

Stereo Review

DECEMBER 1973 • 75 CENTS

**A GUIDE TO TUNER (AND RECEIVER) BUYING
BASIC OPERA LIBRARY • THE MIGHTY MOUTH
ORGAN • WILLIAM TELL • LORI LIEBERMAN**





SX-62

SX-82

**fidelity
s Pioneer.**



Check: ■ **CRAFTSMANSHIP**
■ **VERSATILITY** ■ **SPECIFICATIONS**
■ **PERFORMANCE** ■ **POWER** ■ **FEATURES**
■ **CRITICS' REVIEWS** ■ **DEALER RECOMMENDATIONS**
■ **VALUE** ■ **MUSIC REPRODUCTION**
■ **PIONEER OWNERS** ■ **RELIABILITY** ■ **WARRANTY**
■ **REPUTATION** ■ **SERVICE** and you'll
reach
the inevitable
conclusion...

SX-525

SX-727

in high
the best i

Incredible as it may seem, six years ago only the most avid followers of authentic sound reproduction were familiar with the Pioneer name. Yet, Pioneer's reputation for quality craftsmanship has been 35 years in the making. And it's continually being enhanced with each new component introduced. Case in point. Pioneer's outstanding AM-FM stereo receivers. They're the superb result of everything we've learned about sound and quality sound reproduction.

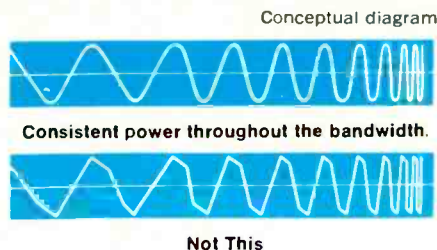
Reliability through exhaustive quality control.

Pioneer builds each receiver as though it was one-of-a-kind. To begin with, we produce virtually every part that goes into our receivers on our own production lines. So we know we're putting in the best there is. Until it's a completed unit, each receiver is continuously checked and inspected every step along the way. (A receiver in production travels on the average of twice the length of a football field. You can imagine how many quality checks it undergoes.) Still, that's not where our quality control stops. Because each receiver is then subjected to another rigid round of inspection before it's shipped to your Pioneer dealer. As a result, the Pioneer receiver that ends up in your home is as trouble-free as a receiver can be. To top it off, Pioneer backs it up with a full two-year warranty on parts and labor.

All the versatility you need — plus.

Pioneer designers are people-oriented. You'll appreciate this when you see that each receiver has more than a full complement of connections

for every music source available: records, tape, FM, microphone, and 4-channel. You can do your own tape-to-tape duplicating and even make listening tests of different phono cartridges and speaker systems.



Consistent power to spare.

Merely comparing the power capabilities of different brands of receivers does not tell you what's behind the power. Not only do these Pioneer receivers provide more comparable watts for your high fidelity dollar, they also deliver consistent power throughout the most vital listening area — the 20 — 20,000 Hz bandwidth. This is important. It means you get better bass response plus greater across-the-board frequency response with absolute minimum distortion.

Great specs + top sound = outstanding performance.

To many hi-fi buffs top performance means great specifications and impeccable waveforms. However, most people listen first and check the specs later. Whatever your modus operandi, you'll be more than delighted with Pioneer's outstanding performance.

Here's a mini spec list:

SPECIFICATIONS	SX-828	SX-727	SX-626	SX-525
IHF Music Power 4 ohms	270 watts	195 watts	110 watts	72 watts
RMS @ 8 ohms. Both channels driven @ 1KHz	60+60 watts	40+40 watts	27+27 watts	17+17 watts
FM Sensitivity (IHF) (the lower the better)	1.7uV	1.8uV	2.0uV	2.2uV
Selectivity (The higher the better)	+75dB	+70dB	+70dB	+45dB
Capture Ratio (the lower the better)	1.5dB	2.0dB	2.5dB	3.0dB
Power Bandwidth	All exceed by a wide margin the usable sound frequency spectrum			
INPUTS:				
Tape monitor	2	2	2	2
Phono	2	2	2	Phono/Mic.
Auxiliary	1	1	1	1
Microphone	2	1	1	Phono./Mic. (as above)
OUTPUTS:				
Speakers	3	3	3	2
Headsets	2	1	1	1
Tape Rec.	2	2	2	2

Easy-to-use features increase listening enjoyment.

All four receivers share many basic features for simplified operation, such as loudness contour, FM muting, click-stop tone controls, mode lights, signal strength meters, and a super wide FM dial scale. With Pioneer's wide variety of models to choose from, you're bound to find just what you're looking for in the way of sophistication and refinements.

Unanimous acclaim from the experts.

Stereo Review: "Pioneer's moderately priced SX-727 has a degree of operating flexibility and electrical performance previously found only in some of the most expensive receivers . . . The array of operating features is impressive . . . In its flexibility and in many areas of its measured performance it is somewhat better than much of the competition at its price level."

Audio: "We find the SX-727 to be a rugged, reliable instrument that certainly represents state-of-the-art receiver technology in its design and performance."

Hi-Fi Stereo Buyers' Guide: "This (SX-828) excellent performer features full power output at all frequencies . . . excellent reception of weak FM signals . . . selectivity was excellent."

High Fidelity: " . . . Solid quality . . . Pioneer has avoided a make-do approach in the SX-626; we wish we could say the same for all under \$300 receivers."

Stereo Review: "... We were especially impressed by the solidity and precise 'feel' of the SX-626's controls. Clearly, nothing has been skimped in the mechanical design and construction of this receiver. It is a joy to use, a very good value in every respect."

A Pioneer receiver costs less than you'd imagined.

Normally you'd expect to pay a lot more for such quality, performance and features. But not at Pioneer. We believe sensible pricing goes hand in hand with craftsmanship. Let your capable Pioneer hi-fi dealer give you a complete comparison demonstration. It's the only way to find the best in high fidelity and the best high fidelity for you.

SX-828 — \$499.95; SX-727 — \$399.95
SX-626 — \$339.95; SX-525 — \$259.95.
Prices include walnut cabinet.

U.S. Pioneer Electronics Corp.
178 Commerce Rd., Carlstadt,
New Jersey 07072.

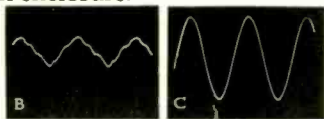
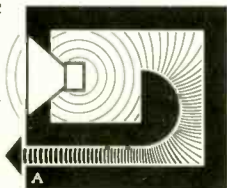


Now BIC VENTURI™ puts to rest some of the fables, fairytales, folklore, hearsay and humbug about speakers.

Fable

Extended bass with low distortion requires a big cabinet.

Some conventional designs are relatively efficient, but are large. Others are small, capable of good bass response, but extremely inefficient. The principle of the BIC VENTURI systems (pat. pend.) transforms air motion velocity within the enclosure to realize amplified magnitudes of bass energy at the BIC VENTURI coupled duct as much as 140 times that normally derived from a woofer (Fig. A). And the filtering action achieves phenomenally pure signal (Scope photos B & C). Result: pure extended bass from a small enclosure.



B—Shows output of low frequency driver when driven at a freq. of 22 Hz. Sound pressure reading, 90 dB. Note poor waveform.
C—Output of venturi coupled duct, (under the same conditions as Fig. B.) Sound pressure reading 111.5 dB, (140 times more output than Fig. B.) Note sinusoidal (nondistorted) appearance.

Fairytale

It's okay for midrange speakers to cross over to a tweeter at any frequency.

Midrange speakers cover from about 800 Hz to 6000 Hz. However, the ear is most sensitive to midrange frequencies. Distortion created in this range from crossover network action reduces articulation and musical definition. BIC VENTURI BICONEX™ horn (pat. pend.) was designed to match the high efficiency of the bass section and operates smoothly all the way up to 15,000 Hz, without interruption. A newly designed super tweeter extends response to 23,000 Hz, preserving the original sonic balance and musical timbre of the instruments originating in the lower frequencies.



Folklore

Wide dispersion only in one plane is sufficient.

Conventional horns suffer from musical coloration and are limited to wide-

angle dispersion in one plane. Since speakers can be positioned horizontally or vertically, you can miss those frequencies so necessary for musical accuracy. Metallic coloration is eliminated in the BICONEX horn by making it of a special inert substance. The combination of conical and exponential horn flares with a square diffraction mouth results in measurably wider dispersion, equally in all planes.

Hearsay

A speaker can't achieve high efficiency with high power handling in a small cabinet.

It can't, if its design is governed by such limiting factors as a soft-suspension, limited cone excursion capability, trapped air masses, etc. Freed from these limitations by the unique venturi action, BIC VENTURI speakers use rugged drivers capable of great excursion and equipped with voice coil assemblies that handle high power without "bottoming" or danger of destruction. The combination of increased efficiency and high power handling expands the useful dynamic range of your music system. Loud musical passages are reproduced faithfully, without strain; quieter moments, effortlessly.

Humbug

You can't retain balanced tonal response at all listening levels.

We hear far less of the bass and treble ranges at moderate to low listening levels than at very loud levels. Amplifier "loudness" or "contour" switches are fixed rate devices which in practice are defeated by the differences in speaker efficiency. The solution: Dynamic Tonal Compensation.™ This circuit (patents pending) adjusts speaker response as its sound pressure output changes with amplifier volume control settings. You hear aurally "flat" musical reproduction at background, average, or ear-shattering discoteque levels—automatically.



A system for every requirement

FORMULA 2. The most sensitive, highest power handling speaker system of its size (19¾ x 12 x 11½)! Heavy duty 8" woofer, BICONEX mid range, super tweeter. Use with amplifiers rated from 15 watts to as much as 75 watts RMS per channel. Response: 30 Hz to 23,000 Hz. Dispersion: 120° x 120°. \$98 each

FORMULA 4. Extends pure bass to 25 Hz. Has 10" woofer, BICONEX mid-range, super tweeter. Even greater efficiency and will handle amplifiers rated up to 100 watts. Dispersion: 120° x 120°. Size: 25 x 13¼ x 13" \$136 each.

FORMULA 6. Reaches very limits of bass and treble perception (20 to 23,000 Hz). Six elements: 12" woofer complemented by 5" cone for upper bass/lower midrange; pair of BICONEX horns and pair of super tweeter angularly positioned to increase high frequency dispersion (160° x 160°). Size: 26¼ x 15¾ x 14¾" \$239 each.

Sturdily constructed enclosures. Removable grilles in choice of 6 colors. Optional bases for floor standing placement. Write for brochure HF-11.

Audition today's most advanced speakers at your BIC VENTURI dealer.

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BIC VENTURI™

Stereo Review

DECEMBER 1973 • VOLUME 31 • NUMBER 6

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“AN IMPRESSIVE ACHIEVEMENT.”

— *Stereo Review*, August, 1973.

Excerpts from the equipment report in *Stereo Review*, from technical data supplied by Hirsch-Houck Laboratories.

“... the versatility of the Fisher 504 is exceptional, as a review of its features will show. Our test results speak for themselves.”

“FM distortion was 0.17% in mono and was actually lower in stereo, measuring 0.13%. Stereo separation exceeded 40 dB from 30 to 2,600 Hz (reaching 50 dB in the 100- to 200-Hz range), and was better than 25 dB at all frequencies up to our measurement limit of 15,000 Hz.”

“... it was entirely ‘bug-free,’ everything operated in its intended manner, controls were clearly marked, tuning was smooth and noncritical, muting action was excellent, etc. In other words, it is a superior product which does everything Fisher claims for it and then some. All in all, the Fisher 504 is a first-rate receiver and an impressive achievement!”

“... the best value we’ve yet encountered in a quadraphonic receiver.” — *High Fidelity*, January, 1973, from technical data supplied by CBS Laboratories.

“The Fisher 504 is so loaded with features and so competent in its performance that we can confidently say it represents the best value we’ve yet

encountered in a quadraphonic receiver.”

“When the unit is switched from quadraphonics to the stereo mode, an odd thing happens. Into 8-ohm loads the total rated power increases from 128 watts (32 x 4) to 180 watts (90 x 2), into 4-ohm loads it drops from 160 watts (40 x 4) to 100 watts (50 x 2). This behavior... is a concomitant of the unusual 4/2-channel switching configuration plus the amplifier’s feedback circuits... Suffice it to say that for quadraphonic use, the 504 delivers plenty of power for each of the four loudspeakers—including extremely inefficient ones—of conventional design in any normal room, and even enough power for two sets (eight loudspeakers) in many situations.

“And being conservatively rated by Fisher (as the lab data show), it is also an unusually clean amplifier at rated output... This is... over-all the best amplifier performance we’ve yet encountered in a quadraphonic receiver.

“The tuner is also exceptionally fine. The stereo quieting curve is so good that it resembles the *mono* curve in many an inexpensive receiver; the 504’s *mono* curve is superb. The ultimate quieting in both (better than 50 dB in stereo, 60 dB in *mono*) suggests the finest of separate tuners.”

“A price of \$599.95 is not peanuts, but we have yet to examine in detail any quadraphonic receiver—at any price—

that offers more, over-all, to the music listener.”

“... a well-thought-out unit with exceptional performance.” — *Electron* (Canada), June 1973.

“Fisher Radio has been in the receiver business as long as there has been a receiver business, so it is no great surprise to find that their latest effort is a well-thought-out unit with exceptional performance.

“The first thing that strikes you about the 504... is its bulk. It measures 21" x 7" x 17," and weighs 43 pounds. But, considering what this unit has inside it, the size is not excessive.”

“Perhaps, from a practical standpoint, its human engineering is one of the unit’s most outstanding features. In spite of its 21 front-panel controls, its 27 input and output jacks, and its 21 speaker and antenna connections, we found this a very easy unit to master in a short time. But then, Fisher has been designing these things for a long time.”

For free test report reprints, write to Fisher Radio, Dept. SR-12, 11-40 45th Road, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101.

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Studio - Standard

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PUBLISHER
EDGAR W. HOPPER

EDITOR
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MANAGING EDITOR
WILLIAM LIVINGSTONE

MUSIC EDITOR
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TECHNICAL EDITOR
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ART DIRECTOR
BORYS PATCHOWSKY

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RALPH HODGES

POPULAR MUSIC EDITOR
STEVE SIMEIS

ASSISTANT MUSIC EDITOR
VIVIANNE WINTERRY GOODMAN

PRODUCTION EDITOR
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CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

CHRIS ALBERTSON
MARTIN BOOKSPAN
ROBERT S. CLARK
NOEL COPPAGE
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MADEleine LITTMAN

GROUP VICE PRESIDENT
ELECTRONICS & PHOTOGRAPHIC
FURMAN HEBB

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER
STANLEY NEUFELD

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
PEGI McNEANEY

Editorial and Executive Offices
Ziff-Davis Publishing Company
One Park Avenue, New York, New York 10016
212 679-7200
Eastern Advertising Manager: Richard J. Halpern
Midwestern Office: The Patis Group
4761 West Touhy Ave., Lincolnwood, Ill. 60064
312-679-1100
Arnold S. Hoffman

Western Office
9025 Wilshire Boulevard
Beverly Hills, California 90211
213 273 8050, 272-1161
Western Advertising Manager: Bud Dean

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

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EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

By WILLIAM ANDERSON

MAECENAS AND MUSIC

ABOUT 2,000 years ago there lived in Rome a certain Caius Cilnius Maecenas, a retired politician, rich, and justly famed as a patron of the arts. His name through the years has been a synonym for the generous giver, not so much for what he gave as to whom: without his support, it is possible that neither the Odes of Horace nor the *Aeneid* of Vergil would have come into existence, that the whole of the Augustan age itself would have lacked a great deal of its classical luster.

Since then, the world has become a vastly more populous and infinitely more complicated place, one more difficult for both artist and patron to put his mark on. It is perhaps a bit too much to say, for example, that there would have been no Haydn but for Prince Nicolaus Esterhazy the Munificent, and simply ridiculous to contend that either Christian Ludwig, Margrave of Brandenburg, or Prince Andreas Rasoumovsky deserves to be compared to Maecenas—Bach and Beethoven *could* have managed very well without them. Still, it is inescapably true that if these men have any claim to fame today it is as patrons of the arts and not for whatever else they were, and that those musical works that bear their names are some evidence that they were men of taste. Such evidence of enlightened, personal patronage is rather hard to come by in modern times. Money is being given to the arts, music among them, and works are being produced, but even when we are lucky enough to hear one of them in the single performance they are usually vouchsafed, the commissioning party all too often turns out to be a faceless institution, a corporation, a fund, or, occasionally, an agency of government. Small wonder that the compositions themselves are just as faceless: having received his grant or commission, the composer is left with no incentive to please anyone but himself, for the funding agency abandons its responsibility—and its interest—as soon as the check is signed. There can be, I think, no better example of the adage "The gift without the giver is bare." This is not patronage, but charity of a most demeaning sort. The arts do not pay for themselves in any coin a bank would recognize, so they *need* subsidy, but artists have a right to know who their benefactors are, to have the satisfaction of working for identifiable people who genuinely like what they are spending their money on, care whether it is any good or not, and know enough to be able to tell the difference.

That contemporary musical patronage largely lacks this vital ingredient may in part explain the tremendous excitement generated in New York musical circles in late September by the announcement (front page, *New York Times*) of the astounding gift to Philharmonic Hall of a sum variously estimated as between \$8 million and \$10 million. The Maecenas responsible has a name: Avery Fisher, pioneer in the field of high-fidelity sound reproduction and founder of Fisher Radio. He knows what he is doing: the money is in the form of an endowment, 80 per cent to go for maintenance expenses at the hall (a practical man, Mr. Fisher) and 20 per cent for the encouragement of young instrumentalists (*no* "contests"). And, above all, he knows why he is doing it: "I've always been a musician at heart, not a manufacturer. My heart has been with live music. That's the source, the fountain, of music."

Mr. Fisher hopes that this example of enlightened giving will inspire emulation, particularly within the audio industry. Let us hope that its influence is broader than that, that other individuals will have the courage and the generosity to put their money where their hearts are. Our musical life will suffer in a social vacuum as long as it depends mainly on corporations whose gifts are inspired by image-making PR campaigns or the advice of tax lawyers, on foundations whose biggest job each day is simply to *unload* a given sum of money. And I don't mean we should spurn such participation—only morally prejudiced snobs speak of "doing the right thing for the wrong reasons." But corporations, after all, don't have hearts; people do, and they should be encouraged to use them to build an Augustan age of their own.

TCD 300

The stereo cassette deck for people who wouldn't own anything but a reel-to-reel machine.



The new ideas we've engineered into the Tandberg TCD 300 may change some of your old ideas about cassette tape decks.

To begin with, the TCD 300 is the world's first three-motor, dual-capstan cassette recorder. A hysteresis synchronous 4-pole capstan drive motor assures smooth, constant speed. The two DC EDDY spooling motors can wind or rewind a 60-minute cassette in 40 seconds flat! And Tandberg's exclusive servo control gives you constant speed, completely avoiding stress on the tape in both wind and rewind. No other cassette deck comes close to handling tape this fast...or with such great stability.

The TCD 300 uses a unique closed-loop tape drive system with two pinch rollers that automatically compensate for slight differences in cassettes. You get inaudible wow and flutter. And you don't have to worry about tape jamming, even with heavily played cassettes.

Now for the specs—and what specs they are! A signal-to-noise ratio of

*Dolby is a Trademark of Dolby Laboratories, Inc.

54 dB without the Dolby* circuits in operation. An incredible 62 dB with Dolby*. Frequency response of 30-16,000 Hz (DIN) using CrO₂ tape. Maximum wow (WRMS) of 0.15%. It all adds up to the kind of reliability and clean, transparent sound you'd expect from a fine reel-to-reel tape machine.

The specifications for the TCD 300, as with all Tandberg equipment, are guaranteed minimum performance standards.

As significant as the specs themselves is the way we achieved them. For instance, the TCD 300 uses a minimum of high frequency pre-emphasis in recording (only 12 dB at 14 kHz with CrO₂ tape). This means a significant increase in dynamic range at the highest frequencies. And an audible improvement in signal/noise as well.

In other words, the TCD 300 does not "buy" its extended frequency response and excellent signal-to-noise ratio with a reduction in dynamic range—which makes the TCD 300 fully capable of recording the true dynamics of a live performance.

Another TCD 300 exclusive—large, illuminated peak reading dB meters.

These unique meters show the fully equalized record signal at all frequencies, and accurately read the peaks to keep you from getting audible distortion during recording. They allow maximum utilization of the tape, for improved signal/noise.

The CrO₂ tape switch changes record current bias and both record and playback equalization. This gives you full advantage of the special properties of CrO₂ tape. Automatic electronic end stop, one-button record control and built-in microphone preamplifiers add still more control sophistication.

Ask your Tandberg dealer to demonstrate the TCD 300. You'll find it does things the others can't. Because it has things the others don't.



TANDBERG

We're our only competitor.

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A. Allen Pringle, Ltd., Ontario, Canada



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thank You, Elvira Madigan!

● The letters from Charles Martin and Ken Gould and your answer in the September issue made me feel quite nostalgic about my "discovery" of classical music. It was only a few years ago—and I'll spend the rest of my life feeling frustrated that I didn't discover it till I was twenty-eight. Think of all that wasted time and enjoyment! Messrs. Martin and Gould will be sorry to know that I still feel as they do, with only a fraction more knowledge than I had in the beginning. The more I learn, the more there is to learn. You might be interested to know that the Boston Pops "turned me on" to classical music in their unobtrusive way. I wonder how many other people have entered this world of music because of Arthur Fiedler. I bought a Boston Pops "Greatest Hits" album for my husband which included Pops' treatment of some Beatles tunes and movie tunes of the Sixties, along with the second movement of the Twenty-first Piano Concerto of Mozart under the title, of course, of "Elvira Madigan." The classical listing on the record was complete Greek to me. I listened to this piece, along with the rest of the album, four or five times without really "hearing" it, if you know what I mean. One day, while housecleaning and listening, I suddenly stopped and announced aloud to an empty room, "My God, that's beautiful!"

The rest is history: I've become a musical junkie. I discovered opera the following year (this time I went looking for it) and also fulfilled a lifelong dream: I bought a piano and am learning to play, as is our nine-year-old daughter. Learning to play makes listening infinitely more enjoyable: I listen differently now. I still have trouble knowing what I want to hear, and it's still just as expensive to experiment, but your reviews and articles are quite helpful in that regard.

Finally, I'm slowly but surely bringing my husband into the fold, and our daughter is getting the background at the age I wish I had. She walks through the house singing about how she left her Chevy on the levee one minute and *Celeste Aida* the next.

Regarding your list of recommendations, I would like to include more of what I seem to like best at this point in my education—the Romantic piano literature. I was playing the Rachmaninoff "Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini" one night, and my husband, who

claimed he hated all classical music, stopped in his tracks and admitted that he would be willing to listen to some more. I have discovered that most classical pieces take several hearings before a novice can begin to appreciate their beauty, and it might be helpful for Messrs. Martin and Gould to know that. But I submit that if the "Rhapsody" doesn't get to them, nothing will!

CAROL A. AGLIALORO
Collingswood, N.J.

More on the Colonial Complex

● No American composer in his right mind would disagree with Ezra Laderman's October letter concerning Chicago's nauseating Bicentennial opera commission to Krzysztof Penderecki, but I wish to point out that your reply unconsciously (I presume) reflects the very prejudices you so rightly deplore: as much as the contemporary music of any other nation, American music *deserves* the world's approval right now. How to get it is another question, and one not entirely concerned with matters musical.

PAUL TUROK
New York, N.Y.

The Editor replies: Composer Turok is oversensitive. My point was simply this, that the world is not likely to have any respect for American classical music unless we respect it ourselves, and we obviously don't (the Chicago commission is only one small bit of proof). If approval is to be sought, we must therefore seek it at home first—but such approval must, needless to say, be earned as well. Excellent music has been and is being composed in this country, but there is also just as much of the meretricious produced here as elsewhere. It is ridiculous that a flashy bit of goods from Europe still has the edge here simply because it is from Europe, but we must take care not to overcorrect chauvinistically, to prefer bad American to good European. Of course, there are those who will say that that is precisely what we are trying to avoid right now.

Swing King

● Let Chris Albertson tell no sad stories of the death of kings or try to demythologize Benny Goodman's kingship of swing (October). Paul Whiteman wasn't really king of jazz, but if Goodman wasn't *roi de Thulé*, who was? Forsooth, knaves like Artie Shaw,

Charlie Barnet, and the brothers Dorsey abode their hour and one by one crept silently to rest; only Benny remains, chuckling. "Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!" On the sepia side, Ellington with his white tails and patter, Lunceford of the long baton and golden grin, were regarded primarily as showmen: few were aware that they were the true keepers of the flame. Goodman's claim to greatness lies in the synthesis he achieved of all that was best in swing before bop and the "birth of the cool" turned him into a wanderer from an antique land.

DAVID WILSON
Carmel, Cal.

Astro-Surf

● Having grown up in the "surf culture," so to speak, I thoroughly enjoyed Greg Shaw's nostalgic review of that era's music (October). I certainly agree with Mr. Shaw when he says that the music of that era represented simple fun and was indeed refreshing.

Mr. Shaw mentioned the Astronauts from Colorado and again I agree that they were one of the best groups of the time. However, it seems that he and I may be the only two people in the world who feel that way, as I have been trying to find their album "Surfing with the Astronauts" for seven years and have not as yet found anyone who has even heard of them. If either your magazine or Mr. Shaw could tell me where I can purchase a copy of this album I would greatly appreciate it.

C. M. TRANT
Haughton, La.

For a starter, the album is still listed in Schwann—2. RCA LSP-2760.

Sweet and Sour Sondheim

● How can Peter Reilly talk about playgoers being "assaulted" by Stephen Sondheim's "high but sour intelligence" (in his October review of *Irene*) when Sondheim's most recent show, *A Little Night Music*, is as charming, warm, humanistic, and un-sour a musical as anyone is likely to see? I can't imagine anyone coming out of *Night Music* feeling bad; in fact, it may be the most refreshing audiovisual spiritual sauna in New York: its therapeutic effect on low spirits is quite remarkable. Al Carmines can continue to write his derivative and simple-minded nonsense. It is Sondheim, and Sondheim alone, who is keeping alive all that is great in the tradition of American musical comedy.

THOMAS LYNCH
New Orleans, La.

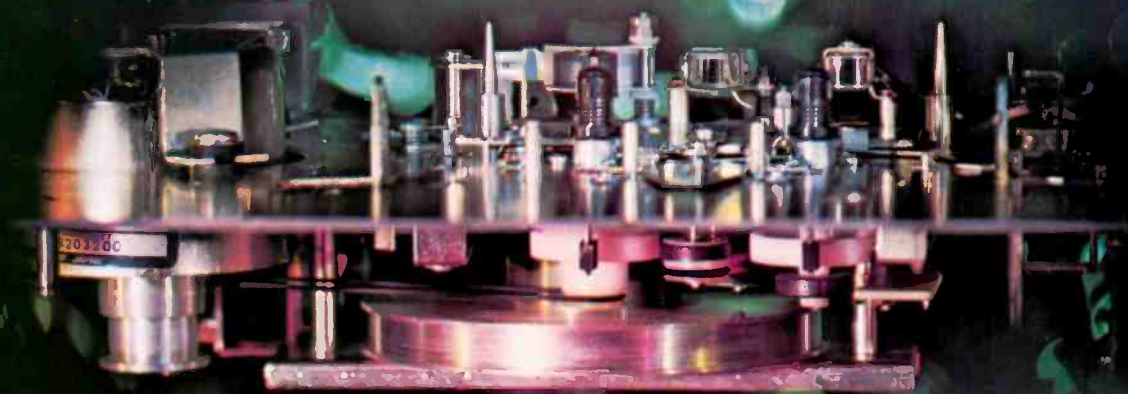
A False Ring

● Regarding Irving Kolodin's review of the new Bayreuth *Ring* (October), I can see no reason for acquiring it except for the fact that it was recorded at Bayreuth. As he says, "It is one of the phonographic documents of our time." So is a Nancy Sinatra recording. If one cared that much about how the music sounds "within the hallowed walls of Wagner's Festspielhaus" he would fly there for the \$104 which the new set costs. One of the "associations" connected with these performances, the decline of Wieland Wagner with a fatal illness, strikes me as merely morbid.

Finally, his argument that the new set offers a "Wagnerian amplitude" not available on Solti's London set or elsewhere is demolished by his statement that Solti is "superb in electronic science and musical means."

(Continued on page 15)

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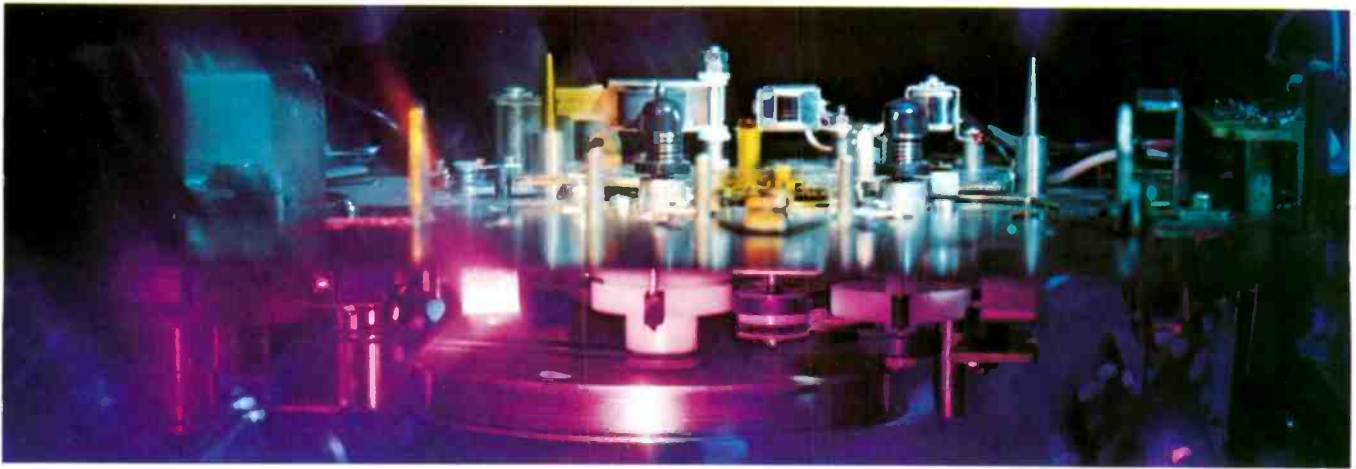
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 2 Line: 0.1V, 50k ohms or more
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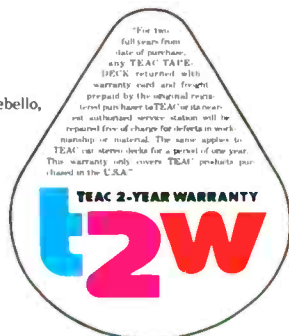
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CIRCLE NO. 1 ON READER SERVICE CARD

The two improvements he cites are "the extended power" of the *Ride of the Valkyries* and "colossal force" of the *Forging Song*. The first musical episode is embarrassing at any sound level, and the second is ear-splitting on the Solti recording.

However, I thank Mr. Kolodin for his spirited defense of the Bayreuth "geld." It was worthy of Alberich himself.

J. H. WEBB
Dayton, Ohio

● Thank you for Irving Kolodin's expectedly able and extremely useful examination of the *Ring* picture to date. He sold me on the new Philips version, but I wish he had mentioned that the whole is in manual sequence. In these days of superb changer mechanisms, aren't we just a little beyond that old-fashioned-purist affectation?

JACK SOMER
New York, N. Y.

● Bravo to Irving Kolodin, who has invented a marvelous new parlor-trivia game for Wagnerians with his cast breakdown on the four *Rings*: for example, Who is the third Norn in the Furtwängler version, and what other roles did she sing? Incidentally, Philips has available a single *sampler* disc of its Bayreuth *Ring* in Europe: will it be issued here?

ED BUXBAUM
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Philips says no.

"Jena" Reissue

● I thoroughly enjoyed Richard Freed's article on the "Jena" Symphony in your September issue. His final paragraph, however, indicates that he must have overlooked a reissue—one that has been discontinued, but which he might find in New York City if he has access to the many shops specializing in discontinued recordings. A number of years ago, RCA Victor reissued the Werner Jansen recording of the "Jena" on its Camden label (CAL-241).

GAYLE R. CARVER
Brenville, Ky.

The Old Pop-Classical Shuffle

● From time to time you have had editorials about the split between those who like "classical" music and those who like "popular." I have an idea for those who just like *music*—period. Instead of separating the two categories, why not mix them together alphabetically? Bach would thus come right after Alice Cooper, and David Bowie would be found somewhere between Beethoven and Brahms. It would be sure to cause some raised eyebrows, but it would be proving what you believe, that music is music, that there is good and bad in both the "classical" and "popular" categories, and that we should simply get to know *all* music a little better.

LADIMER J. YUNGER
San Diego, Cal.

The Editor replies: Just can't see it. To mix everything up together in Mr. Yunger's alphabetical blender would be to imply that "classical" and "popular" share a good deal more than the general classification of "music," that they somehow "go together." That is not our point at all; our point is that they are different, but that they are not competitors, that it is possible to be fond—even equally fond—of both. Dumping the whole works into one

container is rather like putting gravy on the salad, mustard on the ice cream, and coffee on the steak. Somehow, it just seems to me that I appreciate things—including music—when they are in their accustomed, expected places: I don't think I could adjust my listening muscles or my moods fast enough to go from Bach cantata to Seals and Crofts to Chopin mazurka to Yvonne Printemps to Rochberg to Bee Gees on a hand-to-hand or even a review-to-review basis. Why is it so hard to get across the idea that two things can be the same thing and different things at the same time, and that they can be different without one of them necessarily being superior to the other?

Bum Boomer

● Noel Coppage's excellent review of Ry Cooder's "Boomer's Story" (April) contains one inaccuracy which changes the context of the lyrics of the title song. A boomer was not, as Mr. Coppage states, a hobo. He was an itinerant railroad man, frequently a brakeman or a telegrapher, who would work a while on one railroad, then move on to another job when he felt the urge to do so. As a fellow tradesman, he was allowed by train crews to ride free from job to job, hence the singer's boast "Been on every branch-line railroad, never paid a nickel fare." Since railroading was highly romanticized in America before the coming of the automobile and the airplane, a railroader enjoyed considerable status in the community and was a good matrimonial prospect, even if he were a boomer. This was not true of the hobo, who was shunned by townspeople, harassed by police, and persecuted by railroad detectives.

JOHN L. TREVEY, JR.
APO New York

More Classical Rookies

● I was recently in the market for some stereo equipment and felt that STEREO REVIEW could help. As I read through the magazine, the "Classical Rookies" letters and answer (September) struck my fancy. I have always been a rock and folk-rock nut, but one day while checking out some turntables at a stereo shop the salesman put on *The Planets* by Holst and I fell in love with it. Ever since, I have been trying to find some classical records I would like, but with so many different kinds in the record racks today, I just about gave up. After reading the Editor's suggestions I went out and bought Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, and Bartók's *Three Village Scenes/Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta*. This stuff really turns me on. Keep up the good work, and why not run an article strictly for classical rookies?

KEN BEAL
Fresno, Cal.

Can you wait until January?

● I am very much in favor of making converts to classical music, and believe that because the principal characteristic of rock is the beat, looking for something akin to it in classical music might ease the way. I believe that Baroque music will accomplish this. I exposed my son to Vivaldi's *Concerti for Diverse Instruments* (Columbia MS 6131), and his reaction was instantaneous: he was enchanted. He has now graduated to Bach who, of course, also has a very good beat. I have tried the same record on others of my

rock friends with very much the same rewarding results.

DAVID FONSECA
Chattanooga, Tenn.

● Earlier this year I bought a record because the cover art was, to me, worth the price of the record. Upon hearing the music for the first time I was stunned by its intensity. Successive listenings have altered my head musically, philosophically, and socially, and profoundly accelerated my memory and musical taste (I subsequently bought numerous Paganini concertos, and symphonies by Schumann and Shostakovich).

The LP is "Pawn Hearts" by Van der Graaf Generator, and it transcends any musical compartmentalization. I have bought numerous copies and presented them to friends. The reaction is always identical to mine. I recommend "Pawn Hearts" to people who are into music for something way deeper than background sound, into art for art's sake, into faith and faith in man, into intellectual processes, into the search for ideal beauty, and into themselves.

JEFF ROBERTS
Hadley, Pa.

● In response to the "Classical Rookies" letters in the September issue, I would like to recommend the following recordings as worth their weight in gold to any pilgrim in the classics: the Berlioz Overtures with Colin Davis conducting the London Symphony (Philips 835367). The Tchaikovsky "Pathétique" with Eugene Ormandy conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra (Columbia MS 7169), and the Brahms First Symphony with Ormandy again conducting the Philadelphians (Columbia M 31821).

I should like to add that there is nothing like a live performance to make a believer out of a neophyte. I have found that a performance of one of the Mahler symphonies seems to have an instant enrapturing effect.

GORDON W. KAYE
North Brunswick, N.J.

● I read with great interest the Editor's response to the Martin and Gould letters in the September issue. As teacher of a course called "Literature and the Arts" and as faculty advisor to a student-operated radio station, I too have had the opportunity to play proselytizer. From my students (and some colleagues) I have found an overwhelmingly positive response to Samuel Barber's *Violin Concerto*. I think this work is a much unnoticed twentieth-century classic.

Another interesting question: what are the works that opened the classical door for the present generation of proselytizers? Not surprisingly, mine were Dvořák's *New World Symphony* and Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1.

TIMOTHY E. McCracken
Cranford, N.J.

Clara Haskil Query

● For the discography portion of a forthcoming biography of the pianist Clara Haskil, I would be grateful to hear from readers who possess any of the 78-rpm recordings or private tapes. In addition, I am searching for information on Miss Haskil's three trips to the United States.

JARED WEINBERGER
Via della Foscherara 28
40141 Bologna, Italy

As recently as twenty-five years ago Gustav Mahler was still more or less a cult figure, and a performance of any of his symphonies was still a novelty; only five of them had been recorded, though the First had made itself felt among the searching young and Bruno Walter was winning converts with his performances (and recording) of the Fourth. Today all of Mahler's works have taken their place in the repertoire and have been abundantly recorded: there are no fewer than five "integral" recordings of the symphonies, and a dozen or more each of some of the individual works. As a conductor, and particularly as director of the Vienna Opera, Mahler had an enormous impact on the musical world of his time; as a composer, he was confident his time would come, and he may have foreseen that recognition and acceptance would be his when the unique artistic and spiritual benefactions in his works were needed most deeply. Those who become immersed in the Mahler mystique have found in his music everything from prophecies of both World Wars and their social aftermaths to philosophical and ethical guidelines for daily life, as well as a musical experience quite unlike any other. And there are more than a few surprises among the legions so immersed, as illustrated by this statement from one of the most *avant* of avant-gardists:

Should a higher being from a distant star wish to investigate the nature of earthlings in a most concentrated moment, he could not afford to bypass Mahler's music. . . . To discover that which is most characteristic of the earthling, to understand his entire range of passions from the most angelic to the most animal, to know everything that binds him to the earth and lets him no more than dream of the other regions of the universe, there would be no richer source of information than Mahler.

The words are Karlheinz Stockhausen's, from his introduction to Henry-Louis de La Grange's biography of Mahler, an achievement—in the context not only of musical biography, but of biography in general—for which the old adjectives of praise, respect, and amazement simply will not suffice.

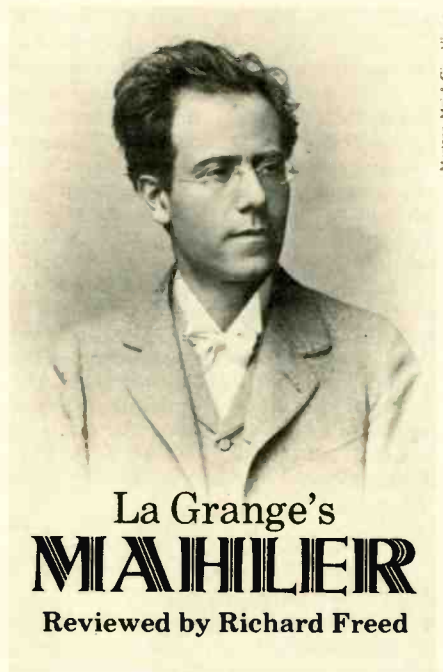
La Grange, the son of a French father and an American mother, educated in both countries, must represent the ultimate Mahlerian, involved to the degree of undertaking a lifework of incomparable value and consequence. Dozens, hundreds, perhaps thousands of new de-

Mahler, Volume I, by Henry-Louis de La Grange. Doubleday, Garden City, New York (1973), \$17.50, 982 pp. plus xxiii; illustrated with photographs.

Gustav Mahler, by Kurt Blaukopf, translated by Inge Goodwin. Praeger, New York and Washington (1973), \$10.00; 279 pp.; illustrated with photographs.

tails are offered in his book. Gaps are filled in, old assumptions are corrected, situations clarified—and all in a modest, straightforward manner, free of laudatory embellishment and obtrusive value judgment. La Grange presents his data—all scrupulously documented—in reportorial style, and lets the events and quotations speak for themselves.

This thousand-page "Volume I" takes us up to the eve of Mahler's marriage in 1902; Volume II will cover the final years—a little short of a decade—during which Mahler composed the symphonies from No. 5 on, *Das Lied von der Erde*,



Mertens, Mai & Cie., Vienna

and the *Kindertotenlieder*, and moved from the Vienna Hofoper to New York's Metropolitan. But there is a good deal more than the fantastically detailed—almost day-by-day and thought-by-thought—story of Mahler's life here. The narrative portion of Volume I ends on page 701 with the assurance that Mahler "did not underestimate either the vital power of his love or the unique qualities of the magnificent creature fate had placed in his path." Then, in addition, there are four appendices, 116 pages of footnotes, an eleven-page bibliography, a detailed eighteen-page index, and a preface by Irving Kolodin as well as the introductions by the author and Stockhausen. One of the appendices contains all of Mahler's poems, in both German and English and with analytical comments: the major one, though, is a 120-page section comprising an exhaustive catalog of all of Mahler's compositions—detailing sources, publication, revisions, premieres, etc.—and an extraordinarily detailed analysis of each work through the Fourth Symphony (in other words, all those completed by the time of Mahler's marriage). Volume II is to include similar coverage of the later

works plus "a complete chronology of Mahler's life and an alphabetical list of all the works conducted by him."

Volume I, in its own right, is by no means "incomplete": rather, it is an unprecedentedly penetrating and comprehensive exposition of the makings of the phenomenon that was Mahler. In his preface to the book, Kolodin cites the passage in Thornton Wilder's *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* from which Alma Mahler took the title of her memoirs, *The Bridge Is Love*, and he observes that "La Grange has known such a love, built such a bridge." Indeed, if there is a single factor as evident throughout the book as La Grange's painstaking research and utterly committed involvement with the spirit and essence of Mahler, it is the compassion shown for *each* of the characters. The roster includes such figures as Brahms, Liszt, Wagner, Bruckner, Bülow, Klimt, Hanslick, Ibsen, Johann Strauss, Richard Strauss, Anna von Mildenburg, Dvořák, Hugo Wolf, and Tchaikovsky as well as forgotten relatives, tragically doomed students, and dozens of others whose lives touched, and were touched by, Mahler's.

As for Mahler himself, La Grange has drawn a real-life figure: the man and the musician, "warts and all," but substantially (as toasted, in absentia, by Alexander von Zemlinsky) "the only man of whom one can speak no ill." There is no indication as to how soon Volume II will appear, but Volume I is enough to occupy the most devoted Mahlerian for some time, and at \$17.50 it is one of the greatest bargains in print.

One of the 264 sources listed in La Grange's "general bibliography" is Kurt Blaukopf's *Gustav Mahler*, originally published in German in 1969. It is, in common with every other book on the subject, a less ambitious undertaking than La Grange's, but Blaukopf too has gone back to reliable sources in an effort to correct or clarify certain errors in earlier books on Mahler. He has given us a concise and, within the obvious limitations of its format, a comprehensive survey of Mahler's life and work, but he is both more "interpretive" (and not always convincingly so) and far less diligent in his research than La Grange. It may be noted, too, that the editors of the English edition have been less fastidious on Blaukopf's behalf than an author might hope. There are numerous misprints and misspellings, and one would think the discographical references could have been brought up to date.

Blaukopf ends his final chapter with a call for the book which "will certainly be written one day when biographical research on Mahler attains a standard commensurate with the subject." La Grange's *Mahler* is that book, indispensable to anyone seriously interested in the man, his time, or his art.

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port (with servo-controlled direct-drive capstan motor) and complete solenoid switching. Operating speeds are $7\frac{1}{2}$ and $3\frac{3}{4}$ ips. Recording bias and equalization are switchable for "standard" and low-noise/high-output tapes such as Akai SRT, with which frequency response is 20 to 25,000 Hz ± 3 dB at $7\frac{1}{2}$ ips, and 30 to 20,000 Hz ± 3 dB at $3\frac{3}{4}$ ips. With the same tape, the signal-to-noise ratio at $7\frac{1}{2}$ ips is 55 dB, improving to 63 dB with Dolby noise reduction. Wow and flutter are under 0.08 per cent at $7\frac{1}{2}$ ips, and less than 0.12 per cent at $3\frac{3}{4}$ ips.

The GX-285D employs three heads (erase, record, and playback) of the glass

and crystal-ferrite composite types that are exclusive with Akai. There are switching facilities for source/tape monitoring as well as sound-on-sound recording. The automatic-reverse function can be set to shut off after one complete cycle, or to go on playing a tape indefinitely. The unit has a pause control and separate recording-level controls for line and microphones that permit input mixing. Reel diameters of up to 7 inches are accommodated. The dimensions of the deck are approximately 17 x 18 x 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Price: \$750. A remote-control unit will be offered as an accessory.

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Audio Dynamics XT 10 Speaker System



● A recent speaker entry from Audio Dynamics Corporation, the ADC-XT 10, is a two-way system employing a 10-inch air-suspension woofer and two 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cone tweeters with effective radiating diameters of $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches each. The drivers are mounted along a diagonal of the sealed enclosure's front panel, with the woofer in the center and a tweeter to either side. Frequency response is specified as 37 to 20,000 Hz in an average lis-

tening room. The nominal impedance is 8 ohms. A two-position switch in the rear of the enclosure adjusts the high-frequency level for "anechoically flat" response or -3 dB at 10,000 Hz. Power-handling capability is about 100 watts. Dimensions of the system are 23 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 13 x 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches, and the finish is oiled walnut with an acoustically transparent foam grille. Price: \$115.

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Sony Dolby Noise-Reduction Units



NR-115



NR-335

● Two Dolby B-Type noise-reduction processors of the so-called "outboard" type—the Sony Models NR-115 and NR-335—have been introduced by Superscope. The NR-115 (top) is a stereo unit with a front-panel pushbutton that switches the two Dolby circuits from the recording to the playback function when the finished tape is to be auditioned. The NR-335 contains four circuits, thus permitting simultaneous off-the-tape monitoring of a de-Dolbyized signal as a recording is being made. The simple control layout of the NR-115 includes left- and right-channel recording-level controls (which take over from the recorder's controls after calibration) and a single calibration meter (switchable between the left and right channels). Screwdriver adjustments are provided

for playback calibration, and two more pushbuttons activate the Dolby circuits and a built-in oscillator that generates a 400-Hz calibration tone. The more elaborate NR-335 has knob controls for both recording and playback calibration, two meters, a tape-monitor pushbutton, and a switchable filter to remove the 19-kHz pilot tone from FM stereo broadcasts. Both microphone and line inputs are accommodated (microphone sensitivity is adjustable at the rear panel), and there is a front-panel stereo headphone jack. Both units can be used for processing Dolbyized FM broadcasts as well as for tape recording. They come with patch cords and Dolby-level calibration tapes for cassette and open-reel. Prices: NR-115, \$99.95; NR-335, \$259.95.

Circle 117 on reader service card

Scott 451C C-Weighted Sound-Level Meter



● THE Model 451C sound-level meter from Scott Instrument Laboratories of

Cambridge, Massachusetts, is a professional-quality pocket-size unit with a response that conforms to the Type C frequency weighting (essentially flat response over most of the audio-frequency range) specified by the American National Standards Institute. The large meter face, calibrated over a range of 20 dB, works in conjunction with a rotary decade switch with ten positions from 40 to 130 dB, referred to the standard 0 dB

(0.0002 dyne/cm²) sound pressure. The integral microphone is an omnidirectional ceramic type that protrudes slightly from the instrument's case and permits the attachment of a separate acoustical-calibration coupler. Pushbuttons turn the device on and off, select fast or slow meter response, and check the condition of the battery (a meter reading up to the battery-check index mark on the meter

(Continued on page 20)

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The last loudspeaker was invented by a little-understood engineering genius, Lincoln Walsh, who patented it in 1969 (U. S. Patent 3,424,873) and died less than three years later. As exclusive licensees of the Walsh patent, we've spent the past two years developing construction techniques for the invention. The end result is the Ohm F.

The originality and stark simplicity of the Walsh design are apparent at a glance. A single, very steep 12-inch cone, oriented with its apex up and convex side out, is used to reproduce the en-

tire audio range from 30 to 20,000 Hz without crossovers. (Not to be confused with the 2-inch Walsh tweeter made by another company under license from Ohm.)

The cone is made of titanium, aluminum and paper, and it acts as a wave transmission line, completely discarding the classic piston theory of speaker design. Its output is a unique cylindrical wave front, which is kept in perfect phase with the input audio signal at all frequencies. This is "coherent sound", analogous to coherent light from a laser.

No other full-range speaker is a totally coherent sound source, with 360° direct radiation to boot. It's the theoretical ultimate.

The Ohm F comes in a striking, tapered column cabinet, about 3½ feet high, and is priced at \$400. (Also available is the \$1000 laboratory prototype Ohm A, with an 18-inch Walsh driver that goes down to 20 Hz but requires 350 watts of power.)

As the years go by and the history of the wheel is repeated, the Walsh idea will inevitably filter down to the lowest price ranges.

Meanwhile, the Ohm F is here for those who want to be the first to own the last loudspeaker.

Ohm Acoustics Corp.,
241 Taaffe Place,
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11205.



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indicates a good battery). The frequency range of the 451C is 45 to 8,000 Hz. Proper operation of the meter is obtainable over a temperature range of 15 to

150 degrees Fahrenheit and a relative-humidity range of 0 to 95 per cent. Size is 5 x 2½ x 2⅞ inches, and weight is 13 ounces. The power source is a single 9-

volt transistor-radio battery. Price: \$98, which includes battery and a pouch-type carrying case.

Circle 118 on reader service card

BIC Venturi Speaker Systems



● **THREE** new speaker systems from British Industries, the BIC Venturi series, employ an enclosure of unique design that works on what is called the Venturi principle. The woofer is mounted so that the front of the cone radiates directly into the listening area; the rear of the cone works into a chamber connected to a duct that folds back and around to emerge through a vent at the bottom of the enclosure. The duct gradually narrows through the first part of its

length, so that the acoustic pressures within the enclosure produce relatively high air velocities at the vent opening. The vent output is said to be in phase with the woofer over most of its range.

From 1,500 to above 15,000 Hz, the BIC Venturi systems employ a special two-section horn driver that is conical near the diaphragm and opens into an exponential flare at the mouth (square in cross-section to provide equivalent horizontal and vertical dispersion). The systems also use 2-inch dome tweeters that operate from 15,000 to 23,000 Hz. A novel feature of the Venturi speakers is a dynamic loudness-compensation system that contours the frequency response (in accordance with the Fletcher-Munson equal-loudness curves) according to the acoustic levels being produced by the speaker. Defeating this automatic compensation by means of a rear-panel switch activates a continuously variable high-frequency level control.

The two less-expensive systems, the Formula 2 (\$98) and the Formula 4 (\$136), have one mid-range horn and one dome tweeter apiece, and woofers of 8 and 10 inches, respectively. The deluxe Formula 6 (\$239, shown) has a 12-inch woofer, two horns and two dome tweeters, and a 5-inch cone driver for the lower mid-range. Amplifier powers of 15 watts per channel continuous are adequate for all the systems, while power-handling capabilities range from 75 watts continuous for the Formula 2 to 125 watts for the Formula 6. All three speakers are identical in appearance, with walnut-finish cabinets and acoustic-foam grilles available in shades of black, brown, chocolate, beige, orange, blue, and red. Dimensions range from 19¾ x 12 x 11½ inches (Formula 2) to 26¼ x 15¾ x 14¾ inches (Formula 6). Optional bases for floor-standing installation cost from \$6 to \$9.

Circle 119 on reader service card

Micro/Acoustics QDC-1 Phono Cartridge



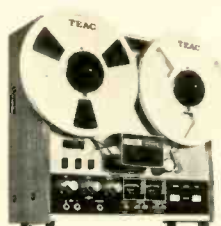
● **MICRO/ACOUSTICS**, besides being a manufacturer of consumer speaker systems, is a well-established maker of disc-cutting styli for the recording industry, and it has now introduced a phono cartridge available with the company's own

specially designed stylus for playing CD-4 four-channel recordings. The stylus cantilever of the cartridge is attached directly to a solid-state electrical generating element. Two elastic bearings, oriented 45 degrees from the vertical at left and right, support the stylus assembly. Three stylus options are offered: a 0.5-mil spherical, a 0.2 x 0.7-mil elliptical, and the "Quadra-Point" stylus intended to extend high-frequency response into the ultrasonic range required by CD-4 recordings. Frequency response with all three styli is essentially flat down to 5

Hz, and is within ±2 dB to 20,000 Hz with the elliptical (±2½ dB with the spherical), and within ±2 dB from 20 to 50,000 Hz with the Quadra-Point stylus. The rated tracking-force range is 0.9 to 1½ grams, and output is 3 millivolts per channel for a recorded velocity of 5 centimeters per second. Stereo separation is nominally 30 dB at 1,000 Hz and 20 dB at 10,000 Hz. Prices: spherical, \$100; elliptical, \$110; Quadra-Point, \$120. The cartridge is sold with a five-year guarantee against manufacturing defects.

Circle 120 on reader service card

Teac 3300S-2T Stereo Tape Deck



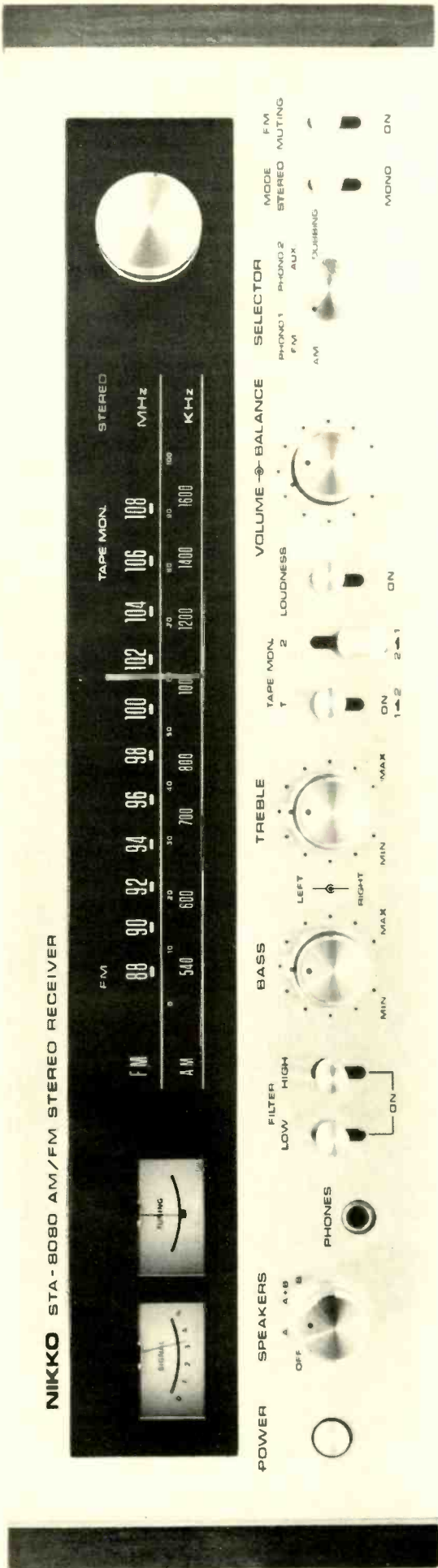
● **FEATURES** with special appeal for the serious recordist—such as 10½-inch reel accommodation, half-track stereo recording and playback, and tape speeds of 15 and 7½ ips—are being offered on Teac's new 3300S-2T open-reel, three-

head, three-motor tape deck. Light-touch pushbuttons control the transport through solenoid switching governed by logic circuitry that regulates tape motion to prevent tape spills or stretching. Recording bias and equalization can be switched for standard or high-performance tapes, and the two recording-level meters are calibrated beyond the usual +3-VU point to permit the use of the higher recording levels the new tape types allow. Recording-level controls are separate for microphone and line inputs to facilitate mixing. Correct hold-back tension can be selected for large or small tape reels.

Record-playback frequency response

with high-performance tape is 30 to 22,000 Hz ±3 dB at 15 ips, and 30 to 20,000 Hz ±3 dB at 7½ ips. Wow and flutter are 0.04 and 0.06 per cent, respectively, for the two tape speeds, and the signal-to-noise ratio, referred to a 0-VU recording level producing 1 per cent harmonic distortion, is 60 dB. Microphone inputs have a 600-ohm impedance. Dimensions of the 3300S-2T, including its walnut side panels, are approximately 17¼ inches square by 8¼ inches deep, and the weight is 44 pounds. Price: \$679.50. A quarter-track stereo version with tape speeds of 7½ and 3¾ ips will be available later.

Circle 121 on reader service card



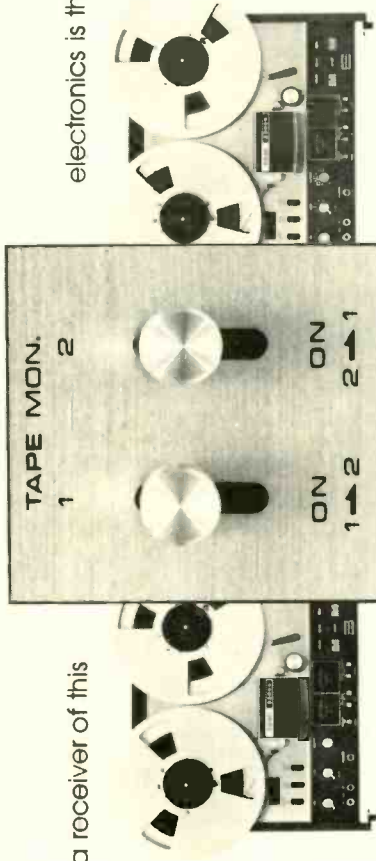
This little beauty has everything. Including two-tape-deck dubbing.

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CIRCLE NO. 49 ON READER SERVICE CARD

AUDIO NEWS VIEWS AND COMMENT By LARRY KLEIN Technical Editor

● IF you would like to know just how fast time flies, reflect on this: the tape-cassette format is marking its *tenth* anniversary this year. I don't know how many of you ever had a chance to play with the book-size, lo-fi portable cassette machine Philips first produced a decade ago, but, as I recall, those of us who did scarcely dreamed that the format would one day offer serious competition to open-reel tape and to discs as well: total world-wide sales of cassette *machines* are expected to top ten million this year; imagine how many tapes will be played on them!

It is no secret that Philips, the originator and licensor of the cassette format, has for some time carefully avoided endorsing the Dolby noise-reduction system. In their view, it was somehow a step away from the *total* compatibility they insist upon—meaning the ability to play *any* cassette on *any* cassette machine without loss of any part of the recorded program. In my view, Dolby has always been the potential salvation of the format as a hi-fi medium. Philips has finally, I am happy to report, seen the light—or heard the noise—and has signed with Dolby. With the participation of the giant Philips organization assured, it ought to be very difficult, in a year or so, to find a pre-recorded cassette that is not Dolbyized.

● THE Hall-effect diode has been somewhat in the audio-news spotlight of late, and without going into the solid-state physics of it, it can be described simply as a special semiconductor that controls current flow by responding to an external magnetic field. As far as I know, Hall-effect devices have so far appeared only in a few sophisticated turntables which use them (instead of brushes and commutators) as control elements in slow-speed d.c. motors. Now, Pioneer is producing Hall-effect magnetic-reader heads in Japan; they are designed to read magnetically imprinted credit cards, computer cards, and such. Conventional velocity-responsive tape-recorder heads respond to a magnetic pattern moving past them at a given speed, thus producing an electrical signal. But a Hall tape head can read a tape that is not moving

at all! Will Hall-effect heads be appearing in some kind of super-low-speed tape recorder? Time will tell.

● SPEAKING of slow-speed recording, would you believe a recorder that provides 2,000 hours of audio recording/playback time on a 5-inch reel? That is what you get on an aircraft flight recorder with a record/play speed of about $\frac{3}{16}$ ips. The catch is that 1-inch tape is used, and the signal is recorded and played by a helical-scan system such as is used in video tape recorders. Incidentally, a helical-scan recorder using ordinary quarter-inch tape *could* handle the up-to-45,000-Hz subcarrier signal that is used on discrete four-channel discs. Hmmmm...!

● BALTIMORE radio station WFBR has requested permission from the FCC to conduct stereo-broadcast tests. Why do they need FCC okay to broadcast stereo at this late date? Well, they have this plan to broadcast *AM* stereo, you see. The way to do that is to put the left channel on the upper sideband and the right channel on the lower sideband of your station's broadcast frequency. Then the radio audience tunes *two* AM radios slightly off-station (in opposite directions, of course), and *voilà!* lo-fi stereo. The technique should have enormous appeal for that segment of the listening public normally attracted to \$29.95 stereo phonographs.

● WITH the availability of new receivers that have built-in SQ, QS/RM, and CD-4 four-channel decoding, some audiophiles may think the quadraphonic quandary is resolved. But there are still a few caveats to be observed. Unlike CD-4, which is available in one format only and provides, when everything is working right, practically discrete four-channel SQ (and QS) comes in several "step-up" configurations. With SQ, the equipment manufacturer has a choice of three matrix formats: no-logic, front-back semi-logic, or full-logic decoding. Because of the high cost of putting in full-logic circuits just now (there are something like 400 extra parts), almost all the SQ receivers have a semi- or no-logic configuration. This means that SQ discs are going to suffer badly in playback comparisons with either discrete tape or discrete disc material, because only SQ with *full* logic has a chance of providing the same audible separation a discrete system does. The cost of full-logic SQ will of course drop somewhat as soon as SQ integrated-circuit (IC) chips are available—perhaps as early as Christmas. But, on the other hand, if four-channel buyers, because they don't know the difference, don't demand the extra-cost full-logic SQ circuits in their equipment, manufacturers will hardly be motivated to put it in.

AT THE TIME OF WRITING THERE IS NO OTHER RECEIVER LIKE THIS IN THE WORLD.

This Harman/Kardon 800+ multichannel receiver can handle every kind of monaural, stereo, and four-channel system on the market today, and in the foreseeable future.

It has a CD-4 discrete system built in. Not the standard, off-the-shelf system everyone else uses. This we designed ourselves. It's more efficient, more compact, and it sounds better than anything else made.

The 800+ also has a matrix system. Built in. Also using a new circuitry design. And although we designed it for SQ, it will, in fact, play all current matrix systems.

In the quadraphonic mode, the 800+ delivers an amazing 22 watts per channel. And it delivers them throughout the entire audible spectrum of 20Hz to 20KHz.

If you hate to see your stereo records lying idle, turn the mode selector to 'Enhanced Stereo'.



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The 800+ has Harman/Kardon's traditional ultra-wideband circuitry. And as a result, the best phase linearity, square wave response and, many say, the best sound in the business.

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AUDIO QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

By LARRY KLEIN *Technical Editor*



Comparing Speaker Specs

Q. *I have a pair of speakers made by EMI a number of years ago and I am thinking of upgrading. But before I make a move I would like to know the specifications of my previous speakers to make sure I'm getting a new pair that provides better performance.*

DAVID V. ANTHONY
San Antonio, Texas

A. Mr. Anthony, you show a touching faith in the significance of speaker specifications as a guide to their performance. It is true that, with purely electronic equipment, the specs give you a fighting chance of evaluating relative quality and may indeed help you distinguish among the good, bad, and mediocre. But with speakers, the specifications are remarkably unhelpful as a means of comparing one product with another. And, as a matter of fact, the speaker spec situation is so chaotic that the manufacturers can't agree as to the best way to specify the electrical impedance of a system or even the physical size of the cones of the drivers in it.

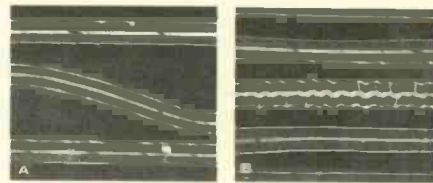
Disc Playing Time

Q. *To settle a bet, can you tell me the maximum amount of playing time that can be put on a 12-inch LP?*

VINCENT FICARA
New York, N.Y.

A. If you ask a record-cutting engineer to inscribe the maximum possible amount of blank grooves on a disc, it will come to something like 45 minutes worth. However, I don't think we can call that playing time since nothing is being played. Once sound modulations are cut in the grooves, the playing time is reduced drastically since the modulation causes side-to-side displacements of the groove. And it should come as no surprise that a groove that is wiggling from side to side (A) takes up more space than one that pursues the straight and narrow (unmodulated) path (B). In short, the louder the music and the more

bass content it has, the more record surface the grooves will occupy. Or, as Sid Feldman of Mastertone Studios once put it: "The lower the level, the longer the play; the louder, the less." But if you check the playing time of records in your collection, you will see that sides con-




taining 30 minutes or so are not uncommon. And RCA announced about a year ago that their playing-time goal for CD-4 quadrasonic discs was 25 minutes (the extra sub-carrier modulation requires slightly more space than two-channel stereo).

Loudspeaker Crossover Design

Q. *I would like to build two crossover networks with crossover frequencies at 2,000 and 6,500 Hz for a music system that now has 70 watts, but will have 125 watts later. Please inform me as to the design of such a crossover.*

RUDOLPH BUTLER
Baltimore, Md.

A. It is impossible to design a loudspeaker crossover network with optimum characteristics without having far more information about the specific drivers to be used with it than is usually available to the home consumer. One has to be aware of the resonances, relative efficiencies, power-handling capacities, dispersion characteristics, and impedances for each driver, and not just at one frequency but throughout the individual operating ranges. Most engineers design their crossovers with this mass of information as a starting point, and then nevertheless adjust the parameters of the crossovers on the basis of acoustic measurements of the combined outputs of the various drivers being fed by the
(Continued on page 26)



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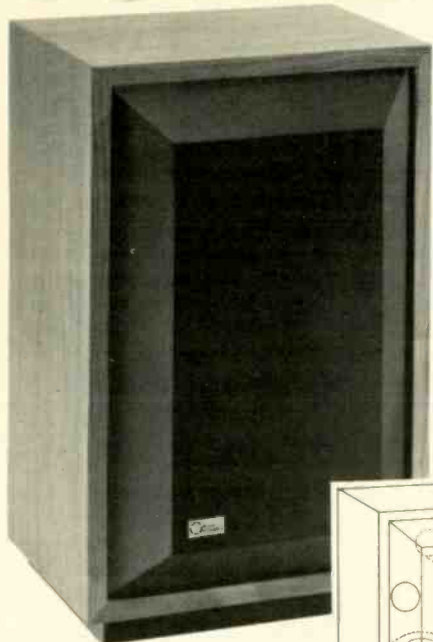
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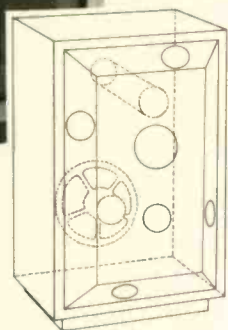
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We can't tell it all here, but to rip off an old cliché, you've got to hear it to believe it. And if you want to read about it in detail, write us at:



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crossover. In other words, knowing the electrical characteristics of the crossover without knowing the pertinent electrical, mechanical, and acoustical characteristics of the drivers—or having the ability to make acoustic measurements—makes your plan a hit-and-miss proposition. It is for these same reasons that substituting an electronic bi-amplifier crossover for a conventional crossover does not ensure improved performance.

Despite the fair warning that I've given you, if you still wish to build your own crossover, you'll find plans in *Hi-Fi Loudspeakers and Enclosures*, by Abraham Cohen (Hayden Book Company, Inc., New York, \$5.59) and *How to Build Speaker Enclosures*, by Badmaieff and Davis (Howard W. Sams & Co., Inc., Indianapolis, \$3.50).

Modular-Center Speaker Boom

Q. I recently bought a name-brand "stereo modular center," which came with its own speakers, during a special close-out sale. The speakers are described in the manufacturer's brochure as "sealed-type," with an 8-inch high-compliance woofer plus a tweeter in each enclosure. The speakers sound very boomy, something like an improperly tuned bass-reflex system. My question is: can anything be done to tune this kind of enclosure to get rid of the bass boom?

WILTON STURGES
Tallahassee, Fla.

A. Inexpensive compact systems are almost always designed for a sound quality intended to appeal to the unsophisticated buyer. Invariably, this means boomy bass and little or no highs. If the bass is boomy because of the design of the speakers themselves (high resonant frequency), there is little or nothing you can do short of major redesign of the systems—in my view, a pointless procedure. However, if most of the bass boom originates in the amplifier—because it has a loudness-compensation circuit that is always on—then a cure, or at least an alleviation of the symptoms, may be possible. You, or a competent audio technician, should locate the volume-control lugs that provide the connections for the loudness-compensation network and simply detach the parts (probably a couple of resistors and capacitors). A simple way to determine whether the amplifier or your speakers are responsible for most of the boom would be to try the speakers with another hi-fi system of higher quality to see if (or to what degree) the bass heaviness disappears.

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

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SR-3 HEADPHONE TYPE: electrostatic push-pull. **RESPONSE:** 30-25,000 Hz ± 1 db. **SOUND PRESSURE LEVEL:** 95 db at 100 VOLTS RMS input. **MAXIMUM LEVEL:** 115 db. **WEIGHT:** 432 grams

SRD-5 ENERGIZER: Polarizing supply and signal source for STAX SR-3 headphones. **DISTORTION:** below .1%. **DIMENSIONS:** 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide, 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches high, 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep.

Stax



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AUDIO BASICS

By RALPH HODGES

SPEAKER DISPERSION

ON the theory that a change of pace refreshes, I'd like occasionally to interrupt our on-going series of audio definitions and devote an entire column to a single subject that is relevant and timely. Judging from the spate of recent technical papers, the directional properties of speakers—otherwise known as speaker dispersion—is now a hot topic.

If you think about it for a moment, you'll realize that any device that radiates energy into three-dimensional space (such as a loudspeaker or an electric light bulb) has certain very specific directional properties associated with it. For example, an unshaded light bulb is pretty much an "omnidirectional" source, casting illumination in most directions, whereas a flashlight throws a focused beam of light.

Like lamps, speakers have definite directional characteristics that are an inevitable—and not always desirable—consequence of their design. At very low frequencies, any speaker is virtually omnidirectional. Otherwise, the directional characteristics of a speaker change with the frequency of the sound being generated—particularly with how the wavelength of the sound relates to the physical size of the speaker's diaphragm. An example: for a flat, circular "piston" diaphragm (a speaker cone can be considered to be one), dispersion will be virtually omnidirectional for frequencies with wavelengths that are more than four times the diameter of the diaphragm. Dispersion theoretically narrows to approximately 60 degrees when the wavelength equals the diameter (think of a spotlight projecting a beam 60 degrees wide), and to 30 degrees when the wavelength is half the diameter. Now the wavelength (in air) of 1,000 Hz is a little over a foot; above 10,000 Hz, wavelengths diminish to an inch or less. So a speaker with a 2-inch radiating surface will be practically omnidirectional at 1,000 Hz, but will radiate a 10,000-Hz tone in a beam not much more than 30 degrees wide. (Note that these figures

are theoretical; in the real world a number of other factors enter in. But it is the case for all speakers that at some point dispersion begins to decrease as frequency increases.)

None of this would be worth mentioning if dispersion characteristics did not have a very audible effect on the way a speaker sounds. Actually, of all the factors that have been proposed as having (or suspected of having) something to do with a speaker's sonic personality, it is evident that only frequency response and dispersion are consistently audible to everyone with normal hearing under almost any conceivable listening conditions. Wide, high-frequency dispersion is achieved by using the smallest possible tweeter, by using an array of tweeters angled in different directions, by using deflecting elements, or by controlling the physical design of a horn acoustically coupled to the diaphragm. Wide-dispersion speakers are said to be more "open-sounding" by their proponents. This is presumably because of the multitude of sound reflections that are set up from nearby wall surfaces. In any case, it is a sonic quality that is readily heard but difficult to describe.

Those who object to very wide dispersion—and many qualified authorities are among them—say that getting the listening room excessively involved (via reflections) in sound reproduction causes localization distortion (vagueness of the stereo image) and risks frequency-response colorations as well. I have listened to both arguments (and to the speakers they support), and I must confess it is still not obvious—to me, at least—precisely what directional properties a speaker should have to be a realistic or even an accurate reproducer. So, at the moment, this is one area in which I must defer to the taste of the individual buyer. And you, as the buyer, should be sure to listen to speakers with a variety of dispersion characteristics before choosing, because you *can* hear the difference.



“...the most powerful stereo receiver in its price class by a considerable margin...”

A challenging claim?

Not at all. Just a statement of fact by Hirsch-Houck Laboratories as published in Stereo Review, September 1973.

They're describing the new Pilot 254 and they go on to say, "Our test measurements clearly showed that the advertised specifications for the Pilot 254 are not only honest, but quite conservative."

Separating verifiable fact from advertising fiction is a testing lab's specialty. Making sure that every Pilot product meets or exceeds every one of its specifications is our specialty.

How well we do our part, may be judged from the rest of the Hirsch-Houck report.

The Pilot 254 specifications read: 65 honest watts per channel, 8 ohms, both channels driven. The Lab finds, "At 1000 Hz, the outputs clipped (were overdriven) at 82 watts per channel..."

We rate harmonic and I.M. distortion at 0.4% and 0.5% respectively. They find, "At Pilot's rated 65 watts per channel output level, distortion was 0.1% to 0.15% from 20 to beyond 10,000 Hz, reaching a maximum of 0.25% at 20,000 Hz."

In evaluating the FM tuner section, the Lab reports, "FM tuner performance was well up to the standards of the audio section."

We rate IHF sensitivity at 1.8 uV with harmonic distortion at 0.4% mono and 0.8% stereo. They find, "...a 1.7 uV IHF sensitivity and only 0.16% harmonic distortion at almost any useful signal level with mono reception. The stereo distortion was about 0.5%."

We list capture ratio at 1.5 dB. They find, "The capture ratio was an excellent 1 dB..."

And they go on to confirm the same outstanding performance figures for noise, stereo separation, image rejection and all the rest.

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Listen to the Pilot 254 and you will agree.

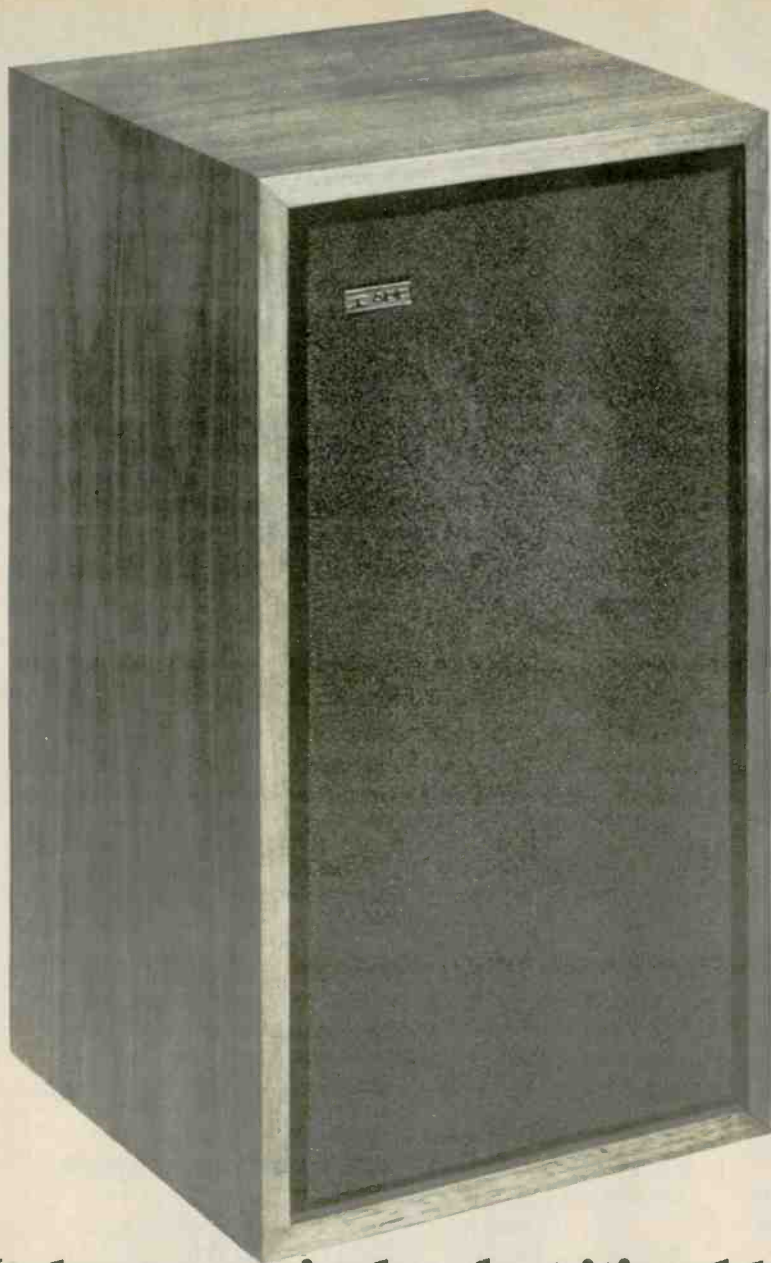
For the complete text of the report and additional information write: Pilot, 66 Field Point Road, Greenwich, Conn. 06830.

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The Pilot 254 Stereo Receiver \$429.00*

*Manufacturer's suggested retail price



The new ADC-XT 10.

If you believe, as we do, that the ultimate test of any speaker is its ability to produce a true audible analog of the electrical signal fed to it, you'll be very impressed with the new XT 10.

The XT 10 is a two way, three driver, system employing a newly developed ten inch, acoustic suspension woofer with an extremely rigid, light weight cone and a specially treated surround that permit exceptionally linear excursions.

Matching the XT 10's outstanding low frequency performance are two wide dispersion tweeters that extend flat frequency response to the limits of audibility (see accompanying frequency response curve) and significantly improve power handling capacity.

All three drivers are mounted in a beautifully finished, non-resonant, walnut enclosure. And in place of the conventional grille cloth is an elegant new foam grille.

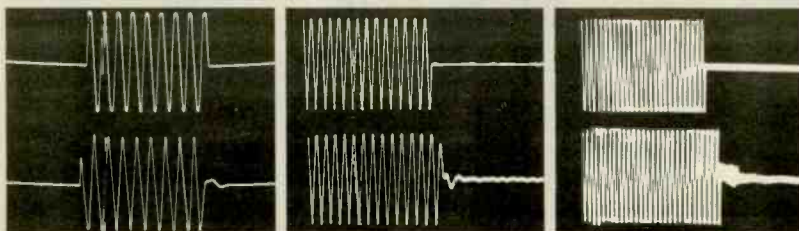
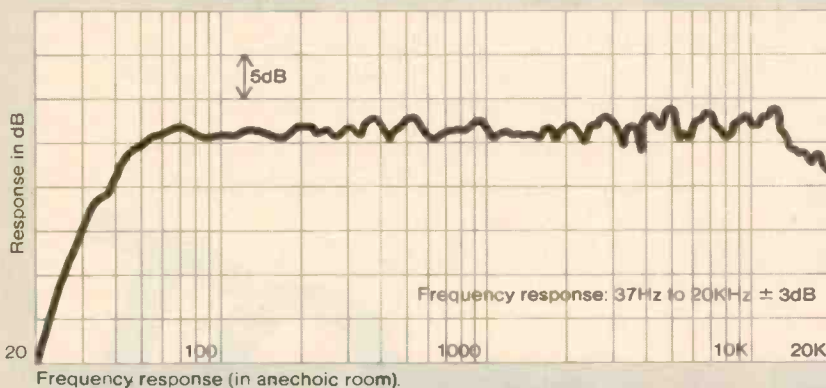
An extraordinarily accurate transducer, the XT 10 is characterized by very flat frequency response, excellent high frequency dispersion and extremely low distortion. Finally, it is distinguished by outstanding transient response assuring exceptional clarity and definition.

As a result, the ADC-XT 10 rivals and in many instances, surpasses the performance of units costing several times as much.

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For more detailed information on the ADC-XT 10 write: Audio Dynamics Corporation, Pickett District Road, New Milford, Conn. 06776.

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Tone bursts at 500Hz, 1200Hz, 15,000Hz
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TECHNICAL TALK

By JULIAN D. HIRSCH

● **OMNI VS. DIRECTIONAL SPEAKERS:** Judging from the articles and letters appearing in audio and electronics magazines, both here and abroad, the question of optimum speaker directionality (or dispersion) is yet to be resolved. The situation is confused by a fundamental lack of agreement as to what a speaker—or, indeed, an entire audio system—is really supposed to do. In pre-stereo days, most speakers suffered from high-frequency directionality, or “beaming.” Depending on a speaker’s directionality and axial frequency response, a reasonable frequency balance could be heard only on-axis (directly in front of the speaker, that is) or perhaps anywhere *except* on the axis of the speaker! From time to time, speaker designers have attempted to improve high-frequency dispersion by using clusters of tweeters, diffusing devices, or even by employing reflections from walls and other surfaces.

In stereo reproduction, the use of directional speakers generally limited the listeners to a narrow area along the line bisecting the wall against which the speakers are positioned. Awareness of this effect was not confined to audio hobbyists; numerous cartoons and jokes in the general press noted the situation. One cartoon showed a group of listeners who had stacked themselves like the figures on a totem pole so that all could be in the optimum spot to hear the proper stereo image.

Today, this “problem” has largely faded from public awareness. A major factor, no doubt, has been the striking improvement in high-frequency dispersion in loudspeakers at all price levels. Even moderately priced conventional direct-radiator systems now have sufficient dispersion that their sound character does not change drastically as one walks past them. The stereo listener also benefits from improved recording techniques, which emphasize total sound spread rather than an exaggerated “ping-

pong” effect. (The advent of four-channel sound has revived some of the excesses of the early stereo days, plus a few new problems, but that is another subject.)

In respect to their directional properties in the *horizontal* plane, speakers can be loosely classified as omnidirectional, semi-omnidirectional, and directional. The output of an “omni” speaker is uniformly distributed around a full 360-degree circle centered on the speaker. The “semi” has an essentially uniform output over a 180-degree forward angle; in other words, it is fully dispersed in the listening area, but does not radiate to the

TESTED THIS MONTH

●
**Scott 490 Integrated Amplifier
Videotone Speaker Systems
Crown DC-300A Power Amplifier
Nakamichi 700 Cassette Deck**

rear. The directional speaker is the most common type, either bookshelf or floor mounted, which radiates forward through an angle somewhat narrower than 180 degrees (often 60 degrees or less at the highest audio frequencies).

Most of the special characteristics of wide-dispersion speakers are related to their performance in the horizontal plane. Very few have comparably wide vertical coverage, which is less obvious in its audible effects. There are also a couple of special cases deserving mention. The dipole radiator (such as a free-standing electrostatic speaker or an array of speakers on an open-back baffle) has a dispersion pattern resembling a figure eight whose lobes may be more or less flattened. This can be considered as

intermediate between the omni and semi categories, with some of the properties of each. A corner speaker with a 90-degree horizontal coverage also covers the room as effectively as a semi speaker against a flat wall. In the usual listening room, the most obvious audible effect of omni sound is its uniformity—which can be heard *and* measured—over a wide area. With any directional speaker, there is a pronounced measurable increase in sound-pressure level (SPL) as one approaches the speaker, as well as a change of frequency balance at different angles to the speaker. All speakers radiate low frequencies omnidirectionally, but the coverage of conventional speakers narrows as the signal frequency increases. At normal listening distances, most of the sound is from the reverberant field, whose level is nearly constant throughout the room. Closer to the speaker, the direct field becomes significant, and eventually dominant, with the SPL increasing rapidly as the distance decreases.

Omnidirectional speakers in a given room produce a much higher ratio of reverberant sound field to direct field. As a result, there is almost no change in sound level or frequency balance as one approaches the speaker. In the case of a true 360-degree spherical radiator (which can be approximated by some designs), it is sometimes very difficult to convince yourself that the speaker is the source of the sound you are hearing, except by placing your ear right up against it.

The sound of *any* speaker is affected, to a greater or lesser degree, by its placement, the dimensions and acoustic treatment of the room, and the listener’s location. Omni’s, more than other types, are affected by the room characteristics, since most of what reaches the listener’s ears has first been reflected from one or more room surfaces. However, generalizations as to the behavior of a specific speaker type in a particular room are

exceedingly risky. Such generalizations are so risky, in fact, that I would consider *every* installation a unique case.

Nevertheless, I have seen some very positive statements, from competent and respected sources, to the effect that omni speakers produce a poorly defined stereo image, and that the somehow superior imaging of more directional speakers is preferable for stereophonic (and four-channel) listening. First of all, I question the importance—or even the desirability—of the so-called “precise stereo image.” I agree that some omni speakers do not seem to localize a specific sound at a tightly defined point somewhere across the width of the room. And although some directional speakers (for various reasons) are no better, others do seem to be able to pinpoint stereo sounds a bit more accurately than the omni speakers.

When I have attended live musical performances, at times I have tried (very hard!) to localize specific instrumental groups or soloists by ear. The best I have been able to do is to identify the general region of the orchestra from which the sound originates, with a resolution of perhaps 25 to 30 per cent of the stage width. This is a far cry from pin-

point localization and represents my own limits of angular resolution of a broadly distributed orchestral sound source, even when I have been aided by visual clues.

When I listen to a stereo music system, I tend to judge its spatial qualities in relation to my experiences at live concerts. Even a fully omni (360-degree) speaker system provides the same sort of lateral resolution in my listening room as I hear in concert performances. If, indeed, better resolution can be obtained with more directional speakers, I cannot imagine what benefits can accrue to the listener from this ability, and so I question the relevance of this effect in music reproduction.

Another argument is that omni or semi speakers may “stretch” a centrally placed soloist over an unnaturally wide area. True, this does sometimes happen, though it is by no means as common as has been suggested—and, as a matter of fact, I have heard it occur with directional speakers as well. Considering the infinite diversity of recording techniques, and the equally immense variations in home listening environments, I suspect that undue importance has been attached to this effect. If any particular speaker

were able to reproduce *all* types of music in all listening environments, and better than *any* other type, it would be the unquestioned leader, and its competitors would either have to match its performance or fall by the wayside. This has not happened as yet, nor do I expect anything like it to happen in the foreseeable future.

If the stereo properties of omni speakers are at least comparable to those of a live performance, what other characteristics can influence one's choice of a particular category of speaker? I would not presume to impose my personal preferences on others in this highly subjective matter, but my conclusions are, for me, quite definite.

All else being equal (of course, it practically never is), the wider the dispersion of a speaker, the better I find it sounds. A semi-omni, in which category I would include a corner-placed speaker with 90-degree dispersion, almost always sounds better (more like the subjective effect of a live performance) than a conventional directional system. A full omni speaker is better yet, although its improvement over a semi is less striking than that of a semi over a conventional speaker.

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories

H. H. Scott 490 Integrated Stereo Amplifier



● THE H. H. Scott 490 integrated stereo amplifier and 431 AM/FM tuner are matched components, obviously intended to complement each other in appearance as well as function when paired in the same music installation. Their external physical dimensions and styling are identical.

For this report we tested the 490 amplifier, which has a black metal cabinet with a light-colored front panel, and an illuminated pattern of interleaved sine waves that appears (in place of the tuning dial of the 431) when the unit is turned on. This is a purely decorative element, and it can be dimmed or shut

off entirely by a control located underneath the amplifier. The selected input source and the use of the stereo mode are identified by illuminated legends. At the upper left of the front panel are two small, dimly-lit level meters that read the left- and right-channel output voltages. An unlabeled pushbutton at the upper right reduces the volume by 20 dB for temporary listening interruptions.

Starting from the lower left of the panel we find the input selector (MIC/PHONO 1, PHONO 2, TUNER, EXTRA 1, EXTRA 2), two standard 1/4-inch phone jacks for tape-recording inputs and outputs (in parallel with the rear-panel tape inputs

and outputs), and two miniature phone jacks for dynamic microphones. Inserting a plug into one of these jacks disconnects the PHONO 1 input, since it shares the same position on the input-selector switch.

The remaining knobs are for balance, separate bass and treble for each channel (centrally mounted slip-clutch types), and volume. Five pushbuttons control loudness compensation, tape monitoring, mono/stereo mode, high-cut filter, and meter sensitivity. Below them are five more buttons that activate the three sets of stereo speaker outputs in various combinations of one or two pairs simultaneously. The last pushbutton is the power switch, and below it is a stereo headphone jack.

In the rear are the numerous input and output facilities, including separate preamplifier outputs and power-amplifier inputs with removable jumpers. A slide switch changes the preamplifier sensitivity for low- or high-output phono cartridges or microphones, and another

(Continued on page 34)

KLH is well into its second decade of manufacturing extraordinary high performance loudspeakers that don't cost an extraordinary amount of money. We've kept costs down by making every loudspeaker ourselves. And by selling a staggering number of them.

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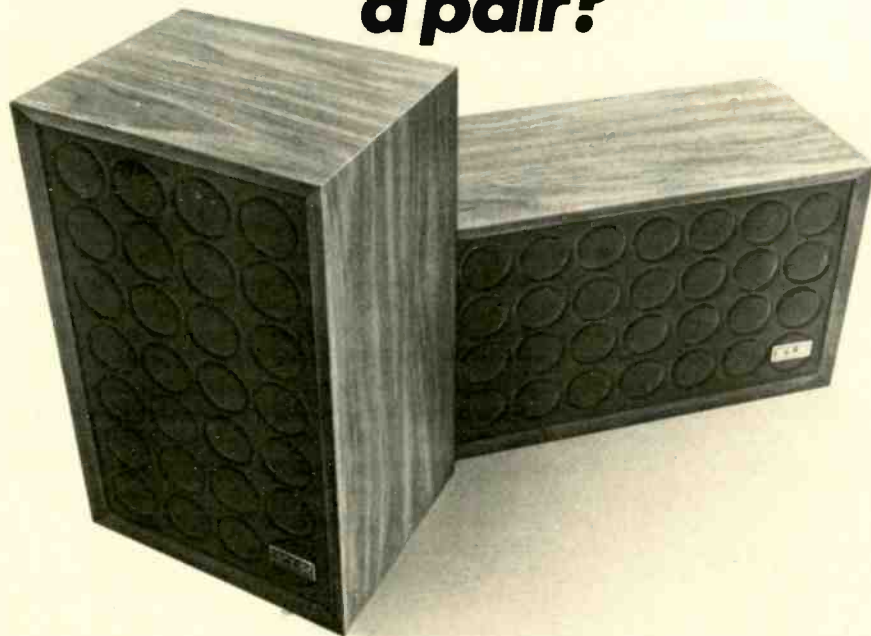
For now you can own a pair of our new Model Thirty-One loudspeakers for just \$89.95†. Think of it. Two superb sounding full-range loudspeakers at a price you might consider fair for just one! A pair of Thirty-Ones deliver a truly inordinate amount of sound for their modest size. You can drive them to big listening levels

with virtually any decent amplifier or receiver. They're handsome, featuring a new sculptured acoustically transparent foam grille. Rugged. And best of all, incredibly inexpensive. With the money you save, you might even trade-up to a better turntable or receiver, perhaps even get into quadraphonic sound. The Thirty-Ones can help make it happen. A pair is at your KLH dealer now. Listen to them soon. We're sure you'll agree that no one has ever offered you a better value in sound.

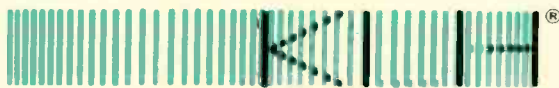
And we've had a lot of practice.

For more technical information, write to KLH Research and Development, 30 Cross Street, Cambridge, Mass. 02139. Or visit your KLH dealer.

What does it take to make an important new loudspeaker and sell it for \$89.95[†] a pair?

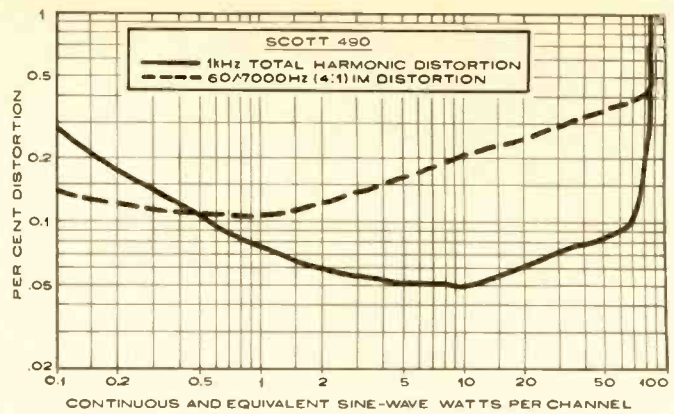
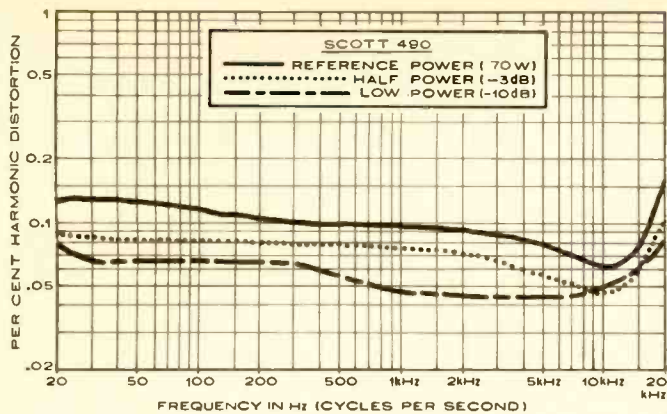


Practice. A whole lot of practice!



KLH RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CORP.
30 Cross St., Cambridge, Mass. 02139

†Suggested retail prices—slightly higher in the South and West.

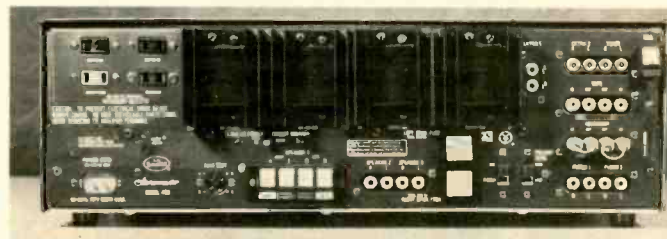


changes the equalization through the MIC/PHONO 1 input from RIAA to flat. Each speaker output is fused, and a push-button-reset circuit breaker protects the entire amplifier. The main speaker outputs use spring-loaded terminals that, when released, grip the wire inserted into their holes. The other two pairs of speaker outputs use standard phono jacks. Three of the four a.c. outlets are unswitched. The Scott 490 measures 17½ inches wide, 13 inches deep, and 5¾ inches high overall, and weighs 30 pounds. Price: \$299.90.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The 490 amplifier proved to be a "powerhouse" among integrated amplifiers, clipping at almost 80 watts per channel into 8 ohms and 121 watts per channel into 4 ohms when both channels were driven with a 1,000-Hz test signal. The 16-ohm output was 46.5 watts per channel. The conservatism of the amplifier's 70-watt rating is obvious, and we were impressed by the fact that it remained relatively cool throughout our high-power tests. From 20 to 20,000 Hz, at any power level from 7 to 70 watts per channel, harmonic distortion was typically between 0.05 and 0.1 per cent, reaching its high point of 0.15 per cent at 20,000 Hz and 70 watts output. At 1,000 Hz, har-

monic distortion was between 0.05 and 0.1 per cent from 0.6 watt to 70 watts. Intermodulation distortion (IM) was between 0.1 and 0.2 per cent from 0.1 watt to almost 10 watts, increasing to 0.4 per cent at 80 watts. The distortion increase at low power levels was slight,

most we have seen recently, had a "hinged" characteristic, pivoting about a 700-Hz center. The loudness compensation boosted only the low frequencies, and the filter had a 6-dB-per-octave slope, with the response measuring 3 dB down at 2,700 Hz.



The rear panel of the Scott 490. Among special features are phono-jack outputs for two pairs of remote speakers and highly accessible circuit test points.

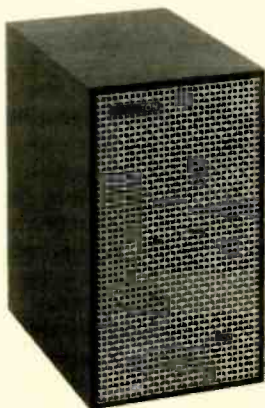
reaching only 0.5 per cent at 7 milliwatts output.

The high-level inputs required 0.21 volt for a 10-watt output and achieved a 74-dB signal-to-noise ratio (S/N). The phono sensitivity was 1.35 millivolts (HI) or 2.7 millivolts (LO), with a 71-dB S/N. The MIC sensitivity was 4 millivolts, also with a 71-dB S/N. Phono overload occurred at a very safe 94 millivolts (HI) or 130 millivolts (LO). The RIAA equalization was +2, -1.5 dB at 15,000 Hz, and the MIC response was within 0.5 dB from 20 to 7,000 Hz, down only 1.5 dB at 15,000 Hz. The tone controls, unlike

● **Comment.** The "handling" and listening qualities of the Scott 490 amplifier left nothing to be desired. And its unusually high power capability did full justice to our best and least efficient speaker systems. Up-to-date construction techniques, such as plug-in circuit boards and printed boards for switch wiring and mounting, are used throughout. This helps assure manufacturing consistency and reliability, and doubtlessly also contributes to the excellent performance/cost ratio achieved by the Model 490.

Circle 105 on reader service card

Videotone D 132-E and DP 202-E Speaker Systems



● THIS magazine has reviewed Hungarian recordings through the years, and recently we had an opportunity to test our first Hungarian audio products: two of the smaller models in the Videotone speaker line, the D 132-E and DP 202-E.

The DP 202-E could best be classified as a "sub-compact" speaker, measuring 14½ x 9½ x 8¾ inches, and weighing 15¼ pounds. Its wooden cabinet is finished on all sides (including the back), and it has a DIN speaker socket for electrical connections. A mating plug and cable assembly, about 15 feet long, is supplied with each speaker.

The D 132-E is a true miniature system, one of the smallest we have seen with a reasonable claim to high-fidelity performance. Like that of the larger DP 202, the cabinet of the D 132-E is finished on all sides, and connections are made through a DIN plug and socket with the furnished cable. The D 132-E is only 10¼ x 6½ x 8¾ inches, and it weighs 9¼ pounds. Despite their physical differences, these two speakers are nearly alike in their design and performance. Both are two-way systems with 3-inch cone tweeters and small "long-

(Continued on page 36)

After so many high-fidelity and consumer publications rated our HD 414 "open-aire" headphones tops in sound, comfort and value, why would Sennheiser introduce another model?

The reason is perfection.

Not that our new HD 424 is perfect. But our engineers—the same engineers who developed our dynamic and condenser microphones for the recording industry—have made some significant advances. Enough, we feel, to warrant a new model. Enough, that a certain kind of music lover will appreciate the added fidelity, despite the added cost.

The primary difference is response. As linear as our HD 414 is, the HD 424 boasts even greater accuracy—particularly at low bass and high treble frequencies. Due to an improved transducer assembly and redesigned earpiece geometry. Heard on the HD 424, low organ notes assume an additional, fundamental richness without sacrificing the "tightness" of good transient response. While violins and other high-overtone



instruments retain the additional "transparency" their overtones produce.

No less important, especially for long listening sessions, is comfort. Retaining the "unsealed" free-air feeling so many praised in the HD 414, the new HD 424 provides even less (!) pressure on the ear, distributing it over wider, thinner acoustically transparent cushions. For this reason—and an improved, cushioned headband—the HD 424 actually seems lighter than the 5 oz. HD 414, even though it is slightly heavier.

Now, there are two Sennheiser "open-aire" headphones for you to choose from. The HD 414, rated best for sound and comfort. And a new model offering something more. That's why.

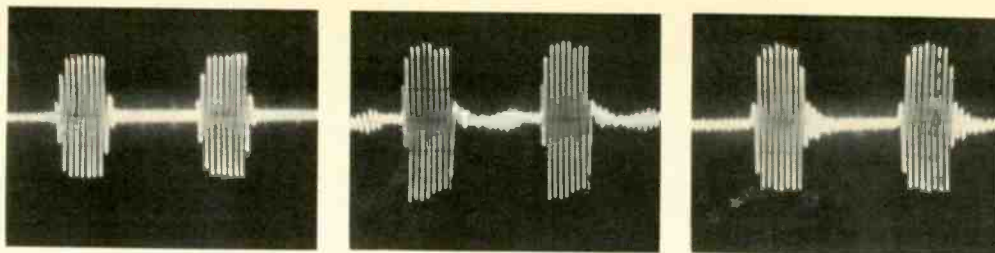
Hear them both at your Sennheiser dealer, or write us for more information. Sennheiser Electronic Corporation, 10 West 37th Street, New York 10018.



Manufacturing Plant: Bissendorf, Hannover, West Germany

CIRCLE NO. 54 ON READER SERVICE CARD

The tone-burst response of the DP 202-E, shown at frequencies of (left to right) 100, 1,500, and 10,000 Hz, was quite good.



throw" acoustic-suspension woofers in fully sealed enclosures. The tweeters of both speakers appear to be identical, but the woofer of the DP 202-E is 7 inches in diameter while that of the D 132-E is 4½ inches. There are no controls of any kind, and the crossover frequencies are not specified.

Both systems have a nominal 8-ohm impedance, and they are rated to handle up to 15 watts of continuous power or 20 watts of musical program material. The D 132-E has a rated frequency response of 50 to 20,000 Hz, while the DP 202-E is rated for a 45- to 20,000-Hz range. The Videotone Model D 132-E (also called the Minimax-2) sells for \$45, and



The front of the D 132-E is practically all speaker. The woofer diameter is 4½ inches.

the Model DP 202-E (also called the Saphir-1) is \$70.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Despite the size and price differences, the DP 202-E and D 132-E had almost identical frequency responses, as measured with a distant microphone in our "live" room. There was a broad increase of output between 400 and 2,000 Hz, with an average amplitude of about +5 dB relative to the output at lower and higher frequencies. The high-frequency response was unusually flat—within ± 2 dB from about 2,000 to 20,000 Hz.

The low-frequency response curves of the two speakers were identical, with a

± 1 dB variation from 85 to 350 Hz. The output fell off smoothly, but rapidly, at lower frequencies. However, our measurements were made with the microphone in close proximity and the speakers in the middle of the room. The speakers therefore lacked the benefit of the usual bass reinforcement from the room walls.

Overlaying the response curves for the two speakers one upon the other showed them to be almost identical, with the major difference being the shape of the mid-range rise—actually a "double-hump" effect. The D 132-E had its maximum points at 500 Hz and 1,100 Hz, while the DP 202-E peaked at 600 and 1,700 Hz.

As might be expected, the two speakers differed substantially in their distortion and in their power-handling capability at low frequencies. The larger DP 202-E had less than 2 per cent harmonic distortion at 1 watt down to 56 Hz; distortion increased to 5 per cent at 50 Hz and 14 per cent at 40 Hz. When we maintained a constant 90-dB sound-pressure level (SPL), the distortion was 3 per cent at 70 Hz, 5 per cent at 62 Hz, and 10 per cent at 55 Hz. The smaller cone of the D 132-E held up very well down to 70 Hz, where the distortion was 2 per cent for a 1-watt input; it rose to 5 per cent at 57 Hz and 14 per cent at 45 Hz. When we tried to maintain a 90-dB SPL from the 4½-inch woofer, its limitations were apparent. Distortion was 7 to 8 per cent down to 70 Hz, 10 per cent at 65 Hz, and 15 per cent at 60 Hz.

The larger DP 202-E had moderately high efficiency for an acoustic-suspension speaker, requiring slightly less than 1 watt for a 90-dB SPL at mid-frequencies. The efficiency of the D 132-E was about 3.5 dB lower, with a 2-watt input needed for the same output.

The impedance curves of the two speakers were generally similar. The 8-ohm impedance of the DP 202-E was very constant over most of the frequency

range, rising to about 12 ohms at 20,000 Hz and to 22 ohms at the bass resonance of 90 Hz. The D 132-E impedance was similar at high frequencies, between 10 and 12 ohms at mid-frequencies, and 30 ohms at the bass-resonance frequency of 80 Hz (despite its smaller size, its woofer resonance was lower than that of the DP 202-E).

The tone-burst responses of the two speakers were reasonably good, though we observed differences at 10,000 Hz which we would not have expected from

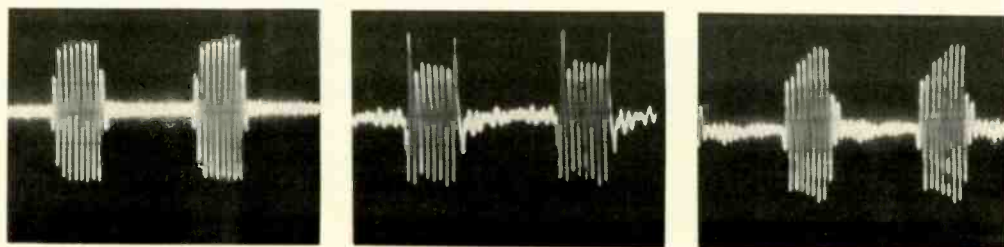
CORRECTION

● During a routine review of our past test reports, it was discovered that some incorrect figures were printed in the report on the Teac 450 cassette deck (September, 1973)—apparently the result of an error in transcribing the figures from the data sheet to the manuscript. Specifically, the stated signal-to-noise ratios for a recorded level producing 3 per cent distortion—between 48 and 49 dB for ferric-oxide tapes and 51 dB for chromium-dioxide tape—are incorrect. The actual signal-to-noise ratios measured by Hirsch-Houck Labs were between 55 and 56 dB and 56.2 dB, respectively. These are significantly better than the figures that appeared in the report. The editors regret the error.

identical tweeters, and some mid-range effects in the D 132-E which may have been the result of interaction between its drivers.

● **Comment.** Listening to these speakers, one would never suspect they were so small—especially in the case of the D 132-E. The efficiency difference between them is clearly audible, but when we played them at the same level it was virtually impossible to tell them apart. (Continued on page 38)

The tone-burst response of the D 132-E, shown (left to right) at 100, 1,700, and 10,000 Hz, differed in some respects from that of the DP 202-E, but not in ways that would be audibly significant.



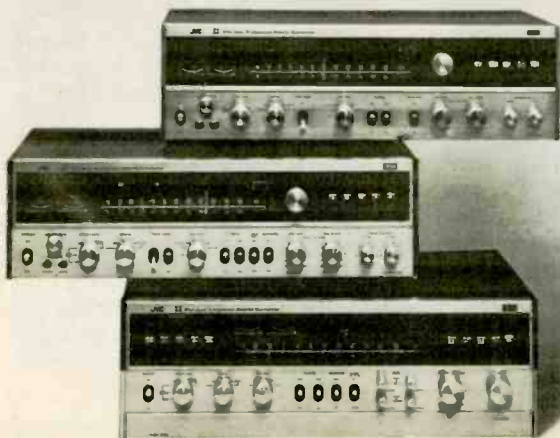
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although we felt the larger DP 202-E had a slightly more "open" sound (possibly because of lower modulation distortion due to its larger cone area). The mid-range emphasis (a Hungarian accent?) gave them a very slight "forward" character, but the overall frequency balance was nearly ideal.

In our simulated live-vs.-recorded listening tests they were astonishingly good. On-axis we would rate either of them between a B+ and A, depending on the mid-range content of the program mate-

rial. Off-axis as little as 30 degrees, the directivity of the tweeter became apparent and the rating fell to a B, still a very creditable performance for speakers in this size and price range.

These speakers illustrate in an almost classic manner how a desired low-frequency response can be achieved with an enclosure and driver of almost any size through the use of appropriate "trade-offs" between efficiency and power-handling capacity. In a small room, or where the speakers are to be

visually inconspicuous, the tiny D 132-E can produce a caliber of sound that must be heard to be believed. If a greater quantity of sound is required, the DP 202-E will play much louder, and with less distortion, although at any given sound level it will not sound appreciably different from the D 132-E. If these speakers are indicative of the state of the rest of the audio art in Hungary, we look forward to seeing other products from that country.

Circle 106 on reader service card

Crown DC-300A Stereo Power Amplifier



● ONE of the first highly regarded "super-power" solid-state amplifiers, the Crown DC-300, is now available in an updated version as the DC-300A. Despite the superficial resemblance of the two amplifiers and their somewhat similar specifications, the circuits of the 300A have been completely redesigned. The Crown DC-300A has a 7 x 19-inch panel, intended for rack mounting, and extends 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches behind the mounting surface. The amplifier weighs 45 pounds. Two large knobs on the panel control the input sensitivity of each channel, and the only other external control is a heavy-duty rocker switch that turns the amplifier on and lights up to serve as a pilot indicator. The speaker terminals (which are heavy-duty binding posts) and the input connectors (standard $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch phone jacks) are in the rear of the amplifier, as is the a.c. line fuse.

Most of the gain in each channel is obtained from a single integrated-circuit operational amplifier, replacing a considerable number of discrete transistors and other parts performing the same function in the original DC-300 amplifier. The input impedance at full gain settings is 10,000 ohms. The number of output transistors in each channel has been doubled, from four (in the DC-300) to eight. There are no output fuses, but an elaborate electronic protection system safeguards the amplifier against short circuits, mismatching, or open circuits,

as well as problems that may be provoked by reactive loads. The amplifier is completely direct-coupled from input jacks to speakers, and is completely free of transient pulses in its audio outputs during a.c.-power switching.

The DC-300A carries several power ratings, including 190 watts per channel at the clipping point (8-ohm loads) and 420 watts IHF dynamic power output into 8 ohms. Its overall performance is thoroughly described in some fourteen separate graphs in the exceptionally complete instruction manual. For most purposes, the reference full-power output is 150 watts per channel into 8 ohms. Although the amplifier is normally rated for use with loudspeaker loads of 4 to 8 ohms, its maximum power is delivered into 2.5 ohms, and lower impedances can be used with no adverse effects except a reduction of maximum power output available.

The most impressive specifications of the DC-300A relate to its distortion, which is far lower than that of the most advanced laboratory test equipment. Using external filters, Crown has managed to lower the minute residual distortion of the best available audio generators to less than 0.0001 per cent. Crown's curves for the DC-300A are therefore able to show that its distortion is between 0.0001 and 0.01 per cent over the 20- to 20,000-Hz range, 150 watts per channel into 8-ohm loads.

For special applications, a simple in-

ternal connection converts the DC-300A into a single-channel mono amplifier with a typical clipping power output of 650 watts into either a 4- or 8-ohm load. Most of the other specifications remain unchanged in this mode of operation. The Crown DC-300A costs \$695. A walnut cabinet is \$37 additional.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** With both channels driven into 8-ohm loads with a 1,000-Hz test signal, the outputs clipped at 185 watts per channel. Into 4 ohms, the output was 325 watts per channel, and into 16 ohms it was 102 watts per channel. An input of 0.43 volt was required for a 10-watt output (about 1.75 volts drives the amplifier to full power). The noise was 88 dB below 10 watts, or 100 dB below the rated 150 watts. Crown bases its -110-dB noise rating on a measurement bandwidth limited to 20,000 Hz, so the published specification is consistent with our measurement made over a much wider frequency range.

Although the DC-300A carries a 150-watt per channel rating, we noted that its distortion was almost independent of power and frequency up to its clipping point; therefore, we chose 180 watts as a reference full-power output. At this level, harmonic distortion was between 0.02 and 0.025 per cent at full power over most of the audio-frequency range, reaching 0.08 per cent at 20,000 Hz. At lower power levels, the distortion was typically between 0.003 and 0.01 per cent over the full frequency range. Our test-equipment residual distortion is about 0.002 per cent.

The harmonic distortion, because it was so low, was masked by a random-noise component (also inaudible) at most operating levels. The combined noise and distortion reading varied from 0.015 per cent at 1 watt to 0.004 per cent at 100 watts, and was only 0.0045 per cent at the rated 150 watts. The intermodulation (IM) distortion was about

(Continued on page 44)



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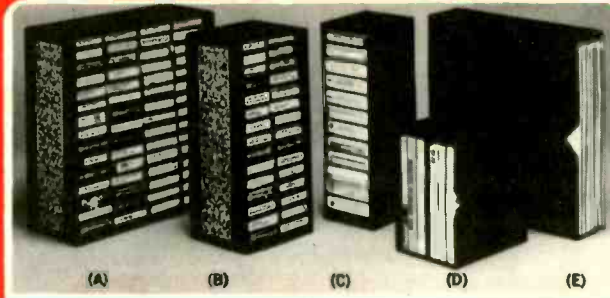
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If the five Concord receivers on this page have one thing in common, it's this: brutally honest specifications.

What do we mean by brutally honest?

Consider.

The power ratings for all five are derived by running all channels at rated output, using an 8-ohm load, with total harmonic distortion no higher than 1 percent (only .5% for the CR-550).

Now, we could rate our receivers by driving only one channel with a 4-ohm load. And give you much bigger numbers to read about and "ooh" and "ah" about. Especially when you consider our modest prices.

However, listening is what audio is about. Not reading. You can't hear numbers. But you can hear quality. And the conservative way we arrive at our numbers may be a clue to why the sound that comes out of our receivers is so "ooh"

and "ah" provoking. At any price.

You see, when it comes to making fine audio components, the Concord theory is that honesty isn't the best policy. It's the only policy.

You can peruse all of our brutally honest specifications by sending for our full-color brochure. It starts with our CR-100 (a most economical way to start a stereo system) and includes our new CR-400 (quadraphonic sound at stereo prices). Plus the magnificent CR-550, with 45 honest rms watts per channel... both channels driven into 8 ohms. After reading it, you'll want to learn one thing more about the Concord line. And that is how they sound. You get the answer wherever uncompromising audio equipment is sold.

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24 watt RMS

CR-100
12 watt RMS

CR-550
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CR-400
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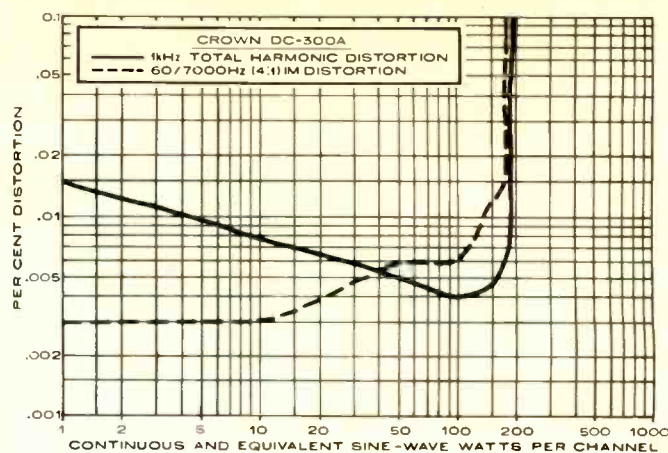
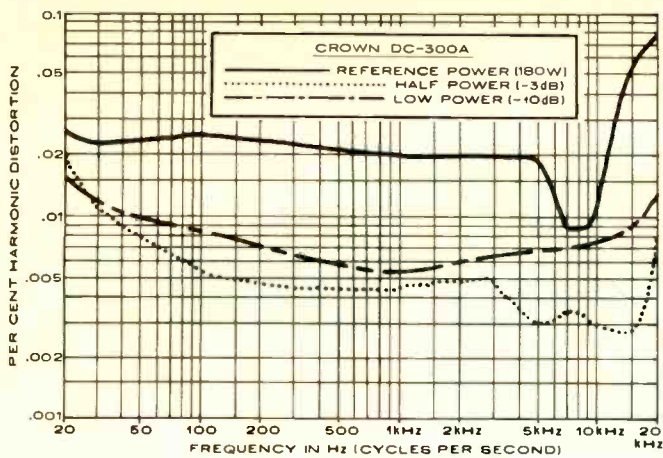
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0.003 per cent (essentially the residual of the test equipment) up to 10 watts, increasing to 0.012 per cent at 150 watts. The absence of "crossover" distortion was apparent in the very low-power 1M measurements, which reached a maximum of a mere 0.014 per cent at just about 3 milliwatts output.

The frequency response was flat from our lower measurement limit of 5 Hz (actually, it is flat to d.c. or "zero" Hz) through the audio range, falling to -0.6 dB at 50,000 Hz and -3 dB at 170,000 Hz. Square-wave rise time was about 4 microseconds. The d.c. offset voltage appearing across the speakers was an almost unmeasurable 3 millivolts.

● *Comment.* The Crown DC-300A almost defies comment. Though it is not the most powerful amplifier available, it may well be the "safest" for use with a wide range of loads. No load we could apply—including short circuits and large capacitors—had any significant effect on its operating characteristics. Prolonged high-power operation during testing eventually activated the DC-300A's protective circuits, as it should have. In normal operation, with speakers of extremely low efficiency, the amplifier did not even become noticeably warm to the touch.

Most engineers would probably be impressed, as we were, by the incredi-

bly low distortion of this amplifier. However, we think the audiophile user is more likely to benefit from its foolproof circuit design. Some otherwise excellent high-power amplifiers occasionally have problems with special loads or inadequate external cooling, but the DC-300A seems to be able to handle these conditions without difficulty. While we obviously could not apply *all* possible conditions of improper operation to the DC-300A, we tried our best, and it survived unscathed. It is, in short, a most impressive amplifier, one that has no flaws or functional weaknesses that we could detect.

Circle 107 on reader service card

Nakamichi 700 Cassette Deck



● THE new Nakamichi 700 three-head cassette recorder incorporates most of the features and the essential performance of their \$1,100 "professional" cassette deck at a much reduced price. Although the Nakamichi 700 is still expensive by cassette-deck standards, there are two strong mitigating factors: its performance is essentially comparable to that of open-reel decks in the same price range, and the high-end cassette recorders from other manufacturers are fast approaching the price level of this

striking new contender in the tape field.

In its basic features, appearance, and performance, the Nakamichi 700 is unique. Its "Tri-Tracer" head assembly includes separate recording and playback heads whose gap widths are respectively established at 5 microns and 0.7 micron for optimum performance of each function. There are separate recording and playback amplifiers and Dolby circuits, providing the off-the-tape monitoring capability usually found only in open-reel recorders. The tape is driven

through a closed-loop, dual-capstan system by a feedback-controlled d.c. motor which maintains constant speed over a wide range of line-voltage and frequency variations. A second motor drives the cassette hubs. The solenoid-controlled transport is operated by flat touch keys, flush with the panel, which move almost imperceptibly under finger pressure.

The control functions are conventional (PLAY, STOP, REWIND, FAST FORWARD, RECORD, and PAUSE), and there is an IC logic system to prevent improper operation. A small light inside each button glows when it is activated. The controls can be operated in any sequence, except that RECORD can be engaged only from a STOP condition. One can go directly from rewind to fast forward, or vice versa, and from fast speed directly to play. The machine pauses for only a fraction of a second before going into the new mode. This is in contrast to a number of high-quality open-reel decks with logic-control systems, which must pause for several seconds to allow the tape reels to stop completely before going to the

(Continued on page 46)

AKAI's 4-Channel Challenge

We challenge any other manufacturer in the world to surpass the performance of AKAI's new 4-channel component combination. You can pay more. But you can't buy better.

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First is AKAI's new AS-980 4-channel receiver. Endowed with sophisticated features for unparalleled performance. Sensitive and powerful, the AS-980 provides a continuous output of 120W (30 x 4). Plus 4 separate 4-channel modes: Discrete, SQ, RM, and built-in CD-4 with individual separation controls ... It's everything you'd expect AKAI's *ultimate* receiver to be.

Unequaled reproduction quality is yours with AKAI's new GX-280D-SS. It's a fully discrete 4-channel tape deck that's also 2-channel compatible. The utilization of 4 individual heads—including AKAI's exclusive GX glass and crystal heads (dust free and virtually wear free)—and 3 superbly engineered and balanced motors make this unit *the* professional 4-channel tape deck for recording and playback.

Together, these units are AKAI's unbeatable 4-channel challenge—providing professional 4-channel capabilities that no other equipment combination can match.

Both the AS-980 receiver and the GX-280D-SS tape deck are available at your nearest AKAI Dealer ... Whenever you're ready to make that ultimate step up. That's AKAI's 4-channel challenge.

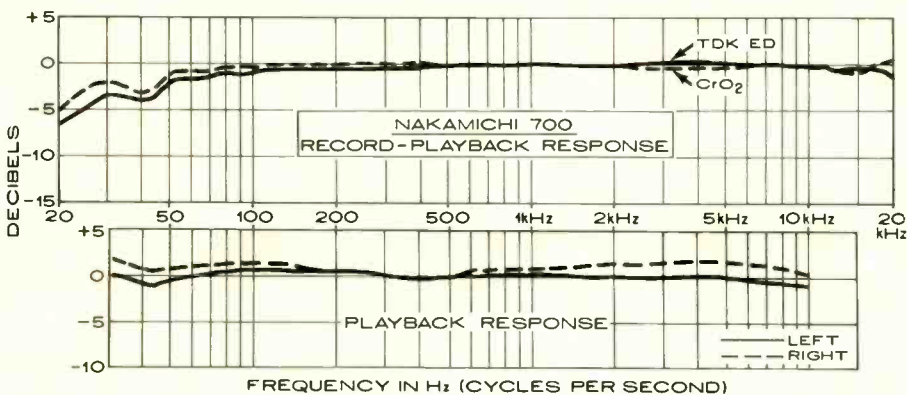


From
AKAITM
The Innovators

new speed. The Nakamichi 700 is designed to operate in a vertical position.

Pressing the EJECT button opens a vertically hinged door and cassette carrier. The tape moves from bottom-to-top, instead of the more usual left-to-right, and it can be viewed through a narrow backlit slot in the door. Two large, illuminated peak-level meters read both recording and playback levels. They are not affected by the playback-level controls. There is a stereo headphone jack for 8-ohm phones, and a three-digit index counter with a "memory" switch. If the counter is reset to zero at any point on a tape and the memory system is engaged, the tape will stop at that point when rewound.

Two pairs of concentric recording-



level controls set levels for the line and microphone inputs (for 600-ohm dynamic microphones). A third input for a "blend" microphone drives both inputs to provide a center "solo" position, and it has its own level control. All inputs can be mixed, and the microphone preamplifiers are switched off until a plug is inserted in the microphone jack so that they cannot affect the overall signal-to-noise ratio when recording from line inputs. Another pair of concentric knobs controls playback volume through the line outputs and the headphone jack. Pushbutton switches control power, tape bias, and equalization for "normal" and CrO₂ tapes, the Dolby circuits, a recording-level limiter, and monitoring from source or from tape.

The various inputs and outputs are recessed into the top of the recorder's wooden cabinet. The phono-jack line inputs and outputs are paralleled by a DIN connector, and the pair of 1/4-inch microphone jacks is also duplicated in a DIN connector. A slide switch inserts a 15,000-Hz low-pass filter into the line inputs, if needed, to prevent any stereo-subcarrier leakage in the output of an FM tuner from affecting the recorder's Dolby circuits. Finally, there is a connector for an optional remote-control unit, which operates at the end of a 15-foot cable and duplicates all the transport controls. In the rear of the recorder are screwdriver-adjusted Dolby recording-level controls which use a built-in oscillator test signal.

As with any tape recorder, the recording and playback heads of the 700 must be exactly aligned in azimuth. The playback head is factory-aligned, but for optimum results, the recording head must be aligned for each individual cassette on which a recording is made. The Nakamichi engineers have devised a remarkably simple, fast, and effective method of doing this. Pressing a CAL button next to the EJECT button opens a vertically hinged door, revealing a TEST TONE switch, a screwdriver adjustment for the playback-head azimuth (for factory use only), a record-head azimuth-alignment knob, and a slider-type pitch control.

When the cassette to be recorded is loaded, the test tone is switched on and

the machine placed in the record mode. Two small light-emitting diodes (the "alignment beacon") on the subpanel flash alternately when the head-alignment knob is properly set. If only one light glows, the alignment knob is turned slightly until they flash alternately. The process takes less time to accomplish than to describe. The tape speed is fixed at 1 7/8 ips during recording, and in playback when the pitch control is set to its center detented position. To correct the pitch of recordings made on other machines having incorrect speeds, the pitch control can vary the playback speed ± 6 per cent. The deck is 20 1/2 inches wide x 10 1/16 inches high x 5 1/8 inches deep, and weighs a hefty 28 pounds. The price of the Nakamichi 700 is \$690 and the remote-control accessory is \$49.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The Nakamichi 700 is factory-adjusted for TDK SD tape, which we used in our tests. Nakamichi also packages their own CrO₂ cassettes, which we used when appropriate. The playback frequency response, from a Nortronics AT-200 test tape, was ± 1 dB from 31.5 to 10,000 Hz. The record-playback frequency response with TDK SD tape was ± 1 dB from 47 to 20,000 Hz, with a slight drop at lower frequencies. This was the first cassette recorder we have tested which required extending the response measurements above 20,000 Hz. The overall response varied only 5 dB from 20 to 21,000 Hz.

We tried TDK ED tape also, obtaining essentially similar results. With Nakamichi CrO₂ tape, the performance was improved (!) at both ends of the frequency range, and was an almost incredible ± 1.5 dB from 46 to 22,500 Hz, or 5 dB overall variation from 20 to 23,000 Hz. The importance of the record head-alignment process was illustrated by the response measured with the CrO₂ tape cassette using the alignment setting previously established for the TDK SD cassette. The output began to drop above 6,000 Hz and was down 5 dB at 12,500 Hz.

The FM multiplex filter worked well, introducing an insignificant 1-dB peak at 16,000 Hz, and then attenuating the signal more than 10 dB at 19,000 Hz and 25 dB at 20,000 Hz. The Dolby circuits tracked very well, affecting the overall response by less than 1 dB over the 20 to 20,000-Hz range, at any level from -20 to -40 dB. The level meters of the Nakamichi 700, which are carefully identified as "dB meters" rather than the carelessly applied "VU meter" designation employed by so many recorder manufacturers, actually had response characteristics closely approximating those of a true VU meter, with a very fast rise time, slightly slower fall time, and negligible overshoot. Their calibrations were also very accurate over the full 20-dB scale range.

A signal input of 87 millivolts (line) or 0.58 millivolt (mic) produced a 0-dB recording level, with a corresponding playback output of 0.95 volt. Microphone overload occurred gradually, at about 150 millivolts. The distortion with a 1,000-Hz, 0-dB signal was 1.8 per cent with TDK SD, and 2 per cent with CrO₂ tape. The standard-reference 3 per cent harmonic-distortion level was reached with an input of about +2 dB with both types of tape. The noise level, referred to the 3 per cent distortion level, was very low: -54.5 dB without Dolby and -62 dB with it, using TDK SD tape. With CrO₂ tape, it was slightly better: -57 dB without Dolby and -62.5 dB with Dolby. The noise increase through the microphone preamplifiers at maximum gain was actually too small to measure, although a minute increase in high-frequency hiss could be heard.

The recording limiter had no effect on signals under the +1-dB level. With higher inputs, it went into action rapidly—the attack time was a small fraction of a second—to reduce the gain and to prevent overload and distortion (although it cannot control transients of very short duration). The release time was more gradual, requiring about 2 seconds to restore normal gain when the overload was removed. In a steady-state measurement, a +6-dB input produced 6.2 per cent distortion without the limiter, which reduced the distortion to 2 per cent when it was switched on.

(Continued on page 50)



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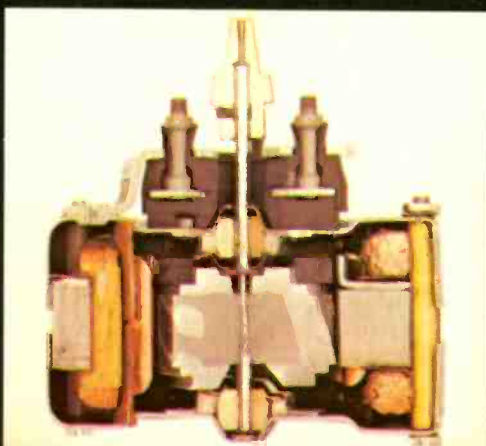
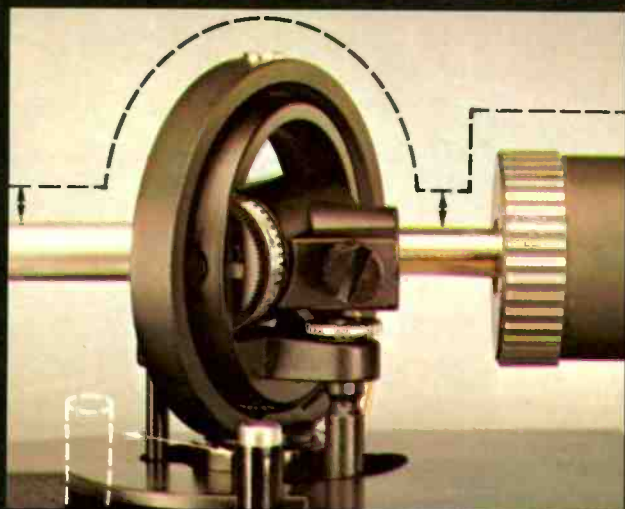
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CIRCLE NO. 58 ON READER SERVICE CARD

**There are some things
you'll appreciate about a Dual
right away.**

Others will take years.



You can appreciate some things about a Dual turntable right in your dealer's showroom: its clean functional appearance, the precision of its tonearm adjustments and its smooth, quiet operation.

The exceptional engineering and manufacturing care that go into every Dual turntable may take years to appreciate. Only then will you actually experience, play after play, Dual's precision and reliability. And how year after year, Dual protects your precious records; probably your biggest investment in musical enjoyment.

It takes more than features.

If you know someone who has owned a Dual for several years, you've probably heard all this from him. But you may also wish to know what makes a Dual so different from other automatic turntables which seem to offer many of the same features. For example, such Dual innovations as: gimbal tonearm suspensions, separate anti-skating scales for conical and elliptical styli, and rotating single play spindles.

It's one thing to copy a Dual feature; it's quite another thing to match the precision with which Duals are built.

The gimbal, for example.

A case in point is the tonearm suspension. Dual was the first manufacturer of automatics to offer a true twin-ring gimbal suspension. More importantly, every Dual gimbal is hand assembled and individually tested with precision instruments especially developed by Dual. The vertical bearing friction of this gimbal is specified at 0.007 gram,

and quality control procedures assure that every unit will meet this specification. Only by maintaining this kind of tolerance can tonearm calibrations for stylus pressure and anti-skating be set with perfect accuracy.

Other Dual features are built with similar precision. The rotor of every Dual motor is dynamically balanced in all planes of motion. Additionally, each motor pulley and drive wheel is individually examined with special instruments to assure perfect concentricity.

The Dual guarantee.

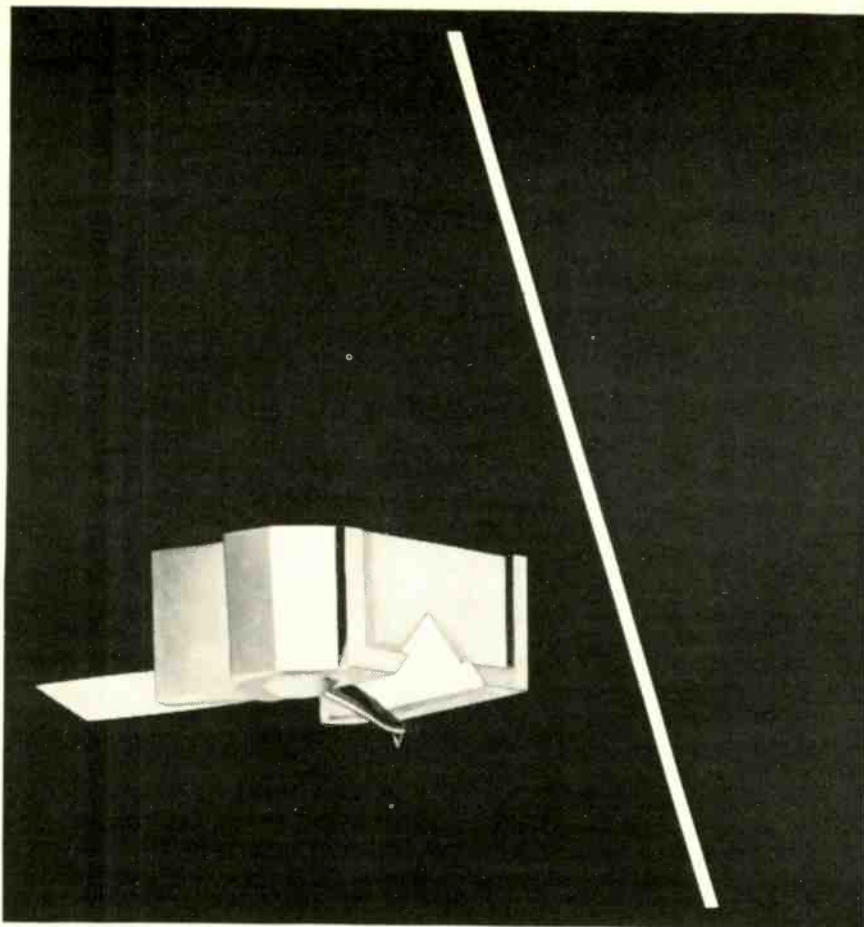
Despite all this precision and refinement, Dual turntables are ruggedly built, and need not be babied. Which accounts for Dual's unparalleled record of reliability, an achievement no other manufacturer can copy. Your Dual includes a full year parts and labor guarantee; up to four times the guarantee that other automatic turntables offer.

If you'd like to read what several independent testing laboratories have said about Dual turntables, we'll be pleased to send you reprints of their impartial reports. To appreciate Dual performance first hand, we suggest you visit your franchised United Audio dealer.

But your full appreciation of Dual precision won't really begin until a Dual is in your system and you hear the difference it will make on your own records. Play after play. Year after year.

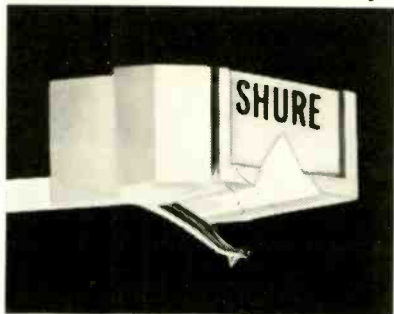


United Audio Products, Inc., 120 So. Columbus Ave., Mt. Vernon, N.Y. 10553
Exclusive U.S. Distribution Agency for Dual.



The three dollar bill.

The stylus shown above is phony. It's represented as a replacement stylus for a Shure cartridge, and although it looks somewhat authentic, it is, in fact, a shoddy imitation. It can fool the eye, but the critical ear? Never! The fact is that the Shure Quality Control Specialists have examined many of these imposters and found them, at best, to be woefully lacking in uniform performance—and



at worst, to be outright failures that simply do not perform even to minimal trackability specifications. Remember that the performance of your Shure cartridge *depends* upon its patented stylus, so insist on the real thing. Look for the name SHURE on the stylus grip (as shown in the photo, left) and the words, "This Stereo Dynetic[®] Stylus is precision manufactured by Shure Brothers Inc." on the box.

Shure Brothers Inc.
222 Hartrey Ave., Evanston, Illinois 60204
In Canada: A. C. Simmonds & Sons Ltd.



The tape speed was within 0.1 per cent of its correct value, and could be varied in playback over a +6, -5 per cent range. We could not measure the 700's combined wow and flutter because it was below the residual level of our test tape. The combined recording-playback flutter was only 0.07 per cent (average, unweighted), which is approximately what we usually measure on open-reel machines in the price range of the Nakamichi 700. A C-60 cassette was handled in fast forward and rewind in about 57 seconds. Headphone volume was adequate using 8-ohm phones.

● *Comment.* As our test data indicate, the Nakamichi 700 is an extraordinary cassette recorder. It really cannot be compared with other cassette machines, since its higher price removes it from direct competition. One of the most severe tests of a tape recorder's overall frequency response and dynamic range is to record random "white" noise, such as an interstation FM tuner hiss, and compare the playback with the incoming signal. Even some of the best open-reel machines produce an audible change in the noise sound, especially when operating at 3³/₄ ips, and more especially when their recording-level meters read higher than about -10 dB (because of tape saturation by the very high frequencies in the noise signal). No cassette recorder we have previously tested has come close to passing this test, at any recording level.

The Nakamichi 700, at a 0-dB recording level, had *no* audible effect on the sound of a random-noise signal. It therefore came as no surprise that, in an A-B, source/monitor comparison while taping the best records we have, we could hear *no* difference between the original and the recorded programs. A tape deck with this ability, plus a very low flutter, is capable of making truly professional quality recordings. In the audio world, the term "professional" has lost much of its meaning through unwarranted use, but we must say that it is the best way to describe the Model 700.

The price of the Nakamichi 700 places it squarely in competition with some very fine open-reel tape decks in the \$600 to \$1,000 range, and Nakamichi welcomes this comparison. Ignoring the inescapable fact that cassette editing is difficult to the point of being impractical, it seems to us that the *only* respect in which an open-reel recorder can "out-test" the Nakamichi 700 is in overall dynamic range, including the advantages in equalization offered by the wider tracks on a 1/4-inch tape. Perhaps no one will ever use the Nakamichi 700 to make a critical master tape, but for any less-demanding purpose, we would rank it for now as the best cassette recorder we've tested—and one of the best tape recorders of *any* type we have ever used.

Circle 108 on reader service card

Instead of talking about a cassette deck with 3 heads we make one.

The RS-279US.

It has an HPF™ monitor head. So every recording you make will be as sharp and clean as it should be. That's recording insurance. The kind of insurance that great specs alone can't give. Only a monitor head can.

The monitor is more important in cassette than it ever was in reel-to-reel. Because the cassette can drag or jam without warning. And it's prone to recording overload. Which can ruin a potentially great recording if it isn't detected.

The RS-279US also has many other desirable design and convenience features. Like a dual motor system. With a DC motor for the reel-table-drive and our exclusive direct drive DC motor for the capstan. Adjustable Dolby*. Switchable bias for CrO₂ tapes. Solenoid-operated function controls. Locking pause. Memory rewind. And Auto-Stop.

And the specs are just what you'd expect from a deck with those credentials. The signal-to-noise ratio is better than 59dB. Frequency response is from 20-16,000Hz. And wow and flutter are less than 0.10%.

The RS-279US has the hallmarks of a great cassette deck. Plus one that puts it ahead of other decks. Our patented HPF™ monitor head.

The concept is simple. The execution is precise. The performance is outstanding. The name is Technics.

*Dolby is a trademark of Dolby Laboratories Inc.

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CIRCLE NO. 67 ON READER SERVICE CARD

GOING ON RECORD

By JAMES GOODFRIEND

Music Editor



O PIONEERS!

WITH all due respect to my friend and colleague Martin Bookspan, I must admit that I am very much opposed to some of the uses I have seen made of his Basic Repertoire. Let me explain that. I am not, of course, against the *music* that makes up the Basic Repertoire. True, I do despise a few of the pieces, and there are others I would not willingly listen to again, but I am quite prepared to admit their appeal for those whose tastes differ from mine and for others who have not yet heard them too many times. What I *am* against is the concept that there could be any degree of permanence or finality to an overall basic library of recorded music, the kind of "this is it" delimited list that becomes an end in itself rather than merely a suggested beginning. The notion that one can look at the total wealth of recorded music and say that this piece and that one are "basic" and all the others aren't is to me simply appalling.

Of course, our Basic Repertoire doesn't really do that. First of all, it is still open-ended and on-going. And it is also all but exclusively confined to orchestral works—it is, in fact, no more than a basic *symphonic* repertoire. Other aspects of the vast reservoir of recorded music—solo piano, chamber music, German lieder, and, in this very issue, opera—are treated in our (also on-going) "Basic Library" series. These, like the Basic Repertoire, are intended as useful listings of some of the well-recognized cultural landmarks we share: they are merely convenient places from which to start. At least in the symphonic repertoire, however, all too many readers seem not to see that (to me) very obvious limitation, and tend to view the Basic Repertoire as an enshrined selection of the "best"—and therefore everything worth bothering about—that twelve centuries of musical activity have produced. The symphonic repertoire is far less than that. Quite in addition to its instrumental limitations, it is also confined to music

composed in the late eighteenth, the nineteenth, and the early twentieth centuries. In a sense, it is a direct reflection of the program-making of our major symphony orchestras—and there's the rub, for those programs are in themselves merely an attempt to reflect public taste or rather what public taste is *thought* to be. So the whole thing becomes one brutal, static circle of listeners wanting only the "best" and declaring it to be the best simply because other listeners have wanted it.

With this sort of setup, needless to say, change in our basic symphonic repertoire proceeds at the pace of a Galapagos tortoise crawling uphill. The few dramatic changes of recent years (notably the concert-hall enshrinement of Mahler and, to a lesser extent, Bartók) are probably more traceable to the influence of record producers than to anything else. Is there more imagination among record producers than among major conductors today? Probably. But why, then, since records are so adept at opening unfamiliar musical doors, do so many record collectors go out of their way to find methods of closing them? For that is exactly what this almost purposeful misunderstanding of the Basic Repertoire does. It guarantees, among other things, the petrification of the reputation of Paul Dukas as a one-piece composer, the excessive popularity of a few Mozart concertos and Haydn symphonies as compared to equally fine and all-but-neglected others, and the relegation to the department of specialized tastes of the masterpieces of such composers as Monteverdi, Schütz, Perotin, Dufay, Purcell, Webern, Fauré, and others, together with virtually the entire vocal, chamber, and solo music repertoires. To search the world for the ideal recording of *Scheherazade* or *The Fountains of Rome* while never being aware of the *Lagime d'Amante* of Monteverdi or the C Minor Piano Quintet of Fauré strikes me as the height of absurdity.

Any basic repertoire is merely a sampling and a beginning, and, with the exception of a relatively few unique masterpieces, any work in it should be replaceable by another with no loss of quality or scope. The listener's urge should always be to explore, not to rule out, and occasionally to seek out a piece of music precisely *because* no one he knows has heard it. Such explorations may make him a little late in arriving at the Beethoven Sixth or Mozart's D Minor Piano Concerto, but the appreciation of both may be greater for the originality of the approach to them.

* * *

The Bruno Walter Society (Box 921, Berkeley, California 94701) is one of a number of organizations whose purpose is partly to honor the man whose name they bear, and partly to issue records which are available only to members. It is quite easy to become a member of the Bruno Walter Society, and those interested should write to the address given above. What other benefits may ensue I am not prepared to say, but a recently released group of records available to the members may be reason enough to join.

There are, to begin with, three albums (Volume II is two records) of "The Art of Joseph Szigeti." Volume I includes the Mozart Concerto No. 3, in G Major, conducted by Walter, and the Berg Violin Concerto, conducted by Dimitri Mitropoulos. Both are superb performances marked by a technical elegance that Szigeti did not always display. Volume II includes Schubert's Duo, Sonata No. 1, Fantasia, and *Rondo Brilliant*, Brahms' Piano Trio No. 2, and Schumann's Trio No. 1, with such associated musicians as Myra Hess and Pablo Casals. Incidentally, that is about two hours and twenty minutes of music on two discs with little loss in sound quality. Volume III is the Bloch Violin Concerto, Charles Munch conducting.

Nathan Milstein and Bruno Walter are together in a simply marvelous performance of the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto on another disc, backed by a fine Schumann Symphony No. 1 which is unfortunately disfigured by noise from the original acetates. Artur Schnabel plays two Mozart concertos (Nos. 22 and 23), and Edwin Fischer two Beethoven sonatas (Opp. 110 and 111) on two additional discs, and there is a striking set of three records of Richard Strauss conducting his own *Zarathustra*, *Till Eulenspiegel*, *Don Juan*, *Ein Heldenleben*, *Tod und Verklärung*, and *Bürger als Edelmann* with the Vienna Philharmonic.

The recordings are mostly more than adequate (mono only, of course), the processing and pressing very good, the packaging bottom-of-the-line, and the whole thing technically some kind of piracy. But the music. . . . Oh, wow!

86 Proof Blended Scotch Whisky © 1973 Paddington Corp., N.Y.



One of the rare pleasures of Christmas.

J&B
RARE
SCOTCH



How d'ya like them Raspberries?

Eric, Jim, Wally, and Dave (or is it John, Paul, George, and Ringo?)

THE SIMELS REPORT:

Steve Simels goes to a mahvelous party

JUST in the line of keeping the Who, the What, and the When straight, there is a good deal of information gathering necessary before, between, and after the fact of our review columns, and I thought you'd feel better if you knew that I *have* been getting around. In fact, just the other Wednesday, I went to a mahvelous party. But before the party came the concert. It was at Carnegie Hall, which is still the classiest rock venue in town. Every show I've seen there, even the mediocre ones, has been fun just because the hall itself is so swank. Anyway, I was there to see Stories and Raspberries (and also to hustle the Raspberries producer, Jimmy Jenner, for whom my band did a few demos before he got really successful—all of which is another number entirely). Stories were on first, and WNEW FM jock Pete Fornatelle (a wimp of the first order) presented them with a gold record for their single *Brother Louie*. (Somebody in the crowd kept yelling for *Louie Louie*, which must have annoyed them no end.)

Now, I always get a kick out of seeing a Top Ten group doing their hit, but in this case it was kind of sad. Stories, you see, were the brainchild of ex-Left Banke keyboard whiz Mike Brown (who has since departed). They've been very much in his image, and they've gotten out two really lovely albums of post-Beatles stuff, very melodic, very creative. But they went nowhere. So, on a whim, they did a cover version of a minor English novelty hit (the aforementioned *Brother Louie*) which doesn't sound even remotely like them—and they got a smash hit. And that's *all* the

audience wanted to hear, of course—Stories' own vastly superior material got polite applause at best.

The Raspberries did much better—in fact, they even hired (I'm guessing) some young girls to rush the stage and scream. Their Beatles/Small Faces/Who emulations may betray a marked lack of originality, but basically I'm a sucker for mid-Sixties-style high-harmony schlock, and I must admit I enjoyed them. The best thing they did was a medley of Little Eva's *Locomotion* and the Ronettes' *Be My Baby*, which were dead ringers for the originals—the latter was especially impressive, in that the group was able to duplicate one of Phil Spector's most gargantuan studio productions with ease.

ANYWAY, the party (thrown jointly by Capitol and Buddah, which may—or may not—be indicative of an industry trend toward economy) was on the top of the Time-Life building, and simply everyone was there—Henry Edwards of *After Dark* and the *New York Times*, Dave Marsh of *Creem* and *Newsday*, Todd Rundgren in his green hair, members of Gunhill Road, publicist Toby Mamis, Buddah's lovely Nancy Lewis, critic Jon Tiven (in from Sarah Lawrence to hear Stories, his longtime faves), Yiddish theater stars Harry and Bella Fonte, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Harry Horlick and his A&P Gypsies, Superman, and the Princess Anastasia. Incidentally, they had an excellent sound system up there, over which they were blasting both Stories and Raspberries LP's. The entire New York press corps got up almost en masse to dance. Never thought I'd see *that*.

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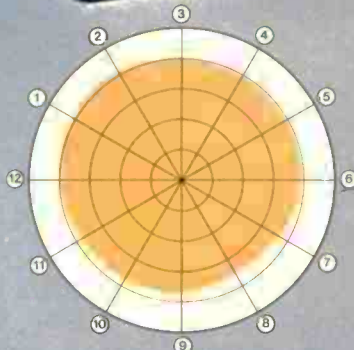
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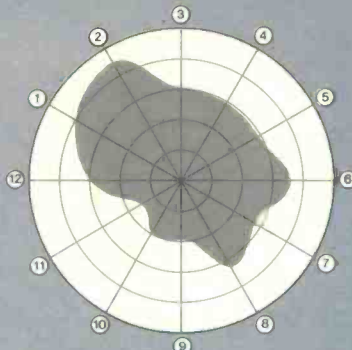
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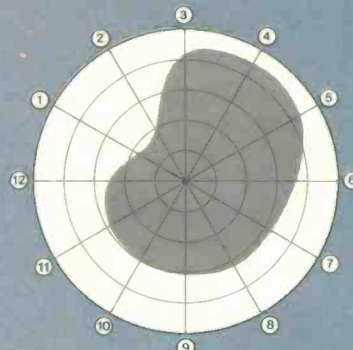
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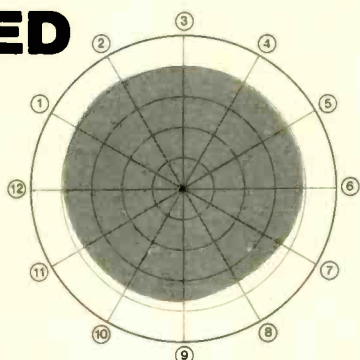
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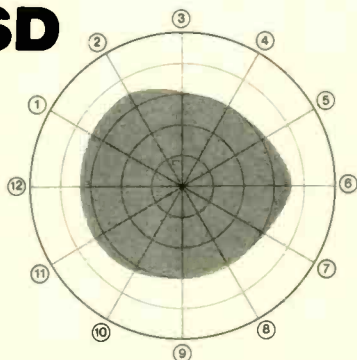
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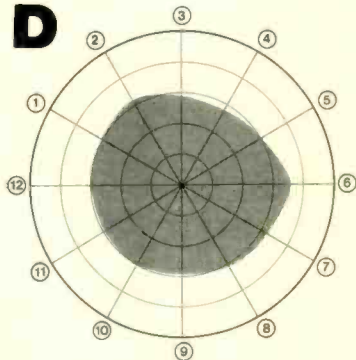
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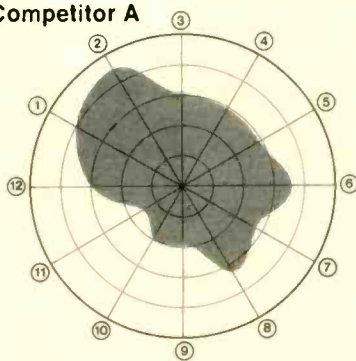
- 1-MOL @ 333Hz
- 2-Sensitivity @ 333Hz
- 3-Sensitivity @ 8kHz

- 4-Sensitivity @ 12.5kHz
- 5-MOL @ 8kHz
- 6-Erasability

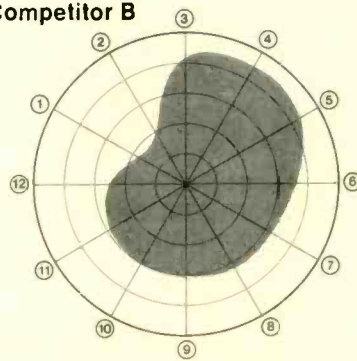
- 7-Bias Noise
- 8-Print-Through
- 9-Modulation Noise

- 10-Output Uniformity
- 11-Uniformity of Sensitivity
- 12-Bias Range

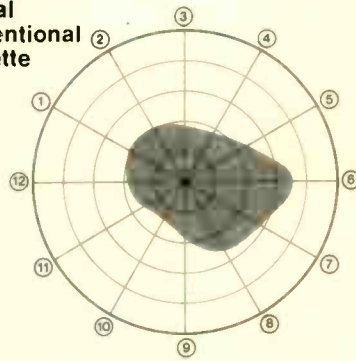
Competitor A



Competitor B



Typical Conventional Cassette



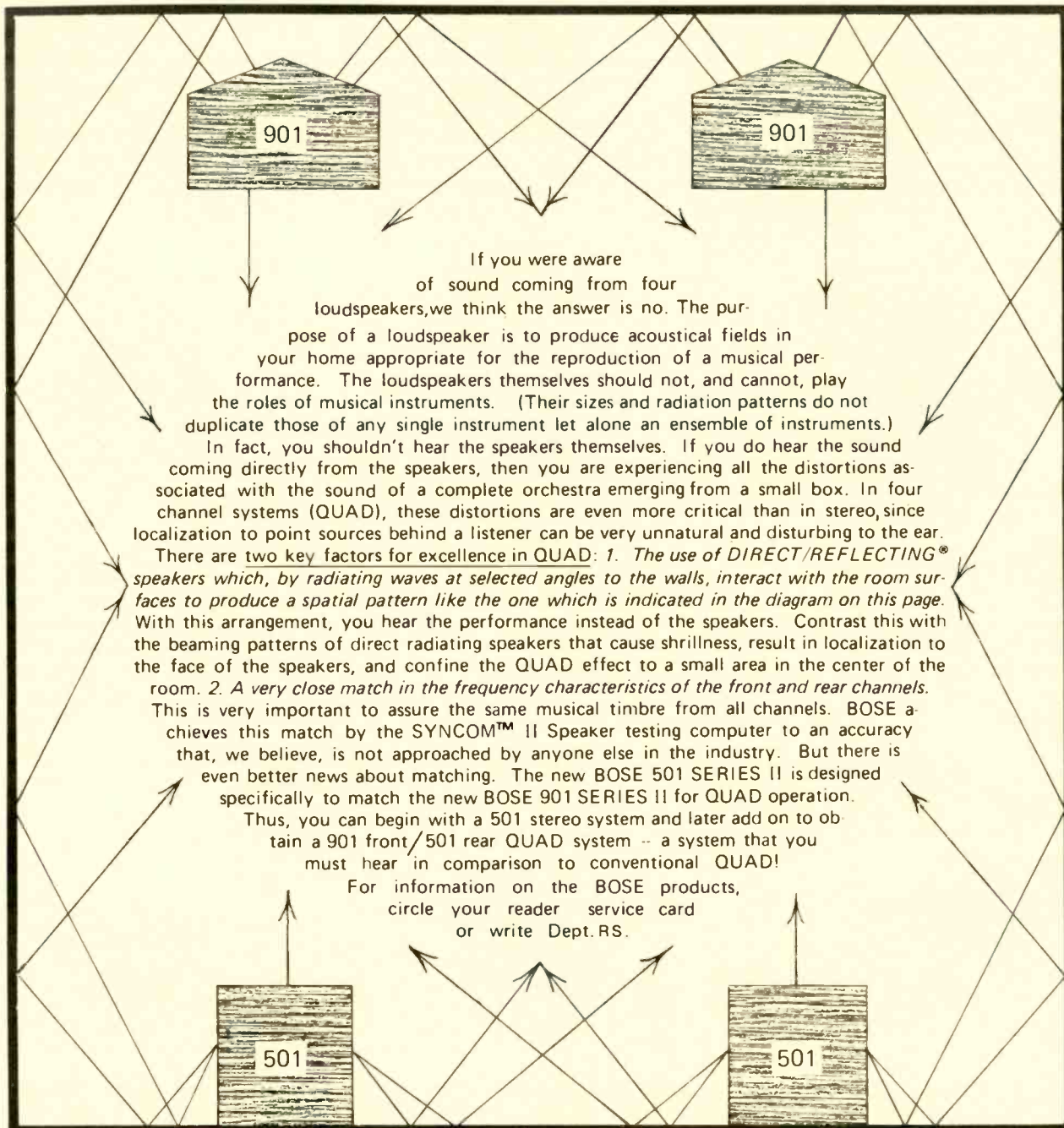
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Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht*

IT is ironic that nearly a quarter of a century after his death Arnold Schoenberg's music remains largely outside the normal experience of the average music lover. This despite the passionate advocacy of Schoenberg's music over the years by several distinguished and influential performers—Rudolf Kolisch and Dimitri Mitropoulos in the immediate past and Pierre Boulez in the present. True, certain of his works that were once thought unrewarding and unfathomable have now lost some of their terrifying aspects. The Violin Concerto, Op. 36, is perhaps principal among these: thanks largely to the perceptive, lucid, and loving performances (and recording—Deutsche Grammophon 2530 257) given it worldwide during the past decade by Israeli violinist Zvi Zeitlin, it at least has been heard beyond the initiates' circle. But where mainstream repertoire is concerned, Schoenberg has still made it with only one work, *Verklärte Nacht* (*Transfigured Night*), composed in 1899 when he was twenty-five.

It was an impassioned poem from a collection titled *Weib und Welt* (*Woman and World*) by Richard Dehmel that fired the composer's imagination during the course of a holiday stay at the home of his teacher, Alexander von Zemlinsky. There, during three weeks in September 1899, Schoenberg composed *Verklärte Nacht* as a sextet for strings—two violins, two violas, and two cellos. Dehmel's poem, considered shockingly erotic in its time, tells of a man and a woman walking through a wood at night. She confesses, with heavy guilt, that she is pregnant by another man. He comforts her, declaring that her guilt is self-destructive; the power of his love will cement their relationship and make the unborn child truly his. She feels redeemed by his love and understanding, and as they walk on the night becomes transfigured.

The poem falls into five sections: Introduction; The Woman's Confession; Love Duet; The Man's Forgiveness; and Apotheosis. Schoenberg's biographer, Egon Wellesz, wrote of the music:

The structure of *Verklärte Nacht*, in accordance with the poem, is made up of five sections, in which the first, third and fifth are of more epic nature and so portray the deep feelings of the people wandering about in the cold moonlit night. The second contains the passionate plaint

of the woman, the fourth the sustained answer of the man, which shows much depth and warmth of understanding.

The music, though strongly influenced by Wagnerian chromaticism, was considered quite radical at its first performance in 1903. But, as Schoenberg developed his theory of twelve-tone composition in the ensuing years, *Verklärte Nacht* came to be respected and admired in even the most conservative circles. In 1917 the composer arranged the score for string orchestra (adding a part for double basses) to heighten the expressivity of the music, and in 1943 he made revisions in both the sextet and string-orchestra versions.

SEVEN of the nine available recorded performances are of the string-orchestra version, most of them by conductors whose strong suit is intensity. My own favorites are the performances conducted by Daniel Barenboim (Angel S-36484), Zubin Mehta (London CS 6552, reel L 80202), Dimitri Mitropoulos (Odyssey 32160298), and Leopold Stokowski (Seraphim S-60080). Each conductor imparts to the score his own special brand of vitality and drama, and all four receive fine playing and luminous recorded sound. Mitropoulos, whose performance is the fastest of the lot, delivers not only the most lucid and tightly knit reading but the most spontaneous. If I prefer his recording above all the others, it is for these reasons—and because this is now one of the few remaining of the many recordings Mitropoulos made. It can thus serve as a treasureable souvenir of his compelling powers as a conductor to those who never experienced his art in the concert hall.

In the sextet form, there are two available recordings, one on disc and one on tape. For some reason, Deutsche Grammophon has apparently withdrawn the disc recording of the performance by the expanded New Vienna String Quartet (available at one time as DG SLPM 130 361), but fortunately this lyrical and impassioned performance still exists on tape (reel DG L 9361, cassette DG 92 3099). I prefer the string-orchestra version of *Verklärte Nacht*, but those for whom the greater intimacy of the sextet version is irresistible can choose either the Deutsche Grammophon tape or the augmented Ramor Quartet on Turnabout 34263.

* Mr. Bookspan's 1973 UPDATING OF THE BASIC REPERTOIRE is now available in pamphlet form. Send 25¢ to Susan Larabee, Stereo Review, 1 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016 for your copy. *

LO, THE MIGHTY HARP!

Scorn, ridicule, contempt, and condescension have long been the lot of the tough little folk instrument, but its high, lonesome, Western wail has nonetheless lodged in America's heart

By Noel Coppage



Paramount Pictures

THEY laughed when Walter Shirra sat down at the console — of a space ship — and played *Jingle Bells* on a tiny harmonica. They laughed when Johnny Puleo and His Harmonica Gang, without missing a note on *their* harmonicas, played out a skit in which Johnny, four-feet-six, kept getting crowded out of the spotlight until he rushed in wildly and slugged the bass player in the *kneecap* . . . and hurt his fist. They even laughed when Johnny Carson said playing the harmonica for a living was “a hand-to-mouth existence.”

But nobody laughs when Charlie McCoy goes to work carrying a briefcase containing nothing but four-dollar (and cheaper) harmonicas, or when Sonny Terry draws the pain of what we call the Black Experience through the number two hole of his harp and, with a flutter of his hand, sends a choked wail out over people who can understand something hearing this that they could never understand hearing words.

And so it goes. The harmonica — or “mouth organ,” “mouth harp,” “French harp,” or, lately, just “harp” — has led a double life in America ever since it arrived here in the 1860's. Americans have laughed at it, and they have cried with it. There is or has been or will be one in almost every family. Probably 75 million Americans have learned to play a chorus of *Red River Valley* or *Hot Cross Buns* on the harmonica, and this has perhaps been enough to persuade many of them that it's just a toy — if it were a *real* musical instrument, it would be both less common and more difficult to play, wouldn't it? And yet, there is something about the *sound* of a well-played harp that cuts through all this, making us not just willing but eager to suspend such judgments, stop kidding around, and surrender to it. Probably this is true because the harmonica has been through so much with us, partly because it was always small and sturdy enough to make every trip (even into space) and partly because it just happened to be particularly eloquent about us and our adventures.

“The harmonica has been a far more important folk instrument in America than in any other country,” says Gil Matthies, advertising director of M. Hohner, Inc., the German “family business” that has for many years produced the great majority of harps sold everywhere.

Even John Sebastian Sr. would admit, roused in the middle of the night, that the harmonica has not been much of a *classical* music instrument, but I would agree with him that the reasons for this are social, or extra-musical. Such fine harmonicists as Sebastian, Cham-Ber Huang, Eddy Manson, Larry Adler, Larry Logan, and a few others have done

amazing things with the little harp on the concert stage, but somehow the image of the classical harp man is not sufficiently august for the tastemakers of the field. Not yet, at least.

But once the frontiersmen — to whom augustness meant you could spit farther than the other guy — got the harmonica into the West, having taken it along because it was small and tough, it turned out that the instrument spoke poetically about the high, lonesome character of the place. And once the Yankee soldiers had scattered harps throughout the South, it turned out that the harp's melancholy, vocal sound was a natural at elaborating on the African-based inflections of the field whoops and other elements of a music being created by the black people. The harmonica thus became a folk instrument on two fronts at once, and if the blacks took it more seriously longer, it may have been because they were able to coax more eloquence from it, or because their “front” lasted a lot longer, or because it was still the cheapest instrument made, and being “emancipated” didn't put any money in their pockets, or their children's pockets. Says Sonny Terry: “I made my first hundred dollars with a twenty-five-cent harmonica.”

Blues harp playing is still the healthiest of all harmonica uses, anywhere. But now, more or less suddenly, the other — white — folk-art use of the little harp is moving into a boom period. Someone made a tally recently and found a harmonica in *half* the songs on the pop charts, and the list of performers using harmonicas in their arrangements reads like a Who's Who in folk, rock, country, folk-rock, country-rock, and just plain pop (whatever that means) music. As often happens when I'm pondering this sort of thing, the influence of Bob Dylan pops to mind — not because he plays well, but because he was an influential figure who made the harp very visible.

THE most celebrated of the non-blues harp players now (he *can* play excellent blues when he wants to) is Charlie McCoy, the busiest studio sideman in Nashville, just named country-music instrumentalist of the year. “The Real McCoy” was the top-selling country album for five straight weeks in 1972, and his single *Today I Started Loving You Again*, despite the enormous success Merle Haggard's vocal version had enjoyed not long before, sat atop the country charts for at least a month. Before Charlie could pick up his Grammy award as best country instrumentalist of the year, his whiz-bang version of *Orange Blossom Special* — another overexposed tune, one would think — was promising to do even better. And making his own recordings is just a

small part of McCoy's work; almost *everyone* who comes to Nashville to record (and that, sooner or later, includes just about everyone . . . period) seems to want Charlie's harps in the arrangements. He is in the studio every day from something like ten in the morning to two at night.

McCoy says his approach to playing country or pop harp is to try for "the straight sound of the harp," with a minimum of the hand-fluttering and oral-cavity manipulations blues players use. He does, however, have a distinctive, brassy sound, can go at lip-blistering speed, and probably controls the instrument as well as any man alive. Like the great majority of folk, country, and blues players, he uses mostly the Hohner "Marine Band," a ten-hole, twenty-note diatonic (which means it is set up like a section of the white keys of a piano) harmonica that sells for about four dollars. Charlie buys them off the rack. He uses the blues-developed technique of bending reeds (more anon about this) to hit sharps and flats, but he hits them head-on, without sliding up or down by the merest fraction of a tone. This is about as difficult, I would say, having tried both, as lobbing a tennis ball into the chimney of a three-story house.

A romantic he's not, however. But those who want their folk harp a bit warmer and more sentimental are finding a surprising number of good harp players ready to fill the order. George Christ, a member of J. F. Murphy's Free Flowing Salt, plays so sweetly he has shaken several gypsy violinists into trying something in a major key (there is, incidentally, one harp model that comes in *minor* keys, but Saul Broudy and I are the only people I've ever seen who had one). Willow Scarlett, who gave David Bromberg's first album warmth and credibility, carves the outer cases for his harps out of wood and swishes olive oil in his mouth, for added mellowness, I'm told, as he plays. Eric Andersen, building upon Dylan's "trademark" of playing the harp in a rack to free the hands for guitar or piano, has found ways of weaving warm, nubbly, subdued lines and chords—without those squeaky Dylan discords—into his adamantly romantic music. Eric is one of the few professionals to use a tremolo harp occasionally: it has diatonic tuning, but two sets of reeds per hole, one reed tuned to concert pitch and the other a teensy bit higher for a reverb effect. Jean "Toots" Thielemans, a jazz (!) harmonica player whose imaginative decorations adorn several Quincy Jones recordings, has proved—in such settings as John Denver's "Aerie" album—that he can wail like the loneliest of cowpokes and also come in from outer space (in the same song) and still sound neither unnatural nor showy. Thielemans also plays



Harpists, like bassoonists, are hard to catch with an instrument in their mouths: here is busy Charlie McCoy with a mike in his.

guitar and is a noted whistler. The similarities between harp playing and singing have been noted, but in one important aspect (you draw in as well as blow out) *whistling* is the "instrument" that leads most naturally to the harmonica.

There's a profusion of players no more romantic than McCoy but considerably more country. Jimmie Fadden of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band is pretty fast, slightly ragged, and seems to think like a fiddle player. I don't think he leaves enough holes for the other instruments, but he has the old-timey sound and at his best is reminiscent of such fine old country players as Lonnie Glossen. Jonathan Edwards is *very* fast, but his unsubtle harp style doesn't seem to jibe with the kind of music he plays. Doc Watson has a sound similar to Fadden's but a bit more like a true blues-harp sound, and he has impeccable judgment about when to play and when not to.

There are players, such as Broudy and John Sebastian the Younger, who switch back and forth between blues and folk styles, sounding a bit more chordy and full-bodied than most when they play folk. There are players like Dan Smith who play gospel music almost exclusively and so have modified the blues-harp style slightly. But the thing there is *not*, to my knowledge, is a quality *female* harp player. Big Mama Thornton is the only one of much notoriety and, while she may have been good at it once, she seems to have been too preoccupied lately to give it much attention.

Sandwiched between the country-folk harp and the blues harp in real life (as in these pages) there *does* exist a third harmonica use in secular music. Richard Hayman used a harmonica as the lead voice for big-orchestra versions of *Off Shore* and similar easy-listening tunes. Jerry Murad and the Harmonicats perfected the harmonica trio form, using bass, chord, and chromatic lead harmonicas

to play *Peg o' My Heart* and similar easy-listening tunes. Johnny Puleo and His Gang and Paul Baron and the Harmonica Rascals (founded by Borrah Minevitch) added still more accompaniment harmonicas to play—well, nobody can remember just what, because the gangs and the rascals were clowning around so much all the time. Some brilliant technique has been flashed in this kind of playing, particularly on the classical musicians' choice of harps, the chromatic, which is set up (thanks to a sliding reed cover) like a section of the white and black keys of a piano. But easy-listening harmonica—in trios, harmonica bands, whatever—is like barbershop quartet music: always apparently on the verge of dying out, always smarting from the snubs of the young, blithely unaware of its own lack of soul, continuously moaning about the dearth of good new players everyone assumes are essential if the thing is going to be carried on . . . and surviving anyway.

THE harp's survival as a blues instrument was never in doubt, although if certain purists had known what the blacks were doing with the harp, there would have been letters-to-editors about it, and maybe even legislation. Never taught to play "correctly," the bluesmen sized up the harp all "wrong"—that is, in a fresh, objective, unrestricted way. Ignorant of the philosophy behind the reed layout (the harp is built the way it is so you can blow out more than you draw in), they just looked for a way to make it slide and wail and hit those "blue notes," the flatted thirds and sevenths that are crucial to the blues but understandably were not of much concern to white Germans in the business of manufacturing harmonicas. The blacks learned how to get two pitches from the same reed, how to make it sound flat by overstressing or "bending" it. In order to do that—since, at the bass end of the harp,

ABOUT THE FRONTISPIECE

AUTHOR Coppage makes a good case for the contention that the sound of the harmonica (or "mouth organ" as it was known when I was a pup) is prototypically (a) American, (b) wild-western, and (c) lonesome. All this is extraordinarily exemplified in *Once Upon a Time in the West*, a (quasi) spaghetti western lately seen on your TV screen. The Sergio Leone film features Claudia Cardinale, Henry Fonda, Jason Robards, and Charles Bronson (see frontispiece), but the real star of the piece is the harmonica-drenched score by Ennio Morricone (the harmonica soloist is F. De Gemini). Plot, subplot, and counter-plot are too complicated to unravel here, but the harmonica is the key to one of them—a killing and, later, an avenging. The haunting and poignant theme—a real leitmotiv—is powerfully evocative in the movie, and it somehow refuses to leave the mind afterward. The soundtrack is available on RCA LSP-4736.

—Ed.



Reigning virtuoso of the blues harp is Sonny Terry, who has been perfecting his remarkable skills for something like sixty years.

a reed in a draw hole is infinitely easier to bend than one in a blow hole—they had to play so that draw notes, not blow notes, occurred more often and on the more important chords of the song. The answer was to play in the "wrong" key. Actually, the harp man plays in the same key as the guitar, but he does so with a harp tuned to a higher key. It works out to a fifth higher, in fact. A bluesman plays in the key of G on a C-tuned harp, in E on an A-tuned harp, and so forth, by starting in the "wrong" place on the mouthpiece. This is called "cross-harp," "crossed-harp," or "second-position harp."

When I asked Sonny Terry about it, however, he said, "I don't call it crossed. I call it playing the way I learned to play."

That was back about 1917, but Sonny started applying himself in earnest after two accidents left him almost totally blind as a teenager. He also holds the harp (almost always a Marine Band) "upside down," with bass notes on the right, but that's another relative term. Terry is most likely the best blues player alive, and certainly the most rural; he even throws in falsetto whoops now and then ("There are seventeen different kinds of whoops in this song," he tells audiences about one particular number). Many blues-harp players have effectively taken their hands out of the action by holding the microphone and harp *together* in them, but not Sonny. He leaves the mike on its stand and does things with his hands that would exhaust the most adrenalized pantomimist. The old tremolo and wah-wah effects are child's play: Sonny's left hand is a blur of flourishes, arcs, sweeps, chops—and each motion has quite a distinct effect on the sound.

"It's been pretty rough at times," Sonny told me as we left a blues club that he and Brownie McGhee were packing nightly in the Boston area. "We played a long time in a lot of rough places and didn't



Chester Records

Sonny Boy Williamson (the elder) is gone now, but his few recordings suggest he may have been the best blues harpist of all.

make no money. But we kept at it, because we figured our time would come.”

It has. Born Saunders Tedell in 1911, Sonny was a street player with Blind Boy Fuller from about 1933 until Fuller died in 1940. They made some recordings starting in 1936, but not a lot of money. After Fuller's death, Sonny teamed up with singer-guitarist Brownie McGhee, and they've been partners ever since. Sonny has backed a wide assortment of performers, however, including such folk heavies as Leadbelly and Woody Guthrie, who for a time camped at Sonny's house.

Terry's style is rhythmic and complex. He frequently hits a chugging bass-chord rhythm, but he can slur a great, diverse tumble of single notes together so rapidly that it almost sounds as if he's hitting chords impossible on a harp. He mixes melody, counterpoint, harmony, and rhythm a lot faster and more precisely than common sense can account for, and he is never unnecessarily ornate.

Charlie Musselwhite, who plays "amplified harp" (holding the mike against it), has several characteristic licks, including a slow, stylish warble he gets by gently shaking his head. He works the high end of his harp more than most players, plays a lot of up-tempo things and a lot of notes in the slower

pieces, and is, in all, aggressively experimental. Some of the wilder licks he tries don't always work out, but he plays such an unfettered and yet personal fusion of scattered influences that he must be one of the great harp stylists. As this is written, many harp players are eagerly awaiting publication of the instruction book Charlie wrote when he was recovering from an auto-accident injury last year: to date, the best such manual probably has been *Blues Harp* by Tony Glover.

If you're new to De Blooze, you may be confused about the Sonny Boys Williamson. There were two, both great harp players. The younger one, John Lee Williamson (1921-1948), organized a band in the late Thirties that could pass for an early model of the Chicago-style rhythm-and-blues band. He accentuated the beat and found harp phrasings that helped urbanize the blues, but retained his moaning, heavily wah-wahed sound from his rural background. If there is a Chicago style of blues-harp playing (harp playing is so personal that any identification of "schools" is largely subjective), he was one of its founders. The older Sonny Boy, Willie "Rice" Miller (1897-1965), took the name of Williamson. He stirred up the blues-harp craze in England when he toured there shortly before his death. Those who heard him in concerts seem almost universally to insist that he was the greatest blues-harp player of all, and his poetry does shine through the tinny production of the few recordings he left behind.

Many great harp players worked for Muddy Waters at one time or another: Junior Wells, James Cotton (who, with Stevie Wonder, likes the chromatic harmonica, which most bluesmen consider too large and awkward), Shakey Walter Horton, and the late Little Walter were among them. Little Walter was among the first to hold the mike in his hands, and was another major influence on young British blues musicians.

Jimmy Reed, one of the figures who inspired Charlie McCoy, has the most stylized sound of any harp player I know, in any field. Since he also plays

Young Bob Dylan may well have set the new wave of harpists in motion, but its energy potential today owes much to the efforts of folk singer Eric Anderson, Jimmie Fadden of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, and latter-day troubadours like Jonathan Edwards.



Columbia Records



Vanguard



Liberty



Capricorn

electric guitar, he uses a rack and plays a lot of "straight" or "first-position" harp, but he never plays much of a melodic, or counter-melodic, or harmonic line—he just blows fierce, snakey punctuation into the statements of guitar, bass, and vocals. The *pauses* in his harp playing are what blink your eyes. He's a surrealist.

There are literally hundreds of fine blues-harp players, and more good ones seem to arrive each day. Corky Siegel, whose style suggests both Sonny Terry and some of the Chicago players ("I never did sit down and listen carefully to any one harp player," he says), is particularly gifted: he has what bluesmen call "the tone." Magic Dick (I'm told he will disclose, under questioning, that his real name is Richard) has put the harp into the consciousness of countless young minds, and in the process has checked the J. Geils Band's tendency to self-destruct in a fit of sophomoric showboating. Richard "Earthquake" Anderson, who hit some folkie notes behind the Youngbloods, was a key man in the formation of Jesse Colin Young's cool-bluesy new band. John Hammond Jr., who formerly relied upon Bill Dicey for the harp playing in his music, is playing it himself now—so well that thirty-year veterans of the blues have made some admiring comments.

The two most accessible blues-harp players in recent years have been Paul Butterfield and John Mayall. "Butterfield is responsible for exposing the blues and the harp to a great many white, young, and probably Jewish kids," Corky Siegel says. Mayall has done much to keep the blues and the harp before young audiences in England, Europe, and America. Butterfield plays amplified harp, uses single notes where other players might use chords, and is a smooth, no-baloney harp player. He never sounds flashy and never sounds taxed. Mayall, who has his own homemade harp-holder/amplifier (it appears to have a guitar pick-up embedded in its wooden housing) indulges in some brinkmanship in that he tends to play *to* his weaknesses as much as avoiding them: few demand so much of themselves,

and if you didn't like it this week, come back next week and Mayall will have mastered it.

A determined album hunter can discover many equally fine harp players—players such as Lazy Lester—whose existence is unknown to the vast majority of *Red River Valley* virtuosos: this provides some indication of the depth of the relationship between blues and harp. So it is not surprising that devotees of the blues still have more respect for harmonicas than other people do. But respect from most quarters is there, even if the instrument does still have to endure being made sport of occasionally. You could ask Charlie McCoy about that.

Or you could look on the back of the run-of-the-mill pop album and see the harp player *identified*. There was a time, not long ago, when you could hear a harmonica in such an album, look to the credits and see the names of guitar pickers, piano players, string arrangers, wood-block clackers, producers, hammered dulcimer players, sackbut players, hand clappers, and people to whom the featured artist wanted to say Thanks or Hi or Drop Dead, but nary a mention of any harp player's name. That doesn't happen much nowadays.

Neither does the look that used to come over people's faces when I answered the question, "And what instrument do you play?"

Neither does the fifty-cent or even the one-dollar price tag that used to adorn good-quality harmonicas in the showcase.

But one thing has not changed: in der Black Forest, or wherever it is, villagers who have perfect pitch—and whose fathers, grandfathers, and great grandfathers had perfect pitch and did the same thing in their days—sit in little sound booths and tune harmonica reeds by ear . . . and set them aside for a month of "seasoning" and tune them again.

And another thing that has not changed is that, sooner or later, someone in your clan will try one of these things. Happy (try starting it by blowing out through hole number three) Trails.

John Sebastian came to the harp naturally—his father is the renowned classical harmonicist. Charlie Musselwhite has written a book on the subject, and maybe Paul Butterfield (now of the group Better Days) or British blues revivalist John Mayall ought to.



Reprise



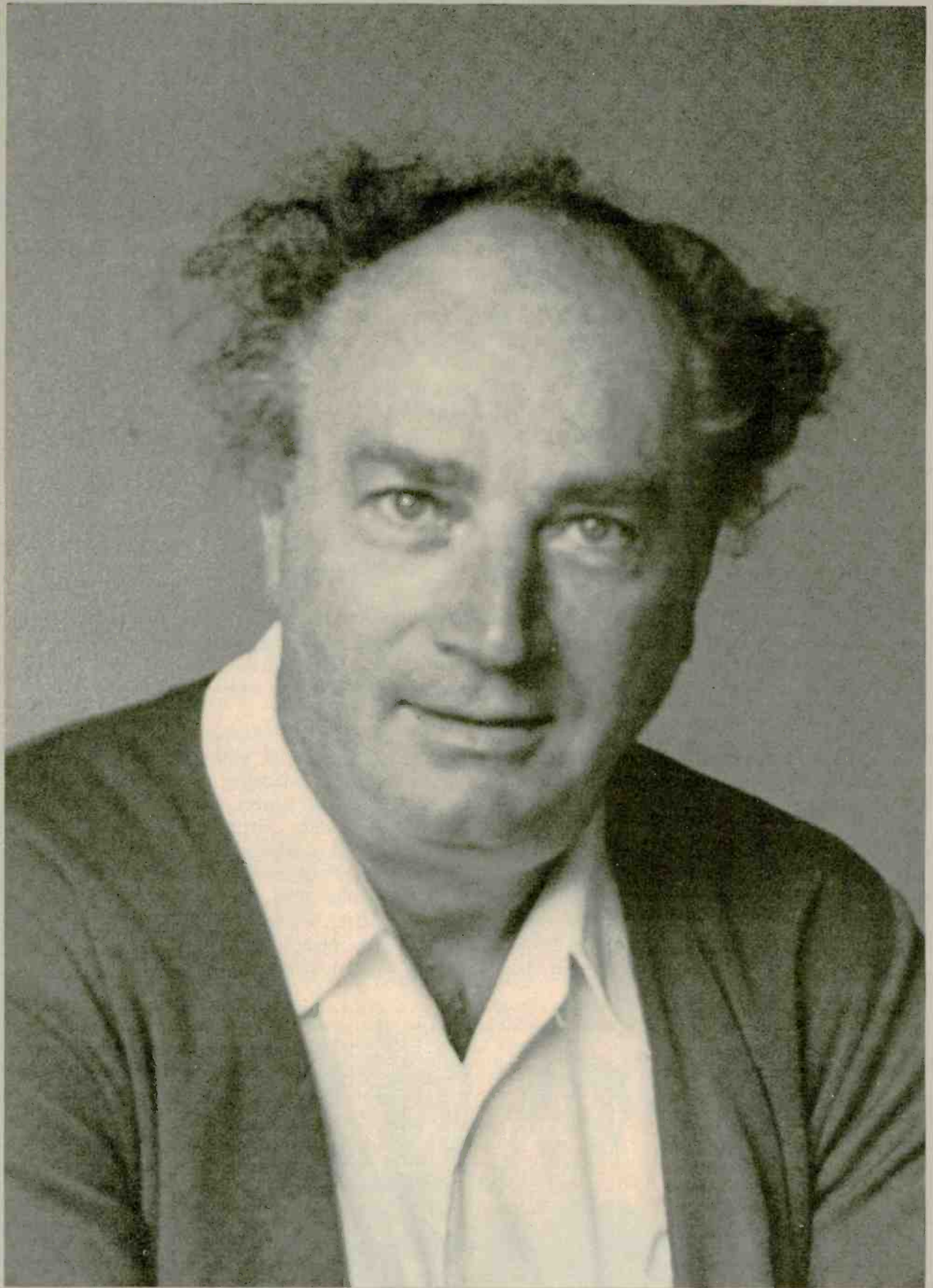
Vanguard



Warner Bros.



Private



RAFAEL KUBELIK

The Metropolitan Opera's new music director takes the helm

By Robert S. Clark

FOR a man who has every eye in New York's—and probably the nation's—musical community upon him, Rafael Kubelik, the Czech conductor who this season became the first man ever to hold the post of musical director of the Metropolitan Opera, is surprisingly serene. If he is worried at all about taking a spectacular pratfall in the glare of the spotlight his new position has focused on him, no one would have suspected so the morning I visited him in his new quarters at the opera house. His vivacity and his ready laugh were all the more remarkable because I knew that he was embroiled in planning and rehearsing the New York stage premiere of Hector Berlioz's *The Trojans* on October 22—by design the ninetieth anniversary of the Met's first opening night.

"Taking this post is a tremendous responsibility," Kubelik told me in his lively but slightly deferential manner of speaking. "It is also a great joy. For me this is the culmination of almost fifty years in music"—he will turn sixty just after the current season—"and it is a chance to bring all my experience to bear on the realization of my ideals. Here I really feel I have the prospect of fulfillment. This is the greatest opera house in the world. It is physically beautiful, it is excellent acoustically, and its roster contains the greatest singers alive. There are other great opera houses, of course, but it is only here at the Metropolitan that you can dream of having stars singing fine ensemble!" He grinned broadly, and then hurried on, as if to fend off any objection to this sweeping claim. "It is not true, you know, that great singers do not want to be part of a team. They do, like everyone else, if the groundwork is laid and the necessary spirit created around a production. The musical director must foster the feeling that everyone involved in the production—star, chorister, instrumentalist, stagehand—is a link in a great chain. They must all feel that the success of the undertaking depends upon each of their contributions. Stars will feel the appropriate spirit as strongly as anyone, and they will rehearse like anyone else. But the spirit must be evoked. It is not automatic.

"Now, please understand—I will not indulge in public criticism of the old administration. I give it credit for establishing the tremendous prestige and the high overall quality of the house, which will help me greatly in realizing my ideals. We must dust off the old productions and make them work better, and introduce into the repertoire the deserving works of this and other centuries that can be done here because the Met's roster has the singers to do them. But only the spirit of co-operation I spoke of makes it possible for real inspiration to flower on the stage."

Kubelik and Schuyler Chapin, the Met's new general manager, have already made several innovations intended to promote this spirit. "First of all, we have cut down the number of operas to be presented in one season—from twenty-seven last season to twenty-two this—so as to obtain more rehearsal time for each opera. We will in-

sist that the original cast remain intact throughout a season's performances of a new production, and with very few exceptions the same will apply to the rest of the repertoire. When it is necessary to have cast changes among the leading singers in a particular opera, we will make the changes all at once and rehearse it as if it were an entirely new cast. We have engaged our conductors with the understanding that each will lead every performance of the work assigned to him, and will oversee it thoroughly. Each will have a cover conductor who will work with him from the beginning and will know every stage movement and every *fermata* the singers take. The cover man will be in the house for every performance in case he is needed. In addition, as you know, we have James Levine as principal conductor. He will spend seven or eight months a year at the house and will be co-responsible with me for its artistic welfare."

Another announced goal of the new "partners"—as Kubelik calls himself and Chapin—is to make the Metropolitan, as much as is consistent with artistic excellence, a showplace for American singing. "I have heard so many fine American singers in Europe. Why should they have to stay there?" Yet, I told him, many American opera-goers feel that an Italian, a German, or a Frenchman can bring an idiomatic sound and address to a role in his native language that is often beyond even the best American artists. "I would never generalize about American singers in that way," he replied. "It is what the individual brings to a role that counts—though, of course, it must be colored by a knowledge of style and tradition. As for sound, I have known German singers whose vocal production is very like the Italians', and even a few Italians whose vocal production is like the Germans'. Yes, there are typical Italian and German singers, but we are not striving for the typical. The conductor, of course, should see to it that overall a performance possesses an idiomatic style."

The repertoire possibilities indicated by the Chapin-Kubelik team's choice of *The Trojans* as their first new production—representing as it does a clean break with the taste of the previous general manager—have been the subject of constant speculation among opera fans. Kubelik was understandably cautious and unspecific. "I do not think we should try to stage an opera just for the sake of doing that opera, but should always base our choices on the availability of singers and conductors who can do the work as it should be done. And the Met is not an experimental house—it is not in its nature to be so. Still, with those things in mind, there are many possibilities. I have done Janáček's operas elsewhere, and we will consider them. Among other twentieth-century works, we are looking at those of Hindemith and Bartók. We have also thought of the Busoni operas, but have rejected them for the moment because we feel we cannot cast them properly. This season we are reviving Rossini's *L'Italiana in Algeri* and Verdi's *I Vespri Siciliani*, and for next season we have announced Britten's *Death in Venice* as well as

Rossini's *Siege of Corinth* for Beverly Sills' Met debut." And the Czech operas of Smetana and Dvořák? "I would love to do them," he said, with a deprecatory laugh, "but I cannot push them on the public simply because I am Czech. My contract runs only three years. Perhaps, if it is renewed. . . ."

One of the most frequently voiced criticisms of the Metropolitan in recent years has been that Italian operas had proliferated and had crowded out important works of the German and French repertoire. But Kubelik does not intend to redress the balance radically. "I expect that Italian works will continue to dominate the repertoire, because by and large they are singers' operas. The essence of the operatic art is beautiful singing, and whatever the language of the opera it must be a vehicle for beautiful singing if it is to find a place in the Met repertoire. I certainly do not intend to force my singers to cope with the yelling and shouting that are characteristic of the stage works of the past twenty years or so. Composition seems now to have developed into a branch of the science of acoustics. I do not understand it. I am a musician, and I will go to my grave as a musician, never as an acoustician. But to return to your question, we will try to get more of the important French and German works into the repertoire. This year, in addition to *The Trojans*, I will conduct *Don Giovanni* and the new production of *Götterdämmerung*, and in the season to come I will lead the entire *Ring* cycle in succession. It has been more than a decade since it was possible to see the entire *Ring* in a single season at the Met."

Rafael Kubelik was born in 1914 at Bychory, near Prague, in the Bohemian province of what was then an Austrian Empire about to come apart at the seams. He was one of eight children of the celebrated Czech violin virtuoso Jan Kubelik and his wife, a Hungarian noblewoman. He studied at the Prague Conservatory and made his conducting debut with the Czech Philharmonic in 1934, before he had turned twenty. In 1935 and 1936 he made his first journey to the United States to tour as his father's accompanist, and he also conducted the Cincinnati Symphony at the invitation of Eugene Goossens. Upon his return to Prague he became principal conductor of the Czech Philharmonic, and was made its music director in 1942. Meanwhile, in 1939, he had been appointed chief conductor of the Brno Opera Theater, where so many of Janáček's works were given their premieres in the first three decades of this century, and he held that post until the Nazis closed the theater in 1941. It was there that his association with *The Trojans* began: in 1940 he staged the second part of the work, *The Trojans at Carthage*, in a Czech translation. He was head of the Czech Philharmonic until 1948, when the revolution drove him from his post and his native country. From 1950 to 1953 he was music director of the Chicago Symphony, and from 1955 to 1958 director of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. There, in 1957, he presented *The Trojans* virtually complete in a single evening—for the first time since its composition, it was performed as Berlioz had intended it, but in English. Though he has conducted the work on several occasions since, the Met production is the first one he has conducted when the work was being sung in French.

"To make its full effect," Kubelik says, "*The Trojans* must be done in a single evening. I cut only two short passages—a portion of the ballet at Dido's palace in Act 3, and the *recitativo* scenes between Aeneas' departure

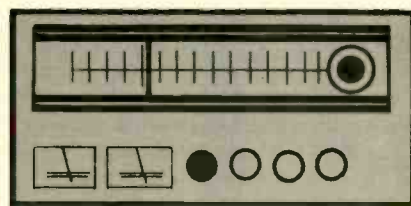
and Dido's monologue beginning '*Je vais mourir*.' Altogether that leaves about three hours and thirty-five minutes of music, and with two intermissions—one after the scenes set in Troy, and the other between Acts 4 and 5—we finish about a quarter to twelve. I think one of the principal reasons the work had never been done as I did it at Covent Garden was that, until the invention of modern stage machinery, it was impossible to make the scene changes quickly enough—there are ten of them—to get it into one evening. Peter Wexler, the stage designer for our production, and Nathaniel Merrill, our director, have devised some marvelous solutions to the problem."

Kubelik will spend five months of each year at the Metropolitan Opera and will retain the post he has held since 1961, that of music director of the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra in Munich. In the future he plans to turn down most, if not all, offers for guest conducting engagements. He does plan, however, to continue adding to his already large catalog of recordings, some high points of which are his Mahler symphony cycle with the Bavarian Radio Symphony (Deutsche Grammophon 2720 033, fourteen discs, also available separately), Smetana's *My Fatherland* with the Boston Symphony (DG 2707 054, two discs), a group of the same composer's other symphonic poems with the Bavarians (DG 2530 248), and Mercury's two-volume documentation of his years with the Chicago Symphony called "The Kubelik Legacy" (Vol. 1, MG-3 4500, three discs; Vol. 2, MG-3 4501, three discs; mono only). He will add recordings of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, with the Boston, and the Second, with the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, to a contemplated Beethoven cycle in the near future, and will make a set of all of Dvořák's *Slavonic Dances* with the Bavarian Radio Symphony. Reviewed in this issue is a major operatic first that should provoke strong feelings both pro and con: Hans Pfitzner's philosophical opera *Palestrina* (DG 2711 013, four discs), sung by a cast that includes Nicolai Gedda, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Hermann Prey, Helen Donath, Brigitte Fassbaender, and Karl Ridderbusch, and played by the Bavarian Radio Symphony conducted by Kubelik.

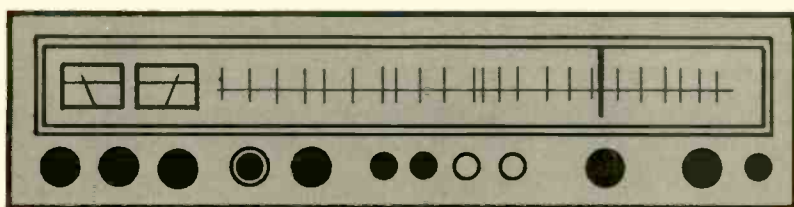
DOES his intention to refuse guest-conducting engagements rule out a return to his native land? I asked. "I have not been east of the Iron Curtain since 1948, though I have been asked many times. I have always replied that I would return only when every Czech is granted the rights offered me as a visitor: freedom to travel, to associate with whomever one wishes, and so forth. And that must include freedom to express one's self without fear of reprisal. Freedom of expression is essential to the progress of mankind, and any regime that prohibits it is both stupid and criminal. I am a believer in what you call passive resistance—but I think that word 'passive' is inaccurate. It is important to maintain somehow an *active* negation of the spirit of oppression where it exists. Not with guns, for I am no gunman, and I do not believe in revanchism. But, as an example, during the Nazi occupation I did not speak German for six years, though I grew up knowing German as a second language to Czech. When the Nazis came around to the Czech Philharmonic hall, I refused to deal with them unless they spoke Czech. In ways like this I think one can maintain a small stronghold of the principle of freedom in the heart of an oppressive regime. I will not return to Czechoslovakia until I am free to tell my nation why it is that I left."

According to Julian Hirsch, the best route to

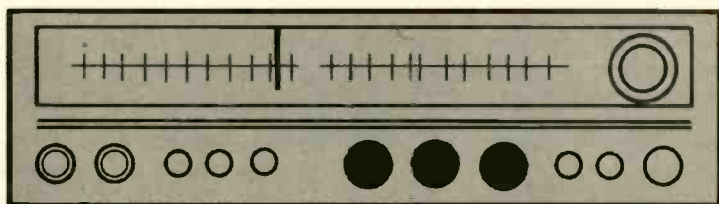
SUCCESSFUL



TUNER



BUYING



is a thorough understanding of the specifications

THERE can be little argument that most audio-component buyers would like to be able to make their equipment selections entirely on the basis of a few simple performance specifications. Unfortunately, even for those of us who have been trained as engineers, things are almost never that easy. Speakers are, of course, the worst case, and we can be thankful that specifications are both simpler to derive and easier to understand among the purely *electrical* components—tuners, amplifiers, and (therefore) receivers. An amplifier's capabilities, for example, can be judged quite well from a study of its specifications—assuming, of course, that they are both complete and accurate. The FM tuner, however, whether it be a separate component or built-in as part of a receiver, lies between the speaker and amplifier extremes. Its electrical properties can be measured with excellent repeatability by anyone with the proper test equipment, but these performance specifications are often not directly (sometimes not even remotely) related to how a given tuner will actually *sound*. The reason for this is that, for the most part, the specifications relate to how well a tuner will perform *under difficult or extraordinary reception conditions*—which is all well

and good, but such conditions are not the ones under which most tuners will be operating most of the time. These specifications are still, however, the best (and only) guides for the tuner (or receiver) buyer, who should familiarize himself with what they are and what they mean if he wants to get his money's worth.

The complete technical specifications for a stereo FM tuner, according to the proposed revision of the Institute of High Fidelity (IHF) standard, would define about eighteen separate performance parameters, and even a basic minimum set of specifications would cover about ten items. The existing IHF FM tuner standard is quite similar to the proposed new one in its complexity, and the tests presently made on tuners by Hirsch-Houck Labs include almost all of the proposed eighteen, though not all are singled out for separate comment in the text of our reports.

It is difficult to assign any order of importance to the various specifications, since the characteristics needed by a tuner in some locations could well be unimportant in other geographical areas. In the usual or "normal" receiving environment, only a handful of the tuner's performance characteristics

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have any significant effect on the sound quality of the received program. We will therefore discuss the practical significance of the various specifications and place them in useful perspective for tuner (or receiver) shoppers. Where possible, typical "ball-park" values will be given as examples of what ought to be expected of a good modern tuner.

● **IHF Sensitivity.** This is the smallest input signal, measured in microvolts (μV), that will result in a 3.2 per cent (-30 dB) level of noise-plus-distortion in the tuner's audio output. The quality of a signal with a -30 -dB noise-plus-distortion level is below basic hi-fi standards (it is much too noisy), but the rating provides a reference point for a rough comparison of tuner sensitivity. As may be learned from reading a few typical specification sheets, most good FM tuners have an IHF sensitivity rating measuring between 1.5 and 3 μV . The IHF sensitivity rating refers to the reception of a mono signal. For a stereo signal, a much higher signal input is required to achieve the same -30 -dB condition. In most cases, the tuner's stereo multiplex circuits are set to automatically switch in at the minimum input-signal level for stereo reception. Signals below this level will be reproduced in mono.

● **50-dB Quieting Sensitivity.** A better indicator of a tuner's sensitivity is the minimum input that will quiet the tuner's background "hiss" to a level 50 dB below a fully modulated FM signal. Unlike the -30 -dB IHF rating, a 50-dB signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) is of listenable quality, though it is still noisier than most of us would care to settle for. In stereo about ten times more signal input (measured in microvolts) is required to achieve a -50 -dB noise level. A typical 50-dB sensitivity rating (still in mono) is between 3 and 6 μV .

● **Ultimate S/N.** As the input-signal level is increased beyond the 50-dB sensitivity rating, background noise continues to drop. It usually reaches a minimum at about 100 μV in mono, and at about 1,000 μV in stereo. This noise level, again referred to the fully modulated test signal, is the ultimate signal-to-noise ratio, typically between 60 and 70 dB in mono, 50 to 60 dB in stereo.

● **THD at 50 dB S/N.** The S/N figures refer only to the noise (hiss) in the tuner's output. Weak signals are also subject to distortion, which diminishes as the signal strength increases. The total harmonic distortion (THD) at the 50-dB level is a further indication of the tuner's suitability for high-quality reception of moderately weak signals. Typical distortion figures are about 1 per cent (-40 dB) at 100 per cent modulation, both in mono and in stereo.

● **Ultimate THD.** Distortion continues to drop as the input-signal strength increases, usually reaching its minimum level at about 1,000 μV input. It varies rather

widely, from less than 0.1 to as much as 1 per cent (and even more in some of the cheaper tuners not normally used in component systems). In stereo, the distortion is usually higher, with 0.5 to 0.8 per cent being typical values. Since these distortion figures are measured with 100 per cent modulation of the input test signal, distortion will normally be considerably lower at actual average program-modulation levels.

● **Drift.** Before solid-state tuners were available, drift was a common problem. With many tuners, the station had to be retuned a few minutes after turn-on, and sometimes at regular intervals thereafter. Most of the drift was caused by the heat of the vacuum tubes affecting the tuning circuits. Since modern transistorized tuners generate little or no heat, drift is no longer much of a problem. Some tuners have automatic-frequency-control (AFC) circuits which not only eliminate any tendency to drift, but even correct for slight mistuning by the user. A small amount of AFC action helps to make tuning less critical, but, used in excess, it gives the tuning an imprecise feel and can interfere with the reception of a weak signal close in broadcast frequency to a much stronger signal.

● **Frequency Response.** Assuming adequate design in the rest of the circuit, the frequency response of an FM tuner is determined almost entirely by a few small parts that form its de-emphasis network. This circuit reduces the high-frequency response (above about 2,000 Hz) in a fashion that complements the high-frequency boost that was applied in the transmitter. The technique improves the overall signal-to-noise ratio of the signal in the same way the high-frequency pre-emphasis added in the recording process improves the S/N of records.

Almost any tuner should have a frequency response better than ± 2 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz. Stereo tuners usually have a very sharp cut-off filter to remove any 19-kHz or 38-kHz multiplex pilot-tone signals from the audio outputs (see *Subcarrier Rejection* below). A well-designed filter has little effect at 15,000 Hz or below (stereo FM broadcasts are limited to a 15,000-Hz audio bandwidth), but sometimes the highest audio frequencies are slightly attenuated. Although, in severe cases, this can give the sound a slightly "dull" quality when compared to another tuner having a flat response, it is not a terribly serious fault since a slight treble boost from the amplifier tone control will usually correct the condition.

● **Stereo Separation.** An audio signal transmitted so as to appear in either the left or right channel alone should be heard only in that channel when received. There is always a slight amount of "crosstalk" between channels, so that the left signal may be heard (at a much-reduced level) in the right channel, and vice versa. The ratio between the level of the channel's proper signal and the level of the "crosstalk" leaking over from the other channel is the *stereo channel separation*, expressed in decibels.

Separation varies with frequency, with the maximum usually occurring in the 400- to 1,000-Hz mid-range region. Many modern tuners achieve as much as 30 to 40 dB mid-range separation, falling to perhaps 15 or 20 dB at 30 Hz, and sometimes to as little as 10 dB at 15,000 Hz. A nearly uniform separation across the full frequency range is probably more desirable than this "very good in the mid-range, not so good at the extremes" case, but, in practice, if separation is 20 dB or better from 100 to



about 8,000 Hz, subjective stereo localization or "image" will be good.

● **Subcarrier Rejection.** A 19-kHz subcarrier is transmitted, at low level, with every stereo broadcast. It is used to generate or control a 38-kHz signal in the tuner's multiplex section, which in turn is used to extract the left and right channels from the composite received signal. Usually, filters are used in the tuner's outputs to attenuate the 19-kHz and 38-kHz signals, for, if they get through, beeps and whistles can result when certain recorders are used to tape FM broadcasts. Dolby noise-reduction circuits can also be affected by small amounts of 19-kHz signal leakage, but most Dolby units now have built-in filters to eliminate that problem. Some tuners have a subcarrier rejection of only -40 dB or so (relative to the 100 per cent modulated program level). This is a satisfactory rating for most applications, although some older tape recorders might be affected by even that small amount of leakage. The best tuners attenuate the subcarrier signals by 60 dB or more.

● **SCA Rejection.** SCA means Subsidiary Communications Authorization. Authorized by the FCC, SCA is used to broadcast advertising messages, background music, and other nonpublic programs—the sort of thing that murmurs in the background in restaurants, etc. Although the SCA signal is broadcast along with a station's regular FM program, it is not audible (except occasionally as an interference nuisance) to listeners lacking special adapters on their receivers. SCA transmissions include a subcarrier, usually around 67 kHz, and in a poorly designed tuner it is possible for this to interfere with normal stereo reception. Rough, unsteady whistles or "gargling" sounds are common forms of SCA interference. Relatively few FM stations, and those mostly in urban areas, use the SCA system.

FM tuners have 67-kHz "traps" in their multiplex circuits, and their effectiveness in removing the 67-kHz signals is measured by the SCA rejection rating. Few tuner specifications include this rating, which is significant only to listeners who like to listen to stations that also broadcast an SCA signal.

● **IM Distortion.** Total harmonic distortion (THD) measurements cannot reveal a tuner's distortion at high audio frequencies (over 7,500 Hz) since tuners' built-in low-pass filters remove those harmonics above 15,000 Hz. An intermodulation-distortion measurement (which detects "difference" tones) has been proposed as a means of measuring the effects of high-frequency distortion. This IM test is not part of the present IHF tuner measurement standard. Its significance has not been firmly established, and no published tuner ratings include it at this time.

● **Capture Ratio.** FM reception offers a unique advantage over AM, in that tuners are able to respond only to the strongest of two or more signals on the same channel and can do so without interference from the weaker signal(s). In other words, with a well-functioning FM tuner, it is unlikely that you will hear two stations at once. There must, however, be *some* difference in the strengths (measured in decibels) of the two signals if the weaker one is to be suppressed completely. The smaller the decibel difference required for a tuner to block out the weaker of two stations on the same broadcast frequency, the better the capture ratio. Today's tuners may range from an excellent 1 dB to about 3 dB.

Although the most obvious benefit of a good capture ratio might seem to be the rejection of an unwanted station at the same station frequency as the desired one, this is a special situation which exists only in a limited number of areas. More important is the ability to reject mutually interfering multiple signals from a *single* station caused by reflections from large man-made or natural objects in the area served by the transmitter.

Such a *multipath* reception condition is very common, especially in urban areas with high-rise apartment and office buildings. It has nothing to do with signal strength, and it has been known to occur even within sight of the transmitting antenna. Its effect is to impart a harsh distortion to program peaks, and, in the case of stereo, to affect the channel separation—it can vary from moment to moment or completely disappear. A directional receiving antenna is the best solution for multipath interference, but in a severe case (or when such an antenna is not practicable) the best possible tuner capture ratio is needed to minimize the distortion.

● **Alternate-channel Selectivity.** The FM band is divided into 200-kHz segments, and in any given geographical location, FM stations are assigned frequencies separated from each other by an "empty" channel. In other words, stations are 400 kHz apart. The alternate-channel selectivity of a tuner reflects its ability to receive a station without interference from a much stronger signal 400 kHz above or below it. It is expressed in decibels, and varies widely in tuners of different price classes. Even a relatively inexpensive tuner should have a selectivity rating of 35 to 40 dB. Most hi-fi components carry ratings between 55 and 70 dB. And a couple of the finest units reflect the state of the art in today's tuners with alternate-channel selectivity ratings of 90 to 100 dB. (The decibel numbers give the maximum interfering-signal/desired-signal ratio that will still result in good suppression.)

If the stations in your area are separated by more than 400 kHz, this rating may become relatively unimportant, but in a densely populated area served by dozens of stations it is often necessary to reject a powerful nearby station in order to receive a more distant one only 400 kHz

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away from it in frequency. In such a case, the highest possible alternate-channel selectivity may be required.

● **Adjacent-channel Selectivity.** In a few geographical locations (usually midway between population centers), it is possible to receive stations on adjacent channels only 200 kHz apart. A directional antenna may help to suppress the unwanted neighboring signal, but excellent tuner selectivity is also needed. This is called adjacent-channel selectivity, and it is rarely, if ever, specified by the tuner manufacturer. In general, a tuner with excellent alternate-channel selectivity will also have good adjacent-channel selectivity.

● **Spurious Response.** A superheterodyne receiver (all FM tuners are of this type) is inherently susceptible to interference at certain frequencies, some of which may be far removed from the frequency of the desired signal. The interference may take the form of cross-modulation (in which the interfering program is heard superimposed on the station to which the receiver is tuned), or it may be an "image" or intermediate-frequency response which can be rejected if the tuner has a good capture ratio (and if the interference is not too strong). On the other hand, if the interfering signal is stronger than the desired signal (a good example is a tuner's response to an aircraft communicating with the airport as it flies overhead on a landing approach), it can completely obliterate the FM program you want. Sometimes a strong local broadcast station will appear at several points on the dial, and this is another form of spurious response.

Like selectivity, spurious response is rated in decibels, with the higher numbers indicating the better performance. In many locations, 40 to 50 dB rejection is sufficient, but in some areas the 100 dB or more offered by the top-ranking tuners can be used to good advantage.

● **Stereo Threshold.** A tuner's automatic stereo-switching circuits are (or should be) designed to operate only when there is a signal strong enough to give usable stereo reception. Moreover, these circuits should switch quickly back to mono if the signal strength drops below that threshold. However, the stereo-switching threshold is usually set near the level that activates the tuner's interstation noise-muting circuits (if there are any), and this means that if the muting is switched in and the signal strength falls, the tuner will simply shut off its audio instead of switching to mono. This problem—when it is a problem—is very simply resolved by switching off the noise-muting circuits when listening to a weak station. The actual switching-threshold signal, which may be anywhere in the range from 5 to 30 μV , is unimportant to the user, since considerably higher levels will always be needed for low-noise reception. All tuners provide for manually switching to mono to reduce the background noise on weak stereo transmissions.

● **AM Suppression.** An FM tuner is not supposed to produce any audio output from an AM signal. The ratio of the outputs from FM and AM signals of the same frequency and with equivalent modulation levels is the AM suppression specification of the tuner. Lower-price equipment may have only 35 dB or so of AM suppression, and the more expensive usually has between 50 and 60 dB. The major significance of good AM suppression is in the reduction of multipath distortion it affords (with an assist from a good capture ratio).

How Good a Tuner Do You Need?

A STUDY of the published specifications of today's tuners will show, as might be expected, that the more expensive models are usually superior in *all* respects to lower-price tuners. Since not everyone needs state-of-the-art performance in all the specified areas, it is helpful to know which specifications are the most meaningful for one's own particular situation and which can be safely ignored.

Paradoxically, high sensitivity and high selectivity are rarely needed in the same location. In populous areas served by dozens of stations, selectivity and freedom from spurious responses are of paramount importance, and since signals are likely to be strong (in the hundred- or thousand-microvolt range), a super-sensitive tuner is unnecessary and may even be susceptible to certain interference problems. On the other hand, in remote rural areas where the nearest FM stations may be more than 100 miles away, the highest possible sensitivity (especially the 50-dB quieting sensitivity) is obviously required. Selectivity is likely to be of minor

importance, except in the special case where two distant stations happen to fall on adjacent channels.

Since, as a practical matter, one cannot buy a tuner with high sensitivity that is not also very selective, or vice versa, both of these extreme situations may call for the use of the best (and possibly the most expensive) tuner one can afford. On the other hand, if you listen selectively to a few well-spaced, powerful stations, *neither* characteristic has any special significance for you.

No matter what your reception situation, however, such basic performance parameters as frequency response, stereo separation, ultimate signal-to-noise ratio, and ultimate distortion are important specifications. As pointed out previously, the frequency response and stereo separation of most FM tuners are quite adequate to meet the most critical hi-fi listening standards. A stereo separation of 40 dB across most of the audio range is a technical tour de force much to be admired, but it is not likely to produce any audible benefits to the listener.

Tuner distortion is a factor more difficult to as-

sess. With the bulk of broadcast material originating from records and commercial tapes in which distortion content is often appreciable, it is not always easy to detect the advantages of owning a very-low-distortion FM tuner. A listening comparison between two tuners with distortion ratings of 0.1 per cent and 1 per cent will almost certainly reveal audible differences, but the choice is not so clear-cut when comparing the more typical high-quality tuners whose distortion ratings might lie between 0.2 and 0.5 per cent. Obviously, the lower the distortion the better, but the final choice would best be made on the basis of other tuner characteristics.

A good capture ratio (under 2 dB) is certainly desirable in any location. Few locations are abso-

lutely free of multipath effects, and the cleaner sound of some tuners is more likely to result from their superior capture ratio than from ultra-low distortion or other less well defined characteristics. Do not forget that a good rotatable directional antenna can often do more to improve signal (and hence sound) quality than several times its cost invested in a more expensive tuner.

From my own experience, I find that some important tuner characteristics are not covered by IHF measurement standards—or at least are not emphasized. For example, an interstation-noise muting circuit, which silences the loud hiss between stations when tuning, is a very desirable feature. Unfortunately, many of these circuits pass a burst of noise when you tune on or off a signal, thus negating (for me) much of their value. Needless to say, no measurement is necessary to evaluate this feature: either it works or it does not. The prospective purchaser can judge for himself when he listens to the tuner in a dealer's showroom.

Similarly, an accurately calibrated, *legible* dial scale is vital in urban areas, though it is somewhat less important where there are only a few FM stations to be heard. But if stations appear every 400 kHz right across the dial, as they do in many large cities, it is certainly helpful to know that the frequency indicated on the tuner's dial is actually the frequency to which it is tuned. Some tuners are accurate at the dial's calibrated points, but these may at times be few and far between (1 or 2 MHz apart) and therefore of limited value. A quick check on the frequency of known stations can establish the validity of a tuner's dial calibration. There are several tuners with digital station-frequency readouts, and though this solves the problem definitively, it does so at considerable cost.

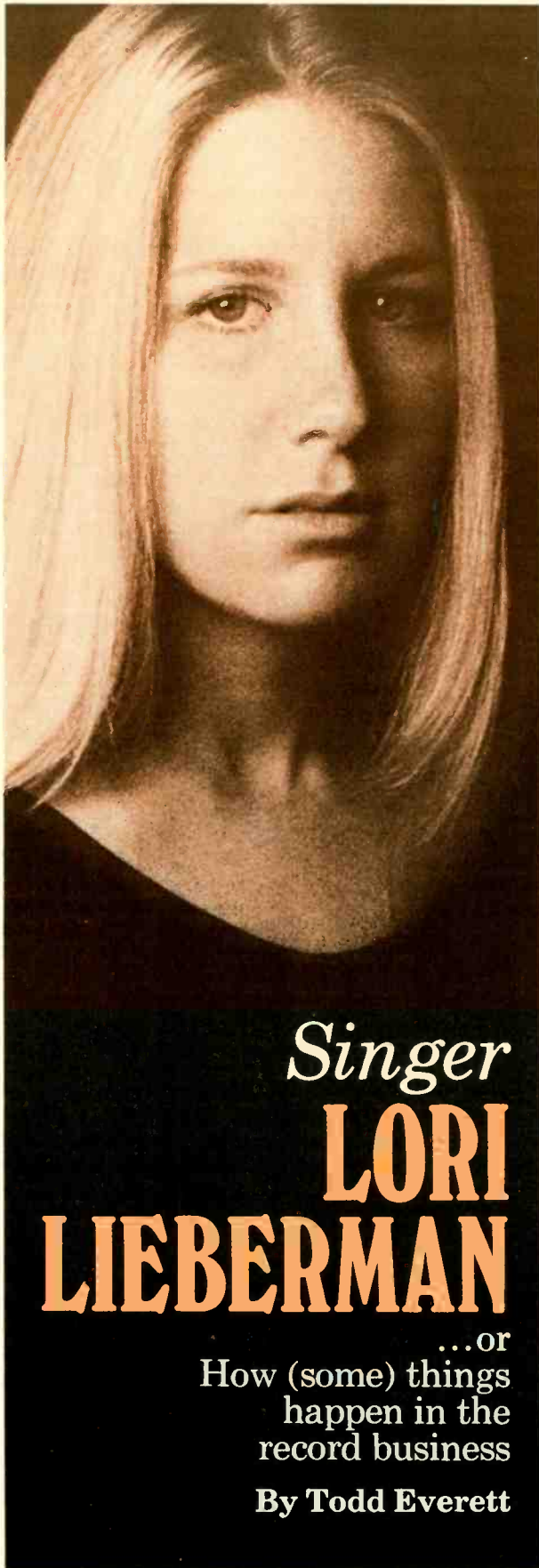
FOR those who listen to AM broadcasts regularly or who live in an area not served adequately by FM, most hi-fi tuners also include an AM tuner section. With few exceptions, the audio quality of these tuners could never be mistaken for hi-fi, and their sensitivity and selectivity generally leave much to be desired. Nevertheless, they are perfectly satisfactory for listening to stations with all-day news broadcasts, ball games, and the like. If there are no FM stations in your area, and you must depend on AM for your radio listening, it would be sensible to buy a good, sensitive separate AM radio rather than a tuner. Such a set is more likely to be able to cope with difficult AM receiving situations than the AM sections of hi-fi receivers. And, after all, there are always records and tapes to turn to when you become hungry for high-quality listening.

WHAT ABOUT FOUR-CHANNEL FM?

ALTHOUGH the four-channel phonograph-record controversy is by no means settled, there are now only three active systems with commercial viability: the SQ and RM matrix systems, and the CD-4 discrete system. A considerable number of discs are now available in each format, and many four-channel amplifiers and receivers have appeared with circuits for decoding both matrices (with or without logic). Further, all will accept an external CD-4 "adapter" unit, and some have built-in CD-4 circuits.

Paralleling the development of four-channel discs has been the search for a method of transmitting four separate channels over one FM channel, and progress on this front was ably covered by Leonard Feldman in his report on four-channel FM in last month's issue. The major problem still to be overcome, however, is that of overall compatibility of four-channel with stereo and mono broadcasting. Ideally, the owner of a mono or stereo FM receiver should be able to hear a complete four-channel broadcast in its entirety—mixed down, that is, to one or two channels just as four-channel discs can be for listening in mono or stereo in a record-playing system. At the same time, there should be no interference with other FM broadcasts and SCA, and there should be no significant loss of area coverage by the station.

Tests of a number of proposed four-channel broadcast systems are under way, and perhaps the FCC will ultimately approve one of them. But, realistically, we cannot expect that to happen in the immediate future; it will more likely be a matter of several years. For that reason, no one presently considering the purchase of a tuner need be unduly concerned over sudden four-channel obsolescence. In any case, SQ and QS matrix-system broadcasts are already taking place with present-day stereo FM. Anyone who postpones replacing an outmoded or inadequate tuner because he is waiting for four-channel discrete broadcasting will therefore only be denying himself years of listening pleasure.



Singer
**LORI
LIEBERMAN**

...OR
How (some) things
happen in the
record business

By Todd Everett

LORI LIEBERMAN, of whom you may not have heard anything yet, can be described for the moment as the young woman responsible for what just might turn out to be 1973's most-recorded song. Though that fact is far from the most important thing about her, it ought at least to earn her a little footnote in some obscure BMI archive: Lori Lieberman is the girl who recorded the first, the *original* performance of *Killing Me Softly with His Song*, the same song that was later to become a multi-million best seller in Roberta Flack's version, the same that has since been recorded by scores of others in versions vocal and instrumental.

Footnote or no, there is an interesting and unusual story behind it, one that requires a bit of background. Lori was born in Los Angeles. Her father is a chemical engineer who moved to California with his wife shortly after his graduation from college in Ohio. In Los Angeles, he invented a popular texture paint whose quick success resulted in his moving not only his expanding business but also his growing family—Lori and her two sisters—to Switzerland.

That was over a decade ago, and here we are now in a high-rise apartment building overlooking a private golf course in Westwood, California. We are in the tastefully, though sparsely, furnished living room of an apartment belonging to songwriter Norman Gimbel. He supplied the lyrics for song hits ranging from *Canadian Sunset* to several of the most popular products of the bossa-nova craze—*Meditation*, *How Insensitive*, and *The Girl from Ipanema*, to name only three—to the English lyrics for Michel Legrand's *Umbrellas of Cherbourg* film score.

Enter Lori from the kitchen, bringing black coffee in mugs bearing the insignia of National Football League teams. She is quite enough, all by herself, to bring back all those adjectives—"fresh," "wholesome," and "radiant"—we haven't used since early Doris Day. Her blonde hair reaches to the middle of her back, her eyes shine turquoise, and a pair of not-too-deep dimples punctuate her cheeks when she smiles. At just twenty-two, in white jacket, fashionably stilted shoes—and hose under her jeans—she is the very picture of the Girl Next Door. But there's a good deal more to Lori than there is to the Girl Next Door, even if your GND is a champion baton twirler or past mistress of the art of the cheese soufflé. For this diminutive girl with the rich, full-bodied voice is a Singer, a good-enough one already that a number of insiders are certain that she is headed for stardom.

Lori sits on the end of the couch nearest Gimbel's chair, telling us that she had arrived only moments before from her home in West Los Angeles, where she now lives with her mother. The doorbell rings, and Gimbel answers it. It is Charles Fox, a somewhat younger, longer-haired man wearing a shirt identical to Gimbel's. Fox is the composer of scores for a number of films—*Barbarella*, *A Separate Peace*, *The Incident*, *Goodbye Columbus*, and *Making It*—and with Gimbel as his partner has also written for *The Star-Spangled Girl*, *H. R. Pufnstuf*, and *The Harvard Experiment*. He has just this very afternoon finished his work on *The Laughing Policeman*, starring Walter Matthau.

Lori, after greeting and introducing Fox, gets back to the story she had been telling us: "I lived in Geneva and went to school there for eleven years. The music I heard was pretty much limited to French schmaltz on the radio, with an occasional Beatles record. I wasn't particularly interested in music until my sister brought me a Judy Col-

lins album. She was really the first female singer I'd ever heard and liked. It got me interested enough to get a guitar, learn three chords, and start singing.

"Most of my singing was the kind of 'folk' music that was coming from America—Peter, Paul and Mary material and things like that. But I also wrote several songs myself."

Somewhere along the way Lori made a demonstration record in a London studio, but nothing came of it. Moving to Boston for two years, she studied music theory and composition privately, and she took voice lessons too—until "I started sounding too much like Julie Andrews, so I stopped."

Lori's parents had separated, and her mother and sisters had returned to Los Angeles from Geneva. Lori left Boston to join them, and soon found herself, after a somewhat unusual professional debut, singing in small clubs in the area.

"I had been writing some songs with a friend, Michelle Willens [now a free-lance journalist and television writer]. One of them concerned Daniel Ellsberg. We met Ellsberg at a private party, and got a chance to sing it for him. He liked it, and asked me to sing it at a defense fund-raising rally. So my first public performance was in front of 18,000 people at the Los Angeles Sports Arena!"

Norman Gimbel continues the story: "Charlie and I had been working together for a few years, mostly on film scores. We wanted to get ourselves a situation where we could write for a particular performer—tailor our songs to her. We had auditioned a number of singers, but none of them proved satisfactory, for one reason or another. Then somebody suggested Lori. We went out and saw her perform at a little place on the beach . . ."

" . . . a converted Orange Julius stand," interjects Lori . . .

" . . . and we decided that she might be what we were looking for. We had some songs already written, and took Lori to Capitol Records to make a demo." The people at Capitol liked what they heard, and Lori was signed up through Gimbel and Fox's production company.

"We didn't know exactly what we wanted to do at first," explains Fox, "other than that we wanted to do it as openly and as honestly as possible." "We worked with Lori for six months, developing a style and refining it," Gimbel continues. "Burt Bacharach's songs, for example, are not suited to her voice. They *sound* lovely, because Lori has a lovely voice, but they aren't really suited to her. We had to develop Lori and the material so they would complement each other."

Gimbel and Fox compose by bouncing ideas off one another. Gimbel, the lyricist, carries a notebook with him to capture vagrant inspiration. "I had a title for a song—*Killing Me Softly with His Blues*—and told Lori about it."

Lori picks up the story: "My friend Michelle dragged me down to the Troubadour [a popular Los Angeles club] to hear Don McLean. I'd never paid any attention to him before, but I went down to please Michelle. When I heard Don, I really liked him—and Norman's song title kept coming into my head . . . I kept thinking about how it related to my experience watching Don. I told Norman about it, and he and Charlie finished up the song." (For the record, then: he who kills you softly with his song is Don McLean.)

The song was completed in a hurry, and it became the last track to be recorded under the deadline for Lori's first Capitol album ("Lori Lieberman," ST-11081). The al-

bum was released, but no chimes rang. However . . . Capitol Records has an arrangement with American Airlines under which it programs the content of their in-flight stereo-headphone music (other companies have similar arrangements with other airlines). And so it was that Roberta Flack got to hear Lori singing *Killing Me Softly with His Song* on a flight from Los Angeles to New York.

"She heard my record and, I understand, loved the song immediately. When she got to New York, she bought a copy of the album and contacted Norman and Charlie."

"We've been told," says Gimbel, "that she recorded *three* songs from the album. All of them were sitting in the can, unreleased for several months. Then Capitol released Lori's version of *Killing Me* as a single, and it began to get some attention in Boston. Atlantic's guy there called Roberta's producer and told him they'd better get her version out in a hurry." They did, and the rest can be read on the charts.

Roberta Flack, in the meantime, has been "very nice" to Lori, mentioning the original version of the song often on television and at personal appearances, calling the attention of friends, critics, and other artists to the album. And she has also commented to Gimbel about Lori, "I hope she takes care of that voice: it's beautiful."

And so, since Lori's first album has, in its odd way, made something of a splash, she now has another one out—"Becoming," Capitol ST-11203. All ten songs on it are Gimbel-Fox originals (one of Lori's own songs, *My Lover Do You Know*, is in the first album). "I just don't get inspired to write very often," says Lori, "and when I do, my songs aren't as good as Norman's and Charlie's. Sometimes we get the same ideas. Once I thought I'd write a song about all the traveling I've done in my life. I told Norman about it. 'Funny,' he said, 'I've just written a song about that!' And his was much better than mine would have been."

GIMBEL and Fox work closely with Lori in the recording studio, grooming and coaching her in a way that greatly resembles the procedures of that greatly successful partnership formed by Burt Bacharach, Hal David, and Dionne Warwick. In live performances, Lori varies her program somewhat from what is (so far) available on records. Scattered among the Gimbel-Fox compositions and some few of her own are such songs as Don McLean's *Castles in the Air* and Billy Taylor's gospel-singalong *I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free*. Perhaps the most interesting of her inclusions, however, is Jimmy Webb's *P. F. Sloan*, at once a bitter indictment of certain aspects of the pop-music business and a tribute to a now all-but-forgotten songwriter of the misty Sixties. "I don't go for the big applause in my sets," says Lori. "I try more to present songs that I feel are honest and revealing."

A very busy present keeps Lori from thinking or worrying much about the future. She is working hard on her songwriting, growing in both proficiency and confidence, but she feels that her relationship with Gimbel and Fox is important and productive, and that it will continue, possibly for another five years. And her record company is well enough pleased with her development that it has launched a long-term campaign to provide the publicity support a growing artist needs. In short, it seems quite likely that Lori Lieberman will in time take up a little more space in the archives than a footnote reading "the girl who. . . ."



Beth Brerman

Carmen taunts Don José for the last time: Marilyn Horne and James McCracken in the current Metropolitan Opera production.

ESSENTIALS OF AN OPERA LIBRARY

By George Jellinek

IN addition to providing its readers with buying guidance to the many new record releases each month, STEREO REVIEW welcomes its responsibility with respect to all those still-active recordings that compete for the music lover's attention with such difficulty from the crowded pages of the record catalog. Martin Bookspan's continuing surveillance of the basic orchestral repertoire discharges part of this obligation. Pertinent discographies included, when possible, with music articles contribute as well. Most useful in this respect,

MY first list of operatic "Essentials" in STEREO REVIEW's November 1963 issue covered twenty-one operas; the second, in the December 1968 issue, ran to twenty-five; and the current one includes thirty. Some may take this

however, have been the articles in our "Basic Library" series, in which we have treated such other—and equally important—subjects as chamber music, German lieder, piano music, folk, jazz, country and western—and opera. George Jellinek's "Essentials of an Opera Library," judging from reader comment and reprint requests, has been among the most popular of these. We are therefore happy to bring it back once again, suitably updated, in response to popular request.

—Editor

growth to be another indication of the inflationary times, but I offer an explanation that is more to the point: record collectors (I include myself) are by definition an acquisitive lot, and our concept of a "basic minimum" is bound to grow with the years.

The numerical growth, however, does not reflect any change in my original chronological span, which still extends from Christoph Willibald Gluck (b. 1714) to Richard Strauss (d. 1948). It should also be re-emphasized that my list contains only "repertoire" pieces. There is always room for discussing neglected masterpieces and startling new discoveries, but not in the context of such a basic survey as this.

One major departure from my previous listings is that all first choices are stereo recordings. In those cases where certain mono versions simply cannot be overlooked, however, the text will call attention to them.

There are many holdovers from my 1968 choices, and no fewer than eight stubborn survivors from the initial list of 1963. This is rather surprising, considering the record industry's well-known penchant for constant re-examination of the basic repertoire. The explanation, however, is not difficult to find. This is an industry which lacks neither eagerness, nor enterprise, nor generosity. What it sometimes lacks is sound artistic judgment, which is a quality not to be confused with commercial cunning. The recordings of Bellini's *Norma* are a good case in point. Both the Sutherland (London) and Caballé (RCA) versions are commercial successes despite the fact that neither soprano had mastered the taxing demands of the title role in time for the prematurely planned recordings. Both divas could have achieved superior results a year or so later had artistic considerations prevailed over commercial pressures.

CASTING is another matter in which record companies have exercised limited imagination. Sherrill Milnes is a fine baritone, but is it wise or appropriate to cast him as *the* baritone in almost every Italian opera? Was it necessary to cast Gwyneth Jones in quick succession as Medea, Octavian, Kundry, and Ortrud on three (!) different labels just to have all four recorded ventures seriously compromised by her inferior contribution? I don't suppose that sales departments—which govern release policy to a commanding degree—ever give much thought to such questions. But I wonder just who is blamed when some highly touted ventures do not measure up to commercial expectations.

The picture is far from bleak, however. The industry has earned our gratitude for having expanded the repertoire in all directions, with such additions as various Handel operas (RCA), Berlioz's *Benvenuto Cellini* (Philips), Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda* (ABC), Verdi's *Giovanna d'Arco* (Angel), and others too numerous to mention. And special

compliments are offered to those responsible for rescuing several worthy sets from limbo and reissuing them in budget editions. The best of these are listed in a special "budget" supplement to the "Essentials of an Opera Library" that follows.

GLUCK: *Orfeo ed Euridice*. Shirley Verrett, Anna Moffo, Judith Raskin; Virtuosi di Roma, Renato Fasano cond. RCA LSC 6169 three discs \$17.94.

Only one new recording of this opera has appeared since 1968: London OSA 1285. With the frequently spectacular Marilyn Horne as Orfeo, the set is a strong contender, but Solti's intense conducting is *too* overwhelming for my taste. My preference therefore remains the uniformly satisfying and excellently recorded RCA set. For those wishing to probe deeper into the Gluck literature, I must add a warm endorsement of *Iphigénie en Aulide*, his first opera for the Paris stage. It is now available in Richard Wagner's standard edition, in German, on the imported Eurodisc label (86271 XR, two discs). The cast includes Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Anna Moffo, Thomas Stewart, and Ludovic Spiess.

MOZART: *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Cesare Siepi, Hilde Gueden, Suzanne Danco, Lisa della Casa, Fernando Corena; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. Erich Kleiber cond. LONDON OSA 1402 four discs \$23.92, reel V 90008 \$25.95.

MOZART: *Don Giovanni*. Cesare Siepi, Suzanne Danco, Lisa della Casa, Hilde Gueden, Fernando Corena, Anton Dermota; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Josef Krips cond. LONDON OSA 1401 four discs \$23.92, reel V 90007 \$25.95.

MOZART: *Die Zauberflöte*. Evelyn Lear, Roberta Peters, Fritz Wunderlich, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. Franz Crass; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Karl Böhm cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2709 017 three discs \$20.94, reel S 8981 \$16.95.

A very fine version of *Le Nozze di Figaro* on RCA LSC 6408 has been deleted since my last listing. It may be reissued in the future—on the London label. In the meantime, the by now venerable London OSA 1402, an alternative preference five years ago, remains firmly in first position. Its current competitors (Philips, Angel, and DG) are sonically superior, but none matches the harmonious totality Kleiber secures in the London set. Among recordings of *Don Giovanni*, London OSA 1401 (my preference five years ago) still holds the lead, though Carlo Maria Giulini's exciting conducting and the remarkable trio of Joan Sutherland, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, and Graziella Sciutti make Angel 3605 a viable alternative. Deutsche Grammophon's *Magic Flute* is an outstanding set, scoring on total points over the considerable strengths of Angel S 3651

(Otto Klemperer cond.) and London OSA 1397 (Georg Solti cond.). On behalf of Mozartians, then, a hearty "bravo, bravo, arcibravo!" can be pronounced on the state of recorded Mozart operas.

BELLINI: *Norma*. Maria Callas, Christa Ludwig, Franco Corelli, Nicola Zaccaria; Chorus and Orchestra of La Scala, Tullio Serafin cond. ANGEL S 3615 three discs \$17.94.

DONIZETTI: *Anna Bolena*. Beverly Sills, Shirley Verrett, Stuart Burrows, Paul Plishka; John Alldis Chorus, London Symphony Orchestra, Julius Rudel cond. ABC ATS 20015 four discs \$23.94.

ROSSINI: *The Barber of Seville*. Roberta Peters, Cesare Valletti, Robert Merrill, Giorgio Tozzi, Fernando Corena; Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and Chorus, Erich Leinsdorf cond. RCA LSC 6143 four discs \$17.94, cassette RK 6143/4 \$13.96.

Vocal shortcomings notwithstanding, Maria Callas communicates the essence of *Norma* with the security of musicianship and special insights that are altogether unique. But hers is a special art, not esteemed by all, and for the dissenters I can wholeheartedly recommend RCA LSC 6202, beautifully sung (Montserrat Caballé, Fiorenza Cossotto, Plácido Domingo, Ruggero Raimondi) and dutifully conducted by Carlo Felice Cillario. The inclusion of *Anna Bolena* among all these standards is not as eccentric as it might seem at first glance. It is, I think, proper to include at least *one* Donizetti opera in this "inflated" listing. Well, then: I am not sufficiently charmed by either available version of *Don Pasquale* to recommend one of them for a *basic* library, and, as for *Lucia di Lammermoor*, if you are a fan of Joan Sutherland or Beverly Sills you will know what to do *without* my recommendation. But you might overlook *Anna Bolena*—after all, the entire world seems to have overlooked it for almost

Cesare Siepi is Figaro to Hilda Gueden's Susanna in the venerable but still unsurpassed Marriage of Figaro on the London label.



London Records

a century—and it is, possibly, Donizetti's finest opera. There are two recorded versions; the ABC set rates higher than London OSA 1436 (reel V 90177) by a small margin. And it is also a small margin of excellence that causes me to prefer RCA's *Barber* over London OSA 1381 (reel R 90105) and Angel S 3638, though I am by no means deaf to their considerable virtues. This is exactly where matters stood with me five years ago. I was not particularly impressed by the only new *Barber* to emerge since then (on DG), despite Teresa Berganza's enchanting Rosina.

VERDI: *Rigoletto*. Joan Sutherland, Luciano Pavarotti, Sherrill Milnes, Martí Talvela; London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Richard Bonyngue cond. LONDON 13105 three discs \$17.94.

VERDI: *La Traviata*. Anna Moffo, Richard Tucker, Robert Merrill; Chorus and Orchestra of the Rome Opera, Fernando Previtali cond. RCA LSC 6154 three discs \$17.94.

VERDI: *La Forza del Destino*. Renata Tebaldi, Mario del Monaco, Ettore Bastianini, Cesare Siepi, Giulietta Simonato; Chorus and Orchestra of Santa Cecilia, Francesco Molinari-Pradelli cond. LONDON OSA 1405 four discs \$23.92.

VERDI: *Don Carlo*. Montserrat Caballé, Plácido Domingo, Sherrill Milnes, Ruggero Raimondi, Shirley Verrett; Royal Opera House Orchestra and Chorus, Carlo Maria Giulini cond. ANGEL S 3774 four discs \$23.92.

VERDI: *Aida*. Leontyne Price, Grace Bumbry, Plácido Domingo, Sherrill Milnes; John Alldis Chorus; London Symphony Orchestra, Erich Leinsdorf cond. RCA LSC 6198 three discs \$17.94, cassette RK 11033/4 \$13.96.

VERDI: *Otello*. Renata Tebaldi, Mario del Monaco, Aldo Protti; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. LONDON OSA 1324 three discs \$17.94, reel R 90038 \$21.95.

Monterone's long-lasting curse seems to have been

There were Normas before, and there have been Normas since, but Maria Callas' interpretation for Angel remains unforgettable.



Angel Records

lifted: the new London set, though somewhat handicapped by the conducting, is the first complete *Rigoletto* I value sufficiently to include in these listings. It raises my number of Verdi operas to six (out of a total of thirty), a ratio for which I offer no apologies whatsoever. My 1968 choices for *La Traviata*, *La Forza del Destino*, and *Otello* have remained on top despite recent challengers. As a matter of fact, only RCA's *La Forza del Destino* (LSC 6413 four discs) can be considered a real threat to the front runner: with an excellent cast (Leontyne Price, Richard Tucker, and Robert Merrill), it is bound to bring full enjoyment to listeners more receptive to this particular threesome than to their illustrious London counterparts. Angel has released new versions of these three operas in the intervening years, but none rose above the level of mere competence. Angel's new *Don Carlo*, on the other hand, is good enough to dethrone the DG set, my previous preference. While it is true that I would have preferred more passion in the conducting of Carlo Maria Giulini (whom I nonetheless greatly admire), the cast is uniformly strong and the individual performances (Caballé and Verrett in particular) at times reach inspired heights. Turning to *Aïda*, I offer this quote from my 1968 listing: "There are three stereo alternatives, all extravagantly cast, but none of them is really outstanding." Substitute "four" for "three," and the observation still applies in 1973. The new RCA set offers the best all-around performance, and I particularly welcome the unmannered leadership of Erich Leinsdorf. His opposite numbers, the Messrs. Karajan, Mehta, and Solti, give us more charisma, but Leinsdorf offers us more Verdi. The best *Aida*, however, is found on RCA's mono set, now available on the inexpensive Victrola label (6119 three discs).

At least one Donizetti opera is an essential, and essential to Donizetti is Beverly Sills—especially in the role of Anna Bolena.



Ehr - Vincent

WAGNER: *Die Walkure*. Birgit Nilsson, James King, Hans Hotter, Régine Crespin, Christa Ludwig, Gottlob Frick; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Georg Solti cond. LONDON OSA 1509 five discs \$29.90, reel Y 90122 \$33.95, cassette P 31122 \$22.95.

WAGNER: *Götterdämmerung*. Birgit Nilsson, Wolfgang Windgassen, Gottlob Frick, Christa Ludwig, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Georg Solti cond. LONDON OSA 1604 six discs \$35.88, reel V 90098 \$36.95, cassette P 31098 \$22.95.

WAGNER: *Tristan und Isolde*. Wolfgang Windgassen, Birgit Nilsson, Christa Ludwig, Martti Talvela, Eberhard Wächter; Bayreuth Festival Orchestra, Karl Böhm cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2713 001 five discs \$34.90, reel W 9225 \$23.95.

WAGNER: *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Theo Adam, Helen Donath, René Kollo, Geraint Evans, Peter Schreier, Karl Ridderbusch; Dresden State Opera Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. ANGEL S 3776 five discs \$29.90.

The wheels of "progress" have ground the best complete recording of *Die Meistersinger* (Angel 3572) into limbo. Its successor, which I had to choose, albeit reluctantly, since it is the only stereo version in the catalog, benefits from Karajan's authoritative and often brilliant leadership, but the singing is only adequate. (Both budget versions offer better singing to listeners willing to settle for less than optimum sound.) Karajan is also the conductor of Angel's new *Tristan und Isolde* (S 3777 five discs). It is an impressive if somewhat inconsistent production, marred by odd engineering balances and some super-glossy effects. The singing, particularly on the part of Jon Vickers and Christa Ludwig, is first-rate. On final balance, however, the DG set is still preferable. With the addition of *Götterdämmerung*, two of the *Ring* operas from the magnificent Solti/London cycle are now included.

There can have been very few Traviatas as beautiful as Anna Maffo; she gives a performance to match in RCA's recording.



RCA Records



London Records

The famed London recording of Verdi's *Otello*, with Mario del Monaco in the title role, has been challenged, but not successfully.

BIZET: *Carmen*. Marilyn Horne, James McCracken, Tom Krause, Adriana Maliponte; Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Leonard Bernstein cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2709 043 three discs \$20.94.

GOUNOD: *Faust*. Victoria de los Angeles, Nicolai Gedda, Boris Christoff; Paris Opera Orchestra. André Cluytens cond. ANGEL S 3622 four discs \$23.92.

MASSNET: *Manon*. Beverly Sills, Nicolai Gedda, Gérard Souzay, Gabriel Bacquier; New Philharmonia Orchestra, Julius Rudel cond. ABC ATS 20007 four discs \$23.92, reel 12007 \$29.95, cassette P 52007 \$22.95.

Only the *Faust* set has carried over from my 1968 listing. My remarks then still hold: "The performance is far from being the last word on the subject, but it is miles ahead of the ill-assorted "all stars" assembled on London OSA 1433 [reel W 90125]." What five years ago was a full-price *Manon* on Capitol has reappeared on the budget Seraphim label (Ser 6057 four discs). With Victoria de los Angeles at her most enchanting and Pierre Monteux leading the orchestra, it remains a cherishable performance in its modest mono splendor. I would not call the ABC set a superior *Manon*, but it is richer-sounding, very well sung and conducted, and entirely admirable. Selecting the "best" *Carmen* has become an impossible task. I have listed the DG set because it amounts to an important rediscovery of a standard opera we have long taken for granted without really knowing. *Carmen* with the spoken dialogue and with certain brief but important passages restored to its fabric is a different opera, and it is eminently worthy of recognition in this form. The contributions of Marilyn Horne and Leonard Bernstein are outstanding, and Adriana Maliponte is a pleasing Micaëla. The other principals are on a lesser plane. (For a "standard" *Carmen*, I recommend



RCA Records

Odd licensing arrangements mean that Leontyne Price's *Tosca*, though recorded for RCA, is now to be found on the London label.

again my 1968 choice—Angel S 3650X three discs, with Maria Callas and Nicolai Gedda.)

MOUSSORGSKY: *Boris Godounov*. Boris Christoff, Evelyn Lear, Dimitr Ouzounov, Anton Diakov; Chorus of the National Opera House at Sofia, Paris Conservatoire Orchestra, André Cluytens cond. ANGEL S 3633 four discs \$23.92.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Eugen Onegin*. Galina Vishnevskaya, Vladimir Atlantov, Yuri Mazurok, Alexander Ognivtsev; Bolshoi Theater Chorus and Orchestra, Mstislav Rostropovich cond. MELODIYA/ANGEL S 4115 three discs \$17.94.

For all the respectable and laudable efforts on its behalf in the vernacular, Russian opera is best when it is presented in the original language. The Bolshoi Theater's presentation of *Eugen Onegin* is the best possible with contemporary casts. (I also recommend Melodiya/Angel's recording of Tchaikovsky's *Pique Dame*—S 4104—to operatic Russophiles.) As for Angel's *Boris Godounov*, it has topped my list ever since 1963. If and when London releases a single disc of highlights from its new complete album under Karajan (OSA 1439, reel V 90204), it should be acquired for the beautifully sung Tsar of Nicolai Ghiaurov. The set, however, is slightly disappointing *in toto*.

MASCAGNI: *Cavalleria Rusticana*. Giulietta Simionato, Mario del Monaco, Cornell MacNeil; Chorus and Orchestra of the Accademia di Santa Cecilia, Tullio Serafin cond. LONDON OSA 1213 two discs \$11.96.

LEONCAVALLO: *Pagliacci*. Franco Corelli, Lucine Amara, Tito Gobbi, Mario Zanasi; La Scala Chorus and Orchestra, Lovro von Matacic cond. ANGEL S 3618 two discs \$11.96.

The age of stereo has produced nothing to surpass the outstanding twenty-year-old performance of the

“twins” that is now available—alas, separated—on Victrola 6044 (*Cavalleria Rusticana*) and Seraphim 6058 (*Pagliacci*). The stereo preferences listed above, however, are more than acceptable. RCA and London have released new versions of *Pagliacci* since 1969, but both are quite unremarkable.

PUCCHINI: *La Bohème*. Renata Tebaldi, Carlo Bergonzi, Gianna d'Angelo, Ettore Bastianini, Cesare Siepi; Orchestra of Santa Cecilia, Rome, Tullio Serafin cond. LONDON OSA 1208 two discs \$11.96, reel S 90014 \$16.95, cassette D 31014 \$14.95.

PUCCHINI: *Tosca*. Leontyne Price, Giuseppe di Stefano, Giuseppe Taddei; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. LONDON OSA 1284 two discs \$11.96, reel R 90170 \$21.95, cassette D 31170 \$14.95.

PUCCHINI: *Madama Butterfly*. Victoria de los Angeles, Jussi Bjoerling, Mario Sereni, Miriam Pirazzini; Rome Opera Orchestra and Chorus, Gabriele Santini cond. ANGEL S 3604 three discs \$17.94.

PUCCHINI: *Turandot*. Joan Sutherland, Luciano Pavarotti, Montserrat Caballé, Nicolai Ghiaurov, Peter Pears; John Alldis Choir, Wandsworth School Boys' Choir,

London Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin Mehta cond. LONDON OSA 13108 three discs \$17.94.

The best *Tosca* ever recorded—Angel 3508, mono—though not listed in the Schwann catalog, is still regularly available. It features Maria Callas, Giuseppe di Stefano, and Tito Gobbi in peak form and in superb ensemble under Victor de Sabata's remarkable leadership. London 1284 is far ahead of the current stereo competition, though RCA may have a strong contender in its new release (Price-Domingo-Milnes; Mehta conducting—it was not available for this deadline). The new London recording of *La Bohème* (with Pavarotti and Mirella Freni in superb form, conducted by Karajan, London 1299 two discs) has strong attractions without quite matching the idiomatic rightness of London 1208. Another 1968 front-runner, Angel's *Madama Butterfly*, emerges with a small margin over excellent rival sets conducted by Serafin (London), Barbirolli (Angel), and Leinsdorf (RCA). Among the recordings of *Turandot*, however, the palm now goes to London's remarkable new set in which Joan Sutherland scales new and unexpected heights; she is surrounded, moreover, by a cast of uniform excellence. The margin of preference is, again, a small one; those inclined to prefer the Angel set of 1965 (with Nilsson, Corelli, and Renata Scotto, Angel S 3671 three discs) or RCA's distinguished 1959 effort (with Nilsson, Bjoerling, and Tebaldi, RCA LSC 6149, cassette RK 6149/50) will get no argument from me.

STRAUSS: *Elektra*. Birgit Nilsson, Marie Collier, Regina Resnik, Tom Krause; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Georg Solti cond. LONDON OSA 1269 two discs \$11.96, reel H 90137 \$12.95.

STRAUSS: *Der Rosenkavalier*. Régine Crespin, Helen Donath, Yvonne Minton, Manfred Jungwirth; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Georg Solti cond. LONDON OSA 1435 four discs \$23.92, reel 190165 \$29.95, cassette 131165 \$29.95.

Richard Strauss is well represented on records. Therefore, listeners who find my choices limited or arbitrary (or both) are invited to investigate the recorded versions of *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Angel S 3733 three discs), *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (Richmond 64503 four discs), and *Salome* (London OSA 1218 two discs). My choice boils down to equal representation of the two sides of Strauss' operatic genius, the mellow and the manic. In the former, London's new *Rosenkavalier* edges out the beautiful Angel set mainly in terms of recorded sound. If your devotion to Angel (Schwarzkopf, Ludwig, Karajan, Angel S 3563 four discs) remains unshaken, I will not try to dissuade you. The *Elektra* set is a holdover from my 1968 listing.

BASIC OPERA LIBRARY ON A BUDGET

THE record industry's low-price catalogs have expanded considerably during the past five years. The following “essential items” are recommended to budget-minded buyers. Unless otherwise noted, the sets are mono.

- MOZART:** *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Turnabout 4114/5/6 (Domgraf-Fassbaender, Helletsgruber, Rautawaara; Busch). *Don Giovanni*, Turnabout 4117/8/9 (Brownlee, Souez, Pataky, Baccaloni; Busch). *The Magic Flute*, Richmond 63507 (Gueden, Lipp, Simoneau; Böhm).
- BELLINI:** *Norma*, Seraphim 6037 (Callas, Stignani, Rossi-Lemeni; Serafin).
- DONIZETTI:** *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Everest 439/2 (Scotto, Di Stefano, Bastianini; Sanzogno).
- ROSSINI:** *The Barber of Seville*, Richmond 63011 (Bastianini, Simionato, Corena; Erede).
- VERDI:** *Rigoletto*, Victrola 6041 (Peters, Bjoerling, Merrill; Perlea). *La Traviata*, Victrola 6004 (Carteri, Valletti, Warren; Monteux). *La Forza del Destino*, Everest 418/3E, artificial stereo (Caniglia, Masini, Tagliabue, Pasero; Marinuzzi). *Don Carlo*, Seraphim 6004 (Stella, Gobbi, Filippeschi, Christoff; Santini). *Aida*, Victrola 6119 (Milanov, Bjoerling, Warren; Perlea). *Otello*, Richmond 63004 (Tebaldi, Del Monaco, Protti; Erede).
- BIZET:** *Carmen*, Richmond 63006 (Juyol, Micheau, De Luca, Giovanetti; Wolff).
- GOUNOD:** *Faust*, Odyssey Y3 32103 (Steber, Conley, Siepi; Cleva).
- MASSENET:** *Manon*, Seraphim 6057 (De los Angeles, Legay; Monteux).
- MASCAGNI:** *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Victrola 6044 (Milanov, Bjoerling, Merrill; Cellini).
- LEONCAVALLO:** *Pagliacci*, Seraphim 6058 (Bjoerling, De los Angeles, Warren, Merrill; Cellini).
- PUCCHINI:** *La Bohème*, Seraphim 6000 (De los Angeles, Bjoerling, Amara, Tozzi, Merrill; Beecham). *Tosca*, Seraphim 6027 (Caniglia, Gigli, Borgioli; De Fabritiis). *Madama Butterfly*, Richmond 63001 (Tebaldi, Campora, Inghilleri; Erede).
- R. STRAUSS:** *Salome*, Richmond 62007 (Goltz, Patzak, Dermota; Krauss). *Der Rosenkavalier*, Richmond 64001 (Reining, Gueden, Jurinac, Weber; Kleiber).

TALES
from the
STUDIO

Caricature by Lincoln Perry



VAN CLIBURN, CROONER

By Jack Somer

IN THE center of the barren wood floor of Manhattan's Webster Hall, a ballroom converted into a recording studio, two engineers and I stand admiring a gleaming Steinway concert grand. A tuner is touching up its strings. We feel like a tense racing team superintending the adjustment of the carburetor in our Maserati. Our driver is expected momentarily. His name is Van Cliburn.

Cliburn has recently completed his first piano solo album, "My Favorite Chopin." But he has heard a test pressing and is displeased with some of his playing. He wants to re-record some selections. Although I have never worked with Cliburn before, I have been asked to substitute for his regular producer, Richard Mohr, whom the record company has sent to Rome to record an opera.

We have booked the hall every night for a week to be certain that all the remakes are completed in time to meet the album's production schedules. To add to my personal tensions, I am booked on a holiday flight to Paris this coming Saturday. Today is Monday.

The tuner finishes and gives the black beauty a test run: a series of chromatic chord progressions straight from a basic harmony text, but, on that instrument, magnificent. Then there is silence. I nervously finger the books of waltzes, études, and scherzos while pacing a slow circle around the piano. Cliburn is due at ten o'clock: he is a night person and likes to work late. But on this night he never shows up.

Tuesday morning I report the bad news to my superiors. They take it in stride: such is the way, they say, of great artists. After a day at the office and a light supper, I return to the hall. Ten o'clock comes and goes. Eleven. At about eleven-thirty a tall, ghostly woman, ageless, with straight dark hair down to her waist, mounts the stairs followed by the taller pianist. I greet Cliburn, and he introduces me to his companion, his *astrologer*. She immediately asks for details of my birth: date, time, and place.

My answers prompt a brief dialogue aside. Happily, it ends in my being granted full astrological sanction. The sessions may now begin. The long-haired woman quietly takes her leave, and Cliburn installs himself at the keyboard to warm up. In a few minutes he proclaims his readiness. The tape machines are started. I "slate" the first take:

"M-two-R-B sixteen fifty-three, Étude Number Twenty-three, Opus Twenty-five, Number Eleven, Remake. Take one!" The echoing sound of my pompous announcement is ridiculous. I cringe in the control room, promising myself never to do *that* again.

Cliburn begins to play. But he is apparently not warmed up enough. He drops some notes. After a few moments he stops.

"Take two," I call. That's better.

He plays again. Badly. Again he stops.

"Take three."

Some more dropped notes. I'm worried. It is *my* fault, I think. Despite our celestial harmony, I feel certain Cliburn is uncomfortable with a stranger in the booth. I begin to sense disaster.

"Take four."

Again the cavernous hall fills with the sound of Chopin's towering "Winter Wind" Étude. First the somber theme; then the body of the piece with its torrential right-hand passages. But it is no go. After a few more frustrating minutes, Cliburn rises from the piano. I go out to talk to him. He apologizes for

not being prepared and, seeing the terror in my face, assures me I am blameless. With a promise for better tomorrows, he bids me good night.

Wednesday he arrives late again, but with energy in his step.

"May we start with Opus Ten, Number Three?" he asks.

Going to the piano, he plays the beautiful E Major Étude (the one made into the popular song *No Other Love*), but he has difficulty with its poetry. His playing is not nearly as tender as his original rendition. After a few takes he decides to drop the étude for something else.

"Waltz in C-Sharp Minor," he announces. He plays. It is fine; a clean, straightforward reading of the popular waltz. But halfway through, in the fast measures, he stumbles. He tries a few more takes, then quits the waltz.

"We will come back to it later," he says, an edge creeping into his voice. I glance at the clock, note the day, and wonder how much later "later" can be. I am deeply concerned, no longer for my vacation, but for Cliburn, whose struggle and gentle sincerity have won all my sympathy. I fear he will not reach the standard he has set for himself. But we go on.

He attacks a passage in the Scherzo, Number Three. He does it beautifully—but not to *his* satisfaction. After a few more takes he says he likes it, but he isn't sure.

"Can we go on to something else?" he asks. Then he skips restlessly from piece to piece, getting no satisfaction. His annoyance is rising. I suggest a break. He refuses. He adjusts the bench nervously. He plays, trying very hard to conquer himself. He doesn't. It is past four in the morning and he has tentatively approved only one brief excerpt. But he doggedly plunges back into the "Winter Wind," again getting tangled in its notes, still unable to loosen up.

SUDDENLY, after a particularly rough passage, he rises, angrily slams the cover down on the keyboard, *kicks* the piano, and turns his back on it. The noise, like two rifle shots, reverberates through the gaudy, mirrored hall as the engineers, the tuner, and I swiftly converge to assuage Cliburn's anxiety.

But it is pointless. With a curse on his breath, he excuses himself and flies out of the hall. The tuner attends the innocent, silent piano and pronounces it unhurt. We stare at one another in silent commiseration, then we go home to pray for one of those better tomorrows.

Thursday, the engineers and I meet early at my request. We darken the studio like a concert hall, hoping to reduce the rather mechanical ambiance of

a recording session. We clamp a lone reading light to the piano's music rack to illuminate the keys. We turn out the lights in the control room. The piano glows like a distant galaxy on a summer night.

Cliburn arrives, on time and smiling. He seems happy and relaxed. He says, with warm pride, that he has practiced all day. He even approves the new dark atmosphere, and sets right to work. In minutes we are recording, and the music reflects his lifted spirits.

He begins with the Waltz in C-sharp Minor, and in a few takes it is perfected. He moves on to a portion of the A-flat Polonaise that needs mending; it is repaired quickly. He corrects the scherzo and another waltz, then he turns to the tempestuous "Winter Wind."

Cliburn is torrid. His energy is boundless, his fingers under complete control. He plays two magnificent, tumultuous performances of the étude. He is playing so well that he decides he can afford to press on for musical perfection. He begins the third take. The melancholy theme emerges through the cascading right-hand accompaniment; the powerful sound thunders through every corner of the hall, resounding with tornadic force and brilliance.

But as the musical storm rages toward its conclusion there is an unexpected sharp crash, followed by the splintering of glass. The hall goes black. The music stops. . . . The infernal lamp has fallen to the keyboard from the explosive vibrations the piano has been subjected to. The bulb has burst!

Panic!

The engineer and I rush out to the piano, nearly tearing the door off the control room. Our hearts are pounding in terror that some damage may have been done to Cliburn's hands. The assistant turns on some lights. Cliburn is standing in the half light, erect and sure, remarkably unruffled. He is not hurt. The lamp has missed his hands. The bulb has shattered on the floor.

Before I can express the utter shame I feel, Cliburn assures me that "these things happen." He calmly insists that another lamp be brought. It is fetched and installed, this time on a microphone boom independent of the piano's motion. The broken glass is swept away, and I return to the control room, shaking, drenched with sweat, and counting my blessings.

Cliburn resumes his passionate conquest of the "Winter Wind," and in half an hour only the tender E Major Étude remains unrealized. We start the tapes once more, and he starts to play.

It does not go well. Something is missing. Cliburn makes a few false starts. He gets halfway into the piece and halts to practice some vexing measures.

He returns to the beginning several more times, breaking down and halting to rework other passages. The effect is an unintentional collapse of the emotional arch Chopin so carefully constructed. Cliburn is working too hard to achieve simplicity. Perhaps he has lavished too much energy on the "Winter Wind." His earlier annoyance returns, and it is compounded the harder he tries.

I insist he take a break, and he does. While he sits musing at the piano I walk to a shadowy corner to stretch my tensed muscles. But soon I hear music. Cliburn is playing again. I run to the control room, but the senior engineer has gone to the men's room. I order the assistant to start the machines quickly anyway; we can't miss a precious note.

He pushes the buttons. The red "Recording" lights pop on. The control room fills with sound. It is beautiful. But wait; it's *not* Chopin's lovely étude. It's *You and the Night and the Music*, and Cliburn is *singing*, in a husky, torchy voice, accompanying himself in a wonderfully warm and easy style!

The unexpected but delightful "pops" concert continues for about fifteen minutes. Midway through it the engineer returns, relieved, but then shocked to hear what we are hearing. He juggles the knobs on his console, trying to pick up more of Cliburn's voice, but the microphones are too far away. At best he can get only a distant, somewhat spectral sound, not inappropriate to the misty mood the pianist has fallen into.

Cliburn sings six or seven songs. Then, almost without pause, he begins playing the étude. He plays with the introspection that has eluded him all week. He plays with the several levels of Chopin's deceptively simple piece exquisitely balanced. He constructs Chopin's arch. At four o'clock Friday morning, after several completely sublime takes, the E Major Étude is completed, and, with it, the album.

LATER that morning, with a fresh engineer, I edit the new tapes. After lunch Cliburn comes to approve the master. "My Favorite Chopin" is now in the hands of the pressing plants, and one very pleased pianist goes home to practice again. Thirty-six hours later I pick up my rental car at Orly Airport and head for the Chateau Country.

And somewhere in the vault at RCA there is a tape of Van Cliburn singing Dietz and Schwartz and Gershwin. Unless someone has erased it.

Jack Somer, a free-lance writer, has been working in or writing about the record industry for some fifteen years. He was recently appointed vice president of Composers Recordings Inc.

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



CLASSICAL

AT LONG, LONG LAST, ROSSINI'S *WILLIAM TELL* COMPLETE

The composer's crowning operatic achievement receives a splendid production from Angel

IT is certainly a truism that some operas succeed on their first presentation and others—even very good ones—fail. But Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* is something of an anomaly: though it was a success initially, history has *treated* it as if it had been a flop. When it was introduced at the Paris Opéra in 1829 in its original five-act form, it was enthusiastically received and given fifty-six performances. But, after that triumphant first run, those in charge of subsequent productions immediately began abridging it almost at will. According to an oft-quoted story, a certain impresario met Rossini on the street one day and informed him, with an evident desire to please, "Tonight, Maître, we play the second act of your *Tell!*" "What! The whole act?" was Rossini's aptly ironic reply.

Just the same, in one way or another, the opera had reached a total of 500 performances by 1868, the year of Rossini's death, and there were several revivals in Paris over the years following, the most recent in 1932. The four-act Italian edition seems to have fared a little better, though generally in truncated versions. It was last heard at the Metropolitan in 1931, with the strong cast of Giuseppe Danise (*Tell*), Giacomo Lauri-Volpi (*Arnold*), Editha Fleischer (*Mathilde*), and Ezio Pinza (*Walter Furst*), and with Tullio Serafin conducting. In Italy there were important revivals—all in Florence—in 1939, 1952, and 1972,

as well as a successful recording (heavily cut) on the Cetra label in 1952 (it is still available on Everest 420/4).

Now, at last, we have a new recording of the work from Angel, one which may further be considered a truly "complete" representation of the Rossini original, even though the edition used for this recording divides the work into four acts instead of five. Completeness, for an unjustly neglected work of this caliber, is certainly a great recommendation, but I am happy to be able to add that this is a first-rate performance as well.

In all candor, *Guillaume Tell* is unquestionably, as its critics have never tired of pointing out, of excessive length. The awkwardly constructed libretto (the effort of several hands at work on the original story by the illustrious German dramatist Friedrich von Schiller) is a considerable drawback as well. The relatively brief fourth act, moreover, is distinctly anticlimactic: *Tell*'s heroic escape and Gesler's ignominious downfall, the twin events toward which the previous action-packed acts seem to have pointed, are telescoped into one fast and therefore relatively ineffective scene. Then there is the familiar (and, granted, attractive) ballet music which slows the action, plus some choral passages that, however beautifully written, are not only overlong but frequently repetitious. Nevertheless, the score



LAMBERTO GARDELLI AND NICOLAI GEDDA
Clowning around with the famous apple

abounds in marvelous pages: expansive lyric arias for Mathilde and Tell, the exciting tenor aria "*Asile héréditaire*" for Arnold, effectively constructed ensembles, and rousing choruses, all ringing with conviction in the proper dramatic contexts. The difference between *Guillaume Tell* and the comic Rossini operas of the previous decade is simply astonishing in terms of textural richness, variety, and harmonic sophistication. Rossini is revealed here as equally a master of vocal and orchestral writing (witness the pastoral evocations of the Swiss countryside), laying the foundations, tastefully and with restraint, for the "grand opera" genre that was to be radically redirected in the less tasteful and unrestrained works of Meyerbeer after Rossini's untimely retirement.

This new recording owes its success—for success it is—first of all to the spirited leadership of Lamberto Gardelli. He moves the music along at a bracing pace, guides his singers with consideration yet with undeviating firmness, and assures the choral passages the prominence and significance they deserve (*Guillaume Tell* is, after all, about a whole people—in this case the Swiss—rather like *Boris Godounov* is about the Russians). Even the over-familiar Overture and the dance sequences come to new life in Gardelli's energetic and lovingly detailed treatment.

Tenor Nicolai Gedda towers above the other individual contributors in the ardently yet sensitively sung role of Arnold. In every way, he is an ideal interpreter of this high-ranging, florid, and fiendishly difficult part—though I must reluctantly add that he would have done it even *more* spectacularly had he been given the opportunity a few years earlier. Gedda's excellence creates an imbalance of sorts, for the opera's central character is not Arnold but Tell, and Gabriel Bacquier, for all his skill as a singing actor, cannot project the vocal weight that is necessary if he is to dominate his scenes (as Giuseppe Taddei did in the Cetra set). Still, despite a dry and effortful upper range, he sings with authority and sufficient vividness to capture both the strength and the tenderness of the character.

Judging from her performance, Montserrat Caballé must have added the role of Mathilde to her repertoire only recently. She does offer moments of ravishingly beautiful vocalism (especially in the Act 3 duet "*Arnold, d'ou n'ait ce désespoir*"), but much of her singing is aloof and unmoving, and, although she sings with opulent tonal sheen, her intonation is not always pure.

Mady Mesplé, portraying Tell's son Jemmy, sings purely and accurately. Since her voice is small, it creates the proper childish impression, but



MADY MESPLÉ (JEMMY) AND CHARLES BURLES (FISHERMAN)
At the *Guillaume Tell* recording sessions

its lightness is a fault in the ensembles. She is at her brightest in the aria Rossini wrote for Jemmy but never used; it is included in this recording as a special supplement at the end of the third act. Two very fine basses, the English Gwynne Howell and the Hungarian Kolos Kovács, perform smoothly and resonantly as Melcthal and Furst.

Only two contributions are really disappointing. The ominous character of Gessler is insufficiently realized by the Belgian bass Louis Hendrikx—his singing is undersize, nasal, and without menace. Again, the role of the brutal Austrian officer Rodolphe should have been assigned to a singer with a heftier voice than that of Ricardo Cassinelli, who cannot deliver the necessary impact. But these are the only miscalculations in the otherwise uniformly first-rate casting.

I found the sound engineering somewhat over-reverberant on first hearing, with too much artificial resonance surrounding the voices. Further listening, however, permitted me to make the necessary adjustment to this initial strangeness, and I now find the sonic qualities enjoyable. Of central importance, of course, is the fact that it is good, finally, to have *Guillaume Tell*—all of it—on records. I expect to enjoy its many beauties—one act at a time, may Rossini's spirit forgive me—for a long time to come.

George Jellinek

ROSSINI: *William Tell*. Montserrat Caballé (soprano), Mathilde; Mady Mesplé (soprano), Jemmy; Gabriel Bacquier (baritone), Guillaume Tell; Jocelyn Taillon (mezzo-soprano), Hedwige; Nicolai Gedda (tenor), Arnold; Louis Hendrikx (bass), Gesler; Kolos Kovács (bass), Walter; Gwynne Howell (bass), Melcthal; Charles Burles (tenor), Fisherman; Ricardo Cassinelli (tenor), Rodolphe; others. Ambrosian Opera Chorus; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Lamberto Gardelli cond. ANGEL SEL-3793 five discs \$29.90.



IDIL BIRET

Technical discipline yields improvisatory freedom

PIERRE BOULEZ'S PIANO SONATAS

*Brilliant realizations of music that is both
challengingly difficult and oddly paradoxical*

Two new and notable recordings which between them contain the three piano sonatas of Pierre Boulez suggest the continuing interest in and importance of the creative work of the music director of the New York Philharmonic: Sonata No. 1 and the completed movements of No. 3 have been recorded for Columbia, with the composer's cooperation, by Charles Rosen, and Sonata No. 2 is performed by the Turkish pianist Idil Biret for Atlantic's new Finnadar label.

It is rather surprising that the "old-fashioned" piano has been such an important medium for avant-gardist Boulez, but his most concentrated thought can nonetheless be found in the two great sets of *Structures* for two pianos and in these three piano sonatas. For a composer with the particular musical concerns of Boulez, the piano seems to offer qualities of clarity and directness still unmatched by any other live performance medium. One composes "on" the piano, for example, with somewhat the same sense of working directly with the sound materials that the electronic composer has in working with tape—each piano tone contains its own rhythmic/dynamic impulse and shape. Nineteenth-century composers tried to override these inherent characteristics of the instrument (vocally derived melody was their ideal), and early twentieth-century composers overstressed the rhythmic-accentual components of piano sound and technique. But Boulez simply takes the "shape" of the sound of the piano—that curve of sound which (by remarkable

coincidence) looks rather like the contours of the piano's sounding board (a wide percussive attack followed by a natural fall-back of sound and then, pedal permitting, a graceful dying away)—as an essential mode of articulating his musical thought.

But clarity and sound articulation form only one aspect of Boulez's piano music. The act of performance, of manipulating time, is for him equally significant. Boulez is the only important composer of the post-War European group who has not been involved extensively with tape music; actual, real-time, live performance has always been an essential part of his work.

The problem of *recording* this music lies, in part, in catching the performing act itself without letting the weight of unalterable permanence concretize the organic and transient qualities of the music. Charles Rosen alludes to this problem when he points out that Boulez's presence at the recording sessions should not be taken to imply that these performances are "authoritative," "definitive," or otherwise "official." In fact, Boulez has *composed* performer-choice right into the two completed movements of the Third Sonata: the four sections of "Trope," for example—*Text*, *Parenthesis*, *Gloss*, and *Commentary*—form an endless idealized circle into which the performer must break in order to actually begin to perform the music. And "Constellation-Miroir" has all its fragments laid out on a page; the sequence of their playing is to be chosen, within certain guidelines, by the performer.

Boulez, like many composers in the late Fifties and early Sixties, came back to the idea of "interpretation" by confronting an old artistic and creative problem: the resolution of the dramatic tension between chance and necessity. His particular inspiration was a Mallarmé poem, also laid out on the page like a constellation: "A die cast will never abolish chance." In a sense, Boulez (and Rosen, too, simply by making this recording) paradoxically turns the aphorism upside down: the continuing existence of chance cannot abolish the reality of the die cast, the music recorded, the record pressed!

The first two of these sonatas, written when the composer was in his early twenties and under the direct influence of his discovery of Schoenberg and Webern, would seem to present no such problems on the surface; yet, they must be performed, despite their highly worked-out serial character, as if they were, from moment to moment, being *discovered*. There is no real contradiction in this: the tension between the highly notated music and its necessary incarnation in sound is simply a part of its structure, just as the interaction between the possibility of choice and the necessity finally to make unalterable



Ronny Whyte (piano, vocals) and
Travis Hudson (piano, vocals);
a new generation
of Gershwinites

decisions becomes an integral part of the performance and recording of the Third Sonata.

Even without Boulez's own blessing, Charles Rosen would have to be considered the ideal interpreter of this music. He is technically and temperamentally as well as intellectually equal to the exceptional demands of the music. Nor is he indifferent to its more obviously sensual qualities—the tremendous dynamic energies and flashing patterns of the First Sonata, the floating, flickering resonances of "Constellation-Miroir." All in all, an extraordinary performance well served by clear, attractive piano sound.

The demands of the First Sonata—playing and listening both—are, if anything, exceeded by those of the Second, which projects similar serial concerns, but on a level of far greater scope and complexity. Only one approach is possible: the mastery of its technical difficulties must be absolute so that one is freed completely to play the work as if it were being invented in the process. Idil Biret, Turkey's leading pianist and a musician of secure European reputation, is equal to this challenge. She does not merely sustain the thirty-minute length—enormously ambitious for music that cannot fall back on the familiar landmarks of tonality—but inflects and shapes it in a remarkable way. The drama here—and this is something more than any ordinary abstract canvas—is the dialogue between a thought process and its corporeal realization, between the musical idea itself and its expression as sound-color of an almost improvisatory nature. Miss Biret catches all this, and she does so beautifully. A sensitive performance of the by-now classic Webern Variations completes an impressive American recording debut. The piano sound is (like Miss Biret's playing) strong and clear; it is also (unlike Miss Biret's playing) somewhat on the dry side.

Eric Salzman

BOULEZ: *Piano Sonata No. 1*; "Trope" and "Constellation-Miroir" from *Piano Sonata No. 3*. Charles Rosen (piano). COLUMBIA M 32161 \$5.98.

BOULEZ: *Piano Sonata No. 2*. WEBERN: *Variations for Piano, Op. 27*. Idil Biret (piano). FINNADAR SR 9004 \$5.98.

POPULAR

GEORGE GERSHWIN:
A BIRTHDAY GARLAND

Three treasurable new albums to mark
the composer's seventy-fifth anniversary

THIS is the month of December, and I want to get in here right now with my nomination for The Year's Most Endearing Album: it is Monmouth-Evergreen's "For George and Ira," in which we hear some twenty songs sweetly and charmingly sung by Frances Gershwin Godowsky, sister of that same George and Ira.

It is a fact of historical record that the Gershwins' little sister broke into "the show business" before her brothers: she both danced and sang, in a true and lovely voice, often accompanied by her piano-playing brother. Marriage, motherhood, and, remarkably, a career as a painter took her away from Broadway, but, judging from the secure timbre and fresh quality of the voice in this album, she must never have stopped singing. What we have here is intimate, informal, and thoroughly lovable, a song session such as might have occurred at any of the Gershwin penthouses in the late Twenties, with Frankie singing to George's accompaniment. His contribution is splendidly approximated here, with all the right tempos, the rhythmic and melodic nuances, by Alfred Simon (an old Gershwin hand) and

Jack Easton. The album opens with the too-little-known *Oh Gee! Oh Joy!*, a Frankie favorite, done up with properly careful attention to musical and lyrical phrasing. This high standard is maintained throughout the album: the best version I've ever heard of the disarmingly conversational *Isn't It a Pity?*, a delightful *My Cousin in Milwaukee*, an affecting *The Man I Love*, a mischievous *Do It Again!* (into which Mr. Simon interpolates a portion of Gershwin's own transcription of the song). And then there is Mr. Easton's accompaniment to *Sweet and Low-down*—but mention one delight, and you are tempted to mention all of them. Enough to say that there is a consistent rightness about the album that makes it perfect and perfectly unique: Mrs. Godowsky's musicianly phrasing, which guarantees that not one rhyme or play of words gets lost, and the artful programming, from the opening to the quiet and touching close of *Love Is Here to Stay*, are but two of the important elements. Gershwin lovers of the world, rejoice: you have nothing to lose but your hearts.

Next, I have a four-letter word to describe my reaction to "Bobby Short is K-ra-zy for Gershwin," Atlantic Records' contribution to this year's Gershwin cornucopia, and that word is R-A-V-E. Bobby presents us with no less than *twenty-nine* individual songs, ranging from the standards (*'S Wonderful*, *Embraceable You*) through what I like to call the rarities—*Innocent Ingenue Baby*, *Delicious* (complete with its fine verse), *High Hat*, *I've Got to Be There*, the beautifully done *Feeling Sentimental*, and that multi-carat gem *Hi-Ho!* This last, originally conceived with an intricate piano accompaniment (it was omitted from an earlier recording by another vocalist), is done justice here by means of a second-piano obbligato (all those pianistic curlicues!) by Gershwin devotee Kay Swift. A fine touch, indeed.

As for Bobby Short, he is in fine fettle both vocally and pianistically. Best is an extended piano medley on themes from *Porgy and Bess*, a moving tribute to the composer. But he also sings disarmingly, his flexible voice rich with humor and warm with elegance, working subtle Gershwinisms into the arrangements: a touch of *Rhapsody in Blue* in *Kick-in' the Clouds*, a snatch of the Second Rhapsody in *Drifting Along with the Tide*. Here is a man who knows—and loves—his Gershwin. He has fun, too, doing *I Must Be Home by 12 O'Clock* and the mordant *Comes the Revolution*, singing a duet with himself in *Mine*, and romping through *I've Got a Crush on You* at the proper tempo (it was *never* a slow song). Have I raved long enough? Perhaps not, for the album is full of riches, but they are better heard than read about.

Monmouth-Evergreen is right back again with Ronny Whyte and Travis Hudson on the album "We Like a Gershwin Tune." Theirs is a slightly different (younger) view of Gershwin, but one that will not at all disturb his older fans. In fact, their frankly theatrical approach reminds us that the Gershwins wrote mostly for the musical stage. But this album is required listening for many reasons, not the least of which is the inclusion, again, of several rarities: *I Mean to Say*, *Vodka*, *Tell Me More*, *That New Fangled Mother of Mine*, and others. There is also a charming little note of "musicology" introduced in one of the medleys: they do an early (1919) song called *Something About Love*, with a lyric by Lou Paley. Paley, a Gershwin friend and a school teacher, based the song on the conjugation of the verb "to love." The song itself is innocuous (George was very young), but a melodic line near the close (on the words "he loves/and she loves") hints at the Gershwin to come. Eight years later, when George and Ira were doing *Funny Face*, George recalled the melodic germ and, with Paley's blessing, he and Ira produced the outstanding *He Loves and She Loves*. It is fascinating to hear this back-to-back with the earlier song.

But this is not an album of musicology, but a mixture of fun, verve, fine voices, and remarkable characterizations (listen to Miss Hudson's dumb-blond reading of *I Must Be Home*). It is, above all, a great tribute to the composer on his seventy-fifth anniversary by a new generation of Gershwinites.

Which album should you get? Why, all of them! Each is unique in its special way, a special tribute to the many-sided Gershwin talent. And there is also remarkably little duplication. These three releases therefore make a splendid core for a new Gershwin collection, a necessary expansion of an old one.

Edward Jablonski

FRANCES GERSHWIN: *For George and Ira*. Frances Gershwin (vocals): Alfred Simon, Jack Easton (pianos). *Oh Gee! Oh Joy!*; *When Do We Dance?*; *That Certain Feeling*; *Beginner's Luck*; *Fascinating Rhythm*; and twelve others. MONMOUTH-EVERGREEN MES/7060 \$5.98.

BOBBY SHORT: *Bobby Short is K-ra-zy for Gershwin*. Bobby Short (vocals and piano). *They Can't Take That Away from Me*; *Love Walked In*; *I Was So Young*; *Lorelei*; *A Foggy Day*; *I'm K-ra-zy for You*; and twenty-four others. ATLANTIC CD2-608 two discs \$11.98. © TP2-608 \$9.97. © CS2-608 \$9.97.

RONNY WHYTE/TRAVIS HUDSON: *We Like a Gershwin Tune*. Ronny Whyte and Travis Hudson (vocals and piano). *The Real American Folk Song*; *I Don't Think I'll Fall in Love Today*; *How Long Has This Been Going On?*; *I'd Rather Charleston*; *Fidgety Feet*; and eleven others. MONMOUTH-EVERGREEN MES/7061 \$5.98.



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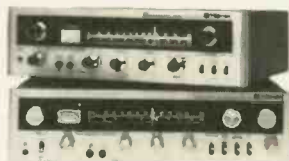
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POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES

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

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

AIRTO: *Fingers*. Airto (vocals and instrumentals). *Fingers: Romance of Death; Merry-Go-Round: Wind Chant*; and three others. CTI 6028 \$5.98.

Performance: **Brazilian brilliance**
Recording: **Excellent**

Airto's group of six—Flora Purim, David Amaro, Hugo and George Fatturoso, Ringo Thielmann, and Airto himself, who is Brazilian and who makes do with one name—sing and make their keyboards, harmonicas, acoustic and electric guitars, and drums do astonishing things. Sometimes they evoke the spirit of jazz, and sometimes the eerie sound of *candoblé*, the religious ritual of Bahia where every living thing has a soul attributed to it and the singers and musicians observing religious rites fall into trances. Little cries and yelps punctuate pieces like *El Rada (Fingers)*, their *Wind Chant* is a whirlwind, and *Parana* swells with energy like a river flooding its banks. They do only seven numbers in all, and each time they give themselves plenty of room for experimentation, development, and the exploration of every kind of Brazilian vocal, rhythmic, and instrumental effect. "Fingers" is a strange blend of modern and traditional Brazilian elements, not quite like anything else coming out nowadays. I recommend it especially to listeners sated with "the same old thing" and in search of fresh new sounds. P.K.

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
- Ⓒ = quadraphonic cassette

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

BACHMAN-TURNER OVERDRIVE. Randy Bachman (lead guitar, vocals); Tim Bachman (guitar, vocals); C.F. Turner (bass, lead vocals); Rob Bachman (drums). *Gimme Your Money Please; Hold Back the Water; Blue*

heights of his furtive and powerful *Wednesday in Your Garden* or the belligerent appeal of *American Woman*.

Bachman is Canadian. I believe that Canadians have a special approach to rock—respectful, resentful, ambitious, and refreshing—as they do to most things American. But besides that, people with Bachman's talent, when they leave the groups where they have made their names, tend to turn away from the qualities that made them famous—to take a vacation, or try to convince themselves and the public that they are capable of different or "better" or "more important" things.

The potential of this particular group is as great as Bachman cares to make it. He hasn't decided what he wants to do yet; for the moment, he leads a strong band that would make anybody's Saturday night. Its future, though, is anybody's guess. J.V.



AIRTO
Fresh new sounds from Brazil

Collar; Little Gandy Dancer; and four others. MERCURY SRM 1 673 \$5.98, Ⓢ MC8 1 673 \$6.98, Ⓒ MCR4 1 673 \$6.98.

Performance: **Energetic**
Recording: **Good**

This is a perfectly respectable thump-and-pump rock album. Mostly it's Randy Bachman's show—two of his brothers are on guitar and drums, with C.F. Turner as vocalist and bassist. Bachman was one of the leading lights of the Guess Who, as important to them as Graham Nash was to the Hollies, and his new group is solid. The failure of the album stems from Bachman's temporarily not being able (or not caring) to provide the first-class songwriting he did for the Guess Who. Though most of the material here is superior to most of what you hear today, it does not reach the

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MATTHEW FISHER: *Journey's End*. Matthew Fisher (keyboards, guitar, vocals); Mick Hawkworth (bass); Geoff Swettenham (drums). *Suzanne: Going for a Song; Play the Game; Separation; Hard to Be Sure*; and five others. RCA APL1-0195 \$5.98, Ⓢ APS1-0195 \$6.98, Ⓒ APK1-0195 \$6.98.

Performance: **Majestic**
Recording: **Excellent**

This is a great album, to be sure, but it is not, despite Fisher's having been a member of Procol Harum, and despite the hype RCA is giving it, the "A Salty Dog, Part Two" that you may be expecting. Matthew Fisher being who and what he is, "Journey's End" couldn't help but sound a bit like that album, but there are some important differences here, in both conception and execution. For one thing, Matthew's guitar playing lacks, shall we say, the intensity of Robin Trower (and drummer Geoff Swettenham sure as hell ain't B. J. Wilson); for another, Matthew's much too cranky a lyricist to give Keith Reid anything to worry about. When you get down to it, "Journey's End" just doesn't have the overall variety of Procol's 1969 masterpiece.

But so what? On its own terms, this is a spectacular solo debut: Matthew's vaguely

McCartney-esque vocals are great to hear again, and the songs are gorgeous. I'm especially pleased with *My Marie* and *Going for a Song*, an almost nasty account of his split with the Procols, but they're all terrific, including, finally, the theme he wrote (back in 1967) for the film *Separation*, a melancholy little adagio for organ and strings that shows him at his most baroque.

As a matter of fact, I can't imagine anyone's not being knocked out by at least a part of this album: it's that pretty. Buy two. *Steve Simels*

FOGHAT. Foghat (vocals and instrumentals). *Ride, Ride, Ride; Feel So Bad; Long Way to Go; It's Too Late; What a Shame*; and four others. BEARVILLE BR 2136 \$5.98, © C 2136 \$7.98, © M8 2136 \$6.98, © M5 2136 \$6.98.

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

In the music industry, the initials MOR stand for "middle of the road"—which means light mood music, Broadway show tunes, and watered-down versions of contemporary pop hits with choral groups singing "doo-wahhhh" as the string section scrubs away. It is a little above the level of Muzak. Within rock itself there is no recognized MOR (unless it be from such artists as the Carpenters, whose fluffy sound is more obviously pop in the old sense); all hard rock is considered to be contemporary, right-on, and, um, groovy. But it's time either to define a new kind of MOR, or to declare one, that could apply to rock. This would embrace all the "known" rock forms: folk-, hard-, Jesus-, poetic-, pathetic-, bathetic-, country-, and so on. Under this heading would fall all those groups and singers who don't do anything wrong, provided that it's all been done before and very often done to death. The determining factor for including a band or a singer in the category would be that they are Obviously Doing the Obvious—there! That's it! ODO rock!

And if anybody is ODO, then it's Foghat. Every guitar solo and amplifier-induced tone here has been heard before. The vocals are all standard white screamers. The tunes, with two exceptions, are as flat as Kansas. Even the final stereo mix sounds the same as dozens of other albums (this is distressing, since producers usually do the mix, and producers are, in theory, individuals).

Foghat would fare much better if they stayed away from writing their own material until they are capable writers. Otherwise they will remain ODO-rock hacks. *J.V.*

FRANCES GERSHWIN: *For George and Ira* (see Best of the Month, page 88)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HOODOO RHYTHM DEVILS: *What the Kids Want*. Hoodoo Rhythm Devils (vocals and instrumentals). *Crazy About the Ladies; Bullfrog Holler; Milltown Gambler; The Mirror; I Fought the Law; My Old Lady*; and three others. BLUE THUMB BTS 57 \$5.98 © M 557 \$6.98, © M 857 \$6.98.

Performance: **Rompin', stompin'**
Recording: **Excellent**

It's great to hear a band that's *trying* to please and succeeding at it. The Devils' music is meant to incite dancing and foot-tapping; it is an energetic pastiche of straight-ahead rock, country, and folk. The group has the same

good-time feeling that made the Jim Kweskin Jug Band, the Even Dozen Jug Band, and the Lovin' Spoonful such fun to listen to.

Their songs are catchy—especially *Bullfrog Holler* and *Milltown Gambler*—and *The Mirror* could easily pass as the genuine country article, straight out of Nashville. I also commend the Devils for bringing back that great little Tex-Mex-style number, *I Fought the Law*, originally done by the Bobby Fuller Four in the mid-Sixties. The Devils are a band that satisfy. More power to them. *J.V.*

LITTLE SONNY: *New King of the Blues Harmonica*. Little Sonny (vocals, harmonica); George Davidson (drums); Rudy Robinson (organ); other musicians. *Baby, What Do You Want Me to Do?; Eli's Pork Chop; Hey Little Girl; Hot Potato; Don't Ask Me No Questions; Tomorrow's Blues Today; Back Down*



HOODOO RHYTHM DEVILS
Fun music for dancing and foot-tapping

Yonder; Sad Funk; The Creeper Returns. ENTERPRISE ENS 1005 \$4.98.

Performance: **Flashy**
Recording: **Fair**

LITTLE SONNY: *Black & Blue*. Little Sonny (vocals, harmonica); Bar-Kays (horns); Bobby Manuel (guitar); Eddie Wallis (guitar); Willie Hall (drums); Tommy Williams (saxes); Ron Gordon (organ). *Hung Up; Sonny's Fever; Honest I Do; I Found Love; Memphis B-K; You Got a Good Thing; A Woman Named Trouble; Wade in the Water; Paying Through the Nose; They Want Money; Where Women Got Meat on Their Bones*. ENTERPRISE ENS 1018 \$4.98.

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

"We're arrogant," Sheldon Annis says in the liner notes of the first album by Little Sonny (né Aaron Willis). "We say that Little Sonny is now the KING OF THE BLUES HARMONICA. Now whacha gonna do about it?" That's easy: I'm gonna agree with the arrogant part and disagree with the king part. In order to confer such a title upon a harp player, you'd need to know something about the harmonica, and Mr. Annis seems even less familiar with it than he is with the English language. When he isn't into colorful descriptions (Detroit is "Mr. Ford's Economic Won-

derland"; Little Sonny "plays with his whole body, right down to dipping eyebrows, twitching knees, and thumping big toe inside his shoe"), Mr. Annis waffles glibberish about harp technique: "Instead of just blowing out, (Little Sonny) blows AND sucks IN so that the driving sound doesn't stop, doesn't let up." All harp players blow out AND suck IN: blues-harp teacher Arnie Fox says the ratio on a diatonic harp playing blues is about three-to-one in favor of *draw* notes. Of course, Little Sonny uses a chromatic harp, which makes a difference—and which also is an example of the kind of useful information that doesn't appear in the liner notes.

But Annis is correct about one thing: Little Sonny is not a backup man. In the first album, particularly, he plays as if his primary objective is to thwart any other musician who might be harboring thoughts about upstaging the leader. He plays quite well, of course—he studied with Sonny Boy (Rice Meller) Williamson and has been playing around Detroit for a long time—but the first album is an ego trip. The whole thing was recorded, Annis says, in five and a half hours; that may have been a factor. Sonny seems more secure in the second album, "Black & Blue," although still not one to hang back in the shadows for very long. The production obviously was fussed over somewhat more than that of the first effort, with the Bar-Kays brought in to play backwash and rhythm on their horns. Sonny's *singing* is fairly straightforward on both albums, and better than average, but is miked better on the second. His harp style, heavily warbled, seems to show more Little Walter than Sonny Boy Williamson influences, but he does flash and elaborate on a Sonny Boy-like knack for finding a tonal uniqueness on the harp for certain songs, a "sound" that colors the tune all the way through. His timing is excellent, but he still doesn't have enough humility to be anybody's "king" just yet, nor is he smooth enough. Some of the "chords" applauded by Annis are in fact dis-cords, but, again, the work on "Black & Blue" is cleaner. Once he settles with James Cotton the issue of just who is the Duke of the *Chromatic Blues Harp*, then we can worry about the heavier title.

Meanwhile, I'd like to know why harp players are so fond of the name Sonny.

N. (Big Shady) C.

LOBO: *Calumet*. Lobo (vocals and guitar); orchestra. *Rock and Roll Days; Stony; Try; One and the Same Thing*; and six others. BIG TREE BT2101 \$5.98, © M 82101 \$6.98, © M 52101 \$6.98.

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

Composer-performer Lobo is most often an out-front c-&-w entertainer with a professional grip on his material. That he is able to make the most out of such potboilers as *It Sure Took a Long, Long Time* or *Goodbye Is Just Another Word* only points up how consistently good he might be if he had more songs like *Try*, a model of simple lyrics and melody. Lobo's playing on acoustic guitar is excellent. Not so excellent is the electric guitar (played by Barry Harwood) that is added to most of the arrangements; it only emphasizes the commerciality of the material itself.

This is another of those "one track" albums that perversely nag the listener with the thought that perhaps the good track was only

(Continued on page 95)

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LORI LIEBERMAN:

A Singer Without a Song

Reviewed by Noel Coppage

A CAPITOL RECORDS blurb reports that Lori Lieberman is not so sure she likes that jacket photograph on her first album, "Lori Lieberman." She spoke to the blurb writer of an almost "threatening" innocence she sees in the picture. What I saw in it could pass for a Wellesley senior who had just had the egos of two deans and a house-mother for brunch. We could *both* be right, of course. Anyway, we both prefer the jacket art of the second album, "Becoming," which looks like a picture of an attractive, imperfect, real girl instead of a promotion shot by one of those darkroom *artistes* who can glamorize the character out of any face they can get some fixative on.

If the music had undergone a similar change, the contrast between the two albums would have been staggering, and the second would be one of the year's events—for Lori's is that kind of voice. Unfortunately, the songs in both albums belong with that cover photograph on the first one. Nineteen of the twenty songs were fixed in a formula cooked up by Norman Gimbel (words) and Charles Fox (music), best known as the writers of *Killing Me Softly with His Song*. That, of course, was a big hit for Roberta Flack, but it was written with young Lori Lieberman in mind and is the first selection on the first side of her first album.

She sings it, and most of the others, with a voice that seems to have more smoothness than it uses, good range, and, at times, an almost glorious tone. She also sings it, and most of the others, with more conviction than I could summon, but more about that later. It is intonation—what Lori Lieberman basically *sounds* like—that makes her potentially special. One is either blessed with the ability to make beautiful sounds or one isn't, and nobody can do anything about it. Lori is so blessed. She has no throwaway notes: each tone is beautifully formed, each can stand as critical a listen as any other. In the lower register, she sounds something like Linda Ronstadt, but classier: on the higher notes, her sound is clean and rounded. Her range doesn't call attention to itself, which is another good sign: when it becomes obvious that a singer is hitting high and low notes

fairly far apart, the thing that usually *makes* it obvious is some small sign of strain indicating the vocalist is at her limits. Here, Lori Lieberman makes the "two-voices" heavy distinction between upper and lower registers, which may be either a matter of stylistic fooling around by a quite young person or an attempt to get some soul into songs that could sure use some. In either case, I'm certain she is capable of making the transition more smoothly than she generally does in these recordings. Now and then she forgets and *does* smooth it out. This would all take care of itself, probably, if the songs were more engrossing.

Killing Me Softly is a microcosm of what's wrong with the Gimbel-Fox product. It is a head-turning sort of song: Gimbel's unusual way of putting things snares your attention, and Fox's ingratiating melody holds it—but then what? With deliberate speed and terrific finality, the song turns into a pumpkin. Gimbel has contrived what at first seems a colorful—and then seems a grotesque—way of saying that the narrator, a female, went to hear a male singer-guitarist and was mightily impressed. That is, it's another groupie's lament. Fox has hit upon a melody whose catchiness—lack of subtlety—is its own undoing. What you heard the first time was all there was to it, unless perhaps you heard it on the car radio while skidding off the road.

So it goes with most of these numbers. Gimbel has fiddled with the language in order to find cute ways of saying over and over that *luv* sure is complicated: what he has to say seems to be a reiteration of what was said in countless "romantic" ballads hustled off the Tin Pan Alley assembly line in the Forties and Fifties. Fox's melodies have the same machine-made quality: they should be a great comfort to Lawrence Welk or to anyone who goes to B movies just to listen to the background music. A two-man attempt at reviving the old Alley is, I guess, what I make of all this. *A House Full of Women*, in which Gimbel and Fox take up the basically limp ploy of telling a sad story within a happy, bouncy melody—a ploy that

had taken its lumps even before John Lennon got around to using it, by the way—is, nevertheless, one of their better songs. It appears to be one of the few in which the writers tried to grapple with reality instead of with graded, sorted, labeled, and crated song ingredients.

Most of the arrangements seem keyed to that first-album photograph, too. They involve some good musicians (the credits don't identify who plays what) but have that sterile, over-controlled, anonymous quality that television producers and similar risk-avoiding types often demand. They are generally unobtrusive, however, which means producers Gimbel and Fox recognize what a vocalist they've got in Lori, and the arrangements in "Becoming" do seem a bit looser. In fact, an electric guitar actually is allowed to take a short trot (and does so in a clean, Harrison-like style) in the title song, which suggests that Lori could rock with a nice, um, *innocent* sort of abandon if the song itself were a bit less inhibited.

But Lori Lieberman sings these songs as well as anyone could. Her attitude seems to be neither cynical nor naive. There *is* in her delivery a certain reserve—as if to say, well, it's only words—which, in the circumstances, is certainly understandable. I don't, however, take it to be a sign that she has already stopped expecting to be shaken up by a song lyric. That could happen to someone who sang these songs very many years, though; if Lori Lieberman wants to become the next Karen Carpenter, all she has to do is stay put.

I DON'T question the motives of Gimbel and Fox, nor do I doubt that much in their friendship has been important to Lori Lieberman—I even think that, if they could purge certain hack attitudes, they have the skills to write some fine songs—but something has to give. Song quality aside, it is quite a confining arrangement for a singer to stick almost exclusively to the output of a single songwriting team (yes, I've heard of Dionne Warwick)—the one song here that isn't a Gimbel-Fox song is the first album's *My Lover Do You Know*, an unfortunate slip of Lori's own pen. This is especially unfortunate for a singer who obviously has the stuff to interpret a wide variety of material. She ought to be sharpening our insight into some of those strange but arresting minds out there, improving our chances of hearing some of the real poetry that surfaces in our pop music from time to time.

LORI LIEBERMAN. Lori Lieberman (vocals); orchestra. Charles Fox arr. *Killing Me Softly with His Song*; *Michael and the Children*; *And the Feeling's Good*; *Double-Decker Jet Plane*; *My Lover Do You Know*; *Time for Me to Go*; *Back to Before*; *There's a Harbor*; *To That Time*; *A Day Our Love Has Put Together*. CAPITOL ST-11081 \$5.98, 8XT-11081 \$6.98.

LORI LIEBERMAN: *Becoming*. Lori Lieberman (vocals); orchestra, Charles Fox arr. *I Go Along*; *Becoming*; *A House Full of Women*; *It Didn't Come Easy*; *No Way of Knowing*; *Someone Come and Take It*; *Sweet Morning After*; *Elezar*; *The Seed First*; *Song of the Seventies*. CAPITOL ST-11203 \$5.98, 8XT-11203 \$6.98.

a lucky accident instead of an indication of the quality of future work. We'll see. P.R.

LULU. Lulu (vocals); orchestra. *Groovin'; Easy Evil; A Boy Like You; Make Believe World; I Wish;* and five others. CHELSEA BCL1 0144 \$5.98, (B) BCS1 0144 \$6.98, (C) BCK1 0144 \$6.98.

Performance: **Frozen**
Recording: **Fair**

A few years ago Lulu was a top star, at least in England. She was fresh and enthusiastic, and her voice had a strong musicality that communicated vividly. But lately she has been going downhill at an alarming speed. Her newest release shows that, although the voice is perhaps even better than ever (*Funny How Time Slips Away*), her performances have become rote-like and almost as frozen as Petula Clark's. The absence of growth in lyric perception and the apparent lack of interest in developing any new styles makes this album sound like a dial tone after two or three tracks. This is a recording that offers one quarter of the sum of a good, natural talent. It's hazy as to whether boredom or only bad choice of material is at fault, but it is clear that Lulu has lost much of her old vivacity and become, as the British would say, "a bit of a pill." P.R.

MELISSA MANCHESTER: *Home to Myself.* Melissa Manchester (vocals and piano); orchestra. *Funny That Way; Jenny; Be Happy Now; Easy; Home to Myself;* and five others. BELL 1123 \$5.98, (B) M 81123 \$6.98, (C) M 51123 \$6.98.

Performance: **Desperate**
Recording: **Okay**

Everyone knows how crazy I am about Laura Nyro. But then I've always had a weakness for street kids who ponder the cosmic to the tune of about a million dollars a year. Melissa Manchester is the latest representative of this dreary breed. She does make a spirited try, however, to dispense a salable kind of pubescent wisdom—alternately "tough and tender" in *Jenny*, "loving but lost" in *Home to Myself*, and "lusty Earth Mother" in *If It Feels Good (Let It Ride)*—as she hopscotches the well-traveled groove. The voice is fashionably strident and desperate, and about as musical as the clinking of two plastic glasses.

But who knows? She might just make it. Since I never could understand Nyro's wildly successful "mystique" or the audience rapture at her cash-and-carry performances, it is probably unwise to trust my opinion of a Melissa Manchester. P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

IAN MATTHEWS: *Valley Hi.* Ian Matthews (vocals, guitar); Danny Lane (drums); Billy Graham (bass, fiddle); Jay Lacy (guitar); Bobby Warford (guitar); Michael Nesmith (guitar); Red Rhodes (steel guitar, dobro); David Barry (keyboards); Byron Berline (fiddle). *Keep On Sailing; Old Man at the Mill; Shady Lies; These Days; Leaving Alone; 7 Bridges Road; Save Your Sorrows; What Are You Waiting For; Propinquity; Blue Blue Day.* ELEKTRA EKS-75061 \$5.98.

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

Ian Matthews has hit his stride. I always thought he would, but I never suspected how



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easy it would seem when the time came. His Elektra album "Valley Hi" brings together country, folk, and rock elements for a cruise that has the graceful, relaxed, elegant excitement of a balloon ascension on a crisp autumn morning. The sheer competence of Matthews' singing quickly allays all worries about technicalities, yet the vocals are not without concern and humility. Matthews slips inside each song the way Alec Guinness gets submerged in the characters he plays; you could drift into a reverie and forget who is singing—the vocal just seems to go with the song. The other outstanding characteristic of the album is the way it all sticks together, the kind of coherence it has been given by the producer, ex-Monkee Michael Nesmith.

Matthews, whose work with Fairport Convention, Matthews Southern Comfort, and Plainsong drew attention mostly to his songwriting, wrote only three of these songs, the excellent *Keep on Sailing* and two others, let us say. For the rest, he and Nesmith made some canny choices of other people's work, then directed some fine musicians through arrangements that have the calm good sense to be slightly frivolous and surprising sometimes. Nesmith's contribution is not an unqualified blessing: the sound leans too heavily upon the steel guitar, as the sound in Mike's own solo recordings tends to do. But Red Rhodes is an excellent steel player, and the countrified atmosphere is right.

The steel is used just about perfectly in Jackson Browne's *These Days*, which has probably the best arrangement here it will ever get. Numerous vocal overdubs by a man who knows the parts (Ian—and could that also be a girl's voice in there, possibly Sandy

Denny?) convert Steve Young's skimpy 7 *Bridges Road* into a sort of choral overture to side two, and balance the vocal textures of *Keep on Sailing*, which starts side one. Small things like that, any one of which might not be *consciously* noticed, just keep piling up points along the route between the listener's viscera and cerebrum. Indeed, Matthews may even have scored more points there this month than my beloved New York Knicks. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ORCHESTRA HARLOW: *Hommy, a Latin Opera* (Larry Harlow and Jenaro "Heny" Alvarez, music and lyrics). Orchestra Harlow (instrumentals); Celia Cruz, Jenaro "Heny" Alvarez, Justo Betancourt, Cheo Feliciano, Pete "El Conde" Rodríguez, Adalberto Santiago, Junior González (vocals). *Introduction; Es un Varón; El Día de Navidad; Quirinbom-boro; Mantecadito; El Doctor y la Razón; Soy Sensacional; Gracia Divina; Cari-Caridad; No Queremos Sermón; Finale—Mira-me, Oyeme.* FANIA SLP 00425 \$4.98.

Performance: **Impressive**
Recording: **Good**

This will take some explaining, but it all leads to something worthwhile. Larry Harlow is sort of the Lawrence of Arabia of Latin music, a New York Jewish American who is also one of the most popular and respected Latin bandleaders, right up there with Ray Barretto, Eddie Palmiere, Willie Colón, Ricardo Ray, and the other leading lights. Harlow composed this "Latin opera" for probably the same reasons that Peter Townshend of the

Who composed *Tommy*, upon which *Hommy* is based in plot, characters, and individual song content (but with a difference). Both Townshend and Harlow are extremely talented and musically ambitious men, though Townshend stands a little further back from his work, surveying it with a cocked eye and a shrug of the shoulders. Both wrote "operas" to expand the possibilities of the music they play and believe in; if it seems odd that Harlow should write a Latin opera, it is no more odd than that Townshend, an Englishman, should write an opera in an idiom that is an American invention.

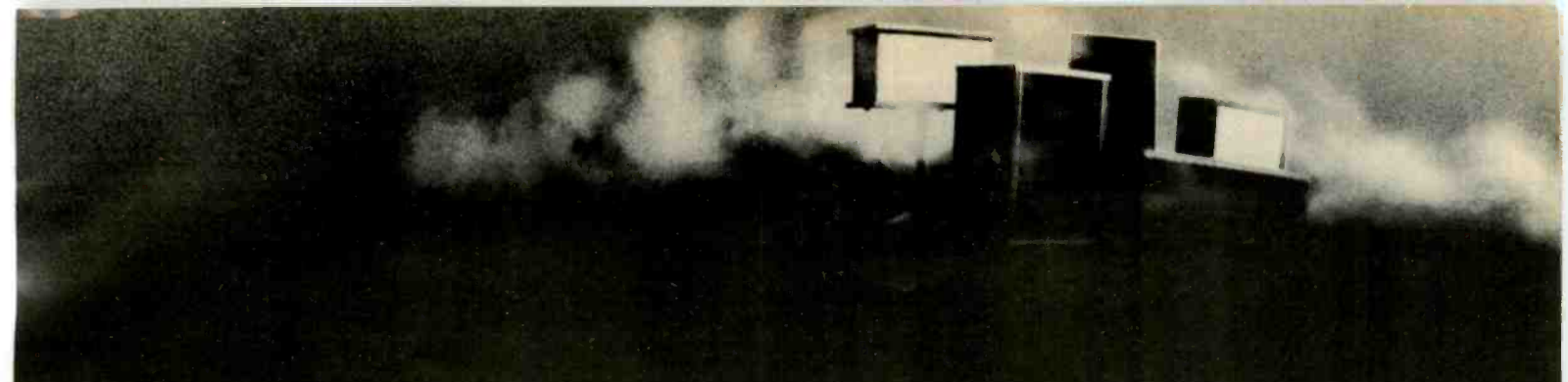
Hommy was presented in concert form at Carnegie Hall last year, to the disappointment of some of those who attended expecting to see a theatrical production. But all agreed that the music was interesting and persuasive. The Who performed *Tommy* as a group concert at the Metropolitan Opera in 1970. It remains to be seen whether either or both of the works can be staged, or how. In fact, *Tommy*, *Hommy*, and the ignored *Babbacombe Lee* by Fairport Convention share a common problem: they were created for phonograph records with no thought of theatrical production.

Tommy's plot concerns a small boy psychologically rendered deaf, mute, and blind after seeing his mother's boyfriend murdered by his father. He becomes a pinball champion (playing by sense of smell), then regains his sensual functions, becomes a pop idol and near-religious figure, and is spurned by his fans when one of his relatives tries to cash in by opening a Tommy Holiday Camp (the British equivalent of a Catskills resort).

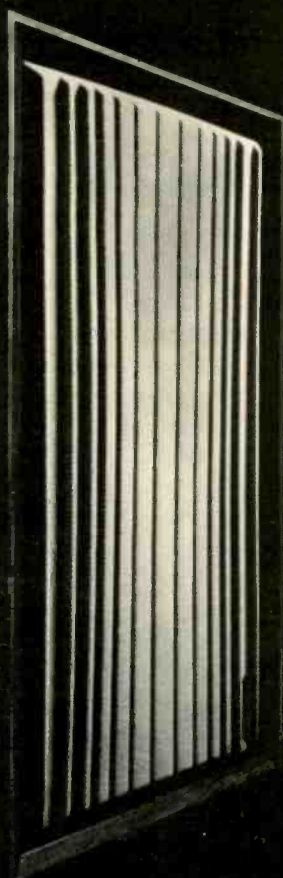
Hommy's birth is cause for rejoicing, as the
(Continued on page 100)

**Rod McKuen
Goes Back
to Carnegie Hall,**

does rock songs like "What'd I Say," "Oliver Twist" and brand new ballads "To You," "Blessings of the Day," "40 Without Fear" and poems "Sunday," "Now I Have the Time" and an entire symphonic suite—25 selections in all. Rod's last Carnegie Hall album just earned him a Gold Record. They're becoming a habit with Rod on Warner Bros. Where he belongs.



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The performance of the Advent/2 is the result of a breakthrough – not in design principles, but in the quality of internal components built into a low-cost loudspeaker. Not only does it have more expensive drivers than other low-cost systems, but drivers of a cost usually associated with speakers of twice the price.

Its low-frequency speaker, for instance, has a magnetic system as massive as that of the original Advent Loudspeaker. And while one of its two high-frequency speakers would have been enough for the usual low-cost loudspeaker, it uses a pair to achieve power-handling equal to that of much more expensive systems.

What makes this level of quality possible for the price is the first use of modern plastics technology to produce an enclosure that equals the acoustic performance of a wood cabinet at far lower cost. The money saved has been put directly into the speakers themselves.

The handsome, warm-white molded cabinet of the Advent/2 wasn't designed simply to look different or provide something new to advertise, but to help achieve the highest possible performance-per-dollar in a loudspeaker. It is a combination of high-impact thermoplastic for its outer shell and high-density polyurethane foam for its inner core. Lighter in weight than an equivalent wood cabinet, it is easier to mount on a shelf. Its acoustically transparent (and non-resonant) metal grille provides excellent protection for the drivers. And both the shape and finish of the molded cabinet have helped produce one of the very few loudspeakers at any price with something to offer the eyes as well as the ears, a really graceful and distinctive appearance that looks very much at home in a home.

Our ability to produce a speaker as good as the Advent/2 for so low a price is based on confidence that we can sell a large number of speakers to offset the initially high cost of mak-

ing molds. We believe your first hearing will tell you why we have that confidence.

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There are some good low-priced speakers on the market, but the Advent/2 is intended to supply meaningfully better performance.

The specific difference is its combination of bass, efficiency, and power-handling. Some low-cost speakers simply don't produce enough bass to avoid a somewhat lightweight sound quality. Some of these – and others with slightly better bass – require more power than low-cost amplifiers and receivers can provide to play demanding music at satisfyingly loud levels. Others just won't produce enough acoustic power under any conditions to fill a big room, or a smaller room full of people, with low-distortion sound.

We feel that a speaker meant to be lived with happily for year after year, without continual urges for something a little or a lot better, must handle enough power to satisfy all likely listening requirements – including turning up the volume for a party or for some high-intensity listening with or without company. If it is to be a true low-cost speaker, it must also be efficient enough for satisfying use with low-cost, low-power amplifiers and receivers. And it must produce enough really low bass to give a solid foundation for all kinds of music, with no sense of missing weight.

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The new Advent/2 costs \$58.[†] If you would like more information, please send in the coupon. We will include a list of Advent dealers who will be happy to give it the full demonstration, including comparison with more expensive speakers, that it deserves.

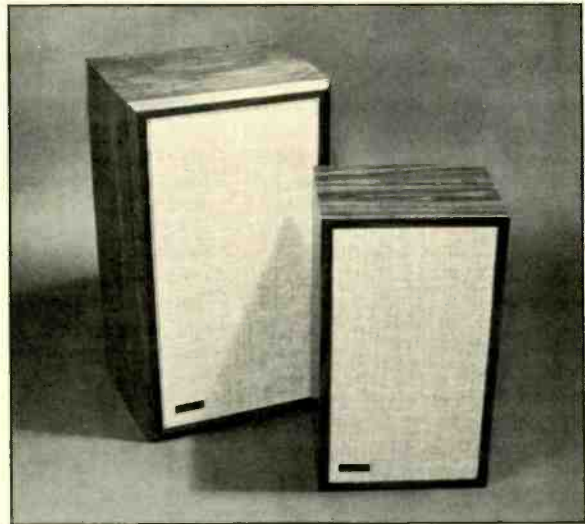
Thank you.

[†]Slightly higher in some parts of the country.

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Advent Corporation,
195 Albany St., Cambridge, Mass. 02139

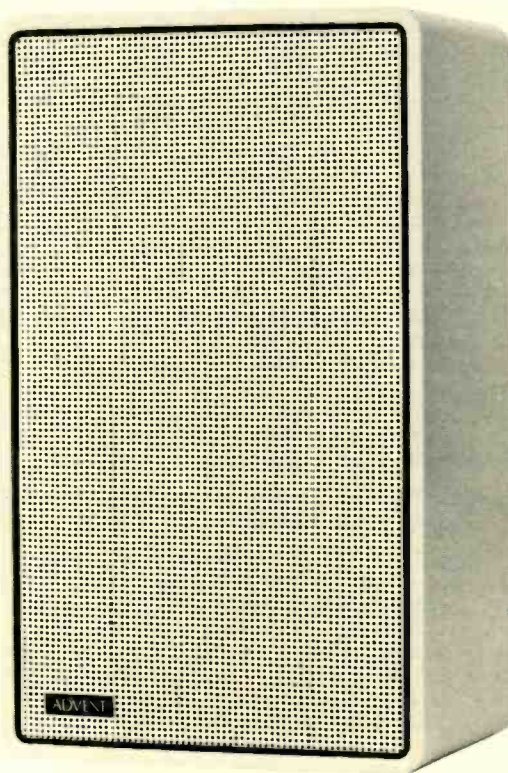
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The Advent/2

Advent Corporation, 195 Albany Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139.

birth of a male usually is in Latin families ("Latin" meaning Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, and Rumanian). But he is born deaf, mute, and blind. His parents then call on the protection and sympathy of God (*Gracia Divina*) to help and comfort their son. By some kind of instinct, he becomes a conga player (speaking through his hands and drums), rapidly turns into a Puerto Rican pop idol, gains use of his sensual functions, begins to preach, is rejected by his fans—who want rum, women, and dope—and finally goes to the mountains to tell God he has failed in his mission and to wish for a world where Christians would act like Christians.

The song parallels between *Hommy* and *Tommy* are obvious: *Mirame, Oyeme* (See Me, Hear Me) is based on Townshend's, *See Me, Feel Me, Touch Me, Heal Me. Soy Sensacional* mirrors *I'm a Sensation*, both songs being sung by characters surprised and de-

Around; When Annie Took Me Home: Katy; and six others. REPRISE MS 2144 \$5.98.

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

The idea has that quick pickup that should have raised suspicions about its endurance: instead of a live album of old songs, which everyone else does, why not a live album of previously unrecorded songs? So they did it, mostly at the Marquee Club in London before an invited audience. The result tends to confirm the thought that an audience doesn't contribute much when the audience doesn't know anything about the songs. Only in a couple of instances, both involving children's songs (one involving the backing vocals of Tom's little girls, Jennifer and Katy), does having a live audience seem to invoke the good old feed-back-of-energy phenomenon. Otherwise, the net effect is that Tom hits some sour notes



Blue Thumb

THE POINTER SISTERS:
Evoking memories of Rosie the Riveter, with a garnish of soul

lighted with their new stardom and unaware of what it really means or how soon they are to be disappointed by it. The great difference between the two operas is that in *Tommy* the parents, who contribute to the boy's woes, try everything to get him cured as he increasingly becomes an embarrassment and a burden to them; in *Hommy* the parents try whatever medical aid may help the boy but accept his condition as a fact of life and rely on God to protect him and make his life bearable.

The Harlow Orchestra and the musicians added to it for the *Hommy* album are all fine, and there are appearances by Johnny Pacheco on flute and Charlie Rodríguez on *tres*. The vocal parts are all well sung, but Celia Cruz, as the guardian angel, has the most moving moments and the greatest sense of theater—it is quite possible that this remarkable woman is the Bessie Smith of Latin music. *Hommy* is a worthwhile project, and an important one in the context of American popular music. It is a further example of how Latin music, while retaining its own identity, is moving toward the mainstream.

Since the opera and the album were made almost exclusively for the Latin market, no English translations of the lyrics have been included. This is an understandable but regrettable omission. I hope we will not have to wait long for *Hommy* to be heard, understood, respected, and enjoyed by general audiences.

J.V.

TOM PAXTON: *New Songs for Old Friends.* Tom Paxton (vocals, guitar); Ralph McTell (guitar, harmonica); Dave Willis (bass); other musicians. *Hobo in My Mind; When We Were Good; Who's Been Passing Dreams*

that would have been corrected in a studio recording, and pads the program with pleasantries, some of which, in the studio, he might have scrapped in favor of the harsher satire he does so well. The last two selections, *Silent Night* and *When Princes Meet*, both of which were recorded in the studio, do have Tom putting the lance to the idiots who run things.

Fred, a tribute to a dog from one of his fleas, is a charmer, and none of the other songs is actually weak—it's just that the album is top-heavy with mellowness and isn't as, um, *alive* as several of Tom's studio albums have been. N.C.

THE POINTER SISTERS. The Pointer Sisters (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Yes We Can Can; Naked Foot; River Boulevard; That's How I Feel; Sugar; Pains and Tears; Jada; Cloudburst; Old Songs; Wang Dang Doodle.* BLUE THUMB BTS 48 \$5.98, M848 \$6.95, M548 \$6.95.

Performance: **Indeed, they can can**
Recording: **Excellent**

They seemed to come from out of the blue, but actually the four Pointer sisters had often strayed from their Oakland, California, garage to seek recognition before their irresistible rendition of Allen Toussaint's *Yes We Can Can* suddenly made them one of the most sought-after acts in the country.

And an act it is. Loosely covered in shoulder-padded, flower-print dresses that might have been worn by Joan Crawford or Vera Zorina thirty years ago, and sporting Late Late Show hairstyles under an assortment of Late Late Show hats, the young ladies offer nostalgia buffs a visual delight. Their music,

too, is a throwback to another time, but, with one exception, it is no mere re-creation. The exception is *Cloudburst*, which is too close to Lambert, Hendricks, and Ross for comfort, but might serve well to turn a younger generation on to that fine group. The rest of the album is an intriguing blend of the Andrews Sisters, the Merry Macs, and other items from Juke Box Jill's collection. Don't let that fool you, however, for the Pointer Sisters inject a great deal of themselves into the songs, and one would be hard put to find *Yes We Can Can* derivative of anything. *Old Songs* is a veritable cocktail of Tin Pan Alley trends of old, and *Wang Dang Doodle*, by blues man Willie Dixon, gets a rowdy going over, with the Hoodoo Rhythm Devils delivering support in r-&-b style.

But let me say no more . . . except this: put Bette Midler back on the shelf, treat yourself to this happy, infectious romp, scat through yesterday's Hit Parade land, and just listen to wartime harmonies as the Pointer Sisters evoke memories of Rosie the Riveter garnished with soul. C.A.

THE POINTER SISTERS. The Pointer Sisters (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Yes We Can Can;* and nine others. BLUE THUMB BTS 48 \$5.98, M848 \$6.98, M548 \$6.98.

Performance: **Fair to Midlering**
Recording: **Commercially cute**

Decked out in Forties tart-style clothes and the subject of a media hype unequaled since Moby Grape, the Pointer Sisters are meant more to be heard than listened to. Their performing range runs from the Andrews Sisters to the Supremes, with a little scat singing along the way. Yeah, not bad as things are going these days, but not much, either, musically or otherwise. On TV, it is a good and funny camp act: four Geraldines roughing up the audience. The album is much milder fun, for beneath all the hype there is only cheerful exhibitionism passing as talent.

Bette Midler, also the object of the shrewdest sort of management, is still the best camp performer around as she plows steadily on through a furrow first cut by Streisand in the middle Sixties. Streisand abandoned it—wisely, as it turned out, for camp is as ephemeral as its subjects—to become the great screen comedienne she is today. Midler will keep on doing her Streisand-Mae West bit for a while, and the Pointer Sisters will be around for a while too, I guess. I have never thought that rip-offs work artistically, but commercially at least, if you look at the charts, they seem to nowadays. But then again these are parched times in pop music. P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LOU REED: *Berlin.* Lou Reed (guitar and vocals); Jack Bruce (bass); Steve Hunter (guitar); Aynsley Dunbar (drums); Stevie Winwood (organ and harmonium); other musicians. *Berlin; Lady Day; Men of Good Fortune; Caroline Says I; How Do You Think It Feels; Oh, Jim; Caroline Says II; The Kids; The Bed; Sad Song.* RCA APL1-0207 \$5.98, APS1-0207 \$6.98, APK1-0207 \$6.98.

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

This is Lou's answer to all the critics, myself included, who thought that his last outing, (Continued on page 102)

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"Transformer," was criminally dumb and beneath his talents. No hip camping here, no glitter, just a stark and depressing tale (it's a concept record, you see; all the songs are part of a larger story) of an American expatriate and his vicious German speedfreak wife.

It's an incredibly ambitious undertaking, and it's a credit to Lou's peculiar genius that it works, by and large; the songs, most of them anyway, are quite capable of standing on their own apart from the overall scenario, and the cumulative effect is really impressive. Actually, Lou's always been headed in this direction; the third Velvet Underground album, in particular, was sort of novel also, although far more subtly done—which leads me to this disc's major flaw: it's a bit too obvious. Lou has tried so hard to be honest and direct that

he's sacrificed some of the poetry he's capable of. The old Lou Reed, at his best, could *suggest* things; here, he spells them out a bit too often. But perhaps, given the subject matter, that was the only sensible approach.

Bob Ezrin's production is really magnificent, and for a change Lou is surrounded by sidemen who can keep up with him. Frankly, Jack Bruce and Stevie Winwood haven't had music this good in years, and they play like they know it. Procol Harum's B. J. Wilson, who drums on two cuts, is absolutely superb. I am beginning to think that he's the best there is. It's a pleasure to hear Lou with such passionate playing behind him, especially after the limp noodlings that producers Richard Robinson and David Bowie provided for his last two records.

"Berlin" may not really rock enough for my taste and it may not possess the ghostly street poetry of the Velvet's "Loaded" (which is still, I think, Lou's strongest work), but it is nevertheless a welcome reassurance that Lou is still one of rock's most idiosyncratic and significant talents. It also may finally hip the mass public to that fact, and I couldn't be more pleased.

Steve Simels

SHARKS: *First Water*. Sharks (vocals and instrumentals). *World Park Junkies; Follow Me; Ol Jelly Roll; Brown-Eyed Boy; Snakes and Swallowtails*; and four others. MCA MCA-351 \$5.98. Ⓢ MCAT-351 \$6.98, Ⓢ MCAC-351 \$6.98.

Performance: **Lukewarm**
Recording: **All right**

Sharks are scavengers, so this group is aptly named, so far. The recording is a casual splice of various familiar riffs from the late, in-some-quarters-lamented, "heavy" period. It didn't have to be that way; the musicians available include Chris Spedding, a respected session guitarist, and Andy Fraser, who played bass for Free and wrote their hit *All Right Now*. But the songs are mediocre, the instrumentals without luster, and the vocals, by someone named Snips, do little for me except raise the proposition that selective borrowing from the styles of Joe Cocker, John Kay, and Rod Stewart doesn't have to total something that sounds like Peter Wolf—it can sound *worse*. I have quietly deep-sixed my copy.

N.C.

BOBBY SHORT: *Bobby Short Is K-ra-zy for Gershwin* (see Best of the Month, page 88)

SIMON STOKES: *The Incredible Simon Stokes and the Blackwhip Thrill Band*. Simon Stokes (vocals); orchestra. *Ride On Angel; If I Wanted To; She's Got the Voodoo*; and nine others. SPINDIZZY KZ 32075 \$5.98, Ⓢ ZA 32075 \$6.98.

Performance: **"Crunch!"**
Recording: **Good**

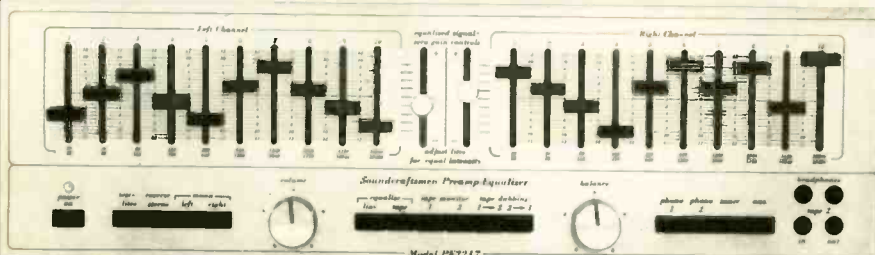
Sadomasochism is as much a part of the pop scene these days as it used to be in those English memoirs by Lord or Lady Someone. Lord S's generally ran, "I shall never forget those joyous childhood afternoons in the nursery with my cousin, the Hon. Pamela Plimpset. Nanny always encouraged us in the most strenuous games. 'As long as you don't break the skin, dear,' I can remember her saying, smiling her dear smile as she sipped a pick-me-up from a toothglass. . . ." Lady S's were more along the line of, "When Luigi arrived at my flat in Belgravia that night, the rain had heightened the scent of his leather coat. I felt quite faint. . . ."

Simon Stokes and the Blackwhip Thrill Band are more plebeian, Hell's-Angels-style, but they are right in there trouncing everything in sight. The title song describes the bliss of feeling Simon's fingers creep threateningly over his sleeping lady love so that she may know the ecstasy of awakening in terrified shock. *The Boa Constrictor Ate My Wife Last Night* is another little lullaby. The roles, as any healthy, with-it s-&-m devotee knows, often change, as in *She's Got the Voodoo*.

It's not an album to be taken seriously, and it's not performed as such; Stokes has some humor that comes across, and the cover is suitably outrageous in an old-style comic-strip way. But to be serious for a moment: if the

(Continued on page 104)

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GTE SYLVANIA

kids are getting a laugh out of this sort of thing, I approve. It's been my experience that really kinky people are totally solemn about their kinkiness and nothing harpoons them more quickly than laughter. Stokes seems to realize this, and the result is a mildly entertaining recording about an essentially pathetic group of human beings. P.R.

STORIES: About Us. Stories (vocals and instrumentals). *Darling; Don't Ever Let Me Down; Love Is in Motion; Hey France; Please, Please; Changes Have Begun; Circles; Believe Me; Words; Top of the City; Down Time Blooze; What Comes After.* KAMA SUTRA KSBS 2068 \$5.98, © M82068 \$6.98, © M52068 \$6.95.

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

Stories continue to owe something to the Beatles—they have no corner on that, of course—and continue to perform a whole lot better than they write. I don't know why it hasn't occurred to them to do someone else's songs or to find someone who can write lyrics, but until they do one or the other, you'll waste your time and energy trying to catch the words. Actually, their melodies aren't bad, once they run them through the arrangements. The sound is snappy and bright, built around Ian Lloyd's high, clear vocals—sounding less like McCartney here than in the previous album—and Michael Brown's soaring embellishments on piano, organ, and mellotron. Stories do not indulge in ten-minute drum solos, or even in one-minute guitar solos; they are tight, bright, and fairly light, and their performances keep getting better. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

WEST, BRUCE & LAING: Whatever Turns You On. Leslie West (guitar, vocals); Jack Bruce (bass, keyboards, vocals); Corky Laing (drums). *Backfire; Token; Sifting Sand; November Song; Rock 'n' Roll Machine; Slow Blues;* and three others. COLUMBIA/WINDFALL KC 32216 \$5.98, © CA 32216 \$6.98, © CT 32216 \$6.98.

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

I'm not that crazy about hard rock, but if I'm going to hear it I prefer West, Bruce & Laing to most of the others. West's lung-busting vocals and fire-siren guitar are probably the best of their kind. Bruce is one of the finest rock bassists around, and his sometimes gritty, sometimes otherworldly vocals contrast nicely with West's. The trio is really about those two performers, yet Corky Laing's fulfillment of his demanding role as drummer should never be overlooked or taken for granted: the three really play together rather than just simultaneously. The songs on this album are about evenly divided between the personal styles of West and Bruce, with some tunes reserved for a mixture. The alternately high-powered and introspective bent of the music keeps the group interesting. They are well worth hearing. J.V.

RONNY WHYTE/TRAVIS HUDSON: We Like a Gershwin Tune (see Best of the Month, page 88)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ROY WOOD: Boulders. Roy Wood (vocals

and instrumentals). *Songs of Praise; Wake Up; Rock Down Low; Nancy Sing Me a Song; Dear Elaine; All the Way over the Hill; Irish Loafer (and His Hen); Miss Clarke and the Computer; When Grandma Plays the Banjo; Rockin' Shoes; She's Too Good for Me; Locomotive.* UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA168-F \$5.98.

Performance: **Astonishing**
Recording: **Good**

This album (yes, this is, finally, the one that Greg Shaw raved about in the April issue) honestly scares me. Not because Roy Wood, founding genius of the Move, sings and plays every single note on it (including, in the bargain, innumerable electric and acoustic guitars, basses, drums, pianos, banjos, cellos, bassoons, saxes, recorders, and at least four hundred voices): not because he makes it



ROY WOOD
An astounding singlehanded creation

quite clear that *all by himself* he could be the Move, if he wanted to; not because this album was done merely for fun, between his other, more "serious" projects; and not even because it demonstrates a mastery of every level of pop music. No, this album scares me because none of that is obvious—"Boulders" sounds so easy and spontaneous that those considerations aren't even operative factors when you're listening. You're too busy being gassed by the whole thing, by the tongue-in-cheek but nevertheless poignant love song *Miss Clarke and the Computer* (in which Roy takes the part of an IBM machine enamored of its programmer and makes you believe it), by the absolutely haunting *Wake Up*, whose rhythm section consists of tears dropping into a bucket, and on and on ad infinitum.

Like I said, it's scary. Wood, without even breathing hard, has come up with one of the most musically imaginative pieces of work since the Beatles went their separate ways, and if that sounds like hyperbole to you, then you simply haven't heard the album yet. If you have not, as yet, caught up with any part of the Move-Wizzard-ELO triumvirate, this is the ideal place to start. Steve Simels

COLLECTIONS

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

STARS OF THE APOLLO THEATRE. Gimme a Pigfoot (Bessie Smith, Buck and His

Band); *He's Long Gone from Bowling Green* (Buck and Bubbles and Their Buckers); *The Lure of the South* (Mamie Smith); *I Wanna Hot Dog for My Roll* (Butterbeans and Susie); *Shake Your Ashes* (Claude Hopkins and His Orchestra); *Sweet Sue, Just You* (The Mills Brothers); *Fifteen Minute Intermission* (Cab Calloway and His Orchestra); *Reefer Man* (Baron Lee and the Blue Rhythm Band); *Harlem Woogie* (Jimmy Johnson and His Orchestra); *Doin' the New Low Down* (Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, Don Redman and His Orchestra); *Rhythm Rhapsody* (Earl Hines and His Orchestra); *Backwater Blues* (Ruby Smith, Jimmy Johnson and His Orchestra); *All My Life* (Ella Fitzgerald, Teddy Wilson and His Orchestra); *From Monday on* (Ella Logan, the Spirits of Rhythm); *When My Baby Left Me* (Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, Cootie Williams and His Orchestra); *Sploghm* (Slim Gaillard and His Flat Foot Floogie Boys); *Four Day Creep* (Ida Cox and Her All-Star Band); *Wherever You Are* (Billie Holiday, Teddy Wilson and His Orchestra); *Lose the Blackout Blues* (Count Basie and His Orchestra, Jimmy Rushing); *Stop You're Breakin' My Heart* (Claude Thornhill and His Orchestra, Maxine Sullivan); *Saturday Night Fish Fry* (Pearl Bailey, Jackie "Moms" Mabley); *Gabbin' Blues* (Big Maybelle, Leroy Kirkland and His Orchestra); *You're Just an Old Antidiseestablishmentarian Ismist* (Duke Ellington and His Orchestra); *Ain't Misbehavin'* (Sarah Vaughan, Jimmy Jones' Band); *Venus Velvet* (Bobby Brown Quartet); *I Put a Spell on You "Screamin'"* (Jay Hawkins); *Evil Gal Blues* (Aretha Franklin). COLUMBIA KG 30788 two discs \$6.98.

Performance: **Black nostalgia**
Recording: **Scratch-free dubbings**

"The Apollo Theatre in Harlem," Langston Hughes wrote, "is an institution—but nobody would think of calling it that." Those of us who grew up in New York in the days when we had not yet all divided up into group factions can remember the Apollo as a grimy old vaudeville house on 125th Street where the movies were grade D but the stage show was incredibly alive. "The jive joint," it was called, and a visit there on a Saturday night was like no other entertainment experience in the world. It was truly an audience participation show: that audience, a mixture of black and white in the orchestra and nearly all black in the gallery, was discriminating, uninhibited, and articulate. It was an Apollo audience that discovered Ella Fitzgerald on an "amateur night," another that launched Sarah Vaughan. On its stage appeared the bands of Cab Calloway, Lionel Hampton, Count Basie, Duke Ellington; singers Josephine Baker, Pearl Bailey, Eartha Kitt, the Mills Brothers, Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday, Aretha Franklin. Comedians ranged from that hoarse, coarse, irresistible specialty of the house Moms Mabley to Sammy Davis and George Kirby.

Although—like so much in the world—it isn't what it was, the Apollo is still there, and a couple of years ago Vanguard sent its engineers over for an "on-the-spot" recording that added up to a pretty good hour's entertainment ("Comedy Night at the Apollo," VRS 9093). Now John Hammond, whose contributions to the jazz and blues scene in America are beyond measure, has rounded up a remarkable collection of songs and stints by performers who starred there in the past, and the result is a Columbia album that never sags (Continued on page 106)

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in excitement for a single second. The very names of the labels from which this material has been drawn—Okeh, Brunswick, Vocalion, Harmony—are enough to send an old-timer spinning, and the names of the stars would do honor to any recorded anthology. But what is really remarkable is the consistency of quality in this generous two-record collection. From Bessie Smith's opening *Gimme a Pigfoot* ("and a bottle of beer"), recorded in 1933 with a band that included Jack Teagarden on trombone, Benny Goodman on clarinet, and Chu Berry on tenor sax, through Cab Calloway's wild *Fifteen Minute Intermession* and the double entendre of comedy team Butterbeans and Susie's *I Wanna a Hot Dog for My Roll* (considered too off-color for release back in 1927), to Aretha

Franklin bringing the blues up to date (at least as far as 1964) in the closing *Evil Gal Blues*, there isn't anything here that wouldn't have drawn approval from the old Apollo's exacting audiences.

Just cast an eye over that list at the top of this review. Better grab this set before it becomes a sought-after rarity. You won't find much of it in any other form: lots of the original records from which the set has been assembled were never issued by the companies that made them. The originals have been cleaned up beautifully by Columbia's alchemists, eliminating scratch and letting every word emerge with clarity. Be advised: this is one that belongs in your collection for sure. Hustle out and get a copy; let the spirit of the Apollo into your life.
P.K.

JAZZ



MILES DAVIS: *In Concert at Philharmonic Hall, New York.* Miles Davis (trumpet); other musicians. COLUMBIA KG 32092 two discs \$6.98, Ⓞ GA 32092 \$7.98. Ⓞ GT 32092 \$7.98.

Performance: **On and on and on**
Recording: **Very good**

I think Miles is putting us all on. This album contains eighty-four minutes and forty-one seconds of untitled music played with unidentified sidemen at one or more unspecified concerts in Philharmonic Hall. If I had not heard any of Miles' recent albums I might be impressed, but I have heard them, and so I feel as if I'd heard this one before. I like what Miles is doing these days, but I do think it's time for further exploration.
C.A.

RICHARD DAVIS: *Epistrophy and Now's the Time.* Richard Davis (bass); Marvin Peterson (trumpet); Clifford Jordan (tenor saxophone); Joe Bonner (piano); Freddie Waits (drums). *Epistrophy*; *Now's the Time.* MUSE 5002 \$5.98 (available by mail from Muse, 160 West 71st St., New York, N.Y. 10024).

Performance: **New thing by old masters**
Recording: **Very good**

Richard Davis is one of the finest bass players in this country, and this recording, made at New York's Jazz City during an engagement in September of last year, is the only proof you'll ever need of that. Davis and his men (two of whom, Marvin Peterson and Joe Bonner, are new to me) quite clearly know what they are doing. They translate Thelonious Monk's *Epistrophy* into a language that gives it the freshness Monk himself so disappointingly has failed to bring forth in recent years—twenty-three minutes of spontaneous musical combustion. They treat Charlie Parker's famous blues *Now's the Time* with equal vitality and skill. Although their theatrics are slightly overdone, this was obviously a happening—the chemistry was right, the rapport perfect.
C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THE JIMMY GIUFFRÉ THREE: *Music for People, Birds, Butterflies & Mosquitoes.* Jimmy Giuffrè (flute, clarinet, tenor saxophone); Kiyoshi Tokunaga (bass); Randy Kaye (percussion). *The Bird*; *Moonlight*; *Phoenix*; *Mosquito Dance*; and eight others. CHOICE 1001 \$5.98 (postpaid from Choice Records, 245 Tilley Place, Sea Cliff, N.Y. 11579).

Performance: **Cohesive and current**
Recording: **Very good**

I first became aware of Jimmy Giuffrè in 1949 when, as a member of Woody Herman's band, he contributed *Four Brothers* to the basic li-
(Continued on page 110)



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—MARTIN CLIFFORD, *FM Guide*, Nov. '72 & March '73

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—HERBERT FRIEDMAN, *Hi-Fi Stereo Buyers' Guide*, Spring '73

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—*Stereo & Hi-Fi Times*, Spring '73

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—4-CHANNEL Quadrasonic Buyers Guide 1973

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—ROBERT ANGUS, *Modern Hi-Fi & Stereo Guide*, June '73

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—*Stereo Review*, April '73

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Atlantic Records

THE ROLLING STONES:

"Goats Head Soup" Needs Seasoning

Reviewed by Steve Simels

THE other day I got a call from Cindy Moran, who is the lead singer (or chanteuse, if you want to be pretentious about it) for the as yet unknown rock-and-roll band that I coincidentally happen to play guitar with.

"I just got the new Stones album," she said breathlessly (Cindy, like every one else in the band, is a Stones freak). "What do you think of it?"

"Which do you want?" I asked. "My honest opinion or my critical one?"

Later it occurred to me that that pretty much summed up my feelings about "Goats Head Soup." On the one hand, Stones fanatic that I am, I love the thing unreservedly, and it's rarely been off my turntable since its release. On the other, I hear it as perhaps their most uneven album ever, a failed experiment alternating between the patented Stones excitement that their audience expects, and attempts at various genres and styles that they are either uncomfortable with or not really committed to. Still, it's so damned vivid. . . . I heard it at a party the other night and it soon became close to impossible to listen to anything else, which, as Greil Marcus has pointed out, is the purpose of any Rolling Stones album—interruption of routine. So the thing really does work.

Then again, it just may be too early to tell. I couldn't make much of "Exile on Main Street" initially, but now of course I realize that it was not only their first blues album since 1965 (only this time it was *their* blues) but the most uncompromisingly rocking

record they'd ever made, an intensely moving document of a kind of malaise that gripped both them and their audience. It was a stunning work on every level; the problem was that no one was used to having to work at grasping a Stones album. All their records (and most great rock-and-roll, really) have had such immediacy—you didn't think about *Ruby Tuesday* or *Gimme Shelter* or *Brown Sugar* the first time you heard them, you simply *knew*.

"Goats Head Soup" is like "Exiles" in that there's that decided lack of visceral impact, but (and I may be wrong about this) I rather doubt that there are any secondary levels here that will come through with later hearings, and I confess to being rather puzzled about just what the band is up to with this package. Still, there's a lot of good music here, and enough flashes of greatness to dispel any real fears about the Stones floundering—when they're good, as they are often enough, they remain unbeatable.

As for the songs themselves, they vary, as you may have guessed already. The opener, *Dancing with Mr. D*, is another instant classic—it has a hypnotic riff from Keith, and features Jagger at his most demonic; the music is reminiscent of some of Creedence's swampier Bayou numbers (like *Run Through the Jungle*) but about one thousand percent more mysterious. It's quite overwhelming. The rest of the first side is less impressive, serving as a sort of warm-up for *Angie*, but there are moments: *100 Years Ago* goes through some imaginative changes:

Coming Down Again has an exquisite vocal by Keith and some neat bits of sexual imagery, though it does go on a bit too long; *Heartbreaker* has an interesting if ultimately unconvincing lyric, but the horns are so full of anger that they almost sound like the ghost of Brian Jones on mellotron, and Billy Preston's clavinet is on hand to show that the Stones are listening to contemporary r-&-b as well as their old Jimmy Reed records, which is nice to know. But *Angie* steals the show; this is easily the most gorgeous ballad they've ever done. It's corny, old-fashioned, and downright irresistible, the *As Tears Go By* of the early Seventies.

Side two drags by comparison, but there's much to admire there too: the effortless, if a bit too typical, funk of *Silver Train*; the late-night-jam-session feel of *Hide Your Love*; the studio tricks on *Can You Hear the Music*; and the almost-but-not-quite vocal orgasm Jagger attempts on *Winter*. The best, not surprisingly, is the closing cut: *Star Star* (which as every schoolboy knows by now is not the real title at all) is a great Chuck Berry-"Aftermath"-styled rocker, with unbelievably crass and funny lyrics about a young lady of Mick's acquaintance who would probably not be averse to making it with John Wayne if the opportunity presented itself. It makes a terrific finale.

IF most of the above has given the impression that I'm hedging, that's because I am. Certainly I'm heartened that the Stones are not content to stand still, are willing to take some chances musically: the fact that some of their experiments don't quite succeed doesn't lessen my respect for the effort. Still, I can't help but be disappointed that "Goats Head Soup" isn't as assured and creative (or exciting) as, say, "Sticky Fingers." Perhaps a live album from their just completed European tour is the answer—if last year's American performances are any indication of what they're up to now, in concert they can wipe the floor with just about any rock-and-roll musicians before the public, and in terms of energy level (the most notable deficiency of "Goats Head Soup") that would be reassuring. Perhaps what I'm bemoaning is really that for a change the boys have had some competition—I've been compiling an early Ten Best albums list lately, and for the first time in years I'm having no trouble coming up with ten candidates. Maybe I'm just in no position to be objective about the Stones under any circumstances.

In the meantime, everyone I know has been playing the album to death, without worrying about such questions. Truth to tell, so have I. What that says about the function of rock critics is a question to be dealt with at another time, but right now I'm going home and listen to *Mr. D* again. As loud as possible.

THE ROLLING STONES: *Goats Head Soup*. The Rolling Stones (vocals and instrumentals); Billy Preston (clavinet and piano); other musicians. *Dancing with Mr. D*; *100 Years Ago*; *Coming Down Again*; *Doo Doo Doo Doo Doo* (*Heartbreaker*); *Angie*; *Silver Train*; *Hide Your Love*; *Winter*; *Can You Hear the Music*; *Star Star*. ROLLING STONES COC 59101 \$5.98, © TP 59101 \$6.97, © CS 59101 \$6.97.

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Bobby Short, having helped spark the revival of the songs of Cole Porter and Noel Coward, now turns his attention to George Gershwin. And what elegant performances he gives to such songs as "S Wonderful," "Love Is Here To Stay," "Love Walked In," "I've Got a Crush On You," "A Foggy Day," and "Embraceable You", all with tasteful lyrics by Ira Gershwin. This striking two-LP set also contains a host of other lesser known Gershwin tunes. A delightfully melodic album that should be in the library of every Gershwin fan.

Bobby Short Is K-RA-ZY For Gershwin on Atlantic Records and Tapes.



CIRCLE NO. 5 ON READER SERVICE CARD

brary of big-band classics. Now in his early fifties, Giuffre remains a man of young ideas that years of valuable practical experience have prepared him to implement. Like *The Train and the River*, which he performed on the much heralded CBS-TV *The Sound Of Jazz* show fifteen years ago, the twelve short pieces in this set reflect Giuffre's fondness for jazz-oriented chamber music: well-constructed vignettes that melt away like ephemeral snow crystals, leaving a vague but lasting impression of their beauty.

Bassist Kiyoshi Tokunaga and drummer Randy Kaye, obviously in tune with their leader's ideas, contribute as much to each fragile fragment as he does. The result will not fatten their bank accounts, but it should give them a sense of satisfaction—which I am pleased to share. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MILT JACKSON: *Sunflower*. Milt Jackson (vibraphone); Freddie Hubbard (trumpet and flugelhorn); Herbie Hancock (piano); Ron Carter (bass); orchestra, Don Sebesky arr. and cond. *For Someone I Love; What Are You Doing the Rest of Your Life?; People Make the World Go Round; Sunflower*. CTI CTI 6024 \$5.98, © CT8 6024 \$6.95, © CTC 6024 \$6.95.

Performance: **Flawless**
Recording: **Excellent**

Eleven ostriches raise their heads against a low sun in Pete Turner's striking cover photo for this album, but, attractive as that is, the expert weave of virtuosity and lush arrangements within the cover is even more enticing: four exquisite sound paintings executed in bold, sensitive strokes by modern music makers who know their craft.

There are still those purists who will sound the cry of "commercialism" as Don Sebesky's strings and flutes swirl around Freddie Hubbard's rich, virile horn, breezing along with the melodic inventions of Milt Jackson and Herbie Hancock, but music created and performed with such taste has simply got to be commercial in a very positive sense. C.A.

TED LEWIS: *Ted Lewis and His Band, 1926-1933*. Ted Lewis (clarinet, alto saxophone, vocals); with various bands and musicians, including Fats Waller (piano, vocals); Muggsy Spanier (cornet); Jimmy Dorsey and Don Murray (clarinet, saxophones); George Brunis (trombone). *Clarinet Marmalade; Lonesome Road; Royal Garden Blues; Dallas Blues; When My Baby Smiles at Me*; and ten others. BIOGRAPH BLP C7 \$5.98 (available by mail from Biograph, P.O. Box 109, Canaan, N.Y. 12029).

Performance: **Gems in the corn**
Recording: **Good translation from 78's**

As Benny Goodman's bio-discographer Warren Hicks points out in his notes to this collection, Ted Lewis' playing left much to be desired. But he obviously loved the music he himself could not play, for he surrounded himself with some of the greatest jazz musicians of the day.

When My Baby Smiles at Me, Lewis' famous theme song, which starts this album, is pure corn, but the fifteen tracks that follow contain little of that. Some of the songs themselves could justifiably be described as corn, but the most prominent thing about this set is the wealth of excellent solo and ensemble

work by some very formidable jazz musicians.

To begin with, there is the inimitable work of cornettist Muggsy Spanier, who was probably the greatest white blues player on his instrument. Spanier's solos alone carry the album, but there is so much more good stuff here: Jimmy Dorsey's upper- and lower-register clarinet work on *Aunt Hagar's Blues* and *Yellow Dog Blues* demonstrates that highly individual style so often obscured in his later work, and Benny Goodman's pre-fame solos give us favorable glimpses into a formative stage of the style that soon lost him his sideman status. The icing on this cake, however, is the presence on four tracks of Harlem pianist/humorist Fats Waller. He virtually takes over *I'm Crazy 'bout My Baby*, *Dallas Blues*, and *Royal Garden Blues* with his characteristic vocals and piano.

And with Ted Lewis' period-piece vocals and such Depression fare as *Dip Your Brush in the Sunshine* and *The Goldiggers' Song* (better known as *We're in the Money*), everybody, including nostalgia hounds, should be happy with this collection. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JUNIOR MANCE: *The Junior Mance Touch*. Junior Mance (piano); Martin Rivera (bass); Richard Pratt (drums); string background music, Bill Fischer arr. and cond. *Tin Tin Deo; I Can See Clearly Now; Midnight Special*; and four others. POLYDOR PD 5051 \$5.98, © 8F5051 \$6.98, © CF5051 \$6.98.

Performance: **Superb jazz piano**
Recording: **Excellent**

Junior Mance has been playing jazz professionally for twenty-five years. From a background of working with Lester Young, Gene Ammons, Dinah Washington, and Dizzy Gillespie, his strong left hand, drive, and blues-rooted style made him eminently suited for the Cannonball Adderley quintet of the late Fifties and that churchy, return-to-the-womb "soul jazz" it represented. On his own since the mid-Sixties, Mance has discreetly continued to produce fine piano jazz into the Seventies—too discreetly, for an artist of Mance's caliber deserves a far wider audience than he has been getting.

That old blues feeling is strongest here in Leadbelly's *Midnight Special*, but it comes through, in a more subtle way, on the rest of the selections in this set: snail-paced Yanceyisms, trills that once were Meade Lux Lewis'. Above all, Junior Mance's playing is lyrical, his sense of dynamics is dramatic, and his imagination rich and tasteful. "The Junior Mance Touch" is predictably sensitive and pleasant. C.A.

WEATHER REPORT: *Sweetnighter*. Wayne Shorter (soprano saxophone); Joe Zawinul (keyboards); Miroslav Vitous (bass); Eric Gravatt (drums); other musicians. *125th Street Congress; Non-Stop Home; Boogie Woogie Waltz*; and three others. COLUMBIA KC 32210 \$5.98; © CA 32210 \$6.98, © CT 32210 \$6.98.

Performance: **Sunny**
Recording: **Excellent**

The music of Weather Report is neither easy to describe nor easy to categorize. Its main roots are certainly in Afro-American music, and it is clearly an outgrowth of the electrified Miles Davis group—of which Joe Zawinul

(Continued on page 114)

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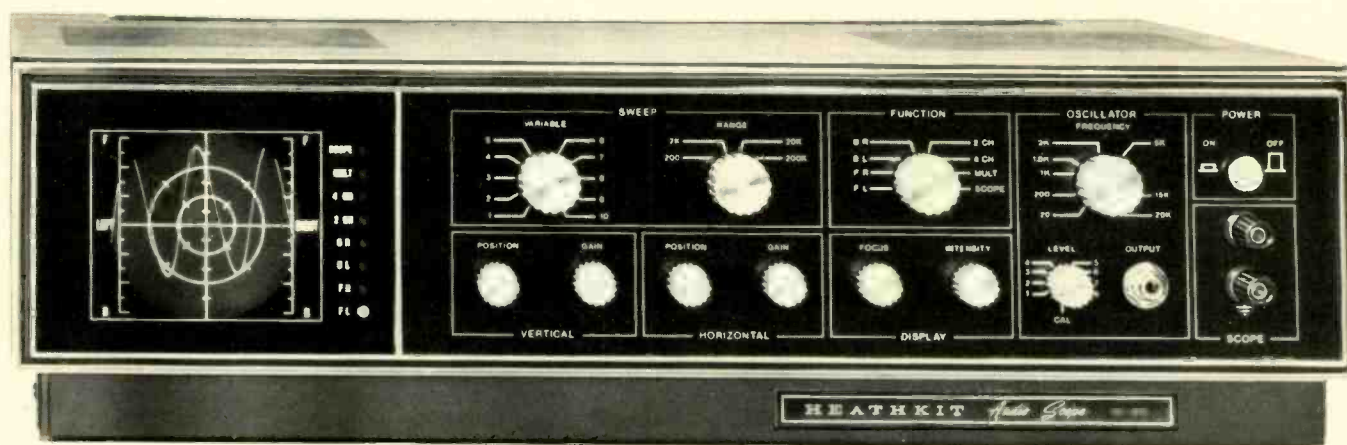
AMPLIFIER SECTIONS — Dynamic power output per channel (Music Power Rating): 25 W (8 ohm load)*, 30 W (4 ohm load), 14 W (16 ohm load). Continuous power output per channel: 15 W (8 ohm load), 20 W (4 ohm load), 10 W (16 ohm load). Power bandwidth for constant .5% total harmonic distortion: 5 Hz to 30 kHz. Frequency response (1 W level): ± 1 dB 7 Hz to 50 kHz, ± 3 dB 5 Hz to 70 kHz. Harmonic distortion: Less than 0.5% from 20 Hz to 20 kHz @ 15 W output. Less than 0.25% @ 1000 Hz with 1 W output. Intermodulation distortion: Less than 0.5% with 15 W output. Less than 0.25% @ 1 W output. Damping factor: Greater than 30. Input sensitivity: Phono: 2.2 mV. Tuner, Aux, Tape: 200 mV. Input overload: Phono: 35 mV to greater than 5 V. Tuner, Aux, Tape: Greater than 3.0 V. Hum and noise: Phono: -60 dB. Tuner, Aux, Tape: -70 dB. Tape output: 0.4 V out with 0.2 V in. **TUNER SECTION — FM (mono)** — Frequency response: ± 1 dB, 20 to 15,000 Hz. Sensitivity: 2 μ V.* Selectivity: 60 dB.* Image rejection: 50 dB.* IF rejection: 75 dB.* Capture ratio: 2 dB.* AM suppression: 50 dB.* Harmonic distortion: 0.5%.* Intermodulation distortion: 0.5%.* Hum and noise: 60 dB.* Spurious rejection: 70 dB.* FM (stereo) — Channel separation: 40 dB typical. Frequency response: ± 1 dB from 20 to 15,000 Hz. Harmonic distortion: 0.75% @ 1000 Hz with 100% modulation. 19 kHz and 38 kHz suppression: 60 dB. SCA suppression: 55 dB typical. **GENERAL** — AC outlet sockets: 2, 1 switched and 1 unswitched. Dimensions: 5" H x 20" W x 14" D.

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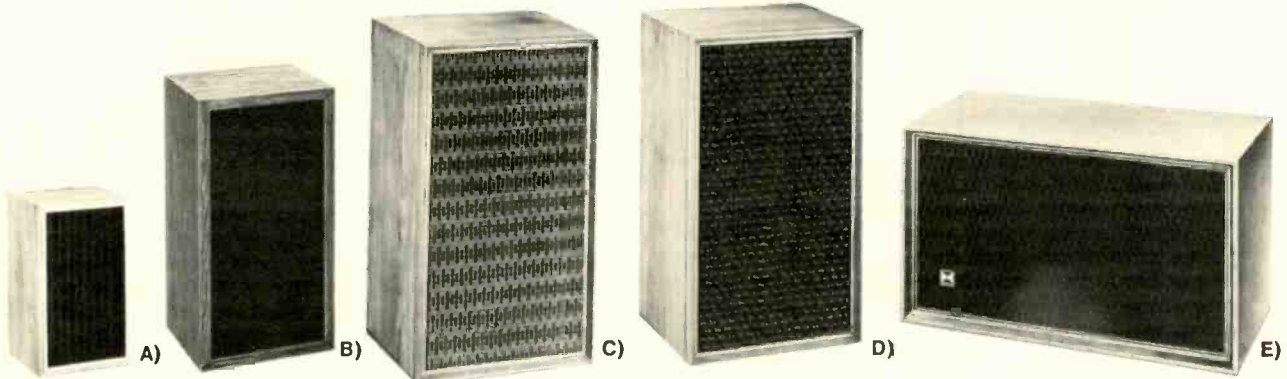
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once was a major force—yet it is a group with a very distinct sound of its own.

Wayne Shorter's soprano saxophone, Zawinul's keyboards, and Miroslav Vitous' bass form the nucleus, and percussionists Eric Gravatt and Dom Um Romao, who came to the group after the first album and performed cohesively with it on the second, now propel *Weather Report* into orbit in the third set.

There is so much happening here that it takes several plays to absorb it. Even after five listening sessions I am still discovering superb subtleties that had previously escaped me—the outlook indeed seems to get better with each *Weather Report* release. C.A.

DICKIE WELLS: *Trombone Four-in-Hand.* Dickie Wells, Vic Dickenson, Benny Morton, George Matthews (trombones); other musicians. *Blue Moon; Heavy Duty; Airlift;* and four others. MASTER JAZZ RECORDINGS MJR 8118 \$5.98 (available by mail from Master Jazz Recordings, Box 579, Lenox Hill Station, New York, N.Y. 10021).

Performance: **Free-flowing mainstream**
Recording: **Fair**

This is another resurrected master from the generally excellent series of nine "mainstream" sessions produced by Stanley Dance for Felsted some fifteen years ago, but this one has not previously been released in this country. The all-star trombone choir romps through Rodgers and Hart's *Blue Moon* and six originals, producing some fine ensemble work along the way and enough good solos to make the whole thing worthwhile. The presence of guitarist Kenny Burrell adds greatly to the proceedings—particularly on *It's All Over*

Now—and the only real flaw in the album is the inclusion of Dickie Wells' *Short, Tall, Fat and Small*, a song worthy neither of its composer nor of this excellent cast of players. The intended humor of its male chauvinist lyrics, sung by Wells and Dickenson, is an embarrassment we should have been spared, even in 1959 when this session took place. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LESTER YOUNG, CHU BERRY, BEN WEBSTER: *The Tenor Sax.* Lester Young (tenor saxophone and clarinet); Leon "Chu" Berry and Ben Webster (tenor saxophones); with various groups, including Bill Coleman, Roy Eldridge, Buck Clayton, Hot Lips Page (trumpets); Dickie Wells (trombone); Al Casey, Freddie Green, Eddie Durham (guitars); Jo Jones, Big Sid Catlett (drums). *Three Little Words; Jo-Jo; Four O'Clock Drag; I Got Rhythm; Four O'Clock Drag #2; Jo-Jo #2; I Got Rhythm #2; Three Little Words #2; Way Down Yonder in New Orleans; I Want a Little Girl; Countless Blues; Pagan; the Devil; Them There Eyes; Stardust; Forty Six West Fifty Two; On the Sunny Side of the Street; Blowing Up a Breeze; Gee Baby, Ain't I Good to You; Monday at Minton's; Body and Soul; Sittin' In; Sleep; Memories of You; Just a Riff; Linger Awhile.* ATLANTIC (M) SD 2-307 two discs \$6.98, (B) 8T 2-307 \$7.97. (C) CS 2-307 \$7.97.

Performance: **Merely excellent to definitive**

Recording: **Good, honest mono**

Having suffered unspeakably bad production on the Mainstream label in recent years, Milt

Gabler's wonderful Commodore catalog appears now on Atlantic where the sound is good (real mono), the packaging reasonably sensible, and the liner notes informative and authoritative. It is good to see it that way.

Along with Coleman Hawkins, Charlie Parker, and John Coltrane, Lester Young is one of the most frequently quoted saxophonists. When he burst upon the scene with the Basie band in the mid-Thirties, he spoke through his saxophone a foreign language that soon was to become the vernacular. Sides one and two of this set feature Young in two complete sessions by the Kansas City Six, recorded in 1938 and 1944. Both sessions, especially the earlier one, produced gems of small-band swing that should be made mandatory listening for any half-serious student of jazz. Although these recordings have reappeared numerous times on a variety of labels, this Atlantic release is of special interest because it contains, for the first time, two versions each of the four 1944 selections.

The Berry sessions, one from 1938 with breathtaking work by trumpeter Roy Eldridge and drummer Big Sid Catlett, the other from 1941 with the phenomenal Hot Lips Page on trumpet, are less interesting than the Kansas City Six sides, but they are nevertheless fine examples of small-band improvisation, and Berry's distinct, haunting tone is heard to great advantage throughout.

The remaining four tracks, Ben Webster with the Big Sid Catlett Quartet, are not in the same league with the Young and Berry sides. Although I count Webster among my favorite tenor players, these are by no means his best efforts. Everything else in the set is merely excellent. C.A.

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GREECE IN MUSIC AND SONG. Various groups, recorded on location by James McNeish. *Skaros (Epirus); Servicos (Arachova, Rumeli); Servicos (Zagori, Epirus); Klepht Bird Song (Rumeli); Tsamicos (Arachova, Rumeli); Miralogia (Epirus); Tsamicos (Arachova, Rumeli); Miralogia (Epirus);* and nine others. ARGO ZFB 70 \$5.95.

Performance: **Unique musical document**
Recording: **Very good**

There must be enough Greek music on records by now to pave the Acropolis several times over. This disc, however, is special. The engineer, an Englishman named James McNeish, took his tape recorder to a region called Epirus, amid the northern mountains of Greece on the Albanian border. In the rocky region where this music is played, there are few roads, little water, no electricity. Men still scratch for their livings in the soil, and women spin wool on frame saddles.

The musicians Mr. McNeish rounded up

are all members of one family. Among them they can play just about any musical instrument to be found in the region — the bouzouki, the lute, the double-string guitar lute, the *defi*, a form of tambourine. Only one of them can read music. Yet what music they can make! Here are pastoral songs, with cries that simulate the sounds of birds; *bouzoikis*, or improvisations on dance themes; *miralogias*, which are metrical dirges; marriage songs; love songs; a lullaby; a dance from Crete. One of the songs is about a bird who sings of death and killing in the village of Distomon, where the Germans during World War II murdered sixty local guerillas in sixty minutes. All are beautiful pieces, with an undertone of fierce primitivism and at the same time a disarming sweetness. I have never heard anything quite like them. Most eerie and unusual is one of the *miralogias* sung by three widows who, according to the notes, crouched "at dusk by kerosene lamplight" to intone this dirge in praise of a dead hero. The recording had to be done in secret, as the local villagers are convinced that "if such a keening occurs and there is no death, ill-luck will befall the inhabitants." Mr. McNeish and his crew have produced a beautiful recording. P.K.

WEST INDIAN SPIRITUALS AND FOLK SONGS. Inia Te Wiata (bass); Maurice Till (piano). *Ogoun Belele; Murder in De Market; Mercy Pourin' Down; Death, O Me Lawd!; The Lord's Prayer* (Max Saunders arr.). *The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy; Time for Man Go Home; Papa Didn't Know* (Hal Evans arr.). *Didn't It Rain?; Swing Low, Sweet Chariot; I Got a Robe; Deep River* (H. T. Burleigh arr.). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY

MHS 1515 \$2.98 (plus 65¢ postage from the Musical Heritage Society Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N. Y. 10023).

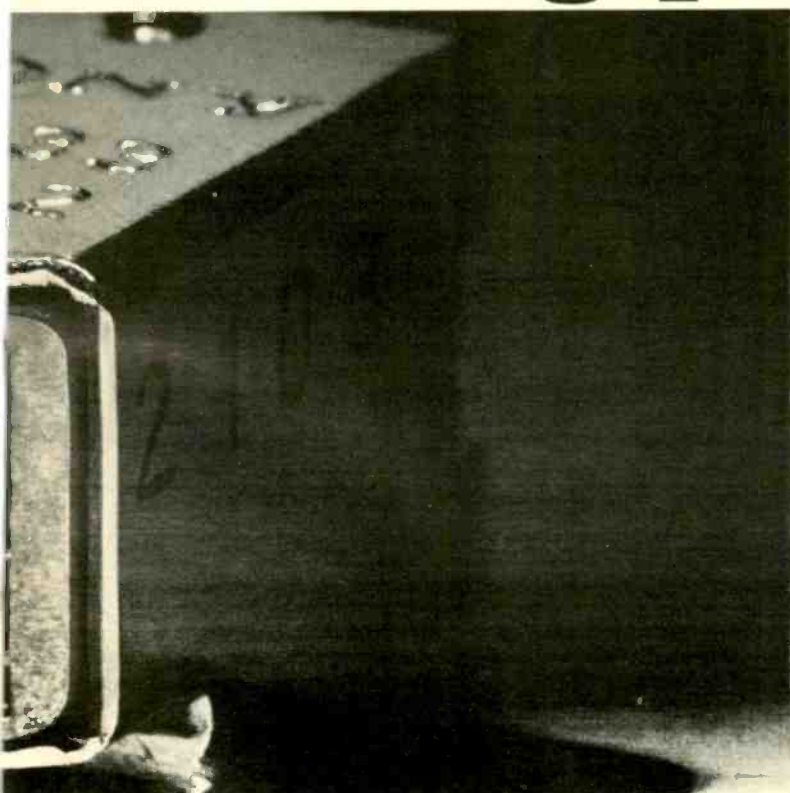
Performance: **Eloquent but too earnest**
Recording: **Good**

Inia Te Wiata is a Maori native of New Zealand who has traveled the world as a singer, appearing as Porgy in *Porgy and Bess* in his own land, in *Così Fan Tutte* at Covent Garden with the Scottish Opera Company, as Joe in *Show Boat* in South Africa (and on the Stanyan recording of same), and as *The Most Happy Fella* in London. When he isn't singing, he's working on his giant wood sculpture extending five floors up through the New Zealand House in London, or collecting West Indian songs, in which he became interested some years ago. West Indian songs plus a group of black spirituals get his attention here, and his rich bass does them justice.

On the program is a "shango" chant in African dialect about an island god, a Barbadian song called *Murder in de Market*, a Trinidadian version of *The Lord's Prayer*, and an item called *The Monkey Song*, sung by Indian plantation workers to remind their overseer when it's time to quit and go home. Mr. Wiata has fitted himself out with some wonderfully poignant vehicles in concert arrangements for piano and voice by Max Saunders and Hal Evans; the spirituals are arranged with a sensitive respect for their simplicity by H. T. Burleigh. I was put off at times by this singer's Sunday recital manner and the genteel quality of the piano accompaniments — I would have liked to hear him break out Calypso-style, but he's certainly a first-rate singer, and the material is captivating. P.K.

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flute in the gap!



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CIRCLE NO. 63 ON READER SERVICE CARD

CHOOSING SIDES

By IRVING KOLODIN



KARAJAN ILLUMINATED

THE fair city of Perth, on the Indian Ocean side of Australia, afforded this itinerant critic a curiously suitable place in which to audition new recordings by Herbert von Karajan of two works that rank among man's greatest commentaries on mortality, seasonal change, and spiritual regeneration. One is Bach's *Passion According to St. Matthew* (Deutsche Grammophon 2711 012, five discs, \$27.92), the other is Haydn's *The Seasons* (Angel SC-3792, four discs, \$19.94), and each is performed by the Karajan stock company. That means, as a matter of course, the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. Soprano Gundula Janowitz and basso Walter Berry participate in both works, tenor Werner Hollweg only in the Haydn, and mezzo Christa Ludwig, tenors Peter Schreier and Horst Laubenthal, baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, and basso Anton Diakov complete the personnel for the Bach.

The sense of suitability provided by Perth was related, in the first instance, to the reversal of seasons that of course prevails down under in Australia. For example, Birgit Nilsson was making a *spring* tour of Australia en route to her *fall* season in the States. In Perth, although the seasons flow on from one to the other with less drastic change than I have encountered elsewhere, there was nonetheless a sense of the vernal equinox in September-October, the same stirrings of life we of the Northern Hemisphere associate with April-May.

But in Perth, as in Australia generally, the mythological and spiritual high points of Judaean-Christian culture retain their year-round place in the calendar regardless of season. Christmas is celebrated in December, often with thunder and lightning but never with anything like snow; Easter is an event of late March or early April, but here these are harvest months rather than planting ones.

What this seasonal confusion did for me in Perth was to trigger an almost urgent reminder of things totally ignored in the segment of the globe where the works I am about to discuss originated. We are accustomed to relating them to a common "European" background, but Bach's *Passion* and Haydn's *Seasons* are basically quite different kinds of works. Bach was dealing with a man-made methodology of ideas, values, and associations embracing something less than two thousand years of recorded history. Haydn,

however, was responding to an underlying rhythm of nature as old as earth itself, one equally applicable to life on either side of the equator.

In most circumstances, this could be noted as an interesting peripheral distinction, but one that could not be expected to have much bearing on any interpretive outcome. But, in the present circumstances, where both works are subjected to the scrutiny of the same mind, filtered through the perceptions of the same spirit, some further significance can be discerned; for, as much light as Karajan sheds on Bach's *Passion According to St. Matthew* and on Haydn's *The Seasons* in these recordings, together they shed even more light on him.

I would not say that there is the slightest indication of willful favoritism in Karajan's treatment of either of these works. Each performance is characterized by the high gloss of suavely produced sound that is the outward mark of the Karajan house standard. As different as the scores are in tonal organization,

spatial layout, and internal texture, each is honored with the same absorption with detail, the same concern for textural clarity, rhythmic precision, and closely controlled dynamics. Indeed, there is throughout each reading a singular lack of ostentatious "individuality" such as might betray the hand by which it was wrought.

But there is, and equally without willful intent, an unmistakably greater gravitation of sympathy toward the one subject than toward the other. Some might anticipate, in this relatively rare instance of Karajan's addressing himself to a major choral work of Bach, an impulsive movement in the direction of temperamental extremes, a predilection for overstatement, an uncontrollable inclination to romantic excess. I do not, alas, find anything so manifestly humane in Karajan's *St. Matthew*. I find instead a uniformly high application of musical science to a point of view—especially in Part I—which might be described as Olympian rather than Golgothan. Rather than offending by overcommitment to impulse (*can* there be an excess of passion in a *Passion*?), the performance errs in being, for most of Part I, musically correct, temperamentally neutral, and emotionally arid.

It has, to be sure, its share of *artistic* interest and *musical* distinction; no performance involving soloists of this caliber could be utterly devoid of these qualities. The carefully collated combination of old and new here brings together two artists (Berry and Fischer-Dieskau) who have recorded the work *twice* before and one (Ludwig) who participated with them in Klemperer's version for Angel. Two of the new elements, Schreier and Janowitz, are very good indeed; Laubenthal is able but undistinguished; and only Diakov has to labor to defend his inclusion in this choice company.

The latent best of which these individuals are capable is finally fused into an absorbing whole in the searing dramatic segments of Part II. Here Bach has delved so deeply into the drama of the Crucifixion, struck so boldly to the heart of the emotions it arouses in him, that only an interpreter absolutely impervious



DEJ/auterw/assc

to the power of music to rouse, to stimulate, to transfigure could fail to respond. And that cannot be said of Karajan.

What must be said of his treatment of the *St. Matthew Passion* is that connoisseurs are more likely to prefer it in "excerpt" form (assuming that DG will be offering the purchaser the same option London, Angel, and Vanguard do) than in its entirety. That is another way of saying that it is not Bach's *Passion* that can be commended here, but the individual performances: Fischer-Dieskau's Jesus, Schreier's surpassingly fine Evangelist, the choral effort (in which the Boys' Chorus of the Berlin Dom is conspicuously successful), and, above all else, Ludwig's singing of "Erbarme dich" and the other eloquent mezzo arias. However much this *Passion* may suffer from Karajan's inability to become a celebrant as well as a participant until almost too late, the excerpts deserve to be with us for a long time to come.

FROM the outset, Haydn's *The Seasons* is another order of musical experience altogether. For this, one could assign any of several reasons that differentiate Haydn stylistically from Bach: his partiality to the homophonic rather than the polyphonic, the sense of a symphonic structure that binds the elements of the oratorio together, the predominance of the secular over the sacred. To me, however, there is something of more cosmic consequence at issue, which is the dominance in *The Seasons* of the pagan pleasures rigorously excluded from the *Passion*. Haydn's feeling for the simple delights of the land, for its cultivation, regeneration, and fructification, are not merely fulfilled but exalted.

Karajan is at one not only with the musical vocabulary and the emotions it embodies in *The Seasons*, but also with Haydn's imagery and the artifice with which it is conveyed. There is, moreover, no sense of the self-powered *solo* effort that prevails in so much of the *Passion*. Under Karajan's consistently considerate guidance, the opportunities afforded by the role of Hanne, for example, are seized upon and improved by Janowitz in a performance that is, without question, the high point of her career to date. She is matched in vocal aptitude by Hollweg, with his brilliant, light-timbred tenor and his rare feeling for the German language. As for baritone Berry, he is—when relieved of the need to strive for a Wotan-like amplitude he does not possess—as much in the the best Germanic mold for the role of Simon as he is for that of Barak in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*.

Karajan's version of *The Seasons* is closer, orchestrally as well as vocally, to the best in the phonographic past than any other contemporary issue. My standards are the Clemens Krauss recording of the late Forties and the Beecham one of the mid-Fifties. Karajan does not evoke all the languid heat that Krauss made us feel in Haydn's summer, nor does he arouse the almost visual sense of dogs on the scent that Beecham contrived in the hunt sequence. Perhaps it could be said that their paganism was a little closer to the soil than Karajan's. Certainly it is pertinent to mention that, proud though they (properly) were of their Haydn, neither felt it incumbent upon him to record Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*. What this illuminates, finally, is not how much more Karajan knows of Haydn than of Bach, but rather how little he knows of Herbert von Karajan.

An ounce of prevention.

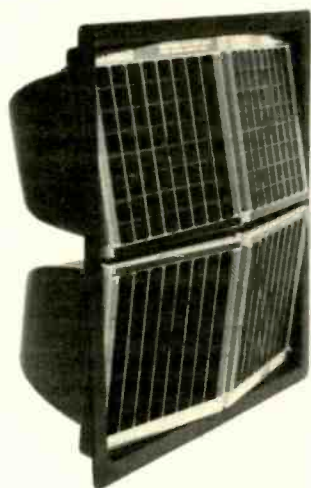
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THE OPERAS IN DECEMBER

L'ITALIANA IN ALGERI

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RIGOLETTO

A man seeing *Hamlet* for the first time was asked how he liked the play. "All right, I suppose," he replied, "but it seems to be made up of familiar quotations." *Rigoletto* overflows with catchy tunes but it also happens to be a masterpiece, the first of Verdi's great middle period which also yielded *Il Trovatore* and *La Traviata*.

DIE ZAUBERFLOETE

Mozart's last opera was produced only a little more than two months before he went to a pauper's grave. It is a contrast more striking than those of *The Magic Flute* itself that Mozart on his death-bed would follow with his watch the progress of the performance in the packed theatre only a few blocks away.

MANON LESCAUT

When Puccini announced he was going to write an opera about Manon Lescaut someone reminded him that for nine years there had been a successful piece by Massenet on the subject. He replied, "A girl like Manon can have more than one lover." Puccini's first to hold a place in the repertoire and full of promise of things to come.

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1973			
Dec. 8	L'ITALIANA IN ALGERI (Rossini)		2:00
Dec. 15	DIE ZAUBERFLOETE (Mozart)		2:00
Dec. 22	RIGOLETTO (Verdi)		2:00
Dec. 29	MANON LESCAUT (Puccini)		2:00
1974			
Jan. 5	SALOME (R. Strauss)		2:00
Jan. 12	CARMEN (Bizet)		1:30
Jan. 19	SIMON BOCCANEGRA (Verdi)		2:00
Jan. 26	TRISTAN UND ISOLDE (Wagner)		1:00
Feb. 2	LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN (Offenbach)		2:00
Feb. 9	OTELLO (Verdi)		2:00
Feb. 16	LA BOHEME (Puccini)		2:00
Feb. 23	DER ROSENKAVALIER (R. Strauss)		1:30
Mar. 2	IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA (Rossini)		2:00
Mar. 9	I VESPRI SICILIANI (Verdi)		2:00
Mar. 16	LES TROYENS (Berlioz)		1:00
Mar. 23	DIE GOETTERDAEMERUNG (Wagner)		12:30
Mar. 30	MAOAMA BUTTERFLY (Puccini)		2:00
Apr. 6	L'ELISIR D'AMORE (Donizetti)		1:30
Apr. 13	DON GIOVANNI (Mozart)		2:00
Apr. 20	PARSIFAL (Wagner)		1:00
Apr. 27	*TURANDOT (Puccini)		1:30

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CLASSICAL DISCS AND TAPES

Reviewed by RICHARD FREED • DAVID HALL • GEORGE JELLINEK • IGOR KIPNIS
PAUL KRESH • ERIC SALZMAN

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BACH, J.S.: *The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I* (BWV 846-869). Sviatoslav Richter (piano). MELODIYA/ANGEL SRC 4119 three discs \$17.98.

Performance: **Sublime**
Recording: **Adequate**

RCA's recent reissue of the Landowska *Well-Tempered Clavier* in full was one of the more notable events of the current record year; with that available, plus more up-to-date recordings by such as Ralph Kirkpatrick and Gustav Leonhardt, and the stimulating piano versions of Glenn Gould and João Carlos Martins, there seemed to be little need for further coverage of this repertoire. But *The Well-Tempered Clavier* is not that frequently performed or recorded, after all, and its wonders still await discovery by many who are frightened away by the notion that it is a "scholarly" work or simply a series of exercise pieces. And, like most great works, it thrives on a multiplicity of approaches. Sviatoslav Richter not only takes his place with such predecessors as Beethoven, Busoni, and Edwin Fischer in upholding the specific validity of the work as a cornerstone of the literature for his instrument, but his is one of the most satisfying—and, in its way, even thrilling—experiences yet offered on records by a pianist.

This is, first of all, extraordinarily beautiful playing. Romantic, yes, but within quite

reasonable limits—for there is a Romantic element, as there is something of everything, in these remarkable pieces. The rock-firm rhythmic steadiness on which Richter's interpretation is built has nothing to do with a "me-



SVIATOSLAV RICHTER
A satisfying, thrilling Bach Book I

chanical" approach: rather, it ensures a freedom from the effect of shifting gears. He reaches exalted levels of poetry and expressiveness without wandering from or distorting a rhythm once set—through subtleties of phrasing and dynamic shadings which are never fussy, never overstated, never allowed to clutter the basic purity of the material. The singular sense of *proportion* in his playing is perhaps the chief factor in both the overall effect of serene simplicity throughout the twenty-four preludes and fugues and the effect of great intellectual vitality in such segments as No. 2, in C Minor, the miraculously played No. 6, in D Minor, and No. 24, in B Minor.

The sound, unfortunately, is anything but crystalline—it varies in degrees of mushiness and plummy from one number to another—and I suspect gratuitous editorial tampering with James Ringo's splendid notes. But musically this is a distinguished issue. R.F.

BARBER: *Excursions, Op. 20.* BLOCH: *Sonata.* GRUENBERG: *Polychromatics, Op. 16.* Zola Shaulis (piano). COMPOSERS RECORDINGS INC. CRI SD 295 \$5.95.

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

Zola Shaulis, a young American pianist who has won a number of competitions, made this record as part of her prize as winner of the 1971 Naumburg Piano Award. She has recorded Bach's "Goldberg" Variations and Prokofiev's Seventh Sonata for Deutsche Grammophon, but that disc is part of DG's "Debut" series, which is not circulated in this country. Her U.S. recording debut is a very imaginative program, quite brilliantly performed and handsomely recorded.

The strongest work among the three is the Bloch Sonata, most welcome in its first stereo recording. Miss Shaulis does not surpass István Nádas (Dover HCR 5215, mono), but she makes an equally strong case for this absurdly neglected work and benefits from superior sonics—while also offering two otherwise unavailable items in place of Nádas' readily duplicated Stravinsky, Bartók, and Prokofiev. The Barber has been recorded by Rudolf Firkušny and André Previn (both on Columbia), but the Gruenberg has not been recorded before; both *Excursions* and *Polychromatics* are lightweight but extremely agreeable (though the "Rag-Time Fragment" in the Gruenberg sequence may be regarded by the purists as a distortion developed in the wake of the Joplin revivals).

Composers Recordings is to be applauded for making this material available, of course, but not for its documentation. Because the music is so unfamiliar, there is a special need for accurate information, but inaccuracy and omission are conspicuous in the anonymous annotation. There is a chunky paragraph about Bloch—as if no one had ever heard of him—but only four lines on his Sonata. The movement headings do not appear on the jacket or the label, nor do those of the Barber work, whose opus number is not given. Among other errors, the title of Barber's *Anthony and Cleopatra* is misspelled, the wrong year is given for its premiere (which opened the Met in Lincoln Center), and Paul Robe-

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- Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge
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- Ⓛ = quadrasonic disc
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The first listing is the one reviewed; other formats, if available, follow it.

son is said to have sung at the Met in Gruenberg's opera *The Emperor Jones*. (Robeson never sang at the Met, but starred in the O'Neill play on which the opera was based; Lawrence Tibbett took the role in the opera.) Even the timing given for the Bloch is off by more than seven minutes.

Better skip the reading, but the listening is great. R.F.

BEETHOVEN: *Sonatas for Cello and Piano (complete)*. Paul Olefsky (cello); Walter Hautzig (piano). MONITOR MCS 2137/8 two discs \$5.96.

Performance: **Genial**

Recording: **Good sound, irksome pressings**

The incomparable Feuermann/Hess version of Beethoven's A Major Sonata (Seraphim 60117, mono) and the still older Casals/

Schulhof version of the same work, in Columbia's five-record Casals "Portrait" (M5-30069) are the only recordings of any of the sonatas for cello and piano available now outside of the "integral" sets, which this release brings to a total of seven. Although bigger names are involved in the other six packages, these confident, warm-hearted performances by Paul Olefsky and Walter Hautzig are eminently satisfying in their own right, making the Monitor set a strong contender among the five on low-priced labels.

The second of the two discs, containing Sonatas Nos. 3, 4, and 5, is particularly attractive: the expansive, mellow approach suits all three works well. The two earlier sonatas, however, could do with a bit more in the way of drive and brilliance. Regrettably, although the vibrant sound quality is one of the plus items, the second disc is conspicuously bedeviled by pre-echo and (on my copy)

surface crackle, irritants present but less noticeable on the first record. At this price, in any event, the only real competitor is the recent Seraphim reissue of the Fournier/Schnabel recordings of 1947-1948 (1B 6075, in genuine mono, not phony stereo as indicated in Schwann-2). These performances are consistently on a higher level and, if the sonics are less rich than Monitor's, the pressings are cleaner and free of disfiguring pre-echo. Price aside, however, my first choice would still be the three-disc Deutsche Grammophon set with Fournier and Kempff (2709.018). R.F.

BEETHOVEN: *String Quartet No. 15, in A Minor, Op. 132*. Quartet Collegium Aureum. BASF KHB 21509 \$5.98.

Performance: **Sweet**

Recording: **Very good**

The Collegium Aureum is a German ensemble—or, more accurately, institute—specializing in performances of old music on original instruments. Such groups usually shut down their activities well short of definitively nineteenth-century items like late Beethoven string quartets, but the Collegium Aureum Quartet—four outstanding string players from the institute playing on a Guarneri, an Amati, a Grancino, and a Gagliano—is admirably equipped for this sublime music. Their playing has a very marked character: sweet, unrushed, "grainy," open, and rich, without the sliding lushness of late-Romantic string playing or the hard brilliance of latter-day style. Some of this may be due to the instruments themselves, which have possibly been restored to something like their original state (most old Italian instruments were drastically rebuilt in the nineteenth century). At any rate, the "old-music" tone, quiet, unlush, but quite beautiful, with a good measure of vibrato and a lot of sensitive ensemble, works very well for this inward-looking music. It would be interesting to hear this ensemble tackle Schubert quartets or even Brahms! The disc is very well recorded. E.S.

BLOCH: *Sonata* (see BARBER)

BOCCHERINI: *Six Symphonies, Op. 35 (G. 509-514)*. I Filarmonici di Bologna. Angelo Ephrikian cond. TELEFUNKEN SKH 24/1-3 three discs \$17.94.

Performance: **Worthy**

Recording: **Poor**

Musically, these six Boccherini symphonies of 1782, which were not published during the composer's lifetime, are highly attractive works, melodically fecund, harmonically and rhythmically inventive. There have been isolated recordings, mostly in poor editions, of half of these works, but this is the first time that all six have been offered as a unit. Angelo Ephrikian, who is preparing a complete edition of the Boccherini symphonies, has an obvious sympathy with the scores. He cannot in any way be faulted for his enthusiasm or his sensitivity (though a few details, such as the treatment of some appoggiaturas and somewhat undetailed phrasing, reveal that the conductor is less cognizant of late-eighteenth-century style than one might wish).

If the music itself is very much worth hearing and the conducting generally commendable, there are still two aspects of this album that cannot fail to disappoint. First, the Bol-

(Continued on page 124)

THE POCKET BACH: A FAST DRAW



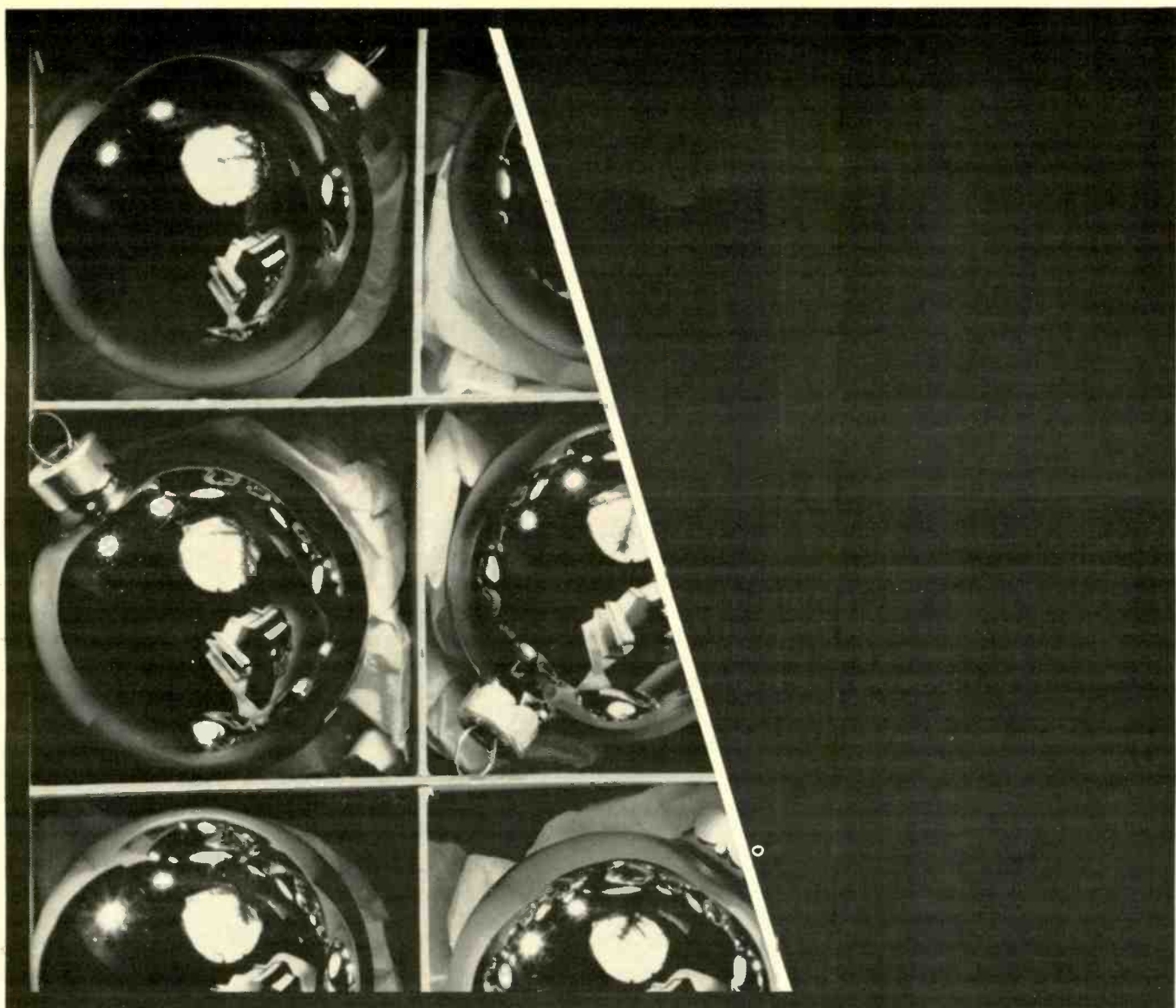
Angel

John Sebastian Sr. has, in some recordings, managed to integrate the big, awkward chromatic and the human body to some degree and thereby overcome the characteristic metallic honk in the instrument's mid-range. George Fields, in this Bach recording at least, has not; he blows straight into it. Even so, he could have had a much more successful recording, in my view, had he scrapped the "harmonicas exclusively" format, which would have allowed him to scrap that bass harmonica. It sounds like nothing so much as a lovesick bullfrog.

The thing Fields excels at here—and one of the things the harmonica, chromatic or diatonic, is so well suited for—is hanging those counter-melodies in there from the high end of the harp. Fields, who is scrupulously clean and fast enough, manages to infuse *some* style at least into the trills, and his timing (this would be the touchy part, I should think, in playing these pieces on a harp) is right in there. I've been trying to imagine what the recording would sound like with a more pleasant bass instrument, say the low end of a clarinet, and I believe parts of it (such as the Sinfonia No. 3, in which Fields seems to be really swinging without leaving the score behind) would then sound quite good. But I admit my concentration on such matters is continually being interrupted by a sort of involuntary speculation and wonderment at what an ungodly pair of lungs the guy must have after a few workouts like this, and one shouldn't be having such thoughts in the middle of a *musical* performance. N.C.

THE POCKET BACH. *Two-part Invention No. 10 (BWV 781); Two-part Invention No. 14 (BWV 785); Sarabande (from Cello Suite No. 5, BWV 1011); Gavotte No. 1 and Gavotte No. II (from English Suite No. 3, BWV 808); "Little" Fugue, in G Minor (BWV 578); Fugue No. 7 (from The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book II, BWV 876); Sinfonia No. 3 (BWV 789); and eight others.* George Fields (four-octave chromatic and bass harmonicas). ANGEL S-36067 \$5.98, 8 XS-36067 \$6.98, 4 XS-36067 \$6.98.

THE line between the two factions of harmonica buffs is not drawn at classical or pop music preferences but at the instruments themselves. One group—which may be enthralled with Angel's newly released recording of George Fields' exhaustively overdubbed joust with Bach—arms itself with chromatic harmonicas and agitates for some mysterious spokesman for "serious" music to proclaim, with resounding finality, that the harmonica is "a bona fide musical instrument." The other faction plays mostly Hohner's Marine Band model and will regard Fields' "Pocket Bach" album as an interesting novelty. The chromatic, with sharps and flats available all along the scale, is necessarily the harmonica one uses for classical music (if one *uses* a harmonica for classical music), but it has—to most of the ears in the faction I'm siding with—a basically tinny sound and it is—because of its large size and stiffer reeds—an instrument that keeps its distance from the player. You play *on* it, but (you'll just have to take my word for this) you can really *merge* with a Marine Band. The little diatonic harp is not quite an instrument all by itself, but a mechanism for converting the player's body into an instrument, quite a personal thing, and quite possibly addictive.



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Alicia de Larrocha



Isaac Albéniz



Rena Kyriakou

A BRACE OF CHAMPIONS FOR ISAAC ALBÉNIZ

Reviewed by Paul Kresh

THERE was a time in my youth when I thought all the concert music of Spain had been written in France by Debussy, Ravel, and Chabrier. Gradually I was to discover the ear-tingling delights in the scores of Manuel de Falla, Joaquín Turina, and others. When I got around to Isaac Albéniz, though, I was disappointed. His melodies were gypsy and Moorish enough, his tone pictures shifted moods intriguingly and were colored with the hot earth colors of Spain, but they didn't seem to go anywhere. Where were the magical, restless rhythms and heady climaxes of the *Rhapsodie Espagnole* and *The Three-Cornered Hat*? The music of Albéniz is a paler but purer wine, appealing to a subtler palate. He never dared to exploit the patterns of flamenco the way Falla would years later. Instead, he sought through the resources of the piano to evoke the percussive rhythms of his country's popular music. At their best, his pieces are pellucid tonal pictures, alluring melodies exquisitely decorated with arabesques and rescued from prettiness by smoky dissonances. At their worst, they are musical picture postcards.

The life of Albéniz would make a marvelous movie—the kind of thing Ken Russell might bring off. Born in Catalonia in 1860, the son of a tax collector, he learned how to play the piano from his sister. At the age of four he gave a concert at which he improvised so well that the audience was sure an adult was concealed backstage while the boy went through the motions at the keyboard. At twelve he was arrested as a runaway in Cadiz, but he escaped from the police, went all the way to Puerto Rico by ship without a ticket, and wound up half-starved in Buenos Aires, where he was discovered playing piano in a café. After a strange reunion in Havana with his father, who turned up as a tax collector there, the boy went on to New York and gave concerts all over the United States. In 1883 he married. In 1893 he started to compose—vast quantities of salon music at first, then the fine works that brought him fame. He died prematurely, of Bright's disease, in the French Pyrenees in 1909.

Who'd play the part—the chubby face with the pince-nez, handlebar moustaches,

and pointed black beard, the fat, stubby-fingered hands, always, except when playing, with a cigar in one of them? Some latter-day José Ferrer, perhaps.

Albéniz's music is heard as often these days in guitar transcriptions and orchestrated versions as in its original piano form. Eugene Ormandy once recorded *Iberia* complete, with five of the twelve pieces orchestrated by Fernández Arbós and the rest by Carlos Surinach. Frühbeck de Burgos plays his *Suite Española*—including the *Cantos de España*—in a vivid orchestral transcription of his own. In fact, though there have been recordings in the past, the current Schwann catalog lists no Albéniz for piano except a few pieces in a collection recorded by Artur Schnabel. It is welcome news, then, that both Vox and Musical Heritage Society are releasing new albums of his music as he wrote it.

The Vox Box is the first in a projected series of three volumes to cover the piano works complete. Volume 1 contains all of *Iberia*, along with a number of other highly regarded pieces, played by Rena Kyriakou, a lady with a light touch, a transparent tone, and admirable taste. Some of the pieces are so familiar through guitar transcriptions that they actually sound a little strange in their original piano costumes—a bit overdressed, at times almost flaccid. *Iberia*, brought to completion in the composer's latter years, stands out above everything else. In this ravishing set of four books of musical watercolors named for various areas of Spain, Miss Kyriakou certainly is alert to the many delicate delights and conveys them charmingly—especially the exquisite *El Albaicín*, a musical description of the Gypsy quarter in Granada; the sunlit and busy *El Puerto*; and the tonal picture of a festival in Seville in *El Corpus en Sevilla*. Of the other pieces in the Vox set, *Dreams* is as close as Albéniz could get to Debussy, though it's no *Evening in Granada*. The seven studies are ingenious but undistinguished, the Sonata is florid, very Lisztian, and *The Remembrances of a Journey* really are picture postcards in music—too pretty, a mite too pat. The *Pavane-Caprice* and *Mallorca Barcarole*, however, are haunting pieces in the composer's purest and most original style.

There is little overlapping between the Vox Box and Alicia de Larrocha's choices for her two-record Musical Heritage Society set, but just enough to make some direct comparisons possible. I played her version of the *Pavane-Caprice* immediately after hearing Miss Kyriakou's. It was a revelation. It's De Larrocha's meat, this music, and few can compete with her in expounding it—her silvery tone, her daring phrasing, her building of those Iberian tensions make the Kyriakou approach sound bland in comparison. There is more rubato here, too, in both the *Pavane-Caprice* and the *Mallorca Barcarole*, and faster tempos, and far more temperament. The pianist brings the same sort of skill and passion to the *Suite Española* and the *Cantos de España*, which include the famous *Córdoba*, the melody of which always and annoyingly evokes *Kiss Me Again*. The *Cantos*, too, are familiar musical pictures with Spanish place-names, rich in melody and percussive effects and immensely attractive. Miss De Larrocha also plays *La Vega*, one of Albéniz's last works, and *Azulejos*, not quite completed when he died. I would recommend this two-record set unreservedly except that my copy had impossibly poor surfaces. The sound of the Vox album, on the other hand, is exceptionally pure and clean, recorded with Dolby stretchers and singularly free of pops and hisses. Both Richard Freed's notes for Vox and Douglas Townsend's for MHS are exceptionally informative.

ALBÉNIZ: Piano Music, Vol. 1. Iberia (complete); Sonata No. 3; Dreams; Pavane-Caprice; Remembrances of a Journey; Seven Studies; Mallorca Barcarole. Rena Kyriakou (piano). Vox SVBX 5403 (three discs) \$9.95.

ALBÉNIZ: Piano Music. Suite Española; Pavane-Caprice; La Vega; Azulejos; Cantos de España; Puerta de Tierra; Rumores de la Caleta; Zaragoza; Tango; Malagueña; Mallorca; Zambra Granadina. Alicia de Larrocha (piano). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1571/2 two discs \$5.98 (plus 65¢ handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).



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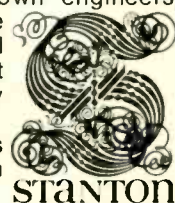
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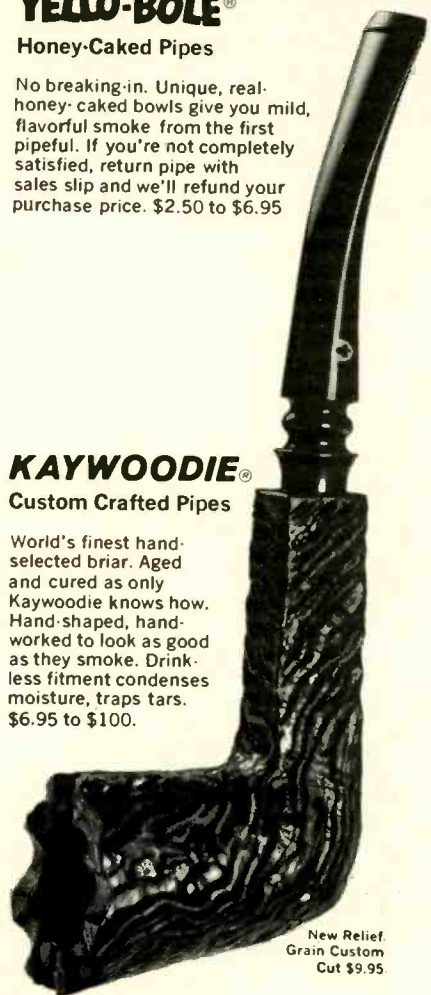
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ognese orchestra is at best routine; they don't sound exactly like a scrub team, but refinement is not quite their forte either. Even more serious—it may indeed have colored my opinion of the orchestra—is the poor sound reproduction: wiry high strings, woolly bass, no highs (there is a severe attenuation of the top end), and, equally surprising from Telefunken, considerable distortion at climaxes, especially near the record center. I might add that since no side lasts longer than sixteen minutes (some symphonies are less than thirteen), it should have been possible to place all six symphonies on four rather than six sides, with room to spare. So there you have it: interesting, at times even fascinating, music, performed with devotion if not with an ideal orchestra, and miserably recorded. I.K.

BOULEZ: *Piano Sonatas* (see Best of the Month, page 87)

BRAHMS: *Symphony No. 1, in C Minor, Op. 68; Symphony No. 2, in D Major, Op. 73; Symphony No. 3, in F Major, Op. 90; Symphony No. 4, in E Minor, Op. 98.* New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein cond. COLUMBIA D3M 32097 (three discs) \$11.98.

Performance: **Over-loving**
Recording: **Excellent**

There are those who claim they can hear in the more yearning passages of Brahms the love songs of his passions for Clara Schumann, Hermine Spies, Elisabeth von Herzogenberg, and the other women in his life. I myself am all too prone to hear in them the sighs of ladies attending matinees of the New York Philharmonic and other orchestras through the land. Brahms seems to be all they ever wanted, or ever will want, to fill their ultimate musical needs. Countless masterworks of modern music have been barred from concert programs so that these true, stalwart supporters of culture in America might gorge themselves on Brahms.

Yet the symphonies themselves remain supreme achievements both in their lyricism and their monumentality. When one thinks of the loveliest performances on records, immediately Bruno Walter's warmth, Serge Koussevitzky's force, and Toscanini's utter clarity come to mind. Bernstein, who was Koussevitzky's protégé, logically carries over some of that master's rugged approach to these works, although, of course, in his maturity Bernstein is also very much his own man. His performances are distinguished by spaciousness, focus, and a kind of expository enthusiasm and dancing grace. Each symphony is cast in a different mood—the first dramatic, the second deft and extremely lucid, the third almost erotic in its sensuality, the fourth abounding in grandeur and nobility. Yet, for all the passion and intensity Bernstein brings to these readings as he investigates every phrase—as though rummaging in a treasure chest for objects of the highest beauty and value and holding each to the light, as it were, to admire the workmanship—in the long run this investigative approach tends to slow things down a bit too much. Occasionally the big line, the tension that holds a complex work together, is lost as he lingers too long over one lovely phrase or another. This is particularly true in his highly searching rendition of the Fourth. But for the most part Bernstein's sense of timing and awareness of dramatic values are unerring. In any case, these lavish and loving performances call our attention to the ar-

chitectural beauty as well as to the emotional force of these musical landmarks and make them live again, not an easy feat in view of how often they've been played and heard on discs. A repackaging of three symphonies from the catalog (Nos. 1, 3, and 4) completed by a new recording of No. 2, this is no pedestrian collection, but a series of highly original and affectionate performances, exhausting at times in their intensity and fervor, but never dull. The recorded sound is exceptionally clean. P.K.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BRAHMS: *Trio in C Major for Piano, Violin, and Cello, Op. 87; Sonata No. 2, in F Major, for Cello and Piano, Op. 99.* Julius Katchen (piano); Josef Suk (violin); Janos Starker (cello). LONDON CS 6814 \$5.98.

Performance: **First-rate**
Recording: **Mellow**

Here are two rich, late chamber works of Brahms given their due in an admirable match of strong, old-style string playing—no schmaltz but full tone and big phrase—with excellent, romantic pianism. These are apparently live recordings—they were made in England a number of years ago at Benjamin Britten's frequent working place, The Maltings, Snape. They are on the dark side, and they could, with just a little bit of charity, be described as mellow—part of that Brahmsian autumnal glow, you know. E.S.

BRAHMS: *Violin Sonata No. 2, in A Major, Op. 100 ("Thun"); Violin Sonata in E-flat, Op. 120, No. 2.* Isaac Stern (violin); Alexander Zakin (piano). COLUMBIA M 32228 \$5.98.

Performance: **Juicy**
Recording: **Generally good**

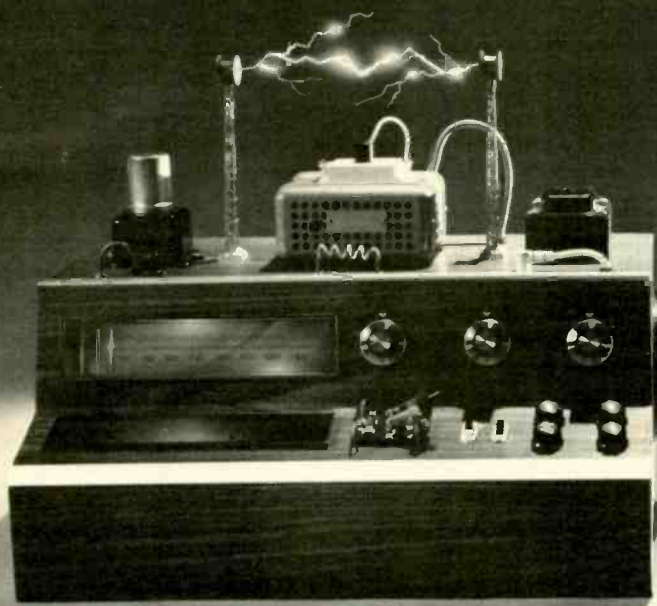
No, Dear Reader, you are not seeing things. I too have a special fondness for the two sonatas of Op. 120, which Brahms composed for clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld and which are also often heard in the alternate scoring for viola. But Brahms did provide yet another scoring for these two works—for violin—and Isaac Stern now offers one of them in what appears to be its first recording. While he brings to his reading an almost viola-like richness of tone, the inherent tonal intensity of the violin, combined with Stern's own exuberant performance style, makes this E-flat Sonata quite a different piece from the mellow work we know in its clarinet or viola scoring. Brahms also revised the piano part for this violin version.

The A Major Sonata is, of course, the second of the familiar three violin-and-piano masterpieces from Brahms' pen. Here, too, Stern steers away from the blandly lyrical approach adopted by many fiddlers and goes all out to extract the utmost melodic juice from the piece. The nectar is a bit overripe for my taste, however, and I would have liked more rhythmic momentum in the finale.

While the balance between the violin and Alexander Zakin's fine piano is generally just throughout Op. 120, No. 2, I find the violin decidedly close-up relative to the piano in Op. 100. The Henryk Szeryng-Artur Rubinstein readings of all three Brahms violin sonatas are decidedly superior in this respect. I'm surprised, by the way, to find that Stern's readings of the First and Third violin sonatas, once available on Columbia MS 6522, is no

(Continued on page 126)

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longer in the catalog. Presumably, Columbia will either reissue them or give us new versions in fairly short order. *D.H.*

CASTELNUOVO-TEDESCO: *Concerto for Two Guitars and Orchestra*. **SANTÓRSOLA:** *Concerto for Two Guitars and Orchestra*. Sérgio Abreu and Eduardo Abreu (guitars): English Chamber Orchestra. Enrique García Asensio cond. COLUMBIA M 32232 \$5.98.

Performance: **Dazzling**
Recording: **Good**

A concerto for two guitars carries no guarantee of being twice as attractive as a concerto for one, say Joaquín Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez*, and neither of these offers anything like the ingratiating appeal of that deservedly

popular work for the general audience. Of the pair here there is more of interest in the characteristically craftsmanlike one composed by the late Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco in 1962 than in the rather fussy one written by Guido Santórsola four years later for the Abreus. This is primarily a record for guitar-fanciers, and, as a showcase for the talents of these young Brazilians (both still under twenty-five, according to the liner information), it is downright stunning. Aficionados may revel in it, but the material really is a bit thin. *R.F.*

DAHL: *Duetto Concertante for Flute and Percussion* (see **KRAFT**)

FIELD: *Piano Concerto No. 1, in E-flat; Piano Concerto No. 2, in A-flat*. Marjorie Mitchell

(piano); Stuttgart Radio Orchestra. William Strickland cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1578 \$2.99 (plus 75¢ handling charge, available from Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Performance: **Fine**
Recording: **Good**

John Field (1782-1837), an Irish contemporary of Carl Maria von Weber, is cited in most musical dictionaries and histories for having devised the piano nocturne as well as for developing a style of piano figuration that went beyond the brittle passagework of the post-Mozart epoch and anticipated the Romantic ornamentation of Chopin.

However, it's not necessary to know all this in order to take pleasure in the best parts of the two concertos so excellently recorded here by Marjorie Mitchell and William Strickland. Field was no major master; he was a child of his time, the transition period in music between the Classic and the Romantic, and one would rather expect the first movements of his concertos to be, in a sense, obeisances to the greater masters of the immediate past and the present (Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, even his mentor-employer, Clementi). And so they are. In short, Field is most nearly himself after he has surmounted the first-movement hurdle. Thus, in the E-flat Concerto, composed during his teens, there is a fetching set of variations on the famous Scottish tune *Within a Mile of Edinburgh Town*, followed by a glittering and definitely folky rondo complete with opening drone bass. Although the A-flat Concerto is a decidedly bigger work, with Beethoven-like gestures in its long opening movement, its slow movement is a perfectly lovely "song without words" and its finale a delectable jog-trot rondo, aptly designated *moderato innocente*. It would appear that the A-flat Concerto was composed about 1814, during Field's long residence in St. Petersburg, Russia. He gave Glinka lessons in 1817, and certain elements of this piece, especially the wind scoring, seem to anticipate the later music of Glinka.

In any event, there is much enjoyable music in these two works. Miss Mitchell's performances have plenty of sparkle and zest. The orchestral support is excellent, and so is the recorded sound. *D.H.*

GOUNOD: *Faust*. Eleanor Steber (soprano), Marguérite: Eugene Conley (tenor). Faust: Cesare Siepi (bass). Méphistophélès: Frank Guarrera (baritone). Valentin: Margaret Roggero (mezzo-soprano). Siebel: Thelma Votipka (contralto). Martha: Lawrence Davidson (bass). Wagner: Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Fausto Cleva cond. ODYSSEY Y 3 32103 three discs \$8.94.

Performance: **Good, but routine**
Recording: **Good for 1951**

This Metropolitan Opera production of *Faust*, dating from 1951, is a competent, if not particularly inspired, accomplishment overall, and it wears its age quite well. Eleanor Steber's fresh-voiced, secure, and appealing Marguérite is its brightest attraction, though Cesare Siepi, after moments of vocal steadiness in the earlier episodes, also rallies to contribute a suave and entertaining tempter. Eugene Conley's Faust is sturdy, but tonally not always appealing. The remainder of the cast and the chorus are adequate (but no more) under Fausto Cleva's firm, lively, but,

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Mia Farrow joins her husband and the London Symphony Orchestra in a delightful *Peter and the Wolf*. Never has this work found a more felicitous narrator. On Side 2, Previn narrates Benjamin Britten's *A Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*, an ideal companion to Prokofiev's fantasy. Both works reflect the rare talents, the rapport, and the pure joy of the conductor and his wife. An album to delight any youngster. But give it to anyone of any age with a sense of wonder and a love of music.

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in my opinion, rather unbending leadership.

This is not a complete *Faust*, but the missing *Walpurgisnacht* ballet can be easily found elsewhere. The performance is not particularly French-sounding, either, though in this respect it is not up against overwhelming competition. It is good value for the price, and, although the recorded sound is definitely pre-stereo, it is easy to listen to. G.J.

GRUENBERG: *Polychromatics, Op. 16* (see BARBER)

HANDEL: *Messiah*. Helen Donath (soprano); Anna Reynolds (mezzo-soprano); Stuart Burrows (tenor); Donald McIntyre (bass); John Alldis Choir; London Philharmonic Orchestra. Karl Richter cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2709.045 three discs \$20.94.

Performance: **Ceremonial**
Recording: **Excellent**

I once used the term "dance" in describing a performance of *Messiah* to a German friend, and got the shocked rejoinder, "No one would ever say 'dance' in speaking of this work in Germany!" That kind of reaction could perhaps be seen as both the cause and the effect of Karl Richter's style. There were already a dozen *Messiahs* in Schwann when this one was added to the list, one of them also conducted by Richter on Deutsche Grammophon (2709.015), but with his own Munich Bach Orchestra and Chorus, and sung in German. For this remake in English, with English singers and an English orchestra, Richter, as before, simply fails—or refuses—to let the music dance. There are sputtering injections of nervous energy here and there, but that is hardly the same thing: there is little of the joy, the exhilarating lift, that Colin Davis, Hermann Scherchen, and others have taught us to expect from this work. Veneration is not enough.

On the plus side here are the sound itself (DG at its formidable best), the superb playing of the London Philharmonic (which now seems at least the equal of any orchestra in Britain), and the solo contributions of Stuart Burrows and Donald McIntyre, both more impressive with each new exposure. The other soloists, however, are disappointing by their own previously set standards: Helen Donath simply sounds uncomfortable with the material, but Anna Reynolds is decidedly off her form—it would have been advisable to re-do her unfortunate "He was despised." The pivotal choruses tend to be earthbound and without momentum. "All we like sheep" is more than brisk enough, but the rhythm is distressingly square, and Richter's puffing chug-a-chug becomes an unintended burlesque. In the "Hallelujah" chorus the orchestra makes a glorious noise and the rhythm does have a good deal of spring, but the words are not as clear as they ought to be and there is a strong suggestion of the old "massed choruses" tradition. Since the orchestral sound is so transparent, it is not unreasonable to suspect that the chorus might actually be as big as it sounds. (DG has made the respective sections easy to find, by the way, by banding each number separately.)

Despite the blandishments of DG's marvelous pressings, I still prefer Philips' 1966 recording under Colin Davis. A strong second choice, at little more than half the Philips or DG price, is the Vanguard/Cardinal set conducted by Johannes Somary (VCS-10090/92).

R.F.

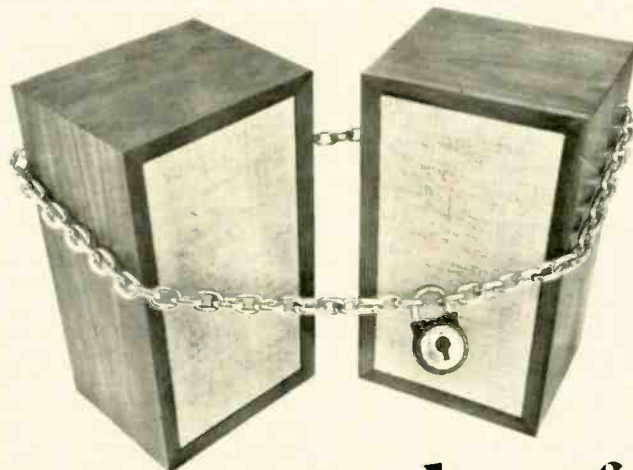
RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HANDEL: *Saul*. Margaret Price (soprano), Merab: Sheila Armstrong (soprano), Michal: James Bowman (counter-tenor), David: Ryland Davies (tenor), Jonathan: Gerald English (tenor), High Priest and Amalekite: John Winfield (tenor), Abner and Witch of Endor: Donald McIntyre (bass), Saul: Stafford Dean (bass), Doeg and Ghost of Samuel: Leeds Festival Chorus; English Chamber Orchestra. Charles Mackerras cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ARCHIVE 2710 014 three discs \$20.94.

Performance: **Mostly excellent**
Recording: **Very good**

Handel wrote the oratorio *Saul* when he

was fifty-three, about two years before *Messiah*. It is one of his longest works, and its orchestration is exceptionally colorful, including trumpets, trombones, drums, harp, theorbo, two organs, harpsichord, and even a carillon. *Saul* contains some notable characterizations, particularly the title role: the tragic king is very impressive in his moments of rage at David, and his concluding scene with the Witch at Endor is one of the boldest, most dramatic scenes Handel ever wrote. Having just recovered from a mental breakdown, and in precarious financial shape, Handel at this point seems to have been undecided about his future course. With *Saul*, and immediately afterward, with *Israel in Egypt*, he appears to have redirected his sights toward the oratorio: writing *Saul* gave him some difficulty, which



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may perhaps be noticed in the unevenness of the oratorio's second act. Overall, however, it is an impressive achievement, one that should be far better known than it is (only the famous "Dead March" can really be termed familiar).

Vanguard's 1963 recording of *Saul*, recently reissued as HM-24/26, has many fine features, including the earnest conducting of Mogens Wöldike. It was, however, pruned a good bit. As far as I am able to tell from an advance pressing without program annotations, this new Archive version is substantially complete: unlike the Vanguard set, it has an overture, and there are quite a few arias and recitatives that were omitted in the earlier album. The presence of Charles Mackerras as conductor is almost automatic assurance that Baroque stylistic matters will be well taken care of (the double-dots the largo of the third-scene sinfonia in Act 2, for example, which Wöldike does not do); there are some excellent idiomatic vocal cadenzas, although the amount of actual embellishment added is conservative. I was surprised, however, that in some instances cadential trills were omitted, this happening fairly frequently in Sheila Armstrong's arias. Mackerras is at his best in the brilliant and majestic sections, such as the opening chorus of Act 1 ("How excellent Thy Name, O Lord"). But some of the slower portions might have gained from a slightly less sanctimonious approach—the "Dead March," for example, is curiously unatmospheric and a bit dull. The conductor's most serious limitation, at least in this recording, lies in the pacing of many of the recitatives, which is too measured and seemingly eschews dramatic thrust. Part of that problem must be ascribed to the excessively low level of the continuo harpsichord, which is not only faint but also lacking in imagination, and the ponderous punctuations of the continuo cello and double bass.

The cast is uniformly good. Donald McIntyre can be singled out as a plausibly dramatic Saul, but the most appealing vocal work comes from the soprano. Margaret Price; even in the unsympathetic role of Merab, the snobbish daughter of Saul, Price stands out for the beauty, excitement, expressivity, and flexibility of her voice, which is not unlike Janet Baker's in timbre. The part of David was originally intended for counter-tenor, and James Bowman sings the role with considerable brilliance, though his is not a particularly ingratiating voice (Helen Watts on Vanguard is a warmer, more sympathetic David). Finally, the chorus and orchestra are more than satisfactory in all respects.

The sonics, with the exception of the weak harpsichord and a too-distant organ obbligato, are clean, transparent, and well balanced. Let us hope, incidentally, that Archive will assign Mackerras to more Handel oratorios: what about *Solomon* for the next project? I.K.

HAYDN: Symphony No. 93, in D Major; Symphony No. 94, in G Major ("Surprise"). New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein cond. COLUMBIA M 32101 \$5.98.

Performance: **Excellent "Surprise,"**
disappointing No. 93

Recording: **Excellent**

The popular "Surprise" Symphony comes off well here, as Leonard Bernstein elicits some fiery playing from the New York Philharmonic, especially in the finale. There are not too many exaggerations, although the minuet (one of Haydn's fastest) is a bit slow and heavy.

Unfortunately, the D Major Symphony suffers from a number of problems, including the fact that the "great bassoon joke" at the end of the slow movement falls on its face like a weak punch line. George Szell recorded both symphonies with the Cleveland Orchestra for Columbia (MS 7006) in what surely must be one of the greatest Haydn recordings of all time: not only is his conclusion to the slow movement of No. 93 uproarious, but he is able to convey so much wit elsewhere, not to mention his pointed phrasing, superbly balanced textures, subtlety, clarity, and orchestral precision, that in comparison Bernstein's version emerges as ordinary. I.K.

JOACHIM: Variations on an Original Theme in E Major, Op. 10. MENDELSSOHN: Sonata in C Minor (1823-1824). Ernst Wallfisch (viola): Lory Wallfisch (piano). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1562 \$2.99 (plus 75¢ handling charge, available from Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Performance: **Competent Mendelssohn,**
lackluster Joachim

Recording: **Exaggerated separation**

Harry Halbreich, in his liner notes for this record, quite aptly remarks on the scarcity of works for the viola in the nineteenth century. In that context, and that of the viola literature in general, a disc of previously unrecorded and virtually unknown works by such figures as Mendelssohn and Joachim would appear to be an interesting hour's worth; having devoted the hour to it, though, I concluded that it is of primarily documentary value, offering little to tempt the listener back for more.

Some of Mendelssohn's resurrected juvenilia have turned out to be attractive, even fascinating works—for example, the D Minor Violin Concerto, the Op. 3 Piano Quartet, some of the string symphonies. There is nothing in this viola sonata, however, to suggest any link with those works, let alone the slightest hint that the glorious String Octet was to follow in a year's time. The second of the three movements—labeled Menuetto, but really a characteristic scherzo—is agreeable enough, but hardly memorable.

Joachim's theme is a remarkably unattractive one, and nothing really interesting happens to it along its twenty-six-minute course. In fairness to the work, perhaps a violist with more flair could make more of its "Hungarian" episodes than Ernst Wallfisch, who, in any event, is rather overwhelmed by the piano in the curiously balanced recording. R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

KELEMEN: Composé. Alfons and Aloys Kontarsky (pianos): Südwestfunk Orchestra, Ernest Bour cond. *Floréal.* Norddeutscher Rundfunk Symphony Orchestra, Hamburg. Jochem Slothouwer cond. *Changeant.* Siegfried Palm (cello): Saschko Gawriloff (violin): Westdeutscher Rundfunk Symphony Orchestra, Cologne. Christoph von Dohnanyi cond. *Hommage à Heinrich Schütz.* Yvonne Cienfela (soprano): Gächingen Kantorei, Helmut Rilling cond. *Surprise.* Radio Symphony Orchestra, Berlin, Milko Kelemen cond. PHILIPS 6500 314 \$6.98.

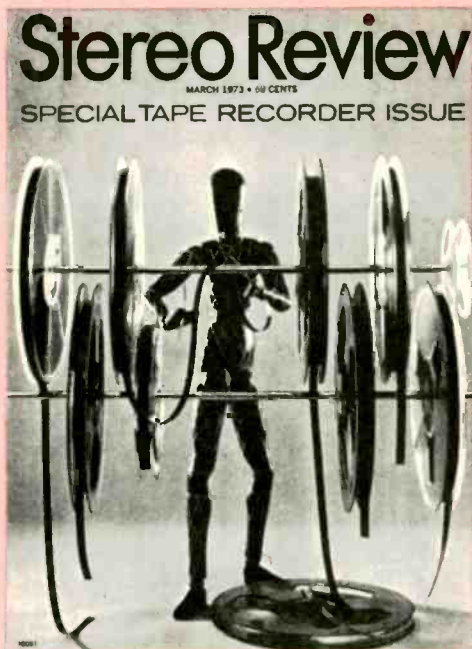
Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **High-quality radio tapes**

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World War II, and, although as yet little known in this country, he has earned a substantial European reputation. His music, close to the mainstream of Central European avant-gardism, has outstanding vigor and character of its own. He is particularly adept at the use of a flashing, changing, inventive orchestral palette—not always true of the chamber-music-oriented serial and post-serial generation of composers. Indeed, these recordings, mostly stemming from radio tapes, provide a tour of the German radio orchestras, suggesting the extent to which those organizations have participated in and patronized new musical life—and not merely for the benefit of the younger German composers.

Probably the most outstanding example of instrumental fantasy here is the purely orchestral *Floréal*. The concerted works can hardly be called concertos in the old sense, but they are virtuosic showcases written for the exceptional talents of the Kontarsky brothers and the cellist Siegfried Palm. The one vocal work on the record, a homage to Heinrich Schütz, uses a certain range of colors from speech to song and back again, but it is most notable for the same kind of dynamic thrust that gives the orchestral works their energetic character. The performances and recordings are all good to excellent, and only a stray pop or click in the pressing mars one of Philips' rare excursions into the contemporary field. *E.S.*

KHATCHATURIAN: *Cello Concerto* (see PROKOFIEV)

WILLIAM KRAFT: *Encounters IV, A Duel for Trombone and Percussion* (with tape collage by William Malloch). **FREDERICK LESE-MANN:** *Sonata for Clarinet and Percussion*. **INGOLF DAHL:** *Duetto Concertante for Flute and Percussion*. Karen Ervin (percussion); Louise DiTullio (flute); Mitchell Lurie (clarinet); Thomas Ervin (trombone). **CRYSTAL S641 \$5.98.**

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

This record of pieces for winds and percussion represents a high-level musical activity of which we—i.e., the Brahmins of Eastern U.S./European musical culture—know very little. And I am talking about the musical activity not in Northern Borneo or the Falkland Islands, but in Southern California! Contrary to popular opinion—on the East Coast, at least—there is a considerable amount of “cultural” activity in that fascinating part of the world, and, as a recent trip to those parts would suggest, they don’t even seem to have discovered that “classical” music is dead; quite the contrary, it thrives in that balmy, smoggy climate.

All the composers and performers on this record have or have had an affiliation with the University of Southern California, a tribute no doubt to that school’s high-level music department. The Dahl and Lesemann pieces are essentially light, sensitive, attractive works that well exploit the virtuosity of the performers. Much of the interest of this record centers on William Kraft’s very *engagé Encounters*, a “duel” for trombone and percussion. Its three movements—*Strategy*, *Truce of God*, and *Tactics*—explore the implications of conflict, musical and otherwise. The second movement includes William Malloch’s collage of old war songs and speeches—kept quite a bit in the background, it is



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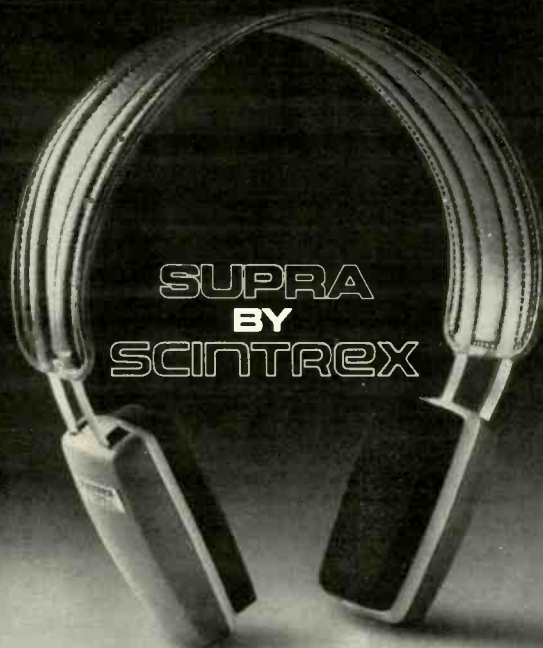
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true, in this recording and simply not very well integrated. Otherwise this is a very strong, dramatic, and well worked out piece, brilliantly played by these excellent performers. A somewhat more astute use of the recording medium might have solved the problem of the tape collage: except for that, the sound is satisfactory. *E.S.*

LESEMANN: *Sonata for Clarinet and Percussion* (see **KRAFT**)

LISZT: *Concerto Pathétique*. **SCHUMANN:** *Andante and Variations; Six Canonic Studies (arr. Debussy)*. John Ogdon and Brenda Lucas (pianos). ARGO ZRG 721 \$5.98.

Performance: **Big-scale**

Recording: **Dullish**

Liszt's *Concerto Pathétique* for two pianos? Who is this fellow Liszt, anyway, who keeps on turning out new pieces eighty-seven years after he is supposed to be dead? Somewhere in Central Europe there must be a Franz Liszt factory where these pieces are made to order. I'd like two Hungarian rhapsodies, one *Mephisto Waltz*, a fantasy on themes from *The Bohemian Girl*, an arrangement for three pianos of the symphonic poem, *Attila the Hun*, and a *Grand Concerto Pathétique*, please.

Or perhaps John Ogdon actually comp . . .

No, no, no. Liszt really did write a *Concerto Pathétique* for two pianos, which is a version (with an added slow movement) of the *Grand Solo de Concert* for piano and orchestra, which is an arrangement (with the slow movement omitted) of the *Grosses Konzertsolo*, which was written in 1849 as the test piece for a piano competition in Paris, of which the name of the winner does not seem to have come down to us. Or so say Deryck Cooke's liner notes, and *Grove's Dictionary* agrees, so it must be true.

The *Concerto Pathétique* is no mere bagatelle overlooked in the floodtide of Lisztian creative effusion. It is a whopping big work on the line of the B Minor Sonata or the "real" concertos: powerful, tightly organized thematically, rhetorical in character, with an attractive slow movement, and building to the usual peroration or two. It may even be a *good* piece, but I find it hard to be sure. It is certainly imposing, not to say overwhelming, in this performance.

I much preferred the overside, however, where the very beautiful Schumann *Andante and Variations* is the main attraction. Actually the story of this work is almost equally improbable. It seems to have started life as a piece for two pianos, two cellos, and horn. It is most familiar in a form for one piano, four hands, which is not even mentioned here: the two-piano version seems to be of Schumann's own devising. Whatever the definitive version, it sounds just fine to me. The *Six Canonic Studies* were written for pedal piano and arranged for two pianos by Claude Debussy. No, I did not make that up either. The music is a little more formal than one expects from Schumann—his schizophrenia was already well in evidence in 1845—but it is in the fine old German contrapuntal tradition and really quite full of character. Perhaps Eusebius, "the other Schumann"—there is a surprising lot of serious, unperformed late music—will yet have his day. If not, it won't be for lack of effort on the part of John Ogdon and Brenda Lucas. But the sound is a bit dull. *E.S.*

(Continued on page 132)

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MENDELSSOHN: Symphonies (complete). No. 1, in C Minor, Op. 11; No. 2, in B-flat Major, Op. 52 ("Lobgesang"); No. 3, in A Minor, Op. 56 ("Scotch"); No. 4, in A Major, Op. 90 ("Italian"); No. 5, in D Major, Op. 107 ("Reformation"). Edith Mathis (soprano), Liselotte Rebmann (mezzo-soprano), and Werner Hollweg (tenor), soloists in No. 2: Berlin Deutschen Oper Choir, in No. 2: Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2720 068 four discs \$22.00.

Performance: **Top Karajan, mostly**
Recording: **Very good, mostly**

Except for No. 1, the numbering of Mendelssohn's symphonies pertains to order of publication rather than creation (if they were num-

bered according to date of completion, the "Reformation" should actually be No. 2, the "Italian" No. 3, "Hymn of Praise" No. 4, and the "Scotch" No. 5). The First Symphony has charm and vigor in the end movements, recalling the styles of Weber and early Schubert, but it is typical Mendelssohn in the lyrically musing slow movement and in the lovely central section of the scherzo. The "Lobgesang," or "Hymn of Praise" (sung in German), is more in the nature of cantata than symphony, although the solemn opening theme, intoned by trombones, unifies the piece, which was written for the commemoration in Leipzig of the four-hundredth anniversary of the art of printing. The other three symphonies are repertoire standbys, of course, and need no background commentary here.

Herbert von Karajan is at his interpretive best in his winged reading of the "Scotch" Symphony (this is a reissue of the 1971 performance reviewed in STEREO REVIEW in January 1972), and the C Minor Symphony turns out equally well. He also brings out the best in the "Hymn of Praise," which too often sounds as pompous as an exercise in Victorian civics. He keeps a light hand on the ceremonial sections and shows off the lyrical and scherzo-like episodes to the very best advantage—I have in mind especially the allegretto of the introductory orchestral section and the lovely soprano-alto duet (No. 4) "I waited for the Lord." The vocal soloists do themselves proud, in particular tenor Werner Hollweg in "Watchman! Will the night soon pass?" I expected a great deal of Karajan's reading of the "Italian" Symphony, and for the most part I was not disappointed. His pacing of the third movement is more *moderato* than *con moto*, but the tarantella finale is brilliant. However, I did miss the exposition repeat in the first movement, with its always interesting re-transition passage.

More questionable is Karajan's treatment of the first movement of the "Reformation," which he handles in ultra-dramatic fashion: for instance, there is a very slow pacing of the somber recapitulation of the *allegro* main theme. And very puzzling indeed is what happens (in my review copy, at least) to the two series of ascending staccato chordal string progressions that begin the transition episode leading eventually to the recapitulation: these chords, which should speak out assertively, suddenly disappear into the background. Was this a miscalculation of relative levels in tape editing, or was someone asleep at the mixing console?

Aside from this, and although I would have given the chorus somewhat more presence in the "Lobgesang," the recorded sound throughout these four discs is excellent, particularly as to textural transparency and ambience. Karajan fans will want the whole set: it is available in limited quantities at the special price listed above. Mendelssohn fanciers certainly will want the first three symphonies. For myself, though, I'll stick to the original single-disc Karajan issue of the "Scotch" Symphony, which is coupled with the *Hebrides Overture*. D.H.

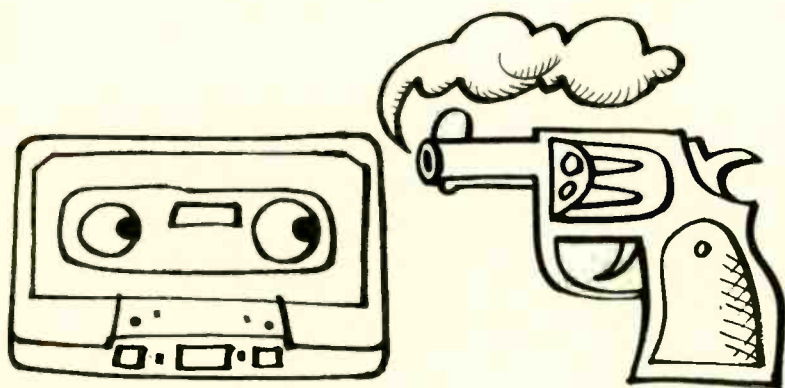
MENDELSSOHN: Variations on an Original Theme in E Major, Op. 10 (see JOACHIM)

MENDELSSOHN: Violin Concerto in D Minor (1822); Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64. Arthur Grumiaux (violin); New Philharmonia Orchestra, Jan Krenz cond. PHILIPS 6500 465 \$6.98. © 7300 248 \$6.98.

Performance: **Fine D Minor**
Recording: **Good**

The same problem that afflicted a Jan Krenz-conducted, Philips-recorded violin concerto album I reviewed a few months ago—of the Wieniawski D Minor and the Szymanowski No. 2—ails this Mendelssohn coupling: the less familiar work gets an absolutely brilliant performance, while the warhorse just plods along.

Mendelssohn's D Minor Concerto with string orchestra accompaniment is another one of those astonishing bits of juvenilia that he wrote for home performance. This one was unearthed for its first public performance (by Yehudi Menuhin) in 1952. Arthur Grumiaux and Jan Krenz give it plenty of zing and sing,



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and the finale emerges as a particularly virtuosic tour de force.

The famous E Minor Concerto is quite another matter, and one's reaction to this performance is a matter of personal taste. The somberly Teutonic reading of the first movement can be justified as a legitimate interpretation, I suppose, but I confess that I myself prefer the opposite, a volatile-fleet approach such as that taken by Henryk Szeryng and Antal Dorati (Mercury 90406). For all of Grumiaux's musicianship and technical expertise, I find his and Krenz's reading too heavy for my musical palate. The recorded sound is good throughout both sides. *D.H.*

MOUSSORGSKY: *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Sviatoslav Richter (piano). **MOUSSORGSKY (arr. Ravel): *Pictures at an Exhibition*.** Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell cond. ODYSSEY Y 32223 \$2.98.

Performance: **Widely contrasting**
Recording: **Not for hi-fi buffs**

Sviatoslav Richter's reading of the original piano version of *Pictures* was recorded at a 1958 concert in Sofia, Bulgaria, and was originally issued as Columbia ML 5600. The sound is muddy and there are coughs galore from the audience, but the extraordinary nuance (including a subtle stress on dissonant elements) and vivid characterization of his interpretation do come through. There are also some amazing bits of sheerly virtuosic delicacy that remain, for me, unsurpassed in any other performance of this piece—I refer specifically to the enchainé trills midway in the Unhatched Chicks episode. Richter's reading is in the athletic, highly colorful Slavic tradition, a pianistic counterpart to the recorded performances of the Ravel orchestration by Koussevitzky (who commissioned it) and the Boston Symphony on 78's, and Rafael Kubelik and the Chicago Symphony in the recently reissued 1951 Mercury recording. Incidentally, Richter *does* play the extended Promenade episode that follows the portrayal of the two Jews, but this is noted on neither the liner notes nor the label of the Odyssey release.

The Szell-Cleveland Orchestra performance is decidedly non-Russian in spirit—the more assertive of the Promenade episodes have a definite Teutonic tread—but as an orchestral performance *per se* it has many things to recommend it. With all due respect to the idea of coupling the original and orchestrated versions of *Pictures* on a single disc, however, the result is never kind to the orchestral version: volume levels on the disc must be modified to accept the excessive length, and even so the gigantic final apotheosis sounds constricted.

At \$2.98 the Odyssey disc is a good buy from a musical standpoint, but it is definitely not for those who demand the sonic ultimate. My review copy, by the way, had considerable surface noise on both sides. *D.H.*

MOZART: *March in D Major (K. 445); Divertimento No. 17, in D Major (K. 334)*. New York Philomusica Chamber Ensemble. A. Robert Johnson cond. CANDIDE CE 31074 \$3.98.

Performance: **Enjoyable**
Recording: **Excellent**

The jacket of this disc implies that the New York Philomusica is planning to record all of the Mozart divertimentos, of which K. 334 is

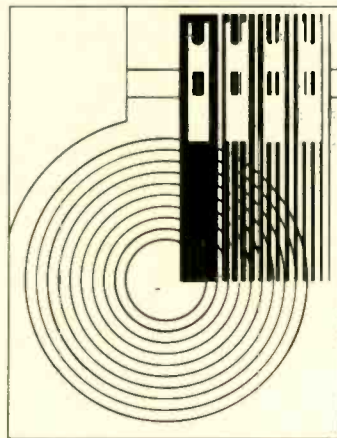
the first. There have been several recent recordings of this work, which was written for the Robinig family in Salzburg in 1779, but most of them have been chamber orchestra versions, whereas the present one involves just a string quartet with double bass plus two horns. This is the disposition that Mozart originally intended, and, surprisingly, the intimacy works well even in those movements where the first violin is treated like the soloist of a violin concerto. The performances of the divertimento and the related March in D (K. 445) are highly accomplished, as one would expect from the distinguished musicians in this ensemble (Felix Galimir, Isadore Cohen, Alvin Brehm, etc.). The playing does not have the suavity or graciousness of, say, the recent Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields record-

ing (Argo ZRG 705): it is a little less elegant and more workmanlike—perhaps earthy would be an apt description. It would be fun to hear such playing at an actual evening party; I'm certain the guests would be as delighted as those eighteenth-century listeners must have been. Good, detailed sonics. *I.K.*

PERGOLESI: *La Serva Padrona*. Maddalena Bonifaccio (soprano), Serpina; Siegmund Nimsgern (baritone), Uberto; Collegium Aureum. BASF 21022 \$5.98.

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

Pergolesi's delightful little comic opera *La Serva Padrona* was an instant hit when it
(Continued on page 135)



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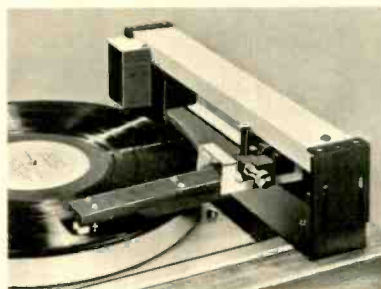
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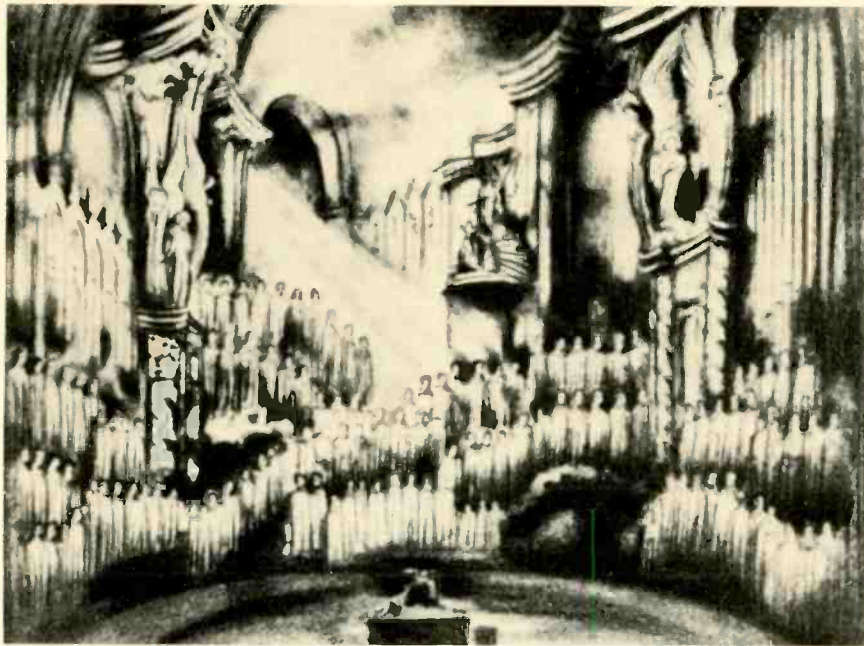


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The Act I centerpiece of Pfitzner's *Palestrina*: the composer writes down his Mass as it is dictated to him by a choir of angels.

PFITZNER'S PALESTRINA

A long-neglected operatic masterpiece makes a late but nevertheless grand entrance into the recordings catalog

Reviewed by Richard Freed

HANS Pfitzner (1869-1949), a slightly younger and more conservative contemporary of Mahler and Strauss, made so strong an impression with his early works that a Pfitzner Society was formed in Munich when he was only thirty-five. Some thirty-four years later a Hans Pfitzner Association was created in Berlin, with Wilhelm Furtwängler as its president; by then the opera *Palestrina*, first given in Munich under Bruno Walter in June 1917, had made Pfitzner a figure of national reverence in Germany. His music, however, never really circulated beyond Germany and Austria, and at seventy-five he had to be rescued (by a committee from the Vienna Philharmonic) from a shabby home for the aged in Munich. His death, two weeks after his eightieth birthday, went virtually unnoticed. Five years ago, on the eve of the Pfitzner centenary, there was talk of a large-scale revival of his works, and there were even some recordings (the Violin Concerto on Candide, the cantata *Von Deutscher Seele* on DG), but nothing further was forthcoming. Deutsche Grammophon's decision to record Pfitzner's masterwork in Munich last winter was surely a heartening surprise for the composer's partisans, and its release now fills a very real gap in the phonograph's documentation of the twentieth century's musical activity.

It used to be taken for granted that *Palestrina* is a work that could never be popular, or even accepted, outside Central Europe: even the three orchestral preludes, the only portions of the score heretofore known in this country via recordings, were virtually unknown in performance. The work was conceived in a lofty and "spiritual" frame, with a libretto by Pfitzner himself in which

the sixteenth-century composer Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina embodies not only Pfitzner's own ideals but those of the art of music itself. The opera, which Pfitzner styled a "musical legend," has come to be revered as a testament sacred to German music, spoken of in the same context as *Parsifal* (which Wagner designated a "stage-consecrating festival"). All of this may seem more than a little off-putting, but Deutsche Grammophon's magnificent recording is a resounding corrective to the notion that *Palestrina* is nothing more than a mummified object of somewhat localized veneration. The music, performed from the 1953 edition of the late Joseph Keilberth, is always beautiful and frequently very moving, as well as being superbly crafted; the drama is well paced, invested with real vitality, and peopled with characters who are no mere symbols. Even without the visual factor, this is good theater.

The "musical legend" does not conform strictly with fact. The plot centers about the challenge to Palestrina, in the last year of the Council of Trent (1563), to compose a Mass with the power to dissuade the Pope from his decision to ban all music but Gregorian chant from liturgical use. Palestrina, inspired by visitations from his dead wife and nine "Departed Masters," writes the Mass dictated to him by angel voices in a single night, and is acclaimed by the public and the clergy. Actually, Palestrina's wife did not die until 1580, but it makes a good story—even in the unorthodox dramatic sequence in which the triumphant Mass is composed in the first act. The entire second act is a panorama of the political intrigue and brutal infighting at Trent, where Palestrina's accomplishment is not yet known. In

the third, the Pope himself appears with his congratulatory message, and the opera ends with Palestrina seated alone at his console, the cheering crowd heard dimly through his window.

If there is a touch of *Parsifal* in *Palestrina*, the spirit of *Die Meistersinger* is no less present: the concluding "Evviva Palestrina," although heard as a murmur (with mandolins) instead of a roar, can hardly fail to evoke the Hans Sachs analogy, and even the visitation of the Nine Departed Masters in Act I suggests a sort of parallel with Wagner's very human Nurembergers. But *Palestrina* is neither an echo of Wagner nor a shadow of Strauss: it is a work whose conviction would be less if Pfitzner had allowed himself to be anyone but Pfitzner. It is extraordinary. I think, and an indication of the degree of commitment the work inspires, that so much of this comes across so vividly in a performance unrelated to a staged production—and one in which most of the participants were performing the music for the first time.

NICOLAI GEDDA, one of the most versatile and dependable singers around, as well as one of the most durable, had sung Palestrina's confrontation with the Departed Masters in concert (in New York), but the rest of the part was new to him. Hardly anyone else in the cast had had even *that* much experience with the work, and Rafael Kubelik has yet to conduct it in the opera house. Perhaps this very factor accounts in part for the freshness of the performance, the compelling intensity sustained throughout the work's three-and-a-half-hour course. In any event, it sounds *anything* but ritualized, as if the project had elicited nothing less than the best each performer had to give. Top vocal honors justly go to Gedda, but what fine company he is in! Helen Donath and Brigitte Fassbaender, in their respective *Hos-enrollen* as Palestrina's son and a pupil, are especially effective. (The only actual female part is that of the shade of Palestrina's wife—here sung by Renate Freyer—the three Angel Voices presumably being neuter.) Heribert Steinbach is new to me, but he is a singing actor from whom we shall surely hear further. Hermann Prey, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, and Karl Ridderbusch all sustain a level of excellence representative of the entire production, which benefits further from splendid recording. And, to put first things last, there is the loving hand of Kubelik, a choice both obvious and inspired. Should the success this recording so abundantly deserves lead to the opera's being given at the Metropolitan under his direction, so much the better.

PFITZNER: *Palestrina*. Nicolai Gedda (tenor), Palestrina; Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone), Cardinal Borromeo; Helen Donath (soprano), Ighino; Brigitte Fassbaender (mezzo-soprano), Silla; Karl Ridderbusch (bass), Pope Pius IV, Cardinal Madruscht, a Departed Master; Hermann Prey (baritone), Count Luna; Heribert Steinbach (tenor), Novagerio; Bernd Weikl (baritone), Morone; Friedrich Lenz (tenor), Bishop of Budoja; Tölzer Boys' Choir; Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Rafael Kubelik cond. **DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2711 013** four discs \$27.92.

reached Germany soon after its Naples premiere of 1733, and it has remained something of a special favorite there ever since. The latest of the several German recorded versions, the current BASF-Harmonia Mundi enterprise, is, on the whole, a well-paced and well-engineered effort, brought off with fluency and lightness. Maddalena Bonifaccio is a lively Serpina, perfectly in character, though her chirpy soubrette mannerisms seem excessive at times. As Uberto, the bachelor who ultimately succumbs to Serpina's wiles, Siegmund Nimsgern reveals a bass-baritone voice of unusual fullness and resonance. He also has a lively sense of dramatic awareness and a flair for comedy, but his Italian pronunciation is too Germanic for *opera buffa* purposes. For this reason, Everest 455-1 (with Renata Scotto and Sesto Bruscantini as the singers) remains the best available version of the opera.

The Collegium Aureum lists no conductor among its members. Somebody, though, should receive credit for the polished overall performance, so let me single out the concertmaster, Franzjosef Maier. BASF deserves no compliments for the production: there is no libretto and the liner notes are in German only. *G.J.*

PROKOFIEV: *Cello Concerto in E Minor, Op. 58.* **KHATCHATURIAN:** *Cello Concerto (1946).* Christine Walevska (cello); National Opera Orchestra of Monte Carlo, Eliahu Inbal cond. PHILIPS 6500 518 \$6.98.

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

Christine Walevska is a good cellist, but I think you have to have a special interest in the cello or love for this repertoire to appreciate this recording. The Prokofiev is an early version of a work later revised for Mstislav Rostropovich (and recorded by him) as the Sinfonia Concertante; the version here is slightly cut—whether to the work's advantage or detriment I cannot say. The original concerto has its moments—an attractive opening and a striking close in particular—but in between it meanders.

The other side is another case: a typical, brash, dreadful, potboiler Khatchaturian creation. It is probably not as bad as it sounds, but it sure sounds dreadful.

I don't know how you can really appreciate a performance of music you don't care for (though it's often done), but Ms. Walevska and the Monte Carlo Orchestra apparently manage well enough. The cello is well recorded; the orchestra is a bit hazy. *E.S.*

RACHMANINOFF: *Symphony No. 2, in E Minor, Op. 27 (complete version).* London Symphony Orchestra, André Previn cond. ANGEL S-36954 \$5.98.

Performance: **Broadly lyrical**
Recording: **Good**

Sergei Rachmaninoff's E Minor Symphony, in all its gorgeously sprawling length, is making its second appearance on the American scene in this newest reading by André Previn. His direct competition is from the late Paul Kletzki with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande on London 6569.

The recorded sonics are not really directly comparable, since EMI and London apply totally different pick-up techniques: London's is relatively close-up with highly detailed inner voices, while EMI brings more general room ambiance into the sonic picture, yet

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with no loss of detail. The orchestras themselves, however, are a different matter. The London Symphony decidedly has the upper hand: the Suisse Romande, in comparison, sounds a bit scrawny in the strings and inaccurate in ensemble brass intonation, especially in the horns.

The Previn and Kletzki interpretations differ markedly as well. Previn favors a lyrical approach on the broadest possible lines, which reaches its peak of effectiveness in a superb realization of the slow movement. Kletzki brings more momentum and drama to the end movements; but his handling of the scherzo is so breathless that the players are hard put to stand the pace.

All things considered, then, I think the choice goes to Previn—for the moment. I am still waiting for something approaching the performance I hear in my own mind, of which I have heard thus far only bits and pieces in the concert hall and on records. *D.H.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RHEINBERGER: *Concerto in F Major for Organ, String Orchestra, and Three Horns, Op. 137; Concerto in G Minor for Organ, String Orchestra, Two Trumpets, Two Horns, and Timpani, Op. 177.* E. Power Biggs (organ); Columbia Symphony, Maurice Peress cond. COLUMBIA M 32297 \$5.98, ©MT 32297 \$6.98.

Performance: **Persuasive**
Recording: **Good**

The Liechtensteiner Josef Rheinberger (1839-1901) is not a total stranger to disco-

philes—he is represented in the current Schwann with recordings of a piano concerto, a piano sonata, and the Christmas cantata *The Star of Bethlehem*, and E. Power Biggs recorded one of his organ sonatas in the Fifties—but nothing of his offered so far has been nearly as attractive as these two concertos, composed in 1884 and 1894, respectively, and the only ones he wrote for organ and orchestra. Both are filled with vitality, craftsmanship, and melodic inventiveness, and Biggs (playing the Möller organ in St. George's Church, New York) makes a strong case for his contention, stated on the seven-inch "bonus disc" tucked inside the twelve-inch jacket, that "Rheinberger's distinction is that, in the least favorable of times for the organ, he wrote the very best of music for it."

Rheinberger's writing for the orchestra is every bit as brilliant as his treatment of the organ, and his blend of the two elements is downright stunning. The jaunty finale of the F Major Concerto, the sort of movement with which Saint-Saëns liked to end his piano concertos, is enough to get anyone hooked on Rheinberger: it is simply adorable, and there is no way around it. In his written annotation, Biggs suggests that the more ambitiously scored G Minor "looks forward to Richard Strauss and Sir Edward Elgar," and one may find certain parallels with parts of the *Enigma Variations*, but it also looks backward some twenty years to the Verdi Requiem, whose *Dies irae* is strongly recalled in the opening of the final movement. The most persistent likeness throughout both works, though, would seem to be the piano concertos of Liszt and Saint-Saëns. Biggs displays all the security

and abandon one could want, and the orchestra, under the extremely able Maurice Peress, is with him every exhilarating inch of the way.

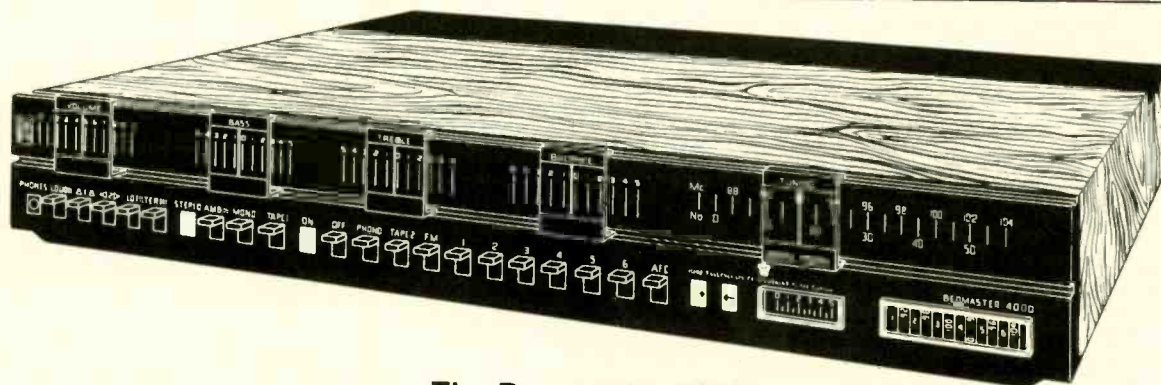
Cassette purchasers, it might be noted, pay a bit more and get a bit less: not only is the "bonus" material withheld from them, but they are deprived of Biggs' informative and entertaining annotation in print. They are, in fact, left completely in the dark about this little-known composer, even as to his given name and his dates. Moreover, the sound of the disc is noticeably brighter than that of the very good (Dolby) cassette. *R.F.*

ROSSINI: *Péchés de Vieillesse. Petit Caprice; Prélude Inoffensif; L'Innocence Italienne et la Candeur Française; Ouf! Les Petits Pois; Une Caresse à Ma Femme; Un Petit Train de Plaisir; Spécimen de l'Ancien Régime.* Aldo Ciccolini (piano). SERAPHIM S-60216 \$2.98.

Performance: **Stylish**
Recording: **Good**

It was a splendid idea to have Aldo Ciccolini follow up his Satie with this sparkling Rossini collection of humorous piano music, and to offer it on Seraphim instead of the full-price Angel label. As in his Satie, Ciccolini knows just when to play deadpan and when to let go, and he seems to be having a thoroughly good time.

Seraphim has labeled the disc "Pleasures and Peccadillos," which may not be an improvement on Rossini's own title ("Sins of Old Age"), but which makes it easy to distinguish this release from Luciano Sgrizzi's collection on Nonesuch H-71163, in which four
(Continued on page 138)



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of the five short pieces Ciccolini plays on side one are duplicated. In place of Ciccolini's *Prélude Inoffensif*, Sgrizzi plays the complementary *Prélude Préventieux*, and he gives us four more short pieces in place of the *Spécimen de l'Ancien Régime* and *Un Petit Train de Plaisir*. Since either disc is an appetite whetter and both are on low-price labels, I would not let the four duplications deter me from acquiring both, which between them offer much of the original matter for Respighi's *Boutique Fantasque* and *Rossiniana*—and, incidentally, remind us that Rossini was one of the earliest admirers of Louis Moreau Gottschalk.
R.F.

ROSSINI: *William Tell* (see Best of the Month, page 85)

SANTORSOLA: *Concerto, Two Guitars and Orchestra* (see CASTELNUOVO-TEDESCO).

SCHOECK: *Der Postillon, Op. 18*. Ernst Haefliger (tenor); Wettingen Chamber Choir and Orchestra, Karl Grenacher cond. *Mit einem gamalten Band; Marienlied, Op. 6, No. 6; Peregrina II, Op. 17, No. 4; An einem heitern Morgen; Im Kreuzgang von St. Stefano, Op. 31, No. 5; Sapphische Strophe; Waldvöglein; Septembermorgen, Op. 7, No. 3; Nur du*. Ernst Haefliger (tenor); Karl Grenacher (piano). *Es ist bestimmt in Gottes Rat; Ein Vöglein singt im Walde; Agnes; 's Seeli; Sehnsucht; Zimmer-spruch*. Wettingen Seminary Choir and Wettingen Chamber Choir, Karl Grenacher cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1577 \$2.99 (plus 75¢ handling charge, available from Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Performance: **Dedicated**
Recording: **Mostly adequate**

Although Schwann lists current recordings of three of Othmar Schoeck's orchestral works now, and only a single title to represent his vocal music, it is generally agreed that his greatest gift lay in the setting of words. This collection offers several attractive songs from various stages of Schoeck's career—nine for tenor and piano and three each for mixed chorus and for male chorus—plus the elaborate setting of Lenau's *Der Postillon* for tenor, male chorus, and orchestra. Regrettably, though, no texts—or even synopses—are provided, some titles are misspelled (*Nur du* is given everywhere as *Nur zu*), and, except for a reference to Mörike in the annotation, none of the authors of the texts are identified (Eichendorf, Feuchtersleben, Novalis, Lienert, Ritter, and Hermann Hesse, a great admirer of Schoeck, are among them). Nevertheless, anyone who enjoys the art of German song as typified by Schubert, Hugo Wolf, and Karl Loewe should find this unfamiliar material well worth investigating.

For the most part, the assortment is "sweet" rather than profound or dramatic. The three pieces for mixed chorus (*Ein Vöglein singt im Walde, Es ist bestimmt in Gottes Rat*, and *Agnes*) have the innocent character of folk song, which fills several of the other songs as well. There is something like passion, of a restrained sort, in *Nur du*, but *Der Postillon* is the only work on the disc that might be called dramatic; it is also the only one with orchestra (despite the misleading listing on the liner), and the only portion of the sequence in which the sound is substandard (giving the impression of a dubbing from

(Continued on page 140)

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an old and faraway broadcast). Ernst Haefliger performs with his customary distinction—which means an exalted level of singing—and Karl Grenacher, whom Schoeck in his last year saluted as his finest interpreter, does very well indeed in his various roles. MHS includes an insert apologizing for the absence of texts, and it is altogether possible they may be forthcoming and perhaps sent to purchasers later on. *R.F.*

SCHOENBERG: *Verklärte Nacht, Op. 4* (see *The Basic Repertoire, page 59*)

SCHUBERT: *Duets. Hermann und Thusnelda; Antigone und Oedip; Cronnan; Singübungen; Selma und Selmar; Licht und Liebe; Hektors Abschied; Mignon und der Harfner; Scene aus Goethes "Faust."* Janet Baker (contralto); Gerald Moore (piano); RIAS Chamber Choir. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 328 \$6.98.

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

This is an instance where the performance commands more attention (and praise) than the material. These little-known and heretofore generally neglected vocal duets cannot be ranked with Schubert's significant works. Undoubtedly, some of them were written for intimate occasions, to be sung by members of the composer's inner circle. Aside from the inconsequential *Singübungen* (vocalises), only two of the nine songs are "duets" in the sense that the vocal lines harmonize and intertwine; the others are dramatic "scenas" taken from Greek mythology, based on texts by Schiller or Klopstock, or from Scottish balladry (*Cronnan*). *Licht und Liebe*, based on a poem by Schubert's friend Collin, is lighthearted and lilting, and *Mignon und der Harfner* is one of Schubert's many settings of Goethe's "Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt." The *Faust* excerpt is the verbatim setting of the Church Scene, with chorus—declamatory but without a real sense of drama.

The disc is a valuable supplement to the massive documentation of Schubert's solo songs, and Deutsche Grammophon deserves our gratitude for its release. The singing is nothing short of masterly. Janet Baker, who has a lovely prayer in *Antigone und Oedip*, and who carries the major burden in the solemn *Hermann und Thusnelda*, is in her most sumptuous vocal form. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau has some difficult moments, but these are generally overshadowed by his poetic insights and illuminating projection. And Gerald Moore is fine, as always. *G.J.*

SCHUMANN: *Andante and Variations; Six Canonic Studies* (see *LISZT*)

WEBERN: *Variations for Piano, Op. 27* (see *Best of the Month, page 87*)

WOLF: *Quartet in D Minor.* Keller Quartet. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1597 \$2.98 (plus 65¢ handling charge, from Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

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

My first contact with Hugo Wolf's youthful and altogether extraordinary D Minor Quartet (1878-1884) was through a 1953 Columbia recording by the New Music Quartet.

This Musical Heritage Society disc is the first recording of it I've listened to in a long time (I haven't yet heard Deutsche Grammophon's recent LaSalle Quartet release), and the music still impresses me as extraordinary in its command of material, if not necessarily in the fine points of string-quartet scoring. Essentially Wolf takes up where Beethoven of the *Grosse Fuge* and Op. 131 left off, but in a later harmonic framework. The piece is long, elaborate, dense of texture, full of ideas—and, for me, wholly absorbing.

The first three movements are full of the atmosphere of Faustian struggle implied in the composer's quotation from Goethe that serves as epigraph, but the finale distinctly anticipates the delectably transparent music of the Italian Serenade, which Wolf scored for string quartet in 1887. What there is in this quartet makes one wonder what Wolf might have produced had he not died in his prime, and had he chosen to turn to large-scale instrumental forms.

This recorded performance by the Keller Quartet has plenty of brio and passion: the violin tone is a bit wiry, after the Central European fashion, but not annoyingly so. The sonics are solid, yet clean, with a pleasantly spacious sense of room-tone. *D.H.*

COLLECTIONS

MADY MESPLÉ: *Coloratura Arias from French Operas.* Gounod: *Romeo et Juliette; Waltz Song.* Delibes: *Lakmé; Bell Song; Tu m'as donné le plus doux rêve (Act 3).* Thomas: *Hamlet; Ophelia's Mad Scene.* Mignon: *Je suis Titania.* Massenet: *Manon; Je suis encore tout étourdie; Je marche sur tous les chemins.* Bizet: *Les Pêcheurs de Perles; Comme autrefois.* Offenbach: *Les Contes d'Hoffmann; Doll Song.* Mady Mesplé (soprano); Paris Opera Orchestra, Jean-Pierre Marty cond. SERAPHIM S-60215 \$2.98.

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

This is quite a display of French soprano fireworks, and Mady Mesplé, France's reigning coloratura soprano, is probably the best-qualified exponent of this repertoire today. The voice seems to be smallish in size, but with a pleasant timbre, airily produced, and at times quite fragile. Her intonation is good and her technique assured, with agile passage work, excellent *staccati*, and a good, if not spectacular, trill. Mme. Mesplé is completely at home in the high reaches: she goes up to an immaculate G-flat above high C in the *Hamlet* Mad Scene.

But she has more than coloratura to offer. There is poignancy in the lovely Bizet aria, and touching expression in Lakmé's brief "Tu m'as donné." Her Manon is soubretteish, a bit superficial-sounding with those uncommon coloratura flourishes, and quite appropriately youthful. There are a few low marks—a dispirited Doll Song that is more mechanical than it ought to be, for one—but pleasing elements are in abundance, and, at the Seraphim price, the disc is a splendid buy. The well-recorded accompaniments range from fair to good. *G.J.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MUSIC OF VIENNA, ALBUM 3. Johann Strauss II: *Emperor Waltz; Roses from the South.* Lanner: *Hunt Galop.* Josef Strauss: *Künstlergruss Polka; Allerlei Polka.* Suppé:

Poet and Peasant Overture. Millöcker: *Dream Waltz (from Der Feldprediger).*
Komzak: *Archduke Albrecht March.* Johann Strauss Orchestra of Vienna. Willi Boskovsky cond. ANGEL 36956 \$5.98, © 8XS-36956 \$6.98, © 4XS-36956 \$6.98.

Performance: **Expert**
 Recording: **Excellent**

As in their previous two albums for Angel, these seasoned Viennese musicians (in all likelihood members of the Philharmonic, thinly disguised for legal purposes) offer warm and relaxed renditions of music they dearly love and intimately know. Of the two famous Strauss waltzes, here given the full concert treatment, I particularly enjoyed *Roses from the South*; Boskovsky's way with the *Emperor Waltz*, though loving and infectious, is perhaps a bit *too* relaxed for my taste. On the other hand, I like very much his way with Suppé, which emphasizes the *gemütlich* Viennese quality in the music of this polyglot Dalmatian. There are several novelties: an attractive Millöcker waltz, two zesty polkas by Johann's immensely gifted younger brother Josef, and a Komzak march that is typical of those not-too-martial (but rather danceable) marches Austrians seem to have favored. The orchestral playing is precise and spirited, and abounds in the well-judged rubatos that are in the blood of these musicians. How can you go wrong with such a disc? *G. J.*

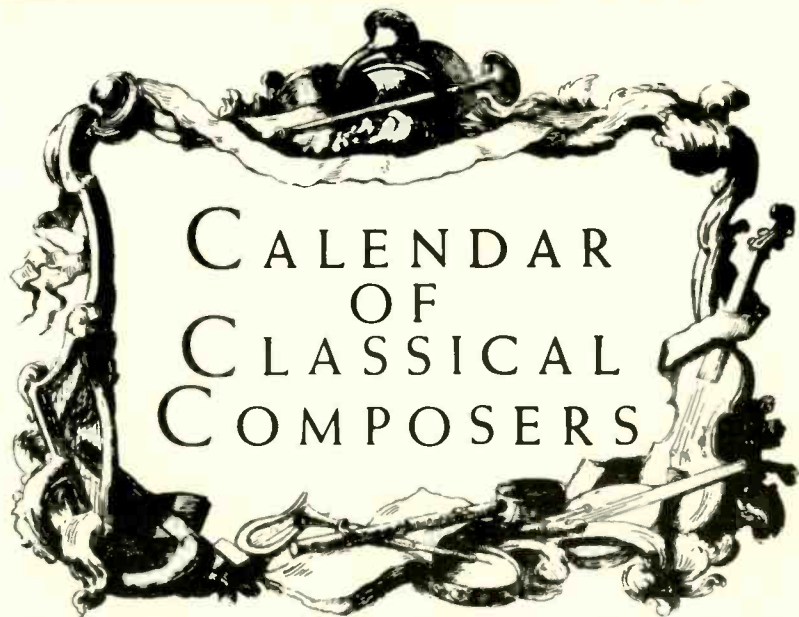
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JOHN REARDON: *For Children and Sensible Parents Only.* Nelhybel: *The House That Jack Built.* Gideon: *The Adorable Mouse.* Regney: *Slovenly Peter and His Friends.* John Reardon (vocals and narration); Ariel Quintet; Stuttgart Kammermusiker, Karl Paul Reichert cond. SERENUS SRS 12050 \$6.98.

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

If children don't wear this one out, their "sensible" parents probably will; the texts, the readings, and the music all are remarkable. The fun starts with *The House That Jack Built*, intoned in Baroque style by John Reardon to a captivating score by Vaclav Nelhybel that teems with wit and color. It's performed by a wind quartet, harpsichord, and every sort of percussion instrument, including xylophone, glockenspiel, chimes, and temple blocks, with the percussionist simulating the clattering of horses' hoofs by slapping himself on the chest. And *The Adorable Mouse* is a delight. Libretto and music are by Miriam Gideon, who dares to experiment with the most modern dissonances in a way that might even help to prepare young listeners to enjoy more serious music of our time. Six instruments accompany the narration and singing of Mr. Reardon to excellent advantage.

Slovenly Peter is based on *Der Struwwelpeter*, Heinrich Hoffman's sadistic tales that have been terrifying the German young since 1844. Some of the sadism has been removed, but Peter, with his wild hair and dirty fingernails, is still a scary case. And his companions are models of horrifying if instructive deportment. The music this time is by Noel Regney, who knows his Prokofiev perhaps too well, but even so has provided a delightful setting to his own rhymed stanzas in English, which Mr. Reardon recites to perfection. This is one of the best records for children ever made. *P.K.*



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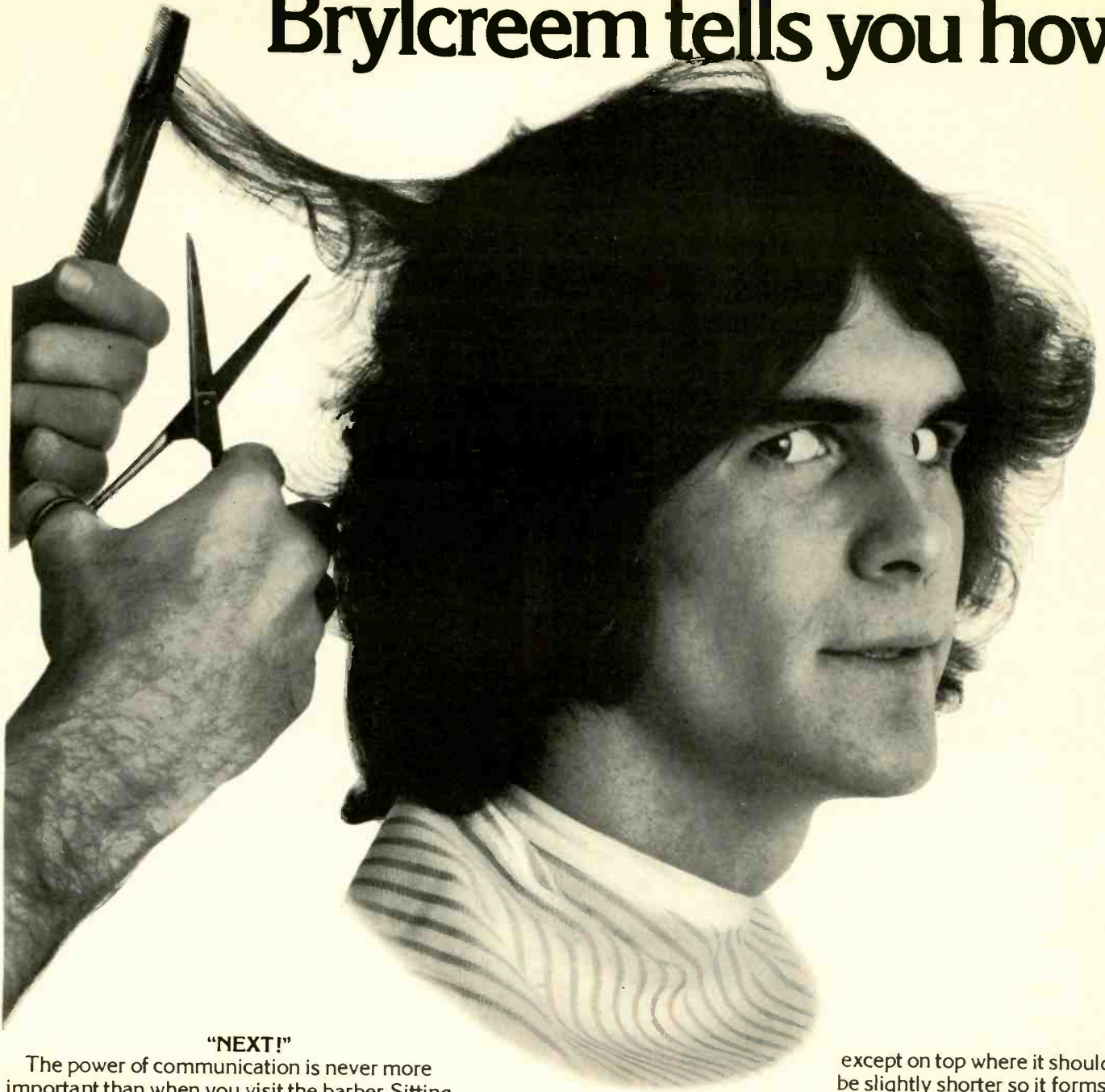
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There is a new, shorter style that looks good on most guys. (Like the one you see here.) We recommend it if you have an average, oval shaped face. To get this new style, ask your barber to cut your hair the same length all over your head. Straight hair should be about 1-1/2" long, except on top where it should be slightly longer so it lies smoothly in place. Curly hair should be about 2" all over,

except on top where it should be slightly shorter so it forms a little bulk. He should keep your ear tops covered by about 1" of hair.

The same for your shirt collar. And your sideburns should stop about 1/2" above the bottom of your ear.

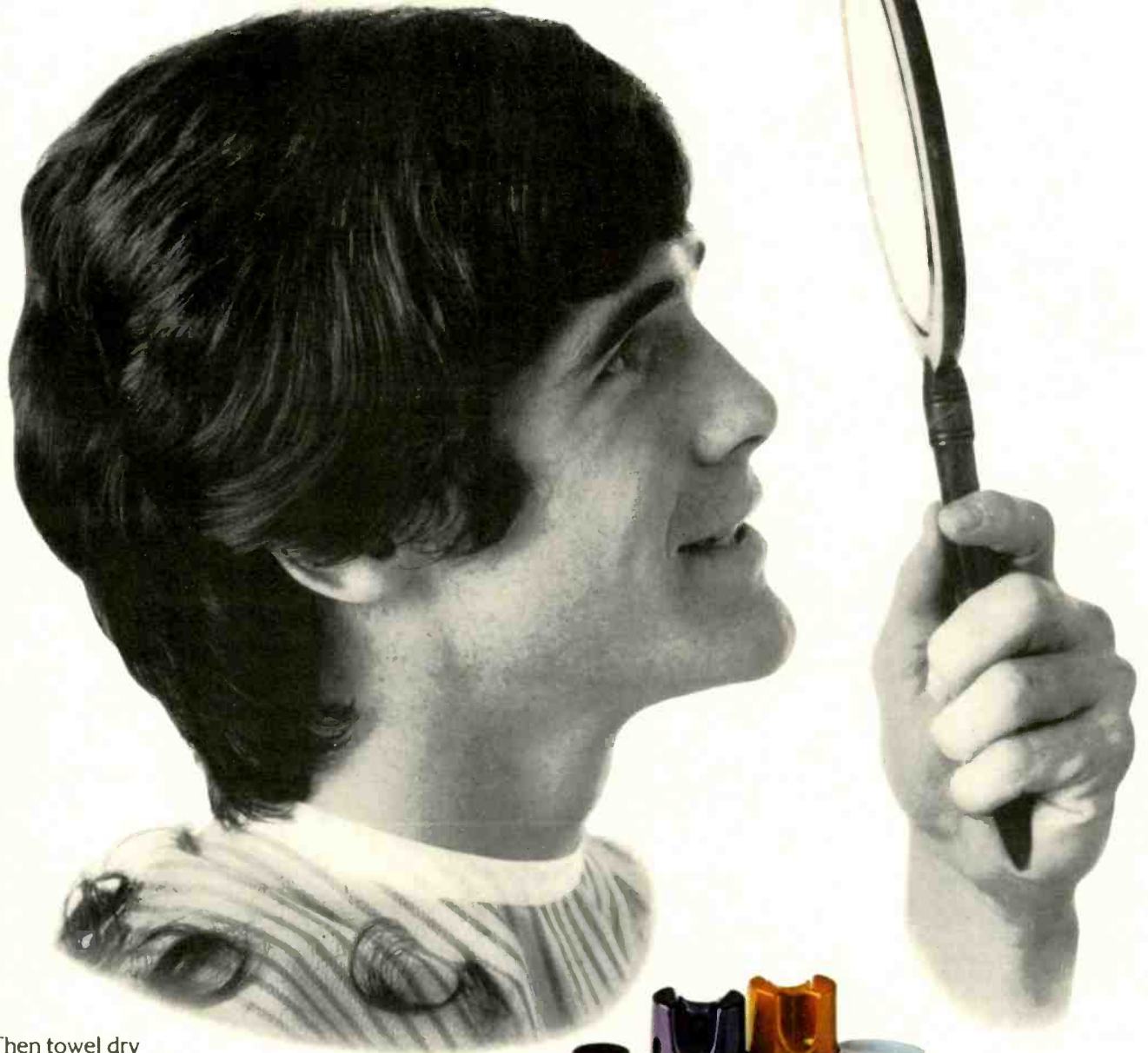
When he's finished cutting and shampooing, ask for a conditioning massage with a little Brylcreem Hairdressing. Its natural ingredients penetrate each hair shaft, conditioning your hair. And a healthy looking head of hair is the only way to begin a new hair style.

Then comb your hair. This is one of the most versatile hair styles you'll ever have. Comb it forward. Or part it on the side. The middle. You can even just toss it around. And you look great. But how do you keep your hair looking that way?

UNTIL YOUR NEXT VISIT

First and foremost, shampoo frequently with Brylcreem Once-A-Day Shampoo. Its pH value is close to that of your scalp so gentle that it cleans without disturbing your natural chemistry.

to talk to your barber.



Then towel dry your hair. If you must use a blow-dryer or hot-comb to straighten out waves or get your hair going in the right direction, condition often with Brylcreem Hairdressing. It helps restore the moisture that hot-air drying strips away from your hair and scalp. Conditioning with Brylcreem is extra important if you have curly hair—it's more porous and dries out even faster.

Last, use a brush to style fine or thinning hair. It'll give you a fuller, thicker look. Use a comb for coarse, thick hair. It will make it appear less bulky.

So have your hair cut regularly. And expertly. Which only happens when you know how to talk to your barber.

Then follow a careful hair regimen to keep your hair looking its best. And remember, whether you keep it long, short, or otherwise, we have a product to help you.



The Brylcreem® group.

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since "a little dab will do ya."



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I bought a Marantz 4 channel receiver because I refuse to be stuck with an electronic antique.



Not one to tolerate obsolescence (planned or unplanned), I considered the stereo vs. 4-channel question carefully, then purchased a Marantz receiver for three compelling reasons.

One. Marantz has Dual Power. This means you get full power of four discrete amplifiers working all the time. When you're listening to regular 2-channel tapes and records you can combine the power of all four channels into the front speakers. This means even if you're not ready to commit yourself to a complete 4-channel system, you can buy Marantz now and when you get the other two speakers just flip a switch. You have 4-channel. Meanwhile, you're not compromising 2-channel because you're getting more than twice the power for super stereo.

Reason number two. Marantz receivers feature the exclusive snap-in snap-out adaptability to any 4-channel matrix decoder. This means that your Marantz stereo will never be made obsolete by any future 4-channel technology because the Marantz snap-in SQ* module is designed to keep up with the changing state of the art. What's more, Marantz receivers have Vari-Matrix—a built-in circuit that will synthesize 4-channel sound from any stereo source (including your stereo records and tapes) and will also decode any matrix encoded 4-channel disc or FM broadcast.

Reason number three. Marantz receivers, from the Model 4230 up, feature built-in Dolby** noise reduction to bring you the quietest FM reception ever. And you can switch the built-in Dolby into your tape deck for noise-free, no-hiss recording from any source. A real Marantz exclusive.

I chose the Marantz Model 4270 because it suits my needs perfectly. It delivers 140 watts continuous power with under 0.3% distortion. And it's literally loaded with features. However, your requirements may be more modest than mine. In which case you can own the Marantz Model 4220 which delivers 40 watts with Dual Power. Or you can go all the way and get the Marantz Model 4300 with 200 watts. It is the very best. Choose from five Marantz 4-channel receivers from \$299 to \$799.95.

The point to remember is this—whichever model Marantz 4-channel receiver you do buy, you can buy it today without worrying about its being obsolete tomorrow. Look over the Marantz line of superb quality receivers, components and speaker systems at your Marantz dealer. You'll find him listed in the Yellow Pages. Think forward. Think Marantz.

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TAPE HORIZONS

By CRAIG STARK



GIFTS FOR TAPESTERS

THE best presents, of course, are the things the recipient really enjoys but probably wouldn't go out and get for himself. This being the season for gifts, then, let me suggest a few of the more unusual tape accessories that may tickle the fancy of the "recordist who has everything."

A recorder's tape counter registers only the revolutions of one of the machine's rotating parts, *not* how many feet of tape have gone by or how much reel time is left. And if you've edited together a number of selections and want to time them, you have to rewind and then play the whole back against a stopwatch. Not, however, if you've mounted a Tape Timer (\$59.95, from Timekeeper, P.O. Box 835, Great Neck, N.Y. 11021) on your deck. Since it's driven by a precision bearing held against the moving tape itself, the device indicates actual playing time (for both 7½ and 3¾ ips) on a dial calibrated in minutes and seconds, and it works whether the tape is going forward or backward, at any speed. Warped reels contribute an annoying (possibly damaging) "tick" with each revolution. To solve the problem, TDK, Teac, and Studio Reel produce 7-inch metal (aluminum) reels, and they are available from many audio dealers.

Have you ever seen the actual magnetic tracks your recorder puts on a tape? Just dip a few inches of recorded tape into a solution called "Magna-See," remove, and in moments all the little bar magnets that constitute the recording show up as ridges of a grayish powder. (You can wipe the powder off afterwards with a tissue; the tape and recording aren't harmed by the process.) Fascinating just in itself, rendering the magnetic tracks visible is an invaluable aid in checking head positioning. A complete viewing kit is put out by Soundcraft for \$12.

As a recordist who frequently goes "on location" to make his tapes, I can testify that there is usually a hassle with the long cables needed for microphones,

a.c. power, and, perhaps, remote loudspeakers. If you wind the cables on your arm, cowboy style, they develop kinks that quickly become unholy tangles that keep the cables from lying flat and may eventually damage them internally. The answer: a crank-type cable caddie that coils and uncoils up to six 50-foot cables without twisting them. Rather like a miniature garden-hose takeup, it's available for \$19.95 (plus \$1.75 shipping) from Russound/FMP, Inc., Box 204, Stratham, N.H. 03885.

A really good splicing jig makes the job of editing, repairing breaks, and attaching leaders a pleasure rather than a chore. Most amateurs are content with the familiar "Gibson Girl" splicers (available from Robins, Audiotex, and others) that trim the splice by cutting a little hour-glass-shaped indentation in the tape edges. They're convenient, and available for a couple of dollars on up.

My choice, however, and that of most professionals, is the more accurate metal splicing block, which you use with a single-edge razor blade and a short length of 7/32-inch splicing tape. This way the tape edges aren't damaged, and there are even packages of pre-cut splices available to make the job easier. EDIT-all is the best-known brand, but splicing blocks are also produced by Norelco, Nortronics, and Robins. Further, I recently came across a unique new kind of splicing block that uses a built-in shearing mechanism instead of a razor blade. Self-honing edges insure clean cuts for both splices and tapes, and the unit combines the ease of operation of a "semi-automatic" splicer with the precision of a block. Available from Nagy Research Products, Box 289, McLean, Va. 22101, the standard 6S25 model costs \$16.95, and the deluxe 25STS (with splicing-tape dispenser) is priced at \$24.95.

These are only a few of the more exotic tape accessories to consider, and a visit to your local dealer will reveal others equally welcome.

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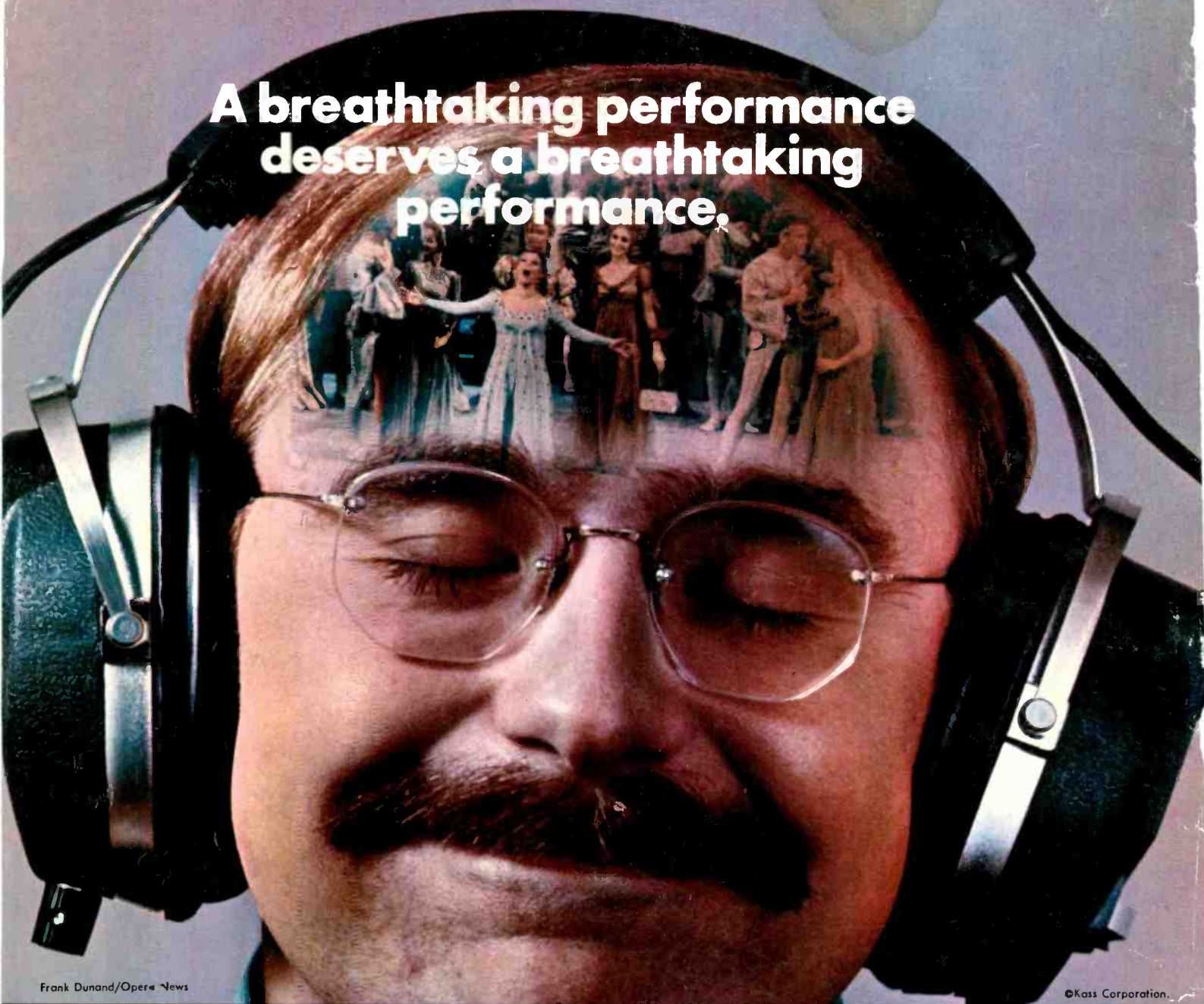
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Frank Dunand/Opera News

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