

STEVE SIMELS
SLEEPING (ROCK) BEAUTIES

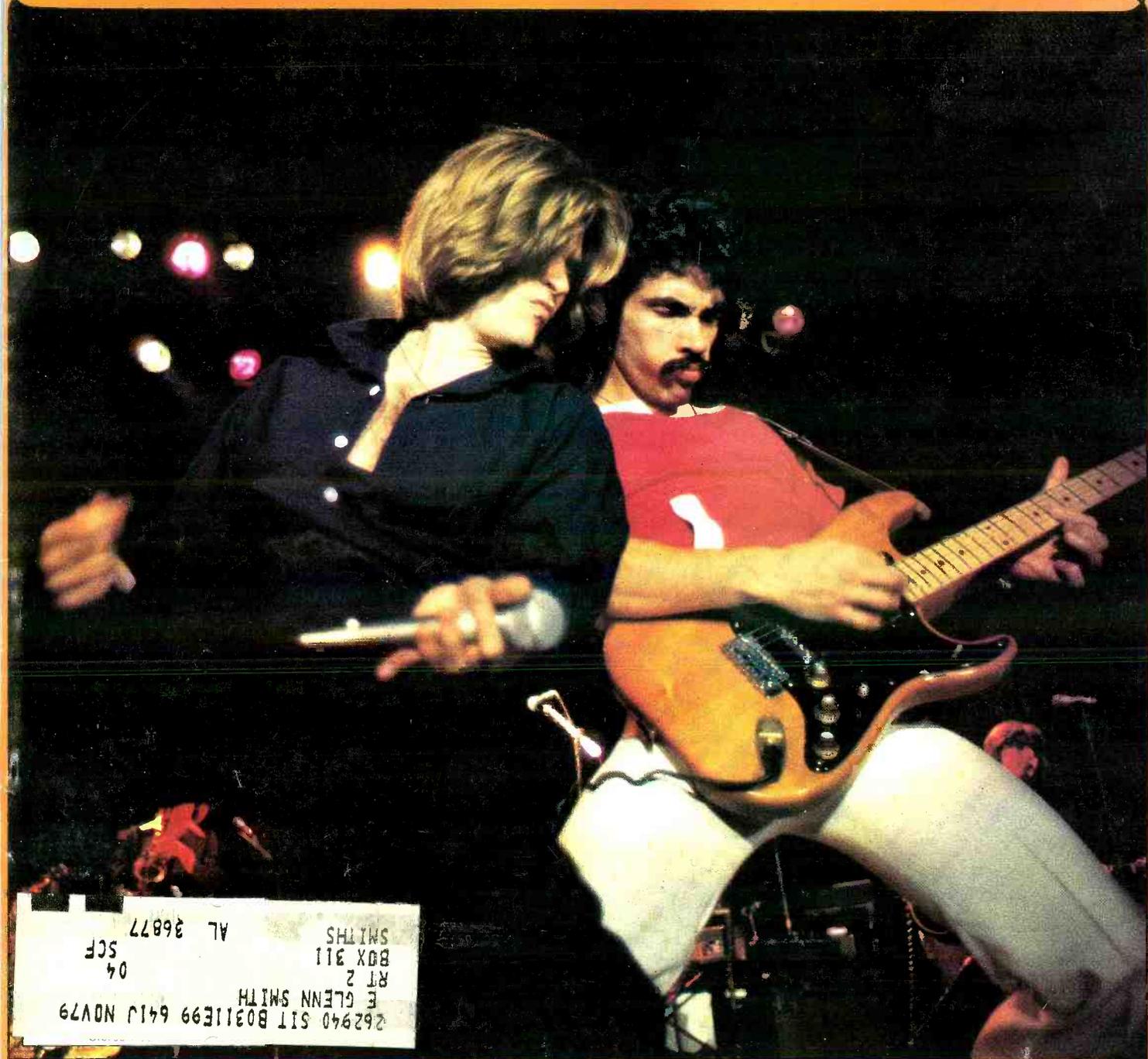
APRIL 1978 • \$1.25

Stereo Review®

JULIAN HIRSCH TELLS HOW HE TESTS TONE ARMS
TALES FROM AN AUDIO REPAIRMAN'S NOTEBOOK

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS: Altec Model Fifteen Speaker System
Kenwood KA-7100 Integrated Amplifier • Technics SU-9070 Stereo Preamplifier
Revox B77 Tape Recorder • Visonik DD-8200 Record Player

HALL & OATES: MUSIC NO PIGEONHOLE WILL FIT



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WORKS THIS SUCCESSFULLY
MOST PEOPLE WOULDN'T
MESS AROUND WITH IT.

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WE'VE REPLACED THE WORLD'S BEST SELLING CASSETTE DECK WITH SOMETHING EVEN BETTER.

For the last two years, the CT-F2121 has satisfied more people than any other cassette deck in the world. Because the major difference between it and much more expensive front-loading cassette decks was price. Not performance.

But there remained one highly critical group of people who were never satisfied. Pioneer's engineers. Who were constantly looking for ways to make it even better.

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The most obvious improvement over the old 2121 is the new front end of the CT-F4242.

What isn't quite as obvious is the thinking behind it. The new push button oil-damped door, for instance, doesn't tilt in like the CT-F2121's, or out like others. Instead, it slides neatly up over the lighted tape transport. So it's easier to get your cassette in and out of the deck.

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The point is, you'll see a lot on the new CT-F4242 that you won't see on other modestly priced cassette decks.

But there's more to this deck than meets the eye.

THE DIFFERENCES YOU CAN HEAR.

By far, the most impressive refinements in the new CT-F4242 are the ones you can't see.

Inside, for example, where many cassette decks use small flywheels that can cause wow

and flutter, the flywheel in the new CT-F4242 is massive. (In fact, it's 30% bigger than the 2121's.) Our bigger flywheel reduces wow and flutter even further. So you get cleaner and crisper recordings.

Then there's our new Dolby system.

Practically every decent cassette deck today has some sort of Dolby system that adds clarity to the music by reducing tape hiss. But the Dolby in the CT-F4242 cuts tape hiss enough to produce an incredible signal to noise ratio of 62 decibels. A figure comparable to far more expensive equipment.

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If you're beginning to get the idea that there are vast differences between the CT-F4242 and other decks for anywhere near the same price, you're right.

So visit your Pioneer dealer and listen to the most sophisticated cassette deck ever made for the money. Pioneer's CT-F4242.

Once you hear it, you'll be glad Pioneer couldn't leave well enough alone.

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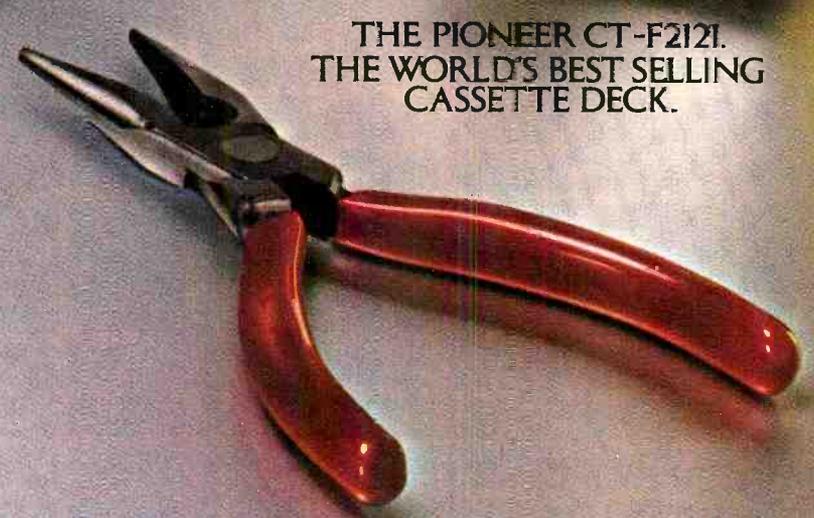
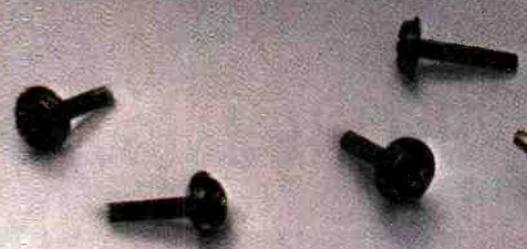
	CT-F2121	CT-F4242
HEADS:	"Permalloy Solid" recording/playback head xl. Ferrite erasing head xl.	"Hard Permalloy Solid" recording/playback head xl. Ferrite erasing head xl.
WOW AND FLUTTER:	No more than 0.12% (WRMS)	No more than 0.08% (WRMS) No more than ±.2% (DIN)
FREQUENCY RESPONSE:	Standard LH tape: 30 to 15,000 Hz (40 to 11,000 Hz = 3 dB). Chromium type tape: 30 to 16,000 Hz (40 to 12,000 Hz = 3 dB)	Standard LH tape: 30 to 14,000 Hz (10 to 13,000 Hz = 3 dB). Ferrichromium type tape: 30 to 16,000 Hz (40 to 13,000 Hz = 3 dB). Chromium type tape: 30 to 16,000 Hz (40 to 15,000 Hz = 3 dB)
SIGNAL-TO-NOISE RATIO:	Dolby OFF: 48 dB (Standard and LH tapes) Dolby ON: 58 dB (over 5 kHz, standard and LH tapes). When chromium type tape is used, signal-to-noise ratio is further improved by 4.5 dB over 5 kHz.	Dolby OFF: more than 52 dB Dolby ON: more than 62 dB (over 5 kHz standard and LH tape). When chromium type tape is used, signal-to-noise ratio is further improved by 4.5 dB over 5 kHz.

Walnut veneer wood cabinet optional at extra cost.

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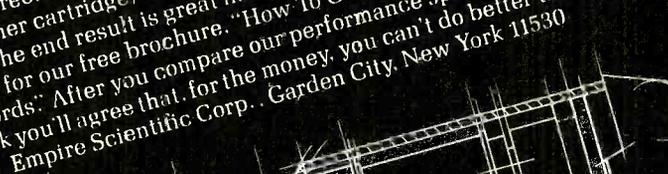
THE PIONEER CT-F4242.
THE LOGICAL SUCCESSOR
TO THE WORLD'S BEST SELLING
CASSETTE DECK.



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EMPIRE
Already your system sounds better.

MODEL	4000 /III	4000 D/I	2000Z	2000Z	2000 E III	2000 E/II	2000 E/I	2000 E	2000
FREQUENCY RESPONSE	10Hz-50kHz ± 3 dB	15Hz-45kHz ± 3 dB	20Hz-20kHz ± 2 dB	20Hz-20kHz ± 1½ dB	20Hz-20kHz ± 2 dB	20Hz-20kHz ± 2 dB	20Hz-20kHz ± 3 dB	20Hz-20kHz ± 3 dB	20Hz-20kHz ± 3 dB
TRACKING FORCE RANGE	¾-1½ gm	1-1½ gm	¾-1½ gm	¾-1½ gm	¾-1½ gm	¾-1½ gm	1-2 gm	1¼-2½ gm	1½-3 gm
SEPARATION	15Hz to 1kHz 28 dB 1kHz to 20kHz 23 dB 20kHz to 50kHz 15 dB	15Hz to 1kHz 24 dB 1kHz to 20kHz 20 dB 20kHz to 50kHz 15 dB	20Hz to 20kHz 20 dB 30 dB 25 dB	20Hz to 20kHz 18 dB 27 dB 22 dB	20Hz to 20kHz 20 dB 28 dB 20 dB	20Hz to 20kHz 20 dB 28 dB 18 dB	20Hz to 20kHz 18 dB 23 dB 15 dB	20Hz to 20kHz 18 dB 23 dB 15 dB	20Hz to 20kHz 16 dB 21 dB 13 dB
I.M. DISTORTION @ 3.54 cm/sec	2% 2kHz-20kHz	2% 2kHz-20kHz	0.8% 2kHz-20kHz	0.6% 2kHz-20kHz	1% 2kHz-20kHz	1.5% 2kHz-20kHz	2% 2kHz-20kHz	2% 2kHz-20kHz	2% 2kHz-20kHz
STYLUS	2 mil bi-radial	2 mil bi-radial	2 x 7 mil elliptical	3 x 7 mil elliptical	7 mil spherical				
EFFECTIVE TIP MASS	4 milligram	4 milligram	2 milligram	2 milligram	6 milligram	6 milligram	6 milligram	9 milligram	1 milligram
COMPLIANCE	30x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	30x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	30x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	30x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	20x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	18x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	17x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	16x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	14x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne
TRACKING ABILITY	32 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 1 gm	30 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 1½ gm	38 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 9 gm	38 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 1 gm	32 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 1 gm	28 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 1½ gm	28 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 1½ gm	28 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 1½ gm	32 cm/sec @ 1kHz @ 2 gm
CHANNEL BALANCE	within 1 dB @ 1kHz	within 1½ dB @ 1kHz	within ¼ dB @ 1kHz	within 1 dB @ 1kHz	within 1 dB @ 1kHz	within 1½ dB @ 1kHz	within 1½ dB @ 1kHz	within 1½ dB @ 1kHz	within 1½ dB @ 1kHz
INPUT LOAD	100k Ohms/ channel	100k Ohms/ channel	47k Ohms/ channel	47k Ohms/ channel	47k Ohms/ channel	47k Ohms/ channel	47k Ohms/ channel	47k Ohms/ channel	47k Ohms/ channel
TOTAL CAPACITANCE	under 100 pF/channel	under 100 pF/channel	300 pF/channel	300 pF/channel	400-500 pF/channel	400-500 pF/channel	400-500 pF/channel	400-500 pF/channel	400-500 pF/channel
OUTPUT @ 3.54 cm/sec	3 mV/channel	3 mV/channel	3 mV/channel	3 mV/channel	4.5 mV/channel	4.5 mV/channel	4.5 mV/channel	4.5 mV/channel	4.5 mV/channel

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Editorially Speaking

By William Anderson



A MUSICAL EVENT, FIRST MAGNITUDE

I HAVE a friend who is said to cry at card tricks. My own emotional threshold is set a little higher, but I know that in the presence of great art the hair on the back of my neck bristles, my eyes water, and my throat goes dry, developing a lump that makes it difficult to utter even a "bravo."

I wanted very much to shout "bravo" as I watched and listened to the PBS TV broadcast of tenor Luciano Pavarotti's epochal recital from the stage of New York's Metropolitan Opera the afternoon of February 19, but my throat had already tightened up in response to what is best described as A Musical Event of the First Magnitude. The standing-room-only audience of 4,000 in the house was swelled by an estimated 387,000 viewers in the New York area alone, and the Lord only knows how many more watched across the nation (the whole thing was rebroadcast three days later for those careless enough to have

missed it the first time and those clever enough to catch it for a second).

The occasion marked not only the first vocal recital from the stage of the new opera house, but a kind of test by the broadcast's underwriters (the Exxon "Live from Lincoln Center" series) to discover whether this kind of programming was, so to speak, "video viable." It could be argued that they hedged their bet outrageously by choosing for the experiment a man whose name is well on its way to becoming a household word, but no matter—a sensation is a sensation, however scored.

There was no hedging involved in choosing the music for the program, which was uncompromisingly high-minded—and I do not except the group of Paolo Tosti heart-throbbers at the close. It gave the soloist maximum opportunity to deploy across America's living rooms, throughout almost two hours of merciless camera and microphone closeups, the vo-

cal gifts, the musicianship, the breath-catching ardor, and the spellbinding personal charm that are his in abundance. It is a kind of closeness that is not possible in the concert hall, of course, nor for those artists whose effortful grimaces and odd mouthings would obtrude unattractively. But with Pavarotti there is not an unaesthetic moment; the worst that can be said of him is that he sweats (he carries a security hanky), a reminder, for those who need it, that this kind of singing is hard work even for a skilled vocal athlete.

The tenor was accompanied by pianist John Wustman, his peer, heir apparent to the mantle of the great Gerald Moore, and for many years my own accompanist. (He can be yours too through the intervention of Music Minus One's albums of Italian art songs, Schubert, Brahms, and more besides; write MMO, 43 W. 61 St., New York 10023.)

The resounding success of this first video-recital effort is almost bound to inspire more of the same. Perhaps, if we're lucky, it will also throw into relief the inadequacy of present-day TV sound. I have a good set, and I dutifully lowered my expectations, but the speaker nonetheless rang like a tambourine with overloading, and dynamic contrasts were merely simulated (they can be heard, naturally, on Pavarotti's many London recordings, which embrace perhaps half the contents of the broadcast program). The event was simulcast on FM (pirate tapes are already available through your usual sources), and Lincoln Center has also preserved a vault copy in impeccable stereo (and video) against the dawning of the video-cassette (or -disc) era.

During the program's intermission it was observed that we have not had a singer with Pavarotti's compelling magnetism since Caruso. Is he, then, "another Caruso"? No; great artists are one of a kind, and Pavarotti is . . . Pavarotti. The secret of his popular appeal can perhaps be found in his most typical gesture: those widespread arms are a token of a warm, openhearted, and vulnerable nature. Only a mean-spirited Malvolio could resist.

Stereo Review

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WILLIAM ANDERSON

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WILLIAM LIVINGSTONE

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Editorial and Executive Offices
Ziff-Davis Publishing Company
One Park Avenue, New York, New York 10016
212 725-3500

Eastern Advertising Manager: Richard J. Halpern
Eastern Advertising Representative: Charles L. P. Watson

Midwestern Office: The Pattis Group
4761 West Touhy Ave., Lincolnwood, Illinois 60646
312 729-1100
Arnold S. Hoffman

Western Office
9025 Wilshire Boulevard
Beverly Hills, California 90211
213 723-8050, 272-1161
Western Advertising Manager: Linda Bartlett

Japan: James Yagi
Oji Palace Aoyama, 6-25, Minami Aoyama
6-Chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan
Telephone: 407-1930/6821, 582-2851

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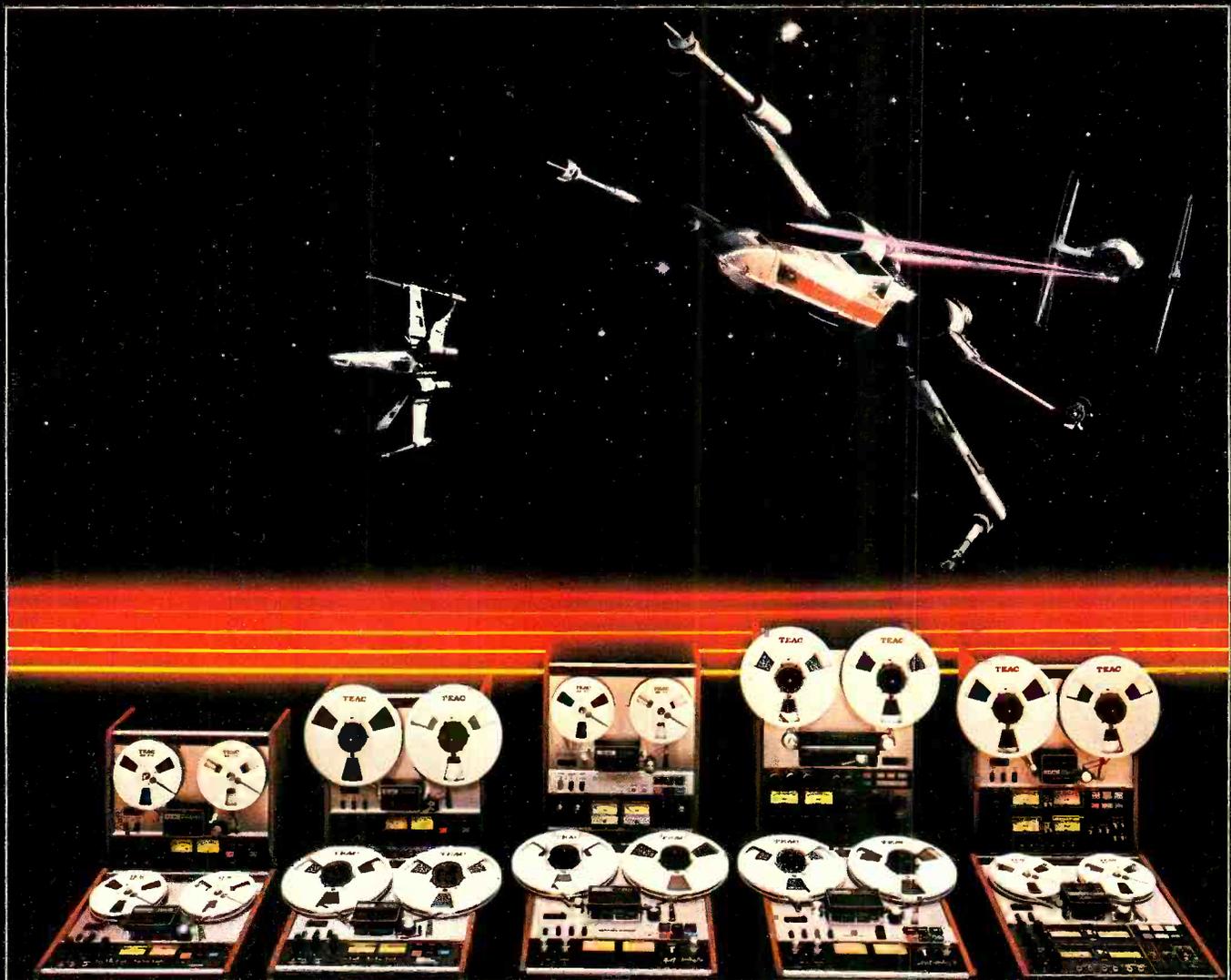


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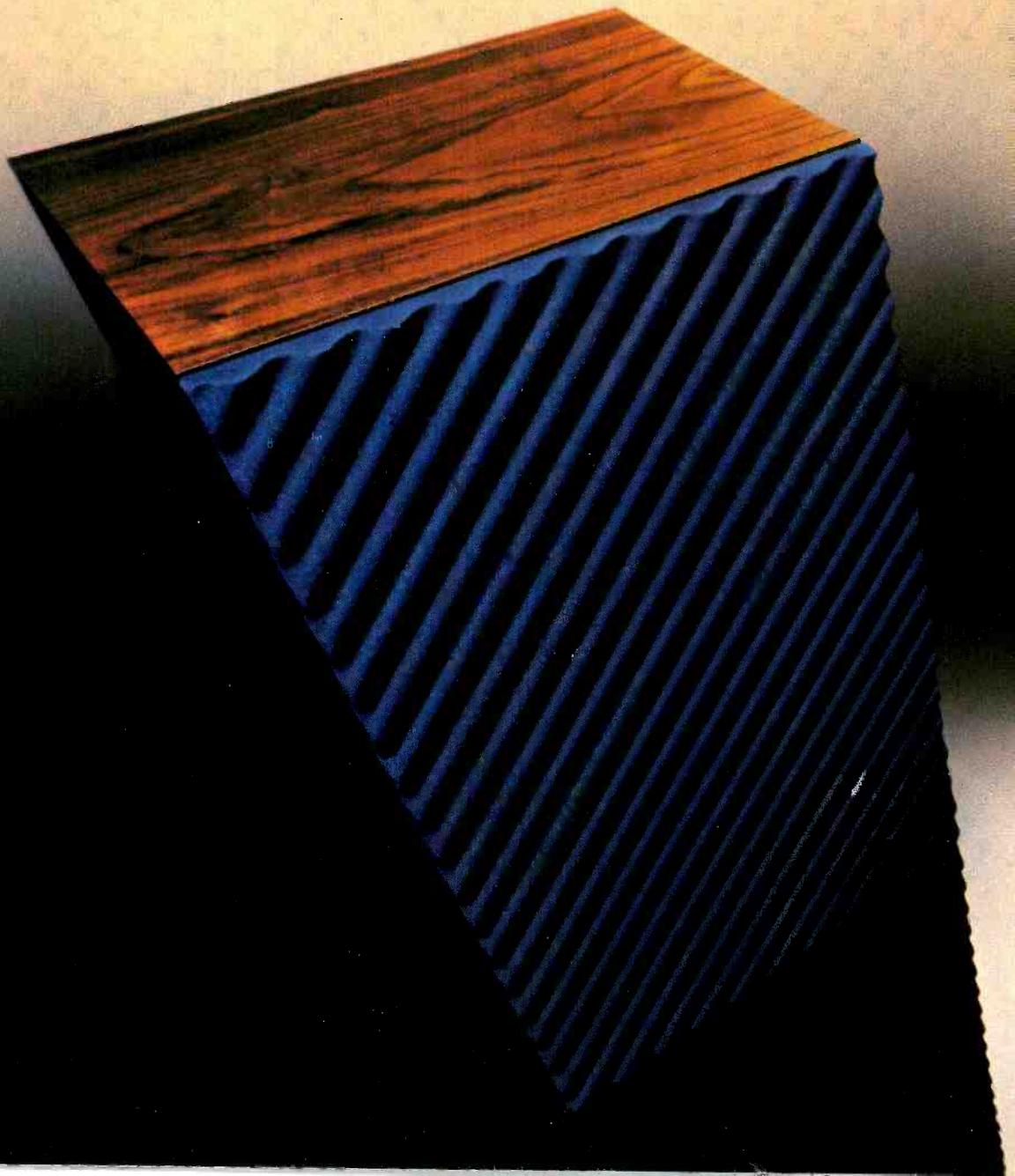
We built a superb system called the L212. It's an absolutely no-trade-off, state of the art, \$1,700 system that has redefined the upper limits of high performance sound.

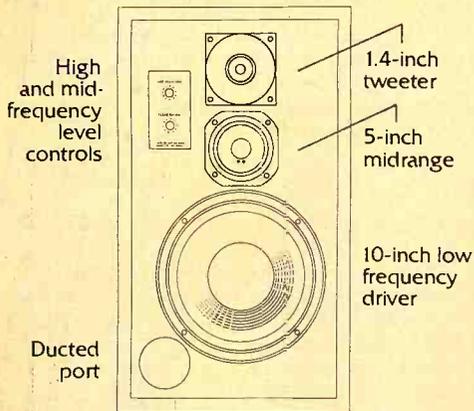
Wouldn't it be great if we could build a loudspeaker that would sound as expensive but wouldn't be?

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The sound is everywhere. No matter which way you turn you're in the center of the music.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Best Recordings

● In the spirit of the "two for the future" sections in February's "Best Recordings of the Past Twenty Years," I'd like to suggest as an ideal release a complete set of the thirteen symphonies by Allan Pettersson, performed by the Detroit Symphony conducted by Antal Dorati. Dorati's recordings of the Seventh (London CS 6740) and Tenth (EMI 061-35142) and of his own orchestrations of eight of the *Barefoot Songs* (HNH 4003/4) make him the perfect choice for the project, and his stay with the Detroit Symphony as music director (he is now in the middle of his first season there) should make it less difficult to bring that fine orchestra back into public view.

MARK S. SHANKS
Castle AFB, Calif.

● Leave it to STEREO REVIEW to have its resident rock reactionary, Steve Simels, pick the "best recordings of the past twenty years." Predictably, he ignored some really classic albums, for instance (in my order of preference): "Led Zeppelin IV," the Who's "Who's Next," Pink Floyd's "Dark Side of the Moon," "Fragile" by Yes, Aerosmith's "Toys in the Attic," Black Sabbath's "Paranoid," and Deep Purple's "Machine Head." Of course, these are pretty much all heavy-metal albums, which Mr. Simels has made clear he doesn't like. He's entitled to his opinions, no matter how trashy. But to include Bruce Springsteen's "Born with the Runs" . . . he's got to be kidding.

BRYAN BORMANN
Medford, Wis.

● I enjoyed "Best Recordings of the Past Twenty Years," though I would have included Schnabel's long-ago Victor recordings of Beethoven's Sonatas Nos. 30 and 32. No indications were given about the availability of the records listed, so here's that information for the classical ones:

"Gabrieli and His Contemporaries" with the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis (was Deutsche Grammophon Archiv 73154) is no longer available, nor is Giuseppe di Stefano's *Melodie Celebri* (formerly Angel S-35837) or Richter's Columbia recording of Beethoven's

Appassionata (in M2L 272). The Durufé Requiem disappeared from Schwann, along with the rest of the Epic classics, in the infamous Black Diamond Massacre, which also killed off CBS and Crossroads; however, the same recording is now available from Musical Heritage Society (MHS 1509).

All the others listed are still available under the catalog numbers given, but Schwann lists Nikolaus Harnoncourt as the conductor of the Telefunken Monteverdi Vespers, not Jürgen Jürgens. Their error?

As for recordings for the future, I'll take anything Rudolf Serkin wants to record, and the sooner the better.

DAVID PIERCE
Vero Beach, Fla.

Nikolaus Harnoncourt is the director of the Vienna Concentus Musicus, the instrumental group that participated in the Telefunken Vespers. Jürgen Jürgens conducted.

● Congratulations on an excellent twentieth-anniversary issue. As an avid rock-music fan I thoroughly enjoyed Steve Simels' choices of the past two decades' best recordings (perhaps I'm a bit biased since I have all but one of them). I do have one small complaint, though. Where are the Who? If the Who haven't made an album or two as important or as good as the two Rolling Stones albums listed, then I may lose my faith in rock and turn to disco. I suggest that Mr. Simels get out his copy of "Who's Next," put on *Won't Get Fooled Again* at top volume, and think about it for a while.

SANDY SHERRARD
Lewisburg, Pa.

● Just a few of the "best recordings of the past twenty years" that STEREO REVIEW's critics left out of their lists: Simon and Garfunkel, "Parsley, Sage, Rosemary, and Thyme"; Jefferson Airplane, "Surrealistic Pillow"; the Doors' debut album; Janis Joplin's "Pearl"; Sly and the Family Stone, "Stand"; Joni Mitchell, "Court and Spark"; Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young, "Déjà Vu"; the Beatles, "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band"; the original-Broadway-cast recording of *Hair*; the same of *Jesus Christ Su-*

perstar; the Who's "Tommy"; *Woodstock*, the original soundtrack; Santana's first album; the Buffalo Springfield's first album; James Taylor's "Sweet Baby James"; Stevie Wonder, "Innervisions"; Bob Dylan, "Highway 61 Revisited."

JACK LORD
Bethesda, Md.

● Some comments on "Best Recordings of the Past Twenty Years": First, I was delighted to see a Fritz Reiner/Chicago Symphony release listed (the Brahms Second Concerto, with Emil Gilels as pianist). Until recently I've felt that STEREO REVIEW's critics were giving his recorded legacy short shrift in terms of preferences in recorded performances. Brahms Third Symphony, Tchaikovsky's Sixth, *Scheherazade*, the *Pines and Fountains of Rome*, *Pictures at an Exhibition*, the Rossini overtures . . . the list could go on and on. With Reiner's brilliant sense of style and clarity, the (almost always) superb playing of the CSO, and RCA's good job of capturing the sound of pre-renovation Orchestra Hall, the Reiner/Chicago pairing is unbeatable 50 per cent of the time and at least very rewarding 40 per cent of the time. If the other 10 per cent of their recordings fail to come off for one reason or another, a 90 per cent rate of success is still mighty impressive by any standard.

Two things in the section disappointed me. One was Richard Freed's choices of chamber-music discs. All eight are of string quartets. Why no woodwind pieces? Why no brass works? Why no mixed ensembles? Wind music has been neglected long enough! (I am a professional bassoonist.)

My other complaint is about David Hall's choice of Stravinsky's own recording of *Le Sacre du Printemps*. I have heard many other performances and recordings of the work that made it sound much more convincing, and the level of orchestral playing is absolutely inexcusable. Far be it from me to praise technical perfection above all else, but that record sounds like a second rehearsal. I recommend the Boulez/Cleveland Orchestra version instead, which despite some odd ideas about tempo is about as good as they come. Too bad Reiner didn't record it!

WILLIAM B. SPENCER
Boston, Mass.

Stereo Generation

● My thanks to Larry Klein for his informative and amusing "I Remember Mono" in the February issue. I don't remember mono, so I was somewhat shocked at the trials and tribulations Mr. Klein and other early audiophiles had to go through to achieve stereo sound. We third-generation audiophiles owe them a great deal, for it was their consumer dollars that brought the audio industry to its present technological state. I'm looking forward to reading Larry Klein's "I Remember Stereo" in some future anniversary issue.

A.L. MCCLINSEY
Galesburg, Ill.

On the Road

● I don't mind when STEREO REVIEW's pop-music critics don't know the name of a back-

(Continued on page 10)

Only one direct-drive semi-automatic has a concrete advantage.



If you want the precision speed control of direct drive and the convenience of a turntable that shuts itself off, you can choose from many brands.

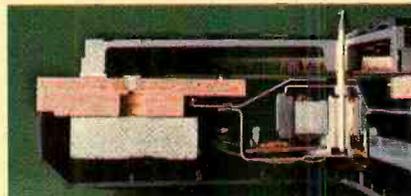
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up band or artist on a record, but when they don't know rock-and-roll history it's a bit too much. Case in point: in his February review of Tom Waits' "Foreign Affairs," Joel Vance said that *Jack and Neal* is a song about two men and a woman driving cross-country. Ha! Jack and Neal are no ordinary Joes. They are definitely Jack Kerouac and Neal Cassady (see Jack's book *On the Road*).

RICH BOBKIN
Edison, N.J.

The Original *Boris*

● Since the 1974 Metropolitan Opera production and the more recent release of the

Angel recording of Moussorgsky's original version of *Boris Godounov*, I have read perhaps two dozen critical opinions about its merits as opposed to the Rimsky-Korsakov version. Hooray for George Jellinek! He seems to be the only one in the bunch who brings ear and heart as well as eye and score to his criticism. Moussorgsky's orchestration is indeed effective in certain dramatic scenes, and these were least noticeably changed by Rimsky. But the original Polish scene is a disaster in the recording and a catastrophe in the theater (Mr. Jellinek used such kinder words as "inept" and "flat" in his February review of the Angel set), and the unrevised coronation scene sounds more like something got up for a Democratic or Republican national con-

vention than a scene from the pen of a titan of Russian music.

Authenticity is all very well when the original is greater than its "enhancement," as is exemplified by the emergence of Bizet's original *Carmen*, which the public has accepted. But most of the opera lovers I know (and *Boris* lovers in particular) are not very much taken with Moussorgsky's original now that they have heard it. Since we have it down on vinyl for posterity, let's consider going back to the Rimsky version so that we can continue to enjoy as well as appreciate this great opera. From his review, I suspect Mr. Jellinek would very much agree.

JOSEPH R. PEARCE
New York, N.Y.

"SPECTACULAR"

and other comments from audio critics about Ohm L loudspeakers:



Comments from Stereo Review:

"In summary, the Ohm L...is easily good enough to meet the sort of critical standards usually applied to much larger and considerably more expensive speaker systems.

The upper mid-range and high frequencies were virtually perfect. The balance between lows and highs was excellent...Blindfolded, one would never guess its compact dimensions." (Copyright 1977 by the Ziff-Davis Publishing Company. Reprinted from *Stereo Review*, June 1977, by permission. All rights reserved.)

Comments from The Complete Buyer's Guide to Stereo/Hifi Equipment:

"Ohm was among the first companies to take advantage of A.N.Thiele's research into vented loudspeakers, with some pretty spectacular results...In listening to the Ohm L, the immediate reaction is one of surprise at the openness of the sound. In addition, the frequency response of the speaker is exemplary. And the midrange, which is often a weak point in speakers of this size and price, is very good. There is no sense of strain, and voices sound utterly natural."



We invite distributors to write or telex: Ohm Acoustics Corp., 241 Taaffe Place, Brooklyn, New York 11205. Telex No.: 421228, Cable Address: Ohmcoustic, New York.

Sound Weather

● I definitely agree with Eric Beckus ("Weather or Not" in February's "Audio Q. and A.") that loudspeaker sound changes with the weather. I wouldn't say, as he does, that my speakers ever sound "terrible" as a result, but I do hear a difference (especially with piano recordings). On a dry, sunny day the sound is clearer and more brilliant, more "alive" somehow, whereas in damp weather it is, well, slightly damped.

After all, musical instruments change tremendously in sound according to the temperature and humidity of the air around them—and not just stringed ones but also some made of metal, such as a silver flute. So I'm sure that speakers too expand and contract as the weather changes, with some effect on their sound.

EDWARD J. SOWINSKI
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Music vs. Lyrics

● Peter Reilly's January review of Billy Joel's "The Stranger" was kind of strange in its own way. In a full-page review Mr. Reilly devotes just a few lines to the musical quality of the album; the rest is concerned with the lyrics. What is he reviewing here, music or literature? The music and lyrics of "The Stranger" are both excellent, but nevertheless I am more concerned about the music. The lyrics are like the icing on the cake!

GREG TETA
New York, N.Y.

Mr. Reilly replies: If Billy Joel's lyrics are "the icing on the cake," it's no wonder I like Doboshtorte so much. If Joel's reputation rested on his abilities as a melodist, he'd probably still be at home in Philadelphia, munching hoagies and dreaming wistfully of the Big Time. Aside from Piano Man and a few others, Joel's messages are principally in his lyrics—which are as good as anything now being written in pop music.

Boone Booster

● Thanks for Peter Riley's excellent February review of the Boones. I've been a fan of Pat's for twenty years and it's a pleasure to say that I'm now one of his daughter's as well. As a free-lance record producer, I am glad that Mr. Riley did not attempt to analyze (Continued on page 13)

As you would expect from LUX, our new R-1050 tuner/amplifier “is no mere run-of-the-mill receiver.”

When LUX Audio entered the U.S. audio scene in 1975, we brought with us a worldwide reputation for excellence. But since we also brought only our separate amplifiers and tuners, relatively few audiophiles could enjoy the special qualities of LUX performance.

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“Given its features, appearance and performance, this is no mere run-of-the-mill receiver. . . . The excellent audio-distortion ratings . . . obviously place it among the clearest of the currently available receivers. . . . every aspect of the receiver’s operation and handling was as smooth and bug-free as its fine appearance would suggest.”

Typical of the circuitry and features that result in such fine performance are these: a dual-gate MOSFET front end for high sensitivity, and a special linear-phase filter array for high selectivity, low distortion and wide stereo separation. The preamplifier section has a two-stage direct-coupled amp for accurate

RIAA equalization and a good phono overload capability. And the power amplifier is direct-coupled DC, in a true complementary symmetry configuration, for excellent transient and phase response.

Operating features include a six-LED peak level indicator for each channel; tape-to-tape dubbing with simultaneous listening to other program sources; turn-on time delay speaker protection plus automatic overload shutdown.

The sound of the R-1050 has been appreciated as much in England as here. For example, the British magazine *HiFi at Home* said: “. . . treble quality was light and delicate, something LUX engineers always seem to achieve. . . bass output seemed plentiful and strong, as is often the case with enormous, low impedance power supplies.”

If we’ve encouraged you to experience the sound of a LUX tuner/amplifier, your next step is to visit one of our carefully selected dealers. We’ll be pleased to send you the names of those in your area.

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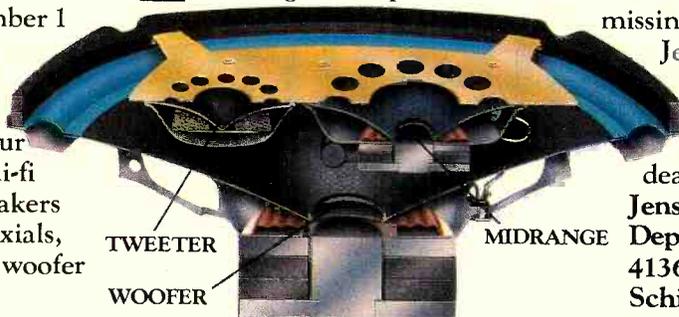
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the musical components of Debby's hit, *You Light Up My Life*. The song isn't mixed that well, and instrumentally it suffers from several flaws; but, as they say, it sure does play!

JOHN O. YODER
President, The King's Place Inc.
New Providence, Pa.

Ear Checks

● I enjoyed Ralph Hodges' essay on learning to listen (January "Audio Basics"), but a recent experience leads me to suggest another basic step in becoming a critical listener that is almost routinely neglected. For the past eighteen months I have been plagued with an infection in my right ear. When I noticed a marked contrast between the sound from the right and left channels of my system—the left seemed mellower and the right thinner—I assumed the problem arose from the right-ear infection and fiddled for hours with the tone controls and room acoustics trying to compensate. Unsuccessful, I arranged for a hearing test by a certified audiologist. I was bemused to discover that the hearing in my left ear is significantly poorer than in the chronically inflamed right one.

Happily, the hearing loss is not much more than is usual in my age bracket (mid-forties), but the relevant point is that after I knew the facts a few minutes spent adjusting the tone controls in the reverse direction of my previous efforts enabled me to balance the sound from my system so as to complement the limitations of my ears. I therefore suggest a periodic reminder to STEREO REVIEW readers that hearing is as much an individually variable faculty as any other sense. Seeking an objective evaluation of one's *auditory* equipment is well worth the time and trouble of anyone concerned with the joys of listening.

DAVID M. DOLL
Racine, Wis.

Rodgers Addenda

● Since I feel that the music in some of Richard Rodgers' less popular shows and other scores is equal or superior to that in the well-known ones, I was somewhat disturbed at James Goodfriend's list of recommended recordings on page 106 of the February issue. I'd like to suggest some additions, even though all but the first is currently unavailable (perhaps the record companies will take the hint and return them to the catalog). With Lorenz Hart: *On Your Toes* (Columbia Special Products CSP 2590); *By Jupiter* (RCA Victor LSO 1137). With Oscar Hammerstein II: *Allegro* (RCA Victor LSO 1099); *Me and Juliet* (RCA Victor LSO 1098); *Pipe Dream* (RCA Victor LSO 1097). Film: *State Fair* (Dot DLP 29011). Television: *Winston Churchill: The Valiant Years* (ABC/Paramount ABCS 387); *Androcles and the Lion* (RCA Victor LSO 1141).

HENRY E. SCHMIDT
Oakhurst, N.J.

Szell's Haydn

● In his review of the Colin Davis recording of Haydn's Symphony No. 99 in the January issue, David Hall says that his disc preferences for this work are Bernstein and Szell. If

I'm not mistaken, Szell never recorded No. 99, only Nos. 93-98. And if he did record it, Mr. Hall is mistaken in saying that it is still available.

ROBERT BALLENGER
New York, N.Y.

Music Editor James Goodfriend replies: Fifty-fifty, Mr. Ballenger. Szell did record No. 99 (Epic LC 3455), but it is not now available.

James Taylor

● I was very pleased to see the January cover story on James Taylor, long one of my favorite artists. His album "J.T." shows that he

still has that mysterious "x" factor that holds his old fans while he keeps adding new ones. Author Rick Mitz deserves praise for his perceptive approach, but even more for not trying to pick Taylor apart. Nearly everyone who writes about him has tried to draw parallels between his shifting life style and the advances in his music, but any fan with some intelligence will respect the man's right to privacy. I don't want to analyze what makes James Taylor great and some other artist an also-ran. What's important is that he's got the pulse of contemporary music, and if he keeps his finger on it we're in for many more years of enjoyment.

RANDY HENN
Vernon, British Columbia

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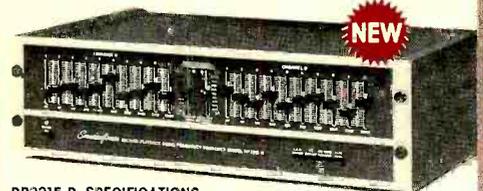
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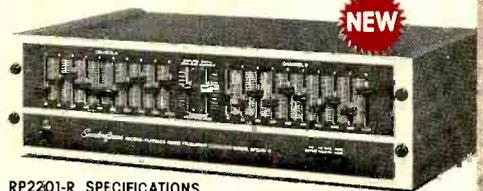
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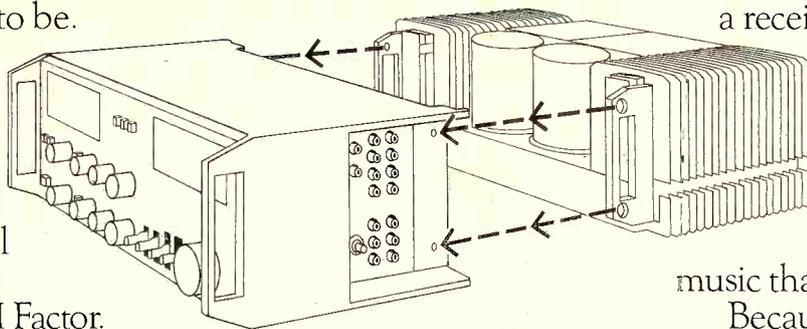
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TDK's Cassette Head Demagnetizer

□ TDK has announced two new cassette-deck accessories, a head-cleaning kit and a head demagnetizer. The HD-1 demagnetizer (shown) is built into a standard compact-cassette case. It is inserted into the deck like a regular cassette and the deck is then set in the play mode; when a red LED on the demagnetizer lights up, the demagnetizing cycle is complete. The HD-1 is powered by a miniature 1.5-volt cell. Price: about \$20.

The head-cleaning kit includes a stiff brush, a cleaning-pad holder, and a dentist-type mirror, along with a bottle of cleaning fluid and a package of cleaning pads. It is packaged in a plastic case the same size as a compact cassette, so it can be stored in a regular cassette rack. Price: about \$6.

Circle 115 on reader service card



Filters to Correct Audio Interference

□ For those with radio-frequency interference (RFI) problems or interference in their a.c. lines, Electronic Specialists offers various corrective filters. There are four basic types, designed for installation on the a.c.-line cord or at the antenna inputs (both FM and television), phono inputs, or speaker outputs. The phono filter is essentially a RC circuit that serves as a low-pass filter (to remove RFI); it is said to have no effect on phono-car-

tridge response. The speaker filter is similar but is designed for higher current levels. The antenna filters come in 75- and 300-ohm versions. Besides the a.c.-line filters to be installed on the line cord of the equipment (this type is supplied with its own line cord), units are available for wiring onto the equipment chassis. Prices for the Electronic Specialists filters range from \$7.95 for a pair of phono-input filters to \$17.95 for a three-prong plug-and-socket line filter with surge-suppression circuitry designed for a 350-watt load. Write Electronic Specialists, 171 South Main Street, Natick, Mass. 01760.

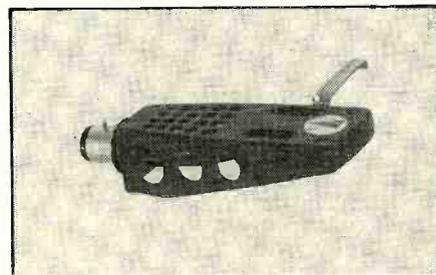


BIC's Indoor FM Antenna

□ BIC is introducing a new indoor FM antenna for high-fidelity systems. Called the "Beam Box," it is shaped and sized like an electronic component (it's about the size of the average integrated amplifier) and contains several dipole antenna elements that afford the user a choice of antenna directionality plus passive-filter circuitry for selectively passing the desired FM frequency to the receiver or tuner. The antenna elements are four aluminum bars arranged in an "X." A switch electrically connects and disconnects them to provide, in effect, four different antenna orientations. For the passive circuitry there is a wide- and narrow-bandwidth switch that operates in conjunction with a tuning dial for fine-tuning the filter. In the "wide" mode the antenna's output contains all FM signal frequencies; the tuning dial sets the center frequency of a resonant LC filter circuit that is switched into the signal path when the bandwidth switch is set to "narrow." This limits the antenna output to a frequency band 3 MHz wide, centered on the desired FM-station channel. Gain in the narrow-band position is -5 dB referenced to a standard dipole.

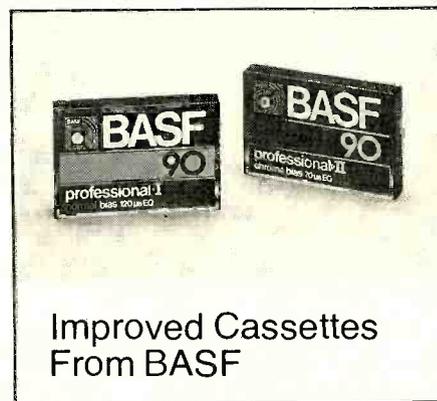
The Beam Box has both 300- and 75-ohm outputs, and the standing-wave ratio in the narrow-band mode is 1.5 to 1. It measures 4½ x 14½ x 14¾ inches and weighs 8½ pounds. A 44-inch length of 300-ohm antenna line with spade-lug connectors is provided. Price: about \$90.

Circle 116 on reader service card



Audio-Technica's "Universal" Cartridge Head Shell

□ Audio-Technica's Model AT-N is a cartridge head shell designed to fit many European and virtually all Japanese tone arms. It is intended for audiophiles who use more than one phono cartridge and interchange them frequently; users can mount all their cartridges on individual head shells and change cartridges simply by switching head shells. The AT-N is a standard light-weight cut-away design with a finger lift on the side. Price: \$5.95. Write Audio-Technica U.S., Inc., 33 Shiawassee Avenue, Fairlawn, Ohio 44313.



Improved Cassettes From BASF

□ BASF has announced the introduction of its new Professional I and II cassettes, the former utilizing a ferric and the latter a chrome tape. The Professional I tape is designed to operate optimally at the recording-bias level common in most Japanese cassette equipment. Thus, it is claimed to provide improved performance with the majority of popular cassette machines.

The Professional II chrome cassettes are claimed to offer advantages in noise level and high-frequency response over other chrome-biased formulations. Prices for the Professional I series are \$3.29 (C-60), \$4.79 (C-90), and \$6.29 (C-120); Professional II cassettes list at \$3.49 (C-60), \$4.99 (C-90), and \$6.49 (C-120).

Circle 117 on reader service card

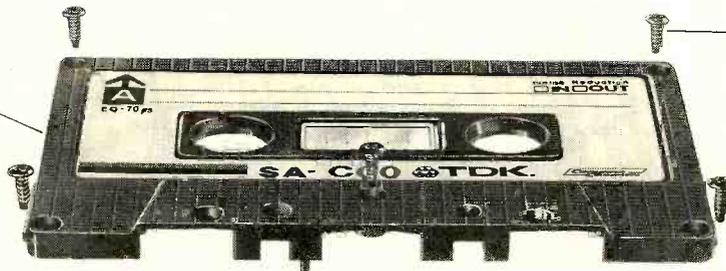
(Continued on page 18)

To get a superb performance, you need a precision machine.

To command a great performance, a cassette shell and cassette tape must be engineered to the most rigorous standards.

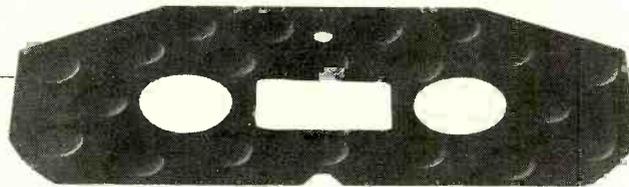
Which explains why we get so finicky about details. Consider:

Precision Molded Cassette Shells—are made by continuously monitored injection molding that virtually assures a mirror-image parallel match. That's insurance against signal overlap or channel loss in record or playback from A to B sides. Further insurance: high impact styrene that resists temperature extremes and sudden stress.



Five-Screw Assembly—for practically guaranteed warp-free mating of the cassette halves. Then nothing—no dust or tape snags—can come between the tape and a perfect performance.

An Ingenious Bubble Surface Liner Sheet—commands the tape to follow a consistent running angle with gentle, fingertip-embossed cushions. Costly lubricants forestall drag, shedding, friction, edgewear, and annoying squeal. Checks channel loss and dropouts.

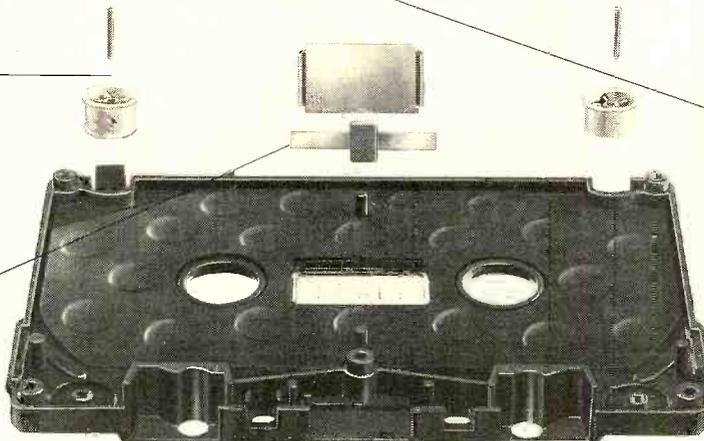


Perfectly Circular Hubs and Double Clamp System—insures there is no deviation from circularity that could result in tape tension variation producing wow and flutter and dropouts. The clamp wedges the tape to the hub with a curvature impeccably matched to the hub's perimeter.



Head Cleaning Leader Tape—knocks off foreign matter that might interfere with superior tape performance, and prepares the heads for...

Tapered, Flanged Rollers—direct the tape from the hubs and program it against any up and down movement on its path towards the heads. Stainless steel pins minimize friction and avert wow and flutter, channel loss.

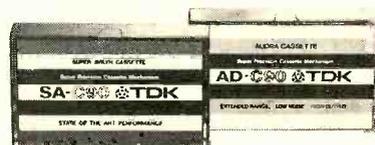


Resilient Pressure Pad and Holding System—spring-mounted felt helps maintain tape contact at dead center on the head gap. Elegant interlocking pins moor the spring to the shell, and resist lateral slipping.

Our famous SA and AD Tape Performance—two of the finest tapes money can procure are securely housed inside our cassette shells. SA (Super Avilyn) is the tape most deck manufacturers use as their reference for the High (CrO₂) bias position. And the new Normal bias AD, the tape with a hot high end, is perfect for any type of music, in any deck. And that extra lift is perfect for Dolby tracking.

TDK Cassettes—despite all we put into them, we don't ask you to put out a lot for them. Visit your TDK dealer and discover how inexpensive it is to fight dropouts, level variation, channel loss, jamming, and other problems that interfere with musical enjoyment. Our full lifetime warranty* is your assurance that our machine is the

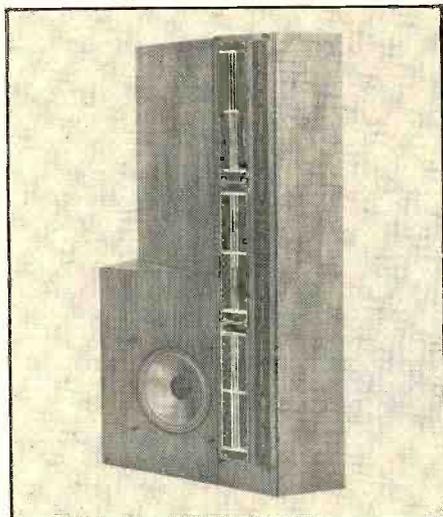
machine for your machine. TDK Electronics Corp., Garden City, N. Y. 11530. Canada: Superior Electronics Ind., Ltd.



The machine for your machine.

*In the unlikely event that any TDK cassette tape ever fails to perform due to a defect in materials or workmanship, simply return it to your local dealer or to TDK for a free replacement.

New Products latest audio equipment and accessories



Infinity's New Top-of-the-line Speaker System

□ The Quantum Reference Standard is Infinity System's new top-of-the-line speaker system. It makes use of Infinity's "electromagnetic-induction" drivers for both the mid and high frequencies. The familiar electromagnetic induction tweeters (EMIT) are now joined by mid-range drivers, called EMIRM (electromagnetic-induction ribbon mid-range) of similar design. These mid-range units employ a low-mass Mylar diaphragm suspended in a magnetic field; the diaphragm has an aluminum ribbon bonded to it that serves in place of a voice coil. The QRS has three of these mid-range units arranged in a 5½-foot vertical column; they radiate both front and rear. It uses twenty EMIT units, thirteen on the front baffle and seven on the rear of the enclosure. The front-mounted tweeters are arranged vertically next to the mid-range units. The woofer is a 15-inch version of the Infinity/Watkins dual-voice-coil woofer mounted in a sealed enclosure. Crossover frequencies are 100 and 4,000 Hz.

The QRS cabinet is a modular design; the woofer enclosure is isolated from the baffle that supports the mid- and high-frequency units. This baffle-board is connected, with piano hinges, to two side panels that can be swiveled to the rear through as much as 90 degrees (they are not normally set this far back in use). These panels can be used to alter the stereo imaging, since their positioning changes the system's dispersion pattern at mid frequencies.

The frequency response of the QRS is rated at 18 to 32,000 Hz ± 2 dB. Response drops 2 dB at 60 degrees off-axis on either side of the baffle. The system is meant to be bi-amplified; suggested minimum inputs are 150 watts per channel for the woofer and 100 watts per channel for the mid- and high-frequency units. Infinity provides an active crossover to

be used with the amplifiers. Nominal impedances of the woofer and mid- and high-frequency units are 4 ohms. The QRS has dimensions of 6½ x 4 x 2 feet and weighs about 325 pounds. The speakers, sold in pairs, are handmade and must be specially ordered. Price: \$6,500 per pair.

Circle 118 on reader service card



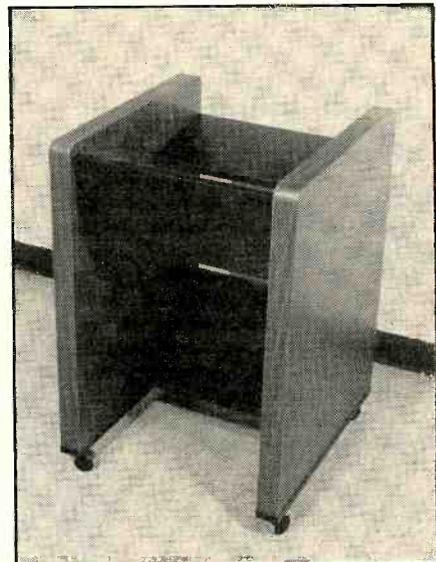
Motional-feedback Woofers in Acoustique System

□ Acoustique 3A International—or 3A for short—a loudspeaker manufacturer headquartered in Montreal, has introduced its Triphonic system: a bass module constructed to look (and serve) as a coffee table plus two small mid-range and high-frequency "satellites." The bass module consists primarily of four "acoustic-pressure-feedback" woofers and the associated feedback electronics, as well as a 150-watt mono power amplifier. The module accepts the output of the regular system power amplifier and routes it through a two-way dividing network; frequencies above the bass crossover point (which is adjustable from 80 to 150 Hz) are directed to the two satellite speakers, while the bass portion of the signal goes to the woofer circuitry. The two bass channels are combined after the crossover and the resulting mono signal is amplified from its attenuated form by the Triphonic's power amplifier, the output of which drives the four 10-inch woofers. These drivers are governed by a motional-feedback system, employing circuits that sense the motion of the voice coils and use the result to develop a "correction signal" that is fed back to the amplifier inputs to improve the linearity of the bass-reproducing system. An analog computer in the feedback path alters the correction signal to make it representative of true acoustic-pressure response. The bass module has

adjustments for the output level of the woofers as well as the input sensitivity of the mono amplifier. It also has a built-in microphone that can be used in conjunction with a pink-noise source to balance the acoustic outputs of the bass module and the satellites. Each satellite speaker is a three-way system with a 5-inch lower mid-range, 2-inch dome upper mid-range, and a cobalt-ribbon tweeter.

The frequency response of the complete Triphonic system is rated at 20 to 40,000 Hz ± 3 dB. Bass distortion is under 1 per cent for a sound-pressure level (SPL) of 92 dB at one meter. The woofers will develop between 86 and 100 dB SPL with a 1-watt input at 1 meter (their sensitivity is adjustable). The satellites produce a 94 dB SPL at 1 meter with a 1-watt input. Distortion of the satellites is rated at under 0.5 per cent. The entire system can be driven by an external amplifier with as little as 15 watts per channel, since this power is used only to drive the satellite speakers. The bass module measures 14 x 35 x 30 inches and is available in several finishes: black Chinese lacquer, walnut, and maple. The two satellites measure about 18 x 8 x 4 inches and are finished to match the bass module. Price of the complete system: about \$1,300. Other small speaker systems can be substituted for the 3A satellites at the user's discretion.

Circle 119 on reader service card



Rack-It Industries' Equipment Cabinets

□ Rack-It Industries has introduced three new equipment cabinets, two for housing electronic components and one for tape machines. The two electronic-equipment cabinets are each about 46¾ inches high and 18 inches deep; one model has adjustable shelves for positioning non-rack-mounting

(Continued on page 20)

AR DOES IT AGAIN. INTRODUCING THE LIQUID COOLED SPEAKER.



Designing a great loudspeaker system is truly an engineering challenge. Solutions don't come easily.

But every so often...

And that's been AR's secret; a quarter-century of innovation and engineering concepts which have influenced speaker design world-wide. Acoustic suspension. The dome high-range speaker. And now, the liquid-cooled, high-range speaker.

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AR generate a lot of heat. The entire system's power-handling capacity depends in part on whether or not this heat can be dissipated.

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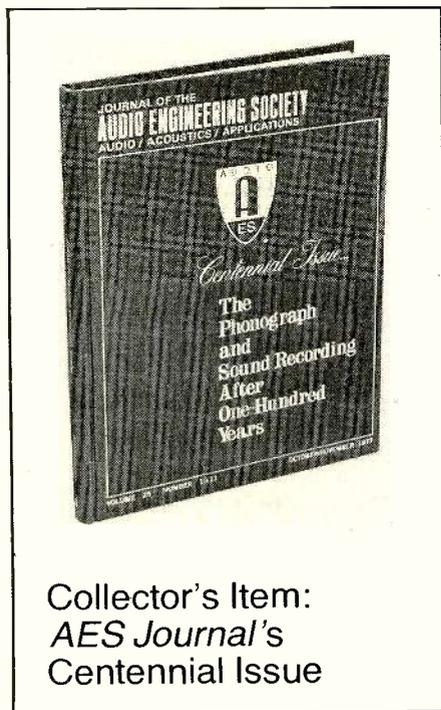
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New Products latest audio equipment and accessories

equipment, the other has a standard 19-inch width and tapped screw holes for rack mounting. The shelving cabinet has three shelves (plus top and bottom panels) and can accommodate equipment up to 24 inches wide (its exterior width is 27 inches). The rack-style cabinet holds a stack of equipment up to 38½ inches high (this corresponds to twenty-two standard 1¾-inch EIA rack spaces); exterior width is 22 inches.

The tape console (shown) will support any open-reel tape machine in a semi-horizontal position. Underneath the deck platform is an additional shelf for storage. Dimensions are 33 x 24 x 24 inches. All three cabinets have walnut-finish Formica side panels and are mounted on 2½-inch ball-type casters. Shelves are constructed of ¾-inch birch plywood. Price: \$180 each.

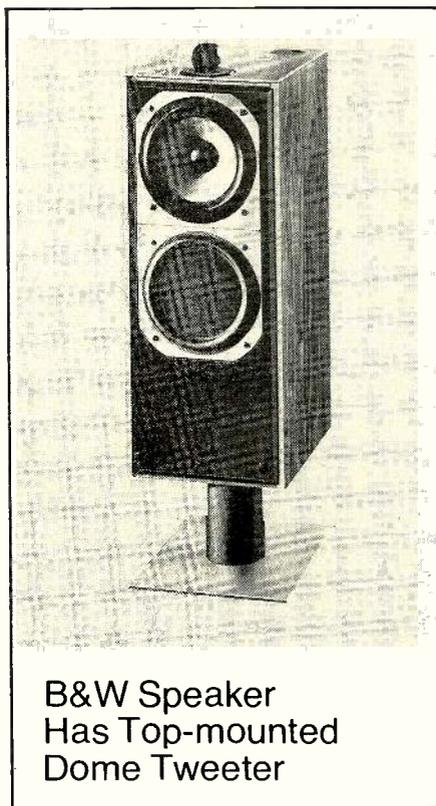
Circle 120 on reader service card



Collector's Item: AES Journal's Centennial Issue

□ The Centennial Issue of the *Journal of the Audio Engineering Society*, covering October/November 1977, is being offered to the general public. The oversize 335-page issue contains a wide range of review articles on all aspects of audio. Articles are grouped into the general areas of Historical, Technology, Industry, Innovations, and Individuals in Audio. Each of these major sections of the issue includes from three to thirteen articles authored by such well-known industry figures as Harry F. Olson and Robert Moog. Illustrations, both photographs and drawings, are plentiful. A sampling of article titles includes: "Emile Berliner, Eldridge Johnson, and the Victor Talking Machine Company," "Record Manufacturing: Making the Sound for Everyone," "Home Music Reproducing Equip-

ment—Performance and Styling," "The Graphic Arts and the Record Industry," "The Audio Engineer—Circa 1977: What Does He (or She) Do?" and "Electronic Music." The issue also contains a listing of the recordings donated to the White House Record Library by the RIAA. It is available from Special Publications, Audio Engineering Society, 60 East 42 Street, New York, N.Y. 10017. Price: \$20 hardcover, \$8 soft-cover.



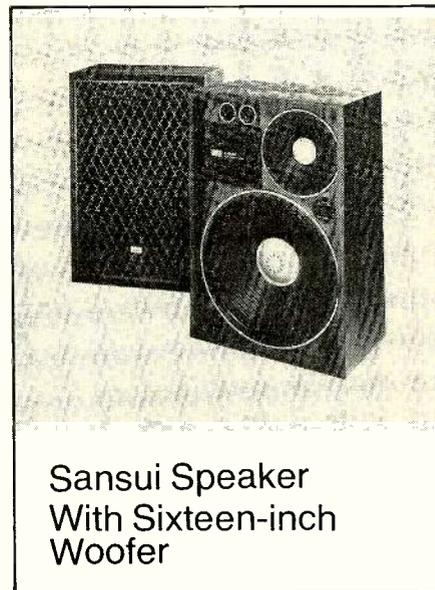
B&W Speaker Has Top-mounted Dome Tweeter

□ B&W's new DM-7 is a two-way loud-speaker system utilizing a 2-inch hemispherical dome tweeter and an 8-inch active woofer with an 8-inch passive radiator. The tweeter is mounted on top of the enclosure on a special molded base intended to alleviate diffraction problems. Designed for high power handling and rapid transient response, it is a high-sensitivity driver with a resistive attenuator designed to accept large inputs. The woofer and tweeter cross over at 3,000 Hz. The DM-7 has a control that allows the user to select one of several response contours provided by "weighting" circuits. The cabinet, constructed of 1-inch laminated particle board, is mounted on an 8-inch pedestal; the speaker baffles are molded plastic.

The on-axis frequency response of the DM-7 is 50 to 20,000 Hz +2, -3 dB. Response is flat within 2 dB through a lateral angle of 40 degrees and a vertical angle of 10 degrees. Harmonic distortion is under 1 per cent from 40 to 20,000 Hz for a 95-dB sound-pressure-level output, which the speaker produces with

a 10-volt input (equivalent to 12.5 watts into 8 ohms). Minimum recommended amplifier power is 50 watts per channel, and the speaker may be used with amplifiers rated as high as 200 watts per channel. Fuses are provided both for the system as a whole and the tweeter alone. The DM-7 measures about 35½ x 10¾ x 14½ inches and weighs about 66 pounds. Price: \$49.

Circle 121 on reader service card



Sansui Speaker With Sixteen-inch Woofer

□ The SP-X9000 from Sansui is a new four-way bookshelf-size speaker system employing a 16-inch woofer in a bass-reflex enclosure. Other drivers include an 8-inch mid-range, two horn tweeters with 6 x 2-inch mouths, and two 1¾-inch horn-loaded "super tweeters" with Mylar diaphragms. Crossover frequencies are 1,000, 6,000, and 10,000 Hz. The system has a three-position level control for the tweeters.

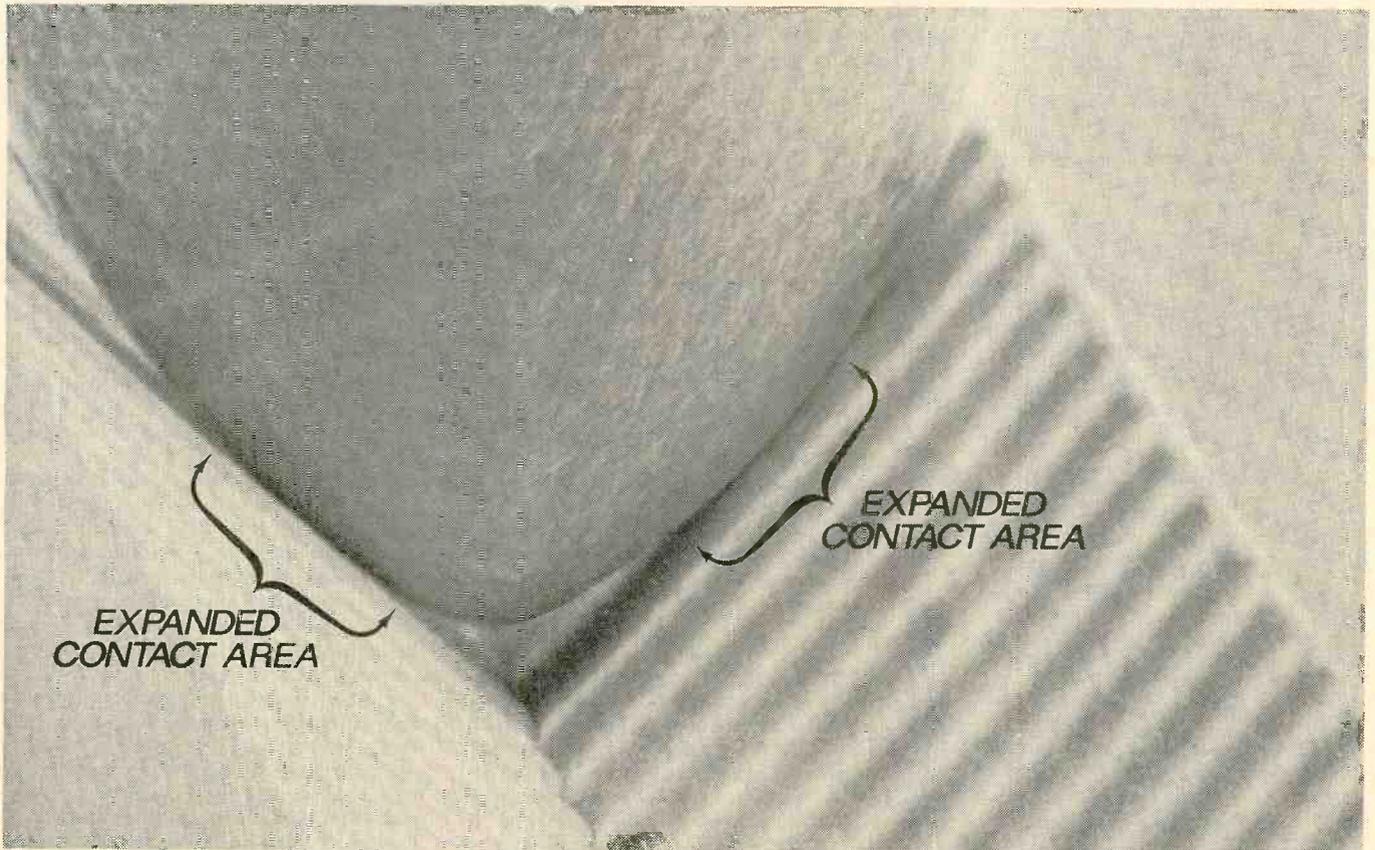
The SP-X9000 has a frequency response of 25 to 23,000 Hz +5, -7 dB. A 1-watt input produces a sound-pressure level of 100 dB at 1 meter (this is very high efficiency). Maximum program power input is 220 watts per channel, and the nominal impedance is 8 ohms. Approximate dimensions are 26½ x 17¾ x 11 inches, and the speaker weighs about 47 pounds. The cabinet is finished in simulated-walnut veneer and has a hand-made grille. Price: \$350.

Circle 122 on reader service card

NOTICE: All product descriptions and specifications quoted in these columns are based on materials supplied by the manufacturer.

Recent fluctuations in the value of the dollar will have an effect on the price of merchandise imported into this country. Please be aware that the prices quoted in this issue may be subject to change.

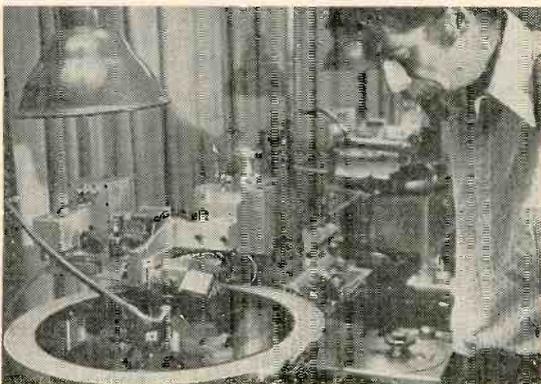
Better stereo records are the result of better playback pick-ups



© Stanton Magnetics, Inc., 1977

Scanning Electron Beam Microscope photo of Stereohedron Stylus; 2000 times magnification. Brackets point out wider contact area.

Enter the New Professional Calibration Standard, Stanton's 881S



Mike Reese of the famous Mastering Lab in Los Angeles says: "While maintaining the Calibration Standard, the 881S sets new levels for tracking and high frequency response. It's an audible improvement. We use the 881S exclusively for calibration and evaluation in our operation."

The recording engineer can only produce a product as good as his ability to analyze it. Such analysis is best accomplished through the use of a playback pick-up. Hence, better records are the result of better playback pick-up. Naturally, a calibrated pick-up is essential.

There is an additional dimension to Stanton's new Professional Calibration Standard cartridges. They are designed for maximum record protection. This requires a brand new tip shape, the Stereohedron®, which was developed for not only better sound characteristics but also the gentlest possible treatment of the record groove. This cartridge possesses a revolutionary new magnet made of an exotic rare earth compound which, because of its enormous power, is far smaller than ordinary magnets.

Stanton guarantees each 881S to meet the specifications within exacting limits. The most meaningful warranty possible, individual calibration test results, come packed with each unit.

Whether your usage involves recording, broadcasting or home entertainment, your choice should be the choice of the professionals... the STANTON 881S.



For further information write to Stanton Magnetics, Terminal Drive, Plainview, New York 11803

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CIRCLE NO. 18 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Tape Talk

By Craig Stark



Demagnetizer Danger

Q. Will demagnetizing the heads in the tape part of an all-in-one compact system damage the other sections, such as the tuner, turntable, and phono cartridge? Most "power" demagnetizers warn about keeping other equipment at least 2 to 3 feet away while demagnetizing the tape heads. Does this mean I can't use one?

CINDY LEACH
Fryeburg, Maine

A. So long as you're careful and follow the correct procedure, I don't think you need have any fear about using a plug-in, a.c.-powered head demagnetizer (also called a "degausser") on the tape heads in your compact system. I've used the most powerful of the hand-held degaussers on all sorts of machines, even in rather close proximity to other equipment, with no ill effects. But care and correct procedure are necessary.

First, be sure your system is turned off so that no transistor in the area will be trying to amplify the intense 60-Hz "signal" being radiated by the demagnetizer. That could cause damage.

Second, remove any tapes to at least an arm's length away from any place the demagnetizer will be (especially as it is turned on or off—see below). The back end of my degausser is recommended as a bulk eraser for cassettes, and while not many models are that strong, this is an obvious precaution.

Third, if the tip(s) of your demagnetizer unit are not already covered by a rubber or plastic material, put some plastic electrical tape over them to prevent the possibility of scratching the faces of the tape heads.

Fourth, hold the demagnetizer about an arm's length away from the recorder (or anything else susceptible to magnetic fields) when you turn it on (or off). At the moments of turn-on and turn-off the current surge is many times greater than when the demagnetizer is operating normally, and close proximity to a head, especially at turn-off, can impart a magnetic polarization far greater than the one you're trying to get rid of!

When it's turned on, slowly bring the degausser up to the tape heads, guides, and capstan(s), then slowly move it up and down the exposed faces. Slowly withdraw it to arm's length before turning off its power. In the

process, don't bring it near VU meters or phono cartridges—you don't want them demagnetized. Be assured, however, that the field from the demagnetizer will be concentrated in the immediate vicinity of its pole tip(s), so if you're more than a few inches away from other components that you don't want to demagnetize, they won't be hurt. Just remember to get the demagnetizer physically well away from the deck before you turn it off.

The whole operation should take less than a minute. Professionals routinely "demag" their heads daily and also before starting any important mastering session. For the home user, about every 8 to 12 hours of running time is enough—about as often, in other words, as you'd expect to clean flaked-off tape oxide from the heads. Don't neglect the routine demagnetizing chore, however, for a magnetized head will permanently erase the high frequencies on a treasured tape in a single pass.

Tape and Hum Fields

Q. Because of crowded conditions, I have to store my tapes quite close to my recorder. Will the electromagnetic fields from its motors harm my recordings?

VINCENT P. MANDAGLIO
North Plainfield, N.J.

A. I've received quite a few inquiries along these lines, often asking about dangerous hum fields around amplifier transformers, tape-deck motors, and, in one case, a furnace motor! Certainly a strong a.c. field will erase magnetic recordings—that's precisely how a bulk eraser works—and fields of lesser magnitude can effect partial erasure and an increase in print-through. But just where you can safely draw the line and forget about any danger may depend on the specific design of the motors, transformers, etc. in question. A toroidal power transformer, for example, creates much less of an external electromagnetic field than a conventional transformer much smaller in size.

You can draw some comfort from the fact that every time you double the distance between the source of an external field and your tapes, the field strength at that distance is one-fourth its previous strength. Further, since external hum-inducing fields represent both a

loss of efficiency and a potential source of consumer complaints, hi-fi equipment manufacturers usually make an effort to eliminate them.

Also, you can use a tape recorder as a rather reliable "hum sniffer." (You'd obviously need to borrow a second machine to check on your own recorder's motors, however.) Just put your deck's controls in "play" mode (using the "pause" control, if necessary) at a volume level that, if you were playing back a tape, would represent a rather loud but still endurable listening level. If your deck has removable head shields, remove them. Then move the deck itself around in the vicinity of suspected sources of electromagnetic fields. If you hear an increase in the hum level, you've found a field. You can establish the hum field's limits by moving the tape deck away again until the hum drops back to its minimum level. It would probably be wise to store your tapes at least that far away from the hum source (whether that turns out to be your own recorder or some other electronic or electrical device).

Headphone Mismatch

Q. I recently bought a pair of high-quality headphones, rated at 600 ohms, for tape monitoring. When I plug them into my recorder's headphone jack, however, they give me less than half the volume I get with my old 8-ohm phones. I wrote the tape-deck manufacturer, and he says I need a 600-ohm matching transformer. Is this true, and, if so, could you please explain?

PAUL BOUVIER
Blackwood, N.J.

A. Since my own tape deck has exactly the reverse problem of yours (it thrives on 600-ohm headphones but won't handle the normal 8-ohm audiophile variety), you certainly have my sympathy! Where you made your mistake, I fear, was in assuming that a "professional" 600-ohm impedance was automatically better than a "home" 8-ohm impedance. The impedance of a headphone, however, has nothing to do with its quality (some manufacturers make the same headphone in 8-ohm and 600-ohm models), but relates, instead, to the kind of headphone circuit in the tape deck that is suitable for driving it. Since audiophiles almost universally use low-impedance (8-ohm) headphones, the amplifier stage designed for them in a consumer deck will be built to deliver its maximum power only into a low-impedance load. Hence the loss in monitoring volume that you have experienced.

A small "audio-output" transformer designed for transistor circuits and having an 8-ohm secondary and a 500- to 600-ohm primary could be connected in reverse to match the output of your tape deck's headphone jack to the higher impedance of your headphones. Stancor, Triad, and UTC make such transformers, but you'd most likely have to obtain them through an industrial electronics supply house or, alternatively, through a professional audio dealer. The difficulty is that if you get a transformer good enough in quality to match the performance of the headphones, it's likely to cost nearly as much as a new pair of high-quality 8-ohm phones, and you'll need two transformers—one for each channel! You'll have to decide if it's worth the trouble.

Misleading Specs?

Q. I've noticed that equipment manufacturers seem to rate their products in whatever way is most convenient for them (but not necessarily for the prospective user). For example, a manufacturer may measure the signal-to-noise ratio at +6 dB but the frequency response at -20 dB. Isn't this misleading? Why not record complete sets of data at both 0 and -20 dB?

ED HORST
Cleveland, Ohio

A. If you'll look at the graphs in STEREO REVIEW's test reports on recorders, you'll find that Hirsch-Houck Labs does measure output vs. frequency ("frequency response") at both 0 and -20 dB. However, there is substantial fall-off in treble response (especially with cassettes) at the higher output level (0 dB) because the tape, and not necessarily the tape deck, is being driven far beyond its capacity. At speeds less than 15 ips, therefore, it is standard practice to rate frequency response with a sufficiently low-level signal to insure that the tape is still within its linear range.

Whether or not this is "misleading" depends somewhat on how much information you expect a specification to convey. The frequency-response spec of a tape recorder is a little like the one-watt frequency-response rating of an amplifier—which is usually far wider than its bandwidth at full power output, but which nevertheless represents the typical performance of the device in practical use.

What I find more misleading is the almost universal practice of saying "±3 dB" when what in fact is meant is "+0, -6 dB."

Exercising Tapes

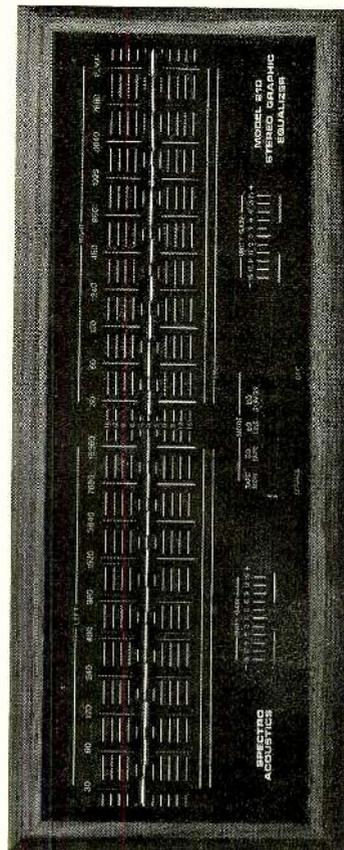
Q. I have a large collection of tapes. Should I make a point of playing them all through regularly? Will they deteriorate if played only once in a while? If you do suggest making sure to play them regularly, would putting them through fast-forward serve the same purpose of prolonging tape life?

BEVERLY WESTMAN
Victoria, British Columbia

A. Playing your tapes through occasionally from end to end is a good idea, since the "exercise" involved will dissipate any tensions within the tape pack that may have developed over time (and reduce print-through). The need for occasional stress relief of this kind was much greater years ago when most tapes used an acetate-base film that expanded and contracted quite considerably with seasonal temperature and humidity changes. With modern tapes that use a polyester base material, you really needn't exercise them any more often than you wish to hear them—so long as you keep your tapes at room temperature and moderate tension.

That warning about moderate tension is important, however, for one of the worst things you could do to your tapes would be to run them through on fast-forward (or rewind) and then store them for a long period of time. The fast-winding modes impose high and uneven stresses on the tape pack that, over time, can indeed ruin a tape. If you expect not to use a tape almost immediately, therefore, always leave it in a played, not rewound, condition.

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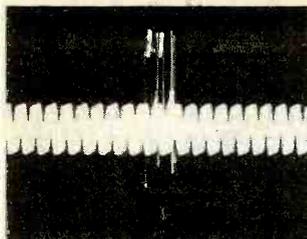
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Actual, unretouched photo of an oscillograph test.

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You're hearing fingerprints now through your speaker system. Instead of the sound your precious discs are capable of. And no vacuum record cleaner, brush-arm or treated cloth will remove them. None.

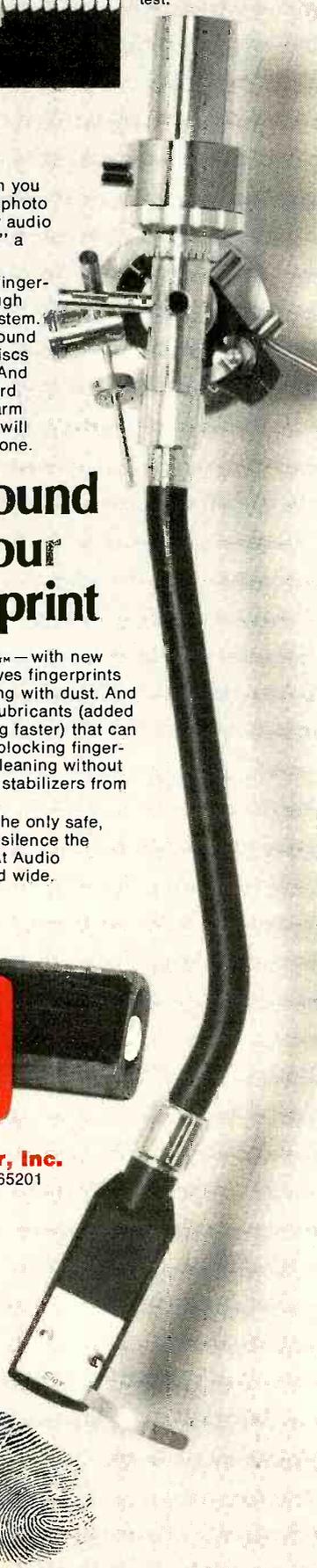
The sound of your fingerprint

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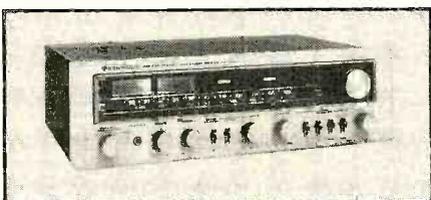
Audio News Views and Comment

AUDIO IN LAS VEGAS

THE Winter Consumer Electronics Show (WCES) was held this year in Las Vegas, Nevada, the first and second weeks of January. Traditionally, the trade-only winter show has been on a much smaller scale than the summer one held each June in Chicago, and it has featured a conspicuous diversity of non-hi-fi products such as calculators, watches, electronic games, and portable radios (the summer show, on the other hand, looks more and more like a hi-fi exhibition every year). However, the new site with its expanded facilities evidently inspired audio manufacturers to an unprecedented level of participation, and there were a number of significant new-product introductions. Some highlights:

● **Receivers.** At 270 watts per channel, the Pioneer SX-1980 is now the world's most powerful receiver. But since Pioneer representatives at the show predicted that its output capability would be surpassed by some other manufacturer at almost any moment, it is evident that the power race is still on. Three other receivers, ranging from 185 to 80 watts per channel, were also introduced by Pioneer. The SX-1980 has a "nationally advertised value" of \$1,250. The others are quoted at \$900, \$700, and \$550.

Sansui is up to 220 watts per channel with its latest addition to the G Series, the G22000, which has a power-amplifier section that detaches for installation convenience. Ken-



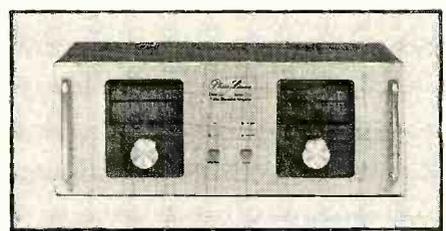
Kenwood KR-6030 Receiver

wood's receiver introductions numbered three: the KR-6030, KR-5030, and KR-3090, at 80, 60, and 26 watts per channel, respectively. Prices are \$500, \$400, and \$250. Sony's STR-7800SD (125 watts per channel) incorporates Dolby noise reduction for FM and a newly developed low-noise transistor in its phono section. Sherwood's two latest, the S-110CP (100 watts) and S-75CP (70 watts), come with credentials testifying to the performance of each individual unit. Sanyo now has receivers providing 120 (Model JCX2900K) and 85 (Model JCX2600K) watts per channel, priced at \$570 and \$470, respectively. And Philips is now providing black front panels for four existing models, all of which bear a "1" suffix to indicate the new look. The Class-G series of Hitachi receivers has been expanded by the addition of the SR 804, rated at 50 watts per channel continuous power (100 watts peak power) and priced at \$400.

● **Amplifiers.** The most provocative new amplifier at WCES was probably the Sony

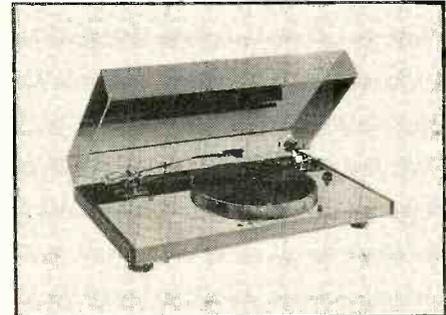
TA-N88, the pulse-width-modulation or "switching" amplifier the company has been promising for some time. Its 160-watt-per-channel rating in a package weighing a mere 24 pounds is good news, as is the low-silhouette rack-mountable exterior design of the device.

Phase Linear has reworked the appearance—and to some degree the electronics—of virtually all its products to stunning effect, as



Phase Linear Dual 500 Amplifier

well as adding to its line a 500-watt-per-channel power amplifier (\$1,350), a \$600 reverberation unit, and a new preamplifier. Marantz is making a vigorous attack on transient intermodulation distortion (presumably using the Ottala method of testing), and the result is the Model 300DC power amplifier, rated at 150 watts per channel. Hitachi has announced the introduction of two power amplifiers employing MOSFET output transistors. The HMA 7500 (\$500) and HMA 9500 (\$1,350) deliver 75 and 100 watts per channel, respectively. Another MOSFET amplifier (a new trend?), exhibited by Nikko, was rated at 80 watts per channel. And Cerwin Vega announced the formation of its "Metron Group," a line of electronics initiated by a \$500 preamplifier



Lux PD-444 Turntable

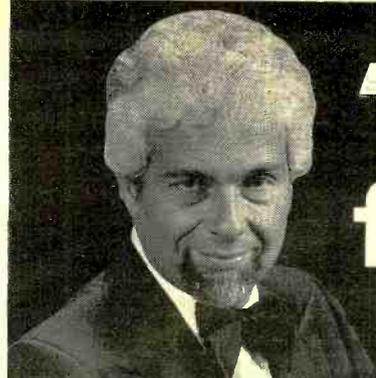
and a \$550 (125 watts per channel) power amplifier.

A large number of integrated amplifiers also made debuts at WCES. Strangely enough, they are lower in output capability, on the average, than the amplifier sections of some of the new receivers.

● **Record Players.** The Harman Kardon/Rabco ST-7 turntable has now become the ST-8, with a Hall-effect-controlled motor and a number of other modifications. Dual has a

(Continued on page 26)

"Direct" to you from Radio Shack



"I'm very impressed with the way Radio Shack has translated latest technology into good looks and precision record playing in the 400."

Peter Nero
Conductor/Pianist

Peter Nero



Realistic® Direct-Drive Automatic... Finest Turntable We've Ever Offered

Features two motors, damped cue/pause, S-shape tonearm, speed controls, \$39.95-value Realistic/Shure cartridge

The LAB-400 makes studio performance both affordable and convenient. The massive die-cast platter rests directly atop a 16-pole brushless DC servomotor. Platter and motor rotate at the same speed, either 33 1/3 or 45 RPM. No idler wheels, reduction gears or belts to alter the music that's stored in your record's grooves. The result: wow and flutter is less than 0.03% WRMS and rumble is better than -63 dB (DIN B). The fully automatic tonearm has an effective length of 8 1/16", for flawless tracking down to 1/2 gram. Handsome walnut veneer base with ultra-modern, slim design. Elliptical-stylus magnetic cartridge and detachable steel-hinged dust cover — significant "extras" that aren't extra. All for \$199.95.*

Fully Automatic Tonearm Operation

You need never touch the tonearm — just select record size and push start switch. An independent motor does the rest, cueing the arm, gently lowering it onto the record, and removing it at disc's end. With repeat mode, cue/pause, anti-skate and tracking force controls.



Two speeds with controls for ±4% pitch adjustment.



Neon light with strobe disc for checking speed.



Low-profile styling with precision shock-mounts to stop acoustic feedback.



These two credit cards honored at most Radio Shack stores. Price may vary at individual stores and dealers.

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This is the two-way miniature speaker system you can assemble yourself in about an hour with just a tube of glue and a staple gun.

With a 1" dome tweeter and 6" butyl surround woofer, the Speakerlab .1 puts out sound that makes other little speakers and lots bigger ones quake in their enclosures. In 4-ohm impedance it's just about the ultimate car speaker; in 8-ohms, you've got extension speakers that may sound better than your larger ones.

There are eight other Speakerlab kits you can make with your hands, too. Like our best all direct radiator system, the Three. It uses the same midrange and tweeter combination as the Point One.

And, to extend the bass in depth, clarity and volume, a 12" woofer that we build ourselves. With low-noise butyl rubber cone surround, efficient 40 oz. magnet, and distortion-free excursion capacity, it uncorks the bottom of any bass passage. At the sensible, direct-to-audiophile kit price of \$135 each.

Send for our 52-page color catalog and learn just how easy it is to save money by building your own. We design great speaker kits so you can afford great speakers.

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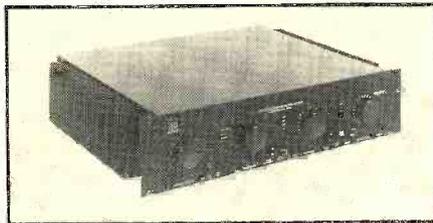
Audio News . . .

new direct-drive turntable, the 621 (under \$300), that offers fully automatic operation in a single-play format. A new direct-drive turntable line from Lux is highlighted by the PD-444, which has an unusually wide base that accommodates up to two tone arms, one of which can be a 16-inch model. List price is \$795. The Marantz 6350Q is also a direct-drive machine, with phase-locked-loop speed control referenced to a quartz-crystal oscillator. A less elaborate machine, the 6110, employs belt drive. Elac appeared again with a novel drive system using an idler to bring the platter up to speed rapidly and a belt drive that takes over while the record is being played. The Models 830 and 870 both have the feature.

● **Tape Equipment.** Sharp/Optonica continues to intrigue the cassette-deck market with its automated marvels. The company's latest, the RT-3388, not only counts selections on a cassette and cues in whatever program is desired; it also tells exactly what it's doing at all times via a liquid-crystal display that incorporates a 24-hour digital clock. Naturally, the clock is capable of functioning as a timer for recording. And all this, believe it or not, can be had for a mere \$350.

Fisher presented a \$250 cassette deck, the CR-4025, that can be operated by a hand-held wireless remote-control unit. Also showing new additions to their cassette-deck lines were Marantz, Sony, Sanyo, and Sanyo.

● **Accessories.** The new ADS Model 10 all-digital Acoustic Dimension Synthesizer is a time-delay/reverberation device (approximately \$1,000) that includes a built-in stereo amplifier (100 watts per channel) to drive the

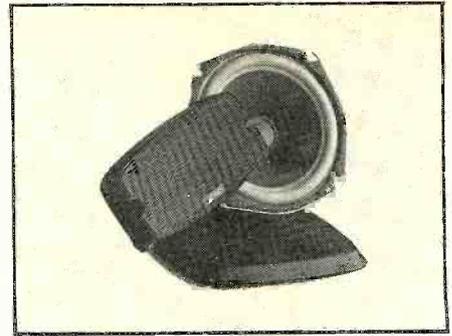


Model 10 Acoustic Dimension Synthesizer

rear speakers *plus* the rear speakers themselves—a pair of ADS L10's.

It seems that equipment racks and cabinets are becoming an especially popular product category, with Harman Kardon, JVC, Marantz, Mitsubishi, and Sansui joining such already established suppliers as Pioneer and Nakamichi. In some cases the racks are being offered exclusively as retail displays at the moment, but it's certain that they will be watched carefully to determine how much consumer interest they attract.

Record- and tape-care accessories are flourishing, encouraging fresh product introductions from Bib, Discwasher, Nortronics, Robins, Sound Guard, Metrotec, and VOR Industries, as well as bringing new faces such as Memorex (a complete new line of record accessories) into the field. Audio-Technica made another strong commitment to headphones with the unveiling of five new designs, two of which employ the electret-condenser principle. And Sony announced a new con-



Jensen Car Speakers

figuration for electret-condenser microphones resulting in a diaphragm of exceedingly low mass.

Car-audio products are proliferating beyond any hope of keeping up with them. EPI (Epicure) made a dramatic entrance at the show with their new automotive loudspeakers installed in a BMW, while Jensen presented a "separates" speaker array with a 6- by 9-inch oval woofer for a car's rear deck and mid-ranges and tweeters to be mounted in the door panels.

● **Speaker Systems.** At 120 liters, the AR9 is physically the largest speaker system ever offered by Acoustic Research. It has two 12-inch woofers, located for optimum relationship to the room boundaries, and three other drivers. In contrast, the new L50 is the least expensive three-way system available from JBL, with a 10-inch woofer, 5-inch mid-range, and 1.4-inch tweeter. The Infinity QRS ("Quantum Reference Standard") is one of the largest loudspeakers ever offered by any manufacturer. Its principal feature is three EMIT-type film-diaphragm mid-range units operating between 100 and 4,000 Hz. The crossover network is electronic, requiring two stereo amplifiers per speaker pair. Rank HI FI presented another film-diaphragm driver, the tweeter in the Model 3090, in its U.S. debut.

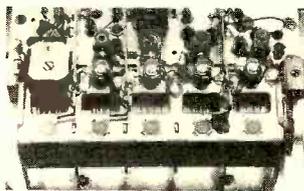
JVC is now designing speaker systems through a process of anechoic measurements from 3,000 (!) microphone positions; the resulting data undergo computer analysis that is said to predict the actual perceived sound of the system. The first JVC models benefiting from this are the three-way SK-700 (\$160) and the two-way SK-500 (\$100).

Certainly the show's most unusual loudspeaker was that demonstrated by a new company, Plasmatronics. A small quartz cell, open to the outside air through an aperture slightly larger than a postage stamp, is subjected to a high polarizing voltage that creates an environment of ionized (and incandescently hot!) gas. The application of an audio-signal voltage results in sound. The driver demonstrated operates at frequencies above 700 Hz and requires a constant stream of helium bled into the cell from a pressurized tank. The manufacturer says that the standard tank of helium is good for about 300 hours of listening time. And, as an added attraction, the driver glows while functioning with a lovely violet hue that many will find at least as interesting to watch as some standard TV fare. The woofer is a conventional cone driver installed in a large, sturdy enclosure.

This is just a slice of the first (and smaller) CES show. The summer monster will, as usual, be highlighted in these pages in the September issue.

—Ralph Hodges

Nikko Sounds as Professional as it Looks



5-gang capacitor

Alpha II amplifier.

One look at the front panel controls and it is obvious these units possess an unusual combination of creative features. Nikko engineers also developed the advanced technology you can't see.



Toroidal power transformer

Technology which makes these components truly professional in sound as well as appearance.

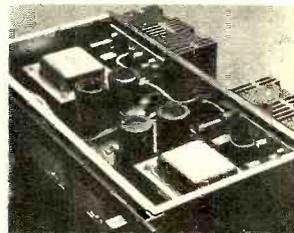
The advanced design 5-gang capacitor (highest rated capacitor available) gives the Gamma I tuner superior FM sensitivity (1.8 μ V) and selectivity (35dB wide, 85dB narrow). You get the signal you want, and only the signal you want to hear.

The thinline Beta I preamp employs high voltage FET's for exceptionally fast signal reaction and extremely high efficiency and linearity in the high frequency range. A toroidally wound power transformer reduces hum radiation while the phono overload rejection capability is one of the highest ever measured.

If you thought Nikko only makes rock-solid, quality-built receivers, we have some pleasant surprises.

For the discerning listener, we present a selection of rack-mountable stereo components from Nikko Audio's Professional Series. The Gamma I FM tuner, The Beta I preamp and the

Alpha II amplifier, totally independent, dual power supplies offer far greater dynamic range and lessened crosstalk than the usual split single power supply and significant headroom. (120 watts per channel, both channels driven into 8 ohms, from 15 Hz to 20 kHz with THD and IM distortion a phenomenally low 0.03%.)



Dual power supplies:

These are but a few examples why Nikko sounds as professional as it looks. Nikko designs and builds all its stereo equipment with dedication to total reliability, highest quality and superb performance. And the price is

always affordable. Take another look at the features and controls. Then visit your Nikko dealer and experience true professional sound.

Available with black or brushed aluminum front panel

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Audio Basics

By Ralph Hodges



DISC EQUALIZATION

In the earliest days of phono recording there was no deliberately introduced frequency equalization. With the mechano-acoustical recorders and reproducers in use at the time, studio pioneers were generally satisfied if their results sounded acceptable to listeners on the players that were then available. There was little or no discussion of such niceties as frequency balances. Then electrical recording arrived, and frequency equalization, easily achieved with simple electronic networks, soon came to be universally—and chaotically—applied.

The first disc-equalization scheme to come into widespread use was a straightforward low-frequency attenuation applied during recording. It was adopted for a very practical reason: by reducing the amplitude of the large side-to-side groove excursions that result from unattenuated low frequencies, it was possible to provide more grooves per radial inch of record surface, and hence longer playing time. Since the public was evidently more concerned with playing time than bass response, this compromise was accepted. And when electrical reproducers became common in homes, tone controls enabled listeners to restore at least some of the bass.

Well and good. But the next development in the recording arts was what might be called "creative equalization," a brand of sonic meddling that raises the hackles of music lovers even today. In other words, the men in the control room began to "adjust" the sound of the record in an effort to "enliven" it for more exciting reproduction on the majority of (usually mediocre) record players. Musical purists and owners of good sound equipment (these are not necessarily mutually exclusive) were understandably upset and began calling for fixed, standard equalization characteristics to be applied to all records worldwide. It took some time, but that is essentially what they got in the 1950's—about a dozen standards, as a matter of fact.

It seems that there were legitimate disagreements among the recording engineers working for the various companies as to the bass turnover and treble rolloff that would produce the best performance from the disc medium in respect to dynamic range, frequency response, noise level, and compatibility with the playback equipment of the day. Dur-

ing the early 1950's it was not uncommon for better equipment to have at least eight positions of record equalization available, and hi-fi magazines used to run charts showing what equalization characteristics were required for the proper playback of each manufacturer's product. In 1953 the recording industry was prevailed upon to accept a single universal standard for disc equalization. The one that applied to virtually all consumer records was known as the RIAA standard, and it is the same for 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ -, 45-, and 78-rpm discs, whether mono or stereo. The RIAA characteristic actually defines only the equalization for the *reproducer*—that is, the machine in the home—on the assumption that the record companies would adjust their disc-cutting equipment to provide the *inverse* of that equalization, so that the frequency balance would come out "flat" in the end. This was not the safest of assumptions, but it at least enabled record-player manufacturers to begin providing *some* sort of standard equalization.

The frequency-response "curve" of RIAA-standard equalization in reproduction comes close to being a straight line descending at a 6-dB-per-octave rate from 30 to 15,000 Hz. In effect, it provides for a bass boost and a treble rolloff. If the disc-cutting equipment is set up as specified, it will introduce a precisely complementary *treble* boost and *bass* rolloff. The bass rolloff is there for the old reason of yielding longer playing time per record side; the treble boost applied during cutting results in an improved signal-to-surface-noise ratio. The subsequent *treble rolloff* when the record



is played restores flat frequency response and drives the surface-noise level down.

The circuits for RIAA equalization in modern high-fidelity equipment act on the signal coming from the phono cartridge very early in the signal path—usually right in the first electronic stage after the phono-input jack of the receiver or amplifier. Equipment designers have become aware in recent years that the accuracy of the equalization and the way in which it is achieved by the circuit can be responsible for significant audible differences between two amplifiers or receivers that might otherwise be expected to sound identical. When a consumer compares equipment by ear, he will often perceive any audible difference (even a trivial one such as a slight and harmless variation in frequency response) as a *qualitative* distinction, and he will often make a buying decision on that basis. This poses a dilemma for manufacturers, for it is impossible for them to predict which way the consumer will decide under any given set of circumstances. As a result, much emphasis has been put of late on the "accuracy" of RIAA equalization, meaning that it must conform to the RIAA standard within a very small fraction of a decibel. If a consumer accepts the manufacturer's claim of accuracy, he will presumably interpret any difference he hears as signifying that the competition's product is less accurate, although there is probably no way he can determine this for certain without test instruments.

Unfortunately, as it happens, it is not especially easy to design a phono-equalization circuit that will be unflinchingly accurate with all cartridges. This is because the cartridge's *electrical* characteristics themselves tend to become part of the circuit, and, as you might expect, there is appreciable variation in these from cartridge to cartridge. In equipment test reports for STEREO REVIEW, Hirsch-Houck Labs checks the effect of several popular cartridges on the equalization accuracy of any phono preamplifier under test. Occasionally there is no change, but in the majority of cases the equalization is altered at the higher frequencies in a definitely measurable and sometimes audible manner. Rarely is this any cause for great concern; a slight turn of the treble control will almost always eliminate it. But it is further evidence of some of the trickier aspects of phono-preamplifier design, of which there are several more.

ANOTHER recent concern has been what to do with phono equalization beyond the range of frequencies (30 to 15,000 Hz) the RIAA standard specifies. It might at first seem logical merely to extend the equalization curve out along its existing 6-dB-per-octave slope indefinitely. However, although this is practical at the high-frequency end, it is not for the extreme low frequencies; the bass boost would become preposterous, ridiculously magnifying all the effects of turntable rumble and infrasonic record noise that we would actually like to be rid of entirely. So there is a real need for a bass-rolloff standard in playback equalization to be applied to frequencies below 20 or even 30 Hz. Such a standard has been proposed by a European industry organization (the IEC), but it has not yet been endorsed by the RIAA, despite reports to the contrary. As for STEREO REVIEW, we'd like to see a *better* standard than the present IEC characteristic, and we'll keep pushing for it. We'll also keep you in touch.

We admit that the Sansui G-9000 is not the world's only great DC receiver...



The Sansui G-9000 is, without doubt, a great receiver — perhaps the most advanced receiver available today. Never before has music reproduction been so clean, brilliant and true. Just listen to a pure power G-9000. You will actually hear its distinctly superior performance. Now, look at the specifications and you'll understand why.

The amplifier section (patent pending) is genuine DC; its frequency response extends all the way from 0Hz (DC) to 200kHz (from main-in, -3dB). It is also Direct Coupled (which means no capacitors in the signal path or negative feedback loop) for fastest response to all musical signals. The slew rate is extraordinarily high, 80V/μsec. — with a rise time of 1.4μsec.

Our sophisticated amplifier design virtually eliminates distortion. Total harmonic distortion is all the way down to 0.02% at full rated power; 160 watts per channel, min. RMS, both channels driven into 8 ohms from 20-20,000Hz.

Such outstanding specifications ensure superb music reproduction. And we at Sansui believe that your audio components must also provide great creative versatility and be a pleasure to operate. So through long months of research and testing, we've developed a receiver that is truly human engineered. The full complement of controls are beautifully positioned and outstandingly accurate. Just touch them and fall in love with the special "Sansui feel."

Why then, with the unmatched specifications, incomparable design, and the amazingly reasonable suggested retail price (\$1,050) of the G-9000, don't we at Sansui claim exclusive superiority for the G-9000? Because...



...there are four more great DC receivers. The Sansui super fidelity DC G-line.

G-8000

AUDIO SECTION

120 watts per channel, min. RMS, both channels driven into 8 ohms from 20Hz to 20,000Hz, with no more than 0.025% total harmonic distortion
 FREQUENCY RESPONSE: 0Hz to 200,000Hz (1 watt, main-amp., +0dB, -3dB)
 SLEW RATE: 76V/ μ Sec. RISE TIME: 1.4 μ sec.
 SIGNAL-TO-NOISE: 79dB (Phono)
 RIAA ACCURACY: \pm 0.2dB, 20-20,000Hz

FM SECTION

IHF SENSITIVITY: 9.3dBf (1.6 μ V)
 SIGNAL-TO-NOISE: 79dB
 DISTORTION: 0.07%
 SELECTIVITY: 80dB

G-7000

AUDIO SECTION

85 watts per channel, min. RMS, both channels driven into 8 ohms from 20Hz to 20,000Hz, with no more than 0.025% total harmonic distortion
 FREQUENCY RESPONSE: 0Hz to 200,000Hz (1 watt, main-amp., +0dB, -3dB)
 SLEW RATE: 60V/ μ Sec. RISE TIME: 1.4 μ sec.
 SIGNAL-TO-NOISE: 78dB (Phono)
 RIAA ACCURACY: \pm 0.2dB, 20-20,000Hz

FM SECTION

IHF SENSITIVITY: 10.3dBf (1.6 μ V)
 SIGNAL-TO-NOISE: 72dB
 DISTORTION: 0.13%
 SELECTIVITY: 75dB

G-6000

AUDIO SECTION

65 watts per channel, min. RMS, both channels driven into 8 ohms from 20Hz to 20,000Hz, with no more than 0.03% total harmonic distortion
 FREQUENCY RESPONSE: 0Hz to 200,000Hz (1 watt, main-amp., +0dB, -3dB)
 SLEW RATE: 58V/ μ Sec. RISE TIME: 1.4 μ sec.
 SIGNAL-TO-NOISE: 78dB (Phono)
 RIAA ACCURACY: \pm 0.2dB, 20-20,000Hz

FM SECTION

IHF SENSITIVITY: 10.3dBf (1.6 μ V)
 SIGNAL-TO-NOISE: 72dB
 DISTORTION: 0.13%
 SELECTIVITY: 75dB

G-5000

AUDIO SECTION

45 watts per channel, min. RMS, both channels driven into 8 ohms from 20Hz to 20,000Hz, with no more than 0.03% total harmonic distortion
 FREQUENCY RESPONSE: 0Hz to 200,000Hz (1 watt, main-amp., +0dB, -3dB)
 SLEW RATE: 56V/ μ Sec. RISE TIME: 1.4 μ sec.
 SIGNAL-TO-NOISE: 78dB (Phono)
 RIAA ACCURACY: \pm 0.2dB, 20-45,000Hz

FM SECTION

IHF SENSITIVITY: 10.8dBf (1.9 μ V)
 SIGNAL-TO-NOISE: 72dB
 DISTORTION: 0.13%
 SELECTIVITY: 70dB

There are four more Sansui pure power G-line DC receivers. All of them feature the same sophisticated Sansui G-9000 DC amplifier circuitry (patent pending) that produces specifications which essentially define the present state-of-the-art in audio engineering. And with these outstanding specifications the quality of music reproduction has reached a new high. When you listen to any Sansui super fidelity G-receiver, we're convinced that you will whole-heartedly agree.

While we won't reveal all of our design secrets (after all, many other manufacturers are already trying to imitate our DC technology),

we would like you to know some of the reasons why, with Sansui's G-receivers, your music can sound more true-to-life than ever it has before.

DC Response: A Matter of Time

Any amplifier whose frequency response does not go down to DC uses a "reactive" device — usually a capacitor — somewhere in its design. Every reactive device introduces a certain amount of frequency-dependent time delay (or phase shift) in the signal path, so the output signal is phase distorted and no longer looks exactly like the input signal. DC design, which does not use capacitors, completely eliminates this problem.

Negative Feedback & Dynamic Response

The conventional approach to the problem of distortion is what engineers call negative feedback. Too much negative feedback, however, can actually increase the dynamic distortion. This particular distortion is frequently called "transient intermodulation distortion" (TIM).

Because of their advanced design, the pure power DC amps in Sansui's G-series receivers need less negative feedback to reduce distortion to the vanishing point, so they do not exhibit the slow dynamic response that causes TIM. As you can see from the specs, the Sansui G-series receivers reproduce signals over an extremely wide frequency range with almost immeasurable distortion.

Slew Rate and Rise Time

Because the quality of Sansui's DC receivers is so much better than has ever been available in any receiver, conventional measurement techniques are insufficient for describing their performance. Electronics engineers are therefore using new measurement techniques that you will soon hear a lot about.

The most important new measurement is slew rate, which defines the maximum rate of change of the output voltage from an amplifier. The required rate of voltage change is greater for high frequencies. How well an amplifier can handle the high-frequencies at high power is an index of how well it can reproduce musical transients. Slew rate measurements, which show the maximum voltage change the amplifier can deliver in one microsecond (millionth of a second) thus indicate an amplifier's transient capabilities. Naturally, the more powerful the amplifier, the greater the required output, so the greater must be its slew rate specifications. Rise time defines how long it takes an amplifier to go from 10% to 90% of rated output. Naturally, the less time required, the better.

To achieve high slew rate and fast rise time, an amplifier's frequency response must extend far beyond the conventional 20,000Hz; which is why these Sansui G-series amplifier sections all have a frequency response that extends to 200,000Hz! Compare our measured slew rates, model for model, against those of other receivers and you'll know why you can hear the musical difference Sansui engineering makes.

Phono Performance

Phono signal-to-noise ratio (from 80dB in the G-9000 to 78dB in the G-5000) and RIAA accuracy (\pm 0.2dB, 20-20,000Hz, except for the G-5000) of the Sansui G-receivers are truly remarkable. Maximum phono input capability of the G-9000 is more than 330mV, achieved by use of a FET differential input circuit. This input-capacitor-less (ICL) design, used in all the G-receivers, is extremely stable and virtually free from distortion.

The Tuner (or FM) Section

The design of the FM section of the Sansui G-receivers is similar to that of our highly acclaimed separate tuners. In addition to the high sensitivity (8.7dBf [1.5 μ V] for the G-9000) and high selectivity (90dB for the G-9000) the FM sections of the G-series incorporate ceramic IF filters to achieve exceptionally low FM stereo distortion (0.08% for the G-9000). Our top-of-the line also offers user-selectable IF bandwidth for highest selectivity or lowest distortion.

Independent Power Supplies

For the cleanest possible reproduction, Sansui engineers designed the G-line with fully independent power supplies for each channel in order to prevent a surge of power in one channel from "robbing" power from the opposite channel. To minimize hum and noise we have used a dual-wound toroidal transformer (in the three most powerful models). The large, low-inductance oval capacitors in the G-9000 and the advanced design, low impedance electrolytic capacitors in the other G-models provide more-than-ample power reservoirs.

All in all, we at Sansui are convinced that if you really love music you will surely choose one of our pure power DC G-receivers. There are no other receivers available today that can offer you all these advantages: superior musical performance, sophisticated DC design, a full complement of controls and outstandingly beautiful styling. For the musical experience of your life, visit your franchised Sansui dealer today.



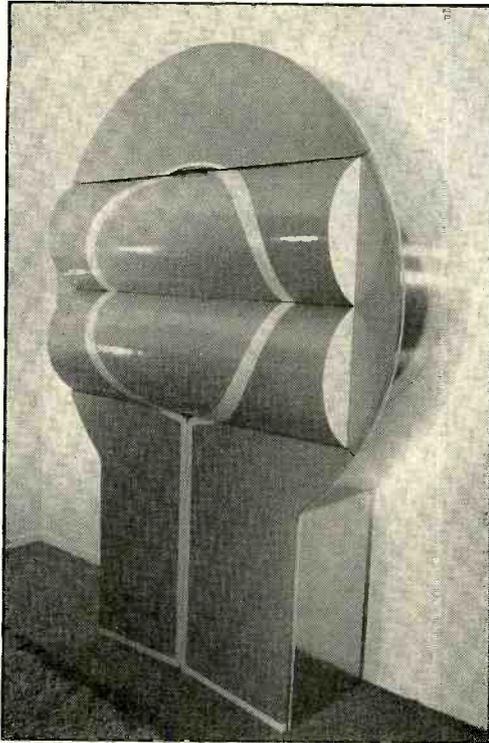
WOODSIDE, NEW YORK 11377 • GARDENA, CALIFORNIA 90247 • SANSUI ELECTRIC CO., LTD., TOKYO, JAPAN
 SANSUI AUDIO EUROPE S.A., ANTWERP, BELGIUM • IN CANADA: ELECTRONIC DISTRIBUTORS



Suggested retail prices: G-8000, \$900; G-7000, \$730; G-6000, \$600; G-5000, \$450. Simulated walnut grain cabinets.

Installation of the Month

By Richard Sarbin



IN designing a visually extraordinary installation for his home in Houston, Texas, Douglas Colin proved that plebeian equipment-storage problems can indeed find aesthetically noble solutions. Although it may seem whimsical, his unconventional cabinet design is both efficient and convenient. When not in use the unit serves as a striking piece of sculpture that is the focal point of the listening room.

Built of $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch plywood and finished with a high-gloss enamel, the console stands 7 feet high and measures 5 feet at its widest point. The curved side panels are made of $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch Masonite covered with brushed-chrome-finish vinyl; the resulting distorted reflections enhance the overall sculptural effect. The horizontal revolving-drum doors in the center—cut from 16-inch-diameter fiber tubing used for pouring concrete columns—are pivoted on ball bearings and balanced with counterweights to provide easy, finger-touch movement. The doors enclosing the record and cassette storage area at the base of the installation are double-hinged to swing out and back, clear of the cabinet edge. At the very top, the semicircular door to the open-reel tape stor-

age compartment is similarly hinged and also spring-loaded so as to open and shut with ease. The overall front design includes curved, cutout areas in both the top and bottom sections that serve as convenient door pulls.

THE highly graphic control panel, labeled with rub-on artist's letters, masks a basic rack-mount system consisting of moderate-price components. Appropriately shaped and sized openings were cut to accommodate the various dials and switches regulating program sources. Visible components are a Dual 1219 turntable, equipped with a Shure V-15 Type III cartridge, and a Sony TC 353-D open-reel tape deck. Mounted behind the control panel is a lineup of Dynaco equipment, assembled from kits, that includes a PAT preamplifier, an FM-3 tuner, and a four-channel synthesizer. The panel can easily be removed for access to these components. Two Dynaco power amps, a Stereo 120 and a Stereo 80, are installed in the rear of the console, which rests on heavy-duty casters so that it can conveniently be moved or turned away from the wall to get at the amps or wiring.

The synthesized four-channel sound produced by Mr. Colin's setup is heard through a pair of KLH Five speakers (front) driven by the Stereo 180 and two KLH Thirty-two speakers (rear) driven by the Stereo 80. Program sources besides FM include LP's and open-reel tapes recorded from FM broadcasts, with a strong emphasis on opera. As the two center slide-out drawers indicate, Mr. Colin is ready to begin collecting cassettes as soon as he carries through the planned purchase of a cassette deck (which he will install in a slot to the right of the turntable).

DOUG COLIN is a commercial artist, and he has here used his skills to create an outstandingly attractive, yet functional, home installation. Dimmer-control rim lighting outlines the console from the rear, and on the front is painted a perfect circle in school-bus yellow surrounded by white. The circle changes its apparent shape from different vantage points in the room—from 45 degrees off-axis it looks like a supergraphic mouth, leading Mr. Colin to deadpan that his installation, besides playing music, "makes a great conversation piece."

Audio Q. and A.

By Larry Klein



Stereo Separation

Q. The poor stereo separation in new discs that some readers have complained about is most likely the fault of their loudspeakers. I own a pair of true omnidirectional speakers (Design Acoustics D-12's) and the stereo image is clearly defined even if I stand within a foot of one speaker with the other 12 feet away. Older discs were mixed according to the loudspeaker characteristics of the time, and similarly today. A speaker's interface with the listening room produces acoustic effects not necessarily recorded on the disc.

PHIL HARDWICK
Lowrey AFB, Colo.

Q. Stereo records are not losing separation! It is just that producers are more accurately re-creating true spatial effects instead of ping-ponging sound across listening rooms as in the late Fifties. Recent recordings have an even spread of sonic localization. Good ears and headphones may be required to experience it fully, but with them it is evident. What's the fuss? As the Doobie Brothers say, listen to the music (not the separation).

R. K. FORTSON
Santa Clara, Ca.

Q. I have been grumbling about the new "wide-mono" LP's for quite a while. Years ago I accidentally hooked up a stereo cartridge with the hot and ground wires interchanged, which made no difference until I switched my amplifier to mono. Then any material that was at the same volume and phase in both channels cancelled and disappeared! I purposely left the wires wrong for a while because I found the results amusing: vocal discs became instrumentals, lead singers vanished, etc. I finally put them right because newer LP's often ended up with nothing left but reverb. Unlike the disc-quality problem, the record companies can't use "economics" as an excuse; it's just a matter of keeping their mixer controls in the right positions to ensure full stereo. Why don't they?

ALLEN DAVENPORT
Ogdensburg, N.J.

A. The stylus/groove drawings shown below will help explain what is happening. In (A), only the left-channel groove wall is modulated and the stylus is moved diagonally up and down. In (B), both the right and left groove walls are carrying information that has generally similar strength and phase. The resulting stylus movement is in the lateral

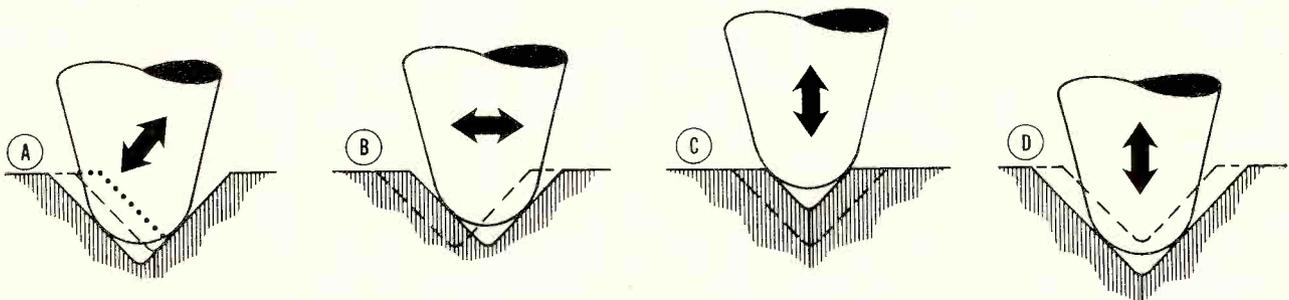
plane and the amplitude of the side-to-side swing is determined by the strength and the frequency of the recorded signals. The louder the signal and the lower the frequency, the greater the groove swing. And the greater the groove swing, the less playing time there is on a disc. Since loss of loudness and playing time are always obvious, while lack of low bass may not be, engineers (who are frequently forced to juggle such factors) tend to sacrifice bass in favor of a louder, longer-playing disc.

Perhaps at this point, some of my readers are getting a clue as to where all this is leading. Drawings (C) and (D) illustrate what happens when you have simultaneous strong signals in both channels that are not in phase with each other (for example, a loud saxophone on one channel playing against a loud bass on the other). The groove walls then advance toward and retreat from each other. The effect in playback of (C) is possible groove jumping or "sticking." However, for situation (D), the major problem is in the cutting of the master lacquer disc rather than in the playback of the pressing. When the vertical (out-of-phase) modulation of the signal on the master tape is too great as a result of excessive separation, it may cause the cutter to lift off the surface of the master lacquer or, on the other hand, to cut so deeply that it hits the lacquer's aluminum base material. Either would require recutting the lacquer.

The solution is either to limit the separation during mixdown or to reduce the signal level inscribed on the disc. In other words, there sometimes turns out to be an inverse relationship between the allowable loudness on a disc and its separation between channels. So, in a sense, it does turn out to be, in Mr. Davenport's phrase, an "economic" matter, simply because in general producers believe that louder records sell better.

Sound Taste

Q. Recently, I told a friend that I had built my own speakers from scratch. He immediately asked "How flat are they?" My question is this: are we getting so wrapped up in specs that we forget about our basic goal—good sound the way we like it? I spent over fifty hours building my ported speakers so I



Playback (and cutting) stylus motions for three different types of audio signal. In each drawing the dashed line represents the position of the unmodulated (no signal) groove wall and the stylus is shown in one of its full-modulation positions. In (A) the left-channel signal has caused the stylus to move diagonally downward; on the next part of the audio-signal cycle the groove wall will probably be in the position indicated by the dotted line. In (B) the

signal has caused the stylus to shift to the right without varying its depth. The shallowness of the cut shown in (C) and the depth in (D) are two results of strong, well-separated (that is, different or out of phase) stereo signals. To avoid excessive depth or shallowness in cutting the master lacquer disc for stereo records, engineers today often reduce the degree of separation between the left and right channels rather than cutting signal strength.

could have a lot of bass the way I like it. Now, I know a lot of "sophisticated" audiophiles are out for flat reproduction and take a dim view of coloring sound, but I like mine that way. Don't get me wrong; specs and test reports are definitely helpful, but one should always bear in mind that you're putting out money to have sound the way you like to hear it—not as somebody says it "should be."

IVAN DZOMBAK
Latrobe, Pa.

A. If Mr. Dzombak wrote about choosing shades of paint for his living-room walls or selecting a blend of coffee—or a wife—I would not argue with the subjectivity of his approach—although my tastes would probably differ. Everyone has a right to his own tastes, and "good" in that context is properly defined as that which satisfies. But there is a vital difference between sound production (as with a musical instrument) and sound reproduction (as with a hi-fi system). When the goal is to reproduce sound, then the reproducing elements must not add any special sonic characteristic of their own. If Mr. Dzombak prefers speakers that produce more bass than is in the original program material, that's his privilege. But I must point out that his speakers, by definition, are *not* providing high-fidelity reproduction. Fidelity to some original is what hi-fi is all about, and it apparently conflicts with Mr. Dzombak's taste.

For me, "good" reproduced sound, by and large, closely resembles sound that I might experience live. I prefer equipment that has flat frequency response because I find that such equipment is most likely to provide "good" sound the way I like to hear it.

Installation of the Month

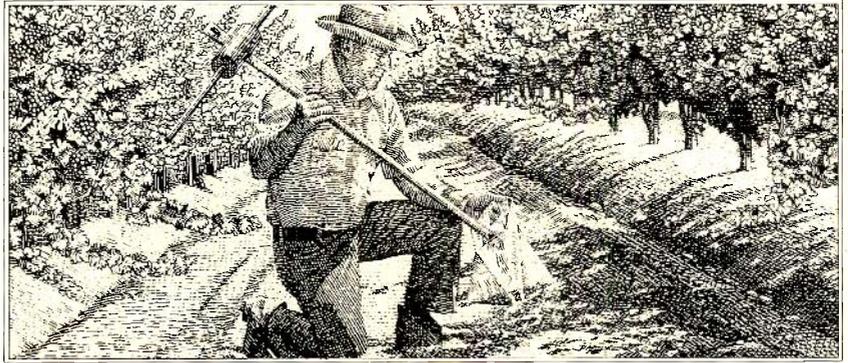
Q. I have noticed that STEREO REVIEW frequently runs an "Installation of the Month" feature showing the setups of audiophiles. I would like to know what you need in the way of photographs and information in order to consider showing my own installation.

CHARLES CUMMINGS
Palo Alto, Calif.

A. To answer Mr. Cummings and others who have inquired: any snapshot (color, black and white, or Polaroid) will be sufficient for us to make a preliminary evaluation of your installation. If it is judged acceptable, you will then be asked to submit a glossy 8 x 10 black-and-white print (or a negative from which one can be made). As for accompanying information, any past "Installation of the Month" can serve as a guide. In particular, we need details on the construction and special features of the cabinets (or whatever you've used), a complete and accurate list of the components, and a few personal notes, such as your occupation, audio background, and interests—musical and other. We also need your address and a phone number where you can be reached during business hours (these, of course, will not be printed).

Although we appreciate systems with well-chosen components, it is necessary to point out that "Installation of the Month" focuses on the *installation*—that is, the special approach taken to *house* the equipment—not the equipment itself. Address entries (with return postage) to Richard Sarbin, STEREO REVIEW, One Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016.

Fertilizing: Its importance in creating superior wines.



Fertilizing the vineyard is a vital part in the art of growing premium wine grapes. It is not a simple operation.

Its Importance

A healthy grapevine can thrive for 80 years or more. In fact, the older its stock, generally the better its grapes.

During the vine's lifetime its nutritional requirements will change from its earliest years—when it is being trained to the desired form for grape growing—to its later years—as it gradually matures into an established vine.

Thus, any fertilizer program that is to be complete must take into consideration both the vine's long-term needs and its immediate requirements.

Different Needs

Fertilizing is not a simple operation. We know that even within a single vineyard, there are no homogeneous soils. Soil textures can range from fine or coarse sand, to a very fertile sandy loam.

These different soils require different fertilizers in different amounts to compensate for deficiencies. As a result, we have kept a precise history of all the fertilizing experiences in our vineyards over the past 30 years.

We know exactly when, how much, and what kind of fertilizer has been applied to each of our vineyards during that time.

We know the results of those applications—and how long the treatment lasted—down to small problem areas only a few yards square and even individual vines.

One of the methods we use to gauge these results is core sampling—the extraction of a cross-section of earth to be analyzed for nutrients—or the lack of them. Above, you see a rendition of our core sampler being used.

We take samples at various depths down to four feet from any part of the vineyard which may show abnormal vine growth or visual deficiencies for comparison with samples from normal areas. These soil samples are delivered to our winery for immediate analysis. They will be analyzed and compared for available nitrogen, pH, organic matter, and other important elements in order to de-

termine the source of the problem and the type and quantity of fertilizer which is required.

Fertilizing As An Exact Science

There are two good reasons why we take so much care when it comes to fertilizing: under-fertilizing and over-fertilizing. Under-fertilizing greatly reduces vine growth and bud fruitfulness, whereas over-fertilizing can produce such exceptionally heavy leaf growth as to curtail bud fruitfulness and grape production.

These phenomena are the result of an imbalance of what is known as the carbohydrate-nitrogen level of the vine.

A high carbohydrate-moderate nitrogen level produces moderate vegetative growth, early wood maturity, abundant fruit bud formation and good fruit production.

This is what we look for in the Gallo Vineyards.

Petiole Analysis

In addition to normal soil analysis in our vineyards we also employ a test known as "petiole analysis."

The petiole is the stalk of a vine leaf. By taking a sample of it and analyzing it, we can determine the current nutritional status of the entire grapevine.

If we find that a particular area of one of our vineyards is weaker than the rest, we will immediately gather 200 or more petiole samples from that section—plus a like number from a healthier area of the same vineyard for comparison.

By analyzing the tissues of all these samples, we can readily and specifically determine if the weaker area has a deficiency of nitrogen, potassium, zinc, boron or some other vital mineral.

Our Solution

These are only a few of the many special steps we take in the Gallo Vineyards to try to grow the finest grapes possible.

It is only by such meticulous care along the entire chain of grape growing and winemaking steps that we can hope to achieve our goal:

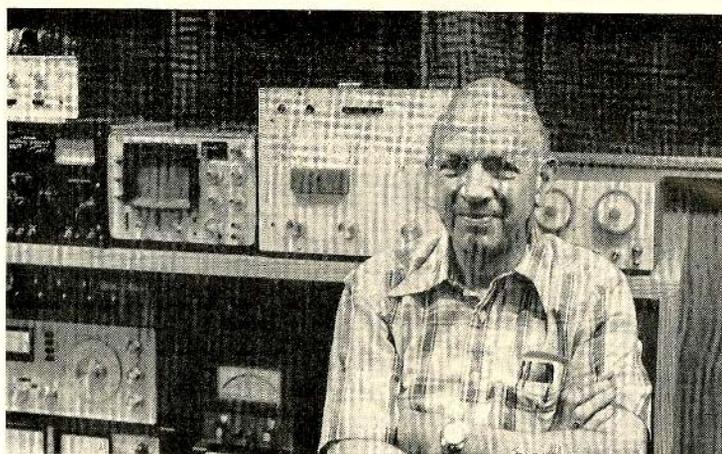
To provide you with the finest wines we can produce.

Ernest and Julio Gallo, Modesto, California

CIRCLE NO. 23 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Technical Talk

By Julian D. Hirsch



• The Testing of Tone Arms •

FOR purposes of listening or testing, phono cartridges and tone arms are inseparable. Neither can be used or evaluated without the other. At this time, separate tone arms are a relatively small part of the U.S. audio-component market, and almost all record players are sold with an integral tone arm. It seems logical to test them as a unit, and that is what we do whenever possible. In the rare instances when a tone arm must be tested separately, we mount it on a suitable turntable base.

To measure the performance of a tone arm, a suitable phono cartridge must be installed in it. Generally, record players come supplied neither with cartridges nor with recommendations for suitable cartridge models, leaving the choice up to the user. In our case, the problem is simplified because we need not be concerned with how the cartridge sounds (since *it* is not being tested), just that it is of good quality and is compatible with the characteristics of the tone arm.

If no suitable cartridge is on hand for testing at the same time a record player is to be tested, I usually install a Shure M95ED, whose compliance and tracking-force requirements are compatible with most record-player arms. It is also relatively easy to install and not unduly fragile. Since I am not trying to establish the performance limits of the cartridge, I use it at or near its maximum force—in this case 1.25 to 1.5 grams.

After unpacking the record player, I set it up according to the instructions furnished. In my opinion, the clarity and accuracy of setup instructions and the degree of ease in carrying them out are among the most vital characteristics of any product—especially a record player. An incorrectly mounted cartridge or an incorrectly adjusted tone arm can negate the most sophisticated engineering design. I assume that if I have difficulty understanding—or carrying out—the instructions, it is likely that the average consumer will also have problems.

One of the more critical arm/cartridge adjustments is the stylus overhang, which is the distance the stylus tip extends beyond the center point of the turntable platter. This is one of the key factors (together with the arm length and the cartridge offset angle) deter-

mining the tracking error of a pivoted tone arm. Since an overhang error of even 1/16 of an inch is excessive, some foolproof means should be provided for mounting the cartridge in the correct position for the specific arm.

A good mounting system might employ some sort of plastic gauge that fits on the shell and provides a positioning reference point. Equally good is a reference post or mark on the motorboard that the stylus will contact when the adjustment is correct. A reference mark on the side of the head shell or cartridge-mounting slide can also serve, but it requires more care to ensure proper alignment. Less convenient is a simplified form of stylus protractor, which is usually a piece of cardboard, printed with a group of parallel lines and a reference mark, to be placed over the record spindle. If the stylus position is correct, the edge of the head shell will be parallel to the lines when the stylus is placed on the reference mark. (This is essentially what we do when measuring lateral tracking error, but it is not as convenient for setting up an arm initially.) If the only guide to the user of the tone arm is a statement that the stylus should overhang the center spindle by some given amount, the manufacturer has been derelict in his duty, for it is then *impossible* to make the adjustment with sufficient accuracy to ensure optimum results.

ONCE the arm has been adjusted according to instructions, its tracking error is measured for record radii between 2 and 6 inches. We use a special protractor designed for this pur-

pose. The measurement requires that the arm headshell have a reference edge parallel to the cartridge that can be aligned with the parallel lines on the protractor. If there is no suitable reference, a visual “guesstimate” is required. Usually the tracking error can be measured within half a degree or less. Dividing this number by the radius gives the tracking error in degrees per inch. Since the distortion resulting from a cartridge’s deviation from perfect tangency to the record groove is directly proportional to this quantity rather than to the angular error itself, a simple specification of a tracking error in degrees, without specifying the radius, is meaningless.

NEXT, the vertical tracking force is measured and compared to what the tone arm’s own scale says it is. We use a Shure balance for this purpose, since it is easy to use and can be read to within 0.05 gram with ease. In the case of an automatic record changer, this measurement (at a 1-gram setting) is repeated with the arm raised to the height of a full stack of records, in order to determine whether the force changes significantly in this position. The change can be in either a positive or a negative direction, but if it does not result in a tracking force outside the correct operating range, it can be considered acceptable.

The electrical capacitance of the arm and signal-cable wiring (with the cartridge and shell removed) is measured with a Boonton Model 160-A “Q” meter. By measuring both the capacitance from each “hot” signal lead to ground (with the other channel shorted) and the combined capacitance of the two channels in parallel, it is possible to compute the actual capacitance to ground in each channel as well as the interchannel capacitance (which can affect the high-frequency channel separation of some cartridges).

The effective arm mass, referred to the stylus position, is measured with a special test fixture made for us by Shure Brothers. It is actually a small downward-facing cone loudspeaker whose voice coil drives the tone arm through a calibrated spring. When the speaker unit is driven from an oscillator whose frequency is slowly varied between 5 and 20 Hz, the entire arm will begin to move up and down at a resonance frequency determined by the

Tested This Month

•
Kenwood KA-7100 Integrated Amp
Technics SU-9070 Preamp
Viconik DD-8200 Record Player
Revox B77 Tape Deck
Altec Model Fifteen Speaker

effective arm mass and the spring compliance. The oscillator is tuned carefully to produce maximum amplitude of arm motion, and that frequency is noted. Given the known physical characteristics of the driver/spring, it is easy to compute the effective mass of the arm-and-cartridge combination.

Since the effective mass will be affected somewhat by the position of the counterweight, the measurement is best made (for comparison between arms) with a standard cartridge and vertical-force setting. This is another reason for our using the Shure M95ED and a force setting of 1 gram as references for arm-mass measurements. The 6-gram mass of the cartridge is subtracted from the computed mass to obtain the effective arm mass. If another cartridge is used, its mass is similarly subtracted (most cartridges have a mass between 5.5 and 6 grams). The probable error in the measurement is about 0.3 gram with a typical record-player arm mass between 17 and 20 grams.

THE accuracy and effectiveness of skating compensation can be measured in several ways, and there is no universal agreement on the best technique. I believe that antiskating should be set during the test procedure so that equal distortion is measured in both channels when playing a heavily modulated record. However, this leaves open the questions of what tracking force to use (with many cartridges, the effect of antiskating compensation is difficult to see above a certain vertical force) and what test record to use for the adjustment (since the amount of compensation required is also a function of recorded level—velocity—among other things).

One test disc we have used for some time has 1,000-Hz tones at the very high recorded level of 30 centimeters per second (cm/sec). Examining the waveforms from the two channels of the cartridge on an oscilloscope, it is easy to see the waveform distortion in the right channel when no antiskating is used. As antiskating is increased, the distortion decreases and eventually begins to appear in the left channel. The correct setting for *this* velocity is the one that gives equal distortion in both channels. Sometimes it is necessary to reduce the tracking force (modern cartridges being much better than those of a decade ago when the record was made) in order to see distortion in both channels simultaneously.

It can be argued that 30 cm/sec is an unrea-

sonably high velocity for such an adjustment. For this reason, among others, we currently prefer to use a record (issued by the German Hi-Fi Institute) that has 300-Hz tones recorded with amplitudes ranging from 20 to 100 microns (millionths of a meter). These correspond to velocities of about 4 to 19 cm/sec. In addition to being an excellent test of a cartridge's tracking ability (see our discussion of cartridge testing in the February 1978 issue), the signals on this record provide a very convenient way to set the antiskating. With no antiskating in use, at some velocity a distinct distortion will be heard from the right-channel speaker. Adding some antiskating will cause it to disappear, usually to reappear at the next higher velocity level. By repeating the process, one soon arrives at the correct antiskating setting for the particular tracking force in use, one that gives approximately equal distortion in both channels.

Either of the above methods will usually require a higher setting of the antiskating dial than the tone-arm manufacturer recommends (at least 1 gram higher than the tracking force). This does not necessarily mean that the arm manufacturer is in error, since there is no "right" or "wrong" in the matter of skating compensation. Some cartridge manufacturers, such as Shure, feel that the correct setting is that which gives equal wear on both sides of the stylus tip, and this requires less corrective torque than the equal-distortion condition. But the "wear" criterion is obviously one that is impossible to check quickly and nondestructively.

What about tone-arm resonance? The low-frequency resonance (determined by the effective mass of the arm-plus-cartridge and the stylus static compliance) is measured with a Nippon Columbia XL-7001-A test record. A band on this disc has a constant-velocity signal sweeping from 4 to 100 Hz. The amplified but unequalized output of the cartridge is plotted on our chart recorder. If there were no resonance, the trace would be a straight line sloping upward 6 dB per octave as the frequency increases. However, resonances are unavoidable in mechanical systems. Depending on the cartridge and arm characteristics, the bass resonance may take the form of a single or a double peak in the response. The amplitude of the resonance peak(s) can be anywhere from 3 to 10 dB above the ideal 6-dB-per-octave slope line and the frequency anywhere between 5 and 15 Hz.

To some extent, the resonance curve duplicates the information obtained from the arm-mass measurement (since either the arm mass or cartridge compliance can be inferred if one of these two quantities and the resonance frequency is known), but the measurement also shows the effectiveness of any damping or other anti-resonance measures.

There are other possible tone-arm resonances that are not so easily measured. Various torsional and flexural modes in the arm tube (shaft) can give rise to "glitches" in the measured response curve of a cartridge. These are almost invariably the result of a very high-"Q" mechanical resonance, which means that they span a very narrow range of frequencies. In fact, unless the graphic recorder is able to draw a curve at a very high speed, it can easily fail to reveal these sharp, narrow-range resonances. Fortunately, they seem to be just as difficult to excite when playing records. Unless the program has appreciable energy in the vicinity of the resonance frequency, the system will ignore the whole matter. I have never heard or seen any evidence that these high-Q resonances produce any audible effects.

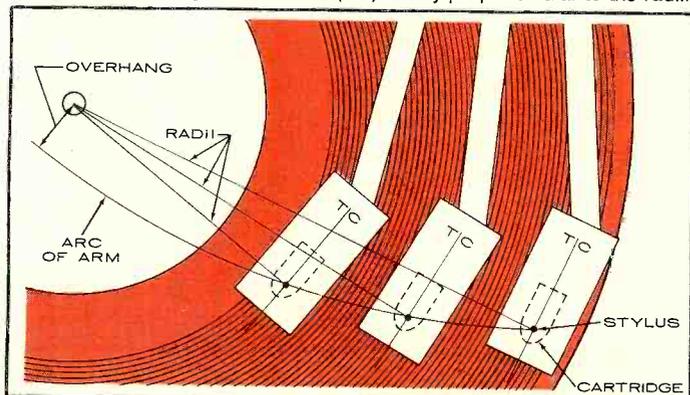
Certain tone-arm characteristics are best evaluated by actual use. The cueing device should raise the arm smoothly, with no bounce, and should lower it just as gently. And, as the pickup descends, it should not move outward under the influence of the antiskating torque. The handling "feel" of an arm is very important, especially in a non-automatic record player. The finger lift should be easy to hold, and the arm should not tend to "get away" from the operator.

By considering the measured and subjective qualities of a tone arm as a whole, we are usually able to decide whether it is just a reasonably competent arm (as most are), one so outstanding that we would like it in our own systems, or one that is so miserable that we cannot wait to ship it back. It is unlikely that any *one* measurement or characteristic will qualify an arm for membership in one of these three categories. Rather, it is the overall "feel" of the product that for me determines its value.

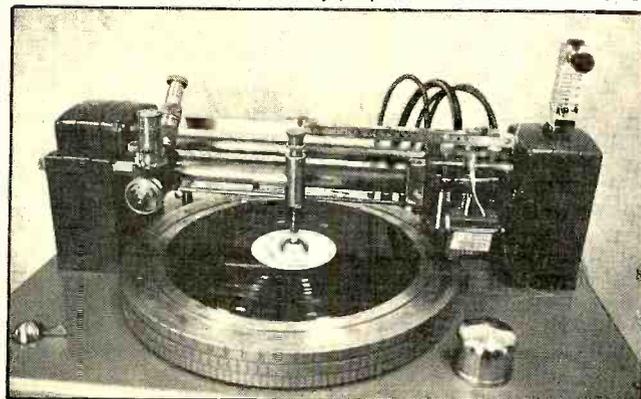
NEXT month we will discuss the testing of turntables, another silent (we hope) member of the record-playing team.

Test Reports Overleaf ▶

The geometry of record *playing* is complicated by the use of a tone arm that pivots in an arc. But a properly designed arm can still manage to keep the cartridge's centerline (TC) nearly perpendicular to the radii.



As illustrated by the cutting lathe below, record *making* involves a scribing device (the cutter head) that moves radially across the disc with its centerline always exactly perpendicular to the disc radius.



Equipment Test Reports

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories



**Kenwood KA-7100
Integrated Amplifier**

KENWOOD's new KA-7100 integrated amplifier is a moderate-price product with outstandingly low distortion specifications and ample control flexibility for a well-equipped hi-fi system. It is rated to deliver 60 watts per channel to 8-ohm loads from 20 to 20,000 Hz, with less than 0.02 per cent total harmonic distortion. The KA-7100 has separate power supplies for its two channels, fed by a common power transformer. The power-amplifier sections of the KA-7100 are direct-coupled.

The dominant feature of the front panel is the large volume-control knob near its center. It operates a thirty-two-position step attenuator whose detents are so light that one is hardly aware of their presence. The bass and treble tone controls are each eleven-position step controls, and the balance control is lightly detented at its center. Below these are level

switches for TONE DEFEAT, SUBSONIC and HIGH filters, and a 20-dB audio ATTENUATOR.

To the right of the volume knob is the TAPE switch, with positions for dubbing from one tape deck to another (but not back the other way) while monitoring the playback output from either deck and for conventional tape playback from either tape deck or a selected program source. The input selector has positions marked PHONO, TUNER, and AUX. Below are the loudness switch, with three positions marked OFF, 1, and 2, and the mode selector, with REVERSE, STEREO, and MONO positions. Completing the front-panel controls are the speakers switch at the upper left (for driving either, both, or neither of two pairs of speakers), the power switch, and a headphone jack.

In the rear of the amplifier are the various signal input and output jacks, plus a DIN socket duplicating one set of the tape-record-

er connections. The speaker terminals are insulated binding posts. The two switched a.c. outlets will take no more than 100 watts of accessory equipment; there is one unswitched outlet. The Kenwood KA-7100 is approximately 17 inches wide, 15 inches deep, and 6 inches high. It weighs 25.4 pounds. Price: \$300.

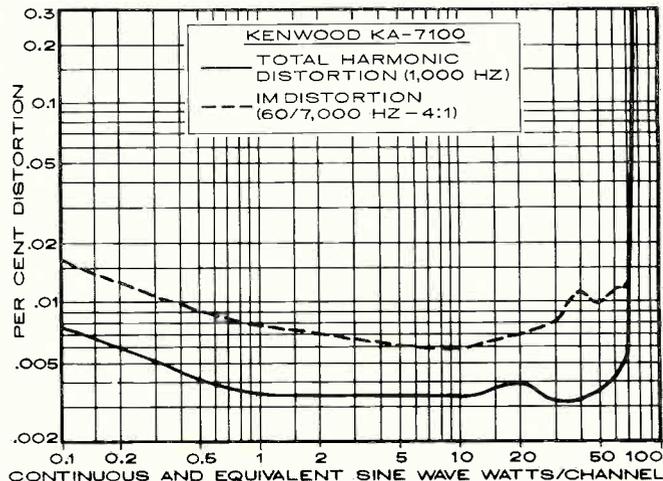
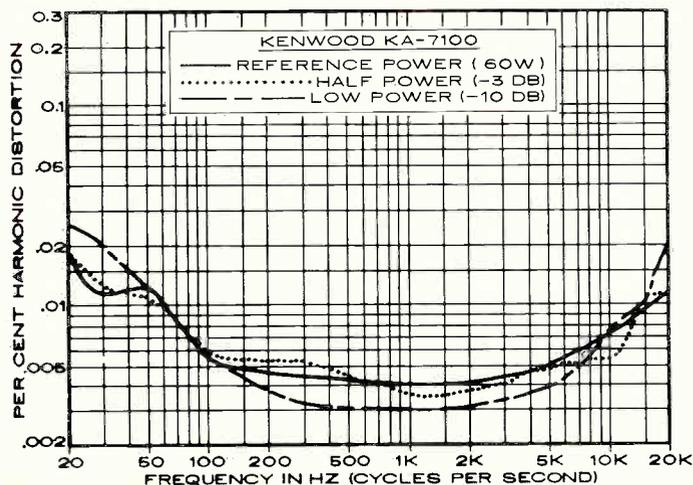
Ⓢ **Laboratory Measurements.** The FTC preconditioning period made the amplifier only moderately warm. Afterward, its outputs clipped at 72 watts per channel (at 1,000 Hz) driving 8-ohm loads. The 4-ohm and 16-ohm clipping levels were 95 and 46 watts.

The claimed low distortion of the KA-7100 was confirmed by a considerable margin. At 1,000 Hz, total harmonic distortion was between 0.003 and 0.004 per cent for all power levels from 1 to 60 watts, and it was only 0.0056 per cent at 70 watts, just before clipping occurred. The distortion also rose slightly at very low power levels, to 0.008 per cent at 0.1 watt. The intermodulation distortion (IM) was 0.006 to 0.008 per cent over most of the power range, increasing to 0.017 per cent at 0.1 watt and 0.012 per cent at 70 watts.

This low distortion was not limited to middle frequencies. At the rated output and also at lower power levels, the distortion was about 0.005 per cent or less from 100 to 5,000 Hz, increasing to 0.018 per cent at 20 Hz and between 0.011 and 0.018 per cent at 20,000 Hz. The distortion at 20 Hz and -10 dB (6 watts output) was 0.025 per cent, but this included inaudible noise components that were comparable to the distortion at that low level.

The input required for a reference output of 10 watts was 61 millivolts at the high-level inputs and 0.95 millivolt at the phono inputs. The corresponding unweighted signal-to-noise ratios were 79 and 76.4 dB, both very good figures. The phono preamplifier overloaded at a very high 260 millivolts.

(Continued on page 44)



Sony's reputation for quality is now being challenged by its reputation for value.

For elegant engineering and technical finesse, the world looks to Sony.

But what is often overlooked is the solid value that Sony represents.

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The 6800, 5800 and 4800 are rated at 80, 55 and 35 watts, respectively. Minimum RMS at 8 ohms, from 20 to 20kHz, at 0.1% T.H.D. And keep in mind that we're conservative; tougher on our ratings than any independent rating lab would be.

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The dials on these receivers incorporate an LED that doubles in length when the station is being properly received. That's part of what we call human engineering—and it's based on the observation that machines don't use our machines, people do. So as you'll find a stereo indication light, signal strength meter, and more. All placed for your convenience, not ours.

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The tone-control action was moderate but perfectly adequate, with a maximum range of ± 8 dB at the low frequencies and ± 10 dB at the high frequencies. The filters had gradual 6-dB-per-octave slopes. The SUBSONIC filter reduced the 20-Hz output by 2.5 dB. The HIGH filter response was down 3 dB at 6,000 Hz, and its effect was not much different from that of a tone control.

The loudness compensation used on the KA-7100 is one of the better circuits of its type. Instead of providing for independent adjustment of overall gain and the compensation (the ideal system), it offers two degrees of bass boost at any given volume-control setting (the highs are unaffected). With either switch setting, the bass boost is much less than is common with loudness circuits, and we found that it could be used without imparting excessive heaviness to the sound.

The RIAA phono equalization was literally ruler-flat, with less than ± 0.25 dB variation from 30 to 20,000 Hz, and down only 0.5 dB at 20 Hz. The inductance of typical phono cartridges caused a slight high-frequency rise in phono response at a rate of about 0.7 dB per octave above 2,000 Hz. The rise time of the amplifier (including the preamplifier section) was 2 microseconds and its slew rate was 45 volts per microsecond, both figures representing very good performance for an integrated amplifier of this power rating and general price class.

● **Comment.** We have been observing with interest during the past couple of years the appearance of amplifiers boasting almost unmeasurably low distortion levels (anything much under 0.02 per cent certainly falls into that category). The phenomenon has so far

been restricted principally to the higher power and price ranges. The technology responsible for this (we assume it to be the development of improved transistors) has now found its way down to the \$300 class of amplifiers, as exemplified by the Kenwood KA-7100.

Although we doubt that there are any *audible* benefits to reducing distortion from 0.1 per cent (or so) to the 0.02 per cent or less of this amplifier, what is amazing is that it can be done at all, let alone in such a low-price amplifier. The really impressive thing about the KA-7100 is how effectively it does its job, with nary a sour note—mechanical or audible—to mar the performance of a beautifully engineered product. Someone with \$300 to spend would have to look long and hard to find a better amplifier for the money.

Circle 105 on reader service card



TECHNICS refers to their SU-9070 stereo preamplifier as a "flat" amplifier. This is a particularly apt description, since the SU-9070 is not only physically "flat" (built in the currently popular low-profile format) but is also as electrically flat as one could desire. It is, in addition, a d.c. amplifier, with no capacitors whatever in the signal path from its high-level inputs to the outputs. However, a second set of output jacks is available with capacitive output coupling.

The SU-9070 is a control center, and an exceptionally versatile one, but it has none of the tone controls and other response-modifying circuits usually available to a user. That role is assigned to a companion graphic equalizer, the SH-9010, which matches the SU-9070 in size and styling. Both are finished in black, with gold panel markings that are surprisingly legible against the dark background. The toggle power switch at the left of the panel is followed by pushbutton switches for selecting mono or stereo modes, turning on a subsonic filter (for the phono inputs only), and inserting an external signal-processing accessory in the signal path. The last control is identified as EXT UNIT and the pushbutton connects it *either* into the preamp's main signal path *or* into the tape-recording outputs. Although the EXT UNIT is intended to be the Technics SH-9010, it can also be any other type of equalizer, noise reducer, or dy-

namic-range enhancer. The ability to switch in such a device to modify the signals going to a tape recorder is a valuable one not found on many high-fidelity control units.

Three bar-knob switches select the program sources for listening and tape recording. The REC SELECTOR and INPUT SELECTOR operate completely independently, so any program can be recorded while one listens to any other. Both switches are equipped to handle the tuner and AUX inputs, a phono input, and up to *three* tape decks. The INPUT SELECTOR allows one to listen to the playback from any of these decks, and the REC SELECTOR interconnects the machines for dubbing a tape from any one to either or both of the others. It also has an OFF position that removes all input signals from the recorders.

The third knob is the PHONO SELECTOR, which connects the input from one of three pairs of phono jacks in the rear of the SU-9070. One set can accommodate a low-output moving-coil (MC) phono cartridge (for which there is a separate low-level pre-preamplifier) and the other two take moving-magnet (MM) cartridges. If a *high*-output MC cartridge is used, it must be plugged into one of the MM jacks.

The remaining controls are a MUTING switch for reducing output level by 20 dB and a concentric VOLUME and BALANCE control. Balance is handled by a center-detented ring;

volume is continuously adjustable. The rear panel of the SU-9070 is well filled with the many input and output jacks plus three a.c. outlets, one of them switched. The metal top cover carries a full set of performance graphs and a signal-flow block diagram of the preamplifier. It also identifies the various rear connectors so that cables can be inserted when the rear labeling cannot be seen.

The specifications of the Technics SU-9070 are both complete and impressive, even by today's standards. Its salient features are extremely low distortion, typically about 0.003 per cent, and an equally low noise level that is achieved by the use of special circuits and some newly developed low-noise transistors. The Technics SU-9070 is 19 inches wide, 4 inches high, and 14½ inches deep. It weighs 15.7 pounds. Price: \$399.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Although the rated output of the Technics SU-9070 is 1 volt into a 600-ohm load, its maximum-output rating is 20 volts into 600 ohms. This corresponds to about 0.67 watt, which is rather unusual, since very few preamplifiers are designed to deliver significant *power* output. In our tests, the 1,000-Hz output of the preamplifier clipped at just above 18 volts with a 600-ohm load. It is noteworthy that the distortion remained *very* low all the way to the clipping level, measuring less than 0.003 per cent at any usable output, 0.01 per cent at 6 volts, and less than 0.02 per cent at 15 volts. At 15,000 Hz, the distortion was actually slightly lower than at 1,000 Hz. These, and all other measurements, were made at the d.c. output jacks with a 600-ohm termination. They can be expected to be somewhat better (!) when driving the much higher typical impedance of a power-amplifier input.

The "flat" nature of the preamplifier is illustrated by the frequency response through the AUX input. It was absolutely constant from 10 to 20,000 Hz and down 0.3 dB at 5 Hz (our lower measurement limit) and 0.2 dB at 50,000 Hz. The RIAA-equalized phono response (through a MM input) was very nearly as flat. It was within ± 0.35 dB from 20 to

(Continued on page 46)



Yes, the new Dual 604 is direct drive. Now let's talk about something really important.

You may have noticed that most turntable stories begin and end with the drive system. The tonearm is more or less an afterthought.

But not with Dual. Because the tonearm can make a big difference in how records sound and how long they last. Which is why Dual is very serious about tonearm design and performance. And why we can be very serious about tonearms in our advertising.

Let's consider the 604 tonearm.

The straight-line tubular design provides maximum rigidity with minimum mass. The four-point gimbal centers and pivots the tonearm precisely where the vertical and horizontal axes intersect. And the counter-balance houses two specially-tuned anti-resonance filters that absorb parasitic resonances originating in the tonearm/cartridge system and chassis.

Operation is semi-automatic, with another unique

Dual difference: the mechanical sensor. Switch it in and you feel when the stylus is positioned precisely over the 12" and 7" lead-in grooves. At the end of play, the tonearm lifts and returns to its post, and the motor shuts off. Automatically.

Now let's talk about the direct-drive system. It employs a newly developed DC electronic motor, with speed regulated by a CMOS integrated circuit and digital reference circuit. Speed accuracy is within 0.001 percent. Wow and flutter are less than 0.03 percent, rumble better than 70 dB. As with any great drive system, that's far beyond audibility.

But the important story with any turntable is simply this. The drive system merely turns the record. It's the tonearm that plays it.

Dual 604, semi-automatic, less than \$260. Dual 621, fully automatic plus continuous repeat, less than \$300. Both with base and cover. Actual resale prices are determined individually and at the sole discretion of authorized Dual dealers.



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20,000 Hz. The effect of the subsonic filter could not be measured since it occurred principally below 5 Hz (the filter has a 12-dB-per-octave slope starting at 20 Hz). When we measured the phono equalization through the inductance of a typical phono cartridge, it was changed by less than ± 1 dB at any frequency up to 20,000 Hz.

The SU-9070 required 180 millivolts at its AUX input for a 1-volt reference output. The phono sensitivity was 3.1 millivolts (MM) and 0.11 millivolt (MC). The excellent corresponding phono-overload levels were 410 and 10 millivolts.

Measuring the noise level of the SU-9070 was not easy. In fact, we could not verify the ratings, since our meter will not indicate signals of less than 100 microvolts (80 dB below 1 volt). In our unweighted measurements, the signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) was something better than 80 dB at the high-level inputs, about 80 dB at the MM phono input, and 61 dB at the MC phono input. If these figures were "A" weighted to correspond to their audibility (and to the Technics rating system), the

first two figures would be completely below our meter's reading range. Therefore, we had to do our noise-vs.-signal evaluation on a subjective basis.

● **Comment.** Let us dispose of that noise question at the outset. With the SU-9070 connected to a 200-watt-per-channel amplifier (which required 1.5 volts input to develop full power) and playing through typical low-efficiency speakers, we could operate all gain controls at maximum, using the MM phono inputs (open-circuited), and, with an ear against the speaker grille, not hear a trace of hiss or any other sound. Through the MC input, also open-circuited (although its internal resistance is a low 47 ohms), a faint hiss could be heard within a foot or two of the speakers in a very quiet room. In other words, under any practical listening conditions that we can imagine, the SU-9070 is totally noiseless. Some noise may be heard when the preamplifier is used in a system, but at least there should be no doubt as to where the noise is *not* coming from.

The other performance specifications of the SU-9070 speak for themselves. Its ruler-flat frequency response and almost unmeasurable distortion could be considered a case of "overkill" if the amplifier sold for several times its price. As it is, the relatively moderate-price Technics SU-9070 is an excellent example of what really first-rate design engineers can do with today's techniques and components.

We enjoyed the almost Spartan simplicity of the SU-9070 controls, which were nevertheless as versatile as any we have seen on a control amplifier. Although we never tried to connect three tape decks to it, it was nice to know that the capability was there. The same comment goes for the EXT UNIT facility. The modular design of the Technics "flat" series components makes it practical to incorporate as much or as little operating flexibility as one's preference or budget will allow, while maintaining a uniform (and very high) overall quality standard.

Circle 106 on reader service card



Visonik DD-8200 Record Player

THE DD-8200 is a direct-drive, two-speed record player imported from Japan by Visonik of America, Inc. It is semi-automatic, with the motor coming on when the tone arm is lifted from its rest. At the end of play, the arm automatically returns to the rest and the motor shuts off. The cast platter and its rubber mat weigh 4 pounds. They are driven by a twenty-pole, thirty-slot brushless d.c. servo motor at 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ or 45 rpm. A vernier speed adjustment covers a ± 3 per cent range, and an illuminated stroboscope pattern is visible under the platter.

The tone arm is an S-shaped tube with an "outrigger" weight to supply lateral balance. The tracking-force scale, calibrated from 0 to

2.5 grams at intervals of 0.5 gram, is on the rotating counterweight. An antiskating dial is built into the arm base. The cartridge shell is the familiar plug-in type, with a locking ring and a well-shaped finger lift. The player mechanism is on a black and gray base and has a hinged, clear-plastic dust cover that remains open at any angle. The entire unit sits on four spring-supported mounting feet.

The DD-8200 has all its operating controls on the front edge of the base, so they are fully accessible even with the dust cover lowered. A square pushbutton at the left of the panel selects the speed, which is indicated by one of two red signal lights nearby. A recessed window at the center of the control panel pro-

vides a full view (by way of a mirror) of the illuminated strobe markings underneath the platter. A horizontal slide control fine-tunes the speed (it affects both speeds, so when one is set, the other is correct also).

Two levers at the right of the panel control the reject and cueing functions. With the CUEING lever up, the arm is raised from the record surface. Pressing it down until it latches causes the arm to descend slowly. To lift the arm, the CUEING lever is pressed down and released. Like the descent, the lift is smooth and well damped. At any time during the playing of a record, pressing the REJECT lever will lift the arm, return it to its rest, and shut off the motor. The Visonik DD-8200 is 18 inches wide, 13 inches deep, and 6 inches high with its cover. It weighs 22 pounds. Price: \$249.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** We tested the DD-8200 with a Shure M95ED cartridge installed; installation was simplified by a supplied plastic stylus-position gauge. Maximum tracking error was only 0.5 degree per inch at a 6-inch radius, and it was considerably less elsewhere on the record. The tracking force was typically within 0.1 gram of the indicated value when initial arm balance was established on a horizontal plane and within 0.05 gram when it was balanced with the head shell slightly *above* horizontal.

The measured tone-arm mass was 18 grams, which is typical for most of today's record-player arms. It resonated with the compliance of the M95ED at 8 Hz, with a 5-dB amplitude. The total arm and cable capacitance to ground was 112 picofarads (pF) per channel, and the interchannel capacitance was 15 pF. The antiskating dial calibration was correct, giving equal distortion in both channels when the dial was set to match the tracking force. The cueing device worked smoothly, and there was no lateral arm drift during its operation.

With the strobe dots stationary, the turntable
(Continued on page 48)

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It is a distinctly sensible way of putting together
an incomparable high-fidelity system.

The monolithic System One rack features
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ble speeds were very slightly fast (about 0.5 per cent at 33½ rpm and 0.15 per cent at 45 rpm). The vernier control range was ±4.5 per cent at 33½ and ±3.2 per cent at 45 rpm. The speeds were not affected by line-voltage changes.

The rumble was -35.5 dB in an unweighted rms measurement and -62 dB with ARLL weighting. The unweighted rms wow and flutter were 0.035 and 0.05 per cent, respectively, with a combined reading of 0.06 per cent. Both the flutter and rumble spectra showed little energy above 10 Hz. This is very good performance, typical of the better direct-drive

turntables. The base isolation from external vibration was about average for direct-drive record players.

● **Comment.** As the test data show, the Visonik DD-8200 is in every way a fine record player. The same can be said of many others, of course, although many turntables lack such niceties as accurately calibrated antikating dials and drift-free cueing systems. But the real convenience feature of this machine is the front-panel location of all its controls. There are a number of other record players whose motors can be switched from the front,

but to lift or lower their tone arms one must lift the dust covers.

True, one must still place the record on the DD-8200's platter manually, and one must cue the arm manually at the start. However, from that point on the cover can be closed, with no need to lift it either for a temporary playing interruption or for a complete shutdown of the system. We found the control setup of the DD-8200 decidedly superior, and it was a pleasure to encounter such a well-thought-out design on a fine-functioning player.

Circle 107 on reader service card



Revox B77 Tape Recorder

IN two decades on the American hi-fi scene, Revox tape recorders have earned an enviable reputation for quality. Having recently established a new U.S. distributorship, the Swiss-based manufacturer (Willi Studer) has chosen to add his own name to the brand name—hence, the latest Revox recorder is the Studer/Revox B77.

The B77 might seem to be a logical successor to the long established A77, which it resembles in many respects. However, at least for the time being, both models will be carried in the product line. The B77 is a high-quality open-reel tape deck specifically designed for the discriminating home user. It operates at either 3¼ or 7½ ips, selected by pushbutton switches, and the capstan has its own direct-drive, servo-controlled a.c. motor. Separate torque motors drive the take-up and supply reels, which can be up to 10½ inches in diameter. The B77 is available in half-track and quarter-track versions. We tested a quarter-track model.

The upper portion of the dark-gray recorder (with contrasting accents in its aluminum knobs and trim) is devoted to the tape reels. The hub shafts are ¼ inch in diameter, so

adapters are needed if 10½-inch NAB reels are to be used. Between the reels is the push-button-reset index counter, and below that is the head assembly with its snap-off cover. To the right of the heads is a built-in tape-splicing block, complete with pivoted cutting knife. As an aid to editing, a "cueing" slide switch under the heads brings the tape into light contact with the playback head so one can locate a specific point either by turning the reels by hand or with the machine in the fast-forward and rewind modes. When the cueing switch is operated, the fast-forward and rewind controls do not latch, so they can be used to shuttle the tape back and forth with considerable precision.

The operating controls of the B77 occupy the lower third of the panel area and are arranged in functional groups. At the left are the MONITOR controls plus the speed selectors and the power switch. The concentric volume control affects only the level at the two near-by headphone jacks (intended for 600-ohm or other medium-impedance phones). The line-output levels can be set by small control shafts in the rear of the machine next to the line output jacks. The monitor switch chan-

nels either incoming signals or the playback-amplifier outputs to the line and phones output jacks. A small playback-mode switch selects normal or reversed-channel stereo, mono, or left- or right-channel playback through both outputs (this control affects the line outputs as well as the headphone jacks).

The recording controls occupy the central portion of the panel. Each channel has its own level control plus an input-selector switch with positions for low- or high-level microphones, AUX, and RADIO (for a DIN-level signal source), plus interchannel transfer positions (L to R and R to L) for making sound-with-sound recordings. Each channel also has its own recording safety-interlock switch and a red light that shows when it is in a recording condition. The two phone-jack microphone inputs are located near the switches. On each meter face is a peak-indicating LED that glows red for excessive recording levels.

Finally, the lower-right portion of the panel contains the transport operating controls. They are light-touch momentary-contact pushbuttons which operate the machine through electrical solenoids and a logic system that makes it possible to go from any mode to any other without first stopping the tape. Normally, the red RECORD button must be pressed simultaneously with the PLAY button to make a recording (and, of course, the corresponding recording safety switches must be on). In addition, the B77 can make "flying-start" or "punch-in" recordings while playing a tape, if one holds the PLAY button in and touches the RECORD button at the desired point during playback.

The fast-forward and rewind buttons can be operated sequentially to shuttle the tape back and forth smoothly, and with a little practice the STOP button can be used to halt it at exactly the desired point. The PAUSE button does not latch and must be held in for as long as the recording is to be halted. Thus, it offers little advantage (other than one-finger operation) over using STOP and restarting the tape with both the RECORD and PLAY buttons. However, an optional remote-control accessory is available on which PAUSE is a locking control.

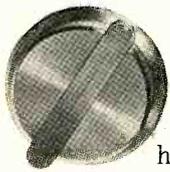
The input and output connectors are set into the rear of the machine. They include a line-voltage selector (from 100 to 240 volts) and jacks for the tape-transport and capstan-speed remote-control accessories (the latter makes it possible to vary the tape speed con-

(Continued on page 50)

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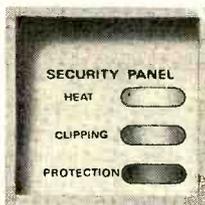
The most important feature in Setton equipment is the sound you hear. Every idea we've perfected over the years has that objective in mind. We think you'll be interested in reading about some of them.

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Superimposed on the circle of each knob is an elongated elliptical shape that helps your fingers accurately adjust the controls. That fine adjustment is aided by detents on volume and tone controls so you can set them precisely. The bass, treble and mid-range controls provide 1331 different settings. The mid-range control is valuable in correcting the dip in response in at least one well-known speaker. Music—be it Bach, bop or rock—will sound truer. And the human voice, from an aria to an oratorio, will sound smoother.

Our pushbuttons are a pleasure to push. They're mounted in nylon bushings so they slide silkily and



Security Panel

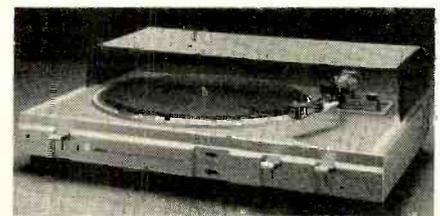
silently. They quickly switch bass and treble turn-over points, FM muting, loudness, tape monitoring and transfer.

The lights do a sparkling job of providing meaningful information. You know instantly what mode of operation your system is in. And

the lights on the security panel give you a visual warning of over-heating, distortion or overload, while a clicking relay also alerts you. Failing all else, the unit will shut down by itself before any damage is done.

New ideas to solve old problems

We think about details, but we also think big, new ideas. For example, on our new TS-11 Automatic Front Loading Turntable the dust cover slides forward instead of lifting up. The TS-11 requires only about six



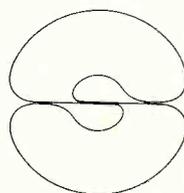
TS-11 Automatic Front Loading Turntable

inches of height, so you can place it wherever you wish. With the controls on the front, you needn't reach into the unit to start, stop, change speeds or cue. And their vertical action cuts down on vibration. Wow and flutter are remarkably low and the rumble level is -60dB.

We haven't told you about our new RCS-X-1000 Remote Control Center. Or about the dual-gate MOS-FET transistors in our receivers and tuners for greater selectivity. And our Power Boosters and Car Speakers that make great sound a moving sensation.

As you might expect, the highest fidelity doesn't come with the lowest prices. Setton equipment is expensive, but for its price it offers uncommon value. We believe there are relatively few people able to fully appreciate this highest fidelity equipment.

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tinuously from 2.5 to 11 ips) as well as a slide-projector synchronizer (which requires an electronic module installed in the recorder). The aux input and line-output jacks, line-level controls, and DIN socket for the RADIO input and output circuits complete the facilities available at the rear of the machine.

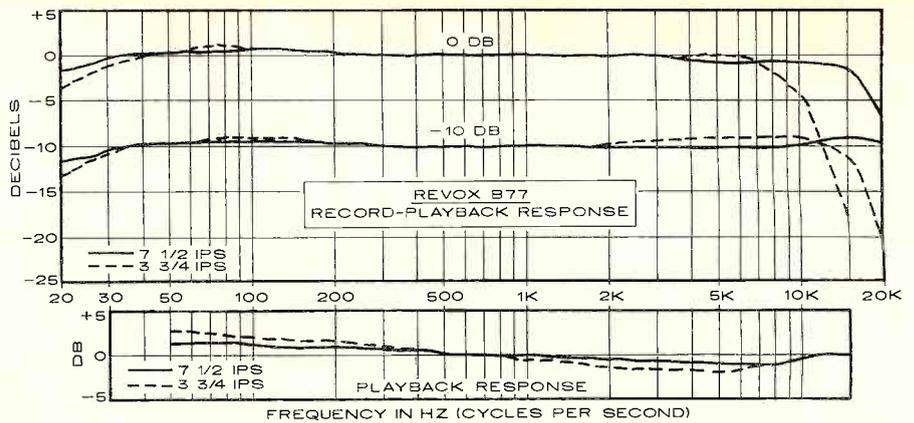
The B77 has a folding carrying handle, and it can be operated in a horizontal or a vertical position. However, if tape editing is planned, horizontal operation is preferable so that the playback-head gap can be seen.

The Studer/Revox B77 is 17¼ inches wide, 16¼ inches high, and 8½ inches deep (slightly greater top and side clearance is required when 10½-inch reels are used). It weighs 37½ pounds. Price: \$1,195.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The Studer/Revox B77 is factory-adjusted for Scotch 207 tape (we used the very similar Scotch 206 for our tests). Studer believes that the bias controls found on some consumer recorders do not assure best results with different tapes, since the recording equalization is also likely to require adjustment. Thus, the company recommends that the machine be set up for one specific tape by a competent technician using appropriate laboratory instruments.

In our measurements of playback equalization, we used Ampex test tapes: 31321-04 for 7½ ips and 31331-01 for 3¾ ips. The latter is a 120-microsecond tape, and the B77 has 90-microsecond playback equalization at its lower speed, so we would not expect to get a truly flat response from the Ampex tape. However, the 3¾-ips playback response was a smooth, downward-sloping line, varying only ±2.5 dB from 50 to 7,500 Hz (the frequency limits of the test tape). At 7½ ips, the response was within +1, -1.5 dB from 50 to 15,000 Hz.

The record-playback frequency response with Scotch 206 tape was well within Studer's very fine specifications. At 7½ ips, it was within +1, -1.5 dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz at a -10-dB recording level. At 0 dB, there was little evidence of tape saturation under 15,000 Hz, and the response was within +1, -1.5 dB from 20 to 15,000 Hz and down 7 dB at 20,000 Hz. One feature of the Revox frequency-response curve was distinctive — it had none of the low-frequency "bumps" typical of most tape recorders. This is a function of head design, and Studer has evidently done a very effective job in that department.



Record-playback response curves for the Revox B77 are shown at levels of 0 and -10 dB, rather than the usual 0 and -20 dB. Note the wide response of the B77 (with Scotch 206 tape) at -10 dB and the absence of low-frequency "bumps" in the curves at either level.

The 3¾-ips response at -10 dB was within ±1 dB from 28 to 15,000 Hz, down 3 dB at 20 Hz and 10 dB at 20,000 Hz. As expected, the 0-dB response at the slower speed showed the effects of tape saturation beginning at about 6,000 Hz. The response was ±1 dB from 30 to 7,000 Hz, down 3.5 dB at 20 Hz and 4.5 dB at 10,000 Hz.

For a 0-dB meter reading, the AUX recording input at maximum gain was only 17.5 millivolts (exceptionally high sensitivity for a high-level input). The microphone sensitivities were 0.053 and 1.35 millivolts, respectively, for LO and HI inputs, with respective overload points of 20.5 and 350 millivolts. The playback output from a 0-dB recording level was 0.7 volt at 1,000 Hz. The meter calibration corresponded to the rated 257 nW/m flux level for a 0-dB reading. The peak overload lights flashed at a +5.5-dB level. The meters themselves were overdamped by VU standards, giving a reading that was about 55 per cent of steady-state signal level on 0.3-second tone bursts.

The third-harmonic distortion during playback (from a 1,000-Hz, 0-dB signal) was 0.8 per cent at 3¾ ips and 0.5 per cent at 7½ ips. The reference distortion level of 3 per cent was read at recording inputs of +6 and +8 dB, respectively. The signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) referred to these levels was 57 and 61

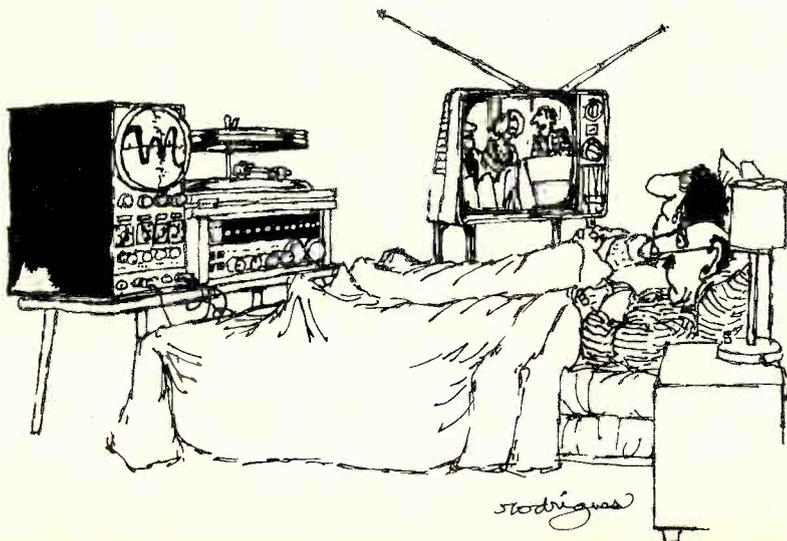
dB in unweighted measurements for the 3¾- and 7½-ips speeds. With "A" weighting the S/N improved to 63.5 and 68 dB, and with CC IR/ARM weighting it was 60 and 64.2 dB. At maximum gain through the microphone LO input the noise level was 10 dB higher; with the HI input the increase was a negligible 1.5 dB.

The peak flutter reading in a DIN-weighted measurement was 0.05 per cent at 3¾ ips and 0.045 per cent at 7½ ips. These were measured with the Ampex 31336-01 and 31326-01 test tapes. The principal flutter frequencies were 60 and 120 Hz. In fast forward, 1,800 feet of tape was wound in 76 seconds; something like 100 seconds was required for the same amount of tape in rewind.

● **Comment.** The Studer/Revox B77 is obviously one of the better home tape recorders, which is no less than we would expect from Studer. Many of its individual performance ratings can be matched by somewhat less expensive machines, but we know of none at a significantly lower price that is the full equal of the B77. It excelled particularly in its very low flutter (it is rated with almost ridiculous conservatism at 0.1 and 0.08 per cent for the two speeds) and the flatness of its frequency response, especially at low frequencies. We noted the same conservative approach to ratings throughout the extremely detailed specifications for the B77. It met and comfortably surpassed every spec but one—the previously mentioned VU-meter characteristic.

The B77 is a very easy machine to use, and as one becomes familiar with it the considerable flexibility of its operating controls becomes more apparent. Unlike most tape recorders, the B77 produced a very listenable volume through 200-ohm headphones.

As we see it, the B77 should appeal to the serious tape-recording hobbyist who would like to have many of the qualities of a true "pro" machine without paying the price in dollars, size, weight, and convenience that a real professional recorder would entail. Assuming that the traditional quality standards and ruggedness of Revox recorders have been carried forward into the B77, it should be a very good long-term value.



Circle 108 on reader service card

(Continued on page 52)

Para - Power

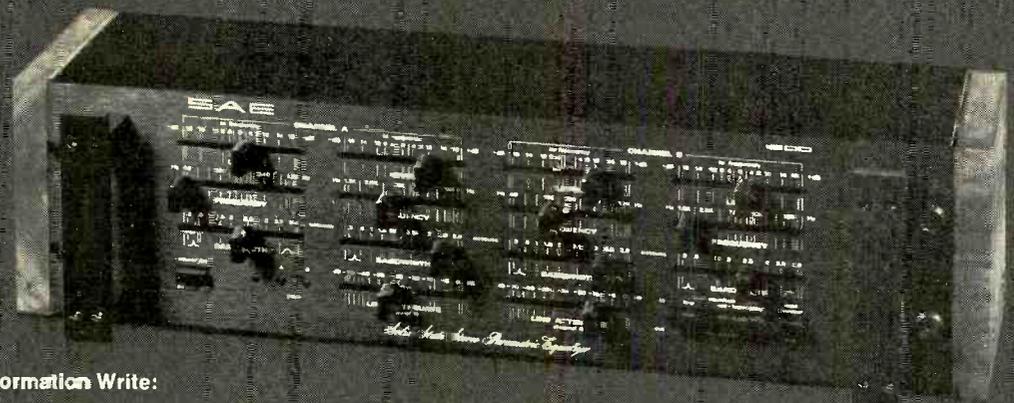
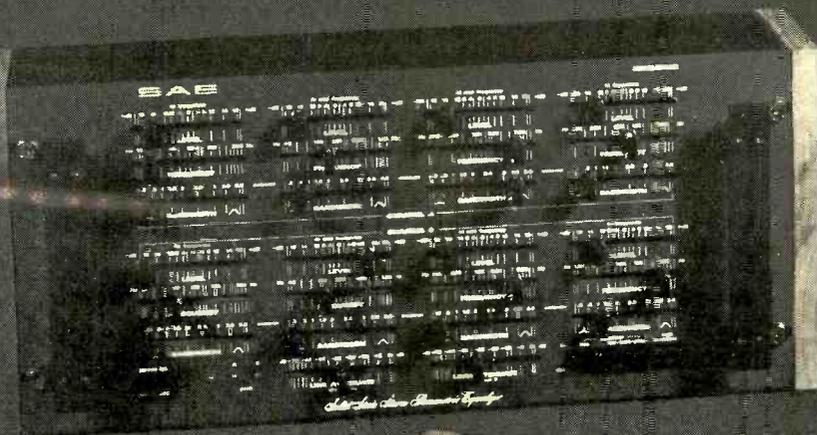
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Altec Model Fifteen Speaker System

ALTEC's two top-of-the-line speaker systems for the home, the Model Fifteen and the Model Nineteen, feature a newly developed high-frequency compression driver and horn assembly employing the company's unique "Tangerine" phasing plug. The phasing plug is placed between the driver's diaphragm and the throat of the high-frequency horn to equalize the acoustic-path lengths from all parts of the diaphragm and thus prevent random acoustic cancellations and reinforcements. The new plug is said to be responsible for a flat output from below 2,000 to beyond 20,000 Hz. The horn itself is a molded-plastic curved radial unit in which the driver faces upward. The mouth dimensions of the horn are 14¼ by 3½ inches. In the Model Fifteen, which was tested for this report, the new high-frequency unit is teamed with a 12-inch bass driver in a vented cabinet using a ducted port. The crossover from the tweeter to the woofer is at 1,700 Hz.

The cabinet of the Altec Fifteen is finished, in oiled walnut or oak veneers, on all visible surfaces (the input connection terminals are on the bottom, out of sight) including the driver mounting panel, which is exposed by un-snapping the foam-plastic grille. The unit can be suspended upside down from wall or ceiling in studio-monitoring applications or mounted conventionally on the floor. A 1¾-inch-high wooden mounting base is furnished for optional use in floor mounting.

The system impedance is nominally 8 ohms, and the rated frequency-response range is 30 to 20,000 Hz. As might be expected from a system with an obvious studio-monitor heritage, it is very efficient, rated to deliver a 94-dB sound-pressure level (SPL) at a distance of 4 feet when driven by 1 watt of pink noise in the band from 500 to 3,000 Hz. The wide dispersion of the new radial horn is illustrated by its rating of 120 degrees coverage, uniform within 6 dB, for frequencies between 500 and 8,000 Hz in both the lateral and vertical planes. The high efficiency is accompanied by high power-handling ability. The Model Fifteen is rated to handle a continuous 60-watt input of pink noise without damage. This will produce an acoustic SPL of 111 dB at 4 feet. The speaker is recommended for use with amplifiers rated to deliver between 12

and 250 watts, which encompasses almost all amplifiers made today. Overall dimensions of the Altec Fifteen are 22 inches wide, 27 inches high, and 15½ inches deep. It weighs about 80 pounds. Price: \$429.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The composite frequency response, measured with both balance controls (mid-range and highs) set to their indicated OPTIMUM settings, showed some emphasis in the mid-bass and high frequencies. Alternatively, it could be considered as showing a reduced output in the mid-range, since the output at both frequency extremes was about the same. Overall, however, the response was within ± 5 dB from 25 to 11,000 Hz, rising slightly to about +8 dB at 14,000 Hz. Our microphone calibration does not extend beyond 15,000 Hz, but there was no sign of a falling of output between 15,000 and 20,000 Hz.

One of the most impressive aspects of the high-frequency performance of the Model Fifteen was the wide dispersion of its tweeter all the way to 15,000 Hz. When we plotted the response curves of the two speakers at angles of 0 and 45 degrees relative to the systems' axes, they were exactly coincident at all frequencies above 6,500 Hz. This is unusual, to say the least. In fact, we have never seen anything approaching such ideal dispersion in a forward-facing speaker (and not always in so-called "omnidirectional" speakers).

The mid-range level control had a range of about ± 5 dB from its OPTIMUM setting, affecting frequencies between 1,500 and 6,000 Hz. The high-frequency control range was a mere 2 dB (all reduction) at frequencies above 6,000 Hz. The tone-burst response was good though not outstanding. The close-miked woofer response curve showed that the port radiation was dominant below 40 Hz.

Our sensitivity measurements confirmed Altec's claims. When we drove the speaker with 1 watt of random noise in the octave centered at 1,000 Hz, the SPL at a 1-meter distance was 94 dB. Such high sensitivity is rarely associated with a speaker whose bass response extends to 30 Hz and below, but of course the Model Fifteen is considerably larger than many home speaker systems, and size is one of the basic trade-offs in establishing

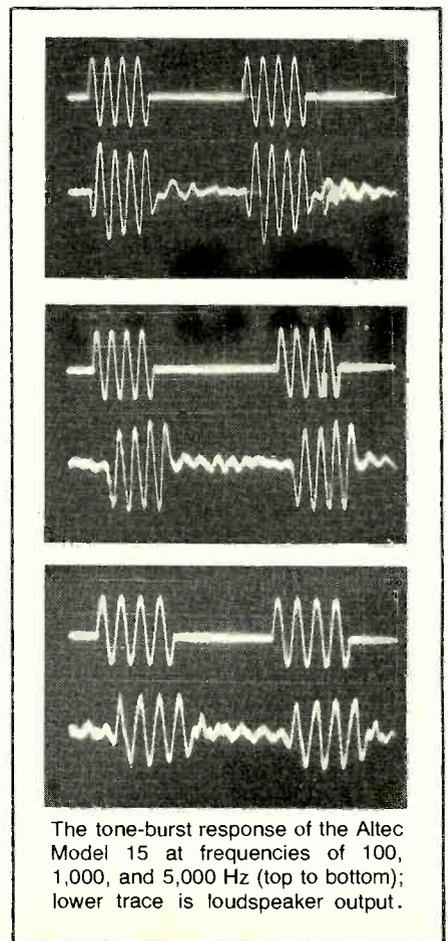
speaker bass-performance parameters. The system impedance hit a maximum of 40 ohms at 50 Hz, with the lowest points being 9 to 10 ohms at 22 Hz and between 100 and 250 Hz.

The bass distortion with a 1-watt input was exceptionally low—typically about 0.6 per cent from 100 to 50 Hz, increasing very gradually to a mere 4.5 per cent at 30 Hz. When the drive level was adjusted to maintain a constant SPL of 90 dB (at 1 meter) regardless of frequency, the distortion was essentially the same. Even at a 10-watt input, which produced a very loud output, the distortion was between 1.5 and 2 per cent down to 50 Hz, and only 7.8 per cent at 30 Hz.

● **Comment.** Our simulated live-vs.-recorded test disclosed a mid-bass warmth (sometimes audible on male voices) and a slightly hot top end. Both effects were consistent with our frequency-response measurements. The highs were excellent, and we found little difference when the high-frequency level control was varied through its full range. We tried to balance the lows and middles by raising the setting of the mid-range control, but this gave the sound an excessively "forward" character. On the whole, Altec's "optimum" settings give the best overall sound balance.

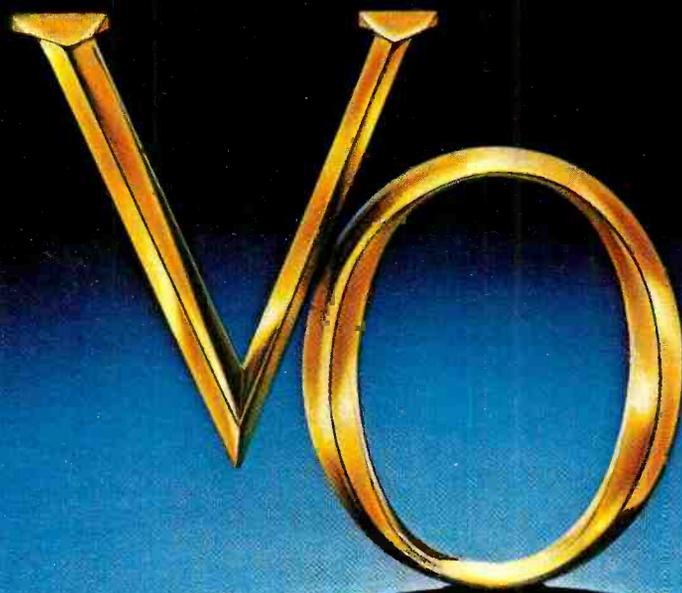
In the past, we have reacted negatively to a number of speakers designed for studio-monitor applications. Many of these did not meet the fidelity requirements of a home hi-fi system. We are happy to say that the Altec Fifteen's smoothness, balance, clarity, and just plain good sound are fully compatible with the needs of the serious home listener.

Circle 109 on reader service card



The tone-burst responses of the Altec Model 15 at frequencies of 100, 1,000, and 5,000 Hz (top to bottom); lower trace is loudspeaker output.

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How the Phase Moire technology works

The motion picture film produced by the combination of nearly 3000 pickup points, the computer, and high-speed filming of the resulting patterns from the face of the video screen, actually shows how a speaker, crossover network or entire speaker system performs, rather like "sound in action."

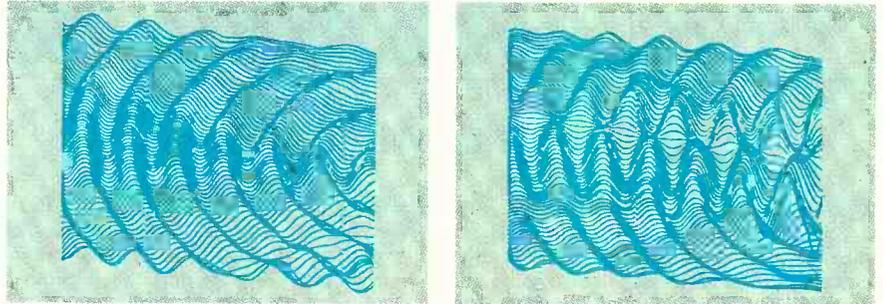
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A final note on technology

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These two Phase Moire patterns represent the crossover frequency response of two similar multi-speaker systems. The left-hand pattern was produced by a JVC SK-1000. Its evenly-undulating shapes indicate a smooth transition from one speaker element to another. The turbulent, uneven pattern on the right is typical of a poorly-designed speaker/crossover combination.

components and systems, we put it to work to help us build a modestly-proportioned (and priced) speaker system that would come as close as possible to the highest levels of integrity in musical reproduction. We feel we've succeeded. But all the technology in the world can't fool two of the most sophisticated testing devices known: your ears. And all the words in the world can't really tell you what the SK-1000 really sounds like. So we suggest that you hear what we've been talking about at a JVC dealer.

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CIRCLE NO. 30 ON READER SERVICE CARD

The Pop Beat

By Paulette Weiss

Pop Music Editor Weiss (second from right) at STEREO REVIEW's Record of the Year Awards party with Warner Bros.' Gary Kenton and Capitol's notorious publicity trio, Doreen D'Agostino, Maureen O'Connor, and Kathy Schenker. For more party pictures, see page 76.



FLYING DOWN TO RIO

FRED ASTAIRE has sung its praises, Frank Sinatra has crooned of his yearning to return, and Peter Allen's exuberant musical portrait has undoubtedly convinced Aunt Myrta everywhere that they ought to pack their bags and head south. It convinced me. Rio. Rio de Janeiro. The name conjures up exotic tropical images and a distinctive musical sound to go with them. It is a sound that has infiltrated our pop music in ways both subtle and obvious, and if you claim never to have heard any Brazilian-influenced music, I'll bet you one rare Carmen Miranda record that you're wrong.

Ever hear of Sergio Mendes and Brazil '66 (now Brasil '77)? If you're not familiar with the haunting film *Black Orpheus*, set in Rio at carnival time, or with its soundtrack (Fontana SRF 67520), you may still know its lovely main theme *Manhã de Carnaval* in its English translation, *A Day in the Life of a Fool*. Perhaps back in the early Sixties you heard *The Girl from Ipanema* in its most popular incarnation. Stan Getz's smooth sax and João Gilberto's delicate guitar barely keeping Astrud Gilberto's whisper-light vocals earthbound. Or perhaps you've heard it more recently, routinely, and mundanely while going up (or down) in an elevator. But there are younger examples as well. Santana's "Festival" (Columbia PC34423), for instance, with its heady Brazilian flavor, or Charlie Rouse's "Cinnamon Flower" (Douglas NBLP 7044). Such

artists as Jorge Ben, Airto Moreira, Flora Purim, and Milton Nascimento also contribute to a trickle of Brazilian influence, but it's a much quieter stream than the vigorous one the *bossa nova* rode northward in the Sixties.

Bossa nova, a refreshing distillation of samba rhythms and American jazz, originated in Rio in the late Fifties. Its creation is generally attributed to its current foremost practitioners, João Gilberto and Antonio Carlos Jobim, but a number of less-publicized composers such as Carlos Lyra, Roberto Menescal, and Oscar Castro-Neves contributed greatly. American jazz artists started mixing drinks with the zesty import, and Stan Getz, Charlie Byrd, Dizzy Gillespie, and others were soon dispensing the brew to a thirsty North American public.

I was just a little drunk on the stuff myself for a fair portion of the Sixties, and instead of going on the wagon when the supply dwindled in the following decade, I continued to search out a few stubborn suppliers. Despite the fading popularity of *bossa nova* here in the U.S., record-shop import bins continued to stock albums bearing names both familiar and new—composers Baden Powell and Dorival Caymmi, unheard-of singers Maria Bethania, Toquinho, Maria Creuza, Chico Buarque. I was delighted to discover albums for which Vinicius de Moraes sang as well as wrote, and to unearth Tom Jobim. "Aha! a brother of Antonio Carlos," I thought, until a Rio resident

set me straight: Tom and Antonio are one person. (Brazilians have deep affection for their musicians and know them by nicknames.)

But, no matter how full they were, record bins were not quite the original source my samba-crazed heart required. And so, following Peter Allen's advice, when my baby next smiled at me, we flew to Rio. If the hills of Austria are alive with the sound of music, then every molecule of the air in Rio pulses with it. Children on the beach form impromptu combos and slap out sophisticated samba rhythms on whatever surface is at hand, and music drifts out of open windows. Many TV programs are simply lip-synched visual projections of a singer strolling through a breathtaking Brazilian landscape.

It must be admitted that even in Rio, as in so many other parts of the world, American and British rock have bullied the national music into a corner, but although 50 per cent of both radio fare and albums in the numerous *discos* (record shops) are imported rock, there's still plenty of samba and *bossa nova* to feast on. And feast we did. The night we went to Canecão, a large Brazilian night club, I recalled an ancient prayer that consists of the enumeration of a long list of miracles, each one followed by the chant, "It would have been sufficient." Had I not had all the other wonderful experiences that Rio provided, that one dazzling night would have been sufficient.

Picture a club of airplane-hangar proportions—with a stage to match—filled with small tables. I had hoped to see just one famous performer I had grown to love in the States; one would have been sufficient. But when the curtains parted, not only was there a full orchestra and a five-woman chorus visible on stage, but also, arm in arm, Toquinho, Miucha, Antonio Carlos Jobim, and, best of all, Vinicius in his first appearance in Rio in three years. For two and one-half all-too-short hours these most ingratiating of performers ran through a program of old favorites—*Corcovado* and *Garota de Ipanema* (*Girl from*)—and instant new favorites—*Sei Lá* and *Vai Levando*—that had me enchanted. You needn't take the word of this stary-eyed observer, for there is a recording of the event, "Tom, Vinicius, Toquinho, Miucha *Gravado Ao Vivo No Canecão*" (Son Livre 403.6142) available as an import. The spontaneity of these artists comes through clearly on disc.

FOR some reason, imported Brazilian discs are cheaper in the U.S. than they are at home, a discovery that caused some gnashing of teeth when I returned burdened with vinyl. Most large record stores in major cities have good import sections. If they don't, import services such as Peters International (619 West 54th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019) will fill in the gaps by mail. The major shops in New York City—King Karol, Sam Goody, and others—have a surprisingly extensive coverage of import discs. According to Werner Gerichter of the Forty-second Street branch of King Karol, there are over 1,000 different titles in their Brazilian collection alone. And if Mr. Gerichter's sales figure of three hundred discs a week is accurate, *bossa nova* and samba are alive and well in New York, if living a bit more modestly than in the past. As if to underline that fact, rumor has it that Frank Sinatra has contracted for a series of concerts in Brazil with none other than Antonio Carlos Jobim. Now that's an event I'd consider returning to Rio for.

Brazil's finest (left to right): Tom, Miucha, Vinicius, Toquinho



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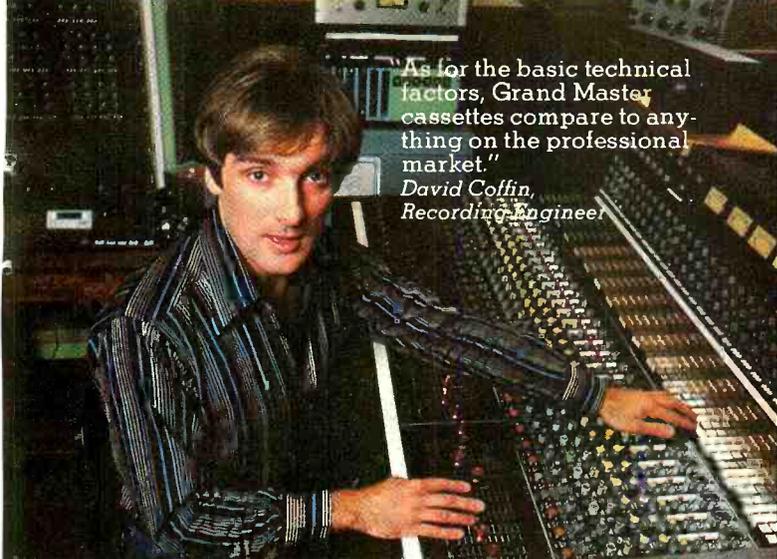
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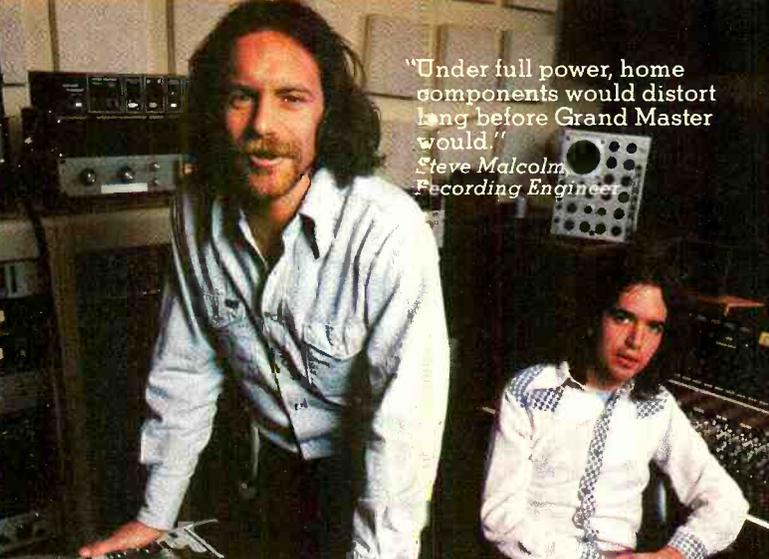
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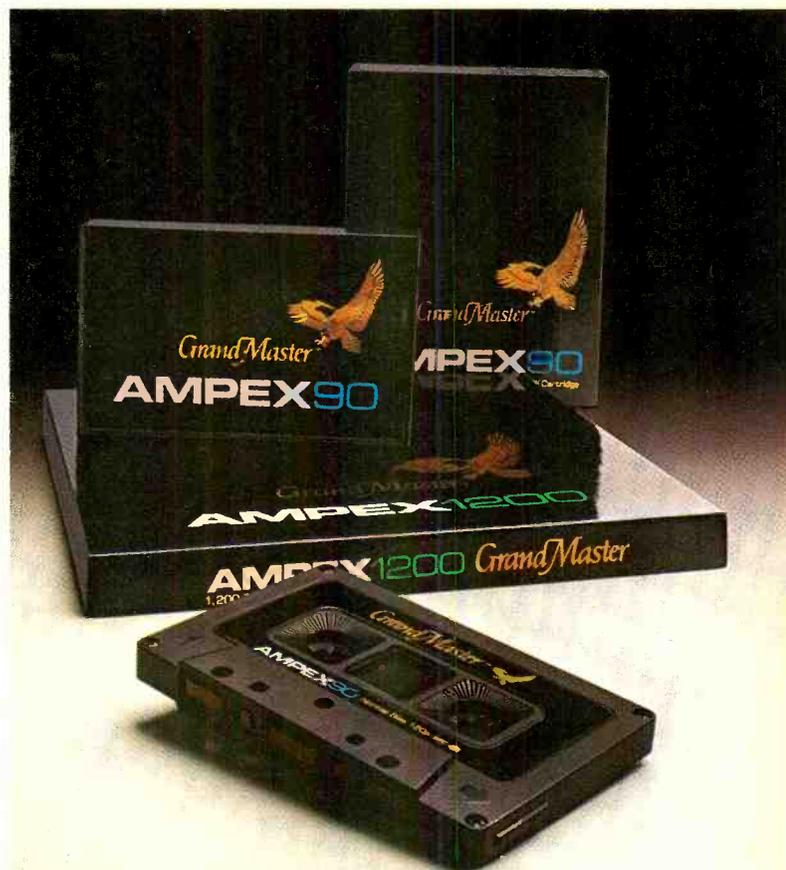
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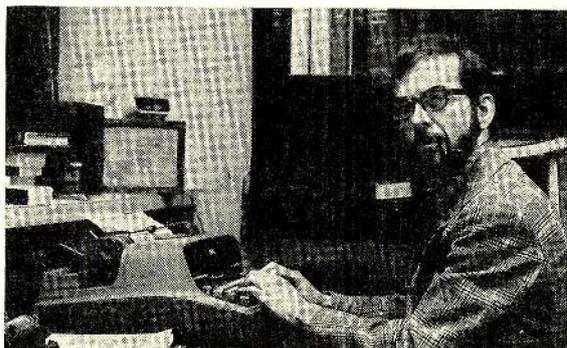
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Going on Record

By James Goodfriend



TECHNOLOGY, A FABLE

WAY back when the tape recorder, which had just gotten over being "an invention," was growing out of its toy-contraption stage and about to become a piece of serious audio equipment, I bought one. As a matter of fact, over the years I bought several—each, I hoped, an improvement on its forerunner. I did with those tape recorders precisely what you might have expected. In my amateur fashion, I ran frequency checks and A-B comparisons on them, tried some on-location recording, recorded live concerts off the air (better fidelity than records), taped mint copies of my best new records (on tape they would always sound new), taped other people's records (well, I wasn't a millionaire), and so on. In short, I gloried in the technology of the tape recorder, in its ability to deliver to me consistently a sound truer to the original than any but the very best LP records, and those only on their first few plays.

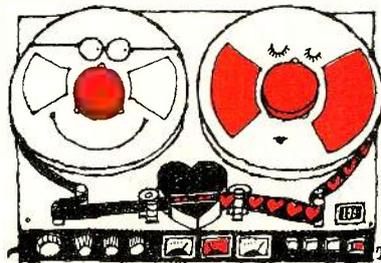
I hesitate to make any general statement on that ability's being then largely theoretical, but in my case it was. Those frequency checks never turned out the way they should have. Of course, I didn't really know how to do them, but still . . . And I could *always* tell the difference between A and B. Sometimes I even actually *preferred* B, and that bothered me. Those live recordings from FM on my tapes usually seemed to have some sort of an edge to them that shouldn't have been there. And the tape itself! Well, you know *tape*. What with dropouts and physical mutilations, tearing and stretching, it seemed to me only a marginally more dependable medium than vinyl.

Ultimately I got rid of all my feature-ridden tape recorders and bought a new one, a machine more elementary than any of its predecessors. It promised a great deal less and it cost a good deal more, but it *worked*. Strangely, now that I had a unit that consistently delivered what it was supposed to, I found myself far less interested in technological marvels. I forgot about frequency-response checks, made the requisite one or two live recordings, and still occasionally taped something off the air. But what I was really interested in doing was preserving, in easily playable form, the priceless musical performances in my collection (and others I had access to) of genuine low-fidelity 78-rpm records.

I worked like a demon over a period of years and accumulated bookshelves full of those conveniently storable 7-inch boxes with the reels inside containing miles of irreplaceable 78-rpm sound. Then I lent my faithful tape recorder to a friend for what seemed a morally dubious dubbing project, and, when I got it back, something was wrong. I had it fixed by the company and I had it fixed by a resident genius, but the machine had become erratic and undependable. Perhaps it had moral scruples built into its circuits. It got shoved into a closet, and the last time I took it out and tried it it behaved abominably, wobbling and wavering (not to say fluttering and wowing) its way through a professional tape dub of a Brahms Second Concerto that I *had* to hear.

When cassettes came in, I waited for the dependable machines to appear and then got one. Cassettes were fun and easy to do everything with but store in some conveniently eye-catching way; they were too small for that. They couldn't be conveniently edited, so I wasn't ashamed at not having spent hours editing them. I recorded what I wanted in haphazard fashion and played it back the same way. I was happy. But I still had those shelves of 7-inch boxes with the tape reels inside and miles and miles of great music from 78's. And I was as effectively cut off from that music as if I had never spent the thousands of hours I did recording it, editing it, and cataloging it. What to do?

WHILE I WAS recovering from an illness recently, having no more strength and power of concentration than it might take to push a button, a friend happened to leave his new, neat, simple, and *working* reel-to-reel recorder at my house for a couple of days. My eyes were



slow to light up, but when they did they stayed on for longer than they had in a week. I pulled down boxes and boxes of tapes, and then, making the final necessary connection, I pulled from a bag in the closet a dozen blank cassettes. I set to work.

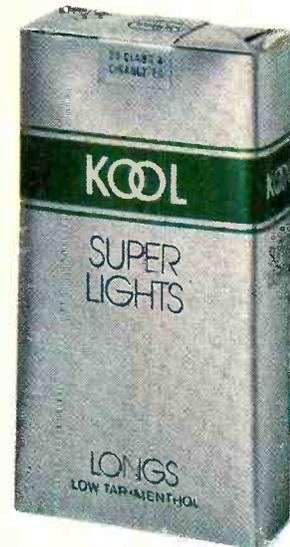
By the time my friend returned to pick up his recorder (it was still warm) I had transferred to cassette (a new technological medium) from open-reel tape (a somewhat older technological medium) the following material drawn mostly from 78-rpm shellac discs (a comparatively ancient technological medium, and some of them recorded acoustically in the dark ages): thirty-six lieder, by such composers as Schubert, Schumann, Wolf, Brahms, and Liszt, sung by Karl Erb, a great German tenor whose elegant style has never been matched (as if any great musician's style could *ever* be matched); sixteen ballads of Karl Loewe, sung by such master interpreters of the distant past as the basses Paul Bender and Paul Knüpfer and the baritone Gerhard Hüsch (Fischer-Dieskau has not sung them nearly as well); three *opéras minutes* (full operas averaging about eight minutes apiece) by Darius Milhaud, plus the famous original recording of his *L'Orestie d'Eschyle*, with all the exhorting voices and the boom-boom background (ah, *those* were the days of modern music); a half-dozen French medieval songs sung by a lady who went by the name of Chanterelle (which means either the highest string on a violin, a musical bottle, or a mushroom) as if she were some kind of musical emanation from the medieval windows of Chartres; two folk songs sung and accompanied by the composer-conductor-singer-pianist Reynaldo Hahn with the sort of effortless artistic elegance that I think just doesn't exist today; a collection of Welsh songs sung by Thomas L. Thomas (that one came from an LP, but it too is long gone), backed with a much more obscure collection of Welsh songs and dances drawn from a variety of ephemeral 78's; ninety minutes' worth of English madrigals by the Cambridge University Madrigal Society (it was a single huge 78-rpm set); a performance of Mahler's Ninth Symphony by Dimitri Mitropoulos and the New York Philharmonic, taken off the air, which Bruno Walter was quoted as saying was the most beautiful *he* had ever heard; Charles Koechlin's *L'Abbaye* for chorus and orchestra, recorded by the French Radio and once, long ago, broadcast in this country while I sat there pushing the necessary buttons; Georges Witkowski's fascinating 1930's answer to the *Symphony on a French Mountain Air*, titled *Mon Lac*, with the composer conducting and Robert Casadesus (no kidding) in the solo part; an hour and a half of assorted masterworks of the lied by such singers as Flore Nielsen, Emmy Leisner, Heinrich Schlusnus, Fritz Soot, Michael Bohnen, Hans Hotter, Lotte Schöne, Elena Gerhardt, Ria Ginster, and a very young Gérardouzay; a collection of French *mélodies* sung by Charles Panzéra, Jane Bathori, Fanély Revoil, Irène Joachim, Jacques Jansen, and Renée Doria; and a few other things I've temporarily forgotten.

I LOVE very nearly every one of them, and every one is, in its own way, unique. I don't care what the current technological medium is, so long as it is one in which I can still listen to these performances. And now that I know what technology means to me, bring on your digital recording.

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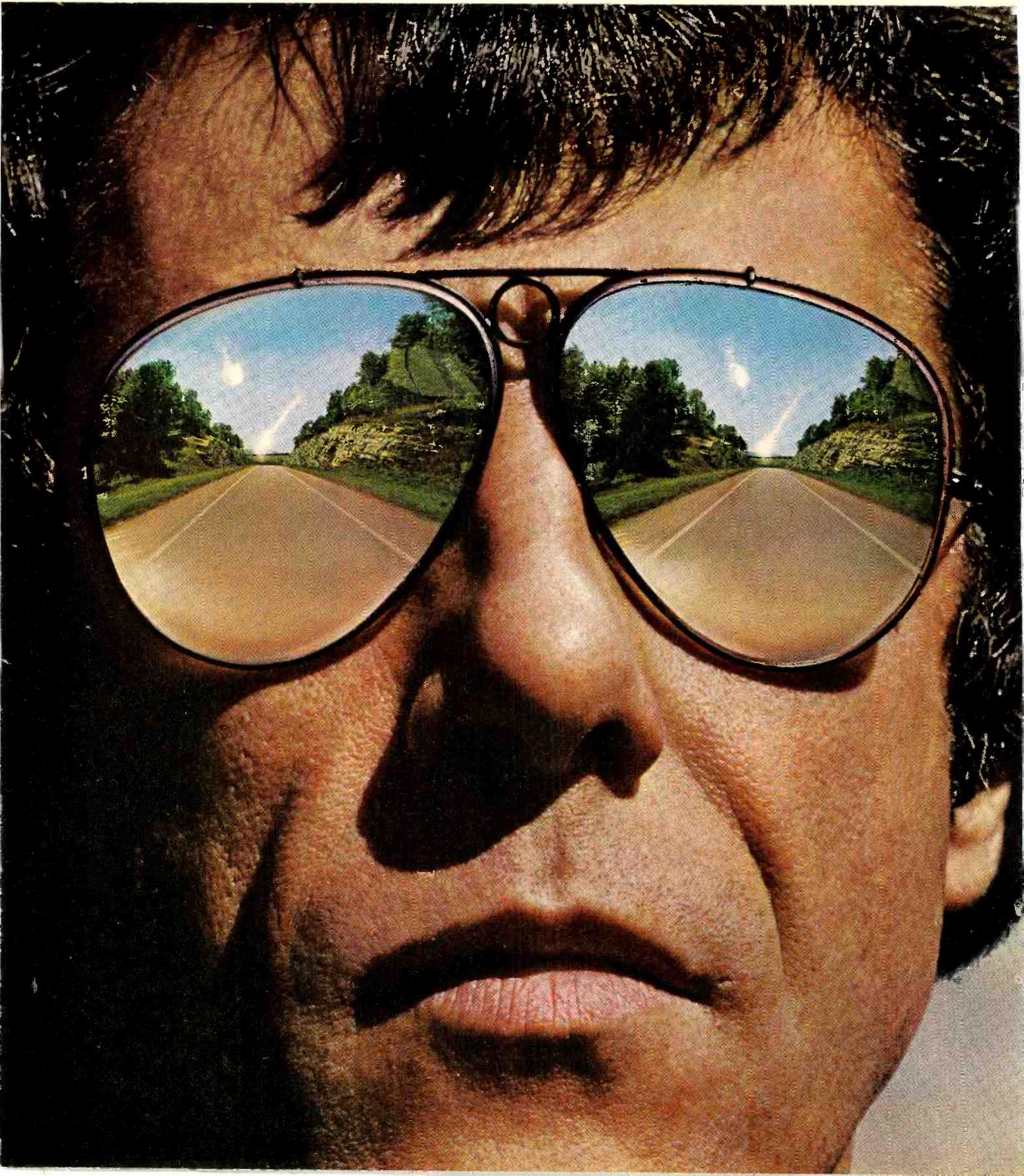
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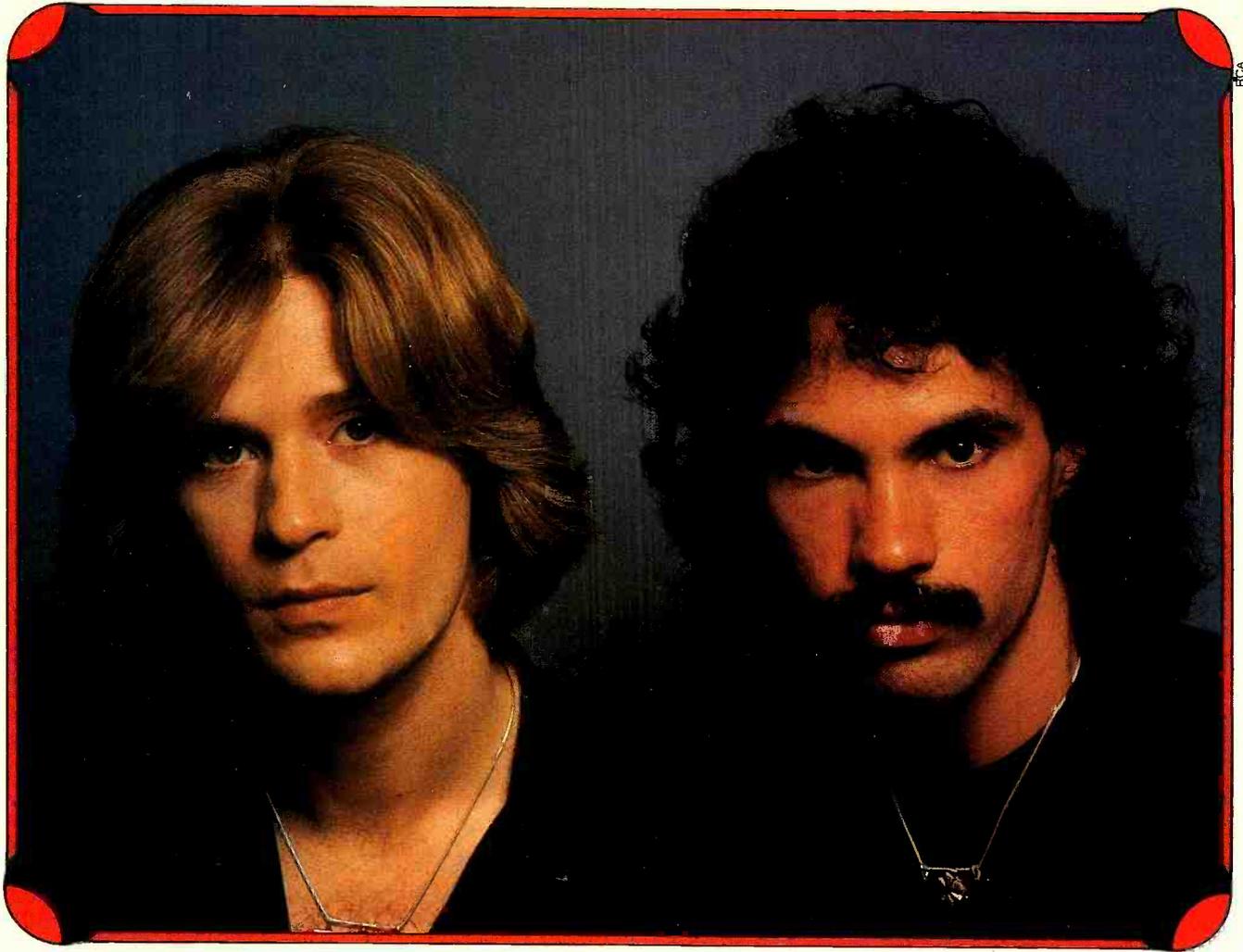
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HALL & OATES

*"Nobody works any harder than we do.
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By Phyl Garland

ABOUT a decade ago, Daryl Hall and John Oates were two creatively driven youngsters separately trying to inch their way into the music business by playing with Jersey Shore bands and working recording sessions with the shapers of the Philadelphia soul sound. When they met as students at Temple University back in 1967, these parallels seemed to suggest that some sort of collaboration was in order.

Though John was a journalism major, his true love was the guitar, which he had played, visions of Elvis Presley dancing through his head, from the age of eight. Daryl, skilled on keyboards, was a sort of teenage prodigy of the funk circuit, having made his first record with Kenny Gamble and the Romeos at eighteen. Both not only sang well but were also pouring their late-adolescent sensibilities into compositions of their own. Their coming together so fortuitously in the developmental stage has produced one of pop-

ular music's more luminous and long-standing unions, a professional relationship so seamless that even the initial friendship has remained intact (as we know, it doesn't always).

The fruit of their association has been a steadily growing popularity, attested to by a string of recordings that have regularly turned vinyl into gold and even platinum. Yet Hall and Oates do not readily fit into any conveniently labeled musical niche. From their first major effort, "Whole Oats" (Atlantic SD 7242), a gentle, understated album in what might be called a Sixtyish Philadelphia folk mood, to the current rakish, rock-based "Beauty on a Back Street" (RCA AFL1-2300), they have favored various styles, always attempting to fuse them into a more personal form of expression. This has created some confusion among their fans, who aren't sure just what to expect from each successive album. And what is their music anyway—rock, pop, soul, or some highly palatable hybrid from somewhere in between?

Some might diagnose their case as musical schizophrenia, but Hall and Oates, at least, seem to know just where they are coming from—and where they're going to—at any moment, and they readily addressed themselves to the question when I met with them in Daryl Hall's apartment off Sheridan Square in New York City's Greenwich Village.

The room is spacious, uncluttered, and light-washed, giving little hint of the owner's personality except for an electric piano occupying a bright spot near a front window. There are only neutral walls, a faded Oriental rug, some tapestries, and unobtrusive pieces of traditional furniture; nothing fancy, showy, or even indulgently comfortable. It is the sort of deliberately peaceful room in which an artist might feel free to entertain his creative fantasies protected from the urban turmoil just beyond the door.

THE initial impression the two convey is of a cool, but not unfriendly, aplomb, an efficiency in manner and expression that comes from years of trying to get ahead in a highly competitive field. But beyond that common air of repose, they present a striking physical contrast.

Daryl Hall is tall, reed thin, and ash blond. Wearing high boots, fitted jeans, and a white shirt, he perches on a sofa, speaking rapidly and intensely, as though his inner cassette-recorder button were set on fast forward. At twenty-nine, he is mature and asser-

tive, bearing little resemblance to the languid-looking, long-haired youth who graced the cover of "Whole Oats."

John Oates seems a little more at ease in a low seat across from the sofa. His publicly touted punk image is belied by a reserved, even shy manner. He listens more than he speaks, contributing concise, carefully thought-out comments sparingly. One year younger than Hall, he is short, compactly muscular, and dark, with curly black hair cascading to his shoulders. His own apartment is only a few minutes' walk away, but he blends comfortably into this setting as easily as he fits into the duo's music.

It is Hall who tries to explain how they define their music.

"People have tried to peg us as all different kinds of things," he says. "Because of our roots and our experience we got pegged as Philadelphia r-&-b for a while. Most of our hits, like *She's Gone*, are in that style. But that really doesn't fit us because other different streams run through our music. We have some very impressionistic ballads, we have English-influenced hard rock, we have r-&-b. We have all these different things that we're synthesizing and developing almost separately from album to album. If you take any one of our three styles, you can trace its development back to our early albums, though its first example might differ from anything else on that particular album.

"When we started, we were coming

However their music is defined, they prefer that it *not* be called 'blue-eyed soul.'

out of the Sixties and consciously trying to be very simple and quiet and calm. Then we started drawing on our Philadelphia roots, as we did with 'Abandoned Luncheonette' (Atlantic SD 7269). But our third album for Atlantic was 'War Babies,' mostly New York hard rock. It was somewhat similar to 'Beauty on a Back Street'."

"War Babies" (Atlantic SD 18109), which came out in 1974, has been described by Hall and Oates as "cold, metallic, nihilistic," a response to the dislocations they experienced in mov-

ing to New York. But in 1975, when the duo left the Atlantic label, their first album for RCA bore little resemblance to their previous one. Called simply "Daryl Hall and John Oates," it was, at least in visual terms, an attempt to grab broader attention, though they deny it involved any artistic compromise. The silver cover was a glitter put-on, showing the two in heavy make-up, air-brushed into an artificial prettiness. A fuchsia pull-out featured Daryl posturing androgynously while John lounged as a Grecian nude.

"We had to pretend we were gay," John says with a chuckle. "But the music *did* represent a softer approach, a return to our more traditional mainstream sound." That album, which contained the hit *Sara Smile*, preceded a noticeably sharp turn back to rock on their second RCA set, "Bigger Than Both of Us" (RCA APL1-1467). But there was a mellowness to much of "Bigger," and *Rich Girl*, its hit single, was very much in their old Philly r-&-b vein. Then came "Beauty on a Back Street," with its more pronounced rock flavor, though, again, the softer element remained quite prominent.

THAT album took a lot of people by surprise," comments Hall, "but we've been going through a kind of metamorphosis, one thing evolving into another all through our career. Some people deal with only one of these different styles, but we try to put them together in some sort of coherence." Asked whether this metamorphosis has now led them to make a permanent shift toward hard rock, he replies, "It's hard to say. I don't think we're ever going to lose the essence of the soul tradition we grew up in, the way we feel. But we don't *live* in Philadelphia any more. We haven't lived there in years, so I think we're moving farther and farther away, into more of a New York sound."

But however their music is defined, they prefer that it *not* be called "blue-eyed soul."

"I'm offended by that; the term implies imitation," says Hall, while Oates nods agreement. "I did the same things as other r-&-b musicians. I even started out singing in church. It's all coming from the same place."

Oates underscores the point. "When we were kids, we were influenced by the sort of things we heard, mostly on the radio. The black sound was the mainstay of Philadelphia music. In fact, some of the first radio stations in America to play rock-and-roll were in Philadelphia."

Their background suggests that the

HALL & OATES

"I don't think we're ever going to lose the essence of the soul tradition we grew up in, the way we feel. But we don't live in Philadelphia any more."

pair have a just claim to some r-&b turf. Both grew up in the outermost sticks of Philadelphia, Daryl in Pottstown, about forty miles from the core of the city, and John in North Wales, comparably remote. The towns were too far away to be considered suburbs; as Oates recalls, "It was definitely the country and Philadelphia was the big city. It was always a big adventure to go there on weekends to buy records and clothes." But those small towns were not beyond the pale as far as pop-music radio was concerned. Like many other youngsters, they listened, liked what they heard, and eventually tried to play it themselves.

For Daryl Hall, music was a natural choice. Both his parents were classical musicians. His mother trained him in piano, and his father, who also sang in gospel groups, coached him in voice. "I could sing from the time I could talk," Hall recalls. "I was singing at the age of two. I got a sense of harmony from singing in church choirs."

But though his exposure to classical music was extensive, he never felt inclined to make a career out of it. "It

was a training period that enabled me to relate to music purely," he explains. "It gave me the technical facility to be able to grasp many styles, but I never felt very close to traditional classical music. I was always into something more vital to this century."

The power of pop music drew him into Philadelphia to sing with local groups and to back up such visiting acts as Smokey Robinson at the Uptown Theater. "I used to back up a lot of Motown acts in the Sixties," Hall says, "and I was very close to the original Temptations, especially Paul Williams. Their singing style was a big influence on me, particularly Paul, David Ruffin, and Eddie Kendricks."

The blond youth quickly became a conspicuous regular on the soul scene, working as a session musician at Sigma Sound with the Stylistics, the Delphonics, and others. "For years, when I was a teenager and up until 1971, I worked really closely with Kenny Gamble, Leon Huff, and Tommy Bell, doing sessions. I was one of the MFSB people for a while—I started with them—so that was a big influence on me. But I also feel that I helped to develop that sound. I left it because I felt that I wanted to move on, wanted to go in a different direction."

MEANWHILE, John Oates was growing up in North Wales, listening to some of those same radio stations. He recalls, "I think one of the reasons I began to play guitar was Elvis Presley. I had sung from a very early age, just naturally, and felt that the guitar was the perfect instrument to accompany my singing. But Elvis really did it for me, his attitude and style. He was a lot looser than the other performers.

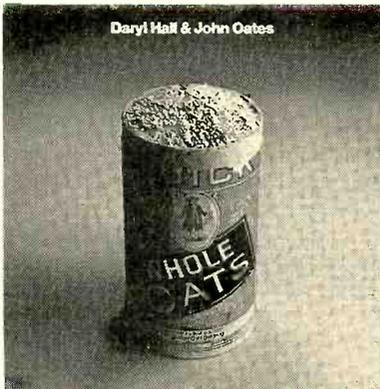


... Hall smiles

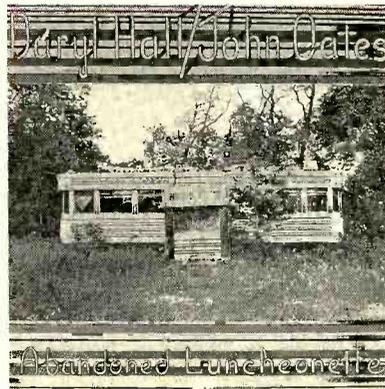
He seemed somehow to speak for all young people. I don't think it was even really conscious. No one knew what it was at the time. It just appealed to everyone. He was the forerunner of a lot of things that were to happen.

"From the beginning, I was also influenced a lot by the bands. I go back as far as songs like *Night Train*—the saxophone-combo type of thing—then everything from Elvis and U.S. Bonds on up. When I was about eighteen or nineteen, I began to get into the same sort of thing Daryl was into—Motown, the Temptations. I started doing some sessions and made my first record with some of the same people. Bobby Martin (he does arrangements for Gamble and Huff) and I began to work that scene when I moved to Philadelphia. From there on out, my story and Daryl's are more or less the same."

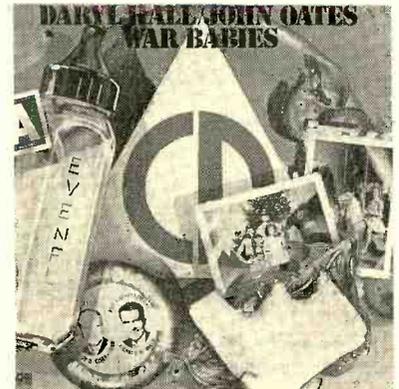
When the hard-rock sound became



WHOLE OATS: *I'm Sorry; All Our Love; Georgie; Fall in Philadelphia; Waterwheel; Lazyman; Goodnight and Goodmorning; They Needed Each Other; Southeast City Window; Thank you for . . . ; Lilly (Are You Happy).* ATLANTIC SD 7242.



ABANDONED LUNCHEONETTE: *When the Morning Comes; Had I Known You Better Then; Las Vegas Turnaround; She's Gone; I'm Just a Kid; Abandoned Luncheonette; Lady Rain; Laughing Boy; Everytime I Look at You.* ATLANTIC SD 19139



WAR BABIES: *War Baby Son of Zorro; I'm Watching You (A Mutant Romance); Better Watch Your Back; Screaming Through December; Johnny Gore and the "C" Eaters; Can't Stop the Music; Is It a Star; Beanie G. and the Rose Tattoo; You're Much Too Soon; 70's Scenario.* ATLANTIC SD 18109.



Oates scores . . .

dominant in popular music, both young men felt an urge to move in that direction. Says Hall, "Even when I was working at Sigma Sound and doing those sessions, a group of us formed a spin-off band and started doing some Beatles-influenced rock. There were always different influences coming together at the same time."

Given the similarity of their activities, it is not surprising that the Hall and Oates paths eventually converged. "We knew about each other," says Oates. "We both had bands, called by various names. We both had records cut, though they were nothing anyone would remember. The bands disbanded, so I teamed up with Daryl when we were at Temple, and we became roommates." The two soon began writing songs together. "It was nothing serious, just two friends writing together, but eventually it developed into this."

As the musical relationship solidified and the songs began to pile up, they attempted to get a recording contract. When they were signed by Atlantic in 1972, they put together a first album from their backlog of material, compositions dating back to 1968 and 1969 that they had written separately and together. But "Whole Oats" sold sparsely and hardly ushered them into stardom. "It wasn't the sort of album that jumped out and grabbed you. It was very quiet, very introspective and subtle," says Oates.

"Pretty artsy and crafty," says Hall.

They hit their stride in 1973 with their second disc, "Abandoned Luncheonette," notable for its airy, free-flowing melodies, flawlessly blended vocals, and pleasantly restrained rhythms. It holds up well today, both commercially and in the opinion of its creators. "I hear those songs on the radio and they still sound great to me," Hall says, "and at this point I must have sung *She's Gone* at least a thousand times."

THOUGH there is plenty of excitement in their performances, with close interaction and smooth showmanship, gimmicks are avoided. Band members might appear in rather dramatic attire (they joke about one of those Hell's Angels leather outfits for one of them), but the visual element is deliberately low key.

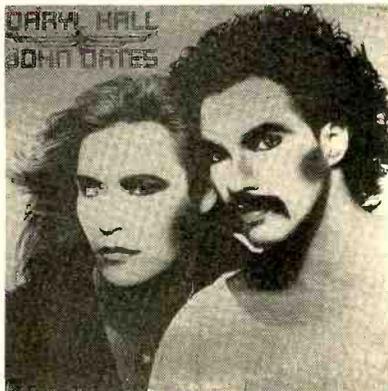
"We don't go in for the usual rock-'n'-roll ostentation," Hall says, "because we feel our music is able to stand on its own. It always has. We don't want anything to divert people's attention from the music. No smoke bombs, none of that junk."

Because success has come to them not as a flash flood but as a gradually swelling stream, they haven't forgotten all the effort that went into building their career.

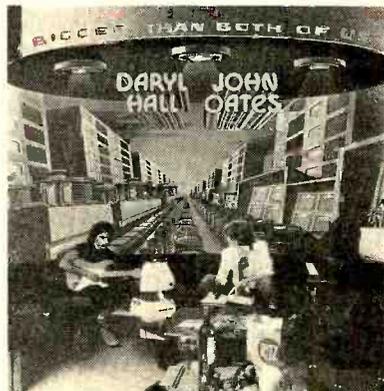
"I don't want it to stop," Hall says when asked whether things might taper off at some point. "I mean, it's taken so many years to get here. If we can just stay at this level for, say, five years, and then taper off for another five years, that's a pretty long career right there. We're both musicians, we've always been musicians, and I don't feel a need to go in to other areas. I think I'll *always* be making music. How many people it sells to is a question mark, but I'm concerned with how I progress artistically and musically. Financial security is certainly an element, but artistic expression is the motivating factor in what we do."

Yet he admits there is tremendous pressure to produce consistent hits. "You get this tugging back and forth. Since we've come this far and we've worked so hard, we want to make money. We *are* making it and we want to keep on making it, because we feel it's time to get some of the benefits of our hard work. *Nobody* works any harder than we do. This is as hard as any profession in the world . . . it's a twenty-four-hour job. You're always thinking. It's taxing to your body and your mind, and most musicians who work hard deserve the money they get. I want to live at a certain financial level, but if I had to make a choice, I'd rather do what I want to do than have the money—if I had to make that choice."

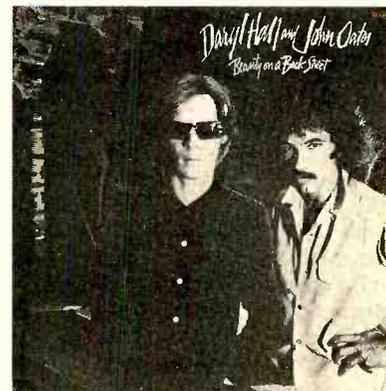
While their public identity is almost that of a single person, Hall and Oates have widely divergent interests they



DARYL HALL AND JOHN OATES: *Camellia*; *Sara Smile*; *Alone Too Long*; *Out of Me*; *Out of You*; *Nothing at All*; *Gino (The Manager)*; *It Doesn't Matter Anymore*; *Ennui on the Mountain*; *Grounds for Separation*; *Soldering*. RCA APL1-1144-B.



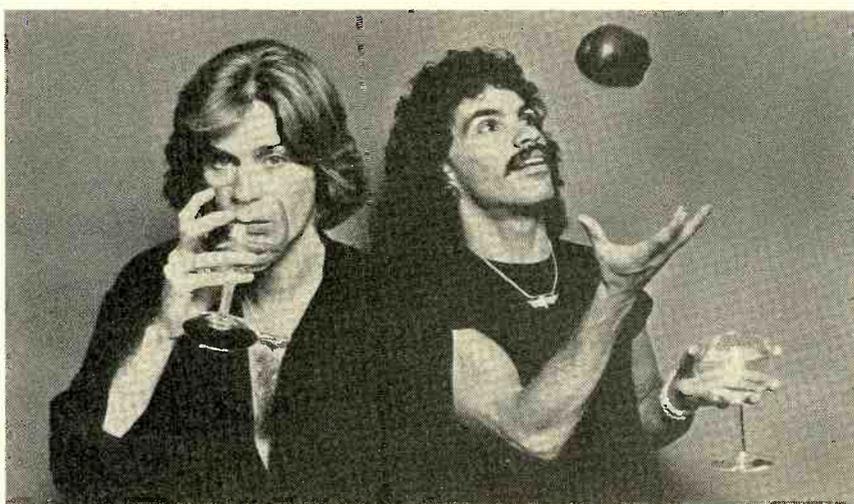
BIGGER THAN BOTH OF US: *Back Together Again*; *Rich Girl*; *Crazy Eyes*; *Do What You Want, Be What You Are*; *Kerry*; *London, Luck, and Love*; *Room to Breathe*; *You'll Never Learn*; *Falling*. RCA APL1-1467-B.



BEAUTY ON A BACK STREET: *Don't Change*; *Why Do Lovers Break Each Other's Heart?*; *You Must Be Good for Something*; *The Emptiness*; *Love Hurts (Love Heals)*; *Bigger Than Both of Us*; *Bad Habits and Infections*; *Winged Bull*; *The Girl Who Used to Be*. RCA AFL1-2300-B.

HALL & OATES

"We are like the sun of our own solar system; our everyday reality is pretty much what we want it to be."



pursue separately—when time permits, and it permits precious little. "I feel the pressure of time," says Oates, tensing up at the mere thought of it. "Time seems to be the factor that colors everything I do. There's never enough time to do what I want to for relaxation or even to work—to write, for instance. Either we're doing interviews or rehearsing or putting a band into clothes or working out lighting." Yet he finds some time to enjoy auto racing. "Not to watch it, but to *do* it. I'm just now getting into it, because it's a very expensive hobby. But it's something I've always wanted to do." He has acquired his dream car, a Porsche. He also likes to read, is weaning himself from TV, and has an enduring interest in film. "I took some film courses in school and I've read a lot about it. I like to watch from a technical standpoint as well as for pleasure. Some day I'd like to write film scripts."

HALL, on the other hand, is all but consumed by his love of music. "I write all the time. Something comes out every day." Otherwise, he is tuned in to a rather special frequency. "I'm very metaphysically oriented. For quite a while I've been interested in genuine magic—not magical tricks. I'm interested in the practical side of it, not just the theory . . . like making things appear rather than disappear." He doesn't say just *what* it is that appears, but adds, "You have to be careful. It's real. It's *very* real."

Their separate identities will be enhanced by the solo albums both hope to release shortly. Hall has his already in the can. Oates has plans: "I want to

use it as an opportunity to stretch out. Recently I've begun to play keyboards and I want to do some work on them, along with guitar. Basically it would be just a departure from what we do together, but I won't know *exactly* what it is until I do it."

The directions these solo efforts take should prove interesting, for neither of the two is deeply impressed with current developments in the rock field, though they express respect for such groups as Television, the Ramones, and Patti Smith.

"It's all been homogenized," Hall begins. "And distilled," Oates ends.

"*And* sucked down into this megacorporate business," Hall continues, "which has washed some of the wildness out of it—the musical wildness. There's not as much room for expansion and creativity and taking chances. Everybody's so concerned with selling records, the constant pressure to make everybody into a salable commodity. There are very few people just doing whatever it is they want to do without any kind of stops put on them. And there's no outlet for it on radio stations anyway—FM doesn't exist any more as an experimental medium. Five years ago an FM programmer just played what he felt like playing. Now everybody has play lists, your top twenty and your top forty. FM is the same as AM, so if you are doing anything outside the boundaries, nobody'll hear about it, only a few people who go to the clubs. The New Wave is a perfect example. Nobody hears it."

Though they are aware of what's going on in the pop-music world, it is often difficult for them to find time to

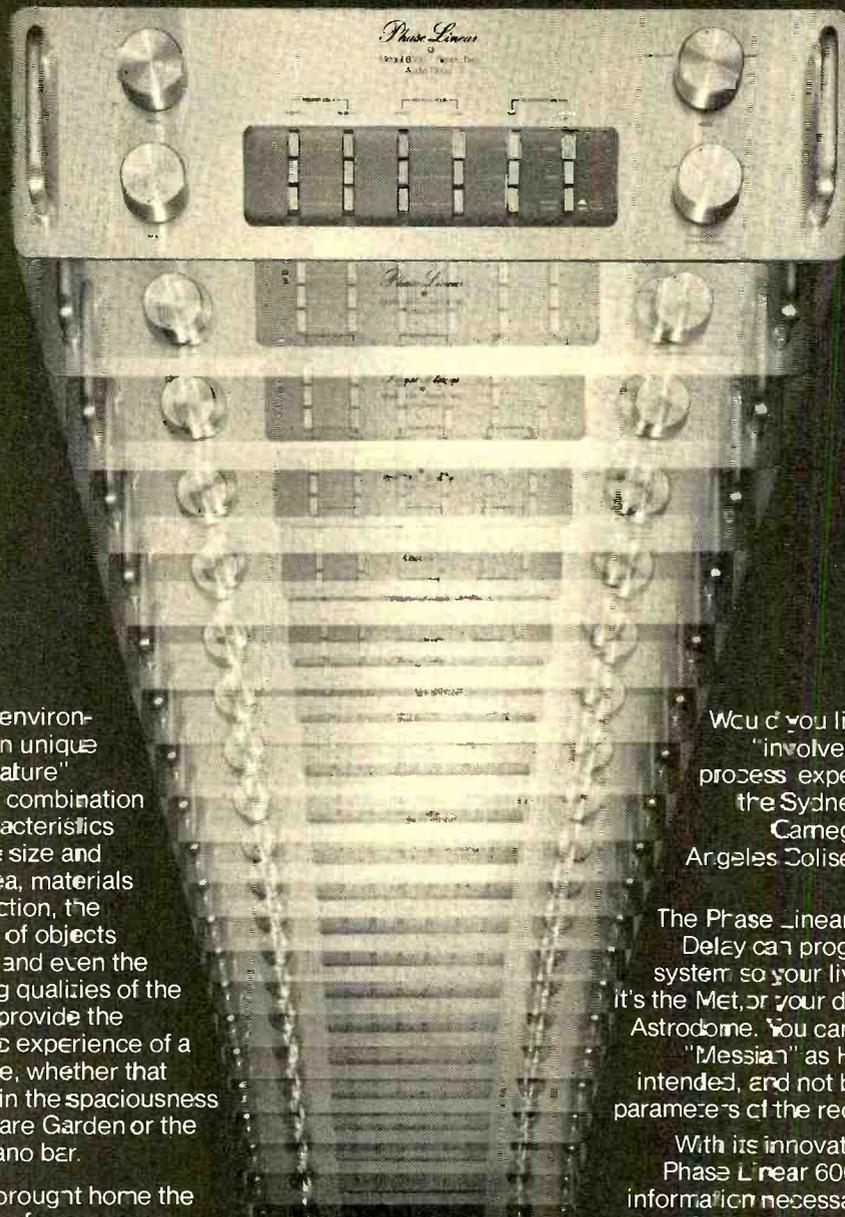
check out new talent. A contributing factor is that, like many popular artists, they travel a lot but nonetheless live in a relatively small world surrounded by a surrogate family composed of those with whom they work.

"We are like the sun of our own solar system; our everyday reality is pretty much what we want it to be," says Hall. "This is great in some ways, but it's also very restricting. We see the same people all the time. Those outside our immediate circle tend to become unreal; in the worst cases it's almost incestuous."

OVERALL, they seem content with their lives and foresee no problems even with all the pressures. They have adjusted to life on the road and feel no need to be in one place all the time, though they talk about buying a large estate in Connecticut that they and their associates could retreat to. Both are single, though Daryl is "with someone" and John was "with someone until today." They seldom go back to their home towns: the distance between them and the world they now work in looms large for a moment as Daryl muses, "Most of the people I grew up with have homes and kids now. I can't remember when I've seen any of them."

Instead they look forward to other types of things, such as an upcoming tour of Europe and the East, including Japan and Australia. Given their susceptibility to fresh influences, the trip, a first for them, might well have some impact on their music. Anybody out there ready for a little Australo-Nipponese rock-funk? □

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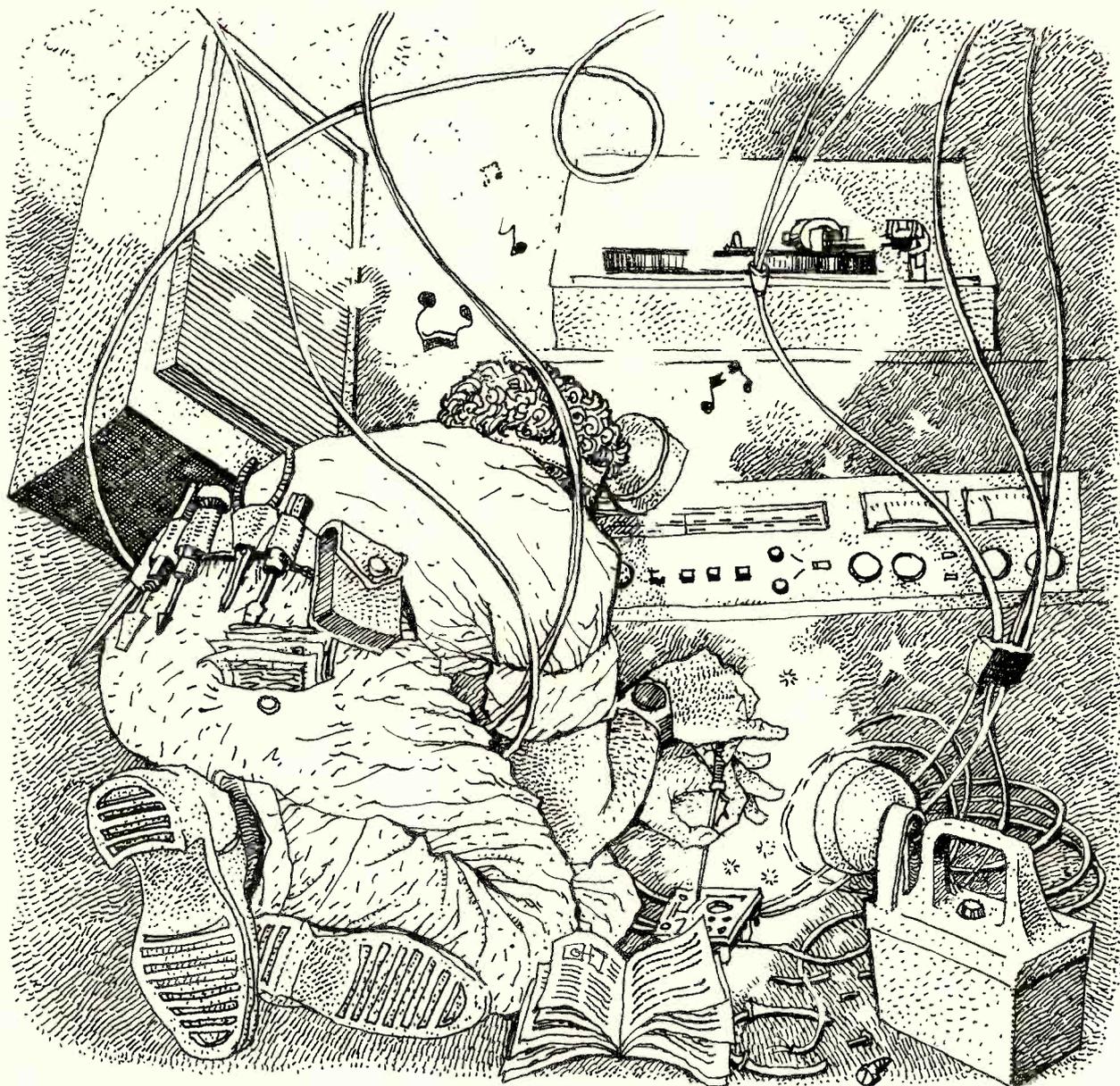
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TALES FROM AN AUDIO REPAIRMAN'S NOTEBOOK

By Robert N. Greene

I'M an audio service technician—otherwise known as a hi-fi repairman. What's it like? It's a job like any other, with many ups and downs, a few frustrations, and now and then a laugh. Come along with me on some of my house calls and see for yourself. If you pick up some ideas about how you can avoid paying somebody like me to come to *your* house, you'll be just that much ahead of the game.

● Hum Sweet Hum

One of the nastiest audio-equipment problems there is is hum. When it's caused by a circuit malfunction, finding and replacing the offending part is a relatively straightforward process. But when everything appears to be working right it can be a real head-scratcher. For newcomers to hi-fi, it's worth pointing out that speakers themselves don't hum; they simply let you hear the hum originating elsewhere in your system. The number of ways in which hum can get into a system works out to a total I would prefer not to think about.

The magnetic field around some a.c. carrier, perhaps even the normal house wiring inside the walls, is usually the source, but there's nothing one can actually see or feel, so correcting the trouble is largely a process of trial and error. In one case I remember, the answer all but fell into my lap.

The exact nature of the customer's equipment was unimportant, except that its bass response was good enough to deliver hum in full measure. The hum was reported to be on phono only, a common enough situation since phono cartridges can be hum sensitive, and preamplifiers have both high gain and equalization circuits that provide considerable bass boost. I half expected to find the record player too near the amplifier or other chassis, one of the common hum sources being the strong a.c. field surrounding power transformers. The cure in such a case requires very little engineering savvy; you just move the components away from each other. (Cassette-deck tape heads can also be sensitive to radiated hum. Sometimes stacking a deck on top of some other component will introduce hum problems.)

In this case, however, I found the record player sitting chastely on a shelf a good three feet from the nearest chassis. Nonetheless, I was able to spot the problem immediately, simply because this owner had made the same mistake I once had in my own system, and it had sat staring me in the face as unobserved as Poe's *Purloined Letter*. I walked over and switched on his system; a conveniently placed lamp also went on to illuminate the turntable. Very handy, but it was one of those compact, high-intensity lamps, the kind that uses a 12-volt bulb. And how do you work a 12-volt bulb on a 120-volt line? Right: with a step-down trans-

former hidden in the lamp base, a small but efficient electromagnetic-hum producer when operated near audio equipment. Enough said? Let's hope you've found this little tale illuminating. . . .

● A Little Amp That Couldn't

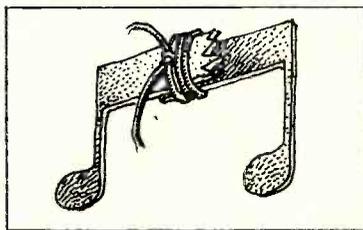
"My amp doesn't like heavy-metal rock!" I've heard quite a variety of audio complaints, but this was a new one. Suppressing an urge to observe that the caller's amplifier may have had better musical taste than its owner, I asked for a little clarification.

"Well, whenever I play my Aerosmith or Led Zep records the sound just sort of keeps going on and off."

From the slightly apologetic tone it was clear this guy expected me to think he was some kind of nut. At one time I might have, but I've learned that audio equipment sometimes does behave strangely under stress, and that even quite straightforward problems can sound a mite strange when described by a technically unsophisticated owner. "What about quieter kinds of music?" I asked. "They seem to play okay; that's what I can't understand."

I went through the catalog of standard questions trying to get some handle on this oddity, but the only additional information I got was that the problem occurred with the cassette machine as well, but seldom with the tuner. And the amplifier was an elderly model bought secondhand.

So we set up an appointment for a house call, and a few days later I got to meet this "no rock, please" amplifier in person. It was a name-brand integrated unit of respectable quality, on the low-power side but normally quite adequate for a small apartment. Everything else was good, standard older equipment; the only items that didn't fit the picture were the new smallish 4-ohm acoustic-suspension speakers at one end of the little listening room. The owner proudly explained that he was upgrading his system and had started with these high-quality but, unknown to him, low-efficiency jobs.



I switched on the power and everything lit up merrily. The tuner sounded okay, so I put on one of the reference records I carry with me—still good. Since everything seemed to be working well, I asked the owner to demonstrate his rock problem (my reference discs are, as you may have guessed, not loud rock music). He put on one of his own records and cranked up the bass, treble, and volume so high that just the sound of the stylus in the lead-in groove made me cringe. When the music began it was painfully loud, but mercifully it stopped abruptly after the first few moments, just as the owner had said it would. And, just as abruptly, it came back on for a relatively quiet passage, then went off again as the decibel level began to rise once more.

During one of the quiet periods I turned the volume and bass down a bit and the sound returned with a little "click" at the amplifier. It was no longer ear-popping-at-the-Palladium time, but we had sound, and perfectly good sound at that. The customer was right; his amplifier *didn't* like rock—at least not the way he was trying to play it. What he didn't realize was that in going to better speakers he had created a problem. His previous speakers had been a different design of much higher efficiency, and he had been able to get ear-shattering volume out of *that* amp-speaker combination with no trouble (except, perhaps, from his neighbors). He thought that with better speakers he'd get "bigger" sound, but nobody told him he'd need more amplifier power to continue shaking the walls the way he wanted to. His demand for tremendous volume and bass from his new low-efficiency 4-ohm speakers overloaded his poor little amp, and it protested by triggering its protective relays. When things calmed down a little and the output transistors were no longer in danger, the amplifier would kick back in until the next high-level onslaught came along and shut things down again.

It wasn't easy to convince the customer that anything approaching live-rock sound levels would require a considerably more powerful amplifier, a switch to higher-efficiency speakers, or both. Of course, he could also leave things as they were and listen at the more reasonable volume and bass levels his equipment could handle. I never heard the upshot of this situation, but I'd be willing to bet it wasn't long before our rock fan went out and bought

AUDIO REPAIRMAN...

"What the 'experts' had done was to entomb the chassis, virtually guaranteeing that it would self destruct. . . ."

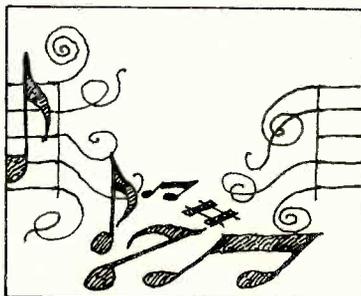
the biggest damned amplifier he could afford—and promptly blew out his new speakers.

● Hum Again

Getting back to the subject of hum, let me tell you about another case that was particularly frustrating to the owner. This was an older gentleman who over the years had put a good amount of money into his system and spent a lot of time listening in his favorite

chair. Shortly before the problem arose, he told me, some of the furniture, including that favorite chair, had been rearranged for reasons of decor. He saw no connection between the furniture movement and his problem and mentioned it only in passing.

And here's the kicker: this poor soul seemed to be the only one who could



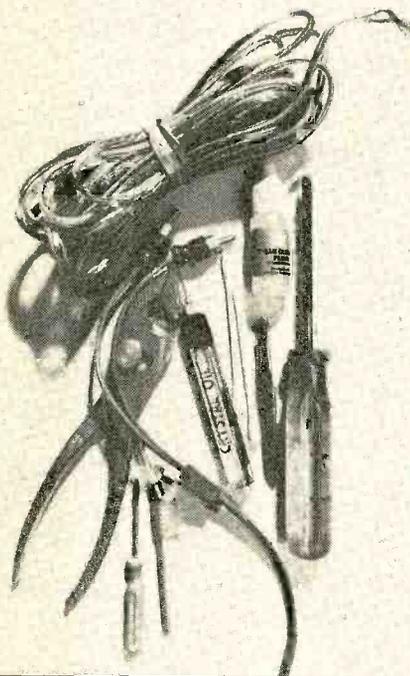
hear the hum! He had had a few people in to inspect his system, but they claimed not to hear what he found so annoying. At first I suspected that I wouldn't be any more help than the others—I couldn't hear any abnormal hum level, either. There seemed to be nothing but normal system noise. But

the man was obviously not a crackpot; if he said he heard something it seemed reasonable to assume he did even though I couldn't. So I left and returned later with something I don't generally cart around—my oscilloscope. Hooking it to the speaker leads, I found that there was indeed some extremely low-level 60-Hz hum present. Now that I could "see" the hum I could take steps to minimize it.

In this case it was not the cure that was interesting but the problem (as it happened, connecting an external ground—from the amplifier to a radiator—cut back the hum sufficiently so that it was no longer bothersome). The point is that the man was sensitive to low frequencies while his high-frequency hearing was diminished. The hum had probably been present right along, but it had gone unnoticed until that favorite chair had been moved—right into one of the peak-pressure areas of a 60-Hz standing wave in his listening room. So our customer suddenly had an accident of room acoustics compounding his peculiar low-frequency sensitivity.

A somewhat related hum incident involves a well-known audio writer (he

WHAT TO DO BEFORE SENDING FOR THE REPAIRMAN



You should, first of all, have your own little troubleshooting kit handy for possible sonic emergencies. It ought to contain several spare sets of shielded audio cables long enough to substitute for the longest cable in your system. In addition, lay in a few spare fuses of each type and value used in your equipment (they will probably all have different amperage ratings and some will be special fast- or slow-blow types; get *exact* replacements). A length of speaker wire—usually No. 18 lamp cord—long enough to reach any of your speakers easily will prove helpful at times too.

As for tools, there should be, at minimum, standard 1/8- and 1/4-inch plastic-handle screwdrivers, needle-nose and regular pliers, a magnifying glass, and a small flashlight.

You may not be able, in any given case, to solve the problem yourself, but you should at least be able to get an idea as to which piece of equipment is at fault and how serious the trouble is. Remember, it's always cheaper to take a part of your system to a repair station than to have a repairman come to you.

Now, as to procedure: step number one is a warning. In the body of the accompanying article you are direct-

ed to pull the a.c. plugs if you see smoke. That's *not* a joke. If you see smoke coming from any part of your system, if you smell anything burning or hear crackling or popping noises coming directly from a component, *immediately* unplug the a.c. leads. Don't just turn things off—*pull the plugs!* Then, unless you know what you're doing technically, get professional help.

To zero in on the minor problems, start by determining if the trouble appears on *all* of the amplifier's input functions—tuner, phono, and so on. If it doesn't, then the problem is probably in the signal-source component. If it's in one channel only, interchange that component's right and left shielded cables at the amplifier end (in a receiver, of course, there are no tuner-to-amplifier cables). If the trouble changes channels, try replacing the cable from the bad source channel. If that doesn't solve the problem, the source component itself is probably at fault.

If the problem is poor sound on phono, check first for a wad (or even a speck) of dirt on the stylus. Dirt is a prime troublemaker even in quantities too small to be visible. It can be removed with a soft camel's-hair brush and alcohol. Careful—styli are very delicate.

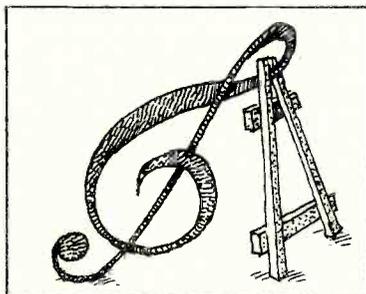
shall remain nameless) who spent hours one Saturday trying to eliminate a hum that was totally independent of the setting of the volume and bass controls. The problem was solved very late in the day when he noticed that the hum was also independent of whether his equipment was turned on or not. It seems that there was this old art-deco electric clock vibrating on the shelf by his speaker that made its own 60-Hz music without needing any other amplification than that provided by the sounding-board shelf.

● *Can You Breathe in There?*

Our next case doesn't involve any cure but rather some prevention. Some years ago, when I was working for an audio-equipment manufacturer, I had a friend who had just "gone stereo" with a fancy new rig. He didn't do the setting up himself but farmed it out to a cabinetmaker who supposedly "specialized" in high-fidelity installations. He might better have done it himself.

The cabinetmaker took the physical dimensions of the various audio components and set about making the furniture based on these figures. Some

weeks later they delivered the completed piece and "installed" the components. What I found on going to view this creation was a rather handsome bookshelf arrangement incorporating the receiver, record player, and tape deck, along with a little bar, a desk, and a few other fittings usual in such a piece. As I had suggested, the speakers



had been left on long leads to allow for optimum positioning in the room.

The builders had been clever in their use of space; not an inch was wasted. Decoratively this was fine, but it did create one very serious problem: each of the components had been allotted only the absolute minimum amount of

space necessary. The turntable and tape deck were on rollers, so they were okay. But the hot spot—literally—was the receiver. It was slid into a space just barely large enough to house it, and no larger. This cubbyhole was sealed on top, sides, and front; the back was open—but the whole thing stood flush against a wall. What the "experts" had done was to entomb the chassis, virtually guaranteeing that it would self-destruct from its own heat, probably sooner than later.

I of course alerted my friend about it. He was far from happy, but relieved that it had been caught in time. He had run the unit for only a short while, but he had already noticed that the receiver's face-plate became alarmingly hot. The receiver couldn't be moved to another shelf; it was mounted on a wood panel that couldn't be removed easily. Further, putting it anywhere else would have upset the visual design of the cabinet.

The only way out, short of returning the whole thing for rebuilding, was a piece of surgery that seemed at the time almost sacrilegious. I got out my electric drill and circular hole cutter, pulled the receiver chassis out, and

Also check the thin-wire connections to the phono-cartridge pins (these are also delicate). If the cartridge shell isn't easily removable, hold a small mirror under it and illuminate the area with a flashlight pointed into the mirror. Perhaps you'll see a broken lead or a clip that's worked loose.

Don't, however, try to repair or adjust a record player or changer mechanism unless the instruction book so advises. You'll probably aggravate whatever troubles you've got.

IF the troublesome signal source is a tape deck, remove the head cover (if possible) and clean the tape heads with a cotton swab and head-cleaning solution. Don't use the same solution on the rubber pinch-roller unless the instructions give you the okay to do so. The pinch roller (the black rubber puck) can safely be cleaned with isopropyl alcohol (drugstore variety) and another cotton swab. *Without* any tape in the machine (use a card, or whatever, to fool the automatic cutoff switch into believing some tape is loaded), put the controls in play. Hold the alcohol-dampened swab against the rotating rubber wheel until the black (or brown) stuff stops coming off.

If your tuner seems to be having

troubles, check several stations. If most are okay, then you may have a problem with your antenna. Check the connections and the antenna's orientation. If antenna manipulation doesn't change anything, professional help is probably needed. If only *one* station is bad, it's probably the broadcaster's fault. This is much more common than you might imagine, and if the trouble appeared abruptly it will probably be cleared up at the source and disappear just as abruptly. Listen to another station until the substandard one gets its act together. If your trouble is spread over half your FM dial but not the other, again, get professional help.

If the trouble appears on *all* functions, then the fault is probably in the amplifier (receiver) or perhaps one of the speakers. If you have noise, distortion, or silence in one speaker, switch the left speaker cable to the right speaker, and vice versa, *at the speakers*. If the problem does not move to the other loudspeaker, then the offending speaker is the cause. Ask the manufacturer for the name of his local authorized repair station; *do not* call your local repairman.

If the trouble moves to the other speaker (it probably will), then you have either an amplifier or a speaker-cable problem. So, interchange the

left and right speaker connections *at the amplifier* (you have now returned your speaker hookup to the original left-and-right configuration). If the trouble stays in the same speaker, replace the cable to that speaker. If it moves, the trouble is in the amplifier.

THIS should be enough to give you the general idea: it's all an orderly process of elimination. For a more detailed check, get a reprint copy of the article "Hi-fi Troubleshooting" from the July 1975 issue of *STEREO REVIEW*. It includes an elaborate troubleshooting flow chart that covers just about everything the average audiophile can do for himself in the event of system trouble. And if you can't fix it yourself, the information provided can at least help you determine which component is at fault, and that's half the battle. The reprint is available for \$1 from Stereo Review Reprints, P.O. Box 278, Pratt Station, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11205. Ask for reprint No. 9.

And last, but by no means least, the manufacturer is the best source of advice about where and how to get your equipment repaired. It's usually worth investing in a long-distance phone call, if need be, to get the information directly, correctly, and—especially—fast.

AUDIO REPAIRMAN...

“... just avoid panic and take the time to think things through.”

drilled a series of large air holes through the shelves above and below it. This would permit the chassis to ventilate itself as it was meant to do. Fortunately, the holes were inconspicuous after the raw edges were stained. The patient recovered without the trauma of major surgery.

I've actually thrown you a bit of a curve with this story. The incident took place years ago, and the receiver involved was a *tube* unit. However, though transistorized equipment of a comparable size will be much cooler in operation, the same rules of ventilation apply. Most solid-state equipment develops *some* heat—the large amplifiers and receivers a great deal—and the transistors themselves, unlike tubes, are heat sensitive.

So don't *you* put yourself in the position of having to drill holes in a nice new piece of furniture. And even if the top of your solid-state unit doesn't seem to get very hot, *don't* use it as a convenient surface to stack magazines or—especially—records!

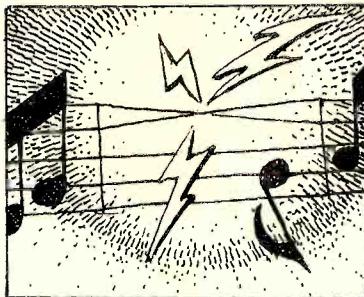
● Got the Shakes?

As long as I'm on the subject of the potential interaction of audio equipment and furniture, I'll cite another example. This time the complaint was about a blurring of sound when records were played at high level. Over the years, I've learned to distrust customers' descriptions of their problems somewhat, so I was prepared to encounter almost anything. It could have been, for example, that the so-called “blurring” was actually present all the time but not obvious except at high levels. In that case, the cause could be something along the lines of a worn stylus (or one with dirt stuck to it), poor tracking (for any of a variety of reasons), turntable flutter, or you name it.

* * *

A little aside here: in the previous case history, I spoke of the importance of having the speakers separate from the cabinet to avoid creating what

would in effect be a console. Why the avoidance of consoles? For one thing, they don't permit proper placement of speakers for best performance in a given environment. Another is even more important: the engineers who design the equipment that goes into these pieces of furniture usually have a serious—and unavoidable—constraint placed on them: the system's bass response must be severely restricted. As the speaker goes lower in frequency, its vibrations become coupled to the cabinet, which in turn couples it to the record player. The *only* vibration that should be present in any record player is that of the stylus as driven by the record groove; anything else will be superimposed on the desired stylus vibration, causing signal distortion or noise. Carried to an extreme, this extraneous vibration, as reproduced by the speakers, will be returned to the record-player stylus, then back to the speakers, and so on. In a mild case of such acous-



tic feedback, there may be a sort of “twanging” quality to the music; in severe cases there will be a loud howl whenever the volume is turned up. By restricting the bass, the designers can minimize the acoustic-coupling problem, but at the cost of sonic fidelity.

All turntables have some kind of built-in provision to help avoid acoustic feedback, a suspension system of one sort or another designed to isolate the turntable and tone arm from the vibrations taking place in the rest of the world. These suspension systems are effective to varying degrees. With some, virtually nothing short of an earthquake will get through; others can be triggered into vibration by a loud bass passage.

* * *

But back to the case at hand. The owner's description had been accurate, and the problem was indeed acoustic feedback. Everything hadn't been built into one cabinet, but there was a connection, if a less obvious one, between the speakers and the turntable. The speakers, excellent bass reproducers, stood on shelves attached to a wall.

The turntable was some distance away, but on a cabinet attached to the same wall. That wall, then, was the connecting link and the transmission path for the vibration that was blurring the sound.

I ran a quick check of the equipment to be sure there was nothing else wrong (there wasn't) and then proceeded to try to eliminate the lack of clarity (the low frequencies, especially, were muddy). A problem of this kind can be attacked from either one end of the system or the other; either the speakers or the record player can be isolated—sometimes both. As long as the feedback link is broken, how it's done usually comes down to a matter of convenience. In this case the record player was easier and more practical to move than the two fifty-pound speakers.

Foam-rubber padding under the turntable frequently does the trick, but this isn't something one carries around. I stole a flat foam cushion from a chair and put it under the player. It was a little wobbly, but it made the point—the lows were now hard and tight.

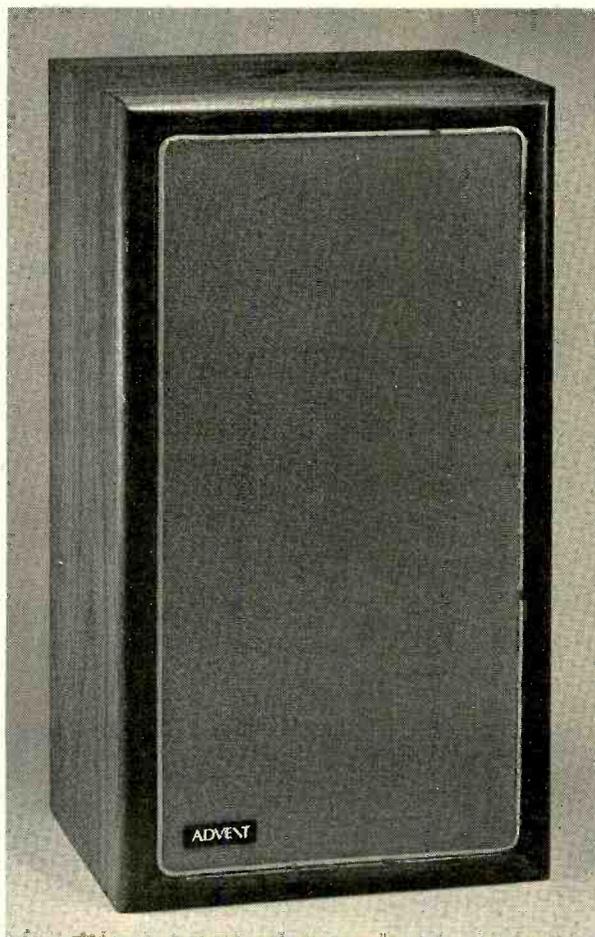
Another way of defeating acoustic feedback is with dead weight rather than padding; the heavier anything is, the less subject it will be to vibration. I ran extension cables from the turntable and placed it on a heavy chest standing nearby. This also worked.

As a final double check, I put everything back the way it had been and gave it another try—the muddiness returned. So the diagnosis had been made; the customer had been shown the problem and ways to correct it. He could now get something more appropriate in the way of an isolating mounting (Netronics and Audio-Technica have them) or relocate his record player. Since the end result would be the same either way, I left the choice to him.

So there you have a handful of examples of the kind of equipment malfunctions an audio service technician is likely to encounter. If you're thinking that in none of the cases cited was there anything *seriously* wrong, you're quite right. Not all equipment problems manifest themselves in smoke clouds, blowouts, and depleted bank accounts. Many of them can be handled nicely by the owner if he'll just avoid panic and take the time to think things through. A reprint of STEREO REVIEW's “Hi-fi Troubleshooting” and a modest tool kit (see the accompanying box) may be all you need to set things straight yourself. If you do decide to try it, go slowly, use your head, and, as the old saying so wisely has it, “when all else fails, read the instructions.” □

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Stereo Review Throws a Party...

To celebrate its Record of the Year Awards for 1977, the twelve awards and twenty-five honorable mentions (see February 1978 issue) set off an epicurean of contagious merriment at New York's St. Regis Hotel January 12. Mabel Mercer, beloved doyenne of the world of cabaret, presented Richard Rodgers with the magazine's Certificate of Merit "for outstanding contributions to the quality of American musical life", of which she was herself the first recipient four years earlier. She is shown (1) with Mr. Rodgers and Edgar Hopper, Stereo Review publisher. Well-wishers and colleagues kept Mr. Rodgers busy. He is shown chatting with (2) singing actress Florence Henderson, onetime Maria in *The Sound of Music* and now known as TV's Wesson Oil lady and ageless ragtimer Eudie Blake; (3) his wife Dorothy and Constance Towers, risking a late curtain for her current engagement in *The King and I* (RCA ABL1-2610); (4) Leida Snow, arts commentator with New York's WPIX, and Erwin Robinson, president of Campbell Music; (5) publicist Alise Regensburg of the Lynn Farnol Group, lyricist Howard Dietz (*Dancing in the Dark*) and—just visible at right—composer Sammy Fain (*I'll Be Seeing You*); (6) Mrs. Rodgers again, and Paired Smiles Records' Ben Bagley; and (8) lyricist Martin Charn (*Annie*, Columbia PS 34712), with whom he collaborated on *Two by Two*. (7) Popular Music Editor Paulette Weiss with Jane Haber of Deutsche Grammophon and Contributing Editor Rick Mitz.



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(9) STEREO REVIEW Research Editor Richard Sarbin with Beth Wernick of Levinson Associates, artists' representatives, and Gay Zizes of Angel Records' artist-relations department. (10) Contributing Editor Steve Simels makes a point with Betsy Volek of Arista.

Above: (11) STEREO REVIEW critic Joel Vance gets the story from Roxana Gordy, on the threshold of a vocal career. (12) Contributing Editor Jamake Highwater, 1978 Newbery Prize winner for his novel *Anpao*, chats with Henry Brief, executive director of the RIAA. (13) Amy Sperling, publicist with Columbia Artists Management, and Erik Hamrin, ditto with Peter Gravina Associates, face the music with George Jellinek, STEREO REVIEW's man about opera. (14) Rising young piano stylist Steve Ross plays *primo* to Eubie Blake's *secondo* on guest-of-honor Rodgers' *Blue Moon*. (15) Millicent Martin, of the cast of *Side by Side by Sondheim* (RCA CBL-1851), enjoyed herself hugely, as did (16) cabaret artists Dolores Gray and Peter Dean. The party became a family get-together for (17) troubadour James Taylor and three distaff singers, sister Kate (left), sister-in-law Lucy Simon, and wife Carly. Family reunion part two (19) has Lucy (again left) with maternal uncle Peter Dean, sister Carly, paternal uncle (and author) Al Simon, and, front, photographer brother Peter. (18) A dazzling dental display by actors Russell Nye, Wesley Addy, and Celeste Holm (now Mrs. Addy, and creator, of course, of the role of Ado Annie in *Oklahoma!*). (20) Publicist Michael Mace with Tony Caronia, director of artist relations for Angel Records. (21) Irrepressible songstress Sylvia Syms and Charles Bourgeois of the Newport Jazz Festival. (22) Metropolitan Opera soprano Mignon Dunn holds court for her admirers, among them Andrew Raeburn, left, producer of New World Records' award-winning *The Mother of Us All* (NW 288/9), in which Miss Dunn starred. And how much, alas, the late Teddi King would have enjoyed it all. (Photos: Vicki Stanwycks, 1, 8, 11, 12, 14, 16, 20, 21; Russell Eliot Reif, 2, 17; Erika Davidson, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 15, 18, 19, 22.)

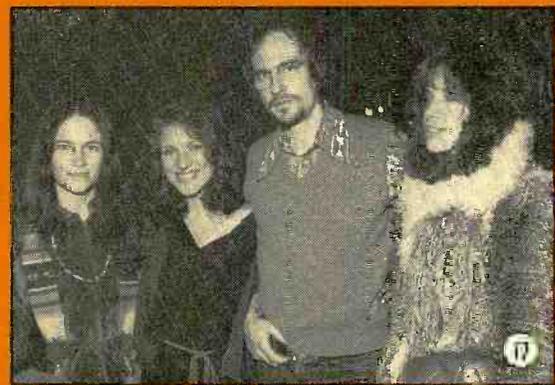
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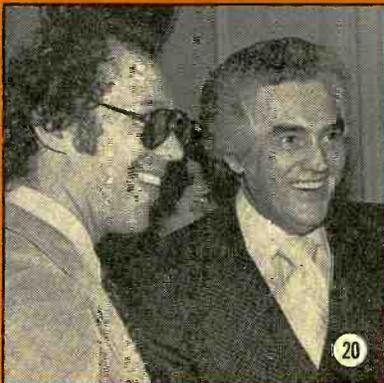
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ROCK SLEEPERS

WHEN I set out to compile this list of rock-'n'-roll "sleeping beauties," I intended to lay as many outré records on you as possible, if only to overcome some people's conviction that my tastes are a wee bit too conventional. Unfortunately, I soon discovered that most of my favorite berserko choices bit the dust long ago and are now out of print, so my definitive study of Godfrey Daniel, Brute Force, Autosalvage, and Zal Yanovsky will have to await some other occasion. But in the meantime, the six discs discussed herewith are all eminently worth a listen even though none of them exactly burned up the charts when they were first released.



● First of all, it's time to say a good word about **Moby Grape**, which is a downright avant-garde thing to do, at least around here. The fact is, for all the bad-mouthing the band has taken over the years for a variety of extramusical reasons—the huge hype from CBS, bassist Bob Mosley's leaving to join the Marines (without even dying of shame)—the Grape was without question the finest rock outfit to come out of San Francisco during that city's musical heyday. They had it all: great singing (Mosley was a nonpareil blues shouter and the group's harmonies were gorgeous), incredible material (everybody in the Grape wrote, at times brilliantly), commanding stage presence (especially front man Skip Spence, before his unfortunate breakdown), and an extraordinarily innovative and influential lead guitarist (Jerry Miller's licks are being stolen to this day by pickers not even aware of their source). If you doubt me, the recorded evidence is still available on their classic debut album, "Moby Grape" (Columbia CS 9498), with the scandalous (for its time) cover photo of drummer Don Stevenson making a vulgar hand gesture. No collection of American music, let alone rock-and-roll, is complete without it.



● Because the **MC5** viewed the then-fashionable radical politics of the late Sixties both seriously and as a good commercial gimmick, and because their initial hype was so strident, even now not nearly enough people realize just how fine they were. It's understandable; would you bother with a band that posed for photos as "urban guerrillas" so tough they wore White Panther buttons on their bare chests? Probably not, but you'd be missing the hardest hard rock ever made by Americans—rock-and-roll in the same league as the very best of the Stones, the Yardbirds, and the Who.

MC5 made three albums—all classics, but all flawed in some way. The first was live and tremendously exciting, but indifferently recorded. The second had even better material, but the band and producer Jon Landau were totally green in the studio, so most of the raunch got lost in the mix. The third time out, though, they finally got the sound they'd been chasing all along, and "High Time" (Atlantic 40223, imported) is one of the wildest, most exhilarating rave-up albums ever waxed. Fast, flashy, full of furious energy, it remains—despite a few overextended jams—one of the significant records of the decade.

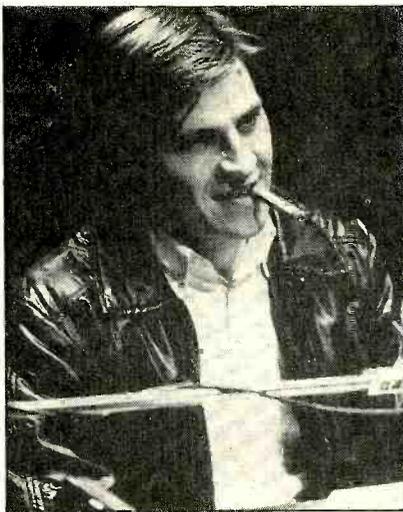


● It's no secret that the late **Elvis Presley's** recorded output was . . . well, spotty. Despite his enormous natural gifts, his albums were too often indifferently produced, tackily packaged, and littered with songs of (as Greil Marcus put it) awesome ickiness. There were exceptions, of course, and one of the finest is the sadly overlooked "Elvis Country" (RCA LSP-4460). It's a concept album, believe it or not, subtitled "I'm 10,000 Years Old." The cover photo is a stark, Depression-era shot of Elvis and his folks when the King was just a toddler. Inside, snatches of an incredibly exciting revival-tent rocker fade in and out mysteriously between twelve cuts running the gamut from quasi-devotional to straight country, urban blues, and rockabilly. The uncredited backings are, for a change, tasteful and contemporary, and all through Elvis sings with a passion and flair unmatched since the classic Sun sides he cut at the beginning of his career; maybe in some strange way he took the subtitle seriously. It's close to being a perfect record, a sad and powerful reminder of the greater heights this unique, quintessentially American artist might have achieved if he (or Colonel Parker, we'll never really know) ever had a compelling reason to try.

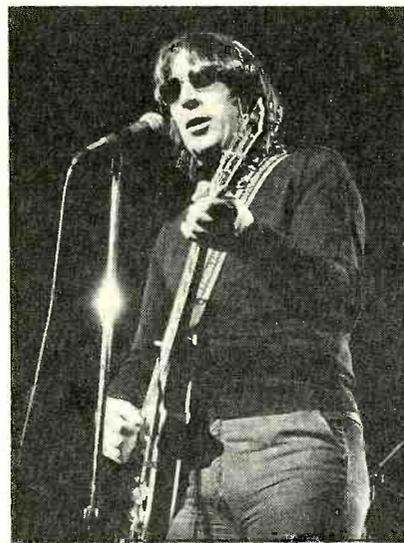
ROCK SLEEPERS



● I love **Paul Revere and the Raiders**. Forget the vaguely embarrassing frat-house humor they used to project on stage and while cavorting on Dick Clark's TV show *Where the Action Is*. The truth is that they were the first American band of the Sixties to approach the power of the best English outfits of the period (Drake Levin may have been the first Yank to really play *electric* guitar). They made scads of uncompromising rock singles, and before he went to Las Vegas Mark Lindsay was looking like an American Mick Jagger. But you don't have to take my word for it. Their great tracks (and some of the lesser ones, which are still pretty entertaining) are collected on "All-time Greatest Hits" (Columbia KG 31464), a double-record set that just about defines "mainstream," at least so far as rock-and-roll is concerned. Play it loud, and make of yourself a proud public nuisance.



● **Alan Price** was, of course, the creative force behind the original Animals, and he has since gone on (in England, that is) to become a highly respected critic, cabaret artist, television personality, and film composer. (One of the minor mysteries of the day is why his score for Lindsay Anderson's *O Lucky Man* never got nominated for an Oscar.) In the mid-Sixties, Price fronted a marvelous small-band r-&-b outfit (with horns, no less); they enjoyed only modest success over here, but their recording, "This Price Is Right" (London PAS 71018), is still in the catalog. It would be worthwhile for no other reason than that it introduced an unknown songwriter called Randy Newman, but since Price is a terrific singer, a canny arranger, and in general one of the most ingratiating and intelligent folks to come out of the British blues movement, there's all the more reason to check it out. Few other 1967 discs have aged anywhere near as gracefully.



● It's hard to know what to make of **John Cale**. Lou Reed, who formed the Velvet Underground with Cale way back when, says that he's another Beethoven. I'm not willing to go quite *that* far, but I've no doubt that Cale has one of the most agile musical minds around. The problem, perhaps, is that he's a little *too* agile, and he can't seem to decide whether he's a serious composer, a pop star, a producer, or the original punk rocker. For me his finest work (there are those who prefer his more recent releases, which I find unrelentingly stark) is "Paris 1919" (Warner Bros., imported), which has the distinction of selling fewer copies than anything since Van Dyke Parks' "Song Cycle." It's a stunner, though. Backed by musicians ranging from Lowell George and Little Feat to the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Cale constructs a haunting, almost surrealistic tableau that summons up the feel of *fin de siècle* Europe without ever saying anything about what actually happened in that place at that vanished time. It is unique and difficult to describe; I'll settle for just superb. □

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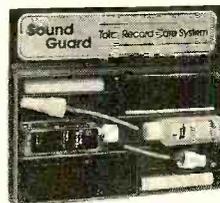
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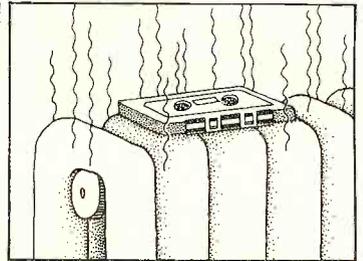
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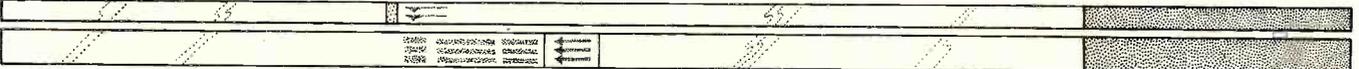
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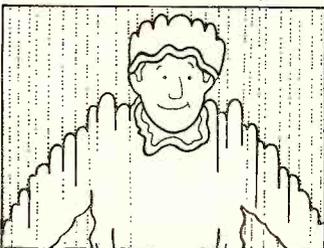


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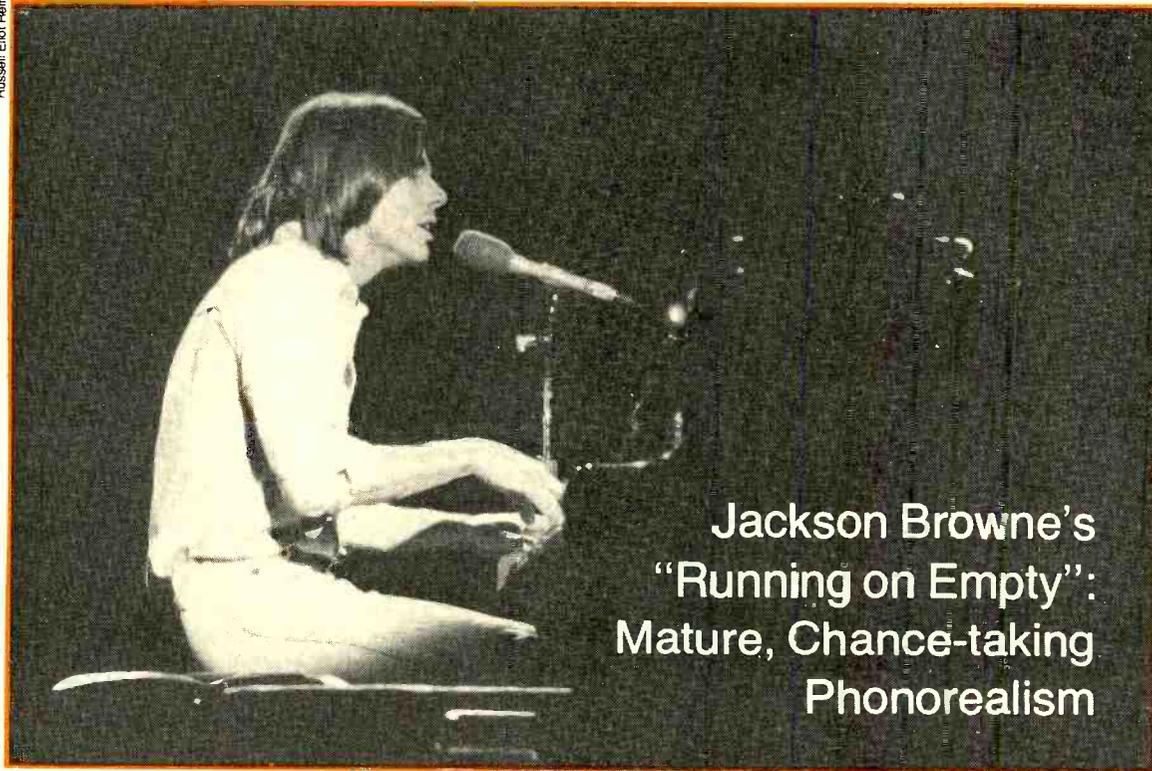


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STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT BEST OF THE MONTH



Russell Eilat Perf



Jackson Browne's "Running on Empty": Mature, Chance-taking Phonorealism

ON the face of it, nothing would seem less likely right now than a gritty, unsentimental, insightful revitalization of one of rock's most played-out themes—the psychic travails of *Life on the Road*—by a singer/songwriter whose previous recorded Laments have verged perilously (to echo *Doonesbury* creator Garry Trudeau) on mere Whines. But clearly Jackson Browne, heretofore recognized as the Mellow Sound's Premier Metaphysical Pretty Face, is toughening up his act, and "Running on Empty," his latest album for Asylum, has both the real rocker's raw-edged sensibility and a film maker's unflinching reportorial eye.

The film reference is not gratuitous. "It's a rock-and-roll band or a movie,

you can take your pick," Jackson sings toward the end of the album, and in fact the whole structure of the thing recalls *cinema vérité* documentaries à la the Maysles Brothers. It was recorded live in a variety of settings, both in and out of concert halls, the apparent idea being to convey some sense of how a touring musician lives and how this life reflects upon the way he plays, to portray the alternately numbing (*Cocaine*, complete with somewhat updated lyrics) and inspiring (*The Load-Out*) effects of musical communication as a vocation. It's a concept fraught with the perils of mawkishness and self-pity, but it is brought off sensationally, even the potentially hokey stuff, as when an acoustic hotel-room version of Danny O'Keefe's *The Road* suddenly

segues in mid-song into an on-stage, full-band electric performance, or when a long and lovely tribute to Jackson's audience metamorphoses into that most sublime of early r-&-b chestnuts, Maurice Williams' *Stay*. Jackson's music has never been so startling; for the first time, there's real rock-and-roll bite to his performances. Truth to tell, his records have always had a superficial patina of "prettiness" that undercut what he seemed to want to get across. Here, however, his regular recording band works out with a vengeance, and the raw clatter adds a weight and an authority to his lyrics that the relative perfection of the sounds on his studio efforts never could.

In short, "Running on Empty"

represents the work of an artist newly matured and unafraid to take risks, a breakthrough comparable to Neil Young's post-"Harvest" realization that the wonders of studio technology do not necessarily provide a path to Total Enlightenment. And, finally, it gives the most resonant and interesting answers to all the questions implicit in the Byrds' oversimplified *So You Wanna Be a Rock-and-Roll Star?* It's a marvelous, compelling piece of work that has converted this rather halfhearted admirer into a total, unabashed partisan. Phonorealism has never before sounded this good.

—Steve Simels

JACKSON BROWNE: *Running on Empty*. Jackson Browne (guitar, piano, vocals); David Lindley (fiddle); Russ Kunkel (drums); Craig Doerge (keyboards); other musicians. *Running on Empty; The Road; Rosie; You Love the Thunder; Cocaine; Shaky Town; Love Needs a Heart; Nothing but Time; The Load-Out; Stay.* ASYLUM 6E-113 \$7.98.

Honegger's *Jeanne D'Arc au Bûcher* In Its Best Recording to Date

ARTHUR HONEGGER's *Joan of Arc at the Stake* is an uneven work, and its reputation has, I suspect, tended to affect the composer's stature by ob-

scuring the virtues of his symphonies and other compositions. There is no question that his *King David* is a superior work: it has more musical integrity and a more judicious balance between musical and dramatic elements. *Joan*, a staged oratorio on the play by Paul Claudel, is one of those daringly ambitious efforts that is ultimately admired more for objective and motivation than for actual accomplishment. There was at least one Belgian recording of *Joan* before the microgroove era, and Columbia has given us two LP versions—one in mono, in French, under Eugene Ormandy and, about ten years ago, a stereo recording in English under Seiji Ozawa, both of these with Vera Zorina in the title role. That no recording in either language is listed in the current Schwann seems to confirm a general lack of enthusiasm—but there is a new version from Supraphon now, in French, and it might well succeed in bringing about a more receptive attitude toward the work. It is, in any event, the strongest case yet made for it in recorded form.

This conjecture is based not so much on the idiomatic control of the score shown by Serge Baudo and the Czech Philharmonic (who have recorded together all the Honegger symphonies and several of his other works) as on the unprecedentedly credible realization of the work's dramatic content and the superb integration of the music and drama with each other. Both the children's and adult choruses are Czech, as are four of the seven solo singers, but Baudo brought all the actors with him from France, and they are, without exception, men and women who have

lived with the work, who obviously believe in it, and who know how to bring it to life. They triumph over Claudel's frequently stuffy text by avoiding the grand declamatory style in favor of thoughtful characterizations on a convincing human level, and by allowing the action to flow with the music.

Nelly Borgeaud, in the title role, succeeds in giving us a real flesh-and-blood Joan, a nineteen-year-old girl who knows fear and pain and simple joys as well as her sense of divine mission, rather than the self-conscious warrior-saint so often thrust at us. It is to her that much of the credit for the success of this performance must go, for without her—without her sort of Joan—all the fine singing and playing would count for little. She, Baudo, and their various associates make it hard for any listener to remain unaffected by the work, uneven though it may be.

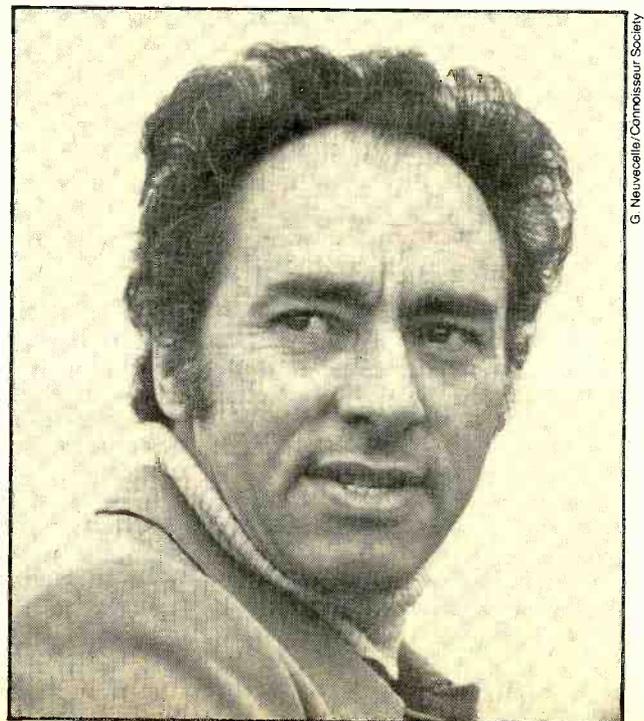
Supraphon has done a fine job of recording. The booklet and box indicate SQ quadrasonic sound, but the discs are labeled to indicate only two-channel stereo, in which mode the sound is rich and clear. The *Ondes Martenot* is (are?) heard to great effect without being given undue prominence, and the choruses are well balanced with the orchestra. I only wish the words sung by the choruses were more consistently intelligible—but perhaps this could not be achieved without altering the well-balanced sonic frame. A forty-page booklet gives the text and annotation in French, English, and German.

—Richard Freed

HONEGGER: *Jeanne d'Arc au Bûcher*. Nelly Borgeaud, Jeanne; Michel Favory, Broth-



Joan of Arc being led to prison at Rouen, a woodcut from Les Vigilles de la Mort du Roy Charles V, Paris, 1943. At right, conductor Serge Baudo.





Larry McNeely (center), with cohorts Jack Skinner (left) and Geoff Levin (right), live at McCabe's.

er Dominique; René Brun, Regnault de Chartres, Jean de Luxembourg, a Peasant, the Priest, the Ass; François Loup (bass), Second Herald, Guillaume de Flavy, the Usher; Annie Gaillard, a Voice, Mother Wine; Tony Jacquot, Heurtebise, Bedford, Third Herald, Another Peasant; Anne-Marie Rodde (soprano), Marguerite, Perrot; Christiane Chateau (soprano), the Virgin; Huguette Brachet (alto), Catherine; Pedro Proenza (tenor), Le Clerc, First Herald; Zdeněk Jankovský (tenor), Porcus; Lenka Loubalová, a Child's Voice; Françoise Deslogères (*Ondes Martenot*). Czech Philharmonic Chorus; Kühn Children's Chorus; Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Serge Baudo cond. SUPRAPHON 1 12 1651/1652 two discs \$15.96 (from Qualiton Records, 65-37 Austin Street, Rego Park, N.Y. 11374).

Larry McNeely, New Banjo King: Fast, Clean, And Original

YOUNG Larry McNeely is my nomination for next king of the banjo. You might not have suspected it if you heard him a few years ago in Roy Acuff's band, but he's got great imagination and verve, and I believe he's finding new directions for the instrument to take. You can't go by crowd

noise where banjos are concerned, of course—crowds tend to cheer a banjo before it's even played—but McNeely's new Takoma recording with Jack Skinner and Geoff Levin, "Live at McCabe's," shows the difference between that kind of cheering and the surprised, involuntary kind that happens because the thing was so good.

The three performers hit it off chemically as well as musically. Levin does some impressive flat-picking, especially in the very first piece, and Skinner's sunny, engaging personality influences the whole album. McNeely was a little farther out than this in his studio album released a few months ago—and, you might say, a little more inventive. This one is more basic and condensed, but take a listen to *Giza*, which he wrote, if you want to hear some original ideas about the banjo. If you want technique, listen anywhere; of all the banjo players I know about, only two—Earl Scruggs and Vic Jordan—may be able both to conceive and to execute in the same class with McNeely, and I'm not sure even they can play as fast and as clean at the same time. Have I made myself perfectly clear? I think the kid is super. —Noel Coppage

LARRY McNEELY: *Live at McCabe's*. Larry McNeely (banjo, guitar, vocals); Jack Skinner (bass, guitar, vocals); Geoff Levin (guitar). *Earl's Breakdown; Hilltop; Silverbird; Giza; Shuckin' the Corn; Honeysuckle; Grey Eagle; Jerry's Breakdown; Slow Train; Midnite Rider; Number Five*. TAKOMA D-1060 \$6.98.

Liszt's *Faust* Symphony: Bernstein and the Boston Surpass All Predecessors

FRANZ LISZT was no traditional symphonist; the free form of the symphonic poem was his true orchestral medium. Nonetheless, on the two occasions when he chose symphonic scope for his grandiose designs—the *Faust* and *Dante* Symphonies—he achieved remarkable results.

Of course, he was not one to adhere rigidly to classical symphonic design. The three long movements of the *Faust* Symphony are "character sketches" for Faust, Gretchen, and Mephistopheles. The choral apotheosis added to the third movement abandons the sardonic point of view that precedes it in favor of a solemn philosophical perspective, thereby giving the work an uplifting summation. Leonard Bernstein is not alone in suggesting, in the notes for Deutsche Grammophon's new recording of the work, that the *Faust* Symphony is "perhaps the one authentic orchestral masterpiece that Liszt ever wrote." There are a number of master strokes that support that contention: the profusion of intense themes in the first movement, so descriptive of Faust's restlessly searching character, the delicate Berlioz-like or-



Altier/Deutsche Grammophon

LEONARD BERNSTEIN: a non-bombastic Faust lovingly shaped



Jack Mitchell/Nonesuch Records

SERGIU LUCA: superb performer, superb performance

chestration of the Gretchen movement, and the ingenious use of parodied "Faust themes" in the last movement to characterize Mephistopheles as the spirit of negation.

Of the several previous recordings of the *Faust* Symphony, two have been rated as generally superior to the others: Beecham's early stereo version with the Royal Philharmonic (Seraphim 6017) and Bernstein's more up-to-date effort with the New York Philharmonic (Columbia MG-699). I am happy to report that Bernstein's new recording surpasses all its predecessors. He paces the music in a more leisurely manner now, and this makes the first movement more eloquent and the slow movement more affectionate. He also obtains a more polished orchestral performance from the Boston Symphony players than he did from the New York Philharmonic's a dozen or so years ago, as well as richer and better-balanced sonics from his engineers. This is an altogether admirable performance, dignified, non-bombastic, and lovingly shaped, with orchestral details realistically captured. And it should be added that tenor Kenneth Riegel is a sweet-toned and expressive soloist in the closing Goethe text.

It was a splendid idea to let this whole program "go to the Devil," so to speak, by devoting the fourth side to the exciting Prologue to Boito's *Mefistofele*. The orchestra here is the Vienna Philharmonic, and it responds stunningly to Bernstein's lusty leadership. The chorus is good, if not the last word in incisiveness where Boito's clever verbal high jinks are concerned. And Nicolai Ghiaurov, ever a commanding singer, is not as formidable in project-

ing his lines as he was in his vocally sumptuous and effortlessly solid rendition for Silvio Varviso a number of years ago (London 26021). Technically, the recording is excellent. Deutsche Grammophon also deserves praise for its uncommonly silent surfaces.

—George Jellinek

LISZT: A *Faust* Symphony. Kenneth Riegel (tenor); Tanglewood Festival Chorus; Boston Symphony Orchestra, Leonard Bernstein cond. **BOITO: *Mefistofele: Prologo.*** Nicolai Ghiaurov (bass); Vienna State Opera Chorus; Gumpoldskirchner Spatzen (Boys' Choir); Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Leonard Bernstein cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2707 100 two discs \$17.96. © 3370 022 \$17.96.

Bach in Authentic Performance: the Technically Impossible Becomes Merely Difficult

FRANKLY, I have always found the unaccompanied violin music of Bach a little hard to take. For one thing, the musical concepts seem to be larger than the medium for which they were written. The *Ciaccona*, as everybody now knows, is best realized in Busoni's piano transcription (try De Larrocha, London 6866, or Bolet, RCA ARL1-0357), the dances are best transcribed for harpsichord, and so on. Playing the modern violin, performers

of this music are faced with almost insurmountable difficulties that cause them to struggle just to hit the notes. And because Bach suggests more than he actually writes, many violinists have assumed the additional burden of trying to find, interpret, and project those suggestions. The result is an effortful superfluity of music making, or, in current parlance, overkill.

With these thoughts in mind, I put on Sergiu Luca's new album of the sonatas and partitas with great misgivings and a few prejudices honorably come by. After one minute of his playing, my whole concept of these works was completely changed. The first quality that struck me was the ease of performance and the beautiful and clear tone of the instrument. Everything was relaxed, there was none of that feeling of struggle to overcome the impossible. Much of this is doubtless the result of playing on an original instrument—namely, an unmodernized violin built by Nicolo Amati (1669)—with a bow made between 1650 and 1700. In other words, the music is being played on the type of instrument for which it was written, and thus the impossible becomes the "merely" difficult.

While the use of an original instrument may lower many of the technical hurdles and offer solutions to some of the stylistic problems, it is still the performer who makes the performance, and Mr. Luca is a superb one. He, the music, and the violin become a unit, clarity is the order of the day, and every tempo is chosen to reveal the texture and harmonic rhythm rather than demonstrate technical brilliance. Further, Mr. Luca projects what is written only, leaving the listener to fill in the

implications—nothing is forced on us.

In the heavily ornamented first movements, Mr. Luca knows what to throw away as simply decorative and what to emphasize as critically structural. In the dance movements we can almost hear Bach taking a dance master's little *pochette* fiddle in hand and inspiring his dancers to a grace of movement and a suppleness of body that they never imagined they were capable of.

This three-disc set is, to my mind, a must for Baroque buffs and violinists as well. They will want to add it to their libraries at once, as will musicologists interested in authentic performance practice. But the main appeal, I think, will be to musicians and music lovers of whatever period or instrumental preference. This performance is one of those rare perfect marriages of historical research and musicianship.

—Stoddard Lincoln

J. S. BACH: *Sonatas and Partitas for Unaccompanied Violin (BWV 1001-1006)*. Sergiu Luca (violin). NONESUCH HC-73030 three discs \$11.98.

gone as well—offers a reading of *Don't Get Around Much Any More* that is as definitively unspoiled Crosbiana as it is pure Ellingtoniana. Tony Bennett does *I'm Just a Lucky So and So* and *Prelude to a Kiss* with only a suggestion of his usual Parmesan sentimentality, and the results are just lovely. (It is testimony to something that two things as seemingly antipathetic as Ellington's music and Bennett's style can come together at all, let alone as satisfyingly as this.) And, best of all, there are two lovely performances by the great Rosemary Clooney (*I'm Checking Out—Goom Bye* and the classic *Sophisticated Lady*) that show she's aged and mellowed like some rare private-stock California brandy only a few have been lucky enough to get their hands on yet. (The vibes here suggest that Clooney just may be on the verge of a second career, one even more dazzling than her first.) Woody Herman turns up too, and proceeds to deliver a performance of *In a Sentimental Mood* that would perhaps have gladdened Duke's heart even more than it did mine.

"Tribute to Duke" includes a spoken introduction by U.N. Ambassador Andrew Young and liner notes by Walter Cronkite and Ed McMahon. All very high-powered and totally unnecessary. Proceeds from the album's sales will go to the Duke Ellington Cancer Center. You couldn't spend your money better: a worthy cause, a memento of one of the twentieth century's greats, and some of the best entertainment the young year 1978 has so far given us.

—Peter Reilly

BING CROSBY, TONY BENNETT, ROSEMARY CLOONEY, WOODY HERMAN: *A Tribute to Duke*. Bing Crosby, Tony Bennett, Rosemary Clooney (vocals); Woody Herman (clarinet); Nat Pierce (piano); Scott Hamilton (tenor saxophone); Bill Berry (trumpet); Monty Budwig (bass); Jake Hanna (drums). Spoken introduction by Ambassador Andrew Young. *Don't Get Around Much Any More*; *Main Stem*; *In a Sentimental Mood*; *I'm Checking Out—Goom Bye*; *Prelude to a Kiss*; *It Don't Mean a Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing*; *I'm Just a Lucky So and So*; *What Am I Here For?*; *Sophisticated Lady*. CONCORD JAZZ CJ-50 \$7.98.

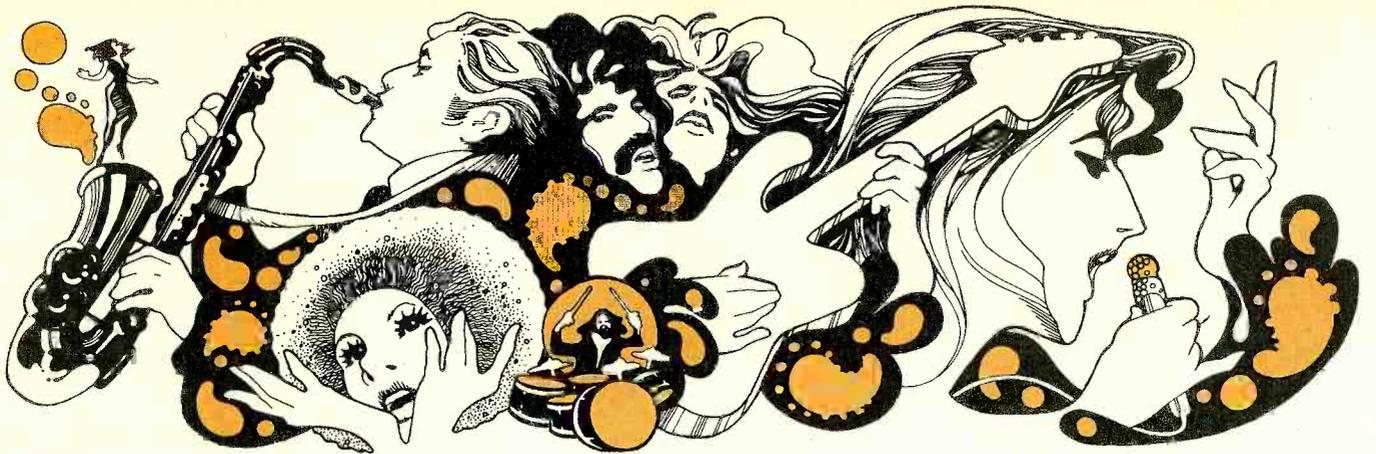
Ellington by Crosby, Clooney, Bennett, and Herman: a Great Tribute To a Great Composer

GREAT artists are seldom very well served by recorded "tributes" to them, particularly if they are musical giants of the stature of Duke Ellington. It is much better in most cases simply to rerelease some of their own best performances; they make a better testament, a more lasting monument. But there is the occasional exception to this rule as there is to all others, and here's one: Concord Jazz's new release "A Tribute to Duke," which employs the formidable talents of such performers as Bing Crosby, Tony Bennett, Rosemary Clooney, and Woody Herman to present the almost incredible creative vitality of a man who was one of America's greatest and most influential musicians. It is music that can bear the endless reworking of numerous performers' interpretations and still delight, year after year, just as that of Gershwin, Porter, and Rodgers does.

The Duke was a Compleat Musician, and the performers here are Compleat Interpreters. Bing Crosby—sadly, now

The Duke as sketched by Tony Bennett





POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES

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

AEROSMITH: *Draw the Line*. Aerosmith (vocals and instrumentals). *Draw the Line*; *I Wanna Know Why*; *Critical Mass*; *Get It Up*; *Bright Light Fright*; and four others. COLUMBIA JC 34856 \$7.98, © JCA 34856 \$7.98, © JCT 34856.

Performance: **Okay**
Recording: **Good**

Well, I suppose we must have an Aerosmith. The general teen and recently post-teen audience seems to need a chew-'em-up band for some reason. Having heard a sufficient number of loud, blues-based groups over the last ten years, I can say that Aerosmith is not as bad as many and better than others, and that some band of Aerosmith's type will remain in the pop-music arena for the foreseeable future. Just like taxes, humid summers, missing buttons, and overcooked vegetables. But why, God, why? J.V.

ALICE COOPER: *The Alice Cooper Show*. Alice Cooper (vocals); Dick Wagner, Steve Hunter (guitars); other musicians. *Under My Wheels*; *Eighteen*; *Only Women Bleed*; *Sick Things*; and six others. WARNER BROS. BSK 3138 \$6.98, © M8 3138 \$7.97, © M5 3138 \$7.97.

Performance: **Tired**
Recording: **Muddy**

I forget who observed that if Booth Tarkington had written *Sixteen* today, he would have

had to retit it *Eleven*. At any rate, *somebody* should have mentioned this to Alice Cooper, because there's a punk band in England that's been doing Al's *Eighteen as Fifteen*. Strange to find the Coop on the wrong side of the generation gap. Not so strange, though, that his latest recording is a pretty sad affair, a spiritless run-through of some of his better numbers. Even Dick Wagner and the rest of the crew that once successfully propped up a fading Lou Reed in concert only barely keep Cooper from sounding like what he really is—a bad lounge act. As live albums go, this one is even more transparently than usual the result of commercial desperation. S.S.

JOAN ARMATRADING: *Show Some Emotion*. Joan Armatrading (vocals, guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Woncha Come On Home*; *Show Some Emotion*; *Warm Love*; *Never Is Too Late*; *Peace in Mind*; and five others. A&M SP 4663 \$7.98, © AAM 4663 \$7.98, © AAM 4663 \$7.98.

Performance: **Variable**
Recording: **Good**

Joan Armatrading certainly has writing talent, but as a vocalist she sometimes has difficulty matching the quality of her lyrics with the specific vocal style she attaches to them in performance. Thus she's more often out of focus in performance than not. But when she's not, things are just dandy.

The two dandies here are *Woncha Come On Home* and *Opportunity*. The first concerns a woman growing increasingly nervous waiting for her man as she looks out the window and spies a loony on the corner: "Every key is turned/And every window's bolted from inside/Oh babe you know I get so scared/You know I couldn't live alone/It's just been confirmed babe/Woncha come on home." Armatrading affects a slight rasp in her voice as she sings *Woncha*, and her arrangement for acoustic guitar and toy piano lends effective eeriness. *Opportunity* is about a bungled stick-up job a woman is coaxed into by her boyfriend, who promises "opportunity/World wide adventure/Money in the bank." Things go awry when the girl leaves evidence behind, and the lyrics are simple but chilling.

There are good lines through the rest of the material on the album, but too often the melodies are wayward and Armatrading's choice of voices adds neither mood nor clarity; at times she sounds as if she's attempting a synthesis of Morgana King and Marvin Gaye. But when everything clicks, it's mighty good. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DAVID BROMBERG: *Reckless Abandon*. David Bromberg (vocals, guitar, dobro, slide, mandolin); Dick Fegy (mandolin, guitar, violin); Hugh McDonald (bass); Lance Dickerson (drums); other musicians. *I Want to Go Home*; *Stealin'*; *Child's Song*; *Mrs. Delion's Lament*; *What a Town*; and five others. FANTASY F-9540 \$6.98, © 8160-9540H \$7.95, © 5160-9540H \$7.95.

Performance: **Not that reckless**
Recording: **Good**

David Bromberg still doesn't have the broad-based following I thought he'd have, but he does have the respect of other musicians I also thought he'd have, and in the last couple of years he's settled into making good (and slightly strange) albums. Where others put variety into their albums because they think that's what you want, Bromberg puts variety in his because he can't help doing it. That's the way he is, a gadfly. He really learns how to pick, and not merely muddle through, whatever new thing his nose leads him to, and I think his voice is getting easier to take. His growth as a bandleader is showing too, although he hung a few strings on this one that he didn't need. His band is evolving a sound of its own, and yet it is, like the music, so eclectic that the sound cannot quite be described. It has horns and country and blues and other disparate elements and reconciles them pretty well. It understands Bromberg, who is at heart an actor, among other things, but not theatrical. In "Reckless Abandon" it helps him be funny, sad, bemused, sardonic. Worth listening to. A lot. N.C.

JACKSON BROWNE: *Running on Empty* (see Best of the Month, page 83)

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓡ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- Ⓒ = stereo cassette
- Ⓛ = quadraphonic disc
- Ⓡ = reel-to-reel quadraphonic tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track quadraphonic tape

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

JERRY BUTLER: *It All Comes Out in My Song.* Jerry Butler (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Living My Life Just for You; (When I'm with You) Everything's Cool; Just You and Me Forever; I'm Music, I'm Your Friend; I've Got to Make It on My Own;* and four others. MOTOWN M6-892S1 \$6.98. © 7-892 HT \$7.98. © 7-892 HC \$7.98.

Performance: **Embracing**
Recording: **Good**

Jerry Butler has always sounded old, even when he was very young, but he has a mellow sound with no hint of maudlin regret. His music is the product of a sure-footed maturity that enables him to express raw emotion with cool implicitness. The Fiftyish funk that overlays some of his recorded output only highlights his ability to transcend musical fashion. Today he sings much as he did twenty years ago when he formed a group called the Impressions with fellow Chicagoan Curtis Mayfield and recorded the all-time r-&-b classic *For Your Precious Love*.

This album captures Butler in a pensive, precious love mood in songs that are intimate man-to-woman statements. While the title track and *(I Love to See You) Dancin'* are suited for a disco setting, he is at his best on tender items such as *(When I'm with You) Everything's Cool*, which has a haunting melody and is easily his best recorded song in years. His mastery of phrasing can evoke shivers of pleasure. Though he's called the Ice Man, Jerry Butler possesses a musical soul that is forged in the fire. P.G.

GLEN CAMPBELL: *Live at the Royal Festival Hall.* Glen Campbell (vocals and guitar); orchestra. *Southern Nights; Sunflower; If You Go Away; Galveston; Wichita Lineman; By the Time I Get to Phoenix;* and nineteen others. CAPITOL SWBC 11707 two discs \$12.98.

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

This double-disc set of Glen Campbell's marathon performance at Festival Hall in London is distinguished by some of the best recorded sound I've ever heard in a live performance. Campbell takes production credit on this one, and he deserves a big hand for the spacious sound and the slick audience "feel" and feedback throughout the entire evening. There are some performing high spots here—*Southern Nights, Sunflower*, and all five of the Jimmy Webb songs that take up side three—and there are also a couple of clinkers that find Campbell in way over his iron-coiffed head. Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Soliloquy* from *Carousel* is a complete disaster—Campbell tries to "act" it, and the result is about as moving as an insurance salesman trying to make a sale in the waiting room of a maternity ward—and *Streets of London* finds our good ol' boy utterly lost and bewildered. The happiest surprise here is a medley of *Good Vibrations, Help Me, Rhonda, Surfer Girl, and Surfin' U.S.A.*, all songs that Campbell used to perform as a member of the Beach Boys back in the mid-Sixties.

The audience here is remarkably attentive and enthusiastic throughout what seems like hours of Campbelliana. It's an album for his fans and those who want a comprehensive all-in-one of one of our better entertainers. P.R.

ROY CLARK: *Hookin' It.* Roy Clark (guitar); Jerry Wallace (rhythm guitar); Lonnie Led-

ford (bass); Muscle Shoals Horns; other musicians. *Lazy River; Steel Guitar Rag; I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry; Hookin' It; Near You; Georgia on My Mind;* and four others. ABC/ DOT DO-2099 \$6.98.

Performance: **Inconsistent**
Recording: **Good**

Well, I applaud the idea: Roy Clark trying on a sort of Muscle Shoals sound, Roy Clark not singing but sticking pretty much to his hollow-bodied electric Gibson, Roy Clark apparently going for a little funk instead of rehashing a Mr. Showbiz album. He does some nice picking, too, in addition to the obligatory speedy picking (occasionally but not usually he does both of these at once; *Steel Guitar Rag* is probably his best-tuned-in speed trip). But the idea is maybe one album away from bearing its best fruit. The main problem is the Muzaky song selection: using a few pieces without an old-shoe familiarity to them would've helped. Tapping somewhat darker recesses of the listener's memory, making the listener do a little work, would've given the listener a better chance to feel involved. Clark actually does

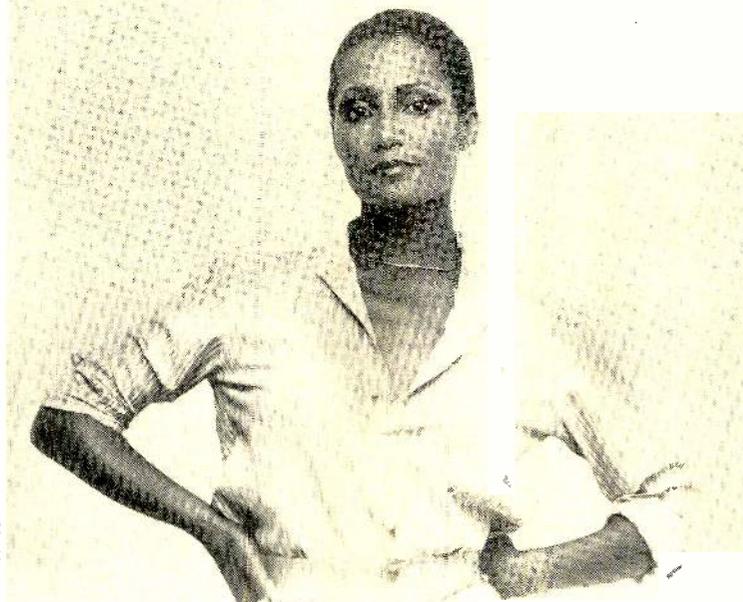
make emotional contact with some of these old shoes, but in general he's taken on an unnecessarily huge battle for freshness. I'd like to hear this gritty-tending, metallic sound again on some tunes he spent more than a casual minute or two digging up. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CLOVER: *Love on the Wire.* Clover (vocals and instrumentals). *Hearts Under Fire; Southern Belles; Oh Señorita; Still Alive; Keep On Rolling; California Kid;* and four others. MERCURY SRM-1-3708 \$6.98. © MC8-1-3708 \$7.95. © MCR4-1-3708 \$7.95.

Performance: **Interesting**
Recording: **Very good**

Clover would, after superficial scrutiny, appear to be merely another in the long line of tedious California organic rockers, CSN-derived harmonies and all. But appearances can be deceiving; the California orientation is one aspect of what Clover is, but it isn't all. There is a real pop sensibility lurking in this band, as earlier demonstrated by their snappy



Very Good Eloise

ELOISE LAWS ought to be able to quicken your pulse a few rpm. She's so sensational looking on the cover of her new ABC album that you'll probably develop a touch of tachycardia before the record is even on the turntable. What pours out through the speakers is a gauzy, silky, provocative voice with a teasing, mocking undertone. Eloise's talent may be at least partly inherited—her brothers are jazz flutist Hubert Laws and saxist Ronnie Laws—but it is undeniably being effectively used. From the very beginning of her opener, *Baby You Lied*, she had me by the short hairs, so to speak, and my attention never flagged right through her closing *Forever Now*.

What's good about Eloise Laws is her complete naturalness, her impolite send-up of lyric and listener at the same time, and her easy, graceful musicianship. What's bad about her—well, that's probably what makes her so intriguing. —Peter Reilly

ELOISE LAWS: *Eloise.* Eloise Laws (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Baby You Lied; His House and Me; 1,000 Laughs; Someone Who Still Needs Me; Love Is Feeling; Number One; You're Incredible; Love Comes Easy; Forever Now.* ABC AB1022 \$6.98.



Mercury Records

CLOVER:
the tension between
California Mellow
and English Frenetic
makes this a band
to watch

work as the uncredited back-up ensemble behind Elvis Costello's debut opus. (Those marginal New Wave credentials are enhanced here by the presence of Robert John Lange as producer, a function he's served for Graham Parker and the Boomtown Rats, among others.) The tension between the California Mellow and the English Frenetic is what makes Clover a band to watch; most of the songs on "Love on the Wire" are fairly convincing and overdue proof that to be laid back need not mean being soporific. They need to edit themselves more lightly, as they have a tendency to stretch their melodic and lyric ideas a trifle thin, but their basic sound is really attractive. They are superb singers—few other white rockers would have the chutzpah or the talent to take on an old Leiber and Stoller *a cappella* number like *Keep On Rolling*. I'd pick their update of Rick Nelson's *Travelin' Man* as a natural single; its concluding rave-up is a sizzler, and it displays a rock-and-roll authority well beyond mere journeyman competence.

S.S.

LOL CREME AND KEVIN GODLEY: *Consequences*. Lol Creme (Gizmo-guitar, piano, vocals); Kevin Godley (drums, percussion, vocals); Sarah Vaughan (vocal); Peter Cook (spoken dialogue); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. *Seascape; Wind; Fireworks; Stampede; Burial Scene; Sleeping Earth; Honolulu Lulu; The Flood; Five O'Clock in the Morning; When Things Go Wrong*; and eight others. MERCURY SRM-3-1700 three discs \$20.94.

Performance: **Fascinating flop**
Recording: **Superb**

Lol Creme and Kevin Godley are former members of 10cc who left the group to work on this three-disc "concept" album, sixteen months in the making and incorporating the effects of the Gizmo. The latter is a guitar attachment capable of producing string, percussion, and vocal effects from the instrument. The album also draws on the talents of humorist Peter Cook and the svelte voice of Sarah Vaughan.

The package is an ambitious effort and it is clear that great care went into its production

and content. Record one comprises music produced by the Gizmo, with occasional vocals. Record two and the first side of record three are dominated by Peter Cook's comic dialogue, interspersed with songs. Cook is a marvelously funny writer and actor, and he is in fine form here. Miss Vaughan appears on *Lost Weekend* in a duet with Godley.

Now, with all this human and mechanical talent assembled, the question is: does the album work? The answer, unfortunately, is no. The Gizmo is a fascinating device, but at this stage in its development it is not capable of carrying an entire album—let alone a three record album—on its own. Then there is the weakness of the plot: "Irate Nature," for reasons never explained, begins to decimate the earth through gale winds, floods, and fire. Meanwhile, in London, a pianist who is a bit daffy has been tinkering with a concerto in anticipation of just such a catastrophe. In the room above his, two lawyers and a married couple argue over a divorce suit. As Irate Nature moves in for the kill, the Loon plays his concerto. End of story.

It would be more than difficult to tell such a non-story entirely through music, which is why Cook's contributions are so necessary and valuable; along with the interspersed songs, they are by far the most satisfying part of the project. The second side of record three, presenting the piano concerto which may or may not mollify Nature, fails as music and as a climax to the plot; it is a hodgepodge of passages and effects with no cohesion, emotion, or drama.

While Godley and Creme were understandably preoccupied with the Gizmo (they originally intended to release a single only and remain with 10cc), a stronger story line would have served their ambition better. There are exciting musical moments, but the project is, alas, only an interesting failure. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RICK DANKO: Rick Danko (vocals, bass, guitar); Ronnie Wood, Eric Clapton, Doug Sahm, Robbie Robertson (guitars); Ken Lauber (piano); other musicians. *What a Town; Brainwash; Tired of New Mexico; Sip*

the Wine; Java Blues; and five others. ARISTA AB 4141 \$7.98.

Performance: **Classy**
Recording: **Likewise**

The Band members are making celebrity-laden all-star revue albums, but in spite of that Rick Danko shows me something here. His consorting with the muse turns out a rather Band-sounding (Robbie Robertson-influenced) kind of song, but a good one most of the time, and now and then there's something engagingly individual. Particularly charming among these are *Once Upon a Time*, a warm reminiscence about a grandfather and his tall tales, and *Small Town Talk*, which he wrote a few years ago with Bobby Charles (Geoff Muldaur recorded a nice version of it as a member of Paul Butterfield's Better Days). In short, the writing is worth tracking, and Danko shows a greater emotional range and more color as a singer than I suspected he had in him.

I've been bothered sometimes watching Danko sing, as he often seemed at the top of his range and straining to keep up there. But maybe that was what he thought the situation needed and he was being a good team man, for here he actually does something with inflection and nuance. The celebrity guitar players don't hurt anything either, with Ronnie Wood taking a particularly nice solo on the very first song. Robertson takes an uncharacteristically off-the-wall one a little later, but it works out all right. The whole album does, in fact, being one of the more graceful of your career-transitional efforts. N.C.

JACKIE DE SHANNON: *You're the Only Dancer*. Jackie De Shannon (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *To Love Somebody; Try to Win a Friend; Dorothy; Tonight You're Doin' It Right; Don't Let the Flame Burn Out*; and five others. AMHERST AMH 1010 \$6.98 (from Transcontinent Record Sales, Inc., 355 Harlem Road, Buffalo, N.Y. 14224).

Performance: **Pleasant and professional**
Recording: **Good**

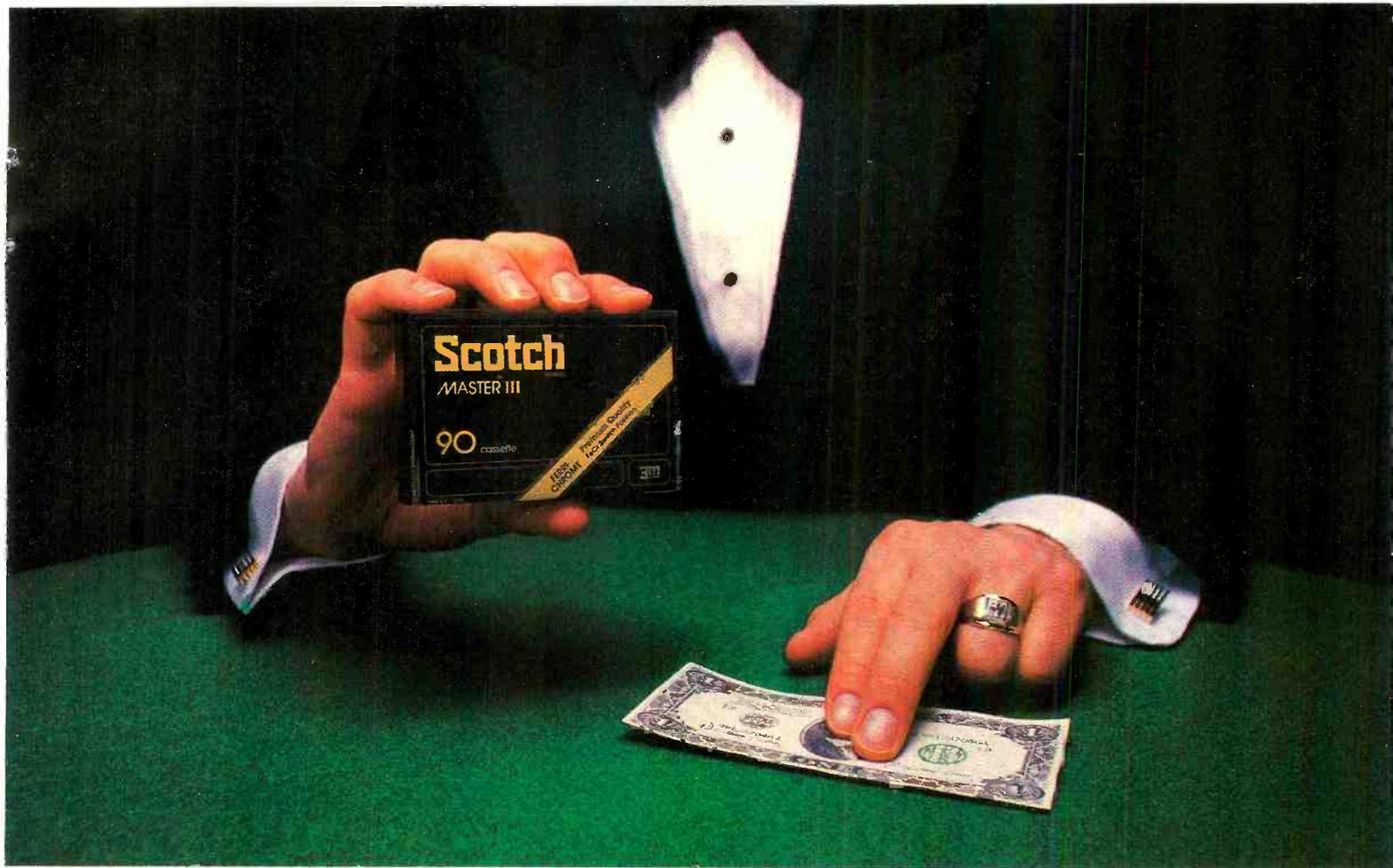
Jackie De Shannon has been ripening pleasantly on the music-biz vine for several years now. She seems always on the verge of writing and performing that *one* album that will secure her the kind of success that's always seemed just slightly out of her grasp. It continues to elude her here. Instead, she presents a highly professional, smoothly performed collection highlighted by the title song, *You're the Only Dancer*, which is just enough above average to encourage hope for better things. Oh well, maybe *next time* . . . P.R.

DETECTIVE: *It Takes One to Know One*. Detective (vocals and instrumentals). *Help Me Up; Competition; Are You Talkin' to Me?; Dynamite; Something Beautiful*; and four others. SWAN SONG SS 8504 \$6.98.

Performance: **Good in small doses**
Recording: **Calculated**

The production and sound here are tempting and repellent at the same time. Apparently a good many microphones were used to separate the sound: the snare and bass drums are loud while the "ride" and high-hat cymbals are so dim you can hardly hear them, and the lead guitar is muffled while the bass is omnipresent. This was probably done to achieve

(Continued on page 92)



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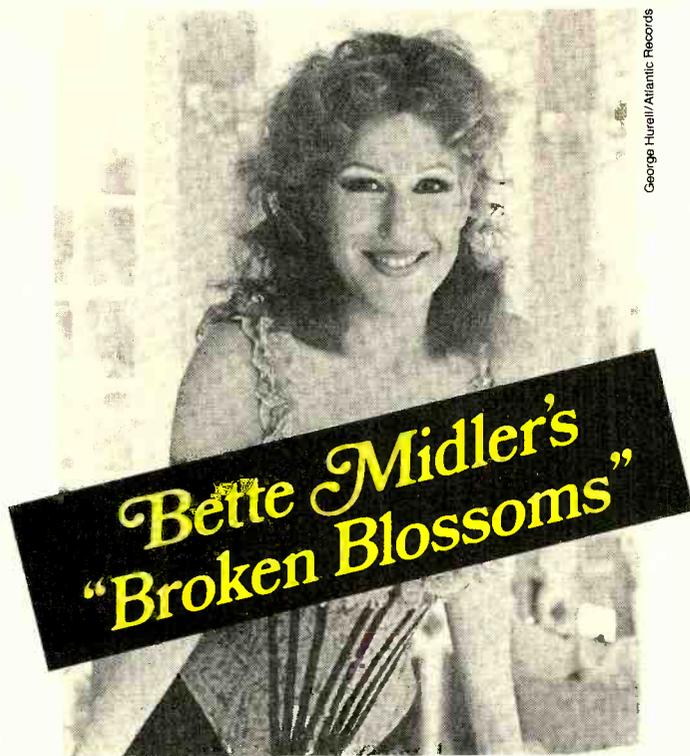
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**Bette Midler's
"Broken Blossoms"**

HHEY, babe, are ya lookin' for some action? If y'are, the flashiest, trashiest chick of them all is back—boobs bobbin' an' gum snappin'—and it sounds like she's been to another festival of Forties film hits. Bette Midler is in richer, rarer form than ever on "Broken Blossoms," from the cover shots by Hurrell—the glamour photographer of the halcyon Hollywood days when Hedy and Lana ruled—to the lavish production and the general air of supreme self-approval that nobody else (except Streisand, *always* with the exception of Streisand) has the guts or wit to put on nowadays. And wait'll ya see, I mean, just wait'll ya *hear* what she's pulled out of her shoulder bag this time!

You like it Continental? Bette's got a *Vie en Rose* that makes Piaf's sound Cantonese. You like drama? Then her duet with Tom Waits in his *I Never Talk to Strangers* is right up your aisle. In this saga of a lady at a bar the lady sounds like Lena Horne might after o.d.'ing on Ida Lupino movies, and the guy whose advances she's resisting sounds like Satchmo Armstrong at his raspiest. Do you get off on glamour? Wrap yourself in *Paradise*, which besides Midler's own lush singing has an Artie Butler arrangement that glistens like the white satin sheets in a Jean Harlow bedroom. Or do you miss the pizzazz of old Aunt Myrt down at the trailer camp, with her rolled-down, once-white bobby sox, scuffed patent-leather pumps, can of beer, and easy welcoming smile? Listen to *Make Yourself Comfortable*, surely the tackiest seduction song ever written. Bette just about reaches her flaky peak here as she cajoles some poor guy onto the sofa while an Ink Spot-like chorus lasciviously and sloppily croons in the background.

It isn't all camp, however. *Empty Bed Blues* is strong and direct and very well sung. Midler tackles Billy Joel's *Say Goodbye to*

Hollywood with all the bite and the cold, weary sarcasm of Lotte Lenya singing "*Wie man sich bettet, so liegt man*" from beyond the grave of dreams. The really dynamite track, though, is *A Dream Is a Wish Your Heart Makes*. Through the sentimentality of the lyrics, through the sugary melody, comes the voice of a Bette Midler we hear too rarely: the real little kid from Hawaii who still believes that pretty is as pretty does, who still expects all the tinsel to be real, every story to have a happy ending, every toad to turn into a prince, and every good little girl to have a good life. It's a gem of an interpretation—and a genuine heartbreaker of a performance.

MIDLER has grown more as an artist than anyone else I can think of offhand, and all of the growth has taken place right before her audiences. From her early, strained outlandishness and uneasy camping, she's grown into a unique personality—half opulent, outrageous put-on, half brilliantly serious singing comedienne, now with that added touch of sympathy and tenderness that all great comic artists have to achieve if they are to last. Midler shows not only every sign of lasting, she seems, finally, to be triumphing as a true original. She's most of the way home already.

—Peter Reilly

BETTE MIDLER: *Broken Blossoms*. Bette Midler (vocals); Lee Ritenour, Fred Tackett (guitars); Leland Sklar, Jim Hughart (bass); Jim Keltner (drums); other musicians. *Empty Bed Blues: A Dream Is a Wish Your Heart Makes; Paradise; Yellow Beach Umbrella; La Vie en Rose; Make Yourself Comfortable; You Don't Know Me; Say Goodbye to Hollywood; I Never Talk to Strangers; Storybook Children; Red.* ATLANTIC SD 19151 \$6.98, @ TP 19151 \$7.97, © CS 19151 \$7.97.

a "crude," muscular, roughneck sound, and it is successful in that. But after two or three cuts the uniformity of the sound dilutes its appeal. Granted there is nothing like an occasional lowdown, dog-kicking rock-and-roll band, but repetition has always been rock's biggest fault and most debilitating element.

As with most groups that take a tough-guy stance, Detective's material is less important than the intensity of the performance. The lead vocalist is a cross between Robert Plant of Led Zeppelin (before they had a sense of humor) and Rod Stewart. It goes without saying that it is just as convenient, and more rewarding, to hear the originals, but for two or three cuts on either side of the album, Detective is muscular stuff.

J. V.

NEIL DIAMOND: *I'm Glad You're Here with Me Tonight*. Neil Diamond (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Desirée; Free Man in Paris; God Only Knows; Let the Little Boy Sing; I'm Glad You're Here with Me Tonight; Lament in D Minor/Dance of the Sabres;* and four others. COLUMBIA JC 34990 \$7.98, @ JCA 34990 \$7.98, © JCT 34990 \$7.98.

Performance: **Flat**
Recording: **Excellent**

I can't classify myself as a Neil Diamond fan, exactly, but since the middle Sixties I've enjoyed his records and some of his sturdier songs, among them *Cherry, Cherry, Brooklyn Roads, I Am I Said* and *Cracklin' Rosie*.

Alas, my regard for him collapsed with a bump when I heard this present offering. Where Diamond used to sound tough and savvy he now sounds Las Vegas lounge macho. He has—or uses—a very limited range, approximately one and one-half octaves. The arrangements are glutinous and nervy, and the songs, mostly Diamond's own, are clap-trap ditties that any knowledgeable hack could knock out in thirty minutes. I don't know what's responsible for this unfortunate transformation, but there it is. Ironically, these attempts to make concertos out of three-chord songs with weak melodies are presented in terrific recorded sound—the bathos fairly leaps out of the speakers. More's the pity.

J. V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

EDDIE AND THE HOT RODS: *Life on the Line*. Eddie and the Hot Rods (vocals and instrumentals). *Do Anything You Wanna Do; Quit This Town; Telephone Girl; The Cross; Beginning of the End;* and four others. ISLAND ILPS 9509 \$6.98, @ Y81-9509 \$7.98, @ ZCI-9509 \$7.98.

Performance: **Improved**
Recording: **Fine**

When last glimpsed, Eddie and the Hot Rods were dispensing amphetamine homage to Pete Townshend and Van Morrison, but although their hearts were obviously in the right place, and despite their abundance of youthful energy, the plain fact was that they came off sounding pretty much like any undistinguished English boogie band. They still do at times on "Life on the Line," their second album, but I am happy to report that the addition of second guitarist and songwriter Grame Douglas has opened up the band's sound considerably; the energy and the blues roots

(Continued on page 94)

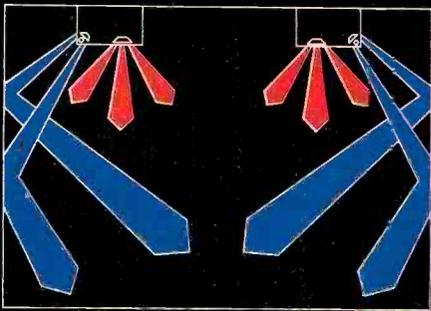
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are still there, but the Rods have begun to learn how to make *pop* music out of the mix. *Do Anything You Wanna Do*, which has been a hit in England, best exemplifies the band's new approach. It suggests a sort of light-metal *Born to Run*, and it reveals that, for all the cheap New Wave cynicism of their packaging, the Hot Rods are really unabashed teen romantics. Recommended. S.S.

EMERSON, LAKE, AND PALMER: Works, Volume 2. Emerson, Lake, and Palmer (vocals and instrumentals); London Philharmonic Orchestra. *Tiger in a Spotlight; Bullfrog; Maple Leaf Rag; Watching over You; Brain Salad Surgery; So Far to Fall; Show Me the Way to Go Home*; and five others. ATLANTIC

SD 19147 \$6.98, © TP 19147 \$7.97, © CS 19147 \$7.97.

Performance: **Good**
Recording: **Expensive**

Emerson, Lake, and Palmer—sounds like one of the higher-toned brokerage firms, doesn't it? The packaging this time out is fairly grand as well: stark white, with an embossed logo in the kind of letters one generally sees carved in stone on the sides of banks. ELP have had the approval of the critics and the public for so long now that they've become a gilt-edged reference for one's taste. And they are, generally, very good. It is when they get kittenish—as they do here in such heavy-handed whimsy as *When the Apple Blossoms Bloom*

in the *Windmills of Your Mind I'll Be Your Valentine* or the comatose *Brain Salad Surgery*—that I feel like switching my account. When they stick to such goodies as Meade (Lux) Lewis' *Honky Tonk Train Blues* or *Show Me the Way to Go Home*, my confidence is restored, for then ELP emerges as the same clever, unendingly slick group they've been almost from the beginning. Occasionally they even seem inspired, as in a track featuring Keith Emerson with the London Philharmonic in a performance of Scott Joplin's *Maple Leaf Rag* that is the essence of the quintessence of joy. P.R.

MARK FARNER. Mark Farner (vocals, guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Dear Miss Lucy; Street Fight; Easy Breezes; Social Disaster; He Let Me Love*; and five others. ATLANTIC SD 18232 \$6.98, © TP-18232 \$7.98, © CS-18232 \$7.98.

Performance: **Very good, but . . .**
Recording: **Good**

Mark Farner was the lead vocalist and energy source of Grand Funk Railroad, a band whose audience happily ignored nearly all the rock critics and made the group one of the biggest commercial successes of its time just a few years ago. After a hiatus on his Michigan farm, Farner returns to rock with this solo album. He is certainly one of the most energetic singers around, with a seething, churning power that bedevils and impresses. But all the decibels and tonsil-busting can't compensate for his feeble material. It's a shame that his writing is so hackneyed; with better songs Farner's solo debut might have been something to cheer about. J.V.

GENESIS: Seconds Out. Genesis (vocals and instrumentals). *Squonk; The Carpet Crawl; Robbery Assault and Battery; Afterglow; Firth of Fifth; I Know What I Like*; and six others. ATLANTIC SD2-9002 two discs \$11.98, © TP2-9002 \$12.97, © CS2-9002 \$12.97.

Performance: **Gothic chic**
Recording: **Good**

We return again to the English Gothic school of rock. Genesis has been a cult group since the early 1970's; their audience has expanded since then to the limits to which such audiences usually go, and with the customary passionate devotion. Their stage shows are precisely that, *shows*, in which lighting effects and all the persuasive technology of live theater are used to full effect. But despite all the fustian and spangle—and the professional musical technique—the band is more form than content. Other Gothic groups of earlier times—Manfred Mann and Procol Harum—now and then played a selection as if they meant it and cleverness be damned. Not so with Genesis; to make their trick work they *must* be all show and no content. As evidence on this live two-disc set, there is *Supper's Ready*, running twenty-four minutes and thirty seconds, in which the entire resources of the group are used; they play at, toward, near, and around a tune but they never play on it. Reason? Simple—there is no tune. Does the audience love it? You betcha. They roar like old Romans cheering for the lions. I pass. J.V.

ANNIE HASLAM: Annie in Wonderland. Annie Haslam (vocals); Roy Wood (vocals, guitar)
(Continued on page 96)



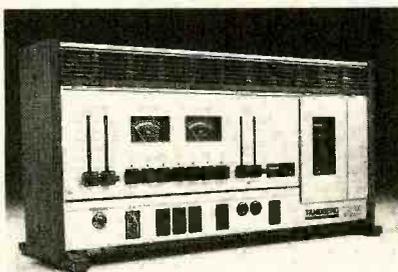
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tars, saxophone, keyboards, percussion); other musicians. *Nature Boy*; *If I Loved You*; *Inside My Life*; *Going Home*; and five others. SIRE SR 6046 \$6.98.

Performance: **Pretty but pushed**
Recording: **Good**

Annie Haslam, unfortunately billed as "The Golden Voice of Renaissance," has one of the prettiest light soprano voices in pop, but it is pushed much too far in this solo album. In the wordless *Rockalise* she's given a demanding six-minute workout reminiscent of the old Swingle Singers. Even with the electronic fiddling of music-wiz producer Roy Wood (of the Move and Electric Light Orchestra fame), it's obvious that her voice just isn't up to that kind of Rima the Bird Girl floridity. When she has a lyric to handle, as in the gruesome oldie *Nature Boy*, a lot of the purity of her voice is sacrificed in her effort just to articulate clearly. There are a couple of very pretty bands here nonetheless, including *If I Loved You* and a piece of exotica called *Hunioco*, which features a thumping, clattering, grunting male chorus that might make King Kong himself feel homesick. P.R.

LEVON HELM AND THE RCO ALL-STARS.

Levon Helm (vocals, drums); Booker T. Jones (keyboards); Steve Cropper (guitar); Duck Dunn (bass); Mac Rebennack (keyboards, guitar); Paul Butterfield (harmonica); other musicians. *Washer Woman*; *The Tie That Binds*; *You Got Me*; *Blues So Bad*; *Sing, Sing, Sing*; and five others. ABC AA-1017 \$6.98. © 8020-1017 (H) \$7.95, © 5020-1017 (H) \$7.95.

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

Levon Helm was always the Band member easiest to picture outside the Band. Of the group's three vocalists, he sang with the most authority and general know-how. Yet even he

strikes me as a somewhat specialized singer whose voice sounds more like part of a band than an out-front (difficulty of putting any drummer out front noted) soloist. And you'll no doubt notice that he has straightaway surrounded himself with big-name instrumentalists—that is, he has once again sought little more than a band member's percentage of the attention. The result is a fine, bluesy-sounding album, which, however, has a one-shot feel to it. Oh, I suppose Helm can afford the luxury of recording again only when he can get such all-stars together, but I doubt that that's the way he works. Could be this album, being also a project, was a way of putting off dealing with what to do now. That would be reasonable and understandable, and the result was worth the doing. The backing is remarkable for what you can't hear—no hot-dogging solos for their own sake or other marks of selfishness. The All-Stars sound like a nice group of guys who enjoy playing together and are still not above a sneaky lick or two. What they do—counting Helm as one of "them"—is to lull you into not making a big deal of the sameness that turns up occasionally in the tunes. It's better music than you usually find in a curiosity item. Now what does Helm do? N.C.

CISSY HOUSTON. Cissy Houston (vocals); orchestra, Michael Zager arr. and cond. *Your Song*; *Love Is Holding On*; *Things to Do*; *It Never Really Ended*; and four others. PRIVATE STOCK PS 2031 \$6.98, © 8300-2031(H) \$7.95, © 5300-2031(H) \$7.95.

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

There's a lot of up-front, snappy, high-style work here by Cissy Houston, a girl who has obviously been around, and to all of the right places. A good deal of her talent and her billowing magenta voice (which deep within its recesses contains an unexpected and totally

disarming small coloratura) are wasted on material that never rises much beyond the level of commercial r-&-b *Weltschmerz*. Confronted with something like Strouse and Char-nin's *Tomorrow*, that artful bit of suds from the Broadway musical *Annie*, Ms. Houston comes into her vivid own, bouncing around like a disco queen on a date with a big butter-and-egg man from Spokane whose wife doesn't understand him. A smart, sassy lady, this Cissy Houston. Too smart, one hopes, to stay mired in the mostly indifferent kind of material she's been handed here. P.R.

BARBARA MANDRELL: *Love's Ups and Downs.* Barbara Mandrell (vocals); Steve Gibson, Chip Young, Reggie Young (guitars); Hargus "Pig" Robbins, Tony Migliore (piano); Charlie McCoy (harmonica, percussion); other musicians. *If I Were a River*; *The Magician*; *Woman to Woman*; *How Long*; *Tonight*; and five others. ABC/DOt DO-2098 \$6.98.

Performance: **No guff from nobody**
Recording: **Good**

Barbara Mandrell is one of those blonde, flinty-eyed ingenues who seem to bloom so easily in c-&-w. Oh, she may be smiling out at us from the front and back of this album in a long, frilly dress with a big frilly hat, but that won't fool you for long once you hear her. *Don't Hand Me No Hand Me Down Love* sets the record straight right from the beginning (she ain't interested in roosters that's all crowded out, and that's fer damnsure). In *Woman to Woman*, she takes matters into her own capable hands and telephones "the other woman" to burn her ears about breakin' up other people's happy homes. Barbara ain't takin' no guff from nobody, as *A Fancy Place to Cry* proves. The Mandrell voice itself is big, bluesy, sexy, and much, much better than either her material or her banal delivery. P.R.

LARRY McNEELY: *Live at McCabe's* (see **Best of the Month**, page 85)

MEAT LOAF: *Bat Out of Hell.* Meat Loaf (vocals); Todd Rundgren (guitars); Roy Bittan (keyboards); Edgar Winter (saxophone); other musicians. *Bat Out of Hell*; *You Took the Words Right Out of My Mouth* (*Hot Summer Night*); *Heaven Can Wait*; and four others. EPIC 34974 \$6.98, © PEA 34974 \$6.98, © PET 34974 \$6.98.

Performance: **Pot roast**
Recording: **Good**

It has been well over two years since we last heard any new music from Bruce Springsteen. That upsets a lot of people, me included, but apparently Meat Loaf and his partner Jim Steinman are absolutely devastated over the Bard of Asbury Park's extended silence. So devastated, in fact, that they hired a couple of guys from Bruce's band, got perennial overreacher Todd Rundgren to whip up a neo-Spector production that is the aural equivalent of D.W. Griffith's *Intolerance*, and then wrote a bunch of rather fevered songs that bear a faint resemblance to Springsteen's stuff. Of course, they have absolutely none of the passion of the originals. Mr. Loaf, a cult figure in New York because of his performance in the inexplicably popular film version of *The Rocky Horror Show*, sings all this stuff in an obnoxious "legit" Broadway voice and

(Continued on page 98)

CISSY HOUSTON:
up-front, snappy vocals
from a smart, sassy lady



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Albert King: Blues at Their Best

ALBERT KING is a folksy, foxy grandpa of blues singing and guitar playing. He displays none of the trappings and cant of the average blues singer; he is neither too raw nor too smooth, and he gives comfort and plea-

sure. King has never had the public acclaim he deserves; the purists have not taken him up nor has he ever become commercialized, but I wish he might have had something of the sweet in-between—a hit record here and there. Where Muddy Waters and B.B. King have become familiar, given the limited audience for blues singers, Albert King remains somewhat on the outside. He has recorded continuously for twenty years and has earned a living from records and touring both here and overseas. His approach to the blues is at once deadly serious and convivial. He is probably the easiest blues singer to listen to who really means what he says.

This particular album has been delayed two years in release. King was on the Stax roster of artists, and when Stax collapsed in a bankruptcy scandal in 1975 their vault tapes were put in limbo. Fantasy Records, a California label, subsequently acquired the Stax catalog and is now issuing both fresh and vintage product. There are some rough spots in this King album, where sharps and flats become momentarily confused, but all in all the performances are a most appealing and friendly display of the blues at their best—and you'll wait a long time before you find a better pal than Albert King.

—Joel Vance

ALBERT KING: *The Pinch*. Albert King (vocals, guitar); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. *The Blues Don't Change; I'm Doing Fine; Nice to Be Nice (Ain't That Nice); Oh, Pretty Woman; King of Kings; Feel the Need; Firing Line; The Pinch Paid Off, Parts I and II; I Can't Stand the Rain; Ain't It Beautiful.* STAX STX-4101 \$6.98.

generally sounds silly ranting on about the streets, while the sonic din that surrounds him is so overblown that I can only describe it as Maximalism. Just what we needed. S.S.

MELBA MOORE: *A Portrait of Melba*. Melba Moore (vocals); orchestra. *You Are My River; Promised Land; Just Another Link; Living Free;* and four others. BUDDAH BDS 5695 \$6.98.

Performance: **Disappointing**
Recording: **Good**

The most dismaying thing about Melba Moore is not her rapid decline from the enchanting ingenue of Broadway's *Purlie Victorious* to a vapid, bespangled, Vegas-style girl singer—that unfortunate transformation occurs often in a business dedicated to the quick buck. No, what is troubling is that on almost all of her albums Moore has a band or two indicating that she is still much more than a sepia Abbe Lane. In the *Living Free* track on this disc one can just hear—bubbling underneath the lousy lyrics, the soupy arrangements, and the gaudy, mindless production—the Melba Moore that captured the public in the first place. The sincerity, the gutsiness, and the note of honest pathos are all still there in her work. To come upon it again after five bands of superficial, stupidly "stylish" singing is to be jolted into anger at the waste of talent in the music biz. She can, of course, turn back to her original gifts any time she chooses, but

at this point it will take a lot of guts and a lot of knocking managerial heads together. It would be worth it. P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MORATH RAGTIME QUINTET: *The Ragtime Women*. Max Morath (piano); Ruth Alsop (cello); Allen Hanlon (guitar, banjo, mandolin); Lynn Milano (bass); Remo Palmier (guitar). *Niebergall: Red Rambler Rag; Hoosier Rag. Aufderheide: The Thriller. Tilton: That Sentimental Rag. Blake: Poker Rag. Craig: Romantic Rag. Gustin: X-N-Tric—Two-Step Characteristic. Shepherd: Pickles and Peppers.* VANGUARD VSD 79402 \$7.98.

Performance: **Splendid**
Recording: **Excellent**

Leave it to Max Morath, our most entertaining (if not our most scholarly) authority on the ragtime years, to turn out an interesting program like this one! The world of ragtime, it seems, abounded not only in female pianists but in women composers as well. And if the biographies of these women are sometimes rather more diverting than the not-always-distinguished scores they set down in the ragtime idiom, there is enough that is good on this record, and it is so splendidly performed, that it should be a welcome addition to anybody's ragtime collection.

What women they were! There was Julia Niebergall, who divorced her husband, made

her own living as a pianist at the Colonial Theatre in Indianapolis, and was one of the first females in town to own an automobile. Her *Red Rambler Rag* and *Hoosier Rag* are no threats to the reputation of Scott Joplin, but they are lively, spunky items just the same. May Aufderheide came from Indiana too; her spooky spoof, *The Thriller*, was one of six rags she published before she settled down as the wife of a wealthy businessman. Then there was Gladys Yelvington, still another Indiana composer, whose family said she could "make a piano or organ talk, laugh, or cry." She played both classical and pop music, and what she contributed to ragtime was the *Piffle Rag*—which is certainly piffle, but pleasant piffle. More pungent is Adeline Shepherd's *Pickles and Peppers*, in its day a bestseller that was used by William Jennings Bryan in his 1908 Presidential campaign. The others are equally intriguing.

Accompanying pianist Morath—who sustains his extraordinarily winning approach to ragtime, eschewing the usual steely pounding—is a group of adroit instrumentalists. They round out all the scores with enough color to rescue even the least inspired ones from banality. P.K.

THE MOTORS. The Motors (vocals and instrumentals). *Dancing the Night Away; Freeze; Cold Love; Phoney Heaven;* and four others. VIRGIN PZ 34924 \$6.98, © PZA 34924 \$7.98, © PZT 34924 \$7.98.

Performance: **Interesting failure**
Recording: **Fine**

I was mildly curious about this album because two of the Motors are graduates of Ducks Deluxe, an excellent pub band whose other alumni have gone on to fame and fortune as part of Graham Parker's Rumour. The Ducks' sound was both extremely frenetic and monochromatic, almost like the Ramones', except the Ducks could play and had roots in the blues. It turns out that the Motors are a lot more ambitious; their debut effort is a rather strained attempt to reconcile the musical and production sophistication of Led Zeppelin with the simplicity and fury of some of the New Wave bands, especially in regard to the role of the lead guitar. It's an uneasy synthesis, to say the least, but there are occasional moments here where the band begins to pull it off. Give this one a B and a wait and see.

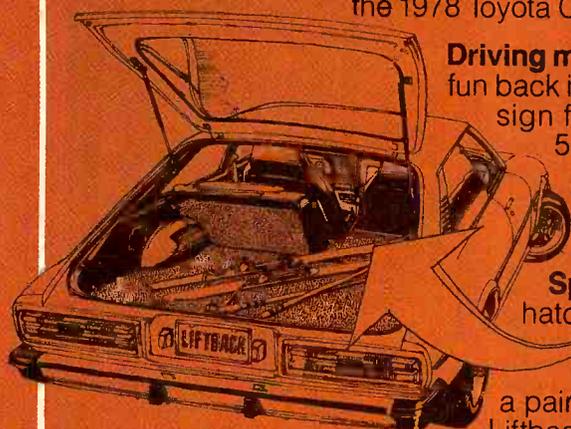
OZARK MOUNTAIN DAREDEVILS: *Don't Look Down*. Ozark Mountain Daredevils (vocals and instrumentals). *River to the Sun; Crazy Lovin'; Giving It All to the Wind; The Fox; Backroads; Snowbound;* and five others. A&M SP-4662 \$7.98, © 8T-4662 \$7.98, © CS-4662 \$7.98.

Performance: **Variable**
Recording: **Clean**

I'm still waiting for the Ozark Mountain Daredevils to equal their performances on "The Car over the Lake Album" (A&M SP-4549), which I had the pleasure of reviewing in 1975. In their subsequent efforts, they have too often played down their talents for gentle introspection and winning adaption of folk-type themes in favor of chugga-chugga standard country-rock. In general, this one's no exception. The three most appealing cuts here, *True Believer*, *Moon on the Rise*, and the instrumental *Stinghead*, are buried on the album's (Continued on page 100)

VRR-ROOM!

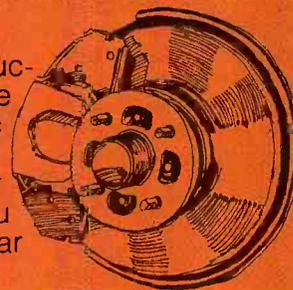
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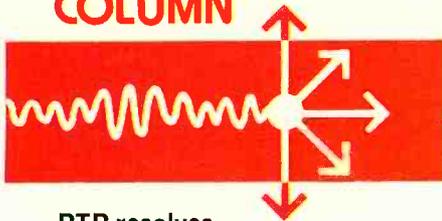
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second side; to get to them one has to wait patiently and wade through some energetic but uninspired cuts. Come on, fellas. J.V.

FREDA PAYNE: *Stares and Whispers*. Freda Payne (vocals); orchestra. *Feed Me Your Love; Love Magnet; Master of Love; Bring Back the Joy*; and three others. CAPITOL ST-11700 \$6.98, Ⓢ 8XT-11700 \$7.98, Ⓞ 4XT-11700 \$7.98.

Performance: **Undefined**
Recording: **Good**

Freda Payne, easily one of the most beautiful women around, still seems to be having some trouble defining herself as a performer. On this outing she's mostly Streisandish, but she's also taken to throwing in random Donna Sommerish moans and gasps as a sort of "special effect." The result of the indecision, combined with low-grade material, is a totally undistinguished album. *Feed Me Your Love* is about the only spot where Payne gives some clues of sounding like herself, not at all a bad sound, but even that is disfigured by her inability to stop borrowing from other performers, in this case from Diana Ross. I'd go to see her in a club, but I'm not so sure I'd stay long to listen. P.R.

MICHELLE PHILLIPS: *Victim of Romance*. Michelle Phillips (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Aching Kind; Trashy Rumors; There She Goes; Where's Mine?; Paid the Price*; and five others. A&M SP 4651 \$6.98, Ⓢ AAM 4651 \$7.98, Ⓞ AAM 4651 \$7.98.

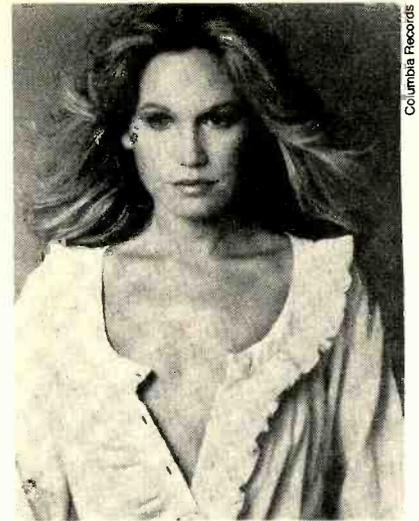
Performance: **Classic, in a way**
Recording: **Helpful**

Fresh from her non-triumph as Nureyev's leading lady in *Valentino*, another of Ken Russell's head-trips, Michelle Phillips (she was the pretty one in the Mamas and the Pappas, one of yesteryear's better groups) makes her solo recording debut with "Victim of Romance." Ms. Phillips is surrounded, in true Hollywood fashion, by all sorts of eager helping hands, including those of her ex-husband, John Phillips, who produced and arranged the *Lady of Fantasy* track she wrote and performs here. Jack Nitzsche produced and arranged most of the rest with the help of a "girl engineer" and a "boy engineer," and the invaluable Tricia Johns, listed here as vocalist, turns up on several tracks singing along with Michelle in a vain effort to keep her somewhere approximately on key. Ms. Phillips' voice has all the texture of an overripe mango, and her interpretive skills are equally wilted. I hope, however, that she will press on—there must be some area of show-biz suited to her talents. P.R.

MARY KAY PLACE: *Aimin' to Please*. Mary Kay Place (vocals); Emory Gordy (bass); James Burton (guitar); Richard Greene (fiddle); other musicians. *Marlboro Man; Dolly's Dive; Save the Last Dance for Me; Don't Make Love (to a Country Music Singer); You Can't Go to Heaven*; and five others. COLUMBIA PC 34908 \$6.98, Ⓢ PCA 34908 \$6.98, Ⓞ PCT 34908 \$6.98.

Performance: **Aimin' better**
Recording: **Very good**

Damn, damn, damn, damn! Now Mary Kay Place has gone and learnt how to halfway sang that there country music, thus putting



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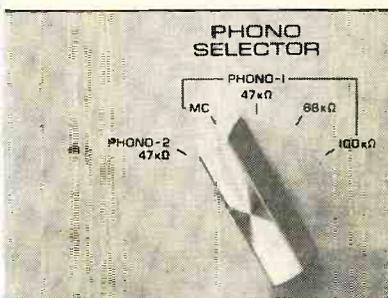
me in conflict. One of my most formidable prejudices, which I believe is based on good sense, is against television's meddling in the marketplaces of other media. It seems reasonable to build up a resistance to television acts' making recordings, because the successful peddling in the sound-only medium of such mediocrities as Cher, Tony Orlando, and the Partridge Family (need I go on?) indicates television has steam-roller effectiveness to go with its steam-roller taste. In the interest of some semblance of balance in the future sound of pop culture (I mean, television has gotten the TV time-out in professional football, the World Series playing night games, and any number of other concessions that amount to major pop-culture shake-ups; shouldn't the line be drawn somewhere?), I resented Mary Kay Place blithely playing her Loretta Haggars character from *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman* and *Fernwood Forever* and selling millions of copies of *Baby Boy*.

I'd feel better, somehow, if I could similarly resent this album, but, as I said, she's come a long way as a singer. Now, you may say that anybody'd sound good given the kind of production Brian Ahern has given this record—shrewdly picking out songs that both dignify Mary Kay's image and show off her vocal improvements and backing her with some tremendous musicians, including some from the band of his best protégée, Emmylou Harris, who does some back-up singing here herself. But it isn't just Ahern; Mary Kay Place has a fuller, richer-sounding voice than Loretta Haggars did, and a much more intelligent delivery too. She's no Dolly Parton, but she's edging toward a style of her own, and it's a much less arch one than Loretta's. The cover painting is ambiguous about what's going on inside; she's wearing a cowgirl suit à la Loretta Haggars, but one can't help noticing that it has this, ah, plunging neckline, hinting at the "new" Mary Kay Place. I prefer to think of it as Loretta Haggars transcended—no mean little feat—and I'm curious to see how the public reacts. N.C.

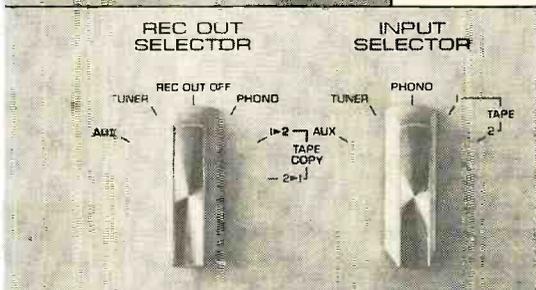
RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THE POINTER SISTERS: *Having a Party*. The Pointer Sisters (vocals); Stevie Wonder, Sonny Burke, Tom Salisbury (keyboards),

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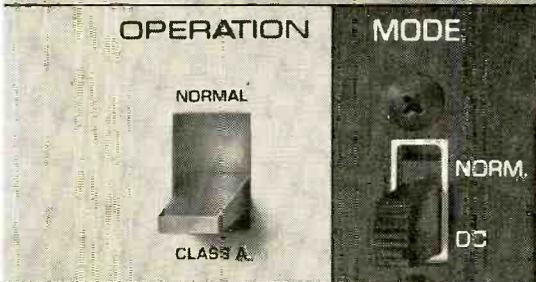
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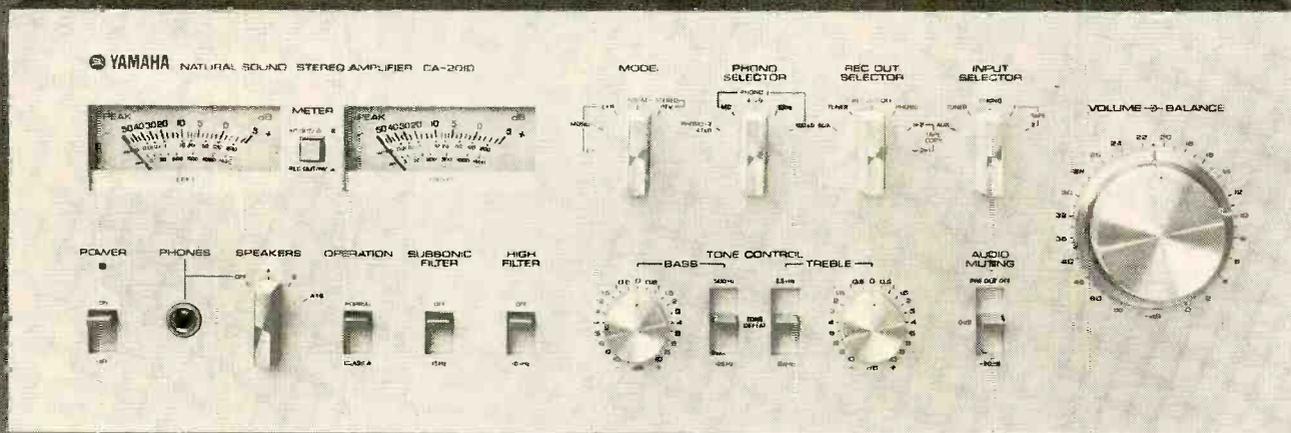


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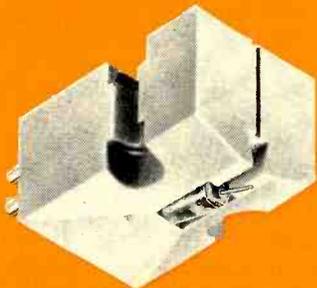


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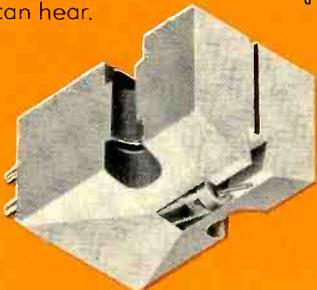
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synthesizers); Louis Johnson (bass); Wah Wah Watson, David T. Walker (guitars); Ernie Watts (saxophone); other musicians. *Don't Let It Drive You Crazy; I Need a Man; Waiting on You; I'll Get By Without You*; and three others. BLUE THUMB BT-6023 \$6.98. © 8307-6023(H) \$7.95. © 5307-6023(H) \$7.95.

Performance: **Fun**
Recording: **Very good**

Camp may come and camp may go, but the Pointer Sisters (a trio now minus sister Bonnie) keep rolling along, though at a less rambunctious pace than Bette Midler and a few other standard-bearers of contemporary cultural *chutzpah*. I've been waiting for the Pointer Sisters to recapture the friskiness of their first album, released back in 1973. Each track on that set shouted out with sassiness. They just about accomplish that feat again here, with a little help from some pretty formidable friends, especially Stevie Wonder on keyboards and synthesizers. Wonder's influence is quite apparent on *I'll Get By Without You*, which has a strange *déjà vu* quality, and *Bring Your Sweet Stuff Home to Me*, marked by his sophisticated chord changes. But the knockout is *I Need a Man*, which throbs with a heavily sensual, up-tempo pulse that leaves you panting. The Pointers are in top form throughout, their specialty being full-bodied ensemble singing with lusty baritone accents. This is fine fare, perfect even for parties of one. *P.G.*

RAMONES: Rocket to Russia. Ramones (vocals and instrumentals). *Cretin Hop; Rockaway Beach; Here Today, Gone Tomorrow; Locket Love; I Don't Care; Sheena Is a Punk Rocker; I Wanna Be Well*; and seven others. SIRE SR 6042 \$6.98.

Performance: **Moderately amusing**
Recording: **Okay**

Tired of Conceptual Rock? Tired of bands (and reviewers) who can't tell the difference between a one-joke act and a serious aesthetic statement? Tired of three-chord clatter that doesn't even have the integrity of true mindlessness? Well, if you aren't, chances are you'll just love "Rocket to Russia" by the Ramones. To be fair, there are a few yucks

here (*Cretin Hop* is actually kind of funny in a *Mad* magazine sort of way, especially when you consider that it's a dig at the group's audience), but the basic rule of minimalist art is that very little happens, and I'm afraid that sums up the album. *S.S.*

JOHNNY RIVERS: Outside Help. Johnny Rivers (vocals, guitar); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. *Outside Help; Swayin' to the Music (Slow Dancin'); Curious Mind (Um, Um, Um, Um, Um, Um); For You*; and five others. BIG TREE BT 76004 \$7.98.

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

Johnny Rivers' pleasant singing and distinctive Southern accent (he was born in New York but grew up in Baton Rouge, Louisiana) have carried him through a recording career that began in 1964 with *Memphis* and has continued, with occasional lapses, to the present day with his most recent hit, *Swayin' to the Music (Slow Dancin')*. Rivers has become something of an experimenter of late; he likes to try different types of songs to test his interpretive ability. Thus we have here two Curtis Mayfield songs from 1964 (when Mayfield was a member of the Impressions and a talent instead of a seer): *Monkey Time* and *Curious Mind (Um, Um, Um, Um, Um)*, both of which Mayfield wrote for Major Lance. There are also Rivers' own *Ashes and Sand*, a good ballad, and a couple of we-are-all-little-candles-in-the-cosmos numbers. Rivers is a pro with charm and experience, and he manages to bring everything off appealingly. Quite a listenable album. *J.V.*

MARTY ROBBINS: Don't Let Me Touch You. Marty Robbins (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Don't Let Me Touch You; To Get to You; Return to Me; Harbor Lights; A Tree in the Meadow*; and five others. COLUMBIA KC 35040 \$5.98, © CA 35040 \$6.98, © CT 35040 \$6.98.

Performance: **Unimaginative**
Recording: **Good**

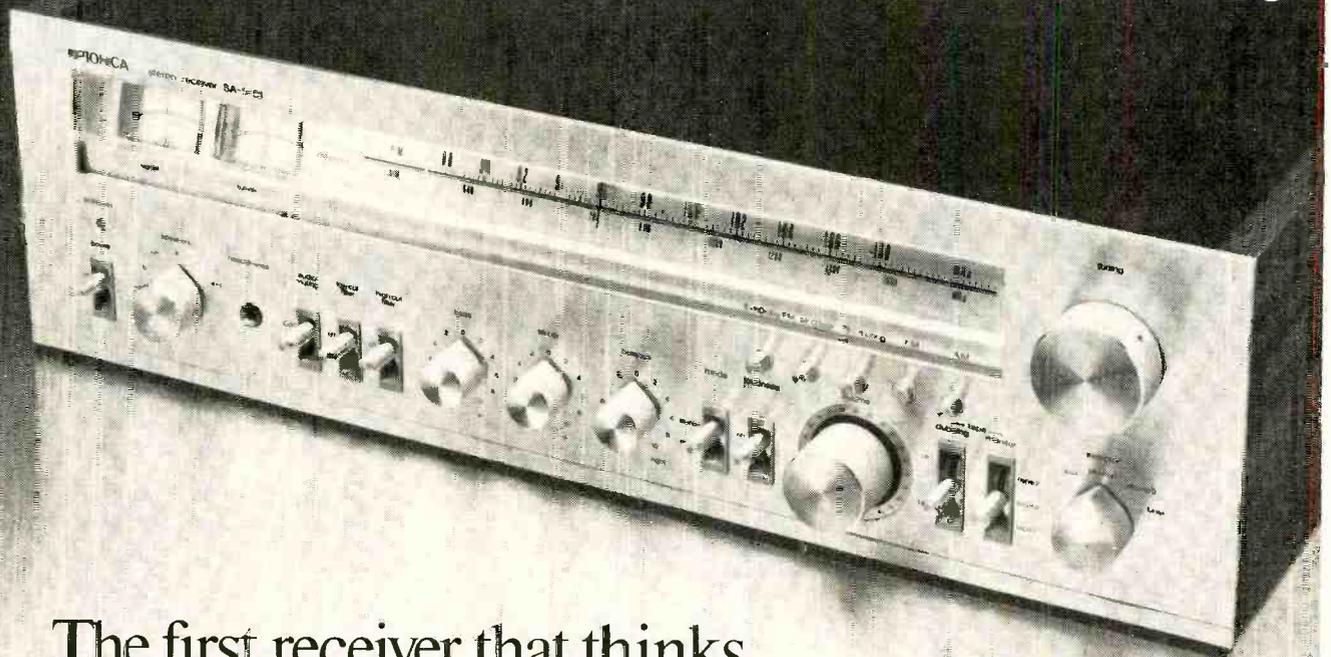
Unfortunate but descriptive title this, and the comeback it suggests is, "Don't worry, Marty" (Continued on page 104)



THE POINTER SISTERS: recapturing their former friskiness with a little help from their friends

ABC/Blue Thumb

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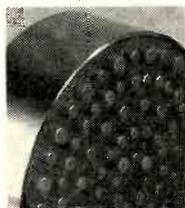
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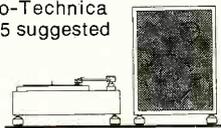
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baby, just keep on making albums like this and no one will." It's pop schlock, to the degree that it's any single kind of thing. That's part of the trouble—the album's style is amorphous, its imagination nil, and what it comes down to is some technical, almost abstract renderings of banalities. And, oh yes, I did scream, at least inwardly, as I promised myself I would if I heard *Harbor Lights* one more time. Too bad; Marty Robbins has some of the best vocal equipment there is. N.C.

BRUCE ROBERTS. Bruce Roberts (vocals, keyboards); Steve Cropper (guitar); Jeff Porcaro (drums); Donald Dunn (bass); other musicians. *I Don't Break Easily; Our Night; I Don't Wanna Go; I'd Rather Be Alone; Star-maker;* and five others. ELEKTRA 7E-1119 \$6.98, Ⓜ ET8-1119 \$7.97, Ⓞ TC5-1119 \$7.97.

Performance: **Wha...?**
Recording: **Very good**

In his album-cover photo Bruce Roberts wears horn-rim glasses, a Scottish plaid bow tie, and red sneakers, and if you think *that's* a clean-cut image, wait till you hear his music. Since we naturally repress the boring times of our past, I can't quite call up just what era Roberts—at least as produced here by Tom Dowd—is a throwback to, but whenever it was, there's enough schlock left over from it to supply his muse—which I guess means Paul Williams' muse didn't get it all. Get the idea? Roberts does the kind of wishy-washy middle-of-the-road orchestrated pop that hasn't actually occupied the middle of the road for twenty years. He has a nice-enough voice, but here he doesn't show me much as a songwriter beyond boyishness and naïveté. And even if he did, there'd still be the sugar instrumentation to put up with. It might go all right with saddle shoes and pennants, if you're into bringing those back. N.C.

THE RUNAWAYS: *Waitin' for the Night.* The Runaways (vocals and instrumentals). *Little Sister; Wasted; Wait for Me; Fantasies;* and six others. MERCURY SRM-1-3705 \$6.98, Ⓜ MC8-1-3705 \$7.95, Ⓞ MCR4-1-3705 \$7.95.

Performance: **Disturbing**
Recording: **Okay**

In case you're interested, the Runaways' new album finds their Svengali, Kim Fowley, back at the producer's helm, and it's pretty much business as usual. The only noticeable change is that the jailbait angle is emphasized a bit more than usual—lyrically, that is. That's beginning to annoy me, because what was cute when their hype began is now smelling suspiciously like kiddie-porn. One of the Runaways has already left the business altogether, and I can only hope that the rest of the girls (what ever happened to child-labor laws?) are tough enough to stand up to the pressures of Fowley's despicable, desperate hucksterism. S.S.

SANTANA: *Moonflower.* Santana (vocals and instrumentals). *Dawn; Go Within; Carnaval; Jugando; Zulu; Gypsy Queen; Savor;* and thirteen others. COLUMBIA C2 34914 two discs \$9.98, Ⓜ C2A 34914 \$9.98, Ⓞ C2T 34914 \$9.98.

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

Santana does their thing on "Moonflower" live—and seemingly endlessly—in France,



RICK WAKEMAN
Streamlined, intimate tone portraits

England, and Germany and in the studio in San Francisco. Twenty tracks of this kind of *haute* rock can leave the casual listener with the same smothered, claustrophobic feeling a spilled bottle of perfume produces. As usual, Carlos Santana and the band create enormously complex patterns of sound that studiously avoid much meaning—musical or otherwise. Also as usual, it *can* be striking at times. They are at their best in such jungle gardenias as *Bahia* and *Moonflower*, but by side three it's lemme-outa-this-elevator time. P.R.

BOZ SCAGGS: *Down Two Then Left.* Boz Scaggs (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Still Falling for You; Hard Times; A Clue; Whatcha Gonna Tell Your Man; We're Waiting; Hollywood;* and five others. COLUMBIA JC 34729 \$7.98.

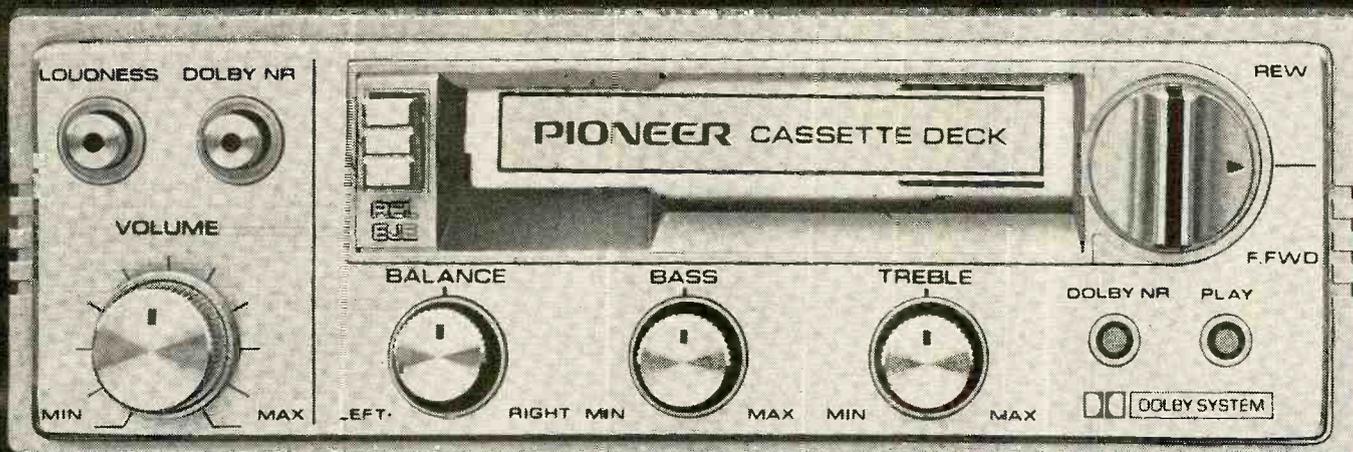
Performance: **Fair**
Recording: **Good**

Try as I might, on bended knee with my forehead in the gravel and my hands raised in prayer and supplication, I cannot understand the wherefore of Boz Scaggs. If I believe his fans, he is the greatest combination of charm and sophistication since Cole Porter was transformed into Cary Grant in Porter's screen biography. If I believe my ears, he sounds like the honorable-mention winner in the Podunk Centennial Talent Contest, the prizes for which are a typewritten scroll and a warm handshake from the mayor.

If these are cosmopolitan love songs, then I frankly admit I am simply deaf to them. If Scaggs is a persuasive tenor, a bicycle horn is music for the gods. Having listened conscientiously to this album four times, I cannot distinguish any track that is unlike any other track; it is all too damned homogenized and busy-busy and commercial. J.V.

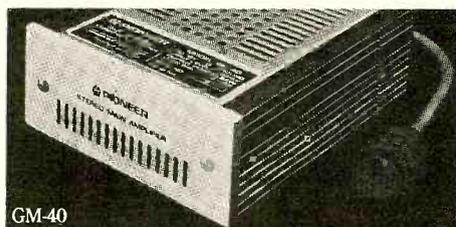
RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RICK WAKEMAN: *Rick Wakeman's Criminal Record.* Rick Wakeman (keyboards); Frank Ricotti (percussion); Alan White (drums); Chris Squire (bass); Bill Oddie (vo-
(Continued on page 106)



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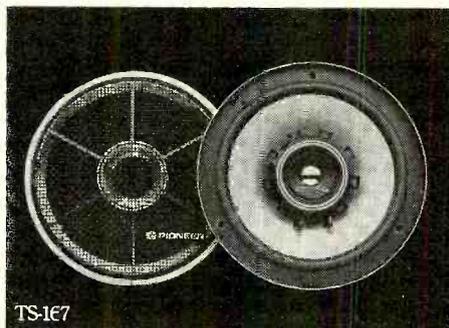
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cal); Ars Laeta Choir of Lausanne, Switzerland. Robert Mernoud cond. *Statue of Justice: Crime of Passion; Chamber of Horrors; Birdman of Alcatraz; The Breathalyser; Judas Iscariot.* A&M SP-4660 \$7.98.

Performance: **Enticing**
Recording: **Excellent**

I'm not quite sure why this album is so fascinating, but since first hearing it I've found it difficult to take off the turntable. I have been far from a fan of Wakeman's in the past, what with his ghastly overblown semi-symphonic travesties, but here he is streamlined, restrained, and mostly straightforward. "Criminal Record" is a series of tone portraits on various aspects of crime, a subject the English seem to have an abiding interest in. Wakeman works out on piano, organ, and synthesizers to spare with grandiose accompaniment ranging from bass and drums to a Swiss choir.

Of the six pieces, *Crime of Passion* has the most charming tune, and *Judas Iscariot*, the most ambitious selection, is successful in creating and sustaining a mood, despite its somewhat shallow content. But Wakeman manages to create an intimacy with the listener which he maintains through the album; try it and see.

J.V.

WAR: Galaxy. War (vocals and instrumentals). *Sweet Fighting Lady; Hey Señorita; Seven Tin Soldiers;* and two others. MCA MCA-3030 \$7.98. © MCAT-3030 \$7.98, © MCAC-3030 \$7.98.

Performance: **Relaxing**
Recording: **Good**

As creators of leisurely paced, Latin-tinged soul, members of the group called War have set up for themselves a comfortable campsite from which they can venture out to dip into various musical waters without appearing to be stuck anywhere. A toned-down type of salsa prevails here in numbers such as *Hey Señorita* and *Sweet Fighting Lady*, while a spacy funk is laced through *Galaxy*. Most appealing is *Seven Tin Soldiers*, which runs to fourteen minutes, providing ample room for Lee Oskar's first-rate blues harmonica. No new ground is broken in "Galaxy." Rather than reaching for peaks, the group maintains a calmly pleasant mood throughout, with bongos, congas, and keyboards ambling through long breathy passages most notable for restraint. This is better-than-average easy-listening music.

P.G.

GENE WATSON: Beautiful Country. Gene Watson (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *The Old Man and His Horn; I Won't Be Sleeping Alone; Hey Barnum and Bailey; Raining in Dallas; I Don't Need a Thing at All;* and five others. CAPITOL ST-11715 \$6.98. © 8XT-11715 \$6.98.

Performance: **Trapped in fluff**
Recording: **Very good**

"He little thinged her out of my arms." Gene Watson sings. You might say Gene Watson little thinged himself out of a good album with such tired stuff as that and "I'd love to live with you again—but then I couldn't live with me." When it isn't that sort of thing, it's a worn-out three-chord tune. The good thing about the album, Watson's singing, tends to seem irrelevant in the delivery of these puff

(Continued on page 108)

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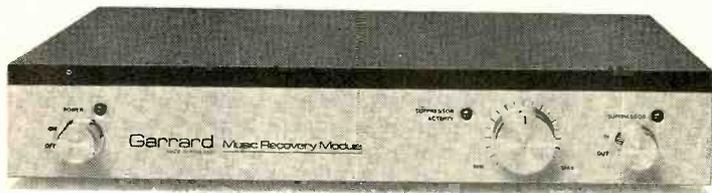
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pieces. Watson has a strong, smooth voice and diction as clean as Richard Carpenter's hair. But almost anywhere you put the needle down you get something like "It don't hurt me half as bad as loving you feels good." Now that's the kind of tin ear that just never will take plating. N.C.

WET WILLIE: *Manorisms*. Wet Willie (vocals and instrumentals). *Rainman; Make You Feel Love Again; So Blue; We Got Lovin'; Don't Turn Me Away; Street Corner Serenade*; and four others. Epic JE 34983 \$7.98, © JEA 34983 \$7.98, © JET 34983 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good**

Recording: **Good**

Wet Willie has had a seven-year run of recording and touring, and in that time the group has pounded out high-powered, usually entertaining, danceable rock. Although the liner notes for "Manorisms" claim that it's got a "new sound," little seems different from the band's past efforts except that the writing is more frankly commercial rhythm-and-blues, which means they are going for a "hit sound" and the larger audience it will attract. Wet Willie works hard, taking care of business and having a good time in the process. They also have a sense of humor—*How 'Bout You* is a parody of the 1920's style, complete with slap-tongue saxophone. The other selections are standard rave-ups and ballads, but all are delivered with admirable punch and zing. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DENIECE WILLIAMS: *Song Bird*. Deniece Williams (vocals); Maurice White (drums, vocals); Paulinho da Costa (percussion); Victor Feldman (vibraphone); other musicians. *Time; The Boy I Left Behind; God Is Amazing; Season; The Paper*; and three others. Columbia PC 34911 \$6.98, © PCA 34911 \$6.98, © PCT 34911 \$6.98.

Performance: **Enticing**

Recording: **Very good**

After listening to this, her second solo outing, I find it easy to understand why Deniece Williams' voice turned Stevie Wonder on so much that he sought her out for his back-up vocal group, Wonderlove. She worked with Wonder from 1972 to 1976, appearing on all the recordings of his most creative period, including "Songs in the Key of Life." She has a buoyant, bright, fluid sound, a delicate vibrato, and a remarkable range that permits her to reach for piercing high notes without any indication of strain.

Here she is fitted out with material that is even better than that on her fine first album. Producer Maurice White poured all of the proper stuff into this one; the arrangements are imaginative, and several name musicians supply smooth, unobtrusive instrumental backing. Ms. Williams is also a songwriter of notable talent, for she helped write some of the best tunes here, including *Time, The Paper*, and a moving, unpretentious gospel selection called *God Is Amazing*. And *The Boy I Left Behind* stands out for its high-spirited quality. Moving tastefully through both slow and fast numbers, Ms. Williams demonstrates that she has everything it takes to go right to the top. P.G.

(Continued on page 110)

STEREO REVIEW

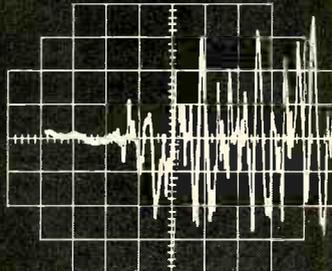
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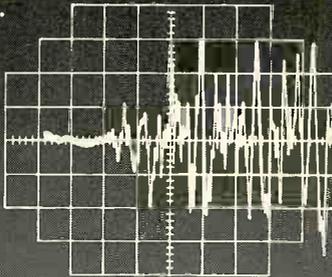
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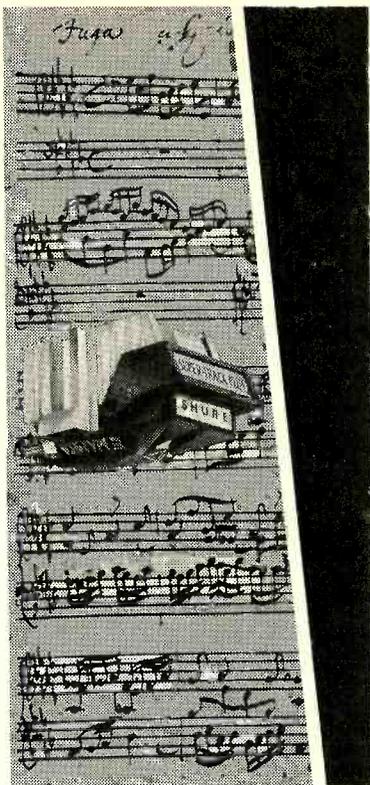
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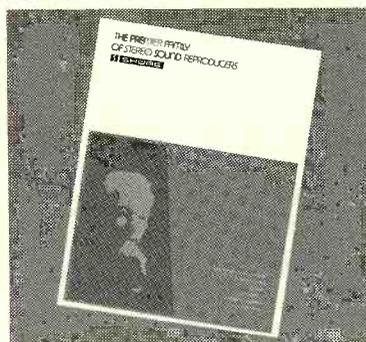
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COLLECTIONS

BRAZILIAN MUSIC: Tom, Vinicius, Toquinho, Miucha Recorded Live at Canecão (See The Pop Beat, page 56)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

COUNTRY COMES TO CARNEGIE HALL. Hank Thompson and the Brazos Valley Boys (vocals and instrumentals); Freddy Fender (vocals, guitar); Don Williams (vocals, guitar); Roy Clark (vocals, guitar); Buck Trent (banjo); other musicians. *Oklahoma Hills; Wild Side of Life; A Six Pack to Go; Before the Next Teardrop Falls; Wasted Days and Wasted Nights; Alabama Jubilee; Under the Double Eagle; Say It Again; You're My Best Friend;* and eleven others. ABC/DO: DO-2087/2 two discs \$8.98, © 8310-2087N \$8.95, © 5310-2087N \$8.95.

Performance: **Energized**
Recording: **Very good remote**

I didn't think I'd like this. Oh, I thought it might be interesting to hear Hank Thompson again, as he's still running one of the few country-swing bands that isn't dry and methodical. But Don Williams is a soft country purveyor, and Roy Clark, the headliner here, has seemed preoccupied for years with winning the title of Mr. Showbiz, which involves having an audience *look* at his flying fingers more than listen to the result. On top of all that, everyone is doing the greatest hits of his greatest hits, more or less, and you know how *that* usually turns out.

In fact, though, all the performers actually seem to be *listening* to what they're doing, and all make a good connection with the audience. Williams and Clark (it's debatable which one steals the show) make *such* good connections with the audience that they should consider doing only live albums for a while. I'm not a fan of Clark's vocals; part of the problem is that he has two singing styles, a fairly straightforward one for a song like *Alabama Jubilee* and a cloying one when he's trying to soft-soap a pop audience. But the thing here is his guitar work, and on *Under the Double Eagle* and the difficult flamenco turns in *Malagueña* he really lets it rip. He's much less mechanical than he is on the *Tonight Show*. Williams wrote *The Shelter of Your Eyes*, just about the epitome of the kind of song he specializes in, but it is perhaps worth noticing how much better he does it when he's playing to an audience that obviously loves it. Those may be the album's best moments. Thompson and Fender seem to have only opening and warm-up roles.

These four stylists, no more or less representative than a number of other foursomes would be, and some of the individual performances show the big city that there's a lot more to this kind of music than *Hee Haw* lets on. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

REDNECK MOTHERS. Johnny Russell: *Rednecks, White Socks and Blue Ribbon Beer.* Gary Stewart: *Back Slider's Wine; Honky-Tonkin'.* Willie Nelson: *I Gotta Get Drunk.* Steve Young: *Renegade Picker; Tobacco Road.* Jerry Reed: *I'm Just a Redneck in a Rock-and-roll Bar.* Bobby Bare: *Up Against the Wall Redneck Mother.* Tennessee Pullystone: *Whiskey River.* Vernon Oxford: *Red-*



ROY CLARK
Really lets it rip

neck! RCA APL1-2438 \$7.98, © APS1-2438 \$7.98, © APK1-2438 \$7.98.

Performance: **Rat on, boys**
Recording: **Mostly good**

This is a great party record, particularly for white-collar parties. If you can read *Doonesbury*, you ought to be able to go to town, as the good old boys say, gleaning insight from it into how the redneck isn't as one-dimensional as you'd heard—if you're not too far along in the party, that is. If you are, well, hell, the album is also partly music to be drunk to—that is, it is both honky-tonk music and a satire of honky-tonk music. Such, you might say, is the elusive nature of honky-tonk music. But you'd have to be pretty far gone not to appreciate the shrewdness of these good old pickers, the fine subtlety with which they parody their own poses.

I've never yet met anyone who wasn't captivated by *Rednecks, White Socks and Blue Ribbon Beer*, and here you have both it and Bobby Bare's . . . er, definitive reading of *Up Against the Wall Redneck Mother*. Besides these peaks of insight (and tunefulness and fun and most other things), there's a reasonable number of decent-size foothills, including Gary Stewart's non-ironic but swinging treatment of the honky tonks. Most of these songs really work best in a live-performance repertoire, of course, as the novelty aspect is a little too strong for repeated closely spaced listenings. But you can mitigate that somewhat by playing the record only for other people—the ones who need more fun as well as the ones who need more insight. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THESE CHARMING PEOPLE: Vocal Duets by Gershwin, Kern, and Rodgers and Hart. Joan Morris, Max Morath (vocals); William Bolcom (piano). *I Don't Think I'll Fall in Love Today; You Never Knew About Me; Hang On to Me; Feeling I'm Falling; The Half of It, Dearie, Blues; Till the Clouds Roll By;* and six others. RCA ARL1-2491 \$7.98, © ARS1-2491 \$7.98. © ARK1-2491 \$7.98.

Performance: **Charming**
Recording: **Excellent**

We know who "these charming people" are. They're Joan Morris, Max Morath, and Wil-

liam Bolcom, not the "debonair" social climbers with "savoir-faire" in the Gershwin ballad from which this album takes its title. Anything Bolcom turns his attention to at the keyboard, especially if his wife, Joan the Mischievous, sings it at the same time, is bound to come out as bright as a blouse that's been dipped into the right detergent on a TV commercial. That's what happens to the songs sung and played here, particularly with the jocular voice of Morath joining in on the whole jaunty enterprise. The trio dip into old songbooks to resurrect known and not-so-known ballads from the pens of Gershwin, Kern, and Rodgers and Hart; the results are nothing if not charming. One could only wish they had been more generous and added a few more to the dozen delights on this program. Without patronizing the somewhat musty material, Morath and Morris make marvelous duets out of Gershwin's *Feeling I'm Falling*, Kern's *Till the Clouds Roll By*, Rodgers and Hart's *There's a Small Hotel*, and other old favorites. When subtle satirical comedy is called for, however, as in Gershwin's *The Rabbitt and the Bromide*, these performers really have the chance to shine, and they make the most of it. I have come to the conclusion that nobody alive can play a Gershwin tune with a better sense of style than William Bolcom; he gets several chances here to be heard between choruses strutting his stuff. A real winner. P.K.

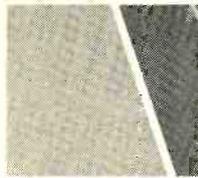


THE KLEZMORIM: *East Side Wedding*. Lev Liberman (flute, vocals, brass whistle, dumbek); David Julian Gray (clarinet, vocals, mandolin, lauto, violin); David Skuse (violin, accordion, vocals); Greg Carageorge (double bass, vocals); Laurie Chastain (violin). *Trello Hasaposerviko: Yoshke, Yoshke; Cintec De Dratoste/Hora Lui Damian; Dem Ganefs Yiches; Doina; Thalassa; Fidl Volach;* and five others. ARHOOLIE 3006 \$6.98.

Performance: **Rousing**
Recording: **Very good**

Would you like to go to a nice old-fashioned Jewish wedding? The musicians live in California and the recording was made in Berkeley, but never mind, it's a good old-fashioned Lower East Side New York wedding just the same. In Eastern Europe, the *klezmorim* were unlettered, penniless Jewish musicians who made music on whatever battered instruments they could get hold of, traveling from town to town to entertain at weddings and other festivals. They were a bridge between the ghetto and the world outside, and their tunes were appropriated from wherever they found them, but whatever they played they melted down into the Yiddish idiom and made their own.

The five young musicians who make up this

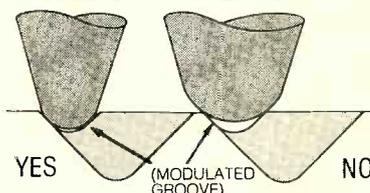


fact: a stylus tip does not a cartridge make. so why all the fuss?

The stylus tip is only part of the complex stylus and cartridge structure, and performs a single function — it positions the entire stylus assembly so that all groove undulations are traced without damaging the record. The production of a top-quality tip calls for exquisite micro-craftsmanship, precision polishing, unwavering uniformity, and exact orientation. (However, important as it is, an exotic diamond stylus tip configuration simply isn't a cure-all for what might ail an otherwise deficient cartridge, regardless of high-flying claims you may have heard or read.)

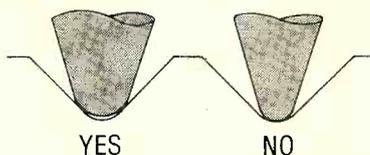
Here are the basic criteria a top-quality stylus tip must meet:

IT MUST FIT THE MODULATED GROOVE

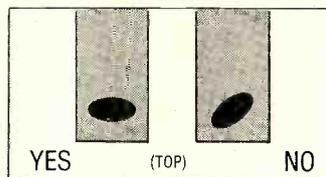
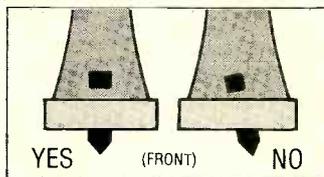


If the tip is shaped so it's oversized at its contact points, it can rise out of the modulated groove (the arrows indicate modulation of one groove wall) and "crest" at the record surface, causing extreme distortion and noise.

IT MUST NOT "BOTTOM" IN THE GROOVE

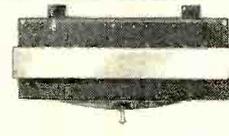


A slightly-undersized or too-pointed stylus tip may ride the groove bottom, lose contact with the groove walls, mistrack, and generate high noise levels.



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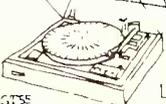
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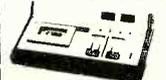
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CIRCLE NO. 9 ON READER SERVICE CARD

modern band of *klezmerim* have also learned their craft wherever they could, by playing together at bars and coffeehouses in the golden West, and they too entertain, by their own report, "at dance parties and on the streets," improvising, playing by ear on old-world instruments, pooling ideas to create their arrangements "communally." Certainly the material they put over here with such a total grasp of style is precisely what you might hear at a traditional orthodox wedding to this very day. There's a lively *freilach*—a joyous dance in the Rumanian spirit—for openers; Chassidic drinking songs; a ballad about the dubious lineage of a thief; Rumanian laments and Greek melodies intertwined with Yiddish ones; the song of a drunken guest who presses money on the musicians, urging them to play his favorite song again and again; a scissors dance; a hora. It's enough to make a listener drunk without the aid of a single glass of wine. The wedding ends on a rather forlorn philosophical note with the poignant song *Di Grine Kuzine (The Greenhorn Cousin)*, a ballad once immensely popular among New York's immigrants, all about a "greenhorn" girl who loses her looks and her good health over a machine in an East Side sweatshop in "Columbus' land." But even this gloomy ballad is delivered in such spirited style that we're sent away in a merry mood. **P.K.**



THELMA HOUSTON: *The Devil in Me*. Thelma Houston (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *I'm Here Again; It's Just Me Feeling Good; I Can't Go On Without Your Love; Memories; Give Me Something to Believe In;* and four others. TAMLA T7-358R1 \$7.98. © 7-358 HT \$7.98, © 7-358 HC \$7.98.

Performance: **Better than the music**
 Recording: **Good**

Thelma Houston has remained in the ranks of highly promising singers, just bubbling beneath the surface of widespread recognition, for what seems like a long time in a business that seems at times to be based on built-in obsolescence. This album is likely to leave her still short of success because of the uneven material she has to work with. The first side is a study in ordinariness, though Houston sings with spirited passion, trying to lug these leaden songs to greater heights. She fares considerably better on the second side, which includes some fairly interesting songs, most penned, at least in part, by Michel Rubini. *Memories* is a real little jewel tucked in among the rhinestones, while *Baby I Love You Too Much* is the sort of lilting, lightweight item that might make a hit. What is lacking here is a distinctive sound that announces to the world that Thelma Houston is Thelma Houston and cannot be mistaken for anybody else.

With her singing talent and expressive abilities, it shouldn't be difficult for some creative producer to provide her with the right magical mix. **P.G.**

DONNY AND MARIE OSMOND: *Winning Combination*. Donny and Marie Osmond (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Best of Me; You Remind Me; Oh, Sweet Lovin'; Baby, I'm Sold on You; Sure Would Be Nice;* and six others. POLYDOR PD-1-6127 \$6.98.

Performance: **For fans**
 Recording: **Good**

This is yet another sausage from the Great Osmond Sausage Machine. "Winning Combination" is all as bright-eyed, clean-cut, and wholesome as Donny and Marie's TV show, an exercise in polyunsaturated sunshine as stupefyingly boring as it is hugely successful. Their records (between them they now have twenty in current release) have probably made them as solvent as the Bank of America, and the amount of material about them one can send away for rivals that of a Presidential candidate.

This particular album has a disco flavor, and Donny and Marie handle their chores with neatness and dispatch. Marie—who used to look like the girl next door but now, after an alarming "glamorization," more closely resembles Liza Minnelli at a Maybelline convention—still coos and pouts quite charmingly in such things as *I Want to Give You My Everything* (don't you believe it). Donny, a sort of male Sparkle Plenty, chimes in enthusiastically all over the place, especially in the title song. The album was produced by Brian Holland with all the care and flash of a hash-house chef giving the fried eggs a once-over-lightly. **P.R.**

BILLY PRESTON: *A Whole New Thing*. Billy Preston (vocals, keyboards, guitars, bass, percussion); other musicians. *Whole New Thing; Disco Dancing; Attitudes; You Got Me Buzzin'; Sweet Marie; You Don't Have to Go;* and four others. A&M SP 4656 \$6.98.

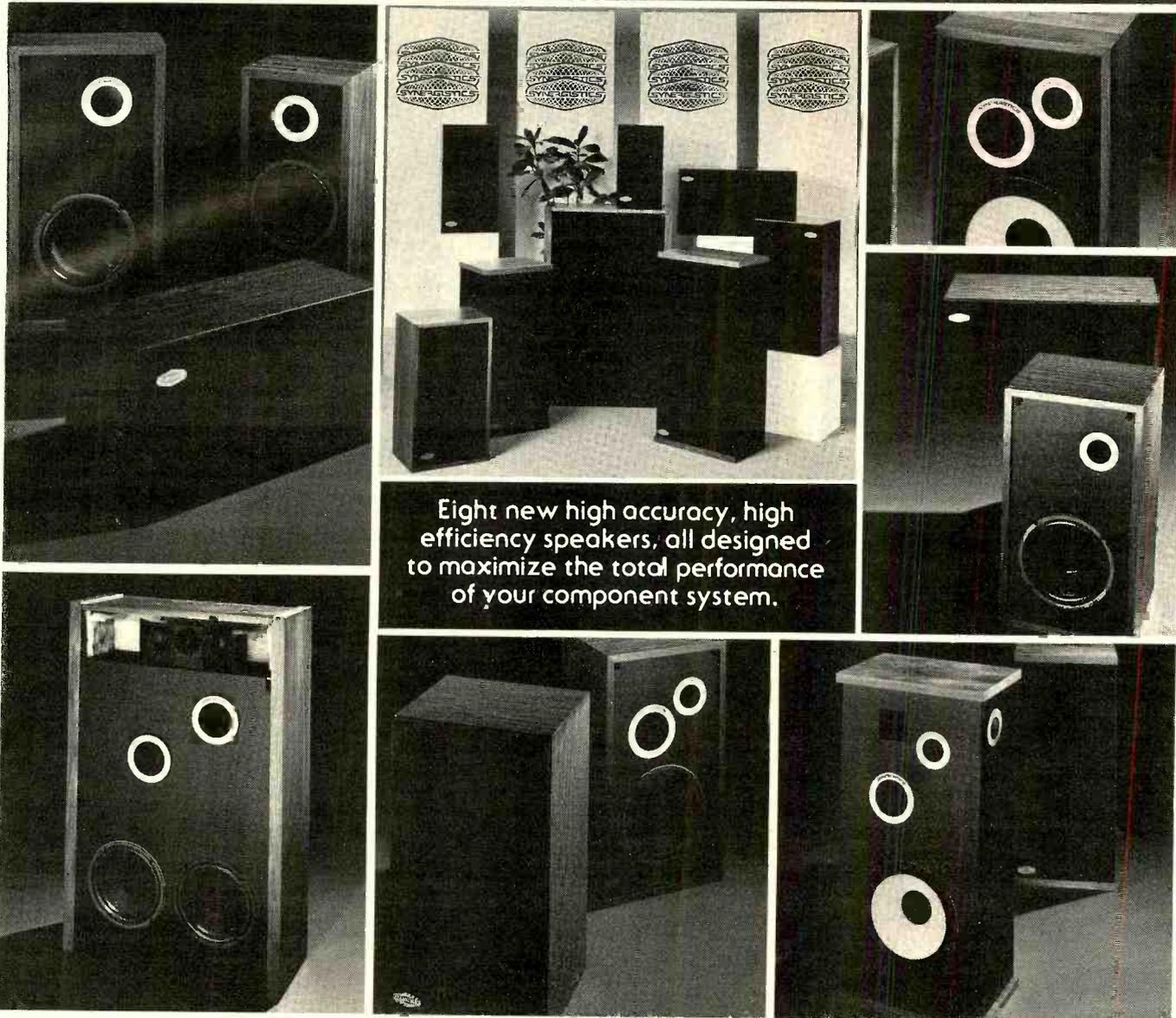
Performance: **Funkful**
 Recording: **Very good**

According to the title of this album, Billy Preston is into a whole new thing. But after listening to this set, I cannot distinguish what it is, except that he might have moved, in his fruitful professional lifetime, from gospel to disco while managing to hold on to some of the basic ingredients of everything that falls in between.

Preston is a most resourceful and versatile artist, bringing a deep sense of musicality to everything he does. Thus he can mix song lines that fit comfortably into the current disco mode with a piano-organ style that is a pastiche of gospel, blues, and boogie. His singing, being of the Ray Charles school, fits well with such a root-rich mixture. Just check him out here on *Sweet Marie*, which shows the influence the master has on him both vocally and instrumentally. And *Disco Dancing, Complicated Sayings, Attitude, and Happy* are sufficiently sprightly to set the lights to flickering in any dance emporium. He's one of the few who have successfully bridged the gap of changing styles, and this disc is a testament to that accomplishment. **P.G.**

(Continued on page 116)

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That Old R-&-B Just Ain't What It Used to Be

*The Mighty Clouds of Joy:
a rambunctious musical hybrid*



ABC Records

THE male singing group was the basis of classic rhythm-'n'-blues, though of course this sort of collective musical effort is older than the genre itself. It has endured in both formal and informal settings, from the casual camaraderie of the street corner through the hallelujah happenings of the black church to the carefully choreographed stage presentations of today.

Somewhat senior citizens may readily recall how in the late Twenties the Mills Brothers transformed the old barbershop-quartet harmonies by singing like an orchestra, parlaying their treatment of jazz and popular favorites into national acclaim as the first group of its kind. They paved the way for the velvet warblings of the Ink Spots and the Charioteers, who themselves gave way to the more rhythmically danceable doo-wop style of the Fifties, of the Ravens, the Clovers, the Orioles, the Dominoes, the Drifters, the Coasters, and others who have now ascended to seats of honor in a vinyl Valhalla. And in the Sixties there was Motown, a phenomenal incubator of both male and female singing groups that came bursting out of Detroit to set folks dancing in the streets. Fewer male soul groups have emerged in the Seventies, but those that have are heirs to a long and honorable tradition.

KEEPING this tradition in mind, I approached the five recent recordings reviewed here with a certain amount of eager anticipation—which soon turned to dismay. If these albums represent the state of the art of today's male r-&-b vocal groups, we have reaped a harvest of chaff. Perhaps our ears have been spoiled by the higher voltage of instrument-based groups like War or Earth, Wind and Fire. Or maybe it's no longer enough simply to sing competently. In any case, a healthy injection of imagination and some more inviting songs might have im-

proved any of these albums. As it is, not one is memorable.

The most pleasurable moments are to be found in "Live and Direct" by the Mighty Clouds of Joy, a rambunctious gospel-pop hybrid group that manages to bestride both camps without sacrificing their funky validity. This quartet deals as deftly with the Isley Brothers' *Shout* as with new-fangled religious songs more suited to a night club than a church. They convey a sense of inner joy that can lift a listener out of the doldrums, although they also rely too heavily on preaching devices that have become hackneyed through overuse. The final track, *Where Is Your Faith?*, is an appealing and sincerely delivered number that has the additional virtue of suggesting that these particular Clouds may be harbingers of clearer skies.

The other four albums are disturbing in their monotony. While there is no outrageously poor singing and not a sour note is to be

*these particular clouds
may be harbingers
of clearer skies. . .*

found, the arrangements are so slick and contrived you could slide home on them. They all seem to be based on the same formula: take a slim fragment of melody and build a flimsy song structure on it through sheer repetition. The lyrics are so simplistic that they live down to the very worst that critics of r-&-b have said about it over the years. Everything seems to be frozen into a fifteen-year-old's

view of life and love. Such mindlessness might be overlooked were the music better, but there's no saving grace there either.

The most forgivable disaster is "At Last . . . the Pips," which features that notable back-up group without its star, Gladys Knight. From the liner notes, one gathers that the trio waited twenty-five years to make this record. They might better have spent the time knitting, so slender is the thread of distinction. Without Knight's glorious peaks and hollows of vocal passion, the Pips squeak forth as just another second-rate singing group. They achieve a fleeting moment of delight on the final track, the engaging ballad *Tomorrow Child*, but that is hardly enough to redeem the album. Gladys, come home; they need you.

LESS forgivable is the new album by the Temptations, "Hear to Tempt You." It doesn't. In recent years this group, one of old Motown's most magnificent vocal combos, has been eulogized as if it were gone forever. But the Temptations have resurfaced from time to time with various personnel changes. Now only a couple of the faces are familiar; unfortunately, this new Atlantic album fails to make me want to keep up the acquaintance. Stilted solos are interwoven with wooden ensemble work, all applied to tacky songs that are forgotten almost before they are heard. Where did all the old fire go? Could this tired remnant be all that's left of the quintet that produced such unforgettable r-&-b hits as *My Girl*, *Ain't Too Proud to Beg*, *Cloud Nine*, and *Papa Was a Rollin' Stone*? What happened since their excellent album "A Song for You" (Gordy G6-969SI) of just two years past? I'd rather remember them as they were.

As for the Spinners, their records were all beginning to sound alike even before their lead singer, Philippe Wynne, split to embark on his less than spectacular solo career.

Wynne was the driver of the group, prompting it to a sassy vitality that is lacking on "Spinners/8." The selections—arranged, conducted, produced, and in large part written by Thom Bell—are agreeable enough, the sort of innocuous fare that goes well with washing the dishes or cleaning out closets.

On "Now Is the Time," Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes manage to hold up a modest corner of the r-&-b tradition. Essential respect for their roots in the Philadelphia sound is apparent in the time they allot for solo excursions, and they avoid getting in each other's way or cluttering things up too much. Unlike the other albums here, theirs does include one real boilemaker, *Baby, You Got My Nose Open*, as well as at least one better-than-average ballad, *Let's Talk It Over*.

OVERALL, what I find lacking in this sampling of discs by male soul-singing groups is humor, variety, and strong individual styles. The Clovers, for instance, with their old-fashioned doo-wop style, could inspire a chuckle with their rendition of *One Mint Julep*, and the Coasters could convey the feel of a rocky bar-side encounter with amusing familiarity. They lacked the sophistication of these younger fellows, and they had no fancy backgrounds, but they seemed to get a kick out of what they were doing that made us anxious to eavesdrop on their pleasure. I don't know about you, but I'll take funky fun over dry, predictable sophistication any day. —Phyl Garland

MIGHTY CLOUDS OF JOY: *Live and Direct*. Mighty Clouds of Joy (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Love Train*; *Stairway to Heaven*; *I Came to Jesus*; *Shout*; *Look on the Bright Side*; *Carnival of Life*; *Where Is Your Faith?* ABC AB-1038 \$6.98.

THE PIPS: *At Last . . . the Pips*. The Pips (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *At Last My Search Is Over*; *If I Could Bring Back Yesterday*; *Midnight Flight to Your Love*; *Since I Found Love*; *Happiness*; *Uncle James*; *Tomorrow Child*. CASABLANCA NBLP 7081 \$6.98.

THE SPINNERS: *Spinners/8*. Spinners (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *I'm Gonna Getcha*; *I'm Tired of Giving*; *You Got the Love That I Need*; *Easy Come, Easy Go*; *Back in the Arms of Love*; *Painted Magic*; *Heaven on Earth (So Fine)*; *(Love Is) One Step Away*; *Baby I Need Your Love (You're the Only One)*. ATLANTIC SD 19146 \$6.98.

THE TEMPTATIONS: *Hear to Tempt You*. Temptations (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Think for Yourself*; *In a Lifetime*; *She's All I've Got*; *Snake in the Grass*; *I Could Never Stop Loving You*; *Can We Come and Share in Love*; *It's Time for Love*; *Let's Live in Peace*; *Read Between the Lines*. ATLANTIC SD 19143 \$6.98, © TP 19143 \$7.97, © CS 19143 \$7.97.

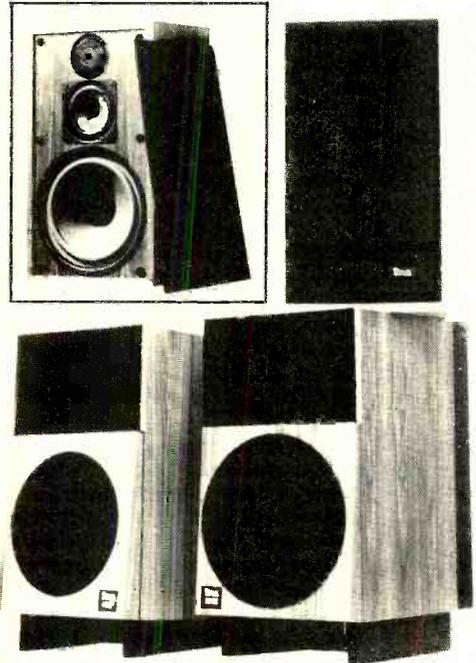
HAROLD MELVIN AND THE BLUE NOTES: *Now Is the Time*. Harold Melvin, the Blue Notes (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Where's the Concert for the People?*; *Baby, You Got My Nose Open*; *Let's Talk It Over*; *Feels Like Magic*; *Now Is the Time*; *Power of Love*; *Today, Tomorrow, Forever*; *Try to Live a Day*. ABC AA-1041 \$6.98.

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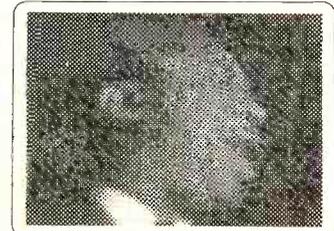
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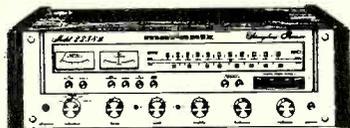
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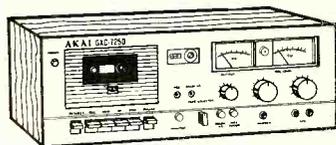
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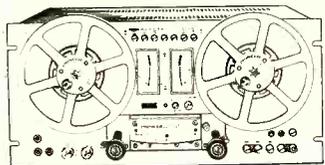


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JAZZ



PEPPER ADAMS/DONALD BYRD: Stardust. Donald Byrd (trumpet); Pepper Adams (baritone saxophone); Kenny Burrell (guitar); Tommy Flanagan (piano); Paul Chambers (bass); Louis Hayes (drums). *Philson; Trio; Bitty Ditty*; and two others. BETHLEHEM Ⓜ BCP-6029 \$6.98.

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

Detroit is usually forgotten when jazz cities are mentioned, but it has given us some of our finest players, including the five men who recorded this album in 1960. Donald Byrd—under whose name this session originally appeared—had started recording for Blue Note two years earlier, and it was an association that yielded many memorable sessions with such sidemen as Hank Mobley, Jackie McLean, Wayne Shorter, Jimmy Heath, and Pepper Adams, just to mention the saxophone players. By the mid Seventies, however, Byrd—still with Blue Note—was turning out mediocre pop records of no jazz value. Which seems all the sadder when you hear his earlier performances, such as the beautiful, lyrical reading of Hoagy Carmichael's *Stardust* that opens this set or his bouncy, boppish solo on Thad Jones' *Bitty Ditty*, which ends it.

Pepper Adams never succumbed to the mass-market mania that gripped Byrd; he is rarely recorded as a leader, but his musical associations have been impressive. In recent years, Adams has often been heard with the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis orchestra and with the versatile David Amram. Byrd and Adams worked well together, often better than they do on this album, and it would be interesting to hear them reunited; for, though he has defected, Byrd is still quite capable of playing the kind of music that gave him his start. The rhythm section—Kenny Burrell, Tommy Flanagan, Paul Chambers, and Louis Hayes—speaks eloquently for itself, and "*Stardust*" is a durable reminder of what jazz was like at the beginning of a decade that later saw it fall victim to rock, raga, and reverb. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ROSEMARY CLOONEY: Everything's Coming Up Rosie. Rosemary Clooney (vocals); Nat Pierce (piano); Monty Budwig (bass); Jake Hanna (drums); Scott Hamilton (saxophone); Bill Berry (trumpet). *A Foggy Day; Hey There; All of Me; As Time Goes By; More Than You Know*; and five others. CONCORD JAZZ CJ-47 \$6.98 (from Concord Jazz, Inc., P.O. Box 845, Concord, Calif. 94522).

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

Well, hello, Rosie! You're sounding swell, Rosie, and it's awfully nice to have you back

where you belong. Rosemary Clooney makes a welcome return to records on this little gem of an album. Accompanied by a quintet of fine musicians, she sings a collection of standards with taste, with style, and with that special Clooney *ritard* in her phrasing and the voluptuous undertow to her low notes. *Hey There* is about the only thing here connected with her glory days, and she does it marvelously well. But then she does everything well, including an *As Time Goes By* that is downright superb. Clooney's pop glory days may be behind her, but those of a more mature and seasoned wisdom seem to be just beginning. Don't miss this one. P.R.

DUKE ELLINGTON: A Tribute to Duke by Bing Crosby, Tony Bennett, Rosemary Clooney, and Woody Herman (see Best of the Month, page 87)



Concord Jazz

ROSEMARY CLOONEY

Taste and style on a not-to-be-missed disc

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

STAN GETZ/JIMMIE ROWLES: The Peacocks. Stan Getz (tenor saxophone); Jimmie Rowles (piano, vocals); Buster Williams (bass); Elvin Jones (drums). *Body and Soul; Skylark; My Buddy; Rose Marie; Serenade to Sweden; the Peacocks; Lester Left Town*; and six others. COLUMBIA JC 34873 \$7.98.

Performance: **Almost perfect**
Recording: **Excellent**

This album was produced by Stan Getz as a showcase for pianist Jimmie Rowles, who—though his musical background is impressive and his accomplishments many—still has not received the recognition he deserves from the public. Of the thirteen selections included, only two don't make it: Wayne Shorter's composition *The Chess Players* (which—by way of multiple tracking—has the added voices of Jon Hendricks, his wife, their daughter, and the daughter of Stan Getz) and *Rose Marie*, the old Jeanette McDonald/Nelson Eddy warhorse, which Rowles turns into a tasteless novelty item. On the former, the voices—singing special lyrics by Jon Hendricks—all but drown out the original instrumental track with a Lambert, Hendricks, and Ross style that sounds hopelessly outdated today.

There is nothing outdated about the rest of
(Continued on page 118)

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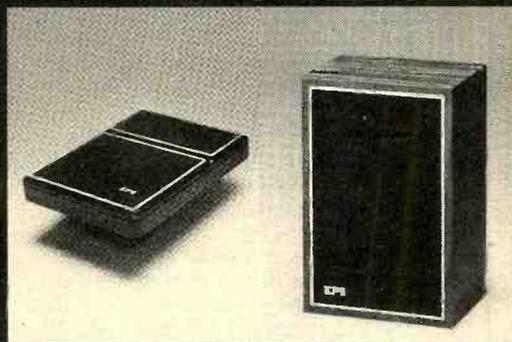
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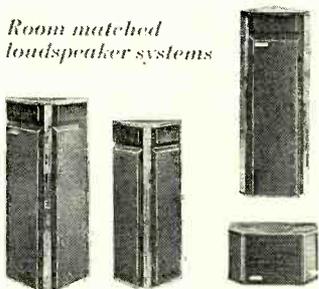
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"The Peacocks," which is a tasteful excursion into the musical minds of Getz and Rowles. The latter goes it alone on two tracks and, aided by Getz's fluent tenor, lends his pleasant, if not exceptional, voice to three familiar tunes. *I'll Never Be the Same*. *This Is All I Ask*, and *My Buddy*. There are also instrumental duets by Getz and Rowles, including the stunningly beautiful Rowles composition from which the album takes its title, and tracks where bassist Buster Williams and drummer Elvin Jones join in. All in all, this is a very fine album by two experts who I hope will make more good music together. C.A.

LEE KONITZ: *Lee Konitz Meets Warne Marsh Again*. Lee Konitz (alto saxophone); Warne Marsh (tenor saxophone); Peter Ind (bass); Al Levitt (drums). *Star Eyes*; *My Old Flame*; *Sound Lee*; and three others. PAUSA PR-7019 \$6.98.

Performance: **Still cool**
Recording: **Good remote**

Saxophonists Lee Konitz and Warne Marsh were born thirteen days apart fifty Octobers ago, and they met in the late Forties when both were members of pianist Lennie Tristano's then quite avant-garde group. The influence of Tristano is still detectable in this set, recorded at saxophonist Ronnie Scott's London club almost two years ago, and that is particularly understandable considering the fact that bassist Peter Ind and drummer Al Levitt—who complete the quartet—also played with Tristano (though in the early Fifties).

In an age rife with Coltrane derivatives, one is struck by the fact that neither Konitz nor Marsh seems to have been the least bit affected by his music, for what we hear on this album is what we might have heard from these men almost thirty years ago (contrary to what we are told in the ill-researched, anonymous liner notes). That is not meant as a criticism, for what we hear is exceptionally fine music played in an enduring style. They used to call this style cool, but it is hot by today's standards, and this album deserves to be hot on the jazz market, despite unfortunate, unattractive packaging. C.A.

LEE KONITZ/PAUL BLEY/BILL CONNORS: *Pyramid*. Lee Konitz (soprano and alto saxophones); Paul Bley (acoustic and electric pianos); Bill Connors (acoustic and electric guitars). *Tavia*; *Out There*; *Play Blue*; and three others. IMPROVISING ARTISTS IAI 37.38.45 \$6.98 (from Improvising Artists, Inc., 26 Jane Street, New York, N.Y. 10014).

Performance: **Sensitive**
Recording: **Very good**

Lee Konitz came on the jazz scene thirty years ago with the Claude Thornhill band, and he continued associating with players whose musical thinking went beyond current trends. He was strongly influenced by Lennie Tristano, in whose group he served, and he was on hand when Miles Davis' Capitol group unlocked the door to so-called "cool jazz." Konitz's playing is still cool, but rarely have I heard it as light and airy as on this set, recorded last June with guitarist Bill Connors and pianist Paul Bley for the latter's label. Each player contributed two tunes to the album: delicate, sometimes fragmented pieces that are loosely structured and seem very much to rely on the mood of the performers. It's strictly for the head, and very soothing at that. Quite a contrast to Konitz's album with Warne Marsh (see review above), which will set your whole body in motion. C.A.

HAROLD LAND/BLUE MITCHELL: *Mapenzi*. Blue Mitchell (trumpet, flugelhorn); Harold Land (tenor saxophone); Kirk Lightsey (keyboards); Reggie Johnson (bass); Al Heath (drums). *Blue Silver*; *Habiba*; *Rapture*; and four others. CONCORD JAZZ CJ-44 \$6.98.

Performance: **Straightforward**
Recording: **Very good**

Tenor saxophonist Harold Land rose to prominence in the mid Fifties as a member of the celebrated Clifford Brown-Max Roach Quintet, and trumpeter Blue Mitchell gained wide recognition in the late Fifties while playing with the Horace Silver Quintet. Both men later made it on their own, but now they have joined forces to lead a quintet that has kept an inexplicably low profile. "We are just a two-year-old underexposed group, although we

BLUE MITCHELL: with partner Harold Land, leading a splendidly swinging quintet



ABC/Impulse

are playing rather regularly," says Mitchell. "Underexposed" is an understatement, for though the quintet has appeared in such cities as Washington, D.C., Chicago, and Detroit (besides its home base, Los Angeles), I had never even heard it mentioned, and I thought I was pretty much up on such things.

Be that as it may, the group *merits* exposure, and perhaps this album—which I believe is their first—will serve as the catalyst. The music of the Land-Mitchell Quintet is unadulterated and shamelessly acoustic, it employs chord structures and melodic lines, and it swings. All that may sound old-fashioned, but, of course, it isn't. There are no dedications here to gurus or other holy beings, just an obvious dedication to good music. The rhythm section (Kirk Lightsey, Reggie Johnson, and Al Heath) flows splendidly, and the compositions (by Land, Lightsey, and Mitchell) are worthy of the talent on hand. More, please. C.A.

GERRY MULLIGAN: *The Arranger*. Gerry Mulligan (bass saxophone, piano, and arr.); with his orchestra and the orchestras of Gene Krupa and Elliot Lawrence. *How High the Moon; Thruway; Mullenium*; and five others. COLUMBIA JC 34803 M \$7.98, © JCA 34803 \$7.98, © JCT 34803 \$7.98.

Performance: **From water to wine**
Recording: **Pre-stereo**

Columbia seems to be re-entering the jazz arena, and part of that move is the establishment of a "Contemporary Masters Series" that digs into the past for material buried in the Columbia vaults. The series also includes newly acquired airchecks and concert recordings by the movers of bop, a group of musicians the label had previously shamefully neglected. This album focuses on Gerry Mulligan as an arranger, an aspect of his talent that is far better represented on other labels. It starts off with two rather ordinary arrangements written for the Gene Krupa band in 1946 and 1947, continues with two vastly superior charts done for the Elliot Lawrence band only two years later, and concludes with four extended arrangements recorded by the Gerry Mulligan Concert Orchestra in 1957. Of these, only one, *Thruway*, has previously been released (as part of an anthology called "Who's Who in the Swinging Sixties"—long out of print).

The 1957 arrangements are understandably the most interesting, and they also feature more satisfying solos (by Mulligan himself, Bobby Brookmeyer, Zoot Sims, Lee Konitz, and others), but time has not been kind to any of the material in this album, and even the best of the 1957 Mulligan arrangements heard here cannot begin to compare with the work of Gil Evans from the same period. Nevertheless, it is good to see these recordings appear, and it's good that Mulligan had a hand in producing the album. I just wish there had been more meat on this bone—and let us hope someone tells whoever was responsible for the credits that neither Zoot Simms nor Charlie Rouse has ever been a trumpet player. C.A.

COLLECTIONS

MONTREUX SUMMIT, VOLUME I. Woody Shaw, Maynard Ferguson (trumpets); Hubert Laws, Thijs van Leer, Bobbi Humphrey (flutes); Stan Getz, Dexter Gordon, Benny

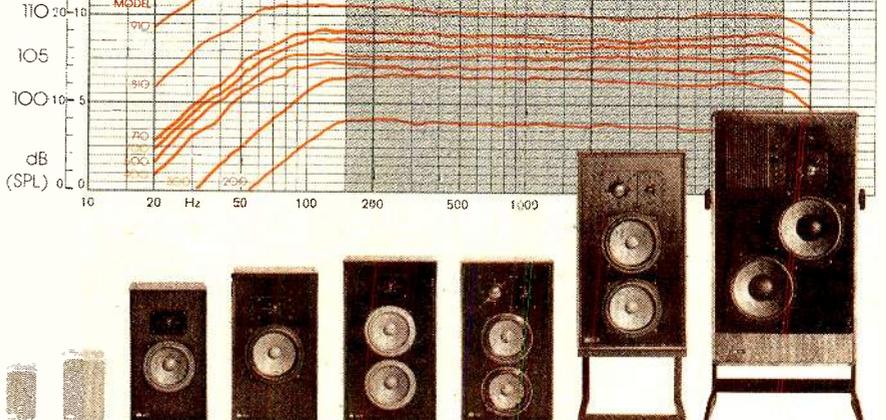
Golson (tenor saxophones); George Duke, Bob James (keyboards); Eric Gale (guitar); Ralph McDonald, Billy Cobham (percussion); other musicians. *Blues March; Bahama Mama; Fried Bananas*; and three others. COLUMBIA JG 35005 two discs \$8.98.

Performance: **Gems amidst the garbage**
Recording: **Good remote**

Considering the stature of some of the participants in this summit meeting at the 1977 Montreux Festival, very little was accomplished. The liner notes read like an account of a Girl Scout outing, avoiding mention of the music itself except to list composer, arranger, and soloists, and I can hear why. It's sad to hear such talents as Dexter Gordon, Stan Getz,

Benny Golson, and Woody Shaw walking the Bob James treadmill, and sadder still to hear such bland, predictable fare as the title tune and producer Jay Chattaway's seemingly endless *Andromeda* followed by enthusiastic audience response. The album's only saving graces are Stan Getz's rendering of Wayne Shorter's *Infant Eyes* and a sextet version of Dexter Gordon's *Fried Bananas*. The rest is talent sinking in the morass CTI and Columbia have been throwing their jazz men into for the past few years. Annotator Mort Goode writes that he sat "in awe" as he viewed the assemblage on stage and that he remarked to Columbia Records president Bruce Lundvall, "I don't believe it's happening." Well, it obviously did, and that's too bad. C.A.

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His name was Charles Christopher Parker, Jr., but the man who laid the cornerstone of the bop movement and brought jazz into the modern era was known to most people as "Bird." By the time he died in early 1955, at the age of thirty-four, Bird's enormous effect on jazz (and pop music in general) along with his well-publicized personal problems (drug addiction) and eccentric lifestyle had made him something of a cult figure, a modern-day legend equal in stature (as legends go) to the Twenties' jazz hero, Bix Beiderbecke. In terms of musical importance, however, there was no contest between Bix and Bird; Parker's influence extended to virtually all instruments, and its scope defies true evaluation. "If Charlie wanted to invoke plagiarism laws," pianist Lennie Tristano remarked in the early Fifties, "he could sue almost everybody who's made a record in the last ten years."

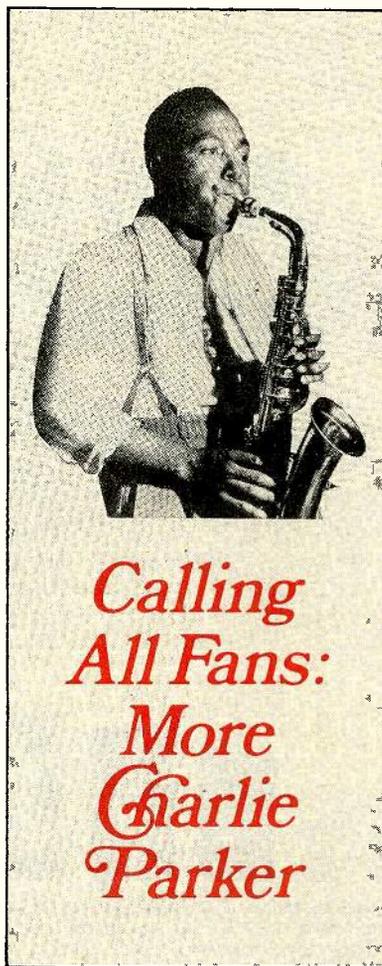
Early in his career, while still in his home town, Kansas City, Bird—much to the consternation of local musicians—exhibited an unusual style and remarkable technique on his instrument. New York didn't exactly welcome the young Kansan with open arms when he arrived there in 1939, though he already had the experience of working with the bands of Jay McShann and Harlan Leonard. But by the mid-Forties, Parker's "eccentric" music had won the admiration of Dizzy Gillespie, who had made remarkably similar explorations on his own and had begun attracting other venturesome players. The bebop movement was afoot.

Parker began recording as a leader in 1944 for the Savoy label. The major recording companies (who had then just signed a new agreement with the American Federation of Musicians, thus ending a two-year recording ban) showed little interest in the new music: Victor eventually made a few bop sides with Dizzy Gillespie, Kenny Clarke, and Charlie Ventura, but Columbia virtually ignored bop. And, except for two Victor sides by the 1949 Metronome All-Stars, Charlie Parker, possibly the most innovative force in American popular music, was overlooked by all the major labels. Fortunately, he was recorded profusely by such small independent companies as Savoy and Dial, and by Norman Granz, whose Verve label could not be considered a major one until much later.

COLUMBIA, in an effort to fill the unfortunate bop gap in its catalog, has now released one double and two single albums of Charlie Parker air-checks made between 1950 and 1953. As one might expect, the sound quality of these performances—broadcast from such places as Birdland, the Apollo Theatre in Harlem, and Carnegie Hall, and recorded on acetate discs from an AM radio—is substandard. Even Columbia's engineers, with the most advanced equipment at their disposal, seem to have been able to produce only a semblance of decent sound from this material. Tinny and unbalanced as most of them are, however, the recordings allow the artistry of Bird and his cohorts to come through, and there is enough good music here to justify the releases.

In November 1949, shortly after he had started recording for Norman Granz, Parker startled the jazz world by recording a session

with oboist Mitch Miller and a six-piece string section. The recordings were a commercial success, and they started a trend; Parker made more such recordings the following year (with even more strings and a French horn added) and began appearing in public with this combination. "Bird with Strings" consists of broadcasts made between 1950 and 1952, and it is the least interesting of the three albums because it contains the most predictable music. Moreover, we already have the studio sessions, recently reissued with proper fidelity and balance on Verve.



"Summit Meeting at Birdland" fares better both technically and musically. Side one, a March 1951 Birdland session, teams Parker with Dizzy Gillespie and Bud Powell for the highlight of these three albums. Only one other recording exists of these three men together, the famous Massey Hall concert of 1953 (currently available as "The Greatest Jazz Concert Ever," Prestige P-24024, two discs), which has Charles Mingus and Max Roach completing the group, and it remains one of the classic concert recordings of all time. On the first side of "Summit Meeting," Tommy Potter and Roy Haynes handle bass and drums just as awesomely as Mingus and Roach did, and we get a much better performance from Powell at Birdland than at Massey Hall. The opening track of side two is an

unusual Parker item, *Groovin' High*, performed with organist Milt Buckner's trio at Birdland in 1953. The organ/saxophone combination was later to catch on and be overdone, though not by Parker, who, as far as I know, left us only this one example. It is obvious that he is far more comfortable with the formidable rhythm section consisting of John Lewis, Curley Russell, and Kenny Clarke that joins him for the following tracks.

The double album, "One Night at Birdland" (the night of June 30, 1950, is suggested, but more than one night may actually have been involved) is technically inferior to the "Summit Meeting" album, but it contains some fine performances by Parker himself and some superb playing by Fats Navarro. Of all the trumpet players Parker associated with, only Navarro could match the rapport that existed between Parker and Gillespie, and there is some stunning interaction between the two here.

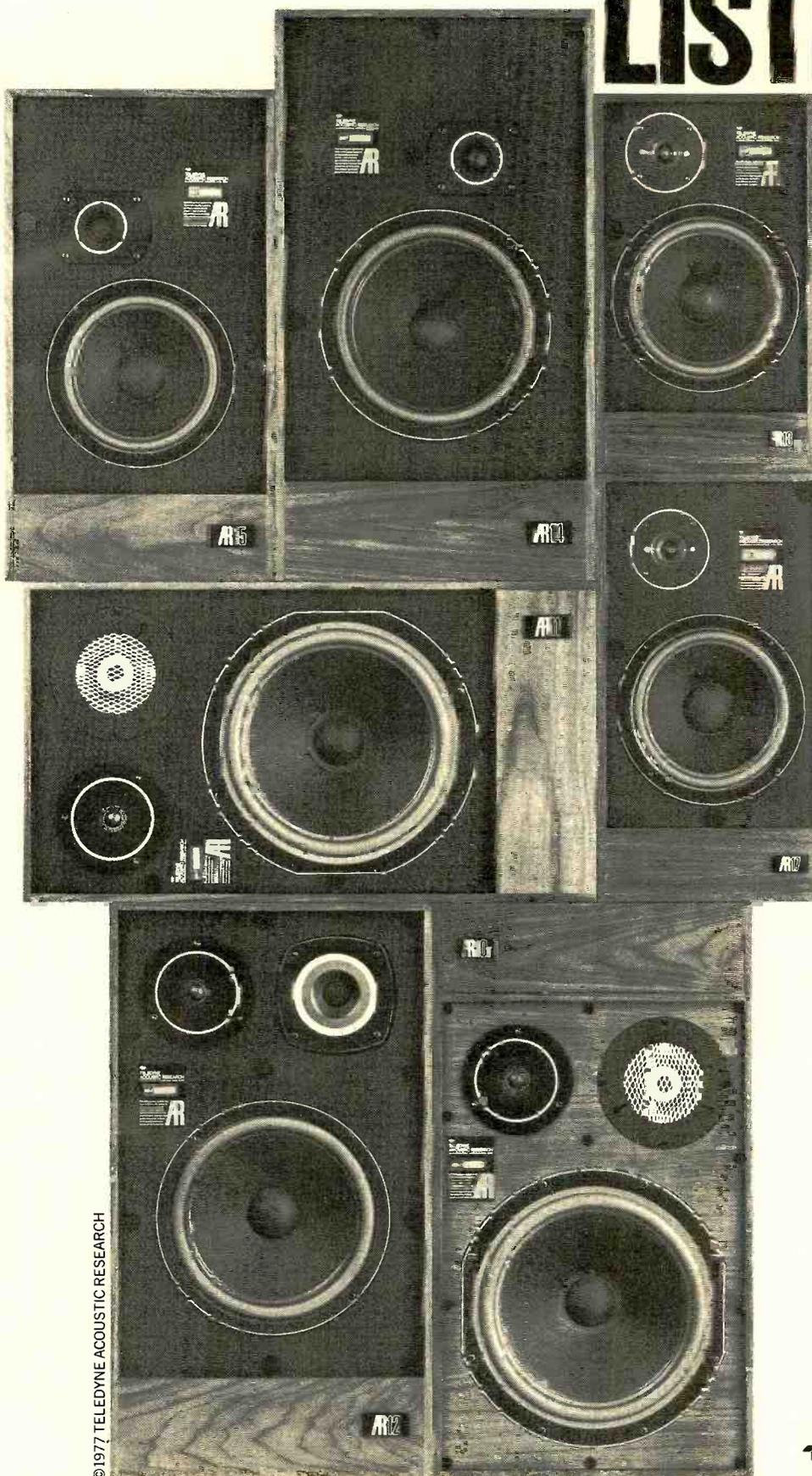
ACQUIRING the rights to release this material must have involved a great deal of work and expenditure, and Columbia is to be commended for its effort. Some of these recordings have been issued before, but only on ill-produced, ill-distributed bootleg labels. These releases are well packaged, and producer Gary Giddins' notes are both scholarly and informative, pointing out both flaws and virtues. There are enough of the latter to make at least the "One Night" and "Summit Meeting" sets worth the price. Parker fans will want all three. —Chris Albertson

CHARLIE PARKER: *One Night in Birdland*. Charlie Parker (alto saxophone); Fats Navarro (trumpet); Bud Powell, Walter Bishop (piano); Curley Russell (bass); Art Blakey (drums); other musicians. *Wahoo; Dizzy Atmosphere; 'Round Midnight; This Time the Dream's on Me; Night in Tunisia; Move; The Street Beat; Out of Nowhere; Little Willie Leaps/52nd Street Theme; Ornithology; I'll Remember April/52nd Street Theme; Embraceable You; Cool Blues/52nd Street Theme.* COLUMBIA ® JG 34808 two discs \$8.98.

CHARLIE PARKER: *Summit Meeting at Birdland*. Charlie Parker (alto saxophone); Dizzy Gillespie (trumpet); Bud Powell, John Lewis (piano); Milt Buckner (organ); Curley Russell, Tommy Potter (bass); Kenny Clarke, Roy Haynes (drums); other musicians. *Blue 'n Boogie; Night in Tunisia; Anthropology; 'Round Midnight; Groovin' High; Cool Blues; Star Eyes; Moose the Mooche/Lullaby of Birdland; Broadway/Lullaby of Birdland.* COLUMBIA ® JC 34831 \$7.98, ® JCA 34831 \$7.98.

CHARLIE PARKER: *Bird with Strings*. Charlie Parker (alto saxophone); Al Haig, Walter Bishop (piano); Tommy Potter, Teddy Kotick (bass); Roy Haynes (drums); other musicians. *Easy to Love (three versions); Jumping with Symphony Sid (two versions); Just Friends; Everything Happens to Me; East of the Sun; Laura (two versions); Repetition (two versions); Dancing in the Dark; Conversation; What Is This Thing Called Love; They Can't Take That Away from Me.* COLUMBIA ® JC 34832 \$7.98, ® JCA 34832 \$7.98.

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CLASSICAL DISCS AND TAPES

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

ANTHEIL: Ballet Mécanique; A Jazz Symphony; Violin Sonata No. 1, Finale; Violin Sonata No. 2. Vera Beths (violin); Reinbert de Leeuw (piano); Netherlands Wind Ensemble, Reinbert de Leeuw cond. TELEFUNKEN AW 6.42196 \$7.98.

Performance: **Lively**
Recording: **Good location job**

The music of George Antheil's "radical chic" period has acquired a decidedly new element of interest today, not only in the light of what has been going on in contemporary music for the past twenty years, but more especially in the light of what we now know of the work of Charles Ives. For in the Second Violin Sonata and the Jazz Symphony, elements of Ivesian collage technique and populist parody are very much present—though there is no reason to believe that Antheil had any significant contact with Ives' work. If one must speak of influences in the early Antheil works, they are clearly those of Stravinsky and of pop music—jazz, cabaret, and carnival (as in the use of the "hootchy-kootchy" dance motif in the Second Violin Sonata, where the populist elements are most prominent). Stravinskian gesture and motoric aspects dominate the finale of the Violin Sonata No. 1 and the one-time notorious *Ballet Mécanique* composed for Fernand Léger's abstract film.

The Jazz Symphony and chamber duos come off brilliantly in both sound and perfor-

mance in this recording, which was apparently (to judge from the audience applause) taped live at the 1976 Holland Festival. I am less impressed by the *Ballet Mécanique* here, which is taken at a fast clip that loses detail and damages musical coherence—at least when compared with the still excellent (and available from Columbia Special Products) 1955 mono recording conducted by Carlos Surinach, which had the composer's blessing. It also is worth noting that all three of the Antheil violin sonatas are available in their entirety on the Orion label. *D.H.*

J. S. BACH: Sonatas and Partitas for Unaccompanied Violin (see *Best of the Month*, page 86)

BEETHOVEN: Soprano Arias (see *Collections—Janet Baker*)

BOITO: Mefistofele: Prologo (see *Best of the Month*, page 85)

BRAHMS: Piano Concerto No. 2, in B-flat Major, Op. 83. Maurizio Pollini (piano); Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Claudio Abbado cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 790 \$8.98, © 3300 790 \$8.98.

Performance: **Brilliant but cool**
Recording: **Excellent**

I get the feeling from this reading of the mighty Brahms B-flat that the performers were attempting an amalgam of Horowitz/Toscanini brilliance and Curzon/Szell monumentality. Certainly the musical texture achieved both in Pollini's limpid pianism and in Abbado's sharply etched treatment of the orchestral score has something in common with the Horowitz-Toscanini approach, but the broad tempos taken here make for a quite different end result. It is something that I can describe only as a cold, intense light without much of the romantic glow that I feel is inherent in the music. This is definitely one of the "different" readings of the B-flat Concerto. The recorded sound as such is fine, but it is unfortunately marred in my review copy by a great deal of surface noise—swishes, pops,

and clicks—throughout the first couple of inches of each side. *D.H.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BRIAN: Symphony No. 6 ("Sinfonia Tragica"); Symphony No. 16. London Philharmonic Orchestra, Myer Fredman cond. HNH 4029 \$7.98 (available from HNH Distributors, Ltd., P.O. Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60204).

Performance: **Expert**
Recording: **Splendid**

Quantitatively speaking, England's Haverall Brian outproduced even Nikolai Miaskovsky in the category of the symphony and outdid both Verdi and Janáček in terms of productive old age. An eruption of creative energy came over him as he entered his seventy-third year and drove him until his death in 1972 at the age of ninety-six: in those two dozen years he composed four operas and no fewer than twenty-seven symphonies—the last seven, which brought his total to thirty-two, after he turned ninety. Most of these symphonies, including the two on this disc (written at ages seventy-two and eighty-four, respectively), are in one movement. All are in a highly personal language—concentrated, intense, and to a greater or lesser degree tragic in character (in this respect Brian has been spoken of as "an English Shostakovich").

This music is not everyone's cup of tea, but those who respond at all are likely to take it to their hearts with special enthusiasm, as Myer Fredman has surely done to judge from the expert, thoroughly convincing performances he draws from the London Philharmonic. These are the same performances (recorded by Lyrita) that were issued about a year ago by the Musical Heritage Society (MHS 3426), but they have greater impact here because of the more transparent quality of the sound—another triumph for mastering engineer Robert Ludwig—and the absolutely silent surfaces HNH continues to offer with astonishing (but gratifying) consistency. Indeed, listeners who do not respond to the Brian idiom may enjoy using this splendid disc to show off their audio rigs. *R.F.*

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- Ⓒ = stereo cassette
- = quadrasonic disc
- Ⓡ = reel-to-reel quadrasonic tape
- Ⓟ = eight-track quadrasonic tape

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

BRUCKNER: *Symphony No 9, in D Minor.* Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Carlo Maria Giulini cond. ANGEL □ SQ-37287 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good-natured**
Recording: **Good**

This is a warm, good-natured, and almost gentle performance of what seems nowadays to be Bruckner's most often performed (dare one say most popular?) work. The music, the great adagio in particular, has many charms in this reading, and it is beautifully played and well recorded. On the other hand, if you consider this *epic* music—a sort of offspring of Beethoven's Ninth and *Das Rheingold* (and *Parsifal!*)—then you may find the first movement a bit wanting. E.S.

CAGE: *Sonatas and Interludes for Prepared Piano; A Book of Music for Two Prepared Pianos.* Joshua Pierce and Maro Ajemian (pianos). TOMATO 2-1001 two discs \$10.98.

Performance: **Well prepared**
Recording: **Very pleasant**

John Cage has been America's premier *enfant terrible* for so long—forty years at least—that it is hard to remember that he didn't appear out of nowhere. His background and early work are closely related to major involvements in percussion, in Oriental music, and in numerology that have characterized important aspects of American music since the 1930's. One of Cage's early and distinctive contributions to this repertoire was his invention and use of the so-called prepared piano. The set of twenty Sonatas and Interludes, written between 1946 and 1948 and first played by Maro Ajemian, are the best-known prepared-piano music. Sometimes referred to as the "Ill-Tempered (or Well-Tempered) Clavichord," this music is actually gentle in sound with simple, exotic exteriors and a complicated rhythmic numerology underneath. The pieces are performed persuasively here by Joshua Pierce.

The hypnotic early percussion style of Cage, Henry Cowell, Lou Harrison, Harry Partch, and others has reappeared in the contemporary pulse-and-cycle music of such composers as Phil Glass, David Borden, and Steve Reich. This line of connection is apparent in *A Book of Music*, a still earlier work for two prepared pianos. Whereas the Sonatas and Interludes are rather quirky and modern-music-sounding in a quiet Zen way, *A Book of Music* is much closer to Eastern sources and, at the same time, to those contemporary minimal musics now much in vogue. Most listeners, myself included, will prefer *A Book of Music*, less "original" though it may be, to the later set; it sounds better and it coheres better. Actually, if you can tune in to this miniature universe of pings, bongs, and blonks, any of it can exert a kind of spacy, mindless charm.

Joshua Pierce is a persuasive young musician; he joins Maro Ajemian, long identified with this music, in the *Book*. Tomato Records (a name new to me) wraps its discs in brown-bag paper marked "Quality Produce"! The outer sleeve and the recordings inside are more conventional and very well produced. E.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CHARPENTIER: *Louise.* Beverly Sills (soprano), Louise; Nicolai Gedda (tenor), Julien;

Mignon Dunn (mezzo-soprano), Mother; José van Dam (bass), Father; Eliane Lublin (mezzo-soprano), Irma; Martyn Hill (tenor), Nottambulist and Pope of Fools; Jacques Mars (bass), Rag and Bone Man; others. Chorus and Orchestra of the Théâtre National de l'Opéra, Julius Rudel cond. ANGEL SCLX-3846 three discs \$24.98.

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

As Andrew Porter observes in his excellent annotations for this release, *Louise* was a success from the start, and by 1856, the year of Charpentier's death, it reached its one-thousandth performance at the Opéra Comique. Unfortunately and mysteriously, relatively little has happened to *Louise* since then. With the close of the venerable Opéra Comique, this operatic glorification of Paris seems to have disappeared from the city that inspired it. The Metropolitan dropped it from its repertoire after 1948. There was a San Francisco

staging in 1968, and there have been several revivals by the New York City Opera, which undoubtedly provided the impetus for this new recording with Beverly Sills and Julius Rudel.

The appearance of two recorded versions of *Louise* within a year of each other (see review in February 1977 of Columbia M3 34207 with Ileana Cotrubas and Plácido Domingo, conducted by Georges Prêtre) stands in dramatic contrast to more than twenty years of neglect. Both versions are substantial and, in the main, enjoyable.

Louise is quite a singular French attempt at verismo with romantic touches. It juxtaposes romantic yearnings and domestic squabbles, combines melodic declamation with short but telling motivic reiterations and occasional arioso expansions, and mixes realistic and impressionistic gestures. It is not an easy opera to hold together effectively, but both conductors meet the challenge laudably. My preference for Rudel is dictated by his obviously



Neumeister/Deutsche Grammophon

Spanish Song: Teresa Berganza

It was only last month that I noted with delight the parallel releases of Manuel de Falla's *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas* by Conchita Supervía and Victoria de los Angeles. Now comes Teresa Berganza with a third, this one with guitar accompaniment. The combination is a natural one, since the original piano writing is full of guitar-like patterns, though ears accustomed to the piano sound may find that some guitar figurations in the accompaniment sound awkward. Berganza sings with characteristic warmth and elegant phrasing, pouring out voluptuous tones in an irresistible flow and allowing the emotions of the clearly realized text to speak for themselves without excessive outbursts of passion.

The real find here, however, is the García Lorca collection: thirteen songs obviously patterned on Falla's. Like Falla's, García Lorca's songs are predominantly folk-based and artfully harmonized, taking on the characteristics of various Spanish regions. They

include dance tunes, cradle songs, love songs, even a bullfight melodrama in which Narciso Yepes delivers a moving narration over his own subtle guitar accompaniment. The catchy *La Tarara* is identified as the source of *El Corpus en Sevilla* in the *Iberia* suite of Albéniz, but nothing is said in the flowery but uninformative notes about the obvious relationship between Falla's *Canción* and García Lorca's *Los Pelegrinitos*.

This is a beautiful program, hauntingly performed. There are some strophic songs which carry the threat of sameness despite their harmonic changes, so I recommend listening to all the songs in one sitting only if you have a natural fondness for the Spanish idiom. I was enthralled by it. —George Jellinek

FALLA: *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas.* GARCÍA LORCA: *Trece Canciones Españolas Antiguas.* Teresa Berganza (mezzo-soprano); Narciso Yepes (guitar). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 875 \$8.98, © 3300 875 \$8.98.

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loving way with this music, his unhurried savoring of its beauties. He is supported by a technical production that is more successful than Columbia's in achieving a good sonic balance between the diverse elements, though Columbia's sound per se is warmer.

In many ways, Beverly Sills and Nicolai Gedda are ideal interpreters of their parts, but they should have been given this opportunity years ago. Both effortlessly and convincingly offer individualized portrayals. Surely the Louise of Miss Sills is far more three-dimensional than the admittedly touching and neatly vocalized effort of Ileana Cotrubas. But the wide vibrato that afflicts Sills' tone these days is a serious detriment. For Nicolai Gedda, the tessitura of Julien's part presents no problems, but his tone has lost much of its erstwhile sensuous appeal. *That* Placido Domingo commands in abundance; what *he* lacks is Gedda's natural Gallic affinity and pointed pronunciation.

José van Dam is superb as the Father, con-



JULIUS RUDEL AND NICOLAI GEDDA: a loving way with *Charpentier's* Louise

vincing in rage as well as tenderness. His mel-low, firmly centered tones embrace the range effortlessly and with moving expressiveness, undaunted by the high extension of his music. This is the most successfully realized role in the two sets, and Van Dam is distinctly superior to his otherwise first-rate counterpart, Gabriel Bacquier. The two Mothers are about equal: Mignon Dunn is effective in her shrewish scenes, but gives more listening pleasure in her quieter, cantabile moods.

Where the Angel set falls down (not that Columbia's is notably better) is in casting the many supporting parts that are supposed to lend this opera its unique atmosphere. Undoubtedly we cannot expect star singers in bit parts, but such roles as the Noctambulist and the Pope of the Fools (usually doubled), the Rag and Bone Man, and Louise's seamstress companions make important contributions at certain moments—and in this instance I recall nothing that rises above mediocrity. There are no disasters, but neither is there any suggestion of magic.

This lengthy opera (more than three hours) is given here virtually complete, with a few insignificant cuts, on three discs encased in a beautifully produced album. I recommend it, though with the above reservations. G.J.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CHOPIN: *Waltzes, Op. 64, Nos. 1, 2, and 3; Polonaise-Fantaisie, Op. 61; Nocturnes, Op. 62, Nos. 1 and 2; Barcarolle in F-sharp Minor, Op. 60; Mazurkas, Op. 63, Nos. 1, 2, and 3; Mazurkas, Op. 67, Nos. 2 and 4; Mazurka, Op. 68, No. 3.* Vladimir Ashkenazy (piano). LONDON CS 7022 \$7.98.

Performance: **Chopin at his best**
Recording: **Lush, unreal**

All the music on this disc dates from the very end of Chopin's short life, and, not surprisingly, it is permeated with melancholy and brooding introspection. Ashkenazy may be the best Chopinist around these days—perhaps it takes a Slav to know one. He has just enough of the old free style to make us feel the intensely personal quality of the expression, but not so much rhetoric as to make us disbelieve. The piano sound is lush, very seductive, and, I must say, a bit unreal. E.S.

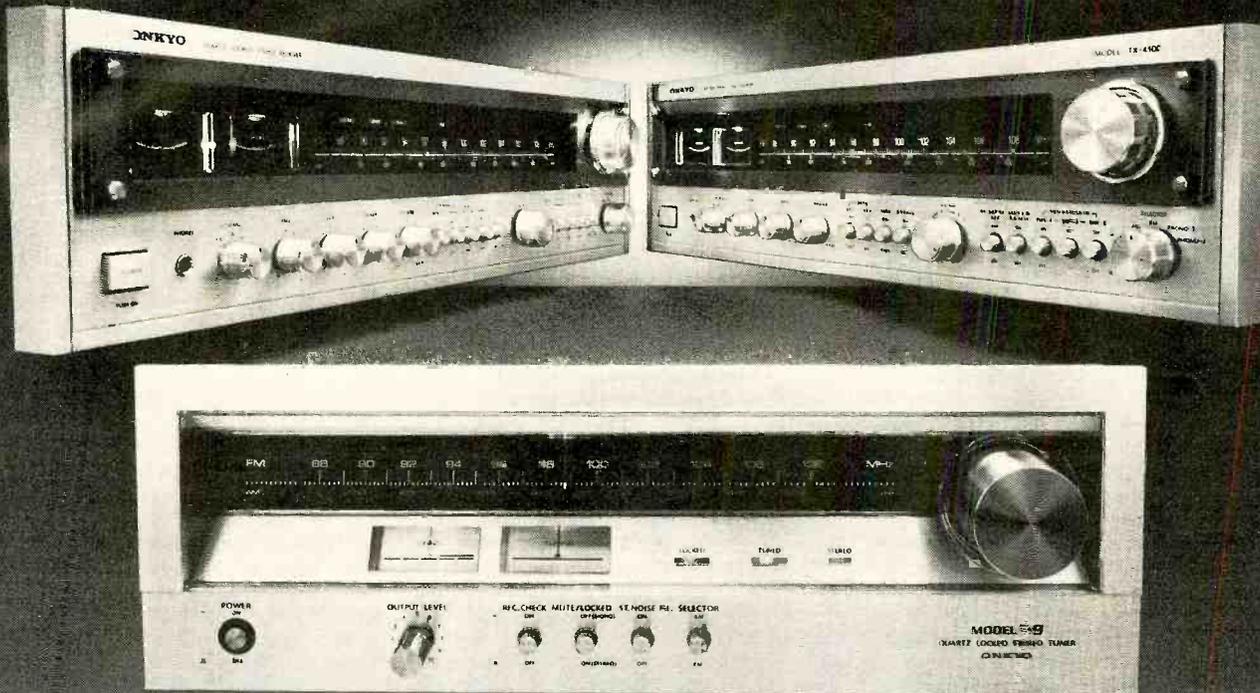
COPLAND: *Passacaglia; Piano Variations; Piano Fantasy; Night Thoughts—Homage to Ives.* Charles Fierro (piano). DELOS DEL-25436 \$7.98.

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

Aaron Copland's quantitatively modest but musically impressive output for piano has fared well on disc over the years, beginning with his own 1931 Columbia discs of the *Piano Variations* and culminating in the 1960 William Masselos Columbia disc of the monumental *Piano Fantasy*. Since then, a younger generation has been essaying the Copland piano repertoire for discs, and, as evidenced by Robert Silverman's work on the Orion label and by Charles Fierro's on the present Delos release, with very considerable success.

Mr. Fierro offers a disc première of the 1973 *Night Thoughts*, which Copland composed for the Van Cliburn Competition. As its "Homage to Ives" subtitle indicates, it contains elements of dissonance and bell-sonority strongly evocative of that New England master, yet it remains quintessentially Copland. The early *Passacaglia* sounds a mite ponderous for my taste in this performance, but
(Continued on page 128)

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Josef Hofmann



Sigismond Stojowski



Percy Grainger

AVID collectors of piano recordings will undoubtedly experience the same pulse-quickening that I did in greeting the latest issues, via Desmar, from that most important keyboard repository, the International Piano Archives. Hofmann, Grainger, Stojowski, Renard, and so on are no longer, of course, names in the public eye, but they do represent a past level and style of performance that many knowledgeable critics consider unsurpassed even by today's jet-fingered virtuosos. In some cases the performers on these discs are linked with an even more distant past: Josef Hofmann was taught by Anton Rubinstein, Percy Grainger coached with Grieg, Sigismond Stojowski's teachers included Louis Diémer, Léo Delibes, and Paderewski, while his acquaintances included Franck, Brahms, and Tchaikovsky. Of course, the collector of such historical issues will already have steeled himself to reproduction that is a far cry from today's advanced technology. One must listen through a good deal of sonic cloudiness, scratch and swish, and attenuated highs and lows in order to penetrate to this older world. It must be said, however, that the IPA has worked some near miracles in making the best of its variable sources.

Regrettably, the worst-sounding item in Volume 1 of "Landmarks of Recorded Pianism," a stupendous sampler containing one pianistic gem after another, is the only known recording by Johannes Brahms. Made in 1889 in Vienna on an Edison cylinder (as a greeting to the inventor), this nearly inaudible and abbreviated Hungarian Dance No. 1 does, after repeated hearings (because one simply cannot catch it the first few times), display a certain gusto and panache. Also, rather more clearly than any of the music, one can hear the high-pitched voice of the composer introducing himself. Fortunately, the remainder of this important collection contains some far better-sounding selections: a Brahms pupil, Ilona Eibenschütz, playing two of that composer's Op. 39 waltzes with charm and a refreshing lack of sentimentality; Grieg and Debussy playing their own works, the former the close of the Op. 7 sonata and the latter (with Mary Garden) in a tantalizingly brief *Pelléas* excerpt that conveys the veiled atmosphere of his playing style much more effectively than the deceptive piano rolls; a sixty-nine-year-old Saint-Saëns dazzling the ear with an improvised cadenza for his "Africa" fantasy. Of fa-

mous pianists performing the works of others, there are five previously unused items: Paderewski and De Pachmann in Chopin nocturnes, Godowsky in an extremely exciting Chopin Scherzo No. 2, Hofmann's tour de force *La Campanella*, and a superb Liszt *Rakóczy* March by Grainger. Together with a handful of other rarities, including four 1921 sides by Josef Lhevinne, these comprise a veritable feast, though one that has a few sonically indigestible moments.

Josef Hofmann's career had many supreme highlights, including a concert in the Metropolitan Opera House on November 28, 1937, celebrating the golden anniversary of the pianist's American debut at the age of ten. It was, fortunately, recorded, first issued (but only in part) by Columbia in the early Fifties, and then released complete in 1971 by the International Piano Library (now Archives). The complete concert has now been reissued in a version marginally superior sonically to its predecessor. I think it gives clearer evidence than any other recording of why many critics consider Hofmann *the* pianist of his age. There is, first of all, the Fourth Concerto by his teacher, Anton Rubinstein, in a performance that is quite simply magnificent. Then there are all the solo pieces, including a large Chopin group and a largesse of encores, all played with the pianist's blend of utter delica-

some marvelous examples of the pianist's art, such as a gorgeous Rubinstein Melody in F, some Rachmaninoff to rival that composer's own versions, and some stunning Chopin and Liszt. The reproduction is just a bit warmer in the bass than IPL's previous issue a few years ago; though the source was acoustic, it now sounds more than acceptable.

THE Rosita Renard Carnegie Hall recital of January 19, 1949, once available as an early privately issued LP, has been an underground item for some time now, and it is good to have the work of this little-known Chilean pianist (1894-1949) available for larger numbers to hear. Like her countryman Claudio Arrau, Renard was a student of Liszt's pupil Martin Krause. She began her career as a prodigy. From the 1920's until the late Forties, however, that career suffered an eclipse, and it was not until a few years before she died (from a strain of sleeping sickness) that she was again establishing herself as one of the more important pianists of the first half of this century. Not everything on these four sides is extraordinary, but when Renard is at her best—as in the riveting Mozart sonata, the majority of the Chopin etudes, the Mendelssohn variations (which in excitement can stand comparison with the Horowitz and Larrocha recordings), and the charmingly playful

what an extraordinary pianist Grainger really was!

cy, heaven-storming fortissimos, and mercurial fingerwork, and all seemingly effortless. If you want to know what all the fuss was about regarding Hofmann's pianism, this is the album to obtain.

The interpretive, rhythmic, and dynamic leeway that Hofmann allowed himself in actual concert was quite properly more restricted in the smaller confines of the recording studio; in the relatively few commercial recordings that he made, most of them pre-electrical, the performances are overall less indulgent and more tightly controlled. Those he made in 1923 for the Brunswick company are among the most important, and they include

Ravel *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales*—her performances show commanding skill and dashing impetuosity.

Sigismond Stojowski (1870-1946), in his time well known as a composer before concluding his career as a highly respected teacher (his students included Arthur Loesser and Antonia Brico), made very few commercial discs. One of these was a rather dim 1916 Chopin waltz (Op. 34, No. 1); the remaining Chopin, Paderewski (*Legende*, Op. 16, No. 1), and Stojowski items included here derive from early 1940's broadcasts. They all reveal an excellent verve and a somewhat blustery and idiosyncratic way with the music that at

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times precludes delicacy (the four Chopin mazurkas, for example), but together they give a clear impression of this pianist's individuality. Luisa Stojowska, his widow, fills out the second side with affectionate readings (recorded recently in stereo) of six of his salon pieces.

FINALLY, there is the historically fascinating record of Grieg works played by Percy Grainger, including two different noncommercial recordings of the piano concerto, a 1908 recording of just the cadenza (made ten months after he had studied the work with Grieg), and three of the Norwegian Folk-songs, poorly recorded in 1950 on an out-of-tune piano. The concerto was, of course, a Grainger specialty, and it is incomprehensible that the pianist was never able to interest a company in recording it commercially. The present performances—the first recorded July 15, 1945, with Leopold Stokowski and the Hollywood Bowl Symphony, the second on October 27, 1956, with the very amateurish Southeast Iowa Symphony Orchestra directed by Richard A. Morse—both reveal Grainger's total identification with and ability to project this score. There is nothing shy about his playing, but in addition to the vitality there is also a wonderfully poetic streak. Neither performance is note perfect (the second is perhaps better in this respect), and yet a spirit emerges that one seldom hears in today's more polished readings. (I am still most thrilled by Grainger's 1957 Danish version of the concerto, but a recording of that live performance was never issued in any form precisely because of the plethora of errors.) Perhaps IPA would now do us all a favor by reissuing the Grainger electrical recordings from the late Twenties and early Thirties, especially the Schumann pieces, the Bach transcriptions, and the Brahms Op. 5 sonata. With these available, it would be even clearer what an extraordinary pianist Grainger really was!

—Igor Kipnis

LANDMARKS OF RECORDED PIANISM, VOLUME 1. Brahms: Hungarian Dance No. 1, in G Minor. Johannes Brahms. *Waltz in E Major, Op. 39, No. 2; Waltz in A-flat Major, Op. 39, No. 15.* Iлона Eibenschütz. **Grieg: Sonata in E Minor, Op. 7, Finale.** Edvard Grieg. **Saint-Saëns: Improvised Cadenza for "Africa."** Camille Saint-Saëns. **Debussy: Pelléas et Mélisande: Mes longs cheveux.** Claude Debussy (piano); Mary Garden (soprano). **Liszt: Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2.** Arthur Friedheim. **Rakóczy March.** Percy Grainger. **Paganini/Liszt: La Campanella.** Josef Hofmann. **Chopin: Waltz in D-flat Major, Op. 64, No. 1 ("Minute").** Alexander Michalowski. **Nocturne in F Minor, Op. 55, No. 1.** Vladimir de Pachmann. **Nocturne in F Major, Op. 15, No. 1.** Ignacy Jan Paderewski. **Scherzo No. 2, in B-flat Minor, Op. 31.** Leopold Goldowsky. **Schumann/Tausig: El Contrabandista.** **Beethoven/Busoni: Ecossaises.** **Tchaikovsky: Trepak, Op. 72, No. 18.** **Rachmaninoff: Prelude in G Minor, Op. 23, No. 5.** Josef Lhevinne. **DESMAR** Ⓜ IPA 117 \$7.98.

JOSEF HOFMANN: Golden Jubilee Concert. **Brahms: Academic Festival Overture.** **Rubinstein: Piano Concerto No. 4, in D Minor, Op.**

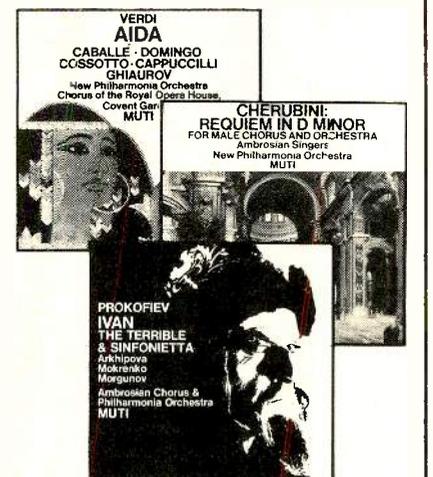
70. Chopin: Ballade No. 1, in G Minor, Op. 23; Nocturne in E-flat Major, Op. 9, No. 2; Waltz in A-flat Major, Op. 42; Andante Spianato and Grande Polonaise Brillante in E-flat Major, Op. 22; Nocturne in F-sharp Major, Op. 15, No. 2; Waltz in D-flat Major, Op. 64, No. 1; Etude in G-flat Major, Op. 25, No. 9; Berceuse in D-flat Major, Op. 57. **Hofmann: Chromaticon for Piano and Orchestra.** **Mendelssohn: Spinning Song, Op. 67, No. 4.** **Rachmaninoff: Prelude in G Minor, Op. 23, No. 5.** **Beethoven/Rubinstein: Turkish March.** **Moszkowski: Caprice Espagnole, Op. 37.** Josef Hofmann (piano); Curtis Student Orchestra, Fritz Reiner cond. **DESMAR** Ⓜ IPA 5001/2 two discs \$15.96.

JOSEF HOFMANN: The Brunswick Recordings. **Scarlatti/Tausig: Pastorale and Capriccio.** **Gluck/Brahms: Gavotte.** **Beethoven/Rubinstein: Turkish March.** **Rubinstein: Melody in F Major, Op. 3, No. 1.** **Hofmann: Mignonettes: Nocturne.** **Rachmaninoff: Prelude in C-sharp Minor, Op. 3, No. 2; Prelude in G Minor, Op. 23, No. 5.** **Wagner/Brassin: Magic Fire Music.** **Chopin: Scherzo No. 1, in B Minor, Op. 20; Nocturne in F-sharp Major, Op. 15, No. 2; Waltz in C-sharp Minor, Op. 64, No. 2; Polonaise, Op. 40, No. 1 ("Military").** **Chopin/Liszt: My Joys.** **Liszt: Concert Etude No. 1 ("Walderauschen"); Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2.** Josef Hofmann (piano). **DESMAR** Ⓜ IPA 103 \$7.98.

ROSITA RENARD: At Carnegie Hall. J. S. Bach: Partita No. 1, in B-flat Major. **Mozart: Sonata No. 15, in A Minor (K. 310); Rondo in D Major (K. 485).** **Mendelssohn: Variations Serieuses, Op. 54; Prelude in B-flat Major, Op. 104, No. 1.** **Chopin: Etudes: E-flat Major, Op. 10, No. 11; E Minor, Op. 25, No. 5; E Major, Op. 10, No. 3; D-flat Major, Op. 25, No. 8; A Minor, Op. 25, No. 4 and Op. 10, No. 2; F Minor, Op. 25, No. 2; F Major, Op. 25, No. 3; C-sharp Minor, Op. 10, No. 4.** **Mazurkas: C-sharp Minor, Op. 30, No. 4; F-sharp Minor, Op. 59, No. 3.** **Ravel: Valses Nobles et Sentimentales.** **Debussy: Danse.** Rosita Renard (piano). **DESMAR** Ⓜ IPA 120/1 two discs \$15.96.

SIGISMOND STOJOWSKI. **Stojowski: Mélo-die, Op. 1, No. 1; Mazurka, Op. 19, No. 5; Variations on a Cracovienne Theme; Romance, Op. 43, No. 1.** **Chopin: Mazurkas: G Major, Op. 50, No. 1; A Minor, Op. 68, No. 2; A-flat Major, Op. 50, No. 2; C Major, Op. 56, No. 2.** **Polonaise in C Minor, Op. 40, No. 2; Waltz in A-flat Major, Op. 34, No. 1.** **Paderewski: Legende, Op. 16, No. 1.** Sigismund Stojowski (piano). **Stojowski: Prelude, Op. 1, No. 2; Flowerette, Op. 36, No. 3; Confidance, Op. 25, No. 1; Solitude, Op. 24, No. 1; Romance, Op. 10, No. 1; Waltz, Op. 12, No. 2.** Luisa Stojowski (piano). **DESMAR** Ⓜ IPA 115 \$7.98.

PERCY GRAINGER PLAYS GRIEG. Concerto in A Minor, Op. 16. Percy Grainger (piano); Hollywood Bowl Symphony Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski cond. **Concerto in A Minor, Op. 16.** Percy Grainger (piano); Southeast Iowa Symphony Orchestra, Richard A. Morse cond. **Concerto in A Minor, Op. 16, Cadenza for First Movement; Three Norwegian Folksongs, from Op. 17.** Percy Grainger (piano). **DESMAR** Ⓜ IPA 508 \$7.98.



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Fierro's realization of the Piano Variations is more than usually interesting in that he seeks out lyrical aspects of the music that are often passed over.

The Piano Fantasy, which ranks with Ives' *Concord Sonata* as one of the most musically substantial and technically demanding works in the American keyboard repertoire, is the main business of this disc. It is fascinating—as it is also with the Piano Variations—to compare the present performance with that of William Masselos, who premiered the Fantasy. Sonic ambiance plays a major role here, inasmuch as the brighter acoustics of the room used for the Columbia recording tend to emphasize the nervously charged quality of the Masselos readings and, in the closing pages of the Fantasy, make for an almost ethereal transparency of texture. On the other hand, the more intimate acoustic surround of Fierro's recording helps bring into fascinating relief details of some of the *scherzando* music that don't quite come through on the earlier disc. The Piano Fantasy, with its sheer bigness, variety, and unifying motivic substance that serves as gravitational center for an apparently centrifugal whole, can stand a measure of diversity in interpretation. I hope that Mr. Fierro will be only one of many gifted young pianists who have the courage to tackle the work. D.H.

COWELL: *Quartet Euphometric* (see HARRIS)

FRANCK: *Sonata in A Major*. **PIERNÉ:** *Sonata, Op. 36*. Jean-Pierre Rampal (flute); Pierre Barbizet (piano). ODYSSEY Y 34615 \$3.98.

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

César Franck's violin sonata is well known in its alternative version for cello and piano, much less familiar in the further alternative for flute. Gabriel Pierné's sonata, also originally for violin, is hardly familiar in either setting, but it is an agreeable piece. Pierre Barbizet, I assume, performs here instead of Rampal's regular keyboard partner, Robert Veyron-Lacroix, because of his acquaintance with both works in their original form (as the longtime associate of violinist Christian Ferras). In any event, the two excellent performances sound no different here than on the still current Musical Heritage Society release (MHS 3175). James Galway and Martha Argerich are perhaps a bit more impassioned in their presentation of the Franck (RCA LRL1-5095), and their coupling choice, the Prokofiev flute sonata, is meatier stuff than the Pierné. But for the price of their disc the flute aficionado can buy the Rampal/Barbizet and another record with Rampal and Veyron-Lacroix playing the Prokofiev plus works of Poulenc, Bartók, and Debussy (MHS 906 or Odyssey Y 33905). R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

GOLDMARK: *Violin Concerto No. 1, in A Minor, Op. 28*. **SARASATE:** *Zigeunerweisen*. Itzhak Perlman (violin); Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, André Previn cond. ANGEL □ S-37445 \$7.98, © 4XS-37445 \$7.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Very good**

While I cannot quite agree with annotator Rory Guy's placing Karl Goldmark's Violin

Concerto in A Minor on the level of the Bruch and Wieniawski concertos, I do feel it has been unjustly neglected much too long. The notes quote Itzhak Perlman's enthusiastic praise for the work; we can only applaud his joining its champions, following the lead of Nathan Milstein (Seraphim 60238).

Soaring lyricism and dramatic episodes assure variety in the opening movement. After a serene andante, the concerto ends with a strongly rhythmic allegretto for which the composer wrote a fiendish and lengthy cadenza (wisely abbreviated by both Milstein and Perlman). Virtuoso challenges abound, but Perlman handles them with his customary brilliance while attending to the lyrical elements with a melting tone and polished elegance. For an encore, he tosses off the familiar *Zigeunerweisen* with an irresistible combination of abandon and refinement. Previn provides good support, and the recorded sound is clean and well balanced. G.J.

GOMBERT: *Musae Jovis/Circumdedeunt Me* (see JOSQUIN)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

GRAINGER: *Country Gardens; Shepherd's Hey; Colonial Song; Children's March; Immovable Do; Mock Morris; Handel in the Strand; Irish Tune; Spoon River; My Robin Is to the Greenwood Gone; Molly on the Shore.* Eastman-Rochester Pops Orchestra, Frederick Fennell cond. MERCURY GOLDEN IMPORTS SRI 75102 \$6.98.

Performance: **Sweet and lovely**
Recording: **Excellent**

Percy Grainger, born in Australia in 1882, came to America in 1914 and died here in 1961, just two years after writing the liner notes for this recording of his music. The reissue of the record is welcome today, when real charm seems to be a commodity rarer than it was a quarter of a century ago, for Grainger's music is nothing if not charming. The Morris-dance tunes based on songs once popular in the English countryside, the quirky children's marches and jaunty melodies from Ireland, and winning miniatures such as *Handel in the Strand* radiate a pink-cheeked innocence and dispel the heavy air of the present with the disarming freshness of a May breeze. Early in his career, Grainger made friends with both Delius and Grieg; Grieg in particular encouraged him to hunt down and notate the folk songs of England, Denmark, the South Seas, and our own country, which he then transformed into the exquisite gems played here with sprightly finesse by the Eastman-Rochester Pops Orchestra under Frederick Fennell. The recorded sound, ahead of its time in the late Fifties, holds up splendidly on this noise-free Golden Imports pressing. P.K.

GRANADOS: *Quintet in G Minor for Piano and Strings.* Thomas Rajna (piano); Albèrni Quartet. *Danza Característica; A la Cubana, Op. 36; Escenas Poéticas, Series II; Aparición; Cartas de Amor ("Valses Intimos"), Op. 44.* Thomas Rajna (piano). CRD 1035 \$7.98 (available from HNH Distributors, Ltd., P.O. Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60204).

Performance: **Fluent**
Recording: **Very good**

This disc, as far as I know, is our first recording of Granados' chamber music, and it has a

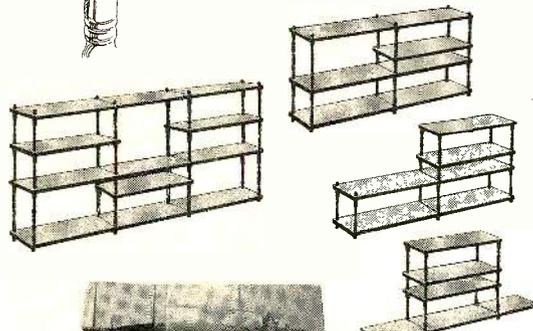
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surprising flavor. That is to say, the music does not sound particularly Spanish, as one would expect, but rather suggests that Granados may have taken Dvořák as his model in composing the agreeable fifteen-minute quintet in 1898. The first of the three movements is not only generally reminiscent of Dvořák's style, it opens with a phrase very like the final treatment of the theme in the Bohemian master's Symphonic Variations (Op. 78); the vigorous concluding movement is just as strongly, if less specifically, evocative of various Dvořák scherzos and the finales of his two best-known quintets. The lovely slow movement seems closer to home, with Moorish overtones. The quintet is really the piano's show for the most part, with the string contributions amounting to little more than ornamentation; it is all very easy to take, and the fluent performance here presents the work in the best light.

Hungarian-born Thomas Rajna has made four earlier discs of Granados' piano music for CRD. While Alicia de Larrocha's quite remarkable single-disc presentation of the *Goyescas* (London CS-7009) is in a class by itself, Rajna gives a most convincing demonstration of the principle, "You don't have to be Spanish . . ." The solo pieces on this disc are, like the quintet, among Granados' lesser-known works, and they are most agreeable discoveries. If the four short works seem no more than extremely tasteful salon music, the second set of *Escenas Poeticas* is a good deal more than that. Its four movements ("Recollection of Distant Lands," "The Angel of the Cloisters," "Song of Margarita,"

"Dreams of the Poet") reach a level of evocativeness that is frequently poetic. All of these are beautifully and knowingly projected, and the sound is quite good, though I suspect it would be better still, and surface noise less obtrusive, if HNH were to press the CRD material here, as it does for recordings from its other English and Swedish suppliers, instead of importing the English discs. R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HARRIS: *Three Variations on a Theme (String Quartet No. 2)*. **COWELL:** *Quartet Euphometric*. **SHEPHERD:** *Triptych for High Voice and String Quartet*. Betsy Norden (soprano, in Shepherd); Emerson String Quartet. New World NW 218 \$8.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Very good**

The rise and decline of Roy Harris is a saga in the history of American music. Harris, who was born in Oklahoma in 1898, was a farmer who decided to become a composer in his mid-twenties. In the socialist-realist and nationalist atmosphere of the Thirties, he was acclaimed as the rising star of American music. Nowadays, while his friend and colleague Aaron Copland remains a major figure in American music, Harris is neglected. We can understand the problem if we listen to his Second String Quartet. The style of this warm and earnest music has become so widely diffused through a couple of generations of symphonic and film composers that we hardly recognize the originality in it. Copland's style,

although often imitated, has angles, harmonic and melodic turns, that mark it instantly as Coplandesque, but time has blunted the sharp edges of Harris' more even, flowing style. At any rate, this quartet is a beguiling work, and it is superbly played here by the young Emerson Quartet.

If Roy Harris is neglected, Arthur Shepherd is virtually forgotten. He was born in Idaho and trained in Boston; he taught and conducted in Salt Lake City, Boston, and Cleveland, where he composed an extensive list of sensitive, conservative works in all the major classical genres. The Triptych for High Voice and String Quartet is his best-known work (which isn't saying much). It is a setting of three poems by Rabindranath Tagore, and, in spite of its obviously derivative style, it evokes a genuine response to the life-affirming nature mysticism of the texts.

Henry Cowell's tiny *Quartet Euphometric* is an oddity. It was written between 1916 and 1919, which means that it took him three years to write two minutes of music. It embodies an idea that can be said to have blossomed (if that is the right word) only half a century later: the relationship between the vibrations of musical tones and rhythm. This complex notion is set forth in such a small space of time that there is hardly a chance to catch on.

In all the works, the Emerson Quartet is first-rate. Betsy Norden sings the solo part in the Shepherd very beautifully, but, as is so often the case in these matters, not one word is comprehensible. Fortunately New World Records supplies the texts, along with what

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RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HINDEMITH: *The Four Temperaments; Nobilissima Visione.* Carol Rosenberger (piano, in *The Four Temperaments*); Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, James De Preist cond. DELOS DEL-25440 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good to fine**

Recording: **Good**

Neither of these titles has been listed in Schwann for some time, so this disc is assured of at least the sort of welcome that is earned for the filling of gaps. Actually, it rates a much warmer welcome than that, for both performances are quite good and that of *The Four Temperaments* is just about all one could ask. It is easy to forget that this work, like *Nobilissima Visione*, was composed for a ballet. As Amelia S. Haygood reminds us in her very comprehensive annotation, *The Four Temperaments* did not receive an actual danced presentation until six years after its 1940 concert premiere in Boston, but it still turns up with some frequency as a concert work and was revived by the New York City Ballet two years ago. It is surprising that there has been no stereo predecessor to the new Delos release—which, however, fills the bill quite nicely in all respects. Carol Rosenberger, in what seems to be her first recording with orchestra, is thoroughly inside the music, giving full but not excessive characterization to the respective sections. She has a very sympathetic and able partner in James De Preist, who draws alert and sensitive playing from the Royal Philharmonic.

The overside *Nobilissima Visione* is less fine but still generally satisfying. The opening movement lacks the breadth that informed the noble versions under Otto Klemperer, Hindemith himself, and the late Jean Martinon (a stunning stereo recording with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, which RCA has deleted along with all its other fine Martinon/Chicago material), but these are now gone, and one is grateful to have the music available at all. De Preist seems to adjust to a more suitable pulse and to pick up depth as his performance proceeds, and on this side too the orchestral playing is on a very high level. The sound is good on both sides.

R.F.

HONEGGER: *Jeanne d'Arc au Bûcher* (see Best of the Month, page 84)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JOSQUIN DES PRES: *Missa L'Homme Armé; Huc Me Sydereo/Plangent Eum.* **GOMBERT: *Musae Jovis/Circumdederunt Me.*** **VINDERS: *O Mors Inevitabilis/Requiem Aeternam.*** Pro Cantione Antiqua, London, Bruno Turner cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ARCHIV 2533 360 \$8.98.

Performance: **Particularly fine**

Recording: **Excellent**

Despite its structural complexities and compositional detailing, Josquin's Mass based on the ubiquitous *L'Homme Armé* tune is so musically expressive and clear in its textures that it is an unstrained joy to hear. The Pro Cantione Antiqua of London offers a particularly fine reading on this recording. The three countertenors, three tenors, and four basses of this excellent group produce a blend that comes very close to sounding like a consort of viols. The purity of the individual voices renders each part with crystal clarity while giving an extraordinary voluptuousness to the sound of the whole. Bruno Turner's tempos are conservative and his general approach hushed and awestruck, but his sense of line and knowledge of where he is going carries the music to superb heights.

Fortunately, the same high standard of performance is accorded the other works on the record, a motet by Josquin and two lamentations on the occasion of his death by other masters of the period. *O Mors Inevitabilis* by the relatively obscure Hieronymus Vinders is especially striking.

S.L.

KORNGOLD: *Violanta: Prelude and Carnival* (see WAGNER)

LISZT: *A Faust Symphony* (see Best of the Month, page 85)

MOZART: *Piano Concerto No. 12, in A Major* (see RACHMANINOFF)

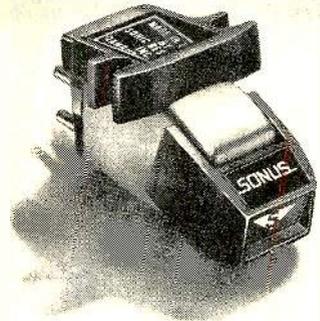
MOZART: *String Quartets: No. 1, in G Major (K. 80); No. 2, in D Major (K. 155); No. 3, in G Major (K. 156); No. 4, in C Major (K. 157); No. 5, in F Major (K. 158); No. 6, in B-flat Major (K. 159); No. 7, in E-flat Major (K. 160); No. 8, in F Major (K. 168); No. 9, in A Major (K. 169); No. 10, in C Major (K. 170); No. 11, in E-flat Major (K. 171); No. 12, in B-flat Major (K. 172); No. 13, in D Minor (K. 173); Divertimento in D Major (K. 136); Divertimento in B-flat Major (K. 137); Divertimento in F Major (K. 138).* Amadeus Quartet. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2711 020 four discs \$35.92.

Performance: **Good**

Recording: **Well defined**

The Amadeus Quartet's recordings of Mozart's ten mature quartets (Deutsche Grammophon 2720 055, also on individual discs) is one of the glories of the chamber-music discography, and it is likely to retain its position of supremacy for some time. As in the case of that distinguished set, this new one of the early quartets must be evaluated against recordings of the same works by the only foursome that has been performing longer than the Amadeus without a change in personnel, the Quartetto Italiano, whose four Philips discs of these sixteen titles are available individually

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(6500 142, 6500 172, 6500 644, 6500 645). Here
the competition is closer, and it is the Quartet-
to Italiano that comes out ahead.

It is hard to give precise reasons for this
judgment, for both sets give a great deal of
pleasure. The Amadeus' playing almost al-
ways shows the group's characteristic ege-
lance and sensitivity (though there are occa-
sional patches of uncharacteristic roughness),
and the warm, well-defined sound is at least as
much an asset as the fine sonics provided by
Philips. One might say the Amadeus approach
is more suave and expansive, the Italiano
more crisp and incisive—but it is not at all
hard to find movements or entire works in
which this contrast is reversed. In general, I
can only say that the Quartetto Italiano,
which has perhaps played the early quartets
more frequently than the Amadeus, seems to
take to them more comfortably, offering more
natural phrasing in place of the Amadeus' fre-
quent overemphasis and occasional matter-of-
factness. The Italians have a more ingra-
tiating way with the minuets, and they
show greater assurance in the grander mo-
ments (such as the fugal finales of K. 168 and
K. 173) and more unforced good humor in
some of the cheery allegros (those of the three
so-called divertimentos in particular).

There are, moreover, some advantages of
the Philips series unrelated to the perfor-
mances as such. The first is that it may be ac-
quired one disc at a time, instead of in a com-
plete set only. The next is that Philips 6500
142 includes the original slow movement for
K. 156 as an appendix to the complete work
with the superior adagio that replaced it. And
finally, Philips has packaged K. 173 in D Minor
not only with clearly superior perfor-
mances of the three "divertimentos," but
also with a magnificent version of the Adagio
and Fugue in C Minor, K. 546, a work not in-
cluded in the DG set; it is not an early work,
to be sure, but it is a most welcome bonus.

Now that the early quartets have been so
well attended to in two complete recordings,
let us hope the Amadeus, the Quartetto Italia-
no, or the Tokyo Quartet will get around to
giving us the four "Milanese" quartets listed
as Nos. 210-213 in the old Koehel Appendix.
They may not be authentic Mozart, but, as the
Barchet Quartet demonstrated in the last
known recording of them (made some twenty-
six years ago, Vox $\text{\textcircled{M}}$ PL 7480), they are far
too attractive to be left in limbo. R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**MOZART: String Quartet No. 20, in D Major
(K. 499); String Quartet No. 21, in D Major
(K. 575).** Alban Berg Quartet, Vienna. TELE-
FUNKEN 6.41999 \$7.98.

Performance: **Splendid**
Recording: **Rich**

These are both splendid, very serious perfor-
mances. The stature of these quartets is not
diminished in allowing them a little more
charm than they exude on this disc, but the
solidity, firm rhythms, fine balance, and over-
all depth of the Alban Berg Quartet's playing
add up to an unusually satisfying experience.
"Serious" need not be equated with "somer-
ber": both opening movements gain strength
from the Viennese players' sinewy, taut ap-
proach, which allows for plenty of expansiveness
and subtlety, and the inner movements
disclose an unforced warmth of heart. The

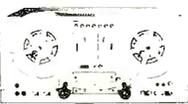
(Continued on page 135)

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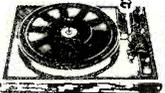
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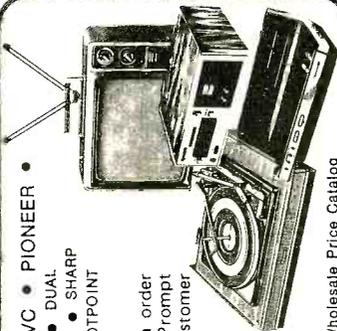
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undercurrent of melancholy in the two finales is superbly realized—again, effective but not overemphasized. The actual playing is nowhere less than impeccable, nowhere less than involved, and the recording itself is richly realistic—indeed, it is a model of how to record a string quartet, with each instrument firmly in focus in relation to its associates. The Amadeus Quartet, showing even greater refinement and style, is still a bit more appealing in K. 499 (Deutsche Grammophon 139 355 or, as part of a set, 2720 055) and more enlivening in the finale of K. 575 (DG 139 437 or the aforementioned set). But there is no other single-disc coupling of these two works to compare with this new one, and chamber music aficionados, I suspect, will always find room for Mozart playing of this quality regardless of duplications in their collections.

R.F.

MOZART: Symphony No. 40, in G Minor (K. 550); Symphony No. 41, in C Major (K. 551, "Jupiter"). Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Karl Böhm cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 780 \$8.98, © 3300 780 \$8.98.

Performance: **Mellow**
Recording: **Rich**

Karl Böhm has always had an especially persuasive way with the *Jupiter*, which he has recorded at least five times by now. His last previous version, made with the Berlin Philharmonic about fifteen years ago (Deutsche Grammophon 138 815), is more galvanic and fleet-footed than this new one; my impression is that this has less to do with a slowing down on his part than with his response to, or interaction with, the respective orchestras. It is a mellower *Jupiter* from Vienna, actually more like his last version with that orchestra (transferred from 78's to Bluebird LBC-1018 some twenty-five years ago) than the more recent Berlin performance, and the extremely rich recording emphasizes this quality—as well as the golden sounds of the respective choirs and instrumental soloists.

The overside G Minor, however, opens so expansively and with so little tautness that many listeners will be put off at first. If you stay with it, though, it becomes clear that Böhm's expansive—one might almost say Schubertian—approach is not at all short on tension or drama, but tends to put this frequently hot-up work back into a convincing Classical perspective. His observance of the first-movement exposition repeat seems to support such a view. This G Minor will not be everyone's cup of tea, but it is solid, sensible, and very beautifully played.

R.F.

PARRY: Songs (see STANFORD)

PIERNÉ: Sonata, Op. 36 (see FRANCK)

PROKOFIEV: Symphony No. 5, in B-flat Major, Op. 100. Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy cond. RCA ARL1-1869 \$7.98, © ARS1-1869 \$7.98, © ARK1-1869 \$7.98.

Performance: **Somewhat ponderous**
Recording: **Superb**

While the opening movement and the adagio of Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony do place this score on a level of aspiration—and sometimes of achievement—comparable to that of Beethoven's *Eroica*, overemphasis on this aspect of the music can make it seem something of a ponderous bore. Eugene Ormandy unhappily

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falls into this trap, and all of RCA's absolutely gorgeous sonics can do little to help. Artur Rodzinski's 1946 recording with the New York Philharmonic, Stokowski's USSR disc (despite coarse sound), Karajan's 1969 DG reading, and Rozhdestvensky's Melodiya/Angel taping all come closer to the essence of the music, whose life-affirming aspect in the remarkable scherzo and fiercely defiant finale is not to be ignored. *D.H.*

PUCCHINI: *Edgar*. Carlo Bergonzi (tenor), Edgar; Renata Scotto (soprano), Fidelia; Gwendolyn Killebrew (mezzo-soprano), Tigrana; Vicente Sardinero (baritone), Frank; Mark Munkittrick (bass), Gualtiero. New York City Opera Children's Chorus; Schola Cantorum

of New York; Opera Orchestra of New York, Eve Queler cond. COLUMBIA M2-34584 two discs \$13.98, □ MQ2-34584 two discs \$13.98.

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

Giacomo Puccini's second opera, *Edgar*, is no neglected masterpiece, but rather the work of a prodigiously gifted young composer still in search of an individual style. Puccini himself never regarded *Edgar* as a first-class opera and took immediate steps to benefit from its less than auspicious reception. Unquestionably his most salutary action was to part company forever with *Edgar*'s hopelessly inept librettist, Ferdinando Fontana. There is no point in detailing the ills of Fontana's insuffi-

ciently motivated plot and stilted language. Once past a creaky first act, however, Puccini's soaring melodies rise above Fontana's folly. I suppose he was just too gifted a melo-dist and too resourceful an orchestrator to create a really inferior opera. But the difference between *Edgar* (1889) and *Manon Lescaut* (1893) is greater than the interval of four years seems to suggest.

This first complete recording of *Edgar*, taken from a live Carnegie Hall performance, has been accomplished as skillfully as Columbia's earlier similar venture involving Donizetti's *Gemma di Vergy*. The casting here is even more felicitous. Bergonzi sings the music of *Edgar* with such fervent passion that the character's cardboard identity hardly ever intrudes. Even at this late stage in his career, this unique artist can still phrase with an elegance and expressiveness all his own. The part of Fidelia is relatively slight, but Renata Scotto fills every moment of it with fervor and intensity. To Frank, another cardboard role, Vicente Sardinero brings the redeeming qualities of a vibrant personality and a manly sound. Evil though she may be, the villainess Tigrana is the only role in this opera that has some shape and purpose. Gwendolyn Killebrew provides appropriate sultriness and ample vocal resource, but her enunciation is unclear and at times careless. Mark Munkittrick is adequate as the father, Gualtiero.

The mock-religious ceremony in Act III could perhaps be more impressive in a tauter and better-rehearsed performance. Aside from that, Eve Queler and her Opera Orchestra have done valuable service indeed in bringing this elusive opera to records. The set comes with the full text and translation, along with informative but verbose and carelessly edited annotations. *G.J.*

RACHMANINOFF: *Piano Concerto No. 3, in D Minor, Op. 30*. William Kapell (piano); Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Sir Ernest MacMillan cond. **MOZART: *Piano Concerto No. 12, in A Major (K. 414), Andante and Allegretto*.** William Kapell (piano); Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Pierre Monteux cond. **DESMAR/INTERNATIONAL PIANO ARCHIVES** IPA 507 \$6.98.

Performance: **Youthfully urgent**
Recording: **1948-1950 acetates**

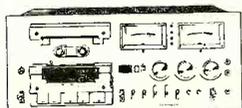
Though the sleeve notes fail to give particulars concerning these performances by William Kapell, whose career was tragically cut short in a 1953 plane crash, I would guess that both are broadcasts—one from the cavernous Massey Hall in Toronto, the other from the somewhat acoustically dead Philharmonic Auditorium in Los Angeles. Despite the thinned-out orchestral sound on the acetates (they sound like 78-rpm's) from the Canadian performance, Kapell's vital pianism is amply evident throughout the Rachmaninoff.

No reason is given for the lack of the first movement of the Mozart, but what we do hear are a slow movement played with loving care and a finale with wondrous lift and panache. Both the piano and the orchestra have a fuller-bodied sound here, and the mastering source—presumably a 16-inch acetate—seems in somewhat better shape than that which served for the Rachmaninoff. Kapell's slim discography of commercial issues for RCA Victor included no Mozart concertos, which makes this souvenir of his art all the more valuable, and it is especially good to

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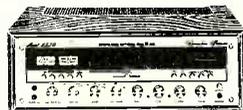
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RAMEAU: Premier Livre (1706); Pièces de Clavecin (1724); Nouvelles Suites de Pièces de Clavecin (1728); Cinq Pièces (1741); La Dauphine (1747). Kenneth Gilbert (harpsichord). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ARCHIV 2710 020 three discs \$26.94.

Performance: **Impeccably historic**
Recording: **Superb**

Kenneth Gilbert is a performing scholar in the best sense of the term. Not only has he produced the most definitive editions of the music of such masters as François Couperin and Jean-Philippe Rameau, he has translated the authoritativeness of those printed scores into sound. Thus, in listening to this album devoted to the complete keyboard works of Rameau, one is confident that every ornament, every tempo, every rhythmic alteration is the result of thorough and careful research. The research has so entered into Gilbert's manner of performance that the two, research and performance, become as one. Gilbert is not only intent on an authentic performance style, he also insists on having a properly historic instrument on which to perform. For this album he has chosen three magnificent eighteenth-century French harpsichords: one built by Jean Claude Goujon (Paris 1749), another by Jean Henry Hemsch (Paris 1761), and the third by Dumont in 1697 (it was reworked by Taskin in 1789).

It is obvious that Gilbert's single aim here is to perform Rameau as he thinks Rameau was performed during the composer's own lifetime. On a purely subjective level, one may disagree with the musical results, but to voice such disagreements in a review would be presumptuous and unfair. Gilbert has chosen to present the music in as historic a light as possible, and he has carried through superbly. S.L.

RESPIGHI: The Fountains of Rome; The Pines of Rome; Overture to Belfagor. London Symphony Orchestra, Lamberto Gardelli cond. ANGEL □ S-37402 \$7.98.

Performance: **Poetic**
Recording: **Atmospheric**

RESPIGHI: The Pines of Rome; Feste Romane. Cleveland Orchestra, Lorin Maazel cond. LONDON CS 7043 \$7.98.

Performance: **Spectacular**
Recording: **Pointed**

Respighi's Roman pieces have garnered a reputation through the years as primarily sonic blockbusters, but I for one insist on the poetic element as well—particularly in the final pages of the *Fountains* and in the quieter middle sections of the *Feste Romane*. Effective, too, is the use of the *Clemens Rector* Gregorian melody at the opening of *The Pines Near a Catacomb*. Because Lamberto Gardelli also insists on the poetic aspects of *The Pines* and *Fountains*, I like his way with the music better than Maazel's, but I do not understand what happened to the taping of Gardelli's performance of *The Pines of the Appian Way*. Not only is there an obvious ragged trombone entry as the dominant fanfare motive arrives at its third entry, but in the ensuing development, as the strings start up their slow scale, there is a big chunk missing, so that the climactic full-brass entry at the top of the string

scale never arrives and we are suddenly detoured down the scale. Since I can't believe this was cut in performance, I must assume it is a tape-editing error. Otherwise, this is an admirable disc, which, by the way, gains greatly in four-channel playback. The *Belfagor* Overture which opens side two is the curtain-raiser for a diabolic opera-comedy, its music sounding a bit like Wolf-Ferrari with sinister overtones.

The Maazel disc seems to be tailored for the sound buff, and, for the most part, very effectively so. The antiphonal trumpets at the opening of *Circuses* is a particularly nice touch, and the near-cinematic evocation of raucous popular clamor in the finale comes off with magnificent unbridled fury. London's re-

recording throughout has more immediacy and tonal body than Angel's. D.H.

SARASATE: Zigeunerweisen (see GOLD-MARK)

SCHUBERT: Soprano Arias (see Collections—Janet Baker)

SCHUBERT: Piano Sonata in A Major (D. 959); Piano Sonata in A-flat Major (D. 557). Radu Lupu (piano). LONDON CS 6996 \$7.98.

Performance: **Gentle**
Recording: **Pretty**

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qualities of the music—they are at least as important as the lyricism—are slighted here, a very decided shortcoming. The playing is likable, but the scale is too small. The A-flat Sonata—an early work, perhaps a fragment with two movements in A-flat and an apparent finale in the “wrong” key of E-flat—is a charming novelty; this time the playing fits.

E.S.

SCHUBERT: *String Quartet No. 13, in A Minor, Op. 29 (D. 804); String Quartet No. 10, in E-flat Major, Op. 125, No. 1 (D. 87).* Quartetto Italiano. PHILIPS 9500 078 \$8.98.

Performance: **Mixed**
Recording: **Very good**

The Quartetto Italiano, one of the most distinguished ensembles of its kind, has been playing with no change in personnel even longer than the Amadeus. It is hardly surprising, then, that this new recording of the beloved A Minor differs hardly at all from the one the same performers made some twenty-five years ago for London/Decca. The opening movement is not merely slow, but uncomfortably mannered, and in all four movements there are excesses in the form of overaccentuation and rhythmic inconsistencies quite out of keeping with the subtlety and refinement this group characteristically displays in repertoire ranging from early Mozart to Webern. Those lofty standards are nobly upheld in the overside performance of the earlier Quartet in E-flat, but it seems unlikely that many collectors would buy the disc for that work alone when a different version of the A Minor is in-

dicated, even with the fine sonics as recommendation. When the earlier Quartetto Italiano version of Op. 29 was current on London, there was a splendid alternative in the form of the Végh Quartet's recording on the same label. Now there is a most attractive complete Schubert cycle by the Melos Quartet of Stuttgart, based on the latest scholarship (Deutsche Grammophon set 2740 123, in which the scherzo of No. 10 follows the slow movement instead of preceding it as in the new Philips and all other recordings), and there is a similarly persuasive account of the A Minor, paired with No. 9 in G Minor (D. 173), by the Alban Berg Quartet of Vienna on Telefunken 6,41882.

R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SCHUBERT: *Symphony No. 3, in D Major (D. 200); Symphony No. 5, in B-flat Major (D. 485).* Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin Mehta cond. LONDON CS 7020 \$7.98.

Performance: **Charming and natural**
Recording: **Beautiful**

The early Schubert symphonies are just about irresistible, but for some reason they are still not encountered all that often. The Fifth is the best known and perhaps the best of them, but No. 3 is a real charmer—fresh, unpretentious, buoyant, intensely lyrical. Here we have clear, sturdy, beautifully recorded versions that call attention to the music, not the performance. I am very fond of the delicacy and precision that Mehta and the Israeli musicians achieve without any hint of patronization or

prissiness. The music opens up, unfolds, and flows with the greatest ease, charm, and naturalness.

E.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SCHUMANN: *Kreisleriana, Op. 16; Waldscenen, Op. 82.* Michel Béroff (piano). CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY CS 2138 \$7.98.

Performance: **Superb Kreisleriana**
Recording: **Excellent**

This is a wonderful performance of the *Kreisleriana*, a reading that combines delicacy and nuance with real impetuosity. Béroff captures the poetic schizophrenia of this music, the youthful, breathless, headlong plunges that alternate with the most personal, expressive inwardness. The control and projection are never less than stunning. The *Waldscenen*—best known for the strange and beautiful *Prophet Bird*—is a later work in a deceptively simple style. The nine movements alternate lyric and genre pieces, and a strong, Germanic folk element is brought to the fore. This aspect is not Béroff's forte; the crisp, rhythmic movement of hunting songs and folk ballads needs to be more on top of the beat with the rest of the music woven around it. The lyrical pieces are enchanting, however, and on a level with the whole *Kreisleriana*—which must be accounted one of the most affecting interpretations of this great work on records.

E.S.

SHEPHERD: *Triptych for High Voice and String Quartet* (see HARRIS)

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SHOSTAKOVICH: Sonata for Viola and Piano, Op. 147. Milan Telecký (viola); Lýdia Majlingová (piano). AURORA AUR 5051 \$7.98.

Performance: **Committed**
Recording: **On the dry side**

The Viola Sonata, Shostakovich's very last work, is not ingratiating, and the listener (as well as the performers) will need time to digest it. Its earnestness is apparent at once, though, as are its very personal nature and the spirit of melancholy fantasy that hovers over its three movements—the last of which, an adagio as long as its two predecessors combined, includes an amiably mysterious citation of the first-movement theme from Beethoven's *Moonlight* Sonata. There may be a double meaning in this: we are told Shostakovich had thought of writing a work in memory of Beethoven, and this elegiac-sounding sonata was in fact composed for Fyodor Druzhynin, the violist of the Beethoven Quartet, the Soviet ensemble that performed Shostakovich's quartets and with whom he performed and recorded his Piano Quintet. (The Quartets Nos. 11-14 are dedicated to individual members of the Beethoven Quartet, No. 13 bearing an inscription to Druzhynin's predecessor, the late Vadim Borisovsky.) The opening movement is a characteristic Shostakovich moderato, the middle one a very substantial scherzo. Milan Telecký and Lýdia Majlingová give an absorbing, obviously committed performance of the sonata, and the Czechoslovakian recording, beautifully pressed in England, is generally good, though a bit on the dry side. In all, this is an impressive introduction to an intriguing work. (I understand, however, that there is an even better version, played by Druzhynin himself with pianist Mikhail Muntyan, which, with any luck, should be issued here before long by Angel or Columbia.) R.F.

SMETANA: The Kiss. Ludmila Červinková (soprano), Vendulka; Marta Krásová (mezzo-soprano), Martinka; Stefa Petrová (soprano), Barče; Beno Blachut (tenor), Lukáš; Přemysl Koči (baritone), Tomeš; Karel Kaláš (bass), Father Paloucký; others. Prague National

Theatre Chorus and Orchestra, Zdeněk Chalabala cond. HERITAGE HCNL 8006/7 two discs \$15.96 (from Qualiton Records, 65-37 Austin Street, Rego Park, N.Y. 11374).

Performance: **Zesty**
Recording: **Good mono**

Written in 1876, shortly before its composer became deaf, *The Kiss* was the fifth of Smetana's seven operas. Like *The Bartered Bride*, it is rustic and comic, but its "folkishness" is less rollicking and its humor mellower. *The Kiss* has the slightest of plots, but its characters are engaging and the music overflows with warmth and exuberance. This is a skillfully through-composed opera, with arias, duets, and ensembles following one another in a natural flow—a seamless display of Smetana's skills. Vendulka's first-act lullaby, one of the melodic highlights, was the composer's special favorite.

Ludmila Červinková and Beno Blachut are excellent as the quarreling lovers, and Přemysl Koči is effective as the conciliatory brother-in-law. There are some weak singers in the cast, but on the whole the performance communicates the opera's beauties. Those who enjoy *The Bartered Bride* and *My Country* will find *The Kiss* delightful. The sound is acceptable Fifties mono. G.J.

STANFORD: Eight Unaccompanied Part Songs, Op. 119; The Haven, Op. 127, No. 4; Heraclitus, Op. 110, No. 4. PARRY: Six Modern Lyrics; O Love, They Wrong Thee Much; Ye Thrilled Me Once. The Richard Hickox Singers, Richard Hickox cond. PRELUDE PRS 2506 \$7.98.

Performance: **Lovely, if somewhat bland**
Recording: **Flawed**

Like the oratorio, the unaccompanied part-song is a genre associated particularly with Victorian England (no matter that Handel's oratorios were composed in an earlier era—the performing traditions, for better or worse, were Victorian until recent years), and neither form has enjoyed similar popularity in other places and times. The eighteen songs on this disc are fairly representative of the genre's upper stratum, vintage 1890's. The one piece at all likely to be familiar on this side of the Atlantic is Parry's setting of Shelley's *Music When Soft Voices Die*, which concludes his *Six Modern Lyrics*. From the prominence given it on the jacket, I infer that Stanford's *The Blue Bird* is a special favorite in Britain; it alone in this collection has a prominent solo part, and, like all the Stanford songs but *Heraclitus*, it is a setting of words by Mary Coleridge, great-niece of the celebrated poet. Richard Hickox's twelve-voice ensemble performs the various numbers with taste and feeling; if the overall effect is a little bland, it is probably because that is how the genre itself strikes many listeners. The recording is handsomely focused, but marred by a 60-Hz hum on the second half of each side; using a low-frequency filter helped a bit, but that didn't knock it out entirely. R.F.

TCHAIKOVSKY: The Seasons, Op. 37a. Michael Fardink (piano). ORION ORS 7724 \$7.98.

Performance: **Pleasant**
Recording: **A bit clangorous**

Tchaikovsky's 1876 collection of twelve piano pieces, more properly titled *The Months*



Music Editor James Goodfriend's *Calendar of Classical Composers* is a listing of the most important composers from the year 1400 to the present, grouped according to the stylistic periods—Renaissance, Baroque, Classic, Romantic, etc.—in which they worked. This 12 x 24-inch aid, guide, and complement to your music listening is printed in color on heavy, non-reflecting stock suitable, as they say, for framing. A key to the calendar, consisting of capsule accounts of the principal stylistic characteristics of each musical period, is included. The whole will be sent rolled in a mailing tube to prevent creases; we pay postage. All you do is send 25¢ to:

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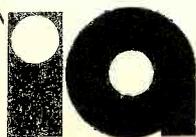
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than *The Seasons*, was commissioned for month-by-month publication, and, for the most part, they fall into the category of what he described as "musical blini"—the kind of salable music that furnished the wherewithal (together with Mme. von Meck's stipend) to permit him the luxury of working on symphony and opera. A few of the pieces have retained deserved popularity over the years, such as the bitter-sweet Barcarolle (*June*), the plaintive Autumn Song (*October*), and the Troika (*November*). Those who want on a single disc the whole set of these pleasant salon miniatures will find them decently, if not outstandingly, served in these performances by Michael Fardink. The piano seems too close-up, however, and can sound clattery without some tone-control adjustment. *D.H.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Symphony No. 6, in B Minor, Op. 74 ("Pathétique")*. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 774 \$8.98, © 3300 774 \$8.98.

Performance: **Impassioned**
Recording: **Brilliant**

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Symphony No. 6, in B Minor, Op. 74 ("Pathétique")*. Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Sir Georg Solti cond. LONDON CS 7034 \$7.98. Ⓟ 8-7034 \$7.95, © 5-7034 \$7.95.

Performance: **Taut**
Recording: **Full-bodied**

What looked to be a battle of conductorial giants in the Tchaikovsky Sixth turned out on hearing to be something of a one-sided affair. Except for a rather heavy-footed second movement (marked *allegro con grazia*, in 5/4 time), it seems to me that Herbert von Karajan and his Berliners have it all the way. Sir Georg Solti does a beautiful job with his rhythmic pointing of this movement, but he takes the ensuing march at such a fast clip that it loses in cumulative impact. It is here that Karajan really excels—I don't expect ever to hear a more shattering performance of the march on or off records.

In the first movement, Karajan makes the most of every dramatic point, but I'm not sure that I don't still prefer the more classically oriented, leaner texture of Claudio Abbado's Deutsche Grammophon recording with the Vienna Philharmonic. Nevertheless, this new Karajan disc of the *Pathétique* is outstanding on all counts—including the sound, which emerges from the speakers with enormous brilliance and body. Solti and his Chicago players are accorded even richer sound by the London production staff, and there is somewhat better presence in the bass register, but this cannot disguise his curiously passionate way with Tchaikovsky's passionate music. *D.H.*

VERDI: *Requiem*. Leontyne Price (soprano); Janet Baker (mezzo-soprano); Veriano Luchetti (tenor); José van Dam (bass). Chicago Symphony Chorus and Orchestra, Sir Georg Solti cond. RCA ARL2-2476 two discs \$13.96, Ⓟ ARS2-2476 \$13.95, © ARK2-2476 \$13.95.

Performance: **Good, not outstanding**
Recording: **Good**

It is hard to succeed with a much-recorded work like the Verdi Requiem. Aside from the

demands the work itself places on the performers, there is also the challenge of matching standards established by the likes of Toscanini, Reiner, Giulini, and Karajan—and their stellar combinations of singers.

Perhaps RCA's optimism in launching a new Requiem against formidable competition (which includes Sir Georg Solti's own still fairly new London 1275 with Sutherland, Horne, Pavarotti, and Talvela) will be justified commercially, but the results are artistically disappointing. The Chicago Symphony Chorus and Orchestra perform at peak level—the brasses in the "*Tuba mirum*" are thrilling—but in the quest for ensemble virtuosity Solti gives us a fairly unbending reading without sufficient warmth and flexibility.

The individualities of the four singers do not easily blend into a harmonious ensemble.



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Leontyne Price delivers some beautiful phrases, but her low notes are harsh, especially in the crucial "*Libera me*." Janet Baker is considerably below form and not miked to her advantage. Veriano Luchetti is a thoroughly competent Italian tenor, but he is not to be compared to his recorded predecessors. Finally, José van Dam sings smoothly, elegantly, and with perfect musicianship but sounds too much like a baritone in music that calls for the weight of a Pinza or a Ghiaurov. Ah, those standards!

My recommendations remain: Giulini (Angel), Karajan (Deutsche Grammophon), and Reiner (RCA), in that order. The cassette version of Solti's performance, by the way, comes in a handsome book-style box too large for the two cassettes—but just the right size for the complete text booklet included. *G.J.*

VINDERS: *O Mors Inevitabilis/Requiem Aeternam* (see JOSQUIN)

WAGNER: *The Flying Dutchman: Overture. Tannhäuser: Venusberg Music. Siegfried Idyll.* **KORNGOLD: *Violanta: Prelude and Carnival.*** Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Jascha Horenstein cond. QUINTESSENCE PMC 7047 \$3.98.

Performance: **Passionate**
Recording: **Holds up well**

There's no yawning gap in the classical catalog aching to be filled by the overture to *The*

Flying Dutchman or the Venusberg Music from *Tannhäuser*, but if we must make room for still another performance of these popular winners in the Wagner sweepstakes, this one is at least a stimulating entry. Jascha Horenstein died in 1973, and his reputation is certain to be revived and enhanced by the current series of Quintessence reissues of his records. There is a kind of moody passion in his readings of the tempestuous overture and the fevered bacchanale with which Wagner opened the 1861 production of *Tannhäuser* in Paris. By way of contrast, the *Siegfried Idyll* gets a hushed *sotto voce* performance which brings out in breathtaking whispers the pastoral beauty of this sublime work.

Completing the concert are a prelude and carnival episode from an opera called *Violanta* which Erich Wolfgang Korngold completed at the age of seventeen. The prelude, with its ominous atmosphere leading up to the stage action of a murder in sixteenth-century Venice, contains the seeds of the sort of atmospheric writing Korngold eventually would bring to his film scores. The carnival is an empty exercise in local color, but at least the hues are still clear and clean, not muddled and murky the way they would get when this composer's skill as an orchestrator later outstripped his talent as an inventor of original music. The performance here is a vivid one, but this music is sadly overshadowed by the Wagner works that dominate the program. The 1960's sound remains impressive. P.K.

WALTON: *Belshazzar's Feast; Coronation Te Deum*. Benjamin Luxon (baritone); London Philharmonic Choir; London Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Georg Solti cond. LONDON OS 26525 \$7.98.

Performance: **Resplendent**
Recording: **Not quite ideal**

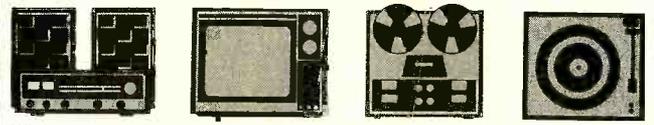
Belshazzar's Feast has been documented in a half-dozen or more recordings, none less than good and several of them truly remarkable. This new one led by Sir Georg Solti almost falls in the "truly remarkable" category, thanks to the brilliantly disciplined singing of the London Philharmonic Choir and the razor-sharp orchestral performance. Only a hairline miscalculation of ideal presence for the chorus makes for some reservations. The impact—or lack of it—of the opening proclamation, "Thus spake Isaiah," can tell all: every word here must be clearly intelligible and the body of choral tone must have real weight. That is certainly the case in both recordings conducted by the composer, as well as in Previn's 1972 disc. In comparison with these, Solti's singers sound just a shade off—a problem that can be ameliorated to some extent by playing the stereo record through quadrasonic equipment as if it were a four-channel recording and cutting some bass in the signal to the rear speakers.

Solti's baritone, Benjamin Luxon, is not, for me, the equal of Dennis Noble (heard on both the first Walton-conducted recording and the Adrian Boult one of a decade later), who was a veritable incarnation of Nemesis in the handwriting-on-the-wall recitative. However, I do find Luxon better in the role than Donald Bell is in the Angel disc Walton conducted. All in all, it is rather a photo finish among the three currently available versions—the Previn, the second Walton, and Solti's new one—with all of them falling slightly short of per-

(Continued on page 144)

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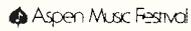
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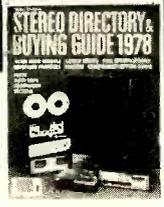
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fection in one way or another. A major reason to favor the Solti disc is its inclusion, as an opening filler, of another Walton choral work, the sumptuous 1953 *Coronation Te Deum*. There are no balance problems in this—every word of the English-language text is clear and the antiphonal effects among the organ, choir, orchestra, and brass come off splendidly. This is music of pomp and circumstance in the best sense. D.H.

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Performance: **Fresh**
Recording: **Clear**

Here, at last, is a representative sampling of the fine motets of Adrian Willaert (ca. 1490-1562), the Fleming who brought music to Venice and turned the tide of musical ascendancy from northern Europe to Italy. A first listening may give the impression that Willaert was just another typical mid-sixteenth-century composer standing somewhere between Josquin and Palestrina. But listen more closely and follow the texts; a very new freshness and passion are clearly evident.

The Boston Camerata Motet Choir brings its own fresh sound to the music, achieving a fine blend between female sopranos and countertenors—no small feat. The choir's diction is impeccable, and its clearly produced vowels both color and articulate the music. Joshua Rifkin, a rare blend of musicologist and all-around performer, approaches the works with a single motto: be clear, be precise, and the music will speak for itself. And so it does; Willaert's voice here is a strong and beautiful one. S.L.

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

This interesting sequence offers infrequently heard stage-oriented works by Beethoven and Schubert. The music of *Egmont* and *Rosamunde* is often recorded, but it is good to have the soprano arias so easily accessible apart from the orchestral context.

In performance, the Schubert side comes off better. Miss Baker sings the two arias charmingly, weaves a magic spell in the longish but irresistible *Zögernd Leise* (a Grillparzer setting for mezzo, female chorus, and piano), and makes a strong case for the lengthy aria from *Lazarus*, a semi-operatic oratorio Schubert left unfinished in 1820.

On the Beethoven side, the two songs from *Egmont* are done to a turn, but both concert arias are disappointing. Much of *No, Non*

Turbati, which appears to be new on records, lies in the E-G area that the singer finds uncomfortable; the rendition is tonally uneven and at times off-center. While the adagio section of *Ah! Perfido* is affectingly phrased, the concluding allegro lacks fire and determination. I am also disturbed by an increasing tendency on the part of Miss Baker to favor a "white" (vibrato-less) tone. Raymond Leppard should share the blame for that overcautious *Ah! Perfido*; otherwise his accompaniments are fine and warmly recorded. G.J.

CANTOR DORA KRAKOWER: *Song and Chant Mosaic. Sounding of the Shofar. Janowski: Harninu. Trad. (arr. D. Krakower): Kol Nidre. Trad. Chassidic (arr. Pitesky): Psalm 23. Goldfarb: Shalom Aleichem. Pitesky: Blessing over the Sabbath Lights. Nathanson: Yihiyu L'Ratzon. Saint-Saëns (arr. Michaels): Ana Dodi. Trad.: Hanukah Blessing over the Lights; V'Ohavtoth. D. Krakower: Va-ani Zohr B'riti. M. and D. Krakower: Birdsong; Talmud Berakhath; Parental Blessing; Avinu Shebashamayim—Prayer for the Government.* Cantor Dora Krakower (soprano). AZURE CDK \$5.98 (from Azure Music, P.O. Box 3723, Santa Monica, Calif. 90403).

Performance: **Valorous**
Recording: **Very good**

Cantor Dora Krakower, one of the first women to be accepted as a cantor, has been chanting the liturgy from the pulpits of Reform congregations in California and other Western states for some years under the sponsorship of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the central congregational body of Reform Judaism. Under the pseudonym of Doreen Michaels, she has also pursued a second career as a songwriter and singer in the movies and on West Coast television shows. This is her first album of liturgical music, and some of the settings are credited to her alter ego Doreen. No matter. The complaint often launched against the music of Reform Judaism—that it apes the Episcopalian hymnals and lacks emotional content—cannot be made here. Cantor Krakower applies her soprano to passages drawn from the *nigunim*, or ecstatic chants, of the Chassidic Jews of Eastern Europe, as well as a passage of Lithuanian cantillation; she sings a setting she helped compose of a touching song about the freedom of birds written by a child who died—among 15,000 other Jewish children—in Terezin Concentration Camp; she offers in Hebrew her own adaptation of passages from the *Song of Songs* matched to the music of Saint-Saëns' *The Swan*. There are several traditional prayers—including one for the government—and the program opens, just to show how well she can hold her own in what was until a short time ago exclusively a man's domain, with the cantor sounding the shofar, or ram's horn, as a prelude to passages that are sung in the synagogue on the eve of the Day of Atonement. A great operatic soprano she isn't, but her style is impressive and her voice true and sweet, and her singing wears well throughout an unusually interesting concert of Jewish religious music. P.K.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CLARA ROCKMORE: *Theremin Recital. Rachmaninoff; Vocalise; Song of Grusia. Saint-Saëns: The Swan. Falla: Pantomime. Achron: Hebrew Melody. Wieniawski: Ro-*

mance. **Stravinsky:** *Berceuse*. **Ravel:** *Habanera*. **Tchaikovsky:** *Berceuse; Valse Sentimentale; Sérénade Mélancolique*. **Glazounov:** *Chant du Ménestrel*. Clara Rockmore (Theremin); Nadia Reisenberg (piano). DELOS DEL 25437 \$7.98.

Performance: **Astonishing**
Recording: **Effective**

In 1920, a twenty-one-year-old student at the University of Petrograd in Russia demonstrated a working electronic musical instrument. This instrument—which eventually became known by the last name of its inventor, Leon Theremin—was widely heard in Europe and America in the Twenties and Thirties. It attracted a great deal of notice and inspired several imitations and a number of composers. Unfortunately, the novelty waned, and a depression and a world war turned attention

Delos Records



CLARA ROCKMORE
A virtuoso at the Theremin

away from such exotic frivolities; Professor Theremin subsequently returned to Russia, where he now directs the Laboratory of Musical Acoustics at the School of Music of the University of Moscow.

During its heyday the Theremin attracted a number of performers, the most talented of whom was undoubtedly Clara Reisenberg Rockmore. The Theremin is played by standing stock still in front of the instrument and moving one's hands—very carefully!—in and around a pair of metal rods. The sight of the striking and sultry-looking Ms. Rockmore poised trance-like in front of a mysterious box, waving her hands in the air and evoking music directly out of the ether, must have been (is) extraordinary. Theremin could certainly have cooked up an easier way to play his instrument, but no keyboard could have been as evocative or, for that matter, have produced so particularly human a tone. Even without the vision of Ms. Rockmore in person, we can hear in this remarkable recording a most vividly evocative sound—nothing like latter-day electronic music but something halfway between a human voice and a violin.

Not surprisingly, Rockmore was a musical prodigy and a violin virtuoso before she took up the Theremin, and every aspect of her playing is intensely musical. Out of this incredibly difficult instrument she manages to evoke the most affecting and personal sound imaginable.

Remarkably enough, this is the first recording of Rockmore's playing and one of the few examples of the Theremin on discs. A special feature is the rare appearance of her sister, Nadia Reisenberg, a famous pianist and teacher, and the recording was produced and engineered by Shirleigh and Robert Moog of Moog synthesizer fame. My only cavil is the repertoire, which consists entirely of small salon-type pieces—mostly romantic Russian voice-and-violin stuff. How curious: the starting place for electronic music turns out to be pure, soulful, psychic schmaltz of the old school.

E.S.

THE TRIUMPHS OF ORIANA. East: *Hence Stars! Norcome: With Angel's Face*. Munday: *Lightly She Whipped o'er the Dales*. Gibbons: *Long Live Fair Oriana*. Bennett: *All Creatures Now*. Hilton: *Fair Oriana, Beauty's Queen*. Marson: *The Nymphs and Shepherds Danced*. Carlton: *Calm was the Air*. Holmes: *Thus Bonny-boots*. Nicolson: *Sing, Shepherds All*. Tomkins: *The Fauns and Satyrs Tripping*. Cavendish: *Come, Gentle Swains*. Cobbold: *With Wreaths of Rose and Laurel*. Morley: *Arise, Awake, Awake*. Farmer: *Fair Nymphs I Heard One Telling*. Wilbye: *The Lady Oriana*. Hunt: *Hark! Did Ye Ever Hear*. Weelkes: *As Vesta Was from Latmos Hill Descending*. Milton: *Fair Oriana, in the Morn*. Gibbons: *Round About Her Charret*. Kirbye: *With Angel's Face*. Jones: *Fair Oriana, Seeming to Wink*. Lisley: *Fair Cytherea Presents Her Doves*. Morley: *Hard by a Crystal Fountain*. Johnson: *Come Blessed Bird*. Pro Cantione Antiqua, London, Ian Partridge cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ARCHIV 2533 347 \$8.98.

Performance: **Stultifying**
Recording: **Pure**

Thomas Morley persuaded the best madrigal composers of the day to contribute to a cycle of madrigals in honor of Queen Elizabeth I, whose Arcadian name was Oriana. The only requirement was that each madrigal end with the couplet, "Then sang the shepherds and nymphs of Diana/Long live fair Oriana." The emotional scope of the collection is thus necessarily limited, but to study the many ways in which the various composers set the final couplet is, in effect, to study the essence of the madrigal: word painting.

The Pro Cantione Antiqua of London, an excellent ensemble of male singers, enlisted the aid of two female sopranos for this project; their voices are absolutely white and devoid of all expression. When combined with the countertenors of the original ensemble and the somewhat muted natural-sounding tenors and basses, the result is otherworldly. Everything is subdued and precious. One longs for a real forte or some point at which the singers simply let go, for although there are many beautiful moments the overall effect is emasculated and stultifying. Add to this some serious pitch problems and rhythmic fuzziness and it is clear that this disc is not a success. The group seems to be sight reading—and good readers they are—but this repertoire needs more than a reading to bring it across.

S.L.

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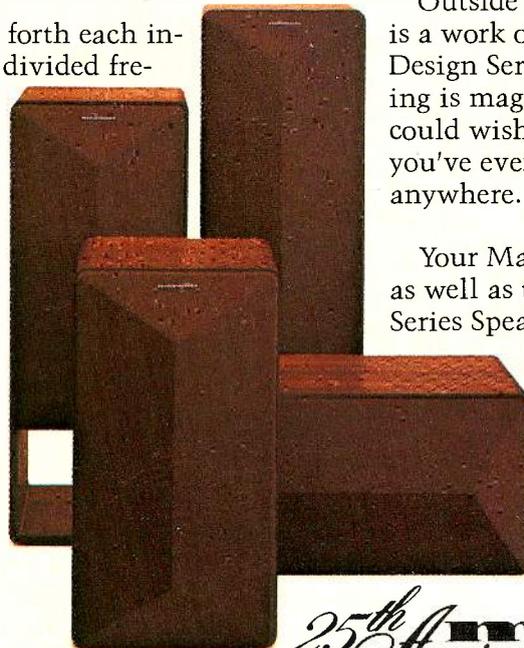
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