VIDEO
Mitsubishi monitor/receiver
Vidicraft video enhancer

AUDIO
Denon receiver
Yamaha tuner
Technics turntable
Hafler preamp
Plus latest models from Ohm
Audio-Technica
Micro-Audio
and Audio-Technica
JVC INTRODUCES THE VIDEO TAPE THAT SOUNDS BETTER THAN ANY AUDIO TAPE.

JVC’s Hi-Fi VHS videotape will make any VHS recorder a top performer, but the picture quality isn’t the whole picture. When used on one of the new Hi-Fi video decks, it actually sounds better than any audio tape you can buy.

Utilizing new titanium oxide for the first time ever, JVC engineered this tape especially for recording an audio signal deep within the magnetic coating. The result is sound reproduction of such high quality that it can significantly improve the sound quality of even the most advanced stereo system.

A TAPE SO ADVANCED, IT HELPS WITH THE CLEANING.

Our Hi-Fi VHS tape gives you a picture so life-like it’s startling. And the video head cleaning properties of JVC’s unique titanium oxide coating help keep it that way, without drop outs. JVC videotapes are designed to keep your memories from fading.

SUPER HIGH GRADE COMPLETES THE PICTURE.

For perfect video quality, JVC’s Super High Grade videotape is what you should be looking at. It’s the same tape we chose for our revolutionary TC-20 VHS-C cassette, used in our new ultra-light VideoMovie camcorder system. About the size of a deck of cards, this cassette delivers a level of quality way out of proportion to its size.

GET A BETTER LOOK.

JVC makes an entire line of high quality videotape for VHS recorders, from Standard Grade right on up to Hi-Fi VHS. And remember, they are the only videotapes that come to you direct from the original developers of the VHS format: the people at JVC.

JVC videotapes—the more you see them, the better they look. You can buy them singly, or in convenient six packs.

MAGNETIC TAPE DIVISION (VHS)
Audio

Currents  Edited by Peter Dobbin  
Nakamichi meets CD; Trinitron refined; Best-ever speakers from JBL  

The Autophile  by Robert Angus  
Compact Discs take the helm—literally.  

CrossTalk  by Robert Long  
Ohm’s law?; Demagnetizing; Roll your own Polk?  

Basically Speaking  by Michael Riggs  
Horizontal resolution—getting the whole picture  

*New Equipment Reports  
Denon DRA-750 receiver  
Technics SL-M2 turntable  
Micro-Acoustics 830CSA phono cartridge  
Yamaha T-80 tuner  
Audio-Technica ATH-20 headphones  
Audiosource EQ-One Series II equalizer  
Ohm Walsh 4 loudspeaker  
Hafer DH-100 preamplifier  

New Technologies

*Video Lab Tests  
Mitsubishi CS-2061R monitor/receiver  
Vidicraft Detailer III video image enhancer  

Music Reviews

Popular Compact Disc: Elvis Costello, Pat Metheny and Lyle Mays, Sonny Rollins  
Classical Compact Disc: Film music; Gershwin selections; Two Gruberova discs  
New Compact Discs: More than 270 pop and classical releases arrive in the stores  

Classical Music

Simon Rattle and the Seriousness of Sibelius  by Paul Griffiths  
On location with the conductor as he begins recording a major symphonic cycle  
Reviews: Karajan and the Vienna Philharmonic tackle Der Rosenkavalier; Egorov plays Debussy; Haydn’s Sturm und Drang symphonies; A heavenly Mahler Fourth from Maazel; Prokofiev potpourri  
Critics’ Choice  
Kiril Kondrashin: A tribute on ten concert LPs  by Robert E. Benson  

Continued on next page
INTRODUCING THE HOME DECK FOR THE ROAD. IT EVEN GOES INTO REVERSE AUTOMATICALLY.

Ever notice that tapes you’ve recorded at home don’t sound as good when you play them in your car? That’s because a car’s acoustics are vastly different from a home’s. That same tape that sounded great at home may now sound muddy, hollow, lifeless.

Happily, there’s a quick, simple, effective remedy. The car EQ button on our new K-600 cassette deck. Push it in and record. The typical frequency response characteristics of your car are automatically compensated for.

So the bass and midrange sound full and natural. Without boominess. And the highs come through loud and clear.

It’s also uniquely easy to make recordings on the K-600. Use its Auto Fade Out and Auto Reverse functions, and you won’t have to worry about ending Side One in the middle of a song. You’ll get smooth, natural fade-outs (and fade-ins) in both directions. Automatically.

So test drive the K-600 at your Yamaha dealer. It’s one home cassette deck that can add to your driving pleasure.

Yamaha Electronics Corporation, USA. P.O. Box 6660, Buena Park, CA 90622
“Sherwood products offer excellent performance at very reasonable prices.”

Leonard Feldman, Audio Magazine

The occasion of Mr. Feldman’s comment was his review of our S2680-CP top-of-the-line receiver. His statement was sparked by the fact that, while quite affordable, the S2680-CP, like all Sherwood receivers, is designed and built with the care, precision and innovation which have become Sherwood trademarks.

A tradition of affordable quality. More than three decades ago Sherwood was founded on this philosophy: Through innovation, make quality audio equipment more affordable. That philosophy has been nurtured throughout Sherwood’s history and is the foundation of our newest line of receivers.

We never cut corners on sound. All five Sherwood receivers deliver true high-fidelity performance. Even our budget-priced S2610-CP sounds better than many separate components. And the entire group is laced with features that can make significant differences in your listening enjoyment. Ultra-low-bass EQ, multi-deck dubbing, auto-scan digital tuning and discrete phono preamp circuitry are standard on several Sherwood models, yet missing from many other brands, regardless of price.

Certified Performance. Sherwood is the only manufacturer to test and certify the performance of each individual receiver. On the outside of every carton you will find a certificate showing the measurement details of the power amp, phono preamp and FM tuner sections of each receiver. These are not just the rated specs; these are the actual measured performance data of the individual unit, so you know exactly what you’re buying.

Find out what the experts say. Get the whole story on why Sherwood receivers—in Mr. Feldman’s words—“offer excellent performance at very reasonable prices.”

To get your own copy of his review of the S2680-CP and to find out just how much quality and innovation you can afford, visit your nearest Sherwood audio specialist today. To find him, call (800) 841-1412 during west coast business hours.

Sherwood
Quality and Innovation You Can Afford.

13845 Artesia Blvd., Cerritos, CA 90701 In Canada: The Pringle Group, Don Mills, Ontario
About This Issue

PROGRESS OFTEN COMES in small steps. This is especially true with most of the audio and video components that make up today's home entertainment systems. A percentage point of distortion trimmed here, a little more headroom there, perhaps an innovative circuit—all are aimed at moving us ever closer to that Holy Grail of perfect music reproduction.

Every January for the past 13 years, we have devoted the heart of our magazine to test reports—ten, to be exact, or about twice our usual number. Our selection of components is based not so much on particular earthshaking breakthroughs as on typical audio and video products that accurately represent a cross section of what you'll find on a dealer's shelves.

This year, though, each piece of equipment we have chosen also has a new twist. For example, Denon's receiver incorporates a tuner section designed to notch out a strong FM station that is interfering with the one you want to listen to; Technics' turntable is one of the first with a pivoted P-mount tonearm; Harman-Kardon's preamp can be bought as a kit for $150; Yamaha's tuner offers a variety of tuning options; and Ohm's speaker represents some new thinking on an old design. As our lab testing reveals, some of the ten components accomplish their goals better than others. As always, the significance of a particular development is validated by its survival over time.

Two of our columns this month augment our NEW TECHNOLOGIES coverage. In "Basically Speaking," Technical Editor Michael Ragins continues his report on the basics of television-picture reproduction and looks at the promise of digital TV. Also, regular contributor Robert Angus, appearing as guest "Autophile" columnist, explores a unique application for the Compact Disc.

Our music features run the gamut from serious Sibelius to postpunk. First, in an exclusive interview, British freelance writer Paul Griffiths talks with Simon Rattle in Birmingham, England, as the young conductor begins an integral recording of Sibelius's seven symphonies. Readers of our MUSICAL AMERICA edition will find the first installment of a two-part article on the often neglected music of Jerome Kern. And in BACKBEAT, regular contributor John Northland explores punk rock's offspring of the Eighties, hardcore....W.T.

Letters

CDs Defended

I have been receiving HIGH FIDELITY for approximately eight months and have read with interest the many articles and comments concerning digital audio. I finally went to my local audio dealer for a demonstration and ended up buying a Sony CDP-200 Compact Disc player, which you reviewed in your January 1984 issue.

Less than an hour after getting it home, I realized that I would never buy another conventional record. The CD is vastly superior to previous media. As far as I'm concerned, it can be compared to making a jump from the Wright brothers directly to the space shuttle. I do not understand how anyone could still have real reservations about the Compact Disc system. Anyone who can hear, audiophile or not, can tell the difference immediately. An analog turntable, regardless of price, could never come close to duplicating the sound.

My advice to those who care about sound would be to stop buying conventional records, because CDs are so much better. My only regret is that I have a substantial collection of LPs (with music that I like) that will never be transferred to Compact Disc.

Thomas R. Wiles
West Fork, Ark.

I am writing to comment on the continuing debate over the sound quality delivered by Compact Disc players. I bought one a week ago, and what I did not get was: a rumbling turntable, a misaligned cartridge, a stylus that has to be replaced twice a year, crackling and popping (even on so-called audiophile records), a step-up device for certain cartridges, record-cleaning paraphernalia, stylus-cleaning paraphernalia, or unspoilable salesmen cutting down my carefully conspired component choices to sell me their inventory overstock. What I did get was 50 to 70 minutes of the best music I have ever heard, without having my listening interrupted by the need to turn over a record. I don't care if some say the sampling rate is too low (whatever that means) or that the sound doesn't measure up to that of their ultra-high-end turntables (which cost ten times as much as my CD player). I couldn't get nearly the same sound from an analog turntable for the money I paid for my CD player. Now I can direct my attention to my real reason for having a stereo system: music, not maintenance. I never realized how much I dislike all the little chores involved with having a turntable. Now I seem to want to ignore my collection of 500 LPs in favor of my six CDs.

The best high-end turntable/cartridge/record combinations are only as good as the records played on them. Faults are apparent now in the recording process that few knew about before the Compact Disc. There is no longer any room for these shoddy techniques. Thus, CD technology eventually will improve the sound of all recordings.

Al Larson
Lake Worth, Fla.

I find the letters in your October 1984 issue very amusing ["More CD Debate"][. However, I strongly support Compact Discs for the following reasons:

1. CDs are extremely revealing of every detail, so the discourage recording engineers from attempting such tricks as multitinking, overdub, reverb, and compression.

2. They suffer much less from the problems of wow and flutter, tape modulation noise, high-level overload, and mechanical resonance. The much-hyped phase shift of digital is minute compared to analog's.

3. Their small size means easy storage and, more importantly, we need only one storage format for home, car, and portable use.

4. Most important, with proper care CDs are virtually indestructible; all we need is a soft cloth to clean off the discs. Even with expensive record and stylus cleaners, a law of physics demands that both eventually wear out because of the friction from physical contact.

If these facts don't convince audiophiles, maybe we ought to let them hear Telarc's Compact Disc version of Aaron Copland's Fanfare for the Common Man (Telarc CD 80078). That should convert those doubting Thomases.

Raymond Chuang
Sacramento, Calif.

E. Brad Meyer's piece on attempting to make a CD sound as good as an LP ["CD vs. LP: Little Things Matter."] March] makes me angry. Is he trying to give digital a bad name, or does he not know about making a stereo system? Obviously, you should set speakers up so that they sound best to you. Record playback never comes close to flat response: There is always a severe dropoff in the lowest bass. So to compensate, you put the speakers up so that they sound best to you.

Record playback never even comes close to flat response: There is always a severe dropoff in the lowest bass. So to compensate, you put the speakers up so that they sound best to you. Record playback never even comes close to flat response: There is always a severe dropoff in the lowest bass. So to compensate, you put the speakers up so that they sound best to you.

As soon as I bought my CD player, I stopped using my record player and proceeded to move my speakers around for a few weeks until I liked the way they sounded. According to your articles, people are complaining about CDs not having the depth and ambiance that the LP versions have. Well, my CDs are better than my LPs in this respect. I wish you could print what I think about Bob Carver's CD fixer. I have yet to hear a record that sounds as good as my worst CD. Anyone wanna buy a turntable?

Tom Seiler
Ventura, Calif.

Spin Dizzy

In your October issue, Vince Aletti notes the
A to B in 0.2 secs!

CONTINUOUS PLAYBACK AND RECORDING.
Auto-reverse was a great idea. Quick-Reverse is a better one. It not only changes tape sides, it does something even more miraculous. It eliminates interruption between sides!

Aiwa engineers achieved this remarkable feat two ways: First, Aiwa's AD-R550 does its changing act fast: just 0.2 of a second from one side to the other! That's just half the story.

Just before the tape leader reaches the heads, a photo-electric sensor activates Aiwa's Quick-Reverse mechanism. That way, instead of giving you 15 seconds of leader, Aiwa gives you something unheard of... continuous playback and recording!

DOLBY HX PROFESSIONAL
With Dolby® HX Professional, normal bias cassettes you record on the AD-R550 will actually outperform expensive chrome position tapes recorded on conventional decks! What's more, they can be played back on any deck, with the same superior results.

UNPARALLELED PERFORMANCE MATCHED BY UNPARALLELED CONVENIENCE.
Activate Aiwa's unique Blank Skip feature and the AD-R550 will automatically move into Fast Forward mode when it senses more than 12 seconds of blank tape. That way it skips any long pauses.

The Aiwa Quick-Reverse AD-R550. Catch it at your Aiwa dealer.

* Dolby is a trademark of Dolby Labs.

Quick-Reverse: Aiwa's latest innovation in digital-ready cassette decks.
Introducing

one brilliant idea

on top of another.

Unmatched FM Stereo/AM Stereo reception and video control makes them fantastic. X-Balanced circuitry makes them phenomenal. Sansui's 130 watt S-X1130 and 100 watt S-X1100 Quartz PLL Audio/Video receivers are so far advanced, they even have a special decoder that lets you receive broadcasts of all AM stereo systems. What's more, their unique X-Balanced circuitry cancels out external distortion and decisively eliminates IHM, for the purest all-around listening pleasure.

But the advantages don't stop there. Both receivers are complete Audio/Video control centers that are radically different—and significantly more versatile—than any others on the market. The S-X1130 delivers all the highly advanced audio and video performance of the S-X1100, with the added bonus of sharpness and fader controls for enhanced video art functions. And both units offer additional audio dexterity with "multidimension" for expanded stereo or simulated stereo, plus sound mixing capabilities.

For more brilliant, innovative ideas, check out our full line of superior receivers.

You'll know why we're first, the second you hear us.

There's more worth hearing and seeing from Sansui. Write: Consumer Service Dept., Sansui Electronics Corp., Lyndhurst, NJ 07071; Carson, CA 90746; Sansui Electric Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan.
popularity of the 12-inch single. Since I own more than sixty myself, I agree with him.

But what continues to frustrate me is the lack of standardization in this format. Some companies release 12-inches at 33⅓ rpm, other companies at 45 rpm, RCA releases everything at 33⅓, Warner Bros. at 45—and CBS has developed a nasty tendency to flip-flop between the two. As if this isn’t bad enough, cover art often obscures the label on the disc and includes no information about the speed of the record. This matters to consumers; some people like myself avoid the 45-rpm versions because they ruin established filing systems. Even radio deejays complain about this problem.

It is about time that companies start releasing 12-inches at one speed. If they can’t do that, they should at least mark the covers.

Robert F. Kilgour
Rowley, Mass.

Consumers also complain that 12-inch singles recorded at 45 rpm are impossible to stack on a changer with others recorded at 33⅓. Plus, the automatic sensing features on some turntables “read” all 12-inch discs as long-playing albums. But the industry isn’t likely to standardize anytime soon. Club deejays, who can help make or break a release, prefer the 45-rpm recordings because the mix sounds hotter. Also, contrary to your claim, Warner Bros. does occasionally release 12-inch singles at 33⅓.—Ed.

Father/Son Confusion

I was most interested in your story about pianist Gyorgy Cziffra [October 1984] because it cleared up a lot of confusion out here. The presenters of his San Francisco recital [in September] billed him as “Georges” Cziffra! When we asked them if (or how) he was related to the famous Hungarian-born pianist Gyorgy Cziffra, we were informed that Georges was the father of Gyorgy—technically correct, but altogether misleading, what with the father-son Gyorgys.

Because some people attended the concert thinking that they were hearing this particular artist’s father, it is little wonder that a listener was overheard saying on the way out, “He really looks much younger than I expected.”

Paul Hertelendy
Music Critic
San Jose Mercury News
San Jose, Calif.

Beta Hi-Fi Availability

Your answer to Mr. Knight in the September [1984] “CrossTalk” implies that few Beta Hi-Fi titles are available. In fact, there are now more than 650, and Thorn, EMI, MGA, and United Artists, to name just a few companies, release new titles every month. I might add that Beta Hi-Fi software has been available since the first Hi-Fi VCRs were delivered in late 1983. Any of your readers who need information about software or the Beta format should feel free to call me: I would be happy to help them.

Richard J. Quinlan
Aiwa America, Inc.
Moonachie, N.J.

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.

Flat frequency response is a key definition of high fidelity, and most audio systems can deliver it in the lab. But the room where you listen—its size, shape and acoustics—makes a huge difference in what you actually hear. So does the location of your speakers.

That’s where ADC comes in—with the graphic equalizers whose design, engineering, construction and spec-meeting performance have made them the consistent leaders of the audio world.

For example, the SS-315X graphic equalizer/spectrum analyzer.

Here’s how it works. Activate the pink-noise generator, which delivers a truly flat signal, 20 Hz-20 kHz, to your speakers. Sit in your favorite chair with the specially calibrated electret-condenser microphone at ear level. The spectrum analyzer will show you the inevitable peaks and valleys that the graphic equalizer can then eliminate. It’s as simple as that.

There’s even more to the SS-315X. It has inputs for two recorders, and provides two-way tape dubbing, with or without equalization. A subsonic filter eliminates the power-robbing non-musical frequencies below 20 Hz. The equalizer section has ten frequency controls for each channel at exact one-octave intervals from 31.5 Hz-16 kHz, and with a broad ±15-dB control range for each.

Now, if you trust your ears so much that you don’t need the spectrum analyzer, then all you need is our SS-115X, which features the identical superb graphic equalizer.

Of course, before you hear the results at home, you’ll want to audition them at your ADC dealer.

Then you’ll know how good everything can be—your stereo system, your room, your program sources. And your hearing.

ADC
71 Chapel St., Newton, Massachusetts 02195 Dept. B1
Tel: 617-964-3210
VCD-1000 - Having set the sonic standards for home audio, Harman Kardon now enters the world of home video by introducing high fidelity for your eyes! Harman Kardon applied its 30 years of technical expertise to an extraordinary new home entertainment product: The VCD-1000 VHS Hi-Fi.

A breathtaking audio product with high quality video, the VCD-1000 is the perfect link to an integrated audio/video system.

As with all renowned Harman Kardon products, the critical issues of the quality of the circuitry, construction and layout of components were expertly addressed. The VCD-1000 utilizes an advanced record/playback system which FM encodes the audio signal. This FM signal is recorded and played back via high speed rotating heads (1800 rpm), resulting in wide, flat frequency response (20Hz-20kHz, ±3dB), virtually non-existent wow-and-flutter (0.005%), and 80dB dynamic range.

Custom-designed discrete filters are precisely tuned in production to extend frequency response, critically align noise reduction and reduce high frequency distortion.

Applications of Harman Kardon acclaimed amplifier philosophies that are evident in the VCD-1000 are the use of discrete components for reduced distortion and the use of low negative feedback.

Stereo TV Tuner - The VCD-1000 incorporates a built-in 105 channel cable-ready stereo TV tuner, and is capable of receiving, recording and playing back high fidelity stereo TV broadcasts (with bi-lingual channel capability), even if you don't own a stereo TV yet. There is an independent audio tuner section resulting in improved sound quality from these stereo broadcasts.

The video section offers 4-event/14-day programming; still frame; high speed forward and reverse picture search; full digital displays; slow motion and an infra-red remote control that duplicates all front panel functions.
VM-100 Video Monitor - To further refine the audio / video vista, Harman Kardon is introducing the VM-100... a 25" diagonal, high resolution video monitor. The VM-100 combines exceptional linearity and superb transient response to deliver a picture that can only compliment the high fidelity sound.

When incorporated with Harman Kardon's unparalleled audio components, your world of high fidelity audio / video enjoyment becomes boundless.

Experience the Harman Kardon line of audio / video products... They're pure high fidelity for your eyes.

240 Crossways Park West, Woodbury, NY 11797, Ir Canada, Gould Marketing, Montreal. For more information call toll-free 1-(800) 653-2252 ext. 250.
Please accept Sony's sincerest apology for making all car stereos obsolete.

SONY INTRODUCES THE WORLD'S FIRST CAR COMPACT DISC PLAYER.

To state it bluntly, the difference in sound quality between the new Sony Car Compact Disc Player and everything else is like the difference in performance between a Ferrari and a Model T.

One noted audio critic at High Fidelity magazine said, "In all my road testing to date, I've never heard it so good... It can stand comparison against the best home CD players we've tested. The new Sony Car Compact Disc Player is the real thing in every sense."

And not only are wow and flutter unmeasurable, but its phenomenal 90dB dynamic range will sound that way forever. Because Compact Discs are played by a laser beam. Not a tape head. So you can't wear them out.

To test-drive the Sony Car CD Player, visit your nearest authorized Sony autosound dealer.

And once again, accept our regrets for rendering your present system an antique.

SONY, THE LEADER IN DIGITAL AUDIO.
Finally, compact discs at a compact price.$7.99.

Sony® brings you a compact disc offer that's music to your ears and an ode to joy for your wallet. Compact discs for no more than you'd pay for an ordinary LP or cassette tape. Just $7.99* each.

For a limited time only, Sony in cooperation with CBS is offering 30 of the most popular titles at a great low price. If you purchase any Sony home, car, or portable Compact Disc Player between Nov. 1, 1984 and Feb. 28, 1985, you can choose any or all of these great CBS titles:

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<th>ARTIST</th>
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<td>Bruce Springsteen</td>
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<td>Wynton Marsalis</td>
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<td>Stevie Ray Vaughan</td>
<td>Haydn Trumpet Concerto</td>
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<td>Elvis Costello</td>
<td>Couldnt Stand the Weather</td>
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<td>Bob James &amp; Earl Klugh</td>
<td>My Aim Is True</td>
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JBL's Best Ever

Said by the company to be its best-sounding speakers ever, the four models in JBL's Ti series combine exotic materials with typically fine craftsmanship. Each of the speakers—which range from the towering (52 inches high) 250Ti at $1,700 to the compact 18Ti at $270—uses a titanium dome tweeter. Titanium was chosen because of its high stiffness-to-mass ratio; indeed, sheets of titanium just 25 microns thick are used in the fabrication of the driver, which is said to be capable of flat response out to 27 kHz. Also new in the Ti series is a midrange driver with a filled polypropylene diaphragm, which JBL says avoids the chief disadvantage of other polymer cones (breakup at high playing levels) while maintaining the material's inherent advantages (such as high internal damping). The complete line consists of the four-way 250Ti (pictured here), which has a 14-inch woofer and an 8-inch lower-midrange driver; the more conventionally shaped 240Ti ($840 each), a three-way system with a 14-inch woofer, the 120Ti ($560 each), a three-way design with a 12-inch woofer, and the 18Ti, a two-way system with a 6½-inch low-frequency driver. All Ti speakers are finished in hand-rubbed Burmese teak veneers. For more information, write to JBL (8500 Balboa Blvd., Northridge, Calif. 91329).

Nakamichi Enters The CD Arena

With two CD players and an $80,000 industrial machine capable of recording on a variety of optical disc media, Nakamichi is making a strong commitment to disc-based digital audio. The CD players (OSM-7 and OSM-5) contain a variety of refinements that the company believes are crucial to high-quality playback. Chief among these are a spring-mounted disc-drive system for greater immunity to shock, four-times oversampling and digital filtration, separate digital-to-analog (D/A) converters for each channel, and a direct-coupled analog output stage with linear-phase filters. The remote-controllable OSM-7 ($1,300, pictured here) is equipped with a keypad for direct access to banded and indexed selections, a two-speed audible search function, and a repeat control for replay of an entire disc or a programmed sequence. The nonprogrammable OSM-5 ($1,000) uses steppe for access to selections and is not remote controllable. Both models display current track number, tracks remaining, and elapsed or remaining time on the disc.

Nakamichi has not curtailed its work in the analog domain either. Its latest effort is a line of prerecorded cassettes duplicated in real time on specially modified ZX-9 decks. These music tapes are created on TDK metal stock, cut to the correct length for the particular program at hand. Running masters used in the duplication process are first-generation digital copies of the original master tape. The 25 titles in the Reference Recording Series are available with Dolby B or C encoding at $18 each. Labels currently represented in the Nakamichi catalog include Sheffield, Telarc, and Delos.

Trinitron Refined

A pioneer in the field of video components, Sony is now bringing some of the performance and flexibility offered by Profeel separates to its Trinitron line with two monitor/receivers. Available with 20- or 25-inch screens, the new sets are equipped with BTSC decoding circuits for reception of stereo broadcasts. On-screen displays give visual confirmation of a variety of functions, ranging from channel, volume, and source-selector settings to the relative levels of the sharpness, brightness, and hue controls. Both models have data-grade picture tubes with a fine-dot pitch and black-tinted glass for increased resolution and...
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AUDIO/VIDEO Currents

contrast. Another particularly interesting feature is what Sony calls its Trinitone system, which enables you to vary the color temperature of the picture downward (for reddish whites) and upward (for bluish whites) from the standard setting. The models have three video/stereo-audio inputs and two sets of outputs. Shown here is the 25-inch KV-25XBR ($1,200) and optional SU-71 stand. Though difficult to see in the photo, the stand has foot-switch controls for power, channel selection, and volume. For more information, write to Sony Consumer Products (Sony Dr., Park Ridge, N.J. 07656).

Neatness Counts

Before and after with Cable Helpers

Monster Cable's answer to the problem of interconnect confusion is Cable Helpers—a cable dressing and labeling kit that enables you to trace connections quickly when changing audio and video components. The system includes cable ties, ladder straps for routing cables down the side of a rack or against baseboards, and self-adhesive tabs printed with input and output designations. The complete Cable Helpers system costs $21, but separate packages of ties, ladder straps, and labels are also available for $5, $6, and $10, respectively. For more information, write to Monster Cable (101 Townsend St., San Francisco, Calif. 94107).

A Processor With Punch

Quite frankly, had we not heard the Barcus-Berry BBEE-2002 for ourselves, we might have doubted the claims made by the company for this $850 signal processor. Called a speaker-reactance compensator, it hooks into the tape-monitor loop on a receiver or preamp and simulates the electrical characteristics of a typical dynamic speaker. After
a signal emerges from this surrogate load, it is compared to the input signal itself. If there are differences between the two, a multiband dynamic-gain circuit and phase compensator are activated to generate a corrective signal, which is fed back to the amplifier. According to Barcus-Berry, the process results in proper articulation of music's harmonic structure and better reproduction of program transients. Front-panel controls enable you to vary the characteristics of the surrogate load, thereby tuning the device for your particular speakers and taste. Our first impression of the BBE-2002 was quite positive, and we are looking forward to evaluating the unit in our own listening room. For more information, write to Barcus-Berry Electronics (5381 Production Dr., Huntington Beach, Calif. 92649).

**Third-Generation Players by Technics**

Technics has revamped its CD player line with three new models. The SL-P3 ($600) offers 15-band random-access programmability, full-function remote control, a cue function that causes the laser pickup to halt precisely at the beginning of a selection so that playback can start immediately on command, and a programmable music scan that plays from 1 to 99 seconds of each selection on a disc. This top-of-the-line unit is also equipped with index search, remaining disc-time readout, a subcode output terminal for future applications, and a loop function for repeated play of any interval on the disc. Particularly welcome, in our opinion, is the inclusion of a volume control on the unit's remote. The SL-P2 ($500) is similar to the P3, but without a cue function, loop repeat, and output level control. The SL-PI ($400) also offers 15-band programmability and index search, but lacks a remote control and a few other conveniences features. For more information, write to Technics (1 Panasonic Way, Secaucus, N.J. 07094).

**Laserdisc and CD Development**

A process said to make short-run production of Laserdiscs and Compact Discs economical is being developed by Laservideo, Inc., of Chicago. A spokesman describes the process as being similar to contact printing in photography, involving the use of an "interm" to transfer video and audio information to emulsion-coated discs. The...
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Tandberg's world-famous audio products, highly regarded by professional musicians as well as discriminating consumers for more than 50 years, now include two of the most advanced high fidelity components available today: the TIA 3012 Integrated Amplifier & TPT 3001A Programable Tuner.

These units, which were individually given a "rave" review by AUDIO magazine, can be joined together with their optional rosewood side panels to become..."the finest 'receiver' we have ever tested" (HIGH FIDELITY) and "a receiver of exceptional quality" (STEREO REVIEW).

It is a stereo receiver capable of exceeding the demands of today's...and tomorrow's most advanced digital program material.

For literature, test reports and the name of your local dealer, contact: Tandberg of America, Labriola Court, Armonk, NY 10504. (914) 273-9150

A Canadian Contender
Sold in mirror-imaged pairs, the ESM-2 from Energy Loudspeakers is a two-way ported design with an 8-inch polypropylene woofer and a 1-inch soft-dome tweeter. Ferrofluid in the tweeter's voice-coil assembly increases the driver's power-handling capacity and helps control resonances. The system, which uses a phase-corrected crossover network, measures 23¼ inches high by 10½ inches wide by 10½ inches deep and is said to deliver smooth, natural output from 40 Hz to 20 kHz. A pair of ESM-2s sells for $330; stands are optional. For more information, write to Energy Loudspeakers (135 Torbay Rd., Markham, Ontario L3R 1G7).

Stereo AM à la Pioneer
If you live within the receiving area of a station broadcasting a Motorola stereo-AM signal (a partial list of these stations appeared in the October 1984 "Auto-ophile"), you'll be delighted to know that Pioneer's first stereo-AM-equipped front end is now available. The KE-A433AM ($300) has a selectable-bandwidth filter that enables you to optimize AM reception for different signal-strength conditions. The unit is also equipped with a Supertuner III stereo-FM section, 12 FM and 6 AM station presets, selectable tape EQ, a loudness control, and an automatic tape replay function. For more information, write to Pioneer Electronics (U.S.A.), Inc. (1925 E. Dominguez St., Long Beach, Calif. 90810).
Teac, the voice of authority in the precision reproduction of sound from tape, introduces the 6110 and 6112 Speakers. We've eliminated the middle man, so to speak, between our playback heads and your waiting ears. So now you can hear what a Teac does so well, just the way the maker intended.

We could reel off a series of quite impressive specs for you right here. But those abstractions aren't equal to the sound itself. So, instead, we suggest you visit a Teac dealer where you can hear them with your own ears. And we'll let our speakers do the talking.
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Roll Your Own Video Color
The Showtime Video Ventures Model 7070 color processor offers an unusual array of controls for dubbing (or watching) video, lending it to everything from subtle remedial touchups to creative psychedelia. The $380 device can remove residual color from black-and-white movies, adjust black reference, rotate the phase of the color carrier, adjust saturation and gain, correct flesh tones, and fade to black at the end of a scene. For more information, write to Showtime Video Ventures (2715 Fifth St., Tillamook, Ore. 97141).

Infinity Gets Smaller
The RS-11 is the latest addition to Infinity's Reference Standard series of loudspeakers. The 12-inch-high acoustic-suspension system is just 7 1/2 inches deep and 5 3/4 inches wide. Its driver complement consists of a 4-inch polypropylene woofer with a long-throw voice coil and a 1 1/2-inch polycarbonate tweeter. Sensitivity is rated at 87 dB for a 1-watt input. For more information, write to Infinity Systems, Inc. (7030 Deering Ave., Canoga Park, Calif. 91304).

Surrounded In Sound
Tate Audio, the sole remaining purveyor of logic-directed four-channel matrix technology, is quickening its activities in home video, anticipating mass enthusiasm for programming that incorporates "surround" audio effects. While the company itself is concentrating on selling its decoder chip—with at least a dozen hardware licensees expected to be in the fold by next year—a subsidiary, Tate-Reber Productions, is hawking a mixing system said to make it easy to encode soundtracks with the surround information. The aim is to get theater-like sound in programming for cable, broadcast stereo TV, Beta and VHS Hi-Fi, and videodisc. With the Tate-Reber system, a producer could even derive a feature film's theater soundtrack from one developed first for home video use. Hollywood's reaction is said to be enthusiastic in some quarters, and NBC reportedly is planning to use the Tate-Reber technique in its stereo broadcasts of The Tonight Show.

A New Angle For Quad
Though justly famous for its rather extraordinary electrostatic loudspeaker, the ESL-63 (test report, July 1984), Quad has never attracted a wide audience in the U.S for its line of English-made audio electronics. And 'tis a shame, really. Quad's preamps have always been paradigms of control flexibility and wise ergonomics, and its power amps used feedforward circuits to reduce distortion years before the topology was rediscovered in the East.

Assessing the situation, the company recently decided that a bold new cosmetic tack was in order, and the result is what you see here. With their matching anthracite-gray faceplates, the Model 34 preamp, FM-4 tuner, and 405-2 power amp now have a more neutral appearance, making them visually correct even in the most conservative settings. But the truly eye-catching element is the stand. Finished in the same shade of gray, it supports all three components with stylish grace. Particularly nice is the stand's back piece, which gives a finished appearance to the ensemble by hiding the interconnect cables. For more information, write to Quad (695 Oak Grove Ave., Menlo Park, Calif. 94025).
Cassette decks eat less and sound better with Discwasher CareSet.

A dirty cassette deck hungers for attention. If you ignore it, it may make a meal of your favorite cassette.

Treat your home, car and personal cassette player to a Discwasher Tape Deck CareSet. The Discwasher C.R.R.™ Capstan-Pinch Roller Cleaner clears away contamination that can devour cassettes. And the Discwasher Perfect Path™ Cassette Head Cleaner cleans up the sound of any cassette deck. Buy both together in our CareSet, wherever you buy tapes or stereo systems.
Compact Discs
Take the Helm

LAST MAY, AN ENGINEER from N.V. Philips was scheduled to address the annual convention of the Society of Automotive Engineers, meeting in Detroit. The topic was to be the Compact Disc, and the assembled engineers assumed that the talk would deal with the entertainment potential of CDs in the car. What they heard instead was Philips's startling description of a car navigational system using a specially equipped CD player, an onboard computer with mini-CRT display, and a receiver capable of linking a car with the Navstar network of satellites.

The heart of the system, which Philips calls CARIN, is a Compact Disc containing information rather than music—in this case, a comprehensive guide to a specific section of the country. The information storage potential of a CD is so great that one disc could contain street maps for every city, town, and hamlet in New England, with room left over for highway and super-highway maps. In addition, data on restaurants and hotels, including menus and room rates, could be available on the same CD, making it comparable in content to a Mobil Guide.

A data disc is useless, however, unless the information can be retrieved and manipulated by a computer. The CD player in the CARIN system is therefore modified to "talk" with the onboard computer—responding to commands to seek out data, then passing the information back to the central processing unit. And when not occupied with navigational duties, the same CD player can be used for music playback.

Imagine yourself driving a CARIN-equipped car. All you do is load the appropriate disc and tell the computer where you want to go by entering a destination code on a dash-mounted keypad. CARIN responds by activating its radio receiver, which then locks onto the radio beacons emanating from the two nearest Navstar satellites. (There are currently eight such satellites, forming part of the Western defense network. In addition to their military applications, they are used by commercial shipping and aviation as orbiting "signposts.") By triangulating on these beacons, the CARIN computer is said to be capable of determining your position within 75 feet.

As you pull away from the curb, the CRT blinks on to show a street map of your neighborhood. If you find it distracting to peer down at the display, CARIN can give you audible directions. A speech synthesizer might even prepare you for a turn by telling you to get into the turning lane well ahead of an intersection. As you approach a highway, the display shifts to a coarse grid, highlighting the appropriate exit. CARIN can even keep track of your gas consumption and guide you to the closest refueling station when necessary. And should you accidentally or intentionally ignore the system's navigational advice and become lost, CARIN can still help: Just push a button, and the computer will figure out an alternate route based on your present position.

Philips, however, is not the only company developing a navigational system for the car. Blaupunkt's design involves rear-wheel sensors that measure the angle of each turn and a computer that integrates this information with the car's speed. Originally, the system was to use digital data tapes (and a special player) instead of Compact Discs. But when the company's engineers heard about Philips's CD idea, they immediately replaced the tape drive with a disc player. A CD's immense storage capacity and quick random-access capabilities give it a clear advantage over tape for data storage and retrieval. Delco, too, has been experimenting with navigational systems and likewise has decided that CDs are the preferred medium for such applications.

Philips says that CARIN probably won't be on the market until after 1989—but by which time it expects most new cars to contain CD players. It isn't talking about price, but one insider believes that the whole system may cost less than $500. Blaupunkt says its system might be ready before then, but it won't venture a guess as to price.
Until you experience a Blaupunkt car stereo system, you'll never know how alive sound can be. That's why Blaupunkt car stereo systems come as standard equipment in some of the finest cars in the world. Yet it's surprising how easy it is to afford one. For the Blaupunkt dealer near you, call 1-800-228-5333. In Nebraska, 1-800-642-8788.

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Wicked lows. Manic highs. Nasty passages. It all translates the same.
Music sounds better when it's recorded on Maxell XL-S cassettes.
That's because we've improved our crystallization process. So we can now produce magnetic particles that are both smaller in size and more uniform in shape. Which allows us to pack more of these particles on the tape's surface, in turn, making it possible to record more information within a given area of tape.

AC bias noise is reduced by 1dB. And maximum output levels are increased by 1.5dB on XL-I-S and 2dB on XLII-S.

As a result, XL-S delivers a significantly expanded dynamic range. A noticeably improved signal to noise ratio. And a fuller impact of dynamic transients.

So if you want to hear your music the way it was meant to be heard, put it on Maxell XL-S.
Because recording tapes just don't get any better.
Or any badder.

IT'S WORTH IT.
Practical answers to your audio and video questions by Robert Long

Ohm’s Law?

Why are present-day speakers limited to 8 ohms or less?—John A. Goodlad, McFarland, Wis.

There’s no law against the 16-ohm nominal impedances that used to be common, and some models still are so rated. But the lower the impedance (within reason), the more power—and therefore the more sound, all else being equal—speakers can draw from the voltages created by the amplifiers that drive them. All else rarely is equal, but the principle inhibits manufacturers from going the high-impedance route.

Demagnetizing

I own a Harman Kardon CD-101 cassette deck, my son owns a Nakamichi, my daughter owns a Technics RS-M14. Each of us uses a TDK HD-01 head demagnetizer after every ten hours of playback or recording, and we have no problems. Except that I don’t see why the decks need demagnetization—if, indeed, they do.

I’m a physicist, and I can’t answer the question. I can find no source of DC going to the heads when I look at the schematics. The earth’s magnetic field is only about 0.5 gauss, so I doubt that has anything to do with it. I’ve phoned engineers at TDK and Maxell, and they wouldn’t venture an answer. If we, as users, are being frightened into worrying about an unreal problem, I intend to shoot somebody down.—R. E. Elmore, Tulsa, Okla.

Up front, let me say that there is a problem, but not one that’s worth demagnetizing after every ten hours on any cassette deck I know. So relax a little.

As a physicist, you’re doubtless familiar with the hysteresis curve that characterizes the effect of a magnetic field on a permeable substance like the “pigment” in recording tape—or the steel or other magnetically responsive materials that can be used in the head or guides of a deck. This curve never passes through the origin, which means that if you cut off an alternating magnetic field at any instant, the permeable material within the field will be left magnetized. Residual magnetization usually results from too abrupt a discontinuation of such a field—seldom from the application of a DC field.

The trick in degaussing (demagnetization) is to reduce the strength of an alternating field so that it approaches zero, collapsing the hysteresis curve to timer and timer swings around its origin. That’s why it’s so important to withdraw an AC degaussing gradually. A deck’s designer can make recording (or record/play) heads and erase heads self-degaussing by adding a capacitor to the bias/erase oscillator supply so that when it’s turned off its output decays over a fraction of a second. This is too fast for the ear to detect, but slow enough to collapse the hysteresis curve rather than leave it hanging, so to speak.

That doesn’t help separate playback heads, capsants, or tape guides, however. Fortunately, the relatively slow transport (and more to the point) fast-wind speeds of cassette decks, plus the thinner magnetic coatings (which therefore saturate at lower flux densities), mean a lot less magnetic stress (and danger from its sudden cessation) in these parts than is the case in open-reel equipment. Hand-held AC degaussers can do the most effective job on these parts, but carelessly applied, they can do more harm than good—again because of a too-sudden removal of a strong field. As a result, some manufacturers recommend that you not degauss your cassette equipment. So I wouldn’t worry too much about either underuse or overuse of the TDK device.

Roll Your Own Polk?

After reading your review and explanation of the Polk Stereo Dimensional Array speaker systems [SDA-1, January 1983; SDA-2, June 1984], I realized that I should be able to get the same stereo image enhancement simply by using two sets of ordinary speakers and driving the outside pair with the reverse-polarity signal from the opposite channel. If I drive these speakers from a separate integrated amplifier that gets its signal from the headphone jack of the main system, would the difference in phase shift between the two amplifiers affect the results?—Ralph Gonzalez, Philadelphia, Pa.

Probably not—if the results you want can be achieved this way at all. Remember the adage about silk purses. Sows’ ears may not be able to hear the difference between such a jury-rigged system and Polk’s engineered one—to which interdriver distances, among other things, are crucial—but I expect yours would. Also, you would have to use opposite polarities of the difference signal (left minus right and right minus left) to correctly mimic the Polk technique.

Surround Digital

I’d like to feed the output of a Toshiba XR-Z70 Compact Disc player to a Sansui QXR-9001 quadriphonic receiver. The Sansui has two separate aux input pairs—front and back. The Toshiba has only a stereo output pair, of course. How should I connect the two components?—B. T. Strickland, Deerfield Beach, Fla.

If the QXR-9001 receiver works like the QXR-7001 (test report, July 1975), the mode switching affects all inputs and offers seven possibilities. If you connect the Toshiba to the front aux inputs (the most likely choice), the “discrete” setting will deliver the CD sound to the front speakers only, as will the front-stereo setting. The back-stereo setting gives you the option of attaching another stereo component to the back aux connections. The remaining settings are Vario-Matrix options that derive back-channel signals from the front ones: HALL SYNTHESIZER and SURROUND SYNTHESIZER are designed to simulate quad from two-channel inputs; SQ and QS will give similar effects, though they are designed to decode matrixed quad recordings.

Lineup

Do you know of any equipment, jigs, or test tapes that are available for aligning cassette-deck heads?—J. W. A. Burley, Wallingford, Pa.

Yes. Some moderate-price cassette alignment tapes have been available through regular retail dealers, though I haven’t been impressed by the quality of the ones I’ve tried. The professional tapes (such as the BASF ones we use) cost considerably more. (They’re handmade—not mass-produced like music cassettes.) Well-built decks certainly shouldn’t need adjustment more frequently than once every few years, so the services of a technician might cost you less even in the long run. And unless you know how to use the tapes and are mechanically adept, I wouldn’t suggest you try under any circumstances: A boched job is worse than none at all.

We regret that the volume of reader mail is too great for us to answer all questions individually.
Audio and video concepts and terms explained

by Michael Riggs

Horizontal Resolution

LAST MONTH, I devoted this column to the subject of vertical resolution in video displays, particularly in the NTSC television broadcasting system used in North America and Japan. (Resolution is a measure of how finely detailed a photographic or video image can be.) As I mentioned then, this is somewhat less than half the story (or picture, if you like); the better part of what’s left falls under the rubric of horizontal resolution. In fact, horizontal resolution is what people usually mean when they talk about video resolution, largely because it is the more variable of the two. A properly designed television set should provide all (or very nearly all) of the vertical resolution that the broadcasting system is capable of delivering. Horizontal resolution depends much more on the receiver manufacturer’s design priorities.

The key consideration is the number of discrete points that can be illuminated on each scanning line, which is determined by the number of such lines per frame, the number of frames per second, and the bandwidth of the video signal. In the NTSC system, the frame rate is 30 per second (30 Hz), with 525 scanning lines in each one. That works out to a horizontal scan frequency of 15.75 kHz (kilohertz)—15,750 scanning lines per second. Thus, the amount of time required to scan a single line is equal to 1 second divided by 15,750, or 0.063 microseconds (millions of a second). Of that, approximately 11 microseconds are taken up by the horizontal blanking interval, during which the electron beam is repositioned to begin scanning the next line. This leaves 525 microseconds worth of active line time in which to put picture information on the screen.

Another way of looking at this is to say that a 1-MHz (megahertz) video signal could contain 525 cycles in one scanning line. The maximum bandwidth of an NTSC luminance signal is 4.2 MHz, which translates into 220.5 cycles per line. Each can generate what amounts to a pair of dots—one white and one black, corresponding to the positive and negative half cycles. If the same frequency were maintained for several scanning lines, these dots would form columns through which you could draw straight vertical lines. Consequently, horizontal resolution is specified in lines or line pairs, rather than dots.

But to maintain direct compatibility between vertical and horizontal resolution figures, the latter must be adjusted (normalized) to compensate for the display aspect ratio. In all current television systems, it is 4:3—four units of screen width for every three height. Multiplying 220.5 by 0.75 yields approximately 165 line pairs, or 330 lines. (Another approach to the calculation would be to multiply 52.5 by ½, which would yield about 40 line pairs—or 80 lines—if resolution for every 1 MHz of video bandwidth.) This is the theoretical maximum for horizontal luminance resolution in the NTSC system.

However, few receivers are capable of taking full advantage of it. Tuners sacrifice some response at the highest video frequencies to prevent interference with the 4.5-MHz audio subcarrier, and monitor electronics often give up everything above about 3 MHz to prevent interference from the 3.58-MHz color subcarrier, limiting horizontal resolution to about 240 lines. Only high-performance receivers with comb-filter color-separation circuits are capable of resolutions in the 300-line range. By now, you may be scratching your head over those ads you’ve seen claiming horizontal resolutions approaching 400 lines or more for certain video monitors. In some cases, they may be exaggerations, or they may genuinely represent the performance obtainable with composite-video signals (fed to the monitor’s direct inputs) having bandwidths that exceed the 4.2-MHz NTSC limit. Such capability is beneficial for computer text and graphics displays, but it offers no real advantage for ordinary TV and video applications.

So far, we have considered only the luminance part of the video signal. In the NTSC system, color (chrominance) is modulated onto a 3.58-MHz subcarrier as a pair of difference signals: red minus the luminance (R-Y) and blue minus the luminance (B-Y). Green is derived from these two. The average bandwidth of the chrominance signal is approximately 1.2 MHz, which works out to a horizontal color resolution of about 96 lines. However, very few receivers exploit more than half of this information, making the discrepancy between the color and luminance resolutions rather large even on sets with limited bandwidth all round. Fortunately (in a manner of speaking), our perception of color detail is not very good. It’s the luminance resolution that mainly matters.

A number of things can be done to improve video resolution, starting with the proper installation and orientation of a good outdoor antenna. This will provide a strong, clean signal to the tuner, minimizing noise and ghosting on any receiver. If you live in an area afflicted with poor reception conditions or in an apartment building that prohibits outdoor antennas, the next-best alternative is cable. Beyond that, you can buy a monitor or receiver that interfaces properly and uses comb-filter color-separation circuitry to provide extended luminance response.

Further improvements will require technological advances in receivers and broadcasting equipment. The first step—which could come as early as this year—will be sets incorporating digital signal-processing circuits. At first, these probably will be used mainly for tricks such as split screen, freeze frame, and zoom, but they also have the potential for ghost cancellation and other forms of image enhancement.

For example, a digital receiver could be made to perform field insertion or interpolation, in which a complete frame is written onto the screen every sixtieth of a second. The insertion method simply merges the current field with the preceding one, whereas interpolation involves creating new lines between the lines of a field by averaging the prior and succeeding fields. The latter method is arguably a shade more “accurate,” but it requires more memory. In either case, however, the standard 30-Hz frame rate is doubled to equal the field rate. This stratagem eliminates interlace effects (such as interline flicker), greatly diminishes the visibility of the line structure, and minimizes the Kell factor (see last month’s column).

The only problem with these techniques is that they can cause blurring of horizontal motion. This can be prevented by interpolating an average of adjacent lines in the same field, which smooths out the picture but improves vertical resolution. Fortunately, the eye’s resolution also deteriorates when the object being watched moves, so the loss is not obvious. For optimum performance, however, the receiver must be smart enough to switch back and forth between the two types of interpolation according to what’s going on in the scene it is displaying.

Few sets can display the NTSC system’s maximum resolution.
I didn't buy my car stereo backwards.

Why should you?

My car stereo dealer told me if you want clean, clear accurate sound—choose your speakers first. Because if the speakers can't handle it, you won't hear it. No matter what kind of sound your receiver pulls in.

Then he told me: Jensen.

If you want to hear it the way they played it, choose Jensen speakers first. Jensen invented car speakers in the first place. And they're a leader today. Simply because they know how to deliver the goods.

Naturally I got a Jensen receiver to go with my Jensen speakers. Great team, designed to play best together. Makes sense. Makes great sound, too. I want to hear it all. With Jensen, I do.

JENSEN
When you want it all.
New Equipment Reports

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

Denon's Super-Searcher Receiver

Denon DRA-750 AM-FM receiver. Dimensions: 18 1/4 by 4 inches (front panel), 14 inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. AC convenience outlets: one switched (100 watts max.), one unswitched (250 watts max.). Price: $550.


FM tuner section

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

Though interesting from several points of view—its generous power rating, its Non-NFB (non-negative-feedback) circuitry, and its "liquid cooled" heat sinking, to name three—the DRA-750 is perhaps most noteworthy for its novel tuner design. In particular, it is fitted with what Denon calls a Super Searcher Tuning System, or SSS for short. With this feature, you can notch out a strong FM station that is producing an interference product close enough to the tuned station to degrade reception—a fascinating idea that we have not encountered before.

The tuner can memorize as many as 16 stations. Since there are only eight preset buttons, a ninth button switches between two memory banks: stations 1 to 8 and 9 to 16, respectively. Two additional tuning modes are available. One delivers muting and automatic mono/stereo switching on FM and scan-tunes either band, stopping at the next "receivable" station in either direction (depending on which tuning button you push). The other mode delivers mono only, without interstation muting, and tunes manually—in 100-kHz (half-channel) increments on FM and 10-kHz (full-channel) steps on AM.

Once an FM station is tuned, you can engage the SSS feature by pushing a button at the bottom of the control panel, lighting the SSS indicator near the signal-strength display. You then push the round SSS knob at the top of the panel. It pops out, permitting rotation for adjustment, and changes the green signal-strength display into a red one for noise. Next, you turn the knob until the display shows minimum noise, which should coincide with the setting at which an interfering station is notched out. Touching any major tuner control automatically disables the SSS again, so you can't accidentally leave the notch in the circuit when you change stations.

The concept is so appealing that we were disappointed in our inability to document its usefulness in practice. Most often, no appreciable change occurred when we applied the feature to any of the noisy stations available to us in our rural location (unless we canceled the tuned frequency
In today's Army, you learn to accept challenge, handle responsibility, and make the most of any given situation. And that's much of what it takes to be a good college student. So if you're planning to attend college, maybe you should think about how spending some time in the Army can help you get there. Not only will you be better prepared to handle the challenge, you can also be better prepared to handle the costs. By taking advantage of the Army College Fund.

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Call toll free 1-800-USA-ARMY for your free Army College Fund booklet. And find out how the Army can contribute to a very worthwhile cause — your college education.

THE ARMY CAN CONTRIBUTE A LOT TO YOUR COLLEGE EDUCATION.
YOU CAN SEE AND HEAR
When you're this good, you put your warranties where your mouth is. That's why, overall, Hitachi probably has the finest limited warranty protection ever offered in home electronics products. Products that perform so well, you may never get a chance to see how good our warranties really are.

HITACHI
A World Leader in Technology

NEW COMPACT DIGITAL AUDIO DISC PLAYER
Hitachi leads the way in compact disc performance with Laser Life, a two-year limited parts warranty, twice as long as our major competition. Introducing the DA-600. Three spot laser pick-up servo system; wireless remote control that reads, selects, repeats, skips and scans; memory programming for up to 15 selections; slim-line, front load design.

NEW 5 + 2 HEAD HI-FI VCR
With Adjustomatic, a limited warranty superior to industry standards, the exceptional VT-99A VCR from Hitachi has brought hi-fi technology to video sound. Sound finer than any turntable or conventional tape deck...far superior to ordinary VCRs; it's sound you have to see to believe. Five video heads, two audio heads, cable ready, with a computer brain that guides you through every program function. Each step is displayed on your TV screen.

NEW SIGNAL TRACKER COMPONENT TV
Backed by Hitachi's incomparable 10/2/1 limited warranty, this state-of-the-art 20" diagonal flat square tube receiver/monitor integrates all your home entertainment functions. VCR, VideoDisc Player, stereo system, video games, home computer and total TV reception. Enjoy more on-screen picture and less distortion. And only Hitachi has Signal Tracker control, our most advanced color control system ever. With the handy wireless remote control and wood cabinetry you get ease of operation, great sound and quality good looks.

Simulated TV picture.

HITACHI
401 W. Artesia Blvd., Compton, CA 90220. (213) 537-8383
itself, in which case the noise became much worse, of course). Presumably, if we had an appropriate reception problem to begin with, we would experience a change for the better with SSS.

The antenna connections are slightly more complex than usual. There are the customary screw binding posts for an AM antenna, and Denon supplies a pop-on loop for the purpose. But there's only a coaxial fitting for FM (although not a standard F connector), for which the company supplies a balun transformer with a mating connector on one side and screw terminals for 300-ohm twinlead on the other. If you have 75-ohm downlead, best performance will be obtained by fitting a matching connector directly to the cable. The alternative, if you can't find such a plug or if the cable already is terminated with a conventional F connector, would be to go into a balun to convert to 300-ohm twinlead output to the input of the Denon balun.

The tone controls provide fairly modest (though usually more than adequate) amounts of boost and cut—less than 10 dB at maximum rotation in each case—and, despite their calibration, save most of their effect for the last two or three divisions of the scale in each direction. The bass has most effect in the region between 30 and 100 Hz, the treble between 10 and 15 kHz.

Loudness compensation is adjusted independently of the volume setting. Turned down only a little from "flat," the control reduces output above 500 Hz a little more than at lower frequencies. Beyond about half rotation, it introduces progressively less attenuation at high frequencies (say, above 3 kHz), and the center of the band where maximum attenuation occurs slides upward from below 1 kHz to a little above. At the extreme setting, this center dip is down more than 12 dB from the bass (below 70 Hz) and almost 5 dB from the output above 10 kHz.

We preferred intermediate settings, though we consider loudness compensation to be largely a matter of taste, despite the study that has been afforded it. (Evidently, Denon agrees: Its curves don't match those dictated by current research.) In any event, such a continuously variable loudness can more easily approach any criterion, subjective or objective, than one that is rigidly keyed to the volume or (as sometimes is the case these days) completely fixed.
As in many other receivers, the moving-coil preamplifier has an inherent infrasonic rolloff that is not shared by the fixed-coil input, and the switchable infrasonic rolloff is quite gentle. Thus, control of warp-generated signals is better with the moving-coil option, though response is closer to ideally flat within the audio range through the lower-gain input.

Not only is the power rating quite hefty for a receiver, but so is the dynamic headroom, yielding the equivalent of more than 20 dBW (100 watts) into 8 ohms on typical musical signals. And into 4 or 2 ohms, the dynamic power is a whopping 22 dBW (160 watts). Diversified Science Laboratories notes that distortion is unusually severe when these limits are exceeded (at least with 8- or 4-ohm loads), but unless you have loudspeakers of atypically low sensitivity or play material with wide dynamic range at very high volume, this is not likely to be a problem.

Distortion is below our 0.01-percent reporting threshold at 0 dBW (1 watt). It is a hair above that level throughout the frequency range at rated power, but still far below normal audibility thresholds—even though at test frequencies of 4 kHz and below, the third harmonic dominates the measurements, rather than the more benign second. In other respects, performance generally is typical of modern receivers—with occasional standouts, such as the exceptional subcarrier suppression in the FM section.

Despite its innovative features—particularly the Super Searcher Tuning System—and its high power rating, the DRA-750 is basically a very straightforward receiver and consequently easy to use. It does have such luxuries as two-way tape dubbing and dual aux inputs (one cardmarked for a CD player, the other for video sources), but only the separate loudness-compensation adjustment and the SSS itself are likely to leave even the rawest of neonphiles in any confusion about intended operation. And the wood-grain end pieces and soft gold finish make it an unusually handsome model as well—something we take almost for granted from Denon.

A Pivoted P-Mount From Technics

In the beginning, the P-Mount plug-in cartridge system was associated exclusively with the Technics tangent-tracking turntables for which it was developed. The fuss-free format proved so attractive, however, that it quickly caught on with other manufacturers—first of pickups, then of tonearms and turntables. And here we have come full circle: This is the first turntable we have tested with a high-performance pivoted arm designed for P-Mount cartridges.

The SL-M2 is a two-speed manual model with one concession to automation: At the end of a record side, the arm lifts and the platter stops. Cueing is manual, though the arm is raised and lowered with a large touchplate rather than a lever near the arm pivot. This plate and the other controls are arrayed along the front of the base, beyond the dust cover’s front edge, so that they can be operated without opening it.

The most unusual of the controls is the one for pitch. To alter speed over a range that amounts to a little more than a half-tone in either direction—you must both adjust...
Music just met its Master.

Home audio from Proton, the “Best Picture” video people. Pure black, purely superb home audio components that deliver a richness in performance unequalled in audio today.

Performance is Proton-engineered into these separates with features like the exclusive Schotz Tuner/Noise Reduction System in the digital Proton 440 Stereo FM/AM Tuner.

The Proton 520 Integrated Amplifier also features High Current capability, Video Select, and Dual Phono Preamps for both moving coil and moving magnet cartridges. The Proton 720 Stereo Cassette Deck offers both Dolby® B and Dolby® C Noise Reduction Systems and Metal/Normal/CrO₂ tape capabilities.

Proton Audio components reproduce the full spectrum of music with great beauty and depth, perfectly matching Proton Video components in styling, size and performance. They’re definitely in a class of their own.

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**SPEED ACCURACY**
no measurable error at either speed, 105 to 127 VAC

**SPEED ADJUSTMENT RANGE**
+8.6% to -6.8%

**Wow & Flutter (ANSI weighted peak)**
average: -0.035%
maximum: -0.050%

**Total Audible Rumble (ARLL)**
-71 3/4 dB

**Effective Tonearm Mass**
-15 grams

**VTF-Gauge Accuracy**
no measurable error

**Total Lead Capacitance**
115 pF

*See text.*

The SL-M2 is a fine turntable. Rumble is (at -71 3/4 dB) very nearly the best that Diversified Science Laboratories has measured by conventional means; with the Thorens Rumpelmesskoppler (a special test instrument that can't be used on all turntables), the figure is an astonishingly low -76 1/2 dB. Flutter also is among the lowest DSL has found. And control operation is superb in its very straightforward way. Even if you're not specifically looking for a traditional manual model with the radical virtues of P-Mount, don't pass this one by.
M-A's Micro Cartridge


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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HZ</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>25</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>100</th>
<th>500</th>
<th>1K</th>
<th>2K</th>
<th>5K</th>
<th>10K</th>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1K</td>
<td>2K</td>
<td>5K</td>
<td>10K</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Frequency response

| L ch | +15, -25 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz |
| R ch | +1, -2 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz |

SENSITIVITY (at 1 kHz) 0.84 mV/cm/sec

CHANNEL BALANCE: + -1/4 dB

VERTICAL TRACKING ANGLE: 16°

MAX. TRACKING LEVEL (re RIAA 0 VU; 1.2 grams)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lateral</th>
<th>vertical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≥ +16 dB</td>
<td>&gt; +12 dB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DYNAMIC COMPLIANCE (vertical) 17 x 10^-6 cm/dyne

RECOMMENDED EFFECTIVE TONEARM MASS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>optimum</th>
<th>acceptable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 grams with weights removed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6 grams as received</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6 grams with extra weight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SQUARE-WAVE RESPONSE (1 kHz)

Three and a half years ago, we reviewed a radical product: the Micro-Acoustics 630 nonmagnetic phono cartridge. Now that model has been upgraded to create the Model 830CSA through the application of two developments: a more advanced multiradial stylus shape called Cutting Stylus Analogue, and selective tuned damping to control residual resonances and microphonics in the pickup's electrical compensating network.

The cartridge requires such a network because it is essentially an amplitude-sensitive transducer, whose frequency response therefore rolls off at 6 dB per octave. Magnetic pickups, for which phono preamplifiers are designed, are velocity-sensitive and therefore generate essentially flat response; they also have relatively low output. To match the sensitivity and RIAA equalization of conventional phono inputs, the outputs of Micro-Acoustics cartridges must be padded down and equalized. This task is accomplished by a miniature passive circuit built into the pickup shell. Because of its unusual generating system, the Micro-Acoustics is said to be almost completely immune to the effects of electrical loading (resistive and capacitive) that must be considered when choosing or installing a magnetic pickup.

The 830 is a featherweight, tipping the scales at just over 3 grams when stripped of the three half-gram weights that are built into it. With all three in place, it still weighs only 4.6 grams, which is about par for a low-mass model. A separate 1-gram weight is supplied and can be added between the cartridge and the headshell if your tonearm still won't balance with the other three in place. The instructions tell you how to judge the minimum weight that will work in your arm without resorting to a cut-and-try approach.

Diversified Science Laboratories' SME tonearm required all three half-gram weights, that in our listening setup wouldn't quite make it to the new stylus shape, which is designed specifically to trace the cutting stylus's path more accurately at high frequencies than the older biradial designs can. Vertical tracking angle (VTA) actually has decreased from the current standard of 20 degrees to near the erstwhile standard of 15 degrees, but the more important rake angle (SRA) is closer (very close, in fact) to the ideal.

Response and separation are very much alike when the two models are compared, though our published reports might not suggest so. When we tested the 630, we were still using the CBS STR-170 test record for this purpose. At that time, however, DSL was in the process of assessing alternatives. Among the records it tried with the 630 was the JVC TRS-1007 Mk. II, which we eventually settled on and used for the 830 curves shown here. Micro-Acoustics's own curves for the 830 show greater separation and a flatter high end, very much like the results we got with the 630 and the CBS disc.

At times, we thought the stereo imaging somewhat less crystalline than we have come to expect in top pickups, though in theory the 15 dB or more of separation measured even with the JVC disc should be enough for adequate imaging. Response is quite flat, and detail is well differentiated. Overall, the 830CSA delivers very enjoyable listening.
FM SENSITIVITY & QUIETING

LOCAL MODE

DX MODE

Channel separation

Frequency response

-25

-20

-15

-10

-5

0

5

10

15

20

25

30

35

40

H2 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 12 14 16 kHz

Sensitivity (for 50-dB noise suppression)

-25 dB at 98 MHz, with 0.80% THD+N

(25 dB at 90 MHz, 44 dB at 106 MHz)

Mono sensitivity (for 50-dB noise suppression)

21 dB at 98 MHz

AC POWER

PRESETS

RECORDING CALIBRATION TONE ON/OFF

METER MODE (SIGNAL-QUALITY/MULTIPATH)

"FILTER" (SEE TEXT) ON/OFF

FM ATTENUATOR ON/OFF

TUNING (UP, DOWN)

FINE TUNING (UP, DOWN)

BAND (AM/FM)

MEMORY

TUNING MODE (AUTO/MANUAL-MONO)

RX MODE (LOCAL/DX/AUTO)

Fresh Thinking

In a Yamaha Tuner


Except as indicated, measurements were made in the DX mode with the RF attenuator and "filter" off.

FM and 10-kHz (full-channel) steps on AM, either one step at a time as you tap the UP or DOWN end of the main (upper) tuning bar or in bursts as you press continuously. If you push the smaller, lower tuning bar, the step width is reduced by a factor of ten—to 10 kHz and 1 kHz, respectively—so that you can deliberately detune to reduce interference from a strong neighboring station.

Perhaps best of all, from a practical point of view, is that the presets memorize not only the precise tuned frequency, but also the settings of the RX mode, FM attenuator, filter, tuning mode (about which, more in due course), and tuning band (AM or FM), so that you can preadjust them for normal reception conditions on each station. If conditions are atypical when you select a frequency, you can then customize one or more of the settings without having to address the others. (In tuning AM stations, the RX mode and FM attenuator are inoperative, of course.)

Accessible at the left end of the tuner is a slip-out rack that holds translucent IDs for the ten preset buttons, and Yamaha supplies labels for AM-1 to -10 and FM-1 to -10, plus each of the FM frequencies assigned in this country. The memory is reasonably nonvolatile. Yamaha says it will hold up through power blackouts and temporary disconnection; when we switched the tuner at our preamp and left it off for days at a time, we lost no information. One nice detail is a back-panel switch that chooses whether the T-80 will select the last station tuned or the first in the preset series at turn-on.

The antenna connections—one of the few elements we dislike in the design—include two spring-loaded terminals for a long-wire AM antenna and ground or for the supplied snap-on AM loop, a similar pair for 300-ohm FM twinlead, and a special fitting for 75-ohm coax, with an adapter to mate it. Why most companies resist the now-standard F fittings for 75-ohm
A Middleweight Headset from Audio-Technica


ONCE UPON A TIME, good headphones were uncomfortably heavy and cut you off almost totally from your immediate environs. Using them was, in a sense, an affirmation of your love of music—you were willing to suffer for art’s sake. Although the situation had begun to improve before the advent of the Walkman, it was the personal-portable riptide that really washed the old clunkers out to sea. Nowadays, everyone is wearing the new featherweights, mainly because of the ultralightweights, which are cheap, comfortable, and often very good sounding, if you can overlook some weakness in the deep bass and don’t need a great deal of isolation from external noise.

But if you want a more substantial alternative, Audio-Technica may have just what you’re looking for. Its ATH-20 headphones weigh 3.3 ounces—only slightly heavier than the ones packed with most personal portables. They rest lightly on the ear yet feel considerably more secure than some are and are virtually peerless: Very few tuners offer so broad a range of options with anything like this degree to which it has dumped cliché in favor of direct relationships between control functions and listening quality. In that respect, the superb flexibility of the T-80 is virtually peerless. Very few tuners offer so broad a range of options with anything like this.

A MIDDLEWEIGHT Headset from Audio-Technica

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, treb-e-intensive digital source material with optimum results.

And TDK makes sure the performance never fizzes, 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!
"Within a few seconds... it was obvious that the
Genesis 44 is not a 'typical' two-way speaker."

The Genesis 44 is a unique high performance loudspeaker. Because we make all our own speaker components, the 44 incorporates engineering not even on the drawing boards of the competition: A tweeter that covers a range two octaves greater than similar types, and crosses over as low as a midrange. An eight inch woofer with so great an air moving capacity, it can respond accurately down to 25Hz, even at high volumes. "One of the most nearly ideal loudspeaker room-response measurements we can recall making."* Every note is captured, and reproduced with the highest fidelity.

"Certainly distinctive... adding to the speaker's appearance are the broadly beveled front edges of the cabinet, which... reduce diffraction effects."

The 44's handsome good looks are an instance of form and function working in harmony. The cabinet shape eliminates the boxy sound caused by sharp-edged, square cabinets. All the important loudspeaker characteristics were optimized in a design with one goal: to build a loudspeaker that doesn't sound like a loudspeaker.

We succeeded.

"Whatever the reason(s), we could listen indefinitely without being reminded that we were listening to loudspeakers."

"The Genesis 44's created an unmistakable feeling of depth... that was simply lacking in the sound of other speakers..."

"It would be natural to conclude that the Genesis 44 is a smooth, uncolored speaker with a very wide-range response and considerably above-average dispersion qualities. Well, it is certainly all of that, but it is much more..."*

The Genesis 44 is that rare piece of audio equipment that is actually a welcome addition to your home. No other speaker sounds more like being there at a musical performance. Hear it, and agree.

Each 44 is individually tuned and tested. Like all Genesis speakers, the test results are displayed on the shipping carton, and the speaker is covered by a Full Lifetime Warranty. Currently available at less than $700 the pair.

*Julian Hirsch, STEREO REVIEW
**Audiosource's Flexible Equalizer**

**Audiosource EQ-One Series II graphic equalizer, with built-in pink-noise generator and spectrum analyzer.**


**OUTPUT AT CLIPPING** (at 1 kHz, all controls at 0 dB)
- 6.5 volts

**MAXIMUM INPUT LEVEL** (clipping)
- 6.9 volts

**S/N RATIO** (re 0.5 volt; A-weighting; IHF loading)
- all controls at 0 dB
  - 92 dB
- worst case (at max. above 1 kHz, others at min.)
  - 67.4 dB

**HARMONIC DISTORTION** (THD; 20 Hz to 20 kHz)
- at 1-volt output
  - <0.014%
- at 2-volt output
  - <0.027%

**FREQUENCY RESPONSE** (all controls at 0 dB)
- <+1/4, -1/4 dB, <10 Hz to 135 kHz;
- <+1/4, -3 dB, <10 Hz to 219 kHz

**CONTROL ACTION** (max & min. with other controls at 0)
- EQ-One Series II
  - DB
  - 0
  - ±10
  - ±15

**INFRASONIC FILTER**
- -3 dB at 22 Hz; +18 dB/octave

**CHANNEL SEPARATION** (at 1 kHz)
- 74 dB

**INPUT IMPEDANCE**
- ≥23.7k ohms

**OUTPUT IMPEDANCE**
- 69 ohms

**OUTPUT IMPEDANCE**

**INPUT IMPEDANCE**

**CONTROL ACTION** (max & min. with other controls at 0)

**INFRASONIC FILTER**

**CHANNEL SEPARATION** (at 1 kHz)

**INPUT IMPEDANCE**

**OUTPUT IMPEDANCE**

**This is a reworking of the original EQ-One equalizer/analyzer, which we reviewed in the June 1983 issue.** We found that model useful and interesting, though perhaps less precise than average (even among consumer units) in such matters as calibration. As it turns out, the Series II is identical to the original model in its features; the only changes are internal, aimed at making it a more accurate instrument. Hence the “Calibration Standard” legend on the front panel.

The unit’s graphic-equalizer section has ten independent octave-band sliders for each channel, centered on ISO frequencies from 31.5 Hz to 16 kHz. The control scheme and back-panel connections make it possible to monitor a tape deck (the one whose monitor connections on your preamp or receiver the EQ-One has pre-empted) and to equalize the recording feed, the playback signal, or neither. Thus, it can be used for either program “sweetening” or speaker EQ.

The spectrum-analyzer section includes a pink-noise generator to provide a test signal that, on average, is flat across the audio band. Input can be either through the EQ-One’s line connections (to check the response of a tape deck or other piece of electronic equipment) or from the supplied microphone (to measure loudspeakers or other acoustic devices). The results are shown on a bank of LEDs that have a green element in each frequency band for reference level plus four red elements above and four below—a total display range of ±8 dB when set for 2 dB per step or ±16 dB at 4 dB per step.

The far-left column, which normally would display the 31.5-Hz band, can be switched to show average level across the audio range. Other switches permit display of the left-channel signal only, the right only, or the sum of the two. You have a choice of two time constants over which instantaneous data are integrated, approximating the normal and peak-hold display modes of “bar graph” level meters on tape decks. A PAUSE freezes the display for as long as you press the button. There also is a very effective switchable infrasonic filter, with a steep slope and low cutoff frequency.

Even without the analyzer section, the EQ-One’s switching flexibility would make it relatively attractive in this crowded field. The size of the bite or boost it supplies still varies slightly. As measured at the center frequencies, changes are smaller near the “0” detent than toward the extremes. Most are now within a dB or two of the marked calibrations, however, representing a large improvement over the original model. In particular, it makes getting the feel of the equalizer faster and easier than before. But, as we noted in our first review, you will depend more on your ears than your eyes in most situations, making the calibration something of a side issue.

**What really separates the EQ-One from the competition, however, is the spectrum analyzer.** Obviously, it won’t be pressed into service every time you use the equalizer, but having it available adds materially to the things you can do. Again, however, it isn’t a laboratory instrument: Real precision can’t be expected at this price. The levels at which the display LEDs trigger are usually within 1 dB of the calibration levels relative to the 0-dB reference (which is user-adjustable), and because errors tend to be cumulative, they are smallest for the modest degrees of boost or cut that normally are involved.

Furthermore, the sensing circuitry ap-
pears to respond to peak rather than rms signal values and presumably senses only one half of the unrectified waveform. For whatever reason, the level displayed depends on the nature of the signal. And when you shift from 2-dB to 4-dB steps in the display or between display-speed modes, you must readjust the 0-dB reference.

Taken for what it is— an inexpensive home equalizer/analyzer with excellent control flexibility—the EQ-One is a delight. It will tell you far more about the signals that pass through your system than any conventional device will. We wish every recordist could watch the shifting spectral content of music this way, because it would make much easier our job of explaining how to make the best possible recordings. The improvements Audiosource has incorporated in the Series II version are relatively small, but they are nonetheless worthwhile, making an already attractive product even more so. And they have been achieved at very little increase in price.

Walsh Redux, From Ohm

Ohm Walsh 4 floor-standing loudspeaker system, in particleboard cabinet with walnut, oak, rosewood, white lacquer, or black lacquer finish. Dimensions: 15½ by 40 inches (front), 15½ inches deep at base. Price: to $1,895 per pair, depending on finish. Warranty: "limited," five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Ohm Acoustics Corp.. 241 Taaffe Pl., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11205.

ROOM RESPONSE CHARACTERISTICS

![Room Response Chart]

Walsh 4
- on-axis response
- off-axis (30°) response
- boundary-dependent region

SENSITIVITY (at 1 meter; 2.8-volt pink noise 250 Hz to 6 kHz) 86 dB SPL
AVERAGE IMPEDANCE (250 Hz to 6 kHz; controls "flat") 11.3 ohms

About ten years ago, Ohm introduced a loudspeaker that truly deserved the overworked, often misapplied adjective "unique." It was based on a new type of full-range driver developed by Lincoln Walsh. His invention looked something like a conventional cone driver, except that it flared less and pointed down into the cabinet rather than out into the room. Thus, sound is radiated primarily from the outside surface of the cone at right angles to the voice-coil axis rather than from the front. The cone's slope is determined by the speed of sound through its surface, so that an impulse reaches any given point on the cone at just the right time for it to radiate in step with every other point. Ohm says that the result is a cylindrical wavefront expanding horizontally into the room in every direction.

In 1982, Ohm introduced the relatively compact Walsh 2, which uses an improved second-generation version of the Walsh driver. The Walsh 4 under review is a larger version of that system, which is said to have deeper bass response and greater dynamic range. Both incorporate significant changes from the earlier models. A small super tweeter has been added to fill in the top octave, and there is now a protective perforated metal canister covering the entire driver assembly, with felt over its outer rear quadrant to block some of the output toward room corners. This departure from the essentially omnidirectional radiation pattern of the original Walsh speakers is said to improve stereo imaging.

A pair of Walsh 4s is delivered in three boxes: two containing identical bases and a third holding the mirror-imaged driver modules. You must mount the driver units on the bases—a process that takes only a few minutes. The models will fit only one way, so it is virtually impossible to make a mistake. An acoustically transparent cloth bonnet fits over the top, hiding the driver canister from view. The base (which rolls easily on four small casters) contains the speaker's crossover network and has a ducted port in its bottom to extend low-frequency response.
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Amplifier connections are made with bared wires or banana plugs to a pair of color-coded sprint clips in a recess on the back panel. Also located there are three three-position slide switches for tailoring the speaker’s response. Two are for increasing or decreasing low- or high-frequency output; the third is labeled “perspective” and is designed to alter your apparent distance from the performers by manipulating midrange response.

Diversified Science Laboratories obtained best measured response with the speaker backed against a wall, the low-frequency contour on “decrease,” and the perspective switch on “forward.” It therefore adopted that arrangement for all of its other tests. Sensitivity proved relatively low by current standards, perhaps partly because of the rather high average impedance. The impedance curve varies somewhat according to the settings of the response-contouring switches, but the absolute maximum is approximately 24 ohms, while the absolute minimum is 4.4 ohms. Although you might need a bit more power than usual, a pair of Walsh 4s should represent a nonthreatening load to any good amplifier, and with care, you might be able to run them in parallel with another set of speakers.

On our 300-Hz pulse power-handling test, the speaker accepted the full output of the lab’s amplifier—equivalent to 26½ dBW, or 481 watts, into 8 ohms—without sign of distress. At that level, the calculated peak sound pressure level (SPL) was 112½ dB, or 481 watts, into 8 ohms—the lab’s amplifier-equivalent to 26½ dBW. On our 100-Hz sine-wave output, the speaker was quite loud. (We are comparing SPL at equal levels. As you can see from the curves in our data column, the Walsh 4’s room-corrected third-octave response is smooth and extended at the lab’s control settings and placement, remaining within +5¼, -4 dB from 30 Hz to 16 kHz on-axis and within +5¼, -4 dB out to 20 kHz off-axis. In this case, 30 degrees off the cabinet axis is more nearly on the axis of the tweeter—hence the more extended treble response.)

Not quite as smooth, response also is very respectable with the speaker several feet from any walls and the controls set flat—the arrangement we used for most of our listening. The resulting sound is clean and neutral, with plenty of detail across the range (most notably in the bass, which is firm and tight and excellent stereo imaging. Perhaps because of its unusually wide and uniform radiation pattern, the Walsh 4’s sound is remarkably unconfined and open—an endearing quality that’s hard to give up once you’ve grown accustomed to it. And you can hear decent stereo from an unusually wide range of listening positions.

The speakers do not seem to be especially placement-sensitive, though the bass increases (as one would expect) when they are moved back against a wall. If the need be, this rise can be tamed with the bass contour switch, which is equally effective in bringing up the low end when necessary. The effects of the other two switches are also apparent, especially in their boost settings. However, we usually preferred the results obtained with all three at their middle positions.

We are always a little suspicious at first of speakers that employ unusual types of drivers (so many of them turn out to be oddities and nothing more), but these new Ohms certainly have won us over. They can hold their own against the finest speakers we know in every respect except, perhaps, sensitivity. And in some—imaging particularly—we feel they are conspicuously appealing. In their price class, they deserve special mention for this report most fainthearted for a prebuilt unit, the parts readily plugging to plugging. Particularly flexi-Hafler says that the parts readily plugging to plugging. Particularly flexi-Hafler says that

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eliminating such extras permits the use of high-quality components, such as polypropylene and polycarbonate capacitors, throughout the signal path. To protect your loudspeakers from nonmusical transients, the DH-100 mutes the output to your amplifier for about two seconds when turned on and immediately when turned off. Its tone controls have no defeat option, but Diversified Science Laboratories' measurements indicate that they have virtually no effect on the unit's frequency response at their detented center positions.

DSL found the phono section's input capacitance relatively low—about right (after adding tonearm cable capacitance) for typical premium cartridges. However, the owner's manual explains how to vary the impedance (resistance and capacitance) of the phono input to match the requirements of any fixed-coil pickup. Despite its use of passive RIAA equalization, the DH-100's phono input overload margin is adequate at high frequencies and generous in the midrange and bass. A fixed infrasonic filter rolls off the response through all inputs at about 9 dB per octave below 10 Hz to remove warp-induced and other unwanted signals at frequencies below the audible band.

The tone controls operate over broad bands, with maximum effect at the frequency extremes. The BASS begins its action between 250 and 600 Hz (depending on the amount of boost or cut) and has a range of ±12 dB at 20 Hz. The TREBLE cuts in at about 1 kHz, reaching extremes of approximately ±15 dB at 20 kHz. We were somewhat disappointed with the taper of the controls, which puts most of their action within ±90 degrees of the detents. This characteristic makes it more difficult than usual to achieve modest amounts of response contouring.

If performance is what you look for in a preamp, you'll find much to love in the DH-100. Frequency response, phono equalization, noise, and distortion all belie the little Hafler's modest price. Indeed, if you can get by without a few creature comforts (such as a headphone output and a mono switch) and don't need the greater flexibility afforded by more elaborate models, we can see little reason not to consider the DH-100. And we don't know of a better bargain.

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COMPLETE GUIDE TO HIGH FIDELITY'S TEST REPORTS

Each year, High Fidelity evaluates almost 100 audio, video, and car stereo components. To help you completely understand how we conduct the tests, what characteristics we feel are important, what changes in testing procedures we have made during the past year, and how to use the reports we publish each month in making buying decisions, we are offering for the first time the "Complete Guide to High Fidelity's Test Reports." This full-size, 16-page primer contains an extensive glossary of technical terms; sections on how we test Compact Disc players, video components, cassette decks, preamplifiers, power amplifiers, tuners, phono cartridges, turntables, speakers, car stereo components, and cassette tapes; and a complete list of all lab tests published in 1984 (which also are available as separate reprints). To obtain your copy, send a check or money order for $3.95 (which includes handling and postage) to High Fidelity's Test Report Guide, High Fidelity, Dept. JW, 825 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019. Allow 60 days for delivery.
MITSUBISHI CS-2061R
TELEVISION RECEIVER

Special features: direct audio and composite video inputs and outputs, RGB input, built-in speakers, broadcast stereo TV reception capability, sleep timer, and wireless remote control. Dimensions: 20½ by 19 inches (front), 19¾ inches deep; screen, 20 inches (diagonal). Price: $820. Warranty: "limited," two years parts and labor on picture tube, one year on all other components. Manufacturer: Mitsubishi Electric Corp., Japan; U.S. distributor: Mitsubishi Electric Sales America, Inc., 3010 E. Victoria St., Rancho Dominguez, Calif. 90221.

JACK OF ALL TRADES best describes the Mitsubishi CS-2061R. Used as a straight monitor, it can display either standard NTSC-composite or RGB video, making it suitable for computer graphics applications as well as pure home entertainment. But it also has an internal TV tuner (the first we have reviewed with a built-in BTSC stereo audio decoder) capable of receiving all VHF and UHF broadcasts and every...
low-band, midband, superband, and hyperband cable channel. If you subscribe to a pay TV or cable channel, you can connect the descrambler to a second antenna input Mitsubishi provides and select normal or pay broadcasts either locally or via the infrared remote control.

Ten-button keypads on the main chassis and remote provide direct access to any channel. Scan tuning also is available, via up/down buttons on the chassis and remote. However, the scan operates only over the channels you’ve entered into the CS-2061R’s tuning memory. Mitsubishi says the set will maintain the contents of this memory for at least six hours without AC power, but they are automatically erased if you switch from TV mode to cable or vice versa. Although the CS-2061R’s tuner is a frequency-synthesis design, you can fine-tune any channel with a pair of plus/minus buttons and an auto/manual switch on the main chassis.

Whenever you change channels, the new channel number and the time appear briefly on the screen. A two-digit display below the screen also shows the channel number and doubles as a countdown timer when you’ve selected automatic turnoff. Turnoff time can be set for five minutes or in ten-minute increments up to 90 minutes in advance. Pressing DISPLAY on the main chassis or the remote recalls the video display of time and channel number. The local display button also serves to arm the clock-set system. A “quick view” button enables you to return instantly to the last previously tuned channel.

Volume is adjusted via up/down buttons on the chassis and remote, and there is another button for muting the sound entirely. The remote also enables you to switch between the two antenna inputs, activate the sleep timer, switch from the tuner to the direct-video input, and turn the set on and off. Unlike many other monitor/receivers, the CS-2061R’s front panel duplicates all of the remote’s functions. When not in use, the remote stores in a special slot in the monitor.

Controls that are only on the main chassis include vertical hold, color, tint, picture (sharpness), brightness, and contrast. The last three are detented at their recommended settings. RGB brightness, contrast, and horizontal hold are separately adjusted via back-panel controls. For audio, there are center-detented bass, treble, and balance controls, plus loudness, blend, and expand pushbuttons. BLEND partially mixes left and right channels to reduce noise on weak stereo broadcasts; EXPAND creates synthetic stereo from a mono source.

When the CS-2061R senses a stereo broadcast, it illuminates an indicator and switches to the stereo mode. If a Separate Audio Program signal is present, the SAP audio indicator also lights. Pressing the stereo/SAP button switches between the main stereo broadcast and the mono Separate Audio Program. You can select automatic or manual switching from the SAP to the main audio program when channels are changed, but it’s best to stick with automatic. In manual, the receiver will stay in the SAP mode even if there is no SAP signal on the new channel.

All connections are made on the back panel. A pair of F connectors serve as the two 75-ohm VHF antenna inputs; a set of screw terminals is provided for 300-ohm UHF downlead. The audio and composite video inputs are pin jacks, while the RGB input is a standard EIA 8-pin connector. An RGB color switch gives you a choice of 8- or 16-color display. The CS-2061R’s small main speakers—flanking the front control panel—and rear-mounted woofer can be disconnected by a back-panel slide switch, allowing you to wire external speakers to a set of color-coded spring clips.

The CS-2061R has only one pair of line-level audio outputs instead of separate sets for driving a stereo amplifier and recording on a VCR. You can get around this limitation by hooking an amplifier and VCR in parallel with Y connectors, but the Mitsubishi’s rather high output impedance and low output level suggest you’ll have to turn up the amplifier volume quite a bit. The CS-2061R’s audio controls affect the signal at the line outputs, so once you start recording, it’s best to leave them alone.

Diversified Science Laboratories’ measurements indicate that the tone controls are of the shelving type and provide a maximum range of approximately ±9 dB below 100 Hz and almost the same above 10 kHz.
The loudness compensation boosts the bass by about 7 dB and the treble by 5 dB independent of the VOLUME setting. Frequency response through the audio line input is quite flat, bumping up slightly below 400 Hz to a maximum of +1 dB at about 100 Hz, then rolling off gradually to -3 dB at 20 Hz.

Unfortunately, test equipment for broadcast stereo reception is not yet available, so all of DSL’s measurements of the tuner section’s audio performance were made in mono. However, we would not expect any major differences except in signal-to-noise (S/N) ratio, which might be better because of the noise reduction applied to the stereo signal. The frequency response is respectable, although it exhibits a peak of approximately 2 dB at 6.5 kHz and unusually sharp rolloffs below 40 Hz and above 14 kHz. The horizontal scan component is quite well suppressed, and the A-weighted S/N ratio is reasonably good under normal viewing conditions.

The tuner’s video response is essentially flat to 3 MHz and down only slightly at the color-burst frequency (3.58 MHz). Luminance level is somewhat high, but this is easily corrected with the BRIGHTNESS, and gray-scale linearity is very good. Chroma level (color saturation) is very close to the mark, and the phase (hue) error also is within acceptable limits, with blue, cyan, and yellow furthest off the average. Chroma differential phase (the degree to which hues shift with changes in scene brightness) is low, and the chroma differential gain (variation of color saturation with scene brightness) is confined almost entirely to the highest luminance level.

Mitsubishi’s CRT is one of the new “squared-off” types that enables you to see to the very corners of the screen and gives the impression of a picture-window view of the action. Convergence is extraordinarily good right to the corners of the screen. What little misconvergence the lab could find was at the middle of the screen toward the top and bottom and was completely unnoticeable at normal viewing distance, even on test patterns.

Horizontal and vertical overscan are about par for a component video monitor, and the picture is very well centered. Geometric linearity and transient response are excellent, and vertical interlace perfect, assuring maximum vertical resolution. With the picture control at its center detent, horizontal resolution approaches the limits of the NTSC system. Advancing the control increases the sharpness of the 3.0-, 3.58-, and 4.2 MHz burst patterns; turning it down softens the picture noticeably on almost all of the bursts and reduces video noise. We’re very impressed with the CS-2061R’s color accuracy. Reds are noticeably more red (less orange) than usual, and green also is truer than average. (Blue seems to be an easy mark for most good monitors.)

Mitsubishi has done such a good job on the hard problems in monitor design—keeping the colors accurate and well converged over the entire screen—that it’s surprising to see the CS-2061R stumble a bit in handling the luminance information. With the factory BRIGHTNESS and CONTRAST settings, gray-scale linearity is poor to fair. The lowest gray bar merges into solid black. Advancing the BRIGHTNESS helps, but we’d still not give the monitor high marks for gray-scale rendition, which directly affects its ability to handle our chroma differential gain test pattern.

Over most of the screen, black retention is very good, but the upper third of the screen tends to be noticeably brighter than the lower two-thirds—an anomaly that can be seen in normal TV viewing as well as on test patterns. And there is evidence of blooming (enlargement of white areas) over most of the CONTRAST range when switching from solid black to solid white. This effect can be eliminated by turning the CONTRAST all the way down, but that makes the picture quite weak; the BRIGHTNESS setting makes almost no difference.

The CS-2061R we received for review was a very early sample, so there is reason to hope that these problems—in what is otherwise an excellent monitor—will have been cleared up by the time you read this. During the time we had to live with the unit, we found only one station in our area transmitting in stereo. Subjectively, the bandwidth and signal-to-noise ratio of the stereo broadcast was about the same as that of mono on other stations. Unfortunately, the programming did little to advance the cause of stereo TV!
NEW TECHNOLOGIES VIDEO

VIDICRAFT DETAILER III
VIDEO ENHANCER

Manufacturer: Vidicraft, Inc., 0704 S.W. Bancroft St., Portland, Ore. 97201.

IF YOU EVER have the feeling that you’re looking “through a glass, darkly,” maybe you need a video enhancer. The function of such a device is to bring out detail in a picture. This can be especially useful with VCRs, which substantially soften images because of their limited video bandwidth. And when you dub from one VCR to another, the problem is compounded. An enhancer can also be used to pep up a low-resolution monitor or the output from a TV tuner whose video response rolls off prematurely. The only prerequisites are that the input to the enhancer must be a composite (direct) video signal and that the devices it feeds also be able to accept a direct video feed.

The operation of a video enhancer is analogous to that of a treble control in an audio system. Both boost high-frequency information and can improve the sharpness and clarity of what you see or hear. But neither can replace information that has been completely lost, and both can exaggerate high-frequency noise, producing hissy sound or a snowy picture. Some inexpensive image enhancers (like the sharpness controls on most monitors) boost everything in a band of frequencies—noise as well as detail—and do so equally at all signal levels. This can result not only in a snowy picture, but also one in which vertical edges are overemphasized and followed by secondary outlines.

Vidicraft’s top-of-the-line Detailer III is notably more sophisticated. It has separate controls for detail and sharpness and two noise reduction systems that modify the enhancement to avoid—insofar as possible—emphasizing snow and graininess. The independent controls for sharpness and detail are important because, despite their similarities, the two are not the same. A picture is “sharp” when lines and edges are clearly delineated. It may or may not have much “detail” within those edges. (A cartoon is sharp but has little detail.) Detail is the fine grain of the picture. Does grass look like grass or like green asphalt?

Technically, both sharpness and detail are related to the high-frequency content of the video signal. But whereas detail can be brought out by a relatively simple boost in high-frequency response, sharpness can best be enhanced by creating a controlled ring on transients. That is, when there is a sudden increase in brightness—suggesting an edge—the change can be made more discernible by “penciling in” the edge, so to

AC POWER

INPUT SELECT (1/2/3/4)

ENHANCE/BYPASS
COLOR/MONOCHROME
"SPLIT SCREEN" ON/OFF

DETAIL, SHARPNESS ADJUST.

"SPLIT SCREEN" ADJUST. (BLACK, VNX)
speak, with a fine darker line just before the transition.

Indeed, Diversified Science Labs' tests using a staircase signal—sudden, step-like increases in brightness from black to white—suggest that the Detailer III creates precisely such an effect. When the SHARPNESS is turned up, a brief reduction in brightness precedes an overshoot that highlights the increase. Although there is a cycle or two of ringing in both the darker and brighter portions, the signal quickly settles to the proper luminance level. The result is heightened contrast at the point of transition, making edges stand out more than they otherwise would. When DETAIL is advanced, each transition to a higher brightness level is briefly enhanced before settling down to the correct luminance. Close examination of the action suggests that the Detailer III sharply limits the boost to a factor of two to prevent overemphasis of vertical lines. Also, the ringing after the transition is brief and well controlled, which suggests negligible "outlining" to the right of a vertical line.

DSL's multiburst measurements indicate that both controls have their greatest effect between 1.5 and 3.0 MHz. When they are at minimum (or with the system bypassed), response is essentially flat across the entire video band. In all other respects, and independent of control settings, the Detailer III is neutral. Luminance level and gray-scale linearity are virtually perfect. There's no chroma differential gain and negligible differential phase, indicating that neither color saturation nor hue shifts with changes in scene brightness. Chroma level (color saturation) is right on target, and the worst-case phase (hue) error is tiny.

Like its sharpness- and detail-enhancement circuits, the Detailer III's video noise reduction systems are technologically more sophisticated than average. The black areas of a typical picture contain very little detail, so the eye usually is attracted to the brighter portions. However, if video noise is present in the dark areas and is emphasized by enhancement circuitry, it appears as white snow or a mottled graininess that is very distracting. To prevent such side-effects, the Detailer III's "black" control adjusts the luminance threshold above which enhancement becomes effective. DSL's tests indicate that at the control's maximum setting there is essentially no enhancement of black scenes and only a slight boost at the first luminance level. Full boost isn't attained until the upper half of the luminance range.

The Detailer III's second noise reduction control is labeled VNX—Vidicraft's trademark for what is known generally as a "coring" circuit. It limits the amount of enhancement applied to low-level detail while maintaining full enhancement of high-level signals, the argument being that noise normally will be low in amplitude relative to the desired video information and that it's worth sacrificing a bit of low-level enhancement to avoid emphasizing the snow. To check the circuit, DSL fully advanced the DETAIL and SHARPNESS, which causes low-level ringing after a step increase in brightness. Turning up the VNX removed the ringing (corresponding to low-level detail) but had virtually no affect on the basic high-level enhancement.

The Detailer III has four sets of direct stereo audio-video inputs and outputs. You choose the input to be processed at a pushbutton selector array. After enhancement, the same signal feeds all four outputs, so you can watch it on one or more monitors and record it on multiple VCRs simultaneously. A split-screen control enables you to compare the processed signal to the raw input—a great way to maintain full enhancement for best effect. You can vary the point at which the split takes place from about one-quarter the way across the screen to three-quarters across. Once you've made the adjustments, the split-screen can be defeated with a pushbutton. Other buttons bypass the processor and select either color or monochrome processing. You can even patch in other audio-video processing equipment at a set of jacks on the back panel.

All in all, the Detailer III's performance is superb. But as Vidicraft's excellent owner's manual points out, the effectiveness of image enhancement depends on the quality of the source material. Usually, the better the original, the greater the possible improvement, and you cannot expect any enhancer to perform miracles. Nonetheless, this is a remarkable and quite useful instrument. We've never before used an enhancer that could do so much with so little.
Reviews

Popular Compact Disc

Elvis Costello: My Aim Is True.


Costello's ten albums are available on Compact Disc, more than the number from most contemporary rock stylists. But then few artists have released ten albums in seven years. Costello's debut, "My Aim Is True," is by far the least promising as a CD, but I've worn out both of my LP copies so I'm more than happy to have a new copy in a new format.

The endearingly low-fi aesthetic of this album is not memorable in itself, but it does make a point. Essentially a set of demos, "My Aim Is True" was recorded and mixed in a London studio by producer Nick Lowe, who completed the project within a few days at a cost of $800 or £800, depending on which version of the story you believe. But the unvarnished album burst with energy and grounded Costello securely in a commercially and artistically successful career.

The CD version offers minor improvements. There is a solid, ringing accuracy to cymbal work, but elsewhere in the percussion there are still muffled spots. Bass figures emerge with a bit more depth, and vocals sound slightly cleaned up, although not when compared to audiophile pressings.

The digital makeover doesn't solve the frequent crackle of distortion or the sometimes slapdash (and, in spots, near-mono) stereo placement. But the sheer vitality of the playing (by members of an expatriate Bay Area band, Clover, on all but one track) is first-rate, as are the songs—including Less Than Zero, (The Angels Wanna Wear My) Red Shoes, Mystery Dance, and I'm Not Angry.

Collectors should note that this version repeats the sequence used on the American LP release, which added a subsequent single, Watching the Detectives, recorded by stello and his then new backing band, the Attractions.

Still, better candidates for CD transfer would be the Spector-inspired sweep of "Armed Forces" or the Stax/Volt stylings of "Get Happy!!" The latter could be a genuine revelation in CD, since the original analog LP crammed nearly 30 minutes onto each side of a single disc. Judging from British single mixes of those songs, the master itself offered more than the LP could handle.

—Sam Sutherland

Pat Metheny and Lyle Mays: As Falls Wichita, So Falls Wichita Falls.


ECM's immaculately but conservatively produced sessions drew little attention to studio technology until this 1981 project by guitarist Pat Metheny and synthesist Lyle Mays. The ambitious title suite alone required the sort of extensive overdubbing and signal processing normally associated with pop and rock production at its most lavish. Building on oceanic synthesizer textures (familiar from Mays's earlier work in the Pat Metheny Group), as well as on Metheny's versatile electric and acoustic guitars, the suite interweaves muttering crowds, random words and numbers, sound effects, and Nana Vasconcelos's percussion and vocalese. The effect is especially hallucinatory on Compact Disc, where the sharper definition, lower noise floor, and better stereo imaging enlarge the performance without altering or obscuring its myriad details.

The excellent analog master production retains its rich, cinematic atmosphere without losing any ambient information or revealing any technical seams previously masked by the higher noise levels of its LP configurations. The second side, while closer in execution to the Metheny Group albums that preceded this record, translates equally well to CD.

—S.S.

Sonny Rollins: Brass/Trio.


Brass/Trio* may not be the greatest Sonny Rollins album, but it is a logical choice for CD release. As the title implies, one side of this 1958 recording offers the legendary tenorman backed by a full rhythm section plus an additional brass section, the other side a minimal setting of horn, bass, and drums—a typical Rollins lineup of the time. This affords the listener a chance to hear how well the CD version captures both a massed sound and a more airy, open tone.
The "Brass" selections virtually leap off the beam. Rollins is right up front, crystal clear and cracking. The late Fifties were peak years for him, here his fervor, particularly fine; his robust, dancing lines now sound full and rounded. Grimes is more at home with the leaner surroundings, but the bass (Henry Grimes) and drums (Charles Wright) now sound full and rounded. Grimes is particularly fine, his robust, dancing lines are given the density they deserve. The best track, though, has nothing to do with either the brass or the trio. An unaccompanied track, though, has nothing to do with either of these discs and listen to a phenomenal singer having fun with the music—from E.T., however, Kunzel and the band come to life, the playing has guts, and the line of action is clearly grasped. Ditto for the main theme from Star Trek, by veteran Alexander Courage, which receives a driving, upbeat reading.

As prelude and postlude to the disc, Telarc provides synthesized sound-pieces by Frank Proto, a member of the orchestra's bass section. Unfortunately, the material is pure drivel. Still, Telarc gets high marks for its engineering; if only a little more of the genius of John Williams had come through!

—THEODORE W. LIBBEY, JR.

GERSHWIN:


André Previn is as much in his element here as he is out of it in a number of his more recent recording ventures. The music is some of Gershwin's finest, and the Londoners play it for Previn with all the panache it requires. The Cuban Overture fares particularly well, its Rhumba emerging with an élan and elasticity that make one want to dance. Throughout it and the other works here, Previn has the balances in perfect adjustment, the rhythms sprung exactly right, the shape of phrases utterly natural.

This is one of those extraordinary recordings made by EMI in the early phase of its digital campaign, when it used special, custom-made equipment. It is breathtaking in its impact and presence, with superb imaging and a startling sense of ambience—so startling that one literally hears the air. The high end is just a touch bright, but timbres are totally unaffected. In spite of short timings, this issue makes a terrific case for CD.

—T.W.L., JR.

EDITA G RUBEROVA:

Coloratura Arias.


Edita Gruberova is a reigning coloratura some unwanted groaning from the podium). The repertory is more than a little off the beaten track, which is all the more reason to hear Gruberova go at it. Her pitch is spot-on throughout, her command of diction and phrasing admirable. The only real drawback is that the band information is incorrectly printed on the disc itself (though not on the liner).

The Angel EMI sampler consists of more familiar selections from the French and Italian side, in which Gruberova is no less adept. Delibes's "Bell Song" is brilliantly done, except for one or two minor wrinkles in pitch; and if Gruberova's pronunciation here and in the three other French selections is only fair, she at least gets the words out. The Munich Radio Orchestra and conductor Gustav Kuhn provide first-class accompaniment.

Whether you prefer the warhorses or the unfamiliar works, you can sit back with either of these discs and listen to a phenomenal singer having fun with the music—and that alone is worth the investment.

—T.W.L., JR.

GRUBEROVA: reigning coloratura

H ere are two simply superb collections from the finest coloratura soprano of our time. Both are extremely well recorded and offer thrillingly lifelike presence and perspective on CD. That's important because Edita Gruberova's is the kind of high-pressure coloratura that sets styli vibrating past the limits of their design (when the Angal EMI LP came out, it exhibited distortion in the loudest passages). What a pleasure it is now to hear every nuance as if she were standing there. The Orfeo is a fine studio recording, a touch dry but remarkably clear and well balanced. Kurt Eichhorn's accompaniment gets stodgy in places, but by and large it is sympathetic and unobtrusive (in spite of

C L A S S I C A L  C O M P A C T  D I S C

CINCINNATI POPS ORCHESTRA: Film Music.


I t is hard to imagine this music being played by a capable orchestra, and superbly recorded, yet still missing nearly every point. But Erich Kunzel's curiously managed tempo transitions and nit-picking treatment of detail, at the expense of sweep and intensity, cause most of these accounts to go soft. The John Williams selections suffer most. Kunzel fails to convey the poignancy of the main theme from Close Encounters of the Third Kind and makes its climax sound superficial, while in the Star Wars, Empire, Superman, and Raiders selections he repeatedly stops short of serious involvement.

With the music from E.T., however, Kunzel and the band come to life, the playing has guts, and the line of action is clearly grasped. Ditto for the main theme from Star Trek, by veteran Alexander Courage, which receives a driving, upbeat reading.

As prelude and postlude to the disc, Telarc provides synthesized sound-pieces by Frank Proto, a member of the orchestra's bass section. Unfortunately, the material is pure drivel. Still, Telarc gets high marks for its engineering; if only a little more of the genius of John Williams had come through!

—THEODORE W. LIBBEY, JR.
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WEATHER REPORT
Mysterious Traveler
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Simon Rattle and the Seriousness of Sibelius

In Birmingham, the young British conductor begins his first integral recording of a major symphonic cycle.

by Paul Griffiths

At the New University of Warwick in the English Midlands, the long, narrow room behind the main concert auditorium has been converted temporarily into a recording studio. Outside, the sun falls on lawns and glass/concrete constructions in a modernist blaze of summer. Inside, the climate is different: Simon Rattle is listening to a take he has made with his City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra of part of Sibelius's Second Symphony, and though certainly not cold, the sound coming over the monitors is tough and determined. It is a familiar scene. The conductor sits smiling, struck only occasionally by doubt, at which point his pencil dives into the score he is following. The producer sits behind him, also with a score, but giving nothing away. Now and then, in easy good humor, Rattle turns to share a moment with him; the response is always serious.

Any good relationship between a musician and a producer demands a balance of enthusiasm and appraisal; what is unusual is that Rattle and his producer are not the only ones with their heads in the music. The room is filled with members of the orchestra who are taking part in evaluating the playback. The concertmaster, smartly turned out as if for a country-house weekend, sits next to an American trombonist in college sweatshirt, jeans, and sneakers. A violinist has her music on her lap; others stand with miniature scores. Clearly, this recording is being made by an orchestra (their principal conductor included), not just by a baton-waver with a complaisant group of players.

As such, Rattle's projected recording of the seven Sibelius Symphonies is a hallmark of his work with the Birmingham musicians. Under their previous conductor, Louis Frémaux, the CBSO had made some decent recordings in the French repertory, but their reputation was less than outstanding, even among British provincial orchestras. In four years Rattle has changed all that, and the change is less a matter of new personnel than of enhanced morale. There is a keenness and an interest throughout the ensemble—the level of attendance at the playback session proves that. As Rattle says, "There's nothing blasé about them. There's a desire to make music and a will-
That desire and willingness are clear enough in the recordings Rattle has already made with the CBSO. Janáček's Glagolitic Mass, Weill's Seven Deadly Sins, Britten's War Requiem plus various smaller works by the same composer. But the Sibelius cycle, beginning with Symphony No. 2, is the first long-term project they have undertaken for EMI. Rattle made an earlier recording of the Fifth Symphony, with the Philharmonia Orchestra, but will now work with the Birmingham ensemble on all seven, including a new version of the Fifth at the end of the series.

Still in his twenties, Rattle is understandably ambivalent about making a second recording of a piece so soon, but at the same time he is happy to be working on a larger canvas with the CBSO. "It was EMI's idea to use the CBSO, and I was very pleased about that," he says. And he is glad of the opportunity to take another look at the Fifth after an experience in 1983 that was evidently as illuminating for him as it was for his audiences at Warwick and London: playing and hearing all the Sibelius Symphonies in the course of three programs.

"You begin to see where it's all leading, where the momentum is going," Rattle points out. "I know I feel differently about the Second Symphony now. You have this tremendous resolution, and then what is tragic in the Fifth Symphony is that the resolution is withheld. That's what makes the Fifth such a powerful piece: I must have conducted it fifty times now—more than any other work—and still it doesn't get any weaker." Rattle talks with fascination, and intriguingly, of the differences he heard in a tape of Sibelius's first version of the Fifth Symphony: the separation of the Scherzo from the first movement, the greater anxiety of the Finale. "What I'd really like to do is to do both versions in one concert." At the moment, performances of the first version are banned, but, says Rattle, "We can wait."

Meanwhile, there will be the recordings of the seven canonical symphonies, the first symphonic cycle Rattle has recorded. Indeed, it is the first he has performed in its entirety; some of Mahler still lies ahead, most of Beethoven, and most of Haydn ("I wish I had conducted all the Haydns!" he says with intense enthusiasm). He is a little taken aback when reminded that he has completed Sibelius before these others, but not altogether surprised. "For a long time I've had strong views on how Sibelius should be performed. I've felt that generally he's not taken as seriously as he deserves. I'd go along to performances and then look at the scores, and I'd find a great discrepancy: Details would be smudged, or else considered to be just background noise, instead of it being shown how everything grows out of the tiniest cells." The first intimations Rattle had of a true Sibelius style came when he was working with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and their Finnish conductor, Paavo Berglund, in the mid-Seventies. "I learned a lot from Paavo," Rattle confides (though his preparation for recording the Second Symphony did not include listening to Berglund's version, made as part of a complete cycle with the Bournemouth players). "Paavo taught me, for instance, how a great many of Sibelius's melodies have to do with Finnish speech rhythms. And that's important in the woodwind chorale in the Finale [of the Second], where you have to take account of the fact that there's no ana-crusis in Finnish."

The point is made clear in Rattle's recording of the piece: The rhythm is stronger, more upright, and it contributes to the feeling of constant forward motion that is so important in this section. The fact that Sibelius delivers the goods right at the start of his Finale can easily make the continuation seem anticlimactic, but Rattle, characteristically, sees the difficulty primarily as one of tempo. "There are really two tempos implicit—that of the main theme and that of the little chorale—and you have to move between these. The essential thing is not to go under the main tempo. One can't let the tension sag."

It is rather the same in the first movement, where sometimes it seems that each new theme implies its own tempo. "Yes," Rattle says, "but you have to make the different tempos flow into one another. And you have to discipline the long themes. You see, I have this idea that Sibelius's long melodies should never be improvisatory. They should always be built clearly from the smaller units. You have to keep the momentum going." Again, the matter of Finnish speech rhythms appears to be important here, because Rattle's performances of this movement give the impression of different orchestral groups talking to each other—and the suggestion of dialogue justifies the shifts within the basic tempo. Of course, the dialogue must be all the richer because Rattle and the CBSO have worked on the Second Symphony for so long and with such evident goodwill on both sides. The prospect of performing it with another orchestra—as Rattle will with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, which he takes to New York this month for his debut there—is a challenge. "I've only conducted the Second Symphony with two orchestras, the BBC Scottish Symphony and the CBSO, and I think perhaps it's a work you can never perform really well the first time with an orchestra. Also, I think there's a problem that in the United States the sound world of Sibelius is very alien, and orchestras tend to want to flesh it out. For instance, that flautando effect, playing with the tip of the bow, is not at all natural to American string players." And yet it is absolutely crucial, since Rattle feels that Sibelius has been too much the victim of efforts to romanticize him, in Europe as much as in the States. "The music has had a Romantic tradition foisted onto it, and orchestras have developed traditions that you have to try to get rid of."

Perhaps the Second Symphony and the Fifth have been most vulnerable to the Romantic-herioc approach, which Rattle finds inappropriate not only because it distorts the music, but also because it makes it hard to see Sibelius as a whole. "Conductors have this image of Sibelius, and then they get to the Third Symphony and the Sixth and they don't understand why suddenly it's all different. Whereas if you really look at the music, you find this violence, this lack of resolution. Even in the Second Symphony, though the Finale seems to resolve so emphatically, it's not a resolution that sits on its arse: It's always moving forward, it has that sinew."

The forward movement and the sinew are certainly in evidence in Rattle's performances of this symphony with the CBSO. The drive at the Warwick sessions was strong and sure, and the recording ought to add enormously to the reputation of the Rattle-Birmingham pairing, since this is so much a team effort. Rattle sees the recording almost as an emblem of his work with CBSO, of his striving with their cooperation toward the realization of a much misunderstood masterpiece.

However, it is not quite the most problematic of Sibelius's symphonies. Rattle reserves that distinction for the First: "It is so hard because just when Sibelius gets going, he stops. The thing divides into great chunks separated by silence. It's like Bruckner, whom I also find very difficult. I've conducted his Fourth Symphony occasionally, and just now and then when I've caught myself listening to a performance while it's happening—or later when I've listened to a tape—I've found things that didn't seem quite right. Maybe I just haven't got the patience for Bruckner."

But Rattle still has plenty of time in which to learn. And he is showing admirable and rare patience in remaining with one orchestra at this stage in his career. "My present contract with the CBSO lasts until 1986, but I'd hope that I'd be with them for a long, long time yet. I'd hope that I can bring them to a level where it would be ludicrous for me to leave." The new recording of the Second Symphony suggests that he is well on the way to achieving that aim. HFF
STRAUSS, R.: Der Rosenkavalier.

CAST
The Feldmarschallin Anna Tomowa-Sintow (s)
Sophie Janet Perry (s)
Marianne, the duenna Wilma Lipp (s)
Octavian Agnes Baltsa (ms)
Herr von Faninal Gotfried Hornik (t)
Singer Vinson Cole (t)
Baron Ochs von Lerchenau Kurt Moll (bs)


Der Rosenkavalier + the Vienna Philharmonic + Herbert von Karajan + distinguished soloists - a constellation that seemed to prophesy a major phonographic event, by anyone's standards. About 30 years ago, in London, Karajan conducted a superb recording of this opera with the Philharmonia Orchestra and an almost perfect cast, headed by Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Christa Ludwig, Teresa Stich-Randall, and Otto Edelmann. As the release date for this new recording approached, one realized with some trepidation that Karajan had set himself a dangerously high standard to try to live up to, let alone excel. Have he and his present forces risen to the occasion? Well . . yes and no. Anyone expecting a truly definitive Rosenkavalier, as I confess I did, will find this recording at least partially disappointing.

As a masterpiece of musical drama (of what Walter Felsenstein, the founder of East Berlin's Komische Oper and probably the greatest theatrical genius since Konstantin Stanislavsky, liked to call realistisches Musiktheater). Der Rosenkavalier may well stand alone. Hugo von Hofmannsthal provided Strauss with a libretto close to perfection. I once heard an Austrian recording (made with authentic Viennese actors) of just the libretto itself, and it proved captivating; can you think of any other that would? This work has charm, romance, comedy, poignancy, and, at the end, a tender, aching renunciation that pierces the heart of anyone who has ever loved and lost. It brings life full circle. With the Marschallin, autumn moves into winter, while with Sophie and Octavian there come the eternal renewal and cyclic rejuvenation of spring. A recording of Rosenkavalier, even more than the best stage production, automatically brings with it the possibility of doing full justice to that superlative text.

One must assume that Karajan man-
aged to engage the cast that he considered the best available at this particular moment in history. Unfortunately, even such musical demons as Karajan have to make compromises and make do, because the best cast available does not necessarily mean the ideal cast. When Karajan recorded the Ring, he did it during a temporary world shortage of Siegfrieds, but he went ahead on schedule. He has always taken himself and his musical legacy very seriously, and one may imagine that, at his present age, he wanted to leave posterity the best-engineered recording of Rosenkavalier that he could organize. So here we have it, and if it does no grounds for outright jubilation, it does for thanks.

This opera has long since become a world property, but Hofmannshald and Strauss put it together primarily for German-speaking audiences who could savor the gamut of social strata revealed by the particular gradation of Viennese dialect spoken by the Marschallin, Baron Ochs, Faninal, Sophie, and her father, Fermanal. (Shaw, of course, did something similar in Pygmalion, which begat My Fair Lady.) The Marschallin’s Viennese remains elegant and refined, but unmistakable. (A truly Viennese Marschallin will refer not to “die alte Fürstin Rest,” but to “die alte Fürstin.”) The Baron, an oaf of almost limitless conceit and vulgarity, employs a dialect so thick you could cut it with a knife, and Hofmannshald also slily slips in a double negative as a revealing indication of his intellect and education. Octavian’s Viennese places him on the same level with the Marschallin. Faninal’s new riches have only just begun to be swallowed. Given the chance, however, she becomes truly electrifying, and in the scene of panic immediately before the Baron’s first entrance, Janet Perry, as Sophie, has a lovely voice, particularly when she comes to those soft high B flats, but she gets low marks not only for spongy diction but for outright errors: The performers have let her get by with pronunciation of div as if it were “dear” and even substituting bedeuten (“to thank”) for bedecken (“to ponder”), turning that sentence into nonsense. Willa Lipp, once a distinguished prima donna herself, makes more of the duenna Marianne’s role than usual, especially in all the excitement preceding Ochs’s arrival at the beginning of Act II, and she sounds wonderful. Moll reinforces his reputation as one of the finest singing actors around, and at one point (just before the Marschallin’s monologue) he grunts out a low C you have to hear to believe. Vinson Cole, whose part consists entirely of the interpolated Italian serenade during the Marschallin’s leève, sings it to virtual perfection.

As for Karajan, he offers ample proof that his remarkable hand has not lost its cunning. The combination of control and impulsive abandon, the sudden, apt surges of passion, the exquisitely subtle flexibility of tempo to accommodate the vocal line—all add up to a most impressive whole. In the numerous performances of this opera I have attended in various houses, I have never known any other conductor to touch Karajan when it comes to building the overpowering climax he manages in the Act III trio, that heart-stopping culmination of the entire work. He has the Marschallin begin it (“Hab mir’s gelobt, ihn lieb zu haben”) at an unnervingly slow tempo that will tax the three ladies’ breathing techniques to the limit, but he inexorably maintains that deliberate, almost ponderous, tempo so that by the time they finally reach the peroration, the listener experiences something approaching levitation. Checking Strauss’s score reveals that Karajan merely takes each section of the interpolated Italian serenade during the Marschallin’s leève, takes it to virtual perfection.

I have heard members of the Vienna Philharmonic proudly declare their own band’s playing as “so schön schlampig,” which I can conscientiously translate as “so nice and slovenly.” This orchestra does indeed have a patent on the kind of free and easy playing that avoids both the downright sloppy and the coldly, inhumanly perfect. The quintessential distillation of this playing can be found 57 bars before the end of Act II, when the orchestra exultantly bursts into Ochs’s waltz theme, punctually carrying out Strauss’s instruction in the score to apply to the ascending upbeat intervals “the sugary [süsslich] Viennese glissando.” Over the decades, this orchestra and conductor have had their typically Viennese ups and downs with each other, and the present recording indicates that the musicians—these members of the most exclu-
sive musical club in the world—play for no other conductor as they do for Herbert von Karajan.

All the talented people involved in this recording had the opportunity to offer us, if not the definitive Rosenkavalier, at least the complete one. It is regrettable that they have not done so. Act I does emerge intact, and Act II escapes with only one cut of about 64 measures (after rehearsal number 223, when Ochs and his servant threaten Octavian). However, cuts interrupt Act III at six different points: after rehearsal number 128, a deletion of 25 measures (Annina, Ochs, Innkeeper, and waiters); after 150, 34 measures (Ochs, Police Commissioner, Innkeeper); after 163, 38 measures (Commissioner, Ochs, Faninal); after 172, 40 measures (Ochs, Innkeeper, Faninal); after 185, about 24 measures (Faninal and Sophie); and after 389, 34 measures (Ochs and Octavian). True, all the splices work smoothly and seamlessly, as one would expect from such professionals. Yet under the circumstances, it seems a pity.

So this new recording offers us a great conductor and orchestra and some exceptional voices, all recorded with the refinement of the most modern technology. It may not be the ultimate Rosenkavalier, but it certainly deserves sincere praise.


I really wanted to like this record. Michael Tilson Thomas remains one of my favorite conductors, and I remember with affection his version of Beethoven's Sixth Symphony with the same orchestra (CBS M 35169), in which a sunny disposition and transparency with the same orchestra (CBS M 35169), in which a sunny disposition and transparency were hallmarks.

On the other hand, this new performance of the Seventh seems to run forever, and not just because Thomas takes every written repeat in movements 1, 3, and 4. Plodding tempos and generally murky orchestral definition are rife; there's some sudden animation during the last three minutes of the finale, but it's not enough to compensate for the frustration experienced elsewhere.

Certainly this version gives no case in particular for performing the Seventh with an orchestra reportedly the same size as those of Beethoven's time (I wonder how big they really were). There are no revelations here to compare with those heard in Thomas's recording of the Pastoral, and therefore this album can't be recommended. Decent sound, but no more.

By way of constructive postscript, I must say it's regrettable that CBS hasn't seen fit to record Pierre Boulez's uniquely exciting account of this score. In a New York Philharmonic concert I heard him give seven or eight years ago, he not only took every repeat, but imbued the score with Furtwänglerian spaciousness and ferocity. Boulez usually conducted the three B's very badly then, but his Beethoven Seventh was a glorious exception—a remarkable interpretation that surely deserves to be immortalized via recording. BILL ZAKARIASEN


There is very little to recommend this 1973 analog recording, save perhaps a moderately interesting cover and conductor Alain Lombard's scrupulous adherence to Berlioz's dynamic markings. The performance, which I'm sure did Strasbourg proud, is not anywhere near world class. Rapid passages are glossed over, important solos are played with both eyes glued nervously to the score, and the subtleties in the music are completely beyond most of the players. The recording itself offers a stolid, shrillish presence to the strings and a more distant, boomy image to the brass and winds. The nightmare here wasn't to be found in the score, but in the production studio afterwards, where the problems include two botched edits in the third movement (one can distinctly hear where the hall echo was inadvertently edited out in the splice between takes).

Back when this disc was first set down, the competition was already overwhelming, with notable entries by Argenta, Beecham, Davis, Munch, and Wallenstein. Against today's powerhouse lineup at all price ranges, this release fails to get even a honorable mention. NOAH ANDRE TRUDEAU

DEBUSSY: Préludes, Bks. 1 and 2; Reflets dans l'eau, from "Images." Set I: Estampes.

Youri Egorov, piano. (John Fraser, prod.) ANGEL DSB 3954 (digital recording). Cassette: 4X2S 3954.

It seems a pity that a near-fanatical partisan of Youri Egorov's pianism since I first heard him in 1977. (Yes, I was the critic who called his 1978 Carnegie Hall concert of Fantasies "probably the greatest piano recital I've ever heard.") Well, since that time, Egorov hasn't always been the greatest, but he has never been less than interesting. He likes to take a lot of interpretive and technical chances that don't always work, but when they do, one hears things on a piano that no other performer seems capable of achieving.

So it is with this Debussy recital. Egorov bravely takes panels few if any pianists have trod, not all of it is convincing, but the virtues remain plentiful and unique. Taking unusually slow tempos for most of the Préludes, Egorov gives them an almost symphonic scope: The listener has the uncanny realization that these pieces are not entities unto themselves, but relating segments of a larger musical tapestry. And speaking of the symphonic, Egorov's monumentally conceived "La Cathédrale engloutie" rivals Stokowski's famous orchestral arrangement in sonic splendor.

At the other end of the spectrum, "La Fille aux cheveux de lin" proves completely winning for its confident simplicity of expression, while the airy fingerwork of "Bouillards" and the sassy wit of "Hommage à S. Pickwick. Esq." "General Lavine—ecentric," and "Minstrels" have never been more apparent. One of the very few disappointments is "Feux d'artifice," which oddly doesn't sparkle the way it did during Egorov's Carnegie recital last season.

The often nebulous and enigmatic Estampes also fare most beautifully, particularly "Pagodes," the performance of which leaves no doubt as to where Ravel got his inspiration for "Laidercrotte" in Ma Mère l'Oye. "Reflets dans l'eau" receives an evocative reading as well, though its placing at the close of Side 2 (right after the end of the first book of Préludes) is disturbing, surely Angel could have found room for it at the end of the last side. The recording is comfortably realistic (helped by Egorov's choice of a mellowsounding German Steinway). Like most of Angel's recent issues, this set was pressed by Direct Metal Mastering, and the surfaces are gratifyingly silent. BILL ZAKARIASEN


Composers generally set their sights higher than the serenade. Dvořák was no exception, in spite of his facility at spinning out fresh melodies amid subtle orchestral surprises. In this respect, he was an heir to Mozart, who better than anyone "concealed" mastery beneath a smooth surface of melodic pleasantry.
Indeed, there is even a Mozartean flavor—and design—to Dvořák's Serenade for Strings and his Czech Suite (originally intended to be the third serenade, following the one in D minor for winds). Both exploit reduced instrumental forces within an 18th-century five-movement format. (For the Czech Suite, Dvořák the Rustic replaces the usual courtly dances with a Polka, Sousedška (neighbors' dance), and Furiant.) Completed in the 1870s, these two scores reflect Dvořák's growing self-assurance as he became a full-fledged nationalist composer.

Armin Jordan and the Lausanne Chamber Orchestra understate the many lovely melodies, which only adds to their charm. Yet these performances are by no means tentative. A calm strength exists in the slow movements, most noticeably in the Romanza of the Czech Suite and in the Serenade's Larghetto. When the music calls for gusto, the players respond heartily, lending a spirited though refined attack, for example, to the Furiant in the Czech Suite.

But Jordan does well against the competition from recent digital releases of this repertoire. Gerard Schwarz, leading the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra (Nonesuch 790441-G), presents a vivid, lucid, yet comparatively brusque interpretation of the Czech Suite. Neville Marriner, with the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields (Philips 6514 145), delivers a more sonically spectacular Serenade, but opts for splashiness. Grandiose statements from his strings rob the piece of warmth Dvořák so lovingly instilled, which Jordan and the Swiss ensemble so naturally express.

CHARLES MCCARDELL


Don't be misled by the usually reliable Harry Halbreich's fulsome praise of Gheorge Enescu (Georges Enesco) in his annotation for this release—"one of the greatest composers of his age, on a level with his exact contemporary Béla Bartók." He lists only Fauré as the teacher of Enescu in fin-de-siècle France, whereas Massenet, with whom the Romanian prodigy also studied composition, exerted a stronger influence on Suite No. 1, composed in 1902–3. This could have been called Scènes roumaines.

If the earlier piece is curious (yet not unbeautiful in the long Menuet lent that follows a unison Prélude for strings with kettledrum punctuation), Suite No. 2 of 1915 is even curioser. After an overture with a six-voice fugue, there are five movements beholden to the Baroque era. Halbreich calls it "a little in the spirit of Max Reger" (what an awful charge to make!), although you may find it, as I did, a lot of salon music for large orchestra, lacking the charm of Enescu's two Romanian Rhapsodies of
Trevor Pinnock and The English Concert: Handel of immense vitality and eloquence

1901-2. Lawrence Foster proselytizes earnestly without persuading the Monte Carlo Philharmonic to play plussily or even more ably than, say, the orchestra of Radio Luxembourg. On LP, the recording sounds tonally anemic, texturally adulterated, and multiply miked—and, for that last reason, spatially inconsistent.

**HANDEL: Concerti Grossi, Op. 6, Nos. 5-8 (in D, G minor, B flat, C minor); 9-12 (in F, D minor, A, B minor).**


During this Handel tricentenary year, we are certain to be treated to many recordings of his music, yet few are likely to surpass the English Concert’s traversal of his Concerti Grossi, Op. 6. Previously released as a three-record set (Archiv 2742 002), the discs have now been issued separately. Vol. 1, containing Nos. 1-4, was praised by this reviewer in November 1984 [MUSICAL AMERICA] edition: it only remains to reiterate a few of the salient features of this group’s approach as heard in Vols. 2 (Nos. 5-8) and 3 (Nos. 9-12).

The greatest asset of these performances is that they are likely to find devotees among the full range of 18th-century music fans—both original-instrument skeptics as well as instrument purists. That is because the English Concert, though performing on “authentic” instruments, produces a warm, full-bodied tone, never bordering on the thin or steely. These are readings of stylistic accuracy in ornamentation, articulation and bow stroke, tempo, and tuning—yet they are also readings of immense vitality and eloquence. Interpretive originality is everywhere, from the florid cadential embellishments and controlled application of vibrato to the varied dynamic gradations and expressive ritardandos.

Simon Standage’s effortless virtuosity graces the demanding solo violin sections of the more Italianate concertolike movements; the pristine tones of Elizabeth Wilcock and Anthony Pleeth join handsomely with his. Trevor Pinnock, directing from the harpsichord, communicates the regal pomposity of the French overtures, the polite formality of the Minuets and Gavottes, the high spirits of the Gigue, the poignancy of the slow movements, and the etched clarity of the fugues. And Archiv has contributed silent pressings and flattering digital sonics. It is hard to imagine a more pleasing result.

**HAYDN: Symphonies: Nos. 26, in D minor; 41, in C; 43, in E flat; 44, in F minor; 48, in C; 52, in C minor.**

**L’Estro Armonico, Derek Solomons, dir. [Martin Compton, prod.] CBS 13M 39040 (digital recording, three discs). Cassettes (3): 13T 39038, 39039.****

In his thoughtful and provocative liner notes to this three-record set, Haydn scholar H. C. Robbins Landon attempts to justify the term *Sturm und Drang* as it is used to describe many of the composer’s symphonies. Musicologists have long debated the merits of this term, or even whether the “’Sturm and Stress’ movement existed in music at all. Properly applied, *Sturm und Drang* refers to a German literary trend of the late 1770s in which Goethe and Klinger participated; dramatic works were characterized by “a concentration of passion to the near exclusion of order” (Landon’s words). When in 1909 the French scholar Theodore de Wyzewa noted the predominance of stormy, passionate, minor-key symphonies in Haydn’s output of the late 1760s and early 1770s, he tried to draw a parallel between the literary trend and the composer’s musical style. There was only one problem: Wyzewa was unaware of the fact that the German movement occurred years after the supposedly *Sturm und Drang* compositions were written.

Landon, however, sees the literary and musical movements sharing the spirit of the era: “Both were extremely similar in their essential message, in their language and structure, in their relatively short span of life.” In music—specifically in three of the symphonies recorded here—*Sturm und Drang* was characterized by the use of minor keys, by an expanded harmonic palette, by the integration of Baroque contrapuntal procedures, and by unusual thematic material featuring wide jagged leaps and rhythmical syncopation. Though I have my doubts about the propriety of retaining the term in music when it serves only to perpetuate an irrational chronological link between literature and music, I won’t quibble with Landon’s conclusion: “Neither Haydn nor Goethe could have become what they did without passing through the eye of the storm.”

Half of this set is devoted to symphonies representing that very storm. The previous installment in this CBS series (13M 37861) included some of the earlier *Sturm und Drang* symphonies (such as Nos. 39 and 49), while the present collection highlights the later ones (Nos. 26, 44, and 52). These turbulent works immediately transport us to a brooding, unsettled world far removed from the trivialities of the contemporary *galant*. Only the rapturous, exquisitely crafted slow movements provide a respite from the emotional intensity. Three other symphonies (Nos. 41, 43, and 48), dating from the same period but not really partaking of the passionate spirit, are also included in the set, together with the *Overture to Le Pescatrici*. Two of these symphonies are in minor (Nos. 41 and 48) and possess the majestic splendor and festive pomp typical of works in this key, the orchestration, using brilliant high horns and trumpets as well as tympani, contributes to this result. Listening to the entire set, it is fascinating to follow Haydn as he gradually achieves the blended sonorities we associate with Viennese Classicism: In a mere five years, he travels the long road from the stark, chiseled, more Baroque cast of No. 26 to the smooth, lush sound and thematic control evident in Nos. 43 and 52.

The mere fact that one is even able to perceive such development is due to the premise of the parent project—planned not only as the first complete Haydn symphonic cycle performed on original instruments, but as the first recorded in approximate chronological order. After all, the numbering of Haydn’s symphonies is a terrible jumble stemming from turn-of-the-century ignorance: Nos. 39 and 26, for instance, are roughly contemporaneous. With these
works now ordered by date of composition, we are suddenly able to recognize trends in Haydn’s compositional development that would have been obscured in the traditional sequence.

Fortunately, the performances live up to the high level already established by the earlier issues. L'Estro Armonico, a British original-instrument ensemble led by its principal violinst, Derek Solomons, has been recording Haydn symphonies for several years, originally for Saga and more recently for CBS. On the present recordings, the group ranges in size from 15 to 19 players. This small number has many advantages: It enables articulations and attacks to be crisp and accurate, allows every musical line to cut through the overall texture, and restores to the winds their rightful importance. Now that the winds (usually oboes and horns) are not drowned by an army of strings, one can appreciate just how large a role they play in Haydn’s symphonies. And what beautiful wind playing this is, from the cascading arpeggios of the recorderlike flute in No. 41 to the rich, reedy oboe tone and the biting, powerful high horn and trumpet lines in No. 48.

Solomons observes all repeats, thereby restoring the proper balance both within movements and within each symphony as a whole. Tempos are brisk throughout, even the slow movements avoid any hint of sentimentalization. Dynamics and ornamentation are scrupulously observed—the pianissimo passages especially so, thanks to the small ensemble as well as the absolute purity of the nonvibrato performance style. Those who doubt, however, that an ensemble of fifteen can muster sufficient power in the forte sections will find that the energy and vitality of these musicians more than compensate for what they lack in numbers.

In short, this set, together with the previously released volumes, belongs in the library of every devotee of 18th-century music. CBS has lavished much attention on the collection: The pressings (imported from Holland) are excellent, the liner notes are detailed, and the digital sound is acceptable if a bit dry. Let us hope that L’Estro Armonico is allowed to complete this worthy project, for it the less familiar early works prove this revelatory, imagine what the results will be in the London Symphonies. We may never be able to listen to them again in quite the same way.

K. ROBERT SCHWARZ

MAHLER: Symphony No. 1, in D (1889 edition).
With so many others surging on the crest of the Mahler wave, why not Riccardo Muti? Because—to answer that question on the basis of this wipeout reading—he has no affinity for the idiom beyond the deed of having learned all the notes and dynamic markings. The composer’s personalized rhetoric—what gives emotional weight and expressive validation even in a work as early as this symphony—is basically missing, a lack that’s well-nigh lethal.

The problem is not that Muti comes to the music across the Dolomites from an alien culture. One of the supplest recordings of the First Symphony in the stereo era has been Seiji Ozawa’s from Boston (Deutsche Grammophon 2530 993). Claudio Abbado’s newer version for the same label (2532 020), digitally encoded in Chicago, is an interpretation of comparable caliber. In their company, Muti comes across as musclee-bound, not to say robotic: when he pauses for breath, the music goes on hold.

The Philadelphia Orchestra plays with a new kind of elegance, less violinistic than what Eugene Ormandy cultivated (and succeeded in preserving for the astonishing span of four decades), but nonetheless in a tradition of phenomenal discipline going back more than 60 years. EMI’s production team at least has made a new pass at environmental coherence, this time by setting up a field of microphones inside Memorial Hall at Fairmount Park. As facsimiles of the real article go, it’s fair enough. Having

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MAHLER: Symphony No. 4, in G.

This may or may not be the finest recorded performance of Mahler's most brocolic symphony, but it's one of the slowest, running just a few seconds over an hour. This isn't surprising, however, because Lorin Maazel's 15-year-old version with the Berlin Radio Symphony (once available on Nonesuch) held the previous record for playing time. Actually, Maazel takes Mahler's tempo indications more literally than most conductors, and comparisons between his movement timings and those of the two other recent accounts of the Fourth (Georg Solti/Chicago Symphony on London and Klaus Tennstedt/London Philharmonic on Angel) are very illuminating.

In the first movement, marked Be- diichtig, nicht eilen. Maazel runs 18.04, Solti 16.18, and Tennstedt a comparatively breezy 15.40. However, in the second (Im gemähdlicher Bewegung, ohne Hast), Maazel's 9.29 virtually ties Solti's 9.31, with Tennstedt a dog-trot 8.52. It's back to business-as-usual with the rest of the symphony: The third movement (Ruhevoll) goes 22.31, 20.08, and 21.04, respectively, while the vocal finale (Sehr behaglich) runs 10.41, 8.24, and 9.14.

Clearly, Maazel sees this work in most relaxed and expansive terms, and what one hears often sounds slither than it really is. This doesn't mean that the music is allowed to drag; on the contrary, Maazel gives it a long-breathed, rapt interpretation, full of glowing pastoral colors and probing inner detail, helped by some of the finest playing I've ever heard from the Vienna Philharmonic. In fact, there are sounds in the first movement (starting with the intriguing accenting of the viola part in the opening exposition) that most other conductors barely hint at. In addition, Maazel on several occasions allows the strings to use generous portamentos—something we haven't heard much of in a Mahler Fourth since Willem Mengelberg. I must admit that Solti and even Tennstedt sound superficial, uptight, and perfunctory by comparison.

The second movement seems a three-way toss-up, with the famous scordatura solo by the concertmaster being equally well done in each case, but Maazel is a hands-down winner in the third. The breadth of vision here is truly extraordinary, and the sudden orchestral explosion toward the end has never been so effective on or off records. Some listeners might feel Maazel's tempo for the last movement is little more than a crawl, but when one considers that sehr behaglich can mean "very comfortably" or "very leisurely," Maazel's opting for the second definition has its point, especially because the fast few pages unfurl with such heart-tugging eloquence. Maazel is also fortunate here in having Kathleen Battle as soloist. Her childlike tone and glib expression fit the transparent scoring and the Wunderhorn text to absolute perfection. Next to this, Kiri Te Kanawa on Solti's version sounds as if she could be Battle's mother.

CBS's recorded sound is admirably warm, full, and clear, and the few climaxes in the work come off with ideal potency. However, some of the very soft string playing in the third movement has a bit too much presence for my taste. In sum, this is an unusual, very brave, and ultimately refreshing and satisfying performance—one that any Mahlerian worth his salt will want to investigate.

BILZAKARIASEN


Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Colin Davis, cond. [F. Axel Mehrle, Dieter Sinn, and Diether G. Warneck, prods.] ORFEO S 089 841 (digital recording). (Distributed by Harmonia Mundi, U.S.A., 2351 Westwood Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90064.)

For Davis, the Bavarians behave well.

A creditable job all around—except by Orff's production troika in Munich, who typically neuter the acoustic personality of the Herkulessaal there. Again we encounter excesses of reverberation and high-end equalization, with the musicians seeming only a body-length away from our speaker cones.

This time, though, thanks to Sir Colin Davis, the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra plays prevailing in tune, with an attention to ensemble and balance that pretty much eluded Rafael Kubelik's control during the 19 years he was in charge.

There's notably lovely violin tone in the first movement of the Scottish Symphony, while the reed players take their wide vibrato by at least half. Since Eugen Jochum's time (even before Kubelik), the BRSO has tended to be as sloppy as the New York Philharmonic in any given period of its history when it has played with timid guest conductors. But Davis's success, following the foreshortened tenure of Kari Rond齑, promises a new standard of performance in Munich.

He encourages the Scottish Symphony to flex its limbs, without turning the performance into an exercise class. This was, after all, Mendelssohn's final symphony, despite its (wrongly) published number. Furthermore, Davis makes it a memorably serious experience that is free of the taints of sonomelence or mock solemnity, the account is rhythmically alive throughout and energetically phrased. While the Fingal's Cave Overture (a/k/a Hebrides) has been the usual disc coupling here tofore, Davis prefacces the symphony with a deft, aniable reading of the Overture to A Midsummer Night's Dream. First-class Teldec pressing, too.


PROKOFIEV: Excerpts from "Romeo and Juliet."


PROKOFIEV: Symphony No. 5, in B flat, Op. 100.


Just from looking at this cornucopia of simultaneously issued recordings, one can easily see that the music of Sergei Prokofiev is back in vogue, and with a vengeance. Not that Prokofiev was ever really neglected in recent years, but he has been overshadowed by his compatriot Dmitri Shostakovich, probably because of extramusical reasons.
THE DEATH OF Kiril Kondrashin on March 8, 1981, two days after his sixty-seventh birthday, was a major loss to the music world. Prior to making his American debut—with Van Cliburn as soloist, in the wake of the young American’s victory in the 1958 Tchaikovsky International Competition—Kondrashin had had a distinguished career in the Soviet Union. In 1960, he became the music director of the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, and he spent the next 15 years developing it into a top-flight ensemble. Kondrashin left the Soviet Union in 1978 for political reasons and was given asylum in the Netherlands, where he soon became a permanent conductor of the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra. He had already enjoyed great success with the orchestra; his earliest appearances with it had been a decade earlier.

Kondrashin presided over many superb recordings with the Moscow Philharmonic, most of which appeared in the United States on the Angel/Melodiya label and are now, unfortunately, discontinued. But during his long association with the Concertgebouw, he made only one commercial recording, of Rimsky-Korsakov’s Scheherazade, which is considered to be one of the finest accounts of the score (Philips 9500 681). Perhaps because of the dearth of session material from this popular conductor, Philips has turned to concert sources. The LPs already released include a performance from the Bavarian Radio of César Franck’s Symphony in D minor (6514 119) and a very exciting account of Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto No. 1, with Martha Argerich (6514 118). Sales of these prompted Philips to search further, and it has announced the release of ten concert LPs, all from the files of the Dutch Radio.

The first three are now available in the United States: a pairing of Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 6, Op. 54, and his Symphony No. 9, Op. 70 (412 073-1); Mendelssohn’s Symphony No. 4, Op. 90 (Italian), and Casella’s Paganiniana (412 068-1); and a generous coupling of Nielsen’s Symphony No. 5, Op. 50, and Sibelius’s Symphony No. 5, Op. 82 (412 069-1). So far, these performances are available only on LP.

The Shostakovich pairing is the most successful of the three—one of the reasons being that Kondrashin had a special affinity for his countryman’s music (he recorded almost all of the symphonies for Melodiya with the Moscow Philharmonic). These Concertgebouw performances of the Sixth and Ninth date from 1968 and 1980, respectively. They are wonderfully played, and it is a particular pleasure to hear this fine orchestra romp through the finales of both symphonies. But collectors should keep in mind that Bernard Haitink and the Concertgebouw are recording the Sixth for London as part of their Shostakovich series. (The Ninth, with the London Philharmonic, has already appeared on LDR 71017.)

The Mendelssohn Italian, recorded in November 1979, is given a leisurely, pleasant reading of no great distinction. But at the same concert, Casella’s Paganiniana, a virtuoso display work for the entire orchestra and long a favorite of Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia, comes through in a superlative performance. Nielsen’s Fifth Symphony elicits a gentle reading from Kondrashin that avoids much of the cragginess of the score. The Sibelius Fifth is equally understated, with the closing massive brass chords surprisingly subdued.

From a technical standpoint, the recordings vary in quality. Always highly listenable, they offer a more accurate sonic picture of the Concertgebouw than do most of Philips’s “studio” recordings made in that hall. However, the timpani often are muddy, and there is a decided lack of brilliance. Inexcusably, there are no program notes whatsoever, just lengthy biographical notes on Kondrashin.

I question Philips’s ethics in issuing these LPs at full price. Admittedly, a company has to make money where it can, but there must have been minimal production expense for these recordings. If they were historic performances of great significance, perhaps there would be more justification for the premium cost.

Future releases in the series will contain the following works: Beethoven’s Symphony No. 3 (412 064-1); Brahms’s Symphony No. 1 (412 065-1) and his Symphony No. 2 (412 066-1); Prokofiev’s Symphony No. 3 and Borodin’s Symphony No. 2 (412 070-1); Ravel’s complete Daphnis et Chloé (412 071-1) and his Concerto for the Left Hand (with Daniel Wayenberg), Rapsodie espagnole, La Valse, and Tzigane (with Herman Krebbers) (412 072-1); and a coupling of Stravinsky’s Petrouchka and Gershwin’s An American in Paris (412 067-1).

by Robert E. Benson
CLASSICAL Reviews

At any rate, most of these performances are superb—so fine, in fact, that they displace previous front-runners in the field.

Klaus Tennstedt's rendition of the Lieutenant Kije Suite is perhaps the best case in point, which should surprise no one who heard him conduct Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony for his debut concerts with the New York Philharmonic and the San Francisco Symphony several years ago. That Fifth, full of leonine glory, seemed nothing short of definitive—strange indeed that Tennstedt has yet to record it. His Kije is a similar revelation: broad, brazen, caustic in the extreme, and it works to perfection in every measure.

Tennstedt obviously sees this score relating less to the blunted drama and often sticky romance of Prokofiev's later works than to the bold experimentation of his pre-1930s compositions. Of course, it's all there in the music, as this great conductor proves. Barring one horn flush at the outset, the London Philharmonic Orchestra plays splendidly, and the recording has frequently awesome clarity and visceral impact (catch that bass drum in "The Birth of Kije"). The reverse, Kodaly's Háry Júrás Suite, doesn't quite explode as much individual personality (excellent recordings are abundant, notably Arpad Joo's on Seel 5001), but it holds its own against any competition.

Tellec's disc of excerpts from Romeo and Juliet heralds the recording debut of young (thirty-four) Joel Levi, who is all but unknown in these parts, but hardly likely to remain so. Born in Romania, Levi emigrated to Israel and later returned to Europe, where he studied under several distinguished masters, including Kiril Kondrashin. No doubt his work with Kondrashin contributed to the superlative results heard here. Like such recorded predecessors as Mstislav Rostropovich (Deutsche Grammophon 2532 087) and Georghi Spieli (London LDR 71087), Levi arranges in dramatic order the suites Prokofiev culled from his ballet, beginning with "The Montagues and Capulets" and concluding with "Romeo at Juliet's Grave." That's not the only felicity: Levi's performance is electrifying for its alertness, frenzy, passion, and canny sense of perfect tempo throughout, and the Clevelanders' playing is faultless. This record (boasting wondrous clarity and depth of sonic field) matches any similar issue ever recorded of "Kije's Wedding." The charming little Stravinsky suites come off bloodlessly. Maybe Mata just finds this sort of repertory boring. At least with Messrs. Tennstedt, Levi, Chailly, and Slatkin, the music of Prokofiev is in very good hands indeed.

Recitals and Miscellany

ANDREW DAVIS: Organ Recital.


As an orchestral conductor who is also a notable organist, Andrew Davis joins a
Trumpet Tune has the kind of style that Toronto's Roy Thomson Hall, and it gives a Thomas Schippers. gave him an honorary doctorate, and he there was a reconciliation, the University after a stormy confrontation. One year later had walked out of the University of Toronto specific events surrounding the origin of the work labeled "academique" and written cisely the manner you would expect of a and takes you to the ball in the "d/a polonaise" in every possible way. He is solemn music (which Ives wrote when he was sev-teen) in every possible way. He is solemn and takes you to the ball in the "d /a polonaise" in every possible way. He is solemn while playing the Sweet Adeline cadences, does not hesitate to choose amusing registrations when the melody appears as a solo, and takes you to the ball in the "a la polonaise" variation.

Sir Ernest's Cortege proceeds in precisely the manner you would expect of a work labeled "academique" and written for a centennial celebration in 1953. The specific events surrounding the origin of the piece are worth noting: In 1952, MacMillan had walked out of the University of Toronto after a stormy confrontation. One year later there was a reconciliation, the University gave him an honorary doctorate, and he wrote his Cortege—but do not miss the touch of nose-thumbing in the two chords preceding the last chord. It's an amusing reminder of Ives in America.

Both the Franck and the Messiaen selec-tions are played in a way that is close to ideal. The long line of the Franck Prélude is beautifully molded, without any suggestion of an intrusive ritard, but with an expressive shaping of the lyrical melody. The Fugue is solid and the transition to the Variation exactly as it should be.

The most exciting playing, and some of the most exciting music on the record, comes with the Messiaen scherzo, the episod from the suite L'Ascension that had to be replaced by something far less organistic and more symphonic when the composer arranged the four pieces for orchestra. Davis takes Messiaen's description of the work—"inspired by a new Alleluia—literally. as he does the composer/organist's ob-observation that the music brings together "all the brilliances of the organ fortissimo." The playing is remarkable, the sound equally so. Davis takes 15 seconds longer than Messiaen (who can be heard on Ducretet-Thomson DUC 1), a minor matter consid-ering the differences in instruments and locales of recording.

PAUL HUME
Although part of a chain reaction against late-Seventies arena rock, hardcore wasn’t built to last. But some of it has.

by John Morthland

LECH KOWALSKI’S DOA, a documentary of the Sex Pistols’ first and last American tour (in 1978), and Penelope Spheeris’s The Decline of Western Civilization, filmed in Los Angeles a couple of years later, caught British and American punk at their respective heights. Both movies look a lot better now than when they were released theatrically; they offer powerful answers to questions about why punk failed and "new wave" mutations such as Boy George, Duran Duran, and Billy Idol took over. And both show the groundwork being laid for hardcore, some of the most ignored but compelling music made today. The Minutemen, Husker Dü, Black Flag, Flipper, and others still circulate in a scene known as hardcore, though "post-hardcore" is probably more accurate. The form was guaranteed to self-destruct; few of its advocates could sustain all that urgency and intensity. But some have, and they are part of the same chain reaction that started in the late-Seventies disillusionment with big-money arena rock and quickly led to punk—which is probably where we ought to begin.

The England of DOA’s time, in the midst of a depression and widespread unemployment, is celebrating a gaudy coronation. Rock is at an all-time low; crass superstars take the money and, literally, run into tax exile. For kids, there is no fun, no future. They take their predicament to the stage, making angry, violent, and amateurish music that requires little equipment or sophistication. It’s also in the spirit, coincidentally, of early rock and roll: Anyone can do it. In this England, punk is a grass-roots movement, and a political challenge to the existing order in government as well as in music.

So in Kowalski’s film we see public officials explaining the 19 pages of stipulations that apply to a Sex Pistols gig, which effectively shut the band out of performing in London. We hear the withering condensation of antismut activist Mary Whitehouse and of stout-ale heir Jonathan Guinness. But we also see the housing projects and dole queues. We hear the articulate polemics of Terry Sylvester (of Terry and the Idols, a failed band) and songs from a variety of other early punk groups. Lead singer Poly Styrene exults in the pogo as her band, X-ray Spex, hammers out O Bondage Up Yours. The Clash’s jagged version of Police and Thieves affirms punk’s empathy with reggae and its antiauthoritarianism. And Generation X offers Kiss Me Deadly, with lead singer Billy Idol—back when he stood for something other than his own
blustering mannequin of a self—looking fresh and inquisitive. His career, if anything, symbolizes what went wrong with punk.

Or does it? One “highlight” of this movie is the interview with Sid Vicious and Nancy Spungen shortly after the Pistols’ tour ended. By now, Sid has committed the cardinal pop-star sin of believing his own press clips and is intent on acting them out in all their ugliness. Wearing a swastika T-shirt and wraparound shades, he nods, mumbles, and drops burning cigarettes on Nancy, who is dressed in black leather and whines nonstop. Before the film would make it to the theaters, both would be dead (as would its funder, Tom Forcade, the High Times magazine publisher, who committed suicide).

But equally indelible is the magnificent, mercurial music and the power of Vicious and Johnny Rotten onstage in late-Seventies America, where punk is less a revolt than a fashion trend. The Pistols are booked into a Dallas club by accident (Merle Haggard would play there next); Sid is shirtless, his chest slashed and fingertips bloody, as the band700ds over Pretty Vacant. In Tulsa, a haunted and haunting Rotten peers out over the crowd, reveling in the sheer confrontational nature of it all. And the San Francisco show (the only one

in the North, and the only one in a show-biz stronghold) ends with Sid crawling around the floor and Johnny shimmering in the spotlight as he calls forth all the fury and transcendence he ever promised. The bleak colors and cast of characters Kowalski plays off the band bring the punk era back fresh and inquisitive. His career, if any-

opened; that was the idea. We just didn’t know they’d all sound just like us.” In New York, the first wave of punk offered such diverse artists as Patti Smith, the Ramones, the Talking Heads, Blondie, and Television. But in the Los Angeles of Decline, two-chord LOUDHARDFAST rules.

Even the exceptions are telling. X, the group that figures most prominently in both the performance and interview footage of the movie, knows more chords than the other bands—but their real secret is that they

Sex Pistols: Never Mind the Bollocks, Here’s the Sex Pistols. Warner Bros. BK5 3147; 1977.
Flapper: Album—Generic Flapper. Subterranean SUB 25; 1982 (S77 Valancia. San Francisco, Calif. 94110.)

ANTHOLOGIES
The Decline of Western Civilization—Original Soundtrack Album. Slash 1- 23934; 1980.
Rat Music for Rat People. GO!; 1982. (1230 Grant Ave., Suite 110. San Francisco, Calif. 94138.)
Mighty Feible. New Alliance NAR 013; 1983.
Blasting Concept. SST 013; 1984 (Distributed by Jem Records.)

ANOTHER place, punk can play to a heavy metal crowd despite their obvious affinity for rockabilly and blues. And obscure Catholic Discipline, founded not by a suburban teenage boy but by expatriate French journalist Claude Bess ey a/k/a Kickboy Face, has real drive and melodic flair.

Everyone else in the film sounds like speeded-up versions of the Doors or Love's
“Sir John A lot Of” is probably the spunkiest album ever put out by Windham Hill, and no wonder: It was originally released in 1969 on Warner Bros. At that time Renbourn was a featured guitarist for the late-Sixties British band Pentangle, then at its creative and commercial peak. “Sir John A lot of Merrie Englandes Musyk and Ye Grene Knyghte,” as the LP was originally titled, captures the now forgotten experimental era when a synthesis of folk, popular, jazz, and traditional musics seemed within reach. For me, it is the enduring masterpiece of that optimistic period, a stirring, beautifully crafted work that still impresses with its scope and ambition.

Traditional British folksongs, which figured prominently in Pentangle, make up all of Side 1, but this is by no means a polite visit to the musty archives. On both time-honored ballads and original hybrids, Renbourn fashions intense, minimal arrangements that highlight his biting acoustic guitar work and the altered sensibility he brings to the material. For despite his English folk roots, Renbourn is an American blues guitarist at heart. His rhythmic drive and string-snapping attack are closer to the Mississippi Delta than a Yorkshire moor. This earthy approach places purity of emotion before purity of style; the stark beauty and affecting lyricism of this music haven’t dated a bit.

Side 2 covers all of Renbourn’s other bases. He is fluent in jazz (Charles Lloyd’s *Transfusion*), r&b (Booker T. and the MGs’ *Sweet Potato*), country rags (My Dear Boy), and Indian modality (*Seven Up*), the last two songs self-composed. His other originals allow him to slip imperceptibly from one style to the next, often within a single chorus. Both *Forty Eight* and the gorgeous *White Fishes* start as reflective folk ballads, become jazzy blues jams, and then return effortlessly to their gentle themes without jarring pronouncements. Renbourn is still the most eclectic, resourceful acoustic gui-
Lindsey Buckingham: Go Insane

Lindsey Buckingham & Gordon Fordyce, producers. Elektra 9-60363-1

Whatever restraint Lindsey Buckingham brought to the studio for the last Fleetwood Mac album, “Mirage” was checked at the door during the recording of “Go Insane.” This pop session is downright delirious, as feverishly offbeat as anything he has ever done.

Unlike “Law and Order,” which grounded Buckingham’s goofier uptempo experiments with several lambent ballads dominated by his lovely acoustic guitar picking, “Go Insane” sustains its edge. A battery of synthesizers, electronic percussion devices, and multitrack production effects suggest the flip side of his sunny Mac persona. Romantic despair and self-doubt were alluded to in the hit “Go Your Own Way” and erupted intermittently throughout “Tusk”; here, they predominate. On “I Want You,” a rattling alarm clock combined with a chorus of muttered longings is at once menacing and tongue-in-check. Buckingham then launches the song in earnest, building a spritely choir of cheery, chirping voices. The title cut is only marginally more conventional, its brisk tempo and tough guitars mated to lyrics drenched in angst.

Along with “Slow Dancing and Loving Cup,” these songs indicate that their author with the fewest pretensions that I’ve ever heard.

Windham Hill shows tremendous taste and artistic responsibility in reissuing this gem. Courage, too—most of the label’s current catalog can’t hold a candle to it.

“Silly Sisters,” the duet album by British folkteers Maddy Prior and June Tabor, has enjoyed “tail”follwoing since its original release in 1976. The pairing of these two voices—backed by musicians as celebrated in traditional folk circles as guitarist Martin Carthy, mandolinist Andy Irvine, and whistle player Johnny Moynihan, to name just three—was viewed as a vocal summit meeting. Prior, whose clear soprano provided much of the propulsion for the folk-rock group Steeleye Span, and Tabor, a contralto well known on the folk circuit as a solo performer, share a common bond in style of British traditional singing. This recently reissued collaboration points to their

John Renbourn: Sir John Alot Of
Nathan Joseph, producer
Lost Lake Arts/Windham Hill LL 0084

Maddy Prior & June Tabor:
Silly Sisters
Maddy Prior & Robin Black, producers
Shanachie 79040 (Dalebrook Park,
Ho-Ho-Kus, N.J. 07423)

Lindsey Buckingham: delirious exorcism

Small stylistic differences, offering several examples of the effectiveness of understatement.

The spare lines of Seven Joys of Mary are sung as a church hymn, to an accompaniment of bassoon and, for the last verse, soprano recorder. As Prior sings silent harmonies, Tabor delivers the melody in uninflected, flattened lines. Her voice rises to a slight lift at the end of each verse, under-scoring the paradox of the lyric about Mary’s “joy” to see “her own son Jesus Christ upon the crucifix [sic].” On The Game of Cards and My Husband’s Got No Courage in Him, both about sexual relations, the vocalists trade between cross harmonies and unison singing, referring matter-of-factly to love games and a wife’s lengthy chastity.

With this record, Tabor shifted from triplets and the curlicued rising inflection favored in the Celtic styles that border on unison singing. She became more restrained, more reserved. At the same time, Prior internalized Tabor’s fancier touches. She became looser, letting the sentiments dictate more ornate vocalizing. Tabor’s Geordie, set to a guitar line pacing a brisk march, barely hints at the resolve and hope of the heroine who has gone to save her incarcerated lover. On Lost of Loch Royal, Prior infuses a betrayed lady’s lament with small rises and falls that heighten the sadness of her story.

Between them, Prior and Tabor created a light and delicate album of hidden complexities that reveals the beauty and intensity of British ballads. It ages well.

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The dB's: Like This

Chris Butler & the dB's, producers
Bearsville 25146

The dB's are the missing link between guitar pop's first blush (the Beatles and other '60s Brits) and its ripening (from R.E.M. to the Bangles). The band was formed in 1978 by North Carolina natives Chris Stamey (guitar), Peter Holsapple (guitar), Gene Holder (bass), and Will Rigby (drums); another of their hometown pals, Mitch Easter, went on to produce R.E.M. and form his own group, Let's Active. Anyway, like his connection to the Beach Boys—a link holder (bass), and Will Rigby (drums); another of their hometown pals, Mitch Easter, went on to produce R.E.M. and form his own group, Let's Active. Anyway, like his connection to the Beach Boys—a link

Production is up to Buckingham's usual meticulous standard, but the real triumph here is his singing. Not only does he display a considerable mimetic gift, but his talents as an arranger invoke his sources without copying them. The creamy falsetto parts on the calliope-like Bring the Drum underline his connection to the Beach Boys—a link that's officially acknowledged on the closing D.W. Suite. This surreal pastoral manager-to-sound hymnlike even as Buckingham sings, "If we all go insane/Wed can all go together." Said to be an homage to the late Dennis Wilson, the tune borrows from the timeless Celtic ballad. Wild Mountain Thyme (also known as Will Ye Go Lassie), then shifts to a characteristic Brian Wilson choral stroll before concluding with another lilting traditional melody.

This is anything but safe listening for Old Fleetwood Mac fans. For those of us who love that band but value Buckingham's more mercurial solo work, however, that's a come-on.

SAM SUTHERLAND

The dB's: Fortunately, Americans, guitars, and sincerity are in vogue.

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assay the unusual close harmonies of Loud Mouth Annie.

But Chess, the home of Chicago blues, was more oriented toward guitar, and New Orleans artists seem to have considered this when they recorded for the label. Edgar Blanchard's demented one-note solo on his Laidy Mama—you could call the song a novelty if the performance weren't so relentless—is unduplicated, although a couple of artists try here, namely Allen Brooks on Foolish Woman and Eddie Bo on Oh Oh. Sugarboy Crawford strikes the most effective compromise between New Orleans and Chicago on Jockomo (a NOLA Indian chant better known as Iko Iko, a hit for the Dixie Cups), which manages a robust Chicago band sound despite the deft, second-line beat and tenor sax solo.

In the end, variety wins out. The Hawketts' Mardi Gras Mambo couldn't have come from anywhere but New Orleans, what with its resonant baritone intro, riffing horn section, irresistible beat, and remarkable breath control on the vocal (by a young Art Neville, in his studio debut). Ditto for Clarence Henry's Country Boy and Reggie Hall's The Joke, both novelties like many of the biggest hits from the Crescent City. Most pedestrian are generic teen ballads such as Brooks's Ding Dong Darling and Bobby Blanket's Needing Your Love, but

New Orleans Rhythm and Blues
Milton W. Malden, Norman Schoenfeld, & Freddy Jeffries, reissue producers
Ches CH 9174

This looks like a typically shoddy Sugarhill repackaging of vintage Chess material. The cover could have been dashed off on the Friday afternoon before a three-day weekend. The liner notes are riddled with typos, the artists' names are in quotes while the song titles aren't. But then there's the music. And the music—obscure singles recorded in the Fifties heyday of New Orleans—is a revelation.

The piano was the primary instrument in New Orleans r&b. Because Huey "Piano" Smith's Clowns were the backing band on several of these cuts, there are vivid samples of rollicking piano rumba. Those are Huey's licks under the rumbling vocals of Charles Williams (best known as a session drummer) on What Can I Do, an archetypal piece of New Orleans bounce; Smith also leads the way as Myles and Dupont

Other artists

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MITCHELL COHEN

Porsche is a sharply conceived update of an
headphones and plug

also pulls some clever variations on well-
dulges in standard-issue raunchiness, but he

personal, not to say obsessive, approach to

groups that had a profound effect on those

Players as well as the P-Funk crew, two

longer than either. He was part of the Ohio

sentence Show Me Yours is completed.

JANUARY 1985
The 12-inch Report
Reviewed by Vince Aletti

Though nearly every pop song with a beat turns up as a 12-inch single these days, the heart of the market will always be those records with little or no stake in mainstream tastes, the sort of underground material the format was designed to deliver in the first place. Rap records, high-energy disco, cut-and-scratch mixes, and all the current variations on new wave and postdisco dance music that fill the 12-inch racks swarm around the edges of the pop charts, occasionally breaking in for a run at the big time. But the real life of these records is usually elsewhere, rocking the house at a club or party or booming out from a box on the street. Of course, yesterday's underground enthusiasm has a way of surfacing as tomorrow's phenomenon, and a number of the most popular 12-inch singles issued recently have turned decidedly left-field material to surprising advantage.

Frankie Goes to Hollywood—the sensation of 1984 in England, where the band dominated the charts for months with two controversial singles—has brought back disco with a vengeance. Produced by the fiercely avant Trevor Horn (Art of Noise, Yes, Malcolm McLaren), the five-man group takes disco's insistent thump and extravagant structure but leaves out the froth, for a brittle, brilliant sound. The sly sexual come-on of Relax (Island 96975), which had the good fortune to be banned by the BBC, established Frankie Goes to Hollywood as Britain's bad boys. But it's their second release, a pounding antiwar song called Two Tribes (Island 96931), that gives them more credibility. Against a dark, dramatic track, Horn mixes aggressive passages of singing with civil-defense announcements and fallout warnings. The urgency of the vocals and cold finality of the bulletins set up a fine tension that keeps the song taut, well aimed. Several versions of Two Tribes were released in England, each with a different sleeve; the U.S. mix is not the most chilling of these tracks, but another variation is featured on the B side (along with an annoying treatment of Edwin Starr's War), and the sleeve is packed with material, including a chart on the likely announcement of a nuclear exchange.

Though their singles have had rather less commercial success than Frankie's, Bronski Beat has claimed a significant spot in Britain's new disco scene with its debut, Smalltown Boy (Forbidden Fruit import). Sung in a tarnished falsetto recalling Sylvester at his roughest, plaintive but savage, Boy is a cinematic quick take of an adolescent leaving home, and it's filled with the anguish and exhilaration of escape. The vocalist of Bronski Beat (like the leads of Frankie) is publicly gay, and this gives a certain resonance to the song (and to lines like "the answer you seek will never be found at home"), but is ultimately irrelevant to its considerable impact and appeal. Bronski's second 12-inch, Why, an even more furiously paced disco cut with a slashing funk edge, is more defiantly gay, angrier but less affecting.

On the lighter side, there's Malcolm McLaren's outrageous culture clash, Madame Butterfly (Island 96915), another British production that borrows from disco (in this case, the "classic" extravagances of Alec Costandinos) for its own very modern ends. A master of pop appropriation, McLaren also steals the "Un bel di" aria from Puccini, skewers it on a streamlined electro-track, and then lets it go full force, riveting the listener with a passion all the more stunning for being so utterly out of context. This hip-hop Butterfly is witty, vulgar (it's certainly not for purists from any field), and, almost in spite of itself, quite touching.

Back in the States, Talking Head Jerry Harrison and ace funkateer Bootsy Collins have crossed guitars for one of the year's best political records, 5 Minutes (Sleeping Bay 13). Opening with a tape of Reagan's "joke" that "We begin bombing [Russia] in five minutes," the track flips his voice back and forth across a percolating (hardly ominous) interplay of guitars until it's just pure sound. In three separate mixes here, the voice is speeded up and slowed down, the phrases snipped and shuffled about, but the Presidential announcement ("My fellow Americans," he says) is run straight through often enough to sink in. Often enough for us to realize how insanely close to the edge we are right now.

The politics in rap come down to street level in three current message songs. The Fat Boys (formerly the Disco 3), a trio whose combined weight is over 700 pounds, kid around a bit at the beginning of Jail House Rap (Sutra 027)—they all land in jail for compulsive eating—but things ain't so funny in the end. Over a dry, chilled-out synth track sparked with unexpected jazzy piano runs (a terrific Kurtis Blow production), the Boys rap a few painful verses about the realities of prison, and the lesson hits hard. An irresistible gimmick here is the Human Beat Box, whose rhythmic breathing erupts with nutty abandon throughout. Nolan Thomas's Yo! Little Brother (Emergency 6546) is a rap hybrid—not quite singing, but more fully produced than most hip-hop cuts—with another serious lesson. This tight little drama (it could be a perfectly realized scene in a breaksploitation movie) is sung by big brother, still a kid himself, out to get baby bro off the block and set him straight. Both boys are streetwise and tough; so's the record.

Continuing this rap righteousness, there's "Love Bug" Starsski's Do the Right Thing (Fever 801), a gritty MC chant about avoiding the "ghetto trap" and another of Blow's crisp productions. Flip the record for a trip further into rap territory, Starsski Live at the Fever, Pt. II. The MC/DJ team of T LaRock and Jazzy Jay provide an even better idea of what it's like to be inside one of New York's beat clubs: Their raw party record It's Yours (Def Jam/Partimay 104) comes in four different versions, including a Scratch Party Death Mix. The message here is a sweet one: The music out there is yours. Take it and enjoy.

Vince Aletti lives and works in New York City and writes for The Village Voice.

Frankie Goes to Hollywood: Disco minus froth equals brittle brilliance.
Rod Bernard’s *This Should Go On Forever* is an enduring white swamp-pop ballad. And it’s a treat to hear Clifton Chenier’s backwoods accordion burst out of the big-city sound for *Baby Please*. And it’s a treat to hear Clifton Chenier’s backwoods accordion burst out of the big-city sound for *Baby Please*. All in all, a hefty set of 17 cuts from the New Orleans underbelly. Only a city as richly endowed with jazz as New Orleans could create such a rich anomaly—even if the packaging does not quite do the music justice. John Morthland

SSQ: Playback
Jon St. James, producer
EMI America/Enigma ST 17114

This is an SOS for SSQ. From a 1981 EP that never really surfaced to last year’s LP, which is still submerged, this West Coast band hasn’t had the opportunity to come up for air. Now their record contract has been tossed overboard by EMI. Unfortunately, because SSQ presents a slick product resulting from the lush synthesizer ensemble of Jon St. James, John V. T., and Rich West; due to the lush synthesizer ensemble of Jon St. James, John V. T., and Rich West; detoured vocals by Stacey Swain.

Synthecide (the most commercially appealing track), Walkman On, and Big Electronic Beat are tributes to the addictive quality of musical automation. In the first, Swain sings urgently, “I gotta have my digital fix today.” Personifying a 16-track synthesizer in Big Electronic Beat, she sighs in her come-and-get-me voice, “I can make it naughty, I can make it nice! I can make it anyway, choose your own device.” They’re a synth-pop band, all right, but they’re not trendy—although they do give lip service to the chic topic of domination in Screaming in My Pillow, which ends with Swain’s escalating cries and whimperings. And two songs study the impersonal interactions of the idle rich: Swain is appropriately apathetic on Jet Town, but the more haunting expression of this ennui is N’importe Quoi, a sort of high-tech Girl from Ipanema.

Clockwork is the least successful cut, a tune you’d expect to hear overplayed at those passé singles bars where deejays are still spinning Billie Jean. Swain is sorely missed here, proving how indispensable her light, almost instrumental vocal quality is against the glossy background. With her, SSQ is rock’s answer to impressionism. Without her, their music is merely a glimmering display. “Playback” shimmers and soothes with sensual and intellectual appeal. It’s softly as a gentle wake-up call or blare it for late-night dancing. Either way, SSQ deserves to be thrown a life preserver.

SUSAN GALARDI

**Jazz**

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Hugh Leal, producer
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The tradition of Detroit jazz goes back at least to the 1920s, to the Graystone Ballroom and Don Redman, who was building McKinney’s Cotton Pickers into a major band there. The city produced many world-famous musicians: Milt Jackson, Betty Carter, Kenny Burrell, Ron Carter, Tommy Flanagan, Roland Hanna, Pepper Adams, Paul Chambers, Howard McGhee, Yusef Lateef, the Jones Boys—Hank, Thad, and Elvin. For the last 25 years, however, Detroit hasn’t been generating that kind of tal-

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**Backbeat Reviews**

In N.Y. State Call: (718) 253-8888
en: Many artists are still there, of course, but they aren’t the type who leave home.

Two of the members of this quartet—alto and tenor saxophonist George Benson and pianist Claude Black—were on a par with Finigan and Flanagan in the 1940s. But unlike Finigan and Flanagan, drummer J. C. Heard left the city 45 years ago to play in big bands led by Teddy Wilson and Benny Carter. He toured with Jazz at the Philharmonic and lived and played in Japan for more than a decade before returning to Detroit in 1964.

The quartet (the fourth man is Canadian bassist Dave Young) shows its roots in ‘40s and early ‘50s bop, but that isn’t all it plays. Benson has a typically lean, straightforward attack on tenor sax that builds to a sinuous wail; on alto this same style is warm and singing. But Black’s dark, rumbling piano lines link him to Eddie Costa and Dave McKenna, and his five-minute solo on If You Could See Me Now includes touches of Erroll Garner’s romanticism.

Heard is the focal point of the most completely developed number in the set, however. J. C.’s Blues—traditional blues verses sung in an open, Joe Williams manner by Heard with Benson and Black punching and nudging behind him—is both a summation of the quartet’s contemporary mainstream jazz sources and an impressive display of its individual voices.

JOHN S. WILSON

Dirty Dozen Brass Band:
My Feet Can’t Fail Me Now
George Wein & Quint Davis, producers
Concord Jazz 3005

The current revitalization of New Orleans jazz, represented by such young stars as Wynton and Branford Marsalis, Terence Blanchard, and Donald Harrison, also encompasses older music. The Dirty Dozen Brass Band, an eight-man group that originated in 1977 as a kazoo band, takes a fresh look at the city’s colorful street-parade and funeral bands and their exuberant second lines, a Mardi Gras tradition that has been popular since the turn of the century.

The Dirty Dozen’s repertoire starts with traditional tunes (The Saints, Didn’t He Ramble, L’il Liza Jane) but reaches out to include Charlie Parker, Thelonious Monk, Miles Davis, and even Michael Jackson. Rythmique intensity, based on African drumming, is kicked along by rapid-fire, insistent riffs that explode joyously. The excitement typical of the band’s tremendous reception in New York and Europe this past year is conveyed successfully enough on this debut. But without the characteristic and very stylized dancing and movement that are integral to their shows, a lot of color and vitality is diluted.

The closest the record comes to duplicating a full performance is on Blue Monk: Growling trumpets, a shimmering trombone, and Kirk Joseph’s ominously com-

mending tuba stalk through a vivid, noisy background. You’d think the babble would be distracting, but it fits right in. L’il Liza Jane, with its ensemble vocal, moves at a double-time trot and swings around happy, staccato instrumental lines, while the clapping and singing on the title cut (an original) enable the musicians to at least imply movement. And their version of Duke Ellington’s Caravan has all the high-stepping confidence of one of those second-line marches on Mardi Gras.

Straight instrumental pieces such as Blackbird Special and Do It Fluid need more than horns and rhythm to vary this set, so the way the band’s simple physical presence would. Seeing the Dirty Dozen is almost as important as hearing them.

JOHN S. WILSON

Eastern Rebellion 4
Wim Wigt, producer
Timeless SIP 184
(Zebra Marketing, 17735 Collins St., Encino, Calif. 91316)

In the last two decades, pianist-composer Cedar Walton has been a stalwart of mainstream jazz, reveling in the multicultural bebop traditions of Dizzy Gillespie, Sonny Rollins, and Art Blakey. Most of the time, Walton’s sessions—live and recorded—achieve what he wants them to: an unpretentious mixture of hard-driving music and lush, colorful tones. His material is rarely inappropriate or dated; aside from an occasional dip into commercial pop and the world of fusion, Walton has kept his integrity intact. And though his style hasn’t changed in those two decades, he has remained fresh and vibrant—at least until the release of “Eastern Rebellion 4.”

As the title indicates, this is the latest in a series. The acoustic sextet’s first recording, 1979’s “Eastern Rebellion,” was lively, almost punchy. As a leader or a soloist, Walton is a passionate player, but on “4” he often sounds tentative and staid, holding back on his percussive staccato, usually a highlight.

The recording is good, even crisp, yet the ensemble seems to be off in the distance. Given that the sextet includes well-respected trombonist Curtis Fuller, tenor saxophonist Bob Berg, and drummer Billy Higgins (all of whom Walton has worked with in many other contexts), the low energy level is an enigma. One wonders if they were bored with each other or preoccupied with individual projects.

Gillespie and Gil Fuller’s Manteca, which Walton recorded in 1978 with more enthusiasm (“The Pentagon,” Inner City, 6009), has a strong, rhythmic introduction, but the horn section (especially trumpeter Alfredo Armenteros) sounds ho-hum and flat-footed. Despite Higgins’s excellence and Berg’s memorable solo, the piece loses its richness. On Thelonious Monk’s Epistrophy, the unit creates a frenetic atmos-

phere and trombonist Fuller reinforces Monk’s haunting mood, but it’s still too calm. Higgins, who almost never misses the mark, is not as hard-hitting as he should be, especially at the bridge.

Two ballads, Johnny Mandel’s Close Enough for Love and Walton’s own Groundwork, are the album’s best offerings, both featuring Walton’s genuine softness. Groundwork, with fine cymbal and snare, is Higgins’s best vehicle, too. The older Walton original, I Am Not So Sure, is composed in Cannonball Adderley’s soulful style, a sensation that Berg helps secure.

To label “Eastern Rebellion 4” lackluster would be too harsh, but the selections here simply do not capture this group at its best.

JOHN S. WILSON

Chico Freeman: Morning Prayer
Masahiko Yuh, producer
India Navigation IN 1063 (60 Hudson St., Room 205, New York, N.Y. 10013)
Chico Freeman: Tangents
Chico Freeman & John Koenig, producers. Elektra/Musician 60361

In 1975, when “Morning Prayer” was recorded, Chico Freeman looked like a real contender. A member of Chicago’s avant-garde Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, Freeman could blow as “out” as any post-Coltrane saxophonist, but he was also comfortable and convincing with more traditional forms. He personified the neoclassical vogue that has since be-

Freeman has been on hold since 1975.
come a mainstay of contemporary jazz.

Technically, “Morning Prayer” was Freeman’s debut, although it has only now been released. On tenor sax, his main wind instrument, he comes on hard and strong with a full-toned, Coltrane-inspired raspy attack. This is a thrilling, youthful sound—brash and exciting. Constantly verging on the ecstatic, Freeman never falters; even at his most convulsive moments he keeps a firm grip on the twisting contour of his solos. His energy and intensity are most apparent on the mad dash The In Between and the more elegant Conversations.

Freeman’s writing on “Morning Prayer” is equally assured and compelling, full of memorable themes that incorporate darting time changes and intricate chord patterns. Freeman always makes sure to inject lyrical turns that keep his tunes from sounding academic or forced. On Conversations he skillfully sets off the lurching momentum of the opening choruses with a gorgeous waltz-time bridge that alters both the construction and the mood of the tune, a clever device typical of this young musician’s precociousness. Only the title track, a 12½-minute mood piece complete with tinkling bells, tolling gongs, and wispy flutes, is meandering and inconclusive, especially compared to the razor-sharp directness of the other four numbers.

I thought that by now Freeman would be giving David Murray stiff competition as the young bandleader on the scene today. But instead we have “Tangents,” which, like many of Freeman’s recent records, is an exercise in delayed gratification. Although each LP has been marked by almost obsessive exploration in different contexts and moods, Freeman’s talents as a player and writer are still teasingly unfocused.

The guest appearance by vocalist Bobbi McFerrin and the occasional use of synthesizers and rock rhythms are too deliberate and contrived. Though Freeman plays well on the straight-ahead jazz sections, the squeaky-clean gloss of the studio reins in any liberating energy. Even when Freeman and company risk a little action on the freestyled Fifty Tenth Street, every note seems perfectly in place. The glaringly commercial Computerized Indifference (too aptly titled to be ironic) is just silly, so flat and elementary it sounds as if the musicians were learning an old rock-and-roll backbeat for the first time. McFerrin, an acquired taste, is merely an appendage, popping up at odd times to wordlessly echo the horn lines. His big duet with Freeman, Sangoma and Nelly, is great if you like his can-you-guess-what-instrument-I’m-imitating-now shtick. I don’t.

But there is always hope. When Freeman gets down to business, on You Are the One, he is transcendent. Moments like this remind me that the best is yet to come from this still young craftsman.

STEVIE FUTTERMAN

Wynton Marsalis: Hot House Flowers

Wynton Marsalis is a trumpet-playing machine. There’s no point in talking about his technical skills. The man can hit any note at any speed with perfect articulation. He swings, has taste, is familiar with and respectful of the heritage of jazz, and is eager to share his gifts with the world. Why, then, do I still find his playing unconvincing and anonymous? “Hot House Flowers,” “a no-risk ‘with strings’ project, brings out the worst in him, of all his recordings, it provides the most up-front answer to that question.

It’s far from a total failure: Marsalis’s quintet, plus Ron Carter, performs with assurance and vigor, the string arrangements are unobtrusive, and Marsalis plays an unusually infectious up-tempo solo on I’m Confessin’. What disturbs me, though, about this always pleasant album is how utterly bloodless and safe it is. Despite his young, hip, and forward-looking image, Marsalis is a deadingly conservative player. As he essays the material here—a well-chosen mixture of popular chestnuts and jazz originals—it becomes apparent that the trumpeter is locked into a restrictive, neobop groove. He is slavishly addicted to stylistic role models Freddie Hubbard and Miles Davis. There is nothing wrong in emulating two of the greatest horn men of all time, but Marsalis has confused inspiration with duplication. You begin to listen not for his own inventions, but for the familiar phrases of his mentors that he carefully, but unerringly, depends on. And because he relies on other men’s expressive devices, Marsalis lacks depth; his emotions sound second-hand.

Then there’s the fact that this twenty-three-year-old totally rejects the alternative vocabulary of the post free-jazz decade. Marsalis seems positively resistant to experimentation with his faultless tone or his precise navigation of a tune’s chord changes. His ideas are so tame and professional that they border on the reactionary. No wonder he’s the new star of the Eighties.

STEVIE FUTTERMAN

Don Sickler: The Music of Kenny Dorham

Robert Sunenblick & Mark Feldman, producers. Uptown 27.17

Don Sickler is becoming a one-man rescue team for an endangered species. Fifties jazz was dominated by composers Charles Mingus and Thelonious Monk, but Tadd Dameron and Kenny Dorham were there, too, less celebrated yet highly talented. Today, when bands perpetrate even iconoclastic giants like Mingus and Monk (Mingus Dynasty and Sphere), it is especially important that groups such as Sickler’s keep the other music alive.

This album focuses on Dorham compositions and arrangements that exist only on out-of-print recordings. These selections emphasize his knack for fascinating harmonic colors and haunting ballad lines (notably on La Mesha, a charming piece written for his three-year-old daughter). The LP also reveals Sickler’s talent as a trumpeter to a far greater extent than does his work with Philly Joe Jones’s group Dameronia. Here he steps out with bright, crackling phrasing; on slower pieces, he is more deliberately swingy.

The quintet includes two sidemen who worked in Dorham’s groups—pianist Cedar Walton and saxophonist Jimmy Heath—along with Ron Carter on bass and Billy Higgins on drums. Carter is in brilliant form, not only as a soloist but in his strong, pulsing support.
PUNKED OUT
(Continued from page 69)
there is Black Flag, providing the bridge into hardcore and then back out. Personnel has changed numerous times since the group formed in 1978; guitarist and chief songwriter Greg Ginn is the only original member, and the band didn’t really hit its stride until vocalist Henry Rollins joined for the 1981 “Damaged” LP, a hardcore watershed.

By then, hardcore and new wave had thrown down different gauntlets. New wave—softer, more melodic, and thus more marketable—sought to take over the charts. Hardcore ignored the charts and the larger industry; the purist spirit of punk lived on in that separatist music, as did the nihilism.

Most bands don’t last long, but the form is ubiquitous, even taking hold in a few places outside Los Angeles. San Francisco produced the Dils (who evolved into Rank and File) and the Dead Kennedys, probably the most prolific hardcore band in the world, but one with mundane music and pretentious, posturing lyrics. Washington, D.C., boasted a strong scene for several years, but the only durable band proved to be the bruising and intelligent Minor Threat. The nation’s capital also yielded Rollins as well as Bad Brains, an all-black group that played hardcore and reggae; still, the Brains weren’t recognized until they went to New York, just as Rollins had to go to L.A.

Today’s hardcore is everywhere. Compilation albums leap out of unlikely states and cities, like Texas and Phoenix. But no major label has signed a hardcore band, and none is likely to. The problem is not simply that the music is inherently anticommercial, nor that so much nihilism inevitably turns on itself to break up bands and scenes; even the flirtations with fascism can’t be blamed, especially when mainstream groups with pretentious, posturing lyrics. Washington, D.C., boasted a strong scene for several years, but the only durable band proved to be the bruising and intelligent Minor Threat. The nation’s capital also yielded Rollins as well as Bad Brains, an all-black group that played hardcore and reggae; still, the Brains weren’t recognized until they went to New York, just as Rollins had to go to L.A.

After defining the form, Black Flag leaned toward commercial viability by fusing hardcore with heavy metal and hard rock. But soon they veered too close to metal, becoming ponderous and increasingly trite. Their cynicism may have done them in, but Rollins still plays fearsome machine-gun guitar, and Rollins is more enthusiastic about his poetry projects.

Another suburban L.A. group, however, has found a way out of the hardcore ghetto, musically if not commercially. The Minutemen hail from San Pedro; their name is partly a play on their political bent and partly a reference to the fact that their songs originally lasted less than 60 seconds. That music was all breakneck forward motion, lead singer d. boon spewing forth tunes that

Hardcore can’t get major-label bids, but compilations still leap out.

Bob Mould, Jimi Hendrix’s hardcore heir. Reoccurring Dreams (on their “Zen Arcade” double album), a 14-minute instrumental that could have been unthinkably a couple of years ago, features a swirling rhythm section holding together layers of drone, fuzz, feedback, and white noise. And Mould is maturing as a songwriter—Pink Turns to Blue is as harrowing a junkie song as anyone has written; in a genre that dwells on the subject.

Flipper, a San Francisco band, plays a grinding, grunting, groaning mélangé of hardcore, metal, and dissonance that’s slower than anything else on the circuit today. They crash and crunch, their riffs heaving and lurching as if to parody hardcore, but underneath the surface is a band that approaches life and love with humor and urgency. Flipper is also the model for Not Trend, a Baltimore group that may be even raunchier, and the Butthole Surfers, a San Antonio band that may be even more mock-perverse.

Among those bubbling under, the Meat Puppets (from Phoenix) integrate country and hardcore. TSOL (True Sounds of Liberty), veterans of the original L.A. hardcore scene, sound too much like the Doors, but otherwise continue to edge toward something that could conceivably make it onto the radio. The Effigies (from Chicago) know their way around a riff and have passion, if not energy. These and other bands still constitute an underground class that the other bands lack.

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- Field, Ian: An Irish Expa...
Peressnick's Te Deum: Another Milestone from a Modern Master. Paul Moor. May.
Public Image Ltd.: This is What You Want. This is What You Get. Commercial Zone. Tim Sommer. Nov.
Simon, Paul: Hearts and Bones. Sam Sutherland. Sept.
Simon, Paul: Hearts and Bones. Sam Sutherland. Sept.
Strange Birds (The Orioles, et. al.). Crispin Cioe.

RECORDS AND RECORDINGS
In Favor of Live Records. Alfred Brendel. May.
Top 10 of '83 from the Big 6: Popular Critics Pop and Jazz Poll. Mar.

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Ackerman, William: Passage. Sam Sutherland. June.


Beatles: Abbey Road. Sam Sutherland. Feb.


Davis, Miles: E.S.P. Sam Sutherland. Mar.


Eagles: Hotel California. Sam Sutherland. Nov.


Fagen, Donald: The Nightfly. Sam Sutherland. Aug.

Films and the BBC's: Tricycle. Sam Sutherland. Aug.

Gaye, Marvin: Sam Sutherland. July.


Grusin, Dave and the NY-LA Dream Band: Sam Sutherland. May.


Jackson, Joe: Night and Day. Sam Sutherland. June.


Jones, Quincy: The Dude. Sam Sutherland. Mar.


Menheney, Pat: 80/81. Sam Sutherland. June.


Osborne, Jeffrey: Stay With Me Tonight. Sam Sutherland. June.


Pretenders: Sam Sutherland. Mar.


Shadowfax: Shadowdance. Sam Sutherland. Sept.


Springsteen, Bruce: Born in the U.S.A. Sam Sutherland. Nov.


Vollenweider, Andreas: Caverna Magica (Under the Tree—in the Cave...). Sam Sutherland. Nov.


VIDEO REVIEWS


Bowie, David: Ira Mayer. May.

Easton, Sheena: Ira Mayer. May.

J. Geils Band: Ira Mayer. May.


Massey, Marion: Thomas W. Russell III. May.


Reed, Lou: A Night With Lou Reed. Jeff Nesin. Sept.


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