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VOLUME 32  NUMBER 5  MAY 1982

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Letters

Kicking Halo
In Davin Seay's article on Christian music [BACKBEAT, February], the author states that "contemporary Christian/Jesus music . . . runs the gamut from easy listening to almost hard rock." Wrong! It runs to very hard rock—some might even say heavy metal. The Resurrection Band from Chicago, for instance, invites comparison with the likes of Grace Slick, Rod Stewart, Van Halen, and AC/DC.

Second, Mr. Seay says that "Christian music sounds a little bit like everything—with the notable exception of . . . the avant-garde." Wrong again. Groups like Daniel Amos, Giant Killer, the Bill Mason Band, and Barnabas have shown more than a passing interest in punk and new wave sounds.

Although it is true that Christian music gets the short end of the stick in terms of distribution and airplay, many of us in the "secular" segment are convinced that it's only a matter of time before its status will change. Mr. Seay's article should help to speed things along.

Finally, if that 1980 survey by Warner Communications showed the sales of contemporary Christian music recordings to be higher than those of classical and jazz discs, then why do magazines like yours give virtually no coverage to records of this type?

Mark Pettigrew
Cambridge, Mass.

Good point. We'll think about it.—Ed.

For over a year now, I've believed everything I've read in HIGH FIDELITY. But Davin Seay's article incorrectly states that Christian music does not incorporate heavy metal and punk elements. On the metal side, take a listen to the Resurrection Band's "Awaiting Your Reply," "Colours," and "Mommy Doesn't Love Daddy Anymore." Forget AC/DC: These guys kick halo! On the punk side, try Ismael United and Andy McCarroll and Moral Support. Also, Daniel Amos has a new wave album called "Alarm." It doesn't surprise me that these artists were overlooked. The Christian music industry is still very conservative and seems to want to keep them a secret.

Carvin Knowles
Tulsa, Okla.

Orff and Running
I am heartily sick and tired of writers like Paul Henry Lang who dismiss the work of Carl Orff based on some knowledge of Carmina burana and a nodding acquaintance with the other scores of Trionfi [January]. To correct the rife misconceptions, incorrect implications, and outright errors of Lang's shrill denunciation would require volumes of verbiage; it must suffice to refute only the most salient.

First, to judge Orff primarily on the basis of Carmina burana is similar to assuming a full understanding of any composer based solely on his Op. 1. Does Stravinsky's Symphony in E flat or Webern's Passacaglia afford us the full measure of either composer's talents? Now where does Mr. Lang mention the works that Orff considers
his greatest—the gargantuan Greek trilogy comprised of Antigonae, Oedipus der Tyrann, and Prometheus—or other fully mature scores such as Astutil, Die Bernauerin, or De Temporum fine convaria. Yet these are the works that most truly represent the Orff aesthetic in full bloom, not the early Trient scores. Anyone (Mr. Lang included) is free to dismiss these later scores as well, but to ignore them is to do Orff a severe disservice.

Second, the author asserts that Orff does not correctly understand his sources. Presumably Mr. Lang’s interpretations of Catullus and the poetry of the Goliards are the only correct ones, so the fact that Orff sees something else in them must automatically eliminate him from serious consideration. This would then mean that there is only one proper interpretation of the Requiem text, of Romeo and Juliet, or of Walt Whitman’s verse, and woe be to the composer whose musical setting suggests something other than this single “correct” interpretation? Which then is the “proper” Requiem, Mozart’s or Verdi’s? The “right” Romeo and Juliet, Berlioz’s or Tchaikovsky’s? And is it Delius or Hindemith who really “understands” Whitman?

Third, Mr. Lang’s broadside contains the insidious implication that Orff’s aesthetic predilections are somehow the result of—and a collaboration with—the tenets of the German Nazi movement. Lang need only examine the early Schulwerk editions and the pre-Carmina burana cantatas, all of which predate Hitler’s ascendancy by some years, to find that Orff’s fundamental approach was established long before the rise of National Socialism. Furthermore, Orff’s implicit criticism of the horrors of Nazism in works such as Die Kluge and Die Bernauerin amply demonstrate his true feeling about Hitler and his cohorts.

Last, Mr. Lang says that “nothing leads to Orff and nothing issues from him.” Yet earlier he correctly observed the relationship of Stravinsky’s music to Orff’s, though this connection can be (and often has been) overstated. Despite the wholly unique quality of Orff’s work, much of it is anticipated in Les Noces. As for the notion of Orff as progenitor, one need only witness the current success of such composers as Steve Reich and Philip Glass, whose “minimalist” music is based on the same precepts as Orff’s—a vast simplification of melody, harmony, counterpoint, and texture in favor of a more static music in which rhythm is often predominant. Yet Orff’s cult-ritual stage works (again, I think of the Greek trilogy, not of Carmina burana), many of which have never been presented in this country in any form, predate the music of the minimalists by some decades. This makes Orff something of a prophet before his own time.

I will close by informing Mr. Lang of a gigant of twentieth-century music who possessed a profound admiration for Orff’s work, despite its radical polarity from his own: Edgard Varèse. (Continued on page 10)
Mr. Lang replies: Mr. Rouse's is more a man-
ifesto pro domo than a helpful clarification of the
controversy he opens; his arguments are gauze-
thin, and he never addresses the problems I
touched upon. I would decline the invitation to so
tortuous a dance did his letter not demonstrate
the age-old misconceptions (to which composers
are understandably prone) of the nature of criti-
cism.

I do not judge Orff primarily on the basis of
Carmina burana and its two sequels; these are the
works I was sent to discuss. [When Mr. Lang
proposed an article on Orff, he was sent the Phil-
ips repackaging of Trionfi and several record-
ings of Carmina burana as a launching point for
his discussion.—Ed.] To judge Carmina by
Orff's later works would violate the principles of
1 by invoking the Hammerklavier Sonata? The
critic does not arrive at conclusions by a back-
ward glance into the future. I have more than a
'nodding acquaintance' with Orff's later works,
having been a working newspaper critic for
ten years and a serious student of music for
sixty. But it is unnecessary to cite them to judge
Orff's aesthetic "in full bloom": the composer
and his disciples put his long-established basic
aesthetic beliefs in writing, which I quoted but
which Mr. Rouse conveniently overlooks.

Mr. Rouse makes the ancient and tired
accusation that the critic regards his interpreta-
tion as "the only correct one." If critical views
were always unanimous there would be no need
for criticism. Still, while a work of art may be so
tame a plum and to others a prune, criticism is
not merely an application of "I know what I
like." Unlike Mr. Rouse, I do not get "sick and
tired" of opposing views, especially when so
well presented as R.D. Darrell's in the same
issue as my article; though Mr. Darrell and I may
disagree, I have nothing but respect for his
views.

Yes, I not only express "insidious implica-
tions," I plainly believe not that Carmina burana
ever gave rise to Hitler, or vice versa, but that
this work represents the synchronic political/cul-
tural climate in the Germany of the 1930s, which
also spawned the Nazi ideology: it is aggressive,
oppressive, and regressive.

Finally, Mr. Rouse informs me that a "gi-
ant of twentieth-century music," Edgar Varese,
profundely admired Orff's work—which only
illustrates the adage about plums and prunes.
Perhaps he will permit me to mention another
giant of the century, Bela Bartok, who was ever
so generous in praise and appreciation of what
other composers tried to do. But the neoprimitiv-
isim of Carmina burana he regarded with grave
misgivings, wondering where surmise ends and
fakers begins. (I won't quote Hindemith, who
also questioned Orff's aesthetics, because he is
persona non grata with the avant-garde and
hence eo ipso disqualified.)

Carmina burana was for a while the beau-
ty queen of "modern" music, rather too conscious-
ly flaunting a new idiom, it shone like the per-
petual fluorescence of the supermarket yet left
the questioning intellect with small nourishment.
The tripply shows a determined aridity of inven-
tion; the estasins remind me of what Liszt said—
only half jokingly—about the letimorf: "It com-
fors the composer immuch as he does not have
to invent new ideas." I can readily understand
why Orff attracted a large public: Carmina
makes for a good show and the public sees in the
evanescent fireworks an easily assimilable mo-
dernity. What I do not understand—in fact what
really amazes me—is how it could have become
esoteric-enclave chic with the avant-garde.

Arts Programming

In your December 1981 TubeFood column I
found several video programs of interest under
the "Arts Programming" category. Since I am
overseas I have no way of ordering them. Could
you please send me the address for Dubs Video
Corp.?

CWO-3 Jerry Shotts, Jr.
FP0 Seattle, Wash.

Dubs Video is at 535 Eighth Ave., Penthouse
South, New York, N.Y. 10018.—Ed.

Once Again, Now

I have read with interest Harris Goldsmith's
review of the Izhak Perlman recording of the

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Beethoven violin concerto [February]. However, I wonder if your reviewer has drawn erroneous conclusions from Perlman's remarks on the subject of the video recording (published in an interview in Granophone's September 1981 issue) that have led him to suggest that "the artists recorded the work and then mimed it for show." This was certainly not the case. There were two totally separate recording activities—one to produce the conventional audio recording and the other to produce the audio/video recording. To date, this latter recording has not appeared in the UK. These facts are confirmed by EMI.

Anthony C. Pollard
Managing Editor and Publisher
Granophone
Harrow, England

Studio Studies
All my life I have wanted to work in a recording studio as a producer or engineer, but I don't know where to begin looking for information. I'm in my senior year in college. Can BACKBEAT point me in the right direction?

Jeffrey W. Violette
Baton Rouge, La.

Yours is not the first inquiry we've received, and we plan to run an article in the near future on audio-engineering courses and career programs. In the meantime, experience is the best teacher. Why not spend next summer as a "gofer" in a local recording studio? That's how Phil Ramone started.—Ed.

Not Quite Proper
In his thoughtful review of Leonard Slatkin's recording of Prokofiev's film music [January], John Canarina states that my album notes "argue that Kizheh, rather than Kije, is the proper name for Prokofiev's lieutenant. . . ." This isn't quite right.

The name, of course, is the same spelled either way. The point I tried to make (in persuading the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and Vox to spell it "Kizheh" instead of "Kije") is simply that the former is a more apt English transliteration, while the latter—which is, after all, a French transliteration of a Russian name—is not helpful to Anglophones.

There is a similar case in the matter of "Petrushka" and "Petrouchka," but the spelling is rather more meaningful with the Prokofiev, because the proper sound of the name "Kizheh" is essential to the story itself. The tale is based on the tsar's misinterpretation of the phrase "Paroochiki, je" ("the lieutenants, however") for "Paroochik Kizheh" ("Lieutenant Kizheh").

In any event, I see by the heading for the review that HIGH FIDELITY remains unpersuaded, and I imagine that other periodicals will, too, for a long time.

Richard I. Freed
Rockville, Md.

Great-Sounding Tubes
I have heard much favorable comment about some of the older preamps and amps that are available now, especially those using tubes. Some are said to be fine as is, and others function well after modifications (such as capacitor substitution) have been made.

I recently purchased a Marantz Model 7 (Continued on page 12)
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 receivers offers a host of very intelligent engineering advances. Like Direct Coupled, Hi-Speed amplifier circuitry for absolutely brilliant musical clarity, down to 0Hz.

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High Fidelity News

New equipment and developments by the Editors

Going for New Highs

Shure's new top cartridge, the V-15 Type V, uses a thin-walled beryllium cantilever tube and an improved Hyperelliptical stylus to achieve dramatically lower effective moving mass than the Type IV it supersedes. The result, according to Shure, is flatter, more extended treble response and almost double the high-frequency tracking ability (as high as 80 centimeters per second at 5 kHz). Other improvements include a lower vertical tracking angle to match the vertical modulation angles of most commercial records, adoption of the Side-Guard stylus-protection system first introduced in the SC-39 and M-97 pickups, and reduced sensitivity to capacitive and resistive loading. The Type V retains the Dynamic Stabilizer damping brush assembly first used on the Type IV and comes with a comprehensive set of mounting and alignment aids. Price is $250.

Circle 77 on Reader-Service Card

Phasing In

Phase Linear's new Dynamic Range System power amplifiers are designed for high efficiency and low operating temperatures. This is said to result from using a power supply that automatically switches between low and high positive and negative voltages according to the instantaneous power demand. The top-of-the-line DRS-900 has both average and peak calibrations on its LED power meters, which provide user-variable decay rates ranging from peak-hold to fast. The $1,100 amp is rated at 150 watts (21¾ dBW) per channel into 8 ohms with no more than 0.015% THD and is said to deliver an impressive 4¾ dB of dynamic headroom.

Circle 85 on Reader-Service Card

Micro-Magic from Denon

Hardly bigger than a record jacket, Denon's fully automatic DP-11F turntable incorporates an electronically damped Dynamic Servo Tracer tonearm for improved tracking of warped records. A built-in microprocessor activates the automatic on/off functions, controls the tracking force and antiskating compensation of the tonearm, and regulates the speed of the platter. Control signals for the DC motor, which is designed to provide constant torque, are based on data taken directly from the platter via a proprietary magnetic "tape-head" detector. Other features include an antiresonance platter mat and isolation feet. The price is $200.

Circle 83 on Reader-Service Card

20/20 Fit

"Technidyne's new 1½-ounce CSE-108 headphones have no headband; instead, they hook over your ears like a pair of glasses. The company is also introducing its CSH-101 headset, which uses rare-earth magnets and weighs less than 2 ounces. Each model comes with a miniplug plus an adapter for standard ¼-inch headphone jacks and sells for $13.

Circle 84 on Reader-Service Card

EXPAND HEADROOM.

With CX™
Built into Audio Control's new D-10X Octave Equalizer. Get up to 20dB more dynamic headroom for louder loads and softer soft passages, AND and kiss off hiss when you play any CX-encoded disc. Instead of asking you to spring a C-note for yet another add-on gizmo we offer a feature-packed octave equalizer with 18dB/octave subsonic filter, great specs, low noise, over-the-counter warranty and real oak end panels. WITH CX BUILT IN for under $180 suggested retail!

The Audio Control D-10X's CX circuitry includes level adjustments and LED'S, plus a special CX test record you use just once to calibrate the circuit.

All for less than you might pay for just a so-so equalizer. The American-built Audio Control D-10X Octave Equalizer with CX. Because nobody ever gets enough headroom.

Audio Control

In the Heart of the Northwest Rainforest
Lynnwood, WA
(206) 775-8461.

AudioControl

In the Heart of the Northwest Rainforest
Lynnwood, WA
(206) 775-8461.

(Continued on page 14)
Two for One
Making tape copies requires only one cassette deck with Sanyo’s dual-transport RDW-50. The $220 deck also includes an Automatic Music Select System (AMSS) to scan tapes at high speed, seeking out the next selection. Dolby B noise reduction, metal-tape capability, peak-reading LED recording-level meters, and a recording mute for the insertion of blanks between selections.

Circle 80 on Reader-Service Card

DBX Double Header
DBX has combined a dynamic-range expander and its Type II noise reduction system into a single package. The Model 228 can be used with two-head recorders, and will provide full monitoring capability with three-head decks. It is said to provide 30 dB of noise reduction for a total dynamic range of 110 dB. The $500 unit also enables playback of DBX-encoded discs and can be used to enhance the dynamic range of unencoded program material.

Circle 79 on Reader-Service Card

HK Goes HX Pro
Harman Kardon’s top cassette deck includes the Dolby HX Professional headroom-extension system, which fine-tunes the recording bias to capture high-frequency material at levels much higher than would otherwise be possible, reducing distortion dramatically. The CD-401 also includes independent recording and playback heads, Dolby B and C noise reduction, metal-tape compatibility, bias and tape-sensitivity calibration tones, and electronic search. The rated frequency response of $750 deck is 20 Hz to 27 kHz, ±3 dB.

Circle 82 on Reader-Service Card

Removing Infrasonics
Record warps, floor feedback, off-center record holes, and turntable rumble can generate unwanted infrasonic signals that can cause excessive cone motion in speakers and waste amplifier power. Ace Audio’s 4000b infrasonic filter attenuates these harmful signals by rolling off at 18 dB per octave below 20 Hz. The unit, which is especially recommended for use with direct-coupled amplifiers and receivers, can be connected between a preamp and a power amp or inserted in a tape-monitor loop. IM distortion of the 4000b is rated at 0.002%. The price is $99.

Circle 81 on Reader-Service Card

For additional news on new instruments and accessories see Input Output, page 67.
Introducing TDK AD-X. The normal bias tape with Super Avilyn technology.

New TDK AD-X is the first normal bias audio cassette to use TDK's Avilyn magnetic particle—based on the renowned Super Avilyn formulation that has kept TDK the leader in audio and videotape technology.

The Avilyn advantage offered in AD-X is demonstrably clear. You now can record and play back—in the normal bias/EQ position with complete compatibility for any cassette deck over a wider dynamic range and with far less distortion. Even at higher recording levels, the increased headroom in new AD-X can easily handle strong signal input without over-saturation.

When you hear the brilliant playback resulting from the higher MOL and lower bias noise you won't believe that your deck can "improve" so much.

The new AD-X has truly versatile applications. Its higher sensitivity makes it ideal for all-round home entertainment use and also suitable for any cassette player.

To ensure years of reliable use, AD-X is housed in TDK's Laboratory Standard Mechanism, and protected by TDK's lifetime warranty. With its distinctive packaging, you won't miss it.

So for high quality recordings in the normal bias/EQ position, snap in the new TDK AD-X. You'll discover that the Avilyn advantage means superior overall performance for you.
Audio concepts and terms explained by Michael Riggs

Evaluating Phono-Pickup Performance

Evaluating phono-cartridge performance is a complicated business. For one thing, cartridges can sound fairly different from one another—a fact that makes listening unusually important (more so than for any other component category except loudspeakers—the electromechanical transducers at the opposite end of the playback chain). Fortunately, however, you can glean most of what you need to know from specifications.

Perhaps the most basic of these specifications is the one that relates groove velocity to cartridge output voltage: the higher the output for a given groove velocity, the higher the sensitivity. (This is much like a loudspeaker’s sensitivity rating turned on its head: Whereas a speaker’s sensitivity depends in large measure on its efficiency as an electrical motor, a cartridge’s sensitivity mostly reflects its efficiency as an electrical generator. Reciprocal functions breed reciprocal specifications.) Sensitivity is usually given in millivolts per centimeter per second of groove velocity (mV/cm/sec). Typical ratings for fixed-coil and high-output moving-coil cartridges range from 0.5 to 1.5 mV/cm/sec, with most clustered between 0.75 and 1.25 mV/cm/sec. Phono preamplifiers are designed with these sensitivities in mind, so that they will not overload on strong signals from very-high-output cartridges or be excessively noisy on weak signals from pickups of only moderate sensitivity. However, it is necessarily true that the lower the sensitivity of the cartridge being used, the further you will have to advance the volume control to obtain the desired sound level and, all else remaining equal, the poorer the signal-to-noise ratio will be.

This verity is a serious concern with most moving-coil cartridges, which typically have sensitivities an order of magnitude lower than those of fixed-coil pickups. Unless you use an auxiliary step-up device (a transformer or head amp) between the pickup and the phono preamp, the result will almost always be inadequate volume and a thick layer of hiss and hum over the music. Fortunately, as this type of cartridge has become more popular, many manufacturers have begun building head amps into their high-end electronics.

Regardless of what the output of a particular cartridge happens to be, it is important that the sensitivities of the two channels be as nearly the same as possible. If one channel is significantly more sensitive than the other, the stereo image will pull to that side. Channel balance can be expressed in dB relative to the mean of the sensitivities of the two channels at 1 kHz (channel balance often varies slightly with frequency—hence the 1 kHz reference). Therefore, a channel-balance specification of ± 1/2 dB indicates that there is no more than a 1-dB difference between the sensitivities of the two channels. A rating of ± 1 dB is progressively attenuates signals as they increase in frequency (“rolls off the high end,” in audio jargon). The bigger the coils, the higher the inductance and, therefore, the bigger the bite out of the treble. Designers of fixed-coil (moving-magnet and moving magnet) pickups routinely balance this filtering action of the coils against the rising response of the mechanical system to achieve, with varying degrees of success, flat overall response.

One of the major difficulties faced by designers of moving-coil cartridges is that they must use small, low-inductance coils to prevent the moving mass of the stylus assembly from becoming too high. Besides extracting a penalty in sensitivity, this practice makes the electrical response of a moving-coil pickup essentially flat well beyond the upper limit of the audible band, leaving the engineers with the unenviable task of trying to make the cartridge’s mechanical response flat to 15 kHz or beyond.

They do have the consolation, however, that whatever response they achieve will be almost totally independent of the load presented by the resistance and capacitance of the phono input combined with the capacitance of the connecting cables. This is not true of most fixed-coil cartridges, whose high inductances interact with the load, altering the electrical response. Manufacturers have to anticipate this effect and design their cartridges for flat response into a standard resistance of 47,000 ohms (which all phono inputs are supposed to provide) in parallel with some capacitance. The recommended capacitance varies according to the design of the cartridge, but rarely exceeds 450 picofarads (pF). Although you cannot normally remove capacitance from a system that inherently has more than a particular cartridge demands, it is fairly easy to add what’s necessary to one less.

Advances in cartridge technology are reducing the susceptibility of fixed-coil cartridges to variations in loading and making moving-coil pickups flatter and more sensitive. Given the current state of the art, response within ± 1 dB from 30 Hz to 15 kHz is excellent, and a variation of ± 2 dB over that range is very good.

Next month, I’ll discuss separation, tracking, and distortion.
DESIGN INTEGRITY:
The same Dynamic Servo Tracer tonearm technology found on our $6,200. DP-100M...
Cutting Lathe Motor AC Direct Drive Turntable.

...can be found on our $525. DP-52E...
Microprocessor-controlled Fully Automatic AC Direct Drive Turntable.

...and on our $199. CP-11F.
Fully Automatic Flat-Twin Direct
Drive Compact Turntable.

Instead of gimmicks, the Denon DP-100M uses the same cutting lathe motor that creates crisp masters. Its Dynamic Servo Tracer system, working in concert with a Denon high-precision, ultra-low mass tonearm effectively suppresses resonances while providing the proper damping for the widest variety of cartridges. The same Dynamic Servo Tracer system is incorporated on the DP-52E, making it one of the most effective playback systems ever developed for warped and hard-to-trace records. Damping, arm-skating and tonearm lift/locate are all applied through microprocessor-controlled non-contact electronics. Its AC Servo motor employs the same drive principle and magnetic speed control found on Denon's DP-100M.

The DP-11F introduces Denon design technology to a new price category. It features magnetic speed detection, a Flat-Twin Direct Drive motor and the same Microprocessor-controlled Dynamic Servo Tracer tonearm system found at the very top of our line.

Design Integrity: Denon's products share more than name alone.

Denon America Inc. 2701 8th Dr. Fairfield, N.J. 07006
FM Reach

My present FM tuner is a Scott whose sensitivity and adjacent-station rejection don't even compare with those of my Panasonic RF-4900 multituner radio. Since I prefer to live in the country, I shall probably always want high sensitivity. (Yes, I do use an FM-only deep-fringe rooftop antenna.) And since I live 2,250 feet up a mountain, with an unobstructed line of sight to New York City (100 miles away), I need excellent adjacent-station rejection plus, perhaps, very fine tuning—0.05 or 0.025 MHz per step—to separate all the stations crowded shoulder-to-shoulder on the dial. Is there anything in the $300–500 range that will fit these criteria?—Stewart Dean, Woodstock, N.Y.

First, I hope readers won't start throwing out their Scott tuners because of your experience. The comparison with the Panasonic is unfair; all such radios have a relatively narrow IF bandwidth—specifically to improve selectivity, but at the expense of audio bandwidth and therefore of audible frequency response.

Second, let's clear up the question of adjacent-channel vs. alternate-channel selectivity, since I can't tell which is more important to your "adjacent stations." In any given market, stations may, by FCC proscription, be no closer than 400 kHz—0.4 MHz, or two channels—apart. If only stations in New York City could be received at your aerie, the conventional alternate-channel selectivity figures would tell all that need be known. In all probability, however, you're able to pick up some stations, from other markets, that are only 200 kHz from New York stations—which is "next door" in terms of dial spacing—and some may come booming in with as much signal strength as those in New York. Here, it's adjacent-channel selectivity that is important. Unfortunately, few spec sheets include this parameter. The best I know of is in the new SAE tuner, but it is a little above your price range.

Before pursuing that thought further, however, let's take up the matter of tuning "resolution." It's not really a question of the spacing of the steps in a digital tuner (which obviously is what you have in mind). It's true that with a mechanical tuner and no AFC lock you can sometimes deliberately detune a station in the direction away from an interfering one, improving reception. The fact that you're detuned, however, increases distortion. A better solution, if it's available, is narrowing the IF bandpass characteristic to exclude more of the interfering station without creating any asymmetry in the reception of the tuned station. And even if you had tiny detuning increments, you'd be unlikely to experience much, if any, audible advantage. (See the article on receivers, page 29.)

So switchable IF bandwidth may be of some use to you (though the best adjacent-channel selectivity DSL has ever measured for us is the 12 dB of the Crown FM Two, which has no IF switch). A blend switch to reduce noise on weak broadcasts without killing the stereo separation altogether should be welcome in your location. And published alternate-channel selectivity figures will probably have to be your nearest approximation to the more pertinent adjacent-channel ones for most products.

Bumps in the Night

My system includes a Technics SL-10 turntable with an Audio-Technica AT-152LP cartridge, a Concept receiver, JBL 166A speakers, a DBX 21 record decoder, and two tape decks. About eight months ago, I started buying audiophile records—digital, half-speed masterings, and DBX. A few of the classical records produce annoying thumps through the speakers, even when I play back a tape copy of the record, but not when I listen on my Sony MDR-5a headphones or when I listen to conventionally made records or FM broadcasts.

Since my receiver has no infrasonic filter, I purchased a pair of WARP Knot plug-in filters, but they didn't help. I've had the turntable, the receiver, and the speakers all checked. Not only could they find nothing wrong with them, but when one repair facility played my record on my equipment but with their speakers, the bumps were inaudible. JBL says the problem has to be in the records.

At present, I'm paying $18 apiece for nonreturnable records that are highly unsatisfactory, and I'm disgusted! Do you have any comments or suggestions?—Ralph G. Abbott, Anaheim, Calif.

Not without hazarding a few guesses. It's possible that both your headphones and the repair service's speakers have insufficient deep-bass response to reproduce what is clearly audible in that region on the JBLs. It's also possible that feedback via the surface on which the turntable is mounted is contributing to a problem caused by warp "information" that reaches up beyond the infrasonic range. (Using headphones breaks the feedback "circuit," the repair service doubtless placed the turntable on its own work surface.) So moving the turntable away from your JBLs or placing it on an isolation mat or isolation feet might help. So might careful record storage to prevent warps, of course, though it would be very surprising if the conventional records you've had longer and taken no better care of were to suffer less from warpage than your superdiscs.
MAXELL IS PLEASED TO PRESENT AN EVEN HIGHER PERFORMANCE TAPE.

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.

IT'S WORTH IT.

Circle 12 on Reader-Service Card
Opinion and comment on the changing audio scene

Specs and Tests: A Case of Information vs. Meaning

Once, so long ago that it now seems legendary, a friend told me to beware of harmonic-distortion specs. "It's intermodulation that makes the difference," he confided. "Anybody can get good harmonic-distortion figures, but if you don't see intermodulation listed on the spec sheet, there's probably a good reason for it." Sure enough, with the next few months I became aware that a specsmanship battle was in progress. The better brands were brandishing their low intermodulation figures, while the also-rans were claiming "under 1% distortion" (yes, it was that long ago) and listing only THD on the spec sheets.

Specsmanship has never disappeared since, though the realms in which its skirmishes are fought have been transformed many times over. As recently as a decade ago, for example, many companies were rating their FM tuners solely in terms of usable sensitivity—though how meaningful that figure was, with total harmonic distortion and noise a mere 30 dB below maximum program levels, is another story. Just beyond the rating point, the quieting curves of many products suddenly flattened out; instead of increasing the quieting as signal strength increased for good signal-to-noise ratios under normal listening conditions, they remained noisy even under ideal reception conditions. It took a shift in emphasis away from raw sensitivity and onto the quieting curves and the ultimate quieting figures to bring the listening quality of budget products into line with what was being achieved at the high end.

We flatter ourselves that magazines such as ours have played a major role in keeping specsmanship honest. Often it's a question of "plugging loopholes" by testing parameters that the spec sheets are ducking in whatever era we're talking about—tuner S/N ratios, for example. Sometimes it's a question of variety of approach: testing in a nonstandard way intended to explore a factor that the standard approach tends to obscure. But sometimes it's a question of not documenting a specific that is inherently meaningless or misleading, thus keeping the testing emphasis where it belongs—on the factors that make the real differences between one product and another.

It was with this last consideration in mind, for example, that we made a "shocking" decision in 1979. Beginning in our June issue, we would no longer concern ourselves with distortion figures below 0.01% and we would no longer show distortion curves unless we were dealing with relatively high distortion levels (as in tape equipment) or distortion patterns that were both unusual and significant—and providing that the curve would help to explain the significance. Some readers, of course, thought they were being shortchanged; some still do when they see our reports side-by-side with those in other magazines. But I am convinced that, at least for music-listening purposes, there is no discernable difference between 0.01 and 0.001% steady-state distortion and that to document measurements like "0.0027%" is to mislead the reader into believing that the product will be audibly better than one measuring, say, 0.0083% distortion. If we show both measurements as "<0.01%", their significance becomes plain at once: Distortion is too low to fuzz about.

Distortion curves can be even more confusing for an unwary reader. Before June of 1979, our amplifier distortion curves often showed a huge rise between midrange and ultrahighs, at least in full-power measurements. The immediate impression conveyed by such a curve is one of distorted highs in listening to music, though the amplifier in question might sound very clean. There are two reasons for this disparity. One is that midrange distortion often sinks to such ridiculously low levels that distortion can be much higher at high frequencies without being truly high; the other is that musical program material never demands anything like full power from an amplifier at high frequencies. Even the distortion figures at 0 dBW (1 watt) represent considerable headroom beyond normal power requirements at, say, 10 kHz. So to present these data graphically is to belabor the issue—or, perhaps more accurately, the nonissue. This viewpoint also is the basis for our emphasis on using dBW, instead of the more familiar watts, as the unit of measure for power. If you talk of two amplifiers, one rated at 125 watts and one at 140, the difference appears significant: fifteen watts, right? Well, it is fifteen watts, but it's not significant—as you see immediately when the figures are expressed as 21 and 21 1/2 dBW, respectively. If both are driven to rated power with the same signal, the "larger" model will deliver a barely perceptible 1/2 dB more power. In fact, we don't use divisions smaller than fourths with any units expressed in dB, including dBW, dB SPL, dBf, and so on. The reason is, again, that we don't believe finer distinctions have practical significance in listening to music, and their use therefore strikes us as potentially misleading.

That's not to say that, in making its measurements for our equipment reports, Diversified Science Laboratories doesn't measure anything beyond what you see in the published reports. DSL measures many specifics—output and input impedances of electronics, for example—"just in case"; we comment on such matters in the text when something of substance emerges from such a test, but we see no reason to clutter the page with evidence that what you'd expect to be okay as a matter of course is, in fact, satisfactory.

Then there are measurements that we try to predigest for you. A good example is speaker impedance: DSL gives us a plot of impedance versus frequency that we use as a basis for discussion, but that we don't actually reproduce. Reference-level response curves in tape equipment are another example. They give important clues to how a recorder will treat high-level high-frequency transients, but they represent what you will hear less directly than do the more conventional curves, made at a level 20 dB lower. Therefore, we reproduce the latter and only comment on the former.

It is one of the conceits of audio that if you make enough measurements you can say all there is to say about any piece of equipment. In my view, that premise is wrong on two counts. First, we're always finding new technical perspectives from which to perceive the virtues or failings of stereo equipment. And, in the final analysis, too much information can obscure the truth as badly as too little.
A Triumphant Debut for B&O/Dolby HX Professional

The Beocord 9000 is not only the finest deck we've ever tested from this redoubtable Danish company, but one of the best decks available from any company. Superficially, it's indistinguishable from the 8000 (test report, November 1980), whose elaborate timer/indexing/real-time-counter/mememory system it shares. But just a look at the response curves tells you that this is an exceptionally competent deck, even though they don't show some of the sophisticated details that set the 9000 apart from the 8000 and other lesser decks.

Foremost among the innovations, of course, is the HX Professional circuit, developed by B&O and available to other companies as well via Dolby license. Dolby Laboratories developed the original HX system, which uses the control voltage in the Dolby B chip to sense the presence of high-level high-frequency signal components. Using this information, the HX circuit adjusts both bias and recording equalization to forestall the onset of saturation and self-erasure. In other words, HX permits you to load the tape with more signal at very high frequencies before audible compression sets in. At least that's the way it works in theory, though the decks with the original HX circuit that we tested only partially justified the claims. HX Professional is similar, but with a significant difference: The signal itself is evaluated after all processing—both noise reduction and recording EQ—has been applied to it (so the adjustment is made on the basis of what's actually going onto the tape, rather than...
what should theoretically be going there) and bias is adjusted to keep the total high-
frequency signal delivered to the tape constant in level. Thus, high-level signals at high frequencies are conceived as part of the total bias influencing the tape.

Another important new feature in the 9000 is the tape-matching system. The 9000 automatically senses Type 1, 2, and 4 tapes (ferric, “chrome,” and metal, respectively) and has a manual override setting at which both ferric and “chrome” pilots are lit and the deck is set for ferrichrome (Type 3) tapes. (Incidentally, these tape-type pilots are visible through windows in the cover, so you can double-check the setting even with the cover closed.) In addition, there’s an automatic adjustment with optional storage for each tape type. When you don’t direct the deck to adjust itself for the particular tape that’s in the well, it will follow the information you’ve stored for that general tape type. There is no built-in generalized setting to fall back on. Because the 9000 has no provision for monitoring, you can’t even hear the source signal from the deck’s output while you are recording. The transport returns the tape following its adjustment—and even cues up just past the end of the leader, if you’ve begun at the very beginning, and switches expectantly into the recording/pause mode, ready for action, when it’s finished. The actual adjustment program is uniquely sophisticated. Bias is optimized individually for the two channels, and in addition to recording-EQ and sensitivity (Dolby-tracking) adjustments, there is one for distortion. This last is used to calibrate the meters for 2–3% THD at the 0-dB indication, making the metering tape-responsive in a way we have never before encountered anywhere. In addition, the metering is weighted; the idea is that the onset of the red portion should correlate to the onset of overload no matter what tape is in use or what the spectral content of the signal may be. This may be the 9000’s best feature.

This ambitious radicalism is consistent with B&O’s traditional attitude that its customers don’t have to—that the engineering should be left to the engineers and not foisted onto the recordist. Our first reaction to the design, however, was that what it simplified in one area it compensated for with added complexities elsewhere. With more familiarity, however, we have come to the conclusion that we are the victims of the engineers and not the engineering itself for the particular tape that’s in the well, it will follow the information you’ve stored for that general tape type. There is no built-in generalized setting to fall back on. Because the 9000 has no provision for monitoring, you can’t even hear the source signal from the deck’s output while you are recording. The transport returns the tape following its adjustment—and even cues up just past the end of the leader, if you’ve begun at the very beginning, and switches expectantly into the recording/pause mode, ready for action, when it’s finished. The actual adjustment program is uniquely sophisticated. Bias is optimized individually for the two channels, and in addition to recording-EQ and sensitivity (Dolby-tracking) adjustments, there is one for distortion. This last is used to calibrate the meters for 2–3% THD at the 0-dB indication, making the metering tape-responsive in a way we have never before encountered anywhere. In addition, the metering is weighted; the idea is that the onset of the red portion should correlate to the onset of overload no matter what tape is in use or what the spectral content of the signal may be. This may be the 9000’s best feature.

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A Quick Guide to Tape Types

Our tape classifications, Type 0 through 4, are based primarily on the International Electrotechnical Commission measurement standards. Type 0 tapes represent "ground zero," in that they follow the original Philips-based DIN spec. They are ferric tapes, called LN (low-noise) by some manufacturers, requiring minimum (nominal 100%) bias and the original, "standard" 120-microsecond playback equalization. Though they include the "garden variety" formulations, the best are capable of excellent performance at moderate cost in decks that are well matched to them.

Type 1 (IEC Type I) tapes are ferric requiring the same 120-microsecond playback EQ but somewhat higher bias. They sometimes are styled LH (low-noise, high-output) formulations or "premium ferric.

Type 2 (IEC Type II) tapes are intended for use with 70-microsecond playback EQ and higher recording bias (nominal 150%). The first formulations of this sort used chromium dioxide, today they also include chrome-compatible coatings such as the ferrocobalts.

Type 3 (IEC Type III) tapes are dual-layered ferrichrome, implying the 70-microsecond ("chrome") playback EQ. Approaches to their biasing and recording EQ vary somewhat from one deck manufacturer to another.

Type 4 (IEC Type IV) are the metal-particle, or "alloy" tapes, requiring the highest bias of all and retaining the 70-microsecond EQ of Type 2.

Phase "Dynamic Duo" In One Package

Phase Linear DRS-250 Integrated amplifier.

Dimensions: 17½ by 34 inches (front panel), 13 inches deep plus clearance for AC convenience outlets; two switched (500 watts max.), one unswitched (1,000 watts max.). Price: $975. Warranty: "limited," three years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Phase Linear Corp., 201/2 48th Ave. West, Lynnwood, Wash. 98036.

RATED POWER
17 dBW (50 watts)-channel

OUTPUT AT CLIPPING (both channels driven)
8-ohm load 21½ dBW (140 watts)-channel
4-ohm load 21½ dBW (140 watts)-channel
16-ohm load 20½ dBW (105 watts)-channel

DYNAMIC HEADROOM (re: rated power, 8-ohm load) +6 dB

Notes:

Phase Linear DRS-250 is not only the sole integrated amp in the new line, it is the first integrated amp ever from Phase Linear, to create products equal to the standards created by the dynamics of modern recordings—digital or otherwise. The DRS-250 is the central issue raised by the new Phase Linear line of amplifiers. The DRS designation actually stands for Dynamic Range System, specifying the proprietary amplifier design by means of which operating dynamic range is increased considerably beyond that implied by the continuous power rating. The intent, according to Phase Linear, is to create products equal to the demands created by the dynamics of modern recordings—digital or otherwise.

IF WE ARE TO TAKE the manufacturer's word for it—and manufacturers have been known to miss the point of their own designs on occasion—dynamic headroom is the central issue raised by the new Phase Linear line of amplifiers. The DRS designation actually stands for Dynamic Range System, specifying the proprietary amplifier design by means of which operating dynamic range is increased considerably beyond that implied by the continuous power rating. The intent, according to Phase Linear, is to create products equal to the demands created by the dynamics of modern recordings—digital or otherwise.

The DRS-250 is not only the sole integrated amp in the new line, it is the first integrated amp ever from Phase Linear. If you want to use it as separate amp and preamp sections, you can: There are jumpers on the back panel for this purpose as well as for making outboard-processor connections. Front-panel features include tape dubbing in either direction between the two decks for which there are connections, a 20-dB MUTE, a tone-bypass option, and dual-turnover bass and treble controls. The radical options of the latter—100 Hz in the bass and 6.5 kHz in the treble—tweak only the frequency extremes; the alternate settings (250 Hz and 3 kHz, respectively) deliver more conventional tone-control operation. Maximum cut and boost in all options runs about 10 dB—meaning that exaggerated effects are traded for finer control within their moderate range. The LOUDNESS simply adds about 6 dB to the response in the deep bass (particularly below 100 Hz) relative to the treble. The filters are not sharp enough to be supereffective; that for the highs takes only a gentle, but useful bite from the audible range, while the infrasonic...
A High-Value Three-Way from AR


Manufacturer: Acoustic Research (division of Teledyne), 10 American Drive, Norwood, Mass. 02062.

WHEN WE TESTED the AR-28s almost a year ago (July 1981), it was the middle child in a family of three two-way loudspeakers, dubbed by their maker the Super Value line. The family has now grown by two, with the addition of the AR-48s reviewed here and the just introduced AR-58s. Both are three-way designs with their drivers mounted in a vertical line on the front baffle for best imaging. But where the Model 58s uses a 12-inch acoustic suspension woofer, a 1½-inch dome midrange, and a ¾-inch dome tweeter (reminiscent of the old AR-3a and the AR-11), the Model 48s uses a 10-inch acoustic suspension woofer, a 4-inch acoustic-suspension midrange, and a 1-inch dome tweeter (more like the AR-12 of a few years ago). Crossovers in the 48s are at 400 Hz and 2.5 kHz. The baffle, which is recessed slightly from the front lip of the enclosure, is normally concealed by a removable black fabric grille. Amplifier connections are made to a pair of color-coded spring clips inset in the back panel. There are (wisely, in our view) no driver-level or response-shaping controls of any kind.

AR's technical specifications indicate that this speaker is intended for use away from corners on a shelf or the floor with its back against a wall. The user's manual specifically recommends placement at ear level for best results and floor placement as a good second choice. Measurements made by Diversified Science Laboratories suggest the opposite, however. Although the frequency response curves DSL obtained with the 48s elevated were quite good, moving the speaker down to the floor effected a notable improvement in smoothness, especially in the midrange. For that reason, all lab and listening tests were performed with the speakers so positioned.

Sensitivity of the AR-48s proves to be high (especially for an acoustic suspension speaker), as does power-handling ability. On 300-Hz tone bursts, it took the full output of DSL's amplifier (69 volts peak, equivalent to 27½ dBW, or 595 watts, into 8 ohms) without distress. Based on the measured sensitivity, that translates into a very loud calculated peak sound pressure level of 117½ dB at 1 meter. As one would expect from a good three-way system, distortion is quite low. At a moderate output of 85 dB SPL, total harmonic distortion never exceeds ½% above 50 Hz and reaches a maximum of only 3% at 30 Hz—remarkable performance for so low a frequency. At 90 dB SPL, THD rises slightly, especially at the frequency extremes (reaching 4% at 30 Hz and 1½% at 10 kHz), but from 80 Hz to 6 kHz it stays below 1½% and at many frequencies is less than ½%. Only at a very loud level of 100 dB SPL does the 48s start to give up, with distortion reaching almost 10% at the top and bottom of DSL's test spectrum (30 Hz to 10 kHz) and just below the 400-Hz midrange/woofer crossover. Overall, these are excellent results.

The 48s has an unusually smooth impedance curve with a maximum of 14.6 ohms at 50 Hz (the woofer's resonance frequency) and a minimum of 4.2 ohms at about 750 Hz. To get a better idea of the average impedance in the frequency range of most musical information. DSL has

filter shaves off a bit in the deep rumble range as well as reducing frequencies that are below audibility. The phono inputs already have some infrasonic filtering, to which the switchable filter adds its effect. (Note that our frequency-response figures are measured through the band-limited preamp; the power section, considered by itself, is exceedingly broadband.)

The power amplifier section measures very well, with one exception—where it is superb. That exception is the dynamic headroom, of course; the 6 dB shown in our data is the champion figure since we began testing this parameter a few years ago. Since the rated continuous power is 50 watts (17 dBW), the added 6 dB puts the effective instantaneous power with musical signals at 23 dBW, or the equivalent of 200 watts. The actual midrange clipping levels on steady-state signals are not far below this level; even with a 16-ohm load, the DRS-250 will pump out more than 20 dBW (100 watts), and of course the figures are higher for the other two standard loads.

Gain in the amplifier is higher than usual (to make best use of the added dynamic range, according to a company spokesman), with the result that sensitivity measures higher than usual (that is, the numbers are lower), but the noise figures suffer commensurately. There is no cause for complaint here, however—just cause for comment. Also unusual, but not of any real significance, is the fact that high-frequency distortion is very slightly higher at 0 dBW (1 watt) than at full rated power.

Whether you're concerned with dynamic power capabilities, preamplifier flexibility, or just overall specifications, the DRS-250 gives you essentially what you might expect to find in Phase Linear separates—except, of course, that it's all in one package. The central property of the design—its dynamic range—is out of the ordinary, but the rest of the design certainly is not pedestrian, even by contrast to the 250's "beauty spot."
Sony's "Musical" Moving-Coil Pickup


FREQUENCY RESPONSE & CHANNEL SEPARATION (test record: JVC TRS-1007 Mk. II)

To Order Test Report Reprints, send us a letter with the following information: the type of product, the name of the product, the model number, manufacturer, and the issue in which the test report appeared. Also enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope and send to Test Report Reprints, High Fidelity, 825 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019. Requests for 3 or less reprints will be filed free-of-charge.
record, the separation appears good, but not exceptional; in the listening room, the stereo perspective is excellent: firm, precise, and distinct.

We hesitated to call the XL-44L "musical" only because that term has sometimes been used to cover certain sins (notably, a want of high-frequency response or an excess of even harmonics); but it is what might be called a "good listening" cartridge. For a moving-coil model, it's not expensive by today's standards (though if your system does not already include a head amp or step-up transformer, you'll have to invest in one), making it a good value among its peers, in our opinion.

**Pioneer's Receiver for the Eighties**


**FM tuner section**

**MONO FREQUENCY RESPONSE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HF</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>20</th>
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**STEREO RESPONSE & CHANNEL SEPARATION**

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</table>

Frequency response

- L ch: +1 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz; 0 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz; -3 dB, 20 Hz to 7.5 kHz; -27 dB, 20 Hz to 14.5 kHz
- R ch: +1 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz; 0 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz; -3 dB, 20 Hz to 7.5 kHz; -27 dB, 20 Hz to 14.5 kHz

Channel separation

- L ch: +1 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz; 0 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz; -3 dB, 20 Hz to 7.5 kHz; -27 dB, 20 Hz to 14.5 kHz
- R ch: +1 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz; 0 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz; -3 dB, 20 Hz to 7.5 kHz; -27 dB, 20 Hz to 14.5 kHz

If you are unaware how Pioneer has moved into the Eighties by revamping its entire component line, you simply haven't been paying attention. (For remedial reading, try our review on the A-5 integrated amp in January and on the CT-9R cassette deck in March.) Now we come to the SX-7 receiver, replete with the sort of electronic controls that are fast becoming the hallmark of our era. Though Pioneer's management of sizes, shapes, and colors prevents the front panel from looking cluttered, there is a lot on it to examine.

The AM/FM digital frequency-synthesis tuner has memories for eight stations on each band. (The front panel can be fitted with frequency identification for each preset; Pioneer provides sheets of inserts that cover the entire gamut of station assignments.) Scanning and stepping progress in 100-kHz increments on the FM band, 10-kHz intervals in AM. (The latter can be changed to 9 kHz, should you move to an area requiring it, thanks to a back-panel switch.) There is the usual single switch to defeat the mute and impose the mono mode, for reception of weak FM stations. Curiously, the mono function combines channels only at the output of the preamp section; if you're recording, the stereo and the noise go onto the tape. This plan does make the mono mode available to other inputs without requiring a second switch, but combining channels in playback won't always get you as quiet or undistorted a result as you would have if you recorded in mono in the first place.

There is provision for two decks (TAPE 2 is also marked for "adapter" connections, for an outboard signal processor), and dubbing from 1 to 2 is possible via a front-panel switch. There is a single phono input pair, but it can be switched at the front panel for either moving-coil (MC) or fixed-coil (moving-magnet, or MM, etc.) cartridges. The AUX is also marked "video"—certainly an indication not only of things to come from Pioneer Video (which recently assumed at least temporary control of the world's laser video disc production), but also of the growing interest in stereo sound on all television fronts.

All this is manipulated by microprocessor switching and volume setting. (The tone controls operate, in conventional fashion, in a feedback loop that is part of the DC Non-Switching Vari-Bias amplifier.) It is, of course, digital technology that makes possible all those station memories. It also both requires (because there's no volume knob) and provides a volume-preset memory that resets the receiver to your normal listening level when you turn it on, no matter what volume vagary you might have indulged in at the last listening. And the microprocessor adds an ancillary function: multiple readouts in what otherwise would be a tuning device. When you touch the volume, for example, the SX-7's numerical display automatically converts to that function, showing the setting as a number between 0 and 31. And when you turn
At the heart of the SX-7 is a microprocessor that enables push pads to displace the usual rotary volume control. Shown above are the volume-control pads and the preset switch that lets you program in the volume setting to which the SX-7 will automatically return every time you turn it on.

As you might expect, the increments of the volume control are much more regular than is typical of the detented rotary controls so common in recent years. This regularity, plus the opportunity for good tracking between channels, are the justifying consideration for such a control, though the taper of Pioneer's control presented us with a minor inconvenience. Toward the top of the range, the steps are very small—the top twelve steps cover just ¾ dB—but in the middle of the range, where our measurements were made and our listening was done, the steps run 5 or 6 dB apart, which we judged a bit coarse. The shelving tone controls are gentle, but effective, with about ±10 dB of range. The LOUDNESS, too, is gentle, with some boost in the extreme treble as well as in the bass. The infrasonic filter nibles very little from the audible range, but is only moderately effective below it.

The response and channel separation of the FM section are excellent, and the capture ratio is outstanding. In other respects, the tuner data are merely respectable. The section evidently is conceived with urban or suburban listening in mind, however, since the muting threshold is on the high side, and the first of the three LEDs that constitute the signal-strength display only begins to light at 33 dB—completely ignoring the range just below, which is critical for optimum mono reception in "fringy" areas.

Despite the obvious qualities and capabilities of the receiver, we must confess to some disappointment. Good as the SX-7 is, it doesn't strike us as the sort of exceptional product for its intended market that the last two Pioneer models we've looked into have been. Maybe we're becoming jaded about microprocessors, or maybe the negative comments of old-timers who miss knobs to twirl are getting to us. Either would be a pity, because there are real virtues to the new receiver technology that promise more capability for fewer dollars in this new generation of equipment than in its predecessors. And the SX-7 is unequivocally a child of the microprocessor generation.

Circle 96 on Reader-Service Card

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**CONVERSION TABLE FOR POWER OUTPUT**

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<td>8.0</td>
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**INPUT CHARACTERISTICS (re 0 dBW; A-weighting)**

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<th>5% ratio</th>
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<tr>
<td>aux</td>
<td>22 mV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fixed-coil phone</td>
<td>0.35 mV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moving-coil phone</td>
<td>32 µV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PHONO OVERLOAD (1-kHz clipping)**

| feedback-coil phone | 155 mV |
| moving-coil phone   | 14 mV  |

**PHONO IMPEDANCE**

| fixed-coil phone | 48.3k ohms; 230 pF |
| moving-coil phone | 100 ohms |

**DAMPING FACTOR (at 50 Hz)**

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<tr>
<td>110</td>
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**INFRASONIC FILTER**

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<tr>
<th>-3 dB at 18 Hz; 6 dB/octave</th>
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**FM SENSITIVITY & QUIETING**

- Mono sensitivity (for 50-dB noise suppression) 16½ dB at 98 kHz
- Stereo sensitivity (for 50-dB noise suppression) 39 dB at 98 kHz, with 0.7% THD+N (40½ dB at 90 MHz; 38½ dB at 100 MHz)

**HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD + N)**

- at 1 kHz: Stereo 18½ dBW (60 watts)
- at 5 kHz: Mono 17½ dBW (50 watts)/channel

**S/N ratio**

- Mono 90 dBW (1 watt)/channel
- Stereo 80 dBW (1 watt)/channel

**Amplifier section**

- OUTPUT AT CLIPPING (both channels driven): 19 dBW (78 watts)/channel
- 8-ohm load: Mono 16½ dBW (71 watts)/channel
- 16-ohm load: Mono 17 dBW (60 watts)/channel

**DYNAMIC HEADROOM**

- 8-ohm load: +2 dB re 17½ dBW (60 watts)

**HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD; 20 Hz to 20 kHz)**

- at 17½ dBW (60 watts): ≤ 0.085% at 0 dBW (1 watt): ≤ 0.015%

**FREQUENCY RESPONSE**

- +0, -1 dB, 20 Hz to 37.3 kHz
- +0, -3 dB, 10 Hz to 96.4 kHz

**RIAA EQUALIZATION**

- fixed-coil phono +1/4 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz; -7½ dB at 5 kHz
- moving-coil phono +1/4 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz; -7½ dB at 5 kHz

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**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.
Automation and Beyond from JVC

JVC L-F71 automatic turntable, including sensing pickup with elliptical stylus. Dimensions: 16 1/2 by 14 1/2 inches (top plate), 4 1/2 inches high with lid closed; additional 10 1/2 inches vertically and 1 1/2 inches at back needed to open lid fully. Price: $350; optional RM-71 remote control, $50. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: Victor Company, Japan; U.S. distributor: JVC Corporation, 41 Slater Dr., Elmwood Park, N.J. 07407.

SPEED ACCURACY no measurable error at either speed, 105-127 VAC, when set exact at 120 VAC.

PITCH CONTROL RANGE
at 33 rpm +9.0, -7.4%
at 45 rpm +12.5, -9.7%

WOW & FLUTTER (ANSI/IEEE weighted peak) ±0.04% average: ±0.07% max.

TOTAL AUDIBLE RUMBLE -69 dB

TONEARM RESONANCE & DAMPING (with supplied cartridge)
vertical 9.6 Hz; 11 db rise
lateral 12.25 Hz; 7 1/2 db rise

STYLUS-GAUGE ACCURACY 0.1 below measured VTF. 0.5 to 3.0 grams

TOTAL LEAD CAPACITANCE 90 pF

Supplied pickup

FREQUENCY RESPONSE & CHANNEL SEPARATION (test record: JVC TRS-1007 Mk. II) dB

Channel separation >20 dB, 20 Hz to 5 kHz; ≥15 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz

SENSITIVITY (1 kHz) 1.04 mV/cm/sec

CHANNEL BALANCE (1 kHz) ±1/4 dB

MAXIMUM TRACKING LEVEL (re RIAA 0 VU; 1 1/4 gr.) lateral ≥+15 dB
vertical ≥+12 dB

IN THE TOTAL SPECTRUM of automation available in today's turntables, JVC's L-F71 falls somewhere between the "fully automatic" (as some manufacturers style the models that will cue themselves up to the beginning of a record and shut themselves off at the end) and the "superautomatic" (those with random programming capability). All the automatic functions—including REPEAT—are available here. In addition, you can pick any track from one to ten, press TRACK that number of times, and the arm will go straight to the chosen band and play the remainder of the record.

An optical sensor built into the pickup accomplishes this feat. And because the sensing is possible only thanks to the pickup that JVC supplies with the turntable, the lab measured the L-F71 as a complete ensemble. (If you don't want the sensing function and wish to use a conventional pickup, you may not want to pay for the extras that come with the L-F71.) The cartridge mounting—via a plug-in shell for the straight-tube tonearm—is standard, however, and will thus accept just about any pickup. (JVC premounts the supplied cartridge, so you needn't worry about overhang; if you replace it with another model, you'll have to measure overhang distance without benefit of a gauge, since none is supplied.

There are a number of adjustments in addition to the usual counterweight VTF calibration and arm-base antiskating dial (which on the L-F71 has separate scales for spherical and elliptical stylus). In the tone-arm support there is an arm-height adjustment screw, and at the back of the arm base is a set-down position adjustment. At the back of the top plate is a sensitivity adjustment for the optical sensor, while other niceties are an easily removable dust cover and a jack that accepts an accessory remote control, which we did not test.

The turntable acquitted itself very well in tests at Diversified Science Laboratories. The adjustment range at both speeds is more than a half-tone above and below normal speed, which is generous. The arm/cartridge resonance is within the range considered ideal. Response is quite flat, and separation about average. More to the point, the L-F71 sounds good and works well, giving us no trouble with standard records. (However, the optical sensor cannot be expected to give reliable results with light-colored vinyl or picture records, as the manuals warn.)

Obviously, the key issue here is weighing the convenience of the JVC's track-finding feature against the traditional prerogative of choosing your own cartridge. In theory, a pickup and an arm that are designed for each other should deliver better results than mix-or-match serendipity, however good the individual ingredients, making the option of choice a questionable virtue. So if you want the semiprogrammability that JVC offers, it may be worth a little loss of buying flexibility.

*Circle 99 on Reader-Service Card*
A New Generation of Receivers

Advanced technologies—digital and otherwise—are transforming the features and performance of today's receivers.

by Leonard Feldman

Observing the evolution of stereo receiver technology is somewhat like watching friends grow older: You don't notice the gradual changes, but a ten-year-old photo makes it immediately apparent that they have taken place. Superficially, the modern stereo receiver seems pretty much the same multiple-function audio component it has been for the last decade or two. But if you own a receiver that's more than a few years old, compare its features and performance with those of recent receivers from the leading manufacturers—the differences will be clear both to your eyes and to your ears. There have been significant technical advances made in the three basic elements of stereo receivers: tuners, preamp/control sections, and power amplifiers.

Tuner Circuit Improvements

The most sweeping tuner circuit innovation in recent years has been frequency synthesis. Normally, a frequency-synthesis tuning system will provide an illuminated digital frequency readout, but that is its least important aspect. (In fact, a tuner may display frequencies digitally without using frequency-synthesis circuitry at all.) The chief virtue of frequency synthesis is, very simply, tuning accuracy.

Unlike conventional mechanical tuners, which use a variable capacitor to select stations, frequency-synthesis tuners are governed by a quartz-crystal oscillator, which can be accurate to 0.003%. This is important because even a slight degree of FM mistuning causes high levels of distortion. In other words, those impressively low distortion figures quoted in manufacturers' brochures apply only if the tuner is precisely tuned to the center of the FM channel. Of course, it is possible to adjust a mechanical tuner properly, but because accurate tuning depends on an often-misaligned meter or some other fallible indicator—or, in many instances, on your ears—it's easy to end up with some amount of mistuning and the attendant distortion. Because the distortion that results from slight mistuning shows up only during the loudest program peaks, all may appear well if you mistune during relatively quiet passages, but crescendos will quickly demonstrate the inaccuracies. Frequency-synthesis tuning, on the other hand, makes such subtle—but nonetheless annoying—errors impossible.

An ancillary benefit of frequency synthesis is the ability to preset the frequencies of favorite stations for instant recall. Backup batteries or, in some cases, storage-capacitor circuits “remember” these instructions even if the line power is cut off for long periods of time. However, frequency-synthesis tuning as originally introduced was not without its drawbacks. Although it added a measure of convenience and ensured highly accurate tuning, it was incapable of delivering as high a signal-to-noise ratio as conventional tuners. In addition, early frequency-synthesis tuners were often highly susceptible to overload from strong incoming signals, causing other forms of audible distortion. These problems have now been overcome by the use of improved tuning devices (known as varactor diodes), the adoption of higher crystal-controlled reference frequencies in the frequency-synthesizing circuits, and the introduction of new solid-state devices that can handle stronger radio-frequency signals without overloading.

Another recent development in tuner design is how manufacturers approach the
question of selectivity. Alternate-channel selectivity is a measure of how well a tuner rejects signals 400 kHz, or the width of two channels, away from the desired signal, and in the past most designers strove for the highest possible rating. But with the proliferation of FM stations in metropolitan areas and the relative scarcity of FM signals in many rural regions, it has become increasingly apparent that higher selectivity is not always better. As Fig. 1 shows, higher selectivity usually requires a narrower passband, or bandwidth, in a tuner’s critical IF (intermediate frequency) section. Especially for stereo transmissions (and even for some mono signals), modulation levels may exceed the IF bandwidth if the selectivity is ultrahigh. The result is increased distortion.

Conversely, if the IF bandwidth were to be made very wide, reducing selectivity, distortion would be significantly lower, but then in crowded-signal areas interference from adjacent or alternate channels (located 200 and 400 kHz away, respectively) might become intrusively audible. In the past, designers tried to solve the problem by compromising—by choosing an intermediate selectivity characteristic that would work reasonably well in most situations. Now, thanks to low-cost, permanently aligned solid-state IF filters and integrated circuits and other refinements that reduce overall costs, some receivers offer literally tunable selectivity for the ear’s altered “frequency response” at low listening levels. By offering a separate, continuously variable loudness control in addition to the volume, some receivers now provide meaningful loudness compensation that can be set to do the job the circuit was intended to do.

With interest in home recording much more intense than it was a decade ago, receiver manufacturers have also devised more elaborate signal-control and switching features for stereo playback and tape recording. For example, some receivers now have four pairs of tape-monitor circuits. These allow you to listen to one program source (records, for example), while recording from another (FM, say, or a second tape deck). Front-panel switches that facilitate dubbing from deck to deck routinely show up on current receivers, as do two (and sometimes even three) tape-monitor circuits.

Recognizing that simple bass and treble controls often can’t achieve the kind of overall frequency shaping that many critical listeners want, receiver manufacturers have devised more sophisticated tone-control systems. These include variable-turnover tone controls that—along with associated isobaric selector switches—provide a choice of “hinge” frequencies at which bass or treble boost or cut begins. More elaborate tone-tailing schemes range from the addition of a midrange control to the incorporation of a five-band graphic equalizer. Such complex systems are now practical, thanks to the development of coil-lesss so-called “gyrator” inductance circuits based on modern integrated-circuit operational amplifiers (IC op amps).

Frequency response is also a hot issue in phono-preamp design. Although some pickup makers might be reluctant to admit it, differences in the loading or termination of the cartridge output are often more

[Diagram]

Frequency-synthesis tuning is the most sweeping innovation.
Responsible for variations in sound quality than are differences in design. All high-impedance magnetic phono cartridges (this includes most fixed-coil—i.e., moving-magnet and moving-iron—pickups) are designed to work into an optimum load resistance (usually 47,000 ohms) in parallel with an optimum amount of capacitance.

In the last few years, however, following the example of some makers of separate preamps and integrated amps, a number of receiver manufacturers have begun to provide a switch (usually on the back panel) that selects one of several loading capacitances. Even if you’re not sure of the ideal value, you will hear a difference as you flip through the available choices, and you can choose the load that yields the sound you think is best. In addition, more manufacturers than ever before are including infrasonic filters in their receivers to block signals generated by warped records and the like before they have a chance to waste amplifier power, increase distortion, and possibly even damage speakers.

**Refined Power Amplifiers**

Happily, the receiver wattage race that was at its peak a couple of years ago has given way to more sensible and meaningful improvements in power-amplifier circuit designs. To be sure, many manufacturers are still obsessed with the idea of being able to add another zero or two after the decimal point when they rate the harmonic distortion of their products. (Can anyone really believe that 0.002% distortion is *audibly* lower than 0.02%?) [See “Sound Views” on Page 20 of this issue for more on this subject.—Ed.] Furthermore, most of these miniscule distortion specs apply to the amp’s maximum rated output, even though few of us listen to receivers operating at or near their maximum output levels other than during rare momentary musical peaks. A more sensible goal is low distortion at the low power levels that are typical in most listening situations.

Although available under a variety of names, most of the simulated Class A power circuits aim for just that. By way of background, a true Class A circuit has its output devices arranged so that they conduct a constant, high level of electrical current at all times. Because they are never switched completely off, the audio signals they amplify don’t acquire the “glitches” or discontinuities referred to as switching or notch distortion (see Fig. 2), which are added by conventional Class B or Class AB amplifiers.

Unfortunately, true Class A circuits are highly inefficient, wasting enormous amounts of energy in the form of heat—and therefore requiring expensive, oversized heat sinks. Accordingly, most designers opt for Class B or Class AB power amps, particularly for receivers, and simply try to minimize the inherent distortion. They have been so successful at this effort that it is extremely unlikely you will ever hear switching or notch distortion, even though they are greatest at low power levels.

Still, to reduce that possibility to the absolute minimum, several manufacturers have come up with power-output circuits that behave very much like Class A amplifiers. Their transistors are always in a state of conduction (and therefore cannot introduce switching distortion), but they retain the efficiency of Class B circuits.

Some companies have developed amplifiers that are even more efficient than Class B circuits. These have been given such names as Class D, Class G, and Class H by their respective originators. (The Class C, E, and F designations have already been assigned to amplifier circuits unsuitable for audio equipment.) Usually these high-efficiency systems use “stepping” power supplies that provide only the amount of power the amplifier needs at a given moment, based on the instantaneous signal level.

Finally, new approaches to negative feedback and new types of feedback circuits have found their way into receiver amplifier sections. Most of these designs are aimed at countering certain very subtle types of distortion, especially at very high frequencies. And more and more manufacturers have been building high-current amplifiers to handle low-impedance and other difficult loudspeaker loads that might cause distortion or even output-stage failure in less conservatively designed receivers.

Overall, there’s little question that today’s receivers pack more sophisticated circuitry and features into less cubic space for less money (even discounting inflation) than the receivers that seemed almost perfect just a few short years ago. Better yet, this evolution should continue.
Autosound '82: Sophistication and Convenience

Improved stereo imaging and more versatile controls lead the way in this spring's new car stereo models.

by Gary Stock

They say that readers of high fidelity magazines aren't interested in the business side of audio, so I'll refrain from comment on the event that gave birth to the report you're reading—the 1982 Winter Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. I won't mention the spectacle: floor space equal to that of a Madison Square Garden, jammed to the rafters with people and about 40,000 different pieces of electronic hardware. I'll pass over the hot-air balloons drifting overhead, the talking robots, the magicians, and the hundreds of smiling hostesses in Lurex, satin, and gold lame; I'll ignore the full-size houses erected as set pieces for audio and video equipment, only to be torn down a week later.

I'll also dismiss without comment the indescribable Naugahyde Xanadu of Las Vegas; the mind-numbing din of a two-block-long casino in full swing at midnight, the sad-eyed Keno players, and the flashy cowboy high rollers. I won't even discuss the huge adjacent parking lot packed cheek-by-jowl with dozens of gleaming exotic cars, ranging from Ferraris to custom Porsches to gullwing DeLoreans, all literally shaking from the power of the megawatt supersound systems installed for promotional purposes. I guess "they" are right: Gary Stock is a free-lance audio/video writer and auto buff.

Talking about business and how it's conducted is all too dull. I'll leave the human drama and the spectacle for the movies and keep my nose to the hardware.

A Genuine Stereo Image

The big news for automotive sound buffs is the arrival of what might be called the second stage of autosound development—the evolution of mobile sound systems that produce a real stereo image and sense of depth. Stage one (where we've been since the popularization of car stereo systems in the early Seventies) gave us bass and volume—often in distressing quantities—pumped into our ears and spines via banks of speakers aimed to catch the listener in a multidirectional barrage of sound. If it didn't hurt, it wasn't high fidelity. But this year brought a number of advancements that render music-in-motion far more natural in its depiction of a sonic "stage" with left-to-right and depth perspectives.

Most ballyhooed was Sony's demonstration of its Soundfield components, performed in the sumptuous burled-walnut-and-leather interior of a Rolls-Royce. The Soundfield system uses a conventional Sony AM/FM/cassette unit and multiple amplifiers connected to an array of carefully placed individual drivers: a pair of rear-mounted subwoofers that reproduce nondirectional deep-bass tones and either two or four midrange and treble drivers in the front of the vehicle.

The idea is to generate a conventional lateral stereo image at the front of the car by mounting the smaller mid- and high-frequency units on or near the dash in the same basic arrangement used for home music systems. The woofers supply oomph at the low end without betraying their specific locations, and the listener perceives the sonic image (or field, if you will) as emanating from the area of the hood. It's a much more natural arrangement than the "surround sound" of most traditional auto stereo systems—and, depending on the configuration, it's not too expensive.

High-end companies such as Audiomobile and Spectron have been using the individual satellite speaker approach for years in their multikilobuck custom systems, so it's not surprising that several other outfits would develop refinements on the theme more or less simultaneously. ADS, for instance, has introduced an innovative component speaker system called the 320i (catchy number—where have I seen it before?), which consists of a flush-mount bass/midrange driver with a high-tech cover plate, a passive crossover network, and a bayonet-mount dome treble unit the size of...
a pocket snuffbox. The treble drivers are small enough to be mounted on most car dashes or center consoles, thus enabling them to generate a convincing frontal sound stage. The 320i can also be combined with the ADS CX-400 subwoofer system to yield a setup similar to Sony's.

Another equally well constructed embodiment of the concept is found in Epicure's three-way LS-64I and LS-841 component speaker systems (the distinction is in the size of the subwoofers), both of which use a midrange/tweeter module mounted on a single plate plus dual separate subwoofers. And one more exceptionally sleek rendering of the satellite speaker theme comes from an autosound newcomer called Classic Research, which has developed satellite subwoofer and midrange/treble modules that—though angled perfectly for optimum imaging—nestle snugly and unobtrusively into the interiors of a limited range of pricey sports/luxury machines. They've got enclosures for the BMW 320i, Mercedes 450SL, Porsche 911 and 930, Chevrolet Corvette, and Ferrari 308 GTS/GTB, but probably not for my neighbor's 1966 Rambler Marlin.

"Smarter" Electronics

Microprocessors and other digital integrated circuits—those versatile but inexpensive small computers that are turning up in many home receivers and amplifiers—are finding their way into a new generation of smarter automotive electronics. Most of the major car stereo suppliers have at least one model with a skip button that enables you to pass over a selection and pick up at the beginning of the next. Sanyo calls its version AMSS and uses it in three new midprice AM/FM/cassette units (all less than $160). Marantz calls it Compuskip and employs it in the CAR-312 ($200), a new budget member of its Gold Standard family.

Fujitsu Ten has made much of the selection-skipping and other convenience features of its Dashboard Wizard microprocessor-controlled radio/cassette unit. That company is now making a smaller version for imports and minicars, available in both black and silver finishes, called the Mini-Wizard. And Clarion, which made a bold move this year by replacing its entire line of equipment with a new range of fifteen "downsized" receivers, is offering similar automatic selection-finding and other convenience capabilities in the top half dozen or so units of its range, calling the selection-skipping circuit APC.

The variety of cassette noise reduction systems for use in home high fidelity systems has expanded considerably in recent years, generating no small amount of confusion. Perhaps in an effort to avoid such confusion in the fledgling car stereo business, a growing number of manufacturers are adopting a noise reduction system that's been pitched as a universal approach—the DNR (Dynamic Noise Reduction) system proprietary to National Semiconductor and now offered by that company in inexpensive integrated-circuit form. Like the older Philips DNL system, DNR works by reducing the frequency range of the system during quiet passages, when tape hiss would normally be noticeable—relying on the human ear's relative insensitivity to limited bandwidth at low sound levels. DNR is a "one-pass" system: It requires no encoding of the original recording and can be used to clean up the sound of radio broadcasts as well as tapes.

The combination of broad applicability and low cost has drawn many automotive cassette-machine suppliers into the DNR fold this year. In addition to previous supporters, such as Autotek and Delco, Blaupunkt, which has DNR in its new CR-3001 receiver/cassette deck for Japanese cars, Metropolitan Sound is using it in an expanded range of high-end AM/FM/cassette units. and FAS has it in the top-of-the-line D-1a.

Convenience and Sophistication

A trend toward easier-to-install budget automotive systems is also discernible in this year's showings. Kraco is packaging some of its most popular speakers, receivers and power boosters in suitcase-like boxes for one-stop shopping and easy, guaranteed-to-fit installation. The two prepackaged systems, which sell for less than $200, are called the TAS (Total Auto Sound) Series. Sanyo and newcomer K40 (known to CB buffs for its antennas) are both breaking affordable ground with AM/FM/cassette units priced at $60.

Among the high-end automotive suppliers. Audionmobile is also making a move toward convenience and compactness by offering its electronic crossover and power amplifier systems premounted and wired on a single large plate suitable for concealed trunk mounting. Linear Power stunned me and numerous other listeners with a clever 4×10-inch subwoofer system that actually uses two large vertically mounted drivers. The mighty 1,600 watts of amplification fed to the speakers may also have had some influence on its mind-boggling bass output.

Two New England companies noted for their smooth-sounding home speakers—Boston Acoustics and Genesis—have introduced two-way flush-mount automotive speakers similar in general format to the well-known ADS 300. And Philips—the giant Dutch concern that invented the cassette and the optical video disc—has applied its considerable engineering talents to developing a superb-sounding line of multiple-driver speaker systems with stylishly high-tech faceplates. A favorite of mine is a handy, adjustable-level add-on treble unit, which can be used in pairs to improve the stereo imaging of almost any conventional auto sound system.

Also a home speaker manufacturer, but with a longer history in the autosound market, Jensen has four new radio/cassette models ranging from the $150 JR-100 to the $240 JR-115. The top two (one with a standard-size chassis, the other a mini) have five station presets, a mono/stereo switch, and automatic local/distance switching to prevent front-end overload in strong-signal areas such as cities. All four units have separate bass and treble controls and locking fast-forward and rewind buttons.

Human Engineering

Distressingly absent from most of the systems I saw at the show, however, were controls that a driver could use easily while (Continued on page 79)
VideoFronts

Latest video news and products by the Editors

Simulated stereo sound from a VCR, a video disc player, or any mono signal source is possible with Vidcraft's Stereo Synthesizer. It divides the audio spectrum into five bands and then feeds them in different proportions to the two channels of a stereo receiver or amplifier. A separation control adjusts the output from mono to the full "stereo" effect, and two dimension controls adjust the relationships between channels. A bypass switch sends mono or stereo signals through the system unaltered. The synthesizer sells for $190.

Circle 90 on Reader-Service Card

Nonabrasive, nonmagnetic VHS and Beta cassette-cleaning tapes are available from Audio-Technica. Because both sides of the tapes clean, they can remove built-up residue from all heads, rollers, and tape guides in one pass. Magnets in the tape housing extract oxides from the cleaning tape, preventing recontamination. The cleaners are available in both VHS (AT-5001, shown here) and Beta (AT-5002) versions, at $25 and $22 respectively.

Circle 88 on Reader-Service Card

A combination RF switcher and amplifier is available from Quasar. With the Model VE-581U Video Controller you can connect any of five RF input signals to any of three outputs. The built-in amplifier is designed to boost all signals by about 6 dB; isolation is rated at more than 60 dB. The price is $120.

Circle 92 on Reader-Service Card

A new refinement of Fuji's Beridox particle technology is embodied in Super High Grade video tapes, said to provide a 4-dB increase in color and video signal for cleaner, brighter pictures. The improved formulation is designed to yield results in the extended-play modes comparable to those attained by conventional tapes at higher transport speeds. The special leader and trailer and the cassette shell are treated with an antistatic formula to protect the tape from dust particles. The seven VHS lengths available range from T-20 ($23.35) to T-120 ($37).

Circle 91 on Reader-Service Card

The newest color portable receiver from Panasonic, the Model CT-3311, contains a 3-inch screen appropriate for use as a monitor with portable VCRs. AC line current, a car battery, or an optional rechargeable battery can be used for power. Other features include electronic tuning and Panabrite color control, which automatically adjusts contrast and color to changing ambient light. The tiny portable also has automatic-search tuning. The CT-3311 will debut in July for $500.

Circle 89 on Reader-Service Card

A compact, versatile, front-loading Betamax VCR measuring only a little more than three inches high is the latest addition to Sony's video line. The SL-2500 ($1,500) features Betascan-II high-speed picture search; Swing Search multispeed, bidirectional playback; an electronic Tab Marker Indexing System (for random access to any of nine selectable tape locations); and a linear tape counter, which displays the actual elapsed and remaining taping time. Video inputs and outputs are provided, and a wireless remote module controls most VCR functions.

(Continued on page 39)
Kenwood's KVA-502 Audio-Video Amplifier

For this video test report we have amended our usual hands-on evaluation procedure; we have employed laboratory bench tests for the audio portion of this hybrid product. The data appearing here are comparable to that which regularly appears in our reports on new audio equipment.


RATED POWER
17 dBW (50 watts)/channel

OUTPUT AT CLIPPING (both channels driven)
8-ohm load 19 dBW (79 watts)/channel 4-ohm load 20¼ dBW (106 watts)/channel 16-ohm load 16¼ dBW (47 watts)/channel

DYNAMIC HEADROOM (8-ohm load)
+2½ dB re 17 dBW (50 watts)

HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD; 20 Hz to 20 kHz)
at 17 dBW (50 watts) 0.026%
at 0 dBW (1 watt) 0.017%

FREQUENCY RESPONSE
+½ dB, 11 Hz to 20 kHz; +½, -3 dB, <10 Hz to 54 kHz

RIAA EQUALIZATION
+½ db, 20 Hz to 17.5 kHz; -6 dB at 5 Hz

INPUT CHARACTERISTICS (re 0 dBW, A-weighting)
sensitivity: S/N ratio
phono input 20 mV 82¼ dB
phono input 0.31 mV 81½ dB
mike input 0.165 mV

INPUT OVERLOAD (clipping at 1 kHz)
phono input 180 mV
mike input 100 mV

PHONO IMPEDANCE 47.4k ohms; 240 pF
DAMPING FACTOR (at 50 Hz) 670

To our knowledge, Kenwood's KVA-502 Audio-Video Amplifier is the first attempt at an all-in-one control unit for the home entertainment center of the future. True, you must repatch cables to perform certain video operations, but to some extent this is due to the peculiarities of today's home video cassette recorders. One thing is certain: This is not another "accessory box"; it is a product whose design indicates how smoothly audio and video technology can be combined. Since there is no other single piece of equipment like the KVA-502, we'll describe how it works in detail. First, it is an integrated stereo amplifier with 17 dBW (50 watts) performance that can serve as the heart of your stereo system. Performance is fully comparable to the best audio amplifiers in its power class, as Diversified Science Laboratories' test data indicate. Distortion is below measurement limits through 6 kHz and barely exceeds 0.025% at 20 kHz—just half of the published specification. For music reproduction, the generous 2½-dB dynamic headroom makes this unit the sonic equivalent of an amplifier of 19½ dBW (90 watts) per channel. Damping factor is one of the highest that DSL has measured.

The bass and treble controls provide more than 10 dB boost or cut below 100 Hz and above 10 kHz. While the controls lack center detents or a defeat switch to ensure flat response, they have little effect until rotated beyond the "0" mark. At that point, response is flat within ⅛ dB across the audio band. The LOUDNESS switch causes a substantial bass boost—as much as 12 dB—at low volume settings; it gradually diminishes as the control is advanced toward its maximum.

In addition to serving as a high-quality amplifier for video sound sources, the KVA-502 handles an audio tape deck, an FM tuner, and a fixed-coil (moving-magnet, etc.) phono cartridge. Phono equalization is flat to within ½ dB over the typical bandwidth of a record, and the overload margin is more than adequate. Sensitivity and signal-to-noise ratios of the inputs are typical for a high-quality audio product.

Two banks of pushpads select the source presented to the headphone jack, audio tape recorder, and speakers. You can hook up two sets of speakers, as long as their combined impedance is at least 4 ohms. The first four pads are mutually exclusive and select between VCR A, VCR B, VDP (video disc player), and AUDIO. Pressing AUDIO relegates your choice to the second bank, where there are three pushpads—PHONO, TUNER, or AUDIO Tape. PHONO and TUNER are mutually exclusive; TAPIPE serves as a tape/source monitor and overrides PHONO and TUNER when it is engaged. In addition, there is a microphone input that can be mixed with any of the other sources via a separate mike mixing control.
The switching is less complicated than it sounds. For example, the four-pad INPUT SELECTOR enables you to choose between the three video sound sources individually and the four audio sources as a group; the three-pad audio selector enables you to choose among the audio sources individually and enables you to add the microphone pickup as desired. By pressing AUDIO DUBBING—the pad between the two switch banks—you can record the audio source on the soundtrack of VCR A, either as the video program is being recorded initially or later, should you want to substitute a new audio track for the original one. Thus, you have the ability to record the soundtrack of a simulcast concert from your FM tuner (which probably has higher quality audio than your TV set) while you tape the video from the TV tuner. And you can record it in stereo if your VCR has that capability. You can also easily dub background music and commentary onto a video home movie.

Video dubbing is also possible, but only on VCR A. The two VIDEO DUBBING push pads let you select either VCR B or the video disc player as the program source, and by placing the antenna selector switch in the TV mode, you can dub video while viewing a regular TV program. To check the progress of the dubbing, you simply switch the antenna selector to VIDEO, and the VCR signals are sent to your TV set on either Channel 3 or 4. (Use this setup whenever you wish to watch a video source that is routed through the KVA-502.)

A PICTURE control allows you to soften or sharpen the detail of video images, whether you intend to tape the signal or just view it. Lab tests at DSL indicate that the picture function works from 1 to 3 MHz and that the maximum effect occurs around 1.75 MHz, where a boost or cut somewhat greater than 7 dB is possible. In practice, we found the PICTURE helpful in bringing out video detail, especially when dubbing from VCR B to VCR A. The boost tends to compensate for the rolloff in high-frequencies that is characteristic of any consumer VCR. Some discretion is necessary though; too much boost will emphasize the ghosts and video noise in the picture. To use the PICTURE when viewing over-the-air TV, select the channel on the tuner of VCR A. Route the video through the KVA-502 by choosing VCR A on the Kenwood's input switch and then send the signal to the TV set (via Channel 3 or 4) by switching ANTENNA to the VIDEO position.

If your receiver is a true monitor with a direct video input, you can avoid the degradation imposed by the additional RF link by connecting the KVA-502’s video output directly to the monitor.

When stereo TV sound finally becomes a reality in this country (as it is now in Europe and Japan), the KVA-502 is ready for it. Each video input has separate left and right audio channels. In the meantime, the KVA-502 creates its own pseudostereo image via a left/right crossfeed through time-delay phase-shift networks. (Tests at DSL indicate that the time-delayed crossfeed does apportion the mono signal between left and right channels in a frequency-dependent manner and that the total acoustic output is unaffected above 300 Hz. Below 300 Hz, the crossfeed creates a bass boost that amounts to about 4 1/2 dB at 50 Hz.)

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

Integration of audio and video controls is apparent on front panel of the KVA-502. PICTURE (center bottom) lets you soften or sharpen a video image, whether off-the-air or taped. Top row enables video dubbing (far left), selection of inputs, and audio dubbing. AUDIO activates the separate TAPE/TUNER/PHONO selector panel. Mono TV (and audio) sources can be heard in pseudostereo via MODE’s enhancer position, and the denoiser switch (not shown) rolls off hiss.
Video Q&A. by Edward J. Foster

Q Can I build a home satellite TV antenna? Where I live I get just two channels, and then only very poorly. The 'home' dishes that I've seen advertised are quite expensive. If I can build one, where do I point it?—Joe Sacino, Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada

A There's a lot more to a satellite antenna than the big dish you see (although mounting that, in itself, is a formidable mechanical engineering problem if you don't want it to blow away in a heavy wind). The dish functions like the mirror of a large reflecting telescope, focusing the weak RF signal onto the antenna proper. The signal itself travels thousands of miles to and from the satellite, whose transmitting power is quite low—usually only a few watts. Thus, the signal is very weak when it returns to earth and must be boosted by a low-noise amplifier (LNA) right at the antenna. And because the satellite transmits at an extraordinarily high frequency—around 4 gigahertz (GHz), or 4,000 MHz—signals must be converted down to a much lower frequency (about 500 MHz) before the satellite receiver in your house can handle them. The receiver selects the channel you want to view and converts that frequency down to one your TV set can handle.

So unless you're a good mechanical engineer, superb at electronics, and have substantial experience in ultra-high-frequency low-noise circuitry, you'll be overwhelmed if you attempt to build a complete receiving system. You may be able to save a few bucks by installing a system yourself, however. Heathkit, for one, offers a 3-meter dish (the SRS-8100) with the necessary LNA, down-converter, and satellite receiver. Most of the components are made for Heath by Scientific-Atlanta, a company with considerable expertise in this area. The system handles 24 channels, which are selectable via an Zenith Space Command remote-control unit (included). The SRS-8100 sells for about $7,000, but is a fairly sophisticated model with automatic orientation to the proper polarization of each channel on the link.

As a starting point, we'd suggest you get Heath's Site-Survey Kit (SRA-8100-10) for $30. It will tell you in what direction the dish has to be pointed in your reception area. If there isn't a clear line of sight from your proposed antenna location to the proper part of the sky, an antenna system won't work.

Q I've been an audiophile for some time and am now about to begin assembling a home video system. I've thought about getting a video disc player in addition to a VCR. One thing I don't understand is how you clean video discs. And would I have to clean the laser-optical type anyway?—Oliver Bryant, Miami, Fla.

A Laser-optical video discs are not supposed to require cleaning, because the laser focuses on information recorded beneath a protective surface. Thus, fingerprints or minor scratches on the surface are "out of focus" for the laser, and it tends to ignore them.

The stylus-in-groove CED discs must be kept scrupulously clean because the grooves are very narrow and the information is tightly packed. Although the VHD system does not actually use grooves, the surface of the record must be spotless nonetheless. Even the tiniest dust particle would change the spacing between the stylus and the record surface and appear as "information" to this capacitance-sensing system. Because cleanliness is so important to the CED and VHD systems, each disc is packaged in a caddy, which you insert into the player. The player withdraws the disc from the protective package for playback and then reloads the disc back into the caddy when playback is complete. You never touch the surface of the disc itself.

Although we are not aware of any video disc cleaners on the market at this time, we expect to see many of them as soon as the format holds. If and when that happens, we'll try out some of the magic elixirs and report on them.

(Continued from page 36)

Audio tape recorder is mono, but that going to VCR A A two-channel: it must be combined with a stereo-to-mono Y-adapter before feeding the VCR's audio input.

The KVA-502 has one more strategy for improving TV sound—a denoiser circuit. The denoiser has essentially no effect on high-level signals that effectively mask noise, but as signal levels diminish and hiss becomes more of a problem the circuit rolls off response above 4.5 kHz, reducing noise by as much as 10 dB at 7.5 kHz.

RF signals are fed to and from the KVA-502 via standard 75-ohm coax fittings. If your antenna uses 300-ohm lead-in, you'll need a balun transformer to match the two impedances. Audio and video are handled via RCA pin jacks; a supplementary DIN connector is also provided for an audio tape recorder. Try to keep the video cables as short as possible and use high-quality, low-capacitance cables to minimize signal loss. Speaker connections are made to color-coded screw connectors, and there are three convenience outlets: one switched (50 watts maximum) and two unswitched (for a total of 300 watts maximum) to accommodate your VCRs and audio equipment.

Kenwood recommends connecting both UHF and VHF antennas to VCR A. The UHF link then passes directly to the TV receiver, while the VHF output of the VCR routes first through the KVA-502 and then to the television set. This allows the KVA-502's ANTENNA switch to feed either the Channel 3 (or 4) signal or the RF output of VCR A to your TV set.

The direct video and audio output signals of VCR A are connected to the VCR A play jacks of the KVA-502, while the corresponding record jacks on the Kenwood feed VCR A's direct video and audio inputs. The second VCR and the video disc player are logically equivalent; each feeds its direct video and audio outputs to the corresponding play-input jacks on the Kenwood amplifier. When the system is wired in this way, it is impossible to record on VCR B.

If your VCR B has a tuner section, we suggest connecting it to the antenna (via antenna splitters) so that the machine can at least record broadcast signals. With this hookup, the two VCRs can record independent programs while you watch a third, or VCR B can record off the air while you watch a prerecorded tape on VCR A. (However, it still would not be possible to dub from A to B without employing external switching.)

Although the KVA-502's control panel is laid out quite logically and the diagrams in the owner's manual are clear, the written instructions could be more explicit. For example, there is no warning that many VCRs are designed so that the direct audio and video inputs automatically override the tuner input; a novice videophile might erroneously conclude that the system was not working properly when this occurrence occurred.

Whenever connection is made to these direct-input jacks—as is the case when the KVA-502 is hooked up—such VCRs cannot record off the air. The solution is simple: Disconnect the plugs (at the direct inputs to VCR A) whenever you wish to record a broadcast. It may be a nuisance, but the design requires it.

While we may have complaints about the instruction manual—and about the audio control knobs, which are difficult to see—generally, we find the KVA-502 to be a well-engineered product. At a very attractive price, you get a first-rate integrated amplifier with ample power, pseudostereo enhancement of TV sound, a useful denoiser, a circuit that improves picture detail, and reasonably flexible video dubbing facilities. That's an auspicious beginning for this new generation of audio-video equipment.
A Novice Videotapes a "Dream" Trip to Europe

As a travel journalist, I’ve learned to take as little as possible with me on assignments. Usually it’s two ballpoint pens, a daily diary, a compact 35mm camera, and a drip-dry wardrobe that can easily be thrown together just hours before departure.

My last trip, however, was very special: It was a “dream” trip with my wife Judy to Europe, where our itinerary would take us to the Flemish fairyland city of Bruges, the famous KD Rhine Cruise, and the vacation mecca of Lucerne, and then through the Alps to Salzburg (where The Sound of Music was filmed) and finally to Vienna.

Somehow more than mere slides were called for to record this trip, but I cringed at the thought of having to pay for a lot of motion picture film. So, although I didn’t have a great deal of technical expertise, I decided to give video tape a try and visited an area dealer. Convinced after an hour or two that making a video movie of our trip wouldn’t be so difficult after all, I chose a color video camera and portable VCR and went home to practice before the trip.

In the final analysis, my decision to videotape had both positive and negative aspects, some of which are summarized in the adjoining “Video Traveler’s Tips.” Most important, I found that I hadn’t spent nearly enough time practicing with my VCR, and as a result the tapes of the early part of the trip are inferior in quality and content to those made later.

Also, I had completely overlooked the differences in line voltage between the U.S. and Europe, and thus lacked the proper converter for recharging the VCR’s battery. My first attempt at recharging burned out the charger unit, and it wasn’t until I’d made frustrating trips to video outlets in Bruges, Amsterdam, and throughout France and Germany that I finally got it fixed in Lucerne.

Would I videotape another trip? Knowing what I do now after a sometimes frustrating initiation, sure!

Benjamin Patt is a free-lance travel writer and a novice videophile.

Video Traveler’s Tips

- If you’re not totally familiar with your video gear, practice with it as much as you can. Make sure you know exactly what each control does. Learn to operate the transport controls without taking your eyes off what you’re taping.
- Video equipment is a prime target for theft, and I’d suggest carrying as much of it with you as you can, rather than checking it through. If you want to check it, pack it in a well-constructed carrying case made especially for video gear; if it’s mishandled, your VCR and camera won’t be damaged. Be sure your system is covered by insurance, whether under umbrella coverage (such as a homeowner’s policy) or a separate “floater.”
- Be sure to register your video gear with U.S. Customs before you go. They will issue documentation to show that you bought your equipment before your trip, so you won’t have to pay import duty on your return to the U.S.
- Take a power adapter that will allow you to recharge the VCR battery in every country you’ll be visiting. The option, of course, is to haul several fully charged batteries around with you, but that’s very cumbersome. On the other hand, having an extra battery saves you from running out of portable power at a critical time.
- You can edit your tapes once you get home, but editing on the fly saves tape, battery power, and post-production time. Briefly, long scenic shots with no action can be just plain boring when you view them later. Unless there is something truly spectacular, limit these shots to ten or fifteen seconds. Try to incorporate people, entertainment events, moving vehicles, etc., into what you’re taping. Remember to compose the tape with a logical thread of continuity to avoid a disjointed hodgepodge effect when you overdub it later with commentary or music.

No power, no pictures was a lesson quickly learned by the author, who burned out his VCR battery-charger in Bruges. Later, with fresh battery in place, he tapes from atop Mt. Pilatus near Lucerne, Switzerland (as his wife monitors the battery power) and operates the power zoom lens for a curious Austrian tourist on the Mt. Pilatus cog-wheel railroad. The author’s advice: Carry a spare battery.
 TubeFood

New (and sometimes original) video programming

Video Cassette

CONTEMPORARY FILMS

- Columbia Pictures Home Entertainment: Only When I Laugh, Outrageous, Graduation Day, The Cat and the Canary
- MCA Videocassette: Raggedy Man, Continental Divide, High Plains Drifter
- Media Home Entertainment: Hell Night, Blood Beach, The Haunting of Julia
- MGM/CBS (rental only): Rich and Famous
- Planet Video: Snake Fist Fighter
- Thorn EMI Video Programming: One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, Thorn EMI: Lord of the Rings, The Cruel Sea
- Twentieth Century-Fox: The Apartment, A Streetcar Named Desire, Sergeant York, Exodus

THEATER/STAGE SHOWS

- Columbia Pictures: Seventh Voyage of Sinbad, Sahara
- MGM/CBS: The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby (four cassettes)
- Thorn EMI: Nicholas Nickleby
- Vestron Video: The Lenny Bruce Performance

Options mark Toshiba's V-9200 Beta VCR.

Front-loading ease and a variety of speed options mark Toshiba's V-9200 Beta-format home VCR. Priced at $895, this deck allows operation in single-frame advance, slow motion (one-fifth normal speed), and visual scan (forward or reverse at eight times normal speed). Other features include automatic tape rewind and one-event programmability each day for as many as three days. A wired remote control operates basic VCR functions.

Wireless remote control capability is included in Zenith's new VR-9775 Beta-format front-loading VCR. Also featured on this $1,400 deck is the ability to program as many as four events on different channels during a fourteen-day period. Speed Search operates at ten times Beta II speed, allowing you to locate specific sections of the tape visually. Other features include a tape time-remaining indicator, a program-error indicator (to indicate conflicting programming requests), and the infrared Remote Video Action Control, which operates all transport functions.

Weighing in at slightly less than 3 pounds, Magnavox's new 8238 color video camera ($750) features an f/1.4 13-52mm zoom lens. Controls include auto/manual iris adjust, white-balance adjust, and a selector for indoor and outdoor light sources. The camera uses an electronic viewfinder.

A compact portable home entertainment system that includes a three-inch (diagonal) TV screen is one of the unusual new video products from Sharp. Housed in a cabinet measuring approximately 15 by 5 by 5 inches are the electronically tuned black-and-white TV set, an AM/FM stereo radio, a two-speed microcassette audio recorder, and two full-range speakers. Power is supplied via eight C cells or 110/220 volt (switchable) line current. Cost is $420.

Circle 74 on Reader-Service Card
Good(e) Piano, on Tape . . .

Richard Goode's first solo recordings provide a superb blend of technology and artistry.
Reviewed by R. D. Darrell

Now in his late thirties, Goode has long been known and respected in musical circles, especially in and around New York, primarily as a sensitively skilled ensemble pianist—the role he has assumed in all his earlier recordings (with soprano Benita Valente, fellow pianist Peter Serkin, the Boston Symphony Chamber Players, and the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society). But despite his many honors—a Young Concert Artists award in 1961, the Clara Haskil Prize in 1973, the prestigious Avery Fisher Prize in 1980, and selection as High Fidelity Musical America "Musician of the Month" in October 1981—Goode has only recently begun to win wider hearing and recognition as a soloist, and to achieve in his first solo recordings near-epiphanies of his distinctive artistry.

For all his seemingly effortless technical expertise, Goode is essentially a classical/Romantic interpreter—an eloquently communicative poet of the keyboard rather than a flamboyantly bravura virtuoso. And he could scarcely have chosen more fitting programmatic materials than the two last Schubert sonatas, augmented by three of the composer's shorter but also late pieces, and two major Schumann works. One heard frequently, the other rarely. Most of these have been recorded, often by big-name pianists, many times before; only the Schubert Klaavierstück isn't represented in the current Schwan catalog. Lacking my colleague Harris Goldsmith's encyclopedic experience and fabulous memory, I scarcely dare make any all-time comparative evaluations. Yet I have no doubt at all that these versions warrant very high rankings artistically, and I don't hesitate for a minute to give them top honors for sonic and tape-processing excellence, virtually hors de concours.

What is extraordinarily striking, technologically, about all three releases is the similarity of the final aural results. The Desmar "Sound Research Series" programs are uncompressed analog recordings, made in an unspecified location and issued in limited-edition real-time duplications (by In Sync Laboratories) on superchrome tape; the Nonesuch program is a (Sony) digital recording, made at the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters in New York and issued in ferric-tape duplications at an unspecified speed ratio (and in a disc edition mastered at the CBS (Continued on page 80))
and Disc

A new label debuts with pianists, turning a conservative philosophy to the music's advantage.

Reviewed by Harris Goldsmith

Today, with so many audio producers blowing their own trumpets (not to mention our speakers), it's refreshing to encounter the quiet common sense of Audion's credo, as set forth on the jackets of these newly issued discs. The small, independent Florida-based label evidently thinks that recordings shouldn't sound like recordings, but rather, that sophisticated audio techniques should unobtrusively afford the listener a concertlike experience in all its unvarnished vitality. Its producers use analog methods, 30-ips tape speed, and Mark Levinson equipment and forgo noise reduction, limiting, and signal processing. They have the further good sense to make their performances with a minimum of fuss (but a maximum of expertise), use a spacious "auditorium" acoustic, and—from what one hears in the finished results—put their artists at ease. Most significant, "Since the musical flow is of prime importance, we have urged our artists to reduce editing to an absolute minimum, so that the integrity of a real performance can be maintained. We . . . feel that an occasional wrong note is far less bothersome than a note-perfect performance that emerges as musically sterile because the tape editor's scalpel has cut away the spontaneous breath of life along with the wrong notes." In short, with its initial release, Audion turns a basically conservative philosophy to its—and the music's—advantage.

For the moment, the label is focusing its attention on piano music, but within the confines (?) of that genre, it runs the gamut, from the succinctly austere (Leonard Shure in late Beethoven) to the tastefully garish (Bar-Illan in the Mozowski concerto, Ivan Davis in Liszt's Norma paraphrase). Giving the three pianists the floor, the production team steps aside and lets the performance put it miles ahead of the Epic (if performance put it miles ahead of the Epic (if...)

I'm particularly pleased to hear Davis' surging account of Schumann's Faschingsschank aus Wien, with its assertive drama, spontaneous romanticism, and big, swashbuckling sonorities. Many of Davis' earlier recordings (and concerts) have been marred by ultrataut, nervously calculated phrasing and neon-lit voicing, but he sounds infinitely more natural and communicative here. His approach to Schumann's writing is, to be sure, pianistically oriented, yet none of his liberties ever transcends decorum or in any way violates the innate proportions or the ongoing line. In fact, his reading is red-blooded and warmly poetic. The playing has surge and clarity, intermingled with some welcome humor. The big-hall resonance enhances the solidity of the bass line and makes the treble sound live, but never harsh. Davis also does well by the Liszt "Norma" Reminiscences; if I find little of interest in that composition (or the original opera from which it derives), it is not the pianist's fault.

Nor can I hide my extreme antipathy for the billowing rhetoric and aggressive use of chromaticism and diminished-seventh chords that characterize Liszt's B minor Ballade. (His B minor Sonata relies on this same sort of "my bathtub runneth over" compositional philosophy, but somehow, that work's greatness overcomes its commonplace modus operandi.) On the other hand, the First Mephisto Waltz is a wonderful inspiration, and the late, impressionistic En rêve (composed in 1885, a year before Liszt's death) has ravishing poetry and distinction. Bar-Illan plays these pieces well, investing En rêve with wistful nuance and giving Mephisto more fleetness than more literal-minded artists sometimes do. (The slightly tipsy character of some of the phrases suggests that our devil has been drinking margaritas at the village inn.) And Bar-Illan renders the Weber A flat Sonata with grand sweep and style; this freewheeling, ardently nuanced account stresses the work's wild romanticism rather than its domesticity.

Bar-Illan's recording of the Moskowski E major Concerto, though made in Germany with a different producer, is of equal excellence sonically; the orchestral timbres are clean, the tuttis have magnificent luster and solidity, and the piano's arabsques are judiciously balanced. The soloist's volatility and seemingly limitless facility give this superficial but agreeably melodic music all it demands in a performance that certainly supersedes the (very good) one by Michael Ponti and the Philharmonia Hungarica (Candide CE 31030). This disc, in particular, is of demonstration caliber.

With the Beethoven album, Shure becomes the first artist to have recorded the Diabelli Variations three times, just as he was the first to have recorded it twice, twenty-five years ago (an accomplishment since equaled by Julius Katchen, Alfred Brendel, and Rudolf Serkin—whose second version, of 1968, has never been approved for release). I first came to know Shure's forthright interpretation from his early Vox edition and regarded his subsequent Epic recording as a relative disappointment. Formerly a brilliantly promising performing artist, he there seemed more the highly esteemed pedagogue. The new version still has its occasional professorial points of stress: Var. 13, with its abrupt pauses and dynamic contrasts, is too pokered and not rhythmically alert, and the "cops-and-robbers" Presto scherzando Var. 15 is too heavy and humorless; nor are the trills and broken octaves of Var. 16 wide enough. But other passages are really excellent—notably, the Andante Var. 20, broadening but rhythmic, the deliberately paced yet lucidly voiced Var. 26, and the great minore Vars. 29 through 31. Following the tradition of his teacher, Artur Schnabel (and his own two prior recordings), Shure puts in an extra repeat in Var. 2, where Beethoven omits one.

Technically, the playing is very controlled, although a few passages are excessively cautious, and Shure's left hand seemingly deserts him in the second half of the "Notte e giorno faticar" Var. 22. (There is also a moment of scrambling toward the end of Var. 10.) And throughout, he seems almost consciously to be striving for an antisensual kind of tone color—never percussive, but unluminous and slightly opaque. For all that, there is much to admire here, and certainly, the more impactful dynamic range and greater spontaneity of the Audion recording and performance put it miles ahead of the Epic (if comfortably in the shade of the antiquated Vox).

Shure's new version of the Op. 110 Sonata is wonderfully robust and unpressured.

(Continued on page 80)
**Young Guitarists Show Some Pluck**

With technique firmly in hand, new artists are looking farther afield for innovative repertory. Reviewed by Allan Kozinn

For guitarists, the battle lines have changed dramatically over the last few years. One of the primary fronts used to be the establishment of a performance standard commensurate with that of ranking virtuosos on other instruments: now conservatories are turning out streams of twenty-one-year-old technical wizards, already possessed of the speed, fluidity, and sheer dexterity that many of the instrument's elder statesmen could never quite attain. Like their violinist, cellist, and pianist colleagues, these young technicians often need greater humanity, warmth, and interpretive depth; yet at least the technical basis is there—quite different from the era, not so distant, when interpretive warmth was offered (sometimes condescendingly) as mitigation for technical awkwardness. These days, guitarists can have it both ways.

By the same token, today's young artists no longer have to scratch around for steady and serious audiences, although the guitar world does remain somewhat parochial. To the annoyance of many performers, their audiences consist largely of other guitarists or people who have come to the instrument mainly through popular music; a comparatively small proportion is attuned to the classical-music mainstream. But whether those who attend guitar recitals also partake of opera, symphony concerts, and piano recitals is of secondary importance and may in any case change as the guitar world continues to mature. What is important is that the audience is large enough to sustain an unprecedented level of activity, on the order of 100 recitals per season in New York alone.

This audience and its potential are not lost on record-company executives, who also appreciate that guitar discs are relatively inexpensive to produce. And while prospects on the recording front are not as bright as for pianists, violinists, and singers, these days major labels have one or two guitarists (not always the right ones, given the available talent) on its roster, and the smaller labels have taken up the slack.

Repertory, however, remains a dilemma, and now that there are more and better-trained players vying for attention, the problem of having to repeat the established literature has become more acute. Yet as anyone who has done any research into the matter can attest, even this oft-bemoaned dearth of repertory is largely illusory. It stems less from an actual shortage of important original works, than from the willingness of so many guitarists to follow closely in Andrés Segovia's footsteps. For a time, it looked as though the small body of works he played were—with the addition of some newer scores composed for Julian Bream and John Williams—just about the only music available. Perhaps this was a necessary step in establishing a basic literature for the instrument; but by the early 1970s, it finally dawned on guitarists that the mold had to be broken.

Thus, the name of the game for guitarists these days is "repertory renovation." For a time, it looked as though Segovia's repertoire was the only music available.

Particularly among the younger generation, the race is on to stake out new territory, not only with contemporary works, but with hitherto untapped literature from the past, and even with fresh looks at familiar transcriptions. Many guitarists are being aided by a new breed of musicologists specializing in nineteenth-century guitar music, and others are themselves taking on the task of searching out scores in libraries.

One guitarist who has turned to obscure corners of the nineteenth-century literature for his debut recording is New Yorker David Leisner, who recently made strong showings at competitions in Toronto and Geneva. His explorations have unearthed the music of Johann Kaspar Mertz, a Hungarian guitarist-composer who lived in Vienna from 1840 until his death in 1856 and was thereafter swallowed whole by history. The six selections here—Adagio con grande espressione presents formidable technical difficulties. Previous-
bolstered by an extremely bright, larger-than-life room ambience, whereas Williams is closely miked in a much drier room. Lots of ambient sound can be seductive in guitar recordings, at least on first hearing. But when the sound is too ambient, as here, the effect wears thin on subsequent listenings, particularly through headphones. Beneath all the reverberation, the clarity of Lukowski’s playing is striking. Yet there is something disconcertingly genteel about his interpretations, making each piece sound like a sweet, dreamy lullaby. Some are just that, but others have a more robust side that Lukowski seems intent on suppressing.

If Barrios represents the continuation of the guitarist-composer tradition through the first half of this century, that tradition is best exemplified in our own time by Leo Brouwer, a Cuban who writes in a style that combines avant-garde and popular elements. Jeffrey Van, at the center of what is now a hotbed of guitar activity in the Midwest, has already made a temporary guitar music, has already made a temporary guitar music, has already made a

The centerpieces of the Isbin discography, however, are the Bach transcriptions, on which she collaborated with Bach keyboard specialist Rosalyn Tureck. The First Lute Suite. S. 996, on Sound Environment, is fitted out with an abundance of florid ornamentation—particularly, as one might expect, in the repeats. The Bach chaconne, on Denon, is an entirely different affair, with the ornamentation on the coda for cadences, and unlike the suite, played with edge-of-the-chair aggression, the chaconne is relaxed, with considerable attention paid to dynamic contrasts and shifts of coloration. Both works are played with keyboardlike clarity and realistically recorded. On both technical and interpretive grounds, these performances are real eye-openers.

Another young player with a flair for baroque style is Eliot Fisk, who offers an even more profusely embellished reading of the S. 996 Suite. Coming several months after Isbin’s recording, this seemed on first hearing to initiate a contest—a guitaristic shootout at the OK Corral—in which these exceptional technicians would determine who could add the most notes to a Bach fast movement without easing the tempo. Fisk wins, and not only in the mathematical tally. For the most part, his ornamentation is better thought-out and more fully developed, and his use of sequential devices casts an illusion of compositional unity over its darker, slower sections, allowing his tempo to ebb and flow expressively; and if the quicker, brighter variations receive less than a bravura reading, they are never flaccid. Elsewhere, he shows himself to be a stylish baroque player in a Couperin transcription and adept at avant-garde timbre production in Gilbert Biberian’s moody Monogram. Between them falls James McGuire’s Suite No. 2 in Popular Style, a conservative work reminiscent in its easy-going manner of some of John Duarte’s sets—but with stronger French overtones and a couple of quotes from Brouwer.

Isbin, on her Sound Environment disc, gives a splendidly atmospheric performance of Brouwer’s finest guitar work, La Espiral eterna, a swirling, almost electronically sounding score. An equally vivid reading of Benjamin Harrison’s ante-codex contribution to the solo guitar literature, Nocturnal, Op. 70, rounds out the side. On Denon, Isbin offers a similar pairing: Bruce MacCombie’s Nightshade Rounds, with a shimmering, oriental character, owes much to Brouwer’s Espiral, while Stephen Dodgson’s Partita is more conservative—accurately played here but without the prickly tension of the Williams recording (CBS MS 6696).

The other Bach piece is sparer, with a personalized rhythmic flow (but a surprisingly plodding ending to the fugue). Particularly in the Bach suite, both Fisk’s and Isbin’s approaches to ornamentation are provocative and exciting; yet some listeners may find both versions too busy or too rich, preferring the more straightforward readings of Bream (RCA LSC 2896) and Williams (CBS MS 33510).

The most uncompromisingly adventurous of these releases show up on two new labels specializing in guitar discs: John Wager-Schneider’s collection of postwar pieces on El Maestro and the first installment of David Starobin’s “New Music with Guitar” series on Bridge.

Wager-Schneider begins with Lou Harrison’s Suite No. 1, originally for troubadour harp. Written in an ancient mode or meant to evoke an old Eastern instrument, each of the three movements creates an interesting sonic aura. Stephen Paulus’s dissonant Two Moments includes an “Agitato” very much in the Brouwer mold. Albavalde, by Spanish composer Tomás Marco, is actually an early minimalist piece, built largely on a single chord and single notes, attacked with everything from plain fingers to ping-pong balls and razor blades. Although Wager-Schneider plays it with conviction, neither this nor Bruno Bartolozzi’s Omaggio amounts to much more than a showcase for sounds and techniques; very little is actually communicated. Wager-Schneider’s own Voyage, for electric guitar and tape, is one of the splashier and more intriguing of these scores, and Rinald Smith-Brindle’s Nocturne closes the recital with a gentle reminder of what used to be thought of as ultramodern guitar writing thirty-five years ago.

Starobin, also a specialist in contemporary guitar music, has already made a considerable mark: Guitarist of choice for Speculum Musicae, the Aeolian Chamber Players, and other ensembles, as their needs
DAVID LEISNER: The Viennese Guitar.

David Leisner. [Jon Aaron and Ralph Downey, prods.] TITANIC TI 46, $9.00 (Titan Records, 43 Rice St., Cambridge, Mass. 02140).

GUITAR RECITALS.


WAGNER-SCHNEIDER: Voyage.

DAVID STAROBIN: New Music with Guitar, Vol. I.

David Starobin. guitar; Susan Jolles, harp; Peter Press, mandolin; Richard Fisch, baritone. [David Starobin, prod.] BRIDGE BDG 2001, $9.95 (distributed by German News Co., P.O. Box 2223, Winnetka, Calif. 91306).


Manuel Barrueco. guitar. TURNABOUT TO 34770, $5.98. Tape: CT 4770, $5.98 (cassette).


CARLOS BONELL: Showpieces.


RODRIGO: Guitar Works.

Pepe Romero. guitar. Philips 9590 915, $10.98. Tape: 7300 915, $10.98 (cassette). ALBENIZ: Concierto de Aranjuez; Chico; Quatre Piezas; Rumba; Montuno; Romance; Toruño; Concierto de Aranjuez; Fantasia; Asturias; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tinos; Tino...
Worth Its Weight?

Schirmer has weighed in with a leviathan of a tome. Arthur Cohn's *Recorded Classical Music* (2164 + xii pp., $75). One wants simply to be overwhelmed at its size and scope and importance, as the notaries quoted on the dust jacket apparently were ("nothing short of a miracle"; "like Johnson's Dictionary")! in what must have been a hasty preview. Yet our own hasty sampling suggests the need for caution.

Despite its bulk, this is in no sense a "complete" guide to classical recordings, past or present—nor does it pretend to be. That said, however, one is hard put to determine the bases for Cohn's selections. He seems to have no clear or consistent notion of the level of collector he's aiming at or just what his self-appointed mission is. One looks for guiding principles and finds only arbitrariness.

For an isolated yet important example, take Bach's cantatas: There is nary a mention of the Rilling series, about half-completed on Musical Heritage (though a single movement of the Rilling series, about half-completed, on Telefunken until No. 58, then—still with no indication that they are part of a larger project—two consecutive Harmoncourt sets (minus No. 57) are cited, running through No. 63, before darkness descends. Is it possible that the series achieves "real stylistic authenticity" and "total success" within this handful of works and nowhere else? It's not as though Cohn has anything better to offer; he gives no recommendations for Nos. 111—3, 5—9, 11, 13—29, etc. (Yet in contrast to such glaring oversights, some three reams later Schubert's D. 556 Overture rates the following insipid entry: "Satisfactory, if not very important Schubert. Satisfactory, if not a very inspired performance [by Münchinger].")

Any such compilation necessarily dates quickly, since this ambitious project was undoubtedly years in the making, much of it is out of date already. Cohn begs the issue of currency at the outset: "There will be very few discs in the coming years that will surpass the artistry of the performances endorsed ..."—a half-truth even as it stands. Furthermore, currency involves not only new issues (and novel recording frontiers and changing performance practices), but the continued availability of recommended recordings. Here again, a decision needs to be made: Availability either is a criterion or isn't. If the latter, Cohn's laments over deletions and haphazard information about alternative available formats simply waste space (precious in this context: Save a tree!). If the former, there are worse problems ahead, for some of Cohn's choices have been out of the catalog for years, and the rest are dropping like flies.

As for the recommendations themselves, everyone will find many to agree with, many to dispute. That I prefer Previn in Rachmaninoff's *The Bells* (currently available) to Cohn's Ormandy (currently not) is irrelevant, to the extent Cohn can justify his choice; yet one hardly knows what to make of this rationalization (a fair sample, incidentally, of his distinctly un-Johnsonian style): "The text is sung in English and for some this may diminish the authenticity of the recording. Not for this reviewer, because it's sufficiently difficult understanding a chorus in English without trying to do so when Russian is used." A liberal sprinkling of dicta like "No one can fault the way these are played" neither sheds much light on the choices nor inspires confidence. And when substantial performance questions are raised, the ground shifts freely. For Cohn, the inclusion of "the exponential repeat in the opening movement, which structures the material as it should be structured," is crucial in choosing a Schubert Fifth (Böhm), yet for Schubert's First and Second, the recording he recommends (Böhm) omits the repeats.

Eventually, one comes to visualize vast mountainous ranges of index cards, undigested by author or editor, thrown into a hasty preview. Yet my own hasty sampling suggests the need for caution.

More Old Stokie

For the sixth WFLN/Philadelphia Orchestra Marathon, RCA Special Products has mined its vaults for a two-disc set (DPM 2-0534) that neatly ties together two of the year's big centenaries—Stokowski's, duly noted last month, and Stravinsky's, which we will observe next month. Included in this limited edition are Stokowski's second—first electrical—recording of the 1919 *Firebird* Suite, from 1927 (not the 1935 third recording as stated in Richard Freed's fine annotations; Freed was apparently caught by a change of plans, and the information is given correctly elsewhere): Stokowski's first recording of *Le Sacre*, from 1927-29 (one of the items lauded highly in Curtis Davis' discography last month and indicated there as being unavailable); and Stokowski's first recording of *Petrushka*, from 1937 (not a "suite" as described on the label; it's the overside *Firebird* that should have been so identified). These are all wonderfully vibrant performances, and the playing of the Philadelphia principals is often brilliant. The superb remasterings, with *Petrushka* on a single side running just over thirty minutes, are the work of Stokowski enthusiast Ward Marston, who also handled the transfers of the Bell Labs historical material discussed by Robert Long last December. The sound is remarkably well balanced in the older artifacts; only in *Petrushka* do the brasses sometimes become overbearing, and even that is probably just what Stokowski ordered. The set is available only through membership in the Philadelphia Orchestra Association, at a cost of $55 (add $1.00 for shipping; Philadelphia Orchestra Marathon, 1420 Locust St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19102).

Devil's Swill

Recording Tartini concertos recently with the English Chamber Orchestra, violinist Salvatore Accardo had to give up on the E minor, D. 56; totally inaccurate and unusable, the parts, I was said, were evidently "copied by a drunken man."
BARTÓK: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 2, in B minor.

André Gertler, violin; Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Karel Ančerl, cond. [Eduard Herzog, prod.] QUINTESSENCE PMC 7181, $5.98. Tape: FAC 7181, $5.98 (cassette). [From CROSSROADS 22 26 0012, 1968.]

Erick Friedman, violin; Southwest German Radio Symphony Orchestra, Zdenek Macal, cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 4386, $7.75 ($4.95 to members) (recorded in performance) (add $1.60 for shipping: Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Rd., Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

Peter Zazofsky, violin; Belgian National Orchestra, Georges Octors, cond. [Rend Gailly and Wolfgang Mitlehner, prod.] DG CONCOURS 2535 012, $6.98.

Three new recordings of Bartók's violin concerto (now often called the "Second," since an earlier one has surfaced in more recent years) attest to the special popularity of this work, along with the Concerto for Orchestra, it is probably his most frequently heard orchestral composition. This should not be surprising: Though one of the simplest and most traditional conceptions of the mature Bartók, it nevertheless carries his unmistakable stamp.

Of these three readings, André Gertler and the Czech Philharmonic under Karel Ančerl offer the outstanding one. A reissue of a recording made in 1965, the disc holds up well with today's competition in regard to both sound and execution. The rendering, the most accurate of the three, is also the most flexible in rhythm and the most varied in color. Gertler, a Hungarian by birth, performed frequently with Bartok in his earlier years; completely in command of the music, he balances the right degree of freedom with the requisite control.

It is just this balance that Friedman lacks in his live performance with the Southwest German Radio Orchestra. Yet many aspects of his playing are impressive. He has sure technique and interesting ideas about shaping the piece. But the rhythms are too heavily accented and too carefully patterned; and when he uses portamento, which he occasionally does for some reason (perhaps a nod to "Hungarian style"), it sounds stiff and calculated. His fast, tight vibrato also wears on the ear.

Finally, the recording with Peter Zazofsky and the Belgian National Orchestra under Georges Octors was recorded during the 1980 Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition, which Zazofsky won. He is no doubt an excellent young violinist, but the recording is so bad—combining a dull, cavernous quality with an almost impenetrable sonic opaqueness—that it is impossible to judge with any certainty. Things sound very tentative indeed, especially on the orchestra's part; no doubt the performance had to be put together quickly for the occasion. This release hardly serves Zazofsky well.

R.P.M.

BEETHOVEN: Symphonies (9); Overtures (4).

Sheila Armstrong, soprano*; Linda Finnie, mezzo-soprano*; Robert Tear, tenor*; John Tomlinson, bass*; Philharmonia Chorus* and Orchestra, Kurt Sanderling, cond. [Beatrix Musker, prod.] EMI SLS 5239 (digital recording; eight discs, manual sequence). Tape: TCC SLS 5239 (eight cassettes) [Price at dealer's option.] (Distributed by Brilly Imports, 155 N. San Vicente Blvd., Beverly Hills, Calif. 90211.)


Jessye Norman, soprano; Brigitte Fassbaender, alto; Placido Domingo, tenor; Vienna State Opera Chorus, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Karl Böhm, cond. [Werner Mayer, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2741 009, $25.96 (digital recording; two discs, manual sequence). Tape: 3382 009, $25.96 (two cassettes).

In England, Kurt Sanderling’s Beethoven has been likened to Klemperer’s. To test the analogy, I made some comparisons with the few Klemperer/Philharmonia discs on my shelf. (I never cared sufficiently for his cycle to obtain it in toto.) What I found proved instructive: For one thing, Klemperer—for all his reputation for solidity—was considerably more of a lapidarian than I had remembered; in fact, his acute detailing and sophisticated shaping of woodwind lines in the Egmont Overture and the first movement of the Ninth Symphony surprised me with an almost Toscaninian agility. Sanderling, on the other hand, rivals Klemperer in solidity of rhythm, but not in shapely authority: He’s the one who resembles the fictitious Klemperer of my faulty memory!

More importantly, although both conductors favor some exaggeratedly slow, ultra-Teutonic tempos, neither is nearly as phlegmatic throughout as those few instances might lead one to fear. In the Seventh Symphony, after an introduction cautiously unfolded with minimal accents on the opening chords and a Vivace painstakingly articulated at something approaching slow motion, Sanderling goes on to give the remaining three movements a crisp, alert execution. After a hefty and perhaps overly pervasive heaviness breaks the music’s back. Though some might be less put off by Sanderling’s slow tempos, I find them a sore trial—particularly in the Alberti passages in the Larghetto and in the lumbering Scherzo.

Things improve considerably in the Eroica despite a first movement that remains too sedate. But by now the blended euphony of the recorded balance begins to pall a bit; one hears timbres well enough if one listens for them, yet the instrumental detail never stands out in sharp relief.

The Fourth’s introduction is once again extremely deliberate, but thereafter, things pick up. Sanderling’s tempos are generally lively, and such niceties as the celebrated bassoon pitfall in the finale are splendidly managed.

The Fifth is stodgy and straightforward; its’ first movement, in particular, lacks the kind of molten energy Giulini brought to this three familiar masterpiece in a recent broadcast performance with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. (DG should surely record that truly distinguished interpretation.) By contrast, Sanderling’s left slow introduction, the work gets off to a suitable romp. All four movements have well-sprung rhythm and a good deal of bracing energy. An auspicious start.

But in the Second (as in Böhm’s), a pervasive heaviness breaks the music’s back. Though some might be less put off by Sanderling’s slow tempos, I find them a sore trial—particularly in the Alberti passages in the Larghetto and in the lumbering Scherzo.

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Critics’ Choice

The most noteworthy releases reviewed recently

BACH: Harpsichord Concertas (6), Koopman. Philips 6769 075 (2), April.


SCHUBERT, WOLF: Songs. Pears, Britten. BBC REEL 410, March.
BOLCOM AND MORRIS: Ragges and Hart Album. RCA ARL 1-4123, March.

KIRE TANAKA: Song Recital. ChS M 36667, Feb.

HEAVY METAL: Film score for Elmer Bernstein. Full Moon/Asylum SE 547, Jan.

Del Tredici’s Final Alice [Philips 6769 075, April] offers a distinctly distinctive, alluringly alluring chamber music experience. Hendricks, Solii, under the masterful baton of Koopman, deliver a performance that is both traditional and avant-garde, with their take on Del Tredici’s work being so evocative and compelling that it leaves the listener with a sense of awe and wonder.

Beethoven’s String Quartet No. 1, as performed by the Pro Arte Quartet [Philips 9850 995, Feb] under the direction of Jordan, provides a masterful rendition of this iconic work. The group’s cohesive playing and rich soundscapes bring out the full potential of Beethoven’s composition, making it a truly delightful listening experience.

Dvořák and Mendelssohn’s String Quartets, as interpreted by the Orlando Qrt under Philips [9850 995, Feb], offer a vibrant and expressive take on these works. The ensemble’s tight cohesion and dynamic musicianship result in performances that are both technically proficient and emotionally resonant.

Franck and Symanski’s Violin-Piano Works [Danzewska, Zimmermann, DG 2531 330, March] provide a rich tapestry of sound that is both technically challenging and musically rewarding. The performers’ technical mastery and interpretative insight make for a truly engaging listening experience.

Haydn’s Misericordia, conducted by Mathis and Jordan [Philips 9500 929, Feb], is a masterful performance that highlights the composer’s inventive and melodic significance. The ensemble’s precise and expressive performance showcases Haydn’s genius at its finest.

Mahler’s Symphony No. 5, under Strauss and Verklärung, is a masterful achievement by the Metropolis. New York Philharmonic [Supraphon 1116 3611/2 (2), April]. The conductor’s meticulous attention to detail and the orchestra’s consummate skill bring out the work’s profound and moving essence.

Martenů’s The Greek Passion, as performed by Mitchellson, Tomlinson, and Mackerras [Supraphon 1116 3611/2 (2), April], is a gripping and poignant musical experience. The performers’ dedication and expertise make for a performance that is both technically proficient and emotionally profound.

Mussorgsky’s Orchestral and Choral Works [London Symphony, Abbado, RCA ARL 1-3988, Jan] is a captivating program that highlights the composer’s raw and intense musical genius. Abbado’s precise and expressive conducting, combined with the orchestra’s intense and passionate performance, results in a truly moving musical experience.

Puccini’s Tosca, under Levine [Angel. DBX 3919 (2), March], is a masterful production that brings out the full potential of this iconic opera. The performances are both technically proficient and emotionally resonant, resulting in a truly moving and captivating experience.

Schubert’s String Cycles and Songs [Hirsch, Arakeshue 8107-3L (3), March] is a masterful program that showcases Schubert’s supreme mastery of the vocal form. The performances are both technically proficient and emotionally resonant, resulting in a truly moving and captivating experience.

Schubert and Wolf’s Songs [Pears, Britten, BBC REEL 410, March] is a masterful program that showcases Schubert and Wolf’s masterful songwriting. Pears’ and Britten’s interpretations are both technically proficient and emotionally resonant, resulting in a truly moving and captivating experience.

Tanevsky’s Piano Quintet [Cantilenia Chamber Players, Pro Arte PAD 107, April] is a masterful performance that showcases Tanevsky’s unique and innovative musical vision. The ensemble’s tight cohesion and expressive musicianship make for a truly engaging and thought-provoking listening experience.

Tippett’s King Priam, under Harper and Bailey, with Atherton conducting the London LDR 73046 (3), March, is a masterful program that showcases Tippett’s unique and innovative musical vision. The performances are both technically proficient and emotionally resonant, resulting in a truly moving and captivating experience.

Weill’s Songs, performed by Stratas and Wotisch [Nonesuch D 79019, Feb], is a masterful program that showcases Weill’s unique and innovative musical vision. The performances are both technically proficient and emotionally resonant, resulting in a truly moving and captivating experience.

Bolcom and Morris’ Ragges and Hart Album [RCA ARL 1-4123, March] is a masterful program that showcases Bolcom and Morris’ unique and innovative musical vision. The performances are both technically proficient and emotionally resonant, resulting in a truly moving and captivating experience.

German Chamber Music Before Bach, performed by the Cologne Musica Antiqua, Goebel [Archiv 2723 078 (3), Jan], is a masterful program that showcases this genre’s unique and innovative musical vision. The performances are both technically proficient and emotionally resonant, resulting in a truly moving and captivating experience.

Kire Tanaka’s Song Recital [ChS M 36667, Feb] is a masterful program that showcases Tanaka’s unique and innovative musical vision. The performances are both technically proficient and emotionally resonant, resulting in a truly moving and captivating experience.

Heavy Metal, performed by Elmer Bernstein for Full Moon/Asylum SE 547, Jan, is a masterful program that showcases this genre’s unique and innovative musical vision. The performances are both technically proficient and emotionally resonant, resulting in a truly moving and captivating experience.

Lacks enlivening thrust, though it never falls as wide of the mark as did Bernstein’s disappointing and plodding rendition (DG 2531 311). Again, Sanderling’s reading can be likened to Böhm’s (DG 2530 062).

The Pastoral is a bit slow and heavy-footed, but apart from a few disruptive ritards, Sanderling captures a suitably bucolic aura.

The Seventh has already been discussed, and were it not for that questionable first movement, this would have been one of the high points of the set. The finale, with its granitic solidity and wonderful string articulation, is really terrific. And the symphony is followed by a genuinely distinguished account of the Prometheus Overture. (The violins dance with captivating style and precision.)

Sanderling takes the Eighth with broad, well-regulated tempos and a suitable playing style and precision. (Perhaps I should rehear his approach does not always catch lyrical fire the way those of more idiosyncratic conductors.)

This is Beethoven conducting by a sensitive musician thoroughly grounded in the idioms and playing by a top orchestra recorded in state-of-the-art sonics (leaving aside my purely personal reaction to the blending of sonorities). Anyone learning the music from these accounts will get an al its effect. Anyone learning the music from these accounts will get an al its effect.

About the best that can be said for Zubin Mehta’s coupling of the Fifth and Eighth is that there have probably been worse versions of both symphonies. The Fifth begins with a pleasantly dramatic first movement, reasonably well executed. Thereafter, the decline is steep: Right at the outset of the Andante con moto (which both liner and record label insist in identifying as “Andante con brio”), violins and cellos indulge in vulgar-sounding swells. In the central portion of the movement—where pianissimo strings provide a vamping accompaniment to clarinet, then bassoon, flute, and oboe—the conductor permits (encourages?) contrabasses and cellos to add unneeded crescendos after attacking their notes; this not only disfigures the passage’s aesthetic appeal, but also throws the rhythmic pulse seriously off kilter. In the scherzo, the New York Philharmonic horn players sound more like members of the teamsters’ than of the musicians’ local. (Surely a take could have been found in which their opening attack at bar 27 wasn’t flubbed so conspicuously.) And the intended breadth of the finale turns to inertia, 1949. It’s interesting, but it sounds unnaturally. Gielen does add the revised trumpets in the first-movement coda, and his energy surges at the least excuse. On the whole, his Eroica resembles Scherchen’s stereo account, and if the Cincinnati Symphony is a little hard-pressed and sour of intonation, it plays with far more assurance than did Scherchen’s Vienna State Opera Orchestra. Yet the reading sounds unconventionally constrained—like metronome-chasing; details are audible but trivialized. At least after all the sonorities, tensionless Eroica like Ormandy’s (RCA ATC 1-4032) and Mehta’s (CBS IM 35883), Gielen’s hot-rod approach is stimulating, however ephemeral its effect.
mainly because of laggardly, imprecise chording from everyone concerned (or unconcerned). The Eighth is even more problematical: The first movement, played at pretty much the same tempo as Sanderling's, is riddled with its energy by a generalized diffuseness of sonority and lethargic execution. (The piano windmills in the coda sluggishity sit on their notes beginning at bar 363, in embarrassing contrast to the pizzicato strings they are supposed to be matching.) Horns and clarinets, aggressively miked, croon their way through the third-movement trio to the scratchy accompaniment of unattractively stringy cellos and basses. If the orchestral performance had been merely coarse-textured and gruff, it might have been allowed to pass without comment, but with Mehta's syrupy overlay of phony Gemsünstickheit, it somehow suggests a Bronx cheer with a Viennese "ecco." He keeps Beethoven's original scoring for bassoons in the Fifth's first movement (bars 302 et seq.) and includes first-movement repeats in both symphonies. CBS's sound and pressing are so-so.

Omar Swinburne's Fifth is the best installment so far in his unfolding Beethoven cycle. Here the small forces and the conductor's tautly symmetrical rhythm produce a Fifth in the astringent manner of Erich Kleiber's well-remembered (and often reissued) version. The only thing I question here are the da-capo repetition of the scherzo and the repeat in the finale (which still seems wrong to me, try as I do to accept it). Suitner, like Mehta, uses the original bassoon scoring in the first movement. If you like a nervously energetic Fifth rather than a hulking, massive one, this should suit your (good) taste.

Böhm first recorded the Ninth back in the days of his Dresden tenure, and he made at least three subsequent versions— all in Vienna. This digital edition, taped in the fall of 1980, is noticeably slower than his account of a decade earlier, and the ultra-sharp digital reproduction emphasized its martial clarity. In its way, it is a distinguished reading albeit a bit too Prussian for my taste. (I kept thinking back to the Scherchen version, which I haven't heard for nearly thirty years.) Böhm favors a ripe, bass-oriented sonority, but the rhythmic exactitude verges on nummification; his 1970 account (DG 2707 073), with detail enough, seemed less brash and more flowing communicative. The soloists this time are generally better—Jessye Norman, in particular, more on-phrase than her 1970 counterpart, Gwyneth Jones. Apart from its Schwantesque sentimental appeal and its sonic attractions, there seems to have been little need for this remake.

CAVALLI: Ercole amante.

CAST:

Jole Felicity Palmer (s)
Elena Eiddwen Harwby (s)
Pasitea Rosemary Hardy (s)
Page Agnès de Crouzet (s)
Cinthia Marilyn Hill Smith (s)
Gionone Yvonne Munro (ns)
Dejamira Patricia Miller (ns)
Venere/Beauty Colette Allov-Lugaz (ns)
Hyllo Keith Lewis (t)
Licio Ricardo Cassinelli (t)
Laomedonte Michael Goldthorpe (t)
Mercurio Michel Corboz (b)
Eurycle Ulrick Cold (bs)
Tevere/Nerone John Tomlinson (bs)
Batyro's Ghost Malcolm King (bs)
English Bach Festival Chorus and Baroque Orchestra. Michel Corboz, cond. ERATO STU 71328, $26.94 (three discs, manual sequence) (distributed by RCA).

CAVALLI'S Ercole amante is an opera more honored in the history books than on the stage, and even by historians it is more often buried than praised. It was written to celebrate the marriage of Louis XIV of France to Maria Theresa and commissioned for performance in Paris by Cardinal Mazarin. This act of internationalism—Mazarin was well-known for his Italian cultural preferences—created many problems. Cavalli was familiar neither with the prevalent French taste in opera nor with the complex organizational setup at court, it is thought that Lully may well have been jealous and obstructed him.

The time Cavalli spent in Paris was frustrating and ultimately unsuccessful. First, his new opera was not ready for the actual wedding celebrations in 1660 and had to be replaced with a new version of an earlier piece, Serse. Then Mazarin died in 1661, removing the main impetus toward an Italian celebration of the Franco-Spanish marriage. Finally, when Ercole was produced at last, on February 7, 1662, it was given in a theater that had dreadful acoustics and interspersed with long ballet interludes by Lully (who thus attracted most of the attention). One of the few favorable remarks on Cavalli's music came from a not unprejudiced source, the Venetian ambassador, who said that it was "very fine and fitting" and that in rehearsal it had been much enjoyed.

Cavalli vowed after this experience never to work in the theater again. (In the New Grove Dictionary, Thomas Walker's fine entry on the composer somewhat perversely suggests that this could have been because he had earned so much money in France.) At any rate, Italian cultural influence in France declined, French opera developed unaffected, and Cavalli went back to write more operas for Venice. Ercole had never been revived until the adventurous opera company of Lyons staged it in 1979 under Michel Corboz. (The record box is decorated with a handsome reproduction of Launomo's painting of Louis XIV's marriage ceremony.)
which formed a backdrop for that production.) A concert performance was also given in London by the English Bach Festival, again under Corboz. This recording seems to represent an amalgam of the two revivals, with a mixed English/French cast, English chorus and orchestra, and French conductor.

Strong claims are made for the opera in the extensive notes that accompany the recording. At one point, it is described as “quite simply, the quintessential masterpiece of seventeenth-century baroque opera.” That goes a little far; apart from everything else, the work is so unusual as to be unclassifiable. The mixture of French-style and Italian-style recitative; the great importance allotted to the chorus, when Italian works rarely made use of it at all; the grandeur of the opera combined with its astute psychological penetration: All these factors make Ercole a most curious hybrid.

The most striking parts of the work are the massive Prologue and the remarkable fifth and final act; through some of the rest one has to remind oneself that the magnificent stage machinery in the hall of the Tulleries would have absorbed much of the audience’s attention. The best music is splendid. The double choruses of rivers in the Prologue, rising gently in old-style imitation writing and then crashing in Venetian antiphony, are sung flexibly and lightly (though recorded rather too distantly) by the English Bach Festival Chorus. In the fifth act the complexity of the relationships is signaled by a glorious succession of ensembles (another form in which Italian opera was not usually rich): a quartet, then a trio, a duet, a quintet, and a final tableau, with a duet for Hercules and Beauty as the centerpiece, framed by two more double choruses.

Throughout this performance Corboz seems intent on drawing long, smooth lines from his singers. There is very little incisiveness either in the delivery or in the recording, which represents Erato at its most mellifluous. More variety of pace in the recitatives would have been welcome, and greater rhythmic subtlety might have improved the less inspired arias. (Much of Cavalli’s measured music is, as usual in his operas, in triple time, which after a prologue and five acts can become wearying.)

The singers, however, perhaps helped by the fact that several of them have sung their parts onstage at Lyons, are sympathetic to the idiom and seem convinced by their characters. Corboz manages to take the acid bite out of Felicity Palmer’s voice, which is an achievement; she sings Jole with poise and dignity. Yvonne Minton is a slightly darker, not always stylish Gione. Patricia Miller—a name new to me—is most impressive in Dejanira’s two arias (which, though powerful, cannot match that character’s contributions to Handel’s Hercules. Surely unsurpassed in the whole baroque literature). There are pretty, shaped contributions from Colette Alliot-Lugaz and Agnès de Croutz, and all the smaller female parts are excellently done. The men are less satisfactory, from Ulrik Cold’s rather beefy, unfocused Hercules down to Corboz’ own tiny cameo as Mercurio. John Tomlinson’s sharply etched Tevere and Nettuno represent the exception.

One matter not touched on in the booklet (which contains reams of material on the imagery and political allegories implicit in the libretto) is the musical edition used: the realization is simply credited to the harpsichordist, Luciano Sgrizzi. In Jane Glover’s useful book on Cavalli we learn that this is one of his few operas with writing for five-part strings; from Walker, in Grove, we glean the hint that “wind instruments may have been used.” From this to Sgrizzi’s prominent pairs of recorders, oboes, and bassoons, plus trumpets, trombones, and drums, is rather a leap. His additions are usually tasteful, but there is too much counterpoint added to the singing (à la Harnoncourt/Monteverdi), and the twitterings of a solo recorder are a particular distraction. If there are to be elaborations, surely the emphasis in an opera performed at the French court would have been on the oboe- and-bassoon texture of the Lully ouverture.

The conclusion must be that it is difficult to say how faithfully this account of Ercole reflects the original. But it would be demonstrably foolish in this case to attempt to re-create the exact circumstances of the first performance, so perhaps some poetic license should be allowed. This is certainly an important work, well worth having on record.

Haydn, L’Infedeltà delusa.* Supplementary Arias and Trio.

CAST:

Vespuza: Edith Mathis (s)
Sardrina: Barbara Hendricks (s)
Nencio: Claes H. Ahnsjö (t)
Filippo: Aldo Baldin (t)
Nanni: Michael Devlin (bs)

Lausanne Chamber Orchestra, Antal Doráti, cond. PHILIPS 6769 061. §32.94 (three discs, manual sequence).

Arias: Ah, tu non senti... Qual destra omicida (Ahnsjö); Tergi i veziosi rai (Devlin); Se tu mi sprecci (Baldin). Trio: Lavatevi presto (Ahnsjö, Baldin, Devlin).

On September 1, 1773, the Empress Maria Theresia and a large retinue visited Eszterháza, where Prince Nikolaus honored her with festivities lasting for three days. These included performances of Haydn’s opera L’Infedeltà delusa (its second), his Symphony No. 48 (now called Maria Theresia), given in the middle of an elaborate masked ball, and his marionet play Philemon and Baucis. The princely Kapellmeister was surely kept busy as both composer and performer.

The librettist of Infidelity Outwitted, Marco Coltellini, Metastasio’s successor as imperial court poet in Vienna, was highly esteemed, and his librettos were set by Traetta, Gluck, and Galuppi, among others, as well as by the young Mozart (La Finta semplice). But this is certainly no Metastasian libretto; the protagonists are Tuscan peasants, not heroes of antiquity. There is neither clemenza nor nobiltà, and the complicated subplots of opera seria play no part in this burletta—a farce, full of earthy fun. The simple story comes from the old popular theater: a father wants to marry off his daughter to a rich peasant, but the girl prefers another, who happens to be poor, meanwhile the latter’s sister has her eye on the well-to-do agrarian. In the end, of course, things are straightened out to mutual satisfaction. Yet this sprightly, captivating comedy has its serious side, with musings on love, wealth, and poverty. Clearly, Le Nozze di Figaro was not the first great opera that reconciled the seria with the buffa.

The several fine Haydn operas Philips has issued, most commendably, all testify to the emerging fact that the great master of the symphony was also a major opera composer; but perhaps none has so much musical red meat as this little buffa. Composed with unflaggingly high artistry, it contains brilliant and virtuosic ensembles of a sort rare in the seria, and most of its arias are arie di carattere—Haydn creates characters in music. Alongside the expected fast buffo patter scenes occur pensive arias, a melting serenade, and mixed pieces that start amusingly but turn serious, or vice versa. Amazingly, everything—even the da capo pieces—is through-composed.

Haydn’s imagination never slackens; the vocal writing is admirable, and the small orchestra is handled with string-quartet finesse. He uses the small preclassic orchestra of two oboes, two horns, and

Edith Mathis: mostly her excellent self

ENRICHED
strings—yet surprisingly, he adds two drums (seldom used without trumpets), which are very much in evidence. Most of the time they serve as bona fide musical instruments, but in the two remarkable finales, Haydn cleverly exposes them and the two horns to achieve the feeling of the popular rousing and tumultuous ensemble finale despite the tiny forces at his disposal. The sparkling wit and inexhaustible inventiveness of this warmly human musician show up everywhere. It is fascinating, for example, to watch the second finale amble along with easy casualness, speaking in a conversational tone, a word here, another there: then almost imperceptibly the pace—not of the tempo but of the repartees—picks up until all the protagonists sing together, whereupon Haydn turns on the finale tone and tempo. His timing is really uncanny.

The opera is recorded on five sides, at the expense of some recitatives. The sixth side is given over to four "replacement" pieces that Haydn, as opera director, felt it necessary to insert in other composers' operas produced under his direction at Eszterhaza. Three of them are "merely" time arias, but the fourth, a trio for two tenors and a bass, is a masterpiece composed for a pasticcio in 1789—long after Haydn had ceased to compose entire operas. Over 500 measures long, it superimposes bantering voices on a seamless symphonic web full of the delectable symphonic jokes and surprises of the jovial elderly master. A capital piece.

The performance of the opera, while generally good, is less accomplished than in most of Dorati's other opera recordings. The pace is somewhat uniform; even the fast buffo pieces need flexibility, and the pauses should not be taken literally. The conductor is attentive to the chiseled part-writing in the orchestra, but the playing is a little pale; the oboes are timid, and the horns lack velvet. The engineers seem to have placed microphones right under the kettledrums, which are disturbingly loud yet at the same time sound as if the kettles were half filled with soup. The replacement pieces are much better played; the orchestra, now fortified with flutes and bassoons and perhaps a few more strings, sounds more substantial, and without the timpani, everything is nicely balanced. The continuo in the recitatives is too thick and loud; it dominates everything instead of simply giving the pitch to the singers. There is no need for both a cello and a double bass, no matter what the "book" says: a very discreet cello and a really secco harpsichord without much strumming would suffice and not impinge on the singing.

Surprisingly, the best performer is not Edith Mathis (Vespina), but Barbara Hendricks (Sandrina), who sings affectingly, musically, and with a finely modulated voice. Mathis overdoes the soubrette coyness a little—too many deliberately off-pitch tones can become annoying—but elsewhere she is in her excellent self. Claes Ahnström (Nencio) is a dedicated artist, and though he pushes a bit above the staff, he sings agreeably and knows the style; the others could learn from his execution of recitatives. The second tenor, Aldo Baldin (Filippo), tries his best, but his voice is not very attractive, and the bass, Michael Devlin (Nanni), is quite acceptable, though in the recitatives he displays the usual "bass wobble."

Despite its flaws, this is still an enjoyable and engrossing recording; no one interested in opera in general or Haydn in particular should miss it. Since score and parts are now available and the ensemble is small, perhaps some enterprising small company will come to realize that L'Infedelta delusa is not only a viable opera, but potentially a popular repertory item. P.H.L.

MACHAUT: Le Livre du voir dit; Messe de Nostre Dame†.

Taina Kataja, soprano*; René Jacobs*, and John Patrick Thomas*, countertenors; Mieczysław Antoniak, alto*; Yoshihito Matsunara, tenor*; Laszlo Kunz, bass*; Vienna Mozart Boys' Choir*; Les Menestrels. [Klaus Walter, Michel

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This is one of the most arresting recordings of medieval art to have come my way. I write "art" rather than music, since what is recorded here is primarily speaking. René Jacobs (better-known for his recordings of the baroque and now the Romantic repertory for alto voice) declaims virtually the complete spoken text of Machaut's Le Livre du voir dit—with some alterations, omissions, and additions—and the musical interpolations in that manuscript are inserted where indicated. In addition, the second record of the set (also available separ- rately) offers a complete performance of Machaut's Messe de Notre Dame in liturgical context with chant and plainsong: This is a revelation. Scholars have written for years about the primacy of Machaut's poetry in his output but have tacitly or overtly suggested that we could not tolerate or understand it today. (See, for example, Gilbert Rancey in Music and Letters, 1958, p. 38; an illuminating introduction to the Voir dit is Sarah Jane Williams' article in the Machaut number of Early Music, October 1977.) Meanwhile, medieval music groups have ripped the musical portions from their context, shortened them to a couple of verses, and presented them as real Machaut (akin to performing only the first few minutes of a Steve Reich piece because the rest sounds the same).

For Machaut and his generation, spoken texts were as much music as were sung texts. This is made explicit in the treatise by Machaut's follower Eustache Deschamps, where he distinguishes "musique naturelle" (poetry) from "musique artificielle" (voices and instruments). On this record, for the first time in my experience, one can hear that notion brought to life: The music emerges naturally as an intensification of the poetry, a relationship not unlike that between recitative and aria in later opera. Le Livre du voir dit tells the long story of a love affair, by all accounts a real one, between Machaut and Pérone d'Arménier. The musical inserts often represent the formal communications between the two: thus "My noble lord and true friend, my most beloved friend"—and music follows. Jacob's treatment of the French may well be totally ersatz; I am no judge of medieval French. But he conjures up a marvelous, hypnotic intensity, so that listening to these extensive recitations involves no labor or drudgery. So far from being the artificial, repetitive conventionalities that have been supposed, the texts have all the tightness and depth of a ritual, in which meaning and emotion are hidden behind a formality of language.

It is a great pity that the musical settings are not performed on the same high level. Jacobs sings his solo pieces with considerate feeling—in interesting contrast to Andrea von Ramm's much cooler approach to the complainte "Tela rit au main" on the Studio der Frühen Musik's disc of Machaut chansons. (Réfex EMU Elektra 1C 063-30106, from German News Co.). But the ensemble Les Ménestrels (a Vienna-based group formed in 1963 that appears on several other Mirror Music releases), does not sing or play with a matching sophistication. Besides, too many and varied instrumental sounds are used. Deschamps's authority is cited for this, but Christopher Page's important reinterpretation of a crucial passage in Deschamps's writings (also in the October 1977 issue of Early Music) puts the use of instruments in a different light. The unique instruction in the text of the Voir dit itself that the ballade "Nes que ou porroil" can be rendered instrumentally probably indicates (as Reaney suggests) an alternative, not an addition to vocal performance.

For the same reasons, it is difficult to recommend the version of the Mass recorded here, in spite of the fact that the liturgical chanting is sensitively done and the placement of the voices in the acoustic has been carefully planned. Machaut's own music does not come across well, and the instruments are too prominent. It is just not true that there is no other way to perform the numerous interludes in the Gloria and Credo: the interludes are thin and have been very effectively vocalized in performances I have heard.

The Mozart Boys' Choir joins Les Ménestrels in the Mass, and the singing becomes altogether too fractious. Nevertheless, this is an important and revealing release. Full documentation and translations are provided in the sixty-eight-page booklet, though it becomes a little coy in revealing how much of the Voir dit has been cut or substituted for by other Machaut pieces. N.K.

MAHLER: Songs (15).

Hanna Schaer, mezzo-soprano, Christian Ivaldi, piano. [Ariane Segal, prod.] Music Heritage Society MHS 4367, $7.75 ($4.95 to members) (add $1.60 for shipping; Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Rd., Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

Lieder and Gesänge aus der Jugendzeit—contain the same emotional mix—not only from song to song, but usually within songs—that we know from his more familiar later work. That they tend to be simpler in texture and detailing makes them more difficult to perform, though, and makes them especially problematic for performance en bloc.

Roland Hermann demonstrated this when he set his boety baritone a-chugging through the whole collection for EMI, following the published order doggedly and leaving in leaden accounts of those great later Wunderhorn songs 'Reveler' and 'Der Tambour'sell.' (We have to be careful with nomenclature here. The last nine of the Lieder und Gesänge—i.e., Vols. 2 and 3—are in fact drawn from the poetic anthology Des Knaben Wunderhorn, as if it weren't hard enough to keep the later orchestral and symphonic Wunderhorn settings straight.) The result might have a certain archival value if it didn't make the material sound so tedious.

Now, from Arion by way of MHS, we have twelve of the songs piped conscientiously in what sounds like a pleasant light-mezzo midrange pushed down to form an artificial quasi-bottom, leaving the rest of the middle thinned out, dangerously so in the upper midrange. It is obvious why a female performer would omit the Don Juan serenade, but what about 'Scheiden und Meiden?' Both Anna Reynolds (on a British Delyse disc, coupled with Schumann's Op. 39 Liederkreis) and Judith Raspin (on an Epic disc of Mahler and Mendelssohn) included it in their more limited selections. The Schaer disc is filled out with two staples from the orchestral Wunderhorn set, 'Wer hat dies Liedlein erdacht?' and 'Das irdische Leben,' plus a novelty, the voice-and-piano reduction of 'Es singen drei Engel,' the children's chorus with alto solo from the Third Symphony.

Schott; No. 11, Ablösung im Sommer: No. 13, Nieht wiedersehen; No. 14, Selbstgefühl. Lieder aus 'Des Knaben Wunderhorn'; No. 4, Wer hat dies Liedlein erdacht?; No. 5, Das irdische Leben; No. 11, Es singen drei Engel. MAHLER: Des Knaben Wunderhorn; Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen; Kinder- totentotenlieder.


MAHLER: Kindertotenlieder; Rück- lert-Lieder (5).


Mahler's first published songs, the three volumes comprising fourteen piano-accompanied Lieder and Gesänge aus der Jugendzeit, contain the same emotional mix—not only from song to song, but usually within songs—that we know from his more familiar later work. That they tend to be simpler in texture and detailing makes them more difficult to perform, though, and makes them especially problematic for performance en bloc.
Schauer is at least as ponderous as Hermann, and to her credit she seems not to have learned Rule No. 1 of the Lieder Singer's Guide to Subtlety: Always underline what superficial profundity is concerned, there is no such thing as "too much." Many of these songs begin encouragingly, with an unaffected directness that contrasts pleasingly with Fischer-Dieskau's self-importance in five of these same songs, along with the two omitted ones and four of the five Rückert songs (with Leonard Bern-stein at the piano, CBS M 30942). But after a couple of bars, or a phrase or two at the most, when you realize that Schaer isn't going to do anything except try to keep from being overwhelmed by the notes, Fischer-Dieskau begins to sound like a more reasonable option.

MHS supplies usable texts, but the notes should be approached with either caution or a sense of humor. I suspect that the annotator hadn't heard some of the songs, like the radiant poem "Ich ging mit Lust!" (which he links with "Selbstgesüh!" as "amusing songs with a folk flavor") and the grief-laden "Nicht wiedersehen!" ("another charming tune"—egal), and somehow he has deduced that the soldier in "Zu Strassburg auf der Schanz" is Swiss: "Es sungen drei Engel" is placed in the first rather than fifth movement of the Third Symphony.

The best representation of the Jugend- zeit songs that I know is the group of four in Christa Ludwig's Seraphim Mahler program with Gerald Moore (S 60070, also including five Wunderhorn and three Rückert songs). Her mezzo was then in its sparkling prime, her musical instincts at their most spontaneous-sounding, and the selection includes three of my favorite Jugend- zeit songs: "Ich ging mit Lust!" and the deceptively fablelike "Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen" (both Wunderhorn settings), and the bubbly folk song "Hans und Grete." So far as I know, Ludwig never recorded anything from Vol. 3, which leaves Fischer-Dieskau as a necessary source for the first of Mahler's unhappy military vignettes, "Zu Strassburg auf der Schanz," and for "Nicht wiedersehen!"

Fortunately Ludwig has recorded lots of other Mahler. Her old Seraphim coupling of the Wayfarer Songs and Kindertotenlieder (conducted by Adrian Boult and André Vandernoot) from oboes in unison plus horn to muted cellos (effectively doubling the voice, but an octave higher), harp, and violas. I suppose it's a legitimate choice to try to modulate the tones of the new grouping into those of the old, and to try similarly to homogenize the singer's (presumably inappropriate) slippage from oboes in unison plus horn to muted cellos and violas. The Ludwig/Karajan Rückert disc, coupling the fourth-side fillers of Karajan's Mahler Fifth and Das Lied, is beautifully sung and played, but so monochromatic as to be, finally, unbelievable. Except under the discipline of certain meditation techniques, the mind just doesn't focus this unreliently on anything. If you don't believe it, try being grief-stricken for twenty-five uninterrupted minutes. Or even for five, the typical length of one of these songs.

In Ludwig's case, the how-sad-I-am choice suited the diminished capacity of the voice, which even then was no longer the flexible, colorful instrument heard in her earlier recordings. But why was Karajan so intent on enforcing a uniform mood?

Consider the moment in the opening song, "Now the sun wants to rise so brightly," when, as the singer begins her second phrase ("as if no misfortune had happened in the night"), the accompaniment switches from oboes in unison plus horn to muted cellos (effectively doubling the voice, but an octave higher), harp, and violas. I suppose it's a legitimate choice to try to modulate the tones of the new grouping into those of the old, and to try similarly to homogenize the singer's (presumably inappropriate) slippage from oboes in unison plus horn to muted cellos and violas. The Ludwig/Karajan Rückert disc, coupling the fourth-side fillers of Karajan's Mahler Fifth and Das Lied, is beautifully sung and played, but so monochromatic as to be, finally, unbelievable. Except under the discipline of certain meditation techniques, the mind just doesn't focus this unreliently on anything. If you don't believe it, try being grief-stricken for twenty-five uninterrupted minutes. Or even for five, the typical length of one of these songs.

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Hungaroton’s György Lehel demonstrates that genius is less important than the willingness to listen and explore. Already in the oboes-and-horn introduction he is getting more varied and expressive results, mostly by allowing the players to show him what their instruments can do with these four bars. Of course thousands of possibilities remain unexplored, but even this much is a welcome change from the standard procedure whereby a conductor desperate to demonstrate his competence and authority imposes an etiolé choice without even finding out what else the notes might yield.

Fortunately Klára Tákačs not only shares Lehel’s willingness to listen to the music but brings it to a strong, colorful mezzo. The result is a Kindertotenlieder that makes a solid first impression and has so far held up nicely on repeated hearings. On the flip side, Sándor Sólyom Nagy gives a pleasant account of the less troublesome Woyserar Songs.

Although Lehel’s contribution to the Woyserar Songs and Des Knaben Wunderhorn is no less sensible, it may be less distinctive than his Kindertotenlieder in that most of the conductors who have recorded this music have had fun with it. For that matter, much as I enjoy the detailed immediacy of Hungaroton’s engineering, other engineers have had fun with this music too—both Haitink’s Wunderhorn (Philips 9500 316) and Bernstein’s are quite well recorded, in the styles you would expect from the respective sources.

Lehel has another good baritone for his Wunderhorn. István Gáti is a higher, more lyric baritone than we usually hear in this music, with some real ring on top—note the G on “Er führt den Krieg” in ‘Des Schildwache Nachtlied.’ Both ‘Revelge’ and ‘Des Tambourge’sell’ are excellent, and he makes the most of his shot at “Des Antonius von Padua’s Fischpredigt,” a bottom-leaning song that has been grabbed by all the mezzos and altos who have recorded this collection but ducked by the sopranos (in addition to Eva Andor and Schwarzkopf, Haitink’s Jessye Norman). Gáti also gets “Wer hat dies Liedlein erdacht?”, and though he can’t manage the passagework either, he sings it better than Fischer-Dieskau, the other only baritone I’ve heard tackle it.

In fact, the distribution of material here exactly duplicates the Schwarzkopf/Fischer-Dieskau version, to the point of making a duet of “Wo die schönen Trompeten blasen.” That’s in addition to the four other songs duetized in all the recordings except Vanguard’s pair. There is some logic to making a duet of “Trost im Unglück,” which not only has two equal, independent voices, but has a concluding section to be sung by both. Otherwise the case is shaky. While “Lied des Verfolgten im Turm” does have two independent voices, it is after all the prisoner’s song, and “Der Schildwache Nachtlied” (the Klára Tákačs: a willingness to listen

sentry’s night song) and “Verlo’re Müh” seem to me clearly narrative re-creations, not you-are-there dramatizations.

By happy coincidence, my favorite Woyserar soloists can be found on the same record, but not in the same songs: the Vanguard Everyman recording (SRV 285) with Maureen Forrester and Heinz Rehfuss and perfectly adequate support from the Vienna Festival Orchestra under Felix Prohaska. “Urlicht,” from the Resurrection Symphony, is thrown in as a bonus (raised a tone here, and the disc is budget-priced to boot. Such a deal!

Ludwig also gets to sing “Urlicht” in the CBS version, which offers an even bigger bonus in the separate piano-accompanied disc, recorded in concert. And Ludwig is a close match for Forrester. I like being able to choose between such a good mezzo and contralto. (Ludwig, incidentally, sings a dandy solo “Der Schildwache Nachtlied,” along with four other Woyserar songs, on the Mahler disc with Moore.)

Berry is less warmly personal than Rehfuss, but he’s vocally solid and a vital performer in his own right.

Against such stiff competition, one relatively weak soloist becomes a major factor in both the Hungaroton and Philips recordings. Hungaroton’s Andor has a basically attractive timbre, but her vibrato borders on wobble. It is nice to hear some of these songs in the higher soprano keys, for which you can turn to Philips’ Jessye Norman, who’s in fine shape here. Her partner, John Shirley-Quirk, isn’t awful, but neither is he in the class of Rehfuss. Berry, or Gáti.

So what do we have? I’m recommending four basic recordings: (1) the Woyserar Songs and Kindertotenlieder of Ludwig, Boult, and Vandernoot, (2) the Woyserar Songs of Forrester, Rehfuss, and Prohaska; (3) Das Lied plus five Woyserar and Rückert songs by Ludwig, Wunderlich, and Klemperer; and (4) the Ludwig/Moore recital of Jugendzeit, Wunderhorn, and Rückert songs.

In addition to or instead of (1), you may choose the new Hungaroton coupling. If you want a male Kindertotenlieder (and the third song, “Wenn dein Mutterlein,” is pretty inescapably the father singing), hope for a Turnabout reissue of the beautiful recording by Norman Foster and Jascha Horenstein; meanwhile I suppose the Fischer-Dieskau/Kempe recording (Sar- phim 60272) will do. In addition to or instead of (2), you may want Ludwig, Berry, and Bernstein.

For (3) there are any number of supplements I could suggest, but no current listing that seems to me a reasonable substitute. As a supplement to (4), mostly for repertory, there’s Fischer-Dieskau’s selection of Jugendzeit and Rückert songs. Finally, sort of straddling (1) and (2), let me put in a good word for Yvonne Minton’s Woyserar Songs and four Woyserar songs with Solti and the Chicago Symphony—formerly available coupled on a single disc, now available only in their original format, as fillers for Solti’s Mahler Sixth (London CSA 2227) and Fifth (CSA 2228). K.F.
got the Concertgebouw sounding like a hastily assembled pickup group. The choruses also have a shrill quality not improved by the harsh recording. The High Priest (Thomaschke) and the quartet of chorus soloists are okay—not noticeably better or worse than the competition.

There is choice competition. If the East Berlin recording conducted by Bernard Klee, formerly on Philips, were still available, I'd recommend it. It's solid, straightforward Mozart. (It also includes the Symphony No. 26, K. 184, as an overture.) Let's not kid ourselves, though. "Solid" and straightforward" aren't the adjectives we really want to apply to Mozart performances. In the absence of a Beecham or Walter version, however, I guess they'll have to do.

PROKOFIEV: Symphony No. 1 (Classical)—See Shostakovich: Concerto.

PURCELL: Dido and Aeneas.

CAST
Dido
Belinda
First Witch
Second Witch/Sailor
Second Lady
Spirit
Sorceress
Aeneas

Taverner Choir and Players. Andrew Parrott, cond. [Brian Couzens, prod.] Chandos ABRD 1034. $15.98 (digital recording) (distributed by Sina Qua Non Productions, Ltd., 1 Charles St., Providence, R.I. 02904).

Comparisons
Cohen/Boston Camerata
Har. Mun. Fr. HM 10.067

Leppard/English Ch. Orch. RCA ARL 1-3021

These days, you can have Purcell's woeful little masterpiece any way you like it: in large- to moderate-sized orchestras and with singers more attuned to the conventions of Romantic opera than those of baroque performance; in performances by smaller ensembles more conscientious about matters of period style; or in a variety of workable and not so workable compromisers. Andrew Parrott's version—on original instruments, with a string body and chorus of twelve apace and a cast drawn from the London early-music world's finest singers—falls into the uncrowded second category and goes straight to the top of the lists.

Parrott's goals are fidelity and completeness, and he succeeds better than any of his competitors in re-creating the Dido first performed at Josias Priest's boarding school for young gentlewomen in 1689. That is, he succeeds as well as one can without the aid of an extant manuscript score. For luck of Purcell's direct word, the most important documentary tool in the quest for a reasonably authentic Dido is a copy of the original libretto owned by the Royal College of Music. It contains stage directions for several dances (some evidently intended as guitar improvisations over a ground bass) and texts for a prologue and for a chorus at the end of Act II—none of which is included in the 18th-century copies of the score on which modern editions are based.

Like those who have recorded Dido before him, Parrott declines to reconstruct the lost prologue: nor does he fit out the missing second-act chorus with music from one of Purcell's other works, a suggestion profited in both the Benjamin Britten/Imogen Holst and Margaret Laurie/Hurston Dart editions and taken up by a few conductors. He does, however, adopt a companion suggestion, using a homophone from The Married Beau as the second act's closing dance.

Two more brief dances are indicated in the libretto. One precedes "Oft she visits this lone mountain," and Parrott wisely has guitarist Anthony Bailes use that aria's introductory bass figure as the dance's ground. The other, coming between Belinda's "Pursue thy conquest" and the chorus "To the hills and the vales," raises an interesting question of authenticity and integrity versus theatrical logic. That the libretto indicates a dance here is hardly a new discovery: and Priest, a dancing master, might well have demanded every opportunity for his charges to show their skills. Yet of all the Dido recordings in the catalog, only Parrott's includes a dance here. And for good reason: Belinda's song flows so naturally into the chorus that the minute or so of guitar extemporization, charming as it is, seems an unwarranted intrusion.

Parrott's attention to detail makes this recording unique in other ways, too. He is one of the few to heed the stage direction at the end of Act II's first scene and actually provide the storm Purcell's Witches have conjured for—"thunder and lightning, horrid music," as the score says; and of those who do provide a storm here, only Parrott does it properly, combining an offstage thunder effect with ad lib orchestral cacophony. And though the Sailor's song was given to male singers as early as 1700, it is assumed that, at the original girls'-school performance, only Aeneas was sung by a man. Parrott restores the song to soprano and tenor, and it sounds almost coquettish rather than wounded to the quick. But this probably has more to do with her vocal texture than with any motivational lapse; in any case, she rededes her performance immediately with as heartbreaking and gorgeously sung a lament as can be found on disc.

The other soloists are equal partners: Judith Nelson makes a moody, conspiratorial Belinda, and David Thomas does his best to storm the heavens at the end of Act II—

The Taverner players produce a beautifully trim sound, with the cutting edge that only baroque strings can provide, and Parrott takes the score at a comparatively lively clip. But perhaps the greatest charm lies in the soloists' characterizations. There is no other Dido on disc like Emma Kirkby, whose crystalline, light-timbred soprano reveals more of the fragile, emotional woman than the overblown tragic heroine more commonly played. Whether touchingly forlorn, as in the opening scene, or imperious, as in her final confrontation with Aeneas, her Dido is entirely human and deeply moving. Kirkby's use of vibrato is rather refreshing: She resorts to it only sparingly, using it as an expressive tool, not as a basis of vocal production.

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through not quite as powerfully as Richard Stilwell, on RCA. The witches' scenes also merit special praise. Most conductors unaccountably have their witches play their scenes straight, and some even allow them to sound stertorously. Here, Jantina Noorman is a throaty Sorceress, flanked by Emily van Evera and Rachel Bevan as nasal-sounding hags who bring out both the malevolence and black humor in their scenes. The witches' choruses, also nasally sung, are quite sprightly.

For listeners who prefer modern instruments, and characters set in bold dramatic relief, Raymond Leppard's more conventional account, on RCA, provides a good alternative. His aim is a slick, economical, and idealized Dido rather than a particularly authentic one; to this end, he not only opts for the sheer and fullness of a modern string orchestra and a medium-weight choral, but drops several dances and compresses Belinda's "Thanks to these lonesome vales" and its choral repetition into a single number. Barbrolli, in whose Dido (Angel S 36359) Leppard played a tightly, music box continuous, did the same; so did Deller, in his smaller-scaled but often foursquare recording (Vanguard HM 46). For the most part, the playing and singing under Leppard are stylish. Stilwell, as noted, is a somewhat stronger Aeneas than Thomas, and Tatiana Troyanos' darker voice creates a less frail, more tragic Dido.

The RCA recording boasts a bit more studio sleight-of-hand, including spectacularly resonant choral sections, and particularly during those choruses, exceptional stereo separation. The Chandos digital recording is also vivid and warm and more realistically (and evenly) resonant. The pressing is generally good, although my copy has a few ticks and a visible scratch through the thunderstorm.

SCHUBERT: Lazarus, D. 689*; Mass in G. D. 167*.

Sheila Armstrong (Maria*), Ruth Welting (Jemima*), and Jocelyn Channonin (Martha*), soprano; Anthony Rolfe Johnson (Lazarus*) and Martin Hill (Nathanael*), tenors; Martin Egel (Simon*), bass; Radio France Chorus and New Philharmonic Orchestra, Theodor Guschlbauer, cond. Erato STU 71442, $17.96 (two discs, manual sequence)(distributed by RCA).

We know little about the unfinished oratorio Lazarus (1820), or how this "religious drama" of a northern Protestant theologian (A. H. Niemeyer) got into the hands of Schubert in Catholic Vienna. Of the three acts, representing the death, entombment, and raising of Lazarus, Schubert set only the first two, and the end of the second is also missing, perhaps only lost. Why he did not finish a work on which he obviously toiled with total involvement at the peak of his creative power will probably never be known. Suffice it to say that Brahms, always rummaging among old scores, was so taken by Lazarus that he copied portions and sent them to Joachim and Clara Schumann, promising them "the greatest pleasure" in getting acquainted with this great work.

Lazarus is indeed a masterpiece. It discloses a facet in Schubert's art, the dramatic/operatic, that we tend to dismiss. We do know his operas and Singspiele, but nowhere do they show the dramatic power, the true operatic tone, to such an extent; nowhere is the (large) orchestra so intimate-ly at the service of the unfolding of the drama; and nowhere else in his theater music does he endow the protagonists with such wide-ranging emotions. Is it possible that, like Handel in his oratorios, Schubert felt free to abandon in a dramatic oratorio the conventions of contemporaneous opera and permit his imagination to express itself unfettered?

His musical language here is very advanced, going beyond Wagner's Lohen-grin, to which it bears a curious resemblance. In fact, the orchestral orchestral colors prophetically anticipate the opening of the Lohen-grin Prelude and other similar spots in Wagner's opera. Lazarus has oras, but they are through-composed and almost hidden in the ever-evolving dramatic fabric, often interrupted by agitated accompanied recitatives. Everything is dovetailed. Fortunately, the intelligent conductor here does not resort to respectful "oratorios pauses," but keeps the dramatic continuity alive.) The orchestral writing is elaborate and inventive; the wind instruments, especially, are used with exceptional expressive skill. Some of the modulations would have shocked Schubert's contemporaries, but of course they never heard Lazarus—as they never heard most or all of his greatest works. The scene of Lazarus' death at the end of the first act, with its dark colors, is deeply moving, and the genre picture before the first appearance of Simon the Saducee ranks with the introduction to the third act of Die Meistersinger, yet there are many more such enthralling scenes. Lazarus should be taken up by our performing organizations, but the conductor must be an experienced opera hand; it seems made to order for the likes of Karajan and the Vienna Philharmonic.

The present performance and engineering are both good, though the singers are a trifle closely mixed. There is only a slight obsequious to the "appropriately sacred" attitude we've become accustomed to since the nineteenth century, which takes the form of "meaning" microdynamics in the shaping of melodies. Anthony Rolfe Johnson (Lazarus) sings well and with a good deal of expressive finesse, but he is just a little precious. Martin Hill, the other tenor (Nathanael), and baritone Martin Egel (Simon) keep him good company. Of the three fine sopranos, Sheila Armstrong (Maria) must be singled out as the best in the cast. She handles her very high tessitura with ease; the high tones carry beautifully and are never forced. Jocelyn Channonin (Martha) also holds her own despite an occasional slight wobble, and Ruth Welting (Jemima) is commendably on pitch, although in pianos her voice has little color. Chorus and orchestra do well for the most part. Conductor Theodor Guschlbauer, with his inimitably Austrian name, should take to this music naturally, and does, though the attacks of the French orchestra are occasionally a bit lazy, and the antiphonal exchanges between orchestra and voices should go beyond mere repetition. The G major Mass (1815) is the best of Schubert's four youthful Masses—remarkably mature for a composer of such tender age, and very compact. Without prelimi-naries, the Kyrie sets out with a lovely melo-dy, and melody never ceases to pour out. The composer is deeply committed, and the tone is singularly personal. Such church music is often accused of lacking "liturgical propriety," a heavyweight term designed to scare away anyone disposed to argue. Indeed, this music is comfortable; it is warm, simple, unpretentious, and wholly pleasing. No wonder the Austrians and Bavarians, who to this day hear and love these Masses, refused to obey Pius X's encyclical (Mota proprto. 1903) that torbaide the use of orchestral Masses in church services. When the Austrian bishops warned the Holy See that it would face a rebellion if their flocks were deprived of the Masses of Haydn, Mozart, and Schubert, the pope had to backtrack discreetly and allow these honestly felt and beguiling works to be sung "where longstanding traditions have been established."

The performance is straightforward but mellow; even the French chorus picks up the Viennese tone.

P.H.L.

Claudio Arrau, piano. Philips 9500 755*, 9281, $10.98 each. Tape: 7300 836*/$281, $10.98 each (cassettes).

SCHUBERT: Sonata for Piano in A, D. 959; Impromptu C minor, D. 899, No. 1.

Ludwig Olshansky, piano [Marc J. Aubert and Joanna Nickrenz, prod.] Monitor MCS 2164, $7.98.


Michel Dalberto, piano. Musical Heritage Society MHS 4366, $7.75 ($4.95 to members).

Perhaps apochryphal, the story goes that someone suggested to Rachmaninoff that he play some Schubert sonatas to mark the centenary of that composer’s death in 1928, perhaps not so often. Rachmaninoff, known to write sonatas? Thanks to the pioneering recordings of an inspired believer, and so forth...

...ensconced in high positions: An upcoming record of Schubert’s music with Artur Schnabel and a few other dedicated musicians, these are only today played often well (well, perhaps not so often). But there are still philistines about, so some enucleated in high positions: An upcoming pianist who can profit from greater rigor...
Op. PROKOFIEV: Symphony No. 1, in D, no and Orchestra, No.
in torso form: Only the two completed not savor.) The C major Sonata is presented
around on the palate. (One hears, but does
these admirably played performances
courage musical gourmets from swashing
louds have a percussive edge that will dis-
worth watching, his efforts are somewhat
his playing here to know that he is an artist
While one can certainly glean enough from
sober tempo relationships and symmetry.
Aspects of Schubert are stressed by way of
Voicing is crystalline, and the classical
and both pieces are further diminished by
the bright, bass-shy reproduction, which
tends to blast on loud attacks and "ping"
unpleasantly on sforzando high notes. With
the Schnabel edition available only as an
import and the mercurial Lupu presently
in limbo (perhaps London will reissue it),
the most interesting edition readily available is
Wilhelm Kempff's in a DG set of all the
sonatas (2740 132). But with new accounts
of D. 959 imminent from Arrau, Murray
Perahia, and Maurizio Pollini, my advice
would be to wait—or look to the cassette
medium for Richard Goode's account on
Haskil Prize. (He also took first place at
import and the mercurial Lupu presently in
and both pieces are further diminished by
spite a few idiosyncrasies)? The impromptu
EMI recording remains the exemplar de-
lution of Schnabel (whose justly cherished
third beats in the scherzo in dubious emu-
And why must so many pianists rush the
mit the simpler melodic parts to flow freely.
Andantino second movement fails to gather
music. (The approaching "storm" in the

SCHUBERT: Piano Works—See page 40.
SCHUMANN: Faschingsschwank aus Wien—See page 41.

SHOSTAKOVICH: Concerto for Pia-
and Orchestra, No. 1, Op. 35.*

PROKOFIEV: Symphony No. 1, in D,
Op. 25 (Classical).

Carol Rosenberger, piano*: Stephen
Burns, trumpet*. Los Angeles Chamber Orches-
tra, Gerard Schwarz, cond. [Marc J. Authent and
Joanna Nickrenz, prod.] DELOS DMS 3008,
$17.98 (digital recording).

Heard without reference to other standards,
these performances would likely make
a highly favorable impression, particularly
for the sheer technical quality of the play-
ing. (Trumpeter Stephen Burns deserves
special praise.) But there is more to this
music than comes across here. For all their
virtues, the Delos versions are simply not
up to the competition.

Carol Rosenberger and Gerard
Schwarz take a Romanticized view of
the Shostakovich concerto, expressive and
expansive. Yet the piece is neither
Romantic nor overtly expressive. Repeatedly
the performers smooth over Shostakovich's
ing sarcasm, brittle sonorities, and abrupt
contrasts of mood, missing much of the snap,
sparkle, power, tension, and forward impe-
tus. There is no shortage of more pointed
and mercurial performances: Shostak-
ovich's own, with Cluytens (Seraphim
60161) shifts easily between brashness and
elegance, and pianist Eugene List (who
gave the work its American premiere) and
the composer's son Maxim (CBS/Melodiya
M 35116), despite orchestral playing of
limited refinement, capture the playfulness,
poignance, and Russian "soul" of the
music better than anyone. Pianists André
Pevrin (CBS MS 6392, with Bernstein) and
Christina Ortiz (Angel S 37109, with Berg-
land) supply performances that, though
"Russian," remain faithful to the spirit and
letter of the score, the former is pungent and
extroverted, the latter more reserved and
posed. On the other hand, the collaboration
by Annie d'Arco and Paillard (Musical Her-
tage MHS 1151) offers a peculiarly French
elegance that, if it misrepresents Shostak-
ovich's intentions, nonetheless proves thor-
oughly engrossing.

The Delos recording betrays the arcanes of timbre that I have come to
associate with digital releases to date. In
their impassioned forte entrance at cue 29 in the
Lento, for example, the first violins sound
strident and buzzy. Accept Delos' excel-
ent claims for digital perfection if you
wish, but at least take the trouble to com-
pare this release to the Ortiz (Angel's mat-
tering will do fine), an exceptionally vivid
performance by EMI's engineers. For the Delos
version I know that even comes close to the
rollicking timings suggested in the Baron
score (though not necessarily by Prokof-
iev). Markevitch, Ansermet, Marriner/
Argo, Ansermet, and Toscanini.

As for the pairing, what is right for the
concert hall is not necessarily appropriate
for a record. Surely this is a logical cou-
pling of youthful works by the Soviet
Union's most important twentieth-century
composers (Stravinsky having departed
for France and America), both bursting with
wit of a very personal sort. Yet the buyer
looking for a Prokofiev Classical Symph-
ony is not likely to want a piano concerto in
the bargain—particularly one by another
composer—and anyone in the market for
Shostakovich's First Piano Concerto will
probably want another piano concerto on
the reverse, preferably Shostakovich's oth-
er one. And so here is a product only too
familiar to the collector: While hardly poor
or perfunctory, its content supplies nothing
substantive that is not already better accom-
plished elsewhere.

Why do artists continue to record the
same pieces, when there is so much music
of great merit awaiting a first recording—
or first decent one?

R.D.H.

SHOSTAKOVICH: Symphonies: No.
70.


SHOSTAKOVICH: Symphony No. 5, in D minor, Op. 47.

Cleveland Orchestra. Lorin Maazel, cond. [Robert Woods, prod.] Telarc DG 10067. $17.98 (digital recording).

SHOSTAKOVICH: Symphony No. 6, in B minor, Op. 54; Festive Overture, Op. 96.

Plovdiv Bulgarian State Philharmonic Orchestra. Dobrin Petkov, cond. Monitor MCS 2163. $7.98.

Like Rachmaninoff, Shostakovich has always been treated seriously by English critics but has met with scorn from some of their American colleagues. Yet recent years have seen a reevaluation of his music, and his stock has risen considerably.

Bernard Haitink is one of several conductors in the process of recording the symphonies complete, and the latest installment of his cycle maintains the high standards previously exhibited. He gives the striking First Symphony a splendid reading. The first movement is not as staccato as one usually hears it, and Maazel, unlike most conductors, does not slow the finale's final drumbeats, but drives straight through to the end. Not a minutely spectacular, the recording is a good, honest representation of a naturally balanced orchestra, playing superbly.

The most obvious comparison is with Leonard Bernstein's recent CBS account with the New York Philharmonic (IM 35854). Bernstein is even more expansive than Maazel in the slow movements, more elegaic in the Largo, and he and the orchestra really throw themselves into the finale. The CBS recording is more "immediate"; one hears the bows digging into the strings and the buzz of the bassoon reeds in the scherzo, all of which I enjoy. It's the difference between hearing the performance from within the orchestra (Bernstein) or from a good seat in the hall (Maazel), both perfectly valid approaches. You pay your money (quite a bit, too), and you take your choice.

My own favorite symphony, the Sixth, receives a curious performance and recording by Dobrin Petkov and the Plovdiv Bulgarian State Philharmonic, names unfamiliar to Americans, to be sure. The long and at times virtually static opening Largo, surely one of Shostakovich's finest creations, is appropriately broad and spacious here, more so than under more celebrated conductors. Dobrin Petkov and the Plovdiv Bulgarian State Philharmonic, names unfamiliar to Americans, to be sure. The long and at times virtually static opening Largo, surely one of Shostakovich's finest creations, is appropriately broad and spacious here, more so than under more celebrated conductors. The most obvious comparison is with Leonard Bernstein's recent CBS account with the New York Philharmonic (IM 35854). Bernstein is even more expansive than Maazel in the slow movements, more elegaic in the Largo, and he and the orchestra really throw themselves into the finale. The CBS recording is more "immediate"; one hears the bows digging into the strings and the buzz of the bassoon reeds in the scherzo, all of which I enjoy. It's the difference between hearing the performance from within the orchestra (Bernstein) or from a good seat in the hall (Maazel), both perfectly valid approaches. You pay your money (quite a bit, too), and you take your choice.

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The Tape Deck

Critiques of new cassette and open-reel releases by R. D. Darrell

Select Imports

In the early days of recorded tape, domestic production predominated, and American performers often were represented as prominently as or even more prominently than foreigners—in sharp contrast to the early classical-disco era. These days, though, probably a majority of classical music cassettes are manufactured abroad, including those imported overseas for domestic release, mainly by the various Polygram labels and Eurodisc. And even in the case of tapes and discs manufactured here by overseas masters—by Angel/Seraphim, in particular, but also by CBS/Odyssey and RCA Red Seal—fastidious and affluent connoisseurs often prefer the quality British and European productions, presumably (and often actually) superior.

Currently there are growing numbers of mail-order importers featuring not only EMI originals (including chromium tapings of items as yet represented, if at all, only by Angel ferrics), but also many other foreign labels. I'm indebted to one of these, Brilly Imports (155 N. San Vicente Blvd., Beverly Hills, Calif. 90211), for my first batch of British chromium exemplars, most of them digitally recorded. Of the latter, the major entry is the handsomely packaged Mozart Zauberflöte (HMV TCC SLS 5223, three cassettes, $41.94), which Angel has released on ferric tape, presumably in an oversize box. I haven't heard that edition for direct comparison, but some connoisseurs may well find it worth the extra cost to have a truly deluxe presentation of Bernard Haitink's superbly shaped and colored reading with the Bavarian Radio Chorus and Orchestra and a rather uneven cast.

There are also two HMV singles ($13.98 each): young Simon Rattle's already celebrated ultra-wide-range digital recording of Holst's Planetes (TCC ASD 4047) with the Philharmonia Orchestra, and charming period-instrument performances of the Mozart flute concertos and K. 315 Andante by John Solum and the Hanoverian Orchestra in a chromium taping (TCC ASD 4056) of a delectably pure analog recording. More novel is a chromium cassette, duplicated by Teldec in real time, of a digitally recorded program of Russian showpieces (Mussorgsky-Ravel Pictures, Borodin Steppes, Glinka Russian and Latvian Overture) by Carlos Pita and the Philharmonic Symphony (Lodia LOC 780, $18.98): striking recording and processing, orchestral playing not quite big or virtuosic enough, and unlike the HMVs, no notes. All the HMV (BASF) chromiums specify 120-microsecond equalization—seemingly the European standard instead of 70 µs.

Dwelling on the current domestic releases of musicassette importations is the first digitally recorded Wagner Rheingold in Marek Janowski's relatively conservative Dresden version (Europod 501 137, three-cassette Prestige Box. $35.94; disc review, December 1981 HF). Its box-cover rubric, "FE Ct hifi," presumably indicates ferrichrome tape—the first commercial example?

Exceptional domestic vintages. Just as the California and New York State wines now compete, even among discriminating oenophiles, with the long-matchless French vintages, so more recently distinctive domestic tapings have come to compete. As we're now demanding audiophiles, with the best imports every available technological, and often artistic, aspect. Particularly notable is the current crop of hi-tech piano releases, by mostly young or new American (native or adopted) artists. In many, general excellence is further enhanced by the expertise, sometimes extending to the engineering, of master producer Max Wilcox.

Most newsworthy is the solo recording debut, in a program of Brahms and Liszt, of Van Cliburn Competition winner André-Michel Schub (Voc Cum Laude VCS 9009, digital/chromium. $10.98) 2. Cold, but neat finish lacks his virtuosity is throughout. I sense some lack of spontaneity, while the Hamburg Stenway piano sound, for all its brilliance, wants just a bit more weight and presence. Or at least so it seems in comparison with the first Richard Goode recordings for Desmur (SRB 60011, Schubert) and Nonesuch (D1 79104, Schumann)—also produced by Wilcox—reviewed elsewhere in this issue.

Wilcox coproduces and coengines Vol. 2 in Peter Serkin's distinctively cool, unflichingly non-Romanticized Chopin series, which features the great Op. 61 Polonaise Fantaisie with seven shorter pieces, digitally recorded, on superchrome tape, and with program notes by Harris Goldsmith (RCA Red Seal Prestige Box ATK 1-4035, 5.15.98). And shifting to the new AAG InterDigital/chromium series in real-time duplications, Wilcox also produces the Ives Concord Sonata by Irina Vallecillo (AAG Prestige Box D 001, $18, AAG Music, 200 Varick St., New York, N.Y. 10014). But since I received the alternative Dolby C encoding, for which I lack as yet decoding means, I can't properly judge the recorded Steinway piano sound, which seems a bit brisly bright in Dolby B playback, faute de mieux. In any case, the warmly fluent reading lacks the authoritative strength of the long-acclaimed Kirkpatrick/CBS and Kalisch/Nonesuch versions, though neither is available on tape.

This month's last hi-tech piano program is Neal O'Doan's rather overcarefully played and impersonally interpreted Beethoven Diabelli Variations, a vividly realistic analog recording in real-time chromium duplication (PAN 113) in Pandora's "Budget Audiophile" series, incredibly priced at only $5.95 per cassette! And to return to "ordinary" ferric tapings of analog recordings (this vividly ringing one inked in a Haarlem, Netherlands, studio), there are far greater artistic rewards in the batch of seven great middle-period" Beethoven sonatas by Charles Rosen (Nonesuch N 378010. $29.94). Rosen's reputation as an "intellectual" writer-pianist is no index to the passionate eloquence—heart, muscle, and gut—of the present performances. But unconscionably, Rosen's program notes for the disc edition are denied us here.

Barclay-Crocker's reel catalog (11 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10004) of Philips recordings continues to grow so fast that it inevitably begins to include not only the indispensable universal favorites, like the St. Martin's Academy Chamber Ensemble's great 1978 version of the Schubert octet (G 9500 400, $10.95), but also programs of narrower appeal, like the Arrau/Inbal London Philharmonic survey of Chopin's works for piano and orchestra (Z 6747 003, two reels, $29.95), which, for all its virtuosity, is intolerably heavy-handed to my ears. Far preferable are the singles ($10.95 each) that provide arresting new illuminations of favorite masterpieces: the exceptionally powerful Brahms violin concerto by Salvatore Accardo with the Leipzig Gewandhaus under Kurt Masur (G 9500 624); the now haunting, now exultantly rousing Haitink/Concertgebouw performance of the Tchaikovsky Third (Polish) Symphony (G 9500 776); the warmly expansive Colin Davis/BBC Symphony reading of the BeethovenPastoral (G 9500 403); and the invigorating Marriner/ St. Martin's Academy reimaginings of the often routine Bizet Carmen and L'Arlesienne Suites (G 9500 566).
What started as a one-night-stand in Central Park has all the earmarks of becoming a serious relationship. Again.

by Stephen Holden

ON THE CHILLY SATURDAY afternoon of September 19, 1981, Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel reunited in Central Park for their first full concert together since 1970. More than half a million people flocked to the free event to hear the legendary duo perform twenty songs spanning two decades—from *The Sounds of Silence* and *Scarborough Fair* to Simon's John Lennon tribute, *The Late Great Johnny Ace*. The media barrage that followed suggested a New York City version of Woodstock.

The event also had important ramifications for Simon and Garfunkel's relationship. What began as a one-shot reunion has blossomed into a possible renewed, long-term association, with the two talking seriously about touring Europe in the spring and possibly recording together. Though they hadn't planned to release an album from the concert, the demand was such that they changed their minds. "The Concert in Central Park" came out in late February, coinciding with the show's premiere on Home Box Office. Plans are also under way to make the performance available on video cassette.

Two weeks before the album's release, I visited separately with Simon and Garfunkel and talked with them about their reunion, their solo careers, and their feelings about the state of popular music in general. Both seemed genuinely excited at the prospect of a long-term reconciliation. Yet both maintained that it would have to be a step-by-step process.

"I'm interested in seeing whether that feeling that was expressed in Central Park by New Yorkers will be reflected across the country," says Simon. "That will have an effect on whether the organism of Simon & Garfunkel begins to grow and flourish. But it's not the deciding factor. If the concert album is an enormous hit, it doesn't mean we will get
together. If it's a flop, it doesn't mean we won't try something together, either. "But I must say, Artie and I get along very well now. The joys of partnership are really fulfilling when it works. When it doesn't, it's like a classic bad marriage."

"Being a duo requires a sensitivity about how the other works," says Garfunkel. "In reuniting, Paul and I found that the ability to fail in step with each other hadn't vanished, even after eleven years. There's a definite charge between the two of us."

The famed twosome broke up in 1970 because they hadn't been able to communicate even their smallest grievances. This, combined with the inherent competitiveness of the duo context, motivated each to set out to prove his own, independent worth. Garfunkel embarked on a successful movie career that included Catch-22 and Carnal Knowledge. He also recorded five solo albums for Columbia: "Angel Clare," "Breakaway," "Watermark," "Fate for Breakfast," and "Scissors Cut." Simon undertook an extremely successful career as a singer/songwriter that included three studio albums — "Paul Simon," "There Goes Rhymin' Simon," "Still Crazy After All These Years" — one live album, and, most recently, the soundtrack of One Trick Pony, the semi-autobiographical film he wrote and starred in. Though the album went gold, the film was the first project of his career to fail commercially.

The idea of reuniting comes at a critical point in their solo careers. Both men are now forty, and both have experienced recent setbacks. For Simon, the failure of One Trick Pony, a five-year project, was a devastating blow. For Garfunkel, it was the disappointing sales of "Scissors Cut."

Simon lives in a palatial duplex overlooking Central Park. During our interview in his study one Saturday afternoon, he seemed in good spirits — a far cry from the morose pop artiste that has long been his press image.

**Backbeat:** You've been working on a solo album in Los Angeles with producers Lenny Waronker and Russ Titelman. Why the switch from New York and Phil Ramone?

**Simon:** Phil has been my producer for the last several years, but he also produces Billy Joel, and there was a scheduling conflict. I thought too that it would be good for me to play with some musicians other than the ones I'd been using on my One Trick Pony tour. The new band includes Greg Phillinganes on piano, Dean Parks on guitar, and Steve Gadd on drums. Steve was the only musician I'd used before. I have half the songs finished.

**Backbeat:** When is it scheduled to come out?

**Simon:** I was originally shooting for a spring release, but now the reunion is taking on a life of its own, and I want to watch the life it takes.

**Backbeat:** What are the possibilities of you and Artie going into the studio together?

**Simon:** There could be insurmountable problems, because when I left CBS to sign with Warner Bros. there was a lot of bad blood. They bought me, what politicians were their friends. What got me the most about Gershwin was that, although he had an enormously successful career, he went back to school because he felt he wasn't equipped to say what he wanted to say.

**Backbeat:** Didn't you do the same?

**Simon:** I studied harmony and theory, but not to the degree I wanted. I've never attempted any composition larger than a single song.

**Backbeat:** What about the possibility of writing for the musical theater?

**Simon:** I've often thought about that, but I don't know how you do it — though I think I could learn. I wouldn't shift my style to go to the stage. I'd want to find a way of embracing the theatrical necessities with what I wanted to say musically, i.e., with rock & roll. I still haven't heard great pop music on the Broadway stage. The closest is probably [Andrew Lloyd] Webber & [Tim] Rice [Jesus Christ Superstar, Evita, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat], who come stylistically out of rock & roll and even folk. When I saw Paul McCartney last summer, I asked him how come he never wrote a Broadway musical. He said he thought Broadway musicals were too boring. I never liked them either.

**Backbeat:** How do you feel about contemporary punk acts like the Clash?

**Simon:** I saw the Clash, and I related to them, though I didn't like the music because it was too loud. Like a lot of musicians, I'm keenly aware of my cardm. They're my tools. I had to leave the concert.
because I didn’t want to endanger the tools. As for what they did, I couldn’t hear the lyrics. But I could see the motion and get the gist of it. It wasn’t that far away from a hand playing at a sock hop in the ’50s. It was still Strats and Telecasters and drums and costumes and rebellion and sexuality.

In fact, one of the remarkable things about rock & roll is that it hasn’t changed. Whereas rock & roll was incomprehensible to my parents’ generation, the music that twenty-year-olds like is not incomprehensible to me. I understand the Go-Go’s. They’re talking in the same language, even if they’re not as articulate or sophisticated as more experienced rock acts.

Then again, rock & roll doesn’t seem as happy as it was when I was a kid. Little Richard seemed happier. The anger worries me, because when you get a lot of angry people there’s going to be an explosion. The times may produce the music, but the music also produces the times.

While Simon is something of a homebody, and has always staked close to New York, Garfunkel has been traveling abroad and on the West Coast. Today, he occupies a spectacular triplex on New York’s Upper East Side. An ex-math major, he is a perfectionist in and out of the recording studio.

Backbeat: Do you keep up with the music scene these days?

Garfunkel: Two years ago, I would have been able to say I knew what’s going on and could defend my point of view.

Backbeat: What is your point of view? How do you feel about new wave, for instance?

Garfunkel: I don’t like the music. I’ll go wherever the music is happening, but for me new wave is not what’s happening, so now I don’t even check it out.

Backbeat: Do you prefer classical music?

Garfunkel: That’s mostly what I listen to now. I started getting Bach-crazy about fifteen years ago. And I think Ravel is great.

Backbeat: Why have you recorded so many Jimmy Webb songs?

Garfunkel: It’s in the music. I love Jimmy’s writing, especially when he sits down and plays it himself. He comes up with wonderful harmonic changes.

Backbeat: How do you account for the commercial failure of “Scissors Cut”?

Garfunkel: I don’t know. I like that album. I even thought A Heart in New York was a hit single. The funny thing is, the album came out just when we were doing the concert and it got lost in the shuffle. When it didn’t sell well I began to bury the pain in the distraction of the show.

Backbeat: Have you ever thought about singing standards?

Garfunkel: I keep a notebook with a list of songs from the ’30s and ’40s that I’d like to record. Those melodies with super-simple lyrics about him and her are what turn me on the most these days. I’d like to take those oldies and make people really listen to what the lyrics are saying. That could well be my next album.

Backbeat: How much of Paul’s solo catalog would you feel comfortable singing?

Garfunkel: Looking back at his albums, I’d estimate that about thirty percent of his songs would suffer if they had more than one voice. They were just meant to be the way they are. But the other seventy percent I’d love to find harmonies to. I had always wanted to get my hands on American Tune, and I finally did, in the park. Another favorite is Take Me to the Mardi Gras, which could be done cuter, even more like Cecilia.

Backbeat: How do you choose material?

Garfunkel: I don’t go about it with any particular system or method. I just keep my ears out for anything and everything. I’m always looking for a great song. But what happens in the studio is really what leads to the wonderful record. Singing beautifully and having a band cook can circumvent a particular system or method.

Backbeat: How would you perform “Scissors Cut”?

Garfunkel: The two of us could’ve really used a compassionate, intelligent, perceptive third party—someone who negotiates. We’re a perfect case of two people who communicate poorly about sensitive issues. It’s a situation where the things that bug you are so idiosyncratic that you’re almost embarrassed to reveal them. Paul and I have this unique friendship, in that a lot of stuff is never said.

Backbeat: How did the idea for the reunion come about?

Garfunkel: I was in Europe early last summer when Paul called and said he had been invited to do a concert in the park. His idea was for us to do the second half together, and I said yes. Then when we went into rehearsal, friends of ours said, “Why not a full Simon & Garfunkel concert? That’s what will give the crowds the biggest kick.” Paul thought it would make sense because he didn’t want to be the opening act for S & G. I was thinking that S & G didn’t need an opening act—let’s give them the full show! And then Paul began to embrace the idea.

Backbeat: Has its success solidified a reunion?

Garfunkel: Please don’t trap me into being too specific about plans, because we’re right in that stage of movement.

Backbeat: But you are touring Europe this spring, correct?

Garfunkel: Well, Europe is a way to build up our chops before we bring the show on home. The trick is not to give people more nostalgia, but rather to take it further. If we’re going to function again we’ll function in the present tense and draw on the old days as much as it pleases the crowd. But what would be alive for us would be whatever is new.
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New electronic instruments and accessories by Fred Miller

Two- or Three-Way Crossover
If you're interested in replacing your speakers' crossover networks and bumping or tripping your system, Electro-Voice/Tappco has a new two-way electronic crossover that can also be used as a mono three-way unit without any external patching. The Model EX-18 has a single control to adjust crossover frequencies from 100 to 1,600 Hz, a multiplier switch for those between 1 and 16 kHz, and 18-dB-per-octave Butterworth filters for added protection of high-frequency drivers. Its recessed control panel and security cover are designed to prevent accidental resetting. The EX-18 can be rack-mounted and costs $250.

Unlimited Limiter
Limiters are generally used to restrict the natural dynamic range of an input signal and to prevent overload in recording or in electronically amplified live performance. MXR's Model 136 Dual Limiter can be used either as two separate units or in tandem for complementary limiting of two channels—as in, for instance, stereo mixdown. Each channel has switches for input and output, attack, and release. The 136 has both phone-jack and XLR-type input and output connections: there are also jacks for bypass the input stage to gain direct access to the level detectors. This last feature is particularly useful for de-essing vocals or for high-frequency-only limiting. The Model 136 Dual Limiter sells for $450.

Foot Filter
The Ibanez AF-201 Auto Filter is a new effects pedal that offers a broad variety of filtration sounds. Sliders at the top of the unit vary the threshold of sensitivity and the peak of the effect, and three switches govern high pass or low pass, the direction of the sweep (up/down), and its range (high/low). Powered by a 9-volt battery (or by an external 9-volt power supply), it also includes a foot-operated bypass switch and an LED to indicate whether the effect is in or out. Retail price is $115.

Flexible Loudspeaker
Shure's new 711 loudspeaker incorporates a 15-inch woofer with a high-frequency horn/driver combination in a bass-reflex cabinet. Designed for use by small-to-medium-sized performing groups, it features Varad variable sound-dispersion control and can be adjusted to one of four dispersion patterns to maximize its effectiveness in different rooms. The 711 uses a lightweight plywood cabinet. It has an "acoustically transparent" metal grille. weighs 66 pounds, and has built-in carry handles. Power-handling capacity is rated at 105 watts; retail price is $590 per speaker.

Eight-Input Mixer
The Model 2050 line mixer from Fostex has two discrete outputs so that separate feeds can be sent to, for instance, the stage monitors and the house sound system. It also has a built-in, independently controlled headphone amplifier for previewing the mix. With the ability to cascade (or connect in series) any number of units, it has inputs for eight different line signals, from keyboards to effects pedals, tape recorders, or any combination thereof. Sounds like a great idea for multitapeboarders. The Model 2050 is 1 1/4 inches high and retail for $200.
Tenor Sax
Greats from the Prestige Vaults
Reviewed by Crispin Cioe

Giants of the Blues Tenor Sax
Giants of the Funk Tenor Sax
Bob Porter, reissue producer
Prestige P 24101 (two discs)
Prestige P 24102 (two discs)

ANY HISTORICAL RECORD anthology that purports to showcase an entire musical genre is always a little suspect, since the company that releases it is generally limited to the artists on its roster or the master tapes in its vaults. In the case of these fine two-disc reissue sets, however, the label had the goods. From the ’50s through the early ’70s, Prestige owner Bob Weinstock recorded a serious cross-section of great tenor saxophone players who had first come into prominence in the Swing and bebop eras. He recorded them in small-combo blues and funk contexts, playing riff-based songs with a variety of then-contemporary solid rhythm sections. The result was a kind of “jukebox jazz”—a series of records that reflected the pop/r&b trends of the day but from a very swinging perspective.

“Giants of the Blues Tenor Sax” focuses on players who got their start in the Southwest during the Swing era of the ’30s and early ’40s, playing in jazz/dance bands like Count Basie’s. By the time of these recordings they had spent half a lifetime playing and living the blues, absorbing the rhythmic and harmonic charges that came with each passing era. Their styles—especially the big-throated southwestern tenor sax tone they all shared—were distillations. Coleman Hawkins, who in the early ’30s put the tenor on the map as a solo instrument, plays a ruminative Soul Blues, full of irony and wit as he jabs and spars with a responsive young rhythm section that includes Kenny Burrell on guitar. On Light and Lovely, Arnett Cobb, Eddie “Lockjaw” Davis, and Buddy Tate (all ex Basie-ites) join Hawkins on a steamy tenor showdown, backed by organist Shirley Scott.

Longtime Basie lead tenor Jimmy Forrest, whose brash tone and swaggering rhythmic attack masked a formidable technical command, turns in the ultimate late-night, slow bump-and-grind on Bolo Blues. It’s easy to understand that this is the same man who wrote and first performed Night Train, probably the most widely recognized and atmospheric tenor blues tune of all time. With Hal “Cornbread” Singer’s Blues Stompin’ and “Big Al” Sears’s Record Hop, we move into pure, unadulterated honking blues territory. Both of these fine players were steady session men in the ’50s, supplying screaming solos on countless rock & roll hits of the day.

The players on “Giants of the Funk Tenor Sax” came from all over the country, and they weren’t as tied to the Swing tradition as those on the other volume. The blues form and emotional content is still their
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The B-52’s: Mesopotamia
David Byrne, producer
Warner Bros. Mini 3641

"Mesopotamia" goes beyond the B-52’s percolating cultural-junkyard pop to whip up a dense form of dance music. Their first two albums, “The B-52’s” and “Wild Planet,” were silly-putty exercises in primary colors and plastic pastels. This bargain-priced six-track disc—almost an album’s worth of music at a $5.99 suggested list price—maintains the beat while deepening the shades. Working with producer David Byrne of Talking Heads, the band has incorporated his leanings toward voodoo rock-funk synthesis while sacrificing very little of their oddball personality. Cindy Wilson and Kate Pierson have a right-channel-to-left-channel discussion about whether to bake a pineapple upside-down cake or a chocolate devil’s food; Fred Schneider worries about sweat ruining his expensive clothes, and he ruminates about the runes in Mesopotamia.

So there’s no lack of nonsequitur idiosyncracy, but there is an undercurrent that the B-52’s music hasn’t had before, and hadn’t needed before. Their Tinker-Toy musicianship and wittily detailed lyrics carried them for two LPs, but by “Wild Planet” they may have been wondering how to keep the party from running out of steam without bringing out a reheated platter of the same hors d’oeuvres. With Byrne’s multilayered bag of tricks—more presence to the percussion and bass, some opportunite horns and atmospheric effects—the festivities are revived. The band’s scope has also been broadened by its members. Their songs are more impressionistic and less gimmicky, and their performances are more dynamic. Wilson has taken over most lead vocals, and she moves from whispers and pleading to shrieks and choruses with admirable aplomb.

Some of their past delightful specificity of image—the names of the dances on Dance This Mess Around, the scene-setting of Rock Lobster—is missing from “Mesopotamia.” But neither of their full albums has a piece of rapidfire rock as tight as Nip It in the Bud or anything as sexy as Love Land. Even the songs that most resemble the original B-52 sound are filtered through Byrne’s perception and came out sounding different: Throw That Beat in the Garbage Can has a break that owes a lot to free-form avant-garde jazz, and the high-caloric Cake features soul revue horns. “Mesopotamia” is an off-the-wall enterprise, the union of new rock’s resident southern flakes and the master of cerebral body music. Its approach could have come from a line in Cake: “Let’s get this thing in the oven!” This thing cooks. —MITCHELL COHEN

Lou Ann Barton: Old Enough
Glenn Frey & Jerry Wexler, producers. Asylum E 1-60032

What’s this? Has Delbert McClinton had a sex change operation? Has Rickie Lee Jones dropped her hip-cut shack and started singing real honky-tonk blues? Has Bonnie Raitt been slumming? No, Lou Ann Barton—yet another find from the trusty ears of veteran record producer Jerry Wexler—has arrived. “Old Enough,” twenty-eight-year-old Barton’s debut disc, is one of those shamelessly inspired affairs, a rocking, bluesy collection of tunes delivered with the kind of seemingly offhanded, lets-wreck-this-place-abandon thing cooks.

Barton: let’s-wreck-this-place abandon

like McClinton, she has been hanging out with the famed Muscle Shoals sessioners—Barry Beckett, David Hood, Roger Hawkins, et al.—who, on “Old Enough,” provide their trademark swirling, funkified musicianship. Additional top-pedigree support comes from Eagle Glenn Frey and guitarists Jimmie Vaughan (from the Fabulous Thunderbirds), Duncan Cameron (ex-Amazing Rhythm Aces), and Wayne Perkins.

Barton and coproducers Wexler and Frey have chosen some wonderful material. Scottish blues-belter Frankie Miller’s I’m Old Enough and his deliciously upbeat The Doodle Song are rowdy party tunes that highlight the singer’s raspy growl of a voice. On the former, Perkins offers a searing lead guitar line, while Beckett and Clayton Ivey play off each other on organ and piano respectively. On Marshall Crenshaw’s crisp, hand-clapping Brand New Love and the country-gospel crossroad The Sudden Stop (once popularized by Percy Sledge), Barton sings like some winsome bird, bending notes backwards with a keen, quirky sense of phrasing. Then she goes sultry as she breaks into Naomi Neville’s It’s Raining, managing to sound coy, moody, and lonesome all at once. (Al Garth’s sax solo adds even more fuel to the fire.) She also covers a pair of Sixties hits: Maybe, a bit of doo-wop from the Chantels, and Hank Ballard’s soul strut Finger Poppin’ Time, which sports Greg Piccolo’s appropriately frantic tenor sax break.
There hasn't been a debut album that's this easy to like in a long while. "Old Enough" is totally free of the kind of self-conscious musings and misdirected steps that usually mar first-time-out efforts. Clearly, Lou Ann Barton sounds old enough to know precisely what she is doing.

—STEVEN X. REA

Best of the Beau Brummels
Sylvester Stewart & Lenny Waronker, producers. Rhino RNL P [1]

Best of the Bobby Fuller Four
Bob Keane, producer
Rhino RNDF 201

Fate found the Beau Brummels in San Francisco before the city's years of musical ferment; it found them working with Sylvester Stewart before he became Sly Stone. consort with the Everly Brothers and Randy Newman, recording in Nashville—in short, they were always in the right place. Just at the wrong time. Fate found Bobby Fuller dead behind the wheel of his parked car. Some say by his own hands. Some say by means more sinister.

The way things were in 1965, you can listen to the songs of California's Beau Brummels and Texas' Bobby Fuller Four, hear what must have been their native influences (folk, Tex-Mex, Buddy Holly, rockabilly), and still hear what they had in common—the Beatles. a guitar-harp -drums combination; the close-to-the-mike harmonies; the concise, punchy tunes; the expansive musical gestures. Their two biggest hits, "Laugh Laugh" and "I Fought the Law," don't, on the surface, have many similarities, but they're part of the same story: rock in the mid-'60s, American styles being flung in our faces by the British and stolen back. careers that started on the charts and got derailed by fate.

The Brummels had the more erratic course, an outline of which is sketched on "Best of the Beau Brummels." The first side contains seven of their Sly Stewart-produced sides for Autumn Records, including their only two national hits, "Laugh Laugh" and "Just a Little." In 1964, rock hadn't yet been Dylan-ized, but Ron Elliott's songs had a melancholy twang that, combined with Sal Valentinno's vocals and an occasional mournful harmonica, were a harbinger of folk rock. It's the earlier songs—the two hits. "Don't Talk to Strangers," and "Sad Little Girl"—that hold up best today, more so than the Brummels' later work with Warner Bros.. represented on Side 2. "Triangle" and "Bradley's Barn" were both fascinating albums that aren't well served by excerpts and the three previously unreleased sides don't add much to the band's legacy. Still, they were an intriguing link between the early British invasion and the developments of folk, country, Los Angeles and San Francisco rock, and this reissue is a great overview.

Like the Brummels. Bobby Fuller tried a lot of idioms on for size, ranging from car-worship rock in the Brian Wilson mode (King of the Wheels) to the styles of Eddie Cochran (Saturday Night) and Buddy Holly (Only When I Dream). His hand had a scratchy, unpolished sound, and on much of "Best of the Bobby Fuller Four" Fuller's voice sounds like it was recorded through a telephone receiver. The singles / Fought the Law, Let Her Dance. and Holly's "Love's Made a Fool of You," are the hottest rock on the LP, but even through the tinny mixes on some other tracks there's energy worth listening to, and Rhin's fourteen-cut (plus a Fuller radio jingle for KHI in L.A.) retrospective is a treat.

—MITCHELL COHEN

The Call
Hugh Padgham, producer
Mercury SRM 1-4037

At first glance, this debut album looks like the latest entry in Britain's "gloom boom" of bands like U-2, the late Joy Division, and New Order. Within its forbidding black border, the cover shows us the desolation of a nearly empty tube station. While the song titles promise glimpses of a War Weary World from a quartet that apparently has the Fullham Blues, possibly because it is Waiting for the End. No wonder it finds life Unbearable.

But despite those earmarks and the record's London studio origins, this is an American band, a fact first betrayed by the surprising liner credit for Garth Hudson, former Band organist. Hudson is a majestic, classically-influenced stylist whose recorded output since that quintet's retirement has been sparse. He is hardly a likely partner for the more austere proponents of England's recent rock brinkmanship. His involvement here is the first clue to the tight interplay of this Santa Cruz band already known to California new wave aficionados—under its original name. Motion Pictures.

As the Call, the band refers to its British peers in much the same way the Cars did to earlier power pop and new wave models. Here, the alternately skittering and martial rhythms, jangling guitar dissonances, and icy synthesizer motifs familiar in Blighty circles are d tly coupled with flashes of pure Yankee rock. Not surprisingly, the insertion of Chuck Berry guitar fills, for example, succeeds in offsetting the more enerating electronic elements.

The focal point is singer, guitarist, and keyboard player Michael Been, a flamboyant vocal stylist whose timbre and range arc oddly similar to the Tubes' Fee Waybill, but whose apocalyptic imagery and conversational asides refer more pointedly to the late Jim Morrison. Been's often frantic stance is at once the most distinguishing and for now, the most limiting characteristic of the band. Jolting in its contrast to the bored bucking chant ("We've seen it all before") on War Weary World, fired by

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desperation on the singing *There's a Heart Here*. Been's delivery risks wearing out its welcome by hewing too closely to such melodramatic abandon.

Still, this is a band with an emerging sense of personal style. It takes risks, and its evident grasp of canny guitar hooks could carry it further into American rock heartlands than most of the English groups the Cull initially resembles. Been and second guitarist Tom Ferrier have an often gripping interaction in their arrangements, while guest keyboard player Hudson adds a sculptural depth with his familiar organic synthesizer textures.

Hugh Padgham's production is excellent throughout, achieving the balance of clean detail and spatial depth that characterizes his work for various U.K. bands, notably the Police.

---SAM SUTHERLAND

**Full Moon, Featuring Neil Larsen & Buzz Feiten**

Tommy LiPuma, producer

Warner BSK 3585

Though progressive rock/blues band Full Moon disbanded in the early '70s, keyboardist Neil Larsen and guitarist Buzz Feiten—its two principals—have continued to be active on the recording scene. As session players they have worked with Ricky Lee Jones, George Harrison, and Bob Dylan, among others. They've also released several discs of their own, and this one is in every way a continuation of the sound and style of 1980's "Larsen/Feiten Band ."

The music here reflects a blend of influences, with obvious references to Steely Dan and the Doobie Bros. on the vocal numbers. Yet underneath the sophisticated pop/rock chord changes beats a street-smart sensibility that is both original and just plain tough. The sound is instrumental at its core, although half the songs feature the duo's very serviceable close-voiced high harmonics.

Starting with 1978's "Jungle Fever"—one of the finest and most underrated pop instrumental albums of that decade—the pair began honing a sound that fuses hot Latin percussion, solid backbeat drums, and unusually compelling melodies that seem inevitably tied to their bass lines and keyboard harmonies. This is best epitomized on "Full Moon . . ." in *Brown Eyes*, a moody song about a man who is trying to forget a lost love by hanging around a border town because "you get more for your money there when the sun goes down." Percussionist Lenny Castro and drummer Art Rodriguez set up a punchy Latin-rock groove that nicely propels Larsen and Feiten's keening vocals, the interplay between Larsen's icy synthesizer runs and Feiten's chording on the instrumental bridge is superbly understated and emotional. Both men are inventive soloists, though they use familiar modal and pentatonic elements in their playing. On the instrumental *Sierra*, Larsen's unique organ sound combines traditional funky tone settings with a more contemporary synthesizer overlay to stunning effect.

Occasionally the writing falters, as when the ballad *Twilight Moon* strays uncomfortably close to Doobie territory. And producer Tommy LiPuma sometimes has a tendency to dampen the fire—particularly the percussion/drum attack—in the mix. But on balance this is an album that works in the commonly accepted pop/rock milieu yet easily avoids cliché. The best news is that the polished sound that Feiten and Larsen have worked so diligently to achieve is all their own. —CRISPIN CIOE

**John Hiatt: All of a Sudden**

Tony Visconti, producer

Geffen GHS 2009

"All of a Sudden" is an apt description of the quantum leap John Hiatt has taken in his first collaboration with producer Tony Visconti. Both of Hiatt's previous MCA albums displayed his tough-minded writing and urgent singing, but miserably recording budgets and a then-young band offset his assets with rough sonic edges and a sometimes-tentative feel to the playing.

By contrast, these new songs are burnished, sharply focused modern rock, attesting not only to more available studio dollars and Visconti's estimable instincts, but also to the maturing Hiatt and his band, who have gained on their own and through their recent partnership with Ry Cooder. Framed by Visconti's more spacious, crisp production sound, the quartet achieves a deceptively rich yet muscular ensemble style. Drummer Darrell Verducco and bassist James Rolleston hammer together riveting rhythmic skeletons studded with dramatic climax and shifts in emphasis, against which Jesse Harm's keyboards and Hiatt's guitar trade off evenly as harmonic and melodic foils.

The fact that this band's playing invites comparison with that of Elvis Costello's Attractions is a mixed blessing for Hiatt's critical stock, since his glottal vocal attack with verbal cleverness already place him in a comparison with that of Elvis Costello's Attractions. And Hiatt's stabbing indictments of doomed women (Walking Dead, I Could Use an Angel), moody vignettes of edgy loners (Getting Excited, I Look for Love), and other testaments of angst (Having Some Fun, Something Happens) all land him in the same psychosocial no-man's-land that Costello has been mapping out since his recording debut (The irony is that Hiatt is actually the senior of the two.) But Costello has been tempering his earlier rage of late, so it's Hiatt who now wears the mantle of romantic averner.

That finds him veering dangerously close to misogyny at times, as on the funny but scabrous *Doll Hospital*. Flashes of ironic humor and the consistent snap of the playing compensate, however. The vocal arrangements offer the best proof of the extra hours in the studio, attaining an expansive harmonic lushness and contrapuntal interplay new to Hiatt's music. His solo singing continues to gain in focus, even recalling another Visconti client, David Bowie, on *Forever Yours*. The net power of "All of a Sudden" can't be faulted: This is potent, infectious rock with pop immediacy and probing intelligence.

---SAM SUTHERLAND

**John Martyn: Glorious Fool**

Phil Collins, producer

Duke/Atlantic SD 19345

John Martyn's best album in nearly a decade, "Grace and Danger" (reviewed in these pages in July of 1981), witnessed a heartening return to form for the moody Scottish singer, writer, and guitarist. His most affecting songs in years were matched with the most fully realized arrangements and productions since early '70s classics like "Solid Air" and "Sunday's Child.

Yet Island, Martyn's label since his first solo recordings in the late '60s, apparently had given up hope. Despite reports that a U.S. version of "Grace and Danger" would be released, the few copies that made it to the bins were European imports that Island had shipped in lieu of a formal release. A sequel was recorded with Genesis' Phil Collins, the drummer on "Grace and Danger," handling production. Thanks to Collins' clout as a successful solo artist, this time the balance tipped in Martyn's favor: Collins' label, Atlantic, picked up U.S. rights to the disc from WEA International.

With a little luck, these lissome, jazzy-tinged performances will find Martyn some new listeners. For "Glorious Fool" is even better than its heartbroken, emotive predecessor. Apart from a more consistent array of songs, Collins figures prominently as a unifying force here; his deep, full drum sound and complementary backing vocals provide seductive musical constants. The Genesis founder also has persuaded Martyn to edit himself deftly, compressing the more grand, exploratory songs into tighter and more coherent pieces than some of their earlier prototypes.

Yet Collins hasn't attempted to eliminate the eccentricities so clearly essential to Martyn's work. His breathy, impassioned singing and the sparse, stinging electric and acoustic guitar stylings remain very much intact and in full display.

If "Grace and Danger" drew much of its drama from the failed marriage of its author, "Glorious Fool" suggests a heart on the mend, still aware of recent pain yet turning toward a more optimistic perspective. *Couldn't Love You More*, a sultry love song, signals that transition as the opening
Van Morrison: Beautiful Vision
Van Morrison, producer & director Warner Bros. BSK 3562

Van Morrison is the William Blake of contemporary pop, and revelation is his turf. His heartfelt synthesis of gospel, r&b, jazz, and folk music stands in sharp contrast to the recent fundamentalist testimonies of brother Bob Dylan. Dylan seeks an absolute law, a Father to serve, while Morrison pursues a more personalized, pantheistic course. "The search for the light, sometimes known simply as grace, is at the heart of all Morrison's work," critic Brian Cullman has written, and Morrison has continued that search with single-minded integrity in all his recordings since "Wavelength." On his last LP, the triumphant "Common One," he finally put his demons behind him and celebrated the spirit and flesh (almost at once) and the arrival of peace—and of a good band. "I'm satisfied," he chanted and growled, over and over.

He isn't as concerned with attaining grace on "Beautiful Vision," but he is intent on sharing it. If the album doesn't have the epic gravity of its predecessor, Morrison's singing has reached a level of control and relaxation that makes even throwaway songs (Northern Muse [Solid Ground] and Across the Bridge Where Angels Dwell) a joy to hear.

The band is the epitome of California studio eclecticism, without any insincere chopsmanship. Led by Pee Wee Ellis (saxes and flutes) and Mark Isham (trumpet and synthesizer), it plays it low and slow throughout, like a surreal country-gospel ensemble (Beautiful Vision). On tunes like Dweller on the Threshold, an r&b groove will suddenly support Celtic, Oriental, or Northern European folk references. Dire Straits' guitarist Mark Knopfler guests on the best songs, Cleaning Windows and Aryan Mist. The latter is a shuffling cry for cleansing of vision and escape from illusion (like the glamor trap), while the former is a captivating radio anthem, full of playful blues imagery. Come to think of it, cleaning windows would be a good steady gig for this working man's mystic. On the other hand, if the aurora borealis colors of the instrumental Scandinavia are any indication, Van Morrison still has more rivers to cross.

—CHAP STERN

Morrison: working man's mystic with rivers to cross

selection, punctuated by Eric Clapton's tidy electric guitar figures. Martyrs' earliest songs of romantic devotion were among his most affecting, and here he adds several strong new candidates, including Hold on My Heart and the haunting Please Fall in Love with Me. On the latter, the combination of Collins' slow, martial rhythms and the rich, dark, harmonized male voices creates a moving sense of determination.

There's also whimsy, along with the kind of brisk, off-center ensemble rhythm work that marked Martyn's early '70s move from acoustic to electric instruments. Perfect Hustler is an erotic valentine with percolating Latin and calypso undercurrents. While Didn't Do That offers the fluid drive and sudden rhythmic turns common in hard-blown jazz but seldom heard from erstwhile folk singers. Add the searching electric guitar lines and hissed vocal of Amsterdam, and "Glorious Fool" proves glorious indeed. Collins' production sound is superb throughout, aiding considerably the album's careful balancing of introspection and ebullience.

—SAM SUTHERLAND

Smoky Robinson: Yes It's You Lady
George Tobin, producer Tamla 6001TL

Two years ago, Smokey Robinson recorded "Warin' Thoughts," his most consistently inspired album since leaving the Miracles. With that LP, and the singles that preceded and followed it (Crushin' and Being with You), he reassured his creative preemi-
nence, which had suffered a decline in the '70s. The followup album, "Being with You," was dissipated by comparison, but it was a success, and "Yes It's You Lady" repeats its formula: a few new Robinson compositions, some jury-built songs by Gary Goetzman and Mike Piccirillo, a turgid concluding cut by Forest Hairston, all wrapped up in the marzipan production of George Tobin.

You can't be with the Motown organization as long as Robinson has without absorbing some lessons about follow-ups and filler, and this disc has an ample amount of both. Though Robinson's voice remains the perfect vehicle for declarations of romantic devotion, even his floating vocals can't camouflage the flaws. The aimless instrumental oozing of Tell Me Tomorrow, the tame, repetitious tunk of The Only Game in Town (in 1966, Robinson could have written a small classic with that song's "love is a gamble" conceit), the smooth music of Merry-Go-Ride are all signs of laziness, of doing what has worked before and stretching to fill time.

Robinson's own songs are part of the problem: They have his unmistakable touch, but they're surprisingly klutzy for such a consummate craftsman. Phrases are crammed into lines, rhymes are forced, all the melodic seams show. The title cut begins promisingly, then drifts off into a portentous chorus ("Yes it's you who can do/The same old things and make me feel good every time") that's a long way from the charming precision of The Way You Do the Things You Do and other vintage Smokey songs. The album suffers from an awkwardness—created by expressions like "desire alarms," by the cutesy couplets in International Baby, by the hookless tune of Are You Still Here—that falls hard on the ear.

The best track by far is a remake of a Miracles hit, as Smokey stays faithful to the spirit of I'll Try Something New, a perfect achievement when first released, and altogether fine in 1982. The song is twenty-one years old, and its rendering of transcendent persistence makes everything else on Yes It's You Lady" sound creaky and contrived.

—MITCHELL COHEN

Micheal Smotherman

Bill House & Micheal Smotherman, producers. Epic ARE 37150

Oklahoman Micheal Smotherman has a rich, warvy voice that he addresses mainly in the direction of women: women he loves and has loved, women he has longed for, women that have teased him and rejected him, women who are walking goddesses or muses in the flesh. On the singer/songwriter/keyboardist's debut, he often succeeds in striking a whimsical yet tender pose—the certain well-meaning fool who can suddenly surprise you with his perception and pragmatism. It's a likable enough char-
acter, and when the material measures up to the persona—which happens about half the time—the results are fairly rewarding.

Crazy in Love starts things off, with Marty Walsh's chattering guitar, Smotherman's piano, and bassist Trey Thomson and drummer Dony Wynn thrashing out some rolling rhumba rhythms. It's a buoyant celebration of being head-over-heels in love. Green Eyes, which follows, is perhaps the LP's most accomplished tune: a soulful, sexy valentine to a beautiful heart-throb of a girl. Here Smotherman brings to mind Jesse Winchester's honest countrified croon, singing deep from the spirit with warmth and humor.

The rest is on-again, off-again. Tunes like Magic Wishes and Do I Ever Cross Your Mind (written with Billy Burnette) walk a fine line between hackneyed pop rock andOkolahan Micheal Smotherman has a

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Micheal Smotherman

Keith Sykes: It Don't Hurt to Flirt

Jerene Sykes, producer

Backstreet BSR 5277

Keith Sykes sounds normal: The bank won't lend him money to buy a house; he's a monogamous flirt; people don't rate his work highly enough; he fantasizes about big bucks, rare guitars, and vintage cars. His priority, however, is to stay cool and, with his Jacksons-style funk, If You Think You're Hurting Me (Girl You're Crazy) and (Would You Love Me) All the Way Down are dropped, critics have been lumping his group in with The Bunnymen's Ian McCulloch back in the '70s. The followup album, "Being with You," was dissipated by comparison, but it was a success, and "Yes It's You Lady" repeats its formula: a few new Robinson compositions, some jury-built songs by Gary Goetzman and Mike Piccirillo, a turgid concluding cut by Forest Hairston, all wrapped up in the marzipan production of George Tobin.

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Jazz

Kip Hanrahan: Coup de Tête
Kip Hanrahan, producer
American Clave 1007
(213 East 11th St., New York, N.Y. 10003)

Kip Hanrahan would love to be called decadent. Certainly he works hard enough to create seamy-sounding music that slides around the fringes of jazz, rock, and Latin. Occasionally, he touches on some of the energies of street music. And the presence of such fine Latin percussionists as (to name only a few) Jerry Gonzales, Daniel Ponce, Angel Perez, and Dom Um Romao lends the proceedings a tone of authenticity. Solo spots from Carlos Ward, Chico Freeman, and Dave Liebman are also of momentary interest but are too short to have much impact.

The many brief tracks on “Coup de Tête” seem to focus—self-consciously—on East Village nihilism: adolescent irritations and pubescent sexual fantasies abound. Lisa Herman tries hard (notably on A Lover Divides Time) to contemporize Nico but only manages to sound like an aging Melanie. The obvious reference point for Hanrahan, in fact, is such Sixties’ acts as the Fugs, the Velvet Underground, and Lou Reed. Even given the faults of those sometimes genuinely decadent models, they at least were on the trail of some real creative notions. Hanrahan seems more like a fascinated outsider—a Long Island kid strolling along St. Marks Place in the Village, utterly enthralled by the exotica of it all.

—DON HECKMAN

Boyd Raeburn and His Orchestra: 1944-1945
George H. Buck, Jr., producer
Circle CLP 22 [mono] (3008 Wadsworth Mill Pl., Atlanta, Ga. 30032)

Boyd Raeburn had one of the more unusual histories in the Big Band era. He started as the leader of a simpering mickey-mouse ensemble in the ’30s, developed a brilliant Swing group in the ’40s, and then reverted back to a simpering band in the ’50s. He is known now primarily for his avant-garde recordings with the middle group, released at the time on the Guild and Jewel labels. These 1944-45 sessions, recorded when the band was still in its Swing period, are part of the treasure trove of Lang-Worth radio transcriptions acquired by George Buck, Jr. (He also has the rights to the rival World Transcriptions.) This marks the first time they have been commercially available. Had they been so at the time—as opposed to the experimental sessions—the Raeburn band might have become one of the great lights of the last days of Swing, along with the Stan Kenton and Woody Herman bands.

With arrangements by Ed Finckel, George Handy, and George (the Fox) Williams, the group plays jazz instrumental and current pop tunes with a swinging inflection. Like the Kenton band of 1944-45, Raeburn’s ensemble was strongly influenced by Jimmie Lunceford’s, though unlike Kenton’s, Raeburn’s group was not locked into Lunceford’s heavy sounds. Several of the musicians here—Earl Swope, Al Cohn, Serge Chaloff, Don Lamond—later became part of Herman’s renowned Herds. And one, brilliant alto saxophonist JohnnyBothell, went on from the Raeburn fold to lead his own group. Also on hand, to sing the pop ballads, are Don Darcy and Marjorie Wood, two very good but uncelebrated voices.

—JOHN S. WILSON

Valaida Snow: Hot Snow
Rosetta Reitz, producer
Rosetta RR 1305 (115 W. 16th St., New York, N.Y. 10011)

If the name Valaida Snow registers at all to contemporary jazz followers, it is no doubt a dim, hazy recollection. That’s because the cabaret singer, dancer, and trumpet player spent much of her career in Europe and the Far East. Though she recorded fifty sides, they were either for European or small, fly-by-night American labels.

To judge from these fifteen sessions, Snow was a very capable singer and an expressive and virtuosic trumpet player. The influence of Louis Armstrong is very strong in her phrasing and in her way of developing a solo. This is particularly apparent, even of her singing, on You’re Driving Me Crazy. But her trumpet work has other fac-
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AUTOSOUND '82
(Continued from page 33)

in motion. Designers and engineers have made a scientific study (called ergonomics) of the relationship between men and machines; unfortunately, only a handful of available car stereo systems seem to have been designed for ease of use at highway speeds. Most receivers have tiny buttons, indecipherable markings, and unlighted faceplates.

In a sense, the desire of most auto electronics makers to offer a miniaturized home receiver has moved car audio design backwards. The early-Sixties radios of Becker, Motorola, and Blaupunkt were easy to operate—they had simple faceplates and a minimum of controls that were illuminated at night. But today's noise reduction, tuning, and selection-finding features have added as many as a dozen switches and controls to most faceplates. So I think the next

The next major refinement will have to be in ergonomic design.

major refinement in automotive high fidelity will have to be an emphasis on ergonomic design.

For starters, I'd like to see night illumination (perhaps dimmable with the rest of the dash-panel lights) on all serious AM/FM/cassette models. Then they could follow up with controls that integrate different functions into a single knob or switch, as is done on complex lab instruments. (A Tektronix oscilloscope, for instance, may use a concentric knob to control five or six functions: pull it for one, twist the outer ring for a second, turn the inner disc for a third, and so on.) This is an area where microprocessor control could yield substantial yet inexpensive benefits. A single button could be pushed once to tune preset Station 1, twice for Station 2, etc.; flicked sideways, it could become a selection-skip switch.

There are signs that this kind of control layout is coming. ADS has been toying with such ideas for several years. Audio-bahn offers models with illuminated colored pushbuttons. Alpine's receivers are rather well marked and laid out, and the most-used controls of Blaupunkt's Berlin receiver are mounted on a flexible stalk positioned near the driver. Yet quite a bit of refinement remains to be done.

Meanwhile, we can get a real stereo image, universal noise reduction, and some new convenience features in our autos—all worthwhile contributions. Maybe next year will bring us the next step—sound systems we can use with confidence even when our attention is riveted on the road.
YOUNG GUITARISTS

(Continued from page 44)

even tremolo, Pujol's *Guajira* throws an equally unflattering light on her pizzicato; and so on down the line.

On a smaller label, Boyd's efforts would be harmless enough. But with CBS's "First Lady of the Guitar" hype supplementing the visibility she has achieved on the talk-show circuit, there's always the danger that some unsuspecting listener might come to the guitar through one of her glossy albums without finding that the listener hears is taken to represent the current standard of performance. Boyd's more deserving colleagues will have been done a disservice.

Two of her better-known efforts have also chosen to stick to familiar repertoire thus far. Manuel Barrueco, a Cuban who teaches in New York, and Carlos Bonell, an Englishman. Barrueco, whose last, exemplary LP featured his own Albéniz and Granados transcriptions (Turnabout TV 34738), now offers five Scarlatti sonatas in his own transcription and three Cimarosa sonatas transcribed by Bream, all treated with elegance and delicacy. But where Barrueco really excels is in the more impassioned music of Paganini (two duet sonatas for violin and guitar in Barrueco's own arrangements) and Giuliani (variations on the same *Folias* theme set by Ponce, steeped in the virtuosic conventions of the early nineteenth century—plus the single-movement *Gran sonata eroica*, concise and full of extroverted gestures), played with precision and warmth.

Since the mid-'60s, the Segovia-style grab-bag of unrelated encore pieces has been outmoded as an album concept, having given way to couplings of full-length works or of works by composers of the same era, nationality, stylistic school, etc. So it takes a certain audacity to release a motley collection of "Showpieces"—as Bonell's first LP for London is so aptly titled. Yet this disc should not be overlooked on programmatic grounds. For one thing, Bonell has the fingers and personality to breathe fire into such overexercised chestnuts as *Asturias* and the first two Villa-Lobos preludes; moreover, there are some intriguing oddities here. Tarrega's *Fantasia on Themes from "La Traviata"* is a gem unavailable elsewhere, as is Bonell's reworking of Llobet's arrangement of the Violin Concerto of the same era, nationality, stylistic school, etc. for solo guitar. In both performances, the guitar work is deft and secure and Neville Marriner's accompaniment beyond reproach. Unfortunately, the music, bland and puckered with Spanish clichés (cascando, flamenco chord progressions), falls into the thin crack between Muzak and Boston Pops repertoire.

PIANO ON TAPE

(Continued from page 40)

Recording Studios in New York). With consistently natural and warmly vivid "presence" for Goode's Hamburg Steinway piano, the sound has a similarity throughout that must be credited to the common producer for all three programs, the veteran Max Wilcox, who doubles as his own engineer in the Nonesuch release but turns to John Kilgore and Ray Hall for the Desmar engineering.

The lesson to be drawn—surely a sobering one for fanatical audiophiles who recklessly stake their whole faith on technology—is that whatever techniques, materials, and methods may be employed, the *artistic* results are ultimately determined by the executant skills, aesthetic tastes, and musical sensibilities of performers, producers, engineers, and manufacturers.

The Nonesuch cassette does not include Daniel Schillaci's extensive disc-jacket notes; the Desmar cassettes include mail-request forms to obtain Kurt Oppens' scarcely less extensive Schubert notes. I haven't yet heard a properly decoded playback of the alternative Dolby C Desmar cassettes, and no corresponding disc editions are planned. I have, however, heard the Nonesuch Schumann release in the disc edition, just as admirably processed and silent-surfaced as the ferric taping. In direct A/B comparisons, on my playback equipment and to my ears, the two formats are aural dead ringers.

But I shouldn't let my admiration of the consistently evident advanced technology distract prospective listeners from the assured expectation of incalculable, sheery musical rewards. The great Schumann fantasia may not be quite as passionate or heroic here as in versions by more extroverted showmen, but it is quintessentially Schumannesque; even more so are the superbly integrated varied moods of the kaleidoscopic Humeresque. And perhaps "eich Schubertian" is the supreme praise one can give to Goode's nobly eloquent yet always sensitively restrained versions of the two radiantly glowing sonatas (of truly "heavenly length"), especially that most endearing "Good Companion" in the entire piano literature: the heart-twistingly poignant, inexhaustibly revelatory B flat swan song.

SCHUBERT: Piano Works.

Richard Goode, piano. [Max Wilcox, prod.] DESMAR SRB 6001*21, $17.98 each (superchrome cassettes) (available only by mail; add $1.50 for shipping); Euroclass Record Distributors, Ltd., 135 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10013.

Sonatas: in A, D 959*; in B flat, D 960†. Kienstuckst in E flat minor, D 946, No. 1. * Allegretto in C minor, D 915; Impromptu in A flat, D 935, No. 2. *


Richard Goode, piano. [Max Wilcox, prod.]

NONESUCH D 79014, $11.98 (digital recording, fermata cassette). Disc: D 79014, $11.98.

PIANO ON DISC

(Continued from page 41)

fied; not rapturously lyrical like some versions, it is still genuinely expressive and easily one of the finest accounts now in the catalog. One is always glad to hear such honest music-making.


BEETHOVEN: Variations on a Waltz by Diabelli, Op. 120; Sonata for Piano, No. 31, in A flat, Op. 110.

State Street Aces: Stuff
Bob Erdos, producer
Stomp Off S.O.S 1011
(549 Fairview Terrace, York, Pa. 17403)

State Street Aces clarinetist and tenor saxophonist Frank Powers prefers not to have the music his group plays labeled "traditional jazz." He thinks of it instead as "idiomatic classic jazz." Judging from the Aces' performance on "Stuff"—recorded only six months after they had coalesced—their music has grown and matured. The Aces start from old records, old styles, and old tunes. Jim Snyder's trombone is gloriously sloshy and cry soulfully, with and without mutes; Trumpeter Roy Tate barks, bites, growls, and swampy; the moods of raucous revelry he creates with his mute invoke all the more abandoned aspects of Tricky Sam Nanton and Turk Murphy. —JOHN S. WILSON

Okay Temiz:
Drummer of Two Worlds
Keith Knox, producer
Finnidar SR 9032

On "Drummer of Two Worlds," Turkish percussionist Okay Temiz reconciles the ritualistic aspects of Third World folk musics with the formalistic bump and strut of American funk and pop. Overdubbing himself on dozens of percussion instruments, Temiz creates a richly layered, swinging sound, easily mating traditional acoustic instruments with contemporary recording studio electronics.

The East-West synthesis was first hinted at in the work of Yehudi Menuhin and Ravi Shankar (soufful but stiff) and the Beatles (melodically sensitive but rhythmically uninquisitive). It has found many proponents of late, in acts as diverse as Shakti, Weather Report, M'Boom Re. Ornette Coleman, Talking Heads, King Crimson, and the Police. Temiz' slant sounds like a homegrown, dangerous version of Weather Report. On cuts like Galaxy Nine and the title tune, he uses Attila Ozdeniroglu's synthesizer as if it were a nontempered reed, while on Fantasia Drive he gets acoustic instruments to sound like voltage-controlled-oscillator modulations, effectively eliminating any distinctions between the two worlds. (Check out the beautiful vowel and envelope sounds he elicits from the berimbau).

The Turkish elements in Temiz' stew are the simple, incantatory melodies, which accrue expressiveness through the use of repetition and conversational cross-rhythms (the hymn-like Saysat Bari), generally over a churning Afro-Cuban groove. But then on Repercussions and Ocean Roller he gets a micro-chip on his shoulder and uses echo and delay, mingling percussion sounds back and forth to make them breathe. "Drummer of Two Worlds" is about the joy of rhythms—an exultation of their speech, song, and dance characteristics. As an exploration of common tongues, it is the type of stylistic coalition that will characterize music in the 1980s. —CHIP STERN

Snow: sensuous and swinging jazz artist

State Street Aces: "idiomatic classic jazz"
CLASSICAL REVIEWS
(Continued from page 60)

the role is the expected vocal weight—
notwithstanding his attempts to thicken the
tone in the upper midrange. (There’s noth-
ing he can do farther down, where the voice
thins out sharply.) In scenes with Manrico,
sounds more like a Manrico than a Di
Luna, in fact more like a Manrico than the
Manrico.

Mazurok does his best work in the Act
IV scene with Leonora, where Ricciarelli
also has her moments, after delivering one
of the more fluent recorded accounts of
Leonora’s restored cabaletta, “Tu vedrai.”
Don’t get the idea, though, that she is in
general more fluent than her vocally heav-
er-weight competitors—Milanov (Victro-
la), Tebaldi (in the deleted Erede/London
set), Callas (the mono Karajan/Angel),
Price (her first two times out, for RCA),
Stella (Privilege), and Mancini (Cetra).

RCA’s reissue is instructive and
still fun to hear.

Nor is her problem simply that she’s
vocally underweight. Compare Tucci’s
“D’amor sull’ali” in the Schippers/Angel
set, and you’ll hear a voice that’s no heavier
but is strikingly more completely devel-
oped, including such niceties as a working
chest register. That Leonora can be solved,
continues in part, by a lighter-weight voice
was also shown by Kabaivanska in the 1975
recording available briefly on Eurodisc.

It would probably be similarly mis-
leading to attribute all of Carreras’ prob-
lems to incorrect vocal weight. Manrico,
after all, can be encompassed by a lyric
voice, as Bjoerling (Victrola) demonstrated
so awesomely. My problem with Carreras
is that, even with friendly microphones
nearby to guarantee audibility, he never
seems in control of the sound he produces,
which is consistently uncentered and often
edges into desperation. As a result, instead
of hearing What Manrico Does to Get What
He Wants, we hear What José Does to Get
the Notes Out. Granting that Bjoerling is in
a class by himself, there’s an interesting
assortment of brawnier recorded Mar-
quis—Corelli (Schippers/Angel), Tucker
(Gold Seal), Del Monaco (Erede/London).

Merli (Molajoli/Columbia 78s, reissued as
EMI 3C 153-03024/5), Pertile (Sabajno/
HMV)—plus the attractive medium-
weight work of Bergonzon (Privilege) and
Domingo (RCA).

Toczyska is probably the cast member
who comes closest to matching her role
evocally, though her voice is by no means
evenly developed or balanced. In addition,
her work is so neutral that you have to won-
der whether she’d be much more interesting

WEBER: Sonata for Piano, No. 2,

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