How to Buy a Turntable - Intelligently!

New Record Care Accessories
- Guns
- Mats
- Fluids
- Weights
- Feet
- Clamps

Our tests show how well they work - or don't

New Record-Playing Equipment

Lab Reports on:
- Top Straight-Line Turntables
- Programable Turntables
- Compact Turntables
- The year's first

- 350 changer
- 80 ZX cassette deck
- Corp clamp

Spot: Rupert Holmes
Six Years to Overnight Success
changes in temperature. But even the best of them just seem to reduce drift instead of eliminate it.

The Pioneer PL-400, on the other hand, has a Quartz PLL servo system that keeps rotational speed at a constant. And keeps the PL-400 unaffected by temperature changes, voltage fluctuations and other powerline anomalies.

These features work to keep the PL-400 sounding like a much more expensive turntable. But without our specially designed Coaxial Suspension system, they wouldn’t be nearly as effective.

This free floating suspension system isolates the platter and tonearm from the rest of the turntable. So even if the base vibrates, the platter and tonearm don’t.

This means you can shake, rattle and roll a lot more with a lot less worry that your turntable is doing the same thing.

Even the tonearm of the PL-400 is designed to give you better sound. Its new “Mass Concentrated” design improves crossmodulation distortion and tracking accuracy. So you get more sound clarity and better channel separation.

All these features on a turntable the price of the PL-400 is unheard of. But Pioneer didn’t stop there. The PL-400 also has full automatic controls. Including automatic lead-in, viscous damped cueing, automatic return, and automatic repeat. An easy to read one-stripe strobe that confirms platter speed accuracy. A quick start mechanism that starts the platter revolving as soon as the tonearm begins to move. And more.

So if you want to buy a $200 turntable and are just interested in great specs, there are any number you can buy. But if you’re interested in a $200 turntable that will give you great sound, there’s only one.

The Pioneer PL-400.
INTRODUCING THE NEW PIONEER PL-400.

Today, most turntables in the same price range look practically the same on paper. But they don’t sound at all alike in your home.

Because equal specs don’t necessarily mean equal sound. In fact, specs are just a measure of the distortion caused by your turntable itself. They tell nothing about how your machine prevents distortion caused by your environment.

Pioneer’s new PL-400 turntable was designed to also keep external interference from coming between you and great sound.

Much of the success of our new PL-400 turntable revolves around our all new “Stable Hanging Rotor.” The world’s thinnest direct drive motor.

Unlike more massive conventional motors, the motor in the PL-400 is so thin, it allows the center of gravity to be at the pivot point of the rotating mechanism. So instead of the platter wobbling like a top, the platter on the PL-400 acts like a gyroscope to stabilize itself.

Although this technology is very difficult to understand, the result of it is very easily appreciated. You no longer are bothered by distortion caused by stylus mistracking or speed deviations. So you get just what’s on your record. Nothing added to it. And nothing taken away.

But this super thin motor does more than eliminate distortion. It also eliminates any space wasting elements used in conventional motors. And because it’s so much thinner than any other motor, the cabinet around the PL-400 is also a lot thinner. This 20% reduction in cabinet size means the PL-400 is 20% less likely to suffer from acoustic distortion.

Many turntables in this price range are direct drive. Some of them offer DC motors. Some of them have servo motors aimed at eliminating drift caused by
IF ALL $200 TURNTABLES HAVE THE SAME SPECS, HOW COME THE PL-400 SOUNDS BETTER?
MEMOREX HIGH BIAS TEST NO. 5

WHICH HIGH BIAS TAPE STANDS UP TO A GENRAD REAL-TIME ANALYZER?

The GenRad 1995 Real-Time Analyzer is among today's state-of-the-art devices for accurately measuring and displaying audio signals. That's why we used it to show that MEMOREX HIGH BIAS is today's state-of-the-art high bias cassette tape.

When tested against standard recording levels against other high bias tapes, none had a flatter frequency response than MEMOREX HIGH BIAS.

And, the signal/noise ratio of MEMOREX HIGH BIAS proved to be unsurpassed at the critical high end.

Proof you can't buy a high bias cassette that gives you truer reproduction. And isn't that what you buy a high bias tape for?

Is it live, or isn't it?

MEMOREX

For unbeatable performance in a normal bias tape, look for Memorex with MRX3 Oxide, in the black package.

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Memorex Audio Development Center, P.O. Box 988, Santa Clara, CA 95052, U.S.A.
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THE EQUALIZER
THAT HAS NO EQUAL.

If you think that all stereo equalizers are created equal, you probably haven’t heard Pioneer’s new SG-9800. Because while most equalizers are not built to handle extended frequency response, sharp transients and high slewing rates, Pioneer’s SG-9800 is. The SG-9800 has low-noise ±1% metal-film resistors for more precise equalization. And low-error ±2% polypropylene capacitors for superior audio characteristics. And instead of wires, the SG-9800 has a computer-designed circuit board that eliminates distortion caused by wiring in the signal path. The result is an unheard of distortion level of .006%. Which just goes to prove that some equalizers are more equal than others.

SYSTEM ENHANCERS

We bring it back alive.

Are your records really clean?
Vac-O-Rec, the sure way.

There are plenty of record cleaning products around, but none of them can match the Vac-O-Rec system. Vac-O-Rec rotates the record past a metalized, mylar brush which discharges static electricity. This in turn loosens the dust. Then, separate super soft mohair brushes gently reach into the grooves to loosen and effectively remove micro dust. Finally, all dust and dirt is vacuum cleaned away.

The result—a really clean record free of dirt and surface noise. Vac-O-Rec is UL and CSA listed.

Don’t put up with noise, or risk damage to your priceless records. See Robins Vac-O-Rec at your dealer. Manufactured in U.S.A. by Robins Industries Corp., Comstock Ave., 11725.

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4 HIGH FIDELITY

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Performance and reliability. That's why 73 of the top 100 radio stations that use turntables use Technics direct drive turntables. In fact, of those stations surveyed by Opinion Research Corporation, Technics was chosen 6 to 1 over the nearest competitor.

Why did station engineers choose Technics direct drive: "Latest state of the art." "Reliability and past experience." "Low rumble, fast start." "Wow and flutter, direct drive and constant speed." To quote just a few. And you'll choose Technics for the same reasons.

The D-Series. Three turntables that start at $125. Each with 0.03% wow and flutter and -75 dB rumble. That's unsurpassed performance for the price.

The Q-Series. Two turntables with speed accuracy of 99.998%, wow and flutter of 0.025% and -78 dB rumble. No wonder so many radio stations choose Technics quartz-locked turntables.

The MK2 Series. Three turntables with a startup time of 0.7 seconds, or ¼ of a revolution. And the accuracy of Technics quartz-locked pitch control. That's performance good enough for the most demanding professional.

Then there's the SL-10 ($600). The turntable of the 80's. Not much bigger than a record jacket, it has a quartz-locked direct drive motor and a servo-controlled linear tracking arm. But what really makes it unique is what it can do: Play with all the accuracy Technics is so famous for, even on its side (upside down).

Technics direct drive. The turntables that top radio stations use. *Technics recommended prices, but actual price will be set by dealers.

You should buy a Technics direct drive turntable for the same reasons 73 of the top 100 radio stations did.
The new Sansui G-4700.

A double-digital receiver with all the right numbers.

Digital readouts and digital circuitry. Great specs. And the best price/performance ratio in the business. All the right numbers. That's the new Sansui G-4700. Just look what we offer:

**Double-Digital Design:** The front panel of the G-4700 has a bright electronic digital readout that shows the frequency of the station you've selected; and behind the front panel is one of the most advanced tuning systems in the world.

Sansui's patented Digitally Quartz-Locked Circuit uses a precise quartz crystal time base to keep your station locked in, even through many hours of listening or if you turn the receiver off and back on again.

Conventional quartz-controlled receivers use analog phase comparison circuits that can become inaccurate because of harmonic interference. Our system uses a new LSIC (Large Scale Integrated Circuit) digital processor that actually counts the vibrations of the quartz crystal to compare to the tuned frequency. The frequency is perfectly locked in the instant you find the station you want.

With this unique Digitally Quartz-Locked system, the G-4700 delivers high sensitivity (15dBf, mono); a better signal-to-noise ratio (75dB, mono); and a better spurious rejection ratio (70dB).

**DC power amplifier:** Power is ample for almost any speaker made, with 50 watts per channel, min. RMS, both channels driven into 8 ohms from 20 to 20,000Hz with no more than 0.05% THD.

And the wide bandwidth DC power amp circuit responds quickly to transient music signals for the most accurate and pleasing music reproduction. What you hear is clean and sharp, just the way it was recorded.

**Electronic LED power meters:** Don’t worry if your present speakers can’t handle 50 watts. The array of fast-acting LED's (Light Emitting Diodes) on the Sansui G-4700 lets you monitor and control the output level so you don’t damage your speakers.

**Electronic tuning meters:** Two fluorescent readouts help to zero-in on each station with accuracy and ease. Both the signal strength and center-tune indicators operate digitally for precise station selection, and the nearby LED verifies that the quartz circuit has locked in your station.

**Superb human engineering:** A full complement of genuinely useful knobs, switches and jacks gives you complete control over what you hear and how you hear it.

Ask your authorized Sansui dealer to demonstrate the G-4700. Listen to the music. You’ll love what you hear. Look at the numbers. You’ll love what you see.

**SANSUI ELECTRONICS CORP.**

Lyndhurst, New Jersey 07071 • Gardenia, Ca. 90247
SANSUI ELECTRIC CO., LTD., Tokyo, Japan
SANSUI AUDIO EUROPE S.A., Antwerp, Belgium
In Canada: Electronic Distributors

Circle 40 on Page 79
Mix 'n' patch from Niles

The CPM-31 from Niles Audio is a component patching matrix that allows up to thirty-one different interconnections between preamp (or receiver) and tape decks or signal processors. It has no active electronics and includes 3,300 ohm resistors in each output line for prevention of overload distortion. Insertion loss is said to be less than ½ dB when operating tape recorders singly into normal loading impedances. All interconnections are made with RCA plugs. The CPM-31 is priced at $200.

Circle 144 on Page 79

MOS FETS plus Realistic

Radio Shack's Realistic STA-2200 receiver features frequency-synthesized tuning and full Dolby FM decoding, as well as microprocessor memory for the storing of six AM and six FM stations. The power amp section, rated at 60 watts per channel into 8 ohms, makes use of recently developed power MOS FETs for their inherent linearity and high switching speed. Other features include two-step FM muting, two-way tape dubbing, and defeatable tone controls with selectable turnover points. Separate LED displays monitor power output and signal strength. Cost of the STA-2200 is $600.

Circle 143 on Page 79

Ace Audio's hum zinger

The Model 3900 Ground Liminator from Ace Audio is designed to eliminate hum in component audio systems by breaking up ground loop faults in connecting cables. Because of its passive circuitry, the 3900 is said to introduce no distortion of its own. The Ground Liminator can be purchased in kit form for $14.25; a wired version is available for $16.

Circle 141 on Page 79

No-hands tuning

Imagineering Audio has developed the Alphatone series of three alphachromatic note analyzers that read out the letter of the note being played or sung for quick, hands-free tuning. Flats and sharps are indicated, and an automatic centering bar shows when the exact note is hit. Alphatone I is designed for precise instrument tuning, and Alphatone II is calibrated for vocals; Alphatone III is a combination of the two. Each model is battery-operated and has a seven-octave range. Prices are $150 for both the Alphatone I and II and $200 for the Alphatone III. An optional AC adapter can be obtained for $16.

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A minispeaker with muscle

Kinetic Audio's Stat minispeaker uses two 5-inch "midwoofer" drivers and a 1½-inch dome tweeter in a tapered trapezoidal enclosure designed for linear phase response. Recommended power input range of the system is 10 to 80 watts [10 to 19 dBW]. Rated frequency response is 36 Hz to 22 kHz, ± 2.5 dB. Crossover occurs at 1.8 kHz, and impedance is 4 ohms. The Stat is 17½ inches high and costs $399. Optional stands cost $49 a pair.

Circle 145 on Page 79
Get The Professional Disco Sound!

Three great reasons why a recent survey published by Billboard Magazine reveals that for the third year in a row Stanton has increased its share of the Disco phonograph cartridge market. The Stanton share has grown to an impressive 55.8% ...a full 24 percentage points more than its nearest competitor.

The 500AL...great sound without sacrificing performance quality.

The 680SL...especially designed for home Disco.

From Disc cutting to Disco...to home entertainment...your choice should be the choice of the Professionals...Stanton cartridges. For further information contact: Stanton Magnetics, Inc., Terminal Drive, Plainview, N.Y. 11803.

© 1979 STANTON MAGNETICS

A budget-priced bookshelf speaker

Cambridge Physics has announced the Model 208 bookshelf loudspeaker, a two-way ported system with 8-inch woofer and 1-inch dome tweeter. Second-order Butterworth filters with a 12-dB-per-octave slope provide a crossover at 2 kHz. A constant-impedance control adjusts tweeter level over a 50-dB range. Rated frequency response is 50 Hz to 20 kHz, ± 2 dB, with a sensitivity of 94 dB for 1-watt input. The 208, finished in walnut veneer, costs $129.

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Tandberg ships separates

Shown last year in prototype, Tandberg's TPA-3003 power amp is now being shipped to dealers. Designed for hum-free operation, the amp uses a toroidal power transformer and is rated to deliver 150 watts (21¾ dBW) into 8 ohms with less than 0.02% THD. LEDs indicate clipping for each channel. The TPA-3003 is priced at $1,200. Other products in the Tandberg separates line include the TPT-3001 programmable tuner ($1,500) and the TCA-3002 preamp ($1,000).

Circle 148 on Page 79

Spectra Sound's pro equalizer

Designed for studio and stage applications, the 1000B graphic equalizer from Spectra Sound has ten bands, infrasonic filters, input level controls, and total channel independence. LEDs are provided to indicate overload. Maximum boost or cut for each frequency band is switchable to ± 8 dB or ± 16 dB. Rated frequency response, with EQ in and all sliders set flat, is 20 Hz to 20 kHz, ±½ dB. Both balanced and unbalanced inputs and outputs are included on the 1000B, which sells for $595.

Circle 137 on Page 79
The only car tape that eliminates the car.

BASF PRO III is the only one for the road.

Today's more sophisticated car tape systems are every bit as good as many home sound systems—until you start your engine. Then, engine noise, wind, tire whine and car vibration all begin to compete with the sound of your stereo. Until now, the listening environment of a moving car was something less than a moving experience. PRO III has changed all that.

There's an "extra" in every cassette.

Since the playback equalization of most car stereo systems is 120-µs, we designed PRO III at 70-µs. This gives you an "extra brightness" during playback, and it gives your high frequencies an added boost that stand out dramatically above ambient car noise.

Two different layers make all the difference.

PRO III has two separate tape layers for peak performance even under the most difficult listening conditions. The top layer is pure chromium dioxide for unsurpassed highs and low background noise. The bottom layer is ferric oxide for superior lows and great middle frequencies. And it also gives you higher recording levels, so you get cleaner, louder playback without cranking up your volume control to compensate.

The guarantee of a lifetime.

Like every BASF Professional Tape, PRO III comes with a lifetime guarantee that covers everything. Should any BASF cassette tape ever fail for any reason, we'll replace it at no cost. PRO III also comes with our patented "Jam-Proof" Security Mechanism—a BASF exclusive that provides smooth, exact winding, alleviates wow and flutter, and puts an end to tape jamming.

Use a tape cassette that gets the most out of your car's sound system. Get the new PRO III from BASF—it's the car tape.
The finest audio component must do more than merely sound good.

For an audio component to be the absolute finest, it must satisfy all design parameters. Audiophiles tell us the ideal component is a straight wire with gain. The TA-150’s all-electronic design comes closest, which helps explain why its sound rivals the finest separates.

Scientists tell us the perfect machine would have no moving parts. The TA-150 has but one, a single programmable knob.

Designers tell us that form must follow function. The beauty of the TA-150 is that the world’s most sophisticated receiver is also the easiest to operate.

Sound, science, and style. The total design approach to audio.

Phase it in

Eventide’s FL-201 Instant Flanger can now function as a phaser with the use of the BPC-101 plug-in phaser card. While bucket-brigade devices are used to create the time-delay flanging effects, the phaser card uses electronic phase-shift networks to generate frequency cancellations in the audio signal. It requires simple calibration to work with the main-frame FL-201, but thereafter it may be interchanged with the flanger card with no further adjustments. The phaser card alone costs $233. The FL-201 costs $615 with either the flanger or phaser card and $848 with both.

Circle 138 on Page 79

Multifunction guitar amp

Acoustics Model 165 is a guitar amp with a five-band graphic equalizer, built-in reverb, dual master volume controls, and switchable FET or tube front end. Power output is switchable to 60 or 100 watts (17.3 or 20 dBW). A twelve-inch Electro-Voice EVM-12L speaker is rear-mounted in the solid oak and walnut cabinet of the Model 165, which is priced at $1,195.

Circle 139 on Page 79

Furman’s tunable crossover

The Model TX-4 from Furman Sound is an active electronic crossover with four user-selectable crossover points from 20 Hz to 20 kHz. A rear panel switch allows selection of stereo three-way or mono five-way modes. Features include separate level controls for each output, unbalanced inputs, and a separate power supply for each channel. Maximum available gain is said to be 6 dB, and distortion is rated at 0.01% at 1 kHz for a ± 20 dBm output. The rack-mountable TX-4 costs $415.

Circle 140 on Page 79

Circle 6 on Page 79

Circle 46 on Page 79
Introducing TDK's Optimum Dynamic.

Normal bias tape taken to the optimum.

TDK's answer to the need for a normal bias reference standard.

Optimum Dynamic is the outcome of the same, sophisticated technology which set the high bias reference standard with TDK's SA cassette. Its tape formulation consists of Optima Ferric particles. A needle-shaped, pure iron oxide that has been ultra refined to cover the tape surface evenly and densely. The result is a cassette with a sensitivity and MOL audibly superior to any normal bias cassette available in the market today.

Well balanced sound.

Optimum Dynamic has all the sound characteristics you've been looking for. Super flat frequency response and sensitivity with a wide dynamic range. Lower noise and higher output at critical levels. For example, you'll now be able to capture the full dynamic complexity of a classical performance as well as the sustained higher output characteristic of contemporary music. In every way, Optimum Dynamic will deliver a well balanced, reference quality normal bias performance. And you'll hear it, unfailingly, for years to come.

Optimum Dynamic has the same Super Precision Mechanism as the SA cassette, protected by TDK's full lifetime warranty.*

The test of success.

We believe we've been highly successful in fulfilling the need for a normal bias reference standard. But there's a simple test. Listen to an Optimum Dynamic just once. Compare it to anything else you've been using. From then on, you may want to use it as a reference.

TDK

The machine for your machine

Supplier to the U.S. Olympic Team

*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.

© 1980 TDK Electronics Corp., Garden City, New York 11530
An incredible sound experience awaits you. An experience that technology alone finds hard to explain. You'll hear music of such stunning purity and sensual richness, that you'll wonder how any turntable could make that much of a difference.

That's the secret of Onkyo. The unique ability to take you several steps beyond pure technology ... to a world of more exciting sound. And we provide it in all our components ... including all five of our turntables.

The Onkyo CP-1030F Fully Automatic Turntable is an outstanding example. Its unique design lets you take much fuller advantage of today's most sensitive high-compliance cartridges ... providing more perfect record groove tracking and more perfect damp ing of the vibrations that destroy perfect sound quality.

The Onkyo CP-1030F utilizes a uniquely designed low mass, straight-line carbon fiber tonearm and headshell. Its construction assures purer sound even with warped records.

Infrared sensors replace the usual mechanical devices that detect the end of record play ... returning the tonearm more silently to the OFF or REPEAT position. Manual cueing is also smoother and more precise ... with far less lateral drift during stylus descent.

A Quartz-locked DC direct-drive motor ... with an LED illuminated strobe ... assures rotational speed accuracy. And a separate motor controls automatic tonearm movement functions.

The entire turntable rests on a highly stable triple-insulated suspension system to isolate it from room vibrations and sound vibrations from your speakers.

Styling is superb. Silver-grey with black, low lustre metal and a crystal dust cover. Feather-touch control buttons are front-panel mounted, with a full array of LEDs indicating all function settings.

The CP-1030F is just one of five remarkable new turntables from Onkyo. All built for more perfect sound ... both today and into the future.

Experience "the secret of Onkyo" now, at your Onkyo dealer. Hear audio components so advanced, they transcend mere technology.

Onkyo USA Corporation
42-07 20th Avenue
Long Island City, N.Y. 11105
(212) 728-4639

The Onkyo CP-1030F
A remarkably advanced turntable that makes every record sound better, even when warped.
**HIFI-CROSTIC No. 53**

**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.53 will appear in next month’s issue of HighFiElixir.

**INPUT**

A. “Pickin’ up ______” Southern singing game

B. Carry out; consequence

C. Schumann symphony

D. With Word ZZ, final resort

E. With Word L jazz singer (1904–49) with Ellington in the ’30s

F. Jazz-rock performer/composer and Grammy winner, began career at age twelve (full professional name)

G. Simple piano piece by four Russian composers

H. American composer, Mrs. ______ (1867–1944): “Gaelic” Symphony (init. and last name)

I. See Word E

J. Reciprocal of conductance

K. Jazz drummer with Cannonball Adderley (full name)

L. American composer (1861–1908): “Indian” Suite (full name)

M. Britten cantata (2 wds.)

N. Varese percussion composition

O. Slight fluctuation in pitch

P. Of the Dorian scale, mainly and strong

Q. Popular vocalist: “Blind Lemon’s Buddy”

R. Musical show by Judy Woldin; original cast on Columbia

S. ______ Tune, famous 16th-century English psalm

T. Making money

U. Anglican equivalent of Catholic vespers

V. Medieval theory of nondiatonic tones (2 Lat. wds.)

W. Conductor Karl

X. Former Concertgebouw conductor (full name)

Y. “Wachet auf, ______, uns die Stimmung”

Z. Music played on the qanun or baskhaw

ZZ. See Word D

**OUTPUT**

```
Y 197  M 198  C 199  B 200  X 201  N 202  S 203  P 204  T 205  I 206  R 207  K 208  J 209  L 210

\[165 70 93 175 105 42 35\]
\[145 719 207 84 133 68\]
\[67 157 122 51 199 27 187\]
\[9 133 86 64\]
\[103 66 54 90\]
\[204 104 115 89 63 3\]
\[152 17 39 107 170 129\]
\[76 155 134 40 189 147 14 113 32 46\]
\[50 164 101 25 72 124 40 87\]
\[74 29 49 140 206 172 71 106\]
\[167 95 81 28 137 53 12 150 209 790\]
\[192 58 26 158 102 144 207 76 188 716\]
\[61 126 35 47 37 137 73 29 104 103\]
\[185 156 210 191 176\]
\[111 186 14 171 131 79 142 198 166 32\]
\[51 162 75 202 123 6 143 33 97 15\]
\[7 153 161 48 85 180 118\]
\[41 168 109 77 117\]
\[4 181 38 135\]
\[177 88 120 31 149 208\]
\[67 163 196 203\]
\[183 65 13 52 23 125 151\]
\[182 127 110 24 7 92 55 193\]
\[98 36 10 177 114 45 78 193 57 20 147\]
\[94 21 172 160 127\]
\[30 199 139 8 148 71 18 43 194 100 201 80 169 112 59\]
```

by William Petersen
McIntosh Laboratory Inc.
Box 96 East Side Station
Binghamton, NY 13904

Name _______________________
Address _______________________
City State Zip _________________

If you are in a hurry for your catalog please send the coupon to McIntosh. For non-rush service send the Reader Service Card to the magazine.

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HIGH FIDELITY

CrossTalk

Q. I own an old Scott Model 310C FM tuner. Since I thought tuners had come a long way since I purchased it, I decided to test the performance of the Phase Linear 5000 and the Technics 9030 in my home via a loan agreement with my local audio dealer. The results were startling: Both new tuners showed much greater noise and hiss and were less sensitive than the 310C. My dealer insists that the Scott tuner is monaural, but it has outputs labeled A and B, and I can clearly hear separation between the channels. Is the Scott mono or stereo, and can you explain its superiority to the two super tuners?—Aaron Barcham, Cranbury, N.J.

A. While Scott made some tuners that, years after they were withdrawn from the market, continue to compare well with today's products (the LT-1128 was, perhaps, the "classic"), you are attributing virtues to your fifteen-year-old 310C that it doesn't deserve. It is, in fact, a mono unit and therefore can be compared with modern tuners only when the latter are heard in mono. On stereo broadcasts, listening in mono will reduce the noise content dramatically in weak or borderline stations. If you hear "separation" from the Scott, it presumably is due to aging, which can introduce response changes independently in the two outputs, one of which was intended for a multiplex adapter.

Q. There seems to be a controversy brewing in bass-reflex speaker design between those companies that extol the virtues of woofers with heavy, cast steel frames and those that continue to use stamped steel frames. A knowledgeable friend of mine tells me that the thin, stamped steel frame flexes in operation, allowing the voice coil to distort the magnetic field, thereby decreasing the speaker's efficiency. Yet, some ads state that the heavy cast frames are impressive looking but add nothing to the performance of the driver. Who's right?—William C. Lloyd, Madison, Wis.

A. The main virtue claimed for the extra-rigid speaker frames—or baskets, as they are called—is that they are less easily distorted and therefore have a better shot at maintaining voice-coil centering. An off-center coil can rub against the magnet structure, producing gross distortion as well as friction. While the friction certainly would reduce efficiency, the distortion is really the more serious concern from the sonic point of view. But companies that prefer the lighter, stamped type of basket claim that, since the back of the speaker is protected by the enclosure, there is no opportunity for the basket to be deformed to the degree necessary for voice-coil problems. Incidentally, cast baskets are not peculiar to bass-reflex systems, though JBL (one of the companies that has been quite vocal on the subject) is well known for both.

Q. Your test reports on the new so-called "metal ready" cassette decks seem to point out that these decks are really not capable of getting the sort of performance from metal tape we've been told to expect. With metal tape, the decks you've tested seem to show rougher high-frequency reproduction and greater distortion than with high-bias ferric tapes. Nowhere do I see the tape manufacturers' claim of a 10-dB improvement in high-frequency headroom borne out. As an audio salesman, I am in a bind. I've found myself steering customers away from the very expensive metal formulations, knowing that similar (and sometimes better) performance can be had with much cheaper premium ferric formulations. Are metal tape and "metal ready" cassette decks just another hype?—Name withheld at writer's request.

A. As the situation stands right now, metal tape makes sense only for special application recording and, according to the data we've accumulated, only on fairly expensive equipment. Though the "metal ready" feature is fast becoming standard on many budget-priced decks, these decks' ability to get the most from the new tape is doubtful. There is some irony in the situation: Would the purchaser of a $200 deck really be willing to spend $10 or so for metal tape? We think not, and obviously many deck manufacturers that...
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Right now, your stereo system doesn't deliver bass frequencies much below 50Hz. Simply because that's the limit of most records, tapes and FM signals.

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HIGH FIDELITY

include metal capability as another feature rather than a prime focus would agree. In our tests of high-end metal-capable decks, results are much more encouraging and do not confirm your contention of increased distortion and high-frequency roughness. Obviously there has been a rush by all involved to get metal tape and compatible decks to market as soon as possible—perhaps a bit too soon. In our view, however, metal-alloy tape holds great promise, and we eagerly await the appearance of less costly decks that can be said to be truly metal ready.

Q

To my great consternation, I am finding that my older records are becoming so warped that the stylus literally jumps out of the groove while trying to track them. Is there anything I can do to flatten them out, and how can I prevent other records from undergoing similar deformations?—Yong J. Kim, Thousand Oaks, Calif.

A

Storing records vertically with gentle pressure exerted uniformly should preclude the development of warps. Any attempt to flatten out a warped record is never 100% successful, and anyone undertaking the task should pay careful attention to detail; that is, the disc must be scrupulously clean, pressure must be applied evenly, and only chemically inert materials should contact it. Another reader, Jorge Espinosa of Santiago, Chile, has developed his own protocol for dewarping records. He states, “The warped record should be placed in its inner protective sleeve and then sandwiched between two glass plates [about ¼ inch thick] and pressed gently. This sandwich should then be exposed to strong sunlight and remain untouched for two or three days. The greater the difference between daytime and nighttime temperatures, the better the results. I've flattened absolutely unplayable records with two days of this treatment. Make sure, however, that the record has cooled to normal ambient temperatures before removing it from the glass-plate sandwich.” Good luck.

We regret that, due to the volume of reader mail we get, we cannot give individual answers to all questions.
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It’s called print-through. And if you think it interferes with your reading, you should hear what it does to your listening.

It happens on tape that has low magnetic stability. Music on one layer of the tape is transferred to music on an adjacent layer, causing an echo.

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Empire's EDR.9
The Phono Cartridge Designed for Today's Audiophile Recordings

Direct-to-Disc and digital recording have added a fantastic new dimension to the listening experience. Greater dynamic range, detail, stereo imaging, lower distortion and increased signal-to-noise ratio are just a few of the phrases used to describe the advantages of these new technologies.

In order to capture all the benefits of these recordings, you should have a phono cartridge specifically designed to reproduce every bit of information with utmost precision and clarity and the least amount of record wear.

The Empire EDR.9 is that cartridge. Although just recently introduced, it is already being hailed as a breakthrough by audiophiles, not only in the U.S., but in such foreign markets as Japan, Germany, England, France, Switzerland and Sweden.

What makes the EDR.9 different?

1. Within the cantilever tube, we added a mechanical equalizer. It serves two purposes: (1) to cancel the natural resonance of the cantilever tube, and (2) to improve the overall transient response of the cartridge. The end result is a stylus assembly that has a mechanically flat frequency response. The frequency response extends from the 20Hz to 35Hz with a deviation of no more than ± 1.75 dB. No other magnetic cartridge has that kind of performance. We call this stylus assembly an “Inertially Damped Tuned Stylus,” the refinement of which took over 6 years.

2. In order to reproduce a groove containing extreme high frequency musical overtones, the stylus tip must have small enough dimensions to fit within the high frequency portion of the groove. Yet, the smaller the stylus tip, the greater the pressure applied to the record surface and the more severe the record wear. In the EDR.9, we have responded to these conflicting requirements by developing a stylus that has the proper dimensions from side-to-side, a much smaller dimension from front-to-back, and a very large, low pressure degree of contact between stylus and groove top-to-bottom. The net result of this large contact area, which engineers call a “footprint,” is that the stylus of the EDR.9 can track musical signals to the limits of audibility and beyond. Yet it has the lowest record wear of any cartridge presently available. The stylus shape of the EDR.9 is called L.A.C. for “Large Area of Contact.”

3. Conventional cartridges exhibit radical changes in their frequency response when connected to different preamplifiers. This is because the load conditions—the amounts of capacitance and resistance provided by the preamp—vary tremendously from one preamp to another, and from turntable to turntable. Consequently, most phono cartridges, even expensive ones, have their frequency response determined essentially by chance, depending on the system they are connected to.

But the electrical elements of the EDR.9 have been designed to remain unaffected by any normal variations in load capacitance or resistance. Thus, the EDR.9 maintains its smooth frequency response and accurate transient reproduction ability in any music system, irrespective of loading conditions.

4. Then, as a final test of performance, we listen to every EDR.9 to make certain it sounds as good as it tests. At $200, the EDR.9 is expensive, but then again, so are your records.

For more detailed information and test reports, write to:
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New Equipment Reports

Aiwa's Ultimate Turntable

Aiwa LP-3000U turntable

SPEED ACCURACY (at 33 or 45 rpm)
no measurable error at 105, 120 or 127 VAC

SPEED ADJUSTMENT RANGE
at 33 +6.8 to -6.1%
at 45 +7.0 to -6.0%

TONEARM RESONANCE & DAMPING (see text)
vertical 5.8 Hz; 2½-dB rce
lateral 5.0 Hz; 2½-dB rce

ARM FRICTION negligible in either plane

VTF-GAUGE ACCURACY
reads approx. 10% above actual values

MIN. STYLUS FORCE FOR AUTO TRIP 50 mg

TOTAL LEAD CAPACITANCE 218 pf


The LP-3000U is that sort of occasional audio product that demands attention. Were it to be displayed in a store window, only the rarest of audiophiles could resist stopping for a moment to stare at it—delighted as much by its sleek good looks as by the promise held by so many blinking lights and silvery buttons. Though there have been turntables before that incorporate some of its features, the LP-3000U is unique in combining a microprocessor-based memory and optoelectronic track selector with tangent-tracking tonearm and direct-drive motor with quartz lock.

Considered first as an automatic single-play turntable ([sans track selection and memory]), the 3000U is a fine performer. The lateral-tracking tonearm is statically balanced; you set vertical tracking force by unbalancing the disc-shaped counterweight. The tonearm is propelled across the record by its own motor on a single-support, rack screw mechanism. Cueing, being integral to the automatic functions, also is powered by a separate motor. Once the platter has been brought up to speed, a green LED next to the digital speed readout signals operation of the quartz lock, which operates even when you move the adjustment knob away from the standard settings. The adjustment range reaches a hair beyond the claimed ±6% variation, which represents a half-tone pitch change in either direction, and the percentage of change appears on an LED display. Since the 3000U employs a tangent tonearm, there is no lateral tracking angle error or skating force and hence no overhang or antiskating adjustment.

Data from CBS Technology Center show the turntable capable of excellent basic performance. Line voltage does not influence speed; flutter and rumble measurements are in the good-to-excellent category. CBS did find a slight discrepancy between the speed readout and the actual percentage variation when the control is set near either extreme—for adjustments of more than ±2.5%—but we see no reason why the accuracy of the readout at these settings should be of any interest for all but the most esoteric of applications. (The settings are repeatable, so if the LEDs show +3% when a recording is tuned to your piano, you can return easily to that setting no matter what true variation it represents. The actual percentage might matter, for example, if you were trying to tune the piano to A = 440 Hz from a recording known to have been made with an A at another pitch—from which it should be obvious what we mean by "esoteric.")

The tonearm is equipped to handle any of the "universal" headshells, but for automatic track selection functions the supplied headshell must be used. A rather massive affair at 16.5 grams, it contains the sensor: an infrared-generating LED and an infrared-sensitive photo transistor. All this apparatus adds mass to the
arm at the most crucial point. When mounted with our standard Shure V-15 Type III pickup at the CBS lab, the combination resulted in a resonance point, both laterally and vertically, right in the warp information area. Fortunately, the resonance is fairly well damped, minimizing potential groove jumping, but a less compliant pickup should reduce the possibility even further.

Now to the automatic functions. The 3000U has three modes of operation. The simplest of these is semiautomatic and is available whether or not you are using Aiwa’s sensor-equipped headshell. You must select disc size via one of the selectors (marked 17, 25, and 30 cm—for 7, 10, and 12 inches in U.S. nomenclature). Touching PLAY will set things in motion: The arm lowers itself onto the record and returns to rest at the end of play. A touch on REPEAT and on one of the ten consecutively numbered program buttons will trigger replaying for that number of cycles. (If no number is pressed, the arm will repeat its play cycle twenty-four times or until it is stopped manually.) During the play cycle, you can cue the arm to any desired selection via PAUSE (which raises the arm), FORWARD/CUE or REVERSE/REVIEW (which shuttle the arm forward and backward, respectively), and PLAY (which lowers the arm again).

With the disc-sensor headshell in place, you are presented with a choice of fully automatic and programmed play. The former leaves it up to the arm to seek out the beginning of the disc. With PROGRAM switched on, the microprocessor memory circuits will accept your choice of bands on the record, the desired order, and the number of times you wish each to play. Up to fifteen commands can be entered into the memory at any one time, but once the program has been entered and the arm has begun its search-and-play functions, the memory will no longer accept new commands, though you can skip ahead to the next programmed selection (via C/Skip) or back to the beginning of the band being played (b/skip). To erase the memory, a touch of CLEAR/REJECT is all that’s needed.

In use—and we lived with this machine for some months before reviewing it—the 3000U can be both thrilling and frustrating. Like many automatic turntables, absolutely level placement is critical. (Otherwise, drift during arm descent can deposit the stylus in the wrong spot; it may even fall off the disc’s edge bead.) Since Aiwa says that at least 3 millimeters of banding is required between cuts if the sensor is to find them, we were not surprised that we could not pick out individual movements on many classical records. But many popular records also lack the amount of space between cuts that the 3000U’s “eye” demands, and even some records that looked fine were “read” either incorrectly or not at all by the sensor. Pressing HIGH SENSITIVITY does help where sensor perception is marginal, but after several episodes in which the arm scanned entire sides without finding anything to play, we settled on nonprogrammed automatic play for most of our listening.

Used this way, the 3000U is mightily impressive. Its tangent tracking and exact and unvarying speed control are truly state of the art. And we enjoyed the built-in muting circuit that suppresses the impact noise of the stylus alighting on the groove. The programming function is admittedly somewhat problematic, since not all records are made to Aiwa’s specifications, but diversity is what adds the spice to life, we’re told. If that is so, this turntable adds more than a little spice to its field, and even listeners for whom it represents an overrich diet will find elements to admire—elements that may well appear in less elaborate future models.

Circle 131 on Page 79


Some months ago Technics held a press conference to announce the coming introduction of its first tangential-tracking turntable, the SL-10. During the presentation a company spokesman noted that, depending on consumer reaction to this first model, Technics hopes to do for this format what it did for direct drive, beginning with the SP-10 almost a decade ago: develop a broad line of well-made, reliable, and affordable units. If our reaction is any indication, the SL-10 may very well be just such a harbinger.
Upgrading is for music lovers who can hear the difference. For them, Radio Shack has made "the difference" affordable . . . for example, 30-28,000 Hz (± 3 dB) frequency response, extended dynamic range, low distortion, low noise — you get it all in the easy-to-be-creative open reel format. Tape handling is no problem because the TR-3000 is totally logic controlled. A pushbutton-activated solenoid system controls all tape movement — you can switch functions instantly, without tape spills or snarls. Pause and mute controls even let you edit, electronically, as you record.

The TR-3000 has three motors. A precision servo-controlled capstan motor reduces wow and flutter to less than 0.06% WRMS. And two high-torque reel motors maintain constant tape tension for smooth, fast winding. Separate play, record and erase heads give you "off-the-tape" monitoring. Individual mike and line input controls work like a built-in mixer. High/low bias and EQ switches for an optimum match with any tape. 7½ and 3¾ ips speeds. And lots more. Realistically priced at only $499.95.* Check its superb sound and specs at one of our 7000 locations today!
This is by far the most compact high fidelity turntable we've ever seen. Technics compares the dimensions of its top to those of an LP jacket, and that's about half the area of most turntables. Its configuration, too, separates it from the rest: The tonearm, microprocessor circuitry, and function selectors are contained in the top half of the body (the cover, as it would be called in a more conventional design), and the bottom half contains the quartz-lock direct-drive motor, platter, speed selector, and moving-coil head amp. This last deserves some explanation. The SL-10 comes equipped with a built-in moving-coil pickup designed specifically for the dynamically balanced tangent tonearm; it will not accept any other brand or type of cartridge. The built-in head amp is, of course, necessary to step up the pickup's very low output voltage, but a bypass switch at the rear of the turntable allows you to use your own head amp, if you have one.

The SL-10 comes from the factory with the pickup in place and the vertical tracking force already set. Because of its dynamically balanced arm, it is extremely insensitive to position. And since a top-mounted, rotating stabilizer keeps the record securely pinned to the platter, you can actually play it with the turntable mounted vertically. (We even played a record with the unit upside down!) According to the owner's manual, stylus replacement is easy, requiring only that you remove one screw, and VTF is reset simply by dialing in the correct amount on a calibrated scale. What this all boils down to is the simplest setup procedure yet for a sophisticated turntable. Remove the transit screws, plug the AC cord into the wall and the signal leads into your system, and it is ready to play.

The SL-10's tonearm logic and automatic record size/speed setting are faultless. When you drop a regular, opaque record into playing position, it will cover one or more of the sensors built into the platter surface, thereby "telling" the logic circuitry the size of the record and suggesting "standard" speed. If the disc is transparent or colored, you can still make use of the automatic sensor by first placing one of the supplied 7- or 12-inch black paper light shields on the platter. To play a record whose speed does not correspond to its size (such as a 7-inch LP) the automatic speed selector can be overridden with manual settings. The tonearm maintains its tracking accuracy with the help of another optical sensor, located close to the stylus, which assesses groove deflection angle and repositions the tonearm to maintain optimum tracking.

A touch on START begins automatic play. Pressing CUE raises the arm and illuminates a portion of the disc's surface. A soft continuous pressure on START causes the arm to move slowly across the record; increasing the pressure increases the traversal speed. If you go too far, you can use the STOP in similar fashion to back up. Intermittent pressure on either START or STOP will cause the tonearm to move in discrete 1-millimeter increments. As a safety feature, the SL-10 will not propel its tonearm past the edge bead of a record in this mode. If the arm is in playing position, you can return it to its rest either by pressing STOP or by opening the lid.

Data from CBS Technology Center bespeak careful attention to basic engineering. Speed control is rock steady; arm friction is negligible; flutter and rumble measurements are excellent. The amplitude of the low-frequency resonance — here measured with Technics' supplied pickup instead of our standard Shure—is typical in light of its well-placed resonance point.

In use, the SL-10 is an absolute joy. It does its job with finely bred finesse and demands no involvement, past pressing START, by the user. Though the cueing light proves marginally helpful in locating the correct band, a long LED index that moves with the arm scale on the top cover proves even more useful in determining exact cue-down spots. Considering the sophistication of the unit, we were somewhat surprised to find an input on the rear that will accept an optional 12-volt negative-ground DC power supply. Information in the owner's manual confirms that Technics does, indeed, envision that the SL-10 might be used in an automobile. Its insensitivity to operating position would argue in favor of such an application, but not its resistance to external shock. While we found its suspension good for home applications, this consideration plus its tendency to create pitch wavers when it is moved suggest that any vehicle in which it is mounted should be stationary before you attempt to play a record on it. In our conventional use of it, we had nothing but praise for the design and hope that it sires a breed of turntables that are equally compact and capable but priced for those to whom a straight-line tracking model still is an improbable dream.

Circle 134 on Page 79

More on Page 28
Unique qualifications.

For example, a tweeter mounted directly in the grille.

It's the Jensen 6½" Coax II car stereo speaker. And by putting the 2" tweeter where it is, we've improved the high frequency dispersion. And slimmed down the speaker.

Experienced treble-shooter ... for better dispersion.

High frequencies can be tricky... they usually just want to travel straight forward. But the up-front position of this direct radiating tweeter helps disperse those highs throughout the whole car.

So whether you install these speakers low in your front doors or back in the rear deck, you can be sure you're going to hear all of the treble this unique speaker has to offer.

Beefed up music.

That's what you'll get from the 6½" Coax II. Music with plenty of meat on its bones. Music with a frequency response that stretches from 50 Hz to 40,000 Hz.

Not only from the tweeter in the grille. But also from the 6" woofer behind it. This woofer's hefty 16 oz. magnet and large 1" Nomex® voice coil serve up a second helping of full, balanced bass. While a responsive rim suspension and meticulous cone design give this speaker extra sensitivity.

This highly efficient, 4 ohm Coax II will handle up to 50 watts of continuous power. And make the very most of it.

A slimmed down speaker.

No extra fat on this speaker... it's only 1½" deep and it fits your current 5¼" cutout. So it will fit in more car doors, more rear decks, and more tight spaces than ever before.

The Jensen 6½" Coax II is also easier to install, thanks to its new uni-body construction. The grille is permanently affixed to the speaker unit. Which not only makes installation easier, but also means a sturdier speaker with less vibration.

Excellent references.

Give a listen to the new Jensen 6½" Coax II's. The speakers with the grille-mounted tweeters.

We think you'll agree that they're just the right speakers to fill the position in your car.

JENSEN SOUN DB LABORATORIES
AN ESMARK COMPANY
**A Suave Tangential**

Phase Linear Model 8000 Series Two automatic two-speed (33 and 45 rpm) linear-tracking turntable system, with dust cover.


American audiophiles may be somewhat surprised that a company whose name has been so closely associated with electronics should suddenly offer a series of ultrasophisticated electromechanical products (the Phase Linear cassette deck, like this turntable, is such a model) with no history of accomplishment in the field. They may even wonder how good a "first try" could be, even from a company with so fine a reputation in its original field. A more international view makes the answer obvious: This turntable appears elsewhere under the Pioneer name, and Phase Linear became a subsidiary of Pioneer about two years ago. A little earlier, when the Series 20 brand was launched, a spokesman explained to us that its products all represented state-of-the-art Pioneer designs that seemed incompatible with Pioneer's broad distribution system and audio-for-Everyman image in this country. The appearance of the new models under the Phase Linear brand (and the disappearance of Series 20) surely establishes a pattern. We expect that more Pioneer-built products too specialized in appeal and/or too costly for the typical neighborhood home-entertainment retailer will be groomed as adoptive siblings for the Phase Linear electronics.

Yet in one sense, at least, the appeal of the 8000 is very broad indeed. For years we have used the term "silky feel" to characterize the sensuousness of finely made gear, and this turntable has it in abundance. Whether you use the control buttons on the front edge of the base or grasp the arm's finger grip directly, the noiseless and seemingly intelligent scurrying of the arm drive to do your bidding suggests the activities of a superbly trained pet mink. If you do grasp the arm, the behavior is like that of a typical semiautomatic: The phase-lock direct-drive platter motor comes on as the arm nears playing position, and arm return and motor shutoff are automatic at the end of the record. The arm can also be positioned manually via the "steering-wheel" vernier at the right front corner of the base. Or you can set the controls for the disc diameter and go for fully automatic record playing—and even repeat the record indefinitely if you want, since the cycle continues until you press REPEAT a second time.

Behind these relatively cosmetic features is some impressive technology: in particular, the tangent tonearm. (Phase uses the term "linear"; aside from the implied reference to the full company name, it correctly suggests linearity of behavior, but any arm will move the pickup along some sort of "line" from outer groove to label, and the difference is that this line is straight for a tangent arm, curved for a pivoted one.) Its outer end accepts any universal headshell (one is supplied), including those with integral pickups. Tracking force is set with a fairly finely made gear, and this turntable has it in abundance. Whether you use the

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TEAC TODAY: THE X-SERIES.

You're looking at four new machines that have more in common with data recorders than audio recorders. Together they are called the X-Series. And they bring a totally new kind of technology to the open reel format.

Each X-Series transport is an instrumentation mechanism. For 15 years, this TEAC design has stood the grueling test of time in computer installations where dependability is worth millions.

The basic configuration is closed-loop dual capstan. It's extraordinarily quiet, stable and precise. Wow & flutter is very low. Speed accuracy very high.

Three DC motors drive the tape. They're used to keep changes in motor temperature to a minimum under different loads so constant torque is maintained.

Our Magnetloat flywheel assembly, a completely new concept, uses magnetics rather than mechanics to eliminate problem-causing springs and pressure plates. Axial variations between the tape and capstans are prevented so proper tracking is assured. The result is highly accurate audio reproduction even after years of hard use.

The X-Series transport maintains ideal tape-to-head contact. Audible drop-outs, level and frequency losses are absolutely minimized. Frequency response is wide and flat. And signal articulation is unusually clear.

The brain behind the transport is our LSI control chip. It eliminates the need for mechanical relays so transport control is faster, more positive and reliable. The LSI also lets us provide full motion-sensing in the X-10 and X-10R.

Within the X-Series, machines have been specifically designed for bi-directional record and playback. Perfectly symmetrical head stacks (6 heads in all) assure top performance in both directions. There's automatic reverse and repeat. And two-way cue monitoring.

New audio electronics accompany this new transport technology. Record and playback amplifiers are quieter and completely free of audible distortion. The sound is cleaner, more faithful to the source. The fidelity is unsurpassed.

An option previously available only on our professional recorders can now be added to any X-Series machine. Called dbx 17, this noise elimination system adds 30dB to the already high S/N and over 10dB of headroom to give you master-quality recordings.

If your audio perception is critical, your listening standards high, audition an X-Series recorder. The performance is flawless. The sound peerless.
speed is a hair fast is more surprising but inconsequential. Wow and flutter are just about as low as CBS has ever been able to measure; rumble is squarely in the league with other fine models. The two samples we examined have a slight cant in the headshell (whether we use that supplied by Phase or interchangeable ones from other sources), which could influence the pickup’s channel separation somewhat. Otherwise we consider the detailing, finish, and care that have been lavished on the 8000 to be exemplary.

And the logic governing its multimode behavior performed faultlessly for us. Some products are extremely efficient in use, and we would score the present model high in this respect—particularly in the way its manual functions override and complement the automatic ones, rather than inhibiting or being inhibited by them as they often are in automatics. (We even found that we could “trick” the logic into letting us backcue, which is extremely rare in automated turntables and generally beyond the interests of the home users for whom the 8000 obviously is designed.) But the Phase rises above even this level of excellence in the sheer pleasure it affords the user; it is beautiful to look at and so fascinating in operation that we were tempted to play with it, rather than play records on it. It is, in a word, a delight.

**Garrard GT-350 two-speed (33 and 45 rpm) record changer/turntable, with base and removable dust cover. Dimensions: 17⅓ by 14⅞ inches (top plate), 7⅞ inches high with cover closed; 9⅞ inches additional vertical clearance and 4⅞ inches at back required with cover open. Price: $230 without cartridge; $307.45 with premounted Shure M-95ED cartridge. Warranty: “limited,” three years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Garrard, England; U.S. distributor: Garrard U.S.A., 100 Commercial St., Plainview, N.Y. 11803.**

Anyone who still believes that multiple-play turntables are inherently inferior to single-play machines in most performance parameters should spend an hour or two with Garrard’s GT-350. Designed from the ground up as part of Garrard’s Advance Design Group, the GT-350 seeks to assimilate state-of-the-art single-play features into a fully automatic record changer. Judging from the success of the GT-35 (HF, July 1978), we expected much from this machine. Its low-slung silhouette, silvery finish, and front-mounted controls (accessible with the dust cover closed) are attractively different from the classic Garrard look. Though this company has made forays into direct drive, here it has opted to retain belt drive with a servo DC motor, electronic speed selection, and variable pitch control. The 9-inch statically balanced tonearm has been pared down so that its effective moving mass (when balanced for a cartridge weighing 5 grams) is just 12 grams.

The carbon-fiber headshell (actually a two-part system consisting of a finger lift/cartridge holder and headshell body) is cleverly joined with a sort of built-in phono alignment protractor that makes setting stylus overhang quite simple and precise. In this scheme, the pickup is first mounted to the finger lift, which in turn slides into a groove on the headshell body to prevent lateral skewing of the cartridge body. You then turn over the platter mat, exposing a series of raised parallel lines and one intersecting perpendicular line. To set overhang, you move the tonearm over the mat until the headshell is between and parallel to the raised lines. You then slide the cartridge back and forth until the stylus meets the designated intersecting point on the mat and tighten the pickup mounting screws.

Data from CBS Technology Center attest to the GT-350’s capabilities. Speed is unvarying; the adjustment range does not extend very far downward, but this will likely concern few users. Tonearm resonance—measured with our standard Shur V-15 Type III pickup—is close to ideal in frequency (and will be higher with pickups that are lighter and/or stiffer) in the warp-sensitive vertical plane and so well controlled as to defy detection in the horizontal plane. Rumble and flutter measurements are good. Measured VTF values, while not dead on the gauge values, are within the operating window (typically, ±10–25%) of most cartridge specs. The antiskating bias is within the normal range—a little toward its high end at the “1-gram” setting (where our bias factor is calculated) and a little lower above. The GT-350 performs admirably. The illuminated strobe markings are clearly visible and reassured us that, even with five records resting on the platter (the maximum number the changer is designed to handle), speed does not vary.
INCREDIBLE CAR SOUND
IN THREE EASY STEPS.
AND ONE HARD ONE.

Let's break all rules and get to the hard one first. Number four: $350 for a complete car stereo speaker system. Gulp. But considering what you paid for the stereo in your dash, if you don't have good speakers, all that money is simply wasted.

Before we get to number one, a word about our whole Voice of the Highway™ system (the ALI). It's extremely modular. So much so, you can buy any part of it and enhance what you've got now. Of course, it's best to get it all and listen to car stereo as it's supposed to sound. A system designed exclusively for the road, but engineered to rival the one in your living room.

Number one is TK1 3" high frequency drivers that deliver the highest highs you've heard in car stereo. It's a dimension other speaker systems just don't have.

Number two is our SKI 5¼" speakers. Designed for extended range and for fitting in where nothing else will. The sound? It's what made Altec famous: clean, clear and tight.

Number three is a unique requirement: the SW1 Power Bass. A self-powered subwoofer that fills out the entire system, improves its dynamic range and reduces distortion. Its unique die-cast structure contains a 40-watt amplifier, electronic crossover, balanced inputs and an active equalizer. And the results are dramatic. (Or you can add the Power Base to your existing speakers for $219.95 and still get great sound.)

Now back to number four. Our $350 item. If you want true car stereo, super efficiency and clear performance (not just so much noise on the road), you have to give our Voice of the Highway™ a listen. We believe it's the only speaker truly designed for the car. (And when it's installed by an authorized dealer, we'll guarantee it for as long as you own the car).

In addition to our ALI system, we also have an incredible set of 6" x 9" Duplex speakers. They're ideal for all cars with severe space limitations, because they easily mount into a door. They also can be used with the ALI system or are available themselves at $159.95 per pair.

LISTEN. FREE GAS.
Just to get you to listen, we'll pay for your gas money. Take this ad to your car stereo dealer, listen to the speakers, and we'll send you $2 for gas money, whether you buy or not. That's how confident we are you'll like our Voice of the Highway™. So when it comes down to the four steps, all of them are really easy to take. One at a time, or all at once. Including the last one. It won't be so hard, once you really listen. Hear Altec's Voice of the Highway™ today and end up driving a real bargain. For the name of your local dealer, call toll-free (800) 528-6060, Ext. 731; in Arizona (800) 352-0458.
tech talk:

45 Watt RMS minimum per channel into 8 ohms. From 20 to 20,000 Hz. With no more than 0.03%. THD.

explained.

The tech talk you just read is a set of amplifier specifications, or specs. Specs for the remarkable MCS Series Model 3248 45 Watt receiver. Most people think they need an engineering degree to understand specs so they usually don't even try. That's a mistake. Specs are intended to inform and protect you. With that in mind, we'd like to end some of the confusion.

The first sentence above tells you that 45 watts are the least amount of continuous (RMS) power the amplifier portion of the 3248 will deliver to each speaker channel when hooked up to 8 ohm speakers.

The second sentence states that at least 45 watts of power will be delivered over the entire audible range of sound frequencies. From 20 to 20,000 vibrations per second (20 to 20,000 Hz).

The last sentence contains the most important information of all. It tells you that under these conditions the unwanted overtones or harmonics will not exceed three hundredths of one percent of the output signal (0.03% THD or total harmonic distortion).

When you consider that THD of up to 3% is considered virtually inaudible you can understand just how remarkable the MCS Series 45 Watt receiver really is.

So come to your nearest JCPenney and see for yourself. See the LED power meters. The tape monitoring system that lets you compare what you're recording to the program source while you're recording. The tape dubbing control that lets you record from one tape deck to another, and back again, at the flick of a switch. The loudness switch that boosts bass and treble ranges when the volume is low. See all these features and much more. Or just come in and listen to the MCS Series 45 Watt receiver. You won't have to look any further. The MCS Series 45 Watt receiver only $379.95 and only at JCPenney.

Full 5-Year Warranty on MCS Series speakers. Full 3-Year Warranty on MCS Series receivers, turntables, tape decks, tuners and amplifiers. If any MCS Series component is defective in materials and workmanship during its warranty period, we will repair it—just return it to JCPenney.

MCS Series Audio Components sold exclusively at JCPenney.

Prices higher in Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico.
Cueing is a bit abrupt in the liftoff but well damped in descent, with no side drift. We had no trouble with a problem sometimes posed by other changers: alteration of effective VTF by electrostatic attraction between the arm and the stack of records poised above it. As far as the “changing” function itself is concerned, the two-point record suspension system and plastic cams beneath the platter performed faultlessly. Immunity to surface-borne shock is about average.

We're not entirely sure whether the introduction of a new record changer at this moment of market domination by single-play models represents an act of courage or one of opportunism on Garrard's part. So swiftly and thoroughly has the limelight swung away from the once-omnipotent multidisc format that its admirers must sometimes wonder where their next turntable will be coming from. Garrard to the rescue! In view of the GT-350's solid performance and scarce competition, the company's efforts should be rewarded. We hope they will be; we would like to think that audiophiles are not such slaves of fashion that they will pass up changers altogether.

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Nakamichi Model 680ZX two-speed (1⅜ and 15/16 ips) cassette deck with automatic azimuth adjustment, in metal case with rack-mount adapters. Dimensions: 17 by 5 inches [front plate, 19 inches wide with rack-mount adapters], 12¼ inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. Price: $1,550; optional RM-200 wired remote control, $45; RM-580 wireless remote control, $165. Warranty: “limited,” one year parts and labor plus additional three-year coverage on parts other than head, capstan, and motor assemblies. Manufacturer: Nakamichi Corp., Japan; U.S. distributor: Nakamichi U.S.A. Corp., 1101 Colorado Ave., Santa Monica, Calif. 90401.

So many of the features of the 680ZX are new or unique or both that we hardly know where to start. The half-speed option is a first for a quality home deck (though it has been announced for some relatively inexpensive battery portables and is, of course, the standard transport speed for microcassettes). So is the automatic azimuth adjustment system, which is a refinement of the ever-evolving Nakamichi three-head transport. The 680 has audible cueing—not exactly a novelty, though this is the first Nakamichi deck to employ it—and an ancillary system that the company calls Random Access Music Memory. Like the few similar systems on the market, RAMM finds recorded selections by sensing the blanks between selections in the fast-wind mode; but here, too, Nakamichi has left its unique imprint on the way the system is realized. Also out of the ordinary is the pitch control, which adjusts playback speed only and is detented at the normal setting. And there is the “bar graph” metering system, which we consider unequivocally the most useful display available for the amateur recordist.

Like others of its ilk, this display has the advantage (over meters) of showing levels for the two channels in such close proximity that they can be viewed simultaneously. Unlike most, it is superbly calibrated: from below -40 to +10 dB and differentiating 47 signal levels—in steps of less than 1 dB over the entire range from -10 dB up, with the marked calibrations unusually precise in this range. There are two metering modes and two display elements in each channel for each mode. When you switch the display for peak indications, the “bar” of the bar graph (which, as usual, actually comprises a series of discrete segments) follows instantaneous peak values with just enough decay time to allow you to assess signal values. In addition, what Nakamichi calls a cursor—consisting of a single illuminated segment unconnected to the bar except at signal maxima—holds onto those maxima for about 4 seconds before it begins inching downward. Thus you have simultaneous instantaneous-peak and peak-hold metering, the mode in which we generally preferred using the display. A second mode converts the bars to average readings (the sort one might get from a VU meter), while the cursor simultaneously bobs about above the bar at the instantaneous peak signal values. The spikier the waveform—that is, the more sharp transients it includes—the farther apart the two will fall; the closer the signal approaches sine-wave behavior, the nearer they come. Thus the combination tells you not only average and peak values, but something about the nature of the signal as well.

But there's more. When you begin recording and switch the deck to its calibration mode, a 400-Hz tone appears at the recording input and azimuth adjustment begins automatically, using a recording-head servo to eliminate any

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All This and Half-Speed Too

Nakamichi 680ZX cassette deck

PLAYBACK RESPONSE (TDK test tape, -20 dB DIN)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hz</th>
<th>L ch</th>
<th>R ch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>+1, +3 dB, 20 Hz to 1 kHz</td>
<td>+1, +3 dB, 20 Hz to 1 kHz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>+1, +3 dB, 20 Hz to 1 kHz</td>
<td>+1, +3 dB, 20 Hz to 1 kHz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1k</td>
<td>0 dB</td>
<td>0 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5k</td>
<td>-1 dB</td>
<td>-1 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10k</td>
<td>-6 dB</td>
<td>-6 dB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE, TYPE 2 TAPE (-20 dB)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hz</th>
<th>L ch</th>
<th>R ch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>+1, +3 dB, 20 Hz to 1 kHz</td>
<td>+1, +3 dB, 20 Hz to 1 kHz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>+1, +3 dB, 20 Hz to 1 kHz</td>
<td>+1, +3 dB, 20 Hz to 1 kHz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1k</td>
<td>0 dB</td>
<td>0 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5k</td>
<td>-1 dB</td>
<td>-1 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10k</td>
<td>-6 dB</td>
<td>-6 dB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE, TYPE 4 TAPE (-20 dB)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hz</th>
<th>L ch</th>
<th>R ch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>+1, +3 dB, 20 Hz to 1 kHz</td>
<td>+1, +3 dB, 20 Hz to 1 kHz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>+1, +3 dB, 20 Hz to 1 kHz</td>
<td>+1, +3 dB, 20 Hz to 1 kHz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1k</td>
<td>0 dB</td>
<td>0 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5k</td>
<td>-1 dB</td>
<td>-1 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10k</td>
<td>-6 dB</td>
<td>-6 dB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

S/N RATIO (IEC DIN 0 dB, A-weighted)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type 2</th>
<th>Type 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>playback without noise reduction</td>
<td>59 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording/play without noise reduction</td>
<td>67½ dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolby playback</td>
<td>56 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolby record/play</td>
<td>64½ dB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

< Circle 33 on Page 79
The separate bias and EQ (120/70 microseconds) switches are used together in the normal fashion when you are recording at 1/8 ips. For half-speed operation, however, the manual specifies the 120-microsecond EQ for all tapes to compensate for the reduced high-frequency headroom. Actually, we made some surprisingly good tapes with the slow speed and the heftier (70-microsecond) high-frequency boost, but their success depended on the relative absence of loud highs. Even with the recommended EQ, the slow speed exacts a toll if you want really clean, open highs with signals on which hiss will be minimal in playback. The astonishing thing is that, given the deck's outstanding performance at 1/8 ips, you must give up so little when you switch to half speed. The results are comparable to those with the very best (full-speed) decks of not so many years ago.

The slow speed can be used for three basic purposes: to store recordings that would normally require C-90 or C-120 tapes on C-45s or C-60s, using their thicker base material to lessen the likelihood of audible print-through; to reduce tape costs by using shorter tapes or by cramming twice as much onto the same lengths (though, for more exactly comparable signal quality, you may want to choose more expensive formulations for the slower speed); and to accommodate without interruption recordings too long to fit onto one side of standard cassettes at standard speed. This last is of particular merit to operaphiles—above all, Wagnerians. After putting an entire "Carmen" onto a single C-90, we glanced at our collection of fractured acts from "Walküre" and "Götterdammerung" broadcasts with rueful eyes.

For inherently more fragmented fare, the greater capacity poses a problem: finding what you want to hear. Nakamichi has anticipated the need by providing (in addition to the usual memory rewind) what some manufacturers call a cue/review feature. If you press FAST WIND orREWIND and then PAUSE, the winding must give up so little when you switch to half speed. The results are comparable to those with the very best (full-speed) decks of not so many years ago.

For inherently more fragmented fare, the greater capacity poses a problem: finding what you want to hear. Nakamichi has anticipated the need by providing (in addition to the usual memory rewind) what some manufacturers call a cue/review feature. If you press FAST WIND or REWIND and then PAUSE, the winding speed slows somewhat and a twittering of output appears at your monitor speakers so you can keep track of your whereabouts on tape. We found this a useful feature at both speeds. To activate the RAMM, you start with FAST WIND and press PAUSE twice, at which point the numeral 1 appears to the left of the metering display to indicate that the RAMM will skip one selection and play the next. To increase the number to be skipped, you press PAUSE, stepping the display number upward at each tap; you can step the number downward by tapping RECORD. Perhaps because in RAMM operation its winding speed is slower than average, we find the Nakamichi design uncommonly adept at finding the intersection spaces as they whip past the playback head; but it is not altogether foolproof, and without side-by-side
MOVE IN THE BEST OF CIRCLES.

AKAI turntables. Six of the most accurate, precisely-engineered components in the world. Backed by 52 years of superior technology in turntable motors for noise-free, dependable performance. Designed to maximize your musical enjoyment and deliver your records' highest fidelity. With virtually every feature you've ever looked for, including one of today's most important: value. You'll find it built into every piece of equipment in the AKAI family circle.

To start a music revolution of your own, see your AKAI dealer or write AKAI, P.O. Box 6010, Compton, CA 90224.

AKAI turntables for 1980, featuring full automatic, semi-automatic, direct drive, belt drive, quartz lock configurations; automatic return and shut-off, DC servo motors, static balanced tonearms; variable pitch controls; built-in strobe lights; anti-skating controls; vibration-absorbing isolated feet; front panel controls for convenience and easy access.

AKAI
You never heard it so good.
It would be a pity to put an ordinary car stereo in a $125,000 Lamborghini.

Instead, you’ll find an Alpine Car Audio System as standard equipment, factory installed in each of their magnificent machines. Chosen by Lamborghini for its superior features and sound performance, Alpine offers a number of pure bred, high technology car audio systems to make whatever you love to drive sound as good as it looks. For an audition, visit your Alpine dealer. He’ll show you the extraordinary in car audio sound. Alpine Electronics of America, Inc., 3102 Kashiwa Street, Torrance, California 90505.
comparison with the same recorded tape we can't quantify its effectiveness. Suffice it to say that in pops [music with relatively few "holes" that will look like pauses to the sensing system] it usually gave us the selection we wanted, but we found it easier to use the CUE/REVIEW for the classics.

In terms of performance, the 680ZX is simply superb. The flatness of the record/play curves—even at levels higher than those shown in the graphs—cannot be surpassed in any significant respect by any deck we know of. Indeed it's a good deck that can match at 1% ips what the Nakamichi can do at 15/16. Even when we tried the Type 2 tape with its high-speed EQ at the slower speed, we saw results that might have come from many a "good" deck, though Dolby response and 0-dB behavior both were significantly degraded by comparison to the results with the recommended EQ. Note that noise actually measures a hair lower in some of the measurements at 15/16 ips; the operative fact, however, is that maximum recording levels are significantly reduced at the slower speed so that the maximum dynamic range is less. The evidence can be seen in the data for overload points at 333 Hz. Note, too, that the distortion is similarly low throughout the midrange but rises more quickly as frequency increases at half speed. More important, perhaps, is the degree to which the touted superiority of metal tape really shows up in these curves. Those for record/play response confirm this. Indeed all of the response curves are extraordinary; in general, the lab had to drive the deck at -10 dB [at standard speed] to get high-end rolloff comparable to that of most fine decks at -20.

Nakamichi actually specs the 680ZX to 22 kHz at -20 dB, so the lab checked beyond the 20-kHz top of its normal test range. With the multiplex filter [which introduces a very sharp, clean "cliff" at about 17 kHz] switched off, response did not drop by 3 dB until the lab had reached about 24-25 kHz with all three tapes, and even with the noise reduction turned on, the figures were reduced by less than 1 kHz.

Along with all this praise, we do have some caveats to offer prospective purchasers. It is important that you place the deck in a spot not too far below eye level and with good illumination if the front panel is to be adequately visible. Until we heeded this advice, we had trouble differentiating among the switches at the right end of the deck, reading the left-channel portion of the recessed signal display, and seeing whether the RECORDING LED (nestled below the protruding FAST-WIND switch) was lit. And several times when we intended to check recorded signal via the monitor switch, we inadvertently turned the deck off, ruining our recording; while you quickly learn to avoid this, Nakamichi could have prevented it altogether by using a pushbutton instead of yet another lateral lever switch for the AC power. These are, of course, tiny matters in so wonderful a product. Many companies make solid, attractive, competent cassette recorders; but very few exert Nakamichi's sort of brilliant and far-reaching inventiveness to make the medium always better. The 680ZX gives you both superb performance and the excitement that comes only with such inventiveness.

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A Crowning Glory?


Once upon a time, Crown was a tape-recorder company. Since its products offered excellent value for the pro and excellent capability for the amateur, they might have been considered prototypical of the semipro category. Gradually, a matching group of electronics grew up around them and established such a reputation for clean power and no-nonsense design that they took over from—and eventually superseded—the decks to which they had been mere accessories. Notable among the Crown power-amp specs of that period were details of "safe operating area" (considering output voltage and current as the separate entities they are, rather than lumping their product into behavior-obscurring wattage numbers alone) and phase response. In both respects, the company was well ahead of its time, and the importance of these specifics is only now being re-examined in detail elsewhere. The SA-2, in a sense, sums up this thrust with what Crown calls its self-analyzing computer: circuitry that assesses a number of key factors—including voltage and current at the output—and controls operation accordingly.
The self-regulation is unusually complex. In addition to monitoring output-stage conditions (and shutting down the balanced stage that precedes it in the event of output overdrive), the circuitry monitors input/output waveform comparisons, the internal temperature of the power transformer, and the ambient temperature inside the amplifier case. When it senses an unwanted condition, the circuitry usually prescribes shutting down the high-voltage supply to the output stage, putting the amp into its standby mode. But the design provides more than a single panacea. When ambient internal temperature rises above 47°C, for example, fan speed increases. (The fan is at the intake port on the back panel, and the ventilation path exhausts through the slots on the front panel. Obviously, both must have free access to room air if ventilation is to be efficient. Even with the amp free-standing, the fan is no louder than typical home ambient background noise.) Also on the back panel are three switches: STEREO/MONO (for “strapped” operation), LOW FREO PROTECT on/off (which puts the amp into standby when anything below 10 Hz appears at the output—essentially a DC protection feature since the amp otherwise is rated to DC), and DELAY on/off (which is used in conjunction with the preceding switch to postpone turn-on of the high-voltage supply following standby, including initial startup on the amp). Diversified Science Laboratories measured the SA-2 with both DC protection and delay turned off; we generally listened with both engaged, but since we never tripped the protection, behavior was essentially identical.

A nice touch is what Crown calls the display “ladder” on the front panel. Each channel has its own vertical “rail” with an amber standby LED at the bottom and a red one at the top to indicate when the input/output comparator comes up with a discrepancy. In between are fifteen green LEDs that show peak output in 3-dB steps (with reasonable accuracy, in the lab check) below rated output into 8 ohms. All the green LEDs, up to and including that representing the instantaneous peak output, light as a bar graph; in addition, the top LED reached by the bar in its upward excursions remains lit for about 4 seconds after the signal drops to provide a peak-hold indication as well as what Crown calls the instantaneous running peak. The display is quite fascinating and tells you much more about the nature of your signals than most, but the net effect is so powerful an amplifier is that it simply reminds you how much of the capability is going unused during normal operation. When you do become aggressive enough to drive the amp into clipping, waveform irregularities begin to appear on an oscilloscope before the red comparator LEDs light, though they will do so in the presence of any serious disparity. In the measurements, the lab rated the SA-2 at the first signs of anomalies (as always); in listening, the slightly more forgiving display probably is more realistic.

The bench data certainly are impressive. Interestingly, what distortion there is at the 0-dBW level consists of even harmonics alone, for all practical purposes—a characteristic traditionally associated with tubes, rather than transistors, and sometimes invoked to explain the “warmth of tube sound.” Some third harmonic content does appear by the time rated output is reached, but the total distortion remains low—less than 0.01% to beyond 1 kHz—and creeps upward only gradually as frequency increases. The mono mode takes the power rating to 700 watts (28½ dBW), putting it beyond the scope of normal home application, so we have not included it in our data. If you plan the sort of professional installation for which this capability is provided, you will find copious notes about such matters as ground-loop prevention (for which special ground jumpers are supplied on the back panel because of the unusual internal ground scheme of the amplifier) in the manual—which is typical of Crown products in its sober, thorough informativeness. The SA-2 is fitted with a 20-amp three-prong AC cord and supplied with an adapter for the common 15-amp three-prong type. We used the latter with no hint of misadventure, but for a pro setup that will drive the Crown flat out, 20-amp lines (at 120 volts) will match the output transistors’ total dissipation rating of 2,400 watts. Home users may be pleased to note, however, that the signal inputs are the standard pin variety, rather than the ¼-inch type.

So Crown has done it again. We don’t remember a single Crown product that was less than solid and precious few that were less than innovative. The SA-2 embodies more than its share of both properties. Like other models in the line, it may strike some home users as uncompromisingly “professional” in design: It does not go in for decor styling or convenience features. As a matter of fact, its self-regulation impresses us as a convenience feature of the highest order, and we take the avoidance of self-indulgent glitter as an index of Crown’s priorities.

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We don't like to brag. But with the new ADC Integra Series: Integra XLM-III, Integra XLM-II and Integra XLM-I, it's hard to resist.

Let's start with basic design. That's what our engineers did. Though what they finished up with is far from basic.

The new ADC Integra is the first all carbon-fibre integrated headshell/cartridge designed to minimize tracking angle distortion two ways.

**OVERHANG DIMENSION ADJUSTMENT**

As your tonearm "sweeps" a record, the angle the stylus makes with the record groove constantly changes. The result is offset angle error.

Is it serious? An error as little as 2° can more than double cartridge distortion! That's serious! And that's why the new ADC Integra was designed so you can set the optimum offset angle simply by adjusting the overhang dimension. It's easy. We've even included a Tracking Angle Gauge.

**VERTICAL TRACKING ANGLE ADJUSTMENT**

Nearly all records are cut with a vertical tracking angle of 20°. That's the way they're made. That's the way they're meant to be played. Sounds simple. But when you see how tonearm heights vary, from turntable to turntable, getting the exact vertical tracking angle suddenly isn't simple anymore. Unless of course you chose a new ADC Integra. Its vertical tracking angle is adjustable. In calibrated degree increments from -8° to +8°. Enough to compensate for all bayonet-type tonearm heights. Including changes.

If all that sounds impressive, wait until you hear how the new ADC Integra Series actually sounds. By minimizing what you don't want to hear, we've obviously maximized what you do want to hear. Music. The new ADC Integras' response is clean, effortless and often astonishing. But why listen to a description? Audition a new ADC Integra for yourself at your nearest ADC dealer.

After you've heard us, we'd like to hear from you. Write or call the Customer Service Dept., Audio Dynamics Corporation, Pickett District Road, New Milford, Connecticut 06776. 800-243-9544.
Culshaw's Cats
I enjoyed John Culshaw's "Seven Cats and Eight Bags" immensely [February]. His is one of the better Beecham stories. Sir Thomas was right that Handel's Messiah lay badly for Joan Sutherland's voice—as witness Sir Adrian Boult's London recording with her singing the soprano part.

Culshaw's column and R. D. Darrell's "The Tape Deck" are among the main reasons for my taking HF.

Pierce H. Russell
Troy, N.Y.

Culshaw's February column was of added interest to me as I have five of the seven recordings whose secrets he revealed to us. I also have "Libero Arbace" as the Jailer in Maazel's Tosca on London and 'Murray Dickie under his own name as the fourth Jew in the old mono London recording of Salome conducted by Krauss (now on Richmond).

Jerome Weintraub
El Cajon, Calif.

Four-Hand Piano Buffs
I have begun the organization of a group dedicated to the preservation and enjoyment of piano music for four hands. We play the gamut from Bach through Mozart and the piano at Juilliard and Galway begins as FOUR HANDS. We will read Ruttencutter's book, Pianist's Progress, but if the review was sliced, may we have a short followup?

Tom Scardino
Savannah, Ga.

The review was published essentially as Mr. Smith wrote it, with no cuts.—Ed.

Is That All?
I followed with great interest Patrick Smith's review of recordings by Robin McCabe and James Galway [February] until I got to the last line. Led by Mr. Smith's description of McCabe's performance, I felt myself to pass through the Great Gate of Kiev but then abruptly abandoned. Something tells me that Mr. Smith did not stop there, but was cut off by an editor.

Galway got seven paragraphs as opposed to three for McCabe. I find her story far more interesting, as we begin with her at the piano at Juilliard and Galway begins as First flute under Karajan. Her history is easier to relate to, for there are more of us struggling than those who have made it. I will read Ruttencutter's book, Pianist's Progress, but if the review was sliced, may we have a short followup?

More on London Orchestras
Paul Snook's reply to my letter [February] in reference to the various film scores recorded in London by British orchestras vindicates the London Symphony. Now it has been correctly identified as the fine ensemble that recorded John Williams' Dracula, Superman, and Star Wars.

I respect Mr. Snook's affirmation that he has a preference for the National and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras—a matter of opinion. But he has muddied the waters further by saying he prefers the National Philharmonic under Charles Gerhardt and Jerry Goldsmith. It's true that this orchestra has made the fine RCA Classic Film Score Series under the direction of maestro/producer Gerhardt; it has not, to my knowledge, played with Goldsmith as conductor. If Mr. Snook was referring to the Alien score composed by Goldsmith, Lionel Newman is correctly identified on the
Now there are two approaches to low THD. Ours gives you better sound.

Harman Kardon introduces low negative feedback design for inaudible TIM distortion.

For the last few years, audio manufacturers have been rushing to bring you newer, lower THD levels in their amplifier sections. And every year, they’ve accomplished this the simplest way they could. By adding negative feedback, a form of electronic compensation. Unfortunately, this “cure” for THD—typically 60-80dB of negative feedback—creates another form of distortion. Transient Intermodulation Distortion, or TIM, which does far more to degrade the music than THD.

At Harman Kardon, we lowered THD the right way. With a unique circuit design (U.S. Patent #4,176,323) that lets us use just a fraction of the negative feedback typically used.

The result is our new HK700 series High Technology Separates. Built around our low negative feedback amp/preamp combination that delivers a crystal clear, totally transparent 65 watts per channel. You can also choose from a full-featured digital tuner, a phase locked analog tuner, and the most advanced cassette deck on the market.

The world’s first cassette deck with Dolby® HX.

Our new metal cassette deck goes beyond metal. It features the all new Dolby HX circuitry for an extra 10dB high frequency headroom and an astonishing 68dB signal-to-noise ratio. With Dolby HX, even an inexpensive tape can perform like a premium metal tape. And a premium metal tape sounds unbelievable.

Our new separates look as good as they sound. Each measures a mere 15” wide x 3” high. As you can see, they stack beautifully.

We suggest you audition them. But only if you’re serious. Once you hear the difference low negative feedback can make, you’ll never settle for anything less.

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See them and hear them; feel their feather touch; put them under your control. We promise you a surprising and sensual experience.

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†Optional with dealer

VRX-9000 Digital Receiver has RMS power (both channels driven, from 20 to 20,000 Hz, with no more than 0.08% total harmonic distortion) of 80 watts per channel into 8 ohms.

VCX-600 Three-Head Cassette Deck wow and flutter is less than 0.06%. Frequency response (± 3 dB) metal tape, 30 to 20,000 Hz; Co or CrO₂ tape, 30 to 18,000 Hz.
MAY 1980

album as the conductor.

But it can safely be concluded that London is blessed with more fine professional orchestras than any other large city in the world. In addition to the aforementioned, there are also the London Philharmonic, the Philharmonia, and the BBC. That's an impressive array.

William Radford-Bennett
Glen Echo Heights, Md.

Mr. Snook replies: The National Philharmonic was conducted by Goldsmith in his soundtrack albums "The Boys from Brazil" (reviewed by me, February 1979) and "The Great Train Robbery" (which I also reviewed, August 1979).

In Defense of Vocal Recordings
I must say that sections of your magazine have become somewhat tedious of late, particularly those reviews dealing with vocal records. The crotchety, whiny tone in many of them now borders on the insufferable. While I would generally agree that some modern opera sets have a certain homogenized, artificial feeling that undermines their impact, I find several well sung and enjoyable despite their shortcomings.

What is most disconcerting is the veritable vendetta being waged by your writers against Luciano Pavarotti, continued in January in the review of his Neapolitan songs. While I too have found some of his recent recordings lacking in one area or another (often having nothing to do with him), there is still much to be enjoyed from his singing, as witness not only his continuing popularity, but also the critical acclaim elsewhere.

Martin Sletzinger
Alexandria, Va.

A Single Pringle or Six?
In response to your query as to which of the six flower maidens shown with John Culshaw's "The Plot Against Wagner's Miss Pringle" (December) is Carre Pringle, I think that the picture contains nothing but her, photographed in stop-action by Muybridge. I also think she eventually settled in Albuquerque; the phone book has a goodly number of Pringles, and, like many good musicians, she must have seen the beauty of living in the Southwest after her dear Wagner left for Valhalla.

Ralph Berkowitz
Albuquerque, N.M.

Correction
In our January "Letters" column we printed a communication ("Another Composers' Haven") from Thomas Steenland, Program Coordinator for Owl Recording, Inc., in which he asserted that Owl was "the first record company in the U.S." to acquire tax-exempt status. We have been informed that in fact Louisville First Edition Records holds that honor, having been granted such status in the 1950s, and that New World Records too obtained its exemption in June of 1975. Furthermore, Composer's Recordings, Inc.'s tax-exempt status dates from early in 1976, not 1977, as Mr. Steenland said. Our apologies to all concerned.

WHY NOT THE BEST?

"Polk Audio is a small Maryland-based company whose speakers enjoy an enviable reputation among audiophiles who would prefer to own such exotica as the Beveridge System 2SW-1 or Pyramid Metronome but don't have the golden wallets to match their golden ears."

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INCREADLE SOUND — AFFORDBLE PRICE

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LONDON—It comes as a surprise to find that it is three years (January and June 1977) since I wrote anything about video software and music, and because my prognosis was gloomy it would be agreeable to report that the scene has now changed. Well, in terms of hardware it certainly has, and much sooner than I predicted. “In ten to fifteen years,” I wrote, “a video recorder in the home will be as common as high fidelity equipment today,” which put the date somewhere between 1987 and 1992, whereas if demand maintains or increases its present rate, most of us will have video recorders in a few years. But the operative word there is “recorder,” and what I am concerned with is prerecorded material in general and music in particular. (I am omitting any discussion of tape-vs.-disc because for the software problem it is a red herring: The question is simply whether people will want prerecorded material, whatever the format.)

What people want in general is already clear in all existing markets: They want feature movies at full length (that is, without the “edited for television” restriction and without commercials), and they want pornography. Otherwise, there is a market so small as to be almost negligible for documentary or “teach yourself” programs; and the rest is silence—or, rather, darkness. Yet a swift calculation covering only the past three years, and which almost certainly errs on the side of an underestimate, shows that on a worldwide basis millions of dollars have been spent photographing conductors jumping up and down and waving their arms about. In terms of money earned, this is good news for the conductors, orchestra players, directors, cameramen, and lighting technicians thus employed; it is also quite good news for the minority networks that can acquire such material for a pittance since it is a non-competitive market. Nobody is going to bid for Maestro Hullabaloo’s video tape of Bruckner’s Seventh Symphony, but those who paid for it will console themselves with the erroneous anticipation that any kind of television exposure will eventually create a demand for the prerecorded video cassette.

I have been here before, and more than once. The same argument was being advanced, with some force, in the early 1960s when Herbert von Karajan engaged the brilliant French director Henri-George Clouzot to direct a series of orchestral films. Nothing came of them, and the excuse eventually made was that they were in black and white at a time when people only wanted color. So Karajan made many of them again in color, this time directing both the cameras and the orchestra himself; I am told that an intrepid explorer can actually find them on video cassettes in Germany and Japan, although he is likely to be an unhappy explorer when he returns and meets friends who have recorded them off the air for nothing except the cost of an unrecorded tape.

It is here that I am tempted to turn to the more expensive field of opera, but I am going to defer that to a later piece in the hope of delving still further into the motivations behind video cassettes of orchestral music. There are basically two. One is vanity, because whatever they say to the contrary, conductors adore seeing themselves on a screen, if only because it is far less inhibiting than a domestic mirror. The other is profit on the part of those who underwrite the ventures and who think they are sitting on a crock of gold, while in fact they are the victims of a false analogy. They are quick to point out that both LPs and stereo took time to capture the public imagination and that prerecorded video may take a little longer. What they forget is that LPs and stereo offered indisputable musical advantages, whereas video applied to the orchestral repertoire offers only pictures of the conductor or bald-headed oboists and the like, along with sound quality that is woefully inferior by today’s standards and that is likely to里斯ible by the time digital recording gets into its stride.

So where’s the market? Let us not forget that film exists of many of the great conductors of this century, and very useful it is to illustrate a lecture or to provide a “clip” in a documentary. But—to cite some of the lesser known examples of material that I know exists—I doubt if the market would be flooded with demand for Stravinsky conducting the Firebird Suite, or Kleiber directing all the Beethoven symphonies, or Giulini conducting a Mozart symphony for the very first time. All of this comes under the same category as film of Richard Strauss, Stokowski, Szell, Furtwängler, Walter, and a host of others who made themselves available to the cameras for complete or incomplete performances at one time or another. It is all archive material, and we should rejoice that it has been preserved, while not kidding ourselves for one second that the sight of Furtwängler conducting Tchaikovsky’s Sixth would add one jot to the musical experience he set out to share with us.

There is a final factor that the video speculators have left out of their equation, and this time there is a parallel with audio. It is that, generally speaking, the public wants whatever is current. Of course it is true that recordings by masters from days past are still in demand, but it is the newcomers who tend to command the center of the marketplace. I do not believe it will ever happen, but if at some stage in the future there is a surge in demand for orchestral music on video, it is bound to focus on whatever figures are most prominently before the public. What has been made in the past fifteen years or so will then take its rightful place in the archives. And those who invested so much money with such abandon will be exceedingly sad and wonder why nobody warned them. 

HF

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Synthesized Art.

Sony's new receiver creates higher-fi with a computerized tuner, a DC power amp and Pulse Power Supply.

Dream up a stereo test and compare our new STR-V55 receiver work of art with any other receiver you care to hear. Or view.

The measure of the receiver you invite into your home should feature unusually intelligent versatility. Ample power. Inaudible distortion. And an attractive design that speaks with a quality "finish."

Of course, we'd like to recommend our STR-V55 because we synthesized our newest technology to give you the incredible accuracy of frequency synthesized tuning, a versatile microcomputer and silent, uninterrupted power. The tuner section is so sophisticated that a highly stable quartz-crystal oscillator locks in AM and FM signals for brilliantly faithful reproduction of broadcast programming.

And the microcomputer gives you tuning options that simply don't exist anywhere else.

Memory scan is our latest exclusive tuning advance to span the bands automatically. Press a button and preset stations are automatically tuned in sequence for approximately 3.5 seconds each. Hands-off tuning lets you automatically monitor your favorite stations and simply pressing the appropriate station button tunes in your selection for continuous listening.

Choose auto tuning to capture stations with frequencies that you don't know for certain. A touch of a button precisely finds the next station encountered up and down the frequency band.

Manual tuning lets you approach known frequencies at high speed and then obtains the exact frequency in precise, discrete steps.

And preset tuning instantly recalls any of the eight stations that are stored in our new MNOS (metal nitride oxide semiconductor) memory that can't be accidentally erased.

Our beauty is not only designed for easy viewing, it's coordinated to be proudly displayed. Bright electro-fluorescent digits display frequencies.

Bright green LEDs in a five-step array show signal strength. And red LEDs pinpoint your favorite stations at a glance.

Consider the power of 55 watts per channel that propels the intimacy of the original performance through Sony's advanced DC amp technology. And a high-gain low-noise phono amp in the preamp section enables you to even use an MC cartridge with your turntable to capture the subtleness of the softest, most delicate music.

It's also important to know that an efficient, compact Pulse Power Supply provides stable DC power even at peak levels. And highly responsive Hi-fi power transistors artfully reproduce complex wave forms even at high frequencies and full output power.

Sound is so clear that quiet intervals are "quiet" even at the highest listening levels.

Sony's STR-V55 is more of a receiver because you demand to hear more of your music. Own our masterpiece.
Phonographic Prescriptions: Do They Work?

HF measures key performance points of some typical "miracle cures."

In our harried world, we all are looking for quick solutions to immediate problems. Who wouldn't invest $20 for a magic elixir claimed to improve a car's mileage by 10 to 15%? Who wouldn't invest a like amount—or even more—to preserve a cherished record collection, improve sound clarity, eliminate static, and so on? It is not surprising, therefore, that record-care products and accessories flood the market, with more appearing every day. Two years ago, we ventured to investigate some of them.
Now, returning to the topic, we find that we can't adequately document the entire mélange; there are too many products to enumerate, much less test. Some are essentially identical, merely bearing different names; others, purporting to serve the same function, differ only slightly—and more in detail than in substance.

In our February 1978 article, we concentrated mainly on record-cleaning and record-preserving items and only touched on antistatic products, at that time dominated by the ionization gun, whose progenitor was Discwasher’s Zerostat. Since then, various antistatic concoctions claiming permanent effect have been formulated, and we now have field mills that can determine static charge more quantitatively than the gold leaf electrosopes we used then. Conductive mats purporting to bleed away static, rendering it harmless, have proliferated; most of these also are said to damp out record and platter resonances that tend to muddle reproduction. In a reversal of heretofore accepted logic, “solid” record mats are offered to replace the conventional rubber ones, again in an effort to suppress undesirable resonances. There are weights and stabilizers to hold the record firmly against the mat, suppressing entrapped-air resonances and sometimes, it is claimed, reducing the effects of record warp. Various compliant feet are sold to improve the isolation of the turntable from its environment. Designing a set of experiments to test such a hodgepodge is no easy matter, and the task is complicated by the fact that the test bed itself affects the accuracy of the measurement.

Vibration Isolators

For example, the effectiveness of a vibration isolator designed to supplement a turntable’s own suspension depends upon the mass of the turntable itself and its suspension resonance and damping properties. The mechanical engineer knows that proper isolation requires that the system be considered as a whole, carefully balancing mass, compliance, and damping. Changing any one factor in a random fashion is as likely to make matters worse as better, common sense notwithstanding. Thus, our test results are totally valid only for the particular turntable system we used; another, with different mass and suspension, undoubtedly would have responded differently.

To help us judge the effectiveness of the vibration isolators we tested, we rigged up a shake table. The turntable, a medium-weight (14 lb.) direct-drive single-play model whose own suspension consisted of four compliant feet, rested on a spring-suspended platform. The platform was vibrated by an inertial driver. Since such a jury-rigged setup could hardly be expected to result in the same amplitude of vibration at all frequencies, we first calibrated the system as a function of frequency by determining the output from a phono cartridge when resting in a non-rotating silent groove. Then, the add-on isolators were mounted in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions, and the response measurement was taken again. The difference between the two curves suggests the improvement that could be attributed to the isolators.

Two isolation devices were tested: Discwasher’s DiscFoot ($22) and Radio Shack’s Audio Insulators (Catalog No. 42-2753, $18). The DiscFoot system consists of four molded-polymer pod systems, each resting on four protrusions. A platform cap snaps into the upper portion of the foot to provide a circular resting surface slightly less than 1½ inches in diameter. These are used only when isolating a “foot-suspended” turntable (as opposed to those with internal suspension). Discwasher includes a rubberlike disc that can be placed under the DiscFoot to protect the furniture and four damping-foam pads that can be used to stabilize the turntable’s foot if required. A set of four pods will support a turntable weight of 22 pounds; one additional pod should be used for every 5-pound increase. (Where it would go in the common four-foot system is left to the user’s ingenuity, though some turntable bases have flat bottom panels that are solid enough to accept an extra pod just about anywhere.)

In our setup, DiscFoot successfully tamed resonances occurring at 7½ and 11½ Hz, the former by 11 dB, the latter by 5 dB. However, from 14½–20 Hz, and again from 31–45 Hz, the turntable’s isolation averaged about 7 dB worse with DiscFoot than without. From 45 to 150 Hz, the system seemed to do little. At higher frequencies, the DiscFoot isolators again made apparent improvements from 170 to 225 Hz and from 600 to about 1,300 Hz; there were some frequencies in the 500-Hz range, however, where the isolation was better without the pods.

With the DiscFoot, the compliance is afforded by a two-part system. The base is formed of a rubberlike molding with a large number of protrusions of varying diameter and length, presumably to distribute the bearing force across the surface and provide a predictable variation in compliance according to weight. The surface on which the turntable rests (about 1¼ inches in diameter) is compliantly mounted to the framework that terminates in the rubber fingers. The turntable-bearing platform, adjustable in height, helps in leveling. (A bubble level is included in the kit.) The four isolators will support up to 36 pounds.

In our tests, the Insulators reduced the 7½-Hz and 11½-Hz resonances by 5 db and were also helpful from 18 to 27 Hz. From 14 to 18 Hz and from 30 to 48 Hz, however, the isolation was substantially better (by some 10 dB) without them. From 58 to 72 Hz and from 88 to 110 Hz, the isolators also had a slight detrimental effect. Between 110 and 600 Hz, the number of regions in which they were beneficial just about equaled that in which they were detrimental, but from 600 through 1,300 Hz, they did offer a substantial net improvement in isolation.

Though no audible characterization of frequencies will be exact, if you’re unsure how to interpret these frequency references remember that rumble usually constitutes unwanted energy below about 100 Hz, particularly if it’s fairly irregular. (If it’s very regular and at one or more discrete frequencies, it’s usually called hum.) A “boomy” bass—which may come from feedback, as well as inherent speaker design—ordinarily puts most of its excessive energy into the octaves between 40 and 160 Hz. Resonances or feedback that contribute just a general muddiness to the sound probably are operative in the midrange, where most instrumental fundamentals lie—particularly in the octave between 250 and 500 Hz. Problems higher up
(say, above 1 kHz) are more likely to be characterized as a nastiness or edginess in the sound; outright shrillness implies one or more resonances in this range, especially above about 3 kHz.

Conclusions? Both of the isolators are effective in certain frequency intervals but can actually increase transmitted vibration at others. Moreover, the frequencies at which they are effective (and ineffective) depend upon the particular turntable in use, so we caution against drawing specifics from our tests. The best advice we can offer is to try one or the other and hope they will prove advantageous in preventing the vibrational modes that may be prevalent in your system. Either gives the turntable less secure footing than when it is resting on its own feet, however, unless they replace, rather than supplement, the turntable’s own suspension.

Turntable Mats and Stabilizers

The largest category of products we reviewed consists of turntable mats and stabilizing weights. We will discuss them together because, in one regard at least, most claim similar advantages. The current contention is that a record sitting on a platter is subject to the mechanical resonance of the air trapped between it and the mat, and that these resonances can be controlled either by the contour of a replacement accessory mat or by damping them with the mass or friction of an accessory hold-down device. Some of the latter also claim to flatten warps; some of the mats prove more successful in dealing with airborne vibration (from the speakers) than with the disc/air/matt resonance as such. It has also been said that the vibrations of the stylus while tracing the groove travel throughout the record, reflect from the rim, and return to the stylus, perturbing its motion.

Common sense would seem to bear out the validity of some of these suppositions, but partly because of the diversity of desiderata, common sense leads different designers in very different directions. Two of the mats we investigated—the Kenwood TS-10 and the Audio Source SAES SS-300—are rigid; a third, the Osaka OM-10, is composed of a heavy rubberlike substance; the others generally are foam or feltlike. The weights and clamps have various forms as well.

For this product group, we used a similar test setup but with an acoustic sound field generated by a loudspeaker rather than the inertial driver and platform of the previous tests. We placed the speaker near the turntable, adjusted the sound pressure level to a loud 94 dB in the vicinity of the turntable, and made two response curves of the cartridge output while the stylus was sitting in a non-rotating silent groove. The first test was made with the disc resting on the standard mat supplied with the turntable. Then a second response curve was taken, using the mat (or weight or clamp) under test. The difference would indicate the effectiveness of the device in damping the airborne vibration and, presumably, any “reply” from the trapped-air resonance. It did not address the warp problem, of course, nor that of stylus-generated vibrations—a claim we find difficult to take seriously because of the relative masses involved and the consequent inefficiency of the stylus tip in “driving” the disc.

The most exotic system we tested is Kenwood’s. It consists of three parts that can be purchased separately. The TS-10 Turntable Sheet ($160) is formed of sintered alumina (ceramic) impregnated with 50% silicone rubber said to provide a high mechanical impedance under the stylus for antivibration performance. The sheet is hard and brittle (don’t drop it!), weighs almost 2% pounds, and has a moment of inertia of 130 kg(cm)². Further improvement is said to be afforded by the DS-21 Inner Disc Stabilizer ($40), a 1.3-pound brass weight that rides over the spindle and adds another 2.5 kg(cm)² to the moment of inertia. The piece of resistance is the DS-20 Outer Disc Stabilizer ($150), a heavy (3½ pound), circumferential brass ring that adds yet another 430 kg(cm)². First, a carefully machined plastic disc is placed over the spindle and record, and then the brass ring is fitted over it. When the plastic disc is removed, the outer ring is left accurately centered and resting only on the outer bead of the record. To prevent the record from “dishing” upward, the inner stabilizer must also be used.

We swept the sound field from 20 Hz to 5 kHz, using just the record sheet, then adding the inner stabilizer and, finally, the ring as well. Below 600 Hz, we could document little improvement in susceptibility to vibration over that with just the normal mat. From 600 to 1,700 Hz, the system responded more severely to external sound pressure when the record was on the TS-10’s firm surface than when it was on the regular mat. The susceptibility increased by as much as 10 dB at some points. From 2,000 to 4,500 Hz, however, the Kenwood generally lowered the susceptibility of the system to external sound by 4–10 dB. The addition of the inner and outer stabilizers changed matters slightly but not significantly. The improvement attributable to all three elements was most evident above 3,500 Hz.

Since the shape of the Kenwood outer stabilizer suggests that it might help to mitigate the effects of pinch warp, we sought out a frequency-response test record with a warped edge. First, we measured the frequency response without the outer stabilizer in place. At 10 kHz, there was a 5–10 dB variation in level each time the warp came by. The inner stabilizer created a negligible change; with both stabilizers in place, the surges in level variation in this test actually were increased.

Another of the “solid” turntable mats we tested, the SAEC SS-300 ($140), is formed of a specially treated aluminum alloy. It appeared to be effective above 2,100 Hz, and from there to the limit of testing (5 kHz) it reduced susceptibility to external sound by about 4–5 dB. From about 1 to 2 kHz, however, the system was quieter without the SS-300.

Osawa’s OM-10 Diskmat ($23) is flexible much in the sense of a normal mat. However, its high-density material is said to increase effective mass, inhibit resonant vibrations, reduce wow and flutter, and improve vertical tracking. Its concave surface “supports warped records.” Although there were a few frequencies at which the OM-10 reduced the sensitivity to our sound field, the mat supplied with our turntable did a better job overall.

Record weights being essentially similar, we confined our investigation to two versions offered by Keith Monks—the KMAL/RW/60 ($12.50) and the “lim-
Conductive Mats

Although the prime claim for each of the remaining mats we tested was its conductivity—its ability to drain off the static charge from the record—some sort of antiresonance property was claimed as well. We therefore subjected them to the previous test procedure. A pattern quickly emerged. No mat showed an appreciable reduction in sensitivity to airborne sound at the lowest frequencies—say, from 20 to 550 Hz. Nor did any prove inferior to the mat that came with our turntable. From 700 Hz to 2 kHz, the mats generally increased susceptibility to external sound, but from 2.5 to 5 kHz, most showed some ability to attenuate it. There were minor differences among the mats; the Transcriber mat, however, behaved more like our standard mat at both high and low frequencies than did any of the others.

We also checked each mat for electrical conductivity. Manufacturers often fail to specify whether the mat is to be used in lieu of or in addition to the regular mat. Most indicate that the electrical grounding is via the spindle, which implies that it can be used on top of the regular mat. We attempted to verify this assumption by measuring the conductivity to the spindle both with and without our normal insulating rubber mat. To do this, we obtained a conductive plate the size and approximate weight of a record. An insulating paper the size of a record label was centered on the plate. With the conductive plate in "playing" position but insulated from the spindle, we measured the resistance between it and the spindle—that is, through the mat. As expected, the conductivity depended upon the pressure applied to the plate and its contact with the mat. Thus, only ranges are given.

Then we attempted to evaluate each mat's ability to discharge a record in a more practical sense. We charged an ordinary record by rubbing a piece of fur on each surface and measured the static charge with a field mill. Next we put the record onto the mat for 5 seconds, then flipped it over and measured the charge. (Although some literature suggests that it may take much longer to discharge the record, we feel that 5 to 10 seconds is all that one can reasonably be expected to wait for the discharge to occur.) We also tried to charge the record while it was in contact with the mat. In each case, our figures show electrostatic field strength as percentages of the charge with the record on an ordinary mat.

In alphabetical order, our first conductive mat hails from Bib, designated the Audio-Phil Edition Anti-Static Turntable Mat ($10). Though it makes no pretensions to vibration damping, it proved the rough equivalent to other soft mats in this regard. It is approximately ⅛ inch thick and fabricated of a soft, feltlike, carbon-filled material. On the turntable's rubber mat, the Bib made poor contact with the spindle and remained essentially ungrounded; with the rubber mat removed, resistance ran to 200–600 kilohms. A charged record placed on the Bib mat lost 50% of its static in 5 seconds but could be charged back to 60% while in contact with it.

Discwasher's D'Stat II ($8.50) is an antistatic, antiresonance mat about 1/16 inch thick. It can be used in place of or in addition to a normal mat. It, too, is a feltlike material, with one side specifically meant to face down. When placed on an insulating mat, the conductivity to the spindle was poor; directly on the platter, resistance was 120–650 kilohms. A charged record lost 30–50% of its static within 5 seconds and could not be charged further.

Empire's Anti-Static Record Mat ($9.00) is also a carbon-fiber-impregnated, feltlike substance, about 1/10 inch thick. Two sets of strobe rings are printed on the light gray felt. It is said to damp out record ringing in addition to discharging the disc. The mat proved quite conductive (25–30 ohms) when in contact with the platter but, when isolated from it, showed poor conductivity to the spindle. At least 50% of the record's charge was lost but about 70% regained when in contact with the Empire mat.

Goldring's EXstatic mat ($15) is a relatively hard, thin (1/16-inch), carbon-fiber-impregnated felt with a strobe disc in the label section. Conductivity was on the low side, with a resistance reading of 1,500 kilohms even when in contact with the platter. Yet it quickly discharged a disc by 50–80%, and the disc could not readily be recharged once it had...
HIGH FIDELITY

stabilized.

Radio Shack's Disc-O-Mat ($5.00) is a carbon-fiber-impregnated foam cushion of moderately low conductivity—16-800 kilohms when in contact with the platter, 900-1,300 when on a rubber mat. Static dropped by 40% and was stable at that point.

Scotch's Dustguard ($6.00) is a hard conductive foam with center strobe pattern. The mat fits tightly over the spindle and, even when insulated by the undermat, proves quite conductive to ground (620-850 ohms). Resistance went down to 110 ohms when in contact with the platter. Upwards of 70% of the record's charge dissipated quickly, and Dustguard prevented static buildup as long as the disc was in contact with it.

The Transcriber mat ($15) is extremely thin (1/64 inch) and is 100% carbon fiber with a nonporous surface. The center hole is slightly undersized to assure a firm contact with the spindle. Resistance to ground was only 12-15 ohms with an insulating undermat, 1 1/2 ohms with a bare platter. As much as 75% of the charge dissipated rapidly, and, when insulated with a bare platter. As much as 75% of the charge dissipated rapidly, and, when insulated by the undermat, proves quite conductive to ground. Dustguard prevented static buildup as long as the disc was in contact with it.

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The correlation of resistivity and static-discharging ability proved tenuous at best: Each freely conductive mat reduced the charge to some degree, but none was totally effective. An adjustment in arm height would be required to maintain vertical tracking angle, depending both on the thickness of the mat and on whether you retain the turntable's original mat beneath it. (And, don't forget, dirt is likely to accumulate in porous mat surfaces.)

Other Static Eliminators

We checked out the Empire Static Eliminator ($30) and the Bib Groov-Stat ($35), both of which appeared in our February 1978 roundup, though the Bib unit has since been redesigned. This time we also looked at the Panasonic BH-653 ($39). The "classic" models (including the Empire and the Zerostat) all work similarly. Squeezing the trigger stresses a piezoelectric element that develops a high voltage and positively ionizes the air around a pointed electrode in the "barrel." Conversely, releasing the trigger releases negative ions. Since the charge on a vinyl record normally is negative, the squeeze does most of the job. But a balance must be achieved. We experimented with positive ions alone (by squeezing in the vicinity of the disc and pointing the barrel away for the release) and found that we could leave the disc positively charged; though we could reduce the charge by 90% (using the Empire), it takes luck to achieve a perfect balance of positive and negative ions.

The Bib Groov-Stat uses a 1 1/2-volt C cell and generates a sufficiently high voltage to ionize air around a pin in the nozzle. It generates only positive ions. We found it wise to keep the Groov-Stat 10-12 inches away from the record; in close proximity, it imparted a strong positive charge. The Panasonic device also is battery-operated and emits only one type of charge. For a reason that escapes us, the stream is negatively charged and thus is relatively ineffective in neutralizing the disc's natural charge.

All of the static eliminators mentioned so far are temporary in nature; the next time the record is pulled from the sleeve, it is recharged and stands ready to act as an electrostatic magnet for airborne dust. Several record-treatment solutions claiming permanent antistatic properties have appeared recently. We tested Stanton Magnetics' Permostat ($20; refills available for $16) and Bib's Groov-Guard (price not yet announced). The Permostat setup is capable of treating approximately 25 LPs; Groov-Guard, 20 LPs. Permostat is sprayed from a pump-top bottle and then distributed by buffing the disc with a velvet pad. Bib contends that Groov-Guard reduces frictional wear as well as static, a claim that falls beyond the scope of our measurements.

One consideration with any material applied to the surface of the disc is the possible influence it might have on frequency response, record life, etc. While we could not ascertain the long-term effects of these products, we treated test records with each, measuring frequency response before and after application. Permostat had a negligible impact on response—less than 1/2 dB at 20 kHz. Groov-Guard produced a 1/4-dB increase in high-frequency output, and its effect could be noted down to about 3 kHz. This change might be attributed to the lubricating properties of its oily residue. Permostat left a substantially smaller and less oily deposit.

Both products are effective antistatics, but our tests gave Permostat the edge. Once treated with Permostat, discs could not be charged appreciably even with vigorous application of our fur "generator." Compared with an untreated disc, the maximum charge we could reach was about 3%, and that rapidly decayed to below 1%. The disc treated with Groov-Guard could be charged as high as 20%, but the charge rapidly decayed into the region of 4-5%.

From the many hours of experimenting with these products, what conclusions can we draw? With the exception of Permostat, the products did not fully live up to the claims made for them. (And, of course, we can testify to short-term effects only.) None of the products was totally useless either. One or another of them may solve a given problem in your system. It also is possible that the same product may prove not only ineffective but even detrimental in another system.

As in so many areas of consumer-product testing, the findings here reinforce our conviction that there is no substitute for detailed understanding—that the quick fix is a chimera. There may be readers who can afford to buy every accessory in sight and try them all, looking for the most effective. The rest of us must be more canny. We must begin by trying to understand precisely what we want to achieve. (Is it airborne feedback, for example, that is causing the boominess we hear—or is it a resonance in the shelf beneath the turntable?) Often we can narrow down our needs by trying makeshift solutions (a felt typewriter pad or rubber doormat beneath the turntable as a clue to the effect of these compliances on the system). Our experience of these products—both on the test bench and in an operating system—strongly suggests that satisfaction will result only with careful identification of the problem you want to solve and selection to match.  

HF
How to Buy a Turntable
by Michael Riggs

Setting the record straight on record-playing equipment.

The basic function of a record-playing system is deceptively simple. It has to turn a record at a fixed speed while its arm must position the cartridge in exactly the right way to trace the record grooves without distortion. Other than that, it should just stay out of the way. Which is where the trouble starts.

It's not easy to keep real materials from making their presence felt: Motors vibrate, turntable bases absorb sound from the environment and transmit it through the platter to the stylus, and practically everything resonates. The designer's task is really to outsmart nature.

Here we will examine the main obstacles in his path, the common ways of dealing with them, and some approaches to deciding how well he has done his job.

Considering the number of variables he faces, the turntable designer has to outsmart nature.

Vertical tracking force is something you definitely need—but in just the right amount. One approach to applying VTF is to balance the arm with the cartridge installed, then move the counterweight forward just enough to unbalance the arm sufficiently to create the desired downward force. This is called static balancing, and its only disadvantage is that the turntable must be perfectly level to keep the force strictly perpendicular to the record surface. If the base is tilted, part of the force created by the unbalancing of the arm will express itself laterally, causing impaired tracking and excessive groove wear. Dynamically balanced arms use a calibrated spring to apply the tracking force. Because the arm is never unbalanced, it is insensitive to orientation and, theoretically, works well even upside down or sideways.

Most automatic turntables use this system. Unfortunately, springs will not exert exactly the same force over prolonged periods.

Skating—a tendency for the stylus to pull toward the center of the record—is a side effect of the geometry of pivoted tonearms. [See "Tonearm Geometry."] A pivoted arm angles the headshell toward the center of the disc in order to keep the stylus as nearly tangent to as many grooves as possible, thereby generating an inward pull. Unless the manufacturer provides some means of applying a compensatory outward force (by means of a calibrated spring, for example, or weight-over-a-pulley arrangement), styli and record grooves will wear unevenly, and there will be more distortion in one channel than in the other. Radially tracking tonearms (also called tangential or straight-line) are inherently free of skating and so require no antiskating mechanism.

Of course, fine adjustments of VTF and antiskating will be of little value if there is too much pivot friction. Excessive friction impedes free motion of the arm, causing variations in tracking force and excessive wear of the outside walls of record grooves. Provided friction remains lower than 5% of VTF (about 50 milligrams, in most cases), you
A turntable's primary function is to spin records at exact, unvarying speed despite line voltage changes.

Determines the frequency of the arm/cartridge system's bass resonance. If this resonance occurs at too high a frequency—above about 15 Hz—it will cause a response rise at the very bottom of the audible range. If it is located below 7 or 8 Hz, it will exaggerate warp signals, which tend to fall at or near 5–6 Hz, and that may in turn cause increased cartridge and loudspeaker distortion, mistracking, and pitch wavering. You will often hear 10 Hz cited as the "optimum" target point.

So if you want to use a relatively low-compliance moving-coil cartridge, for example, you will also want a medium- to high-mass arm, of which there are many available. You will be more likely to buy one of the many high-compliance fixed-coil pickups, which means that you will need an arm with lower mass to keep the resonance above the warp frequency range. Although more such arms are coming on the market, they are still relatively uncommon, mainly because they are more difficult to design. The usual tricks are to use a pared-down headshell, a thin-walled, small-diameter arm tube, and a heavy, disc-shaped counterweight set as close as possible to the pivots (because, again, actual mass is less important than its distance from the pivot point in determining effective mass).

But this approach is constrained by the need to keep the arm absolutely rigid, to prevent flexing and resonances, and to maintain the ability to balance cartridges with widely varying weights. The most obvious alternative is to shorten the arm, but that would entail an increase in tracking error and, therefore, in tracking distortion. The remaining option is to reduce the mass of the cartridge, which, because it hangs right out on the end of the arm, makes a large contribution to the effective mass of the entire system. (In fact, there have been cartridges with weights and compliances such that an arm with negative mass would be necessary to bring the resonance point up to an acceptable frequency.)

You are faced with the problem of making a satisfactory match between arm and cartridge and again High Fidelity's test reports can help. By using the same high-compliance pickup (a Shure V-15 Type III) to determine the resonances of tonearms and the same medium-mass tonearm (an SME 3009 Series II) for all cartridge resonance measurements, they provide a means of comparing the relative masses and compliances of different arms and pickups. In addition, there are records from Shure (the ERA-IV) and Ortofon that provide very simple evaluation of the compatibility of any arm and cartridge.

Damping

One way of attacking recalcitrant resonances is to damp them. Many arms decouple the counterweight from the arm tube with a compliant rubber sleeve, and if the mechanical system is designed well, it should reduce the effects ("dB rise") of the low-frequency resonance, along with any higher-frequency tube resonances. One manufacturer has refined this approach somewhat by building into its counterweights what it calls an "antiresonance filter," which splits the bass resonance into two smaller peaks.

The most effective damping technique is also the least common, although its popularity seems to be on the upswing. It usually involves the application of a thick fluid (silicone, most often) to the pivot bearings. Because only single-pivot designs naturally lend themselves to that implementation of viscous damping, a number of manufacturers who use gimbals or knife edges have turned to the use of paddles descending from the arm tube into a trough filled with viscous fluid. Properly applied (i.e., not overdone), viscous damping can significantly reduce the amplitude of the bass resonance and thereby improve arm stability and tracking, especially on warped records. [See HF, July 1975.]

If you like the idea of viscous damping but don't care for any of the small number of arms that incorporate it, you'll be happy to know that you can get the same benefits from a couple of add-on devices that clamp onto the headshell of just about any arm. In addition, at least one pickup manufacturer builds the function into some of its cartridges with a viscous-damped brush on the stylus assembly.

To optimize the performance of a pivoted tonearm, great care is needed in setting stylus overhang correctly.
Tonearm Geometry

For a stylus to produce minimum distortion, its axis must lie along the groove it is playing. The only way to maintain this ideal alignment over an entire record side is to use a tangentially tracking tonearm, one that moves in a straight line across the disc. Such arms have traditionally been rather complex, and the few that have appeared in the past have usually been dogged by reliability problems and high prices. Contemporary technology makes straight-line arms more feasible, however, and they seem to be enjoying a renaissance.

Even so, the alternative is far simpler, exceedingly reliable, and not necessarily expensive to build or buy. The pivoted arms most of us use can be quite good, but they are a compromise in that the stylus axis can be tangent to the groove at only two distances from the center of the disc. If the arm is not properly designed and set up, it may be tangent at only one radius or even none.

To do the job right, a designer must consider three parameters: effective arm length (pivot-to-stylus distance), "offset angle," and stylus "overhang." Provided everything else is done right, the greater the effective arm length, the lower the maximum tracking angle error. Of course, it's not really practical to make an extremely long tonearm, and the designer must also be concerned with effective mass, which goes up rapidly as arm length is increased. Usually, he settles on about nine inches.

With length decided, it is possible to calculate, for given outer and inner disc radii (i.e., where the side begins and ends), the offset angle and overhang that will yield the lowest distortion across the record. One difficulty is that the radii, especially the inner radii, of discs vary from one to another, which means that any "optimum" geometry will not be truly ideal for most records. The best one can hope for is a reasonable approximation. That, however, is better than nothing, and 2% and 5% inches have become the generally accepted magic numbers for the target radii.

With everything else fixed, offset angle and overhang become critical. The offset angle is the angle of the headshell relative to a straight line between the stylus and the pivot. The headshell can be offset either by attaching it at an angle to a straight tube or by bending the tube into an S or J shape. A straight tube provides the lowest mass and highest rigidity for a given effective length but will not accept the virtually standard detachable headshell originated by SME (which uses the same connector as the integrated cartridge/headshell combinations that have been appearing lately). Most J- and S-shaped arms do. (That's why they're built that way.) But a J-shaped arm, besides being more massive than an equivalent straight arm, is unbalanced laterally and may require a lateral counterweight to prevent excessive friction. A properly designed S-shaped arm will be laterally balanced (that's the reason for the extra curve), but it tends to be even more massive than a J-shaped arm. As with anything else, don't be too concerned about how the design goal is achieved, so long as it's well done and fits your needs.

Overhang is the difference between the distance from pivot to stylus and that from pivot to spindle. Obviously, changing the overhang of a cartridge also changes the effective arm length, which changes the optimum offset angle, and so on. These things all interact. The problem is solvable, though, and if the designer has done his homework and you follow his instructions meticulously, all will be well.

Many tonearms, however, are designed incorrectly or come with incorrect instructions or both. In the absence of any other guide, it's probably best to follow the manufacturer's instructions. But there are several alignment aids on the market that can help you set up any arm the way it really should be, almost without regard to how badly the manufacturer has bungled his end of the job. Until the industry cleans up its act, a device such as DB Systems' Phono Alignment Protractor or the Soundtractor from Dennesen Electrostatic is sure to be a good investment.
You might try jumping up and down in the showroom to test a turntable's suspension.

Must be kept to a minimum to prevent objectionable rumble. Fortunately, what rumble does appear tends to be at very low, mostly infrasonic, frequencies. Although this system is used primarily in top-line turntables, its only real advantage over belt drive is higher torque (which has won it a niche in the professional market beside the rim drives).

Although each drive system tends to have some generic strengths and weaknesses, both excellent and mediocre turntables can be built with any of them. When shopping, focus on results. You want three things: 1) speed accuracy, 2) low wow and flutter, and 3) low rumble. The first is the most easily achieved. So long as the turntable runs within about ½% of the desired speed, you are unlikely to hear anything amiss. The only models you might expect to have problems with are the few rim- and belt-drive units with induction motors, whose speed depends on the AC line voltage. Line voltage fluctuates too much in most areas to assure correct speed with such motors, which are superseded today. Synchronous and electronically controlled motors, such as are used in almost all good turntables, do not suffer from this flaw and can generally be relied upon without question.

If you have reason to be especially concerned about absolute pitch accuracy (e.g., if you want to be able to "tune" records to your own instrument), you may want a model with a speed control and a strobe speed indicator. A range of 6% above and below the basic pitch, or about a semitone, should be adequate for most applications.

Wow and flutter are very short-term speed variations caused by inevitable imperfectness in turntable bearings and motors. They do not affect the turntable's basic long-term speed accuracy, but they are often audible. Wow, which comprises slow variations, is heard as pitch instability—a sourness in sustained tones. It is especially noticeable on held piano tones. (Most audible wow results not from inadequate turntable mechanisms, but from records with off-center spindle holes or warps.) Flutter occurs at higher frequencies and generally is heard as a coarsening of the sound.

Out of the many measurement standards for wow, flutter, and rumble, HF has chosen for its test reports the ones it feels best represent the audible performance of turntables in the home. [See "Measuring Rumble, Wow, and Flutter.”] Because all the reports adhere to one set of standards, they facilitate comparisons between reviewed components. Unfortunately, the situation with manufacturers' specifications is rather chaotic. The various standards are significantly different from one another, and numbers derived with one are not directly comparable to those obtained by other methods. Unless the specifications for two components indicate the same measurement methods (and many don't say), you cannot safely make a direct comparison. Nonetheless, you should expect to see wow and flutter figures below 0.1% for acceptability and below 0.05% for premium equipment. Rumble should be less than -60 dB.

Isolation

Acoustic and mechanical feedback are among the worst problems in disc playback. Acoustic feedback occurs when sound from the loudspeakers is picked up from the air by the turntable base and transmitted through the stylus back into the system and out the speakers. Mechanical feedback is transmitted through solid objects, such as the floor and walls of the listening room. At their worst, when the sound level in the room at the feedback frequencies is high enough to support sustained oscillation in the system, these effects can cause piercing howls. Feedback that severe is rare, but the frequency and transient response of the system may begin to deteriorate at sound levels as much as 30 dB below those required for actual "howl-back.” The subjective effects include muddy bass and poor definition.

A turntable suspension isolates the tonearm and cartridge from external vibration and thereby prevents feedback. Two basic approaches (with a number of variations on each) to accomplish this are currently in use. One attaches...
Which turntable is right for you is ultimately a matter of assessing your habits and needs.

Record playing, and observe whether the tonearm continues to track steadily. Then turn off the player, leaving the stylus resting in the groove, and tap some more. Ideally, you should hear a dull thud from the base and little or no sound from the loudspeakers. If the showroom has wood floors, you might also try jumping up and down while a record plays to see whether the tonearm jumps with you. These tests certainly aren't scientific, but they're better than nothing.

Deciding What You Want

As with any other component, your buying decision must be based in part on what you want the unit to do for you. The contemporary single-play turntable market offers many degrees of automation, ranging from completely manual designs, which require you to set the stylus down in the groove at the beginning of a record and to remove it at the end, to designs so automatic that you can program them to play certain tracks of a disc in a certain order, to repeat them, and so forth. Although the uppermost reaches of performance remain the province of manual turntables, there is little reason for most people to eschew automatics and changers. There is nothing inherently bad about automatic operation; the best of the breed are really very fine. Even changers have evolved to the point where their performance rivals some fine single-play models.

If you decide to go with a manual anyway, you will still have to decide whether you want an integrated system or separates. Theoretically, it should be possible to get better performance with an integrated turntable/arm unit, because the designer can tune the whole system for optimum performance. In practice, however, some of the finest ensembles result from the mating of separate arms and turntables. Aside from the premium price you pay for separates, it takes a seasoned enthusiast or knowledgeable dealer to make the correct match and install the arm properly.

There is also the question of features. Most turntables and tonearms include a damped cueing system that enables the user to lift and set down the stylus without going through the risky business of moving the tonearm by hand. Some arms include adjustments for height, enabling you to optimize the vertical tracking angle of your cartridge, and for lateral tilt of the cartridge. Getting these angles set just right should reduce record and stylus wear and offers at least theoretical performance advantages, but whether this kind of fine tuning makes a significant audible difference is a matter of dispute. The available evidence seems to indicate that, provided these angles are not too far off, it doesn't much matter.

If you change cartridges often, you probably will want a tonearm with either a detachable headshell or arm tube. The latter has been gaining favor of late because it puts the relatively heavy connector assembly near the pivot, where it will make a smaller contribution to the arm's effective mass.

Turntables are beginning to sport some fancy speed-regulating mechanisms—quartz lock, phase-lock loop, and so forth. These will yield better numbers, but most listeners probably won't hear the difference. Some manufacturers use an integrated circuit computer called a microprocessor for this function. One turntable so equipped allows its LED speed readout to be switched to a timer mode—a real boon for the inveterate tapester. Other manufacturers are bringing out turntables with remote control or elaborate programmable track-selection and record-handling facilities.

In the future, we can expect computer technology, in the form of programmable microprocessors, to find its way into more and more turntables. They are the darlings of the fully digital future, which eventually will displace the analog disc and banish forever most of the problems we have discussed here. HF

Measuring Rumble, Wow, and Flutter

Rumble, wow, and flutter can be measured in a variety of ways, all of which give different results. Rumble figures depend on the level and frequency of the reference tone (rumble is stated in dB below the level of the reference) and on the frequency response of the weighting network used (if any). The resonance of the arm/cartridge combination employed for the test adds another variable, which can affect the results by boosting rumble components near the resonance frequency. High Fidelity uses the ARLL (audible rumble loudness level) weighting for its turntable tests. This method incorporates a weighting curve that rolls off above and below 500 Hz to model the ear's sensitivity to low-frequency noise.

Wow and flutter are normally lumped together in a single measurement. High Fidelity follows this practice, although it does present two figures. One conforms strictly to the IEEE/ANSI standard, which specifies a weighted peak measurement that gives greatest emphasis to speed variations occurring at about 4 Hz—the rate that most annoys the ear. But flutter tends to be more random than wow, and HF supplies an average figure, based on an interpretation of the movement of the flutter meter during the test, as well as the maximum instantaneous value obtained.
HF/MA Throws a Party

International record prizes given; Mehta named Musician of the Year

Last January, HIGH FIDELITY and MUSICAL AMERICA held our annual ceremonies to present the International Record Critics Awards—for which HF is the American representative—and to proclaim MA's Musician of the Year. As readers of last December's issue will remember, the winning recordings were the Archiv album of the orchestral music of Jan Dismas Zelenka, featuring horn player Barry Tuckwell and oboist Heinz Holliger and conducted by Alexander van Wijnkoop; the Angel recording of Richard Strauss's *Salome*, conducted by Herbert von Karajan and starring Hildegard Behrens; and the EMI recording of Witold Lutoslawski's complete orchestral works conducted by the composer (not available in the U.S.). The Musician of the Year for 1980 is New York Philharmonic music director Zubin Mehta.

Musicians of the Year
1960–1980

Since January 1961, what the music business used to call MUSICAL AMERICA's "special," "booking," or "directory" issue, and is now the MUSICAL AMERICA INTERNATIONAL DIRECTORY OF THE PERFORMING ARTS, has proclaimed a noted artist as Musician of the Year. That month we bestowed the title, for 1960, on Leonard Bernstein. Three years later, publication date of the special issue was moved back a month, to December, where it has remained ever since. In the following list of titleholders, you will notice that there is none for 1976; beginning with the 1977 edition (published in December 1976), we have been designating the honoree for the coming rather than the fading year.

Leonard Bernstein—1960
Leontyne Price—1961
Igor Stravinsky—1962
Erich Leinsdorf—1963
Benjamin Britten—1964
Vladimir Horowitz—1965

Yehudi Menuhin—1966
Leopold Stokowski—1967
Birgit Nilsson—1968
Beverly Sills—1969
Michael Tilson Thomas—1970
Pierre Boulez—1971
George Balanchine (Artist of the Year)—1972
Sarah Caldwell—1973
Eugene Ormandy—1974
Arthur Rubinstein—1975
Placido Domingo—1977
Alicia de Larrocha—1978
Rudolf Serkin—1979
Zubin Mehta—1980

The Musician of the Year captivates publisher Leonard Levine and ABC Publishing president Seth Baker...
The Party

Soprano Hildegard Behrens, star of the award-winning "Salome" recording, with contributing editor David Hamilton, who reviewed the album.

Terry McEwen, executive vice president of London Records and director-designate of the San Francisco Opera, with record-cataloguer William Schwann.

MA's book review editor Patrick J. Smith amuses conductor Antonio de Almeida, center, as HF contributing editor Abram Chipman listens.

Vanguard Records' Solomon brothers: Maynard, the noted Beethoven scholar, and Seymour, the company's president.


Trumpet virtuoso André Bernard with CBS Masterworks artists-and-repertoire director Thomas Frost.

... and breaks up ABC's chairman of the board Leonard Goldenson and president Elton Rule.

From left, McEwen, Guenter Hensler, recently named president of Polygram Classics, London classical manager Richard Rollefson, and Frey.

Mehta seems to be demonstrating his own version of "Salome" to CBS Masterworks executive Peter Munves and MA columnist Dorle Soria.
Behind the Scenes

Columbia Masterworks is no more! Columbia Records' classical label will now be CBS Masterworks. The "Columbia" trademark started out in the nineteenth century as the District of you-know-where of the North American Phonograph Company, a merchandiser of Edison and other phonograph equipment, but its international vicissitudes have been complex—and often amusing. The English subsidiary, for instance, merged in 1931 with the Gramophone Company to form EMI (now Angel here), forcing U.S. Columbia to seek British representation from other firms and leading to such delights as Philips promoting the competition in advertisements of Bruno Walter conducting the Columbia Symphony Orchestra. "CBS" has long since been the Columbia label abroad, and now America joins the rest of the world.

Again, in 1968, as a matter of fact, Columbia attempted the name change. Pierre Boulez' album with the London Symphony Orchestra of Berlioz' Lélia and Symphonie fantastique that year wore a CBS label; it was deleted in 1970, and when each recording re-emerged (separately), it had on the Columbia dress. At the moment, we notice that, while classical jackets sport the new CBS logo, the record labels themselves still read "Columbia."

The recent trend for young virtuoso soloists to combine forces in high-powered chamber ensembles has produced yet another group: Violinist Itzhak Perlman and pianist Vladimir Ashkenazy have joined with cellist Lynn Harrell in a recent recording of the Tchaikovsky trio for EMI/Angel. The same performers are also in the midst of a more ambitious undertaking, a complete recording of the nine Beethoven piano trios, to be released as a set. This project calls to mind one of the more notable Perlman/Ashkenazy collaborations—their recording of Beethoven's complete violin sonatas, which won an International Record Critics Award for 1978.

The rush to digital production has begun to outstrip available resources. Since the number of digital recorders is still limited, and the few there are have to be moved from one recording site to another, companies have had to build a degree of flexibility into their planning. This is reflected in EMI's term "projected digital," which it now applies to most of its European sessions. One such is a recording of Schubert songs by Janet Baker and pianist Geoffrey Parsons, an interesting repertory departure for the digital medium, should it come to pass.

So Thorn Electrical Industries is now firmly in the driver's seat at EMI—or is it? Don't look now, but 20th Century-Fox has been making overtures to the new British parent with a view to acquiring the EMI music divisions. There is speculation that Thorn was more interested in EMI's electronics divisions all along and was never terribly thrilled about getting into the record business, though official word is, of course, to the contrary. Just when you thought you had all the new ownerships straight!

On January 29, just two weeks after Polygram acquired Decca/London's recording and publishing assets, Sir Edward Lewis, Decca's board chairman who had himself acquired the company fifty-one years earlier, died, in London. He would have been eighty in April.

The Association for Recorded Sound Collections will hold its fourteenth annual convention May 8–10 at the National Library and Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa. Among presentations, open to all, are a survey of the history of unauthorized duplication ("piracy" to the layman) by Raymond Wille, a professor at Queens College; a panel discussing the problems and possibilities of LP reissue of archival materials; a session on the preservation and duplication of early recordings, which will include a display of recently developed equipment for transfer from cylinders; a progress report on several nascent discographies, including Steven Smolian's of the New York Philharmonic, nearly completed; a discussion by Ian Payne of standards for record-sleeve notations; and, tentatively, a session on the problems of transcribing the spoken word, with particular reference to the Nixon tapes.

The Musical Heritage Society is about to issue Alfred Deller's Purcell opera series, licensed from French Harmonia Mundi. The first release, scheduled for this month, will be King Arthur, to be followed later in the year by The Indian Queen. In addition, the Society has itself recorded a number of Purcell works, performed on original instruments by Frederick Renz's Ensemble for Early Music, with British countertenor James Bowman. The two-disc set, taped shortly after the group's recent New York concert, will include a suite from The Fairy Queen and the ode Come ye sons of art.

MHS has also signed a nonexclusive agreement with the Walter W. Naumburg Foundation that guarantees each major Naumburg Competition winner the opportunity to make at least one recording. Though the agreement takes effect with this year's event, a vocal competition to be held this month in New York, MHS has already completed a recording with the 1978 winner, flutist Carol Wincenc, and is considering a similar project with last year's winner, pianist Peter Orth. The Wincenc recording, with pianist Andreas Schiff, contains the Poulenc sonata and works by other French composers and the Romanian Enoesco. The Society is working out more future plans with Wincenc.

Swedish pianist Eva Knardahl, familiar to many Americans from her twenty-year stay in this country, is now in the mop-up stages of her recording of Grieg's complete piano works for Bis Records of Sweden (distributed by Qualiton). The fourteenth and final volume, still to be recorded, will include the composer's piano arrangement of music from his incomplete opera Olav Tryggvason. (The opera, recently recorded by Unicorn, will be reviewed next month by Irving Lowens.)

Bis has also begun recording another Swedish pianist, the young Staffan Schefe, who recently moved to New York. He will play the Prokofiev Third and Sixth Sonatas. Virtually a one-man operation—the one man being thirty-six-year-old Robert von Bahr—the five-year-old Bis label is now producing more than thirty records per year (in contrast, Von Bahr proudly points out, to the heavily subsidized Swedish Caprice label, whose fourteen employees turn out some twenty records a year). Though something of a linguist, Von Bahr apparently does not know the meaning of the word "delete"; he vows that all Bis titles will remain available indefinitely. Plans include complete recordings of Mendelssohn's works for piano and orchestra and for organ and Sibelius' works for piano and for organ.

HF
**A. HOUSE**

Students, pay attention. A house is a big, square box with many surfaces which absorb and reflect sound, in varying degrees. Designing speaker systems to perform superbly in such an environment (which Avid already does) requires experience and technical expertise. But when one starts out to design speaker systems for cars, not all experience gained with A. is transferrable to B.

**B. CAR**

A car is also a box, sort of. But with a different shape, and different reflective and absorptive surfaces. And, a lot of problems not associated with houses. Cars move. And make noise. And vibrate. Thus, one who attacks the car-speaker-design problem as if it were a house-speaker-design problem is making a big mistake. Listen to what is on the road these days and discover how many expensive mistakes are being made in the name of car stereo.

**C. DRIVER**

That's you. The educated listener whose ears are accustomed to the finer sounds in life, found most often only in your living room. Wouldn't it be nice if you could get such great sound in your car? Well, now you can.

**D. EXPERT DRIVERS**

That's what we make. Speakers designed for your car, not adapted from your living room. We've spent many years (not to mention lots of money) perfecting the research which has provided the principles upon which our drivers are built. Simply put, Avid's Expert Drivers perform better than others because we've isolated the obstacles to good car speaker performance and designed around them.

This is your homework. But the real test is waiting for you at your Avid dealer. See him soon, or send for your free Drivers Manual. Write Avid Corporation, 10 Tripps Lane, East Providence, RI 02914.

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**Study Sheet**

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<th>Expert Driver</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Impedance</th>
<th>Continuous Power Capacity</th>
<th>Frequency Response</th>
<th>Suggested Price</th>
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<td>Wide range door mount</td>
<td>4½&quot; cone</td>
<td>4 ohms</td>
<td>50 w</td>
<td>60 Hz to 8kHz ± 5 dB</td>
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<td>50 Hz to 20kHz ± 3 dB</td>
<td>$225/pair</td>
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<td>10+ System</td>
<td>Combines the Model 10 and RD-5 for the ultimate 4-driver system</td>
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<td>100 w</td>
<td>50 Hz to 20kHz ± 3 dB</td>
<td>$275/system</td>
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The AVID 10 + System

Circle 8 on Page 79
All your records will sound better with Dual's new ULM tonearm and cartridge system.

Even if they look like this.

Although none of your records may be in such bad shape, many are probably warped enough to present serious problems to conventional turntables.

The high inertia of a typical tonearm and cartridge combination, with approximately 18 grams total effective mass, causes the stylus to dig in riding up the warp and to take off on the way down. Tracking angle and tracking force vary widely—as much as 30 percent. And a warp as small as 1.5mm (which is barely discernible) can generate harmonic distortion of 2.7 percent. That's audible!

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Record Reviews

And Now Mozart
On Original Instruments

What Telefunken is doing for the Bach cantatas, Oiseau-Lyre proposes to do for the Mozart symphonies.

by Nicholas Kenyon

Is nothing sacred? In recent years, a growing number of recordings have attempted to persuade us of the virtues of music performed on “original” instruments: Concertos by Handel and Corelli, operas by Lully and Rameau, chamber music by countless minor and major figures, and almost everything by Bach have all been subjected to this approach. But if we thought that the disconcerting noises and strangely unfamiliar interpretations that resulted from these efforts were at least confined to a period of supposed musical prehistory before 1750, then we were mistaken. The trouble (if trouble you think it is) is only just beginning.

Here is the first installment of an ambitious attempt to record all of Mozart’s symphonies not only using instruments of his time, but also reconstructing some of symphonies not only using instruments of the period. Vol. 3 has appeared first; by Vol. 6 (some years away, you may be relieved to know) we can expect to hear these instrumentalists tackling the great final trilogy of symphonies—works whose every inflection and phrase we know from “conventional” performances. And finally, in Vol. 7, they will add such curiosities as the G major Symphony “No. 37” (by Michael Haydn, with only a slow introduction by Mozart) and a group of early symphonies from 1767–68, which will run the total number of Mozart’s authentic symphonies up to fifty-one or fifty-two.

That this project will annoy many listeners is beyond question. Adventurousness, which involves taking risks, which results in making mistakes, is not a favored quality in the recording studio. It is easier to play it safe with the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields—and indeed, there are very good, sophisticated performances of Mozart’s early symphonies by that ensemble available. But I view the new series with unrestrained delight, and the results in this first set, with all its evident imperfections, may be greeted with what W. S. Gilbert would have called modified rapture.

The fundamental premise behind the undertaking is that we can no longer rely on a continuous performance tradition of classical orchestral music. Our understanding of eighteenth-century orchestral music is clouded rather than clarified by the interpretations of nineteenth- and twentieth-century performers that lie behind today’s accounts of this music. We must now try to isolate a precise, appropriate style of performance for each period, each type of orchestral music—not just an antiquarian reconstruction, for that would be lifeless, but a performance practice that respects all the important features of the playing techniques of the time and attempts to recapture the spirit in which the music was originally intended.

This process involves an important collaboration between musicologists and performers; one of the most welcome features of the new series is that it has enlisted the scholar who probably knows most about the classical orchestra, Neal Zaslaw of Cornell University. Zaslaw’s important paper for the Royal Musical Association in England, “Toward the Revival of the Classical Orchestra” (1976–77, still unpublished), lies behind this project. He is able to tell us what Mozart thought of the orchestra he had available in Salzburg in the 1770s (not much, apparently), what its strength was (though this is a little vague), and how it might have been arranged (with flutes and trumpets and first and second violins, both separated). He is also able—and this is more controversial—to tell us what contemporary writers thought was the function of a symphony, before the nineteenth century turned it into the weightiest means of instrumental musical expression. He concludes: “With the arguable exception of the last few, Mozart’s symphonies were perhaps intended to be witty, charming, brilliant, and even touching, but undoubtedly not profound, learned, or of great significance. . . . Approaching Mozart’s symphonies with this attitude in mind relieves them of a romantic heaviness under which they have all too often been crushed. Thus unburdened, they sparkle with new lustre.”

This, I think, goes too far. It is neither fair to earlier Mozart interpreters to suggest that they crushed the music with Romantic weight (Did Thomas Beecham? Did Bruno Walter?) nor fair to the music to suggest that it is really of little significance. Indeed, a sense of Romantic weight (Did W. S. Gilbert?) nor fair to the music to suggest that it is really of little significance. For the predominant impression I take away from this first collection of the symphonies—eleven of them, all written when Mozart was sixteen or seventeen—is what superb, subtle, skillfully original music fills under the social function for which it was intended. I have tried to treat the pieces as “background,” to do other things when the records were on, but time and again the music drew me back to listen to it. I have tried to treat the pieces as “information,” to do other things when the records were on, but time and again the music drew me back to listen to it at some detail in the score, to listen to a movement or a symphony again.

Perhaps I am in a minority. Certainly, previous commentators have dismissed many of these works. “I cannot extract much artistic interest from it [K. 162],” indeed from K. 181 and K. 182. . . .” writes Hans Keller in the two-part Penguin symposium The Symphony. “The first two [K. 162 and K. 181] are of the least interest. . . .” says Jens Peter Larsen in a generally more
Yet the D major Symphony, K. 181, with its appreciative guide in The Mozart Companion. For another slant on the use of original instruments in Mozart's music, see the review of his Quartet for Oboe and Strings.—Ed.

Two footnotes: First, numbering. The situation is complicated by the successive revisions of Köchel's catalog. Here, record labels and the contents list prefer Köchel's original numbers, with the more chronologically exact numbers from the latest (sixth) revision of the catalog in brackets. Thus: K. 182 [173dA]. But Zaslaw's notes use the numbers the other way around! Thus: K. 173dA [182]. And the New Mozart Edition uses an earlier revision of Köchel in its authoritative scores! Thus: K. 182 [166c]. Surely the original Köchel numbers provide the most convenient point of reference. (They are listed in Einstein's biography and The Mozart Companion.) Even if they sometimes mislead as to the order of the symphonies, they should always have precedence.

Second, a curious problem. Recent recordings of this project in England have been disrupted by the insistence of the Musicians' Union that Hogwood, as a non-union "director," may not play the harpsichord in these performances. (Only conductors and soloists are exempt from having to join the union; all orchestral players must belong.) And so authenticity founders to join the union; all orchestral players must belong.) And so authenticity founders. Rumor has it that another harpsichordist has been engaged and that Hogwood now has to "direct" the recordings from the control room. It really is nonsensical that artistic freedom should be interfered with in this way; we must hope for a speedy resolution of the situation.

The guiding forces behind the project: musicologist Neal Zaslaw, harpsichordist Christopher Hogwood, and concertmaster Jaap Schröder
MAY 1980

Record of Singing Continued

With commentary almost as valuable as the documents themselves, EMI's second volume is another must for the vocal collector.

by Dale S. Harris

With the appearance of this second volume of EMI's monumental survey of the vocal art as it has survived on 78-rpm recordings, we have reached the end of the acoustical era. Vol. 3—originally projected as the final album in the series but destined, from the look of things, to be followed by yet another—will have the advantage of much better sound but the disadvantage that the electrical recording process, introduced in 1925, sometimes makes it hard to judge the true size (and occasionally even the quality) of a singer's voice. In any case, Michael Scott is bound to provide judicious guidance to the album's contents. In the full-length, richly illustrated books of commentary that accompany Vols. 1 and 2, he has already proved himself a singularly illuminating preceptor.

I make no apology for mentioning Scott so early on, since he is the vital factor in the success of the entire venture: He supplies a critical/historical framework that alone renders this vast assemblage of voices meaningful. Without him, the twenty-five LPs issued so far would be, at worst, confusingly miscellaneous and, at best, merely entertaining. As it is, while they are certainly entertaining, they are also revelatory. Indeed, for anyone wanting to understand the development of vocal art in the twentieth century they are indispensable.

Actually, Scott's reach is even wider. In Vol. 1, by using the recorded evidence provided in the early years of this century by artists of the "old school" like Patti, Sembrich, Tamagno, Santley, Battistini, and Maurel, he is able to trace the course of singing back into the early years of the nineteenth century and from there even to the eighteenth century and the heyday of the castrato. Adelina Patti, who did not record until 1905-6, made her operatic debut at the age of 20, in 1884, with Beaumarchais's Le Barbier de Séville. By 1893, she had already achieved international fame and had sung in most of Europe, the United States, and Australia. In 1896, she made her New York debut at the Metropolitan Opera House, singing the role of Norma in Bellini's Norma. She was considered one of the greatest singers of her time and was admired by many of the world's leading conductors and composers. She is credited with having saved the Metropolitan Opera from bankruptcy. Patti was also known for her beautiful voice, which was described as having a quality of sweetness and purity. She was a master of bel canto technique and was able to sing in a variety of languages, including Italian, French, and German. Despite her的成功, she was always conscious of her limitations and was willing to work hard to perfect her craft. Patti was also known for her dedication to her art and her passion for music. She was a great supporter of the arts and was involved in many charitable endeavors. Throughout her career, she was respected for her talent and dedication to the art of singing. Patti's legacy continues to be felt today, as she remains one of the most admired singers in history.
sonorous a performance is it, and so au-
thoritative. Some of the pieces will be fa-
miliar to collectors of historical vocals, ei-
ther originals or LP reissues. The most often
encountered recording of a singer is, after
all, likely to be the one that contains his
best or most characteristic performance.
Thus, the selection chosen to represent
the art of Grazziella Pareto, “Quel guardo”
from Donizetti’s Don Pasquale, is one many will
already know—as they will, no doubt,
Frances Alda’s “Ah! dunque” from Catalani’s
Loreley, Lucrezia Bori’s “Oh gioia, la nube leg-
gera” from Wolf-Ferrari’s Segreto di Susanna,
and Marie Louise Edvina’s “Depuis le jour”
from Charpentier’s Louise.

But the majority of these selections
are both relatively unfamiliar and hard to
come by. There are excellent and inter-
esting performances by Russian baritone
Alexander Bragin and Russian soprano
Maria Kuznetsova; by several outstanding
artists of the French school, including ten-
os Paul Franz and Louis Caetze, baritone
Hector Dufranne, sopranos Fanny Hedly
and Berthe Auguez de Montalant (born in
Baltimore, Maryland); by celebrated sing-
ers of the Italian school, like Rosa Raisa,
Amelita Galli-Curci (including her en-
chanting performance of Massenet’s “Cri-
puscule”), and Gabriella Besanzoni (a beau-
tiful “Voce di donna” from Ponchielli’s La
Gioconda); by a group of fine and too little
appreciated English and American singers
like Edith Mason, Julia Heinrich, Eleanor
Jones-Hudson, Peter Dawson, and Horace
Stevens; and by some first-rate representa-
tives of the German school, like Helene
Wildbrunn, Lola Antô de Padilla, Margare-
rete Arndt-Ober (the Met’s first Octavian),
Julia Culp, and Vera Schwarz.

Some of the most fascinating selec-
tions are among those previously unpub-
lished: René Lapelletrie’s “Oui suis-je?” from
Ambroise Thomas’s Le Songe d’une nuit d’été,
Edoardo Ferrari-Fontana’s intriguing “Vesti
la giubba,” Gertrude Kappel’s authoritative
version of Brünnhilde’s Battle Cry, Maria
Ivogin’s “Caro nome” (in German), Alexan-
der Kipnis’ 1921 version of Prince Gremin’s
aria from Eugene (also in German). Other
fine (published) items are Wildbrunn’s
“Abscheulicher!” Schwarz’s “Liebe, du Himmel
auf Erden” from Lehár’s Paganini, Zinaida
Jurjevskaya’s Act II aria (in German) from
Janáček’s Jenůfa, Culp’s “I’ve Been Roam-
ing” (Charles Edward Horn), Caetze’s “Je
suis l’oiseau” from Massenet’s Griselidis, and
Ruth Vincent’s charming account of that
old Melba specialty, Nymphes et Sylvains by
Herman Bemberg.

To my ear, some of the performances
are distinctly unpleasing—those, for exam-
ple, by Frank Mullings, Gilda Dalla
Rizza, Ester Mazzoleni—but all have been
carefully chosen to illustrate the vocal situ-
ation during the years under survey, and all
have something significant to reveal about
the age. Occasionally I find myself dis-
agreeing with one of Scott’s judgments. I
concur with his analysis of Elisabeth Schu-
mann’s faulty technique but find her a
more attractive vocal personality than he
does. I also find Edvina’s top notes in “De-
puis le jour” less secure, Elena Ruszkowska
less impressive, Florence Easton less satis-
fying, and the rattle in voices like Tina Poli-
Randaccio’s and Juana Caracciolo’s less
endurable. All this is as it should be. To
Scott’s credit, his auditory precision and
technical objectivity encourage one to ar-
rive at opinions that still allow for the oper-
ation of subjectivity.

Because his views about the de-
velopment of vocalism are so coherent, tech-
nically sound, and musically cultivated, he
also, willy-nilly, tells us a great deal about
the state of singing today—though by im-
plication, not directly. No one listening to
these recordings and reading Scott’s com-
mentary could fail to become more alert, to
feel—as I have time and again—that he has
never listened properly to certain singers
before. Unlike J. B. Steane, whose striking
descriptive powers (as evinced in his oft-
quoted book The Grand Tradition) are ulti-
mately too impressionistic to be genuinely
helpful and, in any case, do not arise from a
sound theoretical basis, Scott provides in-
valuable insight into specific records and,
by extension, into the art of singing. What
this album reveals, a state of evident de-
cline, awakens the gravest doubts about the
art’s future.

Such doubts are only aggravated by
Scott’s quotations from certain American
critics of the past, like W. J. Henderson
(1855–1937), H. T. Parker (1867–1934),
and Richard Aldrich (1863–1937), to read
whom on the subject of voices is to become
horribly aware of how little their current
counterparts know—or care—about the
art of singing, whether in a technical or an
artistic sense. Present-day critics must
surely be held in large measure responsible
for the decline in judgmental standards that
has accompanied the decline in vocalism.

In any case, no lover of singing can
afford to bypass this album. The sound
throughout, though somewhat variable—
hardly surprising, given the diverse origins
of the material—is excellent. Surface noise
has not been eliminated and neither, there-
fore, have the overtones of the voices.
Greater care seems to have been taken with
the speeds than was the case with the first
volume. That one, sadly, is now out of
print, and when copies change hands, they
do so for around $1,200, according to the
The New York Times. Only 1,500 copies of
Vol. 2 have been imported from England. It
would be wise to act with dispatch.
Pachelbel’s “Canon in D Major”
is yours for only $1!

with your FREE-NO PURCHASE OBLIGATION-membership

Dear Friend of Great Music,

To acquaint you with the Society’s musical fare and recording program, we’d like to send you an outstanding record that has captivated thousands of Americans FOR ONLY $1.00!

It is rare that a recording is made that is truly “out of this world” with the ethereal qualities of music, performance and sonics ideally presented. But this recording is, indeed, OTW, embodying all these characteristics!

The Society is happy to offer a recording of such captivating power that Hamlin’s story of the Pied Piper pales! All who hear this recording simply MUST have it and go to great lengths to get it. When radio stations play this recording, their phones are tied up for hours. A New York City station had more than 400 calls when they played this recording! A San Francisco station had a similar experience.

While this recording is enrapturing and delightful throughout, the first work, CANON IN D MAJOR, is so mesmerizing that hearers are overcome. Your writer was so hypnotized that I spent over an hour repeating the first work before I even bothered to go to the others when I first listened to the record!

But the other works are transporting as well. The performance of the orchestra could not possibly be excelled and the trumpet playing is so spectacular that it is, in a word, breathtaking!

Certainly you’ll treasure this recording as your favorite. You’ll insist that all your friends hear it in the confidence that they will be grateful that you have introduced them to such a “revelation” in music.

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MHS 1060
JOHANN PACHELBEL (1653-1706)
CANON In D Major; PARTIA No. VI In B-flat Major; PARTIE In G Major
JOHANN FRIEDRICH FASCH (1688-1758)
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SINFONIA In G Major; SINFONIA In A Major
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BRUCKNER: Symphony No. 5, in B flat.
Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Daniel Barenboim, cond. [Günther Breeet, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2707 113, $19.96 (two discs, manual sequence).
B Munich Philharmonic Orchestra, Rudolf Kempe, cond. ODYSSEY Y2 35243, $9.96 (two discs, manual sequence).
BRUCKNER: Symphony No. 7, in E. WAGNER: Siegfried Idyll.

Bruckner’s Fifth Symphony is an architectural masterpiece, nearly flawless in its symmetry and awesome in its contrapuntal rigor. It seems to require a conductor of steadiness and authority, qualities most apparent in the performances of Bernard Haitink (Philips 6700 055), Kurt Masur (Vanguard 71239/40), and Otto Klemperer (Angel, deleted). The looser, more Romantic view propounded in the past by Eugen Jochum, Wilhelm Furtwängler, and Eduard van Beinum is more vulnerable to critical attack, and the two latest arrivals are of approximately that ilk.

“Approximately” covers a multitude of sins and virtues, however, and if Daniel Barenboim and Rudolf Kempe both favor rubato and tempo modification beyond a literal reading of Bruckner’s (original edition) score, the latter does so with a seamless flow, subtlety, and control that are everywhere more authoritative. Whereas Barenboim responds to momentary whim, Kempe appears to have a larger plan of expressive contours, of the play of stillness and movement, darkness and light. His tempos are intensely contrasted, except in the scherzo, where the fiery momentum barely lets up even for the “bedeutend langsamer” episodes. Barenboim is less vehement in this movement, but he doesn’t slow much for the secondary theme group either, in contrast to Herbert von Karajan (DG 2707 101), for example, who extracts all its Austrian folk sentiment.

Kempe’s inspired, idiomatic, and sympathetic reading clearly refutes the notion that architectural “rigor” is the only path to a successful Fifth. Despite his basically flexible outlook, he manages the great finale with uncanny assurance and conducts the fiercely tricky three-against-two rhythm in the Adagio as securely as anyone on discs. By comparison, Barenboim is relatively flaccid in these movements, though his exciting reading makes the most of the Chicago Symphony’s imposing low brass and creamy strings.

Kempe’s Munich Philharmonic plays with a tautly contained, smooth sonority and an intensity of concentration that rival the Chicago’s. Horns are less gloriously steady but completely Brucknerian in their dark and tragic solemnity. Some excessive flute vibrato and a mildly nasal oboe are the only minor drawbacks. The acoustical ambience is ideal, neither resonant nor dry. Everything is beautifully proportioned, and the highest pages of the finale project clearly. Violins are divided, and there is even a welcome spread of the low strings. This at the Odyssey price!

Haitink, perhaps the least egotistical of today’s major conductors, would not be likely to remake all or part of such a towering achievement as his Bruckner cycle without compelling reason. In the case of the Seventh (the 1967 recording was last available on Philips 802 759/60), there are two compelling reasons: both some major interpretive rethinking and significant sonic improvement.

Haitink still uses the mildest of the Loewe/Nikisch rescorings (e.g., the percussion at the Adagio’s climax), and the major interpretative difference shows up in the tempos. Though I prefer the greater propulsion and tautness of the older reading in the first movement, I fully subscribe to the reassessment of the third, where the trio section is now discernibly broader than the cracking scherzo. The Adagio ought to stretch to eternity, and here Haitink has slowed down comfortably, albeit not quite enough to suit me. (Karl Böhm, on DG 2709 068, comes closest.)

Philips’ latest sound preserves the admirable balance and perspective of the earlier issue and adds new warmth, immediacy, and dynamic range. There is not better sounding edition of the work in SCHWANN, and this will serve nicely as a basic purchase for those who don’t have the earlier Haitink version. Böhm’s Vienna Philharmonic recording has a special compassion that makes it one of the most compelling alternatives, but it is packaged in a three-disc box with the Eighth Symphony. The fine single-disc accounts of Masur (Vanguard 71242), Hans Rosbaud (Turnabout TV 34083), and Jascha Horenstein (Unicorn 72004) are inevitably compromised by side breaks in the Adagio.

The familiar choice of the Siegfried Idyll as a filler is sensible, given the Wagnerian overtones of Bruckner’s Adagio. Haitink offers an ideal mix of soothing tenderness and firmness of purpose. The work’s contrapuntal lines are articulated with a crystalline clarity equal to that of the one-player-to-a-part Solti/Vienna Philharmonic version (London RDN 51) and with considerably finer definition than in most full orchestral versions. A.C.
people in 1926? (It will be found in a well-intentioned, limply played, dimly recorded Copland collection, similarly not quite complete, issued a couple of years back by a Washington label optimistically known as Golden Age.) One other cavil: The 1966 In Evening Air is billed as a first recording, but was previously included in Peter and Meriel Dickinson’s “American Anthology” (HNN/Unicorn UN 1-72017), an attractive collection of songs and piano music.

But of course it is to the major works that we turn first in such a collection. Leo Smit has been associated with Copland’s music for a long time; he made the first recordings of the piano sonata and piano concerto, gave the first performance of the Four Piano Blues, and before making this recording, played all of this music as a single recital program (all, that is, except the Midsummer Nocturne, which Phillip Raemy had only just turned up among Copland’s sketches; this, at any rate, is a first recording). Smit’s playing is rhythmically firm without being stiff, compact in tone without loss of fullness when needed, and sensitive to musical character. It is also less impetuous than, say, the playing of William Massey in the variations and fantasy (Odyssey 32 16 0040), less rhetorical in the climaxes than the writing seems to imply.

This has interesting results. The concise and kaleidoscopic variations, though set forth with great clarity, seem small-scale by comparison with the Masselos recording. On the other hand, the sonata seems to gain by not being pushed to storm ultimate heights; the piece seems more at ease with itself in Smit’s performance than in most others (although Leonard Bernstein once brought off the rhetorical sort of reading very successfully—if RCA would only reissue that famous set of 78s!). And the fantasy, the longest and most problematic of these works, both gains and loses—at one another—as to make perilous any attempt at absolute critical judgments. If your exploratory urge is incurable, and your budget can take it, you will want to investigate some of the other prime versions: the Guarnieri (RCA Red Seal ARL 1-0187), with lithe, wiry intensity and dry, somewhat acrid acoustics; the Quartetto Italiano (Philips 835 361), drenched with poetic sighs, scents, and swoons; the LaSalle (DG 2530 235), with its ethereal sense of refinement; and the Tokyo (Columbia M 35147), with an undulating plasticity of line and a bracing, steely gloss of tone. This repertory enjoys a chronically healthy condition.

**A.C.**

**GILBERT AND SULLIVAN: Trial by Jury.**

**CAST:**

The Plaintiff Winifred Lawson (s)
The Defendant Derek Oldham (t)
Counsel for the Plaintiff Arthur Hosking (b) Usher George Baker (b) The Learned Judge Leo Sheffield (bs-b) H.M.S. Pinafore.**

**CAST:**

Josephine Elsie Griffin (s) Hebe Nellie Britcliffe (ms) Little Buttercup Bertha Lewis (a) Ralph Rackstraw Charles Goulding (t) Sir Joseph Porter Henry Lytton (b) Captain Corcoran George Baker (b) Boatswain Sydney Granville (bs-b) Dick Deadeye Darrell Fancourt (bs)

Carpenter’s Mate Stuart Robertson (bs)

H Chorus and orchestra, *Harry Norris Continued on page 71*
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"Silence with Music in It": DBX Goes Digital
by R. D. Darrell

My first report on the superb silencing of all disc surface noise by the DBX encoding/decoding process (November 1979) lamented the lack of digital recordings among the debut exemplars, mostly derived from existing masters. A number of varied additions to the DBX catalog have since appeared, but only now are there any brand-new digitally recorded releases. And the first three (three others are expected shortly) do indeed substantiate the extravagant technical claims made for them and appetizingly anticipate the eventual ideal of digitally reproduced digital recordings.

Perhaps only grizzled old-timers, brought up in the hard school of 78-rpm shellac discs with all their inescapable and often excruciating noise problems, can fully appreciate the total emancipation from noise-slavery. But surely the very youngest, most recently initiated discophile can hear and enjoy the incalculable difference between even the smoothest-surfaced conventionally processed disc and one that has been first DBX-encoded and then played back via a DBX decoder (like the simplest Model 21, $109 list price, which I've been using). I must stress that it's quite futile to try to explain in words the full meaning of complete disc silencing; that can be grasped only by hearing for oneself—as the disc starts rotating—absolutely nothing until the music suddenly bursts forth in radiancy.

The present programs from the Miller and Kreisel Sound Corporation, previously represented only by a series of direct-to-disc releases, hold considerable interest on their own merits as well. The Philharmonia Hungarica is a skilled ensemble and plays with infectious enthusiasm under its original conductor/founder Zoltán Rozsnyai, who became a naturalized American citizen, recorded with Biggs and Serkin for Columbia, and is currently conductor of the Knoxville (Tennessee) Symphony. Since these programs feature bravura showpieces, for the most part, Rozsnyai is obviously faced with formidable refined and virtuosic competition that neither he nor his orchestra can possibly match. But they make a fine try and succeed remarkably well in the idiomatically Magyar-spiced Berlioz and Brahms and in Ginastera's barbarically propulsive Panambi ballet suite—recorded here for the first time, I think, since the Goossens version on Everest, sensational by the standards of twenty years ago.

Yet even the more routine readings of familiar Tchaikovsky and French favorites, handicapped as they are by some orchestral (especially brass) coarsenesses—only too realistically captured—and lacking notable stylistic distinction, still must be ranked outstanding principally for their sonics: above all, their well-nigh incredible dynamic extremes, imposing solidities, and searching clarity of inner-voice details. All three discs (PS 1004 in particular) are destined to become sound-specialists' delights, but the joys of "silence with music in it" will not be relished only by audiophiles. They can and should be appreciated by completely nontechnical music lovers too. These releases are truly significant milestones on the direct route to the goal of ideally recorded and reproduced music.

ZOLTÁN ROZSNYAI: Orchestral Works.
Beyond the news that Arabesque plans "a long series of historical Gilbert and Sullivan recordings" (complementing as well as overlapping the British Pearl label's series, which already includes this same coupling), my major interest in these performances—from the D'Oyly Carte company's first electrical series of the operas—is Malcolm Sargent's conducting of Pinafore. Not surprisingly, it's a more conventional performance than the one Sargent recorded nearly thirty years later as part of his wonderful EMI stereo series, and yet the two readings have much in common—above all, the uncanny and almost proprietary sense of rhythmic equilibrium.

More than anything else, equilibrium seems to me what the G&S operas are about: the attempt to take all the world's silliness and absurdity and pomposity and, yes, maliciousness, and out of them fashion some sort of queasy balance. When Sargent returned to G&S in his later years, he broke new ground in exploring the darker and more tender aspects of these pieces; the foundation on which he built, however, had already been laid in his D'Oyly Carte years.

If I were to write about "justness of proportion," that might suggest a pedantic or humorless quality. In fact, Sargent's performances have their fair share of sparkle (though perhaps not the ebullient bounce of Isidore Godfrey's), yet it remains firmly under control. Listen to the "Let the air with joy be laden" tune in the Pinafore overture—or, even better, to the entrance of Sir Joseph's sisters, cousins, and aunts, whom Sargent somehow manages to get on-stage gaily tripping and lightly skipping, all the while keeping both feet planted firmly on the ground.

Unfortunately this Pinafore must be listened to—in the manner of, say, Toscanini's Aida—with a sort of mental singing—filter. Even the singers of real quality, Bertha Lewis and Darrell Fancourt, aren't very impressive here. Lewis squanders her fine contralto with all sorts of fussy gear changing, and her mincy way of spitting out the name "Buttercup"—especially the middle syllable—sets my teeth on edge in the aria. (Sorry, but "Recitative and Aria" is how Sullivan billed Buttercup's entrance song.) I prefer both Monica Sinclair and Gillian Knight (this is one of the latter's better roles) in, respectively, the Sargent and Godfrey stereo sets. Fancourt too seems to have caught a case of the minces, so that we don't hear how imposing his bass could sound in those years; he actually sings more firmly in the 1949 Godfrey recording (Richmond R5 62003). In any case, my favorite Dick Deadeye is Donald Adams, who sings better and more vividly and does wonderful things with the spoken dialogue, which is included in the 1959 Godfrey set.

The Trial by Jury and Pinafore casts contain several singers with major reputations unsupported by anything I have heard from them. Leo Sheffield and Sydney Granville between them blanketed the G&S bass-baritone repertory, sharing a number of roles, to no great effect that I can hear. Sheffield croaks the Learned Judge even less attractively than do the comedy baritones who normally take the part;
Granville is a hollow, dull Boatswain. Tenor Derek Oldham's florid style might be less bothersome if the actual vocalism had some real ease and ring; at that, his Defendant is better than Charles Goulding's almost nonexistent Ralph Rackstraw.

Elsie Griffin's singing contains enough evidences of solid control and even some command of color to lead one to suspect that the relative colorlessness of the actual sound heard may owe something to the early electrical recording. The other women, Winifred Lawson (the Plaintiff in Trial by Jury) and Nellie Brierciff (Hebe in Pinafore), sound simply like mediocre singers.

At this stage in his career, Henry Lytton could hardly be called a singer at all; still, he gives an expert performance in the arch, surface-deep comic style many people associate with G&S. The other baritones are quite competent but face stiff competition in the modern sets. Arthur Hosking's Counsel for the Plaintiff is no match for the distinctive accounts of John Cameron (Sargent/Angel, deleted), Kenneth Sandford (Godfrey/London), and Michael Rayner (in the more recent Nash/ D'Oyly Carte version, London OSA 1167). Similarly, George Baker—who would later be Sargent's stereo Learned Judge and Sir Joseph—is a solid but unmemorable Usher and Captain Corcoran. Given the general excellence of Arabesque's LP transfer, I assume that the transposition of the captain's song from D to C is authentic.

Apart from the modest size of the chorus and orchestra, I find the sound of Pinafore quite satisfactory, Trial by Jury, in addition to being less interestingly conducted (by Harry Norris, according to the album box; by "conductor unknown," according to the booklet), sounds "older"—recording technology made rapid advances between 1927 and 1930. This set includes a delightful bonus: an 1888 recording, made by Edison technicians, of Sullivan reading a brief message to the inventor—barely inaudible but cherishable all the same.

Future releases in Arabesque's G&S series (next in line is the 1936 Mikado with Martyn Green, conducted by Godfrey) should have wider appeal for nonfanatics. Meanwhile, in the absence from Schwann of Sargent's Angel Trial by Jury, the Godfrey stereo recording is an obvious choice. (Its three filler excerpts from Utopia, Limited, incidentally, remain the best evidence I've heard of that problematic piece's possibilities.) Although Sargent's and Godfrey's stereo Pinafores may not rank among their most memorable outings, they can be safely recommended, the choice depending on your preference for inclusion (Godfrey) or omission (Sargent) of the dialogue. K.F.

**HIGH FIDELITY**

**HAYDN: Die Schöpfung.**

Heather Harper, soprano; Robert Tear, tenor; John Shirley-Quirk, bass; James Lancelot, harpsichord; King's College Choir (Cambridge), Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, David Willcocks, cond. [Christopher Bishop, prod.] Arabesque 8039-2, $13.96 (two discs, manual sequence). Tape: 9039-2, $13.96 (two cassettes). **COMPARISON:**

Waldman/ Musica Aeterna MCA 2-10001

Ever since a Viennese audience first heard Haydn bring C major to light from Chaos, this wonderful oratorio has been a perennial favorite with both choruses and audiences. Like Handel's Messiah, it is a masterpiece that speaks to the heart not only through the ear, but for many of us, through active participation as well. To those who have sung in a performance or gone to one locally and are thus familiar with the work in English, the language of the recording may be crucial. Thus, the new Arabesque release, the first English version issued here since Frederic Waldman's 1965 recording, is specially welcome. Both recordings are good, but they are quite different. The Willcocks performance, first released by EMI in 1974, is British in conception and execution, and the Waldman, originally on Decca, is American.

Singing The Creation in English is quite logical. The original libretto (now lost), which Haydn picked up in London, was in English, and the German he set was a translation by his friend Baron von Swieten. The first publication, in 1800, was in both languages. Most of the English libretto sounds perfectly fine, and some parts are wonderful, but there are also infelicities and (to our ears) archaisms, amended by later editors. The most important of these was Vincent Novello, whose mid-nineteenth-century edition remained the standard for a century of performance and is the basis for this recording (though Arabesque mysteriously omits the final column of text from the libretto printed on the jacket). Waldman employs a text updated by an unattributed editor. Differences stand out most clearly in the solo arias. "On mighty pens," for instance, which has always called to mind a giant scriptorium, becomes "On mighty wings" in the American recording.

The singing is splendid in both performances, though the edge goes to the English simply for the excellence of John Shirley-Quirk, whose smoothly produced bass and beautifully flowing legato far out-class Chester Watson. If MCA's Judith Raskin is shimmering quicksilver, Heather Harper is liquid gold; both sopranos are
perfectly cast within the different conceptions of the two interpretations. Uriel is the least interesting of the archangels, but Robert Tear is in good voice and reliable as usual.

In the English cathedral tradition, Willcocks leads the men and boys of the King’s College Choir in their own fifteenth-century chapel at Cambridge, a remarkably resonant space with a lot of room for reverberation in its lofty Gothic arches and intricate stone traceries. Either for this reason or simply out of preference, Willcocks adopts comparatively slow tempos throughout, emphasizing the broad contours of the work. Haydn the symphonist emerges here in the long push to the crowning choruses that conclude each of The Creation’s three parts. It is an impressive achievement, but fanciers of the Waldman performance will miss the loving attention to detail and the bouncy cheerfulness the dry acoustic of the recording studio permitted there.

The orchestra, the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, gets a bit lost in the cathedral acoustics; here again you will have to look elsewhere for detail. It is the essentially choral nature of the work that Willcocks brings across, and his justly renowned choir is well equipped to carry the burden. If boy trebles are too British for your taste, however, you can turn to the women of the Musica Aeterna Chorus without any sacrifice.

In sum, listeners who are accustomed to Waldman’s crisp, playful Creation may be put off at first by Willcocks’ majestic deliberation. But traditionalists will surely appreciate this older approach, and fortunately Haydn’s Creation is a wonderful work that can be reborn in many successful guises. S.T.S.


When we speak of Haydn’s so-called ‘master’ quartets, we usually mean his last nine, Opp. 76 and 77. (The opus numbers were not of Haydn’s designation but are far more familiar than the scholarly Hoboken classification.) Similarly, when his symphonies are discussed it is the London Symphonies, the last dozen of the hundred-odd, that are singled out as the masterworks. Indeed, there is a close relationship between his late quartets and his late symphonies, because they represent the summit of his art and are all connected with London, directly or indirectly. But any intimation that there are no masterworks among the earlier works is palpably ridiculous and represents a view that should be rectified. Thus, we should greet this fine recording of Opp. 71 and 74 with satisfaction, especially because the “late” quartets really begin here.

Just about the time young Beethoven arrived in Vienna in 1792, carrying with him some early sketches for his first quartets (later published as Op. 18), Haydn embarked on a set of six quartets. Finished the following year, they were dedicated to the Hungarian magnate, Count Anton Apponyi, who also was a Maecenas and an excellent amateur violinist. Though seemingly two sets of three works each, with different opus numbers, they belong together, like the traditional six-packs under one number.
These Apponyi Quartets show the impact of Haydn's first visit to England, where his new symphonies had created a sensation; quite obviously, he composed them with an eye to his next visit, informing them with a good deal of the orchestral/symphonic, though without in the least jeopardizing their essential chamber music character. Resounding chords, anywhere from one to five, open the first four quartets, sounding almost like the premier coup d'archet so popular with the French audiences at the Concert spirituel. Haydn does not use these string fanfares in the body of the allegros; they are only a device to invite attention (like the two whiplash chords at the beginning of Beethoven's Erato), portals through which we must advance. The last two quartets dispense with the introductory chords, using instead equally symphonic heavy unison passages from which the theme takes root.

Tovey called Haydn "reckless" in his last works; this was said not in a pejorative sense, but to acknowledge the sexual-narian composer's exceptional imaginative freedom as he goes his own courageous way in every aspect of composition and instrumental writing. Though Haydn now places the main emphasis on tonal and thematic logic—even the subsidiary and closing subjects are often derived from the principal theme—he delights in throwing them with a good deal of the orchestral/symphonic heavy unison passages from which the theme takes root.

Haydn reconciles the two extremes by re-sonorous passages from which the theme takes root. The minuets in these quartets show how far the genre has left behind the old curiously dainty; they are fast, sophisticated, and symphonic, yet the spirit of the dance still hovers over them. Slow movements are stately and profound; the Adagio of Op. 74, No. 3, is one of the finest of its kind in the entire classical era. The finales brim with elan, wit, and ever-regenerating ideas, the sonata/rondo never falling into a pattern.

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These Apponyi Quartets show the impact of Haydn's first visit to England, where his new symphonies had created a sensation; quite obviously, he composed them with an eye to his next visit, informing them with a good deal of the orchestral/symphonic, though without in the least jeopardizing their essential chamber music character. Resounding chords, anywhere from one to five, open the first four quartets, sounding almost like the premier coup d'archet so popular with the French audiences at the Concert spirituel. Haydn does not use these string fanfares in the body of the allegros; they are only a device to invite attention (like the two whiplash chords at the beginning of Beethoven's Erato), portals through which we must advance. The last two quartets dispense with the introductory chords, using instead equally symphonic heavy unison passages from which the theme takes root.

Tovey called Haydn "reckless" in his last works; this was said not in a pejorative sense, but to acknowledge the sexagenarian composer's exceptional imaginative freedom as he goes his own courageous way in every aspect of composition and instrumental writing. Though Haydn now places the main emphasis on tonal and thematic logic—even the subsidiary and closing subjects are often derived from the principal theme—he delights in throwing them with a good deal of the orchestral/symphonic heavy unison passages from which the theme takes root.

Haydn reconciles the two extremes by re-sonorous passages from which the theme takes root. The minuets in these quartets show how far the genre has left behind the old curiously dainty; they are fast, sophisticated, and symphonic, yet the spirit of the dance still hovers over them. Slow movements are stately and profound; the Adagio of Op. 74, No. 3, is one of the finest of its kind in the entire classical era. The finales brim with elan, wit, and ever-regenerating ideas, the sonata/rondo never falling into a pattern.

Harmonies can be really "reckless." In Op. 71, No. 3, Haydn presents the first half of the allegro theme in the principal key of E flat, but the consequent is in F minor!

Only the last quartet in the set, which posterity has dubbed The Rider because of the cantering figure of its opening movement, has no introduction. But then, this, one of Haydn's greatest quartets, is a terse, concentrated work that permits nothing extraneous. For once the weightiest movement is not the first, but the last, a concept that Beethoven, and later the Romantics, espoused.

The Amadeus Quartet gives masterly performances: Intonation is perfect; style, ensemble work, and articulation are exemplary; everything is precise—a precision not machinelike, but loose and flexible. The sound is good, and James Webster's notes are professional and excellent.

Let us also give favorable mention to the new Philips disc featuring Haydn's well-known Emperor Quartet and Mozart's equally often recorded Hunt Quartet. The Quartetto Italiano's patrician performances should delight all friends of chamber music. P.H.L.

JANáČEK: The Makropoulos Affair.

CAST:

Emilia Marty: Elisabeth Soderström (e)
Kristina: Anna Czaková (ms)
Charwoman: Jana Mírová (a)
Maid: Blanka Vítňová (a)
Albert Gregor: Peter Dvorský (t)
Vítěz: Vladimír Krejčík (t)
Janek: Zdeněk Svěhla (t)
Hauk-Sendorf: Beno Blachut (t)
Jaroslav Prus: Václav Zítek (b)
Kolenát: Dalibor Jefferson (bs-b)
Machinist: Jiří Joran (bs)

Vienna State Opera Chorus, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Charles Mackerras, cond. [James Mallinson, prod.] London OSA 12116, $17.96 (two discs, automatic sequence). Tape OSA 12116, $17.90 (two cassettes).

Since the report on The Makropoulos Affair, the second installment in London's Janáček series, is similar to that on its predecessor, Káťa Kabanová (January 1978), it can be briefer. Charles Mackerras knows this music well and shapes it with urgency and eloquence. The Vienna Philharmonic plays masterfully, its tone characteristically rich and refined. Elisabeth Söderström, though not as glamorous of voice as once, is still in command of her part both musically and theatrically; a true dramatic soprano (Janáček's designation of the role) would bring more edge to her tone in Emilia Marty's uglier moments, but Söderström reads her lines with such force and point, and shapes the musical phrases with such
thrust, that we are not minded to complain. Peter Dvorsky is a bright-voiced Albert Gregor, and the other roles are well taken; a special mention is due Beno Blachut, Czechoslovakia's great heroic tenor, now (in his sixties) occupying himself successfully with character parts, such as the aged, demented Hauk-Sendorf. The recorded sound is solid and full, if not ideal in its delineation of orchestral detail.

There is also a Czech recording, no longer listed in SCHWANN as Epic B2C 167 (in which form it was reviewed in these pages in March 1968) but still to be found in imported form (Supraphon SUAST 50811/2)—one of the least effective Janácek recordings from his native land, with a shrillish heroine and an often inept conductor, Bohumil Gregor, who misinterprets tempo changes and fails to shape the climactic scenes. (It can claim one clear superiority of casting, however: Helena Tatter-muschova's bright and spirited Kristina.)

Despite these deficiencies, it makes us aware of important points. The Vienna Philharmonic's playing is not only better than that of the Prague National Theater Orchestra; it is different—and the drier, brighter tone of the Czech band is surely closer to the quality Janáček had in mind than the lusher patina of the more famous orchestra. Furthermore, as suggested, that grander Decca/London ambience tends to swallow up orchestral detail: For example, early on in the Marty/Gregor scene in Act I, a leaping wind figure with repeated notes plays an important part in the textures, but it is frequently smothered over in the new recording—you can find it if you know where to look, but it doesn't grab the ear as in the Czech performance. These points are hardly enough to tip the balance in favor of the slack and sometimes sloppy Gregor recording, but we should be aware that in some respects the London performance is stylistically off-center. The gradual dissolution of national stylistic traits in music is probably an inevitable consequence of the ease of international travel and communication, but we should not let them slip away without being conscious of the loss.

Having registered that reservation, I heartily recommend the new recording, especially to those who do not know the opera. Based on an ingenious and effective play by Karel Capek about a woman who lives for more than 300 years, its music is austere and at first frustrating in its constant reliance on sequential repetition, but the cumulative effect, topped by the final powerful surge of lyricism, is likely to take you by surprise. The London booklet includes a first-class historical essay and an introduction to the musical material by John Tyrrell, as well as a libretto with a new translation (uncredited) that reads well and makes sense (though I'm not in a position to vouch for its accuracy). D.H.

LIGETI: Melodien; Concerto for Flute, Oboe, and Orchestra*; Chamber Concerto.

Aurèle Nicolet, flute*; Heinz Holliger, oboe*; London Sinfonietta, David Atherton, cond. [James Mallinson, prod.]

Decca HEADLINE HEAD 12, $9.98 (distributed by London Records).

György Ligeti first achieved international prominence in 1961 with his orchestral Atmosphères, which has since become remarkably popular for a contemporary work and has appeared frequently on concert programs. At first hearing, Atmosphères seemed similar to those works by Penderecki, such as the Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima, that appeared at about the same time and, like the Ligeti, featured dense, slow-moving textures—"sound blocks," as they are often called—which were developed and juxtaposed in various ways. Yet the points of departure of the two composers were even then fundamentally different: Whereas Penderecki

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High Fidelity

These pieces, the most problematic, since the music of the solo instruments is insufficiently differentiated from that of the larger ensemble. Also, the contrapuntal writing is generally less interesting than in the other two works. In contrast, the Chamber Concerto, the earliest of the three, is a marvel of virtuosic scoring, with thirteen instrumentalists treated as soloists of equal ability. Its four distinct movements together form a work of unusual accomplishment. Melodien, with its sensual and luminous web of long contrapuntal lines and delicate filigree, deserves a place in the standard orchestral repertory. Despite talk to the contrary, there is complex new music being written that is well within the reach of average concert audiences.

The performances by the London Sinfonietta and soloists Aurele Nicolet and Heinz Holliger under David Atherton's direction are, despite one or two minor lapses, faithful in both detail and spirit. Ligeti himself supplies very informative liner notes. R.P.M.

Mozart: Quartet for Oboe and Strings, in F, K. 370; Quintet for Horn and Strings, in E flat, K. 407.

Michel Piguet, oboe; Hermann Baumann, horn; Jaap Schröder, violin; Wiel Peeters and Willem ten Have, violas; Wouter Möller, cello. TELEFUNKEN 6.42173, $9.98. Tape: 4.42173, $9.98.

Comparison—Oboe Quartet: Holliger, Krebbers, et al. Phi. 9500 397

I wonder how many other old-timers were led into the paradise of Mozartean chamber music by the great Leon Goossens, the first to record the endearing oboe quartet—both acoustically, for the National Gramophonie Society, and electrically, in 1933, for English Columbia. But today greets bank out the World Records reissue for fear some of the once incomparable magic may have faded. Though I'm sure Goossens himself remains unique, I doubt that his collaborators, members of the Léner Quartet, could have approached the technical standards of the Dutch ensemble that joins Goossens' successor as oboist extraordinaire, Heinz Holliger, in their truly ideal 1977 Philips version.

Against this background and with considerable dubiety about the advantages of period instruments for Mozart's works, I can't muster much enthusiasm for the present version, with Michel Piguet and members of the Esterházy Quartet playing eighteenth-century instruments. Piguet plays very well, and I'm fascinated by the penetrating, reedy tonal qualities of his two-keyed Christophe Delusse oboe (c. 1785). But the anonymous producer has...
the work almost becomes a concerto rather than a balanced chamber piece.

The same (by no means uncommon) miscalculation is even more egregious in the horn quintet, dominated by the big, booming tone of Baumann’s Bohemian Inventions with E-flat crook (c. 1800), and further handicapped by his rather unwieldy reading. Baumann participated in an earlier Telefunken account (6.41009, with the Strauss quartet), there presumably playing a felled instrument. But I’m sorry to admit that I haven’t heard it—or any of several other more recent recordings, since I never got around to replacing the fine, if somewhat romanticized, early stereo version by John Barrows and the Fine Arts Quartet (available in a 1972 Orion reissue, 7281).

All of which leaves the new Telefunken pairing with strictly limited appeal: to period-instrument specialists. R.D.D.

MOZART: Symphonies (11). For a review, see page 61.

RAVEL: Quartet for Strings, in F— See Debussy: Quartet for Strings.

ROSSINI: Otello.

CAST:
Emilia
Nucci Condò (s)
Desdemona
Frederica von Stade (ms)
Otello
José Carreras (t)
Jago
Gianfranco Pasetti (t)
Rodrigo
Salvatore Fisichella (t)
Lucio
Keith Lewis (t)
Doge/Condolieri
Alfonso Leoz (t)
Elmire
Samuel Ramey (bs)

Ambrosian Opera Chorus, Philharmonia Orchestra, Jesús López-Cobos, cond. Philips 6769 023, $29.94 (three discs, manual sequence). Tape: 7699 110, $19.96 (two cassettes).

Rossini’s Otello is a beautiful, affecting, and dramatic opera. It’s not quite true to say that Verdi’s greater handling of the same drama drove it from the stage; Rossini’s work had started to lose its popularity well before Verdi’s Otello appeared, in 1887. But the canto d’azione pioneered by Bellini and Donizetti and championed by Verdi had long before that begun to replace Rossini’s more florid style as a favored medium for musical drama. It is probably true to say that, if Verdi had not composed his Otello, we would have heard Rossini’s opera more often than we do. There were two concert performances in New York in the 1950s, one with Jennie Tourel and the other with Eileen Farrell as the heroine. A few cities staged the piece in the 1960s, among them London, Rome (a production that came to the Met), and Wexford. I last heard the opera in Philadelphia, a year ago. I’ve never heard it without being moved or without also reflecting on how well it’s composed.

To those who don’t know the opera, this Philips performance should come as a revelation. Those who do know it will probably have a different kind of revelation; in one of the theater productions mentioned above was the score anything like as well played as it is here by the Philharmonia under López-Cobos. Otello was the second of the nine operas, all of them serious, that Rossini composed for the San Carlo in Naples. (Strictly, Otello had its premiere at the Fondo and moved to the San Carlo as soon as that house, damaged by fire, was ready again.) He was sometimes accused at the time of being too learned, too “German”—another way of saying that he was not content merely to repeat the old forms and that he took a good deal of trouble with his orchestral writing. Otello is filled with inventions in variation form: The march that accompanies the hero’s entrance and the successive strophes of Desdemona’s Willow Song are just the most striking examples among many. And it is elaborately and vividly scored, with many beautiful wind solos and many touches of contrasting colors carefully applied. Desdemona’s prayer—like Elisabeth’s prayer in Tammschäfer—is accompanied by winds alone; then the strings are used to convey Otello’s fury and anguish, his alternate resolve and hesitation, as he enters. (There are many signs that both Boito and Verdi knew Rossini’s opera well.) All the orchestral playing is alert and colorful, and it is very well recorded.

The instrumentalists of our day are trained to a high standard; student pianists take in their stride works that nineteenth-century professionals hesitated to play in public. But very few singers today acquire the technique to sound Rossini’s music with anything like fluency and accuracy. No violist or pianist would dare to offer an audience as many smudged notes, clumsy runs, and tonal unevenesses as are heard from the tenors in this set. Otello is particularly tough on tenors. Four of the roles are designated for primo tenore. José Carreras, as Otello, can’t manage his aria. There’s no bright, forward, heroic flash in the timbre; floriture are sometimes aspirated, sometimes vague. Elsewhere, the music sometimes runs too low for him to be effective in it. Charm of timbre and a natural, unaffected, all-purpose expressiveness take him part of the way, however.

Rodrigo is a role of equal importance. Salvatore Fisichella’s voice is new to me; it has an open, slightly hard ping at the top that is not disagreeable, for the focus is true. He’s not as nimble as Pietro Botazzo,
who used to sing the role in the '60s, and he grabs awkwardly at some of the grappetti. In the aria, he bears down on the first beats too heavily—"Ah C'om Mai non Senh!"—so that the line lurches. In the Act II duet with Otello and the subsequent trio, he is too retiring. The fourth primo tenore is the Gondoliere. He has just too much ability. The fourth Jago is a smaller role; Gianfranco Pastine sings it. He overdoes the recitatives, aiming to "express" almost every word—but not the only reason for buying it. The singers may be technically imperfect and stylistically uncertain, but they do show feeling for the music and are as good as most Rossini singers are today. The opera does come across. And so a reviewer is left with mixed feelings: gratitude that Otello should have been recorded and that Philips should have assembled probably as good a cast as one could hope to hear now, tempered with the "objective" realization that Rossini's music deserves far better singing still. A.P.
The following listings are excerpts from the "New Listings" section of the March Schwann Record and Tape Guide. Some listings contain a cross-reference (*) to other works on the recording. Letters in brackets refer to language used in vocal music (G, German; E, English, etc.). Cassette editions are indicated by the symbol L. Quadriphonic discs are indicated by the symbol Q. Quadrifonic discs are indicated by the symbol 4Q. Cross-references (5) to other works are contained in the "New Listings" section of the March 1980 High Fidelity Magazine.

BACI, JOHANN SEBASTIAN
Chromatic Fant. & Fugue in d, Harpsichord, S.903
Tureck (piano) t Duets; Italian
Col. M-35822

Duets for Harpsichord, S.802/5
Tureck (piano) t Chromatic; Italian
Col. M-35822

French Suites (6) for Harpsichord, S.812/7
Verlet 2-Phi. 6756855
Italian Concerto in F for Harpsichord, S.971
Tureck (piano) t Chromatic; Duets
Col. M-35822

Sonatas (6) for Violin & Harpsichord, S.1014/9
Gruniau, Jaccottet 2-Phi. 6769017
Toccata for Harpsichord, S.910/16
Gould (piano)(S.911, 914/6)
Col. M-35831; 3-MT-35831

BARTÓK, BÉLA
Bluebeard's Castle, Op. 11
Szönyi, Székely, Dorati, London Sym. [Hung] t Dance; Miraculous; Wooden
3-Mer. 77012

Dance Suite
Dorati, Hungarica Phil. t Bluebeard's; Miraculous; Wooden
3-Mer. 77012

Miraculous Mandarin (ballot)
Dorati, BBC Sym. & Cho. t Bluebeard's; Dance; Wooden
3-Mer. 77012

Quartets (6) (complete)
Hungarian Qt 3-DC 2728011; 2373011
No. 3 (1927)
Sequioa Qt t Ravel: Qt
Delos DMS-3004 (D)

Wooden Prince, Op. 13
Dorati, London Sym. t Bluebeard's; Dance; Miraculous
3-Mer. 77012

BEETHOVEN, LUDWIG VAN
Concerto in C for Violin (fragment), K.5
Kremer, Tchakarov, London Sym. t Romances; Schubert:Konzertstück
DG 2531193; 2301193

Leonore (1805) (orig. vers. of Fidelio)
Moser, Donath, Casilly, Adam, Ridderbush, Blomstedt, Dresden St. Op. [G]
3-Ara. 8043; 29043

Romances Nos. 1, 2, Violin & Orchestra, Op. 40, 50
Kremer, Tchakarov, London Sym. (Op. 40) t Vn Con. K.5; Schubert:Konzertstück
DG 2531193; 2301193

Sonatas (32) for Piano
No. 1 in E, Op. 10
Bishop Kovacevich t Son. 30 Phi. 9500569

No. 28 in E, Op. 109
Bishop Kovacevich t Son. 28 Phi. 9500569

Variations & Fuge in Db, Op. 35, "Erato"
Buchbinder t Var. Op. 34, 76, G.191
Tel. 642070; 442070

Variations in E (32 var.), G.191
Buchbinder t Var. Op. 34, 35, 76
Tel. 642070; 442070

Variations in D, Op. 76, for piano
Buchbinder t Var. Op. 34, 35, G.191
Tel. 642070; 442070

Variations in F on an Original Theme, Op. 34
Buchbinder t Var. Op. 35, 76, G.191
Tel. 642070; 442070

BELISI, VINCENZO
Norma
3-Col. M3X-35902

BERNSTEIN, LEONARD
Fancy Free
Bernstein, Israel Phil. t Ser. DG 2531196

Serenade for Violin Solo, Strings & Percussion
Kremer, Bernstein, Israel Phil. t Fancy
DG 2531196

BIZET, GEORGES
Jeux d'enfants, Op. 22
Martinon, ORTF Orch. t Jolie; Sym.
DG 2535238; 2335238

Jolie Fille de Perth:Suite
Martinon, ORTF Orch. t Jolie; Sym.
DG 2535238; 2335238

Symphony No. 1 in C
Martinon, ORTF Orch. t Jolie; Sym.
DG 2535238; 2335238

BLOCH, ERNEST
Sinfonia breve (1953)
Dorati, Minneapolis Sym. t McPhee; Schuller
Mer. 75116

CHOPIN, FRÉDÉRIC
Polonaises
Berman (Nos. 2, 6) DG 2531094; 2531094
Gilel (3) t Son. 3 DG 2531099

Sonata No. 3 in b for Piano, Op. 58
Gilel t Polonaises
DG 2531094; 2335238

CLÉRAMBAULT, LOUIS NICOLAS
La Musette (Cantata)
Monyos, Richman, Concert Royal [F] t S.1014/9
Marais; Rameau: L'Impatience; Pièces en concert
None. 71371

DEBUSSY, CLAUDE
Fantaisie for Piano & Orchestra
Sonata No. 3 in g for Violin and Piano
Zukerman, Neikrug t Faure: Berceuse; Vn Son.
Col. M-35179

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EPSTEIN, DAVID
Cam. 2776

FAURÉ, GABRIEL
Berceuse for Violin & Piano, Op. 16
Zukerman, Neikrug t Vn Son.; Debusy:
Son. 3
Col. M-35179
Zukerman, Neikrug t Berceuse; Debusy:
Son. 3
Col. M-35179

FRANCK, CÉSAR
Sonata in A for Violin & Piano
Oliveira, Feldman t Saint-Saëns:Vn Son. 1
Col. MX-35089

GILBERT, WM. S. & SULLIVAN, SIR ARTHUR
H.M.S. Pinafore
Sargent, D'Oyly Carte Op. Co. t Trial
2-Ara. 8052; /9052

Trial by Jury
Sargent, D'Oyly Carte Op. Co. t Pinafore
2-Ara. 8052; /9052

GLAZUNOV, ALEXANDER
The King of the Jews (incidental music), Op. 95 (1914)
Köhler, Stuttgart Phil. Turn. 34739(Q)

HAYDN, (FRANZ) JOSEPH
Creation (oratorio)
Harper, Tear, Shirley-Quirk, Willcocks, St. Martin's Acad., King's Colleg. Cho. [E]
2-Ara. 8039; /9039

Quartets (82)
Amadeus Qt (Op. 71, 74) 3-DG 2709090
Symphony No. 94 in G, "Surprise"
Previn, Pittsburgh Sym. t Symphony 104
Ang. SZ-37575
Symphony No. 104 in D, "London"
Previn, Pittsburgh Sym. t Symphony 94
Ang. SZ-37575

Trios (piano) (31)
Beaux Arts Trio (H.XV, Nos. Cl, 41)
Phi. 9500658

MARAIS, MARIN
Suites for Viola da gamba & Harpsichord
Richman, Concert Royal (No. 2 in D) t Clérambault; Rameau:Impatience;
Pièces en concert None. 71371

MARTINO, DONALD
Triple Concerto for Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, Contrabass Clarinet & Chamber Orchestra (1977)
Devendra, Smylie, Thimunig, Sollberger, Gp for Contemp. Music t Babbitt
None. 71372

McPHEE, COLIN
Tabuh-Tabuhan (Toccata for Orchestra) (1966)

E2

Hanson, Eastman-Rochester Orch. t Bloch:Sinf.; Schuller Mer. 75116

MOZART, WOLFGANG AMADEUS
Concerti (25) for Piano & Orchestra
No. 14 in E♭, K.449
Vasary, Berlin Phil. t Con. 26
DG 2531207; /3301207
No. 26 in D, K.537, "Coronation"
Vasary, Berlin Phil. t Con. 14
DG 2531207; /3301207
Idomeneo, Re di Creta, K.366
Rothenberger, Moser, Gedda, Büchner, Adam, Schmidt-Iserstedt, Dresden St. Op. [I] 4-Ara. 8054; /9054

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Trio for Oboe, Bassoon, & Piano
Still, Turkovic, Perry t Saint-Saëns:Bsn Son.; Schumann:Romances; Tansman
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PUCCINI, GIACOMO
Suor Angelica
Sutherland, Ludwig, Buchanan, Bonynge, Nai! Phil. [I] Lon. 1173; /5-1173

RACHMANINOFF, SERGEI
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Kletzki, Orch. Suisse Romande
Lon. STS-15500

RAMEAU, JEAN PHILIPPE
L'Impatience (cantata)
Monoyios, Richman, Concert Royal [F] t Pièces en concert; Clérambault; Marais
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Pièces de clavecin en concert
Richman, Concert Royal (No. 5) t L'Impatience; Clérambault; Marais
None. 71371

RAVEL, MAURICE
Daphnis et Chloé (complete ballet)
Mata, Dallas Sym. & Cho.
RCA ARCI-3458 (D)

Quartet in F
Sequía Qt t Bartók:Qt 3
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ROSSINI, GIOACCHINO
The Barber of Seville
D'Angelo, Monti, Capecci, Tadeo, Bartlett, Bavarian Radio Sym. & Cho. [I]
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Martha Argerich, piano. [Jurg Grand, prod.] COLUMBIA M 35168, $8.98.
Youri Egorov, piano. [Klaas A. Posthuma, prod.] PETERS INTERNATIONAL PLE 113, $7.98.
Imre Rohmann, piano. [Attila Apró, prod.] HUNGAROTON SLPX 11799, $8.98.
SCHUMANN: Kreisleriana, Op. 16.
Ludwig Oleshansky, piano. [Marc Aubort and Joanna Nickrenz, prod.] MONITOR MCS 2160, $4.98.
Susan Starr, piano. [Alvred L. Borkow Jr., prod.] ORION ORS 77284, $7.98.
Arthur Rubinstein, piano. [Max Wilcox, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-3427, $8.98. Tape: ARK 1-3427, $8.98 (cassette).

If anyone still questions Schumann's popularity as a piano composer, he has only to consider this unruly assemblage. Apart from Rubinstein's, all are new recordings, and they are joined in the catalog by recent reissues as well (Anda's C major Fantasy and Symphonic Etudes, DG Privilege 2535 364; Eschenbach's Kinderszenen, Waldszenen, intermezzos, and Abgng Variations, DG Privilege 2535 224).

Martha Argerich's name comes as a surprise on a Columbia release, but the Argentinian virtuoso has not shifted her contractual allegiance away from Deutsche Grammophon; she made this recording for the Italian Ricordi label—a one-shot deal, I am told—and Columbia has licensed it for sale in other countries. Argerich seems to have a Midas touch. Even where she is not at her very best—the first several Fantasiestücke are a bit fast and glib; parts of the fantasy are slightly detached and perfunctory and even a bit cavalier technically—the sheer naturalness of the pianism and the wingedness of the musicianship carry the day. She seems more sympathetic to the short pieces than to the larger fantasy, which requires tension and grandeur, but there is much in both performances that is revealing. The reproduction is at a low level, and I suspect that Columbia's processing does not do full justice to the nuances of the master tape. Still, the sound is serviceable.

Daniel Barenboim, fresh from his traversal of Schumann's orchestral music with the Chicago Symphony (DG 2709 075), shows that he can be as willful and variable at the keyboard as on the podium. When he is at his considerable best, as in the Kinderszenen and Faschingsschwoank, his musiciansly interpretations are refreshing. His Kinderszenen, in particular, is direct, uncluttered, full of soundly considered detail,
and devoid of treacle. While he plays each of the vignettes with classical cogency and succinctness, he (like Schnabel) also manages to make the various components work as a cycle, and the prevailing robustness is attractive. Faschingsschwank gets a similarly affectionate, propulsive performance, though its sonority is understandably weightier and less intimate.

In the fantasy, as in the central movements of the C major Symphony, Barenboim's brusquer qualities come unattractively to the fore. Many of his interpretative points are intellectually defensible, usually derived from either the printed page or the "tradition" of prior artists; but the sensibilities of Barenboim the musician are not nearly so persuasive as the workings of Barenboim the logician. His tone is oppressive and opaque, and his interpolated ritardas and Luftpausen have a certain belligerent crassness. (I am reminded unpleasantly of his manhandling sforzato accents in the symphony's second movement trio sections and his graceless, unsuitable Adagio in the same work.) His Carnaval has a few exemplary details (the beautifully sturdy, rhythmic "Arlesquin") and some that are at least thought-provoking (the repeat of both sections in the da capo of "Valse allemande"); but on the whole, it and, to a lesser degree, his Arabeske are depressing and shallow. Technically, the pianism is clean—more than could be said for much of his work ten years ago—yet a prevailing percussive drollness robs the music of its tonal allure.

The first release of the much-heralded Soviet émigré Youyi Egorov (Peters International PLE 121, May 1979) was somewhat disappointing; recorded live at a Carnegie Hall appearance, the young pianist sounded understandably intimidated by the dual challenge of having to live up to the standard he set at his Tully Hall debut six months earlier and of having to produce a concerto tape that could withstand the scrutiny of repeated hearings. But in these imposing performances he realizes a full quota of ardor and poetry and integrates them into an Olympian, symmetrical progression. The music unfolds imperturbably, with perfect timing and wonderful plasticity of tone, and no detail sounds either skimmed or dwelt upon to the detriment of the overall musical plan. Only the greatest stylists possess comparable breadth of design and aesthetic sensibilities.

The Arabeske is somewhat more epic than usual, with such details as the forte upbeats of the middle section given a surpassingly emphatic quality that somehow escapes sounding aggressive. And, for all the scope and dynamic range, the quintessential intimacy is not slighted. The fantasy, too, gets a dream of a performance: Whereas Richter's and Horowitz' recordings are finicky and detail-conscious, Egorov, a colorist of exceptional ability, subordinates all the spasmodic jolts to a long-range dynamism (but without losing vitality, as Pollini's slightly denatured reading does). Egorov negotiates the celebrated skips at the end of the march with awesome aplomb—keyboard mastery reminiscent of Rachmaninoff's in Schumann's Carnaval. The low-key, yearning third movement is a grand summation of what has gone before. Rarely, if ever, have I encountered a more affecting (and less affected) C major Fantasy. The Kreisleriana and Noeletten are equally commendable, and Peters' EMI-derived sound has spacious solidity.

Bella Davidovich also gets gorgeous sound for her Humoreske and Carnaval, and on the whole, these are more interestingly played than her Beethoven and Chopin (Philips 9500 665/6, January). The massiveness and deliberation with which she opens Carnaval augur well, and her interpretation is generally clean, powerful, and efficient. But why must she use so much arm weight? And why must she dawdle so in the introspective middle section of "Renaissance"? The Humoreske is steady and ingratiatingly lyrical. Though both performances are idiomatic, they are a triple trim and orthodoxy and do not eclipse memories of Arrau, Horowitz, Richter, and Yves Nat in the Humoreske or Rubinstein, Hess, Gieseking, and—above all—Rachmaninoff in Carnaval.

The young Hungarian Imre Rohmann turns in excellent, musiciancally accounts of the rarely heard Op. 4 Intermezzos and the Fantasienstuck. He plays with convincing vigor and shapes with stringent sensibility. His Fantasienstücke, somewhat broader than Argerich's, are stylistically akin to Perahia's (Columbia M 32299); they have shape, lucidity, and poetry allied to excellent virtuosity. Hurgonito's reproduction, while still close, is less boxy than the piano sound that label produced a few years ago. This is a fine disc, particularly valuable for the strong rendering of Op. 4.

Ludwig Olshansky's performance of the Kreisleriana and the Intermezzos from Brahms's Op. 119 can be passed over quickly: His playing, though never really bad, is beset with eccentricities and blochy articulation. There are much better performances of both works available. Susan Starr is a brilliant technician capable of impressive digital clarity in "Fa-bel," "Traumeswirren," and the scurrily outer movements of the G minor Sonata, and her playing would be first-rate if it weren't so inescapably prosaic. What with all the cautious little adjustments and hesitations (especially in "Aufschwung" and "Des Abends") and a certain persuasiveness, the music ends up sounding monochromatic and earthbound. Orion's sound, bas-
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To my own perhaps overtender ears, the true Heldentenor of Dubrovkin’s Orestes is the most readily tolerable, the garish so-pranos of Shimko’s Electra and Ganestova’s Pallas Athene the least, while the vocal aggravations of the other singers fall variously between these extremes. But even listeners who suffer most acutely as a result of such strictly vocal aberrations (undoubtedly some are entirely impervious) will likely ignore their discomfort in the irresistible dramatic grip of the best role-enactments—especially Galushkina’s superb Clytemnestra.

The outstanding musico-dramatic moments (including whole selections) not only compensate for the major executant and minor creative weaknesses, but irrefutably justify the fabulous reputations of Taneyev and his opera. Quite unforgettable are: the arrestingly virile orchestral introduction and well-nigh Mussorgskian Watchman’s Soliloquy (Agamemnon, No. 1); Cassandra’s long prophecy—arioso with oboe obbligato, chorus, and Agamemnon’s off-stage death cries (No. 8; a scene worthy of concert exploitation by a Flagstad or a Nilsson); the night-scene of Clytemnestra’s guilty ghost-ridden terrors (Choephori, No. 11); Orestes’ brooding over the tomb of his slain father and then watching from a distance as his sister Electra and her attendants bring grave-offerings (Nos. 14 and 15); the orchestral storm-entr’acte and Orestes’ pursuit by the Furies (Eumenides, No. 23); the superbly evocative entr’acte depicting Apollo’s temple in Delphi (No. 24; an ideal excerpt for orchestral presentation in concert); and the last part of No. 30, the finale of the entire opera, with Orestes’ and the Athenians’ hymn of thanksgiving to Pallas Athene and the solemn procession from the Acropolis to the Parthenon: “Thus God and Fate are reconciled.”

It’s superfluous to stress that this album is essential for every specialist in opera and Russian music. But for others—even those who share my abhorrence of its sheerly vocal acerbities and judders—its endless fascinations, inexhaustible chills and thrills. And by no means its least significant rewards are one’s enhanced appreciation of the remarkable genius of Taneyev and its illumination of the grandeur of ancient Grecian mythology and drama in general and of Aeschylus’ trilogy in particular. R.D.D.

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As part of Philips' gargantuan Edizioni Vivaldi, begun in 1978 to commemorate the tercentenary of the incredibly prolific Red Priest's birth (some ten boxes comprising forty-eight discs have been announced overseas), Heinz Holliger and I Musici have been busily recording the oboe concertos. There are a lot of them: twenty for solo oboe, three for two oboes, two for oboe and violin, one for oboe and bassoon, and countless others for three or more soloists including oboe. The present release is the third (following Philips 9500 044 and 9500 299) in what promises to be a lengthy series.

The five concertos here are admirably varied. Vivaldi's own arrangement of one of his many bassoon concertos, the rhapsodic RV 448, is relatively familiar, as is the cheerfully quirky RV 449—one of the two Op. 8 concertos in which the usual solo violin part may preferably be given to the oboe. The other three are new to me. The fleetly whirling RV 456 emanates from a collection published by Walsh in London around 1728 and is presumed authentic. The prime appeal here is shared by the bewitching music itself and Holliger's truly spellbinding playing. He inspires I Musici to some of its finest performances, and for full measure, the brightly vivid recording is admirably bright and open.

Most listeners seeking a period-instrument Seasons will probably find Vanguard's easier to accept. Yet, much as I admire it, I'm far more stimulated by the less conventional, Harmoncourt dramatizations. And while the 1976 CRD recording is admirably bright and open (with some sharp edges in the high end), the Vanguard review copy was noisy. Still, if you're not yet ready to be galvanically jolted by the Harmoncourts, and you crave a change from slicker modern-instrument recordings, Standage and Pinnock offer a rewarding alternative.

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CHAMBER WORKS BY WOMEN COMPOSERS.

Joseph Roche* and Robert Zelnick*, violins; Tamas Strasser, viola*; Camilla Keller, cello*; Paul Freed, piano*; MacAlester Trio* [Dennis D. Rooney and Russell Borud, prod. ] Vox SVBX 5112, $13.98 (three discs).


Even if one assumes that 51% of the music ascribed to Anonymous was actually written by Mrs. or Miss A., the question of whether composer actually composed the works remains a matter of debate. However, the work produced by Mendelssohn-Hensel is a notable exception. The piece, written around the mid-nineteenth century, is generally considered to be one of her most significant contributions to the genre. The piece is known for its intricate and challenging harmonies, as well as its lyrical and expressive qualities.

The Mendelssohn-Hensel Trio, Op. 17, is a late work by the composer, and is considered to be one of her most mature and accomplished compositions. The piece is known for its complex and challenging harmonies, as well as its expressive and emotional qualities. The piece is performed by a number of different ensembles, and is considered to be one of the most significant works in the genre.

The Closing Doubtarian Quartet, op. 150, is a later work by the same composer. The piece is known for its complex and challenging harmonies, as well as its expressive and emotional qualities. The piece is performed by a number of different ensembles, and is considered to be one of the most significant works in the genre.

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it; her contemporary commentators and critics and, perhaps, even colleagues would have made their little remarks and wondered how she could give birth to both babies and symphonies, but she nevertheless would have been recognized. And we would know that music today.

But in fact, history has sent us no masterworks (I hesitate to say "mistressworks") from the pen of even one woman, let alone the number of women population statistics would logically dictate. Since the explanation for this dearth is clearly not genetic, it must be social or circumstantial. That troubles me, too, because I can’t believe that Beethoven or Mozart would not have composed had he been born female. Still, some rationales can be accepted:

Women in centuries past were not given the kind of professional training lavished on their brothers; they were not encouraged or pushed toward public success by friends and family; they were scorned by society if they tried to break with tradition and take on "men’s work." Now those structures have been eased, and we in the mid-twentieth century have seen the emergence of a number of important women composers—Thea Musgrave, Barbara Kolb, Shulamit Ran, and Joyce Mekeel, to name only a few. I hesitate to forecast that the next half-century will see composers who happen to be female outnumber composers who happen to be male. At the very least, however, we can hope and assume that the public will not faint with shock should that actually happen.

Meanwhile, the point remains that women have written no musical masterworks, and this collection of chamber works by seven women doesn’t disprove that. It does raise some intriguing questions, though. In isolating the work of women composers (or black composers, Indian composers, Hispanic composers, etc.), a set like this tends to present the pieces as curiosities. I intend to try a blindfold test, putting Amy Beach’s piano trio between one by Haydn and another by Schubert, for instance, or playing Teresa Carreño’s quartet along with a late Mozart and an early Beethoven. My unsuspecting listener/victim won’t rave about how wonderful and powerful and unfairly neglected these mystery works are. But neither will he—it has to be a he, of course—look down his nose at this music by women, or dismiss it as a good way to stave off boredom between feedings and diaper changes.

Five of Vox’s seven women—Fanny Mendelssohn-Hensel, Cécile Chaminade, Amy (Mrs. H.H.A.) Beach, Clara Schumann, and Lili Boulanger—are recognized as skilled creators, although their music is rarely played today. Germaine Tailleferre

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should be better known than she is; she was, after all, a member of the famed Les Six in Paris (the only woman), and the violin sonata played here is every bit as impressive as the work of the other five. I'm embarrassed to admit that, until now, I had never heard of Carreno; but I certainly intend to find out more. She must have been quite something: born in Venezuela in 1853; driven from her homeland by revolution; a piano prodigy and student of Louis Moreau Gottschalk and Anton Rubinstein; married to Emile Sauret, Giovanni Tagliapietra, Eugen d'Albert, and Arturo Tagliapietra (G's brother); an opera singer, director, and conductor; died in New York in 1917; reinterred in her homeland in 1938. She outmarried Alma Mahler and was known as "the Walküre of the piano." Furthermore, she wrote very good music, if the Quartet in B minor is any indication.

The best work among these seven is Schumann's G Minor Trio, Op. 17, which, fortunately, has been well recorded elsewhere, by the Beaux Arts Trio on its Schumann set for Philips (6700 051). The timid, sometimes sloppy playing throughout this set by the Maclester Trio "& Friends" (everybody has friends, these days) is a distinct liability; in fact, the talents of the performers are much more modest than those of the ladies whose music they play. Still, it's easy to tell that Fanny Mendelssohn, Felix' sister, was much better at presenting sweeping musical ideas than she was at developing them. And Mrs. Beach (who can hardly be blamed for using her husband's name, when her maiden alternative was Amy Cheney), though crafty and technically accomplished, could not discipline herself in this, her only piano trio (Op. 150), to keep from throwing in everything but the proverbial kitchen sink. Boulanger is represented by two miniatures, a nocturne and Concertino, that hint at her talents but hardly display them to best advantage. Chaminade's First Piano Trio is a work of much greater originality and conviction than the little flute concerto and the Scarl Dance, by which she is usually identified, and who's to complain if most of the charm is on the surface? The same goes for Tailleferre's C sharp minor Sonata, but here the language suits the café more than the parlor; the music speaks with the tongue of a very witty and delightful asp. Then there's the B minor Quartet by Carreno; alas, the only people who seem to have remained unsmitten by this composer's charms are the Minnesotans who play her music here.

In the pitifully abbreviated liner notes that accompany this release, violinist Joseph Roche (who unearthed the scores) says that "the phenomenon known as Teresa Carreño may provide a clue" to why tropical storms were given women's names.

Someone might remind him that even the National Weather Service now gives men equal time in the hurricane department. Furthermore, saying that the work of these women was inspired by their husbands is tantamount to putting a footnote at the bottom of a program for Bach's B minor Mass to thank Anna Magdalena for keeping the kids out of the way while J.S. composed.

K.M.

THE RECORD OF SINGING, VOL. 2. For a review, see page 63.

ZOLTAN ROZSNYAI: Orchestral Works. For a review, see page 70.

Theater and Film

STAR TREK. Music from the original film soundtrack.

Composed, conducted, and produced by Jerry Goldsmith. COLUMBIA JS 36334, $7.98.

THE BLACK HOLE. Original motion picture soundtrack recording.

Composed, conducted, and produced by John Barry. BUENA VISTA 5008, $8.98.

In keeping with the stately, elegant pacing and suavely handsome mounting of Robert Wise's Star Trek, Jerry Goldsmith's score projects an almost naively Romantic warmth and sense of awe at the wonders of space, instead of the knowingly comic-book-like vulgarity of other recent science-fiction fantasies. It may not equal his Planet of the Apes, Logan's Run, The Omen, or Conan in power and originality, but it does display an ingratiating and even winsome side of the composer. Like the film it embellishes, the music is a celebration of space rather than a trivialization.

Although the main title fanfare theme underlines the unavoidable precedent of John Williams' Star Wars music, its use and development throughout the film stress its wholesomely heroic and humanistic potential rather than its garish aspects. There is only an occasional reminder of Goldsmith's calculated methods of creating tension through jagged textures and relentless ostinatos. His conception and execution are consistently symphonic in scale and tapestrylike in their smooth transitions from one section to the next. And though the music plays an integral role in articulating the film's narrative and ambiance, it is always supportive, never suffocating. Some of the more threatening pas-
sages, with their emphasis on low brass registers, the discreet application of electronic effects, and the distant reverberation of an organ tone or two, recall Bernard Herrmann’s evocative use of similar devices in The Day the Earth Stood Still without in any way sound derivative. And the soaring, yearning melodic line of “Illia’s Theme” is one of Goldsmith’s most passionate inspirations. Interestingly, his witty incorporation of Alexander Courage’s breezy theme from the original television series into a couple of sequences has been deftly edited out of the recording.

This is the first large-scale Goldsmith soundtrack of recent years not to be recorded in London; it apparently utilizes members of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, though the orchestra is not specifically identified. Orchestrator Arthur Morton, music editor Ken Hall, chief engineer John Neil, and veteran Hollywood musician Lionel Newman are all to be congratulated on this eminently lifelike and listenable Columbia release, as stunning aurally as the film is visually.

For The Black Hole, a much more juvenile and derivative film with a cut-and-dried “action” emphasis, John Barry has written a less sophisticated but nonetheless theatrically effective score. Though he has never aspired to Goldsmith’s extended symphonic structures, Barry has always turned out scores that are well tailored to the task at hand, idiosyncratic in sound, and superbly crafted within their own more modest dimensions.

After the inevitable obeisance to the Star Wars signature in a main title theme that seems almost a retrograde clone of its famed model, the trio section offers one of those distinctive Barryisms in its lockstep, assembly-line march tune. And the swirling, rotary motion of the “Black Hole” music—in which the characteristically repetitive accompanimental figure assumes a greater importance than the melodic line in the brasses—presents a striking example of the composer’s penchant for simple, graphic leitmotifs with almost subliminal formulative force.

But the purely musical interest flags quickly, as his powers of variation are ultimately stretched to the breaking point. As with many Barry scores, the music is more illustrative in a subsidiary vein than evocative in the truest sense. His “Space Station” sequence for Moonraker was far more awe-inspiring than anything here.

The orchestra seems of slightly less than symphonic proportions; thus, the sonic elements are not quite as overpowering as in previous films of this genre. The digital recording techniques, however, make for a transparently natural-sounding reproduction and pressing. P.A.S.

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The Tape Deck

by R. D. Darrell

Sweet singing in the choir

Surely no recorded-music experience can surpass the sheer thrill and lasting satisfaction of a masterpiece for chorus and orchestra, four outstanding examples of which have appeared recently in multitrack Prestige Boxes. At least one of them ranks among the all-time best: the combined Vols. 3-4 of Vittorio Negri’s Vivaldi sacred works series, with soloists led by soprano Margaret Marshall, the John Alldis Choir, and the English Chamber Orchestra (Philips 7699 118, two cassettes, $19.96). Like the yet untaped Vols. 1-2 (November 1978), this set combines relatively familiar works (RV 589 Gloria, RV 591 Credo) with ones rarely heard (RV 586 Sacrum Mass, RV 604-607 psalms)—spellbinding music, superbly performed and recorded.

I can’t commend the others as unreservedly, but each has potent individual appeal. Hanns-Martin Schneider’s Bach Christmas Oratorio (Archiv 3376 012, three cassettes, $29.94) will delight period-instrument fanciers who enjoyed the Regensburg St. John Passion (“Tape Deck,” December 1979), yet again will convince most listeners that boy soloists are wholly inadequate for Bach’s great soprano and alto solos. Leonard Bernstein’s remake of the Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra under Frigyes Sándor, in remarkably zestful, brightly gleaming, suitably lightweight versions of Mozart’s Concertos Nos. 9 and 14 (MK 11942). And a conductor new to me, Adam Fischer, brings much of the same engaging verve to six of the best-known Rossini overtures with the Budapest Symphony (MK 11932).

More of Marriner’s argosy on reel Barclay-Crocker’s stepped-up open-reel production prominently features the imaginatively varied, consistently admirable Argo recordings of Neville Marriner and his redoubtable little Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields ensemble. Many of these are not yet available in cassette editions. In any case, neither the disc nor the cassette format does as much justice to the original masters as do the well-nigh ideal B-C reel processings—currently exemplified by some exceptionally invigorating rococo/early classical and modern programs ($8.95 each, with one noted exception, from Barclay-Crocker, 11 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10004).

The Mozartrian includes irresistible 1968 recordings of the string divertimentos, K. 136-138, and the Serenata notturna, K. 239 (Argo/B-C E 554); the 1971 Eine kleine Nachtmusik (never played better), Sinfonia concertante, K. 364, and quasi-overture Symphony No. 32 (F 679); and the 1973 coupling of the Third Violin Concerto and K. 190 Concertone (E 729), in which soloists Alan Loveday, Iona Brown, and Carmel Kaine put many far more famous fiddlers to shame.

The Haydn brothers are represented by Joseph’s popular trumpet concerto (with Alan Stringer) and six sonatas and Michael’s Horn Concerto in D (with Barry Tuckwell) and six unfamiliar but delightful minuets (E 543). This 1967 version of the horn concerto is in many respects preferable to Tuckwell’s recent self-conducted version on Angel (4SZ 37569, “Tape Deck,” April). From the same era come some Rossini juvenilia, six sonatas for strings, in first-rate 1967–69 string orchestra versions (E 506 and 603), with the second reel filled out by a rarely heard youthful quartet of Donizetti’s.

Then, to jump forward more than a century, it’s fascinating to hear Marriner’s highly sympathetic approach to such Americanas as Ives’s Third Symphony, Barber’s Adagio, Copland’s Quiet City, Cowell’s Hymn and Fuguing Tune No. 10, and Creston’s A Rumor (E 845). But of course he faces formidable native competition in most of these works. And this is true to an even greater degree in such demanding programs as his 1970 Bartók Divertimento for Strings and Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta (E 657, $9.95); the 1972 Shostakovich Concerto, Op. 35, and Stravinsky capriccio, with pianist John Ogdon (E 674); and the 1974 Schoenberg Verklärte Nacht, with pieces by Hindemith and Webern (E 763).

More successful than any of these is one of Marriner’s earliest (1974) programs with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra—the one I so relished in its disc edition (September 1975), but which sounds even more impressive in open-reel format (E 792). Novel for Janáček’s early but distinctive suite and Richard Strauss’s Capriccio Sextet, it is perhaps most appealing for its incomparably mellifluous Suk serenade.

De-digitalizing Illya (and R.D.D.) Only after the January column appeared in print did I learn that I had jumped to an erroneous conclusion in hailing the Unicorn/B-C edition of Glière’s Illya Maromets as the first digitally recorded reel. Barclay-Crocker had made no such claim, but since the British disc edition was made from a digital master, I naively assumed the American reel had been too. But no: It stems from an analog “insurance” tape master, recorded, of course, at the same time.

To be sure, the technical merits of both recording and reel processing are unimpeached. But we still have to wait a while longer (one of us very red-faced and muttering “Pecau!”) for the first real digitally recorded reel.
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Rupert Holmes: A Lesson in Resilience

by Stephen Holden

When people ask me what I would have been in another life, I say that I would have been the illegitimate second son of the Marquis de Provence during the French Revolution, printing up tracts urging the peasants to revolt. But come the bloody revolution, you would have found me running up and down the halls trying to save the paintings as the masses set fire to the palaces with torches.

Rupert Holmes's description of himself as part conservator, part iconoclast is an accurate characterization of this sophisticated singer/songwriter with a non-singer's voice. His recent—and thus far only—hit under his own name, Escape (The Pina Colada Song), is a junk-pop novelty fable about a bored lover who unwittingly answers his girlfriend's personal ad. Yet Holmes is a classically trained musician who frankly admits that his idols are Rodgers and Hart.

Though far from his finest work, Escape's level of verbal craft is considerably higher than that of most hits these days. In fact, like that of Paul Simon and Randy Newman, Holmes's work is the essence of songwriting polish. His five solo albums and various production projects abound with terse pop tunes and sophisticated lyrics that use such "legit" devices as internal rhymes, clever turns of phrase, puns, and double entendres. His perspective is a lot more distanced than that of tough-talking contemporaries like Warren Zevon.

Holmes calls himself a "Victorian anarchist" whose refined diction has prompted some critics to compare him to Cole Porter and Noel Coward. Holmes, however, balks at the comparison.

"My problem with Coward and Porter is that their elegance can turn to foppishness. When people liken me to them, I'm flattered, but I don't go around with a cigarette holder. Now Rodgers and Hart are different. Their songs have the same beautiful construction and elegance of expression, but they're not so brittle. Hart's lyrics are simply incredible. The poor man wore his heart on both sleeves. He wrote the most vulnerable lyrics I've ever seen."

His point is well taken. His own lyrics are also more aching than arch. The People That You Never Get to Love, the best song on his recent "Partners in Crime" album, is very much like Lorenz Hart in its poignant simplicity: "And you think about/The people that you never get to love/The poem you intended to begin/The saddest words that anyone has ever said are, 'Lord what might have been.' " The melody reflects the lyric's quiet conversational quality. Holmes, who's very self-critical, agrees that The People is one of his best songs and numbers it among the seven or eight he has
written that he's completely satisfied with.

Holmes's musical background runs the gamut from highbrow to bubblegum, with the two extremes often getting delightfully mixed up. His best pop orchestrations have a classical grace, while his witty side often expresses itself in melodies that sound like extended jingles. The son of a Nyack, New York, music teacher who played big band clarinet in the '40s, he had acquired an extensive familiarity with both classical and big-band repertoire by age five. Rock & roll was looked down on in his house, so he didn't really discover it until the advent of Beatlemania, which prompted him to learn bass guitar and form a local band. After high school, Holmes entered the Manhattan School of Music on a clarinet scholarship but soon switched his major to composition. Musical academe didn't suit his temperament, and he began moonlighting as a pop jack-of-all-trades, taking what odd jobs he could find.

"I'd go to composition class and the teacher would say, 'You can't write for trombone like that,' and he'd give me a D. That night the same teacher would be playing trombone 'like that' on one of my recording sessions," Holmes recalls. "I said to myself, 'The people who are teaching me how to compose are teaching me because they can't earn a living as composers.' I'm very pragmatic. I think an artist has to find his audience. You can't say that you had no right to your opinion because you hadn't read the textbook."

So in 1969, Holmes got his first music business job for $45 a week as a songwriter/mailboy for Lou Levy Publishing at 1650 Broadway. This was his initiation into the "bubblegum" factory, where teenage junk music was cranked out by studio hacks with mythical group names (known for such singles as Yummy Yummy). "You'd sell a song on the ninth floor, record the thing in the basement at Associated Studios, then take it back up to Buddah Records. You could have a single out on the streets in one week without leaving the building," he says. "We ripped each other off. I've had hit records I've yet to see a penny from, but on the other hand, the bubblegum manufacturers let me learn my craft." He worked under some forty different group names, turning out literally hundreds of songs. One of them, Timothy, a novelty about cannibalism in a mineshaft, went to the Top 10 in 1971 and landed him a publishing deal with MCA.

"Finally, I realized that if I didn't make a break soon, I'd become a true hack and an alcoholic," Holmes says. "I went to England for a rest, and after that I started dissociating myself from all the people who'd kept me under their thumb."

In 1974, he signed a singles deal with Epic under the pseudonym Rosebud. But instead of recording a frothy "group" sound, he presented the label with one of his serious story songs, Terminal. Epic liked it enough to sign him for an LP under his own name, and for the next nine months he and his partner, engineer Jeffrey Lesser, worked on "Widescreen," a concept that Holmes had been developing for several years. "I'd been mailing off short stories, mostly mysteries, to publishers, and my walls were covered with rejections slips," he remembers. "One hot summer day, I went to see the movie You Only Live Twice. When John Barry's title tune came on, with Nancy Sinatra singing over this massive orchestration, I had a vision of the pop record as a three-and-a-half-minute movie scenario. The song's story is the plot, the music the orchestration, the lyric the screenplay, and the rendition the cast. When we finally made 'Widescreen,' we used ten actors and fifty-six musicians."

Though the album received favorable critical notices, it sold poorly. Epic probably wouldn't have picked up Holmes's option had not Barbra Streisand, also a CBS artist, phoned him to request the lead sheets for two songs on "Widescreen." A subsequent meeting resulted in Holmes and Lesser agreeing to produce her next LP, "Lazy Afternoon," which now ranks among Streisand's best records. It's her only '70s album to eschew rock altogether, and the quality of the material (including three Holmes songs) is unusually consistent.
“It’s really a live album recorded on 24 tracks,” he says. “Nine times out of ten, what you hear is what happened at that moment, which is very rare these days.”

When not working with Streisand, he was recording his second LP. “Rupert Holmes,” which he feels might have been better had he not been dividing his time. Still, it contains several nuggets, among them Brass Knuckles, a mini Raymond Chandler-like epic, and The Place Where Failure Goes, a cynical show-business antianthem.

Holmes likens his career from then on to a disaster movie. Engaged by Streisand to be the musical director of A Star Is Born, he wrote ten songs for the picture (most of them unused), and when the project looked like it would never be finished, he quit. Meanwhile the people who signed him to Epic had left, and the new head of A&R wanted him to write singles. He responded with “Singles,” an album of light pop tunes, most of which he admits “could have been written by anybody.” Ironically, it contains his most frequently covered songs. Who, What, When, Where, Why has been recorded by Dionne Warwick and Manhattan Transfer, among others, and The Last of the Romantics is an Englebert Humperdinck mainstay.

When “Singles” flopped commercially, Holmes got his release from Epic and, to support himself, free-lanced as a producer, cutting albums with Strawbs, John Miles, Sparks, and Sailor. “I never shortchanged anyone I produced. But if I have my way, I’ll never produce again. And if I have my way, I’ll never produce again.”

“I never shortchanged anyone I produced. But if I have my way, I’ll never produce again.”

Holmes was so discouraged by the commercial failure of “Pursuit of Happiness” that he considered never recording again. But when Infinity Records, MCA’s custom label, offered him a shot, he took it. Bizarrely, history repeated itself with the folding of Infinity as Escape, from his fifth album, was climbing the charts. This time, however, the single was too hot to be stopped. It went to No. 1 and stayed there for over a month, selling more than 1.5 million copies. (It also completely defied music business conventional wisdom that people don’t listen to lyrics and that short-story songs don’t stand a chance commercially.) Holmes is now technically on MCA, Infinity’s parent, though this status is being challenged in court by Infinity’s president Ron Alexenburg, to whom “Partners in Crime” is dedicated.

“Before I made ‘Partners in Crime’ I went over my backlog and realized that there was a recurrent theme in my work. Most of my best songs were about couples. I also decided to clown around again and consciously brought humor back into my songs. At the same time, I wanted to get back to the story song.”

Easily his most cinematic record since “Widescreen,” “Partners in Crime” is an engaging mixture of junk-pop ideas like the sound effects on Answering Machine, and of luxurious studio polish. It evokes the bustle and the loneliness of hyperactive city life. Amidst the clamor and under the hard edge, Holmes talks like a nervous Everyman, trying to communicate through a maze of gadgets that only impede what they’re supposed to facilitate.

“I love junk as much as anyone else,” he says. “One of the reasons I liked writing Escape was that, even though it’s a lighthearted song, it has a point of view in its suggestion that we dispose of relationships too easily. To go back to what I said about revolution, while the mob burns the palace. I’m trying to save the paintings, because when the revolution’s over, they’ll all become middle class and want to buy some paintings and there won’t be any. I hope I’m not sounding pretentious, because I’m very pragmatic. I wanted to get into pop music, pop being short for popular, as populist, as in people like it. If someone can find himself in one of my songs, I feel I’ve accomplished my goal. I think it’s a noble goal if I can distract someone enough so they forget they have a dentist appointment tomorrow.”

“Classical music for me was like wearing a tweed suit without underwear.”

“Lorenz Hart wrote the most vulnerable lyrics I’ve ever seen.”
“Record” Business: The End of an Era
by Sam Sutherland

At the end of the opening day of the Las Vegas Consumer Electronics Show last January, I found myself sharing dinner and talk with a group that included Bill Anderson, president of the Advent Corporation. As a writer who has been involved principally in the “music industry” — an often distant cousin to the trade that makes listening to recorded music possible — I was powerfully impressed by the show’s interminable maze of high-tech dazzle.

After discussing the increasing cross-fertilization between the various media technologies (a phenomenon that had been so apparent on the CES floor) the talk inevitably turned to 1979, the year of the Platinum Goose’s downfall. Would the record business learn from its harrowing losses? And what would be the effect of the technological refinements — of digital reproduction, miniaturization, and, most promising, video — that clearly lay ahead?

Anderson answered with a question: “What are you going to do when there isn’t a record business?”

He wasn’t warning of an overnight demise, but his challenge did underscore some troubling ironies. That term has become more prevalent than “music business” during the two decades that preceded the decline of the phonograph as the primary vehicle for sound reproduction. Whereas the ‘70s witnessed cassette technology’s bloom as a universal medium, “record business” veterans tended to think of tape as “plus business,” a dividend earned on their real commodity. They treated it as a second-class format in almost every respect — product quality, packaging, catalog variety, and marketing support — even as the caliber of cassette hardware consolidated the consumer’s ability to make better tapes in his living room than he could buy from the “record business.” Indeed, it has been the drastically steep growth curve of blank cassette sales coupled with the fact that prerecorded tapes are now approaching parity with disc sales that has finally caused the majors to recognize the format’s importance.

But why has it taken them so long?

The implications of laying the groundwork for the aforementioned conjunction of media — the spread of cable and satellite transmission, the adaptation of digital technology to home applications — have, for at least the past decade, been felt by the entire “communications industry.” Of which the record business is a part, of course. Or is it?

Part of the answer lies in its booming financial growth in the ‘60s and ‘70s. Even as technology drew film, television, music, and information systems toward a future crossroads, heady profits and steep growth diverted labels’ attention from the long-term outlook. So the people who made hardware, despite the obvious commonality of interests down the road.

In fact the two industries have seldom understood the market goals and economic realities each faces. For instance, much as the labels underestimated the impact of superior playback technology in exposing their own products’ flaws, hardware manufacturers have been indifferent to the real obstacles including environmental restraints — that disc and tape manufacturers face.

This will have to change, and may already be changing, since CES saw more “record business” participation than ever. Both industries are feeling the harsh gusts of economic reality, as discretionary dollars tighten and new home entertainment rivals emerge to compete for those dollars. With the early months of 1980 revealing no easy escape from ongoing market ills, “record company” managers are realizing that they must become “entertainment company” managers in order to survive.

We goofed: In last month’s Pop-Pourri column by Stephen Holden, the Five Royales were erroneously referred to as a “fictional” Fifties rhythm & blues group. Our apologies to the Five Royales, to Mr. Holden, and to rock & roll.
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When Linda Ronstadt, pop star, makes an album, it's a big-bucks, painstakingly calculated project. Material is carefully screened: an old Temptations hit, a Buddy Holly rocker, an anguished J. D. Souther ballad. The general strategy for her last few LPs has remained as formulaic and predictable as her band lineup. “Mad Love” at least represents a change—a calculated move to try something new, something kind of “new wave.”

Ronstadt has cut her hair, opting for a stark, harder image. A punchier, leaner, more assertive band has been assembled. Three Elvis Costello songs and one by Angeleno hipster Billy Steinberg are tackled. Mark Goldenberg—lead singer/songwriter/guitarist with another L.A. combo, the Cretones—contributes three more. And if Goldenberg and three fellow veterans of writer/songstress Wendy Waldman’s old backup band decide to cut their hair short, put on tight black trousers and wraparound shades, and cast mean, angry glares at the camera, that’s their prerogative. A mainstream pop star like Ronstadt can assume new wave trappings, so there’s no reason why an unknown L.A. pop/rock band can’t do the same. After all, this is Hollywood. Nothing’s real. What matters are the end results, which, on "Mad Love" and on the Cretones’ "Thin Red Line," are surprisingly satisfying.

Like the three Karla Bonoff tunes Ronstadt recorded for "Hasten Down the Wind," the three Goldenberg tunes on "Mad Love"—the title cut, Cost of Love, and Justine—are bound to draw attention to the Cretones’ renditions of the same. Goldenberg writes succinct, sharp lyrics in a Costello mold, but without that writer’s venom. He resigns himself to the calamities of love, but pursues love’s course regardless. Musically, the songs are a flurry of descending guitar lines, snapping rhythms, and taut choruses. Since Goldenberg is one of the two guitarists on "Mad Love" (the other is Dan Dugmore), instrumental similarities between Ronstadt’s and the group’s renderings of the three songs are inevitable.

Ronstadt, of course, brings that voice to her versions—a voice which, on "Mad Love," is consistently full of rapt emotional energy. But while a lot of that energy goes into the Goldenberg cuts, they’re not necessarily the best. Neil Young’s Look Out for My Love is a triumphant meeting of the old- and new-school L.A. sounds, Mike Auldridge’s dobro aligning with Dugmore’s revved-up guitar. Of the Costello compositions, Party Girl, an ominous ballad of high-class heartlessness, and Girls Talk, one of the songwriter’s best, stand out. How Do I Make You, already a Top-10 single, is the gutsiest, most overtly new wave track. While melancholy soapers from Bonoff and Souther are absent, Ronstadt and producer Peter Asher haven’t forsaken the formula altogether: Little Anthony & the Imperials’ Hurt So Bad gets a tough new reading, as does the Hollies’ mid-’60s gem I Can’t Let Go. "Thin Red Line" is a neat little surprise. The Cretones display a self-mocking spirit and a penchant for powerful, pounding rhythms that their vigorous playing manifests with gusto. The ten tracks are all Goldenberg’s. (Two are co-written, I Can’t Wait with Andrew Gold, and Ways of the Heart with bassist Peter Bernstein.) Of the three covered by Ronstadt, Justine is the best, Goldenberg singing with a shade of Jagger, circa “Between the Buttons.” The opener, Real Love, is a crashing hybrid of hook-happy Eagles and sentimental Costello. Everybody’s Mad at Katherine explores the world of a girl who “doesn’t care” and calls to mind the cleverness of Jules &
the Polar Bears. Mrs. Peel, a homage to Diana Rigg's role in the old Avengers TV series, is a rousing walk down the dark alleys of spymdom with every espionage cliché thrown in for good measure. The Cretones' sound is spurred on by Goldenberg's guitars and Steve Leonard's surging keyboards, the latter a cross between the tacky Farfisa of the Attractions and Todd Rundgren's grandiose keyboard sweeps.

It's refreshing to hear Ronstadt break her five album-long somnambulism, and if it took the arch, rocking wit of the Cretone to do it, more power to them. What "Mad Love" and "Thin Red Line" indicate is that rock's new wind is finally barreling down the canyons and up the beaches of L.A.

Bruce Cockburn: Dancing in the Dragon's Jaws
Eugene Martynec, producer
Millennium BXL 1-7747
by Sam Sutherland

The solution to Bruce Cockburn's obscurity in this country may actually be related to his success: In his native Canada, this singer, songwriter, and guitarist has been a major star for nearly a decade, allowing him to continue his pursuit of an often idiosyncratic acoustic music. He might easily have abandoned that style in order to court more lucrative commercial acceptance below the border, but he hasn't needed to—most of his albums have turned to precious metal up north.

Both Cockburn's writing and performing mirror the sweeping plains of his homeland, as well as its cultural diversity. (He has continued to include at least one French lyric on every album, and his liner notes remain pointedly bilingual.) There's a hushed pastoral quality to his music that consciously avoids any nods to urban life fueled by the recurrent mysticism of his imagery.

This latest album, his first via Jimmy Jenner's RCA-distributed Millennium label, continues his familiar blend of acoustic folk-guitar styles, jazzy percussive accents, and meditative lyric themes. In these respects, his closest musical peer is the equally underexposed Scot, John Martyn, with whom he shares an evocative command of guitar harmonics and nimble, finger-picked filigree.

"Dancing in the Dragon's Jaws" isn't going to get any play at the Mudd Club, nor does it probe the vicissitudes of modern American life. For Cockburn is unconcerned with pop's sociological aspects. This is personal music, internalized as a mantra and similarly aimed at imposing a holistic perspective. If Cockburn's poetry sometimes veers uncomfortably close to cosmic philosophizing, the overall effect is lucid and rather hypnotic. His early records have weathered well, and this new one fits comfortably into their tradition.

Elvis Costello and the Attractions: Get Happy!!
Nick Lowe, producer
Columbia JC 36347
by Sam Sutherland

"Get Happy!!" may be too much of a good thing: With ten songs per side, many of them furiously up tempo and all of them dense with Costello's typically convoluted wordplay, the listener is overwhelmed by a blur of new plot lines, characters, and catchphrases compressed into two- and three-minute works. If the effect is inescapably powerful, it can also be a little disorienting, especially coming in the wake of last year's "Armed Forces."

The concise delivery and thematic coherence of that album put the author's misanthropic viewpoint across quickly. "Get Happy!!" not only covers a wider range of topics and root styles, but also makes pronounced shifts in narrative perspective. One moment Costello is railing against familiar crises (imminent societal collapse, personal alienation, or romantic treachery), the next captures him in an atypically subdued, or even openly confessional mood.

Such candor makes him seem less like an avenging prophet than like the Everyman sometimes obscured by his rage in the past, and there is some tradeoff in focus. In that sense, "Get Happy!!" will disappoint some fans, but to these ears the ultimate effect is positive, conferring glimpses, however oblique, of a warmth and humility previously missing from his tortured cityscapes. Even the album's title seems less sarcastic than one would have expected, given his past work.

The Attractions also take a looser tack on their arrangements, although their playing is as charged and economical as before. They pay more direct homage to the models (including Motown, '60s British beat music, country, and folk) they invoked through more stylized means on "Armed Forces." Whereas that album's metrical devices and mannered keyboard voicings gave the material a clockwork intricacy and often ethereal atmosphere, the new performances hew to more traditional instrumental timbres, and the rhythm section explores both fluid grooves and more complex time schemes. The music, like Costello's lyrics, poses a more life-sized image.

A week after hearing "Get Happy!!," Costello's fourth album, I'm still marshaling my restraint in order to digest its dizzying surfeit of songs. But the best ones here suggest the depth and verve of their feisty author's finest prior tunes. Love for Tender, Secondary Modern, King Horse, and New Amsterdam are my favorites so far, but that's just Side 1, and the flip sounds better each day. Too much of a good thing? Sounds impossible, actually.

Rodney Crowell: But What Will the Neighbors Think
Craig Leon & Rodney Crowell, producers. Warner Bros. BSK 3407
by Steven X. Rea

Up until now, Rodney Crowell has been traveling mainly on country roads. Johnny Cash's son-in-law, his songs have been recorded by the likes of Emmylou Harris, Waylon Jennings, George Jones, and Jerry Jeff Walker. Crowell's debut, "Ain't Living Long Like This," boasted most of Harris' Hot Band among its players. His second LP sports pretty much the same personnel (drummer Larrie Londin
is the only major newcomer), but it's an affair far from country, or even country/rock. "But What Will the Neighbors Think" is an understated, eloquent rock & roll record.

Coproducer Craig Leon has elicited the same unlabored clarity of sound from Crowell's musicians that has marked his recordings with Moon Martin, keyboards and guitars—Albert Lee's among them—resonate with bright, bouncy color. The disc's sonic simplicity is matched by Crowell's unaffected songwriting craft. Here Comes the '80s, which kicks off Side 1, is an optimistic bluesy rocker. It's Only Rock 'n' Roll is like its title: basic, straight-ahead stuff. But it's on the ballads that Crowell really excels: On Ashes by Now he croons wryly to a long-gone lover, "As much as you've burned me, I should be ashes by now." The One About England is a hazy, romantic reverie that alludes playfully to I Dream of Jeannie.

There are three covers. Keith Sykes (a singer/songwriter with two early '70s LPs on Vanguard) supplies Oh, What a Feeling, a euphonic song cast in an ethereal Everly Brothers glow. Texan Guy Clark's Heartbroke, which Crowell sings in the swirling midst of Hank DeVito's pedal steel, is the closest the album comes to pure country. DeVito's Queen of Hearts is handled with easy aplomb, but for anyone familiar with Dave Edmund's version (from "Repeat When Necessary") this one is only adequate.

Crowell's singing is consistently warmhearted and direct, and his lyrics almost fool you with their simplicity: Old hackneyed phrases are infused with new meaning by the subtlest inflections and juxtapositions of images. Whether his long association with country kinfolk will hinder a widespread pop acceptance remains to be seen. If "But What Will the Neighbors Think" gets on the airwaves, though, Crowell shouldn't have any problem.

Daryl Hall: Sacred Songs
Robert Fripp, producer
RCA AFL 1-3573
by Don Shewey

"Sacred Songs" is Daryl Hall's controversial, long-awaited solo album produced by English experimental guitarist Robert Fripp. Recorded in August of 1977 with the Hall and Oates touring band (Caleb Quaye, Roger Pope, Kenny Passarelli, and Charles De Chant), it was withheld for release until now because RCA reportedly considered it "uncommercial." Though it is no masterpiece, it is definitely worth the wait.

The title is somewhat misleading; one imagines Hall's silken, soulful voice incanting hymns over Fripp's celestial, electronically altered guitar. But the only moment that comes close to that is a brief bit called The Farther Away I Am, while the title track is a punchy rave-up declaring that nothing is sacred anymore. The urgently romantic Why Was It So Easy and the driving Something in 4/4 Time are as irresissibly pop as anything Hall and Oates have done. Less satisfying are Don't Leave Me Alone with Her and Survive, which degenerate into numbingly repetitive riffing, and Without Tears, on which Hall's shrieky, forced falsetto undercuts his intended sincerity. The album's tour de force is the odd suite of songs that closes Side 1. Beginning with Babs and Babs, it appears to be an aural portrait of a split personality (or perhaps Siamese twins). Apparently, one sings and the other doesn't; when they venture away from home, Urban Landscape (a dreamy cascade of swirling Frippertronics) represents the silent one's observations, while NYCNY features the other's demented ravings ("New York, love me!").

Needless to say, "Sacred Songs" is far removed from Hall and Oates's usual fare. Nonetheless, its sonic textures and surrealistic storytelling show unusual adventurousness for a pop record.

The Knack:

. . . but the little girls understand
Mike Chapman, producer
Capitol SOO 12045
by Sam Sutherland

As the focal point for an industry-wide swing toward power pop and new wave styles, the Knack offered 1979's most frightening success story. On the one hand, its stripped-down arrangements and emphatic delivery invested its records with a drive largely missing from big-budget rock, suggesting a sane alternative to the six-figure excesses of high-tech recording. On the other, the band's underlying goals were frankly odious, closer to pop cannibalism than to a truly fresh synthesis capable of launching a new generation of musicians.

Perverting the romantic optimism of the Beatles' early records they so accurately imitated, songwriter Doug Fieger and his partners confined their perspective below the belt. They masked their deeply cynical, misogynist contempt for their audience with a perky counterfeit of the Fab Four's original exuberance. Fieger's message was that sex isn't merely sensual, it's everything. What made that so chilling was the undeniably infectious surface of the music. You could almost ignore the rancid thematic core to his hookladen three-minute songs.

Thus it's heartening to report that the Knack's second album succumbs to the band's own arrogance, failing to support its erotic conceits with the musical momentum that made "Get the Knack" difficult to ignore. This time around, Fieger has begun to cannibalize his own band, as the first single and opening track, Baby Talks Dirty, quickly reveals. The song is a thinly veiled retread of last summer's My Sharona, propelled by the same visceral drumming and panting vocal. (Drummer Bruce Gary is the band's secret weapon and the one musician I'd actually enjoy hearing, though in a different band.)

Elsewhere, the band steals from the Rolling Stones (Can't Put a Price on Love, a lift from Beast of Burden that could have been co-written by a copyright lawyer given its hairbreadth escape from outright
plagiarism) and pays more honest homage to the Kinks in a cover of Ray Davies’ The Hard Way. That song, the album’s best, is still a pale replica of the original, relying on its hammering rhythm guitar and call-and-response solos and adding nothing new.

On balance, the only classily move made here is the title taken from Willie Dixon’s blues classic, Back Door Man. Even that is shadowed by Fieger’s smarm and the laughable vanity of the inner sleeve, which depicts these Mop Top clones sitting in their limo, basking in the grins of the swooning jailbait surrounding them. On the strength of these new songs, though, perhaps the Knack should start thinking about bus fare.

**Willie Nile**

_Roy Halee, producer_  
_Arista AB 4260_  
_by Steven X. Rea_

The majority of the cuts on “Willie Nile” smack of starry-eyed romanticism, even in the face of emotional adversity and cynicism. _Behind the Cathedral_ describes lovers’ trysts beneath the shadow of the church steeple, _Old Men Sleeping on the Bowery_ is a protest against poverty and apathy, and _They’ll Build a Statue of You_ is an indictment of fate. These and tales of requited and unrequited romance are framed by a pair of searing, surging electric guitars and a galloping rhythm section. Nile, who possesses one of those nasally Dylanesque timbres, adds his own electric and acoustic guitars to the brew and, more significantly, some resilient piano playing. His band consists of guitarist Clay Barnes and bassist Tom Ethridge from the Cryers, drummer Jay Dee Daugherty from the Patti Smith Group, and guitarist Peter Hoffman. But even amidst their whirlwind of aggressiveness, Nile’s stance is one of—pardon the expression—sensitive singer/songwriter.

The overall effect varies. The opener, _Vagabond Moon_, is like listening to Loudon Wainwright fronting the trebly twelve-string wash of the Byrds. On the sappy ditty _That’s the Reason_, Nile, as he often does, explores the limits of one infectious lyric/melodic hook and invokes the AM ambience of Stevie Nicks and Fleetwood Mac. On _It’s All Over and Sing Me a Song_ (whose guitar run is a wonderful steal from the theme of *TV’s Bonanza*)

“Willie Nile” marks the emergence of an auspicious new talent.

**Gene Parsons: Melodies**

_Gene Parsons, producer_  
_Sierra-Briar SRS 8703_  
_(Box 5853, Pasadena, Calif. 91107)_  
_by Sam Sutherland_

With its emergence as a major commercial force during the ’70s, country/rock went the way of all trends, its early sense of adventure replaced by the certainties of formulaic thinking. Though an occasionally lackluster, overly repetitive moment intrudes here and there (Dear Lord and the dirge-ish _Across the River_, in particular), for the most part “Willie Nile” marks the emergence of an auspicious new talent.

For “Melodies,” Parsons has opted to keep his style intact rather than plumb the pop mainstream. That, rather than the quality of his music, explains the LP’s release on the tiny Sierra-Briar label. The music is anything but low-budget. Surrounded by some of the best country-rockers alive (guitarists Bob Warford and Albert Lee in particular), he has ignored commercial wisdom to assemble an intelligent sampler of country swing, bluegrass, white gospel, and, of course, rock. A ringing electric cover of Phil Ochs’s My Kingdom for a Car benefits from an ironic lyric even timelier today than when the late songwriter first penned it. At the other extreme, Parsons captures the wide open plains feel and sweet innocence of the Sons of the Pioneers via Bob Nolan’s Way Out There. He also serves up some Gram Parsons (Hot Burrito #1) and Mickey Newbury (Why You Been Gone So Long) with similar verve and feeling, and the production throughout gives full weight to the musicianship.

**The Searchers**

_Pat Moran, producer_  
_Sire SRK 6082_  
_by Steven X. Rea_

Another crusty comeback attempt from a veteran group of an era gone by, Continued on page 103
Jazz
by Don Heckman & John S. Wilson

Charlie Haden, Jan Garbarek, Egberto Gismonti: Magico
Manfred Eicher, producer
ECM 1-1151

Putting these three world-class jazzmen together was a great idea that somehow never ignited. Garbarek is coolly distant, Gismonti sounds uninterested, and Haden seems confused. The air of passivity that permeates virtually every track is enough to drive one straight back to the Sixties. D.H.

Gary Lawrence and His Sizzling Syncopators
Steven Epstein, producer
CBS Masterworks
M 35824

This is more Jazz Age than jazz: a collection of 1920s jazz and pop tunes as well as Beatles and Bee Gees songs, all arranged in 1920s style. Gary Lawrence has picked up the period's characteristics (clarinet trios, oomping tubas, even an accordion solo), and his band projects the sound and beat with a lot of polish. When he sticks to '20s material the ideas work, but when he tries to squeeze Glenn Miller (Pennsylvania 6-5000) or the Beatles into the formula, it does not. J.S.W.

New York, New York: Sounds of the Apple
Bernard Brightman, producer
Stash ST 204

Gimmicky records, such as a collection of songs about New York City, rarely have any reason to exist beyond the hook on which they are constructed. But this one does. Marky Markowitz, Phil Bodner, John Bunch, Bucky Pizzarelli, George Duvivier, and Grady Tate create a swinging ensemble sound, topped by an interesting assortment of vocalists. Slam Stewart reveals a little-known facet of his talent by singing lyrics instead of humming, Dardanelle gives On Broadway a swinging reading, and Markowitz builds some enthusiastic and brilliant Armstrong scat lines. The only weak point is a pompous vocal by Tate. J.S.W.

David Sanborn: Hideaway
Michael Colina, producer
Warner Bros. BSK 3379

The narrowing limits of David Sanborn's already proscribed alto saxophone style may just be too small to sustain an entire LP. He does all the predictable things here—disco/jazz, a bit of r+b, and one or two Warner Bros.-style string heavy ballads. His once-delightful ability to surprise is rapidly waning. D.H.

John Haley Sims, Sweets
Harry Edison: Just Friends
Norman Granz, producer
Pablo 2310-841

Both the merits and drawbacks of consistency are illustrated on this disc. Trumpeter Harry Edison is consistent, using the same devices on virtually everything he plays: what is initially provocative finally becomes tiresome. John Haley Sims (Zoot's formal name) is a consistently swinging saxophonist, and via innumerable and varied means. On this disc he plays soprano as well as tenor, offering a definitive example of his light, fresh soprano approach. I Understand, accompanied only by Roger Kellaway's piano. Kellaway alternates between acoustic, on which he can be inventive, and electric piano, which is a tinkling bore.

Leo Smith: Spirit Catcher
Chuck Nessa, producer
Nessa N 19 (Nessa Records, 5404 N. Kimball, Chicago, Ill. 60625)

Leo Smith is identified with the avant-garde, but his music is just as connected to African sources. An impressive composer, his use of three harps on The Burning of Stones is a revelation, and "Spirit Catcher" is an effective addition to the repertoire of contemporary jazz. Unlike much avant-garde stuff, it stands up well to repeated hearings. D.H.

Michal Urbaniak's Fusion, Featuring Urszula
Dudziak: Heritage
MPS Records, producers
Pausa Records PR 7047

This installment in the Urbaniak/Dudziak oeuvre dates back to 1977 and sounds strangely bloodless for this usually fiery duo. Only the always-stimulating ululations of Dudziak's astonishing voice make the whole thing worthwhile. Both performers have done better work more recently. D.H.

Nana Vasconcelos: Saudades
Manfred Eicher, producer
ECM 1-1147

Vasconcelos' battery of Brazilian percussion is on full-fledged, brilliant display in this mostly-solo recording. The few gaps are filled—equally brilliantly—by Egberto Gismonti's passionate string-orchestra writing and by Vasconcelos' eerie, overdubbed vocals. One of ECM's best of the year. D.H.
Continued from page 101

right? Wrong, dead wrong. Almost two decades after their founding, the Searchers are back. The sole major Merseyside outfit that stood outside Brian Epstein's stable (the Beatles, Jerry and the Pacemakers, etc.) they are responsible for such classics as Needles and Pins, Don't Throw Your Love Away, Love Potion No. 9, When You Walk in the Room, What Have They Done to the Rain? etc. Founders John McNally and Mike Pender still front the group, backed by drummer Billy Adamson and bassist Frank Allan. A Searcher for fifteen years. Shimmering harmonies are still their calling card, spangly, ringing guitars still their hallmark.

Among the ballads and pop rockers here are several by writers who admit—in their songs, if not in so many words—to the Searchers' influence. Tom Petty's spookily Lost in Your Eyes is one such confession. British band the Record's Hearts in Her Eyes is another. The latter is a sprite, midtempo track, tailor-made for the group's euphonious chiming; it should pick up where their string of hit singles slackened off in the '60s. Mickey Jupp's oft-covered tune of telephonic eroticism, Switchboard Susan, gets a loping, low-key folkish reading. A rare Dylan track, Coming from the Heart, and John David's It's Too Late (the first single) share sides with a pair of Searchers-penned pop pieces, This Kind of Love Affair and Don't Hang On.

While the army of short-haired, skinny-tied kids revamped '60s stylings and fall far short of producing anything really new, the Searchers have pulled off a veritable magic act of self-resuscitation. They make the much-ballyhooed new pop scene sound like so much mush.

Sylvain Sylvain
Lance Quinn, Tony Bongiovins, & Syl Sylvain, producers
RCA AFL 1 3473
by Don Shewey

Knowing that Sylvain Sylvain played lead guitar for those brash and ragged protopunks, the New York Dolls, will hardly prepare you for his surprisingly lush and versatile debut. One minute he's Southside Johnny playing party-hardy on What's That Got to Do with Rock 'n Roll? and the next minute he's a breathless teen.

Continued on page 105
In Search of Authentic Comedy Recordings
by Sam Sutherland

The Firesign Theater: Nick Danger—The Case of the Missing Shoe
Philip Austin, Peter Bergman, David Ossman, & Philip Proctor, producers. Rhino RNEP 506 (12-inch EP) (11609 West Pico Blvd Los Angeles, Calif. 91107)

The Credibility Gap: A Great Gift Idea/Floats
The Credibility Gap, Donn Landee, & Harry Shearer, producers Sierra/Brier SRS 8704 (Box 5853, Pasadena, Calif. 91107)

The Rhino Brothers’ Circus Royale
Harold Bronson & Richard Foos, producers. Rhino RNLP 007

KROQ-FM Devotees Album
Compiled by Harold Bronson, Jed the Fish & Richard Foos Rhino RNLP 008

Mal Sharpe: The Meaning of Life
Larry Ball, Jerry Zelinger, & Paul Decker, producers Rhino RNLP 006

Ironically, Rhino’s first new release by established comic masters, the Firesign Theater, is among its least satisfying. Between 1967 and 1974, this quartet of writers and actors produced the most dazzlingly intricate, multileveled comedy records ever made, establishing a high-water mark for ensemble comedy through albums that could stand up to countless listeners. Shakespeare, computer language, and good old American jingoism informed their writing, and multitrack recording enabled them to create aural movies with casts of thousands.

“The Case of the Missing Shoe,” a twelve-minute “serial” EP, is thus especially disappointing, since it offers the weakest thematic framework ever erected by these once astute comedians. Old Firesign fans will be better off checking the Credibility Gap anthology, which couples “A Great Gift Idea” (a now out-of-print Warner Bros. album) and the group’s infamous Rose Bowl Parade broadcasts, here excerpted under the appropriate title “Floats.”

Like Firesign, the Gap honed its ensemble approach through progressive FM broadcasts, but it seldom matched Firesign for consistency or inventiveness, perhaps because of the constantly shifting lineup and the Gap’s early domination by radio newscasters, rather than writers. The most gifted members, though, definitely shine on the best cuts here, notably a dead-center parody of Johnny Carson. Harry Shearer, Michael McKean, and David Lander have since gone on to wider visibility, but they may never have been funnier than they are on this extended bit, or on other gems like the neo-McKuen drivel of In Someone’s Sneakers.

For rock fans unwilling to treat their newwave with too much reverence, Rhino’s “KROQ-FM Devotees Album” also has its moments. The offspring of a radio promotion that invited listeners to contribute their own parodies of Devo, the package consists mostly of ham-fisted Devo covers. For anyone who ever derived simpleminded joy from playing Four Seasons singles at 78, a Devo-ted cover of Okie from Muskogee and a reworking of Devo’s anthem, Jocko Homo, to Jocko Boxo are painless fun.

Finally, the one coherent concept album here is Mal Sharpe’s “The Meaning of Life,” which extracts some genuinely bizarre comic nuggets from Sharpe’s numerous “man on the street” forays.
Continued from page 103

cooing I'm So Sorry. A Fifties-like testimonial to true love called Deeper and Deeper stands back to back with the jackhammer rhythms of the savvy sax anthem 14th Street Beat.

The style-hopping gets into mawkishness on Without You, an early, too-earnest Paul Simon folk-rocker that quotes from the Beatles Norwegian Wood and ends with Sylvain whispering, "Do you want your ring back, darling?"

But generally the album builds in momentum, finally exploding with a roof-raising rendition of Clarence "Frogman" Henry's Ain't Got No Home, a double-time New Orleans boogie complete with false ending and orgasmic reprise. Jonathan Senator Gerber's searing, lonely sax solo takes the place of a vocal on Tonight and closes the album with impressive eloquence. The production sounds hasty and superficial in spots, and Sylvain isn't the most distinctive singer in the world, but the LP's flaws are more than made up for by its overwhelming vitality.

### JAZZ

**Joanne Brackeen with Eddie Gomez: Prism**
Gerry Macdonald, producer
Choice CRS 1024

**Joanne Brackeen: Mythical Magic**
Hans Georg Brunner-Schwer & Willi Fruth, producers
Pausa PR 7045
(Pausa, Inc., 9255 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90069)
by Don Heckman

It's going to be Joanne Brackeen's decade. After years of drifting through the jazz scene, always well respected, usually working with first-rate players, but constantly burdened with the stigma of "female musician" (still particularly virulent in the jazz world), she has finally come into her own.

To get the nonsense out of the way first: In the past, women players have often been easily identifiable by their rhythmic awkwardness. Alas, at times this has been true even of such fine improvisers as Toshiko Akiyoshi and Marian McPartland, to name only two. But I challenge anyone to listen to these new Brackeen recordings blindfolded and identify them as anything other than the work of one astonishingly brilliant jazz pianist—regardless of sex, race, age, religion, or planetary origin.

Both "Mythical Magic," a solo LP, and "Prism," a duo with bassist Eddie Gomez, bristle with the electric energy of a talent that has found itself. (Both were actually recorded in 1978.) There is more than enough here to delight and stimulate the listener for repeated hearings. The first thing one notices is Brackeen's extraordinary skill as a pianist. She knows the instrument well, obviously loves it (and probably hates it sometimes too), and fully explores its limits—from pure jazz percussiveness to outright Lisztian Romanticism and Cecil Taylor pyrotechnics. She is also an evocative composer whose work is texturally thick enough to demand expansion into larger instrumental ensembles. Listen to Hobbits (either it was recorded with overdubbing or she's even better than I thought), Told You So, Ironies, Car Stereos, Telegraph Answering and Dictating Equip., Watches, Calculators & much more all at amazing low prices.

**Jim Cullum's Happy Jazz Band: Live and Swingin'**
American Jazz AJ 127
(American Jazz Recording Company, 522 Riverwalk, San Antonio, Tex. 78205)
by John S. Wilson

In the eighteen years since Jim Cullum founded it, the Happy Jazz Band has developed from a traditional group that specialized in lesser-known tunes to a contemporary revitalizer of material from the '20s and '30s. In the process, Jim Jr., who took over when his father died in 1973, has grown into a confident professional. Continued on page 107
R&B

by Christopher Petkanas

James Brown: People
Brad Shapiro, producer
Polydor PD 1-6258

A great and faithful soul improvisor herein makes a convincing case for living the funk. James Brown sounds as relevant and resolved as ever, and the horn section's darting relevant and resolved as ever, funk. James Brown sounds as convincing case for living the improvisor herein makes a

Merry Clayton: Emotion
Steve Tyrell, producer
MCA 3200

A former backup singer for Ray Charles, the Stones, Streisand, and Joe Cocker, Merry Clayton is an exuberant vocalist who is linked stylistically to Aretha and Patti Labelle. Among the best cuts here are a cover of the First Choice's Armed and Extremely Dangerous—one of disco's early hits—and a salute to Sly Stone. Chris Dedrick provides the vibrant, first-class orchestral arrangements.

Gotham:
Void Where Inhibited
Gene Allan, Gary Knight, & Harold Wheeler, producers
Aurum AU 0002 (Aurum Records, 43 West 61 Street, New York, N.Y. 10023)

There's so little musical activity here that it sounds as if entire tracks are missing from the mix. This is budget disco that sounds like budget disco—the kind of record that can turn your brain to mashed potatoes. Gotham's singing is faceless, the material insubstantial. Ironically, the trio has a pleasant and extremely professional nightclub act, proving that the choices made on this album were not its own.

Grey & Hanks: Prime Time
Len Ron Hanks & Zane Grey, producers
RCA AFL 1-3477

On the dance floor, the endless repetition of the most fundamental riffs is less irksome than it is in a listening-only situation. High-gloss sameness is the only characteristic that stands out on "Prime Time."

Thelma Houston: Breakwater Cat
Michael Stewart & James Godson, producers
RCA AFL 1-3500

An athletic voice and good dramatic sense notwithstanding, one would have to be fully schooled in the long roster of female disco artists to pick Thelma Houston's voice out on the radio. Her cover of Suspicious Minds does stand out, though, and its grizzly intro is inspired. Executive producer Jimmy Webb contributed five tunes.

Debbie Jacobs: High on Your Love
Paul Sabu, producer
MCA 3202

Touted as "d.o.r." (dance-oriented rock), "High on Your Love" contains too many heavy-handed disco elements for the term "rock" to be applicable. Former Guess Who guitarist Paul Sabu empties a pocketful of fancy tricks on six of his own unmemorable compositions. Alas, the most electric and satisfying cut, Hot Hot, is a remix from this unremarkable singer's last effort.

Mammatapee
Norman Whitfield, producer. Warner Bros. WHK 3171

One member of this new, lackluster disco quartet was part of the Undisputed Truth. Producer Norman Whitfield has created a few exciting peaks, but singer Ella Faulk makes no impression whatsoever. Jr. Walker's sax is eagerly welcomed, otherwise—no thrills.

Ray, Goodman & Brown
Vincent Castellano, producer. Polydor PD 1-6240

The former Moments (I Found Love on a Two-Way Street) are experts at creating rich, warm three-part harmonies. Their song tags have a mildly improvisatory feeling that works well and their earnest lead vocals are never overbearing. There's plenty of pleading falsetto, finger-popping, and, best of all, wholesome romance.

Sister Sledge:
Love Somebody Today
Bernard Edwards & Nile Rodgers, producers
Cotillion SD 16012

"Love Somebody Today" is a triumph of urbane disco. The sisters Sledge have crossed over from plaited cornrows to new wave preppy pastels while retaining the flawless, celebrated sound that produced their chartbusting "We Are Family." This package is even smoother than the aforementioned, if measurably less funky. Vocals are solid and assertive with brightly projected harmonies, ballads are affecting and well-conceived, and, of course, the powerful Chic rhythm section lays down a clean path. Hear the Cory Daye-derived Let's Go on Vacation and Eddie Daniels' sax solo on Reach Your Peak.
Jim Cullum’s Happy Jazz Band

Continued from page 105

both as a cornetist and a band leader.

“Live and Swingin’,” recorded in 1979 in San Antonio at the Landing (where the group has been playing since 1963), displays the band’s sense of confidence. Its approach to the material is relaxed and swinging, with not a trace of the anxiety that makes so many traditional bands rush their playing. Though the rhythm section deserves much credit for this, Cullum’s self-assurance also plays a part. He still follows the styles of Bix Biderbecke, Bobby Hackett, and Louis Armstrong, but he is no longer straining to sound like them. Bix’s little running figures, Hackett’s singing warmth, Armstrong’s strong, urgent phrasing flow easily and naturally through his solos.

The band has picked up another strong voice in Mike Pittsley, a trombonist with a broad, lusty, sometimes bellicose attack that, in the gentler lines of ballads such as I’ve Got a Crush on You, falls somewhere between Bill Harris and Jack Teagarden. Clarinetist Allen Vache is not as fully developed as Cullum and Pittsley, but he has a warm low register from which he emerges with bubbling enthusiasm.

“Live and Swingin’” includes the works of King Oliver, Armstrong, Hackett, and Bix, which are often rendered on a tinny piano that has no place in a successful jazz club.

Duke Ellington:
The Collector’s Ellington
The Franklin Mint Record Society
(Two discs, from FMRS, Franklin Center, Pa. 19091)
by John S. Wilson

This two-disc collection is the perfect gift for the Ellington fan who, until now, had everything. Among its fourteen selections that have never been released before are an attractively rhythmic Ellington song, sung by Woody Herman, called I Fell and Broke My Heart and two developments on one of the Duke’s favorite themes, trains. In addition to the unissued material, which is drawn from 1935–62, there are eight earlier pieces that have not before been available on LP, as well as two alternate masters.

For those who are not really aficionados, the set provides an overview of Ellington and of his band’s significant developments from 1928 to 1962 without using the obvious, standard examples. Its only glaring omissions are the 1940–42 period, when the band was at its height and the Duke at a creative peak, and any representation of the longer Ellington works that began to appear in the ‘40s. Otherwise, all the great Ellingtonians are here in fine form.

Continued on page 111
Music in Print

by Elise Bretton

These five beautiful people deserve credit for attempting to break away from the "oh baby let's get down and boogie" school of disco composition and performance. But the songs in "Risque" are so fragmentary as to disintegrate on paper. They will not unduly tax your pianistic or vocal skills—arranger Mark Swados has seen to that—but watch for still more remnants of the "Le Freak" syndrome that catapulted Chic to its present popularity.

Some of the Grateful Dead and Garcia material, though previously issued, has long been out of print, which makes this a valuable collection. Never repetitive and still fresh after thirteen years of success, the Grateful Dead has earned a place on your folio shelf, even at this price.

The Art of Ragtime Guitar
Country Rock Guitar
Electric Blues Guitar
Improvising Rock Guitar
Slide Guitar, $8.95 each
Improvising Blues Guitar, $6.95
Green Note Music Pub./Warner Bros. Music

I am not a guitarist, but I am enchanted with this series. Each folio comes complete with pictures and diagrams and, with the exception of "Improvising Blues Guitar," a demonstration record put together by the Green Note staff (Straw Dog, Ceel, and Richard Saslow). The well-organized curriculum, crystal-clear text, easy-to-follow transcriptions, and examples from top echelon performers make these books appropriate for professionals and amateurs alike.

Joni Mitchell: Mingus
Warner Bros. 6 songs, $8.95

This reverently conceived folio, transcribed from Joni Mitchell's latest LP, is not for amateurs or dilettantes. The strong, leaping Mingus bass lines demand technical dexterity; two of the selections eschew keyboard notation in favor of complicated guitar tablature; and chordal fluency is a must for anyone who essays the (electric) piano notation. Inasmuch as Mingus had dedicated these compositions to her, it would have been grossly inappropriate for Mitchell to alter any of the rhythmic structures to accommodate her usual logorrhea. I am happy to report that she has risen to the challenge, renouncing self-indulgence, ostentation, and excess, and achieving both lyrical maturity and a oneness with Mingus' spirit. Joni Mitchell here proves herself, at last, a writer for all seasons.

The Muppet Movie
ATV Music Publications/Cherry Lane Music. 9 songs, $7.95

Kermit desperately needs a hit single. Not only is it not easy being green, but a frog can't get by on his good looks forever. Brilliant colors and a smashing layout make this package a Muppet-lover's dream come true, but the Paul Williams/Kenny Ascher score is merely so-so, and many of the lyrics are either simplistic or simply incoherent. Yet obviously there's no point in my telling you not to buy this folio: Who can resist the sheer rapture of Kermit, Miss Piggy, Gonzo, Fozzie Bear, et al.? Two-line piano settings by Jack Perricone are quite good, and an intermediate pianist can negotiate them with ease.

Kenny Rogers Song Book
Cherry Lane Music. 23 songs, $7.95

Kenny Rogers can park his guitar under my stereo any time. The spectacular recording career of Nashville's sweetest music man is here delineated in easy-play, two-line piano-vocals. One boggles at the number of top sellers attributed to him: Lucille, Anyone Who Isn't Me Tonight, Love Lifted Me, The Gambler, and She Believes in Me are just part of the pile of gold. In addition, editors Milt Okun and Dan Fox have furnished succinct program notes for singers, keyboardists, and pickers. Though the editors stress their belief that the included songs are the very best of Rogers, it's worth noting that at least half of them were composed by other songsmiths. The singer's tastes are eclectic; he chooses good material that he truly feels comfortable with. And that, fans, is one very good reason why he's a star today.
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RECORDS FOR COLLECTORS FREE LISTING. RIVERDEAL BOX 52544, HOUSTON, TX 77052.
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The best periods represented are the early Cotton Club days (late '20s, early '30s), with Freeze and Melt, Mississippi Moan, Flaming Youth, and Sweet Mama, and the late '50s, when the band recorded some provocative variations by Billy Strayhorn on Take the 'A' Train: Allah Byah and Track 360, a musical portrait of a train in motion that is in the tradition of (though different from) the Duke's Daybreak Express and Happy-Go-Lucky Local. Some of the least successful selections also come from the late '50s/early '60s. Among them are a listless Lullaby of Birdland, a determined but futile effort by Milt Grayson to sing some life into the Duke's stodgy Love You Madly, and, in general, a heaviness in the band's sound.

Ella and Basie: A Perfect Match

Norman Grana, producer
Pablo Today D 2312110 Digital
by John S. Wilson

Though the title of this recording implies a meeting between Ella Fitzgerald and Count Basie, that is only marginally true. It is Ella and the Basie band, minus three-quarters of its rhythm section. (Only guitarist Freddie Green is present.) Basie is heard at the piano only briefly on an extended selection.

But, mislabeling aside, "A Perfect Match" is one of the happiest, most open, exuberant records that Ella has ever made. In the past few years she has begun to find herself as a singer, employing expression and interpretation instead of mere virtuosity. The new freshness, warm Ella pours out of this record, adding tremendous intensity to Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone and Sweet Georgia Brown. She punches out the up-tempo numbers as though she had just discovered them and brings gorgeous new colors and depth to the ballads. It is difficult to believe that this very vital performing talent has lived inside for so long, particularly when one remembers her on stage, nervously pulling at a handkerchief, shifting her feet, and reciting her standard repertoire.

In her ad lib scatting with Basie on Bossa, their one number together, she even comes out with a few lines of Shake That Thing, also a departure from her usual style. That Thing, also a departure from her past image. It is a very welcome change, particularly to those who, while recognizing her remarkable vocal talents, were constantly distressed by her failure to develop as a performer.

Mingus Dynasty: Chair in the Sky

Than Miramarou, producer
Elektra 6E 248
by Don Heckman

The Mingus Dynasty has the strong aura of the kind of band Mingus would have chosen for himself: Dannie Richmond was his drummer for years; Jimmy Knepper was in and out of various groups and various Mingus trances; John Handy, Jimmy Owens, and Joe Farrell can play with anybody, Don Pullen manages to play avant-garde jazz in a traditional setting and Charlie Haden—while hardly in Mingus' class as a bassist— is, at the very least, dependable.

Superficially, on "Chair in the Sky" the Mingus sound is there: strong and vibrant in an effervescent Boogie Stop Shuffle, off-the-wall silly in My Jelly Roll Soul, and richly moody in the classic Goodbye Porkpie Hat. (Ironically, that is now as much a threnody for Mingus as it was originally for Lester Young.)

Despite all the talent, there are problems. The remaining pieces are from Mingus' late-life collaboration with Joni Mitchell, and they cannot be considered vintage Mingus, despite heroic efforts by orchestrator Sy Johnson. More serious is Mingus' very absence. His music always was as much the result of sheer creative intimidation as it was to the product of notes on the page. Dannie Richmond tries hard to provide some of the energy, the sheer juice, that poured out of Mingus and that made even his lesser bands into something very special. But he can't carry it off by himself.

Without that energy, Mingus Dynasty is a group of very fine musicians playing very fine music. But the magic sim-
PLY isn't there—no more than it is in the leaderless Duke Ellington band. Without the masters' hands, things just can't be what they used to be.

Charlie Ventura: Euphoria
Albert Marx, Teddy Reig, Herb Abramson, & Bob Shad, producers; Bob Porter re-issue producer. Savoy 2243 (two discs) by John S. Wilson

Unlike some of the saxophonists who came up during the late '40s—Dexter Gordon, Lucky Thompson, Stan Getz, Zoot Sims—tenor saxist Charlie Ventura's name has almost disappeared from the current jazz repertory, "Euphoria," a two-disc reissue of his 1945-48 recordings, serves as a reminder not only of his impressive talents, but of the interesting groups he led.

Among those represented here is Buddy Stewart, who sang with Ventura's 1947 band. Stewart was an unusually good straight vocalist and an adept and creative bop singer. His solo on Synthesis forecasts the style of Jackie Cain and Roy Kral, who joined the band separately in 1948—he as a pianist and arranger, she as a singer—and eventually became the team that is still going strong. In addition to their unison scat singing on Euphoria, Play Colada, and I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles (their biggest hit with Ventura), Jackie can be heard soloing in the rather flat, strained manner that was fashionable at the time.

Ventura's groups always had distinctive trombonists—Bill Harris at one time, Kai Winding at another, and Benny Green. All three bring strong flavors to these performances. It's also possible to chart Ventura's progression from his deep-throated but feathery style in 1945 (much in the Chu Berry manner) to the lighter tone that characterized his playing later on. His occasional baritone saxophone sounds much like his tenor but richer, and his soprano might be mistaken for a clarinet.

The performance by all five of the soloists seem to get caught up in the almost hypnotic flow of it all, especially percussionist Ray Mantilla, who chugs through his congas and cow bell solo like a speeding train. In "Soundscapes" Walton has managed to integrate the intelligence and lyricism of progressive jazz with the drive and energy of the current idiom. The result is fresh, challenging, and entirely satisfying.

Cedar Walton: Soundscape
George Butler & Cedar Walton, producers. Columbia JC 36258 by J.B. Moore

At forty-six, keyboardist/composer Cedar Walton seems an unlikely candidate to "burst on the scene." Working with such greats as J.J. Johnson and Art Blakey in the late Fifties/early Sixties and, more recently, with Freddie Hubbard, Milt Jackson, and Eddie Harris, he has earned a reputation for being a competent and dependable sideman. His last album, "Animation," showed him to have great promise of becoming a first-class writer, arranger, leader, and producer. "Soundscapes" fulfills that promise to the extent that it could indeed be Walton's vehicle to "burst on the scene."

Of particular interest here are Warm to the Touch, a ballad, and Latin America, an instrumental. The former, cowritten by Walton, features vocalist Leon Thomas in an exquisitely crafted arrangement. The strings are lush, the rhythm swings without intruding, and the voicings are a perfect complement to Thomas' subtle styling.

Latin America demonstrates Walton's arranging skills in an entirely different genre. Bass, drums, and piano provide a solid foundation over which the horns settle into a loose, easy Latin feel. The soloists seem to get caught up in the almost hypnotic flow of it all, especially percussionist Ray Mantilla, who chugs through his congas and cow bell solo like a speeding train. In "Soundscapes" Walton has managed to integrate the intelligence and lyricism of progressive jazz with the drive and energy of the current idiom. The result is fresh, challenging, and entirely satisfying.

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