

Stereo Review

APRIL 1972 • 60 CENTS

LABORATORY TESTS OF THE SUPER-POWER AMPLIFIERS
THE MUSIC OF CLAUDE DEBUSSY: A LISTENER'S GUIDE
METROPOLITAN OPERA: THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD



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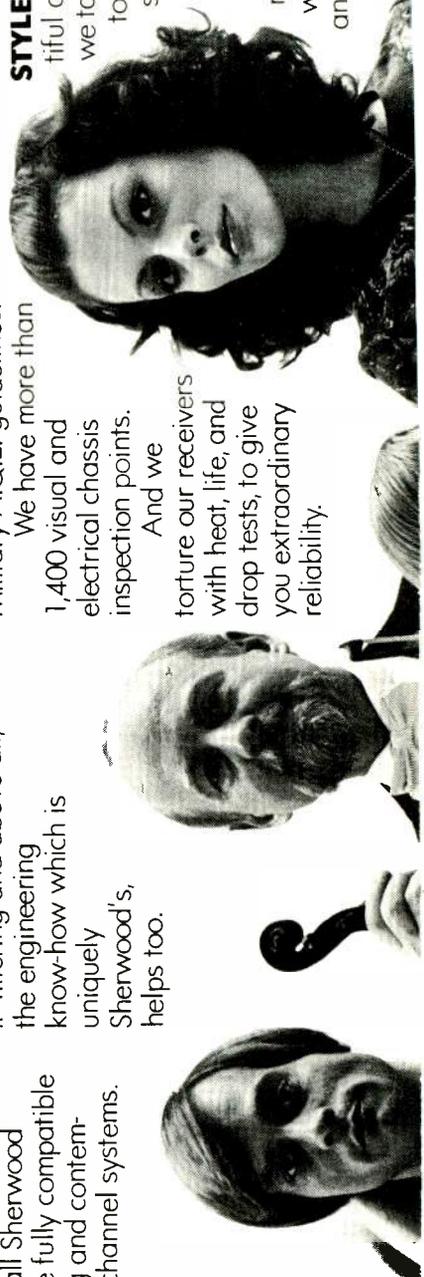
We have more than 1,400 visual and electrical chassis inspection points.

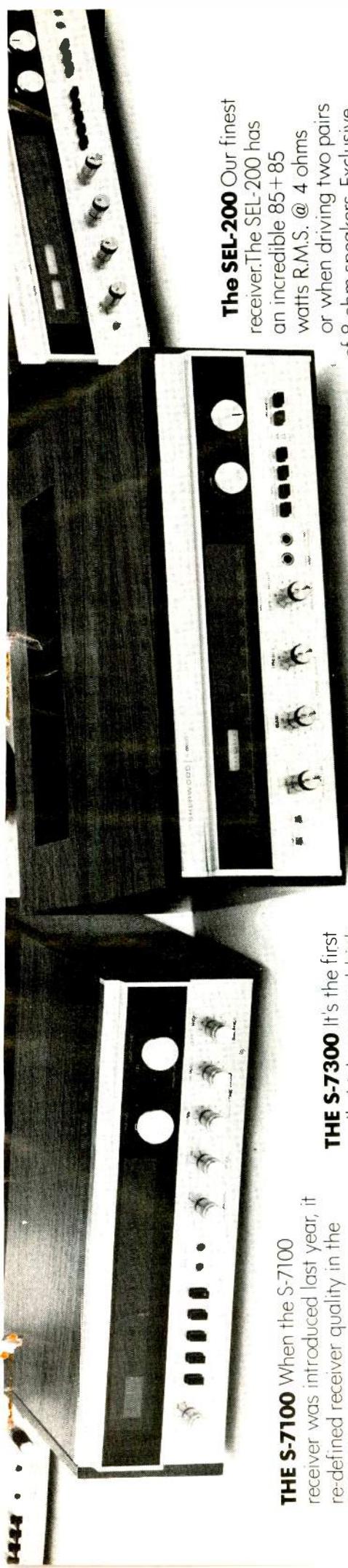
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HIGH FIDELITY

Sept. 1971

Altogether, this new arm strikes us as an excellent piece of engineering; it probably is the best arm yet offered as an integral part of an automatic player. □ Operation is simple, quiet, and reliable. □ All told, we feel that Garrard has come up with a real winner in the Zero 100. Even without the tangent-tracking feature of the arm, this would be an excellent machine at a competitive price. With the novel (and effective) arm, the Zero 100 becomes a very desirable "superchanger" with, of course, manual options.

AUDIO

July, 1971

The Zero-100 performed just about as we expected after reading the specifications. Wow measured .08 per cent—that is in the band from 0.5 to 6 Hz. Flutter, in the band from 6 to 250 Hz, measured .03 per cent, both of which are excellent. □ Thus, the Garrard Zero 100 is certainly the finest in a long line of automatic turntables which have been around for over 50 years. □ We think you will like it.

Stereo Review

July, 1971

Indeed, everything worked smoothly, quietly, and just as it was meant to. If there were any "bugs" in the Zero 100, we didn't find them. □ Garrard's Zero 100, in basic performance, easily ranks with the finest automatic turntables on the market. Its novel arm—which really works as claimed—and its other unique design features suggest that a great deal of development time, plus sheer imagination, went into its creation. In our view, the results were well worth the effort.

The GRAMOPHONE

August, 1971

Reproduction quality was excellent with no detectable wow, flutter or rumble under stringent listening conditions. End of side distortion, which is always a possibility with pivoted arms, was virtually absent, due no doubt to the tangential tracking arm.

Popular Electronics

August, 1971

Our lab measurements essentially confirmed the claims made by Garrard for the Zero 100. We used a special protractor with an angular resolution of about 0.5°, and the observed tracking error was always less than this detectable amount. The tracking force calibration was accurate, within 0.1 gram over its full range. □ The Garrard Zero 100 operated smoothly and without any mechanical "bugs."

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Sept. 16, 1971

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H.F.

STEREO GUIDE

Fall, 1971

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Stereo Review

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EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

By WILLIAM ANDERSON

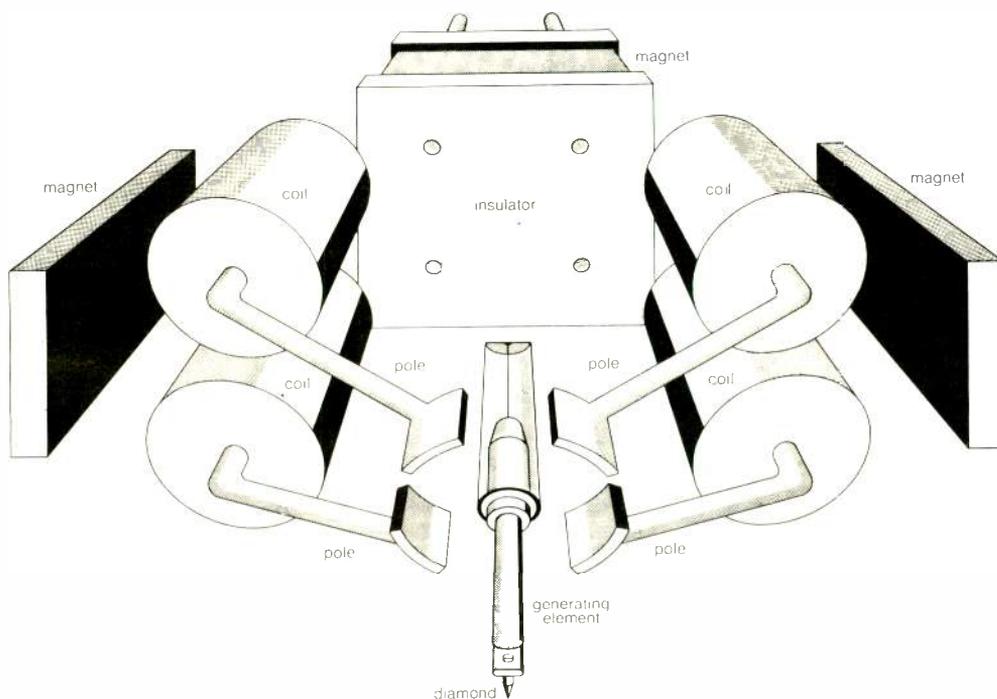
WHAT TO LISTEN TO, AND WHAT FOR

SOMEWHERE between hiding one's light under a bushel and bounding onto a soapbox for a round of rowdy bugle blowing there is a reasonable middle ground. It ought there to be possible to make a simple news announcement without contributing to the eruption of superlatives that assaults the public's eyes and ears every time a newspaper or magazine is opened, a radio or TV set switched on. The more we are subjected to the debased verbal currency of biggest, best, newest, fastest, cleanest, and (lately) dirtiest, the less attention we pay, the harder it is for *any* message to get through. All of which is to say, in my usual direct fashion, that I would like to announce (middle-ground, soft-pedal, low-key, conversational in tone, and modestly after the fact) the inauguration of a new series of articles in STEREO REVIEW.

Some readers have doubtless already tumbled to the intentions encoded in Music Editor James Goodfriend's articles on Bach in December, Schubert in February, and Debussy in this issue, but let me spell them out in clear. STEREO REVIEW is a "service" magazine, and the service we render our readers is guidance in the selection of recordings and the equipment to play them on. The one area of the recordings catalog where guidance is sometimes a help and often a necessity is classical music—as if all those composers and all those works weren't enough, there is the additional complication of performance duplication. Standard example: the February issue of the Schwann catalog lists *thirty* (my count) different versions of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Further, being pedagogues all, we are not above propagandizing, while we are "serving," for some of our musical points of view, both general ("any music is worth at least one listen") and particular ("the great composers are not called 'great' for nothing"). The motto for Mr. Goodfriend's series can be simply stated as "What to listen to and what to listen for in the music of the great composers," and the result, as you see, is a neat combination of guidance and propaganda. This pleases us mightily (though not, I hope, indignately), and we hope it pleases you too.

It has long been something of a weight on my conscience that, in publishing STEREO REVIEW month after month, we rely so consistently and so heavily on the iconographical riches of ages past, that there is relatively little going back into the kitty, so to speak. Much of this is unavoidable: an antique subject requires antique illustration. But there is, nonetheless, the certainty that these storehouses of art will in time be exhausted, as well as the possibility that we will repeat ourselves well before that time—there simply *are* no more undiscovered portraits of Beethoven. To accompany the Music Editor's series, then, we are commissioning portraits of each composer, in his turn, from a number of outstanding contemporary graphic artists. Since the composers cannot sit for these, the artists will of course be relying on iconographical materials for their likenesses. From that point on, however, the contribution is unique: the approach to the subject, the spirit, and the technical means as well spring from each artist's reaction to the music of his subject. Counting the Debussy in this issue, three portraits have so far been published. The first, of J. S. Bach (December issue), is by the Ukrainian artist Jacques Hnizdovsky, an internationally renowned specialist in the woodcut. Al Blaustein, who teaches at Pratt Institute in New York, used etching and aquatint techniques in his portrait of Schubert (February). The Debussy portrait on page 47 of this issue is by Antonio Frasconi, a native of Uruguay whose work in the United States since 1945 has been influential in the contemporary revival of the woodcut. Debussy himself might well have appreciated a pair of fortuitous subtleties in Mr. Frasconi's portrait: the medium is the woodcut, of which Debussy, from his close acquaintance with Japanese prints, was a connoisseur, and the color is Debussy's favorite violet. But then Mr. Frasconi tells us he *was* listening to Debussy as he worked.

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How it works.

If you know how moving magnetic cartridges are made, you can see right away how different an Empire variable reluctance cartridge is. With others, a magnet is attached directly to the stylus, so that all the extra weight rests on your record. With Empire's construction (unique of its type), the stylus floats free of its three magnets. So naturally, it imposes much less weight on the record surface.

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1000ZE/X and 999VE/X.) AUDIO MAGAZINE said of the Empire cartridge "outstanding square waves . . . tops in separation." HIGH FIDELITY noted ". . . the sound is superb. The performance data is among the very best." While STEREO REVIEW, who tested 13 different cartridges, rated the Empire tops of all in light-weight tracking.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Infidelity of FM

● Three cheers for Larry Klein's "The Infidelity of FM" (February). As chief engineer of a classical FM station, I am painfully aware of the difficulty in getting out a clean signal—and also disgusted with the present state of the art in FM broadcasting as heard from most stations.

A great many FM stations are now automated, and also simply play back tapes rented from duplicating services. The quality of these tapes is usually acceptable, but the quality of the playback equipment may be marginal. Tape heads, guides, capstans, and pinch-rollers are not cleaned frequently enough (many automated machines run twenty-four hours a day), and high-frequency roll-off, tape squeak, wow and flutter, and so forth are frequent results. Some stations run their tapes only at 3¾ ips, resulting in loss of the entire top octave (many professional machines give up at 7,500 Hz at 3¾ ips). However, the real sore point is the record player. Unfortunately, many stations are run at such a pace in the control room that operators are quite reckless in handling their tone arms. The frustrated chief engineer is forced to install a cartridge that can stand getting dropped—and ends up using something slightly better than a high-quality thumbtack. And that "thumbtack" is tracking on a turntable that has higher rumble than almost any half-way decent home hi-fi turntable. To get rid of the rumble, the broadcaster may use a hefty bass cut-off at 50 Hz or higher.

If the audio signal gets out of the studio alive it will probably be messed up at the transmitter by an impressive array of limiters, compressors, and clippers that insure maximum modulation under virtually any circumstances. If you were to survey FM engineers around the country, you would probably find that they are not happy with the FM limiters they currently have—and in my opinion, there is no commercially available device on the market today that will prevent FM overmodulation without undesirable and audible side effects.

I have visited a large number of FM stations that are without any kind of full-range monitoring speakers backed by a clean power amplifier. No wonder they don't sound very good—those at the station don't even know what they really sound like. If only more people would complain about FM sound quality,

maybe someday it would be worthwhile owning a high-quality FM receiver.

CARSTEN THOMSEN
Chief Engineer, WAUS-FM
Berrien Springs, Mich.

● As a member of that small group of broadcasters for whom audio quality is a matter of fact rather than a matter of money, I commend Larry Klein for a comprehensive outline of some of the problems faced by today's FM broadcaster. There is, however, an ironic twist to the topic of FM audio quality which Mr. Klein did not mention.

When WADB-Stereo first began broadcasting encoded quadrasonic sound, we did so with the knowledge that several other stations had had little success in their efforts. Through our experiments with quad, including "live" quad remotes, we learned that the proper phase and balance of the stereo channels on the station's part was most critical. Since all of our material is prerecorded on tape, we adjust the balance of our Scully tape decks every time a tape is changed to assure the proper stereo reception. However, we found this simple practice to be even more critical when encoded quad information was broadcast. If the left-right balance or phase is not perfect at the station, then the listener loses rear-channel separation and information.

I think that Mr. Klein will agree that as more FM broadcasters jump on the quad bandwagon, those who place the mathematics of the market place before the sonic quality of their on-the-air product will have to take a long hard look at their engineering priorities. There's just a chance that the growth of quadrasonic sound with its stringent technical requirements might give us a general improvement in FM quality.

FRANK D. MURPHY
Program Director, WADB-FM
South Belmar, N.J.

'Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished.

Fragmentation of Rock

● Bravos to Joel Vance for his "Fragmentation of Rock." He summed up all the thoughts on rock that have been accumulating in the minds of those of us who love this music. It just isn't what it used to be during its "golden age"—1965-1970, in my mind—when the music was just so, well, *meaty*. The groups

and songs that came along knocked us off our feet. The music, in short, excited us, as it never will again.

Rock is going nowhere because there is nowhere to go—all possible directions and sources of new energy have been explored, as Mr. Vance says. Nondescript new groups and performers continue to arrive on the scene, accompanied by fanfare that tells us they're revolutionary. Not that they're bad—it's just too much of the *same*.

There's no going back, and I would not want to. I don't feel lost or cheated; there's a lot more to music than rock, of course. I do not lament the fact that rock will fade away in a few short years and something else—I have no idea what—will develop into the new "youth music" for the next generation.

What more can I say? Again, Mr. Vance, thank you. You said it all, and beautifully.

ARLENE G. SARKISIAN
Cliffside Park, N.J.

Mr. Vance replies: "Dear Miss Sarkisian: When may I take you to tea?"

● Surely five pages of advertising would have been more enlightening than "The Fragmentation of Rock" by Joel Vance in your February issue.

THOMAS A. FADNER II
Madison, Wis.

● After reading the article concerning rock's destiny ("The Fragmentation of Rock," February), I was left with my own answer to the question "Where is rock going?" It is: rock is not going, it is *growing*. As Joel Vance said, many groups fed off the Beatles, such as the Dave Clark Five and the Monkees. However, there were those that *grew* from the Beatles, such as the Rolling Stones. From these groups in turn more groups grew. So what we have now are branches in all directions which are producing more branches. I believe rock will continue to grow because it will take a very big axe to chop this tree down.

JEFFREY HENNEVUTH
Falmouth, Mass.

Schubert

● James Goodfriend is to be commended for his succinct article "The Music of Schubert" (February). May this series continue, for his ability to distill the essence of a composer's style is unique. I have never read as concisely just *how* Schubert's harmonic shifts from the major to the minor account for the emotional effect of his musical style.

There are only three other composers (usually not mentioned in the same company) who use this magical technique of harmonic chiaroscuro—the sudden shift between sonic sunlight and clouds—to a similar degree: Mozart, Berlioz, and Mahler.

E. DAVID DEVOE
Fort Wayne, Ind.

Carpenters

● Just what we needed: an appreciation of the Carpenters by the erudite Henry Pleasants (February)! Unfortunately, Mr. Pleasants failed to tell us what is worthwhile about their music. Sure they have a "nice sound," but it is also a bloodless, mechanical sound, engineered for easy playback on AM radio. And like Satchmo's (as he mentions), their records sell in the millions. But when Mr. Pleasants reaches for a Louis Armstrong al-

(Continued on page 8)

Dick Sugar's been playing his Miracord 10H's 18 hours a week for 7 years.

We built our new 660H for people like him

Dick "Ricardo" Sugar broadcasts Latin music over New York's WHBI-FM, six days a week, three hours a day, from his own private studio. For the past seven years—6500 hours of broadcasting—his studio turntables have been Miracord 10H's.

We built the new ELAC/ Miracord 660H for people like Dick Sugar; people who want or need the highest quality in a turntable, and who want that quality to endure. So the new 660H has everything Dick Sugar bought his old 10H's for—plus all the improvements we've made since we built the 10H.

A broadcaster like Dick wouldn't settle for anything but the long-term speed accuracy of the 660H's hysteresis synchronous motor. Or for an arm that couldn't track down to a fraction of a gram with the finest cartridges, or an arm without an ultra-simple overhang adjustment to keep distortion nearly imperceptible.

Dick Sugar might not need the convenience of our

CIRCLE NO. 22 ON READER SERVICE CARD



pushbutton-controlled automation (the world's most flexible)—he gets more practice playing records manually each year than most people get in their lifetimes. But he'd appreciate the 660H's cueing lift; with it, he could float the arm right off a record without taking his eyes off his clock and VU meter.

What impresses him most about Miracord though, is reliability: "In the seven years I've had mine, I've had to replace styli, idler wheels and a few minor parts. But I've never had to send them to the shop. And

my next turntables will certainly be Miracords—just like the ones before these were."

The ELAC/Miracord 660H. \$139.50, less base and cartridge. Another quality product from Benjamin. ELAC Division/Benjamin Electronic Sound Corp., Farmingdale, N.Y. 11735/a division of Instrument Systems Corp. Also available in Canada.

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bum on his shelf, which does he grab: the Hot Five classics or the more popular "Hello, Dolly!"?

STANLEY DIAMOND
Chicago, Ill.

Mr. Pleasants replies: "Sure, I'll reach for West End Blues, but I'm not putting down those who would reach for Hello, Dolly! In either case one acknowledges a great pro doing an artist's job of giving his listeners a pleasurable experience in his own way but on their terms. That's what's worthwhile! Chacun à son goût. I say—even if some would prefer to spell it 'goo!'"

Record Lending Libraries

● In the "Letters to the Editor" column in the February issue of STEREO REVIEW, I noticed a letter from G. Ward Evans, the head of the record section of the Akron Public Library, along with the Editor's reply. The Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (the public library) also has a rather good record collection from which I borrow constantly. But Pittsburgh has a problem. Somewhere in the city is a little old lady, a music lover, who gets hold of all of the library's new records, takes them home, and plays them on a very old mono machine that has a tone-arm pressure of about three-quarters of a pound.

In reply to the editor's comment, some of Mr. Evans' music-loving "customers" insist on being on the privileged "mint-condition" list because, for the privilege of listening to mint-condition records, they take the responsibility of returning them in the same condition. They don't have "more delicate ears"; they have more delicate tone-arms, and cringe at the thought of Pittsburgh's little old lady.

FRANK WARNINSKY
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Critical Shift?

● Correct me if I am wrong, but isn't there a shift taking place in criticism in general (movies, music, etc.) back toward using aesthetic standards exclusively for the judgment of artistic works?

In recent years criteria such as "social value," "relevance," and popularity became important in judging works of art, to the neglect of considerations of their intrinsic artistic worth. Lately, though, critics seem to have put the latter back on top and are attacking amateurism, gratuitous obscenity, the pretentiousness of empty poses, and all the rest in no uncertain terms. And they are boosting the positive values of solid craftsmanship, sound content, excellence of performance, etc. STEREO REVIEW's Rex Reed, in particular, has pulled out all the stops and is a leader in this movement. If this trend does indeed exist, I applaud it. If it does not, it is about time that it did.

TOM FONTE
Kenosha, Wis.

The Editor comments: "I would like to believe that reader Fonte is right, and I hope he is gathering supporting evidence. But we will always have with us those who believe that the arts are means, not ends in themselves. The popular arts in particular have been made to bear a fearful weight of propaganda and to suffer demeaning political manipulation during this century, and criticism, unfortunately, has often cooperated. To me (and to Oscar Wilde), all art is quite useless, and it is that which gives it its glorious importance. On

the subject of 'amateurism,' I assume that Mr. Fonte is referring to amateurism that presents itself as professionalism. Some sentimental criticism has indeed, during the recent folk and rock eras, tried to sell us a good deal of this, thus merely muddying the stream it ought to be clarifying. But of the other kind of amateurism—playing or singing for one's own delight—we can never have enough."

Short Short

● Bobby Short's album of Cole Porter songs is everything Rex Reed's rave review ("Best of the Month," February) says it is, but couldn't you at least have found a photo of him at the piano?

JERRY SWEENEY
New York, N.Y.

With difficulty, yes. Below, at the piano, is Bobby Short at the age of ten.



Fork in the Old Country Road

● Thank you so much for the wonderful article in your January issue on country music and the one on country music's number one entertainer, Loretta Lynn. Robert Windeler did a great job covering the life of this great singer.

RON MILLER
Arlington, Va.

Pride of the Angels

● I read with great interest Robert Windeler's article on Charley Pride in the January issue. Windeler mentions that Pride played pro baseball for the Los Angeles Angels. I looked for his playing record in the *Baseball Encyclopedia*, but he is not listed. This started me wondering whether Charley Pride is the singer's original name, and if it is, why is he not listed in the *Encyclopedia*? Could you please set the record straight?

DAVID GLAGOVSKY
Haverhill, Mass.

Charley began the regular season with the Angels, during the first three weeks of which his pitching arm got sorer and sorer. He finally had to withdraw from the team.

Fans and Critics

● I am writing to register my objection to the comments concerning Renata Tebaldi in George Jellinek's review of *London Records'* new *Ballo in maschera* (January).

Certainly no fan claims that her current vocal estate matches that of her peak years. Tebaldi does, however, still sing well, and now offers stronger dramatic conviction in her interpretations, as evidenced in the conspiracy scene of the new recording. Remind Mr. Jellinek that Tebaldi did not make the recording for her critics, but rather for her fans, who welcome it. The new *Ballo* certainly does not displace my Nilsson or Price versions: it *does* shed a new light on this masterpiece of Verdi.

NORMAN PASCARELLA
Atlanta, Ga.

Mr. Jellinek replies: "Besides being a critic, I am and have always been a fan of Renata Tebaldi. As a fan I regret that she has made this recording. As a critic it is my duty to say so."

Tale of Darkness

● Re Stephen Rubin's article on Alberto Ginastera's opera *Beatriz Cenci* (January); your readers might be interested in a fine novel about the Cenci tale written by Frederic Prokosch, and entitled *A Tale for Midnight*. Its intriguing introductory sentence is: "Our story begins and ends in darkness."

RALPH J. STURGES
Wethersfield, Conn.

Bernstein Mass

● For your entertainment, edification, and reflection I submit the following bit of doggerel on the subject of Leonard Bernstein's *Mass* ("Opening of the Kennedy Center," December):

Sweet Lenny gives Man his "Mess,"
and his audience a weepy buss.

The critics coo, musicians boo.

Peace is his subject—or so it seems—
really, a compote of liberal themes.

For me, soft Lenny, write no more:
your coup *is* complete: a musical bore.

You stuck on all styles with Mystic tape,
pop, rock, Bach—a cultural rape.

When next you start to work, I shall
groan—

unless, that is, you write something your
own.

PHILIP BRANTINGHAM
Chicago, Ill.

70, Girls, 70

● I would like to thank STEREO REVIEW and Rex Reed for the review of *70, Girls, 70* ("Best of the Month," November) which brought to my attention an enormously appealing musical-comedy score which I would never have noticed had it not been for the obviously sincere enthusiasm in Mr. Reed's forcefully written review. I think this disc is going to be an enduring treasure.

EDWARD W. KENNEDY
Mercer Island, Wash.

Miklós Rózsa Society

● Together with Mark Koldys in Detroit and Ken Doeckel in San Francisco, I have recently attained a long-held goal: the foundation of a Miklós Rózsa Society to focus attention on the film and concert music of this distinguished and unjustly neglected composer. We are putting out a small critical journal and planning on a recording project as well. Those interested should write to the address below.

J. F. FITZPATRICK
2604 Davidson Ave.
Bronx, N.Y. 10468

Stanton quality is a very special quality... in headphones too.

The headphone is, after all, a speaker system for the head.

And the new **Stanton Dynaphase Sixty** is an advanced two-way speaker system designed for heads instead of shelves. Its unique, extremely wide-range two-way dynamic reproduction system is acoustically mounted with a separate woofer and tweeter. A special crossover network precisely channels the highs and lows into each ear, creating a truly breathtaking feeling of presence.

In keeping with the high quality approach to the design of the Stanton Dynaphase Sixty headphone, the fully adjustable headband and softly cushioned earpieces are stitched (not heat-sealed). Stanton even improves convenience in amplifier connection and disconnection by providing a

larger and specially designed plug. A simple blue-black and chrome color scheme adds the quality finished touch. \$59.95.

Stanton Dynaphase Forty, a high-performance economy version of the Dynaphase Sixty with wide range single speaker system is also available. \$39.95.

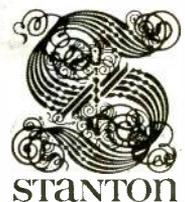
ACCESSORIES

Stanton Model 5741 control unit—The most convenient in-

line control unit ever developed for headphone listening. Works with Stanton Dynaphase headphone systems as well as with other headphones. Lets you control listening at your location by providing separate volume and tone controls and a stereo-mono switch. Complete with 17-foot coiled cord, it acts as a perfect extension accessory. \$19.95.

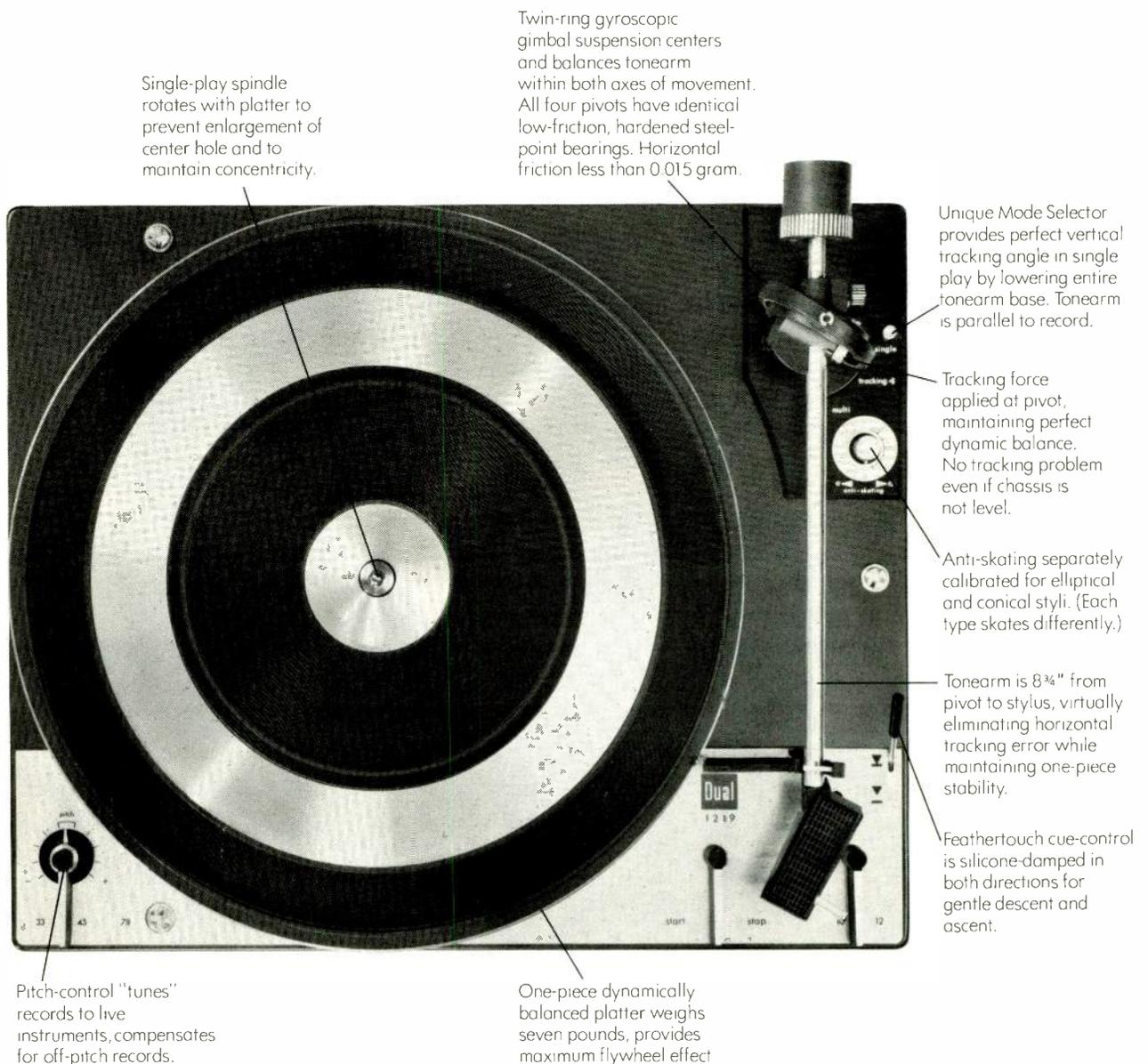
Model 5742—Separate 25-foot coiled extension cord works with all headphones. \$7.95.

For complete technical data write Stanton Magnetics, Inc., Terminal Drive, Plainview, N.Y. 11803



Manufacturers of the world famous Stanton Calibration Cartridges and the renowned Isophase Electrostatic Headset Systems.

The Dual 1219.



Single-play spindle rotates with platter to prevent enlargement of center hole and to maintain concentricity.

Twin-ring gyroscopic gimbal suspension centers and balances tonearm within both axes of movement. All four pivots have identical low-friction, hardened steel-point bearings. Horizontal friction less than 0.015 gram.

Unique Mode Selector provides perfect vertical tracking angle in single play by lowering entire tonearm base. Tonearm is parallel to record.

Tracking force applied at pivot, maintaining perfect dynamic balance. No tracking problem even if chassis is not level.

Anti-skating separately calibrated for elliptical and conical styli. (Each type skates differently.)

Tonearm is 8 3/4" from pivot to stylus, virtually eliminating horizontal tracking error while maintaining one-piece stability.

Feathertouch cue-control is silicone-damped in both directions for gentle descent and ascent.

Pitch-control "tunes" records to live instruments, compensates for off-pitch records.

One-piece dynamically balanced platter weighs seven pounds, provides maximum flywheel effect

Still the favorite of the purist who insists upon a full-size professional turntable.

Ever since its introduction two years ago, the 1219 has been widely acclaimed and accepted as the "no-compromise" automatic turntable.

Today, it is still the favorite of the more serious music lovers, those purists who are never quite satisfied unless every component in their system is "state-of-the-art."

From years of listening, these record lovers know that on a Dual, any Dual, records are preserved indefinitely and continue to sound as good as new no matter how often played. Yet over the years, they have purchased more "high-end" Duals than any other model. Readers of this magazine, for example, have purchased more 1219's than any other turntable at any price. That is quite a tribute for a turntable that sells for \$185.00.

The reasons for the 1219's continued popularity vary from purist to purist. To many, it's the tonearm, centered and balanced within the two concentric rings of a gyroscopic gimbal. With horizontal bearing friction less than fifteen thousandths of a gram. When a cartridge actually arrives that can track at a quarter of a gram, this tonearm will do it full justice.

To others, the 1219's platter is important. It's a full-size 12 inches in diameter, cast in one piece non-magnetic zinc alloy,

and individually dynamically balanced. To drive this massive seven pound platter, there is a powerful continuous-pole motor that brings it up to full speed in less than half a revolution. Then the motor's synchronous element takes over to hold speed at absolute constancy.

We find that most people interested in a turntable of the 1219's caliber use it primarily in its single-play mode. So the tonearm was specifically engineered to perform precisely as a manual tonearm: parallel to the record instead of tilting down. This is accomplished by the Mode Selector which lowers the entire tonearm base for the single-play mode. And raises it for the multiple-play mode.

To the purist, all of the 1219's many precision features are important. But in the end he buys this Dual for the same reason a non-purist buys it. For its uncompromised performance and absolute reliability.

If you'd like to know what the independent test labs say about the 1219, we'll send you complete reprints of their reports. Plus a reprint of an article from this magazine that tells you what to look for in record playing equipment.

Better yet, just pay a visit to your franchised United Audio dealer and ask him for a demonstration.

Dual[®]



United Audio Products, Inc., 120 So. Columbus Ave., Mt. Vernon, N.Y. 10553
Exclusive U.S. Distribution Agency for Dual

NEW PRODUCTS

THE LATEST IN
HIGH-FIDELITY
EQUIPMENT

Toyo Model 335 Eight-Track Tape Deck



● Toyo's extensive line of eight-track tape-cartridge equipment now includes the Model 335, a stereo record-play deck with full pushbutton operation. A total of nine buttons perform such functions as track selection (with indicator lights), record interlock, and selection of playing mode (continuous play; stop at the end of each cartridge; stop at the end of each track; repeat track). Two buttons are the equivalent of a pause control, with a front-panel warning light to show it has been activated; there is also fast-forward. Among the specifications of the Model 335 are a frequency response of 100 to 10,000 Hz, 0.3 per cent wow and flutter, and a signal-to-noise ratio of 50 dB. Recording levels,

which are displayed on two illuminated meters, are set automatically by internal circuits. The deck will record directly from high-level sources, a magnetic or ceramic phono cartridge, or microphones (a pair of dynamic microphones is supplied). A stereo headphone jack is located on the front panel. Overall dimensions, including wood end panels, are 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 5 x 11 $\frac{1}{5}$ inches. Price: \$99.95.

Other Toyo eight-track products are two- and four-channel stereo players for automobile use, and a four-channel receiver and integrated amplifier for home use, each with a built-in eight-track quadrasonic player.

Circle 116 on reader service card

Harman-Kardon Model 630 AM/Stereo FM Receiver



● HARMAN-KARDON'S Model 630 AM/stereo FM receiver is a moderately priced (\$259.95) unit with the distinction of having completely separate power supplies for the two stereo channels. Another unusual feature is a set of rear-panel jacks (activated by a front-panel pushbutton) intended to accept a Dolby B-Type noise-reduction device, anticipating the future Dolbyization of FM broadcasts. Seven similar pushbuttons provide independent control of two pairs of stereo speakers, activate the high-cut filter, FM interstation-noise muting, mono or stereo mode, and loudness compensation (affecting low frequencies only), and operate the tape monitoring function. Control knobs are used for volume, balance, bass and treble (separate concentrically mounted controls for each channel), and input selection (phono, FM, stereo FM, AM, auxiliary). An FM channel-center tuning

meter reads signal strength for AM. There is a front-panel stereo headphone jack.

Power output of the Model 630, both channels driven into 8-ohm loads, is 30 watts continuous per channel over the full 20- to 20,000-Hz audio band. At this rated output, harmonic and intermodulation distortion are 0.5 and 0.12 per cent, respectively. Signal-to-noise ratios are 50 dB for high-level inputs and 33 dB for the phono inputs. Specifications for the FM section: IHF sensitivity, 3 microvolts; capture ratio, 2 dB; selectivity, 30 dB; AM rejection, 50 dB; and image rejection, 40 dB. Stereo separation is 33 dB at 1,000 Hz, and 30 and 20 dB at 100 and 10,000 Hz, respectively. The dimensions of the Model 630 are 12 inches wide, 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches deep, and 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches high. A walnut finish wood cabinet is optional at \$34.95.

Circle 117 on reader service card

Trans-Static I Speaker System



● ELECTROSTATIC SOUND SYSTEMS' Trans-Static I speaker system is a three-way design utilizing three electrostatic tweeter elements over the range of 1,350 Hz to beyond audibility. The elements are approximately 3 x 6 inches each, and radiate both in the forward direction and backward to a reflecting panel within the open-sided enclosure. The front-mounted mid-range is a 5-inch plastic-cone driver back-loaded by an acoustically damped tube that radiates from the rear. The woofer, also front-mounted, has a flat oval diaphragm with an effective area of about 54 square inches. Its rear radiations are conducted by a damped acoustical line to a port located at the bottom of the enclosure, which is open on four sides. The crossover point be-

tween woofer and mid-range is 300 Hz; the system's bass resonance is claimed to be 15 Hz.

Rated frequency response of the Trans-Static I is 25 to 20,000 Hz \pm 1.5 dB. A minimum amplifier power of 30 watts continuous per channel is recommended, with system power-handling capability approximately 80 watts. Distortion is rated at less than 2 per cent at a 95-dB level for any frequency or combination of frequencies between 80 and 20,000 Hz, and less than 3 per cent for the same level at 35 Hz. Mid- and high-frequency level controls are provided for contouring of the response. The nominal impedance is 8 ohms. The large enclosure—42 x 18 x 15 inches—is covered with dark grille cloth on three

(Continued on page 14)



dynaco 4-d amp kit

Value—the SCA-80Q is the only 4-D amplifier in kit form and for the same cost as a similar two channel amplifier. From a built-in de-matrix circuit at the **output** of the amplifier, connect four speakers (such as the very popular DYNACO A-25s). Uncover hidden concert hall ambience in many conventional two channel discs, tapes and FM broadcasts and recreate the original sonics with new 4-D recordings. Or use two speakers now for stereo and add others later. 40 watts RMS per channel, simple assembly, careful engineering, low distortion and superb versatility go together to give traditional DYNACO excellence.

A special 4-D DYNACO/Vanguard LP is available now. See your DYNACO dealer or send \$2.95 to us.

\$169.95 kit; \$249.95 assembled

dynaco inc. 3060 Jefferson Street, Philadelphia, Pa. 19121

NEW PRODUCTS

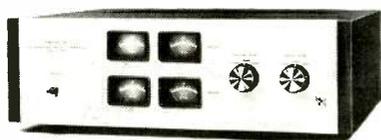
THE LATEST IN
HIGH-FIDELITY
EQUIPMENT

sides, with oiled walnut or optional rosewood top and bottom panels. The speakers are sold in mirror-image stereo pairs, with the mid- and high-frequency drivers positioned toward the

center of the stereo image. Price per pair: \$1135 (\$1195 in rosewood). Versions for bi-amplification systems (with electronic crossovers) also available.

Circle 118 on reader service card

Pioneer QM-800 Four-Channel Power Amplifier



● PIONEER's new QM-800 power amplifier provides four channels of amplification, each rated at 25 watts continuous when all are simultaneously driven into 8-ohm loads. Harmonic and intermodulation distortion are less than 0.5 per cent, and the signal-to-noise ratio is 90 dB. Additional specifications include a power bandwidth of 10 to 50,000 Hz and a frequency response that is uniform within ± 1 dB from 5 to 80,000 Hz. Electronic limiters and circuit breakers protect both the amplifier and speaker

systems from overdrive conditions, and prevent power surges when the unit is first turned on. The QM-800 has level meters for all four channels, the sensitivity of which is adjustable by means of a front-panel rotary switch with three positions. The amplifier sensitivity is also adjustable—to 0.5, 1, or 2 volts—by means of a similar switch. The QM-800 has dimensions of approximately 17 x 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 13 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches, with wood end pieces. Price: \$299.95.

Circle 119 on reader service card

Koss KO-747 Stereo Headphones



● Koss has a new stereo headset with an integral mono/stereo switch that, in the mono position, drives both earcups even when the source is a mono signal from a mono (two-conductor) phone jack. Designated the Model KO-747, the headset is a dynamic design, with each earpiece housing a driver with a 1-inch voice coil and a Mylar diaphragm. Frequency response is rated at 30 to 20,000 Hz. The nominal impedance is 300 ohms per channel, making the phones suitable for driving with a low-impedance source (4 to 16 ohms) or the 600-ohm source

customary on studio equipment. Continuous power-handling capability is 5 volts per channel. The earpieces are designed for acoustical isolation, each being fitted with a fluid-filled, washable vinyl cushion. The headband, which connects to the earpieces through universal pivots, is adjustable and foam padded. The attached cable stretches 10 feet when extended, and terminates in the standard three-conductor stereo phone jack. The finish of the phones is two-tone brown; weight is 21 ounces. Price: \$45.

Circle 120 on reader service card

Fairfax Speaker System



● FAIRFAX's top-of-line speaker system is a four-way twelve-driver design called the "Wall of Sound." The tall, shallow enclosure (52 x 30 x 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches) is partitioned into various acoustical paths and chambers, terminating in ports for the woofers. Six 8-inch woofers handle the frequencies up to 1,500 Hz, where two 5-inch mid-range drivers take over to extend response to 5,500 Hz. The upper mid-range (to 9,000 Hz) is handled by two 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cone drivers. The frequen-

cies above that go to a pair of 1-inch dome tweeters. Frequency response is given as 20 to 20,000 Hz. The system has a nominal impedance of 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ ohms, with a power-handling capability of 100 watts and at least 20 watts of amplifier power per channel recommended as a minimum. The enclosure panels are 1 inch thick and finished in oiled walnut veneer. Shipping weight is 125 pounds. Price: \$399.95.

Circle 121 on reader service card

Ampex Tape Catalog

● AMPEX continues its efforts to make stereo prerecorded tapes available to customers not adequately served by retail outlets with a 233-page catalog listing more than 6,000 selections that can be ordered through the Ampex Tape-by-Mail Service. The Ampex service has been expanded to include cassettes and eight-track cartridges as well as open-

reel tapes; all are offered for at least \$1 off list price, with a further discount of 10 per cent or more extended to repeat customers. No obligations are incurred with purchase. The catalog is divided into fourteen sections with selections listed alphabetically under composer, artist, and title, with special-interest tapes grouped under individual categories. Playing speeds (where applicable) and Dolbyized tapes are indicated in the

listings. Among the more than 125 labels represented: London and subsidiaries, Atlantic, Warner, Reprise, DGG, Vanguard, Capitol, Angel, Nonesuch, and Mercury. The catalogs are being mailed at no charge to present users of the Ampex tape service. Others can obtain a copy by sending fifty cents to: Pat Russell, Dept. 2606SR, Ampex Shoppers' Service, P.O. Box 178, Elk Grove Village, Ill. 60007.

THE COBALT CASSETTE EXPLOSION, EXPLAINED.

This is the year cassettes made it big. The year they changed from teenybopper tape to a full-fledged recording/playback medium.

And the latest step in this revolution is something called cobalt energizing, or cobalt doping.

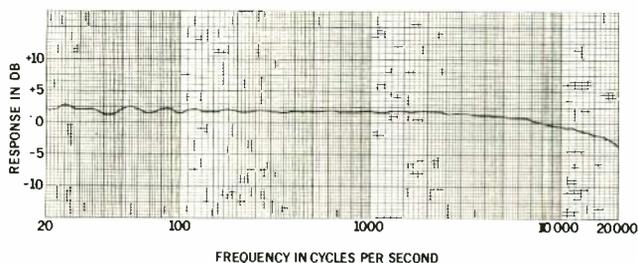
It creates, in one stroke, the cassette of the future.

Mallory's Professional Duratape®, the newest development in cobalt energizing, gives you a 1980-type cassette right now.

In 1972.

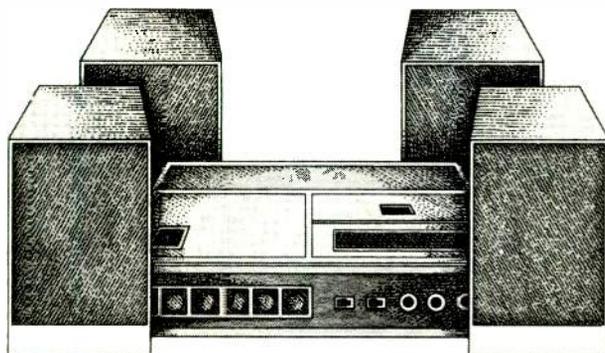
Professional Duratape's cobalt energizing concentrates magnetic particles in the tape to an almost incredible density, allowing a greater signal-to-noise ratio, and producing a fully-extended frequency range: 35 to 18,000 Hertz, plus or minus 2.5 decibels.

Different tape decks give different response curves. But our cobalt-energized cassette, played on optimum equipment, would give you one that looks like this:



Before, you had to use chromium dioxide tape and a deck with a special chromium dioxide switch to get maximum frequency range. Now cobalt energizing does it without any special switching or circuitry.

Professional Duratape is a cassette so advanced, it's capable of future recording and playback in discrete 4-channel stereo—two front speaker channels and two rear speaker channels.



It's a cassette so complete in its capabilities, it can replace your other playback media: reel-to-reel tape, cartridges, records, the works.

It even permits editing, a great advantage to professional audio people as well as advanced amateur enthusiasts.

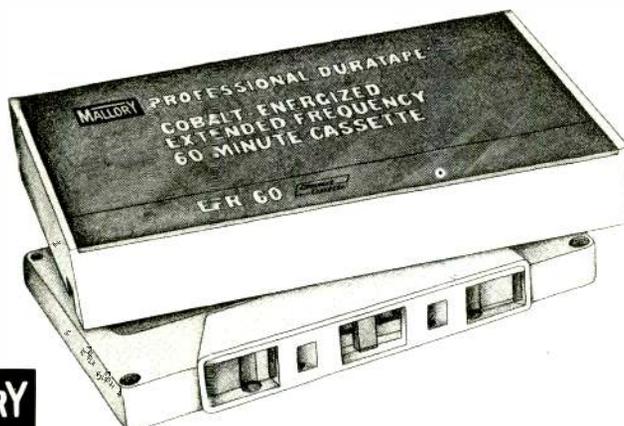


All of which is why we named it Professional Duratape.

If you've ever spent any amount on cassettes or cassette equipment, you owe it to yourself to experience Professional Duratape.

Just once.

And that, we believe, is all you'll need.

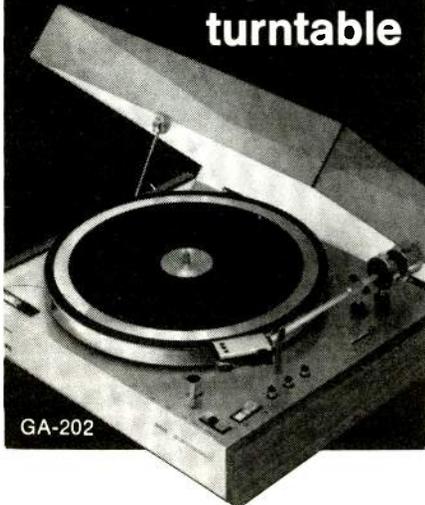


MALLORY

THE NEW COBALT-ENERGIZED PROFESSIONAL DURATAPE.

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PHILIPS GA-202
the high-
performance
electronic
turntable



...with RAVE
reviews



Heralded by new equipment reporters as a smooth-acting control system with excellent performance... a precision-built machine that does its job flawlessly...

We couldn't add a single superlative to this but to say — this vernier-controlled three-speed (33-45-78 rpm) single-play "floating" suspension turntable with an integral viscous-damped tonearm and cueing device, is supplied with base, hinged dust cover, 45 rpm adapter and cables.

See the GA-202 as well as the new two-speed GA-308 at your dealer's. Also see three new Philips Calibrated Cartridges or write us for information today!

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AUDIO
QUESTIONS
and
ANSWERS

By LARRY KLEIN *Technical Editor*



Dolbyized Open-Reel Tapes?

Q. *Perhaps prerecorded cassettes need Dolby noise reduction more than open-reel tapes, but certainly it would seem to make sense to provide Dolbyized prerecorded open-reel tapes for those who want the ultimate in quality. For the first time, an audiophile would be able to get fidelity from program material which is consistently better than that available on the average disc recording.*

ARNOLD VANEVER
Palo Alto, Calif.

A. I couldn't agree with you more. However, until recently, Ampex (the largest manufacturer of prerecorded tapes) held the opinion that open-reel did not really need Dolby noise reduction. My opinion was that if they held to their opinion the open-reel prerecorded tape market would continue to slide downhill to a noisy death. Apparently, Ampex has now seen the light (or heard the noise) and has stated that it will be releasing Dolby open-reel prerecorded tapes in the near future.

Four-Ohm Power

Q. *Since most of the new receivers I have read about have a higher power output at 4 ohms than at 8 ohms, I wonder if it is possible to connect an 8-ohm resistor in parallel with an 8-ohm speaker to provide a 4-ohm load to the amplifier and thus take advantage of the higher output.*

EMIL MARZANO
Clifton, N.J.

A. Yes, but half the new total power will do nothing but heat up the added 8-ohm resistor. The net result would be *less* power reaching your speaker.

Prerecorded Chromium Dioxide

Q. *Why is it that there is little, if any, prerecorded material available on chromium-dioxide tape? Don't the*

old duplication methods presently used work for Crolyn oxide tapes?

SANFORD MITCHELL
Los Angeles, Calif.

A. There seem to be two major factors involved: (1) cost—both of the tape and of conversion of existing duplicating equipment to achieve the full potential of CrO₂ tape, and (2) as yet only a few people seem to care about getting the full fidelity potential from the cassette format. Among those who do care is Henry Kloss of Advent—and we will be hearing more about developments there in the upcoming months.

Apropos of CrO₂ duplication, a recent communication from DuPont, the developers of Crolyn, revealed an unusual property of the tape. It seems that CrO₂ tape has a Curie temperature of 130 degrees Centigrade (266 degrees Fahrenheit), which means that above that point any magnetic pattern that is on the tape is erased. This is interesting, but in itself has little practical significance, since the temperature (well above the boiling point of water) is unlikely to be encountered under any normal circumstances. Certainly, if one wants to bulk-erase Crolyn, it's easier to do so with a high-powered bulk eraser than in an oven.

However, DuPont disclosed further thermal properties that do have significance in tape duplication. If, after the tape has been raised to 130 degrees C, it is then cooled while in a low-intensity magnetic field, the tape becomes magnetized to saturation (full-signal) level. By low intensity, DuPont means 10 oersteds. Some of the ramifications of this become clear when we realize that the magnetic flux densities of the signal on recorded tapes may reach hundreds of oersteds. In other words, there is actually a magnetic signal gain, in that the field on the tape is stronger after cooling than the applied field! If the

(Continued on page 20)

Scott components always get good reviews!

Why?

It could be their performance.

The professional reviewers' findings may be best summarized by a respected test engineer who said, "In the nearly twenty years I've been evaluating audio components, Scott units have consistently met, and in many cases, substantially exceeded, their published specs." No one should be surprised at this. Hermon Scott and his colleagues planned it that way from the very beginning. Scott components are intentionally rated conservatively to provide a safety margin, so that, even with normal tolerances in piece parts and production techniques, every Scott product shipped will meet or exceed its published performance claims.

It could be their advanced design features.

When the present Scott line of audio components was first shown to dealers and the press, a reviewer from a non-audio-buff magazine commented, "My readers and I are more interested in what the equipment does than in how it does it. These Scott components seem to me to have all the controls and convenience features the serious listener needs." That, too, should be no surprise, for H. H. Scott is traditionally the first to use advanced design concepts in circuitry, function and appearance, but only where such advances contribute demonstrably to user convenience and satisfaction.

It could be their value for the price.

Reviewers have the edge on audiophiles, and even most dealers, because reviewers get the opportunity to critically evaluate virtually every product on the market, and compare it with everything else in its price class. After they've made a spec-for-spec and feature-for-feature comparison of everything available, they know which products represent the best value to the buyer. When a reviewer says of a Scott product, "This receiver offers an unexcelled value for the price," the audiophile can purchase the unit with the certain knowledge that he is getting his money's worth.

Professional audio equipment reviewers like H. H. Scott components for their performance, advanced design features and value for the price. But aren't these the very qualities you like to stress when you sell an audio component or system? You'll find these qualities in every Scott tuner, amplifier, receiver and speaker system. Call your Scott rep today for further information.

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From its Sequential Cam System that antiquates the conventional noisy cam gear and swinging plate to its Synchronous Power Unit, the BSR McDonald 810 is designed to match or exceed the performance of any automatic turntable currently available ♦ Some other highlights include a Variable Pitch Control ♦ A 12" dynamically balanced turntable platter ♦ A viscous-damped cue and pause control with exclusive friction Cue Clutch to keep the tone arm cued over the exact groove ♦ An automatic tone arm lock to eliminate accidental damage to the stylus or record ♦ A Concentric Gimbal Arm Mount and featherweight push-button operation featuring the widest selection of operating modes ♦ Your BSR McDonald dealer will be happy to audition the 810 for you ♦

Introducing the BSR McDonald 810 Transcription Series Automatic Turntable.

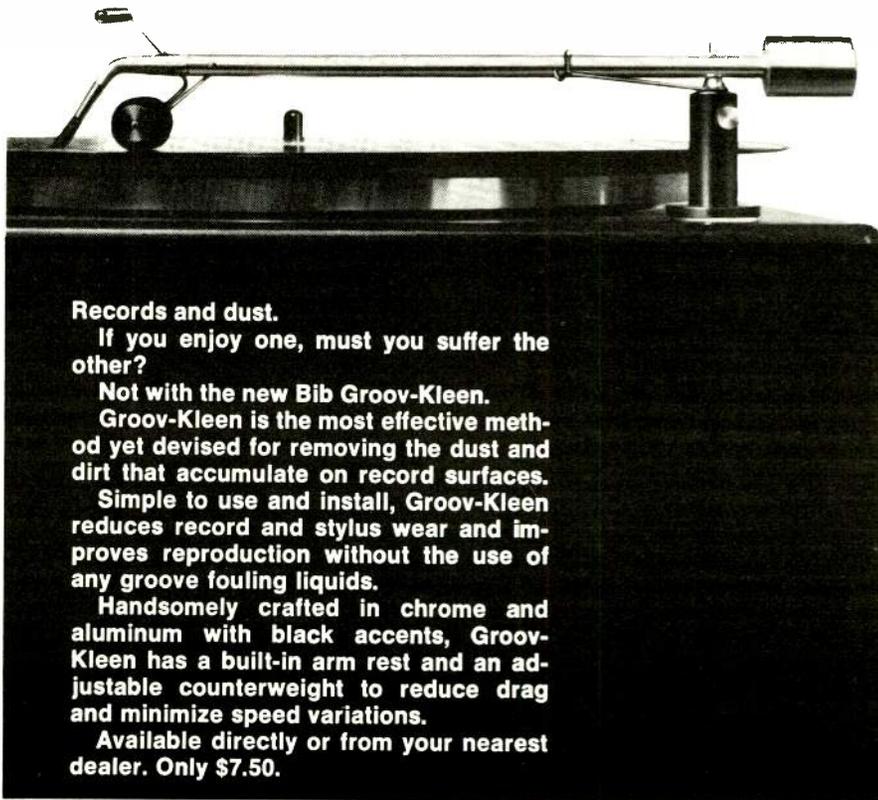
The price for this unbelievable performer? \$149.50 ♦ From BSR ♦ The world's largest manufacturer of automatic turntables ♦

BSR (USA) Ltd.
Blauvelt, N. Y. 10913



CIRCLE NO. 11 ON READER SERVICE CARD

The Kleen Machine.



Records and dust.

If you enjoy one, must you suffer the other?

Not with the new Bib Groov-Kleen.

Groov-Kleen is the most effective method yet devised for removing the dust and dirt that accumulate on record surfaces.

Simple to use and install, Groov-Kleen reduces record and stylus wear and improves reproduction without the use of any groove fouling liquids.

Handsomely crafted in chrome and aluminum with black accents, Groov-Kleen has a built-in arm rest and an adjustable counterweight to reduce drag and minimize speed variations.

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Revox Corporation 155 Michael Drive, Syosset, N.Y. 11791

CIRCLE NO. 40 ON READER SERVICE CARD

"low-intensity field" is provided by a master tape in contact with the Crolyn, a signal transfer takes place.

The transfer, in terms of the wavelength (frequency) of the signal, is not perfectly linear: there is a 2 to 3 dB loss at very low frequencies, 6 to 10 dB gain at mid frequencies, and perhaps zero gain at the highest audio frequencies recorded at slow speeds. This departure from linearity is not severe, since it is actually less than that which occurs in the normal electromagnetic-recording process.

A basic problem in duplicating prerecorded tapes is the speed needed to make the process profitable. Conventional prerecorded audio tape is run through slave duplicators at about thirty times normal playing speed. If the highest audio frequency recorded on the tape is 15,000 Hz, this then requires perhaps a 500,000 Hz (0.5 MHz) response from the tape heads and associated electronics. Video tape with its 4.5 MHz response requirement is even more difficult to duplicate at greater than playing speed because the frequency response demanded of the heads and electronics becomes excessive. Thermal duplication, however, not only eliminates the electronics but has other advantages, as we saw above. The only special requirement of the video-tape master would seem to be the need for "pre-equalization" to compensate for the thermal duplication response. In their prototype machine DuPont is able to achieve a duplication speed of at least ten times the playing speed, which, to the best of my information, is ten times faster than anyone has been able to duplicate video until now.

How about thermal duplication of audio formats—open-reel, cassette, and eight-track? Several factors indicate that the thermal process may *not* be the long-sought solution for audio noise, drop-outs, and frequency-response loss. Audio tapes—all formats—are usually duplicated by having a master (in the form of a continuous loop) feeding a dozen or so slave machines, each of which is dubbing all tracks of the program simultaneously and continuously. As the four tracks end, a tone is put on the tape which later is used to separate each "album" as it is wound on the open reel, the cassette, or the eight-track hub.

It's questionable whether the advantages resulting from thermal duplication of audio tapes would outweigh the need for complete replacement of existing duplication equipment.

Because the number of questions we receive each month is greater than we can reply to individually, only those questions selected for this column can be answered. Sorry!

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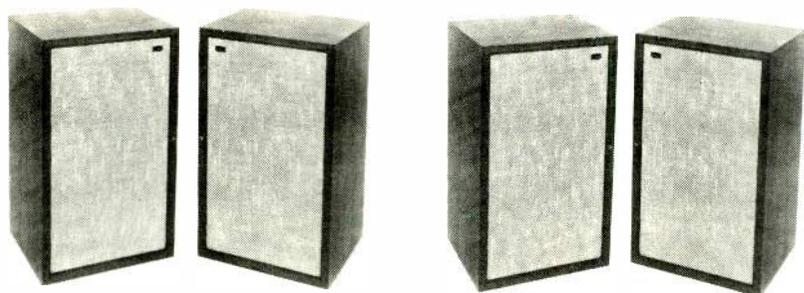
AND ALLIED RADIO STORES

A TANDY CORPORATION COMPANY

2725 W. 7th Street, Fort Worth, Texas 76107

The 4-channel Sansui MQ2000 is not a second-class component system.

It's a first-class compact.



Sansui has never made anything but components until now. So our engineers just couldn't break the old habit when we asked them to come up with a four-channel compact. They took the ingredients of a state-of-the-art component system and packed them into a single housing, then crowned them with an acclaimed, first-line automatic turntable and magnetic cartridge.

The MQ2000 complete four-channel music center. It's an AM/FM receiver. A decoder for all compatibly matrixed four-channel recordings and broadcasts. A four-channel synthesizer for your entire collection of conventional stereo records, as well as for regular stereo broadcasts. It can handle any discrete four-channel source, taped or otherwise, and can take any adapter for any future four-channel medium that might come along.

Total IHF music power: 74 watts. FM sensitivity: 5 microvolts IHF. Normal-level response: 30 to 30,000 Hz ± 2 db, with harmonic or IM distortion below 1% at rated output.

The automatic turntable is Perpetuum Ebner's Model 2032 with calibrated stylus-force adjustment, variable-speed control, damped cuing, anti-skating and a host of other features. The cartridge is Shure's M75-6, specially recommended for four-channel discs.

The speakers are Sansui's exciting new AS100 two-way acoustic-suspension designs. Not scaled-down performers made just to go along with a package, but full-fledged performers in their own right—regular members of Sansui's new AS speaker line. Two of them come as part of the package, because most people already have a stereo pair, but you can match up another pair of Sansui's regular line, if you wish, for a perfectly balanced system. Wait till you hear this at your franchised Sansui dealer!



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SANSUI ELECTRONICS CORP.

Woodside, New York 11377 • Gardena, California 90274
ELECTRONIC DISTRIBUTORS (Canada), Vancouver 9, B.C.
SANSUI ELECTRIC CO., LTD., Tokyo, Japan • Sansui Audio Europe S. A., Antwerp, Belgium

It sounds like reel-to-reel. It looks like cassette. It is. It is the new Sansui SC700.

Close your eyes and your ears tell you you're listening to a reel-to-reel deck of the highest caliber. Open your eyes and you know that cassette recording has finally made the grade.

The performance-packed, feature-packed SC700 Stereo Cassette Deck incorporates Dolby noise reduction, adjustable bias for either chromium dioxide or ferric oxide tapes, three-microphone mixing and specs that will make your eyes—as long as they're open—pop even wider.

Undistorted response is 40 to 16,000 Hz with chromium dioxide tape and close to that with standard ferric oxide tape. Record/playback signal-to-noise ratio is better than 56 to 58 db with Dolby in—and commendably better than 50 db even with Dolby out! Wow and flutter are below 0.12% weighted RMS.

A DC servo motor (solid-state controlled) assures rock-steady speed. The tape-selector adjusts both bias and equalization for ferric-oxide or chromium-dioxide formulations. The large, slant-panel VU meters are softly illuminated. Contourless heads keep response smooth, and a head gap *one micron* narrow brings high-frequency output right up to reel-to-reel standards.

With so much in its favor, Sansui engineers decided it deserved all the features of a first-rank open-reel deck, and more: Pause/edit control. 3-digit tape counter. Separate record/playback level controls (independent but friction-coupled). Automatic end-of-tape shut-off with full disengagement and capstan retraction . . . and much, much more.

The SC700 is practically a self-contained recording studio. Which makes it quite a bargain at \$299.95.



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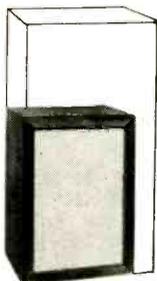
**Bringing up
the rear.**

The ADC 404A.

If you've hesitated about making the switch to four channel because of the complications posed by rear speaker placement, relax.

We've got the answer. It's our ADC 404A.

The choice of leading testing organizations for two channel systems, this unobtrusive, high quality, low cost speaker is also the perfect solution to the biggest hang up in four channel sound reproduction.



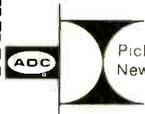
The ultra-compact ADC 404A (11 $\frac{7}{8}$ " x 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ ") provides the clean, uncolored, well balanced sound normally associated with far larger and more costly systems.

Best of all, its small size and light weight enormously simplify placement problems. Just place a pair on a back wall and almost before you can say four channel, you're hearing it.

And once you've heard the 404A, we think you'll agree that with ADC bringing up the rear, you're way ahead.

Manufacturers suggested retail price \$45

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AUDIO BASICS

By RALPH HODGES



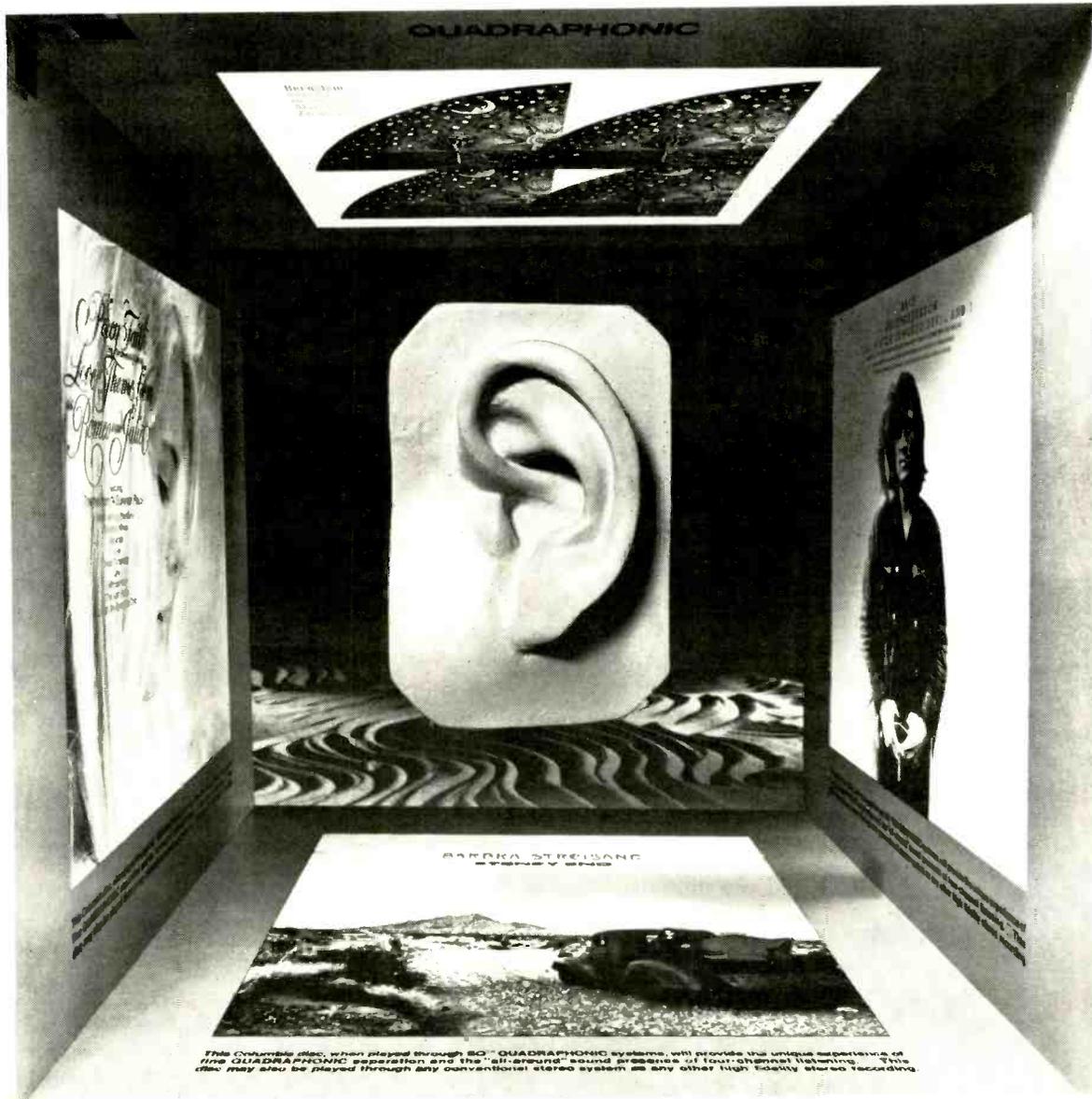
RECORD STATIC

STATIC ELECTRICITY ranks with simple carelessness as the element most responsible for shortened record life. It also troubles the tape user, to a lesser degree, but for similar reasons. All matter is ultimately made up of subatomic particles gathered into units—atoms and molecules—that are normally electrostatically neutral (that is, *plus* and *minus* particles are present in equal numbers). However, it's often not too difficult to cause a gain or loss of one or more of the particles, leaving the atom or molecule with a plus or minus static (or stationary) charge, depending on which type of particle remains in the majority. Since electrically conductive materials (metals, *etc.*) permit a free flow of charges, an electrostatic imbalance of one atom is distributed throughout the whole object. Nonconductors (record vinyl, untreated tape backing, and many others) will develop a potent static charge at the precise point where there is a gain or loss of the charged particle(s). Now, static charges want nothing so much as to *discharge* (neutralize) themselves. They'll attract anything present in the immediate environment that might correct the imbalance. Dust is always available, and is usually the first thing to make a visible arrival. Once there, the dust speck locks with the record surface in a tug of war over the disputed charges that is surprisingly difficult to break up. And this dust is ultimately destructive to records when the playing process grinds it into the walls of the grooves.

Unfortunately, the very act of playing a record, or wiping it to remove dust, creates more static charges. Everyone who has ever tried even rudimentary record cleaning has noticed, along with a faintly audible crackle, the tendency of dust motes to skip back to the spot from which they were removed. Record-cleaning fluids are supposed to be a specific against static, and many of them are probably admirable in this capacity, but my reservations about fluids, expressed last month, still stand. This leaves two lines of defense. The first is the conductive turntable mat. It is standard equipment on most of today's good turntables, and can often be purchased for older models. The mat can't *discharge* static, but it can bring enough plus charges in close proximity to the record surface's minus charges to neutralize the record's attractiveness to dust temporarily—as long as the record is on the mat. Once removed, with the familiar crackle, the record again becomes a dust magnet, and should be jacketed immediately. Your second option is the use of some radioactive device (not usually much more radioactive than a luminous watch dial), such as the Staticmaster brush or ionizing "jewels." These ionize the air, making it conductive, and thereby provide an escape path for the charges. The dust held in captivity is now free to be removed mechanically. Once released, the dust is easily wiped away.

Some record companies specially "dope" the vinyl from which they mold their discs with substances intended to make the disc more conductive. While this is somewhat effective in reducing static, it is also an adulteration, and, unless done with moderation, may increase surface noise.

The best part of Sony's SQ four-channel system isn't made by Sony.



It's made by people like Columbia and Vanguard: the SQ stereo/quadrasonic record.

That's as it should be. Because without music that means something to you, four-channel would be meaningless—no matter how much technical ingenuity our engineers invested in it.

But now you can get four-channel SQ records that surround you with the music of composers like Bach, Mahler, Tchaikovsky and Verdi, and with performers like Baez, Bernstein, Blood, Sweat and Tears, Miles Davis, Dylan, Santana, Streisand...

Which means you now need some way to hear those records in four-channel.

And that's where Sony comes in. Add two speakers, an integrated amplifier and our SQD-1000 decoder to your stereo system (or two speakers and our SQA-200 with its own amp built-in), and you can hear true four-channel sound from all the new SQ records. Even the stereo tapes and records you already have will be enhanced to sound like four-channel. And you can add a four-channel tape player.

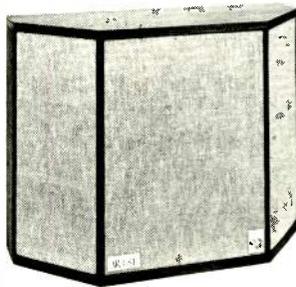
Besides compatibility with your stereo system and recordings, SQ has many other technical advantages—that's one of the reasons major record companies are adopting it. With SQ, the record producer can seat his musicians anywhere in a circle around you without unbalancing the musical effect. And you can listen without losing any of the left-to-right separation your stereo system gives you. And front-to-back separation is greatly increased by the logic circuits in the Sony SQ decoder.

A wide variety of SQ records are now available. And your Sony dealer has the SQ equipment that you need to play them. Drop in for a demonstration, and surround yourself with music that you want to hear, the way you've always wanted to hear it. Sony Corporation of America, 47-47 Var Dam Street, Long Island City, N.Y., 11101. *A trade mark of CBS, Inc.



SONY® SQ* four-channel record system

“The performance of the LST is truly prodigious.” *High Fidelity Magazine*

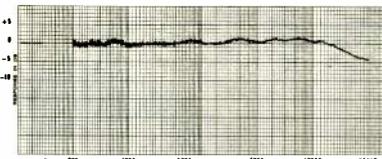


The idea behind our Laboratory Standard Transducer was to offer engineers and scientists a quantitative standard where before there was none. Since its introduction to the professional, however, a number of these speakers have found their way into home stereo systems.

This fact is not so remarkable, though, since the AR-LST is simply a logical extension of the philosophy long employed at AR in designing loudspeakers for the home: The best loudspeaker is the most accurate one.

Linear response

High Fidelity's recent review of the AR-LST (January 1972) reflected their appreciation of this approach: “The performance of the LST is truly prodigious. Its response was found to be among the most linear



Total radiated energy of the AR-LST above 500 Hz; selector switch in the “flat” position.

yet measured for a loudspeaker. From 50 Hz to 15,000

Hz, the LST was measured as flat within plus or minus 3 dB!”

Flexibility

The AR-LST offers a choice of six different energy output characteristics — the flat one shown here, plus five others — all accurately known and available at the turn of a switch. *High Fidelity* reported that “different program material (depending on variations in high-frequency emphasis and over-all tonal balance) did seem to call for different settings of this switch”, and that the various settings were “very useful for satisfying individual listener preference and/or suiting the playback to different types of rooms.”

Overall performance

High Fidelity summed up its reaction to the AR-LST's unique characteristics this way: “The LST's sonic accuracy becomes manifest not only in terms of the natural tonal balance it provides for all manner of musical material, but also in the way it reveals subtle differences in the upper midrange and high-end response of different recordings — differences that often are obscured by otherwise fine loudspeakers but which are of importance to the critical listener. With good recordings and an appropriately powerful amplifier driving them, a pair of LST's are a joy to hear whether the material is rock or chamber music, grand opera or a baroque ensemble, Sinatra or a Mahler symphony.”

Please send detailed information on the AR-LST, as well as a list of Demonstrating Dealers, to

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Acoustic Research, Inc.

24 Thorndike St., Cambridge, Massachusetts 02141

SR-4



TECHNICAL TALK

By JULIAN D. HIRSCH

● **“SUPER-POWER” AMPLIFIERS:** Although most people seem to be quite content with moderately powered amplifiers, there has been a gradual upward trend in amplifier power ratings in the last few years. I’m referring here to legitimate ratings, not figments of advertising imaginations. Today there are a number of receivers and component amplifiers capable of delivering 50 to 60 watts (or more) per channel to 8-ohm speakers. These are usually considered as “high-power” amplifiers, since 20 to 30 watts per channel is a more usual rating, even in rather good audio systems. Much has been written, pro and con, on the need for, or even the advisability of, extremely high amplifier power. After all, ordinary listening volume seldom requires more than a watt or two, even with the least efficient speakers. What is to be gained by using a “super-power” amplifier?

“Super-power” is my own term for the class of amplifiers capable of delivering 100 watts or more per channel to 8-ohm loads with both channels operating simultaneously over a frequency range of 20 to 20,000 Hz with very low distortion. What constitutes “very low distortion” is discussed in the feature article in this issue where I go into the specifics of super-power amplifier performance.

As I see it, the use of super power can be justified on several grounds, all of which are interrelated:

1. Music and speech waveforms are complex, with brief output peaks far exceeding the average values. The average power is related to the apparent volume of the sound (all else being equal), but the ratio of peak to average power in the program really determines what is needed in respect to the amplifier’s power rating. This ratio is rather indeterminate, but measurements I have made suggest that it may be 10 dB or so for speech and perhaps 6 to 7 dB for rock music. Both figures were based on reproduction of music where some peak limiting has

already been applied during the recording process. It is certain that the ratio for live sound sources is considerably higher.

A 10-dB peak-to-average ratio means that the amplifier, running at a 1-watt average output, may have to deliver 10-watt peaks occasionally. Obviously, the speaker must be able to handle the highest peaks.

2. The logarithmic response of human hearing requires a doubling of power for each 3-dB increase of volume. This is a relatively small volume change, which might not even be noticed if it occurred after a pause in the program. A few such “slight” volume increases could easily require a ten-fold increase in amplifier power.

3. The size and acoustical treatment of the listening room, difficult to define except in general terms, can have a great influence on power requirements. A large living room can easily require ten times as much power as a small den to achieve a comparable listening level.

4. Loudspeaker efficiency—a rough measure of how much electrical power is needed for a given acoustic output—spans a range of perhaps ten to one (not including large horn and theater-type systems which are more efficient than the usual home speaker systems).

5. Individual listening taste and volume preference, impossible to specify rigorously, may well be the major factor in determining amplifier power needs. My own tests, in a room of about 2,000 cubic feet, indicate that only about 0.1 watt per channel provides a comfortable background music level that does not interfere with normal conversation (with moderately low-efficiency acoustic-suspension speakers). At 1 watt the volume is, by my standards, quite loud, with conversation possible but requiring shouting. Yet, with certain types of program material, where the utmost in realism is desired, the average power rises to 10,

TESTED THIS MONTH

●
Akai GX-365D Stereo Tape Deck
Dynaco A-10 Speaker System
Magnesonics 200B Erasette
E. D. FW-10 Cassette Winder

20, and even 50 watts. Even in this case, we know that we are well below "natural" volume levels.

Taking all factors into consideration, it is easy to see why some people never feel the need for more than 10 watts of amplifier power, while others still feel limited with several hundred watts at their disposal. It is for the latter group of dyed-in-the-wool audiophiles that several manufacturers produce super-power amplifiers. These are all basic power amplifiers, rated with great conservatism, and meeting the requirements previously set down for this category of amplifier. Many of them are large, heavy, and hot (a cooling fan is advisable for any of them that are to be run at high levels much of the time). All of them are expensive, although curiously enough, considered on a "dollars per watt" basis, they are more economical than most lower-power amplifiers.

To discover what differences might exist among these amplifiers, both measurable and subjective, and to decide whether they offered any clear-cut advantage over more mundane amplifiers, we have tested a group of super-power amplifiers. All of the manufacturers we contacted supplied us with a sample for testing—with two exceptions: SAE, because they simply had no amplifiers to spare; and McIntosh, because it is their company policy not to submit products for testing. A few other amplifiers of this caliber are doubtless available, but usually from smaller companies that do not have national distribution at this time.

The details of the tests, and of the results, appear elsewhere in this issue. Even if you have no desire to add one of these units to your system, you might nevertheless find our test data a useful guide to the present state of the art in audio amplification.

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories

Akai GX-365D Stereo Tape Deck



● THE Akai GX-365D stereo tape deck is a three-motor, four-speed machine with three long-life glass-ferrite heads and a number of unusual operating features—including reverse playback. The basic operating speeds (1 $\frac{7}{8}$, 3 $\frac{3}{4}$, and 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ ips) are selected by individual pushbuttons that simultaneously change the equalization. Operation at 15 ips is also possible when a special capstan bushing and rubber pinch wheel are installed (they are normally stored inside the hinged head cover). The 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ -ips equalization is used for the higher speed.

The transport is solenoid controlled through five light-touch pushbuttons. An optional remote-control accessory can be plugged into a socket in the rear of the unit. The GX-365D shifts its single playback head to achieve bi-directional playback. There are play and fast-speed pushbuttons for each direction of travel flanking a large STOP button. Illuminated arrows next to the reels indicate the direction of tape movement. The reel braking is electromagnetic, and there is a switch to adjust the transport

mechanism to handle tapes of $\frac{1}{2}$ -mil, 1-mil, and 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ -mil thicknesses.

The tape passes over a tension arm that shuts off the motors when the tape breaks or runs out. A special switch can be set to turn the machine off totally when the automatic shutoff trips. The PAUSE control is a small button which acts instantly when pushed (and does *not* record a noise on the tape when released). Twisting the button clockwise locks it in position.

The GX-365D is designed for world-wide application, in that it has a six-position voltage selector in the rear to make possible its use with line-voltage sources from 100 to 240 volts. A screwdriver-adjusted control on the panel sets the drive system for either 50- or 60-Hz power lines. The electronic portion of the GX-365D is located below the transport. Two illuminated meters indicate recording and playback levels. Three pushbuttons below the meters select stereo recording or quarter-track mono on tracks 1-4 and 2-3; two more buttons route the SOURCE or TAPE signals to the line outputs. By engaging both these buttons and the appropriate track selector button, sound-on-sound recordings can be made in mono. A pushbutton marked "SRT" increases the recording bias to suit the newer low-noise, high-output tapes. With the SRT button disengaged, the GX-365D is adjusted for low-noise tapes such as 3M Type 203.

A stereo headphone jack (for 8-ohm phones) with its own volume control is located below the monitoring pushbuttons. At the right side of the control panel are two pairs of recording-level controls. The line and microphone adjustments are concentric for each channel, and the two sources can be mixed. The MIC inputs, which have a 10,000-ohm impedance, are located below the controls. Between them is the RECORD button, with a red indicator light above it. The button can be pushed at any time, with the tape set for normal speed, to engage the

(Continued on page 30)

Our new SX-727. So much for so little.



If you think that value is an abstraction, you'll change your mind when you see and hear the new Pioneer SX-727 AM-FM stereo receiver. Comparison proves it has greater power, performance, precision, features and versatility than any similar priced receiver.

Looking behind its power rating — 195 watts IHF, 40 + 40 watts RMS at 8 ohms, both channels driven — you find a direct-coupled amplifier and dual power supplies. The result is consistent power throughout the 20-20,000 Hz bandwidth for improved transient, damping and frequency responses, with low, low distortion.

You're in complete command of the FM dial, even in congested areas. New and advanced FET/IC circuitry has substantially improved sensitivity and selectivity. Reception is crystal

clear and free of interference.

There's a wide range of connections for turntables, tape decks, headphones, microphones, and even 4-channel. You can connect three speakers, which are protected against damage by an exclusive, new Pioneer safeguard system. Additional features include: loudness contour, high & low filters, FM and audio muting, click-stop tone controls, ultra wide FM tuning dial, dual tuning meters, mode lights and an oiled walnut cabinet.

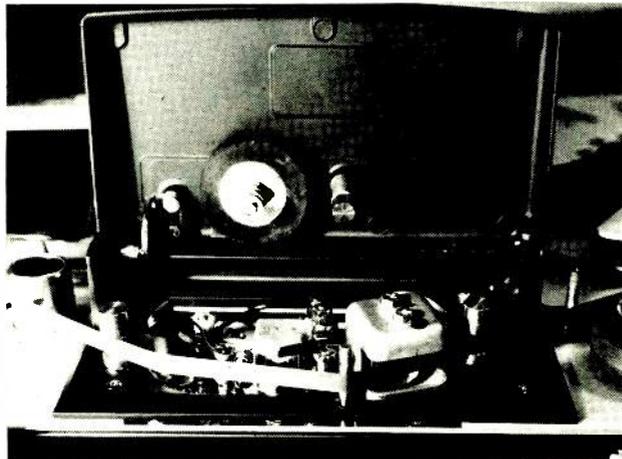
Sensibly priced at \$349.95, the SX-727 is one of Pioneer's new line of 'four margin of extra value' receivers.

The others are SX-825, SX-626 and SX-525, designed for both more luxurious and more modest budgets. Hear them all at your Pioneer dealer today.

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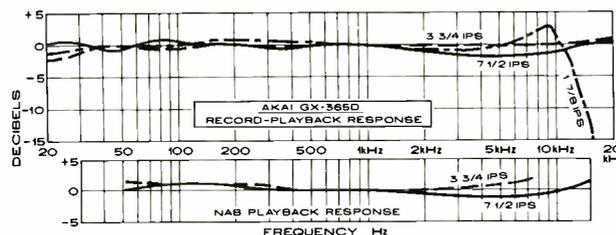
The head cover on the Akai GX-365D is hinged, permitting easy access for inspection and maintenance. A special capstan sleeve and pinch roller for 15-ips operation are stored on its underside.

recording mode. To prevent accidental tape erasure, a concentric ring can be turned 90 degrees to lock out the recording function.

Two unique operating features of the Akai GX-365D are the "Reverse-O-Matic" and the "Compute-O-Matic" systems. The former is an automatic-reversing playback function, operating with the four-digit index counter and two concentric calibrated knobs. By setting these appropriately for the beginning and end of any desired tape segment (up to 2,400 feet long) and pushing a button, the recorder can be made to play the selected portion, reverse, play the other pair of tracks until it reaches the starting point, and repeat the process indefinitely. Automatic reversing can also be actuated by a strip of conducting foil that has been applied to the tape at the desired point.

The "Compute-O-Matic" system is an unconventional automatic-recording-level adjustment. It is actually a gain control driven by a servo-motor, operating on both channels, with its action set by the highest signal level on either channel. The shaft of the motor-driven control, with an index arrow, is visible on the panel. When the Compute-O-Matic button is pressed in the absence of a signal, the control turns to maximum with an audible whirring sound. When a signal is applied, the control setting reduces until a maximum level of 0 VU is obtained. If higher peaks should occur during the recording, the gain is reduced imperceptibly to accommodate them. Inasmuch as the process may take a second or two, it does not follow program peaks, but instead serves to establish a safe maximum average level. However, the gain does not advance during low-level passages, and therefore the average program level may tend to drop slightly as a recording is made, depending on the duration and frequency of occurrence of loud passages.

The Akai GX-365D is supplied in a handsome walnut cabinet with a removable hinged cover (it is not portable, however), and can be installed vertically or horizontally. The take-up reel supplied, incidentally, is a novel metal type with large side slots and a special hub for easy tape loading. The unit weighs 56 pounds. Price: \$559.95.



● **Laboratory Measurements.** We used the recommended 3M Type 203 tape for our measurements. Akai states that it is similar to the Akai AT-7S tape which is used for the recorder's alignment but is not sold in this country. The record-playback frequency response at 7½ ips was impressive: within ±1.5 dB or better from 20 to 20,000 Hz, it was down only 3 to 4 dB at 25,000 Hz. In particular, the frequency response was maintained with virtually no fluctuations resulting from head fringing effects down to the lowest frequencies of our test instruments. The response was essentially identical in both directions, and on both channels.

At 3¾ ips, the frequency response was even smoother: ±1.5 dB from 20 to 21,500 Hz. The lowest speed, 1⅞ ips, provided better response than most open-reel recorders we have tested at that speed, though it was well short of the range achieved at higher speeds. It was ±2 dB from 20 to 11,500 Hz, with a slight peak centered at 9,300 Hz. Our response measurements at all speeds confirmed Akai's specifications.

Since the 7½-ips equalization is also used at 15 ips, one would expect an exaggerated high-frequency response at the higher speed, and this proved to be the case. The output rose from about 4,000 Hz to a maximum (between 20,000 and 25,000 Hz) of about +16 dB. Clearly this speed is suitable only for playback of quarter-track 15-ips tapes on 7-inch reels—not a very common item these days.

The NAB playback response, over the range provided by the Ampex test tapes, was ±1 dB from 50 to 15,000 Hz at 7½ ips and ±0.75 dB from 50 to 7,500 Hz at 3¾ ips. We made numerous measurements with other tapes, including 3M Type 111, BASF LP-35LH, Maxell UD-35-7, and TDK SD 150-H7, with both normal and SRT bias. It was immediately evident that "standard" tapes are not suitable for this machine, at least as it is normally biased. The 3M Type 111 response fell off smoothly above 1,000 Hz, and at 20,000 Hz was more than 5 dB below the mid-range level. The low-noise tapes gave excellent results with either bias setting, with flatter response above 15,000 Hz using the SRT bias. In fact, with this bias, the typical response of any of the low-noise tapes was ±1.5 dB from 20 to 25,000 Hz.

The GX-365D required a line input of 45 millivolts for a 0-VU recording level, or a microphone input of 0.42 millivolt. The corresponding output level was 0.85 volt at 1⅞ ips, 1 volt at 3¾ ips, and 1.15 volts at 7½ ips. At 0 VU, the record-playback distortion was between 1 and 2 per cent, depending on tape speed. It increased gradually, reaching 3 per cent at +7 VU at 7½ ips and at about +3 VU at the other speeds. The unweighted signal-to-noise ratio, relative to the 3 per cent distortion level, was 55 dB at 7½ ips and about 53 dB at the slower speeds. These are fine figures and confirm the manufacturer's ratings.

The operating tape speeds were exact, as determined by a stroboscope wheel. Fast forward or rewind of 1,800 feet of tape required 90 seconds. At 7½ ips, wow was unmeasurable (less than 0.01 per cent) and flutter was a very low 0.06 per cent. At 3¾ ips, wow and flutter were 0.02 and 0.08 per cent, respectively, and at 1⅞ ips they were 0.01 and 0.16 per cent.

● **Comment.** The GX-365D had a few idiosyncrasies. The meters were underdamped, swinging wildly, and the transport-control solenoids operated with a resounding "clunk" that could be obtrusive in a quiet room. Tape reversal took 5 seconds, whether initiated manually or automatically, and regardless of the speed. However, it never failed to work, requiring only patience and faith on the part of the user.

The "Reverse-O-Matic" system worked well, but was

(Continued on page 32)

There's more behind the BOSE 901 than just a reflecting wall.

Research

The 901 DIRECT/REFLECTING® speaker system is the result of the most intensive research program that has been conducted into the physical acoustics and psychoacoustics of loud-speaker design. The research that gave birth to the 901 in 1968 began in 1956 and continues today to explore the frontiers of sound reproduction. Copies of the Audio Engineering Society paper, 'ON THE DESIGN, MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION OF LOUDSPEAKERS', by Dr. A. G. Bose, are available from the Bose Corp. for fifty cents.

Technology

As might be expected, the product that emerged from 12 years of research is technologically quite different from conventional speakers. Some of the major differences are:

- 1) The use of a multiplicity of acoustically coupled full-range speakers to provide a clarity and definition of musical instrument sounds that can not, to our knowledge, be obtained with the conventional technology of woofers, tweeters, and crossovers.
- 2) The use of active equalization in combination with the multiplicity of full range speakers to provide an accuracy of musical timbre that can not, to our knowledge, be achieved with speakers alone.
- 3) The use of an optimum combination of direct and reflected sound to provide the spatial fullness characteristic of live music.
- 4) The use of a totally different frequency response criterion—flat power response instead of the conventional flat frequency response—to produce the full balance of high frequencies without the shrillness associated with conventional Hi-Fi.

Quality Control

It's a long way from a good theoretical design to the production of speakers that provide you with all the musical benefits inherent in the design. To this end BOSE has designed a unique computer that tests speakers for parameters that are directly related to the perception of sound. There is only one such computer in existence—designed by us and used for you. In January alone it rejected 9,504 speakers that will never be used again in any BOSE product. It is the speakers that survive the computer tests that provide your enjoyment and our reputation.

Reviews

The BOSE 901 DIRECT/REFLECTING® speaker is now the most highly reviewed speaker regardless of size or price. Read the complete text of reviewers who made these comments:*

Julian Hirsch STEREO REVIEW.
". . . I must say that I have never heard a speaker system in my own home which could surpass, or even equal, the Bose 901 for overall 'realism' of sound."

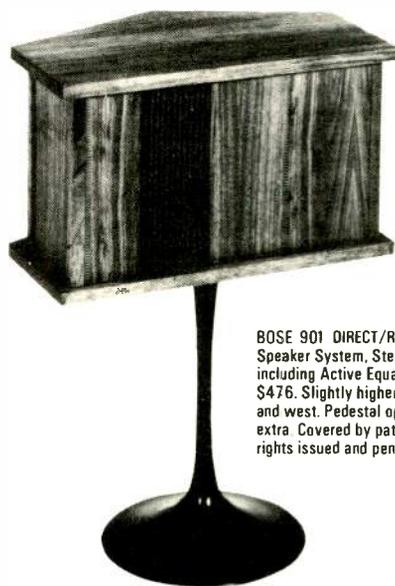
e/e HIGH FIDELITY. "It is our opinion that this is the speaker system to own, regardless of price if one wants the ultimate in listening pleasure."

Irving Kolodin SATURDAY REVIEW.
"After a time trial measured in months rather than weeks, this one can definitely proclaim Bose is best, big or small, high or low."

Performance

You alone must be the judge of this. Visit your BOSE dealer. Audition the 901 with your favorite records. We make only one request. Before leaving, ask him to place the 901's directly on top of the largest and most expensive speakers he carries and then compare the sound. You will know why we make this request when you have made the experiment.

*For reprints of the reviews circle our number on your readers service card.



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a little imprecise in its point of actuation. By leaving perhaps 15 seconds of "dead time" at the beginning and end of the selected portion of the tape, it can be repeated ad infinitum. The "Compute-O-Matic" gain control—once we learned to ignore the occasional internal buzzing sound accompanying its operation—was very effective. We found it useful when recording FM broadcasts when we did not know what maximum level to expect. Combined with the considerable dynamic range of the recorder, it takes care of those unknown recording situations quite nicely.

The record-interlock button is so designed that it isn't easy to tell when the disc is in the locked position. If the control is not set correctly, a careless touch of the button will unfortunately erase a tape during playback; caution is the word here.

The braking was always smooth and gentle, though not particularly fast. The controls do not have logic interlocks, so one must be careful to bring the tape to a full

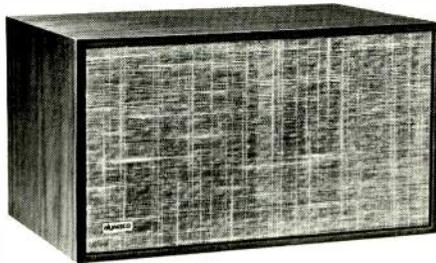
stop before going from a fast speed to normal speed, in order to avoid tape spillage.

The electrical performance of the GX-365D needs little comment. It is virtually flawless, in respect to frequency response, distortion, and noise. The signal-to-noise ratio, although not equal to that of the very best machines we have tested, nevertheless was very good and seemed audibly better than the test equipment indicated. At any rate, we never found any evidence of audible hiss contributed by the recorder. When recording and playing back FM interstation tuner hiss, there was practically no change in sound character at either 3¾ or 7½ ips. At 1⅞ ips, a slight brightness was added, rather than the dulling of highs so often encountered at this speed.

Overall, we liked the Akai GX-365D very much, with the "pluses" far outweighing the few "minuses." It is handsome, rugged, easy to operate, exceptionally versatile, and unsurpassed in electrical performance.

For more information, circle 105 on reader service card

Dynaco A-10 Speaker System



● A NEW member has been added to the Dynaco speaker family. The Model A-10, a very compact two-way system, closely matches the acoustic characteristics of the larger Dynaco A-25 and A-50 speakers. The A-10 uses the same soft-dome tweeter as the A-25, and its 6-inch woofer has the same magnet structure used on the 10-inch woofers of the A-25 and A-50. The 6-dB-per-octave crossover is at 1,500 Hz. Unlike the larger systems, the A-10 has no tweeter-output level adjustment.

Since the A-10's efficiency and general response match those of the A-25 and A-50, it is a good choice for use in the rear of a four-speaker quadrasonic array with the larger Dynaco models in front. When A-10's are used as a stereo pair, amplifiers of at least 15 watts per channel are recommended, and peaks of up to 50 watts can be handled safely.

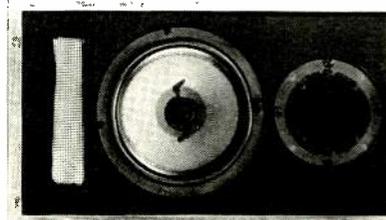
The Dynaco A-10 is 8½ inches wide, 15 inches high, and 7⅞ inches deep; it weighs 11¼ pounds. The walnut cabinet and the grille cloth match the appearance of the other Dynaco speakers. Three recessed brackets in the rear of the A-10 permit wall mounting, either horizontally or vertically. The Dynaco A-10 is sold only in pairs, for \$99.95 the pair.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Recalling the great similarity in response and sound character between the A-25 and A-50 systems, we were not too surprised to find the A-10 almost identical to them. The averaged frequency response was ±4 dB from 50 to 15,000 Hz, with the maximum low-frequency output at 80 Hz and a broad high-frequency maximum at 10,000 Hz. The overall response was smooth. The lowest frequencies were not reproduced as strongly, or with as low distortion, as with the larger Dynaco speakers. Nevertheless, the bass performance of

the tiny A-10 was most impressive, with the distortion (at a 1-watt level) under 5 per cent down to 65 Hz and reaching about 10 per cent at 50 Hz. We would judge the useful lower limit of the A-10's response to be between 50 and 60 Hz, which is not at all bad for a 6-inch woofer.

The pedigree of the A-10 was further emphasized by its performance in the simulated "live-vs.-recorded" listening test, and by its tone-burst response. We would give it a B+ rating in the former, since a loss of extreme highs (above 10,000 Hz) could be heard, and at times there was a slight mid-range coloration whose exact cause we could not identify. The tone bursts, at all frequencies, were as close to perfect as we have seen. Comparing our tone-burst photos with those we made on the A-25 and A-50, we found them as nearly alike as the proverbial "peas in a pod," and completely free of ringing or any other distortion. The impedance of the Dynaco A-10 reached its minimum of 5 ohms at 150 Hz, and had two peaks of 20 and 30 ohms at 70 and 1,300 Hz. The average impedance was between 8 and 10 ohms.

● **Comment.** We used the Dynaco A-10's in the rear of a four-speaker "Dynaquad" setup, with A-25's in the front. The results were excellent, with a good front-to-rear balance when the rear-speaker level control was at maximum. We then placed them in the front of the room and compared them with some of the best speakers at our disposal. With some types of program material the sound of the A-10's was frequently almost indistinguishable from that of speakers costing many times their price. Of course, there *were* differences. The high-frequency output and dispersion of the A-10, while better than average, were no match for those of more elaborate systems using multi-unit dome-tweeter arrays. *(Continued on page 38)*



Like the larger A-25 system, the Dynaco A-10 enclosure has a heavily damped port. The tweeter is similar to those in the larger models.

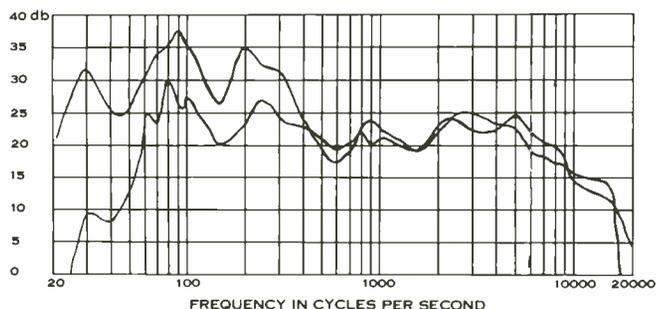


The Base Performance of the BOSE 501

Did you know that the one inch base on the bottom of the BOSE 501 DIRECT/REFLECTING® speaker is essential for the clarity of its sound? It is—but for a very different reason than you might expect.

The surfaces immediately adjacent to any loudspeaker affect the balance of frequencies that it radiates into the room. You have no doubt discovered this in changing the position of your speakers at home. Variations in the location of any speaker relative to adjacent wall or floor surfaces can cause gross variations of the frequency balance of the sound radiated into the room, in the manner shown in Figure 1. This is often more variation in sound than you get between speakers of widely differing price ranges.

Fig. 1 Two frequency response curves, measured at a fixed microphone location, of a good quality conventional speaker placed at 2 different locations in the same room.



As a consequence of this variation with position, the performance of every 'bookshelf' speaker is at best a compromise. Does it sound better on a free standing shelf, on the floor, along the wall, in the corner, or, is it designed to sound reasonably well in all positions and therefore, not yield optimum performance in any? This is a fundamental acoustical problem inherent in the concept of a 'shelf' speaker and independent of designer or manufacturer.

And this is where the base of the 501 comes in. The base itself has nothing to do with the radiation of sound but it was designed so that you must place the 501 on the floor. In addition, you are instructed to place it along a wall. And we don't allow you to place it in a corner!

Our knowledge of your placement of the 501 gives us a design advantage that directly converts to a superior performance for you. The 501 is designed to optimally couple to the adjacent floor and wall surfaces.

Admittedly, it is a rather autocratic approach for a designer to tell you how to place your speaker. However, we feel about the 501 as we do about the now famous 901, with which it shares many features. We would much prefer that you buy a conventional speaker than to use ours improperly—even if it still has an edge over the competition when so used. Your enjoyment and our reputation are involved with every performance.

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"...a stereo receiver easily worth twice the cost (or perhaps even more)..."

— *Audio Magazine*.

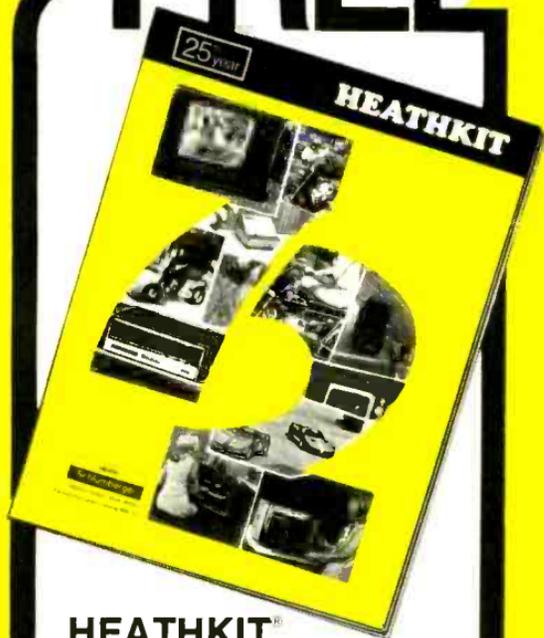
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— *Radio Electronics*.



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Mr. Hirsch goes on to say: "The FM tuner section of the AR-1500 was outstandingly sensitive. We measured the IHF sensitivity at 1.4 microvolts, and the limiting curve was the steepest we have ever measured... The FM frequency response was literally perfectly flat from 30 to 15,000 Hz... Image rejection was over 100 dB (our measurement limit)..."

"The AM tuner was a pleasant surprise... It sounded very much like the FM tuner, with distinct sibilants and a quiet background, and was easily the best-sounding AM tuner we have had the pleasure of using..."

"...all input levels can be matched and set for the most effective use of the loudness compensation. This valuable feature is rarely found on high-fidelity receivers and amplifiers..."

"The phono equalization was perfectly accurate (within our measuring tolerances)... The magnetic phono-input sensitivity was adjustable from 0.62 millivolt to about 4.5 millivolts, with a noise level of -66 dB, which is very low... When properly set up, it would be impossible to overload the phono inputs of the AR-1500 with any magnetic cartridge..."

"...it significantly bettered Heath's conservative specifications. Into 8-ohm loads, with both channels driven, the continuous power at clipping level was 81.5 watts per channel. Into 4 ohms it was 133 watts per channel, and even with 16-ohm loads the receiver delivered 46.5 watts per channel. Needless to say, the AR-1500 can drive any speaker we know of, and with power to spare..."

"At 1,000 Hz, harmonic distortion was well under 0.05 per cent from 1 to 75 watts per channel... The IM distortion was under 0.05 per cent at levels of a couple of watts or less, and gradually increased from 0.09 per cent at 10 watts to 0.16 per cent at 75 watts... The heavy power transformer is evidence that there was no skimping in the power supply of the AR-1500, and its performance at the low-frequency extremes clearly sets it apart from most receivers..."

"Virtually all the circuit boards plug into sockets, which are hinged so that boards can be swung out for testing or servicing without shutting off the receiver. An 'extender' cable permits any part of the receiver to be operated in the clear - even the entire power-transistor and heat-sink assembly! The 245-page manual has extensive tests charts that show all voltage and resistance measurements in key circuits as they should appear on the receivers built-in test meter..."

"With their well-known thoroughness, Heath has left little to the builder's imagination, and has assumed no electronic training or knowledge on his part. The separate packaging of all parts for each circuit board subassembly is a major boon..."

"In sound quality and ease of operation, and in overall suitability for its intended use, one could not expect more from any high-fidelity component."

From the pages of Audio Magazine:

"...the AR-1500 outperforms the near-perfect AR-15 in almost every important specification..."

"The FM front end features six tuned circuits and utilizes three FETs, while the AM RF section has two dual-gate MOSFETs (for RF and mixer stages) and an FET oscillator stage. The AM IF section features a 12-pole LC filter and a broad band detector. The FM IF section is worthy of special comment. Three IC stages are used and there are two 5-pole LC filters..."

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"...IHF FM sensitivity... turned out to be 1.5 uV as opposed to the 1.8 uV claimed. Furthermore, it was identical at 90 MHz and 106 MHz (the IHF spec requires a statement only for IHF sensitivity at 98 MHz but we always measure this important spec at three points on the dial). Notice that at just over 2 microvolts of input signal S/N has already reached 50 dB. Ultimate S/N measured was 66 dB and consisted of small hum components rather than any residual noise. THD in Mono measured 0.25%, exactly twice as good as claimed! Stereo THD was identical, at 0.25%, which is quite a feat..."

"...the separation of the multiplex section of the AR-1500 reaches about 45 dB at mid-band and is still 32 dB at 50 Hz and 25 dB at 10 kHz (Can your phono cartridge do as well?)"

"The real surprise came when we spent some time listening to AM... This new AM design is superb. We still have one classical music station that has some simultaneous broadcasting on its AM and FM outlets and that gave us a good opportunity to A-B between the AM and FM performance of the AR-1500. There was some high-frequency roll-off to be sure, but BOTH signals were virtually noise-free and we were hard pressed to detect more THD from the AM than from the FM equivalent. Given AM circuits like this (and a bit of care on the part of broadcasters), AM may not be as dead as FM advocates would have us believe!..."

"Rated distortion [0.25%] is reached at a [continuous] power output of 77.5 watts per channel with 8 ohm loads (both channels driven). At rated output (60 watts per channel) THD was a mere 0.1% and at lower power levels there was never a tendency for the THD to 'creep up' again, which indicates the virtually complete absence of any 'crossover distortion' components. No so-called 'transistor sound' from this receiver, you can be sure. We tried to measure IM distortion but kept getting readings of 0.05% no matter what we did. Since that happens to be the 'limit' of our test equipment and since the rated IM stated by Heath is 'less than 0.1%' at all power levels up to rated power output' there isn't much more we can say except that, again, the unit is better than the specification - we just don't know how much better..."

"As for the amplifiers and preamplifier sections, we just couldn't hear them - and that's a commendation. All we heard was program material (plus some speaker coloration, regrettably) unencumbered by audible distortion, noise, hum or any other of the multitude of afflictions which beset some high fidelity stereo installations. The controls are easy to use and quickly become familiar..."

"As always, construction instructions are lucid enough for the inexperienced kit-builder and there is enough technical and theoretical information to satisfy even the most knowledgeable audio/RF engineer."

And Radio Electronics had this to say:

"As you know, the original, the AR-15, has been widely acclaimed as one of the very best stereo receivers that has ever been made. Therefore, it's hard to imagine that anyone has gone ahead and built a better one. But spec for spec, the AR-1500 is ahead of the AR-15..."

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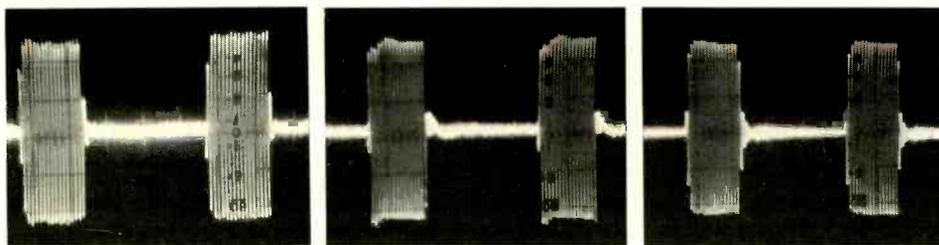
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The A-10 exhibited nearly perfect tone-burst response. The oscilloscope photos show frequencies of (left to right) 100, 1,000, and 10,000 Hz.



put of the A-10 woofer was hard to believe, but switching to the larger speakers while reproducing the pipe organ or bass drum always supplied another octave of the kind of bass that can be *felt*. Without this comparison, it would have been easy to convince someone that the A-10 was reproducing the lowest bass octave. It is very good, especially when compared with most speakers of its size or price, but of course it cannot work miracles.

To summarize, the Dynaco A-10 does exactly what is claimed for it. It is a nearly exact match, electrically and acoustically, for the larger A-25 and A-50 Dynaco speak-

ers. This, plus its size and cost, makes it ideal for the rear speakers of a quadrasonic setup with the larger speakers in front. In addition, it sounds good enough to earn a place in the front of many listening rooms. Although it cannot deliver the volume of sound of a larger speaker, it can play loud enough for almost any reasonable purpose. Its wide dispersion and tonal balance are such that it *sounds* big, and a blindfolded listener would never suspect that he is listening to a speaker system of subcompact size and price.

For more information, circle 106 on reader service card

Magnesonics Model 200B Erasette



● **THE Model 200B Erasette**, manufactured by Magnesonics (Dept. SR, 11036 Nestle Ave., Northridge, Calif. 91324) is a cassette bulk tape eraser. Using a regular reel-type bulk tape eraser with a cassette is effective, but it also amounts to preposterous overkill. The Erasette is a small plastic box, about 4 inches wide, 3½ inches deep, and 2¾ inches high; it weighs only one pound. Four AA penlight cells supply its operating power. To erase a cassette, a molded plastic handle (which plugs into two holes on the top of the Erasette for storage) is pushed into the reel hubs of the cassette to lock them. (If the handle is not used, the tape pack within the cassette may loosen up because of the vibrating action of the erasing field.) The red button on the top of the "Erasette" is pressed, and the cassette is passed along a guide track on the top of the case. As with any eraser, the cassette should be slowly removed from the vicinity of the 200B before the button is released.

If you are wondering how four small AA cells can possibly supply enough energy to erase the tape, they don't. The Erasette contains a permanent magnet that is rotated by a small d.c. motor when the button is pressed. At any given point along the cassette path, the magnetic field goes through a complete cycle, from zero to maximum for both polarities, each time the magnet rotates. In other words, we have the alternating magnetic field that is required for erasure.

A major advantage of bulk erasure is its potential reduction of tape noise. Aberrations in the waveform of the erase-current of any recorder leave a residual noise level (even though the previously recorded material may be completely erased) somewhat higher than that of virgin

tape. A powerful bulk eraser can restore the tape noise to its original level.

This is one of the claims made for the Erasette, and its accompanying literature presents well documented graphic evidence that the 200B is comparable to a commercial a.c.-operated bulk eraser and far better than the machine erase of a low-price cassette machine. Its price is \$15.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** We checked the Erasette first with a high-quality cassette deck and a low-noise cassette. After exposure to the recorder's erase field, the tape exhibited a 4.5-dB increase in noise over its virgin level. Two slow passes over the Erasette restored the noise to its original level. Possibly a single pass would have done as well, but we are in the habit of giving tape a double exposure. Next, we used a chromium-dioxide tape with the same recorder. The recorder increased the noise by 5.5 dB; the Erasette reduced it by 4.7 dB, to very nearly the original level. Several slow passes of the cassette over the eraser were necessary to completely erase a recorded signal from the CrO₂ tape, but we have had to go through the same process erasing CrO₂ tape with an a.c.-operated bulk eraser. Finally, we used a recorder and tape—which shall both be nameless, but which were both of undistinguished quality. The residual noise in the recorder's amplifiers substantially exceeded that of the tape, so that no difference could be measured between recorder and Erasette erasure.

● **Comment.** The Magnesonics Model 200B Erasette is a very effective means not only of erasing all of a cassette without passing it through a recorder at normal speed, but of reducing its noise level to that of an unused tape. Obviously, it won't help a poor recorder and/or tape, but it is a worthwhile adjunct to any good cassette recording system. *Warning:* unlike a.c.-operated erasers, the Erasette has a field that is always "on"! Keep it away from tapes—both blank and recorded—and from watches, even when it is not in use.

For more information, circle 107 on reader service card

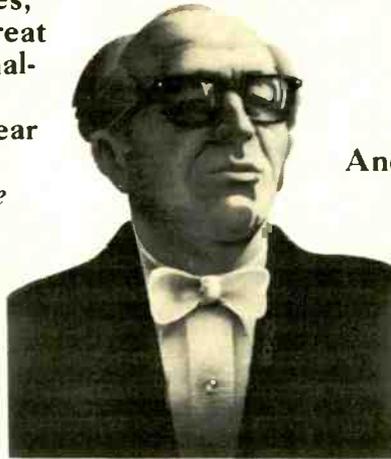
(Continued on page 40)

Copland's music challenges Altec's finest.

Aaron Copland's music: western prairies, big cities, Billy the Kid, Appalachian Spring, ballets, symphonies, chamber music, film scores. It's great American music. The kind that challenges a stereo.

Right now, we invite you to hear a particular piece at your Altec dealer — Aaron Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man*.

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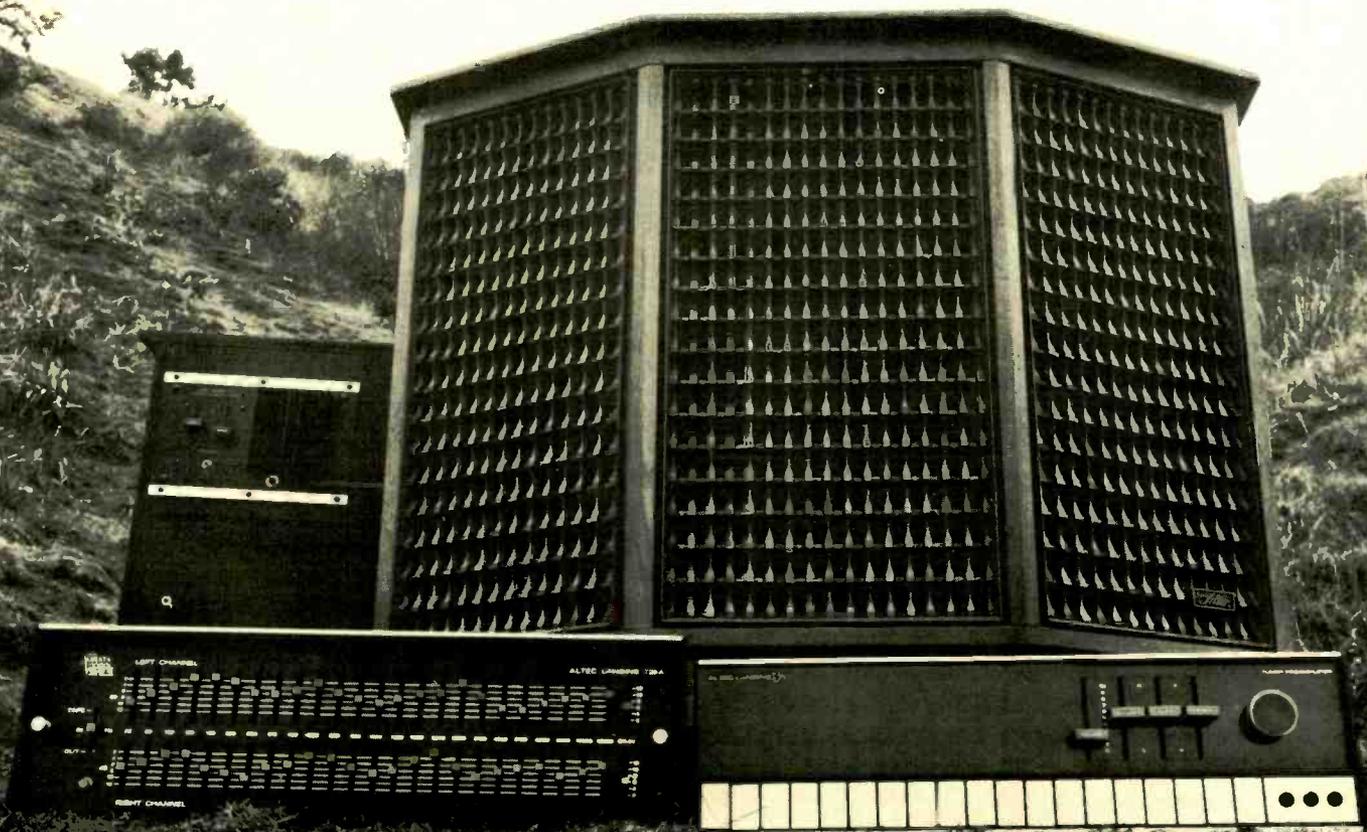
fiers. One to separately handle the highs. Another to separately handle the lows.

Altec's finest system also includes the new Altec 724A tuner pre-amp with an exclusive 4 FET Varitronik tuner. So you hear better stereo separation.

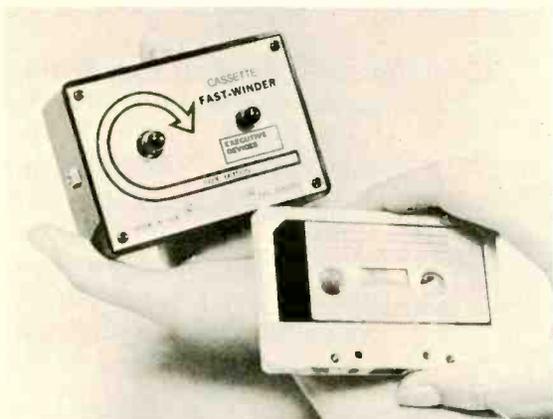
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Executive Devices FW-10 Cassette Fast-Winder



● THE Executive Devices FW-10 Cassette Fast-Winder is a neat answer to the agonizingly slow "fast" speeds of most cassette recorders. The FW-10 weighs 12 ounces and is only a little larger than a cassette—4 x 2⁷/₈ x 2 inches. It has two rotating shafts and two guide pins that engage the hubs and locating holes of a cassette just as in any cassette machine. Pushing a red button on the back of the FW-10 winds the cassette at a high speed in the direction shown by an arrow on the unit.

The manufacturer says that a good C-60 cassette can be fully wound in 12 to 15 seconds when fresh batteries are used (it uses two "C" size flashlight batteries). We

timed several C-60 cassettes at exactly 15 seconds, which is three to ten times faster than is possible on a cassette recorder. Although the manufacturer suggests slowing down near the end of the wind to lessen the shock on the tape leader and its fastening to the hub, we found that the tape always slowed down sufficiently so that the final stop was no worse than would occur with any player or recorder.

We noted also their suggestion that the FW-10 can be used to check cassettes for smooth mechanical operation before use, or even at the point of purchase. This may well be the most useful function of the FW-10. A cheap cassette, or one with high or erratic internal friction, will wind slowly and haltingly (or perhaps not at all) in the FW-10. If it does, you can be sure that it is likely to behave in a similar manner in your machine. On the other hand, a high-quality cassette runs through with an unmistakable "zing," and can subsequently be used with confidence. The FW-10 also appears to wind (as claimed) a smoother, flatter tape pack than many machines, minimizing the chances of malfunction during subsequent use.

The Executive Devices FW-10 sells for only \$7.95 (less batteries). For those who would use it extensively, an a.c. adapter is available for \$5.95. This is the sort of gadget that makes an ideal Christmas present for a cassette enthusiast, but there is no need to wait for next Christmas. The address of Executive Devices is: 740 South Locan, Fresno, Calif. 93727.

For more information, circle 108 on reader service card

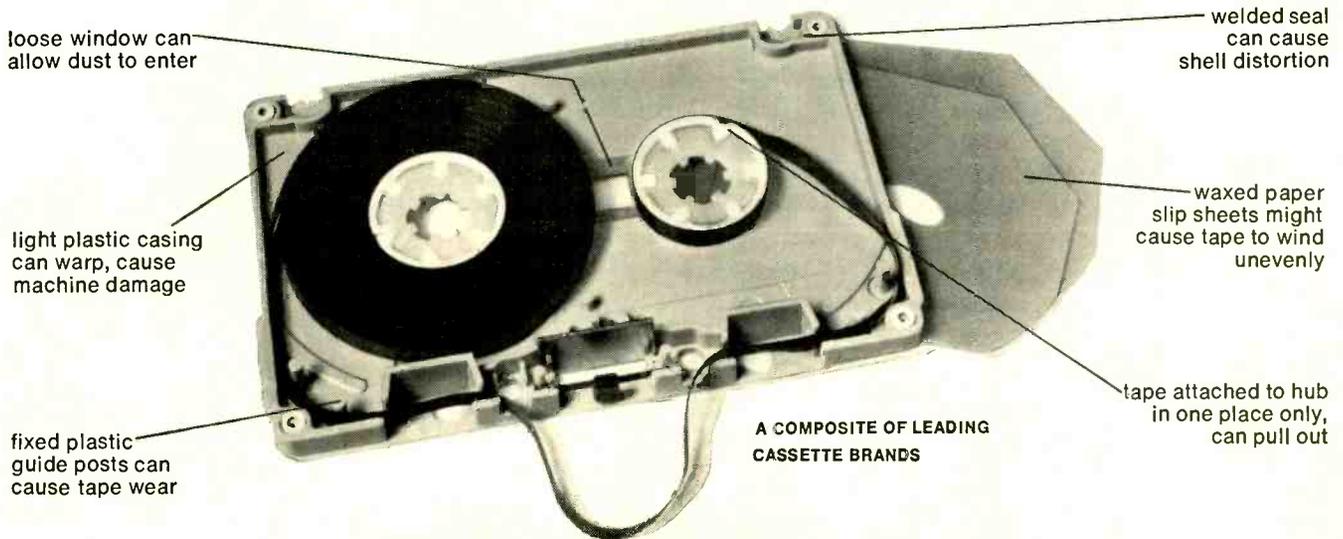
Grand opening



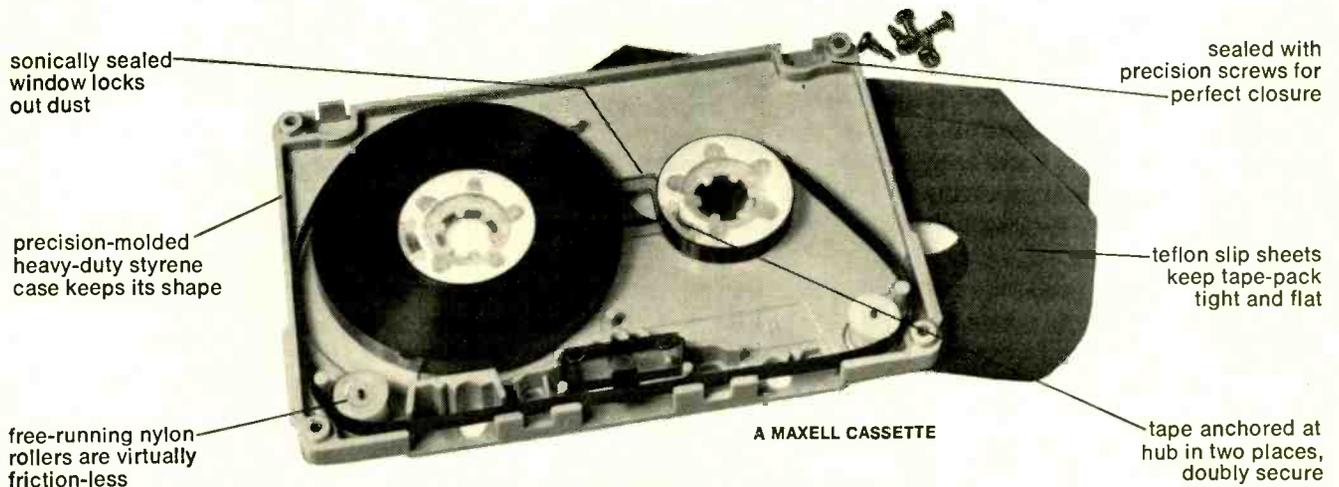
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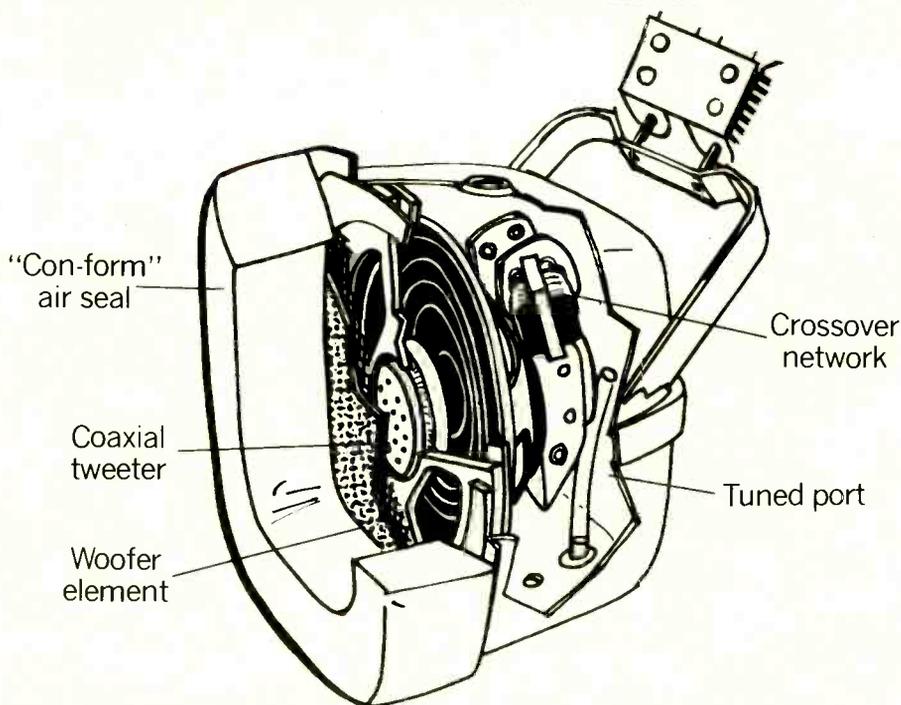
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Ravel's LA VALSE

IN a letter written in 1906 to the music critic of the *Mercure de France*, Maurice Ravel confided: "It is not subtle—what I am undertaking at the moment. It is a Grand Valse, a sort of homage to the memory of the Great Strauss, not Richard, the other—Johann. You know my intense sympathy for this admirable rhythm, and that I hold *la joie de vivre* as expressed by the dance in far higher esteem than Franckist puritanism." Over the next half-dozen years or so, Ravel turned out such works as the opera *L'Heure espagnole*, the ballets *Mother Goose* and *Daphnis and Chloë*, the *Rapsodie espagnole* for orchestra, and the solo piano pieces *Gaspard de la nuit* and *Valses nobles et sentimentales*. The "Grand Valse" went no further during this period.

During the years of World War I, Ravel was able to produce only one score, the meticulously crafted *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, composed originally for solo piano but orchestrated by the composer almost immediately. Perhaps it was this backward glance at a bygone era and bygone manners that put Ravel into the mood to turn again to his "homage to the memory of the Great Strauss." The impresario Serge Diaghilev, at the suggestion of the painter Misia Sert, expressed interest in the project as a subject for his Ballets Russes, and Ravel worked steadily at the score during 1919 and 1920.

Whatever may have been the composer's idea about the piece when he first conceived it shortly after the turn of the century, it had now become strongly influenced by the War. *La Valse*, a *Choreographic Poem*, as Ravel titled it, is a musical mirror of the disintegration of nineteenth-century European civilization and culture. The score carries this descriptive analysis:

At first the scene is dimmed by a kind of swirling mist, through which one discerns, vaguely and intermittently, the waltzing couples. Little by little the vapors disperse, the illumination grows brighter, revealing an immense ballroom filled with dancers; the blaze of the chandeliers comes to full splendor. An Imperial Court about 1855.

To this outline the distinguished Italian composer, conductor, and pianist Alfredo Casella contributed a further scenario. Casella maintained that *La Valse* was in the form of a triptych. Its opening movement, *The Birth of the Waltz*, starts "with dull rumors . . . and from this chaos the development gradually takes form." Casella labels the middle

section simply "The Waltz" and the concluding one "The Apotheosis of the Waltz."

When the score was finished, Ravel submitted it to Diaghilev, along with his own scenario for its production. When the impresario rejected the score, with the excuse that staging expenses would be prohibitive, Ravel was furious. The two of them met five years later in Monte Carlo, and when Ravel refused to shake Diaghilev's hand, he was promptly challenged to a duel. Friends intervened and the duel never took place, but Ravel and Diaghilev never saw one another again.

THE extremes of interpretive approach to *La Valse* are epitomized in the performances conducted by Ernest Ansermet (London CS 6367) and Leonard Bernstein (Columbia MS 6011). The former adopts a no-nonsense, almost deadpan attitude toward it, allowing the music to make its points without any noticeable involvement on the part of the conductor. Bernstein, on the other hand, conducts a highly personal account of the score, with much reliance on phrasing and tempo elasticity and a much wider dynamic range. Bernstein's way will certainly not be to every listener's liking—it borders on fussy overinterpretation—but I find it totally absorbing. The recorded sound, a product of very early stereo engineering, is still highly acceptable; it is clear, detailed, and well-balanced.

Of the remaining recordings of the orchestral version of *La Valse*, none equals Charles Munch's performance in the frenzy and hysteria of the closing section. Unfortunately, the first two sections (to use Casella's breakdown) suffer from a curious lack of atmosphere. The Munch recording exists in three different couplings, of which the budget-price version (RCA Victrola VICS 1323) is by far the best-sounding. Perhaps the safest recommendation of all is Pierre Monteux's recording (Philips 835258), a middle-of-the-road approach that has more personality than Ansermet's but is less manipulated than Bernstein's. There is also a splendid performance of Ravel's fiendishly difficult piano version by Ruth Laredo (Connoisseur Society CS 2005).

The sometimes quixotic but always absorbing Bernstein account (Columbia MQ 522) has been available to reel-to-reel collectors until just recently, when it disappeared from the Harrison Tape Catalog. It is worth searching for.

LISTENING TO DEBUSSY

... a composer for whom music was not everything,
but for whom everything may well have been music

By JAMES GOODFRIEND

APPROACHING the music of Achille-Claude Debussy through the music of the past, one discovers immediately that the vocabulary that has sufficed for Beethoven, Bach, or Schubert simply will no longer do. For, besides talking about such things as parallel fifths and sevenths, pentatonic and whole-tone scales, timbre as a major compositional element, and the separation of metric rhythm from harmonic rhythm—all of which are, if somewhat abstruse-sounding, at least *musical* subjects—one also finds it necessary to discuss prosody, poetry, painting, symbolism, theater (the theater itself and the theater of the mind), Japanese prints, *art nouveau*, and a host of other subjects, the totality of which makes one wonder if, in fact, one is still talking about music at all. One is. But, with Debussy, music has changed.

Debussy was a modern man and a complex man, a collector of sensual experiences, an iconoclast when it came to art, a connoisseur, an aesthetic theorist eager for new discoveries. He lived not in some simpler, distant time, but in the complex modern world, a cosmopolitan sophisticate in the most cosmopolitan and sophisticated of cities, Paris. He was neither Olympianly distant from the social milieu nor shy of it; he had many friends and acquaintances, some of them of no little significance themselves in the world of the arts. His preferred company was that of writers; his preferred pastime was looking at pictures. Musical composition was his career and the field in which his genius played, but it was not his entire life. "To see the sun rise," he once wrote, "is more profitable than to hear the *Pastoral Symphony*." That is not the remark of a man to whom music is everything, although it might be said to be the remark of one to whom everything is music.

Debussy's style has had a label put on it—Impressionism—which has been applied to the music of some others as well. Debussy himself loathed the word, and many musicians today have come to feel

that it is a totally misleading one when applied to music at all. Misleading it is, for its generally accepted meaning and artistic reference has as little to do with its musical reference as the literal meaning of the word "baroque" has to do with most of what we now refer to as Baroque music.

It is interesting that both words were probably first applied to music as pejoratives. Debussy, at least, had a very clear idea of what the term meant in art: the capture of the quality of a single moment's vision of a scene, the appearance of which would change, of course, the next instant. But he vehemently denied that this was what he was trying to do in music. He was after, he said in reference to his orchestral *Images*, an "effect of reality," an essence which, though it might be subtle and difficult to discover, was a real and permanent part of the scene or the idea. It is almost like a musical Platonic Idea (not this tree, but the *idea* of this tree which gives the tree its reality), a nice conceit which would hold that there is a musical component to the reality of, if not all things in this world, at least certain things. Debussy was not a metaphysicist, but such an aesthetic perception of the world is strongly implied in his music, in the titles he gave to his music, and in his writings.

Impressionism (to get back to it) was a strong movement in the pictorial arts, one associated particularly with the works of Monet, Renoir, Sisley, Pissarro, and Degas. Debussy's music is often equated with the paintings of these men. But Debussy himself had very definite tastes in art, and the Impressionists did not appear to be among them. In a questionnaire he once filled out for a sophisticated drawing-room party in 1889 (reproduced in full by Edward Lockspeiser in his magnificent biography of the composer) he named as his favorite painters Botticelli and Gustave Moreau (his favorite composers at the time were Palestrina, Bach, and Wagner), neither of them exactly Impressionists. Instead they call to mind another artistic movement of



paucor 12

the time, that of Pre-Raphaelitism, and one of the poetic products of that movement, Rossetti's *The Blessed Damozel*, had been set the year before by Debussy as *La Damoiselle élue*. To the names of Botticelli and Moreau, we can add those of Joseph Mallord William Turner ("the greatest creator of mysterious effects," wrote Debussy), James Abbott McNeil Whistler, whose nocturnes (rather than Chopin's) were the impetus for Debussy's, and the Japanese woodblock artists Hiroshige and Hokusai. (Hokusai's "Great Wave," varied slightly, adorned the cover of the first edition of Debussy's *La Mer*.) But even apart from these artists, if one really wants to tie Debussy to an artistic movement (and it hardly seems absolutely necessary to do so), then perhaps the most logical would be *art nouveau*—for reasons which will become apparent later.

BUT if Impressionism in music does *not* mean what Debussy believed it meant in art, what meaning does it have in musical history? Simply this: it is the name generally applied to music that partakes of certain strong and noticeable characteristics, mainly harmonic and timbral, most of them first heard in the music of Debussy. It is a reference to a composer's use of chords built on the higher partials of the harmonic series, chords of the ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth; to the melodic and harmonic use of scales other than major and minor; to the parallel motion of voices for color effect; to a frequent indefiniteness of tonality; to softened, hazy formal outlines rather than clear-cut ones; to pastel-like colorings in which timbre becomes a major element of music in and of itself; to the sacrifice of a developmental and tonal organization to a sense of flow; to an avoidance of both Classical formality and Romantic expression.

In these terms, then, much (but not all) of the music of Debussy is Impressionistic, and the label can also be made to fit *certain* works of Ravel, Debussy, Arnold Bax, Louis Aubert, Vaughan Williams, Charles Griffes, Ernest Bloch, Bartók, and others, precisely those works that, when we hear them without knowing or remembering their compositional source, we say sound "impressionistic." Impressionism in music, then, refers not to aesthetics, but to techniques and sounds. Debussy's aesthetic was something else.

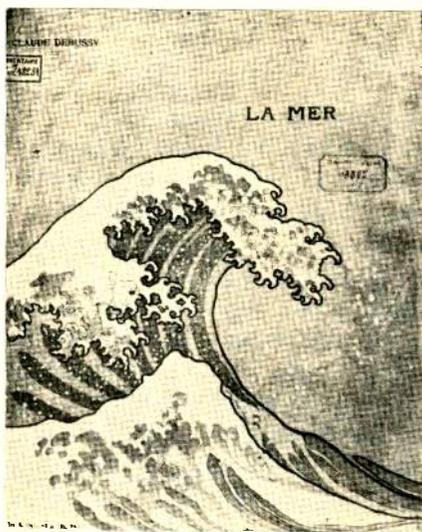
"*Mon plaisir*" is not enough to explain it. The quest for the exotic in time and space is a large part of it. But to complicate matters, we occasionally find in Debussy an unmistakable musical reference (like Wagner's *Tristan* motif in *The Golliwogg's Cakewalk*) that bespeaks an aim quite different from that of the abstractions of *Reflets dans l'eau* or the

Études. Even more occasionally one finds a sentimental component whose presence is unexplainable on more objective grounds. Central to the aesthetics governing most of Debussy's music, however, is the concept of the arabesque. An arabesque is defined as an ornament consisting of interlacing patterns of flowers and leaves, or fruit, sometimes squarely geometric, sometimes flowing. As a concept for artistic creation it implies an objective and ornamental art rather than an expression of feeling, a concept of movement which is yet not a progression from one place to another; it implies not the construction of an edifice, but the designing of a pattern, an interlacing of elements rather than a fusion; it posits the strength of the web as against that of the rock. It is "the divine arabesque" that Debussy found in the music of Renaissance and Baroque composers (hence Palestrina and Bach, among his favorites, if not Wagner), and on this basis he constructed his own music. The arabesque was, of course, a key element in *art nouveau*; it is also Oriental in origin—the exotic again.

Those things that were musically important to Debussy are reflected, not unexpectedly, in his compositions; those things that were extra-musically important to him are reflected in the titles he gave them. We must deal with him on both levels. Recent attempts to view Debussy as a purely musical figure present only a part of the man and make him a lesser artistic figure than he really was. Making believe that a Seurat painting has no subject does not destroy its formal qualities, but it does make it a lesser thing than it really is. Removing the title from a Debussy *Image* similarly cannot harm the work as pure music, but it makes it a lesser experience than the composer intended it to be.

Fanciful titles, in themselves, are relatively common in music, but the kind of titles Debussy chose and the significance they have are quite different from anything that had come before. They of course do not signify paintings in translation. Debussy was far too sophisticated an artist to hold any such idea. Nor are they the titles of stories told (or, more accurately, underlined) in music—as, for example, one might say of Strauss' *Till Eulenspiegel* that it is a story "told" in music. Debussy's titles do not stand for "feelings evoked by . . .," as Beethoven's *Pastoral* Symphony, apart from some elementary realism (bird calls and thunderstorms), is a statement of feelings and not of scene. And they are not, like many of the titles of the eighteenth-century clavecinists, mere fantastic names, ornamental and having little or nothing to do with the music itself.

Debussy's titles, rather, are symbolic, particularly if we remember that it is in the very nature of a



The first edition of Debussy's *La Mer* bore on its cover a design obviously derived from Hokusai's famous woodcut "The Great Wave." At the right, Debussy at Pourville (near Dieppe) in 1905, where he was later to compose the *Etudes*.

symbol not to mean just *one* thing, but to glory in the ambiguity that allows it to have connotations in different directions. A symbol is there not to be "translated," but to say something that cannot be said more explicitly. The title "*Reflets dans l'eau*" may convey to us the notion that the music is a quasi-Platonic musical idea or essence of the scene, or that it is a musical expression of the *sound* of the words of the title, or that, in line with the concept of a theater of the mind, that this is music *for* such a scene—or all of these. To anyone who has read the writings of Marcel Proust, who was Debussy's almost exact contemporary, none of these will seem to demand too great a suspension of disbelief.

APART from its extra-musical associations, Debussy's music has as its goal *sound*. This is not the truism it seems to be, for it excludes certain things. The intent is not a musical architecture, for example, nor the expression of feelings, nor story-telling, nor tune-smithing, but primarily—and for its own sake—sound, beautiful sound. The approach is an equivalent of that of Debussy's friend, the poet Mallarmé, who maintained that poems were made not of ideas but of words.

Debussy's musical materials have already been mentioned in passing, but it is worthwhile to go into the matter further. In his search for a new musical vocabulary, he drew on many sources. Some he found through research into older musics; some he came upon more accidentally, as he did the Javanese gamelan and Chinese music he heard at the International Expositions of 1889 and 1900 in Paris; some he developed from direct experience at the keyboard—even, perhaps, from deliberately experimenting with everything disallowed by textbooks of traditional harmony and counterpoint.

Debussy was not a composer who depended upon melody. The magical opening pages of his

Nuages, the first of the *Nocturnes* for orchestra, show in score a pattern-like chordal figuration for the clarinets and bassoons, held notes in the horns and strings, a pianissimo roll on the timpani, and brief, stepwise, descending passages for the oboe and English horn. There is nothing that could be called a melody, and also nothing that one could call a motif for development. For this is not the presentation of material whose significance will come with later development, nor is it mere introductory material; this is, already, the *essence* of the piece, and the transformations it will undergo later are no more significant than these opening pages themselves.

Some aspects of Debussy's harmonic usage have already been mentioned: parallel fifths and sevenths, ancient modes, pentatonic and whole-tone scales. If we add to these the use of discords without preparation or resolution, and the wholesale use of every sort of ostinato, what it all adds up to is the complete breakdown of traditional harmony, not only in the smaller sense of previously forbidden progressions and discords, but in the larger sense of the function and purpose of harmony. Harmony had previously been a motor force, a generator of movement, through logical and palpable progressions, from a starting point through a variety of keys or tonal areas to an ultimate destination. Each small progression was a step in a larger progression which in turn was a major element of the tonal architecture of the form. Debussy did away with this. Harmony is now a palette of colors. There are still large areas of "tonality," and there is still a movement from one area to another, but the areas are defined not by key but by harmonic coloration.

One of the results of this is that the elements of music become free and independent in a new way. Harmony is free of the bar line, and harmonic movement and rhythm are no longer tied to the metrical rhythm. Hence rhythms are also free to act

as the composer wishes. Melodic elements no longer need work hand in glove with harmonic movement, but are free to find new phrase lengths and to be varied in terms of specific pitches while retaining an overall shape. And timbre or tone color becomes a primary element of music in and of itself.

Rather than resulting in chaos, the freeing of the elements of music allowed Debussy to recombine them in new ways. Tonal and atonal sections can be played off against one another. Melodic shapes become susceptible to continuous variation in an almost Oriental way. Rhythms of color change become an actual occurrence. Patterns of color are set up and intertwined with melodic patterns, harmonic patterns, rhythmic patterns, all continuously interlacing and changing their relationships with one another while still making audibly clear that those relationships do in fact exist. A piece can be continuously varied from beginning to end while denying any thought that it is presenting an argument or constructing an edifice. Rhetoric is absent, its neck, as the poet once requested, effectively wrung.

Most of the older studies of Debussy make little comment on the forms of his music, as though it were tacitly assumed that his music *had* no form and it was better to pass over the whole subject in silence. But that is not the case. The contemporary French composer Jean Barraqué has given us an analysis of the *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* that shows that the work is composed in a rather complex form employing elements of both sonata and song form, as follows: exposition; development (which also introduces a second theme); middle section (one might call it "trio" as in scherzo and trio); second development; recapitulation; coda. The main theme is presented ten times, harmonized differently each time, and with certain subtle and sometimes striking melodic changes in each presentation. The tonal areas defined by the harmonies are not those one would expect in Classical sonata or song form, but there is a very definite sense of different areas and of movement to and away from them. One may disagree with the analysis, and one may, perhaps with the utmost justification, say that Debussy did not intend his music to be listened to in that way. But two points are made: (1) the music has a carefully worked-out formal design; and (2) the design supports the music and gives us, unconsciously, the feeling of balance, order, and completeness necessary to a successful work of art. The fact that it does so using exotic materials in an unconventional way is an indication of its uniqueness, its historical importance, and its greatness.

In some of Debussy's earlier works (not the earli-

est) such non-Classical means are used to organize the smaller sections, while in the larger sections of the music the composer reverts to a more traditional use of statement, contrast, and restatement or return. *En bateau*, from the *Petite Suite*, for example, is in straightforward A-B-A form, as is *Clair de lune* and many other works. *L'Après-midi*, as we have seen, is a more complex construction, but still tied to the same idea. Debussy also uses elements of Franckian cyclic form in several of his works: *La Mer*, for example, brings back themes of its first movement in the finale, and the String Quartet uses metamorphoses of the same theme for all of its movements. In his later works, however, Debussy began to work out a totally new kind of musical form, a sort of open-ended music in which each section generates the next section, and the music proceeds from its start to its finish in a relatively straight line, never really turning back upon itself, and substituting momentary allusions for recapitulation. Much of the current interest in the ballet score *Jeux*, a work that was once dismissed as the product of a dried-up composer and is now ranked by some as Debussy's masterpiece, derives from its formal construction.

The body of Debussy's work is not terribly large, at least in terms of composers like Haydn, Liszt, or Schubert, but it contains a kaleidoscopic variety of music. Almost invariably, the first work of Debussy's to which we are exposed is *Clair de lune*, the third of four movements of the *Suite bergamasque*. It is one of the most popular short pieces in the world, and if it has been the object of sniffing dismissal by some musical commentators, that is more likely due to its overpopularity than to anything intrinsic in the music. For it is hardly a bad piece, merely an early one, conventional in form and harmony, perhaps, but demonstrating, at least, the peculiar musical magic that was Debussy's.

The early works of Debussy show definite sources of derivation; the names of Borodin, Gounod, Grieg, Massenet, and Moussorgsky have all been offered at various times as strong influences. Debussy himself is said to have quipped: "there is a little bit of Massenet in all of us," an admission not intended to be a great compliment to Massenet. Now, this is a strange bunch of composers to offer as a starting point for a young genius. Who, after all, has ever really thought of Borodin or Gounod as a seminal figure in music? But this was the music Debussy heard fairly early in his career, though it is doubtful he learned much from the works of any of these men except Moussorgsky. What their music did, rather, was to furnish him with raw material for his own compositional and aesthetic experiments.

Debussy's early works really sound less as if they have been influenced by these composers than that they have borrowed something from them—harmonic usage, or melodic style. In this, we can see a characteristic problem of Debussy as a modern composer: the search for materials.

This would have been virtually incomprehensible to Schubert, Beethoven, Mozart, or even Berlioz. Not since the days of Handel had composers, except on special occasions, looked outside themselves and their immediate traditions for the materials with which to fashion a composition (and Handel did it out of temporal and commercial considerations). But one can see it beginning with the nationalist movements in the nineteenth century (limited to folk song and dances), and then see it come into its own with Debussy, and continue to the present day with Stravinsky, Bartók, Milhaud, Copland, Berio, and Bernstein. Debussy's immature works are immature, then, not because they sound like Massenet or Gounod, but because they are too conventional or unsuccessful in construction, because the musical material has not been completely subjugated to the personality of its creator.

Debussy's earliest successes (like those of Schubert, among others) were songs. *Beau Soir*, written when the composer was about fifteen, is a song many a lesser French *mélodie*-maker would be overjoyed to have written in his prime. The early settings of Paul Verlaine's poetry, *Mandoline* especially, show the sort of musical success—and the perfect capturing of an exotic mood—that Debussy was not to achieve in other media for a few years.

As a whole, Debussy's songs constitute one of those departments of music avidly cultivated by a relatively small group of connoisseurs, and usually

ignored by the larger musical public. This is a pity, for the French *mélodie* embodies an art and a tradition second only to the German lied, and Debussy is unarguably the greatest master of the form. (In French the word "*mélodie*" is used for an art song; a *chanson* is a popular or folk song, and when the word is used by composers of serious music it is meant to have a folk or popular reference.) It is difficult to pin down the essence of Debussy's *mélodies*, but at their best they share certain characteristics: the poetry set is usually of a high order, and the vocal line tends to follow the language rhythms to a great degree and with great subtlety. The vocal line moves effortlessly back and forth from a recitative-like musical declamation to sometimes ecstatic song; the piano writing is often of a richness that could allow it to stand alone as instrumental music, but it never vies with the voice or overpowers it; mood, meaning, and the sounds and rhythms of the language are blended and conveyed together, while repeatable tunes, vocalism for its own sake, and externally imposed forms are generally avoided.

Perhaps the height of Debussy's song writing is to be found in the *Trois Chansons de Bilitis* (1897), settings of poems of Pierre Louÿs. Louÿs published the poems originally as translations by himself from the works of an ancient and unknown Greek poetess, but the ruse did not fool anyone. These were no Greek idylls, but the works of an elegantly decadent modern Frenchman in search of the exotic. It is no wonder Debussy took to them. There emerges from the songs the same pagan storyland we hear in *L'Après-midi d'un faune* (and the same flute, though here the piano sounds the sensual and melancholy notes), the same combination of the archaic (in the musical materials) and the modern (in the use of them), the exotic brought

As a young man, Debussy (lower right in the picture at the left) was a member of the private trio of Mme. von Meck, Tchaikovsky's patroness. Center, with the white hat, he strolls with a group that includes his first wife and the composer Paul Dukas (right). Right, he sits with his daughter Chou Chou, who inspired the Children's Corner Suite.



home with all its perfumes intact, its effulgence, if anything, increased. The cycle is one of the greatest in all of art song.

Also among Debussy's finest songs are the two sets of *Fêtes galantes* on poems of Verlaine, the *Trois ballades de François Villon*, the *Proses lyriques* on his own texts (which have been much criticized for their somewhat murky symbolism), and the *Ariettes oubliées*, again on texts of Verlaine. The last of these contains one song in particular, *Green*, that perfectly epitomizes the incredible feeling for the subtle rhythms and accentuations of the French language that Debussy possessed. Compared with Gabriel Fauré's setting of the same text (and remembering that Fauré was, after Debussy, probably the greatest master of French song), Debussy's *Green* is a revelation of the art that can come from the instinctive and complete understanding of another work of art, in this case Verlaine's poem.

Pelléas et Mélisande is the great watershed in Debussy's career. It does not (as has sometimes been suggested) mark his maturity as a composer (all except two of the song cycles previously mentioned were completed before *Pelléas*), but it marks his acceptance by the musical world as a major figure. The work's reception at its premiere was a scandal, but it was too big, too important, to ignore; critics and audiences *had* to take sides. Eventually, a sufficient understanding of what Debussy was all about converted most of the unconverted and the composer was no longer seen as a brash upstart fit only to be dismissed. He was then forty years old.

The point of *Pelléas* is that it is a lyric drama, a story that unfolds in music, text, action, and scene. It is symbolist, almost surrealist in a sense, in that though the characters are hardly sufficiently clothed in flesh to be people, the element of time is inexora-

bly that of subjective human time, incapable of being stopped for an operatic soliloquy of feelings, a balletic episode, or any other distraction. In no way is Maeterlinck's preoccupation with fate made more meaningful than by the temporal characteristics of the music.

Instrumentally, *Pelléas* contains some of Debussy's most exquisite orchestral writing. Vocally, it is again the kind of writing that moves back and forth between musical declamation and pure song, the kind of writing that demands that, however mysterious the thoughts and actions of the characters, they be presented with the greatest clarity of diction and pitch. *Pelléas* has long been unlucky in the quality of its performances.

Apart from *Pelléas* and the songs, Debussy's vocal work comprises the *Trois chansons de Charles d'Orléans*, his only work for unaccompanied chorus; several early cantatas, including *L'Enfant prodigue* (which contains at least one gorgeous aria, the *Air de Lia*); *La Damselle élue*, mentioned earlier, a lovely work that effectively tones down the rather garish colors of its Pre-Raphaelite origins; the *Ode à la France*, a late work completed from his sketches by another hand and apparently never performed today; and the incidental music to the mystery play *Le Martyre de Saint-Sébastien*. This last work has inspired frequent conflicting opinions, revolving mostly around the text by the Italian poet Gabriele d'Annunzio and how much (or how little) the music is tied to it. For it was the flamboyant text of the work, mixing Christian and pagan elements, that aroused considerable ire even before the first performance of the piece, and it is the text that seems so dated and boring today. "Symphonic fragments" have been extracted from the work (though not by Debussy) and performed alone, and various shortenings of the

Debussy was born well in time for the camera, and the photographic record of his life and times was extraordinarily well kept, as demonstrated by these portraits of him at about twenty-four, thirty-eight, and forty-seven.





Debussy as sketched by Rudolf Herrmann, a caricature which appeared in *Der Merker* of May 1911.

text (usually designed to include only those parts that are actually sung) have been tried, all with somewhat questionable effectiveness. The only thing that is unquestionable is that there is magnificent music in the *Martyre*, if only a proper presentation can be found for it.

Debussy's important works for orchestra are the *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, the three *Nocturnes*, *La Mer*, the *Images pour orchestre*, and *Jeux*. His less important works are the early *Printemps*, a *Fantaisie* for Piano and Orchestra, *Rhapsodies* for Saxophone and Orchestra and Clarinet and Orchestra (both originally with piano), and the *Danse sacrée et danse profane* for harp and strings. There are also two somewhat unknown—or, better, unjudged—quantities, the ballets *Khamma* and *La Boîte à joujoux*, both orchestrated by other hands. The very first of these has already been discussed to a certain extent. It only remains to be said of *L'Après-midi* that in it may yet be seen to be the true birth of modern music. It was first performed in 1894 and, to the amazement of many of us in 1972, it—this golden, estival music that rarely rises above a sensual whisper—garnered for itself a set of reviews entirely comparable to those accorded Stravinsky's violent *Le Sacre du printemps* some twenty years later.

The *Nocturnes*, *La Mer*, and the *Images* are three quite dissimilar works, two of which, oddly enough, seem mislabeled. The most "image-like" are surely the *Nocturnes* (1893-1899, subtitled *Nuages*, *Fêtes*, and *Sirènes*), of which Debussy himself wrote:

The title *Nocturnes* is to be interpreted here in a general and, more particularly, in a decorative sense. Therefore it is not meant to designate the usual form of the nocturne, but rather all the various impressions and the special effects of light that the word suggests.

He goes on to comment individually on the move-

ments, but what is obvious is that these are nocturnes in the Whistlerian sense, illustrative of the play of light and shadow on the clouds, the festival throng, and the sea, respectively.

The *Images* (1906-1909, *Gigues*, *Ibéria*, *Rondes de printemps*), on the other hand, seem far more closely related to the piano pieces called *Estampes* than to those called *Images*. For both the *Estampes* and the orchestral *Images* concern themselves with national characteristics—England, Spain, and France, in that order, in the orchestral work—employing folk song and folk-like elements, all fragmented and harmonized in new and unexpected ways. Once looked upon as a work of flagging inspiration, the *Images* today, particularly since the performances of Pierre Boulez, are recognized as the masterpieces they are.

La Mer (1903-1905), better known than either of the other works, is Debussy's most symphonic, perhaps least pastel-like work. The themes are far more clean-cut, the rhythms sharper, the counterpoint more complex. It is a difficult work to perform well, for there is much going on at the same time and the complexities of its counter-rhythms and melodies are like the currents of the sea that inspired it.

BEFORE discussing Debussy's piano music, a few words must be said about his attitude toward the piano. There exist several descriptions of his own playing, the most significant comment being by the critic Louis Laloy:

... The sounds seem to be produced without any impact of hammers or vibration of strings; they rise up into a transparent atmosphere where they unite without merging, and then dissolve in iridescent mists. M. Debussy puts the keyboard under a spell, the secret of which is unknown to any of our virtuosi.

Debussy himself spoke of his concept of the piano



Debussy as sketched by the great Swiss-French artist Théophile Alexandre Steinlen.

—he considered it an instrument without hammers.

Most of Debussy's early piano works are simply rather charming salon pieces, the *Valse romantique* being perhaps the best of them (and not to be despised). But several of them are something more than that, and these are the ones that were later incorporated into various suites and sets that bear a later date. The dates for most of the early piano works were dictated by Debussy to the critic Jean Aubry at the time Aubry was putting together the first catalog of the composer's works, and they therefore cannot be considered as any more than half-remembered approximations.

The first important group of pieces, at any rate, is the *Suite bergamasque* (1890, revised later and published in 1905), which owes something to the *Commedia dell'Arte* (from the title) and a great deal to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which it evokes with an effectiveness bordering on the magical. Similar in inspiration, if quite different in style, is *Pour le piano* (1894-1901), whose musical materials, but not its ambiance, are drawn from medieval organum, East Indian music, and the whole-tone scale. It is interesting that all the movements of both these suites, with the single exception of *Clair de lune*, are given the titles of recognized forms of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century clavier music (*Prélude*, *Menuet*, *Passepied*, *Sarabande*, and *Toccata*). The *Prélude* of *Pour le piano*, incidentally, is marked *martellato* (hammered), a rare instance of Debussy's specifically calling for playing with a percussive effect.

The later piano music includes the three *Estampes* of 1903 ("prints"—the style of Japanese prints is what Debussy had in mind), with its evocations of the East Indies, Spain, and a French garden; *L'Isle joyeuse* (1904), one of Debussy's biggest piano works; the two sets of *Images* (1905-1907), perhaps Debussy's greatest piano music; the two books of *Préludes* (1910-1913); and the *Children's Corner* (1906-1908). The last of these is a work *sui generis* in Debussy's piano music. To begin with, its titles are all in English. But, beyond that, the work is in places intentionally humorous and sentimental, and, of course, it has that famous parody of *Tristan*, followed by the musical equivalent of a titter.

The last of Debussy's solo piano works (one should also mention the early *Petite suite* for piano four hands, known also in the fine and sensitive orchestration of Henri Büsser) is the set of twelve *Études* (1915). Here Debussy, as in other late works, abandons all symbolic or representational titles for those of simple musical purpose. Perhaps because of the absence of fanciful titles, the *Études*

are among the least known of Debussy's piano works. Or perhaps it is because of the new direction—more severe, almost neo-Classical, but tempered here and there with humor—that the music takes. The *Études* are music to hear and appreciate once one has heard a lot of Debussy; magnificent music, yes, but not the easy nut to crack that some of the earlier works are.

The chamber music is mentioned last because all the important works, with a single exception, were composed toward the end of Debussy's life. That exception is the *String Quartet in G Minor*, Op. 10 (1893), the only considerable work of Debussy's to carry a key signature in its title, the only one to bear an opus number. It is a startling work, partly because of the sheer sound of the exotic musical materials in the medium of the string quartet, and partly because Debussy had found a new way to write a quartet. It follows neither the Classical concept of a serious work in four-part counterpoint, nor the lighter string of tunes with accompaniment that passed for a string quartet among some of the Romantics. The four instruments are used economically but fully, and taking the place of Classical counterpoint is a set of patterns, ostinatos, and repeated figurations through which the melodies twine in the most inventive arabesques.

The remaining chamber works, the *Sonatas for Cello and Piano*, *Violin and Piano*, and *Flute, Viola, and Harp* (1915-1917) are three of an intended series of six, the remainder cut off by Debussy's death (from cancer) on March 25, 1918. Like the *Études*, they abandon all extra-musical reference (though some commentators will still insist on finding it), and, also like the *Études*, they present a music that is demonstrably "out of" what came before, but is no longer the same thing. They are elegant works, but we don't really know them yet; they have not yet found their final position among the *oeuvre* of Debussy.

IT is curious that with Debussy, as with Richard Strauss, critics have been quick to signal an end to inspiration, to call the list of significant works complete while the composer is still alive and producing. Luckily for us all, those pronouncements have later been overturned, though not without effort. The last works of Debussy still haunt us, however, and even he himself was not sure of them. But *Jeux*, at least, has been championed, and perhaps in not too many more years we will come to understand more fully the qualities of the *Études* and the last sonatas—perhaps even the strangenesses of *Khamma* and *La Boîte à joujoux* as well, the final legacies of a great musical genius and a most unusual man.

Hirsch-Houck Labs tests...

THE SUPER-POWER AMPLIFIERS

By JULIAN HIRSCH



TESTING a stereo power amplifier is usually a very simple process: connect a couple of heavy-duty resistive loads to the speaker terminals, drive both inputs with a low-distortion test signal, then measure both the voltage across the loads and its distortion content. A power amplifier has no tone controls, equalizers, or specialized operating characteristics to complicate the process.

Things aren't quite that simple when you are dealing with a "super-power" amplifier, however, one whose continuous output may be from 120 to over 400 watts *per channel*, with harmonic and intermodulation distortion levels between 0.005 and 0.05 per cent at most power outputs and frequencies. For example, load resistors that can easily absorb 50 to 100 watts can be explosively destroyed (literally!) in a matter of seconds by some super-power amplifiers. Even the amplifiers themselves, despite their conservative design, become very hot during periods of full-power testing, and may require forced-air cooling.

As for listening tests, one requires speaker systems capable of absorbing these power outputs without damage or distortion, a strong constitution, and neighbors who are either distant or deaf. The practice of attenuating the amplifier output so that only a fraction of the power reaches the speaker permits the amplifier to be driven fully without undue stress on speakers or listeners. However, we feel that it completely misses the most important reason for using a super-power amplifier—its ability to provide higher acoustic levels than would otherwise be possible. Barring the unlikely situation in which an amplifier clearly sounds better—or worse—than its competitors, the best way we know of to judge the merits of these audio behemoths is to push them to their limits, and that is what we did.

Laboratory Measurements

Since our audio measuring equipment—a Radford Low-Distortion Oscillator and Analyzer and a Crown IMA Intermodulation Analyzer—has residual distortion levels of about 0.002 per cent, we anticipated no problems in measuring the distortion of any of these amplifiers—and none arose. Our load resistors are precision (1 per cent) 50-watt metal-finned units mounted on alumi-

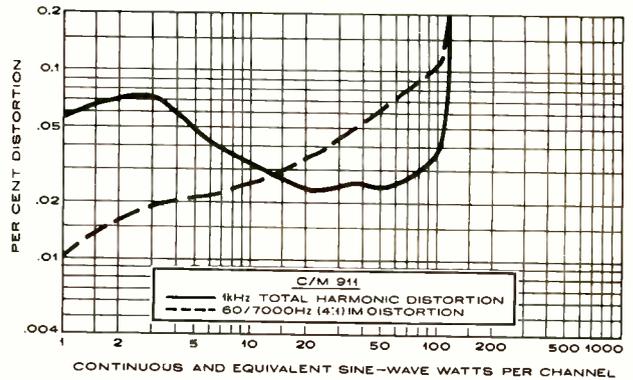
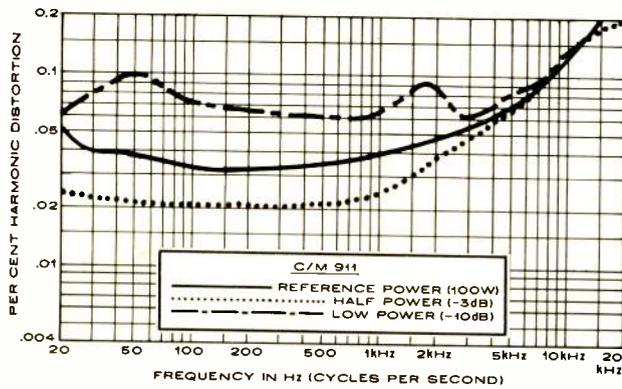
num heat sinks and immersed in a gallon of transformer oil. Their previous exposure to several hundred watts of audio power without damage gave us some hope that they could survive the present test. This belief proved somewhat over-optimistic!

We measured the power output of each amplifier at its clipping point with 4-, 8-, and 16-ohm loads, driving both channels at 1,000 Hz with a 120-volt line supply. The effect of reduced a.c. line voltages (110 and 100 volts) on maximum output was checked. We used a tone-burst generator to apply a single cycle of 1,000-Hz signal to see how much power could be developed on very short-term transients. The tone-burst output power measurement was made with a calibrated oscilloscope—less accurate than our voltmeter, but adequate for the purpose. The power measured in this manner is similar to, but not necessarily the same as, the so-called "music-power" or "dynamic-power" output.

The frequency response was checked also, although this is virtually meaningless for amplifiers of this caliber—their performance extends far beyond audible limits on both the high and low ends. The square-wave rise time—another way of expressing the amplifier's high-frequency response—was also checked. To test stability with capacitive loads (such as are presented by electrostatic speaker systems), we shunted the 8-ohm load resistor with a 3-microfarad capacitor and observed the effect on a square-wave signal. Amplifier input sensitivity and output noise level were measured relative to a 10-watt output level (to permit easy comparison between amplifiers of widely differing power ratings). Since some users might be concerned about the power consumption of a super-power amplifier, we measured the current drawn from the 120-volt a.c. line, both at idle (no input signal) and with both channels driven to rated power.

Although all the amplifiers had extremely low distortion by ordinary standards, we considered the possibility of minute amounts of higher-order harmonic distortion accounting for audible differences between amplifiers (if such differences should prove to exist). We therefore made dual-trace oscilloscope photos of the output waveform and the residual-distortion output from the Radford analyzer, so that the nature of the distortion and its phase relationship to the signal could be judged. This was done, at a 1-watt output, at 10,000 Hz and lower frequencies.

As a rule, we do not attempt to measure damping factor (DF). It is difficult to measure when the value exceeds 30 or 40 (as it does on all good amplifiers), and we have never been convinced that it has anything to do with how an amplifier sounds. However, the manufacturers of most of these super-power amplifiers stress their huge damping factors (from about 200 to 1,000), so we tried to at least confirm these claims. The usual method of measuring DF is to observe the change in output voltage when the load resistance is changed from infinity to 8 ohms. This is im-

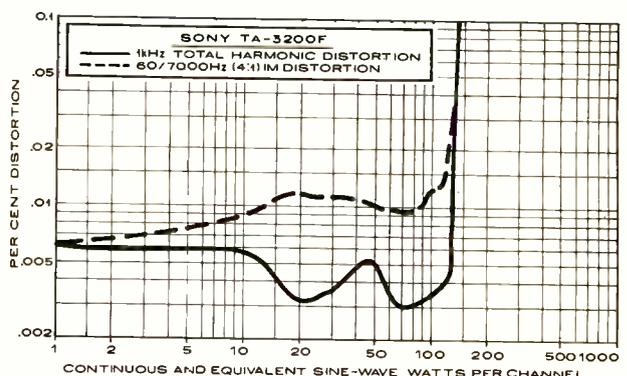
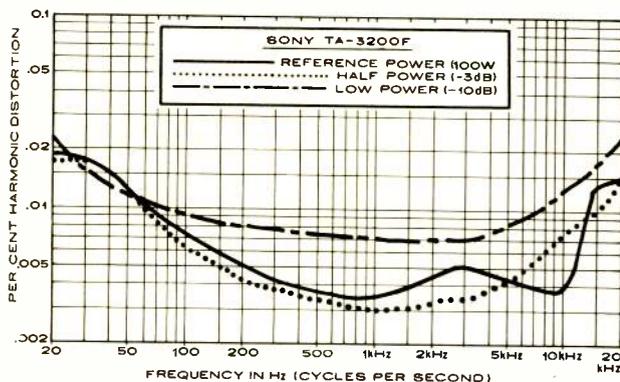


practical without a differential voltmeter capable of measuring very small changes in a large voltage. Crown recommends an alternative method, which we used. By passing a known audio-frequency current through the speaker output terminals of one channel, and measuring the voltage appearing across them, it is easy to measure the internal impedance of the amplifier, and from this the DF can be derived. One manufacturer (Phase Linear) says that this method cannot be used with their amplifier, and our results confirm that statement. But with most of the amplifiers the damping factor figure we derived was plausible, if not necessarily completely accurate.

Listening-Test Setup

We used the new AR-LST speakers for our listening tests. They are among the few capable of absorbing the full power of any of these amplifiers without too much difficulty, and are fused to prevent damage. Their moderately low efficiency, similar to that of the well-known AR-3a, also makes them logical companions for a very high powered amplifier. The amplifiers were compared in pairs, with a variety of program material, switching instantaneously from one amplifier to the other for subjective evaluation.

A wide-range audio voltmeter and oscilloscope monitored the drive voltage to the speaker, which had a nominal 8-ohm impedance under the test conditions. The scope displayed an "X-Y" plot, with the input to the amplifier on the horizontal axis and the output on the vertical axis. This provides a diagonal line, on which clipping of peaks appears as an easily seen horizontal bend, even if it occurs rarely or briefly. The calibrated scope gave us an indication of peak power, while the meter showed the approximate average power output of the amplifier.



● **C/M 911:** This is the only amplifier of the group with a capacitor-coupled speaker output. This eliminates the possibility of a d.c. offset voltage appearing across the speaker voice coil. It is also the only one supplied with a cabinet (a perforated metal cage), although optional cabinets are available for some of the others. In addition to internal electronic protective circuits (which are a part of all the amplifiers), the 911 has a relay that reduces its operating voltages to a safe value in the event of an output short-circuit or overload, thus preventing damage to the output transistors. The inputs are phono jacks, with adjacent input-level adjustments. Speaker outputs are heavy-duty five-way binding posts on $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch centers. The C/M 911 weighs 40 pounds and measures $14\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Price: \$540.



● **Sony TA-3200F:** This unit has more control flexibility than the other amplifiers. In addition to input-level

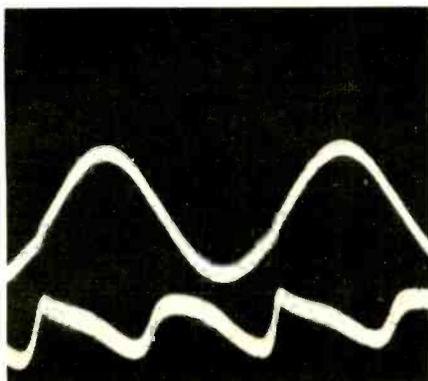
DISTORTION (ETC.)

Oscilloscope photos 1 through 5 show that these super amplifiers fall into two general classes in respect to the harmonic distribution of their distortion products. Distortion in the C/M 911 (1) and Marantz 250 (2) amplifiers is made up mostly of the second and third harmonics, which (theoretically) are the least offensive from a listening standpoint. The Sony (3), Crown (4), and Phase Linear (5) amplifiers have a small "spike" at the crossover point where the waveform polarity reverses. Although this indicates the presence of higher-order harmonics, considered by many to be offensive even in minute amounts, it must be remembered that we are talking of total distortion content between 0.01 and 0.02 per cent, only a small part of which represents the higher-order harmonics.

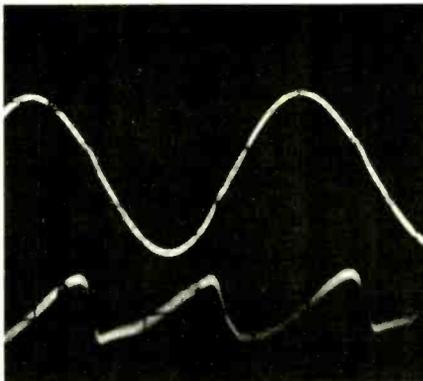
All the amplifiers had rise times of a few microseconds, corresponding to a typical frequency response extending to 50,000 or 100,000 Hz or higher. A dual-trace photograph (6) taken with the Crown DC-300 shows a typical square-wave response. The lower waveform is the input signal, the upper the output of the amplifier. (The slight overshoot on the input waveform is contributed by the oscilloscope.) The amplifier rounds the waveform slightly and eliminates the overshoot on the leading edge of the 2.200-Hz square wave used for this photo.

When a 3-microfarad capacitor was shunted across the 8-ohm resistive load to simulate an electrostatic speaker, the only effect was a moderate overshoot and a couple of cycles of ringing. The input and output waveforms of the DC-300 (7) are shown under this condition. The ringing is at approximately 35,000 Hz. The other amplifiers had similar square-wave response, with the ringing occurring at frequencies from 40,000 to 70,000 Hz.

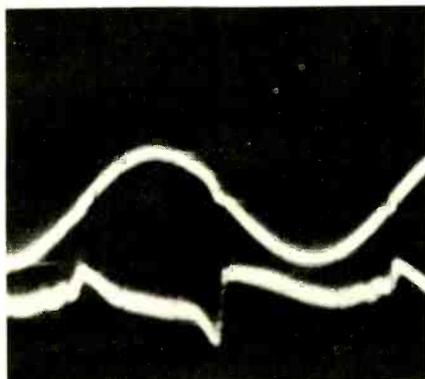
The rise-time scope photo of the Crown DC-300 (8) covers half a cycle of a 10,000-Hz square wave, and each horizontal division corresponds to 1 microsecond. The rise time (to 90 per cent of the final level) can be seen to be about 2.5 microseconds. The other amplifiers had rise times from 0.6 (the Sony TA-3200F at maximum gain) to 6 microseconds for the C/M 911. The rise times of the Sony and Phase Linear amplifiers varied considerably with changes in their input-level control settings. Their maximum rise times of 6 microseconds occurred at a -6-dB control setting. Since this corresponds to a frequency response extending to 100,000 Hz or more, it hardly represents a limitation in audio service.



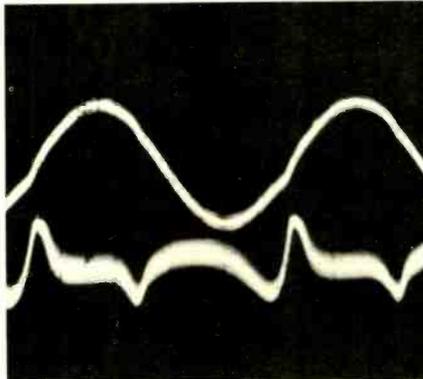
(1) C/M 911 distortion products



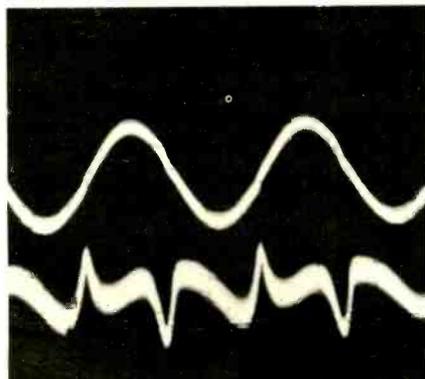
(2) Marantz 250 distortion products



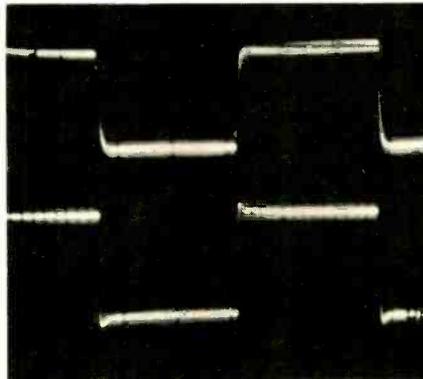
(3) Sony TA-3200F distortion products



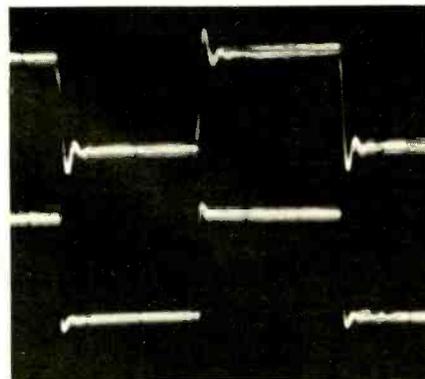
(4) Crown DC-300 distortion products



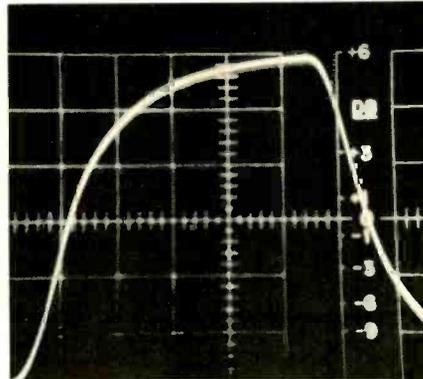
(5) Phase Linear 700 distortion products



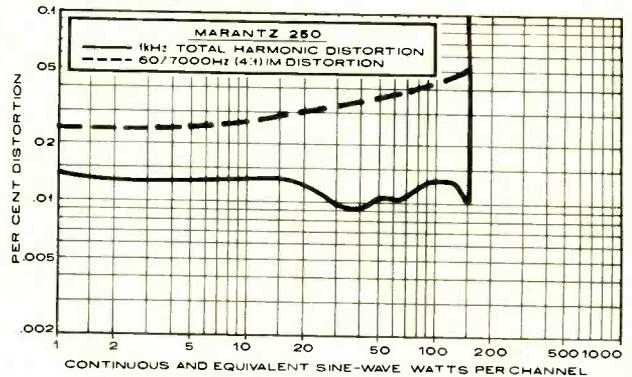
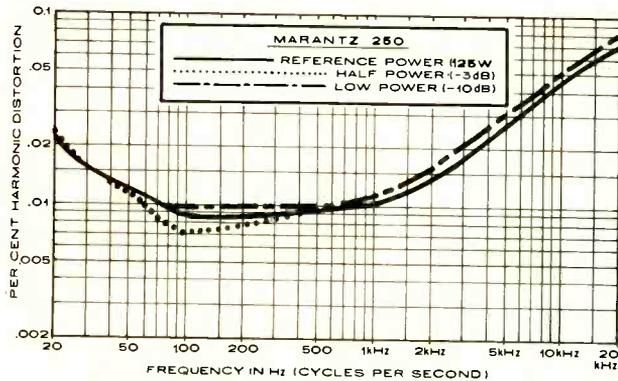
(6) Square-wave response, Crown DC-300



(7) DC-300 input and output waveforms



(8) DC-300 rise time



controls, it has switched outputs for two pairs of speakers and two pairs of inputs with a front-panel selector switch. When used with a tuner having built-in preamplifiers, or with a separate tuner and preamp, the TA-3200F would retain many of the control features found on integrated amplifiers. A POWER LIMITER switch reduces the maximum power to one half and one quarter of the rated value, for use with speakers unable to handle the full power output safely. The inputs are phono jacks, and spring-loaded binding posts carry the speaker outputs. A switch in the rear (NORMAL/TEST) reduces frequencies below 30 Hz in the NORMAL position to prevent overload of a speaker by subsonic signals such as turntable rumble. There are two a.c. outlets, one of which is switched, and a line fuse. The Sony TA-3200F weighs 37 pounds and measures 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 6 x 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Price: \$349.50.

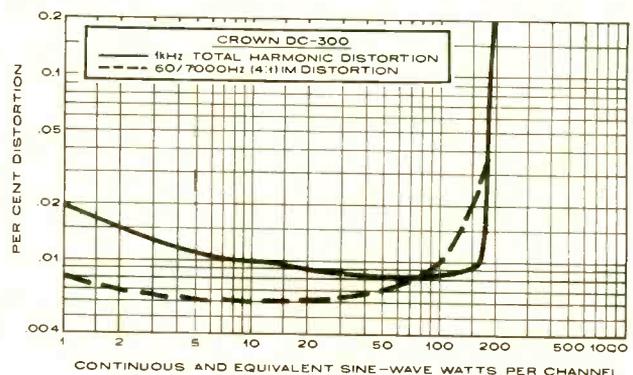
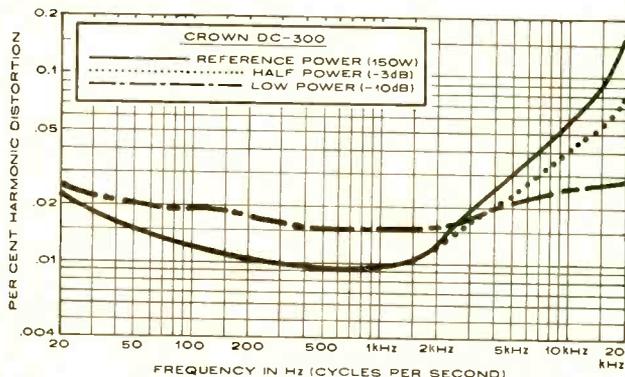


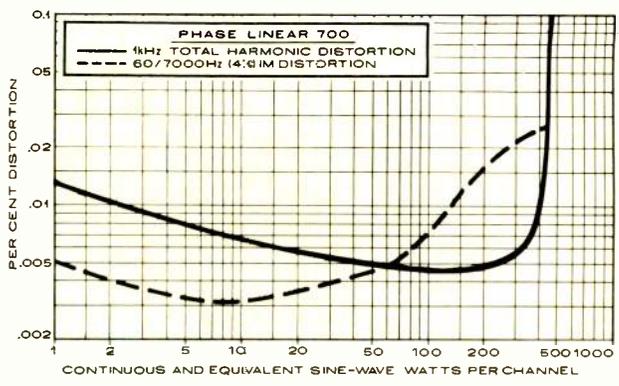
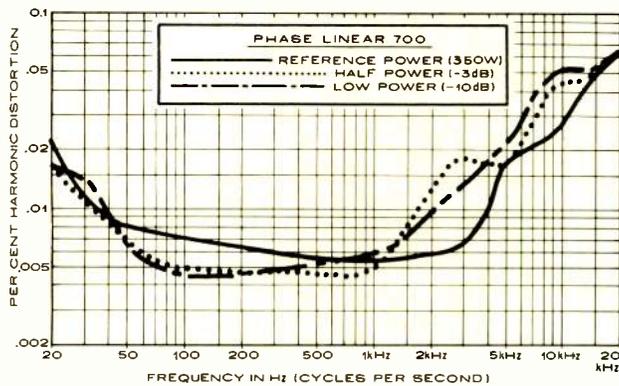
● **Marantz 250:** There are no level adjustments on this amplifier. Two illuminated level meters on the front panel monitor the audio output voltages. Each has a switch to change its sensitivity by 20 dB or to shut it off. A "0-dB" meter reading corresponds to either 0.75 watt or 75 watts into 8 ohms. The Marantz 250 has phono-jack inputs and a barrier-type strip with screw connectors for the speaker outputs. There is a single unswitched a.c. outlet and an a.c. line fuse. Although it is physically the smallest of the amplifiers in the group, much of its surface

is finned to radiate heat, and it therefore runs comfortably cool. An optional walnut cabinet is available. The Marantz 250 weighs 28 pounds and measures 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Price: \$495.

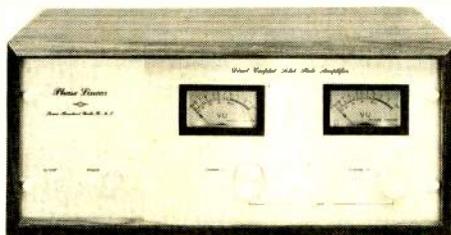


● **Crown DC-300:** The Crown is somewhat more powerful than the preceding models, although the difference is most apparent with 4-ohm loads. It is designed for 19-inch relay-rack mounting. A very large, heavy power transformer in the rear center of the chassis is flanked by oversized electrolytic filter capacitors and the large output-transistor heat sinks. The inputs are through standard phone (rather than phono) jacks, and heavy-duty binding posts on $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch centers suitable for a GR plug carry the speaker outputs. Each speaker output is paralleled by a phone jack. On the front panel, two large knobs control the input-signal sensitivity. A removable section of the panel covers the d.c. fuses, line fuse, and d.c. balance adjustments. Since the DC-300 is often used in laboratory applications where widely varying loads are encountered, its protective circuits limit the output to safe values. For driving reactive loads such as loudspeakers, the protective circuit operation can be modified by moving the switches recessed in the sides of the chassis from NORMAL to HYSTERESIS. This permits more current to be de-





livered to such loads under conditions that would not endanger the output transistors. The Crown DC-300 weighs 40 pounds and measures 19 x 7 x 9³/₄ inches. Price: \$685.



● **Phase Linear 700:** The Phase Linear 700 is the largest—and by a considerable margin the most powerful—amplifier in the tested group. Its manufacturer claims that it is the most powerful audio amplifier made, and this appears to be accurate if one is referring to home music system applications. It is a rack-mount unit whose huge power transformer heavily unbalances its weight toward the left of the amplifier. The output-transistor heat sinks extend about 4 inches behind the chassis. The speaker outputs are heavy-duty binding posts on ³/₄-inch centers that will accept a GR plug. There are two pairs of phono-jack inputs with a small toggle switch to select either pair. The NORMAL inputs have blocking capacitors, with their gain controlled by a pair of front-panel knobs. With the direct-coupled (DC) inputs the controls are bypassed, and the amplifier is direct-coupled from input to output. There are four d.c. fuses and an a.c. line fuse on the rear of the unit. The dominant front-panel features of the Phase Linear 700 are the two large meters that read

the outputs of the two channels. Their ballistic characteristics are such that, with most musical programs, the amplifier will be on the verge of clipping when the meter reads 0 dB. The corresponding power, for a sine-wave input, is about 60 watts into 8 ohms. Programs with heavy sustained passages may “pin” the meter at levels well below the clipping point; this is normal. Forced-air cooling is required for most applications other than home music systems with 8-ohm speakers. An unswitched a.c. outlet in the rear can be used for powering the fan. The Phase Linear 700 weighs 45 pounds and measures 19 x 7¹/₂ x 10 inches. Price: \$749.

Comments on Test Results

Our measurements indicate that, for all practical purposes, all of these amplifiers can be considered as “distortionless.” In fact, with most high-grade laboratory signal generators and distortion analyzers, one would merely be measuring the test instruments’ residual distortion.

The Crown Intermodulation Analyzer has the unique ability to measure distortion down to power levels of a few milliwatts. Almost all amplifiers, including some of the most highly regarded models, show a considerable increase in distortion at very low output levels because of the so-called “crossover-distortion” effect. This frequently produces distortions of 0.5 to 1 per cent or more at levels of less than 100 milliwatts. These super-power amplifiers proved to be outstandingly good in this respect. The highest distortion we measured (on the Sony TA-3200F) was an insignificant 0.15 per cent at 4 milliwatts output. The lowest, in spite of its enormous power capability,

SUPER-POWER AMPLIFIERS: COMPARATIVE DATA AND TEST RESULTS

(in order of increasing power output)

Make and Model	Output at clipping (watts)			Tone-burst output (watts)*	Output: 100-volt a.c. line* (watts)	Signal-to-noise ratio (dB) ref. 10-watt output	Input for 10-watt output (volts)	Damping factor (at 1,000 Hz)	A.C. line idle current (amperes)	A.C. line current at rated power (amperes)	Frequency response (Hz)
	4 ohms	8 ohms	16 ohms								
C/M 911	149	120	76.5	190	81	93	0.42	**	0.70	3.2	6.6 to 37,000 (+0, -1 dB)
Sony TA-3200F	169	130	84	182	101	84	0.41	350	0.15	3.25	20 to 170,000 (±0.1 dB)
Marantz 250	211	151	90	180	112	84	0.40	200	0.55	3.23	0 to 100,000 (+0, -1 dB)
Crown DC-300	315	180	100	180	136	90	0.44	440	0.30	3.6	0 to 85,000 (+0, -1 dB)
Phase Linear 700	**	420	257	460	378	83.5	0.21	**	0.47	9	0 to 100,000 (+0, -1 dB)

All power measurements made with both channels driven, 120-volt a.c. line unless otherwise specified. *Into 8-ohm load. **Not measured (see text).

was on the Phase Linear 700: a mere 0.04 per cent at 10 milliwatts. The others fell between these limits.

Our instantaneous peak-power measurements, made from an oscilloscope screen, were necessarily less accurate than our steady-state measurements. We would say that the four "lowest powered" amplifiers were approximately equal in this respect, with outputs of 180 to 190 watts per channel into 8 ohms. The Phase Linear 700, at 460 watts per channel, was in a class by itself.

We were unable to measure the 4-ohm clipping power output of the Phase Linear 700, which is rated at 730 watts per channel. Special fuses are needed for this test, and it is certain that our load resistors would not have survived the ordeal. As it was, they literally exploded on the final full-power measurement we made, having endured the repeated insult of overloads far beyond their designers' intentions.

Since the resistance of any practical length of speaker cable is far greater than the source impedance of any good amplifier, the whole question of damping factor is a moot point. Since some commentators place great importance on it, we have tried to deal with it in this test, but really would rate its importance—once a figure of more than 10 or 20 is attained—as somewhat less than the physical weight or color of the amplifier.

The idling, or no-signal, current drawn from the a.c. power line was impressively small with any of the amplifiers (as compared with that of earlier vacuum-tube amplifiers of much less power capability). The Sony TA-3200F had the lowest drain—0.15 ampere—and the 0.7 ampere drawn by the C/M 911 was the highest. The others were typically 0.3 to 0.5 ampere, corresponding roughly to 30 to 50 watts. With normal program material, the average current will not be very much greater than this, so no one need be concerned about running up a large power bill. Of course, at full power, the current is higher, from 3.2 to 3.6 amperes with all the amplifiers except the Phase Linear. But even the 9-ampere drain of the latter will not require any special power wiring considerations.

Listening Tests and Conclusions

Unlike some reviewers, we have rarely been able to hear differences, even subtle ones, between power amplifiers with comparable measured performance, so long as they were never driven into clipping or severe distortion. Likewise, in the case of these tests we were not able to detect any differences among the super-power amplifiers at moderate levels with any type of program material including "white" noise.

However, we were very much surprised—"amazed" would be more accurate—to discover how easily a 100- to 200-watt amplifier could be driven to overload. Having enjoyed listening to the AR-LST speakers with amplifiers in the 30- to 50-watt range, and at what many would consider fairly high volumes, we were unprepared for the onset of clipping at levels only slightly above "normal."

Since the first four amplifiers had fairly similar power outputs into 8-ohm loads, the differences between them were minor. By the time we came to the Phase Linear 700, we were sure that clipping would occur only at unreasonably high volume levels. We were wrong—or at least only partially right. With programs having a compressed dynamic range, or appreciable inherent distortion, the amplifier peaks clipped with average levels of 50 to 100 watts—much above the point where our tolerance

for the sound had been exhausted. We also succeeded in blowing the AR-LST protective fuses under these conditions. But—and this is an important qualification—music with wide dynamic range and low distortion clipped (at 450- to 500-watt peak levels) with an average output of perhaps 20 to 30 watts, and was very listenable. The most revealing test was to play piano recordings, in which the piano was either the solo or the dominant instrument. At levels which we would judge to be "life size," but certainly not "larger than life," the Phase Linear 700 clipped regularly.

Some of our preconceived ideas were exploded (along with our load resistors) by this exposure to super-power amplifiers. And, as a result, we have arrived at some unexpected conclusions. In the light of our findings, it is obvious that anyone using a low-efficiency speaker (such as many of the acoustic-suspension types) with an amplifier in the 30- to 50-watt class cannot approach a realistic listening level without severe clipping. Yet thousands of these speakers are being so operated satisfactorily by their users. The key is the word "realistic." As we turn up the volume, there comes a point where distortion first becomes apparent, and then soon unacceptable. It is quite natural to operate at a lower level, with more pleasing sound, and to delude ourselves into accepting it as "realistic"—which it is not!

With a more powerful, essentially distortionless amplifier, it is easy to use a higher volume level without offending our ears. A volume level that would be intolerable (if it could be attained at all) because of distortion on peaks with a 50-watt amplifier is easy to listen to with a 125-watt amplifier. When 350 watts is available, many instruments can be reproduced at very nearly their original levels without discomfort. Obviously, no one could listen at this level all the time: a piano in the living room is believable; a symphony orchestra is not.

All of the foregoing, of course, is predicated on your having speakers that can handle the power and a family and neighbors who are either out of earshot or are willing to be exposed to higher sound levels than they may ever have experienced before. It is worth mentioning that some very high-efficiency speakers, such as the Klipschorns, can achieve the same results with a much lower power amplifier, but most home speaker systems are of the low-efficiency type.

A final word of caution is in order. These amplifiers—especially the Crown DC-300 and the Phase Linear 700—can literally *destroy* almost any speaker in an instant. Record clicks and pops, FM tuner muting "thumps," a refrigerator compressor turning on, a careless flick of the stylus, or dropping the tone arm on the record—any of these common noises, if the system gain is carelessly set too high, will blow out almost any tweeter or mid-range, and in some cases the woofer. We would not operate *any* speaker with a super-power amplifier unless it is adequately fused. Few are, but information is available from most speaker and amplifier manufacturers on recommended speaker-fuse types and ratings.

In closing, we would like to quote a line from the Phase Linear brochure on the Model 700 amplifier. Under the title of "Why 700 Watts?," they present a reasoned justification for its use. After writing our own conclusions, we reread their material and found ourselves in complete agreement. One line, which we originally dismissed as sheer hyperbole, now seems quite conservative. "We wonder if 700 watts is enough." So do we.

CHANGING THE GUARD AT THE MET

The critics offer some helpful suggestions
to the Metropolitan Opera's new general manager

By Stephen E. Rubin

AS LONG as there has been a Metropolitan Opera company in New York there have been critics telling the management how to run its business. What would have happened had the Met's board of directors appointed a music critic instead of Goeran Gentele to replace general manager Rudolf Bing when he retires at the end of this season? What a bold move it would have been! That it didn't happen hardly alters the fact that any general manager, particularly a new one, faces a formidable—and often impossible—situation. Might he not be receptive to some high-class, gratis counseling? Who better to call on for counsel than the critics, professional opinion-mongers all?

In an effort to be positive and constructive, we asked nine music critics in good standing what they would do if they were in Gentele's shoes, how they would run what to some is the greatest—and to others *could be* the greatest—opera house in the world. The critics were: John Ardoin, *Dallas Morning News*; Martin Bernheimer, *Los Angeles Times*; Bernard Jacobson, *Chicago News* and *STEREO REVIEW*; George Jellinek, *STEREO REVIEW*; Harriett Johnson, *New York Post*; Irving Lowens, *Washington Star*; Alan Rich, *New York* magazine; Winthrop Sargeant, *The New Yorker*; and Michael Steinberg, *Boston Globe*.

The Met's major problems, according to these seasoned observers, are fundamental ones. The wrongs to be righted lie at the very foundations of the organization. Yet sweeping alterations initially are out of the question. New management may imply change, but the change must be gradual. The House of Bing has fallen, but without care in the building, the House of Gentele may never rise.

Critics, as everyone knows, are born to disagree with one another, but if there is one subject on which they unanimously concur, it is that the Met has suffered grievously at the hands of pedestrian conductors. "Although great voices and huge, lavish productions have been heard and seen at the Metropolitan during the past twenty-one years, the

music has suffered terribly there," Winthrop Sargeant reports. "Of course, the answer to this is conductors. We should have the very best conductors available, not just youngsters or second-raters, which has been the rule during the Bing regime, except at the very first."

Michael Steinberg, agreeing, goes a step further in underlining the importance of great conductors to the proper functioning of an opera house. "What makes opera opera is that action and characterization are articulated and projected through music, and, in a sense, the director always has to consider the composer as a director—a shaper, pacer, characterizer—who got there ahead of him. Therefore, the man in charge of the musical side of the performance—the conductor—cannot run the music in isolation. He has to become involved in the overall concept. He, the director, and the designer should work closely together from the beginning, and I would like to see the conductor as *primus inter pares* in that triumvirate."

There is no hesitation on the part of the critics to name names. Some of the gravest conductorial offenders at doing the Met's music in, they feel, have been Nino Verchi, Carlo Franci, Richard Bonyngé, Kurt Adler, Nello Santi, and Silvio Varviso—the list is long. One gets the impression that simply by engaging greater *maestri* the Met, according to the critics, could improve its artistic standard tenfold. But even that wouldn't be enough.

Alan Rich cites tawdry backstage politics as a major Met morale problem. "I've heard stories of promising young people who came to the Met and got shunted off because Mr. Bing preferred Lucine Amara or because Richard Bonyngé (the husband of Joan Sutherland) had Bing by the ear. This is enough to scare people away from the Met."

Harriett Johnson is far more explicit in voicing a similar concern. "Many singers and orchestra members whom I've talked to all say that the Met is grossly overstaffed. There are always little satellites running around with their pads and pencils and ac-



Gentele's Agreement

(Reprinted from Sweden Now, Jan./Feb. 1971)

WHAT has Goeran Gentele got that no other candidate to replace Rudolf Bing as general manager of New York's Metropolitan Opera had? Only Met President George Moore and the Board of Directors know for sure.

What the Met may get is anybody's bet, but it may get out of debt, for one thing, and at the moment [as of January 1971] this amounts to \$5.9 million. Gentele takes on New York after seven years as manager of Sweden's Royal Opera, where government subsidy is not

alms, but a guarantee that opera is "for everyone." In his eyes it's the citizen's right and the state's privilege to sustain opera.

If he continues other trends he started in Stockholm, there will be less snob-bishness, less evening dress, cheaper tickets, and discounts up to 80 per cent for students and pensioners.

There may also be more performances—the Swedish Opera's 750 employees give 380 performances a year, while the Met's 1,000 give 275—and the

repertoire may shift emphasis toward the contemporary, the realistic, and works of social indignation.

During Gentele's controversial period as manager, he has also been appreciated as an expressionist director. As critic Leif Aare states, "His great productions have been of works written during our own century and of classics which, through special arrangements faithful to the originals on a profound level, have received a new quality of urgency."

Known for his personal elegance and wit, it is paradoxical that Gentele is less successful at light Rossini and Mozart operas, and best at the realistic *Carmen*, Menotti's *The Consul*, Berg's *Wozzeck*, and Swedish Blomdahl's *Aniara* and *Mr. von Hancken*.

The vigorous Mr. Gentele, now 53, who has an MA in political science, speaks five languages, and has directed nine movies, will not only welcome new money, but new talents, new singers, designers, composers. But the Swedish artists who hope he is their foot in the Met's door are going to be disappointed.

"Europe is full of American singers," he says. "I think it's time America lends them an ear."

Gentele has criticized Swedish television for not broadcasting more opera, even though taxpayers all over the country support it. Now he's anxious to televise more opera to the American public, and perhaps to have the same excuse.

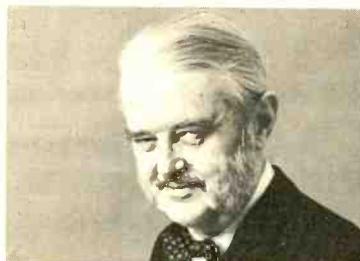
complishing little. This is one of the most unfortunate things about the Metropolitan. It's been dominated by personal pressures—by Joe Smith who knows Mary Jones. From what I've heard, people have sometimes been engaged on a personal basis more than on professional merit. And they haven't been good. A pertinent example is an Italian baritone who came to the Met as a rank amateur and was allowed to serve his apprenticeship at the glorious old house while far better singers got the rough treatment."

Another major factor which has caused the Met to function poorly, according to Winthrop Sargeant, is that the house has never, under Bing, been integrated into American culture as a whole. "I think the Metropolitan ought to be an *American* opera house with occasional foreign stars rather than a completely foreign one such as it is now. There's snobbery involved here. Also, I'm sure it has an effect on the box office. Opera fans are snobs to some extent, even the standees. They want a great Italian voice who they've heard has been singing at La Scala or Covent Garden, and they're prepared to raise the roof when that person sings, no matter who he is—even somebody like Franco Corelli,

who, to my mind, is one of the most unmusical singers in the world today.

"Mr. Gentele, I think, is hoping to integrate the Met into American culture. He told me that he saw *Jesus Christ Superstar*. He's been looking around to see what's happening here. Mr. Bing didn't. In a sense, I think the use of versatile American singers who can sing French, German, and Italian as well as English—they're very well trained—would make quite a viable institution out of the Met.

"Opera will never become a steadily valued thing in America as a whole unless Americans are participating in it to some extent. Covent Garden found this out long ago. They have been developing wonderful native conductors and native singers—if 'native' includes those from Wales, where most of



WINTHROP SARGEANT
The New Yorker

them come from. I would like to see the Met run more on this Covent Garden system."

Not all his colleagues agree with Sargeant. Harriett Johnson is firmly opposed to operatic chauvinism. "I don't believe that a person should be engaged because he's an American. An artist should be engaged solely on the basis of merit. A shining example of what can happen to an opera company if a majority must be of its country is the Paris Opera, which fell to a low state in recent years. Frankly, I think the two worst evils in the world are nationalism, in art or politics, and religion." Michael Steinberg says simply: "What we need are good singers, conductors, directors, and designers, no matter where they come from." Martin Bernheimer takes no particular chauvinistic stand, but simply asks, "Wouldn't it be nice if the Met imported fewer second-rate, little-known (inexpensive) Europeans? Fewer of the likes of Ina Delcampo, Elena Cernei, Karl Liebl, Mario Sereni, Claudia Parada, Pekka Nuotio, etc.?" George Jellinek feels that "in no way should the Met be a proving ground. Certainly, qualified American artists should be given every opportunity." Finally, Irving Lowens, harking back to Sargeant's feeling about opera as an American

as Grotowski or Mike Nichols or William Ball—are contemporary techniques which have found favor with a fairly sizable segment of the audience, including the conservative audience, and which it is high time the Met began to recognize."

"The Met began doing this when Bing first came in in the 1950's. It made pretty good headlines at that time to bring a Margaret Webster or a José Quintero into the opera house. But that initial flurry of theatrical excitement at the Met was not followed through, by and large. We have, instead, a Margherita Wallmann or a Paul-Émile Deiber or a Rudolf Heinrich—we're right back where we were before Bing came to the Met."

Michael Steinberg wants more than just a talented, contemporary theater man. "I want directors who understand that they have to direct according



MICHAEL STEINBERG
Boston Globe



HARRIETT JOHNSON
New York Post

institution, offers the explanation that opera lacks deep roots here because of "our rather individualistic approach of producing operas in the language in which they were written. They should be done in English. If opera is going to have any kind of impact, you can't have a sold-out house for *The Marriage of Figaro* where everyone is sitting around as if they were at a funeral."

Other than taking a stand on its American identity, the Met should also, according to Martin Bernheimer, develop an artistic identity of its own. He would like it if the Met were to "establish a definite, recognizable production style—if some new ideas were to emanate from the house, and if the Met could discover more and copy less (tried-and-sort-of-true procedures) from other companies."

Alan Rich expresses similar views. "The current good techniques that exist in the theater—not necessarily Tom O'Horgan's extravagances in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, but the works of such directors

to what is in the score, not just the libretto." John Ardoin goes a step further. "Honor the style and period of a work," he says. "Some pieces (such as the *Ring*) have a quality which allows them to be approached by a scenic designer or director in a free-ranging, even abstract way. *Faust* is not such an opera. Nor is *Nabucco*, *Carmen*, or *Trovatore* (to name only a few of the super boo-boos made by Bing, because the nature of an opera, its stance as an art work, was violated)."

George Jellinek feels that the Met has been burned once too often by directors who are alien to opera. "After M. Barrault (whose *Carmen* was unanimously panned), I would choose directors from fields other than opera with the greatest caution." Winthrop Sargeant calls for "more imaginative, perhaps less expensive productions. The movies can outspectacle any stage spectacle." Bernard Jacobson says that the Met "must replace its mon-



GEORGE JELLINEK
Stereo Review

ey-social ethos—a sort of artistic materialism illustrated by applause for sets that happily interrupts the music-drama and by applause for even those vilely vulgar rising chandeliers—with a doctrine of true artistic idealism.”

The subject of repertoire has always been a bone of contention between the Met and the critics and will probably never cease to be one. Much of the disparity, of course, is in the realm of personal taste, but some of it can be treated in a manner which approaches objectivity. The critics themselves take wildly diverse stands on this most controversial of topics. All are pleased, however, with Gentile's appointment of Rafael Kubelik as the first music director in the Met's history—a move they hope will considerably improve musical matters, particularly the choice of a more balanced repertoire.

Bernard Jacobson feels that a historic sampling of operas is vitally important to the understanding of opera in general. “The Met must treat musical history not as a gradual painful rise toward and decline from that ineffable peak constituted by the nineteenth century, but as a long, complex, and in no sense either pro- or re-gressive development in which the nineteenth century is simply one stage, no more important in itself than any other.”



BERNARD JACOBSON
Chicago News,
Stereo Review

John Ardoin says: “The Met prides itself on ninety-plus per cent subscriptions. Then why so dull a repertoire? I mean, if you are so fully subscribed, you have, in effect, a captive audience. So why not plan repertoire that is better balanced? I, unlike others, do not expect the Met to rush to give the latest Henze opera, or commission a work from Berio, etc. But by upgrading the repertoire I mean why not one season *L'Amico Fritz* instead of *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Semiramide* instead of *The Barber of Seville*, *Anna Bolena* instead of *Lucia*, *L'Africaine* or *Les Huguenots* instead of *Martha*, *The Pearl Fishers* instead of *Carmen*, etc.”

Irving Lowens takes a similar stand. “I believe that the purpose of the Met is to be a museum. But Bing has been extremely conservative. You can run a museum and still be progressive. I believe in reviving works—taking the ones from down in the cellar and airing them now and again. This can cast

considerable light on the masterpieces which are at the center of attention. Ultimately these revivals sink down to the cellar again. Contemporary and modern works do not belong at the Met. They should be done at universities and conservatories, where money is not a factor.”

Harriett Johnson feels otherwise. “You have to live in your own time. It's wrong not to do contemporary opera. But the public shouldn't be experimented on beyond a certain point, whether it's seventeenth-century or twentieth-century opera. The Met has made some very bad choices—for example, turning down an opera like *Don Rodrigo* and reviving *Adriana Lecouvreur*. The Met is not a museum in the sense that it should bring up third-rate period pieces.”

George Jellinek is more specific in presenting his scheme: “The Met repertoire should not exceed twenty-five operas per season. However, it should have a ‘revolving’ repertoire of sixty or so works, allowing for an almost total revamping of the ‘working’ repertoire every three seasons or so. I think that the public's desire for ‘staples’ is real. However, this desire can be modified. The public can be educated. *Don Giovanni* was not a staple in 1930. *Don Carlo* and *Turandot* were not staples even in 1955. The important thing is to play the best operas, the ones that belong in a major theater.

“Every season should have some contemporary opera,” Jellinek continues. “But not just because it is contemporary. The Met should not become a proving ground. And I don't believe in commissions at all. They are ego trips for managements and composers. They lead to favoritism and the undesirable status of ‘house composer’—Samuel Barber for the Met, Alberto Ginastera for the City Opera.”

Michael Steinberg wants more contemporary opera than the Met currently offers. “Some twentieth-century repertoire lives happily in a staple status elsewhere in the world—Berg, Britten, Henze, Stravinsky, to name some of the obvious names. I would not want to see a general manager demand a medal for bravery for putting on *Wozzeck* or *Peter Grimes*. Then, certainly, there should be one contemporary piece new to the house each season. And I should like to see commissions, and, with shame-



IRVING LOWENS
Washington Star

less chauvinism, I should like to see them go to American composers.

"Gentele will have to be more discriminating than Bing in his excursions outside what has been the Met's central repertoire. *Martha*, *Adriana Lecouvreur*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Mourning Becomes Elektra* are not roads to a livelier music theater (though it is perhaps not necessary to go along with the notion that Bing has deliberately chosen such junk in order eventually to be able to say, 'See, it doesn't work')."

Alan Rich has other ideas on this subject, particularly concerning the Met's recent fiasco with its first presentation of *Der Freischütz* in forty-three seasons. "I don't know whether anybody can actually establish the fact that the *Freischütz* disaster was part of Bing's revenge against those who have always been yelling for *Freischütz*. It just seems so hard to believe that as ill-considered a production as that could have been done in good faith. I'd just rather not believe it.

"The balance of repertoire has suffered under Bing, and it's suffered partly because his own taste has figured so strongly in running the opera company. You know, Mr. Bing came up to me a few years ago, after San Francisco revived *The Trojans*, and pronounced the work a bloody bore. I don't think



ALAN RICH
New York

anyone in Bing's position should be allowed to make that pronouncement about as major a work as *The Trojans*."

Winthrop Sargeant, although sympathizing with some of Bing's personal tastes, feels nonetheless that the general manager has been negligent. "Bing has been criticized for not doing contemporary operas. I think to a certain extent his statement that they don't sell out is correct. People will go to see *Trovatore* who won't go to Hugo Weisgall's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, and I don't blame them. I feel almost the same way myself.

"The thing that really strikes me as remiss in Mr. Bing's approach is that there are an awful lot of operas that might be considered standard that he has not produced. For example, things like *The Barttered Bride*. Look, he's got two of the greatest coloratura *bel canto* singers in the world working for

him—Joan Sutherland and Marilyn Horne. The Met should put on a series of *bel canto* operas just for these two people—not just *Norma* and *Sonnambula*, which is a terribly silly opera anyway, but *Puritani* and *Semiramide* and half a dozen others. There's a big repertoire that's been untouched. At the time they have these two singers they ought to take advantage of them. They're not going to be around forever."

Which brings up the question of making the most out of what you've got, or casting the right singer in the right role. John Ardoin believes that a general manager should "try to suit an opera to a particular singer or singers rather than doing an opera and be-



JOHN ARDOIN
Dallas Morning News

ing forced to use whoever is available to sing whether they're qualified or not." Ardoin cites a classic case of what he means: "Why, with Elisabeth Grümmer in the company, did Bing give *Lohengrin* to Martina Arroyo?"

Martin Bernheimer brings up a point that has much to do with proper casting. "Wouldn't it be



MARTIN BERNHEIMER
Los Angeles Times

nice if the Met gave up its double standard—gave up pretending a *Fidelio* with Barlow, Nagy, Dooley, and Macurdy is the same (and should cost the public the same) as a *Fidelio* with Rysanek, Vickers, Berry, and Tozzi? That Colzani and Bruno Amaducci can do as much for *Falstaff* as did Evans and Bernstein? That a Lippert-Konya-Adler *Turandot* equals a Nilsson-Corelli-Mehta *Turandot*?"

Even the right artist in the right role is not going to work if that artist enters a production late in the season without the proper rehearsal. The Met is notorious for throwing artist A into opera B without much preparation. During a past season, one Figaro

had to contend with six Susannas in seven performances. This kind of helter-skelter assignment of roles hardly permits any kind of ensemble feeling to develop, and doesn't aid in giving a production cohesiveness. John Ardoin implores the Met to "please, run only two or three operas, or four at the most, a month! Few subscribers attend more than once a week, so that if the Met has four operas each month, they will accommodate each set of subscribers." Alan Rich says, "A way has to be found for more rehearsal time. Maybe they should cut down the number of operas per season. The price of tickets doesn't go down as *Tosca* moves from the first to the tenth to the twenty-first performance with new casts. The people who see it in April pay the same amount as those who see it in October, and they are entitled to the same quality."

Any discussion of casting in a house the size of the Met invariably turns to the subject of the star system. Here, too, the critics move along different avenues. Bernard Jacobson feels that the Met's reliance upon stars, particularly under Bing's regime, "has tended usually toward the 'staged-concert' conception of opera, with artists of undisputed distinction thrown together after grossly inadequate rehearsal and often under minimal dramatic discipline in the hope that, somehow or other, an opera will result."

Harriett Johnson is opposed to the star system in theory, but feels, realistically, that the Met has to engage the greatest singers, and that they are often the stars, and with good reason. Irving Lowens cites the enormous size of the Met which, he says, calls for "cows" whose voices can fill it. These, too, are often the stars. Michael Steinberg doesn't believe in employing the star system as a policy, but reports that the public is always going to have favorites, "and a *Traviata* with X, who is much loved, will draw better than a *Butterfly* with Y, who is only respected."

The question of value for money was raised by several of the critics. The Met charges exorbitant prices, which is bad in itself, but for it not to give the public anywhere near its money's worth is criminal. Harriett Johnson says heatedly, "I've often said to myself while viewing a performance that if I had to pay to see this, I'd be furious."

Michael Steinberg offers a logical extension: "If the experience doesn't offer what the advertising promised, people won't come back." This rather clearly explains the current box office decline at the Met, a decline so terrible that the Met has been forced to advertise heavily, adding to an already oversized budget an expense which has nothing whatsoever to do with producing opera. The Met is

trying to make it as simple and convenient as possible for operagoers, but even with the luxury of phone reservations (credit cards accepted), the people are hardly flocking to what once used to be a house virtually sold out every single night.

One can offer a variety of reasons why people aren't coming to the Met: high prices, fear of going out at night, *etc.* But few will dispute the fact that the artistic level at the house has fallen to a point where even the nondiscriminating viewer realizes he's better off going to a movie.

The foregoing suggestions are fundamental, but they aren't enough. The critics say the Met must go beyond the basics and improve and expand in other areas as well. By this they mean putting some life and more sense of responsibility into the slovenly chorus. Experimenting New York Philharmonic-style with the avant-garde in a house other (and smaller) than its own. Initiating popular prices so students and others can attend performances beyond the second-rate entertainments devised solely for youngsters. Developing the *corps de ballet* Covent Garden fashion. Touring less and spending the money saved on improving matters at home. Building a restaurant within the house that serves decent meals at reasonable prices. Instituting an educational system, formal or informal, which would break down barriers between the Met and the public. Relaxing out-of-date traditions and making the Met a place which is fun to visit.

FINALLY, the critics come to the subject of critics. Alan Rich sums up the matter: "I'd like to think that the Met and the critic work together toward building a greater opera house. Whatever Mr. Bing may think about the critics' mounting a personal vendetta against him, the critics do that, if at all, because they recognize the things that could be better at the house. The critics and the opera impresario work together in the sense that they're all concerned about the cultural health of the community. If we can create a lively curiosity for out-of-the-way works or create a lively curiosity about what is going on at the Met to draw people there, in that way we are working for the Met.

"I don't think Mr. Bing ever understood what criticism is for. There are plenty of managers around who do regard the critic as their employee. You give the critic a free seat and he repays you by writing something nice. But a critic does not write to be agreed with. He writes to stimulate people to think for themselves. Ideally, there should be no critics because everyone should actually be one for himself."

Until that happy day. . . .



BARRY MORELL

*"You can't fake it at the mike....
When you record, all you have is your voice."*

By FLORENCE STEVENSON

"I would hesitate to do Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'amore* on stage," Barry Morell told me. The Metropolitan Opera lyric tenor was discussing his newly released RCA recording of arias from Donizetti operas, and was illustrating the point that a singer can record arias—and entire roles, too—that he would never attempt on stage. "I'm very fond of Nemorino's aria '*Una furtiva lagrima*,' and the music *is* right for my voice. But Nemorino is just too stupid! Oh, yes, I know what they say about a tenor—that he has resonance where his brains ought to be. But I'm not sure I would feel comfortable as Nemorino."

So Morell relishes the scope and variety that recording allows him. And during the current year RCA will offer a demonstration of that variety with two releases in addition to the Donizetti—scenes and arias from Bellini, and the Handel Society production of *Judas Maccabaeus*, in which Morell sings the title role.

Morell was in Vienna to record the Handel oratorio when I caught up with him at the Am Parkring, an American-style hotel occupying the three top floors in a block-shaped, granite-hued building that rises starkly over the old-world splendors of Europe's music capital. In the deserted grill-room of this hostelry, with a cup of the city's famed coffee before him, the tenor gazed out the window at a vista of domes and slanting rooftops. "I do other roles on the Donizetti record that I couldn't—or, shall we say, *shouldn't*—sing in the house. Take Ernesto

in *Don Pasquale*. His aria '*Povero Ernesto*' is fine for me, but the rest of the part is too florid for my voice. I sang Calaf's aria '*Nessun dorma*' in my first album, for Westminster, but I would never sing Calaf in the opera house, at least not in my right mind. But on records. . . ." His brown eyes were suddenly lit by a wistful gleam. "On records, I could even do Otello."

Reminded that other singers feel that there is a certain sterile quality about a recording that hampers them creatively, Morell declared that he felt himself uninhibited by the bare stage, the score propped on a lectern, the knotted wires, the overhanging spots, and, in Vienna, as I was soon to discover, the disembodied voice of the sound engineer issuing not from a glass control booth but from an upper floor through a grey, oblong, hole-studded, "Big-Brother-is-listening-to-you" transmitter hanging a few sinister inches over the conductor's head.

In a matter-of-fact voice touched by the Long Island twang of his boyhood, the tenor said. "I enjoy recording very much. You cannot say that as a medium it's either harder or easier than performing in the house. Certainly it is more demanding musically and vocally, for the recording staff does not, and *should* not, pass a wrong note. By its very nature, a recorded performance must be more nearly perfect musically than its 'live' counterpart. A 'live' operatic performance is always diluted, musically speaking. You have to think about props and costumes.

And then there's the action. In a 'live' performance you are running or fighting or climbing up stairs or falling down them—and singing at the same time. For instance, when I made my debut at the Rome Opera last May, singing Cavaradossi, I fell over the sofa onto the floor while I was declaiming 'Vittoria!' An amused look came into his eyes. "Sure, I did it on purpose. I surprised everybody on stage, and some of my colleagues dropped out of character to help me—they were afraid I'd really hurt myself. It was like that time I did *Lucia* in Boston. After I stabbed myself, I fell the length of a long staircase. Everybody was sure I was dead.

"But digressions aside, the point I'm trying to make is that a 'live' performance is both *more* and *less* demanding than the one you give over the microphone. You can't fake it at the mike. You might not have to run and breathe and sing all at the same time. But you cannot rely on costumes and props, either, to provide the emotion you are supposed to convey with your voice—costumes, in my estimation, are the window-dressing of emotion: they really heighten it both for you and for the spectator. Nor can you cover mistakes with your acting. You leave all those tricks and gestures in the dressing room. When you record, all you have is your voice."

But don't recordings also have their tricks—the echo chamber, the engineer's manipulation of sounds, the interpolated notes? Morell became very serious. "I," he said portentously, "have never resorted to an echo chamber. And as far as I know, the dials are set before the recording begins and they remain that way. Interpolated notes? Well, I suppose you could say that artistically they are a cop-out. But let's talk about expenses. Supposing an artist is not at top form on the day he is to produce a high C. In the house, he can cancel and they will bring in a replacement. When a record is being made, there are definite schedules to follow and costs to consider. The orchestra is hired for a certain amount of money, the chorus is assembled, the other singers are on hand—and if the high note is not forthcoming, must all these people be called again at further cost?"

"We've already made the point that a recording is not a 'live' performance, and that, consequently, 'live' standards do not prevail. For instance, in the *Judas Maccabaeus*, I was slated to start my segment of the proceedings in the latter part of August, but I was called to Santiago, Chile, to perform in a special benefit concert for the earthquake victims. I made an arrangement with the company by which I arrived late, and the baritone, who had other commitments, recorded his part before I came. We never did get together. In this way, making a record is much like making a movie: you might do the death scene first, and at the end of the session you might have just sung your first duet with the soprano."

Barry Morell was born in New York City and raised on Long Island. He was "discovered" as a boy by an interior decorator, who one day, while discussing color swatches with Barry's mother at the Morell home, heard some melodious sounds coming from the hot-air ducts. "You have wall-to-wall music?" he said, surprised (this was before the days of home Muzak).

"No, that's my son Barry," she explained. "His workroom is in the basement, and he often sings while he is building boats and things."

"He's got an excellent baritone voice," said the interior decorator."

"That," Morell explains now, "is because my voice

never changed. When I was a boy, it was deep and now it's high—it's the same voice. I studied singing as a baritone until I ran into some real trouble vocally. An introduction to Giuseppe Danise, the great baritone and voice teacher, righted all the wrongs—he told me I was a tenor. I used to work in my father's office—Morell British Textiles Ltd.—and rush up to the Ansonia for a voice lesson during my lunch hour. After about seven years, I made my debut in my hometown, at the New York City Opera, as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*. I repeated the role in my Metropolitan Opera debut two seasons later. I sang seven roles my first season there—1958. Since that time, I have sung in opera companies all over the United States, at Covent Garden, the Vienna Staatsoper, Hamburg, in Berlin, Málaga, Santiago, Mexico, and Havana (pre-Castro). And last May, I made my debut at the Rome Opera, which happens to be my second hometown—I now live there. In January of this year, I will make my concert debut at the Barcelona Liceo, and later I will sing there in *La Favorita*. At Carnegie Hall this spring, I will sing the title role in *Judas Maccabaeus* with much the same cast as on the recording."

LATER I watched Morell as he worked on the recording. I found the *Judas Maccabaeus* company installed, fittingly enough, in the Mozartsaal of the Vienna Konzerthaus, a white and gold room lit by three immense chandeliers, each of them now anachronistically sporting a single unfrosted worklight. The session, a monotonous repetition of a few bars of music—stop, repeat, stop, repeat—suggested further questions.

"When you sing a few notes and you're constantly interrupted, how can you bring any emotion to your work—how can you sustain the mood?" I asked Morell when the session was over.

"Because I have studied the role, and the emotion has already been put there," he explained reasonably. "It's not something I inject as I go along. And I have no trouble picking up the thread, even though I am interrupted. The problem I had this time was concerned with the lack of opportunities for emoting in the work itself. An oratorio is much different from an opera—and it's an entirely different approach, too. I am used to performing in the Italian style. You can't use it in an oratorio, that technique is out of place—you know, where you get wound up and go 'zzzzzz' to a phrase. Judas is not dramatic, he is heroic, and there's a limit to how much emotion you can get into his attitudes. Certainly a hero cannot sob or rant; he has to declaim, especially this Judas Maccabaeus. If he'd been living today, he'd give Moshe Dayan a run for his money!"

"I have to admit that when I approached the music, I was rather daunted by it. It was a real challenge, for I'd never sung an oratorio before. But when I got into it, I found I really enjoyed it, especially the coloratura passages. And when it came to difficulties, I had many helpful suggestions from my colleagues. That's another thing about making recordings: you are a team rather than a group of competitors. In a recording, you are dedicated to making an overall effect, and perhaps for that reason, conditions in a studio are generally more friendly than they are in the opera house. But I won't say that I like singing less in the house. To any musician, activity is the answer: whether you are facing a lectern in shirt-sleeves or a colleague in armor, you are singing and that's all that matters."

STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT
BEST OF THE MONTH



CLASSICAL

ANOTHER SUPERB CHARACTERIZATION BY BEVERLY SILLS

Donizetti's Maria Stuarda is brilliantly realized on the ABC/Audio Treasury label

GAETANO DONIZETTI'S opera *Maria Stuarda* (1834) is a mature work that dates from a particularly productive period in the composer's life, falling as it does midway between two other successful operas dealing with English history—*Anna Bolena* (1830) and *Roberto Devereux* (1837). In a new ABC/Audio Treasury recording of the complete opera, excellent annotations by William Ashbrook detail the many complications and difficulties—personal, literary, and even political—connected with the opera's first presentation in Naples. In retrospect, it would appear that the literary complications had the most significant effect on *Maria Stuarda*, for it was not the distinguished Felice Romani (Donizetti's first choice) who finally undertook the adaptation of the Schiller drama to an operatic libretto, but the dilettante Giuseppe Bardari. (Romani, disturbed by the cavalier ways of the operatic world, had removed himself from the theatrical scene altogether.) Schiller's lengthy play needed drastic condensation, which Bardari effected; the result was a workable libretto, but one totally lacking in literary merit.

It must be admitted that it is more efficiency than first-rate inspiration that marks Donizetti's music for the opera's first act—in which Mary Stuart herself does not appear. With the second act, however, things change dramatically. Mary's first aria brilliantly delineates her character, and the succeed-

ing confrontation between the two queens (the event is carried over from Schiller, though history does not confirm such a meeting) is musically and dramatically outstanding. From that crucial episode on, the music builds inexorably toward the tragic dénouement. There are some pages of conventional writing along the way, but nothing tentative or ineffective. The final scene is on the level of the composer's very best achievements elsewhere.

In the title role, the remarkable Beverly Sills scores another triumph of fully realized characterization. Her Mary is an unjustly persecuted, still haughty queen, clinging to life but nonetheless preferring death to humiliation. Her singing is emotion-laden, yet disciplined and controlled both in the sustained lyrical and the taxing bravura passages. Much of the opera's best music is given to this regal figure, and whether in the remarkable double aria in the second act preceding the fatal meeting with Elizabeth or in the moving final "*Deh! tu di un umile preghiera*" with chorus, Miss Sills rises brilliantly to the role's demands.

Casting Eileen Farrell in the role of Elizabeth was a stroke of great inspiration. Her firm, round tones and strongly supported midrange provide a contrast with the breathier, more fragile Sills that is not only desirable musically but, in this dramatic context, remarkably effective. Aside from occasional caution in florid passages and a certain carelessness with



EILEEN FARRELL and BEVERLY SILLS
Bright rival queens

Italian pronunciation, Miss Farrell's singing is all opulence and security.

Alongside these bright rival queens, the opera's male characters must seem rather pale. Leicester is an idealist dedicated to reconciling the two rivals, but his persuasiveness is no match for Elizabeth's iron will. Stuart Burrows interprets the role with understanding and sings with a lovely tone and Schipa-like artistry. The reliable Louis Quilico almost succeeds in turning the part of Mary's confidant, Talbot, into a leading role. And a real "comer" is revealed as well, in the person of the young South-African baritone Christian du Plessis. His voice is too amiably lyrical to convey the villainy of Cecil here, but his singing cannot be faulted.

Aldo Ceccato conducts a spirited, totally idiomatic performance, and the engineering keeps singers, orchestra, and chorus in the proper balance all the way. Michael Williamson and his team, who were responsible for this company's earlier *Roberto Devereux*, have again produced an outstanding set. It comes with a fine illustrated booklet which could have profited from more painstaking editing to eliminate spelling errors in English as well as Italian.

George Jellinek

DONIZETTI: *Maria Stuarda*. Beverly Sills (soprano), Maria Stuarda; Eileen Farrell (soprano), Queen Elisabetta; Stuart Burrows (tenor), Leicester; Louis Quilico (baritone), Talbot; Patricia Kern (mezzo-soprano), Anna; Christian du Plessis (baritone), Cecil. London Philharmonic Orchestra; the John Alldis Choir; Aldo Ceccato cond. ABC/AUDIO TREASURY ATS 20010/3 three discs \$17.94, © 20010 \$21.95.

TWO NINTHS BY TWO CONTEMPORARY AMERICANS

*Humanist sympathies find expression
in an impressive pair of symphonic works*

I HAVE at hand a most extraordinary recording: two *Ninth* Symphonies, by forefront American composers, both works masterly, heartfelt, and thoroughly remarkable expressions of humanist ideas and ideals held in common, both reflecting, at least in part, their composers' contact with Rome and her influence, through centuries of history, on Western civilization. To continue the parallel, both symphonies were commissioned by the Friends of Alexander Hillsman (former concert-master and Associate Conductor of the Philadelphia Orches-

tra), and both composers are closely connected with the Juilliard School of Music—one as President until he became President of the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the other as a faculty member since 1947 and head of the composition department since 1963. But here the resemblances end, for these are two composers of markedly different personality.

William Schuman's *Ninth Symphony*, subtitled *The Ardeatine Caves*, was begun in Connecticut and completed in 1968 in Rome. It was stimulated by a visit to Le Fosse Ardeatine, a memorial to 335 Italian civilians executed by the Nazis in reprisal for the Italian underground's assassination of thirty-two Nazi soldiers in March of 1944. Like most of Schuman's orchestral music, the *Ninth Symphony* is conceived in extremely broad musical terms. The composer seems to speak first of large general subjects, laying down a foundation for his subsequent peroration and indicating in advance (if you tumble to what he is doing) that his address will be of such-and-such length and breadth, and that he will, in due time, call your attention to chapter headings as they occur in the course of the narrative. No four-bar phrases here, no seams, only an on-going motion, a continuous flowering. This is, among other things, a kind of "music of accumulation" which treats time as if it were a cosmic yo-yo, on a string millions of miles long. It is a conception of musical time that is unique to Schuman, expressively powerful, and, I think, utterly American.

Vincent Persichetti is equally American, equally humanistic. His *Ninth Symphony* also unfolds itself in a continuous flow, seemingly without pause—though there are several subsections of distinct formal importance. But his music does not sound at all like that of Schuman—or, indeed, like anyone's other than his own. It has an exceedingly strong rhythmic impulse throughout, and this is especially important in the fast sections. The work does not

WILLIAM SCHUMAN

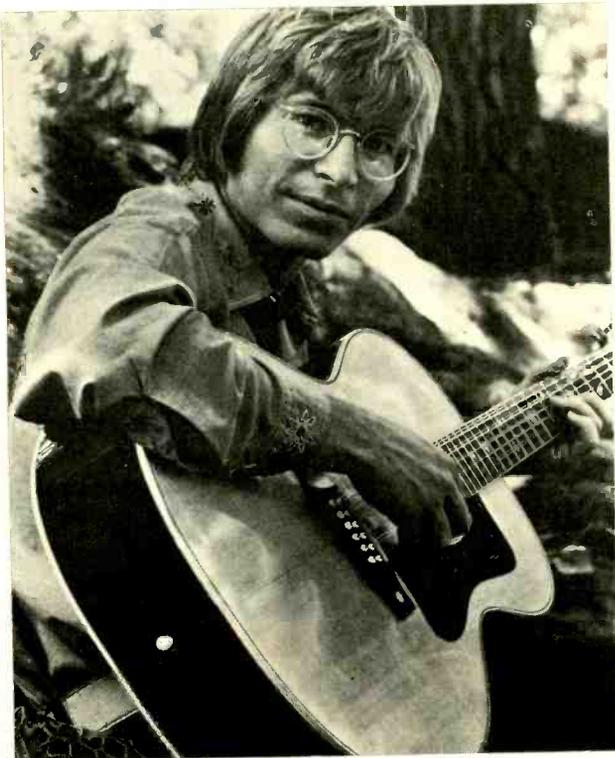


VINCENT PERSICHETTI



"AERIE," JOHN DENVER'S BEST SO FAR

His latest RCA release is a spiritual affirmation with a geographical base



JOHN DENVER: a man living where he's supposed to

seem to be one that depends for its primary impulse on formal expressive means. It is rather a through-composed composition, one of very subtle internal organization, with the intent and the impact of a philosophical tone-poem. One can "hear" the structure of the *Sinfonia Janiculum*, but only as a supportive element. It is distinctly subservient in emphasis to the flow of melodic ideas, colors, and feelings—all of which should keep you (it did me) on the edge of your seat for 23 minutes and 10 seconds. Persichetti's use of the orchestra is very different from Schuman's, but every bit as dazzling. With seeming ease, he blends the sensuous and ideational possibilities of that largest of all instruments, using chromaticism, dissonance, and consonance in ways only a master can, convincing the listener that these musical manipulations are not just sophisticated expertise, but rather a way of postulating a sober philosophical statement. Stimulated by the enigma of the Roman god Janus, whose two faces look in opposite directions, Persichetti has posed himself a number of questions: What is life's beginning, and what its end? Is the door opening or closing? For the answers I refer you to Persichetti's provocative symphony. *Lester Trimble*

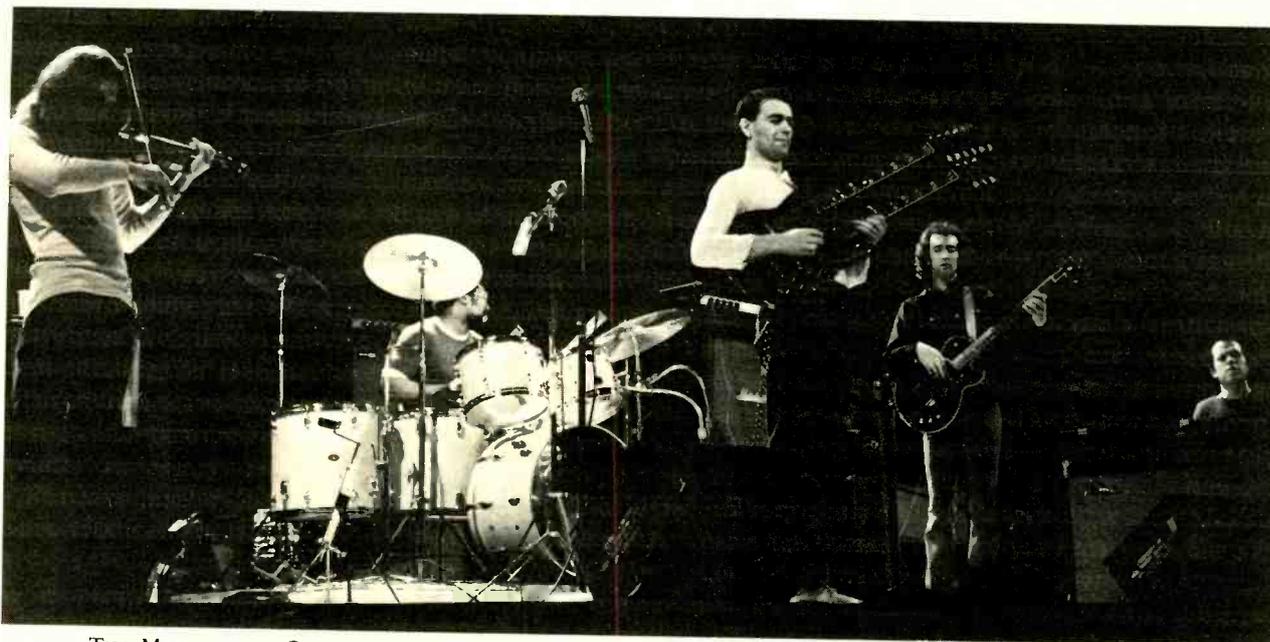
SCHUMAN: *Symphony No. 9, "The Ardeatine Caves."*
PERSICHETTI: *Symphony No. 9, Sinfonia Janiculum, Op. 113.* The Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy cond. RCA LSC 3212 \$5.98.

"AERIE," meaning the lofty nest of a bird such as an eagle, is not exactly a household word even in mountainous Colorado, where John Denver now lives. But, then again, it's not an obscure word either. People there come to know what people in cities forget—that the landscape, including aeries, is important to human kind. Thus "Aerie," John Denver's latest album for RCA, in a way documents how his move from the midwest to the Rockies has changed him. It is also the best, the least sentimental, of his string of albums.

Those who have experienced the Rockies may understand this on some level. Immutable and absolute, the mountains are always lonesome but above loneliness. Their message: "Hush now, and cope." The scenically deprived can almost be transported there by John's version of *The Eagle and the Hawk* (co-written with Mike Taylor), which comes screaming out of the sun and never traffics with—although it seems to acknowledge—man-made trivia. That brief but towering song is the focus of the album, an affirmation that, for now at least, John Denver in Aspen, Colorado, is a man living where he's supposed to live.

Though *Eagle* is the standout, there are other good songs in the album. *City of New Orleans* nicely evokes the affable progress of a train across the American countryside. Bill Danoff's *Readjustment Blues*, a beast to sing (calling for sustained top-volume, high-pitch wailing and difficult melodic changes from verse to bridge), is political, disarming, and disquieting, but not dogmatic. *Everyday*, which hasn't been dusted off since Buddy Holly did it more than a decade ago, is given a sparkling treatment, with Taffy Nivert's voice piercing through from the background.

I think *All My Memories* (possibly written back in the Midwest) drools perhaps a bit too long over the subject of leaving the city for the country, and John sings *Casey's Last Ride* too slowly (but then Kristofferson sang it too rapidly), though he *does* show a slight detachment that makes the song much more moving than a sobbing version would. Finally, *Friends with You* has borrowed too much melody, for my taste, from *My Heart Cries for You*. But these are small complaints. Compared to the quality



Columbia Records

THE MAHAVISHNU ORCHESTRA (John McLaughlin up front): a well-coordinated unit with that old intuitive magic

of the singing and the bulk of the material, the back-up vocals and instrumentals, and the production (as usual on Denver records, Milt Okun has done a letter-perfect job), these are trivial, trifling complaints. From an eagle's altitude you wouldn't even notice them.

Noel Coppage

JOHN DENVER: *Aerie*. John Denver (vocals, guitars); Mike Taylor (guitar); Bill Danoff, Taffy Nivert (background vocals); various other musicians. *Starwood in Aspen*; *Everyday*; *Casey's Last Ride*; *City of New Orleans*; *Friends with You*; *60-Second Song for a Bank*; *Blow Up Your TV*; *All My Memories*; *She Won't Let Me Fly Away*; *Readjustment Blues*; *The Eagle and the Hawk*; *Tools*. RCA LSP 4607 \$5.98, Ⓟ P8S 1834 \$6.98, © PK 1834 \$6.98.

MAHAVISHNU ORCHESTRA: FIRST-CLASS JAZZ

Columbia's new "The Inner Mounting Flame" is a stunning state-of-the-art recording

OH, MAN, is this a good record! If I were asked to name four or five discs to represent the current state of the art in jazz, "The Inner Mounting Flame," Columbia's new release of the Mahavishnu Orchestra, would have to be included. John McLaughlin has matured, in the last couple of years, into one of the most gifted, most provocatively

searching guitarists in all of contemporary music. His backup group, now a well-coordinated unit, steams away behind him, ever interactive, responding to each other's moves with the intuitive magic that always animates first-class jazz music.

The heart of the group is drummer Billy Cobham, a player whose adeptness truly boggles the mind. Working "live," he reminds you of an octopus, his arms and legs flashing so quickly in so many different directions that the existence of only four extremities seems too few to make such sounds possible. Violinist Jerry Goodman, late of the much-lamented group Flock, has found a way to make what is essentially a classically based style work in a jazz context. Pianist Jan Hammer knows all the tricks and electronic gadgetry that are essential to today's electric-keyboard artists, and he uses them with taste and rare musical judgment. And, finally, Rich Laird, a solid, workmanlike bassist, provides a foundation upon which the others can erect their fascinating improvised structures.

All in all, a stunning recording. Placid and romantic in a piece like *A Lotus on Irish Streams*, charged with primal energy in *Awakening*, it gives the lie to stories about the decline, the demise, or the obfuscation of jazz. Those who have ears to hear will understand.

Don Heckman

THE MAHAVISHNU ORCHESTRA WITH JOHN MCLAUGHLIN: *The Inner Mounting Flame*. The Mahavishnu Orchestra (instrumentals). *Meetings of the Spirit*; *Dawn*; *The Noonward Race*; *A Lotus on Irish Streams*; *Vital Transformation*; *Awakening*; *The Dance of Maya*; *You Know You Know*. COLUMBIA KC 31067 \$5.98, Ⓟ CA 31067 \$6.98, © CT 31067 \$6.98.

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viewer went on record to the effect that the **Rectilinear III** was unsurpassed by any other speaker system, regardless of type, size or price. (Reprints still available.)

Then came about forty-seven different breakthroughs and revolutions in the course of the years, while we kept the **Rectilinear III** unchanged. We thought it sounded a lot more natural than the breakthrough stuff, but of course we were prejudiced.

Finally, last year, we started to make a **lowboy** version of the **Rectilinear III**. It was purely a cosmetic change, since the two versions are electrically and acoustically identical. But the

new **lowboy** is wider, lower and more sumptuous, with a very impressive fretwork grille. It measures 28" by 22" by 12¼" deep (same internal volume) and is priced \$20 higher at \$299.

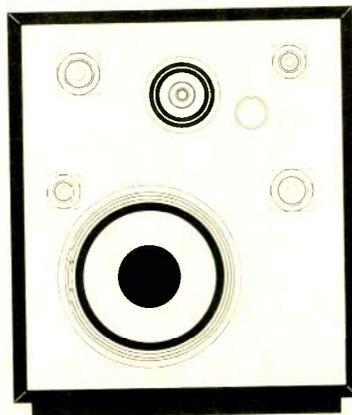
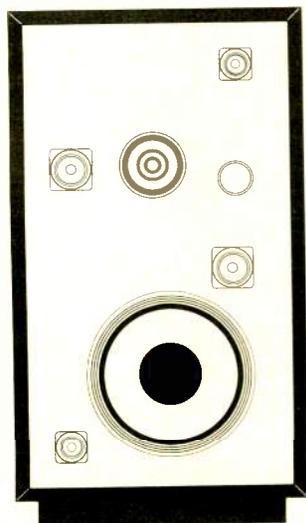
The new version gave *Stereo Review* the opportunity to test the **Rectilinear III** again after a lapse of almost five years. And, lo and behold, the test report said that "the system did an essentially perfect job of duplicating our "live music" and that both the original and the **lowboy** version "are among the best-sounding and most 'natural' speakers we have heard." (Reprints on request.)

So, what we would like you to figure out is this:

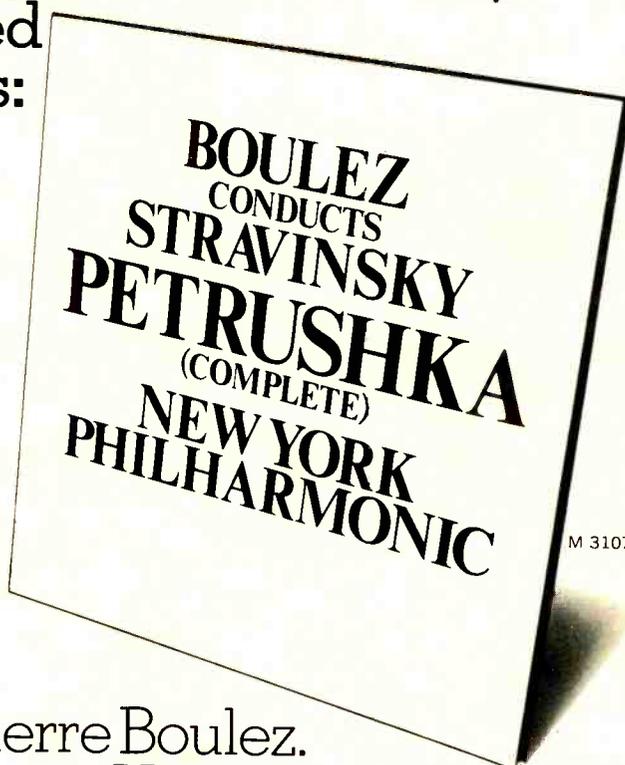
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RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BACH, J. S.: *Four Suites for Orchestra (BWV 1066-9)*. William Bennett (flute, in No. 2); Thurston Dart (harpsichord continuo); Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner cond. ARGO ZRG 687/8 two discs \$11.90.

Performance: **Superior**
Recording: **Good**

This performance, one of the last in which the late Thurston Dart was to participate, is based on research he had done over the past several years. From the average listener's standpoint, the results of the research (having to do with the dating of the works and the earliest forms of some of the suites) are not wildly dramatic, although a number of interesting differences between this and the version usually heard will be noticed by the alert. Most obvious are some of the repeats in the Fourth, a suite which is believed to date from 1725 but had existed for some years in a form that omitted trumpets and timpani; for these repeats, the brass and drum parts are on occasion deleted here, an effect that adds to the variety of the score. This technique of varying repeats by lightening the scoring is also used elsewhere: in Suite No. 3, for instance, winds are silent in the repeats of the second Gavotte; the Sarabande repeats of No. 2 use just the string quartet with the solo flute rather than the entire string section (itself quite a small body of players). And the first violin, as in the beginning of No. 4, often plays solo. Other notable stylistic points are that the same Sarabande has all its bass line matched up with the ornaments and articulation slurs of the flute part, something not heard very often in this particular movement, which in fact is a canon. Ornaments in general have been added quite liberally, but are based primarily on their occurrence in at least one of

the parts of the score. Then, too, a great deal of attention has been paid to phrasing, to properly lively tempos (note the Minuets in particular), and to the chamber-music quality of the sonorities (the trumpets, for instance, never dominate as they are wont to do because of their brilliance).

The playing of the Academy of St.-Martin-in-the-Fields, of course, is gorgeous, with all of that ensemble's usual bounce and vivacity. Perhaps the only disappointments are the lack of prominence of the harpsichord continuo

opening movements, has the benefit of original instruments or reproductions of the period and an incredibly pristine, vivid recording. Though I would not like to be without the Marriner version (which I have now heard several times, each time with greater appreciation for its values), I think it is the Harnoncourt performance that best realizes the color and joy of this music. *I.K.*

BARTÓK: *Sonatas for Violin and Piano, Nos. 1 and 2*. Isaac Stern (violin), Alexander Zak-in (piano). COLUMBIA M 30944 \$5.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Unreal**

These are such handsome performances that it's difficult to know why they are not more satisfying. Isaac Stern is one of the world's truly great violinists; he and Alexander Zak-in play both these sonatas with all the passion and virtuosity one could desire. And yet some element is missing, one so elusive that I can hardly name it. One might occasionally wish for a bit more subtlety and depth of consideration from the performers. But this is so much a matter of fleeting moments that I can't believe it's the reason for my less than happy reaction to those sonatas, which I love.

Indeed, after several listenings, I have concluded that it's not the performers at all, but the sonics of the recording which are the culprit. Columbia's shallow focal depth and its emphasis of high frequencies erase so much dynamic contrast in this instance that Stern seems constantly to be playing at a rather aggressive mezzo-forte, with rosin flying and a consistent nervousness which is neither his kind nor Bartók's. Added to the shrillness, dissonance, tension, and normal agitation of the music itself, this finally just gets on one's nerves.

Of course, ears differ. Mine may be wrong. But I have thought for some time that Columbia's sonic concept embraces the same fallacy which led to the disastrous, rootless acoustics of Philharmonic Hall. Violins don't really sound like this recording (even to a violinist, with his ear an inch away from the strings). If they did, no one could stand to play them, let alone listen. I should mention, too, that there are numerous groove flaws on this recording, which hardly helps matters. *L.T.*

BEETHOVEN: *Fidelio*. Jon Vickers (tenor), Florestan; Helga Dernesch (soprano), Leonore; Karl Ridderbusch (bass), Rocco; Zoltan Kélémen (bass baritone), Don Pizarro; Helen Donath (soprano), Marzelline; Horst R. Lau-



NEVILLE MARRINER
Bach Suites led with style and vivacity

(what one does hear of Dart—during the last few days of his illness—is marvelously inventive but never obtrusive), and sonic reproduction that is always good without being the last word in clarity or presence.

The record catalog at the moment boasts two outstanding recordings of the Bach Suites, in addition to this one. Competing are the fine performances by Raymond Leppard with the English Chamber Orchestra on Philips and the Concentus Musicus under Nikolaus Harnoncourt on Telefunken. Leppard's is better-recorded than Marriner's; he, too, is inventive in varying repeats, but not quite as dramatically as Marriner, and in adding ornaments and embellishments to the score is perhaps even more liberal than the latter. However, his French-styled Overtures are not double-dotted, a requisite of proper style for this kind of movement. Harnoncourt's version, very impressively double-dotted in those

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
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The first listing is the one reviewed; other formats, if available, follow it.

benthal (tenor), Jaquino; José Van Dam (bass-baritone), Don Fernando; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. ANGEL SCL 3773 three discs \$17.94.

Performance: **Tasty**
Recording: **Effective**

Bruno Maderna, the Italian composer and conductor, was quoted in the New York *Times* recently as remarking about Karajan's "chocolate" Beethoven. Frankly, that crack haunted me all through two hearings of this *Fidelio*. For Maderna's remark is more than just cattiness between conductors. This is a beautiful, *tasty* performance—Beethoven cooked up like a great meal. It is above all a singers' performance, superb in all the secondary roles and very fine, if not quite ideal, in its leads. Over all is the strong hand of Karajan urging everyone on to great feats: faster, nobler, more brilliant, more effective, with more pathos, more excitement, more beauty, always more!

Actually, there *are* small faults. The orchestra is, surprisingly, not always that well together. Kélémen, though very effective dramatically, plays a little fast and loose with Pizarro's pitches. Helga Dernesch, although a strong Leonore, is not quite fully up to the demands of the role (once or twice she seems to recede into the orchestral texture as if to cover up a not particularly effective run). Jon Vickers' singing has always had mannerisms that can be annoying. And there are a few strange—apparently intentional—balances in the recording. But these criticisms are really minor. The overwhelming impression is quite different: brilliance, pathos, and vigor all cooked up in the re-creation of a great old recipe—a tasty experience but hardly a profound one. *Molé!* E.S.

BEETHOVEN: Piano Concerto No. 3, in C Minor, Op. 37; Thirty-two Variations in C Minor. Radu Lupu (piano); London Symphony Orchestra, Lawrence Foster cond. LONDON CS 6715 \$5.98.

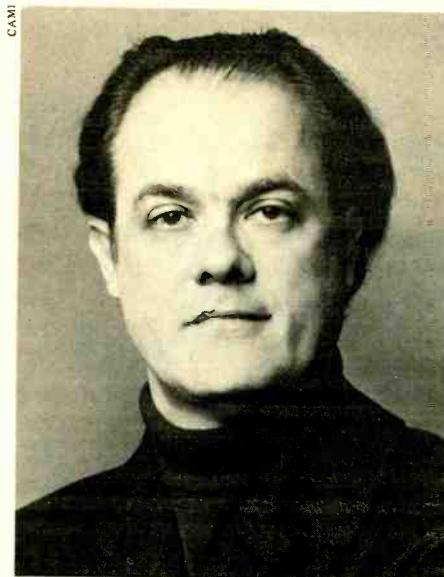
Performance: **Very good**
Recording: **Dark**

Radu Lupu is a remarkable young Rumanian pianist who pulled a Van Cliburn in reverse, going from Moscow, where he was a scholarship student at the Conservatory, to Texas, where he won Cliburn's own competition. His collaboration here is with one of the most talented younger American conductors, and it is a reasonably happy one. I find a shade of difference in approach; Foster's orchestra is gentle and confiding, while Lupu romps through the solo in genial high spirits. Even so, they manage an ensemble that includes a measure of expressive freedom by no means out of place here, and a phrase dynamic that carries right across the changes. The Thirty-two Variations, also in C Minor, are an appropriate and dashing performed supplement. The piano sound is on the mellow side, and the orchestra is too sonically subdued for my taste, but the music and Lupu's talent come through with reasonable clarity. E.S.

BEETHOVEN: Piano Concerto No. 3, in C Minor, Op. 37. Van Cliburn (piano); Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy cond. RCA LSC 3238 \$5.98, © R8S1216 \$6.95.

Performance: **Official**
Recording: **Good**

The word "establishment" is bandied about so much these days that one hardly knows for sure what it means. Nevertheless, there *is* such a thing as an "establishment" viewpoint which one recognizes, on occasion, even without being sure what its component parts are. In the case of this excellent but slightly unexciting performance of the Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 3, it seems to me the word applies. One cannot fault either Cliburn or Ormandy on details. Earnestness of purpose and civility of musicianship are everywhere in evidence. Only a slight sense of *déjà vu*, which derives not from any ennui on the listener's part but rather from a sort of over-digested and fatigued interpretive demeanor on the performers', keeps one from truly enjoying the performance, no matter how much one might admire myriad aspects of it. My theory is that, at that point when performers become so tired of a piece in the standard repertoire that they must call upon sheer



CHARLES ROSEN
A sense of communication in Beethoven

professionalism to put it over still another time, the words "official" and "establishmentarian" begin to apply. There is the sense of a small thrombosis somewhere in the heart of the piece, though the body is still functioning. L.T.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEETHOVEN: Piano Sonatas: No. 27, in E Minor, Op. 90; No. 28, in A Major, Op. 101; No. 29, in B-flat Major, Op. 106 ("Hammerklavier"); No. 30, in E Major, Op. 109; No. 31, in A-flat Major, Op. 110; No. 32, in C Minor, Op. 111. Charles Rosen (piano). COLUMBIA M3X 30938 three discs \$9.98.

Performance: **Magnificent**
Recording: **Likewise**

Writing about great performances of the late Beethoven piano sonatas seems to be one of the chief delights of record reviewing. Two years ago, when I was new to this magazine's staff, it was Daniel Barenboim. And now here is Charles Rosen, with a set of the last six sonatas worthy to stand with any recorded performances, whether in or out of the current catalogs.

The quality of Rosen's performances is the more gratifying to me because I have heard him play some of these works in recital over

the past few years and have been in some degree disappointed. A performance of the A-flat Major Sonata comes to mind, for instance, in which all the right motions were gone through with impeccable taste and artistry, and which yet left me feeling, when it was over, that nothing had really happened.

These recordings suggest that Rosen responds particularly well to the peculiar challenge of the studio. Here the parts are as finely judged as they were in the concert hall, and they also coalesce into far more satisfying wholes than they did there. This is not to suggest that what we hear on these (very reasonably priced) Columbia discs are artificial studio constructions. For one thing, with a technique such as Rosen has at his command, it was probably unnecessary for the record producers (Paul Myers and Bill Newman) to go to extremes in the way of splicing short takes together. For another, it is precisely the sense of communication in Rosen's playing that makes these performances so wonderfully rewarding.

In music as prodigal of meaning as this, it would be unrealistic to expect one artist to have all the best answers. There are indeed places where I feel other performers come closer to the spirit of one work or another. But such places are remarkably few.

The most important is the theme of the variations in the very last sonata, the C Minor. Here Rosen's way of prolonging the last beat in several measures results in a choppy, mannered feeling altogether less convincing than Barenboim's more even and yet also supremely sensitive flow. Rosen's interruption of the crescendo in the second part of the theme with a relative withdrawal of tone at the fifteenth measure also strikes me as a mannerism. Similarly, I think Barenboim digs at once deeper and more naturally into the lyrical vein of the variation theme in the E Major Sonata, Op. 109, and in this movement Rosen distinctly fails to make Variation IV sound "somewhat slower than the theme" as Beethoven directs. This is a minor miscalculation; scarcely more bothersome is Rosen's occasional habit of leaning on the second note of a feminine rhythmic pattern instead of keeping the accent on the beat—the 47th and following measures in the first movement of Opus 90, the 38th measure in the first movement of the "Hammerklavier," and the second-time bar in the first movement of Opus 111 are instances of this.

But, for the most part, even such quibbles as can be leveled at Rosen have their obverse positive aspects. His phrasing of the theme in the Opus 111 variations may, as I have suggested, be less than convincing—but his shaping of the movement as a whole succeeds astonishingly well in making its idiosyncratic rhythmic structure at once clear and communicative. Nowhere is the pianist's power of large-scale structural thinking more evident than in the voluminous slow movement of the "Hammerklavier," where his restraint at the first appearance of the *con grand' espressione* passage makes his expansiveness at a related point later in the movement all the more overwhelming in its eloquence. (This "Hammerklavier," by the way, is not a re-pressing of Rosen's old recording but a new and, I think, even more powerful performance.)

Ivan Moravec's sublime reading of the E Minor Sonata, Op. 90, on a Connoisseur Society disc, and particularly his handling of the idyllic second movement, remains for me a touchstone in sheer beauty of Beethoven

playing that Rosen does not quite match. Yet here again, Rosen's performance has its compensating virtue—in this case, a perceptive and masterly control of dynamic shading and nuances of phrasing and articulation. The superb, brilliantly integrated detail of Rosen's reading—I cannot recall any pianist, for example, capable of realizing so exactly the meaning of Beethoven's little two-note slurs with staccato dots under them—and the more generalized loveliness of Moravec's performance together constitute what great interpretation should be: a range of possibilities such that making a choice among them would amount to self-deprivation.

These performances, then, are not the only way to play late Beethoven. But they represent as cogent a way as you are likely to encounter. The recording, apart from the slightest trace of harshness in one or two places, is comparably magnificent, and Rosen's own liner notes are full of stimulating ideas. *B.J.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 7, in A, Op. 92.*
SCHUBERT: *Symphony No. 8, in B Minor, D. 759.* Philadelphia Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski cond. PARNASSUS 5 \$6.00 (available postpaid from Parnassus Records, Phoenixia, N.Y. 12464).

Performance: **Golden oldie**

Recording: **Early electric**

Stokowski is a remarkable example of a musician who, after a long and notable life in the public eye and ear, has actually outlived his own fame. Although nearly ninety, he is still active with his American Symphony Orchestra, a fallen titan from the Golden Age who has somehow survived into these Leadon Days. But it is necessary to go back to one of the numerous revivals of *Fantasia* to recall what a magisterial and innovative spirit Stokowski was. What a deep impression he made on the style of music and musicians! That white mane and those hands were among the first of what we would call media images. It was Stokowski who made the Philadelphia Orchestra what it is today. He was a pioneer, and, in spite of his aristocratic bearing, a genuine populist, bringing classical music to the millions, enriching the sound of the modern orchestra, and dragging it smack into the middle of the twentieth century via his new-music performances and his pioneering efforts in the recording studio.

Stokowski first brought the Philadelphia Orchestra into a Camden, New Jersey, studio in 1917—he was already thirty-five years old!—and also made the first electric symphonic recordings (in 1925). In the 1926-1927 season he and the orchestra made a series of large-scale recordings which represent some of the first really mature efforts of the recording art in the service of symphonic music. These recordings, two of which are reissued here, can be listened to with pleasure even now.

The performances here are really remarkable by any standard. Stokowski's care and control are phenomenal. There are many interpretive decisions that would be distinctly unfashionable today, and yet they are managed with the greatest conviction and musicality. The over-all impression has nothing to do with romantic laxness or show-biz flamboyance, but suggests an intensity that is always genuine and insightful. Everything is tight, intense, and perfectly in place, yet

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there is never any stiffness, never a lack of flow, of fluent expression, of poetic strength and communication. Even the (then common) use of *portamento* or legato slides in the strings does not seem excessive or out of place. And even some of the legendary richness of orchestral sound—so restricted by the narrow recording range and so much imitated afterwards—comes through. If you want to understand something about the present pre-eminence of American orchestras or get a glimpse of a real Golden Age—beautifully poised, like the music itself, between a rich romanticism and an insightful, structured classicism—simply listen to these recordings!

The original sound is remarkably good and very well remastered, although I do recommend the usual treble cut to reduce noise. And perhaps old Stoky will again receive the recognition he once had and which he is certainly still due.

E.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BRAHMS: *Ballades, Op. 10: No. 1, in D Minor ("Edward"); No. 2, in D Major; No. 3, in B Minor; No. 4, in B Major. Rhapsodies, Op. 79: No. 1, in B Minor; No. 2, in G Minor. Intermezzi: E Minor, Op. 116, No. 5; B-flat Minor, Op. 117, No. 2; E-flat Minor, Op. 118, No. 6. Capriccio in B Minor, Op. 76, No. 2.* Artur Schnabel (piano). RCA LSC 3186 \$5.98.

Performance: **By a master**
Recording: **Good**

BRAHMS: *Rhapsodies, Op. 79: No. 1, in B Minor; No. 2, in G Minor. Intermezzi: E Major, Op. 116, No. 6; B-flat Minor, Op. 117, No. 2; A Minor, Op. 118, No. 1; A Major, Op. 118, No. 2; E-flat Minor, Op. 118, No. 6; C Major, Op. 119, No. 3. Ballade in G Minor, Op. 118, No. 3. Capriccio in G Minor, Op. 116, No. 3. Waltz in A-flat Major, Op. 39, No. 15.* Van Cliburn (piano). RCA LSC 3240 \$5.98.

Performance: **Youth has its say**
Recording: **Very good**

These two discs between them present as fine an assortment of Brahms keyboard riches as one could ever ask for on four record sides, and there is just enough overlap in repertoire between the old master and the young one—the two Op. 79 Rhapsodies, the Intermezzi Op. 117, No. 2, and Op. 118, No. 6—to offer some fascinating contrasts in Brahms interpretation.

With one exception, the Rubinstein album is an almost miraculous and wholly revealing testament to a great artist well into his eighties. The four sharply contrasted Ballades of Op. 10 are played with the necessary passionate surge and drama where they are needed (as in Nos. 1 and 3), and where the utmost purity of line and phrasing is called for, as in Nos. 3 and 4, Rubinstein held this listener simply spellbound. The reading of the delicious B Minor Capriccio is sheer delight, and the handling of the dissonances in the Intermezzo Op. 116, No. 5, makes of this an uncannily haunting, almost spooky piece.

If Rubinstein can no longer match the dynamic power of a young virtuoso in tackling the Op. 79 Rhapsodies, the loss is made up in the discipline of rhythm and phrasing which enables him to give these works a stark power otherwise conveyed only by the late Wilhelm Backhaus in his prime.

Indeed, the contrasts between the approach

of age and youth to the Brahms repertoire are most sharply conveyed in the readings of these Rhapsodies. Rubinstein is utterly straightforward, driving relentlessly onward, Toscanini-fashion, toward the inevitable climaxes that sound just right in terms of everything that has gone before and is to come after—a sense of proportion carried to its ultimate. Cliburn's more freewheeling approach simply fails to communicate this inevitability. On the other hand, the passionate utterance of the Intermezzo Op. 118, No. 1, is tellingly set forth by Cliburn; he also does very well in showing us that the lovely and familiar C Major Intermezzo, Op. 119, No. 3, is a bigger piece than many other pianists care to make of it. Likewise, his playing of the well-loved A-flat Waltz is a joy.

But the peak of Cliburn's recital comes at the one point where Rubinstein, to my mind, falters—in the great E-flat Minor Intermezzo, the aging Brahms meditating on the *Dies Irae*



BENJAMIN BRITTEN
A revelatory TV opera

motif. Rubinstein, in common with almost all other pianists I have heard do this piece—Wilhelm Backhaus excepted—fails to achieve a proper sense of climax in the defiant middle section that eventually resolves in a return of the *Dies Irae* motif. Cliburn, on the other hand, does so brilliantly, and in a manner quite different from Backhaus (who relies on a generally faster pacing): he plays the opening phrases of the section without pedal, thus creating an atmosphere of charged suspense that cracks wide open phrase by phrase to the point that the volcanic recapitulation arrives as true catharsis. I would buy the Cliburn disc for this performance alone, and I certainly would not be without the Rubinstein under any circumstances.

Rubinstein's piano, recorded in RCA's Rome studio, is a trifle dry and unresonant in tone, but not disturbingly so. Cliburn's piano is recorded with the utmost richness, wholly in keeping with his penchant for savoring to the full every juicy episode, even if the sense of inevitability and forward motion must lose occasionally thereby.

D.H.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BRITTEN: *Owen Wingrave, Op. 85.* Benjamin Luxon (baritone), Owen Wingrave; Janet

Baker (mezzo-soprano), Kate; John Shirley-Quirk (bass), Coyle; Heather Harper (soprano), Mrs. Coyle; Peter Pears (tenor), General Philip Wingrave and Narrator; Sylvia Fisher (soprano), Miss Wingrave; Jennifer Vyvyan (soprano), Mrs. Julian; Nigel Douglas (tenor), Lechmere; Wandsworth Boys' Choir (Russell Burgess, dir.), English Chamber Orchestra, Benjamin Britten cond. LONDON OSA 1291 two discs \$11.96.

Performance: **Superb**
Recording: **Ditto**

I did not see Benjamin Britten's television opera *Owen Wingrave*, but judging by the astonishing impact of the music as it comes off this recording, I can only say that this work (premiered on BBC 2 in May, 1971) is one of the most important musico-dramatic works to come from the pen of any composer, of whatever nationality, in several decades. I have never been a hot Britten fan, but in the past few years, it seems to me, this essentially conservative and often facile composer has become so utterly masterly in the use of his chosen materials, so unfailingly deep and true in his evocation of idea and emotion, that he (like Shostakovich) has made considerations of style or idiom irrelevant to a discussion of his music. *Everything* in his new music is a revelation, no matter what it's made of; every stroke falls exactly where it belongs—effortlessly and with such accuracy that smudging and second thoughts seem out of the question.

In actual fact, Britten seems to have "modernized" his idiom somewhat in this work, using some wide-sweeping melodic lines in the voices that add a sense of high styling to the solid harmonic underpinning. His instrumentation, too, is freer than ever, with percussion writing of marvelous elegance and evocativeness, woodwind and brass parts as vividly etched as the masses and laceworks in a late Jackson Pollock painting. Where airiness is most effective, the textures are miraculously transparent (and yet almost palpable). Where bulk is required, or passionate turbulence, the composer seems to have had constant inspiration about fresh methods of producing these qualities.

In short, this television opera sounds very close to being that very elusive thing—an inspired and exactly balanced work, with no dead wood or ballast anywhere, and immediacy of thrust in every measure. The BBC Television Service commission has brought forth a model for all future opera. Television is where late twentieth-century opera belongs, and Britten has finally shown how it can be done, with modernity, immediacy of impact, relevance, and high culture.

The scenario for *Owen Wingrave*, with a libretto by Myfanwy Piper, is based on a short story by Henry James. It is in essence an anti-war tract. The protagonist, scion of the militarist Wingrave family, refuses to continue the family pattern of soldiering, and is disowned and held in disgrace by all those close to him. Spice the plot with a good ghost story! The Wingrave house is haunted by ghosts from an earlier tragic generation in which a Wingrave tried to break out of the family pattern and was destroyed by doing so. The protagonist, Owen, is challenged by his scornful ex-loved to spend a night in the haunted room. He accepts the challenge and mysteriously, though not unexpectedly, dies. The ending is so classic and so firmly symbolic that it functions neatly and with great impact—and without the slightest hint of "corn."

Considering the extraordinary group of singers on this recording, and the fact that the English Chamber Orchestra and the Wandsworth School Boys' Choir are conducted by Britten himself, it is not surprising to find the performance an absolute paragon of perfection: elegant beyond description, and perfect in pitch, dynamics, ensemble, and interpretation. The recorded sound is stunning. *L.T.*

CHAYNES: *Concerto for Organ, Strings, Timpani and Percussion; Concerto for Piano.* Marie-Claire Alain (organ); Yvonne Loriod (piano); Philharmonic and Chamber Orchestras of the O.R.T.F., Serge Baudo cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1088 \$2.99 (plus 65¢ handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Performance: **Authentic**
Recording: **Good but distant**

Although Charles Chaynes is not exactly a young composer (he was born in 1925) and has a very respectable list of credits (Conservatoire, Prix de Rome) and pieces (concertos, symphonies, études and the like), he is really very little known—even in his native France. Both of these concertos are about five years old, both were written for their respective soloists, and at least one of them (the Organ Concerto) was commissioned by Erato, the original record company involved. Chaynes defines his own position as "wholly atonal" but independent of any "school." Neither statement can be entirely accepted at face value. The intensity, coloration, and mystical, contemplative qualities

(the Organ Concerto is "after the Spiritual Canticle of Holy John of the Cross") suggest the orbit of Olivier Messiaen. And, if there are strong differences between the two composers, this is largely because Chaynes works in a much more linear fashion, with structures and rhythmic-phrase patterns derived from the tonal-contrapuntal tradition.

In theory, none of this should affect one's judgment of the intrinsic quality and interest of the music. As a practical matter, however, we are talking about an exotic spiritual climate that I find quite alien, even in the work of a master like Messiaen. And there is, particularly in the Organ Concerto, a gap between the mystical-coloristic atmosphere and the rhythmic neo-Classical jogging along. The Piano Concerto also jogs, but being a less pretentious piece there is less discrepancy between apparent intention and realization; it is the more conventional of the two works, but also the more successful, in my opinion.

Both works benefit from their excellent soloists. The recording problems of the Piano Concerto have been better resolved, and the piece has impact; the Organ Concerto, on the other hand, has lots of atmosphere but not quite enough presence. *E.S.*

DEBUSSY: *Cinq Poèmes de Charles Baudelaire; Fêtes Galantes, Series I; Voici que le printemps; Romance; Mandoline; Trois Chansons de Bilitis.* Anna Moffo (soprano); Jean Casadesus (piano). RCA LSC 3225 \$5.98.

Performance: **Fair**
Recording: **Good**

It is not really surprising that disc recitals devoted entirely to Debussy songs are so rare. For all of Debussy's exemplary understanding of poetry, his musical settings seldom yielded results that amounted to emotionally meaningful and really satisfying vocal music. Although this personal opinion is by no means unique, it seems fair to the reader to state my general lack of enthusiasm at the outset.

I have nonetheless enjoyed Debussy songs rendered in smaller doses in recorded recitals by Jennie Tourel, Victoria de los Angeles, Régine Crespin, and Gérard Souzay, among others. Regrettably, Anna Moffo's interpretations are not in the same league. To make these essentially declamatory songs even moderately effective, the singer must treat them with a lightness born of total mastery and control. In Miss Moffo's singing the mechanics are all too evident, to say nothing of a shrill and effortfully managed upper register. The piano accompaniments, which often redeem the unadventurous vocal half of the partnership, are sensitively played by Jean Casadesus (recently killed in an auto accident in Canada at the age of 44). The recorded balance is good, and so are the annotations of Alan Rich, who, I hasten to add, holds these songs in much higher esteem than I do. This is the only currently available complete recording of the Baudelaire songs. *G.J.*

DONIZETTI: *L'Elisir d'amore.* Joan Sutherland (soprano), Adina: Luciano Pavarotti (tenor), Nemorino: Dominic Cossa (baritone), Belcore: Spiro Malas (bass), Dulcamara: Maria Casula (mezzo-soprano), Giannetta.

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Performance: **Very good, with reservations**

Recording: **Good**

There are many things to praise in this new recording of Donizetti's delightful comic opera. It is *complete*, for one thing. Though the cuts in previous recorded versions were neither extensive nor really damaging, the opera benefits from an absence of meddling with the composer's original design.

Richard Bonyngé's conducting is another positive factor. His affection for this kind of repertoire is evident in the zest and animation he brings to the rustic and military episodes

and in the fastidious care for niceties of orchestral tone and phrasing. Bonyngé's treatment of the singers is exceptionally accommodating. He allows them considerable latitude for handling tricky passages—an elasticity that may not always be desirable, but works in *L'Elisir*.

Luciano Pavarotti's Nemorino is just about ideal. He sings with a soaring, unforced lyricism and with accurate intonation throughout. His "*Una furtiva lagrima*" is fervent and melting, and his exceptional singing always serves his credible and amusing characterization of the engaging bumpkin.

The Adina of Joan Sutherland—a role which, to the best of my knowledge, she has not yet sung on stage—is a somewhat qualified success. In purely vocal terms she is above criticism: her tone is ample and efful-

gent, her technique secure, her intonation virtually perfect. She even brings an unaccustomed liveness and textual awareness to the early scenes. But, as the action develops, the familiar Sutherland predilection for languid moods and droopy phrasing places a Lucia before us instead of the vivacious Adina. At such moments, your acceptance of her achievement depends on the force of her purely vocal magic, which, it must be admitted, is considerable.

Dominic Cossa is a youthful-sounding, appropriately cocky Sergeant Belcore, modest in vocal resources, but nicely in character. The Dulcamara of Spiro Malas, on the other hand, is merely adequate, and this role, for which Fernando Corena has established such a colorful and memorable standard, demands more than that. I miss not only Corena's effortless *buffo* gifts, but also his spectacular way with the text. Malas is simply not Italian-sounding enough—a deficiency particularly noticeable in the delightful Barcarole Duet, in which Sutherland is similarly short on idiomatic spirit. Maria Casula's tremulous Giannetta rounds out the cast.

Bonyngé's zealous research in the *bel canto* archives has yielded an unfamiliar *cabaletta* for Adina's second-act aria "*Prendi, per me sei libero*." The music is pretty and very effective (its source is not identified in the notes). Orchestra and chorus respond to the conductor's leadership in fine style. Although the sound is occasionally overreverberant for my taste, the set surpasses all competition in this area. This factor, plus completeness and the appeal of Pavarotti and Sutherland, should prove irresistible to many. The performance is good. It is unfortunate that here again, as in other Sutherland-Bonyngé productions in the past, more effort was not expended toward uniformly excellent casting. G.J.

DONIZETTI: Maria Stuarda (see Best of the Month, page 69)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LISZT: Transcendental Études: (1) *Prelude in C Major*; (2) *Molto vivace, in A Minor*; (3) *Paysage, in F Major*; (5) *Feux follets, in B-flat Major*; (8) *Wilde Jagd, in C Minor*; (10) *Allegro agitato molto, in F Minor*; (11) *Harmonies du soir, in D-flat Major*. Gortschakoff-*Impromptu*. *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*. Vladimir Ashkenazy (piano). LONDON CS 6719 \$5.98.

Performance: **Dazzling!**

Recording: **Excellent**

One sampling of the first three minutes of this Liszt recital by Vladimir Ashkenazy, and the vision of Franz Liszt in his early thirties as a veritable tiger of the keyboard was conjured up irresistibly in my mind's eye—such is the aural stimulus afforded by the fabulous playing that opens this disc. Though the first of the *Transcendental Études* is brief, it's definitely an attention-getter, a warm-up for the dissonant devilry of the A Minor Etude which follows virtually without pause. There are lovely sounds in the landscape-piece that is Etude No. 3, and delicious virtuosic tinkles in the "Will-o'-the-Wisp" episode. The *Wild Hunt* strikes me as mostly Teutonic bombast, but the Etude No. 10 concluding side one shows the Lisztian devilry combined with savage passion. The last of the *Transcendental Études* played by Ashkenazy is a lengthy and impressive mood piece that looks forward to the beginning of Impressionist technique.

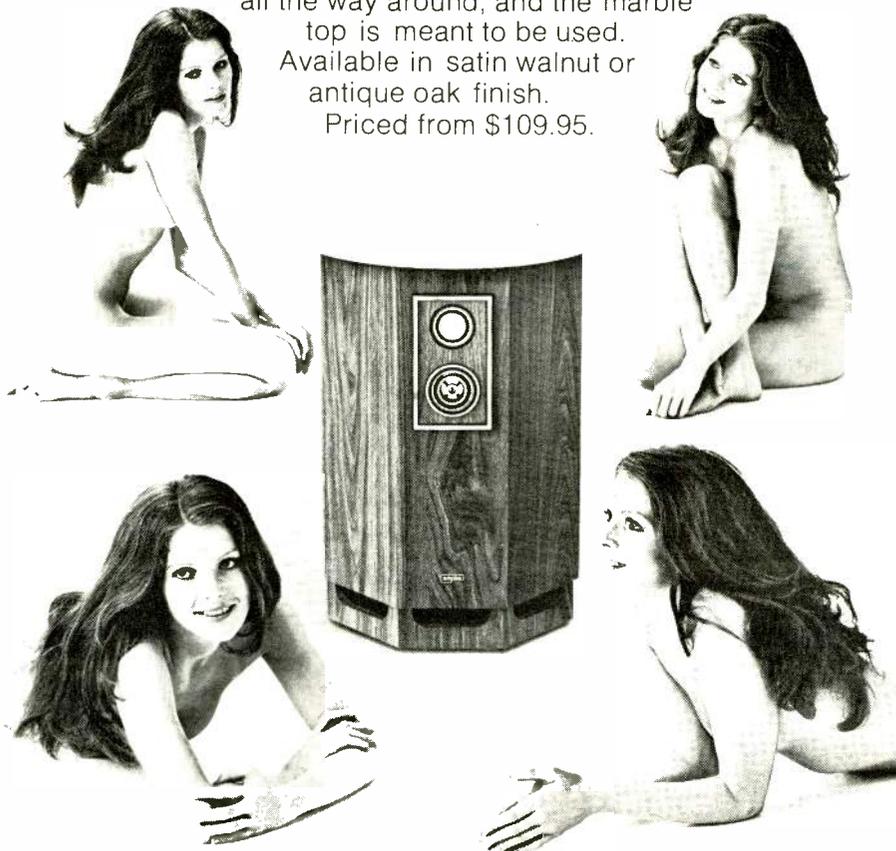
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The Impromptu dedicated to the Princess Gortschakoff is of minor moment, a more harmonically sophisticated rewriting of the celebrated *Liebestraum*. The familiar *Mephisto Waltz* concludes the disc in suitably satanic vein.

I cannot describe the playing here as anything less than stupendous: even the trashy and repetitive pages become at least bearable. But the great things in *Études* 2, 10, and 11 are moments to remember for a lifetime. Happily, the recorded piano sound—full-bodied and clean—is on a par with the Ashkenazy technique and romantic sensibility.

D.H.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MAHLER: *Symphony No. 5, in C-sharp Minor; Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen.* Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Rafael Kubelik cond. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone, in *Lieder*). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 189/190 two discs \$11.96.

Performance: **Marvelous**
Recording: **Marvelous**

Deutsche Grammophon has a real winner in this new two-record release. Though the Kubelik performance of Mahler's *Symphony No. 5* with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra has been available, it was so only as part of a boxed collection of the complete Mahler Symphonies. This is its first offering by itself, and the coupling with *Songs of a Wayfarer* on the fourth side (a new recording) could not be more fortuitous. Both works are given beautiful performances. Indeed, Kubelik's reading of the *Symphony No. 5* puts it high on my own personal list of preferred performances. Since the *Songs of a Wayfarer* is the brand-new item, however, I'll address myself mostly to that.

Baritone soloist Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau is an extremely dependable artist, in addition to all his other virtues. I have yet to hear him give a performance which seemed to me musically unpraiseworthy, though some are, naturally, more praiseworthy than others. In the case of this recording, I really must use superlatives. His voice sounds so fresh, light, and easy that one would think the recording had been made by a Fischer-Dieskau some ten years younger than he actually is (though, of course, he is still a relatively young man). Even the high-tessitura passages in these songs (and there are some stretches which have tested voices quite severely—including his own) are produced with such lyrical brightness and fluency that they are deeply impressive. The singer's interpretive conception of each song is immensely sensitive, sophisticated, and credible. It is also in complete rapport with Kubelik's conception, as expressed through the orchestra. The performance does not break up into small units through concentration on the individual parts: the totality has form and an arching beauty of its own.

I am told that Fischer-Dieskau made this recording after an enforced rest due to a skiing accident. Perhaps that accounts for a part of its splendor—not the skiing accident, but the rest.

L.T.

MAHLER: *Symphony No. 8, "Symphony of a Thousand."* Ileana Cotrubas, Heather Harper, and Hanneke van Bork (sopranos), Birgit Finnilä and Marianne Bielemann (altos), William Cochran (tenor), Hermann Prey

(baritone), Hans Sotin (bass): Amsterdam Choruses, Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam, Bernard Haitink cond. PHILIPS 6700 049 two discs \$11.96.

Performance: **High quality**
Recording: **Big and distant**

Although Mahler was a major operatic conductor and, creatively speaking, a Wagnerite, he wrote nothing for the theater. This may be because the central character in his work is always himself. Mahler did not have the dramatist's gift of externalizing; the dramatic conflicts and interactions are all interior and translated in very personal, quirky ways, transcending the traditional notions of form, harmonic structure, and even "style." This is, in part, what is so contemporary about Mahler. Strauss' *Salome* and *Elektra* are

Freudian in a purely external and dated way; we are not sure how these shocking and revolutionary works relate to their quite sedate and middle-class composer. With Mahler's less obviously revolutionary music, we have no doubts about the depth or the originality of the expression.

All this is by way of introduction to Mahler's most dramatic and monumental work. The "Symphony of a Thousand" owes its enormity to that most irritating of egotrips: the ostentatious plea for the personal intervention of the Lord in the favor of the sinner with the most magnificent offering. The first movement is a giant chorale prelude. The second movement is a setting of the scene in which Faust, standing in for all us tormented intellectuals, is redeemed and tak-

(Continued on page 84)

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JUDAS MACCABAEUS:

Two new recordings swell
the Handelian discography

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Right: Judas slays Apollonius,
general of the Samaritan army.



NOTIONS of victory and defeat are often vulgar oversimplifications when applied to the lofty art of music, which ought to be above squalid competition. But somehow such concepts come readily to mind in connection with the martial patriotic fervor of Handel's *Judas Maccabaeus*. And in these terms, Vanguard's new recording conducted by Johannes Somary plainly has it over RCA and Stephen Simon, while both new versions are clear winners over the one previously available recording on Desto.

What may surprise those familiar with the previous work of Somary and Simon in their respective Handel series is not so much that the decision comes out this way as that it is a relatively close one. Simon's conducting has improved greatly since the days of his unequal battle (again, the military metaphor seems justified) with *Solomon*. But though he brings off some attractive effects in *Judas Maccabaeus* with obviously developing assurance, there are still far too many moments when a touch of unsteadiness in tempo or of imprecision in ensemble betrays the inadequacy of his technique.

Somary has the advantage of an absolutely first-rate orchestra, the English Chamber Orchestra, for which Simon's Viennese ensemble is no match, and Simon is further handicapped by a chorus that is still, even after all its experience with Handel oratorio, uncomfortable with the English language—"See the godlike *use* [youth] advance" is perhaps the most amusing, but certainly not the only, consequence of the singers' problem with the "th" sound, and their Germanic way with the final "s" leads to such cu-

rious remarks as "Sion now her head shall *raice* [raise]."

To compound Simon's difficulties, the RCA engineers have not been able to rival the smooth sonority and natural balance secured for Somary by his producer, Seymour Solomon. In particular, RCA's over-prominent placing of the harpsichord sounds most unrealistic, especially since the player, Martin Isepp, tends to be obtrusive at times, whereas Vanguard's Harold Lester combines a comparable inventiveness with greater discretion. There is also, in the RCA version, a very disturbing tape-join in the chorus "Disdainful of danger."

As far as general style and performance practice are concerned, both conductors do well (though I think both are wrong to treat the bass line in the *secco* recitatives in so sustained a manner—the long notes are a convention of notation, and not meant to be taken literally). Somary keeps his taste for inappropriate choral and orchestral embellishment fairly well in check, and both men are sound on matters of rhythmic alteration, though again Simon is slightly the less consistent of the two. More striking is the superiority of solo ornamentation in the Somary performance. Simon often allows his soloists to leave middle sections, and recitatives in particular, unadorned, which creates an odd contrast with the often lavishly decorated *da capos* in the arias. And, even here, the RCA soloists are far too ready to settle for simply transposing phrases up an octave. This is a legitimate resource if used with discretion, but in excess it becomes a pointless mannerism. The listener can easily

guess in advance that this is, for example, what the tenor will do with the last phrase in the repeat of "How vain is man"—and ornamentation deprived of at least the semblance of spontaneity is bad ornamentation.

Perhaps part of the problem is that Simon's soloists are just less familiar with the style of the Baroque period than Somary's. Barry Morell, for instance, has a fine, heroic voice. But he tends to pour it forth with monotonous generosity in the manner of an old-fashioned Irish tenor, and his *coups de glotte* and gulps for breath are much too operatic for this kind of music. He also goes noticeably out of tune and out of time when faced with Handel's favorite florid divisions. Simon Estes is more reliable in matters of this kind, but he attempts very little in the way of embellishment. The two principal women, Judith Blegen and Sofia Steffan, sound more at home in Handel's world. But even Miss Blegen, who has an admirably clear voice, is tempted at times to use an inappropriately "caressing" style of phrasing, and she really ought to make up her mind whether she is going to pronounce "r" in the American or the European way. The Vanguard soloists, by contrast, are the strongest group yet assembled for Somary, and no praise can be too high for their command of idiom and technique.

SOMARY makes a few cuts in the score, and I regret such omissions as that of the repeat in the Allegro of the overture, of the middle section and *da capo* in the duet "Oh lovely peace," and of the alto aria "So rapid thy course is." But, on the other hand, Simon's very completeness raises the suspicion of mere literalism when he includes the entire group of arias and duets about liberty in the middle of Act I. Handel made different selections from among these numbers according to the circumstances and resources of a given performance, and the effect of performing them all one after the other is boring and a bit silly.

Though most of these considerations add up to a strong recommendation for Somary—and for the Misses Heather Harper and Helen Watts and Messrs. Alexander Young and John Shirley-Quirk—there is also much to enjoy in the Simon set. And though the work itself is not quite on the level of, say, *Hercules* or *Theodora*, it is still a treasure-house of glorious music.

HANDEL: *Judas Maccabaeus*. Heather Harper (soprano), Israelite Woman; Helen Watts (contralto), Israelite Man; Alexander Young (tenor), Judas Maccabaeus; John Shirley-Quirk (baritone), Simon; Harold Lester (harpsichord and organ); Amor Artis Chorale, Wandsworth School Boys' Choir, English Chamber Orchestra, Johannes Somary cond. VANGUARD CARDINAL VCS 10105/6/7 three discs \$11.94.

HANDEL: *Judas Maccabaeus*. Judith Blegen (soprano), Israelite Woman; Sofia Steffan (mezzo-soprano), Israelite Man; Barry Morell (tenor), Judas Maccabaeus; Simon Estes (bass), Simon; Martin Isepp (harpsichord); Robert Scholz (organ); Vienna Academy Chorus, Vienna Mozart Boy-choir, Vienna Volksoper Orchestra, Stephen Simon cond. RCA LSC 6201 three discs \$17.94.

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en to his final reward. It begins with as vivid a bit of scene painting as you will find in the literature—fearful mountain cliffs and forests in gorgeously evocative musical form—and is surprisingly operatic much of the way through. The earthly and heavenly hosts—soloists, choruses, off-stage brass choirs, everywhere present in the first movement—reappear only at the very end.

I have very personal memories of this work, particularly one of dragging a very dubious young lady to hear Stokowski conduct the Philharmonic at Carnegie and finding nothing but grand tier standing room. The brass choirs were in the end boxes and, at the last moment, Stokowski whirled, shook his white mane, raised up his arms and, with a mighty gesture, summoned the Angel Gabriel and his brass band. Who could fail to be impressed? We were.

Somewhat surprisingly I find that it is the soft solo music that makes the deepest impression now. This is partly the nature of this recording. Haitink is really the master of the subtle touch and expressive phrase, and not the grand Stokowski-style gesture; furthermore he has a largely first-rate group of soloists, and they are well and prominently recorded. The rest of the mighty hosts do not fare quite as well. The choruses are immense and full of an enthusiasm that is much too massive to communicate well. The orchestra is excellent but generally far back in the sonic perspective, and many details do not come through very well at all. The creation of a cathedral-like space does not fully do the piece justice, and imparts a sonic sameness not characteristic of the music. Perhaps music like this should be recorded multi-track and mixed afterwards to obtain the proper perspectives. *E.S.*

MOUSSORGSKY: *Boris Godounov*. Nicolai Ghiaurov (bass), Boris Godounov; Martti Talvela (bass), Pimen; Ludovic Spiess (tenor), Grigori/the False Dimitri; Aleksei Maslennikov (tenor), Prince Shuisky/the Simpleton; Galina Vishnevskaya (soprano), Marina Mnishchik; Zoltan Kelemen (baritone), Rangoni; Anton Diakov (bass), Varlaam; Milen Paunov (tenor), Missail; Najejda Dobrianowa (soprano), Xenia; Margarita Lilowa (mezzo-soprano), the Hostess; others, Vienna Boys Choir, Vienna State Opera Chorus, and Sofia Radio Chorus; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. LONDON OSA 1439 four discs \$23.92.

Performance: **Compelling, but not wholly convincing**

Recording: **Excellent**

Neither of the two previous stereo versions of *Boris Godounov* (Angel S 3633 with Boris Christoff in the title role, Cluytens conducting, and Columbia M45 696 with George London as the Tsar and the late Melik-Pashayev at the helm) is totally satisfactory, though both offer mighty attractions. Thus a new recording featuring Nicolai Ghiaurov in the title role, a United Nations of a cast, and the conducting of Herbert von Karajan is not only welcome but also demands unusual attention. Critics who habitually attack Rimsky-Korsakov's edition of this epic opera will be disappointed once again, for this is what Karajan uses. However faithful Rimsky's realization may or may not be to Moussorgsky's ground plan, it remains the version preferred by singers as well as conductors everywhere. Economics being what

they are, recording such a vast opera in another form appears to be a very remote possibility at the moment.

The word which haunted me while I was listening to this recording was "refinement." Normally, this is a complimentary term, but it has a double edge in this instance. Certainly, Ghiaurov is a magnificent Boris. He sings with an amazing richness of tone and sustained legato phrasing, without melodramatic exaggerations. The character he presents comes across in a less earthy manner than do other Borises I fondly remember (Chaliapin, Kipnis, Christoff among them), but Ghiaurov does manage to conjure up a human figure with all his inner torment very movingly, and his subdued ways are admirable in their own way. There is no question in my mind that Karajan is entitled to part of the credit for this conception, for he has obtained similarly polished vocal performances from Martti Talvela (Pimen) and Zoltan Kelemen



NICOLAI GHIAUROV
Magnificent as Boris Godounov

(Rangoni). The former is flawless; the latter is somewhat lacking in sinister undertones but vocally superb. I also liked Anton Diakov's zesty Varlaam. Being a flexible sort of a purist, I don't object to having the different personalities of Boris, Pimen, and Varlaam interpreted by the same artist, particularly if that artist is a Christoff, but it's good to have three distinct vocal characters in these roles. There is, however, a double interpretation in the set: the Bolshoi Opera's Aleksei Maslennikov turns in a satisfactory but by no means fully realized Shuisky and also an excellent Simpleton.

The casting is less fortunate in the "Romantic" episodes. The appeal of Galina Vishnevskaya's name is compromised by the forced and tremolo-ridden quality of her singing, which does not measure up to her recorded counterparts (Evelyn Lear on Angel, Irina Arkhipova on Columbia). The Dimitri of Ludovic Spiess is also rather short on appealing lyricism, but he is acceptable, as are the interpreters of minor roles in this panoramic opera. As for the chorus, it fails to match the stirring performance of the Bolshoi group in the Columbia set.

Without denying Karajan's impressive qualities of leadership, I doubt that he can be called a "natural" interpreter of Moussorg-

sky. He can work with individual singers effectively, but in the management of the crucial massed scenes, in which attention is centered on the Russian *people*, his over-refinement results in bloodlessness. His tempos are often too slow or too inflexible; his overall approach lacks bite and strong dynamic contrast, that barbaric quality we rightfully associate with the composer, and which is decidedly present in Melik-Pashayev's work in the Columbia set. It is particularly unfortunate that the performance gets off with a tame-sounding, quite unimpressive Coronation Scene. Although Karajan achieves some admirable things later on, the initial impression lingers.

The Bolshoi performance practices are followed here, with the retention of the St. Basil Cathedral Scene and with the opera ending in the Kromy Forest, as the heart-rending lament of the Simpleton trails away, bemoaning the plight of the people. Technically, the set is a fine effort, but overall I cannot place it above its competitors. Eventually, London will get around to releasing a highlight disc containing Ghiaurov's contribution. *That* will be a must. *G.J.*

PERSICHETTI: *Symphony No. 9, "Janiculum"* (see Best of the Month, page 70)

SAUGUET: *Mélodie concertante in E Minor* (see VLASOV)

SCHUBERT: *Die schöne Müllerin*. Hermann Prey (baritone); Karl Engel (piano). LONDON OS 26251 \$5.98.

Performance: **Supremely competent**
Recording: **Superb**

Hermann Prey is one of those frustrating artists who seem to dawdle forever on the very verge of greatness without making the vital step across. I first heard him sing *Die schöne Müllerin* eleven years ago at the Holland Festival. At the time I thought his performance an extremely accomplished one that only wanted a little intensification of the poetic mood to achieve true mastery. His new recording of this marvelous song-cycle is just as accomplished, and just as far from the mark. The intensification has not taken place.

Just once, almost at the end, in the first stanza of *Der Müller und der Bach*, I thought the real magic of great lieder-singing was going to be worked. But then, at the stream's consoling answer to the lovesick miller, there was just a fraction too much animation in the irrepressibly healthy Prey's response, and the spell was broken.

For the rest, there is some quite lovely singing—never a vocal problem shirked or a line smudged—but there is no sense of the tears below the surface, even when they come as close to explicitness as in a song like *Thränenregen*. The lively songs (*Das Wandern*, *Ungeduld*, and others like them) are thoroughly enjoyable, especially since Karl Engel's fine accompaniment is exceptionally naturally balanced with the voice. The sad and slow and poetic ones emerge simply dull. I am sorry I must be brutal. But the man sings so beautifully that the final lack of identification is infuriating.

Considering the stature of this masterpiece, the current catalogs offer precious little choice. The late Fritz Wunderlich, who recorded the cycle twice, was hampered both times by poor accompaniments. His two versions are nevertheless even more beautifully

sung than Prey's, and profoundly though not consistently sensitive. Of the two, the Nonesuch is a much better value than the later Deutsche Grammophon. Another outstanding tenor, Aksel Schiøtz, made a splendid recording of the cycle in 1945, with Gerald Moore, that is available on Seraphim, though missing (by mistake, Angel assures me) from the current Schwann Supplementary Catalog. His reading is very subtle, restrained, and pure in style, if a shade effortful vocally. Finer still is Fischer-Dieskau's performance with Moore on Angel—easily the best of the current versions, to my taste. But the greatest recording I have ever heard of the work—by Peter Pears and Benjamin Britten—is not currently available. London would do well to restore it to the lists. *B.J.*

SCHUBERT: *Symphony No. 8, in B Minor* (see BEETHOVEN)

SCHUMAN: *Symphony No. 9, "The Ardeatine Caves"* (see Best of the Month, page 70)

VLASOV: *Cello Concerto No. 1, in C Major*. SAUGUET: *Mélodie concertante, in E Minor*. Mstislav Rostropovich (cello); Moscow Radio Orchestra, Gennady Rozhdestvensky (in the Vlasov) and Henri Sauguet cond. MELODIYA/ANGEL SR 40180 \$5.98.

Performance: **Brilliant**
Recording: **Excellent**

Vladimir Vlasov might with some justice be described as the Soviet Union's answer to Miklós Rózsa, except that, having been born in 1903, he is the older man by four years. To the extent that it makes fewer meretricious bows in the direction of a superficial modernity, Vlasov's folk-derived First Cello Concerto is a better, more honest piece than the dumbfoundingly empty Cello Concerto by Rózsa that Janos Starker has lately been trotting around. But with that reservation, Rostropovich's dazzling performance (finely accompanied by Rozhdestvensky and well recorded in what frequent coughs and a final ovation show to have been an actual concert) provokes a similar baffled indignation at the waste of so many talented musicians' man-hours on so unrewarding an object.

The Sauguet piece on the other side, though modest enough, is on an altogether higher level. Essentially nostalgic in manner (and, as the liner notes tell us, in inspiration), it has the feeling of a greatly expanded Sibelius *Valse triste*. Personally I find it a bit directionless, preferring my music in general more "put together." But as dreamy romantic effusions go, this is a thoroughly genuine, imaginative, and individually felt composition. The performance, conducted by the composer and this time, apparently, recorded in the studio, is suitably bewitching. *B.J.*

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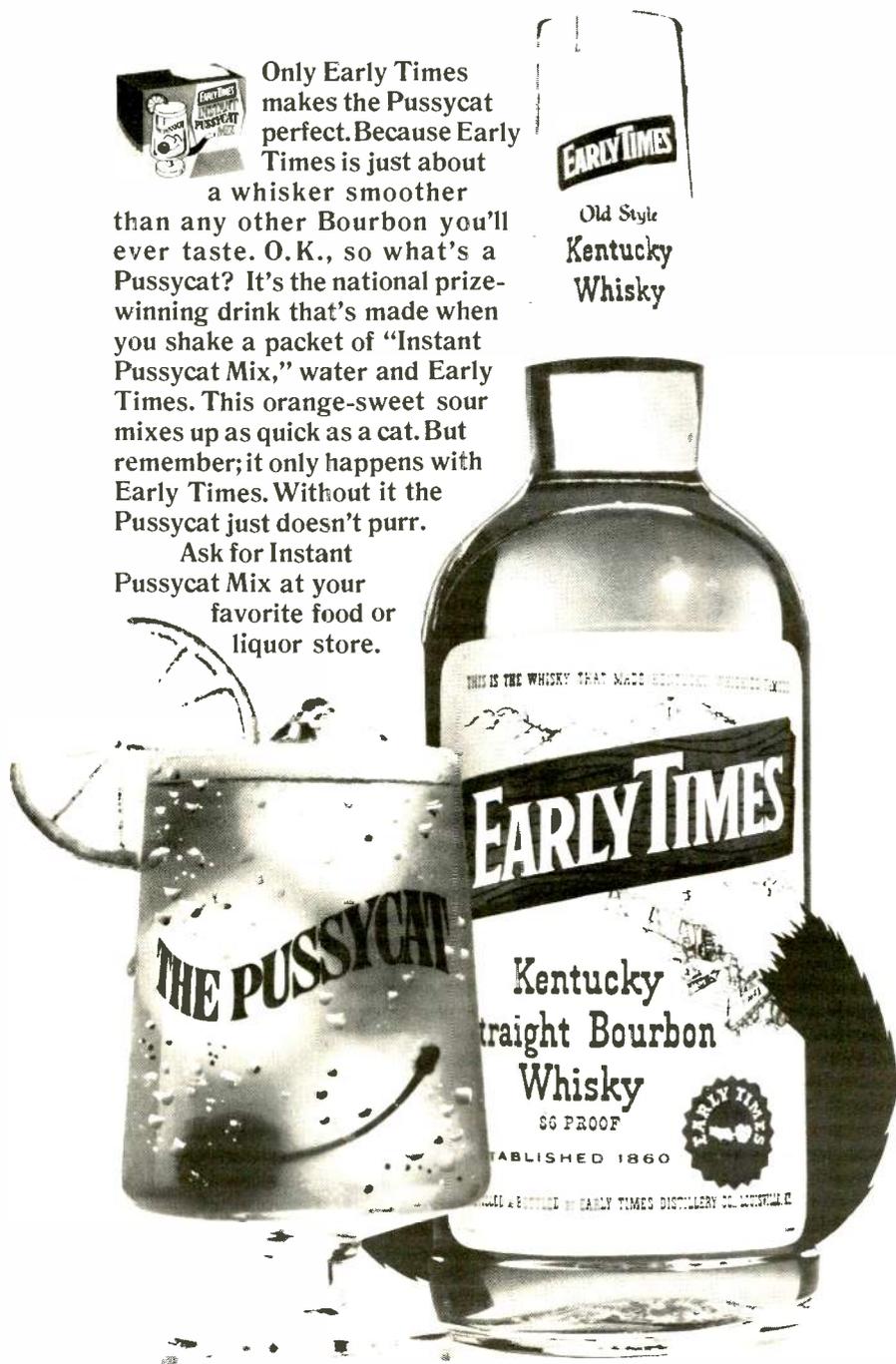
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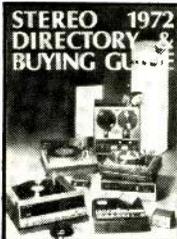
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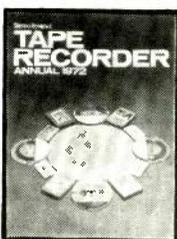
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Joyce Jones (organ); string orchestra. WORD
WST 8528 \$4.98.

Performance: **Mostly splendid**
Recording: **Splendid**

Lev Aronson is one of those rare cellists who make you rejoice in the simple facts that the cello was invented and perfected and that men such as he play it. When I first listened to this record, I could hardly credit my ears: how to explain this utterly gorgeous, sumptuous yet straightforward tone, a sibling of the sound produced by Gregor Piatigorsky? The answer, probably, is in the liner notes. Aronson began his cello studies in Riga, Latvia, and continued in Berlin. Later, but before he came to this country to become principal cellist with the Dallas Symphony, he studied with Piatigorsky. (One might mention, also, that in Berlin he was studying music and law simultaneously!)

Before I go into my rave, I should point out that this is a recording on a "small" label, and calls not only for Aronson but for a considerable number of other musicians. There is a full string orchestra, plus harpsichord, for the D'Indy arrangement of the Sonata for Cello, Op. 14, No. 5, by Vivaldi. Elsewhere, there is an organ; still elsewhere, a piano. This was not a simple or inexpensive record to produce. For this reason, it bothers me less that the string orchestra sometimes sounds a bit ragged. What really shines forth on this disc is the rich, communicative musicianship of Aronson himself, which carries the message of the music straight to the heart. I could quibble with his intonation at a few points (in the Bloch *Prayer*, for instance), and with some relatively slack passages on side two. But, for the most part, Aronson sings the music so wonderfully, displaying so much sincerity and depth of culture, that his recording will rest on my shelves as one of those several to which I listen often for sheer pleasure. L.T.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BAROQUE TRUMPET ANTHOLOGY. Iacchini: *Tratimento per camera in D Major*. Bononcini: *Sinfonia No. 10 in D Major*. Telemann: *Concerto a quattro in D Major*. "Di Melante." Purcell: *The Indian Queen: Trumpet Overture in D Major*; *The Yorkshire Feast Song: Sinfonia in D Major*. Torelli: *Sonata a cinque No. 7 in D Major*. Grossi: *Sonata a cinque No. 11 in D Major*. Schmelzer: *Sonata a cinque in C Major*. Vejvanovský: *Intrada in C Major*. Don Smithers (trumpet); Michael Laird (second trumpet, in Bononcini, Purcell Sinfonia, and Vejvanovský); Desmond Dupré (chitarrone, in Bononcini, Torelli, and Grossi); Simon Preston (harpsichord continuo, in Iacchini, Telemann, Purcell, Schmelzer, and Vejvanovský; organ continuo, in Bononcini, Torelli, and Grossi). Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner cond. PHILIPS 6500 110 \$5.98.

Performance: **Impeccable**
Recording: **Superior**

The majority of pieces in this collection are not new to records, such works as the Telemann, Purcell, and Torelli having often been featured in similar collections in the past. Even the sonata by Johann Heinrich Schmelzer (a late seventeenth-century Austrian) was recently included in a performance using origi-

nal instruments on a Concentus Musicus program devoted to that composer and Fux (Telefunken SAWT 9563/4). The sonata by the Bolognese Andrea Grossi, about whom very little is known, and the Intrada by the Czech Pavel Josef Vejvanovský appear, however, to be first recordings. All of this repertoire, incidentally, has been edited from the original publications or manuscripts by Don Smithers, an American trumpeter with more than a passing interest in musicology. His playing is impeccable, both technically and stylistically. He uses modern instruments here, but they are played with great intelligence and understanding for proper balance. The collection is far from being one loud trumpet blast from beginning to end (a feature of rather too many such anthologies), though Smithers can rank with the most brilliant of his brass confrères. The accompaniments, likewise, are beautifully managed, and the recorded sound is utterly clean. J.K.



LEV ARONSON
Cello playing to make you rejoice

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC FROM JAPAN—Works for Marimba. Akira Miyoshi: *Torse III; Conversation*. Teruyuki Noda: *Quintet for Marimba, Three Flutes and Contrabass*. Minoru Miki: *Concerto for Marimba and Orchestra (excerpts)*. Maki Ishi: *Marimba Piece with 2 Percussionists*. Keiko Abe (marimba); various soloists. New Music Orchestra and Japan Philharmonic Orchestra, Hiroshi Wakasugi cond. CANDIDE CE 31051 \$3.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Good**

The marimba is an Afro-Hispanic-American instrument, but it is easy to understand why it suits the Japanese temperament. Keiko Abe is a marimba virtuoso of extraordinary technical and musical abilities. Almost all of this music was created for her, and, although none of it can be called extraordinary, she makes most of it very vivid. Except in Akira Miyoshi's intentionally kitschy *Conversation*, the instrument is nearly always treated delicately, with the effect not so much of statement as of allusion. Actually, there are considerable differences in style and even quality among these pieces, but the nature of the instrument, the performer, and the approach gives the record its sense of unity.

The music on this release, apparently the

first in a series, is not necessarily typical of the tremendous contemporary musical activity in Japan, but it is attractive enough, extremely well played, and well recorded, with only the non-Dolby hiss and pre-echo level as a sonic drawback. *E.S.*

RÉGINE CRESPIN: *Prima Donna from Paris*. **Gluck:** *Iphigénie en Tauride: O toi qui prolongeas mes jours*. **Berlioz:** *La Damnation de Faust: D'amour l'ardente flamme*. **Gounod:** *Sapho: O ma lyre*. **Saint-Saëns:** *Ascanio: La chanson de Scozzone*. **Massenet:** *Werther: Air des lettres: Va! laisse couler mes larmes: Ah! mon courage m'abandonne!* **Bizet:** *Carmen: Habanera: Seguidilla*. **Offenbach:** *La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein: J'aime les militaires. La belle Hélène: Dis moi Vénus. La Périchole: Je t'adore: Air de lettre: Ah! quel dîner*. **Hahn:** *Ciboulette: Moi je m'appelle: Y'a des arbres*. **Christiné:** *Phi-Phi: Ah! cher Monsieur*. **Message:** *L'amour masqué: J'ai deux amants*. **O. Straus:** *Les Trois Valses: Saison d'amour: Je ne suis pas: Je t'aime*. Régine Crespin (soprano); L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande and Vienna Volksooper Orchestra, Alain Lombard and Georges Sébastian cond. LONDON OSA 1292 two discs \$11.96.

Performance: **Fair to good**
Recording: **Very good**

Combining rarely heard French opera and operetta highlights under the promising aegis of the authoritative Régine Crespin is an enterprise worthy of enthusiastic praise. It is also evident that the repertoire for this set was chosen with sound judgment. (While another *Habanera* and *Seguidilla* were not really needed, their inclusion is understandable; every singer must sooner or later get *Carmen* out of her system.)

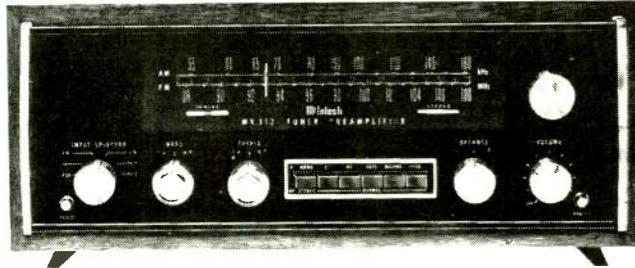
Unfortunately for such a promising venture, the *Prima Donna from Paris* appeared at these sessions (in Geneva and Vienna, it so happens) in considerably less than her best vocal estate. In none of these operatic renditions does she match the high standard she has set for herself at her Metropolitan appearances and in her previous recordings. Her best achievements here are the *Werther* excerpts, the two arias from *Carmen*, and the unfamiliar but rather conventional air from *Ascanio*. These display the well-supported mezzo-like timbre of her lower range to good advantage. Hers is a rich, round voice of ample volume, and it is used with commendable artistry and intelligent characterization. Unfortunately, there are lapses from clean intonation and refinement in phrasing, and there is much harshness in the upper tones. The Berlioz aria, in particular, should not have been passed for release.

The operetta selections, though exhibiting the same characteristics, emerge somewhat more positively. It's good to hear *Hélène's* witty air delivered by such a de luxe voice, and, though the rest of *Offenbach* does not come up to the highest (Tourel) level of charm and vivacity, it is still a pleasure to hear. I tender special thanks for the bravura rendition of the song from *Phi-Phi* and for the three excerpts from *Les Trois Valses*, with their special brand of Viennese-Parisian allure. (One of these, "*Je ne suis pas*," is done to a 1930-ish piano and rhythm accompaniment.)

Some of the orchestral contributions betray insufficient rehearsal but, in the main, they are acceptable. There are good notes and illustrations in the set. But the gifted and versatile Miss Crespin is capable of better things. *G.J.*

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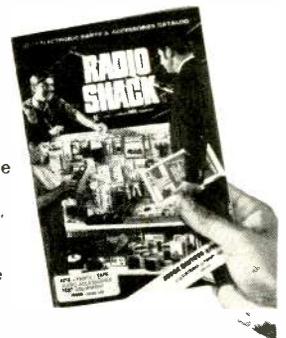
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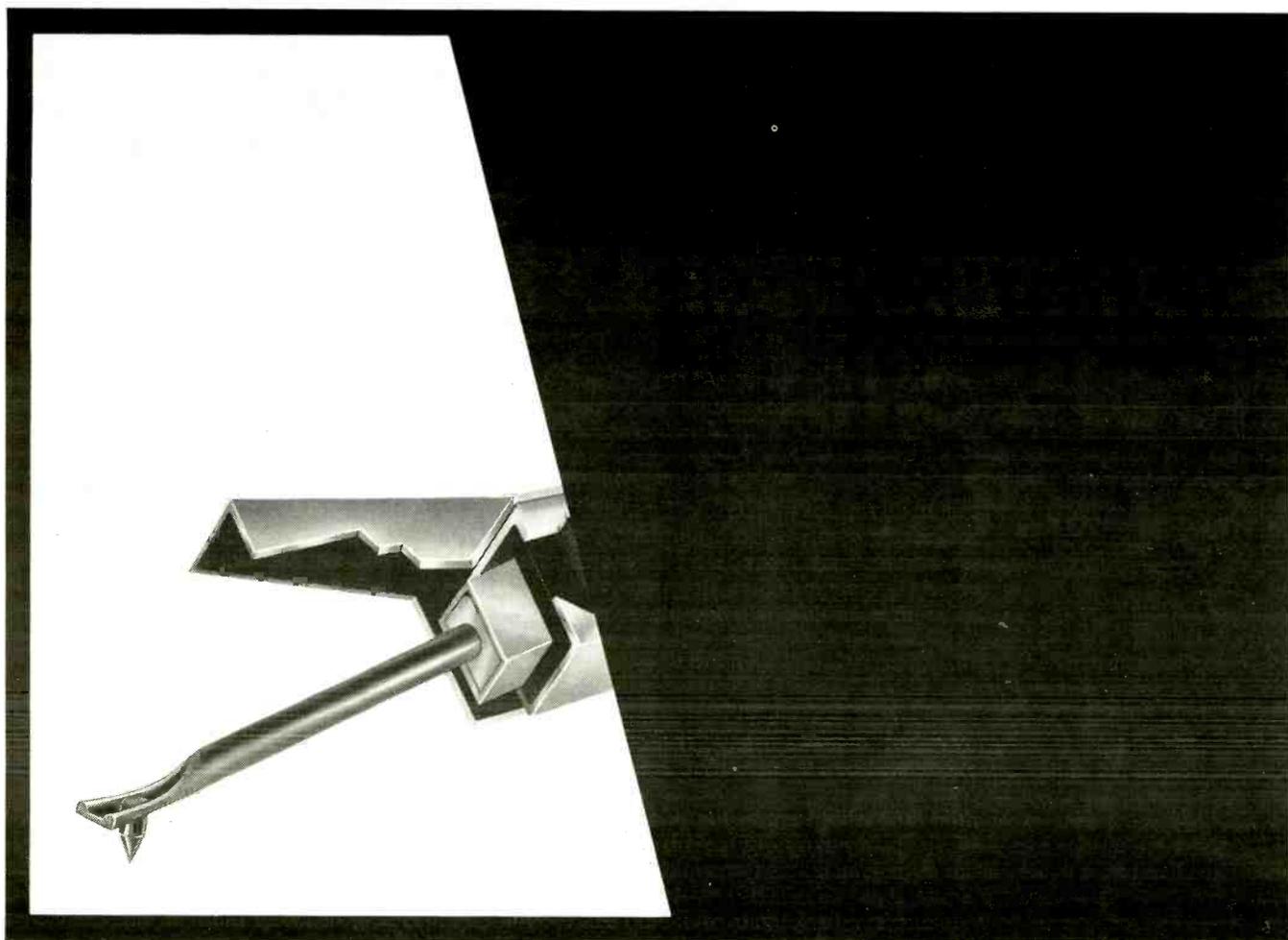
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Reviewed by NOEL COPPAGE • DON HECKMAN • PAUL KRESH
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PAUL ANKA. Paul Anka (vocals); orchestra, Bruce Miller cond. *My Way; She's a Lady; To Say to You; House upon a Hill*; and six others. BUDDAH BDS 5093 \$5.98, Ⓜ M 85093 \$6.98, Ⓞ M 55093 \$6.98.

Performance: **Hard sell**
 Recording: **Elaborate**

When I see the names of some performers on a record jacket I think immediately of the Durante classic, "Close the windows, they're comin' in the doors! Close the doors, they're comin' in the windows!" Paul Anka, the Crown Prince of Chutzpah, has just jumped in the window, on a new label, but with much the same go-get-'em act. This time out, the atmosphere is more Michel Legrandish than usual, thanks to the arrangements by David van de Pitte, and the production, which, although done in New York, smacks of the kind of Las Vegas swank associated with performers at least a generation older than Anka, who only *seems* to have been around that long.

Anka made it big, and internationally, in his middle teens, and has since parlayed and built on his initial success with a ferocious energy that suggests he has an extra thyroid. He is dauntingly professional in performance, and much of his song writing is superior. Two excellent pieces turn up here, *Yesterday My Life* and *She's a Lady*. His performances often verge on overkill, however, and he is not at all convincing in his reading of his own standard, *My Way*. It is high-style soliloquizing perfectly matched to the legendary ups and downs of Sinatra's career, the poignant summation of a nearly spent life. When Anka attempts it in a voice sounding as if he's still in his teens, it summons up an image of Baby Leroy bidding farewell to the troops.

The only really new thing on the album is that, for the first time to my knowledge, a credit is given to the restaurant that catered the recording session. It is a Chinese one. If I were living in Peking I might begin to worry

about who is preparing to be first in the wave of American performers to culture-exchange there if the Great Thaw does take place. And I'm certain I'd start checking all the doors and windows right now. *P.R.*

HOYT AXTON: *Country Anthem.* Hoyt Axton (vocals and guitar); various backup musicians and singers. *My Carolina Sunshine Girl; Better Lovin' Man; Jambalaya*; and seven others. CAPITOL SMAS 850 \$5.98.

Days Are Here Again. The rest of the album is his own stuff, and by and large it is mediocre. Axton's vocal performances are laconic; he seems to be suggesting that if the listener doesn't appreciate the "subtlety," then the listener is a dum-dum. That might be fine if he was being subtle, but he isn't.

The gate-fold cover shows him in various poses alone and with his family. He sure lives in gorgeous country. Of course, the bucolic is in these days. But was that any excuse for releasing this album? *J.V.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BADFINGER: *Straight Up.* Badfinger (vocals and instrumentals). *Money; Flying; Suitcase; Sweet Tuesday Morning; Perfection; I'd Die, Babe; Take It All; Baby Blue; Name of the Game; Day after Day; Sometimes; It's Over.* APPLE SW 3387 \$4.98, Ⓜ M 3387 \$6.95, Ⓞ 8XW 3387 \$6.98, Ⓞ 4XW 3387 \$6.98.

Performance: **Rock lives!**
 Recording: **Excellent**

With the Bee Gees seemingly unable to put it together again and God knows what having befallen the Hollies, Badfinger may be the best group-that-sounds-like-the-early-Beatles we have left. With this album, Badfinger grows. The vocals haven't changed much (and why should they?), remaining more coarse-grained but almost identical in harmonic texture to those of the early Beatles, but the instrumentals have gone from middle-ground rock to sophisticated rock, and they've done it with a lightness of heart that keeps us reminded that rock is still for the lively in spirit. Much thanks, no doubt, is due George Harrison, who produced four bands, and Todd Rundgren, who produced the others. The striking thing about the instrumentals is their economy, the same quality, you'll recall, that always marked George's guitar playing. It's especially gratifying to hear the piano strike only one note when one note will do—usually you get at least five in such situations.

Pete Ham, who wrote five of the twelve songs, is the group's best scribe, I think, his *Baby Blue, Take It All, and Day after Day* being very fine rockers. But Tom Evans' *It's Over* has something microscopically weird about it that gives it staying power at my house, too. "Straight Up" isn't a classic like the Bee Gees' "Horizontal" or the Hollies' "Evolution," but it is an enjoyable celebration of one of the healthiest kinds of rock. *N.C.*

HARRY BELAFONTE: *Calypto Carnival.* Harry Belafonte (vocals); orchestra, Ralph MacDonald cond. *Don't Stop the Carnival; Chinita; Trinidad Carnival Time; Lena;*



BADFINGER

Sophisticated rock with a light heart

Performance: **Laconic**
 Recording: **Good**

This seems to be one of those albums that are the legacy of outgoing label presidents. When a man becomes president of a major label, he commits the company to a certain number of albums by various artists, and if he is deposed, his successors and the label are stuck with the product. They have the option of not releasing it, but that might put them at the mercy of the artist for breach of contract (if the artist has a good lawyer).

Capitol has been having its executive problems lately. Maybe this album is part of the legacy, maybe not. At any rate, it is an abuse of the "back-to-the-roots" movement in rock which assumes that peace in the soul comes with a twang in the throat. Axton sings *Carolina Sunshine Girl*, the great Jimmie Rodgers tune, a cappella and doesn't do anything for it. He slows *Jambalaya* down to a dirge, much as Barbra Streisand did with *Happy*

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The first listing is the one reviewed; other formats, if available, follow it.

Black and White Together; Out de Fire; and four others. RCA LSP 4521 \$5.98, (P) P8S 1747 \$6.95.

Performance: **Kaleidoscopic**
Recording: **Very good**

More bongos, congas, and steel drums than you can count flood from the limbos and marimbas on this new collection, and I must admit I found it ingratiating. Belafonte is in good shape here, with some new animal noises picked up from Miriam Makeba, no doubt, and with some new material that should stir cool breezes in your mind and make pina colodas flow through your veins. There is a Caribbean merry-go-round sound to *Trinidad Carnival Time* that is contagious, and *Chinita* made me think of the dockside excitement that surrounds the landing of cruise ships in Martinique. But not all the songs begin and end with hully-chee tropical tourist come-ons. *Black and White Together* is a plea for racial peace with a calypso beat, and Belafonte sings it with dedication and panache. He is a first-rate entertainer who has found a musical conscience without sacrificing his humor. I'm not sure how popular this kind of music is any more, but it's a soothing change from most of the offal I've been forced to listen to lately. R.R.

ALEX BEVAN: *No Truth to Sell*. Alex Bevan (vocals and guitar); orchestra. *Linda's Song; Every Song; Trains Gone By; Sunburn; Brady Street Hotel; Take Your Time*; and seven others. BIG TREE BTS 2006 \$4.98. (P) 82006 \$6.98, (C) 52006 \$6.98.

Performance: **Promising**
Recording: **Excellent**

A nice surprise: this is a charming, modest album of songs composed and performed by Alex Bevan. It stands as a low-profile model of what a recording like this should be: it is intelligently and carefully produced and takes care not to swamp the performer in grandiose arrangements; it offers sincere performances by someone who has obviously been around a microphone before, and a group of songs that reflect a tangible world as seen through a young man's eyes. *Trains Gone By* and *Two-Man Carnival*, for example, are songs that seem to come out of observed experience—quite a relief from the all too frequent cosmic judgments that so many young performers feel obliged to hurl at their audiences. With its fine close-up but crisp sound, this is a pleasurable album in every way. P.R.

BIG BLACK AND HIS CONGREGATION: *If You're Diggin' What You're Doin' Keep On Doin' What You're Diggin'*. Big Black and His Congregation (vocals and instrumentals). *Diggin' What You're Doin'; Long Hair; Children's Philosophy; Variety*; and four others. UNI 73114 \$4.98.

Performance: **Soul rock**
Recording: **Very good**

This is a first class blues-rock group with no real material to play. Big Black, a veteran of the Dizzy Gillespie and Hugh Masekela groups, is a superb percussionist and a surprisingly good singer. His pieces tend to involve long, long one-chord vamps in which tension and excitement are drawn almost solely from the rhythm section. Occasionally he builds a song on the repetition of aphoristic lines like "If you're diggin' . . ." and "Who ever thought the time would come."

One piece, *Children's Philosophy* (subtitled *Poison Air*), a musical social protest sung with rolling West-Indian rhythms, works beautifully. If Big Black can come up with more pieces like this for his hard-rocking musicians, he'll be on his way. D.H.

JOHN DENVER: *Aerie* (see **Best of the Month**, page 71)

JOHN ENTWISTLE: *Smash Your Head Against the Wall*. John Entwistle (bass, keyboards, flugelhorn, trumpet, trombone, vocals); Jerry Shirley (drums); Dave Langston (acoustic and electric guitars); Latin American percussion (on one track). *My Size; Pick Me Up (Big Chicken); What Are We Doing Here?; "What Kind of People Are They?"; Heaven and Hell*; and four others. DECCA DL 79183 \$5.98.

Performance: **Promising English rock**
Recording: **Excellent**



ROBERTA FLACK
Her artistry is right out front

A first outing as leader of his own group by John Entwistle, bassist with the Who, produces mixed results. The heavy stuff sounds like warmed-over Who—hardly a surprise. Other pieces—a Latin-tinged tune called *No. 29 (External Youth)*, some English folklike melodies—suggest a budding, but still not fully bloomed, talent. With the Who, Entwistle has been the quietest but the most dependable member of a flamboyant group. His rare compositional contributions, however, were always provocative. I'm pleased to see him flex his solo wings. The next flight should be worth watching. D.H.

FAIRPORT CONVENTION: *Angel Delight*. Fairport Convention (vocals and instrumentals). *Lord Marlborough; Sir William Gower; Bridge over the River Ash; Wizard of the Worldly Game; The Journeyman's Grace*; and five others. A & M SP 4319 \$4.98.

Performance: **English folk-song rock**
Recording: **Fine**

Fairport's charm eludes me. In their three or four years of existence such names as Ian Matthews and Sandy Denny have passed through the often-shuffled personnel. But the

musical focus has remained relatively consistent: English folk material supported by surging rock rhythms.

Other groups have tried similar methods. And in comparison with most of them, Fairport comes up short. It lacks Pentangle's brilliant improvisational skills and the Incredible String Band's eerie compositional view. Perhaps more important, since Sandy Denny left the group Fairport has had difficulty finding an identity. They saw and strum their way through one vaguely folksy, hoe-down-sounding tune after another, and they all blend anonymously into each other. Given the premise of Fairport's music, I'll take Pentangle any day. D.H.

JOSE FELICIANO: *That the Spirit Needs*. José Feliciano (vocals and guitar); orchestra. *Come Down Jesus; The Spirit; Wild World; Only Once; Pay Day*; and six others. RCA LSP 4573 \$5.98, (P) P8S 1786 \$6.95, (C) PK 1786 \$6.95.

Performance: **Disappointing**
Recording: **Fair**

This is the first album by Feliciano that I haven't enjoyed, possibly because the accent seems to be on vocals rather than guitar, or possibly because of the "inspirational" message of most of the songs. In any event, it struck me as pretty heavy going, with the exception of *Mellow Feeling*, which Feliciano does with accustomed intensity. I found two Elton John songs, *Take Me to the Pilot* ("of your soul") and *Border Song*, just plain embarrassing. *Come Down Jesus* and *The Spirit*, composed by Feliciano, are merely dreary. He still plays some of the best guitar around, but even that doesn't seem to be able to save the album from falling into a ludicrous sanctimony. P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ROBERTA FLACK: *Quiet Fire*. Roberta Flack (vocals and piano); orchestra. *Go Up Moses; Bridge over Troubled Water; Sunday and Sister Jones; See You Then; Will You Love Me Tomorrow; To Love Somebody; Let Them Talk; Sweet Bitter Love*. ATLANTIC SD 1594 \$5.98, (P) M 81594 \$6.95, (C) M 51594 \$6.95.

Performance: **Strong**
Recording: **Good**

A romantic, it is said, is someone who is often homesick for places he has never been. I think I understand what that means when I hear a recording by an artist with such a strong performing presence that I can easily imagine I have heard him or her "live" when I actually haven't. Roberta Flack's new Atlantic album is such a recording. She is in such superb control of every facet of her performance—her garnet voice, her vital piano playing, her tart but melodic arrangements—that she seems to leap to life in the imagination as the record plays.

Roberta Flack is a special kind of multi-talented musician, but her appeal is wide; there is no clubby cultishness about her, no hot-house air of "we few, we happy few, lucky enough to have the good taste to enjoy each other." No, Miss Flack is right out front, laying it on the line, doing a professional and virtuosic job of controlled yet deeply passionate singing and playing. Her *Bridge over Troubled Water* is seven minutes of the finest music. (Continued on page 96)

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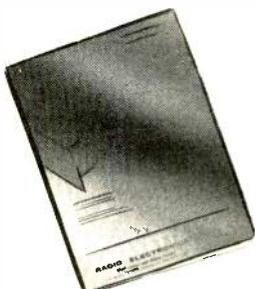
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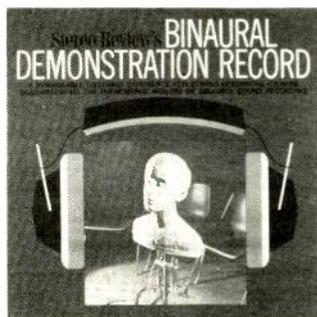
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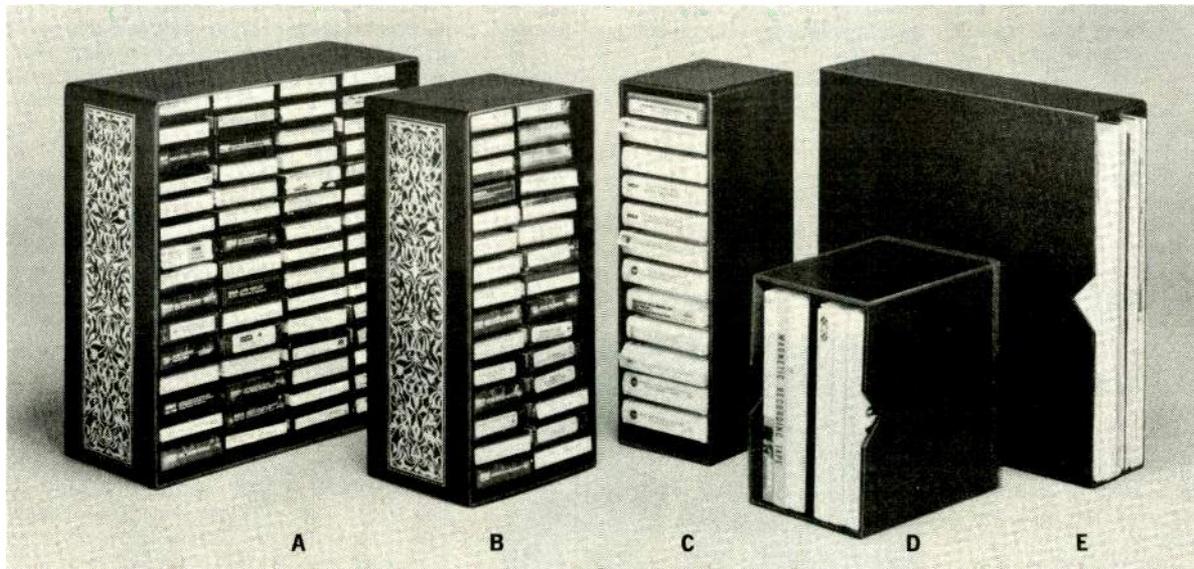
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sic-making I have ever heard spring from that song, and *Sweet Bitter Love* becomes in her hands a powerful anthem of mixed emotions.

Being one of the best, Miss Flack wisely surrounds herself with some of the best: Hugh McCracken on guitar, Chuck Rainey on bass, and Grady Tate on percussion. Arif Mardin contributes a lovely string and flute arrangement on *See You Then*. But the essential contribution and the real message here are the tremendous talents of Roberta Flack. She is the best new black singer to arrive since Aretha Franklin. P.R.

ISAAC HAYES: *Black Moses*. Isaac Hayes (vocals, keyboards, and vibes); various vocal and orchestral accompaniment. *Never Can Say Goodbye; Close to You; Nothing Takes the Place of You; Man's Temptation; Never Gonna Give You up; Help Me Love; Need to Belong to Someone; Good Love 6-9969*; and six others. ENTERPRISE ENS 5003 two discs \$9.96, ⓑ EN8 25003 \$9.98, © ENC 25003 \$9.98.

Performance: **Isaac goes on rapping**
Recording: **Very good**

Isaac Hayes keeps spinning out the same story, and the listening public keeps taking it in. Do your thing, be true to yourself, I still love you but I'm gonna be okay, and so on and on—the familiar emotions that pop music dealt with for all the years before social and political consciousness, newly packaged and expressed in language richly ornamented with hip street jargon.

In his "live" performances, Hayes does a genuinely theatrical trip: dressed in body stocking and gold chains, and accompanied by a lovely young woman dancer, he plays the role of Black Moses to the hilt. Much of that theatricality comes through in this two-disc set, primarily because Hayes doesn't truncate his performances for the sake of the recording. Pieces like *Help Me Love, Your Love Is So Doggone Good, and A Brand New Me* run upwards of ten minutes, so that Hayes can have time to do his rap, let the rhythm build its hypnotic flow, and pour out his slow but sweet-as-clover-honey vocals.

Sure, it's a gimmick. At its worst, it's only one or two steps removed from both the sentiments and the manner of television's *Love, American Style*. But it is an expression that is, at this time and place, in the stresses and strains of this society, meaningful to young black people. And, if other criteria are important (and I don't really think they are, in this case), Hayes has been blessed with a gorgeous baritone voice and a substantial keyboard talent. Twenty years ago he might have been another Billy Eckstine. Today he can play the role of Black Moses. If James Brown is the King of Soul, I'm willing to accept Hayes' assumption of a different sort of throne. D.H.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

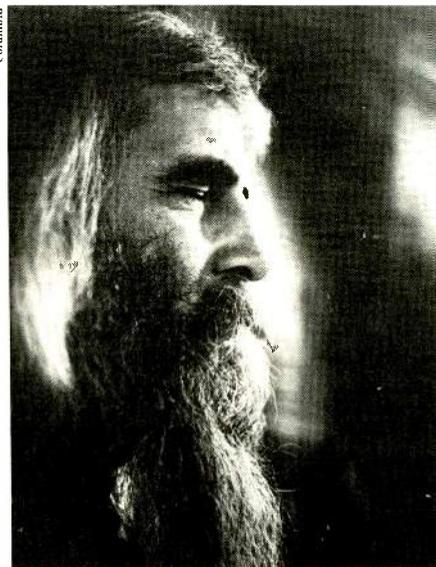
MARY HOPKIN: *Earth Song/Ocean Song*. Mary Hopkin (vocals, guitar and harmonium); orchestra. *International; Earth Song; How Come the Sun; Martha; The Wind*; and five others. APPLE SMAS 3381 \$4.98, ⓑ M 3381 \$6.95, ⓑ 8XW 3381 \$6.98, © 4XW 3381 \$6.98.

Performance: **Lovely**
Recording: **Excellent**

This release offers delightful singing by a girl

who had one smash and hasn't been able to break through with anything else since. Perhaps *Those Were the Days* wasn't really the lucky break that it seemed at the time if the audiences can't identify her with anything else. Of course, she doesn't write her own material, which is something of a handicap these days, but she is a lovely and graceful performer with a spring-clear voice and interpretation. Many of her performances have a wistful poignancy about them that I find very appealing.

This is her best album so far, and much of the credit would have to go to her new husband, Tony Visconti, who has produced a recording of great sheen and exquisite taste. There is some stunning work by Kevin Peek and Brian Daly on two classical guitars, and the orchestral backing gives everything a pop-chamber sound. The most spectacular result is probably in *International*, in which every element works, and superbly. *There's Got to*



MOONDOG
A stately chick-a-boom-chick

Be More is a free-wheeling track that somehow never loses its elegant shape.

With this album Miss Hopkin has put to rest the theory that without having Paul McCartney to supervise her sessions, she was a not too interesting Trilby. It is an enchanting album in every way. I hope a lot of you buy it. P.R.

ELTON JOHN: *Madman Across the Water*. Elton John (vocals and piano); various supporting musicians. *Madman Across the Water; Razor Face; All the Nasties; Rotten Peaches; Levon; Holiday Inn; Tiny Dancer; Indian Sunset; Goodbye*. UNI 93120 \$4.98, ⓑ 8 93120 \$6.98, © 2 93120 \$6.98.

Performance: **Wretched excess**
Recording: **Same as above**

Among the add-water-and-serve Rock Geniuses, of which we get about five per annum, there seems to be a tradition that they shall cut their third or fourth album, and like a fire-cracker kept around too long against a far-off holiday, they shall fizzle out—for lack of good powder, because of overexposure, fate, or too many yes-men.

Elton John's first album was indeed a stunning thing; it has already reserved its place in the history books of the decade, which have

ten years to go before they are written. The composition was innovative, the arrangements were tight, the production was controlled, and the first hearing of John's voice gave one a lot of pleasure. How rapidly they fade, these bold bloomers. "Madman Across the Water" makes me put longer odds on the staying power of his talent. Maybe this is that acceptable, middle-period, not-quite album that artists do from time to time, or maybe it's the proof that style is only style, and that rock artists in rock's Jacobean Age assume that style will make up for everything. 'Fraid not. The arrangements are overblown, the vocals are whiney, the material is cheap, and the packaging is so lush it puts one in mind of a lush's midnight resolve to show 'em, dammit, really show 'em.

Even a harmless tune like *Holiday Inn*, which, with a little ricky-tick, could have been charmingly inconsequential, is blown up into a production number. *Indian Sunset* is a sappy, hey-we-gotta-say-something-heavy-about-the-Indians treatise. The title tune is okay to listen to distantly if you've nothing better to do. *Razor Face* approaches something good, but it is not worth waiting through the whole album for.

I call upon the theory of Mao, without which nobody in China or the moneyed circles in pop could get along, and I recommend that Elton and Bernie Taupin and everybody concerned with this album be sent to a work farm to get their hands dirty. If they cut another album and it still doesn't work, they will probably be put out to pasture and consigned to page 193 of that book to be written ten years from now, with the additional penalty of getting no footnotes. J.V.

DANNY LEE AND THE CHILDREN OF TRUTH: *One Way*. Danny Lee and the Children of Truth (vocals and instrumentals). *One Way; Reach Out and Touch; Jesus, Jesus, Rock of Ages; I Don't Know Why; Keep on Holding on*; and five others. RCA LSP 4611 \$5.98.

Performance: **Missionary modern**
Recording: **Good**

RCA calls them "sacred artists," but the two boys and two girls who go under the moniker Danny Lee and the Children of Truth look like just plain folks in the full-color cover of this one, grinning determinedly amid fields of sunlit flowers. The same determination is evident in their singing of sacred songs, most of which they apparently write themselves from traditional gospel models. The sentiments of these songs, like *Somebody Loves You and God Will Come into Your Heart*, are simple, to say the least, but the singers are so doggedly fresh and wholesome about it all that one could almost succumb to the religious enthusiasm—if it were real. Real as it may mean to sound, it doesn't come across that way, even if Mr. Lee *did* go off in the middle of a recording session he was visiting one day to compose, in a sudden access of delirious inspiration, his number *Jesus, Jesus, Rock of Ages*. I am informed that before the Children of Truth cut a tape they offer a prayer over the microphone. But no matter how sincere these missionary youngsters think they are, slick and synthetic is how they come over, prayers and all. P.K.

MYLON LE FEVRE: *Mylon*. Mylon Le Fevre (vocals, guitar); Marty Simon (drums); Auburn Burrell and Jean-Pierre Lauzon (gui-

tars); Tom Robb (bass); Lester Langdale (keyboards); Tina Blount, Renay Garvin, and Pat Cummings (vocals). *Pool Shooter; Sixteen Tons; Angel Band*; and seven others. COLUMBIA C 31085 \$4.98.

Performance: **Okay**
Recording: **Too busy**

Mylon LeFevre's (brief pause for finger-pop) thing is supposed to be a gospel fervor. If so, 'tain't here, mostly, and when it is, it's diluted with handy Woodstockian peace-and-flowers jive. To add insult to jive, there are two overblown quotations on the back. One is from producer Felix Pappalardi (you can almost hear the reverb): "I will have made three albums during this year. Two will have been of Mountain and this is the third." The other one, unsigned, is: "And our sincere thanks to God." Pappalardi and Mylon have made an album purporting to be full of sincerity and positive fervor, but even on the better cuts, like *Pool Shooter* and *Why You Been Gone So Long*, it is hardly better than average.

Since they're so generous with quotations, I will lug in one from the John Wayne Western *Red River*, in which he plays an unmitigated bastard of a trail boss on a cattle drive. At one point, three cowpunchers announce they are leaving the group because Mr. Dunston (Wayne) is such an unmitigated aforementioned. Wayne growls, picks up a rifle, kills them, and announces he will read the service at the burial. As the rest of the punchers scatter, one old man murmurs: "When they do killin', why do they always try to bring the Lord in on the job?" J.V.

MOONDOG: Moondog 2. Moondog (vocals and instrumentals); orchestra. *Coffee Beans; Be a Hobo; Down Is Up; Sadness; Maybe*; and twenty-one others. COLUMBIA KC 30897 \$5.98.

Performance: **Unique**
Recording: **Good**

Moondog has a way of being discovered every five years or so. I remember a late-night disc jockey who often used to invite him to perform on the air, and he has turned up here and there throughout the years. Not that he is easy to ignore even when he is not performing. He is a familiar, and slightly spooky, sight in midtown Manhattan, where, in a costume that looks like he's answering a casting call for an olive-drab Viking saga, he just stands around being impressively bizarre.

His new album is a collection of what he calls "rounds," although he doesn't mind if you call them madrigals, he says. There are twenty-six of them included here. Moondog is upset about rock: "While hearing rock music I find myself thinking 'Where are the writers?' The sameness of the material is appalling." I guess Moondog worries too much, because in the twenty-six tracks here I could find only minimal differences. He uses a vast array of instruments, including a pipe organ, virginals, viola da gamba, etc., and he occasionally sings along with his daughter June. But the total effect is soporific. The instrument that most intrigued me was a morose maraca that gave out a stately chick-a-boom-chick, and, I hoped, might eventually break into a rumba. Of course it never did. The unusually elaborate packaging contains a complete score.

P.R.

LAURA NYRO: Gonna Take a Miracle. Laura Nyro (vocals); Labelle (vocal group); Tom

Bell, Lenny Pakula, and Robert Martin arrs. *Spanish Harlem; Jimmy Mack; Wind; No Where to Run; Gonna Take a Miracle; I Met Him on a Sunday; The Bells*; and four others. COLUMBIA KC 30987 \$5.98, ® CR 30987 \$6.98, ® CA 30987 \$6.98, © CT 30987 \$6.98.

Performance: **Adequate**
Recording: **Excellent**

As a charter member of the Laura Nyro fan club, I look forward to each new recording by this pop high priestess with unbridled relish. And with the kind of devotion that typifies such infatuations, I am usually deaf to all voices raised against her. But with this new addition to my Laura Nyro library, I do understand some of the reservations about her, even though I am still thrilled by what I hear.

Some detractors that Miss Nyro is at her best as a writer. They point to the number of hits she has written that have climbed the charts when sung by other performers, with the implication that her music is better when sung by somebody else. I have never agreed. Every Laura Nyro song I have ever heard performed by groups like the 5th Dimension sounds pale when compared with Miss Nyro's original recording of the same song. But on this latest disc, she sings the music of other writers, and the results are less satisfying.

Her detractors do have a point. Her faulty diction often wreaks havoc on the coherence of the songs she sings. This doesn't matter when the songs are as passionate and lyrical as her own material, but it does very much on mediocre material. Not that all of the selections on this album are mediocre. Indeed, I have never heard *Spanish Harlem* sung with such poignancy and beauty. A haunting thing called *Wind* assumes the proportions of a chamber concert, and the title tune, *Gonna Take a Miracle*, is as throbbing and dramatic as an intermission riff by the Kenton band. The rousing vocal group Labelle is one of the best back-up choruses it has ever been my pleasure to hear in pop music: their voices blend with Miss Nyro's like hot instruments jamming on a cold night.

But there are problems. Too many of the tunes lack purpose and clarity, and some are just plain dull—something that can never be said about Laura's own songs. There isn't one Laura Nyro song on the whole album, which may help to explain the banality of most of the lyrics. Don Renaldo has provided some interesting string passages, and the arrangements are mostly adequate. But adequate is not a word I have come to associate with Laura Nyro, and this adequate but seldom exciting album is not one of her best efforts. Actually, I don't really understand why she bothered.

R.R.

MARIA OSTIZ. Maria Ostiz (vocals, guitar), orchestra. Waldo de los Rios cond. *Flores rotas; No sabes como sufrí; La princesa; Canción en la mañana; No me digas nada; Cantarcillos*; and seven others. VANGUARD VSD 6575 \$4.98.

Performance: **Smooth**
Recording: **Excellent**

It is difficult to guess, here in America, just how, over there in Spain, Maria Ostiz got hooked up with Waldo de los Rios. Her folk-pretty melodies seem too fragile for his lush blunderbuss approach to orchestration. In *Flores rotas*, he tries to make her sound like

(Continued on page 99)

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Columbia

At the somewhat delayed original-cast recording session (1961): Adolph Green, Betty Comden, Leonard Bernstein, and Goddard Lieberson.

HOORAY FOR *ON THE TOWN*

Only (!) a reissue, but then they don't make musicals like it any more

By PAUL KRESH

LEWIS NICHOLS, writing in the *New York Times*, calls it "the freshest and most engaging musical to come this way since the golden days of *Oklahoma*." Wolcott Gibbs describes it in *The New Yorker* as "young, bright and lovingly executed, and having above all that air of careless improvisation, as if the actors were making things up for their private amusement as they went along. . . ." To *Time*, it's "a youthful high dive that hits the water with a terrific splash . . . one of the freshest, liveliest, most engaging musicals in many years . . . with the brightest of books and lyrics by Betty Comden and Adolph Green."

The year is 1944, and the show they're raving about is the new musical *On the Town*, which composer Leonard Bernstein and choreographer Jerome Robbins have built on the foundations of their high-spirited ballet *Fancy Free*, all about the adventures of three sailors on leave in wartime New York City. I, for one, couldn't wait to see it. When my friend Herb, himself a Navy man, was on leave in New York, he and his wife and I went hurrying down to the Adelphi one winter evening, where we found the new hit to be every bit as "fresh" and "engaging" as *Time* and the *Times* claimed it was. What lyrics! What songs! What dances! What wit! What energy! What sophistication! With the rest of the packed house, we stood up to cheer.

Still, the tunes from *On the Town* never really made it to the nation's jukeboxes. The ballet music, developed in a manner more familiar to the world of modern dance than to Broadway, was not for everybody. But I would not rest until I got hold of the records of that hilarious show and heard it all again. Now, in those days, not every musical automatically gave birth to an "original-cast" album. One set released by Decca, which at first appeared as separate singles on ten-inch 78's, was not altogether what you'd call "original" in its cast. It was not John Bat-

ties, who played the lovesick sailor Gabey onstage, but Mary Martin who sang *Lucky to Be Me* and *Lonely Town*. Nancy Walker, a ghost of herself in that album as the raucous lady taxi-driver who ordered her sailor passenger Chip to *Come Up to My Place*, didn't sing that guided tour-de-force of a song but did run through *You Got Me* and *I Can Cook Too*, taking up two more sides. The third disc boasted members of the original company doing *I Feel Like I'm Not Out of Bed Yet* and *New York, New York*, and on the back, Comden and Green relived their Museum of Natural History number, *Carried Away*. And that was all. Not enough!

Next came an RCA album of 78's, with the ballet music from the show, Bernstein himself conducting the show orchestra, and choral versions of several songs in Christmas-carol arrangements with the Robert Shaw Chorale. Eventually, the Decca set became an LP, and the suave Miss Comden and Mr. Green (who, it turned out, were not married to each other at all but to a couple of other people) performed a number of the songs from the show in a Heritage recording called "Show Music at Its Best, Volume One." They did it again on a Capitol platter in 1959, performing with much bravado, if slightly off-key. The ballads, like the soaring *Lucky to Be Me* and the wistful *Some Other Time*, still begged for definitive vocal treatment. They certainly didn't get it in the subsequent filmed version, for when the movies bought *On the Town* they rejected all but a couple of Bernstein's original songs as inconsequential and engaged Comden and Green to write new lyrics for music by a composer named Roger Edens! At least no original-soundtrack recording ever came of that.

Then, in 1961, all the scattered members of the underground *On-the-Town* cult got the big news: Columbia was about to release a recreated original-cast LP containing

everything, with stars who had been in the 1944 production summoned to the studio from far and wide, and Bernstein himself at the helm. When the album, billed as the "first full-length recording" of the show, came out at last, I sent a fresh copy to Herb in Washington. Herb's wife wanted to know what had happened to the song *I Understand* from the second act. Well, it was gone, but I never missed it much because here, finally, was all the rest of it, with Comden and Green in their original roles; the entire ballet score sounding zingier than ever, with Bernstein now a great internationally acclaimed conductor instead of that merely promising chap he had been in the Forties; Nancy Walker back at the wheel of her cab; Cris Alexander on hand again as Chip, the nautical fare she captures; John Reardon in full, virile possession of his famous baritone and doing right by *Lucky to Be Me* and the haunting *Lonely Town*.

ALL of which brings us up to the present and Columbia's re-release (with a helpful plot summary in new notes by Stanley Green) of its 1961 recreation of the show. As charming as ever, its presence on the market today would be an embarrassment to the recent new production in New York—if it were still running (it closed in January). But you don't really have to see *On the Town* to enjoy the energy and exuberance of the score, the endless ingenuities of its orchestral texture, the flashing lyrics, the melodic inventiveness, the symphonically resourceful development. It is music that found its origins not only in Broadway and Tin Pan Alley, but in Stravinsky as much as in Gershwin, in Copland more than in Cole Porter—even, perhaps, owing something to the John Alden Carpenter who wrote *Sky-scrapers*. Too subtle for Hollywood, too uncommercial for "The Hit Parade," it is music that is New York, and deserves far more than the short shrift it got from tone-deaf reviewers this last time around. These offenders should be sentenced to thirty days of full-length, four-disc original-cast recordings of English music-hall musicals with a melodic range of three notes and the rhythmic vitality of a mudbound lorry.

For the score of *On the Town* hasn't dated—it's not old enough for that. It is New York itself that has dated. No longer a city we residents refrained from "giving" to visitors (who used to say they wouldn't live here if we turned it over to them), it has unfortunately become a town in which three sailors could no longer roam at will from the Bronx to the Battery and all the way to Coney Island through twenty-four carefree hours without encountering at least one mugging, rape, or robbery. If the New York of *On the Town* ever existed, it's just a dream now, but no less real to me. A few years ago, in these pages, I came right out and called *On the Town* the best musical I had ever seen. It still is, and the Columbia album remains the best recording of a musical I have yet heard.

ON THE TOWN (Bernstein-Comden-Green). Original-cast recording. Nancy Walker, Betty Comden, Adolph Green, John Reardon, Cris Alexander, others (vocals); orchestra, Leonard Bernstein cond. COLUMBIA S 31005 \$5.98.

the typical cabaret singer, which should be at least a felony, and in other spots he tries to make his orchestra sound like one of Manos Hadjidakis' confections. But then, I associate De los Rios with his rip-off of Beethoven for his schlock-rock *Song of Joy* two summers ago, and I may be a tough nut for him to crack. Not for Maria, though. I find her melodies exquisite, as inventive as Jacques Brel's and without his apocalyptic bent that sometimes breeds sloppiness. Her guitar playing is awesome, but not heard much, thanks to Waldo. Her voice is clean, and has a good range and remarkable smoothness. Her lyrics—what little I can translate with my creaky español—seem a bit bland, being mostly about nature and love. But then Hemingway himself couldn't barge in and talk politics once Franco had set up shop. *No sabes como sufrí*, at any rate, is the loveliest ballad I've heard in 1.7 years. Señorita Ostiz sings, writes, plays, and photographs beautifully. Get lost, Waldo. N.C.

HELEN REDDY. Helen Reddy (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Come On John; No Sad Song; Summer of '71; I Think It's Going to Rain Today; Tulsa Turnaround; Time; More than You Could Take*; and three others. CAPITOL ST 857 \$5.98, Ⓢ 8XT 857 \$6.98, Ⓢ 4XT 857 \$6.98.

Performance: **Derivative**
Recording: **Good**

Unlike most of the current pop trend-setters, Helen Reddy can at least sing in tune, although that's about as far as my compliments go. I am still at a loss to explain the large number of followers she appears to have amassed in a relatively short time. Practically everything she does is derived from the way some other singer does it better. The best cut on this second collection on Capitol is Carole King's *No Sad Song*, but when you get right down to it, the song is a second-rate imitation of the blackly bitter *A Most Peculiar Man* by Simon and Garfunkel, and Miss Reddy's wholesome sing-a-long treatment is too reminiscent of Edith Piaf on a good day. On *Tulsa Turnaround*, she mimics Bobbie Gentry to the point of possible litigation. And on Randy Newman's depressing *I Think It's Going to Rain Today*, which has been done better by almost anybody you care to name, she falls into the Streisand trap of making a song over at cross-purposes with its original intention. Miss Reddy seems to think this song is a ballad. It isn't. Her own individuality does seep through on Donovan's *New Year's Resolution*, but it is maimed by a monotonous vocal group that should get out Laura Nyro's album with Labelle and find out what vocal accompaniment is all about. All told, a repetitive and highly cluttered affair with about as much inventive imagination as a TV re-run of *Go into Your Dance*. R.R.

FRANK SINATRA, Jr.: *Spice*. Frank Sinatra, Jr. (vocals); orchestra, Nelson Riddle arr. and cond. *The Trolley Song; Black Coffee; Indiscreet; Believe in Me; So Many Stars*; and eight others. DAYBREAK DR2003 \$4.98, Ⓢ P8S 1830 \$6.98.

Performance: **Imitative**
Recording: **Good**

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CIRCLE NO. 20 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Tish Sterling. For every Peter and Jane Fonda (easily the most colorful theatrical family since the Barrymores), there are a Gail and Dino Martin. Frank Sinatra, Jr., can be counted among the casualties. He has been performing for several years now, and he still sounds like a dim carbon of his father. And part of the reason probably is a simple case of genes. The voice seems to be produced in much the same way as, and the actual sound is very close to that of, his father's. But it is in interpretation that the young Sinatra has made his giant misstep. He has tried to adopt the famous looseness and swinging quality of the older Sinatra, but the result sounds unpleasantly up-tight and forced. Singing the same sort of repertoire that his father is identified with is another bad mistake. And, finally, Nelson Riddle, who arranged and conducted so many of Frank's albums during the Sixties, has contributed charts that echo that era. (Would you believe yet another *Trolley Song*?)

Actually, the odds may simply be too heavily stacked against the offspring of any hugely popular singer for him to make it in the same field. The public is attracted to unique sounds, and for purely physical reasons the offspring's sound may be too much the same. The Crosby boys never made it for similar reasons. The only one that I know of who did is Jack Jones. But his father was a light-opera tenor with classical training, and Jones Jr.'s method of voice production is totally different.

This album is only for those held so completely in sway by the Sinatra Mystique that even pale relections suffice. P.R.

TUCKY BUZZARD: *Warm Slash.* Dave Brown (bass); Nicky Graham (keyboards); Jimmy Henderson (vocal); Terry Taylor (guitar); Chris Johnson (drums). *Sky Balloon; Ain't Too Soon; Which Way, When for Why; Need Your Love;* and five others. CAPITOL ST 864 \$5.98.

Performance: **Mediocre**
Recording: **Okay**

When a Famous-Person-by-Association (like Bill Wyman of the Rolling Stones) produces an album, or several of them, by an unknown group like Tucky Buzzard, it is often a sign that neither group nor producer is going to work, and that they wouldn't have gotten together if the producer hadn't been famous and the group hadn't been unknown and, presumably, unwanted. Put them all together and it spells mediocrity.

Out of nine attempts, this group falls down, except for isolated moments, on seven. The other two, *Sky Balloon* and *Ain't Too Soon*, are both buried at the end of side two, which means you have to wade through seven trite cuts of "Hey, pretty baby" and high-school guitar trying to pass as "heavy" via expensive amplifiers. Really, this is too shabby. The vocalist, like hundreds of others, is doing such a job of trying to sound black that he turns the disc into a minstrel show.

And to top it all off, kids, the front cover shows the quintet posing with bared biceps and scowls—to prove they're tough—and the back cover shows one of them (or maybe Wyman) relieving himself in the woods—to prove they're just folks. Faaaarr out. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JOE TURNER: *His Greatest Recordings.* Joe Turner (vocals); unlisted accompaniment.

Shake, Rattle and Roll; Teenage Letter; TV Mama; Chains of Love; Boogie Woogie Country Girl; Oke-she-moke-she-pop; Honey Hush; Flip, Flop and Fly; Corrine, Corrina; and five others. ATCO Ⓜ SD 33-376 \$4.98.

Performance: **Masterly**
Recording: **Evocative mono**

Out of the vaults of Atlantic comes the thundering mouth-beat of the great Joe Turner. His dates were done during Atlantic's early years, when improvisation was the rule not only on its recordings, but in running the company. Even for the small label they were then, concentrating mostly on jazz and making up rock-and-roll as they went along, they utilized several studios in New York (including their own) plus wax-shacks in Chicago and New Orleans. Turner was a big-band jazz vocalist feeling the slump that all his type felt during the early Fifties, when Atlantic helped him make the transition to r-&b. Seen now with hindsight, he was one of the daddies of soul.

There are many good things on this LP. The standouts are *TV Mama*, done in Chicago with Elmore James and his band; *Chains of Love*, a fine urban blues ballad coauthored by Ahmet Ertegun, the label chief; *Teenage Letter*, with the unlikely line, "There's a man across the water changin' water into wine"; and *Honey Hush*, cut in New Orleans, with its happy, goofy "Hi-yo Silver" ensemble vocal chorus (this surely has to be the source from which Jimmy Reed drew his *Hush Hush*) and Turner's original, definitive *Shake, Rattle and Roll*. A good time is had by all. J.V.

HOWARD WALES AND JERRY GARCIA: *Hooteroll?* Howard Wales (piano, organ); Jerry Garcia (guitar); various other musicians. *South Side Strut; A Trip to What Next; Up from the Desert; DC-502; One A.M. Approach; Uncle Martin's; Da Birg Song.* DOUGLAS KZ 30859 \$4.98, © ZT 30859 \$6.98.

Performance: **Good**
Recording: **Excellent**

Before this was recorded, keyboard man Howard Wales played on a couple of Grateful Dead cuts, and at that time Jerry Garcia was leading the Dead *else* into country music. This shows what *else* has been on their minds, for this one is closer to jazz than anything the Dead has done. Wales and Garcia work well together; the entire album is good music to daydream to, but I don't find much of it very involving.

Just as jazz (among other things) "progressed" itself to death, the album seems mostly a showcase for technique and too seldom a musical experience. That may be exclusively the fault of the tunes, which are constructed that way, but I imagine the musicians' mystique enters into it. Now and then the boys in the band like to make a recording just for themselves. Hope they enjoy it. It should be noted, however, that *Up from the Desert* and *Da Birg Song* do penetrate the layers of technique to reach the listener on an emotional level, the former featuring some especially mournful guitar figures etched by Garcia in front of a backwash of both organ and piano dubbed in by Wales, and the latter some nice call-and-answer action (also slightly melancholy) between piano and guitar. These are two extremely skillful musicians, but being dazzled is not as good as being moved. N.C.

JAZZ



RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MILES DAVIS: *Live*. Miles Davis (trumpet); with various other musicians. *Sivad*; *Little Church*; *Gemini*; *Double Image*; *What I Say*; *Nem Um Talvez*; *Selim*; *Funky Tonky*; *Inamorata*. COLUMBIA G 30954 two discs \$5.98.

Performance: **Brilliant modern jazz**
Recording: **Very good**

The Prince of Darkness continues, ironically, to light the way. Miles Davis' near-mythic



ART FARMER
An American original

status in the jazz community hasn't kept him from the hard, grinding work of continuing artistic creativity. True as the tales of fast cars, beautiful women, and high living may be, Davis is also one of the most physically and aesthetically disciplined of all current jazz musicians.

Collections like this are the result. The tracks include a variety of musicians: Ron Carter and Herbie Hancock from past Davis bands; Airtio Moreira, Keith Jarrett, and Gary Bartz from more recent ensembles. They were recorded over the space of—I suspect—at least a year. And it doesn't seem to matter who is playing, what the music is, or when it was made. Davis' current rock-tinged, free-association jazz is the dominant style, of course, but he is not averse to slipping in bits of lyrical melody (as in *Little Church*), Latin rhythms, bebop, and the sound of a sitar. He even uses an electric trumpet once or twice.

Of course you should have this record. I've probably said the same about Miles' last five releases, too, but I'm not ashamed to admire genius openly and without reserva-

tion. Miles Davis, Prince of Darkness (and Light), is one of a kind. *D.H.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DON EWELL: *A Jazz Portrait of the Artist*. Don Ewell (piano). *Buddy's Habit*/*Carolina Shout*/*Little Rock Getaway*; *Careless Love*; *Lullaby in Rhythm*; *Delmar Drag*; *Sunday*; *Spain*; and five others. CHIAROSCURO CR 106 \$5.98.

Performance: **Timeless jazz piano**
Recording: **Very good**

Fine vintage stuff, this. Ewell has been an underrated pianist for years, perhaps because he plays too many styles too well. I hear a great deal of Fats Waller in his music, but the long solo tradition that twists and turns through Jelly Roll Morton, James P. Johnson, Art Tatum, etc., touches every aspect of Ewell's playing.

Many of the songs are familiar, and some are piano classics. Ewell digs through it all in fine fettle, the shininess of his playing brightened by the glimmer and gleam of bits of Joe Sullivan, Tatum, Waller, and all the others. Not very topical, of course, in these days of electrified keyboards and over-amplified right-hand piano players. But it's good, yes, indeed, and highly worthy of your attention. *D.H.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ART FARMER: *Homecoming*. Art Farmer (flugelhorn); Billy Higgins (drums); Warren Smith Jr. (percussion); James Heath (tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone, flute); Cedar Walton (piano); Sam Jones (bass); James Forman-Mtume (conga drums). *Homecoming*; *Cascavelo*; *Some Other Time*; *Blue Bossa*; *Here's That Rainy Day*; *Now*. MAINSTREAM MRI 332 \$4.98.

Performance: **Fine mainstream jazz**
Recording: **Good**

Art Farmer always has been a prophet without honor. In the Fifties the importance of his music was cast into the shade by Clifford Brown; in the Sixties his lyrical flights were overlooked in the jet-propelled explosiveness of the jazz avant-garde. For the last few years Farmer has lived in Europe, working in an environment that still views jazz as an important musical art.

Farmer's always exceptional skills now have been honed to a fine point. This set, made during a return trip to the U.S. finds him in a familiarly introspective mood, chipping away gradually at his material until the shapes of his carefully crafted improvisations break through. At his best in dark ballads with rich harmonies, he is particularly effective in *Here's That Rainy Day* and the Leonard Bernstein song *Some Other Time*.

Unlike many other jazz players of his generation, Farmer has not chosen to embrace rock music. He continues at his task as he always has—quietly, effectively, and with extraordinary originality. An American original. Art Farmer—too bad we can't find a place for him. *D.H.*

RICHARD "GROOVE" HOLMES: *Comin' on Home*. Richard Holmes (organ); Weldon Irvine (electric piano); Gerald Hubbard (guitar); Jerry Jemmott (electric bass); Ray Armando (conga); Darryh Washington (drums). *Groovin' for Mr. G*; *Theme from Love Story*; *Mr. Clean*; *Down Home Funk*;

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CIRCLE NO. 17. ON READER SERVICE CARD

and three others. BLUE NOTE BST 84372 \$5.98. Ⓜ M 9161 \$6.98.

Performance: **Soul jazz revived**
Recording: **Very good**

Incredibly, soul jazz survives. The eager search for roots that occupied musicians like Bobby Timmons, Horace Silver, and Cannonball Adderly nearly a decade ago still shows signs of life. "Groove" Holmes was one of the early blues organists, not quite in a class with Jimmy Smith, but quite capable of rattling the room on his own terms, thank you.

Many of the soul jazz recordings of a decade ago were too limited in scope to sustain interest for very long. Holmes has neatly avoided the problem by putting together a program that includes, in addition to the obligatory hard funk pieces (notably Timmons' classic *This Here*), such unexpected items as the *Theme from Love Story* and Antonio Carlos Jobim's *Wave*. More to the point, Holmes plays with a breadth of style and manner unrestricted by the limited objectives of most soul jazz. Quite simply, he has kept some color in the old girl's cheeks by dressing her in bright new clothing. *D.H.*

MAHAVISHNU ORCHESTRA: *The Inner Mounting Flame* (see Best of the Month, page 72)

MAXINE WELDON: *Chilly Winds*. Maxine Weldon (vocals); instrumental accompaniment, Ernie Wilkins arr. and cond. *Chilly Winds; I'll Remember Today; It Don't Matter to Me; I (Who Have Nothing); Fire and Rain*; and five others. MAINSTREAM MRL 339 \$4.98.

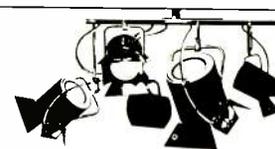
Performance: **Okay**
Recording: **Clean**

Jazz has gone through two periods in the last ten years. One was closet stuff, where jazz got too proud for its audience. The other was when jazzmen realized their mistake and saw rock taking away most of the audience, so musicians and record producers hurried into the studios and cut "jazz" versions of progressive pop stuff. This sort of thing, being a desperate form of musical survival, doesn't leave room for great individual artists. What it has room for are adaptable—and sometimes quite good—average artists. But artists who are individuals go out and do something else.

I don't know which type Maxine Weldon is. Possibly she was led astray by producers. At any rate, even given the recent history of jazz, it is unfortunate that her album is named after the song *Chilly Winds*, for Nina Simone made the version some years ago. Weldon's scatting on the number is fine, but she's competing against a classic.

The arrangements are boring neo-Ellington stuff. Since jazz isn't commercial, pop is rushed in like a witch doctor to save the profits. But the patient—music—dies.

Relaxed jazz tunes such as *I'll Remember Today* and *It Don't Matter to Me* are very listenable; *I Who Have Nothing* has an interesting idea—a duet between voice and harmonica—but it's the wrong tune to do it on. And it is unfair to subject any singer to the monotonous drivel of Leonard Cohen's *Hey, That's No Way to Say Goodbye*. I don't really know, from this album, who Miss Weldon is, but I think there is something there, and I also think that she done been wronged by time and fashion. *J.V.*



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RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN: *H.M.S. Pinafore*. D'Oyly Carte Opera Company; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, James Walker cond. LONDON SPCA 12001 two discs \$11.96.

Performance: **Trim cruise**
Recording: **Superb**

If you were a subscriber to the British magazine called *Fun* back in 1870, you probably enjoyed a rather rousing poem that appeared in the April issue. It was called "The Bumboat Woman's Story," and was one of the "Bab Ballads" by W. S. Gilbert, which were then delighting readers of the day. A bumboat was a small craft peddling provisions and wares to the crews of ships in British ports. The saleswoman on this particular bumboat was a shrivelled old girl of seventy called Poll Pineapple who had once been the "standing toast of the Royal Fleet," and who delighted in the nickname "Little Buttercup," which had been bestowed on her by a kindly lieutenant aboard the gunboat *Hot Cross Bun*. Poll Pineapple was to turn up with her name reversed in 1951 as the heroine of the ballet *Pineapple Poll*, but first, in 1878, she materialized as Little Buttercup; selling her wares to the boys aboard the *H.M.S. Pinafore*. This Gilbert and Sullivan operetta about a sailor who seeks to marry "a lass above his station" was even more successful in this country than in its native England. At one time there were no fewer than eight versions, most of them pirated, playing in New York at the same time. The infectious tunes were inescapable: the whole English-speaking world went about "whistling all the airs from that infernal nonsense *Pinafore*," as Gilbert himself later noted in *The Pirates of Penzance*.

There have been countless recordings of the score in this century, including at least three earlier ones by the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, and each has reflected the progress of the recording medium in the increasing resonance of choral passages, the intelligibility of Gilbert's mock-solemn lyrics, and the salty exhilaration of Sullivan's nautical tunes in their bright orchestral wrappings. London rereleased its monophonic LP version on the Richmond label some years ago at a bargain price; its chief virtue was the performance of Martyn Green in the role of Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B., First Lord of the Admiralty, who rose to his rank by staying at his desk and avoiding marine voyages. That recording also featured the great stars of the troupe in its heyday, but the recording itself was thin and technically unimpressive. Less than a decade ago the troupe was back to record it again, with John Reed as Sir Joseph and several of the old faithful all on board in a vigorous reading "complete with dialogue"

and stunning stereo sound. This time around the company offers a "Phase Four" stereo version, with Reed in Sir Joseph's uniform once again. Thomas Lawlor as the captain. Christine Palmer as Buttercup, Ralph Mason as Ralph Rackstraw, and John Ayldon as Dick Deadeye, with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (*there's richness*) conducted by James Walker.

If you own the earlier stereo version, the new one would seem dispensable, although it does offer a number of innovations and advantages. The continuity has been fitted out with sound effects—the lapping of water, seagulls crying—that help keep the action flowing like the soundtrack of a film. The dialogue, which was impossible to follow without a libretto in the earlier stereo version, comes through now loud and clear. The three rousing cheers that conclude "He is an Englishman" at the final curtain are formidably realistic. Mr. Walker launches his superb choral and orchestral forces at a vigorous clip (almost too much so at times), and the singers are all plausible performers thoroughly indoctrinated in the D'Oyly Carte style that is so essential to a first-rate G&S production. Thomas Lawlor merits an extra "jolly good" along with the usual cheers for his urbane Captain Corcoran, the affable officer whose imperturbability can be ruffled only by a cuss-word. Reed continues to sound too young for his role, though he certainly must be of a proper age by now. In all, *Pinafore* comes through remarkably ageless after its century-long career afloat, but without quite the nautical polish and precision it achieved under Isidore Godfrey in earlier recordings. The new album doesn't come in a proper box like its predecessors, but there's a nicely printed libretto, with every word snugly in place, and drawings of the principals to boot. P.K.

SHAFT (Isaac Hayes). Original-soundtrack recording. Ensemble, Isaac Hayes, leader. ENTERPRISE ENS 2-5002 two discs \$9.98.

Performance: **Facile**
Recording: **Very good**

Shaft has been the surprise sleeper film hit of the year. I'm surprised at the surprise. Surely *Cotton Comes to Harlem* proved that there is a vast black audience that is anxious (and able for the first time in their lives) to see films directed by, starring, and mainly cast with blacks. Both these films are exciting potboilers, only a cut above the average TV adventure series, but both contain shrewd comic insights into present-day black life in America.

Isaac Hayes seems to have been unduly serious about his assignment, for his score for *Shaft* is a topheavy, complex, and overly showy piece of composing and arranging. It sounds too often like what it should not on records: exciting background music. And, unfortunately, it also sounds labored and padded. But the recorded sound is spacious and very well engineered. P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA (John Guare-Galt MacDermot). Original Broadway-cast recording. Jonelle Allen, Diana Davila, Clifton Davis, Raul Julia, Norman Metlock, Alix Elias, Frank O'Brien, José Perez, Frederick Warriner, Alvin Lum, and John Bottoms (vocals); chorus and orchestra, Harold

Wheeler cond. ABC BCSY 1001 two discs \$9.95. ⓑ J 81001 \$9.95. ⓒ J 51001 \$9.95.

Performance: **Carefree**
Recording: **Bright**

Back around 1559, a Spanish writer named Jorge de Montemayor published a pastoral novel called *Diana*. Thirty years later, William Shakespeare got hold of the manuscript or saw a play based on it—we don't know which—and decided to turn it into a comedy for the British stage. The result, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, was not one of his greatest hits. The story of Valentine and Proteus, the "two gentlemen" and close friends who fall out over Silvia, the Duke of Milan's daughter, made use of ploys and situations that were stale even then—a girl disguised as a page, a letter dictated to the wrong lover, a suitor banished for trying to rescue a young lady locked away in a tower by an angry, jealous father. Critics have traditionally dismissed the whole thing as one of Shakespeare's "lesser comedies."

But last summer John Guare took the script in hand for Joseph Papp of the New York Shakespeare Festival and turned it into a musical triumph that delighted countless citizens in New York's Central Park as well as in street-theater presentations around the city. Soon it was on Broadway. Guare accomplished this feat mainly by throwing out most of the play except the lyric "Who is Silvia?" and some airier portions of the blank-verse dialogue, and by persuading Galt MacDermot to match and even surpass the score he wrote for *Hair* with the sunniest series of songs and dances to reach the musical theater in an age. It's all here to raise any listener's spirits in this two-record set. Here is Raul Julia, as Proteus, tossing out the Calypso number *Calla Lily Lady* that brings down the house, and leading the chorus in that overwhelming question, *Who is Silvia?*; lisping Diana Davila as the Julia he betrays, singing *What a Nice Idea*—with an unexpected coda in fiery Puerto-Rican Spanish; Jonelle Allen—the Silvia whose father has to lock her up to keep her from marrying anybody but the foolish Thurio—burning the air with the soul-style numbers *Night Letter* and *Love Me*; Alix Elias, as Lucetta, pinpointing the country of the heart where it all takes place so accurately as *The Land of Betrayal*. Here too are Frank O'Brien in Thurio's hot-blooded *Samba*, Clifton Davis as Valentine planning *Love's Revenge*, and Norman Metlock as the Duke striking a sardonic timeliness in *Bring All the Boys Back Home*. In fact, the only character not heard from is Crab, the dog, who has a non-speaking part (so to speak) and steals the show with it. There is so much—so many styles are mocked, so many great tunes are heard—that it takes a while before the listener can adjust himself to the pace and spirit of *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and get into the hang-loose swing of it. Once that happens, however, this set is the sort any musical-comedy bug is liable to wear out if he doesn't restrain himself. The sound is ringingly bright, and if Side C in your copy turns out to be Side B, as it did in mine, well, just chalk it up to the carefree spirit of the whole event. P.K.



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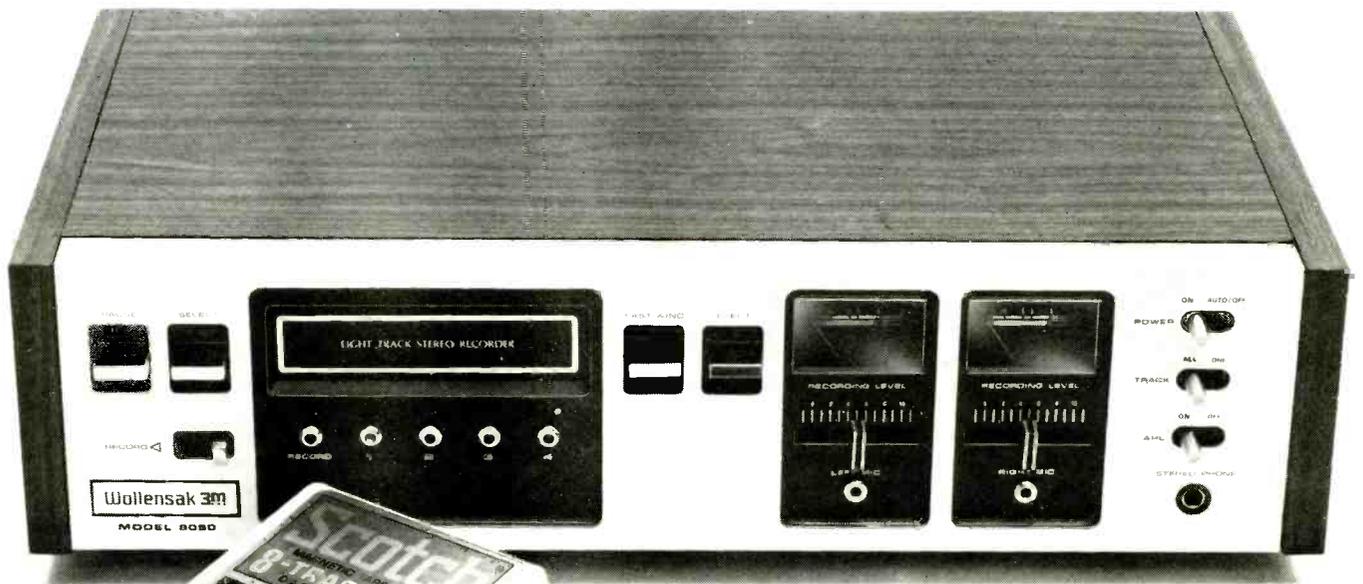
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STEREO TAPE

Reviewed by NOEL COPPAGE • DAVID HALL • IGOR KIPNIS • PAUL KRESH

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CHERUBINI: *Medea* (highlights). Gwyneth Jones (soprano), Medea; Pilar Lorengar (soprano), Glauce; Fiorenza Cossotto (mezzo-soprano), Neris; Bruno Prevedi (tenor), Jason; Justino Diaz (bass), Creon; Chorus and Orchestra of the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Rome, Lamberto Gardelli cond. LONDON © M 31193 \$6.95.

Performance: **Hair-raising**
Recording: **Excellent**
Playing Time: **63' 24"**

Luigi Cherubini's opera *Médée* (1797) has been recorded twice in its Italian translation, the first time by a cast headed by Maria Callas, and more recently with Gwyneth Jones in the title role. For those unfamiliar with the complete work, a superb dramatic piece imaginatively scored and gripping in effect, a set of excerpts is the ideal solution. Those included on this extremely long-playing cassette are deftly chosen and exceptionally well performed. If Gwyneth Jones does not entirely eclipse memories of the unique Callas interpretation (excerpts from which are available on an Everest cassette, which I haven't heard), she does handle the role in a most dramatic fashion. (I wonder, like George Jellinek in these pages, if Miss Jones' voice will last: some strain is evident in this recording, made several years ago.) The secondary members of the cast are especially good, particularly Pilar Lorengar, whose opening scene in these highlights is marvelous. The conducting, too, is most impressive.

The Dolbyized cassette is the best one I have heard to date from Ampex, one that can rank with the very best cassettes available thus far. The Ampex packaging, however, has not improved: no notes or texts, miniscule type for the list of contents, and no indication

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
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The first listing is the one reviewed; other formats, if available, follow it.

of who sings what part. Copy the cast list from the heading above and get the cassette anyway—it's a gem! I.K.

HANDEL: *Overtures and Sinfonias, Vol. 2.* *Semele; Sinfonia; Julius Caesar. Overture and Minuet; Faramondo: Overture; Judas Maccabaeus: Overture; Radamisto: Overture; Arminio: Overture; Deidamia: Overture; Scipio: Overture; Belshazzar: Sinfonia.*



GWYNETH JONES
A highly dramatic Medea

English Chamber Orchestra, Richard Bonynge cond. LONDON © M 10243 \$6.95.

Performance: **Scintillating**
Recording: **Excellent**
Playing Time: **42" 1"**

I enjoyed the disc version of this brightly and stylishly played collection of instrumental introductions from Handel oratorios and operas when I first heard it. The cassette, except for a marginal loss of spaciousness and openness in the full tonal spectrum, is equally entertaining. This Dolbyized cassette, in fact, compares most favorably with the open-reel version; the latter, indeed, has a more obvious hiss level, though the cassette may appear to have a slightly unnaturally bright top end (but without hiss). In any case, this is one of Ampex's best Dolby cassettes to date. No annotations, as usual. I.K.

RAVEL: *Daphnis et Chloé: Suite No. 2; Pavane pour une infante défunte; Rapsodie espagnole; Alborada del gracioso.* Cleveland

Orchestra Chorus; Cleveland Orchestra, Pierre Boulez cond. COLUMBIA © MT 30651 \$6.98, Ⓢ MA 30651 \$6.98.

Performance: **Somewhat variable**
Recording: **At times unfocused**
Playing Time: **45' 13"**

I have said previously that Pierre Boulez, when in top conductorial form, makes me think of a Gallic Toscanini, so remarkable is his feeling for linear detail and shaping of phrase, and for achieving a sense of totally balanced and beautiful proportion. So it has been, for me at least, in the Boulez recordings of *Parsifal* and *Pelléas et Mélisande*. What is still missing in Boulez as a conductor is, to my mind, the elemental yet subtly flexible rhythmic pulse characteristic of Toscanini at his best. Perhaps this is why I find Boulez's recorded performances of the standard orchestral repertoire disconcerting—the almost perverse Beethoven Fifth, a rather labored Berlioz *Symphonie fantastique*, an unvital Debussy *Fêtes*. Yet he can come forth with a revelatory *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, and similarly the Ravel *Rapsodie espagnole* on the present cassette. This last is a miraculous piece of work if I have ever heard one; the tonal imagination of Ravel emerges clear, strong, and vital purified of sensuous goo.

As for the rest of Boulez's Ravel program, the *Alborada del gracioso* has ample zip and sass to it, but the *Pavane* does not really come off with the true poignancy that can be achieved in a fine performance of the piano original. Hats off to M. Boulez for retaining the wordless chorus in *Daphnis*—the music gains immeasurably in magical effect thereby. But though his readings of the *Daybreak* and *Pantomime* music are beautifully measured in dynamics and texture, the *General Dance* begins to achieve its full effect only in the very last pages. The slowish pacing of the opening simply fails to create the sense of anticipation needed to bring off this finale completely.

I'm not entirely happy with the sonics of either the Debussy or Ravel discs done by Boulez in Cleveland. I miss in the reproduction a sharpness of focus on the total orchestral texture that I suspect was aimed for by Boulez in his interpretation. The *Rapsodie espagnole* suffers least in this regard, because of the character of the music as a whole. The cassette sonics seem to me somewhat below Columbia's high standard of clarity combined with quiet background. D.H.

(Continued on next page)

VERDI: Rigoletto (highlights). Robert Merrill (baritone), Rigoletto; Anna Moffo (soprano), Gilda; Rosalind Elias (mezzo-soprano), Maddalena; Ezio Flagello (bass), Sparafucile; Alfredo Kraus (tenor), Duke of Mantua; RCA Italiana Opera Orchestra and Chorus, Georg Solti cond. RCA © RK 1050 \$6.95.

Performance: **Rich antipasto**
Recording: **Very good**
Playing Time: **57' 27"**

Poor Rigoletto! It's bad enough being a hunchback, let alone working as the jester for a promiscuous Italian duke who tries to seduce your daughter. Then when you plot and scheme to save the girl from the Duke's clutches, all your efforts backfire and the person who gets stabbed is not the wicked Duke but your own lovely Gilda, who winds up dead in a sack, after all you've done to prevent her ruination.

Well, that's how it goes in Verdi's opera, and even though this doughty little cassette only presents highlights, RCA generously supplies a synopsis of the plot so you can tell where you are. An hour's selection of arias is included, and the cast is a *Rigoletto*-lover's dream—Alfredo Kraus in splendid voice as the Duke who sings of the fickleness of women in "*La donna è mobile*" but is hardly a model of fidelity himself; Robert Merrill in magnificent shape as the cursed jester; Anna Moffo as the broken-hearted Gilda who must watch the Duke two-time her with a girl named Maddalena; Rosalind Elias as Maddalena; and Ezio Flagello as Sparafucile, the professional murderer Rigoletto has hired to get rid of the Duke. All the popular moments are here, including Moffo's gorgeous rendition of "*Caro nome*," and are capped by a resounding performance of the famous quartet. There are almost no choral passages, which is a pity, but Solti's conducting is vigorous and vivid. Occasionally there's an abrupt cut-off of an excerpt, but mostly the transitions are smooth and the sound is pretty fine.

P.K.

COLLECTIONS

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO HEAR ON THE MOOG BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK FOR. Chabrier: *España*. Lecuona: *Malagueña*. Bizet: *Carmen: Prelude to Act One; Habanera; Introduction to Act Four*. Ravel: *Boléro*. Moog Synthesizer, Andrew Kazdin and Thomas Z. Shepard, "semi-conductors." COLUMBIA © MT 30383 \$6.98.

Performance: **Hi-jinks**
Recording: **Very good**
Playing Time: **29' 23"**

Spanish music by three Frenchmen and a Cuban is the stuff that's put through the computer on this curious and clever but wearing little exercise. Both Mr. Shepard and Mr. Kazdin know their classics, and parrot the orchestral languages of Chabrier, Bizet, and Lecuona with a marvelous gift for mimicry and some sprightly tongue-in-cheek asides from the Moog. Yet for all the wit supplied by its operators, the machine sounds, as it always does, like some monstrous Wurlitzer being played by a robot—emitting a sort of musical equivalent of those non-objective cartoons, fashionable in the Fifties, in which abstract designs cavorted on the screen, resembling animated rubber bands. *Carmen*, for all the ingenuity with

which the airs from the opera are evoked, struts as stiffly as a plastic mannequin; Chabrier gleams, but like metal, not like fire, and Lecuona's alluring rhythms sound simply musclebound. If you turn the cassette over, however, there's a real surprise in store. The arrangers have lavished what must have been an extraordinary amount of thought and ingenuity on the elaborate crescendo known as Ravel's *Boléro*, and the piece fattens and grows huge almost as hypnotically as when it's tackled by live musicians. A few gratuitous curlicues mar the contours, but for the most part the mechanics of the Moog match the mechanics of the *Boléro* itself with intriguing results—a tour de force. But despite the allure of the album title, I've never really wanted to hear *anything* on the Moog. P.K.

ENTERTAINMENT

BIG BROTHER AND THE HOLDING COMPANY: How Hard It Is. Big Brother and the Holding Company (vocals and in-



BIG BROTHER & THE HOLDING COMPANY
The promise shines through

strumentals); various other musicians. *How Hard It Is; You've Been Talkin' 'Bout Me, Baby; House on Fire; Nu Boogaloo Jam; Maui; Shine On*; and four others. COLUMBIA © CT 30738 \$6.98, © CA 30738 \$6.98.

Performance: **Improving**
Recording: **Excellent**
Playing Time: **37' 16"**

The first and most maligned of Janis Joplin's backup bands seems to be maturing nicely; their next album should be the one to watch for. The promise shines through in spite of the fact that Big Brother had some valuable help in putting this one together—Kathy McDonald doing a soulful vocal on *Black Widow Spider* (my favorite of the tunes), David Shallock playing some of the more difficult lead guitar parts, and Nick Gravenites singing *Buried Alive in the Blues*, which he wrote. But Sam Andrew and the BB company do a lot to convince me they're on their way.

This present specimen is passable but a little bland. The melodies are thin, and the lyrics too often aren't about anything much. The band has learned to make its sounds with economy, though, and is still making them with gusto, and Andrew's vocals have a raw severity that gets good mileage out of the material. Compared to the inept thrashing of their "Cheap Thrills" days, this recording tends to make the band sound as if it's arrived, but I think it can do better. N.C.

THE MORMON TABERNACLE CHOIR'S GREATEST HITS (Vol. 3). *Anvil Chorus; Home on the Range; See the Conqu'ring Hero Comes!; All Through the Night; None but the Lonely Heart; Shenandoah; Bridal Chorus; Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair; Deep River; Loch Lomond; One Small Step; Prayer from "Hansel and Gretel"; Finlandia*. The Mormon Tabernacle Choir (vocals with instrumental accompaniment). COLUMBIA © 16 11 0170 \$6.98. © 18 11 0170 \$6.98.

Performance: **Big, bland, and beneficent**
Recording: **Good transfer**
Playing Time: **52' 03"**

The Mormon Tabernacle Choir can Americanize anything—the *Anvil Chorus*, a march from *Judas Maccabaeus* by Handel, *Loch Lomond*, the *Bridal Chorus* from *Lohengrin* (better known as *Here Comes the Bride*) and even *Finlandia*. These foreign specimens, after payment of the usual import tax, are spun through gigantic musical washing machines to purge them of dangerous alien characteristics, rinsed, dried, and rearranged in a home-grown idiom for six thousand voices, symphony orchestra, and mammoth organ. By the time the Mormon Tabernacle singers get through them, you'd swear they had all been written by Stephen Foster and were as safe for home consumption—and just about as spicy—as peanut butter. Come to think of it, *Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair*, which seems to be required by law for inclusion in every Mormon Tabernacle Choir program, is by Stephen Foster, but I never realized before that Tchaikovsky's *None but the Lonely Heart* can seem to be, too. This is the third volume of the group's "Greatest Hits" (everything they sing is a "greatest hit"), and it is guaranteed to have a sure-fire appeal to the same American Gothic buying public as its predecessors have, or your money will be refunded. But send it back to Columbia, not to me. P.K.

ANDY ROBERTS: Home Grown. Andy Roberts (vocals): unidentified accompaniment. *Home Grown; Keep My Children Warm; Good Time Charlie; Queen of the Moonlight World; Moths and Lizards in Detroit*; and four others. AMPLEX © M 51020 \$6.95, © M 81020 \$6.95.

Performance: **Overdone**
Recording: **Good**
Playing Time: **40' 50"**

Some nice textures are almost achieved here—behind some deftly carved melodies—but the album is, finally, overproduced. As often happens, the excessive work on the arrangements seems to have been done because the concept for the album was so vague. When people aren't sure what they want to do, they tend to do a lot. This one ambles toward a country sound, takes an abrupt left and becomes hard rock, takes a hard right and becomes violin-padded easy-listening, and so forth. Andy Roberts has the voice for such vagaries, the kind of voice that acquires itself nicely but two minutes later is forgotten. *Keep My Children Warm* is a poignant song that survives an almost bizarre arrangement, but too many others—along with Roberts' singing style, most of the movies I see on television, and other dribbles and drabbles of experience—seem destined to gather dust in the attic of my mind, if I may paraphrase Bobby Goldsboro copying John Hartford. N.C.



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TAPE HORIZONS

By CRAIG STARK



HEAD ALIGNMENT

In recent columns I've talked about some of the ways in which wear or imperfect orientation of tape heads can take its toll of the potential fidelity of a recording. Adjustment of head height, fore and aft tilt, and proper protrusion of the head into the tape path can be checked relatively easily, using the technique I suggested last month, for in these planes a small amount of error can be tolerated. Unfortunately, this is not true of the most important head-alignment adjustment of all: "azimuth."

To have correct azimuth a head must be so oriented that the vertical gap between its pole pieces is absolutely perpendicular to the edges of the tape. If the playback gap is on a slight diagonal instead of at 90 degrees to the tape edges, large high-frequency losses will result when the tape has been recorded with the proper azimuth. The extent of these losses can even be predicted, thanks to some calculations worked out by Ampex. If we wish to reproduce a 15,000-Hz tone at 7½ ips, using an ordinary quarter-track head, an azimuth error of slightly less than one-half of one degree (29.5 minutes of arc) will produce a loss of 10 dB. That is to say, the playback head will reproduce only one third as much signal as it would if properly adjusted. At 3¾ ips the situation is even worse: the same loss would occur from a misadjustment of less than a quarter of a degree deviation from absolute perpendicularity. And a monophonic FM station using a full-track recorder at 7½ ips will sustain a 10-dB loss at 15,000 Hz if the azimuth of its machine is off by a mere five minutes of arc—1/12 of a degree!

Stereo presents an additional complication, for each head contains two independent sets of pole pieces and their gaps may not be perfectly in line (colinear) with each other. I talked with an engineer at one of the leading tape-head manufacturers and he confirmed that, despite every precaution, even high-quality quarter-track stereo heads were likely to exhibit a 10- to 15-minute error between the two gaps. This means that if one adjusts the azimuth for one channel, high-end response on the other will be off by 1 or 2 dB at 7½ ips, and there will be much greater losses at lower speeds. Obviously, one must make a compromise between channels.

A marked loss of brilliance when playing an assortment of prerecorded tapes known to have adequate treble content indicates likely azimuth trouble in the playback head. On a machine with a separate record head, if prerecorded or borrowed tapes sound fine but the ones you make yourself are dull, your record-head azimuth may well be out, though other causes can also produce this result. On cassette machines and other recorders that use the same head for record and playback, no losses from azimuth misalignment will show up on tapes made on that machine, but some day you may want to replace it (or its worn-out head), and then tapes made previously will play back as poorly as the commercially prerecorded material does now.

Azimuth adjustment requires professional instruments, test tapes, and know-how, but you'll be wise to have it checked about once a year.

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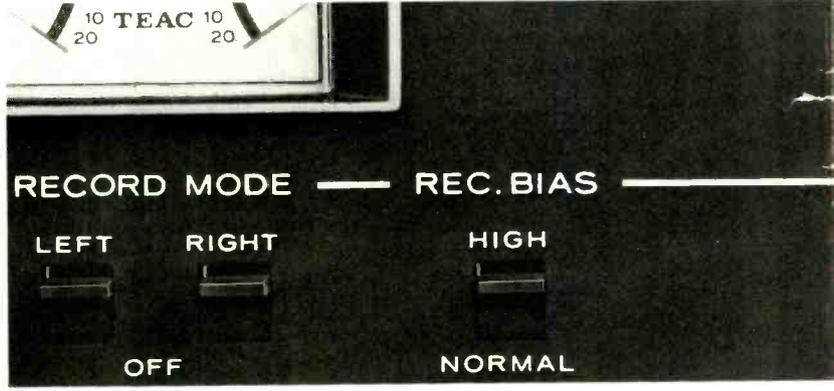
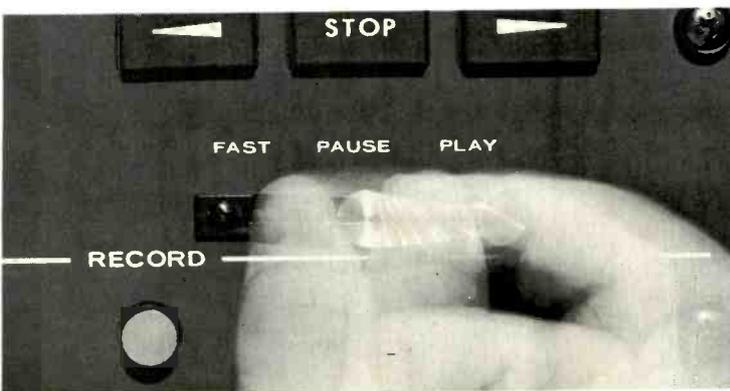
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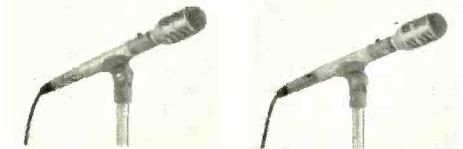
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