

Pioneer has conquered the one big problem of high-priced turntables.

REEMOND



The best way to judge the new Pioneer PL-510 turntable is to pretend it costs about \$100 more. Then see for yourself if it's worth that kind of money.

First, note the precisionmachined look and feel of the PL-510.

The massive, die-cast, alumi-

num-alloy platter gives an immediate impression of quality. The strobe marks on the rim tell you that you don't have to worry about perfect accuracy of speed. The tone arm is made like a scientific instrument and seems to have practically no mass when you lift it off the arm rest. The controls are a sensuous delight to touch and are functionally grouped for onehanded operation.

drive or even belt drive. The PL-510 is truly the inaudible component a turntable should be.

Vibrations due to external causes, such as heavy footsteps, are completely damped out by the PL-510's double-floating suspension. The base floats on rubber insulators inside the four feet. And the

turntable chassis floats on springs suspended from the top panel of the base. Stylus hopping and tone arm skittering become virtually impossible. (Even the turntable mat is made of a special vibration-absorbing material.)

But if all this won't persuade you to buy a high-priced turntable, even without the high price, Pioneer has three other new models for even less.

The PL-117D for

But the most expensive feature of the PL-510 is hidden under the platter. Direct drive. With a brushless DC servo-controlled motor. The same as in the costliest turntables.

That's why the rumble level is down to -60 dB by the JIS standard. (This is considerably more stringent than the more commonly used DIN "B" standard, which would vield an even more impressive figure.) And that's why the wow and flutter remain below 0.03%. You can't get performance like that with idler

\$125* And the amazing PL-112D for under \$100* None of these has a rumble level

under \$175* The PL-115D for under

above -50 dB (JIS). None of them has more wow and flutter than 0.07%.

So it seems that Pioneer has also conquered the one big problem of low-priced turntables.

The low performance. U.S. Pioneer Electronics Corp., 75 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, New Jersey 07074.

The high price. For under \$200, you can now own the direct-drive PL-510.

*For informational purposes only. The actual resale prices will be set by the individual Pioneer dealer at his option.

Direct drive Brushless DC servo-controlled motor 33¹/₃ and 45 RPM speeds Strobe light Strobe-calibrated platter rim $\pm 2\%$ fine adjustment of speeds Double-floating system of suspension Turntable mat of high-internalloss rubber One-handed operation of controls Tone arm: Lightweight S-shaped tubular

Turntable:

design Static balance Ball-bearing pivot with angular contact Anti-skating device Lateral balancer Direct-readout counterweight Viscous-damped cueing Lightweight plug-in headshell

OPIONEER

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So now everyone can have a receiver that looks and sounds like separate units. Without having to pay for separate units.





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Editorially Speaking

By William Anderson

*



OPERA AS A SPECTATOR SPORT

"MATTHEW, MARK. LUKE, AND JOHN" is the answer. The question (or perhaps challenge is better), if you have a mind that works like those of Johnny Carson's gag writers, is: "Name three evangelists and one plumbing facility." Here's another: "Judith Blegen, Marilyn Horne, Beverly Sills, and Luciano Pavarotti." You can send me your own gag line for that one later; in the meantime I'll settle for a simpler formulation: "Name four Metropolitan Opera singers who have performed on the Johnny Carson Show." (There may have been others; I got started on this only recently.)

My mind slipped into this reverse gear as I was re-reading Noel Coppage's examination in this issue of the uneasy relationship that seems to exist between music and TV. It is his opinion (which I share) that popular music, contrary to mere appearances, actually gets very short shrift on the tube, that it is generally found playing second banana to Cher Bono's armpits (I promise not to pursue that image any further). But, as anyone with ears has already discovered, classical music's shrift on TV is demonstrably even shorter—which makes it a mite peculiar that the Johnny Carson Show, an undoubted shrine of middle-American taste and, in most other respects, the bellwether of the industry, undertakes to entertain those four big (sorry, Luciano) "classical" artists repeatedly.

Without meaning in any way to denigrate the musical taste of Carson Host or Carson Staff, I somehow doubt that they have fallen in love with, say, Horne's "Bel raggio" or with Pavarotti's "Una furtiva lagrima," that their particular aesthetic delight is to be found in Blegen's work above the staff or in Sills' fioritura. I further think it unlikely that these stars come out in the Carson firmament just to add a little class to the act-there are, after all, any number of even "classier" acts available for the asking. Is it, then, that Judith Blegen's snub-nosed, chipmunk cuteness is boxoffice boffo? Are Marilyn Horne's down-toearth womanly warmth, Beverly Sills' sexy chuckle, Luciano Pavarotti's witty struggle with the English language quantities measurable in points on the Nielsen ratings? If this were all, why have them sing? But sing they do, so the singing must count.

It is TV's habit, and one of its principal charms, to poke a little harmless fun at a number of things (opera included) we usually take with unnecessary seriousness. The number does not, however, include sports; that much of the American Way is sacrosanct. The world of sport is not to be kidded, it is not to be scorned, it is not, above all, to have its God-given time slot pre-empted by anything even remotely resembling Shirley Temple's Heidi. On some weekends an unbiased observer from Mars might conclude that the only cameras the networks can get to function are those located in the nation's sports stadiums. He might further be excused for thinking that the day's sports scores are a matter of greater import to humankind than news of any war, pestilence, or famine could ever be; and he might even be hard to persuade that the biggest hit of the past TV season was not the Winter Olympics. Haven't we, then, cornered a little something here we could cast in terms of the Carson-Show formula, to wit: "Name two pretty, young, American athletes." Answer: "Dorothy Hamill and Judith Blegen."

Critics long ago fell into the habit of using sports metaphors to describe the goings on in the world's opera houses (a perfectly natural development having nothing to do with the fact that some of their number may have been drafted into musical service from newspaper sports desks). Tenors became matadors, for instance, and the stage a bull ring simply because opera singers are athletes, competitors in a game of high stakes, pitting their physical gifts and their highly trained skills against impressive obstacles, trying to be the highest, the lowest, the fastest, the slowest, the loudest, the softest, the most expressive, the most beautiful, the most agile in their field. These qualities are precisely what opera is all about. They are what generates the excitement, what makes opera enthusiasts the opinionated, argumentative, unreasonable, contentious, insatiable sports fans and writers of letters to the editor they are. Just you wait and see.

Stereo Review

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HENRY PLEASANTS

Blueprint for Flat Frequency Response

In the graph below, frequency response was measured using the CBS 100 Test Record, which sweeps from 20-20,000 Hz. The vertical tracking force was set at one gram. Nominal system capacitar ce was calibrated to be 300 picofarads and the standard 47K ohm resistance was maintained throughout testing. The upper curves represent the frequency response of the right (red) and left (green) channels. The distance between the upper and lower curves represents separation between the channels in decibels. The inset oscilloscape photo exhibits the cartridge's response to a recorded 1000 Hz square wave indiccting its resonant and transient response.

Smooth, flat response from 20-20.000 Hz is the most distinct advantage of Empire's new stereo cartridge. the 2000Z.

The extreme accuracy of -20 its reproduction allows you -25 the luxury of fine-tuning -20 vour audio system .75 30 40 50 H= Hz Hz 50X exactly the way you 20 Hz kHz kH7 Frequency in Hz (cycles per second want it. With the 2000Z, you can exaggerate highs. accentuate lows or leave it flat. You can make your own adjustments without being tied to the dips and peaks characteristic of most other cartridges. For a great many people, this alone is reason for owning the Z. However, we engineered this cartridge to give you more. And it does. Tight channel balance, wide separation, low tracking force and excellent tracking ability combine to give you total performance. See for yourself in the specifications below, then go to your audio dealer for a demonstration you won't soon forget. The Empire 2000Z. Already your system sounds better. Frequency Response - 20 to 20K Hz ± 1 db using CBS 100 test record Recommended Tracking Force -- 34 to 11/4 gra⊓s (specification given using 1 gram VT=) Separation-20 db 20 Hz to 500 Hz 30 db 500 Hz to 15K Hz 25 db 5K Hz to 20K Hz 25 db I.M. Distortion -- (RCA 12-5-105) less than :08% .2KHz to 20KHz @ 3 54 cm/sec Stylus-0.2 x 0.7 mil diamond Effective Tip Mass-C.2 mg Compliance-lateral 30 X10⁻⁶ cm/dyne vertical 30 X10-6 cm/dyne Tracking Ability-0.9 grams for 38 cm per sec @ 1000 Hz 0.8 grams for 30 cm per sec @ 400 Hz Channel Balance - within 34 db (a 1 kHz Tracking Angle-20° Recommended Load - 47 K Ohms

Nominal Total System Capacitance required 300 pF Output-3mv @ 3.5 cm per sec using CBS 100 test record

D.C. Resistance - 1100 Ohms Inductance-675 mH

Number and Type of Poles - 16 Laminations in a 4 pole configuration Number of Coils - 4 (1 pair/channel - hum cancelling)

Number of Magnets - 3 positioned to eliminate microphonics

Type of Cartridge - Fully shielded, moving iron

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20 kHz

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Porgy and Bess

May I add one four-letter word to all the wonderfully perceptive ones that Eric Salzman gave us in his April review of the new London recording of the complete (at last!) Porgy and Bess? The word: Amen.

Edward Jablonski New York, N.Y.

I found both Martha Bennett Stiles' analysis of Porgy and Bess and Eric Salzman's criticism of the new Lorin Maazel/London Records production of the opera (April) to be misleading in one major respect. Both assume that the opera is now receiving its first major recording. In fact, Mr. Salzman states, "Only now, forty years after . . . do we have the chance at least to hear the major masterpiece . . . in its entirety as [Gershwin] conceived it." This statement is essentially incorrect, as Goddard Lieberson produced a mono three-disc set of the opera for Columbia Records (OSL-162) many years ago which included some of the performers from the 1935 stage version. Lieberson's production is important, for it was not only the first to include the "Buzzard Song" but it was the first recording to utilize stage noises in an operatic setting, a technique that is sometimes thought to have been initiated by John Culshaw in his 1958 (and later) production of London's Ring cycle.

KENNETH KULMAN Carbondale, Ill.

The Editor replies: The operative word in Mr. Salzman's review is "entirety." According to Lehman Engel, conductor on the old Columbia set, a number of choruses and repeats were cut because of lack of space; the Maazel recording is essentially complete. The Columbia recording was, however, remarkable for its time, and it is still a treasurable musical document.

Bravo to Eric Salzman for making virtually all of the important points which ought to be made regarding the immense amount of misunderstanding, misconception, and outright condescension which the incandescent score of *Porgy and Bess* has endured during the past forty years.

Perhaps a few observations and bits of information might be helpful from the point of origin: it was Maestro Maazel's *intent* that the

chorus imitate each of Sportin' Life's differing repetitions in the scene on Kittiwah Island. This was brought out by choral director Robert Page during one of two interviews station WCLV did (with Maazel and Page) for the broadcast première on February 29. The chorus was almost entirely white, and Mr. Page directed them to simulate, but not copy, dialectic inflections. (It's interesting to note, on this question of accents, that, try as he will, Willard White-Porgy-cannot entirely eliminate his Jamaican "singsong" . . . at some remove from Catfish Row.) Also, the recording was preceded by one performance given during July of 1975 at the Blossom Music Center, the Cleveland Orchestra's summer facility, and recorded shortly after in the Orchestra's first home, Masonic Auditorium.

It was Lorin Maazel's work in cleaning up the score of an accumulation of performance "malpractice" and his painstaking elimination of errors that contributed in no small way to the success of this magnificent recording.

ALBERT M. PETRAK Music Director, WCLV Cleveland, Ohio

Hot Platters

Bravo for Ralph Hodges' "Hot Platters" article in the April issue! I was glad to see due credit given to foreign pressings, to some small but very high-quality domestic labels, and to Bob Fulton. I would like to see a similar article published at least once a year, even if you could only discover two or three albums that approach the state of the recording-engineering art.

Here are two albums I have recently reviewed which (at least on my system) have outstandingly good sound: Penderecki's Kosmogonia, Philips 6500 683 (stunning overall sound, extraordinary dynamic range) and Weather Report's "Tale Spinnin'," Columbia 33417 (clean percussion and sound effects).

> AL HALSTEAD Waverly, N.Y.

I was surprised to find no mention of the Musical Heritage Society's recordings in Ralph Hodges' enjoyable "Hot Platters" article (April). Although their quality of sound varies widely, depending on the master tapes, the standard of their pressings is above average for domestic product. And some of their releases offer superb sound: "Saudades do Brasil" (Arion, MHS 3160); "Indian Flutes, Harps and Guitars" (Arion, MHS 3164); "The Unforgettables" by the Andreas Trio (MHS 3233); "Bax" (Lyrita, MHS 1769); Mozart's Piano Concertos K. 246 and 537 by J. Demus and Collegium Aureum (Harmonia Mundi, MHS 1614). I find the Arion-derived recordings, in particular, unequaled in my collection for crisp, pure, undistorted, and unclipped percussive transients.

J. J. Russ Los Altos, Calif.

It was gratifying to see a rating on quadraphonic discs (so rarely mentioned lately) in the article "Hot Platters" (April). But John Woram's choice of "Tommy" as one of the four finest examples of QS-matrixed discs was astonishing, because I had expected more from Polydor on this quad recording and found it boring.

> LARRY CLIFTON Capron, Va.

© Concerning the excellent article "Hot Platters" in the April issue: King Crimson's "Larks' Tongues in Aspic" (Atlantic SD 7263) is a very good recording, but it doesn't measure up to their first three, "In the Court of the Crimson King," "In the Wake of Poseidon," and "Lizard." One other recording, not listed, that would be of interest is "Wings" by Michel Colombier (A&M SPX 4281). It's a hard album to come by, but the recording and the music are both excellent.

STEPHEN A. HAWK San Dimas, Calif.

• "Hot Platters" was the most useful article on records I've ever seen in your magazine. After all, what good is \$1,000 worth of stereo equipment when recordings are of poor quality? How about letting Ralph Hodges write a one-page column on records of outstanding quality every month?

> RICHARD GREENE Woodridge, N.Y.

I notice that a recording of mine, the Rachmaninoff Symphonic Dances, has made the "Hot Platters" listing in the April issue, where I am designated as tape and lacquer engineer. The first lacquers were indeed made by me, but subsequent cutting has been done by persons unknown to me, and my impression is that there is more on the original tape than current buyers are hearing. The original tape was made at 30 ips to a special curve, and most studios cannot handle it. As for ticks and crackles, the squeeze between economics and the special care required to produce quiet pressings make such things epidemic.

The original recording was made with two stereo pairs of microphones six feet apart each. The microphones were a modern ribbon type, the Cambridge C-3, designed by Charles P. Fisher of Framingham, Mass. The only reservation I have about the recording is that MacFarland Auditorium, where it was made, is a bit on the neutral side, and we were working, of necessity, across the short dimension of the hall.

There is one additional factor in no way related to engineering that tends to get overlooked in evaluating a recording. In the case of the Dallas Orchestra, the actual playing was on a very high level. Despite what might be loosely called a love-hate relationship with the conductor, the orchestra approached the recording in a spirit that could only be de-

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scribed as dedicated, and I suspect that this has contributed largely to its continued success, despite some production deficiencies.

DAVID B. HANCOCK New York, N.Y.

Mr. Hodges and Mr. Balgalvis reply: Thanks to all the many readers who took the trouble to write and vote for their own favorite records. We'd like to note that among their choices were a number that we did review for the project and-for one reason or another-rejected. Our criteria in each case would be too lengthy to go into here, but we certainly don't mean to imply that they are in any way poor records. On the contrary, most of them are excellent. They were simply crowded out of the top rank by others we felt to be worthier contenders.

Agonizing Reappraisals

As Steve Simels did in his August 1975 column, I have been re-evaluating my feelings toward recent music and records. I protested Simels' review of the Eagles' "One of These Nights" as grossly inaccurate only to discover, after repeated listenings, that the album overall is bland and lacks energy. I still feel the Eagles are capable of that killer album some day, but "Night" sure isn't it.

BOB SILVER North Hollywood, Calif.

Lee Lovers

Allow me to chastise Peggy Lee lovers for failing to acknowledge Peter Reilly's "Paean to Peggy" (March) in your letters column. If it's any consolation to Mr. Reilly, I shall make

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room in my personal time capsule and include his review along with some of Miss Lee's much-treasured albums. I'm still trying to complete my Peggy Lee collection, started when I was a disc jockey in Manila where her albums are hard to come by. However, I've run across the same problem in Los Angeles. Will Decca and/or Capitol or somebody ever rerelease Miss Lee's tastefully produced albums in their original form-selections in their original sequence, original liner notes and album covers intact?

> ENRIQUE R. TEVES Hollywood, Calif.

Bicentennial Corner

• In April's Bicentennial Corner review of the Goldman Band it was stated that "Columbia has put together an unusually thoughtful program here." The liner notes state that the contents are from the J. C. Penney Bicentennial Musical Celebration package created as a gift and already given free to over 20,000 schools by the J. C. Penney Company. The notes on the album cover are from the company's program notes. Columbia gets plenty of mention in STEREO REVIEW; give some credit to J. C. Penney, which goes unnoticed in your pages.

RON STILL Zelienople, Pa.

Chromium Dioxide: Pro/Con

"Chromium Dioxide: Pro/Con" in March was a good article, but I feel that the winner is Advent Corporation for two reasons: (1) its compatibility with regular cassette recorders and (2) its Advent Process CR/70 cassettes. Advent, achtung! Telefunken-Decca has come up with a German counterpart, also with the Dolby system. However, Advent is still three-up for its (1) texts and translations, (2) some lower-priced tapes, and (3) its mail order service.

> PHILIP DAVID MORGAN Saint James, N.Y.

The March issue of STEREO REVIEW was very welcome here at Nakamichi Research. We particularly appreciated Joseph Kempler's lucid article on cassette-housing problems and your debate-format article on chromium dioxide. However, there are gross inaccuracies in some of Andrew Petite's statements in the CrO, debate. He clearly implied (1) that chromium dioxide and ferric oxide have approximately the same abrasiveness, (2) that CrO_2 wears heads more evenly than ferric oxide, and (3) that if CrO2 wears heads faster than ferric oxide, then there is something wrong with the tape-deck design.

These views contradict everything Nakamichi has learned over the past two decades as the manufacturer of close to a million tape recorders. Our tests, conducted with chromium-dioxide and ferric-oxide tapes on the market (not samples supplied by the manufacturers), all show that the best CrO₂ tapes are approximately five times more abrasive than the premium ferric-oxide tapes. And there is absolutely no evidence that CrO₂ wears heads more evenly than ferric oxide. Even head wear is out of the question as long as the cassette housing continues to provide the built-in pressure pad. The unevenness of the pressure-pad surface is impressed through the tape to the head, and this is true no matter what brand of cassette machine is used.

In addition, as Tandberg's Sivertsen correctly pointed out, CrO2 cassettes suffer from relatively high distortion and poor uniformity as well. Thanks to some excellent new alternatives available, we have discontinued our CrO_2 tape (which, as a matter of fact, was *more* expensive than most premium ferricoxide cassettes because our quality control standards forced us to reject approximately sixty per cent of the CrO_2 supplied to us). In light of all this, we have taken steps to relabel the tape-selector switches on our cassette decks and to discontinue the recommendation of CrO_2 for use with our cassette decks.

HARRON K. APPLEMAN Nakamichi Research Tokyo, Japan

Uncle Max(w)ell

• I was dismayed to read in the text of the Sonab cassette-deck evaluation (April) that the machine has been adjusted for "Maxwell" tape. You know very well that the tape you use to test the potential of both cassette and open-reel machines is indeed *Maxell* and not the same name as coffee that's good to the last drop, or the Scottish clan with those eerie bagpipe recordings, or the great American playwright surnamed Anderson, or the lad with the silver hammer immortalized by the Beatles, or, for that matter, my uncle.

JACK SCHRIER Union City, N.J.

What's in a Name?

• The Frazier Concerto speaker system is described in the March test report as a bassreflex system in design. Technically, the Concerto is a modified Helmholtz resonator. That is, rather than tuning for a one-note bass as in a bass-reflex system, we tune for an additional octave of bass. In addition, the report states that at 4,000 Hz there is a second crossover to a horn-loaded, ceramic, piezoelectric tweeter. Actually, the piezoelectric tweeter is *direct-coupled* in the system and utilizes no crossover network.

> TODD CRANE Frazier, Inc. Dallas, Tex.

Technical Editor Larry Klein replies: We suspect that our disagreements are mostly a matter of semantics, but in any case we are happy to present Mr. Crane's point of view.

Steeleye Spanatics

• On behalf of Steeleye Span fanatics who have experienced a veritable hell in obtaining the group's ten albums, I heartily thank STEREO REVIEW for the analysis in the April issue of "All Around My Hat." With your help the constant confusion with Steely Dan (whoever they are) and the virtual lack of Steeleye Span knowledge will eventually disappear. We might even convince record shops to carry more than one of their recordings. And will they ever tour the U.S.?

AL EIBEL Canton, Ohio

Dunno, but pray they do; God is good.

White Harmony?

• After reading Joel Vance's review of the Four Seasons' new album (March) I couldn't help thinking what taste he has. None, apparently! The "white whine" of the Four Seasons is more correctly described as harmony. That distinct sound has been around for fourteen years, and in the past *twenty* years no American male vocal group has equaled the popularity attained by Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons. That's not a bad record, and neither is their new album.

Robert M. Boyer Deer Park, Tex.

Cock Rock and Limp Excuses

I would like to take issue with Steve Simels' March column. His interpretation of "cock rock" was valid, but his view of the implications suggests that he should come out from under his headphones every once in a while and take a look at the world around him. Do we condemn rock as a menace to society? Do we call for a total ban against Robert Plant (Led Zeppelin) and the rest? I think not. But neither should we try to excuse it with weak analogies and a half-hearted push under the rug. "Cock rock" is what it is. It is demeaning to women and indicative of many attitudes in our society that should be corrected. . it is also fun. Some day soon wom-But . en will be putting it to us on the stage and on records with the same frequency we are putting it to them, and the question will then be moot. Until that time, perhaps Steve should, like me, 'fess up to the fact that he likes it even though it's not such a good thing and quit trying to defend it with limp excuses.

> DAVID M. COHEN Boston, Mass.

Roy Eldridge

• Chris Albertson has mentioned, for the second time in seven months (September 1975 and March 1976) trumpeter Roy Eldridge's failing health. The only health problem Mr. Eldridge has had in the past few years has been cataracts, and they were successfully removed some time ago. In fact, though he recently celebrated his sixty-fifth birthday, Mr. Eldridge has been keeping an unusually busy schedule. During 1975 he made three European tours with various all-star combinations put together by Norman Granz. In the course of one of these he appeared at the Montreux Jazz Festival and, as can be heard on the recordings made there, was one of the sparkplugs of that event. He has also made several studio dates for Granz's Pablo label and appeared at various concerts as a guest star while holding down his regular six-night-aweek post at Jimmy Ryan's in Manhattan.

Playing trumpet the way Roy Eldridge does means taking risks, and he has his off moments, to be sure. But he's on a lot more than off, and when he's on, he is still the world's most exciting jazz trumpeter, as his Montreux LP with Dizzy Gillespie and Clark Terry demonstrates. You don't hit that kind of note on a trumpet or exude that kind of performance energy when your health is failing.

DAN MORGENSTERN New York, N.Y.

Latin American Wagner

• Readers interested in Roger Wagner's new disc of early Latin American music (reviewed in March) might want to know about a similar collection Wagner made about ten years ago. Like the new disc, the old one was made under the auspices of the UCLA Latin American Center. It was issued as Angel 36008 but has been out of print for years. Perhaps if Angel won't produce the long-overdue Seraphim reissue of this disc the UCLA Center could get the rights to the record and make it available again.

EDWARD MENDELSON New Haven, Conn.



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CIRCLE NO. 9 ON READER SERVICE CARD

The \$900 Sony Turntable.



Study this page, because we don't want the price to suck you in.

It would be a shame.

People responding to something because it costs \$900*. Not because it's worth \$900. People captivated by price, not performance.

We at Sony don't want anyone spending good money for a great turntable for a bad reason like an impressive price tag.

Especially because there's so much technology in the PS-8750 for you to fall

backon. After you spring for the \$900. So before you spend a lot of money on us, spend at least a little time with us

Total speed accuracy is our speed.

Speed accuracy can be a problem for turntables because the stylus continually puts pressure on the record (and, in turn, on our engineers.)

In fact, as little as one gram of stylus pressure can cause a slowdown in record speed. A slow-down that is particularly noticeable in loud passages.

Up till now, most good turntables achieved accuracy with a direct drive motor and a servo-system to control speed variations.

It was fine for most people. And it still is.

But for those with more elegantly attuned hearing, it's just not good enough.

That's because the servo-system will not serve when it comes to small, low-frequency speed variations. It is not sensitive enough, and the result is there to be heard - if you have the discernment to hear it.

To get around this, Sony took the conventional servo-system and revolutionized it by adding a quartz reference and a phase lock circuitry.

That mouthful is really easy to digest. The stable quartz generator emits a constant frequency. Any variations in speed monitored by the magnetic head are converted to changes in the phase of the signal. This is then compared against the quartz generator's phase signal.

If they do not match, our Xtal-Lock corrects the speed variation instantly.

A conventional servo-system has to wait for the error to appear as a change in frequency, and then it takes time to correct it.

Sony can make the corrections 10 times faster. And within one cycle. All because Sony uses the phase difference as a source of information on speed error, rather than using the angular velocity.

Chart A dramatically illustrates the dramatic difference.

*Cartridge sold separately.

JUNE 1976

Why our tone-arm costs an arm and a leg.

After conquering the drive system, Sony sped along to the tone-arm. The problem: constructing a light, strong tone-arm that has a low resonance quality.

A high resonance quality means the tone-arm vibrates - performing a duet with whatever record is playing.

Sony wrestled with the arm problem and



came up with a different material: a carbon fiber of enormous strength and equally enormous lightness. Moreover, it has a much smaller resonance peak than the aluminum alloy commonly used. (See Chart B, where the difference is demonstrated.)

The carbon fiber worked so well that it was even incorporated into the head shell of the PS-8750. But Sony didn't stop at the tonearm's construction. Next came the actual operation of it.

Most turntables have one motor, oper-

CIRCLE NO. 46 ON READER SERVICE CARD

ating both the drive system and the return mechanism. Meaning that the turntable is linked to the tone-arm. And very often, this linkage produces a drag on the arm

The PS-8750, however, proves that two motors are better than one. The motor that runs the tone-arm is totally isolated from the other motor that runs the turntable.

This eliminates the drag, particularly the drag at the very end of the record. This drag is really a drag, because the return mechanism is preparing to activate itself, and the friction is therefore increased.

Sony further innovates by designing pick-up and return cues that are optically activated. Like the doors in a supermarket, if you will.

With the PS-8750, you get the best of the direct drive manual and the best of the semi-automatic. With

Does your turntable give you bad vibrations?

none of the worst of either.

The same sound waves that travel from your speakers to your ears also travel to your turntable.

This transference excites the equipment. Becoming acoustic feedback, or IM distortion. And the louder you play your record, the more of it you get. There's cabinet resonance. Caused by sound waves.

And there's something called record resonance. Caused by the friction of the stylus in the groove of a warped record.

Sony, however, deals resonance a resounding blow.

We have built the PS-8750's turntable base of an inorganic material that is acoustically dead.

We have also undercoated the platter with an absorbing material that prevents it from transferring any bad vibrations to the good vibrations on the record.

And we cut down on record resonance by pumping a silicone damping material into the record mat itself. By having contact with the entire record surface, it offers more support.

Not for people who want the latest. But the greatest.

The PS-8750 represents a tonnage of innovation and a couple of real breakthroughs. It is not for those who want to spend \$900 so they can <u>say</u> th<mark>ey spent</mark> it.

It is for those who want to spend \$900 so they can hear they spent it.



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11

tem are a wireless battery-powered remote-(Continued on page 14)

NAN CIRCLE NO. 3 ON READER SERVICE CARD

ADR

FID

New Products the latest in high-fidelity equipment and accessories

control unit—about the size of a pocket calculator, and incorporating all the programming buttons of the turntable's main control panel—and a small spherical "receiver" (for the remote control's ultrasonic output signals) that can be placed anywhere within line-ofsight of the remote-control unit. When remote control is employed, the user merely presses the desired buttons, an LED on the receiver lights to acknowledge receipt of the command, and the appropriate control signals are sent on to the turntable itself.

The Accutrac 4000 record player has a lowsilhouette wood-veneer base with black control panel and white pushbuttons. Overall dimensions, including the dust cover supplied, are 18½ x 173% x 6 inches. The entire ensemble, including player, cartridge, and the two remote-control devices, costs \$499.95. Stylus replacements for the cartridge are priced at \$37.50. Less expensive models of the Accutrac 4000, lacking remote control or other features, are planned for the near future.

Circle 118 on reader service card

Yamaha Model TC-800GL Stereo Cassette Deck

Yamaha's designer-styled Model TC-800GL is well suited to both home and portable cassette-recording applications. It will accept



power from the a.c. line, from nine internal "D" cells, or from an external 12-volt power supply. Its unusual sloping front panel is intended to improve control visibility and access. The principal controls of the TC-800GL consist of seven transport-operating push keys (including PAUSE) plus seven unique slider controls that independently adjust the two channels for playback and recording level (line and microphone controls are separate) and vary the speed of the tape over a ±3 per cent range.

The TC-800GL has built-in Dolby B-type noise-reduction circuits, plus switchable bias and equalization for three different tape formulations. In its NORMAL position the equalization switch is correct for low-noise ferricoxide tapes; when depressed, the switch adjusts the deck's circuits for ferri-chrome tape. When a feeler lever in the cassette-loading well detects the presence of a special opening in a cassette shell, the machine automatically switches to chromium-dioxide characteristics. (Most modern chrome cassettes and others designed for chromium-dioxide characteristics have such openings.) Among other features, the deck has a memory-rewind function that works in conjunction with the three-digit tape counter and a limiter circuit that prevents excessive recording levels from reaching the tape. For battery operation there is a batterycheck indicator and a pushbutton for the panel lights, which are turned on only while the button is being pressed. The two recordinglevel meters have green and red LED's to indicate, respectively, levels of -3 and +4 dB. The meters are calibrated over a range of -40to +6 dB.

Frequency response of the TC-800GL is 30 to 13,000 Hz with "standard" low-noise tape and 30 to 15,000 Hz with chromium-dioxide tape. For a 0-dB level the signal-to-noise ratio is better than 50 dB without the assistance of the Dolby circuits. Wow and flutter are less than 0.06 per cent. At high speed, a C-60 cassette can be run through in less than 70 seconds. The deck's headphone jack is said to provide an adequate listening level with virtually all types of dynamic headphones. The TC-800GL measures 12¼ x 3¾ x 12¼ inches and weighs just under 12 pounds. Price: \$390.

Circle 119 on reader service card

Realistic Mach One Speaker System

The Mach One speaker system from Realistic employs a 15-inch woofer together with hornloaded mid-range and tweeter drivers. The woofer is installed in a fully sealed chamber within the enclosure, while the large four-cell mid-range horn (mouth dimensions are 16 x 45% inches) occupies the entire top portion of the cabinet. The smaller tweeter horn ($2\frac{1}{2}x$ $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches) is located just below, concealed by the removable grille. The grille also conceals output-level controls for the mid-range and tweeter, both of which are calibrated from -6 to +6 dB in 3-dB increments.

The Mach One has 12-dB-per-octave crossover networks acting at 800 and 8,000 Hz. Nominal impedance of the system is 8 ohms, and power-handling capability is 100 watts of program material. Frequency range is given



as 20 to 25,000 Hz. The cabinet, with overall dimensions of 283% x 175% x 12 inches, is finished in walnut veneers. Price: \$199.50. Circle 120 on reader service card

Scotch "Master" Cassettes

The 3M Company announces a new lownoise/high-output oxide formulation for cassette tape to be featured in the manufacturer's new line of "Master" Cassettes. The material is ferric oxide, compatible with the normal bias and equalization characteristics of all cassette decks but providing 10 dB more output at high frequencies than standard cassettes. The tape is back-coated with the Scotch "Positrak" backing that is intended to combat tape slippage and promote more uniform high-speed winding of the tape. The Scotch Master cassettes are available in C-45, C-60, C-90, and C-120 lengths; prices are, respectively, \$2.29, \$2.89, \$3.59, and \$4.99. For an additional 30 cents each the cassettes can be purchased in 3M C-Box interlocking-drawer storage-system modules.

Circle 121 on reader service card

Luxman MB-3045 Power Amplifier

A mono vacuum-tube power amplifier is the latest product from Lux Audio. To implement the circuit design, Lux worked jointly with another organization to develop a new type of



high-power triode vacuum tube for the amplifier's output stage and also created a new high-voltage tube for the driver section. In addition, the amplifier uses Luxman's quadrafilar-wound output transformer.

Rated continuous power output of the MB-3045 is 50 watts into any impedance from 4 to 16 ohms at any frequency from 20 to 20,000 Hz. Total harmonic distortion is 0.3 per cent or less at rated output. The amplifier has a signal-to-noise ratio of 95 dB and a frequency response of 10 to 40,000 Hz ± 1 dB. An input of 700 millivolts into the amplifier's 100,000-ohm input impedance drives it to full output. The Luxman MB-3045 measures approximately 14½ x 634 x 9½ inches and weighs 40 pounds. Price: \$445.

Circle 122 on reader service card

PUBLISHER'S NOTICE: Recent fluctuations in the value of the dollar will have an effect on the price of merchandise imported into this country. So, please be aware that the prices quoted in this issue may be subject to change.

WKLS, Atlanta, broadcasts 100% disc-to-air. That's why it uses Stanton's 681 series... exclusively.

Top notch broadcasters who capture a large share of the listening audience, are critically aware of the necessity to achieve a superior quality of sound. Station WKLS is just such a station.

As Bob Helbush, chief engineer, states: "We broadcast 100% disc-to-air except for some commercials. So, for maximum quality sound and phase stability, we use the Stanton 681 SE for on-the-air use. We consider it the ideal answer for that application. And our program director uses Stanton's 681 Triple-E for auditioning new releases before we air them".

And Don Waterman, General Manager, added: "Today, every station in the SJR Communications group . . . all eight of them, all in Major Markets . . . use Stanton 681 cartridges on every turntable".

There are good reasons for this vast acceptance. Stanton's 681 Calibration Series cartridges offer improved trackChuck Ealston DJ, on the air at WKLS.

ing at *all* frequencies. They achieve perfectly flat frequency response to beyond 20 Kc. And the top-of-the-line, superb 681 Triple-E has an ultra miniaturized stylus assembly with substantially less mass than previously, yet it possesses even greater durability than had been thought possible to achieve.

Each 681 Series cartridge is guaranteed to meet its specifications within exacting limits and each one boasts the most meaningful warranty. An individually calibrated test result is packed with each unit.

Whether your usage involves recording, broadcasting or home entertainment, your choice should be the choice of the professionals...the STANTON 681. Write today for further information to Stanton Magnetics, Terminal Drive, Plainview, N.Y. 11803.





You're looking at our attitude about about cassette decks. The HK2000.

harman/kardon

We make only one cassette deck. We certainly are capable of making more. Perhaps some day we will. But it's unlikely — unless there are compelling mechanical or sonic reasons for doing so.

We have an attitude about high fidelity instruments: to give the finest expression to every function of music reproduction. And wherever we feel we have something to contribute, to do so without compromise. The HK2000 (with Dolby*, of course), represents our attitude about cassette decks.

Its predecessor (the HK1000), was evaluated by High Fidelity Magazine as, "the best so far." When our engineering explorations suggested that improvements were feasible, we replaced it. With the HK2000.

We consider that the cassette deck has a definite and honorable utility as a means of conveniently capturing, retaining and reproducing material from phonograph records, tapes or radio broadcasts.

With one major caveat. It must perform on a level equivalent to the source.

The HK2000's specifications offer measurable evidence of its quality. For example: wow and flutter levels of 0.07%.

But performance specifications are only one influence on sound quality. Just as in all Harman Kardon amplifiers and receivers, the wide-band design characteristic of the HK2000 produces sound quality that transcends its impressive specifications.

It utilizes narrow gap, hard-faced, permalloy metal heads (the only heads used in professional studio tape machines) for extended frequency response and low distortion. Low frequency response is so linear that the HK2000 required the incorporation of a subsonic filter control that can be used to remove signals issued by warped discs.

These few factors, not individually decisive in themselves, indicate the attitude with which we conceived, designed and built the HK2000 — the only cassette deck we make.

There is, of course, a good deal more to say. Please write *directly* to us. We'll respond with information in full detail: Harman Kardon, 55 Ames Court, Plainview, New York 11803.

Dolby is a registered trademark of Dolby Laboratories, Inc.





Component Evaluation-II

Q. I have the impression that the writers for STEREO REVIEW by and large don't believe there are major differences in the sound of power amplifiers. Yet the other publications keep talking about them. Are you doing something different in your testing that provides different audible results?

ELLEN MILHAN New Orleans, La.

A. When A-B'ing components, I find it useful to first "rough" match the relative volume levels as close as possible by ear and then make the fine adjustment while listening for—and attempting to eliminate—quality differences. I have proved to myself repeatedly that level differences too small to be heard as such are frequently heard instead as *quality* differences. When the relative levels are adjusted so that the quality differences disappear (or are very small), the ear does not hear a level difference.

This is not to say there are never objective and audible differences among components. But I'm convinced that the vast majority of those listeners, reviewers, critics, etc. who consistently hear distinct *quality* differences between power amplifiers are really responding to those minute *level* differences. The test for this is easy: simply raise the level of the "inferior" amplifier slowly by small increments while operating your A-B test switch. If at some level the sound of the "inferior" amplifier becomes indistinguishable from that of the "superior" amplifier and yet does not appear to be any louder, my point is proved. Three caveats: both amplifiers should, of course, be tested in advance for normal performance, they should be driving conventional speaker loads, and-most important-they should be monitored for clipping. (Clipping, if not too severe, will be heard as a loss of dynamic range before it is audible as IM or THD.) Incidentally, I suspect that this phenomenon results from something other than the ear's standard Fletcher-Munson response, but I have no idea what.

Taping Improvement

Q. I was recently making up a disco dance cassette using one of the new, expensive C-90 tapes. When I later played the cassette back synchronized with one of the original records I had used and switched back and forth between them, the tape sounded more open and had greater clarity than the disc. How can that possibly be? I thought there was always a loss in fidelity when transferring material to tape.

> VINCENT FICARA New York, N.Y.

A How's this for a paradox? There was a loss of fidelity in the transfer and your cassette still sounded better than the original. "Fidelity" simply means a faithful reproduction of some original—in this case the disc.



However, I suspect that the original disc was weak in the highs, which is why it didn't sound open and clear. When you dubbed your record onto a cassette with a rising high end, the net result was a more satisfactory sound.

In regard to the second part of your question, you are right: there must be some loss of fidelity when you dub something onto tape, but the loss of fidelity may occasionally provide a closer approximation of reality.

Low Phono Volume

I have encountered a problem with my system which I hope you can help me with. The volume of the music coming out of the speakers is now markedly lower on phono than on tape or tuner. I thought it was my new turntable, although I bought a very expensive unit with a top-of-the-line cartridge. But some of my friends have the same problem with their systems. Is my amplifier at fault?

SAM CHADISH Brooklyn, N.Y.

It seems to me that I answer this ques-A. tion or a variation on it about once every six months. The "problem"—and it really isn't—appears as a loss (or a gain) in volume when changing a phono cartridge, tape deck, tuner, preamplifier, or power amplifier-in fact, any component. The "problem" arises because for many audiophiles the setting of the volume control correlates directly with amplifier output power. It does not! Think of the amplifier volume control as the equivalent of a handle on a water faucet. If the pressure (signal voltage) is very high, then a slight twist will deliver a high volume of water (sound); if

the water pressure is lower, then the faucet has to be opened further to get the same volume of water flowing out of the faucet.

In Mr. Chadish's case, it's safe to assume that his new phono cartridge delivers less signal voltage to the preamplifier for a given record-groove excursion. (By and large, the more expensive a phono cartridge, the lower its output signal because the mass of the generating elements has been reduced.)

You can see from the accompanying diagram of one channel of a conventional receiver that the MAG PHONO preamplifier section is designed to provide both RIAA equalization and enough gain to raise the output of the phono cartridge to approximately the same level as that of a tuner or tape deck. Specifically, the gain of the phono preamp section is intended to boost the signal from the cartridge, say, 3 millivolts (0.003 volt), to the level of, say, the 0.3-volt or higher signal provided by the tuner or tape deck. If the cartridge had a 6-millivolt output (again, for a given record-groove excursion), then the volume-control setting for the tuner might have to be raised to bring it to the same sound level as the phono input.

When should you be concerned about volume-level differences between components? The way I judge such matters is to play my phono as loud as I would ever want it, and then raise the tone arm off the record with its cue control. If the volume-control setting is higher than 1 or 2 o'clock, then I become concerned-not with power, but with whether I may run into a noise problem from the phonopreamp stages. However, if I don't hear hum, hiss, or r.f. buzz, the required gain-control setting is within the proper operating area.

An excessively high setting (say, 3 o'clock) of your gain control during normal use may mean that your phono-cartridge output is too low for the gain available from your preamplifier. Or it may mean that the input-level controls of your power amplifier (or other units such as a four-channel adapter or equalizer) are turned down, or that your equipment needs servicing.

> The input-source switching circuits of most receivers look something like the diagram at left. The output of the phonoinput section will vary with the cartridge used; the tuner output is more or less fixed.



SONY FRONT-LOAD CASSETTE DECKS FEATURE PRESENTATION:

Dolby* Noise Reduction System virtually eliminates high frequency tape hiss. Signal/noise ratio zips up as much as 10 dB at 5 kHz and over with Dolby in. That 's impressive. There's a 25 μ s de-emphasis switch and rear-panel calibration controls for recording Dolby FM broadcasts.

Ferrite and Ferrite Head lasts up to 200 times longer than standard permalloy. Provides wide, flat frequency response. And—the high density of the ferrite and ferrite material and Sony precision craftsmanship of the head gap make possible a feature we call Symphase Recording. Here, you can record a 4-channel source (SQ** or FM matrix) for playback through a comparable 4-channel decorder-equipped sound system without phase shift. This means that

all signals will be positioned in the same area of the 4-channel spectrum during playback as they were in the initial recording.

Front Load convenience allows you to stack with other components.

Solenoid Operated Transport **Controls** mean feather-light operation. Jam-proof Feature lets you go directly from one mode to another-bypassing stop-without damaging either mechanism or tape. (Available on the 209SD only.)

FeCr Equalization, when used with the new Sony Ferri-Chrome tape, provides significantly improved dynamic range and signal/noise ratio, and optimum frequency response.

Level Measurement includes 2 VU Meters plus a Peak Limiter. Together, they eliminate sudden transient high level input signals that can cause distortion and tape saturation—without compromising dynamic range.

Mic/Line Mixing lets you blend signals from various sources for master quality recordings. (Available only on 204SD, 209SD.)

Sony front load cassette decks have the features you need for the recordings you want. Check them out at your Superscope dealer soon. He's in the Yellow Pages.



*TM Dolby Labs, Inc. **TM CBS, Inc. ©1976 Superscope, Inc., 20525 Nordhoff SI., Chatsworth, CA 91311. Prices and models subject to change without notice.



AUDIO EDUCATION CONTINUED

R^{EADER} response to the article "Multitrack," which John Woram and I co-authored in the March issue, has been especially heavy, with a generous sprinkling of the following sort of communication: "I want to become a recording engineer, but I don't know anything about sound equipment. Will you write and tell me everything I need to know so I can get into this business?"

The idea that learning about the equipment is simply a short and incidental preliminary to the performance of multitrack marvels is misguided at best. It perhaps arises because of the commonly held misconception that a recording engineer functions on a level of creativity somewhere between the realms of pure, abstract thought and inspired, virtuosic knobtwirling. Actually, he is frequently found operating on a level somewhere between the alignment tape and the soldering iron. And if he does wish to avoid the studio's mundane technical/mechanical chores, he had better have exceptional qualifications in other areas.

While there are a number of sound engineers who have the natural or acquired ability to assist the producer and performers in the creative planning of a recording venture, an engineer's main job is that of midwife to the laboring equipment. In other words, he translates the producer's demand for a "taut, gutsy sound" (or whatever else is desired) into types of microphones, mike placements, equalization, reverb devices, delay lines, compressors, noise gates, etc. Then he rigs all these elements together in the right way, and gets them to work properly in a reasonable amount of time. When not so occupied, he generally handles maintenance, the evaluation of new equipment, and the experimentation that may lead to a novel and useful sound "effect." Occasionally he is also a competent electronics designer with innovative signalprocessing circuits to his credit. But, in any case, he is always wrapped up in the equipment and probably never feels he's learned 'everything he needs to know" about it.

As I've mentioned before, there are a number of special schools in the U.S. that profess to teach the basics of sound engineering. As far as I know, all of them focus on the theory and nuts and bolts of the equipment: how to turn it on and off, how to connect it to the rest of the gear, and what to do when it doesn't work right. They do not teach taste, musical sensitivity, or the instinct for a big hit. Of these schools, two of the largest and longestlived are the Institute of Audio Research and the Recording Institute of America.

Although it has an extension division in Los Angeles, the IAR (64 University Place, New York, N.Y. 10003) is based primarily in Manhattan, where it has its own classroom facilities, control room, disc-cutting room, and testing/maintenance shop. The IAR's curriculum is unusually extensive, with courses offered on all levels, and with a particularly distinguished faculty that, incidentally, includes John Woram. The RIA (15 Columbus Circle, New York, N.Y. 10023) works mainly through affiliated recording studios around the country where the studio personnel serve as instructors. Its basic offering is a ten-week program in multitrack skills and tape-recorder theory. While I cannot recommend either of these schools from personal experience, both have by now turned out graduates who endorse them enthusiastically. Many have even found jobs within the recording industry, although no school, of course, can guarantee this.

The most ambitious training now available in the sound field is at the University of Miami, where a four-year program has recently been instituted that leads to a bachelor's degree with a major in music engineering. Besides the prerequisite of a strong background in music performance and mathematics, the curriculum involves three years of music theory (including orchestration and arranging), three years of principal instrument study, two semesters of music literature and history, two years of secondary piano (including jazz piano), four semesters of audio recording techniques (including studio practices), four semesters of electrical engineering, two semesters of calculus, two semesters of psychology, two semesters of business courses, two semesters of communications, a year of music merchandising (including the study of copyright practices), and courses in physics, sound synthesis, and acoustics.

I think I can safely say that precious few engineers working today can boast the formal background that this program provides. But, then again, the graduates of this degree program may well be your competition for recording-industry jobs tomorrow. Anyone wishing more information should write the University of Miami School of Music, P.O. Box 248165, Coral Gables, Fla. 33124.

OR those who have asked about printed study materials, the two largest journals that serve the record-engineering crowd are db magazine (Sagamore Publishing Co., 1120 Old Country Road, Plainview, N.Y. 11803) and Recording Engineer/Producer (P.O. Box 2449. Hollywood, Calif. 90028). R E/P is the newsier magazine, usually providing "how-we-didinterviews with top-forty producers and it'' engineers, descriptive articles on interestingly designed recording studios, and an often-lively letters column. The content of db tends toward the technical side, both practical and theoretical, with useful supplementation by regular columnists Norman Crowhurst, Martin Dickstein, and (that name again!) John Woram. Both magazines will confront the beginner with the usual problems of unfamiliar concepts and vocabulary at first, but diligent study of the articles and the ads should orient him sooner or later. R E/P subscriptions are \$7.50 per year (six issues); twelve issues of db cost \$7. If you can prove you're employed within the recording industry, you're eligible to get R E/P free.

Sagamore is also the publisher of Woram's forthcoming book, Recording Studio Handbook, about which many readers have asked, and offers through the mails a number of other texts that will be of immediate interest to aspiring audio engineers. You can request a catalog from the db address. Also, there seems to be a widespread tendency to overlook a very obvious source of information on the recording arts: the public library. Many libraries today are getting increasingly involved in audio/video projects of one kind or another. Consequently, even if they do not have the most up-to-date texts on hand, they may very well be willing to acquire them for their own reference as well as yours.



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Tape Horizons



PLAYBACK EQUALIZATION

As a recorded tape flows across the tiny gap between a playback head's pole pieces it exposes the head to a constantly varying magnetic field. Even a pure, steady 1,000-Hz tone, in its magnetic embodiment on the tape, fluctuates back and forth between magnetic "north" and "south" a thousand times a second, thereby generating the corresponding electrical "plus" and "minus" portions of the signal waveform in the head's coil. The amplitude (strength) of the voltage generated within the playback head depends, obviously, on the intensity of the magnetic signal recorded on the tape. In addition, however, the output voltage from the playback head depends directly on the frequency of the recorded signal. If a 1,000-Hz tone is recorded at a magnetic flux level that produces a one-millivolt (0.001 V) output, a 2,000-Hz tone recorded at the same flux level will generate two millivolts. This is because the head is an electromagnetic device that responds to the rate of change in the magnetic field it encounters, and there are twice as many plus-tominus (and vice versa) changes per second at 2,000 Hz as at 1,000 Hz.

Now, if the head's output voltage doubles every time the frequency doubles, you have what is called a 6-dB-peroctave rising frequency response. Such a playback characteristic would be much too bright for music listening. But with a single resistor and capacitor combination you can create a 6-dB-per-octave falling response in the playback preamplifier. The head's output rises with increasing frequency and the preamp's output falls with increasing frequency, so when you put the two together the overall output is the same for all frequencies. That's basically what playback equalization (EQ) is all about.

There is more, however, to playback EQ than the simple, straight-line, 6-dBper-octave bass-boost/treble-cut slope. For one thing, bass boost costs money in the form of amplifier stages needed to produce it. For another, carrying full bass boost down to the very lowest frequencies (as is done in some European open-reel machines) amplifies extraneous hum and other low-frequency noise. Therefore, the NAB open-reel standards (and the current cassette standard as well) call for a rolloff of the bass playback boost at 50 Hz (50 Hz, or 3,180 microseconds, the "time constant" of a suitable resistor-capacitor combination, is the so-called "turnover" frequency at which response begins to depart significantly from the straight 6-dB-per-octave slope; at 20 Hz this departure amounts to 8.6 dB). This rolloff eases the burden on the playback preamplifier, but it also means that the missing bass boost must be incorporated into the recording amplifier to obtain flat overall response.

The basic bass-boost/treble-cut curve is also modified at the high-frequency end. For ferric-oxide cassettes, the playback preamp is set to stop cutting the treble at 1,326 Hz (120 microseconds). Open-reel 3¾ ips uses a 1,768-Hz (90 microseconds) turnover frequency, CrO_2 cassettes use 2,273 Hz (70 microseconds), and 7½- and 15-ips openreel stop treble cutting at 3,183 Hz (50 microseconds). Above these frequencies, then, the natural rising response of the head is allowed to reassert itself, helping to compensate for some of the treble losses incurred in recording.

From the figures above you can see that except for chromium-dioxide and some of the other tapes that are very "hot" at high frequencies, the slower the tape speed, the greater the amount of effective treble boost used in playback. While this boost does not raise amplifier cost, it does come at a price: increased tape hiss. At 10 kHz the playback treble rise amounts to about 10.4 dB using 7½ips equalization (50 microseconds). For standard cassettes, which begin their boost more than an octave lower (at 120 microseconds), the rise is 17.6 dB. Head losses can also change these figures.

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ed in this manner, and the vibration has been

the pickup and turntable controls, but it also leaves the system more sensitive to feedback.

A simple isolating sub-base called the "Iso-Mount" has been developed by Netronics, Inc. Consisting of a panel of 34-inch particle board about $13\frac{1}{2} \times 16$ inches, it is supported on four specially shaped coil springs with plastic "feet" to protect furniture finishes (the board is finished in vinyl walnut). When the turntable, with its base, is placed on the board, there are two separate stages of compliant isolation between the mounting surface and the phono pickup.

Although the exact degree of isolation afforded by the Iso-Mount is a function of the record player's mass and suspension system, the device has been designed so that some improvement is likely to take place with virtually any turntable. Price: \$12 plus \$3 postage and handling from Netronics, Route 6, Bethel Meadows, Bethel, Conn. 06801. An 18-inchwide Iso-Mount sub-base is also available for \$14 plus \$3 postage and handling.

• Laboratory Measurements. We were able to measure the quantitative improvement afforded by the Netronics Iso-Mount by means of a test procedure suggested by Technical Editor Larry Klein. We have been applying this technique to all record players tested during the past two years. Essentially, it consists of placing the record player's feet on four small acoustic vibrators (they were originally designed to "turn any surface into a loudspeaker"). The four vibrators are driven in phase with a sine-wave signal sweeping from 20 to 1,000 Hz. The pickup is placed on a stationary record and its equalized output is connected to a graphic-level recorder syn-



The degree of isolation provided by the Iso-Mount sub-base in the acoustic-feedback frequency range of 20 to 150 Hz is shown above. The base is not designed to be effective against physical shock in the infrasonic area.

chronized with the sweeping signal generator. The resulting plot, after correction for the pickup sensitivity, not only shows the relative susceptibility of the system to base-conducted acoustic feedback, but in addition indicates frequencies at which feedback can be expected to occur.

When we made this test on a conventional record player installed on its base and repeated it on the same chart with the Iso-Mount placed between the exciting drivers and record player, the improvement was immediately apparent. A number of record players have ctical terms, this Leans that a record Iso-Mount can actually be placed directly the placed directly in the placed directly of the placed ly no likelihood on the black, even at a loud listening level. We have so operated a number of units, including direct-drive players that are frequently more susceptible to feedback because the motor, platter, and arm are rigidly mounted on a common surface. The results were uniformly excellent.

Comment. We doubt that any other \$12 investment could make such an improvement in a record-playing system as the Iso-Mount. If you don't have a feedback problem, of course, it will do nothing for you. On the other hand, it is quite possible that your sound is being muddied without actual howling taking place, in which case a genuine improvement in clarity is possible. Incidentally, if your record player has a dust cover, it should always be lowered (or removed) during play. Our tests reveal that a raised cover will usually increase the susceptibility to feedback, especially from air-conducted signals.

Although acoustic feedback is often thought of as a low-frequency phenomenon (in which case it could not take place with speakers having limited low bass response), we have found that it is just as likely to occur at mid-frequencies between 100 and 500 Hz, where it is heard as a "singing" rather than a rumble or roar. The Iso-Mount appears to be effective throughout the entire range in which feedback can occur.

Circle 106 on reader service card



• In general, headphones may be classified as circumaural or as open-air types, and each has its own advantages and disadvantages. Circumaural phones are fitted with cushions that completely enclose the wearer's ears and isolate them from outside sounds. Since their low-bass performance depends on the effectiveness of the ear seal, they tend to be relatively heavy and tight fitting. Open-air

AKG Model K-240 Stereo Headphones

phones, on the other hand, rest on the ears, usually by means of foam cushions, and provide little or no isolation from outside ambient sound. As might be expected, open-air phones are usually relatively light to wear, but they rarely have the powerful deep-bass response of a good circumaural phone.

The Viennese firm of AKG, well known for its microphones and headphones, has developed a stereo headphone combining the best features of both types, with few of the disadvantages of either. The AKG K-240 is a circumaural dynamic phone with a rather unusual internal construction. On the same plane as the driver are six small passive radiators spaced at 30-degree intervals around it. In the closed space behind the passive radiators are acoustic-resistance elements which operate in conjunction with the compliance of the "slave" cones to modify the frequency response in such a manner as to enhance the spatial properties of the sound.

For example, at frequencies of 200 Hz and above, the "slaves" are nearly acoustically transparent, and consequently the ear is coupled to an essentially "free-field" environment. This is claimed to eliminate most of the mid- and high-frequency cavity resonances that cause most headphones to have an irregular frequency response in the most important part of their operating range. According to AKG, at very high frequencies the acoustical construction of the phone causes it to simulate the "comb filter" effect which plays an important part in our appreciation of the spatial distribution of sound. Finally, below 200 Hz the slave cones smooth out and extend the bass response, flattening out the usual resonant peak.

Aside from its unique construction, the AKG K-240 is among the lightest of the circumaural dynamic phones, weighing only 10.5 ounces including its ten-foot cord and molded plug. The ear pieces, fitted with vinyl-covered soft-foam cushions, are mounted with the universal pivot originally introduced in the firm's K-140 phones. This allows the earpieces to adapt naturally to the contours of the head; they are further aided in this by a self-adjusting headband that removes almost all the "fussiness" from the process of putting on a pair of headphones.

The AKG K-240 phones have a nominal 600-ohm impedance and a nominal sensitivity of 1 milliwatt (mW) input for a 94-dB sound-pressure level (SPL). The maximum rated input for 1 per cent distortion is 200 mW (Continued on page 34)

A STATEMENT OF LOGIC

FACT 1. All records attract micro-dust when exposed to air.

This dust is welded into record groove walls when a disc FACT 2. is played-regardless of equipment or record treatment.

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(11 volts), which is rated to produce a 117-dB SPL in the wearer's ear. The price of the AKG K-240 is \$69.50.

● Laboratory Measurements. The AKG K-240 phones were measured on a modified ANSI headphone test coupler. The frequency response was measured with a constant 2.45-volt drive level, corresponding to 10mW. The variation of only ±2.5 dB from 20 to 3,000 Hz produced as flat a curve as we have ever measured from a headphone.

Following a slight dip in output at 3,500 Hz (where the volume and shape of the coupler cavity begin to affect the measurements), the output rose to a broad maximum over the range of 6,000 to 15,000 Hz, where it averaged some 10 dB more than the mid-range output. The average SPL between 20 and 3,000 Hz was about 100 dB. When we drove the phones with an 11-volt signal, corresponding to the 200-mW maximum rating, the 1,000-Hz distortion was 0.7 per cent and the SPL was 113 dB. The impedance of each earpiece was between 600 and 900 ohms from 20 to 20,000 Hz.

Comment. The sound of headphones, like that of loudspeakers, can be judged only approximately from the shape of the frequency-response curve. This is because (among other factors) the dimensions of the wearer's ear cavity can have a profound effect on the frequency response, especially at middle and high frequencies.

In the case of the AKG K-240, however, the listening quality was not too different from what we would have expected from our measurements. The sound was extraordinarily clean and uncolored, with only a trace of background-hiss accentuation from the elevated top-end response. We were especially impressed by the total lack of bass coloration, a flaw in so many otherwise fine phones (to say nothing of speakers). The general effect is much closer to that of open-air phones, although the AKG K-240 is technically circumaural in design.

The sound of the AKG K 240 invited a comparison with electrostatic phones (it is undoubtedly at or near the top of the ranks of dynamic phones). We made such a comparison, although it must be realized that, like loudspeakers, no two headphone designs sound alike. With due allowance for that fact, we feel that the sound of the AKG K-240 is every bit in the same league as that of the better electrostatics—which is as high a compliment as can be paid to any phone.

When the very important matter of wearing comfort is considered, the K-240 takes second place to none. It is actually a pleasure to wear, which can hardly be said for the vast



The dim outlines of the six passive diaphragms used in the AKG K-240 headphones can be seen in this photo of one earpiece, cushion off.

majority of headphones we have used. All factors considered, we know of no headphone at or near its price that can top the K-240 for a combination of comfort and sound quality, and few at any price that can offer it any real competition in both those respects.

Circle 107 on reader service card



THE ESS AMT-1 speaker system introduced a few years ago was the first commercial application of the Heil "air-motion transformer" high-frequency driver. Its accordionpleated plastic diaphragm, to which conducting foil strips are bonded, operates in a powerful magnetic field. Current passing through the conductors causes the folds of the diaphragm to alternately expand and contract, thus moving the air with a "squeezing" effect credited by the inventor for the high efficiency and smooth, extended frequency response of this unconventional tweeter.

ESS AMT-1a Speaker System

Originally, the Heil tweeter was combined with a conventional 10-inch woofer in a ported enclosure. While the overall sound aroused much favorable comment, it was obvious that the tweeter was outperforming the woofer and that the system would appear to better advantage with an improved "bottom end." The new ESS AMT-1a is the manufacturer's answer to that need.

The Heil driver in the AMT-1a is basically similar to the original, but it has been improved in several details. Fewer pleats are used in the diaphragm, which is made of soft polyethylene. The magnet structure has been redesigned to improve the vertical dispersion, which was quite narrow in the earlier model. Most important, an entirely new bass section has been developed to complement the improved tweeter.

The former 10-inch woofer has been replaced by a heavy-duty 12-inch woofer and a 12-inch passive radiator, both designed and manufactured by ESS. The enclosure is not vented, since the passive radiator performs the functions of a vent and is much more effective. The forward-facing woofer has a 7.5-pound magnet structure and a 2-inchdiameter high-temperature voice coil. Its natural high-frequency roll-off has been designed to complement the LC crossover network, resulting in an effective cut-off rate of 18 dB per octave above the nominal crossover frequency of 850 Hz.

The passive radiator is on the rear face of the bass enclosure, which forms a pedestal for the tweeter. It is a flat disc of $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-thick neoprene foam bonded to a 5-inch-thick rigid

polyfoam base. Like the woofer, the passive radiator has a compliant edge surround, giving it a free-air resonance of 5 Hz.

Externally, the ESS AMT-1a resembles a slightly scaled-up AMT-1. The truncated, pyramid-shaped, walnut-veneered wooden base is 16¹/₂ inches square and rests on a recessed black pedestal about 4 inches high. The two bass radiators are mounted on a slightly smaller upper section normally hidden from view by a tapering, black-cloth grille structure that lifts off to afford access to the tweeter and the frequency-balance controls. The Heil driver is bolted to the top of the woofer enclosure and radiates both forward and backward.

In a recess behind the tweeter are separate high-frequency and mid-range balance controls. The treble level above 1,200 Hz can be adjusted continuously over a wide range from fully off to considerably above the mid-range and bass signal levels. A "'normal'' range is indicated for the treble about two-thirds of the way up on the control rotation. The middles can be adjusted in steps of $\pm 3 \, dB$ about a "flat" condition by a switch. The center of its control range is at 700 Hz, and its limits are approximately 350 Hz and 1,500 Hz. The system impedance is nominally 6 ohms. The system's power-handling capacity is rated for 75 watts continuous program, 350 watts peak. And the entire system is protected against excessive drive levels by a circuit breaker whose reset button is next to the balance controls. The spring-loaded input terminals are underneath the rear of the pedestal.

The ESS AMT-1a system, with its grille in (Continued on page 36)

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Back view without grille cap.

place, is 36 inches high and 16½ inches square at its widest point. It weighs about 75 pounds. Price: \$396.

Laboratory Measurements. Our "live" room measurements were made with several settings of the treble balance control to determine the flattest overall frequency-response setting. It was apparent (and confirmed by listening tests) that the indicated "normal" setting in our room produced a very hot high end, and we finally selected a control setting at 9 o'clock, nearly all the way off. The mid-range control, which had the specified effect on the response, was left in its FLAT position.

Following our usual procedure for vented systems, we measured the response of the driven cone and the passive bass radiator separately with a close microphone spacing and combined the results to derive a total bass-response curve. The response of the driven cone was smooth, rising about 3 dB at 60 to 70 Hz before dropping very sharply to a minimum at 40 Hz (this is the normal behavior of a system such as this). The passive cone, on the other hand, delivered an almost flat response from 20 to 35 Hz, rising slightly to match the driven-cone output at their effective "crossover" frequency of 56 Hz.

When we combined the two bass curves with the reverberant-field measurement of the middle and high frequencies (as would be done by your ear), the result was a very smooth and extended frequency response. It was flat within ± 3.5 dB from 20 Hz to beyond 17,000 Hz, and was within ± 2 dB from 100 to 5,000 Hz. The bass response rose smoothly to a +5-dB maximum at 56 Hz, where both radiators contributed equally, before sliding off smoothly to a 20-Hz output that matched the mid-range level. The highs between 6,000 and 15,000 Hz were quite flat but elevated 4 to 5 dB above the mid-range level.

The bass distortion was measured at inputs of 1 watt and 10 watts, based on a 6-ohm load impedance. The 1-watt distortion was very low, under 1 per cent down to about 50 Hz and only 2 per cent at 30 Hz. At 10 watts the distortion was about the same down to 60 Hz, but it rose rapidly at lower frequencies, reaching 22 per cent at 30 Hz. We measured the distortion separately at the driven and passive radiators using the figure corresponding to the radiator delivering the predominant output at each frequency.

The very low distortion measured on this speaker may be due in part to our use of a newly acquired Hewlett-Packard 3580A spectrum analyzer instead of the usual null-type distortion meter. By excluding hum and noise, the spectrum analyzer gives a truer picture of the actual harmonic distortion, especially at low sound-pressure levels, and its readings are often substantially lower than those of a THD meter. Nevertheless, the bass distortion of the AMT-1a woofer was clearly lower than that of most good speakers we have measured.

The speaker impedance reached a minimum of 4 ohms at 100 Hz and varied between 4 and 8 ohms over almost the entire audio frequency range. However, if the treble balance control is turned to maximum, the impedance falls above 2,000 Hz, dropping to only 3 ohms in the 10,000 to 20,000 Hz range. In any case, we would give this system a 4-ohm rating rather than the 6-ohm rating chosen by ESS. The tone-burst response of the AMT-1a was good over its full frequency range, though not quite perfect anywhere. However, there was no ringing or spurious output from the system at any frequency, and the tone-burst shape was essentially independent of frequency (with allowance for the predictable effect of the crossover network on the first and last cycle of a burst).

Driving the ESS AMT-1a with 1 watt (based on a 4-ohm impedance) of random noise in the octave centered at 1,000 Hz produced a sound-pressure level (SPL) of 88 dB measured at a distance of 1 meter from the grille. This figure is comparable to those attained by many acoustic-suspension speakers, but it is lower than we usually find with ported systems. The speaker is rated to handle 75 watts of continuous pink noise input, with 350-watt peaks, for 8 hours without damage.

In the simulated "live-vs.-recorded" test, we immediately observed that the "flattest" setting of the tweeter-level control was still much too bright. We had to set the tweeter level to about the 7 or 8 o'clock knob position, and the sound in our room was still too bright. With a slight additional roll-off we achieved a nearly perfect match between the original and its reproduction through the AMT-1a.



Front view without grille cap.

We suspect that there would be few situations where one would need more than a fraction of the output available from the Heil tweeter. However, our live-vs.-recorded test does not evaluate the bass or lower mid-range performance of the speaker, and room arrangement and dimensions as well as speaker placement can have a profound effect on the overall tonal balance and the level-setting requirements.

● Comment. ESS, in our view, has amply corrected the few weaknesses of the original AMT-1, and the new AMT-1a is without question an outstandingly fine loudspeaker. The horizontal dispersion of the Heil driver is excellent, audibly very uniform over more than 90 degrees. Vertically, the speaker still projects a rather narrow beam, but the extra height of the AMT-1a places the tweeter nearly at the ear level of a seated listener and virtually eliminates the problem.

The sound quality of the speaker can be described, somewhat paradoxically, as both "warm" and "crisp" (or "brilliant," if the tweeter level is set too high). When correctly balanced, the highs are without any coloration. If turned up slightly, they have a trace of "sizzle" that may be preferred by many people, since it lends a sharply defined quality to high-frequency transients usually lost in the recording (and broadcasting) processes. The middles are almost totally free of coloration, which is rather remarkable since they are radiated by two very different drivers. The bass is very full and could easily become overbearing if the loudspeaker were placed in a room corner. We found that the AMT-la should be (Continued on page 38)

The ESS AMT-1a's tone-burst performance was quite good, as is illustrated by these oscilloscope photos taken at (left to right) 100, 1,000 and 6,500 Hz.







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CIRCLE NO. 23 ON READER SERVICE CARD





set, for best results, in the open and several feet away from room boundaries. Fortunately, its symmetrical shape and fully finished exterior make this a reasonable solution from an aesthetic standpoint.

The AMT-1a can handle a lot of power

without distress. The only times we tripped the protective circuit breakers were when we deliberately overdrove the speakers and when an unexpected switching transient (are they *ever* expected?) occurred with the volume set high. The sound was perfectly clean when we drove the speakers with the full 150+ watts available from our amplifier, and we found listening at that level to be a most enjoyable experience—a statement we would not make about very many speakers.

Circle 108 on reader service card





THE SAE Mark 2500 is one of the most powerful stereo basic amplifiers available to the public. It is designed for truly state-of-theart performance under the most demanding conditions in professional as well as home applications.

The Mark 2500 is rated to deliver 300 watts per channel into 8-ohm loads from 20 to 20,000 Hz with less than 0.05 per cent total harmonic distortion (THD) or intermodulation distortion (IM). It is also fully rated for driving 4-ohm loads, into which it will deliver at least 450 watts per channel over the full 20to 20,000-Hz frequency range with not more than 0.1 per cent THD.

The amplifier rise time is specified as 2.5 microseconds, and it has an exceptionally high slew rate of 40 volts per microsecond. It is noteworthy that only 10 dB of negative feedback is used in the amplifier; this should minimize any tendency toward transient intermodulation distortion (TIM). The input sensitivity is rated at 1.5 volts for rated output, with the internal noise being at least 100 dB below full power. The input impedance is a constant 50,000 ohms. A relay protects the loudspeakers from damage by low-frequency

transients or d.c. offset voltages and provides a five-second turn-on/turn-off delay to eliminate disturbing thumps through the speakers.

When the amplifier is turned on by pressing the square POWER ON button in the center of the panel, its two large panel meters are illuminated. They are directly calibrated in watts delivered to an 8-ohm load as well as in decibels relative to rated power. Four pushbuttons in the lower center of the panel adjust the meter sensitivity, increasing it in steps of 6, 12, and 24 dB (the latter permits power levels of only 10 milliwatts to register on the meters). Below each meter are four buttons that adjust the gain of that channel downward by 3, 6, or 12 dB. Unlike most amplifiers, whose effective gain is adjusted by a resistive attenuator in the input circuits, the overall negative feedback of the SAE Mark 2500 is switched to actually change its closed-loop gain (which results in a constant input impedance at all gain settings).

In the rear of the amplifier are the two pairs of heavy-duty binding posts for the speaker outputs, standard phono jacks for signal inputs, and the line fuse. The heavy-duty line cord is fitted with a three-wire molded plug (this amplifier was not meant to be switched on by the usual stereo control preamplifier).

The large output-transistor heat sinks in the rear of the amplifier are cooled by a fan that operates whenever the amplifier is on. Because of the full-time cooling system, plus a very conservative and well-protected circuit design, SAE is able to rate the amplifier for continuous duty at any power level within its ratings.

The Model 2500, which we tested, is the "professional" version of the amplifier. It is completely finished in matte black with contrasting white panel lettering. The front panel. is slotted for rack mounting and fitted with rugged handles. An internally identical consumer version, the Mark XXV, has a gold and walnut-grain panel finish; it does not have the rack slotting or handles. An optional wooden walnut-finish cabinet is available for the Mark XXV. The overall dimensions of the SAE Mark 2500 are 19 inches wide, 7 inches high, and 1534 inches deep (excluding handles and rear projections). Its net weight is 58 pounds. Price of the Mark 2500 or Mark XXV: \$1,250. Walnut cabinet (fits both): \$44.

• Laboratory Measurements. SAE points out that only by properly grounding the amplifier relative to the test instruments is it possible to fully validate their impressively low distortion ratings (typical distortion levels are well below 0.005 per cent at most frequencies and power outputs). By taking exceptional precautions in this respect, we were able to match their test data closely in most cases; even when our readings were slightly higher than theirs, however, they were far below the amplifier's published limits.

As might have been anticipated from the capacity of the cooling system of the Mark







The cooling fan for the SAE 2500 nestles amid the heat-sink fins. Toward the front of the amplifier are the power supply (covered by the flat plate) and the driver circuit boards.

2500, the unit was not in the least fazed by a preconditioning period-or by anything else we did to it during our tests. With both channels operating at 1,000 Hz into 8-ohm loads. the outputs clipped at 365 watts per channel. Into 4 ohms, the output was 484 watts per channel, and into 16 ohms it was 221 watts.

At the rated 300 watts, as well as at lower power levels, the Mark 2500 typically had less than 0.005 per cent THD from 100 to about 4,000 Hz with 8-ohm loads, reaching a maximum of about 0.035 per cent at 30 Hz and 20,000 Hz. At 1,000 Hz, the THD was 0.005 per cent at 1 watt; it fell to 0.0016 per cent at 100 watts and reached 0.01 per cent at about 350 watts. The IM distortion was about 0.1 per cent in the range of 10 to 100 milliwatts,

0.009 to 0.01 per cent from 5 to 200 watts, and 0.02 per cent at 350 watts. The noise level of the Mark 2500 was every bit as low as claimed, with the unweighted (wide-band) noise output being only 400 microvolts (87 dB below 10 watts, or 102 dB below the rated 300 watts). A signal of 0.33 volt was needed to achieve our reference 10-watt output.

The square-wave rise time was faster than I microsecond. The slew rate could not be measured because of the action of the protective relay when the amplifier was driven to clipping levels at 20,000 Hz. Checking the effect of the amplifier on square-wave symmetry (one of the suggested tests for TIM distortion), we found none. Our spectrum analyzer indicated that all even harmonics in the input square wave were at least 60 dB below the fundamental level, and the output of the amplifier showed no change in the spectral content of the signal.

Comment. The SAE Mark 2500 is, to put it mildly, an impressive amplifier. As far as we are concerned, it may be considered essentially distortionless. It should be noted that the grounding problems mentioned earlier affect only measurements in the range below about 0.01 per cent, and there are no such special electrical requirements for the normal installation and use of the amplifier. It is perhaps needless to add that the Mark 2500 has no sound of its own, and no transient effects, hiss, or hum either. The Mark 2500 inspired in us complete confidence in its abilities and ruggedness. As far as we could tell, it seems to be virtually indestructible, whether from being overdriven, improperly loaded, or for any other reason. Would that the loudspeakers it will drive were as rugged!

Circle 109 on reader service card



". . . it was either that or my speakers were out of phase. So-o-o . . . I unhooks the speaker wire on my left channel and reverse the connection-and whaddya think? The damn thing still sounds lousy! Could it be the output transistors?



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he Opera File

By William Livinastone



BEL CANTO AND TECHNOLOGY

As the bel canto revival approaches the end of its third decade, each new season brings ample proof of its continued vitality both in opera houses and on records. This year the New York City Opera added Donizetti's Lucrezia Borgia (with Beverly Sills) to its repertoire, and the Met revived Bellini's I Puritani (with Joan Sutherland and Luciano Pavarotti) for the first time since 1918. Among the newest bel canto recordings are Donizetti's Maria Stuarda with Sutherland and Pavarotti on London Records and Bellini's I Capuleti e i Montecchi with Sills and Janet Baker on Angel

Fashions in the arts change for mysterious reasons, and it is difficult to explain why the operas of Rossini, Donizetti, and Bellini regained popularity in such a big way in the middle of this century. At the outset Maria Callas was so prominent in the revival that it is convenient to date its beginning from her first performance of a bel canto role (Elvira in I Puritani) in Venice on January 19, 1949.

That production of Puritani was planned for Margherita Carosio, who became ill a week before the first performance. Callas was in Venice to sing Brünnhilde in Die Walküre, and conductor Tullio Serafin invited her to substitute for Carosio if she could learn the role in a few days. She accepted the challenge, created a sensation in Puritani, and later gave some of her greatest interpretations in bel canto operas.

Some music critics and historians think the general public has credited the bel canto revival to Callas erroneously. Max de Schauensee, for example, has written: "While Callas did inaugurate a new trend in awareness of the obscure bel canto repertoire, the trend actually owed most to Tullio Serafin, who in Callas found the perfect soprano to give form to his ideas.'

I am convinced that the trend also owes something to such technological innovations as magnetic recording tape and the long-playing record, but I've never seen an adequate assessment of the contribution records have made to the bel canto revival. Complete operas on 78's were bulky and had awkward breaks in the music every four minutes or so. Magnetic tape, which became available after World War II, made it easier to record operas, and the long-playing record, introduced by

Columbia in 1948, made it easier to manufacture and distribute them. That the beginning of the bel canto revival occurred simultaneously with public acceptance of the LP is not, I think, mere coincidence.

Record companies quickly began re-recording the standard repertoire plus whatever novelties they thought would sell. The first release of Angel Records (November 1, 1953) included a complete Puritani with Callas conducted by Serafin, and a Lucia with the same soprano and conductor followed a month later. Their Norma was issued in this country within a year. Circulated around the world, such recordings brought bel canto operas to the attention of enormous new audiences and stimulated their appetites for more. Callas was a controversial artist, and her recordings made it possible for people who never heard her "live" to join in the fray.

RECISELY ten years after Callas' historic first Puritani, Joan Sutherland burst onto the international operatic scene in her first bel canto role. Lucia di Lammermoor, in London on February 17, 1959. Transatlantic jet passenger service had just been introduced (by British Airways on October 4, 1958), and it is intriguing to reflect too on the influence of the jet plane on opera: after recordings had created a sufficient public clamor for a particular diva, she could be quickly delivered by jet to any major city in the world.

More important to Sutherland's career, however, was the advent of stereo, which, like the jet, was introduced in 1958. The record industry quickly tooled up to re-record the entire operatic repertoire in stereo, and Sutherland, who had just inaugurated the second decade of the bel canto revival, was ready. Since then she has recorded most of the bel canto operas associated with Callas and a number that La Divina never got around to-Semiramide, Beatrice di Tenda, L'Elisir d'Amore, and La Fille du Régiment.

With the LP coming in 1948, stereo in 1958, Callas in 1949, and Sutherland in 1959, it looked as though we were dealing with a couple of ten-year cycles slightly out of phase. Although the four-channel record was introduced in 1969, the year that Beverly Sills inaugurated the third decade of the bel canto revival with her La Scala debut in Rossini's The Siege of Corinth, quadraphonics have added nothing to her career.

Besides, the diva cycle had been interrupted by the unheralded arrival in 1965 of Montserrat Caballé, who made a brilliant New York debut with the American Opera Society in a concert performance of Donizetti's Lucrezia Borgia. Her first bel canto performance anywhere, it made her a star overnight.

Under the artistic direction of Allen Sven Oxenburg, the American Opera Society was an extremely influential organization that had a significant effect on the careers of many great singers besides Caballé. It also broadened public taste in repertoire by reviving unusual works from the seventeenth century through the twentieth-Monteverdi to Poulenc-with particular emphasis on bel canto. Would the New York City Opera have mount-ed the Donizetti "queen" operas for Sills in the 1970's if the American Opera Society had not already proved those works could thrill modern audiences?

None of the Society's performances were recorded commercially, but many were circulated on pirate discs for a few years, and those influenced the big companies. It is unlikely that RCA would have gambled on a complete recording of Lucrezia Borgia with Caballé in 1966 had there not been a thriving traffic in pirated recordings of her debut in that role.

At least one record company recently decided not to wait for the pirates to send up a trial balloon. This year when the Opera Orchestra of New York under Maestra Eve Oueler presented concert versions of Massenet's Le Cid (Grace Bumbry, Placido Domingo, and Paul Plishka) and Donizetti's Gemma di Vergy (Caballé, Plishka, and Louis Quilico), Columbia Records taped both for release later in the year. They will be the first complete recordings of both operas, and that



TULLIO SERAFIN Did he spark the bel canto revival?

should guarantee a certain number of sales. Like the latest Aida or Bohème, a recorded "first" generally sells well, and for that reason record companies search for such novelties. With Gemma, Columbia will fill one more gap in the bel canto catalog, but there are enough yet to be filled to carry the revival for at least another decade.



ALL THE CLASSICAL MUSIC YOU'LL EVER NEED

N the mass of decidedly hard-sell commer-cials that assault the ear whenever one turns on a late-night broadcast or telecast is a recent one that goes: "All the classical music your family will ever need. . . ." Amid stormy excerpts from such works as Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture, huckster Ed Herlihy goes on to tell us that every composer has written one special work that essentially sums up his life's labors. He assures us, first, that all these works are included in the set of records he offers for sale, and, second, that all the works in that set are complete and not merely excerpts. No performers are mentioned, but with the amount of high-pressure music and words crammed into that commercial, there would hardly be room for such information. And besides, performers are not what they are selling here anyway.

Quite apart from its nearly immortal opening line and the sheer punchiness and presumable sales power of this commercial—one assumes the message is successful, because one hears it over and over again—it contains within it, in highly abbreviated form, some views of music and of the world as well that may be worth examining. I propose to examine them here, and if the reader wonders why, just put it down to some sort of extension of the rule of equal time for differing opinions by responsible people. I consider myself a responsible person.

To begin with, the promise implicit in the advertisement is that of a lifetime supply of a particular product; the words "all" and "ever" are enough to establish that. But there is a quantitative problem here. A lifetime supply of potatoes, for example, might well be several cellars full, while a lifetime supply of the South American poison curare would, unless one is a member of the aboriginal tribe that dips its weapons into it, be no greater a quantity than a single vial. How does one determine how much constitutes a lifetime supply of classical music?

Furthermore, a lifetime supply of *pâté de foie gras* for one who dislikes or is merely indifferent to it is not very much at all—a can or two, perhaps; maybe even none, or just a little for company who might like it. Is this collection of classical music, then, geared to someone who *likes* the stuff or to someone who is indifferent to it? There is some little

evidence that the latter is actually the case, for the commercial explicitly states "all the classical music your family will ever need."

Presumably, then, one should buy this set of records for the family's sake, not for one's own—as, for example, one might buy life insurance. If that is indeed what is in the advertiser's mind, he is at least more honest and straightforward than the life insurance companies who try to sell you all the life insurance you will ever need. Perhaps it is delicacy on their part, but when the time comes, I won't need any life insurance; I expect to be quite oblivious to the whole matter.

Suppose we say, then, that Albert Jukes is considering the purchase of this set of records of classical music, not for his own sake, but for that of his family. Under those circumstances, may the family play the records when Mr. Jukes is at home? He is, at best, indifferent to it. Can he be indifferent to the Rachmaninoff Second Piano Concerto when he is trying to focus on *Hawaii 5-0*? And what of the family? We know nothing of Mrs. Jukes' taste, but presumably it does not tend



toward classical music, for if it did, there already would be such records in the house, she having at least as much power of the purse as Mary Hartman. And if there are such records in the house, then we are obviously faced with a surfeit, since this album contains *all* the classical music she and her brood will ever need.

Armand Jukes is seventeen years old, and like all male persons of that age—according to the advertising media—he has no interest in anything but cars, girls, and hard rock. Does he have a need for an album of classical music? Unquestionably so. There has to be something, apart from mere longevity, that will rescue him from the state of being seventeen. But will he take his medicine like a good boy? Ah, there's the rub!

Emily Jukes is ten and wonders why Donny and Marie Osmond don't get married. Will Mozart soothe her jangled nerves and solve her problems? Perhaps—if he made a personal appearance on her favorite TV show. Then again, perhaps not.

LEAVING the Jukes family alone for a moment, suppose we turn to the contents of this album: one composition per composer, one work that sums up the greatness of his life's work, the cream of the golden oldies. It is not even "Beethoven's Greatest Hits" any more, but Beethoven's greatest *hit*—and Mozart's and Schubert's and Tchaikovsky's, etc. But surely, somebody ought to be allowed to have more than one hit. After all, if everything Elvis Presley ever recorded is now a "classic" (as other commercials imply), Beethoven should have more than a single call on our attention—a couple, at least.

And then I wonder if the Fifth Symphony will always be the Beethoven piece that I need. I hate to keep focusing on that word so much, but there is something significant there, and it's obvious that the advertiser thought so too or he wouldn't have used it himself. Certainly you never hear the word applied to popular music. Popular music is something you want; classical music is something you need. Is that it? Like vitamins, perhaps; bubblegum and popcorn will go just so far.

All right. The Jukes family doesn't want this set of records, but they need it. They need it . . . for what? Why, to fill up the space at the end of the shelf where the books are always falling down and knocking over the lamp. So we have a use for the album: it is a stabilizer, even a tranquilizer, if you will. It sits there on the shelf, protecting the lamp, and proclaiming to all who visit the home that here is a family that knows what it needs and is alert enough to take advantage of an advertised bargain to obtain it.

Do I find the prospect dispiriting? Not at all. A house with things on the shelf is better than a house without them (such as the Kallikak residence), for there is at least the possibility of a temptation to remove them from the shelf and investigate them. Perhaps it may take a decade or two, an utter failure of the television set, the coincidental retirement of all purveyors of junk music, or some emotional trauma-like growing up-but someday . . . someday. No. What bothers me is, if this album will give me all the music I need, or even most of it, why do I have those six thousand LP's cluttering up my shelves and almost as many more piled up on the floor waiting for a more appropriate resting place? Why? That's what bothers me.
TDK SA. WE DEFY ANYONE TO MATCH OUR VITAL STATISTICS.

		MAGAZIN <mark>E</mark> A		MAGAZINE B	
Manufacturer	Brand	S/N Ratio Weighted in dB	Output @ 3% THD	S/N in dB (re: 3% THD)	THD at O dB (%)
TDK	SA 📃	66.5	+4.2	66.0	0.9
AMPEX	20:20+	56.4	+1.9	-	
FUJI	FX	60.0	+ 2.3		
MAXELL	UD	-	—	58.5	1.1
MAXELL	UDXL	62.5 <mark>-</mark>	+2.7	_	- 1
NAKAMICHI	EX	60.0	+2.3	55.0	1.1
SCOTCH	CHROME	-	-	64.0	1.3
SCOTCH		62.5	+2.0	.—	
SONY	FERRICHROME	64.0	+2.1	64.0	1.8

Decks used for tests: Magazine A-Pioneer CT-F9191 (cross-checked on DUAL 901, TEAC 450); Magazine B-NAKAMICHI 1000.

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Wait till you hear what you've been missing.



PATTI AGAIN

RIGINALLY, I wanted to do this month's piece as a sort of "Patti Smith Now That the Dust Has Settled" thing. She's been on the road for months, she's done a nationwide radio broadcast, people have had time (or so I thought) to get over the outrageous press blitz that's accompanied her, and I had received some very interesting reader mail, both pro and con, on the subjects of her album and her live performances. Also, she was making her return to New York the day before I planned to write this (which was late in March), appearing not at a club but at Lincoln Center, of all places, and it seemed like the perfect time for me to try to sum up all my reactions since I first started bothering you about her. I knew, basically, what I wanted to say. What I saw and heard at the concert, however, profoundly disturbed me, and I find that I've had to do a great deal of serious reevaluating on the basis of it.

I didn't get to see any of her club appearances. My only live exposure to her previously was at last September's Arista benefit, but I did hear the radio show, which was taped at a small club in Washington, and I had been charmed by both. She had a first-rate, powerful rock-and-roll band working wonderfully with her (John Cale's production had all but obscured these qualities on her album), and as a performer she was nothing at all like the media image that has been projected of her—the Super Bitch mad with delusions of being the reincarnation of Arthur Rimbaud as a Rolling Stone. Instead, she was an adorable—for want of a better word—gamine, a funny little girl/woman, seemingly rather vulnerable, unpretentious (she kidded her audiences hilariously), and filled with a quite sincere desire to live up to the standards the rock stars she adores have set. She was also—and still remains. I hasten to add—an inexplicably erotic personality.

At Avery Fisher Hall, however, I was reminded of Paul Williams' observations about her and the late Jim Morrison (she opened the show by reading one of Morrison's poems— "They wouldn't let him read it at the Fillmore," she noted) to the effect that Patti, even before she became a rock star, had already achieved what Morrison so desperately wanted *after* he had become one—that is, serious recognition by the academic poetic establishment. He never got it, and we know what happened to him, especially if you ever saw the Doors toward the end, or even listened to their live album. Morrison, who had



unwittingly created a monster (his public image as the Lizard King), began to brood about how foolish it all was, and eventually it and his efforts to dispel it destroyed him.

But that was a process that took years. Patti has been a star for mere months now, but what I saw seemed to me to be already something painfully similar to the Morrison saga. The road work has tightened her act, the band's playing has changed almost beyond recognition, she is still willing to take chances (she sang-are you ready?-Dolly Parton's big hit Jolene, which I doubt more than a handful of her fans had ever heard before), but she seemed nonetheless on the verge of being devoured by the rock-and-roll success she has so desperately craved. Example: at one point, during one of her spoken recitatives (a part of Birdland, if memory serves), she was extemporizing, as she often does, and as she groped for an image she suddenly spaced out and lost whatever it was she was chasing. Immediately, she made a joke of it and went back to something she had done somewhere else before, something she knew would work. But for a brief second in between I sensed real terror on her part; it was like one of those awful moments when a pitiful Judy Garland broke down in concert.

Worse, the crowd was merciless. There were far too many acid casualties in the audience screaming for her "hits" (or her blood, as it seemed to me). and they brought out a side of Patti I had never really seen before. Certainly there has always been an element of pent-up fury behind her work, but it has always been tempered with a kind of tenderness; it's what endeared her to me in the first place. This time, the fury seemed on the verge of explosion, and when she did her encore-a pounding, rampaging version of the Who's My Generation-I half expected her to smash her guitar, not in the self-conscious, for-fun, tradition-demands-it way I had imagined from hearing her do it on the radio, but because she was really angry at her audience, frustrated by the trap they had forced her into, and, frankly, on the verge of a genuine collapse. It was a spectacle at once fascinating and appalling, a metaphorical Altamont, if you will, and, as much as I had been moved by most of the music that evening, I could not wait to get out of the building and away from rock-androll altogether.

NICK JAGGER once asked, in song, "If I could stick my pen in my heart, spill it out over the stage, would it satisfy you?" But he, of course, was being ironic. For Patti, who has struggled for years to reach a position similar to the one Jagger has achieved, the question takes on dimensions far more sinister and real. How she chooses to deal with the answer to it is going to be a very difficult problem for her, thanks to the hype and the monster it has created for her and even, perhaps, of her. And let us make no mistake—she didn't go along with it because it was part of the game: she *demanded* it.

I still like Patti Smith, her music still touches me, and I even think I share her love for her heroes. But I want no part of making her another sacrifice on the altar of rock. As a writer who may in some small way be partly responsible for contributing to the hype that has created this deplorable situation, I can only hope she has the strength to cope with it. Six months ago, I would have staked my life on her. Now . . . well, let's just say the odds have changed.



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world-famous Nakamichi engineering, establishes standards that are unlikely to be equalled for years to come.

By design, the 600 is a study in human engineering. All of the operating controls, as well as all adjustment and calibration controls, are engineered into the graceful front panel, assuring ease of operation and maintenance.

The shape of the future

But the real news is in the increased dynamic range of the 600. The Nakamichi Focused-Field Crystal Permalloy head not only assures a remarkable frequency response of 40 to 18,000 Hz; it achieves superior penetration of the tape coating, producing a higher, undistorted signal level. Special IM Suppressor circuitry reduces saturation nonlinearities and increases dynamic range to an incredible 68dB at the standard 3% distortion figure with Dolby* on. Program material may be recorded at levels 3 to 4dB higher than previously possible.

To take full advantage of this available headroom, the Nakamichi 600 employs precise peak reading meters with an unheard of 47dB range. Full meter defection is an unprecedented +7dB.

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and a starting

That's a big plus any way you look at it!

Naturally, this superior dynamic range yields a vastly improved signal to noise ratio and impressive openness of sound. The tape transport, designed especially for the 600, is light and positive in action, and employs a pulse controlled DC Servomotor, which cuts wow and flutter to a minimum and guarantees constant tape speed, unaffected by fluctuation in line voltage or frequency.

Additional features include built-in Dolby* Noise Reduction, 400 Hz calibration tone, MPX filter for FM recording, memory rewind, and individual record level controls plus master level control and independent bias and equalization switches. The 600 is the first in an innovative group of special components, The Recording Directors' Series, designed to provide unequalled performance and exceptional flexibility.

So visit your Nakamichi dealer soon, and get a glimpse of the future, or for additional information write Nakamichi Research (U.S.A.), Inc., 220 Westbury Ave., Carle Place, New York 11514.





By Martin Bookspan



FRANCK'S SYMPHONY IN D MINOR

COUPLE of months ago this space was devoted to a discussion of the Violin and Piano Sonata in A by César Franck, as good an introduction to that genre of music as one can find. Franck's one and only symphony, in the key of D Minor, may also be an ideal introduction-to French symphonic literature of the nineteenth century. This is so despite the fact that Franck was a Belgian by birth, for, from the age of twelve, when César and his family were settled in Paris by his ambitious father, he imbibed French culture and became one of its most influential dispensers. He lived in Paris most of his life.

The sensuous and mystical in music appealed to Franck. These, along with harmonic daring, became the qualities most strongly felt in his own music, and the D Minor Symphony is a prime example of Franck at his most characteristic. At its first performance, in February 1889, the symphony became the rallying point for opposing forces: those allied with Franck and his music, and those against both. A particular thorn in the side of the detractors seems to have been Franck's scoring for solo English horn of the principal and unforgettable theme in the symphony's slow movement. Today, of course, we wonder how such a fuss could have been made over a simple matter of instrumentation, and that theme and its setting are regarded as among the work's greatest inspirations.

For thirty-two years, from 1858 until his death in 1890-a scant twenty months after the première of the symphony-Franck served the Sainte-Clotilde Church in Paris as organist. The sanctuary and remoteness he felt there became an integral part of his being, and the characteristics of the organ are germane to all his thinking. There are many passages in the D Minor Symphony that call to mind the sound of an organ. It is even possible to find among the various interpretations of the symphony differences of approach that correspond to the different styles of organ composition and performance. Some conductors approach the score with a Baroque attitude: textures are clear and clean, with distinct colors and shading and with rhythmic buoyancy and snap. Others apply to it the thicker-textured conception of the nineteenth century, emphasizing the lush sound of Franck's orchestration and basking in the interpretive opportunities afforded by the score.

Two of the many available recorded per-

formances of the Franck symphony strike me as ideal exemplars of the opposite attitudes: the recordings conducted by Pierre Monteux (RCA LSC 2514) and Leopold Stokowski (London SPC 21061, cassette M 94061). The Monteux recording, made with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra during the 1960-1961 season, marked the third time the revered maître had begun a decade with a recording of the Franck symphony. The performance is the culmination and summation of his view of the music: it has fire and drive, and at the same time the mystical elements are given their full due. The orchestra plays supremely well, and the recorded sound is still vibrant. This is one of the most cherishable reminders of the combined passion and elegance that Monteux was able to command from the orchestras he conducted.

Stokowski, in his performance with the Hilversum Radio Philharmonic Orchestra of Holland, takes an altogether different approach to the symphony, reveling in the sensuous abandon of the music. Like Monteux, Stokowski had made several recordings of Franck's symphony before he made this one, which is a summation of his vision of the music. The Hilversum Radio Orchestra sounds for all the world like the great Stokowski Philadelphia Orchestra of the Thirties, and the recorded sound of the London disc is gloriously warm, vibrant, and detailed.

AMONG other commendable recordings of the symphony is that of Otto Klemperer, whose performance (Angel S 36416) reveals a different, more somber and noble outlook. Sir Thomas Beecham's reading (Seraphim S 60012) is smaller-scaled, characterized by elegance and taste. Beecham secures playing of unusual clarity and precision from the French National Radio and Television Orchestra, and the recorded sound, though a very early example of stereo technology, still holds up quite well.

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HOUGH now is the time young men's fancies are traditionally said to turn to the same old thing, it is also the time to observe another ancient tradition called spring housecleaning. The urban apartment dweller may be spared the chores of rain-gutter cleaning, leaf raking, and porch painting, but there are other seasonal tasks from which he is not exempt-giving his hi-fi system its annual (at least!) clean-up/tune-up being one very good example. Knowing that not every householder, even in these days of macho-lib, has completely mastered the housekeeping arts, I have prepared a checklist designed to help you put your sonic house in order systematically. should ideally have its *own* circuit wiring not shared by other appliances or even lights, especially fluorescents or lights controlled by dimmers. There is nothing wrong, of course, in using the "convenience outlets" provided at the rear of most components.

In less-than-ideal situations, available a.c. outlets may *have* to be shared with other electrical appliances. A good rule of thumb is to think of your audio system as you would an air conditioner (which, in a way, it is!) and use the same sort of wiring precautions for it. Most ordinary lamp cord is No. 18 gauge, No. 16 being a medium-heavyduty size that would suffice for most systems. If your power amplifiers have hum in the system and give you a mild electric shock (a slight "tingle") as you brush your fingertips over the metal faceplates. One way to check for this is to get an inexpensive neon-bulb tester at a hardware or electrical store. Though designed to determine whether an electrical circuit is "live" or "dead" (by plugging the two test prods into the outlet concerned), these bulbs will also glow dimly when they encounter small amounts of leakage current.

• Are the power cords from your components simply jumbled together, or are they "dressed" (lined up) neatly and inconspicuously? Where possible, a.c. power cords should be kept physically

Now is the time to... Clean up and tune up your audio system

Spring housecleaning is about as good an excuse as you'll find these days to take care of those minor chores you have been neglecting all year

By Craig Stark

The payoff could well be a bettersounding, safer, and more convenient sound system, so roll up your sleeves, and let's begin at the beginning:

The A.C. Power Line

• Is your system supplied with a.c. power by a couple of strung-together extension cords running out to so many cube taps that the whole thing looks like an octopus at the end of an umbilical cord? Do equipment pilot lights dim during loud musical passages? Are any of the a.c. wires frayed or cracking (especially near the plugs), and/or do any of the plugs make loose contact with their a.c. sockets? Makeshift or inadequate a.c. wiring can be more than just a visual mess; it can be a source of power loss, electrical shock, and fire hazard as well. It may also be the reason you're hearing your electric blender, hair dryer, and dishwasher through your speakers. A separate line minimizes the chance of noise pickup, so your system a 300-watt or higher capability, No. 14 wire would not be excessive. Don't run a.c. wires under carpets, where the tread of many feet could ultimately fray the insulation enough to create a fire hazard. If you have many components to connect, you can obtain baseboard-mounted strips, with outlets spaced every few inches, from hardware or electrical suppliers. A "master switch" with a pilot light is a convenience, but don't use one if you have one of those preamps that are designed to remain "on" continuously.

• Is each component plugged into its a.c. outlet in such a way as to minimize voltage potential on the chassis? Unless all your equipment uses three-prong plugs and is connected to three-prong grounded receptacles (see Fig. 1, page 50), you've got a fifty-fifty chance of making the chassis electrically closer to the "hot" side of the a.c. line than to the ground side. Failure to minimize chassis potential (by putting the plug in the "right" way) may induce unwanted apart from the shielded audio cables (particularly the phono cables) and should cross them (if necessary) only at right angles. An easy method of keeping the cords neat is to use the plastic spiral wrap (available in colors and designed to protect telephone cords) you can get at a dime store. Cut the spiral into 1- or 2-inch lengths and space these conveniently along the length of the bundled cables. Alternatively, if your equipment is mounted on removable shelves, you may find that the a.c. cords can be taped or stapled to the rear or undersides of the shelves.

• Do all the shielded interconnecting cables between your components make secure, reliable contact at both ends? Broken or shorted cables are easily spotted because of the complete loss of signal or the introduction of loud hum, but a merely poor connection between the outer shell of a typical phono plug and the ring of the phono jack may result in *erratic* behavior, ranging from slightly worse hum to pickup of radio signals.

gets to your receiver's input terminals, it may also cause changes in the directivity pattern that will mean more multipath distortion. If you're installing a new outdoor antenna and want to keep the connection between the antenna dergoing destructive corrosion from unthe weather, coat the whole area of the connection with GC Electronics' "Liquid Tape" after attaching the wire.

• When your outdoor antenna was installed, was it oriented to produce the cleanest reception, or was it merely pointed in the same general direction as meighboring TV antennas? Except in fringe areas (for example, 75 miles or more from the transmitter), where you more from the transmitter), where you more devery microvolt of signal you can get, you can often trade some of your antenna's gain (when it has more than you need) for a little multipath protec-

ec- cured to baseboards, etc., with staples pr

ly, ordinary twin-lead should not be se-

your FM tuner's terminals. Incidental-

of the signal between the antenna and

useful life and you may be losing much

outside all that time, it may be past its

three years old? If so, and if it has been

• Is your 300-ohm twin-lead more than

And then to the other until the TV

then slowly rotate it first to one side

aiming the antenna "on target," and

use it to make this adjustment. Start by

connect the antenna to your TV set and

same site as local TV stations, you can

and the FM stations broadcast from the

er does not have a multipath indicator

response pattern. If your tuner/receiv-

portion of the antenna's directional-

flections from surrounding hills or

tion by so orienting the array that re-

"ghosts" disappear.

THERE ARE SEVERAL STEPS to determining whether your plugs are oriented properly with reference to "ground."

ment simultaneously at any time until everybe careful not to touch it and your equipthen become your ground, but you should have inexpensive ground clamps). This will cold-water pipe (electrical supply stores run a wire to a ground clamp attached to a can't find a ground this way, you'll have to will become your grounded test point. If you tion). If the light glows, that metal screw paint on the screw so you get a solid connecplug slots (be sure you push through any other alternately into each of the two regular holds the cover plate in place and insert the touch one test prod to the metal screw that ing done before 1962). To check for this, would be the case with premium-quality wirground right at that same outlet box (this however, you may still have an electrical you don't have three-conductor receptacles, no means of grounding it was available). If ern, three-conductor receptacle even though may have been replaced since with a modtional electrical ground, and the wall outlet wiring was not required to provide the addially in older houses in which the original nection has been omitted (this happens usuand either of the slots, the grounding conglow when connected between 'ground' ter which) but not to the other. If it doesn't connected to one of the slots (it doesn't matelectrical ground, the bulb will glow when other slots. If the U-shaped hole really is an plug the other probe alternately into the two tester into the supposed ground hole and does, insert one of the probe tips of the neon this (it doesn't always). To check whether it off-center, U-shaped hole should provide plugs directly (without an 'adaptor'), the of your wall outlets accept three-prong 1. Find a known electrical ground. If any

tester and the ground test point as shown in profit from a component plugged in ground point at t Figure 1. With the component plugged in ground point at t and turned on, see if the tester glows when is ground tern its other probe is touched to the metal chas-

ed for proper grounding. 3. Repeat this procedure with each of your components, including the turntable. If a given piece of gear doesn't light the bulb

case this is the way to leave the plug insert-

This time it will probably not glow, in which

a.c. plug in the wall socket and try again.

sis of the component. If it does, reverse the

sulated wire between one probe of the neon

speakers, however). Connect a length of in-

(you don't need to disconnect your loud-

proper grounding and the rest of your system

between the component to be tested for

arate ground connections (if there are any)

thing is safely grounded-you could get a

SUOCK

2. Unplug all audio cables as well as sep-

Fig. 1. Tester is connected between the component's chassis and a suitable ground point. If the bulb lights there is a (possibly hazardous) potential on the chassis.



when plugged in either way, then it really doesn't matter which way that plug is inserted. If it glows both ways, however, pick the position with the dimmer glow.

for their impedance is not disturbed by

them past fire escapes or drainpipes,

leads are also helpful if you must run

ther from the roadway. Shielded down-

consider relocating your antenna far-

directly). If possible, you should also

is not designed to accept 75-ohm coax

and another at the receiver if the latter

a matching "balun" at the antenna end

lead (300-ohm, or 75-ohm coaxial with

noise from passing traffic? If so, perhay you should use a shielded down-

o you pick up automobile ignition

you of much of the performance of

act as a partial short-circuit, robbing

storm window) across the lead-in can

metal (even the frame of an aluminum

At FM radio frequencies, a span of

make electrical contact with the wires.

or tacks, even if these do not actually

proximity to metal.

your antenna.

lower hum, fasten it in. additional ground to your test point gives a level at which hum is clearly audible. If the the bass up, the treble down, and volume to cord. If not, switch to phono playback, turn tion is made automatically through the line a.c. receptacles are grounded, this connecnents with three-prong plugs and your wall preamp. Of course, if you have any composis ground terminal on your receiver or Stound point at the wall socket and the chasprofit from a connection between the test whether your system as a whole would chassis-if they still reduce hum) and see wires you may have been using between ponents (along with any separate ground 4. Reinstall the audio cables between com-

SLEKEO KENIEM

ing factor will be reduced, which will result in the speakers' having greater output at their resonant peaks. Ordinary No. 18 lamp cord is probably an acceptable wire size for 8-ohm speakers located in the same room as the amplifier, and No. 16 should be used for a 4-ohm system. Extension speakers some distance from the amplifier can probably use one size larger—No. 16 for 8-ohm, No. 14 for 4-ohm.

• Do your speakers (or other components) have an oiled-wahnut finish? If so, you should recall that oiled wahnut is an "open-coat" finish, the pores of the wood not having been sealed by lacquer, varnish, shellac, or the like. An open-coat finish needs to be renewed periodically (about once every six months). Simply apply a moderately heavy coating of boiled (not raw) linseed oil, wait a moment, then wipe off the excess with a dry rag. The wood will take on a deep and lustrous patina will take on a deep and lustrous patina

 Does your cat regard your speaker grille as an alternative—or even preferred—scratching post, or have your grilles simply become grungy over the years? Many speaker manufacturers have grille replacements available on snap-on frames. If you do replace fitte lemon extract onto them—very inttle lemon extract onto them—very repulsive to feline nostrils, I'm told. And maybe a little lemon-oil furniture polish on the wood surfaces wouldn't hurt either.

you'd quite forgotten it had, and all but the most ghastly gashes will disappear

as if by magic.

MF isoM 9dT

should concentrate your attentions. tween tuners, so that is where you than even a 2:1 price difference beterms of performance improvement and lead-in wire will contribute more in design and condition of your antenna advisable anyway. Often, however, the make a trip to a qualified technician tuned critical circuits sufficiently to cal-component aging may well have deold, but if so, heat and general electriplace vacuum tubes if your tuner is that an FM tuner. You can, of course, reponseciesning good you can do inside spacing all across the dial, there's little that indicates incorrectly by the same lights and perhaps resetting a pointer Beyond replacing burned-out pilot

• If you have an outdoor antenna, have you checked to see whether the winter's storms have carried away or bent some of its elements? Damage to the antenna doesn't simply mean that less signal

number of other manufacturers also offer models you may find suitable; they can be found at local dealers.

The Speakers

• Are your speakers in phase? No doubt they were when you first installed them, and if nothing has changed in the meantime, they still are. But if someone has accidentally kicked a pair of leads off, if you have tried out other speakers, or if you just want to be sure, switch your amplifier to mono and play something with good low-bass passages. Now, reverse the leads going to the terminals of one of the pair of the terminals of one of the pair of

> If in doubt, squeeze the plugs' outer shells slightly with a pair of pliers so you can feel them ''bite'' when inserting the plugs.

> • Are your interconnecting audio cables as short as possible? Are they "dressed" away from a.c. wiring neatly, and, when they run in the same direction, are they cabled together? The same kind of plastic spiral wrapping suggested above to keep the power cords in order can be used for audio cables as well—or you may prefer to hold them together with masking or plastic tape.

> e if you have to unplug the audio cables going to a particular component, can



the proper "in-phase" connection the most deep bass in this simple test is the most deep bass in this simple test is

wire. In addition, the amplifier's dampnothing but heating up the speaker ing out of the amplifier will be doing leads, then one-fifth of the power comown sti to does ni mdo 2.0 si gnisu t opus and the speaker wire you are example, if your speaker impedance is the speakers will be diminished. For amplifier power that actually reaches your speakers, the percentage of ble traction of the rated impedance of if this resistance becomes an appreciathinner their resistance gets larger, and they're perfectly safe. But as wires get excessively hot. In that sense, at least, speaker systems without becoming the audio-signal current going to your pet unobtrusively will certainly carry mended for running wires under a carthe flat FM twin-lead often recomble zip-cord sold as "speaker wire," or small-gauge (about No. 20 or 22) flexi-• Is your speaker wiring adequate? The

IN" (recorder 3, left-front input). pallpoint-pen legends such as 'R3/LF gical tape which will take brief fiber- or strips out of ordinary cloth-backed surly, you can make your own identifying crack, or fall off with age. Alternativefrom A to Z) that will not discolor, around labels (marked from I to 99, or and convenient set of adhesive wrapdoubt others) produces an inexpensive sary confusion, GC Electronics (and no exasperating job. To prevent unneceshave been taped together-can be an ends-especially if a number of them which jack? Identifying loose cable you later tell which plug mates with

• Do you have a larger number of "outboard" accessories or tape recorders than your receiver can accommodate? What you need is an intelligently designed switching and/or patch-panel arfaght for the available TAPE IN and TAPE for the available TAPE IN and TAPE of Canal SL, North Berwick, Maine of Canal SL, North Berwick, Maine 03908) specializes in such items, and a

The Clean Turntable

Though they are the mainstay of most home music systems, record players require remarkably little care. Manufacturers' instructions usually cover such user adjustments as establishing the point at which the stylus should set down (for automatic turntables), arm balancing, checking proper cartridge overhang, antiskating, and the like. All of these "set and forget" adjustments might be worth checking.

• When was the last time your turntable was lubricated? The main bearing (around which the platter itself rotates) should get a few drops of a high-grade light machine oil once or twice a year. (The manufacturer will indicate just how much and whether a highly specialized lubricant is needed; he can also provide instructions for removing the turntable platter, which is not always a simple job.)

While the platter is off, inspect the drive mechanism. Rubber idler pulleys ("tires") will, with age, harden, show signs of cracking, or develop worn spots. These parts should obviously be replaced. All rotating rubber parts will eventually pick up a visible film or "glaze" on their outer surfaces, and this can be removed either with alcohol (don't get just any "rubbing alcohol compound," for it might contain any number of odd ingredients; ask your pharmacist for a high-grade isopropyl alcohol) or, for an even more thorough job, with trichloro-trifluoroethene. Nortronics markets this latter in 2ounce bottles as its OM-102 tape-head cleaner, but it is highly effective-and safe-on rubber too. Motor bearings should get a couple of drops of oil, and about one (small) drop each should go on other rotating-shaft bearings. Don't put any oil on rapidly rotating parts that may spray it around. An inexpensive "precision oiler" (from your local hardware store if your audio dealer doesn't have one) will help you mete out just enough without spilling it onto adjacent drive surfaces.

Are the motor mountings still resilient? If not, you're probably getting excessive turntable rumble. The manufacturer should have replacements available for all parts prone to aging or wearing. And, unless you are advised otherwise by the turntable's manufacturer, you had best leave tone-arm bearings unlubricated.

• Is your stylus force set within the cartridge maker's recommended limits? The springs that set stylus force on most arms can suffer fatigue with time; a stylus-force gauge will tell you where your arm is at with ease and precision.



Shure Bros. and others have inexpensive and accurate gauges available. If in doubt, set stylus force toward the upper half of the suggested range, for too little force can damage record grooves more rapidly than too much.

• Could your system be suffering from unidentified acoustic feedback? With your amplifier's volume control set normally, put the tone arm on a nonrotating record and then tap the recordplayer base. Do you hear a ringing, resonant sound rather than a single thump? A ringing sound probably means that your turntable setup is sensitive to feedback, and when playing a record the sound is probably somewhat muddied at high volumes as a result. Try isolating the record player by mounting it on soft foam-or check the test report on the Netronics Iso-Base in this issue.

• Is your turntable level—both front-toback and side-to-side? Most turntables are quite tolerant of surprising degrees of tilt, but when a little bubble indicator is so inexpensive in the hardware store, why not be on the level?

• Is your turntable mat clean and staticfree? Foam-type mats seem to be the dirtiest, positively soaking up dust particles that lie waiting to be transferred to your disc surfaces. A light rinsing out with a little bit of *mild* detergent (a small plus: it will leave behind a slight antistatic trace) is probably called for. You might also think about trying the D-Stat mat from Discwasher: it neutralizes static electricity while the disc

is on the turntable. Dust and static electricity are two of the main stumbling blocks to record enjoyment. If you haven't already installed a groovetracking cleaning gadget such as a Dust Bug, it's about time you did. And for manual groove cleaning, check the Watts Parastat or the Discwasher groove-cleaning system with its elegant walnut stand. You should also consider the phono stylus and its pollution problem. Since a speck of dirt too small to be easily seen with the naked eye can foul up your record sound, Discwasher also makes a stylus cleaner with builtin magnifying mirror that will reveal (with one end) and remove (with the other) any . . . er . . . crud that may have accumulated.

Turning to Tape

The same kind of interior cleaning and lubricating instructions just given for turntables also apply to tape-deck mechanisms, so they need not be repeated. But a warning should: be *sparing* with lubricants; if you wonder whether you really put enough oil in that motor or on that shaft bearing, you did. Proper maintenance of tape equipment, however, involves some special cleaning procedures (which should be undertaken about every dozen hours of playing time, not put off until next spring!) as follows:

• Are your tape heads, guides, capstan, end-of-tape shut-off device—in short, everything metal that contacts the moving tape—thoroughly demagnetized? If



not, your tapes will increase in hiss level with each playing, and the high frequencies may be erased to some degree with each pass through the tape machine. It's that simple and final. If you want to know just how much residual magnetism has accumulated on these surfaces, you can get an inexpensive magnetometer that will indicate it (\$7.80 for the Model 20/B5 from R. B. Annis Co., 1101 Delaware St., Indianapolis, Indiana 46202; this firm also produces the most powerful head demagnetizer on the market, the \$24 Han-D-Mag). A reading on the magnetometer of 1 gauss or more should impel you to take a minute or so to demagnetize your unit. Procedure is this: with the machine turned off and all recorded tapes several feet away, turn on a head degausser at a distance of one or two feet from the deck. Slowly bring the degausser's probe end up to the head faces, the capstan, the guideseverything metal in the tape path-and move it up, down, and around the surfaces to be degaussed. Then slowly withdraw the demagnetizer from the machine area until you are a couple of feet away from the heads. Only after you are well away should you turn off the demagnetizer.

• Are all the head faces, guides, etc. free of any build-up of dust, dirt, lint, and flaked-off oxide particles? Again, the cleaning procedure is simple and will take only a few minutes. Since a builtup layer of oxide will cause loss of high frequencies, will result in dropouts, may scratch the tape surface, and could result in uneven head wear, it is foolish not to expend the little effort that will prevent it. A few cotton swabs and either alcohol or the fluorocarbon Nortronics head cleaner will do the job-the latter faster and more thoroughly. Simply moisten the swab in the solvent and rub on the head faces and guides (a wooden toothpick may help get caked-in material out of the corners of the guides). The capstan and pinch roller can be made to clean themselves: fool your machine into thinking a tape is playing when it isn't while you hold a moistened swab against the rotating parts. One word of caution: do not use acetone or xylene as head cleaners, for they can attack the resins used to hold some heads together. Check with the manufacturer if in doubt.

• Are the heads on your machine sufficiently worn to warrant replacement? A set of new heads is expensive, as is the cost of installing them, so if you need new heads you may wonder whether your deck is valuable enough otherwise to warrant it. The test for worn heads, however, is relatively simple: as you slide a fingernail up and down the head's surface, does it catch on a wornin groove, or does it slide freely? If it catches, head wear has caught up with your deck, and that's the reason your highs aren't what they once were.

Final Touches

• Do you have a box of spare fuses of the proper type for every component in your system? A blown fuse on a Saturday night could easily kill your sound for the rest of the weekend.

• Do your volume knob, tone controls, and switches (particularly on older equipment) make odd noises when rotated, pushed, or slid? It could be that they are crying out for cleaning. The TV-tuner spray cans with extension tubes sold at electronic parts stores will do a good job, providing you can direct the spray into the offending parts. After spraying, move the controls rapidly back and forth several times to spread the cure and remove the source of the noise.

Now it's up to you to add all the other little things I haven't thought of and you have been putting off. Is this the time, for instance, to think seriously about putting all your components into a really good-looking set of shelves, a furniture unit, or a built-in? Should you ...? Anyway, have a good week-end or two.



Introducing an evolutionary idea. The New Empire 698 Turntable

change radically.

Instead, they are constantly being refined to become more relevant with time

So it has been with Empire turntables. Our latest model, 698, is no exception. Basically, it's still the uncomplicated, beltdriven turntable we've been making for 15 years. A classic.

What we're introducing is improved performance.

The lower mass tone arm, electronic cueing, quieting circuitry and automatic arm lift are all very new

The rest is history. The Tonearm

The new 698 arm moves effortlessly on 32 jeweled, sapphire bearings. Vertical and horizontal bearing friction is a mere 0.001 gram, 4 times less than it would be on conventional steel bearings. It is impervious to drag. Only the calibrated anti-skating and tracking force you select control its movement.

The new aluminum tubular arm, dramatically reduced in mass, responds instantly to the slightest variation of a record's movement. Even the abrupt changes of a warped disc are quickly absorbed. The Motor

A self-cooling, hysteresis synchronous motor drives the platter with

Great ideas never enough torque to reach full speed in one third of a revolution. It contributes to the almost immeasurable 0.04% average wow and flutter value in our specifications. More important, it's built to last.

The Drive Belt

Every turntable is approved only when zero error is achieved in its speed accuracy. To prevent any variations of speed we grind each belt to within one ten thousandth of an inch thickness.

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... MARIA MULDAUR

ARIA MULDAUR, after spending a number of years struggling on the fringes of popular success, has lately edged more and more into the center-stage spotlight. Relatively untutored and relying heavily on instinct, she has brought with her a disarming love of music and the ability to deal with and compound its three essential elements—melody, harmony, and rhythm—in an open, unpretentious, often touching manner.

At a time when the trend in pop music is toward the synthetic, even the bizarre, Muldaur remains warmly natural and reassuringly human. Darkly attractive and modishly disheveled, she has about her a gypsy seductiveness that is in no way tempered by the flower strategically placed in the long, curly, difficult-to-control hair, the firm, curvaceous figure, and the provocatively rhythmic movements on stage.

While these Mediterranean delights do a little more than merely suggest the sexuality that is part of her performing image, they are, interestingly enough, just the extras. What Muldaur is really about is music, and her central concern is with the raising of standards in an area which for a while didn't seem to have any. Her professional roots run deep into the folk movement of the Sixties, but, unlike a number of her contemporaries, she does not suffer from category-bound shortsightedness when it comes to choosing her songs, nor are her performances frozen into pious rituals of attitude, convention, and stagecraft. There is, rather, an abundant sense of theater, always employed in the service of the feelings evoked by her material.

In retrospect, the rising of Maria Muldaur's star seems to have been almost inevitable. She answers the needs of a long-silent, increasingly large segment of the popular-music audience, an audience long since grown cold to the increasing grotesqueries of pop nihilism and looking for more positive reflections of themselves in our rich musical tradition. Muldaur works comfortably with the older forms such as blues and gospel songs, expressing through them a feeling of familiarity and love, much as one would for a big, old, many-roomed house in which more delight is always waiting to be discovered. She balances this with a keen sense of what is right for her in quality contemporary material, and the result, in her albums as well as her concerts, is not only depth but breadth.

A little time spent with her Warner Bros. recordings ("Maria Muldaur." MS 2148; "Waitress in a Donut Shop," MS 2194; and "Sweet Harmony," MS 2235-reviewed in this issue) very quickly reveals how much ground she covers-and how easily. She moves confidently from something as basic, direct, and simply drawn as Dolly Parton's country portrait, My Tennessee Mountain Home, to a bawdy, traditional New Orleans blues (Don't You Feel My Leg), and is equally at home with Ron Davies' deeply romantic Long Hard Climb. She displays as well an affinity for mainstream jazz and for gospel, the rhythmic music of faith

> "What Muldaur is really about is music, and her central concern is with the raising of standards in an area which for a while didn't seem to have any."

that, as she says, "brings me the most solace and joy." Those who have heard her stirring version of Rev. W. H. Brewster's As an Eagle Stirreth in Her Nest in her latest album are not likely to disagree. It is simply filled with the pulsation, the abandon, and the deep religious feeling this powerful music demands of its interpreters.

CONSIDERING the rather limited range and flexibility of the voice, it is surprisingly effective. Light, fragile, and small though it may be, it is also, as one critic has put it, "independent and special." Like the late Mildred Bailey, the great jazz stylist she vocally resembles, Muldaur can sneak up on you with an unexpected gift of insight. In the midst of a concert or an album that has somehow failed to claim your complete attention she will suddenly, seemingly in mid-phrase, take you compellingly to the heart of a song with simply shattering immediacy.

Since bad performances are part of growing up in music, and since Muldaur is still growing, she can fail to reach her audience too. And when things are not going well, as they are occasionally wont to do, she will run and hide behind her ample attractiveness, hauling out a few vocal tricks, rolling those hips, and shaking that tambourine with immoderate enthusiasm. Some, put off by these lapses, have concluded that that's all there is, that the facade is the reality. Muldaur knows, however, that the reality has to come from the material, and she constantly tries to establish communication through her songs. When the connection is successfully made, as it was for one whole evening concert in New York last year, one can only give oneself up entirely to the experience. And that is just what I, the rest of the audience, and the musicians did, progressively solidifying behind her in approval and satisfaction. Benny Carter, the veteran jazzman who was her musical director on that memorable winter evening, contends that with time the "special" Muldaur nights will become routine.

Muldaur's upbringing was, in many ways, crucial to her musical development. A product of an Italian background, she gew up in New York's Greenwich Village where music of all kinds—folk, jazz, rock, old-time blues, and Italian accordion—was always at her doorstep. Everything was out in the streets or in the social clubs that are still fixtures of Italian neighborhoods. In the Fifties, when Muldaur was first becoming aware of herself as a musician, walking through the Village was fascinating.



"Every kind of American music is important," she insists, "each style is a vehicle for different feelings, a way of getting a look at yourself. I've found that the more I know about my music, the better; I wind up being that much more expressive.

"From the time I was a kid, singing rock tunes with other girls in school, through the years performing with bands, like the Jim Kweskin Jug Band, I sensed there was much more to music than just getting the notes right. As I continue to learn, it becomes clear that there's no end to the process."

An abiding concern for growth is unusual in pop music. Hits are usually an artist's central interest for the simple reason that without them survival is difficult. Building for a stable, fruitful future is therefore the exception rather than the rule. Muldaur, however, insists on it, and she insists as well on establishing a certain distance between business and "life as it really is." She retains a private side, principally devoted to the thoughtful care of her tenyear-old daughter.

Still, like most artists, Maria Muldaur came into prominence through a hit recording. *Midnight at the Oasis*, David Nichtern's romantic fantasy with humorous overtones, was sufficiently contemporary and catchy to find a large audience. It moved, it had a "sound"—and it was an excellent vehi-



cle to display not only Muldaur's girl/ woman vamp quality but the considerable musical talent that lay beneath it.

She has not consciously sought another such hit, but rather songs that have meaning for her. An alert, intelligent woman, she probes all her material constantly, hoping to find in it some aspect of experience that we can recognize as particular to us all. And she continues to sharpen her musical tools, particularly her voice, trying to make it deeper, more pliant and colorful, more responsive to the demands of her art.

She is only now beginning to realize the real extent of her capacities. "If I continue working on my music, I have to keep getting better. But I know I still have a lot of homework to do. If I survive, it has to be as a musician."

In a field in which stars of greater and lesser magnitude spend themselves quickly and disappear, a few blessed not only with talent but with energy, integrity, and an accurate vision of themselves do survive; Maria Muldaur gives every indication of being one of them.

By Burt Korall

An on-the-spot visual record of the staging of Il Combattimento d'Apolline col Serpente: etching by Agostino Carracci after the drawing by Bernardo Buontalenti, who created the staging.

"... no one has ever been able to dispute the claim that an aggregation of musical/literary talents called the Florentine Camerata invented opera in the palace of Jacopo Corsi in the declining years of the sixteenth century."

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By Eric Salzman

T is current wisdom that history proceeds in small but inevitable steps. Thus Corelli did not invent the concerto grosso nor Haydn the string quartet nor Wagner the Leitmotif any more than Apollo invented the lyre. Who did? Why, historical evolution, of course. Historical evolution or not, no one has ever been able to dispute the claim that an aggregation of musical/literary talents called the Florentine Camerata invented opera in the palace of Jacopo Corsi in the declining years of the sixteenth century. Like Columbus, who thought he had discovered the back door to India, this hardy band of artists, intellectuals, and aristocrats set out for a known country and ended up discovering a continent.

What the aristocratic amateurs Giovanni de' Bardi and Jacopo Corsi, the composer and theoretician Vincenzo Galilei, the poet Ottavio Rinnucini, and the musicians Emilio de' Cavalieri, Jacopo Peri, and Giulio Caccini thought

they were doing was reviving ancient Greek music and drama. But they ended up creating not merely a total theater of acting, singing, instrumental music, dance, visual arts, poetry, and declamation, but also inventing or paving the way for operatic and virtuoso singing style, recitative, aria and ensemble, accompanied melody, thorough bass, the modern idea of chord progressions and "functional" harmony, the basic principles of instrumentation and orchestration, and the foundations of both the Baroque and Classical styles. The forces set in motion dominated Western musical culture for almost two centuries, and their influence is hardly extinct even yet.

In actuality, the members of the Florentine Camerata knew very little about ancient Greek music, and that mostly from theoretical treatises (only one tiny fragment of music—from the *Orestes* of Euripides—actually survives today, and even that was unknown in the sixteenth century). Exactly how much of classical Greek and Roman theater was set to music is a matter of some dispute, but we are at least certain that song and dance were important elements. In nearly all ancient cultures theater has arisen out of religion, ritual, and community, and it was everywhere danced and sung before it was spoken.

AFTER the demise of classical culture, theater actually rose again from ritual, this time in the bosom of the medieval church. The liturgical dramas and mystery plays of the Middle Ages were genuine music theater and they form a remarkable and extensive body of work that has only recently begun to be investigated again. The earliest secular musical play that has survived is the charming little Jeux (or, in the quaint old spelling, Gieux) de Robin et de Marion from the late thirteenth century (in these days of recorded riches



there are two versions: Telefunken 641219 and Turnabout 34439).

But secular dramatic theater had to wait for the Renaissance for a full-scale revival. The sumptuous Italian courts of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries sponsored dramas, comedies, masques, ballets, and intermedii (intermezzos). Music, dance, and spectacle played a role in all these productions, but no more so than in your average Broadway show, Hollywood musical, or TV special. For extraordinary occasions something unusual might be called for: a comedy told in the form of madrigals, an elaborate dance work, or a commission for wedding festivities with entertainment in the form of songs, dances, scenic effects, and fireworks. Not much in the way of a "book," that is, but great production numbers.

Still, none of this was yet opera. What was needed was a kind of drama that could lend itself to musical treatment and a kind of music that could be dramatic. Our Florentine friends came up with the idea of *telling* a story in mu-

sic, something fundamentally different from embellishing a story with music. As we have already noted, they had the idea that this was the basic plan of the Greeks. It is probably just as well that this idea was not very accurate, for if they had actually known anything about Greek music they might have ended up merely imitating it. Instead they had to invent their own procedures. The old contrapuntal style of the Renaissance had to go. The new music (Le Nuove Musiche is exactly what composer Caccini called it) had to be simple, declarative, and expressive of the words, which were to be audible and intelligible at all times. Melody accompanied by instrumental chords and, on occasion, embellished vocally or instrumentally was the key. The style and personality of the performers was an essential ingredient. Almost all the early practitioners of this new art were singers (and instrumentalists as well). They were interested not in an ensemble or multi-part style but in a soloistic one: forceful, dramatic, articulated. Behind that was the poetry, scenery, dance, whatever. But it was always the principle of telling a story in music that made the whole thing go. that made it work, made it The Work. L'Opera.

LORENCE in the late sixteenth century was already approaching the twilight of its greatness. The golden age of the early and high Renaissance was long since gone, and even the silver age of the late Renaissance and Mannerism was drawing to a close. The Medicis had long since consolidated their power; under Francesco de' Medici and, after 1587, his brother Ferdinando, the city-state was relatively prosperous. A certain dignified, high-brow, courtly style was in vogue. The aristocracy was encouraged to take up intellectual and artistic pursuits (presumably rather than politics). Playing, singing, and even composing were common skills among the gentility. Equally important were the academies founded in the early Renaissance for the study and pursuit of various intellectual activities. These academies were more like discussion and study groups than educational or research institutes, and they played a major role in the culture of the time.

The most important predecessor of the opera was not the masque or the madrigal comedy or the ballet but the pastoral play, a very important genre in Renaissance Italy and the one that established the still-familiar conventions of nymphs and shepherds. The first pastorale was written by the Renaissance poet Angelo Poliziano on the subject of Orpheus and it was performed in Mantua in 1482 or 1483. As we shall see, the first operas were written on this same subject, and the first great operatic masterpiece, also an *Orfeo*, was actually produced in the same city. Many of the great poets of the day—most of them not Florentine, by the way—wrote pastorales, including Torquato Tasso and Giovanni Battista Guarini. The pastorale, liberally adorned with music, was the most popular dramatic form in Italy in the sixteenth century.

HE so-called intermedio—usually a short intermezzo interpolated in a dramatic evening---was a popular setting for musical diversions in Florence. These intermedii often took the form of quite elaborate productions. At the marriage, in 1589, of Grand Duke Ferdinando to Christine of Lorraine-the Medici always made sure to marry the wealthiest and most powerful European royalty-Count Giovanni Bardi di Vernion was in charge of the six inter*medii* produced. More than forty of the best musicians in Florence took part as composers and performers, including Bardi himself, Peri, Caccini, Cavalieri, Luca Marenzio, Alessandro Striggio, Vittoria Archilei (perhaps the most highly regarded singer of her day), and many others. The poet Ottavio Rinuccini wrote the most successful of these musical playlets: Il Combattimento d'Apolline col Serpente.

The palace of Count Bardi, built a century earlier by Filippo Brunelleschi (it is still standing), was the first home of the Camerata. The key figure in the early days of this literary and artistic club was Vincenzo Galilei, father of the famous astronomer. Galilei was a singer and composer, an excellent lutenist and violist as well as a critic and theoretician. He and Bardi were the instigators of the new movement, and, in a remarkable mixture of theory and practice, actually seemed to have brought about the creation of a new style. In 1580, Bardi published a treatise, On Ancient Music and Good Singing, which some critics think was ghostwritten by Galilei. A year later, Galilei published his own Dialogue on Ancient and Modern Music, the first frontal attack on "the present way of composing and singing several airs in consonance at the same time"-that is, in Renaissance counterpoint. Galilei wanted every word of a text to be understood, and he insisted that the music must not illustrate just details, but express the feeling of the whole. To illustrate his points, he set a scene from Dante which he sang himself, accompanied by viols; unfortunately, like many works of the period, the music is lost.

Galilei died in 1591 and Bardi was called to Rome the following year, but

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another aristocratic amateur, Jacopo Corsi, moved the club over to his palace. More works in the new style began to appear: songs and arias by Caccini, a pastorale by Cavalieri, and, at the very beginning of 1600, a religious/dramatic work by the same composer. This latter, Il Rappresentazione di Anima e di Corpo (The Representation of the Soul and the Body), was presented in Rome in 1600 and more recently in a Deutsche Grammophon recording (ARC-2708016—just withdrawn).

In the meantime, Rinuccini had produced a kind of dramatic pastorale on the story of Dafne, and Peri set it to music some time before 1597 (the exact date is the subject of some debate). Count Giovanni Bardi's son later described the work: ". . in few numbers and short scenes and recited and sung privately in a small room. I was left speechless with amazement. It was sung to the accompaniment of a consort of instruments, an arrangement followed thereafter in the other comedies." Rinuccini himself suggested that Dafne was an experiment and said that Peri's setting "gave pleasure beyond belief to the few who heard it." In fact, the work seems to have been given several times in different versions, and, sensational as it was, it seems never to have reached any kind of definitive form; not a note survives.

In the fall of 1600, the proxy marriage of Henry IV, King of France, to Maria de' Medici was celebrated in Florence. Here certainly was the opportunity for a performance of major import, and the Camerata was not slow to take up the opportunity. Rinuccini chose the popular story of Orpheus and Eurydice for the occasion; what better subject for a work intended to show the renewal of the power of music! Not one but two settings of this work-entitled Euridice-promptly appeared; both Peri and Caccini had put it to music. Although no one seems to have commented on this extraordinary circumstance, it would certainly seem as though we have, right at the start, the first of the many great rivalries that have enlivened the history of opera. It was Peri's work that was performed on October 6, 1600, but-apparently in a sort of compromise—some of Caccini's music was included. Vittoria Archilei was the first Euridice, and a number of aristocratic musicians, including Corsi, took part as singers and instrumentalists. Caccini managed to get his complete setting into print first, although it was not performed for at least two years.

The main musical burden in both Peri's and Caccini's settings of Euridice is nothing more nor less than recitative. The basic invention of the Camerata was a kind of supple, flowing, expressive style of intoning words accompanied by the so-called continuo instruments playing chords. (The system of accompaniment with the chords indicated by numbers under a written-out bass line—later called "thoroughbass"—was apparently first used by Cavalieri and Caccini, although others claimed the credit. It became a standard technique for more than a century and a half and has continued as an important aspect of musical life into our own day.) There is no clear distinction between pure recitative and the arioso that appears at certain expressive

who was Galilei's true disciple, was a really key figure in the history of singing, and he heightened his expressive effects by vocal embellishment which very quickly became refined to a high art. The style of embellishment in Caccini's music is very different from later ornamentation, which is just thatornamental: melodic variations or fioratura over a set harmonic pattern. The "embellishment" of Caccini's music really is the music and the expression at the same time. It has a great deal in common with the ornamentation in Indian music; the ornaments are formed on certain modes and turns of phrase and they are meant to express certain emotional affects. In this vital area, Caccini had a tremendous effect on the history of opera through his concepts of the human voice and florid singing.



Cesti's "Il Pomo d'Oro" as represented in Vienna in 1666.

points. There are a few songs in regular rhythm—solos, solos with chorus, or choruses. There is no independent instrumental music, but we know that a harpsichord, bass lute, *lira grande* (a sort of bowed lyre), and a large lute were used for the accompaniments.

The history books often seem to suggest that Peri and Caccini were enthusiastic amateurs, but this confuses the composers with their princely patrons. Both were, in modern terms, professionals. Caccini, in particular, had a distinguished musical career. The prevalence of recitative in their work was a matter of conscious intellectual choice. Of the two, Peri is the more severe and the less adapted to the modern ear although, because he was the first, he still gets most of the attention and the occasional performance. Caccini,

HE success of these first works was astonishing, and their fame quickly spread throughout Italy and occasioned great excitement. Yet, curiously, few new works were added to the repertoire. Opera in its first stages was a highly aristocratic art form almost exclusively reserved for special occasions. In any case, musical leadership passed from the great city on the Arno just as it had already passed in the visual arts. When the young Florentine Giovanni Battista Lulli appeared on the scene in mid-century, there was very little action in his home town, and he had to move to Paris where he became Jean Baptiste Lully and created the prototype for French opera.

Two very important factors in the early development of opera were the



Above and below: two scenes from Jacopo Melani's "Ercole in Tebe"...

transfer of interest and patronage from the ancient aristocratic city of Florence to the princely families and clergy of Rome, and the entry into the field of the greatest creative mind of the era, Claudio Monteverdi. Monteverdi was a direct link with the older Italian musical schools. Born in Cremona in the heyday of the Amati, the Guarneri, and the Stradivari, he entered the service of the Dukes of Gonzaga at the highly cultured court of Mantua, one of the most brilliant in Italy, in 1590. Vincenzo Gonzaga was a sophisticated prince who was closely in touch with cultural developments all over Italy; he was particularly fond of music and theater

and, quite naturally, took an interest in the new developments in Florence. In 1607, Alessandro Striggio, a Mantuan aristocrat and court official (and the son of a noted madrigalist) produced a libretto, once again on the favorite Orpheus subject.

Monteverdi wrote the music in the new style, and the work was produced under the auspices of a society much like the Camerata, the Accademia degl'Invaghiti or Academy of the Inspired. A lead singer from Florence, Giovanni Gualberto, was borrowed from that city to sing the title role. Striggio and Monteverdi had a disagreement about the ending; Montever-

... (Florence, 1661) show it to be a work in the spectacular tradition.



di wanted to show the transfiguration of Orpheus through a *deus ex machina* instead of his death, and he won out. The libretto was printed so that the cognoscenti could follow it during the performance (!) and the score was also published. An orchestra of extraordinary size was employed: harpsichords, double harps, bass lutes, citterns, gambas, wood-pipe and reed organs, a large string ensemble including small violins, four or five trombones, cornets, recorders, a high trumpet or *clarino*, and a set of soft or muted trumpets.

Monteverdi put these musicians to good use. The work begins with an instrumental flourish, and the score is full of striking ritornellos and sinfonias, several of which recur at key points in the opera. The story is told in an extremely powerful and flexible recitative that often rises to a melodic, arioso style. The composer further specified just exactly how each speech is to be accompanied so that the instruments are constantly helping to characterize persons or situations. There are also songs, duets, and choruses; many of the set pieces are accompanied by instruments, and, in some cases, they certainly accompanied dancing. "Possente spirto" is a bravura aria (one can call it nothing else) in six verses with instrumental accompaniment; Monteverdi gives both the plain, unvarnished version of the melody and then the ornamented form underneath, offering the singer a choice. This fantastic, ornamented version, which certainly owes a great deal to Caccini, gives us a good idea of what an accomplished singer of the period could produce in the way of expressive, floridbut not empty!-virtuosity. With Orfeo we can say that opera came into its own as a unique genre. (Three complete recordings are currently available: Telefunken 3635020, Deutsche Grammophon ARC-2710015, and Musical Heritage Society MHS 939/41; selections are available on Vox VSPS-18 and Orion 74159.)

N the year 1608, the Duke invited Ottavio Rinuccini to provide new operas for the festivities attending the wedding of his son and heir Francesco to Margaret of Savoy. One of these turned out to be his old libretto for Dafne in a new musical setting by Marco da Gagliano (currently available in two recorded versions-Musical Heritage Society MHS 1953/54 and ABC/ Command 9004). Interestingly enough, this same libretto was later to serve, in translation, as the basis of the first German opera, by Heinrich Schütz. The second opera confected for the Duke was an entirely new work, Arianna (Ariadne on the island of Naxos), set

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by Monteverdi. It was performed on May 28, 1608, before an audience estimated—unbelievably—at 6,000! A contemporary writer says that

. . on account of the poetry alone and of the actors that took part, that opera could well be classified as a beautiful work; but the opera became the subject of the greatest admiration in conjunction with the music of Claudio Monteverdi, a man whose great capacities are sufficiently known all over the world, but who on this great occasion has surpassed his own faculty. The instruments, placed behind the scene, continually used for accompaniment, were varied with any change in the character of the vocal music and were adapted to the brilliant voices of the singers, men and women. The Lament of Arianna, abandoned by Theseus, was sung with so much warmth and feeling and represented in so moving a manner that all the listeners were most profoundly stirred and none of the ladies remained without tears.

This opera, which quickly became as famous as Orfeo, is entirely lost except for the Lament, which modern listeners can hear, in the composer's own madrigal version, in a splendid performance by the Deller Consort (Vanguard S-297) as well as in a number of other vocal collections.

THE first attempt to transcend the limitations of opera as an aristocratic entertainment took place, surprisingly, in Rome. Many of the first Roman operas were religious dramas presented on strictly private occasions. But in 1632 the Barberini family opened a theater holding more than 3,000 spectators—a veritable Lincoln Center of its day-with a performance of Santo Alessio by librettist Giulio Rospigliosi and composer Stefano Landi. Rospigliosi, a nobleman and friend of the Barberinis, later became cardinal and eventually, as Clement IV, pope. Interestingly enough, his treatment of the ancient legend of Saint Alexis was, for all intents and purposes, set in contemporary Rome and had a strongly popular character. Many features of later opera can be found in Santo Alessio, including the outlines of the standard Baroque orchestra and the inclusion of scenes that are unmistakable opera buffa. Rospigliosi, working with Landi and two almost forgotten contemporaries, Vergilio Mazzocchi and Marco Marazzoli, virtually created the genre of Italian comic opera. Another outstanding composer of the period was Luigi Rossi, who wrote still another Orfeo and an Enchanted Palace (Il Palazzo Incantato) after the epic poet Ariosto's

Orlando Furioso. (Anyone looking for early undiscovered operatic material of high quality for performance or recording should examine the operas of the early Roman school.)

In the long run, the Roman opera did not flourish. Perhaps the popular nature of these works was ultimately objectionable to certain dignitaries of the church, or perhaps religious revival pushed out the secular forms. At any rate, Rossi turned from operas to cantatas (he is said to have been the first cantata composer), and Giacomo Carissimi invented the oratorio as a kind of dignified substitute for opera.

By this time, however, the focus of the operatic scene had shifted once again, this time to Venice, and it was Monteverdi who carried the ball. In 1613 he accepted the job of maestro di cappella at Saint Mark's Cathedral, a position he held for the rest of his life. All of Monteverdi's early Venetian operas are lost with the exception of Il Cambattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda. performed privately in a Venetian palace in 1624 (and in no fewer than four current recordings, choicest of which is Philips 6500457). Due to the nature of Venetian society and the relatively narrow structure of Venetian palaces (outdoor events were virtually impossible in the city itself), lavish private or semipublic spectacles were inconvenient. So, in 1637, the noble Tron family took the fateful step of building and op-

"The heyday of virtuoso singing, of elaborate formal and florid arias, of the castrati... of great spectacles and stage effects had arrived. It must really have been something."

erating a public opera theater (Teatro di San Cassiano), initiating things with a performance of a work called Andromeda, by Francesco Mannelli. In 1639, the Grimani opened another theater (Teatro S.S. Giovanni e Paolo) with a Monteverdi commission, and the Vendramins opened their doors with a revival of Arianna which ran, it is said, for a year. Other commissions followed, but only two of Monteverdi's late operas survive: Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria (The Return of Ulysses to his Homeland, libretto by Giacomo Badoaro, recordings by Vox, SVBX-5211, and by Telefunken, 4635024), and an undisputed masterpiece, L'Incoronazione de Poppea (The Coronation of

Poppea), with a libretto by Giovanni Francesco Busenello, one of the best poets of early opera. This last-named holds the stage—and record turntables—today (four complete recordings; Telefunken 635247 recommended).

By Monteverdi's death in 1643 the public performance of operas was well established. Between 1637 and the end of the century some 350 operas were produced in Venice at some seventeen opera houses. Forty-two of these were by Monteverdi's pupil, Pier Francesco Caletti-Bruni, called Cavalli, who was the heir to the leadership of Venetian opera composers. His equally famous contemporary Marc' Antonio Cesti carried this golden apple of song (Il Pomo d'Oro was his most famous work) as far as Vienna. Centered in Venice but now European in scope and appeal, the new opera was no longer mythological but concerned itself with human figures drawn from history and legend. The heyday of virtuoso singing, of elaborate formal and florid arias, of the castrati, of machinery and perspective stage designs, of great spectacles and stage effects had arrived. It must really have been something. Here is a Frenchman's view (in a contemporary English translation) of Venetian opera in all its glory:

At Venice they Act in several Opera's at a time: The Theaters are Large and Stately, the Decorations Noble, and the Alterations of them good: But they are very badly illuminated: The Machines are sometimes passable and as often ridiculous. These Opera's are long, yet they would divert the Four Hours which they last, if they were composed by better Poets, that were a little more conversant with the Rules of the Theater. . . . The Charms of their Voices do make amends for all imperfections: These Men without Beards have delicate Voices besides which they are admirably suited to the greatness of the Theater. They commonly have the best Women Singers of all Italy. . . Their Airs are languishing and touching; the whole composition is mingl'd with agreeable Songs that raise the Attention: the Symphony is mean, inspiring rather Melancholy than Gaiety: It is com-posed of Lutes, Theorbos and Harpsichords, yet they keep time to the Voices with the greatest exactness imaginable.

They that compose the Musick of the Opera, endeavor to conclude the Scenes of the Principal Actors with Airs that Charm and Elevate, so that they may acquire the Applause of the Audience, which succeeds so well to their intentions, that one hears nothing but a Thousand *Benissimo*'s together; yet nothing is so remarkable as the pleasant Benedictions and the Ridiculous Wishes of the Gondoliers in the Pit to the Women-Singers . . . for these impudent Fellows say whatever they please, as being assured to make the Assembly rather Laugh than Angry.

In short, what it was, was Opera.



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The oddest couple of all MUSIC

Noel Coppage wonders why they can't seem to get along

ELEVISION and music go together like fried clams and chocolate sauce, like Lee Marvin and Amy Vanderbilt, like Archie Bunker and Mary Tyler Moore. One can discover several reasons why this is so; the dicey part of the business is contemplating what the long-term effects of this incompatible coupling might be. Something---perhaps the glassy-eyed state that television viewing induceshas lulled us into avoiding that. We tend to consider the source of, say, Tony Orlando and Dawn and become what the football coaches call philosophical about it: "It's only television." But I don't believe it's all that benign and harmless. Music and television are both enormously important elements in our culture, the one not only because it helps some of us make it through nights but because it, having come from inside us, us humans, may vet turn out to be the best evidence that each of us has a soul; the other is important because it's there, everywhere, and ignoring it would be like crawling across the Sahara and remaining oblivious to vast wastelands.

Television is, in fact, the new champion of the media. Statistics more than adequately prove that, and so does the behavior of those who would advertise their products or themselves. "You're *nowhere* without that tube," as Lou Rawls told Henry Pleasants several years ago. Advertising experts turned campaign managers told the same thing to Richard Nixon. TV Guide, its now slick, now pulpy little pages extending Marshall McLuhan's theme that TVwatching is an oddly "tactile" experience, reports on a recent survey that concluded most people would give up their radios, their record players, their newspapers, their magazines, the whole works, before they'd part with their TV sets, if they could (God forbid) keep just one thing.

And yet it's so silly, so trivial. We just aren't programmed to have this thing of unpredictable, unfathomable influence turn out to be such an apparent pussycat or, to be precise, Puddy Tat. TV Guide stays just about brimfull with mind-screwing little quotes from people on the inside, and then there's the content of TV itself, most of it silly. Small wonder that the person who really loves music and cares what happens to it might overlook the insidiousness of television. The whole mess of television's relationship with music has perhaps appeared to this person to have slunk into the most obvious kind of camp, and he or she may reasonably expect even the beer-can-and-undershirt set to tire of *that* sooner or later. I *mean*:

Ð

"Comedy-variety-vaudeville," said Michael Eisner, who is toiling for programming ace Fred Silverman to reorient ABC-TV toward more dealings with music (featuring, among others, such singers as Paul Lynde), "is the Tabasco sauce of television."

Oh, how the impulse surges to make great sport of such quotes, which fairly bubble in *TV Guide*—but the specter of television's influence *is* sobering. When Eisner's boss Silverman (when he was what *TV Guide* called "the programming *Wunderkind* for CBS") said of Tony Orlando and Dawn, "These kids are what this medium is all about," I surely *wanted* to laugh . . . and I would've, too, if I could've stopped shuddering,

KADIO—which we may assume a number of good Germans in the Thirties regarded as "just radio"—is a medium that, for me, helps set off the tricks of lighting or whatever it is that darkens the outlines of this specter of television's influence. This is an acci-



dental approach, the result of my having been born into the car culture and being unable, to this day, to purge myself of the notion that the car radio is one of man's greatest treasures. Driving and listening go together for me like a Howard Johnson's devil's food cake thing with ice cream in the middle and chocolate sauce on top.

Since radio clearly extends only one of the senses, it's a good reference point for contemplating another medium that claims to extend two senses, and it also-thanks largely to TVdeals massively with music. Having become, through no fault of my own, sensitized in this area, I am vulnerable to the ever-sinking taste that comes to radio from somewhere. I didn't expect the taste to be lofty (partly because it is just radio now that there's television), but I'm sure I recall its once being whimsical, regional, varied, even having a chance of being funky on a good night. A night driver must have flirted with the viewing-with-alarm-the-impending-situation record many times in recent years, even if you count only the atrocities (shall we recall Tie a Yellow Ribbon 'Round the Old Oak Tree, or shall we recall any given duet between Archie and Edit'?) you can link directly

with television. Those who forget history, etc., so remember, I say, the Monkees, Jim Nabors, Tennessee Ernie, the Partridge Family, the Hudson Brothers, the Osmonds, Mac Davis, Cher, Tony Orlando, Frankie Avalon, all the Bobbies. It *can* happen here. And it does happen, in fact, with boring regularity.

Ny involuntary slant on this effect of TV is subject to manipulation by such extraneous (though indirectly, perhaps chaotically, related) affairs as the so-called fuel shortage. Perhaps the topic need not be such a downer. With any luck at all, there are moderating forces at work. Even I can see that television doesn't do too badly by music when it "covers" it in a journalistic way, or even when it stages it and then covers it in a pseudo-journalistic way. The television camera is a remarkably candid instrument, and such shows as In-Concert-cum-Rock Concert, Soundstage, In Performance at Wolf Trap, Evening at Symphony, perhaps on occasion such syndicated ones as The Porter Wagoner Show, and even the formula-dizzy Midnight Special manage to give performers a fairly neutral forum in which to show whether

they're oriented toward making music or dancing to it. You always stand a decent chance of gaining some insight into how the act regards itself (not to mention a fair chance of an overdose of the shift in attitudes among performers as to which they really cherish most, music or show biz). These programs do some good in uncovering truth about this, and, while the direct good they do music may be left-handed—in that they at least don't attack music's dignity—it is, nevertheless, of some help.

These are not, however, the kinds of music programs one expects from the real power in television, the three big commercial networks. These mostly are, or are based on, package deals coming from promoters on the outside, like Don Kirshner, or they are lowbudget public-television deals that perhaps tap a mild tradition of cooperation between poverty-stricken educational stations and some of the more serious musicians (Pete Seeger has earned a lot of points by ministering to the poor in this way). What one expects from the Big Three (which, incidentally, retreated from Seeger's politics not that many years ago; you may recall how Joan Baez refused to be on Hootenanny because of the way the networks treated

MUSIC & TV

"Your truly loyal vice president is constitutionally unable to decide which he likes best cops, docs, jocks, or comedy-variety-vaudeville"

Seeger) is anything but low-budget, and it is to journalism as Walter Cronkite is to Tom Wolfe, as Ted Baxter is to Neil Sheehan. It is, this expectation we've come to form, all dessert and no main course, or all smoke (tinted, of course, for the color) and no bang . . . it is always the same thing, the variety show, the-how did the man put it?-the Tabasco sauce. Your truly loyal vice president of TV programming is constitutionally unable to decide which he likes best-cops, docs, jocks, or comedyvariety-vaudeville. We need not dwell on his indecision here, since the variety show is the only one declaring itself to be connected with music. Monday

emphasis on comedy and represent themselves as not being very musical (The Carol Burnett Show) or have spotlighted a new kind of hell-for-leather (or, as the case may be, satin or rhinestone) egomania. We're in the era of the Horning-In Host/Hostess, who has (temporarily, I think) gotten the advantage over the Pointer. Garry Moore, reminiscing with Tom Snyder on Tomorrow, recalled Fred Allen's saying, "The people who are going to survive on television are the pointers, people like Garry Moore and Ed Sullivan, who point to a spot where the next act will appear and say, 'And now. . .' .'' Allen said this at a time when, as Bob and Ray's Ray Goulding said, "Most of us thought of television as just radio with pictures." I think Allen was on a course that, had he pursued it, could have led to his scooping Marshall McLuhan in perceiving an important effect of the camera's relentless search for faces and personalities.

For a while, though, the prevailing idea has been that a television "presence" is something that screams—no matter whether it's ostensibly prattling stair-steps above me so my head wouldn't stick up higher than his."

Anticipation that the public might soon join Diamond in becoming sick of this, I should think, would be quite a fearful notion in a conservative environment; it would mean that old bugaboo, Change, must be faced. If you reason that such an atmosphere would most likely yield, in such a moment of awareness, to Something That Worked Before (in the spirit in which vaudeville was exhumed in the first place), you might fancy you have a handle on the reunion, professionally speaking, of Sonny and Cher.

I like to look at what little positive side there is and think this at least indicates the era of the Horning-In Host/ Hostess is starting to fade. Sonny and Cher can go back to their Bickersonsupdated routine, and there is other evidence: Saturday Night Live with Howard Cosell was quickly canceled, Bobby Vinton and his honorary Poles never really had the muscle of a network show or even of some syndicated shows (loved The Avengers), and Manhattan Transfer and Joey Heatherton



Night Football, in fact, has done music lovers a great favor by selling commercial spots during the time *The Star-Spangled Banner* is played by some tinhorn band.

There haven't been quite as many variety shows in recent years (assuming this is read before ABC's "revitalization" program reaches full blast); there just hasn't been the time, as the network's cop-craze has been in the throes of a particularly prolonged and severe seizure. Those that have been on lately have tended either to put the about linebackers or cracking ethnic jokes with the ethnics themselves— "Me! Me! Look at Me!" This kind of presence not only entices Barbara Walters to sing but of course sings with her. "Being a guest star on a variety show is the lowest form of work a person can do," Neil Diamond once said to me. "They're going to insist that the host or hostess sing duets with you, regardless of how your voices blend or don't blend, and they have you in skits and production numbers and *that's* not what you do. I had them put the host on

and Dad and similar dog-days items departed fairly soon after giving everyone a chance to take one last disbelieving look at low camp, real *low* camp.

Still, even if it's rid of these boors/ booresses, the variety show has something eerie and pathetic about it. It is, I think, an unfair thing to do to our culture this late into the future, and not simply because it treats music like a grubby stepchild; it is the kind of dirty trick that Dr. Frankenstein pulled on the good burghers in his neighborhood. The main difference is that his motives were, in their twisted way, a little more honorable. The variety show, vaudeville, is a walking cadaver culturally; we *know* it's dead, reliable witnesses saw it die—they were, as a matter of fact, still reporting on the final convulsions during my childhood, which was back before Ed Sullivan went around the bend on the little Italian mouse. Yet here it is.

Consider the power television must have, to have pulled this off as efficiently as it did. And consider music's builtin trouble with power. Let's trace back along just one of the branches. Television, the "trivial" medium, would be expected to favor blandness in musicians. Actually, the ones that have turned music into something sour through the years were only superficially bland; there is something behind the voices of such as Andy Williams, Jim Nabors, Wayne Newton, Mac Davis, Cher, Helen Reddy, and others, something somewhere in the personalities they project that is somehow arch. Groups that are bland all the way through (the Carpenters, the Fifth Dimension) don't have television shows.

in his set, blew up his train on the last show. I liked that.

So, expecting blandness, we get a like-it-or-lump-it-spit-in-your-eye kind of blandness, a stand of some sort. Theoretically we could have a good bland show-say, The Carole King Show-that would be a professional, sincere production, most of all a dignified association with music, but what we get is Cher. King is not technically a much better singer than Cher, but there's a world of difference in their values. King simply has too much respect for her art or craft or whatever she deems it to be to treat music the way the Cher people treat it. It's no accident, I think, that the ones like Cher show up with the power of television behind them. One of the things you wonder, of course, is whether the people, constantly being told in subtle ways that this croaking is music and that music is a lot less important than costumes anyway, are buying this the way they bought the argument that Bufferin is twice as fast as aspirin, that Coke is the Real Thing, and that their left sides will convince their right sides. of the label Made in Hong Kong. That's one aspect of a vicious cycle, the other being the production end of TV sound. Engineers tell me it isn't very good mainly because there's not much impetus to improve it until the hardware on the receiving end is improved. This state of affairs must reflect (and, at the same time, perpetuate) attitudes about just how important sound really is, relative to sight, in this particular imitation of life. Those who perform regularly in that environment are, ironically, regularly exposed as knuckling under to it by that hungry and single-minded camera. One recalls, for example, how Cher handled Geronimo's Cadillac, Michael Murphey's wry song about how the white man preposterously misinterpreted the Indian. Cher, as if to turn the thing into a parody, was dressed in a flashy, sexy "Indian maiden'' costume. The words lost out to the outlandishly budgeted costume department headed by designer Bob Mackie, who tells TV Guide that Cher has "sensational armpits."

How long does it take for the novelty of being able to send pictures through



But abrasive personalities, which usually make the more interesting music, other factors being equal, are allowed on TV only occasionally in rock and public-TV shows, and the implication persists that they're just visiting. Roger Miller showed how long a real gadfly personality—one that deliberately toys with the mind instead of avoiding any acknowledgment that there is such a thing—is likely to last on television. I believe it was then the industry-wide minimum amount of time, thirteen weeks. Miller, who used a train motif This branch of television's influence indirectly serves the main body of it, much of which deals with much more obvious and practical, here-and-now concerns. You don't even have to turn the set on to start on those: all that space-age works-in-a-drawer circuitry that thinks in color, that leaps out at you and self-adjusts in accordance with the national something-or-other of eye doctors' recommendations—that's all concerned with the *picture*. The sound has to eke out as best it can through a speaker (and circuitry) barely worthy the air—even pictures of great armpits—to wear off? In real life, we might value vision over hearing if we could keep just one, but sight and sound overlap, work together—they are, in fact, in some ways almost as subtly interdependent as taste and smell are.

DUT ah, you say, this could all be tainted with the ravings of a car-culture kid just goosed by another gasoline price increase. Perhaps. There are, or seem to be, viewpoints that take television on its own terms and don't see it,

MUSIC & TV

"The people who are going to survive on television are those who point to a spot where the next act will appear and say, 'And now. ...'"

as I do, as a distorted extension of the senses.

"I just never paid much attention to the sound on television, except when it was so bad I couldn't understand what people were saying," says Henry Kloss of Advent, a corporation identified with fine loudspeakers. Kloss is the man behind the TV development that, on the surface, would seem the most spectacularly visual yet, the Video Beam, a projected TV with a seven-foot (measured diagonally) screen. "There has been," he says, "some interest from time to time in improving the hardware-in stereo sound, for example, and even in fourchannel sound. I'd be satisfied with one good channel." Economics naturally are involved; the hardware/signal, who-moves-first proposition has ex-PENSIVE written all over it.

"I think the thing that might actually change attitudes about this," Kloss says, "and might start to break up this chicken-or-egg situation, is the development of the video disc. If that's really successful, people might come to regard it as a *music* source, with pictures as a bonus, an adaptation of the way they regard record albums, which they certainly buy a lot of at high prices. It could persuade the broadcasting industry *and* the hardware manufacturers as well that the sound will have to be improved."

HAT iffy road to improvement, you'll notice, is another that bypasses the slug-like movements of the big networks. It would also get around the philosophical barrier that confronts the committed musicians (you've thought this through, haven't you?—there's no *Carole King Show* because Carole King wouldn't get involved in such a deal even if television uncharacteristically offered one) where television's rela-

tionship with music is concerned. The closer they come to being actual poets, the more wary they are of throwing in with all that power. If poets have learned anything, they've learned that power corrupts. Sound recordings, and the attitudes surrounding them, have become an acceptable way of finding and communicating with your audience, the term "high fidelity" itself saying something about priorities, connoting a subservience of engineering prowess to the real stuff coming from inside a warm-blooded human, the music itself. So if TV recordings could take on some of that kind of credibility, they'd produce several desirable side effects, the breakdown of the power question and the removal of identification with underarm deodorants and headache pills among them.

That's about as bright a prospect as I can find, although M*A*S*H and Saturday Night (the one on NBC with the National Lampoon people) are encouraging signs on nonmusical fronts, and the way the public stations have hung on is heartening. I could perhaps be more optimistic about the programming of television if I were not half persuaded, partly by McLuhan, partly by my own feelings, that we may not be able to change this beast even when we think we understand it. McLuhan believes, among other things, that the content is all but irrelevant as long as it is produced with certain understandings (which McLuhan believes are explained in the writings of Marshall McLuhan), and I think he believes that man does not have conscious control of a certain inner glow, fire, in television, something almost approaching free will in the atoms and energy running the picture tube, something he thinks massages the viewer's mind into (in time) a whole new perspective on the world and his or her place in it. How in the blue-eyed world of tinkering Westerners would we ever manhandle such a slippery rascal of a vagary as a massage that arrives visually? How, especially, if our only good look at it so far has come through McLuhan's slap-happy war with the English language? Surely we can agree that he has, at the very least, stirred up widespread suspicion that there is something about all this that is very mysterious.

Not much of what he says is provable in an empirical way, but you do know you feel dopey, drugged, after watching the thing a few hours, no matter what the programming was, and you can feel that its effect on the culture has been different from that of radio (whether you're a night driver or not), the movies, or any medium we've known before.

We are, that is, living in interesting times, and television-silly, trivial, nostalgia-recycling, tedious, constant, omnipresent television-may turn out to have been one of the most interesting phenomena of those times. It threatens music by threatening our sense of proportion-God knows what kind of job it's doing on taste in general-but realizing that and knowing what to do about it are two different things. One could, I suppose, keep after the networks and stations about programming, keep complaining to Zenith, Magnavox, et al., about speakers, keep banking on the video disc or other technical advances (cable, perhaps) to set the whole mess on its ear, keep encouraging the educational stations.... Still, it is going to get worse before it gets any better.

UT I do have a sneaking suspicion (there is a perverse streak of optimism in me) that it eventually will get better; the signs seem to indicate that the power of television is going to be decentralized, and that's probably what it would take to make the thing actually start behaving like a medium instead of an animated billboard. Music may then actually come to be treated as well as sensational armpits. I'm not giving out any advice on how to while away the long hours of waiting for that day to come (the only truly useful piece of advice I ever received was a bit that televiewers don't need; it was: never pass up a chance to take a leak), but I can tell you what I do: I watch television while what I'm really doing is practicing on the guitar. Since I think I detect some snail's-pace improvement in my playing, and since playing a guitar is my idea of physical exercise, about as close to honest toil as I'd care to get, this is a double-barreled cultural-political activity: it is pro-music . . . and it encourages wetness!



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





(tales of love unrequited), and his artistic achievement in handling the complex musical style must be considered a signal victory, one that has been won by very few.

The minute stylistic details through which this music lives and breathes have been well described by Giulio Caccini in the introduction to his *Le Nuove Musiche*, a collection of madrigals for *solo* voice and accompaniment. Rogers has absorbed them all, and more: he has also mastered the demanding technical details of the *gorgie*, the heavy ornamentation indulged in by the singer-composers of the period. Many performers, it must be admitted, sound embarrassingly awkward in this style, and most of them sound no less than silly when performing the notori-

Tenor Nigel Rogers, left, and Caravaggio's chitarronist, below

Seventeenth-Century Italian Monody: You've Never Heard Anything Like It

DIPPING into that very special musical world of early seventeenthcentury Italian monody, English tenor Nigel Rogers and Deutsche Grammophon Archiv have given us a splendid discful of passionate settings of ardent poetry by eight composers who flourished at about the time the foundations for that edifice we now call opera were being laid. Although Rogers' voice may be somewhat limited in robustitude, it is perfectly adequate for this specialized and largely sighing repertoire



ous "goat's bleat" trill that is required. Rogers executes everything neatly and convincingly, though you may find that his avoidance of vibrato except as an ornament and his use of a rapid *trillo* (both historically justified) take some getting used to. At times the results seem more akin to Oriental music than to the vocal sounds we are accustomed to in this modern era, still under the continuing influence of bel canto. But monody is *not* bel canto, and Rogers' prime achievement here is in sounding so securely *right*.

The discreet support offered the soloist by the continuo instruments is commendable. It is a particular joy to hear a solid bass line and such a colorful timbre as are supplied by the chitarrone (a kind of double-necked lute beautifully illustrated on the album cover in a painting by Caravaggio). This is one of those rare releases that not only present an accurate reconstruction of long-forgotten performance practice, but are accomplished on the highest artistic level as well. Performances are uniformly brilliant, recording quality excellent. Notes, texts, and translations are supplied, but Archiv has resorted to the lamentable practice of giving no list of works on the record label and, in addition in this instance, of listing the works on the jacket cover in a different order from that in which they are sung. One must count texts to find which side and band offers which selection. Apart from that matter of packaging, though, the record is a triumph. Stoddard Lincoln

NIGEL ROGERS: Canti Amorosi. Caccini: Perfidissimo volto; Belle rose porporine; Udite amanti; Amarilli mia bella. D'India: Cruda Amarilli; Intenerite voi, lagrime mie. Saracini: Io moro; Deh, come invan chiedete; Quest'amore, quest'arsura; Giovinetta vezzosetta; Da te parto. Peri: O durezza di ferro; Tra le donne; Bellissima regina. Da Gagliano: Valli profonde. Rasi: Indarno Febo. Turco: Occhi belli. Calestani: Damigella tutta bella. Nigel Rogers (tenor); Colin Tilney (harpsichord, positive organ); Anthony Bailes (chitarrone); Jordi Savall (viola da gamba); Pere Ros (violone). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ARCHIV 2533 305 \$7.98.

Previn & Ashkenazy: An Ideal Collaboration For the Prokofiev Piano Concertos

THE first integral recording of Prokofiev's five piano concertos with Vladimir Ashkenazy at his most brilliant and fluent as soloist is reason enough for any record buyer to sit up and take notice, but London's justreleased package offers an extra as well: a "sneak preview" of Ashkenazy as conductor. He gives us a very elegant Classical Symphony, the amusing Overture on Hebrew Themes in its original chamber version, and a first recording of the broody Autumnal Sketch, a work dating from the composer's nineteenth year.

However, the main interest in this set clearly attaches to the pianist's performances of the concertos, five works as different from each other as one can possibly imagine, yet unmistakably from the same hand. Let it be said at once that André Previn and the London

ANDRÉ PREVIN AND VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY: from Rachmaninoff to Prokofiev



Symphony provide virtually ideal collaboration, as they did in Ashkenazy's set of the Rachmaninoff concertos (London 2311) recorded in 1972. The youthful brio of the First Concerto emerges sparklingly in this partnership and makes for a fine curtain-raiser. In the decidedly more problematic Second Concerto Ashkenazy and Previn make the most of the wild contrasts between the bittersweet lyricism of the opening movement, the dazzling toccata style of the fleeting scherzo, the fantastic intermezzo, and the now eruptive, now unabashedly lyrical aspects of the finale.

The deservedly popular and oftrecorded Third Concerto gets a brilliant and unproblematic reading, Ashkenazy's articulation in the quasi-glissando episode of the finale being one of the high points. The last two concertos each present, in their different ways, performance problems. The Concerto for the Left Hand was written for Paul Wittgenstein in 1931 and promptly rejected; indeed, there was no first performance until the year 1956, after which the work became a regular part of the Prokofiev performance repertoire, even finding its way to disc through a most unlikely interpreter-Rudolf Serkin. That performance, a good one, is still available (Columbia MS 6405), but Ashkenazy here has a clear edge when it comes to volatility. both in the tersely motoric opening movement and the technical tour de force that rounds out the piece. The now-contemplative, now-intense middle movements contain what I consider some of Prokofiev's finest writing, an opinion that is definitely reinforced by the eloquence of the Ashkenazy/Previn performance.

The Fifth Concerto I find oddly cryptic, even (in its opening movement) arid, reminiscent of the composer's manner in some other scores of the period just before his return to Russia-the ballet On the Dnieper, for example. Sviatoslav Richter championed this work relatively early in his career and recorded it in Russia, Warsaw, and London, and I must confess that for all Ashkenazy's fluency (and Previn's able teamwork), it is Richter, both with Lorin Maazel (Angel) and with Witold Rowicki (DG), who manages to wring the greater amount of musical substance out of the piece. Ashkenazy scores most effectively in the grotesquerie of the second movement and the ferocity of the finale, but Richter has the edge overall in either of his stereo recordings.

Save for a few minor details of balance (somewhat overprominent castanets in the Third Concerto and an uncomfortably overbearing touch of horn



LES PAUL AND CHET ATKINS: a bold restraint newly discovered

unison in the third movement of the Fourth), London's recording is altogether splendid. The production as a whole, including the orchestral sides with Ashkenazy as conductor, is essential for any representative library of recorded Prokofiev, and no one who fancies the best in twentieth-century piano writing and performance ought to be without it. Mastering, say, the three Bartók concertos for concert performance and recording is no insuperable feat for today's young piano virtuosos, but doing the same for Prokofiev is a challenge considerably more demanding; it is one Ashkenazy has met in arresting fashion. David Hall

PROKOFIEV: Piano Concertos: No. 1, in Dflat, Op. 10; No. 2, in G Minor, Op. 16; No. 3, in C Major, Op. 26; No. 4, for Left Hand, Op. 53; No. 5, in G Major, Op. 55. Autumnal Sketch, Op. 8; Classical Symphony in D Major, Op. 25; Overture on Hebrew Themes, Op. 34. Vladimir Ashkenazy (piano); Keith Puddy (clarinet); Gabrieli String Quartet; London Symphony Orchestra, André Previn and Vladimir Ashkenazy cond. LONDON CSA 2314 three discs \$20.94

Chet Atkins & Les Paul: Sublime Time For Two Master Guitarists

DON'T recall, up to now, ever having heard Chet Atkins playing the guitar with, so to speak, heart's blood and ... um ... genital heat. He has been for years, and at all times, a highly skilled and impressively accomplished craftsman on his chosen instrument, but he has also been basically cautious. Not only has he never erred, in my hearing, on the side of excess, he has in fact seemed to have an active horror of it.

Les Paul, of course, has never suffered with any such problem. His basically Saturday night point of view and his yahoo personality were always evident in his bombastic playing style. He made several impressive contributions to the development of the electric guitar and, more important, to methods and means of recording it, but as a musician he was too often guilty of mere gimcrackery (who can forget all that bathroom reverb?).

It seems almost too good to be true, then, that these two masters of the poet's instrument should meet, jam, flabbergast each other, and dash off to record a superb album of light jazz, Atkins becoming excitingly bold and Paul restrained enough that we can hear how daring his solo ideas really are. RCA's "Chester and Lester" has so many moments that cause both heart and feet to pound that it's useless to catalog them. Get it so you can hear Atkins playing what he wanted to-and Paul what he should have-twenty years ago. The pairing of the two is something very nearly sublime.

Joel Vance

CHET ATKINS & LES PAUL: Chester & Lester. Chet Atkins and Les Paul (guitars); instrumental accompaniment. It's Been a Long Time; Moonglow and Theme from "Picnic"; Caravan; It Had to Be You; Out of Nowhere; Avalon; Birth of the Blues; Someday Sweetheart; 'Deed I Do; Lover Come Back to Me. RCA APL1-1167 \$6.98, @ APS1-1167 \$7.98, @ APK1-1167 \$7.98.

Legitimate, No-Fooling-Around, Rock-and-Roll Annie McLoone

BACK in the April issue, I was ranting on about the possibility of finding a female rock singer who really was a female rock singer—that is, not just another sensitive folkie or chanteuse, but an out-and-out rocker who could take on the Roger Daltreys and Paul Rogers of this world and at least match them at their own game. "There are a few women who understand how rock operates, though they're few and far between at the moment," I opined, and went on to venture that the emergence of Patti Smith might open the door for other such creatures.



ANNIE MCLOONE: the genuine article

Well, no sooner had my typewriter cooled from writing that than I received a disc marking the recording debut of Annie McLoone-or of the Annie McLoone Band (take your pick; the cover says one thing and the label the other). Questions of nomenclature aside, this is the genuine article; a legitimate, no-fooling-around rock-and-roll woman. Vocally, Annie is vaguely reminiscent of some of the better Sixties Motown girl singers-Martha Reeves. perhaps, or Brenda Holloway-and there will doubtless be Janis Joplin comparisons. Mostly, though, she sounds like herself. She can belt and yet, when she has to, sing quite delicately. This is, however, most definitely a rock-and-roll voice-not a folk



ROY HARPER: you're going to just love the tunes

voice, not a blues voice, not a Las Vegas Show Tune voice, but a rock-androll voice. (Forgive me if I seem to be overusing that phrase, but the distinction is crucial.)

Judging from the cover photos, Annie McLoone has the looks to back all this up. She seems to be a tough, funny, street-wise little kid, perhaps a college drop-out, and something of a floozy. Granted all this may be wardrobe and make-up, but it's tastefully done. She also displays exemplary taste in her choice of material, all of it solidly rock-oriented: songs by Fleetwood Mac's great and vastly underrated Christine McVie, Eric Clapton, Grace Slick, Dylan, Jimmy Cliff, and even Christine Clark's immortal Party Lights, an early r-&-b classic (a knockout version, by the way.)

Together, Annie and her musicians (an extremely solid mainstream rock band, verging on heavy metal, but with lots of flexibility and a knowledge of differing styles) have made one hell of a fine little album, and the only thing that keeps me from recommending it to you without qualification is the fact that although the musicians were thinking rock-and-roll, the producers and engineers weren't. The sound is thin and clinical; guitars roar, drums pound, but ever so politely. The Harder [sic] They Come, for example, has a wonderful Who-esque arrangement, but it is almost sabotaged by a mixing job that seems determined to make the whole sound as anemic as James Taylor. What would obviously blow you away in live performance sounds meek enough here to have been performed by the Juilliard String Quartet.

But it is, after all, a first attempt, and I'd be willing to bet that Annie and band have the same gripe I have; fact is, it's often difficult to get your own way when you're an unknown artist dealing

with a studio full of industry know-italls. Perhaps these problems will be resolved next time out (send her to England would be my solution; if, say, Glyn Johns had produced her we would have had a masterpiece). But it's a gas of an album anyway, and one of the most promising debuts I've run across in a long time. Steve Simels

ANNIE McLOONE: Fast Annie. Annie McLoone (vocals); John Fannon (guitars); Jimmy Waldo (keyboards); Peter Cohen (bass); Denny Carlson (drums). I Want You; The Bigger They Come the Harder They Fall; One Night Stand; Keep on Growin'; Ai Garimasu; Party Lights; Spare Me a Little of Your Love; I Will Glide; If You See Him, Say Hello; I Could've Loved You Forever. APK1-1362 \$7.98.

Roy Harper Will Help You Forget That Rock Is Twenty Years Old

Roy HARPER did the singing on Have a Cigar in the recent Pink Floyd album, and he was the subject of Hats Off to Harper in the third Led Zeppelin LP. "When an Old Cricketer Leaves the Crease" is his tenth album, but it is the first easily obtainable in the U.S. and Canada, and Ian Anderson, head of Jethro Tull and the main force behind Chrysalis Records, is promoting it for all he's worth-at least among reviewers and critics.

Well, Anderson's right; Harper's good. If "Old Cricketer" is any indication, he's extremely good at getting inspired stuff out of the musicians who record with him-the high marks I give this one are mostly for how fresh it all sounds. One can get lost in it and forget that rock is twenty years old and has been cuffed around a lot lately. The lyrics, another thing Harper's supposed to be good at, impress me less. A lot of them, in fact, elude me altogether because of the British penchant for mixing the instruments louder than the vocals. Not that I'd tamper with these arrangements, however; they are, let us say, more relevant to living day-by-day in the English class system than they are to living in ours.

Anderson has been known to compare Harper favorably with Bob Dylan. He certainly does do the wordy dadahyperbole bit as well as Dylan used to, but he doesn't have the singing voice Dylan has, and it doesn't have the built-in, irony-connoting inflections that come so naturally to Dylan's generation. Harper's voice is, when you get right down to it, rather thin, but it is dressed up technologically in several ways here (none of which bothers me) and he manages to get by. But you're going to just love the tunes, and the instrumentation and production are going to rattle your timbers-or is that stick to your wicket? (The jacket notes, by the way, tell you a great deal more about the game of cricket than you're likely to want to know, including what "leaving the crease" means.)

Noel Coppage

ROY HARPER: When an Old Cricketer Leaves the Crease. Roy Harper (vocals, guitar); Chris Spedding (guitar); Bill Bruford (drums); other musicians. The Game; The Spirit Lives; Grown Ups Are Just Silly Children; Referendum (Legend); Forget Me Not; Hallucination Light; When an Old Cricketer Leaves the Crease. CHRYSALIS CHR 1105 \$6.98



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Reviewed by CHRIS ALBERTSON • NOEL COPPAGE • PAUL KRESH • PETER REILLY • JOEL VANCE

MORRIS ALBERT: *Feelings.* Morris Albert (vocals and guitar); orchestra. *Falling Tears; Christine; Gotta Go Home; Come to My Life; Gipsy;* and six others. RCA APL1-1018 \$6.98.

Performance: Good Recording: Good

Here's some very pleasant sort of drifting, pseudo-Latin guitar work by Morris Albert, including his big hit, *Feelings*. His singing is utilitarian and not much more, but he can often manage some very pretty sounds. As seems almost obligatory in this sort of repertoire, he writes songs that try for sensuality but unfortunately only make it up to the point of languor. When he does allow himself to perspire a bit, as in *Ways of Fire/Boombamakoo*, the results suggest that it's time for him to move off the low burner and try a higher temperature more often. Nice, passive entertainment, however. *P.R.*

CHET ATKINS & LES PAUL: Chester & Lester (see Best of the Month, page 73)

ROY AYERS: Mystic Voyage. Roy Ayers Ubiquity (instrumentals and vocals). A Wee Bit; Funky Motion; The Black Five; Life Is Just a Moment (Parts I and II); and four others. POLYDOR PD-6057 \$6.98.

Performance: **Disco loop** Recording: **Very good**

Electric bass up front laying down a simple, repetitive figure against which conga drums beat a common pattern—sound familiar?

Explanation of symbols:

- $\mathbf{R} = reel-to-reel stereo tape$
- (8) = eight-track stereo cartridge
- © = stereo cassette
- = quadraphonic disc
- **R** = reel-to-reel quadraphonic tape
- **B** = eight-track quadraphonic tape

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol M

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

Well, you ain't heard nothing new yet, and you won't, not on this album. Add to the above the usual electronic keyboards, a lady of average voice fantasizing that she is Aretha, musicians singing in chorus as musicians often do (not very well), and some of the blandest, most monotonous material this side of Barry White. This is a strenuous effort to sound soulful in the recent sense of the term, but it is totally lacking in feeling and imagination. Adding insult to injury, the album is dedicated to the memory of Cannonball Adderley (whose name is misspelled in the dedication) and "to his musical contribution to this world." Sad, isn't it? C.A.

BAD COMPANY: Run with the Pack. Bad Company (vocals and instrumentals). Live for the Music; Simple Man; Honey Child; Love Me Somebody; Run with the Pack; Young Blood; and four others. SWAN SONG SS 8415 \$6.98, (1) TP 8415 \$7.98, (2) CS 8415 \$7.98.

Performance: Has its moments Recording: Excellent

I like this a little better than I thought I liked Bad Company. It doesn't stand particularly tall as an album, but the good parts-Simple Man, Honey Child, Silver, Blue and Goldseem to be better singles and radio spots than the group has done before. To be fair about it, Bad Company has better vocals than many rock bands, and on occasion they can be inventive with the instruments. The element I can't find much of is charm; the people seem to let, or cause, the conventions of rock to overshadow their own personalities. They don't seem to have set out to take a lot of chances, either. But the handling of sound shows good judgment when they have a tune to work with; the thing starts to sound padded only when they don't have that-in, for example, Live for the Music and the title song. The production (the mix lets you hear the words) and engineering are quite good. I'd like to hear what they could do if they put this much energy into something that didn't stick so close to the pack. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JOAN BAEZ: From Every Stage. Joan Baez

(vocals and guitar); other musicians. Stew Ball; Natalia; Joe Hill; Forever Young; Amazing Grace; and fifteen others. A&M SP 3704 two discs \$9.98, ^(a) 8T 3704 \$7.98, ^(c) CS 3704 \$7.98.

Performance: Lovely Recording: Good

Joan Baez, as meltingly persuasive as ever, is back in top form here in a series of selections from some recent live performances. There's nothing really new here, but we do get a gorgeous performance of *Please Come to Boston* and a *Suzanne* that will make your hair stand on end. Her audiences respond to her with the same rapture I feel when listening to her--which is to say a lot. This is a lovely album by a woman who couldn't sing an ugly note if she tried, and who gets better and better as the years go by. *P.R.*

BAY CITY ROLLERS: Rock n' Roll Love Letter. Bay City Rollers (vocals and instrumentals). Money Honey; La Belle Jeane; Rock and Roll Love Letter; Maybe I'm a Fool to Love You; Wouldn't You Like It; and six others. ARISTA AL 4071 \$6.98, (1) 8301-4071 H \$7.98, (2) 5301-4071 H \$7.98.

Performance: Slightly improved Recording: Undistinguished

On this, their second American album, the Bay City Rollers put it together for one cut, the title song. Among the possible reasons for this success are (1) that Rock and Roll Love Letter was written by a talented fellow named Tim Moore and it is the only non-Roller composition on the record, and (2) that guest producer Colin Frechter makes his only appearance on the cut and seems to have helped things. The vocals (probably the Rollers' strongest point) are dominant, with Derek Longmuir's drumming pushing the song along at a faster clip than Moore's original. This is a pleasant, competent piece of schlock-rock that certainly should have been the single release. The only other standout of any kind is an entirely unexpected one: Eagles Fly works as a light Southern California rocker à la the Eagles.

The rest of the album runs together into one long harmonic blur. Regular producer Phil

Wainman's work, though improved since the last outing, is utterly undistinguished, and the Rollers' original material (written by Stuart Wood and Eric Faulkner) has at least one glaring weakness: catchy melodies, but weak (read dumb) lyrics. An ideal Rollers album, it seems to me, would consist of about one-third carefully chosen oldies/outside material and two-thirds group compositions. But the band's most desperate need right now is a new producer; it would be interesting to see what Dave Edmunds could do with them.

As for the Rollers being the Next Big Anything, this second album seems like the place to draw a few conclusions. First, merely selling records does not mean, perforce, changing lives. Second, interesting people are rarely manufactured, they simply *are*. For these reasons, the Bay City Rollers will never be the Beatles. With luck, attention to business, and a new producer, they could, however, be the Dave Clark Five of the Seventies. (Quick, now—who was the DC Five's bassist?)

-Chuck Limmer

PAUL BUTTERFIELD: Put It in Your Ear. Paul Butterfield (vocals, harmonica, keyboards); other musicians, Henry Glover arr. You Can Run but You Can't Hide; (If I Never Sing) My Song; The Animal; The Breadline; Day to Day; The Flame; and four others. BEARSVILLE BR 6960 \$6.98, [®] M8 6960 \$7.98, [©] M5 6960 \$7.98.

Performance: Ponderous Recording: Very good

What Paul Butterfield wanted all along, apparently, was to lead a big, big band. Since those are just plain unwieldy, this puts him at the cool end of the blues, or out of it altogether, because his voice and his harp would seem to be better suited to personal, flexible, smaller things. Here he turns lyrical with Fred Carter's country-flavored (If I Never) Sing My Song and edges now and then into a lethargic near-jazz kind of thing, which is probably inevitable when one is using this U.S. Army approach of appointing twenty men to do something that could more easily be done by five. Ironically, Butterfield's harp-the thing that made him famous-is not a cool and melodic, Stevie Wonder, pop type of harp, but a gutsyromantic and semi-raw type. Both it and his voice seem to want to be more emotional than these songs and these arrangements call for. Even so, he takes a couple of solos that sear a little bit. I don't know whether a big band can be made to do what he wants or not, but I don't think this one, this time, has quite cut the mustard; there's just too much sound for the sake of sound, too little contrast, not enough quickness, too much of a make-work factor in the selection of the material. For all that, my respect for Butterfield is not diminished, and I wouldn't underestimate him. Let's see how the next one goes. N.C.

CY COLEMAN: The Party's On Me. Cy Coleman (keyboards); other instrumentalists and vocalists. Chloë; Love Will Keep Us Together; Touch Me in the Morning; The Party's On Me; Bring Back Those Good Old Days; Speak Low; and six others. RCA APL1-1252 \$6.98, (a) APS1-1252 \$7.98, (c) APK1-1252 \$7.98.

Performance: Busy busy Recording: Very good

This collection of a dozen items—some of them vintage and four of them Coleman's manages to hold together somehow at the



<image>

NCE upon a time—it was in the year 1807, to be exact-an English poet named William Roscoe published a children's book all about a forest full of animals getting ready to attend a ball being thrown by a glamorous butterfly and catered by a philanthropic grasshopper. A century and a half later, English artist Alan Aldridge came across the story in a Victorian anthology and persuaded the late William Plomer, an outstanding versifier, to collaborate with him on a new version of The Butterfly Ball and the Grasshopper's Feast. The result was a beautiful book of lush lyrics and lavish drawings that is deservedly a children's bestseller on both sides of the Atlantic.

But The Butterfly Ball just cried out for music, and two British composers, Rod Edwards and Roger Hand, answered the cry. Now from Argo comes a stunning recording of the complete book, set for narrators, vocalists, and orchestra, in a rendition that measures up to the elaborate, richly colored Aldridge drawings and the Plomer poems in every way. The only thing that hasn't been set to music is the appendix of natural-history footnotes. Here are all the irresistible animals-the Old Blind Mole, Harlequin Hare, Major Nathaniel Gnat, and the rest-getting ready for the big blast, which occurs to the accompaniment of splendidly old-fashioned Lepidoptera а Waltz. Michael Hordern and Judi Dench are incomparable narrators; Mr. Edwards and Mr. Hand prove themselves as able in interpreting songs as in composing them. The impressionist-style orchestral arrangements are consistently intriguing and enhancing.

Meanwhile, UKL, another British company, has rushed out another album offering a musical version of *The Butterfly Ball* in a more contemporary idiom. Here Mr. Plomer's poems have been translated into the kind of language that goes with rock songs and supplied with an ambitious rock score, with

pseudo-soul overtones, by Roger Glover. Mr. Plomer's fastidious dormouse, aloof mole, and inebriated newts are suddenly transformed into with-it swingers from a hyped-up part of the forest. Instead of preparing for the butterfly's ball, they get themselves together for it: "Ants and dormice/Open your eyes/ Mobilize now!/Get yourselves together for the feast and for the ball." And the ball itself, though still set in "Nature's countryside," seems to be taking place in an underground disco establishment with strobe lights. Even so, Glover's fast-moving version, employing a large force of singers and instrumentalists, stands up on its own terms, hard-driving as it is, and should appeal to its own kind of kids of all ages

Both albums are handsomely designed to match the book, and both come with texts.

-Paul Kresh

ROD EDWARDS/ROGER HAND: The Butterfly Ball and the Grasshopper's Feast. Based on the book by Alan Aldridge and William Plomer. Judi Dench and Michael Hordern (narrators); Rod Edwards and Roger Hand (vocals and instrumentals). This Is the Day; Harold the Herald; Mrs. Dormouse; Old Blind Mole; Dandy Rat and the Footpads; Harlequin Hare; Esmeralda, Seraphina and Camilla; and thirty others. Argo ZSW 557/8 two discs \$13.96.

ROGER GLOVER: The Butterfly Ball and the Grasshopper's Feast. Roger Glover (synthesizer); Helen Chappelle, Barry St. John, Neil Lancaster, others (vocals); instrumental accompaniment, Mike Moran, Del Newman, Martyn Ford, and John Bell cond. Dawn; Get Ready; Saffron Dormouse and Lizzy Bee; Harlequin Hare; Old Blind Mole; Magician Moth; No Solution; Behind the Smile; Fly Away; Aranea; Sitting in Dream; and eight others. UK RECORDS UKL 56000 \$6.98.

seams although it's constantly fighting itself. With its chorus of lowing voices and the nervous rush of its instrumental arrangement, it's hard to tell whether Coleman's version of Chloë has been issued in tribute to the romantic love song of the past or to Spike Jones. A tune as lovely as Kurt Weill's Speak Low is offered without the tune. Bring Back the Good Old Days flirts with ragtime but never does settle on any particular idiom, nostalgic or otherwise. The Party's On Me comes complete with party sounds, but turns out to be not much of a bash after all. The problem with everything is bigness and busyness-too many kinds of tinkling, clonking, and buzzing going on at once, and everything on too large a scale; too many keyboards straining under Coleman's unrestrained fingers. The dreamy

moments of *Côte d'Azur*, smooth, seductive, and relatively unadorned, arrive like a welcome holiday—but by that time the party is practically over. P.K.

JESSI COLTER: Jessi. Jessi Colter (vocals, piano); Waylon Jennings (guitar); Larry Muhoberac (keyboards); Reggie Young (guitar); Ralph Mooney (steel guitar); other musicians. The Hand That Rocks the Cradle; One Woman Man; It's Morning (And I Still Love You); Rounder; Here I Am; Without You; and four others. CAPITOL ST-11477 \$6.98. (§) 8XT-11477 \$7.98. (©) 4XT-11477 \$7.98.

Performance: Stylish Recording: Excellent

Well, I liked I'm Not Lisa and I still think Jes-

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JESSI COLTER Someone we ought to watch

si Colter is someone we ought to watch. She doesn't seem to have approached her prime yet, as singer or writer, although her singing is stylistically secure and distinctive and interesting. Her voice has that inbred, melancholy quality of Melba Montgomery's, but she's able to convey that it's coming through quite a different personality—and to convey it instantly; two notes and you know who it is. She is married to Waylon Jennings and she performs with the kind of intensity he's identified with; it's larger than life and yet it isn't exactly theatrical.

It's the lyric part of her songwriting that doesn't seem to have jelled yet. I keep sensing a greater awareness than she has actually articulated, and I keep speculating that something is straining to form itself. All My Life *I've Been Your Lady* is the pretiest thing in this batch, although, again, I think the words are a little more predictable than Colter's lines eventually will be. The sound is good, though; the lady can make a tune, and the people she's hired can play one. This is the kind of effort you drive a stake beside (since she is—nominally, anyway—a country performer, make that a stob) so you can check future progress. *N.C.*

LYNSEY DE PAUL: Love Bomb. Lynsey De Paul (vocals and piano); orchestra. Sugar Shuffle; Dreams; Crystal Ball; Central Park Arrest; Season to Season; and five others. MERCURY SRM-1-1055 \$6.98, (Image) MC8-1-1055 \$7.98, (Image) MCR4-1-1055 \$7.98.

Performance: Indelible Recording: Fair

Lynsey De Paul wrote, produced, and starred in this album. One can only hope that she has a lot of friends (judging by the rampantly sexy cover pictures of her, she probably does). Perhaps they will enjoy her comic-strip melodrama ("Love bomb is gonna fall on everyone/Only one last solution/To put an end to war pollution . . ."), her gummy jazziness (Shoobeedoo Wey Doobee How), and her just plain hammy incompetence (Central Park Arrest, a song about a policeman who kills someone who fails to halt that is so incredibly bad in every department that it is almost a piece of surrealistic-dada art). Ms. De Paul performs
these songs with all of the bland assurance of the totally untalented. *P.R.*

BO DIDDLEY: The Twentieth Anniversary of Rock 'n' Roll. Bo Diddley (vocals); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. Ride the Water (Parts 1 and 2); Not Fade Away; Kill My Body; Drag On; I'm a Man; Who Do You Love; Bo Diddley's a Gunslinger. RCA APL1-1229 \$6.98, @ APS1-1229 \$7.98.

Performance: Disappointing Recording: Overloaded

Eugene McDaniels is one of the great originals of rock. He created for himself the mythical Bo Diddley figure, a direct descendant of the Jackstropper, Little John the Conquerer, Stagger Lee, and other black folklore heroes who can fight, work, make love, and be cooler than anyone else. He is a thrilling guitarist; his single-string chorus on the original *Who Do You Love* is one of the most exciting in all rock, and his signature "shave-and-a-haircuttwo-bits" rhythm figure is masterly in its controlled, sustained frenzy.

Though he flourished in the Fifties, Bo Diddley's career began to nosedive by the middle of the last decade, so that when he was brought back to fame via the Rock 'n' Roll Revival concert circuit a few years ago (he was running a chicken farm in New Mexico), he could step on stage and tell new fans who were barely born when his records first came out: "You are looking at a survivor of what I call the 'rock and roll crisis.' But I'd like to say that I've had eighteen great years in show business." In interviews prior to his return he was quoted as saying of British and American groups of the Sixties who appropriated much of his style: "I opened the door for everybody else to get in. They went through the door and just left me holding it.

He is still, in a way, left holding the door. The problem of recording Diddley since his return is that he *is* so much of an original that, despite the credit he gets for being a pioneer from the Golden Age, his former work is bound to be considered "old-fashioned." To make him contemporary, his previous label, Chess, produced a series of albums in which Diddley sang "modern" tunes with foxychick back-up vocals or in which he was surrounded by admiring young British and American players for "all-star" sessions.

His debut on RCA combines the "modern" and "all-star" devices. The first side features the two-part production number Ride the Water, meant to be grandiose and funky. Unfortunately, it's neither. Not Fade Away, written in the Fifties and performed by Buddy Holly, copied the "Bo Diddley beat" and his sentiments. The imitation was imitated in 1964 when the Rolling Stones did the tune. It seems pointless, even absurd, for Diddley to sing it now. The second side has an "all-star" jamsession medley of three Diddley classics, on which assorted famed names twang and pound, but nothing amazing takes place. The new listener can't celebrate the twentieth anniversary of rock and Diddley's part in shaping it without a knowledge of the variety, folk wisdom, and rich humor in Diddley's best work. Much of it is collected on "Got My Own Bag of Tricks" (Chess 2CH 60005), officially out of print but still available in some stores, and I suggest you get it soon. IV

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT DR. FEELGOOD: Malpractice. Dr. Feelgood (vocals and instrumentals). I Can Tell; Going Back Home; Rolling and Tumbling; Don't You Just Know It; Riot in Cell Block #9; You Shouldn't Call the Doctor (If You Can't Afford the Bills); and five others. COLUMBIA PC 34098 \$6.98, ⁽³⁾ PCA 34098 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good fun** Recording: **Muddy**

Thousands in England must find life more enjoyable because of Dr. Feelgood, a pretty good rock dance band with a style based on American urban blues and rock novelty songs from the Fifties: Rolling and Tumbling is from the Muddy Waters catalog; Riot in Cell Block #9 is a Jerry Lieber-Mike Stoller standard; Don't You Just Know It was originated by New Orleans' Huey "Piano" Smith about 1958. The songs that the group has written are derivative, which is not surprising, given their influences. I would guess that they even take their name from that of Dr. Feelgood and the Interns, a black group of the period mentioned who recorded a piece of superior jive entitled You Got the Right String but the Wrong Yo-Yo.

Nevertheless, the present Dr. Feelgood is long on beat and bravado, and "Malpractice" is a lot of fun. The album cover shows them looking ominous and inscrutable—rock dance bands always had a secret giggle about looking tough—but one of the nicer things about most dance bands, and this one in particular, is that they have few blowsy ambitions about becoming dignified. The Feelgoods have pro-(Continued on page 82)



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PICTURED ABOVE: lower left-TD-125 AB MARK II. (Also available without tone arm TD-125 B MARK II) lower right-TD-145 C • top left-TD-160 C • top right-TD-165 C. "Something rare ... a white girl singer who's actually funky."



Goroughly Modern Maria

MARIA MULDAUR technically qualifies to be called an old folkie, and she has a sound that's superficially old-timey, but she is a thoroughly modern Maria. It isn't just that she's a good example of a divorcée making it on her own in a time when a new kind of attention is being paid to women. There's something else here: if Muldaur feels defensive or self-conscious about riding point in that way, she keeps such feelings out of her music. She does not say between the lines as, oh, Helen Reddy does, "*Respect* me, damn you," nor does she constantly remind you how sincere and basically unthreatening she is, the way most old folkies do. She seems, at least in performance, to be past all that, able to assume you will respect her and trust her to be sincere and even-handed. As a consequence of this kind of self-liberation, she is something rare indeed, a white girl singer who's actually funky. She dares to lighten things up-she even dares to stir recollections of Betty Boop-and nobody calls her empty-headed or frivolous.

This is a more richly colored-in personality than usually comes across in popular music, especially from womenfolkies, and Muldaur's latest Reprise album, "Sweet Harmony," demonstrates what a boon it can be. Song by song, the material in a Muldaur album doesn't have to be all that excellent (as, song by song in "Sweet Harmony," it isn't); the songs' main task is to stay in balance while on the move, to complement one another, and to give Maria room in which to go at it. (I'm having to write this in the rotten month of March, which I've always hated and which has only one decent feature, the round of basketball tournaments and playoffs it contains, so:) In basketball it is sometimes useful to clear out one side of the court and let your best ball handler, your best one-on-one player, make his moves. Muldaur is like unto a good oneon-one player. She has the moves.

It's easy enough to find fault with several of the songs in "Sweet Harmony." The two by Wendy Waldman, Back By Fall and Wild Bird, are fairly tuneless and seem to advertise a profundity they don't actually have-but they do allow for the kind of instrumental and mood changes that, in turn, allow Muldaur to break matters up or fold them over. We Just Couldn't Say Goodbye, by Harry Woods, is not particularly strong either, but it seems just about right for its particular spot in the program; it has a chorus in which the vocal harmonies have to go lickety-split and be precisely enunciated, Dan Hicks-style-and one of the harmonizers there is Maryann Price, a graduate of Dan Hicks and His Hot Licks. (There are, as the title suggests, lots of harmonies here and they are sweet, with the hired help including Linda Ronstadt and Ellen Kearney, and with Amos Garrett singing bass the way he used to with Ian and Sylvia.) The semi-nutty gospel thing by the Rev. W. H. Brewster, As an Eagle Stirreth in Her Nest, works only because this particular singer can put a move on you. In the end, the only combination of tune, arrangement, and placement

in the album that doesn't work, I think, is *I* Can't Stand It, written by Smokey McAllister—and even there I may be reacting mostly against the phrase. That's always struck me as being out of joint and too easily dismantled: one can stand it, one does stand it; one is, after all, still here.

Muldaur's funkiness comes more overtly into play in her treatment of something like Hoagy Carmichael's *Rockin' Chair*, and in the zany-shrewd judgment involved in picking such a tune to record in the first place. She is able to kid the song and at the same time to convey respect for it. It comes out just right, one degree off center or (in the marvelous phrase of an anonymous good old boy quoted in *Saturday Review*) half a bubble off of plumb.

WELL, Muldaur had a head start toward developing this faintly anarchistic whimsey. She first appeared on the scene in the early-Sixties folk boom, but not with a gut-string guitar and a sheaf of Childe ballads. She was in a jug band, and rather a socially portentous one at that, the Jim Kweskin Jug Band. It was quite well liked around Harvard Square for a time, but the interesting thing about it was the tangled question of where the authority lay-Kweskin, the leader, was an avowed follower of one of the in-and-out sidemen, Mel Lyman, harmonica player and early commune chief. It would seem a better place than most for a young musician to learn how to stay loose and not take too much too seriously. Two members of the group, Maria and Geoff Muldaur, her husband then, seemed to make learning how to sing the number-one thing to concentrate on, and today it shows.

Today, Maria has a wild, gypsy voice that can take a good but not great song, such as John Herald's Jon the Generator, and turn it into a swinging, free-form experience ... a style that makes even a Neil Sedaka song (Sad Eyes) seem to have some depth to it, and I never thought I'd perceive that in a Neil Sedaka song. She is loose but not out of control, like Pete Maravich flying down court on a fast break. Things seem always about to fly apart, but they don't. My latest assessment of all this is that I wouldn't trade one funky lady for a half-dozen of your funny ladies with their straight, standard, blue-eyed jokes, assuming you could round up that many to trade. And who'd have suspected that boop-boop-bedoop could grow up to be something worthy of a Ms? -Noel Coppage

MARIA MULDAUR: Sweet Harmony. Maria Muldaur (vocals); Waddy Wachtel (guitar); John Girton (guitar); Amos Garrett (guitar, vocals); Gary Mallaber (drums); Willie Weeks (bass): Jim Gordon (woodwinds); Linda Ronstadt, Wendy Waldman, Ellen Kearney, Michael Finnigan, Arthur Adams (harmony vocals); other musicians. Sweet Harmony; Sad Eyes; Lying Song; Rockin' Chair; I Can't Stand It; We Just Couldn't Say Goodbye; Wild Bird; Jon the Generator; Back By Fall; As an Eagle Stirreth in Her Nest. REPRISE MS 2235 \$6.98, **(6)** M8 2235 \$7.98, **(6)** M5 2235 \$7.98.

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duced one of the least pretentious bits of rock in many a month. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PETER FRAMPTON: Frampton Comes Alive! Peter Frampton (guitar, vocals); instrumental accompaniment. Something's Happening; Doobie Wah; Show Me the Way; It's a Plain Shame; All I Want to Be (Is by Your Side); Penny for Your Thoughts; and eight others. A&M SP-3703 \$7.98, [®] 3703 \$7.98, [©] 3703 \$7.98.

Performance: Very good Recording: Good

Twenty-five-year-old guitarist Peter Frampton made a wise decision when he quit the stale and noisy Humble Pie. He has since become successful, writing and singing I-loveyou-baby songs that individually amount to molehills but collectively are . . . well, not a mountain; more like a steep slope covered by sweet-weed tall enough to hide a few couples at play.

This live album, made up of excerpts from a recent concert tour, contains the screams, whistlings, roars, and cannibal chants of audiences who appear to be more whacked out on their own enthusiasm than they are on Frampton's music.

But Frampton is notable and perhaps special. He is remarkably restrained in that he plays only what he has to play, according to the needs of each tune, and does so in a fresh and pleasing manner. He has charm, a virtue so rare in rock that it is at first almost a little embarrassing; never mind—it soon becomes most welcome. J.V.

GRAND FUNK RAILROAD: Born to Die. Grand Funk Railroad (vocals and instrumentals). Born to Die; Dues; Sally; I Fell for Your Love; Take Me; Genevieve; and four others. CAPITOL ST-11482 \$6.98, (® 8XT-11482 \$7.98, (© 4XT-11482 \$7.98.

Performance: **Ree-goddamn-diculous** Recording: **Good**

It's true. They play the instruments better

perhaps special than they used to. Still, as music, this album is

PETER FRAMPTON: notable and

the nearest thing I've heard lately to the old Edgar Bergen-Mortimer Snerd routine: "How can you be so stupid?" "Wull, I got a fella helpin' me." The thing seems to make heavyhanded dumbness a paradigm, or maybe it's still merely a political shibboleth as incompetence in general was in days of yore. Speaking of politics, "Mr. Politician please don't deceive us, Mr. Politician you're there to relieve us" is an example of the freshness Mark Farner brings to that theme, and a good enough example of how novel Grand Funk's viewpoint is generally. About as novel as preachers at a funeral, to get on with the subject of Death, which is what the packaging leads you to believe the album is about. Only the title song is, in the narrow sense of the word-and it would have been better to avoid the theme altogether than deal with it in the insensitive, moon-June way Farner's lyrics do. It's all the more depressing since it may refer to an actual happening; the victim is identified as "my cousin" and the cause as a motorcycle accident. There's a lot said about death indirectly, though, and the whole album seems to have been born that way. NC

LARRY GROCE: Junkie Junkie. Larry Groce (vocals and guitar); orchestra. Old Home Place; Calhoun County; Coal Tattoo; The Biggest Whatever; and six others. WAR-NER BROS. BS 2933 \$6.98, (1) M8 2933 \$7.98, (2) M5 2933 \$7.98.

Performance: *Junkie* fine, the rest poor Recording: Good

Larry Groce's hit single, Junkfood Junkie, holds up under repeated playings as one of those songs that says almost perfectly what it sets out to say in a funny and insightful way. The rest of this album, however, sags and descends, band after band, with all of the implacable determination of wet lederhosen on a mountain climb. The Little Old Lady in Cowboy Boots, for instance, is a one-joke idea that seems inordinately long even though its actual performance time is only two and onehalf minutes. Overall, this is the kind of album that starts at the top and then goes downhill so quickly that one doesn't even hear it after about the fourth track. P.R.

ROY HARPER: When an Old Cricketer Leaves the Crease (see Best of the Month, page 74)

KANSAS: Masque. Kansas (vocals and instrumentals). Child of Innocence; It's You; The Pinnacle; All the World; and four others. \$7.98, © PZT 33806 \$7.98.

Performance: Dank Recording: Good

Kansas is one of those groups that give what's left of rock a bad name. There isn't one attempt at a fresh or vital musical idea offered throughout this noisy, pretentious, self-indulgent disaster-only an endless rehash of everything that's gone on (too long) before it. "Masque" is pop narcissism at its dankest, most puerile level. P.R.

SPEEDY KEEN: Y' Know What I Mean? Speedy Keen (vocals and guitar); other musicians. Crazy Love; Almost Eighteen; The Profit on Ecology; My Love; Nightmare; and four others. ISLAND ILPS 9338 \$6.98.

Performance: Relaxed and professional Recording: Good

Here's Speedy Keen in a relaxed ramble around the block. Always the pro, Keen plays excellent guitar, and what he lacks in voicewhich is a lot-he more than makes up for in conviction. His songs fall into the same easy, assured bag, and when he's spinning out something such as Crazy Love or I Promise You, he probably gets as close to rock-moodbackground music as anyone ever will. Or should, probably. P.R.

KGB. Mike Bloomfield (guitar); Rick Grech (bass); Barry Goldberg (piano); Carmine Appice (drums); Ray Kennedy (vocals). Let Me Love You; Midnight Traveler; I've Got a Feeling; High Roller; Sail On Sailor; Workin' for the Children; and four others. MCA-2166 \$6.98,
 MCAT-2166 \$7.98,
 MCAC-2166 \$7.98.

Performance: Boys, you should know better

Recording: Better than performance

Everyone in this band has been around for quite a while and knows his stuff technically, but they all seem to have run out of imagination. The songs are woefully mediocre, the vocalist does a lot of hifalutin blues hollering, and guitarist Mike Bloomfield plays with meaningless intensity while the band lurches and churns like a runaway tractor just about out of gas. KGB, da? KGB, nyet! IV

LYNYRD SKYNYRD: Gimme Back My Bullets. Lynyrd Skynyrd (vocals and instrumentals). Give Me Back My Bullets; Every Mother's Son; Trust; I Got the Same Old Blues; Double Trouble; and four others. MCA' MCA-2170 \$6.98,
 MCAT-2170 \$7.98, MCAC-2170 \$7.98.

Performance: Passable Recording: Good

In the credits (and/or liabilities) here, there's a line to "acknowledge our kinship to the likes of the Marshall Tucker & Charlie Daniels bands." Then it says, "Furthermore, in agreeance with all concerned the energy set Everything you need to know Rea about CB is in this new book



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CIRCLE NO. 36 ON READER SERVICE CARD

forth," etc., and what I'd like to know, among other things, is what the hell kind of word is agreeance? Among the other things is why the likes of the Allman Brothers weren't cited, since aping their lead sounds seems to be a large part of Lynyrd Skynyrd's act. Behind that it is different, though, with the "cooking" kind of swamp-vamping you used to hear in Redbone, or behind Tony Joe White. Lynyrd Skynyrd is a tight band, but awfully definite about being a second-generation Southern blues-rocking band-it doesn't seem to try anything that hasn't been markettested in or around the region. Still, it's competent, not hard to take, for all my carping, and if this leads some kid to wonder about sources back beyond the Allman Brothers, it's done some good. NC

MELISSA MANCHESTER: Better Days & Happy Endings. Melissa Manchester (vocals); orchestra. Happy Endings; You Can Make It All Come True; Better Days; My Sweet Thing; Come In from the Rain; Rescue Me; and four others. ARISTA AL 4067 \$6.98, [®] 8301-4067 H \$7.98, [©] 5301-4067 H \$7.98.

Performance: **Good** Recording: **Very good**

Usually you can tell what kind of audience a recording is aimed at, but I can't tell that in this case. Manchester is a tight-throated, incontrol throwback to stylish singers of yesteryear—she has style without seeming to have to work at it—and she has a nice, smooth tone, but she seems neither as glib as this material wants her to be nor as intense as



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MELISSA MANCHESTER The stylishness of yesteryear

an occasional line of lyric and an occasional jostle of arrangement want her to be. It may be simply that it's difficult to write optimistic songs, which these mostly are (she and Carole Bayer Sager wrote most of them), or it may be that she's been Richard Perry-ed a little bit this album was produced by Vini Poncia, an associate of Perry's. It strikes me as overproduced, yet warmly, benignly so; it's pleasant, but I still don't know any more about Melissa Manchester. N.C.

ANNIE McLOONE: Fast Annie (see Best of the Month, page 73)

SERGIO MENDES & BRASIL '77: Home Cooking. Sergio Mendes & Brasil '77 (vocals and instrumentals). Sunny Day; Shakara; It's Up to You; Hey People, Hey; and six others. ELEKTRA 7E-1055 \$6.98, © ET-81055 \$7.98.

Performance: Boring Recording: Good

Sergio Mendes and his Brasil '77 group sound winded, tired, and bored in this collection of background music that gives no hint at all of the brilliant entertainment Mendes used to provide back in the Sixties. Ketchup, and very watery ketchup at that. *P.R.*

LAURA NYRO: Smile. Laura Nyro (vocals, guitar, piano); Chris Parker (drums); Richard Davis (bass); John Tropea (guitar); other musicians. Sexy Mama: Children of the Junks; Money; I Am the Blues; Stormy Love; The Cat Song; Midnite Blue; Smile. COLUMBIA PC 33912 \$6.98, (B) PCA 33912 \$7.98, (C) PCT 33912 \$7.98.

Performance: Oddly impersonal Recording: Very good

Laura Nyro, in her singing at least, always touched bases with jazz, but this first album after a four-year hiatus pushes the fascination with sound, the indirectness, the emotional understatement (qualities some associate with "modern" jazz) a bit further. For me, it doesn't work very well. I find it impossible to take through headphones—she isn't strident or harsh, exactly, but there's some kind of dissonance here that seems to make a savage (Continued on page 86)

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breast more savage. At times I wonder if I don't run into some kind of emotional barricade in her voice, or if it hasn't triggered some kind of defense mechanism in me; anyway, I can't seem to get close to it. I Am the Blues is a fine song, though, working in an abstract way—what the words say doesn't seem to matter at all—and I enjoy it the way I enjoy the Japanese instrumental thing at the end.

Perhaps Nyro is homing in on some kind of mysticism that suits her. Much of the album, however, is likely to have its words listened to and its melodies, down under all that real cool instrumentation, left uncovered—and much of it, in that context, sounds vaguely like something Joni Mitchell might do better. There are times, incidentally, when there's *more* melody than one suspected under there, as well as times when there's less. A Nyro fanatic will like all this, probably, enough to at least read up on Oriental cultures a little bit. But anyone else might have trouble finding a handle on it. *N.C.*

TONY ORLANDO & DAWN: To Be with You. Tony Orlando & Dawn (vocals); orchestra. Talk to Me; Cupid; Selfish One; Happy Man;

Talk to Me; Cupid; Selfish One; Happy Man; To Be with You; and five others. ELEKTRA 7E-1049 \$6.98.

Performance: Torquemada time Recording: Garish

Like the dreadful family down the block, the appalling in-laws of bad jokes, or the gate crashers at a party, Tony Orlando & Dawn can be depended on to lend their ghastly presence at precisely the moment one is least able to cope with them. I was feeling elated and tranquil, having just listened to such goodies as the new Janis Ian (they, of course, have confiscated one of her songs, When the Party's Over, to wriggle through here), the new Baez, and the new Jimmy Buffett. And wouldn't you know that Tony Orlando and his two witting accomplices would turn up and spoil an otherwise lovely day? Yes, they're still at it-with even more elaborate arrangements, hammier vocal "stylings," and dumber than ever attempts at "excitement." Their "hit" here is Cupid. To listen to them mangle one song after another is torture of a kind so exquisite that I'm sure even Torquemada would smile P.R

DORY PREVIN: We're Children of Coincidence and Harpo Marx. Dory Previn (vocals and guitar); orchestra. The Comedian; Fours; So Much Trouble; I Wake Up Slow; Woman Soul; and four others. WARNER BROS. BS 2908 \$6.98.

Performance: Soapy Recording: Good

Any night now, I expect Mary Hartman to announce that she's inviting her new neighbor to dinner, and the neighbor will turn out to be old Fish-Eye herself, Dory Previn. I can see her now, sitting around the Hartman manse, quietly deploring Mary's position as a household slave, and vowing to raise Mary's consciousness Before It's Too Late. Until that night, I suppose I can always play Ms. Previn's latest caterwaul of vexation, complaint, and masochistic despair. Wild Roses (Love Song to the Monster) might be fun (she just knows he's gonna give her the kiss-off over dinner at a fancy restaurant), or *How'm I* Gonna Keep Myself Together (only with the greatest difficulty, apparently) might just add the right note of cheer. If you like this sort of thing, be assured that Dory's still holding the cruel world at bay with her rhyming dictionary and her guitar, and you'll love every lachrymose moment. *P.R.*

CHRIS SQUIRE: Fish Out of Water. Chris Squire (vocals, bass, twelve-string guitar); instrumental accompaniment. Hold Out Your Hand; You by My Side; Silently Falling; Lucky Seven; Safe (Canon Song). ATLANTIC SD 18159 \$6.98, (1) TP 18159 \$7.98, (1) CS 18159 \$7.98.

Performance: Blub blub blub Recording: Very good

Chris Squire's solo album commits some, but not all, of the excesses routinely committed by his parent group, Yes, and by a certain kind of theatrical group such as Genesis. These excesses come together as a tendency, if not an obsession, to make abstract music for which an ideal audience would be computers. It is precise and regular and oddly monochromatic, which should make it approachable mathematically. Singers tend to affect the same semi-frustrated whining attitude toward every song; later you have the feeling that they all feel the same way about all songs. The instrumentals are programmed to pounce on the dramatic parts and handle them ponderously, and soon you find it's more trouble than it's worth to try to locate just which are supposed to be the big moments. Squire doesn't stay stuck on that; Lucky Sev-

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en is treated with restraint instrumentally and a few degrees warmer vocally, and after that there's some orchestral razzle-dazzle with an occasional snatch of melody in it that's quite pleasant. There's just enough mechanical pomp to wreck about half of it, for me, and to indicate that this fish hasn't flopped completely out of the sea of abstractions that in Yes language would have some fancy name like, oh, Topographic Oceans. *N.C.*

SUTHERLAND BROTHERS & QUIVER: Reach for the Sky. Sutherland Brothers & Quiver (vocals and instrumentals). When the Train Comes; Something Special; Love on the Moon; Ain't Too Proud; Reach for the Sky; Moonlight Lady; and four others. COLUMBIA PC 33982 \$6.98, [®] PCA 33982 \$7.98, [©] PCT 33982 \$7.98.

Performance: Reach for the warm milk Recording: Good

A British group that has done a lot of listening to "soft" folk rock as practiced by everyone from Peter, Paul & Mary to Neil Young, the Sutherland Brothers & Quiver are a rather passionless bunch who, with a little re-orientation, could probably turn into the Carpenters. Their proceedings here sometimes get ambitious, but they also often get stuffy and sometimes they're downright silly. Is it really necessary, in a song called *When the Train Comes*, in which the train is frequently mentioned, to have the background singers going, "Whooo! Whooo!"? Sorry, kids, I pass. J.V.

SWEET: Give Us a Wink! Sweet (vocals and instrumentals). Action; Yesterday's Rain;



SWEET: a pugnacious, surprising British quartet

White Mice; Healer; The Lies in Your Eyes; Cockroach: and three others. CAPITOL ST-11496 \$6.98, **B** 8XT-11496 \$7.98, **C** 4XT 11496 \$7.98.

Performance: Good Recording: Good

Sweet is a pugnacious British quartet that probably cannot reproduce on stage all they do on this record, since it involves voicepinching, reverberations, and other whizbang stuff made possible by studio technical equipment. (And yet, a previous live album demonstrated that they can indeed do some spiffy four-part harmonizing.) Sweet tends to ambush the listener with surprises, and their material, though derivative, is better than average, especially *Healer*, which, with the drums miked very close and the guitar playing a catchy riff, is hypnotic. J.V.

(Continued on page 90)

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"... as a rule I am less than enthusiastic about synthesizers"



Gary Wright's "Dream Weaver"

T says right there on the cover that Gary Wright's "The Dream Weaver" is "an album of keyboard music" produced mainly with various and sundry synthesizers, and as a rule I am rather less than enthusiastic about such things. I do make exceptions, of course: I'm quite partial to a lot of Genesis and Pink Floyd, and I've a few favorite Yes pieces, even though I can't stand Jon Anderson's singing and doubt that Rick Wakeman, poor sot, has done anything truly worthwhile since A Glimpse of Heaven with the Strawbs.

As for the rest, I could cheerfully live forever without hearing Tomita, or Emerson, Lake and Palmer, or most of those cloning hordes of Continentals (in this country, pubescent boys build model cars and airplanes, but in Europe they obviously design and construct their own lavish electronic gear) who mostly emulate British groups who were, in most cases, fairly blatant plagiarists themselves. I might feel differently if I ever got my hands on a synthesizer—I'm sure they're as much fun to play with as any other electronic gadget. But I see no justification for charging people *money* to hear spoiled children play with their toys, and that's what most of those people seem to be doing most of the time.

Gary Wright, though, is a slightly different story. He's not only a proficient keyboardist, but he is also a capable, experienced songwriter, a skill in which most of the synthesizer "geniuses" fall short. "Dream Weaver" is composed primarily of solidly crafted, intelligently executed pop songs, some with almost a disco flavor, but most strongly resembling latter-day Spooky Tooth, which is hardly surprising: Gary Wright was the main, perhaps the only, creative force behind that group (it started out in 1968 as a sort of cross between Procol Harum and the early Spencer Davis Group), especially in its later configurations.

Spooky Tooth, like a lot of bands, went through a variety of changes, but although they had a fair cult following and most people at least knew what they sounded like, they were never widely popular, probably because they produced only one *consistently* good album, "Spooky Two," for which Gary Wright composed or co-authored most of the material, played organ, and provided backing vocals. Around 1970 he left the group and released two solo albums ("Extraction" and "Footprint," both unfortunately deleted from A&M's catalog), but he rejoined (reformed?) Spooky Tooth a couple of years later and more or less led the group until its demise. Their later albums were pretty erratic, but all give evidence of Wright's increasing fascination with electronic instrumentation, which has culminated for now in "The Dream Weaver."

Despite the plethora of electronics involved, however, this is *not* a mere freaknoise record. The many synthesizers are marshaled quite effectively to enhance, not upstage, the songs, and Man retains control of Machine most of the time, which is as it should be but seldom is. Nearly all the material is bright, catchy, and brief—no song is over five minutes long, most are under four which helps make this a reasonably interesting record several cuts above the average in both concept and execution.

T's not perfect, of course. The music is extremely well played, but I find a couple of things, the Moog bass in particular, intrusive and irritating. Since most of the songs are so deftly constructed, the few inferior ones seem even weaker by comparison. And I thorough ly dislike the album's cheap science-fiction packaging—Flash Gordon *cum* David Bowie. Really now, people, this sort of thing has been passé for *ages*!

But my chief disappointment with "The Dream Weaver" is that it simply isn't as good as Wright's previous albums. It is, with all its brisk, up-tempo numbers, similar in mood to much of "Extraction," but it contains no song with the dynamic or emotional impact of *I've Got a Story or Over You Now*, not to mention *Love to Survive* and *Forgotten* from "Footprint," two of the most haunting and beautiful songs I know of anywhere.

None of Gary Wright's compositions have ever dealt with any startlingly original concepts—"We need love to survive" is hardly a novel notion—but with simple, direct language and attractive melodies he somehow manages to communicate his ideas effectively without being preachy or dogmatic. "The Dream Weaver" certainly isn't the best work he's done, but it does show his capabilities, and perhaps if we're very lucky and the current commercial success of the album's title track doesn't spoil him, the *next* Gary Wright effort may be his best ever. I'm keeping my fingers crossed. —Linda Frederick

GARY WRIGHT: The Dream Weaver. Gary Wright (vocals, keyboards); Andy Newmark, Jim Keltner (drums); Ronnie Montrose (guitar); other musicians. Love Is Alive; Let It Out; Can't Find the Judge; Made to Love You; Power of Love; Dream Weaver; Blind Feeling; Much Higher; Feel for Me. WARNER BROS. BS 2868 \$6.98, ⁽¹⁾ M8 2868 \$7.98, ⁽²⁾ M5 2868 \$7.98.

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VANGELIS: Heaven and Hell. Vangelis (keyboards); English Chamber Choir (vocals); orchestra. Heaven and Hell; So Long Ago So Clear. RCA LPL1-5110 \$6.98.

Performance: Orffly derivative Recording: Thunderous

Vangelis composed, arranged, and played "all kinds of keyboards, percussion and sundry instruments" here. *Heaven and Hell*, the biggie, is apparently some kind of tone poem in the manner of Richard Strauss filtered through Carl Orff filtered through you-nameit. The Orff influence dominates, with masses of thunderous effects and a gummy sort of portentousness inflicted on the simplest musical ideas. Vangelis throws in the English Chamber Choir to chant and mutter whenever his own efforts at sonorous grandeur begin to overwhelm him. Also dropped in at the tag end of the recording is something called So Long Ago So Clear, with lyrics by Jon Anderson sung by Vana Varoutis. No comment is a comment.

Actually, all this kind of thing began with Kubrick's brilliant use of a Strauss theme in *Space Odyssey*, but that was *several* years ago. You'd think by now that everyone else would have caught on to the fact that you have to be a Kubrick to get away with that kind of almost hallucinatory grandeur. It would seem that Vangelis hasn't been keeping up with things the way he should. *P.R.*

HANK WILLIAMS JR. AND FRIENDS. Hank Williams Jr. (vocals, guitar); Jerry Wal-



CIRCLE NO. 10 ON READER SERVICE CARD

lace (guitar); Gary Boggs (steel guitar); Pete Carr (guitar); Lenny LeBlanc (bass); Roger Clark (drums); other musicians. Losin' You; On Susan's Floor; I Really Did; Can't You See; Montana Song; and four others. MGM M3G 5009 \$6.98, [®] M8H 5009 \$7.98.

Performance: Good, solid Recording: Very good

Hank Williams Jr. is no Hank Williams, but he deserves credit for realizing that and trying to find and improve his own voice. He rocks a little more than most straight country acts, doing a better than average job here with the Marshall Tucker Band's Can't You See, and he doesn't try to hide the fact that it's hard to keep this matter of being the son of a legend in perspective (check out Living Proof). His writing isn't as sharp as his eye for other people's songs, but Brothers of the Road resonates much the way truth does-however familiar the theme is, you have the feeling he actually wrote it from experience, from life. His singing style still doesn't seem quite set, although he has the equipment. I wouldn't break my neck trying to get a copy of this album, but it's worth picking up some time when you're at loose ends. NC



LEE ERWIN: America; The Birth of a Nation; Intolerance. Lee Erwin (organ). ANGEL DS-36092 \$6.98.

Performance: Echoes of ancient glory Recording: Excellent

In the days when the great silent film features of D. W. Griffith were first enrapturing the nation's movie-goers, the theaters where they were shown were actually far from silent. Griffith commissioned composers to write special scores for his films, and these were played on huge organs-sometimes by full symphony orchestras-as accompaniments to the action. When a revival of interest in old film classics developed in recent years, however, the "original" scores turned out not to hold up so well. For one thing, they weren't particularly original, depending all too often on quotes from The Ride of the Valkyries and the William Tell Overture; viewers often tittered when they were supposed to be gasping in amazement.

Into the breach stepped Lee Erwin, who had started his career as a movie-house organist in the days of the silents. Mr. Erwin examined the old scores, borrowed what seemed still of value, and constructed new full-length accompaniments for various silent oldies. His earlier album, "Sound of Silents," offers a fair sampling of what he has provided for silent movies by other directors. In this one he devotes himself entirely to the works of Griffith. The score for *America*, a movie reviewed in the New York World back in 1924 as "the best picture ever made," offers "au-



LEE ERWIN New music for ald silents

thentic melodies" of the revolutionary period along with an original "love theme" by Mr. Erwin as an obbligato to the tale of a love affair between a Minute Man and a Royalist's daughter while the entire Revolutionary War is fought out behind them. For The Birth of a Nation, that still controversial super-epic about the Civil War from the South's point of view, the composer has combined folk tunes, melodies by Stephen Foster, and songs of the period with his own inventions to provide the proper ambiance and keep step with the action. The "love theme" this time is preserved from the original score of 1915 by Joseph Carl Breil; the Klan rides again to an original theme by Mr. Erwin. Finally, there is the music for Intolerance, a movie that undertook to illustrate practically the entire history of man's inhumanity to man from the days of Babylon down to the efforts of early twentieth-century industrialists to kill the labor movement. From the 1916 score by Breil, Erwin resurrected a cradie song, a waltz, and a "chicken trot," adding his own ideas and embellishments as he went along.

The results in all three cases sound like models of silent-movie accompanimentchanging moods, rhythms, and time periods with sure-footed smooth iess—although it's a bit hard to tell how successful the music really is without being able to watch the movie at the same time. Then, too, there is always that diffident, almost vapid self-effacing quality in these scores as they strive, perhaps too hard, not to call attention to themselves, which makes concentrating on even these relatively brief excerpts a bit hard to do. The music was recorded on the Fox-Capitol Theatre Wurlitzer Pipe Organ (which is not in a theater at all but in the Maryland home of a Mr. Richard Kline, who reconstructed it); the organ sounds just great, but even with all the special effects Mr. Erwin manages to wring out of it, it still sounds, after all, like an organ. The total effect is a program that encourages the mind to wander more than to marvel at what Erwin has wrought. P.K.

(Continued on page 93)

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"... expert, typically brash treatments of the old favorites ..."

"Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. How are you? I'm not well, so don't go by me. . . ." Frances Faye, raising her stentorian tough-gal Brooklyn baritone as she pounds away on a concert grand, still starts her act in the style her fans have come to expect of her over the years. She introduces the musicians huddled about her on the stand (in this case a small combo made up of bass, drum, and flute) as former husbands, then settles down Helens and Helens go with Georgies (and Georgy goes with orgy) to the boundless delight of everybody within earshot.

Frances has a tendency to change everything with her moods—the color of her hair ("When you're young and pretty and Jewish, it doesn't matter how you wear your hair"), her weight, and, right in mid-number, the very song she is singing. She was a short-haired blonde that evening, looking trim in a kind of



to the business of belting out songs, abusing the boys in the band and herself, and sassing the customers.

When I went to see her at the Spindletop, a West Side midtown restaurant in New York with an intimate cabaret on the second floor, the "mad gal from Gowanus . . the fabulous Fayzie," as some bedazzled liner-note writer once called her, had been packing them in for two weeks during her first New York visit in years and was being held over for another three. Although she insisted she was out of sorts that night, Frances rallied as her act went on and pretty soon was muttering the kind of insults her customers adore ("I'd only play that song for a gal who was keeping me, honey"). She put off clamorous requests for I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate and mounted her own kind of aggressive attack on every sort of old favorite from Yesterday to I'm Drunk with Love, long one of her specialties, all the way to Frances and Her Friends, a round robin of a song in which an endless chain of Guidos go with Vitos and Willies go with Tillies and Shirleys go with

spangled black pants-suit that glittered in the spotlight. I noticed that her fans ranged from teenagers all the way to couples heading clear out of middle age, all doting on every bellowed note and mumbled aside.

When I went to see her after the show, I told her how she had brightened many an evening for me at the Crescendo on the Sunset Strip during uneventful winters in Los Angeles in the Fifties, and I asked why she had stayed away from New York for so long. She explained that a broken hip (it happened when she tripped on a carpet at the Riviera in Las Vegas) had kept her out of circulation for several years but now she's on the road again—Sydney, London, Chicago, San Francisco—and could have more dates but is turning them down to write her autobiography.

"I'm writing it for Simon and Schuster. I'm taping it. I've been taping all week and I'm exhausted." Her story will take her from the time of her birth on Stone Street in Brooklyn ("it's none of your business" what name she was born with) through a spectacular nightclub career, stints in movies and on Broadway in the musical Artists and Models, records, a long friendship with Mel Tormé (their album of Porgy and Bess was selling for \$100 until it was re-released by Bethlehem recently), two marriages (no children), and, nowadays, a house in West Hollywood shared with a housekeeper and four French poodles.

In New York, she spent her days in her hotel room, taking aspirin for her healing hip, listening to soul music on the air (she's especially fond of Aretha Franklin, Marvin Gaye, and Isaac Hayes), talking everything she can recall of her life into a tape recorder, and resting up for those appearances at the Spindletop. Hotel living deprives her of one of her greatest pleasures—cooking hot, spicy dinners, "the kind of food I'm not allowed to eat," for her friends. "I can't complain, though," she said. "The hip is almost better, and there's not even a trace of a limp. God is good."

WELL, not everyone can see Frances Fave in a real night club, but it is possible to hear her in her natural habitat. One can still obtain her classic album "Caught in the Act" (GNP 41), recorded live at the Crescendo in Hollywood and complete with side-of-themouth remarks, applause, and demands for her specialties—including I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate, Frances and Her Friends, and Drunk with Love. And, since her recent New York appearance, Bethlehem has re-released another of her albums under the title "Bad, Bad Frances Faye." She's in a more formal studio setting here, accompanied by four trombones, a piano, guitar, bass, drums, and an orchestra conducted by Russ Garcia. She doesn't exchange insults with any of them but confines herself to expert, typically brash treatments of the old favorites-These Foolish Things, Somebody Loves Me, I've Got You Under My Skin-all done in her own winning way during sessions when she must have been in tip-top shape. The trombones are especially apt in backing her, sometimes echoing the very inflection of her brassy voice. And there's a medley, starting with Little Girl Blue and winding up with a single line from Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered, that offers a good sample of her restless method-shifting from song to song and mood to mood in a musical tightrope act without ever, so to speak, falling off. Particularly persuasive is her version of Cole Porter's Love for Sale which (for once, all the lyrics are intact) you can really believe is the story of a woman in business for herself. Frances Faye, it is obvious, is in business for us all. -- Paul Kresh

FRANCES FAYE: Bad, Bad, Frances Faye. Frances Fay (vocals); orchestra, Russ Garcia cond. Toreador; They Can't Take That Away from Me; He's Funny That Way; I've Got You Under My Skin; All of a Sudden My Heart Sings; Somebody Loves Me; September in the Rain; These Foolish Things; Love for Sale; Medley—Little Girl Blue/Where or When/Embraceable You/Exactly Like You/I Don't Know Why/My Funny Valentine/Bewitched; Out of This World. BETHLEHEM BCP 6006 \$6.98.



RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PAUL BLEY: Alone, Again. Paul Bley (piano). Ballade; And Now the Queen; Explanations; and four others. IMPROVISING ARTISTS 373840 \$6.98.

Performance: Haunting Recording: Excellent

Canada-born pianist Paul Bley has been closely associated with the avant-garde for many years now. His former musical associates include Charles Mingus, Ornette Coleman, and Sonny Rollins, and he has been an important member of the Jazz Composers Orchestra Association. In 1972 Bley recorded a solo album for ECM at Bendixen Studios in Oslo, and "Alone, Again" might well be volume two to that one. The Bendixen sound is the best thing that ever happened to piano recording, absolutely fantastic. Of course it helps when the man at the keyboard plays as beautifully as Bley. His music is deeply emotional and brooding, quite romantic for someone once so closely identified with the often neurotic avant-garde. CA

CHICK COREA: The Leprechaun. Chick Corea (keyboards, percussion); Bill Watrous, Wayne Andre (trombones); Joe Farrell (soprano saxophone, flute, English horn); Eddie Gomez (bass); Steve Gadd (drums); Gayle Moran (vocals); others. Imp's Welcome; Nite Sprite; Pixieland Rag; and five others. POLY-DOR PD 6062 \$6.98.

Performance: Return from forever Recording: Excellent

What all this has to do with an Irish fairy eludes me, but then leprechauns are elusive. Judging by the short sentences describing each piece here, Corea seems to have had a running theme in mind when he wrote this sometimes pretentious, sometimes thoroughly swinging, but never unpleasant music. Vocalist Gayle Moran is certainly an improvement over Flora Purim, and, although I consider this by no means an album representative of Chick Corea's considerable talent, it is several notches above anything I have heard by his Return to Forever group. Let us hope it heralds a return from forever. (P.S. Dear Chick, did you have to chew gum while emceeing Down Beat's awards show on TV? It smacked of . . . well, let's just say it smacked.) C.A.

MILES DAVIS: Agharta. Miles Davis (trumpet, organ); Sonny Fortune (soprano and alto saxophones, flute); Reggie Lucas (guitar); Pete Cosey (guitar, synthesizer, percussion); Michael Henderson (Fender bass); Al Foster (drums); Mtume (conga, percussion). Prelude (Parts 1 and 2); Theme from Jack Johnson; Interlude; Maiysha. COLUMBIA PG 33967 two

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CIRCLE NO. 5 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Performance: Skimpy Recording: Lacks presence

I don't believe it! Not only are we furnished with individual titles for the selections here, but the sleeve information also contains a complete listing of personnel and even goes so far as to tell us that these recordings were made at a concert in Osaka Festival Hall, Japan, February 1, 1975. That's more data on a Miles Davis album than we have had in a long time. But, quite frankly, I'd accept less data if it meant getting more music. There are moments, especially on Interlude and Theme from Jack Johnson, where mere electronic sounds give way to some music, but, as in previous double albums, it's all a bit like a two-pound steak containing a one-and-a-halfpound bone. C.A.

HAPPY FEET—A TRIBUTE TO PAUL WHITEMAN. Joe Venuti (violin); New England Conservatory Jazz Repertory Orchestra, Gunther Schuller cond. Coquette; Happy Feet; My Blue Heaven; Changes; I'm on the Crest of a Wave; Sweet Sue; Makin' Whoopee; Nobody's Sweetheart; and seven others. GOLDEN CREST
CRSAW 31043 \$6.98.

Performance: **Too pious** Recording: **Excellent**

When Gunther Schuller, who never does things by halves, decided he was going to duplicate the sound of Paul Whiteman's band, he set about obtaining copies of the actual arrangements Whiteman had commissioned from such composers as Ferde Grofé, Bill Challis, and William Grant Still. He deployed the forces of the "New England Conservatory Jazz Repertory Orchestra" to cover the entire six-octave range that Whiteman's band was able to manage in its day. And he called in Joe Venuti as "special guest artist" to add to the authenticity of the experiment.

The resulting record offers mainly the sort of music Whiteman had in his repertoire in the Twenties-such hits of the day as Dardanella, Coquette, and Sweet Sue smoothed out in the silky Whiteman manner from bouncy little pieces of the period to musical mannikins swathed in the sophisticated evening gowns of luxurious arrangements. Yet the sound is not Whiteman's; it's Schuller's-faster, harder, edgier. A quick check of one of those superbly redubbed Whiteman albums from Columbia containing the same arrangements confirmed this listener's impression that the "inimitable" Whiteman sound really can't be imitated. If the originals, as in this case, just happen to be still available in technically excellent reissues, why try to copy them? And since the Whiteman sound was such a slickedup one to begin with, perhaps a bit of caricature in the copy instead of all that reverent replication (and over-reverent liner notes) might have been more interesting. The tunes are great, though, standing up well despite the cruel ravages of callous time. P.K.

PAUL HORN: In India. Paul Horn (flute); instrumental accompaniment. Raga Desh; Raga Kerwani; Raga Tilang; Alap; and nine others. BLUE NOTE BN-LA529-H2 two discs \$7.98.

Performance: 99 per cent Indian Recording: 50 per cent mono

Pointing with pride to the Blue Note label's

important-jazz-since-1939 catalog, United Artists continues to give us "Blue Note reissues" of material from the World Pacific catalog. No, it doesn't make much sense to *me* either. However, World Pacific was a pretty good label too, so it doesn't really matter.

This set consists of two 1966 albums, "Paul Horn in India" (World Pacific WPS-21447) and "Paul Horn in Kashmir" (World Pacific WP-1445). The music is not a jazz/raga hybrid, but, rather, Indian music with a modicum of Paul Horn, who adapts his playing to the form of his Indian colleagues. Thus, it is more for people who like Indian music than it is for the Paul Horn fan, and it is about as far removed from the music normally identified with the old Blue Note label as apples are from oranges. Do I like it? Yes. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HUMAN ARTS ENSEMBLE: Under the Sun. Human Arts Ensemble (vocals and instrumentals); Lester Bowie (trumpet); Oliver Lake (alto saxophone). A Lover's Desire; Hazrat, the Sufi. ARISTA FREEDOM AL 1022 \$6.98.

Performance: Exciting Recording: Very good

If you read these pages regularly, you probably know that I often write unfavorably about the sound of such groups as the Art Ensemble of Chicago. But, should you be under the impression that free-form music in general turns me off, let me tell you that this album by the Human Arts Ensemble contains some of the most exciting new music I have heard in a long time—even trumpeter Lester Bowie, for whom I have had few good words in the past, sounds fine on these recordings made in St. Louis three years ago.

Sure, there are moments when things seem to fall apart, but drummer Charles Bobo Shaw revs up and propells it all together again. There is no great individual musicianship detectable here, but there is a collective spirit and drive that more than makes up for any weaknesses. I don't know why the album took almost three years to be released, but I'm glad it has finally made it. C.A.

IDRIS MUHAMMAD: House of the Rising Sun. Idris Muhammad (drums); instrumental groups and vocalists. Baia; Hey Pocky A-Way; Sudan; and three others. KUDU KU-27 \$7.98.

Performance: **Repetitious** Recording: **Very good**

If Idris Muhammad has had any other albums of his own released I am not aware of them, and if he hasn't I am not surprised. Frank Floyd's vocal on *House of the Rising Sun* is about all I can recommend in this album, most of which is monotonous formula stuff. I have heard some fine arrangements by Dave Matthews, but this assignment obviously did not inspire him—perhaps because Muhammad himself is a rather dull performer who has done better work as a session drummer than he does here. Other than routine drumming, Muhammad's only input here seems to be Sudan, a composition of equal blandness. C.A.

ESTHER PHILLIPS: Confessin' the Blues. Esther Phillips (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. Confessin' the Blues; Romance in the Dark; Cherry Red; I Love Paris; Bye Bye Blackbird; C. C. Rider; and seven others. AT-



CLARK TERRY: a madly swinging album of inspired excellence

LANTIC SD 1680 \$6.98, (a) TP 1680 \$7.98, (c) CS 1680 \$7.98.

Performance: Familiar Recording: Fair

Esther Phillips is a polished, urbane blues singer whose style is almost totally derived from that of the late Dinah Washington. The arrangements and the performances of the groups backing her here are hackneyed jazz, though the distinguished jazz apologist Mr. Leonard Feather, in his liner notes, would have you believe otherwise.

The second side of the album was produced by the late King Curtis, saxophonist and bandleader, who was murdered a few years ago by a Saturday night drunk. Your time would be better spent listening to some King Curtis records. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CLARK TERRY: Clark Terry and His Jolly Giants. Clark Terry (trumpet, flugelhorn, vocals); Ernie Wilkins (soprano and tenor saxophones); Ronnie Matthews (piano); Victor Sproles (bass); others. The Hymn: Flintstones Theme; Straight No Chaser; Never; On the Trail; and five others. VANGUARD VSD 79365 \$6.98.

Performance: Excellent Recording: Excellent

If you like music that swings madly, if you think a group ought to play together as if they actually enjoyed their work, if you crave performing excellence and don't have an aversion to inspired solos, if you would like to hear a group give new life to a Charlie Parker classic and accomplish the feat of turning a Ferde Grofé warhorse into a musical delicacy, then don't miss this album by Clark Terry.

JOE TURNER: Nobody in Mind. Joe Turner (vocals); instrumental sextet including Roy Eldridge (trumpet) and Milt Jackson (vibraphone). I Want a Little Girl; How Long, How Long Blues; Juke Joint Blues; and five others. PABLO 2310-760 \$7.98.

Performance: Unjustifiable Recording: Good

Pablo's house annotator, Benny Green, is re-

markably candid in his notes for this album: "I would be very surprised if a single octave did not encompass all his (Joe Turner's) requirements with room to spare . . . he has a strictly limited range, a strictly limited choice of keys, strictly limited vocal effects." Green goes on to point out that guitarist Pee Wee Crayton's tone is flat and bland, that Turner does nothing here that he hasn't done before, etc. He then proceeds to justify the recording of this album, but one has a feeling that what he is really trying to justify is his own involvement as annotator.

Milt Jackson is fine and Roy Eldridge has his moments, but both are available on good albums, so why bother with this remnant of a singer who wasn't particularly exciting to begin with? C.A.

KAI WINDING/J.J. JOHNSON: The Finest of Kai Winding and J. J. Johnson. Kai Winding, J.J. Johnson (trombones); Dick Katz (piano); Milt Hinton, Wendell Marshall (bass); Al Harewood (drums). Thou Swell; Lover; Gong Rock; Stolen Bass; Lope City; and five others. BETHLEHEM @ BCP-6001 \$6.98.

Performance: Worthy reissue Recording: Good mono

They were known as Jay and Kai, the "in" trombonists of the Fifties, and two of the finest musicians jazz has seen on that instrument. Between 1954 and 1957 they made a series of highly successful records for four different labels, the selections here being their total output for Bethlehem. Recorded on two consecutive days in January 1955, they represent a time when jazz was virtually all acoustical, bop had become respectable, Cannonball Adderley was about to make his record debut, Miles Davis would soon form his famous quintet with John Coltrane, and Hollywood had people believing that Benny Goodman discovered Lionel Hampton working as a performing waiter in a greasy spoon. A lot has happened to jazz in the intervening twentyone years, but good music is never really dated, and this is good music-not innovative or history-making, just good, swinging, smallband jazz played by men who know their craft. I am happy to see the return of the old Bethlehem label, but I do wish they wouldn't give us the original liner notes. They are dated, and they're inaccurate as well. C.A.





THE QUARTETS OF FRANZ SCHUBERT

Ew events in music are more remarkable than the phenomenal growth of Franz Schubert's compositional skills over the span of the fifteen string quartets he wrote between his fifteenth and thirty-first years. It is a maturation that might be likened to that of a child who began by modeling fanciful sand castles and grew up to design another Taj Mahal. In Schubert's case there is a touch of God-given fantasy even in the early childish efforts, and what is extraordinary about the later fulfillment is not so much the greater measure of divine inspiration evident in the material as the strength and resourcefulness of the human hands that shaped it. They have now found their re-creative counterparts in the hands of the Melos Ouartet, whose matchless performances are newly available in a seven-disc release (Deutsche Grammophon 2740 123) of recordings made from 1971 to 1974.

At the outset, in No. 1 (in mixed keys), No. 2 (C Major), and No. 3 (B-flat Major)-all new to me-one is captivated, seduced to slavish attention by the dewy, youthful power that courses through the music. These three quartets date from 1812-which is to say from Schubert's sixteenth year, when he was a student at Vienna's Konvikt (music school). The first of them is a total-if miniature-success, while the second betrays some little concern about direction: shall it be along the path of Haydn, that of Mozart, or the trail Beethoven was blazing even as Schubert bent over these student chores? For a while, it is some of each, a little of all, a gush of productivity no doubt stimulated by the prospect of immediate performance by a family quartet of which the composer was violist.

In the last of the 1813 quartets (No. 10), however, we encounter a work good enough to represent any young master. It was in circulation for many years as Opus 125, No. 1, and accepted as a work of Schubert's maturity until a manuscript discovered early in this century left no doubt that it was written in November of 1813. It is Schubert's first quartet with a scherzo rather than a menuetto, an *adagio* rather than an *andante*. Above all other distinctions, it brings to light, in its 2/4 allegro finale, a melodic idea that can only be called "heavenly." It is an inspiration of such simplicity (two half-notes on D and F rise to a quarter on "high" C, followed by a retreat to an eighth on B-flat) that most other composers, if they'd had the luck to invent it, might have lacked the wit to preserve it. Schubert had not only the luck and the wit, but the imagination to lead his discovery through a series of sequences that are as satisfying as they are unexpected.

In the printed (Breitkopf und Härtel) edition the work is noted as "Componirt im 1817" and assigned No. 10. Deutsche Grammophon puts it seventh in its recorded order but retains the numerical designation—which means that Nos. 7 in D, 8 in B-flat, and 9 in G twice as many more. But there are only five more, of which No. 12 is that great single quartet movement in C Minor the Germans call simply the Quartettsatz (D. 703). The shift from abundance to scarcity in the quartet form is accounted for by the enlargement of the Schubert family quartet into a small orchestra of friends, relatives, and professional enthusiasts. As a result, the single symphony Schubert wrote in 1813 was joined-between March 1815 and October 1816-by four others, including the C Minor (No. 4, sometimes called the "Tragic") and the beautiful B-flat (No. 5). In 1817 came the merry E-flat Quartet (No. 11), and in 1818 the "Little" C Major Symphony (No. 6).

For the most part, 1818 and 1819 were piano years for Schubert, the time of a love affair following his acquaintance with a new instrument. Fortunately, Schubert did not believe this commitment had to involve complete fidelity, and so he was able to share his passion with other instruments, most productively in the superb *Trout* Quintet of 1819. And, of course, there were always songs, songs, and more songs. It was a form of composition in which Schubert reveled and—not unimportant—one whose products were readily marketable.

The almost limitless vista opened up by the early quartets might have vanished tantalizingly into the thin air of the *Quartettsatz* (1820) had not Schubert decided, in 1824, to undertake a symphony on a larger scale than anything he had so far attempted. Why this should lead to a renewed interest in quartet writing is explained in a letter the composer wrote to a friend outlining some of his recent and forthcoming involvements. Referring to the period since they had last communicated, Schubert notes: "I wrote two quartets . . . and an octet, and I want to write another quartet . . . to pave my way towards [a] grand symphony."



Minor (written in 1814 and 1815) must be mentally realigned unless you do a little discshuffling. Each, however, has its appeal, especially the G Minor, in which the majorminor changes begin to attain the insistence that would soon become an obsession with Schubert.

At this rate of production—ten quartets in less than four years—the next dozen years of Schubert's life should have produced at least THE MELOS QUARTET: left to right, Wilhelm Melcher, Gerhard Voss, Hermann Voss, Peter Buck

The octet Schubert refers to is a source of endless pleasure, and so is the A Minor Quartet (No. 13), which had its first performance in the same month in which the letter was written. But where is the companion piece Schubert says he "wrote"? The one that was to follow the A Minor could very well be the incomparable No. 14, Tod und das Mädchen, begun later in 1814 but not finished until 1826. (Continued on page 99)

[&]quot;...the way to deal with a composer committed to song is to sing."



CIRCLE NO. 45 ON READER SERVICE CARD

One can readily accept that turbulent work as the product of a composer thinking in terms of orchestral strings-but the lovely, gentle, introspective A Minor? How could it qualify as part of a procedure that would lead to a symphony? It is, interestingly enough, a question that can be answered in performance, in this case by the extraordinary combination of insight and persuasiveness the Melos Quartet brings to it, fashioning a surging drama of conflict out of the first movement's major-minor vacillations, after which the superb C Major subject is like oil poured on troubled waters. The cantilena leader Wilhelm Melcher draws from his Montagnana instrument in the slow movement is a perfect voice for the embellishments Schubert imposed on the subject he derived from the third entr'acte of his Rosamunde music. And all this is but a prelude to the most telling transformational strokes of all: the deliberate tempo chosen for the menuetto and the careful stressing of the moderato in the finale's allegro moderato designation. All these factors bind the work together and sustain its character from first to last.

VITH this instance of independent thinking and artistic enterprise as an example, one is prompted to demand a high standard of performance in the very greatest of Schubert quartets, Death and the Maiden. The Melos Quartet does not fail us, summoning a breadth and richness of sound that puts it on a plane with such contemporaries as the Juilliard, the Guarneri, and the Cleveland Quartets and matching the dramatic magnitude of Schubert's thought note for note. The phrasing and molding of the great slow movement with its variations leave little doubt that the quartet knows the best way to deal with a quintessential work by a composer committed to song is to sing. That includes bow pressure (it is like breath in the voice), vibrato (shading of the sung tone), and an unremitting attention to such detail as the reference in the finale to the line "Du liebes Kind, komm geh mit mir" from the Erlkönig. How much Mahler was to make of such quotations and allusions! And how much he undoubtedly learned from Schubert's practices when he had the strings of the orchestra he conducted in Hamburg in November 1894 perform, of all possible quartets, Death and the Maiden.

HE Melos group's performance of the G Major (No. 15), vibrantly responsive to the rhythmic vitality that flows through the work. is final proof that we can celebrate here the arrival of another great quartet of string players. More pity, then, that this wealth of talent and effort has to be offset by a poverty of planning in the physical aspect of this release that has put obstacles in the way of listener enjoyment. The works are presented in reverse chronology from No. 15 to No. 1, a nuisance that might be corrected after the fact by turning the pile upside down-except that this does not, alas, prevent No. 5 from ending on the side which contains the beginning of No. 4. Nor does it, worst of all, prevent the D. 703 Quartettsatz from occupying the grooves immediately after Death and the Maiden: one must leap from the chair every time it is heard to abort an unwelcome non sequitur. Has anyone at Deutsche Grammophon ever put himself in the record buyer's place? The sonic reproduction, the packaging, and the notes (in the usual three languages), however, are models of what good planning can produce.



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Reviewed by RICHARD FREED • DAVID HALL • GEORGE JELLINEK • PAUL KRESH STODDARD LINCOLN • ERIC SALZMAN

D'ANGLEBERT: Pièces de Clavecin. Kenneth Gilbert (harpsichord). HARMONIA MUNDI HMU 941 \$6.98.

Performance: Elegant Recording: Excellent

French harpsichord music, like French cooking, is inundated with so many sauces and frills that it is, at times, almost impossible to tell what one is actually consuming. This is especially true of the music of the late seventeenth-century master Jean-Henry d'Anglebert, whose repertoire of ornaments includes some twenty-five signs, each indicating a different figuration. Add to that the notorious but authentic French practice of rhythmic alterations of the written notes and the freedom offered the performer in the unmeasured preludes, and it is easy to understand why this must be a very special record. D'Anglebert's output consists almost entirely of somber dance music; even the gigues barely rise to a stately allegretto. Nonetheless, the pieces are elegantly crafted, highly sophisticated, and well worth acquiring a taste for.

Mr. Gilbert, playing an extremely richsounding Delin harpsichord of 1768 from his own collection, gives these works the full treatment. He faces squarely up to the overwhelming plethora of ornaments and the ambiguous convention of *notes inégales* as well as anyone can. Any fussiness and lack of line, perforce, is inherent in the music and cannot be blamed on the performance.

Explanation of symbols:

- \mathbb{R} = reel-to-reel stereo tape
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The first listing is the one reviewed; other formats, if available, follow it.

But despite Mr. Gilbert's historical foundations for what he does, such a rigid adherence to the documents frequently does a disservice to the music for the modern listener. The application of *notes inégales* to the allemande is, perhaps, dubious, and the practice certainly destroys the flow of this graceful dance. The same mannerism also debilitates the virility of the courante. Certainly Mr. Gilbert is to be praised for his research and accuracy, but the result is that all of the pieces come out sounding alike. S.L.

J. C. BACH: Harpsichord Concerto in A Major (see HAYDN)

BEETHOVEN: Romances for Violin and Orchestra (see SIBELIUS)

BERIO: Agnus; Air; O King; El Mar la Mar; Melodrama; E Vo. Elise Ross, Mary Thomas (sopranos); Gerald English (tenor); Alide Maria Salvetta (singer). London Sinfonietta, Luciano Berio cond. RCA ARL1-0037 \$6.98.

Performance: Composer's own Recording: Excellent

This album, awkwardly entitled "The Many Voices of Luciano Berio," consists of four sections of Berio's meta-opera Opera, the original version of his tribute to Martin Luther King (which later became the second movement of his Sinfonia), and an early work for voices and instrumental ensemble. Of these, the Opera excerpts command first attention. This work, premiered several years ago in Santa Fe, interweaves episodes from the inevitable Orpheus legend (itself the earliest opera subject), the sinking of the Titanic (undoubtedly a metaphor for the state of things), and part of the Open Theater's production dealing with the terminal ward of a hospital.

The Melodrama is, like Berio's Recital for Cathy, a performance by a singer who is playing a singer attempting to give a performance. Like Recital, it is amusing, full of intentional pretensions, clichés, and jargon but very little actual music; unlike Recital, it does not have Cathy Berberian to put it across. The other excerpts are briefer and more effective: an Agnus for two women's voices and three clarinets revolving around a single pitch, an evocative setting of a Sicilian lullaby; and a setting of a text from Monteverdi's Orfeo in a rather curious style of vocal repetition and instrumental interference.

The original version of O King, written in response to the news of King's assassination, was scored for voice, flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano. This is one of Berio's simplest and most successful word/sound/music pieces and is perhaps different enough in the chamber version to warrant the new recording. The early El Mar la Mar, settings of Spanish texts by Rafael Alberti, was written in the early 1950's, on the edge of serialism. Two beautifully evocative movements are followed by a light-fingered atonal scherzo that almost comes off. These works are heard in outstanding performances by Elise Ross and Mary Thomas with the London Sinfonietta under Berio's direction.

The recording of the singing voices seems too laid-back to me, but perhaps that's what Berio wanted. The production of the record seems designed to obscure rather than show off the major interest of the recording. The excerpts from *Opera* are scattered, and there is a very misleading suggestion that the record constitutes a survey of Berio's vocal music over the last twenty years instead of what it mostly is: a series of very particular responses—almost like studies—to very specific expressive and conceptual impulses of recent vintage. *E.S.*

BERLIOZ: Harold in Raly, Op. 16. Daniel Benyamini (viola); Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin Mehta cond. LONDON CS-6951 \$6.98.

Performance: Good, but . . . Recording: Rich and warm

The Israel Philharmonic has a splendid first violist, and both he and the orchestra itself are shown to great advantage in the rich, warm acoustics of the Binyanei Ha'ouma in Jerusalem, which must be a fine recording site. Mehta, however, does not seem to have sold himself on the work, though I would have thought he would have a natural affinity for it. His tempos are reasonable, his marshaling of his forces is always polished, but he moves from episode to episode with no sense of the sweep or personality of the work, none of the flair he exhibits so convincingly in, for example, descriptive works of Liszt and Strauss. For all its age, I feel the *Harold* of Primrose and Beecham (Odyssey @ Y 33286) is still the indispensable version. R.F.

BLOCH: America—Epic Rhapsody. American Concert Choir; Symphony of the Air, Leopold Stokowski cond. Introductory comments by Ernest Bloch. VANGUARD SRV 346 SD \$3.98.

Performance: With conviction Recording: Good

Ernest Bloch (1880-1959) is known best for a handful of masterpieces reflecting his Jewish heritage, but he was a craftsman of the first order, and many of his works not of specifically Jewish inspiration deserve a lasting place in the working concert repertoire: his Concerto Grosso No. 1 and virtually the whole of his splendid chamber-music output—the two violin sonatas, the Viola Suite, the Piano Quintet, and the five string quartets.

Would that America, written as a tribute to his adopted country, could take its place among the Bloch masterpieces. But, despite the cunning interweaving of American Indian, Negro, and other American melodies of the past, all bound together by a germinal motto reaching fruition in a final choral anthem, the work simply is not a convincing whole.

Stokowski, Margaret Hillis' American Concert Choir, and the lamented Symphony of the Air (once Toscanini's NBC Symphony) gave their all for this 1960 recording, and it stands up very decently after more than fifteen years. Whatever one may think of its musical content, this disc is a unique document, not least because of the introductory track with Bloch himself speaking to a concert audience about his hopes for *America*. One cannot listen to this without being deeply touched—and indeed, if the music had measured up to Bloch's commentary, it would have been a masterpiece. D.H.

The Bicentennial Corner

A Sampler of American Music

"HIS intriguing collection, according to the notes, is "based on" a concert given at the University of Washington in 1973 by musicians who were all at that time members of the university's faculty. It is a very thoughtful program, the vocal items interspersed with the instrumental; there are a few familiar pieces, but many more will be "discoveries" for most listeners. In the latter category, the Carpenter and Griffes songs are especially worthwhile, and I liked Kenneth Benshoof's settings of three Roethke poems and two folk songs (the only recent material here, dating from the Fifties and Sixties). Everything is done with apparent affection and no trace of condescension-the two Carrie Jacobs Bond songs, in fact, are genuinely touching here. Stuart Dempster contributes a euphonium obbligato in A Perfect Day, and he and Victor Steinhardt provide vocal assistance in Some Folks. It is all very endearing, and it has been beautifully recorded by Glenn White, who made those fine recordings of the Seattle Symphony ten or twelve years ago. The Washington State American Revolution Bicentennial Commission used its funds well in supporting this recording. --Richard Freed

AMERICAN SAMPLER. Foster: I Cannot Sing Tonight; Summer Longings; Why, No One to Love?; Some Folks. Carpenter: The Player Queen. Griffes: Early Morning in London; The Lament of Ian the Proud. Ives: Walt Whitman; The White Gulls. Benshoof: The



CARRIE JACOBS BOND

Waking; Dinky; The Cow; The Fox; John Brown's Body. Bond: I Love You Truly; A Perfect Day. Elizabeth Suderburg (soprano); Robert Suderburg (piano). Simons: Atlantic Zephyrs. Mantia: Priscilla. Pryor: The Tip Topper; The Supervisor. Fillmore: Miss Trombone. Stuart Dempster (trombone, euphonium); Victor Steinhardt (piano). Lamb: American Beauty Rag; Ragtime Nightingale. Held: Chromatic Rag. Dett: Juba Dance. Joplin: Fig Leaf Rag. Paul Pratt: Hot House Rag. Victor Steinhardt (piano). UNIVERSITY OF WASH-INGTON PRESS □ OLY-104 two discs \$12.95 (from University of Washington Press, Seattle, Wash. 98105). BOCCHERINI: String Quintet in C Major; String Sextet in D Major, Op. 24, No. 3. Sestetto Chigiano. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 3122 \$2.95 (plus 95¢ shipping, from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N. Y. 10023).

Performance: Winning Recording: Warm

The Quintet in C Major is not identified by an opus number because, like the famous Boccherini Cello Ouintet in B-flat, it is a synthetic work, in this case compiled by Johann Christoph Lauterbach (1832-1918) from no fewer than five separate Boccherini quintets (the Menuet and Trio are from different works). It is a flavorful concoction, not otherwise adulterated (as Grützmacher's arrangement of the Cello Concerto is); the especially ingratiating final Rondo, taken from Op. 37, No. 7, is one of the pieces Jean Francaix orchestrated for his ballet Scuola di Ballo. The performance here is a much more engaging one than the only other known to me-by the Stradivari Quartet and Harvey Shapiro on the same label (MHS 694)-and the warm sonic frame enhances the spirit of good cheer emanating from the performances.

The Sextet does not appear to have been recorded before; it is a very worthwhile discovery, with an especially interesting Menuet (set off by one of Boccherini's "Spanish" trios) and a particularly dashing finale. A most enjoyable release, whetting the appetite for more. R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BRAHMS: Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 77. Nathan Milstein (violin); Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Eugen Jochum cond. DEUT-SCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530592 \$7.98, © 3300592 \$7.98.

Performance: Sinewy Recording: Very good

Nathan Milstein is now more than seventy years old and conductor Eugen Jochum is two years his senior, but, believe me, this is no old men's performance. Indeed, some hearers may complain of its lack of sentiment. I myself lean toward the musical views espoused here, which I find essentially in accord with those of Szigeti and Sir Hamilton Harty in their classic 1928 recording. Sinewiness in this context does not mean briskness. It does mean enormous tensile strength of phrase, tremendous rhythmic surge-Jochum contributes greatly here-and an eschewing of the obviously sentimental. Take care of the architecture and the phrasing of the melodic line, and the sentiment will take care of itself. Not that this is a cold performance. There is plenty of warmth in Milstein's exquisite molding of the slow movement, for example, and those who want soloistic brilliance will get it in Milstein's own first-movement cadenzaby no means inferior to the understandably sacrosanct Joachim. I have compared this recording with the two Oistrakh recordings at hand, as well as Szigeti and the recent Grumiaux/Davis, and I have no doubt that the Milstein/Jochum version belongs in the company of the classic performances. It may not strike home at first hearing, but I'm convinced that it will wear well. DH

BRAHMS: Volkslieder (Folk Songs). Fortytwo German Folk Songs for Solo Voice and Piano; Fourteen Children's Folk Songs; Nine



PETER SCHREIER, EDITH MATHIS: exemplary performances of Brahms' folk songs

German Folk Songs for Four-part Chorus. Edith Mathis (soprano); Peter Schreier (tenor); Kari Engel (piano); Leipzig Radio Chorus, Horst Neumann cond. DEUTSCHE GRAM-MOPHON 2709 057 three discs \$23.94.

Performance: Loving and enjoyable Recording: Excellent

For a composer endowed (and burdened) with Brahms' acute sense of self-criticism, even the simplest song had to be a refined work of art. We can therefore take it for granted that great care went into the folk-song arrangements that occupied Brahms from early youth to late maturity. This elegantly produced album offers all fourteen of the Volkskinderlieder dedicated to the Schumann children in 1858, nine of the fourteen choral songs from 1864, and forty-two of the forty-nine Volkslieder published by Simrock in 1894.

Ranging over themes of love, nature, faith, knighthood, the hunt, and other familiar subjects of German lore, the songs are lovely. and the arrangements manage to sound simple, concealing the great art and sophistication behind them. Nearly three hours of them, however, make for exhausting listening-I recommend small helpings for optimum nourishment. The performances are exemplary: Edith Mathis and Peter Schreier sing with unaffected simplicity, endowing these songs with tenderness and flowing lyricism. They are sensitively supported by planist Karl Engel, and all receive topnotch engineering assistance. The Leipzig Radio Chorus sings with great precision and tonal sheen.

My reference to the "elegant production" pertains to the artistic layout, complete texts, and attractive illustrations; it does not extend to the liner notes, which are wordy, rambling, and not really informative. *G.J.*

CASTELNUOVO-TEDESCO: Concertino for Harp and Chamber Orchestra, Op. 93 (see VILLA-LOBOS)

CHABRIER: Trois Valses Romantiques (see SAINT-SAËNS)

CHOPIN: Twenty-four Preludes, Op. 28; Berceuse in D-flat Major, Op. 57. Alicia de Larrocha (piano). LONDON CS 6952 \$6.98.

Performance: Hard Recording: Very good

CHOPIN: Twenty-four Preludes, Op. 28; Prelude in C-sharp Minor, Op. 45; Prelude in A- flat Major, Op. Posth. Murray Perahia (piano). COLUMBIA M 33507 \$6.98.

Performance: Extrovert Recording: Good

Nothing Alicia de Larrocha does can be without interest, but that quality tends rather to diminish as this sequence of preludes unfolds, and the sheer excitement of the last of the twenty-four does not compensate for the hardness and lack of variety in what has gone before. There is a good deal of beautiful playing, but a good deal, too, that seems simply relentless, and, with all too few exceptions (the lovely performance of No. 15 is one), the music simply isn't given a chance to breathe. Perahia, too, who has shown himself so exceptionally sensitive in all of his earlier recordings, is disappointing here in his unexpectedly extrovert approach, given to muscularity and overamplification where one wants delicacy. My current comparison disc is Claudio Arrau's (Philips 6500.622), which offers the same program as Perahia's. While both Larrocha and Perahia (uncharacteristically, perhaps) seem content here with insistent driving vigor, there is a world of subtlety in Arrau's phrasing and dynamics; Arrau provides just what is missing in these two newer recordings, what is really indispensable to full realization of this music-in a word, its poetry. RF

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DUFAY: Messe Ave Regina Coelorum. Clemencic Consort, René Clemencic cond. HAR-MONIA MUNDI HMU 985 \$7.98 (from HNH Distributors Ltd., P.O. Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60201).

Performance: Exciting Recording: Splendid

Although Guillaume Dufay employed the Gregorian Ave Regina Coelorum as the basis for this Mass, the spirit of the chant has very little to do with the magnificence of fifteenthcentury Burgundian polyphony. Dufay enthusiasts used to hearing this master's Masses performed a cappella or with discreet use of a few instruments will certainly be startled by Clemencic's bold concept of this work. An ensemble of three countertenors, tenor, and bass is supported (if not actually overwhelmed) by two bombards, two sackbuts, trumpet, vielle, lute, organ, and kettledrums, and many sections are played by instruments

alone. The delicate duets and trios, shared by various singers, vielle, and lute, are contrasted with the exciting sonorities of the entire complement. Taking contemporary accounts that "during the customary pause in the singing . . . the kettledrums and wind instruments are sounded" to heart, Clemencic has added striking fanfares to such places as the final cadence of the Gloria and during the held chords of the Credo. The purist may raise his eyebrows, but the results are stunning. Here, then, is a performance that stresses the secular ceremonial splendors of richly dressed nobility in splendid churches as opposed to mystic monks meditating the mysteries of the unknown. Approve or disapprove, this disc will certainly cause one to reconsider the fifteenth-century Mass. S.L.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ELGAR: Symphony No. 2, in E-flat Major, Op. 63. London Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Georg Solti cond. LONDON CS 6941 \$6.98.

Performance: **Superb** Recording: **Very fine**

The Elgar Second Symphony, with its luxuriant and complexly textured outer movements, can prove tough going on initial hearing. But gradually, through an understanding of the inner movements, one comes to realize that Elgar's thematics, embedded in the Richard Straussian exuberance of the opening movement, are not as important in themselves as they are in terms of what happens to them throughout the whole of the symphony. The theme associated with the epigraph from Shelley, "Rarely, rarely comest thou, Spirit of Delight" recurs in somewhat the same visionary, almost hallucinatory fashion as the great tune with which Elgar begins his First Symphony. An assertive figure becomes the basis for the slow-movement main theme, while a slow undulating theme gravitating in downward progression, which seems in the first movement like a mere clouding of a predominantly bright harmonic atmosphere, not only becomes the basis for the scherzo, but assumes in the terrifying central section a guise of absolute evil. The very last pages of the finale, which bring the main themes together in a Brahmsian sunset glow, include some of the most moving and masterly music in the Elgar testament.

Sir Georg Solti and the London Philharmonic have given this music a realization of surpassing brilliance and passionate vitality, matched in my opinion only by the earliest of Sir Adrian Boult's recordings (done with the BBC Symphony in 1945 and regrettably never issued in LP format). Elgar himself recorded the Second in 1927, and Solti hews close to the composer's own basic tempos. Add to this Solti's virtuosic flair and clearly impassioned involvement with the music, and the result is the kind of performance this score needscrystal-clear exposition of its architecture and polyphonic interweavings, fiery rhythmic impulse, phrasing that grows naturally out of human organic roots-and, of course, this virtuoso ensemble can respond instantly and unerringly to the demands placed upon it. Interpretive self-indulgence is fatal to this music; there is none here.

Fine as London's recording is—and it is very fine in this instance—I have one tiny reservation about the sonic realization of this music: a curious lack of expansiveness in the major climaxes. This small reservation aside,

however, this is a great record of a fascinating late-Romantic masterwork. D.H.

FRANCK: Symphony in D Minor (see The Basic Repertoire, page 46)

GLIÈRE: Symphony No. 3, in B Minor, Op. 42 ("Ilya Murometz"). Moscow Radio and Television Symphony Orchestra, Nathan Rakhlin cond. COLUMBIA/MELODYIA MG 33832 two discs \$13.96.

Performance: Good Recording: Mostly good

Reinhold Glière (1876-1956) is for many of us associated with the musical culture of the Soviet era, but his best-known large-scale work, *Ilya Murometz*, is actually a product of the Tsarist epoch, having had its world première in March of 1912 in Moscow. It takes the form of a massive narrative symphony built around legendary exploits of Ilya of Murom which were handed down in ancient folk tales (we would call them "tall stories") known as *bylini*. The musical language in which Glière has clothed the adventures of this Russian Paul Bunyan might best be described as Rimsky-Korsakov with post-Wagnerian trimmings, which makes for a great orchestral showpiece.

Nathan Rakhlin is one of Russia's foremost conductors of the post-World War II era, and his reading is noteworthy for both musical and dramatic coherence. While he gives all the big moments their proper due, he does not fall into the trap of allowing them to overwhelm the basic thread of musical narrative and motivic interlinking. The result makes the work as a whole more palatable—to me, at least—than it has been in the past. The sonics are big and spacious, as befits music of this kind, and the Moscow players have the performance style for this kind of musical fare ingrained into their collective being—adding thereby to the credibility of the final product.

I do object, however, to the short measure offered in this expensive two-record set only an hour and fifteen minutes of music spread over four sides. D.H.

HAYDN: Divertimento in C Major for Piano, Strings, and Two Horns (Hob. XIV/4); Piano Concerto in D Major (Hob. XVIII/2); Piano Concerto in F Major (Hob. XVIII/3); Piano Concerto in G Major (Hob. XVIII/4); Piano Concerto in G Major (Hob. XVIII/4); Piano Concerto in G Major (Hob. XVIII/1). Ilse von Alpenheim (piano); Bamberg Symphony, Antal Dorati cond. Vox QSVBX 5136 three discs \$10.98.

Performance: Fast and dry Recording: Thin

HAYDN: Piano Concerto in D Major (Hob. XVIII/11); Piano Concerto in G Major (Hob. XVIII/4). Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli (piano); Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Edmond de Stoutz cond. ANGEL S-37136 \$6.98.

Performance: Heavy Recording: Tubby

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT HAYDN: Harpsichord Concerto in D Major (Hob. XVIII/11); Overture in D Major (Hob. 1a/7). J. C. BACH: Harpsichord Concerto in A **Major.** George Malcolm (harpsichord); Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner cond. LONDON STS 15172 \$3.49.

Performance: Sparkling Recording: Clear and crisp

The kindest thing one can say about Haydn's concertos is that the genre does not bring out his best. More bluntly, with the exception of the well-known concertos in G and D Major, they are downright silly and not worth bothering with. The omnivorous Vox Box, however, has found new fodder in this dubious repertoire and presents the Viennese pianist Ilse von Alpenheim (Mrs. Antal Dorati) in six concertos. Her approach is an expedient one: play as fast as you can. Thus, in the fast movements she eliminates all musicality and sounds like a machine. Her slow movements are better, but she doggedly shuns the rubato so necessary for the style. The best parts of this album are the charming cadenzas for the aforementioned Concertos in D and G Major. I wonder who wrote them.

On the other side of the coin we are offered an assault on the D and G Major concertos by Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli. His playing is on a Lisztian scale that quite destroys the original quality of these fragile works. This is bolstered by a thick-sounding orchestra best suited for a Brahms or Tchaikovsky concerto. If one accepts this style, these are fine performances. However, the tediously pompous cadenzas by Nino Rota (!) for the G Major Concerto overwhelm the work by sheer length and are rivaled only by the absurdly spastic anonymous cadenzas of the D Major.

Although the D Major Concerto sounds



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Ge New Basic Repertoire

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best on the piano, George Malcolm turns in a sparkling performance of the work on the harpsichord. This is a witty reading filled with marvelously outrageous decorations and finished off with Haydn's own cadenzas. The orchestral accompaniments are crisply played, and a clear sound is achieved through the proper Classical balance of winds and strings. The Haydn Overture in D Major is also superbly performed, and listening to it reminds us, after all those concertos, that Haydn was indeed a top-drawer composer. His weakness in the concerto genre is emphasized by the Bach concerto that Malcolm includes on his disc. Despite the dubious authenticity of the A Major Concerto (I believe it was written by the young J. C. Bach under his brother's tutelage), it is a strong work, and it is sensibly played here. S.L.

IVES: Holidays Symphony. Temple University Concert Choir; Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy cond. RCA ARL1-1249 \$6.98.

Performance: Good Recording: Good

Ives' Holidays Symphony is a kind of orchestral suite of what they used to call characteristic pieces: Washington's Birthday, Decoration Day, The Fourth of July, and Thanksgiving, one each for the rites of each of the seasons. Thanksgiving, now usually placed last, was written first, in 1904 (it grew out of earlier organ music); the others were written between 1909 and 1913 at the peak of Ives' creativity. Ives himself could never make up his mind as to whether the four works really constituted a whole. One worry was that the earlier Thanksgiving did not quite belong with the others. But, in fact, if anything pulls it all together, it is Thanksgiving, music that is outstanding for its intensity and spirituality. The hymn-tone entrance of the chorus (how typical of Ives to have a chorus sitting around all night just to sing a few bars-but what a few bars!) is one of the most shocking and moving moments in orchestral literature. The real weakness of Holidays is in the similarity of the first three pieces. They all follow a typically Ivesian pattern of a moody slow opening followed by a build-up to a smashing, dancing explosion of one kind or another; there is always a short, quiet, moving coda that dissipates the energy into the night. Washington's Birthday is a cold New England winter landscape melting into a barn dance to end all barn

FRANK MARTIN (1890-1974) Handsome works, distinguished performances



dances. Decoration Day is another masterpiece: a loving, moving in memoriam, taps and all, followed by the damndest quickstep explosion you ever heard. After this The Fourth of July is bound to be anticlimactic. Ives could push a good thing just a little too far—too many tunes, too many beers, too many firecrackers, too much celebration altogether. But then there is Thanksgiving.

These performances and recordings are good, but I have one or two reservations. Ormandy lacks something in exuberance at the big "up" moments. And I think the close miking of one or two of the special instrumentsnotably the jew's-harp in Washington's Birthday and the celeste in Thanksgiving—is overdone. Outside of that, hurray for Ives! E.S.

MARTIN: Concerto for Seven Wind Instruments, Timpani, Percussion, and String Orchestra; Études for String Orchestra. Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet cond. LONDON STS-15270 \$3.98.

Performance: Authoritative Recording: Good

Ansermet was a distinguished advocate for the music of the late Frank Martin, and this disc is especially welcome in the continued absence of any other recording of either of these handsome works. The slow movement of the concerto is especially effective here, the sound (dating from 1962 or earlier) is good enough, and the production carries the imprimatur of the composer in the form of his own annotation. Until RCA reinstates Jean Martinon's superb Chicago recording of the concerto and Philips reissues the excellent one of the études by I Musici-and neither gesture seems very likely, unfortunatelythis inexpensive STS package is a most attractive proposition. R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MOZART: Six Notturnos (K. 346, 436, 437, 438, 439, 549); Five Divertimentos (K. 439b, I-V); Twelve Duets for Two Horns (K. 487). Elly Ameling and Elisabeth Cooymans (sopranos); Peter van der Bilt (baritone); members of the Netherlands Wind Ensemble. PHI-LIPS 6747 136 two discs \$13.96.

Performance: Outstanding Recording: Ideal

This set has been dubbed "Mozart Miniatures": the six notturnos are short vocal trios (set to Metastasio texts) with clarinet and basset horn accompaniments, the five divertimentos are scored for the combination of three basset horns only, and the twelve duets (ranging from less than a minute to three minutes in length) are for two horns.

For all the skill and invention expended on them, it is hard to take these unpretentious trifles seriously; I doubt that Mozart did. He probably dashed them off in the instant of inspiration. Just the same, they are eminently enjoyable in small portions.

I recommend this set as a gift to Mozart lovers who *think* they have everything by their favorite composer. The singing is delicate and admirably harmonious, the playing is virtuosic and (virtually) flawless, and the recorded sound is immaculate. *G.J.*

POULENC: Sonata for Two Pianos (see RACHMANINOFF)

(Continued overleaf)

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ZIP.

PROKOFIEV: *Peter and the Wolf* (see SAINT-SAËNS)

PROKOFIEV: Piano Concertos Nos. 1-5; Autumnal Sketch, Op. 8; Classical Symphony, Op. 25; Overture on Hebrew Themes, Op. 34 (see Best of the Month, page 72)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RACHMANINOFF: Suites for Two Pianos: No. 1, Op. 5; No. 2, Op. 17. Vladimir Ashkenazy, André Previn (pianos). LONDON CS 6893 \$6.98.

Performance: Gripping Recording: First-rate

RACHMANINOFF: Suite for Two Pianos No.

1, Op. 5. POULENC: Sonata for Two Pianos. Nadya and Steven Gordon (pianos). KLAVIER KS 549 \$6.98.

Performance: Bright Recording: Good

The young Rachmaninoff's First Suite for Two Pianos, subtitled "Fantasy" and complete with programmatic titles (*Barcarolle, A Night* for Love, Tears, and Russian Easter) is music drenched in adolescent romantic sensibility. There are Lisztian influences in evidence, particularly in the nightingale evocations of the second movement. The Rachmaninoff of the Second Suite was seven years older and finishing off his Second Piano Concerto. Here the virtuoso is much more to the fore, and the music as a whole is more outer-directed. I



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particularly like the gorgeously stylized second-movement waltz and the stunning tarantella finale.

The team of Ashkenazy and Previn offers virtually ideal performances of both works— "gripping" is the word that applies here—and I was completely caught up in the magic of the playing and the music. London's recording is superb.

The young Gordons, a husband-and-wife team, respond more effectively to the contrasted mock-gravity and sauciness of Poulenc than to the romanticism of Rachmaninoff. A hearing of the funeral coda of the *Tears* movement should be enough to prove the point. Klavier's recording is bright and full-bodied; though one is more aware of room coloration here than on the London disc, this factor is not unduly obtrusive. D.H.

RAVEL: Boléro; Rapsodie Espagnole; La Valse; Ma Mère l'Oye (complete ballet); Menuet Antique; Le Tombeau de Couperin; Daphnis et Chloé (complete); Valses Nobles et Sentimentales; Alborada del Gracioso; Une Barque sur l'Océan; Pavane pour une Infante Défunte. Tanglewood Festival Chorus (in Daphnis); Boston Symphony Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2711 015 four discs \$31.92.

Performance: Brilliant, sometimes hard Recording: Mostly excellent

RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

RAVEL: Ma Mère l'Oye (complete ballet); Tzigane; Valses Nobles et Sentimentales. Itzhak Perlman (violin, in *Tzigane* only); Orchestre de Paris, Jean Martinon cond. AN-GEL □ S-37149 \$6.98, ⑧ 8XS-37149 \$7.98, ⓒ 4XS-37149 \$7.98.

RAVEL: Le Tombeau de Couperin; Pavane pour une Infante Défunte; Alborada del Gracioso; Menuet Antique; Une Barque sur l'Océan. Orchestre de Paris, Jean Martinon cond. AN-GEL □ S-37150 \$6.98, ⑧ 8XS-37150 \$7.98, ◎ 4XS-37150 \$7.98.

Performances: Superb Recordings: Rich

The late Jean Martinon's Ravel cycle on Angel is complete now, except for a final disc of the two piano concertos with Aldo Ciccolini, which will be along shortly and is, in any event, rather outside the context of the "complete orchestral works." Two of Seiji Ozawa's four discs have been available individually for some time, and the other two, presumably, will be issued on their own in due course. In the meantime, DG's release of the boxed set is stimulus for going through the entire cycle with both conductors, and doing this confirmed my nagging feeling that I had overpraised Ozawa's Daphnis et Chloé when it was issued on DG 2530 563, and undervalued the level of the Orchestre de Paris' playing for Martinon on Angel 🗆 S-37148. Ozawa's Daphnis is "individualized" chiefly by way of a very streamlined approach that is exciting, but also rather hard and inflexible, with little of the highly appropriate sumptuousness Martinon allows. Ozawa is more convincing in most of the other works than he is in Daphnis, but Martinon maintains a remarkably high level throughout his four discs.

While Boulez, Monteux, Skrowaczewski, or Bernstein may have a bit of an edge in this or that particular work, Martinon's Ravel cy-(Continued on page 108) Photographed at 200X magnification with 1.5 grams tracking force, you can see record vinyl being worn away.

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cle as a whole is simply superb; it is probably the single brightest segment of his discographic legacy. His interpretations are at once idiomatic and imaginative, molded with obvious affection and filled with an expansive vitality that seems to breathe with Ravel; the Orchestre de Paris plays magnificently for him, and the sound is about the best Angel has given an orchestra. Considered either as part of the series or on their own, these two newest discs are especially appealing. Ozawa, as it happens, is also at his best in these particular titles-crisp, brilliant, and by no means coldhearted, with splendid playing everywhere and bright, shimmering sonics. The disc containing the last four titles as listed above is probably the finest of the four in his set, but his Ma Mère l'Oye is also one of the best. touched by real elegance. His Tombeau de Couperin, however, lacks style, his Menuet Antique is efficient rather than communicative, and his Alborada hasn't anything like the wit Martinon finds in the piece.

Ozawa's is the most expensive of the three "complete Ravel" cycles available now, and both of the others are better buys. Martinon's includes the first and only recording of the early *Shéhérazade* Overture (on S-37147) as well as Perlman's stunning remake of the *Tzi*gane; Skrowaczewski's very attractive set (Vox \Box QSVBX-5133) offers instead the *Fan*fare pour "L'Eventail de Jeanne." The Rapsodie Espagnole is still gratuitously split for turnover in Ozawa's set, and DG's documentation tells us very little about the music. R.F.

RODRIGO: Sones en la Giralda, Fantasía Sevillana (see VILLA-LOBOS)

SAINT-SAENS: The Carnival of the Animals. PROKOFIEV: Peter and the Wolf. Hermione Gingold (narrator); Alfons and Aloys Kontarsky (pianos); Vienna Philharmonic, Karl Böhm cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 588 \$7.98. © 3300 588 \$7.98.

Performance: Narration excellent, music stolid Recording: Superb

SAINT-SAËNS: The Carnival of the Animals. CHABRIER: Trois Valses Romantiques. SÉVERAC: Le Soldat de Plomb. Marylène Dosse and Annie Petit (pianos); Württemberg Chamber Orchestra, Heilbronn, Jörg Faerber cond. TURNABOUT TV-S 34586 \$3.98.

Performance: Shabby circus Récording: Fair

Saint-Saëns wrote *The Carnival of the Animals*, that droll collection of musical zoological studies, for a private performance for his friends; he never heard the piece in public concert in his lifetime. Posterity has made up for the oversight. There seems to be a competition these days to see which can be recorded most frequently—Saint Saëns' *Carnival* or Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*. Pretty soon there won't be an actor in the world who hasn't been hired to narrate one or the other of them—or both. Sometimes they're issued back to back, as in the latest entry from Deutsche Grammophon.

Hermione Gingold is an excellent choice to narrate the witty verses Ogden Nash wrote to go with Saint-Saëns' little masterpiece—his fossil who feels "it's kind of fun to be extinct," his elephants who wear their teeth "upside-down, outside," and his dated but delightful references. Böhm's approach to the music, however, is by contrast almost pain-



JEAN MARTINON (1910-1976) A simply superb Ravel cycle

fully stolid and nonwhimsical, although his grand finale is just about the most spectacular on discs to date. The best recording with narration remains Columbia's reissued mono version with André Kostelanetz leading the orchestra and Noël Coward narrating. In *Peter and the Wolf*, the collaboration between Gingold and Böhm is more satisfactory.

If you prefer attending your Carnival without a guide, the music alone is furnished at a bargain rate by Turnabout. This is a rather mangy rendition, though, short on humor in the orchestral division and not very long on élan in the pianos. In this version, the "Personages with Long Ears" seem too tired to bray, the birds are half asleep, and the aquarium needs to have its water changed. The three Chabrier waltzes, delicious and dreamy as they are, don't sparkle as they should here either, and Séverac's Brave Tin Soldier, the hero of a suite based on the Hans Christian Andersen story, can't even manage to sound jolly at his own wedding. PK

SCHUBERT: Complete Quartets (see Choosing Sides, page 96)

SÉVERAC: Le Soldat de Plomb (see SAINT-SAËNS)

SIBELIUS: Violin Concerto in D Minor, Op. 47. BEETHOVEN: Romances for Violin and Orchestra: No. 1 in G Major, Op. 40; No. 2 in F Major, Op. 50. Pinchas Zukerman (violin); London Philharmonic Orchestra, Daniel Barenboim cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 552 \$7.98, © 3300496 \$7.98.

Performance: **Overindulged** Recording: **Excellent**

This is a sumptuous performance, sumptuously recorded, but I wonder if unrelieved sumptuousness is really what the Sibelius Concerto calls for. There are moments, to be sure, in which the work opens out for all the world like the most impassioned of romantic virtuoso concertos, but those moments are set off against a background of frosty colors and lean textures. There is just no leanness here, no reticence where it might help. It is all very intense, with slower tempos than the work can sustain without sacrificing its nobility (in the first movement) and its excitement (in the last). The Beethoven Romances, all but un-(Continued on page 110)



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known a couple of decades ago, are rather overexposed now and stand up even less well under the hyper-intense treatment they are given here. For gorgeous fiddling, it is an impressive display, and DG's orchestral sound is exceptional in its clarity (though Zukerman is a little too much in the spotlight for ideal balance), but more satisfying Sibelius may be had more economically in the form of the recently reissued Francescatti/Bernstein recording (Odyssey Y 33522) or in any of a halfdozen other versions. *R.F.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

J. STAMITZ: Symphony in G Major; Sinfonia Pastorale in D Major, Op. 4, No. 2; Symphony in D Major, Op. 3, No. 2; Clarinet Concerto in B-flat Major. Alan Hacker (clarinet); Academy of Ancient Music, Christopher Hogwood cond. L'OISEAU-LYRE DSLO 505 \$6.98.

Performance: Vibrant Recording: Bright and clear

Johann Stamitz, not to be confused with his two sons Carl and Anton whom Mozart referred to as "two wretched scribblers," was the founder of the celebrated Mannheim Orchestra. The Berlioz of his day, he introduced such startling instrumental effects as the Mannheim steamroller, the Mannheim sigh, and the Mannheim rocket, and he made use of orchestral diminuendos and crescendos-all taken for granted today, but quite novel in the mid-eighteenth century. Although every college course in music history dwells at length on the Mannheim School, its glory has not, in the past, been convincingly documented by the record industry. That situation is now remedied. The Academy of Ancient Music has not only caught the glory of Mannheim but it has also caught its sound by using authentic instruments and revitalized its excitement through vigorous performance.

The Academy of Ancient Music, named after Dr. Pepusch's venerable society circa 1725, is a group of about twenty-five players of old instruments which duplicates, with astonishing accuracy, a typical but excellent orchestra of the late eighteenth century. It must be realized that most research on and usage of old instruments today has been devoted to music of the Baroque era or earlier. Few musicians realize that the late eighteenth century was a period of difficult transition to the modern instruments we play today. This orchestra, that of Mozart and Haydn, is unique. Also unique is Alan Hacker's Miller clarinet. The ensemble sound is a bit raucous with its preponderance of snarling woodwinds, white strings, and bleating horns, but what it lacks in homogeneity of sound is balanced by the clarity of the inner parts. True, there are certain problems of intonation involved with old instruments, but the striking sound and straightforward performance here more than compensate for any roughness. This album, then, is a milestone in historically oriented performance of Classical and pre-Classical music. It brings to light, in a most enjoyable way, the innovations of the Mannheim School and the joyous sound of the Classical orchestra which is, after all, the basis of most of the music we hear today. S.L.

R. STRAUSS: Also Sprach Zarathustra, Op. 30. Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy cond. RCA □ ARD1-1220 \$6.98, ARL1-1220 \$6.98, @ ARS1-1220 \$6.98, @ ARK1-1220 \$6.98, @ ARK1-1220 \$6.98, @ ARK1-1220 \$7.98.

Performance: Brilliant Recording: Impressive

I'm not about to turn in my two-channel Karajan and Haitink recordings of Zarathustra, but Ormandy's RCA Quadradisc does offer its own special enticements, including a brilliance of orchestral performance in general and of string playing in particular that recalls Koussevitzky's Boston Symphony in its pathbreaking recording of forty years ago.

RCA's quadraphonic disc still plays back at a lower level than the two-channel norm, but the orchestral sound generally seems more vivid and less washed-out than was the case with the earliest CD-4 discs. The frontal spread and depth perspective are altogether splendiferous, while the back channels contribute a highly effective sense of space and semi-surround throughout the performance. And in the muttered motival fragments in the muted brass which succeed the great opening sunrise episode, the mix (at least as heard on my equipment) achieves an effect whereby the "muttering" appears to be coming from nowhere—the nowhere in this instance being

NETHERLANDS WIND ENSEMBLE: an eloquent statement of Stravinsky's Octet



STEREO REVIEW

the rear channels. In the Convalescent episode also (at the beginning of side two), the "surround" element was very evident on my equipment, particularly in the French horns.

STRAVINSKY: Concerto for Piano and Wind Instruments; Ebony Concerto; Symphonies of Wind Instruments; Octet for Wind Instruments. Theo Bruins (piano); George Pieterson (clarinet); Netherlands Wind Ensemble, Edo de Waart cond. PHILIPS 6500 841 \$7.98.

STRAVINSKY: Octet for Wind Instruments; Pastorale; Ragtime for Eleven Instruments; Septet; Concertino for Twelve Instruments. Boston Symphony Chamber Players. DEUT-SCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 551 \$7.98.

Performance: Both first-rate Recording: Both fine, Philips warmer

Both of these collections are as attractively played as they are sensibly programmed-the one a convenient package of Stravinsky's major work for winds, the other an intriguing assortment in which each item calls for a different group of instruments. Both discs are crammed with first-rate music-making; the delicious presentation of the under-three-minute Pastorale for violin and wind quartet by the Bostonians is the sort of thing of which bestsellers are made, and no one attracted to either program is likely to be disappointed. Comparison of the two versions of the Octet (the one title common to both collections), though, does point up the advantage of having a conductor for this composer's chamber music: the phrasing is ever so slightly more relaxed and assured, and the instrumental balance just that much more successful, on the Philips disc-whose somewhat warmer sound quality is a further plus. (For more than twenty-five years I have cherished an early RCA LP of the Octet played by a different group of Boston Symphony men, but that version does have a conductor-Leonard Bernstein.)

The Dutch performance of the Piano Concerto must yield top honors to the more brilliant one by Stephen Bishop and Colin Davis on the same label (Philips 839.761LY), but it is fully satisfying in its own right. The new version of the *Ebony* Concerto is at least competitive with either of the other current ones, and Edo de Waart's handling of the Octet and the *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* strikes me as the most eloquent statement of either of those works available now. *R.F.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TCHAIKOVSKY: Songs. Was I not a little blade of grass?; Believe me not, my friend; The Fearful Minute; Sleep, my wistful friend; In this moonlit night; Cradle Song; Why?; At the Ball; If I'd only known; It was in the early spring; Again, as before, alone. Galina Vishnevskaya (soprano); Mstislav Rostropovich (piano). ANGEL S-37166 \$6.98.

Performance: Compelling Recording: Excellent

Galina Vishnevskaya is such an intensely expressive artist, so alert to the dramatic possibilities in a song, that every one of her recordings is an Event! Granted that she has been rather uneven vocally for the last five years or so; granted, too, that her top range has become hard-edged and sometimes strident. Still, she has a way of communicating (Continued on page 114)



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poetic and dramatic essence that discourages applying conventional standards to her achievement.

This program finds her in relatively good vocal form, so she can devote herself to countless expressive variants on the Tchaikovsky themes of loneliness, dejection, and despair in the knowledge that she is technically capable of following the dictates of her superb interpretive instincts. Her dynamic shadings are remarkable; her piano tones may be musing, mournful, or just airily suspended, never falling into predictable patterns. There are telling dramatic touches: carefree, almost studied superficiality in At the Ball, a deliberately understated opening in Why? that leads to an overpowering climax, and the "white" (vibrato-less) sound in Again, as before, alone that underlines the feeling of desperate loneliness. Along the way we do encounter a few cian of his day, wrote the recitatives in German so that they could be understood by his audience and most of the arias in Italian so that he could achieve the linguistic sound so essential to opera buffa. Interpolating concertos between the acts is historically accurate and enhances this delightful work.

The singers are first-rate through the entire opera. Siegmund Nimsgern is properly pompous as the harassed Pimpinone, and Uta Spreckelsen is a deliciously naughty imp of a contriver. Her voice is as clear as a bell and her coloratura flute-like in its instrumental accuracy. Equally important is the orchestra, which provides sparkling, bumptious accompaniments and is a joy to hear in the three concertos. The only criticism I can make of this otherwise superb album is that the harpsichord accompaniments (by Herbert Tachezi) for the recitatives are too soft. S.L.



GALINA VISHNEVSKAYA, MSTISLAV ROSTROPOVICH: an absorbing recital of Tchaikovsky songs

shrill tones and some waveriness on sustained notes, but they are soon forgotten.

These are for the most part sad songs. Rostropovich plays the piano parts with color, warmth, and eloquence, but the uncommonly slow pacing of some of the songs (*It was in early spring*, for one) compounds the gloominess. In sum, while not a "perfect" recital, it is absorbing from start to finish. *G.J.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TELEMANN: *Pimpinone* (incorporating Tessarini's Violin Concerto in B-flat Major, Op. 1, No. 7; Albinoni's Oboe Concerto in B-flat Major, Op. 9, No. 8; and Vivaldi's Violin Concerto in C Major, Op. 7, No. 2). Uta Spreckelsen (soprano), Vespetta; Siegmund Nimsgern (baritone), Pimpinone; Ensemble Florilegium Musicum, Hans Ludwig Hirsch cond. TELEFUNKEN 6.35285 ER two discs \$13.96.

Performance: Razor-sharp Recording: Bright

I recommend Pimpinone to those lovers of opera buffa who have always felt that they should like Pergolesi's La Serva Padrona but are bored by it. Pimpinone's story is about the same as that of La Serva, but the music is far superior. It is Telemann at his wittiest and has the further appeal of having been written before La Serva. Telemann, a practical musiVILLA-LOBOS: Concerto for Harp and Orchestra. RODRIGO: Sones en la Giralda (Fantasía Sevillana). CASTELNUOVO-TEDESCO: Concertino for Harp and Chamber Orchestra, Op. 93. Catherine Michel (harp); Monte Carlo National Opera Orchestra, Antonio de Almeida cond. PHILIPS 6500 812 \$7.98.

Performance: Very good Recording: Very good

I would have thought the Villa-Lobos Harp Concerto had been recorded before, but apparently both that work and the Rodrigo piece are recorded here for the first time. The fourmovement concerto is one of Villa-Lobos' late works (1953), a bit overlong and less in the nature of a solo vehicle than an orchestral piece with an obbligato part for the harp. Rodrigo's eight-minute fantasia, written the year after the Villa-Lobos, is one of the Spaniard's several homages to his native city, in this case evoking the most famous tower of the Alcázar (handsomely pictured on the record jacket). Both works are pleasant enough, but neither is as interesting as the Castelnuovo-Tedesco Concertino, a very original and beautifully proportioned piece. It is curious to have three versions of it now, when less than two years ago there were none; while I am still partial to Ann Mason Stockton's performance of the original version for harp, three clarinets, and string quartet (Crystal S 107), Catherine Michel is hardly less persuasive, and she earns general recommendation by virtue of the more substantial companion pieces on the new Philips release. R.F.

WOLF: Songs on Poems by Eduard Mörike. Der Genesene an die Hoffnung; In der Frühe; Fussreise; Neue Liebe; Der Feuerreiter; Jägerlied; Storchenbotschaft; Verborgenheit; Im Frühling; Auf einer Wanderung; An die Geliebte; Peregrina I and II; Lebe wohl; Begegnung; Der Jäger; Bei einer Trauung; Abschied. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone); Sviatoslav Richter (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMO-PHON 2530 584 \$7.98.

Performance: Good Recording: Good

It is good to have recorded documentation of the Innsbruck concert (October 1973) where these two eminences participated, but for such a summit meeting I find this a disappointing recital. Richter collaborates with his partner admirably, but at times he is too selfeffacing, and the engineering has not been very kind to his tone. Fischer-Dieskau is considerably below his best form. Moments of extraordinary insight are evident-in the darkly evocative Der Jäger and the urbanely sardonic Bei einer Trauung, among others. But the high tessitura of some of the songs is troublesome, interpretive points are frequently overstressed, and toneless declamation is sometimes chosen over singing on exact pitches. And Fussreise and Auf einer Wanderung, two disarming songs, are delivered with a rather mannered artificial jollity instead of the natural charm the same artist brought to them in his recently issued Mörike collection (DG 2709 053) with Barenboim. G.J.

COLLECTIONS

COURTS AND CHAPELS OF RENAIS-SANCE FRANCE. Dufay: J'attendray tant qu'il vous playra; J'ay grant doleur; Gloria ad modum tubae. Lassus: Je l'ayme bien; Quand mon mari vient de dehors. Goudimel: Prire avant le Repas; Psalms 77, 86, and 137. And seventeen others. Boston Camerata, Joel Cohen dir. TITANIC TI 4 \$5.98 (from Titanic Records, 43 Rice Street, Cambridge, Mass. 02140).

Performance: Straightforward Recording: Intimate

In recent years Boston has become a capital of early music. The number of concerts of Renaissance music offered in that city of tradition is staggering, and one wonders what the overall quality is really like. Judging only from the few groups that have been recorded and especially from this disc of the Boston Camerata, Bostonians enjoy concerts of restraint and good taste.

This album offers the listener a well-chosen selection of French Renaissance music that beautifully demonstrates the remarkable artistic contributions of that time and place. Beginning with music of the Burgundian school, we move to the ditties of a garden party in the Loire Valley, sample the seriousness of French Protestant psalms, and thence to the court music of Henry IV and finally to some joyous Christmas music from the Avignon Cathedral. The most delightful aspect of this record is the simple, straightforward approach of the musicians. The singing is natural, not projected or precious. The instrumental playing is clean and in tune. The percus-(Continued on page 117)

If you've got the salt, I've got the Sauza.



"... out for adventure, frequently in the realm of the recondite"



A^{BC/COMMAND is a new, serious—dead serious—budget line launched by ABC Records, produced and generally directed by ethnomusicologist Kathryn King. The company has revived the name "Command" deliberately, to recall the quality of its classical Command catalog in the 1950's, but this new series, rather than concentrating on standard repertoire in demonstration-type recordings, is out for musical adventure, frequently in the realm of the recondite.}

The eclectic first release of six albums makes for absorbing listening in unexpected areas, reaching back 368 years for an opera by Marco da Gagliano called La Dafne, into the Romantic era for an album of cello bonbons, forward to experimental works by composers of the 1970's, and laterally all the way to Guatemala, Chile, and Sikkim in the Himalayas for folk-music recordings made in the field and presented under the general sublunary heading "Music of the Earth." Of the six albums, two are in QS four-channel recordings, two in stereo, and two (though not so marked on the jackets) in mono. All the recordings (allowing for field conditions where applicable) are excellent of their type.

The outstanding item is unquestionably La Dafne, an opera that until recently had probably been unheard since 1608. Strangely, though—as the world of recordings is strange—this is its second recording. The first, on Musical Heritage Society MHS 1953/54, was reviewed in the July 1975 issue of STEREO REVIEW. The work had been neglected because the surviving performance materials were sketchy and replete with notational problems, but the realization here reveals it as an enchanting effort (Gagliano's music is really exquisite) by one of the very first composers of opera.

Robert White's clean-lined but ardent tenor treatment of Apollo's arias and Mary Rawcliffe's florid yet immaculate soprano in the role of Dafne are the most dazzling gems in a jeweled setting further ornamented by ensemble playing under Paul Vorwerk's sensitive musical direction. The quadraphonic (QS) recording lends a brilliant sheen to the whole splendid production, and complete texts and abundant notes are supplied.

"Spell" is an album of twentieth-century music for a trio of clarinet, cello, and piano. The title work, by Per Nørgård of Denmark, is a fascinating series of patterns that push the resources of chamber music to its limits, sometimes calling upon the players to handle several tempos simultaneously. With its shifting rhythms and tones, *Spell* is difficult but truly magical music.

Barney Childs' Trio, composed in memory of the poet Paul Blackburn, is partly original, partly eclectic in manner, a lovely work in its own chilling way, making use of the spoken word-including lines from Blackburn's own enigmatic poems-for novel effects. Unfortunately, while the musicians are able to sing on their instruments, their untrained and dull voices make the spoken passages sound amateurish and intrusive. The record concludes with Daniel Lentz's Songs of the Sirens, in which whispered "phonemes" are woven together with sensuous instrumental writing to evoke, less yearningly than Debussy did but still rather effectively, those sounds with which the Sirens might have tempted Homer's hero had he not stuffed his ears with wax.

These admittedly experimental works find

their perfect antithesis in the recital of short, mostly nineteenth-century pieces for cello and piano in sensitive, musicianly performances. Jeffrey Solow's tone has never been purer, and his intonation melts appropriately into the right accent for each work, recalling Voltaire's compliment to a viola da gamba virtuoso of his day: "You know how to turn an ox into a nightingale." The pianist, although her role is a modest one, matches the cellist throughout in taste and vitality.

The field recordings of folk music, I'm afraid, will be of much more interest to the ethnomusicological specialist than the general listener, and the ten-thousand words' worth of notes that accompanies each of these discs tends to reinforce that observation. Although the Sikkim recording contains some of the eeriest chanting ever recorded and a morning hymn most hauntingly played on enormous copper trumpets and shawms, most of the other material is so primitive that to unscholarly ears it frequently approaches a point of excruciation rather than pleasure.

ALL told, then, ABC/Command has made an auspicious and multidirectional beginning, and we can look forward with considerable curiosity and interest to what will follow.

–Paul Kresh

GAGLIANO: La Dafne. Robert White (tenor), Apollo; Maurita Thornburgh (soprano), Venus; Su Harmon (soprano), Cupid; Mary Rawcliffe (soprano), Dafne; Dale Terbeck (counter-tenor), Thyrsis. Musica Pacifica, Paul Vorwerk cond. ABC/COMMAND COMS 9004 two discs \$6.98.

NØRGÅRD: Spell. CHILDS: Trio for Clarinet, Cello, and Piano. LENTZ: Songs of the Sirens. Montagna Trio. ABC/COMMAND COMS 9005 \$3.49

JEFFREY SOLOW: The Romantic Cello. Tchaikovsky: Pezzo Capriccioso; Nocturne. Toch (arr. Solow): Impromptu. Debussy (arr. Hartmann): Il Pleure dans mon coeur. Rachmaninoff: Vocalise. Fauré: Elegy; Sicilienne; Papillon. Weber: Sonata in A. Jeffrey Solow (cello): Doris Stevenson (piano). ABC/COMMAND COMS 9006 \$3.49.

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THE TRADITIONAL MUSIC OF CHILE. Various singers and instrumentalists. El jardín; El Carretero; Con arpa, guitarra y piano; Tú eres como el picaflor; Me gusta ver a los huasos; Versos por nacimiento; Marcha; Huaino; Tarquirari; Cueca; Huaino. ABC/COMMAND COMS 9003 \$3.49. sion is used with, thank heavens, discretion. All in all, this is aristocratic music making, free of the gimmickry and coyness so frequently used to "sell" early music. *S.L.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LOUIS DANTO: None But the Lonely Heart. Massenet: Elegy. Gounod: Serenade. Godard: Berceuse. Denza: Si vous l'aviez compris! Handel: Jehova, to my words give ear. Tchaikovsky: None but the lonely heart. Glinka: Doubt. Rimsky-Korsakov: The Rose and the Nightingale. Borodin: Listen, maidens, to my song. Rachmaninoff: Oh cease thy singing, maiden fair; When night descends. Louis Danto (tenor); Jascha Silberstein (cello); Artur Balsam (piano). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 3276 \$2.95 (plus 95¢ handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Performance: First-rate Recording: Good

This is an old-fashioned recital reminiscent of the era when the likes of Fritz Kreisler and Mischa Elman would lend obbligato support to the likes of John McCormack and Enrico Caruso. Annotator Harold G. Byrnes, well known in record-collecting circles, aptly describes it as "..., a very special record ..., a splendid recital by three outstanding musicians, each a superb artist in his own right."

Tenor Louis Danto gives renewed evidence here of the extraordinary qualities I admired in his previous record recitals: a sweet, finespun lyric sound produced with smoothness and pure intonation, enriched by uncommon technique that includes a facile command of ornamentation and an expert use of the *voix mixte* (a blending of chest and head resonances in the upper register). He sounds more idiomatic in the Russian repertoire than he does in the French, but his work is tasteful and skillful throughout. Only in the ending of the Rimsky-Korsakov song is there a slight suggestion of a cantorial overemphasis.

Minor reservations aside—erratic rhythm in Glinka's *Doubt* and an engineering balance that sometimes relegates Jascha Silberstein's exquisite playing far into the background this is a very enjoyable presentation of popular yet elusive material. The Handel aria seems oddly placed in this sequence, but it too is well performed. *G.J.*

NIGEL ROGERS: Canti Amorosi (see Best of the Month, page 71)

BARBRA STREISAND: Classical Barbra. Debussy: Beau Soir. Canteloube: Berceuse, from Songs of the Auvergne. Wolf: Verschwiegene Liebe. Faure: Pavane (Vocalise); Après un Rêve. Orff: In Trutina, from Carmina Burana. Handel: Lascia Ch'io Pianga, from Rinaldo; Dank sei Dir, Herr. Schumann: Mondnacht. Ogerman: I Loved You. Barbra Streisand (vocals); Claus Ogerman (piano); Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Claus Ogerman cond. Co-LUMBIA M33452 \$6.98, @ MA 33452 \$7.98, @ MT 33452 \$7.98.

Performance: Mary Garden she ain't Recording: Very good

Barbra Streisand has a good voice, and she is an exceptionally intelligent woman, but treading here where angels like Maggie Teyte walked only with trepidation, she is vanquished by the assignment. She not only lacks



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Over 4600 Stores - Dealers - USA, Canada, England, Australia, Belgium, Germany, Holland, France, Japan Registered Trademark the breath control and the vocal technique to manage this material; she is incapable of finding the right emotional pitch for the poetry in it either. One has only to listen to her agreeable but so bland treatment of Fauré's haunting Après un Rêve and then turn to recordings of the same piece by Teyte or Victoria de Los Angeles to see how our Barbra has missed out on the twist of drama at the end. And when the singer leaves Gallic territory to tangle with the brooding subleties of Hugo Wolf, the ecstatic romanticism of Schumann's Mondnacht, the exacting demands of Handelian arias, matters only grow worse. What starts as an intriguing attempt to apply the Streisand intensity under rarified musical conditions ends up simply as amateur night. She doesn't exactly turn out to be the Florence Foster Jenkins of the art song but she comes dangerously close at times.

I cannot quite go along with the alarm sounded by Speight Jenkins in the New York Post that the sales of "Classical Barbra" (the number already sold is reputed to be over six figures) could result in a general debasement of the American musical scene-what would be wrong, after all, if we sang lieder in the streets? And I really would rather hear Barbra Streisand sing Beau Soir than hear Dorothy Kirsten sing The Darktown Strutter's Ball. But the buyer should know, if he acquires this one, that what he is getting is a well-packaged curiosity, not a serious contender in the artsong sweepstakes. A complete text, in English and all the other languages, is supplied, along with earnest notes by Homer Dennison and an endorsement by Leonard Bernstein ambiguously praising La Streisand's "sensitive, straightforward, and enormously appealing performance." PK

JANIS ZABERS: Song Recital. Mozart (attrib.): Wiegenlied. Bach-Gounod: Ave Maria. Schubert: Serenade; Die Post; Ungeduld; Der Leiermann. Brahms: Lullaby. Grieg: The Poet's Heart; I Love You; The First Primrose; From the Fatherland; The Dairy Maid; The Swan. Medins: Caress. Janis Zabers (tenor); instrumental accompaniment. KAIBALA 40 DO3 \$6.98 (from Kaibala Records, P.O. Box 512, Oreland, Pa. 19075).

Performance: Good or better Recording: Fair

About two years ago, I praised an operatic recital by the late Latvian tenor Janis Zabers (1935-1973) wholeheartedly. Part of my review now appears on the jacket liner of this follow-up release (with my name misspelled, but you can't have everything. . .). Zabers' bright, ringing tone and sensitive artistry are still much in evidence, though his top range appears less free in some of these songs than it did in the first sequence. Zabers must be regarded with Lipatti, Kapell, Neveu, Wunderlich, *et al.* as among music's tragic early losses.

The recital, however, is not all pleasure. The accompaniments are only adequate or worse (for example, the two lullabies are accompanied by a saccharine instrumental trio). Many songs are sung in Latvian, which, while not familiar to most listeners, may be all to the good because the singer's German is poor in the Schubert material. The "Mozart" Wiegenlied, incidentally, is the familiar "Schlafe, mein Prinzchen" of spurious authorship. Altogether, this recital is not for musical purists but for those who find enjoyment in the discovery of genuine vocal talent. G.J.

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Introducing the Staff . . .

Since readers from time to time understandably display a natural human curiosity about the backgrounds of the writers and editors who bend their ears each month, we are offering a series of capsule biographies and autobiographies designed to satisfy that expressed need and at the same time to circumvent some of the hazards of mere speculation. —Ed.



Contributing Editor Paul Kresh

WAS born in the Bronx and grew up in Washington Heights, where the wind blew up from the Hudson and winter always seemed to last forever. My father's windup phonograph, with the inevitable Caruso and Galli-Curci records, and books I began reading early were bulwarks against a buffeting world.

My teachers at George Washington High School encouraged my notion of myself as a would-be writer, but after attending New College at Columbia University and City College, I took such Depression jobs as cutting rhinestones into patterns at a jewelry factory and typing in the advertising department of the New York Times. After writing several unpublishable novels and reams of bad poetry, I wound up preparing news releases for fund-raising organizations. I spent my evenings commuting to New Jersey and working as a reporter on the Newark Star-Ledger. At the same time, I was writing scripts for WNYC, the city-owned radio station in New York, for such programs as Adventures in Music, which to my delight and surprise won a series of Ohio State Awards. Since then, I have always had

one foot in the world of broadcasting, writing and directing such series as Adventures in Judaism and The Jewish World, which have added to the number of framed certificates on my office wall. As motion-picture coordinator for United Jewish Appeal, I was shipped to Hollywood where I had to take a book out of the library to learn how to write a movie scenario. This led to writing and directing many documentary films on the West Coast, in New York, and in Israel.

For ten years I was editor of the magazine American Judaism. I reviewed books for Saturday Review and wrote articles on the performing arts. I wrote an opera libretto (based on Hawthorne's The Marble Faun) which is still in search of a composer, and I wrote The Power of the Unknown Citizen, published by J. B. Lippincott.

In 1968 the record business beckoned and I went to work as vice president of Spoken Arts Records where, among other albums, I edited the eighteen-record "Treasury of 100 Modern American Poets" reading their poems. Later I moved to the competition and worked for a while as "projects editor" for Caedmon Records. No longer a full-time producer, I completed a three-record set of Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird for Miller-Brody productions this year, and to my amazement it was nominated for a Grammy (it didn't win).

Until I started making records myself, I had for years reviewed the spoken word on discs for the late *American Record Guide* (where so many of us record critics got our start) and later for STEREO RE-VIEW. When a conflict of interest loomed, I offered my resignation, but Bill Anderson invited me to stay on to review music everything from rock to Rachmaninoff.

ODAY, I am back at the United Jewish Appeal-Federation of Jewish Philanthropies as "creative director," a title that bewilders my friends and embarrasses me. In addition to my music reviews, I am again covering the spoken word on discs, these days for the New York Times, where I used to type invoices. I'm writing a biography of Isaac Bashevis Singer for Dial Press, and I consider this the biggest challenge of my career. But I still find time to listen to records and cassettes for pleasure, to go to the theater, opera, ballet, and movies, and to follow such seemingly interminable TV series as Upstairs, Downstairs. My favorite program is Monty Python's Flying Circus; I am essentially a surrealist, you see.

What else can I tell you? I backed into music and literature through the masterpieces of the twentieth century, and my preferences still lie with the achievements of my contemporaries. I live in a high-rise apartment in Greenwich Village with a friend, a tankful of tropical fish, and a beagle named Emily. I've traveled for pleasure through most of the known world, and my idea of paradise would be to have nothing to do all day but listen to records and tapes and reread the novels of Joyce, Proust, and Virginia Woolf. You'd have to be rich for that. Guess I won't make it. —Paul Kresh

june 1976

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