

better listening

Through High Fidelity

Vol. 4, No. 2 — FEBRUARY, 1958

Answers to
Common
Tape Problems
See Page 6



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On the hi-fi record



By Edwin S. Bergamini

THE DEBUT of one of the world's outstanding orchestras, the *Israel Philharmonic*, on LONDON LL 1715 is also the first appearance on longplay records of the complete "Boutique Fantasque" ballet music arranged from Rossini's music by Respighi. The players respond completely to Georg Solti's sensitive molding of the highly colored score; gorgeous is the term for London's sound. Overside is a fetching performance of Dukas' "The Sorcerer's Apprentice."

Another excellent "Apprentice" is offered by Mitropoulos and the *New York Philharmonic-Symphony*, along with a brisk "Polka and Fugue" from Weinberger's "Schwanda," a vivid version of that magnificence of senuous horror, the "Dance of the Seven Veils" from Richard Strauss' "Salome," and of Liszt's "Les Preludes." The sound offers plenty to the best hi-fi rigs (COLUMBIA ML 5198).

That exceedingly lovely symphony, *Mabler's Fourth, in G*, has always fared well in recordings. But DECCA's issue of Leopold Ludwig and the Saxon State Orchestra, Dresden, with soprano Anny Schlemm doing nicely by her last-movement solo, is perhaps the most beautiful of the four diskings now available. And Decca's Deutsche Grammophon sound (with perhaps a bit more treble rolloff than certain American records) is its own recommendation, warm of hue and solid of timbre (DL 9944).

MERCURY's new disc of *Hindemith's Symphony in B flat, Schoenberg's Theme and Variations*, op. 43a, and

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NEW!



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Ask for the New FISHER High Fidelity Folder

Loudness Control

WE ARE ALL familiar with the "volume control" used universally on radios, TV sets, and most amplifiers. Why then the new term "loudness control?" How does this differ from a volume control? What does it have to do with hi-fi? Do you need it, in addition to a volume control?

A loudness control, simply, is a volume control which is electronically compensated to provide a specific aural effect. An ordinary volume control makes a sound system "louder" or "softer" by regulating the amount of signal voltage fed to the amplifying tubes. A loudness control does pretty much the same thing, but it provides a specific amount of bass and treble boost when it is used for low volume listening.

The justification for this boost lies in the very nature of human hearing. We tend to hear the middle frequencies more easily than we do the low and high tones. This phenomenon has been demonstrated in reliable tests whose results are accepted in the biological and physical sciences. Several years ago, two Bell Laboratories researchers, Harvey Fletcher and W. A. Munson, conducted tests which showed that as the listening level is lowered, people hear less and less of the low and high frequencies in proportion to the amount of mid-range frequencies still audible. The results of these tests were published as a series of curves

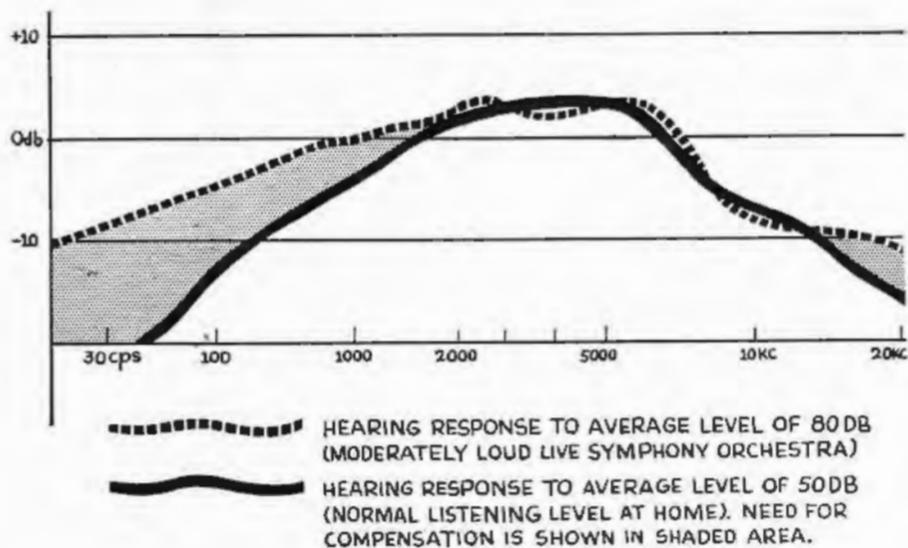
on a graph, showing how this hearing action takes place at various listening levels over the audio frequency range. These curves, known as the Fletcher-Munson curves, form the basis for the design of loudness controls in modern hi-fi amplifiers. In other words, if — by turning down your volume to comfortable room level — you are going to miss some of the highs and many of the lows that were present in the original music, you should have the option of restoring those highs and lows. Such restoring — admittedly an electronic trick — will provide you with full-range reproduction at low listening levels. In a word, the loudness control permits you to enjoy hi-fi without the need for blasting your neighbors or even the people in the next room.

Some tricky circuit design goes into such a control, involving the calculated use of resistors and capacitors to provide the right amount of tonal boost at various listening levels. Of course, if you can play your hi-fi system "wide open" at concert-hall level, chances are you won't need to use a loudness control. As a matter of fact, the loudness control would have no effect at full listening levels. For this reason, most amplifiers incorporate a switch which permits you to choose between using the same knob as either a conventional volume control or as the compensated loudness control.

Anyone planning to get a new amplifier, or preamplifier-control unit, should make certain that whatever his choice, the unit is equipped with a loudness control. Hi-fi listeners with older amplifiers that were made before loudness controls were developed can do one of two things: those handy with a soldering iron can buy, from their hi-fi dealer, a loudness control ready to install in place of the existing volume control. Several different models are available to suit different needs. Full instructions for their installation and use are included. Your dealer will help you make your choice.

The other alternative for using amplifiers not equipped with loudness controls is to rely on your bass and treble tone controls to replenish the audio range at low listening levels. There are two hitches to this plan, however; first, you can never be quite sure that you are boosting the tone by the precise amount required; second, you might not want to adjust the treble and bass controls every time you turn the volume down.

There is an indescribable thrill for hi-fi enthusiasts who use a loudness control in home listening situations. By permitting you to hear all the highs and lows as well as the mid-range tones of music as relatively low levels, it provides a degree of presence and intimacy formerly unattainable with softly played music. ■ ■ ■



On the Hi-Fi Record

(Continued from page 3)

Stravinsky's "Symphonies of Wind Instruments" is a sparkling example of how good music written for concert band or wind ensemble can be. The Hindemith's first movement sports a provocative skipping-rhythmed figure that can be whimsical or hectic. The Schoenberg (written for school band, a good school band, that is) owns a fine fugal variation. The Stravinsky score is beautifully poised on rhythm and sonority; not a note is wasted. These are accessible works that grow on the listener with each hearing. The performances, by the Eastman Wind Ensemble directed by Frederick Fennell, are A-plus, as is Mercury's wide-dynamic sound (MG 50143).

RCA VICTOR, by reissuing on a single longplay record (LM 2051) (it's also in set LM 6123, three discs) *Sergei Rachmaninoff's* inimitable performance of his own *Third Piano Concerto*, recorded with Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra in that very respectable sonic era just preceding World War II, surely has brought joy to many phonophiles. Possibly even more pleasure attends the resuscitation of his version of Schumann's "Carnaval," one long revered for its deep poetic insight. It is now to be had at Victor's Camden-label prices. The great Russian-born pianist's personalized, magisterial reading of *Chopin's Sonata in B flat minor*, op. 35, is overside (CAMDEN 396). Note also the record label, "The Art of Sergei Rachmaninoff, Volume One." For pleasurable listening, and for the artistry it serves, the sound indeed will suffice.

COMPOSERS RECORDINGS, INC., has released *Norman Dello Joio's "Meditations on Ecclesiastes,"* coupled with the *First Symphony of Frank Wigglesworth* (CRI-110). This issue should help bring to public attention the names of two of the younger American composers whose worth has hardly received proper recognition. In these scores, Dello Joio's melodic gift owing a certain debt to

(Continued on page 18)

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- Entirely separate bias voltage supply features DUAL-TRIODE VACUUM TUBE VOLTAGE REGULATOR.
- OVERALL SIZE: 14½ inches wide, 12½ inches deep, 8¾ inches high.
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Answers To Common Tape Problems

by HERBERT G. HARD



Tape, now generally accepted as a source of fine music, can also be a source of casual fun through home recordings.

A TAPE RECORDER or a playback deck for pre-recorded tapes is usually the final addition to a complete hi-fi system. Tape as a program source for good music, especially if stereo is involved, or as a means of retaining music presented on the air or played "live" in your home, is now becoming common as an adjunct to high-fidelity installations. Tape is now finding general acceptance on equal terms with the conventional phonograph record or the FM tuner as a source of hi-fi enjoyment.

Yet since the principles of sound reproduction from tape differ rather fundamentally from those of conventional phonography, questions and problems arise in the minds of hi-fi fans who are about to add tape facilities to their installations. Here we present fifteen of the questions most often asked, as well as brief answers which, we hope, will aid in the understanding of tape theory and technique.

1. How Should Tape Be Stored?

Tape should always be stored on the take-up reel. In the course of recording, or playback, the tape winds on the take-up reel forming a smooth and uniform pack. If it is rewound at fast speed on to the feed reel it will almost invariably have an uneven pack. Consequently it is better to leave the tape on the take-up reel for storage. Tape should never be stored where it is likely to encounter extreme temperatures or humidity, like hot attics or damp basements. Storage at ordinary room temperature is usually satisfactory. Tape should be kept away from magnetic fields like large motors. Stored tape should be re-spooled in playback mode at least once every six months and preferably every 30 days. Frequent re-spooling also

prevents "reel set." "Reel set" is a more or less permanent deformation of the tape resulting from winding pressure over prolonged storage periods.

2. What Is Print Through?

Print Through is the transfer of the magnetic signal in adjacent layers on a reel of tape. Signals print through from one layer to another similar to the making of carbon copies.

3. How Can Print Through Be Avoided?

Do not over-record. When recording, set the record level as low as possible in order to get a noise-free signal. Rewind recorded tapes frequently. Store at room temperature since higher than normal temperatures accelerate print through.

4. What Is Meant by Single Track and Dual Track?

Single track recording is made with a full track recording head which is almost as wide as the 1/4-inch tape. Dual track recording is made with a half track head. It records only half the width of the tape. With a dual track head, the user can record first the bottom half and then the top half of the tape, thus gaining twice as much playing time on one reel of tape. Dual track tapes cannot be edited.

5. What Types of Film, or Base, Are Used for Recording Tape?

1. Cellulose acetate.
2. Mylar, which is DuPont's registered trademark for its new polyester film. At one time, paper was used as a base for magnetic recording tape but it was discontinued several years ago by most manufacturers.

6. What Is the Difference Between Acetate and Mylar?

Each has its advantages. Acetate has been the standard film of the recording industry for ten years. It is less expensive than Mylar. When acetate breaks, it breaks clean. A neat splice can be made without losing any of the recording.

Mylar is tough. It will not tear easily. It is stronger than acetate and will take a greater pull before stretching. Mylar has a high resistance to extreme temperature and humidity.

7. How Long Will Tape Last?

The life of good quality recording tape is indefinite. Tests have shown such



Editing magnetic tape is as easy—even easier—than editing movie film. Scissors and splicing tape do the job.



Special high-strength tape is now available to stand the strain of casual handling. But while tensile strength is a commendable property of this tape, the lady seems to be literally laboring the point.

tapes can be recorded and played up to 10,000 times without appreciable loss of recorded material. A tape with a smooth surface will last longer because it offers less oxide shedding in head contact. Mylar tapes will last longer than acetate since Mylar does not embrittle with age.

8. Explain Long Play and Double Play Tapes

The basic tape length is a 1200 ft. tape of 1 1/2-mil base thickness on a 7-inch reel. Long Play tapes, both Mylar and acetate, are made on a base of 1-mil thickness. This thinner base permits 1800-ft. on a 7-inch reel. Double-Play tapes, on a 1/2-mil base (Mylar only) permit 2400-ft. on a 7-inch reel. Thus Long Play tapes give 50% more playing time and Double-Play tapes 100% more playing time.

9. Which Is the Most Popular Type?

According to statistics from leading tape manufacturers, the public's preference, in order listed, is:

1. Standard acetate, 1200-ft. on 7-in. reel.
2. Long Play "Mylar," 1800-ft. on 7-in. reel.
3. Double-Play "Mylar," 2400-ft. on 7-in. reel.
4. Long Play acetate, 1800-ft. on 7-in. reel.
5. Professional grade "Mylar," 1200-ft. on 7-in. reel.

The 7-inch is the most popular reel size, selling three to one over the 5-inch.

10. Are Any Precautions Necessary for the Thinner Tapes?

Ordinary care will suffice in the case of 1-mil tapes but certain precautions should be observed in using the half-mil Double Play. A tape recorder, properly adjusted, exerts a pull of 6-9 oz. while running and 10-16 oz. in start or stop on rewind and fast forward modes. Double Play has a yield (stretch) value of 32 oz. which ordinarily provides an ample safety margin. However, special care should be taken on fast forward and rewind. The tape must be taut between reels when starting and stopping.

11. Why Is Double-Play Tape Popular?

Recording fans want longer recording and playing time. The disc record industry proved this with the long playing record. One 7-inch reel of Double-Play, at 3 3/4 ips, will take a two-hour recording on single track or four hours on dual track.

12. Why Is A Smooth Tape Surface So Important?

The coating process on many tapes produces a rough, grainy surface similar to sandpaper. When this tape passes across the recording head friction causes the oxide particles to shed. This shedding not only gums up capstan and rollers, it also causes excessive head wear. A tape that has been processed to provide a smooth surface, or sheen, will minimize oxide shedding. A smooth sur-

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Mozart's life and work was intimately connected with his native city of Salzburg. Some of the recent Mozart recordings were made there during the annual Salzburg Festival.

Mozart In Retrospect

by JOHN MILDER

OVER A YEAR has passed since the official ending of the recording companies' observance of the "Mozart Year." The two hundredth anniversary of Mozart's birth was the signal for an unprecedented deluge of recordings which continued for some months after the supposed end of the year of celebration. Finally, however, we can begin to get some kind of perspective on the vast effort made in Mozart's name.

Certainly all of us have benefited to some extent from the attention paid to Mozart during 1956 and early 1957. We can now become familiar in our living rooms with many of his works which we would have little chance of hearing in live performances. We can hear the composer speaking softly in his sonatas and quartets, and we can also come to know the vast statements of works like his Great Mass in C Minor. Certainly no other composer has benefited more

from recordings, for Mozart communicates equally well in the living room and the concert hall.

But if the Mozart year produced a lot of genuine treasure, there was much baser metal among the gold. There were a few attempts by some to "cash in" on the interest in Mozart, and many other honest but over-earnest attempts to fulfill recording requirements with performances by artists who were not ready for or familiar with their material. While there were few actual cases of companies trying to make a fast profit with anything at hand, there were too many recording projects which were "dutiful" in attitude.

Inevitably there were a few misguided attempts at "authenticity." A few of these involved reducing modern orchestras to the supposed size of the orchestra of the classical era. Unfortunately, Mozart's conceptions were often diminished at the

same time, with the resultant performances sounding antiseptic. There were far more cases of "note perfect" performances which sounded bloodless than of overblown or pompous interpretations.

While it is virtually impossible to single out all of the truly fine performances which did manage to find their way into the record catalogues during the Mozart year, there are a few which serve as yardsticks by which other recordings can be measured.

One of the most satisfying performances in the entire catalogue is the London "Marriage of Figaro." The direction

of the late Erich Kleiber can not be faulted on any count. The major performers, Della Casa, Gueden, Siepi, and Danco, all are more than up to the demands of Mozart. The performance as a whole has a unity of style which makes it seem superior to the competing R. C. A. version from the Glyndebourne Festival, although individual performances in the latter are almost equally fine. Altogether, "Figaro" seems to be the only major Mozart opera which emerged unblemished during the Mozart year. Decca produced a good recording of "The Magic Flute" (Decca DX-134), but neither Fricsay's direction nor individual performances bear comparison with the old Berlin Opera version under Sir Thomas Beecham — which has been deleted from the catalogue.

Among Mozart's religious works, three recordings stand out. Bruno Walter's direction of the magnificent Requiem (Columbia ML-5012) is particularly noteworthy. A competing version by Beecham, also on the Columbia label, does not come quite up to the Walter standard.

In the Epic recording of the Great Mass in C Minor (Epic SC-6009), the magnificent singing of Teresa Stich-Randall more than compensated for faults in the overall conception, by Rudolf Moralt. Certainly Miss Stich-Randall's first entrance in the Kyrie section is one of the most beautiful things on record.

A fine spirited performance of the "Coronation" Mass in C Major, by Igor Markevitch and the Berlin Philharmonic, is accompanied by a good reading of the "Prague" Symphony on Decca 9805.

Among Mozart's many beautiful concertos for piano and orchestra Walter Geiseking's performances of the 20th and 25th with the Philharmonia Orchestra under Hans Rosbaud belong in anyone's record collection (Angel 35215). Equally good is a record issued during the "period of grace" just after the Mozart year, on which Rudolf Serkin and Alexander Schneider collaborate in spirited readings of the 21st and 27th concertos (Columbia ML 5013). More performances by this team are certainly in order, and Columbia is issuing a second example of their collaboration with the 9th and 12th concertos.

Mozart's intensely personal chamber and solo works are represented by several excellent performances. Wanda Landow-

ska's two-record set of Mozart piano works would be a highlight of any year. Miss Landowska takes a few liberties in her readings, but she communicates in precisely the same way as with her renowned performances of Bach on the harpsichord (RCA Victor LM-6044).

On Epic LC-3299 Arthur Grumiaux and Clara Haskil collaborate in beautiful performances of the A Major and B Flat Major Sonatas for Violin. Altogether, the record is a perfect introduction to this facet of Mozart's genius, and it demands further performances from these artists.

Mozart's incomparable Last Quartets are performed magnificently by the Budapest String Quartet (Columbia SL-228). Combine works from the very pinnacle of Mozart's achievements with performances like these and you have very rare records indeed. Recent performances by the same group of the Viola Quintets (with Walter Trampler) fall in the same category of achievement (Columbia ML 5191, 92, 93).

One of the delightful surprises of the Mozart Year appeared on Decca's Archive series (ARC-3044). On it the Norddeutscher Singkreis sing twelve canons which reveal Mozart in his most ethereal and most earthy moods. The secular canons are among the lustiest pieces in the record catalogue, and will furnish many surprises for anyone who can understand a bit of German. On the other side of the record are two Adagios and Rondos played on the otherworldly sounding glass harmonica by Bruno Hoffman.

A current interpreter of Mozart, Sir Thomas Beecham is superbly equipped for his task by having a personality similar to that of the composer; both polished and profound.

photo: Angel Records

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, as portrayed by a contemporary.



Equally charming are records from Vanguard (Vang. 483), and Epic (LC 3043). The first is a performance by the Vienna State Opera Orchestra of Mozart's "Haffner" Serenade, conducted by Mogens Woldike. The latter features the Cassations Nos. 1 and 2 in performances by the Vienna Symphony under Paul Sacher.

Of the massive list of symphonies recorded during the Mozart year, the most rewarding recorded example is the by now famous Bruno Walter version of the 36th ("Linz"). More important than the performance of the symphony itself is the segment of the two record set devoted to Walter's rehearsal of the orchestra. There is no better insight into the workings of an orchestra than this recorded rehearsal provides (Columbia DSL-224).

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From Our Readers:

Mr. Claude Cadarette of North Hollywood sends us these pictures of the custom hi-fi installation he placed in an old built-in bar in his study. He replaced the old doors of the bar and clothes closet and replaced them with panels made of Novoply. Then he lined the space with Ash plywood and installed lights and wiring, as well as the

shelves to bear the equipment.

The units consist of a Metzner "Starlight" turntable, Scott 99-B 22 watt amplifier, Fisher 80 tuner, Revere T-11 recorder and University CW-15 woofer, Comreflex, and HF 206 tweeter in a case of his own design.

A Shure 55S microphone completes the setup. ■■■



(Above)
The unobtrusive paneling gives no hint of the audio array it hides.

(At Right)
The doors swing open to reveal a hi-fi system



complete with tape recorder. Speaker and TV are seen in foreground, but Mr. Cadarette writes about the TV set: "I don't have time to look at the thing as long as good music is available"



A closeup view identifies the tuner as a Fisher, the amplifier as a Scott, the turntable as a Metzner with a Rek-O-Kut arm (bearing a Pickering cartridge), and a Revere tape mach-

ine. The small box atop the tuner is Mr. Cadarette's own switching arrangement that eliminates a lot of unsightly wiring.



Joseph Eger demonstrates the musical possibilities of intricate plumbing. (Photo: RCA Victor.)

Disc Debut

AMONG THE MORE unusual discs is "Around the Horn," Joseph Eger's first recording. This new Victor disc introduces not only the artist, but also displays his instrument in a sort of exploratory spotlight.

Thoroughly in love with his work, Mr. Eger is an avowed propagandist and champion for the French horn. He is delighted therefore when people ask to know more about the horn and what it can do. Audiences have shown such curiosity and lively interest in this rarely heard solo instrument, that Mr. Eger has often responded with an informal question period.

"The question periods are fascinating for all concerned," says Mr. Eger. "People are astounded that such a vast range of tones, dynamics and facility can come out of this shiny bit of plumbing that has only three keys. They ask 'What is your right hand doing in the bell?' 'Why is the horn curled up?' 'How long would it be if it were straightened out?' They are curious about the changes in tone color. They wonder how I can play such long phrases without taking a breath — for I don't look like Charles Atlas or Jack Dempsey.

"I often ask the audience to hold its breath while I hold a tone, to see who can last longer. They are surprised to

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Plugging It In . . .

by JOHN MILDER

ONE OF THE main reasons for the overwhelming popularity of today's component high fidelity is the ease with which a home music system can be assembled. There is no longer need for anyone to be an amateur electrician to put together his own system. Interconnection of components usually consists of two or three easy steps which rarely take more than a few minutes to complete. There are, however, a few easy safeguards which should be observed to make sure that equipment is installed securely and will continue to operate at maximum efficiency.

The connection between pickup cartridge and amplifier or preamplifier requires a little care to make sure that no extraneous noise is able to intrude between you and the music from your records. The lead from your pickup should be a shielded cable terminating securely in a conventional pin jack, with no bare expanse of wire, particularly at the point of connection between cable and jack. The use of one of the many available cables with "molded on" pin jacks is

well worthwhile to make certain that no AC hum from normal house currents and other sources can find its way into your system. The jack itself should be inserted as tightly as possible into the proper portion of the jack to insure firm grounding to the amplifier chassis. Failure to insert the jack all the way will produce a roar of protest from your speaker, and the lack of a proper ground to the chassis will occasion a disturbing 60 cycle hum. While you're at it, make sure that there is enough slack in the cable to prevent the jack from working loose at the input.

If this connection is made as indicated and your set nonetheless produces appreciable hum, two further steps are in order. First, reverse the power cord plugs in their respective sockets. If the hum lessens but is still bothersome, run a simple ground wire from your pickup arm to the amplifier chassis at the phono input. In almost all cases, except for increasingly rare instances of amplifier defects, these measures will reduce hum to the vanishing point.

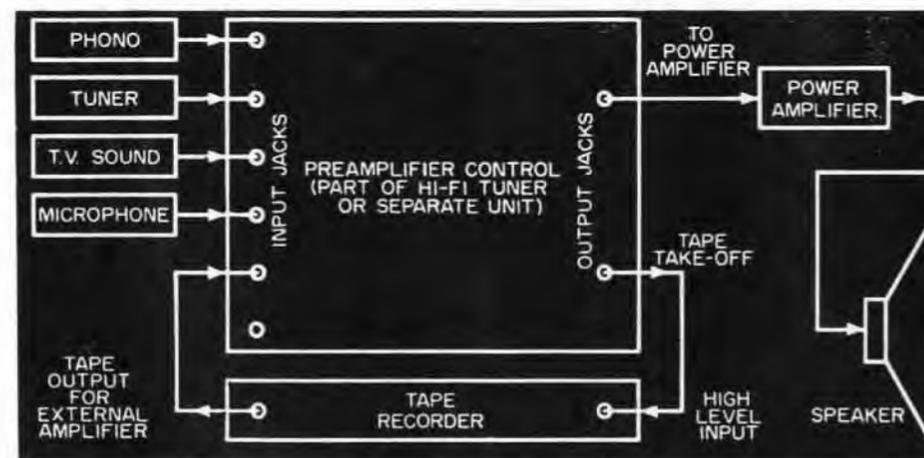


Hooking up hi-fi components is simple as child's play. But knowing a few simple tricks can forestall possible disappointment. (Photo: Alter-Lausing.)

Connecting the amplifier to your speaker requires only a screwdriver and ordinary lamp cord wire. Providing the speaker is connected to the amplifier output terminal which matches its stated impedance and the screw terminals themselves are in tight contact with the wire, you should encounter no problems. A few things should be taken into account, however, for full protection of your equipment and best overall results. The most obvious of these is making sure that the two wires between amplifier and speaker can not touch each other—with no sound at all as the result. The exposed portions of wire should also be short enough to prevent their coming in contact with the metal chassis of the amplifier, for this condition can result in your output tubes quickly burning out. It is a good idea, too, not to turn on your amplifier if it is not connected to the speaker, although this condition is not as dangerous to most amplifier circuits as it once was.

A few other measures will insure long term protection for your speaker. If there is any doubt that your speaker is capable of handling the full powers

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Overall schematic of interconnections in a high-fidelity system complete with inputs for record player, radio tuner, TV sound and microphone for "live" recording. (Courtesy Popular Electronics Magazine.)

Answers To Tape Problems

(Continued from page 7)

face tape making better magnetic contact with the head thereby improving frequency response.

13. How Is A Tape Splice Made?

Take the two broken ends of tape, lapped ends at a 45-degree angle. Place the two ends together, and lay over a piece of splicing tape. Be sure the splicing tape is not on the coated, or oxide, side of the recording tape. Trim the edges of the splicing tape with a slight inside curve. Pressure sensitive tape is not satisfactory for splicing. It has so much adhesive it makes a "gummy" splice and causes the next layer of tape to stick to the splice.

14. What Is Stereophonic Sound?

Stereophonic sound is sound recorded

with two microphones at two separate points, each mike feeding into a separate channel on the tape. This sound is played back thru two speakers, each with its own amplifiers. Each speaker reproduces sound from one channel only but the effect of the two speakers playing simultaneously gives the illusion of depth to the sound reproduction. Stereo playback machines with dual playback heads are required for playing stereo tapes.

15. What Is Leader Tape?

Leader tape is used to "lead" or thread the recording tape on to the reel. It also prevents the tape ends from becoming frayed, thereby losing part of the program material. Leader tape is also used to splice tape for program timing. ■■■

Mozart In Retrospect

(Continued from page 9)

Although the Mozart year itself produced many other recordings of merit, we would be doing ourselves and Mozart an injustice if we did not take a brief look at three or four recorded examples prior to 1956.

Happily, one of the finest records of the early LP era is still available. On it Sir Thomas Beecham conducts the "Prague" and "Jupiter" symphonies with the Royal Philharmonic. Both symphonies receive truly great performances, full of zest and good feeling. Beecham's famous concern for orchestral balances produces a quartet-like clarity in large scaled performances. Since the recording is also quite good, this is a record to search out. (Columbia ML 4313.)

Equally full of good feeling and general enjoyment is the late Dennis Brain's performance of Mozart's four horn concertos on Angel 35092. Most horn players would be happy to circle the pitfalls in this music with some kind of grace, but Brain refuses instead to acknowledge them at all, producing ravishing performances which seem deceptively full of ease.

One of the loveliest of early LP's is not available for the time being. On it Ralph Kirkpatrick performs the 17th Piano Concerto with an orchestra under the direction of Alexander Schneider, and Schneider himself is soloist in the 4th Violin Concerto. (Haydn Society 1040.) In addition to the fine quality of perform-

ance, the sound of a "Mozart piano" makes the record of considerable interest, and we can hope that the new Haydn Society label will reissue it.

While early LP's, like the three just mentioned show us what we should expect from Mozart performances, many recent releases indicate that such high expectations can still be satisfied. Since the record companies no longer have to rush to meet the calendar deadlines of the official "Mozart Year," they can relax about their Mozart projects—and in

The spirit of Mozart's church music, at once devout and elegant, is paralleled in the architecture of the Salzburg churches, for which he wrote. Here is the gate of the church of Saint Sebastian.



this new atmosphere the style and vitality of Mozart's music can be recaptured. It is perhaps a paradox that the aftermath of the Mozart Year is better than the real article—but the paradox is now working to our advantage. ■■■

Disc Debut

(Continued from page 10)

find I can outlast them — especially the big men." (Mr. Eger is a slim 140 pounds.) People also want to know why it is considered so hard to play, what are its highest and lowest notes, who invented it, and why it is called French.

"The left hand operates the valves while the right is partially inserted in the bell to help control the sound and pitch," says Mr. Eger. "Not many years ago, before the introduction of the present valved instrument, the right hand was very busy indeed in closing and opening the bell to change pitch. Now the valves, which control the length of tubing through which the air can flow, do a good part of this job, and increase the technical virtuosity of the instrument. By closing the bell completely with the right hand, a haunting, far-way sound (called "muting") is produced.

"Until recent decades it was taken for granted that the hornist would make many 'fluffs' or mistakes," Mr. Eger explains, "but today, with the improved modern horn, the artist is expected to cover almost four octaves and a wide range of tone and dynamics with complete accuracy."

"Around the Horn" is a survey in miniature of solo French Horn literature culled from past and present. Side 1 contains Mozart's devilishly difficult "Horn Concerto No. 3 in E-Flat, K. 447," which like all four Mozart horn concerti was written for his good friend, Leutgeb, the cheese-store proprietor. Mr. Eger is accompanied by the RCA Victor Orchestra, Joseph Rosenstock conducting.

The other side of this Victor disc (LM 2146) features a Haydn Horn trio and an assortment of smaller pieces by Schubert, Gershwin and Bernstein, all pleasant and well played.

However, "Around the Horn" is geographically off-key. Instead of "The Horn," the globe pictured on the record jacket shows the Cape of Good Hope, which misses the intended pictorial pun by about 6,000 miles. ■■■

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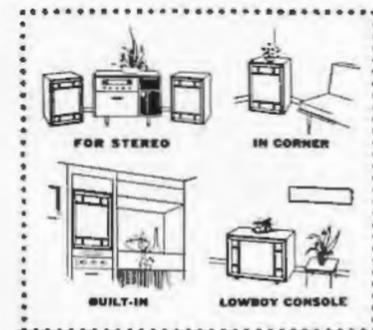
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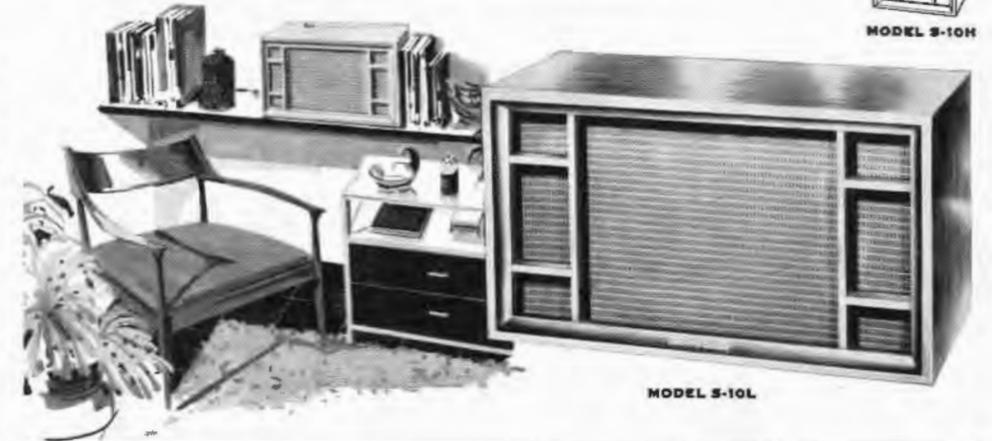
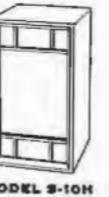
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Ask for demonstration and get complete product catalogue at franchised Altec dealers.

12-19

Plugging It In

(Continued from page 11)

which your amplifier can produce, it is a good idea to insert a fuse in the line to the speaker. The usual rating of such a fuse should be from 1/2 to 1 ampere, and a competent employee of your equipment dealer should be able to advise you on the best rating for your particular speaker. A resistor should also be connected in parallel with the fuse to insure protection for your amplifier if the fuse blows, but this is not always necessary. If neither precaution seems worth the bother, get into the habit of turning your amplifier volume control down or all the way off before inserting or removing input plugs or suspect tubes. Not bothering with this safety measure can result in feeding the full power of your amplifier into your speaker, with possible damage to the speaker and definite damage to your nerves.

Further possible connections between components usually require only the usual interconnecting cables supplied with them, without the need for an external ground between units. There are a few more suggestions, however, which you may find useful for keeping your equipment at peak efficiency.

Most amplifiers have AC convenience outlets on their chassis for plugging in your accessory equipment. In most cases, one of these outlets is "live" at all times, even when the amplifier is turned off. Record changers and turntables generally should be plugged only into this outlet on the amplifier, although this will deny you the convenience of turning off all your equipment from the amplifier's on-off switch. Most turntables are driven by rubber idler wheels which will tend to develop flat spots if they are left in contact with the turntable for any length of time with the power off. Since these idler wheels are ground with great precision to insure quiet and smooth operation, it is well worth the effort to switch off the turntable itself rather than simply cutting off its power through the amplifier. If the amplifier does not have a continuously live outlet, plug the turntable separately into a wall socket.

If you have purchased an amplifier and preamplifier on separate chassis, both are likely to have master level controls.

(Continued on page 20)

NEW

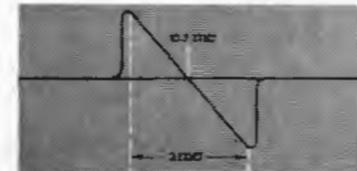
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Tape Reviews

By Edwin S. Bergamini

Strauss waltzes from Vienna in stereo sound! The knowing style is there, the lilt just right as we hear the festive "Emperor Waltz," the languorous Intermezzo from the "Thousand and One Nights" music, the sprightly "Waldmeister" overture with its lovely flute duet, and the delightfully carefree "Fire Festival Polka" of Josef Strauss, all performed by the Vienna State Opera Orchestra under the baton of Josef Drexler. Outstanding, undistorted sound, with a most persuasive stereo spread (LIVINGSTON 721-BN).

"*The Strings of the Philadelphia*" is an excerpting on stereo tape by COLUMBIA (IMB-8) from material released earlier on disc ML 5187. The Philadelphians awe us with their playing of Borodin's "Nocturne for Strings" and Barber's "Adagio for Strings" (both arrangements for string orchestra of string quartet slow movements) and Vaughan Williams' "Fantasia on Greensleeves" under Eugene Ormandy's direction. The stereo sound is very hi-fi.

Bigness and fullness of sound is the thing in MERCURY's new stereo tape of Debussy's "Iberia" and "Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun," more than emphasis on sound directionality. But that too is there, surely enough, in these beautifully played performances by the Detroit Symphony under Paul Paray's direction. "Faun" is delectably evoked; we hazard "Iberia" lacks the final atmosphere (MBS 5-8).

There are stereo sonics that sparkle, some that glow more quietly. The latter describes RCA VICTOR's stereo tape version of "Offenbach Melodies," including "La Belle Helene" overture and a medley from "La Periochole." Arthur Fiedler conducts the Boston Pops Orchestra in ear-catching performances (BCS-50).

A debut on stereo tape (and we note there's no disc version in the catalogs at the moment) is Haydn's sparkling *Symphonie Concertante* in B flat, op. 84.

CONCERT HALL SOCIETY's performers, who include Heintz Nordbruch, oboe; Fritz Henker, bassoon; Friedrich Wuehler, violin; Fritz Sommer, cello; and the Hamburg Chamber Orchestra under Hans Jurgen Walther, offer the work in all its delightful buoyancy (EX-57). The sound is a ruddy compliment to the gay goings-on. Not to be missed!

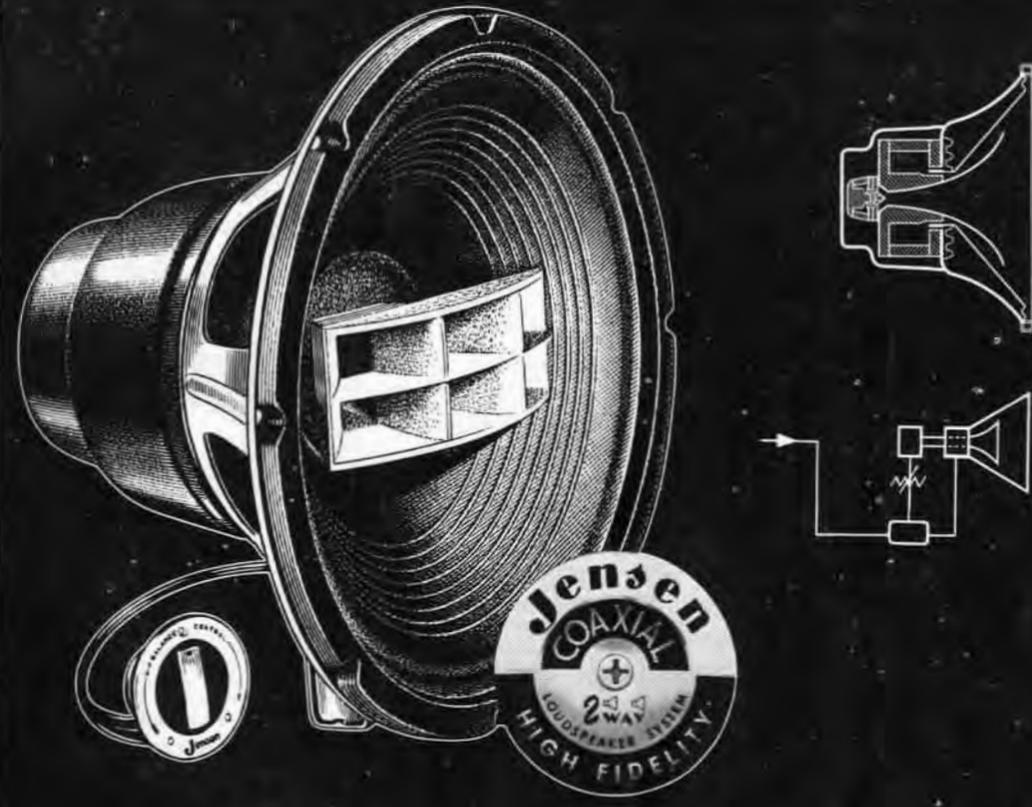
Power, power, power! It's bound up in the Boston Symphony's magnificent playing, Munch's dynamic conducting, and RCA VICTOR's superb capture of Beethoven's *Third Leonore and Coriolanus* overtures (BCS-48). The sound, with an excellently defined stereo spread, is an improvement over that in Victor's earlier disc release of these performances (LM 2015). We still find theatrical touches in this Leonore and continue to prefer a less fast-paced, more lyric, more carefully weighted Coriolanus. But Munch's concept is sonically mighty impressive.

The good Munch reading of Tchaikovsky's lovely "Serenade for Strings" has been released on stereo tape by RCA VICTOR (CCS-66) with less success, soundwise, than the disc version (LM 2105). There's a blurring in the upper strings, which we note may be peculiar to our review copy.

The powerful and song-filled musical expression of Schubert that is familiar in his "Unfinished" and "Great" C major symphonies occurs elsewhere, as one can discover listening to CONCERT HALL SOCIETY's well-managed stereo taping (LX-48) of his *Mass in A flat*, sometimes called his "Missa Solemnis." The estimable quartet of soloists includes Anne Bolinger, soprano; Ursula Zollenkopf, alto; Helmut Kretschmer, tenor; and James Pease, bass. The North German Philharmonic Chorus and Orchestra sound well under conductor Carl Bamberg's energetic baton. Very much worth hearing.

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On the Hi-Fi Record

(Continued from page 5)

Puccini) seems more noteworthy than Wigglesworth's. "Meditations" is highly listenable, with a rhapsodic note that makes one recall Bloch's "Schelomo." The Wigglesworth Symphony's outer movements jig tunelessly, even if the tunes themselves aren't out of the ordinary. But listen to the third movement, Allegretto, for what strikes us as a touch of Spike Jones, caricatured and intellectualized at the same time. Very humorous. The performances by F. Charles Adler and the Vienna Orchestra are alert and affectionate; the sound is of sun-washed brilliance.

Music lovers are going to be reminded of the loss of Guido Cantelli each time one of his remaining recordings is released from the E.M.I. archives. The slow movement of Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 4 ("Italian"), the opening movement of the Schubert Symphony No. 8 ("Unfinished") take on a peculiar poignance as we hear them directed by the young Italian conductor who was killed a year ago in a plane crash. These performances, made with the great Philharmonia Orchestra of England, rank with the finest available. Mendelssohn's sunnily exquisite detail, Schubert's fervent songfulness, have not often been as well set forth (ANGEL 35524).

The fifth and sixth books of Greig's "Lyric Pieces" (M-G-M 3198) continue pianist Menahem Pressler's sympathetic exploration of the composer's ten volumes under the title. The more familiar pieces in Book Six (the first four are included in the Lyric Suite for orchestra) should not cause one to overlook the hypnotic pre-impressionism of the volume's sixth and final selection, "Bell-Ringing." In the fifth book, the highly charged "Vanished Days" and the touching, simple nostalgia of "Home-Sickness" are particularly fine. The sound is highly satisfactory.

In "Spanish Keyboard Music of the 16th and 17th Centuries" EXPERIENCES ANONYMES (EA-0026) has offered what is to us more of a collection than a program. That is the art bound up in this

(Continued on page 20)

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On the hi-fi record

(Continued from page 18)

record's treasures by Cabezón, Cabanilles, and others, sensitively offered by harpsichordist Paul Wolfe, is better appreciated when one hears these pieces in twos or threes rather than all at a sitting. The sober intensity of Cabezón's variations on the song "La Dama le Demanda" caught our fancy in particular. Highest quality sound.

By calling its first record of the *American Percussion Society* (Paul Price, conductor) "Breaking the Sound Barrier," URANIA conjures up a flock of images which may lead us away from its new releases (UV 106) being, in their own words, "an arresting form of modern musical expression" — which it most surely is. The notable contents include Edgar Varese's percussion classic, "Ionisation," the "Canticle No. 3" of Lou Harrison, which uses folk melodies attrac-

tively, the pleasantly descriptive "Four Holidays" of Harry Bartlett, and two interesting studies in rhythm and sonority, "Introduction and Allegro" by Jack McKenzie, and "Three Brothers" by Michael Colgrass. Forty-four different instruments are used, ranging from cymbals to pistol, ocarina to water-buffalo bells! As one might expect, the engineering is outstanding.

VOX's new release of the big, brawny *Second Piano Concerto of Brahms*, by Friedrich Wuehrer and the Pro Musica Orchestra of Stuttgart, under Walther Davisson's direction, is a sterling specimen of the solid, lovingly manipulated older school of Brahms performances. Those who haven't been sold on the more streamlined approach to this music increasingly common in recent years will like this new record very much (PL 9790).

Idiom is the issue, comparing two releases of Bartók's monumental *Concerto for Orchestra*. Ernest Ansermet, directing L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande on LONDON LL 1632, offers a well-considered, rather classical-minded reading. But the brisker Ferenc Fricsay version with the Berlin Philharmonic on DECCA DL 9951 shows a firmer identification with the composer's idiom; the works points of detail as well as its magnificent verve are excellently put forth. Each recording represents the best of its label, serving a score whose sonic impact is second only to its inspired, and inspiring musical communication.

(Continued on page 22)

Plugging It In

(Continued from page 14)

It is wise to keep the amplifier level control at a high setting and the preamplifier at a low one, since the former almost always has a lower residual noise level than the latter at high volume. If the manufacturer of your preamp specifies a certain setting for use with your particular phono cartridge, it is usually wiser for many reasons to accept his suggestion rather than the above procedure.

While you are looking at manufacturer's suggestions, make sure that the phono input impedance of your amplifier or preamp is of correct value for your cartridge. Incorrect matching of the two can result in irregular high frequency response, and it can easily be remedied by soldering a resistor of correct compensating value across the input.

These few suggestions should make sure that your equipment operates correctly from the beginning. The time and effort they require can be measured in minutes, but they can eliminate hours of future searching for "bugs" in your equipment. ■■■

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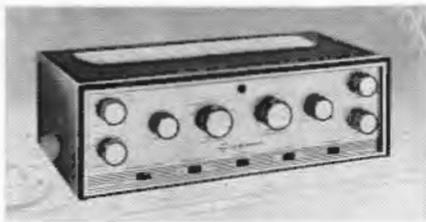
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On the Hi-Fi Record

(Continued from page 20)

Would names like Santa-Cruz and Mendoza-Nava appearing on a record attract your attention? They should, on the strength of a new release by M-G-M (E 3515), featuring Chile's noted *Domingo Santa-Cruz's "Suite for String Orchestra"* and *"Estampas and Estampillas"* (Pictures and Picture Card) for orchestra of cellos, by the Bolivian *Jaime Mendoza-Nava*, performed by the proper M-G-M string forces under Carlos Surinach's discerning leadership. Cellos never sounded more nobly than in the "Estampas" suite, which makes adroit use of folksong material. And the Santa-Cruz is another neglected gem, a modern romantic work that brings to mind similar essays by Vaughan Williams and Bloch. Most highly recommended.

Against all comers! We are prepared to defend Antal Dorati's new recording of *Mendelssohn's "Scotch" Symphony* (MERCURY MG 50123) against all who would carp at his choice of a leisurely tempo or two. To cite a case: the second movement is conservative of tempo, but is it often this meaningfully delineated, and with such ravishing wind and string detail? This happy effort ranks with the top two or three readings extant. Filling out the record is the "Fingal's Cave" or "Hebrides" overture, in an engaging, slowish-paced reading of sober elegance. The London Symphony plays magnificently, and Mercury's recording is sheer beauty.

RCA VICTOR has turned the spotlight on two impressive young pianists in new releases. *Byron Janis*, first to record the work for this label, has given us the best version of Richard Strauss' "Burlleske" with the emphasis on power, to this date. It's a splendid experience, as is his volatile and vivacious playing of the lovely, underrated Rachmaninoff First Concerto on the record's other side. The ferociously grand Reiner accompaniments, directing the Chicago Symphony, complete an excellent issue (LM 2127).

For his part, pianist *Gary Graffman* gives a brilliant and lusty account of Prokofieff's remarkable Third Piano Concerto, one of his most melodious, potent, memorable works. Graffman's backing by the San Francisco Symphony under Enrique Jorda's direction is very good indeed. The disc (RCA VICTOR LM

2138) also offers a detailful, gusty reading of Prokofieff's "Classical Symphony." The engineers have done very well by both releases; the Prokofieff is a touch bass-heavy.

One of the most detailfully excellent readings we have heard of *Dvorak's Fifth Symphony ("From the New World")*, by Rafael Kubelik, has been released by LONDON (LL 1607). The sound's sunny, warm riches will also win this release its adherents. Most commendable.

That extended and diffusely eloquent human document that is the *Bruckner Ninth Symphony* has received perhaps its most sympathetic reading on records to date, at the hands of Edward Van Beinum and the Amsterdam Concertgebouw (EPIC LC 3401). Epic's sound is splendid, with the Concertgebouw's strings (surely this orchestra is the finest to have disced this score) emerging with undistorted beauty. ■ ■ ■

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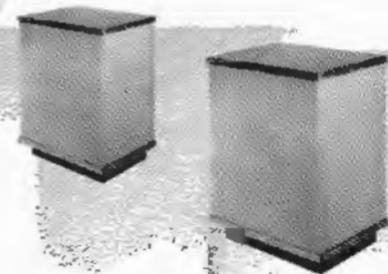
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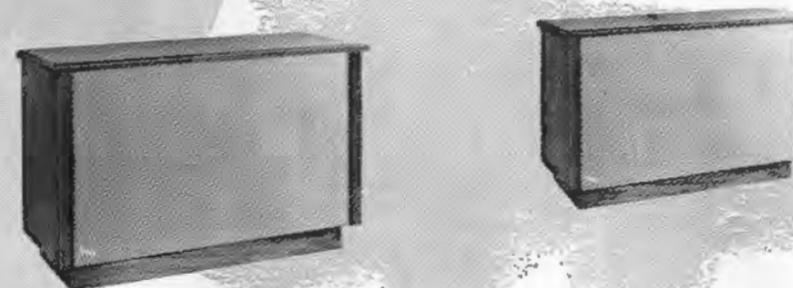
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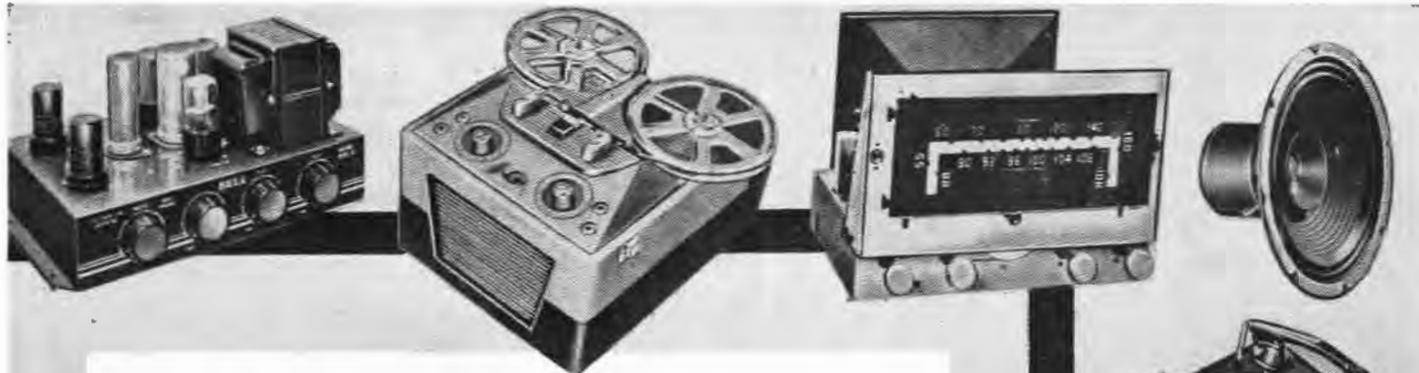


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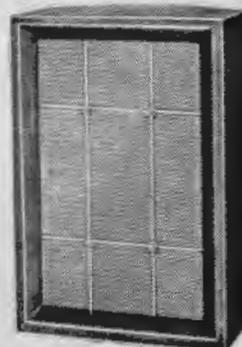
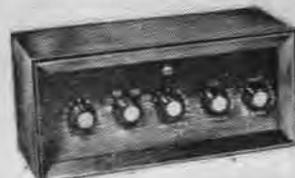
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