Amazing Sure Cure for Your Warped Records
Tested! $420 High Performance Tuner, Exceptional Polk Speaker
Which Video Recorder Features Do You Need?
The “Secret” Top Rock Stars Share • “New Wave” Classical?

One-Brand System or Separate Components
• Which Should You Buy?
• How Specs, Features Compare
A WHOLE NEW TOP OF ALL THESE FEATURES.

have won Pioneer acclaim throughout the high fidelity industry.

Pioneer's engineers have designed an exclusive ID MOS FET transistor for the front end of the SX-7's tuner. It allows you to tune in stations with weaker signals without worrying about stronger stations causing distortion due to front end overload. That's what keeps the SX-7 virtually free of RF intermodulation.

But no matter how free a receiver is from all forms of distortion, it must be able to keep the station you select perfectly tuned for hours. Pioneer's quartz-PLL digital synthesized tuning does this by making drift virtually impossible.

Pioneer's exclusive Non-switching™ amp also eliminates distortion caused by output transistors switching on and off thousands of times a second in response to music signals. This is one of the reasons that the total harmonic distortion of the SX-7 is no more than 0.009% (continuous average power output of 60 watts per channel minimum at 8 ohms, from 20Hz to 20,000Hz).

And Pioneer's high-gain phono preamp section allows the use of either MM or low-output MC cartridges selectable by a front panel switch. There's even a Subsonic filter you can use to do away with very low frequency interference caused by record warps.

Now if you think all these features sound great in print, listen to them in person at your nearby Pioneer dealer. He'll demonstrate the SX-7 and an entire new line of Pioneer receivers. And you'll quickly see that we've done everything humanly possible to give you more music for your money.

That's what made Pioneer No. 1 in receivers. And that's what's going to keep us there.

AND ONLY PIONEER OFFERS A
UNIQUE ENGINEERING CONCEPT ON

You’d expect a new receiver from the leading manufacturer of stereo receivers to be packed with exciting features. As you can see, it is. But Pioneer didn’t get to be No. 1 in receivers by doing the expected and stopping.

So we developed the SX-7 using a unique engineering concept we call High Fidelity for Humans. It makes the SX-7 as superb to live with as it is to listen to.

At the heart of the receiver is a micro-computer that’s been programmed to operate controls electronically. It affords the owner of the SX-7 operating convenience unlike any previously available in conventional receiver designs.

For example, the microcomputer’s prodigious memory allows you to preset up to eight FM and eight AM stations and recall them instantly. Once set, all stations are directly accessible via “Station Call” buttons. And you can even recall them at the preprogrammed volume level because the microcomputer electronically controls volume setting.

What’s more, with just the touch of a button you can search out the next station up (or down) the AM or FM tuning band. Stations are brought in perfectly tuned every time. And you can select any station by tuning it manually or scanning the entire band automatically sampling five seconds of each station.

But these human engineering features aren’t all that make the SX-7 such an extraordinary receiver. It also offers features that
NO OTHER RECEIVER OFFERS ALL THESE FEATURES.
Computerized Push Button Controls:
Pioneer has programmed a microcomputer to operate controls electronically for improved accuracy, reliability and convenience.

Quartz PLL Digital Synthesized Tuning:
FM “Drift” is eliminated by this incredibly accurate tuner.

Station Scan:
Touch this control and you’ll hear five seconds of every station strong enough to meet the mute threshold.

Station Search:
Touch this control and move to the next station up, or down, the band.

Subsonic Filter:
This control lets you do away with ultra low frequency distortion caused by record warps and such.

Volume Memory:
The SX-7 will also remember the volume you select for each preset station.

Eight AM presets, eight FM presets:
The SX-7 will memorize eight of your favorite FM and eight of your favorite AM stations and retrieve them instantly.

Non-Switching Amp:
Pioneer’s patented amp design gets rid of transistor switching distortion once and for all.

High-Gain Phono Preamp:
Allows the use of either MM or low-output MC cartridges.

ID MOS FET Front End:
This exclusive transistor circuitry tunes in weak stations as clearly and quickly as strong stations.
The best for both worlds

The culmination of 30 years of Audio Engineering leadership – the new Stereohedron®

XSV/5000

One of the most dramatic developments of cartridge performance was the introduction of the Pickering XSV/3000. It offered the consumer a first generation of cartridges, combining both high tracking ability and superb frequency response. It utilized a new concept in stylus design – Stereohedron, coupled with an exotic samarium cobalt moving magnet.

Now Pickering offers a top-of-the-line Stereohedron cartridge, the XSV/5000, combining features of both the XSV/3000 and the XSV/4000. It allows a frequency response out to 50,000 Hz.

The new XSV samarium cobalt magnet accounts for an extremely high output with the smallest effective tip mass. The Stereohedron tip design is the result of long research in extended frequency response for tracing of high frequency modulations. The patented Dustamatic® brush and stylus work hand in hand with the rest of the cartridge assembly to reproduce with superb fidelity all frequencies contained in today’s recordings.

Pickering is proud to offer the XSV/5000 as the best effort yet in over 30 years of cartridge development.

A fresh new breakthrough in cartridge development designed specifically as an answer for the low impedance moving coil cartridge –

XLZ/7500S

The advantages of the XLZ/7500S are that it offers characteristics exceeding even the best of moving coil cartridges. Features such as an openness of sound and extremely fast risetime, less than 10µs, to provide a new crispness in sound reproduction. At the same time, the XLZ/7500S provides these features without any of the disadvantages of ringing, undesirable spurious harmonics which are often characterizations of moving coil pickups.

The above advantages provide a new sound experience while utilizing the proven advantages of the Stereohedron stylus, a samarium cobalt assembly, a patented Pickering Dustamatic brush, with replaceable stylus, along with low dynamic tip mass with very high compliance for superb tracking.

So, for those who prefer the sound characteristics attributed to moving coil cartridges, but insist on the reliability, stability and convenience of moving magnet design, Pickering presents its XLZ/7500S.

THE SOURCE OF PERFECTION

Pickering

“for those who can hear the difference”

For further information on the XSV/5000 and the XLZ/7500S write to Pickering Inc., Sunnyside Blvd., Plainview, N.Y. 11803.

from Pickering

Circle 2 on Reader-Service Card
HIGH FIDELITY

VOLUME 31 NUMBER 11  NOVEMBER 1981

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GET THE SYSTEM!

The new Spectrum Series from Kenwood.
A collection of complete stereo systems. Everything you need. Matched for great sound, without great complications. Branded with the one name that says you know a lot about sound.

And crafted with a look that says you also know a lot about style.

For more information, contact Kenwood,
P.O. Box 6213, Carson, California 90745.
Technics linear-tracking turntable.
Program it to play any cut. In any order. Even upside down.

Technics direct-drive SL-15. It automatically plays the record selections you want and skips the ones you don't. It completely eliminates tracking error and is so advanced it can even play upside down.

The SL-15's microcomputer and infrared optical sensor let you play up to 10 cuts per side, in any order. Just press the program keys in the order of the selections you want to hear. And with the repeat button, the SL-15 can repeat the entire program or any selection.

The SL-15 performs virtually any function, automatically.

It accurately selects the record size and speed, finds the lead-in groove and begins playback at the touch of a button.

More proof of the SL-15's accuracy is its quartz-locked, direct-drive motor and dynamically balanced, linear-tracking tonearm. In addition to tracking perfectly, the SL-15 plays a record as accurately upside down as it does right side up.

Technics also offers other linear-tracking turntables, including our famous SL-10 and SL-7. Audition one and you'll agree when it comes to linear tracking, Technics is a cut above the rest.

Technics
The science of sound
Introducing Pioneer Syscom: A totally new kind of high fidelity component system.

If you're in the market for true high fidelity sound, pre-matched system is a good way to get it. Because it offers the sound quality of separate components and saves you the trouble of having to buy them piece by piece.

But not every pre-matched system is a good one to buy. Many are made by companies known for only one thing. Like speakers. Or turntables.

Syscom, on the other hand, is the high fidelity system built by the people who are famous for everything that goes into one. Pioneer. In fact, today Pioneer is the leading maker of virtually every kind of high fidelity component.

What's more, Syscom's components aren't merely...
matched. They're built for each other by Pioneer audio engineers. This maximizes the system's performance and results in sound quality often not even found in systems costing twice as much.

There's a wide variety of Pioneer Syscom groups available in vertical and horizontal arrangements. One of them is perfectly suited to the way you live.

So why would you even consider buying a high-fidelity system from a manufacturer who knows how to build some of the components, now that you can buy one from the people who've perfected them all. Pioneer.

*PIONEER*

We bring it back alive.

People:

Letters

Standing Up to Colin Wilson

I have rarely written a letter in response to a magazine article, but John Canarina’s “Will the Real Colin Wilson Please Stand Up?” [August] demands an answer. I am one of the music lovers who bought the Aries records mentioned and am most grateful that someone (regardless of the circumstances or conditions) has given us the opportunity to hear something other than the umpteenth recording of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, Verdi’s Requiem, or Ravel’s Bolero.

Perhaps there is a hint of immorality or a touch of larceny in releasing records without giving complete information as to the circumstances and artists. But I seriously doubt that the people who made these records have become millionaires because of them; as a matter of fact, this is probably a labor of love with little profit. I also seriously doubt that the actual artists would have become wealthy through the royalties derived from the sale of these records. So what we seem to have is another person (namely Mr. Canarina) whose sole objective in life is to make money at all costs. The almighty dollar is all that seems to matter; to hell with those who derive immense enjoyment from hearing Havergh Brian’s symphonies, which otherwise would be nothing more than statistics in music books.

If you want to start a crusade, don’t use Aries and the other adventurous small companies as your scapegoats; raise a hue and cry against more than statistics in music books. High Fidelity could do a great service to music lovers and record collectors if it would in the future print articles of a more positive nature instead of wasting valuable space on petty articles that resolve nothing and certainly do not contribute anything constructive to the musical scene.

Robert N. Norton
Los Angeles, Calif.

John Canarina’s article was disturbing enough, but what was really amazing and shocking was Aries’ answer, or rather nonanswer.

Shenanigans by record companies pass off to perfection by the chutzpah of Aries’ response.

Before we feel outraged by the supposed losses to the actual conductors of the pirated Brian series, it is well to recall, as has been done in the past, that the recordings in question have been made available by illegal means virtually by necessity. The BBC, like other holders of priceless archives of musical performances, has doled out painfully few of its treasures in its LP issues, which are excellent but often difficult to obtain. At the present rate of issue, we will all be long dead before a significant fraction of the archive is available.

In the future, we may see records and books become largely unobtainable in the market, because a home information network will give the public electronic access to music and words via the TV screen and its sound accompaniment. Musical performances will be stored in central computer memories, retrievable on demand. If this dream is realized, practical limitations will reduce the number of performances of a work, and even the variety of works, available to the public. Then only

(Continued on page 17)
A Brand New Species of Mitsubishi.
Through a process of selective breeding, evolution, natural selection, and good old fashioned survival-of-the-fittest, there has emerged a new manner of Mitsubishi.

This is the 25/30 Series. It doesn't look like any Mitsubishi system that ever existed before.

For, in fact, these components are the result of a completely new design and engineering effort.

So, where once there were knobs, now there are push buttons. Analog displays and systems have been replaced by digital. Integrated circuitry (IC's), microprocessors, and microcomputers have been exploited to a degree where entire sub-assemblies and elaborate circuitry have been replaced by tiny chips.

By all sleek appearances then, the 25/30 Series Mistics would seem to represent a major break from the past. Not at all. In its fundamental design approach, the 25/30 Series is vintage Mitsubishi.

The DA-P30 Preamplifier, using special printed circuit boards, maintains our traditional dual-monaural construction. By keeping the two stereo channels both electrically and physically separated, noise and distortion remain phenomenally low.

Paragraphic tone controls allow unusually delicate adjustment of tonal balance while providing a characteristically simple and practical alternative to a graphic equalizer.

A subsonic filter screens out those low frequency signals which, if allowed to pass through the system, would compromise the output of the components.

Meanwhile, the DA-P30, with its extremely high switching speed and rapid response, transmits subtleties which would be lost on lesser systems.

**TRUTH IN AMPLIFYING.**

In designing our new DA-A30 Power Amplifier, we built on the successes of our earlier amps with their legendarily low distortion. And introduced some striking innovations.

Of particular note is a linear cross-bias switching system which manages to combine the supposedly incompatible qualities of high efficiency and ultra-low harmonic distortion.

Output transistors are cooled by a special heat pipe assembly. Highly conductive liquids, hermetically sealed in the pipe, replace pounds of bulky radiators and long loops of wiring which can create noise and instability.

The result of these refinements is the most accurate and faithful amplifier we've ever built.

It produces 105 watts per channel RMS. Both channels driven into 8 OHMS from 20HZ to 20KHZ with no more than 0.008% total harmonic distortion.

**A NEW DECK MATCHED TO A NEW SYSTEM.**

Our DT-25 Stereo Cassette Deck, though rather exotic in its execution is quite accessibly priced.

Some of its highlights are metal tape capability (of course), costly sendust record/playback heads. Feather-touch microswitch controls with electronic logic monitoring. Fluorescent peak level meters for instantaneous and accurate readouts. And wow and flutter of just 0.004% WRMS.

**A SYNTHESIZED TUNING SYSTEM THAT SOUNDS AS ACCURATE AS IT TUNES.**

The advantages of digital synthesized tuning have long been obvious: It can't be mistuned, nor will it drift.

Unfortunately, the disadvantages have also been obvious to the ear. A bad, meaning low, signal to noise ratio.

Our DA-F30 Tuner features a quartz crystal phase locked loop frequency synthesizer tuning system. And a solution to the signal to noise problem.

So, along with digitally precise push-button station tuning and display, along with an 8-station memory, the DA-F30 delivers a signal-to-noise ratio of 78 dB (stereo).

Our tuner also provides a superbly graphic LED display of multipath and signal level. So you can adjust your antenna with precision for optimum reception.

For optimum reception of the message of this advertisement, however, you would do well to get closer to the source of the signal.

Pay a visit to one of our select circle of dealers. There you can observe and study the species at close hand. Perhaps a Mitsubishi 25/30 Series will be your natural selection.
At Last A Receiver Built Like A Mitsubishi.

On the subject of receivers, we can perhaps be accused of a bit of priggishness.

Having established certain standards in our components, we weren't about to put our name on a receiver if the receivers couldn't measure up.

It wasn't until very recently, in fact, that technological advances brought about a receiver good enough to be called a Mitsubishi.

And now we're introducing a receiver in our new 25/30 series, the R-25.

It owes a great deal to developments incorporated in our separates.

The R-25 features Quartz Synthesized tuning, for hair-splitting tuning accuracy.

Each station is illuminated on a fluorescent digital display. Tap the control bars and it proceeds to lock on to the first available station. Hold the bars down and it will scan up and down the band.

You can pre-select up to seven AM and seven FM stations for storage in memory.

MAKE BETTER STEREO IN THE BLENDER.

FM stereo frequently falls prey to high-frequency noise when stations are weak or far away.

The R-25 has an Automatic Hi-Blend feature which blends stereo signals into monaural in the noisy high-frequency ranges. But it leaves the undisturbed low-frequency signals in the stereo mode.

This removes almost all
the perceived noise while preserving the broadcast in stereo.

SEPAREATING THE STRONG FROM THE WEAK.

Strong signals, by nature, will bully the weak ones, drowning them out, pushing them aside.

Our automatic IF (Intermediate Frequency) switching circuit solves this problem by narrowing the tuning window, thereby excluding interference.

However, since narrowing the window increases distortion, this switching function is introduced—with laudable discretion—only at that precise point where the increased distortion is a lesser evil than signal interference.

As a result of this automatic wizardry, it is a simple matter to tune the R-25 perfectly. It cannot, in fact, be tuned otherwise.

PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE WITH BUILDINGS.

High-rise structures make lovely skylines, but they’re hell on signals.

Signals reflected off buildings result in multi-path phenomena, generating audio ghosts.

A signal strength meter on the R-25 functions also as a multi-path indicator. You can measure the amount of reflected signal from any one station. And adjust your antenna accordingly.

The R-25 Pre-Amp section features a continuous loudness control of ten settings. Rather than the usual single on or off loudness mode. This lets you contour the low and high frequency ranges at low volumes for much richer tonal perception.

Built into the pre-amp section as well is a moving coil amplifier. A simple push of a switch and you’re ready to use a high-grade moving coil cartridge without any other external unit.

Meanwhile, back in the amplifier, cross-over and switching distortion is reduced to negligible levels by a linear switching circuit.

All of which might be considered a rather ambitious array of features for a receiver.

But the reason we include them is simple enough. If it says Mitsubishi, it’s got to sound like a Mitsubishi.
Our famous turntable, the linear tracking LT-5V, rather than rest on all fours, instead stands erect. A pose that is not only striking, but eminently sensible.

Our LT-20, on the other hand, is quite content to take things lying down. In the conventional manner.

But, as it too features linear tracking, it too plays straight with your records. Thus delivering performance that is decidedly beyond the conventional.

As to which stance you choose, it's partly a question of the depth of your shelf space. And partly a question of your propensity for showmanship. For the LT-5V makes a good show as well as an exceedingly good sound.

Both our upstanding LT-5V and our reclining LT-20 have many extraordinary features in common.

Foremost is the linear tracking mechanism itself. Much superior to ordinary pivoted tone arms in that it plays your records in the same straight line across the disc as the cutting head which made the original master recording.

Tracking errors and unbalanced side forces are therefore virtually non-existent. The result is a dramatic decrease in distortion and false coloration. And a strik-
ingly audible improvement in stereo definition and real-life presence.

Our tone-arm transport system is notably simple, solid and reliable. The entire assembly is moved with smooth precision, guided to exquisitely fine tolerances by two sensitive optical sensors which hold the arm on a perfect tangent course across the disc.

All functions of our LT turntables are controlled by an extremely advanced Large Scale Integrated (LSI) circuit— one of those fabled "computers on a chip." Lift-up, cueing, starting, and return are all push-button operations.

An optical prism device perceives the size of your record and automatically sets the appropriate speed—33 1/3 or 45.

On the LT-20, that speed is maintained with chronographic accuracy by a Quartz Crystal Oscillator linked to its direct-drive motor through a frequency generator.

Now, what with computer controls, quartz oscillators, and optically monitored linear tracking, it may seem that we've gone to rather incredible lengths to spin a disc properly.

Not unusual for us, though. Because vertical or horizontal, up or down, that's what Mitsubishi stands for.
Excellence in the extreme can be intimidating. It smacks of drastic expense, requirements of a highly technical education, and tastes on the remote fringes of esoterica.

None of the above are required to enjoy the pleasures of Mitsubishi.

While not inexpensive, the price is not unreasonable.

While Mitsubishi is technologically sophisticated, this is translated into simplicity of operation.

And while our standards of performance are demanding in every sense, we've never thought it wise to build equipment whose superiority could be appreciated only by laboratory instruments.

In short, if fine quality sound and finely made equipment mean something to you, then you should investigate Mitsubishi. It may well be that you can't afford to own the best of everything. But if you buy a Mitsubishi, you'll own the best of something.

For more information write to Mitsubishi Electric Sales of America, Incorporated 3010 East Victoria Street, Compton, California 90221

Are You Ready For A Mitsubishi?
I don't know whether the "real" Colin Wilson has stood up yet to take credit for his record-implications. Aries has rather played havoc with the real Wilson's reputation, not to mention those of Canarina, Del Mar, et al.

Aries does have a point, though. What artistic purpose will be served by having these little-known works and may even have mentioned Brian as an example. (My copy has disappeared.) Since a key premise of his book was that he is not a musician, Aries has rather played havoc with the real Wilson's reputation, not to mention those of Canarina, Del Mar, et al.

I do not see how your article, if its assumptions are false, can hurt Aries, as the company implies. Conductors, unlike tigers, are articulate, and Aries should be able to produce the "real Colin Wilson" and establish its source for these recordings without any great trouble or expense.

If the article is correct in its assumptions, Aries' actions are morally reprehensible, even if, by some quirk of international copyright law, those actions are legal, as claimed. Such dishonest labeling does indeed tamper with the quality of these recordings and their buyers, both past and prospective, should be warned.

Your review on page 58 seems to imply that the Unicorn recording of Brian's Symphonies Nos. 10 and 21 is the first "legitimate" Brian release in the U.S. Certainly, Musical Heritage MHS 3426 [not in current catalog] is legitimate, even if it doesn't appear in the retail catalogs.

Carrington Dixon
Garland, Tex.

Soundcraftsmen...

HF replies: As this cross section indicates, much of the "Colin Wilson" correspondence takes us to task for providing a forum for Canarina's reactions to having his work misappropriated. Canarina did, of course, acknowledge that companies such as Aries "perform a substantial service," and collectors will no doubt continue to avail themselves thereof. They should do so, however, with full knowledge that to a greater or lesser extent, reputations, careers, and livelhoods of performers are at stake.

However desirable the release of these records, it won't do to portray Aries as Robin Hood: indeed, Mr. Norton turns Robin Hood on his head, suggesting that, if Canarina stood to get rich, only then would he have a legitimate stake worth defending. Moreover, if Canarina were the mercenary Mr. Norton describes, he would not be conducting Brian in the first place. That Canarina should want proper credit for his work is no less reasonable than that Mr. Norton should want his letter properly attributed.

Mr. Nelson should rest assured that, unlike the "Old" HF of a few years back, we have no corporate relationship to a record company; ABC Records long since closed its classical and pop wings. Similarly, the Aries spokesman who suggests that we are trying to cozy up to the major labels would be hard put to convince them of that. Our editorial policy is independent of "corporate" purposes, as, for example, their ABC's or those of record companies.
Now from Speakerlab comes the new Slit, Si 5 and Si 7. Housed in slender, elegant enclosures, these speakers are designed to reduce edge detraction for better "imaging". Componentry includes: amazing Samarium Cobalt leaf tweeters for limitless high-end; efficient, ultra-low distortion polypropylene/Polylam™ woofers; and passive radiators to extend the low end both powerfully and accurately. The combined effects are awesome—bringing you music that's so fresh on your ears it's really like being there.

Send for a free catalog and read about these and a dozen more new designs from Speakerlab.

An Amazing Grace?

The first Grace moving-coil pickup to be released in the U.S., the F-11L is claimed to be the result of a two-year development effort between the Japanese manufacturer and Sumiko, the U.S. importer. The pickup is equipped with an ultrathin boron-alloy cantilever and a multiradial diamond tip. It weighs 8.6 grams, and its 0.75-millivolt output is claimed to be high enough to drive high-gain preamps without the use of additional gain stages. The F-11L is priced at $595.

Pro Power from Altec Lansing

Designed for heavy-duty professional use, the Model 1270 power amp from Altec Lansing is rated at 250 watts (24 dBW) per channel into 8 ohms and 400 watts (26 dBW) into 4 ohms. The amp is equipped with several error-detection and protection devices, including a VU limiter, a two-speed fan that responds to excessive heat conditions by locking into the fast-speed mode until temperature has been reduced, and a relay that prevents startup and shutdown transients from zapping loudspeakers. The Model 1270 costs $1,400.

Alpine's Car Combo

Alpine's latest car stereo component, the Model 3023, is a combination graphic equalizer/power amp that is said to be capable of 18 watts output into 4-ohm loads. The unit features seven bands of EQ and a 10-LED power-output meter. The device also provides line-level out-

Cassette Kit Checks Tension

A cassette-deck maintenance kit called Clean-n-Check, marketed by Boughton Enterprises, includes a tension meter that, as far as we know, is unique in consumer products of this sort. It can be used to check the play, fast-wind, and reverse. (Continued on page 22)
WHY ONLY SONY WINDS UP WITH FULL COLOR SOUND.

Strangely enough, some of the things that make Sony Full Color Sound sound so terrific are things you can't hear. Such as Sony's unique experience and technical achievement. Sony makes both tape and the equipment that plays it. So Sony's experience with tape recording is unique among major tape manufacturers. After all, you'd better know all there is to know about tape decks before you make a tape. Sony does.

Then there's unique Sony balance. The fine-tuning of all the elements that go into making a tape, so that each synergistically complements the other and delivers the finest recording humanly and technically possible to achieve.

You also can't hear Sony's unique SP mechanism, one of the carefully balanced elements in every Sony tape. It's a perfect example of Sony technical achievement. The SP mechanism is what makes the tape run so smoothly inside the cassette. And smoothly running tape is critical for total, perfect tape performance.

Smooth running means less friction. So some of the most popular tape makers give the tape as much clearance inside the cassette as possible. We used to do the same thing.) But this method results in uneven or too tight winding and actually increases friction as you wind and rewind the tape. Jamming and even a stopping of the tape in its tracks can result.

It was clear to Sony that even, uniform winding was the key. So Sony reversed the basic thinking about friction completely and invented the SP mechanism, the first positive guidance system on the market. Instead of giving the tape lots of room, it gently guides the tape smoothly and precisely through the cassette, and onto the reels, with a maximum of positive precision support, yet with an absolute minimum of friction. This is a perfect example of Sony pioneering and how the Sony balance system works.

Some of the unique patented Sony innovations are the stepped hub wheel, which suppresses wobble; parallel "rails" of the liner which guide the tape and hub and keep the tape winding flat and even. Even the surface which touches the tape is special graphite-coated polyester, for the least possible friction.

Our Sony SP mechanism is actually 10 times more trouble-free in lab tests than our old conventional mechanism. And the increase of friction after 200 "torture-test" windings and rewindings has been reduced by nearly 75%.

The fact is, the more sophisticated your equipment, the more you'll appreciate Full Color Sound. Listen to Sony SHF (our best normal bias tape), EHF (high bias), FeCr or Metallic tape. Listen to the perfect balance of its perfect components. It's the secret of Full Color Sound. SONY.

©1980 Sony Corporation of America. Tape DIV. is a trademark of Sony Corp.
There is a truism in the marketplace that few of us ever question. It says, you get what you pay for. What it really implies is that more is better, but it will cost you, brother.

In the area of high fidelity stereo equipment, that point of view has been raised to dizzying new heights. And somewhere between the state-of-the-art technology and the state-of-shock prices a sense of value seems to be slipping away.

We're not playing that game at Sherwood.

Our design engineers employ proven advances in technology to produce superb sound. Our marketing department helps keep them on planet earth. It's a philosophy that works. Sherwood equipment has been quietly snapped up by critical listeners for more than twenty-five years.

Changes are not welcome. Improvements are.

Early this year a panel of scrupulously honest reviewers examined fifteen mid-priced stereo receivers. The results were published in America's leading consumer research magazine. Sherwood was rated #1, ahead of names that are probably more familiar to you. We tell you that reluctantly, because a short time later we discontinued that superb model. And replaced it with the S-9600CP. It's better. It's more

Sherwood: For fuss
powerful, more flexible, and has more finesse. And thankfully the price has barely budged.

The new S-9600CP offers 60 watts RMS per channel with no more than 0.05% total harmonic distortion. Its clean power you can monitor with an eight segment logarithmic LED power output display for each channel.

The pre-amplifier has a discrete FET phono section for better cartridge performance, three position tape monitor and copy switching for two decks, and filters and treble squelch to weed out the undesirable little glitches that pop up in even the best of records.

The FM section is remarkable for its clarity and convenience: 1.6uV usable sensitivity, 75dB stereo signal-to-noise ratio. There is Touch Lock Tuning that senses your touch and automatically fine tunes and locks in your station selection. And a digital display shows the frequencies in 0.1 MHz increments.

The S-9600CP is a statistician's dream. But more importantly, it's for music lovers. Whether your choice is Polonaises or the Pretenders.

We don't brag. We swear.

Most manufacturers spot check a few receivers along the assembly line.

Sherwood is different. We test each and every one. Then we fine tune it and check it again. And again. Until with the final tweaking we know that every receiver not only meets our published specifications, but in most cases exceeds them. You can tell, because the key test results are recorded on a certificate and affixed to that unit's shipping carton. That's Certified Performance — our guarantee that what you see is what you get.

Now more than ever.

Careful production means limited production. But this year we do offer a greater variety of Sherwood than we have in the past.

In addition to our receivers and separates, there are two superb tuners, three semi-automatic turntables, and three metal capable cassette decks. We also have three new speaker systems, from a two-way bookshelf to a three-way time compensated floor system.

Our apologies in advance.

Sherwood just isn't as easy to find as you might like. Well engineered stereo equipment that draws critical praise and remains reasonably priced doesn't hang around on shelves gathering dust.

For the moment, we don't have an acceptable solution. So hurry.

pots and skinflints.
(Continued from page 18)

wind modes and will register NORMAL, FAULTY, or (at the borderline between the two) "requiring service soon." Awareness and repair of the drive deficiencies that cause FAULTY readings are the key to avoiding snarled or damaged tapes, the company believes. The complete kit, with cleaning solvents and applicators, retails for $7.00.

Cizek's Three-Piece Suit

The Sound Window satellite/subwoofer system from Cizek Audio Systems is unusually compact. The satellites, which can be hung on a wall, each employ a 6½-inch woofer and a cone tweeter in an acoustic suspension enclosure. The subwoofer's 10-inch driver has a dual voice coil and stereo crossover for use in a common-bass configuration, though separate subwoofers can be used for each channel. A 10-inch passive radiator keeps subwoofer efficiency relatively high despite the driver's small size. The entire Sound Window system, in oak or walnut finish, costs $450.

MXR's Disc Denoiser

Among the decoders for playing the new CX discs (using a circuit designed by CBS, but licensed to other companies as well) is MXR Innovations' Model 156, dubbed the Discoder. It has three front-panel controls: an active/bypass switch, a sensitivity adjustment knob, and an on/off switch for the display (two LEDs) that's used in adjusting sensitivity with a reference-level disc. The Model 156 is priced at $100.

Shure Goes Hyper

Shure's distortion-reducing hyperelliptical diamond stylus, first introduced in the top-of-the-line V-15 Type IV pickup, has been added to five more pickups, bringing to ten the roster of Shure cartridges so equipped. At $92 and $72, respectively, the M75HE Type 2 and M75HE-J Type 2 are designed to improve the performance of low-priced systems. For owners of linear-tracking Technics SL-series turntables, there are (Continued on page 118)
SA-X. HIGH BIAS IS RICHER FOR IT.

The greatest honor a cassette can receive is to be held in higher esteem than the one now setting the high bias standard. SA-X has already gone beyond SA in frequency response, sensitivity, and resolution. It was intended to. With its ultra refined dual layer of Super Avilyn and the Laboratory Standard Mechanism, nothing less was possible. TDK believes sound reproduction should have no set barrier. No limit. For us, high bias was a limit to be surpassed. SA-X has won three international audio awards to date. It will no doubt win others. But we take awards philosophically. They represent our continuing effort to create the machine for your machine. In that, we could not be happier with SA-X.
Shocker

I have a GE color TV set, which I have connected to my stereo system using an adapter cable with two alligator clips on one end and a pin plug on the other. The two clips are attached to the speaker leads inside the TV set; the pin connector goes to the aux input of a Kenwood amplifier. Any idiot could wire this up, and it costs less than $7.50—not $75, like some of the converter kits in the stores. Why doesn’t everybody do this? Do you consider this a safe alternative to the expensive kits?—B. A. Lolley, Wichita, Kan.

Absolutely not. One accessories manufacturer canceled a device like yours before production began when it was discovered that some customers might be electrocuted by the high voltages with which the clips can come in contact.

Mix or Match?

I plan to buy a separate power amplifier and preamplifier. I can see the advantages of buying a matched set, since both units are designed to work together. But what if one of the two has features I don’t want? How do I decide whether an amp and a preamp of different brands are compatible? Which specs and features should I look for, and which should I avoid? Or should I stick with the matched set that comes nearest to meeting my needs?—John Lundell, Alliance, Neb.

Don’t worry about mixing amp and preamp brands. The matching considerations involved (essentially, impedances and levels) are so standardized that any combination of genuine component brands will avoid the sort of matching woes here that can be a real problem elsewhere in the system.

Rotten Rating?

I have two sets of 8-ohm speakers connected to my Sony STR-V5 receiver. When I switch to the A + B speaker position, the sound deteriorates in quality and is distorted somewhat, though the speakers are in separate rooms and can’t be interfering acoustically with each other. What could the problem be?—Vincent Marangi, Rosemoor, Calif.

Your system is probably suffering from inconsistencies in manufacturers speaker-impedance ratings. If the 8-ohm ratings were true nominals (based on the effective midrange/midbass minima) which is unlikely, you should have no problem running both sets of speakers simultaneously from the Sony. But if “8 ohms” represents a sales manager’s eyeballed average of an impedance curve, which is not at all unlikely (8-ohm ratings being “in” with speaker sales managers), the actual impedance may be significantly lower over important parts of the frequency range. The combined impedance of two such misspecified speaker pairs operated in parallel can drop significantly below 4 ohms and present a difficult load to the receiver, reducing the amount of power it can deliver and driving distortion up.

Get the Pops Out

I have just bought a DBX 224 noise reduction system that works very well on tape hiss. But what about noise from minor record abrasions, such as pops, clicks, or scratches? From your experience, which brand of noise reduction would be most effective (and cost-effective) in conjunction with the DBX, the Burwen DNF-1202A or the SAE-5000A Impulse Noise Reducer?—Robert A. Jones, Milford, N. J.

The Burwen DNF-1202A Dynamic Noise Filter combats continuous noise (like tape hiss); what you’re doubtless thinking of is the TNE-7000 Transient Noise Eliminator. Unfortunately, KLH (which has absorbed Burwen) has not resumed production of the TNE since moving to California earlier this year, and the supply is said to be scarce. Garrett also made a comparable device at one time, but it has “gone the way of the dinosaurs,” according to a company spokesman. And Packburn equipment—though the most effective of all in HF’s experience—is professional gear in the $2,000 bracket and therefore not cost-effective. That leaves only the SAE as currently in production among the consumer models. HF’s experience with it and the Burwen TNE would put them about on a par (though you could argue the point one way or the other), so you’d probably be best advised to take the easy route and look for the SAE.

Hyped Hiss

Can dubbing somehow magnify the tape hiss of the original? I know this sounds improbable, but it’s the only way I can explain why the background hiss is greater on the copy than on either the original or the blank tape on which I made the copy.—George Norris, Philadelphia, Pa.

Tape noise does accumulate in successive dubbings, but what you’re undoubtedly hearing is so-called modulation noise. Even with no input, the bias signal in the recording head will add noise to the background hiss of virgin or bulk-erased tape. When you play back a tape that has been recorded this way, the hiss level will suddenly rise at the point where you began your recording, even if no hiss is being contributed by the recorder’s electronics or by the source.

Speaker Protection

I am now using a receiver rated at 40 watts [16 dBW] per channel to drive a pair of Klipsch Heresy speakers. I want to upgrade to separate components and more power, but Klipsch warns against using amplifiers capable of more than 105 watts [204 dBW] per channel. Unfortunately, most power amps of the quality I’m interested in have much higher power ratings than that. How can I use a high-power amplifier—say 200 watts [23 dBW] per channel—without damaging my speakers?—Alan Futterman, New York, N. Y.

Put a fuse in the hot (i.e., positive) wire to each speaker. Write Klipsch for the proper value (a one-amp fast-blow type is about the most common recommendation for modern speakers). However, some of the finest power amps on the market are rated at 20 dBW (100 watts) per channel or less, and even if you do settle on a better model, it is unlikely that a speaker as sensitive as the Heresy used in a normal home would ever draw enough power to do itself harm.
WHEN THE OXIDE PARTICLES ON RECORDING TAPE AREN'T OF A UNIFORM SIZE AND SHAPE, YOU CAN END UP LISTENING TO DISTORTION AS WELL AS MUSIC. THE SOUNDS OF DIFFERENT INSTRUMENTS GET BLURRED TOGETHER, AND YOUR MUSIC LOSES ITS CLARITY.

AT MAXELL, EVERY INCH OF OUR TAPE IS CHECKED AND RECHECKED TO MAKE SURE THE OXIDE PARTICLES ARE PERFECTLY UNIFORM. WHICH MEANS WHEN YOU LISTEN TO MUSIC ON MAXELL TAPE, EVERY INSTRUMENT WILL SOUND PERFECTLY CLEAR.

SO IF YOU CAN'T TELL YOUR BRASS FROM YOUR OBOE, TRY USING OUR TAPE.
INTRODUCING LORAN.
THE MOST ADVANCED AND REVOLUTIONARY AUDIO CASSETTE IN THE WORLD.

Neither the heat of the desert, nor the cold of Alaska, nor the oven temperature of a closed car in the sun, nor falling on the floor can stop Loran from delivering incredibly clear, accurate and beautiful sound.

The Loran cassette has the only shell in the world made of Lexan® resin, the incredibly tough space age material used for bullet proof vests and bank teller windows. Unlike other cassettes it can stand up to extremes of heat and cold. It will not warp at 250° Fahrenheit or shatter at 60° below zero. That means you can leave Loran on an exposed dashboard all day long and still have trouble free performance.

Another unique Loran feature is the Safety Tab™ (patent pending). A 1/2 turn of the Safety Tab™ makes it virtually impossible to erase a recording. However, unlike all other cassettes, you can restore its erase and record capability by simply turning the Safety Tab™ back to its original position.

Loran’s unique tape formulations offer performance that matches the advanced technology of the Loran shell and tape guide systems.

Our Chrome equivalent high bias tape is coated with separate layers of two different oxides. It offers extremely low residual noise levels (-56 dB, A weighted, relative 0 VU) and an MOL of +6 dB relative of 0 VU for 3 percent distortion. This tape provides magnificent low-end response, in addition to the high-end response normally found in other Chrome equivalent formulations.

Loran’s Metal, Ferric Oxide and Ferrichrome tapes also deliver improved and outstanding performance associated with these formulations.

Loran...the most advanced audio cassette in the world. Destined to become a leader.
Share the excitement. Listen to Loran.
AUDIO

Basically Speaking

Audio concepts and terms explained by Michael Riggs

Frequency Response and High Fidelity

Reproduced sound has been a part of our world for more than a century—ever since Edison's invention of the phonograph. The sounds of voices and instruments emerging from the horn of his primitive cylinder player were recognizably themselves, but little more. Still, for the last hundred years, listeners have regarded the illusion of reality as an achievable goal. Two principal difficulties still hinder its realization: making accurate recordings, and making the acoustics of a typical listening space such as a room sound like those of a real performing space—such as a club or a concert hall. These problems are probably not insoluble; neither are they easy to get around. So, for the most part, we routinely accept and enjoy something less than the ideal.

What we seek to extract from a good recording—one that, with proper reproducing equipment, could yield a credible sonic picture of the musical event it captures—is fidelity to the original. Hence the term "high fidelity," to indicate a very accurate translation into sound of the stored information.

Knowing what we want, the question becomes: How do we know when we've got it? How can we tell a better one? The ear is, fortunately, a little forgiving. Certainly, we can sometimes spot flaws in a reasonably good presentation without direct comparison to a better one. The ear is, unfortunately, a little forgiving.

And if the recording itself is not very good, the ear becomes a problematic evaluator. It cannot differentiate between errors in the source material and those in the equipment. The latter, in fact, may even compensate for errors in a particular recording, creating an instance in which two wrongs make an apparent right. Thus you must isolate and define the errors introduced by the equipment in order to determine a system's level of fidelity.

Technical specifications for the mechanical and electrical performance of the various components in a reproduction system provide the necessary definitions. Some are specific to individual components; others apply to all and, therefore, to the entire system as well. The level of performance with respect to any particular specification is measured by test instruments, which (unlike people) are unemotional and objective and (unlike the ear) unforgiving. Measurement is the key to isolating the errors.

Most basic audio specifications involve one or both of the qualities of sound I mentioned last month: loudness and pitch. Among the simplest and most obvious of these is frequency range. For example, a pocket radio could never be a high fidelity device because its tiny speaker can't reproduce one portion of the audible spectrum: the bass.

The frequency band between 20 Hz and 20,000 Hz (20 kHz) is usually given as the range of human hearing. In fact, individual variations are great: Women tend to have somewhat better hearing at high frequencies than men of the same age, for example, and few people in middle or old age hear frequencies higher than about 14 kHz. In any event, the audible frequency spectrum is ample to accommodate music reproduction, which generally requires a range of no more than 30 Hz to 15 kHz. Actually, very little music contains any information below 50 Hz. So it's safe to say that a range of 30 Hz to 15 kHz is adequate for high fidelity reproduction.

There's more to the story than just frequency range, however. A cello and a piccolo recorded at the same level should be at the same level when the recording is played back. If the piccolo comes out sounding louder than the cello, the reproduction system is doing something wrong, and fidelity to the original is diminished.

Ideally, signals between 30 Hz and 15 kHz that enter the system should emerge at the same relative volume regardless of frequency. If the high tones come out louder, the sound is said to be unnaturally "bright"; if they come out softer, the sound will be "flat." The specification by which we judge a system's impartiality with respect to pitch is called frequency response, and it can be stated in two ways. The more informative is the graphical approach, in which frequency (in Hz) is plotted horizontally on a chart, and loudness (in dB) is plotted vertically. A signal of known, constant level is fed to the input of the component or system under test at all frequencies within the limits of interest (usually from 20 Hz to 20 kHz). The output level is then measured and plotted in dB for each frequency within the measurement limits. By looking at the resulting line, you can tell at a glance what frequencies the system is exaggerating and what frequencies it is attenuating, and by how much. Stating the maximum variation over the tested frequency range (e.g., ± 1 dB from 20 Hz to 20 kHz) is simpler, but less revealing—you know the magnitude of the error, but not where it occurs.

Frequency response is among the most important audio specifications, because we are acutely sensitive to it—even to variations as small as a few tenths of a dB in some cases. Clearly, the ideal would be something like ± 0 dB from 30 Hz to 15 kHz, corresponding to a straight horizontal line across the response chart (i.e., "flat" frequency response). In practice, however, most audio components fall short of perfection. This is especially true of devices such as microphones, phono cartridges, and loudspeakers, which convert mechanical to electrical energy or vice versa. In later columns I'll explain how tolerable various types and magnitudes of frequency-response errors are in various components.
New Equipment Reports

Preparation supervised by Robert Long, Peter Dobbin, Michael Riggs, and Edward J. Foster. Laboratory data (unless otherwise noted) supplied by Diversified Science Laboratories.

Soundcraftsmen
Shoulders the Load


RATED POWER
24 dBW (250 watts)/channel

OUTPUT AT CLIPPING (both channels driven)
8-ohm load 24% dBW (300 watts)/channel
4-ohm load 26 dBW (400 watts)/channel
16-ohm load 22½ dBW (178 watts)/channel

DYNAMIC HEADROOM (8 ohms) 1½ dB

HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD: 20 Hz to 20 kHz)
at 24 dBW (250 watts) ≤0.035%
at 0 dBW (1 watt) ≤0.062%

FREQUENCY RESPONSE (at 0 dBW)
+0.0, –0.1 dB, < 8 Hz to 35 kHz

INPUT CHARACTERISTICS (re 0 dBW: A-weighting)
sensitivity 85 mV
S/N ratio 83½ dB

DAMPING FACTOR (at 50 Hz) 160

Like previous Soundcraftsmen power amplifiers, the MA-5002A incorporates what the company calls a Vari-Portional power supply, the purpose of which is to make the amp more efficient. It works this magic by operating at different supply voltages depending on the amount of power the 250-watt amp is required to deliver. When power demands are low to moderate, the power supply loafs along at a relatively low voltage. Only when the signal-tracking circuitry detects that high output will be required does the supply shift to higher voltages, enabling the amp to deliver its full rated power. When the peak passes, the Vari-Portional power supply drops back to its low-voltage state. The result, according to Soundcraftsmen, is an amplifier that runs cooler and uses less electricity than a similarly rated unit with a conventional single-voltage power supply.

Soundcraftsmen engineers have not been blind to the other possibilities inherent in a smart, dual-voltage power supply, and in the MA-5002A they have realized one of them in what they call the Auto-Buffer circuit. It makes the power supply just a little cleverer than it already was by sensing the impedance of the load it is driving. When the impedance is too low, the Auto-Buffer prevents the power supply from rising to any voltage that might create excessive current drain and the possible destruction of the output transistors. This enables the amplifier to drive impedances as low as 2 ohms safely without recourse to conventional current limiters, which can create severe distortion and, in some cases, cause the very damage they were intended to prevent. At the same time, it enables the amp to deliver full power into loads of 4 ohms or more. The beauty of this design is twofold: its low distortion and the fact that it entails no sacrifice of power at normal impedances.

Protection from more mundane threats, such as short circuits and simple overheating, is provided by what Soundcraftsmen calls its Auto-Crowbar circuit, which—when tripped—instantly shuts off the amplifier and bleeds the power supply. When this happens, a PROTECT LED on the upper right of the front panel lights. The amplifier automatically resets itself when the fault is corrected.

Other features of the MA-5002A's front panel are a power switch in the lower left-hand corner, level controls for each channel, two LEDs (one for each channel) that light whenever the Vari-Portional power supply shifts into high gear, a clipping-indicator LED for each channel, two peak-reading power meters (a row of twenty LEDs for each channel.
HOW 23 PEOPLE SHARE A WALKMAN.

WITH MURA'S STEPPIN' OUT.™

Sony's, Aiwa's and Mura's mini-portable cassette players and FM radios are great when you go solo. But not so great to share with friends. Now Mura helps you make sound-for-one sound-for-all.

Just plug your Walkman (or any brand) into Mura's Steppin' Out and the sounds step right out. Through two 4 inch center dome speakers driven by a quality stereo amp.

Steppin' Out has a “presence” switch and a “stereo expander” switch which does to sound what 3D does to movies. Steppin' Out is also lightweight and portable. And the price is in step with your budget. Now you have a choice: solo or sharin’ with Steppin’ Out.
Lots of Tuner At a Moderate Price


Neither superfancy models nor bare-bones budget jobs have characterized Sansui’s TU series, but it has had more than its share of good buys—in particular, models that approach or equal the specs of other companies’ much-discussed superturners, but at a fraction of the price. The TU-S9 continues this estimable tradition. We were delighted with both its performance and its personality, yet it certainly can’t be counted a luxury model.

There are four basic ways of tuning it. Like most digital designs (and this one uses quartz reference, true frequency synthesis, and phase lock), it can be made to scan the band, looking for stations, or it can step by discrete frequency increments. The S9’s steps are 0.1 MHz wide for FM and 10 kHz wide in AM. (Outside the Americas, it is set to step in 9-kHz increments to conform to broadcast frequency allocations in those areas; the manual says that the tuner can be adapted if you move from one broadcast-practice zone into another.) The stepping process operates in either direction, as does the fast-scan mode, which is activated by a slightly harder pressure on the same up and down tuning buttons. Finally, if you press DIRECT SET, the ten station-memory buttons become a “key-
Choosing a receiver can be a painful experience. Especially when the features you want most don’t all happen to come in the same package.

But now there’s the JVC R-S77. With the sound purity of Super-A amplification. The precision and beauty of quartz tuning. And the flexible control of JVC’s 5-band S.E.A. graphic equalizer.

By completely eliminating switching distortion, Super-A allows the subtle details of musical overtones to come through cleanly and naturally. Add a powerful 60 watts per channel into 8 ohms, from 20 Hz to 20 kHz, with no more than 0.005% total harmonic distortion and you have an amplifier that sounds convincingly live on all kinds of music, loud or soft, simple or complex.

The quartz tuning system zeros in perfectly on every FM and AM station. So distortion and noise remain infinitesimally low. And with our pushbutton memory system, you can tune in any of six FM or six AM stations instantly.

With our built-in S.E.A. graphic equalizer, you can give your system a thousand sound personalities. From flat-accurate for classical. To bright and punchy for popular. Or anything in between. You can also fix speaker quirks and room acoustics. Beauty. Convenience. Control. And stunning sound quality. Now you don’t have to choose which you want. Because you get them all in the JVC R-S77 receiver.
Why listen to the first names in music, on anything less than the first name in high fidelity.

Fisher ST925.
Incomparable Fisher sound reproduction, plus quality Fisher craftsmanship.

At Fisher, we believe that the only way to do justice to a great piece of music is to listen to it through a great pair of speakers. And after 40 years of designing speakers, the ST925 is our best ever.

As expected, it has the look and feel of fine furniture—handcrafted with close attention to detail. Plus all the things needed to make it sound like a fine musical instrument.

Take the 15" low frequency driver, for example. Ours uses a low mass, high rigidity cone material to provide optimum deep bass response.

We didn’t compromise on the midrange and high frequency horn drivers either. Both are suspended in an expensive ferrofluid that drastically reduces heat build-up, thus enabling the drivers to handle greater power.

In fact, maximum power handling capability is 130 watts. Yet the ST925 is so efficient it can reproduce live concert sound levels with as little as 25 watts. Not only that, it can also reproduce the full dynamic range typical of the newest digital recordings.

If you think these are good reasons to buy them, you’re not alone. After all, Fisher happens to be the largest manufacturer of speakers in America.

FISHER The first name in high fidelity.

© Fisher Corporation 1981
board" so that you can enter a specific frequency. Even if you know only that the station calls itself, say, "Rock 102," you can punch up 1-0-2-0 (102.0) and then step up and down from there until you find the station. Once you've found one you will want to come back to, you can press memory and the word "memory" will appear in the frequency-display window for a few seconds. During this time you can enter the station into any of the ten memory positions. After those few seconds (or if you do enter the station), the "memory" legend disappears and so does the entering capability, preventing inadvertent reprogramming when you next touch one of the ten buttons. All told, this adds up to one of the most versatile, adept, and satisfying digital-tuning control systems we've encountered.

Many tuners and receivers will memorize more stations than the TU-S9, since each button on the Sansui will accept either one AM or one FM frequency (but not both). However, in regular use we find we do not need more than ten stations. And the S9 offers what, arguably, is a plus not found on most digital tuners: Its FM range goes low enough with less at higher frequencies and more below) and that the blend's "bite" is so
defeat and mode (automatic/mono-only) in one button is occasionally somewhat hampering, depending on your tuning habits, but Sansui has chosen such appropriate threshold levels that we never really missed having a separate button for each function. The calibration tone is a convenience for recordists. The S9's tone is at 400 Hz, 10 dB below 100 percent modulation. (After de-emphasis, 100 percent modulation in the RF translates to differing audio levels at different frequencies, but the equivalent of full modulation at 400 Hz is about the highest audio level you're likely to encounter with typical program material.) As usual, however, the test tone is not at the Dolby reference level and therefore it isn't much help in calibrating a decoder for Dolby FM reception.

The noise canceller is a blend switch. When we looked at Diversified Science Laboratories' separation curves made with this switch on, we thought Sansui had gone overboard, and we wondered why the subjective stereo effect was still so good with the blend in. On more careful examination, we realized that Sansui's blend preserves roughly the separation of a typical phono pickup (about 20 dB at 1 kHz, with less at higher frequencies and more below) and that the blend's "bite" is so big only because the separation is so exemplary without it. At any rate, we consider this feature unusually effective. The meter-mode switch also is effective—giving you quick comparison between signal strength and multipath readings at any antenna orientation—but the "meter" it controls (actually a set of five LEDs) is not. The thresholds for the lamps are reasonably well chosen, but there are so few of them and their on/off action is so sharp (in some designs they fade gradually as signal is reduced) that the sound actually is more help than the display most of the time when you're tuning the antenna. If you don't use a rotator, the point is moot; if you do, this
AM SUPPRESSION
SUBCARRIER (38 kHz) SUPPR.
PIL0T (19 kHz) SUPPRESSION
IM DISTORTION (mono)


Polk's Premium Loudspeaker

Founded less than ten years ago, Polk Audio has earned an enviable reputation for its line of moderate-price loudspeakers. The RTA-12B is the latest refinement of the company's top model, originally introduced as the RTA-12, whose main claim to fame was excellent phase response. Designer Matthew Polk has attempted to retain that quality in the 12B, while smoothing the system's frequency response and improving its cosmetics.

The new design is a tall, floor-standing column with a black grille cloth covering the bass drivers. The tweeters and crossovers are separately packaged, and you must mount them on top of the speaker bodies. This takes only a few minutes using the supplied bolts and thumbscrews. An interconnect cable from the tweeter/crossover module plugs into a socket on the top of the bass cabinet.

The 1-inch dome tweeter is mounted in free space (for low diffraction) and somewhat back from the plane of the bass drivers (for time alignment). A curved ramp extends down from the face of the driver-mounting plate to the front edge of the woofer enclosure, providing a hard reflective surface that directs high-frequency energy toward the listener and prevents the frequency-response notches that would otherwise occur because of delayed reflections from the top of the cabinet. In normal use, the tweeter and crossover are completely hidden by a rectangular cloth cap that matches the grille on the main enclosure.

Frequencies below 2 kHz are handled by two 6¼-inch woofers, which are mounted side by side below the tweeter, and a large passive radiator. The inner woofer of each speaker in a mirror-image pair is rolled off above 2 kHz, the outer woofer above 600 Hz. The intent is to reduce the off-axis comb filtering that occurs when two drivers are operated over the same frequency range. Connections to amplifiers are made at binding posts on the back panel, which accept banana plugs, spade lugs, or bare wire.

The RTA-12B's impedance curve is low over much of the frequency range but fairly smooth, with a maximum of 13.9 ohms at 50 Hz and minima of 2.9 ohms at 350 Hz and 1 kHz. From approximately 150 Hz to 1.5 kHz—the band in which most musical fundamentals occur—the speaker's impedance remains at or near 3 ohms. In the tweeter's range, above 2 kHz, the impedance meanders smoothly between the more comfortable limits of 7 and 11 ohms. But because of the low value of the impedance in the midrange and upper bass, some amplifiers might have trouble driving a pair of RTA-12Bs, and almost all would balk at two pairs in parallel.

This potential difficulty is ameliorated somewhat by the 12B's unusually high sensitivity, which—in combination with its high power-handling capacity—results in an exceptionally wide dynamic range. In Diversified Science Laboratories' pulsed-power test, the RTA-12B accepted 40 volts (equivalent to 23 dBW, or 200 watts, into 8 ohms) without excessive distortion, from which it delivered a thunderous output of 118¼ dB SPL at 1 feature is among the very few curves the S9 will throw your way.

There also are some unusual features on the back panel. The AC convenience outlet is welcome. There's an rF output for a stereo-AM adapter, anticipating an approved broadcast system, and a battery compartment that holds two AA cells to prevent memory loss due to power failures. Particularly welcome in areas enjoying Dolby FM broadcasts is a pair of outputs with built-in 25-microsecond de-emphasis, ready to feed properly equalized stereo to a decoder. The antenna options include the usual binding posts for AM and both 300- and 75-ohm FM leads, plus a coaxial 75-ohm connector. A loop antenna for AM fits a swivel support on the back panel or can be mounted on a similar swivel bracket that will stick to any appropriate surface up to about two feet away, if that will achieve better reception. It's a nice idea but, judging from our experience, it needs re-engineering: the adhesive on our sample was not strong enough to support the antenna's weight.

When you come to compare the S9's performance with that of competing models, you may not have to look far to find a better number here or there, but you'll have to look very far indeed to find numbers that are significantly better in any respect. Response is very flat, and separation exceptional; sensitivity is about as high as DSL has ever measured for us, and, conversely, both distortion and noise very low; though it doesn't show in our data, adjacent-channel selectivity is unusually high (DSL measured 7½ dB, which doesn't sound like much only because we're so used to the much higher alternate-channel figures). And listening confirms what the data declare: that the TU-S9 can hold its own against the sonic blandishments of any tuner you choose to compare it with. Fancier models may have extra features (CRT tuning aids, for example), but if you can hear a difference at all, it's likely to be in favor of the Sansui.

Circle 131 on Reader-Service Card
The Onkyo CP-1130F. It will startle you, shake you, satisfy and soothe you.

The Onkyo CP-1130F Computer Automated Direct-Drive Turntable is the most exciting fully automatic turntable in its price range. It not only provides a purity of sound unheard of in so affordable a unit, it also provides a breakthrough control feature that can extend the life of your recordings significantly.

At the push of a button, the CP-1130F's raised tonearm will automatically search across the record. So precise is its movement, that you can cue it to a single groove if you wish. Then at the touch of a second button, you can lower the tonearm with absolute accuracy. Without ever touching the tonearm or opening the dust cover, you control complete tonearm movement. Other important features include a straight-line, low-mass tonearm, brushless electronic servo direct drive, a diamond-polished platter, soft touch microcomputer controls, a memory repeat function, and full remote control capability. Hear the CP-1130F now at your Onkyo dealer.
DISCOVER GOLD.

MARantz uncoverS the gold standard of audio equipment.
Its performance will startle you. Its look will excite you. Its sound will move you. The classic quality only Marantz could produce.

DISCOVER THE SOLID GOLD ADVANCES.
Like our 24-Karat Solid Gold Plated input and output jacks for the ultimate in oxide free/low distortion audio connections.

Our fully computerized cassette deck and receivers that will push your system to new levels of flexibility. There's even a deck with an advanced Linear Skating Drawer mechanism that slides effortlessly out of the front panel for cassette loading.
And True Power™ Amplification, a Marantz engineering breakthrough that delivers 25% to 50% more power into your speakers than other comparably rated receivers or amplifiers. That's more power for more clean sound.
And there's still more. Because now we put a golden touch in every Marantz product— turntables, loudspeakers, portables. Everything. Each designed for better sound, not just better looks.

THE NAME THAT'S GOOD AS GOLD.
For over thirty years, Marantz has been recognized worldwide as a leader in quality, advanced stereo sound. So, it's only fitting that we should bring it to its new solid gold plateau.
There's a gold mine waiting to be discovered at your Marantz dealer now. Stop by soon. And take your pick.

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THE SOLID GOLD SOUND
Performance or quality.

The choice of equipment to be tested rests with the editors of HIGH FIDELITY. Samples tested. HIGH FIDELITY and Diversified Science Laboratories assume no responsibility for product performance or quality.

Report Policy: Equipment reports are based on laboratory measurements and controlled listening tests. Unless otherwise noted, test data and measurements are obtained by Diversified Science Laboratories. The choice of equipment to be tested rests with the editors of HIGH FIDELITY. Samples normally are supplied on loan from the manufacturer. Manufacturers are not permitted to read reports in advance of publication, and no report or portion thereof may be reproduced for any purpose or in any form without written permission of the publisher. All reports should be construed as applying to the specific equipment to be tested. HIGH FIDELITY and Diversified Science Laboratories assume no responsibility for product performance or quality.

New Equipment Reports

ROOM RESPONSE CHARACTERISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency (Hz)</th>
<th>On-axis response</th>
<th>Off-axis (30°) response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>60 dB</td>
<td>40 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>50 dB</td>
<td>30 dB</td>
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<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>40 dB</td>
<td>20 dB</td>
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<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>30 dB</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>20 dB</td>
<td>0 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>10 dB</td>
<td>-10 dB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SENSITIVITY (at 1 meter; 2.8-volt pink noise, 250 Hz to 6 kHz) 91 dB SPL

PULSED OUTPUT (at 1 meter; 300 Hz) 118 dB SPL from 40 volts peak

A YEAR AND A HALF ago, in the May 1980 issue, we reviewed the Phase Linear Model 8000 Series Two turntable and commented on its obvious source: Pioneer—Phase Linear’s parent company and the brand under which the 8000 has appeared in other parts of the world. Now the straight-tracking turntable design has percolated down into less heady regions of the audio sphere, and the PL-L800 bears Pioneer’s own name in token of its arrival for a broader market.

The motive system is a coreless drive motor with quartz phase-lock loop for the two standard speeds—33 and 45. There is a positive indication of correct speed (a lock pilot) but no means of intentionally varying pitch. (The vernier-and-strobe alternative, though it offers an important plus to some users, certainly doesn’t justify its extra cost for the majority of purchasers, in our opinion.) When you switch on the AC, the 800 is ready to play a 12-inch LP; because speed and size are independently controlled, you can select unconventional combinations of the two—to play audiophile 12-inch 45s automatically, for example. For esoteric sizes, such as 8- and 10-inch LPs, you must cue by hand.

Pressing the START/STOP button begins automatic playback—including cueing and setdown at the beginning and arm return and shutoff at the end of the disc. If you want the record to repeat, you press REPEAT, which will keep the

Listening tests bear out the measurements. Set up well away from the walls of our listening room, the RTA-12B sounds unusually open and spacious, with precise stereo imaging and an excellent sense of depth. Coloration is very low, most notably so on vocals and percussion instruments, which emerge with utter clarity. There is some tendency to brightness, however, and a noticeable lack of weight in the low end. Moving the speaker back against the rear wall largely eliminates these slight deficiencies, especially in the bass, although at some expense to the speaker’s still very fine imaging performance. Piano, organ, string bass, and timpani take on a fuller, more naturally balanced sound, making the wall position the favorite of most of our listening panel.

Much thought and care went into the design of the RTA-12B, and it has paid off in exceptional performance. The price is not low; neither is it extravagant by current standards. And this level of quality is rarely cheap. If you’re in the market for good sound (and good looks to boot) and don’t mind paying a little more to get a better product, you definitely should have a listen to the RTA-12B.

Circle 135 on Reader-Service card

Thinking Man’s Tangential from Pioneer


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

AC POWER

SPEED (33/45)

SIZE (12/7 INCH)

MODE DISPLAY

START/STOP

CUE (UP/DOWN)

ARM POSITION (IN, OUT)

REPEAT

NOVEMBER 1981
Arm-balance and VTF adjustments are supplied by conventional calibrated counterweight at back of arm "carriage." (Antiskating is not required in a tangent arm.) Note arm-lock button at lower right.

**AUDIO** New Equipment Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specification</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL AUDIBLE RUMBLE (ARLL)</td>
<td>-65 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOW &amp; FLUTTER (ANSI/IEEE weighted peak)</td>
<td>≤0.05% average, ≤0.07% max. instantaneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TONEARM RESONANCE AND DAMPING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vertical</td>
<td>7.2 Hz; 11-dB rise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lateral</td>
<td>6.8 Hz; 5.4-dB rise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Shure V-15type III cartridge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vertical</td>
<td>12.5 Hz; 9%-dB rise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lateral</td>
<td>8.4 Hz; 9%-dB rise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VTF-GAUGE ACCURACY</td>
<td>no measurable error, 0.5 to 3.0 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL LEAD CAPACITANCE</td>
<td>225 pF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Nikko Says It with Numbers**

In describing the next-to-top receiver in Nikko's current line, the NR-800, the first word that comes to mind is "superdigital" because, in addition to a digital tuning display and array of memory buttons, the front panel is dominated by an output-power display whose LEDs register in discrete steps of 7 to 8 dB and thus is essentially digital. At heart it is a good, middle-of-the-road receiver. Nikko's long history of building good value into its equipment here stands it in good stead. The 800 may not be for everyone, but it satisfies the priorities of a broad segment of the receiver market.

As far as the controls are concerned, there are separate AM and FM tuners, selected by the front-panel AM/FM switch; while you work with one, the other retains its last setting; unlike typical mechanical tuners, it doesn't lose your "place" on the FM dial when you change AM stations. There are four tuning modes, depending on the setting of the AUTO/MANUAL switch and the amount of finger pressure on the up and down tuning buttons. In AUTO, light pressure seeks out the next "receivable" station in the selected direction (the sensitivity depends on which of the three muting options you choose: HIGH, LOW, or OFF); harder pressure bypasses stations until you reach the portion of the dial in which you want to do your signal cycle going until a second touch of the button stops it. All of these functions—speed, speed lock, diameter setting, arm up/down, repeat, and arm motion in or out across the record—are signaled by graphic LED pilots on the mode-display panel.

The arm, which is constructed of polymer graphite, is fitted with a plug-in headshell whose arm mating is not the "universal" variety, but whose cartridge mounting provisions are standard. Thus the supplied moving-coil pickup can easily be replaced by any standard cartridge—moving-coil or otherwise. This feature will surely attract many users who would reject out of hand other models whose range of mating pickups is limited. Although Pioneer tells us it doesn't list the headshell in its accessories catalog, it is available as a replacement/part for multipickup users who want adlib interchangeability.

Though this is essentially a report on the turntable, we devoted some time to the supplied pickup—as, we imagine, most purchasers will, even if they plan to substitute their own favorite. Though it is a moving-coil design, its output is high enough (0.76 millivolts, ±½ dB, from 1 centimeter per second at 1 kHz, loaded by 50 kilohms) that it can be used with the standard phono inputs of typical preamps. At 2 grams, the median of Pioneer's recommended tracking-force range, DSL got encouraging results in the tests for distortion and maximum tracking level. Arm-resonance frequencies are nearly ideal, as the data show, and separation is good. Some eyebrows were raised by the frequency-response and square-wave tests, however: a marked overshoot in the latter appears to be related to a peak of 6 dB or more in the range just below 15 kHz. In listening, we do find transient-loaded highs (triangle, for instance) noticeably overetched, though the effect is not necessarily unpleasant. And voices (particularly, it seems, mezzo-sopranos) can take on a rather metallic luster. But the pickup is remarkably clean and open and created a very favorable impression with most program material.

Our admiration is directed primarily toward the turntable itself, however. In particular, we liked the automation scheme, which covers all the important functions without in any way inhibiting manual use. If you want to play a record's third band, for example, you can position the arm by hand. When you draw it away from its rest position, the platter drive starts automatically; meanwhile, the arm's drive motor will respond to any pickup displacement by tranquilly moving the arm "carriage" in the appropriate direction. If you don't want to continue play into the fourth band, you'll have to retrieve the arm manually, of course. And there's no means to prevent the arm from settling down when there is no record on the platter—though there is a "logic" system of sorts that, for example, flashes the arm-motion indicator LEDs if you try to cue up before you have released the arm lock that prevents misadventure during disc cleaning. This is, in a word, a thinking-man's automatic, not a sybarite's home juke box.

The arm drive is so silent and so responsive to manual displacement that it almost seems alive. And since it responds in both directions, it can cope with even outrageous record eccentricity, which not all tangent arms can. The handsome base design, in which arm and platter share a subsuspension, is virtually unaffected by external shock of any reasonable magnitude. All operating controls are accessible with the cover closed. Speed accuracy and stability are beyond reproach. Adding to these factors the geometric elegance of tangent tracking and the felicities of the automatic control scheme, we consider the ensemble unusually attractive.

*Circle 134 on Reader-Service Card*
...and then came the SE-9.

35 years ago, to satisfy listening preferences, serious music lovers had to redesign their listening rooms. Remove the drapes. Add a rug here. Rearrange the upholstered sofa there. Get rid of that crystal chandelier! Bass and treble tone controls came later, and they helped—but only a little. When you needed a boost in that lowest bass region, you had to accept boosted upper bass and mid-range tones as well—whether you needed them or not.

By 1958, the first equalizers appeared. They allowed you to alter specific bands of tones to suit the needs of the listening room—and the music program. With special mics, a pink noise generator, and a real-time analyzer, you could electronically adjust your system to your listening preference. If—that is—you didn’t mind spending several thousand dollars and a half hour adjusting and readjusting controls to enjoy a half hour of listening.

Then came Sansui’s remarkable SE-9 Compu-Equalizer. It takes the guesswork and the frustration out of equalization. At the touch of a button, the SE-9’s built-in pink noise generator feeds its signals first to one speaker, then the other. Sounds picked up by the SE-9’s calibrated microphone are then analyzed by its microprocessor. Sit back and amazement, as the SE-9’s motorized system moves past of its 16 fader controls (8 per channel) to create the curve that yields precisely flat response at your preferred listening location.

Touch another button, and the curve is memorized for future, instant recall. Move to another location—even another room—and the SE-9 can create and store a new curve—up to four of them.

At last, after 35 years, a perfect equalization system without errors or frustration. And, at a price that makes perfect equalization affordable for all serious music lovers.

See the SE-9 and Sansui’s truly complete line of high quality components and systems at your Sansui dealer today. Or write to us for details.
When you press the memory button, a pilot above it lights for a few seconds, during which time you can enter the selected frequency into any of the six memory positions. Because AM and FM selection functions are independent of each other, each button will memorize one station from each band. The memory is semipermanent, though the owner's manual (which is only average and therefore leaves much room for improvement) doesn't explain the modus operandi. Unplugging the set doesn't wipe the memories, but leaving it unplugged for a day or two does make them faller.

There is a five-LED signal-strength "meter," which we didn't find very useful for aiming our antenna. The positioning of the LEDs, with the bottom two at progressively lower levels, presumably is intended to suggest the tuner's limiting curve: actually, however, audible signal deterioration sets in well before the middle LED (representing the minimum of "full limiting") goes out. The antenna connections on the back panel are all binding posts. Those for AM can be connected to the leads from the supplied loop antenna, which can be removed from its back-panel swivel bracket and repositioned for better reception.

The five illuminating switches that comprise the selector group control tape functions in an unusual manner. Tape 1 and Tape 2 are independent of the three main selectors (PHONO, TUNER, and AUX), which are mutually exclusive, canceling your previous choice when you make a new one. The tape buttons, too, will cancel each other, but either can be switched off by punching it once again. Thus, if you have pushed Tape 1, it can be released by pressing either Tape 1 or Tape 2 but not by touching the other selector buttons.

This means that you can listen to either tape deck (assuming you use two) no matter which nontape source you have chosen without canceling that source. The same receiver switching is used whether you plan to play back a tape or (with a three-head deck) want to monitor the quality of something you are recording. But pressing either button makes its deck the source for dubbing; if you are recording on both decks, pushing Tape 1 or Tape 2 again will interpose that deck between your original source and the other deck. And if you are dubbing, you can't monitor the results on the copying deck without losing the feed from the source deck. Further, if you use either set of tape connections for an outboard signal processor—say, an equalizer or image enhancer—you will have the options of tape playback or source processing, but not processed playback. So, while we find the switching scheme very convenient in relatively simple systems, complex ones have to be thought out carefully if they are to work well with it.

The tone controls are gentle-acting. To say that both are capable of a little less than 10 dB of boost or cut is true but makes them sound inadequate; on the contrary, we appreciate their freedom from gross extremes, the evenness of their action, and the fact that both leave the midrange virtually unaltered. The rather high threshold of the loudness action, which includes a bit of hike in the high treble along with a broad bass boost, suggests that Nikko expects the NR-800 to be used with relatively inefficient speakers. With the fairly efficient ones in our test setup, we find the effect a little exaggerated, but judging loudness action is, at best, highly personal and subjective. The infrasonic filter is very gentle, but any attenuation of warp frequencies is welcome when you're having a problem with them, and

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Circle 16 on Reader-Service Card
BASF Chrome. The world’s quietest tape is like no tape at all.

Today only one high bias tape is able to combine outstanding sensitivity in the critical high frequency range with the lowest background noise of any oxide tape in the world. That tape is BASF’s Professional II.

Professional II is like no other tape because it’s made like no other tape. While ordinary high bias tapes are made from modified particles of ferric oxide, Professional II is made of pure chromium dioxide. These perfectly shaped and uniformly sized particles provide a magnetic medium that not only delivers an absolute minimum of background noise, but outstanding high frequencies as well.

Like all BASF tapes, Professional II comes encased in the new ultra-precision cassette shell for perfect alignment, smooth, even movement and consistent high fidelity reproduction.

With Professional II, you’ll hear all of the music and none of the tape. And isn’t that what you want in a tape?

All BASF tape cassettes come with a lifetime guarantee. Should any BASF cassette ever fail — except for abuse or mishandling — simply return it to BASF for a free replacement.

Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab chose BASF Professional II in preference to all other cassettes for their Original Master Recording High Fidelity Cassettes. These state of the art, high-priced cassettes are duplicated in real time from the original master tapes of some of the most prized test recording units of our time.

For the best recordings you’ll ever make.
A lot of high-fidelity manufacturers would like to impress you with how well their turntables play sideways or even upside down. But at Sony, we believe a much more valid test of a turntable is how well it plays flawed records. Which, in point of fact, is every single record you buy.

So, to prove to you just how much better Sony's new PS-X600 makes your imperfect records sound, bring us a warped record. An old favorite that barely plays. And play it on the X600.

Instead of bumps, jumps, clunks and other distortions, you'll hear crisp, clear sound. That's because the X600 features the only tonearm that actually comes to life the instant the record begins to play—Sony's exclusive Biotracer. The Biotracer's remarkable two-motor, computer guidance system actively senses record warps, center holes off-center, unwanted resonances—those factors that degrade the play of a record—and instantly compensates for them.

And you don't need a special cartridge for it to work. The Biotracer is compatible with the widest range of cartridges.

Other outstanding features: a Magnedic servo speed control system works like a quartz watch to lock onto the correct speed; gel-filled feet isolate the turntable from vibrations; there's automatic record-size sensing and other sophisticated features without the sophisticated price.

So the point is simple. If you want to play records upside down, there are several turntables to choose from. But if you do your record playing right side up, there's really only one name to choose. It's Sony.
Sound Concepts Enhances the Image


"Center" figures show results when test signal is fed equally to both inputs and one output measured; "side" figures show results when test signal is fed to one input and the summed output measured.

FREQUENCY RESPONSE
center +½ dB, <10 Hz to 19.5 kHz; -3 dB at 48.4 kHz
side +½, -½ dB, <10 Hz to 19.5 kHz; -3 dB at 48.4 kHz

Input overload (set for unity gain)
center >8 volts
side ≥2 volts*

Distortion (THD; 20 Hz to 20 kHz; at 2 volts)
center <0.01%
side <0.015%

S/N ratio ≥76 dB*

*At worst-case control setting; see text.

Sterophonic sound can produce remarkably realistic imaging, but in theory, at least, it's far from perfect. Even assuming perfect channel separation in the recording and playback apparatus, your listening room blends the sound from your speakers—homogenizes it, so to speak—into a composite that limits the width and realism of the stereo image. "Image enhancement" devices intended to counteract this effect have been getting a lot of attention recently. The Sound Concepts IR-2100 is one that possesses some rather unusual technical and human-engineering features.

First let's look at the limitations of "normal" stereo. The image is created by differences in the loudness and phase (timing) of the sound waves that reach your ears. If you're sitting equidistant from the left and right speakers (as you should be), sounds that emanate from each speaker at the same time will reach the corresponding ear simultaneously. If the sounds are equal in strength, your brain assimilates the information, and you "locate" the sound as coming from directly in front of you. No well-balanced stereo system has difficulty reproducing this center ("mono") image. But suppose an instrument in an orchestral sound source is to the left of center. The sound will arrive a bit sooner and a bit stronger at the left microphone than at the right. The left speaker therefore will reproduce it sooner and at a higher level than the right. The left speaker therefore will reproduce it sooner and at a higher level than the right. Your left ear will hear the sound first, because it's closer to the left

the filter reduces response by about 10 dB in the region of worst warps, around 5 Hz. Added to the fixed infrasonic rolloff in the phono section, that's some 20 dB of attenuation in this region. The detented volume control produces reasonably even steps, as such things go, but we continue to view the feature as a slight affectation. (A true stepped control can be calibrated for professional use; the increments in the detented alternative are too hit-or-miss for that.)

On the DSL test bench, the NR-800 showed nary a glitch. Considering Nikko's long experience, we wouldn't expect any; but it's reassuring to see this evidence of engineering consistency. In our opinion, it represents a far greater achievement in this price class than does championship performance in some respects coupled with so-so behavior elsewhere. And, of course, the NR-800 sounds good in all respects. The most virulent objection anyone could muster, in fact, was over the lack of a switch to defeat the flashing of the power display. If you're in the market for a midprice, midpower receiver, the NR-800 leaves little room for improvement.

Circle 133 on Reader-Service Card
The control unit is connected to your system's signal-processor or tape-monitor loop via a rather heavy umbilical cord. Since the IR-2100 offers no tape-monitor switching to replace what it pre-empts, you may prefer to insert it between the preamp and power amp. If signal levels here are too far below the nominal 1-volt maximum (and they often are, particularly if a high-power amp feeds relatively efficient speakers, forcing low settings of the preamp volume control), the effective S/N ratio will suffer: for $10, though, Sound Concepts will optimize the IR-2100 for low-level use. Power is supplied to the umbilical by a plug-in transformer. (It's big enough to block adjacent convenience outlets, so you may want to run it off an extension or plug it directly into a wall socket.)

Diversified Science Laboratories measured A-weighted noise levels that varied from 76 to almost 89 dB below our 1/2-volt reference, depending on how the controls were set. With low IMAGE settings—which we prefer—noise is at least 86 dB below reference level. Input overload (the flip side of this coin) depends on whether the sound source is centered or far to one side, since the IR-2100 handles each differently. Unlike some image enhancers, it concentrates its attention on the "difference" (stereo) information and does virtually nothing to the center (mono) image. To our way of thinking, this is a distinct advantage: the center image remains rock-stable in the stereo panoply. Incidentally, maximum output level approaches 9 volts—far more than you'd ever need—and interface impedances are well chosen.

Center-channel frequency response is ruler-flat: that for off-center sources varies in accordance with the processing, but the total acoustic power remains flat within 1 dB in the audio band. (Some other processors introduce a bass prominence that is difficult to compensate for, complicating the setup procedure.) At fairly high VOLUME settings, the IR-2100 applies slightly more than 6 dB of gain; a middle setting delivers unity gain.

Not all recordings take kindly to this sort of image enhancement. Some just don't respond: others may be too noisy. The processing seems to "localize" surface noise and thus makes it more apparent than it would be otherwise. But when it has good material to work with, the results can be impressive. We were particularly impressed with the Telarc Firebird (DG-10039), and you're more likely to get best results with audiophile recordings such as this than with the garden variety, which often are recorded with more microphones and less care, introducing confused and ambiguous phase relationships that can undo the stereo enhancement.

With good source material, the sound stage expands beyond the confines of the loudspeaker setup in both breadth and depth. We find the effect most satisfactory when we sit somewhat closer to the speakers than normal and not too close to the rear wall. (Reflections from a wall behind your head apparently interfere with the desired cancellation.) The listening area for the best results is fairly narrow, but not as narrow as theory would seem to indicate. Since it takes some control diddling to get an optimum image, which can be assessed only from the listening position, we appreciate the hand-held remote design. There's one thing the Sound Concepts won't do, and that's mess around with the center image. It remains stable, and the enhancement takes place about it. And that may be the IR-2100's most important virtue of all.

Circle 136 on Reader-Service Card
IMPROVE YOUR IMAGE...

...With True Depth and Natural Ambience

If the sound image from your recordings leaves you flat, consider this—Dahlquist DQ-10 Phased Array™ loudspeakers give music back its substance and form and let you explore its inner spaces.

The DQ-10's precise, stable imaging, and open, airy presentation of each individual instrument make them perhaps the most musically involving loudspeakers you'll ever hear.

It's all made possible by our patented Phased Array™ principle: a system of mounting and aligning each driver to minimize diffraction and eliminate time delay distortion. The result is a five-way system that blends into a single, coherent, and naturally accurate sound source. No wonder the DQ-10 has been acclaimed as a classic by esoteric audiophiles and dedicated music lovers alike.

We think that you'll be impressed as well. Take the opportunity soon to audition a pair of Dahlquist DQ-10s and learn for yourself how important a good image can be.

DQ-10's are available in black or white grille cloths with solid oak or solid walnut side pieces and are supplied in mirror-imaged pairs. Remarkably, they are priced at a most reasonable $500 each.

DAHLQUIST
601 Old Willers Path Hauppauge, New York 11788 (516) 234-5757
Play the Rack-System Prepackaging Game

**COLUMN A**
The Moderate Approach

- Integrated Amp
- Receiver
- Cassette
- Tuner
- Equalizer

**COLUMN B**
The High-End Approach

- Preamp
- Power Amp
- Tuner
- Cassette Deck
- Signal Processor
- Timer/Real-Time Analyzer

**Directions:**
The object of play is to devise the best possible one-brand stereo system. First, carefully cut out the elements along the dotted lines—the success of a rack system is measured partly by its neatness.

Next, decide between the timid approach (Column A) and the bold one (Column B). You may not mix components from one group with those from the other. If you do, you must return all cutouts and begin again. Remember that Column B gives you more choices and therefore requires more thought to create a "good" system. (In competitive play, the better system wins.)

Having decided on the degree of challenge, sort the components into two piles: package basics and package options. (This is a crucial step in competitive play because it determines what components you may or may not deploy in the end-game—your final system choice.) To deploy a component, place it on an empty shelf, bending back the tabs to hold it in place. You must deploy all your package-basic components. The turntable is considered package-basic (though in real-world systems this is not necessarily so) and already is deployed for you on the top shelf. You may also deploy any package-option components—but not all of them. (If you deploy all in competitive play, you must declare yourself "wiggled out" and either 1) recommence play, beginning with the sorting of the components or 2) switch to Column B if you had previously been playing Column A.)

Finally, judge your system. Inexperienced players will create redundancies—two tuning sections, for example, where good players will have only one. (In competitive play, you must deduct points for each duplication. If there is both a cassette and a receiver in the system, the player is penalized separately for the redundant preamp, amplifier, and tuner sections.)
Components by the Rackful

Does prepackaging components in one-brand systems make sense?
by Robert Long

As Patent Files can verify, nothing is ever entirely new and original, yet the familiar always seems to be coalescing in unexpected ways. If you're not paying attention, the process can creep up on you. For many audiophiles, the present rage for "rack systems" is an unexpected—perhaps even traumatic—incursion into the familiar world of componentry. If the opportunity to assemble a system by handpicking individual elements is what components are made for, what sense does it make to prepackage them in a cut-and-dried system? But I'm getting ahead of my story.

The basics were all there a few years ago. A series of amplifiers designed for the professional market—and, therefore, for mounting in nineteen-inch racks—by such companies as Crown International and BGW had become the darlings of the home-audiophile market through their combination of high power, low distortion, and often sophisticated protection circuitry. Gradually, rack-mount styling came to suggest quality, and manufacturers began adding rack-mount "ears" and handles to designs that weren't intended for the professional market and, in some cases, wouldn't even fit the standard spacing of professional racks.

The next step was obvious: These same manufacturers began producing furniture-style racks—first as a means of displaying their new "rack-mount" components in stores, and later as home products. Pioneer was among the first to capitalize on this idea by assembling an all-Pioneer system composed, in this case, of its most prestigious products—models that might, in fact, be employed in some professional applications. Nikko, among others, took this idea off on a very different tack. Though it offered a series of large rack-mount separates in its recently introduced high-tech line (the Alpha 1, etc.), Nikko consistently chose the more modestly priced slimline components to display in its rack cases. Not only did a lot more components fit into the rack that way, dramatizing the "family design" characteristics, but as it turned out, many more purchasers were willing to consider a moderate-price one-brand system than were eager for semipro gear with a brand restriction—explicit or implicit.

And the sort of shopper who was most likely to stop and stare in admiration at the rack systems was not the traditional audiophile. Often he or she was a neophyte who knew that components were supposed to offer the quality route to sound reproduction but was rather intimidated by them. To such a shopper, the rack systems appeared to have all the technological glitter of separates, but shorn of their most intimidating elements: the need to learn a little about the technology if the specific components are to be appropriate to each other and the system hookup at home is to be successful. And there is the germ from which the rack-systems idea has grown rapidly over the last year or two.

What Systems Offer

The most obvious sort of rack system parallels what you might buy if you were to shop for a one-brand set of separate components. A typical configuration at the middle price points (say, about $1,000) would include a tuner (often AM/FM, with station presets if it is a digital model), an integrated amplifier (rated at about 17 dBW—say, 40 or 50 watts—per side), a pair of speakers, and the rack/case to hold them. Usually the package also includes a turntable and magnetic pickup, though you may find systems in which a cassette deck is included and the turntable is an option, or even ones with both included. (Fisher includes a microcassette deck and a personal portable as well in one system, but most companies offer cassette decks as the sole tape option.)

As you go downward in price (most component manufacturers bottom out their rack systems at around $500-600) it becomes impossible to build all these chassises and maintain the price, so receivers or other combinations become the rule, usually with about 13 dBW (20 watts) per channel. Many of the least expensive systems incorporate cassette-players (receivers-cum-cassette decks), thus making a graceful transition to the compact three-piece "stereos" in which the turntable is mounted directly on top of the cassette player to form a single unit. At this point, obviously, we are talking of mass-market goods that may or may not qualify as high fidelity equipment, depending on your personal value scale.

Moving toward the other extreme puts us in territory that would qualify as high fidelity by most standards—but not all. Product specifications are often indistinguishable from those of regular components. A head-count of features in any component category will generally give similar results when you compare rack systems with separates, though you get more chance to pick and choose your features if you buy separates, of course. But the available component categories are somewhat different, once the basics—amps, tuners, and so on—have been taken care of. Even elements as "eso-
As You Like It

The variety of formats that can be found in rack systems is astonishing, as these examples demonstrate.

Product specs are indistinguishable from those of separate components.

upper price levels. You can buy comparable remote controls for collections of separates, but the difficulty of retrofitting this function to components that were not designed for it can be immense—as can the price of a finished remotely controllable system that is assembled in this way. The integral-design approach obviously is far more efficient, and the variety of functions that can be controlled remotely may be greater.

Gaudete Emptor

It's tempting to look at the differences between the prepackaged systems and the separates as a subject for debate. An argument could be made, for example, that the separates simply create confusion and hazards of possible mismatch as the price for the elitism and snobbery of the relatively few music lovers who know enough about the subject to avoid its pitfalls. The obvious rejoinder is that prepackaging inherently inhibits the raison d'être of componentry: choice; it is as if the dead and discredited concept of consoles and compacts, with all its compromises, had come back to haunt us in a new winding-sheet. And there is some truth in both points of view, though neither is entirely fair.

First, let's give the pick-and-choose approach its due. There are some things you simply can't get in a system that's devised to meet an existing market. An obvious example is in dynamic processors. If you take your taping at all seriously,
you're probably wondering whether you should also have Dolby C or DBX noise reduction—or both. And since you're interested in these features, you should also be looking for the tape-matching adjustments—for fine-tuning bias, recording EQ, tape sensitivity, and even azimuth, whether manual or automatic—which help get the best performance from your tapes and, therefore, from your noise reduction. You'll look long and hard before you find these noise reduction systems or related features in the decks available for prepackaged systems.

You can always get some or all of them as add-ons by buying extra components for use with the system, of course, but then you're jumping right back into the field of separates and, in some cases, you may find the system's switching won't accept the additions very graciously.

Rack systems generally outstrip separates in convenience features.

The main point, however, is that if you're eventually going to need a mix-and-match component system, you'll do better to start out with that in mind and assemble one that's suited to your needs. Of course, since the individual parts of the rack systems are genuine components (give or take a few features), you can replace them one at a time as either your tastes change, but you can't expect to find replacements that both match the original rack system and are on the leading edge of the new technology. So in a number of important ways, going the rack-system route can involve real compromise.

Can involve real compromise. If your requirements are relatively simple and—more importantly—close to those of the sort of buyer for whom such a system has been packaged, there needn't be any compromise at all. It's not every music listener who feels eager or even comfortable about making equipment choices, and the notion that everyone would want a handpicked component system in the best of all possible worlds is both naive and foolish. But rack systems offer something better than the black-and-white choices of earlier years, when it was either componentry or low-fi, with precious little in between. Essentially, prepackaging gives you components with training wheels; you can remove the helpful restrictions whenever you're ready and move full steam ahead into separates—which you couldn't do with typical consoles or compacts.
What to do when your favorite LP is out-of-shape.
by Peter Dobbin

What could be more frustrating than taking a favorite LP off the shelf and putting it on the turntable, only to find that its gently modulated groove has somehow been transmogrified into a playback-defying roller coaster? For me, it's getting a brand-new record that has been rendered unplayable through warping due to careless handling and storage at some point during its manufacture or shipping. The idea for this article, in fact, came from my desire to flatten out a recent birthday gift—"Nurds" by The Roches—that could not be returned to the dealer 1,000 miles away.

The three methods outlined in the following pages are usually not necessary if you have time—lots of time. A warped record will, in fact, heal itself if you return it to its jacket and shelve it with your other records. (Naturally, we're assuming vertical storage.) Depending on the severity of the warp, the thickness of the vinyl, the amount of pressure being exerted on both sides of the disc by its neighbors (firm but not tight), and the ambient temperature of the room, the healing process will take anywhere from a few weeks to a few months. Judging by the severity of the warps in this LP—broad undulations over most of the surface and a hideous bead-bump (see left)—the "natural" process would've taken too long.
Though I didn't have much hope that this technique would help with a bead warp, the combination of Platter Matter ($55) and Eon Pod ($15) had proven effective on less severe deformations—especially dish-type warps. The thick, squishy Platter Matter replaces the turntable's existing mat. The record is then forced into tight contact with it by the clamping action of the Eon Pod. The downward pressure didn't reach far enough out, so to speak, to effect a material improvement of the bead, however.

Though not marketed as warp controllers per se, the Kenwood DS-20 outer disc stabilizer ($150) and the DS-21 record weight ($40) form an effective, albeit expensive, team. With “Nurds,” the broad undulations were effectively flattened, and the large bead-warp was reduced enough so that the pickup could track the outer grooves.

As a first step in using the combination of devices, the DS-
20's plastic positioning template is placed over the record to ensure that the outer brass ring will ride exactly on the bead of the I.P. Kenwood says that after a little practice you might not need to use the template. With the outer ring correctly positioned on the bead, the template is removed, and the record weight is placed over the spindle. This system has lots of caveats, however. The heavy brass ring and inner weight might present too much mass for a low-torque motor, and turntables with spring suspensions could well bottom out. Also, some phono pickups with large, squared-off bodies will rub against the inner edge of the ring, making outer-groove tracking impossible.

This is my favorite method for curing warps, and when done properly it is a surefire solution. Total cost of materials: about $10, for two sheets of 1/4-inch plate glass 13 inches square. The recipe is really quite simple, but precautions must be followed in each step. 1) Make sure that both the glass and the record are scrupulously clean. Any particles of dust that undergo the treatment will be imbedded forever in the deli-
cate vinyl. 2) Sandwich the record between the two sheets of glass. 3) Preheat the oven for about 15 minutes at the lowest possible setting. Oven thermometers and thermostats are unreliable at these very low temperature settings, so don't try to calibrate the process this way. 4) Turn the oven off. 5) Place the glass-and-record sandwich on one of the oven racks and close the door. In about 15 minutes, open the oven door and let the sandwich cool in place. Complete cooling is very important—half an hour at the minimum. If your oven is equipped with a pilot flame, the normal ambient oven temperature might be sufficient for the "baking" process. In that case, let the record sandwich cool out of the oven.

Remember: It's always better to err on the safe side—too low a temperature, too short a time in the oven—than to overdo it. A record that has not been sufficiently dewarped can always be treated again; a melted record is a total loss. HF
VideoFRONTS

Latest video news and products  by William Tynan

An octagonal shape characterizes Microtech's new Apollo X9 satellite TV antenna ($1,995). Although this design has substantially less surface area than a comparable 10-foot parabolic antenna, it is said to offer better reception. Constructed from a single piece of fiberglass, this is the least expensive model in Microtech's TV antenna line.

Stereo-audio capability is built into General Electric's new 25-inch color-console television Model 25EM-2870P ($1,290). The stereo amplifier is rated at 10 dBW (10 watts) per channel. It can be used with such stereo sources as video discs or tapes. The set also features a room-light sensor; dual-mode remote control; and 105-channel capability (35 of those channels are designated for basic cable reception). Separate bass and treble controls, audio-output jacks, and a full complement of audio- and video-input jacks are included.

Designed specifically for 19-inch television sets, Gusdorf's 2490 video cabinet ($87) has a VCR shelf that slides out for easy accessibility to the deck. Storage space is located at the base of the unit, behind a set of doors. The cabinet is 31 1/2 inches high and has a walnut-vein finish.

Ease of relabeling is the goal of the Logan Design Group's new Indenta-Tape video-cassette labeling system. Specifically designed for people who reuse video tapes, each package contains five sets of four different kinds of labels, including one on which you can mark the number of times a particular tape has been played. The kit also includes a special marking pen with fast-drying, smear-resistant ink that can, however, be erased easily with a damp cloth or tissue. Other labels are provided for titles, tape length, and special notations. The price of one packet is $5.00.

For more information, circle the appropriate number on the Reader-Service Card.

145 Microtech  
146 The Cable Works  
147 Design Institute  
148 General Electric  
149 RCA  
150 Pioneer  
151 AMCO  
152 RCA

With an eye on decor, the Design Institute of America is offering a modular wall system called the Cityscape Entertainment Center. Doors are of Diaglass, which conceals a video or TV screen when the set is off; when the set is on it is clearly visible through the glass. Modules are 22 inches square and are available in a variety of heights. Price depends on the number and type of elements incorporated; the design shown here sells for approximately $10,000.

The deluxe entry among RCA's new VHS video cassette recorders is the VFT-650 ($1,500). This top-of-the-line VCR includes a 105-channel cable-ready tuner and a wireless full-function remote control. The tuner is of the fourteen-day/eight-program variety. Features include a memory counter and such special effects as still frame, single-frame advance, double speed, variable slow motion, and picture search.
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The brightest ideas in the world are here today.

Circle 20 on Reader-Service Card
Shopping for your first VCR? Then you'll soon be faced with an array of features that can be confusing even to an experienced videophile. Every VCR, whether of portable or home design, has basic controls such as PLAY, RECORD, FAST FORWARD, and REVERSE. But what about those "special" features? Which ones do you need? Which ones are important for your particular purposes?

Special features fall into roughly three functional areas: programmability, or the ability to predetermine automatic time and channel-shifting; variable viewing speeds, or the ability to watch the picture at anything from a single frame at a time to twenty or more times normal speed; and remote capability, or the ability to operate the recorder without leaving the comfort of your armchair.

Programmability

The tuner/timer section of your VCR determines the degree of its programmability. Some basic tuners merely record sequentially: that is, you can set them to turn on and turn off at particular times. Real programmability, however, is the ability to change channels automatically as well as to record at different times on different days. The most sophisticated units can record up to eight different programs across a fourteen-day period. While you may not need the full capabilities every time you record, if you're away on vacation, for example, you can tape your favorite shows automatically.

Variable Viewing Speeds

How you'll use your VCR determines the special features that you'll need.

by William Tynan
If your main interest is in time-shifting programs for later viewing, then the ability to see the picture at a number of different speeds may seem of limited importance. However, there will be occasions when you'll want to see a scene either in slow motion or still frame to concentrate on a particular detail. This is especially true if you own a portable VCR and record your own video movies.

The types of variable frame speeds available run the gamut from still frame to almost full-speed advance. Still frame is essentially what the term implies—the ability to view a particular frame of a tape as if it were a still picture. Until recently, VCR design was not sufficiently sophisticated to eliminate interframe noise bars from still pictures. Now, many units use additional heads and special circuitry to create noiseless stills. If you plan to use this feature a good deal, it is worth investigating the newer, noiseless units.

One step up from still frame is single-frame advance, which facilitates viewing the tape one frame at a time—much as you would a series of color photographic slides. This function is also noiseless on some of the new models.

Simple slow motion is available on many VCRs. Variable slow motion is more useful, however, because it enables you to adjust the speed of playback. This feature also comes in a noiseless variety. The technique used here involves advancing the tape alternately at regular and slow-motion speeds with the result that the interframe noise bars are not visible. Because this technique is so complex, noise-free variable slow motion is most effective on tapes made on the same machine. Otherwise the tracks may not match exactly and you may pick up some interframe noise.

Fast-viewing modes include 2x (two-times normal speed) and 3x (three-times); they allow you to move fairly quickly through a program and locate a particular scene. High-speed search modes operate at twenty or more times normal speed and—though the interframe bar is almost always visible—enable you to locate specific parts of the tape very quickly.

Some decks include electronic program indexing, which automatically locates the beginning of a program. In some cases a signal is placed on the tape when the RECORD function is engaged. Later, when advancing or rewinding in a fast mode, the deck senses the electronic signal and automatically stops. Other machines stop when they sense the absence of video signals between two programs. However, these units can be fooled if the program has been recorded on a previously used, unerased tape, or if inadequate blank space has been left between recorded segments.

What comprises “full-function” remote control varies among brands.

Remote Capability

Remote control is an almost universally useful feature. If you get the type that has channel selection, you can use it with your TV, independent of the VCR. Many remote control devices are called “full-function” though what that actually means varies among brands.

Ideally, a “full-function” key pad has all the controls that the VCR has. Among the most useful remote functions are channel selection, pause (for editing out commercials while recording), remote pause/still (essentially the same as pause, except that a picture remains on the screen until you disengage the mode), and remote fast wind.

One other important feature is interscene stabilization, which eliminates the noise, or “glitch.” that occurs at the point where you have stopped recording and then started again (as you would do when editing out a commercial). A break in the synchronization track occurs whenever you stop recording; without the stabilization circuit, in playback the picture will jump, waver, or be noisy as the edit points pass over the playback heads. A VCR with interscene stabilization circuitry backs up several video fields from the point where you stopped recording, so when you resume taping there is a degree of overlap. This feature works with varying degrees of success, and it is one you should check out if you will be doing a lot of real-time editing.

Certainly more special features will be seen on new VCRs during the coming months. But the great versatility already available should be sufficient to meet the needs of most videophiles for some time to come.
The problem: How to cram color TV information into a system designed for black-and-white.

by Edward J. Foster

Not surprisingly, the technique used to achieve compatible color TV was similar to that used to produce monocompatible stereo FM, although the video problem was more complex and compromise more likely. In stereo FM circuitry, the left and right signals are combined (L+R) into a single, monophonic signal that a mono receiver can detect in a normal fashion. A difference signal (L-R) is multiplexed, or piggybacked, on top of the mono signal. This difference signal modulates a 38-kHz ultrasonic carrier and is ignored by a mono receiver. A stereo receiver responds to the 38-kHz subcarrier, recovers the difference signal, and—by adding it to and subtracting it from the mono (L+R) signal—reconstructs the two independent channels.

In each FM channel there is enough additional spectrum space for the ultrasonic carrier, but in the frequency spectrum assigned to a broadcast television channel, nearly all the available bandwidth is needed for video information. The question, then, was how to transmit the RGB (red, green, blue—see October VIDEO TODAY) color information, which we intuitively would expect to require three times as much space as a black-and-white signal.

This dilemma is solved by one of the peculiarities of human vision: Fortunately, our eyes do not respond to color in fine detail. Unless a color spot is relatively large, we cannot distinguish precisely what color it is. Thus, it is not necessary to transmit as much color information as brightness or "luminance" information.

Fine detail in video is equivalent to high-frequency information (see July VIDEO TODAY). So the bandwidth needed by the color signals is narrower than might be expected, provided that brightness is transmitted in sufficient detail. All color TV systems employ this principle by separating the color and luminance signals, transmitting the latter in fine detail in the normal black-and-white channel, and piggybacking low-detail color information on top of it. The technique is analogous to using a relatively broad brush to paint color on a finely detailed background.

In the U.S., TV channels are spaced 6 MHz apart in the VHF and UHF bands. Of this available space, 4 MHz is used for video information, sound is transmitted on a subcarrier at 4.5 MHz, and the remainder is used for guard bands. In the compatible-color NTSC system, the color information modulates a subcarrier placed at 3.579545 MHz—the significance of this frequency will become apparent later—which is transmitted along with the video luminance information.

All standard color TV systems assume that if color information does not appreciably affect the luminance of the reproduced picture, it will not be noticeable on a black-and-white receiver and—other than creating the desired colors—will not be seen on a color TV either. This approach allows the color subcarrier to be inserted right along with the video information and not be visible itself.

Since the color subcarrier is a high-frequency video signal, it might appear on a black-and-white set as a fine pattern of stripes—if suitable preventative pre-
cations were not taken. Part of the trick in eliminating this interference lies with the particular choice of subcarrier frequency. 3.579545 MHz, which is "frequency interleaved" with the horizontal and vertical scanning frequencies and with the sound subcarrier. The purpose of this arrangement is to eliminate intermodulation, or "beats," among the four signals. Beats would appear in the picture as a moving pattern of bars, a phenomenon far more noticeable than the fine stationary pattern that interfering produces. Furthermore, frequency filters are used to notch out the color subcarrier in order to minimize its interference with the luminance information. Finally, the particular choice of frequencies involved places the color subcarrier at an odd multiple of half the horizontal scanning rate, causing the interference pattern to interleave from scan to scan, thus appearing as fine dots too small to be seen at normal viewing distances.

To achieve the necessary frequency interleaving, slight changes had to be made in the established horizontal and vertical scanning rates. Rather than being 15.750 Hz and 60 Hz as they were in the original black-and-white system (see Part I of this series in the July Video Today), the NTSC color system uses 15.734.264 Hz and 59.94 Hz respectively. The new frequencies are so close to the old that existing black-and-white sets synchronize easily with them.

The luminance information is transmitted in the same manner that it has always been for black-and-white reception, and it is not necessary to transmit all three color signals independently.

Hue and Tint controls let you adjust theoretically "perfect" colors to suit your taste.

Just as with stereo FM, transmitting two of the three colors allows the third to be generated electronically in the receiver by subtracting the sum of the color signals from the luminance signal (see October Video Today). The remainder is the "missing" third color.

Sometimes, however, crosstalk between the two transmitted color signals can cause color fringes at the edges of "neutral" (black, grey, and white) objects. To eliminate this problem, the NTSC system transmits color information as two "chrominance" signals (I and Q), which are derived from the luminance, red, and blue information in such a way that the color information goes to zero as the saturation of the colors decreases. Since the eye is most sensitive to color fringes on neutral objects, this technique minimizes the visibility of crosstalk-induced errors.

Obviously, the NTSC color television system is quite complex. To keep your home TV receiver synchronized with the transmitter so that it can decode the color information properly, a short burst of the color subcarrier is tacked onto each horizontal blanking interval. The transmitter controls the frequency accuracy of the color subcarrier to within ±10 Hz, and the subcarrier burst synchronizes a crystal oscillator within the receiver precisely.

The burst also tells the TV that the transmission it is receiving is in color and activates the color circuitry. When the subcarrier is absent, a "color killer" turns off the color demodulator and forces the set into the black-and-white mode. This assures that when the picture is weak the video noise will appear as white snow and not multicolored confetti. Occasionally a technician at the station forgets to turn off the color generator when transmitting an old black-and-white movie, and you're treated to random color splotches.

While the TV station theoretically is transmitting a picture in "perfect" color and a well-adjusted set should reproduce it perfectly, you may not agree with the TV technician's idea of what "perfect" color is. Sometimes station color technicians are literally asleep at the switch: as a result, color balance can change from program to program or from segment to segment. To deal with problems of this sort, you have a tint or hue control to vary the red/green balance and a color (intensity) control to adjust color saturation from pastel to vivid. Essentially, the TINT varies the strengths of the color signals relative to each other, while the COLOR adjusts the relative level of the color signals as a whole relative to the luminance. You should use these controls freely. just as you would the tone controls in your stereo system, to achieve the most pleasing color rendition.
Q. I know that you can use some consumer versions of 35mm cameras underwater without any special protection, but are there any such portable video cameras? If not, is there a simple housing you can use to protect the camera and shoot underwater, even if it's just in the swimming pool?—Edward Hargrove, Mountain View, Calif.

A. To the best of our knowledge, there are no underwater video cameras on the consumer market. For that matter, we haven't seen an underwater housing for a video camera either, although it's conceivable one might exist. The housing would be more complicated to make than one for a 35mm camera, because you'd need waterproof multipin electrical connectors for the cable. You'd also need to have access to the zoom and focusing controls and the run button.

I've had reasonably good luck shooting underwater in a swimming pool by rigging a submersible box fitted with a large, flat mirror at a 45-degree angle at the bottom. The box is weighted to give it neutral buoyancy. I keep the camera above the water line where it will be safe and shoot the image reflected by the mirror.

Consider the setup an upside-down periscope if you will. The pool has to be very well lighted for this technique to work, and it's only good to a depth of a few feet. It has been helpful in analyzing a swimmer's underwater strokes, however.

Q. A lot has been written about the new generation of video recorders that use ¼-inch tape instead of ½-inch tape. [See the "Hands-On Report" in the September VIDEO TODAY, for example.—Ed.] Can the picture quality in this smaller format really match that of the ½-inch format?

A. Obviously, ¼-inch wide tape has less surface area per inch than a ½-inch tape, so there's less magnetic material with which to capture the information. But don't discount technological advances. Remember when high fidelity tape recording required ¼-inch tape running at 7½ or 15 ips? Now we have cassette decks that run at a quarter to an eighth of those speeds. Use tape that is just over half as wide, and outperform the best consumer open-reel decks of yesteryear. The moral is obvious.

Video Q.A.

by Edward J. Foster

Video Discs

- Columbia Pictures Home Entertainment has hopped onto the optical bandwagon, and its first Laser Disc offerings (all in the one-hour/side CLV mode) include: Tess, Close Encounters of the Third Kind—The Special Edition, The China Syndrome, California Suite, and Chapter Two.

- Magnetic Video, making big news this fall with its jump into video discs. Initial offerings, 40 in all, are in the Laser Disc format and include: Nine to Five, All That Jazz, Alien, and Chapter Two.


- RCA's video disc releases are, of course, in the CED format and include: The History of the World Part One, Ordinary People, Goldfinger, The Pink Panther, The Ten Commandments, The Bad News Bears, North Dallas Forty, American Gigolo, and War of the Worlds. Both RCA and Pioneer Artists have announced the upcoming release of a specially staged re-creation of the original Broadway production of the musical Pippin. It will star Ben Vereen and will be available in mono sound on the RCA format, and making use of the dual-channel audio capability of the optical format, in stereo from Pioneer Artists.

- Finally, the entire library of United Artists features films has been licensed to VHD Programs, Inc., for release as video discs in the VHD format in mid-1982. Titles will include: Raging Bull, Rocky, The Towering Inferno, The Sting, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, West Side Story, the Pink Panther series, and films by Woody Allen.

TubeFood

New (and sometimes original) video programming

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Framing the River: A Minimalist Primer

Suddenly, the cutting edge of the classical vanguard is truly popular music; but just what is minimalism?

by Tim Page

Minimalist music? Pulse music, if you prefer. Pattern music. The New York Times has called it “trance music”; critic Richard Kostelanetz refers to “modular music.” Philip Glass, one of the leading figures in the field, likes to call his work “music with repetitive structures”; the rock crowd grooves to “space music”; and detractors have decried the “stuck-record school of composition.”

Whatever the name affixed to this new music—and none of the above is entirely successful—there is little doubt that it has proved to be an important aesthetic, with a sphere of influence that grows daily.

Andrew Porter waxes rhapsodic about a Glass opera in the pages of the New Yorker, while David Bowie devotes much of a rock album to experiments clearly based on the work of Steve Reich. Both Glass and Reich, the two outstanding figures in minimalist music (to settle upon the most popular, if not the most apt, label for this style), have sold out Carnegie Hall as well as pop-music hangouts like New York’s Bottom Line. Conservatory students diligently analyze the scores, while rock fans blast the tapes from dorm speakers. For the first time in the twentieth century, the cutting edge of the classical aesthetic is also truly popular music.

Minimalism marks a clean break with the musical avant-garde of the ’50s and ’60s. For years, “serious” music had been becoming increasingly academic and ingrown—moving away from literal repetition, tonality, and strong rhythmic pulse. After the death of Anton Webern in 1945, the vanguard of new music had two faces: the rigid serialism of composers like Pierre Boulez and Milton Babbitt, and the pointillistic, aleatoric music of those like John Cage and Earle Brown. Although compositional methods differed greatly, the products of both schools came out sounding sparse, atonal, and arhythmic. Minimalism—busy, generally very tonal, and very rhythmic—represents a complete about-face.

What is minimalist music? There is no doctrinaire “school”: composers may use any harmonic language they choose. An atonal—even dodecaphonic—minimalist work is conceivable. Nobody cares who follows the “blueprint”; everything is permitted. Minimalist elements can appear in improvised music or in Reich’s strictly through-composed works.

Still, there are a few ties that bind the movement together. Most immediately striking is the music’s incessantly static nature. Minimalism implies fascination with repetition—through either the continual reiteration of brief, elegant melodic modules or the use of extended, drone-like held tones or chords. Compositional material is usually limited to a few elements, which are subjected to transformational processes. One shouldn’t expect standard Western musical events (sforzandos, diminuendos, etc.) in these scores; rather, the listener is immersed in a sonic weather, in an aural kaleidoscope that slowly turns, revolves, develops, and changes. Minimalist mu-

A scene from the recent Artpark staging of Philip Glass’s opera Satyagraha.

Tim Page, classical and new-music editor of the Soho News, also hosts a daily music program on New York’s WNYC-FM.
music has nothing of the bell-shaped curve to it; Minerva-like, it springs to life fully formed—from dead silence to fever pitch. There is a strong feeling of ritual, a sense that—on some subliminal plane—this music has always been playing and that it will continue forever. Given such a focus on infinity, it is probably no coincidence that the four major figures in the movement's history are all deeply religious men.

Allow me two more metaphors, as a spiritual understanding of this music is much more central to appreciation than what would be gleaned from analysis of a detailed Schenkerian graph (if such a graph could even be made). Imagine concentrating on a challenging modern painting that always becomes just a little different every time you shift your attention from one detail to another. Or imagine trying to impose a frame on a running river—making it a finite, enclosed work of art yet leaving both ends open and free, leaving its kinetic qualities unsullied. Minimalist composers are framing the river.

Minimalism finds its roots in many different places. There was an important “minimalist” movement in visual art in the ’50s and ’60s. There’s also the influence of many non-Western musics—Balinese gamelan music, African drumming, Indian ragas. And there are European roots: Reich cites the music of the thirteenth-century French composer Perotin as a major influence, and there is a spiritual kinship to the opening of Wagner’s Das Rheingold, with its three-minute examination of an E flat major chord. Some might even note a resemblance to Bo Derek’s tune, Bolero, though I disagree: Ravel’s use of repetition is closer to sheer refrain than to the evolving musical tapestry of the minimalists. Yet in the long run, this music—with roots also in jazz and rock—is essentially American-born and bred.

Whether or not La Monte Young was a true minimalist, there is no doubt that some of his mid-’50s experiments paved the way. A jazz musician with a strong classical background, he grew more and more experimental in his atonal pieces and became fascinated with long, sustained tones. By 1958, in his Trio for Strings, he took five minutes to present only four notes. “At that point,” he recently recalled, “almost everyone thought that I had gone off the deep end.”

In reality, he had begun to create a new musical language. Young continued to work with held tones, but most of his music does not fit into the category of minimalism. In recent years he has worked with “just” intonation, a manner of tuning based on natural overtones. His major work in this genre, The Well-Tuned Piano, with perhaps the most pretentious title in music history, is one of grace and intermittent power.

Minimalism really flowered in 1964, with the world premiere of Terry Riley’s In C. Greatly influenced by his work with Young, Riley took some of his ideas and built on them. In C is basicallyImprovised, in contrast to the painstakingly through-composed work of later minimalists. But it is the first piece to really view repetition as something other than accompaniment, refrain, or ostinato, and it features the steady eighth-note pulse that would become standard baggage in later minimalist endeavors.

In C is for any ensemble (the sole prerequisite is a piano), can last any length of time, and—more like a game than a composition—presents rules to the performer rather than standard notation. It contains fifty-three motives, all only a few measures in length and more or less consonant with C. Each performer must play the fifty-three motives, in order, as often as he wants, until he has played them all.

What keeps the work from being sheer monophony—and ties it to jazz and rock—is the fact that each performer progresses at his own speed, with a resulting jumble of rhythms and motives. And what keeps the whole from becoming total chaos, and really stamps Riley’s work as minimalist, is the piano part, the “pulse.” Throughout, the pianist harmonized the top octave of his instrument—parallel Cs—in even eighth notes. This pulse helps center the piece and gives it a timeless, open-ended quality.

Riley wrote a few more minimalist pieces, but it became increasingly clear that his real interest lay in Indian music, just intonation, and keyboard improvisation. Though he has made many later records—some superb (1969’s Rainbow in Curved Air) and some execrable (1980’s Shri Camel)—his important minimalist innovations began and ended with In C.

One of the performers in the initial San Francisco performance of In C was a young Juilliard-trained musician named Steve Reich. He had moved to the Bay area to study with Luciano Berio and Darius Milhaud but had become tired of the academic music scene and was not interested in teaching. So he remained in San Francisco, driving a cab at night and spending his days working on improvisational pieces with the San Francisco Mime Troupe and writing the music for light shows.

Riley’s music had a profound effect on Reich, and he soon began his own experiments. In 1965, he invented a technique that would become very important to his early musical development. He set up two tape recorders with identical tape loops and let them run. Due to the intrinsic microvariations in motor speeds, one machine ran slightly faster; the loops moved in and out of phase, resulting in intriguing permutations. He applied this technique in a number of tape pieces, the best known of which are Come Out and It’s Gonna Rain. He then attempted to transfer the phasing technique from tape to live music—music utilizing performers rather than machines. In Piano Phase (1967), one pianist repeats a melodic pattern while another plays the same sequence at a slightly faster tempo. As the pianists move in and out of phase, all sorts of inner harmonic and rhythmic relationships become apparent, and the music has a hypnotic, static quality.

At about this time, Reich defined some of his ideas in an article called “Music as a Gradual Process” (later anthologized in Writings about Music, New York University Press, 1974): “I do not mean the process of composition, but rather pieces of music that are, literally, processes. I want to be able to hear the process happening throughout the sounding music. . . . Performing and listening to a gradual musical process resembles: pulling back a swing, releasing it, and observing it gradually come to rest; turning over an hourglass and watching the sand slowly run through to the bottom; placing your feet in the sand by the ocean’s edge and watching, feeling, and listening to the waves gradually bury them.”
Steve Reich: "I want to be able to hear the process happening throughout the... music"; boos uptown, cheers downtown

The musical establishment slowly began to become interested in the new music. In the late 1960s Columbia Records recorded quite a few minimalist works, including In C (called a "masterpiece" by Alfred Frankenstein in the February 1969 issue of HIGH FIDELITY) and two albums devoted to Reich. With the growing acclaim also came dissent, and there were those who heard this music as nothing but mindless repetition.

In 1970, Reich finished Four Organs, scored for electric organs and maracas, which furnish a rhythmic pulse. Consisting of a single chord drawn out for twenty minutes, the work represents Reich at his most difficult, austere, and rigorous. A performance at a Boston Symphony concert at Carnegie Hall produced a scene that must have rivaled the Paris premiere of Stravinsky's Le Sacre.

Perhaps there were boos at establishment centers uptown, but downtown, among the art galleries and lofts of Soho, audiences cheered. Reich's Drumming, premiered in 1971, became a cult favorite; the Village Voice's Tom Johnson considers it not only Reich's masterpiece, but the most important composition to come out of the entire minimalist movement. Though symphonic in length (eighty-five minutes), the scoring is confined to eight small tuned drums, three marimbas, three glockenspiels, male and female voices, whistling, and piccolo. It marks the most complex application of the phasing technique, with many instruments at a time phasing against each other, and it paradoxically manages to be both strongly invigorating and deeply calming. Deutsche Grammophon recorded Drumming in 1974 and released it as part of a three-record set, along with his Music for Mallet Instruments, Voices, and Organ and Six Pianos—the latter a work that emanated from the rather Busby-Berkeley-esque idea of composing a piece for all the pianos in a piano store.

Since Drumming, Reich's work has grown progressively more symphonic. He once wrote a tape piece (Melodica, 1966) in a single day, but it took two years to bring the radiant and haunting Music for Eighteen Musicians (1976) to completion. By the time it was recorded, he was well on his way to becoming a truly popular composer. The New York Times named the record one of the ten best of the year, and ECM signed him to a contract.

The recent Music for a Large Ensemble (1978) is scored for twenty-seven instruments, and Variations for Strings, Winds, and Keyboards (1980) exists in two versions, one for full orchestra; it's easy to see why Reich objects to the term "minimalism." The orchestral version was performed last year by the San Francisco Symphony to a sold-out house; Reich has come a long way since his days of hack-driving and tape loops.

Reich's recent style is characterized by increasing mysticism and lyricism, tempered by a deeply classical sense of

With roots in jazz and rock, minimalism is essentially American.

The Rock Connection

MINIMALISM has had a strong influence on contemporary rock—particularly on some of the more experimental "new wave" music. Brian Eno, who has proved to be one of the more literate and intuitively creative rockers, has not only utilized minimalism on his own albums, but also produced records for Laraaji and Harold Budd. In addition, Eno worked with David Bowie on the latter's most original and visionary album, "Low" (1977), a disc of minimal-oriented pieces. The first experience many listeners had with any kind of minimalism was with Mike Oldfield's "Tubular Bells" (1973)—later adapted as the theme for The Exorcist. It features a gentle, attractive exercise in repeating patterns somewhat derivative from Riley. In 1980, in his album "Platinum," Oldfield paid homage to Glass by including a discodified version of Glass's North Star. Glass himself has recently delved into the world of rock and with Kurt Munkacsi has produced two RCA albums for the new-wave band Polyrock.
form. His great recent Octet (1979), which flashes and sparkles like a trout splashing through clear water, shows the strong influence of Stravinsky. Reich's harmonic language grows ever more sophisticated, but he is not losing the magnificently obsessive single-mindedness of his earlier work. The recent Variations is his first piece since student days completely devoid of repeat signs; this may prove an interesting development.

The other crucial composer on the current minimalist scene is Philip Glass. It has become a truism to pair the names of Reich and Glass—one that, alas, I am here perpetuating—yet as time goes by has become a truism to pair the names of Reich and Glass. It was a truism that approximated minimalism. But there were many differences. Reich has always tended to eschew electronics, aside from amplification of acoustic instruments, an occasional electric organ, and a tape loop or two. Glass writes for an ensemble based on electronics: the woodwinds and voices are the exceptions. Reich came to minimalism via the phasing technique; Glass worked with "additive process"—as a motive is repeated, other notes gradually flesh out the phrase. Perhaps the most striking example is the keyboard piece Music in Contrary Motion (1969), in which a C minor/G major passage is expanded to many times its original length, until it becomes almost rococo, full of elaborate passing tones and countersubjects, while adhering to its original strict discipline.

By 1971, in Music in Twelve Parts, a three-hour examination of various techniques of repetition, Glass had achieved mastery of his style. Unfortunately, only Parts 1 and 2 have been recorded. He defined some of his ideas in the album notes: "It may happen that some listeners, missing the usual musical structures (or landmarks) by which they are used to orient themselves may experience some initial difficulties in actually perceiving the music. However, when it becomes apparent that nothing 'happens' in the usual sense, but that, instead, the gradual accretion of musical material can and does serve as the basis of the listener's attention, then he can perhaps discover another mode of listening—one in which neither memory nor anticipation has a part in sustaining the texture, quality, or reality of the musical experience."

Glass's best known work is Einstein on the Beach—a unique opera, with staging and story by Robert Wilson. Glass's text consists of numbers, solfege syllables, and nonsense words; whenever actual sentences are used, they are always spoken. It is an opera that breaks all the rules; though it lasts five hours without intermission, audience members are free to come and go as they please. The Glass/Wilson creation affords a metaphorical look at Albert Einstein—scientist, humanist, amateur fiddler, and the man who split the atom. In the final scene, there is nuclear holocaust; the score, with the Renaissance-like purity of the choral writing and the frightening and virtuosic chromatic runs in the woodwinds, is awesome. Einstein was performed throughout Europe in 1976 and came to the Metropolitan Opera for two sold-out performances in November of that year. John Rockwell of the New York Times declared himself "profoundly—religiously—moved," and this...
nondescript opera, for dancers, solo violinist, amplified ensemble, and decibels galore, became the season's most talked about theatrical event.

Much of Glass's music, including Einstein, is for a set ensemble of seven musicians (as opposed to Reich's group, which expands or contracts for each new piece). Kurt Muncaci, who mixes the sound, is considered an integral part of the group. The sound reaches the ear as an aural unit that slowly, inexorably shifts and develops.

Glass's more recent opera, Satyagraha, with a text that Constance de Jong adapted from the Bhagavad Gita, is based on Gandhi's years in South Africa (1893-1914). Premiered in Rotterdam in September 1980 and given its American premiere last July, the work is his most conservative to date. While the maestro Einstein radically challenged the standard notion of opera, Satyagraha puts Glass into the mainstream. It has a real plot, a full libretto, and set numbers. Though one can hear elements of other composers, the work always remains recognizably Glassian. More mystery play than opera, Satyagraha operates on an extraordinary moral level, with religious overtones. It is one of those works—like Wagner's Parsifal, Satie's Socrate, Busoni's Doktor Faust, and Pfitzner's Paestra—that are more ritual than entertainment. Sibelius once said that his Fourth Symphony had "nothing, absolutely nothing of the circus to it"; the same can be said of Satyagraha.

While Reich and Glass dominate the current minimalist scene, there are others working in the same general vein. As with most artistic movements, much of what is being produced is junk; any generation has only a few real artists. But there are some promising records being made today that may signal a "second wave" of minimalism.

A recent album on the 1750 Arch label by the young Californian John Adams shows a rare talent developing. Shaker Loops, a work for seven solo strings, is far from rigid minimalism; it owes as much to Bartók as to Riley. But its repetitive sections are exciting and fresh, and its synthesis of styles bodes well for the future of this gifted artist.

David Behrman, who produced Columbia's outstanding new-music series in the late '60s, has made an album of his own on Lovely Music—two gentle and meditative works that are lovely music indeed. Composer Robert Ashley has worn a lot of hats in his time, and he is currently making music that is a wonderful hybrid of minimalism and text sound. His opera Perfect Lives (Private Parts) has elements of rock and jazz and tells an intriguing story, to boot. This unassuming music, easy to tune out, will nevertheless offer surprising substance to anyone who makes the effort to concentrate.

Meredith Monk, best known as a dancer, is also a fine composer. Her "Tablet" album is extraordinary—minimal in the truest sense of the word. Side 1 features only her versatile voice, and the shrieks, cries, moans, coos, and melodic phrasings must be heard to be believed. Side 2 is a lengthy suite for piano, recorder, and four women's voices.

This greatly simplified introduction to minimalism cannot find space to discuss the work of such notable composers as Jon Gibson, Beth Anderson, Rhys Chatham, Harold Budd, Laraaji, Glenn Branca, Jeffrey Lohn, and others. Suffice (Continued on page 117)

### A Basic Minimalist Discography

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<th>Composer</th>
<th>Album Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Terry Riley</td>
<td>In C</td>
<td>CBS MS 7178</td>
<td>The genesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Rainbow in Curved Air</td>
<td>CBS MS 7315</td>
<td>An evocative piece for organ and electronics; a bit flaccid but with moments of rare beauty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Reich</td>
<td>Come Out</td>
<td>ODYSSEY 32 16 0160</td>
<td>One of Reich's best tape pieces; early application of phasing technique.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Four Organs</td>
<td>ANGEL S 3605</td>
<td>Austere and difficult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drumming</td>
<td>Six Piano; Music for Mallet Instruments, Voices, and Organ</td>
<td>DGG 2740 106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Music for Eighteen Musicians</td>
<td>ECM 1-1129</td>
<td>Reich at his most accessible and jazzy; may seem superficial on first hearing but ultimately a deep and beautiful piece.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Music for a Large Ensemble</td>
<td>Octet: Violin Phase</td>
<td>ECM 1-1168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip Glass</td>
<td>&quot;Solo Music.&quot;</td>
<td>SHANDAR 83 515</td>
<td>Contains Music in Contrary Motion and the early Two Pages, a good sample of the embryonic Glass style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Music in Similar Motion; Music in Fifths</td>
<td>CHATHAM SQUARE 1903</td>
<td>Good early Glass, particularly Similar Motion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Music in Twelve Parts</td>
<td>Parts 1, 2</td>
<td>CAROLINE CA 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Einstein on the Beach</td>
<td>TOMATO TOM 4-2901</td>
<td>Fragmented, exciting, powerful, and important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>Nos. 1, 3</td>
<td>TOMATO TOM S 1029</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Behrman</td>
<td>On the Other Ocean; Figure in a Clearing</td>
<td>LOVELY Music LML 1041</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jon Gibson</td>
<td>&quot;Two Solo Pieces.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frederic Rzewski</td>
<td>Coming Together</td>
<td>OPUS ONE 20</td>
<td>Left politics meets minimalism; an exciting work of political theater.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Ashley</td>
<td>Perfect Lives (Private Parts)</td>
<td>LOVELY MUSIC VR 1081</td>
<td>A little less than an hour of basic, puritan minimalism, beautifully performed by Rzewski.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Johnson</td>
<td>An Hour for Piano</td>
<td>LOVELY MUSIC</td>
<td>Minimalism meets poetry and cinema.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meredith Monk</td>
<td>&quot;Tablet.&quot;</td>
<td>WERGO/SPECTRUM SM 10</td>
<td>Electronic zither music? Yes; wonderful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lubomyr Melnyk</td>
<td>KM1: Piano Music in the Continuous Mode</td>
<td>MUSIC GALLERY EDITIONS MGE 18</td>
<td>A bit treacly at times but the final ten minutes gorgeous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingram Marshall</td>
<td>The Fragility Cycles</td>
<td>IBU 101</td>
<td>A Haunting, lovely electronic music; includes minimalist piece based on Sibelius' Sixth Symphony!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laraaji</td>
<td>&quot;Day of Radiance.&quot;</td>
<td>EG EGS 203</td>
<td>Electronic zither music? Yes; wonderful and hypnotic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Adams</td>
<td>Shaker Loops: Pyrgian Gates</td>
<td>1750 ARCH S 1784</td>
<td>The best new-music record from the first half of 1981; Romantic, classical, minimalist, all at the same time; Loops a strong work of uncompromising power.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Available from New Music Distribution Service, 500 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012.
The Mahler Boom, from Beginning to... Endless

Mitropoulos' 1960 Philharmonic Fifth takes us back to the start, and a varied new batch brings us up to date—if not always up to snuff.

Reviewed by John Canarina

In 1960, to commemorate the centennial of the birth of its onetime music director, the New York Philharmonic presented a Mahler festival that has been credited with awakening widespread interest in the composer. The result being the enormous popularity his music enjoys today. Leonard Bernstein, then in his second season as the Philharmonic's music director, shared the conducting of the festival with Dimitri Mitropoulos and Bruno Walter, the latter leading Das Lied von der Erde. The symphonies performed were Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, and 9, plus the Adagio of No. 10. Mitropoulos opened the series with the Fifth, which had not been played by the orchestra in thirteen seasons, and now, as part of its 1981 WQXR Phone Festival Radiothon, the Philharmonic has issued a recording of that historic broadcast. If the 1960 festival was indeed responsible for today's Mahler boom, then this performance is where it all began.

With conductors such as Walter, Mitropoulos, and Bernstein at the helm, the Philharmonic has always been the Mahler orchestra par excellence. Mitropoulos was, of course, a Mahlerian of long standing prior to 1960; his outstanding accomplishments included the American premiere of the Sixth Symphony in 1947 and the debut recording of the First in Minneapolis. His extremely personal approach to music-making, though not always successful in the classical repertory, usually worked supremely well in late-Romantic music. This Mahler Fifth is one of those supreme instances. It is a magnificent conception, brilliantly performed: the very few imperfections undoubtedly result from Mitropoulos' often idiosyncratic conducting style.

In the first movement, which unfolds with measured tread, the elasticity of phrasing in the opening lament is particularly noteworthy. In fact, throughout the symphony, the great tensile strength of the playing, even in the softest passages, rivets the listener's attention. Especially is this true in a sublime Adagietto. Despite an extremely slow pace, the tension is never allowed to die. Walter played this movement much more briskly in his equally magnificent reading recorded in connection with his 1947 Philharmonic performance (Odyssey 32 26 0016). The finale is fairly delicate, and Mitropoulos slows down even more for the return of the Adagietto music. Though, of course, the slower tempo never approaches that of the earlier movement, it makes the passage seem less trivial than it usually does, played in the fast tempo: here it sounds, as marked, grazioso. The lilt of the third movement's waltz music is highly infectious, and the horn solos are superbly played by the Philharmonic's former principal, James Chambers, who has also written the excellent and extremely informative notes for the album. On both Mahler and Mitropoulos. Along with a bit of applause at the end, there is also some after the third movement—good reason: As the concert program attests, Mitropoulos took an intermission at that point.

The sound is quite good monostereo broadcasting had not yet become the norm—though the bass is somewhat deficient and there's a certain amount of hiss. The album gives indication ('Historic Recordings, Vol. 1') that the Philharmonic plans to continue issuing items from its archives on a limited basis. I nominate for future release Mitropoulos' overwhelming 1955 broadcast of the Mahler Sixth and his moving 1960 performance of the Ninth, his last appearance with the Philharmonic. (He died while rehearsing the Third in Milan exactly ten months after the performance of the Fifth presented here.) Recordings of Walter and Guido Cantelli would be welcome as well.

Speaking of Cantelli, also included in the present release is the December 2, 1956, Death and Transfiguration, played in memory of the young Italian conductor, who was killed in an air crash near Paris a week before, en route to his Philharmonic engagement. Mitropoulos and the orchestra give an emotionally supercharged reading, which also captures perfectly the serene resignation of the closing pages. Unfortunately, the
A year ago I wrote that Klaus Tennstedt had given "the most extended performance—and one of the finest—I’ve ever encountered" of the Mahler Ninth (Angel SBZ 3899, October 1980). Now along comes Herbert von Karajan to top not only Tennstedt, but everyone else. What must surely be one of the greatest recordings he and the Berlin Philharmonic, either together or separately, have ever made—a spectacular achievement. The first movement begins almost inaudibly and proceeds inexorably to climaxes of staggering impact. The next movement’s three tempos are perfectly integrated, each with the dance element always to the fore: the second tempo—only marginally quicker than the first, as indicated—emphasizes the music’s grotesque buffoonery. In the brilliant Rondo-Burleske that follows, the suspended animation of the central section maintains the tension and heightens anticipation of the movement’s frenzied conclusion. Karajan offers a warmly eloquent, truly heartfelt Adagio, with a tempo even slower than Tennstedt’s, sustained with such rich intensity in the loud sections that the pianissimo passages seem all the more remote in their bleakness. Probably the last thing the Berlin Philharmonic needs to be told is that it is a superhuman orchestra, but so it sounds here. The passionate commitment of the playing simply must be heard to be believed. Had I attended a concert performance such as this, I would have felt privileged to be there. (Though who am I to question Tennstedt’s interpretation of German?)

It is fascinating to note the echoes of the Second Symphony in the Third: the many horn calls: stormy cello and bass passages; the third movement’s emphatic triplets; another alto solo. Similary, the Third includes pre-echoes of the Fourth, and the latter contains a prefiguration of the Fifth’s trumpet call. The more one immerses oneself in these symphonies, vast as they are, the more they begin to seem all part of one gigantic, cyclic canvas—an idea that found sympathy from the late Deryck Cooke.

Georg Solti herewith becomes one of the few conductors (Bernstein, Klepper, Ormandy) to record the Second twice, as he apparently begins a new cycle. Likewise, with its second recording of the work, the Chicago Symphony joins ranks with the New York Philharmonic and the London Symphony, the former having recorded it twice, the latter three times.

The orchestra plays magnificently and Sir Georg conducts brilliantly: the performance has, nevertheless, an element of impatience. After a truly terrifying opening, the Allegro maestoso first movement lacks the very quality of majesty. Claudio Abbado’s performance with the same orchestra (DG 2707 094) is more satisfying in this regard. Solti’s scherzo, glib and hasty, leaves little time to savor the music’s irony or the mellow songfulness of the second subject. Here, too, Abbado is slightly more relaxed, hence more successful.

Conversely, Solti scores over Abbado in the second movement, admirably conveying the gentleness of the opening music and its recurrences and the sardonic quality of the triplet section. He betrays his impatience even here, however, as the pizzicato violins at figure 12 enter two beats prematurely, thereby destroying the feeling of triple meter. I might have attributed this to a faulty tape splice if Solti hadn’t done the same thing in his earlier version with the London Symphony (London CSA 2217). Throughout the symphony, he shortens the rests before beginning a new section.

When it comes to presenting the long finale as a unified entity, Solti is superb. Yet here, too, he seems to want to get on with it. Abbado again finds more majesty in the martial episode. Margaret Hillis’ Chicago Symphony Chorus is beautifully sensitive in its opening sections and warmly sonorous later on. The soloists, both new to me and about whom there is no information, are well matched in the finale and sing with great commitment there. But rarely have I heard the beautiful “Urllicht” movement sung so unmovingly as by Mira Zakai.

Ultimately, however, it’s the recording that really lets the team down. Certainly its clarity is magnificent, but I can’t imagine how anyone could find such a cold, hard, steely sound appropriate to Mahler’s warmly expressive music—though apparently someone has. The violins sound especially dry and thin. Recent London digital recordings of Shostakovich and Sibelius have not been so afflicted.

Solti’s older version, from the late 1960s, was altogether more satisfying. Its first movement was properly majestic, and the mystery and nobility of the work were captured successfully throughout. The scherzo, though just as fast, did not sound glib and hasty; the second movement, however, is better paced and more relaxed in the new performance. The earlier soloists (Heather Harper and Helen Watts) were more impressive and the recording was more natural, better suited to the music. The London Symphony, at the peak of its form in those days, had many outstanding principal players (Barry Tuckwell, Gervase de Peyer, John Georgiadis, and Neville Marriner, to name a few) who have since departed. I will gladly return to that version many times, but I won’t come back to the new one soon, largely because of its glaringly harsh sonics.

My first exposure to the Sixth was the aforementioned 1955 Mitropoulos
performance, heard live in Carnegie Hall. All subsequent versions have stood in the shadow of that magnificent event. Václav Neumann has always struck me as a rather unsmilng interpreter of Dvořák; since there is precious little to smile about in this grimmest of Mahler's scores, he succeeds extremely well in conveying its ominous character. In this mostly satisfying if unexceptional account, he is aided by excellent playing from the Czech Philharmonic, though the wavery oboes take some getting used to and the timpani are occasionally out of tune. As in the orchestra's native repertore, the slightly astringent quality of the brass is well suited to the music.

More specific reservations are extremely few and minuscule. The opening Allegro energico moves rather briskly, perhaps more so than the qualifying "ma non troppo" might allow; Neumann's observance of the exposition repeat undoubtedly influences his choice of tempo. (This is the only time after the First that Mahler includes such a repeat.) The rather clunky-sounding cowbells, decidedly too close, mitigate the requisite feeling of distance. Mahler felt that when he took leave of this earth, the last sounds he would hear would be cowbells; these, I fear, would have hastened him on his way. Similarly, the Finale's famous hammerblows seem to have been struck on an anvil, for the sound has a bright ping, in contrast to the dull thud Mahler wanted.

While the lean textures Neumann favors admirably suit the rest of the symphony, the rather Rachmaninoffian slow movement needs a bit more opulence, as well as a more fervent espousal of its romanticism. In fact, it is this very reserve, persistent throughout, that ultimately militates against complete success, well played and conducted though the performance is; and the reserve is carried over into the Tenth Symphony's Adagio. Here again, a bit more opulence would not be misplaced. Curiously, Neumann takes the adagio sections faster than the antandantes. These are both perfectly honorable readings, yet they lack that special Mahlerian flair necessary to make them outstanding. Supraphon's recorded sound is somewhat constricted.

In what may be the first Mahler recording by a French orchestra, Lorin Maazel leads the Orchestre National in a straightforward, light-featured reading of the First. I don't know how often Mahler is performed in France, but the orchestra, which obviously has the music in its fingers and lungs, does not seem to have it in its blood and heart. This is an extremely well-played performance if a bit too civilized, especially in the stormy pages of the finale, where the essential element of frenzy is missing. It just doesn't sound as if the players' lives depended on this performance, as the Karajan Ninth does. (There, in fact, it may be the case.)

No doubt Maazel bears the responsibility for this cool approach, yet there is still much to admire in his carefully chosen tempos and scrupulous observance of most of the score's indications. He does ignore, as do most conductors for some reason, the accelerando at the end of the scherzo, as well as the instruction to get progressively slower during the big buildup over reiterated cello and bass notes in the first movement and finale. Nor does he press forward during the symphony's closing measures.

The recording is rather dry and clinical, and like Solti's, it lacks an appropriately warm ambience. The funeral march seems to have been recorded at a higher level than the rest; some of its delicate passages actually sound louder than many of the finale's fortissimo episodes. And though the obligato trumpet passages in the march should... (Continued on page 117)
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BACH: Cantatas, Vols. 25–27.

Wilhelm Wiedl (in Nos. 99. 101. 105. 110), Detlef Bratschke (No. 100), Marcus Klein (Nos. 106. 107), and Stefan Frankouis (No. 110). boy sopranos; Raphael Harten (No. 106) and Michael Stumpf (No. 110). boy altos; Paul Esswood, countertenor (Nos. 99–103. 105. 108–10); Kurt Equiluz (Nos. 99–105. 107–10); and Marius van Altena (Nos. 105, 108). tenors; Philippe Huttenlocher (Nos. 99. 101. 102. 104); Max van Egmond (Nos. 100. 103. 106. 107); Ruud van der Meer (No. 105. 108). and Siegfried Lorenz (No. 110), basses; Tenl Boys Choir, Vienna Concentus Musicus, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, cond. (Nos. 99. 101. 102. 104. 105. 108–10); Hannover Boys Choir, Ghent Collegium Vocale, Leonhardt Consort, Gustav Leonhardt, cond. (Nos. 100. 103. 106. 107). TELEFUNKEN 26.35443/35558/35559, $23.96 each (two discs).


The Jubilee Edition of Telefunken's Bach cantata series, Vol. 25, begins by offering an interesting comparison: two versions of similar music, one performed by Harnoncourt's forces and one by Leonhardt's. The two cantatas Was Gott tut. Nos. 99 and 100, have opening cho- ruses that—though differently scored and of different length—use the same material. Leonhardt, handling the larger or- chestra, wins without question: His sub- tlety of rhythm and dancing inflection of the lines are in strong contrast to Har- noncourt's insistent first-beat accents. And throughout these three sets (as one cannot tire of pointing out in reviewing this series, they contain a rich and varied store of wonderful music), I became more irritated by the quirkiness of Har- noncourt's accounts and more pleased by the lightness and deftness of Leon- hardt's.

Why, I wonder, does Harnoncourt record so many more cantatas than Leon- hardt (eight of these twelve)? I would have loved Leonhardt's quiet approach to the searing, chromatic D minor opening chorus of No. 101; Harnoncourt makes it exciting but unyielding. In the second box, the lovely pastoral chorus of No. 104. Du Hirte Israel. höre, is spoiled by Harnoncourt's galumphing accents. But he does the marvelous opening of No. 105. (a great, neglected cantata) well, with dark colors and drooping suspensions, and his choir is lithe and bright in the fugato that follows. Indeed, most of the problems with the technique of choral singing and of boy soloists that
plagued earlier volumes have been solved; the problem that remains is Har
noncourt's interpretational approach. In the arias, where soloists and obbligato players dominate, there are far fewer re
servations; his players have the edge on Leonhardt's for confidence and con
viction—the glassy violins in the soprano aria of No. 105 and the three oboes with the bass in No. 101 are outstanding ex
amples—and his soloists are experienced.

There are some well-known can
tatas in this batch: the last of the vol
umes, No. 110, Unser Mund sei voll Lachen, is the one that reworks the Fourth Orchestral Suite as its first move
ment; here again, Harmoncourt pounds the accents and makes his singers un
naturally do the same. He is better in the elegiac cantata No. 109, Ich glaube, lie
ber Herr, where he interestingly follows Bach's undotted notation precisely and consistently.

But the best of these boxes is Vol
. 26—the only one the directors split equally. The arias in Harmoncourt's con
tributions are good, and there is loving playing from the twin oboi d'amore in No. 104. Leonhardt gets No. 103, with its superb, extended chorus that features the brilliant trilling of Frans Brüggen on the flauto piccolo and an extraordinary central section, a bass recitative. How
ever, I see no justification for Brüggen's using his supersonic instrument again in the cantata's alto aria; though he plays musically, the result is nonsense. The gem of this box is Leonhardt's account of No. 106, the famous Gottes Zeit funeral cantata, which sounds profound, gentle, and affecting in this new account. From the unearthy "Sonnatina," with its serene gambas and clashing recorders, through the connected sequence of solos, fugues, and choruses, a single coherent approach is maintained. (How much more coherent might the other performances be if they were not recorded in separate segments?) Bach's youthful vision of death remains unsurpassed, and this performance, light yet serious, touches the music's heart.

**BACH: Concerto for Two Violins and Strings, in D minor, S. 1043.**

**MOZART: Sinfonia concertante for Violin, Viola, and Orchestra, in E flat, K. 364.**

**VIVALDI: Concerto for Three Violins and Strings, in F, F. 551.**


This epiphany of Isaac Stern—commemorating his sixtieth birthday celebration at last year's gala opening night of the New York Philharmonic—is a uniquely valuable documentation of a milestone historic event. It's essential, of course, as a permanent memento for those who heard the concert either live or via tele
vision's grossly inadequate sound reproduction; but it's even more important to doubt, though, that many Bach, Vi
valdi, or even Mozart purists will will
ingly suspend disbelief.)

**R.D.D.**

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**Critics' Choice**

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**ADAMS:** Shaker Loops; Phrygian Gates. Various. 1750 Arch S 1754, Oct.


**BOLCOM, COPLAND, RZEWISKI:** Rags, Blues, Ballads. Jacobs. NONESUCH D 79006, Aug.

**BRAHMS:** Piano Concerto No. 1. Pollini; London Symphony, C. Davis. Philips 9500 682, Sept.

**BRAHMS:** Symphony No. 4. Vienna Philharmonic, Marriner. ASR 2740 235, Oct.

**BRANTON:** Orchestral and Vocal Works. Denize; Philharmonique de Lille, Casadesus. Harmonia Mundi France HM 10.064, July.

**SCHUBERT:** Piano Trios (2). Les Musi
ciens. Harmonia Mundi France HM 1047/8 (2, Sept.

**SCHUMANN:** Symphonies (4). Philo

**STRAVINSKY:** Symphony No. 7; Age of Gold Suite. London Philharmonic, Haitink. London LDR 10015 (2), Sept.

**VERDI:** Un Ballo in maschera. Milanov, Bjoerling, Panizza. MET 8 (3), June.

**LE CHANSONNIER CORDIFORME.** Consort of Musicians, Rooley, Oiseau-Lyre D 186D4 (4), July.

**DECAMERON:** Monodic Ballatas. La

**THE MANNHEIM SCHOOL.** Camerata Bern, Furi. Archiv 2723 068 (3), June.

**THE WALTZ PROJECT.** Moran, Cobb, Feinberg, Mikhasheff. NONESUCH D 79011, Sept.

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**BACH: Concerto for Two Violins and Strings, in D minor, S. 1043.**

**MOZART: Sinfonia concertante for Violin, Viola, and Orchestra, in E flat, K. 364.**

**VIVALDI: Concerto for Three Violins and Strings, in F, F. 551.**

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**BARTÓK: Quartets for Strings (6).**

Tokyo Quartet, Steven Paul (1, 3, 4, 5), Cord Garben (2, 3, 6), Jobst Eberhardt (1, 3), Wolfgang Stengel (4, 5), and Karl-August Naegler (2, 6), prod. Deutsche Grammo
phon 2740 235, $32.94 (three discs, manual se
quence) [Nos. 2 and 6 from DG 2530 658, $32.94 (three discs, manual se
quence).] [Recorded in concert, September 24, 1980.]

This epiphany of Isaac Stern—commemorating his sixtieth birthday celebration at last year's gala opening night of the New York Philharmonic—is a uniquely valuable documentation of a milestone historic event. It's essential, of course, as a permanent memento for those who heard the concert either live or via tele
vision's grossly inadequate sound reproduction; but it's even more important to future music historians as a lasting me
morial to the artistry and personality of one of our era's favorite and most in
fluential virtuoso violinists. And if newer ones the directors split equally. The arias in Harmoncourt's con
tributions are good, and there is lovely playing from the twin oboi d'amore in No. 104. Leonhardt gets No. 103, with its superb, extended chorus that features the brilliant trilling of Frans Brüggen on the flauto piccolo and an extraordinary central section, a bass recitative. How
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tion is very stiff indeed. And although I would not rate the Tokyo set at the top (Julliard's second release, CBS D3S 717, remains unchallenged), it does take a comfortable position in this rather elite field.

The Second and Sixth were recorded several years ago and released on a single (DG 2530 658, September 1978). The four new additions basically confirm my earlier impressions: The playing is always excellent, and the performances have been carefully thought out and meticulously prepared. Yet there is, in general, a rather neutral quality about their treatments. One misses some individuality in the interpretations and a greater willingness to take chances. The group is at its best in the more subdued movements, such as the opening fugal movement of the First, the tenuous Adagio of the Fifth, or the fast, subtly articulated movement of the First, the tenuous Adagio of the Fifth, or the fast, subtly articulated second movement of the Fourth (played with a marvelous light touch that seems almost to dissolve the music into an impressionistic haze). Where a stronger, more emphatic approach is called for, however, the requisite force is lacking. At the opening of the Fourth, for example, the tiny motivic particles that pass from instrument to instrument need to stand out more distinctly from the sustained background; everything threatens to merge into an undifferentiated mass. Even more problematic are the movements based on highly lyrical, folklike material (e.g., the middle movements of the Second and Fifth. The Allegretto pizzicato of the Fourth). These must be played with greater intensity, whether with the Julliard's driving, propulsive quality or the freer, more rubato-laden approach of the old Hungarian renderings.

Yet taken as a whole, this is an excellent set. For listeners who prefer a less aggressive, more restrained conception of this music, it may even represent an ideal choice. The sound is first-rate.

R.P.M.


BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 4, in D minor, Op. 60 (Pastoral).

A Berlin State Orchestra, Otmar Suitner, cond. [Denon OX 7222-ND, $15 (digital recording; distributed by Discwasher)].

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 5, in F, Op. 68 (Pastoral).

A Berlin State Orchestra, Otmar Suitner, cond. [Denon OX 7222-ND, $15 (digital recording; distributed by Discwasher)].

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 6, in F minor, Op. 96 (Pastoral).

A Berlin State Orchestra, Otmar Suitner, cond. [Weiss 0009, $15 (digital recording; distributed by Discwasher)].

With the multitude of Beethoven symphony recordings available, the industry is casting about for ways to justify new versions; hence such jargon as "digital recording," "original version," and "on original instruments." The best justification of all—excellence of performance—arises only intermittently in this latest harvest.

A reasonably strong case can be made for the Pro Arte Eroica. As so often with Collegium Aureum performances, the use of original instruments affects the sonority less than does the reduced size of the ensemble. The winds may be a bit more plangent, and the natural horns have an enticing (and appropriate) "burr." The chamber-sized forces muster considerable tonal weight, with the strings slickly in tune, buttressed by a mellow, supportive bass line.

The interpretation is solid and expressive. The first movement proceeds at a moderate, "Bruno Walter" tempo, and the Marcia funebre, though slightly brisk, has a modicum of pathos. The Scherzo is well-sprung rhythmically, and the central Trio retains the basic pulse. (As in the Klemer, Jochum, and post-1945 Toscanini performances, the version that ties the three horn notes in the first ending of the Trio's second strain is used.) The violins take pains to articulate the octave grace notes that open the finale (heard here to greater effect than in most big-orchestra versions), and the movement's contrapuntal episodes are powered with a natural—undemonic—rhythmic drive. But the second bassoon plays B-flat rather than B-natural in measure 351: is that a misreading or a textual variant I am unaware of? Everything considered, this is a well-played, musically enjoyable Eroica. The first movement (with repeat) occupies Side I, the remaining three movements the other side of this excellently pressed disc—a smooth transfer from German Harmonia Mundi.

Eugene Ormandy's newest account largely retains the style of his earlier Columbia edition (D7S 745), but a combination of slightly too deliberate tempos, overly legato articulation, imprecise recorded balance, and generalized sound drains the music of all sense of purpose. The creamy timbres, blowy, spreading bass line, and consistent lack of bite and dynamic range make this eminently competent performance seem much worse than it is; the record vies with Mehta's recent version (CBS IM 35883, January) as a soporific. The first-movement exposition repeat is (wisely) omitted. Surfaces are agreeably quiet.

Seiji Ozawa's 1969 Fifth with the Chicago Symphony (RCA LSC 3132) was one of his finest phonographic efforts, and his new Telarc account follows its general outline. Tempos are a bit more deliberate, and the newer version naturally cultivates a richer, weightier sonority, but in the main, this remains an honest, sensibly dramatic Fifth, with a welcome infusion of lyric warmth. Only the finale lacks true rhythmic incisiveness; the fastish tempo is not really held on a sufficiently tight leash as it was in the earlier recording. The Egmont Overture gets a shapely, middle-of-the-road reading, somewhat deficient in strife and combat but, again, richly reproduced. The Boston Symphony is in good form, and Telarc has produced an honest-sounding replica of Symphony Hall. The first-movement repeat is observed, but (fortunately) not the one in the finale.

The term "original version," applied to Loris Tjeknavorian's Fifth, simply alludes to that extra repeat in the scherzo, espoused by Pierre Boulez on record (CBS M 30085) and Kurt Masur in concert. In addition, Tjeknavorian—like Ozawa on Telarc—leaves the bassoons unreinforced by horns at the famous spot in the first-movement recapitulation, in keeping with Beethoven's original scoring.

Challfot's annotations are extensive and more than a little pretentious. Ates Orga's detailed evaluation of the performance might make sense were the
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but this time only the first scherzo repeat is observed (inexcusable, with the symphony spread onto four sides), and basso Marius Rintzler’s opening solo is disfigured somewhat by a bleating tremolo. The Dutch chorus, however, is more luminous of sound and resilient of accent than its slightly woolly British counterpart.

I heard Haitink and the Concertgebouw do the Ninth in Carnegie Hall a few seasons back and enjoyed it very much. (The finale, if memory serves, was much. (The finale, if memory serves, was much.) But is there really a market for another recorded Ninth, at a substantial, albeit reduced, price, when so many of those available—including Haitink’s own earlier effort—are at least comparable? H.G.

**COMPARISONS:**

Haitink /London Phil. Phi. 6500 072
Gibson /Scottish Nat. Chansons ABRD 1010
Akiyama /Vancouver Sym. CBC 5002

With the possible exception of Elgar’s Enigma Variations, the one large-scale British symphonic score that irresistibly fascinates international virtuoso conductors, orchestras, and audiences is Holst’s World War I suite The Planets. In part, this undoubtedly stems from its (actually minimal) astrological associations and (of late) the universal interest in anything concerned with outer space. But in larger part, the work is eloquently spell-binding by virtue of its endlessly imaginative music and orchestration. The latter is so potent indeed that it tempts most non-English interpreters into inexcusable overemphasis on sheer sensationalism. The latest Berlin and Boston examples are no exceptions: Resplendently spectacular as they are, they once again portray the heavenly bodies, not swimming luminously and serenely in infinite space, but cruelly “spread out against the sky/Like a patient etherized upon a table.”

Herbert von Karajan’s earlier Vienna Philharmonic version for London (deleted), though not the first stereo recording, was the first to exploit the full potentials of 1962 technology. His new one exploits (if scarcely to the full) the potentials of today’s digitalism, but the effectiveness of its tremendous power and blazing incandescence is less than it might have been if this release had not been preceded by Alexander Gibson’s Chandos version (February 1981 HF), even more miraculous technically, and if it did not appear almost simultaneously with an Ozawa/Phillips apotheosis of the (still unexhausted) potential of analog recording. In any case, Karajan and his men are Teutonically efficient and impossibly smooth throughout, manifesting not the slightest understanding of this music’s inspired moments of quintessentially English bluff humor, pastoral serenity, and fervent songfulness.

Seiji Ozawa is, if anything, even more heavy-handed, hard-driving, and grimly humorless, but his Bostonians do play like angels, and the engineering dramatically demonstrates how far analog technology still is from reaching its limits. Never has the opening “Mars” sounded more terrifyingly brutal, nor have the big climaxes been more overwhelmingly powerful or palpably solid. But the unidentified producer has made a fatal miscalculation: Even if Ozawa’s reading were more empathetic (and less blatantly pretentious—like Karajan’s—official in the unforgettable hymnlike Jupiter melody), the unnaturally vivid presence of such searchingly close miking would still insensately ruin the music’s most enduring moments of impressionistic—even mystical—magic.

Much to my surprise, another Japanese conductor, Kazuyoshi Akiyama (as new to me as is his Vancouver Symphony) reveals greater Holstian affinities in a 1980 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation version distributed by CBC Merchandising. 73 East
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Allen St., Suite 101, Winookee, Vt. 05404. I'm grateful to a Canadian correspondent for the chance to hear this disc for it's an admirable one in every respect—if inevitably outmatched by the still more virtuosic orchestral playing and more spectacular recording qualities of the competition.

Probably the most sensational showpiece among the pre-Ozawa analog recordings is Georges Solti's London version (December 1979 HF). And although its disc edition was processed with slightly quieter surfaces than either Ozawa's or Karajan's, there is marginal further improvement—along with seeming enhancement of transparency and greater sonic definition and quest in Mobile Fidelity's half-speed remastering and JVC's super-vinyl pressing. It's markedly superior in at least one detail: It eliminates the original's slight yet definite pre-echo at the fortissimo brasses' motto-theme opening of Uranus. Nevertheless, here as elsewhere, the most advanced technology is never (except perhaps for fanatical audiophiles) any real compensation for the lack of genuine Holstian humor and fancifulness. Sir Georg has demonstrated considerable English empathies elsewhere, but here too, is another brazen foreign-born virtuoso concerned only with the letter of this extraordinary score at the expense of its far more elusive spirit.

It's only when I turn back to my long-preferred version by Bernard Haitink that I'm fully satisfied. Gibson's digitalism to (say nothing of the latest Karajan and Ozawa technologies) exposes even more score details and even wider frequency and dynamic ranges than did the Philips engineering of the early 70s; and the Boston Symphony plays even more beautifully than did the London Philharmonic (or indeed any other orchestra so far). Yet both overall and in detail, Haitink's _Planets_ remains not only the most rewardingly heart-warming, but also the most dramatically thrilling.

**R.D.D.**

D'INDY: Tone Poems (5).

_Orchestre Philharmonique de Pays de la Loire, Pierre Dervaux, cond. [René Challan and Groo Caucaud], prod J. ANQUET 8090F-1, $13.96 (two discs, manual sequence). Tape: 9097-2, $15.96 (two cassettes)._ 


The name Vincent d'Indy has come to be synonymous with extreme academicism, though within an unadventurous framework he did write some very attractive music. A pupil of César Franck, he did not follow in his master's compositional footsteps, as his fellow student Chausson had done; nor, unfortunately, did he develop a distinctive style of his own. Today he is just barely represented on concert programs by the lovely _Symphonies on a French Mountain Air_—the one work, ironically, that does belong to the Franck-Chausson sphere.

The most familiar piece here is _Istar_ (1896), previously recorded by Pierre Monteux and Max Rudolf in versions long deleted. Based on an Assyrian legend, it is, in fact, a musical strip tease (from so proper a composer!), a series of variations with the theme revealed only at the end. Monteux's recording, which dates from the late 1940s, nevertheless gives a clearer idea of the piece than does the present one. The entire first record of _Istar_ is cut at an extremely low volume, almost completely lacking in bass, and recorded from a very distant perspective, as though the engineers had set up their microphones in the lobby of the hall. The _Wallenstein_ trilogy (1873-81), based on Schiller's epic poem and once programmed by Dimitri Mitropoulos and the New York Philharmonic, suffers especially from this most curious recording technique. Listening with score in hand, I noticed detail after detail going unheard in the generally reverberant acoustic hash. I can't imagine what impression a scoreless listener unfamiliar with the work would gain from this 1976 recording, which is entirely unprofessional by today's—or even yesterday's—standards. It's too bad, because D'Indy's music deserves better. Under the circumstances, it is pointless to discuss what can be discerned of the performances.

Matters improve on the second disc, from 1979. At least the mixes are in the hall. Details emerge clearly, the recording level is reasonably high, and the sound is quite respectable at a bit wobbly at the beginning of each side of my review copy. _Summer Day in the Mountains_ (1905), a three-movement, half-hour work of rather leisurely tempo, depicts a day in which not much happens, but it happens very pleasantly. The opening down-music is reminiscent of Mahler's First (without the cuckoo), while the bird calls (but only the bird calls) look forward to _Daphnis et Chloé_. _The Enchanted Forest_ (1878), one of D'Indy's earliest works, is nevertheless the most interesting on the second disc. It does owe something to Franck, its "Ride of the Warriors" being a musical sibling of The Accursed Huntsman. The 1891 _Travel Impressions_, orchestrations of six short movements from an earlier piano suite, don't add up to much.

Pierre Dervaux and his Loire Philharmonic give capable, even sensitive, performances, though one senses that the repertoire is new even to them. An interesting element of this release is the inclusion of a short "vocal autograph" in which the composer himself is heard.
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Jan. 25 Denver (Lakewood) Feb. 13 Greensboro
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Jan. 27,28 San Francisco Feb. 21 Cleveland
Jan. 29,30 Beverly Hills Feb. 22,23 Minneapolis
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HIGHLIGHTS OF NOVEMBER

Thursday 5  The Pittsburgh Symphony under Andre Previn plays the
           U.S. premiere of Oliver Knussen's Symphony No. 3—part
           of a ten-day British Festival.
           The 25th anniversary season of the Dallas Opera is
           launched with a performance of Gounod's Roméo et Juliette.

Friday 27  The New York Philharmonic's all-Britten program
           includes the first U.S. performance of The Young Apollo
           for piano and strings; Christian Blackshaw is the soloist,
           in his debut with the orchestra.

Monday 30  The Terrace Theater at the Kennedy Center opens with a
           production of The Rake's Progress, staged by Sir Robert
           Helpmann.

Contributing editors:

Charles B. Fowler, education
Jack Hiemenz, television
Joan La Barbara, new music
Jacqueline Maskey, dance
Patrick J. Smith, book reviews
Dorle J. Soria, personalities

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Young Concert Artists: Twenty and Triumphant

Two decades of management reveal an uncanny ear for talent

**Dorle J. Soria**

Young Concert Artists, as every budding artist knows, is the national non-profit organization founded by Susan Wadsworth "to launch the careers of extraordinary young musicians." Last spring it celebrated its twentieth anniversary season. First there was a gala concert at Tully Hall. Everybody who appeared had begun as a Young Concert Artists Auditions Winner including mistress of ceremonies, flutist Eugenia Zukerman, who looked most festive in a pink and white frilled dress. In a spotlighted box sat Ania Dorfmann, guest of honor of the occasion to whom tribute was paid as "pianist [the only woman soloist to appear under Toscanini], teacher, inspiration, friend." A large supper party after was at the Tavern on the Green in Central Park. Ania sat among old friends including Toscanini's daughter Wanda Horowitz and David Rubin of Steinway and his wife Vivian, as well as her writer-daughter Natacha Stewart. Susan Wadsworth did not sit. She flitted from table to table, from artist to artist, radiantly accepting the congratulations which rained on her like a shower of grace notes.

A few weeks later we saw Susan Wadsworth again, this time in her busy, informal offices in the East Fifties. In her own room the walls are covered with photographs of artists whose careers she has launched and there was a framed certificate from the Mayor of the City of New York saluting her for "her endless supply of talent, dedication, energy, wisdom and love which have enriched the lives of all who love music." Susan was tanned—she had had a brief vacation—and, in her school-girl sweater, looked like one of her own young artists. But when she talked she was her usual quick, keyed-up self, down-to-earth and pie-in-the-sky, discussing practically but idealistically the work of launching the young artist in the great wide competitive concert world.

It all began when Susan was at Mannes. She had been an English major at Vassar before but had decided that her real interest was music. After a year, however, she decided she was never going to be a professional pianist. She had, however, become friends with many of her fellow students, some of great talent. And she realized the problems which lay ahead for them—the difficulties in beginning a professional career for which they had not the money or the know-how, or the connections. After a year in the publishing business, she decided she would do something about it. With the courage of ignorance she decided to form a funded, non-profit organization to help young artists get started. She presented her first concert in a Greenwich Village restaurant loft. She rented the space, bought folding chairs, brought together an audience for a program which had rather unexpected competition. The restaurant cat had previously delivered a litter and, when the music began, there emerged a large family of kittens underfoot, miaowing and competing for attention. Undaunted, Susan went ahead. The concerts moved uptown, eventually to Tully Hall and the 92nd Street Y.

The very first year, 1961, was indicative: the list included Richard Goode, Shmuel Ashkenasi, Paula Robison. During the Sixties Susan Wadsworth launched forty-eight musicians, among them Joseph Kalichstein, Ruth Laredo, Anthony Newman, Murray Perahia, Ursula Oppens, Toby Saks, Fred Sherry, Pinchas Zukerman. The Seventies added another thirty-two, including Daniel Adin, Emanuel Ax, Boris Bloch, Zehava Gal, Stephen de Groote, Ani and Ida Kavafian, Daniel Phillips, plus the Tokyo and Chilingirian String Quartets and Speculum Musicae. The 1981 winners, selected from almost four hundred world-wide applicants, are soprano Marvis Martin, pianists Jean-Yves Thibaudent and Christopher O'Riley, trumpeter Stephen Burns, and two string quartets, the Mendelssohn and the Endellion.
Before going under commercial management, artists stay with YCA from two to six years. “They go when the time is ripe,” says Susan Wadsworth. “We choose our artists not only for technique and repertoire but because we feel they have a personal statement to make, something to communicate. But we must help them to communicate. They all play an instrument well. But they must learn to play it in concert before people. They must learn how to relate to an audience, to make the public feel they care about them. It is not easy and it develops in many ways. A Rubinstein communicates from the moment he makes his entrance. He has a special aura. A Serkin holds his public in an entirely different manner. He comes out on the stage, shy and diffident, but endearing. And once at the piano he is a great communicative force. But it needs time for a young artist.

“Take Pinchas Zukerman. He is now one of the most magnetic personalities on the stage! But when he began he was just a frightened young violinist. I remember back in 1965 when Young Concert Artists booked him for his first American recital at Baltimore Junior College with pianist Richard Goode. I was acting as page turner and just before we were to start Pinky leaned back across the piano and whispered to me: ‘My knees are knocking.’ ”

She talked of other artists’ beginnings. “I had known Emanuel Ax since he was fourteen. His teacher Miecyzslaw Munz told me about him. He made a Tully Hall debut in 1973 and had such fabulous notices that it never occurred to me that he could need us. But, strangely, even after those reviews nothing happened. And so in the spring he entered our auditions and won and the next year he won the Rubinstein Competition and his career was made. Then there was Daniel Phillips. I heard him first at Juilliard. He was seventeen and he was playing chamber music. He applied for our auditions but it was too soon. He was too immature. He didn’t even make it to the finals. But four years later he returned and this time he was a winner. Later he also was given a special prize by Young Concert Artists, the Michaels Award. And now he is

"Where would the Pinkys and the Paulas be today, without such listeners?"
André-Michel Schub

For the winner of the 1981 Van Cliburn Competition, the risk was enormous but the rewards are worth it.

Shirley Fleming

By the time it actually happened, very few people were surprised. The Sixth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition had had an unprecedented amount of publicity as it unfolded, with a half-dozen articles by Harold C. Schonberg in the New York Times not only offering ringside seats to a national readership but making it pretty clear where the bets lay as far as the Times’s cultural correspondent was concerned. In short, André-Michel Schub was a strong contender from early in the race, and the surprise would have been only if he had, in the final moments, fallen short of the finish line. He didn’t, and on Sunday, May 31, viewed by millions on public television, Mr. Schub got the big silver cup and the $12,000 and the dazzling list of future engagements that go with first place. It was well deserved, and all the greater honor because the runners-up, each in his different way, were so good. The jury scratched third prize in order to give both Panayis Lyras and Santiago Rodriguez equal status as second-prize winners, and few could have quarreled with that decision.

There is always gossip surrounding any competition of this intensity, and by the time I got to Fort Worth for the finals, the preceding ten days of trial and eliminations had churned up the usual conversational drafts in the corridors. Schub was not all that popular, it seemed—too aloof on stage, too unsociable, too introverted. Both the Greek-born Lyras, bouncy and boyish and sunny-tempered, and the Cuban Rodriguez, radiating a quite incandescent kind of warmth, had a stronger hold on the audience’s affections. There was even some resentment that an artist so advanced in his career as Schub should have come into the competition. He is, after all, scarcely the kind of “new” talent that competitions like to claim they help discover. He won the Naumburg in 1974 and the Avery Fisher Prize in 1977, and he has been playing with orchestras like the Boston Symphony and the New York Philharmonic, and appearing in the Tully Hall Great Performer Series, at a satisfying clip.

But the unfairness of such an argument is obvious. The risks are enormous when an established performer stakes his artistic bankroll on a gamble of such size, when anything less than first prize for him can be disastrous. Why had he done it? We asked Schub the question while he—and everyone else—was still sweating out the final hours before the prizes were announced. “Well, I’m twenty-eight,” he said, “and life is kind of short. If you don’t take the plunge, nothing will ever happen to you.”

There were a couple of new wrinkles in this year’s Cliburn competition, the most innovative being the use of videotapes in selecting the forty competitors from 128 applicants. Filming was done by the same engineering crew at various locations in the United States; European auditions were handled by another single crew. One advantage of this system, according to the competition director, Anthony Phillips, was that videotapes can’t be tampered with. Furthermore, said pianist Earl Wild, one of the jurors, “What you see reinforces what you hear. A player ought to be part of the instrument—you should feel that his body extends right to the back of the piano.” The consensus was that videotaping was a good idea.

The other element new to the Cliburn (but not to some other international competitions) was the addition of a Phase II to the first round, giving each contestant a chance to perform twice before any eliminations were made. (Phase II brought Mozart, later Beethoven, and some modern repertory into play.) “In some past competitions,” said Leonard Pennario, who has been absent from only one Cliburn jury since the competition’s founding in 1962, “we
felt we hadn’t heard enough. But now I think we’re hearing almost too much. For some of the contestants, Phase II helped. But it hurt others.” Among those it hurt was an entrant from the People’s Republic of China, Zhu Da Ming, who had impressed the jury the first time around but faltered in the second hearing. He made it into the finals, nevertheless, and placed sixth.* There was a flat statement in the local newspaper that he had received special consideration because of his nationality, but this was denied. “Any man,” commented juror Maurice Abravanel, “who played as he did on the first round has the intrinsic capacity within him. I wouldn’t be surprised if in four or five years he should emerge as a superb artist. When he played, it was with such beauty, such delicacy. I was so delighted. I had been afraid that, in a competition like this, we would have forty monsters of technique!”**

Whatever the pros and cons concerning Phase II, everybody agreed on the value of the chamber music round, relying this year—as in 1978—on the good services of the Tokyo String Quartet. “It shows the ability to adapt,” said Wild, who went on to lament that one of his own favorites among the contestants, a twenty-three-year-old Hungarian named Christina Kiss who had “showed a wonderful sensitivity” in Schumann’s Piano Quintet in E flat, had failed to place in the finals. “But these youngsters will never make a penny playing chamber music,” Wild added practically. Lucrative or not, “Chamber music is terribly important,” in the view of Pennario: “It’s very revealing as a test of control and sense of musical balance and musicianship.” André-Michel Schub, an old chamber music hand himself, agreed: “The chamber music brings out certain facets of playing that are important.” And immediately putting the matter into a soloist’s perspective, he added, “Rubinstein and Horowitz both played chamber music, of course.”

A certain amount of conflict behind the closed jury room doors is an inevitable part of any competition process, and Fort Worth had its share. Abravanel was most open about it—“I hate, just hate, the playing of one of the finalists,” he said at one point. “But discussion doesn’t do much good, because judging is subjective. Look, we are all intelligent people on this jury, but if A likes a contestant and B doesn’t, you can discuss all the logical aspects until the cows come home and it won’t change anybody’s mind.”

Pennario pointed out that some disagreement arises because judges are looking for different things, in keeping with their backgrounds. “A conductor on the jury may listen for the way a competitor would work with him and his orchestra; a composer may be wondering, ‘how would he play my music?’ Each is listening for something special. Still, we all want to find star quality, to find the exciting player.”

For most listeners, myself included, André-Michel Schub fulfills the criterion. Abravanel summed it up: “For some, he is intellectual, but the man has everything. Because what is intelligent is beautiful—mathematics is beautiful—and what is beautiful is intelligent.”

Schub’s intelligence, let it be noted, in no way obscures the fact that he commands a prodigious technique. His Beethoven Concerto No. 2 in the finals was chiseled, clean, and tender, with crystalline runs and a feather-

*Fourth and fifth place winners were Jeffrey Kahane of Los Angeles and Christopher O’Riley of Jamaica Plains, Massachusetts.

**Jurors, in addition to those quoted, were: Marcello Abbado, Abram Chasins, Valentin Gheorghiu, Nicole Henriot-Schweitzer, Minoru Moijima, Vlado Perlemuter, Lucio San Pedro, and Zhou Guang-Ren. Lili Kraus was prevented by illness from participating in the judging. John Giordano was chairman of the jury and conducted the orchestras in the final round.

*Continued on page 39
Royal Ballet’s Golden Jubilee

MacMillan’s “Isadora” falls under its own weight

Jacqueline Maskey

In the Annual Report of 1928-29 of the Old Vic Theatre, home of popular-priced Shakespeare and opera in London, there appeared a sanguine paragraph of interest to ballet lovers: “Perhaps its most far-reaching and important events were concerned with the Old Vic’s first tentative efforts at founding a school of English Ballet.” The Old Vic is, as of this year, no more; the “English Ballet”—as first the Vic-Wells, then the Sadler’s Wells, and now Royal Ballet—goes on.

This is the Royal Ballet’s Golden Jubilee Year—the official founding date is May 5, 1931, when a complete ballet program was risked at the Old Vic—and its first appearance in New York at the Metropolitan Opera House in five years. The company appears to be in a transitional stage; the stars we remember with such affection and admiration—Fonteyn, Beriosova, Bergsma, Mason, Seymour, Sibley, Dowell, Grant—are retired or gradually receding into mime and character roles or (Dowell, for instance) facing the inevitable decline which age enforces.

There seems to be no lineup equal in variety or stature. The younger dancers of the Royal Ballet, with the obvious exceptions of Jennifer Penney and Lesley Collier, impress one as a bland, not very individual bunch. There is competence in the front ranks of the company—craft, too—but precious little in performing magic, especially among the men. When Wayne Eagling comes on as Siegfried in Swan Lake you think him socially acceptable in country club terms (“Such a nice boy!”) when what is wanting is the larger more dynamic dimension of “Prince!” That a certain lack in the “star” category was felt even at administrative levels was evident from the emergence from retirement of Antoinette Sibley, who made a much-appreciated return in a single role, Ophelia in Robert Helpmann’s one-act Hamlet, opposite her long-time partner, Anthony Dowell.

Strong corps and repertoire

There are still certain stable and dependable elements in the Royal Ballet: the excellence of the corps de ballet—a model of coherence—and the Ashton repertoire. Sir Fred, who has been a force in the company almost as long as its founder Dame Ninette de Valois, is in his seventies and still inventing ballets of schoolboy vigor and satanic difficulty. Rhapsody, set to Rachmaninoff’s Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini for Piano and Orchestra, is a case in point, a demanding virtuoso piece for ballerina, danseur and a corps of twelve. Created with guest Mikhail Baryshnikov in the leading male role, Ashton had the supreme joy of being able to throw the book at a dancer who could toss it back with text intact, and there is in it a kind of accelerating glee in the opportunity such a dancer presents.

In New York the role was danced by Dowell (looking rather

Park & Hosking in Isadora: a complicated expression of passion
pressed by its demands, but elegant none the less) and the promising young soloist Stephen Beagley. Lesley Collier, whose superior speed, lightness, and lyricism are of high-ordered efficiency rather than poetry, flew through the ballerina role with the brilliance of a humming bird. But this role has such a made-for-Fonteyn aura about it that it was not until midpoint that Collier exorcised the ghost of Dame Margot and achieved an independent image all her own.

The corps girls (Bryony Brind, Angela Cox, Gillian Kingsley, Karen Paisey, Genesia Rosato, Gail Taphouse) were absolutely exemplary, but there was some cause for worry among the boys, where one noticed in flashes strained shoulders or a drooping elbow port de bras all the more noticeable for being unusual in the Royal's ranks.

The rest of the Ashton repertoire comprised A Month in the Country (with both Merle Park and Marguerite Porter taking over the Natalia Petrovna role with extraordinary fidelity to Lynn Seymour's original interpretation), a Daphnis and Chloé which, without Fonteyn, seems to have lost its animating center, Symphonic Variations, and the too rarely seen Scènes de ballet. In the last, dressed and decorated with chic comprehension by André Beaurepaire, Ashton grapples with Stravinsky with tonic effect, creating a lucid, plotless ballet for ballerina, danseur, and corps whose spatial arrangements are continually engrossing.

After Ashton, Kenneth MacMillan is the choreographer with the longest on-going relationship with the Royal Ballet, beginning in the 1950s and peaking in the 1960s with his dramatic The Invitation and the full-length Romeo and Juliet. You have to give MacMillan credit. He tries and tries to make major ballets framed doomed heroines: Anastasia, Manon, Mayerling (never seen in New York), and finally this year Isadora.

Isadora

Over the years MacMillan's full-length works have become more complicated theatrically, and in Isadora he goes to the chancey extreme of dividing the title role between a dancer (Merle Park) and an actress (the splendid Mary Miller), who speaks a running narrative drawn from Isadora's writings and the memoirs of those close to her. The dancing is hung on this narrative line, so to speak, chiefly in pas de deux for Isadora and her lovers which MacMillan has received not as tender interludes but as floor-bound and brutally complicated expressions of passion. These are, indeed, heavy going, and one is left in terms of entertainment with dances extraneous to the story, parodies of popular social dances like the tango and the stage fare of the time. In this vein the treatment of Loie Fuller is less than respectful, but a ballet company with a petulant danseur and especially a lineup of thundering Spanish music hall performers are frankly hilarious.

There is a chaste little solo for the youthful dancing Isadora, but the single most evocative moment in the ballet is dealt not to Miss Park but to Miss Miller who, with a few crimson flimsies and statuesque poses, suggests the electric quality of Isadora's Marseillaise. Topped up like this the dancing seems of dominant quantity, but the huge number of scenes and the prominence of the speaking actress in almost all of them combine to diminish the element which should be most prominent.

Isadora is close to three hours long—it's as if MacMillan wanted to cram in everything from the dancer's San Francisco childhood ("I was born by the sea, ... My first idea of movement, of the dance, certainly came from the rhythm of the waves") to her death in the south of France as the victim of a freak accident in which her shawl, entangled in the wheel of the open car in which she

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was riding, strangled her ("Adieu, mes amis. Je vais à la gloire!")). Like the movies, MacMillan uses flashback and dissolve techniques, abetted by Barry Kay's set—an enormous ellipse hung over the stage along whose track a curtain can be quickly moved to obscure a finished scene or reveal a succeeding one.

The score by Richard Rodney Bennett, conducted sympathetically by Ashley Lawrence, is a dextrous pastiche, just clever enough to suggest Isadora's favorite composers and any number of popular tunes. As for the dancers—how they worked! Park (sincere but miscast); Derek Deane, Julian Hosking, Derek Rencher, Stephen Jeffries as the men in Isadora's life; Monica Mason as a Lesbian "Fuller girl." In a better world, perhaps the effort and intent lavished upon Isadora would have ensured success; but in the theater of dance it makes its mark as a mammoth failure.

"Fin du jour" & "Gloria"

Another new MacMillan piece La Fin du jour, set to Ravel's Piano Concerto in G major and lavishly set and dressed by Ian Spurling, seemed the sort of ballet for which the term "chi chi" ("ostentatiously stylish; showy") was invented. Drawing its postures from fashion magazine illustrations of the early '30s and the craze for golf, swimming, and tennis, it recalled the hectic and superficial round of social life in another—eminently disposable—era. There were, nevertheless, dashing performances by Merle Park, Jennifer Penney, Julian Hosking and Wayne Eagling.

But after the glut of Isadora and the flash of Fin there was Gloria (Poulenc), an evocation of the World War I generation devoured by that conflict. Here MacMillan was fairly simple and restrained, using Andy Klunder's set—a representation of mounded earth stuck through with vertical poles which poetically suggested both the no-man's-land of the trenches and the rim of the world—with telling effect. The dancers crawled or stepped over the mound's edge on their entrances and the very last action in the piece—a young man, the last of an anonymous horde, moving to its edge and stepping off backwards into space—projected it as the edge of memory from which these men and women came and to which they, ghost-like, returned. In its simplicity and directness of feeling—expressed beautifully by its leading dancers Jennifer Penney, Julian Hosking, and Wayne Eagling—Gloria managed to be a very moving piece and, happily for MacMillan, one of his best.

During its New York season the Royal also presented Swan Lake and The Sleeping Beauty, the latter in the most splendid production (designed by David Walker) ever seen here. However, after sitting through a Beauty in which the Blue Bird and Princess Florine came to grief, the Fairy variations are indifferently performed. As for Path, dedicated to Antony Tudor, its depressing panorama of rejection, separations, and missed connections in love recalled that choreographer only in terms of subject. Missing in Kylian's frigid encounters is the lifeblood of Tudo's best works, which is the heat of human passion.

Netherlands Dance Theater

The Netherlands Dance Theater, thirty-one strong, followed the Royal Ballet into the Met for a week's season (July 6-11) bringing as it is its custom a repertoire created by its artistic director Jiri Kylian. Once again—as in its surprise City Center season in 1979—it attracted a large and enthusiastic audience and once again one wondered precisely why.

Kylian's dancers—with the exception of tiny, red-haired Marly Knoben—generally remain as unindividualized as pickets in a fence; their costumes tend toward common-man drab; the pieces they dance are long and heavy laden with intimations of sin, sacrifice, and sorrow. So it was with some gratitude that I encountered among the New York premieres at least one which did not share these cheerless qualities: Dream Dances, accompanied by a series of folk songs set by Luciano Berio and sung with great gusto by Lucia Meeuwson. Focusing on amorous entanglements—some wry, some jolly, some tender—its optimism kept breaking through, especially in the bouncy "Ballo" for Knoben and James Vincent and even in the melting "Black is the Color" for Jeanne Solan and Nils Christie.

The other two pieces seen here for the first time, the all-male Soldiers' Mass (Martinu) and Overgrown Path (Janácek), were more typically Kylian productions. The basic dignity of Mass, a lamentation for the young enmeshed in the bodily and spiritual destruction of war, was undermined by Kylian's lack of invention in movement terms and the irritating repetition of motifs and devices worn threadbare by their use in other pieces. As for Path, dedicated to Antony Tudor, its depressing panorama of rejection, separations, and missed connections in love recalled that choreographer only in terms of subject. Missing in Kylian's frigid encounters is the lifeblood of Tudo's best works, which is the heat of human passion.
A National Advocacy Program

Non-profit group publishes “how-to” guides for arts education growth

Charles B. Fowler

Those who recognize the value of the arts in every child’s education and who want to establish better and broader programs on the state, district, or local level will find the materials published by Arts, Education and Americans, Inc. (AEA) of considerable help. Under the banner of a National Advocacy Program, AEA, a national, non-profit organization working to strengthen the role of the arts in schools, is producing a series of monographs (seven are already published), public service radio spots, a slide-tape program, and other materials that are designed to convince even the most recalcitrant educational fundamentalists that there is educational value in the arts.

At a time of dwindling national and state resources, there is a critical need to persuade state education departments, district administrators, and local school boards to maintain their support for the arts. This is no easy task when local school programs are feeling the pinch of failed tax levies, inflation, and reductions in state and federal moneys due to falling enrollments. When programs and staffs must be cut, school boards and administrators sometimes allow their own personal biases to surface. Like sacrificial lambs, whole subject areas, such as language and the arts, are reduced or even demolished.

Need for arts advocates

All the more reason, then, that in these times of gloomy economics, those who believe in a balanced education that includes the arts become active advocates in support of arts education. David Rockefeller, Jr., chairman of the board of AEA, says it metaphorically: “If the salmon turned on their tail fins whenever the river ran against them, our bagels would sorely miss the company of the lox. So it is with arts in the schools. If arts education advocates don’t stem the adverse current of public policy, the curriculum platter will not only be basic, but tasteless.”

While its National Advocacy Program is only one of AEA’s thrusts, Margaret Howard, executive director of AEA, says that the board of directors has “stressed the special role AEA has to play in building public support for the arts and education.” Given
the prevailing educational climate, that role becomes critically important. The reports and other materials that AEA issues to assist administrators and school boards in making more enlightened decisions regarding the arts assume considerable value.

Membership in AEA's National Advocacy Program is free and open to parents, educators, school board members, artists, arts administrators, legislators, and community leaders—the people to whom their reports, including the following, are addressed.

*People and Places: Reaching Beyond the Schools (Report No. 1)* examines the ways in which schools in large and small cities and towns have been able to enliven and extend the arts experiences of their students by joining forces with community artists and arts organizations. Such partnerships provide "a way to bring students into direct contact with the arts and artists and to make them aware of the power and joy of the arts, the life and work of artists, and the part the arts can play in their own lives." In other words, the schools don't have to do the whole job alone, nor bear the whole cost.

This monograph goes on to give short case studies showing how such school-community linkages have enlarged arts offerings in Luling (Louisiana), Minneapolis, Ann Arbor, Boston, in a number of elementary and intermediate schools on Manhattan's Upper West Side, and in East Cleveland.

*Your School District and the Arts: A Self-assessment (Report No. 2)* asks basic questions designed to help people apprise the health of the arts program in their own school system: Is there a formal school board policy or set of goals concerning the arts? How are the arts reflected in the school budget? How strong is the arts program in the elementary schools? At the secondary level? Are there arts programs for students with special needs and interests? How are the arts integrated into the regular academic program? Does the district provide...
Minnesota Art Museum: ethnic art

staff in-service programs in the arts? Do school arts programs involve the community? Does the district have a comprehensive program in the arts? The explanations that follow these questions show how they relate to quality education.

Local School Boards and the Arts: A Call for Leadership (Report No. 3) is addressed to school board members and discusses topics they will find helpful in exerting leadership to enable the arts to flourish in their schools: budget design, turning an administrator into an ally, building a tradition of support for the arts among board members, developing policies and objectives, and long-range planning. The report suggests that the most effective leadership requires steady, patient efforts to achieve broad consensus in both the board and the community at large and suggests ways this can be achieved.

Ideas and Money for Expanding School Arts Programs (Report No. 4) provides a roster of resources available for developing and funding arts programs. This is a very "in" list; most of the publications, organizations, and individuals mentioned are known only to people in the arts education field. Yet they are the best, most basic, and up-to-date resources for providing accurate information and insight.

Method and the Muse: Planning a School Arts Program (Report No. 5) presents three different approaches to planning, designed to clarify what can be a murky process. The case studies are of Brookline, Massachusetts; South Orange/Maplewood, New Jersey; and Santa Cruz County, California.

Developing Financial Resources for School Arts Programs (Report No. 6) surveys the whole range of possibilities for developing support in the manner of monetary or in-kind contributions, informal consultations, formal partnerships, or technical assistance. This monograph investigates the process of resource development and presents a whole catalogue of operational hints.

The Case for the Arts in Schools (Report No. 7) is simply the best rationale for arts education I have ever read. Clearly and concisely, it provides both historical perspective and a summary of current thinking. Of all the monographs, this one should be required reading for every school administrator and school board member.

All of these monographs were written by experts, among them Ralph Burgard (No. 5), Judy Murphy (No. 1), Richard A. Lacey (No. 3), and Junius Eddy (Nos. 2 and 7). Other titles now planned include Artists, Teachers, and Students Working Together; Arts and the School Curriculum; and What One Teacher Can Do to Bring Arts to the Classroom.

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The Fascinations of Improvisation

A London festival shows the best and the worst

Joan La Barbara

Improvisation is a fascinating format. Most musicians and many composers have ventured into the arena; some have stayed, some fled quickly. There are moments when participants can be touched by a very special sense, when the sounds flow with intensity, meaning, and life of their own. It can happen to a soloist or to a group, and the audience can sense the magic. Then there are times when, try as one may, nothing seems to catch fire. All of these situations occurred during the International Festival of Improvised Music, Movement, and Voice in London last June at the Cockpit Theatre, a comfortably-sized theater-in-the-round. I attended every performance except the one just prior to my own (a total of eighteen concerts in three days). While not all of the music and movement was improvised, the back-to-back nature of the performance schedule allowed for some interesting insights into the positive and negative aspects of improvisation. When it works it can be glorious but when it doesn’t it can be painful—which also manages to convey something in a bizarre kind of way.

Feminist Improvising Group

This was proven by the Feminist Improvising Group (F.I.G.). Cellist/bass guitarist Georgie Born, reed player Lindsay Cooper, vocalist/pianist Maggie Nicols, and vocalist/actress Sally Potter found themselves in an untenable situation: some combination of factors that spark the successful improv simply failed. Nicols and Potter explained that they couldn’t get anything to happen, admitting that the nightmare of all improvisers had occurred . . . and they were going to play it through. A large portion of the audience consisted of fellow performers who more than empathized with the onstage pain, and everyone, onstage and off, seemed to be wondering where it would all lead.

Non-events, vocalImprovs

In an operetta remnant, no doubt, and proceeded to improvise a hilarious star-crossed-lovers hit in perfect rhyming iambic pentameter. Somehow the earlier strain and the ensuing comic gem created a poignant event.

When improvisation doesn’t work it can be painful—which conveys something in a bizarre kind of way.

Song and dance

I was most pleased to hear French singer Tamia in person at last. For the past ten years she has been exploring different aspects of vocal sound with a variety of artists in theater, jazz, and contemporary music, and most recently has been collaborating with dancer Hideyuki Yano. Their performance work in London was intensely spiritual, starting in a darkened theater with a disembodied voice crying out from nowhere. Gradually a light appeared a few inches above the floor, reflecting in a cracked mirror, and we could see

Continued on page 22
Antal Dorati must be the world’s most prominent conductor of B orchestras, most of which he elevated to at least B-plus status. He certainly has been a notable presence since he emerged from the staffs of the Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo and the Ballet Theater in the mid-1940s virtually to invent the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. For a decade he directed the Minneapolis Symphony, for seven years the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, and since 1977 the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. He has headed the BBC Symphony, the Royal Philharmonic, and the Stockholm Philharmonic. Dorati’s many fine recordings include Haydn’s complete symphonic canon with the Philharmonia Hungarica. Perhaps his finest contribution has been his recordings of Haydn operas, which brought to world attention these extraordinary works. With such a wealth of experience, his Notes—which despite its title is of course more or less an autobiography—was looked forward to with much hope for musical and historic illumination.

I say more or less, because anyone interested in Dorati’s life will find few details here. This book—originally brought out in England in 1979 by Hodder and Stoughton, but with twenty pages covering the Detroit years added for the American edition—is rather a discursive curriculum vitae. By the time the author admits on page 270 that “I am not writing... about my innermost private life,” the reader will already have drawn that conclusion.

The volume starts out amusingly enough, as Dorati describes what it was like to be a pupil in Hungary just before, during, and after the First World War. Added teachers, having first inculcated their charges with the glory of the monarchy, had next to impart the benefits of, in turn, postwar democracy, Béla Kun’s short-lived Communist regime and, presumably, the government of Admiral Miklos Horthy. (At this juncture, young Toni was sent to live with a family in Denmark, so we don’t find out what schoolboys were expected to believe during that fascistic era.)

Dorati does give cut some pungent thoughts in the Detroit pages. Admitting that he stayed in Motown only thirty-four weeks in three seasons, he blames today’s deplorable tradition of absentee music directors, but not the directors themselves. “I think that, basically, it is today’s public which has shifted its attention to a large degree from music to the music-makers, and as those are of less enduring interest than music itself, the public needs a greater variety of them. Actually, it is not our wish to be so little with the orchestras for which we are responsible. The entire situation is so perverted that, if we did have more time to offer, we would not be welcome.” Note that last sentence’s middle phrase.

Throughout the rest of the book, there are some surprise treasures, as when, describing the “hardly existing... technique” of conducting, Dorati writes: “It is an elementary set of signals which can be explained in a few minutes, and understood in less. It is much simpler, as well as much less dangerous, than driving a car; something every half-wit can learn, alas.”

The jewel here, of course, is that “alas.” It implies volumes.

Unfortunately, most of the rest of the volume implies “alas.” Dorati sidesteps with cliches nearly all questions that pop into the reader’s mind. Why does he leave one position for another? “I followed my star” or “destiny intervened” or, in Minneapolis, his tenure was “approaching its natural end.” The Vienna State Opera withdrew a proffered staff appointment because it “had made other plans.” No fewer than three times does he designate himself “the Benjamin” of a group when he is its youngest member. Nor does Dorati enlighten us any better in matters musical. One would certainly like to know his thoughts about the Haydn operas and symphonies. Instead, he advises us to read H.C. Robbins Landon.

Curiosities abound. People and organizations are introduced several times, as though the author had forgotten he had already mentioned them. Influential composer Ernő von Dohnányi receives the one scathing review—as an incompetent conductor—in the book, and then, eighty pages later, we find that he was Dorati’s uncle and refused to acknowledge the relationship during his nephew’s struggling days. Schorr, Kiepura, Chaliapin, Ballistini, and Jeritza are all artists whose names “may mean little now.” Bartók surprises Dorati with the secret that the fourth movement of his Concerto for Orchestra contains a parody of Shostakovich. (Was there really any musical literate who did not spot the takeoff—complete with Bronx cheer—of the godawfully banal Leningrad Symphony, easily the most ballyhooed symphonic work of World War II?)
Dorati cries out against sloppiness, yet it permeates his book. Not only does he consistently misspell his colleagues’ names, he omits first names he does not recall. For the benefit of any future revisions (was this edition really “revised”?), Dorati’s mentor at the Dresden Opera House, the conductor Kutschbach, was Herman; Boosey and Hawkes executive Heinsheimer was Hans; the Goldmark responsible for the LP record was Peter. Also, Mr. Boccanegra’s first name is Simon, not Simone. Nor did Columbia “buy out” Goldmark’s “invention.” Goldmark was its employee who headed the CBS Labs team that developed the LP. Léon Blum was not a “tragic victim” of the Nazis but lived to head a postwar caretaker government in France and died on his estate in 1950. Fred Gaisberg risked his job by giving a then—considerable sum of money—not a “lifelong contract”—to record the young Caruso, not Gigli. Dorati’s antagonist at the New Opera Company was not a “Yolanda Yrion” but Yolanda Meró Irion. His producer for the Minneapolis recordings was not Wilma Cozart, then vice president of Mercury Records, but David Hall, unaccountably nowhere even mentioned by Dorati, but who directed the sessions and whose magic razor blade and editing block not only excised inadequacies but carved from myriad takes some of the finest recordings of the Fifties.

Notes of Seven Decades could have used a similarly gifted editor.

Leonard Marcus, formerly editor of HIGH FIDELITY, continues to write on musical matters.

Facing the Music
by Harold C. Schonberg
Summit Books, 464 pages, $17.95.

This collection of Harold Schonberg’s New York Times pieces (mainly Sunday ones) while he was senior music critic is, for me, nothing new, as I read many of them when they were written. Reading them again, I was struck less by my disagreements than by the consistency of his ideas over the years, which makes for a strong critical statement.

Schonberg is opinionated, and he rarely changed his mind (“Nobody ever changes. As we grow older we merely become an intensification of what we originally were.”). He presents his arguments with a straightforward clarity which says, “Accept this or not: it’s what I believe.” As with any debater, Schonberg is not above marshalling lies. As with any debater, Schonberg is not above marshalling the facts and the prose to suit his case, but the result is a forcefulness that, at the least, compels attention. He has a critical profile.

To those who have read Schonberg over the years, this collection will revisit the patinaed hobby-horses of the HCS Ranch: the undiscovered merits of the early romantic (and high romantic) composers—such as Dussek, Hummel, Saint-Saëns or Scriabin; the underappreciation of the great “romantic” pianists, particularly when set against the time-beaters of today; the merits of freedom in performance as against the strictures imposed by musicalological book-learning divorced from the notes as sounded; the bleak wastelands of modern composition, especially serial composition (now with the rosy dawn of neo-romanticism perceived?); the nefariousness of the cult of the opera director and its ludicrous consequences, etc. etc. Schonberg prides himself on being a reporter as well as a critic and thus places himself, in his prose as in his posture, as the audience’s surrogate, and if he knows much more about the music than the average musicgoer the response is, finally, that of a member of the audience and not that of a performer, a musicologist, or a special pleader.

There is a dogged simplicity about his love affair with music which, if it is at times infuriating, also gives his writing a tone that sets it apart from most journalism. His hoary argument against opera in translation, however, is seriously undercut by the gaffe that appears on p. 213: “Opera composers want performances, and if the Paris Opéra in Verdi’s day always used French, then Verdi was going to be happy to have Don Carlo or whatever sung in French, with the best translation he could oversee.” Verdi wrote Don Carlos to a French text, and he set that text extremely well: it was later translated, with mediocre results, into Italian for La Scala, and Verdi did little to improve this mundane word-setting. Since one of the arguments of the opera in the original crowd is that the music fits the words much better, Schonberg’s error reveals what I have always suspected: that the argument is but a smokescreen for the conviction that the words are superfluous, and that opera could be just as well sung with nonsense syllables—the music alone counts.

P.J.S.

Jacques Offenbach
by Alexander Paris
Scribner’s, 275 pages, $25.

Jacques Offenbach
by James Harding
Riverrun Press, 274 pages, $29.95.

The centenary of Offenbach’s death in 1980 produced many tributes to him in the form of revivals of Les Contes d’Hoffmann, and it also
The lively times of Offenbach's greatest successes (Orphée en Enfers, La Belle Hélène, La Périchole, La Vie Parisienne) make for lively reading in both biographies, for the scene is peopled with theatrical figures such as Hortense Schneider, and the glitter surrounding the Second Empire. But Faris is the biographer who tries to get at the specifically musical qualities in Offenbach. Although, in the many musical examples he gives, he never penetrates too deeply, he does seek to understand Offenbach's merits as a composer and to explore the paradox of the German who wrote what the public felt was totally French music. In his final chapter, Faris discusses the problems of the unfinished Contes d'Hoffmann, but here he only partly succeeds—a much more thorough examination can be made on the basis of the newly published Oeser edition of the score, and in the writings of the Offenbach scholar Antonio de Almeida.

The urbane biographer James Harding tells many of the same anecdotes, and provides a more polished (if lazier) style honed in the course of writing many books on nineteenth-century French composers. Like the loquacious fellow-passenger, he is ever prone to discursiveness: he cannot drop a name without telling a few anecdotes, which leads him farther and farther afield. He downgrades Contes d'Hoffmann (a swansong rather than a culmination), is uninterested in its musicological problems, and confines his musical comments to a few subjective and superficial observations. It is pleasant enough reading, but very lightweight.

Offenbach: total theater man

produced these two biographies. Of the two, Alexander Faris' is the more substantial, for he, as a conductor and composer as well as longtime student of Offenbachiana, brings to his study a background of appreciation and knowledge.

Offenbach was the consummate theater man, intensely concerned with his one-act and full-length operettas, which he wrote, rewrote, revised, cut, added to, put on, withdrew—all the activity of the commercial arena. He insisted on being not only the composer but the impresario, and this created further freneticism which, when combined with his penchant for extravagance, led to inevitable financial collapses, as one hit was followed by a few failures. Offenbach shielded his wife and children from the riotous world of the theater, and over the years literally wore himself out with the pace of his overwork. His era was perceived then and now to have ended with the defeat of the empire of Napoleon III in 1870: the last decade of Offenbach's life was taken up with revivals of his hits and attempts to match the success of the 1860s. At the end of his life he was occupied with the composition of Les Contes d'Hoffmann, his thrust for legitimate musical recognition, but he never finished the opera.

ALSO NOTED:
André Previn
by Martin Bookspan and Ross Yockey.
Doubleday, 398 pages, $15.95.

The Golden Century of Italian Opera from Rossini to Puccini
by William Weaver.
Thames and Hudson, 256 pp., $27.50.

My Memoirs in Pictures
by Birgit Nilsson, translated by Thomas Teal
Within weeks of his defection from the Soviet Union last April, conductor Maxim Shostakovich startled musical observers yet again when he said, "I told my father, and my father knew, that I considered it my obligation to bring the blood of Shostakovich to freedom."

The statement came midway through a two-hour interview with The Washington Star, during which the forty-two-year-old only son of the late Dmitri Shostakovich detailed his reasons for leaving the Soviet Union. Speaking with the aid of an interpreter, and joined by his son Dmitri, nineteen, a concert pianist who defected with him while the two were appearing on tour with the U.S.S.R. Television and Radio Symphony Orchestra in West Germany, Shostakovich said that his decision to seek asylum in the West was shaped by experiences going back to his own childhood and had much to do with the specter of "harassment" that hangs over his generation in the Soviet Union.

He also discussed the difficulties his father experienced throughout his career and called into question certain accounts and comments attributed to his father in the recent book Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich by emigre musicologist Solomon Volkov [for more on this subject, see page 20]. Shostakovich said he would "doubtless" have defected two years earlier—when he and his son were scheduled to appear in the U.S. with the Moscow State Symphony—if that tour had not been canceled at the last minute. The cancelation resulted from the U.S. government's refusal, in the wake of the defection of Bolshoi ballet dancer Alexander Godunov, to guarantee Soviet authorities that defecting artists would be returned.

Shostakovich gave two reasons for not attempting to leave even earlier. "First of all," he said, "my father was still alive and I couldn't leave him." (The elder Shostakovich died in 1975.) "Secondly," he continued, "my son was still too young, and a Soviet citizen cannot leave the country without leaving a hostage behind—wife, or child, or someone who would be held by the government. But . . . when he became a pianist capable of playing a concert, I included him in my program on tour. Thanks to that ability, I'm here in the West." Asked if that meant his son's ability to play the piano, Shostakovich nodded and said softly, "Slava Bogu . . ." ("Thank God"). Shostakovich went on to say that being the son of the Soviet Union's most celebrated composer enabled him to take the young Dmitri on tour, even though that left his government without a "hostage."

"This is one of the positive aspects of having my name," he admitted. "They couldn't refuse. I traveled a great deal, and they knew that any journalist in the West would ask me, knowing that I have a concertizing son, why I didn't take him with me. I think even the Soviet Union would be ashamed to hear my supposedly 'good' reasons for leaving him behind. Of course, they would have to say that he had a cough, or he's on vacation and I can't force him to work . . . and that couldn't continue for long."

Defection hastened

Shostakovich said that his decision to defect with his son was strictly kept secret from his wife, from whom he has been divorced for several years, lest the Soviet authorities use it as an excuse to punish her after the fact. He revealed that the moment was hastened by several days (he had intended to defect in London) by the defection of the orchestra's harpist earlier on the tour. After that, an agent of the KGB assigned to the tour told him there would not be another tour for him "for a long time."

"According to the Soviet authorities," Shostakovich explained, "I
am directly responsible for the political views of my musicians. And if I allowed such laxity," he suddenly began mimicking the high-pitched tone of an official, "I must be made seriously responsible! I spent a great deal of my life under the impressions which were made during the 'personality cult' period of Soviet history," he continued, "and I remember the situation in which my father and our family found themselves. I remember how difficult he found life. And since that time there has been a protest that has been ripening within me against a system that would allow such conditions to exist.

"I did not undertake this step out of material, personal feelings of gain," Shostakovich insisted, recalling how Soviet authorities had painted Godunov's defection as resulting from Western offers of "mountains of gold and rivers of whiskey."

"Basically, living in Russia," he said, "I could fill bathtubs with vodka if I wanted to because I had enough money for it. But from my great-grandfather and grandfather, and from my father, I inherited a very sharp sense of political awareness. So I couldn't remain indifferent when people were actively suffering for their opinions. Rostropovich suffered for offering shelter to Solzhenitsyn during his most difficult time; Sakharov suffers because he defends the rights of man; Solzhenitsyn for opening the eyes to the conditions in the Soviet Union. And," the chain-smoking Shostakovich emphasized, "there are many, many others. I knew all of them. And this feeling of personal friendship, and knowing that these people suffered for nothing, made my grief even sharper."

Moving closer to his own experience, Shostakovich continued: "You always had the feeling that behind you there was this looming threat."

"The Sword of Damocles," Dmitri agreed.

"In short," Shostakovich contended, "you cannot be an artist and a patriot of your country. About my personal life," he added later, "you see my son sitting next to me. I didn't want to see him live under the same conditions. I felt it an obligation to give him the choice of freedom."

"For which," Dmitri interrupted, "I am eternally grateful."

"My grandchildren," Shostakovich went on, "will be free."

**Suffering confirmed**

Shostakovich's remarks lent credence to the view of his father as a suffering artist—one profoundly at odds with the Soviet policies he paid lip service to—that Mstislav Rostropovich and others, among them Volkov, have furthered in the West.

"While my father was alive," he said, "I could see the difficulties he had every day. I could see the difficulties he experienced with his Thirteenth Symphony, with The Execution of Stepan Razin—compositions directly opposed, in their expression, to anti-Semitism and despotism."

But Shostakovich questioned the authenticity of much of Volkov's book, which has had a major impact in musical circles outside the Soviet Union, saying that "it does not present a full picture of him as an artist and creator. These are not the memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich. This book is a book written about Shostakovich by Volkov."

Returning to his reasons for seeking asylum in the United States, Shostakovich said, "The West has true freedom for creativity." He added that he hopes to continue collaborating with musicians "at the highest level" who have left the U.S.S.R., such as Rostropovich and Ashkenazy, "whose names are obliterated from the memory of the Russian people." Asked if his name would now be obliterated like theirs, Shostakovich replied

"Maxim Shostakovich, yes. But," he added, sarcastically paraphrasing a remark by the chairman of the union of Soviet composers Tikhon Khrennikov, "Dmitri Shostakovich will continue to shine."
Shostakovich’s Memoirs: The Party Line

In the aftermath of Volkov’s “Testimony,” Soviet biographers close ranks

Seppo Heikinheimo

When the existence of Testimony,* Shostakovich’s memoirs as told to Solomon Volkov, became known, Soviet publishers were stimulated into exceptional activity: within a year, three books on Shostakovich have seen the light of day.

Officially these books have nothing to do with Volkov’s, but inevitably they will, of course, compete with it on the open market and be seen as a commentary on his opus. Every reader will have the opportunity to make up his own mind once they are translated into other languages. Whether or not this will happen will shortly be revealed—all three are currently on offer to foreign publishers. And even if there is little response, it is not impossible that some “progressive” publisher might take one or more of the books up. If no publisher can be found, this must be taken as a tacit acknowledgement that Volkov’s book is genuine and will admit no competition.

Shostakovich on himself

The most interesting of the three newly published Soviet volumes is obviously the one that collects the speeches and articles written, or at least undersigned, by Shostakovich himself: D. Shostakovich on Himself and His Times, edited by M. Jakovlev [D. Shostakovitsh o vremeni i o sebe. Sovietski kompositor, Moscow]. It follows Shostakovich’s life from 1926 to 1975 year by year, and for each year there is review of events from Shostakovich’s point of view and a selection of his own writings. Comparison between Volkov’s and Jakovlev’s books is both inevitable and easily made, as the same events are covered in each.

As might be imagined, not a trace of the anxieties and agonies that so deeply color Volkov’s account is to be found in the pages of the Soviet book. Where Shostakovich in Volkov sees “nothing but corpses, mountains of corpses” and calls his whole life “bitter and grey,” the same composer in Jakovlev from time to time launches into a hymn of praise for the progress made by Soviet music that year, or expresses his gratitude for the helpful criticism that has come his way. Take, for example, his comment on the action of the Central Committee of the Communist Party at the 1948 Congress of Soviet Musicians: “There have been many failures and serious omissions in my creative work although throughout my career I have never ceased thinking of our people who listen to my music, our people who brought me up, fed and clothed me, and I have always attempted to write music that is acceptable to them. I have always listened to criticism and tried in every way to work harder and better. I listen to it now and will continue to accept critical guidance. And I appeal to our musical organizations to practice criticism and self-criticism as extensively as possible . . .”

The criticism referred to was no small matter, but part of the witch-hunt which took place in 1948 all over the country to root out formalism from Soviet music—a train of events which is so graphically described in the Memoirs: “The whole country began a life-and-death struggle against formalist composers instead of thinking about its own squallid life.” But Jakovlev succeeds in dismissing the whole thing in a few lines in which he admits that the “Historic Resolution” contained “a number of unjust and unnecessarily acrimonious strictures on the creative work of leading composers including Shostakovich.”

The result of these “strictures” was that Shostakovich was declared an enemy of the people, that he and his assistant Revol Bunin were dismissed from their posts at the Leningrad Conservatoire, that all his “printed scores were pulped,” that “radio tapes of formalistic compositions were destroyed,” and that “the newspaper published hundreds of letters from workers thanking the party for having preserved them from the horrors of listening to Shostakovich’s symphonies.”

It could therefore be said that Jakovlev’s description of these events is inaccurate, if not misleading, “Unnecessarily acrimonious strictures,” nothing more terrible.

In the Volkov Memoirs we can read how Shostakovich felt in becoming the butt of this kind of criticism: “Criticism is held in high regard here. It is based on the well-known principle: strike but do not allow tears. If you are pelted with mud from top to toe on the order of the Leader and Teacher, do not imagine that you can wipe yourself off. Bow and give thanks. Give thanks and bow. In any case no-one will lend an ear to your angry denials. No-one will come to your defense. And, saddest of all, you
cannot let off steam to a friend because in this sort of situation there are no friends.

Pravda’s “Chaos . . .”

The first crisis in Shostakovich’s life took place in 1936 when Pravda printed an article, probably written by Stalin himself, entitled Chaos Instead of Music, in which the composer was pilloried for his opera Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk. In the Memoirs Shostakovich relates how his whole physical existence was threatened and what a deeply traumatic effect this criticism had on him. Jakovlev again treats these events cursorily and in a conciliatory tone: the article again contained “acrimonious and unjust criticism which the composer took badly but without, however, allowing himself to become depressed or his creative work to suffer.” Jakovlev does not even refer to such an insignificant phenomenon as Stalin, not to mention the cultural minister Khrennikov, the “bloodhound.”

The only text of Shostakovich’s from this year that Jakovlev prints is a short autobiography which concludes as follows: “It would be impossible for me to imagine my future development divorced from the work of socialist construction taking place in our country. My first consideration is to serve the construction of our great country with my art. Nothing can give a composer more joy than to realize that through his work he helps the rise of Soviet musical culture, a culture that has been chosen to play a leading role in the transformation of human consciousness.”

The reader of Jakovlev’s book knows nothing of what Shostakovich has to say in the Memoirs about the “transformation of human consciousness” in the Soviet Union over these years: “Before the war against Hitler even started there were millions in our country who were starving or had been tortured or shot. I myself at that period had vastly bigger chances of landing in a camp [than a tenor who actually was sent there].”

The price paid?

For the year 1972 Jakovlev gives the following statement of belief from Shostakovich: “Today we can say with pride that all the greatest achievements of Soviet art over the past fifty years bear the stamp of the immortal thoughts of Lenin. These thoughts nourish and enrich our art.” In the face of such statements, which the book supplies by the bushel, the reader is bound to ask himself whether this was the price Shostakovich paid for being allowed to compose at all.

The most important question, of course, is whether the picture presented by Jakovlev can be trusted. To do this would, in fact, demand fanatical belief, for there are numerous conscious or unconscious omissions: in addition to the casual coverage of the great crises in Shostakovich’s life, there is no mention, for example, of the man who premiered the Second Cello Concerto and Shostakovich’s orchestration of Schumann’s Cello Concerto—Rostropovich, that non-person and renegade who has also retrospectively been expunged from the histories of the Tchaikovsky Competition, in spite of the fact that he was three times chairman of the jury for the cello section.

The editors of the book must have also nodded off in connection with the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt, who emigrated in January 1980 and now lives in Vienna. He is commended by Shostakovich in a text of 1968 but no doubt this error will be rectified in later editions and translations.

Other special features of Soviet music life which the reader may search for in vain in Jakovlev’s book but of which Shostakovich relates in the Memoirs are the mass murder of the Ukrainian folk singers (the bandurists and limniki); the widespread plagiarism of compositions and the use of compositional “assistants”; the persecution of the natsmen (i.e., composers of the Soviet republics); the annihilation of many musicians in the camps, including Nikolai Zilayev, Sergei Popov, Nikolai Vygotski, and Dima Gatshev; the systematic terror exercised by RAPM, the union of proletarian musicians; and the criticism of Shostakovich’s symphonies. Virtually every symphony gave rise to “an evil affair,” only the Sixth receiving “moderate abuse,” with the result that throughout his life Shostakovich felt himself stamped as an enemy of the people.

How does Testimony open?

“These are not memoirs about myself but about others. Others will write about us and naturally they will lie through their teeth. But that is their affair.”

In all justice, it must be said that Jakovlev’s book does contain one or two things of use to those engaged in research on Shostakovich, for example his opinions on other composers and on the development of Soviet music—even sometimes the mildest of criticism, which Shostakovich expresses, as he says, with reluctance. But there is nothing to approach the Memoirs:

“It is an entirely modern phenomenon that scoundrels who have demonstrated their incompetence in

Dmitri Shostakovich
the field of their own art push in among committees to make decisions and give orders to others. And once they have succeeded in reaching administrative positions, they devote all their energies to stifling the musically gifted. To burying them underground. But their own ungifted works they praise with every means at their disposal."

Unfortunately the reader is unlikely to derive much pleasure even from the sections of Jakovlev's book that are truly of interest, because it is all written in the dry, formal language of an official speech. One has only to compare it with the stunning immediacy which Volkov has managed to achieve in the writing of his book. And from time to time one encounters passages in Jakovlev that are as senseless as incomprehensible:

"In the struggle for the realization of the highest ideals of humanity Mahler stands side by side with the Soviet people, the builders of communism which is the most just social order in the world." Well, you may think whatever you like about the justness, but what in the world does Mahler have to do with the building of the Soviet system?

One wonders whether these and similar pronouncements were actually written or merely undersigned by Shostakovich; and if they were undersigned, whether he even read them before signing his name. In an interview with Helsingin Sanomat, the leading Finnish paper, on May 12, 1979, Rostropovich recounted how he had once expressed his surprise to Shostakovich over this matter and been told: "Look, Slava, I never read these things on principle."

**The official stance**

In comparison with Jakovlev's book, the two others recently published are less interesting but reinforce the official stance. One of them, Shostakovich: Life and Works [Shostakovich: iavt'estov i zhizn. Sovetski kompositor, Moscow] is by Lev Danilevitch, who will be already known to readers of Testimony. Shostakovich there talks ironically about "my biographer who is, you might say, a Shostakovich specialist and turned out to be a decent man." When the pianist Viktor Delson was released from the camp to which Danilevitch's denunciation had committed him, he publicly slapped the former, but Danilevitch was decent and did not file a complaint with the police. In itself Danilevitch's monograph is a worthy study aimed at the professional reader, but to immerse oneself in the text of a musicologist who had distinguished himself as a denouncer leaves a bad taste in the mouth.

The most unpromising of the three books is S.M. Hentova's Shostakovich in Petrograd-Leningrad [Shostakovich v Petrograde-Leningrade. Leningrad]. As the first official introduction to Shostakovich's life and work, it would have some success were it not for the existence of Volkov's human document. The authenticity of Testimony will clearly remain the object of dispute: in the East it is perhaps all too vociferously denounced as a forgery, in the West it seems likely to remain the foundation-stone of our assessment of Shostakovich—more and more so, as Shostakovich's old friends and pupils emigrate to the West and substantiate its authenticity, as Rostropovich and Rudolf Barshai have already done.

And apart from all questions of authenticity, its literary merits are indisputable. Whereas the Soviet books are written in the dry language of scholarship, Shostakovich's own words leap off the pages of Volkov's book—lively, cutting, and tragic. Just like his life.

The life of many people would be easier if Shostakovich's memoirs did not exist but only Jakovlev's official version. As Shostakovich says: "No, it is far simpler to believe what you see. Of course you see what you want to see. Like a chicken. The chicken as it pecks sees only one grain. Nothing else. And it pecks away—one grain at a time. Until its neck is wrung."

**New Music**

Continued from page 14

Tania seated lotus-fashion behind the light and mirror.

Suddenly two additional arms appeared waving slowly behind her, giving the image of a many-armed deity. For a moment the effect was so mesmerizing that I forgot about the dancer and wondered how she was creating such an effect. Yano emerged from behind Tamia and she continued her plaintive, unaccompanied lament as he posed and moved before her. Although she employed some extended techniques—overtone focusing, upper-register fluttering, and split-tone wails—the vocal sound was predominantly traditional and captivating. Their work—intent and clearly ordered—was one of the highlights of the festival.

Two other duos are worth special mention. Keith Tippett and Julie (Driscoll) Tippetts, a husband and wife duo with almost the same name, appeared last on the Saturday evening program and, unfortunately, were forced to do a shortened set due to the lateness of the hour. Julie revealed some Laura Nyro qualities in her voice at times, and mixed a quasi-popular style with extended vocal techniques to create a warm and truly wonderful effect. Keith was sensitively attuned to her every nuance, picking up each new tonality instantly, blending and building, overlapping genres as well.

Derek Bailey, a renowned improviser who also has written extensively on the subject, was disappointing. His personality seemed defensive and abrasive, and he often was unaware of vocalist Christine Jeffrey who tried to work with him. At one point he signaled verbally to the audience the end to an improvisation while she was still singing.

But despite shortcomings, festivals of this sort, combining music and movement, performance and video, are all too few. For those privileged to be there, it was a weekend to remember.
Debuts & Reappearances

Shkolnik, Keene, Ovitsky, and Bach backstage at Grant Park

Chicago

Grant Park: Jan Bach
Piano Concerto [premiere]

Ravinia may have the Chicago Symphony and the stars, but Chicago’s other summer festival, on the lakefront in downtown Grant Park, often has more interesting fare. The only premiere of Chicago’s summer season, in fact, happened in Grant Park in early July when Jan Bach’s Piano Concerto was first performed. This thirty-five-minute work actually predates Bach’s best known effort, The Student of Salamanca, which was staged by the New York City Opera last year. Like Salamanca, the conservative, eclectic concerto suggests that Bach’s heart lies with the music of the past.

The concerto’s design is conventional. Two busy, dense movements surround a more serene set of variations on William Byrd’s “My Sweet Little Darling.” The Byrd lullaby—played on tape, in Alfred Delaware’s lovely old recording—begins the slow movement alone; the piano and orchestra then take up the tune and move into a more dissonant and energetic interplay that suggests the mood of the outer movements. In both the opening allegro con brio and the final rondo in moto perpetuo, Bach touches on just about every gesture in the piano concerto literature of the past two centuries. The solo writing meanders from pounding tone clusters to impressionistic noodling to the bravura of the grand Romantic manner. There are jazzy syncopations in the first movement, and Gershwin clarinet wails in the last. Near the concerto’s end, the winds stand up to blast out an Ivesian cacophony. It is all put together with evident delight and considerable skill, but Bach comes off as a clever musical editor with little to say himself.

The concerto was well served by pianist Sheldon Shkolnik and conductor Christopher Keene, despite the woes of summer rehearsal schedules and a breathless, hot Chicago night.

New York

Guggenheim Concert Band

“One of the nice things about this type of concert is that you never know who’s going to be sitting next to you,” remarked conductor Ainslee Cox to the audience that had gathered at Damrosch park in Lincoln Center on August 6 to hear the Guggenheim Concert Band. He was referring to the fact that all but one of the ten composers had been able to attend the program which had been aptly titled “Meet the Composer.” The occasion also honored former Senator Jacob Javits who, before he left office last year, awarded the band a subsidy sufficient to allow it to continue its sixty-four-year tradition of free outdoor summer concerts.

The works on the program could be divided into three categories. Arnold Freed’s Win, Place or Show, Jacques Press’ Wedding Dance from Hasseneh, and Ashley Miller’s Emblem of Liberty all belong to the genre of cheerful, lightweight numbers which generally dominate pops concerts.

Conversely, the two works in the second category attempted, though with little success, to apply new and experimental techniques to band writing. The interviewing of syncopation and counterpoint in Leo Rising by Peter Phillips may look clever on paper but sounds ineffectual in performance. Stephen Foster Revisited by Beatrice Witkin is a fitful nostalgia trip which might appeal more to admirers of John Cage than of Stephen Foster.

The third category comprised the middle-of-the-road and included the best music on the program. Roger Nixon was represented by two movements from his Pacific Celebration Suite. Pageant is a vigorous multithematic finale, while the preceding Prayer builds an atmosphere of eerie beauty.
NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO

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Check local listings for date of broadcast. This information is published by Musical America as a public service.

RADIOVISIONS

Details at Eleven: A program juxtaposing the acoustic backgrounds of poet John Giruma and violinist/composer/performer Laurie Anderson.

The Oldest Instrument: Singer/composer Joan LaBarbara demonstrates the range of vocal extensions that fascinate contemporary composers. A new work by George Crumb was commissioned expressly for this program.

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Music in Reaction: The New Consonance: A change of consciousness contextuates the range of vocal extensions that fascinate contemporary composers. A new work by George Crumb was commissioned expressly for this program.

GERMAN ORCHESTRA SERIES

Kazimierz Kord, conductor: Gluck's Overture to "Iphigenie en Tauris"; "Processionals"; "Aureole" by Jacob Druckman; preludes to "Eye of the Storm" by Stephen Albert (Richard Barrett, tenor); Symphony No. 6 by Mahler.

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NPR RECITAL HALL

Highlights of the 1981 Kennedy Center: Friedheim Awards to Victorica de los Angeles, soprano; Eliot Fisk, guitar; Harvey Snapper, flute; Seven Spanish Songs by Roberto Gerhard; Granados Tarrago's Popular Songs of Spain; Seven Spanish Popular Songs by Manuel de Falla; and Sephardic Songs by Manuel Valls. (Taped November 23, 1980, at Southern Methodist University)

Yuri Yaron, violin; Gary Hoffman, cello; Shigeko Nekiri, piano; Trio No. 3 and Trio No. 11 by Beethoven, and Trio No. 2 by Brahms. (Taped April 30, 1980, at Indiana University)

Shigeko Nekiri, piano: Sonata No. 52 by Haydn; Sonata in B-flat by Prokofiev; and four works by Chopin. (Taped August 29, 1980, in Pittsburgh, Pa.)

INTERNATIONAL CONCERT HALL

The University of Minnesota Wind Ensemble

The New Swingle Singers

Members of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra: works by Vivaldi, Sibelius, Handel, Warlock, Ravel.

Family Chamber Music: Performers include Eugene Levinson, double bass; Gina Levinson, piano. Gary Levinson, violin; with Peter Howard, cello.

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Renaissance Instrumental Music: A listener's guide to the instruments in a Renaissance band opens the program, presented by New York Pro Musica.

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amid solemn chorales and flutty percussion interludes. The enigmatic and trance-like "Memorials from American Ballads" by Morton Gould combines funeral dirge and montage. It was followed by "Panwane," which, after four decades, remains Gould's most famous work.

Among the weaker pieces, Michael Valenti's March Pasha makes a promising start with antiphonal fanfares and a bouncy, whistle-bait march tune, but soon hits rock bottom when it tries to parody oriental bazaar music. John David Earnest's Fanfares and Dances is ambitious but distracted by rhetorical flourishes, while David Schaefer's Manhattan Carnival makes few demands of either the listener or the cornet solo which was performed here by Vincent Didea.

The program posed various difficulties for Cox and his musicians but, aside from occasional evidence of a lapse in concentration, the performances sounded of high quality and ought to have given pleasure to the composers involved.

Andrew Derhen

Santa Fe

Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival: Harbison "Mottetti di Montale" and Piano Quintet [premieres]
work is a song cycle based on Nobel Laureate Eugenio Montale's poetic cycle, *Le Occasioni*. The poetry is quite dense, and there is a danger in setting literate text to music: an intricate libretto can easily detract from—or be diminished by—the music.

Without being at all theatrical, however, Harbison's score captures the humanity that unifies Montale's poems. The neorepresentational setting is as dense as the poetry it supports; and—given its fifty-minute duration—it presents a significant challenge to both pianist and vocalist. With Auer providing a counterpoint of irony and delicacy, Felty found and expressed an underlying warmth that pervades the music and defines the song cycle, faltering only slightly toward the conclusion of this intense piece. The piano part is almost self-coherent, delightful of itself, yet unquestionably integral to the composition. Auer interpreted it with a liquidity that belied the fierce concentration it required.

These are motets in more than the musical sense: there is an exquisite counterpoint of poetry and music. Each could stand alone; together they become something greater than either.

Less than a week later, Harbison had yet another work premiered: a Piano Quintet, commissioned by the festival and dedicated by it to artist Georgia O'Keeffe as "an expression of admiration and gratitude" for her longtime friendship and patronage.

Harbison sees piano quintets as frequently being "a contest between piano and strings." In this score he was, he states, "trying to get to the sense where they are not in contest, but where they are exploring the different notions of cooperation." Consisting of five movements—Overture, Capriccio, Intermezzo, Burlletta, Elegia—the quintet is about twenty minutes long. It is of formidable difficulty and requires five artists of the caliber of those who premiered it: Daniel Phillips and Am Kavafian, violins; Walter Trampler, viola; Timothy Eddy, cello; and Edward Auer, piano.

The work consists of three dense, evocative movements separated by two playful ones. These latter two are immediately accessible. The Capriccio is essentially a pizzicato section for the strings with a graceful piano counterpoint. Highlighted in the center is a canonical duet for bowed viola and cello with piano accompaniment, followed by an acidic duet for the violins playing alone. The Burlletta flows through changing time signatures (seven of them in the first ten measures alone), never quite doing the expected. It is a scintillating dance, a theatrical burlesque in the tradition of the best of Bartók.

The three more serious movements require more than one hearing. Seemingly abstract, they contain a depth of feeling and a melodic invention that touches the listener. Harbison has clearly explored concepts of cooperation, but his explorations (antiphonal exchanges, canons, duets, trios) are all contextually consistent, evolving organically from the entirety. One never had the feeling that an instrument had been neglected or—conversely—forced into a certain attitude. It is always a quintet. This is a significant piece of music; it should become a standard of the literature.

MICHAEL J. CARROLL
Opera Everywhere

Chicago

**Ravinia: “Macbeth”**

Ravinia is no longer the great summer opera house it once was, but the Chicago festival still manages to capture the opera world’s attention, if only for one night each year. Such was the case June 26, when James Levine opened his ninth season as Ravinia’s music director with a concert version of Verdi’s *Macbeth*—due at the Met in 1982 with the same stars, Renata Scotto and Sherrill Milnes.

Scotto was singing Lady Macbeth for the first time in this country, having done the role before only at Covent Garden in March. London reports varied, but at Ravinia Scotto was triumphant in her newest assignment, singing with great freedom and security, and creating an unforgettable sense of character. She sailed through the coloratura; managed the subtly changing colors and two-octave range of “La luce langue” beautifully; and, in the sleepwalking scene, cast a spell, and sustained it to the final pianissimo D-flat. As always, Scotto made much of the words, and recitative was shaped with remarkable rhythmic instinct. She can, of course, use the cutting edge of her soprano to great advantage as Lady Macbeth, but nothing was overdone; only an occasional top note turned shrill. The voice, in fact, has rarely sounded better. Scotto has done nothing finer in recent years.

Sherrill Milnes’s Macbeth is expressive in a more conventional way, relying heavily on sheer vocal brawn for its effect. At Ravinia he was in fine form, and in tandem with Scotto, he seemed to be reaching for more imaginative effects. John Cheek sang Banquo with generous tone and style. Macduff gets only one aria, but his lament, “Macbeth” is not easy for a regional opera company to compete with the big ones in mainstream repertory, but the Cincinnati Opera thought it really had something when it put together a new production of *Das Rheingold* designed by Tony Award winner David Mitchell, conducted by the young American Christopher Keene, and directed by none other than Gottfried Wagner, the great grandson of Richard, in his American debut.

Leif Roar would sing the Wotan and Jess Thomas the Loge. The whole project looked very good. And in a season that otherwise had offered *Carmen, Faust, Aida, Tosca, and Don Pasquale*, it gave the opera buffs in town their only collectors’ item.

Gottfried Wagner being the big gun. Word had it that the thirty-four-year-old director—who had assisted Patric Chéreau at Bayreuth in the controversial 1976 *Ring* cycle and had gone on to create controversies of his own—was thinking in terms of an astronaut outfit for Loge, construction workers’ uniforms for Fasolt and Fafner, miners’ garb for the Nibelungs, and a gray silk three-piece business suit for Wotan. “The timelessness of timeliness” was his motto. He had told Musical America’s Dorle Soria in 1978, “For living theater there can be only one style, that of its own period.”

The announcement of Wagner’s appointment was made May 4, 1981, with production scheduled for June 7, and the first performance June 25. On May 30, the big draw became the big headache. Wagner got sick and cancelled. To make matters worse, Jess Thomas got sick and cancelled June 5. Big stars had pulled out of Cincinnati productions before—cancellations are a fact of life for regional companies—but the timing of these particular emergencies was unusually threatening.

It is a tribute to the organization and professionalism of the Cincinnati Opera that the setbacks did not interfere with the quality of the final product. Wagner was replaced June 2 by Klas Liljefors, the twenty-nine-year-old stage director with the Royal Opera in Stockholm. Thomas was replaced June 6 by Ticho Parly, who is well known internationally for his interpretation of Loge. The results were remarkable.

It was conductor Keene’s first *Rheingold*, but you wouldn’t have known it from the solid job he did with the members of the Cincinnati Symphony in the pit. The orchestra wasn’t big enough, but what he did
with it had great sweep and stylistic integrity. His sense of timing seemed born for the theater, and his instinct for adjustment was totally reliable.

Liljefors' talent had been untested in the States, but he emerged from this Rheingold as a smart young director who gave a richly humanizing interpretation to a story that is too often staid and symbolic. He forgot about the magical gimmicks and concentrated instead on sharply defined personalities, seemingly comfortable with the notion that it is not size which defines Fasolt and Fafner, not earth which defines Erda, not water which defines the Rhine maidens. He was luckily gifted with some fine actors, whose work he no doubt focused so that the essence of every confrontation was made understandable in contemporary terms. There were no astronaut uniforms or construction outfits, but Liljefors' Rheingold was timely nevertheless.

Mitchell has worked for the Cincinnati Opera before. In fact the terrain of Das Rheingold was actually built in 1974 for his Boris Godunov and reused in 1978 for his Die Walküre. He adapted it with a series of backdrops in windswept blues and greens that suggested nature's timeless grandeur without limiting the story to a specific place or time. The whole is simple, spacious, and sometimes breathtaking, if you put the oddly cartoonlike representation of the rainbow aside.

Leif Roar played his Wotan as a scoundrel who lives his life on a heroic scale. It was a thoroughly worked interpretation, which found clues and observed nuances in the language overlooked by others. He was well partnered by Ticho Parly, whose Loge was also impeccably articulated and thoroughly fleshed out. These two were fascinating together, and their battle of wits with Alberich (played by Andrew Foldi) was the most outstanding scene in the opera.

The Rheingold women were less expert in their roles, although there was some fine singing from Gwynn Cornell as Fricka, Eleanor Bergquist as Freia, and Karen Rambo as Erda. Liljefors used subtle staging to sharpen their various relationships and tensions.

He is a director to watch. A former assistant of Wolfgang Wagner at the Bayreuth Festival, he will assist Wolfgang Weber this season as the Metropolitan Opera revives its own Ring cycle.
The Banff Centre—It’s Busting Out All Over

Amid scenic splendor, year-round arts training flourishes

Jack Hiemenz

Tourists, of course, know all about Banff. Each year they flock to this mountain resort, located inside Canada’s second largest national park, to ski during the winter, to hike during the summer, or simply to gaze awestruck at the area’s grandiose peaks and radiant turquoise lakes. The town itself has no industry; it is merely a congeries of motels that cater to the tourists. Just outside the town, though, is the Banff Centre and its School of Fine Arts—a complex of auditoriums, dormitories, practice facilities, and offices gathered at the foot of Tunnel Mountain. And because of it, Banff has become something more than just another scenic place to break a leg in; it now stands as an artistic nexus for the Province of Alberta—one indeed, whose activities are making an impact all across Canada.

And not just Canada. Though Banff is nestled in the remote splendor of the Canadian Rockies, its ties with musical America grow stronger each year. Distinguished American musicians—such as Donald Innes, Sidney Harth, and Julius Baker—troop in and out as part of its revolving faculty. At least twenty percent of the students are American, a number of them on scholarship. And American music schools, casting eager eyes at the high-quality students auditioned and brought in by the Centre, set up information tables in the lobby of the administration building. “I’m trying to interest these kids in Yale,” says a visiting officer from that school, “but I’m also trying to get Yale students interested in Banff.”

All this ties in with the Centre’s own desire for international links with sister institutions and for increased exchange of faculty and students. “We’ve been close to Indiana,” says David Leighton, the Centre’s director, “and I’d like to get closer to Juilliard, to the Royal College of Music in London, to schools in Mexico and Japan.”

The Leighton philosophy Leighton, who has the white-haired handsome looks of a genteel millionaire, is a native Canadian who studied at Harvard Business School and later taught business at the University of Western Ontario. Following a yearning for greater involvement in the arts, he came to the Banff Centre as director in 1971. Since then, he has brought about a number of changes: expanding its summer festival—hitherto confined to a few frantic weeks—to a period of nearly four months; introducing winter programs and thereby making the School of Fine Arts a year-round operation; and instituting an ambitious program in music theater. “When we started in 1933, we were simply a theater school,” he recalls. “But then other organizations started giving theater training. If we had stuck just with theater, we would have died. So by 1970, we’d become something very different—we’ve added programs in music, ballet, photography, and other arts. We’ve developed, whereas my impression is that most
The Banff Centre: urban tensions are far away

schools haven't. They haven't sufficiently thought about their particular roles. They're drifting. They keep doing what they've always done."

Leighton is an unashamed advocate for continuing education. In oil-rich Alberta, which has moved from a way of life primarily agricultural/rural to one that is industrial/white-collar, and where so many have achieved wealth and security, a place like the Banff Centre fulfills a particular need. "These people have made their pile," he declares. "Now they have a hankering for the arts and for education geared to their needs. But at universities everybody looks down their noses at night programs and extension teaching."

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Performance emphasis

Banff, then, isn't trying to become an institution that offers a full-fledged curriculum and degrees. What this means—for musicians, dancers, and theater people—are programs specifically geared for performance training and practical experience. It also means a faculty not of professors but of professionals. "We encourage work outside," Leighton emphasizes. "In fact, we insist that our full-time faculty members maintain professional careers."

In effect, the summer sessions can be regarded as extension programs. By and large, participants come in for six-week terms. There they may receive private lessons, attend master classes, form chamber groups, join the Canadian Chamber Orchestra (an ad hoc ensemble re-created each summer), or participate in festival events. One advantage of the Banff system is that students taking master classes aren't bound to the same teacher for six weeks. Viola students, this past summer, spent three weeks with Donald McInnes, three with Lillian Fuchs. Cellists spent ten days each with Aldo Parisot, Vladimir Orloff, and Janos Starker. Another advantage is Banff's setting in a mountain community—a setting that offers calm, isolation, freedom from the distractions and nervous tensions of urban living, and an opportunity to concentrate fully on one's artistic discipline.

Problems & solutions

On the other hand, as with any summer institute where one has short terms and transient faculty, problems can arise; and Banff, last summer, encountered its share. A master class in double bass, to give one example, was left bereft when its instructor didn't arrive.

Another problem was described to me by a woodwind player: "They bring in six players for each wind instrument, and advertise that we will be sorted out into six woodwind quintets. Invariably, it never completely works out that way—some players don't show up, and so there's an imbalance. Or else personality problems crop up, and the group falls apart. So not everybody gets to play in a quintet."

And a student in the musical theater program, while extolling the quality of training, complained that training had been subordinated to working in the program's two productions: "They even canceled some classes in order to make time for rehearsals!"

When I mentioned this to one administrator, he nodded: "We had this problem last year with our opera program, but we solved it by making the program two-tiered—by having an advanced class for people who..."
would be involved in our opera production, and a program that would stress training. Now we have to address that problem as it applies to the musical theater students.”

Winter cycles

If Banff’s summer term is essentially an extension program, its recently instituted “winter cycles” might well be regarded as an immersion. Instead of 350 music students coming in for relatively brief periods, the Centre brings in a considerably smaller group of participants whom it deems at the threshold of professional careers. And for varying periods—as short as three months, as long as three years—these participants lead existences almost monastic in their single-minded pursuit of cultivating their talent, under the guidance of the Centre’s small resident faculty and its visiting artists. “These musicians may be working up a repertory, or they may be preparing for a competition,” says one administrator. “Last year we had an oboist who had played with a number of U.S. orchestras. When he came up here, he studied with Heinz Holliger—the world’s leading oboist!—but also with such great musicians as Janos Starker and Menahem Pressler.”

The winter cycle concept doesn’t end there. Once the participants feel ready for it, the Centre then sends them on performance tours. “What better preparation could they have?” enthuses Donald McInnes. “That gets them out of the practice room and into the nitty-gritty of practical performing.” What this means, of course, is that the Banff Centre, more and more, is doing something unique for a music school—it is getting into management. Mary Vacca, who helps arrange these tours, points out that they aren’t confined to Canadian artists; nor are they always restricted to winter cycle participants. Last summer, for example, the Pacific Quartet (the Los Angeles-based ensemble that won this year’s Coleman Chamber Music Competition), after being brought to Banff for the summer as its quartet in residence, was then sent to the Stratford (Ontario) Shakespeare Festival, where they performed for five straight days. Miss Vacca also concedes that the Centre hasn’t yet fully mastered the mechanics of management: “One problem with tours is that they can disrupt our winter cycle scheduling. Also we need a higher profile—people in the concert business still don’t know much about Banff.”

A sense of focus

While the business folk learn more about Banff, so do music lovers, thanks to its summer festival. Among the festival’s many presentations by students, faculty, or combinations thereof, I attended a performance of Albert Herring that had been beautifully staged by the noted actor/director Douglas Campbell. I also attended most of the festival’s Bartók centenary offerings, which included chamber music; a performance of the Viola Concerto with Donald McInnes as soloist (a few weeks later, the same piece, in a cello version, was performed by Janos Starker); programs of Hungarian folk music performed on peasant instruments by the visiting Sebo Ensemble from Hungary; and a symposium of Hungarian musicologists. Because of the Bartók series—as well as a stress on the music of percussionist/composer William Kraft—the festival had a definite sense of focus; it wasn’t just another summer-long sonic supermarket.

Two musical theater events were put on—a revue of numbers from Broadway shows, and The Threepenny Opera. And there was also an evening of dance, which included two new works by Peter George and Jennifer Mascall (last year Banff’s dance festival company consisted seventy-five percent of Americans).

There were other events, too. A production of Molnar’s play The Guardsman. An exhibit of sculpture. An exhibition of fifteen American artists working in fibre. And... but you get the picture. Banff is busting out all over. Maybe, indeed, a bit too much. David Leighton has started tightening the reins: “We’d originally set our sights on having 130 music
Heinz Holliger works with string group

students by 1984," he declares. "But then we realized our internal organization wasn’t quite up to handling further growth—so this year we decided to hold it at sixty-five and catch our breath."

Still, that’s a music school with only sixty-five students and a big-name faculty. One that arranges tours—not only for individual performers, but for full-scale presentations of opera and musical theater. How on earth, you may wonder, can they afford it?

Self support

Banff is flourishing today, at a time when so many music schools are glumly facing the skids, for a number of reasons. For one thing, the Alberta government is giving enormous financial support to the Centre. For another, the Centre, taking advantage of its location in one of Canada’s most popular tourist areas, has managed, in good part, to become self-supporting by renting out portions of its facilities during the winter to visiting conventions, and also by arranging management training programs, often for arts administrators. "All this," says David Leighton, "gives us autonomy, freedom of decision-making. We're insulated from political pressure or community animus. When we put on a certain kind of show, we don't have to worry about adverse reactions from the town, or about meeting the market need."

Banff’s unique identity—and attitude of independence—had a curious result, back in the ’70s, when the Canada Council (the government’s arts-funding department) was considering establishing a national music school. A committee of consultants nominated Banff. Banff, after considering the offer, turned it down. "Presumably, a national music school would have been nationally funded," says Leighton, "hence we would have been subject to federal bodies, and been required to meet all sorts of conditions. Also, when that recommendation was announced, we were quite far advanced with our own plans for development. Also, we knew that politically it was a hot potato, and that probably it would be more trouble than it was worth. Other conservatories had been angling for it, and we felt that we depended on their good will for our future programming."

And which new directions will Banff be taking? Another whole article would probably have to be written about its music theater (not musical theater) project, which is just getting underway: an attempt—coordinated by Michael Bawtree—to put together modest-sized productions involving singing actors, but productions which don’t fall into the categories of opera or commercial musical. "We are looking for pieces that address themselves to contemporary audiences, the same way that modern dance broke away from classical ballet and eventually established itself as a twentieth-century vehicle." (Some of the people he hopes to bring into the project are composer Frederic Rzewski and avant-garde theater mandarin Robert Wilson.)

And Neil Armstrong, manager of the School of Fine Arts, speaks hopefully of another cherished project: the establishment of a recording studio, current negotiations for a partnership with a commercial label, and a day when Banff Centre artists will be available to the record-buying public (the government has already increased the likelihood of a label specializing in Canadian artists by imposing a whopping duty on imported discs).

Armstrong also mentions the Centre’s plans to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary in 1983: an opera commission (with music by Canadian composer Galt McDermott); the premieres of four new dances; a string quartet competition; and an international symposium on the arts. Let us hope that Banff, even then, will remain what it is today—a place where American and Canadian talent can continue to mingle despite the barriers of work laws and cultural chauvinism; where the best and the brightest from both sides of the border can work together in art’s perennial—and transnational—quest for excellence. MA
Midsummer Mozart at Covent Garden
A new London festival proves captivating

Edward Greenfield

Outside the capital they always say it’s grossly unfair: London gets all the best in entertainment, not least in music. Now at a time when the various established music festivals through Britain—Aldeburgh, Cheltenham, Bath, and the like—are less ear-catching than they once were, a new festival arises, one that by the test of public enthusiasm ought to recur annually forever. And where is it? In London at the most privilege-bound of all our entertainment places, the Royal Opera House Covent Garden.

Operas and chamber music

But the fact is that in any survey of midsummer offerings this year the Mozart Festival at Covent Garden far outstripped everything else, not just in sheer fizzing enjoyment—you might expect that with Mozart and Da Ponte in alliance—but in the way it led to spin-offs on a wider plane. BBC Television used the Covent Garden Festival as the peg on which to hang the start of a summer-long music festival, presenting a Mozart fortnight as a prelude to dozens of extra music programs. There were not just opera productions and relays of concerts (including the Proms), but a series of masterclasses from Elizabeth Schwarzkopf, conducted at last year’s Edinburgh Festival.

The basic idea at Covent Garden was to have recurrent cycles of the three Da Ponte operas, twelve performances in a great sequence with only Sundays making a break. Then Mozart chamber music took over in the auditorium with the Amadeus Quartet the resident team. In addition there were lunchtime chamber concerts in the Crush Bar of the Opera House given by members of the Royal Opera House Orchestra, but most important of all there were outdoor chamber concerts in the new Covent Garden piazza, one of the few real successes of recent urban planning in London. It is a pedestrian precinct centered on the old fruit market buildings, and its sheltered terraces are always thronged, mostly with young people. There the wind players of the orchestra gave lunchtime concerts including the Serenade for 13 Wind Instruments conducted by Sir Colin Davis. Added to that, two cycles of the Mozart operas were designated “Prom performances,” thanks to subsidy from the Midland Bank. As in certain cycles of Wagner’s Ring at Covent Garden, the seats in the stalls were all removed, and the space given over to Promenaders standing in line on performance night—or more likely through the day.

“Ring” parallel: thwarted

The parallel with the Ring cycle was intentional. It was some years ago that I remember suggesting to Colin Davis that Mozart might very effectively be used as a counter-blast to Bayreuth. My suggestion was a full tetralogy with the three Da Ponte operas capped by the last of the great masterpieces, the opera which far more clearly than the others presents a philosophical conclusion, Zauberflöte. Thus Mozart, like Wagner in the Ring, might become an absorbing and self-contained experience for anyone attending the cycle. What has happened—and I don’t say it was I who started the ball rolling—is that two productions already in the Covent Garden repertory, Le nozze di Figaro and Così fan tutte, both with John Copley as the lively producer, were rounded out with the completely new production of Don Giovanni with Peter Wood as producer, sets by Henry Bardon, and costumes by David Warner.

The pity is that with that dichotomy of production, and three operas presented in sequence instead of adding up to a cycle, the listener was encouraged to compare and contrast each with the others. Sir Colin Davis may have been conducting all three, and various singers contributed more than one performance—Thomas Allen, for example, an authoritative Count in Figaro and then a twinkling Guglielmo in Così—but the failure of the new Giovanni to match the achievement of the other two had the cycle off-center, at least at this first attempt. Wood as a producer is one who believes in imposing his own original interpretation, with a capital “I.” The point which most stuck in my throat was his turning Donna Elvira into a floozy—she who was fresh from a convent. Here Wood had the enchanting Kiri Te Kanawa waggling her hips as she walked, pulling up her skirt to finger her high kinky boots meaningfully, and generally behaving so out of character one wondered how anyone could be so perverse.

The Bardon sets, too, were unnecessarily distracting, a sort of Roman Coliseum in miniature, colonnades one above the other, which slid round and formed different shapes on
their circular railway. So Giovanni's house was nothing less than a palace where for no special reason grape-treading was laid on. Conducting and singing had to compete as best they could, but after a shaky start the cast was presenting very acceptable results musically—not just Miss Te Kanawa but Gundula Janowitz as Anna (yowly to start with, quickly settling down), Stuart Burrows a poised Don Ottavio (much preferable to his Ferrande in Cosi), and Ruggero Raimondi, today's obligatory Giovanni, dark and incisive.

Kiri Te Kanawa also appeared as Fiordiligi in Cosi, sounding far happier, and beautifully matched with Agnes Baltsa as Dorabella, both of them giving weight to the piece, a vein of seriousness. As for Figaro, the performance which latched in the mind delectably was from Lucia Popp as Susanna, a last-minute replacement for Helen Donath, and one who proceeded to dominate the occasion effortlessly, making it almost the Marriage of Susanna. And that in the face of an engaging Figaro, nobler and darker of tone than is common from Stafford Dean.

Aldeburgh's "Prodigal Son"

At the Aldeburgh Festival these days they only just manage an opera production—which is more than most festivals, always impe- cunious, can manage in Britain. Last year it was Britten's A Midsummer Night's Dream in geometric sets as unmagical as anyone could devise. This year, again with Christopher Renshaw producing, it was The Prodigal Son, Britten's third parable for church performance, given not in its original church setting at Orford but—for the sake of fitting in a bigger, economically more viable audience—in the Maltings Concert Hall. The focus was sharper, but the result far less moving with basic indications in the music often ignored.

Glyndebourne's freshness

For a magical evocation of a Britten opera, A Midsummer Night's Dream, one had to go to Glyndebourne this year, which for the first time since the unhappy post-war experiment of presenting the first performances of The Rape of Lucretia there, has remained totally Brittenless. Its size, however, is ideal for the works with chamber orchestra. Bernard Haitink was conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and he brought to the piece the sort of incisiveness and freshness that has transformed Peter Grimes in the reading of Colin Davis. Sir Peter Hall was producing, and there were enchanting designs by John Bury which moved and rearranged themselves before one's eyes, with each sprout of foliage boasting a familiar spirit acting as scene-shifter. With a mirror floor and cunning lighting evoking mists through the hours of the day and night, the scene was often suspended in space. The cast was blessed with such singers as Ileana Cotrubas (Tytania), James Bowman (Oberon), Ryland Davies (Lysander), and Dale Duesing (Demetrius), while the women lovers really did present the right physical as well as vocal con- trast, Felicity Lott a lofty Helena, Cynthia Buchan a diminutive Hermia. Heading the band of rude me- chanicals came Curt Appelgren as Bottom (later an equally sonorous Rocco in the Glyndebourne Fidelio), and a fine tenor, Patrick Power, as Flute.

The weather this summer was even more unreliable than usual in southern Britain, but Glynde- bourne deservedly had a vintage season, still blooming under the musical

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Ponnelle’s New “Tristan und Isolde”

Some brilliant strokes mark the director’s Bayreuth debut

James Helme Sutcliffe

New blood has been coursing through Bayreuth’s veins since Wolfgang Wagner decided to entrust the centennial Ring to a French team and the following Dutchman and Lothringen to Felsenstein apostles. It was almost inevitable, in view of this, that he someday invite one of the world’s greatest “independent” director/designers to the Wagnerian temple: Jean Pierre Ponnelle.

The occasion itself, this past summer, was not all one might have hoped for. It would have been wonderful to experience Ponnelle’s richly detailed, psychologically motivated movement in the season’s new Meistersinger production, but it was, instead, Tristan that he chose to direct, and the results were disappointing.

Scenically the trees had, and held, center stage: three mighty trunks—ship’s stern (I), forest giant (II), and blasted stem (III)—the central features of Tristan. But the opera was performed in its entirety behind a scrim, which allowed for entrancing lighting effects every few minutes that sometimes even substituted for action. What action there was, though, was telling. I’m not so sure it was a good idea to let the exchanges between Brangane, Tristan, and Kurvenal in Act I take place behind the translucent mainsail (a double scrim effect, in fact). But it was a brilliant stroke to ornament Isolde’s bridal white with a pendant formed of the splinter of Tristan’s sword that she had found in Morold’s severed head, and to allow her to finger the gap in its blade as she sarcastically told him to put away the weapon. The vessel containing the supposed death potion was a flat bowl from which both could frenziedly drink at once, and the sectional action for Act II’s tryst has never been less embarrassing, its mood recalling Menotti’s 1968 Spoleto version. Visually haunting, too, was the sight of the sick Tristan in Act III suffering beneath the barren, split trunk on a rocky promontory around which Isolde’s ship could at any moment have sailed, while the ancient bearded Shepherd dolefully piped in silhouette. Ponnelle touches all.

Tristan’s hallucination

But there were problems. Marvelous though it was to trap and weigh down the proud blonde Irish Princess under a white satin bridal cape thirty feet in diameter, bedecked with blossoms, pearls, and delicate paintwork, it was a scandal that the thing cost $8,000, for it was little used and its filigree decorations were invisible through the scrim. King Mark looked the veritable Welsh bard in brown pelts, flowing white hair, and headband, but why did Tristan stalk around like a silent-screen idol, made up to match in black wig and villainous visage that would better have suited Melot?

Which brings us to Ponnelle’s brilliant but impossible solution for the second half of Act III. Taking Tristan’s third hallucination—Isolde floating to him over the waves—as his departing point, he turned the rest of the act into an extension of that vision: Isolde appearing between the two trunk shafts to sing her Liebestod and then disappear, and the arrival of the second ship with Brangane and Mark together with the deaths of Melot and Kurvenal all presented as shadow-play on the cyclorama. There was no reunion of the lovers in death, but only the wish-dream of Tristan’s dying fantasy. Clever, it must be admitted. Too clever, for it made nonsense of Wagner’s idealized conception of perfect love realizable only in another world.

Meier’s Isolde

Musical riches made up for much, however. Daniel Barenboim’s expansive, soft-edged contours were even better paced and architecturally more secure than when he first conducted the opera in West Berlin last year. The slight flutter in Johanna Meier’s opulently expressive Isolde, audible in the broadcast but insignificant in the Festspielhaus, made her princess a regal, womanly portrayal, meltingly sung in Acts II and III with subtle power to spare. Matti
Salminen's Mark managed to tone down the bellowing he does as Daland to the level of touching lyricism. The Kurvenal and Brangane of Hermann Becht and Hanna Schwarz sounded vocally uneven, his the hectoring “gombobble” quality so often heard in Germany, hers with more sense of strain in the voice than an instrument of that size should be displaying.

And what is one to say of René Kollo's Tristan? It does not have the weight we have come to expect in the role, sounding dry and uninvolved, and yet he really did get through it intelligently without flagging, except for indulging in more melodramatic Sprechgesang in Act III than is appropriate or endurable. But that's the wonderful thing about Bayreuth! All of the artists involved will have chances to revise and perfect their contributions as long as this Tristan is in the repertoire—four to five years.

"Meistersinger"

The new Meistersinger was good news from start to finish, although both Wolfgang Wagner's production and Mark Elder's conducting (he is musical director of the English National Opera) were brutally slashed by the German press. I overheard one audience member say about Elder, "You could see in his face that he knew he'd failed," and he was raucously booed after the five-hour marathon. Disgraceful, but then nobody thinks he knows better how a Wagner opera should go than your Bayreuth habitué, an expert on everything except common sense, which should tell him that the glory of such masterpieces is the varied ways they can be conducted, all valid. Elder's was in the broad, gemütlich style of England's grand old Wagnerian Reginald Goodall, a relaxed approach allowing for the shaping of orchestral strands and textures ravishing to the ear, and for absolute clarity of diction though control of dynamics. That it is harder to maintain dynamism when such an orchestral tapestry is spread before you is a commonplace, but Elder did it, and even Wolfgang Wagner's frequent ignoring of acting details his grandfather wrote into the score could be excused by the vivacity and good humor of the rest.

The voice of Siegfried Jerusalem (as Walther von Stolzing) is just plain beautiful (although he sometimes seemed to be forcing), and he cut a dashing figure with Mari Anne Haggander's petitely perfect Eva as his beguiling foil, her vocal quality reminiscent of Hilde Gueden's. Hermann Prey was, well, himself as Beckmesser, although he valiantly tried to enter the role and was cheered for his attempt. Graham Clark brought exuberance and youthfully vocal vitality to David, excellently partnered by the Magdalena of Marga Schiml and Manfred Schenk's fatherly Pogner. Bernd Weikl, having sung the Night Watchman in Wolfgang's ghastly 1972 production, here graduated to Hans Sachs and invested the cobbler-poet with all the humanity of young middle-age, a vibrant baritone darling of Nuremberg (and Bayreuth) for whom Eva could very well have fallen had not Walther come her way.

History seemed to be repeating itself too, for the magnificent Night Watchman of Matthias Hölle deployed velvety tones that will surely command their larger share of Bayreuth's attention in festivals to come. All in all, a Meistersinger to renew one's faith in opera as one of the greatest art forms. MA

Festweise in Act III of Meistersinger: renews faith in opera as a great art form
Franz Schreker died of a stroke in 1934, but in effect the Nazis killed him. They also cast his music, including eight operas, into an oblivion which until relatively recently has remained almost total. In the Schreker operatic revival, East Berlin's German State Opera has now made a major contribution with an admirable new production of Schreker's last opera *The Smith of Ghent*.

This current revival began three years ago in Freiburg with *Christophorus* [MUSICAL AMERICA February 1979]. Schreker had composed it between 1924 and 1927, and the southwest German city of Freiburg scheduled its world premiere for 1931. By that time, though, even two years before Hitler actually came to power, the Nazis threw enough weight around for the Freiburg Opera to cancel the premiere "to avoid political demonstrations." In 1978, forty-seven years late and forty-four years after Schreker's death, the Freiburg Opera finally did *Christophorus*, the first event in the current revival which has included seminars and performances in Berlin and Graz and a revival of an important Schreker opera, *The Marked Ones*, in Frankfurt. (Schwann's comprehensive LP record catalogue carries one single Schreker listing, his chamber symphony entitled *The Birthday of the Infanta*, available on the Classical Excellence label.)

**The Schreker reputation**

Musical oldtimers here, survivors of pre-Hitler Germany, say that no one who didn't experience that period personally can imagine the outstanding position Schreker occupied then. Born in 1876, more or less by accident in Monaco, son of an aristocratic mother and a Jewish photographer father appointed to the Imperial court in Vienna, Franz Schreker got his education at Vienna's Musikakademie and joined the Volksoper there as choral and orchestral conductor at the age of twenty-eight. He first met Alban Berg in 1910; he also became a close friend and regular tennis partner of Arnold Schoenberg, the world premiere of whose massive Gurrelieder he conducted in 1913. The year before that, the Frankfurt world premiere of Schreker's opera *The Distant Sound* had made him famous. Bruno Walter conducted two Schreker productions in Munich in 1914 and 1919, and in 1928 Erich Kleiber unveiled *The Singing Devil* in Berlin.

In 1920 Berlin's Musikakademie had made Schreker its director. His faculty, in time, included such stars as Paul Hindemith, his own composition class such important figures as Alois Hába, Ernst Krenek, and Karol Rathaus. His operas enjoyed more productions and performances than those of Richard Strauss. Then came the Nazis, under pressure from whom Schreker resigned from the Hochschule. Performances of his works, of course, ceased. On March 21, 1934, in Berlin, Franz Schreker died.

Experts from those days differ in their opinions on the relative merit of Schreker's various works. *The Treasure-Hunter*, which the Frankfurt Opera unveiled in 1920, became the popular favorite. Schreker himself confessed a secret weakness for *The Music-Box and the Princess* (1913, Vienna and Frankfurt). H. H. Stuckenschmidt, the dean of Germany's present-day music critics, eighty this year, stands up for *The Distant Sound*. Bruno Walter placed *Irrelöhe* (1924) at the top of the list, Erich Kleiber *The Singing Devil*.

Schreker's biographer Gösta Neuwirth gave first place to *The Smith of Ghent*, which had its first production in 1932 at the Berlin Municipal Opera, where the Nazis turned the premiere into an anti-Semitic scandal. In 1933 Schreker completed the overture to another opera, Memnon, but political and personal developments kept him from finishing it.

**"The Smith"**

S chreker composed *The Smith* in 1930-31, a period of German economic and social ferment and upheaval, with many expecting the Communists to come to power and many others the Nazis. Somehow, in spite of everything, conceivably as a form of self-therapy, Franz Schreker managed to compose a downright merry comic opera.

He himself adapted his libretto from *Smeise Smei* by the early nineteenth-century Belgian writer Charles de Coster, remembered today primarily for his novel *Ulenspiegel*. Schreker once described *The Smith*, fittingly, as "an opera à la Brueghel."

The story focuses on Smee, the smith of Ghent, who in the sixteenth century, like most of his neighbors, did what he could against Spain's oppression in Flanders and the Catholic church's Inquisition which went with it. With his smithy and business ruined, Smee comes to terms with the Devil in exchange for seven good
years. A series of adventures ensues, among them an encounter between Smee and the Holy Family, who in this production have fetching neon haloes which they hold overhead on stems. In the end, Smee outwits Old Nick, then tries to follow his wife into heaven. St. Peter bars the way, but relents after St. Joseph himself intercedes, so all works out happily in the end.

Thanks particularly to fanciful staging by Erhard Fischer and to whimsical but stunning sets and costumes by two guests from Moscow’s Stanislavsky-Nemerovitch-Dantchenko Theater, Valeri Levental and Marina Sokolova, this production adds up to an almost unalloyed delight. On opening night Rolf Reuter had his conducting hands full coordinating his large forces in the pit and on stage, but he and all concerned, particularly Jürgen Freier and Uta Priew as Smee and his wife, enjoyed thoroughly deserved bravoes at the end.

Haidy Schreker-Bures, writing in the printed program from Buenos Aires, shows that she has neither forgiven nor forgotten the wrongs which Germans inflicted upon her half-Jewish father. In a final, searing line about the stroke which killed him, she writes, “It may well have protected him against a worse fate.”

A glance back

Writing this my final report from these parts, on the verge of pulling up thirty-two-year European roots and returning to my native shores, provides occasion to glance back at musical developments in the German Democratic Republic since I settled in (West) Berlin a quarter-century ago.

In general, those developments provide reason for rejoicing, not only for East Germans but for anyone who loves music. Stalin died three years before my move to Berlin, but Stalinist policies for some time continued to dominate the arts in East Germany just as they did politics. Looking back today, it seems almost incredible that for quite a number of years such composers as Bartók and post-Firebird Stravinsky simply did not get performed—and of course the musical bosses equated Schoenberg and his disciples with original sin. Today the East German radio can even risk broadcasting a live Leipzig performance of John Cage’s Piano Concert—even, this year for the first time ever, forty-five minutes of Stockhausen...

East Germany’s performing musicians today appear throughout the world, with at least two of them, Peter Schreier and Theo Adam, as famous abroad as at home. Leipzig’s Gewandhaus Orchestra and the Dresden (formerly Saxonian) State Orchestra, two of the world’s greatest, make major international tours. It has taken a long time, but gradually political paranoia has dissipated at least enough to permit East Germany to assume its rightful musical place internationally, to the enrichment of us all MA.
Artist Life

Continued from page 5

going a Stradivarius! Another artist was Murray Perahia. When he came to audition he had about four pieces in his repertoire and they were all Schumann's Kreisleriana. But he had only to play a few bars and I knew he had something special. And he was accepted. Someone who originally had no intention of applying was Stephen de Groote. He came to the auditions as accompanist to a clarinet applicant. When I heard him I said: 'Aren't you going to enter, too?' I asked for his repertoire and he had wads. He was persuaded and that year, 1977, he was the only winner, out of 360, of the International Auditions. The next autumn he won the Van Cliburn competition."

Susan Wadsworth spoke appreciatively of the many distinguished artists who serve without pay at the Annual Final Auditions. She singled out with special warmth Ania Dorfmann, her anniversary party guest of honor. "We met in 1965 at a competition for youngsters in Quebec and have been friends ever since. She is a wonderful person and judge. She doesn't care if it is somebody else's pupil, if he or she has a different style. I love the way she listens! She listens for the musical juices."

As does Susan Wadsworth. We wondered. Where would they all be today, the Pinkys and the Paulas, without such listeners?

We were having dinner with composer Charles Turner and talk turned, as was only natural, to Samuel Barber, since Chuck had been a pupil of Barber's and then his lifelong friend. He had been near Barber a great deal during the months of his final illness—he died last January 23—and he told us this touching and typical story of one of Sam's last wishes.

"As you know, Sam always liked food, good food, and he was especially fond of soup, and homemade croutons in his soup. One day, towards the end, he said: 'When I am buried I don't want flowers on my grave. I want croutons sprinkled over it.' He died and we remembered. A good friend baked a large loaf of bread and each of us, gathered in Sam's apartment, ate a piece. The bread was then diced and toasted into croutons and we took them with us when we went to the funeral. It was in West Chester, Pennsylvania, where Sam was born. The cemetery is a peaceful place, with fine old trees, and all of Sam's family is buried there except for his aunt, the contralto Louise Homer, who died in Florida. After the services, standing around the grave, we scattered the croutons over it, as Sam had wanted."

We did know—from dinners with him here and at his home in Santa Cristina, Italy—how much Sam Barber enjoyed a good table and good wine. He once told us that for his first opera, written when he was nine, he had asked the family cook to write the libretto. Menotti, in his libretto for Vanessa, made various references to Sam's real-life tastes including his culinary ones. When the curtain rises Erika is giving the major-domo orders for an elaborate dinner which began with potage crème au parles (an excellent soup), included lobster with oyster sauce, and ended with a gâteau d'amandés au miel, plus the wines, Montrachet and Romanée-Conti. But Sam also liked the simpler things of life, the quiet of the country and bird-song. His love for birds, and the croutons, reminded us of Emily Dickinson's lines: "If I shouldnt be alive / When the robins come, / Give the one in red cravat / A memorial crumb."

Charles Turner also recalled that he had been at Capricorn, the home in Mt. Kisco that Menotti and Barber had shared for a large part of their lives, the day when Dario and I had brought Maria Callas there, together with Meneghini, her husband, and Toy, her poodle. She was to listen to Vanessa, scheduled for the Metropolitan, which both the composer and Rudolf Bing were hoping would tempt the soprano to sing the title role. After lunch—this time Italian and copious—Sam went into his studio with Maria. Meneghini settled down in a large chair and eventually dozed off. We heard Sam playing and singing—he had an excellent baritone voice which he had cultivated when he was young. An hour or more passed, then suddenly there was silence. The door opened. Maria emerged. She was obviously through. She said something about "no melody," then, just like Maria, she turned on Sam. No, she did not want to do Vanessa. She had never sung in English. Besides, the mezzo was more important than the soprano. She was the young girl. She had the real love affair. She—Maria, the soprano lead—could never fall in love with a man who had already made love to the mezzo. But before she left, Callas told the composer that he should fall in love and get married and lead the happy married life she had with Meneghini—ironic in light of what was to come. Anyway, the Callas entourage returned with us to New York and Barber found a fine Vanessa in Eleanor Steber.

Recently we had a letter from a writer engaged in preparing a biography of the distinguished music critic Lawrence Gilman. He had heard from Elizabeth Anderson, Lawrence Gilman's daughter, that we had known her father during our days as publicity head of the New York Philharmonic and that we might possibly have personal material of interest. Though we had kept practically nothing—everything was left behind at the Philharmonic and is probably long since gone—we did find a few letters which brought back warm memories of the elegantly erudite gentleman who wrote them. Lawrence Gilman, a public figure as the critic of the New York Herald Tribune and program annotator of the Philharmonic, was personally an intensely private man. Though courtly
in his manners if he chanced to meet you, he would avoid, when possible, human contact. If, for example, when walking down Fifty-seventh Street from Carnegie Hall to, perhaps, the Steinway Building, he saw someone he knew approaching in the distance he would quickly cross the street or retreat into a doorway to avoid the pain of passing the time of day. When we, on occasion, had a question to ask, a musical fact to be checked for a news release, we would always write, never telephone. Here are two characteristic Gilman letters. "Thank you for your heartening review of Rébus. Perhaps Markevitch is crazy, as you imply. But I doubt it. I think he's just another Russo-French nincompoop. A nincompoop, as you know, is 'an impotent ass,' according to the Dictionary. A puppy, again according to the Dictionary, is 'a contemptibly conceived and forward person.' Hence my portmanteau word. Don't you think it covers Igor's case?" We don't remember what we had written to provoke this reply because much later, when we knew Markevitch and published many of his recordings on Angel, and when we became friends, we found him sound and brilliant of mind and music though often unpredictable and difficult.

This episode, also inspired by Callas, is an example. The composer-conductor was passing through New York and we invited him to the Callas Lucia at the Metropolitan. Since the opera began at eight o'clock, we told him to come. But for one thing, it makes you tired. "You learn things about yourself. Of course you must be interested in the way the composer intended. You can have interesting ideas just listening to yourself or walking down the street."

If this statement indicates a strong streak of self-reliance, it is probably not misleading. We talked with Schub twice, the first time before the winners were announced in Fort Worth, and found him well in control of the edginess he must have felt at the culmination of two weeks of extraordinary stress. Despite the fact that he'd played his two concertos with the Texas Little Symphony and the Fort Worth Symphony just the night before, he had been up since 7 a.m. ("I don't sleep much, here") and was quite willing to evaluate his situation objectively. "I've tried to stay on an even keel," he said. "I felt that the finals last night were my best shot. Playing the Tchaikovsky was a personal thing—I've never played it a great deal, but I felt that playing a really good Tchaikovsky was something I wanted to do."

Win or lose, was he glad he'd come? His answer was typically self-searching, and might, incidentally, stand as a justification for the ordeal of competitions, often criticized as part of today's career-making. "This has been a growing experience for me. You learn things about yourself. Sure, in the middle of all the tension you might ask yourself why you've come. But for one thing, it makes you consolidate your repertory—to play a wide range of styles in a short space of

**André-Michel Schub**

*Continued from page 7*

touch control of fingerwork and coloring. The Tchaikovsky First Concerto which followed it on the program was full of purpose, both in overall shape and in the destination of individual phrases; it was never sentimental, but gave off flashes of fire, and once again displayed an extraordinary variety of touch.

**Marked for music**

The road to the Cliburn prize seems to have been a fairly direct one for this intent and focused young artist. Schub, who was born in France but was brought to the United States by his parents as a baby, grew up in Brooklyn and was marked for music from the start. When he heard Bach and Vivaldi on the phonograph at three and a half he began to conduct, and he credits his mother, a professor of languages, with realizing quickly that "music was pretty serious"—she began to teach him piano before he was five. As a child he was brought to concerts at Carnegie Hall—Heifetz, Rubinstein, Richter—and he remarks that "you can't overestimate" the influence exerted by such early experiences. From age twelve to seventeen he studied with Yascha Zaide in New York, and he gave Princeton a try for one year. But Rudolf Serkin offered him a scholarship to Curtis, and he studied for three years there, "practicing very hard" and benefiting from work with Serkin. "He got you to broaden your outlook on music. But you can't be overawed by a great teacher—you have to discover your own way to project music you love, in the way the composer intended. You can have interesting ideas just listening to yourself or walking down the street."

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time. And for another, a competition makes you confront some works that you might not otherwise do. For instance, I've never played Bach in public until last year.” (He performed the Partita No. 5 in G in the first round at Fort Worth.)

On the battlefield

Schub decided a year ago that he would “probably” enter the Cliburn competition. “For the past month and a half,” he said, “I’ve been working for it—I shut myself up and never saw the sun. Yes, it’s been a terrific strain. If I were to say I’d just come out here and played, it wouldn’t be telling the truth. What upsets me is when people say it’s so easy for me to play! If they knew the tension.” Later, in New York, he was even more adamant: “I felt the competition was a war. It was the Battle of Gettysburg, and by the end the wounds and sickness were everywhere. It’s the most awful period of your life, but you learn how tough you are.”

In the aftermath of victory, Schub remains levelheaded about the results of it all. “The publicity of winning a competition is simply one way to arouse interest, to get people to expect something worthwhile. Winning only gives you the opportunity, the credentials. But you have to have something to say, and to say it beautifully. The older I get, the harder some things are. When I was eighteen, a Beethoven sonata didn’t seem so difficult. But now! Discouraging? No, I think that’s kind of wonderful. But maybe that innocence was a good thing? Anyway, now I can go out and enjoy playing a concert, and not feel it’s a hundred-yard dash, that my whole life hinges on one day.”

No more fantasies

Schub confesses that “one always fantasizes about playing in most of the major music centers.” He need no longer fantasize; despite the high caliber of his career before the Cliburn, it is clear that a great many doors are opening faster after it. He will give his Carnegie Hall solo recital debut next March (he performed there with the American Symphony under Commissiona last month), and plays with a number of major orchestras, including the Philadelphia. There is a European tour next spring and in 1983 he makes his first tour of the Far East. Through it all, his close ties with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center hold fast; he appears with the group repeatedly throughout the 1981-82 season. His first solo recording, too, is due out this month on the Vox Cum Laude label—the Brahms/Handel Variations and Liszt’s Dante Fantasia and two of the Liszt/Paganini Etudes, all of which he played in Fort Worth.

It all adds up to the fulfillment of André-Michel Schub’s own typically articulate summation about his calling: “I think the goal of any artist is to keep his career at a level with his musical ability—to have the two move together.” MA

England

Continued from page 33
directorship of Bernard Haitink, a conductor one would not expect to fit but who certainly does. Haitink also conducted the revival of Beethoven’s Fidelio, another of Peter Hall’s productions, while Strauss’s Ariadne auf Naxos, ideally suited in subject and scale to this house, returned in the hands of Simon Rattle, another man who blossoms in Glyndebourne’s country air. And if there was a singer this season who made her mark more positively than any other at Glyndebourne, it was the mezzo soprano Maria Ewing, dazzlingly provocative as Rosina in Rossini’s Barberie di Sigiglia. Then vehemently pouting, she brought not only richness and passion but an irresistible cutting edge to the role of The Composer in Ariadne. And that was a cast which was firmly rooted on lively American singers—Gianna Rolandi as Zerbinetta, Dennis Bailer as Bacchus, and Dale Due sing as Arlekin. MA
saying a few words (in French) about the Wallenstein trilogy. No date is given for this fascinating bit of aural history, though it presumably dates from the early 1920s. Sympathetic, though occasionally irreverent, notes ("he refused to die until 1931") by Alan Rich complete the presentation.

I would recommend the second disc were it available separately. The first should be redone; as is, it's definitely a lemon.

J.C.


FRANCK: Organ Works.

Six Pièces, Opp. 16-21; Trois Pièces; Trois Chorals; Redemption: Symphonic Interlude (arr. Dupé).

LANGLAIS, REGER: Organ Works.
John Obetz, organ of the Auditorium, Headquarters of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Independence, Missouri. LYRICHORD LLST 7353, $7.98.


MESSIAEN: La Nativité du Seigneur.
Theodore Gillen, organ of St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota. [J. Michael Barone, prod.] LITURGICAL PRESS 7131, $8.95 (Liturigical Press, St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minn. 56321).

THOMAS MURRAY: THE SYMPHONIC ORGAN.
Thomas Murray, organ of Trinity Church, Boston. [Scott Kent, prod.] AFKA SK 777, $8.98 (distributed by BKM Associates, P.O. Box 22, Wilmington, Mass. 01887).


Organ works of Liszt, Franck, Reger, Langlais, and Messiaen—along with a collection of transcriptions—may seem oddly juxtaposed in a single review, but a second glance will reveal the central strand. Common to all this music is a connection with the "symphonic" tradition of organ-building, developed around the middle of the nineteenth century and carried well into the first half of the twentieth. While the instruments that...
inspired Liszt differed significantly from say, Messiaen's Cavaillé-Coll at Sainte Trinité in Paris, the basic esthetic was the same: an orchestral range of color and volume, with enormous crescendos and decrescendos (as well as subtle shadings) facilitated by various stop-changing devices and swell-boxes.

By incorporating blatantly pianistic techniques as well, Liszt gave the Romantic/symphonic organ tradition its most flamboyant artifacts. His great Ad nos Fantasy is thus ideally suited to so flamboyant a player as Jane Parker-Smith, who makes the most of the music's dramatic features without slighting its lyrical elements. Her Franck has some wonderful moments, too, but they do not always make a convincing whole. The opening of the Prière is too tight-lipped, and the tempo at the beginning of the First Choral is too slow for the composer's designation, moderato. Nor are the sounds always what Franck calls for (partly the player's fault), although the sprawling neo-Romantic instrument in Philadelphia's St. Francis de Sales Church comes as close as anything else outside of France. The digital recording impressively captures the lavish acoustic and thunderous pedal, but the perspective is annoyingly diffuse, and the disc surfaces are afflicted with scattered pops and swishes.

The minor weaknesses of Parker-Smith's Franck are as nothing, though, compared to the offenses committed in Graham Steed's recording of the complete Franck organ works. One might consider Steed's registrations, eccentric articulations, and perverse rubato matters of taste, but surely there is no justification for the astonishing number of wrong notes captured here; at one point in the First Choral, he even brings in a solo a beat late to evade a tricky manual change. With such sorry performances as this appearing on a major label, it's no wonder organists aren't taken seriously. (Indeed, the tempo in Sousa's Stars and Stripes is a bit too leisurely.) The front-and-back organs of Boston's Trinity Church (built by E. M. Skinner and Aeolian-Skinner) are well supplied with Romantic “ear-ticklers,” and all is captured in an agreeably atmospheric recording. Liszt would have loved it—and so will you.

s.c.


MENDELSSOHN: Chorale Cantatas (5).


Ach Gott, vom Himmel sieh darein! Jesus, meine Freude; O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden; Verleih uns Frieden gnädiglich: Wir glauben all an einen Gott.

MENDELSSOHN: Te Deum in A.

Elizabeth Lane and Rosemary Hardy, sopranos; Jean Temperley and Gloria Jenkins, altos; Paul Taylor and Peter Hall, tenors; Paul Hillier and David Wilson-Johnson, basses; Christopher Bowers-Broadbent, organ; London Schütz Choir, Roger Norrington, cond. [Terry Edwards, prod.] Fonosound 63 105, $10.98.

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HANOI, 401/84 pham hung

garde-yet much of his music remains
the Nazis, and in our time to the
first to Wagner's campaign against
Jews in German art, then, of course, to
the Nazis, and in our time to the
vehemently anti-Romantic avant-
garde—yet much of his music remains
alive and widely appreciated. The anti-
Romantics disliked (and secretly envied)
him, because he had the power to
present the unexceptional with attractive
freshness and superb craftsmanship, but
he could also rise to poise, grace, and
here and there, to strength.

Still, a considerable portion of his
ouevre, his sacred music, has been
neglected. I am not referring to the two or-
atories, which during the nineteenth cen-
tury in England and America rivaled
Handel's in popularity. They contain
much fine music, but Mendelssohn tried
too hard to blend the new with the ar-
chaic to be entirely successful. What I
have in mind are the works composed
with Lutheran, Catholic, and Anglican
texts, some fine examples of which are
recorded here. Listening to these deeply
moving and beautifully composed
works, one cannot help wondering how
such masterpieces could have been
neglected. Perhaps the anti-Semitism
that was a sad reality in Mendelssohn's Ger-
many played some part in this, though
he was baptized and brought up as a
Christian and was a sincere believer. He
was well treated, and Schumann and
his circle, the leading musicians in
Germany, loved and adored him; hon-
ors were showered on him, but he was
aware of the underlying sentiments, si-
enced only by his worldwide fame.
While his Midsommer Night's Dream
music, the symphonies, concertos, and
chamber music were always performed
and liked, his religious music tended to
be tacitly ignored. But if anti-Semitism
was a factor, it was not alone responsible
for the neglect, which later generations
continued out of sheer habit. Sacred mu-
sic had fallen on lean days; the great
masters had ceased to compose for the
giving way to the journeyman
professional church composers, whose
spiritual introspection had everything
but spirit. The kind of profound art that
Mendelssohn offered disturbed them,
and they did not know how to respond
to it.

Having been a pupil of Carl Fried-
rich Zelter, Mendelssohn was close to
the Bach tradition, which—contrary to
popular belief—was alive, handed down
by Bach's loyal disciples and treasured
by professionals, if not by the musical
world at large. He not only studied
Bach's available works, but performed
them whenever he could, thus materially
contributing to the Bach renaissance.
Therefore it comes as no surprise that
these works show a mastery of counter-
point not elsewhere found—except in
Brahms—in the Romantic era. Men-
delssohn no longer struggles to shake
free from the net of previous concep-
tions; now the amalgam is solid, and
there are no uncertainties. But there is
much more here than superb craftsmanship.
He avoids any archaisms, something
he failed to do in the oratorios; the style
is a noble mixture of Palestinian and
baroque vocal polyphony—on Men-
delssohn's terms. There is no parallel in
postclassical times to the great fugue in
the penultimate number of the Te Deum.
The magnificent eight-part setting of
Jesu, meine Freude recalls the grandeur
of the Venetian multiple choirs, yet here
it is a gentle, lyrical, and marvelously
fluid choral song. Wir glauben all en ei-
en Gott seems to offer the clue to Men-
delssohn's frame of mind when—and
why—he composed these works. "We all
believe in one God," proclaims the choral,
and the composer takes it up less as a
manifesto than as a confession; at mo-
ments, his fervor is almost militant. But
the most moving, accomplished, and—
frankly—altogether unexpected piece
among these cantatas is the one based on
the Passion choral, O Haupte voll Blut. It
was unexpected because I did not think
that any composer would dare to set this
hallowed tune—not after Bach. A unique
masterpiece in the postbaroque world, it
retains the ineffable quality of the great
hymn, elaborating it with contrapuntal
mastery and choral euphony worthy of
the greatest masters of this art; yet it is
Mendelssohnian without a false accent.

The performances of the German
chorale cantatas are very accomplished.
The chorus is gloriously true and expres-
sive; phrasing, articulation, dynamics,
and especially the balance between the
orchestra and the voices are fine-tuned;
and the pace is judicious and wholly free
of the sentimental. Conductor Wolfram
Wehnert not only knows his business,
but with a fine sense has gauged just the
right tone for this unusual style. Only the
somewhat dry and unimaginative bar-
tone solo detracts briefly from this excel-
lence. The choral sound is most felici-
tously recorded.

The Te Deum performance, with
English musicians and singers conducted
by Roger Norrington, is less beguiling. It
exudes Anglican propriety and restraint,
the waxy smell of polished woodwork
and starched vestments. Everything is cor-
rect; but in the arts, this adjective is a
condemnation. A recorded performance
should be free of these inhibiting extra-
neous and extramusical constraints.
alive, and true to the composer's inten-
tions. These singers and players simply
won't let themselves go: the dynamics
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JENSEN
Music...pure and simple.
The more effective work is *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Composers Eric Salzman and Michael Sahl parody a segment of society that has, until now, virtually escaped the cutting edge of satire. The two main leads are young executive types—rock-generation kids who have grown up and gone into the advertising world, where, as they put it in one of the set pieces, “Creativity’s gonna lay golden eggs for you and me.” The lady in this ménage is a struggling young singer; who, at twenty-nine, is scraping by with the occasional commercial job while waiting for her big break.

The conflict is a strange one: Derek Dude goes out to a bar with his girl friend Jill Goodheart but decides to leave by himself. Enter Jeremy Jive, who makes short work of picking up Jill. They return to her apartment—where Derek also lives. To Jeremy’s consterna-

Each opera uses straight-out, unadorned rock.

...well cast in their roles.


...too, the Zappa influence is unmistakable; but while Salzman and Sahl have refined the basic satirical impulse of Zappa-style music and lyrics and produced a cohesive work of their own, David Snow and his New Hippies have merely taken on the surface trappings, particularly in the form of sarcastic nar-...
Providing noise reduction on silence is not all that difficult. For years, conventional wide-band compressors have been available which dramatically reduce noise — between selections on a tape or record.

Yet it is just as important to have noise reduction when there is music playing. While music will mask noise part of the time, there are times when it won’t. A bass drum note, for example, cannot hide tape hiss, no matter how loud the drum is: the ear can detect both simultaneously.

Conventional noise reduction systems affect noise reduction at the time of playback by turning down the volume when there is little or no music present. This turns down the noise as well. But they also turn the volume back up again on louder music, and so turn the noise back up at the same time. Thus the bass drum note is accompanied by a burst of tape hiss — hiss which is audible if there is no music at higher frequencies to hide it.

This problem is called noise modulation. It means that with a conventional NR system, the noise level is constantly shifting up and down with changes in the level of the music. But Dolby noise reduction, on the other hand, is free of noise modulation on virtually any type of music (Figures 1 and 2).

Unlike conventional compressors, Dolby noise reduction operates over a constantly changing, or sliding band of frequencies (Figure 3). The band extends wide enough to provide very effective noise reduction on silence. But in the presence of music, the band slides up just out of the way of the music, so that noise at frequencies above the music is almost as effectively reduced as if the music weren’t there.

Both Dolby B-type and Dolby C-type noise reduction are sliding-band systems. With the standard B-type system, noise reduction begins at 500 Hz and increases to 10 dB at 4 kHz and above, while with the new C-type system, noise reduction begins at 100 Hz and increases to 20 dB at 1 kHz and above. With either system, the presence of music does not prevent noise reduction from occurring where it is still needed.

*0-dB equalization, measured with a constant-bandwidth wave analyzer, and weighted (CCIR/ARri) to reflect the ear: sensitivity to noise and noise reduction effects.

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burn Competition!)

The Schubert/Schumann coupling is far more the attractive. The Schubert variations, challenging for both flute and piano, demand more than they actually deliver, but whatever their limitations, they obviously comprise a major legacy for flutists. Paula Robison and Goode provide a superintense reading, although Robison’s emotional energy sometimes leads to intonational sharpness and excessive breathiness (a counterpart in style to, say, Alexander Schneider’s violin playing). Nonetheless, this is an outstanding performance. The overside Schumann piano quartet is played with solid authority, and while some of the string playing is a bit loose, the reading conveys much more symphonic breadth than does the eccentric Glenn Gould/Juilliard reading (CBS D3S 806). The reproduction is acceptable if somewhat overresonant.

Even more echo muddles the hair-trigger writing of the Beethoven string trio. It’s instructive to compare this blown, unclear collective sonority to the equally reverberant yet far more judiciously balanced Supraphon reproduction of the Smetana Quartet’s account of Beethoven’s Op. 18; it makes one wonder how much of the confusion is purely sonic and how much stems from insufficient rehearsal. (Since Treger, Walter Trampler, and Leslie Parnas are all fine instrumentalists, I’ll blame the sound.) The Mozart quartet is deceptively simple, and this reading conveys a forthright idea of the work without quite supplying the requisite edge and refinement. While the balance between piano and strings is good, the viola and cello seem a little heavy in relation to the overall sonority.

H.G.

SCHUMAN: In Sweet Music*; The Young Dead Soldiers*; Time to the Old†

Rosalind Rees, soprano; Paula Robison, flute*; Scott Nickrenz, viola*; Heidi Lehwald, harp*; Robin Graham, horn*; Thomas Muraco, piano*; White Mountains Festival Orchestra, Gerard Schwarz, cond.* [Carter Harman, prod.] COMPOSERS Recordings SD 439, $7.95.

Rosalind Rees’s delivery of William Schuman’s songs is almost—but not quite—good enough to be convincing. The main problem is the tedium inherent in the music itself. As Gregg Smith points out in his notes to this (good-sounding) recording, Schuman turned to solo songs relatively late in his career. (Or sometimes he took a small detour, as with In Sweet Music, which received its first performance in this form in October 1978 but began life in a different guise, as a part of the incidental music to Henry VIII, dating from 1944.)

So while these works do communicate the composer’s sympathy for the voice, they do not impart feelings of immediacy or intimacy; there is little of the kind of direct communication that we have (rightfully) come to expect from the Lied/art-song traditions. No matter how much the listener may share Schuman’s affinity for the words of Archibald MacLeish (in The Young Dead Soldiers and Time to the Old), the impression is of the music’s moving up and out, away from constant ears, onto a plateau that makes it seem remote, abstract—and yes, even tedious.

The best of these works—and the best of Rees’s performances—is Time to the Old, one long song on three texts. These words are not the best on this record (The Young Dead Soldiers is a better poem), and the music of In Sweet Music holds greater riches and more ideas. But Time to the Old is the most impressive match of music and words, the most fitting combination; the one work in which neither the poet nor the composer seems to have taken the upper hand. Even Rees seems to have known this; Time to the Old was written for her, and the performance is genuinely distin-
Elmar Oliveira, violin; Nathaniel Rosen, cello; Mikhail Pletnyov, piano. [Andrew Kazdin, prod.] CBS MASTERWORKS M 35855. Tape: MT 35855 (cassette). [Price at dealer's discretion.]

Yehudi Menuhin, violin; Maurice Gendron, cello; Hephzibah Menuhin, piano. [R. Kinloch Anderson, prod.] ARABESQUE 8014, $6.98. Tape: 9014, $7.98 (cassette).

Itzhak Perlman, violin; Lynn Harrell, cello; Vladimir Ashkenazy, piano. [Suvi Raj Grubb, prod.]. ANGEL SZ 37678, $9.98.

Eastman Trio. [John Santucci, prod.] TURNABOUT TVC 7017, $5.98. Tape: CT 7017, $5.98 (cassette).

Mirecourt Trio. [Steve Markham, prod.] GRAND PRIX GP 9006, $8.98.

"You ask why I have never written a trio. Forgive me, dear friend; I would do anything to give you pleasure, but this is beyond me. ... I simply cannot endure the combination of piano with violin or cello. To my mind, the timbre of these instruments will not blend. ... It is torture for me to have to listen to a trio or a sonata of this kind for piano and strings. To my mind, the piano can be effective in only three situations: alone, in context with orchestra, or as accompaniment, i.e., the background of a picture."

Shortly after writing these words to his benefactress, Nadezhda von Meck, Tchaikovsky ate them and composed a piano trio (to be sure, his only chamber work involving piano). It is dedicated "to the memory of a great artist." Nikolai Rubinstein, brother of the great Anton and a brilliant pianist in his own right, Tchaikovsky, of course, had been tormented in his relationship with Rubinstein as he had been about combining keyboard and stringed instruments. He had been deeply wounded by his friend's harsh dismissal of his B flat minor Piano Concerto, but Rubinstein (like Leopold Auer in the case of the violin concerto) had revised his estimate and become one of the work's advocates. Whatever had happened while both were alive, Tchaikovsky rushed to Paris to view his friend's body in March 1881 and, in a letter to his brother Anatol, noted that he had "forgotten all but [Rubinstein's] good points, and they outnumbered his weak ones. ... Terror lays hold of me when I am confronted with the impossibility of replacing him."

Thus, very much in spite of himself, Tchaikovsky fashioned an eloquent if problematic monument to the departed. He did not make things easier for performers—already hard put to realize the work's monumentality and splashy extraversion without violating its essential intimacy and formal logic—by half-heartedly suggesting two possible cuts in the long second and final movement (the fugal Var. 8, and 136 bars from the finale); yet when played, the fugal variation functions much like a finale itself and tends to break the movement in half.

In spite of himself, Tchaikovsky fashioned an eloquent
monument.

(OF these five editions, only one—the Mirecourt—opts for the excisions.)

The version that corresponds most nearly to my own views about the piece is CBS's, by the three first-prize winners of the most recent Tchaikovsky Competition. Predictably, there is tremendous voltage in their playing, and the "hot" quality of their sonority is perfectly matched in the recorded sound. All three instruments have a biting, slightly wiry presence, and whether the juicy solo stint falls to Elmar Oliveira's surging violin, Nathaniel Roach's pulsed cello, or Mikhail Pletnyov's sharply etched piano, the featured timbre assumes a "center stage" authority but considerably steps aside when the conversation passes to another instrument. While the record is obviously cannily produced, such clarity is possible only when each musician is ultrasensitive to what the others are doing.

These performers also show a superb sense of formal symmetry and a rare respect for Tchaikovsky's musical integrity. Countless small details sent me running back to the score: all but once, the performance reflected precisely what is indicated—and did so in an intelligent, creative way that casts light on why such details are there in the first place. For example, a slight nudge seven bars before letter M in the first movement is fully borne out by accent markings. The tempo accelerates and intensifies just as it should in the accelerando and stringendo sections leading up to the first movement's magisterial second theme. And if the scherzando Var. 3 in the second movement initially seemed a bit sedate, it is perfectly in accord with Tchaikovsky's Allegro moderato specification and ultimately makes greater structural sense than do some of the faster, more playful readings (cf. Hephzibah Menuhin's treatment on Arabesque). The one time the score does not support the players (although intelligent musical logic certainly does) is in their decision to press forward five bars after the Allegro giusto marking both times it occurs in the first movement. And in one or two other places, dynamic directives are judiciously supplemented.

Space does not permit further discussion of this superbly taut, fresh, and convincing reading, but I must praise pianist Pletnyov's bracing treatment of the mazurka, Var. 10 (his leggerississimo cadenzas are absolutely breathtaking!), and the brilliant incisiveness of all three players in the fugue and finale. In short, this performance offers a searing experience remarkably similar to that afforded by the 1943 Horowitz/Toscanini First Piano Concerto. My only quibble is with CBS's arbitrary decision to split the second movement (twenty-seven and a half minutes) between sides. (The turn, coming after the waltz, Var. 6, is fortunately not too hurtful.) All other versions avoid this break.

The Arabesque version by the Menuhins and Maurice Gendron, recorded for EMI in the late 1960s (not to be confused with the 78 set Yehudi and his sister Hephzibah recorded earlier with cellist Maurice Eisenberg, issued in America by RCA Victor), offers a viable alternative approach. Here the emphasis is on chamber-music intimacy, and there is something altogether distinctive and touching about the shapeliness and cantorial purity, especially in the interwoven of Yehudi Menuhin's burnished, tangy violin with Gendron's luscious, unpressed cello. Moreover, for all their restraint, these distinguished string players never sacrifice the golden-toned, solisitic eloquence of this extroverted Romantic writing (as does happen to a degree in the similarly tasteful, scaled-down performance by the Beaux Arts on Philips 6500 132). In this reading, the variation movement is particularly attractive; pianist Hephzibah sets the mood with an affecting, semplice account of the theme itself and, at almost every turn of phrase, evokes the world of The Nutcracker. (The fast scherzando Var. 3 has already been alluded to; the celesta simulation of Var. 5, the lifting waltz, which really swings freely in its pivotal third measure, and the nocturne, Var. 11, are similarly sophisticated in characterization, as is the mazurka, a bit
Wolf fans take the bitter with the sweet.

sharps leading into the waltz. (How beautifully Gendron plays that passage!) The real villain of this perfectly efficient and respectable but completely unmemorable reading is pianist Barry Snyder, who plays most of the variations with ham-fisted, percussive stiffness and complete lack of sympathy and grace.

About the Mirecourt release, the less said the better. The performance, blunt, prosaic, and far from fluent technically, is further impaired by horrendous wailing shifts that would be better applied to Muzak. Furthermore, the unresonant recorded sound makes the piano tone hard as nails and betrays all the grainy rasp associated with an amateurish studio production.

H.G.

VIVALDI: Concerto for Three Violins and Strings, in F, RV 551—See Bach: Concerto.


H. Alexandra Trianti (14), Elisabeth Rehberg (10), Ria Ginster (10), Marta Fuchs (5), and Tiana Lenneit (4), sopranos; Elena Gerhardt (19), mezzo-soprano; Karl Erb (11), John McCormack (2), and Helge Rosvaenge (2), tenors; Herbert Jansen (24), Gerhard Hlush (16), and Friedrich Schorr (1), baritones; Alexander Kipnis (17) and Ludwig Weber (3), basses; Coenraad V. Bos (63), Gerald Moore (36), Michael Raucheisen (19), Hans Udo Muller (10), Ernest Victor Wolf (7), and Edwin Schneider (2), piano; London Symphony, Orchestra, Robert Heger, cond. (1); [Fred Gaisberg and Walter Legge, prod.; Keith Hardwick, reissue prod.]: EMI RLS 759. $95 (mono: seven discs, manual sequence) [from EMI originals, 1931–38, including previously unreleased recordings] (distributed by German News Co., Inc., 220 E. 86th St., New York, N.Y. 10028).

Let's first pin down what's in this loving reissue. The first six discs comprise the six volumes (each containing six 78s) recorded by EMI for release to the five hundred Hugo Wolf Society subscribers; each volume fitting neatly on one LP. The seventh disc contains previously unpublished recordings, possibly intended for subsequent Society releases; along with other EMI Wolf recordings of the period.

The accompanying seventy-two-page booklet is mostly taken up with Ernest Newman's voluminous and stimulating annotations for the original issues; for each volume a theme essay followed by texts and notes on each song. For the "bonus" disc, William Mann has provided new translations (superior to Winifred Radford's for the original issues, which have the additional liability of being printed as run-on prose) and notes (inferior to Newman's). The booklet also offers discographic and background information, and a song-title index.

This is obviously a valuable collection for Wolf fans, despite its uneven quality. Of course Wolf fans are used to taking the bitter with the sweet—and to settling for sweet that isn't so very. Since so large and diverse a collection defies simple review, I'll confine myself to a couple of observations.

The performances I like best provide considerable support for retiring the view that opera- and Lieder-singing are fundamentally different activities. The work of Janssen, Hlush, Kipnis, Rehberg, and Lenneit has the same basic characteristics as these artists' distinguished operatic work: Robust, relatively freely functioning voices are driven into song as a means of dealing with immediate emotional needs. The human urgency of Hlush's "Epiphanius" reminds me how much time I've spent trying to admire Wolf performances that have the virtue of superficial seriousness but no real communicative life. In fact, this set includes many performances of this wearing sort—cf. Gerhardt, Erb, and to a lesser extent Trianti and Ginster.

This collection also suggests one reason for the common mode of Wolf performance: The songs are fiercely difficult to really sing. Of the excellent singers noted earlier, only Kipnis emerges unscathed—a mighty tribute to the awesome control he had over his instrument. It's interesting to compare the three newly published songs recorded by that other fine bass, Weber, in 1937. Only rarely does the musical line enable him to focus his lovely timbre; "Ritter Kurts Brautfahrt" is pretty much a hash, albeit a hash with the occasional lovely phrase.

But to say that the songs are difficult to sing doesn't mean that they aren't meant to be sung. When three baritones of the quality of Janssen, Hlush, and Schorr are this extended by the music, and in similar ways, at least some of the difficulty has to be in the writing, but as these classy artists demonstrate, the solution isn't to abandon singing for inflected recitation. The "subtlety" of Wolf's songs has nothing to do with the ostentatious point-making so admired by Lieder aficionados; it has to do, I'm increasingly persuaded, with precisely locating the human origins of Wolf's vocal gestures and then translating those impulses into honest-to-gosh song.

Not long ago, I suggested that the reputation of Verdi's Falstaff as a "difficult" opera is a function of the attitude of its performers. It occurs to me that the same thing is true here. Wolf-the-think-
ing-man’s-songwriter is (dare I say it?) a bore. There’s another Wolf, though: the keen observer of human passions and foibles. This Wolf is a genius; could we hear more from him? K.F.

ZELENKA: Sacred Choral Works.
Ute Frühhaber, soprano; Dorothea Brinkmann, alto; Alejandro Ramirez, tenor; Hanns-Friedrich Kunz, bass; Marburg Bach Choir, Hesse Bach Collegium, Wolfram Wehnert, cond. [Richard Hauck, prod.] FSM 63 108, $10.98 (distributed by Fonodisc International, 535 E. 86th St., New York, N.Y. 10028).

Magnificat in D; Psalms: No. 110, Confitebor tibi Domine; No. 111, Beatus vir; No. 113, In exitu Israel.

The trouble with antique shops nowadays is that the chances of picking up a real find are slight. Not so in music’s immense and uninventoried treasure troves, where discoveries can be made any day by diligent researchers. It was at the beginning of this century that the music of an obscure Czech composer active in Dresden in Bach’s time had been unearthed, though its true qualities began to be understood only in the 1950s. Jan Dismas Zelenka (1679–1745) had a very good pedigree, which aroused the scholars’ interest. He studied with Lotti and Fux, and many of his contemporaries—led by Bach and his sons, Quantz (Zelenka’s pupil), Telemann, and Fasch—expressed the highest esteem for him; Sebastian Bach even asked his son Friedemann to copy for him the Magnificat recorded here. Yet by 1800, Zelenka was totally forgotten, and even after his rediscovery, scholars as well as performing musicians approached him gingerly; this Czech simply did not fit into the German Baroque milieu in which he had spent almost all his life. It was not an easy life, because all Dresden was at Johann Hasse’s feet, and other musicians had to take a back seat.

What was first discovered was Zelenka’s instrumental music. His main field was sacred music, however, and unlike the trio sonatas, these works—Masses, motets, psalm settings—have baffled both his contemporaries and us. Quantz extolled Zelenka’s polyphonic skill, which indeed is evident everywhere in these psalm settings, but this man was a maverick, a veritable early Janáček, full of surprises and always going his own way, unconcerned with the reigning conventions. The stylistic mixture is flabbergasting. Here we have severe polyphony, Fuxian fugues that were certainly appreciated by Bach—especially the great one in the 113th Psalm, In exitu Israel, (which also has a fine “Gloria patri”). But suddenly we hear a ritornel for Lully’s two oboes and bassoon, a dance piece; elsewhere there is broad Handelian rhetoric, a violin solo seemingly coming from nowhere, or a madrigalian scherzando. Zelenka’s harmony is adventurous, his melodic design chromatic, bold, and highly unusual. His solo ensemble technique, far in advance of his time, is particularly impressive.

All these pieces are interesting, but it is difficult to form an opinion of this unquestionably significant composer on the basis of these few samples, especially since the performance is rather poor. This music demands a conductor of great stylistic sensitivity willing to play Zelenka’s capricious game, and Wolfram Wehnert does not furnish such leadership—though there must be extenuating reasons for that. The performance is almost amateurish, the soloists (except for the soprano, who will do) are not of professional caliber, and the chorus is poorly recorded, its sound flat and at times indistinct. Yet this is the same Wolfram Wehnert who distinguishes himself in the Mendelssohn recording discussed above. Could it be that his inadequate forces led him astray? Why not start all over again? Zelenka is well worth another try.

P.H.L.
THOMAS MURRAY: THE SYMPHONIC ORGAN—See Liszt.

ARTUR RUBINSTEIN: Piano Recital.


Arthur Rubinstein always gave the impression of being better in concert than on records; now that some of his live performances are appearing on disc, we find that this was often true—but not always.

Here is Schumann's Arabeske, a Rubinstein specialty that he recorded several times. The latest version—from a Carnegie Hall recital of November 19, 1961—is quite simply, a miracle. The playing is elegant, but it is an elegance at the service of poetry. Note the control of the main theme's accompaniment—the way he grades the running notes so that they sound like statements and echoes. The singing tone, the finely tapered rubato, and the effortless liquid legato are the work of a master in top form. And the playing has greater thrust and dynamic range than did some of his studio work, which tended to sound, if not exactly careful, excessively comfortable. I recall a memorable prewar HMV shellac version of the Arabeske, but I doubt that it was the equal of this performance.

It's good to have an example of Rubinstein's handling of the Spanish masters. He recorded two shellac versions of the Albéniz tour de force (to which Déodat de Séverac supplied the finishing touches following the composer's death); this concert performance (also from Carnegie Hall, three weeks after the Schumann) is masterly and free-wheeling. Perhaps Alicia de Larrocha supplies a tauter, stricter rhythm and (dare I say it?) plays more of the notes, but even she cannot rival Rubinstein's innate grand seigneur authority.

But in Schumann's Symphonic Etudes (from the same recital as the Arabeske), Rubinstein is a bit uneven. Some of it shapes with extravagant generosity. The theme itself is richly inflected, and the Etude No. 1 is carefully detailed.
Theater and Film

RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK. Original motion-picture soundtrack recording.

Composed by John Williams. London Symphony Orchestra, John Williams, cond. and prod. CBS JS 37373. Tape: JST 37373

The sound of the live performances is especially airy and centralized, with audience noise generally kept at a minimum, though there is an unwanted smattering of applause between the Schumann Etudes Nos. 8 and 9.

As the music’s multifaceted and andante delicacy. Debussy’s La Plus Binghamton, N.Y. 13904

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The score plays an integral if sometimes subliminal role in stirring apprehensive delight and terror. For example, the music for the opening scene (unfortunately not on this disc)—a perilous assault on a figure hidden within an elaborately booby-trapped cave-temple deep in the steamy Amazon jungle—establishes an intense level of dread and excitement, of absorption, anxiety, and anticipation, which hardly ever lets up during the next two hours.

Moreover, Williams seizes the opportunity to score several lengthy action sequences—such as an unbelievably pulse-pounding desert chase—in which he puts his skill at conceiving finely gauged developmental structures on dazzling display. So artful is his construction of climaxes within climaxes, so impeccable his feel for musical proportion and configuration, that these passages never become repetitive or overwrought.

The score's many felicities include a wonderfully fleet Prokofievian scherzo entitled “The Basket Game” and the “Marion” love theme, which sounds an even more pronounced note of sensual yearning than do its counterparts in Star Wars and Superman. There is also very imaginative use of choral vocalise—particularly at climactic appearances of the mesmerizing Ark motif (which Holst himself could hardly have improved upon)—and of ostinato rhythms and dissonances formerly the exclusive province of Jerry Goldsmith.

Williams has noticeably heightened and sharpened his harmonic language, and the echoes of other composers are more persuasively assimilated—perhaps because he has come back down to earth and is treating real human beings (however two-dimensional) in a real historical and geographical setting (however exotic or preposterous). In spite of the essentially comic-book nature of the story materials, he provides music that is quite adult in its use of sophisticated techniques of musical dramatization.

The London Symphony, under Williams' direction, gives a rousing, no-nonsense, and very professional reading of a long score with many intricate passages. The recording, while not of digital origin, is comparable in its solid, detailed, and sensuous aura. It's good to see CBS returning to the serious soundtrack field with such an outstanding production.

Film music fans who have shared my second thoughts about Williams' prodigious facility and fertility are in for a thrilling surprise: movie music to end all movie music.

P.A.S.
Critiques of new cassette and open-reel releases by R. D. Darrell

ROUNDUP, I

Ariola-Eurodisc is no longer the "last major European catalog not distributed in the United States." Its Munich-made musicassettes, as well as discs, are now released here ($9.98 each) by Tiuch Productions, Inc., 65 W. 55th St., Suite 9E, New York, N.Y. 10019. The first examples prove to be admirably processed, in Dolby of course, but have program notes in German only and no vocal texts; the two- and three-cassette sets come in attractive 4x" x 9x" Prestige Boxes.

Among these is the only available taping of that most delectable of all folk operas, Smetana's Bartered Bride. Czechophile that I am, I'd prefer a native-language Prodana neviva, but this 1975 Verkaufte Braut is disarmingly delightful in Jaroslav Krombholc's unflaggingly zestful performance starring Teresa Stratas, René Kollo, and Walter Berry with the Bavarian Radio Chorus and Orchestra (three-cassette set, 57 640, $29.94). A new Rudolf Baumgartner/Lucerne Festival Strings set of Bach's Brandenburg Concertos (two cassettes, 500 086, $19.96) is more ambivalently polarized: powerfully magnetic for aficionados of the group's earlier version (Archiv, 1960; now on DG Privilege 3335 142/3); of neutral or even negative appeal to purists. But nonspecialists may well relish Baumgartner's much more spirited, if still anachronistically Romantic, reading. Soloists include such fine new ones as violinist Josef Suk and harpsichordist Christiane Jaccottet, and the returning flutist Auréle Nicolet. Sonic limpidity and presence are incalculably improved.

My first two Eurodisc tape singles are less controversial, destined for wide popularity indeed: Suk's elegant Mozart Violin Concertos Nos. 1 and 3, in unissued 1972 Supraphon recordings with the Prague Chamber Orchestra under Libor Hlaváček (400 053), and the American recital debut of a potential star Haldenlenor, Siegfried Jerusalem, with orchestra under Heinz Wallberg in German-opera arias ranging from standards to those by D'Albert, Lortzing, and Korngold (400 089).

- Angel ($9.98 each) features the glittering debut of a new threesome—Vladimir Ashkenazy, Itzhak Perlman, and Lynn Harrell—in Tchaikovsky's gangling Op. 50 Trio, a work that demands individualistic virtuosos (especially in the piano part) rather than a more balanced, blended ensemble (4XS 37678). There's more restricted appeal (primarily to fanciers of odd sounds) in the New Koto Ensemble's twangling abstractions of Respighi's Birds and Second Set of Ancient Airs and Dances (4XS 37830).

- Arabesque's very first digital (Soundstream) recording is a set of the Bach harpsichord partitas by the piano virtuoso redidivus João Carlos Martins (7501-3; $29.94) idiosyncratic Bachianas brasileiras treatments definitely not for purists, but quite electrifying when taken on their own dazzlingly bravura terms. Then, for anyone susceptible to Delian enchantments, even in their earliest manifestations, there's the Old Sorcerer's second opera. The Magic Fountain, in its fine first recording by British forces under Norman del Mar (9121-21, $16.96, including libretto). And the latest in Ward Botsford's invaluable historical series of mono masterpieces is the long-awaited reissue of the truly magisterial 1932-35 Schnabel/Sargent cycle of Beethoven piano concertos (9103-4, $31.92).

- CBS Mastersounds/Masterworks (prices at dealer's option). The latest releases in the deluxe (digital/superchrome) series strikingly eclipse the first examples in both sonic warmth and ex- ecutable and interpretative distinction: Andrew Davis' best recording yet—a balefully toe-tickling Rossini-Respighi Boutique fantasque with the Toronto Symph (HMT 35842), and a Berlman/Leinsdorf/Chicago Symphony performance of Brahms's First Piano Concerto (HMT 35850) characterized by bewitchingly Romantic sensuousness rather than the usual fierce heroism. And scarcely less idiosyncratic is the pianism on two analog/ferric releases: Richter's highly personalized, poetic, yet always magisterial Chopin scherzos in a rather lightweight but pure 1977 Melodiya recording (MT 36681) and Daniel Var- sano's Gallically sec and tangy program of familiar and unfamiliar (Sonatine bureau- raticque, etc.) Satie pieces (MT 36694). (Vox) Cum Laude ($8.98 each). A new celebrity-artist label leads off with perhaps the first coupling of Liszt's piano concertos in nearly twenty years to challenge closely the well-nigh definitive Richter/Kondrashin versions—by Jorge Bolet with David Zin- man's Rochester Philharmonic (VCS 9001). The companion release (VCS 9002) features beautifully straightforward recordings of Robert Shaw's poetically understated Atlanta Symphony versions of Bernstein's West Side Story Dances, usually far more extroverted, and Tchaikovsky's Romeo and Juliet.

- Deutsche Grammophon ($10.98 each). Claudio Abbado, un- tiringly here and abroad, is most impressive, and impressively recorded. in Chicago: Mahler's poignant Sixth Symphony (3370 031, $21.96) and Pro- kofiev's satirical Lt. Kijé Suite (with a too tame Scythian Suite in 3300 967). He, Elena Obraztsova, and the London Sym- phony are also dramatically gripping in Prokofiev's epic Alexander Nevsky (3301 202). Only his Verdi Requiem, with the La Scala Chorus and Orchestra and big- name soloists (3370 032, $21.96), leaves me unmoved and unsatisfied.

- London digitals ($12.98 each). Georg Solti surpasses even his memo- rable c. 1966 Mahler Resurrection Sym- phony in ultradramatic performance, with the Chicago Symphony Chorus and Orchestra, and lucidly vivid sonics (LDR 572006, $25.96), but the packaging is pretentiously oversize. Two other digi- tal firsts—appropriately impactful and incandescent—are Janácek's magically festive Sinfonia Titanica (with details restored from the original score) and bardic Taras Bulba Rhapsody in persuasively idio- syncratic, sinewy versions by Charles Mac- kerras and the Vienna Philharmonic (LDR 571021).

Reel Schumann. The latest major addi- tion to the open-reel catalog of Barclay- Crocker (11 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10004) is the acclaimed Musical Heri- tage symphonic Schumann series of au- thoritative idiomatic, notably virtuoso performances by Kurt Masur and the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra (Z 35951D4, two reels, $29.95). The familiar four symphonies are augmented by the less familiar quasi-Fifth (Overture, Scherzo, and Finale) and three rarely heard overtures—all in ringingly robust c. 1976 Eurodisc recordings. HF
Bob Seger, the Who, and the Eagles share a secret: their producer.
by Crispin Cioe

Hidden in a slightly faded motel complex overlooking a harbor in Coconut Grove, Florida, Bayshore Recording Studio looks like a set from a 1950s detective movie. Its owner is Bill Szymczyk (pronounced "simzick") who, in the last decade, has produced a string of platinum LPs for the Eagles, Joe Walsh, Bob Seger, and the Who. At the moment, he's cloistered in the control room, perfecting the final mixes for Seger's forthcoming live LP. "Nobody, not even an assistant engineer, is allowed in the studio when Bill's mixing," explains Seger when he greets me at the studio door.

Fifteen minutes later we're called in for a listen. Szymczyk is a big, solidly built man with dark, penetrating eyes and a great smile. Through the gigantic Westlake Audio monitors we hear Seger and the Silver Bullet Band in a steamy version of Otis Clay's early '70s r&b chestnut Trying to Live My Life Without You. "The full title," chuckles Seger, "is a.k.a. The Long Run, since the rhythm track of the Eagles tune has a slightly similar feel. Bill has had a big r&b influence on us all." The track is a perfect representation of the r&b-flavored hard rock that is both Szymczyk's production trademark and Seger's musical modus operandi.
“ABC kept telling me, ‘But you’re white, you can’t produce B. B.’”

King: white radio finally listened

The Szymczyk “sound” is not easy to define, but at its core is a seamless fusion of rock’s intensity with r&b’s directness, emotion, and musical structure. While the Eagles earlier Glyn Johns-produced albums stressed the band’s country leanings, Szymczyk brought a real rock & roll guitar presence to the proceedings, along with a tougher rhythm section. His hard rock productions with the J. Geils band and Joe Walsh are focussed and never without punch. His work in the Sixties with B. B. King—until that time strictly a chitlin-circuit r&b singer/guitarist—yielded several albums, culminating in the Top-40 hit, The Thrill Is Gone. Since then, B. B. has been the most successful blues cross-over artist in the world.

“The mix might be dragging a bit on the bottom,” comments Seger. “It might need a little more bass drum level.”

“O.K.,” responds Bill, “I’ll do another one right now.” Twenty minutes later, both agree that “it’s in the pocket now” and break for the day.

Like many of the artists he produces, Szymczyk was born in the Midwest, in Muskegon, Michigan. “My father was a factory worker and my grandfather was a farmer,” he says. “That’s the Midwest sensibility in a nutshell—the city and the country. For me, Seger’s Night Moves is the classic midwestern rock song, and Bob’s really the greatest musical proponent of what my roots are.” Growing up in the ’50s, Szymczyk listened to blues, r&b, and early rock & roll on the radio. “WLAC came screaming into Muskegon every night from ‘G-A-T-I-N, Tennessee,” he recalls, “with music by stars of the day like Joe Turner and B. B. King, and mail-order ads for everything from records to ‘baby chicks guaranteed to survive.’ I also became a jazz fan in those days via a local radio station where a friend worked.”

A four-year stint in the Navy started in Key West, which is how he became familiar with the Miami area, and ended in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. After his discharge, he landed a job at the small Dick Charles Studio in New York where he “cut dubs, swept up, fixed amps, did vocal demos, whatever. I think my first actual engineering job there was a Gerry Goffin/Carole King song demo for Screen Gems. In those days, studio time was rented out in fifteen-minute intervals, which meant you had to have a song done in two takes. We’d record the basic in mono, overdub the leads, and there’d be eight or nine generations of bouncing down tracks to get all the instruments on.” In 1964, he went to Regent sound, where, on a four-track machine, he learned “multichannel” technique from Bob Lifkin. About a year later, he had built a solid enough following of r&b producers (Jerry Ragavoy and Van McCoy among them) to become a freelance engineer.

“My very first session with Ragavoy,” Bill recalls, “was Aretha’s sister Erma Franklin’s original r&b version of Piece of My Heart, which Ragavoy wrote and Janis Joplin covered later. I was past the stage of butterflies in my stomach about engineering a session, so the question became, how do you make it work from a musical standpoint? I worked with Ragavoy on records by singers like Garnett Mimms and Howard Tate. At the same time, I wanted to be a producer myself, so I started doing demos that often turned into singles.

“By 1965 I was really getting my engineering chops together and leading a kind of double life. Two-thirds of my work was r&b and about a third was folk stuff—Eric Andersen, Phil Ochs, and the like. I did some of my rock sessions, like several cuts on Paul Butterfield’s “East West” LP, which is how I first met Elvin Bishop, whom I later produced.”

When Ragavoy built the Hit Factory in 1967, he hired Szymczyk as the first engineer. About a year later an ABC recording appointment was arranged at the Village Gate where B. B. was playing. “I was quaking,” says Bill, “because he was always one of my heroes. I told him I happen on Florence’s sessions. A short time later, a staff producer job opened at ABC, and he asked me if I wanted the position. I said ‘Did Van Gogh listen in mono? Yes!’

One of Szymczyk’s earliest assignments at ABC took him to Cleveland to scout a new band. “I didn’t like the group that much,” he remembers, “but their manager told me he had another hot band.” It turned out to be the James Gang with Joe Walsh on guitar. “I immediately fell in love with Walsh’s playing. At the time we were both fans of English rock players like Pete Townshend and Jeff Beck, although Walsh is more of a slowhand player than they are.”

His first real successes at ABC came in 1969 with the James Gang’s “Yer Album” and B. B. King’s single, Why I Sing the Blues. “With B. B.,” he recalls, “it was a case of persistence. I started buggering ABC about letting me produce him as soon as I got there. His records had always been fairly stock renditions of his live show with his roadbands, which were always good but, after a decade, predictable. ABC kept telling me, ‘But you’re white, you can’t produce B. B.’

After finally convincing his superiors to at least let him propose the idea to King, a meeting was arranged at the Village Gate where B. B. was playing. “I was quaking,” says Bill, “because he was always one of my heroes. I told him I

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wanted to use some New York r&b studio cats on half of his next album, and record his own band live on the other half. He agreed!"

With Hugh McCracken on guitar, Jerry Jemmott on bass, and Herbie Lovell on drums, Bill and B. B. went into the studio and cut "Live and Well." Why I Sing the Blues, crossed over to pop and went to the Top 10 on the r&b charts. "The label suddenly said I was a 'genius, do it again,'" Bill continues. "So we cut 'Completely Well' with an all-studio band. B. B. was a little concerned at first about putting strings on the album but he eventually went along with it. There was a blues revival going on then—Eric Clapton, Mike Bloomfield—and I wanted to open up the white radio thing to B. B." That he did, for the LP's single, The Thrill Is Gone, went to No. 5 on the pop charts and sealed King's fate.

During that same era, Szymczyk's current rock production style began to take shape. "At the time," he recalls, "I was admiring the work of both Glyn Johns, then Led Zeppelin's producer, and Tom Dowd, who engineered all the classic Atlantic r&b stuff. I was fond of both white and black music, and I always tried to get a synthesis of both in my own work, without losing the positive characteristics of either."

A change of location and a little help from Mother Nature enabled him to put those rock leanings to use. "I'd been living in L.A., working for ABC and doing all kinds of projects—Pharoah Sanders' Thembi, a John Lee Hooker album. But after the earthquake in February of '71, which scared the living bejesus out of me, I decided to move to Colorado, where for a short time I ran my own label, Tumbleweed. I continued doing independent projects, producing a Rick Derringer album, several J. Geils albums, and so forth."

In the meantime, Walsh—with whom Szymczyk had stayed in touch since their first meeting—was tiring of the James Gang's power trio format. "Joe decided to move to Colorado at about the same time that he was embarking on his solo career," Bill remembers. Walsh brought drummer and old friend Joe Vitalli with him, and, together with Kenny Passarelli on bass, formed a group called Barnstorm. "It took a year to get the Barnstorm album together," says Bill. "Joe'd say, 'I've got a new verse for this song,' I'd say 'great,' and that'd be it for a month. But by the time we recorded, I'd know those tunes inside out. Now he won't even present a song to me unless it's 75 per cent there.'"

Szymczyk calls Walsh "the brother I never had," and the two men have been close friends for over a decade. Walsh talked about his longtime associate in a recent phone conversation: "Bill is really an honest person, and he sincerely believes that the music he produces is valid, or he wouldn't do it. He also understands the pressure of the studio and knows how to guide you through. He requires a certain amount of time to set up and get sounds, but once he gets them the first three takes are usually magic. If something's not going well, he'll talk you down and then try it again later. Or, if the session is going well, he'll keep you directed and moving.

"I'd say he has a fundamentally r&b approach to making basic tracks in that he stresses getting solid, uncluttered bass and drum parts down, leaving plenty of space for overdubs. While some rhythm sections might come in and play too many notes and step all over everything, Bill emphasizes that less is more."

"He can grasp what you're trying to do even if you don't know the technical term for it. I like to try everything, and even if I come in with some ridiculous idea, like mixing an amplifier in the back alley, he'll try it. And he's always sending us cassettes of hip r&b stuff that I'd probably never hear otherwise. Actually, I can't say a bad word about the guy, except that he's too damn physically big."

In 1973 the Eagles and Walsh, both managed by Irving Azoff's Front Line Management, found themselves on the same concert tour. One night Walsh played them the tape from his then-forthcoming album, "The Smoker You Drink, the Player You Get," produced, of course, by Szymczyk. Though they had already finished one third of their next LP in England with Glyn Johns, they decided it was time for a change. They called Szymczyk and, as he remembers it, "told me basically, 'we want to rock.' Actually, it wasn't all that difficult to get them into a new groove. Glenn Frey is an r&b fanatic from Detroit, and Don Henley is an excellent drummer with a great time sense."

"On the Border" and its followup, "One of These Nights," quickly established the band's new direction in '74 and '75 respectively, especially with the success of the latter's title track. With Henley's crackling snare drum and steadily pulsing beat falling right in the Stax/Memphis timekeeping tradition, Don Felder's stinging guitar leads, and the group's soaring vocal harmonies, the song epitomized the sinewy and original rock groove that the Eagles have stuck with ever since.

Szymczyk is quick to admit, though, that producing the band was a learning process: "I'd never worked with such a vocally oriented rock group; it had always been bands with a frontman/singer, not four-part harmonies. The Eagles had been doing that for years, and they showed me a lot about stacking and layering vocals in the studio.

"The major thing we started developing during 'One of These Nights' and 'Hotel California' was the editing technique, which we eventually got down to a science. I'm a firm believer in editing rather than punching-in corrections or new segments. In the end, I'm always looking for five or six great takes of a tune, because I'd rather edit a good lick into a track than punch in one player with new notes.

"I always cut basic rhythm tracks live with bass, drums, guitar, and maybe keyboards, because the groove is always better when four guys are playing together, rather than dropping one into a previously recorded section. Of course, when I'm working with drummers as good as Henley, or Kenny Jones of the Who, or Joe Vitale from Walsh's band, I know the time will be solid, even without using a click track.

"I find that takes come in batches of three or four. Once the band learns a tune and goes through one take to get loose with it, the next couple of takes are usually in the groove. Meanwhile, I'm always thinking, 'Do I have the intro? Do I have a great first verse or bridge?' When I'm thoroughly convinced I've got all the pieces, I stop. It's a lot like cutting a film—you choose the best takes of the best scenes and put them together. On one of the tunes from 'The Long Run' there are more than thirty edits on the (Continued on page 117)
Any Trouble: Wheels in Motion
Mike Howlett, producer
Stiff America USE 13

Remember Fairport Convention, the seminal British outfit whose founding member Richard Thompson became a guitar hero for the entire traditional rock set? Clive Gregson does. In fact it sounds as if the singer/songwriter/guitarist who fronts Any Trouble grew up listening to little else, learning Thompson’s slow, searing, spooky guitar parts until he had them all down pat.

Which is not to say that Any Trouble is an electric English folkie band. Gregson and cohorts Chris Parks (guitars, vocals), Phil Barnes (bass, sax, vocals), and Martin Hughes (drums, percussion, vocals) carry on in the finest Anglo pop/rock tradition. Trouble with Love is a spry, crashing pop tune with a wild, rousing refrain: Open Fire thundered along to the fierce, thudding beat of Hughes’ drums; Walking in Chains boasts a muffled, high-ended guitar solo tailor-made for the airwaves. Throughout, the dark, dour spirit of Thompson’s work lurks just below the surface. His Dimming of the Day is the LP’s sole non-Gregson number, but it sounds like the product of the same songwriter. And Gregson’s eloquent guitar playing—unpredictable as it is—time and again evokes his mentor’s reclusive, eccentric style.

There are other influences apparent in this English foursome’s second album, most notably that of Elvis Costello. Though Gregson’s voice is far richer (often sounding uncannily like a British Jesse Winchester), his frankly enunciated delivery of tongue-twisting double entendres sounds Costello-inspired, as does the band’s animated Attractions-like attack. Then again, the piano flourishes and the loping grandeur of a tune like To Be a King call to mind Bruce Springsteen (Gregson covered Springsteen’s Growing Up on “Where Are All the Nice Girls?” the band’s first album.

But more striking than Any Trouble’s odd mix of musical mentors is Gregson’s skill as a songwriter. The bitter irony of As Lovers Do and Another Heartache is brought forth in an economical flurry of finely honed images and stark, poetic phrases, while his melodies creep up and seep in with a subtle, insidious energy. Here’s hoping that Gregson and his cohorts will be thrashing out their particular brand of intelligent, engaging pop for a long time to come.

Harry Belafonte: Loving You Is Where I Belong
John Cartwright & Bob Freedman, producers
Columbia FC 37489 (CX encoded)
BY CRISPIN CIOE

Harry Belafonte hasn’t released a new album in seven years, but it sounds as if he never left. “Loving You Is Where I Belong” follows the same middle-of-the-road, “adult-oriented” route that made him one of the biggest recording stars to come out of the ’50s, yet it does so without sounding dated. The mix of modern ballads and calypso-tinged midtempo pop will n0t doubt please his aging core audience, and it may well pick up some young easy listeners as well.

Producers John Cartwright and Bob Freedman are to be commended for their success in helping him bridge the generation gap. For example, Bob Dylan’s Forever Young is a lilting, Caribbean arrangement, highlighted by Morris Goldberg’s jaunty alto sax and penny whistles. On Hoyt Axton’s Mary Makes Magic, some fine young studio musicians—drummer Chris Parker, violinist Ross Levinson, and harmonica whiz Don Brooks—provide contemporary, if restrained accompaniment. The song is a perfect vehicle for Belafonte’s ripening voice (though still youthful) baritone; it’s full of soft-focus imagery and pleasantly gauzy sentiments. In a world where change seems like the only constant, it’s nice to hear a seasoned performer connect to the present without forsaking his past.

Go-Go’s: Beauty and the Beat
Richard Gotteherr & Rob Freeman producers
I.R.S./A&M SP 70021
BY SAM SUTHERLAND

Los Angeles’ legions of young bands could learn several lessons from the apparent success of this female quintet, whose debut album is already shaping up as a commercial triumph. Rather than putting forth anger and irony to achieve a contemporary stance, the Go-Go’s opt for a restrained rock classicism, framing their more serious observations in a frothy romantic context. In so doing, writer/guitarist Jane Wiedlin and Charlotte Caffey supply the band with an unpretentious but vivid identity.

That’s not to suggest that “Beauty and the Beat” is a flawless record, or that the group’s persona doesn’t pose problems. The songs sometimes descend into
routine melodies, rendered all the more faceless by the obviousness of the arrangements' models (the same mid-'60s British pop templates so prevalent in post-new wave circles). More serious-minded listeners also may be provoked by the coyly flirtatious mood of the material, as well as by the band's frankly conservative stance on the war between the sexes. Given their celebration of traditional, boy-crazy '50s and '60s rock themes, the Go-Go's might seem like outright reactionaries.

But the sheer verve of the playing and the glints of romantic satire in lead vocalist Belinda Carlisle's readings suggest a tough-minded independence behind that cute facade. On songs like Skidmarks on My Heart and Lust to Love, teen melodrama is overstated to comic effect, lampooning (and, in the latter case, inventing) the plight of the wronged girl. The real masterpieces are the band's first two singles, We Got the Beat (released in the U.K. some months back) and Our Lips Are Sealed. The first is an ebullient anthem of self-confidence, spurred by drummer Gina Schock's simple but taut playing and the lissole, rising contours of the backing choruses. Our Lips Are Sealed is even better, its stately pace and Carlisle's cool mien...
Columbia FC 37156 (CX encoded)

BY BILL ADLER

Behind all the gratitude and promises of eternal love in the Manhattans' music, there has always been a sense of the ache—of just how hard it is to find love and make it stay. That kind of "now you see it, now you don't" love affair serves as an appropriate metaphor for the vocal group's career. Active for over twenty years now, the three original members can probably remember as many dues-paying hard times as good ones. The first of the two albums here is a collection of their mid-'60s efforts for Carnival Records, a tiny independent label owned and operated by Joe Evans out of Newark, New Jersey. The second disc is their current release on Columbia, one that will no doubt add momentum to the wave the quartet has been riding since Shining Star rose to the Top 5 in the summer of 1980 and won a Grammy award.

Though many of the tunes on "Follow Your Heart" became regional hits, they tended to stall in the R&B Top 20, never crossing over into pop. The well known limitations of independent distribution aside, even a cursory listen explains why. At the time the Manhattans were writing their own material—some with Evans' help—and, though charming in its sincerity, it was decidedly second-rate. Those songs that don't recall the various Motown acts of the time hark way back to such similar, lead vocalists George Smith and Blue Lovett sound more like disciples of Clyde McPhatter and Ben E. King, respectively, than voices in their own right. Nonetheless, current fans and devotees of impeccable group harmonizing should take a listen. Solid Smoke has done its usual splendid packaging job, with great vintage photos and well researched liner notes. Only one gripe: Why weren't the cuts sequenced chronologically as they were discussed in the inner sleeve?

"Black Tie" is the Manhattans on top today: Elegant, mature, and assisted by the finest producers, arrangers, and songwriters that money can buy. As usual, Gerald Alston's magnificent tenor is the focal point. He is a supremely sweet, soulful singer who, like Smith (whom he replaced in 1970 when Smith died), addresses his lady from down on his knees. To his credit, though, he does so without his predecessor's teen hysteria and moistness. The other members of the Manhattans provide lush, if limited, support, losing much of their rightful ground to instrumentation. These days they are to Alston as the Pips are to...
Gladys Knight, providing punctuation and little else. Still, “Black Tie” is a more solid work than last year’s “After Midnight” (which included Shining Star). No matter how undistinguished the basic material, each selection sounds rehearsed and polished.

Stevie Nicks: Bella Donna
Jimmy Iovine, producer
Modern Records MR 38 139
BY STEVEN X. REA

What with her white doves and flowing diaphanous dresses, Stevie Nicks is playing to the hilt her role as fairy queen of rock & roll. Her songs are rich with the stuff of a high school girl’s poetry notebook: magical spells, “velvet mornings,” meaningful full moons, witches, and highwaymen. Flanked by some of rock’s biggest guns—including Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, Eagles Don Henley and Don Felder, and Roy Bittan of the E Street Band—Nicks and her hazy-around-the-edges material gets some expert pop treatment. The result is an album that’s easy to listen to (yes, even pleasant) and about as substantial as cotton candy.

For the most part the songs on “Bella Donna” take the same tack as Nicks’s songs with Fleetwood Mac (e.g., Sara and Dreams). The midtempo ditties glide along on a willowy cushion of acoustic guitars (played handily by Davey Johnstone), keyboards (Heartbreaker Benmont Tench on organ. Bittan on piano), and astute electric guitar embellishment (courtesy of Waddy Wachtel). The difference between the Nicks of Fleetwood Mac and the solo Nicks stems from the rhythm section: That buoyant, solidly assertive Fleetwood/McVie wallop is replaced here with a gentler, understated beat. As a consequence, most of Side 2—How Still My Love, Leather and Lace (a duet featuring one of Henley’s weakest recorded vocal performances), and Outside the Rain—is a faded wash of lyric and instrumental embellishment (courtesy of Waddy Wachtel). The cryptic name and grim cover graphic of a sprawling tract development implies yet another doom-laden new wave band. But the debut of Was (Not Was) suggests Steely Dan raised on avant-garde jazz, heavy funk, and heavy metal instead of bebop, sweet soul, and Brill Building pop. The result is a rolling, ear-filling aural landscape that stretches from atmospheric recitative poetry to deadpan modern dance music and, in the process, easily vaults over conventional commercial hurdles.

A studio concept masterminded by two playfully obscure, musically astute writers, “Was (Not Was)” is brainy and demanding. It lurks between to be enticingly funny and rhythmically irresistible. For melodist Don Was (Don Fagenson) and lyricist David Was (David Weiss, now a jazz critic for the Los Angeles Herald Examiner), the seemingly disparate regional styles of their home turf, Detroit, beg for fusion. Here that involves unholy alliances between members of Parliament-Funkadelic, the Knack, the MC 5, and a roomful of other jazz, rock, and funk players. Combining often vitiolic social miniatures (“It’s an Attack! Oh, Mr. Friction!”) with outright surrealism (the spoken-word Tell Me That I’m Dreaming, featuring Ronald Reagan, and The Sky’s Ablaze, another recitation), this duo conjures a feverish world ready to implode—and then asks us to dance while it does so.

What makes these juxtapositions work is the fecocity of lyricist Weiss’s anitic vision. He excels at coupling belly laughs with angst. Out Come the Funks, the set’s opener, escalates from a choral phrase pulled straight from George Clinton’s P-Funk stylebook to the original Funkadelic premise of urban protest: As the characters in the verses demonstrate, the song’s relentless
dance pulse isn't mindless fun, but desperate release.

Charis figure prominently throughout, in fact, nodding both to the duo's obvious respect for the whole of black music as well as to more recent refinements like tap. By relying on a shifting cast of powerful studio singers, the songs capture the tightness and sheen of contemporary studio funk/r&b for yet another twist in an interlocking substructure of ironies. Throughout, Bagens's keyboard and synthesizer textures and Weiss's versatile alto sax enable them to shuttle nimbly from full-blown jazz avant-gardism to sultry soul ballads and then beyond.

Other highlights include Where Did Your Heart Go?, which epitomizes the duo's marriage of stately minor-keyed melody with goofball lyric imagery, and Carry Me Back to Old Morocco. This last goes a long way toward legitimizing Knack principal Doug Fieger, who cowrote the song. Production is spacious and clean, and the musicianship is simply terrific. The credentials of the players helps to explain that, since the huge instrumental and vocal crew includes P-Funk percussionist Larry Fratangelo, jazz trumpeter Marcus Belgrave, former O'Jays vocal arranger Harry Bowens, and r&b guitarist Bruce Nazarian, who has worked with David Ruffin and Johnny Taylor, among others.

Jazz

The Count Basie Orchestra:

High Voltage

Sonny Lester, producer. Pausa 7105

BY JOHN S. WILSON

Though recorded in 1970, "High Voltage" is a refreshing change of pace for the contemporary Basie band. Rather than its customary program of unfamil iar originals and gimmicky standards (such as Beatles songs), the group goes back to the proven basis of big band repertoire—good, solid, standard pop tunes. The usual personnel is augmented by four visitors: Joe Newman, who returns to the trumpet section, Buddy Morrow on trombone, and Jerry Dodgion and Bill Adkins on alto saxophones.

Arranger Chico O'Farrill manages to combine the standard Basie sound with more interesting methods of development than some of the Count's other writers have provided. He is helped enormously by the material, which ranges from songs with a built-in punch (Chicago and The Lady Is a Tramp) to the gently brooding melody of When Sunny Gets Blue. O'Farrill makes excellent use of the ensemble's varied colors—the muted brass, the purring saxophones—out of which emerge Eddie Lockjaw Davis' muscular tenor saxophone, Eric Dixon's strong rolling flute, and Dodgion's biting alto.

And yet, as usual the most fascinating sound of all is the Count's piano. This time he is not locked into a succession of blues variants; instead he drifts along, slides slyly into the spotlight, or lies back in his rocking chair and just pokes at a note. He is at liberty to be gently somber or to skip along airily. The smooth Basie rhythm section pulses consistently behind him, enhanced on this occasion by the strength and sensitivity of George DuVivier's bass.

Terumasa Hino: Double Rainbow

Kiyoshi Itoh, producer. Columbia FC 37420

Terumasa Hino: Daydream

Kiyoshi Itoh, producer. Inner City IC 6069

BY DON HECKMAN

With an equipment shelf that is liberally sprinkled with Japanese electronic products, far be it from me to make a big deal out of that country's fabled ability to clone almost anything. But the truth is that it's almost impossible to listen to a recording by Terumasa Hino without being possessed by a strong sense of déjà vu bearing the name and image of Miles Davis. "Double Rainbow," in fact, sounds like the album Davis might have produced two or three years ago if he hadn't been temporar ily out of commission. Surrounded by players who are thoroughly familiar with the Davis

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**Backbeat**

Records

Style—Eddie Gomez, Herbie Hancock, Airtto Moreira, etc.—Hino has even managed to persuade the reclusive Gil Evans to collaborate on an arrangement of Miwa Yama (which sounds somewhat like an Oriental version of Sketches of Spain).

The Evans piece and Yellow Jacket, the album’s two shortest tracks, are, ironically, the most accessible. The latter starts with Hino’s bright happy line, which is gradually converted into a brief, livened electronic mélangé. Merry-Go-Round, Cherry Hill Angel, and Aborigi- nal are long excursions through the kind of harmonic and rhythmic cloud screens favored by Davis on such albums as “In a Silent Way” and “Bitches Brew.” Technically speaking, Hino is probably a better trumpeter than Davis. His tone is produced with less effort—particularly in the top register—and he hits notes more clearly. Yet his effort to mimic Davis is so dogged, so determined, that he distorts his own sound, flubbing his note attacks and bending his pitch. If there were no Miles Davis in this world, Hino would be a remarkable jazz musician; as it is, he is minimizing his own considerable skills by refusing to find his own voice.

But at least “Double Rainbow” tries to be a serious jazz album. On “Daydream,” even Hino’s Davis imitation can’t rescue the extremely shabby proceed- ings. Plagued by a far too dense rhythm section (which nonetheless includes Steve Gadd, Anthony Jackson, Bob James, and John Tropea) and ubiquitous strings, Hino sticks to the more mellow-sounding cornet and flugelhorn. Tenor saxophonist Dave Liebman and pianist James manage a few provocative moments, but this is, under the ever-commercial musical direction of Leon Pendarvis, little more than an effort to see if Miles Davis’ sound can be con- verted to elevator music.

Red Norvo Quintet:

The Forward Look

Recorded by Keith Johnson
Reference Recordings RR 8
(Reference Recordings, Box 77225X, San Francisco, CA 94107)
BY JOHN S. WILSON

This set, here released for the first time, was recorded on New Year’s Eve in 1957 at Outside at the Inside in Palo Alto, Cali- fornia. Vibist Red Norvo was brilliantly productive during this period, somehow managing to sustain the momentum of an already impressive career. He had pioneered chamber jazz with his 1933 quintet and quartet recordings, blending woodwinds (Benny Goodman played (Continued on next page))
Outlaws: Ghost Riders  
Warner Bros., 7 songs, $6.95

Rush: Moving Pictures  
Warner Bros., 7 songs, $7.95

Steely Dan: Gaucho  
Warner Bros., 7 songs, $8.95

The music contained in these three fine contemporary collections is explosive: the lyrics are intelligently constructed, apropos to the melodies, and singable. Ghost Riders, an old Vaughn Monroe hit, works well as a rock piece and displays the Outlaws' energetic virtuosity. Other standouts in their folio include Freddie Salem's Devil's Road and Hughie Thomasson's Angels Hide. The piano settings, unfortunately, require an iron left hand, so you may have to delete a few bass notes here and there.

"Moving Pictures" is a tour de force by Rush's drummer/lyricist Neil Peart, whose description of a fast whirl in a fifty-year-old racing car (Red Barchetta) left me gasping. Peart is no small part of the Rush success factor, and he is only beginning to explore his potential.

The harmonies of Steely Dan are captivating to examine at a slow tempo. Just beware of the many chord-altering eighth notes: They need their own space and should not be played staccato as indicated. Group folios ought not to be made intimidating, especially when the material is of significance. If this is your first experience with Steely Dan in print, listen to the LP first and then read through the music exactly as notated, making sure you don't rush the beat. Your efforts will be amply rewarded.

Judy Collins: This Is the Day  
Big 3, 45 songs, $8.95

This is a dramatic overview of a career at its crest. Leaving no emotion unchurned, Judy Collins sings of love, labor, reminiscence, and remorse, both in her own words and music (My Father, Running for My Life, Che, Houses) and in those of other songwriters. In the latter category are Randy Newman (I Think It's Going to Rain Today), Hugh Prestwood (Dorothy, Hard Times for Lovers), Mimi Fattina (Bread and Roses), Ian Tyson (Some Day Soon), Joni Mitchell (Both Sides Now), and Stephen Sondheim (Send in the Clowns).

Collins has written a short paragraph for each song describing the incidents that led to her recording it or her connection with the writer. She has also included some family album snapshots. It has always been important to the singer that she be regarded as approachable; in this collection, it is clear that she is.

Emmylou Harris Songbook  
Cherry Lane, 70 songs, $14.95

Emmylou Harris has been both a soloist and backup singer on innumerable recordings, and, although she is not yet a superstar, she is sure to become one. A sympathetic interpreter of folk, blue grass, and country material, she also covers Chuck Berry's You Never Can Tell (C'est la Vie), the Chordettes' Mister Sandman, and even the beehopper's national anthem, How High the Moon. Her repertoire is eclectic, to say the least, and singers will discover many selections that are easily adaptable for cabaret performance.

The Homecoming and 31 Other Great Piano Solos, 2nd edition  
Warner Bros., 32 songs, $5.95

Supervised by the Warner Bros. educational staff. "The Homecoming" is a jolly pianistic romp for musical undergraduates. In this one-room schoolhouse, beginners should have no difficulty with Ada Richter's editing of The Entertainer, which includes pedaling and fingering; intermediates will enjoy Eddy Duchin's old (but never corny) transcription of Lullaby of Broadway, and Barry Manilow's At the Copa. Having acquired some finesse, one then moves easily into the boogie beat of Bad Leroy Brown and the funky Deodato setting of Rhapsody in Blue. A fun way to exercise your keyboard chops.

Rock Fake Book  
Warner Bros., 294 songs, $19.95

In the table of contents of this high-voltage, ultrasonic collection, the song titles are listed adjacent to the recording artist with whom they are associated. Writer credits can be found on the individual song pages. All compositions are in lead-sheet form with melody line, lyrics, and chord symbols; you'll have to create your own keyboard or guitar accompaniment. Melody lines are accurate and free of unnecessary performance ornamentation. Highly recommended.

BACKBEAT Records

bass clarinet on one session) and guitar with his xylophone. Then came his subtly swinging big band in the late '30s with Eddie Sauter's arrangements backing Mildred Bailey's vocals, and his small group work of the '40s with Benny Goodman and Woody Herman. He started the '50s with a trio that included Tal Farlow on guitar and Charles Mingus on bass.

The quintet on "The Forward Look" is an extension of his trio with guitarist Jimmy Wyble and bassist Red Wooten. (Wooten was his third red-headed bassist, succeeding Red Kelly and Red Mitchell.) Reedman Jerry Dodgion and drummer John Markham were added so Norvo could properly share the stage at the Sands in Las Vegas with Frank Sinatra. This disc was mastered at half speed, enhancing an excellent recording (considering the time and the circumstances) by then-Stanford student Keith Johnson. The balance tends to favor Wyble's guitar in favor of Markham's drums, but it catches the wonderfully lightfooted quality that every good Norvo group has had.

Aside from Norvo, who has been consistently delightful throughout his career, the distinguishing factor here is Dodgion's also sax. As much as (and sometimes more than) Norvo, he sets the tone, provides the coloration, and gives the pieces their individuality. He brings Between the Devil and Deep Blue Sea to an eruptive boil; on Quincy Jones's For Lena and Lennie, the disc's most successful selection, his solo has the warmly sinuous, bending qualities of Johnny Hodges' playing, enhanced by the subtle lights that flicker through Norvo's backing. On the title tune, which he wrote, Dodgion establishes a bright and bubbling attack. Norvo then picks it up as (Continued on page 116)
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BACKBEAT Records

(Continued from page 113) the basis for a featherlike solo that belies the basically metallic sound of his instrument.

Joe Tarto: Titan of the Tuba

Birdway-Intermission BR 108 (Broadway-Intermission Records, Box 100, Brighton, Mich. 48116) BY JOHN S. WILSON

Joe Tarto was an unusually prolific and versatile tuba player in the '20s, a time when the instrument was the standard bass element in jazz and dance bands. He was a regular in Cliff Edwards' five-piece jazz group and played with Paul Specht's popular orchestra for two years. He was also with the Original Memphis Five, Sam Lanin's various groups, and Vincent Lopez' orchestra. A very active studio musician, he backed most of the day's popular singers, in addition to recording with the Joe Venuti-Eddie Lang All Stars and the dance bands of Harry Raderman and Nat Shilkret.

This collection, which emphasizes his jazz side, traces Tarto's career from a duet in 1924 with Edwards (the instrumentation is ukulele, kazoo, and tuba, the last of which holds everything together) to his work with Paul Lavelle's City Service Band in the '30s. Included are four pieces by Lanin's group that feature the cornet of Red Nichols, and a 1926 Fletcher Henderson recording of Black Horse Stomp, composed and arranged by Tarto. A 1927 Lopez session demonstrates the massive support his big, full sound could give a band. He lends tremendous rhythmic velocity to sessions in 1926 with Raderman and 1929 with Shilkret, the latter featuring Mannie Klein and Mike Mosiello on trumpets and an excellent saxophone section.

In the 1928 Venuti-Lang group, Tarto is among such peers as the Dorsey brothers, Klein, Frank Signorelli, and Chauncey Morehouse. The following year, as the string bass began to replace the brass bass, Tarto made the switch on a record featuring Carson Robison on guitar and, among others, Tommy Dorsey, playing one of his (infrequent) hot solos. His work in the '30s is poorly represented here by a pair of private sessions that attempt the kind of comedy Spike Jones later made known.

Though these later recordings are of relatively little interest, those from the 1920s are a fascinating survey of the hot and not-so-hot band styles of the decade. More important, they showcase the work of a man who changed the brass bass from a oompah machine to a light-footed, propulsive instrument that brought high spirits to the rhythm section.
MINIMALISM (Continued from page 68)

it to say that the minimalist aesthetic has opened up the compositional field as nothing else has since the work of Schoenberg. Even composers who are decidedly not minimalists, like Frederic Rzewski, have experimented with repetitive structures. (See Coming Together for a neat combination of minimalism and agitprop.) Minimalism has even invaded the conservatories. David Hush, a minimal composer of great talent, is working at Princeton with Milton Babbitt.

In the late 1950s, Babbitt was the leading spokesman for the group of post-Webern composers who thought that musical history had "killed" tonality, finished the idea of repetition, and made serialism inevitable. Believing that audiences would eventually catch up with his work, he penned a famously titled article for the February 1958 issue of High Fidelity, "Who Cares If You Listen?"

Do minimalist composers care if you listen? Reich answered the question recently for a New York Daily News reporter: "I don't want my audiences just to listen. I want them to love it!"

MAHLER BOOM (Continued from page 71)

certainly be a little sleazy. I doubt that they should sound as vulgar as they do here after the "Wayfarer" interlude. My review copy has slightly noisy surfaces.

At fifty-one minutes, Sir Alexander Gibson's is one of the shortest Fourths in the catalog. He perhaps seeks to emulate Walter, whose version (Odyssey 32 1600, at fifty minutes, is the shortest I know. Walter's performance is one of great relaxation, geniality, and eloquence, however, while Gibson offers little more than a hasty traversal of the notes, with scant feeling for the music. The garish recording only emphasizes the weaknesses of the Scottish National Orchestra; the cellos, in particular, often produce a thin and raspy tone. The many string portamentos are graceless and almost slavely. Margaret Marshall sings the sweet soprano solo in a tortured, erratic style. In passages meant to be sung pianissimo, her voice virtually leaps from the speakers. Were this a budget-priced release, it would hardly be recommendable; at $17.98, it's a disaster.

To conclude, at the risk of biting one of the hands that feeds me (barely) and bringing the wrath of God and Jack Diether upon my head, I must say that too many Mahler recordings are being issued. There was a time when it was a special event to hear certain of the symphonies. Now, as with the Beethoven Ninth, they have reached everyday status and lost the special aura they once had. In 1956, Mitropoulos, having just conducted a rare performance of the Third with the New York Philharmonic, was asked by a backstage visitor which Mahler symphony he would conduct next season. He replied that he would not do any, as Walter was scheduled to perform the Second. Somewhat apologetically he added, "We cannot do two.

"My time will come!" said Mahler. So it has, with a vengeance even he could not have predicted.

BILL SZYMCZYK (Continued from page 106)

basic track alone.

As fans will no doubt recall, "The Long Run" was three years in the making. ("We ended up nicknaming it "The Long One," says Szymczyk.) I wondered why. "Some of that was unavoidable," says Bill. "For example, Glenn and Don would bring in the chord changes and rhythm of a song without having done the lyrics. When you cut a track and don't have any idea what the song's about, it's difficult to take an attitude about the tune, so a musician naturally tends to treat it stand-alone. With the Eagles, a lot of times a track was recorded before it was completely written. In the hopes that the rest of the band would give feedback and help develop it. And that ended up taking time."

Seger's "Against the Wind," which came on the heels of "The Long Run," was a refreshing change of pace. "We did three tunes—basics and all overdubs—in a week and a half," Bill says. "Bob comes in with his songs already conceived musically and lyrically, and with the band rehearsed. "The Long Run' was a bit like a decathlon by comparison. Also, the Silver Bullet Band is very up and a lot of fun in the studio, so I'm looking forward to doing a whole studio album with them this fall."

Seger's longtime friend Glenn Frey was responsible for introducing Seger to Szymczyk, and next month the producer will reveal how Bob and Glenn (both of whom were at Bayshore with the author) work together. He'll also talk about his work on the Who's "Face Dances," and Joe Vitali's "Plantation Harbor," and reveal some of his studio techniques and producer philosophies. The author will describe Bayshore's layout and design and recount the reactions to the weekend's final playback.

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The Tapco Model 2230, the first third-octave equalizer to bear the firm's name, employs "true combining filter action" to minimize interaction between the twenty-seven bands, which are spaced on ISO-standard centers. Each band is calibrated for 12 dB of boost or cut, and both high-pass and low-pass filters are included as well. An acrylic cover prevents inadvertent or unauthorized changes in the settings of the recessed controls. The 2230 costs $429. Also new from E-V/Tapco is the Model 2210 dual-channel equalizer with ten octave bands per channel, at $319.

Perfectionism's Pioneer Headset

At the top of the line of lightweight stereo headphones added by Pioneer this fall is the Master-1S, which weighs a scant five ounces and comes equipped with a ten-foot cable. Among the features that make it special are the cable's gold-plated contacts. The Master-1S costs $130. Circle 144 on Reader-Service Card

Compact with Ultra Tweeter

Celestion Industries has been using laser interferometry as a design aid to analyze tweeter behavior, and the Ultra 1-inch dome tweeter embodied in some new Celestion systems is the result. In the Ditton 100, the Ultra is partnered by a 6½-inch woofer to create a compact system (only 13 inches tall and 7½ inches deep) designed to complement amplifiers rated at 12½ to 16 dBW (18-30 Watts). The Ditton 100s, in a walnut-grain vinyl finish, are $260 a pair. Circle 143 on Reader-Service Card

Mobile Amp

A power amp with a difference. Visonik's A-201E ($95) includes a bass equalizer circuit (6 dB of boost at 60 Hz with a slope of 6 dB per octave) to compensate for the low-end rolloff found in many car speaker systems. Rated at 35 watts per channel into 4 ohms, the amp has large heat sinks to minimize interaction between the channels, and so on) available as options. Circle 157 on Reader-Service Card

Custom Component Housing

The handsome (if rather curiously spelled) Quintessence line of audio furniture from Victor Cabinet comes in three basic forms: the SSR (stereo stack rack), which measures sixty inches high by twenty inches wide per bay; the slightly larger Quintessence I; and the Low Boy, thirty-two inches high and four feet wide. Modules can be placed side-by-side to create larger assemblies, and Low Boy modules can be mixed with taller ones. Entry prices for single modules run about $340, with additional features and parts (shelves, wiring channels, and so on) available as options. Circle 158 on Reader-Service Card
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