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Rock Legend Phil Ramone Speaks Out!

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- Tape Decks
- Receivers
- Video Components
- Amplifiers
- Turntables
- Blank Tape
- Phono Cartridges

PRODUCT INFORMATION FREE!
See Page 28
The linear tracking tonearm is without question the ideal way to recover information from a disc. It can virtually reduce horizontal tracking error to zero, eliminate crossmodulation and significantly minimize stylus and record wear.

But until now there hasn’t been a linear tracking turntable whose overall performance truly measured up to the technology of linear tracking itself.

Pioneer’s new PL-L800 has changed all of that.

THE LINEAR INDUCTION MOTOR ELIMINATES MECHANICAL CONTACT.

Unlike other linear tracking tonearms that are driven by vibration-producing rollers, worm screws or pulleys, the PL-L800’s tonearm is driven by Pioneer’s exclusive linear induction motor. Through a process known as electromagnetic repulsion, a magnetic field is set up that gently propels the tonearm, allowing it to track perfectly with no mechanical linkages to degrade performance.

THE POLYMER GRAPHITE™ TONEARM DAMPENS VIBRATIONS.

To minimize any tonearm resonance caused by acoustic vibrations, the PL-L800’s tonearm has been constructed with an exclusive dampening material called Polymer Graphite™. The only thing we want you to hear through our tonearm is music.

Our Coaxial Suspension System, on the other hand, will absorb vibrations that occur when someone walks or dances too hard in a room, or accidentally drops the dustcover. Because inside the cabinet is a free-floating suspension system which isolates the tonearm, platter
and motor from the rest of the turntable; vibrations that reach the cabinet are absorbed by the spring-coupled insulators before they can harm the reproduction process.

**THE STABLE HANGING ROTOR DESIGN REDUCES WOW AND FLUTTER.**

The most advanced turntable platter motor wasn't advanced enough for the PL-L800. So we came up with a new direct drive system called the Stable Hanging Rotor. The problem with the design of conventional motors is that the fulcrum is at the base of the motor, making it impossible for the platter motor's center of gravity to coincide with the fulcrum. And that results in a wobbling of the platter, known as wow and flutter.

The Stable Hanging Rotor system reduces the cause of this wow and flutter. Because the fulcrum lies immediately below the platter, it coincides with the platter's center of gravity.

And as if all this weren't enough, the PL-L800 also is equipped with Pioneer's exclusive moving-coil cartridge. It has such unusually high output that even a receiver or amp not equipped to handle most moving-coil cartridges can be used with the PL-L800.

If you find it hard to believe that a turntable could be as remarkable as the PL-L800, we suggest you visit your nearest Pioneer dealer and see and hear the PL-L800, along with our entire line of new turntables, for yourself.

No other linear tracking turntable deserves your attention more.
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.

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High Fidelity

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Circle 10 on Reader-Service Card
Nine independent reviews you should read before you buy a stereo cartridge.

"The XSV/4000 emerges a clear winner." -- Audioengine

This 16-page book of reviews from High Fidelity, Stereo Review and Stereo is available at your local audio dealer. Write to: Pickering & Co., 101 Sunnyside Blvd., Plainview, NY 11803

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Now Technics lets you hear nothing but the sound of the source.
Introducing the SV-P100 Digital Cassette Recorder.

No tape hiss. No wow and flutter. Not even head contact distortion. With Technics new SV-P100, they no longer exist. The result—now you listen to the actual music...the source, not the tape or the tape player.

Utilizing the Pulse Code Modulation (PCM) digital process, the SV-P100 instantaneously translates musical notes into an exact numerical code, stores them on any standard VHS cassette, then "translates" them back into music on playback. Duplicate tapes are exactly the same as the original. Thus, every recording and every copy is a "master."

The revolutionary size of the new Technics SV-P100 recorder (17" x 11" x 10") is the result of state-of-the-art semiconductor technology. The built-in videotape transport mechanism brings the convenience normally associated with conventional front-loading cassette decks to a digital application. Tape loading is now fully automatic. And, frequently used controls are grouped together on a slanted panel with LED's to confirm operating status.

Despite its compact size, the SV-P100 recorder offers performance beyond even professional open reel decks. Since the digital signal is recorded on the video track, the space usually available for audio can therefore be used for editing "jump" and "search" marks. The unit employs the EIAJ standard for PCM recording. And, in addition, editing and purely digital dubbing are easily accomplished with any videotape deck employing the NTSC format.

Technics new SV-F100 is available at selected audio dealers. To say that it must be heard to be appreciated is an incredible understatement.
WHAT TYPE ARE YOU?

Power has its price. Unfortunately, with many receivers, you usually end up paying for a lot of power you may not necessarily need in order to get the computerized features you want.

At Kenwood, we don't think that's playing fair. Which is why every one of our new Hi-Speed'M receivers offers a host of very intelligent engineering advances. Like Direct Coupled, Hi-Speed amplifier circuitry for absolutely brilliant musical clarity, down to 0Hz. And microprocessor controlled Quartz PLL Synthesizer tuning to give you perfect, drift-free FM reception. We've even included the convenience of our computerized AutoScan tuning. And instant, automatic computer-memory tuning of 6 AM and 6 of your favorite FM stations. But best of all, we didn't restrict all this intelligence to just our new KR-850 Hi-Speed receiver. You can also find it on our new KR-830. And our new KR-820. And even our new Slimline KR-90.

Examine all the possibilities at your Kenwood dealer. With all the choices we offer, you'll find the computerized receiver that's exactly your type. At your type of price.

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Letters

Minimal Comments

It was a pleasure to see Tim Page's article on continuous music, "Framing the River: A Minimalist Primer [November 1981]." I am honored that he included the recording of my KMH: Piano Music in the Continuous Mode in his discography. But I must comment on his use of the term "minimalism.

No word could be more misleading or inappropriate, even for those who profess to espouse the minimalist philosophy. In addition to being wrongly applied to a great many composers, this term is a sorrowful one that causes damage even when used correctly. "Minimalism" is an explicitly negative term; in fact, it is almost insulting. The label "minimal" specifically means that a composer is deliberately (for one reason or another) squashing the dimensions and nature of his work—that he is creating something to be as small as possible or trying to make do with the least amount of material possible. There is, in fact, a school of art that to some extent creates conceptual pieces of this sort, but there is very little music written this way, and certainly most of the composers mentioned in the article do not write from this point of view.

If we are to call this kind of music anything at all, then the most universal term is "continuous music." Minimalism is but one facet of continuous music, and calling us all minimalists is like calling Mozart a twelve-tone composer because Webern was also a composer.

Lubomyr Melnyk
Toronto, Canada

I read with great interest the article entitled "Framing the River." Though all the records mentioned in the article are listed in the discography, the one that I most want to purchase—"Day of Radiance" by Laraaji—is apparently not available to the ordinary reader/collector. The manufacturer's code number is listed, but not the label, the country of origin, or the source within the U.S.A. Could you please check your sources and help me in this matter?

J.B. Frame
Cecilia, Ky.

The record you seek is on the Editions EG label (EGS 203), which is distributed by Jem Records. You can order the disc from Variety Records, 27 The Mall, 5000 Shelbyville Rd., Louisville, Ky. 40207. 502-893-5984.—Ed.

Vox Vexed

We're pleased that Nicholas Kenyon enjoyed the Wurttemberg Chamber Orchestra's Wassenaer and Pergolesi performances in Vox Box SVBX 5154 ("A Great Pergolesi Mystery Solved," February). However, he should have contacted us before publicly judging the recording's liner notes. Neither Albert Dunning's new book, which reveals Wassenaer's authorship of concertos once attributed to Pergolesi, nor the manuscript that supports Dunning's assertions was available to the writer of the notes at press time; he had access only to an advance advertisement of the book. The choice of the words "perplexed ignorance" is regrettable, for it misrepresents the
work of a musicologist with several decades of impeccable scholarship to his credit.

A simple phone call to Vox would have sufficed.

Patricia Willard
Moss Music Group
New York, N.Y.

Mr. Kenyon replies: Sorry, I don't agree. There may be any number of excuses for the distinguished annotator's "perplexed ignorance" in this case, but a reader has to judge what he reads. As for phone calls, why didn't Dr. Braunstein call Albert Dunning to ascertain the facts?

Patricia Willard
Moss Music Group
New York, N.Y.

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Patricia Willard
Moss Music Group
New York, N.Y.
How Loud?

I am considering substituting a Carver M-400 Magnetic Field Amplifier, rated at 200 watts [23 dBW] per channel, for the amplifier section of a Tandberg 2025 receiver, which is rated at 27 watts [14½ dBW] per channel into 8 ohms. Do you feel that it would result in any significant improvement, other than increased volume, in driving a pair of Boston Acoustics A-150s?—Emanuel Schwam, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Though I haven’t experienced these specific combinations, I’d doubt it. But I’m worried by your reference to increased volume. You should already be able to get fairly high levels with the Tandberg. The usual reason for wanting a superamp like the Carver is for its extra headroom—that is, to reduce the incidence of clipped peaks, rather than to raise the overall volume as such. If your objective really is the latter, it’s time to wonder how the A-150s (or most other speakers, for that matter) will accept the gobs of power you evidently expect to hand them.

Out Moded?

The mode switch on my Pioneer SX-1000TD receiver, purchased in 1969, is marked STEREO/LEFT/RIGHT. In playing records only (everything is fine for FM and AM), the right speaker cuts out when I switch to STEREO. It used to be that turning the balance knob a fraction would bring the signal back. (Turning it also creates crackles and pops, but they stop when the turning stops.) But the condition has worsened, and now the right speaker seldom comes on.

When I turn the mode switch to LEFT the “bad” speaker comes on; when I turn it to RIGHT, both it and the “good” left speaker cut out. I never understood the function of this switch or the part of the manual that describes its use. Is the mode control the cause of my problem? Could it simply be a matter of dust getting into the receiver?—Carl Bossio, Dearborn, Mich.

Dust or corroded contacts can cause exactly the sort of thing you describe—including the cracking control. Your receiver is no spring chicken and is due for a little special attention—including an application of contact-cleaner fluid. (Any electronic parts store should stock it.)

The mode switch is unusual in only one way: the omission of the L+R mono position, which combines both channels and feeds the combination to both speakers. Yours will feed either the left or the right signal to both speakers. The right-channel fault evidently is ahead of the mode switch; that’s why turning it to LEFT successfully gets a signal (from the left input) to the right speaker.

Head-Wagging Tale

On a cassette deck that has separate recording and playback heads permanently aligned within a single housing, how much misalignment can be expected between the two head gaps? In monitoring a stereo recording on my JVC DD-9, there is a subtle, but noticeable, shift in the stereo imaging when I switch between SOURCE and TAPE. If I try the same thing with a mono input and listen to both the source and the playback in mono, there is a significant loss in high-frequency output from the tape. Further checking shows a dip of more than 20 dB at 11.5 kHz when the output from the tape is switched to mono. Optimizing the azimuth of the combined heads for the best playback under these circumstances gets rid of the dip. I reckon the alignment error is only about one tenth of a degree. Am I expecting too much in thinking that it should be less?—Peter Schaff, Port Angeles, Wash.

I wouldn’t say so. What you describe is a classic case of significant azimuth misadjustment. It certainly isn’t representative of JVC’s quality control (or that of any other component maker, for that matter), so it should be brought to the company’s attention before your warranty runs out. Of course, the mono measurement that gives you the 20-dB dip magnifies the problem, and most decks are checked out only in the stereo mode on the assembly line from what I’ve seen. The practice duplicates that of most buyers under most circumstances, but it occasionally does let a potential problem go undetected.

We regret that the volume of reader mail is too great for us to answer all questions individually.
If you're familiar with Maxell UD-XL tapes you probably find it hard to believe that any tape could give you higher performance.

But hearing is believing. And while we can't play our newest tape for you right here on this page, we can replay the comments of Audio Video Magazine.

"Those who thought it was impossible to improve on Maxell's UD-XL II were mistaken. The 1981 tape of the year award goes to Maxell XL II-S."

How does high bias XL II-S and our normal bias equivalent XL I-S give you such high performance? By engineering smaller and more uniformly shaped epitaxial oxide particles we were able to pack more into a given area of tape. Resulting in a higher maximum output level, improved signal-to-noise ratio and better frequency response.

To keep the particles from rubbing off on your recording heads Maxell XL-S also has an improved binder system. And to eliminate tape deformation, XL-S comes with our unique Quin-Lok Clamp/Hub Assembly to hold the leader firmly in place.

Of course, Maxell XL II-S and XL I-S carry a little higher price tag than lesser cassettes.

We think you'll find it a small price to pay for higher performance.
How Phono Cartridges Work

LAST MONTH I EXPLAINED how long-playing records are made, touching briefly on the complex subject of how two separate channels of information are pressed into a single groove. Getting the music into the groove is, of course, no mean trick, but getting it back out accurately is even tougher. That task falls to the smallest and probably least expensive component in your system: your phono cartridge.

All cartridges share the same basic construction. A tiny jewel (always a diamond in high-quality pickups) that is carefully ground to a specified size and shape and then polished smooth is the only part that actually contacts the record groove. It is connected to a relatively long shaft called the cantilever. Most stylus cantilevers are slender, thin-walled aluminum tubes. Aluminum is the most commonly used material because it is easily worked, has a high stiffness-to-mass ratio (in other words, it’s fairly rigid for its weight), and is reasonably nonresonant. Among the other materials sometimes selected—usually for their greater rigidity—are beryllium, boron, carbon fiber, sapphire, ruby, and even diamond.

The cantilever is held in place and supported by a flexible suspension—usually a block of some rubber-like compound that also provides some damping. In piezoelectric cartridges—the so-called crystal or ceramic pickups—the rear of the cantilever is attached to a crystalline substance that emits electricity when stressed. Such cartridges are rare in high fidelity applications, as their name implies, moving-coil cartridges differ from both moving iron and moving-magnet cartridges in that the coils are attached to the stylus cantilever while the magnet is fixed to the cartridge body. After a long period of decline, the moving-coil principle has enjoyed something of a renaissance in recent years and is now well represented in the market, along with the various models hewing to one version or another of the fixed-coil approach. This has followed on technological improvements that ameliorate some of the traditional problems of moving-coil design—chief among them that of high moving mass.

Actually, the effective mass of the stylus assembly is a crucial determinant of performance in any type of cartridge: For good tracking at low stylus forces, it is necessary to keep tip, cantilever, and armature masses to a minimum. The traditional difficulty in designing high-performance moving-coil pickups has been that—in order to get reasonably high output using magnets small enough to fit into a phono cartridge—fairly hefty coils with many turns of wire had to be used to yield the necessary amount of inductance. In a moving-coil pickup, every turn of wire adds to the mass of the stylus assembly. Until recently, the only way where this dilemma was to reduce the size of the coils and make up for the loss as much as possible by using a larger, heavier, stronger magnet. There is a limit, however, to how far one can carry that brute-force solution.

The development of strong, lightweight magnets has made life easier for designers of all kinds of cartridges, but especially for those of moving-coil pickups. Although most models are still not sensitive enough to drive a standard phono preamplifier to adequate output levels without the aid of an intermediary step-up transformer or head amp and are still heavier and require higher tracking forces than most good fixed-coil cartridges, they are steadily improving in all these respects.

Naturally, the state of the art in fixed-coil cartridges is also advancing. Lighter magnets and other new materials and construction techniques have yielded improved tracking ability and smaller, lighter cartridges, plus the ability to get high outputs with lower coil inductances, thereby making performance less dependent on electrical loading. Next month, I’ll explore the nature and significance of such loading, what it is that makes a cartridge a stereo cartridge, and some basic specifications.
Not many years ago a "high fidelity" amplifier delivered 5 watts with 5% harmonic distortion. Today, distortion levels of 0.05% — or even 0.005% — in amplifiers with hundreds of watts and a much wider frequency range are almost routine.

Reducing harmonic distortion has usually been achieved by using negative feedback. But too much negative feedback can introduce a new kind of distortion, TIM (Transient Intermodulation Distortion) that audibly degrades the musical sound.

To reduce TIM and other forms of residual distortion, Sansui developed its DD/DC (Diamond Differential/ Direct Current) drive circuit. Then, to eliminate the remaining vestiges of high-level, high-frequency distortion in the amplifier's output stage, Sansui engineers perfected a unique circuit which, though proposed years ago, has now been realized in a practical amplifier design. Super Feedforward, the new Sansui technique, takes the leftover distortion products present in an optimally-designed amplifier, feeds them to a separate, error-correcting circuit that reverses their polarity, then combines them so they cancel themselves out against the regular audio signal. What's left is only the music, with not a trace of distortion.

While Super Feedforward circuitry puts Sansui's AU-D 11 and AU-D 9 amplifiers in a class by themselves, all our amplifiers are renowned for their musicality, versatility, and respect for human engineering. Add a matching TU tuner to any of the Sansui's AU amplifiers and you'll appreciate the difference 35 years of Sansui dedication to sound purity can produce.

For the name of the nearest audio specialist who carries the AU-D 11 and AU-D 9 or other fine components in Sansui's extensive line of high fidelity products, write: Sansui Electronics Corp., 1250 Valley Brook Avenue, Lyndhurst, NJ 07071.
The Jensen System Series Speakers are unique. With uniform power response and ultra-precise crossovers, they're designed to reproduce sound without compromise, without manipulation. In addition, System Series speakers offer a broad range of adjustment to accommodate differences in program material or room acoustics. At Jensen, we believe that choice should be yours, not ours. Our commitment is to bring you exactly the sound that is recorded or broadcast. It is pure, uncensored, virgin sound. Hear it at better audio shops. For more information and dealer locations, call 800-323-0707.

THE VIRGIN SOUND.

JENSEN
**Another Exceptional Crown: FM Two**


**MONO FREQUENCY RESPONSE**

![MONO FREQUENCY RESPONSE](image)

**STEREO RESPONSE & CHANNEL SEPARATION**

![STEREO RESPONSE & CHANNEL SEPARATION](image)

Among the least mercurial of major audio companies, Crown International still is among the most innovative. Its tape recorder line expanded into electronics—separate amps and preamps—only gradually over those years that also saw the overnight blossoming of many a specialty company into one offering "full-line" wares: electronics, speakers and headphones, record-playing gear, tape decks—the works. A decade ago, the Crown name was well-established in power amps, but not yet in preamps; when we reported on the newly introduced IC-150 (December 1971), we considered its radicalism fascinating but a little quirky. Each new preamp from the company as the Seventies wore on was yet more radical and yet more fascinating. Finally came the FM One—an impressive but relatively bulky and expensive model by comparison to the second-generation Crown FM tuner, aptly named the FM Two.

Like most Crown equipment, the Two can be rack-mounted; like several of the company’s power amps over the years, it occupies minimum rack space; like virtually all Crown models, it is among the leaders in its class. Its features include a six-station memory, separate muting and mono/stereo switches, two tuning modes, a switchable BLEND (which Crown calls a filter), a 25-microsecond de-emphasis option (for Dolby-encoded broadcasts that you want to process with a separate decoder), and a bilevel panel-light control. Some of these features are a little out of the ordinary. The battery-less memory, for example, will hold onto station frequencies for some five days, according to Crown, without power on the line cord. That’s long enough to tide you through any power outage but not enough to retain the stations through vacation periods if you run the tuner from a switched AC outlet on your preamp.

The BLEND reduces separation to about 3 dB at frequencies as low as 2 kHz or so, below which separation gradually increases, exceeding 10 dB only below about 500 Hz. These figures, measured by Diversified Science Laboratories, astonished us when we first looked at them. The reduction in hiss and distortion afforded by so extreme a BLEND is admittedly excellent, but the results could hardly be stereo, we figured. Indeed, though a sense of stereo remains, imaging is anything but crisp; the BLEND’s use is best saved for really poor reception conditions, in our opinion. Perhaps Crown may eventually offer a BLEND similar to this one in combination with a more conventional circuit for better (but still less-than-ideal) signals.

The tuning modes are straightforward and efficient. The standard mode steps up or down the frequency scale in one-channel (200-MHz) intervals when you tap the controls and advances rapidly when you keep...
Pressing on the pushbars, The SCAN zips from channel to channel, stopping wherever it discovers a station carrier.

The only antenna-tuning aid is the usual five-segment signal-strength display, which we find less than ideal for fringe-area reception despite its near-ubiquitousness on today's tuners. Nor is there any way of assessing multipath with the FM Two—a surprising omission in a tuner that has so many features. Of course, if you must listen from a cable or community-antenna system—or if your receiving situation is such that adding an antenna rotator would net minimum dividends—multipath indication would merely document an irredeemable condition, not help you correct it.

If you do get your FM from cable or otherwise use 75-ohm lead-in, you'll be pleased that the back panel includes the standard 75-ohm coaxial input. In fact there is no conventional 300-ohm input at all: Crown supplies a balun transformer so you can adapt a 300-ohm twinlead feed to the coaxial input. Nor is there a "floppy antenna" packed in the carton with the tuner. For once, a manufacturer has had the presence of mind to see that its inclusion—expected though it is, at least with receivers—implies endorsement of a design that is cheap but very inefficient (hopelessly so, in some circumstances) and thus demotivates the purchaser from obtaining an antenna worthy of the tuner.

Also on the back panel are the outputs (regular pin jacks) each with a screwdriver level control, and an intriguing multipin jack marked "remote control." Actually, there's no control unit to mate to it yet, but considering the computer-controllability approach that Crown took to the design of the DL-2 preamp, for example, our anticipation is intensely piqued by the possibilities. (When the remote control arrives, incidentally, we hope its manual is better written than that for the Two, which communicates its use less clearly than the front-panel design does.)

Considering Crown's performance track record, it's almost an anti-goal to report that the FM Two behaved superbly on the test bench. Perhaps characteristically, Crown rates superlatives even in one area that "nobody ever looks at" (actually, we're not the only exception): adjacent-channel selectivity. We seldom (if ever) have encountered better than 10 dB in this measurement; the Two comes in at a championship 12 dB. (And remember that it does so without resorting to an IF-bandwidth switch that sneaks a little quality away from the response-and-distortion department in order to buy more selectivity.) Our only negative finding, in fact, is one that evidently applies only to an extremely limited number of units from the earliest production: The output channels are reversed. We overcame the shortcoming simply by swapping the plugs of the output cables; you probably won't even have to do that if you buy the Two.

And if uncompromising signal quality combined with practical ease-of-use features is important to you, you doubtless will want to own the FM Two, which takes its place in the Crown pantheon of ultraelectable components. The price (again, not atypical for Crown equipment) is above the moderate range, but it's a bargain by contrast to the $1,000 superturners of a few years back—none of which consistently performed this well on a spec-by-spec basis. In brief, Crown has done it again.

Circle 100 on Reader-Service Card
A new chapter in bookshelf speaker design.

Even though they sound fine in scientific test chambers, some of the world's most expensive speakers bomb when you get them home and play a record. Trumpets blur instead of blare. Guitars wimp out. Because the speakers weren't designed to allow for the acoustics of real rooms. Rooms with walls, ceilings, floors and furniture.

Our researchers began to attack this problem years ago, creating highly complex computer software to measure the interplay between room surfaces and speakers. Using AR-built woofers, midranges, tweeters and crossover networks, they designed advanced speaker systems like the AR48s (shown at right). All components in these systems work together with room acoustics in a totally integrated sonic relationship. So that even the most inexpensive AR bookshelf speakers deliver their best performance in your home. Not in a test chamber you'll never see.

Find out why AR speakers keep winning acclaim (and three Grand Prix Awards) from the world's top hi-fi magazines. For information and local dealer names, call 1-800-824-7888* toll-free. Ask for Operator 14.

Hear what you've been missing.
The number one selling audiophile loudspeaker in Japan isn’t Japanese.

Over the years, Japan has introduced some of the most innovative audio products in the world. So it’s not surprising that the Japanese are highly critical when it comes to selecting components for their own homes. What might surprise you, however, is that the number one selling audiophile loudspeaker in Japan isn’t Japanese. It’s made in the U.S.A. by JBL.

In fact, in a recent survey conducted by one of that country’s most highly regarded audio magazines, JBL was voted the most desired loudspeaker by an amazing 44% of those surveyed. The closest competitor received only 11.9%. Even more importantly, over 25% indicated that they already owned JBL speakers.

To find out a few more surprising facts about JBL, visit the audio specialists at your local JBL dealer.

*Stereo Sound, Summer 1981 Speaker Systems Market Research

First with the pros.

JBL/harman international
An Elegant Automatic from Denon


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

WOW & FLUTTER (ANSI/IEEE weighted peak) +0.10% average: +0.13% max. Instantaneous

TOTAL AUDIBLE RUMBLE (ARLL) -63 dB

TONEARM RESONANCE AND DAMPING
(with Shure V-15 Type III)
vertical 7.5 Hz: 61/2 -dB rise
lateral 9.5 Hz: 94 -dB rise
(see text)

VTF-GAUGE ACCURACY
reads 0.0 to 0.1 gram low, 0.5 to 3.0 grams

TOTAL LEAD CAPACITANCE 85 pf

among the products on which Denon's reputation is based in this country are its excellent direct-drive turntables. The last one we tested—the DP-2500 (February 1979)—was a massive, fairly expensive manual unit that was short on frills and long on performance. In the latter respect, the DP-32F is clearly in the same tradition, but otherwise it is a rather different animal. For one thing, though it's not cheap, it does sell for substantially less than the DP-2500.

Operation is fully automatic. To play a record, you press one button to tell the turntable the diameter of the disc (7 or 12 inches) and another to tell it the correct speed (33 or 45 rpm). (These settings remain in force until you change them, even if you turn off the turntable and return to it later.) Then, when you tap the start switch, the arm moves the stylus over the lead-in groove, the platter starts turning at the selected speed, and the arm lowers the stylus onto the disc surface. At the end of the record (or when you push the stop switch), the arm returns automatically to its rest and the platter stops spinning—unless the repeat switch is depressed, in which case the arm returns to the lead-in groove and plays the same record again. And there is a cueing button that lets you raise or lower the arm anywhere you choose.

The DP-32F's direct-drive motor has a quartz-locked servo speed control and incorporates Denon's Magnafloat system, which is said to employ a cushion of magnetic force to decouple the platter from the main-bearing base and the rest of the drive mechanism to reduce bearing wear and rumble. This feature has been known to work very well in the DP-32F, whatever the rest of the gear or condition of the turntable, our only complaint is that the Denon's instructions for setting up the turntable, our only complaint is that the Denon's instructions for adjusting stylus overhang, they call for a measurement of the distance from the rear of the headshell to the stylus which is difficult to make accurately in practice. A good alignment protractor would greatly simplify this critical procedure.

The action of the DP-32F's microprocessor-assisted controls, positioned on the front ledge of the base outside the dust cover for ease of use, is sure and precise, and the unit's audible performance is excellent. We are also taken by the look of this new Denon, which reflects an appealing amalgam of sturdy construction, attention to detail, and tasteful styling—a sort of casual elegance seldom seen in audio componentry. The bottom line, of course, is value: a handsome, high-performance automatic turntable that sells for a reasonable price. We think that's a hard combination to beat.
Technics’ Modern Receiver


FM tuner section

MONO FREQUENCY RESPONSE

| DB | 0 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 10 | 12 | 14 | 16 | 18 | 20 | 22 | 24 | 26 | 28 | 30 | 32 | 34 | 36 | 38 | 40 |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Hz | 20 | 100 | 200 | 500 | 1K | 2K | 5K | 10K | 20K |
| dBW | 0 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 12 | 15 | 18 | 21 | 24 |

STEREO RESPONSE & CHANNEL SEPARATION

| DB | 0 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 10 | 12 | 14 | 16 | 18 | 20 | 22 | 24 | 26 | 28 | 30 | 32 | 34 | 36 | 38 | 40 |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Hz | 20 | 100 | 200 | 500 | 1K | 2K | 5K | 10K | 20K |
| dBW | 0 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 12 | 15 | 18 | 21 | 24 |

A PROSPECTUS OF FEATURES for a typical modern receiver might include digital tuning with AM and FM memory presets (and a backup battery to prevent “forgetfulness” when the power fails), scan and manual tuning (with separate internal settings for U.S. or European increments, to keep tuning zippy), automatic return to the last tuned station when you turn on the receiver, a five-LED signal-strength indicator, up and down stepping controls for volume (as well as tuning), two-way tape dubbing, and one of the various amplifier circuits that have been created to deliver the ultralow distortion of Class A operation without its inefficiency. Technics has put all of these into the SA-626 and added one more of its own: an analog tuning “dial” (the manual aptly terms it a frequency meter) to supplement the digital frequency readout.

Also unusual is a switch that gives you the option of running the receiver directly (DC) throughout (partly to make best possible use of Technics’ New Class A power amplification), or of inserting the tone controls and so on into the signal chain. The tone controls themselves shelve at approximately 12 dB of maximum cut or boost. The loudness action, which was not affected by the volume setting within Diversified Science Laboratories’ standard test range and therefore appears to be a fixed equalizer (the manual says to switch it on only for low-level listening), boosts the bass below about 100 Hz, raising it some 9 dB above the level of the treble from 1 kHz up. The filters are gentle (with slopes of only 6 dB per octave), and both have relatively high turnover frequencies. This means that the high filter is unusually subtle in its behavior, taking only a nibble from heavy hiss, while the infrasonic filter slightly attenuates response well up into the audible bass region.

We have often complained that the now-standard five-LED signal display is not much help for critical antenna orientation. Technics’ is better than average for getting optimum results from borderline reception because the five thresholds are somewhat more closely spaced than is usual and fall into the range between 28 and 52 dB. Thus they ignore signals so weak as to make stereo reception offensively noisy and those so strong that tuning them is no problem (multipath aside). They concentrate instead on the region where the indicator can do the most good and increase its responsiveness within the range.

That said, there’s surprisingly little to add, considering the number of front-panel controls and back-panel connections (including sturdy, convenient twist-to-lock power terminals) that the 626 offers. In a way, this is a back-handed tribute to Technics; from a literary point of view, there’s a boring uniformity to the excellence of the performance throughout the tuner and amplifier sections. No records are set, but they’re not missed by much either. In this case, no news most emphatically is good news. The data—and the photographs—speak for themselves. This is an excellent receiver no matter how you look at it.

Circle 98 on Reader-Service Card

About the dBW . . .

We currently are expressing power in terms of dBW—meaning power in dB with a reference (0 dBW) of 1 watt. The conversion table will enable you to use the advantages of dBW in comparing these products to others for which you have no dBW figures.

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HIGH FIDELITY
Sony is about to change your idea of what you can expect from an audio tape.
Hear booming kettle drums with virtually no distortion.

Hear quiet flute passages free of hiss.

Sony introduces and UCX-S, the breakthrough.

Sony's UCX-S is a revolutionary new audio cassette tape. A high-bias tape with a wider dynamic range than any other tape of its type. So wide, it actually expands the sound you can hear. (With minimal distortion, hiss or print-through.) That's why we call it Wide Fidelity Sound.

With new UCX-S, you can record the very high notes— as well as the very low. Either way, you'll hear everything with a clarity you've never heard before on a high-bias tape. And you can also record at higher volume levels, so you can record and hear the very soft sounds you lost before in background noise.

How did Sony do it? With three
Hear perfect reproduction from the lowest ranges of the bassoon...

Wide Fidelity Sound tape that makes it possible.

major technological advances. (The kind you expect from Sony.) First, ultra-fine magnetic particles that are significantly smaller than any other conventional Type II tape particles. And a unique orientation process that aligns the particles so they are pointed in the same direction. (No mean feat when you consider there are some 500,000,000,000 magnetic particles in one millimeter of tape.) And third, a never-before-manufactured binder and process to assure a uniform, high density of particles.

If you want to get technical about it, here are the incredible specifications. Retentivity and Squareness higher than any other high-bias tape. Retentivity of 1800 Gauss, and that means greater Maximum Output Level and dynamic range. Squareness of 95%, an astounding figure, for better recording efficiency. (When you consider that no other tape of this type has ever reached even 90%, you'll realize just how phenomenal UCX-S's 93% is.)

Of course, the real test of UCX-S is not a question of numbers or percentages. It comes when you lean back, close your eyes and listen. You'll hear subtleties in the music you could only hear until now in the concert hall. You'll hear every instrument in the orchestra. You'll hear more than you've ever heard on a high-bias tape. You'll hear it on UCX-S, with Wide Fidelity Sound.
**Integrated Pickup from Shure**


**FREQUENCY RESPONSE & CHANNEL SEPARATION**

- **Input (Reference)**: 0.36 mV (0 dB range)
- **Output (Reference)**: 100 mV (0 dB range)

**Sensitivity (1 kHz)**: 1.04 mV/sec

**Channel Balance (1 kHz)**: ±30 dB

**Vertical Tracking Angle**: ≥ 24°

**Low-Frequency Resonance (in SME 3009)**

- **Vertical**: negligible, see text
- **Lateral**: 8.6 Hz, 41/2 dB rise

**Max. Tracking Level (re RIAA, 114 grams)**

- **Vertical**: ≥ +18 dB
- **Lateral**: ≥ +12 dB

**Weight (including 'shell')**: 12.8 grams

**Square-Wave Response**

More than most manufacturers, Shure has always tended to make cartridges for virtually every conceivable application, from audiophile to budget to broadcast. (Many can even be fitted with special styli for playing old shellac 78s.) The M97HE-AH is the company's first effort in the increasingly popular integrated-headshell genre. Essentially, it is an M97HE cartridge (test report, September 1980) that can be plugged directly into S- or J-shaped tonearms with the standard "universal" headshell connectors whose best-known adherent for many years was SME. Overhang is set by loosening a setscrew (an Allen wrench with a screwdriver handle comes with the pickup) and sliding the cartridge body forward or backward in the shell until it squares up with the lines on the supplied alignment protractor. Retighten the screw, set tracking force and antiskating, and you're ready to roll without having to fumble with fine wires and tiny nuts and bolts.

In other respects, the AH version is a twin of the original M97HE. It has Shure's hyperelliptical line-contact stylus for low tracking distortion and the Side Guard stylus deflector, which prevents the cantilever from being bent or broken if it is accidentally pushed to one side. The cartridge also has Shure's Dynamic Stabilizer carbonfiber brush assembly, which cleans the disc ahead of the stylus, drains off static, and damps the low-frequency arm/cartridge resonance for stable tracking of warped records.

Diversified Science Laboratories found that the M97HE-AH could negotiate all bands of our standard pure-tone torture test at the manufacturer's minimum recommended net tracking force of 3/4 gram. At the more reasonable net force of 1/4 grams (1/4 gram less than the recommended maximum) used for all other measurements, tracking is uniformly excellent—a Shure hallmark. And distortion—both harmonic and intermodulation—is low by cartridge standards, even at high velocities.

Sensitivity is typical for a high-quality moving-magnet pickup, which means it is high enough to ensure a good signal-to-noise ratio with standard phono preamplifiers. Channel balance is good. Vertical tracking angle, as measured by the twin-tone method, is greater than the DIN standard of 20 degrees, but no more so than that of many other fine cartridges. Since we have not found any clear correlation between this measurement and sonic quality, we do not see any reason to be concerned about the discrepancy.

Loaded according to the manufacturer's instructions with 47 kilohms in parallel with 250 picofarads, the M97HE-AH has very smooth frequency response, the only significant irregularity being a gentle treble rolloff starting at about 2 kHz and reaching about −2 dB at 20 kHz. Response is virtually identical in the two channels, and separation is excellent across the audio band. Square waves are reproduced with no overshoot and very little ringing, indicating good damping; the tops of the waveshapes are exceptionally flat with little or no rounding of the corners.

Without the Dynamic Stabilizer, the low-frequency arm/cartridge resonance in the SME 3009 Series II Improved tonearm (which has an effective mass of approximately 9 grams) occurs at about 7.5 Hz laterally and at 8 Hz vertically, both with an amplitude of 11 dB. With the stabilizer engaged—the normal, recommended usage—the lateral resonance moves up a little more than 1 Hz in frequency and drops about 6 1/2 dB in amplitude; in the vertical plane, DSL could find no clearly defined resonance. These results attest to the stabilizer's effectiveness and suggest that the M97HE-AH will perform well in just about any arm that will accept it.

Installing the cartridge in our arm was a snap, and in only a few moments we were sitting back and enjoying the music (a pleasant contrast to the usual tedious installation and setup procedure). And the sound is first-rate. Imaging is stable and precise, while tonal balance is relaxed and essentially neutral. The treble droop shown in the response curves calls little attention to itself on audition (dips are usually less apparent than peaks). Every detail comes through clearly, yet without overemphasis. Track-
ing is squarely in the Shure tradition, which is to say delightfully surefooted: Try as we might, we can't get the M97HE-AH to say uncle.

In short, Shure has delivered itself of another fine pickup—this one in an exceptionally convenient package and at an attractive price. We feel certain that it will enjoy well-deserved popularity.

Circle 97 on Reader-Service Card

FOR SOME TIME ULTRA (Ultra-accurate Laser Topographic Response Analysis) has been a primary design tool at Celestion (see our review of the Celestion Ditton 130, May 1980), but the company says its new SL-6 is the first loudspeaker to be designed from the ground up using the technique. Data derived from a laser Doppler interferometer focused on a loudspeaker driver are fed to a computer, which uses them to generate an enhanced perspective image of the driver's surface. This enables the engineers to observe in detail the driver's motion in response to a signal. According to Celestion, information obtained by this method makes it easier than ever before to isolate and solve speaker design problems.

The company's research has led to the development of two new and unusual drivers expressly for use in the SL-6. The tweeter is a 1 1/4-inch metal dome. Unlike most other high-frequency drivers—whose voice coils are wound on separate bobbins that must then be glued to the diaphragm—the SL-6 tweeter is constructed so that its entire moving system is a single continuous element: Its voice coil is wound directly onto a cylindrical extension of the dome diaphragm. This approach is said to yield greater rigidity (and therefore lower distortion) and to enable the dome itself to act as a heat sink for the voice coil, reducing the chance of damage at high power levels.

The 6 1/2-inch woofer has a single-piece diaphragm (the dust cap is molded in rather than glued on in the usual way, again to increase rigidity and reduce distortion) made of a substance called vinyl homo polymer, or VHP, which is joined to a surround of the same material by a molecular bonding process. Celestion says that the two drivers are designed to match well, enabling the use of relatively simple 12-dB-octave filters in the 2.3-KHz crossover. Over their respective operating ranges, the drivers are said to operate as nearly perfect pistons.

The acoustic suspension enclosure is itself handsome and unusually small for a speaker that is, in fact, the new flagship of Celestion's U.S. line. The company's reasoning is that a high-quality speaker should not have to be large and that many people, especially those living in small apartments, will prefer a system that doesn't require much space. Amplifier connections to the compact units are made via color-coded binding posts recessed into the rear panel.

Celestion suggests mounting the SL-6 on a bookshelf or on stands a little over a foot high. Diversified Science Laboratories chose to make its measurements with the speaker resting on a 15-inch stand backed up against the rear wall, but well away from side walls. Sensitivity is moderately low, but power-handling ability is excellent; where high power is necessary to obtain adequate volume the speaker should perform well.

Distortion proved very low, even at low frequencies where one would expect so small a woofer to run out of steam. At a moderate output of 85 dB SPL, total harmonic distortion (THD) never rises above 5% over DSL's entire measurement range of 30 Hz to 10 KHz. For the most part, it remains well under 1%. At a very loud 100 dB SPL, significant distortion begins to appear in the deep bass range, but from 80 Hz up it is still quite respectable, reaching a peak of just over 6% at 6.3 KHz and averaging 2% to 3%.

Celestion has accurately specified the SL-6's nominal impedance as 8 ohms; the impedance curve reaches a minimum of slightly over 5 ohms at 16 KHz. This is an easy load for any amplifier to drive, and most will accept two pairs in parallel without distress. The system's on-axis frequency response slopes smoothly downward from bass to treble (the small notch at 300 Hz is probably a cancellation induced by proximity to the floor or the rear wall), staying within ±5-dB range from 50 Hz to 20 KHz. Off-axis response is flatter in the bass and midrange, but droops more in the treble because of the tweeter's increasing directivity at high frequencies.

After experimenting with various placements of the speakers in our listening room, we settled on a position well out into the room on stands about two feet tall. So placed, the SL-6s sound smooth, clean, and a little to the warm side of complete neutrality. Despite their small size, they do not appear bass-shy; indeed, because they do favor the low end somewhat, we sometimes found ourselves backing off on our preamp's bass control to achieve a better balance. Imaging is both spacious and precise, conveying an unusually good sense of the ambience contained in the recording. When pushed hard, the Celestions just get louder, never sounding stressed or overdriven and never losing the superb clarity they exhibit at low levels.

Although not inexpensive, the SL-6 is a very good speaker that manages to sound bigger than it really is. We are mightily impressed with the technology that has contributed to its design and manufacture and look forward to hearing the products it will surely bring us in the future.

Circle 96 on Reader-Service Card
MXR: Equalization at Your Fingertips


RESPONSE CHARACTERISTICS

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<th>Hz</th>
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<td>500</td>
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</table>

- Individual sliders at maximum
- Individual sliders at minimum
- All sliders at "flat" positions
- All controls "flat"
- Individual sliders at maximum
- Individual sliders at minimum
- Output clipping level (1 kHz) 4.6 volts
- Input clipping level (1 kHz) 4.9 volts
- S/N ratio (re 0.5 V; A-weighted) 45½ dB
- Worst-case setting* 64½ dB
- Harmonic distortion (THD; 40 Hz to 20 kHz) 0.17%
- 1-volt input 0.10%
- Infrasonic filter 3 dB at 23 Hz; 18 dB/octave
- See text.

Two ingenious features overshadow all other considerations in this handy-dandy equalizer from MXR. The first is the table-top design, intended for chair-side use so you can perform some touchups from your listening position—the only place from which "sweetening" can adequately be judged. The other is the choice of center frequencies for the five sliders in each channel; instead of spacing them evenly (as most manufacturers do, following less-than-thoughtful convention), MXR has tried to imagine how they will be used and to tailor its engineering accordingly. In both respects, the design of the Model 153 is therefore exceptionally practical.

The marked center frequencies (which Diversified Science Laboratories' data show to be unusually accurate) are at 50, 100, and 200 Hz and 2 and 10 kHz. The first three bands are relatively narrow ("high-Q"), while the top two are about as broad as those of typical tone controls. The 50-Hz band covers the deep bass and addresses the area of bass resonance in typical loudspeaker systems; the next two sliders cover the bass and midbass. Together, this group embraces the area where problems—particularly those associated with speaker placement and room modes—are most likely to exist in typical stereo systems. The 2-kHz control covers the upper-midrange "presence" area; the top slider affects the sibilants, hiss, and general brightness of the sound. All have adjustment ranges of approximately ± 12 dB. In addition, there's a nondefeatable infrasonic filter whose effect is just visible at the bass end of our response curves and which rolls off steeply below the audible range to prevent warp "information" from overtaxing woofers or amplifiers, particularly if you choose to bolster weak deep-bass speaker response by raising the 50-Hz slider.

The Model 153 is designed for connection into your system via regular pin-style signal leads and a set of tape-monitor (or outboard signal-processor) jacks on your preamp or receiver. So you don't lose the ability to use a tape recorder when the 153 is connected, MXR supplies a set of tape connections on the equalizer and a source/tape switch on the front panel. This setup lets you equalize the signal coming from the deck, but not the source signal going to it. If you want to use the 153 to adjust the tonal balance of a signal you are recording, you must reconnect the system so it will take the feed to the recording deck from the equalizer's main output.

On the front panel there also are overall-level sliders for each channel and pairs of LEDs to indicate when signal levels should be adjusted. The excellent signal-to-noise ratio (95½ dB) with all sliders set at their midpoints confirms that overall level is not critical with reasonably normal signals. When the lab went looking for worst-case conditions in this respect, it still measured more than 60 dB; that was with the 10-kHz slider moved to its maximum while all the rest were dropped to their minimum settings—hardly a likely combination for any type of listening we can think of.

The distortion measurements were made at 2 volts (the standard setting for preamps and "line-level" signal processors) and prove to be quite respectable. Because MXR's own specs are written for a 1-volt signal, Diversified Science Laboratories also took its measurements at that level and found nothing exceeding 0.10%. THD in the range above 40 Hz. Even at 20 Hz, distortion remains below 1% at both measurement levels; but because the fundamental is here being rolled off by the infrasonic filter, while the spurious harmonics are not, these figures are somewhat inflated by the standard measurement technique. In any event, distortion is low and, being predominantly the second harmonic, contains no worrisome components.

There are, of course, equalization requirements to which no five-band model would be equal, real virtuosity requires a subtler instrument (at a much higher price). But in its class, we find the 153 unusually capable. If you lower the 2-kHz sliders, for example, you can get something very close to classic loudness compensation—and you can adjust the degree of compensation to the listening situation, which is more than can be managed with the usual on/off loudness switch; if you prefer the bass-boost-only approach favored by recent loudness-perception research, you can get it by pulling down the 10-kHz sliders as well. Though there is little or no difference between the last two calibrated settings of extreme boost or cut in each slider, calibration accuracy is at least par for this type of equalizer, and—again—it is the handiness of the design that is its overriding virtue.

Circle 95 on Reader-Service Card
Spring New Equipment Report

The first crop of new stereo goodies blossoms forth from Las Vegas and elsewhere.

Perhaps because Las Vegas is such a dazzle-dazzle town, our annual trip there to see what's new invariably makes us feel a little as though we might have taken one turn too many around the roulette wheel. Despite the harbingers we talked about last month, there were surprises at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show, and despite the protestations of those who made the prototypes we saw and heard, there are bound to be surprises in the months to follow. Plans—however carefully laid—don't always pan out, either at the manufacturer's level or at the gaming table.

The point should not be labored however; the new equipment we've seen confirms, within reasonable tolerance, the predictions in our March issue. Digital prototypes are everywhere, but neither the laser-read compact disc nor a digital version of the familiar compact cassette is ready for market. Meanwhile, there are some interesting new analog components, particularly in the high price brackets. In this issue, three of our editors tell you what they've seen in basic system gear: electronics, record-playing equipment, and tape. This is only the first installment, of course; later we'll also be covering speakers and accessories of all sorts in similar fashion.

Electronics: Power and Panache
by Edward J. Foster
Consulting Audio-Video Editor

Judging from this winter's Consumer Electronics Show, you should expect to find many more new separates and fewer new receivers on dealers' shelves this summer than you have in the past. Given the less-than-exuberant economy, this trend was predictable; high-end components have traditionally been more resistant to recession than those at the lower end of the market. Most of the electronics action at the Las Vegas show was in power amps and preamps. New receivers were few and far between, particularly (with some notable exceptions) at the fancy end of the scale.

Power Amps

The trend is toward the exotic: high current capacity, ultrafast response, and Class A operation—real or quasi. Walking off with the blue ribbon for sheer current capacity and response is the Citation XX, with 250 watts (24 dBW) per channel into 8 ohms (440 watts or 26½ dBW into 4 ohms) at less than 0.1% THD from 10 Hz to 100 kHz, a 200-ampere instantaneous current capacity, and a slew rate of 200 volts per microsecond. This outstanding performance is attributed to the use of laser-trimmed hybrid circuitry and gold-plated transmission lines that reduce the inductance of the ground and power-supply paths. Price is a mere $7,500.

Also in the ultrafast, wide-bandwidth camp are Yamaha, Bedini, Mission, and Audio Design. Yamaha's mono BX-1 is a $2,000 Class A amp with a 100-watt (20 dBW) rating, 10 Hz to 20 kHz into 8 or 4 ohms at less than 0.002% THD. Slew rate is an outstanding 600 volts per microsecond. Bedini named its $3,000 amp 100X2 1 Meg to imply its specs: the frequency response extends from DC to 1 MHz, with Class A output stages supplying 100 watts per channel into 8-ohm loads at 0.01% THD.

From Mission Electronics comes the 777 ($1,200)—a DC-coupled ultrawideband amplifier using what are known as H-FET output devices—rated at 200 watts (23 dBW) per channel. Open-loop bandwidth is 230 kHz, with only 14 dB of feedback, frequency response extends to 1.15 MHz.

Audio Design's Models 10A, 20A, and 30A are also named to reflect their output specs: 10, 20, and 30 amperes per channel, respectively. The 30A carries a conventional power rating of 100 watts (20 dBW) per channel into 8 ohms; with its 3-dB dynamic headroom, instantaneous power is equivalent to 200 watts (23 dBW) per channel—which, thanks to the 30A's high current capacity, is also its continuous-power rating with 4-ohm loads.

Bipolar and Audionics also emphasize the importance of power supply design. Bipolar Electronic Systems' Model 850 may be rated at only 85 watts (18⅔ dBW) per channel, but its regulated power supply is capable of delivering 30 to 40 amperes of current within 50 microseconds. The 850 can drive impedances as low as 2.5 ohms. The Audionics CC-3 ($742) is claimed to be stable into 2 ohms. Rated at 80 watts (19 dBW) per channel into 8 ohms and 130 watts (12½ dBW) per channel into 4 ohms,
The much-bruited digital revolution inched closer this year, particularly with Sony's compact PCM-F1 digital audio processor ($1,900), whose compact size and battery power supply match it to Sony's SL-2000 portable Beta recorder. Although Mobile Fidelity has announced that it plans to offer recorded software for such VCR-based digital recorders, it seems likely that these formats will be upstaged relatively soon by one or more digital versions of the familiar (and less expensive) compact audio cassette. Thus the field remains analog-oriented for all but the most extreme purposes and budgets.

The most interesting technical innovation for those of us who are more conventional is certainly Dolby HX Professional. It is similar to Dolby HX, introduced a year ago, except in one key respect: Whereas the original HX altered recording bias on the original HX's ability in this respect, but to extend high-level high-frequency response by forestalling premature self-erasure. We weren't particularly impressed by the original HX's ability in this respect, but the Professional version gives promise of succeeding through its extra degree of refinement. It was developed by Bang & Olufsen and first incorporated into the Beocord 9000 cassette deck. The second manufacturer to embrace it (under the name HX-Pro) is Harman Kardon, which includes the circuit in the top two models of its four introductions; other Dolby licensees will surely follow suit.

In addition to the $1,800 Beocord 9000, actually introduced last fall, B&O has imported the much simpler Dolby B Beocord 2400, at $550. The Harman Kardon HX-Pro models are the $750 CD-401 and $530 CD-310; the $400 CD-201 and $300 CD-101 fill out the line. All four are designed for ultrawide bandwidth in comparison to other decks in their respective price classes, the top three offer Dolby C as well as Dolby B noise reduction.

The original HX circuit supplements Dolby B in NAD's latest deck—the 6040A ($218)—but a great many companies are choosing Dolby C as the feature to add in the middle price range. Sherwood, for example, employs it in the S-5000C CP and the S-6000 CP. Nakamichi's latest—and least expensive—is the LX-3 with Dolby C (just introduced in January, though we have already tested and reported on it in our February issue). Cybernet, in entering the field, has incorporated Dolby C in its top model, the D-801; its most intriguing deck is the dual-transport DD-701, which is capable of double-speed copying.

Teac has introduced its first Dolby C deck in the $390 V-70C, but it continues its DBX series with two entries—the $590 V-1RX and the $625 V-95RX, the latter with bidirectional recording and a computer-age front panel. There's a similar front panel on the $490 bidirectional V-90R (with no DBX), for more conventional tastes, there's the $420 V-80. Akai—always prolific when it comes to introductions—has three new "computer-controlled" unidirectional...
decks (GX-F31, -F51, and -F71) and two quick-reverse bidirectional entries (GX-F44R and -F66RC), all with Dolby C (and—as in all decks offering “advanced” noise reduction options, of course—Dolby B); prices range from $300 to $575. Dolby C even is included in the same company’s three new budget models, which range down to the $180 CS-F12. Among Aiwa’s varied cassette offerings (including so-called boom boxes and micro-component systems as well as separate decks), the top introduction is the $595 multifeatued AD-3800U, which has automatic tape matching and head demagnetization plus Dolby C.

Denon’s two new models, the DR-F7 ($500) and DR-F6 ($400) both offer Dolby C and bias adjustment—the latter manual on the F6 and automatic on the F7. Hitachi has four new Dolby C models (five, if you include the D-E57 introduced last fall), ranging from the $750 D-2200M, with automatic tape matching, down to the $200 D-E33. Following hard on the heels of the Dolby C TA-2070 (test report, March HF), Onkyo has added the $360 TA-2055, also with Dolby C, and the $255 TA-2025 with B only. Sansui’s three new component decks all have Dolby C: the $420 D-370, with dual memory; the $525 D-570, with dual memory, program search, real-time indicator, and simultaneous monitoring; and the $600 D-770R, with instant automatic reverse and program search.

There are several other Sansui cassette introductions for its mini and systems lines: typical of such models, they do not offer Dolby C, though Dolby B is standard. The thinking here, as at other companies, appears to be that C is virtually a “must” for the advanced recordist these days and therefore belongs in separate components (or even including) the budget level, but that it’s too new—too “esoteric”—to interest the system buyer for the time being. Similarly, though Kenwood has included the original Dolby HX in its Audio Purist

Dolby B and High Com noise reduction systems for playback and High Com for recording. And, of course, there are many other system-design decks (from Pioneer and Fisher, for examples) introduced this year.

Open-Reel Models

Each year the list of new decks for open-reel fans seems to atrophy a little more, so Teac’s announcement of five new models is astonishing. Actually, however, four of them are existing models to which the necessary bias and equalization options to accommodate the new EE tapes have been added: the $1,090 X-10 Mk. II, the $890 X-7R Mk. II, the $790 X-7 Mk. II, and the $590 X-3 Mk. II. Altogether new is the X-1000R ($1,400). In addition to EE capability, it features bidirectional recording and playback, DBX noise reduction, and new logic for search operations.

Blank Tapes

Though BASF was among the first companies to experiment with metal-particle tapes, it has been circumspect about marketing the cassettes, which it introduced here in C-60 lengths only last year. This year, it will add C-90s. But the company’s major thrust in recent years has been toward improved chromium dioxide formulations—for video as well as audio—which is convinced are superior to their counterparts in other brands that rely on ferricobalt technology. Consequently, BASF has added an EE tape for owners of the new open-reel decks with EE switching; the tape is the first of its type to use true chrome instead of the “chrome substitute” pigments. Also new in the BASF line is the upgraded ferric Professional I Super cassette formulation.

The 3M Company, too, has been busy upgrading its Scotch tapes. Among the repackaged cassette formulations, Dyna-
range is said to have been particularly revamped. In video cassette tapes, Scotch uses what it calls its micro-fine Anachron particle—a ferritecobalt—to ensure high performance.

New to the TDK cassette line is AD-X, a ferric for use with 120-microsecond playback EQ. Like SA-X (and SA), it employs a ferricobalt particle derived from the company’s Avilyn technology. AD-X is said to achieve 1/2 dB more dynamic range than any TDK normal-bias tape to date. The technology also is responsible for the new Super Avilyn L-750 HG (High Grade) Beta video cassettes. Sony also has new HG Beta tapes, employing a particle it calls Dynamicron. Lengths run from L-125 to L-750. Sony’s biggest news is a new Type 2 (for 70-microsecond playback EQ) audio cassette called UCX-S, which it believes to be the best of its type on the market—thanks, in particular, to a significant improvement in magnetic retentivity. Also new in Type 2 tapes is a revised formulation from Lorain, to be called High Bias Type II. (The earlier one was called simply High Bias.)

Maxell has changed its packaging on several products. Most significant, perhaps, is a change in the open-reel series to rename the former UD-XL as XL-I to match the style (XL-II) of Maxell’s EE tape. An addition to its microcassette line is the metal NC-46MX. Maxell evidently is one of many companies that believe the microcassette is on the brink of a true high fidelity future (though the necessity of using metal formulations like Maxell’s, at premium prices, and the restricted playing time would seem to put the format at an inherent disadvantage compared to the familiar compact cassette). Fuji’s news this time around is confined to the video field, where it will be offering a formulation that outstrips its own HG: Super HG, which it believes will lead the entire field into another round of product improvement. Among other benefits, Super HG employs back coating on the tape and ABS resin in the case. VHS cassettes are available now; Fuji says Betas will follow. And, to conclude, JVC has formulated its new HG VHS tape specifically for high performance in slow-speed (EP and LP) recording. A key factor, JVC says, is improved tape-to-head contact, resulting from the tape’s ultrasmooth surface. (Video equipment coverage begins on page 37.)

**Record-Playing Equipment: Style and Performance**

by Michael Riggs

Associate Audio-Video Editor

Few manufacturers saw fit to bring out entirely new lines of turntables or cartridges at this winter’s Consumer Electronics Show. Instead, most chose to fill out existing lines, usually at the top or bottom. As expected, there were a number of prototype digital disc players, designed to accommodate the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a year. Perhaps in that time the Sony/Philips compact disc, but none ready for the market. That will take another six months to a...
incorporates Sansui's "Silent Synchrotronic" — a motor that is mounted coaxially with the drive motor and governed by the same control signals, but that runs in the opposite direction to cancel out motor vibrations that might otherwise be transmitted through the turntable base to the cartridge. More conventional is the $270 FR-D40, an automatic direct-drive turntable with a straight static-balance tonearm.

Unlike other turntables of the LP-size genre, Denon's DP-11F ($200) does not have a linear-tracking tonearm; instead, it has a straight, pivoted "Dynamic Servo Tracer" arm that is said to damp the low-frequency arm/cartridge resonance electronically for improved tracking of warped records and lower susceptibility to acoustic feedback. Two new conventionally sized turntables, the DP-51F ($425) and DP-52F ($525), also have Dynamic Servo Tracer tonearms.

One of the first companies to introduce such electronically damped tonearms, JVC, has a new model incorporating one this year. The $750 QL-Y7 has a direct-drive motor and fully electronic controls for maximum reliability and performance.

Other manufacturers have chosen to refine tried and true design principles for higher performance. Among these are Kenwood and Luxman. Kenwood's S375 KD-670 — a new member of the Audio Purist line — is fully automatic with a direct-drive motor and a straight low-mass tonearm designed for high rigidity. The base is made of a special antiresonance resin to combat acoustic feedback. Similarly, Luxman's automatic PD-289 ($400) and semiautomatic PD-284 ($230) have direct-drive motors and straight double-tube tonearms for low mass combined with high rigidity. And for more rarified tastes, Luxman has the belt-drive PD-300 ($1,000), with an isolated subchassis and a hand-operated vacuum record "stabilizer."

Akai has two new automatic and two new semiautomatic turntables. The top model, the AP-Q41 ($250), is a direct-drive unit with a straight low-mass tonearm made of carbon fiber. The least expensive of the new introductions is the belt-drive AP-B110 ($100), which has a straight tonearm with a removable headshell. NAD's latest turntable is the $150 Model 5025 — a belt-drive semiautomatic unit whose straight tonearm is said to have an effective mass of only 9½ grams. It has an anti-resonant base, and the tonearm counterweight is placed so that the arm's center of mass is below the vertical pivots for improved stability.

Looking to its growing minicomponent line, Fisher has two new turntables that are scarcely more than thirteen inches square. Both the automatic MTM-30C ($290) and the semiautomatic MTM-30C ($230) are direct-drive models with straight tonearms and magnetic cartridges. And Toshiba has three new turntables with straight tonearms, front-mounted controls, and bases made of Toshiba Resonance-Blocking Compound (TRBC) for improved resistance to acoustic feedback. They range from the automatic direct-drive SR-Q650 ($220) to the semiautomatic belt-drive SR-B150 ($115).

Sanyo and Vector Research have one new turntable each. The former's TPQ-5 ($170) is an automatic direct-drive unit with a straight tonearm and a floating-subchassis suspension. Vector Research's VT-150 ($120) is a semiautomatic turntable with a straight tonearm and a four-pole synchronous motor.

Two recent semiautomatics from Scott have straight tonearms and front-mounted controls. The PS-68A ($190) is a direct-drive unit, while the PS-48A ($160) uses belt drive. Radio Shack's Realistic LAB-395 direct-drive turntable ($170, with cartridge) also has front-mounted controls, but uses an S-shaped arm.

Four of BSR's five new turntables come with ADC induced-magnet cartridges, and all five are belt driven. They range from the multiplay Quanta 75MX ($110) to the multiplay 26CX ($70), which has a ceramic cartridge. Aimed at much the same market are Mesa's four new turntables, two multiplay units (the 200C and 100C, which cost $90 and $85, respectively) and two semiautomatic single-play models (the $85 500S and the $80 500S).

Finally, one of the most unusual new turntables takes its cue from the personal portable craze its maker started. The Sony PS-155, a direct-drive semiautomatic, includes a cartridge, a phono preamplifier, and a headphone amplifier, enabling you to listen to records with nothing more added than a set of headphones. It can also be connected to a portable radio/cassette player or to the line inputs of a home stereo system. Price for this unique turntable is $175.

**Tonearms and Cartridges**

New from France is the most expensive tonearm I know of, the $2,500 Goldmund T-3. Price aside, it is still a member of a rare breed: a separate linear-tracking tonearm. Only a few such have ever been designed, and I know of only one other — the Souther—presently being manufactured. The low-mass cartridge carrier is guided across the disc's surface by a servo drive system. The arm tube is damped, and there is additional silicone fluid damping to control the main low-frequency arm/cartridge resonance.

The only other new arm seen at CES is a more down-to-earth design from Signet, the XK-35. It is almost identical to the established XK-50, except for its lower price and its use of an integrated arm tube and simplified counterweight assembly. The tube is tapered to reduce mass and arm resonances, and there is a fluid-damping
mechanism to help control low-frequency resonance. The arm also incorporates Signet’s Signetrace planar-pivot system, which keeps the stylus, counterweight, and pivots all in the same plane to eliminate tracking-force variations.

Signet also has a goodly number of new cartridges, starting with the exotic TK-100LC moving-magnet pickup, which has a tubular ruby cantilever and toroidal coils hand-wound with silver wire. In addition, the company has completely redone its standard line with seven new pickups, ranging from the low-end TK-1Ea to the TK-9LCa, which also has toroidal coils for high efficiency, along with a beryllium cantilever and a line-contact stylus. All use Signet’s traditional dual-magnet design, as do the first two cartridges in the company’s new HiTec line, the H-Ten and H-Twelve, aimed mainly at buyers who want to upgrade their prepackaged systems. And finally, Signet has two new Laboratory Series moving-coil cartridges, the MK-111Ea and the MK-110E, both of which weigh less than five grams. The MK-111Ea is said to be designed for maximum performance and has a tapered beryllium cantilever and an elliptical stylus. The MK-110E has a user-replaceable stylus assembly and a tapered cantilever tube.

Dynavector has three new moving-coil pickups. The DV-17D ($650) has an extremely short (1.7-millimeter) diamond cantilever for low moving mass combined with high rigidity and freedom from resonances. Almost as short is the 2.3-millimeter ruby cantilever on the DV-23R ($310), while the more conventional DV-50A ($200) has a 5-millimeter aluminum tube cantilever.

The latest from Fidelity Research is its MC-202 “Gold” moving-coil cartridge ($350) with a Vital line-contact stylus. The MC-202 uses coreless coils for lowest possible distortion. Yamaha’s two new moving-coil pickups use the company’s Cross-Matrix coil system, whose unconventional orientation is said to enable individual adjustment of vertical and horizontal compliance. The MC-9 sells for only $90, while the MC-3, with a tubular beryllium cantilever, bears a $200 tag.

Denon also has a low-price moving-coil cartridge, the DL-300 ($100). Weighing barely more than four grams, it has a cross-shaped coil armature, a two-part telescoped cantilever, and a relatively high output of 0.3 millivolts per centimeter per second. Designed to track at less than 1½ grams, the DL-207 ($275) has a boren cantilever for high rigidity and low mass and individual damping elements for low and high frequencies.

Another relatively inexpensive moving-coil pickup is Adcom’s $130 HCE, which uses the company’s Crosscoil design and weighs less than five grams. The Sony Esprit XL-88 cartridge ($350) has a Figure-8 coil assembly and a composite cantilever made of beryllium, carbon fiber, and aluminum for high rigidity and low mass.

Herolitore known only for its loudspeakers, Boston Acoustics has jumped into the cartridge market with a moving-coil design. One version, the MC-IH ($200) has a Van den Hul line-contact stylus, while the less expensive MC-1E ($140) has an elliptical tip. Because of its low output impedance, high sensitivity (approximately 0.7 millivolts per centimeter per second), low mass, and moderate compliance, the MC-1 is said to sidestep the arm and preamp matching problems that plague some phono cartridges.

Both of Sumiko’s new moving-coil models—the low-output Premier LMX ($200) and the high-output Andante FGV ($200)—have FGV stylus, which are said to approximate the shape of those used in disc-cutter heads for low tracing distortion, but without the danger of cutting into the grooves posed by some similar designs.

Audio-Technica has three new moving-coil cartridges, ranging from the high-output AT-30HE ($135) to the AT-35E ($250), which has a tapered beryllium cantilever. Its other new entries are all moving-magnet pickups using the company’s dual-magnet system. Two are plug-in models designed for use with Technics and other similar linear-tracking turntables. The AT-112EP sells for $70, the AT-122EP for $95. The remaining three are really all different configurations of the same low-mass cartridge. The lightest is the three-gram AT-55XE ($125), which has a standard screw mount. The AT-57XE ($145) is an integrated headshell version with a standard universal bayonet mount for J- and S-shaped arms, while the AT-59XE ($145) is designed to fit most straight tonearms.

Also designed for straight tonearms are the ADC Integra ST induced-magnet cartridges, all of which can be adjusted for offset angle, overhang, and vertical tracking angle. Prices are $135 for the Integra ST XLM III, $120 for the Integra ST XLM II, and $80 for the Integra ST XLM I. All three have carbon-fiber bodies and headshells and weigh about nine grams. And, finally, Nagatronics has its $90 IMS 14601E induced-magnet cartridge with an integrated headshell for straight tonearms.

It seems more apparent than ever that manufacturers are treating the market for record-playing equipment as two markets: one for maximum convenience of set-up and operation, the other for all-out maximum performance. Of course, these two aims are not really mutually exclusive—they can even be complementary—but they do often give rise to different design goals. The distance separating the philosophies behind, say, a Nakamichi TX-1000 and a Technics SL-5 is fairly large. It is remarkable how much progress has been made on both fronts, however, with the result that the overall levels of convenience and performance available to the audiophile are higher now than ever before.

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Spring Video Equipment Report

Refinement of existing designs best characterizes the crop of new video components introduced at the recent Las Vegas Consumer Electronics Show and scheduled to reach dealers' shelves by late spring or early summer.

Along with the continuing trend to smaller and lighter portable video cassette recorders, more companies were showing new front-loading VCRs. First introduced by Sony, this format is aimed at those who want to shelve their VCR along with their audio components. Audiophiles will remember that audio cassette decks underwent a similar style transition in the mid-Seventies.

Video cameras generally are evolving along two lines—one aimed at the least sophisticated user who wants to "point-and-shoot," and the other at the more serious video movie maker. Auto-focus designs are increasingly available.

Single-unit projection-television systems are tending to adopt a standardized 45-inch (measured diagonally) screen, and increased emphasis is being placed on system designs that blend well with home decor. One of the most innovative approaches is a "two-piece" model from Kloss that uses any standard white room wall for its screen.

Video disc players should make a bigger splash as the new catalogs of discs are released. Pioneer's Laser Vision optical system is scheduled to add a player incorporating CX noise reduction, and RCA intends to offer a stereo version of its CED player, both by early summer. A third incompatible video disc system, JVC's VHD format, is also planned for introduction by summer.

The variety of video accessories continues to proliferate. Among the new categories in evidence are specialized video component interconnect cables, which are aimed at providing a high quality video picture through improved conductivity and shielding from spurious RF signals.

For this month, we've assembled a sampling of the new video components, more will appear in future issues. New video software is listed in our TubeFood column, and coverage of new blank video tapes appears on page 31 of this issue.

A newcomer to home video is Sansui, which is offering its first video component—the SV-R5000 video cassette recorder. This VHS deck has separate sets of heads for the two-hour and six-hour modes and can be preprogrammed to record up to eight events in a fourteen-day period. Other features include bidirectional frame search at up to twenty-one times normal speed (with picture visible), full-logic controls with feather-touch buttons, and automatic rewind. A wired remote control contains all the VCR transport functions as well as channel selection and frame search. Front-panel audio and video inputs are provided.

Price is $1,200.

Circle 79 on Reader-Service Card

Expanding its video line in the U.S., NEC Home Electronics is offering the $830 VCP-1000E portable Beta VCR. Features include Betascan (nine times normal speed in forward and reverse); feather-touch controls, and a five-function wired remote control. With the quick-recharge battery pack in place, the deck weighs about 12 pounds.

Circle 82 on Reader-Service Card

A wide range of applications is possible with Winegard's new second-generation video selector. Designated the VS-4002, this device has four 75-ohm inputs to accept such video sources as cable TV, broadcast TV, video cassette recorders, video games, and computer terminals. Via slide switches, you can select one input for viewing while your VCR records from a second input. Three 3-foot coaxial cables are included.

Price is $125.

Circle 88 on Reader-Service Card

Stereo sound from your television set is possible with Fisher's HT-800. Designed for reproduction of such stereo video sources as tape and disc, this set has a five-watt-per-channel amp; a pair of built-in two-way speakers; separate controls for bass, treble, balance, loudness, and stereo matrix; and two sets of audio and video inputs and outputs. The video section features Phase-Lock-Loop (PLL) digitally synthesized tuning circuitry and vertical interval reference (VIR) signal processing for improved tuning and color reproduction.

A seventeen-key infrared remote module tunes the cable-ready set's 105 chan-
ners, provides search and recall functions, and allows you to adjust volume up, down, and to mute. The HT-800 has a 25-inch screen and is priced at $1,150.

Circle 87 on Reader-Service Card

Dolby noise reduction enhances the stereo recording capability of JVC's new HR-7650U VHS-format front-loading VCR. The 105-channel cable-ready deck incorporates a tuner/timer on which 16 channels can be preset and eight events can be pre-programmed over a two-week period. The deck is said to be uniquely capable of both audio and video insert editing. To ensure clean sequential (assembly) edits, a special circuit automatically backspaces the tape when PAUSE is pushed. This provides a stable signal base for the transition to the next scene. Other features include shuttle search (with picture visible), adjustable slow-motion (1/5 to 1/30 normal speed), and an infrared remote control. Separate sets of heads are used for the two-hour and six-hour record and playback modes. The deck also plays back VHS tapes recorded in the older four-hour mode. An LED lights when ten minutes remain on a tape and blinks when there are five minutes remaining. The price of the HR-7650U is $1,595.

Circle 85 on Reader-Service Card

No projection screen is needed for the new Kloss Novabeam Model Two projection TV system. Designed specifically for use in a darkened viewing room, this compact portable video projector, when placed at the recommended four-foot projection distance, throws a three-by-four-foot image on a regular white room wall. The Model Two, which will sell for about $2,000, is unusual in several ways. Because the picture is not viewed on a curved screen, brightness tends to be uniform over a wider range of viewing angles. The set omits the customary TV tuner section, which Kloss claims merely duplicates the tuner built into home VCRs. A hinged top conceals and protects the projection lenses when the set is not in use. The system is slightly more than 21 inches high when closed and 30 inches high when open. It weighs 60 pounds.

Circle 84 on Reader-Service Card

Aimed at sophisticated video photographers, Panasonic's PK-805 Omnipro color video camera incorporates an imaging tube designed for low lag and improved sensitivity in low-light conditions. Among the many features are a two-speed motorized 1/1.4 6:1 zoom lens with built-in macro (super close-up) and auto-focus functions, an auto-white-balance control, an automatic gain control (AGC), a fade control, color-temperature and color-preference switches, a power-standby switch, a shoulder rest with hand grip, and a tally light that flashes to alert the subject that recording is taking place. Price is $1,200.

Circle 81 on Reader-Service Card

Flagging caused by copyguard encoding of prerecorded video cassettes is said to be corrected by Showtime Video Ventures' new VV-170S video stabilizer. To counter flagging (the bending of the TV picture at the top of the screen), this device generates a new vertical interval, reshapes the horizontal sync, and reinserts the serration. A front-panel LED on the $212 unit indicates that the signal is stabilized.

Circle 78 on Reader-Service Card

Lowest priced model in Quasar's line of five video cassette recorders is the new VH-5021TW, a table model that sells for $875. This basic deck features picture search, still image; frame-by-frame advance; a one event, twenty-four-hour programmable timer; and feather-touch controls.

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Hands-On Report

Sanyo's 4300 Beta Recorder

For picture resolution and sound quality, it stands head-to-head with the competition.

by Edward J. Foster

If a nonportable VCR with a single-event programmer fits your needs, then Sanyo's Model 4300 Beta-format deck is worth careful consideration. Priced at $800, the VCR-4300 records and plays at the two newer Beta speeds—Beta II (2 centimeters per second) and Beta III (1.33 cm/s)—with a maximum program length of three hours, twenty minutes in Beta II or five hours in Beta III with an L-830 cassette. There are no provisions for playing back tapes made in Beta I (the format is now obsolete for recording), but, unless you have a library of old tapes, that should be of little concern. You can mix Beta II and III speeds on the same tape when recording, and the 4300 will automatically adopt the correct playback mode. The recording format is selected by a large slider on the front panel. An LED on top of the deck and setting the three-position slide switch to VL (for Channels 2 through 6), VH (for Channels 7 through 13), or U (for UHF stations). Then rotate the tuning control for the best picture on the desired channel. An LED under the lid will light up when the signal is tuned properly, but it's also a good idea to keep an eye on the screen.

Each channel-selector button (they're labeled A through N) has its own band-selection switch, tuning control, and pointer (to indicate the position in the band). You can change the labels on the front panel to correspond to channels you've selected. Raising the hinged lid automatically disables the AFT (automatic fine tuning) circuit to facilitate manual adjustment, and closing the lid re-engages the AFT, unless you set the switch on the lid to AFT-OFF.

Clock-set and programming controls are on the front panel directly below the time display, and a nifty interlock system prevents any accidental resetting: Two buttons must be pressed simultaneously to enter any change. For example, to set the clock you must hold CLOCK SET while pressing DAY/HOUR or MIN. to advance the hours or minutes digits. Each tap advances the count by one; continued pressure advances the setting rapidly.

Sanyo's Digatron programmer is set in a similar way: Press and hold REC-DAY and advance the count with DAY/HOUR. Today is "Day 1," tomorrow is "Day 2" and so on. As with other single-event, seven-day programmers, you can begin recording at any time of any day within a seven-day period. Sanyo's system also has an eighth position marked "E." In this setting, the deck will record for a designated time period every day until it runs out of tape. The start time is set by pressing and holding REC-START while advancing the timer via DAY/HOUR and MIN. Stop time is entered by holding REC-STOP while advancing the display. The channel is selected in the normal manner.

You can check what you have entered in the memory by pressing REC-DAY, REC-START, or REC-STOP, and the data pertaining to each will appear in the time display. (If you lose line current, there is no backup power to retain the data; the time display flashes as a warning when power has been restored.) Once you have set the programmer, press TIMER, and an indicator light will show that the system is set for automatic recording.

The ON and OFF buttons for manual operation are to the right of the timer. TV/VCR switch is to the left. This last determines whether your TV receiver is fed directly from a cable or an antenna TV or from the deck's electronics or a tape (VCR). Once set to VCR, the deck remained in that mode, even when the power was turned off. In order to watch cable or broadcast television, we had to manually reset the control to TV, a minor inconvenience that some other recorders avoid by switching automatically back to the antenna feed when the deck is turned off.

Following usual practice, the VCR-4300 delivers its RF output on either Channel 3 or 4, selectable via a switch under the lid on the top panel. A single 75-ohm coax fitting serves as the antenna input for both the UHF and VHF bands, and a similar single connector conveys output to the TV set. Since many television sets have separate VHF and UHF inputs, Sanyo provides a signal splitter that is connected to the VCR's output via a supplied length of coax. The splitter has separate VHF and UHF 300-ohm twinlead outputs for connection to the set. Also supplied is a balun transformer, which matches your antenna's 300-ohm twinlead to the 75-ohm coax input on the VCR. While the accessories provided should be fine for a cable-fed system or for a home antenna using a single lead-in wire, you will need to purchase a combiner, or reverse splitter, to feed the VCR-4300 if you have the usual separate VHF and UHF downleads.

Adjacent to the RF fittings on the back panel are direct audio- and video-output...
WIND, PAUSE/STILL, duplicates the deck's remote-control DIN jack for the twenty-foot control (which adjusts head alignment and jacks (of the standard pin type) for connecting the deck to a monitor or high fidelity system. Also on the back panel is an unswitched convenience power outlet with a 500-watt maximum rating.

On the lower front of the deck are direct audio and video inputs (pin jacks) for a video camera, a second VCR, or some other video/audio source. A miniature phone jack serves as the microphone input (a high-impedance mike is suggested); a subminiature phone jack provides a connection for a camera's REMOTE-PAUSE switch. There is no camera/tuner switch; instead, the VCR-4300 senses the presence of a plugged-in camera and automatically turns the VCR-4300 on when you press its 4300 features Sanyo's Time Phased Editing (TPE) system, which monitors picture breakup when PAUSE is used to delete commercials. While the electronic "splice" is not quite seamless, we judged the system to be quite effective, particularly at the faster Beta-II speed, in which the edits caused only a very brief flash on the screen. When editing from the remote unit, be careful not to press PLAY or STOP accidentally—they're located on either side of the remote control switch. As a safety measure, the 4300 reverses to STOP if you hold it in PAUSE for more than about five minutes. Whether this is better than going to the record or play modes is a matter of opinion. With the Beta system, the tape retracts from the deck's tape path when you stop the machine; it takes about four seconds for the tape to reload and come up to speed after you press PLAY or RECORD. Still frame and accelerated forward and reverse scanning (without audio), are available in Beta III, in addition to conventional fast wind and rewind. Though you cannot adjust the scanning speeds, the one chosen by Sanyo—nine times normal—seems appropriate. When the machine is in PLAY, press PAUSE for still frame, FAST-WIND for accelerated forward, or REWIND for accelerated reverse. The picture in the still and accelerated modes is quite viewable, if not perfect; usually there were three or four noise bars visible in the high speeds and one in still frame. In addition to some bending at the top of the picture, still frame occasionally suffered from some interlace problems, producing a herringbone pattern on the screen. To return from the accelerated modes and still frame, you simply press PLAY: it takes about one-and-one-half seconds for the sound to return.

If you just want to wind the tape fast without a viewable picture, press STOP and then either FAST-WIND or REWIND. The 4300 rewrinds an L-500 cassette in 151 seconds and fast winds the same tape in 138 seconds—both considerably quicker than Sanyo's 240-second specification. There's also an automatic end-of-tape rewind and a memory-rewind function that employs the 4300's four-digit mechanical counter.

We found the deck's mechanics somewhat noisy, especially in high-speed operation and in fast forward and rewind. That aside, its performance was quite good. The tuner is sensitive—a real boon in our fringe location—and in Beta II the recording and reproduction resolution was as good as we've seen. In Beta III, picture quality was somewhat softer, but this is to be expected. At both speeds, gray-scale and color accuracy were excellent; although the color was "noisier" than we have experienced with more expensive VCRs. You can find Beta-format VCRs with more features than the Sanyo VCR-4300, but for picture resolution and sound quality, it stands head-to-head with any of the competition.
TubeFood

New video programming edited by Susan Elliott

Video Cassettes

SPORTS
- ATI Video Enterprises: Horseback (instruction), Play Golf, Harry Carpenter's Videobook of Sport.
- Magnetic Video: In Search of Skiing.
- Mastervision: Pro Karate Championships 1976-81, Show Jumping World Cup, Arnold Schwarzenegger's Comeback.
- MCA: How to Watch Pro Football.
- MGM/CBS: Greatest Fights of the '70s.
- Paramount: Aerobics (stereo).
- Sports World Cinema: Complete Tennis from the Pros (4-part series).
- VidAmerica: Sugar Ray Robinson—Pound for Pound.

ARTS
- Electric Video: La Sylphide (The French Radio Orchestra, Lille).
- Video Gems: Animation Wonderland, Mini-Musicals, Mr. Too Little.
- Videospace: Video Playbox II, Flower Stories.
- Walt Disney Home Video: Dumbo, Pollyanna, Herbie Rides Again, The Sign of Zorro, A Tale of Two Critters.
- Warner: Pinwheel Song Book.
- Warner (rental only): Animalympics.

TV CLASSICS

TV DOCUMENTARY

CBS Video Enterprises: Franklin D. Roosevelt.
- Video Gems: Fishing U.S.A.
- MGM/CBS: Harry Chapin—The Final Concert.
- Thorn/EMI: Picture Music (Duran Duran, Classix Nouveaux, the Tubes, Genesis, and others), Rockshow (with Paul McCartney and Wings), Times Square (Joe Jackson, Talking Heads, Patti Smith, the Ramones).
- Twentieth Century-Fox Video: Peter Allen and the Rockettes.
- Vestron Video: Rust Never Sleeps, Gladys Knight & the Pips/Ray Charles in Concert.
- Warner (rental only): Divine Madness, Liberace in Los Angeles.

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Q. In "CrossTalk" [November 1981] a reader described how he attempted to get better television sound by connecting the speaker leads on his TV set to his stereo system. Since he did this using a cable that terminated in alligator clips, he asked whether it was a safe alternative to spending $75 for a commercial adapter. You replied "absolutely not" and went on to warn of possible dangers. I disagree, and I think your answer was inadequate. I have been connecting my TV set to my stereo system for years. Of course, I do have some technical experience in electronics, but it doesn't take a lot of knowledge to solder a wire to each of the speaker terminals and then wrap the connections in insulating tape. I suspect that most readers of your magazine have enough intelligence to do this. Another way to achieve better sound is to take the signal from the headphone output on the television set. Two adapters are required for this: one with a miniature phone plug on one end (to insert in the earphone jack) and a pin (or "RCA") jack on the other; the second is a Y adapter with a pin plug for input from the first adapter and two pin jacks for output to the stereo system. —T.C. Howard Jr., Charlottesville, Va.

A. Although you and other readers might be able to make the internal connection to 112V TV receiver safely, it would be highly irresponsible for us to suggest this as a do-it-yourself procedure. There can be dangerous voltages in a television set even after the power is disconnected. Furthermore, tampering with the internal workings of a set can invalidate the warranty. If you're not concerned about the voided warranty and you want a permanent hookup, I suggest that you find a competent technician to wire it for you. For a temporary connection to a set that has a headphone jack, I see no reason not to try the Y adapter hookup you suggest, unless the owner's manual expressly prohibits the procedure. (You can run into problems in attempting to connect a battery-powered TV receiver, for instance, to any stereo system.) Switchcraft offers a series of pin-plug/phono-jack adapters for this purpose, while such companies as Recoton, Rhoades, and Total Video Supply sell inexpensive TV-to-stereo adapters.
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TEAC. MADE IN JAPAN BY FANATICS.
Behind the Scenes

Music news and commentary by James R. Oestreich

Footnote to an *

Happy to report, the asterisk in Curtis Davis' discography elsewhere in this issue denoting the domestic unavailability of Stokowski's 1927 Bach represents no insuperable obstacle for the late-coming collector. A new British company, Dell'Arte Records (P.O. Box 26, Hampton, Middlesex TW12 2NL, England), has assembled an album that includes excellent transfers of that D minor Passacaglia and Fugue and the 1929 C minor Passacaglia and Fugue as well as some Bach new to LP—most notably, the 1928 Second Brandenburg Concerto (DA 9001).

Of course, no one should approach these interpretations with any lofty expectations of "authentic" baroque style. While it is certainly not true that everything Stokowski touched turned to transcription, the editorial pencil did fall heavily here, even on the concerto, adding inner-voice trills to the Anhante and rendering the trumpet largely ineffective. In appropriately feisty annotations, Stokowski expert Edward Johnson leaps to the defense both of the arrangements ("It is no heresy to say that Bach was capable of writing much that was dry and tedious in equal measure with that which was truly inspired and uplifting. So let not Stokowski be criticized for breathing life into J.S.B.," etc.) and the performances ("it would be as useless to criticize Stokowski for conducting Bach like Bruckner as it would be to criticize Toscanini for conducting Brahms like Rossini"). And so the only "authenticity" here consists of hearing how Bach was in fact performed in Philadelphia in the 1920s—not always wisely, but very well.

Dell'Arte's initial release also offers more recent Stokowski: the 1952 Boris Godunov highlights in Mussorgsky's original scoring, an electric performance by bass Nicolai Rossi-Levent and San Francisco Opera forces (DA 9002), and an ebullient 1976 collection of overtures (Don Giovanni with a Stokowski twist, Leonore No. 3, Rossamunde, Roman Carnival, and William Tell) with the National Philharmonic (DA 9003). American distribution for the Victor/RCA-derived Bach and Mussorgsky is being negotiated, but Dell'Arte will have no foreign distribution rights for the Pye recording of overtures. In any case, all three discs are available by direct mail for $10 each in U.S. funds, surface-mail postage included.

Britons in Boston

The Boston Symphony recently recorded two works commissioned for its centennial season, Roger Sessions' Concerto for Orchestra and Andrej Panufnik's Sinfonia viva (Symphony No. 8), under music director Seiji Ozawa. And what brave label tackled this worthy bit of Americana? Hyperion. That's right, Hyperion. Despite the enthusiastic reception accorded the Sessions in particular and the offer of substantial subsidies, the major American labels declined, leaving the field to the wee British label headed by Edward Perry, which has so far concentrated almost entirely on smaller-scaled projects involving British performers. The project coordinator was John Goldsmith, who only recently left Unicorn, the label he founded some fourteen years ago, and the producer was Harold Lawrence, fondly remembered for his contribution to the Mercury glory days, now an independent. Release is projected for the summer. Hyperion is distributed in America by Brilly Imports.

All Things Cultural

In the face of strained financial circumstances, National Public Radio is taking the stance that the best defense is a good offense. A major new venture debuts on April 4, a live five-hour weekly broadcast, The Sunday Show. The concept—an "investigation" into the state of the arts in America and worldwide—resembles that of NPR's daily general news program All Things Considered in its comprehensive scope and its reliance on the resources and initiative of member stations; in fact, the show was developed under the working title "All Things Cultural." It will originate from noon to 5 p.m., Eastern time, and feature performances—live and taped, musical and otherwise—from a variety of sources, in addition to criticism and commentary. Even where performances are involved, the attempt will be to develop an informal medium and style appropriate to the home rather than the theater or concert hall. The April 4 broadcast will offer rare early recordings of and interviews with guitarist Andrés Segovia.
Only slowly do legends give way to the facts surrounding the career of this most elusive maestro.

by Curtis Davis

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AFTER HIS BIRTH, still one of the best-known musical figures in the world, Leopold Stokowski remains a self-made enigma. Few know the whole truth about his birth and upbringing. Abram Chasins' recent biography notwithstanding. "Stokie," as friends later knew him, hid himself resolutely from the world, and even from himself, leaving his biographers to hammer at the facts following his death.

Close members of his family know little about his mother, father, sister, or brother, though his mother lived until 1952 and his brother survived him. Stokie didn't want people to know that his forebears had been tradesmen, merchants, and handcrafters, or that his brother was a used-car dealer in Hampstead. He preferred to make a mystery of his origins, speaking vaguely of his grandfather, "Polish patriot from Staki, near Lublin." He seems to have remained profoundly ashamed of his true origins, those of a lower-middle-class boy from central London. As late as 1967, during a radio interview in Chicago, he disputed his interlocutor's contention that his mother was English, asserting, "No, she was Polish."

The elusive maestro first captured my attention in 1938, when, at age nine, I saw him in the movie 100 Men and a Girl—playing himself, appropriately enough. My fascination only grew in subsequent years—and in 1979 I decided to attempt to unravel the various mysteries surrounding the legend. Many of the facts revealed here, some published for the first time, came to light in that research.

Stokowski was born on April 18, 1882, at 13 Upper Marylebone Street, the home of his mother's parents. The building stood in a district of sooty brownstones and small shops, poorly lit and far more run-down than it is today. His grandfather, a cabinetmaker of Polish origin also named Leopold, did business at 36 Castle Street East. He was married to Jessie Sarah Anderson, probably Scottish. Their only child, Joseph Kopernik Boleslaw Stokowski, born on February 3, 1862, at No. 9 Oxford Market, learned his father's trade. In 1879 his father died, and two years later, at nineteen, Kopernik married Annie Marion Moore, twenty-two-year-old daughter of an Anglo-Irish bootmaker.

The next year our Leopold was their first-born, followed in 1884 by Lydia and in 1890 by Percy John, later known as "Jim." The children attended the public school run by St. Marylebone Parish Church, where Leopold became a choirboy. His musical talent surfaced early, for in 1896, at thirteen, he was admitted to the Royal College of Music, the youngest yet to enter that institution.

Leopold's Marylebone accent was definitely "non-U" to his upper-class peers at the college, and he was equally self-conscious about his name. But Henry Walford Davies, the composer and outstanding teacher of English choirmasters, took the youngster under his wing. Thanks to Davies, upon graduation in 1900 Stokowski secured his first church post, at St. Mary's in Charing Cross Road. Only eighteen, he was already a full-fledged choirmaster and organist, yet later that year his mother nearly brought him to tears by criticizing the post, in front of the rector and full choir, as "beneath your talents."

In March 1902, again thanks to Davies, Stokowski moved on to the far more posh St. James's Church in Piccadilly.

Curtis Davis, director of program services for ARTS, the Hearst/ABC cable program service, is working on a biography of Stokowski scheduled for publication by Coward McCann in the spring of 1984. Between 1963 and 1970 he produced five telecasts with Stokowski; he won a 1971 Emmy for Leopold Stokowski at Eighty-Eight.

APRIL 1982
Stokowski was an absolutely natural-born conductor.

behavior and speech that were to make up the Olympian figure of later years. "Since I've found my native country..." he had already written in 1908 to his former mentor Davies, "I've acquired an American form of vulgarity which I've richly blended with my English callowness." Stokie had begun to hide his true self from the world, to build a new image, to make good on the vaguely Central-European association of his name.

In Philadelphia, he also learned to wield the conductor's power to hire and fire. He kept all his players on tenterhooks via the annually renewable contract. While the personnel turnover was not as extensive as some have suggested—actually from six to a dozen per year—there was never any doubt as to who was boss. He took to designating players by their instruments, impersonally and abruptly: "You there, third oboe?" he would admonish, "more tone, do better." From the beginning he was correct but aloof. As he hoped, it would all go into the making of a legend.

The first two decades of his tenure in Philadelphia were among the most spectacular in the history of conducting. Stokowski initially led twenty-five concert pairs per season, plus innumerable tour performances, including the series in New York, Washington, and Baltimore. By 1927 the number of Philadelphia pairs had risen to twenty-nine, of which he led twenty-seven. He hated to relinquish the podium.

His achievements in Philadelphia can be compared only to those of Arturo Toscanini worldwide in the same years. Stokowski conducted an astounding number of contemporary works—among them, the American concert premiere of Le Sacre du printemps in 1922, and the Sibelius Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Symphonies all in the same season, 1925-26. He led world premieres of scores by Edgard Varèse and Henry Eichheim and conducted for the International Composers' Guild. Serge Diaghilev even invited him to Paris in 1924 to lead the final performances of the Ballets Russes season, but Stokie did not go; Diaghilev could not meet his stringent demands for top players and lavish rehearsal time. Stokowski gradually built the Philadelphia Orchestra into the premier showcase among American symphonic ensembles; it responded to the slightest flicker of his baton—he used one into the 1920s—or of his eyes, always the ultimate source of his power. Small wonder that he had no time for anything else during these years, least of all for his family back in London.

These were critical years in another

Striking a pose, as ever, Stokowski discovered early on the persuasive power of his youthful charm and good looks as well as the uses of "glamor."
respect. Samaroff, whom he had finally married in 1911 in Cincinnati, presented him with a child in 1921, a daughter Sonya. Less than two years later, Olga and Leopold were divorced. In 1926 he married Evangeline Johnston, a twenty-eight-year-old heiress to the medical and baby-oil empire, in one of the most highly publicized weddings ever—even for glamorous-conscious Philadelphia. Leopold, though forty-three, billed himself as thirty-eight; the dispute about his birth date begins here. The following year, Evangeline bore him a second daughter, Luba. And Leopold took a one-year sabbatical.

He had to. All those years he had conducted with a baton, a rather sturdy short stick that Sonya now owns. His style was dynamic and abrupt, with a frequent whip-lash action of the right arm and hand. By the early '20s he had begun to abandon the baton. Through 1925 and 1926 he developed painful bursitis in his right shoulder. (This affliction, as common among conductors as among baseball pitchers, also sidelined Toscanini twice.) By March of 1927, Stokowski was conducting with his right arm in a sling. He wrote to his friend Varese, "I am very much disturbed in my mind because last Wednesday at a concert in Chicago my right shoulder broke down again, and I am unable to use my right arm. I am trying to continue to the end of the season using only my left arm, but it is very difficult, because that is becoming very fatigued. I am writing this to suggest that you have somebody in reserve for the concert on April 17th, in case I am unable to do it."

The sabbatical in 1927–28 did help, but Stokowski had already found that he could use the baton equally well in his left hand as in his right. He began shifting it back and forth, while developing a metronome technique for his right hand and wrist, which he brought into play as needed. By 1930, like Satmoff before him, he gave up the baton altogether. The great hands, poised like swans or darting like swallows, shone forth, lit by high spots in the dome of the Academy of Music, which just touched a halo to his aureole of hair. Over the past decade he had developed the mongrel polyglot accent that he was to sport for the rest of his life: as some men do face hair. The transformation was complete. Stokowski, at forty-eight, had emerged from the chrysalis. That year his third daughter, Sadja, was born.

The rest, as they say, is history. The Stokowski career over the next two decades has taken its place in the mythology of music. To touch just the highlights, there were the American stage premieres of Le Sacre in 1930, danced by Martha Graham to Massine's choreography, and of Berg's Wozzeck in 1931, with designs by Robert Edmond Jones. There were the American concert premiers of Schoenberg's Gurre-Lieder in 1932 and Shostakovich's First Symphony in 1933, more transcriptions of Bach and symphonic syntheses of Wagner, the lectures addressed from the podium to latecomers in the audience. In 1936 came the celebrated final break with the Philadelphia Orchestra and the flight to Hollywood—"a higher calling," in Stokowski's phrase—though for another four seasons his profile still dominated the orchestra's program, in first position, upper left, facing that of his successor, Eugene Ormandy. There were the films, 100 Men and a Girl and Fantasia, and the headlines marking his romance with Greta Garbo—over which Evangeline divorced him in 1937; the two great seasons with the All-American Youth Orchestra in 1940 and 1941; the stint with the NBC Symphony in 1941–43; the leadership of the short-lived New York City Symphony in 1944–45, the two summer seasons with the Hollywood Bowl Symphony in 1945 and 1946, and the shared leadership of the New York Philharmonic in 1947–50 in one of the most peculiar of all orchestral triumvirates, with Bruno Walter as senior musical advisor and Dimitri Mitropoulos as co-conductor. There were the hundreds of recordings, many of them best-sellers and virtually all well in advance of their time technically. Finally there was the stormy, controversial

**Leopold Stokowski: A Select Chronological Discography**

Debussy: Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune. Philadelphia O. April 1924. VICTOR 6481. *One of the few acoustic recordings to reveal the high quality of Stokowski's Philadelphia at its 1920's peak.*


Albeniz: Iberia: L'Espejo de la Seville. Philadelphia O. September 1928. VICTOR 7158. *One of Stokie's earliest non-Bach transcriptions; lush and full, it shook our rafters when I was a boy.*


Strausinsky: Le Sacre du printemps. NBC SO, November 1941. CBS MS 6887. *Ara String" sound like Stokie's old Philadelphia bunch. Toscannini wouldn't have dreamed of asking for such lushness or abandon from his four-year-old ensemble.*


Debussy: Nocturnes (3). BBC Women's Chorus. London SO. Summer 1960. SERAPHIM S 60104. *A longly specializes recorded only once in up-to-date stereo, mature, secure, and ripe. (The haunting "offsung" trumpet effect in "Pies," as I found out in 1964 while taping the work with Stokie for NET telecast, is achieved by using cloth bags over the bells.)*


Ives: Symphony No. 4. Schola Cantorum American SO. April 1965. CBS MS 6775. *A landmark performance that reveals the high standard he achieved inside and out with the Royal Albert Hall, one of the most superbly controlled total performances of any work that I have ever encountered—unlike the later RCA.*

Wer: Symphonies No. 4. Schola Cantorum American SO. April 1965. CBS MS 6775. *A landmark achievement, launching into the international repertory a work that had waited half a century for a full hearing.*


Tchaikovsky: Symphonies No. 5, in E minor, Op. 64. New Philharmonia O. September 1966. LONDON SPC 2107. *Ineffable personal touchs from the definitive Tchaikovsky interpreter of our time; splendid sonics.*


*Currently unavailable domestically, number given refers to last available format.*
The Stokowski of middle years at the piano: the elderly maestro conducting, his aureole of hair touched by spotlights from ahig, and
toasting his ninety-first birthday on the stage of Royal Albert Hall, with British Prime Minister Edward Heath

marriage to Gloria Vanderbilt in 1945, just
a year after her friend Oona O'Neill had
married Charlie Chaplin. And then—

By the summer of 1950, Stokowski
was last year's legend, a tarnished victory
and an out-of-fashion Tiffany lampshade
seemingly ready for the attic. Mitropoulos
got the New York Philharmonic post,
promising no changes in personnel. Now
hardly any American orchestra bothered to
offer Stokowski so much as a two-week
guest engagement. When an old friend
phoned from California to ask how he was,
he replied dejectedly. "Oh. I'm just here
existing." He had long since lost his power
base, an orchestra of his own—the conduc-
tor's ultimate source of patronage. But he
had immense tenacity and recuperative
powers. Besides,
in August 1950 came
another crucial event—the birth of his first
son, Stanislas. Then in January 1952 Gloria
bore him a second son, Christopher. That
April Stokowski turned seventy.

It was as though the boys relaunched
the old man. For the first time Stokowski
placed himself in the hands of a real man-
ger, Andrew Schulhof, who proceeded to
rebuild a European career for this ever idio-
syncratic maestro. Overseas his legend was
undimmed: though he had been seen rarely.
his recordings were prized by musicians
and the public alike, and his films were
wildly successful. Now Sir Thomas Bee-
cham, whom Schulhof also managed, invit-
ed Stokowski to lead the Royal Philhar-
monic Orchestra in its 1951 spring tour of
England. as part of the Festival of Britain, a
signal event in the postwar rebirth of the
beleaguered empire. This invitation had

Stokowski never
forgot that Beecham
was his old rival.

irresistible appeal, of course, and Stoko-

ski promptly accepted. His first concert, on
April 27, was at the Central Hall in Bris-
tol—a program of Wagner, Villa-Lobos,
De Falla, and Brahms. The next night, at
the Winter Gardens in Bournemouth, he
presented a program of Berlioz, Ruggles,
Debussy, Stravinsky, and Tchaikovsky. An
admiring and sometimes bemused member
of that concert's audience was his ninety-
two-year-old widowed mother, Annie Mar-
ion Moore Stokowski, brought from a near-
by retirement home to occupy the seat of
honor, front and center.

Stokowski's tour took him to Cardiff,
Birmingham, Leicester, Hanley, Notting-
ham, Bradford, Newcastle, Manchester,
and Oxford—and finally to the original
seat, the Holy of Holies, the Royal Albert
Hall off Kensington Park, across the street
from the Royal College of Music. Stokow-
ski had come home. He had not forgotten.
however, that Beecham was his old rival,
three years his elder, endowed with a mon-
eyed birthright from his father's pills
("Hark the herald angels sing. Beecham's
Pills are just the thing. peace on earth and
mercy mild, two for man and one for
child"). Stokowski, ever quixotic, told the
press at the end of the tour that the Royal
Philharmonic was "the worst orchestra I
have ever conducted." Beecham never
asked him back and never spoke to him
again.

Touring Europe continuously thereaf-
ter, Stokowski saw his star slowly rise. In
1955 he became director of the Houston
Symphony. Then, early in 1960, he made a
sensational return to Philadelphia. The
crowd, packed with his old fans, went wild
for minutes at his first appearance. After
relishing the triumph to the full, Stokie held
up the celebrated hands and. when the prop-
er hush fell, said, "As I was saying . . . .
The tumult broke out afresh, the rebirth
was complete.

A premature end almost came at
Christmas tide, 1960. Playing touch foot-
ball in his New York apartment with his two
small sons, Stokie slipped, fell, and broke a
hip. The hospital stay, at nearly seventy-
nine, was unbearable: it brought him face to
face with the unthinkable. Besides he had a
date six weeks later with the Metropolitan
Opera—another highlight of his incredible
Indian summer. He had the hip fixed with a
platinum replacement and, on crutches.
made his scheduled debut at the Met in a
staggeringly brilliant performance of Pue-
cci's Turandot, with Birgit Nilsson and
Franco Corelli.

In 1962, at the age of eighty—as he
now gallantly but tacitly admitted—he
founded the American Symphony Orches-
tra at Carnegie Hall; the city would have a
second orchestra for the first time since the
1928 merger of the Philharmonic with Wal-
ter Damrosch's New York Symphony ex-
(Continued on page 82)
Professional quality breaks the cassette barrier.

A true professional recorder must do more than deliver superb sound reproduction. It must do so consistently, hour after hour, year after year.

Now, for the first time, you can buy a cassette deck with long-term performance comparable to the finest reel-to-reel recorders. Not surprisingly, it's from Revox.

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Granted, the B710 does offer a long list of convenience features. A precise 4-digit LED counter, for example. A 24-hour timer for programmable start and stop in record or play. Mic/line mixing. Automatic sensing of tape types. Automatic start of oxide cueing with counter reset to zero. And Dolby noise reduction.

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STUDER REVOX
Professional standards in audio components
Muscovite Phoenix: The Taneyev Phenomenon

Pro Arte's bold release doesn't yet insure a full-fledged revival, but it's an auspicious beginning.

Reviewed by R.D. Darrell

IT HAS BEEN a long, hard, often seemingly hopeless struggle to win for the greatest Russian musical polymath, Sergei Taneyev (1856-1915), international—and especially American—recognition comparable to that accorded him in his native country. It began, for me, way back in late 1932, when I commissioned a Music Lovers Guide article, "Neglected and Recorded Russian Music," from friend Benny (more formally, Bernard) Herrmann, then a twenty-two-year-old aspiring conductor and composer, later a master of film music. His section on Taneyev made me—and others, I'm sure—sit up and take notice. Though not a note of the music was then available on disc, Herrmann presciently glimpsed its artistic stature. He did, however, overromanticize the composer himself as personifying "the shining ideal of a musician who lived only for his art and became a high priest of it"—an exaggerated characterization that ignores the man's robust earthiness, seemingly inexhaustible energy, and extraordinary versatility in maintaining a fiercely independent private identity while successfully holding rank in the tsarist-Russian musical establishment.

But probably no American could appreciate then just how remarkable was Taneyev the man as well as the musician. No political radical, he was nevertheless progressive enough to be one of the first Russian proponents of equal rights for women and, in the 1905 revolution, to resign his directorship of the Moscow Conservatory in order to found an independent "people's" music school. And in one of the most tobacco-addicted societies of all time, he was a defiant nonsmoker—much to the annoyance of Rimsky-Korsakov and other colleagues when Taneyev's stern edict, "No smoking here!", blightened their enjoyment of one of their musical Friday evenings ("Les Vendredis") at Mitrofan Petrovitch Beliaev's home.

Musically, Taneyev was a prodigy. Tchaikovsky's prize student, he became a lifelong friendly critic of that composer and a widely successful virtuoso concert pianist. He was also the first Russian composer (and one of the earliest in Europe) to study at first hand the medieval and Renaissance polyphonists. Alone among his compatriot colleagues, he consistently and richly exploited the potentials of counterpoint in his own compositions, and he endeavored to teach the ancient techniques to others via a comprehensive textbook, Invertible Counterpoint in the Strict Style, and a treatise, The Study of Canon, that was published only long after his death, in 1929. And no less remarkable than the number and fame of his pupils ( Scriabin, Rachmaninoff, Medtner, Miaskovsky, Gretchaninoff, et al.) was his ability to teach them so well without imposing his own powerful personality on their diverse individualities, then just developing.

Some of the obstacles to Taneyev's worldwide recognition have been pid-ding—yet by no means insignificant: long uncertainty over the foreign-language spellings (more precisely, transliterations) of his name; confusion with another, much lesser, composer with the same family name. Alexander Taneyev (1850-1918), only recently established to have been a very distant relation of Sergei, not his uncle, as previously thought, and putative personal as well as musical resemblances to Brahms, real enough but negligibly slight.

Other handicaps have been more serious: Perhaps foremost, as neither an overt nationalist nor an unabashed romanticist, Taneyev got lost in the abyss between, on the one hand, the favorites of connoisseurs, the Mighty Handful (Mussorgsky, et al.), and on the other, the darlings of the mass public, Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff. Then too, the popular forms are in relative-ly short supply in Taneyev's output; for many years only one of his four symphonies was generally known to exist, and he wrote no true concertos or tone poems. And until quite recently recordings of his music have been grudgingly sparse and often short-lived—and even those appeared mainly in Russia.

After my own original stimulation, I had to wait many years to experience the music. I didn't have even a single Taneyev entry in my 1936 Gramophone Shop Encyclopedia of Recorded Music. At about that time, or soon thereafter, the first, rather primitive, Soviet recordings were beginning to appear, yet I had to wait for the pioneering American late-'50s releases (mono, of course) of the Op. 28 Suite de concert and Op. 22 Piano Trio. And it was considerably later still that I began a series of Taneyev reviews: the haunting choral...
The Cantilena performance reveals a work of genuine stature.

Cantilena Chamber Players: pianist Frank Glazer, violinist Edna Michell, cellist Marcy Rosen, and violist Philipp Naegle

Works on Melodiya/angel SR 40151 (May 1971) and the superb coupling of the cantata John of Damascus with the Second Symphony on Melodiya/ABC (later MCA) AY 67043 (June 1979)—both of which went out of print far too soon; and the long-legendary opera Oresteia on Deutsche Gramophon 2709 097 (May 1980). Later in 1980 I had to pass up the chance of reviewing the invigorating Fourth Symphony (Arabesque 8074) in favor of writing the disc's jacket notes.

So it's with highly personal as well as professional delight that I greet Pro Arte's bold release of three Taneyev masterpieces that until now have been unrepresented by modern recordings in American (and perhaps even Russian) catalogs.

Since all three are works of the composer's maturity, they are all most welcome. However, highest honors must go to the composer's only piano quartet, his Op. 20 of 1906 (the same year he completed his pedagogical magnum opus, Invertible Counterpoint). In many respects this quartet is an ideal exemplar of Taneyev's sometimes dense but always subtly woven tonal textures, consistently distinctive rhythmic and melodic ideas, and magisterially sure command of his materials. He has been accused (mainly by those only superficially acquainted with his music and those with insatiable cravings for schmaltz) of excessive cerebralism—and certainly only a very powerful intellect could achieve the intricate mosaic craftsmanship and soaring sweep of his formal structures. But he is also capable of poetically eloquent, never tritely formulated, melodism—as in the quartet's memorably haunting second movement (Adagio più tosto largo, with a contrasting Allegro agitato minore section).

Dating from a period when—after many years of string-quartet writing—Taneyev was concentrating on large-scale chamber works for piano and strings, this quartet also offers near-ideal solutions to the tricky problems of its instrumental combination. Surprisingly few really successful piano quartets have ever been written, and this certainly must rank among the very best of them. To be sure, like others by much better-known masters, it has been criticized (Continued on page 80)
ALFONSO EL SABIO: Cantigas de Santa Maria (9).

Esther Lamardier, soprano, portative organ, harp, and vielle. [Michel Bernstein, prod.]
ASTREE AS 59. $13.98 (distributed by AudioSource. 1185 Chess Dr., Foster City, Calif. 94404).

"A que Deus ama, amar devemos." A Virgen, que de Deus Madre. Como pod' a Groriosa: Entre Av' e Eva: Non devemos por maravilla teer: Non sofre Santa Madre: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que por maravilla teer: Non sofre Santa Madre: Que Deus ama. amar devemos: A que Deus ama. amar devemos: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que Deus ama, amar devemos: A que Deus ama, 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Both these new discs are surely right to respect the importance of the voice and its melody: in the lavish versions by the Clementine Consort (Harmonia Mundi France HM 9777/8) the melodies are smoothed out, whereas in the more direct and genuine improvisational style of the Moslems, are simple and affecting.

N.K.

BACH: Concertos for Harpsichords and Strings (6).


BACH: Concertos for Three Harpsichords, S. 1063–64; for Four Harpsichords, S. 1065.8


BACH: Concertos for Harpsichord and Orchestra: No. 3. in D. S. 1054; No. 6. in F. S. 1057; No. 7. in G minor. S. 1058.

Reviewed by:
John Canarina
Scott Cantrell
Kenneth Cooper
R. D. Darrell
Peter G. Davis
Kenneth Farie
Harri Goldsmith
Matthew Gorewitsch
David Hamilton
Dale S. Harris
R. Derrick Henry
Joseph Horowitz
Nicholas Kenyon
Allan Kozinn
Paul Henry Lang
Irving Lowens
Karen Monson
Robert P. Morgan
James R. Oestreich
Conrad L. Osborne
Andrew Porter
Patrick J. Smith
Paul A. Snook
Susan T. Sommer

Prize-winning pianist Paul Schenly in an impressive recording debut—see page 62.

The Cantigas de Santa Maria is one of the most remarkable bodies of monophony to have survived from the medieval world. The songs were assembled at the Spanish court of Alfonso the Wise in the late thirteenth century. The manuscript in which they are preserved is among the most beautiful of all such compilations. There will never be agreement on how to perform them: an entire conference was recently devoted to the subject in New York. Illustrations in the manuscript depict a wide variety of instruments, but the songs are preserved as monophonic lines: How should they be elaborated?

Both these new discs are surely right to respect the importance of the voice and its melody: in the lavish versions by the Clementine Consort (Harmonia Mundi France HM 9777/8) the melodies are smoothed out, whereas in the more direct and genuine improvisational style of the Moslems, are simple and affecting.

N.K.
three- and four-harpichord concertos. Also thoroughly up-to-date, benefits from the particularly refined sound of the English Concert strings. The problem is the rather tight-lipped playing of the harpsichordists, whose approach seems doubly odd in juxtaposition with the extravagant “lozenge dynamics” of the strings. If the strings are sometimes overindulgent, the harpsichord playing is understated to a fault. The solo episodes, in particular, tend to sound like mindless tinkles. Everything is neat and tasteful, of course, but only in a nicely handled cadenza in the slow movement of S. 1063 does one of the harpsichordists “let go,” and that just accentuates the stilted effect elsewhere. Even the somewhat larger-than-life recorded sound (more the result, presumably, of multiple microphones than of digital processing) contributes to a certain mechanical impression.

Turning to Raymond Leppard’s recording of three single-harpichord concertos, one is immediately struck by the creamier string sound. His players are using modern instruments, of course, but he elicits from them remarkable clarity and alertness. Apart from the rather disagreeable nusale heard in the slow movements of S. 1054 and 1058, the harpsichord sound is adequate, and the recorder playing shows real artistry. Indeed, only the hardest-nosed
Critics’ Choice

The most noteworthy releases reviewed recently

BEETHOVEN: Piano Concertos (5)
MAHLER: Symphony No. 5. STRAUSS: Tod und Verklarung. Mitropoulos. NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC 881/2 (2). Nov.

BOLCOM AND MORRIS: Rodgers and Hart Album. RCA ARL 1-4123. March.

CHERUBINI: Symphony in D ROS-SINI: Sinfonia “al Conventello”. GRAND OVERTURE
Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. Gerard Schwarz. cond. von M. Rose. ANDRANTZ 79023. $12.98
(digital recording). Tape: DI 79023. $12.98 (cassette).

An interesting record, this. Cherubini’s music has always remained on the fringe of the repertory. Not so distinctive a composer as to capture the imagination of musicians and the public, at least in our time, he was nevertheless too good to pass into oblivion. Beethoven admired him greatly: so did Ber-
lioz, in spite of a love/hate (or perhaps hate/love, or maybe just hate) relationship that began when Cherubini was the prim and proper director of the Paris Conservatory and Berlioz a wild-eyed, rule breaking student.

The Symphony in D is Cherubini’s only work in that form and one of his few purely orchestral compositions, opera and sacred music were his prime interests. A melodious, thoroughly engaging, somewhat quirky piece, this is a sort of cross between a Haydn and early-Beethoven or Schubert symphony, with a touch of Rossini and even Verdi thrown in. (The Musetta’s delightful trio section anticipates the

“purist” could complain about performances as intelligent and sympathetic as these. They do not quite have the dramatic individuality of Koopman’s approach, but among modern-imstrument performances they are unlikely to be dramatically bet-
tered. The recorded sound is satisfactory if unremarkable.

The Karl Richter disc includes the Tri- ple Concerto in A minor, and “reconstruc-
tions” (by Wilfried Fischer for the New Bach Edition) of the conjectural original versions of two of Bach’s harpsichord concertos. Though the latter have obvious archival interest, the performances are hardly likely to excite much admiration. The playing is competent and presumably well-meaning, yet there is scarcely anything to suggest that the performers are enjoying themselves. This sobriety is particu-
larly disconcerting in all three finales, which plod along with an apparent utter lack of enthusiasm. The Romantic vibrato of flautist Aurele Nicolet and the three violi-
nists is made to take the place of real sym-
pathy and warmth, which are sadly lack-
ing. S.C.
What they are urging you to add to your collection is nothing less than the Complete Bach. On 99 Deutsche Grammophon Archive LPs. Packed into eleven clothbound, silver-embossed collector's boxes. Pressed in Germany by Deutsche Grammophon. All 99 Bach LPs are on DGG's top-of-the-line "Archiv Produktion" label, the standard of quality all around the world.

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CLASSICAL Reviews

Arturo Toscanini performed the work from time to time and gave it an exciting recording, no longer available. If anything, Gerard Schwarz delivers a performance even more driving and more precise than Toscanini’s, though of course, with a smaller orchestra. The fast movements fairly crackle with electricity, yet the lovely Larghetto is imbued with great tenderness and sensitivity. Schwarz relaxes more in the Minuetto than did Toscanini in his scherzo-like treatment. Conversely, Toscanini was less strict than Schwarz with the finale’s curious syncopated cadential passages, allowing the afterbeats a little more time to register.

This late-Cherubini work is nicely complemented by two early-Rossini overtures. Rossini not only used the same overture to accommodate several operas, but used the same theme in more than one overture: the principal theme of the Sinfonia “al Conventello” is identical to that of the overture to Il Signor Bruschino. The “Grand Overture with an obligato part for contrabass” (which means simply that the basses have a part independent of the cellos) may not be Rossini’s, as Philip Gossett’s excellent notes explain, yet both works, if decidedly formative efforts, are ebulliently and insouciantly Rossinian.

As with the Cherubini, Schwarz captures the spirit of these works beautifully, and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra plays brilliantly throughout. The Nonesuch digital recording, with extremely quiet surfaces, is among the best I’ve heard. My only complaint is that the twenty-seven-minute symphony is not confined to one side, leaving room for another overture or two.

By the way, why have even the more familiar Rossini overtures virtually disappeared from our concert life in recent years? They certainly would provide a leavening for some of the stupefyingly ponderous programs turning up these days.


David del Tredici’s series of Alice in Wonderland settings, which date back over more than a decade, has established him as one of the prominent American composers of his generation. The blatantly “popular” character of these works has met with great enthusiasm from concertgoers and considerable skepticism from many of the composer’s professional colleagues. But one thing stands uncontested: During the past
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Misremembering Bayreuth

by David Hamilton

UNDER THE RUBRIC "Memories of Bayreuth," Discocorp has recently published two discs of apparent historical importance. The first (IGI 379) is devoted to Parsifal and promises live-performance excerpts conducted by the legendary Karl Muck (1931), Richard Strauss (1933), and Wilhelm Furtwangler (1937), with singers including Max Lorenz, Herbert Janssen, and Alexander Kipnis; the second (RR 540) professes "representative excerpts" from two Götterdammerung performances at the 1937 festival, with Frida Leider, Lorenz, Jarro Prahaska, and Ludwig Hofmann, Furtwangler conducting. Given the steady rate at which materials from German radio archives continue to surface, the recovery of such potential treasures is not particularly improbable; they should be valuable additions to our knowledge of prewar Wagnerian performance.

Unfortunately, these recordings are nothing less than fakes. A program note with the Parsifal disc does allow as how the opening sequence (dialogue between Parsival and Guntram, leading to the Transformation Music) is actually from a commercial recording by Gottthelf Pistor and Ivar Andeen; it covers up for the patently erroneous dating of Muck in Bayreuth in 1931 (he had left long before, when Toscanini was engaged for the 1930 festival) by ascribing the remainder of the Grael Scene instead to a Berlin Radio performance with the announced soloists, Herbert Janssen (Amfortas) and Deszö Ernster (Titurel).

Well, the Amfortas certainly is Janssen. In fact, this section turns out to be identical with a widely circulated pirate recording from a 1937 Covent Garden performance conducted by Fritz Reiner, in which Robert Easton sang Titurel. And the choral sequence that precedes it matches an excerpt from the 1938 Bayreuth festival, conducted by Franz von Holst (published in BASF HB 22863). I haven't traced the source of the brief choral epilogue, which is added from elsewhere because the Covent Garden recording ends in midphrase.

On Side 2, we find (in wrong order) the Good Friday Scene and the finale. The first of these, supposedly conducted by Strauss, does feature the advertised voices of Kipnis and Lorenz—the bass, indeed, sings with the identical inflections long familiar from his 1927 Bayreuth studio version of the scene (Seraphim 60124, deleted), which was conducted not by Strauss, but by Siegfried Wagner. I count at least nine splices in this scene, as Lorenz' rather hysterical Parsifal (from a source unknown to me) is slotted in to replace Fritz Wolff. Kipnis' original partner; at one point some measures are omitted, presumably because no Lorenz material was available to cover them. From the final scene, we have Amfortas' monologue, again from Janssen at Covent Garden; for Lorenz' peroration and the coda we return to Bayreuth—but not Furtwangler in 1937; this is really a 1933 recording led by Richard Strauss, from the above-mentioned BASF set!

After that, the Götterdammerung stuff isn't hard to unravel. A big chunk of Act II comes primarily from a 1938 Covent Garden performance that featured Leider, the unmistakable Janssen (Gunther), and Wilhelm Schirp (Hagen). Furtwangler conducting. The 1938 Siegfried was Melchior, so all his lines have here been replaced by Lorenz' singing from the 1950 Scala Ring, also conducted by Furtwangler. From Act III, Lorenz' death scene ("Brunnhilde, heilige Braut!") is identical to a 1944 Berlin broadcast led by Robert Heger (on BASF 22-22120), and the preceding Narration doubtless comes from the same broadcast. And Leider's Immolation turns out to be nothing more or less than her famous HMV studio recording (made ten years earlier than the Act II performance and finding her in rather better voice). Since that recording omitted the orchestral epilogue—an improbable cut in something billed as a live Bayreuth performance—the passage has been supplied from elsewhere, even including Hagen's single line as he plunges into the waters of the Rhine. A bearded old man wearing an eyepatch has plunged a rusty razor blade into the trunk of a tree near my front door, as a prize for whoever first identifies the source of this epilogue.

The gray area of unauthorized recordings is particularly vulnerable to misrepresentation, whether accidental or intentional. No doubts about radio tapes and old acetates are not always clearly labeled, leading to optimistic attributions. But these two discs didn't happen by accident—someone spent a good deal of time at the splicing block to fabricate Bayreuth "performances" that matched the cast lists in the history books. Pretty dumb, really: The principal public for such historical curios consists of precisely those specialists most likely to recognize the sources of the compositions! For nonspecialists, the moral of the story is, clearly, caveat emptor.

We contacted Discocorp and suggested that the recordings in question are not what they purport to be. We were told that the situation is explained fully on inserts packaged inside each sleeve and that copies that do not have such inserts—as ours did not—are either test pressings or "defective." We were subsequently sent a copy of the Parsifal notes and "errata," the same ones D.H. describes, and another copy of Götterdammerung, apparently also "defective." —Ed.
Del Tredici possesses unusual technical facility. A favorite device is the presentation of similar material in a kaleidoscopic sequence featuring variable rates of speed, so that, as in a film, one has a sense of ‘fast and slow motion’ measured against some ‘normal’ rate. Similarly filmic is a technique reminiscent of the ‘freeze frame’: Here the main musical argument is suddenly held in suspension for the momentary insertion of a subsidiary commentary. The orchestra is handled with brilliant virtuosity and I recognize an unmistakable personal voice.

This, then, is a work to command attention. Yet although I greatly admire it (and once again defer to its unparalleled technical polish), there are features that I find problematic. Some of the music that accompanies the narrative sections, for example, offers little more than perfunctory punctuation; and the incessant, obsessive repetitions (the entire conception, in fact, is essentially variational) begin to grate with prolonged listening. Moreover, the third of the recorded arias, in which the melodic line has a less distorted — and less developed — form, is something of a letdown, too unabashedly sentimental and saccharine to carry the weight it must assume. (Del Tredici himself refers to it as the ‘heart’ of the piece.) But despite such reservations, I remain ultimately won over by the energy, fine good humor, and wonderful character that are felt throughout. Del Tredici is clearly a composer in love with sound in the good, old-fashioned sense: and I can think of no other composer today who deals with basically traditional materials in such an inventive way. Whatever one may think of Final Alice, it is not simply another tired effort to resurrect our musical past.

Soprano Barbara Hendricks handles the extremely taxing vocal part with impressive assurance and unflagging drive; and Solti leads the Chicago Symphony, which clearly seems to be enjoying what it is playing here, in a vigorous, stylish reading. A complete text is included (a must, as much of it is impossible to follow), and the composer provides a helpful discussion of the music.

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**HINDEMITH** Sonata for Violin and Piano, Op. 25, No 4 — See page 61.

**MARTIN CODAX** Cantigas de Amigo — See Alfonso el Sabio.

**MARTINŮ** The Greek Passion.

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**CAST**

Katerina — Helen Field (s)

This last of Martinů’s ‘fourteen completed operas’ as described in the notes as his ‘first attempt at setting a sustained dramatic text,’ occupied the composer’s last five years — first trying to get the Kazantzakis novel satisfactorily adapted, then trying to get the thing performed. The second objective, not achieved in his lifetime (the premiere took place in Zurich in 1961, nearly two years after he died), actually complicated the first: In 1957, on the basis of Kazantzakis’s expression of interest in the opera for Vienna (he seems to have lost interest later), Martinů had it translated into German and over the next two years, in the course of tinkering with the score, recomposed a
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CLASSICAL	Reviews
good deal of it, with the ironic result that the
"final" version is in German.
And so for this recording, a collaboration
between Supraphon and the Welsh National Opera ("project coordinated and
supervised by Bond Street Music Limited") it was necessary to have Brian Large
revise the libretto to get the definitive musical
text back into English. Because, yes, the
libretto over which the composer agonized so was in English. Indeed, one of the
ways in which he made himself crazy in
writing the libretto was by insisting on
fidelity to the English translation of the
novel, as if it were a primary text.
All of which might lead one to expect
the worst, especially knowing that the com-
poser turned to The Greek Passion only
after deciding that Zorba the Greek couldn't
be dramatized. (Huh?) In fact, the opera
turns out to be quite winning. The religious
faith and basic humanity of the Greek vil-
lagers are depicted with a Mediterranean
lyricism that puts me in mind of Cavalleria
rusticana. (That's a compliment, folks.)
Like Cavalleria, The Greek Passion
begins on Easter Sunday. On this particular
Easter in the village of Lykovrissi, two plot
strands intersect. First, the local priest,
Grigoris, assigns parts for the following
year's Passion play, enjoining the design-
ees to live the virtues of their roles in the
intervening time. This will have odd effects
on all of them, but most of all on the shep-
der Yannakos, for example. finds himself
rack by the peculiar effects of the Passion
solutions for this strange, tormented man.
Nor is Charles Mackerras very responsive
to the conflicts of the score. Its lyrical
elements are nicely realized, but the rest
sounds kind of flat. The Czech choristers,
apted from being unintelligible in English,
tend to a smooth, soft-textured sound that
flattens their emotional scale. When the ref-
ugees are first seen and heard approaching
in Act I, Manolios observes that the sound
is like weeping. But in this performance it
isn't. And shouldn't there be some sort of
confrontation audible in the choral face-offs
of Acts I and IV?
The confrontation between the two
priests does come off. John Tomlinson
manages Grigoris' relatively considerate
high-bass writing adequately and finds
some life in the words, while Geoffrey
Moses—made hardly any impression
as the Steersman of the Welsh National
Tristan—brings some appropriate vocal
pliancy to Fotsis.
Both of the Tristan character tenors are
here too: and Arthur Davies is so good as
Yannakos (he makes the role sound easy,
which it isn't, lying persistently on the
break) that I wish Goodall had used him as
the Sailor rather than the Shepherd. In fact,
though, John Harris, who was barely
present as the Sailor, has some lovely
moments here as Michelis—such as does ex-
Kurwenal Phillip Joll as the wife-beaten
cafe owner Kostandis. Helen Field is an
attractive and interesting Katerina. Rita
Cullis, although less attentive to verbal
intellegibility, also makes a positive impres-
sion as Manolios' fiancée, Lenio.
The recorded sound mirrors both the
lyrical strengths and the inhibitions of the
performance. The booklet, all in English
cause of the refugees. ('Their children are
starving. They lie dead on the hillside. Can
you watch children dying of hunger before
your eyes without rising up and demanding
an account, even from God?') As the ref-
ugees are heard approaching the village,
Grigoris orders Manolios killed, and he is,
by Panais, the designated Judas.

What makes the opera so powerful is
that, at least for three-plus acts, Marinů has
gotten the abstract human issues that so
interest him into dramatic form. Grigoris
isn't presented as a monster, and the belie-
ability of his gut-level xenophobia makes it
all the more monstrous. Among the vil-
lagers, there are half a dozen beautifully drawn
character roles...

It's only in the climactic events of Act
IV—Manolios' public account of his trans-
formation and the great confrontation—
that I feel the characters glazing over in
intellectual abstractions, and this may be a
function of the performance. Although
most of the casting has been shrewdly man-
aged, John Mitchinson is a shadowy
Manolios. He's an honest performer, and
he's far less extended by this role than by
Tristan (to pick a random example), but he
hasn't found either vocal or imaginative
solutions for this strange, tormented man.

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THE VIOLA REALLY CAME INTO ITS OWN as a solo voice in the twentieth century, and this noteworthy recording pulls together the two composers most influential in bringing about that renaissance. Ernest Bloch’s suite for viola and piano won the Berkshire chamber-music competition in 1919 and was expanded to (less effective) orchestral dress the same year; Paul Hindemith’s Sonata for Viola and Piano, Op. 25, No. 4—not to be confused with a better-known Sonata for Viola and Piano, Op. 25, No. 1—dates from 1922.

The Hindemith work, being honored by its first recording ever, merits pride of place in this discussion (even though its brevity relegates it to the role of “filler” for the longer Bloch, which spills over onto the second side of this well-recorded disc). Extraordinary and thorough musician that he was, Hindemith composed sonatas for virtually every instrument in the orchestra and, “it’s said, could play every note he set to paper. But he was first and foremost a violist—one of the outstanding practitioners of that elusive and dusky-toned instrument, which he wielded in the Rebner Quartet and, after 1921, in the now legendary Amar-Hindemith foursome. His performing style is preserved on many phonorecordings of the Amar-Hindemith Quartet and the short-lived string trio in which he joined violinist Shzmony Goldberg and cellist Emanuel Feuermann, as well as on numerous solo discs recorded for Columbia before World War II. As a performer, he eschewed beauty of tone and—if that phonographic legacy is a reliable index—his playing sometimes veered to downright splinterly astringency. It would be convenient to attribute the lack of suavity to limited practice time in a career divided between composition and performance, but I think, rather, that Hindemith was one of those re-creative musicians who regarded surface polish as superfluous, if not actually detrimental. (Others so minded were Szigeti, Adolf Busch, Casals, and Klemperer.) As support, I cite the notation, “tonal beauty is irrelevant,” in the third movement of Hindemith’s Sonata for Unaccompanied Viola, Op. 25, No. 1.

The unfamiliarity of the newly recorded sonata is easily explained. It was published only in 1976. Apparently Hindemith’s publisher, Schott, withheld the score (to help sales of the unaccompanied work and the earlier Sonata for Viola and Piano, Op. 11, No. 4?) and then simply forgot about it until prodded by that tireless Hindemith champion, violist Walter Trampler. Trampler has been successfully performing the work, and it wouldn’t surprise me if he, too, records it one of these days.

This is a pithy, concentrated work, less effusively lyrical than Op. 11, No. 4. It has several curious features: For one, its first thirty-five bars are scored for piano alone; for another, none of its three movements has a formal meter—although the outer ones are intensely rhythmic in feeling. The concise slow movement, only thirty-nine bars long, is tenderly expressive, but parts of the energetic finale suggest the slashing energy of Bartók’s Third and Fourth String Quartets. The writing for both instruments is unexpectedly spare: the viola displays only a few scattered double- or triple-stops and the piano frequently relies on ostinatos created by reiterated rhythmic figurations or by repeated chords alternating between right and left hand. In short, the piece represents Hindemith at his best, although it proves less euphoric than the (to me) irresistible Op. 11, No. 4, and less grand in scope than the later 1939 Sonata, in the familiar style of Noli me tangere and Mathis der Maler.

As a rule, I have an aversion for works in a rambling cyclic mold, such as the Chausson concerto for violin, piano, and string quartet and the Franck piano quintet. Yet Bloch’s 1919 Suite has always been a happy exception. At least in the version for viola and piano, its billowing repetitiveness is transcended by a fierce primitivism and a welcome variety of textural detail. Bloch uses ponticello and col legno effects to good advantage in his moderately difficult (but, I think, not terrifying) viola writing, and the piano technique ranges from Bartókian expressionism (in the Allegro irontico second movement) to a compendium of Rachmaninoff and Ravel (in the Molto vivo finale). There is also a smattering of Griffes and Respighi, especially in the third and fourth movements. With all the trompetando effects, the work seems to lend itself naturally to orchestration; yet in that later version, glitter and detail are lost, and the viola, pitted against a mere backdrop of nebulous color, finds itself unchallenged.

Both performances here are admirable. The Hindemith is particularly ardent and muscular, with a modicum of lyric intensity as welcome counterbalance. My one reservation in the Bloch is pianist Katherine Collier’s reticence and lack of savagery in some of the more motoric, demonic episodes. But for pacing and relationship between sections, this performance is at least as good as—and usually better than—the one by William Primrose and David Stimmer, long deleted. Yitzak Schotten is a good technician, with a tenorish rather than alto sound; he suggests the quasi-oriental colors of Bloch and the echt-deutsch neo-classicism of Hindemith, infusing both with the glow of Slavic temperament.

Apart from some distracting pre-echo in the Bloch, CRI’s processing is excellent. Every viola fancier will want this disc.
MOZART: Operatic Arias (9).  


Roraud Hansmann, according to the liner notes, has performed widely in Europe for close to two decades. Here, her name will ring a bell, if at all, with owners of recordings by the Vienna Concentus Musicus. For Nikolaus Harnoncourt, she sang six key parts in the operas of Monteverdi (La Musica and Euridice in Orfeo, Telefunken 36.35020, Amore and Minerva in II Ritorno d’Ulisse in patria, 46.35024; and Virtù and Drusilla in L’Incoronazione di Poppea, 56.35247) as well as the first-soprano part in Bach’s Mass in B minor (Telefunken 56.35024). Jürgen Jurgens used her, too, as soprano soloist in the Monteverdi Vesper della beatat virgine (deleted). Those who remember Hansmann in her chaste Monteverdian masks will easily summon to mind a light, airy instrument that seemed to resipre the cool, clear breath of the emperean.

Her limpid tone and poised phrases in the most expansive cantabile and the most florid divisions, staccato or legato, sound as pleasingly now as before. Only antiquarians will claim much prior acquaintance with the repertory she investigates here (excepting “L’amoré, saro costante,” from Il Re pastore); it is not Mozart’s most distinctive or memorable work. But even where he hews closest to eighteenth-century lingua franca (represented here in heroic, soulful, winsome, and tragic variants), his compositions have an uncommon bloom. So do Hansmann’s performances.

There are one or two dim spots. The keyed-up recitative “Ferna, aspetta, ove vai?” (preceding the aria “Infelici affetti miei” from Ascanio in Alba) lacks a certain edge of fire; and in “Miserà, dove son!” (K. 369), too, the dramatic presence is a shade pallid. All the rest is pure gold. The coquetry in “Senti ‘l eco” (from La Finta semplice) has charm and sparkle that verve—does the music—most appealingly on sentimentality without ever crossing the line. In “Aer tranquillo e di sereni,” written for the male soprano Aminta of Il Re pastore. Hansmann finds stirring notes of vigor and youthful manly grace; and her beautiful rhythmic articulation of chromatic cadences artfully underscores the “accessins” in the harmony.

Marinus Voorberg, conducting the Vienna Symphonia, displays—through lucid lines, transparent textures, and just proportions, both within a phrase and from passage to passage and section to section—the same kind of virtues and accomplishments as his splendid soloist. The interplay between the voice and the instrumentalists is everywhere a joy—nowhere more so than in the familiar “L’amoré”; concertmaster Paul Trimmel’s dialogue with the soprano is the very model of affectionate musicianship. But this is a recording to savour even more for its discoveries in the obscurer literature.


Though thirty-three-year-old American pianist Paul Schenly has appeared with the Chicago Symphony, the Cleveland Orchestra, and the Los Angeles and New York Philharmonics, and though he won the Avery Fisher Prize fully eight years ago, this commanding performance of Pictures at an Exhibition is his debut recording. In an album note, he stresses the gritty nationalism of the piece. His performance is weighty, serious, never impish or cavalier. Beyond the imposing largesse of the ground passage to passage and section to section—its previous Trout recording (Vox 510890) enlisted the services of Rolf Rheinhardt. The group’s warm-toned, affectionate, yet disciplined string playing matches the warm solidity of Sawallisch’s piano, and apart from one incongruous touch—a slowing for the third-movement trio (albeit far less obtrusive than that on the well-known Curzon Vienna Octet recording, London CS 6090)—this is a thoroughly bucolic account, notable more for line than for picky detail. With Eurodisc’s superb pressing and fine engineering, this is decidedly a performance to live with.

Yet the Angel performance, if not necessarily superior, makes a more sensational first impression. Here the emphasis is on contrast and ringing accents. Characteristically, the players—Sviatoslav Richter, in particular—lean toward terse, punchy extremes, eschewing crescendos in favor of subito fortes. (The famous downward piano runs in the last movement are done without the implicit dynamic growth, much the way Klemperer handled a similar spot in the Eroica’s finale.) The contrasty character also extends to temps: the outer move-
ments are pretty fast (if a shade more deliberate than Sawallisch/Endres), and the second movement verges on adagio but flows attractively nonetheless. And where the Eurodisc reproduction is all warmth, Angel's digital recording favors a sharper, colder, more crystalline and assertive sonority; Richter's keyboard attack, in particular, recalls the prismatic bite of Peter Serkin's two recordings, especially the older Vanguard edition (VSD 71145).

This is my first hearing of the Borodin Quartet since its reorganization (necessitated by first-violinist Rostislav Dubinsky's departure for America); although the group seems a trifle unpolished by former standards, its partnership is admirable. Georg Hortnagel, of course, is the absolute champ when it comes to recording this work, leaving even our own Julius Levine (with five versions to his credit) panting in the rear.

Both accounts observe the first-movement repeat. The Richter/Borodin also takes the one in the finale. What a boon this practice would be for a typical New York audience: It could interrupt the last movement twice with premature applause! H.G.


Recitals and Miscellany

THE PLAY OF ST. NICHOLAS.

New York Ensemble for Early Music, Frederick Renz, dir. [Frederick J. Bashour, prod.] MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 824437, $15.50 ($9.90 to members) (two discs, manual sequence). Tape: MHC 226437, $15.50 ($9.90 to members) (two cassettes). (Add $1.60 for shipping; Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Rd., Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724.)

The Ensemble for Early Music's presentation of The Play of St. Nicholas is clearly an attempt to follow in the tradition established by the New York Pro Musica's pathbreaking and wildly popular Play of Daniel and Play of Herod. The trouble is, there's nothing else quite like the Daniel play in the medieval repertory. Herod was stitched together out of two liturgical dramas, and this Nicholas presentation is a composite of four plays from the famous Fleury playbook, with added pieces to introduce each side. Still, each play is presented with commendable faithfulness, and the record lis-

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CLASSICAL Reviews

tener can choose to ration himself to one play at a time.

Argument has raged over the source of these dramas: it now seems clear that their relationship to the liturgy was loose, but that they were perhaps performed before or as an interpolation during services. (They all end with some chant—the Te Deum or a Mass Introit, for example—that implies that the liturgy would follow or continue at that point.) This argument is not irrelevant for performers, because it raises the question of how far these plays, preserved in measured notation, should sound like liturgical chant. Richard Hoppin, in his fine survey Medieval Music (Norton), contends that those with liturgically based texts should be performed like plainsong; performers have tended to disagree.

Here, Frederick Renz interprets the music metrically. And he has added instruments that mainly act as drones and occasionally provide expressive commentary. About the former use, there can be little argument; but the addition of something like bongos to liven up the third play with syncopated rhythms and a rattle whirling in the fourth is jarring. At the moment of greatest grief in “The Icon of St. Nicholas,” the vocal lines are bent and a stringed instrument emits scraped dissonances and then pure noise. (There is also a regrettably wild estampie to introduce this play.)

Fortunately, these excesses are the exception, appearing mainly in those plays that use the same melody almost throughout, presumably in a misguided effort to avoid boredom. Where there is more inherent variety, especially in the first play, “The Son of Getron,” the ensemble projects the music with dignity, clarity and restraint; the singers, firm and strong, make much of the Latin texts (provided in the booklet, with full translations). It’s a bit much to claim, as Sterne did in his edition of this play, that it is “an early experiment with the Wagnerian leitmotiv,” but its use of its few melodies is certainly impressive and moving.

Each play is introduced by a professional; the boys of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine sing nicely in “Psallat chorus” before the second (though I like less their organum harmonizations later in that play), and three tenors sing a good, intimate carol, “Dixi som,” before the third. All the performances are fine, but special praise should go to the countertenors who sing the three daughters in the second play with deceptive purity, to the treble Jason Wilbourne in the final motet and play, and to Wilbur Pauley, who plays St. Nicholas with dignity throughout. The instrumentalists always seem to know what they should be doing, which is remarkable. Oddly, the Te Deum that closes the last play is treated ascetically, in free rhythm; yet here, if anywhere, organ and percussion would have joined the singers to bring the play to a climax.
Critiques of new cassette and open-reel releases

by R. D. Darrell

The Tape Deck

As It Was . . .

... In czarist Russia. Not only can the recording medium revive the masterpieces of the past, it can evoke the very locales and times of their birth, to revelatory effect. Compared with the relatively mild interest, for example, of reading (in Rimsky-Korsakov's autobiography, say) about Belaiev's tabous musical Friday evenings in late-nineteenth-century St. Petersburg, how much more vividly real it is to participate—however belatedly and vicariously—in the actual music-making that took place then. Eighteen mostly short works for string quartet, published by Belaiev under the rubric Les Vendredis, have now been recorded, for the first time as an entire series, by the deftly skilled Reger Quartet (Turnabout CT 7015, two cassettes, $11.98). And if a few of these works (like Glazunov's Five Nocturnes) are familiar, others (like a strong Allegro written by Rimsky for a collaborative venture) aren't. How many works have you heard by Artsibushev, Blumenfeld, D'Osten-Sachen, Kopilov, or Sokolov?

Then, to move from informal home entertainment to a full-dress evening at the theater, what could better embody the full splendors of the ballet in the same time and city, than Tchaikovsky's Sleeping Beauty? Relatively neglected nowadays—or known only in bits and pieces or in nonauthentic Slavic accounts—it is a joy to hear complete in an authoritatively balletic reading, glowingly recorded, by Gennady Rozhdestvensky and the BBC Symphony Orchestra (Eurodisc Prestige Box 500 575, three cassettes, $29.94).

... In Bachian Cothen and Leipzig. Could there ever have been a household more permeated by music than Bach's? Some of the pieces that served for the constant harpsichord, clavichord, and singing practice. dutifully written down in the constant harpsichord, clavichord, and baritone Benjamin Luxon (Nonesuch AAG Music (200 Varick St., New York, N.Y. 10014)) feature folk and pop as well as tonalian. But in Ravel's Hebraic and Greek song settings, these performers lack the idiomatic reading of the Mozart horn concertos, with its excessive mannerisms.

Nevertheless, there are also some brand-new Schubert recordings by pianist Richard Goode, which will be treated in a separate review next month.

... And budget-priced. Coming belatedly to the CBS "Great Performances" series (price at dealer's option). I'll pass over innumerable Bernstein best-sellers in favor of memorable Szell/Cleveland masterpieces: the piquantly idiomatic 1963 Czech program featuring Smetana's "Moldau" and Dvorák's Carnival Overture (MYT 36716) and the resplendently dramatic 1969 Wagner Ring showpiece excerpts (MYT 36715)—both still mightily impressive sonically as well as musically. But the once immensely popular 1960 Ormandy/Philadelphia recording of Ravel's Carmina burana (MYT F 37217) leaves me as unconvinced as ever to its excessive mannerisms.

I still find inexhaustible delights in three Angel Red Line reissues ($6.49 each): Sir Thomas Beecham's 1958 performance of Rimsky-Korsakov's Scheherazade and recorded in true stereo (4RL 32027); the distinctive Alan Civil readings of the Mozart horn concertos, with Otto Klemperer conducting, c. 1962 (4RL 32028); and the nineteen Chopin waltzes by pianist Agustin Anievas (4RL 42006). Welcome, too, is a belated taping of the 1974 Tennert/Kempe performance of Strauss's Don Quixote (Seraphim 4XG 65053, $5.98), even without the Rosenkavalier Waltzes that fill out the disc.

Current Philips/B-C reels feature an even more impressive, more convenient double-play edition of Marriner's superb Haydn Creation, hailed last December in its three-cassette edition ($7.69, double-play, $25).

The new Euroclass cassette line also features real-time superchrome duplications (and a choice of Dolby B or C encodings) in its Desmar Sound Research Series limited editions ($17.98 each, plus $1.50 for shipping, from Euroclass Record Distributors, Ltd., 155 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10013). The deluxe reissues are the famous 1976 "Stokowski String Sound" program of Dvorák, Purcell, and Vaughan Williams (SRB 5011), and the 1977 recital of works by Debussy, Honegger, Poolene, and Saint-Saëns that was so instrumental in establishing clarinetist Richard Stoltzman's fame (SRB 5014).
At the old A&R studios in 1977: "We had to be able to do anything and everything—fast!"

The Golden Ears of Phil Ramone

The story behind the music industry's most revered producer, engineer, innovator, and educator.

by Crispin Cioe

A mantle lined with Grammy awards for producing everything from the original Broadway cast album of Promises, Promises to Billy Joel's million-selling "52nd Street." A client roster that ranges from Dionne Warwick to Paul Simon, from Joel to Barbra Streisand and Paul McCartney. There's no question that, as a producer/engineer, Phil Ramone's reputation is as solid as they come in the entertainment business. But among musicians, that reputation is based on far more than a stunning track record. As Joel himself has said, "All these great musicians love Phil. He can pick up the phone and get anybody to come down to the studio. He doesn't come off like, 'I'm the producer and we're going to do it my way.' He's willing to let anything happen in that studio."

The setting for our interview was the control room at New York's Soundmixers studio, where Ramone was mixing the live recording of last summer's Simon and Garfunkel reunion concert in Central Park. On the other side of the glass sat Joel at the piano. As our talk progressed, Simon showed up and joined Joel in the studio, at first listening and then occasionally singing along. At one point, Paul came into the control room and told Phil, "We might try writing something—it felt great working together just then..."

When I had bumped into Joel earlier, he told me he was there "to play some new tunes for Phil." Clearly, these two highly successful singer/songwriters valued Ramone's input a great deal.

"Phil Ramone was a great innovator in the '60s and '70s," says one New York-based engineer, "as well as a total taskmaster in training young kids to become great future engineers. And yet, despite all his overwhelming technical and musical knowledge, he can still just listen and let his instincts take over." Those instincts no doubt come from a very early start as a musician. Ramone began violin lessons at the age of three and was performing as a soloist by age seven. Though he eventually went on to become a Gershwin scholar at Juilliard by the time he was in high school, he had developed an interest in electronic sounds and, by extension, recordings. When he was a teenager, he landed his first job as a combination gofer, janitor, and assistant at a now defunct demo studio on 53rd Street. Several years later, in 1960, he and partner Jack Arnold opened A&R Recording on 48th Street in Manhattan. They have since moved the studio to a much larger location on Seventh Avenue (formerly CBS Records' Studio A), and A&R is now among the country's largest and busiest recording facilities.

Backbeat: After all those years of intense
The fact is, studio players aren't necessarily right for every project.

delayed sound. I also experimented constantly with electronically produced echo, slowing down and speeding up tape for different phasing effects, or using more than one echo chamber when everybody else was using just one. One effect I used quite a bit—on many of the Bacharach sessions with Dionne Warwick and several Leslie Gore dates—was achieved by creating a delay between the tape machine heads before the sound entered the echo chambers. I had heard something like this on a French comedy album from the '50s, but it hadn't been done here commercially, to my knowledge.

Today I use all kinds of echo freely, but I maintain strict control over it. I've also been working very closely with the people who make the Lexicon transistorized delay units. We have on paper and in the computer the exact sounds we created with the old tube-driven EMT echo chambers at A&R. There was a specific style involved with tuning those old chambers—we used to lock them up after sessions so no one could change the settings.

Backbeat: Many of the engineers who apprenticed under you at A&R have gone on to distinguished careers. What kinds of things did you teach them? I can think of one in particular who says you were quite the taskmaster.

Ramone: I was tough on engineers, but I was tough on me, too. The first rule was that there was never to be an attitude of emergency in the studio; it should never look like there's a problem. People who worked for me had to be well prepared, because the studio experience is like going into an operating room.

I demanded that engineers be able to edit tape effectively. Standards of equipment care were stringent. A Neumann U-47 microphone not only has to be handled safely—foam rubber on the boom stand, etc.—but it has to be covered at night rather than boxed, since the more you untangle and disconnect the mike, the more wear and tear on the parts.

A mistake in level of 1 dB on a tape was not acceptable to me, even though the generally accepted tolerance is within 2 dB. If I didn't hear exactly the high end coming back on the tape that I was putting in, then I was on somebody's case to find out why. Of course, some of them never survived. But I never asked them to do anything that I didn't do. If their job was to do a rhythm-section setup, then they just had to do it better than anyone else, that's all.

Backbeat: When you were working strictly as an engineer/studio owner, as opposed to a producer, how involved did you get with the music and the musicians?

Ramone: I learned early on that the ability to communicate and get along with players was an absolute essential. Believe me, if a drummer didn't want to be your friend on one of those big-band live dates in the '60s, the session was finished. If he had it in for the engineer, he could just ride on the cymbals and wipe out all the strings; in those days, you couldn't record the rhythm section and then overdub the strings separately—it just wasn't done.

Rapport with musicians was—iscrucial, and we worked hard to establish it. I remember once we did a live album date for Diahan Carroll and her big band on Atlantic. In preparation we built what was really the first good-looking vocal booth that had some real sound in it. I designed it for her and later expanded it to accommodate groups of back-up vocalists—they hated getting stuck in a hole where they couldn't see the lead singer. I guess I've just always been sensitive to what players have to go through in order to hear and play comfortably.

In retrospect, I don't think a lot of engineers in those days had the fun I did, because they got too inside themselves. They had the attitude of, "I have isolation and I have control and I can redo this any way I want." What I did was to seek out new experiences in remote recording and unusual musical situations, to broaden my scope. I also rode a motorbike a lot in those days. In a sense, the thrill and danger I encountered gave me the feeling and knowledge that I could eventually be a producer.

In 1964, Ramone became the first independent engineer to win a Grammy award for engineering excellence on the classic "Getz/Gilberto" LP and its single Girl from Ipanema. It was also around this time that he served as special consultant to the White House, supervising sound production for various galas and special concerts during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. In addition to originating the sound-recording curriculum at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, he served as sound consultant for several Broadway productions, including Hair and The Magic Show. But as the engineering credits continued to roll in, bringing such clients to A&R as Bacharach, Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, and Paul McCartney (Ramone engineered a single from his first solo LP), his desire to be a producer only increased.

Backbeat: How did your experiences as an engineer prepare you for production work?

Ramone: First of all, throughout my career as an engineer I did everything. I never

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Jones and Mel Lewis. some jazz albums, including one with Thad produce some of the tracks. And I produced composer John Barry. and he asked me to the soundtrack of Midnight Cowboy with produce as well. Business values were different—not better-just different and a light-produce as well. Business values were different—not better-just different and a light-produce as well. Business values were different—not better-just different and a light-produce as well. Business values were different—not better-just different and a light-produce as well. Business values were different—not better-just different and a light-produce as well. Business values were different—not better-just different and a light-produce as well. Business values were different—not better-just different and a light-produce as well. Business values were different—not better-just different and a light-produce as well. Business values were different—not better-just different and a light-produce as well. Business values were different—not better-just different and a light. Working with people like Bacharach, I began to learn how songwriters communicate and how to translate their ideas into reality. I found that they talked in a hieroglyphic I could easily understand. so things went smoothly. Jeffer and Stoller had what I call “editorial minds” in the studio; they’d think and edit as they recorded, figuring out where to take a song before it was done, knowing which eight bars were great, which to recut, and so on. Ramone: Not at all—it was actually quite difficult. Record companies would say, “Well this producer already has a great relationship with that up-and-coming artist, and you’re just an engineer …” even though I too had good relationships with plenty of up-and-coming artists. In a way, though, I had some of my own reservations about producing. I was part owner of a studio, and back then I just didn’t feel it would have been ethical to produce as well. Business values were different—not better—just different and a little crazy, like everything else in those days. I mean, I had a crewcut and wore a tie every day. so what can I tell you? Backbeat: How did you first hook up with Paul Simon? Ramone: He asked me to produce one cut on his first solo LP, “There Goes Rhythm Simon”. Roy Halee was doing the rest of the record. When Halee was unavailable to produce the follow-up, “Still Crazy after All These Years” [1974], Paul asked me to join him as coproducer. He had done some very fine rhythm sessions for “Rhythm Simon” in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, but he was open to new ideas and to other approaches as well. I brought in a bunch of players I’d originally met through my friend Bob James. musicians who had worked a lot on jazz and funk dates for Creed Taylor’s CTI label. At that time, in the early 70s, players like drummer Steve Gadd weren’t well-known. Pianist Richard Tee was known in certain r&b circles, from his work with Aretha Franklin. But along with me as a producer, that whole group of musicians was more like the second-line studio scene—we had our own, more elusive sounds. Paul has a great respect for players, so I began to put him in situations where he could react to their modern r&b and pop playing over a period of time. The musical rapport that resulted between Paul and Richard Tee [who was featured in Simon’s film, One Trick Pony] isn’t really based on any formal musical or studio thing; it was just a chemistry that worked. On the other hand, sometimes I’ve brought in highly regarded, wonderful-sounding players who were, for one reason or another, totally in awe of Paul, and they couldn’t play the way I expected them to. Backbeat: Studio players who know you say that putting unexpected combinations of musicians together and getting the best out of them is one of your fortes. Ramone: I guess I’ve always had a deep appreciation of talent and I’ve always found it interesting to crossbreed a lot of good musicians on sessions. That’s just become my approach. At a certain level, the mutual respect is so high that it’s not an all-star kind of thing—it’s more like a good mix of people at a party. That’s why, for instance, I used alto-sax jazz great Phil Woods for the solo on Billy’s Just the Way You Are, even though it was basically a rock and roll record. I was called in to help with Phoebe Snow’s first album, a project that had already been started in California. What I did was to bring in people like percussionist Ralph Macdonald to play with musicians Phoebe knew and had worked with. Again, I wanted to create a mixture, so I called Zoot Sims—who I’d first met years before through Quincy Jones and Neal Heff— for the tenor sax solo on Poetry Man. Backbeat: You’ve been credited with turning Joel’s career around. He had released four albums before you produced “The Stranger” and none of them, save “Piano Man,” went anywhere. He says it’s largely because you let him use his own band, as opposed to the studio players that other producers had insisted he use. Ramone: I first met and heard Billy and the band in 1976, and what was there live was what caught me immediately. The band was spunky, they didn’t have any fears about speaking up with their ideas and just playing hard. But they also knew what the focus was. I’d heard Billy’s other records and didn’t see or hear any relationship to what was really happening. The fact is, studio players aren’t necessarily right for every project; a drummer who can’t read music may have a better instinct for the music at hand. If a soloist takes three hours to get what I want musically, so what? It’s okay by me. In these days of tight budgets, it just means that technically I’ve got to be more efficient to give myself more room in the right areas. Backbeat: Had you worked with self-contained groups before? Ramone: Yes—rather unsuccessfully, because I didn’t have the ultimate control. I’d also made the mistake of working with all-star bands that would break up over artistic differences or money before the record had ever been released. I had paid my dues with superstar groups, too. I engineered for Chicago with Jim Guercio, and then years later I produced the group. In all those experiences, I learned that to some extent you have to be a dictator—not a role I enjoy, by the way—so you don’t have eight people running around with eight different ideas about what to do. There just has to be some-one to turn to for a focus. Backbeat: How would you describe your basic production approach? Ramone: Well, in terms of ensemble rhythm-section playing, one of my big functions is to keep the ball rolling, to spot the studio-born “accidents” that sound
The studio experience is like going into an operating room.

good and encourage them. When we were recording Just the Way You Are, for instance, Hugh McCracken instinctively went into this rhythm-guitar thing—"ba-danga, ba-danga"—and it was perfect. So we built the fade around that riff. The figure itself came out of a drum pattern that we'd been kicking around, and ultimately out of the fact that those musicians felt free to give and take ideas.

I have a very important habit, which I find musicians respect. I'll say something like, "I feel this song is more piano-oriented," or, "I think this song is more guitar-oriented." Hugh McCracken instinctively likes going into risks that sometimes don't work out, those things that I believe. Even though I take a lot of risks, I don't mind, because it worries me too much. I can't make a record think for me, of course. It's the lazy way. I let him in on a lot of these things. Billy and I became friends. I let him in on a lot of these things. I let him in on a lot of these things.

Backbeat: Joel's recent "Songs in the Attic" was pop music's first live digital album. To quote you in the liner notes: "As Billy and I became friends, I let him in on a secret—someday I hoped we could use his band to re-record his early material. . . . I figured it would never happen 'til we were rocking chairs." Why did you decide to do it now?

Ramone: It just turned out to be the best time. The band was hot. They were peaking in a certain way, and they were the band that was just right. You can't really poll out an album like that. You just take your chances and do it. Billy has a real concept about himself, as I do, which is that there is no formula. You give life to what you're writing now, and you do it in a way that you feel it. He's the writer, and what I do is speak to what the song deserves, not think about what's cute or smart or what worked before. We couldn't have re-cut those songs in the studio because they'd been competing with the original records.

Backbeat: What was the process?

Ramone: We recorded digitally, all the way, in small rooms, clubs, and big concert halls. Then we transferred back to analog at the end of the taping phase because we couldn't get the digital equipment for the amount of time we needed it. And frankly, the rental prices were insane. Ultimately, competition and availability may bring the price of digital recording down, but now it's just out of reach.

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Chubby Checker: somebody found the fountain of youth

Chubby Checker: The Change Has Come
Evan Pace, producer. MCA 5291

Chubby Checker must have stumbled across the same fountain of youth that fellow Sixties rockers Gary U.S. Bonds and Del Shannon have been sipping from of late. Like his hit happy colleagues of yesteryear, Checker has made a “comeback” album charged with more fire and fervor than most contemporary outfits could ever come up with. Twenty-two years after The Twist set a nation of teenagers to gyrating and shimmying as if there was no tomorrow, Checker’s voice booms with easy authority. “The Change Has Come” shines like the polished chrome on a brand new automobile.

He kicks things off with Joe Russo’s Running, a glorious Springsteen ripoff if ever there was one. At one point, after a wailing Clarence Clemons-like sax solo, Checker sings: “I’m running, twisting, and turning on backstreets/Haunting the bars where we would meet/The songs keep calling her name.” If Running isn’t a hit, then truly there is no justice in this world. Producer Evan Pace proves he’s no slouch either, particularly when it comes to songwriting: His surging Harder Than Diamond. I’ve Got Love (That’s Hard to Find), and the reggae-shaded ballad Your Love are anything but filler, especially Checker’s vigorous, roiling clutches.

Taking another cue from Bonds and Shannon, Checker harks back to the British invasion and grabs the Rolling Stones’ Under My Thumb, spitting out Jagger and Richards’ nasty lyrics over some spry, guitar-infused rhythms. He closes this auspicious ten-track collection with T-82, a late-model revamp of his classic 1960 smash. Almost a quarter of a century later, The Twist doesn’t sound stale in the slightest, nor does its singer.

-JEAN W. REA

Jessi Colter: Ridin’ Shotgun
Randy Scruggs & Waylon Jennings, producers. Capitol ST 12185

Sultry yet honey, rebellious yet conservative. Jessi Colter gives off such ambivalent signals that it’s no wonder she hasn’t been able to gain a firm foothold in country music. She’s an “outlaw” only by association, her music is pleasant but uncommanding, and in six albums, no strong personality or point of view has emerged to set her apart from the pack. Newcomers like Rosanne Cash and Lacy J. Dalton have outflanked her on country’s left, the right is sewn up by the established country queens, and Colter keeps rolling down the middle, every once in a while writing a perceptive song such as What’s Happened to Blue Eyes.

Last year’s duet album with husband Waylon Jennings, “Leather and Lace,” contained a handful of good Colter originals and some performances that found her in appealingly toughened-up territory. So the expectations for her new solo L.P. “Ridin’ Shotgun,” were higher than usual. But it’s a wobbly affair. There’s some warmth on the record, and sincerity, but nothing to grab you by the belt loops. Producers Jennings and Randy Scruggs show good intentions in sticking to basic tracks and doing without much instrumental embellishment. In practice, however, Colter’s is one of those voices that needs cushioning. It falls at odd moments, and she really can’t punch out on the songs that require vocal assertiveness.

The more straightforward the sentiments and the tunes, the more believable she sounds. Scruggs’s Nobody Else like You and her own Ain’t Makin’ No Headlines (Here Without You) are attractive ballads: on the single Holdin’ On, she projects a catch-in-the-throat sexiness reminiscent of Maria Muldaur. But most of “Ridin’ Shotgun” is either a strain on her range (both versions of the title song and Jennings’ Shine) or a strain on the listener’s tolerance for treacle. Colter’s daughter Jennifer (whose father is twangy guitarist Duane Eddy) sings colead on a song named after her; she tells mommy and daddy, as she enters the big, bad world, that she’s gonna be fine. Wings of My Victory and A Fallen Star, two outside compositions, are filled with inspirational and romantic banalities, respectively, and all you need to know about Hard Times and Sno-Cone is that Hard Times and Sno-Cone are the names of the song’s characters. Notions that dopey are rare these days, even in country music. Thank goodness.

-MITCHELL COHEN
The storyline of Tony Richardson's first major film in years is built around the clash between American and Mexican cultures along the southwestern border. As such, it provides Ry Cooder with a scoring challenge even more suited to his eclectic array of styles than "The Long Riders," the stunning soundtrack he and his associates produced last year. Root styles both American (Texas swing, blues-drenched rock, and down-home country) and Latin (Norteño conjunto stylings and Spanish guitar fantasies) are represented independently and as subtle hybrids that underline the interaction of the two cultures.

Cooder functions here principally as arranger, producer, writer, and instrumentalist. He minimizes his own singing to focus on a provocative cast of vocalists that includes Freddy Fender, Sam ("The Sham!") Samudio, John Hiatt, Jim Dickinson, and Brenda Patterson. Among them, they cover a rich spectrum of moods and genres. Fender's melancholy vocal on the evocative Across the Borderline sums up the film's themes with heartbreaking economy, while Hiatt's two rock performances, Too Late and Skin Game, take full advantage of the singer's vivid, menacing style. Skin Game is particularly riveting, a meeting ground between Cooder's spicy instrumental portrait of the modern American barrio and Hiatt's sneering lyrics. Cooder's stinging electric bottleneck guitar solos give the track a sense of barely controlled tension that points up the threat of violence explicit in the lyrics.

Samudio shelves his '60s rasp to turn in a surprisingly traditional Spanish rendition of No Quiero, a lambent ballad.
BACKBEAT

Reviews

Michael Franks: Objects of Desire
Michael Colina & Ray Bardani, producers. Warner Bros. BSK 3648

Michael Franks is a classic pop songwriter in jazz milieu, his love of hip argot and sneaky harmonic turns only embellishing his dedication to the verse-chorus-bride framework, not masking it. His alternately wry and wistful point of view and preference for affable if harried characterizations sound more and more like Cole Porter updated for the ’80s. Underneath the slick playing and the coy references to the day, Franks is still an unreconstructed romantic.

It’s that romantic slant that both enlivens and restricts Franks’s range as writer. At his best, he can etch dryly funny portraits of humankind’s oldest conflict as it undergoes cultural reappraisal. Sexual role reversal (Ladies’ Night, which both celebrates and critiques liberated singles life), fear of commitment (No-Drop Love), and the scary bottom line of a single sexual standard (Jealousy) yield deftly drawn vignettes.

There’s still a traditionalist at work, though, which explains his confident use of vintage pop and swing. Yet sometimes his reverence for the older influences peaks suspiciously. On Laughing Gas, his use of ’50s-style phrasing and melody is undone by a self-conscious lyric that smacks of affectation: ‘’How square that our age is atomic/It’s kind of tragically too.” Square indeed.

Luckily, producers Michael Colina and Ray Bardani apply the same shrewd editorial sense they brought to David Sanborn’s ‘’Voyeur” last year. For that alto sax stylist, they sidestepped the no-win framing Sanborn as an r&b instrumentalist, his love of hip argot and guitar instrumentalist. The Bump band move into higher gears. Side 2 is bracketed by a pair of songs from NRBQ—a first-rate East Coast band as seasoned as it is underrated—that offer Raitt a chance to stretch her vocal style. Squeezing the singer’s breathy vocal style and laconic delivery, Lauching Gass effect is rich but spacious, allowing the guitarists’ penchant for dirty rhythm chords and snaky slide work, inviting direct comparison with the Stones.

The album also further consolidates Cooder’s star as a major force in film scoring.

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In brief reviews of newly released debut recordings  
by Steven X. Rea

New Acts

Altered Images: Happy Birthday  
Steve Severin & Martin Rushent, producers. Portrait FR 37738

Altered Images sounds like a bunch of loopy seven-year-olds on a psychedelic binge. With chirpy singer Clare at the helm (the band uses first names only), this Scottish quintet combines a wispy prettiness with a kind of sly charm. The sing-songy Love and Kisses and Real Tons (an ode to kinky sex) feature Clare’s little-girl voice bobbing up and down over a crisp, pliant rock beat. The standout number is the title track, a Top-10 hit in the U.K. and the sole selection (reprised three times) produced by Martin Rushent.

The Embarrassment EP  
Michael McGee & the Embarrassment, producers. Cynkyly Records (P.O. Box 293, Wichita, Kan. 67201)

Here’s some quirky, bent music courtesy of a quirky, bent quartet from Wichita, Kansas. The Embarrassment’s five-song, homemade twelve-inch 45 has a simple-sax. John Nichols’ off-key, deadpan vocals. Tracks such as Celebrate Art Parks and Elizabeth Montgomery’s Face rock with smart—and smart-alecky—charm.

The Human League: Dare  
Steve Severin & Martin Rushent, producers. Portrait FR 37738

With smart-and smart-alecky-charm.

The Waitresses: witty, liberated pop  
Lou Nadeau, producer. Ze/Polydor PD 1-6346

Witty, liberated modern pop. I Know What Boys Like, with its insistent, cackling melody is already something of a left-field hit. On the LP’s real gem. No Guilt. lead singer Patty Donahue strikes an independent pose in the face of a thoroughly neurotic, soured love affair. Butler’s female point-of-view lyrics ring true, as do the catchy rhythms of this fun six-piece band.

Soft Cell: Non-Stop Erotic Cabaret  
Mike Thorne, producer. Sire SRK 3647

As the album title suggests, this two-man combo’s debut is imbued with the glittery, neon ambiance of some dark, trendy European nightclub. Like most things coming from England nowadays, it’s techno-pop with a New Romantic twist. With the exception of the bleating, bicycle-horn rhythms of Tainted Love. “Non-Stop” is all the same: mildly effete, gloomily doomy, and rife with weird allusions to freak-show sexuality.

The Waitresses:  
Kurt Monkacs & Chris Butler, producers. Ze/Polydor PD 1-6346

Wry, usable tunes. I Know What Boys Like.

Yates Brothers and Sisters:  
Electricity  
Benjamin F. Wright, Jr., producer. MCA 5265

Vibrant r&b from a northern California group of siblings. “Electricity” is chock-full of the kind of ebullient dance music that goes straight to the airwaves. Sisters Regina and Tammy Combs take their singing chores to heart as a busy horde of sessioners flesh out the three brothers’ plucky, light-weight Jacksons-style tunes.
there. What sounds humble and clichéd on paper proves contemporary in its lyric sense and nearly jubilant in its musical bravura.

Producer Rob Fraboni merits added credit for his apparent role as catalyst to this band's formation and its bull's-eye representation on vinyl. A link to both Fataar and McLagen. Fraboni is also the probable culprit behind Richard Manuel's soulful presence as vocal foil on River of Tears, the set's most striking resemblance to vintage Stones.

One warning to Raitt fans who align her more with singing and songwriting contemporaries than the blues models audible in her earliest LPs: Fraboni treats her as a band member, not the star of the day, and her vocals thus meet the firepower of the band head-on. That shift in perspective may be unsettling, but it ultimately and easily justifies itself.

SAM SUTHERLAND

Jazz

Johnny Hodges All-Stars: Caravan
Ed Michel, producer
Prestige P 24103

Though he gets top billing on this two-disc set, alto saxophonist Johnny Hodges appears on only one album, leading various small groups of Ellington sidemen (with the exception of trombonist Wilbur de Paris). All of his sides were cut in 1947, and four of them were originally released on the obscure Sunrise label. The remainder of the collection came out on the slightly less obscure Mercer label.

The second disc features Ellington groups led by Billy Strayhorn, with three of the cuts carrying the Duke's name as leader. It was recorded in 1950–51, when Hodges had left the Ellington band for a short-lived fling with a group of his own.

This is the first time these relatively unknown recordings have been brought together in a widely distributed package. On the first disc, Hodges' romantic style is particularly provocative on Frisky, Far Away Blues, Longhorn Blues, A Little Taste, and such better known tunes as A Flower Is a Lovesome Thing and Lotus Blossom. Though Hodges is the primary focus, there are also some crisp, neatly placed trumpet passages by Taft Jordan and a few smoothly soaring appearances by Lawrence Brown on trombone. The second disc features a whole new school of Ellingtonians. Willie Smith replaces Hodges on alto with a style that falls between the latter's rich, ripe sound and Benny Carter's lean purity of tone; Louis Bellson gives the band firm, supple guidance on drums; Paul Gonsalves builds long, squirming saxophone lines; Juan Tizol, having returned from a period with Harry James, lends his
While it's hard to imagine any versions of Them There Eyes and All of Me matching those recorded more than forty years ago by Billie Holiday, the interpretations of Chaka Khan and this quintet fall so short that the whole project seems more a folly than a tribute. From time to time "Echoes of an Era" comes closer to its aspirations, but the few moments of improvisatory inspiration don't add up to very much. On past solo efforts apart from Rufus, especially those under Arif Mardin's direction, Khan has displayed an ability to stretch beyond r&b basics. Here, she sounds rudderless, incapable of navigating the theatrics of Gershwin's I Love You Porgy, the fractured musical grammar of Thelonious Monk's I Mean You, or the arabesques of Billy Strayhorn's Take the A Train.

Given the proven adaptability of these musicians, and the hollow contexts they've been heard in lately, it should have been a pleasure to find them soloing on solid tunes without synthesizers or funk-fusion trappings. This is a fine acoustic jazz group. The muted tones of Freddie Hubbard's trumpet bring to mind the Miles Davis of the early '60s. Stanley Clarke is an unfurling, resourceful bassist, and Chick Corea is a fluid, thoughtful pianist. But it just doesn't click. and it's not only because Khan is running in fast company: whoever chose the material also badly misjudged the strengths of the players. There are any number of harder-edged, less feathery songs from the same period that would have been better suited to Khan and company than Loesser and Lane's I Hear Music. Producer/drummer Lenny White understands the technical, solo-to-solo-to-solo elements of jazz vocal accompaniment, yet he can't recapture the feeling.

Typical of the album's mistakes is Spring Can Really Hang You Up the Most, a long duet for voice and piano. Khan and Corea don't even start off with a firm grip on the melody and the emotional theme; they roam all over the map, never connecting with the song or with each other. More often than not, "Echoes of an Era" resembles a parody of smoky, small-combo-with-singer jazz sessions, with Khan going melismatic like a not-too-sophisticated vocalist and the band just noodling around. It aims for the intimacy and spontaneity of such records as Nat "King" Cole's "After Midnight" and Johnny Hartman's collaboration with Coltrane, but at best these echoes are faint. Although preferable to a return to Return to Forever, these are sorely misguided musings on the forms of the past.

Wynton Marsalis
Herbie Hancock, producer
Columbia FC 37574

Wynton Marsalis is so good at the age of nineteen, so rich with the raw talent to become a major jazz trumpeter, that the worst that could happen to him would be to receive too much praise, too early. Shooting stars are not uncommon to jazz, but getting burned out too soon from high living and overnight success. And at any stage, signing with a major record company can yield potentially dangerous commercial pressures.

Fortunately, Marsalis seems to be very much in control of his own destiny. The son of Ellis Marsalis—a fine, but not very well-known New Orleans pianist—he is one of the growing number of young, classically trained black musicians who are turning back to jazz. Like those contemporaries, Marsalis' approach to jazz has been tempered by the relative comforts of a middle-class background, rather than by the more visceral energies of country blues and the sanctified church. He is a direct descendant of the sophisticated line that stretches through Duke Ellington, Fletcher Henderson, and Miles Davis, as opposed to the more rural-based legacy of Louis Armstrong and Count Basie.

It shows in his music. Control, precision, and a general sense of careful calculation dominate Marsalis' improvisations. On the Bricusse-Newley standard, Who Can I Turn To?, for example, his lean and delicate lines limn the phrase, extending a phrase here, delaying a line there, and stretching the tension to the point where a sudden burst of sixteenth notes is as welcome as a spring rain. I haven't heard this kind of improvisational control in a young player since the very early recordings of Thad Jones.

Marsalis' best solo is on the moody Twilight. Abandoning his conservatism, he takes more chances and displays an incipient ability to make very interesting harmonic choices. Worth noting, too, on this and several other pieces, is the work of saxophonist Branford Marsalis. A year older than Wynton, Branford is both a hotter and a more traditional player; if he may have as much longterm stardom potential as his trumpet-playing brother. Of the remaining material, only Ron Carter's original RI triggers much positive response. An unusually banal line-springs Marsalis' wonderfully open-throated. Harmon-mutated solo, followed by an exuberantly jaunty soprano solo from Branford. What really makes the track work, however, is the crisp ensemble playing of Carter, Herbie Hancock, and drummer Tony Williams—an in-the-flesh revival of the great Miles Davis rhythm team of the mid-Sixties.

Less interesting are Sister Cheryl, a long-lined melody strung out over a vaguely Latin-sounding rhythm, and Herbie Hancock's I'll Be There. It could very well be that, at this stage, Marsalis will have difficulty sustaining his creative level for entire LPs. In this case, he frequently tends to fall back on his exceptional mechanical skills. Clearly his biggest problem—a problem most young players would be happy to have—is going to be avoiding the easy paths available to him because of his prodigious technique. When he develops a sensitivity to content that matches his technical prowess, he will begin to mature as an artist. It's something the jazz audience can anticipate with pleasure.

DON HECKMAN

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(Continued on page 80)
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MUSCOVITE PHOENIX

(Continued from page 51)

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BACKBEAT REVIEWS

(Continued from page 76)

and jazz on his electronically amplified viol- 
in and naming his first American group 
Fusion.

Now, Urbaniak has chosen to go back 
to his acoustic origins—to get back, as he 
says, to playing jazz. This all-acoustic 
album, recorded at Sandy's Jazz Revival in 
Beverly, Massachusetts, is the debut of the 
new "old" Michal Urbaniak. Backed by 
Gene Bertone on guitar and Michael 
Moore on bass, Urbaniak concentrates on 
four standard ballads—Just Friends, Body 
and Soul, Autumn Leaves, and the bossa 
noiva Quiet Nights. He colors Just Friends 
with some of Stephane Grappelli's grace- 
fully melodic qualities. On Body and Soul 
he takes a more personal tack, sliding 
through long lines into what almost amounts 
to an Art Tatum piano effect with running 
note-filled passages flowing and tumbling 
towards themselves.

On the other two tunes he shifts to lyric- 
on, a blown keyboard instrument. The 
sound he produces with it on Autumn 
Leaves is very close to that of his acoustic 
violin, but it also takes on a dark, warm 
tone that falls somewhere between alto and 
soprano saxophones. He uses its singing, 
melodic qualities to best advantage on Qui- 
et Nights, as the guitar and bass provide a 
supple bossa-nova rhythm on which he can 
ride. (Bertoneci and Moore also have solos 
on all four selections.) The lyricism may not 
be worth devoting half a program to, but it 
does lend variety to the context.

—JOHN S. WILSON

Dick Wellstood: Live at Hanraty's 
Charlie Baro, producer
Chaz Jazz CI 108 (V.O. Box 565, 
North Hampton, N.H. 03862)

Over the last three decades, pianist Dick 
Wellstood has developed an approach that 
is a mixture of traditional jazz styles (spe- 
cifically stride) and his own exploratory, 
whimsical, and witty personality. This two- 
disc solo collection was recorded at Hanrat- 
ty's, the restaurant that has been his New 
York base for several years. It is the defini- 
tive 1984 Wellstood statement, a showcase 
for a stride piano technique that can current- 
ly be matched only by Ralph Sutton (an- 
other Hanraty's pianist).

Wellstood constantly finds fresh ap- 
proaches to things that have long been taken 
for granted, and with his wry sense of 
humor teases the listener with slight-of-
hand phrases and passages. For instance, on 
what may be the first approach to Kurt 
Weill's memorable Barbara Song (from 
Threepenny Opera), he initially seems to 
skirt jazz interpretations but moves more 
and more strongly into the idiom. He devel- 
ops a rocking piano solo from Louis Arm- 
strong's classic cornet piece Cornet Chop 
Suey. Jingle Bells is a panorama of gentle 
lyricism, punched-up swing, and eventual-
ly, stride; his version of Cole Porter's *So in Love* is a classic stride creation of his very own.

The ghost of Fats Waller bubbles and rolls throughout: *I Wish I Were Twins. How Could I Be Blue. Runnin' Wild. My Shining Hour. And Ain't Misbehavin*. He turns *A Pretty Girl Is like a Melody* into a slinky, boogie-based blues. In one of several medleys, he couples Cole Porter's *Looking at You* with Bessie Smith's *You've Been a Good Old Wagon* and makes it seem logical.

This is a joyous, jumping album. It is perhaps a little too "live," in that it includes a couple of pieces that drift aimlessly and a "warm-up medley" of little interest. The liner notes and credits are unusually sloppy. Two songs by Sidney Bechet are credited to "Brecht" and the mix-up in Dan Morgenstern's notes is bad enough to suggest that the type was dropped on the floor and reassembled at random. —JOHN S. WILSON

POWER AND PANACHE

(Continued from page 30)

S/N ratio is 76 dB in stereo FM. Onkyo's T-9060 ($490) is also digitally tuned, with seven FM presets. There is also a choice of IF bandwidth and switchable high blend.

Yamaha's T-1060 AM/FM tuner ($350) has a servo-lock tuning system to minimize distortion and noise and ten station presets for both AM and FM. Matching the distinctive black cosmetics of Yamaha's other flagship separates is the T-70 AM/FM tuner ($370), which also has ten presets. Its ultimate S/N ratio is rated as 83 dB in stereo. Among the most impressive specs for SAE's very impressive T-101 AM/FM tuner is an adjacent-channel selectivity of 25 dB. (The best we've ever measured is only about half that number.) Other features of the $650 unit are separate signal-strength and multipath indicators.

Sumo's $460 Charlie (the Tune?) is an FM-only unit offering six presets and a choice of IF bandwidth. Garrard's new electronics include two FM/AM tuners. And Anchor's AM/FM stereo tuner, projected for May delivery with a price of $401, is a quartz-lock digital frequency-synthesis design with seven presets on each band and a multipath indication option.

Receivers

With the exception of new top-of-the-line designs from Pioneer and Kenwood, most of the receivers premiered at the WCES are in the midpower class. Among the most powerful receivers now available, the Radio Shack Realistic STA-2300 pumps out 120 watts (20¼ dBW) per channel. Its tuner incorporates an automatic fine-tuning circuit for minimum noise and distortion. Pioneer's SX-8 ($800) carries a rating of 100 watts (20 dBW) per channel and has a digital frequency-synthesis AM/FM tuner with eight presets for each band plus scan, search and manual tuning. All of the SX-8's controls are electronic, mediated by a microprocessor that, among other things, enables you to store and retrieve two settings each for volume, tone control, loudness compensation, and muting.

Kenwood has extensively revamped its receiver line. At the top is the KR-1000 ($1,250), a computerized receiver rated at 120 watts (20¾ dBW) per channel. With the exception of balance, mixing level, and volume preset, all operations are controlled by pushbuttons and pushpads. The KR-1000's Program Mode Commander retains four different "signal flows" in its memory for instant recall. In addition, the preamp section includes a seven-band graphic equalizer and high and low filters. The other four new receivers range from the KR-850 ($600), rated at 75 watts (18½ dBW) per channel, to the KR-930 ($830), at 30 watts (14½ dBW) per channel. All five receivers have Hi-Speed power amplifiers. Facilities for two-track tape dubbing and monitoring, and digital frequency-synthesis tuner sections with twelve station presets.

Garrard has four receivers. beginning with the Model 1060, rated at 15 watts (11¼ dBW) per channel, and topping off with the 60-watt (17¼ dBW) Model 1660. Scott's 385R ($600) is rated at 85 watts (19¾ dBW) per channel.

Hitachi has filled out the low end of its receiver line with the S250 HTA-3000, rated at 30 watts (14½ dBW) per channel. Its digital frequency-synthesis tuner has six AM and six FM presets. Denon has a new 40-watt (16½ dBW) receiver, the DRA-300 ($400), with a DC Class A power amp and provisions for both moving- and fixed-coil cartridges. Nikko's NR-320 is rated at 25 watts (14½ dBW) per channel and sells for $250, while KLH's conventionally tuned Model 1060 is also digitally tuned, with 60-watt (17¼ dBW) Model 1060, rated at 15 watts (11¼ dBW) per channel. All four have digital station-frequency readouts, but only the Kyocera series and carry power ratings ranging as high as 85 watts (19½ dBW) per channel. The fourth, the CR-80S ($350), is a slim-line unit rated at 45 watts (16½ dBW) per channel. All four have digital station-frequency readouts, but only the Kyoceras have frequency-synthesizers tuning and seven station presets. The latter also use high-speed MOS FET output devices with variable-bias circuitry in the two top models.

Finally, though Proton may call its new entry The Radio, the specs are more like those of a receiver: a S/N ratio of 77 dB in stereo, a capture ratio of 1 dB, and so on. The Radio comes equipped with tape connections, tone controls, and one biamplified two-way loudspeaker for $280. A biamplified speaker for the other channel sells for $150.
STOKOWSKI AT 100
(Continued from page 48)

Stokowski moved back to England. Only now did he reestablish contact with his brother Jim, by this time a successful real estate broker. (Their sister Lydia had died tragically early, in 1911.) In his old age he yearned for a last chance to recapture the taint remaining flavor of his long-buried youth. That fall he survived a nearly fatal bout of pneumonia to relish another birthday party at the Hotel Pierre in April, and one month later quit the orchestra cold.

Stokowski was born while Wagner was in the throes of preparing Parsifal for Bayreuth. Brahms was at Lake Thun working on his Third Symphony, and Massenet was in Paris finishing up Manon. Richard Strauss was eighteen, Sibelius seventeen, Bartók one, and Stravinsky not yet born. But Stokio never looked back. For decades he had been methodically destroying his past, burning letters, photographs, and other memorabilia. The past was his enemy, the future his friend. It was always, "Try harder, do better." In 1976, at age ninety-four, he signed a contract with CBS Records valid for six years, with a renewal clause for ten more.

Early on the morning of September 12, 1977, on what was to have been the first day of his recording session for the Rachmaninoff Second Symphony, a work he had not led since the Philadelphia days, Stokowski took a nasty fall in his room. He had been failing badly for months, even years, but he simply wouldn't give up. Now, unable to rise, he regained his bed unaided, using his arms and shoulders. His legs, grown trailer ever since the hip break, would no longer hold him upright. Later that morning, alone except for his housekeeper, he gave a sudden short gasp and died. His heart simply stopped. Herman Muller, said to me, "I don't think that was a noise of surprise. Of all the men I have ever known, he was the last one who ever thought it could happen to him!"

After his death Stokie's belongings were returned to the United States in two shipments. First came all the carefully annotated scores and the huge collection of exotic instruments gathered from around the world, which he willed to the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, where they now safely reside. Next came his furniture, papers, pictures, and the many honors, the Institute of Audio Research, International Wholesalers, International HiFi, and Illinois Audio.

Said Jose Serebrier, former associate conductor of the American Symphony Orchestra, still alive and well and ready to take part in the celebrations of his centenary at Carnegie Hall on April 18. It is astonishing to realize that so many young American musicians who received their first orchestral training under the old master will still be teaching in the twenty-first century. Only a handful in the orchestra today played under Stokie. The others have scattered to the American orchestral winds, carrying his legacy with them as players from Philadelphia did in the old days, not to mention the hundreds who trained at the Curtis Institute in the 20s, 30s, and 40s under the watchful eye of his famed first-desk men. Equally amazing, a hundred years from now children may still be asking their mothers at the movies—ever whatever replaces them: "Mommy, who's that up there shaking hands with Mickey Mouse?"

We must remember, after all, that Stokowski was born while Wagner was in the throes of preparing Parsifal for Bayreuth.
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