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- 50 SUPER COMPONENTS
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- REMOTE-CONTROL CD CHANGERS
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STEREO TV:
HOW IT WORKS

6 TESTS
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- SHURE CD PLAYER
- AND MORE!
Only one thing justifies the price of admission. The performance.

The path to first-rate performance is paved with plenty of imposters. Which can be readily found on any corner.

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Which is how most audio videophiles discover AKAI's equipment.

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And that, all by itself, may well be worth the price of admission.
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Looking for Number Ones

Several months ago, as Editor Michael Riggs, Technical Editor David Ramada, and I were planning our coverage of new components, we realized that we rarely look back and bring into perspective all the various products we report on throughout a model year, taking special note of those that in some way have been outstanding. For nearly 20 years, the magazine has done just that with classical recordings, presenting the annual High Fidelity/International Record Critics Awards. The answer was obvious, and therefore we inaugurate in this, HF’s 35th anniversary year, the High Fidelity Product of the Year Awards.

What will these awards honor? How many will there be? Who will pick the winners? Some answers. Our goal is to recognize those audio, video, audio-video, and car stereo products that are significant in design, technology, value, and other important areas. Each product will be evaluated on its own merits, and thus there will be no set categories, such as “Receiver of the Year.” Nor will there be a set number of awards. All components released during a model year (September through August) are eligible. The awards panel includes High Fidelity’s editors and several well-known industry experts. Beginning this month, many of the products we feel are contenders will appear in a featured section of “Currents,” though the finalists will not be limited to these. Winners—and all contenders—will be announced in December.

Sure to be among this year’s finalists are some of the exciting new car-stereo components covered in this issue. “AutoPhile” columnist Jay G. Taylor attended the recent Winter Consumer Electronics Show, and in “The ‘86 Model Year” he reports on the latest gear and notes the increasing interest in high-end products. Complementing this coverage are road/lab tests on two front ends that typify car stereo’s new high-tech look.

Elsewhere in these pages is the first installment of “Lape Tracks,” a monthly column on audio and video tape and tapping by Consulting Technical Editor Robert Long, who has written about the subject for almost 20 years. Also appearing are “Five Steps to Better Buying” in Michael Riggs’ “Basically Speaking” column; “Stereo TV Questions and Answers,” the second of two articles by DBN’s v-p of engineering Leslie B. Tyler on how the new broadcast technology works; and profiles of Dutch conductor Bernard Haitink and jazz singer Abbey Lincoln.
AWESOME POWER
It's The First Thing That Strikes You.

The second thing you'll discover is the purity of that power. Because this new Radio Shack stereo receiver delivers 100 watts per channel minimum rms into 8 ohms, from 20 to 20,000 Hz, yet produces no more than 0.05% total harmonic distortion. This is the combination of high power and low distortion you need to enjoy the wide dynamic range of compact discs, LaserVision discs and hi-fi videotapes.

Now, check the features we've designed in so you can control that power. Monitoring and dubbing for two tape decks. Pushbutton selectors for compact disc, video sound, turntable, main and remote speakers. Digital-synthesized tuning with 12 memory presets and automatic search mode. Steppe bass, treble and midrange controls. Deluxe metal enclosure with real-wood end panels. Triple-protected power amplifier. Backed by our Two-Year Limited Warranty and nation-wide service.

Fact is, there's only one thing that's not awesome about our new Fealistic® STA-2600. It's only $499.95 or as low as $23 per month with Radio Shack/CitiLine credit!

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B&W MASS offers a system designed specifically to overcome the difficulties of creating true hi-fi in the automobile. With eight associated modules forming the complete system — to suit any automobile, any pocket — MASS combines flexible, low-profile installation with high sensitivity and the superlative sound reproduction you expect from B&W.

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SOVIET PROPAGANDA
I read with interest Joel W. Spiegelman’s “The Czar of Soviet Music” [March]. As usual with such articles, it sounds like propaganda. I was surprised that High Fidelity, with its commitment to “true” sound, would print such a story without an answer—and that Mr. Spiegelman, for all his apparent interest in and knowledge of Soviet music, would let himself be taken in by Tikhon Kreminnikov’s statements. However, I do realize that Mr. Spiegelman was probably thinking more about the Soviet-American music festival and symposium he is trying to establish than about truth.

I have not read Solomon Volkov’s book [Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich], but I have read Galina Vishnevskaya’s autobiography, Galina, in which she spends a lot of time describing the state of the musician in Soviet society. What Shostakovich revealed to friends with whom he apparently enjoyed a close relationship and what he revealed in public to a society controlled by self-seeking individuals who are committed to mediocrity are (hard to be?) two different things. To rely on Shostakovich’s public statements without understanding the circumstances under which he spoke is to ignore the probable truth. To shed some light on those circumstances, I recommend Galina, as well as the chapters on Vladimir Ashkenazy and Mstislav Rostropovich in Helena Matheous’s book Music. With the Soviet system’s past practice of rewriting history to suit its purposes (witness the current campaign against Leonid Brezhnev), the protestations of innocence regarding the persecution of leading Soviet composers are certainly suspect, if not outright lies. What is even more tragic is that Kreminnikov probably believes what he said. (An interesting question to have asked him would have been about the dearth of contemporary Soviet composers of the stature of Shostakovich or Prokofiev. Perhaps the system has finally “won.”)

I appreciated the interview, if only because it so revealed the duplicity or ignorance of Kreminnikov and the gullibility of Mr. Spiegelman. Please don’t let this letter stop you from publishing other interviews—but please conduct those interviews with your eyes open.

JAMES B. LOWERY
Crystal Lake, I1.

JOEL W. SPIEGELMAN’S INTERVIEW WITH TIKHON KREMINNIKOV LEAVES OUT MORE INFORMATION THAN IT ACTUALLY GIVES REGARDING THE INFAMOUS CENSURING OF BOTH SHOSTAKOVICH AND PROKOFIEV. KREMINNIKOV WOULD HAVE US BELIEVE THAT THE ONLY SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON THOSE CENSURES IS SOLOMON VOLKOV’S BOOK. SUCH A DISTORTION OF KNOWN FACTS IS REPROACHABLE. THIS PARTICULAR CASE WAS WELL KNOWN FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS BEFORE VOLKOV’S BOOK WAS EVEN PUBLISHED.

Here we have a classic situation of bureaucracy over art. The scenario and procedures are as simple as they are deadly:

1. Soviet bureaucrats who oversee “the arts” and “culture,” and who know nothing of either, decide that certain composers are at odds with their brand of ideology.

2. To deal with the situation (and to gain some measure of credibility and respectability), the bureaucrats reorganize the Union of Soviet Composers and install Khrennikov as its chairman, who acts as “spokesman” and publicly (with the proper outrage) censors the objects of the bureaucrats’ wrath.

3. The disgraced artists—if they know what’s good for them—publicly sign the “official” form attesting to their guilt and, upon beating their breasts and vowing future cooperation with the party line, are welcomed.

(Continued on Page 7)

It has the power to flatten a room.

Are you neglecting the most important component in your system, your listening room? Then make room for the new Yamaha GE-60 graphic equalizer.

With 10 bands of +15 dB fixed bandwidth equalization control, it can give you perfectly flat frequency response in any listening environment. Easily. And quickly.

That’s because we’ve provided the GE-60 with a built-in pink noise generator and 10-band frequency spectrum analyzer. And an outboard electret condenser microphone.

Just place the mic where you would sit, and while reading the pink noise level at each frequency on the spectrum analyzer, make precise adjustments with the EQ controls for each frequency band. Right before your eyes, the frequency response of your room is flattened. So you hear your music with all the realism it should have. Especially compact discs.

You can do all this without any output level imbalance. Because the GE-60 has right and left output level controls to match the total output level of the EQ On mode with the EQ Defeat mode.

Or you can do most of this with the GE-40 and GE-3 graphic equalizers. Whichever model you choose, you’ll love what they do to your room. And to your music.

Yamaha Electronics Corporation, USA, P.O. Box 6660, Buena Park, CA 90622

YAMAHA
When you buy a new Jensen® JXL55, you’re buying more than our most innovatively-engineered receiver. You’re gaining the outstanding flexibility to easily connect a portable or in-dash compact disc player to your car’s sound system whenever you’re ready, allowing you to experience the high quality, rich, clean sound of compact disc while on the road.

The Jensen JXL45 and 55 receivers feature built-in inputs specially designed for connecting your compact disc player. An optional dash-mounted adaptor is available to simplify connecting and disconnecting most portable players, giving you the greatest compact disc flexibility.

Jensen JXL tuners feature a state-of-the-art Phase Locked Loop design and Automatic Program Control. Together they give you optimum reception from your favorite stations.

The Jensen JXL55 has a full logic tape deck with electronic soft-touch controls to eliminate confusion between fast forward and rewind functions. And its Dolby® B noise reduction minimizes annoying high frequency hiss when playing tapes recorded with the Dolby System™.

After more than five decades of car audio excellence, it should come as no surprise that Jensen gives you the incredible flexibility of compact disc capability on the JXL45 and 55. Not to mention similarly impressive credentials on all JXL models.

What might surprise you is the price.

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The last word in stereophones

Recently purchased a compact disc player, and I thoroughly enjoy it. I've been impressed with two particular discs but haven't yet seen a review on either one of them: the Glenn Miller Orchestra’s *In the Digital Mood* (GRP-D-95012) and Papa Doo Run Run’s *California Project* (Telarc CD 70501). If you have not reviewed these two, are you in for a treat?

*John Levin*
Inglewood, Calif.

We’re not familiar with the Miller, but we agree that California Project is superior, with the group Papa Doo Run Run performing a collection of Beach Boys greatest hits, duplicating the original harmonies and instrumentation. However, we decided it’s been an excellent matinée doesn’t justify it for review in a section that we like to think covers original music. Now if only someone could get the real Beach Boys to issue a comparable collection. This CD features every hit from “Surfin’ U.S.A.” and “Fun, Fun, Fun” to “Wouldn’t It Be Nice” and “Good Vibrations.” —Ed.

LETTERS

(Continued from page 5)

back into the fold.

That men of the stature of Shostakovich and Prokofiev were humiliated in this manner—and that the man most responsible should make statements like "Why should I put Shostakovich down when I revered him just like I revered Prokofiev, who was a god to me?"—is hypocrisy of the lowest level. Sorry, Mr. K., but it wasn’t wash.

Kenneth H. Wise
Goleta, Calif.

Classical Music Editor Thaddeus W. Lobel, Jr., replies: If we were to pronounce editorially upon comments given in an interview, we would be doing much the same thing Messrs. Lowery and Wise accuse Tikhon Khrennikov of doing: committing a form of censorship. It is not our policy to prevent an individual, regardless of what he has said before and of the historical context in which he said it, from giving his side of a story. Mr. Lowery’s observation about past public statements and their sometimes distant relationship to the truth can be applied in Khrennikov’s case as well as in Shostakovich’s. Bear in mind, too, that it was not our intent to merely examine the record on Khrennikov or repeat the accusations against him, but to add to the record—to question him and repeat what he said.

What distinguished Joel W. Spiegelman’s interview with Sergey Prokofiev from the sort of exposé Messrs. Lowery and Wise seem to have wanted was that he put his preconceptions (valid or not) aside and let Khrennikov do the talking. We think most of our readers are able to read between the lines—as both of these letter writers did—and reach their own conclusions.

By the way, contributing editor Paul Moar has asked to offer a response to Khrennikov’s remarks. That response will appear in a forthcoming issue.

ALL ABOUT CD

LET ME SAY RIGHT OFF THAT I DON’T Doubted the general superiority of the Compact Disc over the current standard of the LP. But I also think that the CD has a long way to go before we see the total demise of the LP. This is evidenced by my recent purchase of the LP version of Kip Hanahan and Jack Bruce’s *Desire Develops an Edge* [American Clavé 1008/9; distributed by New Music Distribution Service]. The vinyl is so quiet, the separation and production so lush and believable, that it makes even my mediocre styli and loudspeakers sound like noise. This is in marked contrast to most current LPs, which even the best match of styli and speaker could hardly bring to life.

I think here lies the argument for a continued future for the LP. As more and more major titles are offered solely on Compact Disc, the current glut of records on cheap vinyl will fall by the wayside, allowing small labels who have neither the finances nor the access to CD production to offer their music on high-grade vinyl at very competitive prices. In this way, the CD, rather than burying the LP, will actually liberate it, allowing it to become the exciting, unpredictable, eclectic, and high-quality medium it can be.

Dennis Darrah
Montpelier, Vt.

William Tyman’s “Compact Disc is King” (“Editor’s Page,” October 1985) makes most interesting reading. I agree wholeheartedly with his sentiments that the CD is the medium of today.

The original detractors of the Compact Disc—who, incidentally, caused a lot of harm—were those manufacturers, distributors, or retailers who did not have their own CD player to sell. It was, to a large extent, sour grapes. These people certainly have come around to the current way of thinking.

Our company distributes Telarc CDs, and we have been overwhelmed by the demand. Never mind the strong dollar that has made their prices outrageous. Demand continues.

Errol J. Rink
Managing Director
J. B. Radio Parts (PTY), Ltd.
Johannesburg, South Africa
Unusual Features in Magnavox CD Player

The editors have selected this product as being one of special interest. As such, it is also a contender for HIFI's Product of the Year Awards. (See "Front Lines," page 1.)

IT'S BECOMING RARE FOR ANY NEW COMPACT Disc player to represent an advance in basic disc-playing performance, and rarer still for one to incorporate a truly innovative convenience feature. The drawer-loading Magnavox CDB-650, according to the preliminary information we have received, does both.

The outstanding attribute of the CDB-650's operation is its 785-selection FTS (favorable track selection) memory. That capacity is the tip-off that this is far from being a mere extension of the programmable playback systems on many players, as a single CD can hold a maximum of only 99 tracks. The CDB-650 memorizes both the selected tracks and the disc catalog number (which is also encoded on a CD) and stores them in a nonvolatile circuit "for onetime lifetime programming." Put in the disc years later and you can call up the same programmed sequence. Turning the power off does not erase the memory. A conventional 20-selection single-disk volatile memory is also provided, but like the cueing and FTS systems it has the same unusual flexibility in what it considers a selection: a complete track, an index point, or a time period. Programming is via the internal numerical keypad or the supplied infrared remote control. Available repeat modes are entire disc, programmed sequence, and user-defined segment.

Other convenience features include a three-speed scan control (with audible program at the two lower rates), selectable four-second record-pause-insertion for tape- scanning cassette decks, antijamming protection that rejects improperly inserted discs, a headphone jack with volume control, and a direct digital output for connection to future signal-processing components.

Perhaps the outstanding audio feature of the CDB-650 is its use of new Philips CD-decoding chips. These devices offer improved error-detection-and-correction capabilities over previous Magnavox chips and the ability to smoothly interpolate over eight consecutive detectable samples (as opposed to only one in almost every other player). Transformation of the digital signal to audio is accomplished by four-times oversampling digital filters and two full-16-bit digital-to-analog converters. The outputs are not multiplexed, nor is there any time skew between channels. The player also has a separate analog-filtered output, making it the only unit offering a choice of filter technology. Phase linearity of the analog output filters is said to be uniform to within 1 degree. Frequency response is given as ±0.3 dB, 2 Hz to 20 kHz. Signal-to-noise ratio is claimed to be greater than 100 dB, separation better than 94 dB at 1 kHz. Total harmonic distortion is stated as less than 0.002 percent at 1 kHz, while ultrasonic rejection is greater than 60 dB.

The enclosure is available in black or silver finishes and measures 16⅜ by 33 by 11⅜ inches. Price is $430. For more information, write to Magnavox/N.A.P. Consumer Electronics Corp., 1-40 and Straw Plains Pike, Knoxville, Tenn. 37914-1810.

SANSUI PACKS AN EQUALIZER

A MICROPROCESSOR-CONTROLLED EQUALIZER, the SE-99 from SANSUI has 11 EQ memories.
The experts agree: Matthew Polk's revolutionary TRUE STEREO SDAs always sound dramatically better than conventional loudspeakers.

"The Genius of Matthew Polk Brings You the Breathtaking Sound of the SDAs"

Matthew Polk's critically acclaimed Audio Video Grand Prix Award-winning TRUE STEREO SDA Technology is the most important fundamental advance in loudspeaker technology since stereo itself.

"They truly represent a breakthrough."
Rolling Stone Magazine

The SDAs' patented* design makes them the world's only true stereo speakers. A conventional mono speaker is designed to be heard by 2 ears at once while True Stereo loudspeakers should each be heard by only one ear apiece (like headphones) in order to preserve full stereo separation. Polk's revolutionary TRUE STEREO SDAs are the first speakers engineered to accomplish this and realize the astonishingly lifelike, three-dimensional imaging capabilities of stereo.

"An amazing experience."
High Fidelity Magazine

Listeners are always amazed when they hear the huge, lifelike, high definition, three-dimensional sonic image produced by Polk's revolutionary TRUE STEREO SDA Loudspeakers. The nation's top audio experts agree that Polk SDA Loudspeakers always sound dramatically better than conventional loudspeakers. When you hear the dramatic difference you'll agree too.


Distributed in Canada by Evolution Technology, Toronto.

polkaudio
The Speaker Specialists

1915 Annapolis Rd., Baltimore, Md. 21230

"For your nearest Polk dealer see opposite page."
a spectrum analyzer and reverberation-time display, a built-in pink-noise generator, and a combination calibrated condenser microphone and remote control. There are no slide adjustments. The 24 frequency-band controls (12 per channel) are manipulated either from the remote or by using the supplied light pen to "draw" the curve directly on the face of the unit. Equalization may be set individually for each channel or simultaneously for both channels. EQ steps are normally 2 dB and are switchable into 1-dB increments for fine adjustment.

Five of the SE-99's EQ memories are preset "to enhance various types of recordings." Listed are contemporary, classical, rock/pop, tapes for car stereos, and tapes for players with headphones. Five other memories are user-defined, and the last is used to store the result of the unit's room equalization process. In addition to automatic room EQ, the SE-99 can be switched to compensate for tape-deck frequency-response variations. Reverb time is calculated for each frequency band and can be stored.

Distortion for the unit is given as 0.003 percent, signal-to-noise ratio as 120 dB. Price is $699. Details are available from Sansui Electronics Corp., 1250 Valley Brook Ave., Lyndhurst, N.J., 07071.

JVC'S ULTRA CAR RECEIVER

JVC's top-of-the-line car receiver/tape deck, the KS-RX710, offers a five-band graphic equalizer, an auto reverse cassette player with Dolby B, a digital-synthesis tuner, and an input for a Compact Disc player. The amplifier portion is rated at 25 watts "maximum power capability per channel." Twenty station presets are provided in the tuner section (five for FM, five for AM), The CD player terminals are on the rear of the unit. Other features include a digital frequency/clock display and line-level output terminals in addition to the front and rear speaker connectors. Price is $410. For additional information, contact JVC Company of America, 41 Slater Dr., Elmsford, N.Y., 07017.

PORTABLE DUAL DECK FROM PANASONIC

In theory, at least, tape dubs made on Panasonic's RX-HD10 combination dual cassette recorder and AM/FM radio will have very low wow and flutter. Because of the unit's single-motor drive system, the tape speeds of original (playback-only) and dubbing transports are the same. The dubbing deck has an auto reverse capability in the playback mode. A cutout in the transport hub slips into the playback-only deck; its output can be recorded on the dubbing transport. In playback, both transports have Dolby B noise reduction and switchable 70-microsecond tape equalization. The dubbing transport has a pulse control, an automatic record-level control, and a one-touch recording feature. Headphones are included, but the two AA cells necessary are not. Dimensions are 8 by 3 by 1 ¼ inches; weight is 10 ¼ ounces without batteries. The RX-HD10 costs $290. Write Panasonic Co., 1 Panasonic Way, Secaucus, N.J., 07094.

EXPANDING CD CAPABILITIES

PHILIPS AND SONY, HOLDERS OF THE PRINCIPAL CD patents and controllers of all CD licensing, announced in February a standardization of yet another application of the Compact Disc. The new format, which seems to combine the technology of subcode graphics and the computer-data storage capabilities of the CD-ROM, is called CD Interactive Media (CD-I). It "allows for full interactive use of the CD-ROM in ... not only music ... but also speech, natural still and animated pictures, graphics, computer programs, and computer data." This means that a single CD will be able to simultaneously hold audio, moving video, computer graphics, and computer data.

The audio comes in various grades, depending on how many channels are needed. Only one pair of full CD-quality audio channels is possible, but as many as 16 separate mono tracks of speech-grade sound can be stored. Horizontal video resolution has been set at 384 lines in normal mode and at 768 lines in high-resolution mode. The computer graphics can store as many as 32,768 colors, depending on which encoding method is used. Total capacity of a CD-I pressing is approximately 650 megabytes, each byte approximately equivalent in information to one printed character.

David Ronada
What other audio tapes fail to hear.

One audio tape is so sensitive it can hear a pin drop
Or the full crash of a cymbal.
To no one’s surprise, it’s made by Sony.
Designed with our widest dynamic range ever, the UCX-S can pick up the softest softs you’ve never heard.
Or the loudest louds.
Without distortion.
And since we pack smaller, more uniform particles on our tape, you can pack more music in it.
And go from one extreme to the other.
So pick Sony. And hear what you've been missing.

© 1965 Sony Corp. of America. Sony is a registered trademark of Sony Corp. "The One and Only" is a registered trademark of Sony Corp. of America. (Trebled harmonics distortion 0.4%)
The Pioneer® SD-P40 is not a projection television. It is a projection monitor. The first of its kind.
And in one masterstroke, all—not some, but all—of the compromises associated with projection television have been eliminated.
In fact, the SD-P40 is not merely far superior to any other conventional projection system, it is also superior to all but a few direct-view monitors.

450 LINES. AND THAT'S THE BEGINNING.
The horizontal resolution on the SD-P40 is more than 450 lines.
The brightness is more than 300 footlamberts. It is actually brighter than any direct-view system.
The contrast has a dynamic range more than twice that of conventional projection systems.

THE END OF BIG-SCREEN COMPROMISE.
Ambient light, one of the great problems in projection video, is no problem at all. In fact, there is less deterioration in contrast due to ambient light than in direct-view systems.
Focus, so much a problem in conventional projection systems, is sharp to the edges of the screen. Further, the picture is equally bright regardless of what angle you are viewing it from.

Blacks, so often grey on conventional systems, are rich while holding detail.
The fuzziness you're so used to seeing around white lettering and objects at high brightness, known as “blooming,” is eliminated.
Color values are exceptionally accurate.

For the first time, a true skin tone is achieved in the presence of a vivid green. At last, color compromise is eliminated.
The exceptional performance of the Pioneer SD-P40 is the result of several major technological advances developed by Pioneer engineers over the last 3 years.

PIONEER INTRODUCES THE WORLD'S FIRST PROJECTION MONITOR.

AN UNPARALLELED LENS.
A REVOLUTIONARY LENS SYSTEM.
The lens itself is the largest projection lens ever developed for private use—with a maximum bore of 160 mm.
Perhaps even more significant is Pioneer's development of the world’s first liquid-cooled optical-coupling system. Far superior to conventional silicone gel or air coupling systems, the “Liquid Lens” is clearly the most accurate, efficient projection lens system ever devised.

MAJOR ADVANCES IN CIRCUITRY.
A new High-Voltage Stabilizing Circuit eliminates anode voltage drop, preventing darkness in white areas and focus loss.
A new Black-Level Stabilizer Circuit automatically sets the optimum black level to the signal source.
A newly created Dynamic Focus Circuit guarantees sharp focus to the edges of the screen.
And new High-Focus CRTs utilize not one but three electron lenses. These, combined with a newly developed Linear Tracking Focus System, result in a focal performance superior to conventional CRTs.

THE HEART OF A SOPHISTICATED AUDIO/VIDEO SYSTEM.
Inputs are provided for a LaserVision player.
and two videocassette recorders, in addition to 139 cable-capable channels with 10-key direct access. There's an MTS decoder for stereo/SAP broadcasts, and a simulated-stereo processor. There's a built-in high-powered 12W + 12W amplifier, with two built-in 6½-inch speakers. There's a monitor output, and a TV output. There's even a variable audio output that lets you control volume through your hi-fi system by remote control.

In fact, the entire system is controlled by one 54-function System Remote control (which will also control Pioneer LaserDisc™ and VCRs bearing the SR symbol).

We could go on and on. Suffice it to say, all you have to do is see the Pioneer SD-P40 once, and you will suddenly understand the difference between the world of projection televisions and the only projection monitor in the world.

(P)IONEER®
Absolutely not. There are certain areas in life where you can’t skimp on quality. That’s why there’s Maxell XLS tape. It’s engineered to achieve a lower distortion and wider dynamic range. XLS frequency response extends to the widest possible limits, with greater sensitivity throughout the tonal range.

It helps capture the quality of sound your system was designed to deliver.

Use Maxell XLS for all your taping needs.

Because there’s simply no substitute for quality.

maxell
THE TAPE FOR SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT.

WOULD YOU BUY CHEAP PERFUME FOR YOUR GIRLFRIEND?
OLD MIXES IN NEW CDs

I read that there is hiss in compact discs that have been remastered from analog tapes because the noise was on the old master tapes and digital transfer retains all of the sound from the originals. Isn’t this hiss actually part of the noise floor, and shouldn’t this be eliminated in remastering?

Jim Cheney
Jonesboro, Ark.

No, the noise won’t be eliminated. Every medium of transmission has its own dynamic range, extending between its inherent noise floor and its inherent overload ceiling, and the noise that a recording acquires from the medium remains with the signal whenever it’s played back. For Dolby B cassettes, open-reel tapes without noise reduction, and run-of-the-mill LPs, dynamic range is approximately 60 dB. If you were to master a CD, whose inherent dynamic range is about 90 dB, from any of those media, the recording’s dynamic range would remain only 60 dB. It’s like pouring a pint of milk into a gallon pail. It remains only a pint no matter what the capacity of the container. On the other hand, if you try to record a signal of wide dynamic range to a medium with a smaller capacity (going, say, from CD to cassette), something will perform spill over and be lost.

DISPOSABLE PICKUPS?

ON AVERAGE, I NEED TO REPLACE STILLY IN MY cartridges every two years. Every time I go to the shop for a new one, they tell me I’m better off replacing the whole cartridge. Is this a sales pitch, or are they correct?

Dave Benz
Syracuse, N.Y.

It could be a little of both. Inexpensive replacement styli may not be as well made, particularly in their tip geometry and polish, as those available from the cartridge’s manufacturer, which can cost a large fraction of a new pickup’s price. The argument is that since it costs little more to buy a whole new cartridge, you might as well take the opportunity to upgrade to the latest technology. And if the cartridge body contains any materials designed to supply physical compliance and damping, they may become stiff with age, altering performance. In that case, replacing the cartridge periodically may be almost mandatory. Such materials usually are built into the stylus assembly rather than the body, however, and thus are renewed with the assembly (another reason for preferring original-manufacturer replacements). So if you’re satisfied with the performance of your cartridges, there probably is no reason you should feel compelled to replace them instead of the styli.

12 VOLS IN THE WILD

I HAVE A SMALL, ISOLATED PIECE OF LAND AND minimal power—a 12-volt battery system recharged by a solar panel with wind-power backup. I already have a color TV set and a shortwave receiver. Now I’d like to add an AM/FM radio with a cassette deck, and the logical choice seems to be a car radio. I want a digital frequency-synthesis receiver with scan and manual override for fine-tuning. And I’d like an AM section that will pull in weak stations from my shortwave antenna.

Duncan Cameron
Pasadena, Texas

You won’t find the sort of fine-tuning you’re used to from shortwave listening in any digital car radio we know of. If you need detuning for either AM or FM, you’ll have to go with a traditional capacitor analog front end. The “muting” of weak stations in most car equipment is progressive—not the sharp on/off action of typical home receivers—so you can still recover borderline stations by turning up the volume. But the AM sections built into most shortwave receivers should prove more capable than typical car-stereo AM sections. All told, we wonder whether a multiband boom-box portable with a 12-volt adapter might not prove more appropriate to your needs than a car unit.

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THE CARVER CAR AMPLIFIER introduces Magnetic Field Amplifier technology to automotive high fidelity. Finally, the traditional weak link between car stereo decks and modern speaker design has been replaced with Carver technology. Into 1/10th of a cubic foot, Bob CARVER stant high voltage level at all times, irrespective and dynamic range produced by modern decks.

Unfortunately, conventional amplifier technology is particularly unsuited to delivering this needed power to the specialized car interior environment. Like their home stereo counterparts, traditional car designs produce a constant high voltage level at all times, irrespective of the demands of the ever-changing audio signal — even those times when there is no audio signal at all! Because automotive amplifiers must, obviously, derive their power from the host vehicle, such an approach results in substantial drain to delicately balanced automobile electrical systems.

The Carver Magnetic Field Car Amplifier is signal responsive. Highly efficient, it produces only the exact amount of power needed to deliver each musical impulse with complete accuracy and fidelity. Thus the Carver Car Amplifier not only reduces overall long-term power demands, but produces the large amount of power necessary for reproduction of music at realistic listening levels without the need for oversize power supply components. Important considerations in the minuscule spaces which quality car design allocates to add-on electronics.

INTELLIGENT POWER. A hallmark of all Carver amplifiers is the careful integration of sophisticated speaker and amplifier protection circuitry. The Carver Car Amplifier is no exception. Speakers are protected with a DC offset internal fault protection design which turns off the power supply at first hint of overload. An overcurrent detector mutes audio within microseconds of a short circuit, as does an output short circuit monitoring circuit. Together, these three circuits eliminate the potential need to replace fuses, revisit your autosound installer, or worse yet, replace expensive speakers due to a moment's indiscretion with your deck's volume control.

ASSIGNABLE POWER. Integrated bi-amplification and bridging circuits, along with The Carver Car Amplifier's compact configuration make it ideal for multiple-amplifier installations.

The built-in 18dB/octave electronic crossover allows use of two amplifiers in a pure bi-amplification mode without addition of extra electronics. Or, at the touch of a button, one Carver Car Amplifier can become a mono amplifier for subwoofers while the other Carver Car Amplifiers may be operated in mono mode into 8 ohms for a 240 watt per channel car system which will truly do justice to digital without taxing your car's electrical generation system.

INNOVATIVE POWER. Can 1/10th of a cubic foot of space hold yet more innovations? Yes.

Carver has addressed the ongoing problem of head-end/power amplifier level matching: Output of current car decks varies widely from brand to brand and model to model. The result can be a less than perfect match. The Carver Car Amplifier incorporates circuitry which compensates for variations in head-end output, reducing noise and optimizing signal-to-noise ratio. In addition, Carver has added a subsonic filter which removes inaudible power-robbing infrasonics before they can tax the amplifier and speakers. Finally, a delayed turn-on circuit activates the Carver Car Amplifier after your head-end unit has powered up, to eliminate starting pops and thumps.

ACCURATE POWER. It goes almost without saying that a product Bob Carver designs for the road carries the same superb electronic specifications that his home audio products are known for.

The Carver Car Amplifier is flat from 20Hz to 20kHz, down -3dB at 16Hz and 30kHz. Not coincidentally, the usual specifications given for Compact Discs. A signal-to-noise ratio of over 100dB means that, in even the most quiet luxury sedan, you will never be annoyed by hiss. The other specifications are equally as impeccable. You may peruse them in our literature or in independent reviews soon to appear.

ACquirable Power. The remarkable Carver Car Amplifier is currently available for audition at Carver dealers across the country.

It is worth the journey. Whether you have a car system in need of the sonic excitement possible with abundant power, or are in search of the perfect complement to a new high-performance automobile, you owe it to yourself to experience the logical extension of Carver technology — The Carver Car Amplifier M-240.
Five Steps to Better Buying

Many people face the prospect of shopping for a new audio or video system with great anxiety. It can be a complicated decision, and the fear of making a costly mistake looms large. On the other hand, think the whole process can be enjoyable, so maybe it would be a good idea to look at some of the things that can be done to make that true for almost anyone.

1. WHAT DO YOU NEED?

Think about what you want your system to do. For example, if you have a lot of records, you almost certainly will want a turntable, even if you also get a Compact Disc player. Otherwise, you may prefer to buy just a CD player and forego vinyl altogether. The next step is to figure out what kinds of components you need to achieve your goals. Start by imagining the ideal configuration, then whittle it down to something that will fit into your budget.

2. SEPARATION VS. INTEGRATION

One of the key decisions you have to make is how “integrated” your system should be. Your choices range from fully separate configurations (built around a preamplifier, power amplifier, and tuner) to all-in-one or rack systems. For most people, it’s best to take a middle position, building around a receiver and two good speakers. That alone will serve for FM listening, usually at a lower price than an equivalent array of separates would fetch. You can then add other sources, like a turntable, CD player, or tape deck.

Each of the other approaches to system-building has its appeal as well, but one choice is not suitable for anyone who really cares about fine sound and the other usually is more costly. All-in-one systems are not an option I would expect anyone who reads this magazine regularly to entertain seriously. Many are padded with extra components to make them look like great values, but the result often is lower quality in each unit. This is particularly evident in the speakers, which areordinarily quite bad in such setups. If you can get a rack system without speakers (not easy) or are willing to replace them with something good, purchase might be worth considering for the sake of the system remote control often provided.

The opposite extreme is to build a system around a separate preamp and power amp. Although in most cases this is more expensive than buying a receiver, it provides greater flexibility and sometimes better performance. If you are a serious audiophile, you probably will want such a setup eventually, no matter how you start out.

3. HOW MUCH AMPLIFIER POWER IS NEEDED?

A perennial question, answer: probably less than you think. Doubling your amplifier power does not get you twice the sound—just 3 dB more maximum volume, which is audible, but not dramatically so. To actually double your system’s maximum perceived volume capability, you would need to increase its amplifier power by a factor of ten. There is some value in having more power: The more there is available, the less likely the amplifier is to be driven into gross distortion. But eventually you hit a point of diminishing returns, which I would put, typically, at about 60 watts per channel. After that, you start paying heavily for relatively small benefits, unless your speakers are very inefficient, your living room is large and sound-absorbing, or you play a lot of very loud music.

4. BUYING THE RIGHT SPEAKER

The speakers in any high-fidelity system worthy of the name have a much greater effect on its sound than any other component. Test reports can help, but ultimately it’s up to your ears to pick the speaker that’s right for you. This means going around to stores and listening. If possible, take a few records of your own—preferably ones that you’re familiar with and that sound natural to you. They also should represent a variety of music, including (but not limited to) voice, strings, piano, and something to test deep-bass extension (pipe organ often is good for this). Compact Discs are the best source, but LPs will do. (Avoid cassettes, whose sound can vary radically from deck to deck if the alignments of the tape heads are not identical.) Seek a smooth, balanced sound. Thumping bass and glaring highs may seem exciting at first, but they quickly wear thin. On the other hand, the lows and highs should be there when called for.

Make sure that any A/B comparisons of speakers are conducted fairly. They should be at the same volume (louder tends to sound better in this sort of test), and the speakers should be placed where the manufacturers specify. A model designed to work well when against a wall may sound bass-shy when moved out into the room. Similarly, a speaker on the floor may sound like it has more bass than one in the middle of the wall.

5. GETTING A GOOD DEAL

Consider what you’re willing to give up to get the best possible price. One route to low prices is through the mail-order discounts—provided you already know exactly what you want. The risk is that if you do have trouble, the store may be too far away to do much about it. Plus, it can be hard to obtain some product lines from mail-order dealers. And you have to watch out for gray-market goods imported directly to dealers, by-passing the U.S. distributor. Some companies won’t honor the warranties on such items.

Regular audio stores may offer discounts on some components and almost always will give you 20 to 30 percent off on complete systems. The prices may not be quite as good as what you can get by mail order, but you can deal with someone face-to-face and perhaps benefit from any service facilities or additional warranties or return policies the store may have. High-end shops are the most likely to go out of their way to help you with equipment selection and installation. In return, however, you more often will have to pay full ticket to get the gear out the door.

M A Y  1 9 8 6  1 7
**Glad You Asked**

Every year, we receive hundreds of queries about audio and video tape and taping, many of which are similar and of general interest. For the first "Tape Tracks," I’ve selected a number of these to answer.

**Q. I’ve been using a Nakamichi 100/2X tape deck and a DBX Model 224 noise reduction unit to record pop and rock, keeping average levels down at –10 dB and peak readings at 0 dB. I’ve noticed print-through during quiet passages of tapes made a year ago. Would a change in recording level help? Should I switch from C-90s to C-60s? And because recorder response specs usually are given at –20 dB, I wonder whether the lower the level, the better the response?**

**A.** Your present levels sound about right, given Nakamichi’s method of calibrating meters. With the DBX system’s 2:1 compression of the signal before recording, the treble can be boosted higher than normal, relative to midrange levels. You should thus avoid higher levels since they may run you out of high-frequency headroom.

In typical music, the extreme highs will be at least 20 dB lower than the midrange levels. Since specifications are determined with signals that retain the same level at all frequencies (pink noise or sine waves), a level of –20 dB is used because that is the highest level the recorder is expected to encounter with high frequencies—in theory. However, when DBX noise reduction is used, the highs are boosted even when the signal level is high, so the theory doesn’t entirely apply. A lowered recording level may thus be necessary to produce flat response, but the DBX system should keep the added noise inaudible.

As for solving your print-through problems (which, if anything, I’d expect DBX to reduce by making the faint print-through sound even fainter), the only relatively sure remedies I know of are switching to thicker tape (C-60 and shorter cassettes have the same thickness; C-90s are thinner, C-120s thinner yet) and playing or at least rewinding your cassettes from time to time so that the same surfaces aren’t always in contact with each other. Also, high-coercivity tapes, like metal, chrome, or the cobalt-doped ferrics (chrome equivalents) can be less susceptible to print-through than ordinary ferric formulations.

**Q. I want to record two separate FM programs received simultaneously from separate stations. It should be easy to do with two tuners. Y connectors (to get a mono signal from each), and a stereo recorder. But when I try, I either get both stations recorded on the same track, with no separation, or one station recorded on both. What is wrong?**

**A.** It sounds as though you just hooked up the Y connectors wrong. Both outputs of each tuner should be combined using one Y connector per tuner, and the resulting single output from each should be fed to one input of the recorder with no further Y connectors. Some equipment may object to the bridged output, however, and it would be simpler to just switch each tuner to the mono mode and feed only one of its outputs directly to one input of the recorder. This won’t work, however, if the "tuner" is one of those rare models whose only mode switch is after the tape feed, leaving it stereo even when the amplification is mono.

In any case, you may find the results disappointing because of crosstalk in the stereo tape head, which can vary a lot from model to model. Channel separation of only 30 dB is more than adequate for reasonably good stereo imaging. But listening to one program with another going on behind it only 30 dB down is murder. In fact, Philips (as original patentee of the Compact Cassette system) took great pains to prevent users from running into this problem by requiring cassette licenses to forswear separate record/play switching for each channel.
READ LIPS, NOT ADS. We bet this isn’t the first time you’ve heard the Aiwa name, even if it is the first time you’ve read an Aiwa ad. Because what’s on people’s minds is soon on their lips. Like the name Aiwa. And Aiwa’s new high-performance DX-1500 Compact Disc Player. Its advanced 3-beam laser pickup assures positive, precise tracking. Two sub-beams constantly check, and instantaneously correct, the main laser beam as it tracks each digital signal. If that sounds a bit too technical, wait until you hear how good it makes your compact discs actually sound. Just listen to your favorite album. In any order you like! The DX-1500 has single-touch memory. This allows you to program up to 16 tracks for playback in any order you wish. And the repeat function can be programmed for the whole disc, your random program or just one track. While the music is playing you just sit back with the wireless remote control and enjoy the sounds. That’s the Aiwa advantage: all the technology you expect from the compact disc now comes with the incredible ease you get only from Aiwa. Now that you know all about DX-1500 Compact Disc Player, try to keep your lips sealed. Go on, just try. Really try.
Harman Kardon's drive for sonic excellence has elevated the standards of high fidelity for over 30 years. Our striving for the ideal is often considered "too much" by our competitors. Now the pleasure of "too much performance" is brought to the automotive environment.

Our competitors must feel that 20-20,000Hz ±3dB is "too much performance" to expect from an in-dash cassette/tuner, or they would offer it.

We believe it the minimum necessary for true high fidelity reproduction. Even our least expensive model offers this and other "over design" distinctions: Dolby®, dual gate MOSFET front ends, superior tuning sections, hand selected tape heads and heavy duty transports.

Our competitors must feel that High instantaneous Current Capability, Low Negative Feedback and discrete componentry constitute "too much performance" in automotive amplifiers. All of our mobile amps, from the 3.5 Watt/channel CA205 to the 60 Watt/channel CA260, are "over designed" to include these superior design criteria.

Automotive high fidelity performance from Harman Kardon. It's too much.

For more information and your nearest dealer call toll free 1-800-633-2252 Ext. 250 or write 240 Crossways Park West, Woodbury, New York 11797.

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High Performance Necessities for the Mobile Audiophile.

* Dolby is the registered trademark of Dolby Laboratories, Inc.
Report preparation supervised by Michael Riggs, David Ranada, Robert Long, and Edward J. Foster. Laboratory data (unless otherwise indicated) is supplied by Diversified Science Laboratories.
Better. Much better. None better.

Improving on the sonic performance of the Denon DCD-1800 was no easy task, considering that reviewers in the U.S., West Germany, and Japan claim “never to have heard a better sounding CD player.” Yet Denon set out to build players that exceed our original performance level and make them more affordable.

We began with the compact DCD-1000, a Denon CD Player at an unthinkably low $379.95. Yet it includes Denon’s unique DDAC, the world’s only digital-to-analog converter that’s hand-tuned for reduced D/A transfer distortion. And it has Denon’s Real Time phase correction circuitry.

Better still is Denon’s DCD-1100. This full-sized machine has the same high-performance DDAC, the same Real Time phase correction, and adds wireless remote control with a 10-key pad for direct track access.

The deluxe DCD-1500 uses two separate 16-bit DDAC converters (one for each channel), and computer-analyzed linear-phase filtration for perfectly flat frequency response. Its wireless remote even features volume adjustment.

Now, no matter how much or how little you plan to spend for a CD Player, you can own one from the first name in digital audio. Denon.

DENON

Design Integrity

*Suggested retail price.

Denon America, Inc., 27 Law Drive, Fairfield, N.J. 07006
EVER SINCE YAMAHA—A LONGTIME MANUFACTURER OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS—SUDDENLY LANDED SQUARELY AMONG THE VANGUARD OF THE MAJOR AUDIO COMPONENT COMPANIES, IT HAS CONSIDERED CLASS A AMPLIFIER CIRCUITS AS THE STANDARD AGAINST WHICH THE MORE ECONOMICAL (AND FAR MORE PREVALENT) CLASS AB DESIGNS MUST BE ASSESSED. MORE RECENTLY, YAMAHA, LIKE MANY OF ITS COMPETITORS, HAS GONE TO "SMART" CLASS A CIRCUITRY THAT SEeks TO ACHIEVE THE WAVFORM PERFECTION OF PURE CLASS A AT A MUCH MORE REASONABLE COST. OR, CONVERSELY, TO ACHIEVE CLASS A PERFORMANCE TOGETHER WITH OUTPUT RATINGS THAT WOULD BE PROHIBITIVE, BOTH IN INITIAL COST AND HEAT DISSIPATION, WITHOUT SOME FORM OF "SMART" POWER SUPPLY OR AUTOMATIC VARIABLE-BIAS OPERATION.

Yamaha calls its solution Auto Class A, and we were impressed when we first reviewed it (as embodied in the A-1000 integrated amplifier, September 1984). In a sense, it is less "smart" than solutions that involve cranking the power supply or bias up and down in response to input-signal voltage swings, but its simplicity also can be viewed as inherently more elegant. It operates as a Class A circuit at low signal levels (no more than 30 watts into an 8-ohm load, according to the company's spec for the M-85), but automatically switches to the more efficient Class AB mode at higher outputs where Class A becomes relatively impractical and Class AB is at its best and essentially the equal in performance of Class A.

Actually, in the M-85 (as in the A-1000) you can defeat the Auto Class A mode and revert to regular Class AB, from which it differs more in degree than in kind. A standard Class AB circuit biases its transistors into conducting all the way down to no-signal conditions. (Without this bias, you'd have pure Class B and its attendant severe "notch" or "crossover" distortion whenever the signal voltage neared zero, which it does twice in every cycle, even for voltage swings to very high maxima between the zero crossings.) Auto Class A simply uses more bias than AB, but still not enough to maintain true Class A operation to full rated output.

Yamaha M-85
Power Amplifier
When you unpack the M-85, you're immediately aware that this is no ordinary amp because its hefty (about 50 pounds) must inevitably come from the heat sinks needed to keep its output transistors adequately cooled when running Class A and from the massive power supply necessary to support its very high output capability. Next you'll probably notice the gold-plated input pin jacks and the extremely heavy-duty binding posts (they're actually constructed more like miniature vices) with top or bottom apertures for moderate wire gauges and provision for direct axial connection of heavy "high performance" cables. The M-85 has terminals for as many as three speaker pairs.

There also is a 200-watt DC convenience outlet on the back panel. Though we saw no caveat in the clear and straightforward multilingual owner's manual, this unusual feature doubtless is intended for the preamp and other components of your system.

As you can see from the picture, the M-85's front panel has an unusual complement of controls for a high-performance power amp. The speaker selectors are unconventional (and ingeniously) wired so that if both Pan's B and Care in use, they always will be connected in series with each other and in parallel with Pair A—but if either is used without the other, it will operate completely independently and in parallel with A. This prevents the horrendously low load impedance that would be imposed on the amp if three paralleled pairs of typical speakers were to be used simultaneously, but still keeps the series hookup from compromising the fidelity of sound both from the main speaker pair under any circumstances and from the subsidiary pairs in all but the unlikely event of their being used at the same time.

The central controls relate to the power displays. We're ordinarily critical of such displays, considering them more gaudy than useful. This one, however, is beyond the ordinary on two counts. First, if you merely want moving lights to accompany your music (and that's about all most displays really provide), this is arguably the most elegant of its ilk: The two broad columns of horizontal red lines, dimmed and mellowed by dark smoked glass, put most of the competition to shame aesthetically. Second, if you actually plan to use the display as a measurement tool, the calibration options (for loads of 2, 4, or 8 ohms and for full-scale indications of 900 or 90 watts), dual scales (in watts and in dB re 600 watts), and peak-hold mode (so you can assess the loudest transients without riveting your attention on the display) put it virtually in a class by itself.

Performance, as documented in Diversified Science Laboratories' measurements, reinforces the positive impression created by the outward design. The amplifier's ability to continue delivering increased power as load impedance drops is to its credit, and the actual output levels achieved are truly intimidating. There is no sign of faltering anywhere. The dynamic headroom, though not exceptionally generous (which would yield the lift of the already very generous steady-state rated power), is consistent—something we rarely have an opportunity to note in exactly these terms because so few home amplifiers are rated for a 4-ohm load, permitting a determination of headroom into that impedance.

Response is very flat and broad; noise is extremely low. Distortion never breaches our reporting threshold (0.01 percent) at 0 dBW (1 watt) and just barely does so (though consistently across the spectrum) at rated power. In the latter test, which theoretically should be above the Class A operating range and thus unaffected by the Auto Class A switch, very slight differences appeared in the distortion data for straight Class AB and Auto Class A at some frequencies. For the record, both here and in the 0-dBW test (where minute but measurable distortion appeared at the very top of the frequency range), Auto Class A proved the better mode—but by an inconsequential margin. At full power, the distortion is dominated by the third harmonic through the bass and midrange, with the second and third about equal in the treble, but this would be of significance only if the total amount were much higher.

This is in fact a superb amplifier, whether it is used in the Auto Class A mode or as a regular high-performance model. After careful listening, we're satisfied that most music lovers will hear no difference between the two operating modes, although some auditors undoubtedly will feel otherwise. In controlled testing, such subtle areas of superiority, or presumed superiority, regularly prove elusive, as they did when we addressed the M-85. But we see no purpose in worrying over the point: Since Yamaha gives you the choice of operating mode, you can hardly go wrong.
Shure D-5000 Compact Disc Player

Shure has startled us lately with two unexpected products. First was the highly regarded HTS-5000 surround-sound processor, incorporating some rather sophisticated technology (such as a proprietary delta-modulation delay line). Now comes the D-5000 Compact Disc player—another significant departure for a company noted, through its phone cartridges and microphones, for its command of analog technology. Of the two, the D-5000 is the more modest and conservative entry, delivering nothing dramatically out of the ordinary in features or design. It is, nonetheless, a very capable player that does quite well the things most users want done.

In audio performance, for example, the D-5000 has nothing to be modest about. Channel separation, though not the best we’ve seen for a CD player, is much more than adequate for superb stereo reproduction. (Anything more than about 25 dB is gilding the lily here.) And the other data from Diversified Science Lab are altogether typical of today’s models. The D-5000’s signal-to-noise ratios, in particular, are comparable to the best. Frequency response falls a hair short of the performance pinnacle, mainly because of a small bump (less than 1/2 dB) in the bass. However, an informal single-blind listening comparison to one of the few players having flatter response revealed no audible differences on white noise, pink noise, or music. (For this test, we used instantaneous switching with player output levels matched to within 0.05 dB at 1 kHz and synchronized playback of the same recordings.) The D-5000 uses 16-bit digital-to-analog (D/A) conversion with two-times oversampling and digital filtering, and its square-wave response and impulse waveforms show ringing patterns typical of these circuits, with just a slight asymmetry. The unit passed all the standard error-correction and tracking tests.

The D-5000’s cueing and other control features are sufficient for most purposes, but by no means elaborate. Among them are a 15-segment program-playback memory and an infrared wireless remote control (a facility we are beginning to find it painful to do without). On the other hand, its digital LED readout must be switched manually to show either track and index number or elapsed time from the start of a track. And though index numbers can be displayed, there is no means for cueing directly to them. The D-5000 has one set of fixed-level line output jacks and no headphone output.

What remains are the core CD-player functions: play, pause, track skipping, scanning (two speeds, the faster starting three seconds after a scan button is held down), repeat (of the entire disc or programmed sequence or of any continuous segment of the disc), cueing, and a host of other controls that are not specifically documented but are easily determined.

The D-5000 is not a high-end player, but it is a very competent one. It is priced at $500, with a limited warranty of one year on parts and labor. It is manufactured in Japan by SHURE BROTHERS, INC., 222 Hartrey Ave., Evanston, Ill. 60204.
Harman Kardon HK-495i AM/FM Receiver

**DIMENSIONS:** 17% by 7 3/4, inches (front panel), 12, inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. AC convenience outlets: One switched, one unswitched (180 watts max. Each). Price: $455. Warranty: "Limited," two years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Made in Japan for Harman Kardon, 240 Crossways Park West, Woodbury, N.Y. 11797.

Harman Kardon has a quiet way with its technology. Where other companies might shout SuperThis and UltraThat about comparable developments—and ultimately leave you wondering whether the circuit features really were worth all the fuss—Harman Kardon chooses a more matter-of-fact tone. It tells us that its wideband circuitry and limited negative feedback promote better transient behavior than competing designs are likely to yield. What it calls HCC (high current capability) is said to achieve radically better headroom into the reactive loads of real loudspeakers than is possible with current-limited amplifiers designed primarily to drive the pure resistances of the test bench. Both are reasonable claims.

Consistent with this tendency toward understatement, the HK-495i receiver evinces less pizzazz than many competing models—surely an important part of its charm. The look is tailored with the neat control groupings that characterize the company's products. We might wish for greater visual differentiation (of the volume with respect to the other rotary controls, for instance, or among the miscellaneous switches above the source selectors), but that could compromise the simplicity of the whole. (In addition to the company's traditional champagne-colored anodizing shown in our photograph, Harman Kardon recently added a brushed-black option.)

The switching (which incidentally calls the auxiliary input "CD/video," allowing use of one but not both) can monitor from the playback head on either of two tape decks during recording from the regular sources. However, if you monitor Tape 1 you can only record the selected source on it or dub from Tape 1 to Tape 2. You can neither monitor Tape 2 while you're copying tapes nor monitor Tape 1 while recording the selected source on both decks without interrupting the signal feed. If you have only one deck or use two-head models or seldom dub, this will be altogether adequate. (If not, check out Harman Kardon's top receiver, the 795i.)

The switching also provides separately for FM muting and mono/stereo listening—the latter at a switch that affects all sources but delivers the same effect as an FM mode switch—so you need not, for example, choose mono-only reception if you decide to defeat the muting. Aside from the eight presets, each of which can memorize one FM and one AM frequency, the digital tuning is...
To hear why George Benson records on Sony Digital equipment, play him back on a Sony Compact Disc Player.

When it comes to capturing the experience of live music, no audio equipment delivers the performance of digital audio.

That's why George Benson, creator of Breezin', the best-selling jazz recording in history, has decided to invest in digital equipment.

And the name this leader in jazz/pop fusion chooses, interestingly enough, is the leader in digital audio: Sony.

Not only has Sony led the way in professional digital recording equipment, we also invented the digital system for playback—the compact disc player. Sony introduced the first home, car and portable CD players. And Sony sells more types of compact disc players than anyone else in the world.

But whichever Sony Compact Disc Player you choose, each allows you to hear the music the way the artist originally intended.

So why not do what George Benson does? Play back the top-selling compact discs the same way they were mastered. On Sony Digital equipment. You'll find that when it comes to bringing you close to the music, nothing else even comes close.

Presenting the Sony Discman,™ the world's smallest portable compact disc player.

Hardly larger than the disc itself, the fully programmable Discman™ D-7DX comes complete with carrying case, headphones and a rechargeable battery. Everything you need for digital audio on the go.

SONY
THE LEADER IN DIGITAL AUDIO™
Stereosaniskv Ny (for noise suppression)

Capture ratio

Stereo SIN ratio lot 65 dB at 100 Hz

Note on channel

Alternate-reverse channel

Intermodulation distortion (mono) Stereo Pilot intermodulation

AM suppression

Pilot (19 kHz) suppression

Subcarrier (38 kHz) suppression

Amplifier section

Rated power: 16 1/2 dB (45 watts) per channel

Output at clipping (at 1 kHz; both channels driven)

8-ohm load: 17 1/2 dB (55 watts) per channel

4-ohm load: 18 1/2 dB (70 watts) per channel

Dynamic power (at 1 kHz)

8-ohm load: 18 1/2 dB

4-ohm load: 19 1/4 dB

2-ohm load: 20 1/4 dB

Dynamic headroom (ra rated power, 8-ohm load)

+ 2 dB

Harmonic distortion (THD; 20 Hz to 20 kHz)

at 1 1/2 dB (45 watts) ≤ 0.057%

at 0 dB (1 watt) ≤ 0.007%

entirely manual and advances in half-channel (100-kHz) steps on FM and full-channel (10-kHz) steps on AM. Even very deliberate pressure on the tuning bars doesn’t immediately switch to fast-scan tuning, so there’s no tendency to overshoot. Like many models these days, the 495i “remembers” which station you were tuned to when you switched sources or turned off the receiver and automatically returns to it when you switch back.

Welcome to American users is the back-panel F connector for 75-ohm coax FM lead-in wire from antenna or cable. The usual screw terminals are provided as well, for 300-ohm FM twinlead and AM antennas— including the supplied AM loop, for which a mounting bracket is built into the back panel. So are two AC convenience outlets, one of which is switched by the main AC button.

The phono preamp section, which is designed around an unusual combination of active and passive RIAA equalization (partly to maintain low negative feedback), is very flat. Response matches the “ruler-flat” criterion except for a very slight rise entirely below 50 Hz, where it is unlikely to be heard as such even if the records themselves were flat to such depths. The phono section itself includes no significant infrasonic filtering.

There is, however, a switchable infrasonic filter that affects every input. It introduces an overall attenuation of 3 dB above about 400 Hz below that point, it rolls off ever so slightly faster than the basic response as measured from the aux input to the speaker terminals. The 15-Hz knee cited in our data column is the frequency at which, with the filter on, response is 3 dB below that at 1 kHz. When the lab looked for the frequency at which response is 3 dB lower with the filter on than with it off, the knee appeared to be at 11 Hz. If the filter-on response were to be boosted by 3 dB to match 1-kHz output with the filter off, the apparent knee would be moved even lower. However, you assess this point, the filter is quite gentle (also characteristic of the company’s circuitry, to minimize audio-band phase shift) and therefore introduces only minimal attenuation of warp “information,” although in some cases any rolloff is better than none.

Even with the infrasonic filter switched out, there is a very gradual deep-bass rolloff in the aux input response. It begins below 200 Hz and reaches ~1 dB (re 1 kHz) at 50 Hz. Response remains at ~1 dB from there on down. Superimposed on this overall response, the bass control introduces about 12 dB of cut or boost, shelving below 50 Hz at its extreme positions and behaving similarly at in-between settings. At its extremes, the bass control introduces a slight boost in the 1-kHz region when dialed for a cut, and vice versa. The treble control is a little more predictable in its midrange behavior (extending down to below 500 Hz) but less symmetrical in boost/cut response with respect to the flat position. Maximum rotation yields about 14 dB of boost or cut at 20 kHz and evidently shelves above audibility; lesser rotation produces shelving at lower frequencies. The loudness introduces a broad dip centered on about 2 kHz and reaching from 100 Hz up to the ultrasonic region. For low volume settings, the maximum depth of the dip is about 8 dB, diminishing progressively at higher volume levels. Overall, we found the usefulness of these preamp controls fairly typical of their kinds.

Bass response of the FM tuner section rolls off in a slightly different way, without the shelf in the very deep bass, but is otherwise extremely smooth and flat right up to the 15-kHz limit of the FM passband. The bench tests all document good or excellent performance, in fact, and we were struck by what we considered the particularly good listening quality of the section—presumably a vindication of Harman Kardon’s care with the design of its IF (intermediate frequency) filtering and sample-and-hold multiplex decoder. For that matter, the AM section also struck us as above average. The only weakness we found is that relevant only to readers owning rotatable antennas—is the three-LED signal-strength “meter,” which supplies minimal information.
SEE RADAR IN A NEW LIGHT.

Now you can see much more than red when you look at a radar detector.

When you look at the Vixen II LED, you'll see just how close you really are to radar.

Green tells you there's radar in the area.

Yellow warns you that you are much closer and should proceed with caution.

And red is the range that's accompanied by one continuous audio alarm.

It combines both sight and sound into the most advanced alert system in radar today.

A dual conversion super-heterodyne receiver gives the Vixen II many times the range of any radar signal. No matter what the band, pulse or continuous. What's more, the Vixen II goes beyond line of sight range. It can see around corners and over hills to pick out weak reflected signals.

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The power-amplifier section delivers a good deal of punch for its moderate power rating. The consistent increase of output power with progressively lower load impedances confirms that the receiver has the sort of current capability claimed by Harman Kardon. Dynamic output into 2 ohms is more than twice the 8-ohm rating (that is, more than 3 dB higher), which certainly would not be true with the usual current-limited designs. steady-state distortion, particularly at 0 dBW, is higher than you would expect in most receivers of this caliber. But keep in mind that the 495's designers have deliberately traded away some negative feedback for better performance in other areas, and the inevitable consequence is slightly higher distortion. But the distortion levels we found are certainly not high enough to cause complaint.

A special word of praise is due the owner's manual because of the dim days through which the company went in this respect a few years ago and the generally sorry state of this unsung art. Like the receiver itself, the manual looks relatively unpretentious, but its contents are in many ways a model of clarity and completeness—neither condescending to kindergarten show-and-tell nor displaying its erudition to the despair of neophytes. And it's written in genuine American English.

It's heartening, in this micro-to-war world of precooked hamburgers and microwaved sole florentine, that a company can retain not only its individuality, but its sense of devotion to an ideal. The economics of electronics haven't been kind to American manufacturers, and most of the last generation's leaders are long gone. Super-price specialty-goods companies aside, the towering exception is Harman Kardon. Although, like all its remaining colleagues, it is forced to manufacture overseas, it almost miraculously continues to serve up its own unique creations. The HK-195, while neither the most adventurous nor the least expensive among them, is a good moderate-price receiver with attractive virtues and more than a dollop of what made its maker famous.
The Alpha 2 displays a distinctly rising high end, and an ultrasonic peak is confirmed by the spike at the beginning of each half-cycle in the square wave. With different test records, both might be less or more marked, though we would expect at least some rise on just about any standard test disc. The strip-chart curves accompanying our test samples were exceedingly flat, however, and therefore unlike the DSD curves.

Actually, the measured performance of the Alpha 2 bears a family resemblance to that of the Alpha 1 (test report, September 1983)—except, as could be expected, in sensitivity (output level). In this test, the earlier model measured 0.125 millivolts per centimeter per second of groove velocity, a value that is already high for a moving-coil cartridge. The Alpha 2 measures 0.61 mV/cm/sec (12.5 dB higher), which is typical of its kind and only a little below the 1-mV/cm/sec that is par for fixed-coil models. Separation is a hair better in the Alpha 2 than in the old model, and the new pickup has better damping of the square wave’s ultrasonic spike.

The cartridge’s Micro Ridge line-contact stylus tip is ground on a nude square-shank diamond mounted on a hollow sapphire cantilever. The recommended minimum vertical tracking force of 1.8 grams is lower than for some prestigious moving-coil cartridges of the past, but it’s higher than is typical of fixed-coil models, even though the fad for ultra-low tracking forces and ultrahigh compliance is past. That the Alpha 2’s compliance is somewhat lower than that of most fixed-coil pickups (and lower than that of the Alpha 1) is perhaps an index as much of the times as of its moving-coil heritage. These specifics, together with the moderate cartridge weight, add up to a model that doesn’t need an ultralight tonearm to perform its best and will match well to a wide spectrum of available arms. The capacitive lead was set at 140 picofarads (a fairly typical value for high-quality equipment) for the lab tests and at about that for listening, though Monster Cable actually specified that it should be as low as possible. However, this factor should make little difference, if any, with a moving-coil cartridge.

The sound? Excellent overall. The measured response had led us to fear a certain hardness at the top end, but we didn’t encounter it in practice. The characteristic that most intruded upon listening was, in fact, the pickup’s handling of extreme modulation levels or groove defects due to scratches. The earlier Alpha 1 was measurably a little better in this respect. With the new cartridge, we found the antiskating setting critical for good tracking on some records. Considering the no-expense-spared approach and the perfectionist clientele for which it presumably was intended, we’re frankly a little surprised that the cartridge didn’t prove outstanding in the tracking test. Keep in mind, however, that the ability to track +18 dB (the highest band on the test record) represents an extreme that many users may never need.

It’s hard to know what to say about a $650 phono cartridge—by a wide margin, the most expensive we have ever tested. On one hand, prodigies might be expected of it; on the other, there’s a limit to how much better than other models it possibly can be. But when playing same levels of record-groove modulation, the Alpha 2 H.O. is among the best of pickups.
**New! EYE-LEVEL BRAKE LIGHT**

**Gives YOUR CAR 1986 STYLING and SAFETY!**

FITS ALL CARS (sedans, coupes, hatchbacks, station wagons), VANS, PICKUPS—ANY YEAR, ANY MODEL—AMERICAN or IMPORTED, with 12 volt system.

**Astonishing Fact:** Rigid testing by the federal government proved that the third brake light—mounted and functioning at eye-level to following drivers—reduces rear-end collisions by 53%.

**Astonishing Fact:** Predictions by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimate that the eye-level third brake light will prevent 900,000 rear-end collisions a year.

**Astonishing Fact:** Estimates by the NHTSA predict that the eye-level third brake light will prevent 40,000 personal injuries each year.

**Astonishing Fact:** Use of the eye-level third brake light can reduce vehicle damage and repairs by almost 60%.

The overwhelming benefits of the eye-level third brake light demanded strong government action. So in the public interest...

Federal Safety Regulations Now Require Eye-Level-Mount Brake Lights On All 1986 Model Cars.

You owe it to yourself, to those who ride with you, and to those who drive behind you, to equip your car with this light as soon as possible.

**Here’s How It Works**

Your third brake light is mounted at eye level, so it is highly visible to the driver behind you... and to the second and third drivers behind you too!

Drivers following you enjoy improved depth perception... lighted and dark day and tailgaters are warned to keep a safe interval.

A built-in logic circuit is programmed to turn on this light with your car’s regular brake lights and your brake lights only—and that is very important...

This light is coordinated with your brake lights, and positioned in the center of your car, so that drivers behind you cannot confuse it with turn-signal or head lights... even for a moment.

**Installation of this light may even qualify you for a discount on your auto insurance.**

**Easy Do-It-Yourself Installation**

Your light mounts easily INSIDE your rear window—just like new cars—where it is protected from harsh weather, car washes, theft and vandalism. No need for any nasty drilling into your car body. NO wire cutting, stripping or tapping either. Special splices are included to let you connect light wires to your brake-light wires... instantly... with aplomb!

**Fits ALL Cars, Trucks, and Vans**

The universal mounting bracket, pivoting joints, and extra mounting extension make it easy to position your light perfectly. You will enjoy easy installation in any sedan, hatchback, station wagon, pick-up truck, van, or any other American or imported vehicle with a 12-volt electrical system. Your light has a big 6¾” wide x 1¾” high red lens, and wiring, splices and easy-to-follow illustrated instructions are included.

**Satisfaction Guaranteed**

J.C. Whitney & Co. stands behind every brake light we sell. Each light comes with our iron-clad promise to you: Complete Satisfaction or your Money Back. If you are not completely delighted with your brake light... for any reason... simply send it back, and we will cheerfully replace it, or promptly refund your money, whichever you prefer.

We believe every car on the road should be equipped with an eye-level third brake light. So we are making them available now... for only $8.95 each, plus only $1.00 for shipping your brake light anywhere in the United States. At this low price, you can order one now for every vehicle you own.

**Order Today—Delay May Be Serious**

When split-seconds can save life and limb—and reduce property damage too—it pays to have an eye-level brake light in your car. Get this valuable protection for your car now. Simply fill in the coupon below, and send it in with your check, money order, or credit card information.

**VISA or MasterCard customers welcome.** Simply phone (312) 431-6102... Call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Order stock number 81-2289R.

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1. YES! Please send me (quantity) No. 81-2289 Brake Lights at $8.95 each plus $1.00 each for shipping (United States, its possessions, A.P.O. and F.P.O. only). Illinois residents add 7% state tax. Chicago residents add 8% sales tax.

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Dealerscope Merchandising Products of the Month

Samsung VT290T VCR Offers Hi-Fi Stereo

A 4 head video system and a 2 head hi-fi stereo audio system make the Samsung VT290T VHS format VCR a high-quality audio/video tape deck. Its on-screen command system displays operating instructions on the TV screen, indicates which buttons to push, confirms the commands and memorizes them. Other features the VT290T offers include: 139 channel cable-compatible tuner with 16 present channels, 4 week/8 program timer, quartz clock, auto date and time recording. For more information, contact your nearest Samsung dealer, or call (201) 587-9600.

Pfante Head Cleaning Cassettes

Pfantine Head Cleaning Cassettes in both Beta and VHS contain a non-abrasive tape which can be used wet or dry. Each cassette comes with Head Cleaning Fluid. The cassettes clean all tape-contact parts to maintain the picture and sound quality of virtually any VCR. Each cassette has easy-to-follow instructions and has a suggested retail of $10.49. Pfantine Head Cleaning Cassettes are marketed by Pfantiehl Corporation. For more information, call 1-800-323-9446.

Nitec Debuts Robot Antenna Positioner

Nitec Advanced Technologies presents the state-of-the-art in antenna positioners. Nitec's Robot Antenna Positioner offers the only system that tracks international, C and Ku-band satellites. The computer controller contains 16 pre-programmed satellite positions—22 in all. It is the only antenna controller to use azimuth and elevation data for point tracking. Manual controls allow fine tuning adjustments, and a backup battery preserves all data in case of power outages. The solid die-cast aluminum body of the Robot Positioner contains the high-precision actuator mechanism. It moves in a smooth 180 degree arc—the full above-the-equator range. The positioner will track any satellite to within 0.2 degrees of its precise location. For more information, call Nitec at 1-800-553-5617.

KLM Electronics Introduces the SBR-6100 Integrated System

The KLM SBR-6100 is a totally new concept in system integration. It incorporates a microprocessor-controlled dish positioner, a synthesized stereo tuner, full-function remote controls and total recall memory. The total recall memory gives direct access to any satellite- transponder combination automatically, and sets dish position, channel, skew, polarity, audio bandwidth, as well as stereo mode, all from a single remote control. Dual feed capability is an added plus with this receiver/positioner, providing enhanced performance in conjunction with ease of operation. For more information on the System Complete SBR-6100 receiver, contact your distributor or call 1-800-228-1926 or 1-800-336-7506 for the KLM rep nearest you.

New Scotch EXG Camera Cassette Features Superior Color Performances

The new Scotch EXG Camera Cassette from 3M offers unsurpassed color performance over time and unique features for people who make home video movies or record programs they want to keep. The Scotch EXG Camera Cassette has been designed for use in tough environmental conditions or for long-term libraries. The video cassette also features 3M's own patented "Anti-Static System" which virtually eliminates picture drop-out. The new EXG series of Scotch video cassettes was recently ranked best in 10 categories in a field of 47 name-brand video cassettes in performance tests conducted by an independent testing organization. For more information, call 1-612-736-5077.

Warrantech Safeguards Your Equipment With Service Extension Plan

With Warrantech's Service Extension plan, anyone purchasing virtually any home-entertainment product is covered for all costs involved in repairs for a period after the original warranty expires. "Prices are based on 50% of what just one service call would cost a consumer," explains Joel San Antonio, president of Warrantech. "We will fix the product for free, as many times as is necessary, for the life of the service extension period." Equipment covered includes all major consumer electronics products.
just as you probably will use them. The azimuth adjustment screw on the chassis is clearly marked and covered by a stick-on dust seal. Adjustment takes only a few minutes for a technician with appropriate tools, but we don’t recommend that the average consumer undertake the procedure.)

The deck runs a hair fast (by a little more than 2 percent, 6 percent being needed for a half-tone change in reproduced pitch), which is more than we usually encounter but of no consequence unless you’re one of those rare individuals with perfect pitch. More important, the flutter measures better than average, and we could hear no wow due to road shock (which was particularly severe because of ice runs on our “test track” during the February trials). In fact, we found the in-car listening quality particularly lifelike (suggesting that the azimuth of at least one of our in-car test tapes is closer to Concord’s than to BASF’s).

The FM section’s FNR feature is typical of automatic optimizer circuits in that it operates in mono as well as stereo. In stereo, it rapidly begins blending channels before signal strength can fall below even moderate levels (about 55 dB). By 40 dB, separation is down to only a few dB and reception is only marginally stereo, but the result is quieting of around 60 dB right down to below 30 dB, where stereo reception on most equipment is too noisy to be listenable, if it’s possible at all. With FNR off, stereo imaging remains excellent down to below the sensitivity rating, but at the expense of greater noise. For this reason, the rating (40 dB) is not particularly low.

At very low signal strengths, output is attenuated sooner (quite steeply below 25 dB in mono, higher and more gradually in stereo) with FNR on than with it off; without FNR, the unit maintains full output (including noise) to below 20 dB. Thus, we preferred the FNR mode (or mono, which is independently switchable) when noise rendered listening truly annoying without it, but left it off otherwise to maintain greater consistency of output and imaging. The noise (“spitting,” as we’ve been calling it) generated by rapidly varying signal strength and multipath distortion occurred relatively frequently on our test road with FNR off, but the noise quality is rather soft and wooly, making it less jarring and obtrusive than in some competing models. With FNR on, it becomes even softer. The remaining stereo data represent good performance for a car unit, and we rated the sound quality with...
strong signals distinctly above average.

We might rate the AM section similarly if it were a little more sensitive. Response is relatively flat; the deep-bass "bump" actually represents distortion and is not nearly as severe as similar anomalies in several other AM sections we’ve measured. This one is equipped to reproduce C-Quam (Motorola) broadcasts in stereo, but no C-Quam station has a strong enough signal in our test-track area for adequate evaluation.

Tuning progresses in full-channel steps on both bands: 200 kHz for FM, 10 kHz for AM. A heavy hand on the spring-loaded tuning knob can easily overshoot the intended frequency, but we otherwise were pleased with the tuning, which includes a station-scan option. There are six preset buttons, each of which will accept three FM stations and one on AM.

Unlike most other car equipment, the 550 doesn’t automatically switch you back to the tuner when a cassette ends and ejects, preventing loud radio from shattering the silence after a quiet tape. To return to the tuner, you press a button, which when you’re listening to the radio enables you to check the time on a built-in clock that shares the digital readout with the tuned frequency (and therefore normally appears only when the tuner is switched off).

A selector above this button chooses what Concord calls the "aux" connections. Though they can be used as an extra input—say, for a Compact Disc player—they also include outputs and therefore will drive signal processors: outboard equalizers, surround-sound adapters, or whatever. In the latter sort of hook-up, the aux selector becomes a "loop" or monitor switch, and the radio/tape switch selects the signal that will feed the processor. A jumper plug that feeds the output back to the input is supplied with the 550; attaching it in place of an outboard ensures that the sound won’t go dead if you accidentally hit the aux button.

The treble control is fairly typical, providing its maximum boost or cut (plus or minus approximately 11 dB, relative to response at one-third octave) at about 10 kHz. The bass is not typical at all. It avoids boost at extremely low frequencies, which usually produces woofier distortion rather than sound, and concentrates its effect at either 80 or 240 Hz. The ±11-dB measurement shown in the data was made (at 100 Hz) with the 80-Hz option, designed mainly to cut the deep-bass standing waves that develop in some car-stereo installations. Alternatively, a little boost at this setting is very effective in adding a touch of vibrancy to systems without subwoofers. It doubtless will be abused remorselessly (even joyfully) by some owners. We found the 240-Hz option less useful in our test installation. But since it adds a certain chestiness to the sound at its boost settings, it might enable you to reduce the same effect in a system that suffers from it.

At the lab’s test volume setting, the loudness compensation (which is volume-dependent) introduces about 10 dB of boost from 100 Hz down, relative to a minimum in the range around 2.5 kHz, and raises the uppermost treble somewhat (by about 5 dB at 15 kHz). Another preamp feature is the level adjustment for the line outputs. Its purpose is not to optimize loudness action—though it could be used for that if you have outboard amps—but to compensate for different amplifier input sensitivities.

Concord’s output power ratings for high fidelity purposes, which stipulate a bandwidth of 30 Hz to 20 kHz, are 12 watts per channel in a two-channel configuration, 10 in a four-channel setup. (There also are "maximum power" ratings, based on higher distortion and unspecified bandwidth.) We measure power only at 1 kHz, and consequently the lab’s figure of 15.8 watts is a dB or two higher. In any event, it’s a good deal more than you can expect in typical factory-installed radios and more than a stopgap until you can spring for outboard amps, whether you opt for two speakers or four. The two-speaker power (as usual, for such ratings) derives from bridged output, which means that neither side of your speakers can be grounded because both leads are "hot" (though opposite in polarity).

Though the 550 sits atop Concord’s HPL line and incorporates a substantial list of features, it isn’t a particularly expensive model. We enjoyed its sound during our testing and would recommend it especially to urban and suburban drivers who don’t normally need exceptional tuner sensitivities. The flexiblity of the various power options commends it to users on a budget who want high power and multiple speakers but don’t want to incur the cost all at once. And the triple noise reduction options will interest recordists who would like to rotate a mixed cassette collection between home and car.

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**AM TUNER SECTION**

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<th>FREQUENCY RESPONSE</th>
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**Sensitivity**

60 µV

**Selectivity**

20 1/4 dB

**AVC Range**

67 dB

**Cassette Transport Section**

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<th>FREQUENCY RESPONSE</th>
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**Wow & Flutter**

± 0.017% average, ± 0.15% peak

**Speed Accuracy** (10.8 to 14.4 volts)

7.3% flat

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**Preamplifier/Amplifier Section**

<table>
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<th>BASS CONTROL</th>
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<th>TREBLE CONTROL</th>
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<td>± 11 1/4, -11 dB at 10 kHz</td>
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**Maximum Line Output Level**

- from FM (100% modulation)
  - 1.3 (or 0 DB) watts
- from tape (DIN 0 dB)
  - 1.73 (or 0 115) watts

**Output (per channel into 4 ohms; at 2% THD+H)**

- at 1 kHz
  - 15.8 watts (12 dBW)

---

*All data (except those in parentheses for line output) taken with output switch at high setting.

---

**THE AUX BUTTON ON THE CONCORD HPL-530 CAN BE USED TO SWITCH IN AN EXTERNAL PROCESSOR.**
SPEAKERS YOU CAN AFFORD THAT SOUND LIKE YOU CAN'T.

Mirage 200 and 350
"remarkably smooth . . . superb reproduction . . . image superbly . . . surprisingly satisfying bass . . . amazingly good little speakers"
STEREOPHILE (U.S.) Winter 1986

Mirage 450
"an impressive performer indeed . . . outstanding depth reproduction . . . remarkable sense of clarity and openness . . . excellent dynamics and power . . . great impact and solidity . . . a sense of aliveness and realism that many speakers in this price range cannot manage . . . STRONGLY RECOMMENDED FOR AUDITION"
HI-FI HERETIC (U.S.) Winter 1986

Mirage 550
"robust . . . remarkably smooth . . . lots of air and detail . . . exciting bass"
STEREO GUIDE November/December 1984

Mirage 650
"Sound outstandingly good and musically highly satisfying. Its dynamic capability is downright exciting . . . thrilling sonic climaxes . . . thrilling bass . . . fine imaging and depth . . . a marvelous audio bargain"
SOUND AND VISION January/February 1986

Mirage 750
"an excellent $1,500.00 speaker. But it only costs ($750.00)."
A major U.S. "Underground Publication," Autumn 1985
Soundstream TC-308 Car Tuner/Tape Deck

The TV-308 provides an excellent match for the azimuth of the BASF test tape. It has a rising frequency characteristic that approximates that of the Playtrim at its maximum clockwise setting; it is therefore a response that is very nearly a reciprocal of the minimum Playtrim setting. The owner's manual (which is among the very best we've encountered for a car component) says that the center detent should match "ideally recorded tapes." If so, the minimum (full counterclockwise) setting would have little point, despite its very flat net response with the test tape. But if the minimum position is taken as a match for the "ideal," that leaves a range of approximately 10 dB (at 16 kHz) by which compensation could be made for tapes that don't match the deck's azimuth. By the time that range is used up, the poor azimuth match probably would introduce such unstable high-frequency output, due to tape skew, that no fixed EQ could be adequate.

In practice, of course, the adjustment is made by ear, rather than by instruments or theory. We tried quite a number of tapes, recorded on almost as many decks, and found that ideal settings varied considerably—though to what extent the adjustments were dictated by actual azimuth error and to what extent simply by taste is hard to assess under those circumstances. Because brighter tends to sound better, if not more accurate, we tended to overemphasize the highs until odd sibilants, pingy piano tone, or other exaggerations taught us the error of our ways. But where an objective comparison could be made with an original, we usually found that we could achieve excellent replication with a little care.

Frequency response is remarkably alike in the two directions of tape travel. Soundstream says it takes special care in this regard, and on the basis of the data, we can believe it. Also exemplary are the figures for tape motion: very low flutter for a car deck (and no discernible wow due to road shock) and speed accuracy that varies a hair with voltage but averages spot-on the correct speed, which it achieves at 14.4 volts in the forward direction and 10.8 volts in reverse.

The tuner section was designed by Larry Schottz (who numbers among his credits designs for NAD, Proton, Nakamichi, and—at his debut, so to speak—Sherwood). Its FM section is engineered to be quiet, with a rapid channel blend as input drops below 50
Separation is down to only $3\frac{1}{2}$ dB at 35 dB, where noise measures 50 dB below output—technically, the stereo sensitivity rating point. We hesitate to so identify it, however, because it's hardly stereo with so little separation. The stereo indicator stays lit down to 16 dB, even though there is no measurable separation with any signal lower than 25 dB.

The rapid blending of channels in the input range between 40 and 50 dB produces what we've sometimes described as a "blandy" image—rapid changes in apparent size—when signal strength fluctuates. We didn't often encounter the effect in our road testing, but it's disconcerting when it does occur. Faced with multipath and still lower signal strengths, the tuner produces "spitting" noise bursts less frequently but with a somewhat harder sonic edge than we've encountered with some competing models. The remaining FM measurements all speak well of the 308. Overall, we judged on-the-road listenability good, though not as spectacularly good as the Schott imprimatur had led us to hope.

Manual tuning advances by full-channel increments on both bands (200 kHz on FM, 10 kHz on AM). The six presets will store one station apiece from each band. There is a scan whose threshold on the FM band can be adjusted from 20 dB (normal) to 51 dB (local); on AM, this switch simply attenuates input to prevent tuner overload. AM bandwidth is relatively limited, trading away response fidelity for relative quiet. As frequently happens in the AM response measurement, distortion is too high in the extreme bass to permit an unequivocal response characterization. Sensitivity is better than average among car models, bringing in something on almost every AM channel during night hours—though most with less than stunning sonics.

In addition to the line outputs, there are gold-plated pin-jack aux inputs, intended specifically for a Compact Disc player. To choose it, you press eject. It ejects the tape if one was playing; otherwise it switches to the aux inputs. (Eject is automatic, incidentally, when the power is switched off at the ignition; there is no on/off switch on the 308 itself.) A pair of screwdriver adjustments on the top of the chassis can be used to trim aux input sensitivity so that the CD player's level will match those of the other sources.

At the lab's test-volume setting, loudness (whose action is volume-dependent) introduces a shelf at $+10$ dB below 100 Hz and rises to $+7$ dB at 20 kHz, relative to a broad depression centered on about 2 kHz. The tone controls are typical of car stereo equipment in the near symmetry of their action about both the 0-dB response line and the range (centered on approximately 800 Hz) where they have no effect. They also have maximum boost and cut near the frequency extremes (at 20 Hz in the bass, 15 kHz in the treble) so that the curves slope rather than level in the important parts of their working range, particularly in the bass. The maximum effect runs to about $\pm 12$ dB in both.

The 308 is a DIN-size chassis with a mounting sleeve into which it docks via mating connectors. (The various input and output wires are connected to the sleeve, rather than the chassis.) An optional SH-30 handle makes it easy to draw the chassis out of the sleeve, for storage out of sight to reduce the likelihood of theft.

Which brings us to what may be the TC-308's most enduring trait: its ergonomics. Not just another pretts faceplate, it is perhaps the easiest to use of any model of comparable complexity we've yet encountered. The rounded corners on everything add an element of tactile pleasure to the visual, the logical layout and differentiated shapes of the control elements aid memorization, and the tiny green LEDs on the controls (some of which turn red when activated) further help the button-homing process, particularly at night. We're very impressed.
CAR STEREO FOR HIGH ROLLERS TOOK CENTER STAGE AT THE WINTER Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, and as a result, the way you listen to music on the road may never be the same. Gambling on the surprising interest in $1,000-plus front ends, three industry leaders showed their versions of what that much money should buy. Beyond these products, and at lower prices, January’s show again demonstrated that in car stereo—as in nearly all other audio fields—the Compact Disc is having quite an impact. Car CD players certainly made a greater impression at this CES than at any previous exhibition.

ILLUSTRATED BY MICHAEL KLEIN
For the Long Haul

If you’re a long-distance driver, two of the most innovative—and expensive—car stereo products may be for you. The first is the Sony CDX-A10 ($1,000), nicknamed the Disc Jockey: a trunk-mounted unit that cradles ten of your favorite Compact Discs in a vibration-resistant changer mechanism, surrounded by a dust-resistant enclosure. The CDs are held in a removable ten-disc magazine and are chosen via remote control. The DIN-sized (7-by-2-inch) remote, connected by an umbilical cord to the changer, provides access to any disc or track. A Random Music Sensor will pick five tracks for you, and Program Play can memorize your choice of ten different selections from any of the ten discs, in any order. Because of its standard dimensions, the remote can be mounted in-dash in many cars. But the real surprise is its depth. Only one inch thick, the remote can actually be attached with Velcro to the dash, to be passed between passengers or tucked out of sight when necessary. As a bonus, the remote will operate a quartz-synthesis tuner pack, the XT-10 ($130), which also stays in the trunk. In addition, the CDX-A10 is equipped with the first two-position compressor I’ve seen on a car CD player; it can be made to work on the tuner output, as well.

Despite its relatively high price, the Disc Jockey clearly has enormous potential. With all the “works” securely locked in the trunk, thieves, even if they can locate the remote, won’t find much of a market for it. Without the space limitations of an in-dash installation, the laser mechanism can be, and apparently is, isolated from all but the most severe jolts. Pounding on the outer case had no effect, and even a vigorous jostling of the changer mechanism itself produced no audible mistracking. Since the preamplifier outputs are part of the trunk-mounted changer, similarly mounted amplifiers will be shielded from the engine and associated motor noise. The next logical step, now apparently in the design stage, is a home CD player that uses the same ten-disc magazine. Additional XA-10 magazines ($20 each) are available, as is a switching box, the XA-39 ($30), for combining the Disc Jockey with an existing conventional car stereo system.

The second major product for the long haul, the Alpine 7375 AM/FM cassette changer ($1,300), also has most of its works stashed in the trunk. It can be programmed to play tapes in any order from a removable magazine. The magazine provides individual noise reduction settings for each of six tapes, including Dolby B, Dolby C, and DBX. Alpine’s G7 tape transport mechanism automatically selects the appropriate equalization. Control for the changer is supplied by a fiber-optic link to the in-dash panel radio. Except for the absence of a cassette door, this unit has the familiar Alpine cosmetics, but as with the Disc Jockey, an LCD serves as a visual indicator for a multitude of functions. Unique to the Al-

pine is a change of display color, from green to red, to signal tape or tuner function, respectively.

Alpine puts to good use the larger component dimensions possible in a non-dash location, producing a tape deck with frequency response, noise, and flutter specifications rivaling those of good home recorders. Three sets of preamplifier outputs—including one for a subwoofer with variable crossover points (50, 80, and 120 Hz) and 18-dB/octave slopes and two high-pass outputs—provide the amplifier section with a variety of speaker hook-up options.

As with the Sony CD changer, noise isolation from the engine is achieved by trunk mounting, but in addition, Alpine’s fiber-optic connections from the dash to the changer are completely immune to electrical interference. In fact, fiber optics may play a leading role in car audio’s future. Richard Hirschmann, a company known primarily for its antennas, had a prototype fiber-optic replacement for speaker wire on display. Offering precisely the same noise-immunity advantages as the Alpine fiber-optic link, a complete system with encode and decode adapters should retail for about $400.

CD Flavors

There seems to be some confusion as to exactly how customers want their car CD players to be provided. Although a number of manufacturers have announced their intentions to build
lead. But I also predicted that the market would eventually belong to CD/tuner combinations. If the added complication of a CD sleeve cannot be accommodated inside the standard 7-b by 2-inch chassis along with a tuner, then the caddy’s days are numbered. Not long after this January’s show, Sony, citing a 10:1 sales ratio of CD/tuner units vs. CD-only ones, made plans for gradually phasing out its CD-X3 car player. Subsequently, Pioneer announced a close-out price on the CDX-P1 player, to be replaced by a model with a tuner. Another maker that wishes to remain anonymous confided that its CD-only player may never be produced because of the lack of consumer interest.

With home disc player sales breaking new records every day, why, wonders the industry, aren’t you, Mr. Customer, willing to strap a $500 CD player under your dash? If you are expecting the same astounding price decreases that occurred with home units, forget it. The construction necessary to handle typical road conditions will prohibit any precipitous declines, and the recent surge in the value of the yen rules out anything but a price increase. Why spend $500 when a $200 portable can be pressed into service? Because the latter cannot be expected to track properly under automotive vibration and temperature conditions. And an unsecured portable is a more tempting target for the casual thief, in addition to being considerably harder to load and operate while driving.

Still, if you already own a portable CD player and would like at least to give it a mobile audition, there are now products to make that easy. In-dash receivers too numerous to mention sprouted CD inputs in Las Vegas. But not all CD inputs are created equal. Most are simply a pair of RCA jacks on the back of the unit, with no provisions for a quick portable patch-in or power source for the player. Jensen showed two such models, the JXL-55 ($400) and JXL-45 ($330), but it also had an adapter, the J-1470 ($25), that would furnish a permanent under-dash input and power source. Proton unveiled two new front ends, the P-206 ($450) and the P-215 ($375), that are equipped with the usual CD button and rear RCA inputs, but also have a front-panel miniphone jack for easy access.

For those of you with the time and patience to change cassettes manually (or a chauffeur to do it for you), the new Kenwood KRC-999 ($1,300) is described as a "breakthrough product." And thanks to an onboard computer module, breakthrough may be an understatement (see test report, March). With microprocessors controlling a host of features, the KRC-999 is probably the most comprehensive tuner/tape deck on the road today. Unable to fit all of the controls on a standard DIN faceplate, Kenwood has had to pack 19 buttons operating an even greater number of functions into a motor-driven tray.

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And features you would expect from this class of front end, the KRC-999 has a seven-band graphic equalizer that will memorize three user-programmed EQ curves plus three that are preprogrammed. The seven-segment, three-color LED display for each band can be used as a visual indicator of the boost or attenuation at that frequency (audible tones are emitted during adjustments, in case driving demands 100 percent of your visual attention) or as a spectrum analyzer. More LEDs are used to show volume level, tuner band and signal strength, noise reduction system, and other information. The KRC-999 will accept direct hookup of a Kenwood car CD player.

Special features of the 5420 include a CD input that is activated by the presence of an audio signal and accessory kits for matching the unit's night illumination with your dashboard lights.

Getting into the removable DIN security business for the first time, JVC previewed the KS-RX605 ($480), with a CD input and a built-in five-band S.E.A. graphic equalizer. Kenwood showed an updated version of the KRC-626, its original extractable design. The new KRC-636 ($639) incorporates Kenwood's Bi-Azimuth head to optimize tape-to-head alignment in both directions of tape travel. Among the other new features are a full-logic tape transport and selectable green/amber lighting.

For the van/limo/ RV owner or passenger searching for the complete audiovisual experience, Sony has taken its background of FM diversity tuning and produced a complete mobile video system. The AN-500 ($125) Mobile TV Diversity Unit provides the best possible reception by automatically compensating for variations in video signal strength. A minimum of two antennas is required, and additional antennas, up to a maximum of four, improve performance. The half-DIN-size TV tuner will fit the full-size DIN radio slots in most new American cars, if installed with a customizing kit (manufactured by Sosche). Featuring scan tuning and a digital display, the XTV-5 ($265) comes complete with an RM-X5 remote control and has both front and rear video inputs for a videocassette recorder. At the show, an eight-inch monitor, the XVM-8 ($400), was suspended from the ceiling of the demo van in a GM-4200 mounting rack ($100). Another accessory offered by Sony is a passenger headphone adapter, the XA-66 ($45).

New Manufacturers

New names in the autosound arena include Sharp, Hitachi, and Sun-Kyong. Among Sharp's products are eight speakers and six in-dash front ends, headlined by the RG-F870 ($400), which comes with a remote control that operates in either a wired fiber-optic or wireless infrared mode. Hitachi showed a complete line that includes amps, speakers, four high-powered FTR/cassette players, an alarm, and a CD player, the CD-D14 ($700).

Car Video

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Speakers

Manufacturers are beginning to realize the after-market potential of high-quality receivers with the "factory" look.

JVC has updated its initial effort in the category, the KS-RX101, with the KS-RX710 ($500). Like its predecessor, the 710 has ample front-panel space for a five-band S.E.A. graphic equalizer, but the cosmetics have been refined to look more like those of factory-installed equipment. Mitsubishi unveiled two oversized receivers, the JX-2 ($280) and JX-3 ($350). Both come with GM wiring harnesses for ease of installation and will plug directly into the Mitsubishi CD-100 Compact Disc player. The JX-3 also boasts high power—100 watts (20 dBW) maximum—and a six-band equalizer.

"spoiler" for aiming the three mid-/high-frequency drivers directly at the listener.

Other introductions of note included the resurrection of the Phase Linear brand name for a new high-end line from Jensen. All four speakers, ranging from the 4-inch dual-cone PL-1400 ($65) to the 6-by-9-inch triaxial PL-3690 ($900), have cones made of a carbon compound, which yields both a significant weight reduction and extra rigidity. Two of Yamaha's latest, the YCS-501 ($100) and YCS-401 ($100), use a woofer made of carbon fiber, the same cone material employed in many of the company's home speakers.

Boston Acoustics joined the growing number of companies making three-way matched-component speaker systems with two models, the 793 ($300) and the 763 ($270). Both packages contain a pair of 4-inch midrange drivers and Yarimount dome tweeters for forward placement and either a 6-by-9-inch (the 793) or 6-inch (the 763) woofer for the rear deck. A 5½-inch dual-cone model, the 705 ($70), and an 8-inch subwoofer, the 780LF ($100), also were presented.

A trend supported by virtually all the latest speakers is increased sensitivity and power handling, with "digital reads" being the most frequent explanation. Another trend, one that I am no longer able to ignore, much as I'd like to, is the pickup-truck box speaker. Although companies (like Stillwater Designs, with their Kickers) have been making this type of speaker for years, the recent surge in pickup sales has brought a bevy of new contestants into the expanding market. Lured by the lack of complicated installation procedures and the ease with which they can be moved from one vehicle to another, consumers are spending several hundred dollars for what the manufacturers like to call an investment that doesn't get traded in when the pickup does. Prominent contributors to the new category are MTX (Road Thunder), Pyle (Pounders), Ultimate (Turbo), and Philips. All produce one- and two-piece units designed to fit behind the seat. With the exception of Philips, all use horn tweeters, whose brightness is subdued by the upholstery they hide behind. And except for the MTX speakers, which are constructed with ducted ports, all have passive radiators for a bass thump that can really be felt as well as heard.

But you say you don't own a pickup? Products are nonetheless beginning to spin off from that category that may still interest you. Southern Audio Service's Barooka subwoofers were originally designed for pickups, but are equally at home when corner-loaded in a hatchback. Variations on the single-piece, full-range theme are emerging for hatchbacks, and more recently, rear-deck applications have been found. Of interest to everyone who ever wanted a subwoofer, but had no place for one; New compact "sub" from Stillwater and MTX fit under most front seats. The Stillwater Compact ($200) uses such small drivers (4-inch cone and 4-inch passive radiator) that I laughed—until I heard it demonstrated. Talk about a kick in the pants! In tandem with a subwoofer amp, such as the Alphasonik AS-1060 ($145) or AS-1100 ($250), even just one of the pair added a new dimension to low-frequency reproduction. You should give this product an audition before cutting gaping holes in your new car's interior.
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Leslie B. Tyler is vice-president of engineering at DBX, Inc., and was active in designing the company's TV noise reduction system.

WHAT IS STERO TV?

The BTSC (Broadcast Television System Committee) standard version of MTS (multichannel television sound) has two main parts: a system (developed by Zenith) of modulating a television signal with stereo audio information and a method (developed by DBX) of reducing audio noise during stereo reception. Zenith's modulation scheme itself consists of four audio channels: left- and right-channel stereo information, an SAP (separate audio program) channel, and a low-quality professional channel. The SAP channel is intended to be a medium-fidelity "service" for simultaneous translations, visiting-team sports announcers' commentary, and even non-program-related uses such as 24-hour news. The professional channel can be utilized to send paging beeper signals, transmitter telemetry, and the like. No restrictions have been placed on its use as long as it does not interfere with the two primary services, stereo audio and the SAP. (For a detailed explanation of stereo TV abbreviations and acronyms, see "Coming to You in Stereo," March).

HOW IS STERO TV POSSIBLE—TWO CHANNELS WHERE ONE EXISTED BEFORE?

That stereo TV is compatible with mono reception is largely due to an accident of history. In NTSC (National Television System Committee) television broadcasting, the standard in the United States since the advent of color in 1953, the video information extends up to 4.2 MHz above the video carrier. With mono NTSC, the audio is encoded by frequency modulation of a 4.5-MHz audio carrier. Maximum audio modulation causes a 25-kHz deviation of the carrier—
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the carrier frequency varies between 4.475 MHz and 4.525 MHz. But even with a fully modulated audio carrier, there is a gap in the spectrum of about 275 kHz between the lowest audio modulation (4.475 MHz) and the highest video frequency (4.2 MHz). This space, determined more than three decades ago, is what makes stereo TV possible. In the BTSC system, the video spectrum is unchanged from NTSC, but the audio signal uses up much of the buffer zone and occupies greater spectrum space (see tinted portion of Figure 1).

**Figure 1.** The spectrum of an NTSC video signal showing the frequency regions taken up by stereo TV (tinted areas)

**Figure 2** shows the comparatively complex baseband spectrum of the BTSC audio signal. (A baseband signal is one that modulates the carrier or subcarrier; it's what the carrier carries.) Just as in NTSC, it contains the monaural (or stereo-sum, L + R) information in its original frequency space (from 50 Hz to 15 kHz) with a 75-microsecond pre-emphasis. But BTSC makes four important additions:

First, the stereo-difference (L − R) information is compressed by the DBX-TV noise reduction system. This signal amplitude-modulates a 31.468-kHz subcarrier, producing a double-sideband suppressed-carrier (DSSC) signal occupying a bandwidth of about 30 kHz. The L − R subcarrier frequency was chosen because it is twice the horizontal-sweep frequency in the NTSC system (15.753 kHz) and is therefore easily synchronized with during reception. The amplitude of the DSSC signal is adjusted to deviate the 4.5-MHz audio carrier by 50 kHz, or twice the deviation of the stereo-sum (mono) signal. This in turn increases the L − R dynamic range.

Second, the SAP signal is also compressed, and the resulting signal frequency-modulates a 78.67-kHz subcarrier (five times the horizontal-sweep frequency) and is injected to produce a 15-kHz maximum deviation of the audio carrier.

Third, the professional-channel signal frequency-modulates a 102.3-kHz subcarrier (6.5 times the horizontal-sweep frequency), which is added to produce a 3-kHz deviation of the audio carrier.

Finally, the system uses an unmodulated pilot tone located at 15.734 kHz, injected with sufficient amplitude to produce a 5-kHz deviation of the audio carrier. This pilot tone identifies the transmission as a BTSC-encoded one and is used by TV receivers to switch into the stereo mode.

The sum of all the carrier deviations (25 kHz + 50 kHz + 15 kHz + 3 kHz + 5 kHz = 98 kHz) is about four times the deviation of a mono TV carrier. This eats into the spectral gap conveniently left by the developers of mono color broadcasting.

**How does BTSC compare to stereo FM radio in audio performance?**

Modern FM-radio transmitters are capable of S/N (signal-to-noise) ratios in excess of 70 dB, flat frequency response to beyond 15 kHz, and low distortion (usually around 0.1 percent). Potential home tuner performance usually is substantially better than the quality of signal being received. However, when receiving a stereo FM signal, distance from the transmitter dramatically affects the final S/N ratio. This is because FM radio's L − R signal is inherently 23 dB noisier than its L + R signal. (At higher modulating frequencies, FM systems have increased amounts of noise, and FM radio's stereo subcarrier is up at 38 kHz.) This noise gain is heard when switching from mono to stereo reception on all but the closest FM stations.

With the BTSC system, the basic S/N ratio of a good TV transmitter is only a few dB less than that of an FM transmitter. Distortion is just as low as radio's, but frequency response is not possible beyond 15 kHz, because of the relatively low stereo subcarrier frequency (31.5 kHz). However, the received S/N ratio in stereo is every bit as good as that in mono, owing to the compander. This means that there will be no difference in dynamic range when switching from mono to stereo in MTS. For the broadcaster, this is extremely important: It means no loss in coverage area in stereo.

**Is companding really necessary?**

Without noise reduction, the Zenith MTS transmission system is capable of high-quality transmission and reception of stereo audio. However, the BTSC stereo subcarrier adds approximately 15 dB of noise to stereo reception. This noise penalty arises from the frequency distribution of noise natural to all frequency-modulation systems combined with the limits imposed on the power and spectrum space available for the audio subcarrier (in order for it not to interfere with the video signal). Furthermore, under certain impaired transmission and reception conditions (weak received signals, transmitter imperfections, and multipath, among other degradations), buzz or hum can be introduced into the audio.
The situation is worse for the SAP channel. Because of its subcarrier's higher frequency, even more noise is introduced. The SAP channel also uses a frequency modulated subcarrier, which is subject to "buzz beat," an intermodulation of the picture with the audio, causing a particularly obnoxious type of non-harmonically-related distortion. The most practical engineering solution to these problems was to apply a sophisticated companding noise reduction system only to the stereo-difference and SAP channels.

**HOW DOES THE DBX-TV WORK?**

To cope with such noisy channels, an entirely new noise reduction system was designed. In order to consistently mask background noise during low-level, predominantly low-frequency passages, substantial amounts of pre-emphasis (treble boost during transmission) would be required. But if extreme pre-emphasis were permitted to remain in effect during high-level, high-frequency passages, the broadcast channel would be overloaded and gross distortion would result. The solution combines the traditional approaches of wideband companding and pre-emphasis with an innovative system (called spectral companding) that varies the pre-emphasis to suit the characteristics of the audio signal.

**HOW DOES SPECTRAL COMPANDING OPERATE?**

A subsection of a DBX-TV compander—the spectral compressor—examines the input signal to determine the ratio between its high- and low-frequency information and varies the pre-emphasis according to these rules: For predominantly low-frequency signals, large amounts of pre-emphasis are applied to boost the high frequencies far above the noise. For predominantly high-frequency signals, where the signal itself hides the noise, the boost is reduced to prevent overload.

(Continued on page 52)
The spectral compressor works in conjunction with a fixed pre-emphasis stage that provides a treble boost somewhat stronger than that used in FM broadcasting. This fixed pre-emphasis has a steep response rise in the critical frequency region between 1 kHz and 5 kHz to help overcome the natural TV-channel noise. Thanks to the spectral compressor, the boost does not cause overload. The combined responses of the fixed and variable (spectral) pre-emphasis are shown in Figure 3. The last major section of the DBX-TV companding system is a wideband compressor stage, which acts to maintain high average audio levels in the channel, but keeps them below the overload point at all times.

**WHAT LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE CAN BE EXPECTED FROM THE SAP AND PROFESSIONAL CHANNELS?**

One of the principle traits to listen for is the signal-to-noise ratio. In test report results, seek a signal-to-noise ratio approaching or exceeding 60 dB (from maximum modulation to an A-weighted broadband noise floor).

If reception conditions are good, distortion and noise pumping are not a problem. In stereo TV as in FM radio, most detrimental to reception is multipath, which can create the noises and distortion familiar to FM listeners, with the added problem of video-frequency leakage (buzzes, particularly) with TV multipath is easier to see-as "ghosts"—than to hear. Minimizing ghosting by antenna choice and orientation automatically reduces stereo TV multipath problems.

You should, in auditioning stereo TV sets, sit off-center for a time. Although it is not a characteristic of the BTSC (Broadcast Television System Committee) modulation or noise reduction, we have found that the mounting position of the loudspeakers on a stereo TV has a great effect on whether the stereo image remains stable, is pulled to one side, or collapses entirely when heard from off-axis. L.B.T.

**STEREO TV: WHAT TO LISTEN FOR**

CLOSE TO A TRANSMITTER (WITHIN 35 MILES OR SO, WHERE THE picture has little snow), SAP performance is good. Its S/N ratio is better than 70 dB, thanks to the noise reduction system. Farther out, performance will degrade progressively, and compander "artifacts" will begin to be evident at about 45 to 50 miles from the transmitter. However, during listening tests the artifacts were judged to be subjectively preferable to a high uncompanded noise level. Frequency response extends to about 10 kHz. The professional channel has no noise reduction and has an upper frequency limit of about 3 kHz—definitely not high fidelity, but adequate for data transmission.

**Figure 3: The Range of Pre-Emphasis Curves Applied by the DBX-TV Compressor Circuit**

(Continued from page 51)

IN A BTSC RECEIVER, THE INVERSE OF THE COMPRESSION PROCESS OCCURS. After demodulation, audio signals are passed through a spectral expander, two fixed de-emphasis networks, and a wideband expander. These elements restore the audio to its original dynamic range and frequency response and decrease noise at the same time. During quiet and low-frequency passages, high-frequency noise is reduced by the sum of the fixed and variable (spectral) de-emphasis, which can be more than 60 dB at 15 kHz. During high-level and high-frequency passages, the signal itself masks the noise.

After expansion, the stereophonic difference signal \((L - R)\) is added to and subtracted from the sum signal \((L + R)\) to produce left and right audio outputs, respectively. Since the noise in the sum channel is higher than that in the companded difference channel, the dynamic range of the final outputs is equal to that of the original (monaural) channel. Because the companding for the SAP channel is the same as that for the stereo difference channel, a typical receiver has only one expander. That is normally switched between SAP and stereo service.

**HOW DOES DBX-TV FUNCTION DURING DECODING?**

In a BTSC receiver, the inverse of the compression process occurs. After demodulation, audio signals are passed through a spectral expander, two fixed de-emphasis networks, and a wideband expander. These elements restore the audio to its original dynamic range and frequency response and decrease noise at the same time. During quiet and low-frequency passages, high-frequency noise is reduced by the sum of the fixed and variable (spectral) de-emphasis, which can be more than 60 dB at 15 kHz. During high-level and high-frequency passages, the signal itself masks the noise.

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Faint Praise


FACT IS, THESE SONGWRITERS, EACH TOPS IN HIS VERY SEPARATE REALM, HAVEN'T AGED VERY GRACEFULLY. THEIR TEENAGE-BOY HANG-UPS HAVE MATURED INTO LUSTY SNOTS AND POSITION PAPERS; IT'S OKAY FOR THEM TO INindle THEMSELVES, IT'S EVEN EXPECTED. COSTELLO, WHO GAVE LINDA RONSTADT THE BEST LYRICS SHE EVER SANG IN "ALISON," IS THE MOST FruSTRATING EXAMPLE, BECAUSE WHEN HE'S NOT HATING A WOMAN FOR REJECTING HIM, THIS CULT HERO ROUTINELY TURNS HIS IRITABILITY INTO VISION. "LITTLE PALACES," ABOUT THE ENGLISH ARISTOCRACY KNOWING ITS PLACE—"TO BE THE HEIR APPARENT/OF THE KINGDOM OF THE INVISIBLE"—IS ONLY THE LATEST EVIDENCE OF HIS GENUS. AND HE'S FruSTRATING BECAUSE, AS A WORD MAN, HE GETS THE MOST PRESS. KING OF AMERICA—WOMAN PROBLEMS NOTWITHSTANDING—REQUESTS NOTE. BUT I COULDN'T JUSTIFY A THIRD COSTELLO REVIEW IN TWO YEARS, ESPECIALLY WHEN OTHER DESERVING ARTISTS GET NONE.

Speaking of which, Marshall Crenshaw, whose excellent DOWNTOWN from last year slipped through the cracks of BACKBEAT, ALSO IS A GREAT SONGWRITER. (And like Costello, he chose T-BONE BURNEST TO PRODUCE HIS MOST RECENT EFFORT.) WITH HIS BOOKISH GOODES AND SHY-GUY Soft-spokenness, CRENSHAW MAY SEEM SELF-EFFACING, BUT HE HARDLY LACKS CONFIDENCE. FROM THE STAGE OF GREENWICH VILLAGE'S BOTTOM LINE, HE SAID, "THERE ARE A LOT OF GREAT SONGS WRITTEN ABOUT NEW YORK. THIS IS MINE." "MY TOWN" WAS A RAVE-UP, ALL RIGHT—NOT AS GREAT, THOUGH, AS "YOU'RE MY FAVORITE WASTE OF TIME," WHICH YOU MIGHT EVEN HEAR, IN COVER VERSIONS, IF YOU'VE BOUGHT A BELLAMY BROTHERS OR A BETTE MIDLER ALBUM RECENTLY.

Crenshaw sings plenty about hurt love: "LESSON NUMBER ONE" IS TELL THE TRUTH, AND THE WAY HE SINGS IT, HE SOUNDS LIKE HE JUST FINISHED CRYING OVER SOMEONE WHO DIDN'T. OR MAYBE IT'S JUST THAT BLEND OF BUDDHIST HOLLYS PLAINNESS WITH BEATLES CHORD CHANGES THAT JERKS A TEAR. RINGING FOUR-PART HARMONIES ALSO ARE STANDARD, AND THOUGH ALL THAT SONORUS SINCERITY CAN GET A LITTLE CLOVEN ON THE '50S STUFF IN CONCERT, CRENSHAW IS NOT THE PREDICTABLE REVIVALIST COMPLETE WITH STRING TIE AND COQ-PUNK ATTITUDE. HIS SOLO VOCAL ON "GIMME SOME TRUTH," WHICH HE INTRODUCED SIMPLY AS "A SONG BY JOHN LENNON," STOLE THE SHOW WITH WITTY, LOUD ROCK 'N' ROLL: "NO SHORT-HAIRED YELLOW-BELLIED SON-OF-FRICKY-DICKS IS GONNA MOTHER HUBBARD SOFT-SOAP ME..." LENNON PERSONIFIED THE CHANGES OF A RADICAL ERA; HE MATURED, AND WE HAVE HIS MUSIC AS EVIDENCE. ELVIS COSTELLO SHOULD TAKE A LESSON, BEFORE HE'S RELEGATED TO THE RANKS OF THE UNENLIGHTENED.

Georgia Christgau

EMI Looks to Opera

ON A RECENT VISIT TO LONDON, I TOOK ADVANTAGE OF A FREE MORNING TO DROP BY 30 GLoucester Place, HOME OF EMI, AND HAVE A CHAT WITH PETER ALWARD ABOUT THE FIRM'S CURRENT RECORDING PROJECTS. NOT SURPRISINGLY, OUR CONVERSATION CENTERED ON OPERA.


A NEW FREDERIUS FROM MUNICH IS IN THE OFFING AS WELL, FEATURING LUCIA PAPP, AGNES BALTS, JOSÉ CARRERAS, EDITA GRUBEROVA, WOLFGANG BRENDL, KURT RYDL, AND CHRISTIAN BOESCH. THE CONDUCTOR—FANFARE, PLEASE—IS PLACIDO DOMINGO. WHILE I GASPED, ALWARD PREDICTED, "THAT'S GOING TO BE A JAMBOREE."

IN JUNE IT WILL BE TIME FOR VERDI'S LA FORZA DEL DESTINO. RICCARDO MUTI WILL CONDUCT HIS LA SCALA forces for the Studio recording, which will include DOMINGO, MIRELLA FRENİ, AND "HOPFULLY" MORRIS AS PADRE GUARDIANO. ALSO IN JULY, OR LATE JUNE, WILL COME SESSIONS FOR A NEW RECORDING OF LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN, A CO-PRODUCTION WITH THE BRUSSELS OPERA. NEIL SHICOFF, JOSÉ VAN DAM, ROSALIND FLOWRIGHT, AND JESSEY NORRIS WILL BE AMONG THE PRINCIPALS.

SOMETIMES THIS SUMMER, AS A FOLLOW-UP TO HIS VERY FINE RECORDING OF RAVEL'S L'ENFANT ET LES SORTILÈGES, EMI WILL LOOSE ANDRÉ PREVIN ON L'HOUR ESPAGNOLE, WITH NORMAN, THOMAS ALLEN, GABRIEL BACQUIER, AND NICOLAI GEDDA. AND AS A FOLLOW-UP TO HIS VERY FINE GLYNDEBOURNE DON GIOVANNI, THE FIRM WILL Capture HAITINK THERE IN COSÌ FAN TUTTE, WITH CAROLE VANESS AND JOHN ALEX. THEN COMES THE BIG ONE: A NEW FIGORA FROM MUTI IN VIENA, WITH ALLEN, RYDL, GEDDA, KATELEN BATTLE, MARGARET PRICE, ANN MURRAY, AND JORMA HYNINEN.

ALWARD ALSO TOLD ME ABOUT A PROMISING YOUNG EAST GERMAN BARITONE, OLF BAER, WITH WHOM EMI HAS ALREADY錄REcorded LUDERWEKIS AND DICHTERLEBEN. NEXT UP IS AN ALL-WAGNER DISC. AND HE TOLD ME THAT NOW THAT JEFFREY TATE HAS FINISHED HIS MOZART SYMPHONY SERIES WITH THE ENGLISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA, HE IS EMBARKING ON A HAYDN SERIES, A COLLECTION OF THE COMPLETE MOZART WIND CONCERTOS, A PARTNER OF RICHARD STRAUSS'S BOURGEOIS GENIUS AND MARIANOSPHASIS, AND, IN DRESDEN, A BEETHOVEN SEVENTH, A BRUCKNER NINTH, AND A SCHUBERT NINTH.

AND AS I WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE, ALWARD SAID THAT EMI HOPES TO DO A NEW VERSI SUIETTA ("... THE TROUBLE IS, NAME ME THE TENOR...") AND, SOMEDAY, THE FIRST COMPLETE RECORDING OF DER FRAU OHNE SCHATTEN ("THE TROUBLE IS... "). YOU GET THE REST.

Ted Libbey

Georgia Christgau

Ted Libbey

MAY 1986 53
Bernard Haitink, For the Record

Bernard Haitink, in more ways than one, has reached the crossroads of his career. Chief conductor of Amsterdam's Concertgebouw Orchestra for the past 22 years, he will step down at the end of the 1985-86 season to become music director of the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. With a new recording of Richard Strauss's Eine Alpensinfonie due for release this month and a Mahler Fifth slated for release in the fall, he continues an association with Philips and the Concertgebouw that began 26 years ago. Other projects for the label include a Bruckner Fourth with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, scheduled for autumn release, and a new recording of Brahms's Variations on a Theme by Haydn and ten of the composer's Hungarian Dances with the Concertgebouw, also expected in the fall. Haitink now has extensive commitments from Decca/London (his distinguished cycle of Shostakovich symphonies with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the Concertgebouw will be completed this summer with the release of Symphony No. 13, and he is recording the piano/orchestral works of Rachmaninoff with Vladimir Ashkenazy as soloist), from CBS (he is at work on a traversal of the Beethoven piano concertos with Murray Perahia as soloist), and from Angel EMI, for which he will undertake a complete studio recording in Munich of Wagner's Ring, beginning in 1988 (see this month's "Medley" for further details).—Ed.
microphone and his ideas on repertory and the chemistry of recording.

High Fidelity: You have been making records with the Concertgebouw Orchestra for more than a quarter of a century. What was it like in the beginning?

Haitink: At first it was terrible. I didn't have any experience. I'll never forget producer Jaap van Ginniken's remark, half an hour into our first session: "The orchestra doesn't sound too good." We were recording Dvořák's Seventh Symphony, which at the time was still called the Second.

High Fidelity: That was in 1960, the year that Philips made the switch from mono to stereo. It was a productive year for you, too: In addition to recording the Dvořák, you collaborated with violinist Arthur Grumiaux in the Tchaikovsky and Mendelssohn concertos and the Beethoven Romances. In 1962 you started the Mahler
cycle for Philips, and in 1965 you began the Bruckner cycle. Those two projects, which were completed in the early 1970s, were a major part of Van Ginniken's lifework. How would you characterize your relationship with him, and did you come to feel more comfortable making recordings as you became more experienced?

I continued to dislike recording at times, yet also found it very interesting and enjoyable. Most of the time, I liked doing it, and it was flattering to be continually invited. I'll admit.

Jaap van Ginniken was a very special man. I respected him enormously and we made a lot of records together. Our contact was always very good without our having to say anything to each other. We were always extremely polite and formal. He was a kind of father figure to me.

What I respected most in him, and also learned from him, was his way of having an ear for the right moment: to grab it, use it, and not waste any of it. He was a great musician who seldom interfered if he sensed that the atmosphere was right. For instance, we recorded the lengthy sixth movement from Mahler's Third Symphony in one take—unique. Ah, when I think back on it, I was still so young; it seems like another life.

The progress of recording technique continues to interest me. Van Ginniken's successor, Volker Strass, always considers your last recording to be your best, which is very touching. He demands a lot from you, but at the same time, I have to admit that when a recording he has supervised is good, it is very, very good.

All of your recordings with the Concertgebouw Orchestra have been made in the Concertgebouw. Has this been much of a problem?

No matter how beautiful it is, the Big Hall is not that suited to making recordings. It is very difficult for a producer to achieve a good sound there. The hall plays tricks on you: It has its moods, and it gives the violins and double basses a hard time. A lot also depends on the temperature and the level of humidity inside the hall. All this makes it quite difficult to record. Philip's achievements are therefore all the more laudable. I have noticed that companies with less experience in the Concertgebouw have trouble.

How great a say do you have in the choice of the repertoire you record? Has there been a certain line in your discography he's amenable to?

I have tried to follow a certain line with the Mahler and Bruckner symphony cycles, also with the orchestral music of Ravel and Debussy, and more recently with the Shostakovich symphonies for Decca/London. But it has lapsed at times. That has not always been the record company's fault: It has to do in part with the chemistry between a conductor and his orchestra. Often, unexpectedly, wonderful results are achieved, and everyone says, "What a shame that wasn't recorded." On the other hand, sometimes a beautiful project is planned that turns out to be a sort of middle-of-the-road recording. That's the life of an artist: There is no certainty. That's why it can be difficult for a record company — which must give priority to a commercial approach — to capture the right moment.

Do you feel that you have favored certain composers along the way?

It's not really my style to favor one special composer. Like my predecessor with the Concertgebouw, Eduard Van Beinum, I have always devoted myself to a broad repertoire. In doing this I am probably influenced by my conception of the task of the chief conductor. Maybe I should have been more demanding in Amsterdam, but I wanted to leave something for the guest conductors.

It's different with other orchestras. I remember a talk I had with the music director of a big American orchestra, with which I was to record something as a guest. He spelled it out for me: "No Beethoven, no Brahms, no Mozart, no Bruckner, no Tchaikovsky, no Debussy, no Schumann. You can do anything." I mean, what else is left?

What do you think of live recordings?

I always tried to make my recordings as exciting as possible. Others must judge if I have managed that. Live recordings are only suited to certain pieces. The real question is whether we are doing the public a favor — especially now with the perfection of the Compact Disc — if they continually have to hear a cough from the hall, a hiccup in the horns, or an uneven attack. On the other hand, live recordings can make for enormously lively results.

Can you tell us something about the new releases that are on the way — specifically, the set of Schumann's four symphonies and your first recording of Richard Strauss's Eine Alpensonate, both with the Concertgebouw Orchestra, and Bruckner's Fourth Symphony with the Vienna Philharmonic?

To start with the last, that was a very favorable moment for recording. I have always loved the Vienna Philharmonic, and I have a special kind of contact with it — which is strange, as people consider me a rather cool man and the orchestra is said to be very warm. Bruckner's Fourth turned out to be a special experience because the Philharmonic gives you the feeling that you have reached the source of the music. I had the same feeling once before when I conducted that orchestra in Beethoven's Sixth.

As far as Schumann is concerned, I know that previous generations of conductors made adjustments to his music because they thought he had not scored it properly. I have never done that, and I am finding that certain of my colleagues — Wolfgang Sawallisch, to name one — share the same opinion. I left the music as it is; if you start to touch it up, you just can't stop. To be honest, I must say that I am very interested in how the complete set will sound, because I have heard the tapes of only the Third Symphony so far; it was the only recording to be released in advance, and I remember it as sounding very noble, almost like Bruckner.

As for Strauss, I realize now that I have recorded virtually all of his major symphonic works. Eine Alpensonate is a masterly representation of a day in the mountains, a surrounding of which I am very fond. The composition is excellent, and it includes some fantastic moments. In fact, the reproduction of the storm is better than Beethoven's in his Pastorale.
A complete discussion of the singers heard in this Brobdingnagian album would be impossible in this space, since there are more than 200 of them [see box, page 58]—roughly twice as many as in either of EMI's two previous Record of Singing sets. Ironically, this one apparently almost never came out, since, as producer Keith Hardwick writes in his liner notes, "Early enthusiasm gave place to misgivings: Vocal standards were generally considered to have been in decline during the interwar years; most of the best singers were already well represented on LP; and (an unavoidable consideration)—would it sell?" Fortunately, Hardwick and Company gave it the old school try anyhow, and came up with a cornucopia of treasures as listenable as it is formidable.

True, most of the singers are amply represented elsewhere, but not in the often atypical repertory offered here. Moreover, many of the selections that once were well known were until now available only on the most arcane labels. In addition, several recordings on this album are heard in different takes than those originally issued, while some were never previously issued at all. As a result, Vol. 3 is every bit as valuable to the vocal aficionado as its predecessors.

Appropriately, Hardwick breaks down the content into five schools: German, Italian, French, Anglo-American, and East European/Slavic. Not surprisingly, the German is the best represented, since the interwar years were golden ones indeed for the performance of Germanic music, and
Wagner in particular. Eight full sides (exhibiting more than 70 singers) are devoted to this school. The collection gets underway impressively with Lauritz Melchior’s brilliant 1930 performance of “Der fliegende Holländer” from Tannhäuser—not that far out of the way, of course, but a wholesome reminder of the days when this singer could manage this cruel selection without strain. Much more out of the way, though, are long unavailable or oddball repertory recordings by Torsten Ralf (Tiefland.), Karl Hammes (Das tote Stadt), Rudolf Beckmann (Das Meistersinger von Nürnberg), Karin Bannzell (La Gioconda), Meta Seinemeyer (The Tsar’s Bride), Rose Pauly (Die ägyptische Helena), and others and much, much more of equal value, including an unpublished Tannhäuser scene with Walter Widdop and Gösta Ljungberg.

The album offers René Mannon seven sides. Features such estimable artists as Dusolina Giannini, Ebe Stignani, Claudia Muzio, Dino Borgioli, Renato Zanelli, and Mario Basiola in benchmark examples of their work, while also there are present some all-but-forgotten but obviously superb singers such as mezzo Floricia Cristoforeanu. In pleasing and unusual repertory, a special highlight is Salvatore Baccaloni and Irma Mion doing a chalksmead duet from the Ricci brothers’ Crispino e la coma. One might initially be puzzled to find Jussi Björling in this section, since he is heard in his classic rendition of Paris’s entrance (“Au mont Ida”) from Offenbach’s La belle Hélène, albeit in Swedish. However, Björling’s greatest operatic successes were probably in the Italian repertory.

The French portion runs in decibel level from Lily Pons to Germaine Lubin, from Madrè d’Arkow to Vanni-Marcoux, and there’s hard-a-disappointment to be found throughout these five sides. Despite this set’s British origin, the Anglo-American school selections are evenly divided over four and three-quarter sides between England and the colonies. Hence we have Lawrence Tibbett (in his unpublished version of Ford’s monologue, “E’sogno, o realtà,” “Fra Falstaff”) as well as John Brownlee: Richard Crooks (singing “Racondate amara,” from Torna”) as well as Heddie Nash; Marian Anderson as well as Muriel Brunskill; and Rosa Ponselle to counter Dame Eva Turner—all in splendid examples of their art.

The East European/Slavic school spans one and a quarter sides, which comes as a bit of a letdown. Feodor Chaliapin, Jarlina Novotná, Vladimir Rosing, Imre Palli, and Krassová, for example, were all great artists, but this vast region (to say nothing of the repertoires) seems to have received short shrift. Where is Dmitri Smirnov, for instance, whose electrical recordings were his best? Nevertheless, what’s here is prime-cut singing, and the selections are definitively offbeat (bass Mark Reizen sings an aria from Gomez’s Salvador Rosa, and in Italian vet!).

Transfers, as with most of Hardwick’s other efforts, have been splendidly accomplished: The voices usually have gratifying presence, and surface noise and occasional peaking have been kept to a minimum, without falsifying the original source material. Biographies of all and pictures of most of the singers are included in a generous brochure that comes with the album. It also supplies date and place information on the recordings, so far as it is humanly obtainable. All in all, The Record of Singing, vol. 3: 1926–1939 is just that, and with a vengeance. To say that the collection is indispensable is an understatement.

Bill Zaharenas
never spastic, and the momentum of the movement is never derailed. In a similar vein, the Courante is played more détaché, less smoothly and sinuously than in either the Szervy or the Milstein recording. This difference of viewpoint is most striking in the third Double (9/8), which Mintz plays détaché, and Milstein legato. They make it sound like two different pieces.

The marvel of this performance abound: the running sixteenth movements that are diamond-bright and computer-accurate without ever lapsing into mechanical note-spinning, the play of light and shadow in the elaborate evolutions of movements like the Grave of Sonata No. 2, the warmth of the melodic line as it unfolds over the rock-steady pulse of the Andante of the same sonata. All these qualities come into play in the Chaconne, made extraordinarily expressively by Mintz’s control of the smallest details. It is monumental, tender, delicate, ferocious, dramatic.

The CD sound, larger than life and frighteningly close and bright, is both seductive and suspicious. No violin ever sounded like this, either from a stage or close up, and in your heart of hearts you know you ought to protest. I confess that I can’t. It is simply too exciting, and it adds an extra sheen to an already brilliant achievement, the listener can only register his rational reservations and then sit back and be dazzled.

With the Mintz performance reverberating in the mind, it is probably unsporiting to turn immediately to another rendition of the Bach pieces released at about the same time. Jean-Jacques Kantorow’s readings have many attractive aspects, but they are less defined, less vivid, rougher in the double-stop work, and they lack the inexorable pulse of Mintz’s. Denon’s sound is considerably more restricted than DG’s. Shirley Fleming

BEETHOVEN:
Concertos for Piano and Orchestra (5):
Bogatelles (7) Andante in F.  

BEETHOVEN:
Concertos for Piano and Orchestra (5).  

BEETHOVEN:
Concertos for Piano and Orchestra, Nos. 1*, 2*, 3*, 4*, and 5*.  
Pollini; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Jo- chum*, Böhm**. Werner Mayer, prod. Deutsche Grammophon 274 284 284. [4*. 4*, 4*].
Listening in close succession to these three Beethoven piano concerto cycles is not quite the golden experience one might sup-
pose. Each of them is actually not that much higher or lower on the success monitor than the other two. For anyone except the Bee thoven fanatic who must have everything, the choice will be difficult. And that observation leads to the second, deeper reason for an overall sense of weariness. It was impossi-
ble, while hearing any one among these 15 performances, not to recall how much more compellingly the cycle was once played by the likes of Artur Schnabel, Wilhelm Kempff, Leon Fleisher, and Artur Rubinstein (with Josef Krips), not to mention other great discs of single concertos. Indeed, the hand of pianistic history does sit heavily, magnificently when it comes to these fabu-
los creations.

Nonetheless, for anyone absolutely driven to buy, here is what to expect. The Vladimir Ashkenazy/Zubin Mehta cycle is surely the most pianistically beautiful of the three. Yet it’s also the least involving musically. Must Beethoven always be made so lovely, so placid, so uneventful? In the past genera-
tion, Walter Gieseking might have agreed, but Schnabel taught us otherwise. The Alfred Brendel/James Levine set, being live, does carry its particular interest, and in truth, the interpretations are more probing than Ashkenazy’s, but only at the severe cost of putting up with Brendel’s emotionally pinched and pianistically spiky understand-
ings of these works. Did Edwin Fischer, Brendel’s teacher, actually play them in like fashion? If so, then what on earth did so much of Europe hear in him before World War II? The Maurizio Pollini/Eugen Jo-
chum/Karl Böhm version might well be the safest bet, but only provided that the listener agrees with the authoritative, didactic, Back-
hausian manner of each performance. In all three cycles, the conductors and orchestras are the most obedient servants of each soloist.

Thomas L. Dixon

BEETHOVEN:
Quartets for Strings.
The Melos Quartet. Steven Paul, prod. Deut-
sche Grammophon 415 342-2 (D, 3). [3].
The STUTTGART-BASED MELOS QUARTET, the only German string quartet (as distinct from Viennese) of international notoriety today, has always given performances that are impres sive for their youthful vitality and pow-
erful intensity, sometimes at the expense of more subtle shadings. This approach is characteristic of their complete sets of the quartets of Mendelssohn, Schubert, and Cherubini, all for Deutsche Grammophon.

Early on, the Melos players recorded a complete Beethoven set, but on a small Ger-
man label (Intercord) with hardly any impact abroad. Now, 12 years later, they have com-
pleted new recordings of the cycle. Opus 18 has so far appeared only on LP, while the middle-period quartets (discussed here) are available on LP, cassette, and CD. The late works have not yet been issued in any form.

The middle quartets are the most power-
fully symphonic that Beethoven penned. This is especially true of the three Ro-
manian quartets, Op. 59, the first of which, in F major, holds a place in the body of his quartets comparable to that of the Eine sera among his symphonies, revealing a similar revolutionary broadening of idiom and form. These are works that well belfit the Melos players’ peculiar qualities, and their reading of the F major Quartet is almost per-
fect, wanting only a little more inner feeling in the slow movement. Their account of the Quartet in E minor (Op. 59, No. 2) satisfies me less, and I am not sure I always want to hear both repeats in the opening movement, even though Beethoven specified them. The Stuttgart ensemble misses the point of the immense Molto Adagio, which lingers here, lacking expressive momentum. On the other hand, the extrovert and virtuoso C major Quartet (Op. 59, No. 3) gets a performance as electrifying, as thrilling, as I’ve ever heard—one that justly reasserts the value of a masterpiece that is sometimes unfairly rated as slightly inferior to its two companions.

In the warm and sunny lyricism of the gen-
ial Harp Quartet, Op. 74, the Melos players’ limitations again show in the slow move-
ment, and they rather underplay the con-
cluding Variations, which sound a little bland in this performance. On the other hand, the opening Allegro and especially the har-
sh, cracking Scherzo lulls receive their due. And this applies to the whole of the stunning F minor Quartet, Op. 95, a master-
piece of terseness and incandescent passion. The musicians spotlight all the prophetic as-
pects of the work—the real forerunner to many an "autobiographical" quartet of the Romantic and modern eras, from Mendels-
sohn’s in the same key to Smetana’s and even Janáček’s. As a bonus, the Melos four-
some also gives us something of a disco-
graphic rarity: Beethoven’s own transcription of his E major Piano Sonata, Op. 14, No. 1, here transposed up a semitone. Not only is this a thoroughly enjoyable piece in its own right, it also repays study, when com-
pared with the original, as a fascinating les-
tion in instrumentation.

On the strength of this release, the Melos
Quartet holds its own against the other con-
tenders in what is admittedly a formidable
competition (including the Amadeus, Berg,
Budapest, Cleveland, Guarneri, Italian, Juil-
liard, Smetana, and Talich Quartets, not for-
getting the Vegh Quartet in a sadly deleted
set, still available in Europe). Less cerebral
than the Juilliard, less superfluous and fugi-
tive than the Berg, less sentimental than the
Italians (for whom, I confess, I have a weak
spot), this recording should satisfy all those
who like their Beethoven vital, heroic, and
virile.

For the CD fan, the Melos accounts are in
my opinion clearly preferable to the Berg on
Angel EMI, but the Smetana on Denon is a
far from negligible rival. Deutsche Gramm-
ophon’s recorded sound is glorious, the ac-
companying brochure is far more lavish than
usual with CDs, and the timings are most
generous.

Harry Halbreich

CANTELOUBE:
Songs of the Auvergne (18).

Gomez, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orches-
tra, Handley. Andrew Keener, prod. Angel
4AE 3447 [1] (DI). 0

Songs: Boiret; Brezairola; Chut, chat; Jou
l’point d’a Miribel; L’Ade de rotsa; L’Antouuen; Le
Delaisoan; La Fiaiolare; Lou Bousu; Lou Cacut;
Maloura a ou un fennou; Obal, a m a Lou Limozu;
Ound’ onen garo; Paapo pe pradit; Pastourelle;
Postouro, se tu m’aymo; Te I’ce te; Uno jianto post-
tourou.

JILL GOMEZ AND VERNON HANDLEY, TWO HIGH-
ly regarded British musicians who are large-
ly unknown in this country, have turned up
on Eminence, Angel Record’s new midline
series, with an outstanding performance of 18 of Joseph Canteloube’s Songs of the
Auvergne, a charming collection of French folk
songs gaudily arranged in the manner of
Reespighi for soprano and orchestra. Go-
mez’s singing is bright and ardent. Hand-
ley’s conducting by turns vigorous and sen-
sitive. Andrew Keener’s digital recording is
excellent.

Gomez studied the Auvergnat dialect
with a native of the Clermont-Ferrand re-
gion of France especially for this recording,
and it shows. Devotees of the classic Can-
teloube recordings of Madeleine Gres or Na-
tana Davrath who are looking for a suitable
digital remake need look no further, while
owners of the more recent recordings by Kiri
Te Kanawa or Frederica von Stade would de-
finately do well to give Gomez and Hand-
ley a listen. Hugh MacDonald’s liner notes
have been slashed to ribbons on cassettes,
with no texts and no biographical informa-
tion on either performer.

Terry Teachout

RAVEL:
Gaspard de la nuit; Pavane pour une infante
défunte; Valses nobles et sentimentales.

Ashkenazy, Andrew Carroll, prod. London
CD 142 255-4 [2]. 0

THIS IS VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY’S FIRST RECORD-
ing of French music since a 1965 recital disc
that contained Debussy’s L’île joyeuse and
Ravel’s Gaspard de la nuit. Ashkenazy’s play-
ing on this all-Ravel collection is quite ar-
resting in places (Le Gibet, for example, or
the epilogue to l’âles nobles et sentimentales)
and is unfailingly intelligent throughout.
But there is an odd lack of fantasy and indi-
viduality that goes deeper than the mere
avoidance of exaggeration and that detracts
noticeably from the success of these very
straightforward performances. Andrew Cor-
nall’s digital sound is warm and realistic.

Terry Teachout

TIPPETT:
Symphonies Nos. 1*, 2*, 3*, 4*. 0

Harper; London Symphony Orchestra, Da-
vis**; Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Salvi**.
Philips 414 091-1 [A, 3]. 0

TIPPETT:
The Knot Garden.

Minion, Barstow, Gomez, Hensley, Corey,
Teard, Heincz; Orchestra of the Royal Opera
House, Covent Garden, Davis. Philips 412 707-1
[A, 2].

TIPPETT:
Concerto for Double String Orchestra*;
Fantasia concertante on a Theme of Corelli**;
Concerto for Piano*; Symphonies for Piano*,
Nos. 1 and 2*; Quartet for Strings, No. 1, in A**.

Moscow Chamber Orchestra and Both Festi-
val Chamber Orchestra, Barshai**; Bath Festival
Orchestra, Tippett***; Philharmonia Orchestra,
Da-

vise**, Edinburgh Quartet, EMI EX 290228-5 [A, 2].
(Distributed by International Book & Rec-
order Distributors, 40-11 24th St., Long Island City,
NY, 11010.)

THE WORKS OF MICHAEL TIPPETT, WHO START-
ed writing music in his teens and is now past
eighties, are complex, thorny, and, unlike
many pieces turned out by his British com-
panions, neither immediately accessible nor
deliberately designed to appeal to conven-
tionally conditioned ears. To penetrate the
labyrinthine passages of Tippett’s music, the
listener must be braced for an idiom that is
not only idiosyncratic but unexpectedly and
uncompromisingly difficult.

Moreover, as a man who was willing to go
to prison during World War II rather than rec-
cant his pacifist views, Tippett believes
that art is inextricably bound up with the so-
cial conscience of the artist and his obliga-
tions to society. This feeling is reflected in
such powerful pieces as his oratorio, A Child
of Our Time (which deals with the murder of a
Nazi official in Paris by a Jewish boy), in his
symphonies (the vocal finale of the Third

Critics’ Choice

The most noteworthy releases reviewed recently

BRITTEN:
Choral Music.

Chance, Coxwell, Hayes, Salmon, Sears,
Unwin, Westminster Cathedral Choiristers,
Cordydon Singers, Best: Hyperion KA
66126, Jan.

CHOPIN:
Piano Music.

Perahia: CBS Masterworks IMT 39708,
Mar.

DEBUSSY:
Préludes, Bl. 2.

Rodriguez: Elan 1206, Mar.

FAURÉ:
Requiem; Cantique de jean Racine.

Ashton, Varcoe, Scott, Cambridge Singers,
City of London Sinfonia, Rutter: Collegi-
um COIC 101, Apr.

GINASTERA:
Piano Music.

Rodriguez: Elan 1202, Mar.

KHACHATURIAN:
Piano Concerto*.

PROKOFIEV:
Kapell; Boston Symphony Orchestra, Kous-
sevitzky*; Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Da-
rátí**. RCA Gold Seal AGM 1-5266, Jan.

REICH:
The Desert Music.

Reich, chorus, members of the Steve Reich
Ensemble, members of the Brooklyn Philhar-
monic Symphony Orchestra, Thomas: Nonesuch
79101-1, Apr.

ROSSINI:
Overtures (8).

Orpheus Chamber Orchestra: Deutsche
Grammophon 415 363-4, Apr.

STRAUSS, R.:
Guntram.

Tokody, Goldberg, Sólyom-Nagy, Göti,
Bàndi, Gregor, others; Hungarian People’s
Army Male Choir, Hungarian State Or-
chestra, Queler. CBS Masterworks 12M
39737, Mar.

VERDI:
Don Carlos.

Raimondi, Domingo, Nucci, Ghiaurov, Ric-
cciarelli, Valentini Terrani, Chorus and Or-
chestra of the Teatro alla Scala, Milan, Ab-
badó. Deutsche Grammophon 415
316-1, Jan.
contains a plea for mankind to display "a deeper mercy that no god has shown"), and in the more private world of his chamber music.

All four of the symphonies are now available in a single album from Philips, Nos. 1–3 in superbly controlled performances under Colin Davis, the Fourth led with characteristic flameburning by Sir Georg Solti. All require unusual concentration of a listener, but the effort is rewarding. Tippett's gods are Beethoven and Shakespeare; it is Beethoven who inspired the musical symphonies, the first of which the composer completed at forty. The Fourth—like the Seventh of Sibelius, more a symphonic tone poem than a conventional four-movement symphony—is one of the most dramatically effective in the series.

Tippett's preoccupation with Shakespeare is evident in The Knot Garden, which has recently been released by Philips. In this opera, there are not only thematic references to that most fantastic of comedies, The Tempest, but each of the contemporary characters actually corresponds to one in the play. There also are correspondences to various elements in Mozart's Così fan tutte in the eccentric, sometimes unexpectedly naive libretto that Tippett himself wrote, as well as in the intricately fashioned score. Yet it is not necessary to be conscious of these deliberative echoes to be thrilled by this curious musical drama about a group of confused and troubled people who bring their problems to Mangus, a sort of analyst whose stage ancestor is the soroerous Prospero and who helps them all make new beginnings. The Knot Garden does not have the sensuality, the dancing propulsion, of The Midsummer Marriage, but it is almost as full of mystery and magic, and the performance by the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, under Davis's direction—the singers, conductor, and orchestra are the same ones that took part in the opera's 1971 premiere—is simply stunning, as is the recorded sound.

As a present for Tippett's eightieth birthday, EMI last year put together a box containing, on two extended-length cassettes, a generous Tippett concert consisting of his Piano Concerto, the Concerto for Double String Orchestra, two piano sonatas, the first of his string quartets, and his Fantasia concertante on a Theme of Corelli. With some of the best performers in England on hand to interpret them, this program (made up of previous releases cleverly recombined) affords the listener a chance to become acquainted with the more introspective aspects of Tippett's many-faceted, sometimes puzzlingly eclectic style. Indeed, Sir Michael's willingness to experiment with blending seemingly irreconcilable approaches to composition in his own distinctive, still evolving idiom; his unexpected moments of humor; his unstinting compassion for the agonies of our age; and his deep emotions are all qualities absorbingly exemplified by this collection.

Paul Kersh

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MAY 1986 61
Oldies but (Mostly) Goodies

COURTIER:

Star Trek: The Original Television Soundtrack.

Courage. Neil Norman, exec. prod. GNP Crescendo GNP5 8006 (D). The Quality of the Star Trek Television series was not enhanced by its music. Without exception, the scores were mainstream efforts that revealed little of interest in their style or instrumentation. This album of original cues by Alexander Courage is for the course: Courage was a thorough professional who whipped up a pile of well-crafted segments of no particular musical distinction. Strip away the Trekkie nostalgia, and you've got a run-of-the-mill collection of production music. Although the cues on this album were written specifically for the episodes The Cage and Where No Man Has Gone Before, many of them were folded into the Star Trek stock library and used throughout the series. My pressing is noisy, but otherwise the digital transfers are fine.

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA:

Star Trek, Vol. 1 & 2.

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Bremner, John Losher and Clyde Allen, prods. Label "X". LKDR 703* and 704** (D). (Distributed by Fifth Continent Music Group.) Sudden, Star Trek television scores are beaming down everywhere. Here are two albums of newly recorded and arranged suites from scores originally written for six episodes. Volume 1 is a disappointment. George Dunning's score for Is There in Truth No Beauty? is dominated by a sultry theme that wears quickly. Gerald Fried managed a bit more thematic contrast in his music for Paradise Syndrome, but the whole is an exercise in Aural Crypts. Volume 2 is the one to have. Best of the lot are Jerry Fielding's Spectre of the Gun and Sol Kaplan's The Enormous. Within, Joseph Mullendore's Conscience of the King is aurally fattening but brief, and Samuel Matlovsky's 1. Mudd proves how difficult it is to write a good comic score. Pressings are flawless, the digital sound is appropriately rich and full, the playing of the Royal Philharmonic is right on the notes, and—surprisingly—annotation is non-existent.

UTAH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA:

Family Plot*; Notorious; Suspicion; Strangers on a Train (excerpts).

University of Utah A Cappella Chair*, Utah Symphony Orchestra, Ketcham, George Korn- gold, prod. Varese Sarabande 704.250 (D). VCD 47.225. A grand idea, grandly realized: music written for Alfred Hitchcock films by composers other than Bernard Herrmann. A brief cue from the John Williams score to Family Plot (1976) opens the set. The style is crisp, clean, and clever...something Mr. POPs hasn't managed all that often lately. Next come excerpts from Dimitri Tiomkin's Strangers on a Train (1951). Nobody over-scored quite like Tiomkin, but occasionally his mix of rough-edged Russian Romanticism, wide-screen Hollywood instrumentation, and Gershwinque jazz managed to hit the mark, and this was one of those times. Franz Waxman remains an underrated film music master; his score for Suspicion (1941) offers elegant argument that the conventional assessment should change. A brief suite from the 1946 Roy Webb score to Notorious (arranged and orchestrated by Christopher Palmer) makes a similarly strong case for a reexamination of Webb's oeuvre. Pro- ducer George Korngold has captured the Right sonic atmosphere (in digital, no less), while conductor Charles Ketcham does a fine job capturing the disparate styles involved. The Utah Symphony gives a believable imitation of the National Philharmonic, and Varese Sarabande's packaging and pressing are up to its high standard.

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Television's Greatest Hits.

Steve Gottlieb, prod. TeeVee Toons TVT 1100 (D, 2) @ (220 Central Park South, New York N.Y. 10019). Here's a long-overdue collection featuring 65 examples of the musical miniature. Lasting perhaps 90 seconds, a TV theme must in that short time define the nature of a program (sitcom, western, etc.) and its unique quality—all in a form capable of withstanding repeated hearings as well as extensive variation. This two-record set is both a delightful celebration of this littlegest art and a treasure trove for tube trivia buffs. The themes are blessedly unadorned, and most (though not all) are originals. The album's four sides are devoted to children's shows, sitcoms, adventures/westerns, and spy/police/detective dramas. Sound quality varies from theme to theme, but what is here is always listenable. This season, the best pictures from the tube may be found on your stereo system.

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

The Twilight Zone, Vol. 5.

Risty, prod. Varése Sarabande STV 81205 (A). This is the final installment in the most distinguished series in soundtrack recording history. The sonic and musical standards set in the previous four volumes [see "Submitted for Your Approval," August 1984], featuring original music from the Twilight Zone television series, are fully maintained. Included here are two more alternate main titles written by Bernard Herrmann, Nathan Van Cleve's melodramatic I Sing the Body Electric (the only TZ score in true stereo), Fred Steiner's plaintive Americana for The Passerby, Jeff Alexander's Dixieland-style The Trouble with Templeton, and Jerry Goldsmith's finely wrought western score Dust. Mastering, transfers, and sequencing are all superb.

FIVE NIGHTS AT FREDDY'S

Our resident expert on film and television soundtracks eyes a few recent releases.

BY NOAH ANDRÉ TRUDEAU

BROUGHTON:

Silverado.

Broughton, Bruce Broughton, prod. Geffen GHS 24080 (A).

BRUCE (THE BIRD AND THE ORIOLE) Broughton has made such a determined effort to evoke the classic sound of the Hollywood western that it seems appropriate to consider this offering among the oldies. Broughton is a disciple of the John Williams "bigger is better" school of scoring; every sound is bathed in a Grand Canyon-like ambiance, and just about every instrumental group has a larger-than-life presence. When Broughton isn't trying to sound like Elmer Bernstein or Williams, he actually has some interesting things to say. Unfortunately, those times are few and far between...like watering holes in the desert, pardner.
TWO MOZART QUARTETS FROM A CZECH GROUP

Quite aside from the fact that they're Nos. 1 and 2 of the famous set of six pieces dedicated to Haydn, it's not at all surprising that the Quartets in G, K. 387, and in D minor, K. 465, make up the first installment of the Kocian Quartet's recorded surveys of the Mozart literature. Along with the so-called Dissonance Quartet in C, K. 465, these head the list of Mozart's most frequently heard chamber music creations, as popular with audiences for their easy flow and dramatic contrasts of light and dark colors as they are with performers for their technical demands, and especially in K. 387) contrapuntal intricacy. In other words, they are test pieces, by which an ensemble can, for better or worse, be instantly judged.

The Prague-based foursome, only recently represented on recordings available in the West, does very well with them in both execution and interpretation. Formed in 1972 and named after the esteemed Czech violinist Jaroslav Kocian, the group produces the slightly edge sound—most prominent in the two lower instruments—characteristic of so many Eastern European ensembles, and its treatment of ornaments is perhaps a bit too snappish to suit the tastes of American listeners who have been paying attention to early music specialists. But otherwise the playing is wonderfully refined. So is the sound of the Compact Disc. My only complaint is with the dismal quality of the liner notes. (What are we to make of an essay that translates the German Wortlautung into "motivated hard work"?) Playing time: 58:50. (Denon CD 72298)

B. Z.

FALLA FROM BÁTIZ AND THE MEXICO STATE SYMPHONY

VARÈSE SARABANDE'S NEW COUPLING OF TWO STAPLES By Manuel de Falla—Nights in the Garden of Spain and the complete ballet The Three-cornered Hat—seems eminently competitive. Enrique Bátiz and the Mexico State Symphony offer idiomatic, rhythmically acute, and elegantly played performances. Bátiz's piano work at the outset of Nights, pianist Eva-Marie Zuk handles her solos extremely well; in the ballet, soprano Maria Luisa Salinas sings her brief solos nicely. I must add that for sheer visceral excitement, one would have to turn to the ancient, pre-Spanish Civil War recording by Enrique Arbis of the familiar suite from The Three-cornered Hat (excellently transferred recently on an In Sync cassette) to hear something comparable. The CD sound is admirably open, with details coming through consistently in proper perspective. Playing time: 56:09. (Varèse Sarabande VCD 47210)

B.Z.

FURTWÄNGLER AT BAYREUTH: BEETHOVEN'S NINTH

WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER'S HISTORIC PERFORMANCE of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony from the 1951 Bayreuth Festival has always been available on some label, and for good reason: Though his interpretation, with its wild fluctuations of tempo, has always been controversial, perhaps no other conductor (not even Toscanini) ever captured the visionary, ecstatic nature of this towering work as well as he. Unfortunately, the only LP pressing of this performance with good sound is the original HMV one, long out of the catalog. Such incarnations as the RCA and Seraphim reissues were near-travesties of the original. Things have been set right by this Angel CD, and it's like going home for Thanksgiving. The clarity and perspective almost make one think the recording is in stereo, and the renewed impact in the climaxes surpasses what is heard on the venerable LP original. Background noise (excluding the audience) is virtually nonexistent, which is a special boon to the superb chorus and soloists (Elsbeth Schwarzkopf, Elisabeth Hängen, Hans Hopf, and Otto Edelmann—as good a quartet as ever sang this piece). Highest recommendation. Playing time: 64:50. (Angel EMI CDC 47081)

B.Z.

REDISCOVERING A GENIUS OF THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

ONE OF THE MOST TRAGIC CASES IN THE HISTORY of composition is that of Rudi Stephan (1887-1915). Prior to his untimely death on a World War I battlefield, he had been hailed by critics as the most important German composer of the younger generation. There is a sad irony in his death, since just before it he wrote a letter to his mother in which he said he had a premonition of being wounded, but he hoped he wouldn't be shot in the head, because there was so much music flying around in there waiting to get out. You can guess where the bullet went.

Stephan's output was too small for one to say whether those German critics were right (this new Schwann Musica Mundi CD contains about one quarter of it), but what is heard here—Lehrzauber for baritone and orchestra, Muse for Orchestra, and Muse for Violin and Orchestra—nevertheless shows a formidable communicative talent. Stephan wrote in a basically conservative, tonal idiom, but his means of expression were impressingly individual. There is throughout these three sizable works an undercurrent of heartbreak and death, as if the composer knew of the little time he had. It's tempting
to compare his style with that of such older contemporaries as Pfitzner, Mahler, Zemlinsky, Schreker, and the early Schoenberg, but Stephan still lets his own personality—however difficult to pinpoint—shine through. (Genius is almost impossible to describe.)

The performances, featuring the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra under Hans Zender, seem completely authoritative, as do Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau's solo singing in Liebeszauber and Hans Maile's playing in the Music for Violin and Orchestra. The recorded sound has all the warmth and full perspective this music deserves. Playing time: 46:00. (Schwann Musica Mundi CD 1623-1. Distributed by German News Co., 220 E. 86th St., New York, N.Y. 10028.)

VERDI'S "FOUR SACRED PIECES," WITH MUTI AND THE BERLIN RICCARDO MUTI'S ANGEL LP RECORDING OF VERDI'S Quattro pezzi sacri with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, the Swedish Radio Choir, and the Stockholm Chamber Choir has been much praised for its incisiveness and incisive underlining of the composer's prophetic flight into modernism. Unfortunately, the sound on the black disk doesn't possess the clarity and impact the performance deserves. This is happily corrected by the CD issue, which brings everything right into focus, adding a strong bass line and notably greater dynamic range in the bargain. True, it would have been nice to have a filler included in this edition, but since the CD is incomparably superior in sound, it appears that people who love this music (I surely do) have no other choice but to dig a bit deeper into the pocket. Playing time: 39:54. (Angel EMI CDC 47066.)

GOLDEN "GOLDBERG" SET SERVED UP BY LEONHARDT GUSTAV LEONHARDT'S 1976 PERFORMANCE OF THE Goldberg Variations, now on CD, has risen above most of its pre-CD predecessors for reasons both artistic and technical, chief among them that Leonhardt's instincts for phrasing and his insight into style sustain the listener's interest from the outset. Used in this absorbing tour de force is a William Dowd harpsichord (Paris, 1755), fashioned, as the annotation states, after a Blanhet instrument made in Paris c. 1730. Such an instrument might well have been available when the music was first performed by the eminent Johann Gottlieb Goldberg himself, under the Princely patronage of Hermann Karl von Keyserlingk, Russian ambassador to the Saxon court, in 1733. Such touches are an inherent part of Leonhardt's appetite for authenticity, which feeds the dietary instincts of the connoisseur. Playing time: 47:06. (Pro Arte CDD 010.)

HARRELL PLAYS THE SIX SOLO CELLO SUITES OF BACH AS THE OFFSPRING OF AN ARTIST AS baritone Mack Harrell, cellist Lynn Harrell can take pride in having reached a similar plateau in his performing. His accounts of Bach's solo cello suites (B.W.V. 1007-12) are scintillating throughout, in a lyrical vein that might be said to derive from the influence of the elder Harrell, a former member of the Bach Aria Group. In all, it speaks well for what lies ahead on the cellist's path: high promise and productivity. Playing time: 127:23. (London 414 164/5-2.)

BARBER'S BEAUTIFUL CONCERTO PERFORMED BY SILVERSTEIN SUCCESSOR TO SUCH PRIOR OCCUPANTS OF the concertmaster's seat in the Boston Symphony Orchestra as Franz Kiesel, Frederic Fradin, and Richard Burgin, Joseph Silverstein is a first-rate example of violinstic virtuosity before becoming, at the start of the 1984 season, the conductor of the Utah Symphony. Of outstanding eloquence is his welcome new account of Samuel Barber's Violin Concerto, a work distinguished by its closeness in spirit to many of Barber's songs and the best parts of the opera Vanessa. Admirable accompaniment is provided by the Utah Symphony's associate conductor, Charles Ketcham. Silverstein goes on to speak his own piece on behalf of Barber by conducting the Prelude and Intermezzo from Vanessa, the School for Scandal Overture, and the Second Essay for Orchestra. Playing time: 48:54. (Pro Arte CDD 241.)

WITH KIRI TE KANAWA, IT'S "BLUE SKIES" TURNING GRAY NEW ZEALAND, WHERE KIRI TE KANAWA was born, is a long way from Broadway or even the West End of London, where she matured musically. So it is hardly surprising that the golden glow of Irving Berlin's "Blue Skies," "Kurt Weill's "Speak Low," or Richard Rodgers's "It Might as Well Be Spring," among the dozen offerings on this disc, is dimmer than one might wish in these renditions accompanied by Nelson Riddle and His Orchestra. We get too much of the gifted operatic artist's midrange and too little of the temperament and tunefulness the songs should have, in a sequence that makes the outcome monotonous. Playing time: 50:36. (London 414 666-2.)

FROM TOULOUSE, THE ARTFUL REQUIEM OF FAURE IN HIS NEARLY 90 YEARS OF PRODUCTIVITY (including a period when he was chapel master of La Madeleine in Paris), Gabriel Fauré ranged widely, composing the first music for Maurice Maeterlinck's Pelléas et Mélisande, much cherished chamber works, an innova-

tive series of songs, and this Requiem, here conducted by the able Michel Plisson of Toulouse, who earned considerable respect at the Metropolitan Opera in the late 1970s. Plisson's abilities as a conductor are reflected not merely in a persuasive outpouring of music wholly representative of the composer's statement: "I envisage death as a felicitous deliverance, a yearning for the happiness of the other world," but also in the choice of such singers as soprano Barbara Hendricks for the "Pie Jesu" and Jose van Dam for the "Libera Me." The brief Cantique de Jean Racine is well performed by chorus and orchestra. Playing time: 47:34. (Angel EMI CDC 47317.)

CLASSIC HERRMANN SCORE FOR HITCHCOCK THRILLER BERNARD HERRMANN'S CHURNING, BREATHE-LESSLY EXCITING SCORE FOR Alfred Hitchcock's 1959 film North by Northwest has rightfully become a classic, and it certainly lives up to this description on a two-year-old Unicorn-Kanchana LP with the London Studio Orchestra conducted by Laurie Johnson. Unfortunately, the CD transfer of it (now on Varèse Sarabande) can't be so enthusiastically recommended. Of course, the sonics remain real solar-plexus stuff, but the playing time is chintzy, while the LP's copious program notes are missing. Those of you with the LP might just as well hold on to it and save some money. Playing time: 36:54. (Varèse Sarabande CDC 47205.)
Abbey Lincoln is fondest of the role she created for herself: jazz singer.

When singer Abbey Lincoln gives her autograph, she append the name “Aminata Moseka.” During her pilgrimage to Africa in 1975, she was christened “Aminata” by the president of Guinea in recognition of her inner strength and determination. Zaire’s minister of education likened her to Moseka, the god of love in female form. “I love Aminata Moseka,” I’ve added her to myself. But I can’t say that’s my one and only name,” admits Lincoln, who has taken many names and experienced several rebirths in her fifty-five years and who invests as much thought and feeling in conversation as she does in her songs. “It’s more like a title, something to live up to. That’s what I saw in Stevie Wonder’s ‘Golden Lady,’ too, the opportunity to sing to a female god. But I’m still Abbey Lincoln; I still like to wear makeup and glittering dresses and look attractive.

moved to rural Calvin Center, Michigan. “I still remember the sound of my father’s voice as he sang lullabies to me and my baby sister. He was a fine singer who might have become a professional if he and my mother hadn’t had so many children. But they had a wonderful, lifelong love affair, and we were the result. He did odd jobs around the community, and my first exposure to music was from the records he got from neighbors. I sang in school pageants and in the church choir, though I never much enjoyed that. I preferred to sing alone—to be the centerpiece. The living-room piano was my private space, once I discovered that singing could win me attention and admiration.”

At nineteen, she began her professional career as Gabby Woolridge. “I was Gabby for two years because the owners of the Moulin Rouge in Los Angeles wanted all their girls to have French-sounding names. They didn’t realize that Anna

Francis Davis is the author of In the Moment: Jazz in the 1980s, scheduled to be published this fall by Oxford University Press.
"My songs are autobiographical, about the world as I encounter it."

Marie was French; it was Woodrige that was the problem. They knew less about their European heritage than I knew about my African heritage, which was nothing." She discarded the surname soon after an aged white millionaire also named Woodrige spotted a mention of her in a newspaper and wrote to inquire whether she was his long-lost heir. "That's when I realized that although 'Woodrige' was the name my father handed down, it wasn't really ours.

At that time, her manager was Bob Russell, best known for his lyrics to Duke Ellington's "Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me," and "Don't Get Around Much Anymore." "Recognizing something potentially fierce and proud and independent in me, Bob renamed me Abby Lincoln. He said, jokingly, 'Well, she Lincoln didn't really free the slaves, but maybe you will.' As a promotional gimmick, Liberty Records sent discs jockeying a photo of me dressed in one of those Marilyn Monroe-type skin-tight dresses and superimposed over President Lincoln's face on a penny. That was ridiculous, but the name worked magic on my life. As Abby Lincoln, I acquired a reputation as a woman warrior.

But for the painted lady, There is a point and star, And yes, that ask a question, I, she going anywhere? ("Painted Lady," Mosack Music, BMI)

The covers of her first few albums trace Lincoln's growing self-awareness. Affair, her debut, released in 1956 and subtitled I Star of a Girl in Love, shows her lounging centerfold-style like a sepa Julie London. "That was the way they packaged women singers then, and I went along with it because I didn't know any better. I didn't yet think of myself as a serious artist—or as a serious person either. All I wanted was to be thought of as beautiful and desirable."

But on her next few albums, the fortitude that was coming to light in her singing also became manifest in the poses she struck for the camera. Gaining a sense of herself as a black woman, she took herself off the sexual auction block. "Through Max [Roach, whom she married in 1962], I met a circle of black musicians and other artists. It was the early days of the civil rights movement, and we were all asking the same questions. But they were questions that glamour girls weren't supposed to ask. As I toured the country, I noticed that black people everywhere were living in slums, in abject poverty. I wanted to know why."

"Gone were the strings that had accompanied her on Affair. Her delivery hadn't improved, but she was now recording with top-rank jazz players like Roach, Sonny Rollins, Wynton Kelly, and Kenny Dorham, and often her material was topical. Although she continued to do standards, she banished from her repertoire songs about unrequited love and "no-good men who didn't know how to treat women. I discovered that you become what you sing. You can't repeat lies night after night as though they were prayer without having them come true in your life."

By 1961, when she collaborated with Roach and lyricist Oscar Brown, Jr., on We Insist! Freedom Now Suite (the original cover shows a recantment of a sit-in at a segregated Southern lunch counter), she'd been branded an outspoken, intractable militant. Record companies considered her too hot to handle. "I would run into my old show-business associates, who would be surprised to see me looking pretty much the way I had always looked. They would say, 'Abby, we heard you were living in Greenwich Village, wearing black woolen stockings, and sleeping with musicians.' The word was out on me, and I was in plenty of trouble. But at least it was trouble of my own choosing. Before, encouraged to portray a woman of easy virtue, I was on the road to loneliness and despair."

Over the last two decades, Lincoln's records have been few. Less the result of a lingering backlash than of the American recording industry's antipathy toward jazz. In concert, with her regal bearing and forthright declamation, Lincoln conveys an actress's riveting stage presence without indulging in salacious flirtation, histrionic bathos, or sociopolitical cant. Jazz critic Martin Williams once saluted Billie Holiday as an actress without an act—and that accolade also describes Lincoln, who did in fact enjoy a sporadic film career. She appeared in the 1956 rock exploitation flick The Girl Can't Help It, costarred with Ivan Dixon in the acclaimed, independently produced 1964 film Nothing but a Man, and played Sidney Poitier's love interest in the 1968 romantic comedy For Love of Ivy.

"With Ivy, my life reached a peak," she says. "Then it slid right into a valley again. Ivy's producers optioned the rights to Holiday's autobiography, Lady Sings the Blues, for Lincoln, but finally the story was resold to Motown's Berry Gordy, who cast his own star, Diana Ross. 'Billie came into Birdland one night to see Dizzy Gillespie play,' Lincoln recalls. 'Max and I were there, too. I'm so lonely,' she told me. 'Louis [McKay, her husband] is in California on business, and I'm sitting at home polishing my nails and going crazy.' And everybody knew that Lou was living it up a few blocks away with a woman who called herself Broadway Betty. That's the worst lie they told in the movie.

(continued on page 79)
Silly Love Songs

THE JESUS AND MARY CHAIN:

Psycho Candy.

The Jesus and Mary Chain, prods Reprise 25383-1, (Distributed by Warner Bros.)

The Jesus and Mary Chain are the wonder-fullest. They are the world without end, ahem, they are the perfect merger of the Archies and Joy Division that we’ve needed for so long and not even known it. Sure! There are some acoustic guitars on Psycho Candy, but most of it is more like “It’s So Hard,” the toxic landfill of awful electric guitar noise.

This album layers so much shrieking guitar feedback over the horizon that instead of screwing up your inards it makes you laugh. Nobody else has made so much noise, stacked up like a Dagwood sandwich, so much fun.

Just as the hype about these four leather boys from Scotland abates back in the United Kingdom, where Psycho Candy was a No. 1 record for three months, the storm pummels the Atlantic coast. Initially, blasphemy got them ink at home (they tried to name a B-side “Jesus Suck”). Then it was the shock of how they fastened their guitar howl to some classic pop chassis—Phil Spector, the Beach Boys, the Beatles—that built a following. Spontaneous they’re not: When I saw them, guitarist William Reid struck a show-long pose with his back to the audience, and singer Jim (his brother) was impassive behind shades and bohemian cool. All in all, you could have been forgiven if you mistook the JAMC for a Conceptualism 101 project. Everything about them is packaged and
thought through, like, like a U.K. band, Roxy Music. And they share a common theme with that classic '70s cult group: some kind of love. At a time when John Lydon pulls off one of the few original love songs around (on the Golden Palomino's *Visions of Excess*), the JAMC come up with a new way of postulating the exhilaration of romance as it careens ahead into nowhere knows what—and the degradation when it curdles.

The lyrics suggest the psychedelic—"I could something crawl within the rubb unhalted hue"—is once—but these guys are not hippie love children. The Reids have a taste for the more, um, picaresque details of various mating rituals, an interest in exploring the porn districts of the soul. One of the few out-and-out happy songs, "The Living End," is no less disturbing than the downers. It sounds like Iggy Pop and Tommys James meeting in a midair collision, but the words are pure Iggy: about fast and non—about living in the end, "is no less disturbing than the Excess)."

Reid's name once, he has to repeat it—this is the time in good-natured mockery—as the Del-Lords' guitars swarm around him in fond emulation of Elvis sideman James Burton. Full of camp desecration and outright awe, the moment seems to ask some good questions—among them, what is Elvis's dream worth now? Johnny Comes Marching Home provides a possible answer. Bearing down on the easy joy of rockabilly with the cramped momentum of punk, the Del-Lords' songs can sound weary and anemic in the same breath; the way "Dream Come True" springs full-blown from a quote of "If I Had a Hammer" is both crazy and heart-tugging.

On its 1984 debut, Frontier Days, the band jostled Alfred Reed's Depression-era lament "How Can a Poor Man Stand Such Times and Live" into a raging, Reagan-era protest. Here chief singer/songwriter Scott Kempner takes on more voices of the forgotten with greater detail: A man at a diner longs to save a waitress from her rotten job ("No Waitress No More"), a veteran offers a quiet prayer for peace ("Soldier's Home"). Kempner's concern trips him up only once, on "Against My Will," a perfectly well-intentioned song about hijacked Americans taken hostage "in the name of God" that can't live up to the complexity of its subject. (Tip-off lyric: "There are no words that can describe this feeling.") But small truths, not podium analysis, are this band's forte, as in Kempner's hilarious rejoicing during a search for "True Love" that he found a parking place. And on this album, there's a greater chance of those small truths getting across to the audience they deserve. Producer Neil Geraldo, Pat Benatar's guitarist, gives the band's guitars a wailing compression that can stand up to the symphonic hysteria that's passing for rock 'n' roll on the airwaves. (Pick to click: the shattered romanticism of "Love Lies Dying.") In 30 years, some guy tuning in a request show could very well be jolted out of his blue mood by the Del-Lords.

**Buckwheat Zydeco:**

We're for You.

Scott Billington, prod. Rounder 2051. TO THROUGH OFTEN CONSIDERED ONE OF THE MOST PURIST FORMS IN AMERICAN POP, ZYDECO IS ALSO SHOW-BAND MUSIC. AT HOME IN LOUISIANA, THESE GROUPS PLAY four to six sets a night, exclusively for dancers. They have to know a bit of everything—only a few originals can be slipped in between covers of current and past hits of the region and (increasingly) the radio, whether country, blues, soul, rock, or traditional. They'd be the last to call themselves purists. Occasionally somebody busts through with a national hit—as Rockin' Sidney did last year with "My Foot Too"—but invariably returns quickly to the old circuit, where the reigning champ is accordionist Buckwheat Zydeco (Stanley "Buckwheat" Dural, Jr.) and his I.B. Sontee Partis Band.

Unlike most of his previous efforts, which played up the genre's ethnic angle, this is a show-band album. "Think It Over One More Time" and "Buck's Step-Up," the
two originals, are both pretty routine, but they won’t drive dancers off the floor. The unlikely gem of the set is a husky, reggae-fied instrumental version of Peter Nledge’s soul classic “Warm and Tender Love,” with trumpeter Calvin Landry swaying the melody. The title song, once a pop hit for Lee Dorsey, gets a similar rhythmic treatment. On Buckwheat’s soul-strutting blues cover of Denise LaSalle’s recent hit “Someone Else Is Steppin’ In,” his accordion snakes through the song like a Hammond organ. And then a whole horn section. Here also the sonorous arrangement and conversational vocals of “Your Man Is Home Tonight,” another timely soul-funk hit; a metronomic rendition of fats Domino’s “Walking to New Orleans,” with Buckwheat in his warmest country-boy voice; and a lead line syncopated, pull-mell-um take on the Dirty Dozen Brass Band’s “My Feet Can’t Fail Me Now.” Mix in Buckwheat’s interpretations of the traditional “Lache Pas La Patate” and “Lee Nah Nah,” and you’ve got what could well be a typical set in a Louisiana club.

Buckwheat is a nimble and insinuating frontman: He gives Landry more solo room to reconcile their heritage with Western commercialism and French culture. Their curious upscale snareticism—African rhythms, funk energy, and nasal Arab harmonies, in the guise of an electro-Euro-pop band—is more fusion than roots, but let’s not blame the assimilationist. Now, I’ve got my qualms about Zazou Bikaye, especially the cover art of Mr. Manager picturing a balloon-lipped black man living through the air, but the group’s synths-based, quadrilingual sound is surely more rooted in the African sensibility than the music of Malcolm McLaren or Peter Gabriel. And Zazou Bikaye personifies both the dilemma and the potential of the African in Paris. It must be strange residing in the métro, keeping one ear to the motherland and the other to black America while trying to be French (a Congolese playwright recently recounted his schoolmasters’ punishment for not speaking French: a bag of feces tied over the head). But such strangeness provided the synthesis that spawned blues and jazz in America.

Algerian synthesizer whiz Hector Zazou shows signs of this awareness with a concept as orchestral as anyone’s short of Joe Zawinul’s. His synth spews forth bass, keyboard, and percussion lines as complete and complementary (if familiar) ideas, having down group’s synths-based, quadrilingual sound is surely more rooted in the African sensibility than the music of Malcolm McLaren or Peter Gabriel. And Zazou Bikaye personifies both the dilemma and the potential of the African in Paris. It must be strange residing in the métro, keeping one ear to the motherland and the other to black America while trying to be French (a Congolese playwright recently recounted his schoolmasters’ punishment for not speaking French: a bag of feces tied over the head). But such strangeness provided the synthesis that spawned blues and jazz in America.

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of song you put on when everyone at your party looks tired and disgusted. Ditto for the bouncy hip-trasher and follow-up, "Can You Feel the Beat."" This Is Cult Jam" and "Behind My Eyes," however, have to grow on you. "You'll Never Change" and "Private Property" are more immediate. On the former, Lisa cops a superwoman attitude when her man wrongs her, and on the latter, there's more bad news, guys: The babe can live without you, too. Propelled by a pumping bass and a thick piano figure, "Private Property" doubles back on itself before breaking down into ominous minimalism, sending your midsection for a ride.

Lisa Lisa's handling of the sole ballad here, a duet with Full Force's Lou George called "All Cried Out," doesn't deserve to be buried in analog smudge, and the CD translation lifts it out. Like the best blues and country singers, she tugs on your heart. Then, over hushed instrumentation, George pulls some more. But don't cry for this Brooklyn group. Despite their "Cult Jam" tag, they're rocking the world.

Besides having greater timbral detail, the CD benefits from a higher groove factor (increased dynamic range). The drums and bass tighten up: More ear candy, even bits of (pleasant) track leakage, reveals itself, and stereo imaging is seemingly improved. For me, though, the greatest virtue of this format is getting to hear Full Force's funky, choirboy harmonies in all their dreaminess. They are the ingredient, atop the hoopiness, that gives Lisa Lisa and Cult Jam their singular luminosity. The voice and instrument crispness, as well as some of these EQ adjustments, could have gone onto the LP. But I am told, the record was rush-released, perhaps cutting short the usual dialogue between producer and mastering engineer. Thank goodness more time was spent on the CD master; now you can really hear one of the records that's helping balance out black music's surfeit of Prince and Arthur Baker clones.

Havelock Nelson

JIMMY JOHNSON:
Bar Room Preacher.
Disques Black & Blue, prod. Alligator AL 4744.

THE ROBERT CRAY BAND:
False Accusations.
Bruce Bromberg and Dennis Walker, prods.
Hightone HT 8005.

TO A RELIEVER IN THE ELEGIAC AND CATHARTIC QUALITIES OF THE BLUES, THE BEST BANDS ARE THOSE NOT TOO PROUD TO PLY THEIR TRADE IN BARS—THOSE TO WHOM "BAR BAND" IS AN EXISTENCE, NOT A CONCEPT. AND I DON'T MEAN TO PIGEONHOLE THE GENRE OR CONDEMN IT TO OBSCURITY AND THE MUSICIANS TO POVERTY. IT'S JUST THAT THE BLUES, AT ITS BEST, IS STILL SO DAMN PERSONAL THAT MASS MARKETING CAN'T HELP BUT STEAMROLL INDIVIDUALITY. LIKE PUNK, LIKE FUNK, THE BLUES IS ABOUT AN ATTITUDE. THOSE THAT PROJECT THIS IN AN ARENA, MORE POWER TO 'EM. BUT THERE ARE MANY WHO CAN'T, DON'T, OR WON'T WHO STILL DESERVE A LISTEN.

Jimmy Johnson, the Mississippi-born, Chicago-based guitarist who received a lot of ink five years ago for the witty lyrics on Johnson's Whacks, actually suffered for his overnight recognition. Seemed like everybody expected him to keep churning out those puns, which he did at the expense of the music. His newest, Bar Room Preacher (recorded and released in France as Hear Sea on Blue Phoenix), is more indicative of his talents, especially his subtle phrasing and an attack that stresses control and clarity rather than speed and volume. Johnson's band is the type of crack, funky outfit that can hit a groove so tight and understated that a greased rubber glove couldn't fit through the cymbales. His whining, gospel-inflected tenor, though limited in range, can growl seductively on the trash-talkin', spare vamp "Chicken Head," warble longingly on the slow blues "When My First Wife Left Me," and shout on the shuffles "Happy Home" and "Little by Little."

Whereas Johnson is rooted in the considered, piercing style of Chicago's West Side guitarists (like Magic Sam and Fenont Robinson), Robert Cray is something of a young upstart from the rain forests of the North-west. In two previous albums, he has tried to blend breezy '60s pop hooks (à la Arthur Alexander), soul, and blues, with moderate success. On False Accusations, Cray transcends the merely facile and sheds some of his sock-hop affectations. Obviously influenced by Albert King, he has always told a good if simple story lyrically. But here his hollow-toned, lirubricious guitar fleshes things out, and so does a combo that is cleverly supportive, if not always hip on ensemble interplay. "Sonny," a tale of betrayal akin to Bobby Womack's "I Wish You Didn't Trust Me So Much," is heartaching, while stark ballads like "She's Gone," reminiscent of Johnnie Taylor's plaintive doogin' tunes, are downright haunting. As a singer, Cray stretches from throaty plaints to a chilling falsetto in rich, authoritative tones. He's not, as of yet, the future of the blues, but Cray, like Johnson, has found a voice in this confessional music that can distill the most painful and jovous truths.

Don Palmer

SHANKAR/ CAROLINE:
The Epidemics.
Shankar/Caroline, prods. ECM 25039-1E.

ZAPPA SIDEMEN ACHIEVE THAT WHAT FRANK HIRES THEM IN THE FIRST PLACE. THINK OF LOWELL GEORGE, ADRIAN BELEW, MR. AND MS. BOZZIO, THE BRECKER BROTHERS. THE JURY IS STILL OUT ON L. SHANKAR AND STEVE VAI, BUT THEIR CURRENT LP IS DAMNING EVIDENCE AGAINST THEM. TOUTED AS ECM'S FIRST FORAY INTO ROCK (WHAT ABOUT LATE-SEVENTIES PAT METHENY, C. NEW CHANTS AND AMERICAN GARAGE?), THE EPIDEMICS IS SOMETHING WITHOUT SUBSTANCE.

The usually fiery Vai sounds surprisingly wooden, turning in formulaic rhythms and struggling through his solo on "Never Take No for an Answer." When he finally begins to soar at the end of the astringent "You Can Be Anything," it's hardly worth his (or our) effort. Brand X bassist Percy Jones also exhibits uncharacteristic caution. While billed as one of the group's leaders, Caroline's role on The Epidemics is relatively inaudible, save for a few vocals. In fact, the most consistently inspired player is the drum machine.

JOHNSON CANT', DOESNT', OR WONT' PLAY ARENA BLUES

DON PALMER
Shankar’s last rock album (1979’s Touch Me There) at least benefited from Zappa’s tasteless/satirical touch, guest vocalists (including “Sansui Homes” himself), and instrumentals that showed off Shankar the violinist. Here he limits himself to fills and short, mostly uninspired solos, preferring to put the singers up front. Shankar’s voice is rather colorless, and Caroline’s is thin, but this would be less noticeable if the lyrics didn’t consist of endless repetitions of clichéd titles like “Give an Inch” or “You Don’t Love Me Anymore.”

“Situation” is one of the few tunes where the band really cuts loose, Jones exploring some harmonic range while Shankar finally lays into a solo. Yet the tone of The Epiphanes is best summed up by this song’s lyric: “Have you ever been/In a situation/When you felt like a fool.” Wonder if Shankar wrote those words after listening to the rough mix.

**Henry Threadgill Sextet:**

**Subject to Change.**

Ed Fishman, Alphonse Mouzon, and Larry Shergold. prod. About Time AT 1007. (Distributed by New Music Distribution Service, 500 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012.)

**Subj ect to Change, the Third Record by the Henry Threadgill Sextet, picks up precisely where the celebrated just the Facts and Pass the Bucket left off, with an exquisitely played composition about a fictional figure, Trinity Deliverance. “Just Trinitis the Man” begins with a swirling pattern created by Threadgill, cellist Deirdre Murray, and bassist Fred Hopkins, played over the elusive rhythms of drummers Pheeroan Aklaff and John Betch. This is punctuated by the staccato notes of trombonist Ray Anderson and trumpeter Rusal Siddik. Then, suddenly, a scalar section leads to chipper syncopations, over which Anderson solos exuberantly. The variety, fluency, and good humor in “Just Trinitis the Man” typifies much of Subject to Change, which is marred, it seems to me, only by Threadgill’s inclusion of two unfortunate vocal performances. One is Aklaff’s barely audible recitation of a clichéd poem; the other, “A Piece of Software,” offers Amina Myers’s agile and expressive singing of such lines as “I believe in life—and death.”

Much more satisfying is the title cut, which slips from a kind of fanfare into a bright, aggressive section dominated by Threadgill’s harsh-toned alto. Later, Murray solos frenetically over staccato chords played by the band on waves of increasing and decreasing volume; the accompanying figures Threadgill writes are often as interesting as his themes. Throughout the album, the flowing rhythms of Aklaff buoy the band, whether it’s focusing on long tones in “Higher Places” or jumping to the near & beat of “This.” Threadgill does not solo much on this L.P. Perhaps, as with Ellington, the orchestra is becoming his instrument. At any rate, his Sextet is one of the best bands around, and Subject to Change, though slightly less illusionary than its predecessors, shows why Threadgill is the young jazz composer to watch.

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**Jazz**

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Ed Fishman, Alphonse Mouzon, and Larry Shergold. prod. About Time AT 1007. (Distributed by New Music Distribution Service, 500 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012.)

**SUBJECT TO CHANGE, THE THIRD RECORD BY THE HENRY THREADGILL SEXTET, PICKS UP PRECISELY WHERE THE CELEBRATED JUST THE FACTS AND PASS THE BUCKET LEFT OFF, WITH AN EXQUISETLY PLAYED COMPOSITION ABOUT A FICTITIOUS FIGURE, TRINITY DELIVERANCE. "JUST TRINITIS THE MAN" BEGINS WITH A SWIRLING PATTERN CREATED BY THREADGILL, CELLOIST DEIRDRE MURRAY, AND BASSIST FRED HOPKINS, PLAYED OVER THE ELUSIVE RHYTHMS OF DRUMMERS PHEEROAN AKLAFF AND JOHN BETCH. THIS IS PUNCTUATED BY THE STACCATO NOTES OF TROMBONIST RAY ANDERSON AND TRUMPETER RUSAL SIDDIK. THEN, SUDDENLY, A SCALAR SECTION LEADS TO CHIPPER SYNCOPEATIONS, OVER WHICH ANDERSON SOLOS EXUBERANTLY. THE VARIETY, FLUENCY, AND GOOD HUMOR IN "JUST TRINITIS THE MAN" TYPifies MUCH OF SUBJECT TO CHANGE, WHICH IS MARRED, IT SEEMS TO ME, ONLY BY THREADGILL'S INCLUSION OF TWO UNFORTUNATE VOCAL PERFORMANCES. ONE IS AKLAFF'S BARELY AUDIBLE RECEPTION OF A ClichéD POEM; THE OTHER, "A PIECE OF SOFTWARE," OFFERS AMINA MYER'S AGILE AND EXPRESSIVE SINGING OF SUCH LINES AS "I BELIEVE IN LIFE—AND DEATH."

MUCH MORE SATISFYING IS THE TITLE CUT, WHICH SLIPS FROM A KIND OF FANFARE INTO A BRIGHT, AGGRESSIVE SECTION DOMINATED BY THREADGILL'S HARSH-TONED ALTO. LATER, MURRAY SOLOS FRENETICALLY OVER STACCATO CHORDS PLAYED BY THE BAND ON WAVES OF INCREASING AND DECREASING VOLUME; THE ACCOMPANYING FIGURES THREADGILL WRITES ARE OFTEN AS INTERESTING AS HIS THEMES. THROUGHOUT THE ALBUM, THE FLOWING RHYTHMS OF AKLAFF BOUy THE BAND, WHETHER IT'S FOCUSING ON LONG TONES IN "HIGHER PLACES" OR JUMPING TO THE NEAR & BEAT OF "THIS." THREADGILL DOES NOT SOLO MUCH ON THIS L.P. PERHAPS, AS WITH ELLINGTON, THE ORCHESTRA IS BECOMING HIS INSTRUMENT. AT ANY RATE, HIS SEXTET IS ONE OF THE BEST BANDS AROUND, AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE, THOUGH SLIGHTLY LESS ILLUSIONARY THAN ITS PREDECESSORS, SHOWS WHY THREADGILL IS THE YOUNG JAZZ COMPOSER TO WATCH.

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**Jazz**

**HENRY THREADGILL SEXTET:**

**Subject to Change.**

Ed Fishman, Alphonse Mouzon, and Larry Shergold. prod. About Time AT 1007. (Distributed by New Music Distribution Service, 500 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012.)

**Subject to Change, the Third Record by the Henry Threadgill Sextet, picks up precisely where the celebrated just the Facts and Pass the Bucket left off, with an exquisitely played composition about a fictional figure, Trinity Deliverance. “Just Trinitis the Man” begins with a swirling pattern created by Threadgill, cellist Deirdre Murray, and bassist Fred Hopkins, played over the elusive rhythms of drummers Pheeroan Aklaff and John Betch. This is punctuated by the staccato notes of trombonist Ray Anderson and trumpeter Rusal Siddik. Then, suddenly, a scalar section leads to chipper syncopations, over which Anderson solos exuberantly. The variety, fluency, and good humor in “Just Trinitis the Man” typifies much of Subject to Change, which is marred, it seems to me, only by Threadgill’s inclusion of two unfortunate vocal performances. One is Aklaff’s barely audible recitation of a clichéd poem; the other, “A Piece of Software,” offers Amina Myers’s agile and expressive singing of such lines as “I believe in life—and death.”

Much more satisfying is the title cut, which slips from a kind of fanfare into a bright, aggressive section dominated by Threadgill’s harsh-toned alto. Later, Murray solos frenetically over staccato chords played by the band on waves of increasing and decreasing volume; the accompanying figures Threadgill writes are often as interesting as his themes. Throughout the album, the flowing rhythms of Aklaff buoy the band, whether it’s focusing on long tones in “Higher Places” or jumping to the near & beat of “This.” Threadgill does not solo much on this L.P. Perhaps, as with Ellington, the orchestra is becoming his instrument. At any rate, his Sextet is one of the best bands around, and Subject to Change, though slightly less illusionary than its predecessors, shows why Threadgill is the young jazz composer to watch.

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gin in particular is a conscientious soloist. His first improvisation, on his long title composition, moves logically and carefully through several moods, starting with a bright, skipping lyricism and ending with discontented growls and strangled sounds.

On an appropriately mournful version of Ornette Coleman’s “Lonely Woman,” the curve of his solo takes the opposite course, from a calm beginning through slow excitation to climax. The real freedom here is on a moment-to-moment basis, in the way Ragin interacts with drummer Thurman Barker, who coordinates a usually light but busy touch with an attentive ear, and bassist John Lindberg, whose support is consistently inventive and whose strikingly rhythmic solos show dramatic flair.

Anderson and his cohorts have fashioned a program equally as varied and somewhat more structured than Ragin’s, though the former’s vigorous attack makes the trumpeter seem almost decorous. No longer the unwieldy instrument it seemed amidst the milieu of virtuosic precision that was bop, the trombone has both developed conceptually and reached back tonally with the advent of looser forms. And so Anderson, who isn’t afraid to use the reed, nuxx sounds the cornet is heir to, manages to sound simultaneously earthy and advanced on cuts like bassist Mark Helias’s “Question Mark” and his own “Stoll Stroler.” As on the Ragin set, the rhythm plays both a freely expressive and a supportive role, though as the billing this time suggests, a more aggressive one.

Drummer Gerry Hemingway’s most impressive contribution is the composition “Edward’s Dance,” dedicated to Ornette’s drummer Ed Blackwell. Its-suite like structure allows the musicians to go from a festive Caribbean style to avant-garde textural experiments. After Anderson throws in some atavistic mute work, the whole thing is topped off with a stretch of kick-azz swing. Throughout all this mixing and matching, the group manages to maintain its case of approach. In fact, it’s this facility, along with the enthusiastic delight the Ragin and Anderson trios bring to jazz’s hard-won freedoms, that makes Metaphysical Question and You Be two of the most purely pleasurable records I’ve heard in some time.

Richard C. Walks

THE CANNONBALL ADDERLEY QUINTET:
The Cannonball Adderley Quintet in San Francisco.

Orrin Keepnews, prod. Riverside FCD 656-1157. © Original Jazz Classics/Riverside OJC 035. (Distributed by Fantasy.)

CANNONBALL ADDERLEY WITH BILL EVANS:
Know What I Mean?


ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR Bandleaders of the late Fifties and Sixties, alto saxophonist Cannonball Adderley and his quintet made a number of hit recordings, beginning with “This Here” from The Cannonball Adderley Quintet in San Francisco. (Inevitably, “This Here” brought forth a sequel, “Dat Dere,” a new take of which has been reissued on Them Dirty Blues, Landmark LP 1301—the first in a series of LPs, also distributed by Fantasy, that will make up “The Cannonball Adderley Collection.”)

The LP issue of the San Francisco date was an instant and—judging from Orrin Keepnews’s notes on this reissue—unexpected popular success. It featured Adderley’s big, buttery, extroverted tone and his almost raucous virtuosity in blues performances that had an immediate impact on audiences ready for his references to gospel music and country blues. His quintet was always a tightly swinging group; much of the credit goes to the rhythm section of bassist Sam Jones and drummer Louis Hayes. And keyboardist Bobby Timmons (who wrote “This Here”), Adderley, and Cannonball’s cornetist brother Nat, were always able to come up with readily appealing compositions—remember “Work Song”?

Not that Adderley was unadventurous. This date includes Randy Weston’s challenging “Hi-Fly,” whose melody sounds like a hiccup, and a version of Oscar Pettiford’s bebop classic “Bohemia After Dark.” In San Francisco captures a good night of a group that would become one of the trendsetters of the Sixties.

Though Adderley later proved himself willing to exploit the soul groove, he continued throughout his career to alternate quintet recording dates and one-of-a-kind studio summit meetings. On Know What I Mean?, a quartet recording made in 1961 with Bill Evans, he rather perks up the lyrical pianist—who in turn, using characteristically sophisticated harmonies and a carefully modulated touch, makes Adderley test himself with an unusually ambitious repertoire, including Evans’s own “Waltz for Debby,” the title cut, and John Lewis’s “Venice.” Adderley seems to burst through Evans’s demure introduction to “Waltz for Debby”; on Gordon Jenkins’s ballad “Goodbye” he is restrained and affecting, Know What I Mean? is satisfying and substantial, and the sound on this Compact Disc, as on the quintet set, is solid and realistic.

Michael Ullman

FREDDIE HUBBARD AND WOODY SHAW:
Double Take.

© Michael Cusco, prod. Blue Note BST 85121. © (Distributed by Capitol Records.)

DOUBLe TAKe IS AS MUCH A DISPLAY OF INTELLIGENT production as it is a stylistic triumph for its two protagonists. Instead of staging a “trumpet madness” showdown between the most exciting and excitable of Clifford

Evans, the former's title cut Treatment of Munch's Hubard

CANNONBALL ADDERLEY: HE INVENTED THE SOUL GROOVE IN JAZZ. THEN HE EXPLOITED IT.
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Brown’s children, the powers-that-be went the classy route. Nothing is arbitrary on this record: All the details that determine a session’s personality—song selection, instrumentation, programming—were obviously mulled over long and hard. The forethought paid off.

Freddie Hubbard and Woody Shaw have always been temperamental players; without a top-notch backing group and challenging material to sink their teeth into, their work turns either lackluster or excessive. By ironing out these problems, Double Take gives us the best Shaw and Hubbard we’ve had in years. The album is set up as a paean to the great trumpeters. Four cuts refer directly to earlier influences: “Sandu” (Brown), “Lotus Blossom” (Kenny Dorham), “Lament for Booker” (Booker Little), and—the hippest choice of all—“Bopera,” from a 1948 Fats Navarro/Howard McGhee recording, which established the precedent for Double Take. There is nothing reverential in Hubbard’s and Shaw’s playing, though; both of these infamous extroverts indulge in forceful, terse blowing. Their styles are distinct and instantly recognizable. Hubbard embodies the machismo of the fire-breathing hard bop players, while Shaw’s attack is more studied, his notes flowing with rounder tones. Shaw’s even-temperened sets off Hubbard’s knock-em-dead swaggering.

But again, it’s the little organizing touch that give Double Take its sheen. The trumpeters play unfashionably short solos and rarely face off, thus dispensing with the gunfighter mentality that often turns these encounters into competitive exhibitions. With the pressure off, Hubbard and Shaw can relax and have fun. When they finally do tangle, as in the four-bar exchanges at the climax of “Lotus Blossom,” the tension is that much more acute. The new Blue Note’s commitment to classic re-signed artists doesn’t often come through in the grooves; Double Take is a notable exception.
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Leading Lady

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 66) she'd had a man as faithful to her as the Billy Dee Williams character, her life might not have been so tragic. The problem was that although she could have had any man she wanted, she was never attracted to anyone who would have been good to her.

"In a way, it's best that I didn't play Billie, because I don't know how to do anything halfway. I was in such a sorry state myself at the time that portraying Billie's sorrow might have killed me. Max and I were divorced in 1970, and I was like a wounded animal. It's difficult recovering from a broken marriage, especially when it throws your career up in the air. I needed sanctuary, so I signed myself into a psychiatric hospital in upstate New York for five weeks, which turned out to be one of the best things that's ever happened to me."

Moving to Los Angeles in 1973 to care for her ailing mother, Lincoln had low for eight years, rarely performing. "I went underground, though I never intended to. I did community work and taught drama at the California State University at Northridge. I had thrown away my career, my relationship with Max—and I thought I had thrown away my life."

I think about the life I live,
A figure made of clay,
And think about the things I lost,
Things I gave away.

And when I'm in a certain mood,
I search the halls and look.
Our night I found these magic words
In a magic book.

Throw it away!
You can throw it away,
Give your love,
Love your life,
Each and every day.

And keep your hands wide open,
And let the sun shine through,
'Cause you can never lose a thing
If it belongs to you.

("Throw It Away," Moseka Music, BMI)

"I WROTE A LOVE SONG TO A MAN NOT OF THIS world, a man who doesn't even exist," Lincoln says of the title track of her latest album, Talking to the Sun, the implication being that no lover under the sun could be as steadfast. Although her lyrics generally strive for social uplift, she does not consider herself a message singer. "My songs are autobiographical, about the world as I encounter it. 'People on the Street' is about the plight of the homeless, but it's based on personal observation—and sometimes I think I should be doing more to help. When I moved back to New York in 1981, I was shocked to see women younger than I was huddled on the streets like zombies, and my friends laughing at them, as if there was anything to laugh about. In the '60s, people used to at least

Legion social conscience, even if they didn't have any. It proves that we've taken more steps backward than forward since then. We demanded a say, and it was given to us. But the people the revolution was fought for have sold it out. Black people like to wear the white hats, point their fingers at others, and pretend that we can do no wrong. But we can."

As a songwriter, Lincoln's greatest skill is her knack for hearty deserts and quick, pointed, telling observations: "The people in the houses ain't got long."

"I cried when that line came to me, because I realized I could wind up out there on the street someday, too. Composing music is the difficult part for me. I've come to think of lyrics as poems, some of which I find melodies for and some of which I don't."

She has written an unpublished volume of poetry called In a Circle. Everything's Up and an unproduced play called A Pig in a Poke, "about an odd-jobs man who stumbles onto a large fortune and doesn't know what to do with it. The character is partly based on my father and partly on myself. In my case, the fortune is my career, the musical gift it has taken me this long to figure out how to use properly."

In 1979, Lincoln reclaimed the career she had thrown away, as Inner City Records released People in Me, an album she had recorded with Miles Davis sidemen in Japan six years earlier. Since 1983, her backup band has included alto saxophonist Steve Coleman, pianist James Weidman, bassist Billy Johnson, and drummer Mark Johnson, all promising young musicians in their late twenties. "Even though I don't perform often enough to give them steady work, they're there for me whenever I call, and that thrills me. I worry about them, though—whether they can hold out against the commercial pressures that young musicians face today. Nobody pays them any attention, and I'm afraid that's going to make them bitter and discouraged."

She lives alone now in an apartment building on Central Park West, ten floors below her ex-husband, still a trusted friend. She has no children, "I never intended to. What sort of mother would I have been, traveling all the time? My mother was always there for me, and I knew I couldn't do that. I've gone through so much madness that I'm glad I didn't drag anyone else through it."

"That's why I'm thankful I've got my music. In a sense, it's all I've ever had. After For Love of Ivy, people predicted a big film career for me, but I knew it wouldn't happen. You have to temper practicality with idealism in real life. There are no roles for black women unless you're willing to play the buffoon, like Nell Carter in Gomer a Breek!—not to knock her, of course, because she has to make a living, I was offered plenty of parts as the snow maid. But I turned them all down; I decided that if I was going to be in the movies, it would have to be as a leading lady. Because that's what I've been off-screen, for better or worse: the leading lady in my own life."
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