

CEAR RECORD CO.:
How to complain effectively

JANUARY 1979 • \$1.25

Stereo Review®

HOW TO MAKE GOOD RECORDS (It's not as easy as you might think)

Steve Simels talks to SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY of the Asbury Jukes

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS: BGW Model 210 Stereo Power Amplifier

Koss Pro/4 AAA Stereo Headphones • J. C. Penney Model 3275 AM/FM Stereo Receiver

Realistic SCT-30 Stereo Cassette Deck • Ultralinear Model 228 Speaker System

DIGITAL MASTERING: A PROGRESS REPORT ON THE NEW DISCS



THERE ARE A LOT
OF WAYS TO BUILD
A RECEIVER THAT SELLS
FOR UNDER \$400.

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PIONEER DID IT THE RIGHT WAY.

INTRODUCING THE SX-780.

It seems that our competitors think they've mastered the art of building a moderately priced receiver.

Unfortunately, most of them appear to be the work of cost reduction engineers, rather than high fidelity engineers. People whose jobs depend on the cost of what goes into a receiver, not the sound that comes out of it.

At Pioneer, on the other hand, we build a receiver that sells for under \$400 with the same care given to a receiver that sells for over \$1000.

A perfect example is the SX-780.

It offers the kind of features, value and

sound you won't find in any other comparably priced receiver.

A STRONG CASE FOR THE METAL BOTTOM.

If you turn over our SX-780, for instance, you'll notice the bottom is made of heavy gauge metal. It's designed to shield the tuning section from spurious noise and keep CB interference from getting in the way of your music.

Equally important is the fact that our bottom has a special ventilating system that allows air to circulate freely around the heat sinks. This not only reduces FM drift due to overheated tuning elements, but increases the life expectancy of the circuitry.

A DC AMPLIFIER WITH THE POWER TO ELIMINATE DISTORTION.

The SX-780 features the same DC power configuration found in today's most expensive receivers.



DC power supply found on the most expensive receivers.

It provides cleaner sound and richer, more natural bass because it eliminates feedback and something called TIM (transient intermodulation). Transient intermodulation is a form of distortion that can keep you from hearing the subtle overtones in your music.

Which interestingly enough is why receivers with a conventional power amplifier might possibly be able to match the specs of the SX-780, but never the sound.

A PILOT SIGNAL CANCELING SYSTEM THAT'S UNHEARD OF IN THIS PRICE RANGE.

All stereo FM stations in America broadcast their music over a pilot signal of 19,000 hertz.

If not eliminated, this signal tends to create an extremely high pitched sound

when combined with lower audible frequencies.

Most of our competitors use a standard high band filter to cancel out this signal. Unfortunately, it also cancels out some of the music.

Pioneer created a special integrated circuit that eliminates this pilot signal without affecting the music.

Which means that you're assured of hearing everything the musicians had intended you to hear. Nothing more. And nothing less.

Obviously, the SX-780 is the only receiver that gives you this feature in this price range. The others give you the noise.

WATTAGE METERS THAT LET YOU SEE WHAT YOU'RE HEARING.

When a receiver has wattage meters, it lets

you see exactly how much power is going through your speakers. So that it not only helps prevent unnecessary damage due to overloading, it helps you make cleaner FM recordings.

Of course, the SX-780 has other virtues conspicuously absent from our competitors' models. Like a built-in wood grain cabinet. Which is something others give you the option of paying extra for.

But what really separates Pioneer's SX-780 from others is more than just a matter of wood cabinets, wattage meters, metal bottoms, DC power, or even price.

It's our commitment to giving you a quality hi-fi receiver, no matter how much, or how little, you plan to spend.

So if you're planning to spend less than \$400, you couldn't ask for more than the SX-780.

PIONEER
We bring it back alive.

POWER: 45 watts per channel min. at 8 ohms from 20-20,000 hertz with no more than .05% total harmonic distortion.
FM SENSITIVITY: Stereo: 37.0 dBf

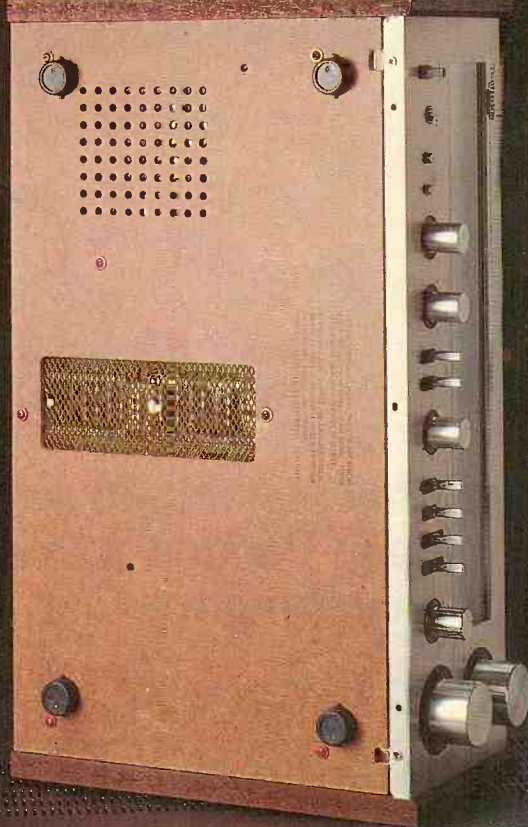
S/N RATIO: Stereo: 72 dBf
CAPTURE RATIO: 1.0 dBf
POWER METERS: 2
SPEAKERS: A, B, AB
TONE CONTROLS: Dual
TAPE MONITORS: 2

An accurate picture of what you're listening to.

YOU CAN
LEAVE OUT
DUAL WATTAGE
METERS LIKE
MARANTZ DID.



YOU CAN INSTALL
AN INEXPENSIVE
PRESS BOARD BOTTOM
LIKE TECHNICS DID,
INSTEAD OF
A METAL ONE.

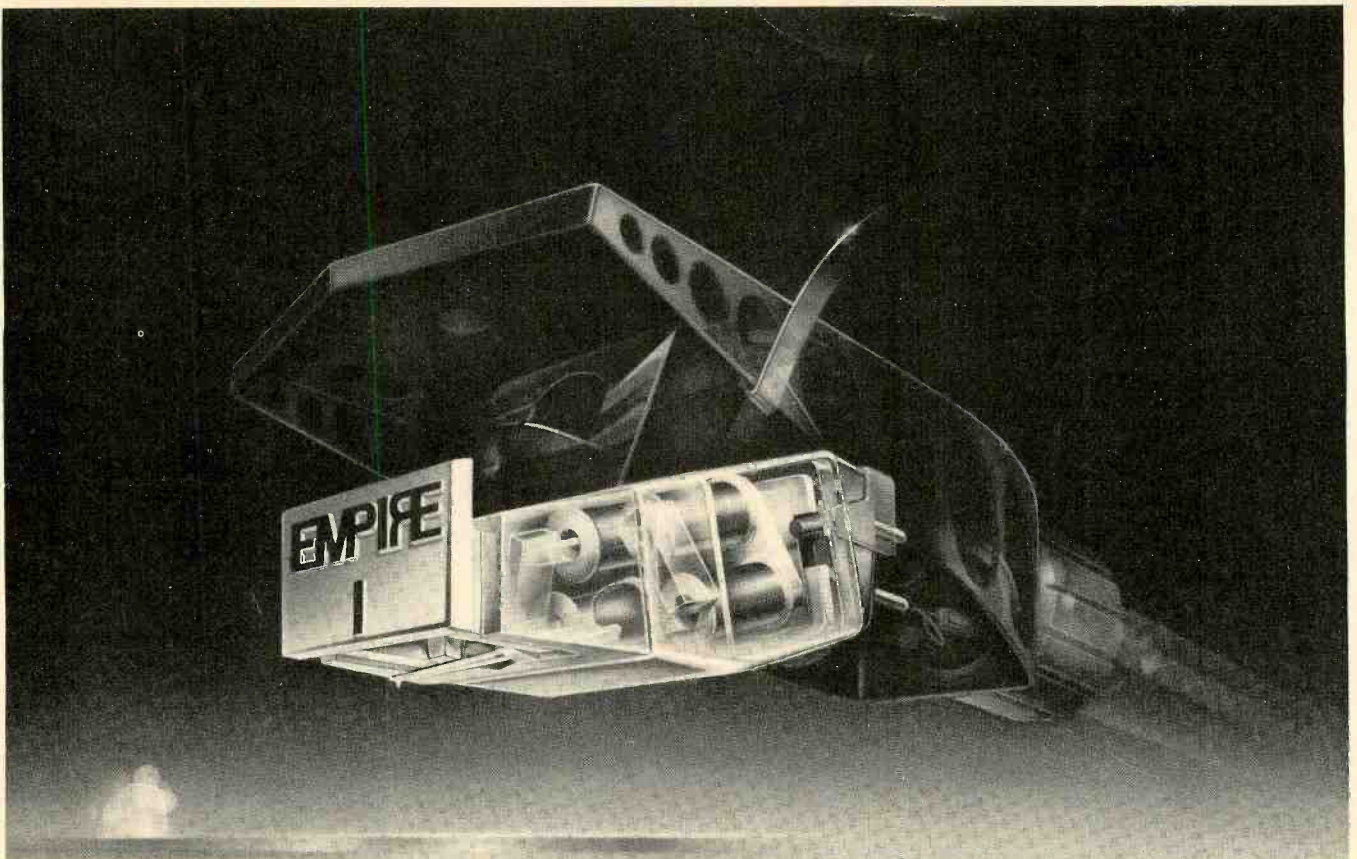


YOU CAN USE
A CONVENTIONAL POWER
AMPLIFIER LIKE
KENWOOD DID.
INSTEAD OF
AN ADVANCED
DC AMPLIFIER.



YOU
CAN USE
STANDARD
HIGH BAND
FILTERS LIKE
YAMAHA DID.
INSTEAD OF SPECIAL
INTEGRATED CIRCUITS TO CANCEL
THE UNWANTED FM PILOT SIGNAL.





No matter what system you own there's an Empire Phono Cartridge designed to attain optimum performance.

Detail, brilliance, depth.

This is the promise of each Empire Phono Cartridge and although there are many Empire models, each designed to meet specific turntable performance characteristics, every Empire cartridge contains the following features:

Features	Details	Benefits
Unique Fixed Unidirectional Three-Magnet Structure	Every Empire cartridge uses 3 high energy ferrite magnets in the cartridge body to provide a high level of unidirectional flux.	Higher and more linear output signal, immunity to bi-directional magnetic distortion, and improved hum and microphonic rejection.
Molded Four-Pole Magnetic Assembly	Every Empire cartridge employs a four-pole magnetic assembly that is precisely aligned and locked in place by a high pressure injection molding process... providing a uniform and orthogonal magnetic field.	Improved crosstalk and reduced distortion that is insensitive to tracking force.
Tubular moving Iron Design	By using a tubular high magnetic saturation iron armature we obtain an optimum ratio of output level to effective tip mass.	Improved tracking ability and widened frequency response.
Four Coil Hum Bucking Assembly Plus Electromagnetic Shielding	Using custom designed computer controlled machines, a precision drawn copper wire (thinner than human hair and longer than a football field) is wound onto a symmetrical 4 bobbin structure. By using 2 coils per channel a symmetrical electrical circuit is formed.	Improved rejection of hum and stray noise fields.
Aluminum Alloy Cantilever	The Empire computer designed tubular cantilever provides optimum coupling of the diamond tip to the moving magnetic system resulting in minimum effective stylus tip mass.	Superb low level tracking, reduced tracking distortion... plus enhanced wideband separation characteristics.
Precision Ground Oriented Diamond Tips	Empire diamonds are precision ground, polished and inspected in house, using sophisticated television cameras and powerful microscopes to ensure accurate angular orientation.	Reduced tracing phase distortion, together with reduced wear of both the record and the diamond tip.

For the full story on Empire cartridges we suggest you "test-listen" to one at your local Empire dealer, and for information on our full line of cartridges, write for our brochure "How to Get the Most Out of Your Records": Empire Scientific Corp., Garden City, N.Y. 11530

EMPIRE

FORMERLY HI FI/STEREO REVIEW

Stereo Review®

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COVER: Design by Borys Patchowsky; photo by Bruce Pendleton. Unit is 3M's new thirty-two-track digital recorder for professional recording studios.

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HOW NOT TO RUIN YOUR RECORDS

PART I

Don't "play" over micro-dust

THE PROBLEM:

The greatest cause of record degeneration is micro-dust. All records possess a static charge which attracts a very fine, virtually invisible micro-dust from room air. A record may "look clean" but contain a fine coating of micro-dust. When you play over this coating, even at one gram of stylus pressure, you grind the micro-dust into the record walls, often forever. Your record then gets "noisy."

COMMON ERRORS:

Most record cleaners are "pushers", and simply line up dirt without removing it from the disc. Skating a brush off the record only spreads micro-dust into a tangent line of danger. Extra arm devices and all cloths are too coarse to do anything but pass over micro-dust—or gently spread it out.

AN ANSWER FROM RESEARCH:

The exclusive Discwasher System removes micro-dust better than any other method.

1. The slanted pile lifts up rather than lines up debris. The pile fibers are fixed in the fabric better than any other record cleaner, and "track" record grooves rather than scrape them (see figure 1).
2. Alterating "open rows" of highly absorbent backing hold micro-dust taken off the record, and demonstrate Discwasher's effectiveness over long term use (see figure 2).
3. The inherently safe D3 fluid delivery system and capillary fluid removal allows the most researched record cleaner to be the world's best.



Fig. 1 Line of micro-dust removed from a "clean" record.

UNRETOUCHED PHOTOS
OF DISCWASHER BRUSH



Fig. 2 Accumulated micro-dust from long, effective use of the Discwasher System.



 **Discwasher Group**

1407 N. PROVIDENCE RD.
COLUMBIA, MISSOURI 65201
CIRCLE NO. 15 ON READER SERVICE CARD



Stereo Review BULLETIN

Edited by William Livingstone

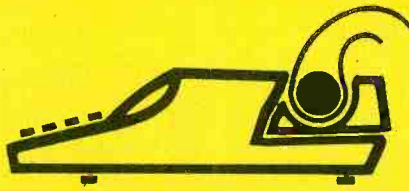
● STEREO TV SOUND is expected to be firmly established in Japan by the beginning of this year. Japanese audio and TV manufacturers have been preparing appropriate models since the early 1970's; these include component-style accessory TV tuners as well as complete color TV receivers. Besides arousing new interest in stereo TV internationally, Japan's move is almost certain to result in the modification of existing video-cassette recorder systems to handle stereo sound--a capability they now lack. Domestically, AT&T has applied to the Federal Communications Commission for permission to begin offering stereo transmitting and receiving equipment to television stations (last January AT&T introduced a new transmission system expanding the range of television audio from 5,000 Hz to 15,000 Hz, a high-fidelity bandwidth fully as wide as that used in FM broadcasting). Before stereo television sound can become widely accepted, a substantial number of broadcast stations must purchase the new stereo equipment and television manufacturers must begin to offer consumer-model television sets with stereo capabilities.

● ADVENT'S LATEST CLASSICAL CASSETTES ARE: Haydn keyboard sonatas (E1068) performed on the fortepiano by Malcolm Bilson; Prokofiev's Sonata No. 1, in F Minor, Op. 80, and Shostakovich's Op. 134 sonata (E1069) played by violinist Emanuel Borok and pianist Tatiana Yampolsky; and Messiah highlights (E1070), which offers 84 minutes of excerpts from Advent's complete Messiah performed by the Handel and Haydn Society directed by Thomas Dunn. Available only on Advent Process CR/70 cassettes, these performances are recorded on chromium-dioxide tape with Dolby. Price: \$8.95 each.

● PHONO-CARTRIDGE INNOVATIONS have been announced by two Scandinavian manufacturers. S. R. Pramanik, designer with Bang & Olufsen, reports that his company is introducing a moving-iron cartridge with a single-crystal cantilever of solid sapphire. And Ortofon is coming out with a 1½-gram VMS cartridge designed to achieve an arm-cartridge resonance between 10 and 15 Hz; it will be available incorporated into a headshell with a universal connector or in a standard-mount configuration with ½-inch centers.

● OLD ROCKERS NEVER DIE: Mitch Ryder, Detroit legend and blue-eyed soul king of the Sixties, is releasing, independently, his first new album in almost eight years. Advance word is that it's vaguely Springsteen-esque (Bruce does a Ryder medley in his current act) and quite astonishing. The Detroit Wheels (Ryder's former back-up band, now known as the Rockets) have just signed with Robert Stigwood's RSO Records. Does this mean they will be featured on the soundtrack of Son of Saturday Night Fever?

●...THEY GET SENT UP THE RIVER: Buddy Miles, early Seventies superstar drummer (with the Electric Flag, Jimi Hendrix, Santana, et al.) was sentenced to two years in prison after pleading no contest to charges of grand theft and grand theft auto. Among other complaints, Miles allegedly filched clothes from Nudie, the famous country-&-western couturier. (What's someone called "Nudie" doing with clothes anyway?)



Stereo Review

BULLETIN

Edited by William Livingstone

● RCA'S NIPPER COMES HOME: Use of the famous trademark of a dog listening to his master's voice on an old phonograph was all but discontinued by RCA in the late 1960's, but the dog was so loved by the public, who refused to forget him, that the company is now restoring him to his former prominence on RCA products and in advertising. The first new product to carry a revised design of the trademark will be a 13-inch color TV receiver, scheduled to be in stores in March. The original Nipper (1884-1895) was a black and white fox terrier belonging to artist Francis Barraud, who created the painting His Master's Voice and sold it to the Gramophone Company, Ltd., of London.

● "FASTER" POWER AMPLIFIERS may result from research at Bell Telephone Laboratories, where scientists have succeeded in doubling the speed at which electrons can move through standard semiconductor materials. When two different semiconductor materials are layered in a single crystal, electrons are provided with alternate, electrically unimpeded pathways which enable them to travel faster. At present, power-amplifier designers must choose between slow, rugged transistors or faster but more fragile devices for their designs.

● WARNER COMMUNICATIONS HAS DECIDED TO MANUFACTURE ITS OWN RECORDS AND TAPES and will build various pressing plants across the country. The first, in Scranton, Pennsylvania, is scheduled to be in operation by mid-1980, and the rest should be finished by 1982, when Warner's contract with Capitol Records expires. According to Warner spokesman David H. Horowitz, the new plants will use techniques developed by the company's German branch, such as automated quality control, to assure records and tapes "of the highest level of quality attainable." Labels affected: Warner Bros., Elektra, Asylum, Nonesuch, and Atlantic.

● A PRICE HIKE FOR SPEAKERS is one surprising result of the civil war in Zaire. The cost of alnico (aluminum-nickel-cobalt compound) magnets used in the manufacture of speaker drivers has jumped threefold in the past year as a result of the flooding of cobalt mines by Katangese rebels. Estimates of the ultimate effect on retail prices of high-fidelity speaker systems are in the range of 2 to 5 per cent, though certain speakers utilizing drivers which cannot easily be converted from alnico to more accessible ceramic magnets may suffer increases of up to 20 per cent.

● COLLECTORS, SAVE YOUR LUNCH MONEY: RCA and Capitol are issuing limited-edition tributes to their all-time sales champs, Elvis and the Beatles. RCA's first-ever commercial picture disc ("Elvis: A Legendary Performer, Vol. III") will feature two different full-color likenesses of the King, two previously unreleased tunes, six alternate versions of material already issued, an interview with Elvis and the Colonel, and a \$15.98 price tag. Capitol's "The Beatles Gift Box" is more elaborate: it will contain all twelve Beatles studio albums in exactly the same form as they were originally released in Britain, plus a bonus album of "Beatles Rarities" that includes two songs never released in LP form in this country. Price: a whopping \$132.98.

QUALITY IN REVERSE

AKAI introduces automatic reverse record at popular prices.

Now instead of interrupting great moments in music when it's time to flip the cassette, AKAI's two newest decks automatically reverse the tape and continue to record or play back.

In addition, the deluxe GXC-735D is loaded with all the features that make the difference between a good deck and a great one. Things like AKAI's exclusive GX (glass and crystal ferrite) heads, guaranteed for 150,000 hours — the equivalent of playing 24 hours a day for 17½ years. As well as feather-touch controls, Dolby,* memory rewind, quick reverse and dramati-

cally recessed red/green illuminated VU meters. Not to mention the kind of specs serious component buyers all over the world depend on AKAI to deliver. (For the more economy-minded, there's the CS-732D. Same great auto reverse record/playback feature, with Dolby, quick reverse and tape selector — a lot of AKAI quality for not a lot of money.)

Hear them both at your AKAI dealer or write AKAI America, Ltd., 2139 E. Del Amo Blvd., P.O. Box 6010, Compton, CA 90224. And see how they can reverse your thinking about automatic recording.

GXC-735D: Wow/Flutter — less than 0.08% WRMS; S/N Ratio — better than 58 dB, weighted, at FeCr position, with peak level at 3% THD. Dolby on improves up to 10 dB above 5 kHz. Frequency response — 35-17,000 Hz (± 3 dB) using FeCr tape.

CS-732D: Wow/Flutter — less than 0.08% WRMS; S/N Ratio — better than 57 dB, weighted, at FeCr position, with peak level at 3% THD. Dolby on improves up to 10 dB above 5 kHz. Frequency response — 38-16,000 Hz (± 3 dB) using FeCr tape.

AKAI

You never heard it so good.



*TM, Dolby Labs, Inc.

Speaking of Music...

By William Anderson



THE IDEA OF MUSIC

If you are going to present a program of unusual music (Bach and Villa-Lobos for an orchestra made up entirely of cellos) in an unusual locale (a private New York club) under unlikely sponsorship (a liquor distiller) for an audience made up (for all you know) of musical innocents, good manners and good sense suggest that a few introductory remarks—harmless, soothing remarks—might be in order. Controversy, however, is not so easily escaped, and I was therefore not too surprised when the guest speaker in this case, a prominent American critic and scholar, remarking on Villa-Lobos' comfortable accommodation of folk sources in his music, observed parenthetically that "folk music is, of course, art music, sunk down, a couple of hundred years later."

Those italics are, of course, mine, and the impulse is to add an exclamation point (!) at the end as well. Just what folk music is, where

it comes from, who "composes" it, is still, as far as most of us know, a mystery, and the cocksure finality of that "of course" rang a little bell in my memory. I traced its tinkle back to an essay by Ralph Vaughan Williams in the 1946 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Vaughan Williams, like Beethoven, Brahms, Dvořák, Schubert, and many another "art" composer before him, also made use of folk music in his compositions, and this is what he has to say about that "of course": "... these attempts at musical expression are not... as we are sometimes told, degraded reminiscences of 'cultured' music, but are something *sui generis*."

For myself, I tend to agree with Vaughan Williams (there are, after all, nations that ring with folk music but have no art music of their own whatsoever). I go, in fact, even further to hold that, despite its frequent use of folk music as a kind of borrowed ornament, art music

too is *sui generis*. That, however, is not the garden path down which I mean to lead you, but another one altogether—which is, that there is no end to opinions about music, that any one of them can easily be expatiated upon long enough to fill a book.

If you are so inclined, the place to start is Nat Shapiro's *An Encyclopedia of Quotations about Music* (Doubleday, 1978, \$10), the most complete compendium of its kind I have ever run across. In addition to all the famous remarks about music by famous musicians ("What you said hurt me very much. I cried all the way to the bank"—Liberace. "Pay no attention to what the critics say; no statue has ever been put up to a critic"—Sibelius. "Applause is a receipt, not a bill"—Schnabel. "If nobody wants to go to your concert, nothing will stop them"—Isaac Stern), it contains many others that deserve currency ("Music is the only language in which you cannot say a mean or sarcastic thing"—John Erskine) even though they may contradict each other ("Good music penetrates the ear with facility and quits the memory with difficulty"—Beecham. "Extraordinary how potent cheap music is"—Noël Coward).

Shapiro's book is an unmixed delight, and a useful one, because it includes not only an index of names and sources but of key words and phrases as well; it should prove a boon to editorial writers forevermore. And it should also inspire you to put together one of your own just as delightful—these 468 pages merely scratch the surface of the subject. I have accumulated a few entries over the years myself (William Flanagan's characterization of the sound of a harpsichord as "a demented banjo" for me has it all over Beecham's contrived "two skeletons copulating on a galvanized tin roof"), and my favorite is a bit of linguistic lore picked up while doing research on Gilbert & Sullivan's *Mikado*: in Japanese, the word for music is made up of two ideograms—*sound* and *pleasure*; that for noise also contains two—*sound* and *displeasure*. Ah, if only it were all that simple!

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Graphite-impregnated Teflon® friction plates for smooth tape wind.

Head-cleaning leader tape keeps recorder heads clean.

True-Track™ fore-and-aft guide system for precise azimuth control.

Felt pad and beryllium/copper spring assembly for precise tape to head contact.

Precision guide rollers with stainless steel pins provide smoother tape movement with minimal friction.

When we invented Grand Master studio recording tape in 1973, professional recording engineers grabbed it. And Grand Master soon became the unquestioned leader in its field.

But in 1973, not even the most sophisticated home users had the kind of equipment that could drive tape hard enough to explore Grand Master's amazing potential. For output sensitivity. Ultra-wide dynamic range. Improved signal-to-noise. And low distortion.

In the studio, yes. But not at home.

Now, the world has changed. Home equipment has improved dramatically. With bias flexibility. Higher output. And lower distortion.

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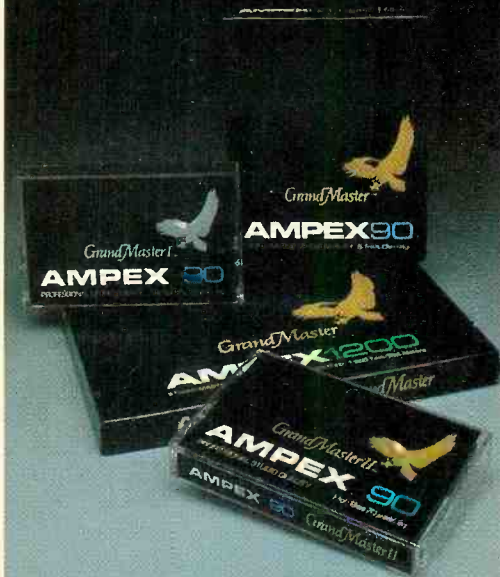
In cassette, 8-track, and open reel. Including a specially formulated Grand Master II cassette, for high bias.

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CIRCLE NO. 4 ON READER SERVICE CARD



The first time you hear the L220's, before you know what's happening to you, you smile.

Later, when you find the words, you'll be able to talk about things like "texture" and "detail" and "subtlety." But right now it's all feeling. It's love at first sound.

Crank them up. Try 110db. Go ahead. That's what they're there for. Drench yourself in pure sound. Crisp, tight, spacious, clean — certainly. But something well beyond. Something powerful, uncompromising, awesome.

Now turn them down for a minute and listen with your eyes. The L220's are tall, tapered, elegant — appearing more slim than they actually are.

Now slip the grille off and feast your eyes on the components: New high frequency elliptical ring radiator. New

refracting wave guide for the midrange. A 14" woofer with a massive, twelve pound magnetic assembly. A 15" passive radiator. Four superb individual performers. How do they work together? Magnificently.

Conventional Staggered Baffle Array



The L220 Flat Baffle Array

To attain proper phase relationships, the acoustic centers of the drivers must be aligned. The JBL L220 design accomplishes this while retaining the flat baffle necessary to prevent spurious reflections.

That breathtaking stereo imaging you hear is not by accident. It's by design. The components are in precise

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Because there's no such
thing as too much music.

vertical alignment. They are in precise acoustical alignment, too. The time domain response, the phase linearity is flawless. JBL's engineers accomplished this without creating one of those staggered baffle fronts that cause as many problems as they solve.

Come celebrate the L220's. They're yours for \$1,750 a pair. They're a whole lot of loudspeakers from the people who gave high performance sound a first name: JBL.

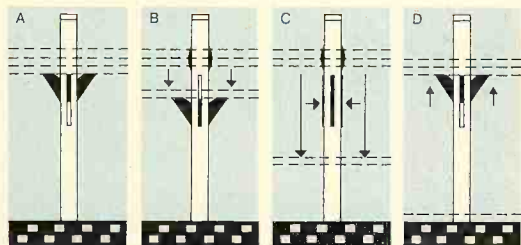
JBL

GET IT ALL.

Last year, 35 of the top 50 albums were recorded or mixed in studios using JBL loudspeakers. Shown here: Criteria Studios, Miami, Florida.

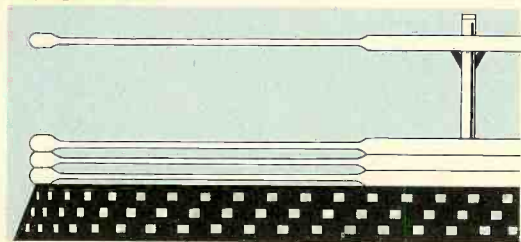


If you'd like to hear an hour or more of uninterrupted music, don't let a few old myths stop you.



Dual's exclusive elevator-action. **A)** Records are supported entirely by platform. **B)** Bottom record is lowered away from stack above which is held in place by soft neoprene pads. **C)** Platform retracts, gently releasing record to platter. **D)** Platform rises to engage stack.

No need to worry about record grooves touching when stacked. Records are made with raised edges and centers which place an air cushion between the playing surfaces.



Myths die hard. Those about all multiple-play turntables compromising performance are no exception, despite the achievement of the legendary Dual 1009.

Before then, serious music lovers were understandably reluctant to entrust their records to the heavy-tracking, vinyl-chewing automatic tonearms of the day.

We therefore felt the need to prepare for the 1009's introduction by asking cartridge manufacturers and independent test labs to put it through the most demanding tests they could devise.

The manufacturers reported that the 1009 tracked flawlessly with their "professional-type" cartridges. The test labs found the 1009 matched the best of the manuals in rumble, wow and flutter—and they quickly adopted it as one of their reference-standard turntables.

Since then, of course, Dual has added refinement after refinement. The tonearms of *all* current Dual turntables are mounted in four-point gyroscopic gimbals, widely acknowledged as the finest suspension system available.

During play, Dual automatic tonearms are completely free-floating. They are engaged by the cycling mechanism only when being moved to or from the record.

Records stacked on Dual's multiple-play spindle are handled with extraordinary care. Before the bottom record is released to the platter, it is gently lowered away from those above. Nothing is ever forced. This is Dual's famous "elevator-action" system. And since all records are made with raised edges and centers, an air cushion keeps the grooved surfaces from ever touching.

In the single-play mode, the short spindle rotates with the platter. This patented design permits more precise centering of the record, an important touch in achieving extremely low wow and flutter specifications. Another touch of Dual precision is the vertical tracking angle control; there's an optimum setting for single play and multiple play.

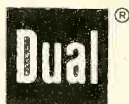
But one very important thing hasn't changed. Dual reliability. Backed by a two-year limited warranty, today's Duals are made to last just as long as the 1009 and its successors (the 1019 and 1219) which are often found to be worth more in trade than their original purchase price.

So if you'd like many years of uninterrupted pleasure from your next turntable, select one of our multiple-play models. (They start at less than \$180 for the CS1237.)

Unless, of course, you prefer old myths to future legends.

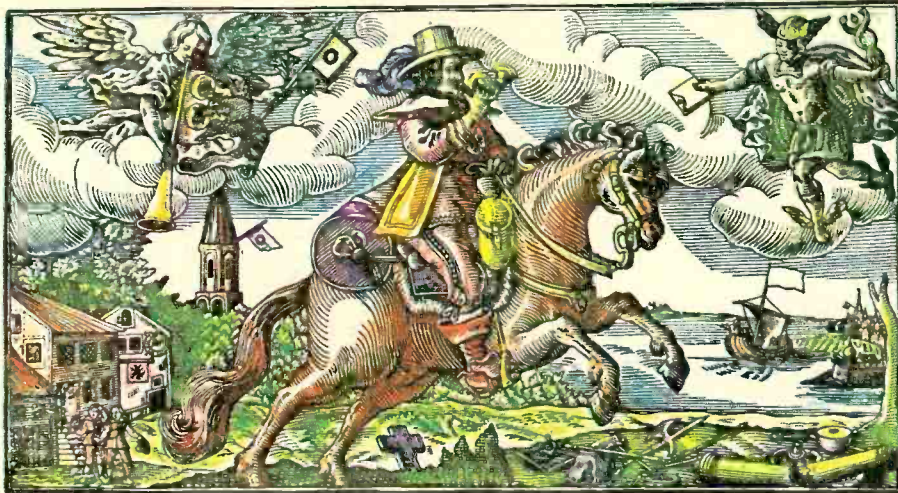


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CIRCLE NO. 50 ON READER SERVICE CARD



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Marriner

● I would like to thank Clair W. Van Ausdall for at last giving me a line ["Neville Marriner," November] on how it is that the musicians of the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields always manage to give the music they play, *whatever* they play, such a remarkable lightness and lift: they are blest with a conductor who doesn't take himself too seriously. Minnesota Orchestra audiences will have reason to congratulate themselves when Neville Marriner takes over the Minneapolis podium next September; let us hope they can refrain from becoming insufferably smug when he gets the orchestra in shape to do it *his* way. Are there any recording commitments involved in Marriner's Minnesota contract?

ERICA NORDSTROM
Milwaukee, Wis.

Marriner already has contractual commitments with Philips and Angel that do not—at the moment—leave room for additional recording assignments, but the Minnesota forces may dictate a re-examination of the schedule once they have been "marrinated" for a year or two.

Twenty Amplifiers

● Julian Hirsch's "Twenty Medium-price Amplifiers" in November was probably a lot of work, but it was worth it for me: I may be wrong, but I think I finally *understand* amplifiers. What are chances that he'll do turntables, cassette decks, and (especially) low-price speakers the same way?

FRANCIS O'DONNELL
Boston, Mass.

Pretty good.

Nashville

● So what else is new? I'm sure Noel Coppage is perfectly right in the November issue about what is happening to country music in Nashville (and everywhere else), but it is really just another case of "they don't write 'em like they used to." There is simply *no way*

older generations are ever going to understand that, whatever it was, however good it was, *it is not coming back*, particularly in music.

RUSS CONKLIN
Dallas, Tex.

Lena Zavaroni Found!

● Paulette Weiss asks, in her wonderful November "Pop Beat" column, about the present-day whereabouts of Lena Zavaroni. Well, the last I saw her (thank God) was on the tube in 1974, in reruns of *Carol Burnett and Friends* and some British variety shows on PBS. After burning up the American charts at number 100 for two weeks, Lena and her managers apparently took Peter Reilly's advice (in his review of her LP) to "take the money and steal away into the night."

IRA BEHR
Glen Oaks, N.Y.

● Lena Zavaroni is very much alive and doing very well in *Britain*. I have been temporarily stationed in Scotland three times since 1976, and I have seen her on British TV. I can't recall the name of the show, but she appears all the time as a regular guest star, or at least she did last time I was there. There are even Lena Zavaroni posters (also tapes). I had never heard of her before I went to Scotland, and I must say that she sings beautifully.

JOHN W. PURPER IV
Washington, D.C.

Irene Kral

● To learn of Irene Kral's passing from STEREO REVIEW (November) is as good an example as any of what it means to be in prison (for a month here it was a rumor). Peter Reilly's effort on behalf of her music, although well intended, seems an impropriety. Owning her albums in these times is a measure of who and what you are. No matter where you live. And a serious lump in the throat and "watery" eyes is a tribute to Ms. Kral and oneself. People should find her somewhere on the road they are traveling or not at all. I did, and it illuminated for me a line

from Robert Frost about roads: "I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference."

MIKE WEAVER
#118862
Walla Walla, Wash.

Cassidy Fancier

● Peter Reilly is a full-fledged dink!! His article on Shaun Cassidy in the November issue is a bunch of lies. Shaun Cassidy is the best singer in the world and "Under Wraps" was his best album yet. He makes a lot more money than you, boy! He's a lot better looking too. Shaun Cassidy is the greatest. He sings great, writes songs very well, and is not a teenybopper! These are my true feelings, and Peter Reilly, I hate you!!!

ELISSA BOSWORTH
Lenox, Mass.

The Punk Fugs

● In considering the roots of New Wave/Punk rock (as in Steve Simels' October article) why does everyone neglect the Fugs? They were the first New Wave lyricists—back in 1965. A sampling of their song titles might include: *I'll Kill Myself over Your Dead Body*, *If You Fuck Somebody Else*, *Slum Goddess*, *Homemade Shit*, *Boobs a Lot*, *Caca Rocka*, *New Amphetamine Shriek*, *Coca-Cola Douche*, etc. *We're the Fugs* is the most moronic song I've ever heard, and they were the first to look and act entirely obscene and outrageous on stage.

The term "punk" was popularized by Sixties record collectors, and sometime in the early Seventies the out-of-print record dealers started using it as an adjective in their set-sale and auction lists. That way a customer could get an idea of what a particular item offered for sale might sound like.

And by the way, *96 Tears* [Question Mark and the Mysterians, 1966] has *three* chords.

JIM FITZGERALD
Lexington Park, Md.

Who's counting?

Mezzomaniacs

● In his October letter about singers who are neglected by recording companies, Thomas Wilson touched on one of the more frustrating aspects of this neglect: indifference to great mezzos. He names Teresa Berganza, but there are many more great singing actresses now at the peaks of their careers who are virtually ignored by recording companies: Brigitte Fassbaender, Tatiana Troyanos, Josephine Veasey, Patricia Kern, Agnes Baltsa, Maureen Forrester, Anne Howells . . . the number is large and embarrassing. With the possible exceptions of Dame Janet Baker, Christa Ludwig, and Marilyn Horne, mezzos are not sought after and promoted with the same enthusiasm as Price, Caballé, Sutherland, Sills, and other sopranos. I do not wish to take anything from these great artists, but they are not the only female vocalists capable of ravishing sound and consummate artistry.

I realize that much of the problem is simply that during the period covered by the bulk of recorded vocal literature (1840-1920) most

composers were more inclined to create Suzukis than Carmens. The answer is not more recordings of the same repertoire, but rather the gradual but inexorable rediscovery of Baroque, Classical, and early Romantic literature for the alto-mezzo voice. While it is true that much of this literature was written for *castrati*, much also was not, including a fair amount that was originally intended by the composers to be sung by women *en travesti*. For many years the prevailing opinions about dramatic credibility prevented the performing or even recording of these roles in their original pitches. However, recent interest in the authentic performance of Baroque music (an especially rich treasure house of alto-mezzo literature) has begun to restore to the mezzo

voice its rightful and long-overdue esteem. We mezzomaniacs are heartily grateful for this development, but the record companies could be doing so much more to bring us these outstanding artists in their acclaimed interpretations—and make some money in the bargain. There is a vast repertoire just waiting for the same kind of sympathetic interest that revived bel canto.

C. DRINKARD
Arlington, Va.

The Editor replies: The name of the game in vocal matters is athletics. In general, audiences react to the high, the loud, and the agile because they are rare. Soprano, tenor, and, yes, castrati voices are simply less common

than mezzo and baritone ones and therefore more exciting. Musical styles may change, but our taste for the unusual does not.

Kenny Loggins

● I read Noel Coppage's review of Kenny Loggins' "Nightwatch" (October issue) with interest, as it was perhaps a statement on the direction that popular music is taking today. The best of the Sixties-inspired music is rapidly dying, as witness the demise of the Band, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, and Loggins and Messina, to name a few. Survivors from that era are going the "commercial" route the way Loggins has. Little wonder, then, that someone like Jim Messina has chosen not to reappear on the music scene to date. Evidently he is in no hurry to join Loggins on the \$1.99 shelf (not while "Full Sail" and "Mother Lode" are selling at \$6.96, anyway). Noel's "... transparent wall between Loggins and the listener" is a wall that time, as much as studio sophistication, has created. For me, neither Kenny Loggins, Linda Ronstadt, Dolly Parton, nor any other of the new survivors will ever be able to duplicate the timeless worth of their earlier works with the disco polish of the Seventies.

BRIAN PEARSON
Ottawa, Ontario

Todd Rundgren

● Steve Simels' review in October of the video cassette of Todd Rundgren at the Bottom Line was nothing short of magnificent! It is about time that someone gave Mr. Rundgren the kind of review that he deserves. I have been an avid fan of his for the last six of my nineteen years, and I have tried to attend his concerts whenever tickets were available. Unfortunately, like Mr. Simels I was unable to attend any of Rundgren's performances last May at the Bottom Line. The video cassette is a fine alternative, and I agree with Mr. Simels when he says that it struck him as "... an exemplary presentation of an artist good enough to deserve no less."

On the other hand, Noel Coppage's review of Rundgren's latest album, "Hermit of Mink Hollow," in the August issue was so supercilious that it just about made my blood boil. This is by far the most easily accessible album Mr. Rundgren has made in years, and I feel that Mr. Coppage's criticisms were completely unfounded.

ADRIENNE NAGY
Elmwood Park, N.J.

Prerecorded Open-reel

● I don't know who is to blame, but I think the hi-fi industry has let down, brushed off, and forgotten the open-reel enthusiast. There are millions of us out here, stuck with great open-reel equipment and unable to purchase prerecorded tapes of most of the new sounds we would like to hear. It would be interesting to find out just how many people would buy prerecorded open-reel tapes if they were made available at a reasonable price. It seems to me that the industry has forced the public to turn away from open-reel to the cassette format. (It's also worth noting that most

(Continued on page 16)

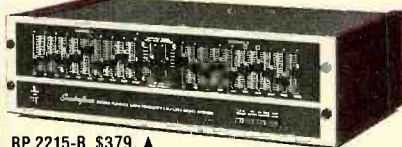
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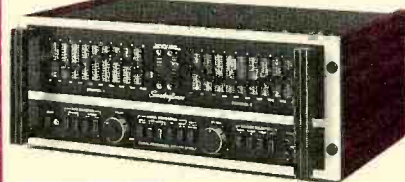
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According to the traditional laws of loudspeaker design, a small driver can't reproduce bass notes, and a large driver can't reproduce high notes.

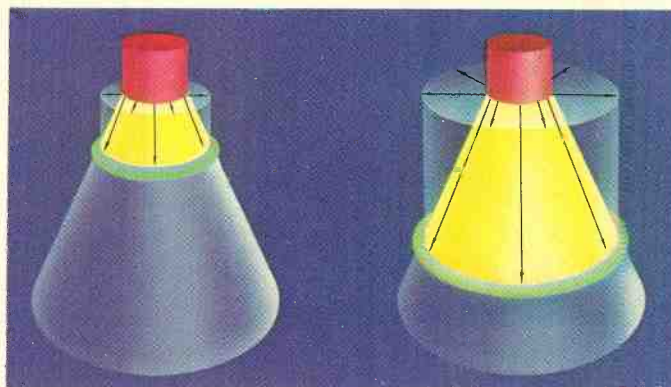
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Hifi Stereophonie (Germany):

"The most important aspect of the Ohm F's performance is its freedom from phase and time errors, i.e., its coherent sound. The Ohm F's are in a class by themselves."

Stereo Review:

"With one of the larger

power amplifiers...the sound began to warrant the use of such words as awesome.

The low bass, too, was extraordinarily clean and powerful...It should be apparent from the foregoing that we include the Ohm F among those few speakers we have tested that achieves state-of-the-art performance." (Copyright 1973 by the Ziff-Davis Publishing Company. Reprinted from *Stereo Review*, October, 1973, by permission. All rights reserved.)

The FM Guide (Canada):

"They have one great quality, a quality that puts them right in the front line of desirable speakers. *They sound musical.* A pair of Ohm F's can recreate a live musical performance free of the usual spatial limitations imposed by conventional speakers."

Stereo Buyer's Guide:

"Judging loudspeakers,

no matter on what principle it has been designed, should always be on its sound quality, and we are happy to report that the Ohm F system is amongst the very best we have heard."

Complete Buyer's Guide to Stereo/Hifi:

"The Ohm F is an extraordinary loudspeaker. The 'coherent' sound produced by this speaker is clear, full, and undistorted. It may well be the finest speaker on the market, and is certainly without a doubt among the top few. Given the proper associated electronics, the Ohm F is capable of providing almost absolute realism in the listening room."



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apartment dwellers do not have the facilities for a proper FM-antenna setup, and therefore taping off FM, even with a good receiver, is generally a poor source of recorded music.)

WILLIAM J. CARROLL.
La Mesa, Calif.

Barclay-Crocker (11 Broadway, New York) are the largest reel-to-reel suppliers we know of, and they will probably be delighted to learn that their potential market is in the millions. As it is, their mailing list averages 2,400 names (it is "cleaned" of non-buyers every six months) and prices range from \$7.95 up. The recording industry has repeatedly lost shirts on reel-to-reel, and it is very unlikely to sacrifice another.

Recording of Special Odiousness

● A discreet hosanna for Steve Simels' October review of the soundtrack for (it hurts to use the name) *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. The record is so bad that STEREO REVIEW should honor its putridity by creating a new category just for it: "Recording of Special Odiousness."

However, there is a mistake in the review. Before Mr. Simels points his besmirching gun at George Martin, he should be aware that the Beatles fought for years to prevent this waste of celluloid and vinyl from being made. Unfortunately, since Robert Stigwood owns the

rights to thirty-two Beatles tunes, the boys lost their court battle. But they did manage to secure two conditions: (1) the lyrics of the songs could not be changed (preventing a repeat of the "artistic liberties" taken in *All This and World War II*), and (2) George Martin would have to produce the soundtrack.

Martin himself, in an interview in the Los Angeles *Herald-Examiner* during production of the film, predicted that the soundtrack would be a failure and implied that he was trying to do whatever good he could do and then get out.

ALLEN R. GREENBLATT
Tarzana, Calif.

Empty Hearts

● Pops on side two of my copy of Heart's "Dog and Butterfly" on Portrait (CBS) required that I return it for exchange. The sales clerk and I discovered that four of the twelve copies the store had left were empty covers sealed in shrink wrap. Record-company quality control has been getting so bad in past years that it didn't really surprise me.

RICHARD ARNOLD
Augusta, Ga.

Then again, you have to admit that that's one way to get a quiet record.

Et tu, Canada?

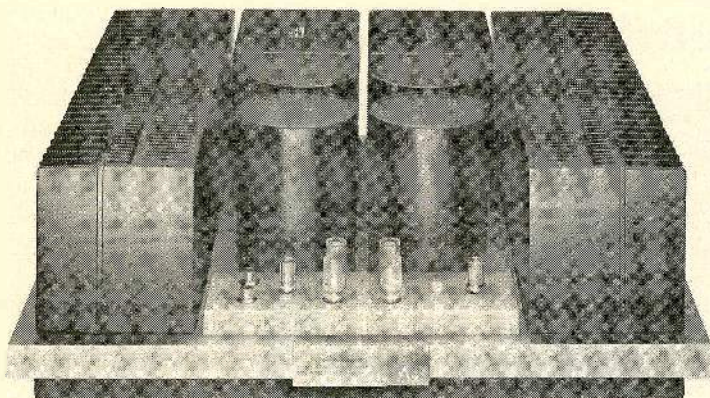
● I am sure you are sick of this subject, but please bear with me and hear a Canadian's point of view. I am referring to record quality, or rather the disgusting lack of it. Here in Canada we pay from \$5 to \$7 for an average current popular record and up to \$30 for an imported direct-to-disc record. A record has to be manufactured in Canada if it is to avoid the 15 per cent import duty, but the only way we can obtain decently recorded and pressed albums is to buy imported records from West Germany or the U.S. However, even that "privilege" is soon to end. The Canadian record manufacturers began to feel the heat, so now they are seeking virtually to monopolize the market by exerting pressure on the government to increase tariffs on imported records. Along with the weak Canadian dollar, this will drive the price of imports through the roof. Whatever happened to pride in workmanship, or has it been overlooked for profits at any cost?

GORDON MACCALLUM
Vancouver, British Columbia

Streisand

● Being an ardent Barbra Streisand fan, I have read a good many reviews of her latest album, "Songbird." Peter Reilly's in the September STEREO REVIEW was the first I've found that praised this wonderful lady for her accomplishments. I would have thought that all of those other music publications could surely see that Streisand is going through a definite change. Ever since *A Star Is Born* she has been slowly shedding her "comic" image and opting for a more mature life, which is reflected in her music. Certainly she deserves better of the critics than she has been getting.

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Phono overload	200 MV	180 MV
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Usable sensitivity Stereo UV at 300 OHMS	3	5
50 db quieting sensitivity Mono UV at 300 OHMS	3	5
THD Mono & THD Stereo	0.2% & 0.35%	0.3% & 0.5%
Frequency response Hz	25 to 15,000	35 to 12,000
Capture ratio (dB)	1.5	2
Alternate channel selectivity (dB)	60	50
Image rejection (dB)	50	45
Stereo separation at one kHz (dB)	45	35

Features:

Graphic Equalizer with LED Readout
 Relay Protection
 32 Detent Volume Attenuator
 Wattage Meters
 Two-Step High and Low Filters
 Deviation Meter

Multipath Meter
 LED Signal Strength Indicator
 AF Mute
 A JCPenney Warranty
 unsurpassed by any
 Hi-Fi manufacturer*

Price: \$599.95

*Within 5 years of purchase of speakers or 3 years of purchase of single or multiple play turntable, receiver, tuner, amplifier or tape deck of this Modular Component System, we will, at our option, repair or replace these items if defective in material or workmanship. Just return it to the nearest JCPenney facility.



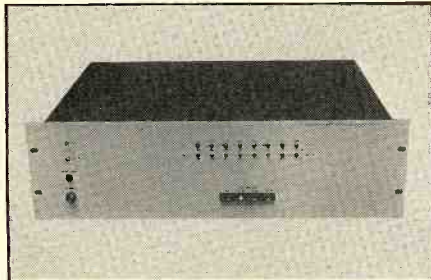
The incredible MCS Series 75 watt receiver.



Sold and serviced only at JCPenney



New Products latest audio equipment and accessories



Dynaco Power Amp With LED Display

□ As part of its 2500 series of low-silhouette assembled components, Dynaco has introduced a 100-watt-per-channel power amplifier, the Model 2521. The amplifier utilizes full complementary-symmetry driver and output stages and a current-mirror input stage, which are said to reduce psychoacoustically irritating distortion. Harmonic distortion is 0.05 per cent or less, and intermodulation distortion is below 0.02 per cent. A peak-reading LED display with a 33-dB range and three front-panel, switchable power levels (0, -6, and -12 dB) monitors the power-output level, and three additional lamps indicate overheating, power on, and initial turn-on delay conditions. The 2521 is supplied with a pewter-tone front plate and is directly rack-mountable. A multitapped transformer permits use with both 120- and 240-volt lines. The amplifier is therefore usable throughout the world. Dimensions are 19 x 5 1/4 x 14 1/4 inches. Price: \$599.

Circle 120 on reader service card



Slimline Two-head, Front-load Cassette Deck from Nakamichi

□ Nakamichi Research has introduced a dual-capstan three-motor cassette deck, the Model 580, based upon a number of design approaches said to be new to tape-recorder technology. The deck utilizes the same narrow-gap record/playback head as the company's Model 600 recorder; however, a new type of toroidal-coil erase head is used in the 580. Nakamichi claims that the more complete erasure (greater than -60 dB at 1 kHz) achieved by this head results in greater subjective definition on musical passages.

The tape transport of the 580 is fully logic controlled and has three motors: a d.c. servomotor for recording and playback, a high-

speed motor for fast-winding functions, and a third motor to align and control the action of the head assembly. The transport also has a cue-and-review function that lets the playback head remain in contact with the tape during fast-forward and rewind so as to assist the listener in finding a particular selection. Special plastics and alloys are used extensively in the transport of the 580 in order to reduce the wow and flutter and modulation noise said to be introduced by vibrational resonances of transport components. Weighted rms wow and flutter is claimed to be below 0.05 per cent. Frequency response is rated as 20 to 20,000 Hz ± 3 dB at a -20-dB record level. The signal-to-noise ratio with Nakamichi EX-II tape is better than 60 dB relative to 0 VU. Other features of the 580 include peak-reading meters, memory and timer functions, a switchable FM-multiplex filter, and front-panel record-level and bias controls for each of the two tape-format positions. A standard cable-connected remote control, the RM-10 (\$60), and a wireless infrared-beam remote control, the RMA-580 (\$155), are available as options. The 580 deck is approximately 19 3/4 x 5 1/4 x 13 7/8 inches. Price: \$650.

Circle 121 on reader service card



Fisher Cassette Deck with Remote Recording Control

□ Fisher is now including on three of its cassette decks a hand-held wireless remote control that activates a solenoid to stop and start tape motion and recording function. Among the units incorporating this feature is the CR5125, a three-head unit that also includes Dolby noise reduction. The tape transport is a dual-motor, dual-capstan arrangement controlled by touch-keys that operate electronic solenoids. Front-panel controls are provided for monitoring, and there are bias and equalization settings for three different tape types. The Dolby circuits can be used for both tape and FM. Frequency response is 30 to 15,000 Hz ± 3 dB with normal tape, extended to 18,000 Hz with CrO₂ tape. Signal-to-noise ratio is 64 dB with Dolby, and wow and flutter are rated at 0.04 per cent (weighted rms). Total harmonic distortion is 1.4 per cent and channel separation is 40 dB. The unit measures 17 1/2 x 12 1/4 x 4 3/4 inches and weighs 22 1/2 pounds. Price: \$550.

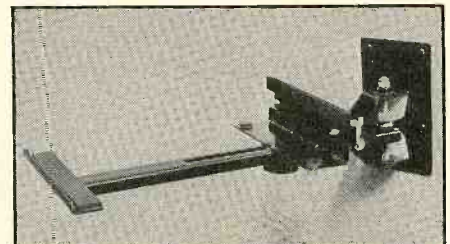
Circle 122 on reader service card



Maxell's Improved Cassette Tapes

□ Maxell has announced improvements in their LN and UD tape cassettes. The LN line benefits from a new manufacturing technique that makes possible a higher particle-packing density and a smoother tape surface, with a resultant 3-dB wider dynamic range and an increase of 2 dB in high-frequency response (relative to the current LN cassettes) as well as superior bass response and reduced tape noise. The Maxell UD tapes have also been upgraded by more homogeneous dispersion and improved orientation of the magnetic material, resulting in a dynamic-range increase of 2 dB as well as lower modulation and tape noise. Maxell states that prices have not been increased. Representative prices are: LN-60 and LN-90, \$2.55 and \$3.90, respectively; UD-60 and UD-90, \$3.80 and \$5.70, respectively.

Circle 123 on reader service card



Osawa Wall-mount Speaker Brackets

□ Osawa has introduced the AVF Universal Wall Bracket, a device designed to mount speakers on any wall—so long as the speakers weigh no more than 30 pounds and have depth dimensions of 9 to 14 inches. An adjustable padded clamp is used to hold the speaker; no mounting holes in the cabinet are necessary. The stands swivel both horizontally and vertically for alignment purposes. Price: approximately \$40 per pair.

Circle 124 on reader service card

(Continued on page 22)



While the others were catching up, TDK was moving ahead.

Shortly after it was introduced in 1975, TDK SA, the world's first non-chrome high bias cassette, was accepted by most quality deck manufacturers as their high bias reference standard. This advanced, new cassette enabled their decks to perform to the limit of their capabilities. And because the decks are set in the factory to sound their best with SA, music-loving consumers made SA the number one selling high bias cassette.

The other tape makers set out in pursuit of SA, hoping someday to equal the performance of its Super Avilyn particle formulation and the reliability of its super precision mechanism.

But making the world's most advanced cassette was nothing new for TDK's engineers. They pioneered the high fidelity cassette back in 1968 and for more than a decade they've led the way in cassette tape technology. Over the last three years, they've refined SA and made

it clearly superior to the '75 version.*

That makes the music lovers happy; it means more music with less distortion. It makes the deck makers happy; they've been improving their decks and SA makes them sound better than ever. But for the competition, unhappily, it means a whole new standard to catch up to.

So if you'd like to raise your own recording standards, step up to TDK SA, the high bias reference tape backed by high fidelity's original full lifetime warranty.**

TDK Electronics
Corporation
Garden City
New York 11530

 **TDK**[®]
The machine for your machine.™



*Today's SA has a maximum output level (MOE) more than 3dB better than that of 1975 SA at the critical high frequencies, and improved sensitivity across the entire frequency range. **In the unlikely event that any TDK audio cassette ever fails to perform due to a defect in materials or workmanship, return it to your local dealer or to TDK for a free replacement. ©1978, TDK Electronics Corp.

FREE

details... **A DIFFERENT KIND OF RECORD CLUB**

You can now own every record or tape that you may ever want... at tremendous savings and with no continuing purchase obligations. You can get valuable free dividend certificates, you can get quick service and all the 100% iron-clad guarantees you want.

Now you can stop price increases that leave you with less music for your record and tape budget. You can guarantee yourself more music for less money through membership in Discount Music Club.

Look at these benefits:

TREMENDOUS SAVINGS

on every record and tape in print—no "agree-to-purchase" obligations of any kind.

DISCOUNTS OF 43% TO 73%

off mfg. suggested list... special catalog features hundreds of titles and artists.

ALL LABELS AVAILABLE

including most imports through special custom ordering service. If we don't stock it we'll get it for you.

SCHWANN CATALOG

lists thousands of titles; classical, pop, jazz, ballet, opera, musical shows, folk, rock, vocal, instrumental, country, etc.

DISCOUNT DIVIDEND CERTIFICATES

Dividend Gifts—Every shipment carries a dividend gift or dividend certificate. Certificates redeemable immediately for extra discounts.

NEWSLETTERS

happenings in the world of music; concerts, critiques, new releases... special super-sale listings at discounts of up to 73%.

DISCOUNT ACCESSORY GUIDE

Diamond needles, cloths, tape cleaners, etc. Discount Music Club is your complete one stop music and accessory buying service.

QUICK SERVICE

same day shipping on many orders... rarely later than the next several days. Partial shipments always made in the event of unforeseen delay... all at no extra cost to you.

100% IRON-CLAD GUARANTEES

on all products and services. Everything is guaranteed factory fresh and free of defects or damages of any sort.

Your total satisfaction is unconditionally guaranteed.

Discount Music Club is a no-obligation membership club that guarantees tremendous discounts on all stereo records and tapes and lets you buy what you want... when you want... or not at all if you choose.

These are just a few of the money-saving reasons to write for free details. You can't lose so why not fill out and mail the coupon below for immediate information.

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650 Main Street, New Rochelle, N.Y. 10801

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ADDRESS

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ZIP

CIRCLE NO. 13 ON READER SERVICE CARD

New Products

latest audio equipment and accessories



Realistic Optimus-10 Speaker System Stresses Efficiency

□ Latest among Radio Shack's Realistic loudspeaker systems is the Optimus-10, with a driver complement consisting of an 8-inch woofer and 3/4-inch tweeter, plus a 10-inch passive radiator. The Optimus-10 delivers a sound-pressure level of 90 dB at one meter with a 1-watt input. Frequency response is 42 to 20,000 Hz ± 3 dB, power-handling capacity is 75 watts of continuous program material, and impedance is 8 ohms. Both phono-jack and screw terminal inputs are provided, and there is a continuously variable tweeter-level control. Finished in walnut veneer with removable grille, the system measures 25 x 15 3/4 x 10 1/2 inches and weighs 32 1/2 pounds. Price: \$139.95.

Circle 125 on reader service card



Yamaha Amplifier Is Disc-oriented

□ Yamaha's A-1 is a 70-watt-per-channel integrated amplifier designed primarily for use with turntables. It has adjustable phono-input resistance and capacitance on both its moving-coil and conventional phono inputs, as well as a switch designed to bypass all post-phono sections when the unit is in the phono mode. Except for this "direct coupling" switch, power-on and speaker switches, and the volume knob, the amplifier's controls are

concealed in a recessed panel under a pivoting front plate. These additional controls include inputs for one tuner, one auxiliary source, and one turntable, a single tape-monitor circuit, and defeatable stepped tone controls. In the direct-coupling position the amplifier is fully d.c. coupled.

The A-1 is rated for less than 0.02 per cent total harmonic distortion at rated output; intermodulation distortion is less than 0.003 per cent. The moving-coil phono stage will not overload on signals of less than 6 millivolts, and the signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) is 82 dB. The conventional phono stage overloads at 230 millivolts and has a S/N of 97 dB (as measured with IHF A weighting referenced to 10 millivolts, input shorted). Frequency response for the phono sections is accurate within ± 0.2 dB. Dimensions are 17 1/4 x 4 3/4 x 15 inches. Price: \$595.

Circle 126 on reader service card



Ribbon Tweeter From Pyramid

□ The Pyramid Loudspeaker Corporation's Model T-1 add-on tweeter is intended to supplement existing high-quality loudspeaker systems by improving high-frequency performance. A ribbon device incorporating a 5-pound magnet assembly and a special crossover network acting at 3,000 Hz, the T-1 can be hooked up directly across the terminals of any full-range speaker system. The ribbon of the T-1 has an area of just over 2 3/4 square inches. At 10,000 Hz, response is within 3 dB of on-axis output for vertical angles as much as 90 degrees off axis and lateral angles as much as 160 degrees off axis. A five-position, 2-dB-per-step attenuator is built in. Frequency response is 3,000 to 40,000 Hz ± 3 dB (± 4 dB to 100,000 Hz). The T-1 provides a sound-pressure level of 93 dB at 1 meter with an input of 1 watt of pink noise; maximum peak-power input is 200 watts of pink noise. At 20,000 Hz, impedance is 12 ohms. Rise time is less than 5 microseconds. Finished in brushed black anodized aluminum, the T-1 measures 4 3/4 x 7 3/4 x 4 3/4 inches and weighs 8 1/2 pounds. Price: \$990 per pair.

Circle 127 on reader service card

(Continued on page 25)

A black and white advertisement for the Epicure 3.0 speaker. The image features a tall, slender speaker on the left and a smaller, cube-shaped speaker in the foreground on the right. The tall speaker has a dark grille and a wooden frame with a small 'EPICURE' logo. The cube-shaped speaker has a large circular driver on the front and a smaller driver on top. The background is dark and textured.

3.0

The last word in the ongoing dialogue between musical art and the state of the art. A loudspeaker creation from Epicure representing over 2½ years of development that will significantly influence the design of loudspeakers for years to come.

EPICURE®

Epicure Products Incorporated,
Newburyport, MA 01950
Epicure Products (Europe)
GmbH Munich, Germany

Again we turn the world around.

The world's first pure power DC receivers, the Sansui G-line, redefined the limits of musical fidelity. Sansui's capacitor-free DC amplifier design (patent pending) with super-high slew rate, ultra-fast rise time, and full transient response, makes music sound much more true-to-life.

Now Sansui does it again. With the new G-7500 and G-5500. Using the same exclusive DC circuitry all others are trying to imitate, these new models offer more watts per dollar than ever before.

The **G-7500** delivers 90 watts per channel, min. RMS, both channels into 8 ohms from 20 to 20,000Hz with no more than 0.025% total harmonic distortion, at a suggested retail price of only \$620.

The **G-5500**, at a suggested retail price of only \$465, offers 60 watts per channel with no more than 0.03% THD under the same conditions.

From their macro-designed power supplies, for rich, full sound over the widest frequency range, to their micro-sensitive double speaker-protection circuitry, the G-7500 and G-5500 are unbeatable.

The FM sections further enhance Sansui's reputation for tuner excellence. Pinpoint selectivity and ultra-sensitivity to even the weakest signals guarantee pure and clean reception, always. And always with maximum stereo separation.

Let your franchised Sansui dealer demonstrate the comprehensive, human engineered features and controls. There's nothing in the world with quite the same feel as the Sansui click-stop attenuator and ultra-smooth tuning knob.



Now look carefully at the graceful styling, with elegant rosewood veneer cabinet. It is setting the trend for all other receivers.

For the best receiver values, the world is now turning to the newest DC by Sansui, the G-7500 and G-5500. Shouldn't you turn to Sansui, too?



SANSUI ELECTRONICS CORP.

Lyndhurst, New Jersey 07071 • Gardena, Ca. 90247
 SANSUI ELECTRIC CO., LTD., Tokyo, Japan
 SANSUI AUDIO EUROPE S.A., Antwerp, Belgium
 In Canada: Electronic Distributors

Sansui

New Products

latest audio equipment and accessories



**Audio Research
Power Amplifier**

□ As part of its new solid-state line, Audio Research Corporation has introduced the D-52 power amplifier unit rated at a minimum of 50 watts per channel (both channels driven) at 8 ohms from 1 to 20,000 Hz with less than 0.25-per cent total harmonic distortion. Located within the unit is a switch for "bridged" monaural-mode operation; at this setting the D-52 provides approximately 180 watts into 8 ohms. Intermodulation distortion is less than 0.1 per cent at rated output, and noise is more than 90 dB below 50 watts at 8 ohms. Input sensitivity is 1.1 volts for full output, and input impedance is 30,000 ohms. Industrial-grade components and construction are employed. The D-52 measures 19 x 5¼ x 10½ inches and weighs 39 pounds. Price: \$995.

Circle 128 on reader service card



**JVC Preamplifier
Emphasizes Phono
Functions**

□ The new Model EQ-7070 aims at providing maximum flexibility for all types of phono inputs including moving-coil cartridges, for which a low-noise pre-preamplifier is built in. A front-panel rotary switch selects any of five phono inputs, including two moving-coil inputs of high and low sensitivity. Two more rotary switches establish resistive (100, 33k, 50k, and 100k ohms) and capacitive (100, 220, 330, and 470 picofarads) loads for all three of the conventional phono inputs. There are also inputs for tuner and auxiliary program sources, tape-monitoring facilities for two tape decks, and an audio-muting function that

reduces the listening level by 20 dB for brief interruptions such as telephone calls. The low-silhouette cabinet of the EQ-7070 has a comprehensive block diagram printed on its top plate to identify internal signal paths and switching functions. Low-noise field-effect transistors are used extensively in the preamplifier's input stages.

Harmonic distortion of the EQ-7070 is rated at 0.002 per cent for the conventional phono inputs and from 0.003 to 0.005 per cent for the two moving-coil phono inputs. Signal-to-noise ratios are 82 dB for the high-sensitivity moving-coil input, 73 dB for the low-sensitivity input, and 85 dB for the conventional inputs, all A-weighted. Impedances of the moving-coil inputs are 11 and 25 ohms, respectively. The conventional phono inputs have an overload point of 300 millivolts at 1,000 Hz. The EQ-7070 measures approximately 16½ x 2½ x 15 inches. Price: \$950.

Circle 129 on reader service card



**BSR Unit for Remote
Control of Household
Lights, Appliances**

□ The X-10 from BSR is a system that permits control, through special microprocessors, of any lights and appliances in one's home from any point in the home. Pushbuttons on the Command Console control, directly through the house a.c. wiring, up to sixteen remote modules that plug in between the individual lamps (which may be dimmed as well as switched) or appliances and their respective a.c. outlets. Remote modules are also available to replace existing wall switches. The control unit might be kept at the owner's bedside. In addition to individual controls, a special pushbutton is included to turn on all the lights at once (as well as audio systems or alarms) to frighten off prowlers. Besides the Command Console, smaller units are available to operate the console ultrasonically at distances of up to about 30 feet. The Command Console measures 4¾ x 3½ x 2¼ inches and weighs 8½ ounces; its price is less than \$40. The ultrasonic control unit is under \$20, the remote modules less than \$15 each.

Circle 130 on reader service card

(Continued overleaf)



**We build
a speaker
that sounds
like music**

It can accurately reproduce the 120+ dB peaks that are found in some live music. That's more than just being able to play music loud. It can accurately reproduce the music bandwidth - from below 25Hz to 20kHz. And the Interface:D's vented midrange speaker reproduces midrange sounds with the clarity and purity that allows precise localization of sound sources - both lateral and front-to-back.

The Interface:D is the only commercially available speaker we know of that can meet these criteria. Audition them at your Interface dealer.



Electro-Voice®

a Gulton company

600 Cecil Street
Buchanan, Michigan 49107

Interface:D™

DISCWASHER

presents

The Clean Truth About Your Naked Stylus

When your stylus plays over one light fingerprint or one tiny "bead" of vinyl stabilizer, the clean naked diamond becomes a glazed, dust-holding abrasive weapon wearing away at your records and masking their true sound. This unseen build-up may actually hold the tracking tip of the diamond out of the record groove.



Accumulated grit on stylus that looks "clean" to the naked eye.

The SC-1 Stylus Cleaner from Discwasher is designed with a brush that is stiff enough to remove harmful accumulation, but gentle enough to avoid damaging delicate cartridge assemblies. Two drops of Discwasher's D3 Fluid add extra cleaning action to the SC-1 without the side-effects of alcohol, which can harden rubber cantilever mountings.



After cleaning with SC-1 and D3 Fluid by Discwasher.

The retractable, walnut-handled SC-1 includes a magnifying mirror for convenient inspection of stylus/cartridge alignment and wiring.

Get the clean truth from your records; get the SC-1.

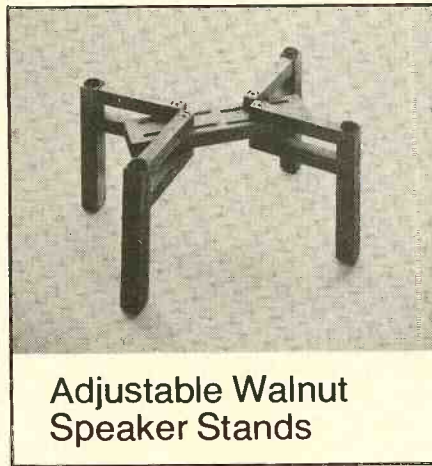
SC-1 STYLUS CLEANER



discwasher® inc.
1407 N. Providence Rd.
Columbia, MO 65201

New Products

latest audio equipment and accessories



Adjustable Walnut Speaker Stands

□ "SpeakerUPPERS" are adjustable walnut stands that elevate any loudspeaker of 150 pounds or less to a position 10 inches above the floor. They are intended to isolate the speaker from floor and wall mechanically (thus reducing the chance of its exciting resonances in those surfaces) and to improve stereo imaging and dispersion by raising the speaker to a position close to the level of the listener's ears. Felt discs protect the speaker's finish from abrasion. The stands expand to a maximum of 11½ by 18 inches, though speakers of larger dimensions can be accommodated. Price: \$19.95 postpaid from SpeakerUPPERS, P.O. Box 698, Malibu, Calif. 90265.

Circle 131 on reader service card



NAD's High-power AM/FM Receiver

□ The highest-power AM/FM receiver from NAD (New Acoustic Dimension), the 7080, has a maximum output of 90 watts per channel at a rated harmonic and intermodulation distortion of 0.03 per cent. Many of the design criteria for the 7080 and the other NAD receivers and amplifiers are said to have been derived from recent studies of transient forms of distortion and preamplifier/phono-cartridge interaction.

The 7080 incorporates two phono inputs that will not overload with signals of up to 200

millivolts; phono signal-to-noise ratio is 75 dB. The signal-to-noise ratio of the high-level inputs is 95 dB or greater. The front panel has variable-turnover-point bass and treble controls (250 and 500 Hz for bass, 2,500 and 5,000 Hz for treble), a high filter acting at 8,000 Hz with a 12-dB-per-octave slope, and an infra-sonic filter rolling off at 12 dB per octave below 18 Hz. Frequency response of the phono section is accurate to within 0.03 dB. The tuner portion of the receiver utilizes a phase-locked-loop multiplex section and has a usable sensitivity of 1.8 microvolts, a 50-dB quieting sensitivity of 35 microvolts in stereo, and total harmonic distortion in stereo of 0.3 per cent or less. Alternate-channel selectivity is 70 dB, capture ratio 1 dB, and image rejection 70 dB. Signal-strength and channel-center meters are used to tune stations.

Switching for two pairs of loudspeakers, an FM interstation-noise muting switch, a microphone and two headphone jacks, and two tape-monitor/dubbing controls are on the front panel; the unit is finished in a dark bronze. Dimensions are approximately 19½ x 6 x 14¼ inches and weight is 42 pounds. Price: \$590.

Circle 132 on reader service card



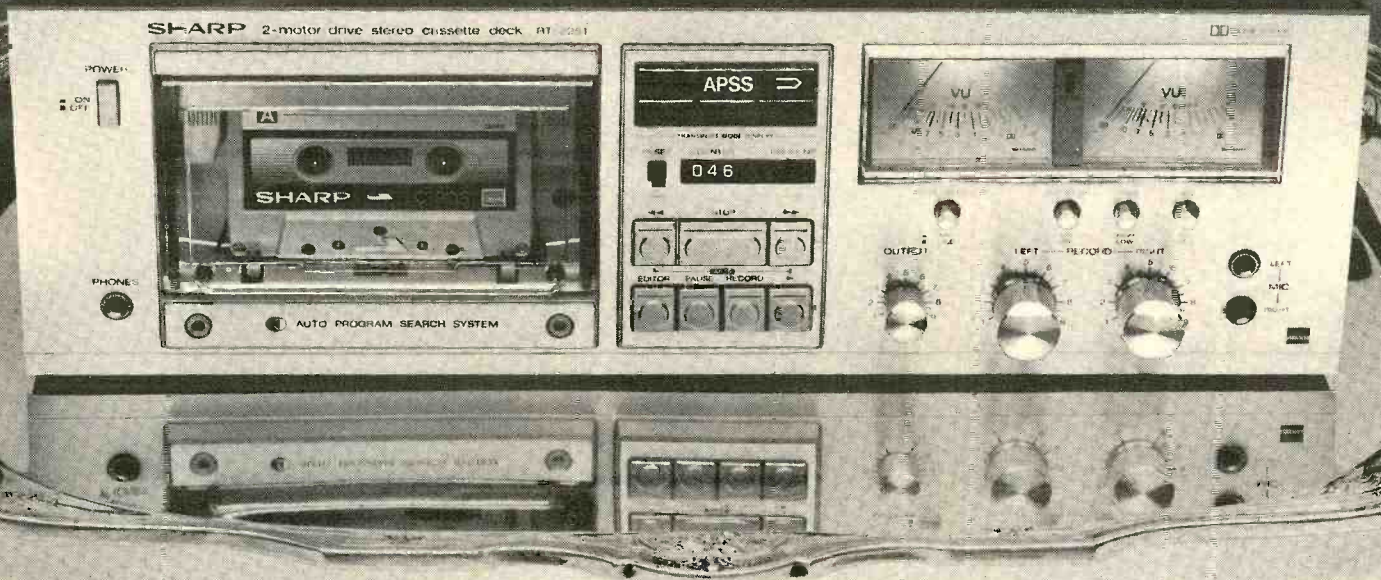
Latest Heathkit Electronics Catalog

□ The Christmas 1978 Heath catalog of electronic kits and supplies includes such products of interest to the audio enthusiast as a dynamic-range compression/expansion unit, the Modulus series of separate components, and a new coherent-phase speaker system. The catalog is available at no charge from: Heath Company, Department SR, Benton Harbor, Mich. 49022.

Circle 133 on reader service card

(Continued on page 28)

MUSIC A LA CARTE.



Introducing Sharp's solenoid deck that plays selections according to your musical appetite.

If you hunger for one of the world's most advanced tape decks, then Sharp's RT-2251 is for you.

The RT-2251 teams the genius of the Sharp Eye™ with the convenience of solenoid controls. A combination you won't find on any other deck.

The Sharp Eye gives you individual song selection. It plays only what you want to hear. And skips what you don't.

And the solenoid controls give you feather touch finger-tip control. For faster response and greater accuracy of all tape functions.

If once isn't enough when one of your favorites finishes, tell the Sharp Eye to play it again. And it will. Automatically.

You even have the option to change your mind. The Sharp Eye lets you interrupt one song

and go on to the next. Instantly.

How do we do it? Simple. The Sharp Eye scans the tape at high speed, finds the blank spaces between selections and automatically plays back the music of your choice. To skip a selection it operates in fast forward. And for repeats, it works in reverse.

You'll also like the gourmet specs Sharp's cooked up for you. The RT-2251 serves up 0.055% wow and flutter, a S/N ratio of 66dB (Dolby* on, over 5kHz) and a frequency response of 30-17,000Hz (FeCr).

To get a real taste of our RT-2251, see the Sharp audio dealer nearest you or write Sharp Electronics Corporation, Dept. SR, 10 Keystone Place, Paramus, N.J. 07652.



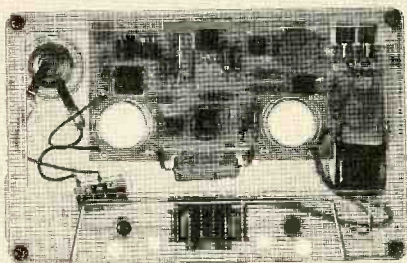
*Dolby is a registered trademark of Dolby Laboratories.

CIRCLE NO. 55 ON READER SERVICE CARD

TDK's new one-second, no-headache demagnetizer.



You don't need time or technical expertise to operate TDK's exclusive instant head demagnetizer. Just pop it into your deck and push "Play" to restore musical performance lost through inevitable head magnetization. Other demagnetizers can be less effective, take more time, or actually magnetize your heads and are more difficult to use. Because our HD-01's miniature battery powers sophisticated circuitry built into a standard cassette shell, it solves all of these problems. You will hear the performance improvement in your home, portable or auto system. TDK Electronics Corp., Garden City, NY 11530.



TDK
The Machine for your Machine.®

New Products

latest audio equipment and accessories

TDK Cassette Recording Guide

□ TDK's newly published *Guide to Cassettes and Recording* is a forty-eight-page booklet that presents in simple language some advice for the home recordist who wants to make optimum use of his cassette deck. A number of subjects are covered, from what constitutes a good recording to how to make one. A glossary of terms is included, as well as instructions for properly utilizing the deck's meters and keeping a unit in top operating condition. The booklet is available from TDK tape dealers for \$2.95.



Tandberg's 80-watt Flagship Receiver

□ The Tandberg TR-2080 AM/FM receiver heads up their new 2000 series. It has a power output of 80 watts per channel with maximum harmonic- and intermodulation-distortion figures of 0.05 per cent (FTC ratings). All signal sources are switched electronically rather than mechanically, an arrangement said to reduce the distortion and noise generated by conventional long wiring runs. The electronic switching system also permits the listener to cue and fade between the two phono inputs. The tape-monitor circuitry of the 2080 accommodates two tape recorders, with facilities for dubbing while listening to a third source. Tape-monitor 2 may also be routed through the tonal-compensation circuits of the 2080's preamplifier in order to equalize a signal to be taped. The tone controls include bass, mid-range, and treble, centered at 50, 1,000, and 10,000 Hz, respectively; a low filter, which rolls off signals at 12 dB/octave below 30 Hz; and two high filters, which roll off signals above 8,000 (6 dB/octave) or 9,000 Hz (12 dB/octave). The two high filters may be used simultaneously to achieve an attenuation of 18 dB/octave above 7,000 Hz.

Phono-overload levels of the two phono inputs are 120 and 150 mV (at 1,000 Hz), and IHF A-weighted signal-to-noise ratios are 88 and 79 dB. RIAA accuracy is ± 0.3 dB. Tuner specifications of the 2080 include an IHF sen-

sitivity of 1.7 μ V (9.8 dBf), a 50-dB stereo quieting sensitivity at 32 μ V (35 dBf), and broadband stereo-FM distortion figures no greater than 0.5 per cent. Capture ratio is 0.9 dB, and alternate-channel selectivity is 80 dB or greater. Additional front-panel controls include switchable FM de-emphasis and a switch that converts the FM relative-signal-strength meter to a power-level meter. Dimensions (in supplied rosewood cabinet) are approximately 20 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 6 x 14 inches. Weight is 27 pounds. Price: \$1,200.

Circle 134 on reader service card



"Facial Treatment" For Records

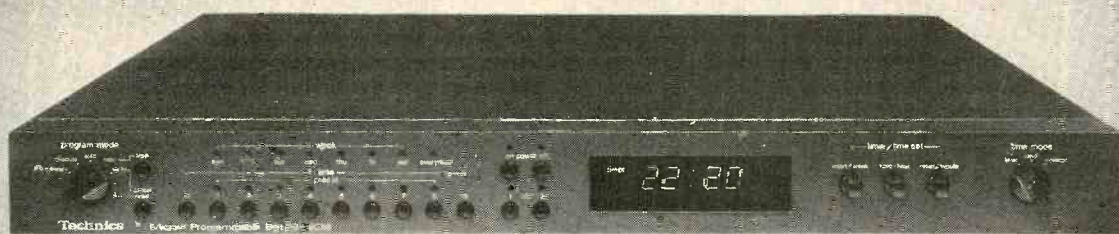
□ Similar in approach to some peel-off skin cleansers is the new Disco Film, a record-care product from Empire Scientific Corporation. Supplied in plastic bottles with sponge tops, the Disco Film gel is sponged onto the disc and allowed to dry. It is then peeled off, taking with it all dirt and even, it is claimed, the residue left by some other record cleaners. The gel is water soluble and said to be harmless to records and skin. A container adequate for cleaning up to seventy vinyl LP sides sells for \$29.95.

Circle 135 on reader service card

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

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

Introducing the system that can tape itself. Tune itself. All by itself. For up to a week.



Up to now using a tape deck to record Tchaikovsky's 4th at 4 PM on one station and Beethoven's 5th at 5 PM on another was easy. As long as you were home. Now Technics makes it just as easy when you're not with the ST-9038 quartz synthesizer FM stereo tuner and its marching SH-9038 microprocessor.

When used with the ST-9038, the SH-9038 microprocessor can be programmed to tune eight FM stations in any order, at any time, on any day for one week. In fact, the SH-9038 can be programmed to remember 32 individual steps. Starting with the day of the week, the time, the FM station and AC line on/off.

All you do is simply select the "write" mode and the SH-9038's computerized memory does the rest. Then select the "read" mode for a readout of the programs you have selected. You can also override your preselected program by switching to the manual mode. What's more, the SH-9038 can be programmed to turn on or off three other components in addition to the ST-9038 tuner.

That's what the SH-9038 microprocessor can do. What the ST-9038 quartz synthesizer tuner can do is just as impressive. Unlike conventional tuners which use a series of variable capacitors to tune in FM frequencies,

the ST-9038 uses the quartz synthesizer tuning system. With this system the quartz crystal, one of the world's most accurate reference devices, becomes the reference for the local oscillator frequency and the broadcast frequency. The results: Only the frequencies on which a broadcast signal might exist can be received. At precisely spaced 200 kHz steps. And that means you don't have to worry about drift or misalignment due to temperature, time or mistuning.

The SH-9038 microprocessor and the ST-9038 tuner. Because you can't beat the memory of a computer or the accuracy of quartz.

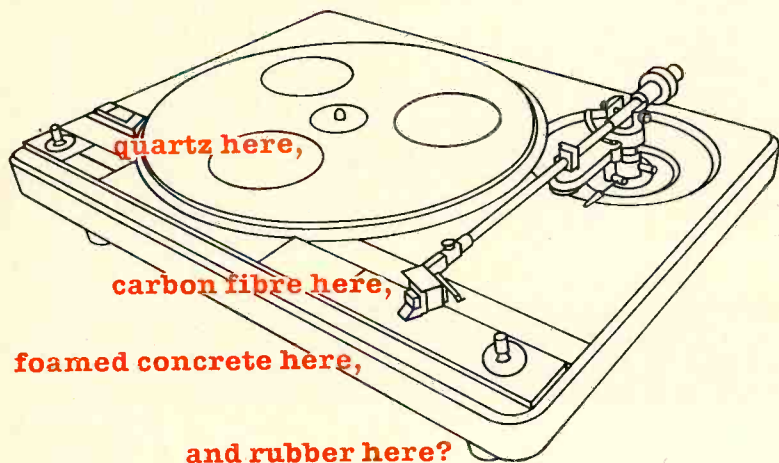
SENSITIVITY: 2.2 μ V (75 Ω), 50dB QUIETING
 SENSITIVITY(New I-F): Mono 18.1 dBf. Stereo 38.1 dBf.
 T-D (100% modulation): Mono 0.1%. Stereo 0.15%.
 FREQ. RESP.: 20Hz to 18 kHz \pm 0.1dB -0.5dB. SELECTIVITY: 75dB.
 STEREO SEPARATION: 4.5dB (1 kHz), 35dB (10 kHz). IMAGE REJECTION AT 98 MHz: 105dB.

Technics SH-9038 and ST-9038. A rare combination of audio technology. A new standard of audio excellence.

Technics

Professional Series

What do you get when you put



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ADC is in the business of building breakthroughs.

First, we brought you the innovation of the low mass cartridge. Then the remarkable computerized Accutrac® turntables. Next, the State-of-the-Art Low Mass tonearms.

And now, our engineers have combined the latest advancements of tonearm technology and turntable construction to reduce mass and resonance to new lows.

Result: new benchmarks of high performance.

Finally, the integration of a carbon fibre design tonearm. The famous ADC LMF Carbon Fibre tonearm was the model for the sleek black anodized aluminum

tonearm found on the ADC 1700DD.

In fact, until now you had to make a separate investment in an ADC tonearm to achieve this level of performance.

A level of performance never before available on an integrated turntable.

It is statically balanced with a lead-filled decoupled counterweight, and the headshell is molded carbon fibre, long known for its low mass to high tensile strength ratio.

Furthermore, the headshell is connected to the arm with gold plated computer terminal pins. And the main bearing cradle is made of sintered aluminum. The pivot system utilizes micron polished instrument bearings which are hand picked and matched perfectly to both the inner and outer races, for virtually frictionless movement.

The viscous cueing is a gentle 4mm/sec., and the tempered spring anti-skate adjustment is infinitely variable to 3.5 grams.

The design, the materials and the details interact to provide incomparable performance for a tonearm on an integrated turntable system.

In fact, the tonearm alone is worth the price of an ADC 1700DD.

Finally, resonance conquered.

The technical know-how that conquered the problems of the tonearm mass, also conquered the problems of turntable resonance.

The ADC 1700DD reduces resonance to levels so negligible they are virtually nonexistent.

The achievement lies in the innovative construction formula for the turntable base that incorporates the latest advancements from European engineers.

The base is constructed with two dissimilar materials that are resonance-cancelling. First, the outer frame of the base is molded, and then a composition of foamed concrete is injected to absorb and neutralize resonance and feedback.

LOW RESONANCE

Beyond even this foamed concrete anti-resonance breakthrough, the base is isolated by energy absorbing, resonance-tuned, rubber suspension feet.

This is as close as technology has ever come to defying the physical laws of resonance.

The motor in the ADC 1700DD is also present standard of excellence: Direct Drive Quartz Phase-Locked Loop. The quartz is used in the reference oscillator of the motor.

An electronic phase comparator constantly monitors any variance in the speed, making instantaneous corrections. Even when out of the Quartz-Locked mode, the optical scanning system keeps drift at below 0.2%.

In fact, to check the speed at a glance, we've engineered the 1700DD with a pulsed LED strobe display for your convenience.

Low-mass. Low-resonance. High performance.

What is the result of all these breakthroughs? Pure pleasure.

The pleasure of enjoying your favorite music with less distortion and coloration than you may have ever experienced before. Now you can truly appreciate the integrity of the original recording.

Our engineers have reduced record wear and music distortion to a point where rumble is -70dB Din B, and Wow and flutter less than .03% WRMS.

In the history of audio technology, significant breakthroughs have been made over the past four years with the development of Quartz Lock Direct Drive, carbon fibre tonearm design, foamed concrete anti-resonance construction. And now, ADC is the first to bring them all together in the 1700DD. We invite you to a demonstration of this and the other remarkable ADC turntables at your nearest franchised ADC dealer.

Or, if you'd like, write for further information to: ADC Professional Products, a division of BSR Consumer Products Group, Route 303, Blauvelt, N.Y. 10913.

Low-mass. Low-resonance. We think you'll be highly interested.

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Audio Q. and A.



Technical Director Klein tries out one of the larger Teac Tascam mixers.

System Imbalance

Q. After a long struggle to find the reason for my having to operate the balance control on my preamplifier at the 3-o'clock position, I managed to trace the difficulty to the speakers rather than the amplifier or preamp, which I had assumed were at fault. It turned out that a readjustment of the mid-range control on one of my speakers enabled me to operate my preamplifier with its balance control centered. What would account for this?

MARVIN SEEMAN
Flushing, N.Y.

A. The frequencies that contribute to the ear's perception of the "loudness" of a sound are mostly in the mid-range. (You can confirm this for yourself by noting the small effect on the overall loudness of music that occurs when you turn your amplifier's bass or treble controls up or down.) Hence, any control that is designed to establish the relative loudness of the mid-frequencies in a speaker system will also necessarily influence its relative "efficiency."

Tone-burst Tests

Q. In loudspeaker test reports, tone bursts are shown along with some evaluative comments. What should one look for in tone-burst photos?

CHARLES DONAL
Lexington, Va.

A. Abrupt stops and starts—and very little jiggle in between. The idea behind a tone-burst signal is that it tests a speaker system's ability to respond precisely to abrupt changes in level or quick stops and starts in the signal. If a speaker cone is unable to follow the electrical tone-burst audio signal because it can't respond instantly to its onset—or if it continues to vibrate after it is gone—then the speaker probably cannot provide clean, clear reproduction of high- or low-frequency musical transients. Tone-burst photos prove nothing in and of themselves, because with practically any speaker it is possible to find some frequencies at which the bursts look fine and other frequencies (usually at the crossover points) at which they may be quite messy. That is why the test reports state that "overall" or "in general" the tone-burst re-

sponse is fine, good, or whatever. Incidentally, don't be misled by the small ripples that frequently appear between the bursts. These are usually the result of reflections from the room surfaces picked up by the test microphone and do not represent the inherent speaker response.

The Best Designs

Q. Can you provide a relative evaluation of the best speaker-system and amplifier designs in respect to their mode of operation? In regard to speakers, I'm referring to acoustic-suspension vs. aperiodic vs. transmission-line, etc. For amplifiers, please evaluate class A versus the other design classes.

HAROLD B. BROWN
Bronx, N.Y.

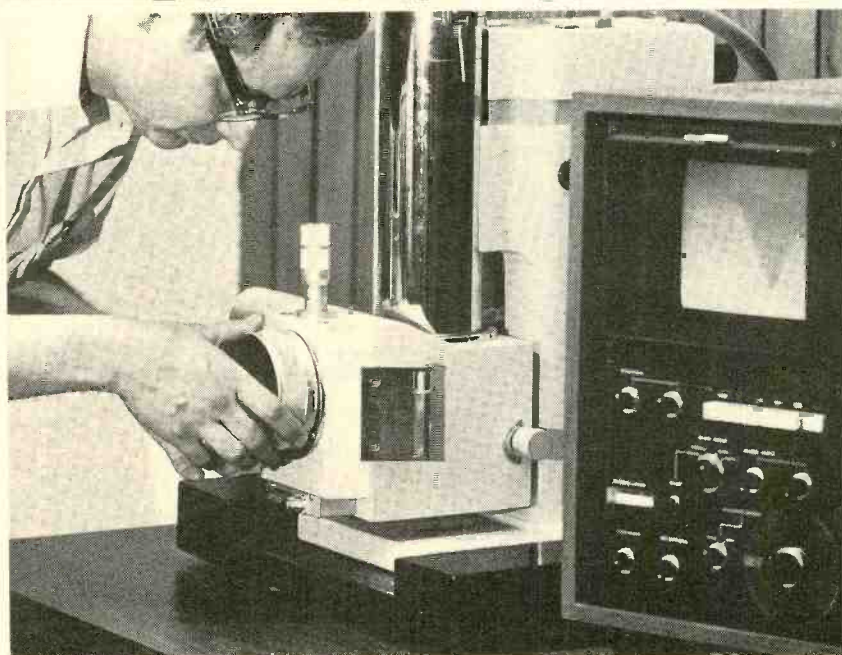
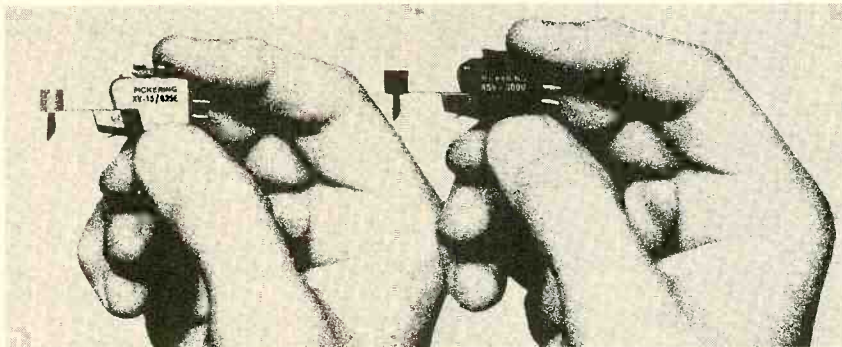
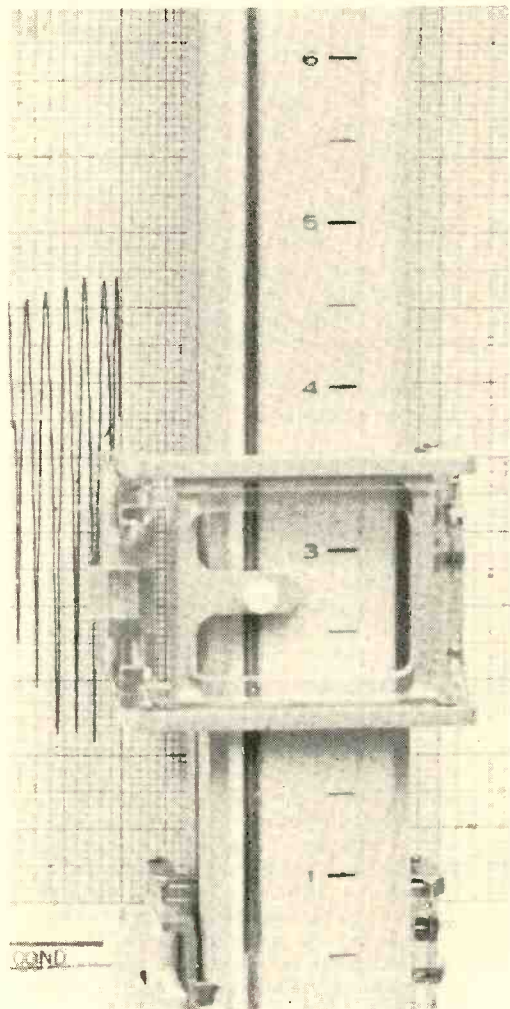
A. I'm not even going to try to provide the sort of evaluation you ask for, simply because, as far as I'm concerned, there's no point to it. However, I'm sure that the advocates of each of the particular design approaches can supply you with whatever data you desire. Our main concern at STEREO REVIEW is not with how a component works, but rather with how well it works. To put it another way, we are far more concerned with what comes out of the box or chassis than we are about what is going on inside it. Perhaps needless to say, we have tested and heard excellent components of all types employing a wide variety of design approaches.

It is a mistake to get excessively hung up on some new component's design theory—apart from everything else—as a factor in your buying decision. To some extent, we at the hi-fi magazines are to blame for this, since audiophiles are too often encouraged by advertising claims or editorial coverage to become overly concerned about technical matters that they are really not in a position to evaluate. Readers should know that it is possible for a manufacturer to use the very latest technical approach in his speaker systems or electronic components and still, through bad design, poor quality control, or a tin ear, end up with a product that is not as good as some older unit with "old-fashioned" parts and design. In short, the best advice I can offer is to compare the technical comments and reports on performance that you will find in this and other

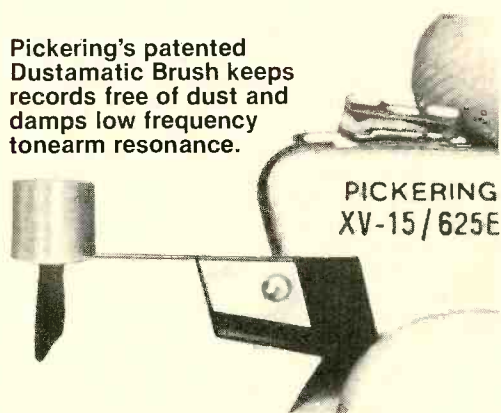
(Continued on page 34)

Only the most sophisticated research and development in this industry could create

Two sources of perfection in stereo sound!



Pickering's patented Dustomatic Brush keeps records free of dust and damps low frequency tonearm resonance.



It takes real effort and skill to become the acknowledged leader in the industry, and even more to stay ahead.

Pictured above are just a few of the advanced electronic devices that Pickering employs in product research and custom-designed development. At left above, the XY plotter on Pickering's Real Time Analyzer and, at the right above, Pickering's remarkable Scanning Electronic Beam Microscope capable of 160,000 times magnification.

Pickering's engineering department is responsible for creating these two outstanding cartridges that, as one reviewer stated: "The XV-15/625E offers performance per dollar; the XSV/3000 higher absolute performance level."

Both the XSV/3000 with its trademarked Stereohedron Stylus tip for the least record wear and the longest stylus life achievable so far... and the XV-15/625E... represent best buys at their price levels. Audition them today at your Pickering Dealer.

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 **PICKERING**

"for those who can hear the difference"

CIRCLE NO. 41 ON READER SERVICE CARD

er magazines, but don't get carried away by the special design approaches used by one manufacturer or another unless the test reports seem to validate them—in the *specific* component under discussion—as being significant.

If the real intent of your question is to determine how close a particular design concept comes to providing some ideal of "absolute fidelity" (cost no obstacle), I really cannot help you, since I know of no way to establish the *absolute* best among the many high-accuracy components we have tested. In regard to speakers, all that can be said is something like: "This ranks with the finest available." It may be that among the group of the best we have tested there is one that comes slightly closer to perfection than the others. But we have no scientific means of making such a fine distinction. And in any practical listening situation, variations in program material, the associated equipment, the acoustic environment, and even placement are likely to introduce more difference in the audible outputs of two excellent speakers than that which results from inherent variations in their performance.

Don't misunderstand this as a dismissal of new technology, however. Many of the "technical advances," "breakthroughs," and innovations announced regularly in our pages are substantial and of real value to the consumer. But others are merely different ways of achieving the same design goal. Even from my privileged seat, it is often difficult to distinguish the mere advertising claim from the genuine advance. And that is the main reason why we focus on a component's performance rather than on whatever special design feature the manufacturer states he has built into it.

Movie Dolby

Q. Ever since *Star Wars* came out more than a year ago, I've seen the term "Dolby Stereo" used more and more often in movie and movie-theater advertising. I'm familiar with Dolby noise reduction in tape recording; what does Dolby—and is it the same Dolby—have to do with film sound?

MARION MACK
Ithaca, N.Y.

A. Yes, it is the very same Ray Dolby of noise-reduction fame. His company, Dolby Laboratories, has been involved for some time with improving film sound, and the box-office success of *Star Wars* has focused a great deal of attention on the Dolby film-sound techniques. Dolby noise reduction (the professional type-A system, rather than the simpler type B used in home tape decks and FM receivers) is an essential part of Dolby Stereo film sound, but there's a lot more to the story. Dolby's approach to improving film sound involves the entire process, including the recording and mixing of the sound, the format of the soundtracks on the prints that go to theaters, and even the movie theater's playback equipment. Ray Dolby says that when he first investigated film sound back in the late Sixties he found the process and equipment discouragingly out of date compared to what was then being used in music-

recording studios. So when a Dolby Stereo soundtrack is prepared, every effort is made to encourage the film studio to use *modern* recording and mixdown techniques and equipment (including noise reduction, of course, whenever possible).

The most important breakthrough in getting stereo sound into theaters was the development of a new stereo *optical* soundtrack format for standard 35-mm release prints. In the early Seventies Kodak and RCA were developing a system for fitting a pair of stereo tracks into the space occupied by the optical mono track on conventional film. Dolby joined forces with them, bringing along the work he had already done to improve the *overall* fidelity of optical sound. The comparatively rapid adoption of this new optical stereo format occurred mostly because of its practicality. In contrast to the magnetic-oxide-stripe soundtracks originally developed for stereo in the Fifties, the stereo *optical* format is far less expensive to produce for movie-house release prints. It involves only a simple photographic development process of the movie print, soundtrack and all, rather than a multistep process with the addition and then recording of magnetic stripes.

But achieving a stereo high-fidelity movie soundtrack was only half of the battle, considering the severely limited frequency response of theater playback systems. (In general, the response of home hi-fi equipment is far superior to that used in movie houses. The Dolby Labs staff made acoustic measurements of more than 150 theater systems and found the frequency consistently down by at least 20 dB at 9,000 Hz, with some bass rolloff as well.) A generally accepted playback characteristic, the "Academy curve" that became a *de facto* standard in the Thirties and Forties, was holding back movie sound, and its effects reached all the way to the original soundtrack recording.

Rather than asking theater owners to rip out their old audio equipment, Dolby Labs compensated for its poor playback response with equalization. Dolbyized theaters are equipped with sound-processing units designed to equalize the projector's sound heads for flat response to 12,000 Hz or so. And at the acoustic playback end, three or more twenty-seven-band, one-third-octave equalizers are used to smooth out and extend speaker-system response. Dolby-trained installers adjust the new equipment using pink-noise generators, real-time analyzers, calibrated microphones, and special test films. The Dolby-manufactured processing units also contain type-A Dolby noise-reduction circuits for the encoded soundtracks, plus circuits to derive a third, center-speaker channel required for proper dialogue localization in theaters using wide screens. In addition, many of the Dolby Stereo film soundtracks have been encoded with a matrix system for a fourth, surround-sound channel. Decoding this extra channel is optional. Many of the same techniques are also used for the six magnetic tracks on 70-mm release prints.

Twenty-five films have been released so far with Dolby Stereo tracks, twenty more are in preparation, and whereas there were about forty Dolby-equipped theaters when *Star Wars* was first released, there are now more than 700! Incidentally, it seems safe to assume that basic improvements in cinema sound will have at least some impact on movie-soundtrack recordings.

FOR THE RECORD



NAGATRON

There is a new reference standard in phono cartridges. The name is Nagatron. And the difference is clear.

Samarium-cobalt magnets, crystalline aligned diamonds and an array of cantilever constructions are but a few of the latest advances employed in Nagatron cartridges to deliver the clean transients and tonal clarity available from your record grooves.

On the record, it's the best you can do for your records.

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Incredibly smooth, well-defined, powerful. Yet small.

Presenting Yamaha's new NS-10M Mini-Monitor: With wide, even dispersion, high sensitivity and accuracy, the sound is distinctively Yamaha: a rich, solid sound with a tight, firm bass that respects every nuance of tonal shading.

What you're going to wonder, is where it's all coming from. Because for the sound, the Mini-Monitor is amazingly small. Weighing in at 13 lbs., the speaker measures only 5.4" high, 8.5" wide. Inside, a 7" cone woofer and a 1.5" dome tweeter produce 90 dB SPL with 1 watt at 1 meter.

The Mini-Monitor was made in the image of the NS-1000. It has an identical finish, and like its bigger brother, is sold in mirror-image matched pairs. At low volume levels the sound is virtually the same. It's a primary monitor with the NS-1000 look and sound, for places the NS-1000 won't fit.

Our new Mini-Monitor with the powerhouse sound is currently contending with the heavyweights at your Yamaha Audio Specialty Dealer. And holding its own, thank you.

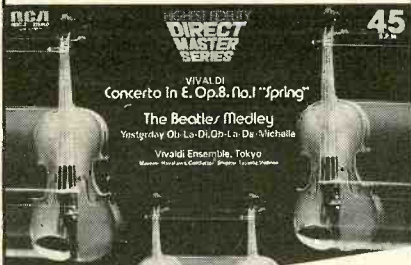


Audio Division P.O. Box 660C, Ueno Park, CA 90622

If you can't find your nearest Yamaha Audio Specialty Dealer in the Yellow Pages, just drop us a line.

"The sound here is quite remarkable...an almost eerie illusion of presence."

Alan Penchansky, Audiophile Recordings Column, *Billboard*, 3/25/78



RCA Direct-to-Disc Recording

Vivaldi's "Spring" (45 RPM) RDC-2 \$14.95 Beatles Medley

You'll agree with Alan Penchansky once you've heard the spectacular sound of the Tokyo Vivaldi Ensemble, captured by RCA/RCA direct-to-disc technology.

Direct-to-disc eliminates the tape recorder to insure maximum dynamic range, wide frequency response, minimum distortion and lowest surface noise. An expert was impressed. You will be too!

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"I enjoyed every bit of both sides,"

Tape and Turntable Column, *Audio*, 4/78



Umbrella Direct-to-Disc Recording

Philip Frank, Violin Bernard Frank, Piano
UMB-DD3 \$14.95

You'll agree with *Audio Magazine* once you hear the exquisite sonatas composed by Eferem Zimbalist Senior and Junior, captured by Umbrella direct-to-disc technology.

Direct-to-disc eliminates the tape recorder to insure maximum dynamic range, wide frequency response, minimum distortion and lowest surface noise. The experts were impressed. You will be too!

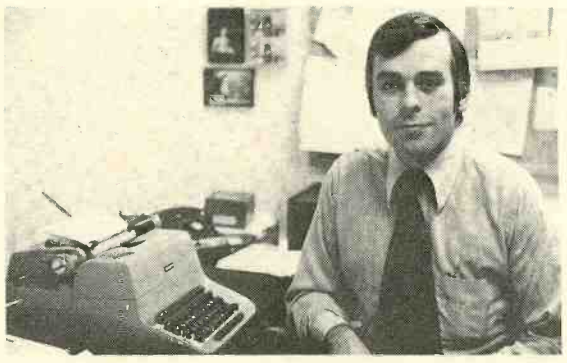
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Audio Basics

By Ralph Hodges



THE WRONG TAPE FOR YOUR MACHINE

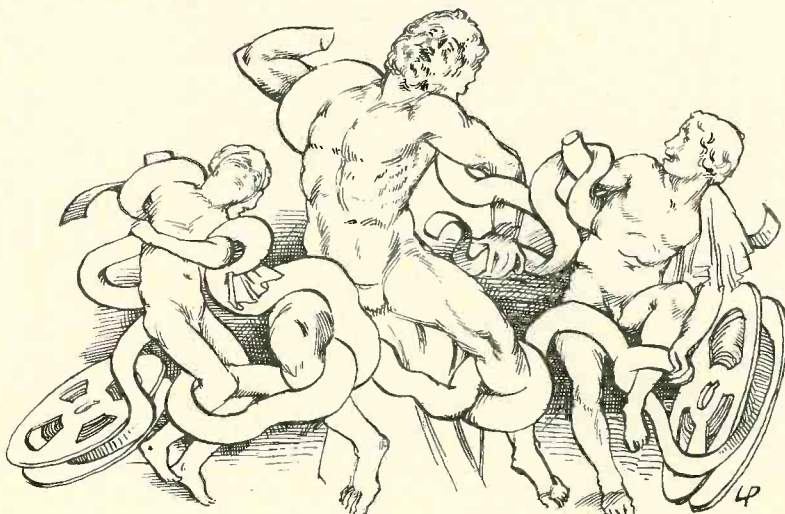
LAST MONTH'S "Bulletin" contained an item about a prominent tape manufacturer's plan to introduce a novel video-cassette system. Since the tape used in the new system is recorded longitudinally, just as in audio recording, I expect that at least a few readers have been wondering whether they could get improved performance from their audio recorders by using the new video tape. In other words, can the "higher" technology of video recording pay dividends with comparatively "lowly" cassette and open-reel audio recorders as well?

Unfortunately, the answer is no. It's true that you can use video tape in an audio recorder—if you can find some way to make it fit the machine (it's not the standard width). But you can't expect improved performance from it. "Higher" technology notwithstanding, video tape is designed for video applications, and although good video tape is both difficult and expensive to make, that fact does not contribute one whit toward making it a good audio tape.

Let's consider a few points in order. First there's the question of longitudinal recording—that is, laying down tracks that run along the length of the tape parallel to its sides. This is the configuration that audio recorders normally work with. Video machines usually lay

down tracks that slant across the tape; in one instance they actually run at right angles to the tape's length. Why so? Well, video applications require a phenomenally high tape speed, but propelling the tape past the heads at such a rate often proves impracticable for a number of reasons. A better idea is to move the tape at a more reasonable speed *and to move the tape heads as well*. Video heads (there are always at least two, and sometimes four) are installed within a rapidly rotating drum around which the tape passes on its way to the take-up reel. These rotating heads whip out slanting (or perpendicular) tracks across the tape surface, managing in the process to make much more use of the available tape surface (that is, they cover more of it) than audio recorders do.

Now, ordinarily, the needle-shaped oxide particles on a tape are physically oriented so that their direction coincides with the direction of tape-head travel. Therefore, one would expect most video tapes to have their oxide coatings oriented at a slant. But this turns out not to be true. For various good technical reasons most video tapes have the same particle orientation as audio tapes; this may lose them a bit of magnetic efficiency in their video applications, but it works out better in the long run when other matters are tak-



en into account. So the reason video tapes do not usually make good audio tapes is not necessarily because they are designed for something other than longitudinal recording. We'll have to look elsewhere for the real answer.

Quite predictably, part of that answer has to do with the tapes' magnetic properties. Video applications require the recording of extremely high frequencies, and video tapes are designed specifically to achieve this. Audio tapes deal with what are, in comparison, very low frequencies. It is possible to make a tape that does a fine job at either high (in the megahertz region) or low (audio-range) frequencies, but it is no easy trick to fashion one that is good at both. For example, when the real push started to turn the cassette into a hi-fi medium, chromium dioxide was seized upon as an excellent material for cassette tapes because its high-frequency performance is especially good, and it is at high frequencies that cassettes generally need the most help. Noting the wonderful job that chrome did for cassettes, many audiophiles looked forward to the availability of 1/4-inch chrome tape for their open-reel machines. But such a tape never really became commercially available, for the simple reason that it was neither necessary nor desirable. Because an open-reel machine is usually operated at at least 7 1/2 ips (four times the 1 7/8-ips speed of a cassette tape) in serious recording applications, any frequency it is called upon to record is in effect four times lower—as far as the tape is concerned—than it would be for a cassette machine. Thus an open-reel audio recorder can be looked upon as a low-frequency device, comparatively speaking. Since all the real benefits of chromium dioxide are realized only at high frequencies (in some formulations chrome is even worse at middle and low frequencies than "ordinary" iron-oxide tape), a chrome tape would be superfluous if not actually detrimental to open-reel performance.

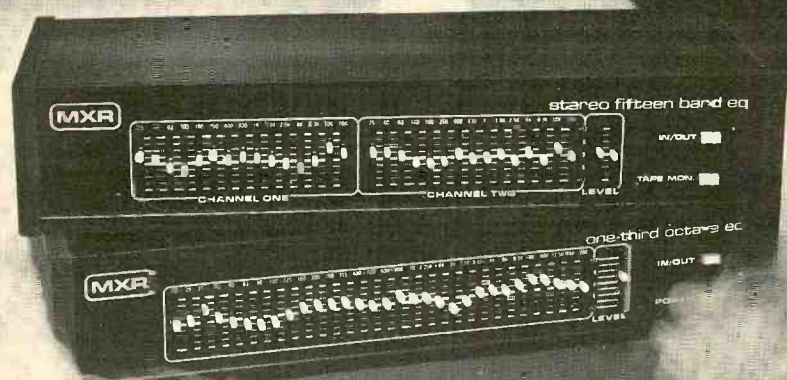
THE story is the same where some other specialized tapes are concerned. Occasionally an audiophile will get the idea that he should be using computer tape for his serious recording. Where, after all, can you find higher technology than in the computer field? In reality, nothing could be worse for audio recording than typical computer tape, which is designed for a job so remote in its requirements from audio work that it's almost impossible to make a comparison. The only thing that can come of using it is an absurdly noisy and wretched-sounding recording.

So it's easy to find the *wrong* tape for your machine, particularly if you make the mistake of believing that a tape that excels in one specialized application is going to shine in all others. Today's open-reel and cassette tapes are actually marvels of engineering. For some years now the cassette producers have been in the forefront of tape development. Any attempt to substitute some other tape type in their shells would make no sense either economically or technically.

The one formulation in sight that might come close to resulting in a good "all-purpose" tape is the new metal-alloy family of magnetic materials, simply because it offers impressive improvements in performance at both low and high frequencies. But metal-alloy technology is just aborning. Give it time to develop and we'll certainly find metal-alloy tapes becoming just as specialized as today's chrome- and iron-oxide formulations. □

Most components just provide recreation

MXR provides Creation



Create with MXR's two newest equalizers, the Stereo Fifteen Band Eq and the One-Third Octave Eq. Two great new eqs that not only put you in complete control of your acoustic environment but provide even more creative contour of your music as well.

The Stereo Fifteen Band Eq is an expanded version of our popular ten band Stereo Graphic Eq. With two channels each having fifteen bands spaced 2/3 of an octave apart, you have even more creative power for berding, shaping, enhancing the sound. No matter how fine your home component system is, problems such as poor room acoustics or program quality may occur. The Stereo-Fifteen Band Eq gives you the control to create the exact sound you desire.

The One-Third Octave Eq goes even further in providing precision control over your system's sound. A single channel unit, its thirty-one frequency bands are spaced 1/3 of an octave apart to give you the most creative power available at any price.

Both units feature a range of -12 to +12 decibels on each band, high slew rate (7V/microsecond) and incredibly wide dynamic range (better than 100 dB). The eqs feature walnut side panels (rack mounting hardware also included) and are built with rugged, reliable MXR quality.

Hear them perform at a fine audio dealer near you, or write MXR Innovations, Inc., 247 N. Goodman St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607.

In all of creation, MXR keeps providing.

Also distributed in Canada by White Electronic Development Corporation, Ontario.



Consumer
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Tape Talk

By Craig Stark



Record on Record

Q. I own a mid-price cassette deck, and I wonder if it is possible to record on top of a previous recording without erasing it. In other words, I want to add the second musical line of a composition after recording the first. Is this possible?

ROB SCHAPIRE
Delmar, N. Y.

A. In a word, no. It is true that you could have a technician wire in a switch that would, on demand, disconnect the erase head, which would otherwise obliterate the first recording completely. But the bias current flowing through the record head itself during your second run-through would, at the very least, destroy the high frequencies on the previously recorded track, or, more likely, reduce it to such a muffled background level that no one would be happy with the result. For the kind of project you have in mind, a four-channel open-reel deck with track-synchronizing facilities is what you need. An open-reel machine with a "sound-on-sound" feature would also work, although not quite as well. Another approach would be to feed the output of your present deck into a small passive mixer (available from many hi-fi dealers) along with the new material. The output of the mixer, fed to a second open-reel or cassette deck, will provide the sort of mix you are after.

Tape Swaps

Q. My friend and I bought identical (two-head) cassette decks so that we could borrow tapes from each other's collections. Recordings made on my machine sound great when played on my deck but lack high frequencies when played on his. His tapes are fine on his machine but have no treble to speak of when played on mine. Can this be corrected?

ED LEPAGE
Milwaukee, Wis.

A. The problem you are experiencing is almost certainly because one (or both) of your decks has a slight azimuth misadjustment of the record/playback head. Ideally, the tape-head gaps should be perfectly perpendicular to the edge of the tape as it flows

across them: this would constitute perfect azimuth alignment. If the head on your machine tilts ever so slightly from ideal azimuth, while that on your friend's inclines just a trifle in the opposite direction, the two azimuth errors combine when you play on one deck a tape that was recorded on the other. And any degree of azimuth error shows itself principally in a loss of high-frequency response. The reason neither of you detect any high-frequency losses when playing your own tapes is that the same head gap is being used for both recording and playback, so there is no relative azimuth change involved.

Adjusting head azimuth to the degree of accuracy that you and your friend obviously desire is a job for a competent technician. And, regrettably, if a readjustment is—as I suspect—called for, it will have some adverse treble effect on the tapes you've already made on the affected machine(s).

Record-level Indicators

Q. I'm confused about cassette record-level meters. Is it better to have a VU meter (perhaps with separate peak-reading LED indicators), a peak-reading meter, or a "post-equalized" peak-reading meter?

CYNTHIA JANIS
Ann Arbor, Mich.

A. This is one of those questions on which honest men (and women) differ, so ultimately "you pays your money and you takes your choice." But you should at least be clear about what the choice is.

The characteristics of the genuine VU meter have been standardized for about forty years, and since I've been recording with them for half that time, it's little wonder that I've grown accustomed to their ways. The salient characteristic of a VU meter is that if you hit it with a 300-millisecond (0.3-second) tone burst of a 0-VU-level 1,000-Hz tone, it will read 0 VU +1.5, -1 per cent—that is, the indicated reading will be within about 0.15 dB. (For bursts of shorter duration the meter will give progressively lower and lower readings.) VU dial scales have standardized calibration from -20 VU to +3 VU and have a percentage marking (useful to broadcasters) of 100 per cent at the 0-VU point.

(Continued on page 40)

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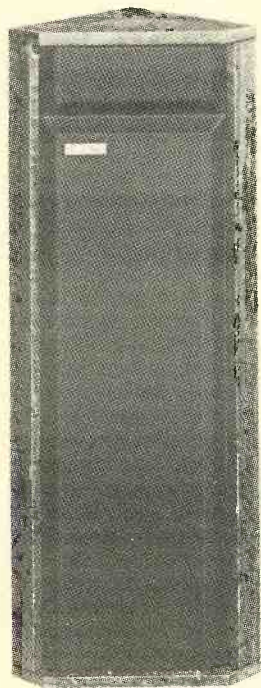
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CIRCLE NO. 42 ON READER SERVICE CARD

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corner speaker system



The ALLISON:THREE™ speaker system, when used in a room corner, has the same performance as that of an ALLISON:ONE™ system placed near a single wall. Its price is \$130 less.

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CIRCLE NO. 3 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Tape Talk . . .

Two things must be noted immediately. First, while most cassette decks have VU-meter dial scales, very few pay any attention to the ballistic characteristic, namely, the response of the needle to a 300-millisecond burst. Julian Hirsch tests this very carefully for his lab reports, but, on decks H-H Labs hasn't tested, don't count on VU-meter needle characteristics unless the manufacturer's literature specifically states "genuine VU ballistics" or words to that effect. Second, not God, but only Bell Labs laid down that 300-millisecond response requirement, and Bell did so in 1939 when, musically speaking, the "fi" wasn't very "hi." VU meters were invented to reflect the perceived loudness ("VU" stands for "volume unit") of speech and restricted-frequency-range music programs at a time when there weren't any commercial tape recorders. That experienced operators can still set levels in today's recording studios using VU meters is a tribute to the remarkably good engineering four decades ago, but, in honesty, it must be admitted that much of what goes into being an "experienced operator" consists in knowing, in an almost unconscious way, when the VU meter may be providing potentially deceptive readings.

Peak-level, not average-level, signals are what cause distortion in tape recorders, because however short the time period selected, at any given instant the tape can hold only so much signal and no more. A meter that (like a true VU device) will hit 0 VU with a 300-millisecond pulse (without overshooting the +3 marking) will give something in between a "peak" and an "average" value with most audio signals, and so it will tend to understate the peak levels. A "peak-reading LED indicator" supplementing a VU meter gives you some useful warning of distortion-causing record levels on brief "transients," but it is probably less useful to most home recordists than a genuine peak-reading meter. Typically, such a meter will indicate the true level of transients as short as 10 milliseconds. To keep peak-level meters from bouncing up and down so quickly the eye has trouble following them, a resistor-capacitor network damps the needle's response. Further, the readable dial scales of peak-reading record indicators can be expanded to show a wider range (from -40 to +5 dB, for example), so that soft musical passages that wouldn't lift the needle off its lower-end stop on a VU meter will at least register visibly on the peak-reading meter.

The final evolutionary step—which a few manufacturers have followed Tandberg's lead in adopting—is the "post-equalization" peak-reading record-level meter. Most record-level indicators, whether of the VU or peak-reading type, meter the signal level *before* the treble boost supplied by the tape deck's record-equalization circuitry. The tape, however, sees not merely "peak" levels but peak levels that have been treble-boosted to overcome anticipated recording losses. Thus, if the purpose of a record-level indicator is to accurately reflect the signal fed to the tape, then an "equalized peak" meter will do the best job. It will steer you to the safest (most conservative) recording level, and for this reason it is the easiest record-level meter to use—at least for a beginner.

Which metering system is "best," then, I

cannot say, for any type will serve the purpose if its attributes and limitations are fully understood.

Big-reel Conversion?

Q. *Couldn't some manufacturing genius invent a pair of extension arms to allow owners of 7-inch reel-to-reel decks to use the larger 10½-inch reels? The add-on reel tables could be belt-driven from the regular reel tables. I'm particularly interested because I'd like to use the 10½-inch reels at 1⅞ ips, and I can't find a 10½-inch-reel deck that will operate at the slow speed. Do the 10½-inch recorder manufacturers think we're all millionaires?*

G. C. DELVILLE
Laguna Hills, Calif.

A. Oh, how I wish such an idea would work (as a hungry young graduate student many years ago, I thought about it myself!), but I'm afraid you've got the laws of physics (along with some very practical problems) working against you. About fifteen years ago, Bell actually manufactured such a device, but they were careful to use separate motors (rather than your belt-drive suggestion) on the extension arms. And, if memory serves, Stelavox, a professional-deck manufacturer (with professional prices), still makes such a machine. But the problems are formidable.

The first problem—which dooms the consumer-deck conversion from the start—has to do with motor "torque," or turning force. A 10½-inch reel of tape weighs about twice as much as a 7-inch reel and it will thus require substantially more torque. Further, to start the reel (when it's full), the motor will need to apply still more torque because the greater radius of the reel means that much less mechanical advantage. At a reasonably conservative estimate, you need a motor with about 4½ times as much torque to handle 10½-inch reels as you do to handle 7-inch reels with the same facility.

And the start-up problem is not the only one. As a practical matter, what do you do for brakes? A 10½-inch reel careering away on high-speed rewind can develop enormous centrifugal forces that can fill the room with flying tape bits unless the brakes are designed to be proportional to the forces they must control smoothly.

You're quite right, of course, that none of the current crop of 10½-inch machines is designed to handle the 1⅞-ips speed. The machines require such oversize driving and braking systems—which ensure a high price to start with—that manufacturers figure tape economy is of less concern to the majority of potential buyers (millionaires or not) than absolutely top quality is. The fact is that at 1⅞ ips you can do a *better* job in terms of fidelity with a cassette deck than with a big-reel machine designed for faster speeds—*unless* you fit the latter with the kind of laboratory-grade, specially built heads used in a manufacturing facility. A playback head gap, for example, that is *optimal* for 15- or 7½-ips operation is likely to be marginal in high-frequency response at 3¾ ips and totally unacceptable (limited to 6,000 to 8,000 Hz tops) at 1⅞ ips. So, in sum, Mr. Delville, unless you're interested in trying to design a machine from scratch rather than modifying an existing 7-inch-reel consumer deck, there are just too many obstacles for me to encourage you.

discover . . .



The inside story of a classic.

Introducing a new type of record cleaner. Meet the CLASSIC 1, the only cleaner of its kind. Developed to satisfy you, the discriminating audiophile.

Neutralizing the static charges that attract and hold destructive micro-particles of dust and dirt on your record's surface is one of the major problems in record care.

Ordinary cleaners attempt to reduce static charges by applying fluid directly to the surface of the record or cleaning unit. Direct application of fluid involves an inherent risk of harmful residue build-up and should be avoided except in the case of abnormally dirty or greasy records. In fact, normal maintenance should not involve wetting the record.

At last, the CLASSIC 1 has the answer to safe and effective cleaning. Not only are static charges reduced, but the problem of residue formation is eliminated. Cleaning is safe and effective because inside the CLASSIC 1 is



the exclusive MICRO STOR SYSTEM which utilizes a humidification/cleaning process rather than a 'wet' technique.

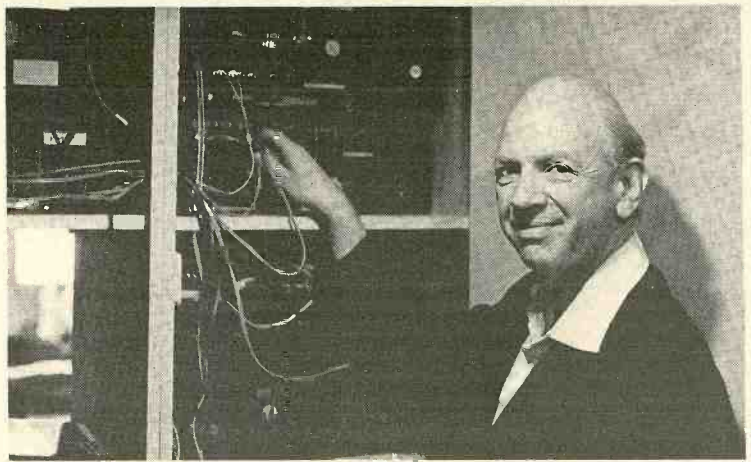
The secret to the MICRO STOR SYSTEM is a permeable matrix of many thousands of tiny glass beads which retain the cleaning fluid. Through capillary action, a vapor penetrates the velvet surface creating a field of humidity sufficient to reduce static charges. Disc contaminants can now be removed safely and easily without wetting the record and risking residue build-up.

Discover the ultimate in record care. The CLASSIC 1, a Sound Saver product.

Available at finer audio dealers . . .

Technical Talk

By Julian D. Hirsch



• Cartridge Measurements—Read with Care! •

FROM time to time I have warned against accepting any phono-cartridge measurement at face value. For one thing, there is no such thing as making a cartridge measurement without a test record, and the test record *must* be specified if the measurement is to have any validity.

In a recent conversation, a representative of a manufacturer of high-quality cartridges pointed out certain discrepancies, particularly in channel separation, between our published test report on one of his products and the data he obtained on that same product in his own laboratories. Both of us understood the reason for the discrepancy, since in our test reports we plainly state that we use a CBS STR 100 record for frequency response and channel-separation measurements and the cartridge manufacturer used a different disc. (His experience with the STR 100 record, by the way, tended to confirm our data.)

Nevertheless, the published ratings on the cartridge in question were considerably better than our test findings, and the manufacturer was understandably concerned lest readers not aware of the limitations of cartridge testing assume that his claims were unjustified or exaggerated. Our conversation led me into a brief but revealing comparative study of the effects of the test record on the key measurements of frequency response and channel separation. The role of the cartridge loading and the tone arm have been discussed in earlier "Technical Talk" articles.

Most cartridge manufacturers use the Bruel & Kjaer 2009 test record for their cartridge testing, and when an individually run response curve is included with a cartridge (as on some of the more expensive models) it is generally made on B&K equipment with their record. The B&K graphic level recorder is widely used throughout the world, especially since it interfaces with many other B&K instruments used for audio and acoustic measurements. Thus, it is quite reasonable for laboratories already equipped with B&K instruments to use the B&K record for their cartridge measurements, and a number of independent manufacturers of test records have also designed theirs to be used with the B&K recorder.

In case anyone is wondering why the record

and the recorder are so inextricably linked, it is because the sweep characteristics of the record must match the chart speed and calibration of the recorder. If a record sweeps logarithmically from 20 to 20,000 Hz in a given time period, the recorder's chart paper must be calibrated correctly and move at the prescribed speed for correct readout.

Although B&K is probably the dominant manufacturer of such test instruments in the world today, there are other records based on the use of GenRad (formerly General Radio) recorders. All the test discs in the CBS Technology Center series and the STEREO REVIEW SRT 14 record have their sweeps timed to match the GR recorder and its calibrated chart paper. At H-H Labs, we use the GR recorder and CBS records, and we have found them to be generally satisfactory.

However, it seems that many of today's cartridges have a better separation characteristic than is "built into" the CBS STR 100 (the "workhorse" of the CBS record series). The separation data we obtain are simply not representative of what many manufacturers claim and really *do* achieve when their specified test records are used. The majority of cartridge manufacturers do not specify their test records, and therefore we do not worry unduly about matching their often scanty specifications. Although this situation is not really fair to the manufacturers concerned, there is no solution presently in sight. Perhaps one day an IHF phono-cartridge measurement standard will be issued, at which time cartridge measurements will be-

come at least as repeatable and meaningful as those of today's tuners and amplifiers.

For the foreseeable future, we expect to continue to use the CBS records for the main part of our cartridge measurements, but in some cases we may supplement the test data with spot frequency-separation measurements made with more advanced records. To illustrate the magnitude of the problem, we measured the frequency response and channel separation of a high-quality phono cartridge with a number of different test records, keeping all other test conditions constant. The results, for me, reinforce what I have long said: *no* cartridge rating or performance specifications should be accepted without question, whether they come from the manufacturer or from an independent reviewer, as indicators of *absolute* cartridge performance (which is a meaningless concept at any rate). Measurements show only how a cartridge performed with a given test record, and they can be used quite legitimately in comparing different cartridges.

FOR frequency-response measurements on our test cartridge, we used two samples of the CBS STR 100 record. One was several years old and had been used for testing many cartridges. The other was brand new, from the latest pressing run of the record, and our curve was taken on its very first playing. We also used a CBS STR 170 record that is similar to the STR 100 but with a smooth transition from constant velocity to constant amplitude at 500 Hz.

The other records were designed for use with the B&K recorder. We had to recalibrate the frequency scales on our charts to match their sweep rates and replot them for comparison with the CBS test records. One was the Denon 7001, which we have used for some time for measuring low-frequency arm resonances. The other was the JVC TRS-1007. Both sweep from 20 to 20,000 Hz in synchronism with the B&K recorder chart. Finally, we used an Audio-Technica AT-6605 record, which has discrete bands at a number of frequencies, including 1, 10, 15, 20, and 30 kHz. These are primarily for measuring channel separation.

As a check on our measurements, we had

Tested This Month

BGW Model 210 Power Amplifier
Ultralinear 228 Speaker System
J.C. Penney Model 3275 Receiver
Koss Pro/4 AAA Stereo Headphones
Realistic SCT-30 Cassette Deck

CHANNEL-SEPARATION DATA FOR ONE PHONO CARTRIDGE AS MEASURED WITH SEVEN DIFFERENT TEST RECORDS

	1 kHz	10 kHz	15 kHz	20 kHz	30 kHz
CBS STR 100 (old)	18.5/25.5	21/21	20/15	15.5/12.5	—
CBS STR 100 (new)	18.5/31	22/23.5	23/17	18/15.5	—
CBS STR 170	18/24	19/24	20/21	20/22	—
Denon 7001	22/24	23/19.5	25/18	26.5/17	—
JVC TRS-1007	24/24	22.5/23	23.5/23	23.5/25	—
AT-6605	28/25	26/22	20/19	20/17	24/30

Separation measurements provided by the manufacturer for the same cartridge as above, but with different test discs, record player, and testing setup.

JVC TRS-1007	33/32	31/32	29/29	27/27	—
B&K 2009	21.5/21	21.5/21	17.5/20.5	17/17	—

The numbers above are channel separation in decibels at the indicated frequencies. The first number is the left-channel measurement, the second the right-channel measurement.

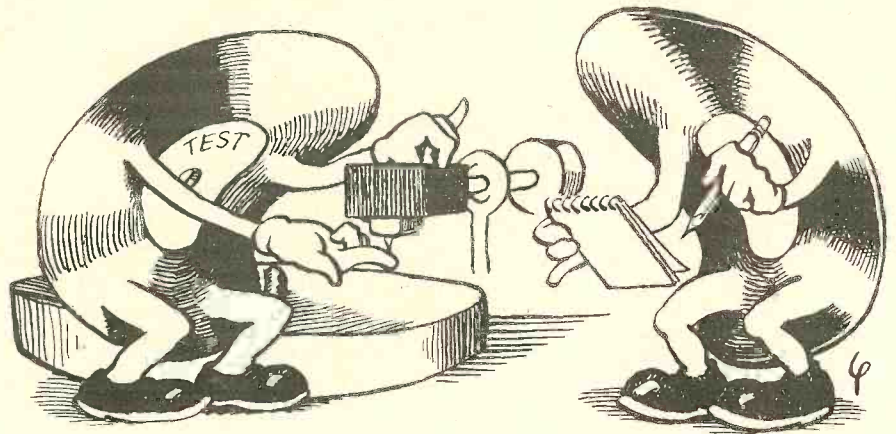
An example of the wide variation in separation figures that can be obtained from the same high-grade phono cartridge measured with seven different test discs. Note the surprising discrepancies between channels at various test frequencies.

gave very similar response curves, which was also unexpected.

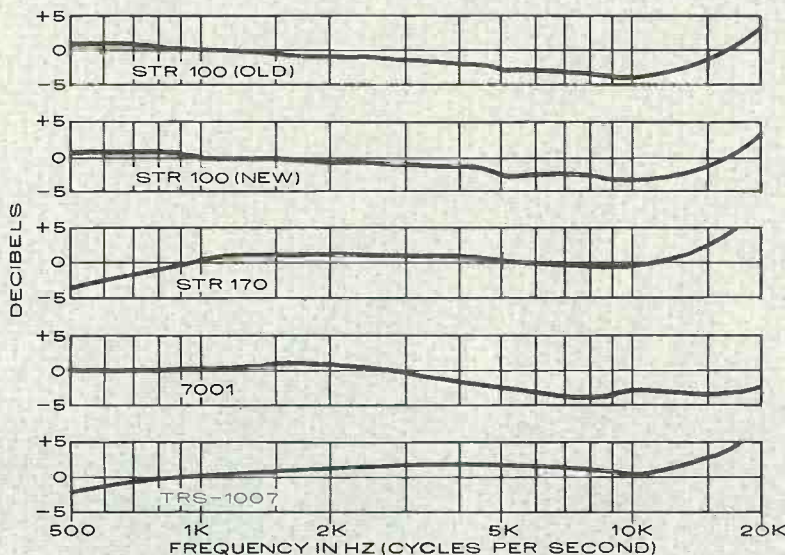
The chart of channel-separation data is much more striking in its implications. Notice that the Japanese test records yield higher separation figures, in general, than the CBS records, outstripping them by 6 to 10 dB at 1,000 Hz. No wonder the manufacturer felt that his cartridge was not getting its due from our tests! We were somewhat disturbed to find that his measurements on the same cartridge, using the JVC record, produced separation figures well beyond what we could achieve in our tests. However, except for the cartridge itself, the two sets of data had nothing in common—different arms, loading, and test records were used. We noted, too, that the manufacturer's data produced by the B&K 2009 record were for the most part not as good as we were typically getting from the CBS test records.

THE difference between the two separation figures (L and R channels) tells us something about the symmetry, or lack of it, in the records and the cartridge. At one time, we would have suspected that the cartridge was

data run on the same sample of the cartridge by its manufacturer, using both the JVC TRS-1007 and B&K 2009 records. The plotted curves show the frequency response of the right channel of the cartridge from 500 to 20,000 Hz, as measured in our laboratory. Somewhat to our surprise, the old and new CBS STR 100 records gave virtually identical frequency-response and channel-separation curves. Although we could see little sign of wear in the CBS records (the old one perhaps ought to have been retired years ago, yet its output was almost indistinguishable from that of the new, virgin pressing), it was plain that the inherent channel separation in this record was far inferior to that of some other records. Except for the Denon 7001, all the records



Frequency response of one phono cartridge as tested with five different test discs. It should be clear from the curves that the "true" frequency response of any cartridge cannot be reliably derived from a measurement using a single test disc.



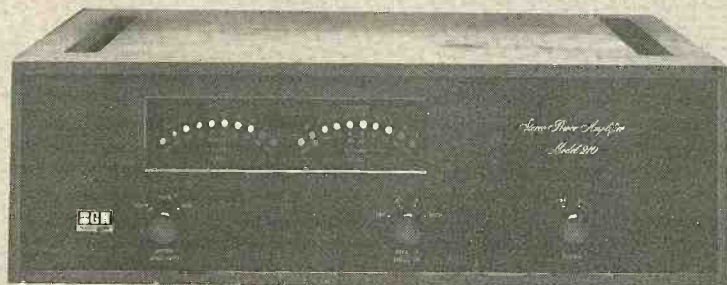
asymmetrical, but the almost perfect crosstalk symmetry obtained with the JVC TRS-1007 record was too good to be a coincidence, and in this case we must conclude that the cartridge in question is almost perfectly symmetrical and that the differences we measured were properties of the various test records.

To sum up: our measurements with the CBS records can still be used to compare cartridge frequency response and even to compare the channel separation of most cartridges, although the numbers may not agree with a given manufacturer's specifications. If we measure a channel separation of, say, 15 dB at 10,000 Hz and the manufacturer of the unit claims 25 dB, do not leap to the hasty conclusion that he is exaggerating or that we are in error. Probably neither party is at fault, and the discrepancy arises simply because of the different test records we are using for our measurements.

THIS MONTH'S TEST REPORTS BEGIN ON THE NEXT PAGE

Equipment Test Reports

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories



BGW Model 210
Stereo Power Amplifier

THE BGW Model 210 is a basic stereo power amplifier rated to deliver 100 watts per channel to 8-ohm loads from 20 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.07 per cent harmonic distortion. Instead of output meters, the BGW 210 has two groups of colored LED indicators, formed in arcs to simulate conventional meter scales. Each "meter" has ten LED's calibrated in decibels at 3-dB intervals from 0 dB (the rated 100-watt output into 8 ohms) to -15 dB (about a 3-watt output). From -15 to -33 dB they are in 6-dB steps, and the -33-dB light corresponds to about a 50-milliwatt output. The last LED is marked *idle* and is on, serving as a pilot light, even without a signal present. The 0 and -3-dB lights are red to warn of possible overload, and the -6- to -15-dB lights are amber. Below -15 dB they are green.

Underneath the LED arrays is a knob-operated switch that increases the display sensitivity by either 10 or 20 dB. In the most sensitive condition, the -33-dB light will glow at only 5 milliwatts output. Another knob con-

nnects either, both, or neither of two sets of speaker-output terminals to the amplifier outputs, and a third knob is the power switch. On the rear apron of the amplifier are the phono-jack inputs and two sets of speaker outputs that use insulated spring connectors. The heavy-duty line cord has a three-wire molded plug. The BGW 210 is finished in black throughout. Its front panel has standard rack-mount dimensions of 19 x 5¼ inches but is not slotted for rack mounting. The depth of the amplifier is 11¾ inches, and its weight is 33½ pounds. Price: \$599. A cabinet is available for \$36.

• **Laboratory Measurements.** Our test sample of the BGW 210 came with neither an instruction manual nor specifications, and the one-page preliminary manual had no information on any special design or operating features of the amplifier. Therefore, all we knew of it at the time of our tests was what we managed to measure for ourselves.

The one-hour preconditioning period at a

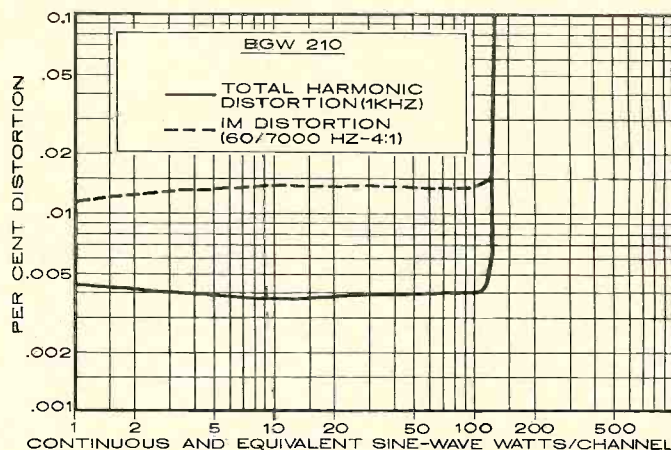
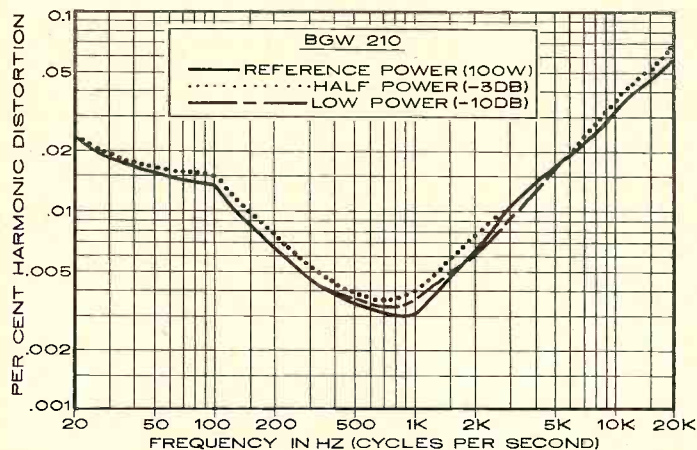
33.3-watt output left the amplifier only slightly warm. With both channels driven at 1,000 Hz into 8-ohm loads, the outputs clipped at 114 watts per channel (IHF clipping headroom = 0.57 dB). The IHF dynamic headroom was 1.02 dB. An input of 0.14 volt was needed to drive the amplifier to a reference output of 1 watt, and the A-weighted noise in the output was less than our 100-microvolt minimum measuring capability, or more than 90 dB below 1 watt.

When the amplifier was driven to rated power at 1,000 Hz and the frequency was increased at constant input level, the distortion did not reach 1 per cent below the 50-kHz upper measurement limit of our Radford distortion analyzer. Thus, we can only say that the IHF slew factor exceeded 2.5 (the ratio of 50,000 Hz to 20,000 Hz).

At 1,000 Hz, the harmonic distortion of the amplifier was almost constant at about 0.004 per cent from 0.1 to 110 watts output. The IM distortion was about 0.014 per cent from 0.1 to 120 watts. Even at only 3 milliwatts output, the IM was only 0.06 per cent, attesting to the relative absence of crossover distortion in the amplifier.

At rated power, one-half power, and one-tenth power, the distortion curves were virtually identical over the full 20- to 20,000-Hz audio band. Below 100 Hz, our readings were essentially the residual distortion of the Radford oscillator, which was in the range of 0.014 to 0.025 per cent between 100 and 20 Hz. At higher frequencies, the distortion dropped to a minimum of about 0.003 to 0.004 per cent at 1,000 Hz and then increased smoothly at higher frequencies to a maximum of about 0.06 per cent at 20,000 Hz. Not only was the LED power-output display reasonably accurate, but we felt that it was somewhat easier to read and interpret than a conventional meter pointer.

• **Comment.** Judging from the cool operation of the BGW 210, the conservative approach
(Continued on page 46)



The most powerful argument for our new receiver is not just power.



True, it's tempting to be swept up by our power.

150 watts per channel minimum RMS at 8 ohms, from 20Hz to 20kHz, with no more than 0.07% Total Harmonic Distortion, is nothing to sneeze at.

But raw power means nothing. What's important is how that power is delivered. In the case of the STR-V7, it's brought to you by Sony in a very classy package.

You get a combination of features and controls that are impressive on their own—but almost unheard of in a single machine.

To start with, we've built in a Dolby system, for decoding Dolbyized FM broadcasts.

The advantages of our tuner,

though, need no decoding. They include a normal and narrow FM IF bandwidth selector. It makes life simple for people in areas where their signals are crowded together elbow to elbow.

In our preamp section, the V7 comes equipped with a special phono EQ circuitry. Thanks to Sony's high IQ, it allows for direct connection of a low-output, moving-coil cartridge phono source. Without calling for an external step-up transformer or pre-amp.

When you're gifted with as much power as the V7, you need a way to keep track of it. This receiver keeps tabs with two power-output meters, monitoring the power being fed to the speakers. So overload can't result from oversight.

And all that power comes from our direct coupled DC power amp. And our power is stable, thanks to a high-efficiency, high regulation toroidal-coil transformer.

There's a lot more to the STR-V7 than power. This receiver takes the best that contemporary technology has to offer, and offers it in a single machine.

Other manufacturers may have the power to bring you power. But only Sony has the power to bring you more than just power.

SONY® AUDIO

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CIRCLE NO. 58 ON READER SERVICE CARD

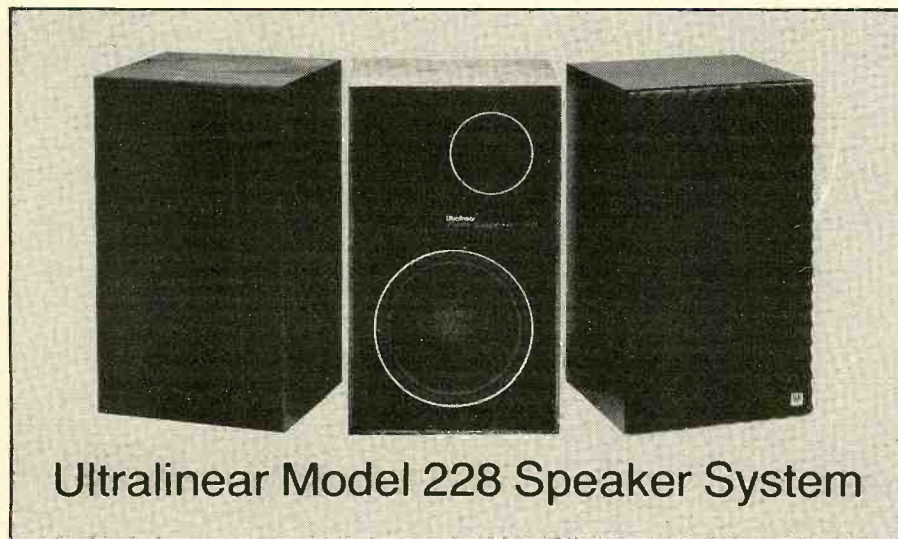
of using a full-size, fairly heavy amplifier to deliver a rated power of only 100 watts can generate worthwhile dividends in potential longevity (heat is the greatest enemy of electronic components). We noted with interest that the BGW 210 is identical in size (and very

similar in appearance) to its 200-watt-per-channel relative, the 410.

The amplifier was quiet (electrically) and did not generate any audible turn-on or turn-off transients. Indeed, its measured performance could hardly be improved upon from

any practical standpoint. As 100-watt amplifiers go, it is not cheap, but it appears to be as solid and well constructed a unit as anyone could desire.

Circle 136 on reader service card



fairly low, as would be expected from an acoustic-suspension design. Driven by 1 watt of random noise in an octave centered at 1,000 Hz, the system produced an 85-dB sound-pressure level at a distance of 1 meter.

The woofer distortion was measured with close microphone spacing and with the system driven at a constant input level corresponding to either 1 or 10 watts. The 1-watt distortion was very low from 100 Hz down to 65 Hz (under 1 per cent and typically about 0.5 per cent). It rose smoothly at lower frequencies to a maximum of about 8 per cent at 40 Hz, and that level of distortion was maintained down to 30 Hz. The 10-watt distortion characteristic was similar in shape, measuring 1.5 to 2.5 per cent down to 65 Hz and 20 per cent at 40 Hz before dropping back slightly to 16 per cent at 30 Hz.

● **Comment.** Compared with some other speakers known to have an essentially flat high-frequency response, the Ultralinear Model 228 tended to sound a little bright, although we found its crispness very easy to listen to and soon preferred its sound to the more subdued high ends of the other systems with which we compared it. The lack of deep bass was not as noticeable as one might have expected from the measurements, probably because the 75-Hz peak gave an impression of bass output that was believable even if not "true." Nevertheless, we consider the speaker's rated low-frequency limit of 27 Hz to be unrealistic.

We preferred to operate both level controls at maximum, because our listening room is fairly "dead" and a strong high end does not produce an overbearing sound at the listening position. There was a slight accentuation of background hiss with this speaker compared with flatter systems, but on quiet program material the effect was minimal. In a more "live" room (which would require a lower tweeter setting), it would be easy to adjust the high end to suit almost any taste.

We did not trip the protective circuit breakers at any time, although we made no deliberate attempt to do so. These speakers can be played at a considerable level without damage to them or to the sensibilities of the listeners, but we preferred to listen to them for our enjoyment at reasonable levels.

We found the sound to be best with the speakers on stands that elevated them about 7 inches from the carpeted floor. Any bass reinforcement that might be achieved by floor or corner mounting brought with it an increase in the bass-resonance peak that we felt negated any other benefits. In the final listening position, male voices were reproduced with clarity and without undue emphasis of the mid-bass, something not achieved by many speakers.

(Continued on page 48)

THE Ultralinear Model 228 is a compact, three-way speaker system suitable for shelf or floor mounting. Its 12-inch-diameter acoustic-suspension woofer crosses over at 700 Hz to a 6-inch cone driver, with a compliant foam-edge surround, that is mounted in its own separately sealed sub-enclosure. At 4,500 Hz, there is a second crossover to a 1-inch Mylar-dome tweeter. Front-panel controls (behind the grille) provide level adjustment of the mid-range and high-frequency drivers from maximum to fully off. Next to the level controls is the reset button for the circuit breaker that protects the drivers against damage from excessive input levels. The input connectors, recessed into the rear of the cabinet, are spring-loaded.

The Model 228 is available with a choice of several finishes, including simulated walnut grain with a protective Melamine coating and oak or walnut veneers. The grille, which is retained by Velcro fasteners, is available with a choice of open-mesh black fabric (which Ultralinear calls "Transparacoustic"), a brown double-knit fabric, and a herringbone-pattern acoustic foam in black or brown.

The nominal impedance of the Ultralinear Model 228 system is 8 ohms, and it has a rated frequency response of 27 to 22,000 Hz (with no tolerance stated). It is recommended for use with amplifiers from 10 to 65 watts per channel. The Model 228 is 24 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches high, 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, and 12 inches deep; it weighs about 40 pounds. Price: \$189.95 in simulated walnut finish.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** In the absence of other information, we set both level controls to maximum for our measurements. The

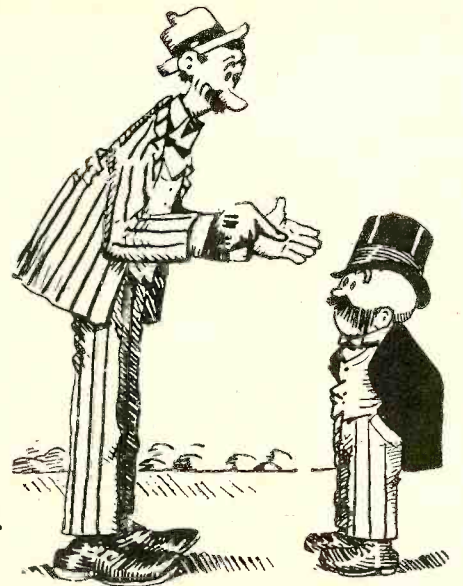
smoothed and corrected frequency response from 100 to 20,000 Hz, measured in the reverberant field of the test room, was spliced to the close-miked woofer-response curve from 20 to 100 Hz to form a single composite frequency-response curve.

Although the woofer is stated to be an acoustic-suspension design, it appears to have a rather stiff suspension, giving it a resonance at 75 Hz in the relatively large cabinet. A bass-response peak also occurred at 75 Hz, falling off at 12 dB per octave below that frequency. There was a moderate amount of mid-range unevenness, with a maximum overall variation of about 7 dB between 100 and 1,000 Hz. At higher frequencies the output was smooth and strong, rising slightly to a maximum of +2.5 dB between 12,000 and 17,000 Hz and with a variation of only ± 3 dB from 900 to 20,000 Hz. The overall frequency response of the speaker was ± 5 dB from 53 to 20,000 Hz. Its high-frequency dispersion was very good, with less than 5 dB difference in the 10,000- to 20,000 Hz range between measurements made on axis and up to 30 degrees off axis.

The tweeter level control affected the output above 4,500 Hz, with a steep cutoff when it was set to its minimum. The mid-range control had a much less obvious effect because the woofer and tweeter tended to "fill in" the gap left in the mid-range when it was turned down.

The impedance of the system was remarkably uniform (a constant 8 to 10 ohms from 20 to 20,000 Hz) except for the rise to 20 ohms at the 75-Hz bass resonance. The tone-burst response of the system was good at all frequencies. The system sensitivity (efficiency) was

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Here you have two of the newest additions to the AR range.

The little fellow (AR18) sells for about \$70. The big guy (AR9) is approximately \$750.

Each, in its own way, is formidable.

If you're ready to spend over \$1000 for a pair of speakers you'll be 'demo-ing' some pretty exotic hardware. Even so, the AR9 is practically guaranteed to boggle your mind. Stuff that costs a lot more won't sound as clean and strong, and give you such an impeccable stereo image.

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That's the AR secret. One standard for all speakers.

Truth in listening.



Truth In Listening

So, while the big guy will handle up to 400 watts per channel, vs 100 watts for the small one (both driven to clipping 10% of the time and using normal source material)...and while there's a difference in the sound levels and the bass, both have the same flat response and satisfying sound.

It means that no matter how big your room or your bank account, you don't have to settle for less than the highest quality speaker delivering high quality sound.

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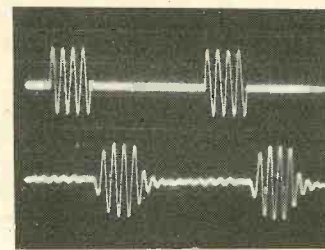
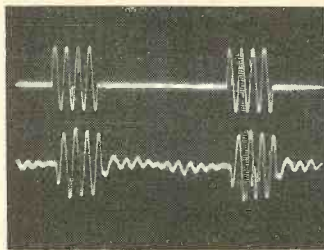
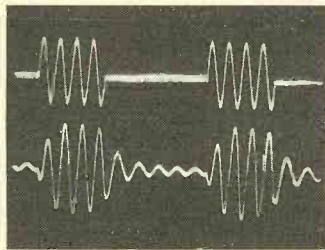


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CIRCLE NO. 2 ON READER SERVICE CARD

The fine tone-burst response of the Ultralinear 228 is illustrated at (left to right) 100, 1,000, and 15,000 Hz. The upper trace is the input signal.



ers with greater pretensions to extended bass response.

The Ultralinear 228 is a very attractive looking and sounding system at a correspondingly attractive price. So far as we can deter-

mine, its design is completely conventional, but its fine sound testifies that its designers knew what they were doing. One of our two test units had the simulated walnut finish, the other the genuine walnut. Both were very at-

tractive, with the unadorned black grille revealing the circular metal rims of the mid-range and bass drivers in the front view.

Circle 137 on reader service card



J. C. Penney Model 3275 AM/FM Stereo Receiver

THE J. C. Penney name is well known to American consumers, but not in connection with hi-fi components. That is about to change, however, for the giant retail chain has recently introduced a complete line of audio components marketed as the MCS (Modular Component Systems) Series. Their finest receiver is the Model 3275, which is distinctively different from its competitors in styling and control features.

Although the Penney 3275 is a large, heavy receiver, it is rated conservatively at 75 (or 80) watts per channel into 8-ohm loads from 20 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.25 per cent total harmonic distortion. Both power figures appear in the literature accompanying the receiver; we tested it to the higher rating. The tuning-dial scales across the top of the panel are flanked by a small meter and a row of red LED's that form a segmented horizontal line. The meter reads either FM deviation (modulation percentage on a scale of 0 to 120

per cent) or multipath-distortion effects, as selected by a pushbutton on the front panel.

The row of LED's is the receiver's only tuning aid, and it functions as a relative-signal-strength indicator for both FM and AM. Its twelve segments are illuminated sequentially, beginning at the left, in proportion to signal strength. Below them is a small red FM MPX light that indicates reception of a stereo broadcast.

Instead of the usual two or three tone controls, the Penney 3275 has a five-band graphic equalizer with separate controls for each channel. The centers of the controlled frequency bands are at 60, 240, 1,000, 4,000, and 16,000 Hz. Unlike most graphic equalizers, the Penney system does not use slider controls. Instead, each control is a small knob with eleven detented positions: center flat, plus five positions each of boost or cut over a ± 10 -dB nominal range. To show the response shape, there is a vertical row of five red

LED's above each knob. When the knobs are centered (or when the DEFEAT button for that channel is engaged) the center LED's are lit. Advancing or turning back a knob setting by two steps causes the center light to extinguish and the one above or below it to glow, and so on. Thus, the approximate shape of the response curve is outlined by the glowing LED's, which are joined by black lines on the panel to suggest a frequency-response curve.

There is some ambiguity in the display, since shifting a knob by one step does not necessarily change the lights. This could lead one to think that the response had not been modified (or that it was the same on both channels) when in fact this was not so. In any case, this sort of adjustment should really be done by ear and not by eye.

The lower half of the panel contains a number of operating controls. Near the center is a large, stepped volume-control knob, marked ATTENUATOR, with a smaller BALANCE knob to its left. At the lower right, under the tuning knob, is the receiver's only remaining knob control, the FUNCTION switch. It has positions for FM, AM, PHONO 1, PHONO 2, and AUX inputs.

Pushbutton switches control the two pairs of speaker outputs, the FM-multipath/deviation meter function, FM MUTING, and an external FM Dolby adaptor (through input/output jacks similar to the tape-monitoring circuits). The FM de-emphasis is changed automatically from 75 to 25 microseconds when the Dolby button is pressed.

Power meters monitor the audio outputs of the two channels. Though small, they have logarithmic scales calibrated from 0.005 to 150 watts. Across the bottom of the panel are several toggle switches, including two for the low and high filters. These provide cutoffs at 20 or 60 Hz and at 8 or 12 kHz, and each has a center "flat" position. The AF MUTE switch drops the audio level by 20 dB for temporary interruptions, and a MODE switch selects either stereo or mono operation from any source. To the left of these controls are the headphone jack and the power switch.

In the lower-right portion of the panel are
(Continued on page 50)

If your choice is sonic excellence over watts per dollar, you'll prefer one of these LUX tuner/amplifiers.

LUX amplifiers and tuners, whether single-chassis or separates, were never intended to compete with typical receivers—those that equate output power with performance. We have a different attitude.

Our audiophile/engineers design for those subtle amplifier and tuner qualities that contribute significantly to sonic performance under actual musical conditions. We're interested in more than the way our equipment measures during sine-wave lab testing. We're vitally concerned with the way it performs in the real world with musical material.

So it's no wonder the acclaim that initially greeted our separate amplifiers and tuners has been matched by our combined tuner/amplifiers.

For example, *Stereo Review* said this about the Luxman R-1050: "The excellent audio-distortion ratings... obviously place it among the cleanest of the currently available receivers... operation and handling (is) as smooth and bug-free as its fine appearance would suggest."

High Fidelity described our R-1120 this way: "As beautiful to behold as to hear... an effortless quality to the sound that just radiates class... the

FM tuner is impressive, to say the least."

And *Audio* summed it up with this: "Lux seems to have the ability to produce product after product that just sounds better."

Our tuner/amplifiers come in a wide range of power to suit every need (and speaker efficiency) from a top of 120 watts per channel for the R-1120 to 30 watts for the new, modestly-priced R-1030.

Whichever of our four models you choose, you'll get only one standard of sonic excellence.

LUX.

LUX Audio of America, Ltd.

160 Dupont Street, Plainview, New York 11803 • In Canada: White Electronics Development Corp., Ontario



Luxman R-1120. 120 watts per channel, total harmonic distortion no more than 0.03%. Switchable turnover points. 12-LED peak level display with selectable sensitivity. Closed-loop FM tuning circuit. Direct-coupled preamplifier equalizer stage and direct-coupled DC power amplifier. Outputs and switching for electrostatic speakers.

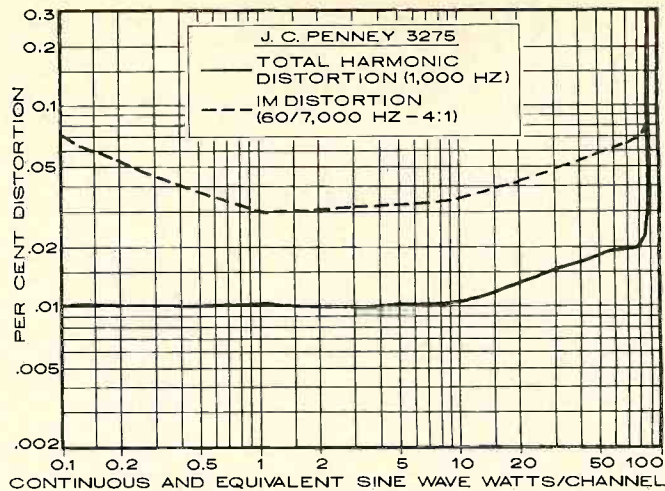
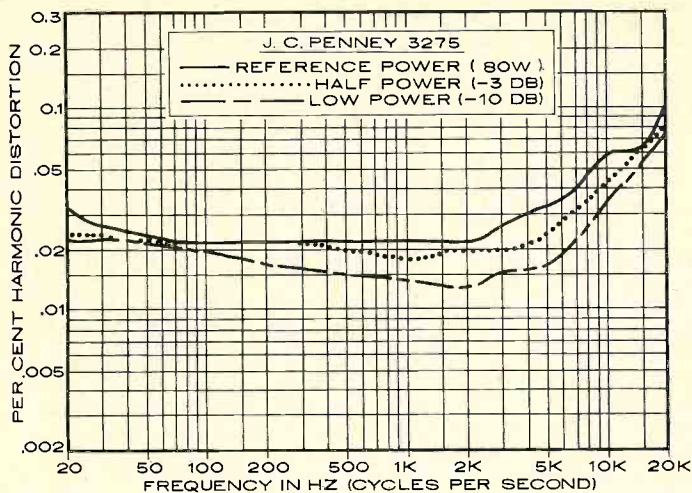
Luxman R-1050. 55 watts per channel, total harmonic distortion no more than 0.05%. * 12-LED peak level display with selectable sensitivity. Dual-gate MOSFET front end. Direct-coupled preamplifier equalizer stage and direct-coupled DC power amplifier. Connections for two decks, two phonos, auxiliary; tape-to-tape dubbing.

Luxman R-1040. 40 watts per channel, total harmonic distortion no more than 0.05%. * 12-LED peak level display with selectable sensitivity. Special negative feedback-type bass and treble controls. Tuner section with linear-phase filters and phase-locked-loop multiplex IC. Direct-coupled preamplifier equalizer stage and direct-coupled DC power amplifier.

And the new Luxman R-1030. 30 watts per channel. Our lowest-priced tuner/amplifier, yet total harmonic distortion is no more than 0.05%. * Among its features: our special negative-feedback tone controls.

*Minimum continuous power, both channels driven into 8 ohms, 20-20 kHz.





the remaining three toggle switches, for the LOUDNESS, TAPE MONITOR, and TAPE DUBBING functions. Two tape decks can be controlled from the receiver, including dubbing from either machine to the other and monitoring from either one.

On the rear apron of the receiver, screw-type binding posts are used for the speaker and antenna connections, and there is a hinged ferrite-rod AM antenna. Two of the three a.c. convenience outlets are switched. The Penney 3275 receiver is 19¼ inches wide, 7¾ inches high, and 15¾ inches deep. It weighs about 38½ pounds. Price: \$600.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Because of its considerable size, the Penney 3275 did not become hot during the one hour preconditioning period at one-third rated power, except on the metal grille directly over the output transistors. The power output at clipping into 8-ohm loads at 1,000 Hz was 90 watts per channel, and IHF clipping headroom was 0.5 dB. The IHF dynamic headroom was also 0.5 dB, indicating that the power supply of the receiver had tight regulation (since it delivered the same maximum power on either a short-term or a continuous basis). Although the receiver does not carry a 4-ohm rating, we measured clipping at 132 watts per channel output into 4 ohms. This did not trip its protective circuits (a relay cuts off the outputs of the receiver in the event of overdriving or an internal circuit failure).

A reference power output of 1 watt required an input of 17 millivolts (mV) through the AUX inputs or 0.235 mV through the phono inputs. The signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) was nearly the same through both inputs, respectively 69.5 and 68.6 dB referred to 1 watt (with A-weighting). The phono preamplifier overloaded at the rated 200 mV at 1,000 Hz, and at 20,000 Hz it overloaded at 1,600 mV, which is equivalent to 168 mV at 1,000 Hz. Both figures represent excellent phono dynamic range. We measured the phono-input impedance as 50,000 ohms in parallel with 150 picofarads.

In view of the amplifier section's official distortion rating of 0.25 per cent, we were pleasantly surprised to find the distortion far lower than that under any measurement condition (it never approached 0.25 per cent unless it was clipping). At 1,000 Hz, the THD was typically about 0.01 per cent, reaching 0.02 per cent in the 70- to 80-watt output

range. The IM distortion was about 0.03 per cent at most power levels and less than 0.07 per cent from 0.1 to 85 watts output (it did rise at very low power levels, reaching 0.45 per cent at about 3 milliwatts output).

The excellent performance of the power amplifier was maintained across the full audio band. At rated power (80 watts), the distortion was between 0.02 and 0.03 per cent from 20 to 4,000 Hz, reaching its maximum of 0.1 per cent at 20,000 Hz. At lower power levels the distortion curve was similar but with slightly lower magnitudes. The IHF slew factor exceeded 2.5, which is our measurement limit.

The graphic equalizer had the expected response, with considerable overlap between adjacent controls. As we confirmed by use tests, they can do a most effective job of correcting for broad-response characteristics of speakers, listening room, or program material. They are far more effective than conventional tone controls for this purpose.

The filters were of little value, having 6-dB-per-octave slopes. The response curves of the 8-kHz and 12-kHz filters were down 3 dB at those frequencies, the 20-Hz filter was down 3 dB at 25 Hz, and, for some reason, the 60-Hz filter was down 3 dB at 200 Hz. The loudness compensation boosted both low and high frequencies, but moderately enough so that it was at least listenable, in contrast to many

loudness circuits that provide excessive frequency compensation.

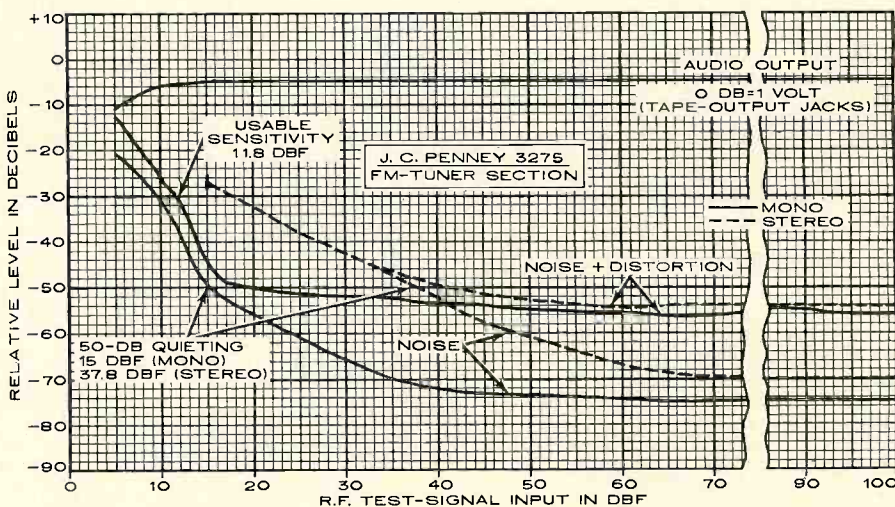
The RIAA phono equalization (extended) was accurate within ±0.5 dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz. It was affected by no more than 0.5 dB at any frequency when measured through the inductance of a typical phono-cartridge winding.

The calibration of the power meters was surprisingly accurate considering their small size. At most points they read within 20 per cent of the actual power delivered to 8-ohm loads, which is as accurate as any of the full-size meters we have seen.

The FM-tuner section of the Penney 3275 had an IHF sensitivity of 11.8 dBf (2.15 μV) in mono and 17 dBf (4 μV) in stereo. The muting and stereo-switching thresholds were respectively 13.5 and 14.3 dBf. The 50-dB quieting level was reached at 15 dBf in mono (with 0.6 per cent THD + N) and at 37.8 dBf in stereo (0.35 per cent THD + N). The ultimate quieting at a 65-dBf input was 74.5 dB in mono and 69 dB in stereo. The distortion at that level was respectively 0.15 and 0.2 per cent in the two modes.

The stereo-FM frequency response was within +1.6, -0.6 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz. The channel separation was quite uniform, measuring about 30 dB over most of the audio range and a minimum of 22.5 dB at 30 Hz.

(Continued on page 52)





Clean look, clean sound.

That clean, open look of these new Crown components is intentional. The *Power Line One* amp and the *Straight Line One* pre-amp are designed for people who delight in accurate sound reproduction, whose joy is in listening, and for whom simplicity of operation is important.

They are obviously easy to operate, yet all the basic controls you need for accurate reproduction and monitoring of fine quality sound are there.

But your greatest enjoyment will surely come from the unusual sonic accuracy of these units. They are acoustically as transparent as can be imagined.

Achieving that purity of sound and function wasn't simple. We've had 27 years experience in building state-of-the-art audio components, such as the world-famous DC-300A high-power amp and the newer DL-2 digital logic pre-amplifier. We've learned a great deal about what can and cannot be done with circuit design, with transistors and with IC's.

That experience is reflected in new computer-aided circuit designs. In the *Straight Line One* phono pre-amp section, for instance, internal noise is so low that thermal noise from your cartridge will be the dominant source of noise.

This circuit technology has also made possible other features you're bound to enjoy. The phono pre-amp is a separate module, much like the system developed by Crown in the DL-2. It eliminates troublesome RFI. Note also that Crown put distortion indicators on *both* units. The amplifier has both the unique Crown IOC circuit plus new peak output voltage LED's. Front-panel speaker switching and a new concept in DC speaker protection provide flexibility of layout and security of operation at high levels.

Please don't take our word for all of this. Visit your Crown dealer soon. Listen to the clean, full range sound of the *Straight Line One* and the *Power Line One*. That experience should simplify your buying decision.

SPECIFICATIONS

	Frequency Response, 20 Hz-20 KHz	Phase Response 20 Hz-20 KHz	Hum and Noise dB below rated output		IM Distortion at rated output, Max.	Total Harmonic Distortion at rated output 20 Hz-20 KHz, Max.
			unweighted	"A" weighted		
Straight Line One 2-channel pre-amplifier Switching module	±0.1 dB	±10°	97	101	0.00055%	0.0009%
Phono pre-amp (RIAA)	±0.5 dB	±5°	88	94	0.0005%	0.002%
Power-Line One 2-channel amplifier	±0.1 dB	+10° to -15°	110	115	0.00095%	0.05%

Power rating: 50 WATTS/CH. MIN RMS INTO 8 OHMS, 20 Hz-20 KHz, THD 0.05%.
80 WATTS/CH. MIN RMS INTO 4 OHMS, 20 Hz-20 KHz, THD 0.05%.



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American innovation and technology...since 1951.

The capture ratio of the 3275 was an extraordinary 0.7 dB at both 45 and 65 dBf input. On the other hand, its AM rejection (which together with capture ratio is a factor in rejecting multipath interference) was mediocre (47 to 51 dB), as was the 53-dB image rejection. The alternate-channel selectivity was highly asymmetrical, measuring 49 dB on one side of the signal and 75 dB on the other, for an average of 62 dB. Adjacent-channel selectivity was a low 3.5 dB on the average. The 19-kHz pilot-carrier leakage into the audio was 65 dB below 100 per cent modulation, and the tuner hum level was -64 dB.

We checked the calibration of the DEVIATION meter and found it to be in error by a consistent 10 to 15 per cent (which is certainly satisfactory for its intended function of providing a level reference for tape recording FM programs). On the other hand, we got no indication from the meter in the MULTIPATH mode, despite the fact that a number of signals in our area show considerable multipath distortion when viewed on a tuner or receiver fitted with an oscilloscope display. The signal-strength LED indicator began to glow with input signals of 10 microvolts, and only 2,000 microvolts were needed to light its eleventh segment. The twelfth segment never lit, even at levels exceeding 30,000 microvolts. The AM-tuner frequency response was flat within ± 1.5 dB from 35 to 2,000 Hz, down 6 dB at 3,700 Hz.

◎ **Comment.** Judging from its appearance and our experience in testing and using the Penney 3275 receiver it seems to be designed to be an amalgam of high-fidelity performance and mass-market appeal.

The audio performance of the 3275 is excellent, and we could hardly fault it in any respect except for its filters (and here Penney is not alone, since effective audio filters are about as common as molars on a turkey). Aside from their unusual physical packaging, which will probably appeal to some people more than the usual graphic-equalizer control layout, the equalizers of the 3275 proved to be very effective (especially when one does not look at the lights and merely adjusts the knobs by ear for the desired effect).

The FM-tuner section of the receiver is another story. Not that it is *bad*: it happens to sound excellent, with a slight "edge" to the extreme top end that is noticeable in comparison to some other tuners that have a perfectly flat high-frequency response—and easily explained by the slight high-frequency boost from the MPX filter. It is sensitive enough for almost anyone except the unfortunate soul who lives 100 miles or so from the nearest FM station, and its capture ratio was so remarkably good that we rechecked it several times, doubting our measurements (the results were consistent, which is in itself unusual in a capture-ratio measurement).

The audio section of the Penney 3275,

though slightly less powerful than some in competitively priced receivers, is of excellent quality and provides what most of us expect from a top-of-the-line \$600 receiver. But the FM-tuner performance, on the other hand, is typical of receivers of much lower price.

We found the tuning indicator of little value in assuring minimum distortion in FM reception. Fortunately this is not likely to be an audible defect, since anyone hearing distortion would naturally retune for better sound.

The AM sound quality of the receiver was surprisingly good. Although its upper frequency limit is not much different from that of most other AM tuners, it is flat in its response over most of the useful audio range up to several thousand hertz, and it has a much more pleasing sound than most AM tuners. It is not hi-fi by any means, but it is quite listenable, which is far more than can be said for most of its competition.

Summarizing, the J. C. Penney 3275 suggests that their MCS line is off to a good start and heading in the right direction. Many of our technical criticisms of the 3275 will not matter one whit to the general public at whom the unit is presumably directed. The fact that it has come so close to meeting true audiophile standards of performance and operation bodes very well for the future of the Penney hi-fi effort and its subsequent products.

Circle 138 on reader service card

Koss Pro/4 AAA Stereo Headphones



THE Koss Pro/4 series of stereo headphones has been in that company's product line for some years. Having progressed through the stages of the Pro/4 A and Pro/4 AA, in its latest version it is called the Pro/4 AAA. The phones have circumaural earpieces whose cushions fully enclose the outer ear and provide an airtight seal against the wearer's head. The cushions are trade-named "Pneumalite," and although the soft vinyl material appears to be loosely filled with a viscous fluid, they are actually filled with air.

The steel headband, covered in tan vinyl,

has an inner, removable band containing several Pneumalite cells. The Pneumalite cushions are normally the only part of the headband that touches the top of the wearer's head. The steel band serves only to support the earpieces and carry the signal cable between them.

Like their predecessors in the Pro/4 series, the Triple-A phones have a knurled locking nut on the left earpiece that can be used to mount a short boom microphone to be positioned in front of the wearer's mouth. This is the basis for the phones' "pro" designation,

since boom-mike/headphone combinations are used in many broadcast and even recording applications.

Each earpiece contains a dynamic driver with a 1-inch-diameter voice coil and a 2.5-square-inch diaphragm. Since the earpieces are completely sealed, all the sound is directed into the ear and little is radiated into the room. The nominal impedance of the phones is 220 ohms per channel at 1,000 Hz. According to Koss, the Pro/4 AAA phones give a 100-dB sound-pressure level (SPL) with 0.7 volt of sine-wave input at 1,000 Hz or 0.24 volt of pink-noise input. The nominal frequency response is 10 to 22,000 Hz, with no tolerance given. The Koss Pro/4 AAA, less cord, weighs 15.5 ounces. The coiled cord, which has a molded plug, extends to 10 feet in length. Price: \$75.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The frequency response of the Koss Pro/4 AAA phones was measured on a standard headphone coupler, or "artificial ear." The response was strong and smooth from 20 to 300 Hz and sloped downward by about 5 to 10 dB between that frequency and 1,000 Hz. The high frequencies were reproduced with reasonable smoothness and good strength up to beyond 15,000 Hz (the coupler irregularities make it difficult to assess the actual response of the phones at high frequencies, if indeed there is any such thing as "a" specific response when one speaks of a headphone). Our curve agreed closely with the curve run by Koss on the same set of phones. (Continued on page 54)

The A-800: A TEAC with features you can't live without at a price you can live with.

The TEAC A-800 gives you one of the best, most affordable combinations of precision, muscle and good looks around. It's a three head, two motor, dual capstan, solenoid-operated cassette deck that lists for less than \$800.*

The A-800 transport has a computer heritage... heavy, rock-steady, reliable. The closed-loop dual capstan system isolates the tape between the capstans to provide optimum tape-to-head contact. Result: better frequency response, fewer dropouts. An



tape between the capstans to

ultra-stable motor drives the capstans while all transport functions are operated through feather-touch solenoid switching both on the deck and with the optional RC-90 Remote Control.

The A-800 uses a combined record/playback head in which both elements are incorporated into a single housing. What's more, the playback head is a unique "Delta" design which incorporates both magnetic and non-magnetic ferrite materials which assures minimum feedthrough from the record head and eliminates low



frequency contour effects.

In addition to its built-in Dolby, the A-800 also accepts an optional dbx® Type II for wider dynamic range and up to 80 dB S/N. This optional dbx interface—a TEAC exclusive—lets you improve the overall signal-to-noise performance by up to 30 dB. It's got to be heard to be believed!

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*Manufacturer's suggested retail price.



Wow & Flutter: 0.05%
Frequency Response: 30-18,000 Hz
± 3 dB (CrO₂/FeCr)

MODEL A-800

LINE OUT

TAPE COUNTER

7 7 8

RECORD

REC MUTE

PAUSE

The 1,000-Hz output was 90 dB with a 0.2-volt input (100 dB was reached at 0.62 volt). The distortion at 1,000 Hz, with a 100-dB SPL, was only 0.13 per cent, equally divided between second and third harmonics. The impedance was 200 ohms from 70 to 5,000 Hz, dropping slightly to 150 ohms at 20 Hz and rising to 300 ohms at 20,000 Hz.

● **Comment.** The Koss Pro/4 AAA shares with its predecessors the ability to deliver a high SPL with low distortion and a reasonably smooth frequency response through the audio

range. Our recollection of the older Pro/4 models is that they sealed very tightly to the wearer's head and hence were somewhat uncomfortable to wear for any extended length of time. The Pro/4 AAA represents a substantial improvement in wearing comfort, and we would rate it among the most comfortable sealing-type headphone sets we have worn. Having a tight ear seal is important when one is recording live performers and wishes to monitor the program as it is being taped. For such an application, one could hardly ask for a more comfortable set of headphones.

Insofar as the sound of headphones can be characterized verbally, we would describe the Pro/4 AAA as having a slightly soft, warm tonal color. They are not at all dull—the highs are "all there," but de-emphasized compared with the lower mids and bass. Like most good phones, these can create a louder SPL than anyone will be able to tolerate, with no signs of overload or distortion and without requiring any unusual amount of drive from the amplifier.

Circle 139 on reader service card



Realistic SCT-30
Stereo Cassette Deck

THE Realistic SCT-30 front-loading cassette deck is a three-head machine with full double-Dolby monitoring facilities and a dual-capstan servomotor drive system. The separate record and playback heads are contained in a single housing, which eliminates the need to adjust the head alignment every time a cassette is recorded. (In three-head decks in which the record and playback heads are separated, the azimuth, or perpendicularity, of the record head must, for optimum results, be realigned before each new recording. This is done in order to compensate for physical imperfections in cassette housings that result in tape skewing. In a design such as that of the SCT-30, the record and playback head gaps are so close to each other in their common housing that no significant skewing in the tape path between them can take place.)

Along the left front edge of the SCT-30 are the power switch, a pair of jacks for medium-impedance (500- to 5,000-ohm) microphones, and a headphone jack providing comfortable listening levels for phones with rated impedances in the 8- to 600-ohm range. When the EJECT lever is pressed, the cassette-well cover opens forward at a slight angle. Cassettes are loaded, with the tape openings downward, into clips on the back of this cover, which is then pushed back into place, seating the cassette. A window in the cover allows the full label of the cassette to be read, and an illuminated orange panel in the rear of the well provides some indication of the amount of

tape remaining on a side. The cover itself is removable, facilitating cleaning and demagnetizing of the heads.

Below the cassette opening is a row of typical "piano key" transport-control levers labeled RECORD, REWIND, PLAY, FAST-F, STOP, PAUSE, and EJECT. These are all mechanical in their operation and worked smoothly and positively in our tests. While it is possible to go directly from rewind to fast-forward, the manufacturer rightly recommends that the STOP lever be depressed first to prevent any possible tape jamming. The EJECT and PAUSE levers can be operated only in the STOP mode.

A three-position bias switch, used in conjunction with a similar but separate equalization switch, sets the recorder up for ferric, chromium-dioxide, or ferrichrome formulations. Another switch is used to turn the Dolby system on and off or to set the deck up for proper dubbing of Dolby FM broadcasts. Above the TAPE switches is a pushbutton that activates an internal generator used together with separate left- and right-channel knobs to adjust the Dolby system to match the sensitivity of the tape in use. A green LED lights up when the Dolby system is on, and an adjacent red LED indicates that the deck is in the RECORD mode. There is a three-digit tape counter with reset, but no memory function.

A pair of pushbuttons set the SCT-30 output (and its meters) to monitor either the incoming (source) or the playback (tape) signals and to select between microphone and line-

level inputs. The recording level is determined by clutched, concentric knobs that allow the user to accommodate differences in channel levels yet adjust both channels simultaneously. In addition, behind the split knob is a rotatable plastic disc with an orange marker that can be set to a desired position and provides a slight detent to allow a return to a previously established level. The output-control knob has a similar-looking marker disc (though without the detent) and controls both channels together. Two illuminated meters, calibrated as peak-level indicators from -20 to +5 dB (the Dolby marking is at +3 dB) complete the front panel.

The rear panel of the SCT-30 contains the usual phono-type jacks for inputs and outputs, a DIN connector with a switch to accommodate either of two DIN sensitivity levels, separate left- and right-channel Dolby-FM calibration adjustments, and a BIAS FINE control that permits the user to optimize the recorder bias for a particular tape. The SCT-30 measures approximately 18 inches wide, 10 inches deep, and 5¾ inches high and weighs 16½ pounds. Price: \$379.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The material supplied with our sample of the SCT-30 indicated that its ferric switch positions had been factory-adjusted for Realistic Supertape Gold, so we used this as our reference. Since this particular tape may be unfamiliar to many readers, we also made measurements using Maxell UDXL-I, TDK AD, and 3M Master I. The performance of the SCT-30 with all four of these tapes was very similar—indeed, the responses differed by only about 0.5 to 1 dB.

The SCT-30 comes adjusted for a "genuine chrome" formulation rather than for some of the popular cobalt-treated "70-microsecond ferrics," but the range of the BIAS FINE control is more than adequate for the very slight reduction in bias required to optimize the deck for the latter. The flattest response was obtained using Sony CRO, though the very slight (1.5 dB) rise in response at approximately 13 kHz obtained by using BASF Professional II extended its upper frequency limit by perhaps 500 Hz beyond that shown in the graph. On the other hand, the high-frequency response with TDK SA was very nearly as wide, despite being somewhat overbiased, and the distortion and signal-to-noise figures were a little better than we obtained with the

(Continued on page 56)

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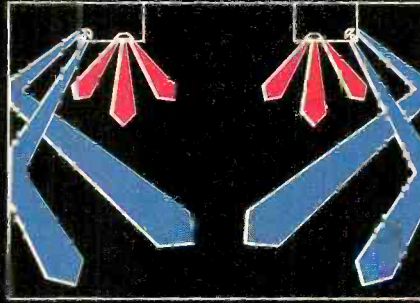
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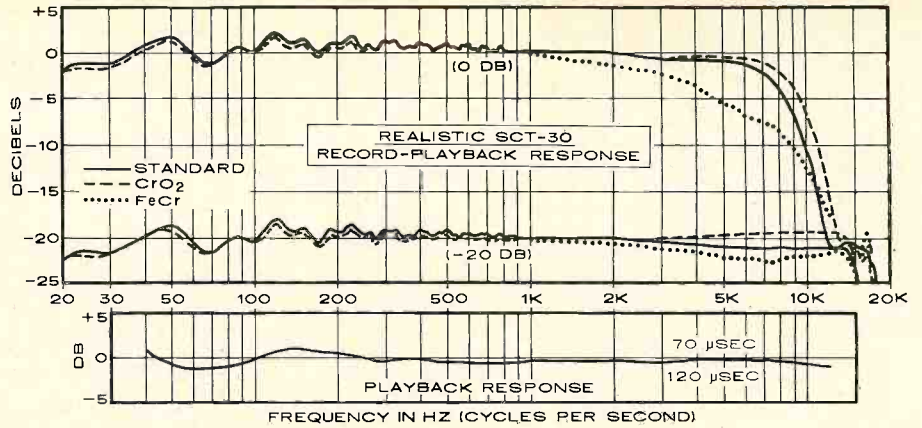
chromium-dioxide tapes. The Maxell UDXL-II showed some treble loss from overbias by the SCT-30, though, again, this was correctable with the BIAS FINE control.

Three ferrichrome formulations were checked, with BASF Professional III providing the flattest response, closely followed by Sony Ferrichrome. A pronounced dip of 5 dB or more in the region of 6 to 11 kHz was shown by 3M Master III, indicating the need for a somewhat different recording equalization than the SCT-30 employs.

We checked the accuracy of the playback equalization of the SCT-30 with our TDK AC-337 test tape, which covers the range from 40 to 12,500 Hz. In the ferric switch position (120 microseconds) response can be read directly, and it did not vary more than ± 1 dB between the limits of the test tape. When we applied the correction factors based on the mathematical difference between standard ferric equalization and the 70-microsecond characteristic used for CrO₂ tapes, we found that the CrO₂ and ferric playback curves overlaid exactly.

Comparing the overall record-playback frequency-response curves, it is clear that both at the indicated 0-dB level and at the -20-dB level the Sony CRO had the flattest response and the greatest amount of high-frequency headroom, followed by the ferric Realistic Supertape Gold and then by the BASF Professional III ferrichrome. In all cases the -3-dB point was reached (on the -20-dB graph) between 15,000 and 15,500 Hz; the low-frequency undulations ("head bumps") appear to be about average for this type of head construction and would certainly not be audible in any practical circumstances.

Using a 1,000-Hz tone at the meter's 0-dB input, TDK SA yielded an extraordinarily low 0.3 per cent third-harmonic distortion and did not reach the reference 3 per cent until an input signal of +10 dB (far off the meter scale) was applied. Compared at the reference 3 per



cent point, unweighted, A-weighted, and CCIR-weighted signal-to-noise ratios (S/N) were 57, 62, and 60.2 dB, respectively, without Dolby, and 59.5, 67.4, and 69.4 dB with Dolby. Our chrome sample had 1.1 per cent distortion at 0 dB and an overload margin of 6 dB before the 3 per cent point was reached; the unweighted, A-weighted, and CCIR-weighted pre-Dolby S/N's were 53.8, 59.5, and 58.8 dB, which improved to 56.5, 64.5, and 67.5 dB with Dolby circuits.

The ferric Realistic Supertape Gold did nearly as well, producing only 0.6 per cent distortion at a 0-dB input and requiring a +8-dB input level to reach the 3 per cent distortion point. Using the same order, the S/N's were 53.7, 58.4, and 56.6 dB without Dolby and 56.5, 65.4, and 66 dB with Dolby. While the frequency-response figures with the BASF Professional III ferrichrome formulation were not quite as good as with the other tape types, its S/N figures were outstanding: 54.5, 61.2, and 60.8 dB non-Dolbyized, and 56, 65.7, and 69.5 dB Dolbyized.

Wow and flutter measurements made on the Realistic SCT-30 showed 0.058 per cent wrms (0.075 DIN peak) figures when using a TDK test tape and 0.07 per cent wrms and 0.1 per cent DIN peak wow and flutter when recording and playing back a regular cassette. An input level of 84 millivolts at the AUX inputs was required to produce a 0-dB meter indication; 0.29 mV was required for the same level at the microphone input. (In our tests the meters tended to underread true peak levels, but they approximated the ballistic characteristics of true VU meters very closely.) Microphone overload did not occur until 28.5 mV, which should be adequate for all uses except close miking with high-output microphones.

The Dolby-level readings on the meters were within 0.2 dB, measured with a standard tape, and the adjustments for Dolby tracking with tapes of different sensitivities were easy to make. If we have a criticism on this score, it is that the exposed Dolby adjustment controls are too easy to turn by accident rather than design. Properly adjusted, the Dolby system showed no more than ± 1 dB deviation from the non-Dolby frequency response curves at levels of -30 and -40 dB, and only a very slight loss (2.5 dB) in the highest frequencies at a -20-dB level. Fast-forward and rewind times were 95 seconds for a C-60 cassette, considerably bettering the 135-second specification.

● **Comment.** We expected from our measurements that we would be pleased with the sonic performance of the Realistic SCT-30, and we were. The machine looks good, it handles well, and, especially with ferric and chromium-dioxide tapes, it sounds fine. When we subjected it to the stringent original vs. recording comparison of which only a three-head design is fully capable, we could detect a slight dulling of the highest audio frequencies using the ferrichrome formulations. With ordinary FM and disc dubbing, reproduction was virtually perfect, and with top-quality ferric and CrO₂ tapes only an insignificant difference could be detected even with so notoriously difficult a test signal as interstation-FM hiss. The mechanical controls handled well, and if the meters were slightly slower in their response than we might have expected, the overload margins were more than adequate. At the price, a three-head cassette deck with all these assets and overall quality is a rarity indeed.



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Going on Record

By James Goodfriend



GREAT MUSIC I HAVE HATED

THE history of my hatred of great music is a long and arduous one. Of course, I did not hate *all* great music. As a matter of fact, when I was young I did not even know what great music was. As a child, I divided all music into two large categories: classical music and the rest of it. Classical music was what my father played for me on our polished mahogany console with automatic record changer (and three-pound tone arm), or what my long-suffering instructors tried to teach me to play on the piano. "The rest of it" was what I listened to on the radio in the privacy of my own room: jazz, country music (we called it hillbilly then), gospel (live from the Harlem churches), big-band swing, blues, cowboy songs, and the current run of novelty pops.

I did not hate any of this music. As a matter of fact, I rather liked all of it almost equally well, in the indiscriminating way of youth. To really hate a piece of music, I think, you need a certain maturity, a certain experience of the world and of other people's hatreds. Without that, many of us might never learn to hate anything or anyone at all.

By the time I entered college, I had some of that worldly experience and could afford to express my dark side. I had also become aware that certain music was generally acknowledged to be great and even that other music might earn that description after it had been around a little longer. The first great music that I can really remember hating, then, dates from that point in my life. It was Bartók.

I lived, in that first year of college, in a dor-

mitory, across the hall from a senior whose ambition in life was to get hit (not too hard) by a Standard Oil truck going against the light. While laying the groundwork for this major event, he was preparing himself to go to law school, and he played the bassoon. He was also determined, for reasons I never discovered, to push Bartók down my throat, and so, whenever I appeared in his room (which was often), everything came to a stop and the Concerto for Orchestra, or the Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celeste, or one or another piece of the Bartók *oeuvre* went onto the phonograph. I came back to New York one fall weekend and confessed to my father that I had developed a passionate hatred of anything and everything by Bartók. My father told me that if I wanted to listen to something *really* impossible I should cock an ear to some of the records of Villa-Lobos he had had foisted off on him by an unscrupulous salesman. But I told him that they couldn't possibly measure up to Bartók. The thrill of first hatred was just too strong for competition.

Christmas vacation that year found me in New York record stores buying Bartók for myself: the Concerto for Orchestra, the MfSPaC, the Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion, even a couple of the string quartets. *Odi et amo*. The history and pattern of my musical hatred had really begun. When I got back to college, I asked another upper classman, a music major, about Delius' *Over the Hills and Far Away* and the Schoenberg string quartets. "Oh, you'll hate them," he said. So I bought them at the first opportunity.



My next hatred, one I smugly proclaimed to a fellow student at N.Y.U. (to which I had transferred), was Bach. "How can you hate the Brandenburg Concertos?" he asked. Well, I liked the Second and Third Brandenbergs (which were the only two I had heard), and so I said that I didn't mean that, but the church music. "You hate the cantatas?" he persisted. I had never heard the cantatas, so I could hate them without fear of self-contradiction, but I had the feeling that I was on thin ice. "Well, it's really the organ music that gripes me," I confessed, and I could sense the proverbial corner behind me as I laid down that swath of hypocritical pain. "Have you ever heard it on a *Baroque* organ?" he asked. If I had ever heard it on *any* organ I couldn't recall it, so I just shook my head. "Oh, well, that's why. Those modern organ performances completely misrepresent the music, and the orchestral transcriptions are pure anachronism." My face was saved, and in the next days I bought recordings of four Bach cantatas and the rest of the Brandenbergs, and I also started on Helmut Walcha's series of the complete Bach organ music on eighteenth-century organs.

I hated Lieder for a long time too. It was an honest hatred, I think, brought on by unpleasant memories of scratchy recordings played in high-school "appreciation" classes, where the soprano *sounded* as if she weighed three hundred pounds and no one knew what the song was about. I carried that hatred right up to the time of Elisabeth Schwarzkopf's American debut in Town Hall, where I was seated second-row center only because the recital was part of a concert series to which I had subscribed. I own, even now, not only a lot of Schwarzkopf LP's, but one of New York's larger collections of lieder on scratchy 78-rpm records.

IN my time I have hated Liszt and I have hated Chopin, and I am the better for it. I have recovered from both those afflictions and I have the records to prove it. I have never hated Mozart, but I admit that it took some time before my visceral understanding of him began to match his universal reputation, which I too was content to mouth. I almost got to hate Beethoven at one time, but it seemed almost unpatriotic to do so, and, anyway, the mood passed.

Being now a mature man, I have learned that simple blind hatred cannot possibly cover all cases. There are degrees of hatred, of dislike, of disdain. And one really needs, I think, a certain respect for a piece of music before one can hate it—always excepting certain contemporary music. There is much music—Tchaikovsky's symphonies, Respighi's tone poems, early Verdi, three-quarters of the Rachmaninoff concertos, and more—that, to take a phrase from the soap operas, I don't hate but that I feel sorry for. Such sympathetic disdain implies, of course, that the music itself is not "great," and, at least from my subjective point of view, isn't. But this is where critical estimations of quality and personal taste get all mixed up together. Certainly there is great music that I continue, to this day, to hate: Wagner's *Lohengrin*, Ravel's *Boléro*, mid-period Verdi, Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, Bizet's *Carmen*, Brahms' Requiem, most of Bruckner, *und so weiter*. But these hatreds are the products of mature reflection, and it should be obvious that I'm not going to change them. □

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The Pop Beat

By Paulette Weiss



TWO WAYS TO STRETCH YOUR EARS

It is commonly thought that rock is an all-or-nothing proposition and that if you really love it you can permit yourself no other musical passions. Life, of course, is not so simple as that. I'm a member of the rock generation (and proud of it, by the way), and as I've grown older I've begun appreciating artists whose careers were established long before Elvis bought his first guitar. I've found that enjoying other kinds of music does not diminish my love of rock one bit—but does cut into the amount of time I used to spend with it. There are many musicians who perform in quite different styles but still have appeal for those of us born in the baby boom of the late Forties. Two of these artists have just made new records, and I'd like to recommend them to you.

The first is by the singer/songwriter Alberta Hunter, who since October of 1977 has been performing regularly at a Manhattan club called the Cookery. At eighty-three (!) Miss Hunter is experiencing the renaissance of a career that began in Chicago more than seven decades ago. Her life story was told in these pages by Chris Albertson ("Roots of Jazz," December 1977) and has since been retold in such general magazines as *Newsweek*, the *New Yorker*, and even *Penthouse*.

On her frequent television appearances in the last year Miss Hunter herself has told the story that began when she left her home in Memphis, Tennessee, at the age of eleven and went to Chicago. Protected by pimps, prostitutes, and Providence, she found work in Chicago as a singer and went on to great success not only in the Middle West, but on Broadway and throughout Europe and Asia. After years of acclaim, she suddenly retired from show business when her mother died in 1954, and she spent the next twenty years in obscurity, working as a nurse in a New York hospital. In 1977 her impromptu performance at a party for her friend Mabel Mercer resulted in an engagement at the Cookery which brought her back into public life.

Miss Hunter's second career is a bit more sedate than the first. At the Cookery there are no giant birdcages filled with feathered chorines (a feature of her act in 1934), and she no longer wears the sparkling beaded dresses that emphasized every shimmy in her Chicago days. Now she usually wears a simple black

dress and has her hair pulled back in a tight bun when she stands at the microphone, rocks back on her heels, and delivers in a robust voice, "I want a two-fisted, double-jointed, rough-and-ready man." Her musically, unobtrusive accompaniment is provided by Gerald Cook on piano and Al Hall on bass. Her audiences, who are surprisingly young, shower her with affection, and standing ovations are common wherever she performs.

And, of course, she is recording again. She wrote and performed the entire score of Robert Altman's film *Remember My Name*. This music track has almost no bearing on the odd-ball plot of the movie. Miss Hunter's music is grafted onto the story by the device of having



ALBERTA HUNTER

it played on the heroine's phonograph. The soundtrack album (Columbia JS 35553), then, is simply a collection of ten Alberta Hunter songs, not an integrated body of music created to further the drama, and so it stands firmly on its own as a record. "Remember My Name" features the Cookery lineup plus five other musicians. With a sensitivity that comes

from their long association, Cook weaves a responsive piano background for Miss Hunter's mature, robust voice, and Hall's bass provides a foundation for both. Except for Wally Richardson's guitar, the other instrumentals don't fare so well either on the Hunter classics (such as *Downhearted Blues*) or on the new material written in classic blues style. They just never swing. But Alberta's spirit comes through nonetheless. An expressive undercurrent of emotion enriches the lyrics of the new ballad *The Love I Have for You*, and her sophisticated sass keeps the old songs, like *Workin' Man*, sounding fresh. In the liner notes she is quoted as saying, "We sing the blues because our hearts have been hurt, but when you sing the blues, let it be classy."

HUGH SHANNON, cabaret artist (or "saloon singer," as he calls himself), has gone a step further; not only everything he sings, but everything he *does* must be classy. Elegant in evening clothes, and occasionally sipping champagne, Shannon can be found most winter evenings behind the piano at David K's, a Manhattan restaurant and club. In the course of a career approximately thirty years shorter than Alberta Hunter's, Shannon has built a repertoire of the finest gems of American popular song. They range from such little-known tunes as Hoagy Carmichael's *Baltimore Oriole* to those as familiar as Herman Hupfield's *As Time Goes By*, with generous portions of Cole Porter and George Gershwin and smaller ones of Stephen Sondheim and Billy Joel.

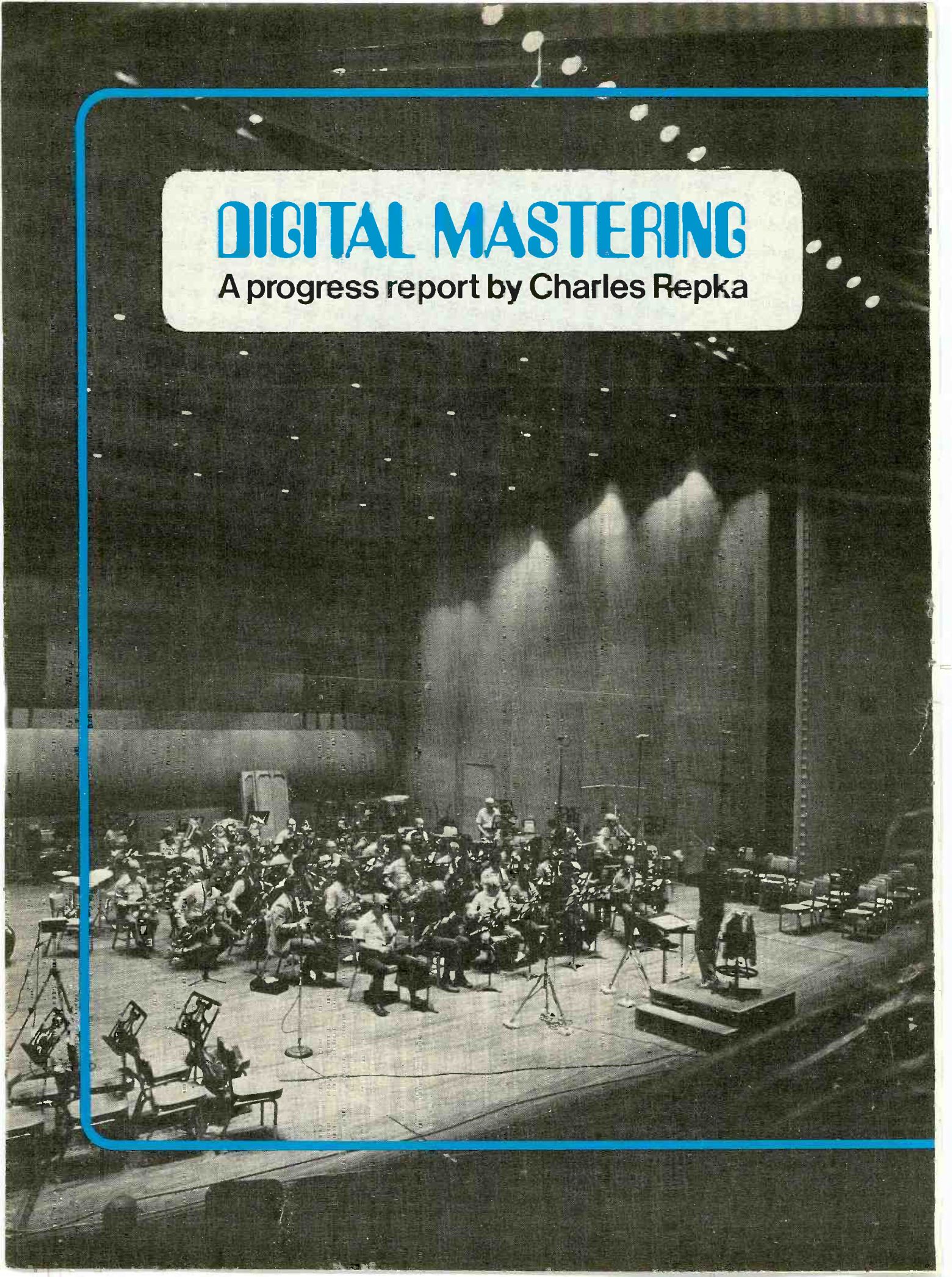
Shannon has usually performed in the small, international-style clubs that have been the havens of cabaret artists Mabel Mercer, Bobby Short, and Blossom Dearie. But if you've missed him in Paris, Rome, or Capri these past few years, and if you're not going to be around to catch him in New York this winter or Monte Carlo next summer, don't fret. A Shannon performance will be arriving from Audiophile Records early this spring, and to enjoy his rugged, urbane baritone and muscular supportive piano you need only put "True Blue Hugh" (AP 140) on your turntable. You might want to open a bottle of champagne for atmosphere, but he will sound just as good if you kick off your shoes and drink a beer straight from the can.

The album reproduces the musical portion of Shannon's appearance on Alec Wilder's excellent (but now defunct) radio series *American Popular Music*. Although the witty, informative commentary that enlivened the original broadcast is not on the disc, the conviviality of the event is palpable in each lovingly selected tune. Shannon is relaxed and in complete artistic control. I've heard an advance pressing of this marvelous record, and I advise you—along about April—to send \$6.98 plus \$1.00 for postage and handling to Audiophile Records, 3008 Wadsworth Mill Place, Decatur, Ga. 30032 and order "True Blue Hugh," which will turn any evening at home into a festive party.

In writing my letter to Santa Claus last month and analyzing the rock records that had come out in 1978, I found that the qualities I admired most in the rock music I really liked were sincerity and commitment to the music. Though their styles differ from rock, I hear the same kind of honesty in the work of Alberta Hunter and Hugh Shannon. They convince me. I believe them. I think you will too. □

DIGITAL MASTERING

A progress report by Charles Repka



THE year 1978 ended with digitally recorded phonograph records available in the U.S. on the Japanese Denon label (manufactured by Nippon Columbia, which has been producing digital discs since 1972!) and on the American Orinda and Telarc labels. A brand-new company, Digital Sound Products, has also been formed, and it already has five discs' worth of digitally recorded material being prepared for release momentarily. Furthermore, Crystal Clear Records, one of the companies in the forefront of direct-to-disc production, has made no secret of the fact that it has often employed a digital recorder as a "back-up" machine at its recording sessions (presumably those digital tapes will be used to generate new digitally recorded molding parts once the existing d-to-d ones wear out), and its engineers were recently busy in London with more of the same, using the very musicians and conductor (the London Symphony Orchestra and Morton Gould) Digital Sound Products had just initiated into the digital mysteries.

Can you figure out what's happening here? Digital recording is making a big bid to become *the* standard method of music recording in the future, and almost everyone seriously involved in the recording industry is either climbing onto the bandwagon or cheering it on. The one point in question seems to be whether the transition from conventional "analog" mastering to the new digital techniques will be accomplished in five years or ten. However, given the tremendous energies fueling the activity just described above—and there is undoubtedly more we haven't even heard of yet—there is a good chance that the switch will come much faster than anyone has so far dared to predict.

How long the *complete* change-over—to pressing of *encoded* discs, that is—will take is another question. None of the products of the recording companies mentioned above are available to the public as digitally encoded discs. Instead, they are conventional analog LP discs that have been made from digitally recorded master tapes. True digital-disc recordings of music

have been demonstrated, but the timetable for their availability (and that of the special players they will require) has yet to be written. However, Hitachi, JVC, Panasonic, and Sony have all demonstrated *tape* equipment, based on video cassette machines, that will record and play back true digital re-

capability as the digital-tape systems.

Such a tape system would include a video-tape machine of some sort (in most cases, a video-cassette recorder) and a special "PCM adapter." With such *home* equipment a recordist could challenge or surpass the performance of the finest *professional* analog tape machines, but he would still have to depend on his own live-recording efforts for program material. There are no pre-recorded digital audio tapes available as yet.

But why the sudden rush into the digital future at this particular time? Part of the answer undoubtedly lies in the pressure that has been applied on the recording industry from without by the critical and market successes of direct-to-disc recordings. When the recording public embraced these limited-edition productions with a price-no-object fervor, the more farsighted of the large record companies realized that sooner or later they would have to offer a product of comparable quality—but in quantities appropriate for the mass market.

Another part of the answer is pressure from within the industry. When Dr. Thomas Stockham of Soundstream began applying the equipment used in the digital restoration of old Caruso recordings to recording new material, the handwriting began to appear on the wall. A few more words were added when 3M introduced a professional thirty-two-track digital recording system for studio use (as of this writing, 3M has delivered the system appearing on this month's cover to four major U.S. recording studios: A&M Records, the Record Plant, Sound 80, and Warner Bros.), and more such systems can undoubtedly be expected from other suppliers.

So far, the one flaw in this apparently wonderful state of affairs is the usual one with any new technology: *compatibility*. The sad fact is that none of the existing or proposed digital recording or playback systems (tape or disc) enjoys full compatibility with the others. For example, Soundstream and 3M use 1-inch tape, sixteen-bit encoding, and a 50-kHz sampling rate, but each system

SPECIFICATIONS

TYPICAL specifications for the Soundstream and 3M machines would look something like this:

Frequency response: 0 to 21 kHz
±0.2 dB

THD at maximum recording level less than 0.03%

THD at 0 VU less than 0.004%

S/N 90 dB unweighted

Dynamic range 90 dB

Wow and flutter unmeasurable

With performance specifications like these, the digitally recorded tapes being made today far exceed the capabilities of the standard disc format into which they must be converted. The best discs today (even direct discs) have a signal-to-noise ratio that may get as high as 65 dB or so with luck, and available dynamic range decreases and distortion increases—as one approaches the center of the disc. Further, the wow and flutter figures of any LP can be no better than those for the typical home record player, and all are equally susceptible to dirt, dust, damage, and a host of manufacturing-related problems. All of which makes the eventual appearance of the digitally encoded disc (in one format or another) inevitable.

cordings via special *adapters*. By the time you read this the Sony adapter, priced at about \$4,000, should be available. Several of these same manufacturers have also demonstrated PCM (pulse-code-modulated) digitally encoded audio discs, based on video-disc technology, with just about the same noise immunity and dynamic-range

DIGITAL EDITING

ONE of the major advantages digitally mastered recordings have over direct-to-disc productions is that digital tapes can be edited. The editing process is much more complex than the "cut-and-paste" procedure used for conventional analog tapes, however, especially if one considers that there can be over a million bits recorded on a second's worth of tape. Finding the proper "bit" to splice into (and out of) is a task nearly impossible to do by hand (although I'm told the Japanese have developed such a technique), so the only practical editing method is via computer.

To date, both 3M and Soundstream have editing systems. A simplified description of how the Soundstream system works can serve as an example. To join two takes of a musical passage at a particular spot, the first take is played back and listened to in analog form, and simultaneously it is transferred in digital form to a magnetic disc. When the joining point is reached, the editor taps a key that tells the computer to "remember" that particular spot (the tape can actually be played at half speed to make the edit point easier to find). The second take is then played and the editor again taps the key at the proper point. The computer then takes over and "views" the analog waveforms at the edit points and selects the correct points at which to join the two takes. Next, the computer plays the two takes back in analog form, switching at the proper point to permit the editor to decide if the edit sounds okay. If not, the editor can either tell the computer to shift the edit point slightly or, alternatively, he can have the analog waveforms displayed on an oscilloscope and manually select the correct edit point with a light-beam pencil. All the edits are made in this manner until the takes are all stored in digital form on the magnetic disc and the edit points are stored in the computer. The magnetic discs are then transferred to a new digital tape with the computer switching back and forth between the various takes to form the final edited version.

To do all this, Soundstream is using a \$100,000 general-purpose computer—a tad more expensive than a box of razor blades and a roll of splicing tape, to say the least. However, my computer advisors tell me that this cost could be cut by a factor of four or even ten with currently available equipment. Probably by the time digital recording is in general use in the studio, the cost of a special-purpose editing system will be no more than the cost of an equalizer, a limiter, or any other piece of special-purpose studio electronics.

employs a different error-detection scheme and a different track format (3M has thirty-two digital tracks for thirty-two audio channels; Soundstream has sixteen digital tracks for eight audio channels). Both 3M and Soundstream use instrumentation-type tape recorders with fixed heads, but Denon uses a video-tape recorder with rotating heads as well as different encoding schemes, sampling rate, and tape width. And, while it is possible to play back a (prototype) RCA PCM disc on a Panasonic player, it is not possible—at the moment—to play a Panasonic PCM disc on an RCA player.

The Audio Engineering Society has formed a digital-standards committee (with representatives from various manufacturers) to sort out this jumble and arrive at a standard format everyone can build to. Unfortunately, these efforts have been blocked by a court injunction filed by one company that has declared that the promulgation of such a standard would constitute "restraint of trade." So, as of this writing, the problem of standards remains unresolved, but it may solve itself in the marketplace if one manufacturer can manage to preempt the field and his machines become the *de facto* standard. This, indeed, would appear to be 3M's intention with its almost simultaneous delivery of four of its systems to major U.S. studios. In fact, the only company with equipment ready for delivery at this time appears to be 3M, although I suspect that the other major professional-level recorder manufacturers (Ampex, MCI, and Studer, to name a few) have been quietly perfecting their own ideas about digital recording.

AFTER all this discussion about specifications, what can we say about the *sound* of the new digital recordings—or at least the analog disc recordings that have been made from them? Certainly, all the recordings I've heard have impressive clarity and freedom from distortion, but there are some important points that should be made.

Denon has the largest selection of discs available, with over 160 in their catalog. Until recently these were available only in Japan, but many of them are now being imported into the U.S. by American Audioport and are available at selected audio stores (not record shops). I had the opportunity to sample some of the early Denon/PCM discs about two years ago. Although they were flawless from the standpoint of mechanical reproduction, I was not happy with the microphone placements chosen by the engineers, which resulted in some very unpleasant sounds—perfectly reproduced! Listening to

some of the more recent releases, however, I find a great improvement in this area, the best recordings being the result of joint efforts by Denon and the Czechoslovakian label Supraphon. The combination of Japanese engineering and Bohemian musical supervision seems to be nearly unbeatable.

All domestic digital recordings so far have been produced using the Soundstream system, but with quite uneven results. The Diahann Carroll tribute to Ethel Waters on Orinda [see review in December issue] somehow fails to impress me even though the record has no *technical* flaws. After several listenings, I got the impression that the recording engineer simply set the session up in the same old way (Soundstream provides only the digital recording machine and editing facilities; the record company provides the recording engineer), making no allowances for the improved technical capabilities of the Soundstream process.

The Cleveland Symphonic Winds recording on Telarc, on the other hand, is digital recording at its finest. The record (recorded by Soundstream but pressed in Japan) is essentially noise-free and has a dynamic range that runs from whisper to thunderclap. The bass-drum shots (in the Holst and Handel selections) have an almost frightening impact, and they clearly dispel the notion that a half-speed cutting process removes low bass. The Telarc disc shows that digital recordings are every bit the equal of the best direct-to-disc recordings, and with none of their production shortcomings [see facing page].

WHAT of the future? Look for more digital releases by Denon, Orinda, and Telarc as well as new ones to come from Digital Sound Products and Sound 80. And since two major record labels (A&M and Warner Bros.) now have digital machines as well, we should soon see digital records being produced for the mass market and not just the audiophile trade. If one of those studios should happen to produce a digitally recorded hit record... well, we might see every producer and every studio *demanding* a digital machine for the next session. With digital mastering universal, encoded pressings would soon follow, leading in time to the creation of a whole new category of home audio equipment. Maybe we could speed it up a little: do you think the Beatles could be talked into getting back together for a digital album? □

Charles Repka, a free-lance recording engineer and audio consultant, has been active in the audio field for almost twenty years.

"A GLORIOUS noise!" is the best description of a new Telarc digital-master disc of forty-two minutes of wind-band classics performed by sixty or so of the best wind and percussion players in Cleveland (half of them with the Cleveland Orchestra) under the direction of Frederick Fennell. The glory of what emerged from my speakers derives not only from the flawlessly polished and alert performances by superb musicians, but more especially from the use of a recording technology that yields both the clarity of the finest direct-to-disc recordings and the tape-editing options of the conventional analog medium. And how welcome it is to have such technology devoted, for a

in the densely textured conclusion of the march, when all the players are going full tilt with the two themes in combination reinforced by hefty percussion. There is not a trace of distortion at any point, and there are both rock-solid "presence" and complete openness in the sonic texture.

The most striking aspect of the record is the extraordinary dynamic range. Telarc's "unofficial" measurement is 64 dB, and by ear it seemed to me to match precisely the dynamics on a *completely uncompressed* experimental cutting I have of the 1953 Dorati/Minneapolis Symphony recording of Respighi's *Pines of Rome* (the version actually released by Mercury incorporated the element of

massed winds that you're after, then the handsome Bach transcription will be right up your alley.

There is a certain price, beyond the premium cost of the disc itself, that must be paid if you want to experience to the fullest degree what this recording has to offer. Only the finest playback equipment in tiptop operating order will reproduce fully what is recorded here; this is no record to play on "compact" systems (not only would it be a waste; it might overload and damage them). Moreover, to hear the quietest passages at all, since the recording level has not been boosted to overcome background noise (there virtually isn't any), your listening room will have to be ex-

Nat Silverman/Audio-Technica

A Wind Band Spectacular

Listening to the playback are, left to right, Soundstream's Thomas Stockham, digital recording engineer; Telarc's Jack Renner, sound engineer; and conductor Frederick Fennell.



change, to such first-rate music as the two Gustav Holst suites.

In a review last October in these pages of the Denon/PCM recording of Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words*, I indicated my strong conviction that digital technology was the way to go for the ultimate in sound reproduction (that sound of a disembodied piano on the Japanese disc, free of any trace of tape hiss or background noise, has since been for me an unflinching party play). The Fennell album involved a collaboration between American (Thomas Stockham's Soundstream digital-recording system) and Japanese technology (the JVC Cutting Center's disc mastering and pressing by the Victor Company of Japan, Ltd.), and it certainly vindicates that view. As with the Denon/PCM digital recordings I have heard, what most immediately impressed me in the Telarc disc was the total cleanness of the sound, which is especially evident in the interlaced counterpoint of the first Holst suite—whether in the quieter passages of the opening chaconne or

compression usual for conventionally recorded and marketed discs). Combine such dynamics with capture of the entire audible frequency range, and the result is mind-boggling indeed. The high-frequency overtones and transients are *all* there, and as for the low-frequency transients—well, the bass drum sounds super-spectacular; the conclusion of the Handel *Royal Fireworks Music*, with bass drum, cymbals, and three field drums, should shiver the timbers of the stoutest dwelling place. And if it's the organ-like sonorities of

tremely quiet. To hear the opening of the Holst Suite No. 1 at what we usually consider a "normal" listening level, the volume control must be set radically higher than usual—but then be prepared for *tutti* passages that will test to the utmost the tolerance of both your speakers and your ears.

The cleanness and dynamic range of the digital recording makes it all-important that extra care be taken in the plating and pressing processes, for any swish in the finished disc becomes unbearable, and any ticks or pops sound like cannon shots. The eventual way out of this problem is the all-digital disc (whatever the particular method of encoding and playback) that is waiting in the wings. In the meantime, anyone who lays out \$14.95 for this Telarc album will not only receive in return an extraordinarily satisfying sonic and musical experience but will also have documentation of the erection of a significant landmark in the art and science of sound recording. Musically, technically, this is for now the collector's item of the year. —David Hall

HOLST: Suites for Band, Op. 28: No. 1, in E-flat Major; No. 2, in F Major. J. S. BACH (arr. Goldman/Leist): Fantasia in G Major (BWV 572): Gravement. HANDEL (arr. Baines/Mackerras): Music for the Royal Fireworks. Cleveland Symphonic Winds, Frederick Fennell cond. TELARC 5038 \$14.95 (plus \$1 handling charge from Audio-Technica U.S., Inc., 33 Shiawassee Avenue, Fairlawn, Ohio 44313).

I HAD a nightmare recently. In my dream it was 1983, and the wife (!) and I were watching videos from the night before (automatically taped while we were out at the Studio 54 franchise in our neighborhood). Suddenly, across our giant seven-foot screen flashed Mason Reese and Kristy McNichol, starring in a sit-com version of *The Best and the Brightest*, a half-hour Norman

Face it, gang, pretty soon all of us Baby Boom kids are going to be more commercial than King Tut and the aliens from *Close Encounters* combined. It's enough to make you gag.

But that's my problem, and I wouldn't bring it up except that it just may explain why the music of Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes hits me so hard; it's my private, soul-

shoved against the door. So I had to listen to the stuff in private or be branded some kind of kook. But here we are in the late Seventies, and I can listen to the Jukes version of that music (since the black musicians who used to play it have moved on to other things) and not feel even the tiniest bit guilty. If it's from Jersey it's hip, at least in my circles, and my revenge is complete.



Steve Simels puts
a few questions to
**SOUTHSIDE
JOHNNY**
(of the Asbury Jukes)

Photos: Robin Platzer

Lear production set at a liberal arts college somewhere in the Northeast 'way back in 1968. It was all there: cute drug jokes, cute protest marches, cute psychedelic music—a vision of the Sixties fully as unreal and sanitized as the vision of the Fifties *Happy Days* peddles so obnoxiously. And my children (!) loved it!

I awoke from this hellish hallucination in a cold sweat, and the fear is still with me; call me paranoid if you will, but I know this show is coming for real, and perhaps even sooner than you think. Why, just the other evening I met a nineteen-year-old coed who actually wanted me to tell her my Sixties stories ("Gee, Steve, college today is so boring; did you really see Janis at the Anderson Theater?"), and friends have reported similar experiences.

cleansing "Up yours!" to the Sixties. You must understand that during my personal muddle through that overcelebrated decade black music was, with very few exceptions, decidedly non-U in hip circles, something only jocks and frat guys listened to. Oh, Otis Redding may have been a hit at the Monterey Pop Festival, but most of my contemporaries thought soul music was a crass commercial debasement of the purity of The Blues. And of the real bluesmen, only B. B. King played the Fillmore. For the most part, the kids I knew were far too busy with their Donovan and Country Joe albums to be bothered with what was going on at Motown or Stax, and, frankly, the Four Tops or Sam and Dave didn't really *work* in a darkened dorm room with the incense burning and a pillow

When I met Southside himself, he hadn't the vaguest idea what I meant. "In my high school, when I was starting to play, the Temptations were God, the Four Tops were saints, and Martha and the Vandellas ruled. And Otis, and Wilson Pickett. That's the stuff I heard all the time." Hmm. I guess I could have saved myself a lot of grief if I had gone to *his* high school.

I encountered Southside (real name John Lyon) at a bar in the CBS building. Unlike the booze hound on the cover of his first album, "I Don't Want to Go Home" (which pictured him lying despondent amidst numerous half-empty scotch tumblers), though, the man himself was not only abstaining, but in fact wanted to go home—to catch the last game of the World Series. He was also without his trademark

sunglasses, which he publicly shed for the first time on the cover of his latest album, "Hearts of Stone," on which he resembles an unkempt Jackson Browne. First Ian Hunter comes out from behind the Foster Grants, and now Southside Johnny. What gives, I wondered?

"I just don't like anything to become a cliché about myself," he said. "I

he knows how. Hardly the stuff legends are made of, but sturdy and dependable. He's been at it for a long time, too. He and various embryonic versions of the Jukes have been working the South Jersey bar circuit for almost a decade, and now, with three albums under their belts, they are finally beginning to impinge seriously on the national consciousness. ("We're phenome-

sically I think he's a very open guy and would have listened anyway. The way Bruce really helped us was that he legitimized our area. I mean, it's no longer *embarrassing* to be from Jersey.

"Now Bruce in the old days," he said, warming to the reminiscence, "he was the guy that was all rock-and-roll. He was the guy that everybody took their cue from. It was either you were a



don't want people to think I *always* wear sunglasses, or that I *always* wear suits on stage. I don't. I mean, I get bored with being thought of as this hoodlum type from New Jersey with an I.Q. of 80."

He shook his head. "People have all these strange images of you. I mean, one time there was this rumor going around, when I had to cancel some shows because my throat was hurt, that I was a junkie. I'm sorry, I can't fit that image. I'm not down and out. I happen to enjoy my life very much. I wouldn't do all this hard work if I *didn't* enjoy it. I mean, I'm crazy, but I'm not *crazy*."

No, he's not. What he is, it seems to me, is an extremely dedicated, basically uncomplicated guy (albeit with a healthy wise-ass streak) who has worked hard at making the best music

nally big in Cleveland," he said with a hint of bewilderment.)

INITIALLY, of course, the Jukes came to our attention by riding the crest of the great 1975 Bruce Springsteen Hypo-ola, and I couldn't help but ask the inevitable question: how much of their success is due to identification with the Boss?

He smiled a funny-you-should-ask-that smile. "I think that's mostly gone. It's not an umbilical cord. We got the record deal from a guy who's not involved with Bruce at all—Steve Popovich [of Epic Records]. He came down to see us in Asbury Park because he'd heard the demo of what we do. It might have been easier because he knew Steven [Van Zandt, the Jukes' producer and Springsteen's guitarist], but ba-

dilettante or a true believer, okay? Bruce was the ultimate true believer. He was the kind of guy who got up in the morning and thought about rock-and-roll, when he went to bed at night he thought about rock-and-roll, and he thought about it all the time in between. He was the guy who practiced eight hours a day and drove you crazy in rehearsals. And then there were other guys, like myself, who at times ... well, heck, we'd pass two or three whole days without thinking about rock-and-roll at all.

"He was never a Juke, though. He was my auxiliary guitar player. See, we had this guy coming from another record company to see us, and Billy Rush [the Jukes' guitarist] had walking pneumonia, and Steven couldn't play 'cause he had the flu, so Bruce played. We

SOUTHSIDE...

“. . . my father was a musician in the Depression, and he always associated it with having no future and no money.”

didn't get the record contract, and the guy thought we were real amateur.” So much for that legend.

Bruce, of course, has chronicled his working-class coming of age in innumerable songs. Southside, on the other hand, doesn't write much, and I was curious about what kind of a childhood he'd had. My question brought out the raconteur in him.

“Well,” he said, “I grew up in Ocean Grove, which is right next door to Asbury Park, separated by this thin little lake, about twenty feet across. It's a Methodist retirement community, a sort of graveyard for Methodists. You see all the bleached bones of old Methodists out on the beach. Really, when I was growing up, 60 or 70 per cent of the population was over sixty-five. I'd walk down the street and all I'd see was little old ladies dying at the curb.

“It's a real quiet town, real strange. No cars were allowed inside the town on Sunday, no ball playing, no bicycle riding, nothing like that. On Sundays the town closed down—they put gates around it, chain gates. And everybody went to church except troublemakers like us.

“My folks? Well, my father was a musician from 1930 'til about World War II; he played a lot of jazz, not swing, more roughhouse jazz. He was interested in Louis Armstrong and Fats Waller, not all that Glenn Miller stuff. And my mother was a local hell-raiser. They used to go out to bars together. She actually went into labor with me when she was at a bar, and she didn't want to leave. She never liked me, from that day on, because she had to leave just as the band was coming back on to do their last set.”

They sounded like a neat influence, I said.

“Oh yeah,” he agreed. “I mean, my parents got in more trouble for making noise than I did. I would practice my harmonica, which you don't need an amp for, but they used to play their old jazz 78's real loud late at night, and the neighbors would complain. Then they would yell at the neighbors, and the cops would come. It was a wild environment. I mean, they're nice people.

They're not Kallikaks; they just like to have fun.”

They also wanted him to go to college (which he “dabbled in”), although they were not unalterably opposed to his being a musician. “It's just that my father was a musician in the Depression, and he always associated it with having no future and no money. So they wanted me to go to college because I could, and because no one in the family ever had. The old story, y'know. They're not stupid people; they know what life is about. They know that working in a factory for forty years is jive, that if you can do anything else you should do it.”

I WONDERED what he, one of the last remaining keepers of the r-&-b flame, thought about the current state of the art. To his credit, he was nowhere near the purist fanatic I had anticipated.

“There's a lot of good r-&-b going on. I love the O'Jays, a lot of those bands. I just don't love a lot of what producers have done to black artists. When Ben E. King was recording with Leiber and Stoller, for instance, I'm sure Leiber and Stoller had a lot of ideas and all, but I'm sure Ben E. King was at least consulted.

“I mean, I think that Teddy Pendergrass is a fantastic singer, one of the best singers I've ever heard in my life. But I think that he does a lot of that Gamble and Huff material because . . . well, they have certain ideas about what they want him to sing, and I'm sure he doesn't detest it, but given his own head I think he would do something different.

“It's the big money; if it sells, they don't mind being swamped with strings, girl singers, and synthesizers. I

think they accept it because like lots of artists they're easily bullied, easily led. Because as long as they're singing, as long as they get a chance to communicate to a live audience, what happens in the studio is not as important; in rock-and-roll it's all-important, sometimes to the detriment of the live show.”

Okay, Johnny, I'll buy all of that. But enough of this music stuff; I wanted to get down to the gossip. I asked him to tell me some dirt about the famous people he'd toured with over the last year. Two in particular: Patti Smith and the Rolling Stones.

He grinned. “Playing with the Stones [at Soldier Field in Chicago, a football stadium] was not my favorite gig. It was exciting playing with them, but it was 11:30 in the morning when we went on, and *nothing* is fun at 11:30 in the morning except turning around and going back to bed.” (For the record, it should be noted that Stones manager Peter Rudge did invite him to go with the boys on a pilgrimage to a Muddy Waters club date, but Southside was too tired.)

But what about Patti? I'd heard tales of some . . . er . . . *bad feelings* between the two of them.

“Bad feelings between me and Patti?” He pulled back and did a credible Fonz imitation. “Heeyyy, we're like this,” he said, gesturing with two adjacent fingers on his right hand.

“Actually, yeah, we've had run-ins with her and the people around her, but I've always tried to be fair. I don't really respect her, but then she doesn't have a lot of respect for me; I guess I don't quote Rimbaud as much as I quote Otis Redding.

“I just wish she'd relax. I mean, I
(Continued on page 70)

ASBURY JUKES: l. to r., Ed Manion, Billy Rush, Alan Berger, La Bamba, Kevin Kavanaugh, Rick Gazda, Stan Harrison, Steve Becker, Bob Muckin, Southside



Epic Records

"The Highly Prized Receiver... ONKYO's TX-4500 MKII"

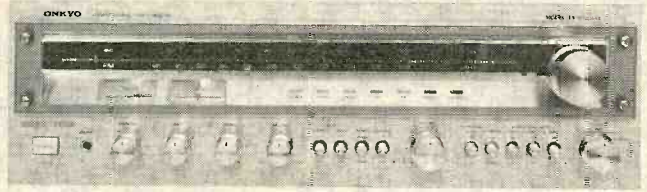
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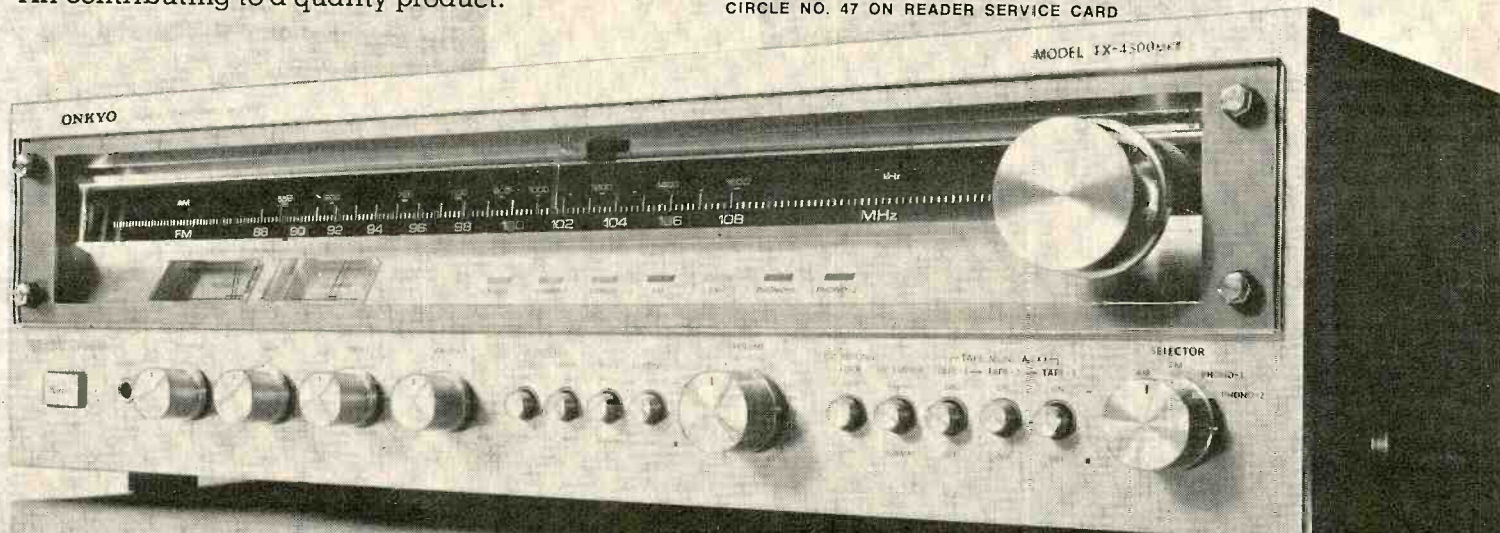
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*STEREO REVIEW, October 1976.

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CIRCLE NO. 47 ON READER SERVICE CARD



SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY and the Asbury Jukes' new album is at once more assured, more contemporary, and less funny than their two earlier efforts, but rest easy: the spirit that makes their version of Sam Cooke's *Having a Party* the most memorable number in their live shows remains intact. The Jukes, after all, are about nothing if not good times, and if the phrase "good-time music" hadn't been rendered meaningless by a horde of boogie bands that shall remain nameless here, it wouldn't be so hard to sell all you heavy-metal fans on the music these guys make. Fact is that Johnny and the boys are the band Paul Butterfield would have led if his approach to the blues wasn't so academic, that Chicago would have been if they hadn't cut their musical teeth on old Herb Alpert records, that J. Geils could have been if they hadn't pandered to their audience, and that Willy DeVille would be running if only he could shake his compulsion to become a young James Brown. In short, it's *the* modern r-&-b band for all seasons.

"Hearts of Stone" deviates from the format of the Jukes' first two efforts right down to the cover shot, which for the first time reveals Johnny Lyon's eyes. There are no oldies here, no novelty blues songs (perhaps because drummer Kenny Pentifallo, whose comic basso was particularly suited to them, has departed), and no guest appearances by legendary vocal groups. As a result, the record has a considerably harder edge and considerably less under-the-boardwalk

"Hearts of Stone"



Epic Records

romanticism than one might have expected. Which is not a criticism; it simply means that "Hearts of Stone" is better for dancing than for making out. The material, by Miami Steve Van Zandt and Bruce Springsteen (Bruce wrote the title tune and the addictive *Talk to Me*—the guy farms out so many good songs it's getting ridiculous), is less easily traceable to specific influences, and while none of the tunes has a hook as warmheartedly memorable as *I Don't Want to Go Home* or a production as overwhelming as *When You Dance*, they do, on balance, establish at last an identifica-

ble voice for the Jukes, enabling them to escape the revivalist trap they could well have fallen into. The result is a record that sounds as crisp and modern as anything by Boz Scaggs and yet still maintains the basic stylistic parameters of their other albums. In short, the Jukes have entered the mainstream with their integrity intact.

DON'T mean to make any of this sound like some classroom exercise (Contemporary Record Production I), because this stuff is far too vital. The point is simply that the Jukes are growing with becoming grace. Johnny's singing has continued to deepen and mature, the horn section has never sounded richer, and the addition of E Streeter Max Weinberg on drums has tightened the rhythm section up considerably. They remain what I have called them before, the Best Working Band in America, and if "Hearts of Stone" is not as immediately involving as its predecessors, it is no less deeply felt. Give it half a chance and it'll get to you.

—Steve Simels

SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY AND THE ASBURY JUKES: *Hearts of Stone*. Southside Johnny (vocals); the Asbury Jukes (vocals and instrumentals). *Got to Be a Better Way Home*; *This Time Baby's Gone For Good*; *I Played the Fool*; *Hearts of Stone*; *Take It Inside*; *Talk to Me*; *Next to You*; *Trapped Again*; *Light Don't Shine*. Epic JE 35488 \$7.98, © JEA 35488 \$7.98, © JET 35488 \$7.98.

SOUTHSIDE...

want her to be real intense, I just want her to be intense *truthfully*. She's not the most appreciative woman in the world, y'know; she says bad things about Bruce. I mean this guy, he doesn't have to help her, but he does it because he feels she's worth helping.

"She can be real exciting, but she can also be a real jerk. I think she would admit that herself. And if she doesn't," he concluded with a natural comedian's timing, "she's being a jerk."

Obviously, his town isn't big enough for both of them, and given the local fans' incredible pride and loyalty, it's no wonder that Patti's name is mud in Asbury Park. Johnny, on the other hand, has the key to the city.

"Yeah, they gave it to me, which was a very nice gesture, but I'm sure they meant it for Bruce too. Asbury's a

strange town, though. For some reason, all the resort communities seem to have their own ethnic make-up, and all the maniacs, all the shopping-bag ladies and garbage-can pickers seem to gravitate to Asbury Park. Asbury Park opened its arms to all the weirdos like us in the last few years."

Can he still walk the streets, though?

"Oh sure. I mean, I live there. People drive by in their cars, and they wave, and they talk to me, ask me how the album's doing. You treat them like friends, 'cause that's what they are.

"I've seen Bruce harassed by fans, but you just have to have an attitude. Like, 'Hey, I'm walking the street, you want to talk to me, that's fine; I like to talk to people. But don't go crazy, don't grab me by the neck, or any of that stuff.' I mean, I'm not the Beatles, I'm just another musician."

THE contrast apparently amused him, and I knew what he meant. But to my mind, he's not "just another musician"; he's of a special breed. Against

some heavy odds, he's bravely chosen to fly in the face of commercial wisdom and play music that in some ways is deliberately anachronistic. There are, after all, much easier ways to make a buck.

He was uncharacteristically thoughtful for a moment. "Well, the ultimate success of this music—for Steven, and me, and the band—means getting it across to as many people as we can, having them realize that it's as valid as any music, and more so than a lot.

"We're not trying to call back the past. We're not saying, 'Gee, wouldn't it be great to live in 1965.' We're just trying to make the music we like, that emotionally moves us. We may be an anomaly right now, but we're gonna change that."

And what if he does? What if the new album goes triple platinum?

"Oh, in that case," he deadpanned, "I'll buy a mansion in France and you'll never see me again. I'll never call my mother. I'm a real creep in my personal life." □

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CIRCLE NO. 9 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Dear Record Company:

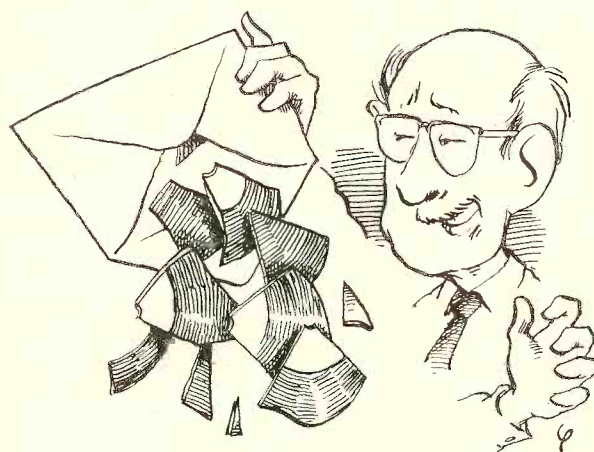
A quality-control engineer with a large record label shares some of his snap, crackle, and warp correspondence

THIS is a complaint. A complaint about complaints. I'm tired of not being appreciated for the job I have to do. What do I do? I'm the quality-control man for a largish but quality-conscious record company. Now I'm sure there are some of you who will doubt my existence ("Nobody cares about quality any more" is the commonly heard cry), but here I am, and there are—believe me—many others like me. I work very hard to keep defective records out of the stores, and when one does appear, I try to track down the cause of the defect and eliminate it.

AND what do I get for my efforts? Insults, that's what. Let me share with you some of my actual (only slightly censored) mail and you'll see what I mean:

- Enclosed please find one of your products. I believe it is intact enough for you to figure out which one it is. This is the third copy of this record I have owned. I exchanged two other warped copies for this warped copy that repeats every line through all the cuts on side one; I couldn't face side two.

The album was played with a top-quality turntable and cartridge tracking at 1 gram without success. I've had it. You



can take this lousy edition of your lousy product and the four bucks, or whatever it cost, and stuff it. You "folks" ought to go into a business you seem to understand much better than your present vocation—junk dealing.

L.O.S.
Hartford, Conn.

This communication came in a 3 x 5-inch envelope along with *all* the pieces of the record being complained about. Do you know how *hard* it is to break a record into pieces that will fit into an envelope that small? Try it some time. I'm just glad I don't have to introduce myself to this guy in a dark alley. I can understand his frustration, but don't you think it would have been more reasonable to send me the offending record intact? That way I would have been able to see what the problem was firsthand.

To be honest, I have never seen a manufacturing defect that would cause a tone arm to skip throughout the *entire* record as this writer claims (it would have to be shaped, I imagine, something like your basic Pringles potato "chip"). I suspect that the problem was

caused by improper storage in the record shop or by a combination of too-light tracking and (perhaps) excessive antiskating force. I sent this rather intense correspondent another copy of the record, but I never received as much as an acknowledgment. It must have been okay, however, because I didn't get that one back in a matchbox.

form letter requesting that the records be returned to us for inspection. They haven't arrived yet (a month or so later), so I don't think they ever will. (I have since discovered that other record companies have received identical letters from the same person complaining about different records. I wonder if collectively we have enough grounds to bring suit for extortion?)



SOME days my mail isn't bulging with record pieces and insults. Some days it's just threats:

● I received as a gift your issue of the complete Mahler symphonies. Unfortunately, the records were in such disgusting shape that they could not be played. I can accept a small amount of surface noise, but this is too much. My brother, who gave me this gift, is an Assistant U.S. Attorney, and when I told him what occurred, he (like myself) was outraged. He got in touch with a friend who is a federal attorney in your state and he requested that we send him the records so he could forward them to the proper agency. A copy of this letter is being sent with the defective product to the above-mentioned attorney. A copy is also being sent to STEREO REVIEW magazine.

R. W.
Bayonne, N.J.

If this letter is a *legitimate* complaint (we'll examine that point in a moment), I find it hard to believe that all *fourteen* of the discs in the set have "disgusting" surfaces. Surely at least some of them were only mildly distasteful. And why am I being threatened with attorneys, some vaguely identified agency, and, last but not least, the heavy guns of STEREO REVIEW?

If a buyer has a complaint about a record, the first place to go is the store where it was purchased. If an exchange is not possible at the store, then the record should be returned to the manufacturer along with a letter containing a clear, noise-free description of the problem. Only after that fails (and it usually won't) should "outside agencies" be considered.

It is my opinion, however, that this letter is a phony. Some legal eagle from Bayonne, New Jersey, has decided that he wants this particular set of records and can get them by sending me a nasty letter. But everyone in the business is pretty wise to that trick these days. I've sent this budding con artist our standard

I ALSO get complaints about the form letter I use. Some people think that form letters are the record company's way of getting even with complaining customers, just another means of demonstrating that they really don't give a hoot. Well, form letters are not exactly evil, but they are necessary. I just don't have the time to write a personal answer to every letter I receive and run down the cause of the complaint too. Here's a sample of one letter I use; I think it is polite, brief, and to the point:

Dear Customer:

In reply to your letter of (date), we regret the inconvenience caused by the defective record. Would you be kind enough to return it to us for inspection and exchange? Please mark the package "Educational Material" to avoid payment of excessive postage.

It would be helpful to us if you would include a short note specifying exactly where the defect is—that is, which side, what band, how many inches from the outer edge, what you hear when playing the record, and so forth. Many thanks for your cooperation.

Sincerely,
Your Record Company

NONETHELESS, one civic-minded person took exception to part of my letter:

● The five albums that I want to return were purchased for my listening pleasure, not for "educational" purposes. I do not see the need to return them to you labeled as such; as you



apparently do not realize, ripping off the Post Office by falsifying mailing purposes only serves to increase postal rates. Most users of the U.S. mails agree that postal services are currently *too* inefficient and costly at that. I am disturbed that you are asking me to contribute to this problem. Further-

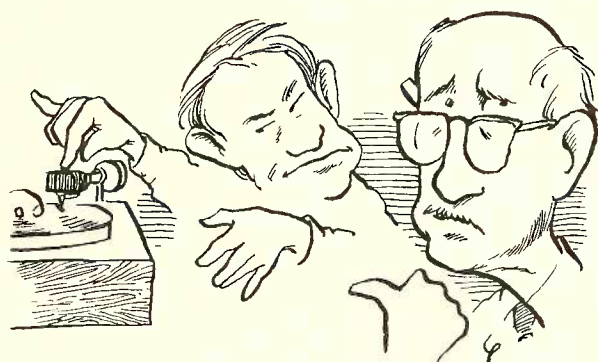
LETTERS...

more, why should I spend additional monies mailing these records when it is your fault that they need to be returned in the first place?

J.E.G.
New York, N.Y.

Well, just to set the record straight (no pun intended), the Postal Service will consider any book or record "Educational Material," no matter the reason for which they were purchased. We are not "ripping off" the Postal Service by suggesting that records be mailed fourth class. Besides, they won't be handled any better or faster if sent first class. (After receiving this letter, I noticed that the return address was only nine short blocks away from my office. The writer could easily have returned the records in person and thus avoided burdening the U.S. postal system.)

OCCASIONALLY people *do* return their records in person. One such adventurous soul appeared in the office one day and demanded that his defective record be exchanged. He claimed that the record was warped, but when the offending platter was placed on a turntable, no warp was visible—to my eye, at least. But, obeying the unwritten law "The customer is usually



right," I went to the stockroom and got another copy. The record was played in our quality-control room with the customer present. The record was deemed acceptably flat and noise-free by all concerned—until the customer happened to take a closer look at our record player. "My God!" he exclaimed, "You're playing that at 2 grams. You've just erased all the high frequencies!" And with that he picked up his original "defective" disc and departed.

NOT all the letters I receive are abusive. Some are just a little strange.

● I recently bought (whatever happened to those good old days at Club 47?) one of your records. Side two plays fine, but side one has roadblocks on it. I purchased the record as a



cutout in E. Lansing, Michigan. Upon returning back to Uniontown, Maryland, I deduced that it skips. If I could get a replacement that would be nice. As it stands now, side one is unplayable except for the first song.

J.F.
Uniontown, Md.

Now the strange aspect of this letter, aside from the tortured handwriting and grotesque punctuation (here repaired for the sake of intelligibility), was a freehand sketch of the offending product that vaguely resembled a shot-gunned Frisbee. I didn't know quite what to expect when I asked that the record be returned to me, but in due course the disc arrived in the mail and, much to my surprise, was *exactly* as shown in the drawing. It was probably the worst case of non-fill pressing (meaning that the plastic didn't flow sufficiently or evenly onto and into the stamper) I have ever seen. I guess you can't always tell a leopard by its spots (or an audiophile by his letters).

BY now you should have some idea of what I, and others stuck with similar jobs, have to put up with. But don't think that we are simply tired of complaints. Far from it! All record companies (all manufacturers, for that matter) are interested, if not exactly overjoyed, in hearing *legitimate* complaints. They help with quality control by making it easier to locate and correct flaws in the manufacturing process—nobody, and nothing, is perfect, after all.

If you think about it, you'll realize that letters are the *only* feedback (aside from sales figures) that the quality-control engineers get from the record-buying public. If most of the letters received are from those trying to "liberate" a few records for themselves, or from discomaniacs with unrealistic ideas about what makes a good record, the net effect on improving disc quality will be zero. So, keep those cards and letters comin' in, folks. But try to keep your outrage under control, your expectations within the realm of possibility, and your complaint carefully worded to tell us exactly what you found wrong. Together we may be able to have some positive effects on record-quality problems, both the immediate and specific and the long-term and general. □

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CIRCLE NO. 63 ON READER SERVICE CARD

HOW TO MAKE GOOD RECORDS

An ironic little tale by someone who tried

THE new digital recording techniques presently creating such a furor in the industry do not, unfortunately, deal directly with the greatest cause of consumer dissatisfaction with today's discs: inferior, if not actually defective, processing and pressing. We've all encountered the problem in the form of surface pops and crackles, warps, groove echo, and various unclassifiable distortions. Just why are these record flaws so common and so troublesome? Can anything be done about them?

Many people (although not many within the confines of the record industry) labor under the delusion that all that is needed to make high-quality records is the *desire* to do so. So, at first, did we at Sonar Records. Quickly disabused of that simple notion, we went on to find *one* way of making high-quality recordings. It's far from the *only* way, but it has worked for us thus far, and it may be instructive for the record buyer to share some of the experiences that went into our discovering it.

When we first set out, we knew that if we wanted to produce a high-quality record we had to start with a high-quality master tape. Until direct-to-disc recordings appeared, tape recordings were almost invariably the original source of the music ultimately sold on discs. For our superior records we obviously needed superior tape recordings. Since we would be recording primarily classical music, we knew that an ideal tape recording would mean minimum background noise and the very highest possible signal level we could obtain without driving the tape into distortion. And so we first went to the length of obtaining our own custom-built tape recorder.

Next, we felt that, for classical music, close-miking techniques would not yield the results we were after. We knew, for example, that if a microphone is placed very close to the strings of a violin, it picks up a somewhat different sound than if it is placed several feet away, for, with the microphone at a distance, more reverberation and hall sound find their way into the recording, certain of the violin's overtones and bowing noises are less

prominent, and the instrument's directional characteristics play less of a role. Also, when you have a *group* of instruments, a natural mixture of sound, such as is heard during a live performance, usually takes several feet of space to develop in. There are, in short, a number of variables involved, and we felt we could best capture what we wanted by backing off with the microphones and letting the orchestra balance itself.

This decision quite naturally simplified the mechanics of our recording. We no longer had to set up a dozen or more microphones throughout the orchestra, feed their outputs into a multitrack tape machine, and then work and rework those tracks later on. Instead, we recorded using only two very high-quality microphones (placed some distance from the orchestra), letting the sound develop naturally and capturing it as it would be heard in a live performance.

Sometimes (rarely) we would get a good natural balance almost immediately. But more often than not we had to lay down a small segment of the music to be recorded, listen to the playback to check balance, and then reposition mikes and/or musicians as necessary. We asked the musicians to help us decide what sounded best, and we all worked together to get the best results. Naturally there were a few prima donnas interested only in *their* sound, but by and large the group cooperated fully, and we obtained an excellent overall balance.

As for equipment, we usually use omnidirectional microphones (one per channel) that feed directly into our own special low-noise microphone preamplifier; we then take the output of the preamp and feed it directly to our tape machine, which has been fitted with special low-noise components throughout. All the mechanical tape-handling portions of the machine have been reworked to get the smoothest and quietest operation obtainable, and special heads of our own design have replaced

the original standard playback and record heads. Recording is done at a tape speed of 30 inches per second using the highest-grade 1/2-inch mastering tape. This gives us a recording with very low noise and a wide dynamic range that is almost indistinguishable from the original performance when played back.

In the good old days, before the advent of the close-miking and multitrack mixdown techniques used today, engineers had no choice but to use these same methods, and this, in our opinion, was a major factor in creating the natural sound quality some of those old recordings have and today's products do not. In effect, we have adopted a similar approach: we simply let nature take its course and try to capture the sound with the best equipment we can get.

WITH the completion of the tape comes the process of transferring the sound to disc, and that is where the real "fun" begins! The first step in record production is, of course, the cutting of the master lacquer from the master tape. During disc mastering, the master tape is played on a special tape machine that provides the signal for the disc cutter, which in turn inscribes the signal as a complex mechanical undulation (the groove) on the master lacquer. The tape machine also provides a signal for a control computer that "previews" the master tape by means of a playback head physically located well before the regular playback head. The computer analyzes the information coming from this preview head and, depending on the loudness or softness of the upcoming passage, tells the cutting lathe how much space to put between the grooves. The master lacquer itself is a 14-inch disc that looks similar to a vinyl record, only thicker. It is actually an aluminum disc coated with a special lacquer material so that the recording stylus can cut the grooves into it.

The intention in disc mastering is to put as high a sound level ("volume") on the record as possible without distortion *and* without cutting into the aluminum or causing the stylus to lift away from the lacquer surface. As straightforward as this sounds, it requires a few hundred thousand dollars

By Norman E. Mendenhall



A master lacquer is examined by microscope on the lathe in the cutting studios of Masterdisk in New York City (photo Bruce Pendleton).

GOOD RECORDS

"Without exception, every step of the process is controlled by the almighty dollar."

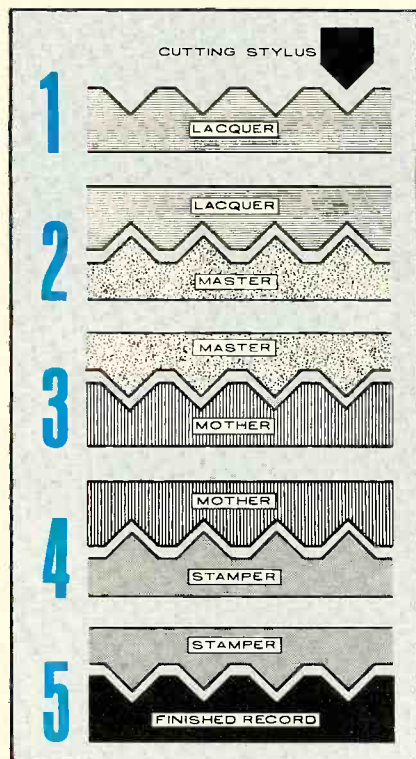
worth of equipment, and someone who really knows what he is doing, to accomplish properly. We found that the latter is usually harder to come by than the former! Because the lacquer material is soft, you cannot play the master lacquer (to determine whether the cutting job was done properly) without ruining it. So you first cut a reference lacquer, which is identical to a master lacquer except that it is 12 inches in diameter instead of 14. This reference lacquer is then played to evaluate the cutting process. If it is okay, you go ahead and cut the master.

The next step is the plating process. After the lacquers are cut, they are sent to the metalizing plant where they are electroplated. This results in metal "negative" copies, or "masters," of the master lacquer itself. Then, as a rule, metal "mothers" are made from the negative masters, also by electroplating. From the mothers are generated the "stampers" that will actually mold or "press" the records.

What could—and does—go wrong in this relatively simple process? First, if you try to speed up the plating process, the metal particles build up at a faster rate than they should, and stresses develop that distort the groove detail, introduce noise, and even cause sonic "print through" onto adjacent grooves—in other words, groove echo. Groove echo can also result if the grooves are cut too close together, regardless what the plating speed might be. We encountered this problem very early in our recording career at a time when we knew nothing of the potential causes of such problems. Our first test pressing arrived from the pressing plant with a horrendous amount of groove echo. We frantically phoned the cutting people, who said that it *couldn't* have occurred during cutting and must have happened in the metalizing. We talked to the man at the metal plant, who admitted that there was a "slight chance" that it happened at their end, but chances were greater that it was in the cutting. And even if it was their fault, there was little or nothing they could do about it! In desperation we talked to the pressing plant and they said that it was probably in the cut-

ting—but perhaps it *could* have been in the plating.

So where did we go from there? Back to the cutting studio to begin all over again. I might add here that numerous other things can go wrong in the metalizing stages as well, such as too high or too low a temperature in the plating bath, a disaster from which we were mercifully spared the first time around. To avoid other difficulties we support the practice of plating the master lacquers as soon as they are cut (in the same hour, if possible), because the lacquer has a tendency to "relax" after cutting, changing the shapes of the grooves and thus the sound to some de-



gree. Our philosophy, therefore, is: plate *immediately*, but plate *slowly*.

The second time around we instructed the cutting engineer to space the grooves out more to reduce the risk of groove echo (but also increasing the risk of running out of recording space on loud, long pieces). We had the master lacquer plated that same evening (and plated slowly), which eliminated *almost* all of the problems.

THEN it was off to the pressing plant, where we found that there are about two zillion additional things that can go wrong. Unless you own your own plant, you are pretty much at the mercy of the one you are dealing with. We found, for example, that the slower the molding cycle, the better—to a certain

extent—the pressing, for a slow cycle gives the vinyl a better chance to settle down properly into the negative grooves of the stamper. However, the slower the molding process, the fewer the records manufactured per hour and the less money everyone makes. This provides quite a substantial motivation for the process to be speeded up—with the inevitable effects on quality.

Which brings us to one of the sorest, if not *the* sorest, topics in the annals of record production: Economics. Without exception, every step of the process—from the moment the orchestra begins to play until the time the consumer places his stylus on the record—is controlled by the almighty dollar. In the original recording session, the producer sees the minutes ticking away (on the musicians' union scale) and is anxious to get the session over as quickly and efficiently as possible unless he has an unlimited budget (I don't know many people who do). Retakes—sometimes in multiples—are always necessary, and occasionally certain errors ("clams") are left in and the engineers are expected to do their magic with the splicing block later to "correct" or polish them up. From that point on, it's an unending rush to meet deadlines and budgets. Rushing often means carelessness, and cutting corners to meet cost requirements usually leads to disaster. You simply cannot cut corners and still expect a superior product.

The disc-cutting facility naturally wants to handle as many master lacquers as possible in the shortest period of time and still maintain enough quality to satisfy—maybe I should say "pacify"—their customers. Various technical procedures and compromises are routinely used to prevent any possibility of overcutting, or "lifts," on the master lacquer and to get more time on the disc.

One additional problem is that of lacquer quality. Some of the lacquer "blanks" used for cutting will be good, others not so good. A certain amount of quality control (usually visual inspection) is exercised here by the cutting facility but, beyond that, most people do not or can not take the extra time and care needed for real quality assurance. It is indeed difficult to do much else at this stage in the production operation, for if you play what you've just cut to check it, the playing will ruin it too. What's the solution? One way we found to evaluate lacquer quality is to cut unmodulated "quiet" grooves on the outside edge of the 14-inch master lacquer, then play them back to determine if there are any flaws in the lac-

(Continued on page 80)



THE TUNE UP KIT FOR YOUR CAR STEREO. IT'LL GIVE YOU A BETTER HIGH END.

With a Scotch® Master III™ Cassette and a minor change in your recording routine, you can noticeably boost the highs you get from your car stereo.

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THE TRUTH COMES OUT.**

GOOD RECORDS

"After you've endured all the agony, you have a disc that sounds only marginally superior even to a critical listener."

quer that are not visible to the naked eye. This, of course, does not eliminate the possibility that there are flaws further on into the lacquer, but you have to *assume* there won't be any and pray for the best. Again, this silent-groove step is not a very popular lacquer evaluation technique because of the time (and money) it takes.

The slow-plating process mentioned earlier is also not popular with the economy-minded because it reduces product output. When same-day plating is requested, the plating plant must reserve time in advance, and they naturally prefer to take things at their own pace rather than at the customer's. (It is possible, of course, with a little arm twisting and/or palm greasing—money again!)

The slow pressing cycle is probably the most difficult of all quality assurances to achieve. In the cutting and metalizing plants you are delaying only one or two customers, but if you ask the pressing plant to take just 15 seconds more for each record in a run of, say, 10,000 or 15,000 discs, this could amount to almost two extra days of pressing time. An already overloaded pressing-plant manager will just love that!

THEN, once the technical problems have been worked out, you start to discover logistical problems. You have reason to believe that everything is all lined up. The cutting people say they will cut on Tuesday, so you contact the metal plant and schedule Tuesday evening to plate. But they *can't* plate on Tuesday, and so you must go back and forth between them and the cutting people until everyone finally agrees on the second Tuesday after the first full moon. The long-awaited hour arrives and you impatiently call the metal plant to make sure everything is proceeding smoothly, only to hear that since they never received the lacquers from the cutting studio, they scheduled somebody else in your place. You phone the cutting plant the next day in near panic and are told by a calm voice at the other end that you got "bumped" by XYZ Records, who had this real *rush* job.

After all, XYZ Records is one of their biggest customers and has some of the biggest hits, and who are *you* to demand equal treatment? But don't worry, they can cut yours in another day or two—and, if not, perhaps some time next week for sure.

In the end, you ask yourself if it is all worth it. After you've endured all the agony, you have a disc that sounds only *marginally* superior even to a critical listener. Certainly there are quite a few quality-conscious consumers who demand the best and are willing to pay for subtle differences, but the majority of the record-buying public simply couldn't care less. And that is why the majority of record companies have long since found their own answers to the question "Why bother with costly and time-consuming procedures when

most people can't tell—or don't care about—the difference anyway?"

It is clear, judging from what has been happening in the direct-to-disc market, that there is a growing audience for high-quality recordings, but it is still a relatively small one. Most manufacturers believe there is not much that can be done to improve the situation significantly, and they have a persuasive body of facts on their side. But consumers need not be at all shy about telling record companies how they *ought* to conduct their businesses. That market out there is, after all, one great big voting booth! □

Norman E. Mendenhall is president of Sonar Records, a privately held audiophile record company. Formerly a free-lance recording engineer, he was a co-founder of Ambiphon.

AGGRAVATION IS NOT THE ONLY EXPENSE

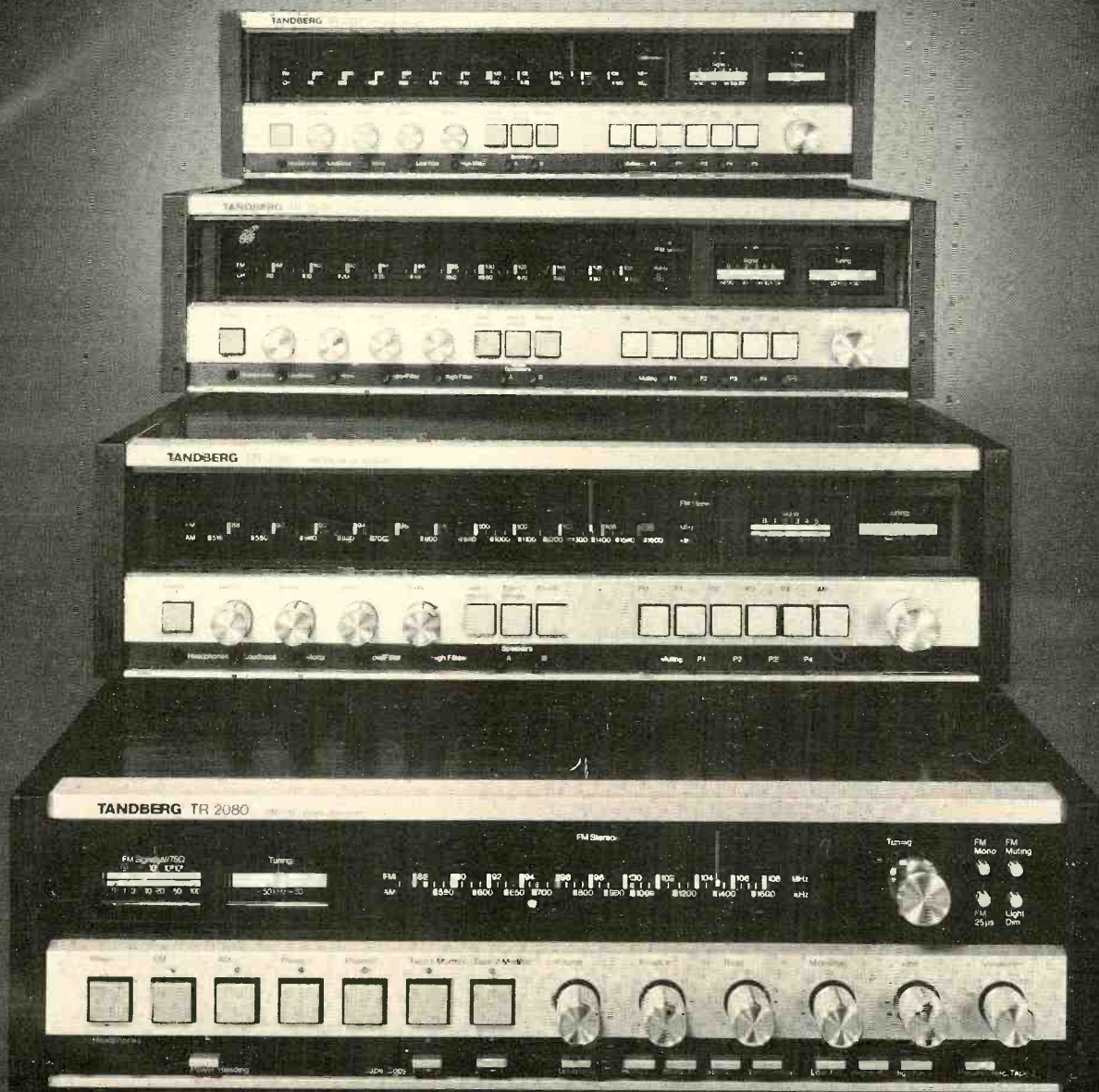
MAKING a record, good or bad, is a fairly costly proposition, and many of the expenses are hidden away where the consumer is not likely to be aware of them. The itemization below documents some of the strains put on the budget in a typical recording project. All figures have been adjusted for an assumed production run of 1,000 discs. Note that the costs of paying the artists, renting the recording site, and making the master tape are not represented here at all. The list shows only *manufac-*

turing costs—what it is necessary to pay to have a finished product to sell. And please note the effects of only two years of inflation.

The figures give the cost of doing each of these operations *once*. But, since something *always* goes wrong, we can count on paying for at least one of these items twice—perhaps three times. A cost overrun of 10 to 15 per cent is therefore what we plan for, and if we meet that estimate we consider that we have been very lucky indeed.

Item	1976 Costs	1978 Costs
1. Safety copy of master tape	\$75	\$80
2. Reference lacquers	\$30/side	\$40/side
3. Master lacquers	\$65/side	\$80/side
4. Metalwork (master, mother, stamper)	\$45/side	\$75/side
5. Pressings	\$470	\$490
6. Liners	\$30	\$30
7. Shrinkwrap	\$30	\$30
Subtotal disc manufacturing (assume 1,000 copies)	\$885	\$1,020
8. Color separations (jacket cover)	\$200	\$300
9. Typesetting (cover only)	\$100	\$150
10. Four-color printing (cover)	\$175	\$200
11. Typesetting (center label)	\$17	\$17
12. Plates (center label)	\$17	\$17
13. Printing (center label)	\$20	\$20
14. Jacket notes	\$100	\$150
15. Stats and typesetting (jacket back)	\$150 (varies)	\$150 (varies)
16. Plates and setup (jacket back)	\$25	\$25
17. Printing back and fabricating jacket	\$65	\$80
18. Jacket cover design	\$100 (varies)	\$250 (varies)
19. Paste up mechanical front and back	\$150	\$225
20. Freight charges	\$85	\$115
Subtotal jacket manufacturing	\$1,445	\$1,549
Subtotal disc and jacket	\$2,330	\$2,569
21. Miscellaneous costs	\$150 (varies)	\$225 (varies)
Total disc and jacket manufacturing	\$2,480	\$2,794

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Knowledgeable experts around the world place Tandberg high fidelity products in that special category. The TR 2080 stereo receiver, for example, is actually made up of a recognizably superior electronic tuner, pre-amplifier and power amplifier, each on its own separate chassis, perfectly balanced into one integrated unit. Moreover, these individual sec-

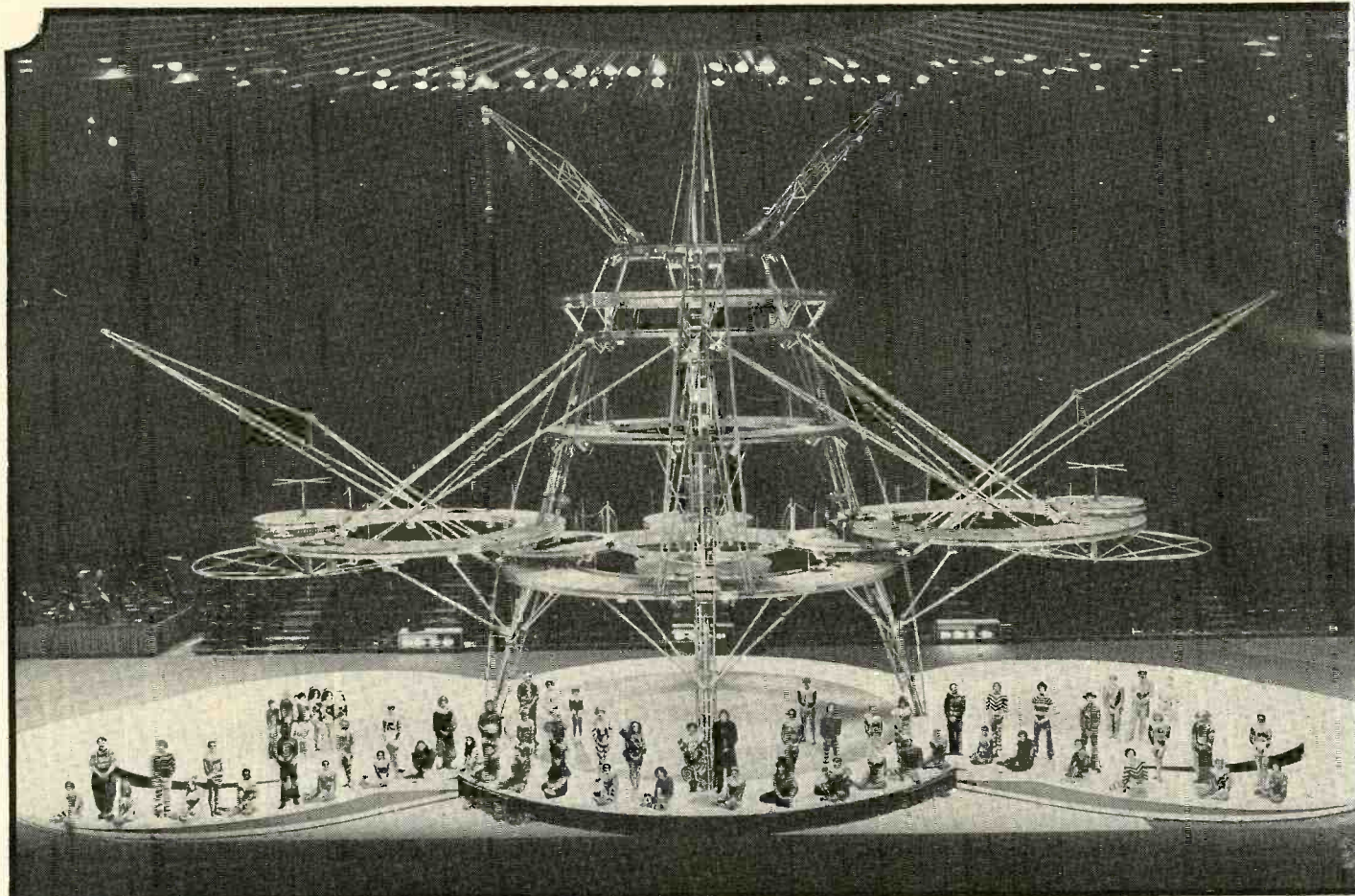
tions of the receiver offer specifications & flexibility normally associated with individual components whose total price would be much, much more than the TR 2080. So, perhaps it is ever possible to consider it a bargain.

See the entire Tandberg receiver line—a series that shares more than just their exquisite rosewood cabinetry. Indeed, you will discover a commonality of performance, specifications and features that reflect the world-famous Tandberg commitment to integrity.

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TANDBERG

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The cast of *ClownAround* assembled in front of the massive "clown machine," which could become . . .

CLOWNAROUND

In the Byzantine world of record collecting, some releases have attained almost mythic stature. If you were to find a copy of, say, Max Steiner's soundtrack for *The Caine Mutiny* (RCA LOC-1013, withdrawn before release, June 1954), it would not be difficult also to find a number of collectors willing to pay more than \$1,000 for the privilege of owning the disc. Although *The Caine Mutiny* is an extreme case, extravagant prices for rare movie soundtracks and original-cast recordings of Broadway musicals are not unusual.

Three Wishes for Jamie (Capitol), for example, was an unsuccessful show written by Ralph Blane in 1952. The original-cast album can be had for upwards of \$150. The list goes on. *Look Ma, I'm Dancin'!* (Decca) is worth more than \$100, and the same goes for

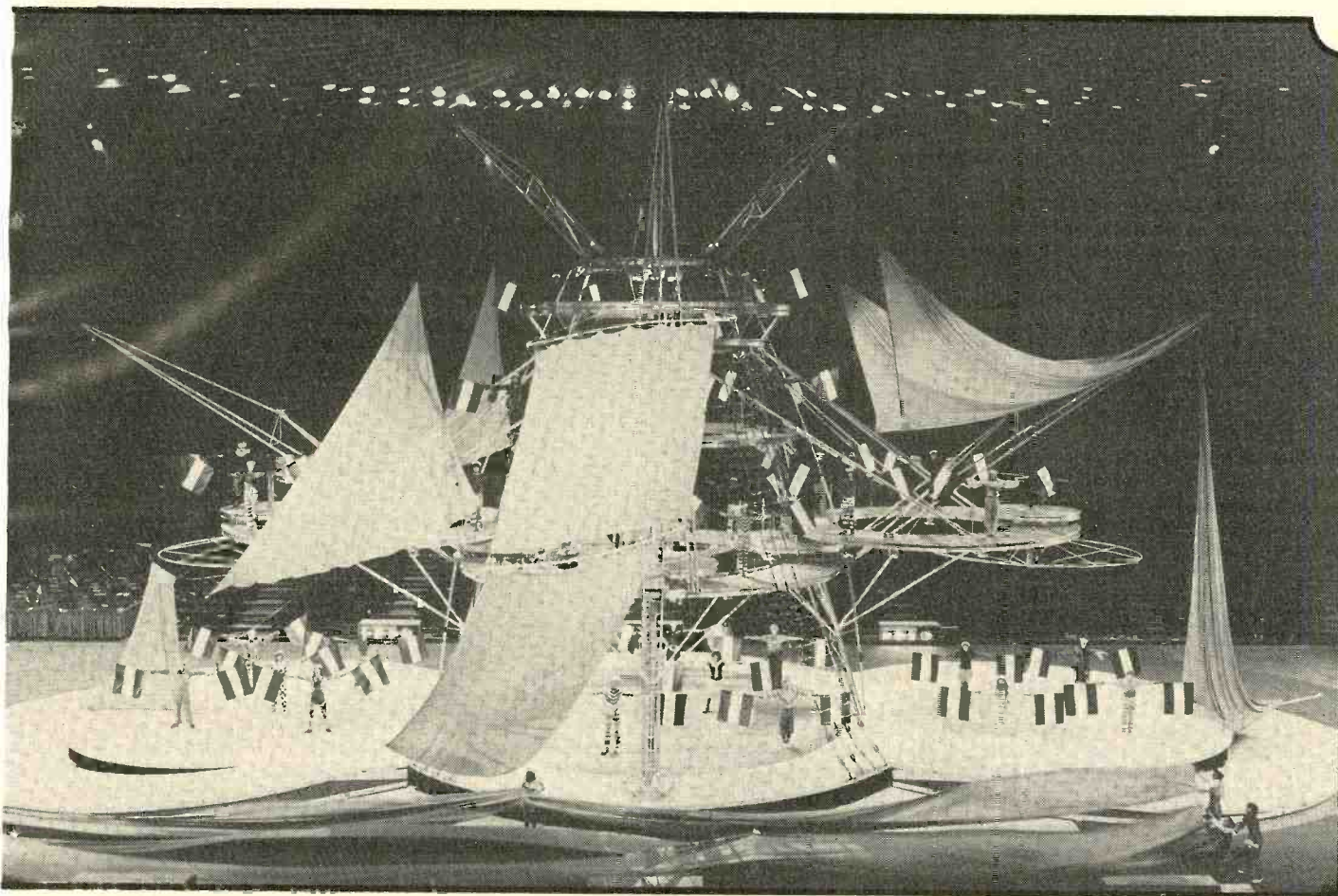
Texas, Li'l Darlin' (Decca) and *Flahooley* (Capitol). The market for the last one is sure to be somewhat deflated because of Capitol Records' 1977 reissue, but there are still some collectors who will pay about \$100 for the original pressing.

These shows all have one thing in common: they were written and produced in the late Forties or early Fifties and had relatively short runs in New York. Newer records, from 1960 on, are cheaper. There is, however, an exception to the rule, an exception whose origins are shrouded in a mystery worthy of Agatha Christie. Its name is *ClownAround*, and those few who own a copy can boast of having "the rarest original-cast album of the Sixties and Seventies."

Accounts—nay, even mentions—of

ClownAround are rare, but it was one such mention that piqued my curiosity a couple of years ago. The source was a publication put out by RTS, a West Coast organization that caters mainly to collectors. "To fill gaps in their collection," said the *Third RTS Annual*, "one will find original-cast collectors willing to part with \$100 for a copy of *Clownaround*." I had never before heard of *Clownaround*. What was it? When was it? Who wrote it? And why was it so rare? I decided to find out.

The when turned out to be easy at first and then confusing. RTS listed *Clownaround* (that was their spelling) as a 1968 production issued on RCA Victor Records as catalog number LSP-4741. So far, so good. The confusion came in when I consulted another source, *Recorded Music for Motion*



... a ship (a ship!?) as pictured above, a jungle, a fairground, a whatever with elevators.

A HUNT IN THE BLACK VINYL FOREST

By Richard Thompson

Pictures, Television and the Theatre, put out by A-1 Record Finders. A-1 is also a West Coast business that deals in rare records (nearly all such dealers are in or near California or New York City). A-1 showed *Clownaround's* issue date as 1972, four years later. Who, then, was right?

To answer any question on Broadway musicals one has an unimpeachable source in the series of annual *Best Plays* volumes. If a show was performed in New York or in the thespic hinterlands, *Best Plays* gives a rundown of dates and credits. *Best Plays* said nothing about *Clownaround*. Not in 1972. Not in 1968. Not in volumes going all the way back to 1950. If *Best Plays* was right, *Clownaround* wasn't a musical, it was nothing.

But there was a kicker. In the 1972

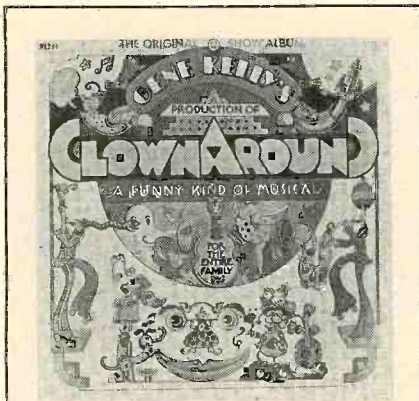
volume *Best Plays* listed all the "New York Cast" albums recorded that year, and one of them was *Clown Around*. Even with the difference in spelling, that had to be it. And yet, according to the same series of books, a show by that name had never existed.

I DID no better in checking back issues of the show-business newspaper *Variety*. Nothing called *Clownaround* or *Clown Around* or *ClownAround* had ever played the Great White Way. It was time to change strategy. I had an idea. Why not find a copy of the album and work from there? The cover of an original-cast recording usually gives the date and location of the opening of that particular show.

The nearest major city to me was Washington, D.C., and in Washington

the finest collection of records belongs to the Library of Congress. A copy of virtually every release on a major label is deposited in that institution's collection of sound recordings. Since both RTS and A-1 agreed on the catalog number, finding *Clownaround* there would obviously be a snap. It wasn't. The Library of Congress had no copy of LSP-4741. They went from 4740 to 4742. All the librarian could suggest was to call RCA, a logical enough next step.

RCA in Washington referred me to RCA in New York. Lee Roberts of RCA in New York transferred me to Paul Giasson of the Red Seal Division, which releases RCA's recordings of classical music and Broadway shows. Giasson hadn't heard of *Clownaround* either, and his search through the RCA



CLOWNAROUND (Moose Charlap-Alvin Cooperman). Directed by Gene Kelly; produced by Theatre Now in association with Harry Lashinsky and Franklin Roberts; musical supervision by Harper MacKay; orchestrations by Jack Elliott and Allyn Ferguson; choreography by Howard Jeffrey; entire production designed by Sean Kenny. Original-cast album produced by Manny Kellam. *Clowns; You're a Clown; Here Are Your Children; Silhouette; Animal Band; Balloon; Thingamajig; Laugh Song; I Need a Ship; Sunny Day; Clown Alley; Clowns Say Goodnight.* RCA LSP-4741, deleted.

files yielded no mention of the show whatever. But there was one encouraging word. Although no one at RCA knew anything about the production, the name for some reason "rang a bell" with Giasson. He didn't, however, know which bell.

Things were getting desperate, and another try with the Library of Congress didn't make the picture any brighter. The librarian conjectured that *Clownaround* might be a "ghost," a nonexistent item that is somehow assigned a catalog number. Since such ghosts don't really exist, copies can never be found. These things are nightmares for librarians.

I tried another tack. Was it ever copyrighted? That question brought forth one small nugget of gold. On April 23, 1971, something called *Clown Alley*, or *The World of Clowns* was copyrighted by Alvin Cooperman and Morris Charlap. Here, at last, was a recognizable name. Morris Charlap was Moose Charlap, who wrote most of the score for Mary Martin's *Peter Pan* in 1954. After that, his career was a cavalcade of flops: *Whoop-Up!* (1958, fifty-six performances), *The Conquering Hero* (1961, eight performances), and *Kelly* (1965, one performance). And Cooperman, as it turned out, had

been associated with Madison Square Garden at the time. The U.S. Copyright Office entry, however, yielded no new paths to pursue. The hunt for *Clownaround* was at a dead end.

The arrival of a rare record catalog in the mail one day brought the key information. It came from Bruce Yeko, and he claimed to have "a personal collection that consists of nearly every Broadway and Hollywood recording."

Did he have a copy of *Clownaround*? Yes, he did. On RCA? Yes: LSP-4741.

But it wasn't a Broadway show. It was meant to be performed in arenas across the country, ending up at Madison Square Garden. It was directed by Gene Kelly and produced by Theatre Now in association with Harry Lashinsky and Franklin Roberts. With the aid of Theatre Now's Charlotte Wilcox, who was a production assistant on *Clownaround*, and Miles Kreuger, of the Institute of the American Musical Theatre, I got a clearer picture of the show.

The correct spelling of the title was one word with a capital "A" in the middle—*ClownAround*—and, according to Wilcox, it began as a small production featuring one clown. However, "it grew very quickly from this small production into an elaborate show, sort of a different version of *Disney on Parade*." She added, "I wouldn't say it was rewritten. It just evolved into something else, particularly after Gene Kelly came into the production."

When it finally opened in Oakland on April 27, 1972, *ClownAround* had

reached gargantuan proportions. Even though the headliners were Ruth Buzzi and Dennis Allen (both then of *Laugh-In*), the real star was a "clown machine" designed by Sean Kenny, whose credits included a series of musicals, among them *Oliver*. Rising 52 feet above the arena floor and stretching 134 feet in length, the clown machine weighed more than 22 tons and took 20 hours to erect. Seven 40-foot vans were needed to transport it. There were twelve performance levels, with built-in lighting, sound, and mechanical effects, all served by a series of elevators. In spite of its imposing size, it was to be an all-purpose set, becoming a jungle, ship, fairground, or whatever, smoothly and quickly.

The cast, too, was large. Aside from Buzzi and Allen, there were no fewer than seventy performers and circus acts. The music and lyrics were what might be expected from an arena show. Hearing the album at the home of a collector, I found it to be typical of the music one hears at such shows as the *Ice Capades*.

THERE was one major drawback to such a huge production. It was expensive to produce, and consequently it had to draw large audiences almost from the beginning. It needed to be an instant hit. *ClownAround* wasn't. Reviews were mixed. *Variety*, among others, was unremitting in pointing out weaknesses, mainly in the supporting cast. "Supporting circus-type acts are

(Continued from page 86)



ClownAround headliners Ruth Buzzi and Dennis Allen seated on the fenders of a "clown train" in a scene from the show, with various clownish hangers-on in the rear.

Theatre Now

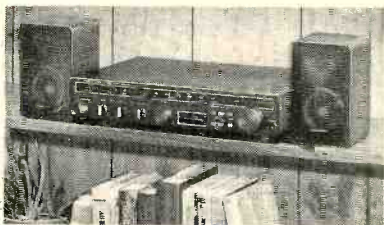
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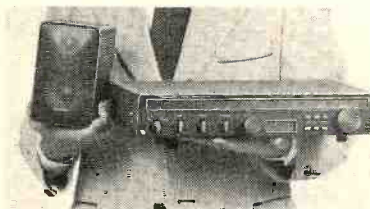
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CLOWNAROUND

tolerable and quite good in places," said *Variety*, "if one doesn't count the stumbling horses, strangling doves, and the Zamperla Family, a group of green youngsters whose cycling and tumbling potential is evident but unready for a pro circuit."

Then there was Chrys Holt, "who normally hangs by her long hair from a balloon high in the rafters." She "unwisely chose to add a motorcycle to the balloon for a roaring entrance." The result was a debacle. "[The] cycle was loud enough, but so heavy that helpers had to keep pushing Miss Holt back up into the air so her feet wouldn't drag while she was hair-hanging."

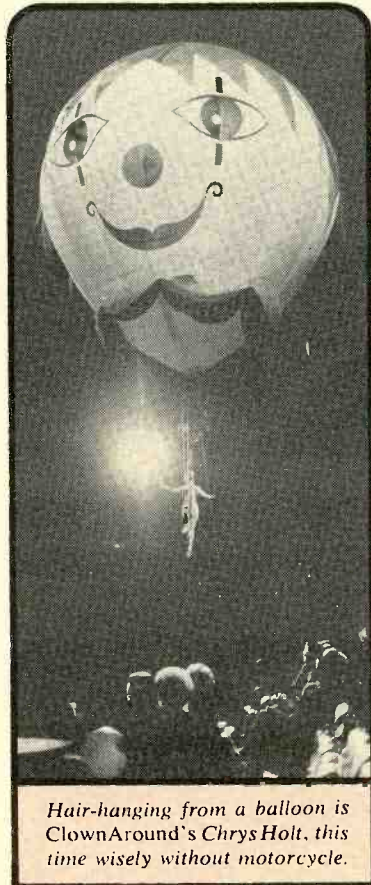
A week after that review, *Variety* carried the account of *ClownAround's* demise, following "two bad weeks in which terrific losses were sustained." The figure given for the total loss was \$650,000. Although it was sold out in Houston, the next scheduled stop, the producers couldn't get it there. They were out of money.

Finally answered were the what, when, and who of *ClownAround*. Only one question remained: why was the record album so rare? Yeko told one story that had made the rounds of collectors. According to this tale, RCA pressed many copies of the recording, but when the show folded, the company destroyed them for tax reasons. Some copies survived, having already been distributed by salesmen as advance samples of the impending release, and a few batches turned up in Boston, New York City, and Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Although it sounded improbable, the detail of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, had the ring of truth. No one at RCA headquarters, however, could confirm the story because their paper cupboard was bare of information about *ClownAround*.

In my continuing search I started drawing blanks again. Composer Moose Charlap was dead. Alvin Cooperman, author of the book and lyrics, was no longer at Madison Square Garden, and I couldn't locate him. Manny Kellam, who produced the album and should therefore know what happened to it, had long since left RCA, and no one there knew where he had gone.

Enter Thomas Z. Shepard, RCA division vice president of Red Seal Artists and Repertoire and the foremost producer of Broadway-show recordings today. Giasson had mentioned

ClownAround to Shepard, and now he, too, was curious to know what had happened to the album and why it was so rare. He even had a test pressing made from the original master, located in Los Angeles. But *ClownAround* proved to be too much. After some preliminary work, Shepard reported that it would take too much research through the RCA files. He just didn't have the manpower and budget necessary to find the definitive answer. When I asked where he thought I should go next, he said, "Have you tried Moose Charlap's widow?"



Theatre Now

Hair-hanging from a balloon is *ClownAround's* Chrys Holt, this time wisely without motorcycle.

Sandra Stewart Charlap didn't know what happened to the record either, but she did have a telephone number for producer Manny Kellam. He was in New Jersey, running a radio station, she thought. That phone number had been reassigned, however, and it now belonged to a repair shop that renovated antique automobiles.

In time I managed to establish that Kellam was not on the staff of any radio or television station in New Jersey (or the entire Northeast, for that matter), and no Manny Kellam was listed in any New Jersey telephone directory I could find. I decided to give it just one more college try. In the 1960's Kellam

had produced albums for Epic Records. Perhaps they would know where he was.

The people I talked with at Epic in New York had no information on Manny Kellam. They recommended calling their office in New Jersey. At Epic in New Jersey one of the executives turned out to be Ted Kellam, the brother of Manny. Bingo!

From there it was a short step to Manny Kellam, who confirmed that, yes, *ClownAround* was melted down by the record company. According to Kellam, now living in New Jersey and producing records on a free-lance basis, RCA originally pressed the normal number of copies, approximately four thousand. As the show went from city to city on tour, batches of albums were to be sent ahead in hopes that those who saw the show would be a ready market and would buy the record. But *ClownAround* closed before any shipments other than the one to Oakland had left the warehouses. No tour, no sales. Most of the few albums sent to Oakland were returned, and the promotional copies and those given to cast and crew members were about the only ones that never came back.

WHAT did RCA do with the thousands they had in storage? Kellam said, "They melted them down." In the record business melt-downs are not unusual. The vinyl is reused, though not in the company's top-price albums. The bargain-label disc (on RCA Victorla, for example) and the 45-rpm single you buy today may be composed, at least in part, of yesterday's unsold loser. At last the mystery was solved. The hunt—or, in Shepard's words, the "runaround on *ClownAround*"—had ended.

Just as I was preparing to try to dismiss the subject from my mind, a record sale list arrived in the mail. It contained an eye-catching item: a copy of *ClownAround*—factory sealed, no less—at \$125.

I thought about it. How often is there a chance to buy a legend? What is the worth of mythology, particularly mythology in a form that will never be reissued? I tried to be reasonable. Whatever the worth, there were more serious pressing demands. The car needed repairs, the mortgage payments on the new house were soon to start, and there were appliances to buy. Finally logic and reason dictated that I pass on this one. But maybe next time, maybe next time. □

Richard Thompson, record sleuth, is also managing editor of the *Bowie (Md.) Blade*.

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Two things are quite clear: a moving coil cartridge reproduces music more accurately than any other cartridge design; Ortofon, the developer of the design, makes the finest moving coil cartridges in the world.

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So the moving coil cartridge is the *best* way to get the most out of your records. But expensive.

Best? Yes.

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The new cantilever in the MC10 is constructed of a special alloy, chosen for rigidity and low mass. With its tiny super-polished elliptical diamond, you get very low tip mass and its many benefits: excellent tracking, easy handling

of transients and minimal record wear. Gold plated terminal pins eliminate the possibility of corrosion. Solderless pressfit contacts secure internal wire contact to the pin shells. In short, everything has been done to make the MC10 a high performance cartridge. What makes it affordable, is that new and artful methods of production have made the MC10 easier and faster to produce.

The Affordable Combination

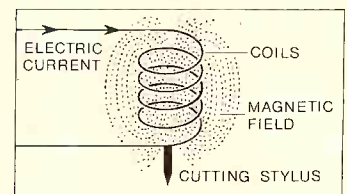
The best moving coil cartridges require that the signal be boosted before entering your receiver. If your receiver has no provision for a moving coil cartridge, we suggest that you consider the STM72. It's a double-shielded transformer designed to function beautifully in tandem with the MC10.

The good news is that the price of either or both of these Ortofon products makes moving coil performance available to many more music lovers who've had to satisfy their desire for exquisite musical performance with a less accurate cartridge.

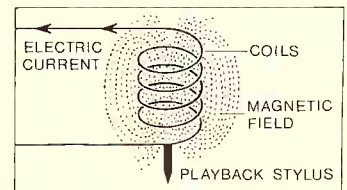
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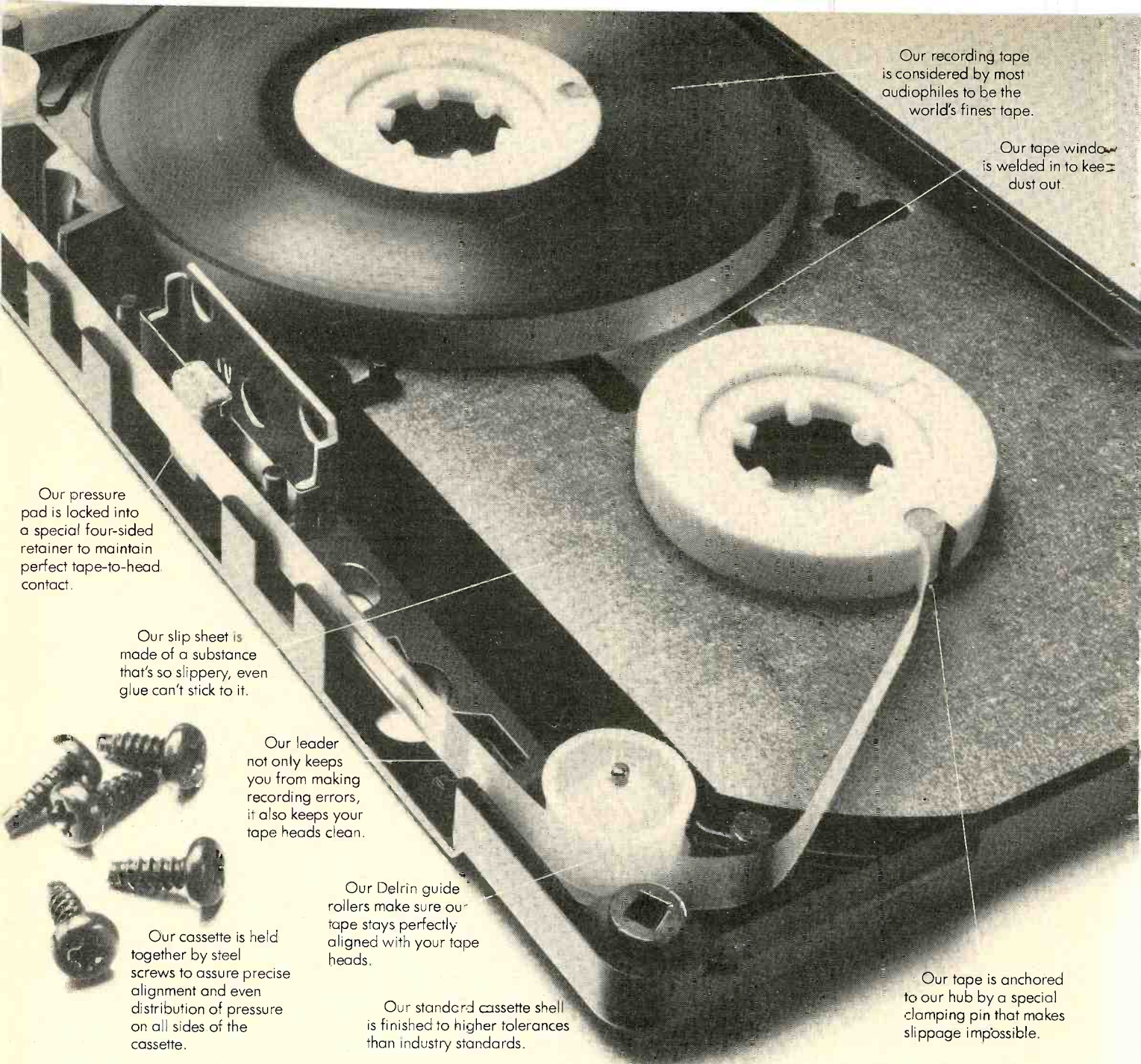


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STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT BEST OF THE MONTH



The New Roberta Flack: Polished, Popular, and Somewhat Aloof—but Still Indisputably a Star

WHEN Roberta Flack is in peak form, she can slip into her songs as though they were delicate garments of notes, custom-designed to fit the contours of her musical style. At such times, she moves through the winding passages of lyrics and melody with such exquisite grace that the song—no matter who may have claimed it previously—is indelibly stamped as her very own. She can achieve this alchemy because she is gifted with a remarkable sense of phrase and a voice that is immediately recognizable for its light clarity, surety of tone, and agility. The results can be truly memorable: sensitive tonal pictures and soothing aesthetic experiences.

Happily, the perfect, controlled fusion of artist and material is apparent in

her latest album in proportion generous enough to counteract entirely the disappointment of her long-awaited previous set, the smoggy, bewilderingly indifferent "Blue Lights in the Basement" (Atlantic SD 19149). Her new album, titled simply "Roberta Flack," generally does not trigger the sort of deep emotional response evoked by her very earliest efforts, but it has the sort of quiet, commercial class common to the best-selling sets that have been her staple product for the past seven years.

If her career were to be divided into two parts, the first would date from 1969 and the release of "First Take" (Atlantic SD 8230), perhaps her best record to date. This period, devoted to subtle social commentary and a probing of the inner self, extended through

"Chapter Two" (Atlantic SD 1569) and ended with her third album, "Quiet Fire" (Atlantic SD 1594). Then, for better or worse, she became a star and moved into the musical mainstream. Simultaneously, she became more reticent about tapping the soulful roots of the music she sang, omitting the touching traces of contemporary gospel, the moving whispers of the blues. And, to the regret of her first fans, who still hunger for "the old Roberta," she has never looked back.

What we have now is Roberta Part Two, polished, popular, and somewhat aloof. But that in itself is no small package. Her flawless delivery quickly leads the listener to understand that no clinkers are to be found here. Though it is somewhat glossy, this is music superior to most of what pours out of the pop tunemill each day. The jacket credits give full indication that something special awaits inside. The opening selection, *What a Woman Really Means*,

has a pleasantly rocking, reggae-laced flavor; it was written by Ralph MacDonald and William Salter, who have contributed heavily to the Flack repertoire, most notably the hit *Where Is the Love?* that she recorded with long-silent Donny Hathaway back in 1972. The lead-off track on the second side, *And the Feeling's Good*, is the creation of Norman Gimble and Charles Fox, who wrote *Killing Me Softly with His Song* (originally Lori Lieberman's song, it nonetheless became Flack's best-seller for 1973). *Independent Man* simply *sounds* as if it should be a hit, with a catchy melody that lingers in the mind to inspire sporadic humming. And, yes, there are a few tracks that are less than memorable, but they are not all that bad, and *When It's Over* borders tantalizingly on the openheartedness of Roberta Part One. All in all, this album is a welcome proof that "Roberta of the Spirits" is still amongst us, still singing.

—Phyl Garland

ROBERTA FLACK. Roberta Flack (vocals and keyboards); Leon Pendarvis, Monty Alexander (keyboards); Reggie Lucas, Hugh McCracken, Jeff Mironov (guitars); Ronnie Foster (synthesizer); Mtume, Larry Alexander (percussion); other musicians. *What a Woman Really Means; You Are Everything; Independent Man; If Ever I See You Again; And the Feeling's Good; Come Share My Love; When It's Over; Baby I Love You So; Knowing That We're Made for Each Other.* ATLANTIC SD 19186 \$7.98, © TP 19186 \$7.98, © CS 19186 \$7.98.

son's earlier Prokofiev releases—the Second Concerto with Ormandy (RCA ARL1-0751), the Sonatas Nos. 2 and 8 (ARL1-1570) and Nos. 7 and 9 (ARL1-2753), and the *Visions Fugitives* (ARL1-2158)—I approached this latest extension of his series with the highest expectations, but I did not expect to be quite so swept away by it. This is simply dazzling playing—extremely brilliant, powerful, and thoroughly attuned to the essence of both works. Furthermore, conductor Eduardo Mata is a first-rate collaborator, by no means a mere accompanist, and he keeps his orchestra on its toes everywhere. Indeed, the thoroughness of the mesh and the spontaneous-sounding interplay between soloist and orchestra is one of the particular delights of this release, and the stunningly realistic sound provided by RCA gives it an additional edge over the current competition. There are other fine recordings of these works in the catalog, of course, but the happy combination of musical and sonic factors in this new one seems to call for no other position than the very top of the list for *both* sides.

—Richard Freed

PROKOFIEV: Piano Concerto No. 3, in C Major, Op. 26. RAVEL: Piano Concerto in G Major. Tedd Joselson (piano); Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Eduardo Mata cond. RCA ARL1-2910 \$7.98, © ARK1-2910 \$7.98.

The Joy of Singing Together Is What Peter, Paul & Mary Are All About

DON'T bother with candy or flowers or any of those idiotic paper-lace cards this February fourteenth. Just hurry on over to your Valentine's house with a copy of the Peter, Paul & Mary album "Reunion," new on the Warner Bros. label, and you've got it made. So do Peter, Paul & Mary: even after all the years, all the taste changes, and all the other singing groups that have come along, they've never sounded better, not even in the by now legendary days of *Blowin' in the Wind*. The only noticeable change is a slight darkening in Mary Travers' voice, but since it adds to the drama of her delivery it can scarcely be thought a minus.

You don't *remember* Peter, Paul & Mary? Well, then, you're just going to have to hear what all the shouting about them from times past boils down to: listen to a single band here called *The Unicorn Song*. It is the kind of thing that the Carpenters always tried to do but never quite could, that Donny and Marie would give a few extra eye-teeth to find for themselves, and

Joselson and Mata: Laying Down New Standards for Prokofiev and Ravel

THERE must have been four or five discs that paired the Ravel Piano Concerto with Prokofiev's Third within the last ten years or so, and the earliest of them, the one by Martha Argerich with the Berlin Philharmonic under Claudio Abbado (Deutsche Grammophon 139 349), has more than held its own, not only among such couplings, but among individual recordings of the respective works (except, perhaps, Michelangeli's Ravel on Angel S-35567). But I think it must at last yield pride of place to Tedd Joselson's new entry for RCA.

Having heard and admired Josel-

TEDD JOSELSON: *attuned to the essentials*



RCA Records



PP&M: a haunting vocal blend

that Ashford and Simpson can probably only admire. First off, there is the musicianship, which is remarkable on all levels. Then there is the haunting quality of the vocal blend, so individual that no other group has ever been able to graft it onto their performances no matter how mightily they struggled (the Sixties flood of computerese imitations of PP&M, none of them successful, has now blessedly subsided). Finally, there is the synergistic high they can create for the listener again and again as they number the petals of their songs. Billy Joel's *Summer Highland Falls*, Dylan's *Forever Young*, and even the sly and ironic *Ms. Rheingold* by Peter Yarrow—all have that silvery, ozone sharpness that pours from the speakers like fresh air sweeping into an overheated room. The production by David Rubinson (with Peter Yarrow second-billed) is exemplary; no contorted arrangements to give the group a phony "now" sound, just plenty of space to let them do what they do best.

At its worst, Valentine's Day is a commercial abomination. In its true spirit, however, it is a bright and happy way to express a little love and affection. Love and affection for their work and for the joy of singing together is what Peter, Paul & Mary are expressing in "Reunion," so maybe it's *their* Valentine to us.
—Peter Reilly

PETER, PAUL & MARY: *Reunion*. Peter, Paul & Mary (vocals, guitars); orchestra. *Summer Highland Falls; Best of Friends; Sweet Survivor; The Unicorn Song; I Need Me to Be for Me; Like the First Time; Ms. Rheingold; By Surprise; Forever Young.* WARNER BROS. BSK 3231 \$7.98, © M8 3231 \$7.97, © M5 3231 \$7.97.

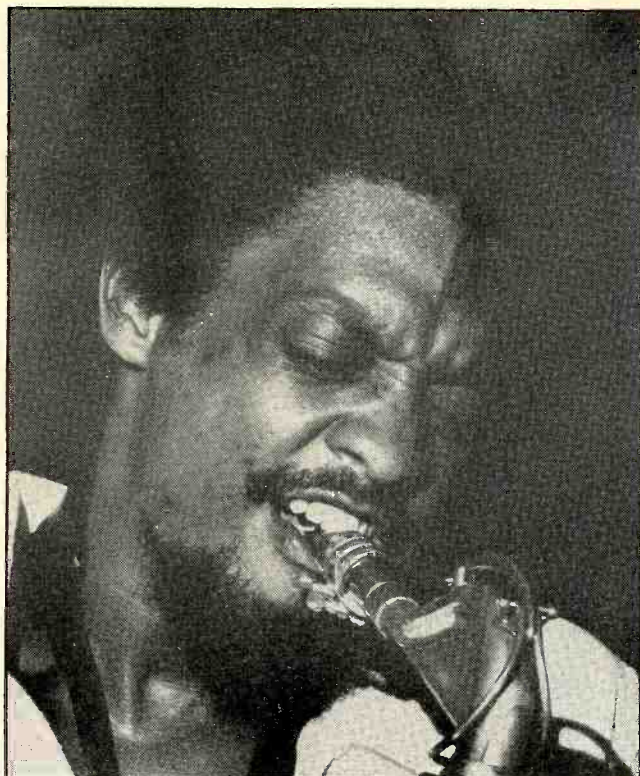
Chico Freeman's "Kings of Mali": One of the Jazz Events of the Year

As things stand right now, Chico Freeman needs an introduction, but if the twenty-nine-year-old son of near-legendary Chicago saxophonist Von Freeman keeps it up, it won't be long before the mere mention of his name will suffice. Chico played piano and trumpet before switching to the saxophone, and though his father didn't determine his choice of career, he did a great deal to encourage and educate Chico as a musician. Another decisive influence has been pianist Mu-

hal Richard Abrams, a co-founder of Chicago's musical wellspring, the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians. Freeman spent a fruitful period playing first tenor in Abrams' big band, but the association went far beyond that. He has also had extensive experience in the rhythm-and-blues field, backing up such groups as the Dells, the Isley Brothers, the Four Tops, and the Chi-lites. Most recently he has been a member of drummer Elvin Jones' group. This varied practical background, combined with Freeman's evident wide listening experience, has made his own music fascinatingly eclectic. His playing, to use a description he once aptly applied to his father's music, is "free, but with knowledge."

Chico Freeman has made only two albums so far, both for the small, poorly distributed India Navigation label. The second of these, "Kings of Mali," would not have to contain more than its first cut, *Look Up*, to rate as one of the most significant releases of the past year; written by Freeman (whose importance as a composer also demands recognition), it plunges from his opening soprano soliloquy into a seething, emotion-charged collective effort from which individual voices emerge with statements of the most profound kind. The rhythmic excitement generated by vibist Jay Hoggard, pianist Anthony Davis, bassist Cecil McBee, and drummer Famoudou Don Moye on *Look Up* is approached but not quite matched on *Minstrels' Sun Dance*, another interesting Freeman composition that serves well to show his command of the tenor. *Illas*, more subdued and conventional, features Freeman on flute, an instrument he seems to approach too cautiously. Finally, there is *Kings of Mali*, a largely percussive piece on which Freeman, Hoggard, and Moye play what I presume to be the African ballophone listed by their names in the credits. I am not familiar with the instrument, nor do I know why it is consistently capitalized on the album, but it is obviously a mallet instrument, and it has a rather pleasant sound over which McBee's bass and Freeman's flutes (obviously by way of double tracking) are heard. *Kings of Mali* is not a particularly exciting track, but it does have a certain charm.

The liner notes are a run-down of the history of the African Empire of Mali, which—notwithstanding the album's title and that ten-minute selection—seems to be quite irrelevant in this context. A bit of background on Chico Freeman would have been more to the point, for he is an important up-and-coming artist from whose creative



CHICO FREEMAN: a cue for the future



Christian Steiner/Vanguard

JOHANNES SOMARY: understanding the past

mind jazz might conceivably take its cue for the future. —Chris Albertson

CHICO FREEMAN: *Kings of Mali*. Chico Freeman (flutes, soprano and tenor saxophones, African ballophone); Jay Hoggard (vibraphone, African ballophone); Anthony Davis (piano); Cecil McBee (bass); Famoudou Don Moye (drums, percussion, African ballophone, gongs, whistles). *Look Up; Minstrels' Sun Dance; Kings of Mali; Illas*. INDIA NAVIGATION IN 1035 \$7.98 (from India Navigation Company, P.O. Box 559, Nyack, N.Y. 10960).

Bach's *Matthew Passion* In an Admirably Paced New Reading For Vanguard

SPECIALIZING in the performance of large-scale Baroque vocal compositions, conductor Johannes Somary has displayed a gratifyingly consistent growth in his work. His latest album, of Bach's *Passion According to St. Matthew*, reveals that the growth continues. Perhaps the most striking aspects of his reading are his choices of tempos

and the overall pacing of the performance. Conductors frequently equate religious music with slow tempos: the more religious the work, the slower the tempos. Which explains why the *St. Matthew Passion* has been played slower than perhaps any music ever written, *Parsifal* being the possible exception. But such sluggish tempos make it impossible to sustain Bach's long phrases—singers simply do not have the breath, and instrumentalists, if they have the breath, lose their concentration. Thus, phrases are broken, the long line is fragmented, and the stately measure becomes more boring than cosmic.

Somary realizes all this, and although he does not quite achieve the ultimate grandeur, by moving the work along he sustains the line without sacrificing dignity. In the chorales, for example, he does not make the usual halt at each fermata, but moves through them according to the harmonic structure. He also understands how to pace the chorale melodies in the enormous double choruses. The final chorus of Part I, "O Mensch, bewein' dein' Sünde gross," at first seems needlessly rushed during the instrumental prelude, the ubiquitous two-note weeping figures rather too pushed to serve as symbols of a contemplation of the Betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane. But the minute the sopranos intone

their first phrase, one realizes that all of Bach's intricate figuration is mere commentary, that the true essence of the piece is the traditional chorale melody.

The balance of the sound is, for the most part, beautifully managed. The real test is in the opening chorus where Somary has evoked two different timbres from the two choruses so that they bring out the question-and-answer structure of the text. The contrasting timbre of the boys' chorale melody is deftly underlined by the use of judicious organ doubling, but the balance between the singers and the obbligato instruments is not so well handled. Lessening the volume of an instrumental solo when the singer enters turns obbligato writing into accompaniment and destroys the sense of equal partnership inherent in Bach's contrapuntal writing.

That Somary understands Baroque articulation is manifest in his modified application of it to modern instruments. Without proper articulation, the texture of the final chorus of Part I can turn to mush. The two-note articulations here are kept intact by the instrumentalists and create a shimmering halo around the legato lines of the chorus. In the final chorus, the articulation of the weeping figure is beautifully matched by both the choruses and the orchestra.

The soloists are, for the most part,

excellent, and, except for a few minor details, they go along with Somary's pacing of the work. Ernst Haefliger's intense voice gives the Evangelist's lengthy text every possible emotional nuance, but I find Barry McDaniel's voice rather too hard and forced for the delicate balance of contemplation and strength required by the role of Jesus. Elly Ameling sings with her usual sensitivity and offers some effective ornamentation in the aria "*Ich will dir mein Herze schenken*." (It is, incidentally, the only ornamentation offered in the entire performance, but it is not at all out of place.) Birgit Finnilae's approach is rather cold and impersonal but nonetheless impressive, and Benjamin Luxon brings extraordinary tenderness to his final aria. It is Seth McCoy, however, who stands out as the real Bach singer. His perfectly placed voice brings warmth to each phrase and restrained passion to each aria.

Though Somary's tempos work most of the time, there are a few instances when the soloists might have used more time to stretch a phrase. This is especially apparent in Miss Ameling's aria "*Blute nur, du liebes Herz!*" She is not given leeway to dwell on the feminine endings, and as a consequence one feels that she and the conductor are at odds about the tempo. McCoy also seems pushed at times, while Finnilae and Luxon, on the other hand, apparently feel no pressure at all.

One of the most admirable qualities of this performance is the careful pacing of the drama as a whole. Each part is brought to a single climax: Part I moves steadily toward the Betrayal in the Garden and Part II moves inexorably toward the Crucifixion and terminates with exalted repose after emotional exhaustion. All in all, and despite

the nits picked, there is a great deal to recommend in this recording. Certainly it is among the best available today of one of the most important musical works in the entire repertoire.

—Stoddard Lincoln

J. S. BACH: *The Passion According to St. Matthew*. Ernst Haefliger (tenor), Evangelist; Barry McDaniel (baritone), Jesus; Elly Ameling (soprano); Birgit Finnilae (alto); Seth McCoy (tenor); Benjamin Luxon (baritone); Ambrosian Singers; Desborough School Boys' Choir; English Chamber Orchestra, Johannes Somary cond. VANGUARD VSD 71231/4 four discs \$31.92.

Bruckner's Fifth by Karajan: a Truly Magnificent Recorded Performance

LIKE its counterpart in the Mahler canon, the Fifth Symphony of Bruckner is a work singularly difficult to bring off with complete success, and for the same reason: a finale that is decidedly lengthy for its substance. Only the most skillful and experienced conductor, one with a profound feeling for Bruckner's musical language, can command an orchestra of unlimited endurance and lung power to do justice to the Bruckner Fifth. So far as I am concerned, Bernard Haitink and the Amsterdam Concertgebouw have had the field pretty much to themselves since 1972. Now, however, despite one small reservation, I feel that Herbert von

Karajan and his Berlin Philharmonic have moved into the top spot.

Though Karajan's pacing is consistently more deliberate than Haitink's, he manages for at least three-fourths of the time to convince me that this is how the music should go. The reading of the first movement is staggeringly dramatic, with playing and sound to match. The first full orchestral outburst—a brass fanfare that follows the stalking, low pizzicato introduction—will simply knock you across the room, assuming you have the equipment to do it justice. The slow movement is stately and intense under Karajan's baton, with the echo effects superbly handled. The scherzo is no less fine, and the slow introductory pages of the finale with its passing-in-review of earlier thematic material promises much, especially with the nuances and dynamic shadings that Karajan provides.

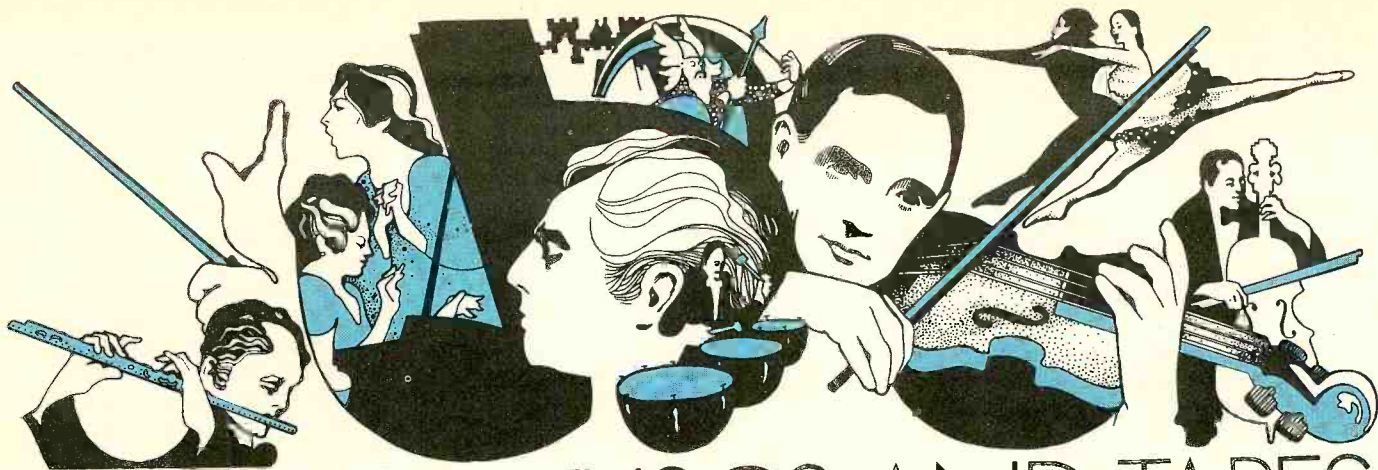
In terms of the last movement as a whole, however, and particularly with regard to sustaining the momentum of the fugal textures, I find that Haitink still holds the edge. By keeping things moving, he makes us less aware of the painfully awkward sectioning of the music (some would call it jerry-built), and, further, the playing of the Berliners here sounds decidedly less fresh than it does in the first movement. But this is my one reservation about what is otherwise a truly magnificent recorded performance, one that stands up to Karajan's other remarkable Deutsche Grammophon recordings of Bruckner's Fourth, Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth Symphonies.

—David Hall

BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 5, in B-flat Major*. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2707 101 two discs \$17.96, © 2 MC 3370 025 \$17.96.



HERBERT VON KARAJAN:
skill, experience,
and a profound
feeling for the
musical language
of Bruckner



CLASSICAL DISCS AND TAPES

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

AMEMIYA: *Summer Prayer*; *Monochrome Sea*. FELDMAN: *The King of Denmark*. Yasukazu Amemiya (percussion). RCA JAPAN RVC-2154 \$14.95 (plus \$1 handling charge from Audio-Technica U.S., Inc., 33 Shiwawsee Avenue, Fairlawn, Ohio 44313).

Performance: **Spectacular**
Recording: **A knockout**

The recorded percussion spectacular, practically a recognized genre a few years back, makes a mighty comeback here with the work of Yasukazu Amemiya. His *Summer Prayer* for solo percussion, percussion ensemble, and tape involves more than five dozen percussion instruments, Eastern and Western—all, through the magic of multitracking, played by the composer. *Monochrome Sea*, similarly inspired by the composer's own poem, is an equally evocative (if slightly less spectacular) East-West percussion piece. *The King of Denmark*, by the American composer Morton Feldman, is, ironically, the most Oriental-sounding of all in its ultrasoft, spare, improvisatory character. The title is a dedication to the king who protected the Danish Jews during World War II, but nothing could be further from program music than this gentle abstraction. Amemiya's own music, in sharp contrast, is intensely dramatic at every moment. Its tremendous range is superbly recorded and reproduced by Japanese RCA, obviously a great deal more adventurous than its

parent company. It is certainly one of the most remarkable demonstrations of the high state of audio technology that I have heard in quite a while, and it isn't even digital. *E.S.*

J. S. BACH: *Musical Offering (BWV 1079)*. Deutsche Bachsolisten, Helmut Winschermann cond. VARÈSE SARABANDE VX 81063 \$7.98.

Performance: **Overbearing**
Recording: **Good**

Although the component parts of Bach's *Musical Offering* are united by Frederick the Great's "Royal Theme," there is a compositional dichotomy that makes a performance of the entire work almost impossible. On the one hand, Bach used the Royal Theme to generate a series of ricercare and canons probably designed more for study than performance. On the other hand, the magnificent trio sonata, which includes the theme as a tribute to its creator, was specifically intended to be performed. To perform the entire work as a cycle is questionable, but to perform it all in one style is folly. Nonetheless, it is frequently presented in its entirety, in performances ranging from the emotional expansiveness of Münchinger to the cool intellectualism of Harnoncourt and Leonhardt. None of them is completely successful; the celebration kills the trio sonata and emotion does violence to the ricercare and canons. Obviously what is needed is two styles of performance: cool clarity for the contrapuntal studies and a more projected emotional style for the sonata.

In this recording of the *Musical Offering*, Helmut Winschermann has put the pieces in what is probably the most logical order: the sonata is used as the centerpiece, with five canons before and five after; the rambling three-voice ricercare is used as an opener, and the more tightly wrought six-voice ricercare brings the work to its logical conclusion. The instrumentation includes strings, harpsichord, and flute. But, though the homogenized string sound is fine in itself, it is all but impossible to hear the complex counterpoint of the canons without the use of some woodwinds to point up the various linear levels. The general sty-

listic approach is purely romantic with absolutely no reference to Baroque performance practice. The strings use a heavy vibrato and play in a seamless, unarticulated legato. All polyphony is lost, and the contrapuntal studies turn into grotesque character pieces. The sonata comes off rather better, but here too romantic mannerisms destroy the linear writing. There is one bright spot: Gottfried Bach's harpsichord reading of the three-voice ricercare is beautifully smooth and well paced, and his use of rubato marks the widely spaced statements of the Royal Theme. But this is hardly sufficient to save the record. *S.L.*

J. S. BACH: *The Passion According to St. Matthew* (see Best of the Month, page 92)

BARBER: *Prayers of Kierkegaard, Op. 30*. WELCHER: *Dervishes*. JOHNSON: *Past the Evening Sun*. Gloria Capone (soprano, in Barber); Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Chorus (in Barber); Louisville Orchestra, Jorge Mester cond. LOUISVILLE LS 763 \$7.95.

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

Of chief interest here is Samuel Barber's *Prayers of Kierkegaard*, a work that made a great impression on me back in December 1954 at its first New York performance (by Charles Munch, the Boston Symphony and Cecilia Society, and soprano Leontyne Price). At long last we have a recording, and it has been well worth the wait. Kierkegaard's deeply moving text is first heard in a quasi-Gregorian melody intoned by the male choir, and out of this grows a musical structure that is majestic, intensely lyrical, and, at its climactic point, highly dramatic. This is prime Barber at his neo-Romantic best—not overwhelming, perhaps, on first hearing, but the work will grow in impact upon repetition. The Louisville forces do well by Barber's score, most especially the chorus, whose singing carries enormous conviction and whose diction is decidedly better than average. The only weak element is soprano Gloria Capone, who deserves A for effort but whose voice lacks the body to do justice to the text.

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- Ⓒ = stereo cassette
- Ⓚ = quadrasonic disc
- Ⓛ = digital-master recording
- Ⓛ = direct-to-disc recording

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

Dervishes, by Eastman School graduate and erstwhile Louisville principal bassonist Dan Welcher, is an overlong, ostensibly serialist orchestral essay. It makes pleasant listening for about half its course. Hunter Johnson's *Past the Evening Sun* is an unpretentious and effective elegy for President John F. Kennedy. Jorge Mester and his players are in first-rate form with these works as well, and they benefit from the excellent production work of Andrew Kazdin. D.H.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEETHOVEN: *Piano Concerto No. 3, in C Minor, Op. 37; Andante Favori in F Major (G. 170)*. Sviatoslav Richter (piano); Philharmonia Orchestra, Riccardo Muti cond. ANGEL □ S-37512 \$7.98.

Performance: **Intensely lyrical**
Recording: **Very good**

Sviatoslav Richter's way with the C Minor Concerto is to underscore the *Innigkeit* and to let the virile, extroverted elements in the end movements pretty well take care of themselves. Thus, the basic tempo of the opening movement is more than usually deliberate, and there is no exploitation of virtuoso tricks in the finale. It is flawless articulation and limning of phrase of which one is made most aware, and, as might be expected, the great slow movement becomes the very heart and soul of this performance. Only the recording by Schnabel in his prime is in the same league. And don't let the tacking on of the *Andante Favori* as an encore put you off: Richter's playing of it is simply fabulous in both tonal beauty and phrase inflection. Riccardo Muti and the Philharmonia Orchestra players provide loving collaboration with Richter throughout the concerto. The piano is beautifully recorded, and the orchestra sounds full-bodied and well balanced—though the acoustic envelope is a trifle reverberant in four-channel playback; two will do here. D.H.

BORODIN: *In the Steppes of Central Asia* (see GLAZOUNOV)

BORODIN: *Polovetsian Dances* (see TCHAIKOVSKY)

BRAHMS: *Four Serious Songs, Op. 121; Two Songs for Alto and Viola, Op. 91; Ständchen; Auf dem Kirchhofe; Therese; Wie Melodien Zieht Es Mir; Sapphische Ode; Der Jäger; Regenlied; Vergebliches Ständchen*. Janet Baker (mezzo-soprano); André Previn (piano); Cecil Aronowitz (viola, in Op. 91). ANGEL S-37519 \$7.98.

Performance: **Very good, mostly**
Recording: **Excellent**

These songs are all late Brahms (post-1880), contemplative, philosophical, and solemn. There are a few infrequently heard items among them (*Therese, Der Jäger, Regenlied*), but, as is usually the case, the most often recorded and best-known songs in the group are also the best. Janet Baker is in good vocal form here, steadier in tone than she has been in some recent releases. I would prefer a more passionate rendering of the *Four Serious Songs* (curiously, that approach is more likely to come from baritone or bass interpreters), but the music is eloquently served here as well as in the two songs with viola.

Best in the sequence are the songs that lie in

the artist's lower register. *Wie Melodien Zieht Es Mir* envelops the listener in a velvety, caressing sound, and a similar effect is achieved in *Sapphische Ode*, delivered most movingly in an inward, serene mezzo-piano. Dame Janet does not modulate her tone in the upper range as well as she used to. The notes are there, but the voice takes on a metallic edge. Still, this is a rewarding and beautiful recital with only one distinct disappointment: a humorless *Vergebliches Ständchen*. Singer and pianist have excellent rapport, and the sound is outstandingly good. G.J.

BRUCKNER: *Helgoland* (see WAGNER)

BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 5, in B-flat Major* (see Best of the Month, page 93)

CHAUSSON: *Symphony in B-flat Major, Op. 20; Soir de Fête, Op. 32*. Orchestre du Capitole de Toulouse, Michel Plasson cond. SERAPHIM S-60310 \$3.98.

Performance: **Mostly fine**
Recording: **Occasionally coarse**

A new recording of Chausson's attractive symphony is always a pleasure (I can't recall

a really disappointing one), and the presence of the previously unrecorded *Soir de Fête* makes this an especially intriguing release. *Soir de Fête*, Chausson's final work for orchestra (and one of his last in any form), seems to have a bit of everything in it. It opens rather like the overture to Chabrier's *Gwendoline*, then goes its way with echoes of both of Chausson's mentors—Massenet and Franck—and an occasional patch of color that suggests exposure to the Russians, who by the late nineteenth century were influencing French composers more productively than Wagner had done a bit earlier; at the end it seems to call up D'Indy's *Istar*. The piece is not so much eclectic, however, as amorphous. It is the sort of thing Franck had better luck giving shape to. It is given a fine performance here, though, and for the most part so is the symphony. Plasson has a good feeling for Chausson, and he has what seems to be quite a good orchestra (which will have toured here by the time these words are in print). Only the slow movement of the symphony is a disappointment, because its climaxes are hammered out instead of voluptuously swelling and expanding. The occasionally murky, coarse character of the sound does not help:



DG/Ledebur

the four pianists (Martha Argerich is one of the others) in Leonard Bernstein's recording of Stravinsky's *Les Noces* (2530 880, reviewed in these pages last July).

Now a third disc is at hand that tells us a bit more about this pianist, a collection of Mozart sonatas in which Zimerman indicates that he has possibly an even surer instinct for Mozart than for Chopin. Tempos throughout the four sonatas are a little brisker than we are used to (though nothing like the whirlwind speeds favored by Glenn Gould in his recordings of these works), but the music breathes comfortably and there is space for as much flexibility as anyone could want without a conspicuous shifting of gears. The D Major in particular is an all but intoxicating delight in Zimerman's hands, with animation, lyricism, and an altogether remarkable regard for dynamic and tonal shadings blended into something incredibly close to a Mozartian ideal. Articulation is as crisp and clean as one likes to hear in Scarlatti on the piano, and yet the phrases really sing. This is, in short, honest-to-goodness elegance, with nothing either superficial or contrived, and it is simply irresistible. No previous recording known to me of any of these four works has offered so much immediate or sustained pleasure.

In addition to providing Zimerman with superb sound, DG offers exceptionally comprehensive annotation by Jürgen Köchel, whose descent from Ludwig Köchel (Mozart's cataloger) is neither confirmed nor in any way alluded to on the liner, but whose name of course looks especially appropriate in this context. —Richard Freed

MOZART: *Piano Sonatas: F Major (K. 280); B-flat Major (K. 281); D Major (K. 311); C Major (K. 330)*. Krystian Zimerman (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 052 \$8.98, □ 3301 052 \$8.98.

Zimerman's Elegant Mozart

KRISTIAN ZIMERMAN won the Chopin Competition in Warsaw at the age of eighteen in 1975, and two years later Deutsche Grammophon released his first recording, a stimulating assortment deriving from the competition, of large and lesser Chopin pieces (2530 826, reviewed here in September 1977). Young Zimerman has not been rushed into overproduction by DG: his only recording since then appears to have been as one of



Marek Anders

Suk Trio: Josef Suk, Josef Chuchro, Jan Panenka
Two "Archdukes"

It has been very instructive to listen to four discs, each pressed in a different country, representing a total of three different recordings but only two different performances of the grandest of all piano trios: Beethoven's "Archduke." The Suk Trio's 1961 Supraphon taping, issued in the U.S. on Crossroads in 1966, then on Vanguard in 1975, has been regarded by many as the finest stereo version of the work; this is what is now reoffered on the Legend and Quintessence discs. The 1975 remake, taped simultaneously by Nippon Columbia for its Denon digital series and by Supraphon itself in SQ quadraphony, is essentially the same nobly straightforward interpretation as before, but it may be appreciated more fully because of the superior balance and clarity in both new recordings. Jan Panenka's eloquent piano, somewhat overprominent in parts of the earlier version, is more deftly integrated into the sonic fabric now, Josef Chuchro's cello is luminously clear throughout, whereas it is occasionally less than that in the earlier recording, and nothing impedes the sweetness of Josef Suk's tone.

Sonic shortcomings were hardly noticed in the face of the splendid performance, though, and that earlier version still exerts a unique appeal for me: it is just that much more spontaneous in its flow, I think, than the new one, which is perhaps a little mellower and also perhaps a little more "studied." Actually the differences are very, very slight, but the 1961 recording literally does sound better than ever in the new Quintessence edition, which must be reckoned an outstanding bargain. The new mastering has produced a sound even cleaner and with the instruments in more equable balance than we heard on Crossroads, the most satisfying of this classic item's numerous previous incarnations. The bright-sounding cassette, even with its noticeable hiss level (and not a word of annotation), may just be the single most basic chamber-music recording available in that format. The more expensive Legend import (from England) is rather less successful, with a more pronouncedly wiry edge on the violin and some muddy cello.

Both the Japanese and Czech recordings of the 1975 sessions should be considered by collectors to whom sonic excellence is as important a factor as musical quality. I suspect different takes may have been used by the respective companies for the opening of the first movement, but if so the difference is certainly negligible. A choice between Denon and Supraphon might be made on the basis of price or of four-channel availability (which in this case comes down to the same decision), and it may be said that the Czech pressing is a very good one, the sound handsome in both two-channel playback and the SQ quadraphonic mode. Denon's two-channel digital recording is so sensationally fine, however, that no one who invests in it is likely to feel he has spent his money foolishly. The spaciousness and realism are breathtaking, as is the absolute silence of the surfaces (the Japanese now seem to have moved into the No. 1 spot for excellence of pressings; I thought I had forgotten to turn on the amplifier until the music began), and so, more than ever, are the glory of the "Archduke" and the more or less proprietary eminence the Suk Trio has established for itself in its performances of the work.

—Richard Freed

BEETHOVEN: Trio in B-flat Major, Op. 97 ("Archduke"). Suk Trio. DENON/PCM ① OX-7035-ND \$14 (from selected audio stores or the Discwasher Group, 1407 North Providence Road, Columbia, Mo. 65201).

BEETHOVEN: Trio in B-flat Major, Op. 97 ("Archduke"). Suk Trio. SUPRAPHON □ 4 11 2137 \$7.98 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 65-37 Austin Street, Rego Park, N.Y. 11374).

BEETHOVEN: Trio in B-flat Major, Op. 97 ("Archduke"). Suk Trio. LEGEND LGD 002 \$6.98 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd.).

BEETHOVEN: Trio in B-flat Major, Op. 97 ("Archduke"). Suk Trio. QUINTESSENCE PMC-7082 \$3.98, © P4C-7082 \$4.98.

indeed, it is the bright immediacy of the sound, almost as much as the elegant voluptuousness of the performance itself, that makes Ernest Ansermet's recently reissued version on London STS-15294 the winner it is. R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CHOPIN: Piano Concerto No. 2, in F Minor, Op. 21; Trois Nouvelles Études; Scherzo No. 2, in B-flat Minor, Op. 31. Emanuel Ax (piano); Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy cond. (in concerto). RCA ARL1-2868 \$7.98, © ARK1-2868 \$7.98.

Performance: **Exquisite**
 Recording: **Limpid**

CHOPIN: Piano Concerto No. 2, in F Minor, Op. 21; Andante Spianato and Grande Polonaise in E-flat Major, Op. 22. Bruno Rigutto (piano); Luxembourg Radio Orchestra, Louis de Froment cond. PETERS INTERNATIONAL PLE 045 \$6.98.

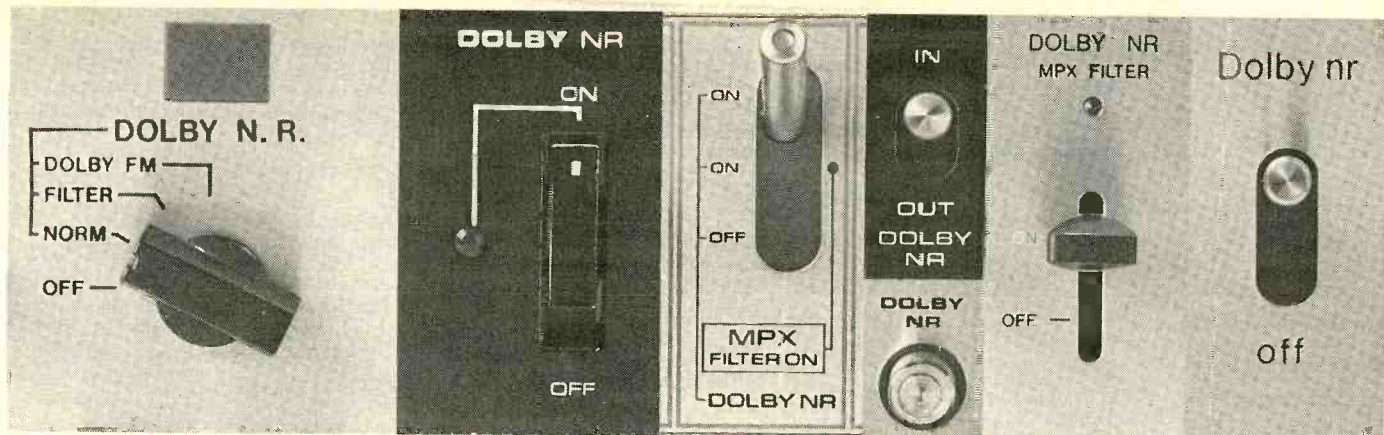
Performance: **Very good**
 Recording: **Warm and full**

Emanuel Ax's first all-Chopin record (RCA ARL1-1569) was so impressive that all I could say about it (STEREO REVIEW, October 1976) was that it was "simply one of the most beautiful records of anything ever offered to the public." His first recording with orchestra is again Chopin, and it serves to validate my 1976 finding that "Mr. Ax is a poet, with Chopin in his blood and most assuredly in his fingers." It is sensationally beautiful. The entire program, in fact, is illumined by the most elegant communicativeness, and the tone Ax draws from his instrument—especially in the concerto's final movement—is so breathtakingly lustrous that one might well be enthralled by this facet of his playing alone. There is expectedly fine cooperation from Ormandy and his orchestra and limpid sound from RCA. Comparisons with Rubinstein, Aron, or anyone else in this repertoire would be quite beside the point: music-making on this exquisite level defines itself.

It is Bruno Rigutto's misfortune that his 1973 recording of the F Minor Concerto reaches us at the same time as Ax's new one, for comparisons will be made. Rigutto, about whom no information is vouchsafed in the liner material (the cover photo shows him to be about the same age as Ax), is, on the evidence here presented, also a first-rate pianist but neither the poet nor the master of tone that Ax is. Rigutto's is a somewhat less intimate, more grand-scaled approach, with slightly brisker tempos throughout and a more overtly dramatic handling of the slow movement; on its own terms, this is a thoroughly enjoyable performance, and so is that of the *Andante Spianato and Grande Polonaise*. There are thoughtfulness and understanding in abundance as well as the most reliable technique. Froment provides a very sympathetic partnership, and the sound itself is warm and full. Nevertheless, Ax's record is not only worth the extra dollar, it is the sort of Chopin record one simply has to have, no matter how many duplications of the music it may create in an existing collection. R.F.

CHOPIN/GODOWSKY: Etudes: Op. 10, Nos. 1, 3, 5 (two versions), 6, 7; Op. 25, No. 1. Trois Nouvelles Études, No. 1, Op. Posth. Waltzes: Op. 64, Nos. 1, 3; Op. 69, No. 1; Op. 70, Nos.

(Continued on page 98)



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2, 3; Op. 18 (concert paraphrase). Jorge Bolet (piano). L'OISEAU-LYRE DSLO 26 \$8.98, © KDSLC 26 \$8.98.

Performance: **Flying fingers**
Recording: **Excellent**

Leopold Godowsky's "transcriptions" of the Chopin etudes (fifty-three versions of the original twenty-seven) and waltzes are legendary extravagances that I never expected would actually be performed by anyone again. Well, here they are, at least a selection of them, in the hands of a pianist known for old-fashioned virtuosic pianism, and it's all very disappointing. The reason these arrangements are not performed any more is simple: they're much too tasteful. Tasteful arrangements of difficult originals made ten times more difficult that end up sounding like pretty parlor distortions, accurately played but without real bravura or depth of feeling—why bother? **E.S.**

DVOŘÁK: Symphony No. 9, in E Minor, Op. 95 ("New World"). Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam, Colin Davis cond. PHILIPS 9500 511 \$8.98, © 7300 671 \$8.98.

Performance: **Cool**
Recording: **Good**

DVOŘÁK: Symphony No. 9, in E Minor, Op. 95 ("New World"). Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Ferenc Fricsay cond. PRIVILEGE 2535 141 \$6.98, © 3335 141 \$6.98.

Performance: **Freely romantic**
Recording: **A mite bass-shy**

Neither Philips' new Colin Davis disc nor the Privilege reissue (on Deutsche Grammophon's new mid-price label) of the 1960 Berlin recording by the late Ferenc Fricsay offers significantly more insight into Dvořák's familiar masterpiece than the best of the more than two dozen other versions currently listed in Schwann. The Davis reading is scrupulous to a fault, with a plentitude of repeats, but it is totally lacking in temperament; the recording as such is first-rate. Fricsay offers lots of temperament in the form of tempo speed-ups and slow-downs, but he leaves out the exposition repeat in the first movement; the recorded sound seems somewhat brash as a result of either a thinning out of bass in the tape-to-disc transfer or a boost in the mid-range (the net effect is the same in either case). Kubelik and Giulini, both on Deutsche Grammophon, provide the best in contrasting views of the music at full price, while versions by Jascha Horenstein and Bruno Walter are best buys in the budget category. **D.H.**

FELDMAN: The King of Denmark (see AMEMIYA)

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN: Excerpts from Four Savoy Operas. *The Gondoliers: From the Sunny Spanish Shore; In Enterprise of Martial Kind; Take a Pair of Sparkling Eyes; On the Day When I Was Wedded; Small Titles and Orders; Finale.* *The Pirates of Penzance: Poor Wand'ring One; When a Felon's Not Engaged; Stay, Frederic, Stay! H.M.S. Pinafore: Hail, Men-o'-Wars-Men; I'm Called Little Buttercup; When I Was a Lad; Never Mind the Why and Wherefore.* *The Mikado: A Wand'ring Minstrel; As Someday It May Happen; The Sun Whose Rays; Here's a How-De-Do!; On a Tree by a River; There Is Beauty, in the Bellow; Finale.* Marion Studholme

(soprano); Edmund Bohan (tenor); Jean Allister (contralto); Ian Wallace (baritone). English Chorale; London Concert Orchestra, Marcus Dods cond. CHALFONT C77.003 \$7.98 (from Chalfont Records, P.O. Box 11101, Green Lantern Station, Montgomery, Ala. 36111).

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

This album, called "A Gilbert & Sullivan Spectacular," is a smörgasbord of selections from four popular Savoy Operas performed by a brave little group who have never been associated with the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company but have its style down pat. Edmund Bohan, who comes from New Zealand, acquits himself well in romantic ballads usually assigned to the male love interest in the operettas—*Take a Pair of Sparkling Eyes, A Wand'ring Minstrel*, that sort of thing. Ian Wallace has a tougher tradition to uphold in the comedy roles, and he handles himself nicely in *When I Was a Lad* and Koko's "little list" of people the world could do without. Though he's no match for Martyn Green, Peter Pratt, or even John Reed, he's plausible and musically sound. Marion Studholme is a savory Yum Yum in *The Sun Whose Rays* and handles the coloratura effects in *Poor Wand'ring One* with ease, but Jean Allister's attempts to be the fierce Duchess of *The Gondoliers* and Katisha of *The Mikado* are just not quite terrifying enough. When the quartet teams up with the English Chorale and the London Concert Orchestra under the adroit Marcus Dods in moments from some of the big first-act finales, however, the results are very impressive. And the recorded sound is so alive that this might be just the starter album to send some incipient Savoyard down the primrose path. **P.K.**

GLAZOUNOV: Symphony No. 6, in C Minor, Op. 58. Moscow Radio Orchestra, Vladimir Fedoseyev cond. **BORODIN: In the Steppes of Central Asia.** U.S.S.R. Symphony Orchestra, Yevgeny Svetlanov cond. COLUMBIA/MELODIYA M 35104 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good Glazounov**
Recording: **Best in Glazounov**

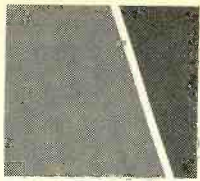
Glazounov comes off better in the balletic middle movements of this symphony than in the end pieces, one of which is rather stuffily academic, the other academically overstuffed. Vladimir Fedoseyev and his Moscow players make the most persuasive case possible for this music in a taut, high-quality performance that is handsomely recorded. On the other hand, Svetlanov's run-through of Borodin's little masterpiece seems rather coarse in both performance and sound until the very last moments, when the playing achieves impressive poetic impact. **D.H.**

GLIERE: Russian Sailor's Dance (see TCHAIKOVSKY)

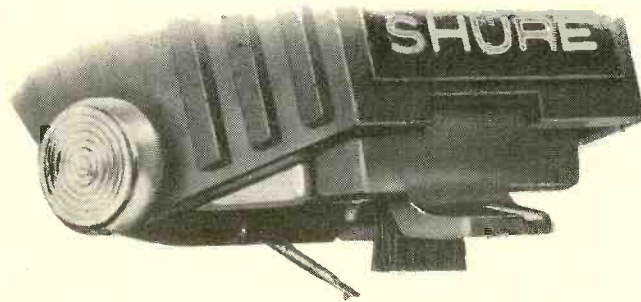
GRANADOS: Tonadillas; Canciones Amatorias. Pilar Lorengar (soprano); Alicia de Larrocha (piano). LONDON OS 26558 \$7.98, © 5-26558 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good**
Recording: **Good, with reservations**

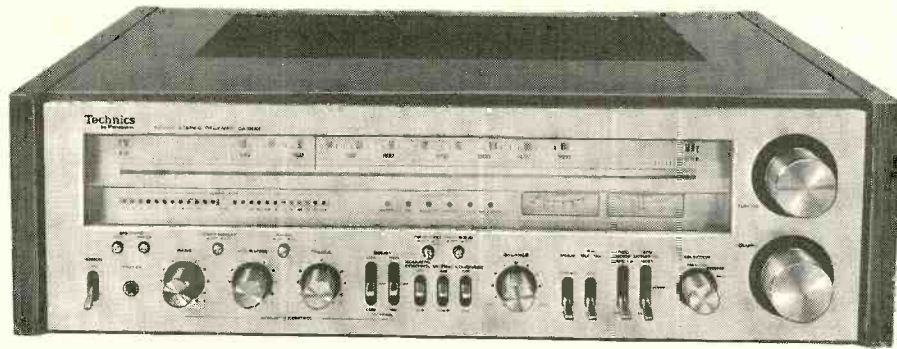
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(Continued on page 100)



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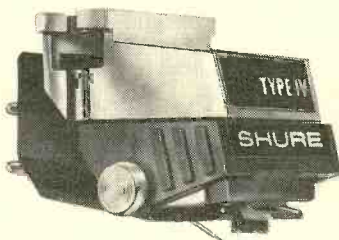
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A Goossens Sampler

SIR EUGÈNE GOOSSENS, who died in 1962 at the age of sixty-nine, was not only one of the more prominent conductors of his time, but was also regarded as one of the more significant British composers of his generation. His own music, however, was not too widely performed in his lifetime and has not survived him with much vigor. It is good now to hear a sampling of it, and highly appropriate that an entire side of Unicorn's new Goossens album feature the artistry of his celebrated oboist-brother, Léon (both Eugène and Léon always used the French spellings and pronunciations of their given names). It may be further noted that one of their two musical sisters, Marie, is the solo harpist of the National Philharmonic in the performance of the *Divertissement* recorded here. In fact, the interrelationships and cross-currents represented on this disc are so intriguing that space simply has to be taken to catalog them.

The last of the three movements of the *Divertissement* is a *ballet flamenco* that makes use of a tune borrowed from a work by Enrique Fernández Arbós, who was not only one of Sir Eugène's teachers but was subsequently co-conductor with him of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra for part of the period between the reigns of Rudolph Ganz and Vladimir Golschmann (in the late Twenties and early Thirties). Nearly four decades later, Walter Susskind, who conducts the Oboe Concerto here, became music director of that orchestra, and he now serves as music advisor to the Cincinnati Symphony, of which Goossens was conductor from 1931 to 1947. Gaspare Chiarelli, conductor of the *Divertissement*, was once a pupil of Goossens, later conducted in Cincinnati himself, and now conducts youth orchestras in Canada—which country's National Youth Orchestra was founded by Susskind when he was conductor in Toronto and Chiarelli was a student there. And at one time Susskind was conductor of the Carl Rosa Opera Company, as Goossens' father and grandfather had been; he also went

to Australia a few years after Goossens did, but not with the same orchestra.

As for the music itself, the Oboe Concerto, preserved here in its original 1948 recording (this portion of the disc is of course mono; the remainder was taped in 1976 and 1977 in stereo), is by all odds the strongest component of the retrospective package. It was composed in 1928 and introduced by the two brothers on the occasion of Léon's New York debut (Eugène was at that time conductor of the Rochester Philharmonic). The piece calls upon the soloist to put his instrument through its paces in the most brilliant manner, and it happens to have real substance, too; it would be a nice addition to the skimpy repertoire of post-Baroque oboe concertos in general circulation now.

The *Divertissement*, composed more than thirty years later than the concerto, was the last work Goossens completed. Its middle movement, a scherzo and folk tune, is an orchestral setting of the *Two Studies* he composed for piano in 1924, material he used in at least one additional setting in the intervening years. It has an agreeably Delian cast and was meant to reflect a summer landscape at sunset, with a shepherd leading his flock down a hillside and a village church bell heard in the distance. The opening movement is an overture dance prelude, full of energy and color, if not quite so full as the aforementioned *ballet flamenco*, which concludes the work with a most convincing evocation of gutsy flamenco spirit.

The *Six Songs from "Chamber Music"* (Goossens obtained James Joyce's permission to use his poems in 1929) are exceptionally successful matchings of words and music, suggesting a natural gift as a songwriter. *Searching for Lambs* (heard here in Léon Goossens' arrangement as a lovely pastoral for his instrument) and *When Thou Art Dead* were also originally songs, the latter from a set of incidental music for the Margaret Kennedy play *The Constant Nymph* and the former a tune Eugène used again in the slow movement of his String Quartet No. 2. The *Islamite Dance* was composed for Léon in its present form, and the *Old Chinese Folk-Song* was arranged by him from a piece Eugène wrote at the age of nineteen for violin or cello with piano.

It hardly needs saying that all the performances are as accomplished and communicative as the most affectionate dedication on the part of outstanding musicians could make them. The sound is splendid in the new recordings, the transfer of the Oboe Concerto from 78's belies its age, and the domestic pressing is itself exemplary. A lovely surprise all around. —Richard Freed

GOOSSENS: *Divertissement*. National Philharmonic Orchestra, Gaspare Chiarelli cond. ***Six Songs from "Chamber Music," Op. 51.*** Meriel Dickinson (mezzo-soprano); Peter Dickinson (piano). ***Islamite Dance; Searching for Lambs, Op. 49; When Thou Art Dead, Op. 43; Old Chinese Folk-Song, Op. 4.*** Léon Goossens (oboe); David Lloyd (piano). ***Oboe Concerto, Op. 45.*** Léon Goossens (oboe); Philharmonia Orchestra, Walter Susskind cond. UNICORN UNI-75005 \$7.98.

and logical idea, yet this is the first time it has been done by a major label. In execution, though, the project has fallen short of the ideal. Pilar Lorengar is an attractive vocalist, but in this repertoire she must be compared with Victoria de los Angeles and Teresa Berganza. By *their* standard she fails to project the insinuating charm, the sense of involvement, and the mastery of communication through pointing up of words and musical phrases that we expect in these brief and colorful vignettes.

Alicia de Larrocha makes a masterly contribution here, relishing the guitar effects, fanciful embellishments, and massive sonorities the music calls for. Her bravura pianism is brilliantly captured, but the engineers' failure to give equal prominence to the vocalist results in a somewhat lopsided balance. G.J.

HAYDN: *Il Mondo della Luna.* Domenico Trimarchi (baritone), Buonafede; Luigi Alva (tenor), Ecclitico; Frederica von Stade (mezzo-soprano), Lisetta; Arleen Augér (soprano), Flaminia; Edith Mathis (soprano), Clarice; Lucia Valentini Terrani (contralto), Ernest; Anthony Rolfe Johnson (tenor), Cecco. Members of the Chorus of Radio Suisse Romande; Lausanne Chamber Orchestra, Antal Dorati cond. PHILIPS 6769 003 four discs \$35.94, © 7699 078 \$26.94.

Performance: **Stylish**
Recording: **Good**

In 1777 Haydn made an operatic setting of Carlo Goldoni's *Il Mondo della Luna* expressly for the ceremonies attending an Esterházy marriage. The work seems not to have been performed again until modern times, when it became the first Haydn opera to be revived. It is still the best known of the composer's considerable operatic output.

In a way this is too bad. *Il Mondo della Luna* (*The World of the Moon*, not, as it is usually translated, *The Man in the Moon*) is far from Haydn's best work in the theater. The Goldoni libretto, by 1777 already a quarter of a century old and previously set by such notables as Galuppi, Piccini, and Paisiello, is one of those rather strained and overly sophisticated eighteenth-century comedies about human folly—in this case the folly of a gentleman who believes that he has been transported to the moon when he is only being conned into letting his daughters marry their lovers. Since the dramatic premise is slight and the dramatic movement almost nonexistent, it is not surprising that Haydn had a good deal of trouble getting going with it. The fun is in the second act, set in the false and fantastic world of the make-believe moon, where the characters put on outlandish costumes and act out a grotesque charade. Only here did Haydn's inspiration take fire in a series of arias, ballets, and ensembles that are entertaining and expressive.

Still, *Il Mondo della Luna* is a product of the mature Haydn, and all of it, even the less-notable first act and the brief, anticlimactic third act, is solid stuff. This highly commendable recording is part of a series of Haydn operas being produced by Philips together with the Radio Suisse Romande and the European Broadcasting Union. The stars of the cast are Domenico Trimarchi as "Goodfaith," the dupe, and Frederica von Stade as the servant girl Lisetta (a kind of predecessor of Despina). Luigi Alva is a bit uneven in the role of

(Continued on page 102)

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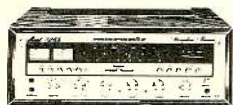
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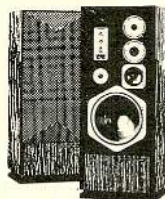


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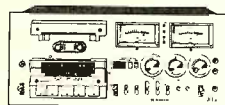


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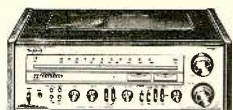
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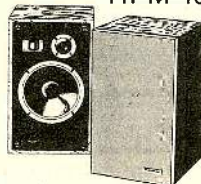
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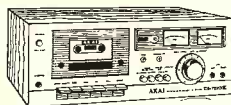
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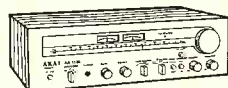
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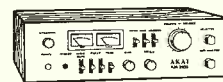
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the fake astronomer, while the other tenor, Anthony Rolfe Johnson, is modestly effective in another comic servant role. The other women are good, especially Edith Mathis in the lightweight part of one of the daughters. The orchestra catches the spirit of the work under Antal Dorati's sensitive and stylish direction, and the whole thing is very attractively recorded. A full libretto with translations is included. If you want to begin to explore the Haydn operas, I suggest starting somewhere else (*Orlando Paladino*, for example). But if you are a confirmed Haydn fancier, operatically inclined or not, this set is well worth your while. E.S.

HOLMBOE: Cello Concerto, Op. 120 (see KOPPEL)

JANÁČEK: String Quartet No. 1 ("Kreutzer Sonata"); String Quartet No. 2 ("Intimate Pages"). Smetana Quartet. SUPRAPHON □ 4 11 1995 \$7.98 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 65-37 Austin Street, Rego Park, N.Y. 11374).

Performance: **Elegantly impassioned**
Recording: **Quite good**

With the Complete Works of Everybody coming at us every ten days or so, it is rather a shock to find that neither of the Janáček quartets has been listed in Schwann since the retirement of the Crossroads disc (22 16 0014) on which both were performed by the quartet named for the composer. Those performances, however, are apparently still in circulation (as Supraphon SUAST-50556) from the same source as this new release, and anyone who is shopping for a recording of these works would be well advised to go for that version. It is not that the illustrious Smetana Quartet in any way lets down its own standards or is uncomfortable in the Janáček idiom, but, to a slight degree, its refinement sometimes clashes with the earthiness of the material. The Janáček Quartet is more intense in this regard and certainly not without savvy or refinement of its own. I should not want to belabor this point, for in its own right the Smetana Quartet gives us stunning performances—one might call them elegantly impassioned—and the important thing is that these extraordinary works be heard. These new performances, incidentally, are also available in a digital recording on Denon (OX-7066-ND), the Japanese and Czechs having taped the same sessions with different equipment. The Denon version is in a class by itself sonically, but the Supraphon is impressive enough, will appeal to SQ-quadrasonic listeners, and costs much less. R.F.

JOHNSON: Past the Evening Sun (see BARBER)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

KOPPEL: Cello Concerto, Op. 56.
HOLMBOE: Cello Concerto, Op. 120. Erling Bløndal Bengtsson (cello); Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Ole Schmidt cond. (Koppel), János Ferencsik cond. (Holmboe). Bis LP-78 \$8.98 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 65-37 Austin Street, Rego Park, N.Y. 11374).

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

Bis designates this disc Volume One in a survey of "Contemporary Danish Music for Or-

chestra"—an adjunct of its own, apparently, to the recent "Anthology of Danish Music" to which various companies contributed. If subsequent volumes are as intriguing as this first one, the series should receive a good deal of happy attention: both of these concertos are more than attractive and should be seized upon to augment the still smallish repertoire of concerted works for the cello. Both seem to be in the nature of drama in instrumental terms, not unlike Bloch's celebrated *Schelomo* but with a wider range of mood. Herman D. Koppel, seventy years old now, has been highly regarded in Denmark for a long time, but I can remember encountering his name only once on a record released in this country, and that was as pianist rather than composer (in Niels Viggo Bentzon's Chamber Concerto, available briefly on Turnabout). His Cello Concerto, composed in 1952, is large-scale, romantic, expressive, and distinguished by a most imaginative use of orchestral color within a fairly conventional framework. The concerto of the better-known and extremely prolific Vagn Holmboe, introduced less than five years ago, is a more inward work and has a more unusual layout: five interlinked movements, the last three of which are really more or less a vivace interrupted by a long solo cadenza. The performances are not only expert in every sense but must be regarded as definitive, since both works were written for Bløndal Bengtsson (who was only twenty when he first played the Koppel concerto). The sound, too, is first-class. The only nit to be picked in the whole presentation is the (to me) irritating presence of applause at the end of the Holmboe side (both sides were recorded in concert, and the applause could have been eliminated from the one as easily as from the other). But that should deter no one from buying and enjoying this altogether excellent disc. R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LECLAIR: Concertos for Violin and String Orchestra: G Minor, Op. 10, No. 6; C Major, Op. 7, No. 3; A Minor, Op. 7, No. 5. Jaap Schröder (violin); Concerto Amsterdam, Jaap Schröder cond. TELEFUNKEN 6.42180 AW \$8.98, © 4.42180 \$8.98.

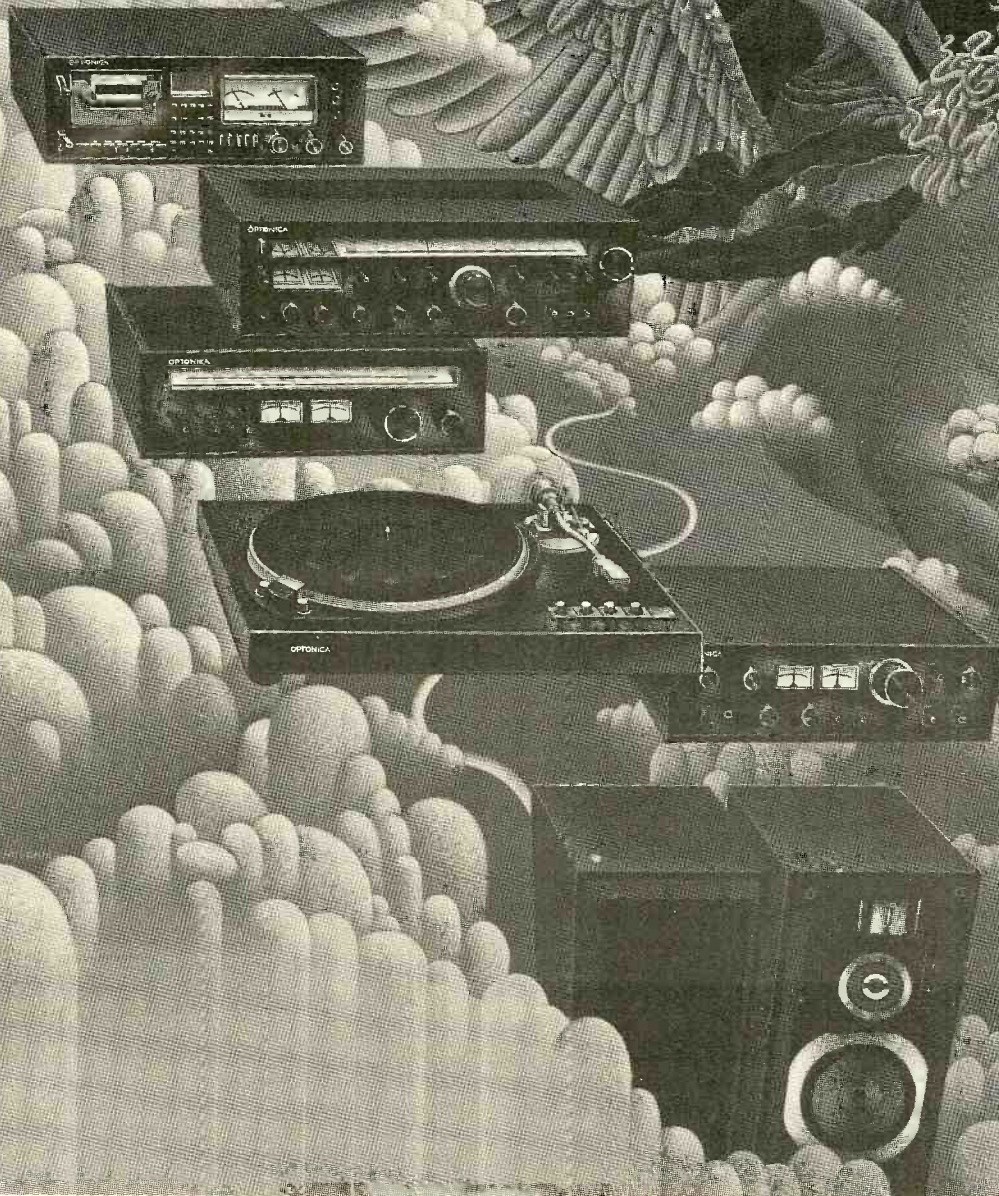
Performance: **Gorgeous**
Recording: **The best**

A ballet-master turned violinist and composer, Jean-Marie Leclair (1697-1764) has always fascinated me. He was an excellent composer with a French dance background who studied in Italy, so that his music has the elegance of France and the fire of Italy. Naturally I looked forward to hearing this disc of three of his concertos for violin and strings.

As a performer of early music myself and as a follower of authentic performance practice, I have consistently been especially critical of "authentic" performances. On first hearing this record, my reaction was, "Good Lord, there they go again with all those scratchy sounds and no musicianship." On second hearing, however, I realized that Jaap Schröder and his fellow musicians were playing magnificent music superbly. True, the sound is thin on the old instruments. True, the articulation is jerky, at least as compared with the Romantic long line. But the detail of ornamentation, the clarity of all of the parts, the spring brought to the dance elements of the

(Continued on page 104)

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MARILYN HORNE: she always
astonishes and thrills

Vivaldi's "Orlando Furioso"



Christian Steiner/CAMI

VIVALDI'S modern reputation is closely associated with the church and the church-run young ladies' orphanage for which he was music director. It is therefore hard for us to imagine his working—and working successfully—amid the sensuous gardens of the Baroque opera theater. But Vivaldi was famous in his native Venice as an opera composer. According to his own (improbable) accounting, he composed no less than ninety-four theater works! These operas have not fared well; only about twenty survive in whole or in part, and all of them had vanished from the boards by the late eighteenth century.

The Italian poet Torquato Tasso's romantic epic on the subject of the love-crazed crusader Roland was a popular operatic subject. Vivaldi himself worked on three different versions of an Orlando opera, and the third, produced in 1727, was one of his most successful works. *Orlando Furioso*, newly released by RCA, is a fine choice for revival since it has the kind of fantasy and exoticism—mountains, groves, and temples, knights and Saracens, sorceresses and enchantments, love and madness—that might appeal to a modern audience. And it has a score by a composer who, possibly more than any other of his age, best embodies the qualities of imagination, fire, fantasy, and passion.

Not that it is an easy opera to present to a modern audience. The original is five or six hours long, filled with vast stretches of dry recitative and something like three dozen arias, all stylized in form if not expression. The edition used for this recording was prepared by conductor Claudio Scimone, and it almost amounts to a highlights selection; even so, Scimone has retained great stretches of the recitative in order to make the action moderately comprehensible. Some of this recitative is quite expressive, and in the third act, where accompanied recitative, choruses, a duet, arioso fragments, and instrumental interjections are mixed together, Vivaldi (or, at least, Vivaldi/Scimone) achieves something of a genuine musico-dramatic impact. Otherwise there is the typical alternation of long stretches of recitative occasionally relieved

by the most beautiful, difficult—and irrelevant—arias.

The whole point is, of course, the singing, and it is only with the emergence of singers like Marilyn Horne that the lost glories of the Baroque can even be reattempted. Horne is truly glorious here. Even in the eighteenth century, Vivaldi admirers already commented on the composer's predilection for using the voice as a kind of super instrument, and it takes an extraordinary vocal instrument like Horne's to re-create the effects he intended. She never melts our hearts the way Victoria de los Angeles does, but she always astonishes and thrills. (I might mention that the part of Orlando was apparently intended for a woman, not a male alto. This brings up an interesting question: how were the mad scenes—in which Orlando is specifically described as naked—actually staged?)

The women, all four of them, do distinctly better than the men here, and this is especially noticeable in their (very properly) added ornamentations and decorations. The modern operatic tenor/baritone style does not lend itself to the spinning out of this kind of Baroque ornamental gold, but all the women manage it easily and artfully—though none as completely as Ms. Horne.

WHATEVER the problems, let me emphasize the fascination and beauty of this score and its realization. The playing and conducting produce a high level of excitement, and the recording—made in Italy and originally released by French Erato—affords us a rare glimpse of the lost glories of Baroque opera.

—Eric Salzman

VIVALDI: *Orlando Furioso*. Marilyn Horne (mezzo-soprano), Orlando; Victoria de los Angeles (soprano), Angelica; Lucia Valentini-Terrani (mezzo-soprano), Alcina; Carmen Gonzales (contralto), Bradamante; Lajos Kozma (tenor), Medoro; Sesto Bruscantini (baritone), Ruggiero; Nicola Zaccaria (bass), Astolfo; Amici della Polifonia Chorus; I Solisti Veneti, Claudio Scimone cond. RCA ARL3-2869 three discs \$23.94.

music eventually told me more about Leclair than had all my past performance and research. The moral of this review is that it may take at least one hearing to turn off one's prejudices and another to accept the performers' viewpoint. Buy the record and listen, and then, at least a day later, listen again and all will be revealed to you. S.L.

LISZT (arr. Boskovsky): *Hungarian Rhapsodies Nos. 2, 3, and 5; Mephisto Waltz No. 1.* London Philharmonic Orchestra, Willi Boskovsky cond. ANGEL □ S-37278 \$7.98.

Performance: **Lush**
Recording: **Excellent**

This is Willi Boskovsky's second volume of orchestrated versions of Liszt Hungarian Rhapsodies. In a review of the first album (with the Philharmonia Hungarica), Richard Freed said the conductor showed a "surprising flair" for this material. I hasten to agree; Boskovsky is plainly as much at home in Budapest as in Vienna. Even the hackneyed Rhapsody No. 2 emerges with elegant subtlety, though the listener is not in the least short-changed when it comes to the rousing climax. The dark-hued, elegiac No. 5 never once bogs down in bathos. And No. 3, with its four contrasting moods and movements, responds especially well to Boskovsky's sensitive, balletic treatment. The *Mephisto Waltz No. 1* perhaps has been heard on discs too often to scare us much any more, but, spiffed up for the occasion and played to a fare-thee-well by the London forces, this *danse macabre* for a Satan in gypsy garb can still raise a few goosebumps, particularly in four-channel playback. P.K.

LISZT: *Mephisto Waltz* (see TCHAIKOVSKY)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MAHLER: *Symphony No. 6, in A Minor* ("Tragic"). Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2707 106 two discs \$17.96, © 3370 026 \$17.96.

Performance: **Intensely poetic**
Recording: **Very fine**

In company with the remarkable recordings by Solti and Bernstein (and not to pass over the revelatory elements in those by Horenstein and Szell), this album by Karajan and his Berliners is yet another exceptionally distinguished recorded realization of Mahler's impassioned music. But whereas Solti and Bernstein exploit the drama and urgency of the music, Karajan searches out new poetic vistas. Not that the Karajan performance is lacking in urgency—his basic tempo for the first movement is the same as Bernstein's—but what we do find here is a little less savagery in the percussion department as compared with Solti's version and a passionate lyricism in the slow movement that eclipses even Bernstein's.

As he already demonstrated in his magnificent recording of the Fifth Symphony, Karajan is totally the master of Mahler's structure and big line, with the result that he can turn his attention here also to the finest details of timbre and blending of tone color without appearing to be fussy about it. I have in mind the evocative alpine episodes with the distantly

(Continued on page 106)

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THROUGH THE OPERA GLASSES

By Irene Kilbourne

AIDA

Had these fond lovers, sealed within their tomb,
Been born in this more scientific day,
They would have known their singing would consume
Their scant supply of oxygen, and they,
Instead of singing their duet out stronger,
Might have kept still, and lived a little longer.



CARMEN

Boy meets girl—with the darkest hair
That Don José ever saw a rose in;
They were a mighty happy pair—
Till Escamillo stuck his nose in.

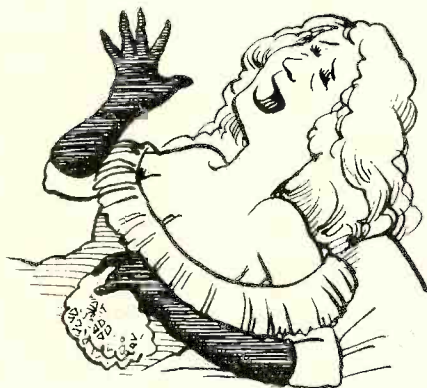
Bullfighter swished his cape and sang,
And fickle Carmen's cup was full
(A girl quite often, with a bang,
Falls for a guy who's full of bull).

But Don José is still her lover;
At the arena gate he grabs her;
The music swells (it's nearly over)
And sure enough, he ups and stabs her.

The moral of this tale is choice;
It's one of wisdom's treasured pearls:
It takes a bit more than a darn good voice
To win these cigarette-factory girls.

LA TRAVIATA

Coughing, consumptive Violetta lies,
And while we melt in charity,
She sings the scene before she dies
With flawless-crystal clarity.
These dying divas suffer, in plays,
Spasmodic coughs that tear their throats—
But always *between* each soaring phrase,
Never on one of the full, high notes.



LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

How can she sing like a high-strung lute
And trill her every thought and sigh
With that anticipatory flute
Shadowing her like the F.B.I.?
A difficult spot in which to work;
No wonder the poor girl went berserk.

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sounding cowbells: they have never been more magically captured than here. Likewise, the long introduction to the massive finale has never seemed more doom-haunted. As to the basic musical substance of the score, it is the singing line that seems uppermost in Karajan's conception—note the emphasis on string tone throughout much of the first movement—and the result is an overall reading less fraught with *Angst* and more redolent of song.

The recording as such is not as spectacular as that of Karajan's Bruckner Fifth, nor as fiercely full-bodied as that accorded Solti in his Mahler Sixth, but it is surely good by any standards. *D.H.*

MOROI: *Symphony No. 2.* Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra, Shigenobu Yamaoka cond. VARÈSE SARABANDE VX 81062 \$7.98.

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

Try this one on your friends. Never mind who wrote it, just ask them to guess the period and country of origin. Not to prolong the suspense, the Japanese composer Saburo Moroi wrote his Second Symphony in 1937-1938, and it was premiered by Joseph Rosenstock with the Japan Philharmonic. It is purely in the late-Romantic central-European mode—somewhere between Bruckner and Sibelius. The feeling of the music is very agitated and apocalyptic, and there is something indescribably odd about hearing this somewhat awkward record of it. It is like some dusty antique that turns out to be neither as old nor as well-made as first appeared but which still has value for curiosity lovers. *E.S.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MOZART: *Clarinet Quintet in A Major (K. 581); Quintet for Piano and Winds in E-flat Major (K. 452).* Richard Stoltzman (clarinet); Ida Kavafian (violin); Lucy Stoltzman (violin); Daniel Philips (viola); Fred Sherry (cello); Peter Serkin (piano); Allan Vogel (oboe); Robert Rouch (horn); Bill Douglas (bassoon). RCA ARL1-2863 \$7.98, © ARS1-2863 \$7.98, © ARK1-2863 \$7.98.

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

Though the record is billed as by the chamber group Tashi, that sterling clarinetist Richard Stoltzman is the only musician of the nine listed above who plays in both works. Stoltzman, Peter Serkin, Ida Kavafian, and Fred Sherry are the four who actually make up Tashi; the other players are guests. Be that as it may, this full group of musicians has given us a most enjoyable fifty-five minutes of utterly lovely Mozart performed with great style and verve. Some may find the opening movement of the Clarinet Quintet a bit on the slow and romantic side, but when it comes to the slow movement only the adjective "ravishing" will do, especially as applied to Stoltzman's clarinet. The variation-finale is delectable here in its amalgam of sentiment and wit. The crown of the Quintet for Piano and Winds is also the gorgeous slow movement, in which the winds singly and in ensemble emit honeyed tones in heavenly harmonic successions. Peter Serkin's pianism is alert and lovely to the ear. The recording is just fine in both body and ambiance. A splendid disc, especially for someone just beginning to explore the chamber-music repertoire. *D.H.*

MOZART: *Quartets for Flute and Strings: D Major (K. 285); G Major (K. 285a); C Major (K. 285b); A Major (K. 298).* Andreas Blau (flute); members of the Amadeus Quartet. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 983 \$8.98, © 3300 983 \$8.98.

Performance: **Elegant but uneven**
 Recording: **Very good**

The four flute quartets may not be among Mozart's most important works, but they are almost embarrassingly likable, and they have certainly been well represented on records (record companies are encouraged, no doubt, by Mozart's having been considerate enough to tailor the quartets to fit comfortably together on a single disc). Andreas Blau is solo flutist of the Berlin Philharmonic, and the Amadeus Quartet is, of course, a distinguished one; but, despite the credentials of the participants, the present release is a little uneven in its yield. Much of it is rather matter-of-fact, as in the opening movement of K. 285b, where the performers seem content with a tidy execution of the notes and reluctant to be entrapped by the music's charm. And yet the ensuing variation movement of the same work is remarkable for its elegant expressiveness and the unexpected depth revealed in this presentation. The recording itself is very good, though occasionally the flute is a bit too far forward. The most consistently pleasurable recording of these four works is still the one by William Bennett and the Grumiaux Trio on Philips 6500 034. *R.F.*

MOZART: *String Quartet No. 18, in A Major (K. 464); String Quartet No. 19, in C Major (K. 465, "Dissonant").* Alban Berg Quartet. TELEFUNKEN 6.42178AW \$8.98.

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

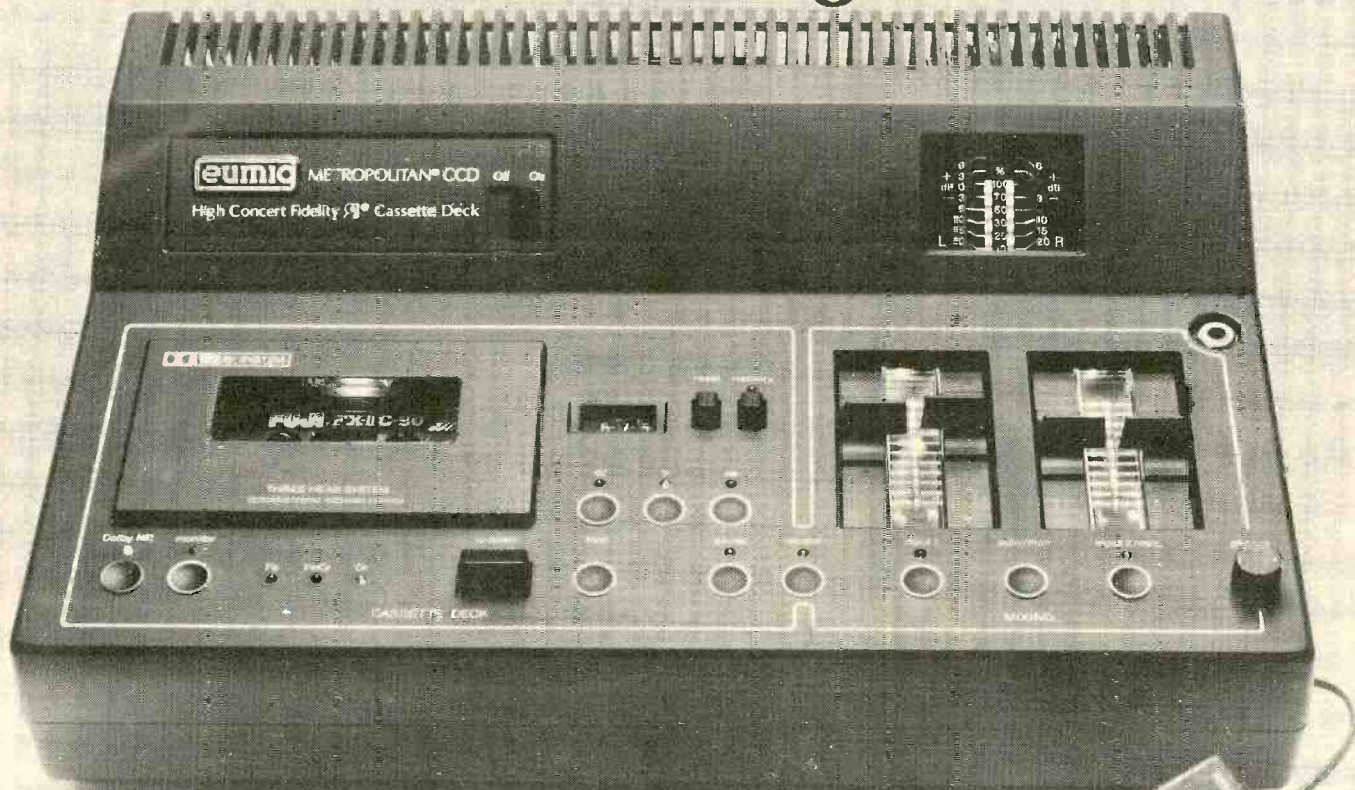
MOZART: *String Quartet No. 3, in G Major (K. 156); String Quartet No. 8, in F Major (K. 168); String Quartet No. 13, in D Minor (K. 173).* Quartetto Esterházy. TELEFUNKEN 6.42181AW \$8.98.

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

Having begun with the last four quartets, the Alban Berg Quartet appears to be working backward toward completion of its Mozart cycle. This new disc of the last two of the six quartets dedicated to Haydn has all the virtues of this group's earlier Mozart recordings (K. 499 and K. 575 on Telefunken 6.41999, K. 589 and K. 590 on 6.42042) and none of their shortcomings. Here, in fact, is the sort of distinguished music-making we heard on the ABQ's initial Haydn record (Op. 74, No. 3, and Op. 76, No. 3, 6.41302)—attuned to the spirit of the works, well judged as to tempos, phrasing, and internal balance, and complemented by splendid recorded sound. It happens, though, that the Smetana Quartet's presentation of K. 464 and K. 465 on Denon OX-7039 shines with a mellowness and *Innigkeit* neither the ABQ nor any other contender quite approaches, and Denon's sound is not merely splendid but phenomenally realistic.

The Quartetto Esterházy's attractive presentation of three of the most interesting of Mozart's earlier quartets is another case of a record that is more than admirable in its own right and yet is outclassed by the competition. Of course, collectors attracted only to these *(Continued on page 108)*

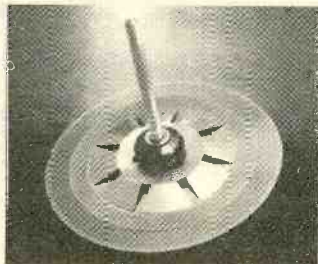
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LUCIA DLUGOSZEWSKI: sonically inventive

New Sounds from the Avant-Garde

VOLUME 2 of the "New Music for Virtuosos" series on New World Records features Harvey and Sophie Sollberger, flutists extraordinary, trombonist Stuart Dempster, and Bertram Turetzky, who has almost singlehandedly made the double-bass a major new-music instrument. All of the music on the disc is nearly as difficult to listen to as it is to play, but there are rewards for the persevering. The styles range from the American expressionism of Andrew Imbrie's *Three Sketches* to the tense, block-like structures of Ralph Shapey's *Configurations* to Harvey Sollberger's own lyrical abstraction. Robert Morris' *Motet on "Doo-Dah"* is, believe it or not, based on the Stephen Foster tune, but don't expect to sing along; you have to listen hard to hear it.

Everything here, with one exception, belongs within the general framework of the academic or abstract-expressionist avant-garde. The exception is Robert Erikson's *General Speech*, which requires the solo trombonist to play a notated score at the same time as he articulates a phonetic version of a speech of General Douglas MacArthur through the 'bone. Alas, without the visual setting, the general effect is a little like run-on flatulence.

These performances are of the kind that extend our notions of what instrumental performance is all about. As usual, New World's notes provide all you might want to know (and more) about the composers and their works, and there is also an excellent essay on "the new virtuosity" by Harvey Sollberger.

One of the key aspects of that new virtuosity is sound discovery, and one of the most sonically inventive composers in new music is Lucia Dlugoszewska, whose recent sudden rise to prominence in avant-garde circles was

long overdue. A new CRI record holds her *Tender Theatre Flight Nageire* for brass and percussion (the title is simply a compound of the names of the four movements). It has her very best qualities of fantasy and poetic invention; these rituals of the imagination are daring and fascinating. Her partner on the album is C. Curtis-Smith (that is his full professional name), who is also a composer a little bit out of the modern-music mainstream. He is best known for his techniques of bowing on piano strings, which are used here in his *Unisonics* to blend the piano and saxophone in unusual ways (including plucked piano sounds, multiphonics on the sax, etc.). His *Music for Handbells* is just that, and a very pretty sound it is, too—if you can take eight minutes of it. The whole record is off-beat, but interesting.

ANOTHER CRI record contains two compositions whose composers were awarded cash prizes and a recording subsidy by the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. I was not previously very familiar with the work of Harold Blumenfeld, who, by his own account, "spent most of the Sixties in experimental opera production" and turned his full attention to composing only in this decade. His *Voyages* comprises atmospheric settings of poems by Hart Crane for baritone, viola, guitar, and percussion. The work is attractive, but I don't like the reading it gets here from baritone Patrick Mason, who seems to confuse performing sensitivity with a snooty, nasal, "cultivated" sound.

The other work is by George Perle, a difficult composer to classify. He is an artist who paints recognizable musical landscapes in the manner of abstract expressionism; in other words, he is a kind of musical abstractionist or serialist who nevertheless uses traditional materials. His *String Quartet No. 7* is dry, laconic, and quietly witty. It is also well played by the New York String Quartet. Like the other two, this last album is technically more than adequate in terms of recorded sound.

—Eric Salzman

SOLLBERGER: *Sunflowers*. Harvey Sollberger (flute); Claire Hedrich (vibraphone). **MORRIS: *Motet on "Doo-Dah."*** Harvey Sollberger (flute); Donald Palma (double-bass); Daniel Shulman (piano). **LEWIS: *Infections I*.** Bertram Turetzky (double-bass). **SHAPEY: *Configurations*.** Sophie Sollberger (flute); Robert Black (piano). **IMBRIE: *Three Sketches*.** Stuart Dempster (trombone); Kevin Aanerud (piano). **ERICKSON: *General Speech*.** Stuart Dempster (trombone, recitation). NEW WORLD NW 254 \$8.98.

DLUGOSZEWSKI: *Tender Theatre Flight Nageire*. Instrumental ensemble, Gerard Schwarz cond. **CURTIS-SMITH: *Unisonics*.** Trent Kynaston (alto saxophone); C. Curtis-Smith (piano). ***Music for Handbells*.** Handbell choir, C. Curtis-Smith cond. **COMPOSERS RECORDINGS, INC. CRI SD 388 \$7.95.**

PERLE: *String Quartet No. 7*. New York String Quartet. **BLUMENFELD: *Voyages*.** Patrick Mason (baritone); instrumental ensemble, Arthur Weisberg cond. **COMPOSERS RECORDINGS, INC. CRI SD 387 \$7.95.**

three particular works will not find them collected elsewhere on a single disc. Quite aside from the matter of more distinctive performances from the Quartetto Italiano on Philips, however, I would not recommend the Telefunken disc because of its irritating and gratuitous side break: the three-minute first movement of K. 156 is on side one and the remainder of the work on side two. R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MOZART: *Symphony No. 25, in G Minor (K. 183); Symphony No. 29, in A Major (K. 201)*. English Chamber Orchestra, Benjamin Britten cond. LONDON CS 7103 \$7.98.

Performance: **Strong stuff**
Recording: **Dark-colored**

Benjamin Britten did not enjoy a wide reputation as a conductor during his lifetime—at least not of other composers' music. Nor have I heard the earlier releases of his performances of Mozart and Schubert, all, I believe, recorded in the early Seventies near Britten's sea-coast home in Aldeburgh. However, I am quite willing to accept these new releases as ample evidence of Britten's great talents in this direction. These are the two gems among the early Mozart symphonies—the little G Minor and the exquisitely witty, contrapuntal A Major—and they are performed here with great vigor and purposefulness. There's no rococo pretty-pretty but rather a surprising monumentality achieved with a minimum of heaviness and a maximum of insight: Good, strong stuff. E.S.

MOZART (trans. Tsunoda): *Symphony No. 40, in G Minor (K. 550); Serenade in G Major (K. 525, "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik")*. New Koto Ensemble of Tokyo, Yoshikazu Fukumara cond. ANGEL S-37553 \$7.98.

Performance: **Eerily apt**
Recording: **Excellent**

Having previously tailored Vivaldi's *The Seasons* to Japanese specifications in a remarkable demonstration of the koto's ability to speak in any accent it chooses, the New Koto Ensemble of Tokyo now turns its attention to Mozart. The results are both heartening and surprising. The koto, an instrument long associated with the classics of the Orient, is six feet long and looks like a zither, but its thirteen silken strings, each with a shiftable bridge, can be made to sound like the very music of the spheres. It is not so surprising that the eight members of the ensemble under Yoshikazu Fukumara can play *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* with all the necessary nocturnal charm; the work is probably sturdy enough to survive transcription for a kazoo, and the treatment it receives here is uncommonly magical. What is amazing is how, from the complex harmonics of its opening notes to the last measure of its celestially lovely rondo, these players bring off the G Minor Symphony, which is challenge enough for the greatest orchestras and conductors of the western world. Perhaps the secret is that the music is so familiar that we tend to hear the orchestration in our heads and thus fill in whatever gaps the koto players must of necessity leave unfilled. Or perhaps it is simply that this is a really great group of instrumentalists for whom no challenge is too daunting. Certainly the symphony retains its original poise and

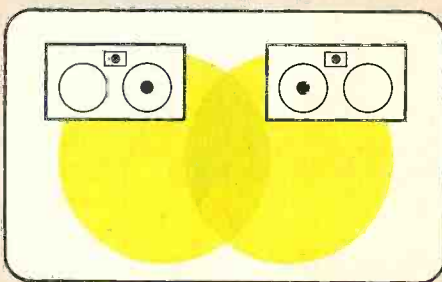
(Continued on page 110)



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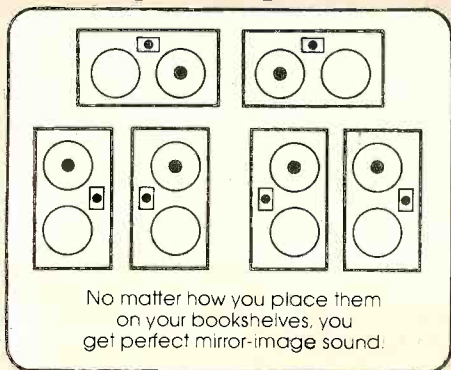


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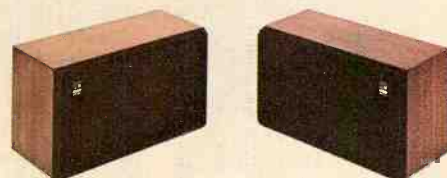
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power in this brave experiment, which by all odds should not have succeeded. However strangely, it does. P.K.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PEETERS: *Missa Festiva, Op. 62.* **POULENC:** *Mass in G Major; Exultate Deo; Salve Regina.* John Scott (organ, in Peeters); Choir of St. John's College, Cambridge, George Guest cond. ARGO ZRG 883 \$8.98.

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

The seventy-five-year old Belgian Flor Peeters seems to combine elements of Gregorian chant, the ceremonial and processional music

of the Gabriellis, and a feeling for his own time in his best works, of which the *Missa Festiva* must be reckoned one. It is not a concert work in liturgical form, but a liturgical work suitable for concert presentation, and it receives a fervent and vital performance here, quite uninhibited by any misguided restraint in the name of piety. It will not be everyone's cup of tea, but I would be surprised if the beauty and power of this presentation failed to revise the thinking of some listeners who have always felt sacred works of this sort to be outside their range of enthusiasm.

With the Poulenc side we are on somewhat more familiar ground: at least the ingratiating Sanctus of the G Major Mass is familiar enough, and boy soprano Jonathan Bond's

solo in the "*Hosanna*" that follows radiates unabashed sincerity and intimacy. Since the Mass is only seventeen minutes long, there is also room for two shorter pieces by Poulenc, the one brisk and jubilant, the other more touching and intimate than even the Mass. The vocal tapestry in these three works is less rich than that of the Peeters, and there is an endearingly ingenuous quality to them which Guest and his singers have caught just right. Altogether a splendid record, with excellent sound—but, regrettably, without texts. R.F.

POULENC: *Mass in G Major; Exultate Deo; Salve Regina* (see PEETERS)

PREVIN: *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* (see Popular Reviews, page 150)

PROKOFIEV: *Piano Concerto No. 3, in C Major, Op. 26* (see Best of the Month, page 90)

PURCELL: *Dido and Aeneas.* Janet Baker (mezzo-soprano), Dido; Peter Pears (tenor), Aeneas; Norma Burrowes (soprano), Belinda; Anna Reynolds (mezzo-soprano), Sorceress; Felicity Lott (soprano), Second Lady; Felicity Palmer (soprano), First Witch; Alfreda Hodgson (mezzo-soprano), Second Witch; Robert Tear (tenor), Sailor; Timothy Everett (boy soprano), Spirit. London Opera Chorus and Aldeburgh Festival Strings, Stuart Bedford cond. LONDON OSA 1170 \$7.98.

PURCELL: *Dido and Aeneas.* Tatiana Troyanos (mezzo-soprano), Dido; Richard Stilwell (baritone), Aeneas; Felicity Palmer (soprano), Belinda; Alfreda Hodgson (mezzo-soprano), First Witch, Spirit; Patricia Kern (mezzo-soprano), Sorceress; Elizabeth Gale (soprano), Second Lady; Philip Langridge (tenor), Sailor; Linn Maxwell (soprano), Second Witch. English Chamber Choir and Orchestra, Raymond Leppard cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 3810 \$4.95 (plus 95¢ postage and handling from Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

Performances: **MHS slightly better**
Recordings: **Both very good**

Purcell's concise little masterpiece of an opera receives idiomatic, scholarly, and affectionate performances in both of these versions, but there are notable differences between them. Raymond Leppard (MHS) follows standard performance practice in concluding the second act with Aeneas' forlorn line "For I obey your will, but with more ease I could die." In his liner notes, Leppard remarks on Purcell's "really superb sense of theatre" which led him to cut out "distracting" parts of the libretto. "Who," Leppard asks, "after Aeneas's incredibly moving agonized acceptance of what he believes to be God's command to leave Dido, would want a jolly chorus of Witches . . . ?"

And yet this is precisely what we hear in the Benjamin Britten/Imogene Holst edition conducted by Stuart Bedford (London). Apparently, Britten was convinced that Purcell must have composed music for the scene because "the drama cries for it." He therefore supplied music from other Purcell works. While I find the traditional ending quite effective in its own way, the Britten emendation sounds perfectly in character also. Both sets offer outstanding Didos. I prefer Tatiana

(Continued on page 112)

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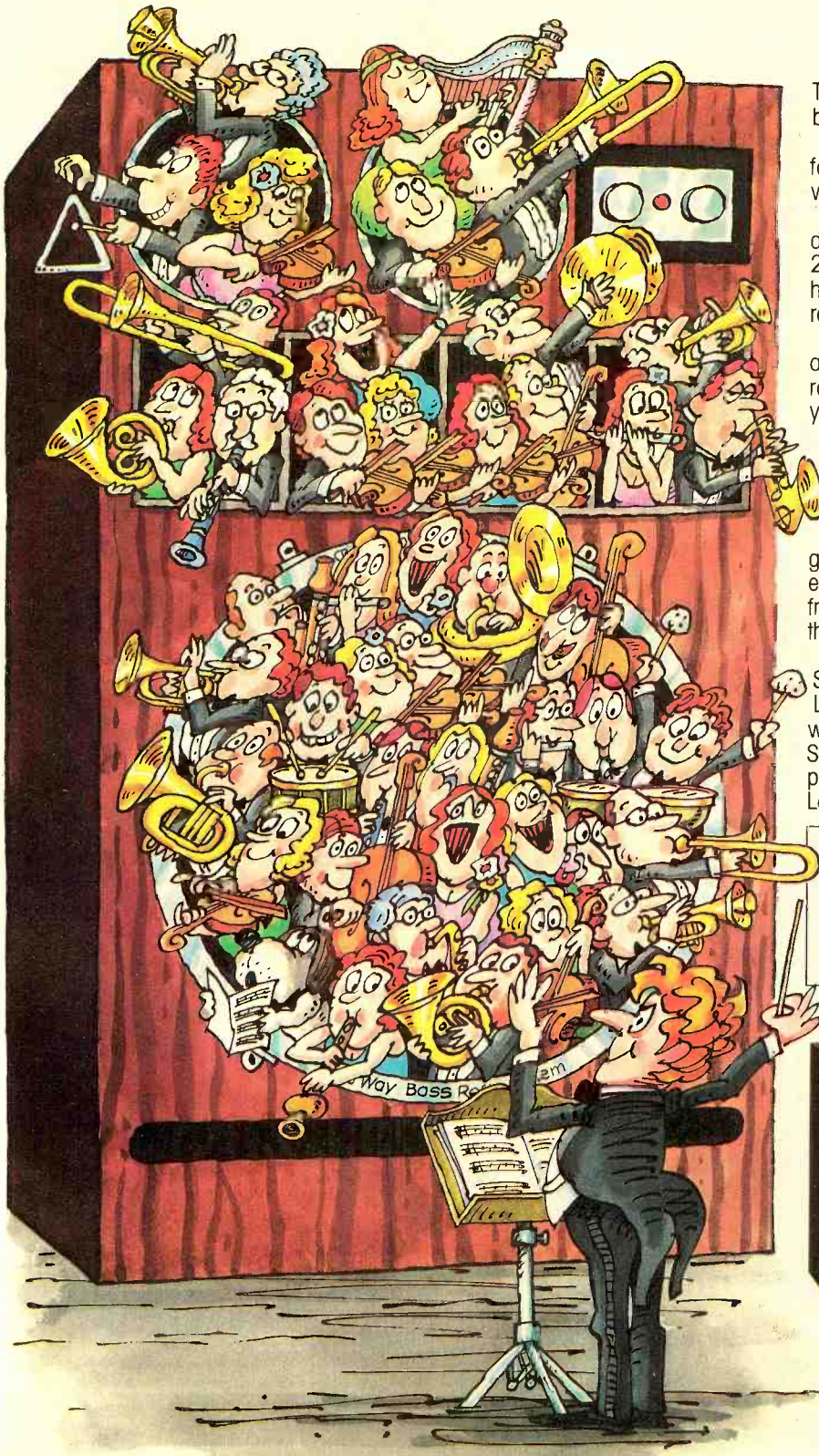
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Troyanos' straightforward singing in Act I, but in the final scene Janet Baker's heartrending pathos and poignancy in the aria "When I am laid in earth" is just about unsurpassable. In general, Miss Troyanos displays the richer tone. Dame Janet the clearer, more pointed articulation. Both Belindas are good, and so are the supporting singers. All seem to be specialists; in fact, Felicity Palmer and Alfreda Hodgson appear in both casts in different roles.

London scores with Anna Reynolds' Sorceress—less menacing in sound, perhaps, than Patricia Kern, but steadier and vocally more imposing. This slight advantage, however, is decidedly offset by the casting of Sir Peter Pears as Aeneas. Though he handles the important Act II recitative eloquently, the distinguished tenor is sixty-five and the assignment is simply too much for his frayed tones. Richard Stilwell, on the other hand, may be the best of the many interpreters who have so far recorded this rather perilous role. Another drawback in the London set is the boy soprano in the role of the Spirit, though some listeners may not share my jaundiced view of treble voices in opera.

Both conductors deserve high praise for creating a Baroque aura without losing sight of the score's dramatic qualities. London's sound is somewhat warmer and more opulent, but I noted a miscalculation in their handling of the lovely echo effect in the chorus "In our deep vaulted cell"; the dynamics are much too low, virtually vanishing at moderate listening levels.

Of the two sets under review, I prefer the one on MHS. Prospective purchasers, however, should also investigate the Colin Davis version (Philips 6500 131) and Janet Baker's earlier version on L'Oiseau-Lyre 60047. In my view, they are the best in the catalog. *G.J.*

RAVEL: Piano Concerto in G Major (see *Best of the Month*, page 90)

RÓZSA: Music from the Films, Julius Caesar; Lady Hamilton; The Killers; Lydia; The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes; Five Graves to Cairo; The Red Danube. Erich Gruenberg (violin); Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Miklós Rózsa cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2584 021 \$8.98.

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

ROZSA: Suites from the Film Music, Lust for Life Suite; Background to Violence Suite (from *Brute Force, The Killers, and The Naked City*). Frankenland State Symphony Orchestra, Miklós Rózsa cond. VARÈSE SARABANDE VC 81053 \$7.98.

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

Movie music from the "golden age" of Hollywood has come to be so respected that you now have to look up recordings of film scores by Miklós Rózsa under "classical composers" in the Schwann catalog. Not only are there original-soundtrack recordings of his contributions to the cinema on the market,

but composer-conducted symphony orchestras are turning out whole series of his *oeuvre* for the movies on various labels. These albums are accompanied by shamelessly laudatory liner notes, plot summaries, and lavish photographs from the movies themselves. Rózsa, now seventy-one, is an old hand at the business of scoring movies and one of its most skillful practitioners. At the same time, he has always been fond of *heavy* orchestration and could write kitsch with the worst of them. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish his movie work from his concert scores, since he borrowed at will from either side of his output to enhance the other. Deutsche Grammophon has now recorded two discs of this material (the present album is the second) and is busy readying a third, while Varèse Sarabande is rereleasing several of the albums Rózsa originally made for Decca.

The Deutsche Grammophon disc, containing excerpts from five scores, has the advantage of later—and headier—sound. The Royal Philharmonic heaves and sighs great ominous chords from the music for *Lady Hamilton* and churns out an overture that was supposed to precede *Julius Caesar* (the studio decided to use Tchaikovsky's *Capriccio Italien* instead), another love theme and a waltz from *Lydia*, mysterious moods from the thriller *Five Graves to Cairo*, and Eastern European atmosphere from *The Red Danube*; there's even an eight-minute violin solo for the sleuth of Baker Street from *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*. It all worked wonderfully well in the movies, where you scarcely noticed most of it behind the action, but, despite the solid craftsmanship in evidence, this is fairly insubstantial stuff taken separately. That is less true of the suite from *Lust for Life* on Varèse Sarabande, where, for the story of Vincent Van Gogh, Rózsa effected a fine compromise between Debussyan tone colors and the Hungarian romanticism that is his natural idiom. But in the suite called *Background to Violence*, there hangs more of the familiar yard goods. Rózsa wields a firm baton on both discs, but the Frankenland State Symphony Orchestra is no match for the Royal Philharmonic. Those aspiring to collect the complete works of Miklós Rózsa will want both albums, of course, as well as the sequels due any minute. Rózsa has never been an idle man. *P.K.*

The Death of Dido, engraving by Marcantonio Raimondi (1475-1534)



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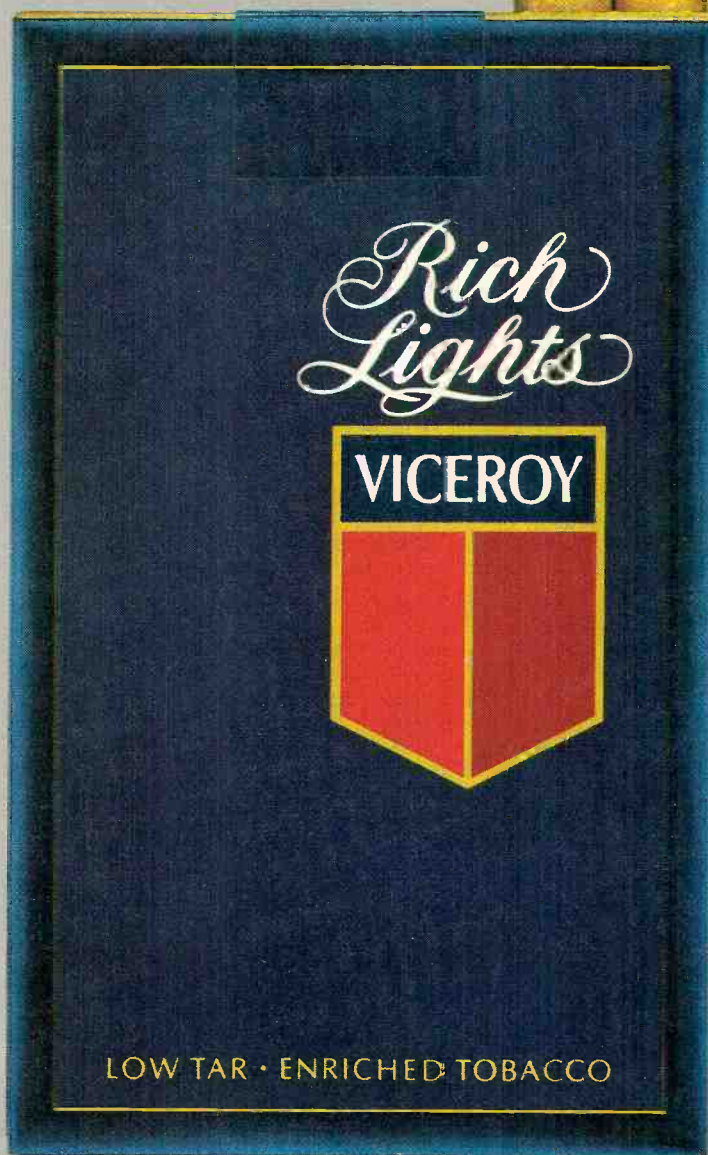
SCHUBERT: Mass No. 5, in A-flat Major (D. 678). Wendy Eathorne (soprano); Bernadette Greevy (contralto); Wynford Evans (tenor); Christopher Keyte (bass); Choir of St. John's College, Cambridge; John Scott (organ); Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, George Guest cond. ARGO ZRG 869 \$8.98, © KZRC 869 \$8.98.

Performance: **Robust**
Recording: **Bright and crisp**

If the Mass in A-flat is not the greatest of Schubert's works in this form, it is surely the most appealing and endearing. We might have expected it to turn up more frequently on records, but it was less than two years ago that this title returned to the pages of Schwann (in the form of Dennis Russell Davies' Nonesuch recording, H-71335), after having been unlisted there for years. George Guest, who has given us a fine series of Haydn Masses on Argo, is no less at home in those of Schubert.

(Continued on page 114)

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as he has demonstrated in his account of the E-flat (Argo ZRG 825). His new A-flat has a bracing, robust character quite in keeping with the particular strain of lyricism that informs this work—in which the (truncated) liturgical text seems almost incidental at times to the sequence of woodland scenes evoked by the music itself. Here we have, too, a welcome opportunity to enjoy—in the limited solo exposures—the Irish contralto Bernadette Greevy, whom we have not heard of ten enough. On Nonesuch, however, there is a no less welcome opportunity to enjoy Jan De Gaetani, whom we cannot hear too often. Both versions, in fact, are more than satisfying, the chief differences, aside from price, being the use of men and boys alone instead of a mixed chorus on Argo and a closer sonic focus on the new disc, which makes more of the brass, organ, and drum contributions but which also tends to exaggerate somewhat the almost music-hall swagger in Guest's treatment of the "Quoniam." Personally, I like that swagger, and I like the overall brightness and crispness of the Argo sound, but I feel Davies shows a subtler hand here and there, and possibly a somewhat greater sense of the overall proportions of the work. The differences, in fact, are just great enough to provide an excuse (if one be needed) to acquire both versions and enjoy them in alternation. For those not so disposed, it should be noted that Nonesuch offers more valuable documentation—including the text, which is very much to the point in view of Schubert's omission of several portions of the customary text of the Mass—and quieter surfaces. R.F.

SCOTT: *Piano Concerto No. 2; Early One Morning*. John Ogdon (piano); London Philharmonic Orchestra, Bernard Herrmann cond. HNH 4051 \$7.98.

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

I find it hard to agree with the annotator's cheery assertion that the pieces recorded here are likely to enhance the reputation of Cyril Scott. Scott described his First Concerto, recorded by the same forces and reviewed favorably in these pages last June (HNH 4025), as "not a deep work but an enlivening one." Enlivening, I'm afraid, is just what the Second Concerto is not: both it and the free-form rhapsody on *Early One Morning* (a tune Scott's friend Percy Grainger treated much more effectively) simply fail to come to any point, and I find little of the striking individuality that makes the First Concerto so interesting and refreshing. *Grove's Dictionary* lists an intriguing catalog of works for this composer, and I would still be interested in hearing some of the shorter orchestral pieces, the chamber music, or the score for the ballet with the unlikely title *The Incompetent Apothecary*. But if I had come to the present disc first instead of the recording of the First Concerto I do not think I would be inclined to seek out more. The performances themselves, though, are just as committed, and the recording every bit as fine, as on the earlier release. R.F.

SCRIABIN: *Preludes: Op. 11, Nos. 2, 5, 9, 15, 16, 21, 22, 24; Op. 13, Nos. 1, 3; Op. 15, No. 1; Op. 16, Nos. 2, 3, 4; Op. 22, Nos. 2, 3. Mazurka in E Minor, Op. 25, No. 3; Etude in C-sharp Minor, Op. 42, No. 5; Satanic Poem, Op. 36; Album Leaf, Op. 45, No. 1; Fragilité, Op. 51,*

No. 1; Poème Ailée, Op. 51, No. 3; Poème Langue, Op. 52, No. 3; Poème, Op. 52, No. 1; Poème, Op. 59, No. 1; Sonata No. 9, Op. 68. Vladimir Sofronitski (piano). WESTMINSTER GOLD ® WG-8538 \$3.98.

Performance: **Authentic style**
Recording: **1960 concert**

Vladimir Sofronitski (1902-1963) enjoyed a generation and more of eminence as a distinguished teacher and concert pianist in Russia. He married one of Scriabin's daughters and became a specialist in the interpretation of the Russian mystic's works. Some dozen years prior to the current Westminster issue, a number of the eight Sofronitski LP's issued on the Russian MK label were available in this country as imports, but they are long gone. This collection of twenty-six Scriabin pieces stemming from a recital given in February 1960 at the Moscow Conservatory makes for fascinating listening—as much for the juxtaposition of the pieces on the disc as for their actual substance. Side one is devoted exclusively to preludes composed between 1894 and 1897, and, with the exception of Op. 13, No. 1, which opens the side, none lasts more than two minutes. The Chopin influence is quite evident, but so is Scriabin's own special poetic sensibility.

On side two we have ten pieces covering the period from 1898 to the beginning of the final phase in the Sonata No. 9. There are touches of the Debussy idiom and a supercharged post-Wagnerian chromaticism, all culminating in the fourth-dominated, highly condensed language of the seven-and-a-half-minute sonata. Thus, a particularly fascinating aspect of this recording is the overview it offers of the development of Scriabin's musical language.

Sofronitski had an enormous reputation in the Soviet Union for doing what he did, and I found it instructive to compare his interpretations with some of the outstanding Scriabin recordings made in this country by Vladimir Horowitz and Ruth Laredo. It seems to me that there is more poetic sensitivity in Sofronitski than in Laredo. On the other hand, Horowitz's performance of the Ninth Sonata is incomparably more electrifying than Sofronitski's, though here one must also take into account the impact (or lack thereof) of the recording itself, for in the bigger pieces the Soviet sonics (generally decent mono) are understandably somewhat diffuse. One can only marvel, by the way, at the awesome quiet of the Russian musical audience; one is aware of its presence, but no more than that. D.H.

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SHCHEDRIN: *Symphony No. 2 ("Twenty-five Preludes for Full Symphony Orchestra")*. Moscow Radio Large Symphony Orchestra, Gennady Rozhdestvensky cond. WESTMINSTER GOLD WG 8357 \$3.98.

Performance: **Handsome**
Recording: **Splendid**

Because his rather outrageous (in my opinion) adaptation of Bizet's *Carmen* music as a ballet score has achieved considerable popularity, it is not surprising that many are inclined to think of Rodion Shchedrin (b. 1932) as a clever concocter of Morton Gould-style orchestral scores à la Russe. But this Second (Continued on page 116)

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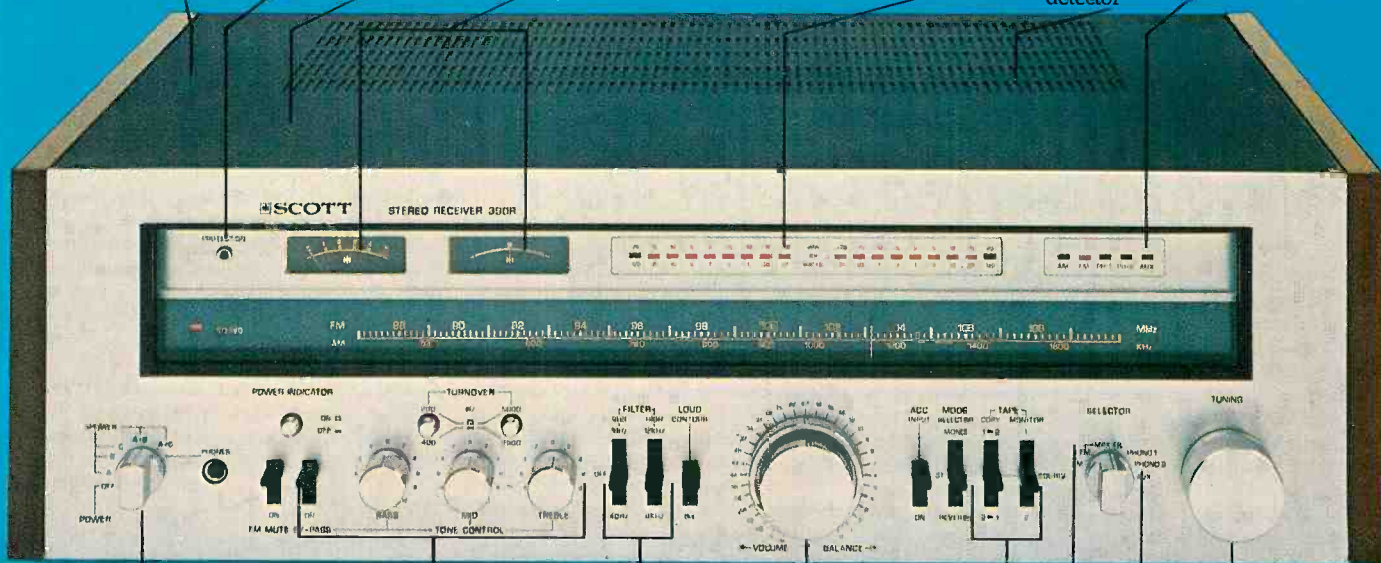
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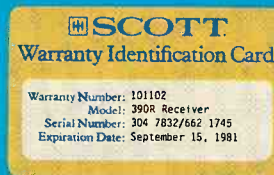
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MARGARET MARSHALL: *breath-taking divisions*

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The lion's share of the solo work is admirably done by Margaret Marshall. From the first entrance in the *Introduzione al Dixit*, one is struck by Vivaldi's transference of violin technique to the voice, a hallmark of high-Baroque vocal writing. Miss Marshall is understandably cautious in her approach to this fierce writing, but all in all her work is stunning. She even manages to get in some breath-taking divisions in the da capos. Ann Murray is her equal in the duet "*Virgam virtutis tuae*" from the *Dixit Dominus*. Their timbres are almost too well matched for the antiphonal style of writing in the "*Gloria et divitiae*" of the *Beatus Vir*, but the ease with which they toss the passage work back and forth between them is thrilling. Even more thrilling is the virile duetting of Anthony Johnson and Robert Holl in the "*Dominus a dextris tuis*" of the *Dixit Dominus*. For her part, Anne Collins displays a rich, vibrant contralto that is more at home in sustained than in coloratura passages. The John Alldis Choir produces a sumptuous, full-bodied sound that is perfect

for Vivaldi's massed sonorities. The extravagant harmonies that open the Kyrie are beautifully set out, and the rugged Latin diction barked out on repeated notes emphasizes the bursting energy of the music.

Negri's conducting is straightforward and clear, his expression based on the meaning of the texts. The antiphon in the *Beatus Vir*, for example, returns six times as a sort of ritornello. Each time it is colored differently depending on its textural and musical juxtaposition. The image of light coming out of darkness ("*Extortum est in tenebris lumen rectis*") in the same psalm is dramatized by a well-placed crescendo. Such dynamic interpretation is consistently used throughout the album. Perhaps this approach is a little on the romantic side, but it is effective and it is certainly in keeping with Vivaldi's musical imagery.

THIS album is a *must* for every collection. It justifies the Vivaldi buffs' enthusiasm, and those who are a little overfamiliar with his mannerisms will hear them, plus a lot of fresh ideas, in a new and exciting context that proves once again that he was a master.

—Stoddard Lincoln

VIVALDI: Complete Sacred Choral Music, Volumes 1 and 2. *Introduzione al Dixit* (RV 636); *Dixit Dominus* (RV 594); *Kyrie* (RV 587); *Beatus Vir* (RV 597); *Lauda Jerusalem* (RV 609); *Domine ad Adiuvandum Me* (RV 593). Margaret Marshall (soprano); Ann Murray (mezzo-soprano); Anne Collins (contralto); Anthony Rolfe Johnson (tenor); Robert Holl (bass); John Alldis Choir; English Chamber Orchestra, Vittorio Negri cond. PHILIPS 6700 116 two discs \$17.96.

Symphony—a real blockbuster—will definitely force some second thoughts on the matter. Subtitled "Twenty-five Preludes for Full Symphony Orchestra," the symphony has five distinct movements, with the individual preludes proceeding uninterrupted within each of them. My overall impression of this highly eclectic and very skillful work is that it is a post-Shostakovich counterpart to the Bartók Concerto for Orchestra. A frankly virtuoso orchestral piece calling for greatly augmented percussion forces and including some mildly aleatoric elements, this symphony is no exercise in "socialist realism" or political propaganda. As indicated in an epigraph in the published score, it is a memorial to the Russian dead of World War II, but there is nothing in it of the merely ceremonial.

Begun at the time of the "thaw" in 1962 and completed in 1965, Shchedrin's Second has many echoes of Shostakovich's long-suppressed Fourth Symphony, which was first heard publicly in 1962. Like Shostakovich's score, Shchedrin's is prodigal and wide-ranging in both its substance and variety of orchestral color. The end movements are in the main somber and turbulent, whereas fantasy and virtuosic brilliance are dominant throughout the three middle movements. There is much interconnection of basic motivic material, and the polyphonic texture is very skillfully handled. Whether Shchedrin will eventually become heir to the Prokofiev/Shostakovich symphonic mantle can scarcely be known yet, but certainly this symphony represents a bid in that direction.

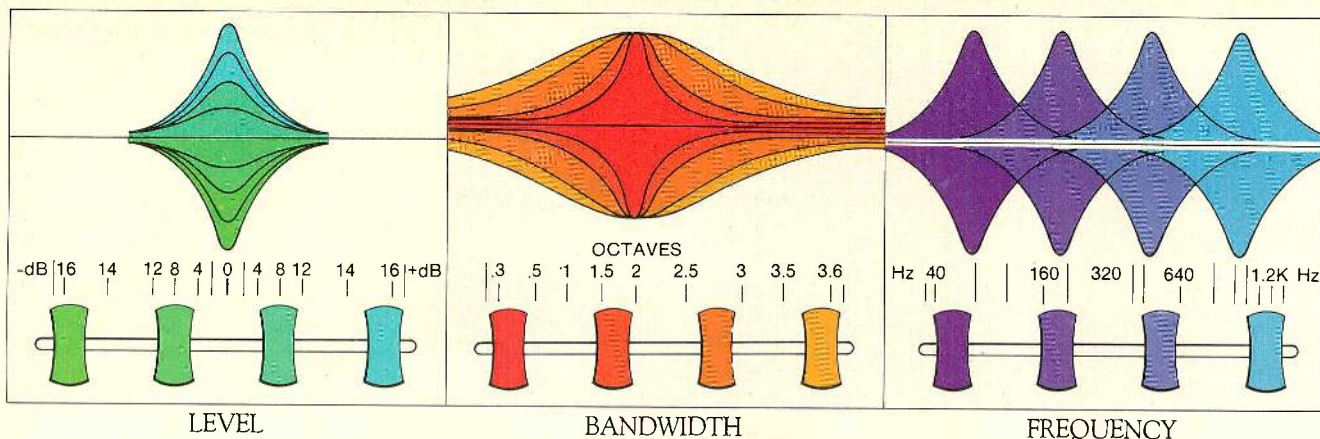
Gennady Rozhdestvensky is a master in the handling of big, complex symphonic structures. His performance here is a knockout, and it is well served by the Soviet recording. This disc is worth your investigation. D.H.

TCHAIKOVSKY: 1812 Overture. GLIÈRE: Russian Sailor's Dance. BORODIN: Prince Igor: Polovetsian Dances. LISZT: Mephisto Waltz. National Philharmonic Orchestra, Charles Gerhardt cond. QUINTESSENCE PMC-7064 \$3.98.

Performance: **Sizzling**
Recording: **Excellent**

Just what the world needed—another 1812 Overture. This program is enough to make a classical-music lover turn in his turntable for a few blessed moments of silence or trade his soul for an ounce of Mozart. Well, at least these shopworn blockbusters are well performed here. Such fleshy music is meat and drink to Charles Gerhardt, and on this Quintessence rerelease he gets a perfect opportunity to show his stuff. With the National Philharmonic Orchestra of England rehearsed to a fare-thee-well, Gerhardt spares no effort to bring off his material—the singing chorus and military hardware so essential to produce a real rouser from the pages of the 1812, the crackling energy necessary to bring the *Sailor's Dance* to a leaping-Lena Bolshoi ending, his own spectacular orchestration of the *Mephisto Waltz* to chase any sinners within earshot straight down to the Lower Depths. It's disappointing that he did not have a chorus on hand for the Polovetsian Dances, but for a purely orchestral treatment this is one of the most sizzling ever caught on discs. P.K.

TCHAIKOVSKY: Symphony No. 2, in C Minor, Op. 17 ("Little Russian"); Romeo and Ju-
(Continued on page 118)



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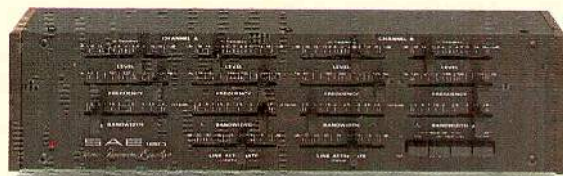
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liet, Fantasy Overture. Philharmonia Orchestra, Riccardo Muti cond. ANGEL □ S-37472 \$7.98.

TCHAIKOVSKY: Symphony No. 3, in D Major, Op. 29 ("Polish"). Philharmonia Orchestra, Riccardo Muti cond. ANGEL □ S-37496 \$7.98.

Performance: **Romeo outstanding**
Recording: **Low percussion a mite heavy**

Muti's way with this music is expectedly more in the Italianate lyrical-humanist manner than *echt* Slav, so it seems fairer to react to his readings as they are than to indulge in fruitless stylistic comparisons. It is the *Romeo and Juliet* performance here that carries the day: very solemn in the opening, then splendidly volatile and lyrically intense. The laconic treatment of the funeral-cortège evocation near the close offers fresh insight and some food for thought—a highly effective touch. The ensuing chorale for winds is played with ravishing beauty.

In the symphonies Muti pays great attention to details of texture and color and points his rhythms nicely, particularly in the lighter movements. I have heard more dynamic performances of the finale of No. 2, but the polonaise finale of No. 3 comes off with great dash. My one reservation applies to the recording, which to my ear gives undue presence to the timpani and bass drum, especially in the finale of the *Little Russian*. **D.H.**

WAGNER: Das Liebesmahl der Apostel (The Feast of Pentecost). **BRUCKNER: Helgoland.** Ambrosian Male Voice Chorus; Symphonica of London, Wyn Morris cond. PETERS INTERNATIONAL PLE 043 \$6.98.

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

Here are two choral works—early Wagner and late Bruckner—related in their obscurity. *Das Liebesmahl* is a Biblical scene Wagner set to his own text for a choral festival in Dresden. The year was 1843; *Rienzi* and *The Flying Dutchman* had been successfully launched and *Tannhäuser* was already in progress. Echoes of all three resound in this music, together with anticipations of *Lohengrin* and, as annotator Jack Diether observes, even *Parsifal*. Wagner's inspiration, however, ran somewhat unevenly here: the confrontation of the Apostles (twelve basses in unison) and the Disciples (full or divided chorus) lacks the dramatic force suggested by the overall design. I also find it rather odd that the orchestra's entrance is preceded by more than twenty-two minutes of a *cappella* singing. From that point on, though, the music is undeniably effective.

Helgoland, Bruckner's last completed work, relates a moment in history when the angry sea is said to have thwarted the attack of invading Romans against a German outpost. The event is supposed to have occurred in pre-Christian times, but that did not prevent Bruckner from ending his cantata with a fervent peroration in his best ecclesiastical manner. This is characteristic, powerful Bruckner, combining strong tone painting and expert choral writing. The recording is detailed and transparent enough to point up a few imprecisions in choral attacks, but the performances are generally first-rate. **G.J.**

WELCHER: Dervishes (see BARBER)

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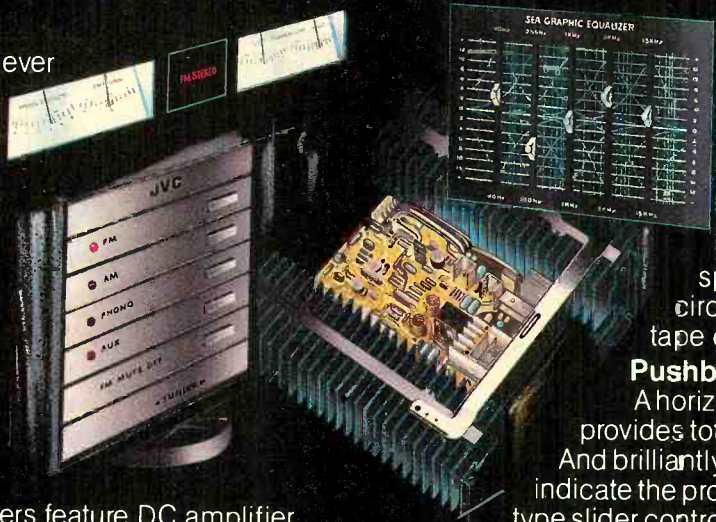
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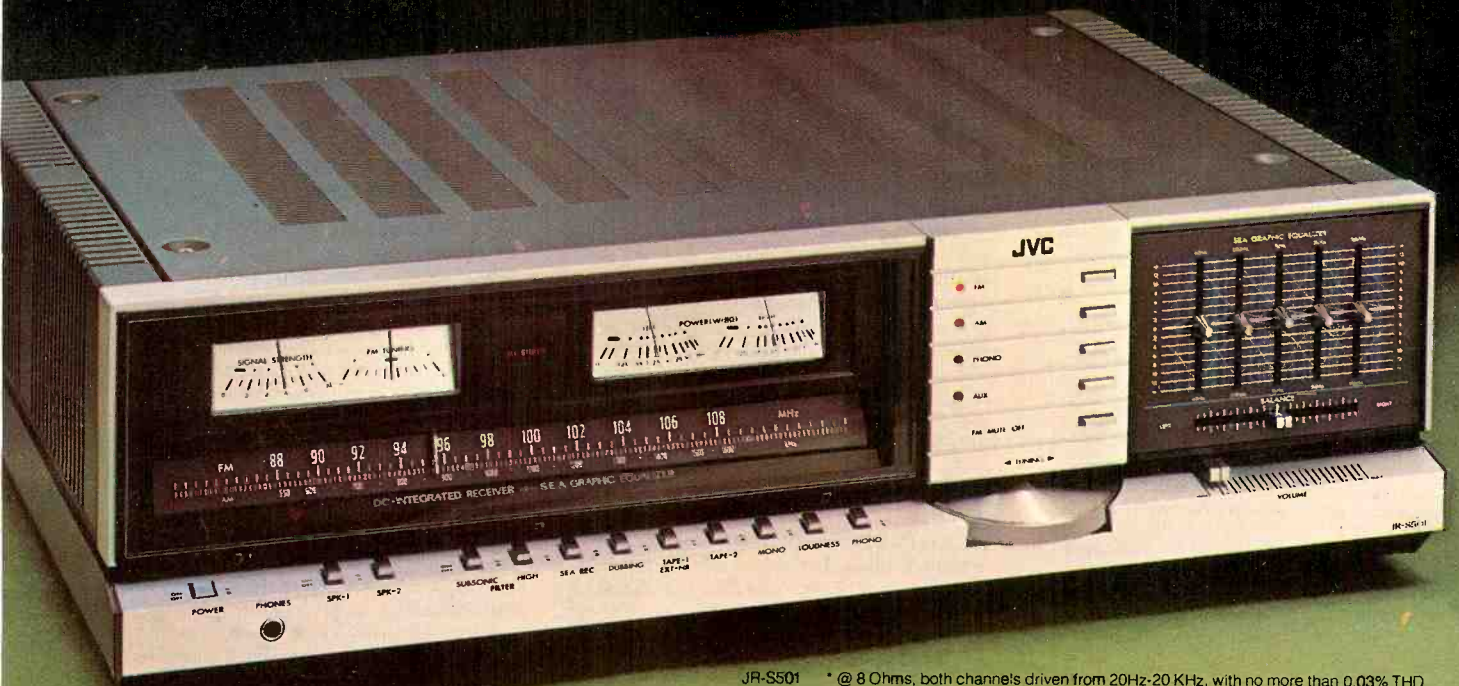
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POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES

Reviewed by CHRIS ALBERTSON • EDWARD BUXBAUM • NOEL COPPAGE • PHYL GARLAND
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JAY BOY ADAMS: *Fork in the Road*. Jay Boy Adams (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *Saddle Tramp*; *Superkicker*; *I Can Get By*; and six others. ATLANTIC SD 19195 \$7.98, Ⓜ TP 19195 \$7.97, Ⓞ CS 19195 \$7.97.

Performance: **Fuzz-faced**
Recording: **Very good**

I can wait until Jay Boy Adams becomes Jay Man Adams, not so his voice can grow up—it's a little high but smooth and flexible—but so his songwriting has a chance to mature. As represented here, he sounds like a sensitive kid from the West Coast who really wants to write songs, and may learn how to someday, but meanwhile is recording the tuneless banalities of a beginner. Some of these remind me of the worst of Poco, characterized by run-on naïveté. The back-up musicians do a nice job, and I'm sure they wouldn't sound so antiseptic if the songs weren't so vague and fumbly. N.C.

ALESSI: *Driftin'*. Billy and Bobby Alessi (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Dancing in the Halls of Love*; *Driftin'*; *Believer*; *Space*; and six others. A&M SP 4713 \$8.98, Ⓞ AAM 4713 \$7.98, Ⓞ AAM 4713 \$7.98.

Performance: **Dizzy ditties**
Recording: **Good**

Billy and Bobby Alessi are a pair of treble-voiced twins (or extremely look-alike broth-

ers) who sing blithe ballads about moon fever, "bakin' in the sun," and "dancing in the halls of love" to a vaguely disco beat. Their style is as wholesome as skimmed milk and just about as flavorless. When they aren't serenading the ladies in their young lives, the Alessis like to step right off the planet and sing science-fiction songs—for instance, *Space*: "Does anybody know the way/To the moon-lit planet on the Milky Way/The most beautiful space to know/Where lovers bring their love to grow..." The Alessis claim to write their own songs. I guess they'd have to. P.K.

TONY BIRD: *Bird of Paradise*. Tony Bird (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *Black Brother*; *The Mynah Birds*; *She Loves Someone*; *Nothing but Time*; *Won't Be Travelin' On*; and five others. COLUMBIA JC 34988 \$7.98, Ⓞ JCA 34988 \$7.98, Ⓞ JCT 34988 \$7.98.

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

The liner notes here claim that "To hear the voice of Tony Bird for the first time is a unique and indelible experience." Quite true. Mr. Bird sounds like the result of a union between Eartha Kitt and Peter Lorre. He's a Caucasian from Nyasaland, and for all I know they may all sound like that down there—which may be why everyone is so nervous about the situation in Africa. Anyway, once you're past the eerie voice, Tony Bird's songs turn out to be either mildly cautionary little essays on brotherhood, such as *How Much More Do You Want* and *Black Brother*, or sort of veldt-dressed John Denverish paeans to glorious nature, such as *Cape of Flowers* and *Bird of Paradise*. Bird's material is only externally and geographically different; it's really the same old hippie drone we've been subjected to for the last decade. P.R.

NORTON BUFFALO: *Desert Horizon*. Norton Buffalo (vocals, harmonica); instrumental accompaniment. *Echoes of the Last Stampede*; *Age Old Puppet*; *Wasn't It Bad Enough*; *Thinkin' 'Bout You Babe*; *High Tide in Winago*; *Cold Cold City Nights*; and six others.

CAPITOL SW 11847 \$6.98, Ⓞ 8XW 11847 \$7.98, Ⓞ 4X4 11847 \$7.98.

Performance: **Cold-blooded**
Recording: **Very good**

Norton Buffalo is a great technician on the harmonica, but if there ever was an instrument that required more than technique, the harmonica is it. His previous album explored various types of song; this one has its own kind of variety, but only in an abstract, showcase-for-technique sense. I defy anyone, including Norton Buffalo, to care about very much of it. The album simply refuses to work as anything but background music. I can't even concentrate on it long enough to steal a few licks. Phooey. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RAY CHARLES: *Love and Peace*. Ray Charles (vocals, keyboards); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *You 20th-Century Fox*; *Take Off That Dress*; *She Knows*; *Riding Thumb*; *We Had It All*; *A Peace That We Never Before Could Enjoy*; and four others. ATLANTIC/CROSSOVER SD 19199 \$7.98, Ⓞ TP 19199 \$7.98, Ⓞ CS 19199 \$7.98.

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

Ray Charles can sing the telephone book for me *anytime*, and on this outing he comes close. Side one consists of love songs, more or less, some of them joshing and some of them straightforward but all of them graced by Charles' unsurpassable sincerity and technique. Hearing *You 20th-Century Fox* or *Take Off That Dress* reminds you how much fun the human comedy can be. Side two is made up of songs of political and social complaint of the why-isn't-everybody-rich-and-happy variety. Once again, Charles is better than the material. Even when he sings the telephone book, he has my number. J.V.

CITY BOY: *Book Early*. City Boy (vocals and instrumentals.) *Summer in the Schoolyard*; *Goodbye Laurelie*; *Raise Your Glass (to Foolish Me)*; *Cigarettes*; *Do What You Do, Do*

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
- Ⓞ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- Ⓞ = stereo cassette
- = quadraphonic disc
- Ⓞ = digital-master recording
- Ⓞ = direct-to-disc recording

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓞ

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

Well; Beth; and four others. MERCURY SRM-1-3737 \$7.98, ® MC8-1-3737 \$7.95, © MCR4-1-3737 \$7.95.

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

City Boy, a six-man group from London, resembles 10cc in that their arrangements are ambitious, their vocals are orchestrated, and their material deals with surreal situations and characters. But they lack 10cc's sense of humor, and City Boy's lyrics, instead of being teasingly esoteric like 10cc's, often just meander (although I was struck by this line from *Goodbye Laurelie*: "I'm the face in the corner of the photograph/A wild man at the wedding fixing his tie"). Paradoxically, City Boy sounds cautious and anxious at the same time, as though they think they've found an identity but can't accept or enjoy it. Ah, well—maybe they'll straighten that out by their next album. J. V.

ROY CLARK AND BUCK TRENT: Banjo Bandits. Roy Clark (banjo); Buck Trent (banjo); Johnny Gimble (fiddle, mandolin); Bob Moore (bass); Ray Edenton (guitar); other musicians. *Earl's Breakdown; Bugle Call Rag; Down Yonder; Jolly Ho; Black Mountain Rag*; and five others. ABC AY 1084 \$6.98, ® 8020-1084(H) \$7.95, © 5020-1084(H) \$7.95.

Performance: **Lickety, like, split**
Recording: **Good**

If you love banjos, don't let me bother you, but I think I could go another ten years without hearing the damned things and be no worse off than I am now. Roy Clark, who plays the banjo as he usually plays the guitar—as if it's all in the hands and none in the head or soul or wherever—hired Buck Trent away from Porter Wagoner's band several years ago, and I'm still wondering what use he intends to make of him. Well, he did get him a spot on *Hee Haw*. Buck is a real stylist, having evolved a distinctive metallic sound and a way of approaching things that may remind you of the way a good steel guitarist approaches things. But you can't get much of a feel for that here, as Roy apparently designed it to be another showcase for flying fingers. They're fast and clean, if that's all you want. Me, I'm more impressed with Johnny Gimble than anyone else in this mishmash, both on the fiddle and, especially, on the mandolin in *The World Is Waiting for the Sunrise*. But if you love banjos and speed, go ahead and indulge yourself. N.C.

DAVE AND SUGAR: Tear Time. Dave and Sugar (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Tear Time; It's a Heartache; We Are the One; Tie Me to Your Heart Again; Somebody Wake Me; Baby Take Your Coat Off*; and four others. RCA APL1-2861 \$7.98, ® APS1-2861 \$7.98, © APK1-2861 \$7.98.

Performance: **Empty calories**
Recording: **Good**

Too much sugar is bad for you, and too much Dave isn't so wonderful either. Too much, this album seems to indicate, is about two songs in a row. Dave and Sugar claim to be country music's answer (if you ever hear anything country about them, please let me know) to Tony Orlando and Dawn. Dave is a little more interesting than Tony Orlando—but then who on God's earth, with the possi-

ble exception of Mac Davis, isn't? The act they remind me of even more is the Carpenters; that is, technically they aren't so bad but spiritually they're worse than nowhere. The puff and piffle they sing is bad enough; the fixed smiles they sing through would give Mary Poppins the sugar blues. N.C.

DONALD FAGEN, WALTER BECKER, DENNY DIAZ: You Gotta Walk It Like You Talk It (Or You'll Lose That Beat). Donald Fagen (keyboards, vocals); Walter Becker (bass, guitar); Denny Diaz (guitar, percussion); John Discipolo (drums); Kenny Vance (vocals). *You Gotta Walk It Like You Talk It; Flotsam and Jetsam; War and Peace; Roll Back the Meaning; Dog Eat Dog*; and three others. VISA IMP 7005 \$7.98, ® 8356-7005 (H) \$7.95, © 5356-7005 (H) \$7.95.

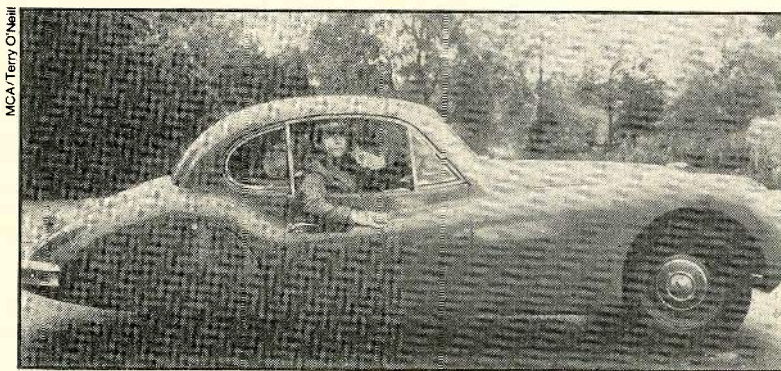
Performance: **For collectors only**
Recording: **Good**

Senator George Washington Plunkitt, a Tammany Hall politico of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, New York's golden

age of municipal thievery, liked to distinguish between "honest graft" and "dishonest graft." Reissues of early recordings by subsequently famous rock acts might be called an "honest con," provided they are accompanied by explanatory liner notes or a statement advising the listener/buyer of the suspect contents. In this case, the album sports a cover sticker that proclaims "Becker & Fagen pre-STEELY DAN," and the liner notes declare that much of the music isn't worth hearing. That's honest, all right.

The eight selections were recorded in 1970 as soundtrack music for a forgettable movie. Three of the items are instrumentals, one a drum solo. The vocals are by Fagen except for *If It Rains*, which is sung by producer Kenny Vance, formerly of Jay and the Americans (for whom Becker and Fagen played back-up on college tours). Although the dolorous duo's musical trademarks are evident—unusual chord structures cast in minors, lyrics with a bleak and cynical outlook—the performances as well as the material are slapdash.

(Continued overleaf)



Elton Rampant

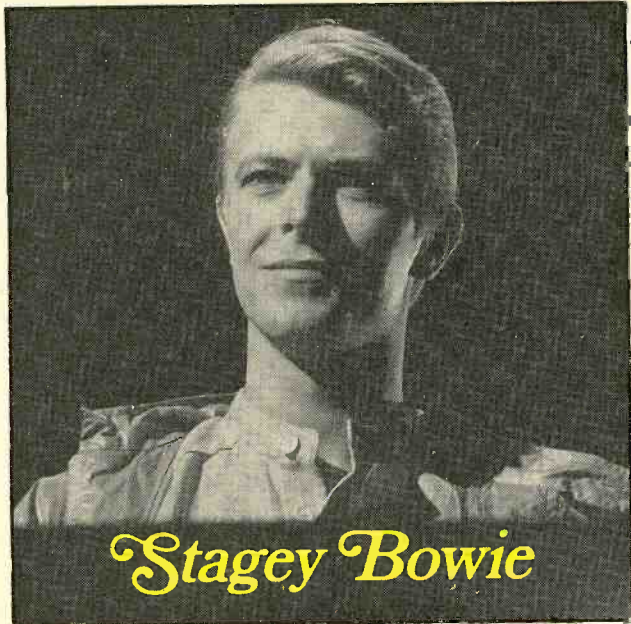
ELTON JOHN ESQ., perhaps the most distinguished eccentric-about-music since Ludwig of Bavaria, is back. His latest album is relatively minor Elton but, as usual, a major joy. Judging by the cover photos, he's either been reading a lot of Dickens or hanging around the Kinkier Klothung Shoppes (a well-known West End chain), perhaps both. One never knows with Elton. Anyway, "A Single Man," his new MCA release, has eleven of his songs (written in collaboration with Gary Osbourne, who replaces Elton's long-time lyricist, Bernie Taupin), ranging from the totally outrageous *Big Dipper*, with its final chorus adapted from *Makin' Whoopee* ("Another ride, another tune/Another crazy afternoon/Another reason for squeezin' your big dipper . . ."), to the sincerity and real heart of *Shine On Through*, to the dippy South Sea delights of *Return to Paradise*, half camp put-on and half tender ballad.

In an unaccustomed serious mood there is *Madness*, a very strong song about terrorist bombs and the unquenchable hate that brings on that sort of random murder. Then too, there is an elegant little instrumental called

Song for Guy, a moving elegy in memory of a messenger boy killed at seventeen in a motorbike accident.

But have no fear that Elton has Gone Dramatic; there are still such charming bits of lunacy as *Georgia* and *Part-Time Love*, and, above all, there is Elton himself. Whether pounding away at the piano like a cross between your deaf Uncle George and a strung-out Franz Liszt or singing the lyrics of *Shooting Star* (which in some undefinable way is reminiscent of Beatrice Lillie pouting her way through *Mad About the Boy*) or just spreading his March Hare joy through the banalities of *I Don't Care*, he remains unique. It's some kind of a blessing in a way; I don't think we could take another one until at least the end of the century. —Peter Reilly

ELTON JOHN: A Single Man. Elton John (vocals, piano); orchestra. *Shine On Through; Return to Paradise; I Don't Care; Big Dipper; It Ain't Gonna Be Easy; Part-Time Love; Georgia; Shooting Star; Madness; Reverie; Song for Guy.* MCA MCA-3065 \$7.98, ® MCAT-3065 \$7.98, © MCAC-3065 \$7.98.



Stagey Bowie

DAVID BOWIE, you may recall, used to be the rock star I particularly loved to hate, for which amusement I clearly owe him a lot. The man provided me with a lot of yucks in his day. Still, he stopped being fun somewhere around the last time I caught him live. That was during his abortive Fred Astaire with Jaundice period, when he decided that Puerto Ricans from the barrio were more interesting than homosexuals from outer space, and on that memorable night he went too far even for me, disco-funking his apocalyptic sci-fi tunes into unrecognizability and mincing across the stage in a production that resembled a cross between the Tina Turner Revue and a summer-stock *Green Pastures*.

Of course, that was when he was still controversial. Ever since the Punk uprising, Bowie's had to settle for being merely an *artiste*, and the records he's made since 1976 (discounting a surprisingly credible narration of *Peter and the Wolf*) have been low-key, fashionably avant-garde collaborations with Brian Eno that haven't sold very well but were moderately compelling in an easy-listening kind of way. As a result, my hostility cooled somewhat. Bowie's futurist pretensions remained insufferable, but alone among the Glitter Era relics still with us, he's stuck to his guns. Which contrasts flatteringly with the Hollywoodized buffoon that's all that's left of Alice Cooper, who in his prime scared the parents of teenagers far more than Darling Dave ever did.

And so I attended the New York stop on the recent tour that formed the basis of Bowie's double-disc live album, "Stage," with no particular axe to grind—in fact, with no expectations of any kind at all. I was soon overjoyed to realize that the Bowie bushwah that used to inspire me to paroxysms of moral outrage was back with a vengeance. I ask you: what could be *more pompous* than preceding

a concert with a screening of Luis Buñuel's movie *Un Chien Andalou* (which he did on his last tour)? Well, I'll tell you: having the band perform a warm-up instrumental and having one of the members *conduct* it. Egad! After all, the New York Philharmonic, or even the Stan Kenton Orchestra, this isn't; it couldn't have been more arrogant to hoist a neon sign proclaiming "This is *SERIOUS ART*!!!" But, as usual, the assembled multitude saw not a glimmer of humor in the gesture.

LISTENING to the show in the privacy of one's living room is less fun, but rewarding in a left-handed way. The recent songs, without Eno on hand to tart them up, are simply lugubrious, and the "Ziggy Stardust" numbers, which have, to say the least, dated badly, are so anemically rendered as to make one long for the ham-handed guitar histrionics of Mick Ronson on the originals. And all the while Bowie croons on in his expressionless, affected Anthony Newley manner, which makes it unfathomable to me why anyone, anywhere, at any time, ever took him seriously as a rock-and-roller. For that, belatedly, I guess a thank-you is in order. Welcome home, David. Heroes, and even anti-heroes, are getting harder and harder to find in this day and age. It's good to have you back as comic relief, even if that's not exactly what you had in mind.

—Steve Simels

DAVID BOWIE: Stage. David Bowie (vocals); Carlos Alomar (guitar); Dennis Davis (drums); other musicians. *Hang On to Yourself; Ziggy Stardust; Five Years; Soul Love; Star; Station to Station; Fame; TVC 15; Warszawa; Speed of Life; Art Decade; Sense of Doubt; Breaking Glass; "Heroes"; What in the World; Blackout; Beauty and the Beast.* RCA CPL2-2913 two discs \$9.95, © CPS2-2913 \$9.95, © CPK2-2913 \$9.95.

This was a quickie, low-energy session which nobody took very seriously.

A slight case can be made for reissues of this type (the Beatles' 1961 dates in Hamburg with Tony Sheridan, James Taylor's 1967 session as lead singer of the Flying Machine) in that they give a historical view of a significant artist's development. But although there may be fine moments in such albums, they are, at best, curiosities, and the ethics of releasing them for commercial sale are highly debatable. "honest" or not.

J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MARK FARNER BAND: No Frills. Mark Farner (vocals, guitar, piano, clavinet); Dennis Bellinger (bass, background vocals); Andy Newmark (drums). *He Sent Me You; If It Took All Day; When a Man Loves a Woman; Faith Keeps It Away; Crystal Eyes;* and four others. ATLANTIC SD 19196 \$7.98, © TP 19196 \$7.98, © CS 19196 \$7.98.

Performance: **Very good**

Recording: **Very good**

I thought Mark Farner's first solo album was a failure because he insisted on singing his own material, which wasn't equal to his powerful and passionate voice. This time out his own songs have improved some, but, more important, Farner or a wise adviser decided that he should sing outside material as well. The two examples are the backbeat ballad *Just One Look* and *When a Man Loves a Woman*. The latter was made famous by Percy Sledge in the Sixties and recently got a limp reading from Leon Russell, who should have known better. Farner's version is thrilling, sung straight to the sky (wow, can he sustain a note!). It's a well-deserved hit single. His third solo album should, I think, have about 80 per cent outside material—there are plenty of great songs that he could do more than justice to—and 20 per cent Farner originals (so he can make a little extra money on publishing royalties). Okay, Mark?

J.V.

ROBERTA FLACK (see *Best of the Month*, page 89)

CRAIG FULLER/ERIC KAZ. Craig Fuller, Eric Kaz (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Feel That Way Again; Cry Like a Rain-storm; You Take a Heart; Let the Fire Burn All Night; 'Til You Come Back;* and five others. COLUMBIA JC 35324 \$7.98, © JCA 35324 \$7.98, © JCT 35324 \$7.98.

Performance: **Silly**

Recording: **Good**

Craig Fuller and Eric Kaz are successful songwriters whose material has been recorded by Linda Ronstadt and Bonnie Raitt, among others. Here they attempt to present themselves as performers (as they did once before in a short-lived group called American Flyer), and the results are... well, pretty ghastly.

It takes a certain amount of self-knowledge for a singer to find what songs suit him—even if he wrote the songs himself. Years ago Neil Diamond was talking to his press agent and volunteered a rendition of a new tune. The agent said, "It's fine, Neil, but it's not for you," to which Diamond replied, "Of course it's not for me. It's for the Monkees." The song was *I'm a Believer*.

(Continued on page 124)

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No such critical judgment protects Fuller and Kaz, however. In the hands of artists like Ronstadt and Raitt, the sentiments of the songs on this album could be made believable; when Fuller and Kaz plead their case they sound bathetic. Their singing is presumably intended to be plaintive and poignant, but it is merely a sustained, irritating whine that renders the nine selections indistinguishable from one another except in matters of tempo. Pass this one by. J.V.

NICK GILDER: *City Nights*. Nick Gilder (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Got to Get Out; (She's) One of the Boys; Hot Child in the City; Here Comes the Night; Rockaway*; and five others. CHRYSALIS CHR 1202 \$7.98, © 8CH 1202 \$7.98, © CCH 1202 \$7.98.

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

In 1976 a Canadian group called Sweeney Todd had a hit with *Roxy Roller* by vocalist

NICK GILDER:
slickly done,
enjoyable
middlebrow pop



Chrysalis Records

Nick Gilder and guitarist James McCulloch, who were members of the group at the time. Gilder has been looking for a follow-up single ever since. He's found it with *Hot Child in the City*, a top-ten item included here with nine other highly commercial examples of low- to middlebrow pop with bubblegum antecedents. They are slickly done and enjoyable if you don't take them too seriously.

A London native, Gilder writes (with his partner McCulloch) and sings in the manner of the Troggs and T. Rex, both of whom based their songs and careers on the mystique of the young, panting girl on the prowl. Gilder's high-pitched, insinuating vocals are modeled on those of Reg Presley of the Troggs and the late Marc Bolan of T. Rex—same breath placement, phrasing, and attack. What is occasionally annoying about Gilder is that he *always* sings like he needs a hit badly. He has one now, so maybe he'll relax a bit. J.V.

ALBERTA HUNTER: *Remember My Name* (see *The Pop Beat*, page 61)

BEN E. KING: *Let Me Live in Your Life*. Ben E. King (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment.

Wonder Woman; Let Me Live in Your Life; See the Light; Dark Storm on the Horizon; Family Jewels; Sweet Rhapsody; and four others. ATLANTIC SD 19200 \$7.98, © CS 19200 \$7.98, © TP 19200 \$7.98.

Performance: **Easygoing**
Recording: **Satisfactory**

Ben E. King sometimes comes off sounding second-best to many of the current soul singers who have adopted his style, with its easygoing rhythmic sway punctuated with carefully placed sensual outbursts. Yet there is always a certain kick in encountering the real thing.

While nothing on this new album appears inspired, it is nevertheless all pleasantly engaging, with a few moments of real delight. King doesn't "get down" too much here, but he sings with a fine consistency as he works over an assortment of songs penned by such veterans as Bettye Crutcher, once of the Stax organization, and Lamont Dozier, the one-time Motowner who frequently pops up wear-

ing different hats. Dozier's title song, *Let Me Live in Your Life*, is particularly appealing.

P.G.

JOANNE MACKELL. Joanne Mackell (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Used to Think It Was Easy; Fire Down Below; Dr. Feelgood; Christmas Day; Trip the Light Fantastic; You Receive Me*; and four others. UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA878-H \$7.98, © EA878-H \$7.98, © CA878-H \$7.98.

Performance: **Frantic**
Recording: **Good**

Joanne Mackell sings too hard and tries too hard and sings too much of her own material, which has good lyrics but is burdened with pedestrian melodies. Be the instrumental accompaniment and arrangements folkish or rockish, she churns along with a manic disregard for them; music takes second place to her ambition to impress us. The only times she relaxes are on the two cuts she *didn't* write: Bob Seger's *Fire Down Below* and Gerry Goffin and Barry Goldberg's *Dr. Feelgood*, both of which she gives good readings. For the rest—ease back, Ms. Mackell. J.V.

THE MOIRS: *State of Shock*. Jean, Margot, and Lesley Moir (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Lately It Seems; Who Needs a Man; State of Shock; We Could Have Been Together; Winter You've Caught Me Out Again*; and five others. ROCKET BXL1-2956 \$6.98, © BXS1-2956 \$7.98, © BSK1-2956 \$7.98.

Performance: **Silly**
Recording: **Good**

The Moirs are three little maids—Margot, Jean, and Lesley—who trill silly, mawkish songs in close, klutzy harmony. Jean, with the occasional help of Margot, writes the ballads, interspersing their flabby sentiments with many a da-da and doodle-de-do, which her sisters respectfully intone with her in high, giddy voices. There's one about a person named Jody, a woman of forty "much too old to fall in love" who apparently changes "when you're not watching" into a girl of eighteen and steals away other people's men friends. There's a song about the somber atmosphere of winter; one about how hard it is to be a woman; a spooky item about a haunted house which does reveal that the Moirs are not entirely without humor; and several other ballads of which I could make nothing at all, even though the texts are plainly printed on the inner sleeve in large, readable type. Will the Moirs follow the Osmonds on to fame and glory? I shudder to think it, but I wouldn't be at all surprised. P.K.

NASHVILLE WEST. Clarence White (guitar); Gene Parsons (drums, vocals); Gib Guilbeau (vocals, guitar); Wayne Moore (bass, vocals). *Mental Revenge; I Wanna Live; Sweet Susanna; Green, Green Grass of Home; Louisiana Rain; Memphis; By the Time I Get to Phoenix*; and six others. SIERRA/BRIAR SRS 8701 \$7.98.

Performance: **Not so hot**
Recording: **Not so hot**

The pitch made in the liner notes here is that this is something of a groundbreaker for country rock, having been recorded in a California club named Nashville West in 1967 on the tape recorder Gene Parsons brought from home. That, of course, is so much bull, since by that date Waylon Jennings was playing real country rock, and had been for some time. What this is is a bar band in which Gene Parsons and the late Clarence White were warming up for the Byrds. I played it on two different sets of equipment; on one, which tends to be bassy, the vocals could barely be heard, but they came up to a respectable level on the other, pricier, rig.

The most interesting thing about the album to most people, I should think, is that it has Clarence White playing on it. He was a wonderful flat-picker on the acoustic guitar—not that that matters in this recording—and had a headful of ideas for the electric guitar, some of them involving the Parsons-White string-bending device for which Parsons makes a sales pitch in reasonably small print at the bottom of the credits. Unfortunately, White here had to do too much (on any equipment I have trouble hearing Gib Guilbeau's rhythm guitar most of the time) and, in a sense, too little. Too much filling, too many solos, and too little variety—no acoustic stuff at all, for one thing. This relates, of course, to its being a bar-made album—one has to be heard—and

(Continued on page 126)

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OZARK MOUNTAIN DAREDEVILS: left to right, Ruell Chappell, Michael Granda, Steve Canaday, Rune Walle, John Dillon, Larry Lee, Steve Cash

that factor also figures heavily in the song selection, which includes several hits of the day that are now too lightweight to fool with.

There's some good stuff by White here, if you want to wade through an overwhelming amount of ordinary stuff to get to it. The vocals are lackluster, though, Parsons' especially; his singing of *Green, Green Grass of Home* crosses some kind of sloppiness threshold. All in all, a badly recorded California band playing cowboy in a saloon on an average night.

N.C.

WILLIE NELSON: *Face of a Fighter*. Willie Nelson (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *Face of a Fighter*; *The Shelter of Your Arms*; *Some Other Time*; and seven others. LONE STAR L-4602 \$7.98, © LC-8-4602 \$7.98, © LCR-4-4602 \$7.98.

Performance: **A loser**
Recording: **Another loser**

Willie Nelson really shouldn't have let this stuff get out. It was recorded in 1961 and has a trebly, Mickey Mouse sound. Willie's trying to get his Lone Star label launched while his own present-day music-making is under contract to Columbia, which is why he let this stuff out. Willie's singing is okay if you can get past the way it's recorded, but the songs are below average for him and the backing is slaphappy cornball, based on kachunks and tinkety-tinks. You'll hear little of the stylish way Willie himself plays the guitar nowadays and, what's worse, practically nothing of the spontaneous quality that there is about him today. Out-take me back to Tulsa. N.C.

OHIO PLAYERS. *Jass-Ay-Lay-Dee*. Ohio Players (vocals and instrumentals). *Funk-O-Not's*; *Sleepwalkin'*; *Jass-Ay-Lay-Dee*; and three others. MERCURY SRM-1-3730 \$7.98, © MC8-1-3730 \$7.95, © MCR4-1-3730 \$7.95.

Performance: **Predictable**
Recording: **Good**

If nothing else, the Ohio Players have mastered the art of repetition. Most of the songs

here seem to have appeared on their previous albums in various forms. And even within the selections phrases are repeated ad infinitum. Perhaps they should not be faulted for this; a few years back, James Brown scaled the heights of soulism accompanying his athletically astounding dances with what usually sounded like the same song. There are a few clever change-ups here: *Time Slips Away/ Shoot Yer Shot* showcases some accomplished vocal and instrumental workouts reminiscent of Earth, Wind & Fire as the tempo picks up for the second segment, and *Sleepwalkin'*, which is taken at a leisurely pace, has the relaxed flavor of an early Fifties hit tune. Still, it's all pretty predictable. P.G.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

OZARK MOUNTAIN DAREDEVILS: *It's Alive*. Ozark Mountain Daredevils (vocals and instrumentals). *Walkin' Down the Road*; *Black Sky*; *You Know Like I Know*; *River to the Sun*; *Satisfied Mind*; *Fly Away Home*; *Horse Trader*; *Chicken Train*; and eight others A&M SP-6006 two discs \$9.98, © AAM 6006 \$9.98. © AAM 6006 \$9.98.

Performance: **Quality**
Recording: **Very good remote**

Here's a live album you can live with, unless you just plain don't like country rock at all. The Ozark Mountain Daredevils, one of those bands with a regional name but not a regional sound, recorded this close to "home" in Missouri and Kansas in the spring of 1978. Unlike most live albums, it has some nuance, isn't all as loud and fast as they can make it, and isn't even limited to the "greatest hits" gambit; there's a fair reading of the venerable *Satisfied Mind* here, among other things. In addition to all that, the sound is pretty good, as good as most of the studio sound I hear these days. The Daredevils do, in person, lose a few of the identifying marks they've put into their studio recordings and sound a little more like a "straight" rock band, but a good one. They've had their lapses, of course;

Chicken Train still sounds more silly than funny, and there's more than a trace of that awkward Southern California poesy in their lyrics. But imagine them writing "Everyone can't be Jackson Browne" a thousand times on the blackboard when you listen to it, and between that and comparing it with most other live albums, you'll be all right. N.C.

PIERCE ARROW: *Pity the Rich*. Pierce Arrow (vocals and instrumentals). *Now I Can Hear the Music*; *She Got the Rhythm (Memphis Woman)*; *Maybe Tomorrow*; *Desperately*; *Mony, Sail*; and five others. COLUMBIA JC 35307 \$7.98, © JCA 35307 \$7.98, © JCT 35307 \$7.98.

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

First, the good news: Pierce Arrow's sound is sophisticated and colorful, a mixture of urbane pop/rock with tinges of jazz, and they have a lot going for them in arrangements, execution, and vocals. Now, the bad news: most of the material here doesn't come up to their performing talents, which is all too often the case with groups that write their own songs. The best songs here—*Now I Can Hear the Music*, *Maybe Tomorrow*, and *Can't Break the Habit*—are none of them Pierce Arrow originals, and they get the best performances. Without the pressure inherent in playing their own stuff, Pierce Arrow really sails. They're a fine band. With a little reordering of their priorities, they could be even better. J.V.

PETER, PAUL & MARY: *Reunion* (see Best of the Month, page 90)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

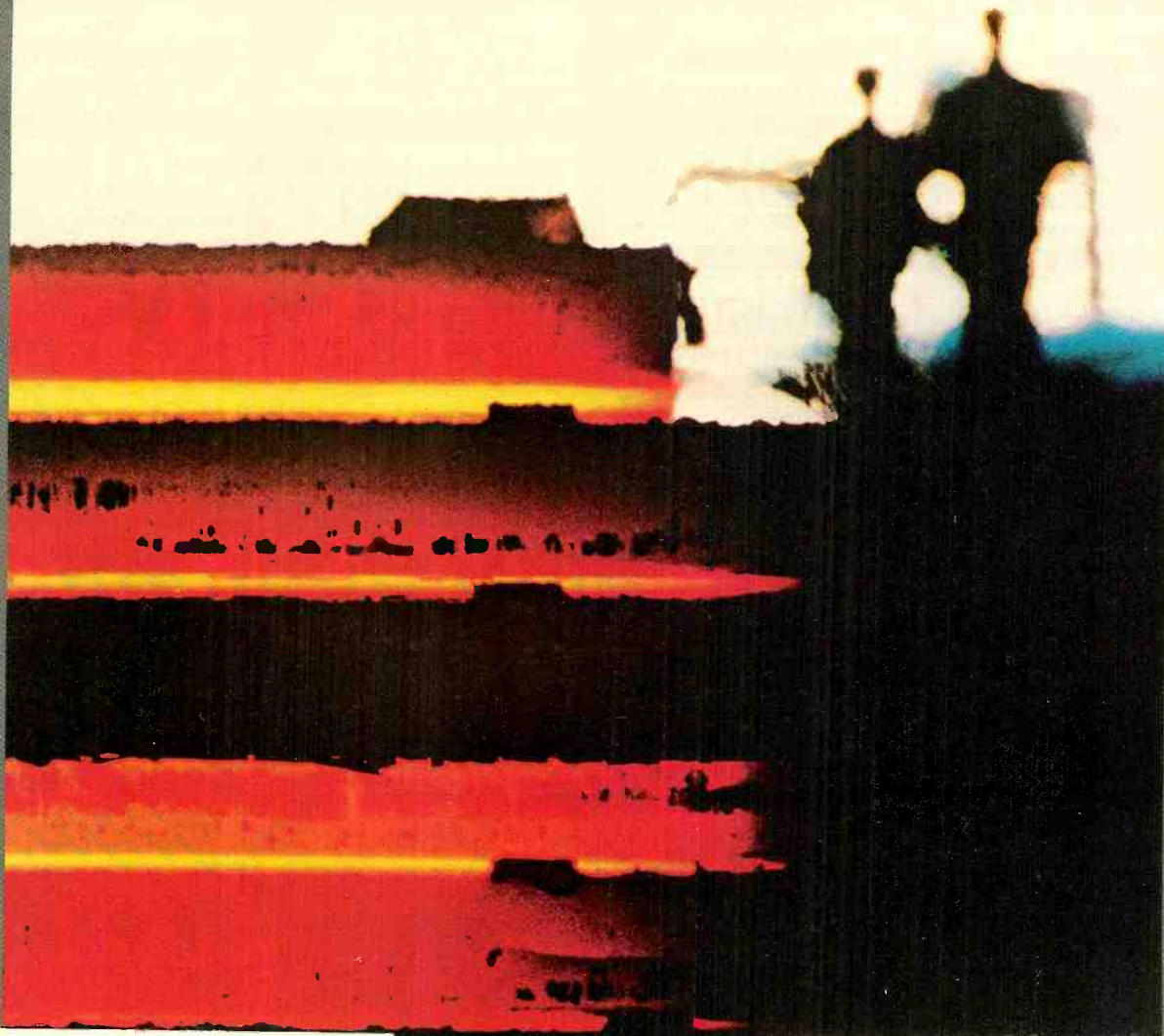
WILSON PICKETT: *A Funky Situation*. Wilson Pickett (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Dance with Me*; *The Night We Called It a Day*; *Dance You Down*; *Hold On to Your Hiney*; *Groovin'*; *Funky Situation*; and four others. BIG TREE BT 76011 \$7.98, © TP 76011 \$7.98, © CS 76011 \$7.98.

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

It seems like a long time since Wicked Pickett was a major r-&b mover, screaming, grinding, and shouting out assorted unintelligible sounds that seemed invitingly obscene. I recall seeing him last in live performance way back in 1971 during the filming of *Soul to Soul* in Ghana, West Africa. On that occasion, which was supposed to bring American soul artists together with their African musical roots, Pickett was the headliner, billed as "Soul Brother No. 2," in the shadow of James Brown. But there was nothing second-rate about Pickett's performance. Before a mob of more than 100,000, he strode onto the stage in what looked like the silver-studded attire of a Spanish matador, with a broad-brimmed black hat crowning his dashing image. Then he proceeded to stomp, scream, dance, and sing up a storm that nearly set up a transatlantic tidal wave. He showed his true power as a performer.

In following years, he just seemed to drift downward, though he continued to record. Now, after several mediocre sets and an interval of silence, the Midnight Mover seems upward bound again, giving every indication
(Continued on page 132)

Steely Dan / greatest hits



Side 1

Do It Again
Reeling In The Years
My Old School
Bodhisattva

Side 2

Show Biz Kids
East St. Louis Toodle-oo
Rikki Don't Lose That Number
Pretzel Logic
Any Major Dude

AK-1107/2

Side 3

Here At The Western World†
Black Friday
Bad Sneakers
Doctor Wu
Haitian Divorce

Side 4

Kid Charlemagne
The Fez
Peg
Josie

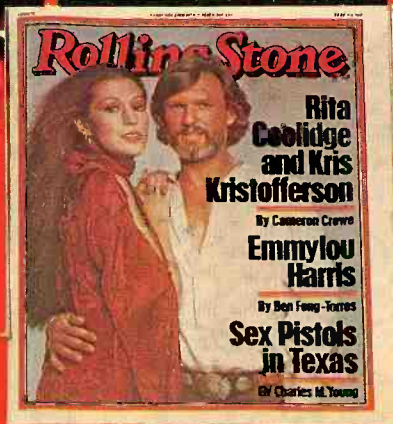
Produced by Gary Katz

†Previously unreleased



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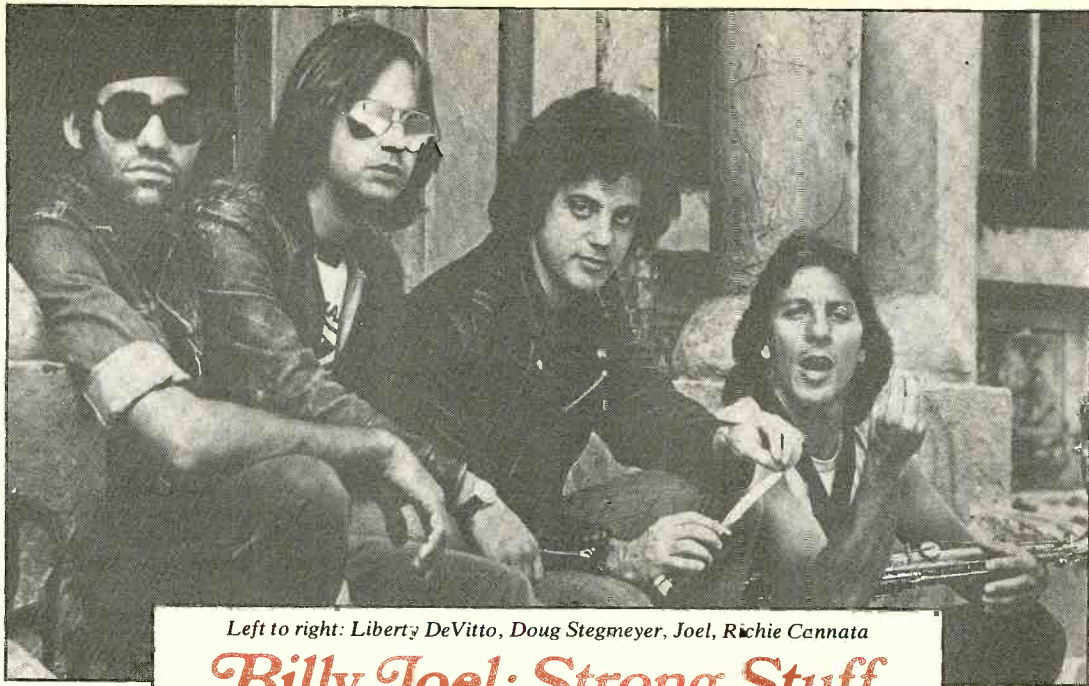
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Left to right: Liberty DeVitto, Doug Stegmeyer, Joel, Richie Cannata

Billy Joel: Strong Stuff

BLUE-COLLAR, lower-middle-class sociology found its seminal literary expression in Hubert Selby's *Last Exit to Brooklyn* almost two decades ago. The book's influence on a whole generation of creative talent is probably most clearly demonstrated in the work of three current superstars of the entertainment media: Martin Scorsese in films (*Mean Streets*, *Taxi Driver*, and *New York, New York*), Richard Price in fiction (*The Wanderers* and *Bloodbrothers*), and Billy Joel in pop music ("The Stranger" and his latest Columbia album, "52nd Street").

Selby's book is a brutal, jarring, nightmarish cityscape littered with the contemporary equivalents of figures from an Hieronymous Bosch painting—the monstrous, the diabolical, and the grotesque. Scorsese's films have concentrated, as have Price's books, on the sickness-of-it-all, laying it out in all its fetid, phosphorent glory for the fascination/revulsion of the beholder. Billy Joel, on the other hand, is paradoxically able to find in this same social framework a heartening amount of humanity, lots of hope (remember *Anthony's Song* from "The Stranger"?), and a kinetic, high-spirited humor about people and the situations they find themselves in.

His new "52nd Street" is about being grown-up and making your first few attempts at adult responsibility, just as "The Stranger" was about the trauma of leaving home. There is no internal evidence to explain why he has chosen 52nd Street as a symbol (it is an area of Manhattan famous for its jazz clubs in the Forties, a time when Joel was probably not even born yet), why the "mean streets" cover photo shows him holding a trumpet he never plays on the album, or why there is a swing/jazz inflection to so many of the arrangements. The title song itself may be a good enough, if rather arbitrary, reason: it's short on meaning and inventiveness for a Joel

effort, but it is fun to listen to. So's the rest of the album, the work of the same warm, sensitive, and ironically funny songwriting talent who first plugged into the big time with "Piano Man," a STEREO REVIEW Record of the Year award-winner for 1974.

WELL, enough about the roots and on to the flowers. Let's take *Half a Mile Away* for starters. It's about a housebound romantic who, once the lights are out, creeps out and joins his friend Little Geo on the corner where they split a bottle of wine, "Talk about women/And lie, lie, lie . . ." There is a certain amount of heartache, but there's also a lot of wry humor and sardonic wisdom in this saga of a guy who'd like to fit into a class stereotype despite a nagging sense that "There's gotta be more to life/Than just try, try, try . . ." Then there is *Zanzibar*, which seems to be a kind of parody of a typical Selby/Scorsese/Price scenario: the squalid, dingy Zanzibar Club where Anything Can Happen. For Joel's hero it's all pretty cool, however: "Me, I'm just another face at Zanzibar/But the waitress always serves a secret smile/She's waiting out in Shantytown/She's gonna pull the curtains down for me . . ." This is sung against a beguine tempo that hasn't been heard since Alice Ghostley went careering around Boston Common in *New Faces of 1952*.

Rosalinda's Eyes is a perfectly charming, charmingly perfect little romance about a young musician knocking around listlessly from gig to gig, fairly discouraged about it all but sustained by his girl Rosalinda and her confidence in him: "All alone in a Puerto Rican band/Union wages, wedding clothes/Hardly anyone has seen how good I am/But Rosalinda says she knows . . ." *My Life* is again about a man who wants to escape from a cliché life. He takes off for California

(which for Joel characters seems to have the same promise of mystery and excitement India did a hundred years ago for the English working classes) and discovers the joys of making it on his own. He's talking to his buddy from back east, telling him that L.A. may not be all he wanted, but it's more than he used to have. His anger flashes in the closing lines: "I don't want you to tell me it's time to come home/I don't care what you say any more, this is my life/Go ahead with your own life and leave me alone." Strong stuff, beautifully performed.

THERE is even stronger stuff in *Stiletto*, deep into blood-and-gore territory, and the rage-filled *Big Shot*, a man's abusive tirade against a woman who has hogged the spotlight on a gala evening. They are powerful songs, but they are also ugly and angry and abusive. Joel's greatest strength in comparison with his contemporaries is his ability to show people as they are without lapsing into the condescending kitsch of *All in the Family* or the spasmed frenzy of a Scorsese Grand Guignol. The thinking here seems to me to be coming from somewhere outside, something along the lines of "Hey, look, you wanna stay in fashion, right?" No, not really. Not if you have talent with the breadth and depth of Billy Joel's; with that you make your own fashion. Despite these two inauthentic lapses, "52nd Street" is another fine piece of work from a fine composer/performer, an album that belongs in any serious collection of the young pop masters.

—Peter Reilly

BILLY JOEL: 52nd Street. Billy Joel (vocals, piano); orchestra. *Big Shot*; *Honesty*; *My Life*; *Zanzibar*; *Stiletto*; *Rosalinda's Eyes*; *Half a Mile Away*; *Until the Night*; *52nd Street*. COLUMBIA FC 35609 \$8.98, © FCA 35609 \$8.98, © FCT 35609 \$8.98.

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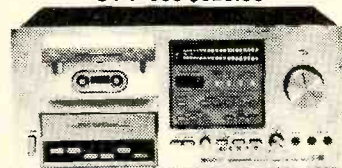
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"He didn't say 'al dente,' did he?"

that he has been able to adjust to the times without sacrificing the core of his style. Several of the selections here are set to a disco beat, but it is tastefully underplayed. The result, especially on the evergreen *Groovin'*, is to give the impression that something fresh is being done with the song without its being pounded into the ground. Throughout, the format is loose enough to permit Pickett the freedom he needs to work his show. But he's at his best on numbers that sound like the get-down r-&-b gut stuff that made him famous in the Sixties. *Hold On to Your Hiney* and *Funky Situation* are choice indications of his full rejuvenation.

PLAYER: Danger Zone. Player (vocals and instrumentals). *Love in the Danger Zone; Silver Lining; I Just Wanna Be with You; Forever; I've Been Thinkin'*; and four others. RSO RS-1-3036 \$7.98, 8T-1-3036 \$7.98, © CT-1-3036 \$7.98.

Performance: **Pedantic**
 Recording: **Good**

Player is fluent, trendy, functional, and a bit boring. If what they do makes you think you've heard it all before, you have—from many, many other bands. It is probably an accident that the opening guitar line on *I Just Wanna Be with You* happens to be the opening bars of the melody for *I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus*, but I doubt that the near-duplication of the chord structure and rhythm of Boz Scaggs' *Lido Shuffle* on Player's *Forever* was accidental. Despite the professionalism of the production, it's evident that Player has little or nothing to say on its own.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MALVINA REYNOLDS: Malvina and Friends Sing Magical Songs. Malvina Reynolds (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Sweet Stuff; Wheels; The Lambeth Children; My Street; Kennebunkport; Quiet; Never Touch a Singing Bird; Don't Push Me; Let Us Come In;* and five others. CASSANDRA CR 040 (plus 50¢ postage and handling from Schroder

Music Co., 2027 Parker Street, Berkeley, Calif. 94704).

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

Malvina Reynolds was a white-haired lady who peered good-naturedly at the world out of black-framed eyeglasses, favored denim jackets and Dutchman caps for clothing, and, up to her death in March 1978, seemed to be adored by every child in the state of California. Well, they can just move over because Malvina's records now have a new fan—me. Her "magical songs," drawn from a book of the time she wrote called *There's Music in the Air—Songs for the Middle Young*, are as fresh today as a tray of home-baked cookies just out of the oven. Malvina had all she could do just to carry one of her own tunes, but with the help of the kids who made this record with her at a recording studio in Berkeley not long before she died, she proves entirely winning in every one of them. You really don't have to be a certified child to enjoy her ballads about the charms of walking down a small-town street, about weary travelers begging to be let into a cozy house at dusk, about the dangers of being pushed, blocked, and shoved in a world where a fellow needs "some space, some room to stand." The grandmotherly Malvina started making records with her "young friends" in 1974, and it is too bad that there aren't going to be any more of them. Would she had gone on singing and recording her songs forever! The child who gets this album as a gift is bound to be a delighted recipient—if the givers can ever bring themselves to surrender it.

LALO SCHIFRIN: Gypsies. Orchestra, Lalo Schifrin arr. and cond. *To Cast a Spell; King of Hearts; Moonlight Express; Fortune Tellers;* and four others. TABU JZ 35436 \$7.98, © JZA 35436 \$7.98, © JZT 35436 \$7.98.

Performance: **Gold-plated**
 Recording: **Hoked up**

Anyone for gypsy music with electronic effects? Lalo Schifrin—the boy from Buenos Aires who made it big in Hollywood compos-

ing scores for movies as different from each other as *Cool Hand Luke*, *The President's Analyst*, and *Dirty Harry* (though the music for them wasn't all that different)—here turns his hand to pieces apparently intended to summon up thoughts of gypsies in the moonlight, spells, and fortune tellers. The orchestration is so gussied up, however, with effects on the mini-Moog and other synthesizers that it would probably frighten off any real gypsy within earshot. On side two the composer offers such pieces as *Gauchos* and *Pampas*, evidently inspired by his Argentinian background. Once again the local color is completely washed away by the showy, brash, overelaborate arrangements. More music and less multitracking might have helped. P.K.

HUGH SHANNON: *True Blue Hugh* (see *The Pop Beat*, page 61)

WILLIAM D. SMITH: *Smitty*. William D. Smith (vocals, piano); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Sweetie Pie*; *Where Did You Come From*; *Midnight Eyes*; *Genevieve*; *Right Feeling at the Wrong Time*; and five others. A&M SP-4693 \$7.98.

Performance: **Missing person**
Recording: **Very good**

Several years ago—in 1969, to be exact—I decided that William D. "Smitty" Smith had talent. I still believe in his artistry, but a current sample of it is, alas, unavailable in its pure form. Smith was the dominant figure in a Toronto jazz/rock quartet called Motherlode, which had one hit, *When I Die* (not to be confused with Blood, Sweat, and Tears' *And When I Die*). *When I Die* was a top-ten chart single, but the quartet broke up and Smith went to Los Angeles, where he earned a comfortable living as a songwriter, arranger, and session musician.

The two Motherlode albums (Buddah BDS 5046 and BDS 5108) are hard to come by but more than worth a search. The quartet was the only artistically successful fusion of jazz/rock the North American continent has produced; it played unaffected, righteous, pulsating, brilliant music. As a vocalist Smith could croon or brawl; as a keyboardist and arranger, he played and wrote with simple but evangelic urgency. He was not heard from as a solo performer until 1976, when Warner Brothers released his album "A Good Feelin'" (BS 2911), produced by Allen Toussaint. Though there were moments when Smith shone through, the album sounded like one Toussaint wanted to make. "A Good Feelin'" was full of good intentions but remained a frustrating stand-off.

"Smitty," his present effort, is unfortunately not much better. The intent of the album is to establish Smith as a pop ballad singer something like Rita Coolidge—personable but bland. The material, mostly written by Smith in collaboration with cronies, is alternately cute and slushy, though he delivers it with skill. But at no time does he cut loose with the volatile emotion of which he has proved himself capable.

Were Smith's Motherlode recordings a youthful fling now tempered and compromised by age, circumstance, and the realities of the music business? Has he mellowed out to the point where he can't be bothered to roar any more? Did he hit a peak and pass it? I don't have the answers, but I still cling to my original judgment, and I'll keep waiting for

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STARCASTLE: Real to Reel. Starcastle (vocals and instrumentals). *Half a Mind to Leave Ya; Whatcha Gonna Do; We Did It; Nobody's Fool; Song for Alaya*; and four others. EPIC JE 35441 \$7.98, ® JEA 35441 \$7.98, © JET 35441 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good**
Recording: **Average**

Rock seems to be crawling these days with bands that aspire to do a creditable job as warm-up acts, and here's one more creditable than most. Starcastle does everything pretty well but write lyrics, and most of the audience doesn't seem to care about those anyway. But clearly it's a band of imitators, not originators, producing yet another synthesis of other people's styles and riffs. Some of the stuff here was lifted from the Beatles, but not enough comes from any one source to give it any particular flavor. For all its lack of style, the album is listenable and musical, with an understanding of dynamics and contrast built into it. There are quiet moments to set off the loud ones and so forth, and the tunes may be recycled but at least they're tunes. It's one of the more competent jobs I've heard lately of begging the question of where rock is going to get a new crop of headliners. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JACK TEMPCHIN. Jack Tempchin (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Stingaree; She Belonged to You; Peaceful Easy Feeling; Fifteen Days Under the Hood; Lifetime Friend; Golden Life*; and four others. ARISTA AB 4193 \$7.98.

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

Jack Tempchin may not have the star magnitude of Jackson Browne or Warren Zevon,

but he's mighty literate for this era of wet-shirt contests and declining SAT scores. His first album proves him to be a much better phrase maker than one would suspect from *Peaceful Easy Feeling* (included here), his most famous song, or *Slow Dancing* or *Already Gone* (not included here), his other fairly famous songs. He's a Californian (car-culture imagery, among other Golden State motifs, keeps recurring here), but he's not extreme about it, neither a hedonistic surfer nor a glib, "poetic" hit machine. In fact, the sunshine he's soaked up out there seems a factor in his ability to take something seriously and not take it seriously at the same time. Skateboard Johnny he sees "enjoying life like it's the latest craze." I like lines like that, that make me approve and disapprove of something simultaneously, and I like most of the melodies Tempchin puts to them. Producer-arranger Pete Carr has given him the kind of back-up that gives you plenty to listen to but doesn't fight with the vocals. It has a touch of L.A. slickness here and there, but some sparkle too; a saxophone comes in just perfectly a couple of times when you expect a guitar, Jennifer Warnes sings harmony sometimes below and sometimes above the melody line in *Peaceful Easy Feeling*, a violation of the "rules" of harmony singing that works nicely, and so on. Tempchin's biggest problem, with this album anyway, is that his phrasing sounds a little too much like Jackson Browne's. This is particularly distracting in the last song on each side, *Lifetime Friend* and *Walkaway*. (Browne sings some harmony here, by the way.) Tempchin has a pleasant voice, though, a smooth, not too high tenor good enough for the singer part of his role as a singer-songwriter in these bland times so in need of the writer part. May he write again soon. N.C.

MEL TILLIS: I Believe In You. Mel Tillis (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *I Believe In You; Long Gone Blues; Ain't No*

JACK TEMPCHIN: literate in an era of wet-shirt contests



Arista Records

California; Tennessee; Broken Man; America's Sweetheart; and four others. MCA MCA-2364 \$6.98, © MCAT-2364 \$7.98, © MCAC-2364 \$7.98.

Performance: **Strings attached**
Recording: **Good**

I like and admire Mel Tillis, and he can croon. Some. But here, the way he's packaged and all, he sounds as if he's been around those idiots who run television a little too long. "I Believe In You" is bulging at the seams with orchestration, and there aren't many "unrefined" songs like *Workin' at the Sawmill* or much of the pathos-cum-bathos of *Ruby Don't Take Your Love to Town*. And of course there's nothing here as zingy and heartbreaking as *Detroit City*. It's one of those low-risk programs with the first eyebrow-raiser turning up away over on side two: *America's Sweetheart*, a nicely romanticized song about a waitress. Even there I'd rather have Ravishing Ruby pour my coffee. But *What Comes Natural to a Fool* is one of those throwaways Tillis does better than other people do, with some nice acoustic guitar fills behind him, and *West Bound Trains*, which has a sort of restrained rock accompaniment, should be a pretty good juke-box tune. As I said, Mel can croon some, and he gets a chance to a few times here. And of course he has more taste about going into this sort of thing than, say, Jim Nabors, so the result isn't bad, exactly, just a little soft and cushy and in-between. N.C.

ROBIN TROWER: Caravan to Midnight. Robin Trower (guitar); James Dewar (vocals); Bill Lordan (drums); Rustee Allen (bass). *My Love (Burning Love); Caravan to Midnight; I'm Out to Get You; Lost in Love; Fool;* and four others. CHRYSALIS CHR 1189 \$7.98.

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

Guitarist Robin Trower has not yet become one of the great Pooh-bahs of rock twangdom, but neither has he suffered the way most of the great plunkers have—Eric Clapton has mellowed beyond the point of enervation, Jimi Hendrix is dead and forgotten, George Harrison is yawning at, Jeff Beck is a rock expatriate in jazzland, and so on. While all these other fellows were being buffeted by fate and fortune, Trower was just being a good technician. He plays what he knows and does it well, his albums sell steadily, and he is a good man to hear on Saturday night when he passes through town on tour. He is reliable, steady, comfortable. If you believe in rock but don't want to work too hard at it, Robin Trower will give you all you need and, at times—a lick here, a phrase there—even more. J.V.

FRANK WEBER: As the Time Flies. Frank Weber (vocals, piano); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Regina; '71; So Many Sides; Parents; Shining in You;* and four others. RCA AFL1-2963 \$7.98, © AFS1-2963 \$7.98, © AFK1-2963 \$7.98.

Performance: **Dull**
Recording: **Override**

Frank Weber is being promoted as a potential heart-throb for the ladies, but from the evidence of this album he's more like a benign tumor: he's just there. His songs and singing have an inert, trancelike quality that makes something like the five-minute *Regina* seem

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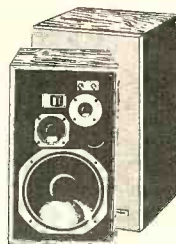
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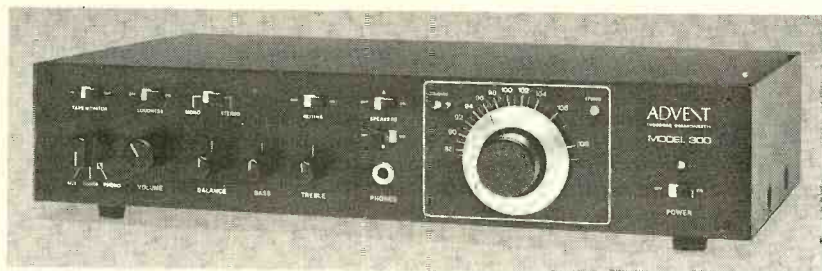
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1/79

immeasurably longer. Weber tries for the kind of still, intense atmosphere that Billy Joel creates so effortlessly, but it all too quickly disintegrates into an elaborate form of musical meandering. The fussy, overripe production doesn't alleviate the general dullness very much either. P.R.

DOTTIE WEST: *Dottie*. Dottie West (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Come See Me and Come Lonely; If I Could Just Find My Way; Even If You Were Jesse James; Broken Lady; Decorate Your Conscience; There's More to a Tear (Than Meets the Eye); Who's Gonna Love Me Now;* and three others. UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA860-G \$6.98.

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

There are two quite different parts to this album: there's Dottie West and then there's the rest of it. Dottie is just fine; she's always had a nice voice, and maturity has made her a much better singer than she used to be. She used to sound mostly like a jingle singer, but nowadays she lets the listener in, for glimpses of both pain and strength. Her backing and production still sound like those accorded a jingle singer, though. The thing is overcrowded with strings, it sometimes spotlights doggedly corny steel-guitar fills by Pete Drake, and it contains too many throwaway, junk, and gimmick songs. Overall, it has too shallow an attitude to go with the kind of singer Dottie West is becoming—and she's enough of a singer to make it fairly easy to take in spite of everything. The Country Girl

has grown up. The production of her records needs to do the same. N.C.

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struction; *Bon Ton One Step*. Jim Europe's Hell Fighters: *The Dancing Deacon*. Original Memphis Five: *Bees Knees*. FOLKWAYS RBF 37 \$7.98.

Performance: **Fun**
Recording: **Deftly dubbed**

If the one-step makes a comeback the way ragtime music did, it may well be owing to the efforts of David A. Jasen, who gathered this music from hoary but honorable sources. In the course of the record, there is even a cut offering authentic instructions for *doing* the one-step—which is, as the producer points out in his program notes, ideally designed for “those who couldn’t dance.” These sixteen selections of solid syncopation and nostalgia date back to the days when the cakewalk, polka, waltz, trot, glide, and two-step (followed by the one-step) reigned supreme.

Here is Sousa’s Band, as well as Pryor’s, playing these dances just as our forebears heard them in the saloons (I dare not suggest in the whorehouses) of the ragtime age. The Walter B. Rogers Band plays the *Gertrude Hoffman Glide* (Gertrude was a big-time vaudeville dancer in her day) and *Too Much Mustard*. Then there’s that hit of 1919, Fred Bryan’s *The Dancing Deacon*, as well as the “most played and recorded cakewalk in history,” *At a Georgia Camp Meeting*, by Kerry Mills. The program culminates in a 1922 fox-trot called *Bees Knees*, played by the Original Memphis Five. Jasen’s is a hard time machine to climb out of when it’s all over, but it’s fun while it lasts, thanks to astutely chosen, superbly remastered material. P.K.

NASHVILLE’S MASTER SONGWRITERS SING THEIR HITS. Harlan Howard: *Heartaches by the Number*; *Busted*; *Late at Night (I Write You Love Songs)*. Allen Reynolds: *Dreaming My Dreams*; *Wrong Road Again*; *Ready for the Times to Get Better*. John Schweers: *Daydreams About Night Things*; *She’s Just an Old Love-Turned Memory*; *Early Fall*. Danny Dill: *Long Black Veil*; *Detroit City*; *Don’t Sell the Farm*. Instrumental accompaniment. TRIPLE I TLP-0001 \$5.98 (plus 75¢ postage and handling from Triple I Records, Inc., Dept. G, P.O. Box 23503, Nashville, Tenn. 37202).

Performance: **Ill-advised**
Recording: **Adequate**

Well, *some* songwriters turn out to be pretty fair country singers, but no one on this disc is among them. John Schweers, whose songs interest me least in this batch, comes closest to getting through a vocal without hurting himself, and I suppose Danny Dill could get by in a honky-tonk if the band and the crowd and the waitresses were noisy enough. But poor Harlan Howard, who has the best track record of the four as a writer, and Allen Reynolds, who’s very bright and promising and has already put a couple of gems into the hands of Waylon and Crystal Gayle—well, they have this pitched battle with pitch, and they don’t get along too well with the other elements of singing either. Some people say they’d always rather hear a song sung by the person who wrote it. This one may cure them of saying “always.” But keep writing, fellows. That’s what you’re good at. N.C.



PHYLCIA ALLEN: Josephine Superstar. Phylcia Allen (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *St. Louis*; *Broadway*; *Star of Paris*; *J’ai Deux Amours*; *Josephine Superstar*; and four others. CASABLANCA NBLP 7108 \$7.98.

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

Here’s another disco concept album, but with a difference: it tells a true-life story. It is a disco-biography of the first black international star, Josephine Baker, from her beginnings in *St. Louis* to her rise to the top of the heap (*Josephine Superstar*), with a pause at her biggest hit, *J’ai Deux Amours (I Have Two Loves)*, done here with a driving disco beat.

Phylcia Allen has a straightforward approach to all this and sells it well in a good, husky voice. Her delivery of the album’s defiant finale, *Don’t Cry Mommy*, is very powerful indeed. What’s more, background vocals (Continued on page 139)

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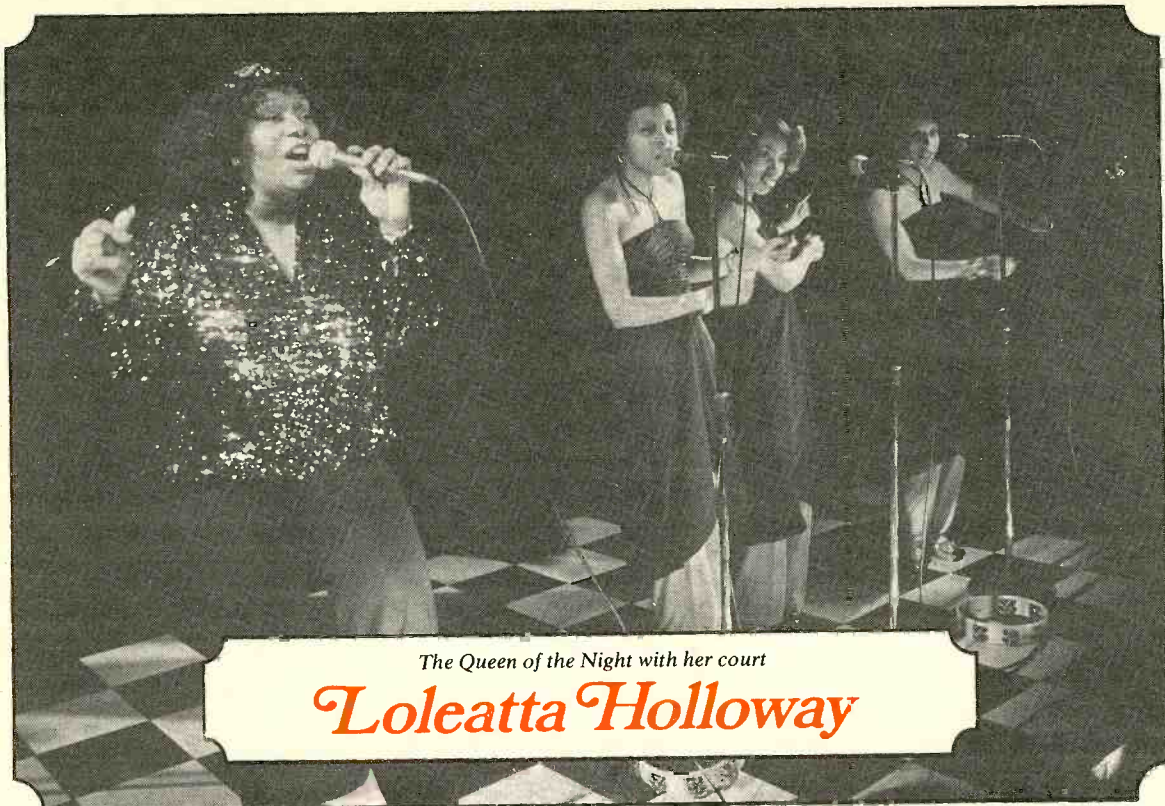
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Lloyd Williams

The Queen of the Night with her court

Loleatta Holloway

WHEN my review copy of Loleatta Holloway's new album arrived, it was in such dreadful condition that it fell out of the jacket in pieces. Oh well, I thought, as I set about tracking down another copy, perhaps somebody dropped it down an elevator shaft accidentally or used it for a Frisbee on purpose. (But aren't these things supposed to be unbreakable?) When I finally did get a chance to hear "Queen of the Night," a different explanation occurred to me: Ms. Holloway whips up such a musical fury on this set that the grooves on that first unfortunate copy were simply unable to contain it.

My, how this woman can belt out a song! She seems to jump right into the middle of the music, setting up a vibration that strikes the listener's ear and quickly works its way all the way down to the feet. Her delivery is remarkable, for she possesses all the natural power of one of those old-time Baptist church soloists who could take a single phrase and work it over with such explosive intensity that folks would get to shouting until the rafters shook. And Loleatta is a former gospel singer, having burst out of her native Chicago as a teenager to hit the circuit from British Columbia to Las Vegas with a group called Caravan. Yet the spirit that now moves her is a delightfully secular one, as suited to a dimly lit basement playground as to the hyperactive environment of a disco.

She is no newcomer, of course—I read somewhere that she starred in the Broadway hit *Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope* several years ago. I saw that show, but her name did not register then, although hindsight tells me she *must* have been the one I applauded most enthusiastically. My main acquaintance with her is from a previous album on the Gold

Mind label called, simply enough, "Loleatta" (GZS-7500). She covered everything from the hot to the heavy on that set, which was most notable for *Worn Out Broken Heart*. She poured bucketsful of emotion into that torch-song, one that seems custom-made for a lonely drinking bout in the darkest corner of a second-rate bar.

While her new album decidedly leans more toward the upbeat, it is ample evidence that Loleatta Holloway has everything it takes to become the next major soul singer. Furthermore, she doesn't sound like a clone of Aretha Franklin, which is not to say that there aren't traces of Aretha's formidable style to be found here. But these characteristics are staples of the gospel/soul art, needed to create a certain type of tension and thrust within the music. To abandon them would force the singer to seek alternative modes of expression, and that would bring us to an entirely different kind of music.

everything it takes
to become the next
major soul singer

I'll settle for soul as it is, particularly when Loleatta Holloway happens to be the purveyor. Though she sang as well on her previous album, "Queen of the Night" has greater consistency in the quality of the material, and the

back-up vocal group, increased from three to five, provides a better balance for her power. My favorite here is *I May Not Be There When You Want Me (But I'm Right On Time)* by Bunny Sigler, who appears as guest artist on *Only You*. I admit to being reluctant to concede that there may be a point where gospel, soul, and disco might mesh compatibly, but all three do fit together here in a wonderfully romping fashion. The true measure of Ms. Holloway's cleverness, though, is her ability to breathe some realism into *You Light Up My Life*. Until she latched onto this ditty, I could not hear it without entertaining unwelcome visions of sugarplum fairies; she sends them all flittering away with a single high note held onto for all it's worth. Loleatta also gives Millie Jackson a run for her money on *Two Sides to Every Story* when she indulges in humorous male-female banter that ends with the put-down line, "There ain't nothing you can make up but the bed you been sleeping in!"

BEFORE I heard of Holloway, the only "Lolita" who had crossed my path was the tempestuous nymphet of Vladimir Nabokov's novel. Now let it be known that the real "Lolita" we have to deal with spells her name L-O-L-E-A-T-T-A.
—Phyl Garland

LOLEATTA HOLLOWAY: Queen of the Night. Loleatta Holloway (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Catch Me on the Rebound*; *Only You*; *Good, Good Feeling*; *I May Not Be There When You Want Me (But I'm Right On Time)*; *Two Sides to Every Story*; *You Light Up My Life*; *I'm in Love*; *Mama Don't, Papa Won't*. GOLD MIND GA 9501 \$6.98, Ⓜ G8 9501 \$7.98, © GC 9501 \$7.98.

are provided by two high-flying disco groups, Village People and the Ritchie Family. But producers/arrangers/composers Jacques Morali and Henri Belolo don't measure up to their best previous disco efforts here. The songs are not strong or distinctive enough, and the arrangements never really catch fire. It's another unfortunate example of a good idea unsuccessfully executed. E.B.

ROY AYERS: *You Send Me*. Roy Ayers (vocals, keyboards, vibraphone); Carla Vaughn (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *You Send Me; I Wanna Touch You Baby; Can't You See Me?; Get On Up, Get On Down; Rhythm;* and three others. POLYDOR PD-1-6159 \$7.98, © 8T1-6159(A) \$7.98, © CT1-6159(A) \$7.98.

Performance: **Hokum**
Recording: **Good**

You Send Me was written and first sung by the late, great Sam Cooke in the mid-1950's. Since then there have been innumerable versions of it, all of which testify to the sheer durability of the song. Its sentiments are so appealing and its simple but hardy construction so resilient that it prospers in good interpretations and survives bad ones. Roy Ayers' version—which is the single that's making this album sell—is an Isaac Hayes/Barry White treatment taken at a gruelingly slow tempo and gussied up with rococo vocals and soupy strings. It seems designed to get people into bed, as if the idea wouldn't have occurred to them otherwise.

The rest of the album is a potpourri of semi-jazz and quasi-disco featuring the overwrought vocals of Carla Vaughn, who, like many jazz singers, seems to operate on the theory that too much is better than enough. The high point of the album is the blessed moment at the end of side two when the stylus swings into the end spiral. J.V.

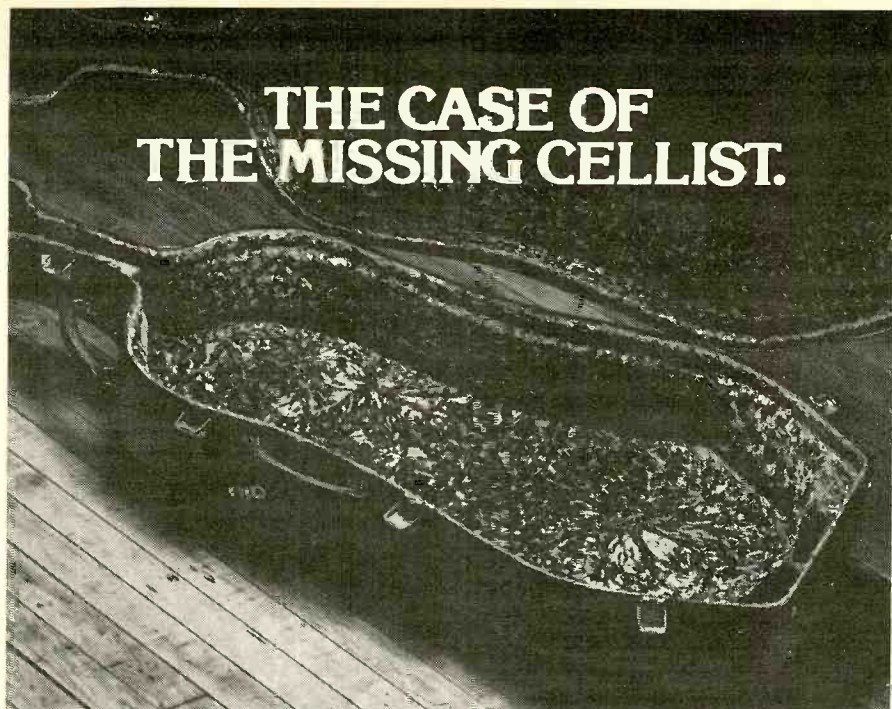
TINA CHARLES: *Heart 'n' Soul*. Tina Charles (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *I'll Go Where the Music Takes Me; Stop What You're Doing to Me; Fire Down Below; I Gotta Dance with You; Go;* and four others. COLUMBIA JC 35416 \$7.98, © JCA 35416 \$7.98, © JCT 35416 \$7.98.

Performance: **Infectious**
Recording: **Fine**

I really like Tina Charles. With the help of producer/composer Biddu, she tries to project her personality as a genuine singer on her records while remaining within the disco framework. But her newest LP is just not up to the high mark set last year by "Rendezvous." That doesn't mean there's nothing worthwhile here. Two of the songs, *Love Bug/Sweets for My Sweet* and *I'll Go Where the Music Takes Me*, have already proved their punch as singles. A little belter called *Fire Down Below*, which shows the dynamic Ms. Charles at her best, and a rollicking bouncer called *Fallin' in Love in Summertime* are both top-drawer performances of better-than-average songs. Finally, listen to her Diana Ross treatment of the ballad *Ain't Gonna Hide My Love*. Nice work, everybody—but not as nice as "Rendezvous." E.B.

GENTLE PERSUASION. Gentle Persuasion (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *I Don't Believe in Magic; You'd Be Good for Me; Litterbug; I'm Gonna Blow Your Mind;*

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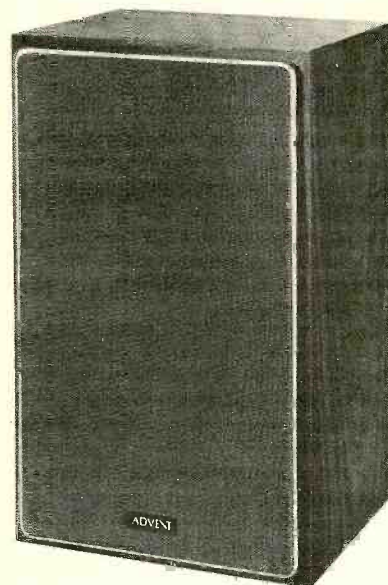
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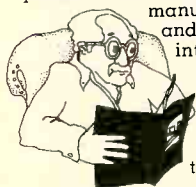
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One on One; and four others. WARNER BROS. BSK 3164 \$7.98, ® M8 3164 \$7.97, © M5 3164 \$7.97.

Performance: **Baby-doll disco**
Recording: **Good**

Perhaps this could be called easy-listening disco, for the tone throughout is somewhat subdued, even quiet at times. The three young women in the group project a certain baby-doll quality in their interpretations of songs that themselves make no particular impression, but they really don't sing that well. This is quite apparent when they attempt solos, though their ensemble work is generally competent. Actually, they sound like a pretty good back-up group in need of someone with greater talent to lead them somewhere. There are a few traces of verve here, but the album is merely "nice" and not much more. P.G.

MARILYN MCCOO & BILLY DAVIS JR.: *Marilyn and Billy*. Marilyn McCoo, Billy Davis Jr. (vocals); orchestra. *You Got the Love*; *I Thank You*; *Stay with Me*; *Saving All My Love for You*; *Carry Me*; and five others. COLUMBIA JC 35603 \$7.98, © JCA 35603 \$7.98, © JCT 35603 \$7.98.

Performance: **Slick**
Recording: **Excellent**

It's not too likely that you're going to hear anything much slicker than this album in the new year. Marilyn McCoo and Billy Davis Jr. departed from the Fifth Dimension in 1975, taking with them the solidly commercial glitter formula of that group. Their spin-off turned into a golden Frisbee almost immediately with *You Don't Have to Be a Star (To Be in My Show)*, and they haven't slowed down since. Their newest effort is still in the pounding, first-you-sing-then-I-sing tradition that established them. They do throw off a certain amount of body heat, and it's a great help that it's all immaculately performed and beautifully engineered. But if you can tell one track from another after the first three, then you're a better man than I am, Gunga Din. This one is for fans, teenybopper discos, and, possibly, my Aunt Myrt, who has yet to work up the courage to wear her new disco pants and shoes to Tupperware parties. P.R.

METROPOLIS: *The Greatest Show on Earth*. The Sweethearts (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *The Greatest Show on Earth*; *Was That All*; *Go Get It*; and five others. SALSOU SA 8511 \$7.98, © S8 8511 \$7.98, © SC 8511 \$7.98.

Performance: **Bland**
Recording: **Fine**

This is a big disappointment coming from the likes of Pete Bellotte (who has produced Donna Summer's recordings) and Tom Moulton (who both produced and mixed the great Grace Jones hit *Do or Die*). Here the production is very definitely on the quiet side. The beat is there, but except for the title track, which gets full advantage of Moulton's characteristically syncopated, thumping bass rhythms, everything is awash in muted, lethargic sound. Even a disco version of the commercial jingle *I Love New York* fails to rise above what I can only call elevator disco—the kind of music that haunts the elevators in large apartment houses. It all has a romantic, big-band sound, but background disco ain't no disco to me, honey. E.B.

NORMA JEAN. Norma Jean Wright (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Saturday*; *Having a Party*; *I Believe In You*; *Sorcerer*; and three others. BEARVILLE BRK 6983 \$6.98.

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

Despite the big push behind *Saturday* on the disco radio stations, this album is fairly ordinary stuff. Norma Jean (Wright), lead vocalist with Chic (remember their *Dance, Dance, Dance*, better known as *Yowsah, Yowsah, Yowsah*), has a good, husky voice with an early-Streisand capacity for belting. For the most part the arrangements bounce along nicely, but the spark of great disco just isn't here. Sam Cooke's *Having a Party* works well as gospel-oriented disco, and the lovely ballad *This Is the Love* suggests that Norma Jean has more talent than this album lets us hear. E.B.

SHALAMAR: *Disco Gardens*. Shalamar (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Tossing, Turning and Swinging*; *Take That to the Bank*; *Stay Close to Love*; *Leave It All Up to Love*; *Lovely Lady*; and two others. SOLAR BXL1-2895 \$7.98, ® BXS1-2895 \$7.98, © BXX1-2895 \$7.98.

Performance: **Spotty**
Recording: **Good**

Two cuts on this disco-oriented album suggest that the three singer/dancers who are Shalamar have the vocal range and talent to make it: the slow-dancin' *Lovely Lady* and the decidedly zippier "sin, sin" *Cindy, Cindy*. The rest of the songs are done in a funky, soul-disco style that is naturally slow, and several—*Stay Close to Love* and *Take That to the Bank* especially—are barely disco at all. Unfortunately, the group just isn't distinctive enough to make a solid impression with this first LP. Shalamar bills itself as a vocal/dance trio—in fact, they got their start as *Soul Train* dancers. In a live performance they may be able to add that extra touch of excitement that would make them extraordinary, but on record they just don't come across. E.B.

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(List compiled by John Harrison.)

JAZZ



RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

GEORGE BARNES: *Plays So Good.* George Barnes, Duncan James (guitars); Benny Barth (drums); Dean Reilly (bass). *Night and Day; I'm Coming Virginia; The Days of Wine and Roses; Don't Get Around Much Any More; On a Clear Day;* and five others. CONCORD JAZZ CJ-67 \$7.98.

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

George Barnes, a jazz guitarist of the romantic school with a keen ear and a sure style, made this record at Bimbo's in San Francisco in April 1977, some months before his untimely death. The album is a companion piece to an earlier program called "Blues Going Up," and it's an easygoing, easy-to-take concert of familiar favorites in the course of which Barnes shows his skill at transforming standard tunes into series of intricate jazz patterns. His characteristic treatment of *St. Louis Blues* is especially fascinating, but everything he undertakes comes out right. Barnes is assisted on second guitar by Duncan James, on drums by Benny Barth, and on bass by Dean Reilly. They're obviously all first-rate musicians too, and the record they've put together makes consistent good listening. P.K.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THE BRECKER BROTHERS: *Heavy Metal Be-Bop.* Randy Brecker (electric trumpet, keyboards); Michael Brecker (electric tenor saxophone); other musicians. *East River; In-side Out; Some Skunk Funk;* and three others. ARISTA AB 4185 \$7.98.

Performance: **Rousing rock-a-boogie**
Recording: **Good**

"Heavy Metal Be-Bop" is an apt title for this new set by the Brecker Brothers, two virtuoso siblings with loads of lung-power and chops sufficiently trained to deliver a burst of high-energy fusion music that is overwhelming in its sheer force of sound. There is a rakishness, a daring pelvis-thrust defiance about what is offered here. A lot of people might not like it, but it is certainly loud enough to be heard.

The Brecker Brothers use their amplified instruments for imaginative, if heavy-handed, improvisation, but the base from which they proceed is as much rock as jazz, with the former being underscored by the hyperkinetic guitar work of Barry Finnerty. Rock supplies the dizzying impetus, while jazz contributes control to the process. And somewhere in this spectrum of musical influences is the unmistakable tint of rousing blues and boogie, particularly on the opener, *East River*, which blasts off like a rocket bound for some outer-

(Continued on page 143)

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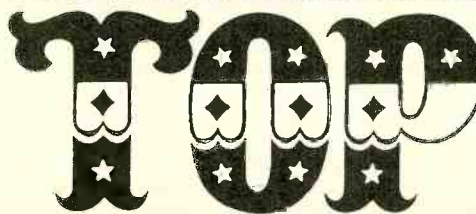
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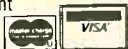
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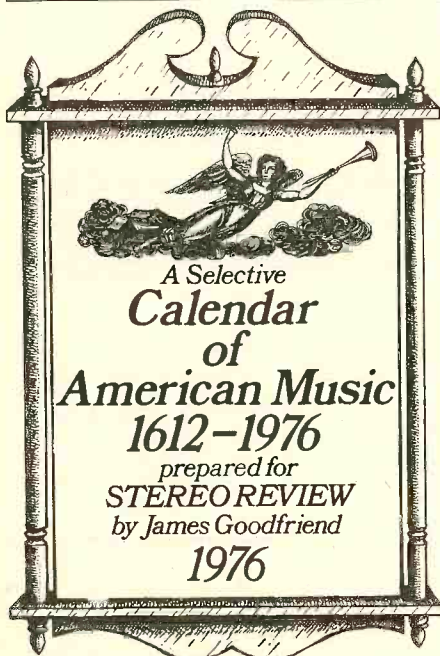
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This useful, information-packed, and attractive (suitable for framing) feature from our July 1976 Bicentennial Issue is printed in color on 11" x 16" stock and includes Music Editor Goodfriend's introduction. For your copy send 50¢ to: American Music Calendar, Stereo Review, 1 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016.

HITLER cried at the sound of it, the lady at the piano in that famous perfume ad *Lost All Control* in the arms of its player, and Evelyn declared that hers was Magic. Yes, the violin—traditionally the most glamorous of all the musical instruments. I mean, when you stop to think of it, a lot of people can step into a room and drift over to the piano to play a tune or whatever, and the party talk will continue and no one will remember it much. But try walking into a room, taking out your violin, and running down a couple of fast ar-

just don't *make* them like that any more! In Venuti's hands the fiddle became, for a whole generation, a new way of pulling at the Establishment's beard. He took this overly revered, overly glamorized Edwardian beauty and turned her into a gum-chewing, rolled-stock-ing flapper capable of a number of previously undreamed of tricks. It is this sense of fun and nose-thumbing joy that permeates Venuti's music here, and the youthful irreverence of it all still comes crackling through the grooves.



Raymond Ross

A Wonderful Anomaly: the Jazz Violin

The late, great Joe Venuti

peggios on it; ten to one you're going to get dead silence and complete attention.

The solo violin, by the very nature of its strikingly beautiful sound, cannot really be comfortably talked over or used as background, and that may be one of the reasons why in the twentieth century it hasn't been among the instruments adopted by pop and/or jazz musicians. That is, with the exception of a few notable virtuosos who had the courage to treat the lady violin as the tramp jazz fiddle and make audiences love it. Two records by probably the two best jazz violin players of the century have just been released—a spanking new one by Stéphane Grappelli on Columbia titled "Uptown Dance," and another really precious oldie dating from 1927 to 1934 by the late Joe Venuti on Yazoo (yeah, that's right, Yazoo) Records.

While Grappelli and Venuti are both of true virtuoso caliber, both witty, and both intensely creative musically, and even though Grappelli's new recording benefits from the latest techniques and the highly styled arrangements of Claus Ogerman, the Venuti recording is probably the one you will want to own because it has that invaluable atmosphere of Work In Progress. At the time it was recorded, there was a genuine search going on for new sounds, just as there is today, and the fiddle and its pop possibilities had not yet been excluded by serious musicians. Also, there is the quality of Venuti's back-up, which included the incomparable Eddie Lang on guitar, Jimmy Dorsey's alto on one 1933 track, and Adrian Rollini on bass sax. They

No less an artist, but perhaps installed here on a pedestal he didn't ask for, Grappelli does some very impressive playing in "Uptown Dance," particularly in Ettore Stratta's *A Waltz Dressed in Blue* and in Erroll Garner's *Nightwind*. But no amount of technical excellence, either in or out of the control room, can really compete with the sheer joy of Venuti's jaunty antiques, so that "Uptown Dance" is, ultimately, only "excellent" and "interesting" and "well done."

After listening to the Venuti I gave Jean-Luc Ponty's latest experiment ("Cosmic Messenger," Atlantic 19189) with electric violin another try. His work sounds academic and as dry as dust compared with the well-aged bathtub fizzle of Venuti's abandoned, freewheeling, gut-funny style. —Peter Reilly

JOE VENUTI: Violin Jazz. Joe Venuti (violin); various orchestras. *Sensation*; *Apple Blossoms*; *Raggin' the Scale*; *Satan's Holiday*; *A Mug of Ale*; *Hey! Young Fella*; *Wild Cat*; *Sweet Lorraine*; *The Wild Dog*; *Kickin' the Cat*; *Jig Saw Puzzle Blues*; *Hiawatha's Lullaby*; *Four String Joe*; *Goin' Places*. YAZOO 1062 \$7.98.

STÉPHANE GRAPPELLI: Uptown Dance. Stéphane Grappelli (violin); orchestra, Claus Ogerman arr. and cond. *Uptown Dance*; *Pages of Life*; *Smoke Rings and Wine*; *Baubles, Bangles and Beads*; *Favors*; *Nightwind*; *A Waltz Dressed in Blue*; *Angel Eyes*; *Shadows*. COLUMBIA JC 35415 \$7.98, © JCA 35415 \$7.98, © JCT 35415 \$7.98.

space bar. Beneath the rock-steeped layers of *Inside Out*, you can find some plain old gut-bucket blues, as on many of the other tracks here. The Breckers indicate that they possess both the energy and the creativity to elevate fusion music above the trite. The more you listen to this album, the more you are likely to be won over by its built-in excitement. P.G.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RAY BROWN/JIMMY ROWLES: *As Good As It Gets*. Jimmy Rowles (piano); Ray Brown (bass). *Sophisticated Lady; That's All; Who Cares; Honey; Rosalie*; and five others. CONCORD JAZZ CJ-66 \$7.98.

Performance: **Delicate duo**
Recording: **Very good**

There isn't much one can say about Jimmy Rowles and Ray Brown that hasn't been said before. Both men are dedicated musicians who for years have had the respect of critics and discriminating fans alike, and both ply their craft with the imagination, taste, and swing that are essential to good jazz. Teaming them up is, therefore, a no-risk proposition—the result would almost have to be exquisite, and this album is just that. C.A.

BILLY COBHAM: *Simplicity of Expression—Depth of Thought*. Billy Cobham (drums); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Bolinas; Early Libra; Pocket Change*; and three others. COLUMBIA JC 35457 \$7.98, © JCA 35457 \$7.98, © JCT 35457 \$7.98.

Performance: **A drummer's disaster**
Recording: **Good**

Something happened to Billy Cobham when he left Atlantic for Columbia—something tragic. I don't know if it's the work of producer Jay Chattaway, the Columbia hierarchy, or both, but this second Cobham release on Columbia is, like the first ("Magic"), a disappointing turn down a dead-end street. This time two vocalists have been added, a dreary-voiced gentleman named Charles Singleton and a perfectly dreadful-sounding person named Kamal, whose gender I am not sure of. Both sing their way through painfully uninteresting songs that have instrumentals of equal blandness. C.A.

CHICO FREEMAN: *Kings of Mali* (see Best of the Month, page 91)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SUNNY MURRAY: *Apple Cores*. Sunny Murray (drums); Frank Foster, Oliver Lake, Jimmy Vass, Arthur Blythe, Hamiet Bluiett (reeds); Don Pullen (piano); Cecil McBee, Fred Hopkins (bass); other musicians. *Past Perfect Tense; New York Maze; Applebluff*; and two others. PHILLY JAZZ PJ 1004 \$7.98 (from J.C.O.A., 6 West 95th Street, New York, N.Y. 10025).

Performance: **Jazz lives**
Recording: **Good**

If the recording-industry establishment didn't have such a distorted view of jazz, there would be no need for accomplished musicians to preserve their art on ill-distributed shoe-string labels. A healthier attitude at the business end would not only result in a more thorough documentation of this vital music, it would also help people understand why much

of what passes for jazz these days actually isn't. In the meantime, as less dedicated jazz men drive their funk to the fringes of disco, some of their more serious colleagues crystallize their art on records few people ever see, much less hear.

One such label, Philly Jazz, now has four albums out. I haven't heard the first three, but if number four is any measure of the label's quality, it's off to a good start. Sunny Murray's "Apple Cores," featuring the flexible Oklahoma-born drummer in various groups of kindred spirits, is the sort of album people will be talking about for years to come, one that some major record company will probably acquire eventually to fill an embarrassing gap in its catalog.

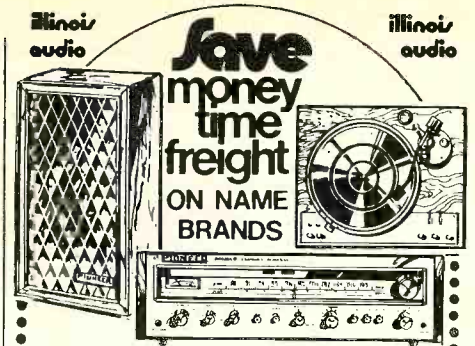
Though Murray is usually identified with the avant-garde jazz movement of the Sixties—a decade during which he was associated with such *enfants terribles* of jazz as Albert Ayler, Cecil Taylor, Ornette Coleman, and Don Cherry—his earlier experiences include work with traditionalists Willie "The Lion" Smith and Henry "Red" Allen. His approach to the drums reflects these wide-ranging experiences, leading him to be innovative yet accessible. "Apple Cores" takes us to bop and beyond. The bop title cut features wonderful tenor work by its composer, one-time Count Basie sideman Frank Foster; Oliver Lake's *Past Perfect Tense* has its composer going a step further; and Coltrane's *One Up and One Down*, which ends side one, has Foster and alto saxophonist Jimmy Vass cooking on a version that owes much of its swing to bassist Cecil McBee. Side two is devoted to two Murray compositions of a more contemporary nature. *New York Maze* prominently features the hysterical expressions of baritone saxophonist Hamiet Bluiett, whose free, less-than-graceful style is effective here against the rhythmic background provided by McBee and Murray. *Applebluff* is played by a quartet that has Youseff Yancy handling "various electro-acoustical sound manipulating devices" as well as a trumpet, but the piece stresses percussion. There is some interesting interplay between Murray and drummer Sonny Brown, but the track suffers from poor recording and requires a considerable boost in volume to be heard.

"For some reason," Murray states in his brief notes, "I seem to work only three or four times a year in this country America, so it's virtually impossible to hear Sunny Murray's Untouchable Factor [Murray's name for his various groups] anywhere." Sadly, that's true, but at least now we have this record. C.A.

SONNY ROLLINS: *Pure Gold Jazz*. Sonny Rollins (tenor saxophone); Jim Hall (guitar); Bob Cranshaw (bass); Ben Riley (drums); Candido Camero, Willy Rodriguez, Dennis Charles, Frank Charles (percussion). *If Ever I Would Leave You; Jungoso; The Night Has a Thousand Eyes*; and two others. RCA ANL1-2809 \$4.98, © ANS1-2809 \$5.98.

Performance: **Uneven 1962 vintage**
Recording: **Very good**

SONNY ROLLINS: *Don't Stop the Carnival*. Sonny Rollins (tenor saxophone); Donald Byrd (trumpet, flugelhorn); Tony Williams (drums); other musicians. *Don't Stop the Carnival; Silver City; Autumn Nocturne; Camel; Nobody Else but Me*; and four others. MILE- (Continued on page 146)



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THESE days it is not uncommon to hear people say that jazz is "coming back." The implication, of course, is that at some unspecified point it left; but if that's the case, where, one might ask, did it go? Did it crawl into some little hole to await the maturation of the Woodstock generation? Certainly not—we didn't exactly *imagine* all those albums that were recorded and released over the past ten to fifteen years, nor have Newport, Monterey, and the numerous other jazz festivals both here and in Europe been mere swinging mirages. Obviously, jazz never "left" us, though it might be argued that we, to a certain degree, left it.

What the jazz-is-coming-back theoreticians really mean is that there is a current resurgence of interest in the music. But, as any realist can see, we are not headed for another jazz era; things are not going to be as they were in the Forties, the Fifties, or even the early Sixties. Jazz has ceased to produce Armstrongs, Gillespies, Parkers, Tatum, and Hawkins. The last generation of budding pioneers—Clifford Brown, Eric Dolphy, and so on—burst onto the scene in the Fifties only to have their lives cut short before their promises were fulfilled, and not since Ornette Coleman and John Coltrane has there been a Pied Piper to lead the way to fresh ground. If there were such artists in the wings at any time during the past ten years, we probably lost them to fusion rock.

True, there seems to be an increase in the number of jazz records being issued these days, but if we exclude fringe records the output does not begin to match that of the late Fifties and early Sixties, and there also seems to be less meat on the bone. We didn't know it then, but the omnidirectional flurry of jazz activity we experienced in the early Sixties was the last of its kind: the beboppers fronted organ trios and recorded so-called blowing sessions as if they were going out of style (and they were); the mainstreamers—vigorous, well-oiled veterans of the Swing Era—alternately rocked us gently and stomped us hard with a timeless kind of jazz that seemed to flow effortlessly from their imaginations; the Dixielanders pandered to potbellied conventioners with umpteen versions of *The Saints* and *Tiger Rag*; obscure blues veterans stum-



Burr Goldblatt

1929 *Hello Lola* solo with a masterly 1939 interpretation of *Body and Soul*, made a smooth transition to bop without sacrificing his highly individual style. Russell continued playing his clarinet in a unique, perplexing style that, in retrospect, seems to have been years ahead of its time when he first introduced it. To hear him with Hawkins in 1961 was particularly refreshing, for by then he was primarily associated with the Dixieland treadmill of Eddie Condon and Company.

Though occupied by men of distinction in that field, the rhythm section on "Jazz Reunion" gets a bit ragged at times, but not enough to mar the overall sound seriously. There are surging tenor solos by Hawkins (his work on *Tin Tin Deo* is a gem), marvelously unorthodox sounds from Russell (his solos on the two blues, *28th and 8th* and *Mariooch*, are studies

bled out of their Southern shacks to be recorded, patronized, studied, and emulated by guitar-toting white youths from Brooklyn.

The period had its avant-gardists as well: serious, often bitter men who produced unorthodox free-form music with racial overtones and an air of defiance. They fought among themselves as the rest of the jazz world turned a deaf ear, and they too failed to produce anyone to lead jazz along new avenues. The avant-garde movement attracted a great number of dilettantes who honked and screeched their way to deserved oblivion, but it also fostered some real talents who today are enjoying a greater measure of recognition even as they continue to appeal to a specialized audience.

IF the early Sixties indeed saw jazz music's last stand, it was at least well documented on recordings, and some of these are currently coming back on the Barnaby/Candid label. Candid—acquired by singer Andy Williams' Barnaby label a few years back—was a small, dedicated company whose recordings were conceived and supervised by Nat Hentoff. The label died young but, thanks to Hentoff's good ear and wide-ranging taste, rich with worthwhile sounds. Barnaby/Candid is now a division of GRT (distributed by Janus Records), and so far none of the latest rereleases duplicate the material reissued in the early Seventies when Barnaby was being handled by CBS. Confusing? Yes, but that's the record business. The music is more straightforward, and GRT has had the good sense to keep each album intact, complete with the original covers, a slightly condensed version of the original liner notes, and updates by Hentoff.

"Jazz Reunion," recorded in 1961, marked the first time Coleman Hawkins and Pee Wee Russell had recorded together in thirty-two years. Their previous meeting was on two classic Victor sides, *Hello Lola* and *One Hour* by the Mound City Blue Blowers (a Red McKenzie-led group that also included Glenn Miller), which came from one of the earliest integrated recording sessions. At the time of their reunion, both reed men had long since gone their separate musical ways. Hawkins, having more than fulfilled the promise of his



Columbia

PEE WEE RUSSELL: unorthodox

in pathos), fine inputs from mainstreamers Bob Brookmeyer and Emmett Berry, and appropriately subtle arrangements by Nat Pierce, who has been a more exciting pianist on other occasions.

In 1960, as street riots closed down the Newport Festival, a counter event took place at nearby Cliff Walk Manor. Organized by Charles Mingus and Max Roach to protest the increasing commercialization of the official festival, it featured top players of two jazz generations. "Newport Rebels," recorded in a New York studio four months later, was an attempt to re-create the artistically successful rebellion. I don't know how accurately it does that, but the result is an interesting if somewhat uneven album.

Three tracks—*Mysterious Blues*, *Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams*, and *Me and You*—feature a spirited Roy Eldridge. *Mysterious* is particularly interesting because it brings Eldridge together with the late Eric Dolphy, who was only seventeen years younger but whose playing represented a much wider age gap; the two sound eminently compatible here, though the young alto saxophonist was clearly working under self-imposed strictures. On the Eldridge tracks the rhythm section—Mingus, Tommy Flanagan, and Jo Jones—

again sounds strangely uncoordinated, especially on *Me and You*, where at one point it all but falls apart. The album's best cut is *Cliff Walk*, composed by trumpeter Booker Little and featuring solos by him, trombonist Julian Priestler, and tenor saxophonist Walter Benton against a driving rhythm section that has both Max Jones and Jo Jones on drums. The least successful track is *Tain't Nobody's Bizness If I Do*. It has an excellent trumpet solo by Benny Bailey, who also does good work behind Abbey Lincoln's vocal, but that vocal does not measure up to Ms. Lincoln's work on her own *Candid* album or her previous *Riverside* sets (she began her career as Gaby Lee and was last known as Aminata Moseka).

By far the most satisfying album is Don Ellis' "How Time Passes," a well-conceived, brilliantly executed set of four Ellis and Jaki Byard compositions that explore new directions in time and chord progression. Ellis has since made some venturesome big-band recordings for Columbia, but these quartet sessions with Byard (on piano and alto saxophone), Ron Carter, and drummer Charlie Persip remain his most extraordinary accomplishment. Hearing this music again, I am reminded of what a fine pianist Byard is and how shamefully he is overlooked these days—a reunion of Byard and Ron Carter could have glorious results. "How Time Passes" is further enhanced by Gunther Schuller's authoritative notes on the music.

Thrown together as a companion piece to Hentoff's book of the same name, "The Jazz Life!" is a grab-bag of then previously unis-

matches the excellence of the Hopkins performance, but *R & R*, despite fiery sparks from Roy Eldridge, does not. Cal Massey's *Father and Son* is a dull tune played competently though without much life, but *Lord, Lord Am I Ever Gonna Know*—with Lucky Thompson's relaxed, robust tenor floating over Kenny Clarke's drums—is among the album's assets. —Chris Albertson

PEE WEE RUSSELL/COLEMAN HAWKINS: *Jazz Reunion*. Pee Wee Russell (clarinet); Coleman Hawkins (tenor saxophone); Emmett Berry (trumpet); Bob Brookmeyer (valve trombone); Nat Pierce (piano); Milt Hinton (bass); Jo Jones (drums). *If I Could Be with You (One Hour Tonight)*; *Tin Tin Deo*; *All Too Soon*; *Mariooch*; *28th and 8th*; *What Am I Here For*. BARNABY/CANDID BR-5018 \$7.95, © 8190-5018 \$7.95, © 5190-5018 \$7.95.

JAZZ ARTISTS GUILD: *Newport Rebels*. Roy Eldridge, Booker Little, Benny Bailey (trumpets); Jimmy Knepper, Julian Priestler (trombone); Eric Dolphy, Walter Benton (saxophone); Tommy Flanagan, Kenny Dorham (piano); Charles Mingus, John "Peck" Morrison (bass); Max Roach, Jo Jones (drums); Abbey Lincoln (vocals). *Mysterious Blues*; *Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams*; *Me and You*; *Cliff Walk*; *Tain't Nobody's Bizness If I Do*. BARNABY/CANDID BR-5022 \$7.95, © 8190-5022 \$7.95, © 5190-5022 \$7.95.

DON ELLIS: *How Time Passes*. Don Ellis (trumpet); Jaki Byard (alto saxophone, piano); Ron Carter (bass); Charlie Persip (drums). *How Time Passes*; *Sallie*; *A Simplex One*; *Waste*; *Improvisational Suite #1*. BARNABY/CANDID BR-5020 \$7.95, © 8190-5020 \$7.95, © 5190-5020 \$7.95.

THE JAZZ LIFE! *R & R* (Charles Mingus, Roy Eldridge, Eric Dolphy, and others). *Black Cat* (Lightnin' Hopkins). *Father and Son* (Cal Massey). *Lord, Lord Am I Ever Gonna Know* (Lucky Thompson, Kenny Clarke, and others). *Vassarlean* (Charles Mingus, Ted Curson, Eric Dolphy, and others). *Oh Yeah, Oh Yeah* (Kenny Dorham, Cecil Payne, Max Roach, and others). BARNABY/CANDID BR-5021 \$7.95, © 8190-5021 \$7.95, © 5190-5021 \$7.95.

DON ELLIS: extraordinary



Candid



COLEMAN HAWKINS: surging

sued selections from various *Candid* sessions. The six tracks range from an excellent performance by blues-singer/guitarist Sam "Lightnin'" Hopkins (*Black Cat*) to a rather uninspired take-off on the period's "soul music" (*Oh Yeah, Oh Yeah*) with barely adequate solos by Kenny Dorham and Cecil Payne. The latter stems from the "Newport Rebels" sessions, as do two other tracks, *R & R* and *Vassarlean* (a theme that appeared as *Smooch* on an earlier Miles Davis recording). *Vassarlean*, played by an eight-piece Mingus band,

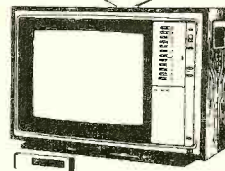
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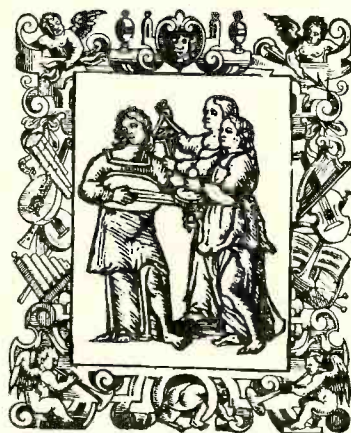
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Performance: **Solid to sensational**
Recording: **Good remote**

At the end of 1961, two years after he had begun a self-imposed exile, Sonny Rollins conspicuously re-entered the jazz arena. His absence had been from the commercial music scene, not from music itself, so what we heard as he hit the club circuit was a more mature Rollins, brilliantly fulfilling a promise made in the mid to late Fifties when he was the focal point of the hard-bop movement. There was no appreciable change in his style: Rollins still came on like an angry bee, wiping sentimentality out of familiar ballads with bold, sarcastic stings from his robust tenor, but he now did it with even more brilliance and authority.

On his return, Rollins introduced an exciting quartet—with guitarist Jim Hall, bassist Bob Cranshaw, and drummer Harry Saunders—and signed an RCA Victor contract said to have been in the six-figure bracket, the sort of deal usually made only with pop artists. His second album for the label, "What's New" (LSP-2572), has now been reissued as "Pure Gold Jazz," part of RCA's ill-packaged "Pure Gold" series. The drummer on it is Ben Riley (who had already replaced Saunders at the second session), and, though the album lists only Hall, Cranshaw, and Riley, other percussionists have been either added or substituted on some tracks. Thus Candido (on bongos and congas) replaces Riley and Hall is omitted on *Jungoso* and *Bluesongo*, two Rollins compositions that are interesting but fail to display his talent in that area to its greatest advantage.

Only *The Night Has a Thousand Eyes* gives us the quartet with Jim Hall, and, while it does not measure up to some of the tracks in Rollins' first RCA release, "The Bridge" (AFL1-8059), it at least demonstrates what a winning combination this was. Rollins is sometimes at his best when he reflects his West Indian heritage, but not so on *Brown-skin Girl*, which features the quintet augmented by three percussionists and a miserable group of vocalists who sound like a bar gang on a Friday night. The same combination, sans vocalists, is heard on *If Ever I Would Leave You*, a track that has Rollins playing at his surging best. It's a magnificent performance, the only real nugget in an album that despite its title is merely gold-filled.

The 1962 session that produced *If Ever I Would Leave You* also yielded *Don't Stop the Carnival*, another calypso item that, rerecorded, is the opening and title cut of Rollins' latest Milestone album. This release comes as a breath of fresh air after a series of largely disappointing Milestone albums, and it should do much to re-establish Sonny Rollins as a major jazz artist. Recorded on three nights during an engagement at San Francisco's Great American Music Hall in April of last year, the two-record set is given added spark by the guest appearance of drummer Tony Williams and added interest by the presence of trumpeter Donald Byrd on five of the nine tracks.

"Don't Stop the Carnival" is not a consistently brilliant album, but as a single-disc set it could have been, for exactly half of its one hour and ten minutes comprises some of the most exciting, brilliantly executed jazz it has been my pleasure to hear in a very long time. That half—*Don't Stop the Carnival*, *Silver*



SONNY ROLLINS
Exciting, brilliantly executed jazz

City, *Autumn Nocturne*, and *President Hayes*—proves in a most striking way what I ventured to guess in my review of Rollins' last album ("Easy Living," Milestone M-9080): Rollins is at his creative best in a live performance. Of the four selections, Byrd appears only on *President Hayes*, making a strong showing that should bring him absolution for the sins committed on such Blue Note albums as "Street Lady" and "Caricatures," but he still only blows a breeze to Rollins' storm. Listen to the intense fire of *Silver City*, treat your ears to the spitting emotions of *Autumn Nocturne*, and I think you will agree that the elusive Sonny Rollins is indeed back in full force. C.A.

FATS WALLER: A Legendary Performer. Fats Waller (piano, organ, vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Ain't Misbehavin'*; *I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter*; *Handful of Keys*; *The Jitterbug Waltz*; *How Ya Baby?*; *The Joint Is Jumpin'*; *Honey-suckle Rose*; *Viper's Drag*; and five others. RCA CPL-1-2904 (e) \$8.98.

Performance: **Classics**
Recording: **Ersatz stereo**

This disc is basically a "best-of" album designed to tie in with the success of *Ain't Misbehavin'*, the Broadway musical revue. The material included might be too familiar to long-time fans of Thomas Wright "Fats" Waller, but for newcomers it's a good introduction to the glory of Great Tom.

The version of *Ain't Misbehavin'* included here is Waller's 1929 piano solo, the first and most satisfying of the many versions he was compelled to record throughout his career. *The Jitterbug Waltz* is an example of his ingratiating musical humor. Unfortunately, this 1942 recording was made with a big swing band. Waller never felt comfortable with anything larger than a combo, and from this cut you can understand why: the band blows the charts as perfunctorily as civil servants file theirs. Waller plays the opening statement on a console model organ—then a crude instrument—and the tinny sound also detracts from the flirtatious beauty of the melody. Waller's 1934 piano solo of *Viper's Drag* is one of his
(Continued on page 150)



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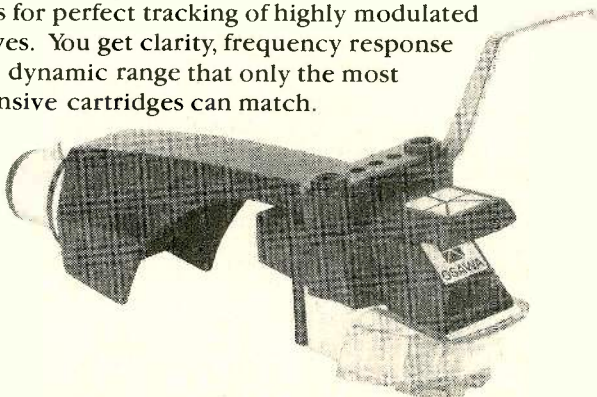
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IN the beginning there was the team of Lonnie Johnson and Eddie Lang. Individually they helped put the jazz guitar on the map as a solo instrument, and together they recorded some remarkable duets that still stand as models of fluent, concise instrumental dialogue. In the fifty years since the Johnson/Lang duets appeared on the Okeh label, other guitar teams have stepped out from time to time: Carl Kress and George Barnes, Chet Atkins and Les Paul, Marty Grosz and Wayne Wright, Larry Coryell and Philip Catherine, to name some that come immediately to mind.

Coryell and Catherine's new "Splendid" is a follow-up to "Twin House" (Elektra 6E-123), the hastily recorded yet stunning set of duos that marked their recording debut as a team. In a favorable review of that album, I couldn't help but wonder what the result might have been if the two guitarists had been granted more time. Now we know, and the album's title says it all: splendid.

Unlike "Twin House," this set is not all acoustic, nor is it all guitar; Catherine goes electric on *Father Christmas*, a tune he wrote with Charles Mingus in mind, and pianist Joachim Kühn makes an effective guest appearance on *Deus Xango*, a tune that reflects the musical heritage of its composer, Argentinian

Astor Piazzolla. Again, the two guitarists display an impressive combination of polished technique, improvisatory skill, and ensemble, three attributes most strongly evidenced on Coryell's *One Plus Two Blues* and Jimmy Giuffre's *The Train and the River*, the marvelously impressionistic piece that Giuffre performed with his trio in 1957 on the almost legendary *The Sound of Jazz* TV special. There is also the seemingly obligatory bow to Django Reinhardt, this time in the form of *My Serenade*, a characteristically lyrical melody first recorded by the Belgian guitarist in 1937.

At a time when Lucite guitars blare electronically processed clichés all around us, the thoroughly original, *musical* sound of Larry Coryell and Philip Catherine is particularly refreshing.
—Chris Albertson

LARRY CORYELL AND PHILIP CATHERINE: *Splendid*. Larry Coryell, Philip Catherine (guitars); Joachim Kühn (piano). *One Plus Two Blues*; *Snowshadows*; *Transvested Express*; *Deus Xango*; *My Serenade*; *No More Booze*; *Father Christmas*; *A Quiet Day in Spring*; *The Train and the River*. ELEKTRA 6E-153 \$7.98, © ET8-153 \$7.97, © TCS-153 \$7.97.

best. It describes the effects of smoking pot, and the mock melodrama is underscored by Waller's reference to *In the Hall of the Mountain King* from Grieg's *Peer Gynt*.

It's impossible to beat Waller at his own game—with which I'm sure the distinguished cast of the revue would agree—and his spoken comments and jokes on *Lounging at the Waldorf* are delivered with a comic timing and a personal sense of the absurd that is simultaneously broad and subtle. Waller was famous for his capacity for alcohol, but sometimes it tripped him up, as on *How Ya Baby?*, where he attempts to sing, finds it won't work after the first lyric line, and talks his way through the rest of the song. You can only admire and marvel at his sense of self-preservation.

The other selections are firmly, and rightly, established in the Waller canon for their musical and comedic value, especially *Your Feet's Too Big*, which contains some immortal Waller lines.

As for the sound of the reissue, I must agree with Chris Albertson, who in reviewing the Louis Armstrong set from the "Legendary Performer" series wondered why RCA insists on doctoring mono recordings for a stereo effect. Volume and tone are slightly improved, but the sound is hollow and blatantly phony. As compensation, the series includes well-illustrated accompanying booklets; Mike Lipskin's notes for the Waller package are studious and affectionate. Overall, Great Tom would be pleased.
J. V.



THEATER • FILMS

EVERY GOOD BOY DESERVES FAVOUR (Tom Stoppard—André Previn). Ian Richardson, Ivanov; Ian McKellen, Alexander; Elizabeth Spriggs, Teacher; Andrew Sheldon, Sasha; Patrick Stewart, Doctor; Philip Locke, Colonel. London Symphony Orchestra, André Previn cond. RCA ABL1-2855 \$8.98, © ABK1-2855 \$8.98.

Performance: **Very English**
Recording: **Striking**

The genre of spoken word with music—the proper technical term is *melodrama*—has long attracted musicians and poets as well as theater people, and many kinds of experiments have been made over the years (I've made a few myself). But, except for certain special cases, there is always an element of confusion. Is the music supposed to illustrate the words? Or comment on them? Or create the proper mood? With the sung word, the case is different; words and music all inhabit the same universe, the same time frame.

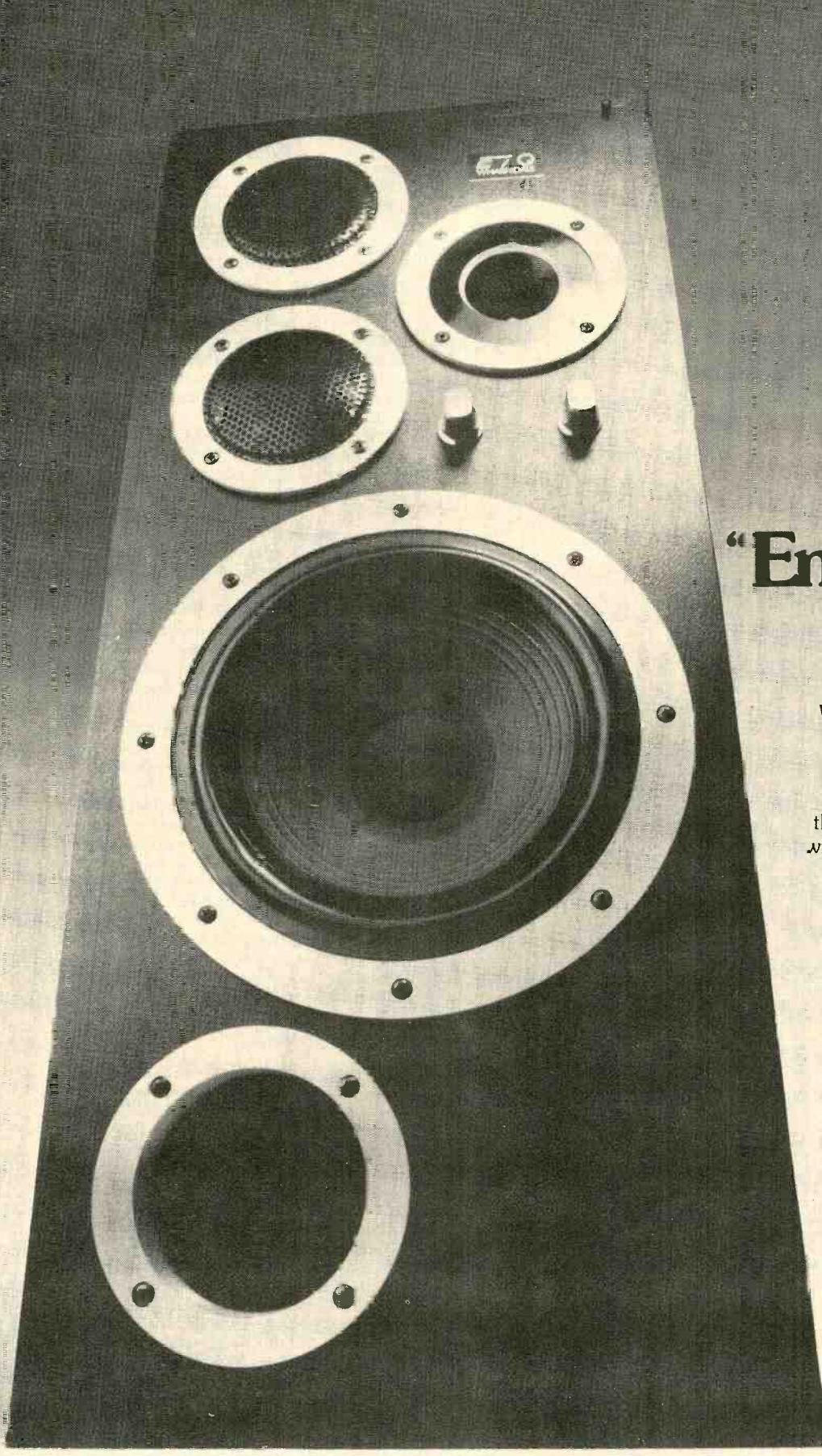
Every Good Boy Deserves Favour (the British version of "Every good boy does fine," the mnemonic for learning the treble staff) is a play by Tom Stoppard that could function just as well (if not better) without André Previn's Bernstein-Prokofievish score. The idea is intriguing and strong. A Russian political prisoner is put in a psychiatric cell with a triangle player who imagines he has an orchestra at his disposal. Stoppard's metaphor is clear: only madmen would think they can orchestrate society like a symphony. The script, typically for Stoppard, is full of all kinds of baby rhymes and puns threading together the themes of music, illness, and political repression. Stoppard has, in fact, already orchestrated his work far more directly than Previn's fancy, irrelevant, symphonic movie score. The play creates a separate "reality," and the music is only incidental.

But let's go back and start again. If we listen to this as just a recorded play—a play in sound—we can appreciate it for what it is: a clever, chilling, witty, and ironic exercise about politics, insanity, and language, themes that are very close to Stoppard and, indeed, very contemporary and relevant to us all. As such, the whole thing is brilliantly performed and produced.
—Eric Salzman

THE ROBBER BRIDEGROOM (Alfred Uhry—Robert Waldman). Original-cast recording. Barry Bostwick, Rhonda Coulet, Barbara Lang, Lawrence John Moss, others (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. COLUMBIA SPECIAL PRODUCTS P 14589 \$7.98.

Performance: **Paler than it seemed live**
Recording: **Excellent**

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(Continued on page 152)



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Welty's celebrated sly tale about the "gentleman robber" Jamie Lockhart and his exploits in the Mississippi Territory of the 1790's, swept into New York with the verve and vitality of a square dance, leaving audiences breathless with admiration when the action, uninterrupted even by an intermission, ended as suddenly and dashing as it had begun. Barry Bostwick, as the bandit who "steals with style," was such an athletically adroit and engaging Jamie that he made every one of the songs, with lyrics by Alfred Uhry and music by Robert Waldman, sound like some treasurable specimen of folk music that would endure forever. Joining Bostwick were Rhonda Coulter as the day-dreaming Rosamund helplessly enthralled by the swaggering Jamie, Barbara Lang as her jealous stepmother Salome, and a chorus as limber and earthy as the frontier types they were dressed up to represent, singing and dancing to the on-stage music of a fine string band.

The members of this vigorous cast started out earning \$10 a week from performances at St. Clement's Church in New York, but the show soon moved to Broadway, gleaned several Tony awards, and is still kept alive by road companies both here and abroad. No wonder people were so anxious to get hold of the original-cast recording, which has been available unofficially for some time through mail-order arrangements. Now that it's available through stores on the Columbia Special Products label, is *The Robber Bridegroom* all we who saw it thought it was? Well, *Steal with Style*, *Little Piece of Sugar Cane*, and *Deeper in the Woods* still come across as deftly fashioned items, Barry Bostwick is almost as engaging to hear as he was to see leaping about the set, and the energy of the whole performance still sizzles and crackles. But the score, I fear, is rather thinner than it seemed on first encounter and not nearly so entertaining when separated from the visual action of which it was so integral a part. A happy souvenir of a splendid effort, but somewhat less than splendid on its own. P.K.

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Performance: **Spirited**
Recording: **Flawed**

I have long admired War's ability to take a fairly simple motif and develop it into a melodically and rhythmically interesting structure while avoiding the pitfall of trite repetitions. Furthermore, they bring to their music a raw energy that finds its outlet in unison chants, capturing the flavor of a spontaneous street-corner come-together. All these strengths are in evidence on this new album, which gets off to a fairly promising start. But after a point, it becomes increasingly apparent that this music was meant to accompany some other action—after all, it is a film soundtrack, music designed to enhance a drama.

Yet this is not a poorly conceived album in purely musical terms. Though many of the ideas are inadequately developed and it falls far short of Isaac Hayes' "Shaft," the exemplary soul soundtrack album of all time, "Youngblood" is clearly representative of the War style. Unfortunately my review copy was riddled with flaws: blurred passages, bumps, and scrapes. I hope such errors are not passed on to the public as well. P.G.

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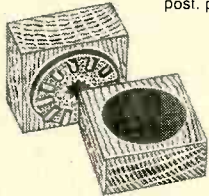
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TRY THE MARANTZ PA WILL NEVER KNOW OUR

By using a simple test you can prove to yourself that Marantz loudspeakers deliver the same brilliant sound separation over the widest possible listening area:

Here's the test:

Have your Marantz dealer place any pair of Marantz floor standing loudspeakers in a normal listening position. Now, listen as your selection of dynamic music is played through the Marantz loudspeakers. Notice the three dimensional quality of the sound. Now close your eyes and have two people slowly turn the Marantz loudspeakers until they're actually *facing each other*.

Did the sound change?

In almost every case we've found the listener cannot hear a change in the sound... because there isn't any! Even with the loudspeakers facing each other. Incredible!

But if you try the same test with most conventional loudspeakers you'll notice a striking difference. The sound literally falls apart. You'll hear a loss of overtones—sparkle and brilliance—all the qualities that make music open and spacious disappear.

WHY MARANTZ PASSED THE TEST WHILE OTHERS FAIL.

In a nutshell: Constant Radiated Power (CRP)—180 degrees dispersion regardless of frequency. To achieve CRP we consider both the frequency response and dispersion characteristics of each individual transducer in the system; woofer, midrange and tweeter. The result is a unique design approach incorporating three important performance parameters:

1. We know that dispersion is determined by the diameter of the radiating surface—the speaker cone—and the frequency being reproduced. So we pick the precise frequency at which each individual driver radiates 180 degrees and use this as the crossover point.

But many manufacturers often crossover at a frequency where, for example, the woofer's dispersion has already started to beam. Why? They may be trying to save money by using cheaper transducers and crossover networks. Or, perhaps they consider CRP to be unimportant. But you won't!

2. Our transducers are positioned on the baffle to ensure the best possible dispersion.

Other manufacturers may position their driver for eye-appeal, but that's not good enough for Marantz.

3. To control transition between our drivers, we use the most sophisticated, best thought-out crossover networks ever developed.

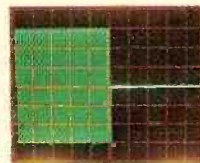
As you can see from the illustration below (Fig. A), wherever you are in the room you hear the same ideal stereo separation and 180 degrees dispersion pattern. Notice how the other speaker

"beams" certain frequencies in a narrow corridor (Fig. B). Unless you sit directly in front of those speakers, you lose part of the music.

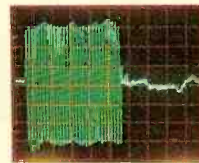
TRANSDUCERS YOU'D EXPECT FROM A WINNER.

Wide sound dispersion alone doesn't guarantee sonic accuracy. You also

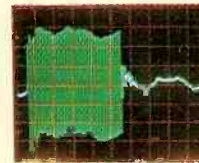
Tone burst test demonstrates superior low stored energy characteristics of Marantz loudspeakers.



Original signal. Note instant start/instant stop of trace.



Marantz loudspeaker. Note close similarity to original signal.



Competitor. Note overhang caused by inability of cone to stop vibrating.

need transducers that exhibit low distortion and low stored energy.

Stored energy is the continued vibration of a loudspeaker's radiating element after the driving force has stopped. It can exist in any loudspeaker; woofer, midrange or tweeter, and is heard as a smearing or running together of the individual instruments.

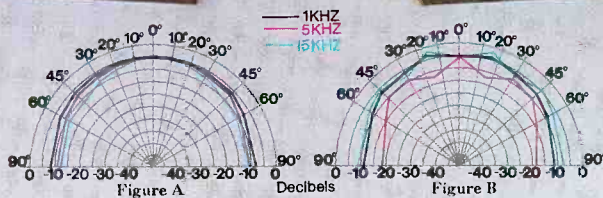
To assure Low Stored Energy, Marantz uses extremely rigid cones and domes tightly coupled to the voice coil to create a homogeneous rigid structure. Accurate control of this structure is then assured by an extremely powerful magnetic motor assembly. The result is that Marantz transducers move as a unit in a smooth, piston-like motion without the slightest hint of cone break-up or flexing—even under the most rapid acceleration and deceleration! You hear precise, sharp instrument definition—the truest musical sound possible—wherever you are in the room!

Your Marantz dealer has the full line of Marantz speaker systems. If you truly want the best—and are willing to spend a little more to get it—then go for it. Go for Marantz.



25th Anniversary **marantz**®

VOT TEST. YOUR EARS LOUDSPEAKERS MOVED.



The Marantz speaker disperses all the frequencies 180 degrees.

Conventional speakers tend to narrow certain frequencies.

In actual test, speakers should be placed the same distance apart as you are away from them.



“Records and tapes just seem to sound more crisp with the Koss Pro/4 Triple A.”

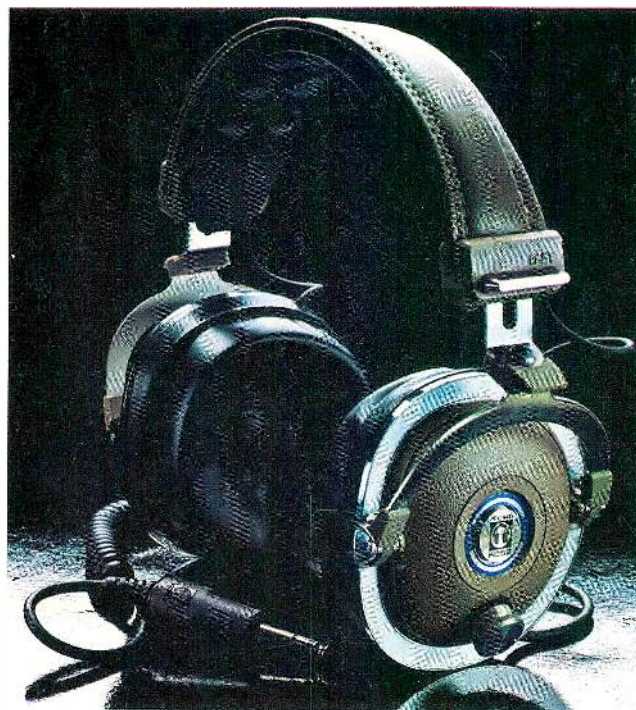
Rob Hernandez
Audio Salesman
Kansas City, Missouri

“The cleaner high end and the richness of the bass ... it seems like it's always been a Koss characteristic. The Triple A is just a great stereophone.”

The Triple A's drivers were specially designed with an extra large diaphragm and oversized voice coil that reproduce a full-bandwidth dynamic Sound of Koss over the entire frequency range of 10Hz to 22kHz.

“You'd be amazed at the number of people who come back and say how much better their receiver sounds when they're listening to their Triple A's. In fact, a lot of people have even come back to buy better speakers after hearing their records or tapes through their Triple A stereophones.”

That's great Rob. Here are some of the reasons why the Pro/4 Triple A's make one's favorite records or



tapes sound like a whole new musical library. First, unlike speakers the Triple A's mix the music in your head not on the walls of your living room or den. Second, the superb seal of the Triple A's Pneumalite® earcushions not only seals out ambient noise but it also provides for an extended bass performance to below audibility. And third, the seal of the earcushions creates an ideal environment for minimizing

the linear excursion of the driver. Thus, the driver is able to produce any volume level without distortion. So you hear all the fundamentals and harmonics of your favorite music the way they were recorded.

“There's a big increase in women coming in to buy stereophones. They come in and already know their stuff. Some of them even ask for the Koss Triple A's with the Pneumalite® earcushions.”

Chances are, Rob, that most of your customers can't spell Pneumalite®. But when it comes to seal, and the ultimate in comfort they know that Koss developed them.

“My wife Kathy was crazy about the Pro/4 Double A's. But the new Triple A's, wow! She can't get over how great they sound and how much more comfortable they are.”

Thanks Kathy... and Rob. We're sure you join us in inviting music lovers everywhere to write c/o Virginia Lamm for our free full-color stereophone and CM loud-speaker catalogs. Or to visit their Audio Dealer for a live demonstration of the Koss Pro/4 Triple A's. We're sure they'll agree with Rob, that when it comes to the Pro/4 Triple A, and other Koss stereophones and speakers: hearing is believing.

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hearing is believing™

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