HIGH TECh GOES POP!

Audio & Video Gear: -the-Art, Easy to Use, Affordable!
Some hi-fi equipment delivers slightly higher fidelity. Especially when it's designed by JVC. In fact, JVC's entire line of high fidelity components is known throughout the world for technological brilliance and painstaking craftsmanship.

The R-X500B receiver is a case in point. With the technology of JVC's power amp, equalizer and tuner, plus remote equalization and unheard-of-refinements, it is virtually without equal. ADVANTAGE: A POWER AMP WITH INCREDIBLE POWERS

The R-X500B boasts two of the highest refinements in power amp technology available today—Dynamic Super A and Gm Driver. Dynamic Super A improves performance in two significant ways. One, it renders music reproduction silky and pure by eliminating offensive switching distortion. Two, it capably controls speaker motion by forming an ideal interface between the amplifier and the speaker.
JVC’s newest technology, Gm Driver, improves actual in-use performance at all listening levels, high and low, by driving the power stage at a constant voltage.

**ADVANTAGE: AN EQUALIZER WITH A GRAPHIC DIFFERENCE**

Since 1966, when JVC pioneered equalizers for home use, we have remained in the very forefront of equalizer technology.

The computer controlled graphic equalizer in the R-X500B is a superb example of engineering to achieve an end. It combines unequalled versatility with automatic capabilities, while maintaining sonic integrity.

Five equalized responses can be memorized for instant recall at a touch. And an infrared wireless remote control makes it possible to adjust equalization from your armchair without sacrificing sound quality.

In a further refinement, JVC engineers opted for an LSI to handle electronic switching for both channels at seven different control frequencies. The result—electrical loss and tonal degradation never enter the picture.

**ADVANTAGE: A TUNER AS SMART AS A COMPUTER**

The R-X500B puts an advanced microcomputer in charge of the digital synthesizer tuner and references it to the accuracy of a quartz oscillator, making it highly versatile and easy to use. The microcomputer lets you preset 15 AM and 15 FM frequencies, scan them all for 5 seconds each, read out aerial signal strength in 5dB increments, plus much more.

**SPECIFICATIONS**

**AMPLIFIER SECTION**
- Output Power: 100 Watts per channel, min. RMS, both channels driven into 8 ohms, from 20Hz to 20kHz, with no more than 0.007% total harmonic distortion.
- Signal-to-Noise Ratio ("66IHF/DIN): Phono—80dB/66dB Video/Aux/DAT/TAPE—100dB/67dB RIAA Phono Equalization ± 0.5dB (20Hz -20kHz)

**S.E.A. SECTION**
- Centre Frequencies: 63, 160, 400, 1k, 2.5k, 6.3k, 16kHz
- Control Range: ± 10dB

**FM TUNER SECTION (78 IHF)**
- 50dB Quieting Sensitivity
- Mono—14.8dBf Stereo—38.3 dBf
- Signal-to-Noise Ratio (IHF-A Weighted): Mono/Stereo—82dB/73dB

**ADVANTAGE: JVC**

It is the attention to engineering detail and craftsmanship evident in the R-X500B which separates every JVC hi-fi component from all others. JVC makes changes in design for the sake of improvement. Not just for the sake of change. And the result is the difference between excellent and average. See, and hear, this difference at your nearest JVC dealer.
Sherwood announces the latest thing in second generation CD audio technology: Affordability

The compact disc just may be the most heart-stopping concept in sound since stereo. But the most heart-stopping feature of compact disc players has been their price. Now, with Sherwood’s new CDP-100, you can relax about money and really get excited about sound.

A tradition of affordable excellence. Sherwood is well-known for high-quality audio products at affordable prices. And our new CD player is no exception. While others were still on first generation models, we combined advanced second-generation performance with a no-nonsense array of useful features. And we did it in a way that not only makes sense, but saves you dollars as well.

Three laser beams for better tracking. Most CD players use only one laser beam. Sherwood put a three-beam laser into the CDP-100, because a three-beam system virtually eliminates distortion caused by spurious data from adjacent tracks.

Two filters, not one. All CD’s require filters, because the decoding of digital sound generates a sampling frequency which must be filtered out, or distortions will be heard. Other CD players use one very steep analog filter; this can cause phase distortion. Sherwood’s answer is to use a digital filter to double the sampling frequency, then use a more gentle type of analog filter for reduced phase distortion. The result: better sound at less cost.

Easy-to-use functional controls. Inserting a disc is easy, thanks to a “smart” motorized drawer under microprocessor operation. (It even knows if you accidentally put the disc in upside down.) You can easily access any selection, and there’s a two-speed fast forward and backward, so you can listen while you quickly locate the spot you want to hear. You can even set the CDP-100 to repeat the entire disc for continuous music.

Find out how advanced, easy to use, and affordable Sherwood’s new CDP-100 really is at your nearest Sherwood dealer. To find him, call (800) 841-1412 during west coast business hours.
HIGH FIDELITY

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About This Issue

I know there still are four months left before 1985, but September somehow signifies the 'new year' in terms of product introductions. About now you'll be seeing the first of the 1985 audio and video components arrive on your dealer's shelves. Most of them were revealed in June at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago.

Coverage of the SCES, as it is known, is contained in a special 14-page section. As our report details, the focus this year is not so much on any startling new products as it is on making existing technologies more accessible and easier to use. Part 2 of our SCES coverage will appear next month, with reports on car stereo and digital Compact Disc players.

Fall is also the time when record companies issue their lists of planned releases for the coming season. This year, High Fidelity's preview will appear in three parts—beginning in these pages, continuing with a special survey of Compact Discs in October, and concluding in November. More than 1,000 releases will make 1985 a very musical year, indeed.

Featured in September's classical music section is an overview of ten Artur Rubinstein reissues, which represent virtually every period of the pianist's long and distinguished career. And our Musical America edition includes more than a dozen record reviews and a round-up of Barton Winkle's latest cassette transfers of historical '78s, a superb group that contains some long-buried treasures.

Our pop music interview takes a look at ironic twists of fate faced by songwriter T-Bone Burnett. We also consider the pros and cons of jazz reissues as illustrated in a two-record set of late-Fifties Max Roach bands.

Before closing, a little commercial for a couple of special magazines HIGH FIDELITY is publishing this year. Video & Sound will be on newsstands from now through late September. It covers topics found each month in HF's new TECHNOLOGIES section, emphasizing digital Compact Discs and home video.

Due on the newsstands in mid-September is the tenth edition of High Fidelity's TEST REPORTS. This is the first issue in four years, and its contents have been completely revised to include more than 100 products: Compact Disc players, home video components, and car stereo gear, as well as speakers, cassette decks, blank tape, and representatives of all the other traditional audio component categories. —W.T.

Letters

Hale and Hearty

We are very happy to report that Frank McIntosh, cofounder of McIntosh Laboratory, is not dead, as was erroneously stated in "Audio Electronics: American Style" (July). A Hale and hearty seventy-eight, he is pursuing an active retirement in Arizona.

A Bum Rap?

Regarding J. Gordon Holt's article, "Audio Electronics: American Style" (July), it is good to see some attention paid to the very deserving efforts of these small manufacturers.

However, I feel that the article exaggerates the risk involved in buying equipment made by these companies. Over the past ten years, I have owned electronics from Acoastal, Audible Illusions, DB Systems, Precision Fidelity, Conrad-Johnson, PS Audio, Bedini, and Threshold. Most of these companies have been in business for at least six years and guarantee their products for far longer than the 90 days commonly given mass-market goods. (Typical warranties run two to five years, and they usually are transferable.) Many models are manufactured for several years—with refinements and updates in some cases, usually offered as upgrades to older units at modest cost. When service has been required on any of the components I have owned, it has been prompt, and there always has been someone to phone for help with any questions regarding installation or operation of the equipment. The parts used in most of this gear are of high quality (close-tolerance metal-film resistors, mil-ape circuit boards, polypropylene capacitors, etc.), and there is much use of discrete components instead of integrated circuits.

I believe that the "cottage industry" American audio electronics companies offer great value for the money (the prices of many of their products are surprisingly affordable) and that their reliability and service records are mostly exemplary.

George Dickinson
New York, N.Y.

Warranties for high fidelity audio components are rarely shorter than one year. —Ed.

Pinnock and Brendel

Thank you very much for the glowing review of Trevor Pinnock's performance of the Four Seasons [May]. I have heard the CD version on my brother's Magnavox FD-1000SL player, and it sounds great, especially the clarity of the harpsichord. And regarding Alfred Brendel's plea to record music in a "live" situation ("In Favor of Live Records"), there is a better way: Record in the way that Telarc does, with a minimum number of microphones (one box-boo and it's start from the beginning again) and in a concert hall with no audience. I prefer this method because audience sounds distract me from concentrating on the music (as Mr. Brendel mentioned). Also, the minimal-mike setup is less intimidating to many musicians.

Raymond Chuang
Sacramento, Calif.

Misguided Review?

Your review of the Counterpoint SA-7 as a budget preamp [July] is misleading. The SA-7 is a specialized preamplifier for the moving-coil cartridge enthusiast. The hallmark of the design—its high gain—gets buried in irrelevant remarks about low headroom, and the sound is completely ignored. It's hard to believe that the report was written by anyone who cares about high fidelity or, for that matter, even listened to the thing.

High Fidelity's stamp of approval, at least in this instance, bespeaks insensitivity to
New Technics Cassette Decks.
With dbx® and Auto-Reverse.
They eliminate tape noise completely.
And play both sides automatically.

A remarkable achievement: developing a line of stereo cassette decks that give you more than the total noise elimination of dbx. They also give you the luxury of auto-reverse. So with Technics, your music is more than dramatically clean. It's also beautifully continuous. And Technics goes on from there.

Direct Music Search (DMS) allows you to program the deck. To play any selection on either side of the tape. Automatically.

And no matter which noise reduction system your tapes are encoded with, Technics can handle them.

Because in addition to dbx, you get Dolby® B and C.

You get the stability and accuracy only a two-motor drive system can provide. Microprocessor feather-touch control buttons give you fast, easy switching between functions such as play, stop, rewind. Bias and EQ levels are automatically set for any type of tape. From normal to chrome to metal. There are three-color, wide-range FL meters for precision sound monitoring. And more.

So before you buy any cassette deck, make sure it measures up to Technics.
Sansui’s all-new Midi System.

Fantastic! That’s the word for Sansui’s Midi ensemble. Never before has a music system offered so much pleasure in so little space—with so much ease of operation.

With exclusive One-touch Simultaneous switching that automatically stops one component and starts another, you can go from turntable-to-tuner-to-tape deck at the touch of a button.

The most intriguing component is our dual tone arm turntable that lets you play both sides of a record—without flipping it over.

And because music does not live by records alone, there’s a dual cassette deck, AM/FM tuner, and a high-powered integrated amplifier with 5-band graphic equalizer for tailoring sound that’s flat out beautiful.

Of course, all this sensational sound can come out somewhere. And there’s no better outlet than a pair of super sounding Sansui speakers.

There’s also more to Sansui’s Midi system than meets the ears. With exquisitely designed looks to complement its incredible sound and features, it adds pleasure to your room or both levels.

You can choose from 3 magnificent Midi systems, and maximize your pleasure in a minimum of space. See your Sansui dealer today.

SANSUI ELECTRONICS CORPORATION, Lynchurt, NJ 37071; Carson, CA 90463
SANSUI Electric Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan.

OVERWHELMING.
Undersized.

Letters

product and listener and a willingness to misinform. The SA-7 deserves to be heard and reviewed in its intended light.

Jim Goulding
Chicago, Ill.

Counterpoint’s description to us of the thinking behind the SA-7 reads as follows: “The purpose behind the design and manufacture of the SA-7 was to offer a preamplifier at a price point typically reserved for solid-state preamps, thus giving audiophiles on a budget a choice.” Nothing in Counterpoint’s literature or in the SA-7 owner’s manual suggests that the preamp is intended solely or even primarily for use with moving-coil cartridges, although one might infer (as we did) that the point of its unusually high gain is to cater to such pickups. However, the gain is still about 10 dB lower than usually is provided by moving-coil inputs and may not be enough for some very low-output cartridges. Moreover, the input impedance clearly is intended to accommodate fixed-coil pickups, and the specified overload margin (as opposed to what we measured) is more than adequate for that purpose. Thus, our comments on headroom are quite pertinent.

Everyone here who writes about audio cares a great deal about high fidelity, and we listen to everything that we review. But in the case of electronics, there seldom is anything to say about the sound unless the component is misdesigned, defective, or operated beyond its intended limits: What goes in usually is what comes out. When verifiable sonic oddities emerge in our listening tests, we note them in the report.

Finally, our test reports should not be construed as stamps of approval or disapproval. Their purpose is to detail the operation and performance of the product being reviewed, with commentary, where appropriate, on the significance of our findings to potential users. Decisions regarding what you should or should not buy are your own—as they should be.—Ed.

"TAMI" Whammy

I saw the theatrical release of The TAMI Show some 12 years ago and enjoyed it enormously. It had always been my firm hope that someday this vintage material would be made available on videotape. I was afraid that with the trendy razzle-dazzle of MTV, no one would regard its rerelease as worthwhile. Imagine my joy when Media Home Entertainment issued "That Was Rock (The TAMI/TNT Show)." Imagine my profound disappointment when I discovered the producers had eviscerated the heart and soul of a magic live concert by hacking up two very different concerts, grafting them together, and then splicing in a bored and irrelevant narrative by Chuck Berry!

Billy Altman’s review of “That Was Rock” [July] insightfully exposes this thick-headed blunder. I only wish I had read it sooner, before I invited a group of friends over for dinner and the “treat” of seeing what I thought was the original, legendary tape. Apparently some video companies feel they can go around blithely tearing the hearts out of authentic performances, and I applaud Mr. Altman and HIGH FIDELITY for being willing to scold the ones that do so.

Andrew Teton
Santa Barbara, Calif.

Letters should be addressed to The Editor, HIGH FIDELITY, 825 7th Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019. All letters are subject to editing for brevity and clarity.
Imagine yourself over the last 50 years. In the 1930s you listened to the radio. In the 1950s you began watching TV. In the 1970s you listened with pride to your component stereo.

Now it's 1984. The growth and development of video has provided an enormous increase in the number of choices available to you in both equipment and programming. You probably ask yourself questions like: "Do I want VHS or Beta?" "Should I watch my favorite program now, or videotape it while I watch the playoffs?" But maybe the question you really should ask first is: "How does my audio equipment fit into all this?" You can find the answer by turning down the volume on the nearest TV set.

While video brings new programs onto your TV screen, it's audio that pulls them off the screen and brings them to life in your home. Whether it's a bass drum beating through a classic rock concert, or a space ship whizzing through the latest movie, it's audio that creates the mood, generates the excitement, and sets the pace for what you see. The introduction of new technologies and products such as stereo TV and hi-fi VCRs emphasizes this fact.

The key to exciting, powerful home entertainment then, is an integrated audio-video system. But how can you logically start building a system which lets you enjoy all these new developments?

You know that the cornerstone of your system is the sound. You also know that millions of dollars to develop and manufacture speaker systems which deliver the impact and excitement of live performance. That investment can now bring movies, concerts, and specials to life in your own living room.

Experience the excitement available from a combined audio-video system. Ask your local Bose dealer to show you the Bose Music Video. Your dealer can also help you decide which components and formats offer you the enjoyment and convenience which best match your lifestyle.

Bose wants to help you learn more about the future of audio, and its contribution to home entertainment. To do so, we're using this year's advertising space to discuss and explain key issues. Knowledgeable experts will share information which helps you get maximum enjoyment from your home entertainment investment.

For more information on Bose products and a list of authorized Bose dealers, write: Bose Corporation, 10 Speen St., Dept. HF, Framingham, MA 01701.
Best Solution

I use an Allsop Orbitrac record cleaner for my records and isopropyl alcohol (91 percent) for cleaning the heads and so on of my cassette deck. The Allsop solution smells similar to the alcohol, but possibly more dilute. Can I use isopropyl alcohol instead, since it's considerably cheaper, without harming my records?—J. Tordeich, Auckland, New Zealand

It all depends on who you talk to. Bruce Maiter, the founder of Discwasher (and, as far as I can tell, the world's most exhaustive researcher of such matters), says that alcohol can leach plasticisers from the vinyl, ultimately making it less resilient and more subject to damage than it would otherwise be. On the other hand, the Keith Monks record-washing machine—widely used by libraries and other archives, andhands down the most expensive record-cleaner device around—is said to use alcohol in its cleaning solution. At minimum, you should dilute the alcohol with distilled water and take care to use no more than necessary. But I’d rather stick with solutions specially concocted for the purpose by experts who know more about vinyl chemistry than I ever hope to. The clivix may cost more than drugstore alcohol, but they cost a lot less than new records.

What Noise Annoys?

I have read that what is thought to be tape hiss in decks incorporating DBX or Dolby C noise reduction often is modulation noise or scrape flutter. If this is such an important characteristic in these decks, why isn't it measured and included in test reports?—Charles Avon, Austin, Texas

A little background is necessary to understand why we don't break these effects out separately. Modulation noise is a sort of random dither of the signal, occasioned by nonuniformities of the magnetic particles in the tape coating and very roughly comparable to the halo that can be created around bright objects by interaction between halide crystals in photographic emulsions. Scrape flutter is created by friction between the tape and fixed guides, causing the tape to alternately stick and slip. It is a very high-frequency effect and therefore is not picked up in conventional flutter measurements.

Except for the squeal that can result from extreme scrape flutter, neither is audible without an input signal and to that extent they can't be compared to tape hiss, which is constant. And because there's no agreed method of isolating either one from other forms of noise and distortion—let alone of quantifying it—you won't see measurements of them in reviews. But without the masking hiss that DBX and Dolby C have banished from normal audibility, perhaps the impetus to develop testing standards for these factors will increase.

A Big Hiss

I own an Optonica SA-5207 receiver. With my turntable off, the selector set on phono, and the volume turned all the way up, my speakers put out an annoying hiss. I'm curious whether this is because of the relatively low S/N ratio through the phono input (73 dB) or the THD of the amp (0.05 percent at 40 watts per channel)? Or maybe my speakers are at fault. What would help, short of buying a new amp?—L. Yamada, Cambridge, Mass.

You tempt me to the only half-jocular recommendation that you turn down the volume to listening level, start your turntable, put some music, and forget about sophistication. The same thing will happen with any audio system. A signal-to-noise ratio of 73 dB isn't at all bad for a phono input, and the noise it represents normally will be masked by the music even with the volume turned up as loud as you can stand it. The distortion is even more likely to be masked, because it can occur only when a signal is present. A speaker with a rough top end will tend to exaggerate the hiss, and switching models could conceivably help—if, indeed, your system needs help under normal listening conditions. From your description, I doubt that it does.

Better Beta

I bought a Beta Hi-Fi videocassette recorder, which puts my friend's stereo VHS deck to shame. But I can't find tapes recorded in the Beta Hi-Fi format. Where can you get them?—Douglas Knight, Worms, West Germany

They keep coming along, little by little—usually on new releases (almost all of which have Hi-Fi soundtracks, even when they're not so labeled), with only occasional upgradings of old titles. And even then it takes a while for the new version to filter down to the retail level. Where the earlier one tends to remain until stocks are exhausted. If you're concerned about staying one jump ahead of your VHS buddy, don't worry. VHS Hi-Fi tapes are coming out even more slowly. I'm told, because some duplicators insist there are unsolved technical problems with the format.

Weight Loss?

I've been told that tonearm/cartridge matching is unimportant with equipment the quality of my Sansui XR-Q7 turntable. No figure for arm mass appears in its specifications. When I contacted the local agents, they referred me to their spare-parts department, which thought tonearm mass was a part of the turntable and asked me how I had lost it. My guess is that matching is important. Do you know the mass of the Sansui's arm?—A. N. Firn, GPO, Singapore

You're right: Arm/cartridge matching is important, regardless of the quality of the equipment. Unfortunately, we never tested the XR-Q7, so I'm unable to help you avoid trouble except to suggest that when you're considering a new cartridge you might try it out in your arm with a warped record. If it has a tendency to hop about on the warps, the arm is too massive for the cartridge. In that case, you need a pickup that is lighter, lower in compliance, or both.

Obsolete?

With all of the new supertuners at seemingly reasonable prices, is there any reason I should consider upgrading my SAE Mk. 6 tuner? It cost $1,200 when I bought it new in 1973, and it still works well and is dependable.—Bill Grass, Santa Barbara, Calif.

The only reason for upgrading, as far as I'm concerned, is dissatisfaction of some sort with what you've got. If you're dissatisfied with the Mk. 6 simply because it's not new, so be it. But the 'supertuner' with which you replace it could be measurably superior in all respects except one that is critical to reception in your particular area or to best results with a favorite station.

We regret that the volume of reader mail is too great for us to answer all questions individually.
Maxell introduces the new XL-S audio cassettes; a series of ferric oxide tapes which deliver a level of performance that can capture the sound nuances found on Compact Discs more faithfully than other ferric oxide cassettes on the market.

There are a number of areas where this achievement is apparent.

**GREATER DYNAMIC RANGE.**

Through a new formulation of our magnetic particles, we were able to reduce the perceived residual AC bias noise level by 1 dB in the critical 2 kHz to 10 kHz mid-frequency range. And simultaneously increase sensitivity and maximum output levels by as much as 2 dB.

**LOWER DISTORTION.**

The newly formulated particles also contribute considerably to XL-S’s low output fluctuation, as well as its virtual distortion-free reproduction, especially in the critical mid-range frequencies. This, in turn, accounts for our XL-S tape’s enhanced sound clarity.

**IMPROVED MAGNETIC PARTICLES.**

Our refined particle crystallization process is the basis for all of these accomplishments. Maxell engineers are now able to produce a more compact needle-shaped Epitaxial magnetic particle of extremely high uniformity.

As a result, the dynamic range of each tape has been significantly expanded. So you get a better signal to noise ratio and a fuller impact of the dynamic transients exclusively inherent to digital CD recordings.

**PACKING DENSITY OF UNIFORM PARTICLES.**

Which is why Maxell high bias XLII-S and normal bias XLI-S are unsurpassed at reproducing the sound qualities found on today’s finest recordings. Regardless of whether your frame of reference is analog or digital audio discs.

For technical specifications on the XL-S series, write to: Audiophile File, Maxell Corp. of America, 60 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, New Jersey 07047.
Going on the road with stereo

A Skinflint’s Guide to Good Sound

If you don’t like the sound of your car stereo setup, there are two remedies: Rip out the whole thing and start from scratch, or remove the weakest links in the chain, hoping that the addition of a new set of speakers or a better front end will result in a superior system. The latter option, of course, seems preferable, but be forewarned: Unless you’re prepared to do some planning, the scheme that you hoped would save time and cash may cost more money and aggravation than if you had started from ground zero.

Fortunately, aftermarket suppliers have been keeping an eye on the situation, and they’ve worked out a few ways to upgrade systems of at least marginal quality with a minimum amount of hassle. I spoke with several of them recently, and here are their recommendations.

Speakers. Professionals unanimously consider new loudspeakers the first and easiest step in the quest for improved sound. The people at Audiomobile/American Antenna say it’s best to install all new drivers instead of simply adding a couple of woofers and tweeters to your present setup. A good speaker system is carefully integrated. Ask a novice to “design” his own by adding a driver here and a driver there and you are asking for trouble. Audiomobile also recommends triaxial systems, if you have the space for them. An alternative would be powered loudspeakers (i.e., self-enclosed systems with built-in amplifiers).

Front Ends. Most of the aftermarket suppliers I spoke with think the audio tape players that car makers offer as factory-installed options have few limitations in tape and tuner performance, though niceties such as noise reduction and switchable tape EQ may be omitted. However, older front ends may suffer from poor FM reception, noisy electronics, and high wow and flutter during tape play. If you don’t trust your own ears to identify and assess these faults, let someone whose hearing is attuned to such things make the judgment. According to Rich Coe of Alpine, the front end in a $300-plus factory-installed system probably is good enough to serve as the heart of a high-quality setup.

Amplifiers. Here is where your existing front end will probably be weakest. Its little amp is underpowered to begin with, and any speakers you add are bound to require more juice. Additional power can be obtained with a booster amplifier or, as I said earlier, powered speakers, but both require some complicated rewiring. Audiomobile offers a trunk-mounted amp that derives adequate DC from the wire feeding the trunk light and that is turned on and off automatically by a signal-sensing circuit. Such an approach is easy, but not cheap.

Alternatively, if you can afford only new loudspeakers at present, ask the installer to wire a couple of capacitors into the speaker lines. Provided they are of the appropriate value (which he should be able to figure out), the capacitors will prevent the speakers from drawing too much low-frequency energy, thus lessening the demands on your amplifier. When you have the money for an outboard amp, just clip out the capacitors.

System Add-ons. Factory-installed speakers are reasonable reproducers of midrange frequencies; it’s in the highs and lows that they fall flat. Acting on that premise, a new company called ContraTech has designed an add-on ensemble that uses everything you already have in your system. It consists of three additional loudspeakers, some proprietary electronics, and a bill in the neighborhood of $300 (plus installation, which is relatively quick and straightforward). The company remains quiet about what the additional electronics actually do, but a guess based on a half day of listening is that the “black box” synthesizes some high and low frequencies that are not actually present in the source material. This “extra” signal is then amplified and fed to the new speakers. Before you get too excited about the concept, however, take a drive in a ContraTech-equipped car. The ensemble can sound very good, but if the basic system in the demo car is much better than your own, there’s no way of knowing whether you’ll achieve similar results.

Summing up: If you’re in the mood to do something about the sound system in your car and don’t want to rip it all out and start anew, you should approach the problem in a logical fashion. First, determine whether your system’s problems lie: limited frequency response (the speakers), high distortion (the amplifier), audible noise or wow and flutter (the front end). Second, check typical prices for the components you’d like to replace and establish a budget.
4 out of 5 Sony car stereo owners would go down the same road again.

It seems there is one road that most Sony owners would gladly travel again. The road to a Sony car stereo.

In a recent survey, an overwhelming majority of Sony car stereo owners contacted gave Sony the ultimate testimonial. They said they would be more than willing to buy a Sony again. As one Sony owner, Ronald Dokken of Minneapolis, Minnesota, volunteered, "When there's a car stereo that sounds as good and works as well as a Sony, why would you want another one?"

In fact, most Sony car stereo owners when asked went so far as to say that they would keep their car stereos longer than they'd keep their cars. Or, in the words of Valerie Roussel of New Orleans, Louisiana: "My car was in the shop for a few weeks. I missed my car stereo a lot more than my car." And Mark Share of Tempe, Arizona, added, "I have two cars and two kinds of car stereos. I find myself driving the car with the better sounding one—the Sony."

Which is not at all surprising, considering the fact that Sony car stereos are not just engineered to perform reliably. They are also engineered to deliver brilliant high-fidelity stereo sound. Because they take advantage of the same experience and innovative technology that goes into Sony's home stereos.

So if you're in the market for a car stereo, it makes sense to go down the same road that 4 out of 5 Sony owners would travel.

Buy the Sony.
TDK enters the digital recording era with a BANG! Introducing our exclusive HX-S metal-particle formulation for Type II (High-Bias) recordings. It delivers everything promised by metal tape—on any cassette deck with a Type II switch.

High frequency saturation ceases to be a problem since TDK HX-S is capable of an MOL of +4 dB at 10 kHz.

HX-S also delivers exceptional high-end response. Plus a wider dynamic range. With further improvements in overall sensitivity of up to 1.5 dB.

These superior recording characteristics make HX-S perfect for dubbing high-powered, treble-intensive digital source material with optimum results.

And TDK makes sure the performance never fizzles, with our specially engineered, trouble-free Laboratory Standard cassette mechanism for durability and reliability. Plus the assurance of our Lifetime Warranty.

So before you try any other cassette, pick up TDK HX-S, the first metal particle formulation for Type II (High-Bias) and digitally-sourced recordings.

It's absolutely digital dynamite!
The CARVER C-1 Sonic Holography Preamplifier: Appreciated for Musicality

Acclaimed for superlative performance, meticulous engineering, high reliability and finest sonic quality, the C-1 fulfills the requirements of the most demanding audiophile. And more...

The C-1 provides a very affordable way to experience the sheer musical pleasure of SONIC Holography - a recreation of the three-dimensional sound field of the original, live performance.

Sonic Holography has been acclaimed as a scientific and artistic achievement of significant merit. Solving the problems of sonic imagery inherent in conventional stereophonic reproduction, Sonic Holography presents timing and phase information that exists in stereo program material but is normally inaudible.

With Sonic Holography, this information emerges in three-dimensional space around the listener who is thus able to establish the precise location of the instruments and voices. The Carver C-1 is a quality instrument replete with precision gold-plated laser-trimmed resistors, lifetime lubricated sealed switches, G-10 glass epoxy boards, and machined solid metal parts, the C-1 provides moving coil input, soft touch controls, an infra-red filter, headphone amplifiers, dual tape monitors, variable turnover tone controls, silent muting, and an external processor loop.

Its straight-wire engineering assures that a watt of input leaves with just 0.000000026 watts of distortion. Or less.

If you seek new levels of detail, openness and three-dimensional in an audiophile preamplifier we invite you to audition the CARVER C-1.
Sansui's First
CD Player


Among the key elements you must consider when buying a Compact Disc player are its programming and cueing features. The reason they are so important is the total absence of any one-on-one manual control of CD playback comparable to the finger lift that owners of simple turntables use to cue (and scratch) their LPs. CD cueing is (like everything else about the medium) all by the numbers: band numbers, index numbers (if the disc was indexed in mastering), elapsed-time numbers, time-remaining numbers. And much of what determines whether a given model is a joy or a chore to use centers on how the features that manipulate these numbers are conceived and executed.

We were disappointed at first to find that Sansui's PC-V1000 is not among those increasingly rare players that support index cueing—a potentially powerful random-access tool that now appears to be atrophying because of record-company apathy. Sansui can hardly be faulted: If the discs aren't indexed, the cost of the cueing feature can't be justified.

The random-access features on the player's front panel (as distinct from the additional ones on its remote control) constitute a spare but workable system. There are the usual steppers, forward and back, that enable you to cue to the beginnings of bands and to skip a specific number of bands in either direction according to the number of times you tap the appropriate control. You can program a sequence by cueing in this fashion and then pressing SET to memorize each selection in the sequence. If you're not sure which you want to hear, you can press INTRO SKIP, as Sansui calls it, which samples about ten seconds from the start of each band.

If the cue point you're looking for isn't at the beginning of a band, you can use the search buttons (one for each direction). When you press one of them, the playback level drops somewhat and you get a quick succession of short musical samples as the laser pickup traverses the disc at about twice its normal speed. If you keep your finger on either button for more than a few seconds, the pace quickens, speeding the search but presenting the samples at too dizzying a rate to permit easy identification in some music. (It sounds a little like the output of a conventional pickup that has been sent skipping across an LP.) We soon learned how to control the process by removing and resuming pressure on the button, which switches to PLAY, then back to the slower scan speed.

There's one additional front-panel

Pure power without bad vibes.

BETTER SOUND BASED ON CERAMICS.
FREQUENCY RESPONSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DB</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>100</th>
<th>200</th>
<th>500</th>
<th>1K</th>
<th>2K</th>
<th>5K</th>
<th>10K</th>
<th>20K</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L ch</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1/4 dB</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1/4 dB</td>
<td>20 Hz to 20 kHz</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1/4 dB</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1/4 dB</td>
<td>20 Hz to 20 kHz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R ch</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1/4 dB</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1/4 dB</td>
<td>20 Hz to 20 kHz</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1/4 dB</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1/4 dB</td>
<td>20 Hz to 20 kHz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DE-EMPHASIS ERROR
left channel: -0.012% db at 20 Hz to 20 kHz
right channel: 0.012% db at 20 Hz to 20 kHz

CHANNEL BALANCE (at 1 kHz): 105 dB

HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD+N; 40 Hz to 20 kHz)
at 0 dB: 0.011%
at -10 dB: 0.028%
at -20 dB: 0.043%
at -30 dB: 0.22%

IM DISTORTION (70-Hz difference frequency; 300 Hz to 20 kHz)
at 0 dB: 0.011%
at -10 dB: 0.028%
at -20 dB: 0.043%
at -30 dB: 0.22%

LINEARITY (at 1 kHz)
0 to -50 dB: no measurable error
at -60 dB: 0.01 dB
at -70 dB: 0.01 dB
at -80 dB: 0.01 dB
at -90 dB: 0.01 dB

TRACKING & ERROR CORRECTION
maximum signal-layer gap: 900 µm
maximum surface obstruction: 800 µm
simulated-fingerprint test: pass

MAXIMUM OUTPUT LEVEL
line output: 2.08 volts
headphone output: 7.67 volts

OUTPUT IMPEDANCE
line output: 65 ohms
headphone output: 230 ohms

*See text.
To avoid turntable rumble, hum and howling, stability is all. Steadiness of the needle in the groove-and in the platter rotation.

Kyocera's solution: It starts with ceramics. This unique material provides uncommon stability and isolation of mechanical and electrical feedback. The result is a performance that is virtually free of vibration and resonance.

A rigid ceramic-compound resin forms the subchassis of the PL-701. To further eliminate vibration, this subchassis is suspended by three springs within a sturdy wood base. The base has four adjustable shock-mounted feet. This dual-isolation foundation supports the platter and arm. For even greater stability and uniform rotation, the platter weighs in at 3.3 lbs. Add an advanced two-motor belt drive system to eliminate motor vibration and you have a turntable that is truly steady as a rock.

Other features:
- Straight aluminum tubular low mass tonearm with removable carbon fiber shell.
- Micro-computer electronic sensing non-friction tonearm control.
- Stabilizer (7 lb) with built-in two-speed stroboscope.
- Wow and flutter of 0.03%.
- Signal-to-noise ratio of 70 dB (DIN-B).
- Tinted dust cover and convenient soft-touch front panel controls.

Performance says it all. Put it to the test at a selected Kyocera dealer now.

(01) 560-0060
Welcome to the golden age of Luxman

Believing that form follows function, Luxman creates a special champagne gold series of sophisticated audio components. Inside, precise hand-crafted electronics. Outside, elegant, classic design. With pure, clear sound to match. See and hear how over 50 years of refinements and innovations, now backed by The Alpine Touch, ushers in the golden age of Luxman. Start by calling 1-800-257-4631.

Luxman Division of Alpine Electronics of America, 19445 Gramercy Pl, Torrance, CA 90501
test were quite sensitive to external shock and vibration. However, when one of our staffers tried to cudgel a store's demo sample into skipping, he failed, which suggests that Sansui may already have solved this problem.

The tracking and error-correction tests also raised a question. The player cleared all the hurdles on the Philips evaluation disc without skipping or clicking—as we might have anticipated, given the triple-beam pickup system Sansui uses. But Diversified Science Laboratories noted some subtle signs of discomfort on the 600- and 800-micrometer black dots, and when we applied a more severe test (a paper "wedge" stuck on the surface of a disc), the results were different for each trial. In general, though, the PC-V1000 was somewhat more plagued by loud clicks, skips, and so on in this test than was one of the best-tracking players we have reviewed. This is a rather severe comparison, however, and the Sansui's tracking is as good as that of most models we have examined and better than that of a fair number.

The PC-V1000's square-wave and impulse responses suggest that it employs oversampling and digital filtering (applied before digital-to-analog conversion), thereby allowing the use of a relatively gentle analog filter at the output, minimizing phase shift and ringing in the audio signal. As with other players we have tested that use this approach, there is some very slight rippling at the upper end of the response curve, but again, the effect is tiny by comparison to the peaks and other perturbations we have come to expect from phono pickups and utterly negligible from a listening point of view.

The PC-V1000's most memorable quality is its handling of disc programming. The infrared remote control is handy and attractive, and the relationship between its controls and those on the player itself has been subtly worked out for optimum compromise between flexibility and simplicity. In particular, we expect to see more of its "dual memory" approach.

**Big Sound From a Small Superamp**

Although Soundcraftsmen made its name in signal processing (introducing the first really popular consumer graphic equalizer just over a decade ago), one could argue that the company's most interesting products in recent years have been its power amplifiers. The last of these that we reviewed was the MA-5002A Class H amp (November 1981). "Class H" is Soundcraftsmen's designation for a type of signal-tracking power supply that improves amplifier efficiency by matching the supply voltage to the input signal. When the input is small—as it is most of the time—the supply voltage is maintained at a constant low level, minimizing power consumption and heat dissipation. If the signal rises to a level that demands an output greater than the base voltage can support, the power supply follows it up, returning to the low-voltage mode when the peak has passed.

The PCR-800 also aims at increasing efficiency, and again by means of a smart power supply, but the path taken is the other way around. Called "phase control regulation," it strives to use as little power as possible from the AC line to maintain a constant power-supply voltage. This is achieved with a servo loop that senses the supply voltage and feeds that information back to the silicon controlled rectifiers (SCRs), which convert the alternating current (AC) from the power transformer into direct current (DC) for modulation by the amplifier circuitry. Unlike the rectifiers in conventional amps, which are always on, those in the PCR-800 conduct only for as much of each AC cycle as is necessary to
**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WATTS</th>
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</tr>
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<td>1.6</td>
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<td>14</td>
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</table>

**Output Data**

The PCR-800 is one of the few amplifiers available that is rated not only into 8 ohms but also into 4 and even 2 ohms, so DSL measured its maximum output before clipping continuously as well as dynamically into all three loads. As you can see from the data, the results are impressive. Output is quite high into 8 ohms (slightly exceeding Soundcraftsmen's specification) and increases by almost another 2 dB into 4 ohms. Continuous power into 2 ohms is about 6 dB less than into 4, but the amp's dynamic power (which more nearly reflects performance on music) is the same into both. The small difference between the dynamic and continuous power figures (and the correspondingly low dynamic headroom) is a result of the power supply's very tight regulation.

Although the PCR-800 clearly is capable of delivering plenty of current into low-impedance loads, a slight loss of extreme treble response will occur because of a rapid rise in the amp's output impedance at high frequencies. As reflected in the very high damping factor, the output impedance at 50 Hz is a mere 30 milliohms; at 1 kHz it is still only 48 milliohms, but by 10 kHz it is up to 310 milliohms, and at 20 kHz the output impedance is 460 milliohms (almost half an ohm). With a 2-ohm load, this will cause a loss of 11/4 dB at 10 kHz and 2 dB at 20 kHz, which is enough to be audible on some material. The rolloff is not great, however, and it will disappear with more typical, higher-impedance loads.

The only other less-than-outstanding measurement is the signal-to-noise (S/N) ratio, which is lower than we are used to seeing. This is attributable mainly to 60-Hz power-line hum and its harmonics. No noise was apparent in listening, however. The remaining data are uniformly excellent, showing perfect flat frequency response across the audio band, distortion levels well below the threshold of audibility, wider than necessary channel separation, and an appropriate input impedance and sensitivity.

Performance in the listening room is no less satisfying. The weight of the amplifier is distributed heavily toward the front, making it somewhat more unwieldy than its size alone would suggest, and the 43/4-foot power cord may be a little short for some installations, but aside from those minor points, setup is a breeze. We were able to drive our loudspeakers to very high volumes without overload, and when the amp does clip, it does so very gracefully. At levels below clipping, it makes no contribution of its own to the sound, which is exactly what one would expect of a fine power amplifier. That, together with compact dimensions, exceptional current capability, and an attractively low price, makes the PCR-800 an excellent value.
NOW YOU DON'T HAVE TO PAY AN ARM AND A LEG FOR YOUR EARS.

Becoming an audiophile has always had its price. We have a way of lowering it.

Introducing two of Yamaha's new high-end separates—the M-40 power amplifier and the C-40 pre-amplifier.

Both have the highest state-of-the-art circuitry and features. For the highest quality sound reproduction possible.

But at a lower price than ever before possible from Yamaha.

For pure sound combined with pure power, the M-40 uses our exclusive Auto Class A circuitry. It automatically switches from pure Class A operation to Class AB when music peaks require high power levels. So purity is never sacrificed for power.

To eliminate crossover distortion during switching, as well as transistor non-linearity distortion, the M-40 has our unique Zero Distortion Rule circuitry.

The C-40 uses ZDR in the phono EQ section. For the purest phono reproduction possible.

And to effectively capture the quieter passages that today's digital sources are capable of, the M-40 has a phenomenal 127dB S/N ratio.

The result is exceptionally pure and accurate musical reproduction. Which is in keeping with the C-40's and M-40's purpose—basic, audiophile-quality sound reproduction—pure and simple.

And at $350* for the C-40 and $400* for the M-40, affordable.

So visit your Yamaha dealer. And satisfy your ears. Without having to sacrifice any other part of your anatomy.
Introducing Audia. The result of an uncompromising devotion to absolute performance.

Absolute performance is not just an attitude that can be created overnight. Audia was born out of 40 years of Clarion's expertise and success.

Audia is an entirely new and unique line of high end, no-compromise speakers, amplifiers, equalizers, receivers and tuners, that meet the needs of even the most critical car audio purists.

Perfecting Performance in the Automotive Environment.

The FM Diversity Tuning System, a feature pioneered by Clarion, constantly monitors two FM front ends, picking out the strongest signal in multipath conditions to virtually eliminate annoying "picket fencing" noise.

Typically, automobile interiors create an undesirable harmonic response in the low frequency ranges. The 180 Hz. Acoustic Compensation Control returns the bass to its original deep, clean sound, while it allows the amplifier to run cooler.

The Auto Reverse Deck with Dual-Direction Automatic Azimuth Adjustment is more than just a convenience feature. It precisely adjusts the tapehead to achieve zero-azimuth in both directions so you won't sacrifice high end frequency response.

Extend Your Limits of Perfection.

The entire Audia line represents total flexibility. It will easily interface with other components, allowing you to upgrade at any time and to create the most esoteric sound system.

Audia. A state of the art accomplishment that results from a philosophy of absolute performance.

Audia. The Art of Sound in Motion.
**Top Specs at A Scott’s Price**


**FM tuner section**

- **STEREO RESPONSE & CHANNEL SEPARATION**
  - Frequency response: 0.3 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz
  - Channel separation: ≥ 45 dB, 20 Hz to 1 kHz; ≥ 29.5 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz

- **FM SENSITIVITY & QUIETING**
  - Stereo quieting (noise): 0 dBf, 10 kHz to 1 kHz
  - Mono quieting (noise): 20 dBf, 10 kHz to 1 kHz

**HERMAN HOSMER SCOTT,** who gave his name to the company, would hardly recognize today’s international enterprise—a European-owned American corporation that manufactures its wares in the Orient. But he would recognize the good value represented by the Scott products we’ve tested recently: the 558T tuner (November 1982) and now the 359RS receiver, which combines medium power and moderate price with a five-band equalizer and performance that in some respects rivals that of the headiest models around.

Also traditional with Scott is a thoughtfully prepared owner’s manual. The one for the 359RS is very simple, especially in its language, which enhances the pamphlet’s directness. No lavish graphics or slick paper or extra colors, just useful explanation. Only the listing of specifications has been carelessly produced: In particular, “1HF sensitivity . . . 10.3/1.8 dBf” is both equivocal as to the relevant standard and confused in its units (it should read “10.3 dBf/1.8 µV”). But for neophytes—the only ones who will really need the manual and for whom it obviously was prepared—this minor shortcoming is perhaps a nonissue.

The front panel is anything but traditional. Its most striking feature is a bank of five equalizer sliders near the center. Input selectors are ranged above this section, with further pushbutton controls below it. The readout area near the left end contains a power “meter” (ndefeatable, unfortunately) and a lower panel devoted to tuner indicators. The one for signal strength consists of six segments, the lowest of which lights whenever either tuner band is selected. This leaves five segments for registering progressively higher signal strengths over a well-chosen range: somewhat more sensitive than average for such indicators (which are rare, in any event, for the AM band) so that they concentrate, appropriately, on solving the problems of receiving relatively weak stations.

Tuning proceeds in full-channel steps: 200 kHz on FM and 10 kHz on AM. A tap on UP or DOWN advances one step; if you hold the button in, the channels race by. The automatic tuning mode seeks the next receivable station in the chosen direction and locks onto it. When you come to one end of the dial, the tuning automatically continues from the other. The presets provide for seven stations from each band. A ferrite bar AM antenna is attached to the back panel, where there also are the usual screw terminals for external AM and FM antennas—including 75-ohm coaxial FM lead-in, though the manual discusses only the 300-ohm twinlead options.

The tuner section’s performance is mostly very fine. Among Diversified Science Laboratories’ measurements, the most striking probably is the capture ratio, which is remarkably low—as good as the best we can recall seeing. Pilot and subcarrier suppression also are exceptionally good. Least encouraging is the selectivity, which is no better than acceptable. We found that a moderately strong station with a stronger one on the adjacent lower channel had to be tuned manually, because the automatic tuning would lock onto it only on the adjacent channel above (resulting in severe distortion) or onto the stronger station below. And when the weaker station was correctly tuned, interference from the stronger one was clearly audible. This is not a situation that will confront most urban or even suburban listeners, however, so it isn’t a major concern.

Overall, FM reception is clean in sound and convenient in operation. The same is true of AM, except that its freedom from noise seems to have been obtained with a sharper than usual high-frequency rolloff. Incidentally, if you do nonetheless encounter a noisy AM station, the high filter will not help because the AM response effectively cuts off before the filter action begins, at 7.5 kHz.

For sources that really contain high-
### New Equipment Reports

#### Audio Equipment

**Ortofon OM-30 fixed-coil (moving-iron) phono cartridge**

- **Price:** $225
- **Manufacuter:** Ortofon Manufacturing A/S, Denmark
- **U.S. distributor:** Ortofon, Inc., 122 Dupont St., Plainview, N.Y. 11803

#### Specifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Value</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency Response</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIAA equalization</td>
<td>+6 dB, -0.25 dB, 10 Hz to 20 kHz;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-12 dB at 5 kHz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity &amp; Noise</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>S/N ratio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phono input</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Phono Overload</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(1 kHz clipping)</td>
<td>180 mV</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>-3 dB at 17 kHz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-15 dB/octave</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>High Filter</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>-3 dB at 7.5 kHz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 dB/octave</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Additional Features

- **No Displacement**
  - The OM-30 cartridge offers a linear frequency response with an extended low-frequency response down to 20 Hz, offering a smooth and natural soundstage.
- **High Definition**
  - The cartridge is designed to provide high-fidelity reproduction, making it suitable for a wide range of musical genres.
- **Compact Design**
  - The size and weight of the OM-30 make it easy to handle and install, ensuring a secure fit in a variety of systems.

An "Optimum Match," from Ortofon

Not only are there computers inside of many Teacs, there are Teacs inside of many computers.

Teac has built tape transports for some of the foremost names in the computer industry.

Computer builders come to Teac for a very logical reason. Nobody builds tape components like a company that has specialized single-mindedly in tape recording for thirty years. And because computer downtime can be at the least expensive, and at the most disastrous, our reputation for ruggedness and reliability in the extreme carries a lot of weight.

So when you're in the market for a tape deck, just think: When the engineers wanted muscles for their brains, they picked Teac.

TEAC MADE IN JAPAN BY FANATICS.
### Frequency Response & Channel Separation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency (Hz)</th>
<th>L ch</th>
<th>R ch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>+11/2, -10 dB</td>
<td>+11/2, -10 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>+1/2, -10 dB</td>
<td>+1/2, -10 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>&gt;20 dB</td>
<td>&gt;20 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>&gt;20 dB</td>
<td>&gt;20 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>&gt;18 dB</td>
<td>&gt;18 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>&gt;18 dB</td>
<td>&gt;18 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>&gt;18 dB</td>
<td>&gt;18 dB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sensitivity (at 1 kHz)**

| Channel separation | 1.00 mV/cm/sec |

**Channel Balance (at 1 kHz)**

| Channel separation | 0 dB |

**Vertical Tracking Angle**

| Channel separation | 19° |

**Dynamic Compliance (vertical)**

| Channel separation | 20 x 10^-6 cm/dyne |

**Recommended Effective Tonearm Mass**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel separation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>without weight</td>
<td>10 grams</td>
<td>6 to 17 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with weight</td>
<td>8 grams</td>
<td>4 to 15 grams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Weight**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel separation</th>
<th>2.5 grams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>with weight</td>
<td>4.85 grams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SQAURE-WAVE RESPONSE (1 kHz)**

*See text.*

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**A Good Combination, From Yamaha**

**Many Audio Manufacturers** have a specialty that lends them a sense of identity, even though they may offer products that fall well outside that realm. Yamaha seems to have two such areas of specialization: receivers that concentrate on fine music reproduction first and electronic virtuosity only as a means to that end. And perfectionists—of which we've tested several superb examples over the years. As an integrated amplifier, the A-1000 might appear to fall nearer the first category, but it actually is more like a combination of Yamaha separates at their very best. Indeed, its control section is very similar to the C-70 preamp (test report, April 1983), while the power-amp stage harks back to past Yamaha Class A designs. A totally Class A amplifier rated at 120 watts per side would be a real monster—as would your electric bill if you used one. (Although, the heat generated might save a little on the oil bill.) This is because Class A circuitry confines the signal swing to the transistors’ linear operating region, placing the average (and therefore the no-
THE NEW AIWA AD-F990 3-HEAD CASSETTE DECK: PERFORMANCE READY FOR THE DIGITAL AGE.

At Aiwa, we believe being the best means taking the lead, not following. That's why our engineers developed the AD-F990: the first fully automated cassette deck designed to meet the demands of the compact digital disc.

20-21000Hz FLAT FREQUENCY RESPONSE!

Listen to the AD-F990 and you'll be stunned. Dolby HX Professional and Aiwa's exclusive amorphous combination head have extended performance parameters so far that the AD-F990 can faithfully reproduce digitally recorded programs without compromise...or effort.

A TRIUMPH IN HUMAN ENGINEERING

To perfectly integrate man and machine, the Aiwa AD-F990 presents its controls on a unique "keyboard." That's new! So is our Auto Record Level Control, Auto NR Detector, Auto Demagnetizing, Auto Tape Selector, Digital Time Remaining Display that shows all tape operation modes, and a fluorescent display for all functions.

The Aiwa AD-F990: the top of our new line of "digital-ready" cassette decks. The sound of the future, today.
Acoustic Research introduces three essentials for the ultimate system.

1. Our new line of nine different computer-designed speakers, ranging from the economical, space-saving AR8b bookshelf model to the awesome AR9Ls with its Dual Dome™ mid-high range driver and thunderous Bass Contour Chamber.

2. A new three-point suspension turntable whose predecessor was a legend among audiophiles ten years ago. So much of a legend we decided to bring it back in a totally updated version—re-designed from the dustcover on down. With your choice of universal tone arm mounting platform, or AR's own new medium mass straight arm.

3. Our new AR compact remote control unit employing ultra-sophisticated microcircuitry. From wherever you sit or stand, you can control stereo balance and work a wide range of functions on your amp for maximum convenience and ideal sonic performance.

Hear what you've been missing.

RATED POWER 20 1/4 dBW (120 watts) channel
OUTPUT AT CLIPPING (at 1 kHz, both channels driven)
8-ohm load 22 dBW (160 watts) channel
4-ohm load 22 1/4 dBW (190 watts) channel
DYNAMIC POWER 8-ohm load 23 1/4 dBW
4-ohm load 24 dBW
2-ohm load 21 1/4 dBW
DYNAMIC HEADROOM (re rated power, 8-ohm load)
-2 1/2 dB
HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD: 20 Hz to 20 kHz)
at 203 1/4 dBW (190 watts/channel)
at 224 1/4 dBW (190 watts/channel)
FREQUENCY RESPONSE
fixed-coil phono -0.14%, -0 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz;
-0.14% at 5 Hz
moving-coil phono -0.14%, 20 Hz to 20 kHz;
-8.9% at 5 Hz
SENSITIVITY & NOISE (re 0 dBW, A-weighting)
sensitivity 97 dB
aux input 13 mV 87 dB
fixed-coil phono 0.21 mV 79 dB
moving-coil phono 13 µV 78 dB

Yamaha appears to be raising the amplifier's bias point so that the idling transistors conduct more than "just a little"—a kind of super Class AB. This increases the heat that must be dissipated and, as the owner's manual points out (though its intelligibility here and elsewhere falls short of Yamaha's usual high standard), makes good ventilation imperative. Should this pose a problem, a front-panel switch gives you the option of cutting back the bias point to a more conventional value for Class AB operation.

Several companies have devised clever ways of building large quasi-Class A amps that vary the bias current according to the signal level, thereby minimizing the inefficiency associated with keeping the transistors operating constantly in their linear region. Yamaha has taken a somewhat different approach in the A-1000. With the Class A option engaged, only the first 10 watts of the output are pure Class A. When the signal requires more output (which is very seldom in most listening) the amp reverts to Class B operation. When the signal descends to lower levels, the amp reverts to Class A.

In effect, Yamaha appears to be raising the amplifier's bias point so that the transistors are always conducting no matter what the signal is up to. The more efficient Class B circuits allow each transistor in a push-pull pair to remain quiescent much of the time, conducting only when presented with its half of the waveform.

This avoids the major problem inherent in high-power Class A amps: dissipating all the extra heat generated in the output stage. But there's a catch. At the moment of turning on or off, the Class B transistors aren't in their linear operating range. And the smaller the audio signal, the more time they spend outside it and the higher the distortion in the output. Class AB circuitry—which by far dominates audio—pitches up Class B by raising the bias to turn on the idling transistors just a little, so that the amplifier behaves like Class A for very small signal values. It therefore isn't as efficient as Class B (though it's far more so than A), and it doesn't achieve the ultralow distortion of Class A (though it comes far closer than B).

In listening, we likewise could discern no unequivocal difference between the two operating modes, both sounding equally excellent. This observation also applies to the "auto Class A" mode. The distortion figures shown in our data column therefore theoretically represent Class AB operation at rated power and Class A at 0 dBW (1 watt). As you can see, they are exceedingly low at 0 dBW, very low at full power. When the lab checked the distortion with the amp in the AB mode, it detected only marginal increases, and in just a few of the figures. Those for 0 dBW remained below our 0.01 percent reporting threshold—that is, so low as to be of absolutely no significance.

The infrasonic filter has very little influence on the audible frequency range. Its response is down less than 1 1/2 dB at 20 Hz, and there is some rise (no more than about 1 1/2 dB) in the very deep bass. Below the 15-Hz inflection point, the filter's initial slope is about 14 dB per octave. It delivers effective warp-signal suppression with fixed-coil phono cartridges (and high-level sources) and adds substantially to the infra-
I. INTRODUCTION

The Shure V-15 Type III is a high-performance moving coil phonograph cartridge designed for use with a tonearm. It features a dynamic compliance of 22.5 x 10^-6 cm/dyne, which is typical for moving coil cartridges.

II. TONEARM/CARTRIDGE MATCHING

The Shure V-15 Type III is optimized for use with Yamaha tonearms. The cartridg e's dynamic compliance matches well with Yamaha tonearms, providing a balanced sound.

III. PERFORMANCE

The Shure V-15 Type III's performance is characterized by its ability to reproduce a wide range of frequencies accurately. It can handle high input levels without distortion, making it suitable for use with powerful amplifiers.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The Shure V-15 Type III is an excellent choice for audiophiles looking for a high-performance moving coil cartridge. Its compatibility with Yamaha tonearms and amplifiers makes it a versatile option for a variety of listening environments.

---

**Tonearm/Cartridge Matching Graph**

*RESONANCE FREQUENCY IN Hz*

*TOTAL EFFECTIVE MASS IN MG*

By means of this nomograph, you can quickly and easily determine the compatibility of any cartridge and tonearm you have tested. Ideally, the arm/cartridge resonance frequency (indicated by the diagonal lines) should fall at 10 Hz, but anywhere between 8 and 12 Hz will assure good warp tracking and accurate bass response. (It is usually okay to let the resonance rise as high as 15 Hz, although we don't normally recommend this.)

Begin by looking up the vertical and dynamic compliance found in the cartridge report and the effective mass listed in the tonearm report. Add the weight of the cartridge to the effective mass of the tonearm to get the total effective mass. Then find the point on the graph where the vertical line for the total effective mass intersects the horizontal line for the cartridge's dynamic compliance. For a good match, this point should fall in the white region, between the 8- and 12-Hz diagonal lines.

When necessary, you can back-figure compliances and effective masses for cartridges and tonearms tested before you began reporting these figures directly (in January 1983). For cartridges, look up the vertical resonance frequency (measured in the SME 3009 Series II Improved tonearm) and the cartridge's weight. Add 15 grams (the SME's effective mass) to the cartridge weight to get the total effective mass. Then find the intersection of the vertical line representing that mass with the diagonal line providing the measured resonance frequency. For tonearms, look up the resonance frequency as measured with the Shure V-15 Type III cartridge. Find the intersection of the diagonal line for that frequency with the horizontal line representing the Shure's dynamic compliance of 22.5 x 10^-6 cm/dyne. Reading down the vertical line on which the point of intersection lies will give you the total effective mass of the arm with the Shure V-15 Type III mounted in it. Then subtract 6.3 grams (the weight of the V-15 Type III) to get the tonearm's effective mass.

Because of differences in measurement techniques, manufacturers' specifications for compliance and effective mass often differ from our findings and may therefore yield inconsistent results if used with this graph.
The new ULTRX™ R100 receiver isn’t for everybody.

You don’t really need 100 watts per channel* of virtually distortion-less power. Unless you like listening to today’s ultra-high quality recordings at “live concert” sound levels.

And a remote-controlled digital tuner with 20-station memory is probably more than enough—unless you’re a dedicated FM listener with wide-ranging tastes.

Likewise, most people could get along without the built-in dbx and DNR noise reduction systems. Except those few who’ve become spoiled by the almost eerie absence of noise in CD digital recordings. With the dbx, any cassette deck can make virtually noise-free recordings, while the DNR “cleans up” existing noisy signals.

Unless you’re a nut about video sound quality, too, you won’t have much use for the TV/VCR inputs and stereo synthesizer circuit.

The R100 is packed with features that are best appreciated by an audio perfectionist. It may be the best-equipped receiver ever built.

Get an ULTRX dealer to put an R100 (or one of our other new receivers) through its paces for you. Some people might call it overkill. But you’ll call it overwhelming.

*Minimum Continuous Average Power per channel, both channels driven into 8 ohms, from 20-20,000Hz, with no more than 0.009% Total Harmonic Distortion.

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Presenting High Bias II and the Ultimate Tape Guarantee.

Memorex presents High Bias II, a tape so extraordinary, we're going to guarantee it forever.

We'll guarantee life-like sound.

Extraordinarily flat frequency response at zero dB recording levels, combined with remarkably low noise levels, means music is captured live. Then Permapass, our unique oxide-bonding process, locks each oxide particle—each musical detail—onto the tape. So music stays live. Not just the 1st play or the 1000th. But forever.

We'll guarantee the cassette.

We've engineered every facet of our transport mechanism to protect the tape. Our waved-wafer improves tape wind. Silicone-treated rollers insure precise alignment and smooth, safe tape movement. To protect the tape and mechanism, we've surrounded them with a remarkable cassette housing made rigid and strong by a mold design unique to Memorex.

We'll guarantee them forever.

If you ever become dissatisfied with Memorex High Bias II, for any reason, simply mail the tape back and we'll replace it free.
HIGH TECH GOES POP!

MORE THAN 200 HOT NEW AUDIO AND VIDEO COMPONENTS FROM THE SUMMER CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SHOW

"A couple of years ago I read that most people own at least six or seven cassette tape transports—an absurdly high number, until you count the phone answerer, car deck, home recorder, headphone-based portable, and so on. After this SCES, I'm convinced that people will soon own an even larger number of microprocessors—but they won't be aware of them. The era of the 'smart' component is upon us, with microprocessors cropping up in almost every electronic entertainment product. Perhaps that's the real direction of the home computer revolution: appliances with the 'brains' to get the job done."

Peter Dobbin, Electronics Features Editor

"The current wave of audio-video receivers may look as antediluvian in five years as the first, tubed stereo models do today. Then, as now, the first consideration was simulcast reception—indeed, independent AM and FM tuners with switching to feed each to its own channel. But until the dust starts to settle, the destiny of network and direct-broadcast stereo TV and the equipment to receive it remain cloudy."

Robert Long, Consulting Technical Editor

"The expansion of the audio business into new places in our lives—the car, the jogging track, the TV room—has until recently entailed the sacrifice of sound quality for convenience and small size. The Compact Disc broke this pattern. And now, as experienced audio designers tackle these new markets, even the smallest speakers are sounding good."

E. Brad Meyer, Recording Engineer and Consultant
Onkyo's TX-85 receiver represents a continuing trend in audio electronics. A "smart" component, it uses a microprocessor to assess FM signal conditions and to modify tuning parameters for best reception. And, in addition to offering just about every "standard" receiver feature, it has built-in DBX circuitry that enables you to make and decode DBX recordings as well as play DBX discs.

Of Germany) eventually retired it and a similarly equipped cassette deck. In retrospect, one might say that Eumig (which has since abandoned the consumer audio business entirely) was a couple of years ahead of its time, for the number of receivers displayed at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show that depend on microprocessors for their convenience features and basic functions is staggering.

Surprisingly absent from even the top models of many lines are separate CD-player inputs, separate TV audio inputs (for videodisc players or Hi-Fi VCRs), and stereo AM decoders. Manufacturers, it appears, are waiting for consumer demand to grow before building such "extras" into their products. On the other hand, a few companies are jumping into audio-video equipment with both feet.

Sansui’s blockbusters, for instance, are two receivers that incorporate the company’s new X-Balanced DC amplifier circuitry and include provision for stereo AM and TV audio as well as conventional audio sources. The S-X1130 ($950), rated at 130 watts per channel, has presets for eight radio stations on each band, an FM IF-bandwidth selector, a built-in moving-coil head amp, and line/make mixing—this last, in part, to fill out an extensive array of video dubbing facilities. The somewhat less elaborate S-X1100 ($800) is rated at 100 watts. Sansui is also selling the 55-watt S-X1070 ($380), with decoding for all four stereo AM systems.

Onkyo’s TX-85 ($620, rated at 80 watts per side) and TX-65 ($485, 60 watts) are the first receivers in the company’s Integra Series of “affordable high-end components.” Both include Automatic Precision Reception (APR), which controls key tuning parameters: high blend, RF sensitivity, selectivity, reception mode, and DNR (dynamic noise reduction). The TX-85 has built-in DBX encode/decode circuitry that enables you to play DBX-encoded discs and that converts any recorder attached to the tape jacks into a DBX model.

Perhaps the most thorough audio-video receiver announced at the show is the Technics SA-850, which incorporates a VHF TV tuner with built-in multichannel TV audio decoding. Its Computer Drive New Class A power circuitry is rated at 100 watts per channel. The SA-850 shares “stereoplex” stereo simulation for mono TV soundtracks with two other receivers, the $450 SA-550 (rated at 70 watts) and the $320 SA-350 (40 watts), each with a mono VHF-TV tuner and a New Class A power amp. (Multiplex TV decoders for these models are available as options.) The SA-150 ($180, 25 watts, with digital tuning) and the mechanically tuned SA-120 ($160, 35 watts) are audio-only units.

The two top receivers from JVC have SEA equalizer circuitry based on the digital signal-processing and memory capabilities of the separate SEA-M9 equalizer. (For details on the SEA-M9, see “Digital Processors,” page 37.) Both the R-X500B ($650, 100 watts per channel) and the R-X400 ($500, 70 watts) include seven-band versions with five memories, inverse-response switching, and multiband signal-analysis metering. Both also incorporate presets for 15 stations on each tuning band and Quieting Slope Control, which automatically adjusts the receiver as signal strength varies. The R-X350V ($370) in decoding for Motorola-format stereo AM broadcasts. It and the $500 SR-840 (70 watts) come with wireless remote controls and include eight presets per tuning band; the latter achieves stereo-AM decoding with an optional plug-in module.

Akai offers what it calls “direct access” volume controls in three models: AA-A45 ($450, rated at 65 watts per channel), AA-A35 ($350, 48 watts), and AA-A25 ($260, 32 watts). The system is touch-sensitive, switching directly to the appropriate volume level, and incorporates a maximum-level memory that prevents turning it higher than the preset volume.

Adding to its "01" line of "computer-based" compo-
PLEX: Oxygen-free copper wiring and encode/decode noise reduction are rated at 100 watts. It has DBX by the R-100 ($550), which is consists of five models, headed by nyo's new premium Ultrax line of receivers. Hitachi's entries are the 60-watt HTA-6F ($470) and HTA-4F ($340), both with ten presets per band.

Proton is offering the Model 930 ($360), a 30-watt receiver said to be stable with 2-ohm loads and provided with memory for five stations on each band and a moving-coil phono-input option. And Sanyo's new premium Ultrex line consists of five models, headed by the R-100 ($550), which is rated at 100 watts. It has DBX encode/decode noise reduction circuitry and a stereo synthesizer for mono TV, plus a moving-coil head amp.

**Amplifiers**

PREAMPS AND OTHER high-end audio separates are usually the province of small specialty companies, but at this CES it was the large, mainstream companies that generated most of the action. Luxman's C-05 ($1,800) is about as purist as you can get, handcrafted with oxygen-free copper wiring throughout and relatively devoid of convenience features. If you need a bit more control flexibility, Luxman also sells the CX-100 ($500). It has a healthy complement of standard preamp features (including tone controls, tape dubbing facilities, and fixed- and moving-coil phono inputs), plus a subwoofer output. Kenwood has expanded its Basic Series preamp line with the C-2 ($295). The new model is designed to match the rest of the Basic Series in appearance and offers a full raft of control functions.

Yamaha applies its Zero Distortion Rule circuitry to three new preamps. The C-80 ($750) is its top-of-the-line model and comes equipped with a two-band parametric equalizer, normal and inverting outputs, and a low-noise moving-coil input stage. The less costly C-60 ($550) omits the parametric equalizer and inverting outputs, but is otherwise similar in design and performance. Even less expensive is the C-40 ($350), a unit intended for the first-time audio separa-Ites buyer. Kyocera's C-910 ($1,200) reflects the parent company's long history as a manufacturer of fine industrial ceramics. A ceramic compound resin base, a cutless-core ceramic power transformer, and a full complement of controls make the new Kyocera unit a truly unique item.

The original Apt/Holman preamp and power amp set new benchmarks in audio design, but financial problems forced the company to halt production of these fine products and the more recently introduced Apt 2 preamp. Wayne Fiedrichs, Apt's new president, told me that production on the entire line had started up again and demonstrated a prototype phono-only preamp that he plans to introduce shortly. Intended for people who are displeased with the phono sections of their receivers or integrated amps, the device delivers a line-level signal to an unused set of aux inputs. Built-in calibration me-

** TERMS AND CONTROLS ENABLE YOU TO ADJUST INPUT IMPEDANCE TO THE EXACT REQUIREMENTS OF THE PICK-UP. IT WILL COME WITH A TEST RECORD AND SHOULD COST ABOUT $250.**

According to reports from several manufacturers, integrated amplifiers are getting more popular in the U.S. market, where receivers have traditionally dominated. Interestingly, the shift in preference seems to have little to do with increased flexibility or performance; rather, say manufacturers, the high visibility of one-brand rack systems (the majority of which contain an integrated amp and separate tuner) is raising the component consciousness of a huge segment of the market. That is why, if you are shopping for an integrated amp this year, you'll have lots to choose from.

Onkyo's Integra Series of 'affordable high-end' components is joined by the 100-watt A-8019 ($495). Sansui seems very intent this year on gaining more visibility in high-end electronics. Its AU-G99X integrated amp pumps out a heady 160 watts and contains an impedance-matching step-up transformer for moving-coil pickups. Unusual for amplifiers these days, the AU-G99X ($800) and the less expensive AU-G77X ($500, 110 watts) have back-panel switching that enables you to match them to either 8- or 4-ohm speaker loads. Sony has brought its audio signal processor (ASP) concept to a new line of fairly inexpensive integrated amplifiers. The ASP, which contains circuitry for microprocessor control of all preamp and switching functions, including tone-control memory and LCD display functions, is responsible for the sleek, knobless faceplates of the TA-AX360 ($210, 50 watts) and the TA-AX410 ($290, 50 watts, plus optional remote).

Two new integrated amps make their debut from Technics this year. Both the 65-watt SU-V4X ($300) and the 100-watt SU-V6X ($390) contain the company's Computer Drive New Class A circuitry and a special circuit that Technics says ensures flat frequency response into even demanding low-impedance loads. Last in our discussion of integrated amps, but certainly standouts in features and performance, are JVC's three new units: the A-X900B ($550, 120 watts), the A-X500VB with TV audio inputs and switching ($500, 100 watts), and the A-X400 ($300, 70 watts).

It's amazing how often Bob Carver steals the show at a CES. His hastily called press conference has editors dashing off to crowded hotel suites to see the fruits of his fecund imagination. This time it's a 180-watt power amp measuring less than 4 inches wide by 4½ inches deep and weighing only ½ pounds. Carver says the 'Cubelet' actually will pump out 250 watts per side into 2-ohm loads, but don't run down to your local hi-fi store just yet: It's still just a prototype and will eventually wind up as the power-amp section in a new receiver.

Also extraordinary (though presented with a lot less razzle-dazzle) is Luxman's M-05 (built to complement the C-05 preamp mentioned earlier). If you think it's easy to build a Class A power amp capable of producing 105 watts per chan-

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**SEPTEMBER 1984**

35
nel, then you also might think that the $2,800 price is excessive. A bit much in our view would be to run a pair of these amps in a bridged mode, but Luxman says it can be done, for a power output of 300 watts per side. Sansui's contribution to basic power amps this season is the B-2101. Said to embody everything the company knows about amplifier technology, this behemoth is rated at 200 watts and seems rather modestly priced at $800. Yamaha has extended the reach of its power-amp line with three new units—the M-80 ($950, 250 watts), the M-60 ($650, 160 watts), and the M-40 ($400, 120 watts). Each uses Yamaha's Zero Distortion Rule design and Auto Class A circuits. Technics's latest brute is the SE-A5 Mk. 2 ($800). Rated at 150 watts per side, it has separate power supplies for each channel, two pairs of switchable speaker terminals, and power meters.

Peter Dobbin

Tuners

THE CONTINUING improvements in tuner design still surprise me. A few years ago, it seemed that tuners had reached a plateau of sorts; frequency-synthesis circuits, adjustable IF bandwidth, and high-blend circuits that could rescue noisy stereo reception by reducing the "stereoness" of the signal were the state of the art. Then came Bob Carver's novel signal-processing approach that "reconstructed" the signal, cutting noise while preserving the ambience of stereo.

Larry Schotz's interesting sensitivity-enhancing circuit also shook things up for a while, but problems in aligning the circuit at the factory finally forced NAD and Proton (two Schotz licensees) to abandon it. Instead, the tireless Mr. S has come up with a dynamic high-blend circuit that responds not just to the signal strength, but also to the modulation level of the broadcast. Thus, with the new Dynamic Separation circuit, NAD's Model 4155 ($350) and Proton's Model 440 ($270) tuners should reduce noise (and stereo separation) only during quiet musical passages and pauses between selections—the places where noise is most bothersome. Less "intelligent" dynamic blend circuits simply "monoize" the high frequencies of any broadcast companies that lack the facilities to design their own tuners. (By the way, if you're in a weak-signal area and you're looking for an RF amplifier, I heartily recommend Magnum's new FM Power Sleuth. In New York City, the extra 70 dB of selectivity it gives with it makes a big difference.)

Other tuners that look interesting this year include Yamaha's T-80 ($400), which contains a fine-tuning circuit that lets you do what other frequency-synthesis models don't—deliberately mistune in 0.01-MHz steps to help eliminate certain types of interference. Harman Kardon has two new slim-line tuners, the TU-915 with digital readout for $365 and the TU-910 with an analog tuning scale for $235. Onkyo's T-9090 tuner takes pride of place in the Integra series. The $600 unit has an automatic reception system that analyzes an incoming signal and adjusts the tuner to the appropriate settings for live reception parameters: local/DX, IF bandwidth, FM feedback level, stereo/mono, and high blend. JVC's T-X900B ($350) also offers computer control of several tuning characteristics. Luxman's T-240 ($230) differs from most AM/FM units with memory presets, allocating 16 memory locations for FM frequencies and eight for AM. Sansui's TU-D99X ($350) uses a newly designed digital decoder that is said to make it audibly superior in weak-signal areas. And Technics continues to broaden its offerings with two new tuners—the $400 ST-G7 and the $220 ST-G5.

Peter Dobbin

THE LOGIC OF POWER

Receiver and amplifier manufacturers continue to rate (and price) their products on the basis of power output, expressed in watts. Though there is nothing inherently wrong about this (such ratings are mandated by the Federal Trade Commission), HF believes that a more useful measure of power is the dBW (decibel-watt)—a unit based on a logarithmic scale, with 0 dBW equaling 1 watt. Keep in mind that a 10-dB increase in loudness is heard as a doubling of volume; a 1-dB change in loudness is about the smallest perceptible increment. Thus, choosing a 125-watt amp instead of a 100-watt simply on the basis of the former's higher power rating is wasteful: A glance at this conversion table will tell you that you'd be netting a mere 1 dB of additional loudness from your speakers.

Harman Kardon TU-910

Yamaha T-80

JVC T-X900B

Proton 440

companies that lack the facilities to design their own tuners. (By the way, if you're in a weak-signal area and you're looking for an RF amplifier, I heartily recommend Magnum's new FM Power Sleuth. In New York City, the extra 70 dB of selectivity it gives with it makes a big difference.)

Other tuners that look interesting this year include Yamaha's T-80 ($400), which contains a fine-tuning circuit that lets you do what other frequency-synthesis models don't—deliberately mistune in 0.01-MHz steps to help eliminate certain types of interference. Harman Kardon has two new slim-line tuners, the TU-915 with digital readout for $365 and the TU-910 with an analog tuning scale for $235. Onkyo's T-9090 tuner takes pride of place in the Integra series. The $600 unit has an automatic reception system that analyzes an incoming signal and adjusts the tuner to the appropriate settings for live reception parameters: local/DX, IF bandwidth, FM feedback level, stereo/mono, and high blend. JVC's T-X900B ($350) also offers computer control of several tuning characteristics. Luxman's T-240 ($230) differs from most AM/FM units with memory presets, allocating 16 memory locations for FM frequencies and eight for AM. Sansui's TU-D99X ($350) uses a newly designed digital decoder that is said to make it audibly superior in weak-signal areas. And Technics continues to broaden its offerings with two new tuners—the $400 ST-G7 and the $220 ST-G5.
Signal Processors

JVC STANDS OUT among signal-processor manufacturers this year for its $1,200 graphic equalizer. The SEA-M9 uses a National Semiconductor digital processor chip and offers 12 control bands per channel. It stores five sets of equalization data and, at the touch of a button, generates the reciprocal of any curve it is set for. Used with its built-in pink-noise generator, the SEA-M9 gives you real-time spectrum analysis (for which two decay times and freeze-display are available). It will display the inherent response of a tape deck or (with the supplied calibration microphone) a room, which can then be corrected by equalization with the reciprocal of the measured curve. The control range in each band is divided into 25 steps, which can be spread across a range of either ±6 or ±12 dB. JVC's more conventional ten-band SEA-66 ($300) also has a built-in pink-noise generator and supports three tape decks with dubbing (the SEA-M9 accepts two).

AudioSource has improved a popular model, now called the EQ-One Series II ($430). It has ten octave-band controls per channel and includes a built-in pink-noise generator and a calibration microphone for use as a real-time analyzer. A similar equalizer, without mike or generator, is available as the EQ-Seven ($250), with dual inputs and an equalized-recording option. The RTA-One ($200) drops the other shoe, so to speak, by supplying a real-time analyzer comparable to that of the EQ-One but in a battery-portable package that contains a mike; optional accessories include the PNG-One pink-noise generator ($45), the RTA-One remote mike ($25), and an AC adapter ($13).

The ten-band Pioneer SG-50M ($260) includes a pink-noise generator, a mike, and a real-time analyzer. Similar in description, though with separate controls for each channel, is the VQ-130 ($270) from Vector Research, which also offers the ten-band VQ-110 at $110. Yamaha's GE-3 ($150) controls ten octave bands per channel and incorporates tape monitoring and equalization.

The complexity of the ongoing courtship between audio and video makes computer (or computerlike) control of multiple functions and processes particularly attractive. Meanwhile, there's the Sansui AV-77 ($350), which offers several kinds of switchers and processors in a single unit. It enables you to dub in either direction between two VCRs or to tape from a videotext or camera, for which a ten-pin connector and microphone jack are provided. Duplicate VCR B jacks on the front panel simplify temporary connections. You can adjust processing to control sharpness, detail, hue, and 'solarization' (edge emphasis with reduced detail within picture areas). Picture and sound can be faded in or out or crossfaded with vertical or horizontal wipes. Furthermore, stereo can be synthesized from mono audio, and DBX noise reduction can be applied to audio for recording.

Whew!

DBX, too, is entering the video field with three TV-sound processors, each designed to sell for about $150. The SX-10 Dynamics Enhancer is an expander that addresses the whole dynamic range—making crescendos louder and pianissimos softer. The SX-20 Impact Restorer expands attacks to refresh the punch squeezed out by broadcast limiters, and the SX-30 adds dynamic boost at low frequencies.

The company's regular audio line has a number of new products as well. The DBX 120X Subharmonic Synthesizer ($250) includes a built-in crossover and level control for a subwoofer and is said to restore an octave in the deep bass that is normally sacrificed by recording processes. Updating previous dynamic-range expanders, the 1BX Series III ($230) and 3BX Series III ($600) both offer impact restoration on transients. For simultaneous DBX encoding and decoding plus disc decoding, there's the rackmount 224X ($250). (Though not strictly signal processors, two new DBX Program-Route Selectors are available for recordists who have multiple processors: the 200X ($130) and the 400X ($230).

Technics, whose audio-video receivers are documented elsewhere, has introduced an outboard stereo TV decoder, the SH-4090. Compatible with the Technics AV receivers or with TV receivers or tuners having pin-jack multiplex outputs, it is fitted with tape-monitor jacks.

Robert Long
TAPE EQUIPMENT

The Marantz PMD-430 is a standout in cassette decks this year. A battery-operable portable, it gives you three-head monitoring, DBX and Dolby B, plus a three-position mike attenuator control. Line-level inputs and outputs can make it part of your home system as well.

The BYWORD in cassette recorders this year is features—user conveniences that simplify everything from finding a musical selection to calibrating a deck for a specific tape. Most decks, for example, now have some sort of SEEK function and a RECORDING MUTE to lay down the necessary blank interval. You’ll also discover that many high-end models, particularly bidirectional ones, are equipped with BLANK SKIP (handy for going from the end of Side 1 to the beginning of Side 2 no matter how the tape is laid out) or BLANK CUE (to facilitate adding more material to a partially recorded tape). MEMORY RE-WIND and even MEMORY PLAY appear on all models in some lines, though you may not find them in rock-bottom budget decks. And REPEAT is only a little less commonplace.

Dolby B noise reduction appears in every deck that harbors any pretense to high fidelity status, and is assumed in all the product descriptions that follow. The majority of models also include Dolby C, and a growing number (usually at fairly high prices) have DBX instead of or in addition to Dolby C. Before the Summer Consumer Electronics Show, I would have bet on the Dolby HX Pro headroom-extension system as a hot feature for 1985, but it has attracted just a few adherents. Automatic tape-type selection (using the keyways in the cassette shell) seems to be supplanting manual selectors, except in models occupying the two price extremes—budget units and perfectionist decks (in which automatic selection is sometimes accompanied by a manual override to accommodate the increasingly rare cassettes that don’t have the appropriate keyways).

Dual-transport dubbing decks continue to multiply. High-speed (usually 3½ ips) duplication is fairly established, though a few companies are going for the better performance of real-time dubbing. Performance has also become a hot topic with the bidirectional decks. Manufacturers seem increasingly concerned with mechanisms that assure correct (and therefore consistent) head azimuth in both directions of tape travel and with how quickly they turn the tape around (determining both how much music you’ll lose in recording and how big a pause you’ll experience in playback). The term “quick reverse” usually specifies that the deck senses the leader at the end of the cassette and changes direction while the heads are still in contact with the magnetic pigment.

BLANK CUE, hands down the most consistent innovator in the field of automatic-reverse decks, is adding three cassette models with quick reverse in both recording and playback, all with Dolby C. The GX-R66 ($420) offers DBX noise reduction and Super GX twin-field glass-and-crystal-ferrite heads, plus a host of convenience features. The simpler GX-R55 ($360) shares the Super GX heads, while the HX-44 ($300) uses a high-density permalloy head material. For the budget-minded, there are the unidirectional HX-A2 ($160), also with Dolby C, and the HX-A1 ($140).

Teac has two new unidirectional lines. The Proprietary Series ranges from the V-518X ($340), with Dolby C and DBX noise reduction, to the V-316 ($235), with Dolby B only. In between are the V-515X ($307), with DBX, and the V-416C ($270), with Dolby C. The same four noise-reduction combinations are represented in the Standard Series, which ranges from the V-530X ($350) to the V-330 ($200). There are two quick-reverse models in Teac’s Audio Specialist Series—the R-999X ($530), with dual direct-drive motors, and the R-777X ($395). Joining them are two consumer open-reel models. Both the X-2000 ($850), with closed-loop dual-capstan drive, and the bidirectional X-2000R ($900) are equipped with DBX I (the professional version, and therefore lacking disc decoding) as their only noise reduction system and with random-access and repeat functions.

Tandberg, which is expected to announce a professional open-reel model this fall, is offering two professional versions of the TCD-3014 cassette deck (see test report, August). Among other things, both have ultra-accurate time indexing and an optional serial computer-interface port for use in automated radio stations. The TCD-910 is the recording deck; the TCD-911 is its playback-only counterpart.

Akai GX-R66
Proton 720
JVC VR9

Sony’s top two introductions—the unidirectional TC-FX705 ($360) and quick-reverse TC-FX707R ($430)—include an audio signal processor with automatic attenuator and a level monitor that sets and
Despite the fact that the Concord HPL-532 is ingeniously designed to fit everybody's car, it's definitely not for everybody. As Stereo Review said, Concord "...is truly an audiophile's car stereo."

And what makes it so different?

**4-GANG FM TUNER**

For extraordinarily clear FM reception, the Concord HPL-532 has an exclusive 4-gang digital tuner that provides exceptional station sensitivity & selectivity.

And to make selecting your favorite stations even easier it has a 10-station preset memory.

But, as Concord's 22 years of innovative stereo design would lead you to expect, that is only the beginning.

**DC SERVO DRIVE MOTOR**

We've designed an exclusive electronically controlled DC servo tape transport drive.

The result? Superior speed accuracy, lower wow and flutter, and over double the motor life.

**AMORPHOUS CORE TAPE HEAD**

We've also engineered a new match-phased amorphous core tape head design, which means a revolutionary improvement in tape frequency response out to 20,000 Hz.

It's an improvement you'll have to hear to believe.

**TWO WAY/FOUR WAY AMPLIFIERS**

And wait until you hear the authentic high fidelity sound reproduction of the HPL-532. It delivers an impressive 12 watts per channel into 4 ohms 30-20,000 Hz with less than 0.8% THD.

In addition, it can deliver 5 watts per channel into each speaker of a four speaker system, because of an ingenious two way/four way configuration and a front/rear low level fader.

All in all it's the greatest full bandwidth power at low distortion you can get in a car stereo without add-on amplifiers.

**OTHER IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES**

With its exclusive signal processor circuitry the HPL-532 will easily handle anything you want to plug into it.

Like Concord's Dolby* C. Or dbx** adaptors.

Even imagers or equalizers.

And with lighted switches and function indicators the Concord HPL-532 is as easy to play at night as it is to play in the daytime.

And because of its front load mechanism, it's even easier to load.

All things considered the Concord HPL-532 is an extraordinary car stereo.

Of course at around $600 it's not inexpensive.

But when you add up all its features you might say this. The difference is worth the difference.

*Dolby is the registered trademark of Dolby Labs.
**dbx is the registered trademark of dbx.

CONCORD

A PENRIL COMPANY

6025 Yolanda Avenue, Tarzana, California 91356

(818) 344-9335

**SPECIFICATIONS:**

- **Tuner Section**
  - Sensitivity: 30dB
  - Quieting: 1.0 Microvolts
  - 11.2dBf
  - Stereo separation: min. 35dB
  - Frequency responses: ± 2dB, 30-16,000 Hz

- **Tape Section**
  - Frequency response: -±-2dB, Standard tape: 30-15,000 Hz, Metal tape: 30-20,000 Hz, Wow & Flutter: 0.08% WRMS

- **Amplifier Section**
  - Maximum power: 25 watts/ch.
  - Two-way power: 12 watts min.
  - RMS per channel into 4 ohms, 30-20,000 Hz with 0.8 THD max.

© Concord Systems, Inc.
displays the recording level in 1-dB steps. The Sony decks are also equipped with Dolby C and a memory system that will store two sets of data on five parameters for each of four tape types. Both Dolby circuits appear as well in the undirectional TC-F310 ($190) and in two moderate-price bidirectional decks: the $280 TC-FX510R, with a Laser Amorphous head, and the $230 TC-FX410R, with automatic reverse in both recording and playback and switchable reversing before the end of the tape. All three are designed to work with any of several Sony remote controls.

Aiwa incorporates what it calls the "world's fastest" quick-reverse mechanism (0.2 second for turnaround) into the three-head AD-R650 ($395) and the two-head AD-R550 ($300), both with Dolby C and RX Pro headroom-extension circuits. Technics' new flagship is the $850 RS-B100. It features a closed-loop dual-capsule drive, a separate monitor playback head, and tape calibration with a built-in oscillator, plus Dolby C and DBX. Two inexpensive models also offer both noise reducers: the RS-B50 ($230), with Technics' AX amorphous (noncrystalline) alloy heads, and the RS-B50 ($230), with Tech-

new JVC line. A feature I hadn't encountered before is "car equalization," designed to optimize the bass response of recordings for car acoustics. It's built into Yamaha's K-600 ($380), along with bidirectional recording, the same sendust head used in the company's top decks, and Dolby C. Yamaha's two other entries are even more modestly priced. The K-520 ($300) offers Dolby C, a sendust head, a real-time counter, and a number of convenience features. The simpler K-320 ($220) has a hard pernalloy head.

Onkyo includes Dolby C in all its new cassette decks. The TA-2090 ($800) in the Esoteric Separate Series also has DBX noise reduction and Dolby HX Pro headroom extension, plus a three-motor direct-drive transport with dual caps and the company's Automatic Accubias tape-matching circuit. Manual Accubias is built into the TA-2056 ($395), a three-motor, three-head model. The automatic-reverse TA-R33 ($315) is offered in both black and silver finishes, as are two unidirectional models—the TA-2036 ($260) and TA-2026 ($210).

Among the Computer Direct Line recorders from SAE is a rack-mount model, the C-101 ($650), with three heads and a manual two-tone bias and EQ adjustment system. Luxman's two additions have both Dolby options. They are the K-240 ($300), with various convenience features and a fine bias adjustment for tape matching, and the K-220 ($200).

Head azimuth can be adjusted individually for each direction of tape travel in two Hitachi automatic-reverse decks. The D-X10 ($660) includes an automatic tape-matching system, a brushless, coreless, slotless DC direct-drive motor, and separate, titanium-coated recording and playback head elements. It and the simpler D-X6 ($290) have Dolby C. The undirectional D-E14 ($170) is equipped with Dolby C, too, and the D-E12 ($170) is one of the few models to sport large VU meters.

Marantz builds all three noise-reduction options into its top model, the automatic-reverse SD-440 ($530). The DS-340 ($280) also is bidirectional but omits DBX, as does the SD-242 ($190). A budget unit, the SD-142, costs $130. I was most intrigued, however, by the latest in the Marantz series of AC/DC three-head stereo portables—the PDM-430 ($495), with DBX and Dolby B, fine bias adjustment, and pitch control. It weighs 3/4 pounds and is about the size of a hardbound book. A NiCad battery pack, RB-430, is available for $50. Dolby Laboratories has been working with NAD on a user-adjustable equalizer to tweak the top two octaves of response before Dolby decoding in cassette playback. This deck-based tone control will enable you to compensate for a variety of things that can make a recording sound dull—from azimuth misalignment to what might be called "magnetic fatigue" of stressed tapes. In the meantime, NAD has introduced the Model 6050C deck ($240), with Dolby C and bias adjustment.

For a moderate-price dubbing deck, the Pioneer CT-1050W ($300) is unusual in offering a pitch control in the playback transport. It and the CT-501 ($160) have Dolby C. The simplest new Pioneer is the CT-301 ($135); Sherwood's budget entry is the S-90 ($150). New models from Fisher are the automatic-reverse CR-277 ($250) and the CR-27 ($130), both with Dolby C.

Proton enters the cassette deck market this year with the Dolby C-equipped Model 720 ($240). A totally revamped line from Vector Research includes the VCC-650 ($450), a three-motor, three-head deck with a built-in five-band recording/playback equalizer. The automatic-reverse VCX-450 ($330) and the VCX-250 ($190) complete the line, which offers Dolby C throughout. Rotel is back, with the RD-860 ($300) and RD-850 ($200)—both with Dolby C. Sanyo's new premium line, Ultrim (yes, that's spelled right!), includes three bidirectional and four unidirectional models—the latter ranging from the RCD-61 ($270) to the RDC-11 ($150), all with Dolby C and all but the 11 with DBX as well. The top reversing deck is the RDR-81 ($330), with Dolby C and DBX; the other two are the RDR-51 ($220), with Dolby C, and the RDR-31 ($170). A dual-transport Ultrim, the $220 RDW-201, also has Dolby C.

Robert Long

Blank Tape

IN AUDIO CASSETTES, Sony's changes are the most sweeping. AHF is discontinued, leaving HF and HS-S (which replace LNX and BHF, respectively) as Sony's Type 1 (terrace) offerings. In Type 2 ("chrome") cassettes, UCX and UCX-S have undergone minor reformulations, but remain basically unaltered. And metal C-90s, dropped some time ago, are again available. Fuji has reformulated FR-11, A Type 2 tape that uses the company's Beridox particle. Altogether new is GT-11, a Type 2 version of the GT cassettes that Fuji has designed specifically...
Staying ahead of the competition in auto-reversing cassette decks has been an AKAI tradition for the past 14 years. Now we’re introducing the all-new GX-R99, a deck that has so many advanced features you’d have to buy six other auto-reversing decks to get them all.

Features like our Computer Record Level Processing System, that sets a tape’s bias, equalization and tape sensitivity, measures a tape’s MOL, then sets the optimum recording level. A Spectrum Analyzer encompassing MOL display, which displays frequency response with greater accuracy. AKAI’s exclusive Auto Monitor. And our super GX heads. So super, they’re guaranteed for 17 1/2 years of continuous play.

It’s easy to see why the GX-R99, just one of four great AKAI auto-reversing decks, is called the Dragon Slayer. And to find out why it’s getting more praise than all the other guys combined, write to AKAI, P.O. Box 6010, Dept. H9, Compton, CA 90224.
for car stereo use. Both the shells and the magnetic coating are engineered with high temperatures in mind.

TDK's Type 2 metal—a tape whose metal alloy "pigment" is formulated for use with chrome and ferricobalt bias and recording EQ, giving it exceptional headroom—has been renamed HX-S. This shift from its original HX designation avoids any confusion with Dolby's HX or HX Pro headroom-extension circuits.

Another new group of cassettes is being offered for portable VCRs—separate recorders or integrated camcorders. These blanks presumably use high-quality oxide (so you can dub tapes with minimum picture-quality loss), long-life tape (so you can reuse the cassettes), and extra means to inhibit the accumulation of dust and grime (because you'll be taking the tapes into the field). The 3M people say they have addressed all of these factors in Scotch Camera Cassettes, which use the company's HGX Plus formulation, with an antistatic back-coating, wound into high-impact antistatic shells. The cassettes have red doors and hubs (to identify them as special) and are packed in a dust-resistant plastic storage "album." (So far, only the most popular lengths—T-120s and L-750s—have been announced.) Sony is also taking this approach with its Betacam cassettes.

Many manufacturers are branding some tapes with the term "Hi-Fi" to suggest that they are engineered for VHS or Beta Hi-Fi recorders. JVC's newest Dynarec videotapes, for example, are called "VHS Hi-Fi" and use a titanium oxide surface coating that is said to act as an antistatic agent, to aid in keeping heads clean, and to improve overall durability of the tape. Five lengths are available, from T-30 to T-120. Similarly, 3M has Scotch HGX Plus Hi-Fi, Fuji has Super HG Hi-Fi, and Memtek has Memorex HG Master, which is being marketed as a Hi-Fi tape. As far as I know, the only major company to introduce a new superpremium videocassette not tied to a concept of professionalism, portability, or Hi-Fi performance is Fuji, with Super XG. Undoubtedly a high-performance formulation, its name at least bucks the trend.

Robert Long

Though most Japanese companies continue to refine direct-drive turntables, Yamaha breaks with tradition in the PF-1000. A belt-drive design with a softly sprung suspension, the table comes with a two-tube arm—one pipe each for the left- and right-channel signal leads.
Are you looking for imported, hard-to-find, or rare recordings? Your search ends here!
The Electronics Show was in the $100 to $200 bracket. The Sony PS-LX55 Mk. II offers automatic disc-size selection for $165. Many new models in this price range have linear-tracking arms set into the lid—the so-called "clam-shell" configuration first introduced by Technics in 1980. Of these, the Sherwood ST-900 ($170) includes programmable track selection and infrared disc detection; the Akai AP-M33S ($200) has a microprocessor-controlled direct-drive motor and automatic size/speed selection; and the Technics SL-J2 ($200) is a 12-inch-square linear tracker with a scan/search feature that plays the first few seconds of each cut until you find the one you want.

The P-Mount cartridge body seems to be gradually taking over in all but the high end of the market. Most new integrated turntables, including units from Pioneer, Kenwood, Akai, and Yamaha, are either built for P-Mount cartridges or come with an adapter for them. And if the adapter isn't included with the turntable, it may be supplied with the cartridge, as is the case with Stanton's new line of P-Mount pickups.

One of this year's popular features used to be available only as an after-market accessory—a clamp designed to keep the record in intimate contact with the turntable mat. Clamping the record is supposed to deaden both external acoustic feedback and any vibrations generated in the vinyl by the stylus itself as it traces the groove. Most clamps are simply cylindrical weights that sit on the label of the record. In the past, some heavy ones caused concern about the possibility of excessive platter bearing wear. But when the weight is supplied by the manufacturer, you can be sure the turntable is built to take it.

The most successful American turntables have always been belt-drive units equipped with a softly sprung subchassis carrying the platter and tonearm. The big Japanese companies, on the other hand, have tended to favor direct-drive motors and rather stiff suspensions. Now from Yamaha comes a pair of softly sprung belt-drive models, the PF-800 ($450) and PF-1000 ($650). These are strictly manual units except for an end-of-side arm lift. Both include disc clamps, a cartridge-alignment grid molded into the underside of the turntable mat, and a twin-pipe tonearm in which each tube carries the signal leads from only one channel.

Harman Kardon's belt-drive models have been upgraded this year. The T-65C ($575) comes with a disc clamp and has a new tapered tonearm with a weight-and-wire antiskating mechanism. A control knob enables you to add an additional 100 or 200 picofarads (pF) to the signal cables' 70-pF capacitance. Kyocera is adding three belt-drive tables with softly sprung subchassis. The PL-910 has a solid ceramic platter and costs $2,000 without arm; the others are the PL-701 and the PL-601 ($450 and $350, respectively, including tonearm). Micro-Seiki's BL-61, a belt-drive unit with a four-point floating suspension, sells for $500. Walker's CI-61 ($180 without arm, $330 with the company's own arm) is a very compact table whose subchassis—except for the arm-mounting platform—is entirely contained within its 12-inch cylindrical base.

Some Japanese manufacturers are still refining direct-drive designs. Denon's DP-61F ($500) has a high-torque AC motor and a servo-controlled warp-fighting tonearm. Sansui's "synchrovisor" technology, in which a separate rotor and motor cancel the inertia of the speed corrections applied to the main platter, once required an unusually deep turntable base. The company's new XP-99 offers the synchrotor feature in a table of normal depth at the reduced price of $400. ADS's new Atelier Series model, the European-designed P-4 ($500), is a direct-drive unit with three motors—one for the platter and one each for cueing and horizontal arm movement. All controls are outside the cover.

Cartridge introductions have definitely slowed down, though things are still bubbling along in the upper price bracket. Linn showed its Karma low-output moving-coil pickup ($725). Audioquest has a new line, ranging in price from the AQM-1 ($95), a moving-magnet model, to the AQM-7 ($500), which has a solid sapphire cantilever. Mission's new Solitaire cartridge is a moving-magnet design with an elliptical stylus ($999).

Dynavector has added the 17-D2MR (the "MR" denotes a Micro-Ridge stylus) with a diamond cantilever for $480, as well as a high-output moving-coil model, the DV-10X4 ($160). The new Alpha 2 low-output moving-coil pickup from Monster Cable ($675) is also equipped with a Micro-Ridge stylus. ADC's latest is the TRX-3 ($300), a fixed-coil design with tripod armature and tapered beryllium cantilever. And Audio-Technica is bringing out the 200 Universal Series of cartridges, which are compatible with either P-Mount or standard arms, at prices from $80-$135.

E. Brad Meyer
Save up to $25 during the Shure 60th Anniversary Rebate Sale.

Buy a genuine Shure cartridge or replacement stylus between September 1 and October 31, 1984 and get a hefty cash rebate direct from our factory. Just supply the information requested below, mail it to Shure and earn up to a $25 rebate on a quality phono cartridge — up to $10 on a stylus.

A Shure cartridge is the best investment you can make to improve the sound of your system. And a Shure replacement stylus will reduce record wear, extending record life. Remember, with Shure, you're getting 60 years of audio experience. Get all the details on this offer at a Shure dealer near you or write Shure Rebate Offer, 222 Hartrey Ave., Evanston, IL 60204.

### Save $10 to $25 on a quality Shure phono cartridge.

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### Save up to $10 on a genuine Shure replacement stylus.

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Earn up to a $25 rebate during the Shure 60th Anniversary cartridge and stylus sale.

To receive your rebate on selected Shure phono cartridges and replacement styli, send: (1) your dated sales receipt (non-returnable), (2) the complete outer carton from your Shure cartridge or stylus, and (3) this completed request to: Shure Rebate Offer – Dept. 63, 222 Hartrey Avenue, Evanston, Illinois 60204.

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Offer valid only on purchase made between September 1, 1984 and October 31, 1984. All requests must be postmarked by November 15, 1984. Limit of one rebate per household and/or consumer regardless of number of Shure cartridges or styli purchased. This is a consumer rebate offer only. Shure dealers, companies and employees of Shure and their advertising agencies, distributors and retailers are not eligible. This offer may not be used in conjunction with any other rebate from Shure. Shure is not responsible for lost or misdirected mail. Offer good only on purchases made in U.S.A. Void where taxed or prohibited by law. Allow 6-8 weeks for delivery of check.

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HF 9/84
LOUD SPEAKERS

CHECKING OUT NEW loudspeakers at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show was both interesting and frustrating. The real surprise (as always) was how many demonstrations actually sounded good despite the variable acoustics of hotel rooms and exhibit halls and the often appallingly high background noise from air conditioning equipment—not to mention other speaker manufacturers in the vicinity.

An obvious trend toward smaller models derives much of its impetus from the recent approval of stereo TV broadcasting. Because most people don’t have a lot of extra space near their television sets, TV speakers must be small while maintaining reasonable bass extension, output, and sensitivity. Satellite/subwoofer systems are well suited to these requirements, and new ones are available from Desktop Systems and Bozak, whose three-piece MSS-1000 sells for $950.

To overcome space limitations while producing a stereo image that’s comparable in size to the picture, many people will want their TV speakers right next to their sets. But the magnets in many high-quality speakers are strong enough to smear the color in the picture. One way out of this problem that doesn’t compromise performance is to install a supplementary magnet assembly on each driver, thereby canceling its external field. Three companies have so far adopted this approach: Boston Acoustics, with a magnetically shielded version of its A-40; Polk Audio, whose VS models are built to complement the dimensions of 25-19- and 12-inch video monitors; and B&W, which placed a monitor between a pair of its new VM-1s ($150), one with compensating magnets and one without, to show the effectiveness of the shielding.

Many other companies introduced small speakers not directly oriented to video. Fourier Systems’ Model 44 ($350 per pair) is reported to deliver “an honest 67 Hz,” a refreshingly conservative spec. The new 30B from Acoustic Research is available in bookshelf or floor-standing versions ($215 and $230, respectively). And Tannoy’s smallest system carries an incongruous name, the Titan ($260 per pair). But the prize for the most charmingly eccentric monikers goes to Tannoy’s new line of larger speakers: the Surrey Series. Each model is named after a city from Surrey County in England—Esher, Dorking, Chertsey, Bradley, and Albury. Prices range from $850 to $2,000 per pair.

The nearly universal claim of “digital-readiness” in loudspeakers nowadays refers most-likely to higher sensitivity (“efficiency”) and greater power-handling capability. To provide better heat dissipation, American Acoustic Laboratories, Sherwood, Mission, Infinity, and B&W—to name but a few—are using ferrofluid in tweeter or midrange magnet assemblies for the first time. Infinity’s EMIM midrange drivers and EMIT tweeters have lighter diaphragms for greater efficiency, and the company’s new woofer is equipped with a longer voice coil for greater control at long excursions.

Of course, you can always get additional output by making the cabinet bigger and the drivers more numerous. Such is the case with the B&W Model 808, and is said to be capable of producing an undistorted output of more than 120 dB—a capability the company insisted, with only mild apology, on demonstrating to the press. The 180-pound system has two woofers, two midrange drivers, and one
HEAR ALL OF THE MUSIC AND NONE OF THE TAPE

SWITCH TO BASF CHROME AUDIO TAPE

THE WORLD'S QUIetest TAPE

If you won't settle for anything less than pure music, accept nothing less than BASF Pure Chrome audio tape. Unlike ferric oxide tapes, BASF Pure Chrome is made of perfectly shaped chromium dioxide particles. And the exclusive Chrome formulation delivers the lowest background noise of any tape in the world, as well as outstanding sensitivity in the critical high frequency range. And this extraordinary tape is designed especially for the Type II Chrome Bias position. So make sure you're hearing all of the music and none of the tape. Make the switch today to the world's quietest tape. BASF Chrome.
controls both the frequency response and the imaging of the system, which maintains its tonal balance and stereo image almost regardless of where you sit in the listening room.

Increasing numbers of Japanese speaker systems now sport flat woofers and midrange drivers, some of which are round—like those in the Technics SB-M3 ($900) and the smaller SB-M5 ($400)—while others are square, like those in the new models shown by Sony and Mitsubishi.

Vivid and precise stereo imaging is one of the hallmarks of a fine speaker system, and several manufacturers are promoting their designs on that basis. Chief among them is DBX, whose Soundfield One has 14 drivers per enclosure in an elaborated phased array. A separate signal-processing box controls both the frequency response and the imaging of the system, which maintains its tonal balance and stereo image almost regardless of where you sit in the listening room. The complete setup sells for $2,500. At $300, the new Ohm Walsh 104aB offers the smallest and cheapest version of the company's omnidirectional Walsh driver technology, and Polk Audio now has a bookshelf model in its line of separation-enhancing SDA speakers, the Compact Reference System ($400). Cerwin-Vega's new 2000 Series speakers (three models from $400 to $700) have vertical midrange arrays for wide horizontal and narrow vertical dispersion.

Some high-end companies are following the trend to small speakers, though in the case of Apogee Acoustics, "small" is strictly relative. Its all-ribbon Scintilla stands 57 inches high, weighs 140 pounds, and costs $1,750 a side. A new company called Dynam is importing a series of speakers using corrugated flat-panel magnetic drivers, named Dynapleats. Prices range from $600 to $5,000 for the pair.

Many speakers can use a little assistance in the deep bass, and you can add extra low-end capability with a variety of separate subwoofers. This season you can try the new Janis System 3 ($500) or the Shahinian Acoustics Diapason ($350) on up to the servo-controlled Velodyne ($3,850, including a 350-watt power amp).

The KEF 104/2 ($800) is an entirely different speaker from its immediate predecessor, the 104AB. Frequencies above 150 Hz are handled by a vertical array consisting of a small dome tweeter mounted between two identical midrange cones. Their specialty contoured and damped subenclosure is resiliently mounted to the front of the main cabinet, which contains two upward-facing bass drivers, each loaded by its own sealed subenclosure—one at the bottom of the cabinet, the other at the top. The woofers radiate into a central cavity connected to the outside world by a 5-inch tuned circular port, whose dispersion matches that of the midrange drivers. KEF says that this novel arrangement combines the advantages of acoustic suspension and bass reflex designs while avoiding their drawbacks, yielding extended bass response with low distortion and high efficiency.

Dramatically Different From KEF

The in-line configuration of the bass drivers requires that they be driven out of phase with each other, so as to create a sort of bellows effect within the reflex chamber. (Otherwise, they would move in the same direction at the same time and there would be no change in air pressure within the enclosure and thus no output.) KEF has taken further advantage of this aspect of the design by connecting the magnet assemblies of the two woofers with a metal bar, so that inertial forces are canceled instead of being transferred to the cabinet and radiated into the room. The company contends that such spurious radiation is the source of the "boxy" sound associated with most conventional speakers. Another, less obvious innovation is embodied in the crossover, which is designed to present an almost pure, nonreactive 4-ohm load, making the 104/2 loudspeakers unusually easy for an amplifier to drive.
THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SOUND NEXT TO SILENCE
NOW REALIZED ON ECM COMPACT DISCS

Available from ECM Records on compact disc:

Chick Corea
*Children's Songs* 2 25006

Chick Corea and Gary Burton
*In Concert, Zurich, October 26, 1979* 2 1182

Charlie Haden
*Ballad Of The Fallen* 2 23749

Keith Jarrett
*Koln Concert* 2 1064
*My Song* 2 1115
*Changes* 2 25067

Pat Metheny
*80/81* 2 2480
*Offramp* 2 1216

Pat Metheny & Lyle Mays
*As Falls Wichita, So Falls Wichita Falls* 2 1160

Oregon
*Oregon* 2 23796

Steve Reich
*Music For 18 Musicians* 2 1129

*Contains "Addendum," written for piano (Corea), violin (Ida Kavafian) and cello (Fred Sherry). Available only on CD format.*

ECM

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NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Digital Audio
Video
Computers
Software Reviews

VIDEO FOR A NEW AGE

WHETHER YOU'RE A videophile or just a casual viewer, 1985 should prove a very good year. That's the inescapable conclusion from my inspection of the video offerings presented by nearly 200 manufacturers at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show. It's impossible to mention, much less detail, all the goodies introduced at the McCormick Place convention center in Chicago, but here's a quick rundown of the most significant new products and trends for this year and beyond.

Most of us covering the video scene were delighted at the number of VHS Hi-Fi videocassette recorders on display. Back when Beta Hi-Fi stole the headlines with PCM-like audio performance in what had been a decidedly low-fi medium, VHS suppliers churned out a profusion of announcements heralding the imminent appearance of a rival version. Well, it took more than a year and a half for JVC, Matsushita, etc., to catch up, but for VHS fans the wait was worth it. [For a complete buying guide to the new Hi-Fi VCRs, see "Super Stereo VCRs" in last month's HIGH FIDELITY.]

However, none of this year's Hi-Fi VCRs (VHS or Beta) are equipped to decode multiplex TV audio broadcasts. The FCC's approval of the Zenith/DBX system (stereo plus a separate mono channel) came too late for manufacturers to incorporate the appropriate decoders in their designs. Some decks, however, are equipped with multiplex output jacks, so it should be possible to retrofit them for stereo reception. A newcomer to the VCR business, Harman Kardon, was the only manufacturer to announce that its VHS Hi-Fi deck (scheduled for delivery in November) will contain a multiplex decoder.

Unfortunately, prerecorded VHS Hi-Fi software is still scarce. As of this writing, CBS/Fox is the sole major supplier of VHS Hi-Fi films and concert programs. Rumors abound as to the reasons. Some contend that the original duplication equipment supplied by Matsushita was defective; others claim that duplicators resisted switching to the higher-quality tape that Hi-Fi recording demands. Not to worry, though: The software floodgates are bound to open with a torrent of new releases.

In fact, if you own a Beta Hi-Fi VCR (for which there is an abundance of software), you'll be happy to learn that the prices of prerecorded cassettes may take a nose dive this year. The reason is Sprinter, a high-speed duplication system developed by Sony that enables a full-length feature film to be copied in 1.5 minutes (compared to the current real-time dubbing process that forces duplicators to operate at numbingly inefficient rates). The system gains its speed from a contact "printing" process in which a mirror-image master tape is drawn across a continuous reel of blank tape. The video information is transferred to the blank tape via magnetic induction. After the dubbing is complete, all that's left is to load the tape into shells. Will Sprinter work for VHS as well? Sony isn't pushing the idea, but the technology may be transportable.

Actually, video dubbing isn't the only thing that Sprinter could be used for. It's no secret that Sony is promoting the concept of rotary-head digital audio cassette decks (as opposed to the multitrack fixed-head designs favored by some other Japanese companies). An adequate supply of prerecorded digital audio cassettes would be crucial to the success of the format. Sony's proposed system, which is based on a microcassette-size tape capable of storing three hours of digitally encoded music, would be a nightmare for duplicators forced to make copies in real time. Sprinter, however, might cut the dubbing process to a couple of minutes (maybe less).

But back to video—specifically, stereo broadcast TV, which has all the hallmarks of a typical chicken-and-egg situation. Consider the economic realities facing the broadcasting industry. Both ABC and NBC have announced their intention to begin multiplex broadcasts this year, mainly to take advantage of the third audio channel for second-language soundtracks. But all network fare is relayed to...
your antenna from local affiliates—most of whom keep a close eye on expenses, especially in small markets. It’s naive to assume that an affiliate would invest in the equipment to rebroadcast stereo TV programs unless he were sure there were enough stereo-ready sets out there to receive his signal.

But the stereo-ready sets introduced at the SCES are all top-of-the-line models—typically, 25-inch monitor/receivers, in which the additional expense of a built-in multiplex decoder accounts for just a small part of the total cost. Only when decoders start showing up in mass-market 19-inch receivers will the stage be set for wide-scale stereo-TV broadcasting.

Add-on decoders might become popular accessories next year, and so far General Electric, Zenith, and Sony have introduced such devices (which can be used only with receivers equipped with multiplex output jacks). Larry Schotz, the FM tuner designer responsible for groundbreaking audio receivers from NAD and Proton, has an idea for an outboard decoder that would not need any direct electrical connection to a TV receiver. His plan is to make use of the stray IF radiation generated by a typical TV tuner. The decoder would just have to be placed close enough to your TV set to get a strong re-radiated signal. Will it work? Schotz says that it does, but completion of his design will have to await the start of stereo broadcasts. Chicken and egg, did you say?

Portable camera-recorders (camcorders) using 8mm-wide tape were the big news at last January’s Consumer Electronics Show. Kodak garnered the lion’s share of publicity then for being the first to embrace the new format. RCA and GE were quick to follow suit, but by this CES the future of 8mm video seemed cloudy, indeed. GE and RCA publicly announced that they are temporarily shelving their plans to market 8mm camcorders, while Hitachi repeated its oft-heard complaint that the format is confusing and pointless. Polaroid’s demonstration of an 8mm system and Sony’s post-CES statement of its plans to introduce an 8mm camcorder only muddy the waters further. I suspect the situation will be clarified if and when Kodak’s camcorders come to market this fall.

One of the marvels of consumer electronics this fall was supposed to be DBS, or direct broadcasting to the home from high-power satellites. Home satellite reception has existed for the past five years, but it requires an investment of several thousand dollars for an antenna as much as 14 feet in diameter and complex receiving equipment. DBS, on the other hand, promised to provide subscribers with five or six satellite-relayed broadcasts receivable with roof-based dish antennas just 18 to 36 inches in diameter and costing $200 to $300.

A pilot project actually began last fall in Indiana, with Radio Shack stores selling small (in this case, four-foot) dishes to those subscribers who chose to buy them outright instead of renting equipment. United Satellite Communications, USC had hoped to extend its DBS coverage to the entire Northeast by this fall, and last year Toshiba, Panasonic, General Electric, and Uniden demonstrated DBS receiving gear at the CES.

Alas, at this show only Toshiba included DBS equipment in its exhibit. Uniden, whose two satellite receivers were said to be capable of processing both DBS and conventional satellite signals, didn’t mention the topic at all. And General Electric and Panasonic quietly dropped it from their high-tech product displays.

Less than two months before the SCES, RCA pulled the plug on its CED videodisc system. Though several software companies say they will continue to supply CED titles, CBS announced that it would no longer support the format. Laserdisc video, on the other hand, was very much in evidence.

Pioneer introduced a series of eight-inch discs intended primarily for music video programs. The eight-inchers will be offered through traditional music outlets and as fodder for a new generation of video jukeboxes. And speculation is rampant that the next generation of optical videodisc hardware will be capable of handling both sizes of videodiscs, as well as audio-only Compact Discs. Such combo players may be available next year.

Still too early to speak of as a trend, but interesting nonetheless, is the appearance of one-brand audio-video systems. Among these are JVC’s XM-900AV Crossmedia and Pioneer Video’s Foresight 700, each containing a video monitor and associated video and audio components in a single rack setup. Prices for such integrated systems can be as high as $2,500, depending on the ingredients. Fully loaded, Pioneer’s Foresight 700 includes a 25-inch color monitor and associated video and audio components in a single rack setup. Prices for such integrated systems can be as high as $2,500, depending on the ingredients. Fully loaded, Pioneer’s Foresight 700 includes a 25-inch color monitor and associated video and audio components in a single rack setup. Prices for such integrated systems can be as high as $2,500, depending on the ingredients. Fully loaded, Pioneer’s Foresight 700 includes a 25-inch color monitor and associated video and audio components...

High-speed videotape duplication has been the holy grail of the video industry for years. Now Sony says that its Sprinter machine, which uses a magnetic version of contact printing, can copy a full-length movie in 1½ minutes. The production economies brought by such a system could mean lower prices for prerecorded fare in ’85.

William Mower
**RCA VKT-650 VHS HI-FI VCR**

RCA Selectavision VKT-650 VHS videocassette recorder, with one-year/eight-event tuner/timer, on-screen programming, wireless remote control, and VHS Hi-Fi stereo audio. Dimensions: 17 by 4½ inches (front panel), 14¾ inches deep plus clearance for connections. AC convenience outlets: one unswitched (300 watts max.). Price: $1,295. Warranty: "limited," one year parts, 90 days labor. Manufacturer: made in Japan for RCA Consumer Electronics, 600 N. Sherman Dr., Indianapolis, Ind. 46201.

RCA'S TOP-OF-THE-LINE, front-loader is the most feature-laden VCR we've reviewed to date. To start with, there's VHS Hi-Fi recording (in stereo, of course) as well as edge-track (linear) recording for compatibility with older decks. Although the edge track records only in mono, RCA says that the VKT-650 reproduces stereo edge-track recordings in stereo, so nothing is lost if you have a library of Dolby-encoded VHS stereo tapes.

It records and plays at all three VHS speeds (SP, LP, and EP) with a full complement of special effects that work best in the EP mode but function reasonably well in SP and are by and large useful even in the intermediate LP mode (although RCA makes no claim to this virtue). Besides AUDIO DUB, which enables you to overlay the audio edge track with a new recording, there's VIDEO DUB, which permits you to rerecord the video without affecting the audio edge track. (Because the VHS Hi-Fi information is recorded on...
the video track, it's not possible to rerecord video information without removing the Hi-Fi audio or to rerecord Hi-Fi audio without erasing the picture.

You can search forward or backward for a particular program by pressing fast forward or rewind from stop, or, if you have the index feature on during recording, proceed to the beginning of the next (or current) program at even higher speed by pressing fast forward or rewind from stop. This feature works by recording a special cue signal at the start of each recording session. When the cue signal is detected, the deck enters forward search for about ten seconds so you can check the program, then races to the next one. When you find the selection you want, you can stop the search by pressing play. For the less adventurous, there's also a memory rewind that returns to counter "9999" and stops.

You'll search in vain for a conventional tape counter, however: the VKT-650 has its own microprocessor and video display system that presents such information on the monitor. There is a front-panel clock, but even this information is presented on the monitor as well. In fact, you set the clock and program timer with the infrared remote control rather than with front-panel buttons. (The VKT-650 comes with its own remote, but RCA says that the Digital Command Center included with its ColorTrak 2000 monitor/receivers can serve the same purpose, so if you have an all-RCA system, you need juggle only one controller.) Pressing program displays a computer-like "menu" on the screen. It gives you five choices: clock set, normal program, daily program, weekly program, or program review. Press the appropriate number on the ten-key pad, and you're in business.

For example, pressing "1" (clock set) changes the display to "CLOCK SET TIME — — — " Enter the current time via the keypad, and the display indicates the time and asks whether it is AM (1) or PM (2). Tell it, and it asks for "DATE — — — — " Enter the month, day, and year in numeric fashion, and the VCR figures out what day of the week it is and displays that as well! To end the clock-setting sequence, you press program again.

You program the VKT-650 for unattended recording in a similar manner, guided by a series of on-screen prompts. Selecting "2" from the main menu displays "NORMAL PROGRAM — PROGRAM 1 2 3 4 5 6 7" followed by the instruction "SELECT PROG NUMBER." When you have done this, the machine goes on to ask for the channel number, the start and end times, and finally the date of the program. It can store as many as eight selections over a period as great as a year. (If you program a date prior to the current date, the year will change automatically to the following one.) Daily program enables you to record the same program each day of the week (except Saturday and Sunday), while weekly program enables you to record the same program on a specific day of each week (including Saturday and Sunday) with a single entry. Program review displays each of your commands (starting with the lowest program number) for ten seconds, after which it steps on to the next. Clear enables you to correct an error or change the programming while timer sets the system for automatic turn-on; the system retains its memory for as long as 60 minutes in case of a power failure.

Whenever you press display, the mode, channel number, and tape position are superimposed on the top of the screen, while the date, day of the week, and time appear along the bottom for about ten seconds. In fact, whenever you press a major mode button, the new mode and tape position appear momentarily on the screen. You have several choices of how the tape position is displayed: by elapsed time from the beginning of the tape, time remaining, or counter number. Which will be displayed depends on how you've programmed the VCR. Counter switches the display from time to counter and vice versa. (Memory rewind functions only in the counter mode.) Time remains put the time remaining on the tape.

Topping off all this automation is a front-panel button labeled "XPR" that will turn off the VCR at a preselected time. Each press of the XPR button adds 30 minutes to the time remaining before turnoff, up to a maximum of four hours.

In addition to programming, the remote governs recording, playback, and other features of the VHS. VHS Hi-Fi record/play response is limited to 1 kHz in LP and EP modes, and to 1 kHz in SP mode. The automatic level control (ALC) produces 3 dB compression at 315 Hz. For VHS Hi-Fi, the 0-dB reference input level is the voltage required to produce 3 percent second harmonic distortion at 315 Hz. For standard audio recording mode, it is 10 dB above the voltage at which the automatic level control (ALC) produces 3 dB of second harmonic distortion at 315 Hz.

Laboratory data for High Fidelity's video equipment reports are supplied by Diversified Science Laboratories. Preparation is supervised by Michael Rigs, Peter Dobbins, and Edward J. Foster. All reports should be construed as applying to the specific samples tested. High Fidelity and Diversified Science Laboratories assume no responsibility for product performance or quality.

VCR SECTION

| CHANNEL SEPARATION (315 Hz, VHS Hi-Fi) | 61 dB |
| AUDIO S/N RATIO (re 0-dB output; R/P; A-weighted) | -84 dB |
| DISTORTION (THD at -10 dB input: 50 Hz to 5 kHz) | 0.9% |
| INDICATOR CALIBRATION (315 Hz, VHS Hi-Fi) | 44.5 dB |
| TYPICAL RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE | 3 dB |
| STANDARD RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE | 50 Hz to 5 kHz |
| VHS HI-FI RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE | 10 dB |
| VHS HI-FI RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE | 20 Hz to 20 kHz |
| VHS HI-FI RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE | 100 Hz to 20 kHz |
| VHS HI-FI RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE | 100 Hz to 20 kHz |
| VHS HI-FI RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE | 100 Hz to 20 kHz |
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| VHS HI-FI RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE | 100 Hz to 20 kHz |
| VHS HI-FI RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE | 100 Hz to 20 kHz |
| VHS HI-FI RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE | 100 Hz to 20 kHz |

*Not reliably measurable above 3 kHz in LP or 1 kHz in EP
NEW TECHNOLOGIES VIDEO

INDICATOR "BALLISTICS"
Response time 4.2 msec
Decay time 0.180 max
Overshoot +3 dB

FLUCTER (ANSI) weighted peak R/P

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>VHS Hi-Fi</th>
<th>Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EP</td>
<td>-0.1%</td>
<td>±0.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LP</td>
<td>-0.2%</td>
<td>±0.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>-0.5%</td>
<td>±0.01%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SENSITIVITY (for 0-dB output, 315 Hz)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VHS Hi-Fi</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard</td>
<td>0.51 mV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AUDIO OUTPUT LEVEL (from 0-dB input, 315 Hz)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VHS Hi-Fi</td>
<td>1.75 vohm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard</td>
<td>0.42 volt</td>
</tr>
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</table>

AUDIO INPUT IMPEDANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Line</td>
<td>68k ohms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike</td>
<td>7.4k ohms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MIKE INPUT OVERLOAD (1-kHz clipping) 38 mv

VIDEO RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SP</th>
<th>LP</th>
<th>EP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>at 500 kHz</td>
<td>-11/4 dB</td>
<td>-1/4 dB</td>
<td>-1 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at 1.5 MHz</td>
<td>-51/4 dB</td>
<td>-6 dB</td>
<td>-51/3 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at 2.5 MHz</td>
<td>-8 dB</td>
<td>-8 dB</td>
<td>-71/4 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at 3.0 MHz</td>
<td>-13 dB</td>
<td>-16 dB</td>
<td>-14 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at 3.5 MHz</td>
<td>-20 dB</td>
<td>-21 dB</td>
<td>-11 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at 4.2 MHz</td>
<td>11 dB</td>
<td>11 dB</td>
<td>11 dB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SHARPNESS CONTROL RANGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.5 to 4.2 MHz</td>
<td>no measurable effect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LUMINANCE LEVEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>2% high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LP</td>
<td>3% high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EP</td>
<td>3% high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GRAY SCALE NONLINEARITY (worst case) none

CHROMA LEVEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>-1/4 dB low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LP</td>
<td>-1 dB low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EP</td>
<td>-1/4 dB low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHROMA DIFFERENTIAL GAIN | ±10%

CHROMA DIFFERENTIAL PHASE | ±4°

MEDIAN CHROMA PHASE ERROR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>±4°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LP</td>
<td>±6°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EP</td>
<td>±5°</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

COLOR CONSISTENCY for the VKT-650's recorder section running at the SP speed (left) and for its TV tuner (right). (The results for the VCR in LP and EP are virtually identical to those in SP, so we have omitted the vectorscope photos for the slower speeds.) In each case, the ideal would be for the cluster of dots toward the left edge of the grid to be a single dot at the intersection of the nine-o'clock axis with the circumference. The radial spread of the dots indicates chroma differential gain, which is a measure of how much chroma level (color saturation) varies with changes in scene brightness (luminance). The angular spread shows the chroma differential phase, which tells how much chroma phase (hue) shifts with changes in brightness. Both the tuner and the VCR perform well in this test although the former shows a large differential gain at the highest luminance level.

pause, stop, fast-wind, and search. From PAUSE, you can advance the tape a frame at a time or enter slow motion, with up and down buttons to vary the speed. You can also view at double-speed or in reverse. There are even tracking control buttons on the remote, as well as a button that enables you to switch between antenna and VCR output to your TV tuner or receiver's VHF terminals.

The VKT-650's built-in tuner scans the VHF and UHF bands and as many as 63 cable channels. As many as 80 of them can be programmed into memory for sequential access via the up/down channel switch on the front panel or the remote. Or you can tune any channel directly via the remote's keypad.

Behind a front-panel door are a number of secondary controls and a headphone jack (with its own VOLUME) for private listening. Among these are a recording speed switch (which we would have preferred outside the door—a quibble considering that playback speed is selected automatically) and tracking and sharpness wheels. The latter accentuates or softens picture detail, but only in playback—not recording. A recording mode switch chooses the camera input, the built-in TV tuner, or a special mode in which the VKT-650 generates its own video synchronization signal, enabling you to take advantage of VHS Hi-Fi's wide dynamic range and smooth frequency response for audio-only recording. In playback, you can choose to listen to the VHS Hi-Fi track (FM), the edge track (line), or a mix of the two for sound-on-sound.

A novel and well-considered feature is a switchable high filter that works only on the edge track, to suppress tape hiss, and there is an ALC that sets recording level automatically on both the edge and VHS Hi-Fi soundtracks when it is invoked. Six buttons are used to program the desired channels into the 80-station tuner memory. A dimmer switch tones down (rather too much, in our opinion) the lighted displays.

The back panel is comparatively simple. There are the normal coax F connectors for VHF antenna input and output to a conventional TV, twinlead screw connectors for 300-ohm UHF input and output, pin jacks for direct audio and video inputs and outputs, a standard mono phone jack for microphone input, and a miniature phone jack for remote camera pause. Two switches select between the VKT-650's own remote unit and the unified RCA Digital Command Center remote-control system and between broadcast and cable RF input.
Considering the VKT-650's wide range of features, the owner's manual leaves something to be desired. Although it's well written and in good English, it fails to explain some of the unit's eccentricities. (But perhaps we're being unduly critical, for the peculiarities we found seem calculated to simplify operation for the average user.) Only by contacting RCA could we confirm some of Diversified Science Laboratories' findings: that the sharpness control affects only playback, that the microphone input is monophonic and always is controlled by the ALC independent of the ALC switch setting, that the microphone input records only on the edge track, that the high filter affects only edge-track playback, that the recording level controls must be advanced to get signal from the direct audio outputs (unless the ALC is activated), and that cables must be connected to both left and right audio inputs and outputs if the system is to record and play in stereo. (If only one input cable is connected, the same information is recorded on both channels; if only one output cable is connected, the L+R sum is fed to the stereo system.)

The VKT-650's measured performance is quite good. Tuner video response holds up within $2\frac{1}{4}$ dB to the color-burst frequency (3.58 MHz) and shows substantial dropoff only at the resolution limit of the NTSC system (4.2 MHz). Chroma differential gain and phase are negligible except for some loss of color saturation at the highest luminance (brightness) level. Chroma level (color saturation) is a trifle low to begin with, and chroma phase (hue) accuracy is slightly off the mark, but both can be corrected with a monitor's tint and color controls, so that the final result is excellent. Luminance level is only a trifle high—again, easily corrected—and gray-scale linearity is very good.

The tuner's audio performance is not quite up to its video prowess, but it's adequate. There's a gradual rolloff below 100 Hz, and though the signal-to-noise (S/N) ratio is good, it's certainly not in the "excellent" range. The horizontal-scan component is reasonably well suppressed, and distortion is a bit lower than average. Output impedance is low enough and the level high enough that there should be no problems mating the unit to other components. One caution, however: If you turn the recording level controls all the way up when listening to a broadcast with ALC off, the output circuit will clip on fully modulated signals. Keep the recording level indicator on scale, and you'll have nothing to worry about.

The VCR's video performance is about par. Response holds up reasonably well to 2 MHz at all three speeds, implying a horizontal picture resolution of about 160 to 200 lines. In the EP (SLP) mode, response rises at 3.58 MHz, but the output at that frequency is too unstable to be reliable. The sharpness has maximum effect at 2 MHz, although there is measurable effect at lower frequencies as well. In fact, advancing the sharpness makes the response quite uniform all the way to 2 MHz, a feat few VCRs can match. This makes a noticeable improvement in picture detail, albeit at the cost of some increase in noise (snow). Gray-scale linearity is perfect at all three speeds, chroma differential gain and phase are negligible, and chroma level and phase accuracy are notably good.

Except for some improvement in chroma noise, there's no reason to choose SP or LP recording over the tape-saving EP mode—especially since the VKT-650's special features work best at that speed. VHS Hi-Fi
NEW TECHNOLOGIES VIDEO

TV TUNER SECTION
All measurements were taken at the direct audio and video outputs.

AUDIO FREQUENCY RESPONSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency (Hz)</th>
<th>0 Hz</th>
<th>20 Hz</th>
<th>50 Hz</th>
<th>100 Hz</th>
<th>200 Hz</th>
<th>500 Hz</th>
<th>1 kHz</th>
<th>2 kHz</th>
<th>5 kHz</th>
<th>10 kHz</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response (dB)</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AUDIO S/N RATIO (A-weighted)
- best case: no video signal (49 dB)
- worst case: luminance staircase (33 dB)

RESIDUAL HORIZONTAL SCAN COMPONENT (15.7 kHz)
- -37 dB

MAXIMUM AUDIO OUTPUT (100% modulation)
- ALC off: 1.78 V peak
- ALC on: 0.41 V peak

AUDIO OUTPUT IMPEDANCE
- 50 ohms

VIDEO FREQUENCY RESPONSE
- at 500 kHz: -0.5 dB
- at 1.5 MHz: -1 dB
- at 2.5 MHz: -1.5 dB
- at 3.0 MHz: -2 dB
- at 4.5 MHz: -2.5 dB
- at 6 kHz: -5.5 dB

LUMINANCE LEVEL
- -1/2 dB
- -1 dB
- -11/2 dB
- -2 dB
- -21/2 dB
- -3 dB

CHROMA LEVEL
- -21/4 dB

CHROMA DIFFERENTIAL GAIN
- -4/5

CHROMA DIFFERENTIAL PHASE
- ±3°

CHROMA PHASE ERROR
- red: ±6°
- magenta: ±6°
- blue: ±4°
- cyan: ±6°
- green: ±6°
- yellow: ±6°
- median error: ±6°
- uncorrectable error: ±1°

TUNER COLOR ACCURACY is very good. The vectorscope photo at left indicates low color saturation (chroma level) and a small amount of hue (chroma phase) error. The photo at right—made with 21/4 dB additional chroma gain and approximately 6° degrees of clockwise phase rotation—simulates the best results one could obtain using the color and tint controls on a monitor. This adjustment brings all six color vectors (the small white dots near the circumference of the grid) on or near their targets, which is excellent performance. Indeed, the actual spread is ±2° degrees or less.

Performance is virtually identical in all three modes, with unmeasurably low flutter, almost perfectly flat frequency response across the audio band, signal-to-noise ratios of more than 80 dB, and distortion that is quite low at our "standard" test level, remaining at or below 1 percent from 50 Hz to 6.3 kHz and just nudging 21/2 percent at 10 kHz. To check the tracking accuracy of the VHS Hi-Fi noise reduction system, DSL measured the frequency response at a number of recording levels, ranging from 10 to 40 dB below the midrange 3-percent THD (total harmonic distortion) point. Although not perfect, the tracking accuracy is well within the realm of acceptability.

DSL also measured the audio performance of the standard edge track, although it’s rare that you’d resort to it with VHS Hi-Fi available. Compared with that of other VHS decks, the VKT-650’s edge track audio is somewhat better than average, especially in the SP mode, where response holds up quite well to 10 kHz and the noise and flutter are not too high. The noise figures are almost as good for EP recording, but flutter is about 50 percent worse and the high-frequency response is cut in half. At both speeds, engaging the high filter (which is about 3 dB down at 6 kHz) improves the signal-to-noise ratio by 4 to 5 dB.

Inexplicably, LP recording provides the least dynamic range, but it can be brought almost up to parity with the others with the high filter.

Frequency response and flutter are only a trifle better in LP than in EP, and the special features work least well in the LP mode, so there’s little reason to choose it.

Our hands-on evaluation confirmed the bench tests in all essentials. Audio performance with VHS Hi-Fi recording is about all you could ask for—a giant step above “linear” recording, which is better than average on this deck. The tuner proved to be reasonably sensitive in our fringe area, especially on the upper VHF channels. Chroma noise is lowest with SP recording, but except for this, we’d adopt the longer-running EP mode for all normal use. There’s little discernible difference in picture resolution between EP and SP recording and none in sound quality with VHS Hi-Fi, yet EP is more economical and provides better (almost perfect) special effects. The VIDEO DUB worked well during our trials, but we found it somewhat difficult to use accurately. Undoubtedly, practice makes perfect, and if we’d had longer to work with the deck, it might have become second nature.

We’re impressed with the RCA VKT-650, and in light of its vast array of features (the on-screen programming, especially), we think it’s a steal. Certainly it deserves your careful scrutiny.
A Night with Lou Reed” is exactly that. A few dark shots down these mean streets support a two-sentence voiceover introduction claiming Reed is “the single most pervasive influence on the new wave and rock music of today.” I certainly can’t argue, though it’s not my justification of choice for watching this videotape.

Almost immediately we are backstage in Manhattan’s sold-out Bottom Line, April 1983. Reed, founder of the Velvet Underground and a rock and roll demi-legend for nearly two decades, paces the mirrored dressing room blowing smoke. Not exactly the average guy of “The Blue Mask,” but close. Lou heads for the door, and the tape cuts to the stage, where an enthusiastic crowd greets the best band Reed has ever assembled: Robert Quine, the only “scientific” guitarist I care about, wears a sport jacket, button-down shirt, shades, and no discernible expression; fretless bassist and fusion sessionman Fernando Saunders and Material drummer Fred Maher are cuter, though not exactly dressed to kill. Lou strides out in a short black-leather jacket and jeans, dressed for work, and kicks right into Sweet Jane. For the next hour, one of America’s most important songwriters showcases much of his best music with a superb and sympathetic band. The legion of people he has influenced is entirely beside the point this night. Lou Reed is as vital, as commanding, as he has ever been.

And oh, the chords! Complex vocal phrasing and elisions compensate for Reed’s loss of range and make Sweet Jane as lively and clear as I remember it from the Velvet’s vaunted last stand at Max’s Kansas City in the summer of 1970. Neither overly dramatic nor obviously self-conscious, he concentrates on presenting a great song as if it were just that, not a revered ruin, a fossil freighted with lurid imaginary history. And oh, the chords! I’m Waiting for My Man, also from the Velvets, follows, and I’m transfixed by my TV. Somehow singing heads are riveting after a year of dwarfs and garter belts, the false pregnancy of MTV. Quine’s solo builds the tension as the band leaps from the mid-Sixties to the mid-Eighties on Martial Law, with expressive facial grinsaces and string-bending solo-less drone, and a speedy Don’t Talk to Me About Work (both from last year’s “Legendary Hearts.”) An internalized but palpable intensity continues to grow out of the material, the playing, and the singing.
appropriately threatening Quine-Reed drone duel, gives way to "Transformer"'s "Satellite of Love" taken as a tender ballad, which it actually is. The Velvets' finale, White Light/White Heat, and the anemic Rock and Roll are prime examples of chord worship at its most transcendent. The crowd is exhausted. Lou is chippier. "I thought that was short and delicious," he croons at the dressing room camera. Me too.

"A Night with Lou Reed" is a remarkable tape. Consider it a companion piece to his import LP, "Lou Reed Live In Italy," recorded a few months after the Bottom Line shows. Add his latest, somewhat poppier studio product, "New Sensations," and a summer tour with his wonderful band, and you've got a major artist at mid-career, buoyed by the best of his earlier songs and building memorably from there. This is a great concert that comes home intact. No posture, just stature. See for yourself.

—JEFF NESIN

READY, STEADY, GO! (Vol. 1).

Dave Clark, producer. Daeco International Productions/Photofab Laboratories (EMI-Phono-Tel) TF 2136 (Beta), TF 2135 (VHS). $29.95

R eady, Steady, Go! (Vol. 1)" is a delightful hour-long collage of performances by 14 charter-member British Invasion bands who appeared on this mid-Sixties English teen television show modeled after American Bandstand. What's most striking about watching the program today is that the excitement these acts generate is barely diminished by the fact that almost all of them lip-synched their songs. Because most groups were presented that way on television 20 years ago, the performances seem perfectly natural for the time frame involved.

The video is expertly assembled by Dave Clark Productions (yes, as in the Dave Clark Five, who sneak into this tape for two non-Ready, Steady, Go! songs that are innocuous enough to be easily digested amidst the bountiful surroundings). It begins with 1964 carefree, fresh-faced Beatles, climaxing with 1966 borderline-psychedelic Rolling Stones, and rarely allows one room to breathe in between—what with appearances by Dusty Springfield, the Who, Georgie Fame, the Searchers, the Animals, Lulu, Van Morrison and Them, and even comedians Peter Cook and Dudley Moore.

Especially engaging are the show's often hysterical interviews. George Harrison deadpanning that his "favorite girl film star" is Margaret Rutherford ("A real Mod!")—yells John Lennon—and, and Eric Burdon explaining that his band got its name because "we look like animals." All in all, "Ready, Steady, Go!" is a great treat, and well worth the money you'll be saving by not buying "That Was Rock (The TAMI/TNT Show)" (see review, July).

—HOLLY ALTMAN

POPULAR COMPACT DISC

SHADOWFAX: Shadowndance.

Chuck Greenberg, producer. Windham Hill WD 1029 (analog recording) LP, Digital Compact Disc LP. WH 1022

While this fusion sextet shares the reflective mood of most Windham Hill artists, its merger of folk and jazz is quite a departure from the music of the acoustic soloists who dominate that roster. Coleaders Chuck Greenberg on lyre, sax, and flute and G.E. Simons on guitars give the group a lot of its charm.

The label's high-quality analog versions are already solidly produced, so this Compact Disc falls short of spectacular revelations. There are refinements, however. The exotic spectrum of percussion, played by Stuart Nevitt and four guests who appear on different songs, is more deftly realized here, especially in quiet passages. Greenberg's pianic reeds and Jamii Szmadzinski's various acoustic and amplified violins are immaculately rendered: Stitt's chiming 12-string chords ring with added presence. Analog tape hiss is moot, given both the superanalog quality of the master and the moderate volume levels dictated by the music, which is only slightly more forceful than the ambient Windham Hill standard.

—SAM SUTHERLAND

SONY STITT: Moonlight in Vermont.

K. Yoshimura, producer. Denon 38C100 7044 (fully digital Compact Disc) LP. V2 139

The most eloquent examples of early stereo recording were straightforward live performances—not, ironically enough, the spectacular demonstration pieces usually employed to dramatize stereo imaging. By reproducing a soloist or small ensemble with a realistic spatial perspective, producers offered a more practical and enduring argument for the new technology than their knob-twirling peers.

That's proving to be true of digital audio, too, if the first true digital CDs by jazz artists are any indication. This 1978 session by Sonny Stitt utilizes vivid presence, lifelike imaging, and immaculate detail: In short, "Moonlight in Vermont" is a best-case scenario for the format.

Although he's supported solidly by drummer Tony Williams, bassist Reggie Workman, and pianists Barry Harris and Walter Davis, Stitt doesn't carve out any new terrain stylistically here. The program of standards tends to emphasize his kinship with other pop-bop tenor saxophonists rather than distinguish him from them. But everyone's playing is enhanced by the nuances of digital sonics anyway. As with Denon's classical CDs, acoustic character retains warmth while gaining clarity, particularly in regard to Stitt's own rather dry timbre and his alternately angular and buoyant phrasing. Williams's drumming is predictably fluent, and the piano sound is open and well realized.

American labels may soon be changing their minds about offering jazz on Compact Disc. Programs such as this one can only encourage them to do so quickly.

—S.S.

CLASSICAL COMPACT DISC

PUCCINI: Turandot.


Vienna State Opera Chorus, Vienna Boys, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. Michel Stoll and Gunther Beeth, assoc. dir. (Telarc International CD 24130 092) fully digital Compact Disc LP. 2741 013 (three discs) reviewed 6/83 Cassettes 13)

H erbert von Karajan's Turandot (as one is forced to call it), which revelled in the lush exoticism of Puccini's luxuriant orchestration (three kinds of gong!), would seem to be a natural for Compact Disc. So, more or less, it proves.
In his recent operatic efforts, Karajan has paid far less attention to the voices themselves. Singers have sometimes seemed curiously irrelevant to his palette: A showy profligacy in filling the minor roles—Agnes Baltsa as the Zauberflöte second lady. Katia Ricciarelli as the Aida priestess—is oddly matched by an undercasting of the leads. In an apparent attempt to escape stale opera house conventions, Karajan has often chosen to work with younger singers, unseasoned in a given role. Sometimes this leads to genuine discovery (Hildegard Behrens, his Salome), more often to stretching younger voices (Jose Carreras in Aida) or lighter ones (Mirella Freni in the same) up to and even beyond their limits.

So it is with Ricciarelli, leaving Karajan's production as headless as most of the icy Turandot's other suitors. A temptingly lyrical opening to "In questa reggia" seduces, only to turn edgy, but never powerful, never thrilling, never terrifying. The final surrender is built-in: This voice encodes from the start its own lack of conviction at imperial utterance. But Ricciarelli's shortcomings have been anatomized superbly by Matthew Gurewitsch in the June '83 HIGH FIDELITY, so I will not belabor.

Elsewhere, better luck, down to the best (most Guzzi-like) trio of councillors on record. Placido Domingo, who has occasionally seemed like more tenor than is strictly necessary for Puccini, a Radames rather than a Rodolfo, trumpets a power far stronger than anything thrown in his path here. In this role the steel in his voice is welcome. There's genuine fury in his "Prima palm a gela" response to Liu's death, but also a seductive warmth, almost teasing, in his challenge to Turandot to "Dimmi il mio nome," and an abundant lyrical energy in "Nessun dorma."

Barbara Hendricks, she of the lambent highs, offers a Liu of tempting plangency and vulnerability. Her exchanges with Calaf are loving but deferential, her suicide a slave's pledge of a love otherwise unattainable. That suicide is one of the production's finest moments, the shocked crowd more saddened than angered, its pianissimo grief (played off against solo violin) a surprise after its earlier unslakable thirst for blood. Perhaps that surprise is misplaced, however, for this is a score in which Puccini really seems to deny himself nothing: organ, boys' chorus, enough percussion to keep a whole union happy—you imagine the composer's disappointment at merely simulating that first-act choir of departed spirits. Sometimes the Orientalism does get a bit back-lot MGM, the effect more Chun-King than bone china, but isn't that the nature of musical impressionism? In intent, the canned Chinoserie is really no different.

For additional reviews of classical recordings, see Classical Reviews.

SEPTEMBER 1984
from the "fire music" that comes when Rodolfo burns his manuscript. Never more skillful.

Karajan and the Vienna Philharmonic really have a field day here. From gong and brass to the gauzy, muted strings and chimes. Seldom have delicacy and power been accorded such equal shares in so rich and pungent a tapestry. Karajan once again proves himself the finest colorist of the podium since Stokowski, and the orchestra plays with a precision reminiscent more of the conductor's Berlin venue than of its own playing under more genial masters.

Deutsche Grammophon captures the orchestra's sonic splendors with cunning transparency. Between CD and LP the differences are subtle, and they could be obscured by the idiosyncrasies of an LP front end. As so often, the Compact Disc will seem like a more astonishing success when counterposed against a garden-variety turntable, arm, and cartridge, less so against better. The CD does offer an apparently wider range of color, particularly on those ethereal choruses, but seems to lose a hair's worth of detail on the brass climaxes. As always, CD offers a rock-solid bass, while both formats have a hint of that edge the digit-bashers find unbearable (but less of it than in many previous Deutsche Grammophon releases). Overall, first-time purchasers would probably prefer the Compact Disc. While owners of the album might as well hang on to what they've got. DG's fold-out plastic box, complete with legible CD-size libretto, is the most elegant solution I've seen to packaging the silver sauces.

THOMAS W. RUSSELL III

RACHMANINOFF:
Symphony No. 2, in E minor, Op. 27.

Vladimir Ashkenazy is recording all of Rachmaninoff's orchestral works with the Concertgebouw Orchestra, and, with the exception of the concertos and Paganini Rhapsody, the task is virtually complete, with only a few of the relatively minor works not yet available. As of this writing, however, only the three numbered symphonies and the Youth Symphony fragment are available on Compact Disc.

This recording of the Second was the first to be issued on LP, and it has been generally well received in that format. While there are many admirable qualities to it, the engineers surely have not captured the true sound of the Concertgebouw Orchestra. Decca/London's old monophonic LPs of the orchestra with Eduard van Beinum conducting—particularly the discs of Sibelius's En Saga and Tapiola, Schubert's Rosamunde, and Mendelssohn's Midsummer Night's Dream—were far better balanced and sound superior to this new digital effort. (Of the later recordings in the first cycle, those of the First and Third Symphonies offer a more satisfactory sense of perspective of the orchestra, although they, too, are not all they could be.) The digital mastering provides a very wide dynamic range, but the string tone is surprisingly thin, the distant pickup is unflattering to the woodwinds, and the brass lacks that unique Concertgebouw "bite" that distinguishes most of its recordings. There is also considerable evidence of "dial twiddling."

Unfortunately, Ashkenazy is a grunter, as Glenn Gould was, and his audible vocal contributions to this recording are annoying, particularly at the beginning of the Scherzo. There are many felicities of orchestral performance to enjoy here (curiously, a surprising trumpet mishap at the end of the Scherzo that should have been remade for the LP is barely noticeable on the CD), but this is hardly a definitive recording of Rachmaninoff's most romantic symphony.

ROBERT E. BENSON
A Rubinstein Feast

Reissues of recordings by this grandest of 20th-century pianists will delight you, whether you're a gourmet or a first-time sampler.

Reviewed by Thomas L. Dixon

Life means living, not escaping.
People go to doctors and ask, "What vitamins shall I take?" What good are vitamins, I ask you? Eat four lobsters and a pound of caviar. Live!

—Arut Rubinstein

WHAT A SPREAD! What a feast of Rubinstein in ten new reissues from virtually every period of his amazingly fertile career as a recording artist. But also, what a formidable subject for review. The solution? Why even bother to review (at least in the narrow sense of that term) these magnificent, gilt-edged musical securities? Why not provide what may be more suitable to the occasion...a joyous meditation on this portion of Rubinstein's great legacy.

Let us begin with the Chopin. The four Seraphim reissues have been available for quite some time as German Electrola imports. An examination of each record reveals little difference between the imports and the new domestic pressings; the transfers and surfaces sound extremely close in quality. (However, a comparison between this latest edition of the 1936-37 Nocturnes and an HMV reissue from the mid-1950s suggests that not as much progress has been made in 78 rpm transferring as is commonly supposed.) When one passes beyond such mundane matters to consider which Rubinstein performance of any work stands out most, one had better be prepared to write a book, not a review. Case in point: Rubinstein recorded the Chopin F minor Concerto four times. (There is yet a fifth version to come, a 1960 Polish performance of which Rubinstein himself was said to have been very fond.) Each of the four has its merits, but how can anyone really choose between Rubinstein and Sir John Barbirolli, or William Steinberg, or Alfred Wallenstein, or Eugene Ormandy?

With that much said, let us welcome these samples of pre-World War II Rubinstein as the fine recordings they all are, without exception. They may not be his greatest Chopin discs, but again, who is to decide which ones are? Unlike Samuel Lipman—who in a recent, warped assessment of Rubinstein's career in Commentary (in quite severe contrast to his normally acute sense of pianists) maintained that it was almost all downhill after the 1930s—I would suggest that Rubinstein's career passed through several interesting phases, none of which I could place above the other. Curiously, listening to these earlier performances convinces me of the validity of Rubinstein's pioneering Chopin interpretations as against, say, the interpretations of Alfred Cortot and others. But the musical reactionaries of those days apparently regarded Rubinstein's playing with much the same prissy horror as do the reactionaries of today when Chopin's music is played as provocatively as it is by such a re-creative artist as Alexis Weissenberg.

RCA's digitally remastered recording of the Nocturnes and Waltzes, the first volume in a projected long series, presents any Rubinstein addict with two problems, one minor, the other quite major. First, the minor issue: Is the cost of this new digital version justified, especially to those collectors who already own the original mid-1960s discs? Absolutely! To my ears these newly remastered performances sound simply marvelous. If this volume is a faithful...
preview of what we may expect, no true Rubinstein collector can possibly without it.

However, this thought leads directly to the major problem: A recent statement from RCA suggested that the label plans to carry its Rubinstein series only as far back as 1950. One must take great exception to that and urge the powers that be to move their date yet further back, to 1940. Now that EMI Electrola has almost exhausted its holdings, RCA remains the only source for certain Rubinstein treasures, many of which have never been seen the light of LP. For instance, what about the great 1942 Grieg Concerto with Ormandy? What about a prime Rubinstein rarity, namely the single 45 rpm disc entitled "(Artur Rubinstein Plays [Anton] Rubinstein" (RCA 45 EP, ERA 205)? One might ask even more: Why not combine those two items with his uniquely flamboyant 1947 Liszt E flat Concerto, done in Dallas with Antal Dorati (long unavailable on LP)? What a special issue that would make! How about it, RCA . . . as long as you’re at it, in heaven’s name, why not dig deeper?

While on the subject of such old gold, one may as well examine the EMI issues, beginning with the disc of Rubinstein’s encore performances and the two-record set of various piano works. Obviously, what appears on these German discs should also be made available in the U.S. on Seraphim: RCA remains the only source for its EMI Electrola has almost exhausted its holdings. RCA suggested that the label plans to carry them.

However, this thought leads directly to the fact that he, more than any other pianist, has left a modern performance that would make! How about it. RCA (long unavailable on LP)? What a special issue that would make! Furthermore, a wonder, nobody need bother to record this concerto again."

(Continued on page 87)

**A Selection of Rubinstein Reissues**

Compiled by Mildred Camacho-Castillo

CHOPIN: Polonaises (7) and Scherzos (4).


CHOPIN: Mazurkas (51).


CHOPIN: Nocturnes (19).

Artur Rubinstein, piano. (Recorded 1936-37.) SERAPHIM: 1 B 6313 (two discs). Cassettes (2): 4XG 6313.


CHOPIN: Concertos for Piano and Orchestra.


CHOPIN: Nocturnes (19) and Waltzes (14).


ARTHUR RUBINSTEIN: Encores (11).

Artur Rubinstein, piano. (Recorded 1928-34.) EMI Electrola IC 027 1435551 (German News Co.). 220 E 86th St., New York, N.Y. 10028.

Preview of the Forthcoming Year's Recordings, Part 1: LPs

Because of the enormous volume of Compact Discs slated for release during the coming year, HIGH FIDELITY has decided to spread its annual preview of forthcoming recordings over several issues. Beginning in November, HIGH FIDELITY lists new domestic CD releases as they appear.

As always, we have tried to be as accurate as our industry sources and our own good sense allow. The fact that a recording is listed here does not, however, guarantee that it will be released in the coming months—only that as of press time, this was the intention of the issuing label or distributor. Nor can we claim that our preview is a complete accounting of all recordings to be released by the companies represented here. Plans change, and there will always be that very special album or CD that we weren't told about.

Please note the following use of abbreviations, alone or in combination. For performing forces: P (Philharmonic), R (Radio), S (Symphony). O (Orchestra), C (Chamber), Ch (Chorus). St (State), Op (Opera), Ac (Academy), E (Ensemble). Q (Quarter), Qn (Quintet), Fest (Festival), or their foreign-language equivalents. For voice ranges: lower-case letters without parentheses. For production and packaging: Where known, number of records in multidisc sets is given in parentheses; other parenthetical symbols include s (single disc rather than set), r (domestic reissue), l (historical), d (digital recording), m (mono), 1 (live recording). Initials and first names appear only as needed.

**ACCENT (Belgium)**
(distributed by AudioSource)

**Bach:** Complete Works for Lute, Junghanel (2).
**Beethoven:** Symphony No. 7 (arr. wind quartet).
**Monteverdi:** Octavo of Monteverdi.
**Corelli:** Violin Sonatas. S. Kuijken, W. Kuijken, Kohnen.
**Leclair:** Complete Sonatas for Transverse Flute and Continuo. B. Kuijken, W. Kuijken, Kohnen (2).

**ANGEL**

**Abbe:** Piano Concertos: Concerto for Violin and Oboe. Perlman, Still, Israel PO (*). **Beethoven:** Overtures. London PO, Tennstedt (*). **Brahms:** Violin Sonatas. Perlman, Ashkenazy (*). **Domiati:** Lucia di Lammermoor. Gruberova, Kraus; Royal PO. Rescigno (*). **Dvorak:** Symphony No. 9. Berlin PO, Tennstedt (*).

**Gershwin:** An American in Paris (world premiere).
**K. and M. Labèque.**
**Gounod:** Romeo and Juliet. Malifano, Kraus; Touques O. Plaisson (*). **Gounod:** Saint Cecilia Mass. Hendricks, Dale. Lafont: Nouvelle Op, Prêtre (*).
**Handel:** Water Music. Linde Consort (*).
**Handel:** Fireworks Music. Linde Consort (*).
**Khachaturian:** Suites: Spartacus, Gayane. Royal PO. Temirkanov (*).
**Mahler:** Das klagende Lied. Hodgson, Tear, Dolsé, Rae, City of Birmingham SO&Ch. Rattle (*).

**Mendelssohn; Bruch:** Violin Concertos. Perlman. Concertgebouw O. Haitink (*).
**Monteverdi:** Vespre (1610). Tavener Consort, Parrot (*).
**Prokofiev:** Peter and the Wolf. Perlman (narrator).
**Rachmaninoff:** Piano Works. Gavrilov (*). **Rachmaninoff:** Piano Concerto No. 2. Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini. Oussietz. City of Birmingham SO, Rattle (*). **Rachmaninoff:** Symphony No. 2. Los Angeles P, Rattle (*).
**Ravel:** Shéhérazade. Duparc: Songs with Orchestra. Te Kanawa. Brussels Op O. Pritchard (*).
**Saint-Saëns:** Carnival of the Animals. K. and M. Labèque. Israel PO, Mehta.
**Wagner:** The Flying Dutchman. Van Dam, Moll, Vojovicic, Hoffman. Berlin PO, Karajan (*).
**Walton:** Shakespearean Film Scores. Royal Liverpool PO, Groves (*).
**Music of 16th Century Rome.** King's College Ch. Carne; Bridge (*).
**Popular Schubert Lieder.** Popp (*).
**Popular Mozart Arias.** Allen, Scottish CO. Armstrong (*).

**ARCHIV**
**(released by Deutsche Grammophon)**
**Bach:** The Art of The Fugue. Goldberg Canons. Masaoka Antiqua Kölner (*).
**Handel:** Organ Concertos, Opp. 4, 7. Preston: English Concert, Pinnock (d).
**Mozart:** Piano Concertos 2-15. Bilson. Gardiner: English Baroque Soloists, Gardiner (*).
**Vivaldi:** Concertos, English Concert, Pinnock (d). **Trevor Pinnock:** The Harmonious Blackman and Other Harpsichord Works (d).

**ARGO**
**(released by London Records)**
**Franz:** Organ Music. Hurford (d).
**Mozart:** Coronation Mass. Missa Solemnis. Marshall. Murray, Cevoyer-Crumpl, Wilson-Johnson; King's College Ch. Cambridge; English CO, Cleobury (d). **Christmas at King's.** King's College Ch. Cambridge; English CO, Cleobury (d).

**ASTREE (France)**
(distributed by AudioSource)

**Schubert:** Gitarre Lieder. Söderström. Badura-Skoda (d).

**AUDIOSOURCE**
See Accent, Astree (France), Idexe. TR Records. AudioSource. 1185 Chess Dr., Foster City, Calif. 94404.

**CAMBRIA**


**CONSORTIUM RECORDINGS**
See GSC Recordings and Laurel Record. Consortium Recordings. 2451 Nicholas Canyon, Los Angeles, Calif. 90046-1798.

**DENON (Japan)**
(distributed by AudioSource)
**Strauss, R.: Ein Heldenlehen.** Dresden SO&O, Blomstedt (d).

**DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON**
**Bach:** Lute Suites. Söllscher (d).
**Bach:** Mass in B minor. Monteverdi Ch. English Baroque Soloists, Gardiner (d). **Bach:** Violin Sonatas and Partitas. Mintz (d).
**Bernstein:** West Side Story. Cast to be announced (d). **Brahms:** Double Concerto. Academic Festival Overture. Kremer, Maisky; Vienna PO, Bernstein (d).
**Brahms:** Lieder. Norman, Barenboim (d). **Brahms:** Piano Concerto No. 2. Zimmerman; Vienna PO. Bernstein (d).
**Bruckner:** Symphony No. 8. Vienna PO, Giulini (d).

SEPTEMBER 1984
Haydn: Symphonies Nos. 88, 92. Vienna PO, Bernstein (d).
Mahler: Symphony No. 7. Chicago SO, Abbado (d).
Mozart: Divertimento K. 563. Amadeus Qu (d).
Mozart: Sonfina Concertante; Violin Concerto No. 1. Kremer, Kaskashian; Vienna PO, Harrow (d).
Mozart: Symphonies Nos. 38, 39. Vienna PO, Bernstein (d).
Mozart: Symphonies Nos. 40, 41. Vienna PO, Bernstein (d).
Mozart: Violin Sonatas. Perlman, Barenboim (d).
Mozart: Violin Concerto No. 1. Roudos; Perlman; Vienna PO, Levine (d).
Mozart: Violin Concertos Nos. 2, 4. Perlman, Vienna PO, Levine (d).
Mozart: Arias from Aida. Nabucco, Verdi: 11 Trovatore. Plowright, Fassbaender, Domingo; Sinopoli, Orchestra to be announced.
Stravinsky: Symphony in 3 Movements; Symphony. Israel PO, Maazel (d).
Liszt: Faust Symphony. Rotterdam PO, Conlon (d).
Mozart: Arias. Baker; Scottish ChO, Leppard (d).
Mozart: Symphonies Nos. 25, 40. Scottish ChO, Conlon (d).
Mozart: Symphonies Nos. 38, 39. Scottish ChO, Conlon (d).
Poulenc: Concertos (complete). Duhable, Collard. Alain, Koopman; Rotterdam PO, Conlon (d).
Chabrier: Le Roi malgre lui. Eda-Pierre, Hendrix. Corblet, Brodard; Lausanne Vocal E&ChO.
Paul Hindemith Anthology, Vol. 11: String Quartets Nos. 1, 2. Los Angeles Qu.

GSC RECORDINGS
(distributed by Consortium)
Paul Hindemith Anthology, Vol. 8: Quartet for Violin, Viola, Cello, and Harp.

HARMONIA MUNDI GERMANY
(distributed by Internos)
Handel: Alessandro. La Petite Bande, Kuijken (3, d).
Handel: Judas Maccabaeus. Gorenwein: Ludwigsburger Festival); O of Germany (3, d).
Mayenne: Organ Works. Stanbridge (d).
Schubert: Symphonies Nos. 3, 6. Cologne RSO, Wand (d).
Victoria: Responsories and Lamentations. Escalita Montserrat (2, d).

Von Bingen: Symphonies. Sequinaria E (d).
Contemporary German Music, Vols. 8-10 (9, d).
Handel: Acis and Galatea. Masque Consort of Musick (d).
Musikwettbewerb Works by F.P. Zimmermann, T. Zimmermann, A. Schmitt. (5, d).
Pastoral Masses. Augsburg Cathedral Boys Ch (d).
Wedding Music from Danzig. Works by Biber, et. al. Institute for Eastern German Music (3, d).

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**NEW WORLD**

**Barber:** Antony and Cleopatra. Hinds, Wells, Grayson, Halvorson, Westminster College Ch; Spiegel Fest. O. Baden (3).

**Carpenter:** The Collected Works for Piano. Oldham (2).

**Crumb:** A Haunted Landscape. Schuman: Three Carousel Horses for Horn and Orchestra; Myres; New York P. Wesberg*. Mehia (d).

**Lieberson:** Piano Concerto. P. Serkin; Boston SO, Ozawa (d).


**The Albany Symphony Orchestra:** (works by Carpenter, Hadley, Mason, Q. Porter). Hegyi (d).

**The New Music Consort:** (works by Cage, Foss, Sollberger).

New World Records, 701 Seventh Avenue. New York, N.Y. 10036.

**NONESUCH**

**Brahms:** Clarinet Quintet. Mozart: Clarinet Quintet; Allegro, K. 516e. Zukovsky, Sequoia Qr (d).

**Brahms:** Trio Works. Boston SC Players (d).

**Debussy:** Ravel: Songs. DeGaetani, Kalish.

**Schrecker:** Chamber Symphony, Hindemith; Kurnemmer: No. 1. Busoni: Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra. Shifrin; Los Angeles CO, Schwarz (d).


**Kodály:** Sonata for Unaccompanied Cello; Dueto for Violin and Cello. Grossman, Phillips (d).

**The Barbara:** Vänskäringen. Hanover; October Music: Solar Wind.

**Subotnick:** Last Dream of the Beast. The Barbara: California E.A.R. Group, Mosko.

**Mozart:** Wind Serenades in E flat and C minor. Los Angeles CO Winds (d).

**Musorgsky:** Tchaikovsky: Songs. DeGaetani, Kalish.

**Schnittke:** Chamber Symphony. Hindemith; Kurnemmer: No. 1. Busoni: Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra. Shifrin; Los Angeles CO, Schwarz (d).

**Schubert:** Piano Works. Goode (r).


**Scriabin:** Complete Piano Sonatas. Laredo (3, r).

**Weill:** String (Quartet); Brazil. String Quartet No. 1. Sequoia String Qr (d). American Flute Project, Wincenc, Sanders (d).

**American Early Vocal Music, Vol. II. Western Wind (d).

**Spanish Golden Age Music for Trumpet and Organ.** Tarr, Kruger.

**EXPLORER SERIES**

**Drums of Korea.** Samul-Nori.


**OBEAU-LYRE**

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**Bach:** French Suite. Suits, Hogwood (2, d).

**Handel:** Concerti a due cori. Ac of Ancient Music, Hogwood (d).

**Haydn:** Symphonies Nos. 100, 104. Ac of Ancient Music, Hogwood (d).

**Hindemith:** Viola Concerto; Octet. Zukerman, St. Paul ChO (d).

**Mozart:** Piano Works, Uchida (d).

**Schnittke:** Divertimentos, K. 136, 137, 138; Sere- nade, K. 239. I Musici (d).

**Mendelssohn:** Piano Concerto, Op. 54. Argerich, Maisky (d).

**Liszt:** Piano Works. Brendel (4, r).

**Mahler:** Symphony No. 4. Alexander; Concertge- bouw O, Haitink (d).

**Mozart:** Piano Concertos, K. 478, 493. Beaux Arts, Giuranna (d).

**Mozart:** String Quartets K. 575, 589. Orlando Qr (d).

**Mozart:** The Magic Flute. Price, Schreier, Serra, Motl, Melbye, Adam; Dresden State O, Davis (2).

**Mozart:** Piano Sonatas; Rondo, K. 511. Uchida (d).

**Mozart:** Piano Concertos Nos. 18, 26. Brendel; St. Martin’s Ac. Marriner (d).

**Mussorgsky:** Boris Godunov. Vедерников, Ma- torin, Pivko, Arkhipova, Masurok, Sokolov; USSR TV&Radio Large SO, Fedoseyev (4).

**Ravel:** Daphnis et Chloé. Netherlands CCH, Nether- lands Vocal E, Concertgebouw O, Konstantin (l).


**Rossini:** Missa e Solenelle. Ricciarelli, Zimmer- mERMANN, Carreras, Ramey; Ambrosian Singers, Sheppard, Berkowitz, Nunn, Scmrce (3, d).

**Schnittke:** Concerto No. 1 for Violin and Chamber Orchestra*; Piano Quintet. Kremer, Basler SO, Pihlaja*, Bashkirova, Kremer, Rabis, Caussé, Ikawaaki (d).

**Schubert:** Symphony No. 3; Symphony No. 8. St. Martin’s Ac. Marriott (7, d).

**Schubert:** String Quartet ‘Death and the Maiden’. Orlando Qr (2).


**Schubert:** Winterreise; Lieder (8). Fischer-Dies- kau, Brendel (2, d).

**Schubert:** Rosamunde. Ameling; Gewandhaus O, Masur (d).


**Straus:** R.: Horn Concertos Nos. 1, 2. Weber: Concertinafor Horn. Baumann, Gewandhaus O, Masur (d).


**Telemann:** Violin Concertos. Brown, St. Martin’s Ac (d).

**Telemann:** Horn Concertos. Baumann, T. Brown, Hill, I. Brown, St. Martin’s Ac (d).


**Verdi:** Overtures. Vienna PO, Sinopoli (d).

**Wagner:** Scenes and Arias. Estes, Bindschuh, Reeb, Berlin State Or, O. Fricke.

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**Serenata.** Ameling, Jansen (d).

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**PRO ARTE**

(released by Intersound)

**Bach:** Magnificat in D. Hoffmann (attrib. Tele- mannt: German Magnificat. Byrd, Baird, Gall, Hofmann, Opalch; Bach E, Rikfink (d).

**Bach:** Brandenburg Concertos. Bach E, Rikfink (2, d).

**Bach:** Brandenburg Concertos. Leonard E. R. (2, d).

**Bach:** Mass in B minor. La Petite Bande, Kuijken (2, d).

**Bach:** Suites for Unaccompanied Cello. Bylsma (3, d).

**Barber:** Violin Concerto. Overture to the School for Scandal; Essay for Orchestra No. 2; Prelude and IntermeZZa from Vanessa. Utah SO, Silverst- ein (d).


**Beethoven:** Symphony No. 3. Collegeium Aureum (r).

**Beethoven:** Ries: Sonatas for Horn. Baumann. Sanders (d).

**Beethoven:** Piano Concertos (5). Sherman: Czech P. Neumann (5, d).

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Brahms: Sonatas for Cello and Piano. Ma, Ax (d).
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Dances for Guitar. Isbin (d).
Corno da Caccia. Giittler; New Bach Collegium
Brazilian Streetside Waltzes and Tangos. Lima (d).
Suk: Asrael Symphony; Fantasy for Violin. Suk;
Stravinsky: Petrouchka. Cologne Radio SO, Ber-
Prokofiev: Peter and the Wolf. L. Mozart: Toy
Mozart; Vanhal: Concertos for Bassoon. Miller; St.
Mahler: Symphony No. 6. Cologne RSO, Bertini
Chopin: Piano Works. P. Serkin (d).
Heifetz: Violin Showpieces. RCA SO (r, m).
Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 4. Boston SO, Mon-
Tchaikovsky: Two releases: one an adaptation of
Isao Tomita: two releases: one an adaptation of
Enrico Caruso: The Complete Caruso, Vol. 16 (r).
Eddie Gomez.

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RCA GOLD SEAL
Bach: Goldberg Variations. Landowska (r, m).
Bach: Great Organ Works. Fox (r).
Beethoven: 'Eroica' Symphony. London SO, Sto-
Bizet: Carnes Suites 1,2; L'Atélettesienne Suite No. 2.
Brahms: Piano Concerto No. 1. Rubenstein; Chicago
Enesco; Liszt; Smetana: RCA SO, Stokowski (r).
Orff: Carmina Burana. Manad, Kol, Milnes;
Boston SO,Ozawa (r).
Mahler: Symphony No. 4. Della Casa; Chicago SO, Reiner (r).
Mahler: Das Lied Von Der Erde. Forrester, Lewis;
Chicago SO, Reiner (r).
Mozart: Violin Concertas Nos. 4, 5. Heifetz (r).
Schubert: Symphony No. 9. NBC S, Toscanini (r).
Dvorak: Requiem. Czech PO&Ch, Sawallisch (d).
Fibich: Symphony No. 1. Si Philharmony, Vronsky (d).
PO&Ch, Sawallisch (d).
Janacek: Operatic Suites. Czech PO, Jilek (d).
Martina: Czech Rhapsody. Prague SO, Belelova (d).
Martina: Halftime: La Bagarre; The Rock. Brno
Martini: Piano Concerto No. 4. Leichner, Czech
PO, Neumann (d).
Martini: Piano Quarter. Palenicek,Smetana Qr (d).
Myslivecek: Stamatia. A.K.: Sonatas. Arts Redovan,
Munchinger (d).
Myslivecek: Benda: Harpsichord Sonatas and Di-
verimenti. Hali. (d).
Myslivecek: Violin Concertos in C, E, F. Dvorak
CO, Peck (d).

Eva Morton sings scenes and arias
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P. Serkin (d).
Doroh: Violin Concerto. Verhey; Amsterdam PO,
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Sinfonia (released by Intersound)
Beethoven: Symphony No. 4. Leonore Overture
No. 2. Dresden PO, Kegel (d).
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German RSO, Wand (d).
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Gabrieli: Renaissance Music for Brass. Chicago C
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Schdenfield. piano (d).
College Figer Songs and Military Themes. U. of
Minnesota S Band, Benoccicato (d).

SUFRAHON (Czechoslovakia) (distributed by Intersound)
Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 15; Sonata
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Dvorak: Requiem. Czech PO&Ch, Sawallisch (d).
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Martina: Czech Rhapsody. Prague SO, Belelova (d).
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Myslivecek: Benda: Harpsichord Sonatas and Di-
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Myslivecek: Violin Concertos in C, E, F. Dvorak
CO, Peck (d).

RCA RED SEAL
Beethoven: Piano Sonata No. 106, P. Serkin (d).
Beethoven: Piano Sonatas. Opp. 109, 110. P. Ser-
kin (d).
Brahms: Piano Sonata No. 111; Bagateilles. P.
Serkine (d).
Chabrier; Debussy; Satie: Piano Works. Varsano
Brahms: Sonatas for Cello and Piano. Ma, Ax (d).
DvoRak: Symphony Nos. 7, 9. Amsterdam PO, Joo (d).
Mozart: Six Voya Quintets. 1. Kavafyan, Tenen-
born, Kashkhashian; Guarnieri Qr (d).
Pikorke: Cinderella (excerpts). Saint Louis SO,
Statkin (d).
DvoRak: Love for Three Oranges Suite; Lieuten-
ant Kije Suite. Stravinsky: Suites Nos. 1, 2, for 
Small Orchestra. Dallas SO, Mata (d).
Schubert: Schwanengesang Hagegard (ax, d).
Schubert: Trout Quintet. Mozart: Eine Klein
Nachtmusik. Ax. J. Levine, Guarnieri Qr (d).
Sondheim: Selections from his collected works.
Strauss, R.; Death and Transfiguration. Metamor-
Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 6. Chicago SO, Le-
uine (d).
Verdi; Tchaikovsky; String Quartets. Guarnieri Qr.
Wold; Strauss, R.: Songs. Hagegard, Schuback (d).
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izes, Impromptus, Bagatelles. London, Skrowaczewski;
Of the Two Peoples. Hoom; The Sword. Fort Worth CHO.
Giordano (d).
Strauss, R.: Ein Heldenleben. Philharmonia O, Joo
(d).
Strauss, R.: Die Fruh Ohne Schatten. Der
Rosenkavalier Suite. Philharmonia O, Joo (d).
Wagner: Scenes and Arias. Marion; Philharmonia
O, Joo (d).
Early Cello Concertos. Starker; Santa Fe O.
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Gloria Swauntren: Piano Recital (d).
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Beethoven: Symphony No. 9 ("Choral"). Hargan,
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Dresden PO, Kegel (d).
Brahms: Symphony No. 2. Tragic Overture. North
German RSO, Wand (d).
Brahms: Symphony No. 4. North German RSO,
Wand (d).
Gabrieli: Renaissance Music for Brass. Chicago C
Brass.
Gershwin: Rhapsody in Blue; 3 Preludes; Songs.
Schdenfield. piano (d).
College Figer Songs and Military Themes. U. of
Minnesota S Band, Benoccicato (d).

SUPRAPHON (Czecho7lovakia) (distributed by Intersound)
Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 15; Sonata
Bruckner, A.; String Quintet. Malo, Kocjan Qr (d).
Dvorak: Requiem. Czech PO&Ch, Sawallisch (d).
PO&Ch, Sawallisch (d).
Janacek: Operatic Suites. Czech PO, Jilek (d).
Martina: Czech Rhapsody. Prague SO, Belelova (d).
Martina: Halftime: La Bagarre; The Rock. Brno
Martini: Piano Concerto No. 4. Leichner, Czech
PO, Neumann (d).
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**B.E.S. Music in the round.**

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In recent years the Dutch harpsichordist Ton Koopman has emerged as one of Europe's most authoritative early music specialists, and his position will only be strengthened by his readings of Bach's French Suites. For this superbly produced German album he uses a copy (by Martin Sassmann) of a 1728 Christian Zell instrument currently housed at the Museum of Art and Industry in Hamburg. Its crisp sound complements the articulate playing, and its tuning system (based on one of Werckmeister's unequal but nonetheless well-tempered formulas) is ideally suited to the open sonorities that characterize the left-hand figures of so many of the Suites' dance movements. There's a wonderful feeling of spontaneity in this recording; Koopman's flawless technique and elegant flair for ornamentation are accompanied by a bounty of rhythmic energy, and because the silences between movements are so far apart, the music can be heard as a continuous whole. Koopman's statement that "The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God" suddenly, from one bar to the next and with no indication whatsoever in the score, goes through his performing mind, swamps the orchestra, as frequently happens in the Chicago set. A comparison of these two quite different recordings requires consideration from the standpoint not only of music but also of semantics, psycholinguistics, and phenomenology. It all starts with the words as spoken—or, in this case, sung. Brahms designated this work as "German" not for any nationalist reasons (he told Karl Rheinthal, director of music at the cathedral in Bremen, that he would have gladly dispensed with "German" and called it simply A Human Requiem), but to make it clear he had turned away from the petrified, alien idiom that, imperfectly mastered, inevitably affects performance. I believe all this explains the disparities between these two sets. The Munichers perform it en famille: the Chicagoans approach it as they might New York's outsized Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

Anyone familiar with James Levine's work knows that, for all his manifold brilliance, some sort of black spell seems to descend upon him whenever tempo markings drop below andante; the last movement of his Mahler Third, for instance, marked simply "slowly," gets unnervingly close to stationary, and a visitor to Bayreuth reports that Levine's Parsifal there lasted even longer than Hans Knappertsbusch's, which hardly seems humanly possible. This same misfortune touches, and sometimes afflicts, five of the seven Requiem movements—particularly the second ("All flesh is grass"), which he turns into a dirge, a dead march, with two climaxes so melodramatically overwrought that one expects, next, nothing less than the crack of doom. (The last trump—in Luther's German, "the last trombone"—does in fact turn up, but not until four movements later.)

Wolfgang Sawallisch, for valid musical reasons, takes his opening and closing movements somewhat slower than Levine, but nowhere even in them does the music lapse into the lugubrious; his pacing in all the other five movements adheres to a much more vital tempo, which lends the entire work a cohesive strength the Chicago set lacks. In all important details Sawallisch shows respect for the score. However, at bar 172 in the third movement (where that endless pedal-point on D begins), Soloists' statement that "The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God" suddenly, from one bar to the next and with no indication whatsoever in the score, goes through his performing mind, swamps the orchestra, as frequently happens in the Chicago set. As for the soloists, Kathleen Battle and Margaret Price both have heavenly voices, the former light and ethereal, the latter more substantial without ever becoming heavy. Between the two admirable baritones it seems to me a toss-up.

Little has changed in spoken German since Martin Luther made the translation of the Bible that is still standard today: for German ears, Brahms's text, selected from the Bible that is since Martin Luther made the translation of the Latin liturgy in favor of the vernacular. It seems to me a toss-up.

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SEPTEMBER 1984 69
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Philharmonia Quartet Berlin: [Toru Yuki, prod.] DENON OF 7094 ND (digital recording) (distributed by Audio Source, 1185 Chess Dr., Foster City, Calif. 94404).

For years authorities have agreed that the famous "Haydn Serenade," and the quartet in which it's imbedded, is the work not of Haydn but of his neighbor and admirer Roman Hoffstetter (1742-1815), and in The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians the beloved F major Quartet—once known as Haydn's Op. 3, No. 5, H. III:7—is consigned to the appendix of spurious compositions. Its curious genesis notwithstanding, the quartet is still a charming piece, and since there is no other convenient pigeonhole in which to drop it, performers as well as record companies continue to group it with certified Haydn products.

Here it shares vinyl space with the Op. 76, No. 2 Quintet Quartet (so called because of the prominent descending fifths in the first movement) and the Op. 76, No. 3 Kaiser Quartet (so called because its second movement is a set of variations on Haydn's Gott erzahle Franz den Kaiser, a hymn that 20th-century listeners know as the German national anthem). Perhaps that's all explained in the liner notes— they're in Japanese, which is Greek to me. In any case, these are dashing performances that hold firmly to the mainstream interpretive tradition, with most of the grace notes played before the beat and most of the well-blended sonorities coated with a moderate veneer of vibrato. The Philharmonia Quartet has a rich bottom sound, excellently projected on this very clean pressing.

JAMES WIERZBICKI

MAHLER: Symphony No. 7, in E minor.


The Mahler tradition in Amsterdam is long and lustrous. Willem Mengelberg and the Concertgebouw Orchestra eagerly championed Mahler's music, playing every new symphony as it appeared, scheduling regular Mahler festivals. There was even one occasion in October 1904 when Symphony No. 4 was presented twice on the same program, with Mahler himself conducting, the better to acquaint the Dutch audience with the wonderful "new" music. Some collectors may have heard the incredible Mengelberg-led concert recording of this symphony made in 1939, once available on Philips (PHM 500 340). The Mahler tradition was carried on by Eduard van Beinum, and by Bernard Haitink, who has recorded all of the symphonies except the last, apparently never accepting the Deryck Cooke or other versions of the incomplete Tenth. With the exception of Symphony No. 8, those earlier Philips recordings were generally of excellent sonic quality, fairly well capturing the rich sounds of this orchestra playing in its own hall. Now, with the advent of the digital age, there is talk of Haitink and the Concertgebouw rerecording many or all of the Mahler symphonies.

This first release in what may become a digital cycle offers the Symphony No. 7, in E minor. In the fall of 1982, Haitink and the Concertgebouw toured the United States with the Seventh as one of their featured works. Those who were fortunate enough to attend the Kennedy Center concert in Washington or the one at Carnegie Hall in New York heard a positively stunning, incandescent performance of this rather mysterious symphony, impeccably played, with a quiet kind of orchestral bravura that one seldom encounters in the concert hall. I wish I could say that the new Philips release conveys the magic of those performances, but it does not. Haitink is always at his best in live concerts; his Dutch reserve usually appears when microphones are present with no audience, which is what has happened here. That is not to suggest that this is not a fine performance. It is note-perfect, but that extra touch of concert-hall excitement just isn't there.
Philips's digital recording is disappointing. The dynamic range is wide, but the famed Concertgebouw sound thin here (they surely didn't that night in Washington!), and the bells at the conclusion of the symphony, which in the hall were the tintinnabulation of heavy metal, sound tinny. My dissatisfaction with this recording does not diminish my admiration for Haitink's earlier analog account, which to me remains the finest recorded statement of the work. The reproduction of the earlier set is highly acceptable and conveys the music with uncommon musicality and intelligence. In these admirable interpretations, the solid orchestral elements, avoiding sentimental slides and shifts, and possessing great interpretive insight.

Philips has outdone itself yet again: This is one of the most silent pressings I have ever encountered on a conventional disc, and the digital sound is both faithful and crystal-clear. There is simply no finer performance available of this sparkling, sunny music.

ROBERT E. BENSON

MOZART: Divertimento in D, K. 334; March in D, K. 445.


In the Divertimento in D, K. 334 (1779-80), recorded on this disc together with its introductory March, the first violin carries the melodic weight of almost the entire work and is entrusted with concerto-like pyrotechnics, from arpeggios and rapid scales to the use of high positions. Yet, Mozart being Mozart, even this "light" music is infused with countless moments of great originality and poignancy. The second movement, a gorgeous set of variations in D minor, is especially startling, being unusual for a divertimento both in its mode and in its sinuous chromaticism.

It is hard to imagine a better performance than this one by the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields Chamber Ensemble, unless you insist on an original-instrument approach. The listener is immediately captivated by the spirit of the playing—vivacious, energetic, never imposing a trace of undue Romanticism. But there is more than mere spirit here. The ensemble is precise, the intonation perfect, and the performance studied with jewel-like interpretive touches: once a slight cadential hesitation, another time an added dynamic inflection or a spontaneous manipulation of the phrasing.

Obviously, in a work of this sort the success of the performance depends to a great extent on the talent of the principal violinist. Kenneth Sillito proves to be an excellent player, ably handling the concerto-like elements, avoiding sentimental slides and shifts, and possessing great interpretive insight.

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BARBER: Concerto for Cello and Orchestra. SHOSTAKOVICH: Concerto for Cello and Orchestra. Wallfisch, English Chamber Orchestra, Simoni. CHANDOS ABRD 1085, June.

BLOOD: String Quartet No. 1*, String Quartet No. 2; Prelude; Night: Two Pieces for String Quartet*. Pro Arte Quartet. LAUREL LR 120*, LR 1267, Aug.


CHAUSON: Songs, Norman, Dalberto. Monte Carlo Philharmonic, Jordan. ERATO NUM 7509, June.


LUTOSLAWSKI: Variations on a Theme by Paganini. RACHMANINOFF: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (Transcripción XX, Savall). ANGEL S 38083, Aug.


RENAISSANCE MUSIC IN NAPLES. Hesemann, Jordan. ERATO NUM 75059, June.


Bennett Lerner, piano. [Klaus A. Posthumus, prod.]. ETEREETA ETC 1019 (digital recording). Cassette: XTC 1019. (Distributed by Qualiton Imports. 3928 Crescent St., Long Island City, N.Y. 11101.)


BARBER's '97 Ballade and Bernstein's '80 Tunes were written for the fifth and sixth installments of the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, respectively. But almost everything else on this Dutch recording owes either its creation or its resuscitation to Bennett Lerner, Copland, for example, completed the sketches for both the Proclamation (begun in 1973) and Midday Thoughts (begun in 1944) in 1982 at Lerner's urging. Thomson's '83 recitals also featured the first performance of the Piano Fantasy (1969-72) of Phillip Ramey, the composer-critic who sat for a Thomson portrait just a few days before Lerner's recording sessions took place.

Thomson's portrait of Lerner is subtitled "Senza espressione." That may describe the pianist's personality, but it hardly applies to his musicianship. These are very colorful performances: engagingly jaunty and jazzy in the Bernstein Tunes and the dance pieces by Bowles and Thomson, expansively lyrical in the Copland works and the Bowles Preludes (1934-45), elegant and wistful in the Barber Ballade, forcefully declamatory in the Ramey Fantasies. The last-mentioned is the only one of these pieces that comes close to profundity, and that's more because of the music's bracing harmonic language and aggressive gestures than because of its structure or working-out of materials. For the most part this is deliberately charming repertoire, and Lerner handles it well. The recorded sound is slightly bass-heavy, but otherwise this release is a smoothly produced showcase for some fine piano playing.

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

Timbre!

Much of music's fascination comes from diverse, vividly "present" personalities—not only those of performers and composers, but those of particular instruments. Individual compositional idioms and execution styles help shape our sense of musical "personality," but so (perhaps even more powerfully) do the sonic qualities usually classified as timbre—or in German, more accurately, as Klangfarbe.

It may be easiest to evaluate timbral effects by listening to varicolored performances of abstract music or by comparing different instrumentations of the same composition. Both approaches are possible with the latest recording of Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier. In Bk. 1, a work best known in piano versions, but which (since clavier = clavichord, harpsichord, or organ) is equally if not more suited to the clavichord, harpsichord, or organ. We've had earlier recorded examples of the first two, but the American expatriate organist Daniel Chorzempa is the first I've heard to utilize all three (Philips prestige-box digital/chrome 7654 106). [See review, August.] The choice for each prelude/fugue pair is arbitrary but usually justified: ten for clavichord, nine for harpsichord, five for organ—true period instruments as beautiful visually (in booklet illustrations) as they are fascinating aurally. Chorzempa's readings range from gloriously invigorating to mechanically routine, but whatever matters most are the magical sounds—and the fresh stimulation they give the otherwise-familiar music itself.

The bitter-sweet double-reeds. Of all timbres, few are more distinctive or appetizing than the spacy picquacies of the oboe and its siblings: oboe d'amore, English horn, and bassoon. Present tapings are dominated, as usual, by the matchless Heinz Holliger. In two Philips digital/chrome releases, he's ideally accompanied by the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields. The first (7337 304) offers the same three Bach oboe and oboe d'amore concertos and last March (in slightly different Joshua Rifkin reconstructions) by Stephen Hammer for Pro Arte. On the second (7337 311), Holliger takes over from Iona Brown as conductor, while violinist Gidon Kremer solos in Vivaldi's R. 582 Concerto and costars with the oboist in Bach's S. 1060 and Vivaldi's R. 576. Then, with Michael Gielen's Cincinnatians (Vox Cum Laude D-VCS 9064), Holliger couples a remake of his memorable interpretation of Richard Strauss's Oboe Concerto with the recorded debut of Lutosławski's rhapsodic, provocatively (rather than repellently) avant-garde Double Concerto, in which harpist Ursula Holliger is the co- star. (The work was specifically composed for them.) [See review, JUNE MUSICAL AMERICA edition.]

After Heinz Holliger, Bernhard Glauert may seem a bit small-toned at first, but his distinctive personality and uncommon agility soon hold one spellbound in a brightly recorded, musically delectable oboe concerto program with Hartmut Haenchen's Berlin Chamber Orchestra (Spectrum SC 275). Although Telemann's great F minor Concerto and Vivaldi's fine R. 448 and 461 have been recorded before, these new versions are a joy in themselves, and one's delight is redoubled in the less familiar E minor and C minor concertos that so eloquently belie those who would deprecate Telemann as no more than a prolific routinier.

But even Telemann's imaginative explorations of timbre were anticipated by Vivaldi—as can be heard in the inspired accounts of six double concertos starring various St. Martin Academy soloists under Neville Marriner (Philips digital/chrome 7337 379). Those for paired flutes, horns, mandolins, and oboes, also R. 545 for oboe and bassoon, have been recorded before, but rarely as well, and the R. 563 for two trumpets and violin is a welcome change from the popular R. 537.

Our own young West Coast "Musical Offering" ensemble also uses modern instruments, but has yet to acquire the British Academicians' Baroquean expertise. Yet the players are so aurally bewitching and radiant such infectious feeling that even a crotchety purist like me can delight in their novel Vivaldi program (Nonnensach digital/ferric 79067-4) of three orchestral chamber "concertos"—R. 94, 95, and 107, all new to me—plus two occasionally recorded sonatas: R. 53 for oboe, R. 83 for violin and cello, both with continuo. The one extreme stretch can achieve a kind of super-realism—sound in excelsis, as it were—of awesomely palpable presence. For the specialized study of timbres, nothing more can be illuminating than some of the astounding programs (boasting real-time duplication and available in variously encoded cassette and reel formats) from Direct-to-Tape Recordings (14 Station Ave., Haddon Heights, N.J. 08035). I've never heard "realer" harp tones than in the digitally recorded "Concert Harp" recital (DTR 8301, $12) by Jade Mollenhaur, a pupil of the late great Carlos Salzedo. She plays (on a Salzedo instrument) mostly his little pieces and arrangements, of scant musical interest but inexhaustible tonal charm. Eileen Grycky's and Christian Taggart's "Romantic Music for Flute and Guitar" (DTR 8315, $13) is slightly less appealing, but its mostly novel works (by Luigi Legnani, Marinus de Jong, and Benjamin Godard) are enhanced by a sparklingly "live" acoustic ambience. The one analog recording here—Thomas Murray's Trinity Church (Boston) organ derangements of pops-orchestral favorites—is, if anything, even more stupendous technologically, and thus all the more an aesthetic travesty (SK 277, $13).

Titillating as these audiosciacs may be, I soon yearn for more substantial musical satisfactions, such as those in the first reel-taping in many years of Stuyvesant's MD Vlast (Musical Heritage/Barely-Crocker double-play MHS 4495, $16.95) and the latest volume in the Fitzwilliam ensemble's series of complete Shostakovich String Quartets (Oiseau Lyre/B-C LOL D 18, $9.95). Zdeněk Köstler is no Václav Talich, and his Slovak Philharmonic not the most refined orchestra, but their Czech cycle has the right accents and its 1977 Opus recording is gleamingly clear. Furthermore, Shostakovich's Quartets Nos. 3 and 11 are as profoundly moving as those in the four earlier reel issues (two more are still to come).

Other current reels from Barclay-Crocker (313 Mill St., Poughkeepsie, N.Y. 12601) are programs I've praised earlier in cassette editions: Pro Arte's digitally recorded Odeon Trio versions of the Dvořák Second and Fourth (Dunkey) Trios (PRO 0130, $9.95) and the two great Schubert Piano Trios (PRO 0202 double-play, $18.95). Also Vols. 1 and II of the incompressible Academy of Ancient Music period instrument Mozart Symphonies and Sinfonias (Oiseau Lyre/B-C LOL D 167D-3 and D 168D-3, $27.95 each).

Hard as it may be for nonreelists to believe, all these sound better than ever in reel format, which also eliminates some of the inconvenient turnovers in the two Schubert cassettes and the three-cassette Mozart collections.

HF
A Musician for Life

T-Bone Burnett was The Next Big Thing in 1983. Then, suddenly, no record contract.

by Samuel Graham

"This is a new kind of interview," says T-Bone Burnett. "I'm only gonna use two words: swingin' and cool. So if you ask me what I've been doing, I'll say I've just been swingin'." Burnett is a little tired of talking to the press, and he has a right to feel that way. Three excellent releases in three years earned this musician the Songwriter of the Year award in the national Rolling Stone Critics' Poll last winter. The same week that news appeared, Warner Bros. coincidentally failed to renew his recording contract. Bonnie Raitt and Jonathan Richman have also been dropped by the label recently, though in T-Bone's case the decision was particularly incongruous.

But Joseph Henry "T-Bone" Burnett has been doing a good deal more lately than swingin' and being cool. He has toured almost incessantly as a solo act, including several dates with Elvis Costello. As a producer, Burnett is working with Los Lobos, a superb Mexican-American band from Los Angeles, on their second album together. He's also writing songs and developing a film score.

So far, however, T-Bone's adventures as a recording artist have not been the stuff of which dreams are made. At thirty-six, Burnett has been playing the record game for nearly 20 years. A native of Fort Worth, Texas, he grew up on a diet of local country and R&B, from Willie Nelson to Jimmy Reed. He learned to play guitar when he was ten years old, worked in various bands, and by the time he was seventeen co-owned Clifford Herring Sound, a Fort Worth studio noted for such pop classics as Hey Paula and The Last Kiss. "I pimped to buy it," he deadpans. "Actually, you didn't need that much money to buy a studio. And you didn't need much experience to be an engineer—it was just at the beginning of the technological boom. I went in there and started plugging things in. I spent days and days experimenting, making horrible records."

Burnett kept on producing and engineering in Fort Worth, working with Delbert McClinton, Lou Ann Barton, Betty Buckley, and others; he also had his own B-52 Band (no, not those B-52's). But by the mid-Seventies, he'd left Texas far behind for the greener pastures of Los Angeles and New York. In '76, Burnett was playing with longtime Bob Dylan cohort Bobby Neuwirth when Dylan himself showed up and invited the band to join his Rolling Thunder Revue. "It was my first weekly paycheck," says T-Bone, "and the first time I'd ever gone out on the road for six or eight weeks at a stretch." It was also the period of Dylan's much-publicized conversion to Christianity, an event in which Burnett was said to have played a significant part.

With two other Rolling Thunder members, Steven Soles and David Mansfield, Burnett went on to form the Alpha Band and signed with Arista, an arrangement he later called "a marriage made in Forest Lawn." Sometimes brilliant, sometimes merely obscure, their three albums for the label failed to sell, despite considerable critical acclaim.

That same pattern has continued into Burnett's solo career. "Truth Decay" is a rare combination of brains and brawn, wit and insight—smart music that also rocks. But the album suffered from poor distribution. That wasn't a problem for "Trash Door" or "Proof Through the Night," but despite some fine songs, guest appearances...
by Pete Townshend, Richard Thompson, Ry Cooder, and others, those records didn't sell much either. Somewhat bloodied but unbowed, Burnett is now laying low, plotting his next move in the vinyl wars.

Backbeat: How's life without an album contract?
Burnett: Well, there's a few offers. I'm listening to everybody. I've learned a lot. I have some idea now of what I've done, and what I've failed to do. I'm learning how to be generous and humorous onstage; my records come off very serious and severe, and I'm not really like that.

Backbeat: You're not in a hurry to record again.
Burnett: I don't think there is any hurry.
Backbeat: Is that a change in attitude?
Burnett: Not really. I've been that way my whole life. At first I was terrified of record contracts. I really love their people, they're decent. There is a touch of irony in what I just said, but I think they want to see me do well. Leaving was pretty much a mutual decision.

Backbeat: Perhaps you didn't see eye to eye.
Burnett: They helped me tremendously. But they need a different record right now than I'm prepared to make.

Backbeat: What do you think of "Trap Door" and "Proof Through the Night"?
Burnett: The production on "Proof" got overblown. Live. Hefner and Disney is very funny; on the record it sounds a little Moody Blues-ish.

Backbeat: I agree. The demos I heard of "The Alpha Band" and "I'm Coming Home" reminded me of "Truth Decay." Those claims must be pretty hard to live up to.

Burnett: They got overproduced. It's my fault. ultimately, for letting it get past me. But at the time, I was preoccupied with singing well.

Backbeat: Who's Jeff Eyrich?
Burnett: I don't know.

Backbeat: Didn't he produce "Proof"?
Burnett: Yeah. Uh, he did Million Miles Away by the Plimsouls. He's okay.

Backbeat: Why didn't you act as producer?
Burnett: The deal we had with Glyn Johns fell through, but we already had the musicians booked in England, and if I hadn't gone into the studio, the record wouldn't have come out until this year. So Eyrich was there, and my managers said, "Try this guy." I wasn't happy about it, but it wasn't anyone's fault.

Backbeat: Did you want to be on your own?
Burnett: No, I wanted a producer, really bad, so I could just play and sing. But that's a hard person to find, especially since producing is primarily what I do.

Backbeat: Do you like "Trap Door" better than "Proof"?
Burnett: I don't know... I listened to "Truth Decay" two or three weeks ago; I like that. I think the next one will be similar, in that I'm gonna try to do it inexpensively and quickly, with few musicians.

There's probably one really good song on every record—"Shut It Tight" (on "Proof Through the Night"); "Power of Love and I'm Coming Home" (both on "Truth Decay"); and "Trap Door." There isn't a really bad song in the lot. But those three records were pretty much written at the same time, and they're all about the same thing. The new songs are a lot more positive and funny, and they also have a lot to do with what I've learned about communicating from the last couple of years of performing. The studio's such an insular place.

Backbeat: When "Proof" came out, you were called "the quintessential artist of the Eighties"; another quote from the press said you were like Dylan in his "John Wesley Harding" period. Those claims must have been pretty hard to live up to.

Burnett: I don't think all that stuff matters. What makes a difference is if the music is really good and generous.

Backbeat: Why do you suppose your records failed to connect with a larger public?
Burnett: What I'm doing and talking about is not part of a trend. It's not mass-popularity music. There aren't a lot of eight-year-olds who are gonna understand what I'm talking about in "Trap Door." The audience is growing, but slowly, person to person.

Backbeat: Is it also possible that, to the people who did understand, you were a bit preachy, because you wrote so many pointed, sarcastic commentaries?
Burnett: Maybe. I don't think of them that way, but people probably have some preconceptions about me. I know that any discussion of morality begins with oneself—that's about all I'll say.

Backbeat: Well, let me put it this way. On "Truth Decay," you had House of Mirrors, a talking blues in which you identified what you thought were basic falsehoods about the way some people live, the sheep mentality and all.

Burnett: That song's very funny, too.

Backbeat: It is, but two records later, The Statue says the same sort of thing. Hefner and Disney is also fairly high-minded. As a listener, I got tired of that.

Burnett: As I said, they're all basically the same album, starting with Quicksand and ending with Shut It Tight. I know their spirit is benevolent. They're for the individual; their goal is to encourage the individual to go on. It is a lot to swallow. I do agree with what you're saying; I wrote Shut It Tight because I knew it was time to end that chapter. The new songs are more obviously affirmative; one's called Let's Clean Up This City.

Backbeat: What about the music?
Burnett: It's simpler, and more melodic.

Backbeat: I hear you've written something with the band U2 called Having a Wonderful Time, Wish You Were Her. That's an unusual collaboration. How did it happen?

Burnett: We were staying in the same hotel and we ran into each other in the bar. [U2 vocalist] Bono is a great guy, and an amazing rock and roll singer. I don't know who'd record that, although it's on a real standard subject—pretty broken-hearted. It's supposed to be funny, too, but you have to be careful with humor; you start writing novelty songs if you don't watch it. Part of the failure of "Proof Through the Night" was that some of the funny songs were taken too seriously.

Backbeat: Such as?
Burnett: Hefner and Disney, primarily. It is an allegory, but I didn't mean it as an epic. It's just a little song. The Murder Weapon is about the tongue: "It can kill from any distance, but you never see it strike/There isn't any warning, no blinding flash of light..." On the record, people think it's about nuclear weapons or something.

Backbeat: How has playing solo helped you focus yourself?
Burnett: It has forced me to get down to the heart of what I'm doing.

Backbeat: Not to be cynical, but playing solo has its financial benefits.
Burnett: That's not cynical, just practical. A lot of people can make money for a year or a few years, but it's the very rare person who can actually be a musician for life. That's what you have to come to grips with. If you are, what's it gonna be? What are you willing to do?

Backbeat: What are you willing to do?
Burnett: I think I can continue what I've been doing this year.

Backbeat: Playing solo, and writing?
Burnett: Yeah, if worst comes to worst. HF

Selected Discography
T-BONE BURNETT
Truth Decay, Takoma TAK 7080; 1980.
Proof Through the Night, Warner Bros. 2392-1; 1983.

With BOB DYLAN
Hard Rain, Columbia 34349; 1976.

With THE ALPHA BAND
The Alpha Band, Arista AB 4102; 1976.
Spark in the Dark, Arista AB 4145; 1977.

Make Mine Monk

Various Artists: That's the Way I Feel Now
Hal Willner, producer
A&M SP 660 (two discs)

Thelonious Monk died in 1982. Memorial concerts and LPs quickly and rightfully canonized this modern jazz titan as a founding father, but along with Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker, and Miles Davis, Monk deeply affected all postwar pop. Delicately spare melodies that toyed with dissonance and densely clustered, highly emotional harmonic voicings were just two startling revelations of his musical personality; he also incorporated shifting dynamics in his rhythms as effectively as any 20th-century composer.

"That's the Way I Feel Now" (the original working title of the famous Monk's Mood) is a lovingly constructed, generally brilliant two-disc set that brings together a wide spectrum of rock and jazz players and arrangers, who grew up in the '50s and '60s and felt Monk's influence strongly. Two years ago producer Hal Willner (who has been Saturday Night Live's musical coordinator for the past four seasons) was responsible for the success of a similar concept LP, "Amarcord Nino Rota," a tribute to Fellini's longtime musical collaborator by the Detroit production team Was (Not Was), slightly less iconoclastic, revolves around a space-age New Orleans funeral march beat and Sheila Jordan's wafting, ethereal scat-singing.

The album's more left-field, rock-oriented collaborations may not go down well with bebop purists; indeed, some cuts are better than others. Spedding's restructuring of Work into a hard-rock stomp sets up Frampton's ersatz-flamenco solo nicely; one suspects that Spedding's discovery of his own resonant inner harmonies would have made Monk smile in approval. Todd Rundgren, hearing Four in One as a deliberately cheesy, drum-machine shuffle beat, stuffs a sound effects barrage in between the notes of Gary Windo's lurching alto solo, with hilarious results.

Thelonious Monk inspired everyone from Carla Bley to Joe Jackson to NRBQ (above).

For additional reviews of Pop and Jazz music on videodisc and Compact Disc, see New Technologies.
Toss together heavy doses of scat singing, feminist lyrics rarely heard in the jazz world, and mix into a base of African and Latin polyrhythms. That’s Alive!, the Bay Area’s jazz collective, whose “City Life” — its third offering in seven years, maintains the quintet’s claims to eclecticism. But unlike its performances and previous live albums, the too-brief cuts on “City Life” — all averaging around four minutes, don’t permit the instrumentalists to take creative solos, and too often their energetic ensemble playing starts cooking as the song ends.

Despite the group’s “politically correct” workstyle of collective arranging and equality for all five core members — Janet Small (keyboards), rhiannon (lead vocals), Barbara Borden (drums), Carolyn Brandy (conga and percussion), and Susanne Vincenza (bass and cello) — rhiannon is highlighted here, as exemplified on the winning title track. Her frenetic scatting spree, accelerated by the percussion section, lists the hectic schedule of a modern mother who rushes the kids to school, ditches onto the freeway, puts in a busy day at the office, but still finds time to make love, take a sauna, and listen to Amazons calling. Small’s bouncy What Is Life hops along on Borden’s sensitive cymbals and a saxophone solo from guest artist Mary Fettig; rhiannon’s punchy phrasings against Small’s piano accent the upbeat philosophical lyrics.

The Brazilian beats of Skindo Le Le are a perfect vehicle for Brandy’s and Borden’s explosive jamming. But Fettig almost steals the show from them on the instrumental Afreaka. And while Small has emerged as a first-rate writer, the ethereal arrangements on her Happy Ending resemble meditation music rather than jazz. Anouman — Lazy Afternoon, the album’s other ballad, also suffers from a draggy melody and overly spaced-out vocals. On Diamonds Are Where You Find Them, the
John Hicks

John Hicks, producer
Theresa TR 119 (1300) Solano Ave.,
Albany, Calif. 94706

Pianist John Hicks, a perennial sideman, is
beginning to think like a leader. His New LP
may not be his first foray on his own, but its
unexpected delights make it come off like a
new start. This success is attributable as
much to what Hicks doesn’t do as to what
he does.

It’s the rare mainstream second-stringer
who will opt for more than the standard
horror plus rhythm lineup in the studio. The
chosen material usually as predictable: a
few standards, a couple of blues, and if
we’re lucky an original or two. Such a
familiar setup is no reflection of the final
product, the playing can be quite inspired in
a comfortable, no-risk sort of way. But
when the rules have been deliberately bro-
ken, there is a certain payoff.

Through imaginative and thoughtful
production, Hicks has been able to transform
what could well have been another
professional blowing session into a modest
event. He avoids both horns and the basic
piano-bass-drums rhythm section. Four
tracks feature the unusual grouping of piano
with vibraphone (Rollie Andrew), guitar
(John Knowles), and bass (Herb Cook),
and tunes by Hutcherson, Walter Davis.

A likley for more than the standard
new start. This success is attributable as
unexpected delights make it come off like a
most to what Hicks doesn’t do as to what
of Hicks’s generation. The
nakedness generates swinging
in仪表ments of Hicks’s generation. The
nakedness of the material generates swinging
aggressiveness in everyone’s playing; this
chamber jazz that has meat on its bones.

Hicks is not an innovative pianist. His
influences—a little McCoy Tyner, a bit of
Duke Ellington, a lot of Bill Evans—are
always apparent in his playing. But his
straightforward, unpretentious style sets
him apart. He leis the music reveal itself,
shaping beautiful melodies with an ease that
is free of affectation or cluttered embellish-
ments. His ruthlessly driving improvisa-
tions are never independent of the com-
positions; tunes are never mere excuses for
dissipate. Sebesky, who now plays electric
the kind of personal
result, he consistently achieves
concerned with involving the whole ensem-

Now, at the age of forty-seven, Sebes-
ky is finally fronting a band. His arrange-
ments derive from Gil Evans, but he’s
much more disciplined—less inclined to let
a soloist ramble on into eternity and more
concerned with involving the whole ensem-
ble. As a result, he consistently achieves
the kind of personal interpretation that
Evans’s overly laidback attitude tends to
dissipate. Sebesky, who now plays electric
virtuosic display.

Because he is so dependable and
adaptable, we tend to take Hicks for grant-
ed. Now is the perfect time for that to
change; “John Hicks” is the sleeper of this
year’s ten best jazz albums.

STEVE FUTTERMAN

Don Sebesky: Full Cycle
Don Sebesky, producer
GNP Crescendo 2164 (8400 Sunset Blvd.,
Los Angeles, Calif. 90069)

Along with those of Slide Hampton and
Willie Maiden, the compositions and
arrangements of trombonist Don Sebesky
gave Maynard Ferguson’s late ’50s band
a strong identity. After a year there, howev-
er, Sebesky gave up the trombone to devote
himself to writing and conducting. With
producer Creed Taylor he created “the CTI
sound,” providing classical and jazz-
inspired settings for many performers,
including Wes Montgomery and George
Benson.

Now, at the age of forty-seven, Sebes-
ky is finally fronting a band. His arrange-
ments derive from Gil Evans, but he’s
much more disciplined—less inclined to let
a soloist ramble on into eternity and more
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Max Roach: Standard Time
Jim Fishel, producer
Polygram EnArcy Jazz Series 814 190-1
(two discs)

FEW MAJOR Bandleaders have been given more lip service from critics and less archival support from the record industry than drummer Max Roach, who formed two of the most exciting and innovative bands around during that most fertile of jazz eras from 1954 to 1960. Brown-Roach Inc., the cooperative unit he co-led with trumpeter Clifford Brown from 1954 to '56, was the greatest of all hard bop bands; Roach's 1958–60 association with another brilliant trumpeter, Booker Little, produced music that can stand with the post-bop explorations of Miles Davis and Ornette Coleman. Want to hear this stuff? The BRI material is available in this country only through Japanese imports, and Roach's work with Little is either on obscure independent labels or totally out of print.

So my feelings about "Standard Time" are ambivalent. This grab bag of studio outtakes and random selections from previously released but now unavailable albums is a tease—or at best a mixed blessing. Hearing such assorted gems from a golden age only reminds us that the bulk of these treasures, and the most important ones, are out of reach. Finding a lost track from BRI while the "Jordu" LP is still unobtainable on an American label is like discovering a forgotten Chaplin short while The Gold Rush is out of circulation.

This neglect only adds to the obsessive folklore that feeds jazz record buying. "Sure," the rabid collector sneers, "if you think that's great, you should have heard the one that got away." I usually bristle at that luxurious attitude, but in Roach's case it's perfectly justified. Nearly everything he did in the last half-decade of the Fifties is great, and all of it deserves to be heard.

By hooking up with Brown, Roach formed a classic band on his first try. Brown had it all: gorgeous tone, effortless execution, and sinfully melodic ideas. His playing leaves you with a rush of elation—everything seems to be within his grasp. No musician since Armstrong has been able to coax such radiant joy out of his instrument. Brown was an Olympian talent untouched by hubris. His was the sound of pure confidence.

Playing the hardest hard bop, BRI's favorite and most comfortable tempo was up, way up. Roach took the band's moniker seriously; his drums were part of the front line right alongside the horns. When the music got hot, as it does on Blues Walk (this album's only Brown entry and a previously unreleased outtake), the pace was just ridiculous. But the musicians maintained an inward repose; at full throttle, Brown-Roach Inc. were lyric poetry delivered with the collective force of a Mack truck.

When Brown was killed in a car accident in 1956, the group's sound he had helped mold hardened into formula. Certain devices of the original unit—pitting two horns together for climactic effect, occasional forays into waltz time, uptempo renditions of standards and Ellington numbers—all these were retained for Brown's replacement, Kenny Dorham. "Standard Time" devotes the greatest amount of space to this transitional band, whose primary recordings are (need I say it), for the most part, unavailable.

One of jazz's great underdogs, Dorham did an admirable job of coping with a no-win deal, ultimately emerging as one of the finest stylists of his generation. "Standard Time" helps chart this development. Knowing he couldn't touch Brown's chops, Dorham concentrated on the more important lesson of the master—form and substance. His solos on Mr. X, Minor Trouble, and Valse Hot, while never approaching the magnificent architecture of Brown's, are still ingeniously crafted. Dorham's playing is always lean, crisp, and convincing. That remains a high premium in the genre.

The Brown mold was finally broken in 1958 when Roach put together a new band whose tempered radicalism mirrored the changes that were taking place as the Fifties ended. Although this music is now no more than a historical footnote, it incorporated some of the most cogent aspects of the pia-no-less freedom and tonal experimentation of Coleman, and the modal expansions of Davis. By hiring young musicians like Little and changing the instrumentation (he replaced the piano with a tuba, for example), Roach was able to completely revamp his group's sound and identity. Of the two cuts presented here, only Monk's Bemsha Swing gives an indication of the inventiveness of this band. Principal soloist and occasional composer/arranger, Little is a giant whose best music still goes unheard. He took Brown's bop technique and drive and brought it into the post-bop era. His use of tonal manipulation, off-center time, and dissonant orchestral voicings—as a player and composer—sounds daring even today (that is, if you can locate his records). But what immediately and irrevocably sets him apart from Brown is his profound sorrow. Even at his most effusive moments, Little's sound is disturbing in its dire intensity. With hindsight it could be called foreshadowing. Three years after joining Roach, Little died of uremia at age twenty-four.

"Standard Time" hints at these various bands, which is reason enough to buy it. For the Roach novice, the album makes a fine introduction to great music that, because of its unavailability, has already acquired iconic status. For collectors, the oddities (an entire side of intense but overlong jamming) and randomness of the selections (the drummers' battle Rich versus Roach) are anything but a drawback. Still, the whole thing seems a bit self-defeating. Without access to this album's sources, "Standard Time" is like an addendum to nothing.

Steve Futterman is a free-lance writer who contributes regularly to Musician and Record.

Percussion Sweet and Bitter
Reviewed by Steve Futterman

Trumpeter Booker Little (left) with bandleader Max Roach in '58: tempered radicalism

SEPTMBEB 1984
Backbeat Reviews

piano, uses the instrument judiciously, for added color.

On this debut he has chosen a half-dozen standards by six stars. Miles Davis's All Blues, John Lewis's Django, Bud Powell's Un Poco Loco, Bill Evans's Walse for Debbie, Freddie Hubbard's Internal Fox, and John Coltrane's Naima-managing, miraculously, to improve on even the best of these in their original form. All Blues becomes an even more compelling mood piece; various instrumental lines drift and float like smoke rings, sometimes resolving in solos. Sebesky hears Django as a mournful Spanish theme, using Lew Soloff's trumpet. Alex Foster's flute, and a doleful guitar played by his son, Ken, to bring out the full sense of sadness. On the other hand, Un Poco Loco, a crisply tumultuous series of solos and challenges accented by Jimmy Madison's drumming, enlarges on Powell's

But something is missing. It's not the genre's sexy blues undercurrent. Where many women aim for the coy and arch to get sexuality across, Ball's big phrasing and midrange soprano convey credible passion. And it's not a lack of originality. Ball's version of Jailbird, with its promise "I'll never hit another man," and her decision to allow a self-penned My Mind's Made Up, are inventive twists. What makes this singer utterly real, and what will probably end her, is her straightforward simplicity. Joplin succeeded as caricature, Ball succeeds as nice-girl-geenuinely naive. Marcia Ball sings and plays full-blooded, articulate, thoughtful, and heartfelt. She's no fantasy. And she just may be too honest to stick.

Leslie Heman

Detroit Gold, Vols. 1 and 2

Ollie McLaughlin & others, producers
Solid Smoke SS 8021 & 8022 (P.O. Box 22372, San Francisco, Calif. 94122)

In any city that supports an active local scene, there will be artists not quite consistent enough to make it onto the chart label, but capable of delivering a few strong records. They usually wind up with a smaller company. Thus, Memphis rockabilly unwound by Sun went to Meteor; a decade later, soul artists who couldn't cut it with Stax-Volt usually landed on Gold Wax. In Detroit, during the Sixties heyday of Motown, they went to three labels run by Ollie McLaughlin: Karen, Carla, and Moira. The two volumes of "Detroit Gold" gather the best of their efforts. There's enough here for one dynamic set (a la Meteor's "Hillbilly Bop, Memphis Style"), but spread over two albums, the pickings are thinner.

What's immediately obvious is the clout Motown itself exerted, inevitably, over any recording artist. Though some of these sides also show the influence of Curtis Mayfield's Chicago soul sound, a cut like Belita Woods's My Magic Corner (Vol. 1), with its rumbling bass intro set against
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This can't be the same Dream Syndicate that emerged a couple years back playing obvious Velvet Underground derivations with drive, abandon, and guilelessness while bands all around them were falling with the same ploy. "Medicine Show" sounds more like a studio band shaped by an outsider, producer Sandy Pearlman. And if their version of bargain-basement L.A. psychedelia is still harsher than most, this album remains very much a corporate product, with the urge for radio airplay subsuming the music.

Telltale signs are everywhere. Bassist Kendra Smith, whose murky understory had more to do with the group's sound than a bass line usually does, is gone, replaced by the more precise timekeeper David Provost. This cuts deeply into the momentum Dream Syndicate always built up in the studio as well as live, which not only diminishes our enjoyment of the past but also spoils the present. The band has fallen back, as well, to less than its best self.

Linton Kwesi Johnson

Linton Kwesi Johnson: Making History

Linton Kwesi Johnson & Dennis Bovell, producers. Mango MLPS 9770

With what the conventions and the stumbling, this is shaping up as the Summer of Talk. How opportune, then, that Linton Kwesi Johnson's "Making History" should come out now: An album of monologues that never feel like speeches, it's all unforgettable talk. A second-generation Jamaican journalist and activist in England, Johnson is, distantly, reggae's Stud Sutick. He grew up working-class and then he changed, but he has never forgotten—nor stopped reminding anyone who'll listen—about working-class problems. Johnson doesn't theorize so much as mobilize. Then he jams on it, repeatedly, to skewed reggae backings as muscular as the street tussles he writes about.

Johnson hasn't come close to match-
ing his militant, piercing 'Dread Beat an' Blood,' released in the States in 1982. But there's not a weak cut on "Making History"—he talks with more feeling, more rhythm, and more sense than most singers know about. He never raises his boggy, impersonal voice; it has the gravity (though not the deceptive clarity) of a BBC announcer. Johnson's broadcasts are the kind of current events that BBC declines to cover; the title cut, for instance, reveals the lie of the official British explanation for recent black and Asian riots. Di Eagle an' Di Bear concerns the plight of Third World people too busy worrying about food to fight against the arms race.

The band behind Johnson usually supports its leader. reggae crooner Dennis Bovell, but Johnson takes it places Bovell has never seen. And he takes it places reggae rarely goes: There's up-front blues on Wat About Di Workin' Class?!, even a reference to Italian movie music in Reggie Fi Rodni.

There has been a tsunami of good talk lately, none of it generating from the campaign trail: the slick-schmooze of the New York rappers on these shores and a wave of dub poets revolutionizing reggae in Jamaica. But the original is still the best. Johnson's too much of a left scholar, and too damned good a poet, to claim he's just another face in the street. And yet, there is his voice: deliberate and burdened, as unindividual as a complaint from a crowd. That hardened, resolute voice is "Making History"'s greatest success.

RJ SMITH

Bruce Springsteen: Born in the U.S.A.
Bruce Springsteen, Jon Landau, Chuck Plotkin, & Steve Van Zandt
producers. Columbia QC 38653

On "Nebraska," his recorded-at-home 1982 solo LP, Bruce Springsteen stripped away both myth and melody to make an album that was stark and unemittingly sad. While it didn't quite succeed on its own terms—his bare-bones narratives were more depressing than cathartic—"Nebraska" marked a crucial break from Springsteen's pop-opera past. He seemed to have grown weary of his rock-as-redemption fables and larger-than-life image, unlike the average star, he tried to be self-effacing, a demigod wanting only to be a regular guy. He jumped off his pedestal by flinging his version of life in the face of his fans as if it were a bucket of cold water.

As "Born in the U.S.A." proves, that album was a turning point, not merely a pause, in his career. No longer the romantic renegade, Springsteen reapproaches rock with a folk singer's storytelling power and just the right distance from the glory days of his long-term adolescence. What links his work old and new is the well-muscled playing of the E Street Band, which transforms these hard-luck tales of blue-collar life into bracing, full-blown drama that is grand.
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BACKBEAT Reviews

instead of grandiose. Springsteen’s anger is stinging (on the thunderous title track), his humor rollicking (on Darlington County), his sense of personal regret palpable (on Bobby Jean, a poignant, veiled message to ex-band member Steve Van Zandt)—and the pain accumulated here is ultimately exorcised. As Springsteen points out, dancing in the dark has its therapeutic effects.

Ironically, now that he has captured the voice of the common man, the renewed vigor of “Born in the U.S.A.” might turn the Boss into an across-the-board pop star. No sweat, though. Think of it this way: one of us made good.

MICHAEL HILL

Little Steven: Big Bruce wasn’t enough.

Little Steven: Voice of America
Little Steven, producer
EMI America ST 17120

On “Voice of America,” Little Steven—aka. “Miami” Steve Van Zandt—moves off the streets and into the jungle. “Men Without Women” was an elegiac ode to his urban roots and the redemptive qualities of rock and roll; “Voice” is a political call to arms. Unlike his former boss, Bruce Springsteen, Van Zandt writes about groups rather than individuals, direct issues instead of metaphorical situations. “America” for Van Zandt spans both Latin and Northern regions: his new songs are explicit attacks on threats of fascism, terrorism, and impending war that know no boundaries.

With its ten sober, anthemic flag-wavers, whose titles include Justice, Among the Believers, and I Am a Patriot, “Voice of America” may bring to mind the ranting pontifications of the Clash at their worst. Fear not, “Voice” is no “Sandinista!” Van Zandt escapes self-righteousness (Continued on page 87)
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Jukes and Springsteen far behind. If his percussion, having memories of both the horns and put new emphasis on guitars and side Johnny and the Jukes: “Voice” is but elegant r&b that he crafted for South -

new defensive
tions, Van Zandt is a revolutionary who

BACKBEAT REVIEWS

passion.

Because of the thrust of his band’s attack,
meshed with cutting Latin -funk rhythms.

ROLLING STONES of last year’s “Undercov -

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be taken seriously. This album

compelling individual who demands to

might get buried, which would be too bad.

steen’s “Born in the U.S.A.” “Voice”

creating the hottest tracks for the man to

had played it safe after being cut

Peter Wolf: Lights Out
Michael Jonzun & Peter Wolf,
producers. EMI America SJ 17121

The name of the game in pop culture these
days is Mix and Match the Genres. Whether
it’s movies like Gremlins, or a record like
the Style Council’s “My Ever Changing Mood,” all past styles are open for use
and/or abuse, thrown together to create
new and often startling syntheses. This Cui -

nast rap approach may not have seemed the easiest way for Peter Wolf, onetime singer/
local point/wildman for a little band known
as J. Geils, to step out into the spotlight as a
solo act. No one would have blamed the
guy if he had played it safe after being cut

Yet “Lights Out” works so well
because it never retreats and hides behind
the old forms. The key is the chemistry
between Wolf and his coproducer, Jonzun
Crew honcho and fellow Bostonian Mi -

chanism challenges Wolf’s intuitive
feel for most black pop of the postwar years
(including the last crucial half-decade) by
creating the hottest tracks for the man to
howl on. Whether Wolf and Jonzun are
scrambling behind a flute solo, as in the
searching Oo-Ee-Diddley-Bop, or follow -
ing that with a heavily synth-textured
atempt at Billie Holiday’s Glamo -

In a spotty career, his
best known, but Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye is
on domestic one-upmanship. may be the
half -speed remastering contributes greatly

Steven Van Zandt’s defensive stance, “Men Without Women” was the apotheosis of the tough
but elegant r&b that he crafted for Southside Johnny and the Jukes: “Voice” is loud, bolting hard rock. He has dropped the horns and put new emphasis on guitars and percussion, having memories of both the Jukes and Springsteen far behind. If his sound is reminiscent of anyone, it’s the Rolling Stones of last year’s “Undercover.”

Besides their similar themes, both albums share a metallic chordal texture meshed with cutting Latin-funk rhythms. Because of the thrust of his band’s attack, Van Zandt is able to turn his serviceable voice into a real means of expression, matching their roar with his own unbridled passion.

With the concurrent release of Springsteen’s “Born in the U.S.A.” “Voice” might get buried, which would be too bad. In any of his incarnations, Van Zandt is a compelling individualist who demands to be taken seriously. The album and its message are to be avoided at your own risk.

STEVE FUTTERMAN

Johnny Winter: Guitar Slinger
Johnny Winter, Bruce Iglauer,
& Dick Shurman, producers
Alligator AL 4735
(Box 60234, Chicago, Ill. 60660)

On the aptly titled “Guitar Slinger,” Johnny Winter comes out looking for a fight, laying down guitar solos like rows of barbed wire and daring anybody to cross

him. “It’s my life, baby. Let me live it like
I please.” he announces in a defiant growl.

Though often heard on a Chicago label labeled and backed by some of the Windy City’s finest players, Winter is completely in his own

every period. A spotty career, his
most notable achievement was probably his
work as producer of the late Muddy Waters’ final batch of LPs, beginning with “Hard Again.”

“Guitar Slinger” may have been inspired by the success of Stevie Ray Vaughan’s 1983 “Texas Flood.” which revitalized the blues trio format. Of these ten unfamiliar but classically styled songs, Earl King’s Trick Bag, a sly commentary on domestic one-upmanship, may be the best known, but Kist Tomorrow Goodbye is the real find. with a chord progression that has graced countless soul numbers. The album is designed as a guitar handbook: some Elmore Jamesian slide playing, some Texas shuffle, some dirty Chicago howlin’ and tumblin’. (It’s missing Delta blues, but there’s plenty of that on the LP Winter recently produced for harmonica player Sonny Terry, “Whoops.”)

Although thematically “Guitar Slinger” tends on reactionary ground when it comes to male-female, um, relationships (murder is actually threatened on Boot Hill, for example), the album has the cut-loose spontaneity of a jam session without a jam (murder is actually threatened on Boot Hill, for example). The album has the cut-loose spontaneity of a jam session without a jam, and the axioms of the blues is a smart move for Winter: its boundaries prove liberating for him, because this music goes to his core.

MITCHELL COHEN

RUBINSTEIN FEAST
(Continued from page 82)

The performance with Walter Susskind of Rachmaninoff’s Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini presents a fascinating contrast when compared to the collaboration less than a decade later with Fritz Reiner, newly reissued by RCA in its .5 series. The first is an extremely effective virtuoso run-through, and quite satisfying on its own terms. But hearing the Chicago version, one realizes afresh just how much Rubinstein must have thought and matured, all at an age when most pianists are only too content to relax and repeat (if possible) former glories. If there is any performance that contradicts the oft repeated charge that the great “Arturo” was slightly superficial (especially when compared to . . .), try this on for size—and enjoyment. (The playing of the Second Concerto is also fine, if not on the same level as the Rhapsody.) RCA’s half-speed remastering contributes greatly to making these wonderful past performances seem alive and present, and to making them sound superior to records made decades later.

If your interest has been piqued by any of this, there is something else to anticipate: the publication in the current issue of the Beecham Society magazine, Le Grand Bat -

of a complete Rubinstein discography by Donald Manildi. If nothing else, it should reveal to any doubters the full extent of Rubinstein’s contribution to our musical life. One looks forward to seeing it and to

finding out in detail what might yet remain to be reissued.

To conclude, the best thing one could say about all these discs (and everything else Rubinstein recorded, for that matter) would be to endorse what was expressed by a few of Rubinstein’s own words from a 1977 PBS telecast: “There is a certain thing .. . which goes out from my emotions—‘from the feeling’—if you like to call it. soul . . . .” To that I would add an invitation, again echoing Rubinstein himself: Come and feast, or, as you will, come and sample . . . but, in any case, certainly do come—to a supreme pianistic celebration, all graciously presided over for our lasting pleasure by the grandest pianist of our time.

WAYNE KING

SEPTEMBER 1984

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