder with the money he got from selling some 78s to a collector in France. He actively dislikes recording studios with their mixing and overdubbing, preferring spontaneous performances. So his recording costs seldom

amount to more than the costs of tape and travel.

Some of Arhoolie's records sell as many as 3,500 per year, some less than 100. But compared to commercial pop music's competitive marketplace, where even a successful record can be obsolete and stone-cold dead in six months, Strachwitz's subject matter is virtually timeless in its appeal. The older discs in his catalog just keep on moving—he sells an average of 80,000 LPs per year. "Slow selling—long lasting," he says with a smile. "I've sold a million records in eighteen years."

Margie Adam's story represents the opposite end of the spectrum. She too is a one-person record company, but to date she has just one release to her credit, "Margie Adam: Songwriter." She wrote all of the material, arranged it in collaboration with her musicians, and produced the record. It has sold more than 20,000 copies, a figure not often surpassed by artists releasing their first albums on major labels. "But the fact is," she says, "that some people still respond in a condescending manner to those of us who have started our own labels . . . as though we just somehow weren't good enough to record for the majors. It started me thinking. What does 'making it' mean? I have friends who are signed to major labels, yet I have larger live au-



David Grisman—success at the grass roots



Songwriter Margie Adam—a one woman operation

diences and sell more records. I'm in control of my music and of who I work with. I can take my career in a direction that means something to me."

One of Adam's goals is to work with women as much as possible, in an effort to increase the number of job opportunities for them in the recording industry. Her budget even includes money for on-the-job training for an apprentice engineer, Margot McFedries. "We're not fighting with men in this field. Rather, we're working to bring women into it."

Unlike Adam, David Grisman has had plenty of experience with major labels. One of the finest mandolin players in the country, he has done sessions with Linda Ronstadt and the Grateful Dead and recorded an album for Elektra in the early '60s called "Earth Opera" and a more recent one on the Round label (distributed by United Artists) called "Old and In the Way." Yet from two recordings on independent labels, he has earned more in royalties and received more attention from the media than he did with the majors. And he has enjoyed it more: "I could do the music the way I felt it." One such release is "The David Grisman Rounder Album," recorded for Rounder Records, an East Coast label that specializes in country music. On it, Grisman matched some of his favorite country musicians—including Vassar Clements on

violin, Bill Keith on banjo, and Tony Rice on guitar—with some of his favorite bluegrass tunes, many of them culled from old 78s and radio broadcast tapes. (One of the best cuts is *I Ain't Broke, but I'm Badly Bent*.)

His other independent album—on Kaleidoscope Records out of Berkeley—features his highly experimental jazz/country instrumental compositions. Simply titled "The David Grisman Quintet," it recently was named the Best Independent Album at the first San Francisco Bammie awards, instituted by *Bay Area Music*, a rock-oriented music news magazine. Sales have soared to more than 40,000, helping to catapult Grisman out of small clubs and into concert halls, where his audiences stomp and cheer in a fashion reminiscent of the old Santana concerts. The album has also generated a resurgence of interest from several of the majors. As his manager, Craig Miller, puts it, "Now that Dave has proved his popularity with the grass roots, the majors are willing to deal with him as a significant solo artist. When we first played the quintet album for them, they loved it but said it had no commercial potential. Now they're literally beating at our door. We'll be able to sign a contract we like."

Complaints about "wallpaper," "hype," "same old stuff," and the like have always been leveled at the major labels, but these days listeners are apparently doing something about it. The independents' output and sales have *doubled* in the past year, despite their less than comprehensive exposure in the marketplace. Some independent labels and distributors have formed information-sharing organizations that help to espouse the cause nationally and, in turn, create publicity. One of them is NAIRD (National Association of Independent Recording Distributors), which holds an annual convention to provide marketing sales and promotion seminars for its members. A more militant association is SIPRA—that is, Small Independent Production and Record Association. Composed primarily of black labels in Los Angeles, it recently filed suit against the FCC and three local black-format radio stations for not giving a fair share of air time to records generated by musicians within the community.

But important as trade organizations and self-promotion may be, the public's interest in their music will ultimately be the determining factor for most independents. That interest seems particularly strong in the San Francisco area, where more than 100 independent singles and LPs were released last year. They've become a kind of cause célèbre, garnering the respect and attention of the press and even a few of the major radio stations. Some of their artists, like Grisman, will be sought out by major labels looking for the headliners of tomorrow. But most will remain beautiful dark horses, running to preserve musical freedom and innovation in an industry that too often abuses the animal in order to win the race. ■

Records

SUSAN ELLIOTT
KEN EMERSON
TODD EVERETT
TOBY GOLDSTEIN
DON HECKMAN
JOHN STORM ROBERTS

BILL SCHMITT
SAM SUTHERLAND
KENNETH J. TERRY
NICK TOSCHES
KEN TUCKER
JOHN S. WILSON

London Town: So What's Wrong with Silly Love Songs?

by Toby Goldstein

Wings: London Town. Paul McCartney, producer. Capitol SW 11777, \$7.98. Tape: •• 4XT 11777. •• 8XT 11777. \$7.98.

I'll tell you what's wrong with silly love songs. Too often they degenerate into terminal wimpiness. Wings's last studio album, the 1976 "At the Speed of Sound," was ripe with this brand of melodic milk, as particularly manifested in the above-mentioned smash single. But perhaps the intervening two years and the group's world tour have toughened up Paul McCartney's compositional abilities, along with his gifted fingers.

Or perhaps it's the departure of two members and a jolly, productive month recording on shipboard in the Virgin Islands. In any case, "London Town" exhibits a sense of purpose Wings hasn't shown since their divine "Band on the Run." It is actually a new McCartney release, since Paul takes production credit, sings all the lead vocals, and writes everything himself or with guitarist Denny

Laine. Fortunately, he is neither tempted by accessible blandness nor pressured to compose immediate hits, his two nemeses on "Speed of Sound." There are probably fewer hit-bound tracks on this fifty-minute disc than on Wings's last several, but it may be a far better album because of that.

"London Town" runs a musical gamut that stretches from the familiar, attractive McCartney ballads to cuts that bear a reggae lilt, tunes with the superficial gaiety of a music hall, and, most fortuitously, several numbers that recall his Beatle belting days. And both *I've Had Enough* and *Name and Address* are exact opposites of past easy repetitions of "I love you and rock & roll," exhibiting a new willingness to write angry lyrics. Lines such as "I earn the money and you take it away," and "Maybe loving you is more than one man can do," may not insure domestic tranquility in the McCartney household, but their expression of real, complex feelings makes him a more complete artist.

At the same time, one couldn't imagine a Wings album without its positive statements, best exemplified here by *With a Little Luck*. This song manages to convey restrained optimism. McCartney's voice dominates the track, over a simple instrumental arrangement, compelling attention the way it did on *Hey Jude*, albeit less substantially.

"London Town" skillfully blends immediately accessible songs with those whose meaning becomes clear only after repeated exposure. Never on any McCartney album has a lyric sheet been as absolutely necessary, for without it, the deceptively slow-paced *Famous Groupies*' extraordinary words might be lost. This is a number that's sure to have the gossipmongers analyzing who its subject(s) might be. One thing's for sure—McCartney has moved far beyond simple rhyming. He uses that technique only once, on *Children Children*, which is best accepted as a nursery rhyme.

He admits, "Hey, did you know that I'm always going back in time . . . I'm the backwards traveller," echoing a plea he made a full decade ago on the Beatles' White album. "Can you take me back where I came from?" On "London Town," he at last recalls where he came from, after having reconstructed the interim years in a manner suitable to his current interests. He easily could have subtitled this LP "Revolution Number 10."



Wife Linda



Paul McCartney



Denny Laine

Amazing Rhythm Aces: Burning the Ballroom Down. Barry "Byrd" Burton, producer. ABC AA 1063, \$7.98. Tape: •• 5 1063AA, \$7.98.

The Amazing Rhythm Aces have been labeled as "southern rock" and "western swing," tags liable to be slapped on any young group that mixes rock and jazz influences into their music and doesn't wear rhinestones. Certainly their songs range beyond the contents of the average red-neck jukebox.

Their base is contemporary country, which of itself has variety to spare, and they use that variety to the full. *I Pit the Mother and the Father* (*When the Kids Move Away*) is a song about the plight of the old, given a very early bluegrass backing. One track, *The Spirit Walk*, is almost old-timey spiritual singing. *Burning the Ballroom Down* marvelously mixes a haunting ballad opening with a driving main theme in which lead singer Russell Smith uses echoes of Bob Dylan to very personal effect. In a self-written piece that is pure Chicago blues (itself a displaced and electrified southern sound), Smith manages to pull off that extreme rarity: A successful piece of white-boy-sings-black in which (like Joe Cocker and almost nobody else) he sounds to the manner born.

The big letdown is *Ashes of Love*. A large part of the brilliance of *Third Rate Romance*, from their first album, was the subtlety with which they used a Mexican tinge to evoke a kind of sleazy sweetness. *Ashes* tries the same effect and doesn't—really badly doesn't—make it. Instrumentally it has a lot of charm, but the melody is weak, the lyrics awful, and Smith's vocal inevitably second-rate. Which is a shame, for first and last and in between, what makes the Amazing Rhythm Aces is Russell Smith's singing: laidback, hungover, self-doubting and—almost always—classic.

J.S.R.

Jimmy Buffett: Son of a Son of a Sailor. Norbert Putnam, producer. ABC AA 1046, \$7.98. Tape: •• 5 1062AA, \$7.98.

Last year's *Margaritaville* brought Jimmy Buffett the fame and money he had deserved since 1970, when his first album, "Down to Earth," was released by Barnaby Records. Buffett is one of the most literate songwriters of our time. His music is as obsessed with the sea and with liquor as it is with love and sex, at times seeming closer to the American literary tradition than to the current of popular music.

Of the nine songs here, only *Livingston Saturday Night* (a gelt version of the original, which he performed in the

1975 film *Rancho Deluxe*) doesn't deal with flux. Flying Dutchmen in tennis shoes, latter-day sea dogs, tropical isles, Midwestern Holiday Inns—these are the personae and settings of Buffett's mind. *Son of a Son of a Sailor*, *The Last Line*, and *African Friend* are all autobiographical. And while he has a distressing tendency to view his life as a pre-War expatriate novel in which romance lumbers dangerously close to pomposity, he rarely hits the depths of pretension plumbed by most of America's self-styled tortured troubadours.

Buffett is at his best when he celebrates profligacy for its own sake, and not for the sake of romance. *Cheeseburger in Paradise* glorifies ground beef with an enthusiasm that resembles religious frenzy. *Fool Button*, to my mind the high point of the album, is a song of endless roaring, reprehensible behavior, and the joy of sin. The band gets better with each album. Fingers Taylor, always the star of the group, further solidifies his position as the last of the crazy mouth harp players, and the Little Walter power he brings to Buffett's poetic lyrics is one of the unique and beautiful sounds in the air today.

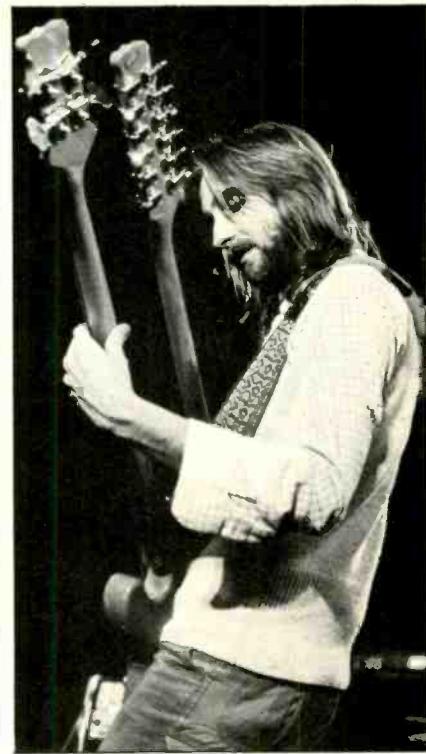
N.T.

Genesis: And Then There Were Three. David Hentschel & Genesis, producers. Atlantic SD 19173, \$7.98. Tape: •• CS 19173, • TP 19173, \$7.98.

In the beginning there were five. Lead vocalist Peter Gabriel left after the release of "The Lamb Lies down on Broadway" and guitarist Steve Hackett struck out on his own last year after the band's tour ended. Though Genesis retains its folk-rooted electric sound, "And Then There Were Three" lacks the consistency of the group's last studio LP, "Wind & Wuthering," and the previous live album, "Seconds Out."

Hackett's recent departure is not the problem. The major difference between this album and its immediate predecessors lies in the writing and the arrangements. Especially in the songs by keyboardist Tony Banks, the synthesizer-dominated sound tends to be harsh and monochromatic. Moreover, thickly clotted textures throughout reduce the impact of some excellent tunes, particularly *Down and Out* and *Burning Rope*. And even when the music takes wing, the lyrics often fall flat. *Ballad of Big*, for instance, possesses a great instrumental hook, but its story line seems to have been lifted from a Grade Z Western. Lyrically, *Undertow* and *Burning Rope* are not only trite, but pretentious.

There are some good selections though. Both *Snowbound* and *Say It's*



Genesis' Mike Rutherford

Alright Joe, composed by Mike Rutherford, act as showpieces for his acoustic guitar, Banks's virtuoso keyboards, and drummer Phil Collins' sensitive vocals. Banks and Collins generate a swinging jam on *The Lady Lies*, a sardonic song of love betrayed that recalls *The Lamia* from "The Lamb." The LP's only real love song is *Follow You Follow Me* a cleverly arranged pop tune that features a kalimba rhythm track and points to a new direction for Genesis.

K.J.T.

Dirk Hamilton: Meet Me at the Crux. Elektra 6E 125, \$7.98. Tape: •• TC5 125, • ET8 125, \$7.98.

It's possible that Dirk Hamilton may be the most important singer-songwriter on the Elektra/Asylum roster. To these ears, he's certainly the most interesting, delivering what better-known composer/performers only promise. He's bright, hip, more than a little crazy, and a finely developed stage performer. Who else maintains all of those qualities in equal quantity?

Hamilton's voice and some of his writing are of the same Van Morrison school responsible for, for instance, Bruce Springsteen. While the connection is obvious, Hamilton manages to sound "like" Morrison without sounding "like" Springsteen—quite an achievement.

"Meet Me at the Crux" is his third album, his first for Elektra. The first two, for ABC, were produced by Gary Katz.



Hamilton—no sellout here

There's no producer credit on "Crux," apparently because a number of hands were involved. But the record suffers no loss of unity and is consistently strong from one end to the other.

The song that is intended to, and probably will, receive the most attention is *Mouth Full of Suck*, a somewhat Dylan-esque diatribe against individuals Hamilton has worked with in the past. You'll recognize the types; they exist in any business. Also included is a put-down of television and its audience that could cause the listener to swear off the tube for weeks. And yet, like Randy Newman, he is capable of more than incisive sarcasm. *Billboard on the Moon* contains the kind of imagery that more pretentious writers, calling themselves "poets," can only strive for.

Hamilton may catch on. He certainly deserves to. In fact, this may be the last opportunity to hear him in raw form, still free from responsibilities to anyone other than himself. On the other hand, he sounds like a person who would die—or kill—before he'd sell out. It's a great part of what's to recommend him. T.E.

Etta James: Deep in the Night. Jerry Wexler, producer. Warner Bros. BSK 3156, \$7.98. Tape: M5 3156, M8, 3156, \$7.98.

Etta James's turbulent career makes most hard-luck stories sound like paid vacations. Although her powerful voice and unbridled style earned her several of the earliest r&b million-sellers, personal and contractual hurdles confined her to relative obscurity from the late '60s onward. Now that she's signed with a major label and teamed with a respected producer, she's understandably confident,

and it shows throughout "Deep in the Night."

Instead of using unconventional material as a format for revising her style, she and her producer have chosen a variety of songs that can be translated into urgent, primal blues. As a result, a potentially fragmentary eclectic exercise achieves a winning coherence, exemplified by the singer's success in transforming such unlikely works as Alice Cooper's *Only Women Bleed* and the Eagles' *Take It to the Limit* into personal statements.

Less surprising but no less impressive are James's performances on both classic and contemporary r&b selections. In the sheer force of her singing, as well as the gospel-inflected approach at the heart of her style, she is a vivid reminder of the original potency of the blues. Although fully capable of the sly mannerisms that too often pass for personal style in contemporary r&b, she concentrates instead on pure feeling. So, one of the set's more obvious choices, Bert Berns's and Jerry Ragavoy's *Piece of My Heart*, becomes riveting instead of predictable. When she vows that she'll prove how tough a woman can be, it's impossible to challenge that perfect balance of raw pain and nearly chiding resolve.

Wexler's production follows an approach that was refined in the early '70s: The songs begin with limber rhythm arrangements designed to propel the singer's performance without overshadowing. He may have added more instrumentation than purists would ask for, but he wisely emphasizes brass and reed colors rather than strings to give the arrangements a warmer, more intimate atmosphere. The conscious eclecticism has led to a few awkward moments, notably Kiki Dee's *Sugar on the Floor*. But James's ease with equally offbeat pieces, like the classic title song and the honky-tonk chestnut *Lovesick Blues*, easily overshadows the lapses. S.S.



Etta James—back at last



Willie Nelson—a special kind of genius

Willie Nelson: Stardust. Booker T. Jones, producer. Columbia JC 35305, \$7.98. Tape: JCT 35305, JCA 35305, \$7.98.

Willie Nelson, since the death of Lefty Frizzell, has held the top position among country songwriters. As a singer, however, he has more in common with the pop crooners of the Forties and early Fifties. Last year, he recorded a wonderful tribute to Lefty Frizzell. This set pays homage to the pop composers who have done as much to shape his genius as the western swing and honky-tonk composers have. The songs cover a wide period, from 1926 (*Someone to Watch over Me*) to 1955 (*Unchained Melody*), and the mood is generally somber, even on such pieces as *On the Sunny Side of the Street*. (Nelson could no doubt cut a version of *Happy Birthday* that would inspire a handful of suicides.)

The most striking aspect of "Stardust" is his use of the same country musicians (with the addition of Booker T. Jones) he normally employs to cover this material. This results in a powerfully striking rendition of songs that are considered to be, and at the hands of most men would be, tired standards. Once again Nelson shows himself to be a man of his own will and his own particular genius. No Lone Star beer, no schlocky Outlaw tropes, nary a mention of cowboys or Texas is to be found here. Who needs Luckenbach when there's *Moonlight in Vermont*? You tell 'em, Willie. N.T.

The O'Jays: So Full of Love. Various producers. Philadelphia International JZ 35355, \$7.98. Tape: JZT 35355, JZA 35355, \$7.98.

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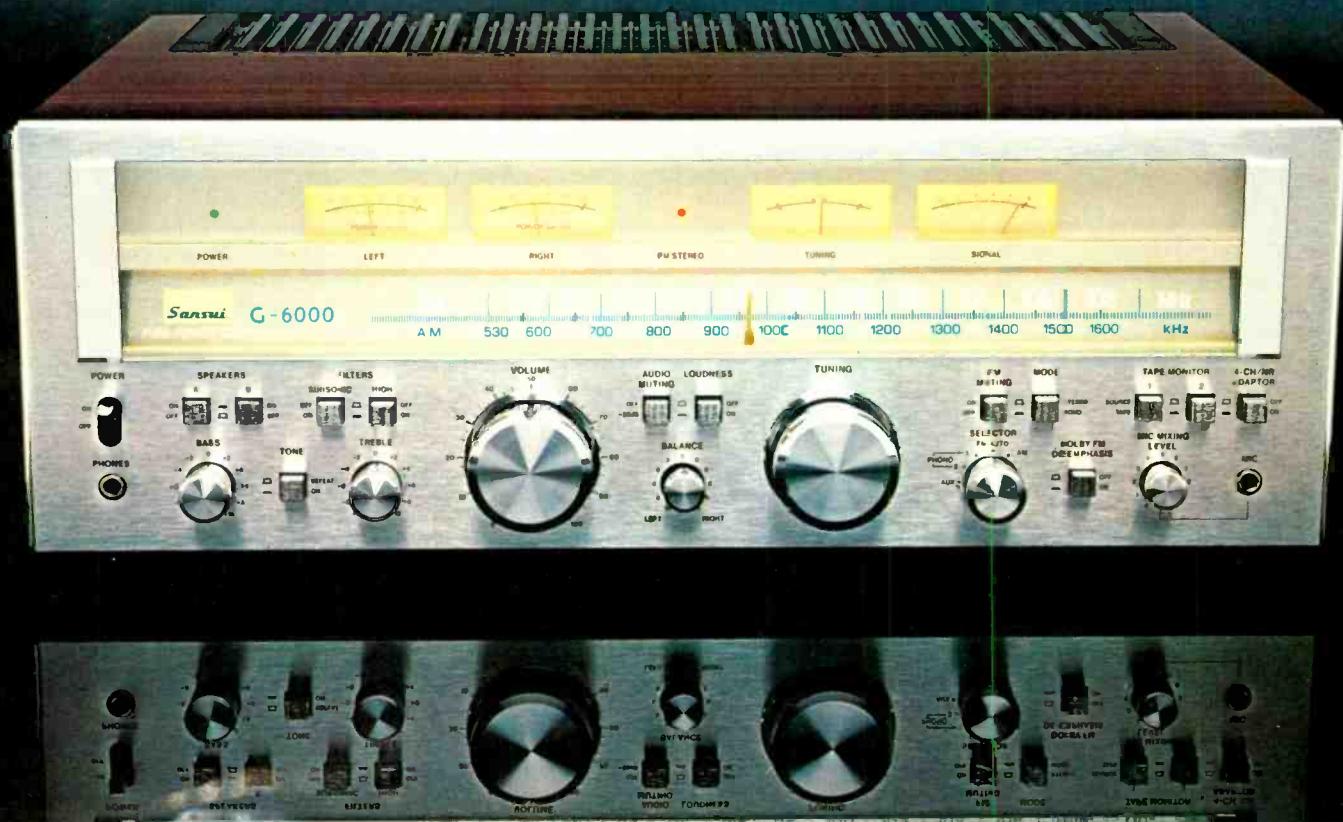
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The O'Jays—still way ahead of their league

worn rails on which it runs, is its sense of balance. There's the balance among the voices of Eddie Levert, Walter Williams, and Dennis Williams—all straight from church, but with enough variety of range, tone, and style to stand out individually. There's the balance between the principals' tell-it-like-it-is soul style and the sweeter harmonies of the backup singers. There's the balance between the (by now) traditionally searing, soaring numbers like *Sing My Heart Out* and the light boop-a-doop of *Use Ya Be My Girl*.

Even the production is balanced. With so many cooks—Gamble and Huff, Thom Bell, the O'Jays themselves, and Bunny Sigler—the broth is not spoiled, but enriched. For once the frame, so to speak, doesn't keep getting into the picture. Schmaltz is kept low key, and flashes of simplicity light up the horizon. Even in the heavy-strings ballads, plenty of space is left for the O'Jays. The lyrics, too, are simple—but not quite simplistic. The notion on *Cry Together* that love affairs need communication may fall short of Revelation. But it's a big step into the adult world for a style usually dedicated to the daft proposition that lurve (or sex) is all it takes.

Simplicity and clarity are the great strengths of the O'Jays. Their many, many years out there have given them a polished ease, an ability to float where other men too often force, and a rare gift for understatement in an inherently overstated idiom.

J.S.R.

Carly Simon: Boys in the Trees. Arif Mardin, producer. Elektra 6E 128. \$7.98. Tape: ••TC5 128. ••ET8 128. \$7.98.

As a songwriter/singer, Carly Simon is one of the few women who can be ex-

tremely personal without being either obscure or wimpy. For the most part, her imagery works for her concept, not vice versa, and if she sings about a lost love or a man done her wrong, she does so with defiant self-understanding or simple putdown—ne'er a weep for me phrase.

"Boys in the Trees" is her first collaboration with producer Arif Mardin, who by and large puts forth her moods and images with taste and subtlety. Mardin is a string arranger of high repute with an imaginative ear for all instruments, both acoustic and electric. As a result, orchestration here is a veritable potpourri ranging from acoustic guitar, bass, autoharp, and brandy glasses on *For Old Times Sake* to full-stops discoit on *Tranquillo (Melt My Heart)*. His violin counter-melody on Carly's and James Taylor's superb rendering of the Everly Brothers classic *Devoted to You* is nothing short of brilliant in its extreme simplicity and appropriateness.

It's when Mardin forgets there's a song with special needs and a rather light-voiced singer present that he gets into trouble. *Haunting* possesses a lovely melody, and its acappella opening allows Carly's high-toned, smoky voice to create a delicate—yes, haunting—mood. But then Local 802 arrives in an arrangement that conjures up images of a *Ben Hur* film epic. Horses, chariots, and a backup chorus of thousands ooh, aah, and collectively ooze their way down the side of a Middle Eastern mountain, burying an intimate, ethereal song and singer in their dust-filled clamor. But the depersonalization of Carly through overkill (and third place in the mix) happens only on two other cuts (*You're the One* and *For Old Times Sake*) and to a much lesser degree.



Carly—in good form

Carly continues to be a good storyteller. *In a Small Moment* describes the development of the child's tendency to tell a tall tale into the woman's tendency to cheat on her lover. The title cut seems to harken back to childhood imagination as well. With the exception of a rather innocuous "la la la la la" bridge, it's personal but intriguing and features some nice acoustic guitar work from both the writer and her husband. Speaking of her husband (all that talent under one household roof is frightening), Taylor's *One Man Woman* is one of the stronger uptempo cuts, with the Mardin/Taylor/Simon collaboration on *Tranquillo* outdoing it in sheer energy and irresistibility. It's what you might call class disco, containing a substantive lyric, a verse with a melody, and superb vocal and horn arranging on the hook chorus. The least successful cut is *De Bat (Fly in Me Face)*, which, despite James's on-the-nose vocal arrangement, is just too cute.

Carly's voice is in good form, her upper register still conveying an easy urgency on the uptempo numbers and a vulnerability on the slower ones, and her lower register ringing through with mature, oft-sexy clarity. Now, about that coverphoto....

S.E.

Ringo Starr: Bad Boy. Vini Poncia, producer. Portrait JR 35378. \$7.98. Tape: ••JRT 35378. ••JRA 35378. \$7.98.

To say that this is Ringo Starr's best solo album in some time isn't necessarily a strong recommendation. Following his first collaboration with producer Richard Perry, Starr's albums have by and large failed to capture the vocalist/drummer's admittedly hard to pin down appeal. He's no singer, yet when paired

Rock Soundtracks: American Hot Wax, The Last Waltz, FM

by Sam Sutherland



Chuck Berry in American Hot Wax



Robbie Robertson in The Last Waltz

Rock & roll, like outer space, is currently under exploration by Hollywood. Although the full range of music-theme films in release or production encompasses disco, Broadway, and pop, rock is clearly the leader in the soundtrack sales boom. Yet if the movie industry recognizes rock's commercial potential, it has yet to grasp either its actual subject matter or its audience's tastes, which may explain why the LP packages prove generally more satisfying than the films they're drawn from.

The three recent rock features under consideration here—*FM*, *The Last Waltz*, and *American Hot Wax*—take different dramatic approaches. The first opts for a strained multiple-character format and garbled plot line, and pushes the music aside; the second fuses documentary with scripted exposition and achieves a hybrid; and the last balances dramatic and musical elements fairly evenly. Together, their LPs form a casual triptych of rock history: “American Hot Wax” uses both oldies and faithful recreations of late '50s classics to illustrate the intensity of disc jockey Alan Freed’s hold over his audience; “The Last Waltz” unites a significant cross-section of late '60s songwriters/performers with the Band, excellent in both areas themselves; and “FM” summarizes contemporary radio’s programming synthesis of low-keyed “progressive” rock with

commercial proven hits.

The “Hot Wax” LP draws much of its authenticity from the original versions of the '50s hits heard throughout the film. These are anthologized on the second disc, with the first containing familiar '50s titles as rendered by the movie's fictional groups. “The Delights,” for instance, tackle the Bobettes’ *Mister Lee* in a nearly perfect rendering that serves to illustrate producer Kenny Vance’s success with the film’s live performance. That quartet, the more dramatically prominent “Chesterfields,” and other stand-ins are offset by performances from Jerry Lee Lewis, Chuck Berry, and Screamin’ Jay Hawkins. For those listeners who hear these songs for the first time in the film’s context, the affection and craft behind the re-creations is winning. But ultimately the soundtrack’s impact will depend on whether you still have the originals.

“The Last Waltz,” on the other hand, offers us a decidedly pedigreed cast of supporting performers who showed up for the Band’s last formal concert at Winterland in San Francisco in 1976. Five of the six sides document that concert, with the remaining songs culled from additional footage shot on a Hollywood sound stage. This permits a broad view of the Band not only as performers, but as accompanists for Bob Dylan, Muddy Waters, Joni Mitchell, Van Mor-

rison, Neil Young, Dr. John, Ronnie Hawkins, and even Neil Diamond. That generosity with the spotlight extends to the “studio” side as well, where Emmylou Harris and the Staple Singers join the group for *Evangeline* and *The Weight*, respectively.

Whether in spite of or as a result of that lineup, the concert coverage sounds curiously dissipated when stretched over five sides. There are some high spots, to be sure, in the performances of Morrison, Young, and Waters, but some of the likeliest successes prove disappointing. Dylan’s brief set, for example, never really approaches the best moments on “After the Flood,” restricting the value of these tracks to historic documentation. The Band is as polished as ever, and that may be the problem: these performances don’t supersede earlier live recordings both with Dylan (on “Flood”) and on their own *“Rock of Ages.”* Since those were both two-record sets, these are second and even third recorded renditions. Only Side 6, which offers four new songs (including Robbie Robertson’s debut as a vocal soloist on *Out of the Blue*), and some guest performances, will prove satisfying to many Band fans.

In *FM*, however, familiarity is the chief commercial hook. With the exception of Steely Dan’s sultry theme song, the live performance of a Jimmy Buffett song, and new songs by Joe Walsh and Randy Meisner, the soundtrack sticks to established artists performing hit songs. If that sounds perilously close to a classy variation on a K-Tel TV hits package, it is. But Gary Katz, who handled the excellent mastering, and compiler Bob Buzaik surpass the film by presenting the music intelligently: Tight segues and intelligent sequencing achieve the seamless momentum of a well-produced FM show, offering listeners without tape gear the chance to hear Steely Dan, Bob Seeger, Steve Miller, Foreigner, and Randy Meisner without commercial interruption. Although there are fifteen other artists on hand as well, the value of this convenience will depend on how many of the hit albums represented you already own. Most of the material is still in print (unlike those TV packages), so the format may prove a dubious reason to shell out the price of a double album. ■

American Hot Wax. Kenny Vance, producer. A&M SP 6500, \$11.98 (two discs). Tape: • CS 6500, • 8T 6500, \$11.98.

The Band: *The Last Waltz*. Robbie Robertson, producer. Warner Bros. 3 WS 3146, \$14.98 (three discs). Tape: • 3 WS 3146, • 3 W 3146, \$14.98.

FM. Rand Holston, producer. MCA 21200, \$13.98 (two discs). Tape: • MCAC 1200, • MCAT 1200, \$13.98.

Continued from page 125

Jansen and lead songwriter/singer/sallow sex symbol Tom Verlaine, puts Verlaine's goonish squawk of a voice up alongside his spacy but specific lead guitar. This in turn gives an emphasis to his blithely obtuse lyrics, which in most cases prove to be harmlessly sappy. All of this would seem to demand the accusation of, "Sellout!" This is, after all, what was considered the most intellectually rigorous and challenging band in the New York Underground. But "Adventure" is extremely inveigling and, yes, adventurous, in a way that makes such criticism beside the point.

Often it is hugely entertaining and witty in a most commercial way. Its thrilling opener, *Glory* ("When I see the glory/I ain't gotta worry"), stands with anything on "Marquee Moon"; it makes you laugh, and you can dance to it as well—a wonderful song. *Foxhole*, high on war-is-surreal sentiment, sports a Verlaine solo and interpolation by Richard Lloyd that recalls Buffalo Springfield quicker than Jimi Hendrix. And Verlaine, aided by the perky bass of Fred Smith and chipper thumps of drummer Billy Ficca, shows a gratifying self-deprecation on *Carried Away*, a bouncy hymn to callousness.

The LP's weakest number is the one that most resembles the tone of "Marquee Moon" in its complexity and intensity. The density of *The Dream's Dream* sounds ponderous, the brief lyric pretentious; it lacks the searing melancholy of "Marquee" and is instead merely self-indulgent. It's the only stumble, though, and far from betraying their initial promise. "Adventure" displays a group with a radical sensibility confident enough to meet the challenge of the commercial marketplace.

K.T.

JAZZ

Al Di Meola: Casino. Al Di Meola, producer. Columbia JC 35277, \$7.98. Tape: ••JCT 35277, ••JCA 35277, \$7.98.

Al Di Meola has become such an astonishingly adept guitarist at such an early age that one almost feels guilty about writing a critical word. The fact remains, however, that with each new outing as either soloist or sideman come more and more technical fireworks, more flash for its own sake. The music here is up to the minute fusion jazz, played by a superstar group of instrumentalists. Steve Gadd is surely one of

the best drummers in the world; Anthony Jackson can play bass with anyone; and former drummer Barry Miles has effectively made the transition from neo-bop to space age keyboard comping. But despite all this class, all this potential creativity, a coldness pervades that has to be traced to Di Meola's leadership and, to the all-surface/no-substance style of his current playing.

Only his obligatory acoustic track, *Fantasia Suite for Two Guitars*, gets past pure technique and into feeling—even passion at times. When Di Meola fully

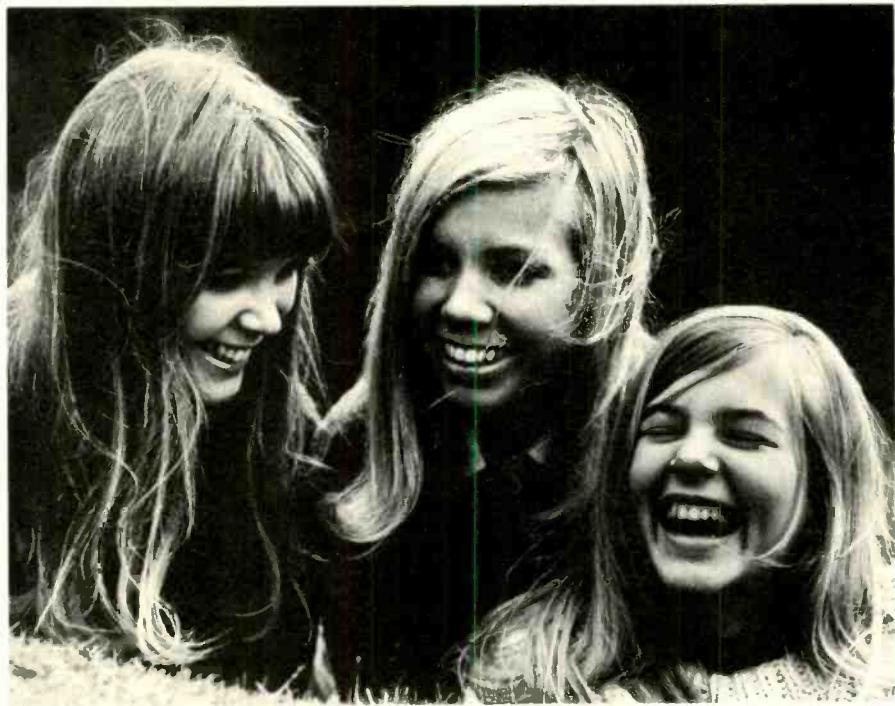
realizes that he can play fast whenever he wants to, perhaps then he will begin to find the music beneath the gloss. D.H.

Focus: Focus Con Proby. Yde de Jong, producer. Harvest ST 11721, \$6.98.

Tape: ••4XT 11721, ••8XT 11721, \$7.98.

Tys van Leer: Nice to Have Met You. Ralph MacDonald & Tom Scott, producers. Columbia JC 35345, \$7.98. Tape: ••JCT 35345, ••JCA 35345, \$7.98.

Continued on page 131



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CIRCLE 14 ON PAGE 89

Tex-Mex and Zydeco: The Role of the Accordion

by John Storm Roberts

It's a safe bet that the accordion would rank low on any American's list of favorite instruments. Yet it has played a leading role in at least two important regional American styles: Chicano, also known as *norteño* (northern) or Tex-Mex, and the French-language black music from the Louisiana bayous called *zydeco*.

Though it's based on northern Mexican music, Tex-Mex is very much its own thing. Its favorite rhythms are those of the waltz and the polka, and older Chicano accordionists claim that their art is adapted from the music of the Czechs and Germans who worked on the Texas railroads in the 1890s and 1900s. But that may be an oversimplification—both the waltz and the polka were popular in Mexico itself from the mid-nineteenth century on. Besides the accordion, the Chicano style also favored guitar groups, both for dance music and for backing the narrative ballads called *corridos*. In fact the use of accordion was limited mainly to instrumentals until the late '30s and early '40s.

One of the men most responsible for its growth in popularity was Narciso Martinez, the subject of one of the ten volumes in a massive Folklyric Records reissue of Chicano music from the 1920s to the 1950s ("Texas-Mexican Border

Music"). Martinez, known as *El Huracan del Valle*, recorded polkas, mazurkas, schottisches, waltzes, and even blues for Bluebird and Victor. It has been said that he accomplished for the accordion what B. B. King did for the electric guitar in blues. By dropping the bass end of the instrument and concentrating on the upper register, he forged a personal style that became an integral part of all *norteño* accordion playing. The material on this LP, mostly accordion with twelve-string guitar backing, is nothing like the mariachi and marimba music that Americans usually associate with the Mexican culture. True, Chicano blends Mexican idioms with those of Central European (one of Martinez' singles was even released on a Polish-American label under the pseudonym of Polski Kwartet) but the result is pure-root Texan.

Flaco Jimenez, the son of another popular accordionist of Martinez' time, is currently the reigning *norteño* accordionist. Though his style is regarded as flashy by older enthusiasts, he has become an in-group name among Texas rock fans, touring and recording with Ry Cooder. "Flaco Jimenez y Su Conjunto," on Folklyric's mother label Arhoolie, shows Jimenez as he played with Texas Mexicans during the '50s and

early '60s, by which time the accordion supported vocals as well as being featured on instrumental solos. Whether backing *rancheras* (Mexican country music) or a *corrido* about Hurricane Beulah, Jimenez' lilting, driving, cascading playing is '50s *norteño* music at its height.

A writer in *Rolling Stone* once called Jimenez "the Chuck Berry of the squeeze box." But there's a better contender for that title: Clifton Chenier, the king of Louisiana *zydeco*. Like *norteño*, *zydeco* is an American hybrid of a foreign style, though in this case the link is less direct. In the late eighteenth century, French-Canadian refugees from the wars with the British found their way down into the then-French territory of Louisiana and settled in the bayous around Lake Charles. The dance music of these Cajuns, often waltz-based, developed a distinct fiddle sound (which has since fed into country music), and an equally powerful accordion style. The Cajun culture, originally white, rubbed off on the local blacks, who blended this music first with blues, then with rhythm & blues creating *zydeco*. (The term is said to be a distortion of a tune called *Les Haricots*—roll the r.)

Though Chenier didn't invent *zydeco*, he did develop it, bringing it to a wider audience with a scattering of singles that found their way onto the r&b charts during the 1960s. Like Jimenez, he stuck closely to local tastes. But while Jimenez' dancers were not at all interested in rock, Chenier's were heavily into r&b. As a result his music has always been an almost equal hybrid, interweaving r&b riffs with French flourishes. But his new album, "Clifton Chenier and His Red Hot Louisiana Band," suggests that *zydeco* as a separate form is on its way out. Only one of the ten tracks, an enchanting syncopated waltz called *Tante Na Na*, preserves the strong Cajun feel of the original style. The rest are blues: Louisiana blues, Chenier's blues, accordion-backed and sometimes French-sung blues. As such it's magnificent, but there's a lot of blues in the world and not much *zydeco*, so I also find it a little sad.

An ironic tailpiece: In case you don't recognize Narciso Martinez' name, several of his recordings were issued in Cajun territory under the name of Louisiana Pete.



Clifton Chenier—the king of zydeco

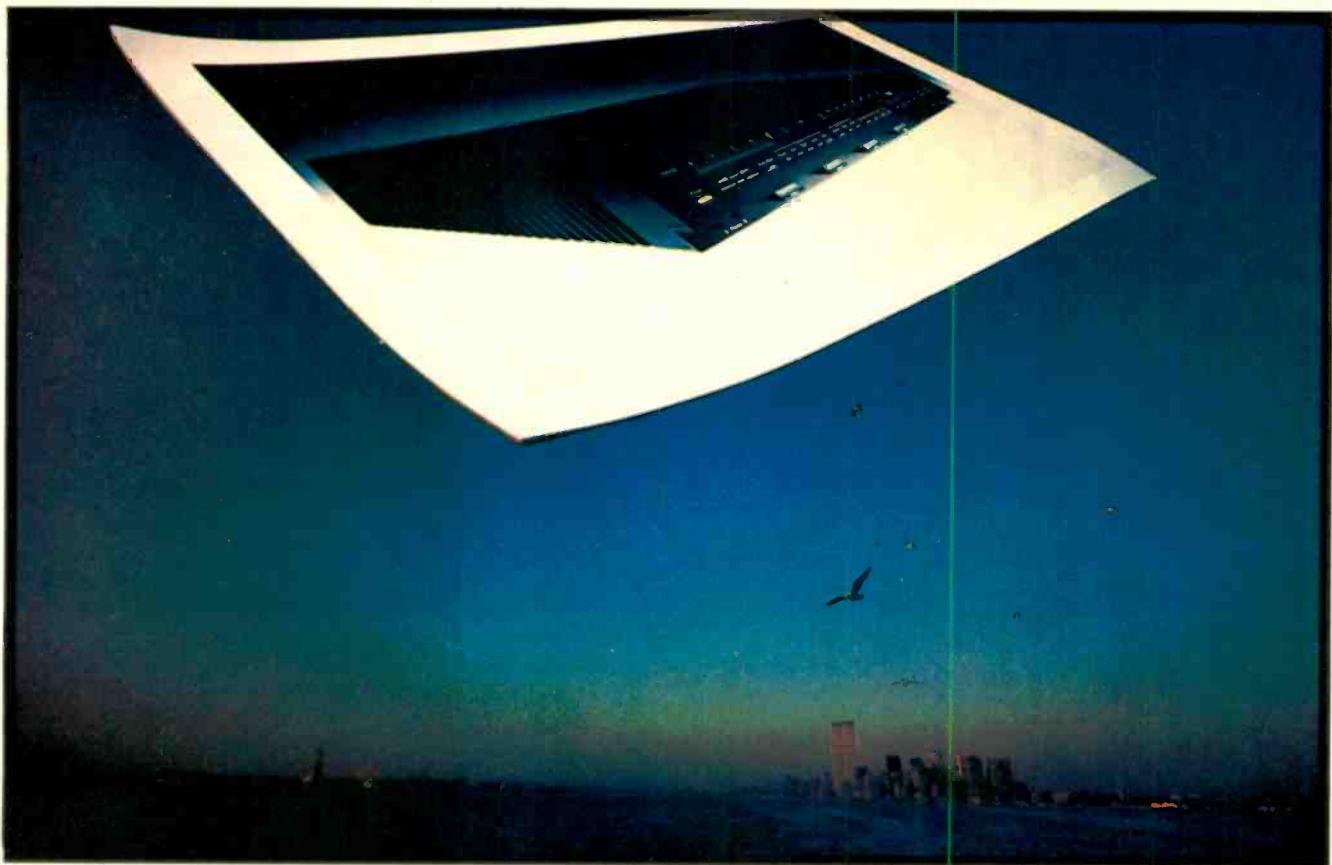


Flaco Jimenez—Tex-Mex accordionist

Texas Mexican Border Music Vol. 10:
Narciso Martinez. Chris Strachwitz, producer. *Folklyric* 9017, \$6.98.
Flaco Jimenez y Su Conjunto. Chris Strachwitz & José Morante, producers. *Arhoolie* 3007, \$6.98.

Clifton Chenier and His Red Hot Louisiana Band. Chris Strachwitz, producer. *Arhoolie* 1078, \$6.98. Tape: •• 5 1078, •• B-8TA 1078, \$7.98.

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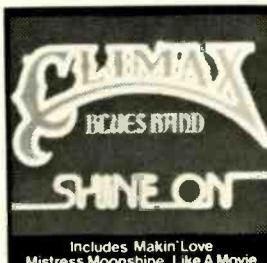
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Pop/Rock

BY TODD EVERETT

Karen Alexander: *Voyager.* Bob Morin, producer. *Elektra 6E 130.* \$7.98. Tape: •• *TC5 130.* •• *ET8 130.* \$7.98.

We don't hear much from Alexander—two albums in several years' time—as she lives in Iran and comes to the States chiefly, it appears, to record. Her LPs are purely American in sound, and credit's due anybody who can make something interesting out of the song title *Bermuda Triangle*. Her music is worth seeking out.



Climax Blues Band: Shine On. Climax Blues Band & Peter Henderson, producers. *Sire SRK 6056.* \$7.98. Tape: •• *M5 6056.* •• *M8 6056.* \$7.98.

Success has gone to these guys' heads. Colin Cooper, second lead vocalist with Peter Haycock, sang the band's hit *Couldn't Get It Right*, and he sings lead on half of this their followup album. Big hits mean big budget: they've sprung for more studio time, even a female chorus on one song, and the blues sound has become a lot more pop in the process. Well-performed as it is, this album is slanted more toward Fleetwood Mac fans than Climax fans. They've paid their dues, so I wish 'em well, but a couple of livelier tunes are in order for the next album.

Henry Gross: Love Is the Stuff. Terry Cashman & Tommy West, producers. *Lifesong JZ 35280.* \$7.98. Tape: •• *JZT 35280.* •• *JZA 35280.* \$7.98.

Anybody who's a sucker for anthems should go for *Rock 'n' Roll, I Love You*, despite Gross's lazy rhyming of "heart" with "heart." The title song is a soul ballad that should delight Young Rascals fans, and there are—of course—plenty of Beach Boys derivations. Gross is a talented and commercial songwriter, and the album's sound is immaculate.

Bryn Haworth: Grand Arrival. Audie Ashworth, producer. *A&M SP 4682.* \$7.98. Tape: •• *CS 4682.* •• *8T 4682.* \$7.98.

An English folkie who has discovered God and come to Nashville to sing about it, Haworth had the good sense to employ the services of Ashworth, whose credits include J.J. Cale, Connie Cato, and Leon Russell's "Hank Wilson" album. The result is tasteful, tuneful, and easy to take; a refreshingly nice set of songs. The religious angle isn't a hard sell; nonbelievers shouldn't be put off.



Garland Jeffreys: One-Eyed Jack. David Spinoza & Garland Jeffreys, producers. *A&M SP 4681.* \$7.98. Tape: •• *CS 4681.* •• *8T 4681.* \$7.98.

Jeffreys is a more than competent songwriter. He's unusually articulate and has an undeniable flair for hook construction. His singing is tuneful when appropriate, gruff when called for, and clear enough that no lyric sheet is necessary (though one is included). Playing and production throughout is straightforward, uncluttered, and frequently imaginative. The only question remaining is subject matter: Do we really care about what it's like to grow up, of mixed racial ancestry, in a New York ghetto? Some will; others would rather hear about more universal subjects. Jeffreys' interpretation of *No Woman No Cry*, by the way, is a treasure.



Helen Schneider: Let It Be Now. Tony Camillo, producer. *Windsong BXL 1-2710.* \$7.98. Tape: •• *BXK 1-2710.* •• *BXS 1-2710.* \$7.98.

Schneider is a female Barry Manilow, though with her sights set slightly more toward "class" and somewhat less toward "commercial." Producer Camillo is chiefly associated with r&b and disco, though "Let It Be Now" falls into neither category. All concerned can be proud of the album: whether it will appeal to radio programmers remains to be seen—but when was the last time you heard a "class" act on the radio?

The Sutherland Brothers: Down to Earth. Bruce Welch & Glen Spreen, producers. *Columbia JC 35293.* \$7.98. Tape: •• *JCT 35293.* •• *JCA 35293.* \$7.98.

This may be the Sutherlands' last album to feature one of their strongest attributes, the guitar playing of Tim Renwick. The brothers remain strong songwriters, agreeable singers, and pleasant enough to listen to when you're in an um, mellow mood.

B.J. Thomas: Everybody Loves a Rain Song. Chips Moman, producer. *MCA 3035.* \$7.98. Tape: •• *MCAC 3035.* •• *MCAT 3035.* \$7.98.

Chips Moman has produced many of Thomas' best records through the years: enough so that one wonders why the singer keeps seeking out hacks to work with between LPs with Moman. Moman's a little greedy this time, writing many of the songs himself (though he's a better composer than many producers who try the same hustle), and Thomas is in top voice.



Loudon Wainwright (III): Final Exam. John Lissauer, producer. *Arista AB 4173.* \$7.98. Tape: •• *ATC 4173.* •• *AT8 4173.* \$7.98.

Wainwright's a quick-witted smart-ass, whose writing is sort of a cross between Jonathan Richman's ingenuity and Randy Newman's sarcasm. Many find his observations appealing, at least the first time around. The best cuts here are *Watch Me Rock I'm over Thirty* (strikes close to home) and *Golfin' Blues*, a good idea with insufficient attention paid to its realization.

Continued from page 127

Dutch group Focus scored a mini-hit in the early '70s with *Hocus Pocus*, an ingenious single that incorporated advanced electronics and yodeling. Ever since, they have been searching for the right ingredients to connect with the American rock consciousness again. With "Focus Con Proby" they seem farther away from doing so than ever, revealing an atrophy of creative direction and input. One suspects that they are simply getting bored.

The opening cut, *Wingless*, is a prime example. What lead guitarist Elf Alber possesses in technical ability he lacks in imagination and energy to spur the rest of the band forward. Once in a while, as on the end of *Night Flight*, drummer Steve Smith provides a brief glimmer when he kicks out the jams. But for the most part the tracks wander in a bland, haphazard fashion.

Focus' attempt to inject some degree of color by adding P. J. Proby's vocals doesn't work either. His voice is adequate, but it lacks the distinction the group so badly needs. Worse, it is totally unsuited to their brand of borderline jazz/rock; he seems completely at odds with the band on most cuts, often sounding as if his part had been dubbed in as an afterthought.

Now for the good news. The group's keyboardist and flutist, Tys van Leer, has come out with his own album, "Nice to Have Met You." In sheer energy alone, Van Leer is everything that Focus is not. Most of the cuts are instrumental, upbeat, and slightly funky, thanks to some tasty horn work by the brothers Brecker and coproducer Tom Scott.

Overall, "Nice to Have Met You" indicates a tentative but positive step in a new direction for Van Leer. With the exception of a couple of minor flaws in engineering (his flute often sounds slightly muddy) and the choice of *Hocus Pocus* to open Side 2 (after two or three outings with Focus, this tune is getting a bit worn), there is every indication to expect his next release will be quite strong. B.S.

Stan Getz/Jimmy Rowles: The Peacocks. Stan Getz, producer. Columbia JC 34873, \$7.98. Tape: JCT 34873, JCA 34873, \$7.98.

Something went wrong here. Jimmie Rowles is one of the few classic, two-fisted pianists to emerge from the bebop era, a period more noted for its single-line keyboard stylists. In recent years he has mellowed with the sometimes autumnal, sometimes fiery passions of the middle years, drawing heavily on a career that has ranged from work with



Jordan, Richard Williams (left); Charlie Rouse, Sam Jones, Al Foster (right)

Charlie Parker to Peggy Lee and Billie Holiday. You'd have to think that a performer with those credentials couldn't make a bad recording, even if he wore ski mittens.

Alas, Stan Getz's obtrusive presence has pulled Rowles down the garden path of mediocrity. Ostensibly involved as a producer, Getz couldn't leave well enough alone and insisted upon joining Rowles on virtually every track. Only on the two pieces in which the pianist is left on his own—*Body and Soul* and *Mosaic/Would You Like to Take a Walk*—do we get a sense of his fine, well-seasoned music. At least six more similar tracks would have provided a fine recording.

Getz's playing is, as it has been in recent years, edgy and a bit whiny. When he keeps the intensity level low, as on *What Am I Here For?*, there is a sense of a slowly emerging maturity that bodes well for the future. More often he tumbles notes upon notes, squeals upon squeals, with the carelessness of a bull in a china shop. Another annoyance: The rhythm work of bassist Buster Williams and drummer Elvin Jones is badly recorded. At times it sounds as though Getz forgot to put them back in sync.

with the rest of the group when he did his mixdown. They deserved better, as did Rowles.

D.H.

Duke Jordan Quintet: Duke's Delight. Nils Winther, producer. Inner City IC 2046, \$7.98.

There is more similarity between Duke Jordan and Duke Ellington than a nickname. Despite his emergence among beboppers in the '40s and '50s, Jordan has circumvented those influences much as Thelonious Monk did. Both musicians had their own hallmarks, and both relate directly to Ellington—Jordan through Monk. In fact there are moments on this disc that sound almost like the other Duke himself. The piano introductions, chordal solo backings, melodies, and arrangements are strikingly Ellingtonian. All of this comes together most effectively on Jordan's *Tall Grass*, with his influences forming a strong base for the personal playing styles of his group.

Jordan's ensemble writing, along with the Ellington strain, has the chunky conjunction of trumpet and saxophone that was characteristic of Horace Silver's

Continued on page 136

Country

BY NICK TOSCHES



Marcia Ball: Circuit Queen.
Neil Wilburn, producer. *Capitol ST 11752*, \$6.98. Tape: **4XT 11752**, **8XT 11752**, \$7.98.

This young Texan is the freshest female voice in country music. What is especially pleasing about this debut album is that it is unabashedly country in material and style and not the sort of L.A. carrot-juice country that comes from the mouths of even the most skilled girl singers.

Bobby Bare: Bare. Bobby Bare, producer. *Columbia KC 35314*, \$7.98. Tape: **KCT 35314**, **KCA 35314**, \$7.98.

The first Columbia album by Bobby Bare corrects many of the mistakes of his RCA work. The material does not all sound the same, the arrangements are spirited, and his wife and kids aren't whining in the background. *Big Dupree* and *Finger on the Button* are a joy—nonpartisan red-neck raunch.

Freddy Fender: Swamp Gold. Huey Meaux, producer. *ABC AA 1062*, \$7.98. Tape: **5 1062AA**, **8 1062AA**, \$7.98.

This is a superb collection of fifteen songs from the Texas-Louisiana music midden. It rocks, it swoons, it gets sloppy and cries. And it works both as a history lesson and as a party album. Hear Fender's version of the Johnny Ace classic *The Clock*, and you'll realize why he is one of the last of a valiant, vanishing breed of singers.

Mickey Gilley: Flyin' High. Eddie Kilroy, producer. *Playboy KZ 35099*, \$6.98. Tape: **KZT 35099**, **KZA 35099**, \$7.98.

Jerry Lee Lewis' cousin and imitator second-best through some memorable honky-tonk (*The Power of Positive Drinkin'*), some Texas classics (*It Makes No Difference Now*), and some trash (*Heaven Ain't a Honky Tonk*). As always, Gilley is effervescent, and what he lacks in originality he makes up for in energy.



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DOUG KERSHAW The Louisiana Man

Includes *Jambalaya (On the Bayou)*
Marie Subterranean Homesick Blues



Doug Kershaw: The Louisiana Man. Bob Johnston, producer. *Warner Bros. BSK 3166*, \$7.98. Tape: **M5 3166**, **M8 3166**, \$7.98.

Doug Kershaw, the Cajun crazy man, has always been one of the South's unique and most unpredictable performers. "The Louisiana Man" is his most provocative, bizarre set yet, with swamp-soul versions of Randy Newman's *Marie*, Bob Dylan's *Subterranean Homesick Blues*, and Kershaw's own classic title cut.

Jim Reeves: Nashville '78. Chet Atkins & Anita Kerr, producers. *RCA APL 1-2720*, \$7.98. Tape: **APK 1-2720**, **APS 1-2720**, \$7.98.

Although Jim Reeves is long since dead, every year sees at least a couple of new Reeves albums, compiled mostly from previously released recordings. And they're usually bad. This one is, but they love it in Sweden.

Kenny Rogers & Dottie West: Every Time Two Fools Collide. Larry Butler, producer. *United Artists UALA 864H*, \$7.98. Tape: **CA 864H**, **EA 864H**, \$7.98.

In recent years, Kenny Rogers resurrected his career with a handful of middle-of-the-road country mewlers. He lost some weight, began wearing his shirt collar outside his jacket lapel, and even got himself a girl singing partner. That way, he could perpetrate duets such as *Why Don't We Go Somewhere and Love*, which may very well be the most wretched performance I've ever heard. This album gives further support to the notion that all boy-girl country duos should be cleft and left to die on the side of the road.

Billy Swan: You're OK, I'm OK. Booker T. Jones, producer. *A&M SP 4686*, \$7.98. Tape: **CS 4686**, **8T 4686**, \$7.98.

The very colorful Billy Swan here continues his crusade to revive rockabilly. The material ranges from oldies like the 1960 *Please Help Me, I'm Falling* to fine Swan originals and songs by his legendary friends Otis Blackwell, Doc Pomus, and Kris Kristofferson. As ever, he's a sheer, untranscendent pleasure.



Johnny Cash: I Would Like to See You Again. Larry Butler, producer. *Columbia KC 35313*, \$7.98. Tape: **KCT 35313**, **KCA 35313**, \$7.98.

Country music's most boring and pompous legend continues to bore. The Man in Black indeed.

Bee Gees Complete, Vol. 1. WBP. 71 songs. \$7.95.

The brothers Gibb have been around since Grandma's ingénue days (certainly since long before *Saturday Night Fever*) and have maintained a consistently high level of musical excellence. The notation here is clear and uncomplicated, and the vocal arrangements respect the limits of the human voice. This retrospective includes *New York Mining Disaster*, *I Started a Song*, and other early efforts that presaged the group's current well-deserved success.

Emmylou Harris: Quarter Moon in a Ten Cent Town. CLP. 10 songs. \$5.95.

In this well crafted, two-line piano-vocal folio, editors Milt Okun and Dan Fox have brought the recorded vocal deviations back to the original notation, as explained in their foreword. A worthwhile innovation! However, despite the alluring persona of Ms. Harris (Blanche Dubois cum Mother Maybelle Carter), these lugubrious ballads are strictly from hillbilly heaven.



Emmylou—stripped of stylistic idiosyncrasies

AP—Almo Publications
Big 3—Big 3 Publications
CLP—Cherry Lane Publications
CMC—Chappell Music Corp.
CPP—Columbia Pictures Publications
GM—Glamorous Music
MCA—MCA Music
WBP—Warner Bros. Publications

Elton John's Greatest Hits, Vol. 2. MCA, 10 songs, \$4.95.

Platinum 78 Songbook of the Stars. WBP. 78 songs, \$7.95.

Mr. John has not restricted these "greatest hits" to his own compositions; also included are *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds* and *Pinball Wizard*, two songs I immediately associate with other writer-performers, plus *Don't Go Breaking My Heart*, credited to Ann Orson and Carte Blanche. (Carte Blanche?) Four-color photo pages of unidentified studio personnel add an element of mystery to this otherwise undernourished volume.

An identical version—same key, same typeface, same notes—of *Lucy in the Sky* can be found in Warner Bros.' "Platinum 78 Songbook of the Stars." The number in the title refers to how many songs are in the collection, not to their vintage: *Lucy* herself sports a 1967 copyright, and another beldam, Neil Diamond's *Sweet Caroline*, was spawned in 1969. You will, however, find more recent rock favorites from Fleetwood Mac, Jackson Browne, Linda Ronstadt, and, yes, even the Bee Gees's *Saturday Night Fever* charts.

John Klemmer: The Jazz Styles of John Klemmer. WBP. 19 songs, \$5.95.

This folio consists of nineteen small selections written and recorded by John Klemmer on various albums. In a rather pompous foreword to the proceedings, the composer begs us to treat his compositions well, as they are his "children." Perhaps they should be heard and not seen, for Daddy's music for piano—stripped of recorded embellishments such as sax, wind chimes, conga drums—is moody noodling by a reed man whose fingers are all too idle on the keys. But if you intend to take these tenderlings into your family, you'll find that the folio is cleanly edited and easy to play, and the compositions are brief enough for even limited attention spans.

Claus Ogerman: Gate of Dreams. GM, 5 compositions, \$4.95.

Claus Ogerman's jazz ballet was originally performed at Lincoln Center in 1972 under the title of *Some Times*. (For some reason someone has given it the nom de folio of "Gate of Dreams.") What we have here is its miniature orchestral score reduced for piano. There are many metronomic markings, occasional indications of rhythm patterns for

drum or tambourine, and, here and there, clusters of chord symbols that mysteriously disappear when the score climbs into the upper echelons of polytonality. The printed music, of course, seems barren without the lush layers of sound we have come to expect of an Ogerman recording. But certain passages do have an interesting ethereal quality, and a classically trained pianist might want to try his hand at them.

Kenny Rogers: Ten Years of Gold. CLP. 10 songs, \$5.95.

Mr. Rogers' neighborhood is country: his songs are plaintive and appealing to the heart. The piano vocals are two-line but ingeniously constructed so that the material will sound contemporarily correct when played by a home musician, while also allowing room for improvisation by the well-trained professional. Find a place on your folio shelf for this excellent representation of Rogers' most recent LP.

James Taylor: JT Songbook. WBP. 12 songs, \$6.95.

The growth of James Taylor as an artist has been paralleled by a corresponding maturity in the notation of his material. Previous folios were self-conscious and busy, the transcribers anxious for us to know that they were as "with it" as the composer. But these songs are beautifully Taylored and unabashedly romantic. Even in the Otis Blackwell/Jimmy Jones *Handy Man*, delicious and easy to read surprises await the fingers. Note for note, the folio keeps step with its LP, and high praise is due the anonymous arranger who has made it swing so pleasantly.

Top Hits of 1977. Big 3. 43 songs, \$5.95.

Here is a curious mix of m.o.r. material made popular, though not necessarily published, in 1977: *Tomorrow* from Broadway's *Annie*, *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes* from *Roberta* (1933), 1954's *Pledging My Love*, and the Carole Bayer Sager/Marvin Hamlisch ode to contented cohabitation, *Nobody Does It Better* (which actually was published in 1977). *Handy Man*, the last song in this folio, acknowledges the James Taylor recording on Columbia, but what you're getting here is the original r&b arrangement as performed by writer Otis Blackwell in 1959.

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group in the '50s. His personal piano style is an adaptation of the right-hand, single-note lines that were the essence of bebop piano. But unlike the boppers, he is not concerned with squeezing in as many notes as possible, concentrating more on spacing and time than on boisterous exhibitionism.

This set as a whole has a relaxed, relaxing quality and is full of catchy, hummable tunes. Charlie Rouse on tenor is a strong, lean-toned soloist all through the disc; Richard Williams' trumpet, muted and tentative much of the time, comes shining through in all its beautifully brassy glow only on the swinging *Duke's Delight*. One of the key elements in the disc's success is the vigorous, pulsing sound of Sam Jones's bass, which provides a sturdy propulsive core for all the pieces.

J.S.W.

Muggsy Spanier Group/Frank Signorelli Group: Dixieland Jazz in the Forties. Spanier recorded by Moses Asch. Folkways FJ 2853. \$7.98.

This is a record for those who know what they want and are willing to ignore a great deal to get it. One side is a Muggsy Spanier session made in 1946 with Pee Wee Russell on clarinet, Vic Dickenson on trombone, and Cliff Jackson on piano (plus Bob Casey on bass and Joe Grauso on drums). Despite the fact that it is Spanier's group, it is a showcase for Pee Wee: Pee Wee on his own *Muskogee Blues*, muttering, nattering, and soloing in an achingly lovely manner with Jackson's bubbling tremolos behind him; Pee Wee with his marvelously woe-be-gone sound on *Since My Best Gal Turned Me Down*; Pee Wee of lyrical and unusually pure tone on *I'd Climb the Highest Mountain*; and even Pee Wee singing in a foggy, husky voice that has overtones of the New Orleans singer (Wingy Manone, Louis Prima) on *Take Me to the Land of Jazz*. Along with all this, there is some fine work from Muggsy, his cornet bristling and punching through solos and providing a clarion lead on ensembles. And there are some brief glimpses of jaunty trombone by Vic Dickenson and scampering stride piano by Cliff Jackson. The tunes, which also include *Rosie* and *Red Hot Mama*, are a pleasant departure from the time-worn Dixieland regulars, and, since it is not even listed in Jepson's discography, the session may be counted as a rarity. So far, so good. The sound, unfortunately, is tubby and echoey and the surfaces have the grainy quality of early Decca. But the ear adjusts.

No ear could completely adjust to the second side, however. Pianist Frank Signorelli leads a group that includes Gor-

don Griffin on trumpet, Nick Caiazza on saxophone, and Chauncey Morehouse on drums, among other good musicians. The tunes are a mixture of standards (*Memphis Blues*, *Darktown Strutters Ball*) and hack novelties (*Saxophone Joe*, *Sour Puss Hannah*), complete with dire vocals. Signorelli, Caiazza, and Griffin manage to shine intermittently in these sleazy surroundings, but it is a set that should best be ignored or, if you have the stomach, played for laughs. Nonetheless, for anyone who treasures Pee Wee Russell, the record is worth having. J.S.W.

The Writers. Ralph MacDonald, producer. Columbia JC 35297, \$7.98. Tape: •• JCT 35297, •• JCA 35297, \$7.98

For the most part, bands comprising of studio heavies are about as enjoyable as TV dinners. Too often they resemble the Phantom Express, going nowhere at a hundred miles an hour. Too often they lack an individual voice. Sure, the Writers are heavily into the funk/jazz/Latin fusion that is the current musical equivalent of crabgrass. Certainly, *Star Black* and *Touch Me* are dreary disco-plast, though with a couple of redeeming features. True, guitarists Hugh McCracken and Jeffrey Mironov are glib—though not disagreeably so—rather than fluent.

But this crew is far from faceless. The Writers can play. They're tight, witty (as in a Baroque jest in the opening and coda of *La La La, La, La La La*), and resonant (as in the same piece's mouth-harp solo). *Hey Babe* features some fine, simple writing by Ralph MacDonald and William Salter, with the former achieving a gorgeous bionic dove-like sound on the Syndrum percussion synthesizer and Frank Floyd delivering a marvelous "I mean this" vocal.

This week's Album of the Year "The Writers" may not be, but it leavens the group's efficiency with style, humor, and elegance.

J.S.R.

Snooky Young/Marshal Royal: Snooky & Marshal's Album. Carl E. Jefferson, producer. Concord Jazz 55. \$7.98.

Both Snooky Young and Marshal Royal have been around for a long time. Saxophonist Royal joined Les Hite's band in 1930, Young went into the Jimmie Lunceford trumpet section nine years later. Since then, both have been prominent and active with important bands, including long periods with Basie. This is the first record that Young has ever made as a featured player. Royal has made only one previously, back in the '50s. This anonymity is a consequence of their being valued lead players, which meant

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that they rarely got solos and were not as well known to the public as their soloing colleagues.

This record is an event, both for the two musicians and for the listener. It brings together an unusually compatible group of musicians who are schooled in the swinging big-band techniques, yet have the knowledge and experience to transfer those techniques to a small group situation. During the two decades that Royal was musical director of the Basie band (until 1970) he had one alto solo feature per concert. Though that was more than Young usually got, Young is a much more interesting soloist here, using mutes (particularly the plunger) skillfully and playing both open and muted with a crackling urgency that relates his playing to that of Roy Eldridge. He is a suave, sophisticated swinger while Royal plays with jouncy, jumpy phrasing reminiscent of

new recording a welcome event. He was most active during the late Sixties/early Seventies, and at the time it was difficult to find anyone who was noncommittal about his always-provocative music. Some hated him for his blatant appeals to the subliminal urges of pubescent libido; others responded enthusiastically to the musical complexities that often lurked beneath the surface of his songs.

This set, recorded live in New York City in late 1976, probably won't change the views of either camp. Three or four of the tracks—*Titties & Bear, Honey, Don't You Want a Man Like Me*, and *The Illinois Enema Bandit*—are excursions through his earlier let's shock mom and dad territory. Other titles, such as *Manx Needs Woman* and *Black Page #2*, are examples of the truly remarkable, disjunct, Stravinsky-esque rhythms Zappa can invent when he wants to.

One thing that he can't be faulted for



Zappa and friends—always the ability to provoke

Pete Brown. Royal has a singing tone that is most pronounced on his ballads (*You've Changed*). When he scoops his phrases he immediately reminds one of Johnny Hodges but with his thinner tone he seems closer to Willie Smith.

One of the delights of this disc is the presence of Freddie Green, whose rhythm guitar comes chunking gently through behind the soloists. But it is no more of a delight than Louie Bellson's steady drumming (and a drum solo that is concentrated almost entirely on his snare drum), Ross Tompkins' jaunty, rumbling piano solos, and the firm assurance of Ray Brown's bass. It is a relaxed, swinging session that has the free feeling of musicians doing something that does not often come their way.

J.S.W.

Frank Zappa: Zappa in New York. Frank Zappa, producer. DiscReet/Warner Bros. 2D 2290, \$12.98 (two discs). Tape: ••J5A 2290, ••J8A 2290, \$12.98.

Zappa's public appearances have been rare enough in recent years to make any

is his selection of musicians. Zappa's personal musical excellence obviously makes it impossible for him to feel comfortable around less than first-rate players. This collection is no exception, featuring horn players Mike and Randy Brecker, Lou Marini, Ronnie Cuber, Tom Malone, and drummer Terry Bozzio. Saxophonist Mike Brecker gets a lot of room to play and uses his space well (especially on *Sofa* and *The Purple Lagoon*). Note, too, the extraordinary synthesizer work (*Black Page #2*) of Ruth Underwood.

Zappa talks too much between tracks, desperately trying to find the right slang words to connect with the common man. (Relax, Frank, there's nothing wrong with being bright.) But he can, when he wants to, play excellent guitar. I cannot make the same comment about his singing, which is at best serviceable for the banal stores he has to tell. Still, unlike so much of what we hear today, a Zappa recording can always surprise. For that, we can be thankful.

D.H.

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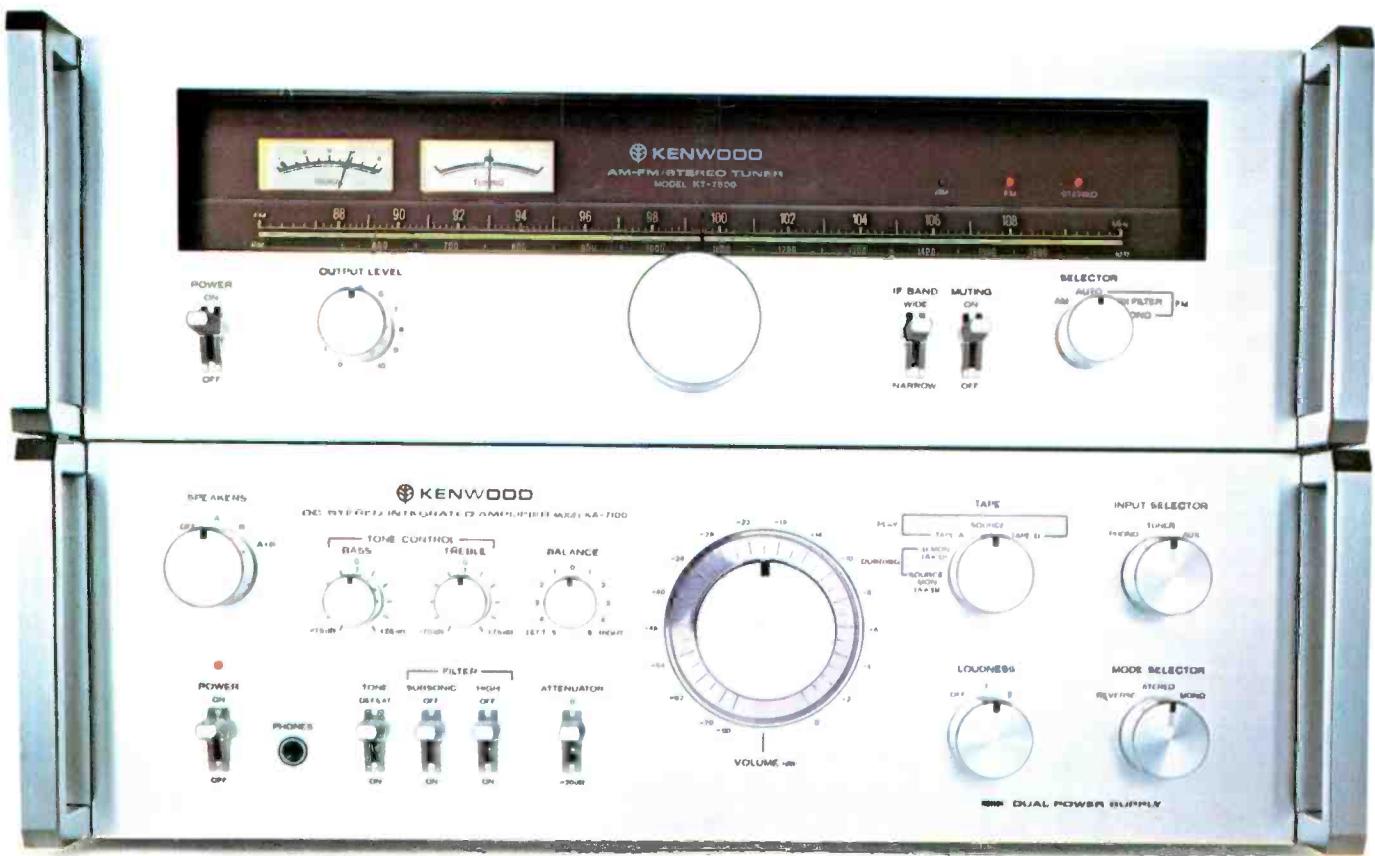
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