

LAB  
TEST  
SPECIAL

JANUARY 1982 \$1.50  
ICD\* 08398

# High Fidelity

T.M.

THE MAGAZINE OF AUDIO, VIDEO, CLASSICAL MUSIC AND POPULAR MUSIC

**Can Your Stereo System Handle True Digital Audio?**  
**Special! Hands-On Test of Sony's Top Home VCR**  
**Annual Pop Music Forecast—Cloudy, With 100% Chance of Video**  
**A Classical Faceoff—Can Splashy Music be Classy Too?**

**We Test 10 Brand-New Components!**

**Sherwood's Spiffy Receiver**  
**Astatic's Super-Smooth Pickup**  
**8 More In-Depth Lab/Listening Reports**

ASHLAND  
KY 41101  
COUNTRY CLUB CRT DBG  
000 024 1 HIF  
02811 JAN82  
COUNTRY CLUB CRT DBG  
000 024 1 HIF  
02811 JAN82  
SHERWOOD  
4605 COUNTRY CLUB CRT DBG  
KY 41101



# A WHOLE NEW TOP OF ALL THESE FEATURES.

have won Pioneer acclaim throughout the high fidelity industry.

Pioneer's engineers have designed an exclusive ID MOS FET transistor for the front end of the SX-7's tuner. It allows you to tune in stations with weaker signals without worrying about stronger stations causing distortion due to front end overload. That's what keeps the SX-7 virtually free of RF intermodulation.

But no matter how free a receiver is from all forms of distortion, it must be able to keep the station you select perfectly tuned for hours. Pioneer's quartz-PLL digital synthesized tuning does this by making drift virtually impossible.

Pioneer's exclusive  
Non-switching™ amp

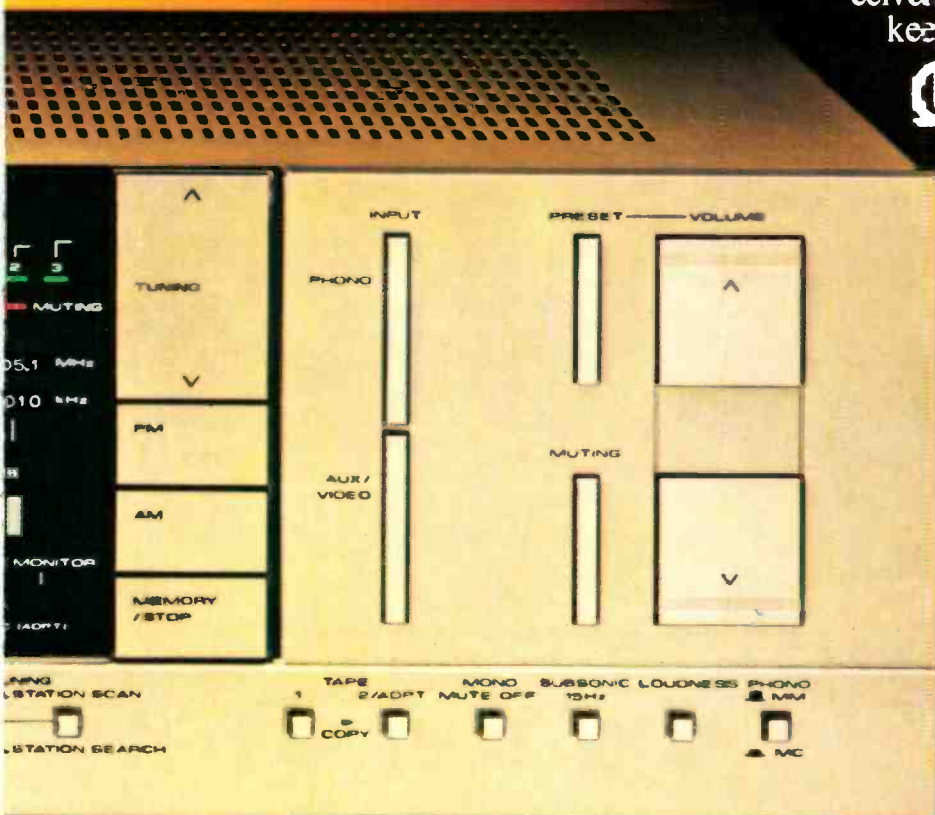
also eliminates distortion caused by output transistors switching on and off thousands of times a second in response to music signals. This is one of the reasons that the total harmonic distortion of the SX-7 is no more than 0.009% (continuous average power output of 60 watts per channel minimum at 8 ohms, from 20Hz to 20,000Hz).

And Pioneer's high-gain phono preamp section allows the use of either MM or low-output MC cartridges selectable by a front panel switch. There's even a Subsonic filter you can use to do away with very low frequency interference caused by record warps.

Now if you think all these features sound great in print, listen to them in person at your nearby Pioneer dealer. He'll demonstrate the SX-7 and an entire new line of Pioneer receivers. And you'll quickly see that we've done everything humanly possible to give you more music for your money.

That's what made Pioneer No. 1 in receivers. And that's what's going to keep us there.

## SX-7 RECEIVER.



 **PIONEER®**  
We bring it back alive.

# AND ONLY PIONEER OFFERS ENGINEERING CONCEPT ON

You'd expect a new receiver from the leading manufacturer of stereo receivers to be packed with exciting features. As you can see, it is. But Pioneer didn't get to be No. 1 in receivers by doing the expected and stopping.

So we developed the SX-7 using a unique engineering concept we call High Fidelity for Humans. It makes the SX-7 as superb to live with as it is to listen to.

At the heart of the receiver is a microcomputer that's been programmed to operate controls electronically. It affords the owner of the SX-7 operating convenience unlike any previously available in conventional receiver designs.

For example, the microcomputer's prodigious memory allows you to preset up to eight FM and eight AM stations and recall them instantly. Once set, all stations are

directly accessible via "Station Call" buttons. And you can even recall them at the preprogrammed volume level because the microcomputer electronically controls volume setting.

What's more, with just the touch of a button you can search out the next station up (or down) the AM or FM tuning band. Stations are brought in perfectly tuned every time. And you can select any station by tuning it manually or scanning the entire band automatically sampling five seconds of each station.

But these human engineering features aren't all that make the SX-7 such an extraordinary receiver. It also offers features that

## INTRODUCING THE PIONEER



**NO OTHER  
RECEIVER  
OFFERS  
ALL THESE  
FEATURES.**

## Computerized Push Button Controls:

Pioneer has programmed a microcomputer to operate controls electronically for improved accuracy, reliability and convenience.



## Quartz PLL Digital Synthesized Tuning:

FM "Drift" is eliminated by this incredibly accurate tuner.

## Station Scan:



Touch this control and you'll hear

five seconds of every station strong enough to meet the mute threshold.

## Station Search:

Touch this control and move to the next station up, or down, the band.

## Subsonic Filter:

This control lets you do away with ultra low frequency distortion caused by record warps and such.

## Touch Volume:

The SX-7 will digitally display and recall any of 32 volume levels at the touch of a button.

## Eight AM presets, eight FM presets:

The SX-7 will memorize eight of your favorite FM and eight of your favorite AM stations and retrieve them instantly.



## Non-Switching Amp:

Pioneer's patented amp design gets rid of transistor switching distortion once and for all.

## High-Gain Phono Preamp:

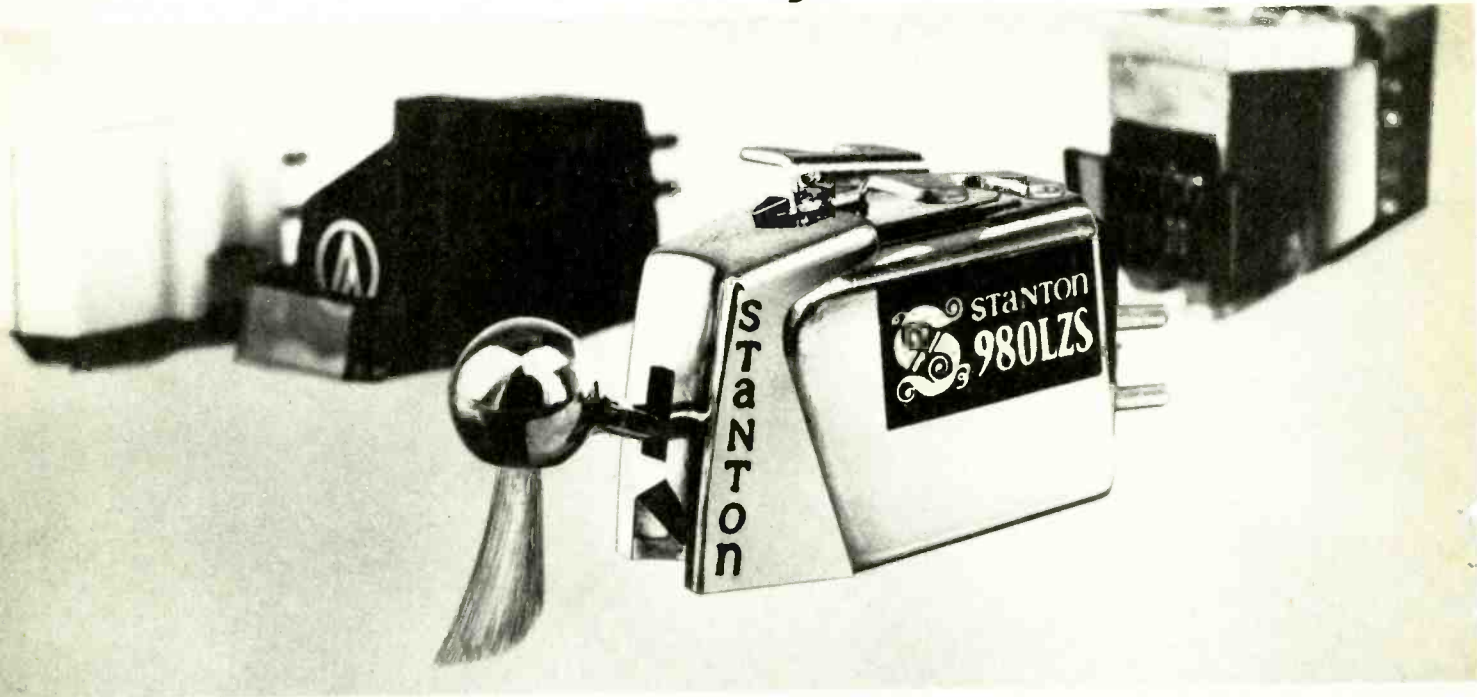
Allows the use of either MM or low-output MC cartridges.

## ID MOS FET Front End:

This exclusive transistor circuitry tunes in weak stations as clearly and quickly as strong stations.



# The moving coil replacement from Stanton Magnetics... the revolutionary 980LZS!



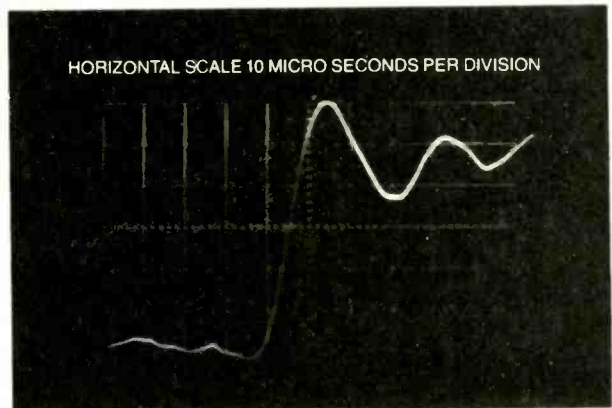
Now from the company to whom the professionals look for setting standards in audio equipment comes a spectacular new cartridge concept. A low impedance pickup that offers all the advantages of a moving magnet cartridge without the disadvantages of the moving coil pickup. At the same time it offers exceedingly fast rise time—less than 10 micro seconds—resulting in dramatic new crispness in sound reproduction—a new “openness” surpassing that of even the best of moving coil designs. The 980LZS incorporates very low dynamic tip mass (0.2 mg.) with extremely high compliance for superb tracking. It tracks the most demanding of the new so called “test” digitally mastered and direct cut recordings with ease and smoothness at 1 gram  $\pm \frac{1}{2}$ .

The 980LZS features the famous Stereohedron™ stylus and a lightweight samarium cobalt super magnet. The output can be connected either into the moving coil input of a modern receiver's preamps or can be used with a preamp, whose output is fed into the conventional phono input.

For “moving coil” audiophiles the 980LZS offers a new standard of consistency and reliability while maintaining all the sound characteristics even the most critical moving coil advocates demand. For moving magnet advocates the 980LZS provides one more level of sound experience while maintaining all

the great sound characteristics of cleanliness and frequency response long associated with fine moving magnet assemblies.

From Stanton ... The Choice of The Professionals.  
For further information write to: Stanton Magnetics,  
Terminal Drive, Plainview, N.Y. 11803.



Actual unretouched oscilloscope photograph showing rise time of 980LZS using CBS STR112 record.



## STANTON

THE CHOICE OF THE PROFESSIONALS™

# High Fidelity

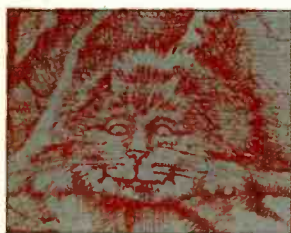
VOLUME 32  
NUMBER 1  
JANUARY 1982



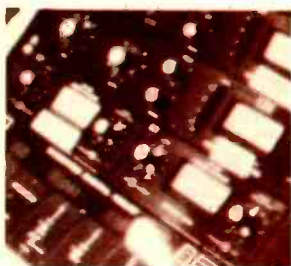
42 *By the Numbers*



49 *Cashing in*



51 *Culshaw's Cat*



78 *Bill's Board*

## AUDIO

<b>High Fidelity News</b> by Dawn Gordon		
Gem of a Cartridge; Time Machine; Car Power; Rack-Mount Reverb		12
<b>CrossTalk</b> by Michael Riggs		
Cassette Chaos; Wired for Sound; Put It on Delay		16
<b>Basically Speaking</b> by Michael Riggs		
Noise and distortion; smog on the aural landscape		19
<b>*New Equipment Reports</b>		
Pioneer A-5 integrated amplifier	20	Denon DH-330 cassette deck
Sherwood S-9600CP receiver	22	Ortofon VMS-30 Mk. II cartridge
Stanton 980LZS cartridge	27	Genesis Physics Model 210 speakers
Dual 607 turntable	28	Astatic MF-100 cartridge
Hitachi HTA-4000 receiver	33	Koss Pro-4X headphones
		41
<b>*Meeting the Digital Challenge</b> by Robert Long		
Where will your stereo system stand come the revolution?		42

## VIDEO TODAY AND TOMORROW

<b>Video Fronts</b> by Dawn Gordon	
Big Screen on a Budget; Front-Loading Beta Deck; Video Cassette Labels	45
<b>*Hands-On Report</b> by Edward J. Foster	
Sony's top-of-the-line SL-5800 VCR is put through its paces	46
<b>Video Q. &amp; A.</b> by Edward J. Foster	
Second-generation Dropouts	48
<b>TubeFood</b> Edited by Susan Elliott	
Video cassette, video disc, and pay cable programming highlights	48
<b>InFocus</b> by Ira Mayer	
Warner's controversial rental-only proposal for video cassettes	49

## CLASSICAL MUSIC

<b>A Gaffe, a Goof, and a Spoof</b> by John Culshaw	
<i>Peter and the Wolf</i> rewritten; Brahms botched; <i>Salome</i> in SonicStage	51
<b>*Carl Orff:</b>	
<b>Bungled Fireworks?</b> by Paul Henry Lang	
Have cherished traditions given way to manufactured thrills?	52
... <b>Or Skillful Effects?</b> by R. D. Darrell	
Or is there genuine imagination at work in this music?	53
<b>A Bubble Close to Bursting</b> Reviewed by Matthew Gurewitsch	
<i>Sophisticated Ladies</i> , spread thin on vinyl, still offers much pleasure	56
<b>An Unperfected Beethoven Masterpiece</b> Reviewed by Harris Goldsmith	
The original Op. 18, No. 1, in a fine recording	58
<b>Record Reviews:</b>	
Mussorgsky's original <i>Bare Mountain</i> ; Prokofiev's film music; Verdi's <i>Ballo</i>	60
<b>Critics' Choice</b>	61
<b>Theater and Film:</b> <i>Eye of the Needle</i> ; <i>Heavy Metal</i>	76
<b>The Tape Deck</b> by R. D. Darrell	
Recyclings; HiTech Debuts; Philips/Barclay-Crocker open reels	77

## BACKBEAT/Popular Music

<b>The BACKBEAT Interview: Bill Szyczyk, Part 2</b> by Crispin Cioe	
A look at what makes his studio special	78
<b>*Music and Recording in 1981</b> by Steven X. Rea	
Rock looks to its senior citizens to cure the bottom-line blues	82
<b>The Police: Third World Rock &amp; Roll</b> Reviewed by Crispin Cioe	
"Ghost in the Machine" is the trio's finest hour	84
<b>Pop Records:</b> Carly Simon; Lindsey Buckingham; Neil Young; Prince	84
<b>Jazz Records:</b> Akiyoshi/Tabackin Big Band; Bob Brookmeyer; Kid Ory	91

## DEPARTMENTS

Letters	6	Reader-Service Cards	65
		Advertising Index	98

# SOUND SO GOOD IT KEEPS THE BAD AWAY.



## FUJI AUDIO CASSETTES.

Sound, pure and perfect. To take you where you want to be  
...anytime you want to be there.

©1981 Fuji Photo Film U.S.A., Inc., Magnetic Tape Division, 350 Fifth Avenue, NY, NY 10116



William Tynan,  
*Editor-in-Chief*  
Shirley Fleming,  
*Editor, Musical America*  
Susan Elliott,  
*Managing Editor /*  
*Editor, Backbeat*  
James R. Oestreich,  
*Classical Music Editor*  
Robert Long,  
*Audio-Video Editor*  
Robert Maddocks,  
*Director of Graphics*  
Michael Riggs,  
*Associate Audio-Video Editor*  
Peter Hemingson,  
*Copy Editor*  
Dawn Gordon,  
*Assistant Audio-Video Editor*  
Susan E. Fingerhut,  
*Assistant Music Editor*  
Diane Albano-Vian,  
Janet Wolf,  
*Editorial Assistants*  
Edward J. Foster,  
*Consulting Audio Editor*  
*Contributing Editors:* Crispin Cioe, R. D. Darrell, Harris Goldsmith, Edward Greenfield, David Hamilton, Dale Harris, Don Heckman, Stephen Holden, Nicholas Kenyon, Paul Henry Lang, Irving Lowens, Robert C. Marsh, Fred Miller, Andrew Porter, Steven X. Rea, Susan Thiemann Sommer, John S. Wilson.

Kathleen Davis,  
*Director of Production*  
Randy Brozen,  
*Audio-Video Production Editor*  
Susan M. Allyn,  
*Circulation Director, Subscription Sales*  
Dominic Mustello,  
*Circulation Director, Newsstand Sales*  
William P. Johnson,  
*Circulation Service Manager*  
Suzanne Hochman,  
*Direct Mail Manager*  
Steven I. Rosenbaum,  
*Publisher*  
*Coverphoto: George Menda*

### ADVERTISING

**New York:** ABC Leisure Magazines, Inc., 825 7th Ave., 8th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10019. Telephone: (212) 265-8360. Seymour Resnick, Advertising Director, Raymond Foster, Associate Advertising Director, George Dickey, Record Advertising Manager; Ozzie Bruno, Eastern Advertising Manager, Yetta Peltzman, Classified Advertising Manager; Robert Maddocks, Director of Graphics; Kathleen Davis, Director of Production; Janet Cermak, Advertising Production Manager; Cecelia Giunta, Administrative Assistant.

**Midwest:** ABC Leisure Magazines, Inc., 190 N. State St., Room 632, Chicago, Ill. 60601. Telephone: (312) 782-1173. William P. Gordon, Midwest Advertising Manager.

**Los Angeles:** ABC Leisure Magazines, Inc., 2020 Avenue of the Stars, Suite 245, Century City, Calif. 90067. Telephone: (213) 557-6481. Andrew Spanberger, National Advertising Manager, Janet Endrinjas, Western Advertising Manager.

**Tokyo:** Japan Advertising Communications, Inc., New Ginza Bldg., 7-3-13 Ginza, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104, Japan. Telephone: (03) 571-8748. Shigeru Kobayashi, President.

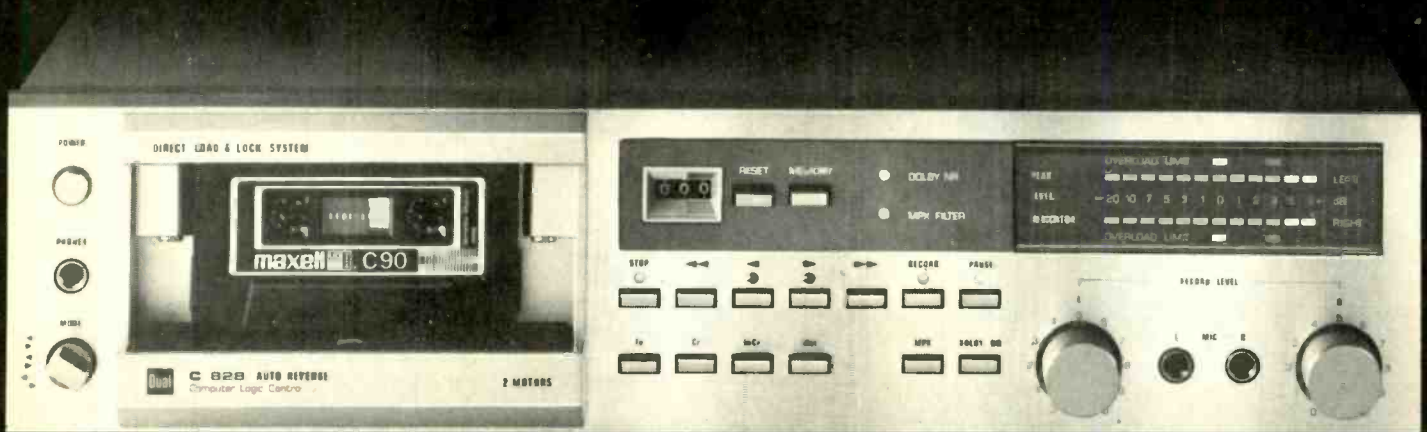
**High Fidelity and High Fidelity / Musical America** are published monthly by ABC Leisure Magazines, Inc., a division of ABC Publishing, Inc., and a subsidiary of American Broadcasting Companies, Inc. Robert G. Burton, President, ABC Publishing, Inc. ABC Leisure Magazines, Inc.: Herbert Keppler, Senior Vice President, Photographic Publishing Division; Ernest G. Scarfone, Vice President, Graphics and Production; Steven I. Rosenbaum, Vice President, High Fidelity Group; Ronald Stuart, Vice President, Finance. Member Audit Bureau of Circulation. Indexed in Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature. Current and back copies of High Fidelity and High Fidelity / Musical America are available on microfilm from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. Microfiche copies of these magazines (1973 forward) are available through Bell & Howell Micro Photo Division, Old Mansfield Road, Wooster, O. 44691.

Editorial correspondence should be addressed to The Editor, High Fidelity, 825 7th Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019. Editorial contributions will be welcomed, and payment for articles accepted will be arranged prior to publication. Submissions must be accompanied by return postage and will be handled with reasonable care; however, the publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited photographs or manuscripts.

**HIGH FIDELITY** is published monthly at 825 7th Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019, by ABC Leisure Magazines, Inc., a subsidiary of American Broadcasting Companies, Inc. Copyright © 1981 by ABC Leisure Magazines, Inc. The design and contents are fully protected by copyright and must not be reproduced in any manner. Second-class postage paid at New York, New York, and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, and for payment of postage in cash. Yearly subscription in U.S.A. and Possessions \$13.95; elsewhere \$18.95. Single copies \$1.50. Subscribers: Send subscriptions, inquiries, and address changes to High Fidelity, P.O. Box 10759, Des Moines, Iowa 50340. Change of Address: Give old and new addresses, including ZIP Code. Enclose address label from last issue and allow five weeks for change to become effective. Postmaster: send Form 3579 to High Fidelity, P.O. Box 10759, Des Moines, Iowa 50340. Postal Identification Number 243820.



# No other cassette deck looks, loads, records, or plays like the new Dual 828.



There's more hands-on involvement with a cassette deck than with any other component. Much more. That's why you should take a long, hard, critical look at any deck you're considering. Put it through its paces, get the feel of its controls, the smoothness of its transport. And, of course, listen to tapes recorded on it.

Now, we'd like to tell you a little about what you'll experience with the Dual 828. And no other deck.

## Direct Load and Lock system

Switch the 828 on and a protective shield swivels away from the tape heads. To load the cassette, simply place it in the open compartment—there's no door in the way.

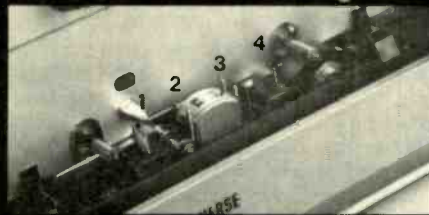


The cassette locks automatically in perfect alignment with the tape heads. You can always remove the cassette instantly—even if the tape is in motion. Photo-electric switches stop the tape the instant your fingers interrupt the beam.

We call this system Direct Load and Lock. And it's a Dual exclusive.

## Four-point tape guidance system

Good tape-to-head avoids drop-outs and achieves extended high-



frequency response. In the 828, four precisely aligned tape guides make sure this contact is perfect.

## One-button record ready

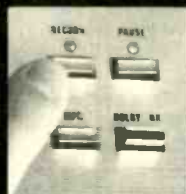
To set up for recording, simply press the record button. That action automatically activates pause.

Then to begin recording, press play. (Makes sense, doesn't it?)

You'll quickly come to appreciate the computer logic that lets you change mode and tape direction as fast as you like. And if a faulty cassette should ever jam, an electronic sensor stops the tape in a fraction of a second. The tape just can't tangle, stretch or snap.

## Automatic reverse

The 828 provides automatic reverse when recording and playing. Thus, a C-90 cassette can actually give you 90 uninterrupted minutes in both modes. Plus continuous repeat in playback.



## Equalized meters

Not so immediately evident are the advantages of Dual's equalized metering system. You may be surprised to learn that although all decks add a high-frequency boost to the incoming signal, only Dual's equalized meters indicate this boost. The others put more high-frequency signal into the record head than their meters show. And that can lead to overload and distortion.



But with Dual, you can safely record at a level that produces optimum dynamic range. The result: superb recordings every time.

## An exclusive experience

You can't have anything like the same experience with any other deck. Because nearly everything we've described is a Dual exclusive.

That's why we doubt that any other deck can satisfy you like the new Dual 828. Especially at its price: less than \$500.

For complete information, write to United Audio, 120 So. Columbus Ave., Dept. H, Mt. Vernon, NY 10553.



United Audio is exclusive U.S. distribution agency for Dual.

"It is hardly conceivable that a small, inexpensive, lightweight cube such as this could deliver as much clean power as any but a few of the largest conventional amplifiers on the market—but it does!"

Julian Hirsch,  
Hirsch-Houck Labs



### The Carver M-400 Magnetic Field Amplifier

The cube that impressed Julian Hirsch is indeed small: less than 7 inches. And it is very light: less than 10 pounds. And very inexpensive: suggested retail price, \$399.

As for its clean power: 201 watts per channel in stereo and 500 watts mono! That, of course, is RMS into 8 ohms, from 20 to 20kHz with no more than 0.05% total harmonic distortion.

As for its sound, Leonard Feldman reported in *Audio*: "Music reproduction was superb and completely free of any false bass coloration or muddiness... none of that brittle quality that one often detects from amplifiers that are beginning to strain."

In short, the M-400 is musical and accurate.

And now here's good news for everyone with a receiver. The M-400 can be added to it easily—with our new Z-1 coupler. So if you now have a 20-watt receiver, it can be a 201-watt (per channel) receiver!

For literature, test reports and nearest Carver dealer, circle number below. For faster response, write directly to us.

# CARVER

C O R P O R A T I O N

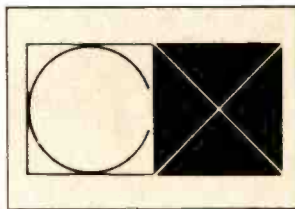
P.O. Box 664, 14304 N.E. 193rd Place  
Woodinville, Washington 98072

Circle 7 on Reader-Service Card

## Letters

### Expanding on CX

In his article about the CX process ["Sound Views," October 1981], Robert Long is understandably perplexed as to what CBS means by "... sound the same as standard records." However, in his hypothesis about going back to the original tapes of Boulez and the New York Philharmonic and remixing them "without any compression," there is an implication that offends me.



The inference that compression was used in those mixes of the Boulez recordings is not only inaccurate, but underlines once again the popular misconception that "black deeds" are going on all the time in the production of a record.

I produced almost all of those recordings, and I can tell you definitively that *no* compression was ever introduced in the mixing of a Boulez/New York Philharmonic recording. The same is true, of course, for the Mehta discs. In fact, because most of Boulez' material was released in quad, even the protective circuits in the disc-mastering equipment were turned off.

It is worth noting that I have never encountered an instance where compression even approached CX's 2:1 over most of the dynamic range.

**Andrew Kazdin**  
Jamaica Estates, N.Y.

**Mr. Long replies:** It's encouraging to know that Mr. Kazdin, at least, has a healthy disdain for compression, even if it means that my choice of the Boulez example (doubtless conditioned by the prominence of Boulez/Philharmonic releases in Columbia's last "big technological push"—for SQ-encoded quadraphonics) was inappropriate. But my ears tell me that black deeds do go on frequently, if not "all the time," in symphonic and operatic recordings.

Certainly, however, it is obvious that the degree of compression involved in CX (2:1 over the upper portion of the dynamic range) is considerably greater than anything normally visited on such material. That's exactly why there remains a question about the ultimate "compatibility" of CX classical recordings played on systems that have no decoder.

A substantial amount of misinformation seems to have been directed toward the public and the industry lately regarding the CBS CX noise-reduction/range-expansion system.

The main complaint of the system's detractors seems to center on the issue of com-

patibility. First, CBS claimed that CX without a decoder was compatible as far as the needs of the average casual listener went, not those of the critical audiophile. Indeed, the system was designed for the audiophile with a decoder. CBS first demonstrated the system (in undecoded form) to several hundred casual listeners, who found it quite acceptable. We, and I am sure the other licensed CX hardware manufacturers, performed similar tests with individuals whose interest in music ranged from the almost nonexistent to the intense. The results were entirely predictable. The casual listener seemed not to care whether a disc was decoded or undecoded, while serious listeners—by virtue of their listening experience and exposure to advanced music-playback systems—could hear the difference. None of the serious listeners found the projected \$100 cost of a CX decoder out of line, particularly in view of the cost of other audio accessories now available, and in view of the fact that CX discs cost no more than conventional discs.

And there are at least two listening situations where the *undecoded* disc may *in fact* be desirable. For example, most automobiles—particularly the small, fuel-efficient variety—do not have enough soundproofing to mask much of the road and wind noise. The ambient noise level in most automobiles is so great that a wide dynamic range may *not* be desirable, simply because so much musical information will be masked. Many types of music will be substantially more listenable in an automobile if they are recorded on cassette from an *undecoded* CX signal. And the casual music listener whose interest is simply background music may find the undecoded CX disc desirable in the home, because the compressed signal will allow him to move around the house without missing the music's softer passages.

We believe the public should listen to CX, and—if they like it—vote for it with their pocketbooks. That's better than having a relatively small group of record producers and mastering engineers with bruised egos determine CX's fate. The reaction of engineers to date has been quite different from that of the music listeners, retail audio salespersons, and audio store owners for whom we have demonstrated CX. We suspect the public at large will join the pro-CX camp!

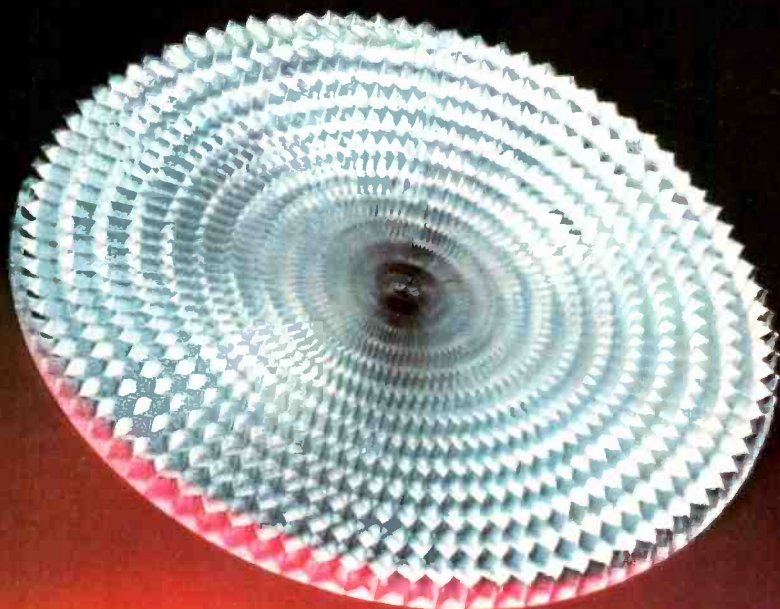
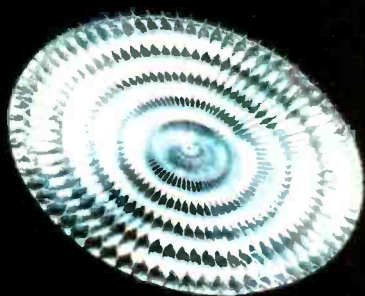
**Charles Wood**, President  
Audionics of Oregon  
Milwaukie, Oregon

The October "Sound Views" column is one of the most succinct and unbiased pieces I have recently seen on the subject of CX—a topic on which there has been a great deal of "choosing sides" without considering the potential benefits to consumers. Thanks for airing all of the sides and arguments and doing so eloquently.

**John J. Bubbers**, Vice President  
Sound Concepts, Inc.  
Brookline, Mass.

### Putting in a Plug

In his review of Barry Tuckwell's recording of the Punte horn concertos [August 1981], R. D. Darrell mentions that he has encountered only one other American Punte recording, a 1976 (*Continued on page 10*)



## The anatomy of a breakthrough in sound reproduction. Technics Honeycomb Disc speaker system.

You're looking at the heart of a revolutionary new speaker system—the flat honeycomb drivers of Technics new Honeycomb Disc speakers. A new shape that takes sound beyond the range of traditional cone-shaped speakers to capture the full energy and dynamic range of today's new recording technologies. It's the essence of a true sonic breakthrough.

All conventional cone-shaped drivers have inherent distortion problems due to uneven sound dispersion in the cone cavity. But Technics new axially symmetric Honeycomb drivers are flat. So "cavity effect" is automatically eliminated. And just as important, phase linearity occurs naturally in Honeycomb Disc speakers because the acoustic centers are

now perfectly aligned across the flat driver surfaces.

Technics also added a unique nodal drive system designed to vibrate the speakers in more accurate piston-like motion to reduce distortion even further. The result is an incredibly wide, flat frequency response, broad dynamic range, and amazingly low distortion.

To complete the system, Technics Honeycomb Disc tweeter with special front-mounted acoustic equalizer extends frequency response to a remarkable 35 kHz.

Technics offers a complete new line of Honeycomb Disc speakers, all enclosed in a rich rosewood-grain cabinet.

Now that you've seen what a sonic breakthrough looks like, listen to Technics—and hear what one sounds like.

**Technics**  
The science of sound

# PIONEER LASERDISC. FIRST THE BEST PICTURE.



An actual freeze frame on tape. An actual freeze frame on disc.

The first time you see Pioneer LaserDisc™ in action, you'll know it's different.

It actually puts a picture on your TV with 40% more video resolution than home video tape. (Viewed side by side with tape, the difference is staggering.)

The first time you hear Pioneer LaserDisc, you'll have a tough time believing your ears as well. Instead of hearing mono with that picture, you'll hear honest-to-

goodness stereo.

This combination of sight and sound creates a sensation you've simply never experienced at home before.

A reality of performance, a sense of "being there" that makes watching a movie or concert at home finally worth staying home for.

Having created all this picture and sound fidelity, it seemed only logical to offer pictures and sounds worth seeing and hearing.

Software that would live up to the hardware. And that's precisely what we've done.

Academy Award winning movies like Ordinary People, The Godfather, Tess, Coal Miner's Daughter.

Comedies like Airplane, Animal House, Cheech and Chong.

When you have the ability to play back in stereo, it makes sense that you offer music. So there are movie musicals like Grease, Saturday Night Fever, All That Jazz. There are Broadway shows like "Pippin." And there are concerts with Paul Simon, Liza Minnelli, Neil Sedaka, even the Opera.

The sight and sound experience of Pioneer LaserDisc is so remarkable, it seemed to demand a larger scale. Which led us to introduce the Pioneer 50" Projection TV.

The experience is more like being at the movies than like being at home. In fact, for the first time seeing a concert at home offers a



Attached to your stereo, it's more than a great picture, it's great sound.



Ordinary People<sup>1</sup>



The Muppet Movie<sup>2</sup>



King Kong<sup>1</sup>



Urban Cowboy<sup>1</sup>



The Elephant Man<sup>1</sup>



The Rose<sup>2</sup>



Popeye<sup>1</sup>



The French Connection<sup>2</sup>



The China Syndrome<sup>3</sup>



Alien<sup>2</sup>



Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid<sup>2</sup>



Tess<sup>3</sup>

1—Paramount Home Video 2—Magnetic Video 3—Columbia Pictures Home Entertainment  
4—Pioneer Artists™ © 1981 Pioneer Video, Inc. All rights reserved.

Circle 6 on Reader-Service Card

# THEN THE BEST PICTURES.

picture that's every bit as large as the sound. As for the picture quality, well, just look at the picture of Liza below. Hard to believe, it's an actual picture taken right off the screen.

But with Pioneer LaserDisc you don't just sit back and watch. For example, with the "How to Watch Pro Football" disc, you can go backwards, forwards, in fast motion, slow motion, stop motion, study it one frame at a time.

There are discs that teach you golf, tennis, cooking, step-by-step. Then there's The First National Kidisc. For the first time, children learn at their own rate. Unlike television, the disc responds to them. Your kids will love it so much they won't even know they're learning.

The only way to believe all this new tech-

nology is to see it. And we've arranged it. Just call us at 800-621-5199,\* for the store nearest you. \*(In Illinois, 800-972-5855.)

 **PIONEER**<sup>®</sup>  
We bring it back alive.

Liza in Concert<sup>4</sup>



The Pioneer 50" Projection TV.

The Pioneer LaserDisc Player.



This LaserVision mark certifies compatibility with other laser optical products bearing the mark.



Optional Remote Control.



# Computer Wedding.

## The new Kenwood computerized AM/FM receiver and cassette deck.

We've married two of our most sophisticated audio components into one space-saving unit that makes beautiful music a lot easier to make. And even easier to afford.

The KRX-7 Computerized Cassette Receiver.

With all its computer controlled functions, the KRX-7 can do remarkable things with cassette tapes. Like automatically fast forward or rewind to any cut you tell it. Play the same cut over again. Or even the same side. As many times as you want. It even handles metal tape.

With its computerized receiver, the KRX-7 also has the intelligence to make AM/FM listening easier. It can automatically find the next station on the dial, and lock it in perfectly. It's even smart enough to locate your 10 favorite stations at the push of a button.

For great performance without a great deal of complications, see the new KRX-7 computerized cassette receiver at your Kenwood dealer. And ask about its matching Kenwood turntable, 3-way speakers and system rack. The easy way to put a stereo system together. And keep it all in the same great sounding family.



**KENWOOD**

For the Kenwood dealer nearest you, write Kenwood, P.O. Box 6213, Carson, CA 90749.

(Continued from page 6)

quad tape performance. I'd like to put in a plug for a much older recording (mid-Fifties?) and another great horn player: On the old Boston label (B 209) there was a marvelous performance of a Punto Horn Quartet in F by James Stagliano, with Ruth Posselt, Joseph de Pasquale, and Samuel Mayes. Not its least interesting aspect is Stagliano's second-movement cadenza, which includes every virtuoso trick, such as producing the chords by humming and blowing at the same time—a technique Punto himself made famous. Naturally, the longtime Boston Symphony first hornist carries this all off with much grace and beauty of tone.

An utterly unrelated point, in regard to Havergal Brian and Aries Records: There was another "legitimate" Brian recording released in this country before the Unicorn disc reviewed by John Canarina [August 1981]—a beautiful recording of Symphonies Nos. 6 and 16 by Myer Fredman and the London Philharmonic on a 1975 Lyrita disc (therefore newer than the Unicorn) that was briefly available in this country on HNH, an excellent but ill-fated label in Evanston, Ill. All praise to Maestro Canarina for exposing Aries (and for championing Brian), but the pirates have a point: How else are we, the less favored, to get at the (legally) unobtainable treasures in the vaults of the "Beeb"? The BBC has sponsored festivals of Brian and Bantock and many others, but the *grande dame* seems to have little interest in vinylizing her noble efforts. The royalties issue aside, Aries' real crime is that of inflicting all those pseudonyms on us collectors. Thank you, Mr. Canarina, for identifying "Colin Wilson." Now, who is the splendid violinist in the Brian violin concerto? Manoug Parikian? In the early Fifties, dozens of pseudonymous artists sprouted on the various "dime-store" labels, and now many of the real attributions are lost, apparently forever. Aries, fess up, before it is too late!

John C. Swan  
Crawfordsville, Ind.

## Refocusing Attention

In an interview in your October issue ["Loudspeakers: Getting Down to Basics"], Andy Petite is said to give "much credit to the pioneering work of Roy Allison, who first focused attention on the importance of room-boundary interactions in work he did at Acoustic Research." My association with AR was long and productive, but I did no work whatsoever on the room-boundary effect while there. Only after leaving AR at the end of 1972 did I have the time for a research program of that magnitude. Technical papers resulting from this research were published in June 1974 and January 1976, and my own company now makes loudspeaker systems with room-matched designs based on the principles set forth in those papers.

Roy F. Allison, President  
Allison Acoustics, Inc.  
Natick, Mass.

Letters should be addressed to The Editor, HIGH FIDELITY, 825 7th Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019. All letters are subject to editing for brevity and clarity.

# THE ONLY THING MORE REVOLUTIONARY THAN AKAI'S NEW GX-77 IS THE TAPE IT PLAYS.



The new GX-77 is the world's first open-reel machine with a special setting for the new ultra-high-density "EE" tapes.



For the uninitiated, "EE" simply stands for extra efficiency. And the innovators at both Maxwell and TDK are committed to it.

For some very sound reasons. **Numbers don't lie.**

And what the numbers are saying is this. You don't have to sacrifice performance for economy. Not with a GX-77 and "EE" tape. Because at an efficient 3% ips, you'll still get the same frequency response, S/N ratio and dynamic range of conventional tape played at 7½ ips.

But see for yourself, below. The specs are spectacular at any speed.

**There's sound engineering, too.**

The GX-77 also features quick-reverse playback/record, 3 motors, 4 AKAI GX heads and



an optional dustcover that's the ultimate cover-up.

Plus a unique, motorized tape-loading mechanism that guarantees virtually perfect tape-to-head alignment. All at the touch of a button.

And all for a relatively modest \$775, suggested retail price.

Or, if you prefer the benefits of "EE" tape on a grander scale (including 10½" reels), consider the new AKAI GX-747.

Better yet, audition both at your AKAI dealer's soon. Or write: AKAI, P.O. Box 6010, Compton, CA 90224.

We'd hate to start the revolution without you.

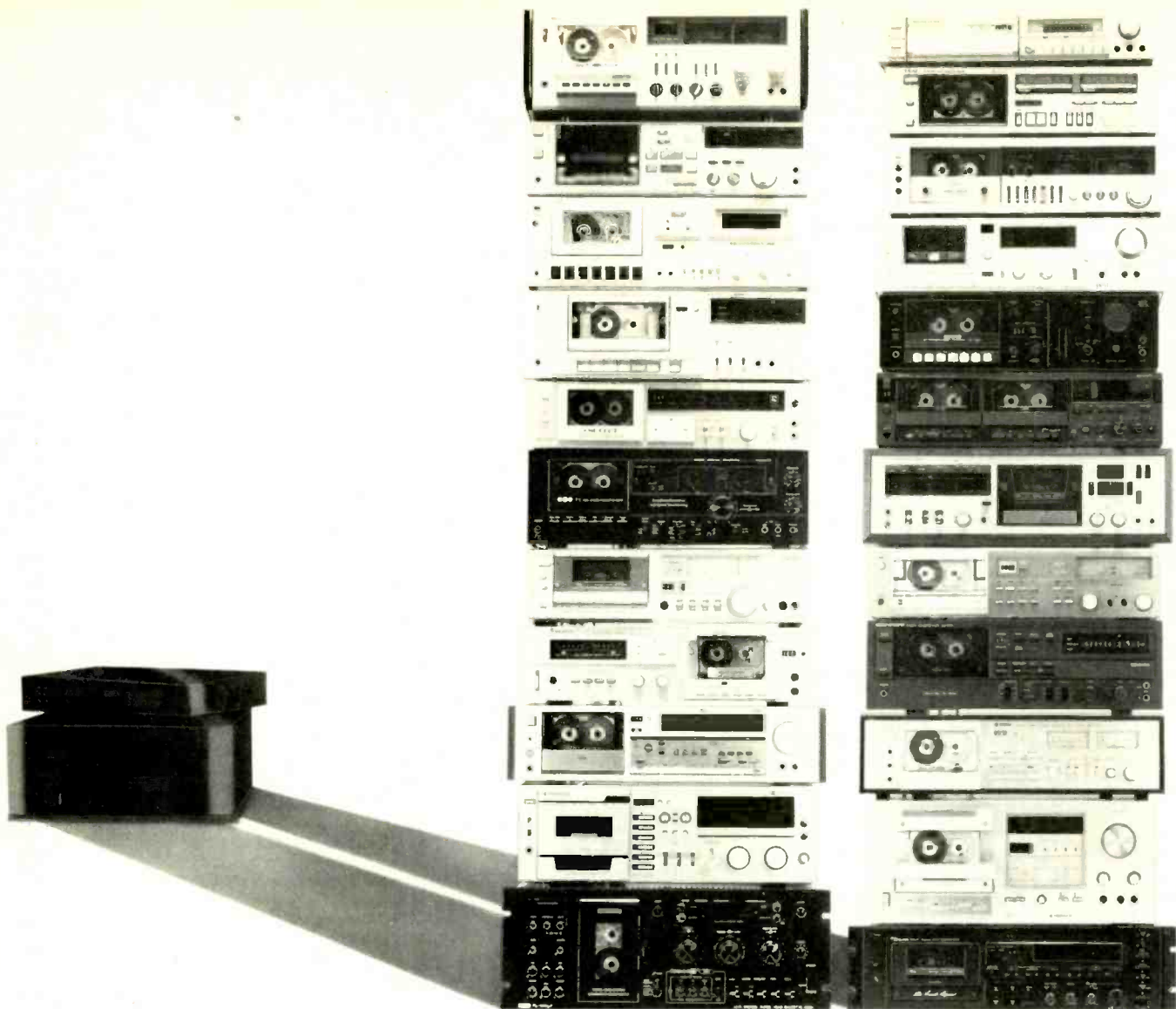
AKAI GX-77 with:	Dynamic Range	Frequency Response	S/N Ratio
EE Tape (3% ips)	70 dB	25-25000 Hz	63 dB
Conventional Tape (7½ ips)	70 dB	25-25000 Hz	60 dB
EE Tape (7½ ips)	77 dB	25-33000 Hz	66 dB

# AKAI

YOU NEVER HEARD IT SO GOOD







## 23 deck makers bias with TDK metal. That doesn't leave many for the competition.

When it comes to the critical bias adjustment, the vast majority of manufacturers won't use anything but TDK Metal Alloy cassettes. TDK metal excels in two different cases. The MA-R has the Reference Standard Mechanism, with a unique metal unibody frame. MA uses the Laboratory Standard Mechanism, designed to deliver the smoothest possible flow of music.

Both MA-R and MA incorporate TDK's remarkable tape formulation, FINAVINX, a metal particle with extremely high coercivity and remanence for high frequency response and low distortion. TDK metal has the widest frequency range and highest MOL of all cassettes rated in an independent test.

It's not easy to get 23 quality deck makers to reach the same conclusion. If you use TDK metal, you'll be in good company.

**TDK**  
The machine for your machine  
Circle 10 on Reader-Service Card



(Continued from page 12)

structured of phenolic material coated with aluminum. It's powered by a two-pound magnet with a one-inch copper voice coil. Midrange frequencies are handled by a 5-inch cone driver. The L-96 sells for \$395.

Circle 145 on Reader-Service Card

## Play It Again, Luxman

An auto-repeat function automatically rewinds the tape and recommences the



playback in Luxman's new K-117 cassette deck. The unit also incorporates solenoid controls, Dolby B noise reduction, a fine bias-adjustment control, fluorescent peak level indicators, and a sendust record/playback head. Other features include a multiplex filter to remove 19-kHz carrier leakage, a mute switch,

and compatibility with ordinary household timers. The AK-1D remote control is optional. Price is \$400.

Circle 147 on Reader-Service Card



## Speed of Sound

Rated at 100 watts (20 dBW) per channel into 8 ohms, the Model 200 Reference Amplifier from BRB Systems (\$900) uses ring-emitter power transistors, which are said to provide better performance and reliability than conventional bipolar or MOS-FET devices. The company claims that the Model 200's high speed Class A circuitry achieves low transient and static distortion.

Circle 151 on Reader-Service Card



## Two-Way Dolby from Mitsubishi

With three heads and two motors, Mitsubishi's \$490 DT-35 cassette deck also offers Dolby B and C noise reduction, dynamically balanced capstan motors, feather-touch controls, metal-tape capability, and a nineteen-segment fluorescent peak-reading meter. A bias control enables you to fine tune the DT-35 for optimum performance with your favorite tapes.

Circle 150 on Reader-Service Card



## Denon's Low Cost Moving Coil

Moving-coil performance at a fixed-coil price is the claim for Denon's \$99 DL-300 cartridge. The DL-300 is said to incorporate design principles found in Denon's top-of-the-line cartridges, such as a single-point suspension system and a

(Continued on page 98)



and when you switch over to the 770's  
you will smile and say...it's magic  
because there is nothing like it  
under the sun!

Mission North America, 89 Galaxy Blvd., Rebdale, Ont., M9W 6A4 Canada  
Mission Electronics, George St., Huntingdon, Cambs., PE 1B 6B8 England

Circle 11 on Reader-Service Card



Once again, in the interest of science and for the betterment of mankind, the services of *Mus albus rodendus*, or the white mouse, have been called upon. This time to demonstrate the sheer brilliance of the new Sony STR-VX5 receiver.

When the little chap so much as touches the VX5's "Memory Scan," you'll automatically hear four seconds of up to eight of your favorite AM or FM stations, without having to tune them in separately.

If he chooses our exclusive "Auto Sweep," you'll hear a four-second sample of every available station on the dial. Find a station you like and another feather-touch control instantly locks onto that frequency. There's no drift. No fade. A computer insures crisp, clear, perfect sound.

But that's merely proof that the VX5 possesses the world's most advanced tuning section. Here's proof that it possesses the

HOW A  
COMMON  
LABORATORY  
SUBJECT  
PROVES THE  
CLEAR  
SUPERIORITY  
OF  
A SONY.

world's most advanced amplifier section.

Statistically, the VX5 puts out 55 watts per channel with no more than 0.007% total harmonic distortion.\* Even your dog can't hear that.

Part of the reason is Sony's unique "Legato Linear" amplifier. This circuitry prevents "switching distortion" from ever intruding on your music. Another part is an incredibly advanced, Sony-developed "Pulse Power" supply. Its transformer alone is but 1/50 the size of conventional transformers and is as quiet as a church mouse.

Of course, there are other outstanding features, from a subsonic filter to moving coil-cartridge capability. And it's all at a price that won't require you to get a second mortgage to purchase it.

The Sony VX5. We used a mouse to prove its genius. But all you really need are a good pair of ears.

**SONY.** We are music.

\*FEATURES AND SPECIFICATIONS: 55 watts per channel, continuous power output, both channels driven into 8 Ohms from 20 Hz to 20 kHz, at no more than 0.007% THD/Quartz frequency synthesis/5-way tuning/Direct Comparator/IC logic function controls/Hi-Fi transistors. ©1981 Sony Corp. of America, 9 W. 57th St., N.Y., NY 10019. Sony is a registered trademark of the Sony Corp.

Practical answers to your audio questions by Michael Riggs

## Hamming It Up

*I have trouble with a ham radio operator coming through over my Lafayette LA-84 amplifier when I play records. The interference persists even when I disconnect the turntable leads. How can I get rid of it?—Brian Charles, Great Neck, N. Y.*

Since the interference does not go away when you disconnect your turntable, the ham's signal must be being picked up directly by the phono preamplifier circuit in your amp. Unlike most CBers, amateur radio operators are usually both helpful and technically competent. The next time one of your listening sessions is disrupted, try to catch the operator's call letters (e.g., "WILTN"). With that information, you can find out from a publication called *The Radio Amateur's Callbook*, or from the FCC, who and where he is. Once he understands your problem, he may be able to suggest modifications that will eliminate the interference. If that fails, you may have to look for a new amplifier that is less sensitive to this type of RFI. (This is one instance, by the way, in which you should insist on a home trial.)

## Cassette Chaos

*Somewhere I read that with a fully adjustable cassette deck, you should check the bias and sensitivity for each cassette you record—even if it's the same brand and type as the last one you used. Although I usually use quality brands and premium tape I have noticed that there are differences between cassettes. Lately I have even noticed differences within the same cassette. Does this mean that I should change the tape settings continuously while I record? How would that be possible?—Eugene Everett, Nashville, Tenn.*

No, continuous adjustment is both impractical and unnecessary. The values of circuit components change slightly as they warm up. For example, bias current in a recording head tends to heat the coil winding and raise its impedance, reducing the bias current. As a result, actual circuit behavior may not be quite the same after two hours of use as it was after only a half-hour, and it can certainly be expected to change over the first few

minutes of use. (For this reason, I usually leave a deck in the recording/pause mode for at least thirty minutes before adjusting it for a recording I really want to take pains with.)

Also, the metering on some adjustable decks is very sensitive to small changes, at least in the calibrating mode. This makes the adjustment process easier, but it also tends to create the impression that minor misadjustments are major. For the most part, you never need to be within less than ½ dB on most adjustments; finer tuning is unlikely to net you any real improvement.

## Adding Delay

*My system now comprises JBL L-150 speakers, a Sansui SR-838 turntable with an Empire EDR-9 cartridge, a Technics RS-M95 cassette deck, a JVC SEA-80 equalizer, an RG Dynamics Pro-20 dynamic processor, and a Rotel RT-1010 tuner, Rotel RC-1010 preamplifier, and Rotel RB-1010 power amplifier. The equalizer and dynamic processor are now hooked into the system through the preamp's tape monitor loop. I would like to add a delay line. Would such a device be compatible with my system, and how would I connect it?—D. Bower, Berwick, Pa.*

Yes, an ambience-enhancement unit would be compatible with your present system, but you would have to get a second pair of speakers (preferably ones whose sonic balance is as close to that of your L-150s as possible) and an amplifier to drive them if the delay unit you select doesn't have one built in. Connect the main outputs of your preamp to the inputs of the delay line. Then connect the delay line's front-channel outputs to the inputs of the power amp driving the L-150s. Finally, connect the delay line's rear-channel outputs to the amp driving the ambience speakers.

## KO-ing Crosstalk

*When I listen to my cassette deck through my receiver, I hear music from an FM station faintly in the background. Where is it coming from, and what can I do to eliminate it?—Jim Marking, Trumbull, Conn.*

It is possible that your cassette deck or your receiver's audio circuits are picking up the station directly as RFI (radio frequency interference). But the more likely explanation is that you are hearing crosstalk from your receiver's tuner section. That is, the audio output from the tuner is leaking into the tape monitor loop, where it doesn't belong. Although this might be the result of a defect in your receiver, I tend to suspect not: crosstalk is a common problem even in equipment that is working exactly as it is supposed to. First, try putting the receiver's selector switch on something other than FM when you listen to cassettes. If you still get interference, tune the receiver to a space on the FM dial where there are no stations. That will cause the tuner section to mute its audio output, so there won't be any more talk to cross!

## Twin Lead

*To optimize the damping factor (especially with low-impedance speakers), reduce skin effects, and overcome possible diode effects due to oxidized connections at amplifier and speaker terminals, would double-conductor runs of 14-gauge stranded wire be superior to single-conductor runs?—Gary R. Gay, Tucson, Ariz.*

Paralleling two lengths of speaker cable will reduce the total series resistance, thereby improving both power transfer and damping factor. However, unless the runs are very long, your gain from doubling up on wire already as thick as 14 gauge will be marginal and very likely inaudible. Skin effect (the tendency of electrons to travel only on the surface of a conductor, rather than throughout it, at very high frequencies) is not a significant factor at audio frequencies. As for oxidation, the best cure for that is to scour all contacts and tighten wires down firmly to the terminals; the number of cables you have coming in shouldn't make much difference. In short, provided you use wire of reasonable heft (18 gauge at least) over reasonable distances, I don't see much benefit to double runs. On the other hand, it can't hurt.

*We regret that the volume of reader mail is too great for us to answer all questions individually.*

# WHY SPEND \$200 MORE ON A BETTER TAPE DECK WHEN ALL YOU NEED IS \$2 MORE FOR A BETTER TAPE.



No matter how much you spend on a tape deck, the sound that comes out of it can only be as good as the tape you put in it. So before you invest a few hundred dollars upgrading your tape deck, invest a few extra dollars in a Maxell XLI-S or XLII-S cassette.

They're the most advanced generation of oxide formulation tapes. By engineering smaller and more uniformly shaped oxide particles, we were able to pack more of these particles onto a given area of tape.

Now this might not sound exactly earth-shattering, but it can help your tape deck live up to its specifications by improving output, signal-to-noise ratio and frequency response.

Our XL-S cassettes also have an improved binder system, which helps keep the oxide particles exactly where they're supposed to be. On the tape's surface, not on your recording heads. As a result, you'll hear a lot more music and a lot less distortion.

There's more to our XL-S tape than just great tape. We've also redesigned our cassette shells. Our Quin-Lok™ Clamp/Hub Assembly holds the leader firmly in place and eliminates tape deformation. Which means you'll not only hear great music, but you'll also be able to enjoy it a lot longer.

So if you'd like to get better sound out of your tape system, you don't have to put more money into it. Just put in our XL-S tape.

**maxell**  
**IT'S WORTH IT.**

Maxell Corporation of America, 66 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, N.J. 07074

Loran™ is the cassette of the future... but it's here right now. The original and only heat resistant cassette shell and tape that withstands the oven temperatures of a car dashboard in the sun. Testing proves that even TDK or Maxell cannot take this kind of punishment.

With Loran, you'll capture a full range of sound as you've never heard it before. Tape that delivers magnificent reproduction of highs and lows, along with an exceptionally low background noise level. Super sensitive with an extremely high maximum recording level capability. That means you can record Loran at high input levels for greater clarity. As a matter of fact, we recommend it.

Because of our cassette shell, Loran

tape can stand up to being accidentally left near a source of excessive heat in your home or in your car. It is indeed the finest quality tape available today.

Loran also has exclusive features not available on any other cassette. Safety Tabs™ (patent pending) prevent accidental erasures. But unlike other cassettes, you can restore its erase and record capabilities simply by turning the Tab screw a 1/2 turn. Our Hub Lock (patent pending) secures the tape to the hub in such a way that the harder it is pulled the tighter it's held.

With all these features, it's no wonder Loran was selected as "one of the most innovative consumer electronics products..." by the Consumer Electronics Show Design and Engineering Exhibition.

Every Loran tape comes with a full lifetime warranty. Listen to Loran. The new generation of cassettes is here right now.



**LORAN™**  
The Design of Spectacular Sound

**WHEN ALL OTHERS FAIL... LORAN CASSETTES  
ARE SAFE AND SOUND SENSATIONAL.**



# Basically Speaking

Audio concepts and terms explained by Michael Riggs

## Noise and Distortion

One oft-quoted goal of high fidelity is "clean" sound. This implies the existence of sound of another kind—"unclean" perhaps or, less Biblically, "dirty"—that is presumably easier to come by. And in truth all reproduced sound is at least slightly contaminated with sonic grime picked up as the audio signal passes through the various mechanical transducers and electronic devices essential to the recording and playback processes. This unwanted passenger comes in two basic varieties.

Additions that are independent of the desired signal are called noise. (Strictly speaking, this definition does not include modulation noise in analog tape recording or quantization noise in digital audio, both of which vary according to the signal. We will take up these special breeds separately in later columns.) The commonest forms of noise are hiss and hum.

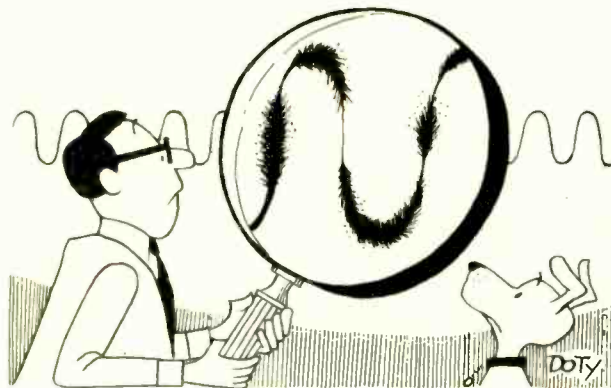
Hiss is simply a fact of audio life. Tape and all electronics produce at least a little of it. But good engineering can minimize it, taking it below the level of audibility. Very few modern amplifiers, for example, generate hiss at levels high enough to be heard under normal listening conditions.

Hum, on the other hand, can be eliminated altogether by the simple expedient of avoiding AC power. If there's no 60-Hz current coming into the system, no hum can be induced in any of the audio circuits. This is one reason many head amps for moving-coil cartridges are battery-powered. For the most part, though, it's not practical to steer completely clear of the wall socket. And so it is that all audio systems produce at least a smidgen of hum (though again, it may be at a level low enough to be inaudible). Anything with a coil in it (such as a phono cartridge or a tape head) or that carries low-level signals (phono cables, for example) is a prime candidate for hum pickup; only careful design and installation can minimize it.

Audible noise is annoying because

it obscures detail and distracts from the music. When you're shopping for a system, it's important to look for components that add the least noise possible to the signals fed into them: The ratio of the amplitude to the desired audio signal to the amplitude of the component's inherent residual noise should be as high as possible. That is, its signal-to-noise (S/N) ratio should be high.

S/N ratio is expressed in decibels (dB) relative to a specified or standard signal level. A S/N ratio of 80 dB with respect to a 1-volt output means that the component's residual noise is 80 dB less than 1 volt in amplitude. Knowing the reference level is vital when you're com-



paring components. For example, the above S/N ratio could also be expressed as 86 dB relative to a 2-volt output. Now 86 dB looks better than 80 dB—until you realize that the apparent 6-dB improvement results solely from the higher reference level, not from any change in the actual amount of noise.

Another important thing to look for when comparing noise figures is what, if any, weighting has been applied. Because the ear is more sensitive to upper midrange frequencies than to the extremes of the audible band, it makes little sense to give deep rumble or high hiss as much "weight" as midrange noise.

One of the best, and certainly the most popular, of noise-weighting schemes is embodied in the A-weighting curve, which HIGH FIDELITY uses for most noise measurements. Its response approximates that of the ear and therefore yields a better index of audible noise than would a flat, unweighted curve. However, the main thing to re-

member is that you cannot compare apples and oranges: Different weighting curves will give different S/N ratios for the same component operated at the same reference level. And a weighted S/N ratio will almost invariably be higher than its unweighted counterpart.

Unlike noise, distortion does depend on the input signal. There are two basic types of distortion: harmonic and intermodulation. Harmonic distortion consists of spurious signals at frequencies that are multiples of the frequency of the desired signal. That is, the second-harmonic distortion product from a 1-kHz signal is at 2 kHz, the third-harmonic product is at 3 kHz, and so on.

The rms (root-mean-square) sum of all the individual harmonic-distortion components is called the total harmonic distortion (THD). THD is the single most commonly quoted distortion specification.

Intermodulation (IM) distortion consists of the sum and difference products of two signals. For example, signals at 100 Hz and 1 kHz would yield sum and difference products of 1.1 kHz and 900 Hz, respectively. Any device that produces harmonic distortion also produces IM distortion, and

vice versa, normally in similar proportions. Consequently, IM figures are quoted less often than are the ubiquitous THD specifications.

Although distortion figures can be (and sometimes are) expressed in the same way as signal-to-noise ratios—as a ratio of the amplitude of the desired signal or signals to the amplitude of the distortion products—they are usually given as a percentage. For example, "1% THD" would indicate that the rms sum of the amplitudes of all the harmonic-distortion components is equal to 1% of the amplitude of the original signal.

In any component, distortion performance varies according to the frequencies and amplitudes of the signals. And the audibility of the distortion depends on the program material and the characteristics of the distortion products. When distortion does reach audible levels, it usually is heard as harshness, added warmth, or some other alteration of tonal balance. With modern components this coloration rarely happens. **HF**

# New Equipment Reports

Preparation supervised by Robert Long, Michael Riggs, and Edward J. Foster.  
Laboratory data (unless otherwise noted) supplied by Diversified Science Laboratories.

## Pioneer's New-Look Integrated Amp

Pioneer A-5 Integrated amplifier, in metal case. Dimensions: 16½ by 3½ inches (front panel), 13 inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. AC convenience outlets: one switched (100 watts max.), one unswitched (200 watts max.). Price: \$225. Warranty: "limited," two years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Pioneer Electronic Corp., Japan; U.S. distributor: U.S. Pioneer Electronics Corp., 85 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, N.J. 07074.

RATED POWER 15½ dBW (35 watts)/channel

OUTPUT AT CLIPPING (both channels driven)  
8-ohm load 16¾ dBW (47 watts)/channel  
4-ohm load 18 dBW (63 watts)/channel  
16-ohm load 14¾ dBW (30 watts)/channel

DYNAMIC HEADROOM (8 ohms) 2 dB

HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD: 20 Hz to 20 kHz)  
at 15½ dBW (35 watts) ≤0.016%  
at 0 dBW (1 watt) <0.01%

FREQUENCY RESPONSE  
+0, -1 dB, <10 Hz to 17.2 kHz;  
-3 dB at 33.4 kHz

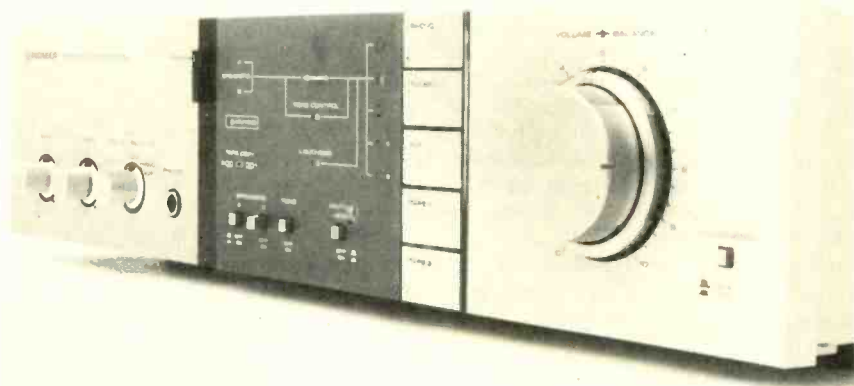
RIAA EQUALIZATION +<¼, -1 dB, 20 Hz to 17.5 kHz;  
-2¾ dB at 5 Hz

INPUT CHARACTERISTICS (re 0 dBW, A-weighting)  
sensitivity S/N ratio  
phono input 0.41 mV 75¾ dB  
aux input 23 mV 79½ dB

PHONO OVERLOAD (clipping at 1 kHz) 160 mV

PHONO IMPEDANCE 57k ohms: 230 pF

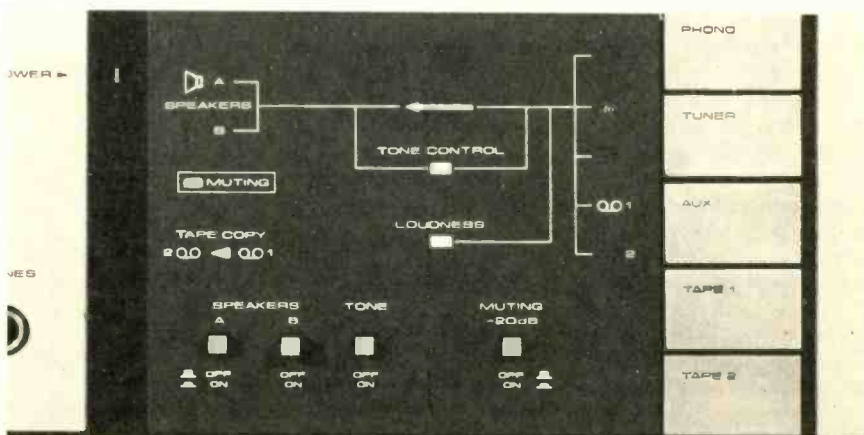
DAMPING FACTOR (at 50 Hz) 55



IN CASE YOU HADN'T NOTICED, Pioneer's current line of components is radically different from that of other brands and from Pioneer's own past models as well. In a relatively simple product such as the A-5 integrated amplifier, we would have expected the cosmetics to take a backseat to the usual considerations of value for the dollar; as it turns out, however, the styling is an intrinsic part of the value that the A-5 has to offer. It is exceptionally functional: Not only do the various switches and knobs fall comfortably to hand in use, but the front panel expresses graphically what the electronics are ready to do.

Illuminating block schematic diagrams of this sort are not unique. (In August 1977, for example, we tested a

Hitachi cassette deck with such a feature.) But never has the idea been as deftly employed, in our opinion. Symbols for the various inputs glow green at the left, depending on which selector button you push, and similar symbols at the right indicate your choice of speaker pair (A, B, both, or neither). Little rectangular lights show when the tone-control circuits and loudness compensation are active (both in green) and when the muting is reducing output by 20 dB (in red). It's all very discreet, yet once you're used to it you can read its messages from across the room. As a practical operating feature, we think this display is worth any number of "power meter" gizmos, which may look jazzier on a showroom shelf but usually contribute

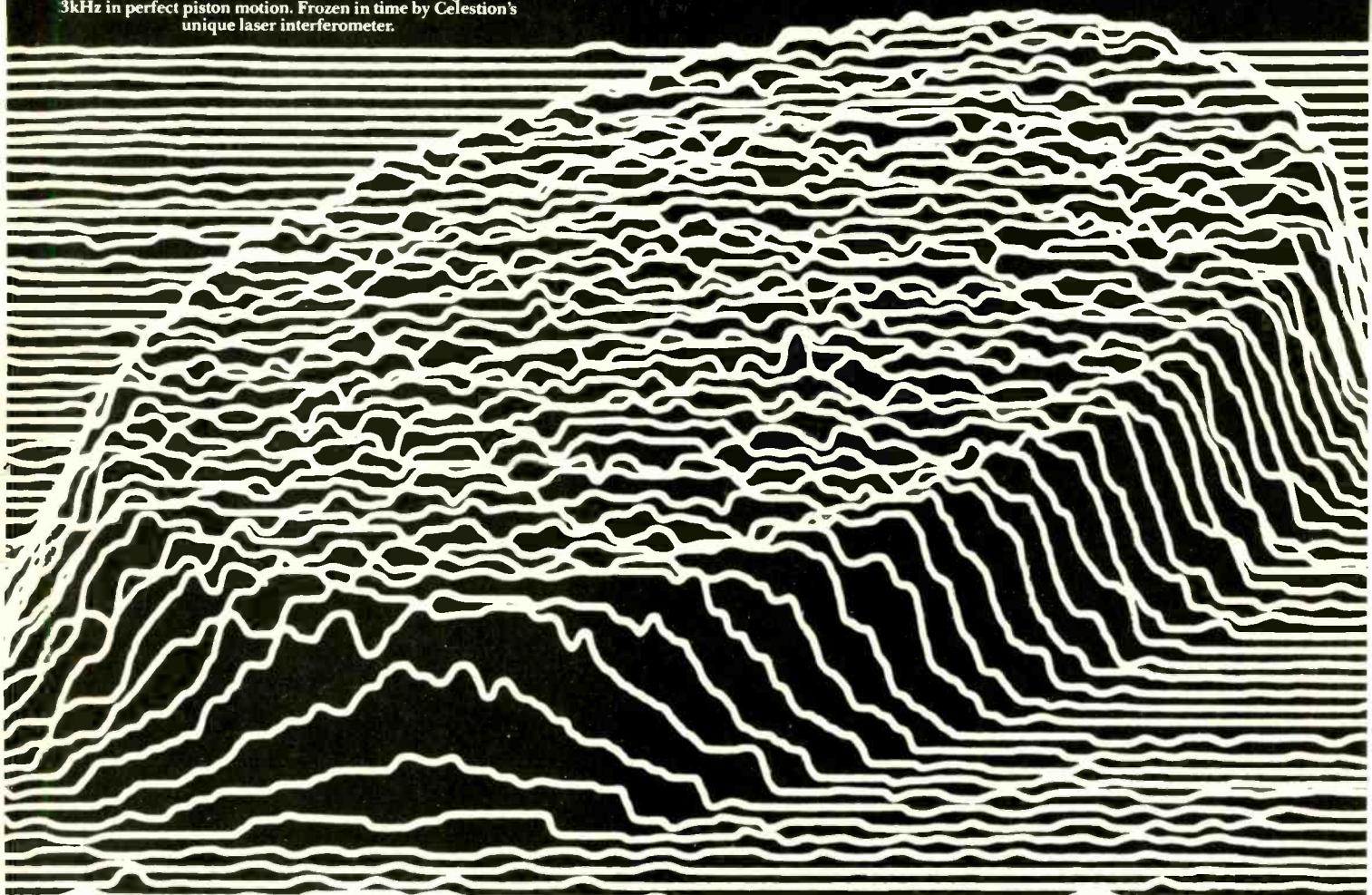


More than just a pretty face, Pioneer's graphic display panel shows which source is playing, what signal-processing is in use, and the signal path through the receiver.



# YOU'VE NEVER HEARD LOUDSPEAKERS LIKE THIS BEFORE.

The new Celestion ULTRA™ Tweeter, vibrating at 3kHz in perfect piston motion. Frozen in time by Celestion's unique laser interferometer.



In accuracy. Response. Power-handling capability. And efficiency that makes even the most modestly-powered receivers and amplifiers sound dazzling.

All, because our engineers have accomplished what no one has ever done before. Frozen vibrating drivers in time. Observed them in the operating environment of an actual speaker system. Then magnified the results with 36,000-point, three-dimensional laser-plotted computer accuracy.

We've used this exciting new tool to uncover the problems of conventional loudspeaker designs. Discover the secrets of critical dimensions. Select the best materials. Optimize physical and electrical characteristics. To obtain maximum performance from drivers individually and as a total system.

The result is our incredible new ULTRA™\* Ditton line, now at your Celestion dealer. You'll appreciate in an instant, what took years to achieve. At prices as unbelievable as the sound.

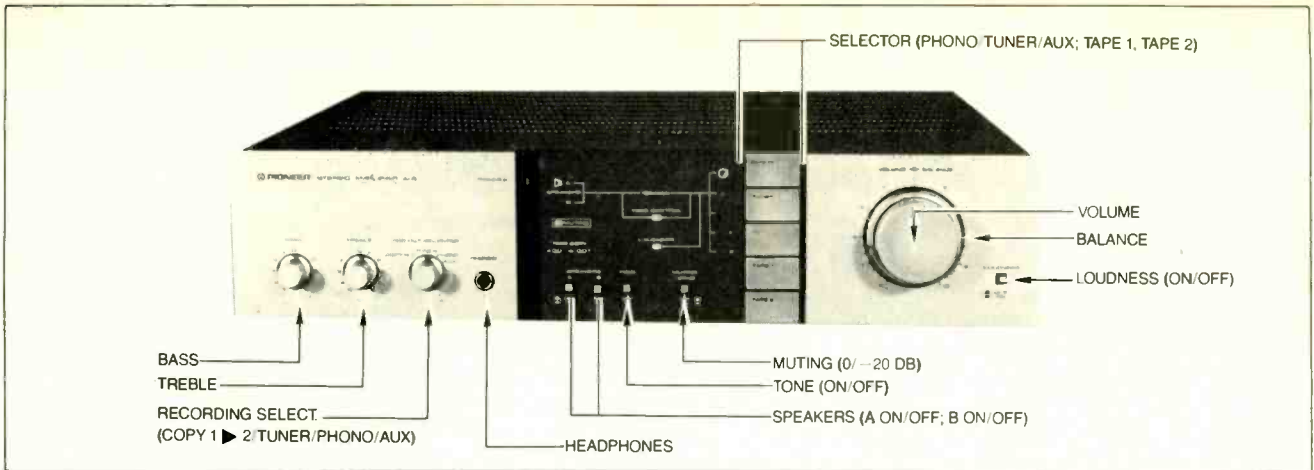
*\*Ultra-accurate Laser Topographic Response Analysis*

**celestion**  **speakers**

AND PROFESSIONAL LOUDSPEAKERS

You'll know... in an instant

Kuniholm Drive, Box 521, Holliston, MA 01746, (617) 429-6706. In Canada, Rocoelo, Toronto.



precious little to the logistics of listening.)

The circuitry that the display represents has more extras than you will usually find in such a modestly priced integrated. Not only is there provision for two tape decks, for example, but the independent recording selector enables recording from one source while you are listening to another. (It provides for dubbing in only one direction, but bidirectional dubbing is relatively rare at this end of the price scale.) Also welcome is the TONE DEFEAT; the detented positions of the two tone controls are a hair off of dead flat (which is not unusual in this price range), but response is absolutely flat over most of the range when the controls are defeated.

Diversified Science Laboratories made its measurements (as always) with the volume control set for standard IHF input and output levels. You'll see in the data that, in our sample, this results in a slight rolloff at the extreme high end. Actually, response remained flat within 1/2 dB out to 37 kHz when DSL turned the volume knob up to maximum, and we understand that results should be similar even at lower volume settings on later production. The point is moot, however, to the extent that compara-

bly priced tuners and tape decks are likely to filter out the range in which the test-sample rolloff occurs, making aural detection unlikely or impossible. Note that the phono response is almost as flat as that of the high-level inputs. At this price, there is no point in supplying a head amp for moving-coil pickups, and Pioneer offers none; nor, unfortunately, does it have an infrasonic filter to tame record-warp "information." (If your woofers are given to spastic behavior in response to infrasonics, you should choose your pickup/toner arm combination for its ability to track warps gracefully.) The LOUDNESS action includes a little boost in the extreme treble in addition to the mandated bass boost. Of course, you can alter this to some extent by means of the tone controls, which are of the shelving type and are sensibly limited to approximately 10 dB of maximum boost or cut.

All in all, we're impressed by the value that the A-5 offers. In its unpretentious way, it supplies all the needs of a modest system, and then some, all wrapped up in what is arguably the most attractive and most functional package available in the price class.

*Circle 137 on Reader-Service Card*

**Report Policy:** Equipment reports are based on laboratory measurements and controlled listening tests. Unless otherwise noted, test data and measurements are obtained by Diversified Science Laboratories. The choice of equipment to be tested rests with the editors of HIGH FIDELITY. Samples normally are supplied on loan from the manufacturer. Manufacturers are not permitted to read reports in advance of publication, and no report or portion thereof may be reproduced for any purpose or in any form without written permission of the publisher. All reports should be construed as applying to the specific samples tested. HIGH FIDELITY and Diversified Science Laboratories assume no responsibility for product performance or quality.

## Sherwood Combines Old and New

Sherwood S-9600CP AM/FM receiver, in metal case. Dimensions: 17 1/4 by 4 1/2 inches (front panel), 13 3/4 inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. AC convenience outlets: one switched (100 watts max.), one unswitched (150 watts max.). Price: \$480. Warranty: "limited," three years parts and labor. Manufacturer: made in Korea for Sherwood (Div. of Inkel Corp.), 17107 Kingsview Ave., Carson, Calif. 90746.

LIKE ALL COMPANIES in the component field, Sherwood has changed with the years. In some ways, the change has been wrenching: All the products were manufactured in its Chicago headquarters at one time, while now the offices have been moved to California and the manufacturing is done in Korea. But some Sherwood products (the lowest-priced receivers in particular) had actually been built in the Orient for years, so to this extent the shift was gradual. Perhaps for that reason, there is a thread of continuity that links the modern Sherwood products—like the S-9600CP reviewed here, which stands at the top of its receiver line—to those very different ones on which the Sherwood reputation was founded. Like so many of its predecessors,

the 9600 offers good value and what might be called a "modest individualism"; while some of its personality and features set it apart from the crowd, there is no hint of quirky radicalism.

Take the FM tuning, for example. Though the tuner has a digital station-frequency display (instead of a conventional slide-rule dial), it is tuned in the traditional way, via an oversize knob connected through a flywheel to an "old-fashioned" variable capacitor. Unlike fully digital tuners, it won't go "around the circle" back to 88 MHz when you get to the other end of the band, preventing the overshoot that can occur if you're not watching the numbers flash by. There is both a signal-strength indicator (with enough segments to be of

# Sansui.

## The story of high fidelity.

High fidelity was born just a generation ago. So was Sansui. In 1947, when the transistor was invented, we began as a manufacturer of high-quality audio transformers. Since then, Sansui's dedication to the sound of music and our extensive R & D have led to countless technological breakthroughs and products that have continually advanced the art and science of high fidelity. Some highlights:

**1958:** The year of the first stereo recordings also brings the release of our first stereo amplifier.

**1965:** As hi-fi widens its appeal, we introduce our first stereo receiver, the TR 707A.

**1966:** Sansui's U.S. subsidiary, destined to be outgrown in little more than a decade by our new headquarters in Lyndhurst, N.J., begins operation.

**1970:** QS, Sansui's patented 4-channel system, gains worldwide recognition.

**1976:** No less a leader in broadcast than in consumer audio technology, Sansui introduces two stereo AM systems at the Audio Engineering Society convention.

**1978:** Psychoacoustic research into the subtle but very real deficiencies in bass and in transient response in music reproduction results in Sansui's introduction of DC amplifiers, the renowned G-series receivers, and our patented DD/DC circuitry. These advanced technologies reduce distortions whose very existence had been questioned until we developed a straightforward measurement technique to verify on a meter what listeners' ears had long told them.



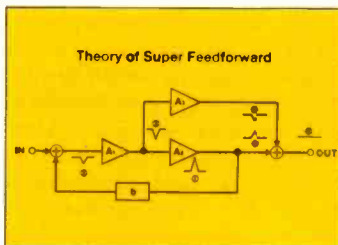
7900Z RECEIVER

**1979:** Sansui's patent-pending D-O-B (Dynaoptimum Balanced) method of optimally locating the pivot point results in significantly lower tonearm susceptibility to unwanted vibrations. The same year Sansui introduces the first member of our trend-setting system approach to hi-fi componentry, the Super Compo series.

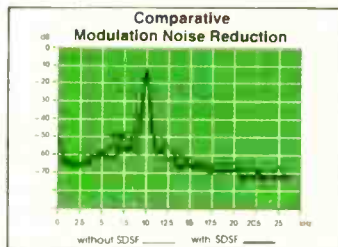
**1980:** Developing a theory first suggested in 1928, Sansui presents

the first Super Feedforward amplifiers, the realization of a design that eliminates even the last vestiges of distortion that not even negative feedback could combat. This development inaugurates a new era in the reduction of amplifier distortion and firmly establishes Sansui as a world leader in this important work. Eager to maintain its technological leadership, now also in video, in the same year Sansui develops an ultra-compact gas laser-optical pickup, some 40 times

smaller than conventional detector systems, that promises to play a vital role in future compact digital audio disc players.



**1981:** Modulation noise, long a problem in cassette recorders, is reduced to virtual inaudibility by Sansui's patent-pending Dyna-Scrape Filter. Equalization that's simple enough for practical home use is realized with Sansui's computerized SE-9 equalizer, which not only achieves professional results in record or playback, but also permits storing up to four instantly-selectable equalization curves.



At the 1981 NY AES, we presented four major papers outlining breakthroughs in both audio and video engineering, each of which will lead to products to enrich all our lives.

Sansui's story and the story of high fidelity. They are really one ongoing story, and the future is bright for both.

TU-S9 TUNER



AU-D11 AMPLIFIER

**1982**  
NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO COME.

**1981**  
DYNA-SCRAPE FILTER.  
DIGITAL EQUALIZER.

**1980**  
SUPER FEEDFORWARD.  
LASERDISC PICK-UP.

**1979**  
D-O-B TONEARMS.  
SUPER COMPO.

**1978**  
G-RECEIVERS.  
DD/DC AMPLIFIERS.

**1976**  
AM STEREO.

**1970**  
QS 4-CHANNEL.

**1966**  
U.S. OPERATION BEGINS.

**1965**  
STEREO RECEIVER.

**1958**  
STEREO AMPLIFIER.

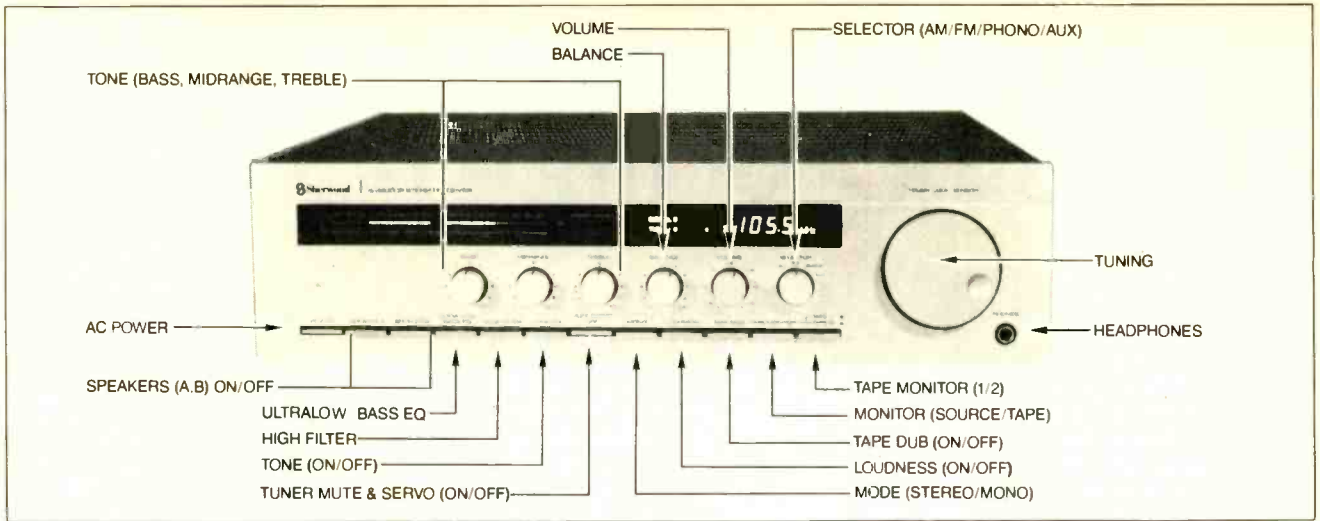
**Sansui**

**SANSUI ELECTRONICS CORPORATION**

Lyndhurst, New Jersey 07071, Gardena, CA 90248  
Sansui Electric Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan

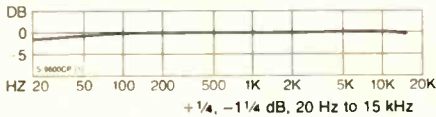
Circle 39 on Reader-Service Card

**1947**  
SANSUI FOUNDED

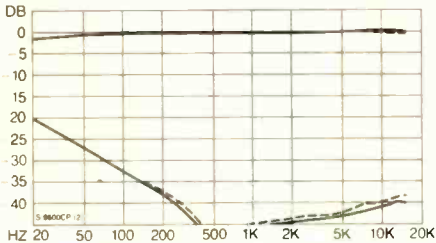


**FM tuner section**

**MONO FREQUENCY RESPONSE**

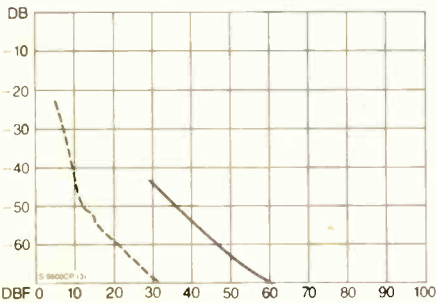


**STEREO RESPONSE & CHANNEL SEPARATION**



Frequency response  
 - - - - L ch +1/4, -1/2 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz  
 - - - - R ch +0, -1/2 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz  
 Channel separation  
 >40 dB, 300 Hz to 8 kHz;  
 ≥30 dB, 70 Hz to 15 kHz

**FM SENSITIVITY & QUIETING**



stereo quieting (noise)  
 - - - - mono quieting (noise)  
 Stereo sensitivity (for 50-dB noise suppression)  
 36 dBf at 98 MHz, with 0.34% THD+N  
 (36 1/2 dBf at 90 MHz; 36 3/4 dBf at 106 MHz)  
 Mono sensitivity (for 50-dB noise suppression)  
 12 dBf at 98 MHz  
 Muting & stereo thresholds 29 dBf  
 Stereo S/N ratio (at 65 dBf) 71 dB  
 Mono S/N ratio (at 65 dBf) 77 dB  
 CAPTURE RATIO 1 dB  
 SELECTIVITY (alternate-channel) 52 dB  
 HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD+N)  

	stereo	mono
at 100 Hz	0.22%	0.14%
at 1 kHz	0.070%	0.044%
at 6 kHz	0.18%	0.062%

real help in antenna orientation) and a three-element channel-centering indicator. And although there is a very effective channel-locking circuit that takes over when you remove your hand from the tuning knob and keeps your selected station perfectly tuned, you are deprived of none of the basic "classic" accoutrements of FM tuning.

The performance measurements from Diversified Science Laboratories, however, demonstrate unequivocally that the FM tuner is not in any way old-fashioned. Noise and distortion are extremely low, frequency response is extremely flat, and there are no disappointments elsewhere to spoil the listening. When DSL measured the sensitivity of the signal-strength display lights, it found that it ranges from 25 1/4 dBf (a little below the muting and stereo thresholds) at the left-hand element to 48 dBf (approaching "full" signal strength, as represented by the 65-dBf test level mandated for S/N-ratio measurements, among others) at the right. The entire display range is therefore devoted to the area where signal-strength information is most important to users with rotatable antennas; it ignores both weak signals that would be capable of only marginal (and mono) audio quality at best and strong signals that would provide very good reception even with careless orientation of the antenna.

The amplifier section also tests out very well. The 2 dB of dynamic headroom means that the 9600 will accommodate peaks equivalent to 19 3/4 dBW (2 dB above the rated 17 3/4 dBW), or some 95 watts. The lab was hard put to find any distortion at 0 dBW; what little existed was toward the frequency extremes and consisted exclusively of second-order products, which are relatively benign. At rated power some third harmonics did appear, but distortion remained minuscule and was mostly confined to the second harmonic.

The preamp and control functions include some surprises. The phono section has fairly low input capacitance. If your pickup is one of the "fussy" ones and pre-

fers a higher value, you can always add it via a pickup-loading kit. (Excessive capacitance can't be lowered.) And the peaky high end that could result if such a touchy pickup were given insufficient capacitive loading would be exaggerated subtly by the very slight upward tilt of the phono response in our sample: a mere 3/4 dB between 1 and 20 kHz, but it's there. Very unusual in today's receivers is the noise filter, with its relatively sharp cutoff above 8 kHz. It therefore makes a material difference when you're straining your ears against very high hiss but audibly subtracts little or nothing from most musical program material. The LOUDNESS introduces a bass rise (leveling off below 50 Hz) at low volume settings; if you require the traditional (but technically discredited) treble rise as well, the tone controls will give it to you. The TREBLE has little influence below 3 kHz or so, while supplying close to its calibrated boost or cut (marked for a maximum of 10 dB) at 10 kHz. The MIDRANGE is properly circumspect, providing a maximum 5 dB boost or cut (despite the "10" calibration) and centering its activity just below 1 kHz. The BASS takes over around 200 Hz and is capable of ±10 dB near 100 Hz—with almost 20 dB of boost or cut available at 20 Hz. Again, the calibration means relatively little on this control. Particularly interesting is the action of the switch marked ULTRALOW BASS EQ, which adds about 5 dB of kick to bass response at 30 Hz and then drops off at about 15 dB per octave. Thus it combines a slight bass-response "extension" for your speakers (the peak is said to be tailored to the response of Sherwood's own models) with an infrasonic filter that is down 30 dB at 5 Hz. If you use it only to subdue infrasonics from warped records, the added output in the audible bass is not enough to create boominess with wide-range speakers.

Finally, one unusual economy: Sherwood manages bidirectional dubbing between two tape decks with a single switch position. According to the schematic, Sher-

# ...and then came Super Feedforward.

Not many years ago a "high fidelity" amplifier delivered 5 watts with 5% harmonic distortion. Today, distortion levels of 0.05% — or even 0.005% — in amplifiers with hundreds of watts and a much wider frequency range are almost routine.

Reducing harmonic distortion has usually been achieved by using negative feedback. But too much negative feedback can introduce a new kind of distortion, TIM (Transient Intermodulation Distortion) that audibly degrades the musical sound.

To reduce TIM and other forms of residual distortion, Sansui developed its DD/DC (Diamond Differential/

Direct Current) drive circuit. Then, to eliminate the remaining vestiges of high-level, high-frequency distortion in the amplifier's output stage, Sansui engineers perfected a unique circuit which, though proposed years ago, has now been realized in a practical amplifier design. Super Feedforward, the new Sansui technique, takes the leftover distortion products present in even an optimally-designed amplifier, feeds them to a separate, error correcting circuit that reverses their polarity, then combines them so they cancel themselves out against the regular audio signal. What's left is only the music, with not a trace of distortion.

While Super Feedforward circuitry puts Sansui's AU-D 11 and AU-D 9 amplifiers in a class by themselves, all our amplifiers are renowned for their musicality, versatility, and respect for human engineering. Add a matching TU tuner to any of Sansui's AU amplifiers and you'll appreciate the difference 35 years of Sansui dedication to sound purity can produce.

For the name of the nearest audio specialist who carries the AU-D 11 and AU-D 9 or other fine components in Sansui's extensive line of high fidelity products, write: Sansui Electronics Corp., 1250 Valley Brook Avenue, Lyndhurst, NJ 07071.



**SANSUI ELECTRONICS CORPORATION**  
Lyndhurst, New Jersey 07071, Gardena, CA 90248  
Sansui Electric Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan

**Sansui**

# In a world where sound reaches new levels every day, ADC delivers the ultimate high.

The ultimate high is total control. And an ADC Sound Shaper® Frequency Equalizer lets you control your sound and custom-tailor your music with the mastery of a pro.

And no better way demonstrates the benefits of an ADC Sound Shaper than taping. Even without a studio environment, you can recreate your personal recordings by changing the frequency response curve of the source material — making the sound more like the original and more agreeable to your ears.

Our complete ADC Sound Shaper IC line\* has an equalizer that is right for you and your system. The SS-110 ten-band full octave equalizer, a step up from our SS-1, features LED-lit slide controls and one-way tape dubbing. If you desire even more control, our twelve-band SS-II and top-of-the-line SS-III include two-way tape dubbing and sub-sonic filters. Our SS-III Paraphrastic™ with 24 ancillary switches that enable you to control 36 bands per channel combines



the ease and control of a graphic equalizer with the precision and versatility of a parametric. All at a price you can afford.

All of our equalizers feature LED-lit slide controls allowing for visual

plotting of the equalization curve. And all ADC Sound Shapers embody the outstanding ADC technology that has made us the leaders in the industry.

To really complete your custom-tailored control-ability, our ADC Real Time Spectrum Analyzer is a must. Equipped with its own pink noise generator and calibrated microphone, the SA-1 provides a visual presentation of the changing spectrum through 132 LED displays. So you can actually see proof of the equalized sound you've achieved.

With an ADC Sound Shaper and an ADC Real Time Spectrum Analyzer, you can attain a new level of control. And ultimately, isn't that the musical high you've always wanted?

*Sound Shaper*®  
Frequency Equalizers  
and Spectrum Analyzer



**ADC**  
A BSR COMPANY

Sound thinking has moved us even further ahead.

Write for a free 24-page booklet "Shaping Sound At Home: A Guide to Equalization" (a \$2.50 value).

BSR (USA) Ltd., Blauvelt, N.Y. 10913, BSR (Canada) Ltd., Rexdale Ontario

\*Sound Shaper is a registered trademark of Audio Dynamics Corporation. \*IC indicates new Sound Shaper® series.

## AUDIO New Equipment Reports

STEREO PILOT INTERMODULATION 0.085%

IM DISTORTION (mono) 0.014%

AM SUPPRESSION 55 dB

PILOT (19 kHz) SUPPRESSION 77¼ dB

SUBCARRIER (38 kHz) SUPPR. 97¼ dB

### Amplifier section

RATED POWER 17¾ dBW (60 watts)/channel

OUTPUT AT CLIPPING (both channels driven)  
 8-ohm load 19¼ dBW (84 watts)/channel  
 4-ohm load 20½ dBW (112 watts)/channel  
 16-ohm load 17¼ dBW (53 watts)/channel

DYNAMIC HEADROOM (8 ohms) 2 dB

HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD; 20 Hz to 20 kHz)  
 at 17¾ dBW (60 watts) ≤0.018%  
 at 0 dBW (1 watt) ≤0.011%

FREQUENCY RESPONSE  
 +¼, -½ dB, <10 Hz to 30.7 kHz;  
 -3 dB at 43.2 kHz

RIAA EQUALIZATION +¾, -½ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz;  
 -2¾ dB at 5 Hz

INPUT CHARACTERISTICS (re 0 dB; A-weighting)  
 phono input sensitivity S/N ratio  
 aux input 0.31 mV 79¼ dB  
 19.5 mV 84¾ dB

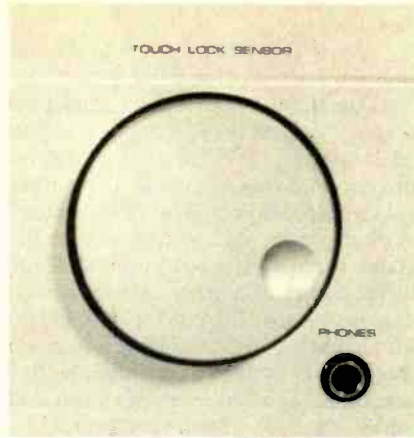
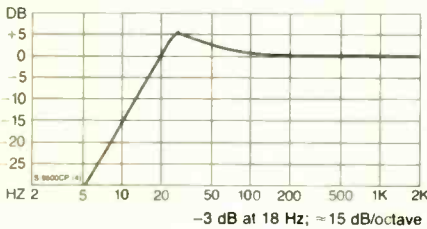
PHONO OVERLOAD (at 1 kHz) 300 mV

PHONO IMPEDANCE 48k ohms; 165 pF

DAMPING FACTOR (at 50 Hz) 74

HIGH FILTER -3 dB at 8.2 kHz; 12 dB/octave

### BASS EQ/INFRASONIC FILTER



Although conventional in appearance, the tuning knob on the S-9600CP incorporates what Sherwood calls a Touch Lock Sensor that engages an automatic fine-tuning circuit when you remove your hand.

wood simply connects the Tape 1 output to the Tape 2 input and, *simultaneously*, the Tape 2 output to the Tape 1 input. "Aha!" we said knowingly, "we're going to have feedback problems or something else untoward. Otherwise everybody would be using this elegantly simple solution to the dubbing problem and wouldn't be giving us one-way-only switches." But we've been unable to induce misbehavior so far. In fact, the closest we can get to trouble is to postulate a situation where we might put two three-head decks into the recording mode at the same time, forgetting that the dubbing had previously been engaged (say, because we had been making tape dubs and then wanted to make two copies from a disc). Feedback—possibly accompanied by damaged speakers—might then be possible, though we are naturally reluctant to try it, particularly since the situation seems so farfetched. From any other point of view, the switch qualifies as the most efficient dubbing setup we've yet encountered.

But it makes "either/or" use obligatory when a recorder is connected to one set of tape connections and an outboard signal processor (for which no preset main-in jacks are provided) is attached to the other. If you want to record through the processor, you would have to reconnect it (though tape playback through the processor would be possible via the dubbing feature).

Sherwood's manual is clearly written (and therefore above average in this respect for a receiver) but confines itself to a very simple level of understanding. This certainly is preferable to an audiophile manual that never addresses the questions of a typical receiver owner. In the case of the 9600, a section dealing with relatively esoteric considerations (such as the meaning of the volume-control calibrations) might be in order. But this receiver—though it certainly should delight the unsophisticated user—is far too good and far too good a value to attract only entry-level admirers. **Circle 132 on Reader-Service Card**



## Stanton's Moving-Coil Mauler

Stanton 980 LZS fixed-coil phono cartridge, with user-replaceable multiradial diamond stylus. Price: \$220; matching BA-26 head amp, \$189. Warranty: "full," one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: Stanton Magnetics, Inc., 200 Terminal Dr., Plainview, N.Y. 11803.

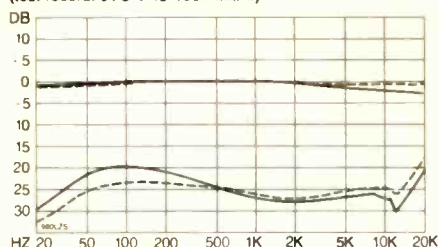
IMAGINE A CARTRIDGE that acts and sounds like a moving-coil pickup, but isn't. That's the Stanton 980 LZS—a moving-magnet cartridge in moving-coil clothes. In most respects it is like Stanton's other top cartridges: It uses the company's Stereohedron line-contact stylus (indicated by the "S" in the model number), has fairly high compliance, and tracks at about one gram. Of course, line-contact styli of one sort or another are fairly standard among today's high-end cartridges, regardless of generating principle, but high compliance and low tracking force are decidedly uncharacteristic of moving-coil designs. What does make the 980 LZS resemble a moving-coil pickup is its low output impedance (from whence comes the designation LZ, for low Z, or impedance.)

But where a moving-coil has low output impedance pretty much by necessity (because the moving mass—and therefore the coil—must be kept small), it is a matter

of choice for the Stanton. The main advantage gained by electing low impedance is that the cartridge's frequency response is essentially independent of capacitive loading. (More typical fixed-coil cartridges with relatively high output impedances are quite sensitive to the amount of capacitance in the tonearm cables and the amplifier's phono input.) The corresponding penalty is a reduction in output, which is usually too low to drive most preamplifiers and amplifiers to full output. This creates a need for an additional stepup transformer or head amp. (We used Stanton's own Model BA-26.)

The 980 LZS has a recommended tracking-force range of 0.5 to 1.5 grams (plus an extra gram to offset its built-in brush). Diversified Science Laboratories did indeed find that the cartridge could pass our standard pure-tone tracking torture test at only 0.5 gram. For other measurements, however, a more normal force of 1.0 gram

FREQUENCY RESPONSE & CHANNEL SEPARATION  
(test record: JVC TRS-1007 Mk. II)



Frequency response  
 L ch +0, -2 1/4 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz  
 R ch +0, -1 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz  
 Channel separation ≥26 dB, 950 Hz to 3.5 kHz;  
 ≥19 1/2 dB, 20 Hz to 18 kHz

SENSITIVITY: (1 kHz) 48 μV/cm/sec

CHANNEL BALANCE (1 kHz) ± < 1/4 dB

VERTICAL TRACKING ANGLE = 24°

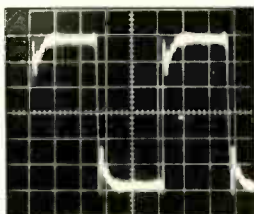
LOW-FREQUENCY RESONANCE (in SME 3009)  
 vertical 7.4 Hz; 22-dB rise  
 lateral 7.8 Hz; 22-dB rise

MAXIMUM TRACKING LEVEL (re RIAA 0 VU; 1 gram\*)  
 lateral ≥ +18 dB  
 vertical ≥ +12 dB

WEIGHT 6.5 grams  
 (including 1-gram weight of brush)

\*actual effective VTF; arm set at 2 grams

SQUARE-WAVE RESPONSE (1 kHz)



was used.

At that setting, harmonic and intermodulation distortion are low and tracking ability is excellent. Channel balance is also exceptionally good. As expected, sensitivity is very low, on a par with that of typical moving-coil models. One pleasant surprise is the closeness of the pickup's vertical tracking angle to the 20-degree DIN standard. We have been used to seeing higher figures from most cartridges on our current twin-tone IM tests for VTA and stylus rake angle. The audible significance of these figures is open to question, but it is nonetheless good to see that Stanton is making an effort to conform to standards. The one drawback (and perhaps the reason so many pickups do have high VTAs) is that the cartridge body rides very close to the record surface, making the 980 LZS more prone to bottoming on warped records than some other cartridges are.

Mounted in the SME 3009 Series II Improved tonearm, the Stanton exhibits a strong infrasonic resonance at a frequency a couple of hertz lower than we consider optimal. This suggests that the 980 LZS would be more stable (and less likely to bottom on warps) in a very low-mass or well-damped tonearm. Frequency response is smooth all the way through the treble (where many other cartridges begin to peak) and generally flat, with a very gentle rise through the midrange. Separation is excellent—more than wide enough for good stereo reproduction.

In actual use, the Stanton 980 LZS is difficult to fault. The matching BA-26 head amp, which is available separately, is a self-contained battery-powered unit with input and output pin jacks on the rear and a POWER-ON/BYPASS switch on the front. DSL measured its frequency response as essen-



The BA-26 head amp is designed to boost the signal from a 980 LZS to a level high enough to drive standard phono inputs.

tially flat to almost 200 kHz. Input impedance is 160 ohms, and gain is approximately 25 dB, with clipping occurring at an input level of 35 multivolts (yielding an output of 670 mV). With any appropriate cartridge, the BA-26 should be virtually overload-proof. Because no AC power is required, hum is quite low as long as care is taken to route phono cables away from power cords, transformers, and the like. We are a little puzzled by the absence of a ground post, but have encountered no problems when leaving the ground wire from the tonearm disconnected.

The sound of this combination is first-class all the way. Every musical detail emerges with sparkling clarity, but without a trace of the harshness that we have come to associate with the exaggerated high ends of many moving-coil cartridges. Imaging is very good and perfectly stable, and tracking is simply superb, no matter what monster disc we ask the cartridge to tackle.

Without denigrating the real virtues of the genre, we have nonetheless never bought the commonplace that moving-coil cartridges are somehow inherently superior sonically to fixed-coil pickups. In its own unique way, the Stanton 980 LZS adds stature to our belief.

Circle 133 on Reader-Service Card

## Dual's Functional Affordable

Dual CS-607 semiautomatic single-play, direct-drive turntable. Dimensions: 17 1/4 by 15 1/4 inches (base), 5 1/2 inches high with cover closed; additional 10 inches vertical clearance required to open cover fully. Price: \$220; with optional Ortofon TKS-55E pickup, \$330. Warranty: "limited," two years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Dual, West Germany; U.S. distributor: United Audio, 120 S. Columbus Ave., Mount Vernon, N.Y. 10553.

SPEED ACCURACY (at 33 or 45 rpm)  
 no measurable error, 105-127 VAC,  
 when set exact at 120 VAC

SPEED ADJUSTMENT RANGE  
 at 33 +7.5% to -6.4%  
 at 45 +7.7% to -6.1%

WOW & FLUTTER (ANSI/IEEE weighted peak)  
 ±0.08% average; ±0.11% max. instantaneous

TOTAL AUDIBLE RUMBLE (ARLL) -64 1/2 dB

DUAL WAS ONE OF THE FIRST (and remains one of just a few) manufacturers to address directly the challenge posed by modern high-compliance cartridges. The problem is that as the compliance of the cartridge (i.e., the flexibility of its stylus cantilever suspension) increases, the frequency of the arm/cartridge resonance decreases (all else remaining equal). If the frequency of the resonance becomes too low—less than 8 Hz or so—it will occur in the same range as most record warps. As a result, the system will tend to overreact to these warps, which are present in great numbers even on discs that appear to be perfectly flat. At best, this will cause the amplifier to waste power as it tries to make the loudspeakers reproduce an inaudible infrasonic signal that is in no way related to the music on the record. At worst, it may cause such severe mistracking that the stylus jumps out of the groove altogether.

There are two avenues out of this dif-

ficulty. One is to damp the arm, thereby reducing the amplitude of the resonance; the other is to reduce the effective mass of the arm/cartridge system, which will raise the resonance frequency. In the 607, Dual takes both roads. The 607's lightweight ULM (ultralow-mass) tonearm is specifically designed to mate with the low-mass Ortofon TKS-55E cartridge, the intended result being an arm/cartridge resonance frequency above the treacherous warp region. The arm is also fitted with Dual's tunable antiresonance counterweight, which (when properly adjusted) is supposed to damp the resonance, providing an extra measure of protection.

Other features of the 607 are more conventional and are, as we have come to expect from Dual, straightforward and well thought out. This is a semiautomatic direct-drive turntable. When you move the tonearm from its rest position, the platter begins rotating at either 33 or 45 rpm, as



# BASF Chrome. The world's quietest tape is like no tape at all.

Today, only one high bias tape is able to combine outstanding sensitivity in the critical high frequency range with the lowest background noise of any oxide tape in the world.

That tape is BASF's Professional II.

Professional II is like no other tape because it's made like no other tape. While ordinary high bias tapes are made from modi-

fied particles of ferric oxide, Professional II is made of pure chromium dioxide. These perfectly shaped and uniformly sized particles provide a magnetic medium that not only delivers an absolute minimum of background noise, but outstanding high frequencies as well.

Like all BASF tapes, Professional II comes encased in the new ultra-precision cassette shell, for perfect alignment, smooth, even

movement and consistent high fidelity reproduction.

With Professional II, you'll hear all of the music and none of the tape. And isn't that what you want in a tape?



The difference in noise level between PRO II and ordinary high bias tape is greatest where the human ear is most sensitive (2.0 kHz).

#### GUARANTEE OF A LIFETIME

All BASF tape cassettes come with a lifetime guarantee. Should any BASF cassette ever fail—except for abuse or mishandling—simply return it to BASF for a free replacement.

#### Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab.

BASF Professional II is so superior it was chosen by Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab for their Original Master Recording™ High Fidelity Cassettes. These state-of-the-art prerecorded cassettes are duplicated in real time (1:1) from the original recording studio master tapes of some of the most prominent recording artists of our time.



# CHROME



# BASF

For the best recordings you'll ever make.



**TO NEARM RESONANCE AND DAMPING**  
 (with Shure V-15 Type III; antiresonance at "11")  
 vertical 5.5 Hz; 10-dB rise  
 lateral 5.5 Hz; 10½-dB rise  
 (with Ortofon TKS-55E; antiresonance set at "14")  
 vertical 13 Hz; 6½-dB rise  
 lateral 13 Hz; 11-dB rise

**STYLUS-GAUGE ACCURACY**  
 measures 0.2 gram high at 0.5-gram;  
 measures 0.1 gram high, 1.0 to 3.0 grams

**TOTAL LEAD CAPACITANCE** 155 pF

determined by the choice of one of a pair of speed-selector pushbuttons on the left front face of the turntable base. A pitch control to the left of the speed selectors makes possible a reasonable amount of variation around the nominal values. And there is a strobe light next to the platter that, in conjunction with four rows of strobe markings on the platter rim, enables you to adjust the turntable to precise speed on both 50- and 60-Hz power lines.

Cueing buttons to raise and lower the arm are located on the right front face of the turntable base. The stylus must first be positioned manually over the lead-in groove of the record; thereafter, the turntable operates automatically, returning the tonearm to its rest at the end of the record and shutting off the motor. The 607 will also turn itself off when the tonearm is manually returned to its rest. To facilitate record cleaning and initial speed adjustment, Dual has thoughtfully included a molded plastic extension on the arm rest, so that you can park the arm without stopping the turntable's rotation.

The tonearm itself is of the dynamic-balance variety, which means that if you adjust it carefully for neutral balance before you set the tracking force (by means of a calibrated dial at the side of the arm gimbals), you need not concern yourself with leveling the turntable: it should function properly in any position—even inverted. Antiskating is set by means of another calibrated dial located to the right of the tonearm on the turntable's top plate. The antiresonance filter is adjusted for individual cartridges by twisting a calibrated dial on the counterweight to the value suggested for

that pickup in the Dual owner's manual.

Although an adapter kit is available that enables mounting of just about any cartridge in the 607's tonearm, its use will usually result in a substantial increase in effective mass. This is demonstrated by Diversified Science Laboratories' measurement of the arm/cartridge resonance with a Shure V-15 Type III installed. The very low frequency of this combination's resonance puts it right in the heart of record-warp territory. With the low-mass TKS-55E cartridge normally supplied with the turntable in place, the resonance frequency rises to a far more palatable 13 Hz—just a shade on the high side of the 8- to 12-Hz range we consider optimum. In both cases, the resonances are fairly well damped with the antiresonator adjusted to Dual's recommended settings (although no more so, as far as DSL could tell, than at any other settings, suggesting that this adjustment is not critical to the system's performance).

The 607's behavior in other important performance characteristics is also quite respectable. Speed accuracy is essentially perfect over a wide range of power-line voltages. And flutter and rumble figures, though not the lowest we have seen, are good for a turntable in this price range.

In use, the 607 presents no special difficulties; like most Dual products, it seems to have been designed with the idea that even a tyro should be able to set up and operate the unit with complete confidence. That, combined with its performance and relatively low price, makes it a good value, especially when used with the matching TKS-55E cartridge.

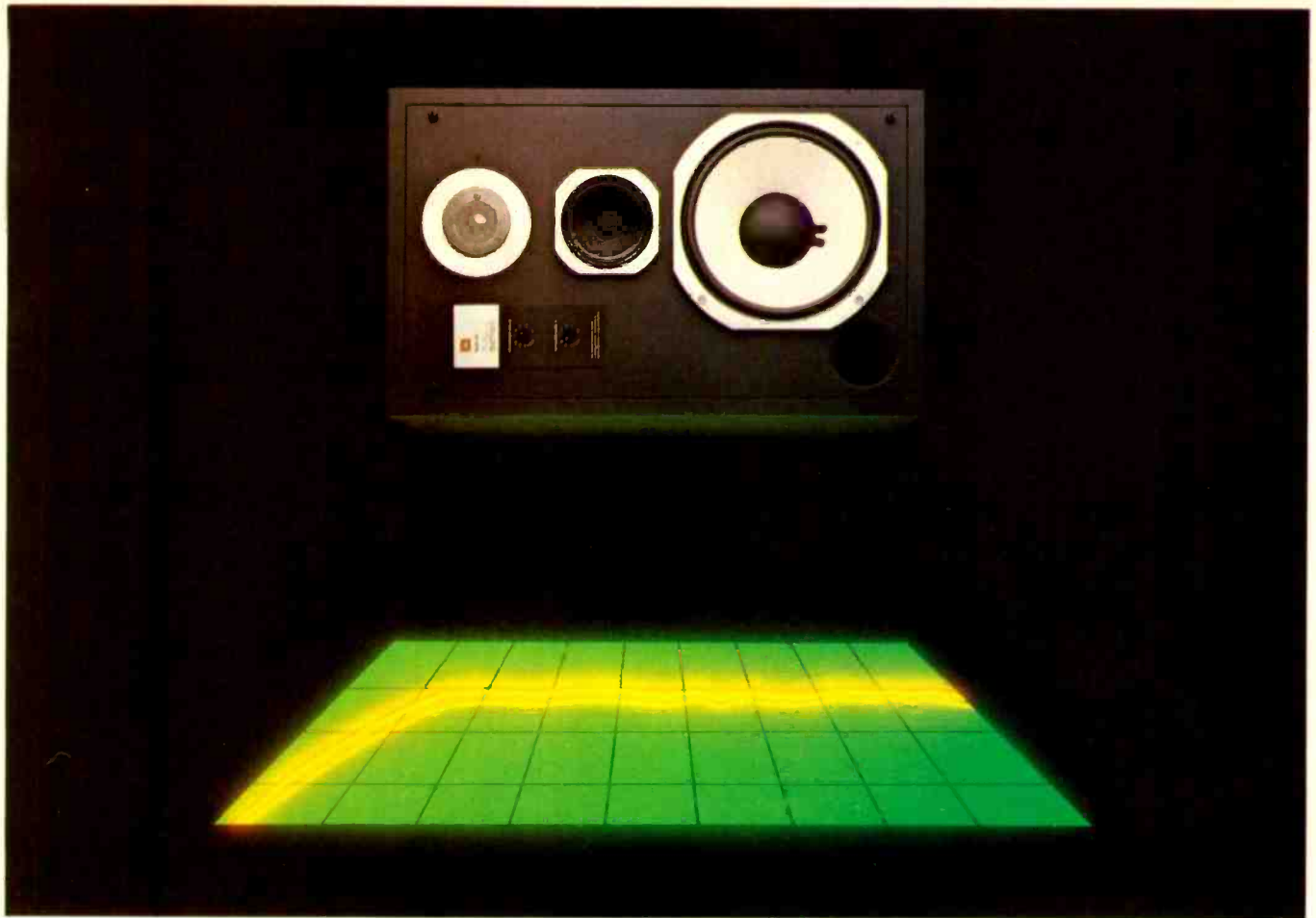
Circle 138 on Reader-Service Card

CONVERSION TABLE FOR POWER OUTPUT

About the dBW . . .

We currently are expressing power in terms of dBW—meaning power in dB with a reference (0 dBW) of 1 watt. The conversion table will enable you to use the advantages of dBW in comparing these products to others for which you have no dBW figures.

WATTS	dBW	WATTS	dBW	WATTS	dBW
1.00	0	10.0	10	100	20
1.25	1	12.5	11	125	21
1.6	2	16	12	160	22
2.0	3	20	13	200	23
2.5	4	25	14	250	24
3.2	5	32	15	320	25
4.0	6	40	16	400	26
5.0	7	50	17	500	27
6.3	8	63	18	630	28
8.0	9	80	19	800	29



## JBL's new L96. Perfect 10.



Having designed and built one of the world's most accurate and critically acclaimed 3-way 12-inch bookshelf systems (the L112), our engineers focused on a new challenge: creating a smaller system with comparable performance. The result is the perfect 3-way 10-inch system, the new JBL L96.

The world's best 10-inch woofer is a great place to start. Realizing that no ordinary, smaller-diameter woofer would maintain the true, deep bass performance required to do the job right, we used the world's best 10-inch woofer—a driver that outperforms many of the

much larger models of our competitors.



The L96's woofer incorporates JBL's unique SFG (Symmetrical Field Geometry) design. The same huge magnetic structure used in our L112 system to reduce second harmonic distortion to infinitesimal levels.

But that wasn't enough. So we added something

unheard of in competitive 10-inch woofers: a larger-than-usual 3-inch voice coil (edge-wound, of course) to raise the power handling and improve the transient response.

The rest is the best of JBL. The other components of the new L96 speak for themselves. Extraordinary sonic detail from the dome tweeter. A superbly efficient, acoustically isolated midrange. And an electronically sophisticated, high resolution crossover network. All working together to produce an incredibly accurate overall sound—natural and effortless, with no sense of a

loudspeaker at all. Of course, every L96 system is built from the ground up in the U.S.A., manufactured to a quality standard that's become the benchmark of the industry.

Come listen to the new L96. Experience yet another chapter in JBL's relentless pursuit of loudspeaker perfection, with the help of the audio specialists at your nearest authorized JBL dealer. For the name and address of the dealer nearest you, write: James B. Lansing Sound, Inc., 8500 Balboa Blvd., P.O. Box 2200, Northridge, CA 91329.

JBL/Harman International  
© 1981 James B. Lansing Sound, Inc.



**Shure supplies  
a replacement  
stylus (needle)  
for virtually  
every cartridge  
we've ever made**

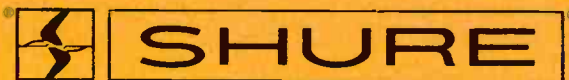
**... a sound  
investment  
in record care  
& listening  
pleasure**

No matter which Shure cartridge you own, from today's V15 Type IV all the way back to the M3D, the first true high fidelity stereo cartridge, you can get a Genuine Shure replacement stylus that can bring it right back up to its original performance specifications. Upgrade styli are available to fit some Shure cartridges for performance *beyond* original specifications.

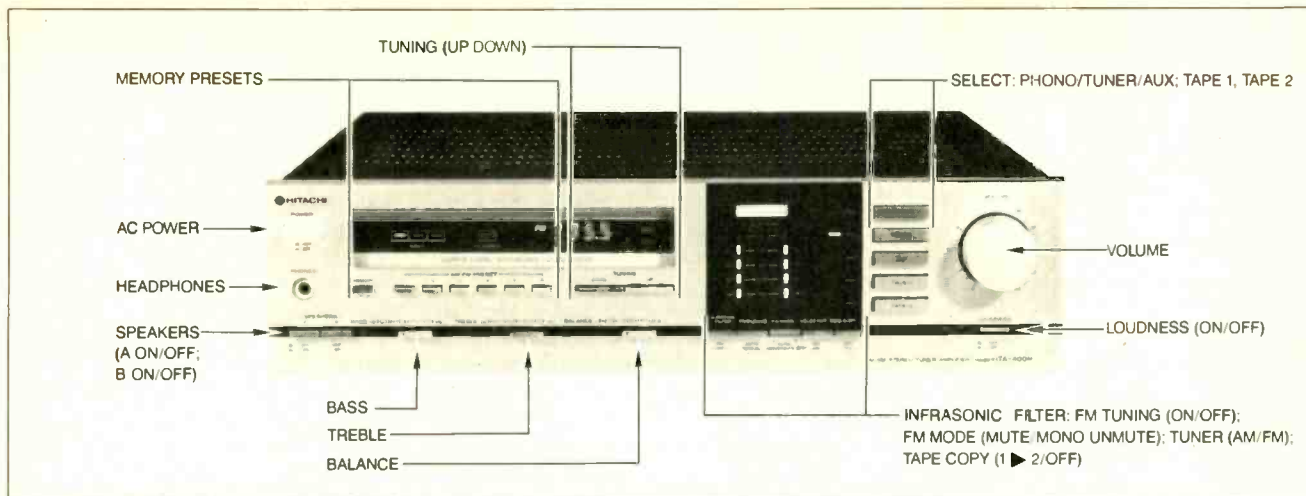
Even as the performance of the rest of your high fidelity system can be no better than the performance of the cartridge, the performance of a fine Shure cartridge can be no better than its

stylus. Cartridges don't wear out—styli do. A worn or damaged stylus can cause irreparable damage to your valuable, possibly irreplaceable record collection. Don't take the chance! Have your stylus professionally inspected *at least* once a year, and replace it if necessary with a Genuine Shure replacement stylus.

Don't be fooled by cheap imitations. Sophisticated equipment designed by Shure assures uniformity and unwavering adherence to specifications. Insist on the name SHURE on the stylus grip.



Shure Brothers Inc., 222 Hartrey Ave., Evanston, IL 60204. In Canada: A. C. Simmonds & Sons Limited.  
Manufacturer of high fidelity components, microphones, loudspeakers, sound systems and related circuitry.

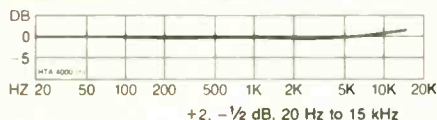


## A Modern Receiver from Hitachi

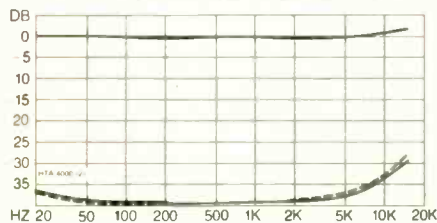
Hitachi HTA-4000 AM/FM receiver, in metal case with simulated wood-grain finish. Dimensions: 17 by 4 1/4 inches (front panel), 12 3/4 inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. AC convenience outlet: one unswitched (100 watts max.). Price: \$360. Warranty: "limited," three years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Hitachi, Ltd., Japan; U.S. distributor: Hitachi Sales Corp. of America, 401 W. Artesia Blvd., Compton, Calif. 90220.

### FM tuner section

#### MONO FREQUENCY RESPONSE



#### STEREO RESPONSE & CHANNEL SEPARATION



Frequency response

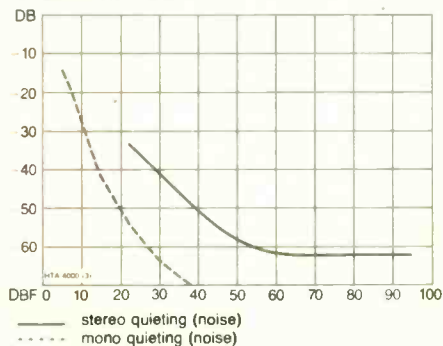
— L ch +1 1/4, -1/2 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz

- - - - R ch +1 1/4, -1/2 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz

Channel separation

≥ 28 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz

#### FM SENSITIVITY & QUIETING



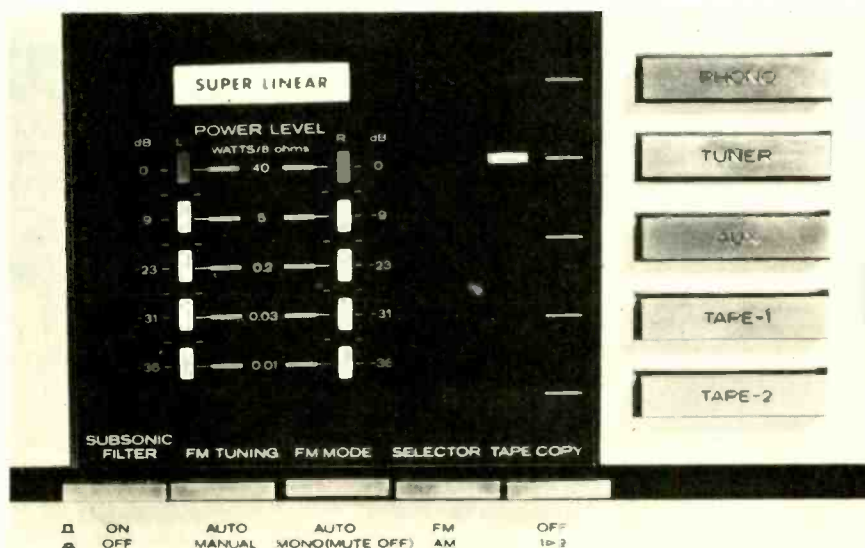
THE STATE OF THE ELECTRONIC art has advanced to a point where a manufacturer can, with enough monetary and engineering wherewithal, achieve in a receiver virtually any level of performance he wants within the bounds of theoretical possibility. This has taken some of the glitter out of specsmanship, with the result that manufacturers have turned increasingly to features and styling to sell their wares. Again, however, modern electronic technology simplifies the task.

Hitachi's HTA-4000 receiver, for instance, has a digital frequency-synthesis tuning section—as do many current receivers. This eliminates the need for a tuning dial (station frequencies are displayed digitally) and for a channel-center meter. Instead of dominating the top half of the front panel, as in a conventional receiver, the tuning aids—the frequency display, a three-LED signal-strength meter, and a stereo indicator LED—fit neatly into the panel's upper left-hand quarter. Arrayed directly below the tuning display is a row of six station-preset buttons (the receiver can

memorize an FM and an AM station for each) and UP and DOWN tuning bars.

Another advantage of digital tuning is that it eliminates the need for a tuning knob, giving a somewhat cleaner look to the front panel. Hitachi has extended this clean look almost to the limit, making the VOLUME the receiver's only rotary control. (We are happy to see this sensible bit of restraint: An ordinary knob is much more convenient for a volume control than the pushbutton systems found on many other recent receivers and amplifiers.) All other controls are either buttons or, for the tone and balance controls, sliders.

The three sliders are in a row below the tuning controls, with separate speaker selectors for two pairs of speakers to the left. The five closely spaced pushbuttons to the right control the infrasonic filter, the tuning mode (auto scan or manual), muting, FM or AM reception, and a one-way tape dubbing feature. The space above these buttons is taken up by a power meter consisting of two columns of five LEDs each, calibrated from 0.01 to 40 watts (-20 to 16



Hitachi's display panel uses LEDs to good effect, indicating which of five inputs has been selected and the approximate power output into a hypothetical 8-ohm load.

Stereo sensitivity (for 50-dB noise suppression)  
 39½ dBf at 98 MHz, with 0.54% THD+N  
 (41 dBf at 90 MHz; 39½ dBf at 106 MHz)  
 Mono sensitivity (for 50-dB noise suppression)  
 20 dBf at 98 MHz

Muting threshold	23 dBf
Stereo threshold	22 dBf
Stereo S/N ratio (at 65 dBf)	62 dB
Mono S/N ratio (at 65 dBf)	73¼ dB

CAPTURE RATIO	1 dB
SELECTIVITY (alternate-channel)	64½ dB

HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD+N)

	stereo	mono
at 100 Hz	0.39%	0.13%
at 1 kHz	0.42%	0.094%
at 6 kHz	1.9%	0.11%

STEREO PILOT INTERMODULATION 0.15%

IM DISTORTION (mono) 0.071%

AM SUPPRESSION 55¾ dB

PILOT (19 kHz) SUPPRESSION 34¾ dB

SUBCARRIER (38 kHz) SUPPR. 39 dB

### Amplifier section

RATED POWER 15½ dBW (35 watts)/channel

OUTPUT AT CLIPPING (both channels driven)

8-ohm load	17 dBW (50 watts)/channel
4-ohm load	16¼ dBW (42 watts)/channel
16-ohm load	15¼ dBW (33 watts)/channel

DYNAMIC HEADROOM (8 ohms) 2½ dB

HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD; 20 Hz to 20 kHz)  
 at 15½ dBW (35 watts) ≤0.023%  
 at 0 dBW (1 watt) <0.01%

### FREQUENCY RESPONSE

+0, -½ dB, 12 Hz to 29.5 kHz;  
 +0, -3 dB, <10 Hz to 72.9 kHz

RIAA EQUALIZATION +0, -½ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz;  
 -3¼ dB at 5 Hz

### INPUT CHARACTERISTICS (re 0 dBW; A-weighting)

	sensitivity	S/N ratio
phono input	0.42 mV	75 dB
aux input	26 mV	82 dB

PHONO OVERLOAD (at 1 kHz) 150 mV

PHONO IMPEDANCE 50k ohms; complex

dBW) into 8 ohms.

In use, this control layout is quite logical and practical, although the power meter seems of dubious utility. There are five inputs, each with a corresponding front-panel selector LED: phono (for fixed-coil cartridges), tuner, aux, and two tape monitors. These last are arranged so that when both are depressed Tape 1 overrides Tape 2. And when the tuner is not selected, the frequency display goes out.

As with most digital tuners, there are two tuning modes in addition to the memory pushbuttons. In the manual mode, pressing one of the tuning bars briefly steps the tuner one channel (200 kHz) up or down, while holding it down causes the tuner to scan quickly across the band until you release the bar. In the auto mode, touching one of the bars causes the tuner to scan up or down the band till it finds a station. There is a slide switch on the rear panel to select 9- or 10-kHz channel spacing for AM, in case the U.S. eventually decides to dump the wider spacing now in use here for that used in other parts of the world.

Basic performance of the HTA-4000 is good, though not uniformly so in Diversified Science Laboratories' data. Take, for example, the relatively high levels of 19-kHz pilot and 38-kHz subcarrier present in the tuner output. Although not themselves audible, they could either intermodulate with the bias signal of a tape recorder to cause audible "birdies" on recordings made off the air or interfere with Dolby tracking. To avoid these problems, you should be sure to use the multiplex filter on

your cassette deck. Though this leakage also raises the measured 6-kHz stereo distortion reading, most of the spurious signal products fall above 30 kHz, well out of ear-shot.

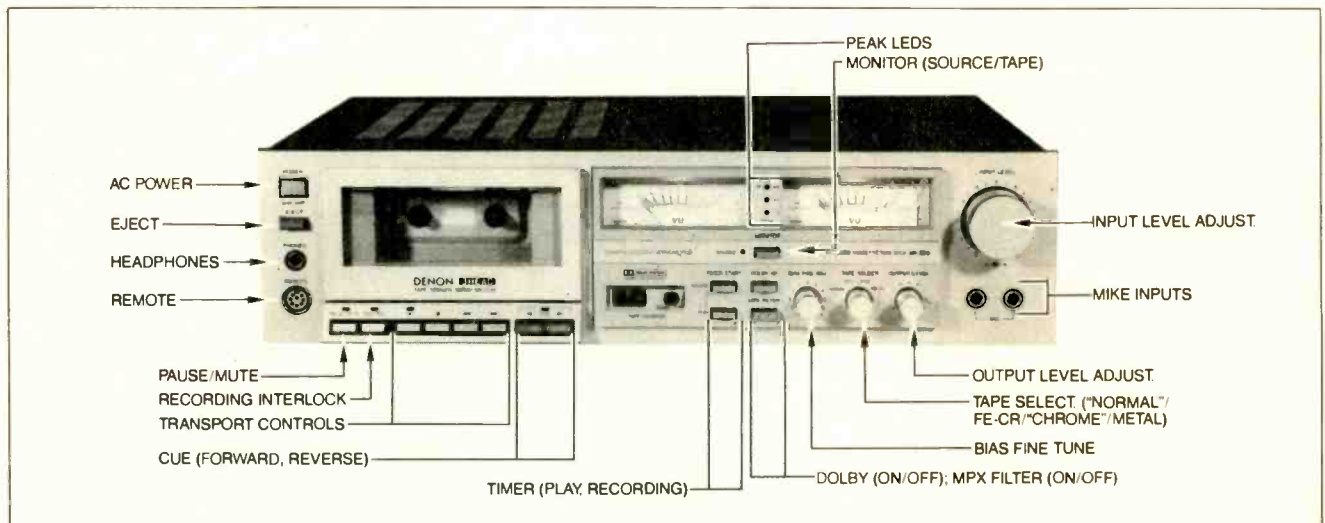
The phono input impedance is not a simple resistance in parallel with a capacitance. As a consequence, cartridges that are sensitive to loading may not perform optimally into this complex impedance. Otherwise, we can find little to fault. Noise and distortion are acceptably low, and frequency response (apart from a light rise in the top end of the tuner response) is quite flat. The tone controls provide substantial amounts of boost and cut: 10 dB for the TREBLE, 15 dB for the BASS. And the infrasonic filter is excellent, with a well-chosen cutoff frequency and a steep slope—a real boon if your arm/cartridge combination tends to bounce on warped records. The action of the LOUDNESS is just about what you'd expect in a modestly priced receiver: It is fixed (not adjustable to the sensitivity of your speakers) and boosts both the treble and the bass (rather than just the bass).

One particularly nice touch is that all three LEDs in the signal-strength meter come on just at the point where the tuner reaches full limiting (and, therefore, lowest noise). That is typical of the HTA-4000's operating convenience and certainly is part of what makes the receiver a pleasure to use. It gives you all the basic features you need and stays out of your way when you use them. And that's what good human engineering is all about.

Circle 140 on Reader-Service Card

DAMPING FACTOR (at 50 Hz) 51

INFRASONIC FILTER -3 dB at 23 Hz; 12 dB/octave



## Denon's Svelte Cassette Deck

AS A COMPANY, and despite its pioneering of the digital audio medium, the Nippon-Columbia/Denon image has seldom been tinged with anything that could be called

ballyhoo or radicalism. It is best known in this country for products that seek to make the most of existing, recognized formats, rather than pursuing the new for its own

Body by Lamborghini. High fidelity by Alpine.

ALPINE  
car audio systems



## Deck your walls with a red Lamborghini.

This holiday season, give yourself or someone you love a print reproduction of the \$200,000 Lamborghini Countach. It's yours from Alpine Car Audio Systems and participating Alpine dealers.

Just clip the car at the bottom of this page and present it and \$1.00 to your Alpine dealer. He'll present you with this eight-color, 19" x 37" Alpine Lamborghini poster. Designed by graphic artist Alan Goodson, it's



a limited edition value and offered only while supplies last.

The name of your nearby Alpine dealer is only a toll-free call away: 800-421-1395. In California, call 800-262-4150. See him for the latest in car audio technology, like the new Alpine

7136 electronically tuned radio with phase-locked-loop frequency synthesizer and digital fluorescent display. Your Alpine dealer knows how to put true high fidelity in your car. Just in time for the holidays. Cheers!  
©1981 Alpine Electronics of America, Inc., 3102 Kashiwa Street, Torrance, California 90505.

ALPINE  
car audio systems

This coupon and \$1.00 entitles you to one 19" x 37", eight-color Alpine Lamborghini poster at your nearby participating Alpine Car Audio Systems dealer.







SENSITIVITY (re DIN 0 dB; 333 Hz)	
line input	117 mV
mike input	0.52 mV
MIKE INPUT OVERLOAD (clipping)	74 mV
MAX. OUTPUT (from DIN 0 dB)	0.95 V

## A Quick Guide to Tape Types

Our tape classifications, Type 0 through 4, are based primarily on the International Electrotechnical Commission measurement standards.

**Type 0** tapes represent "ground zero" in that they follow the original Phillips-based DIN spec. They are ferric tapes, called LN (low-noise) by some manufacturers, requiring minimum (nominal 100%) bias and the original, "standard" 120-microsecond playback equalization. Though they include the "garden variety" formulations, the best are capable of excellent performance at moderate cost in decks that are well matched to them.

**Type 1** (IEC Type 1) tapes are ferrics requiring the same 120-microsecond playback EQ but somewhat higher bias. They sometimes are styled LH (low-noise, high-output) formulations or "premium ferrics."

**Type 2** (IEC Type II) tapes are intended for use with 70-microsecond playback EQ and higher recording bias still (nominal 150%). The first formulations of this sort used chromium dioxide; today they also include chrome-compatible coatings such as the ferricobalts.

**Type 3** (IEC Type III) tapes are dual-layered ferrichromes, implying the 70-microsecond ("chrome") playback EQ. Approaches to their biasing and recording EQ vary somewhat from one deck manufacturer to another.

**Type 4** (IEC Type IV) are the metal-particle, or "alloy" tapes, requiring the highest bias of all and retaining the 70-microsecond EQ of Type 2.

ommendations (aural tweaking being a subjective matter, it's basically inappropriate for such testing), and departures from these settings affect the range above 5 kHz much more than lower frequencies (except, perhaps, when you take distortion and headroom into account—which demonstrates how complex the matter of optimum bias really is).

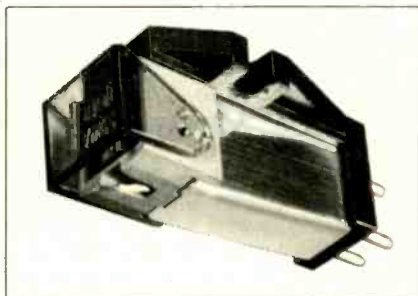
On a more practical plane, there are plenty of pluses in the design. The cassette door can be removed for access to the heads, which employ a 5-micrometer recording gap and a 1-micrometer playback gap. The logic control of the two-motor transport is designed to provide constant winding torque, regardless of atmospheric conditions. That is as may be (we didn't have unlimited climatic variations during our tests), but we can say that the transport works admirably.

Particularly nice, in our opinion, are the recording/pause/mute system and the search controls. When you press the recording interlock alone (that is, without simultaneously pressing PLAY), the deck automatically puts itself in the recording-pause mode and lights the appropriate LEDs. A touch on PLAY then begins the recording; a subsequent touch on PAUSE/MUTE continues recording, but with no signal, for as long as you keep the button pressed and leaves you

in the pause mode when you release it. Very neat! There are two CUE buttons (as Denon's search feature is called), one for each direction of tape travel. They move the tape somewhat more slowly than the fast-wind buttons and permit a slight murmur of audio output. When they come to an inter-selection blank, they stop their scurrying, cue up to the blank, and automatically begin playback. We find the search system unusually surefooted and, therefore, particularly welcome.

A tape deck represents the most personal of equipment choices because it is the component that—of all regular home models—the owner uses in the most active sense; to that extent, it is the one that puts the greatest premium on personal priorities when the time comes to make a choice. The DR-330's metering and bias control, among other things, make it plain that this is a model intended for a more-than-casual amateur who really wants to be involved in the recording process. At the same time, the CUE's little touch of luxury demonstrates that this is a true *consumer* product, without semipro pretensions. If these characteristics of the deck fit your interests as a recordist, start comparing the fine points; we think you'll find that there's no other deck quite like it.

*Circle 139 on Reader-Service Card*



## A Variation on Ortofon's VMS

Ortofon VMS-30 Mk. II fixed-coil phono cartridge, with multiradial diamond stylus. Price: \$175. Warranty: "limited," one year replacement. Manufacturer: Ortofon Mfg. A.S., Denmark; U.S. distributor: Tannoy-Ortofon, Inc., 122 Dupont St., Plainville, N.Y. 11803.

OF THE MANY COMPANIES that manufacture phono cartridges, Ortofon stands out as one of the most versatile, with four distinctive pickup lines. These include the MC series of moving-coil cartridges, the LM series of low-mass fixed-coil cartridges, the Concorde low-mass integrated-head-shell cartridges, and the VMS standard fixed-coil cartridges. The VMS-30 Mk. II is the new headliner in this category.

Like the original M-15E Super and VMS-20E cartridges and all their other descendants, the VMS-30 uses Ortofon's Variable Magnetic Shunt principle. This transducing system uses neither a magnet nor a coil as its moving element, but rather employs a magnetic-field modulator that, by altering the strength of the field, induces a voltage in a set of fixed coils. As with Ortofon's other top pickups, the stylus is a Fine Line line-contact type.

One of Ortofon's avowed design goals for the VMS-30 was to make it the world's best-tracking cartridge. We are not in a position to verify its success, but we can say that we have not tested a pickup that is obviously superior to the Ortofon in this respect. It breezed through Diversified Science Laboratories' usual torture test at its minimum recommended tracking force of 1.0 gram. For all other tests, DSL used a tracking force of 1.3 grams, midway between the manufacturer's minimum and maximum recommended settings. At that force, the VMS-30's lateral and vertical

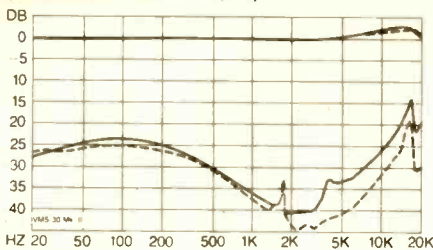
tracking ability surpasses our measurement limits, and distortion—both harmonic and intermodulation—is quite low.

DSL also found channel balance to be excellent and sensitivity unusually high, the latter ensuring a good signal-to-noise ratio. In the SME 3009 Series II Improved tonearm (which has an effective mass of approximately 9 grams), the low-frequency arm/cartridge resonance occurs at about 7 Hz, a shade lower than optimum. This suggests that the VMS-30 will perform best in very low-mass or well-damped tonearms. Vertical tracking and stylus rake angles, measured by the twin-tone IM method, are unusually close to the DIN-standard value of 20 degrees. Ortofon achieves this at a price, however: The underside of the cartridge body barely clears the record surface. Used in a high-mass arm, it might bottom easily on warps.

The two channels match very closely in frequency response, both remaining almost ruler flat up to 5 kHz, then rising smoothly and gradually to a peak of 2½ to 3 dB at approximately 15 kHz. Separation is more than adequate over the entire audible band and extraordinary in the lower treble. The VMS-30's square-wave response is also exemplary, showing a single cycle of overshoot followed by a little well-damped ringing. There is virtually no rounding of the waveshape.

On audition, the treble peak is less apparent than the response curves might

## FREQUENCY RESPONSE & CHANNEL SEPARATION (test record: JVC TRS-1007 Mk. II)



Frequency response  
 — L ch +3, -1/2 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz  
 - - - R ch +2 1/2, -1/2 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz  
 Channel separation  
 ≥32 dB, 630 Hz to 5.7 kHz;  
 ≥23 dB, 20 Hz to 12 kHz

SENSITIVITY (1 kHz) 1.26 mV/cm/sec

CHANNEL BALANCE (1 kHz) ±1/4 dB

VERTICAL TRACKING ANGLE =20°

LOW-FREQUENCY RESONANCE (in SME 3009)

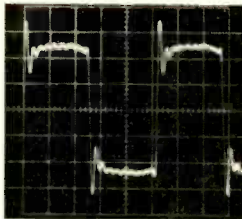
vertical 7.2 Hz; =20-dB rise  
 lateral 7.6 Hz; 13-dB rise

MAXIMUM TRACKING LEVEL (re RIAA 0 VU; 1 1/4 grams)

lateral ≥+18 dB  
 vertical ≥+12 dB

WEIGHT 5.2 grams

SQUARE-WAVE RESPONSE (1 kHz)



lead you to expect. It is audible mainly as a slight enhancement of high-frequency transients (such as from cymbals) and of surface noise. This brightening never slides into harshness, and the effect can be rather seductive on some material. Otherwise, the VMS-30 sounds very smooth and clean. Imaging is good, and in playing a wide variety of records, ranging from old favorites to digitally mastered blockbusters, we have not been able to make it mistrack.

In short, Ortofon has given us another fine pickup—one it has every reason to be proud of. The asking price is fairly high, but not out of line with those of other top cartridges. We expect the VMS-30 will find many happy homes.

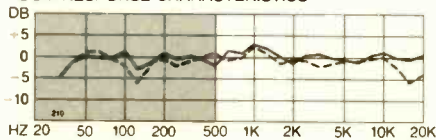
*Circle 135 on Reader-Service Card*



## Genesis' Midprice Masterpiece

Genesis 210 loudspeaker system, in wood cabinet with walnut-veneer finish. Dimensions: 16 1/2 by 31 inches (front), 10 3/4 inches deep. Price: \$249. Warranty: "limited," parts and labor for the lifetime of the original owner (nontransferable). Manufacturer: Genesis Physics Corp., Newington Park, Newington, N.H. 03801.

### ROOM RESPONSE CHARACTERISTICS



— boundary-dependent region  
 - - - on-axis response  
 . . . . . off-axis (30°) response

SENSITIVITY (at 1 meter; 2.8-volt pink noise, 250 Hz to 6 kHz) 91 1/4 dB SPL

CONTRARY TO ITS OWN name, in a sense, Genesis Physics is the youngest descendent of a venerable family. Its founder formerly worked for EPI, whose founder came from KLH, one of whose founders had before cofounded Acoustic Research. Naturally, the histories and products of those companies have diverged over the years, but all have hewed to the line that the best sound is that which is closest to the original.

The Model 210 reviewed here is itself the third generation in a series that started some years ago with the Model 2. It is a large "bookshelf" speaker with a removable black fabric grille that covers almost all of the speaker's front baffle. Bass is handled by an 8-inch woofer, which provides good dispersion up to the crossover frequency, and a 10-inch passive radiator, or drone cone, which carries most of the load at very low frequencies. Both are manufactured by Genesis. The company chose this approach because it gives higher sensitivity than an acoustic suspension design (which it uses for most of its other speakers) with the same enclosure volume and bass-cutoff frequency. Passive-radiator systems do roll off faster below cutoff than acoustic suspension systems; at the same time, they are more sensitive to infrasonic disturbances from record warps. However, these are not significant drawbacks if the bass cutoff is at a low enough frequency and if you use an infrasonic filter or take care to match cartridge compliance and tonearm mass for a well-placed low-frequency resonance.

Above 1.8 kHz, a 1-inch inverted-dome tweeter, also of Genesis' manufacture, takes over. (Contrary to what intuition might lead you to expect, turning the dome inside out does not entail any penalty in high-frequency dispersion, which is determined almost solely by the width of the diaphragm.) Ferrofluid is used in the voice-coil gap to improve power handling.

An inset in the 210's rear panel holds a two-position toggle switch that controls the

tweeter's output level. Response is nominally flat when the switch is in its NORMAL position, and slightly down above 1.8 kHz when it's at DECREASE. Below the switch are color-coded spring clips for amplifier connections. Model 210s come in symmetrical pairs for optimum imaging.

Diversified Science Laboratories ran its measurements with the 210s mounted on stands and backed up against the rear wall, well away from side walls. The speaker's impedance curve lies fairly low and is unusually smooth, ranging from a high of 20.3 ohms at 45 Hz to a low of 4.5 ohms at 130 Hz. This should be an easy load for most amplifiers to drive, but we would not recommend running a pair of 210s in parallel with another set of speakers.

Sensitivity is quite high, as is power-handling capacity: Maximum short-term sound pressure level is 117 dB SPL, which is very, very loud. And distortion is gratifyingly low. At a moderate output of 85 dB SPL, total harmonic distortion remains below 1% all the way from 31 Hz to 10 kHz (the entire range over which DSL makes distortion measurements) and averages less than 1/2%. At 90 dB SPL, THD still averages less than 1% and reaches a high of only about 1 1/2% in the crossover region, where the tweeter is under maximum stress. For a very loud output of 100 dB SPL, harmonic distortion is still below 4% at most frequencies (even in the deep bass), with a peak to about 7% near the crossover point. The distortion products consist predominantly of the relatively innocuous second harmonic component at all three test levels. For what is essentially a two-way system, these are excellent results—especially in the deep bass, where we are used to seeing considerably larger figures.

Even more impressive is the 210's frequency response, which is exceptionally smooth and flat. This is especially so on axis, where response is within ±2 1/2 dB from 35 Hz to 20 kHz. Off axis, the plot is

# Yamaha gives you the silent treatment.

Yamaha's K-960 cassette deck with dbx® gives you what you listen for—music. All the music. With none of the tape noise. The highs without the hiss. The midrange and bass with nothing missing except the noise.



But the K-960 doesn't just eliminate noise. It has the capability of reproducing a full 110db of dynamic range—more than enough to handle

the latest advanced-technology software—that other decks, with 50 or 60db dynamic range, squeeze out.

And the K-960 packs a lot more. A pure Sendust head gives you increased musical clarity and exceptional wear-resistance. Even with metal tape. A superior-design two-motor transport system insures fast, smooth tape handling and reduced wow and flutter.

There are also full-logic transport controls, fluorescent meters, optional

remote control unit, your choice of silver or black



and, of course, Dolby® noise reduction.

It all adds up to a lot of convenient listening pleasure in one beautiful package.

But enough noise about the Yamaha K-960 cassette deck with dbx. Just get into your music with it. At selected Audio Specialty Dealers now.

For more information, write to Yamaha Electronics Corporation, USA, P.O. Box 6660, Buena Park, CA 90622.

**Yamaha. For the music in you.**



dbx is a registered trademark of dbx Incorporated.  
Dolby is a registered trademark of Dolby Laboratories, Inc.

# YAMAHA

PULSED OUTPUT (at 1 meter; 300 Hz)  
117 dB SPL from 50.25 volts peak

APPROX. TWEETER CONTROL RANGE (re "flat")  
+0, -3 dB above 3 kHz

slightly more ragged, but still within  $\pm 4$  dB from 32 Hz to 20 kHz.

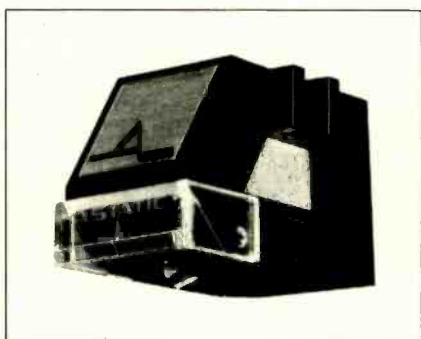
We set the 210s up in our listening room according to Genesis' instructions, which are refreshingly clear on the matter of proper placement. Too many manufacturers seem to want users to believe that their speakers will work well in almost any position in a room. This is never so, and although some experimentation is usually necessary to arrive at the very best position, directions on where to start always help.

In the case of the 210s, Genesis suggests that the speakers be placed with their backs against a wall and at least three feet from side walls and that they be elevated to bring the tweeter approximately to ear level. So located, the 210s sound very smooth and neutral, with a particularly impressive bottom register. Seldom have we heard pipe

organ and timpani reproduced with such authority. This is not to say, however, that Genesis has sacrificed any other part of the audible spectrum. Everything, including very complex high-level passages, comes through clearly and without strain. Imaging is also very good, both laterally and front-to-back, although some listeners did note a slight lack of openness compared to a few far more expensive systems.

All told, we would say that Genesis has performed an outstanding balancing act in the Model 210, which manages to provide high sensitivity, wide frequency range, and accurate tonal balance at a reasonable price. Even though there's no shortage of good speakers on today's market, we suspect you'll find that this one stands out from the crowd.

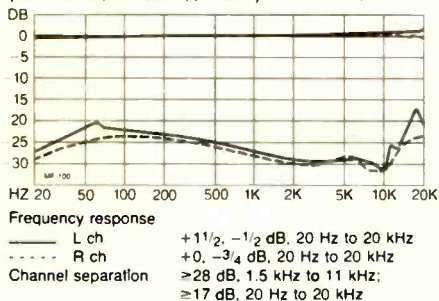
**Circle 131 on Reader-Service Card**



## Astatic's Ace in the Groove

Astatic MF-100 fixed-coil phono cartridge, with multiradial diamond stylus. Price: \$267.50. Warranty: "limited," one year replacement. Manufacturer: Made in Japan for Astatic Corp., Harbor and Jackson Streets, Conneaut, Ohio 44030.

FREQUENCY RESPONSE & CHANNEL SEPARATION  
(test record: JVC TRS-1007 Mk. II)



SENSITIVITY (1 kHz) 1.06 mV/cm/sec

CHANNEL BALANCE (1 kHz)  $\pm < 1/4$  dB

VERTICAL TRACKING ANGLE  $\approx 20^\circ$

LOW-FREQUENCY RESONANCE (in SME 3009)  
 vertical 7.5 Hz; 19-dB rise  
 lateral 7.5 Hz; 11-dB rise

MAXIMUM TRACKING LEVEL (re RIAA 0 VU; 1 1/4 grams)  
 lateral  $\geq +18$  dB  
 vertical  $\geq +12$  dB

ALTHOUGH ASTATIC HAS BEEN in the phono pickup business for almost half a century, the new Moving Flux line is its first assault on the component high fidelity market. The four cartridges, ranging from the MF-400 to the top-of-the-line MF-100 reviewed here, are all based on a variant of the familiar moving-magnet principle. In a conventional moving-magnet cartridge, a tiny magnet is attached to the aft end of the stylus cantilever. The magnet is situated in the cartridge body so that it is surrounded by a set of iron pole pieces, around which wire coils are wound. As the stylus wriggles its way along a record groove, its motion is transmitted by the cantilever to the magnet. The movement of the magnet causes variations in the magnetic flux density in the vicinity of the pole pieces, which in turn induces a voltage in the coils. It is this constantly changing voltage—the electrical analog of the mechanical groove modulation—that is picked up and boosted by your amplifier.

What distinguishes Astatic's MF pickups is their lack of pole pieces. Instead, they have specially designed coil assemblies that detect the flux variations directly through their windings. The company says that this approach results in cleaner, more efficient transduction. In addition, the MF-100 uses a tapered cantilever tube, for low mass combined with high rigidity, and a Shibata stylus, for improved high-frequency tracing.

For both lab and listening tests we used a tracking force of 1.25 grams—the mean of Astatic's recommended range of 1.0 to 1.5 grams. At that setting tracking ability is excellent, and distortion (both harmonic and intermodulation) is quite low by cartridge standards. Indeed, Diversified Science Laboratories found that the MF-100 could negotiate all the bands of our pure-tone tracking torture test at its minimum recommended tracking force of 1.0 gram.

The MF-100's channel balance is virtually perfect, and its sensitivity is about average for a moving-magnet design. Measured by the twin-tone IM method, both vertical tracking angle and stylus rake angle appear to match the DIN-standard value of 20 degrees almost exactly. This is exceedingly rare in our experience; many cartridges we have tested measure 10 degrees or more above that figure.

Astatic claims very high compliance for this cartridge, and DSL's measurements confirm it. In the SME 3009 Series II Improved tonearm (which has an effective mass of approximately 9 grams), the main arm/cartridge resonance occurs at a frequency just slightly below the range we consider optimum. This suggests that you should use a very low-mass or well-damped arm to extract the highest possible performance from the MF-100.

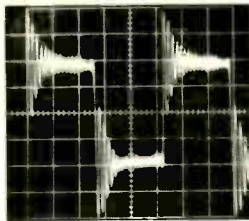
The Astatic's frequency response is extraordinarily flat and almost identical for the two channels up to 10 kHz. Separation is also excellent, even at very high frequencies. Square wave photos show some overshoot and considerable ringing. Some of the ringing is present on the test record, but it is often not as evident with other fixed-coil cartridges, which usually have high coil inductances and therefore somewhat restricted ultrasonic bandwidth. Astatic claims a very low coil inductance of only 90 millihenries for the MF-100.

One benefit of low coil inductance is that it tends to make the cartridge relatively immune to capacitive loading. During our listening tests, we varied the load capacitance on the MF-100 from 180 to 530 picofarads without effecting any significant audible change. The sound itself is superb—clean, well balanced, and free of harshness or strain on even the loudest, most complex musical passages. A number of our listening panel were especially impressed with the transparency of the MF-

WEIGHT

5.5 grams

SQUARE-WAVE  
RESPONSE (1 kHz)



100's high end.

This is a fairly expensive cartridge, even by today's standards. However, it is also one that is almost impossible to fault.

Both technically and sonically, it is an exemplary performer and an auspicious beginning for Astatic.

*Circle 136 on Reader-Service Card*



## A Light and Lively Headset from Koss

Koss Pro-4X stereo headphones, with coiled cord extending to ten feet. Price: \$85. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: Koss Corp., 4129 N. Port Washington Ave., Milwaukee, Wis. 53212.

APPARENTLY "PRO-4 QUADRUPLE-A" is more of a mouthful than Koss thinks people can handle. We are inclined to agree. In any event, it has decided to retire the venerable "A" designation, trotting out in its stead a rookie from the other end of the alphabet. And the Pro-4 series, which goes back a lot of years, rolls merrily on in the tradition of its illustrious predecessors.

This is not to say that there have been no substantive changes: The Pro-4X is in many respects a completely new design. The most important technical innovation is in the transducer system. Unlike previous Koss headphones, which have relied on a single driver to reproduce the entire audible range, the Pro-4X incorporates both a lightweight moving-coil woofer with a four-square-inch diaphragm and a piezoelectric tweeter. (Perhaps the "X" in the model number is meant to signify the presence of a crossover network.) Piezoelectric drivers differ from conventional designs in that they have no voice coil. Instead, they use a ceramic element that flexes in response to an electrical voltage, such as an audio signal from an amplifier, thereby generating sound waves.

The Pro-4X is also lighter than previous models in the series, weighing only about two-thirds as much as its immediate predecessor, the Pro-4AAA. The result is much greater comfort in prolonged listening sessions. This is an especially important consideration because, like all Pro-4 headphones, the Pro-4X is of the high-isolation

school. Its earcups seal tightly around the outside of the wearer's ears—an arrangement that can easily lead to discomfort, even pain, if the headset is too heavy and the cushioning inadequate. The main advantage of the circumaural cups is that environmental distractions are reduced to a minimum. Such isolation is a real plus if you live in a noisy home and virtually a necessity for monitoring during on-location recording.

An added benefit of the sealed-cup approach is extended bass response. In this respect, such headphones normally perform much better than the now more common open-air variety. The Pro-4X is no exception. Indeed, its firm, robust low end is probably its most appealing sonic characteristic. Subjectively, the overall frequency response is smooth over a very wide range. Some of our listening panel did note a tendency to brightness, which gives cymbals and especially violins a slightly metallic quality. However, we find that we can easily achieve a more natural balance by backing off on the amplifier's treble control.

Clarity is outstanding, even in the bass, where many headphones start sounding mushy. Free of the muddling effects of room reflections, every recorded detail comes through unobscured. These phones are fairly sensitive, and therefore tend to make amplifier noise more prominent than it usually is through loudspeakers. But in practice, such noise is almost always masked by the program. The Pro-4X also is capable of reproducing very high levels without strain. (Our ears give out before the phones do.)

Comfort is judged by most of our panel to be excellent, although one dissenter finds that the cups pinch around the earlobes. This kind of disagreement is the norm where headphones are concerned: One size rarely fits all. It's always a good idea when headphone shopping to try before you buy, lest you run afoul of some discrepancy between a designer's notion of how human heads and ears are shaped and how yours actually are.

All in all, the Pro-4X is a fine product that sells for a reasonable price. And it demonstrates once again that Koss is still a strong contender in a market it had a large part in originating.

*Circle 134 on Reader-Service Card*



# Meeting the Digital Challenge

Is your system ready for the dynamic range of fully digital recordings?  
by Robert Long

EVERY GENERATION HAS its super-buzzwords. I suppose, and ours is no exception. In audio, these days, the word is "digital," and you encounter it in brochures for tuners and receivers, in documents dealing with all sorts of mass communications plans, in anything involving timekeeping, and, of course, on record jackets. And more digital recordings are made every month as we wend our way toward the promised "digital revolution."

The big question is: Where will you stand, come the revolution? Will you be ready for the new order—or, more precisely, will your stereo system be ready? The question is both more complex and less intimidating than it sounds. That is, there is no need to be alarmed by the threat of instant obsolescence (despite

extravagant advertising, particularly by loudspeaker makers, implying that some products are uniquely digital-ready), but there is plenty of reason to expect digital recording techniques will materially affect the way we listen to music and the equipment we use in the process.

It's largely a question of the limiting factors. As long as the dynamic ranges of LP records, prerecorded tapes, and FM radio all were limited to about 60 dB—which has been true, more or less, for the last generation—that figure defined a frontier of sonic refinement for regular home listening. Naturally, equipment designers liked to provide as much elbow room beyond that limitation as possible to keep their designs from imposing their own constraints. Phono pickups or preamps, for example, might otherwise

distort on the loudest recorded passages, chipping away the very top of the recorded dynamic range; or a poorly shielded transformer might increase the hum level, stealing from the bottom of the dynamic range. But all this was well understood and, as the levels that each element in the music-reproduction chain would be asked to handle became more and more standardized, the chances that the playback equipment would ever be the limiting factor for dynamic range became progressively fainter.

In some respects, this magic 60-dB figure already represented an ideal that defied realization in practice. Stereo FM found it more difficult to achieve, particularly in the beginning, than mono FM had; and though AM receivers with 60-dB signal-to-noise ratios can be built,

broadcasters can't rely on atmospheric and other conditions to permit full use of the dynamic range. Take, for example, automotive listening. Noise levels in any moving car, however soundly constructed, will mask the quietest sounds in a 60-dB range unless the loudest are reproduced so loud as to threaten the hearing (and the concentration) of the driver and passengers. And some listeners don't want to concentrate on the music. Though background music is hardly HIGH FIDELITY's "beat," there are times when most of us just want the music "there"—unobtrusively audible. With a 60-dB dynamic range, it can't be both: if the quietest passages are audible, the loudest will be obtrusive.

We can play most of today's recordings as background, if we want, because the dynamic range of the music can always be less than that of the transmission medium. In fact, it *should* be less if whatever noise is present is to remain unobtrusively in the background. And as recordists quickly discover when working with wide-range meters, the program material available on discs or tapes or FM seldom exceeds 40 dB between the

## The dynamic range of most currently available program material seldom exceeds 40 dB.

loudest and the softest musical sounds. The dynamic range of much popular music is closer to 20 dB or even less—ignoring the silences (or what passes for them) between cuts, of course.

Digital recording can change all that. Now 90 dB of dynamic range, with infinitely sharp transients, is perfectly possible, and integrated circuits are making the digital technology ever more affordable. If we are to make full use of that capability, we will need several things. The first is a true digital record (and a player for it) so that the digital encoding that took place in the studio need never be decoded until you're ready to listen to it. (It's sort of like frozen food; unless you store it right, you can spoil it.)

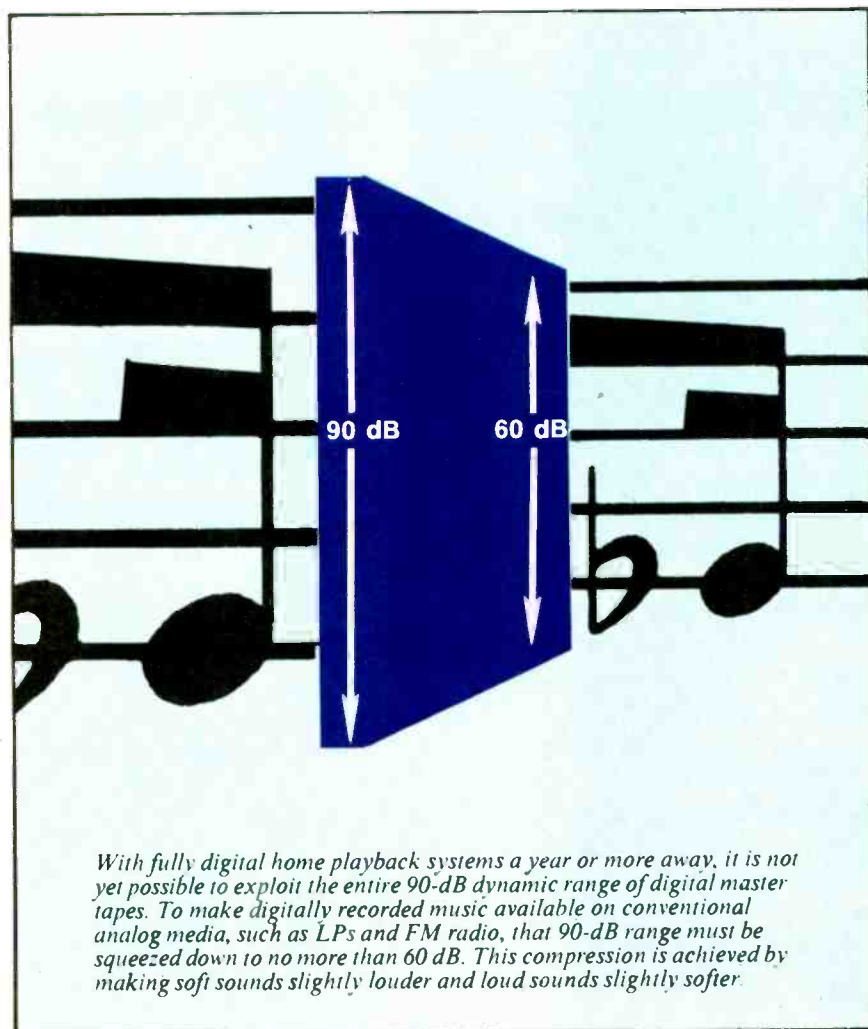
The second is a superb loudspeaker, with minimal distortion both at extremely loud and extremely soft levels plus extraordinary transient response—the sort of loudspeaker you'd like to buy—and could buy right now, if you were willing to stretch your budget. The third is a good, low-noise preamp.

Unless your amplifier is already skimpy by today's standards, it probably has low enough noise and high enough headroom to manage all but the most aggressive digital sound. Still, if you like to knock visitors' socks off, you'll doubtless pine for a bit more unclipped punch on the peaks. To make taped copies of these recordings, you'd presumably need a digital recorder, though that might require "translation" from one digital code to another. But FM could no longer be called a high fidelity medium in the digital context without a radical change in broadcast technique: the present 60-plus dB dynamic range of good stereo reception simply can't be stretched to 90 dB.

Before you prepare your tuner for donation to the Salvation Army, however, consider the implication of what I've just said. The capabilities of current FM technology may well become a limiting factor for a long time to come: if the dynamic range of recordings is so great that they can't be played successfully on FM, recording companies will change the recording technique before they'll sacrifice the free publicity of air play. Then, too, there's the question of the dynamic range that actually will be useful in a typical home—let alone in a moving car. So in improving the dynamic range of typical music-reproduction media by 30 dB, we are only removing this specific limitation; the freedom is welcome, but it won't necessarily be used to its fullest because limiting factors are bound to show up elsewhere.

To put the subject into perspective, consider that the DBX disc also has a dynamic range of about 90 dB, and that it has impressed audiophiles everywhere (including us). Yet it hasn't created a major change in the way recordings are made. On the contrary, it was only the shift to digital recording in the studio that provided the DBX discs with program material worthy of their capabilities. In theory at least, digital disc players promise even more—freedom from the effects of tracing distortion and record warps, for example—but (at least initially) at considerably higher cost than the DBX decoders. Once again, audiophiles doubtless will be delighted. But there is a limit to how far in the audio-ophile direction recording companies and broadcasters can go as a practical matter. We will doubtless have new limiting factors to set our sonic standards, but it remains to be seen how different they will be.

HF

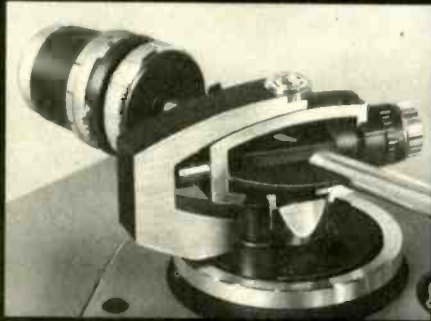


# The worst warped record in your collection can lead to the best investment you ever made.

If you have a record in your collection that's too warped to play and too valuable to discard, we have a suggestion for you.

Bring that record to your audio specialist and ask him to play it on a Dual ULM turntable. You will hear the music the way it should be heard. Because the ULM tonearm will track that record as if it were perfect.

ULM is Dual's exclusive Ultra Low Mass tonearm system, with total effective mass of 8 grams. That's less than half the mass of conventional tonearm and cartridge combinations. And there's no mistaking the difference ULM makes in what you hear.



That difference has been confirmed by the independent test labs that tested ULM with warped records as "real-life" test instruments.

"...tracked the most severely warped records in our collection, usually so well that we heard nothing wrong."

—*Stereo Review*



"Navigating the worst warps we could find, the Dual/Ortofon combination proved very agile indeed, with nary a mistrack."

—*High Fidelity*

"Even a severe warp that would normally throw the pickup into the air will usually give no more than a slight 'thump'... and most warps are undetectable by ear."

—*Popular Electronics*

"The Dual takes dead aim at the fiend of disc reproduction—the warped record—and response to record warps practically is eliminated at the source."

—*Stereo*

One lab also listened to a favorite *unwarped* record played by the same ULM tonearm and cartridge system. Its reaction:

"There is no way measurements, or mere words, can describe the acoustic presence... highs are crystalline, with a purity we haven't heard before. The bass is so clean that one can hear new sounds from records, such as the harmonic vibration of unplayed strings on the double bass... overall definition and transient response were outstanding."

—*HiFi/Stereo Buyers' Guide*

Now just think about all the records in your collection you can enjoy once again. And all the records yet to be bought.

Then consider the one-time investment in a Dual. An investment that may be less than you think.

For example, the single-play, semi-automatic Dual 508 with Vario-belt drive is less than \$160. And the low prices of the nine other new Dual ULM turntables may also surprise you.



Dual 508

For complete information write to United Audio, 120 So. Columbus Ave., Dept. H, Mt. Vernon, NY 10553.

**Dual**

United Audio is the exclusive U.S. distribution agency for Dual.



# VIDEO TODAY & TOMORROW

## VideoFronts

Latest video news and products by Dawn Gordon

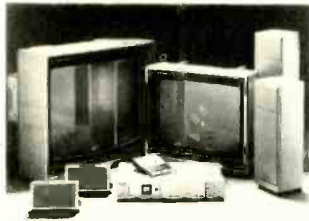


A two-piece projection TV system is being offered by Burke Industries, Inc., for less than \$2,000. Called the Kolorama, it has a 60-inch (diagonal) washable screen and a projector that is housed in a hand-rubbed walnut case. It uses a single-tube, three-gun projection system with dual fresnel lenses. The 16-key remote control includes random CHANNEL SELECTION and VOLUME UP, DOWN, and MUTE. Optional controls are PICTURE, COLOR, TINT, and VERTICAL HOLD. Audio outputs are provided for external speakers. Power consumption, at 70 watts, is said to be only a quarter that of most projection systems.



Front-loading convenience is now available in a low-cost Beta-format VCR. All of the controls for Sony's new SL-5000 (\$895) are located on the front panel, with those for recording grouped on the left and those for playback on the right. The VCR has solenoid switching, BetaScan (nine times normal speed in Beta II), pause, and freeze frame. A wired remote-pause control is standard. Recording and playback are available in Beta II and III, playback only in Beta I. The twenty-four-hour timer can be preset to record the same program ev-

ery day as long as there is tape in the machine (a maximum of five hours in Beta III).



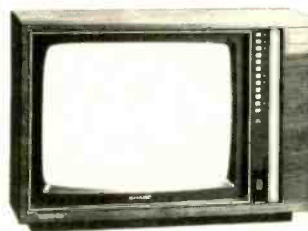
Latest information on Sony's Profeel component television details some of the system's specific features. The separate monitors (19- or 25-inch) automatically adjust contrast for room-lighting conditions, and have a Colorpure filter for improved picture detail; on the 25-inch Profeel there is a Velocity Modulation scanning system for increased sharpness and resolution.

The separate VTR-1000R Access Tuner is a frequency-synthesized device with a 10-key touchpad that can tune any VHF, UHF, or midband or superband cable channel. You can program the tuner to advance through the channels sequentially or to skip certain ones. Also included are inputs and outputs for program decoders and for external audio and video sources such as VCRs.

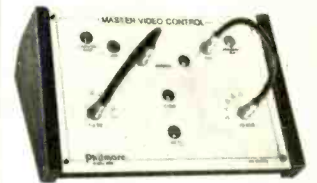
You can choose between two-way speakers that mount on the side of the TV monitor or freestanding loudspeakers, and the monitor includes a stereo amplifier. An optional infrared full-function remote control (RM-705) is available. The system also is designed to handle through a special input such services as Teletext, VideoTex, and interactive communications systems. Horizontal resolution is rated at more than 340 lines, compared to the usual 240-line average. Prices for individual models are scheduled to be announced shortly.



A transition-editing circuit is built into the pause control on Magnavox's top-of-the-line Model 8345 VCR. The circuit is said to provide smoother transitions between recorded segments. This cable-ready VHS deck (\$1,525) has 105-channel tuning capability and uses a new four-head helical-scan system for increased picture stability. Special effects such as still frame, frame advance, variable slow motion, and double speed are all standard. The deck can be preprogrammed to tape up to seven events over a two-week period. The microprocessor's program memory has one-hour power-loss protection that uses two constantly recharging NiCad batteries. A twelve-function infrared remote control is included.



A detachable electronic tuner that can double as a sixteen-function infrared remote control highlights Sharp's new \$690 Model 19F90 television set. The Sharpshooter varactor tuner, which uses fiber-optics technology, is backed by a seven-year limited warranty. Other features include a Linytron Plus single-gun 19-inch picture tube, an ACS-5 automatic color-correction circuit, and a picture-balance control.



Coaxial video cables are used instead of pushbuttons on Philmore's Master Video Control (\$110) to achieve a rated isolation of 100 dB. The device enables you to select from five different inputs to your TV or VCR. Typical video inputs include VCRs; video disc players; pay, cable, and broadcast TV; and video games and home computers.



A video cassette labeling and titling system is the newest addition to Bib's Videophile Edition series of accessories. The VE-17 (\$10) includes a self-adhesive clear pocket that you place on the edge of the video cassette or cassette sleeve. Press-to-apply letters are placed on an index strip, which is then inserted into the sleeve. The kit includes ten self-adhesive title card-holders, twenty index strips, twenty self-adhesive cassette-body labels, two sheets of instant-print letters and numbers, a print burnishing tool, and an instruction booklet.

For more information, circle the appropriate number on the Reader-Service Card.

Kolorama	152
Sony VCR	153
Sony Profeel	154
Magnavox	155
Sharp	156
Philmore	158
Bib	162



## HANDS-ON REPORT



# Sony's Versatile Video Recorder

How Sony's top-of-the-line SL-5800 home VCR performs in actual use tests.

by Edward J. Foster

JUDGING FROM OUR MAIL, the Sony SL-5800 is one of the most popular Beta-format VCRs. Small wonder. It has almost every feature one could want, short of portability. It records and plays at both Beta speeds (2 centimeters per second in Beta II and 1.33 centimeters per second in Beta III), providing recording times of up to three hours and twenty minutes in Beta II or five hours in Beta III. That's very close to the six-hour maximum of the VHS format, even though a Beta cassette is much smaller than a VHS one. You can mix Beta-II and Beta-III

recordings on the same tape, and the SL-5800 will change playback speeds automatically. You can also play back (but not record) in the original Beta I format by flipping a rear-panel switch.

The SL-5800 has a fourteen-channel electronic tuner; any one of the soft-touch selector switches can be set for any standard VHF or UHF channel via individual tuning controls. Each control has a switch that enables you to choose the low-VHF band (Channels 2-6), the high-VHF band (Channels 7-13), or the UHF band (Channels 14-



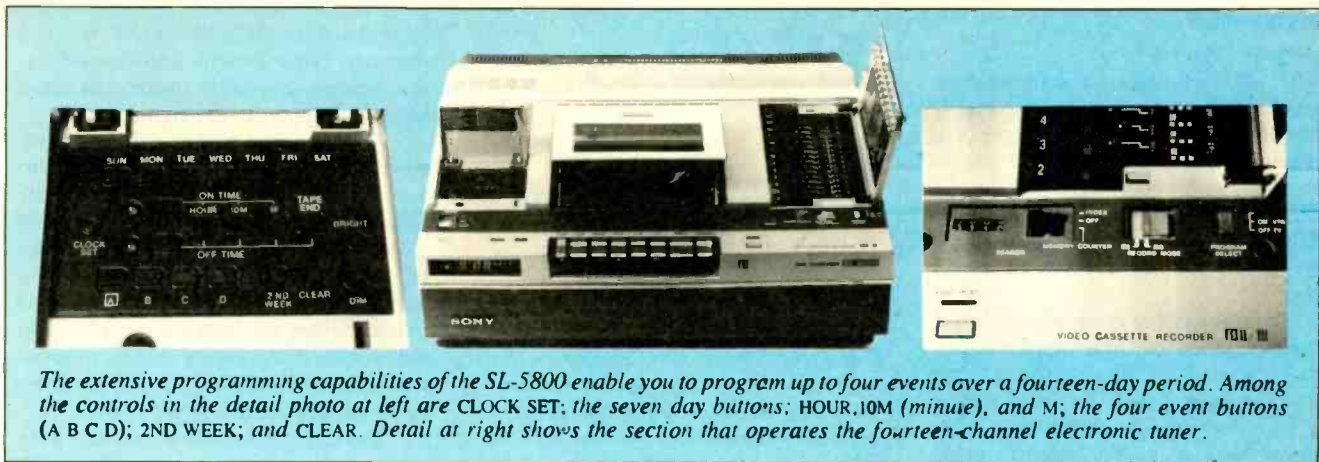
*Back panel of the SL-5800 includes VHF and UHF antenna connectors and Channel 3/4 switch (above, right) and Beta I playback switch (left). External audio and video inputs (above) are on front panel.*

83). The VCR is factory tuned for Channels 2 through 13 in sequence; slip-in legends let you reprogram the display at will.

The usual complement of UHF and VHF inputs and outputs are on the rear panel. UHF connections are screw-type twinlead (300-ohm) terminals; VHF connections are 75-ohm coax fittings. (Adapters are included to convert the VHF connections for use with 300-ohm twinlead.) Rear-panel direct video and audio outputs are provided for use with a TV monitor. The direct video output is a pin jack; direct audio uses a miniature phone jack. Similar jacks at the front serve as direct video (camera) and audio inputs. This audio input is for line-level signals; another jack next to it accepts microphone-level inputs and will override the line-level input if both are hooked up. Another miniature phone jack to the right of the CAMERA/TUNER switch activates the VCR's PAUSE when connected to the camera.

The SL-5800 is, of course, compatible with such Sony video cameras as the HVC-2000, HVC-2010, HVC-1000, and HVM-100, but it can probably be used with a good number of others as well. Since the VCR does not provide power to the camera, it requires an AC adapter such as the CMA-100 or HVA-200. By means of AUDIO DUB, you can add sound to—or rerecord the soundtrack of—a previously recorded cassette without affecting the video.

This deck features four-program two-week unattended taping, using its LCD clock/timer—which, by the way, will maintain correct time during brief (i.e., ten-minute) power outages. Programming is straightforward, which is a pleasant relief from systems that are so complex you have to refer to the manual each time you want to use them. The clock is set by depressing CLOCK SET with a pointed object, pushing the appropriate day button (SUN through



The extensive programming capabilities of the SL-5800 enable you to program up to four events over a fourteen-day period. Among the controls in the detail photo at left are CLOCK SET; the seven day buttons; HOUR, 10M (minute), and M; the four event buttons (A B C D); 2ND WEEK; and CLEAR. Detail at right shows the section that operates the fourteen-channel electronic tuner.

SAT rather than 1 through 7), and pressing the HOUR, ten-minute, and one-minute buttons until the correct day and time appear on the display. Setting up for unmonitored recording is done in precisely the same way, except that you press and hold one of the four "event" memory buttons (A-D); press ON TIME and enter the day, hours, tens-of-minutes, and minutes when you wish the recording to begin; then press OFF TIME and enter the time you wish the VCR to stop recording. Finally, press the button for the desired channel.

A "week" starts from the day you begin programming. For example, if it is now 3 p.m. on Monday, everything until 3 p.m. next Monday is considered the "first week." If you wish to record something in the following week, press 2ND WEEK. Should you accidentally overlap programs—that is, start a second event before the first one has come to its end time—ERR appears in the display. To correct it (or to erase any memory), press the corresponding event button and CLEAR. You can check your programming in each memory at any time by pressing the appropriate memory button: The display will show the start time. Then press OFF TIME, and the end time will appear. The display shows the day of the week, time, a.m. or p.m., event, and whether or not you have selected 2ND WEEK.

At first glance, it would seem that the four event buttons are the same, but if you look closely, you'll see a box around memory A. A one-day setting placed in the A memory is repeated every week. Settings in the B, C, and D memories are cleared after the event takes place. While the weekly repeat feature is quite nice, the method adopted in the SL-5800 is subject to human error. If you leave an unprotected cassette in the recorder and have a time and date in memory A, you could come back and find a new program recorded on top of your old one!

The RM-58W Remote Commander that comes with the SL-5800 not only governs the PAUSE, FF (fast forward), and REWIND controls, but also adds some features not available on the deck itself. It is

connected by a 20-foot umbilical cord terminating in a multipin connector that plugs into the front panel. One button puts the VCR into PAUSE during recording. In playback, that same button provides FREEZE FRAME and SLOW MOTION. The slow-motion speed is controlled by an adjacent slider. At the minimum setting, the picture is frozen, but it can be advanced frame-by-frame by tapping FRAME. The FREEZE/SLOW/PAUSE mode is indicated by an LED on the Commander and by another one on the deck. If you try to freeze the recorder for more than five minutes, it automatically reverts to PLAY to limit tape wear. (Similarly, if you try to pause for more than five minutes when recording, the system goes back to RECORD.)

FAST PLAY, located on both the Remote Commander and on the deck, speeds up the playback by a factor of three. (Again, there is a local and remote indication.) Also on the Commander is BETASCAN a variable-speed cue/review operated by a rotary control and two buttons.

BETASCAN is most useful in finding the starting point of a program. Advancing the control clockwise until it clicks a switch puts you in fast wind. Now FF and REWIND simply duplicate the controls on the deck. Pressing them causes the tape to shuttle, but

without displaying a picture. At other positions of the rotary control, you are in BETASCAN CUE/REVIEW, which, when engaged, causes the tape to shuttle with a picture. The rotary control adjusts Betascan search speed to anything between five- and twenty-times normal playback speed.

Don't expect terrific picture quality in the Betascan mode; there are likely to be a number of noise bars on the screen, and adjusting the tracking control won't eliminate them as it will in fast play. But the picture is decipherable—especially if you don't push for the full twenty-fold speed-up—and you can find the start of a program.

Actually, the SL-5800 has an even better way of finding a program's beginning. Each time the recording interlock is pressed (or whenever a new program is recorded in timer operation), a cue signal is put on the tape. Setting SEARCH to INDEX and pressing either fast-wind button causes the tape to shuttle to the next recorded cue and stop. Voila! You're at the beginning of the next program.

Of course, for the system to work, the tape has to contain the cues (which means it has to have been recorded on the SL-5800 or on an SL-5600), and there also must be at least three minutes of tape (at normal recording speed) between tones for the system not to miss a cue.

Backing up Betascan and this nifty cue system is the familiar mechanical footage counter. In the SEARCH switch's MEMORY COUNTER position, the tape shuttles to counter zero and stops. At the end of the tape, the SL-5800 automatically rewinds to the beginning, which takes about three-and-a-half minutes for an L-500 cassette.

So much for what the deck can do. To find out how well it performs, I gave the SL-5800 a workout in a semifringe reception area, roughly forty-five miles from major-city transmitters. The signal was from a private antenna rather than cable. The tuner was quite sensitive, with lower than average video noise. When the signal was fed from the VCR's tuner directly to the TV set, the picture was a bit on the (Continued on page 48)



Using Betascan, you can vary the fast-forward speed between five- and twenty-times normal—and still see a picture while so doing. Noise bars are visible, particularly in faster modes, but the picture is clear enough to facilitate easy location of specific points on the tape.



# InFocus

Perspectives on important video events by Ira Mayer

## Bent on Rent, Warner Nixes Sale of Vid-Pics

"WE WILL NEVER SELL another video cassette." With that simple statement, made last September by Warner Home Video president Morton J. Fink, Warner has taken the first step toward eliminating your ability to choose between buying or renting a prerecorded video cassette or disc. It's possible that by the mid-'80s, tapes and discs of blockbuster movies, classic TV shows, Broadway musicals, etc. will be available only as rentals. *Superman II*, for instance, is among the current Warner cassettes that, once dealers have sold out their current stock, will be available only for rent.

Why has Warner made this radical move? For a number of reasons, the major one being that you the consumer have shown relatively little interest in shelling out \$60 for a cassette you'll view only several times. Your preference, as reflected in various industry surveys, is to rent, at the more reasonable rate of about \$5.00 per night. According to a year-long WHV study, there were at least twelve rental transactions for every sale of a prerecorded video cassette last year. And some store owners insist the ratio is closer to 25 to 1.

Like the home video industry itself, rental is a relatively new phenomenon. It's also a textbook example of consumer demand dictating industry practice. In the late-'70s, local video outlets began renting out their cassettes on a per-night

*Ira Mayer is a freelance writer and a regular contributor to Video Marketing Newsletter, Music & Video Week, and The New York Post.*

or per-week basis, in response to customer requests. Though the major film studios, which supply the programming, missed out on the profits from rentals, they pretty much ignored the practice, thinking that rental was little more than a passing fad. But in 1979 Fotomat, with its 3,800 retail outlets across the country, formally asked the studios for licenses to rent prerecorded cassettes to its customers. Realizing they could no longer afford to look the other way, the studios hastened to write clauses into their contracts prohibiting rental altogether, at least until they could figure out a way to share in the profits. Of course, many dealers continued to rent anyway. All they had to do to keep it legal was purchase their tapes from either fellow retailers or distributors (the middlemen who buy from the studios and supply retail outlets). In any case, by 1980 rentals proliferated.

Walt Disney Films' solution was to offer its "authorized" dealers a choice of one of three plans: Sales only, rental only, or sale-or-rent. If you walk into a store that has chosen the last, you'll find a minimum of four copies of each cassette: rental Beta and VHS and sales Beta and VHS. Maintaining duplicate inventories in competing formats might give the customer more options, but it isn't particularly practical for the dealer. Furthermore, a three-month case study published in *Video Specialist Newsletter* showed that neither the rental-only nor the sale-or-rent plan was very profitable. According to analyst Jim Lahm, if a dealer bought a Disney title from a secondary source—rather than directly—and then rented it on his own, he could get a 40% return on his investment. But as an authorized dealer following Disney's rental-only rules, his return (based on the same amount of business) would have been 25%. And if he had opted for sale-or-rent, his return would have been only 12%.

There are probably stores in your

neighborhood that have a hard-and-fast sales-only policy. That may be inconvenient for you, but look at it from a dealer's standpoint: The number of times he has to rent out a cassette is very high if he's going to make a profit equal to what he could make from a single sale of the same cassette. If, for example, you buy a copy of *Ordinary People* for \$60, the dealer, having bought it from Paramount Home Video for \$40, will gross a profit of \$20 (not counting his overhead and other operating expenses). But if you rent it for \$5.00, he's going to have to turn it over eleven additional times in order to make that same profit. That's eleven more in-store transactions and a lot more paperwork to keep track of the cassette. On the other hand, for many dealers rental has become the only recourse, since you've proven more willing to pay \$5.00 for one night of *Ordinary People* than \$60 for a lifetime of it.

Which brings us back to Warner Home Video. The plan—currently in effect in a handful of Texas markets and slated for national implementation by spring of 1982—calls for WHV or its authorized "master licensors" (independent distributors supplied from six Warner warehouses) to "license" retailers to rent WHV programs on a week-to-week basis. Dealers will be free to charge you what they wish; they in turn will pay a licensing fee that, according to several Texas dealers, will be approximately \$8.25 per title in the first week, averaging out to \$4.40 by the sixth (consecutive) week.

Initial reaction from video outlets—particularly those that have maintained a sales-only policy—has been negative, to say the least. But when you look at the research, the plan makes sense. In addition to Warner's 12:1 rental-to-sales ratio data, the International Tape Association (ITA) reports that, in 1980, for every sale of a prerecorded video cassette, there were about six blank video  
(Continued on page 50)

NO  
SALE  
?





# A Gaffe, a Goof, and a Spoof

by John Culshaw

Longtime Decca/London producer John Culshaw is familiar to many readers from his column "Culshaw at Large," which ran in *HF* between May 1976 and July 1980. Some will even recall his 1968-69 confrontation over Elektra with *HF* contributing editor Conrad L. Osborne, reprinted in our 1976 Silver Anniversary Treasury.

At the time of his death, in March 1980, Culshaw had completed most of an autobiography, *Putting the Record Straight*, which Viking Press will issue next month. Over the next three months, we will print brief, edited excerpts from the book; and to pick up where the Osborne affair left off, we'll give Culshaw potshots at critics both this month and next.

In October and November 1949, we were still recording on 78-rpm waxes, and one of the works delegated to me was Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*, with Frank Phillips, a famous BBC announcer, as the narrator and Nikolai Malko conducting. It was, as usual, necessary to stop every four minutes or so, and at one point we had a succession of faulty waxes, which meant that Phillips and the orchestra had to repeat the segment several times more than usual. I should add that the engineer operating the wax-cutter was required, at the end of each side, to engrave the "run-out" groove, which, as on records today, ended in a circle. (Obviously, this prevents the needle on a domestic player from being driven into the label.)

It was essential to have total silence in the studio during the seconds required to cut the run-out groove, and orchestras and artists were accustomed to the routine; nobody made the slightest sound until the red light went out. But the succession of faulty waxes in *Peter and the Wolf* finally proved too much for Phillips. The side in question ended with the passage where the bird is at the top of the tree, the cat halfway up the tree chasing the bird, and the wolf prowling round the bottom of the tree in the hope of catching the cat.

After about five attempts it seemed that at last we had a good wax, and I kept the red light on while the engineer began to cut the run-out groove, at which point Phillips forgot that his microphone was



DEBBIE TILLEY

still live. Unaware that any sound would be recorded on the run-out groove, he said, loud and clear, "If I'd been that cat I'd have p---ed on that wolf!"—which meant that we had to do the whole thing again.

Nothing had changed when I went back to Decca in 1953. In May, I was again in Amsterdam to record, among other things, Brahms's First Piano Concerto, with Clifford Curzon as the soloist and Eduard van Beinum conducting. Everything went smoothly until we came to the start of the finale, which opens with the rondo theme played by the piano alone. For some unaccountable reason, Clifford, who had played the work in public many times before and had surmounted the technical difficulties of the long first movement without sign of strain, simply went to pieces in those eight bars. It was the sort of thing that would have been noticeable but not serious in a public concert, but was not acceptable on a recording.

I do not remember how many times he stopped and started again, but after the first few attempts I told the tape operator to leave the tape running until we got a clean performance. Tension was mounting in both the control room and the hall, but our sympathies were with Curzon: it is not an enviable position to sit under the scrutiny of some eighty orchestral musicians and repeat the same eight-bar passage over and over again, although even the greatest artists can for one reason or another become suddenly inhibited about a phrase.

But at last it was clean, and Van Beinum picked up the orchestral entry and went on to the point where we had agreed to stop. Over the talk-back I assured them it was perfect, but to ease their minds, I suggested they should come round and hear the take. The tape operator spooled back to the starting point, and we all settled down to listen.

The tape machine began to roll—and then there was a bewildering silence. By the time any of us realized what had happened, it was too late, for the crucial eight bars in question lasted for only a few seconds—and the tape operator, in the tension of the moment, had inadvertently put the machine into the record rather than the playback mode, thereby erasing the music.

After such a struggle, there was no point in trying to splutter apologies. The only thing was to get the artists back into the hall and try again as quickly as possible; and perhaps because of the shock, Curzon got it right the first time. That kind of accident never happened again, for when tape-machine manufacturers realized the dangers, they deliberately made it almost impossible to press the record button by mistake.

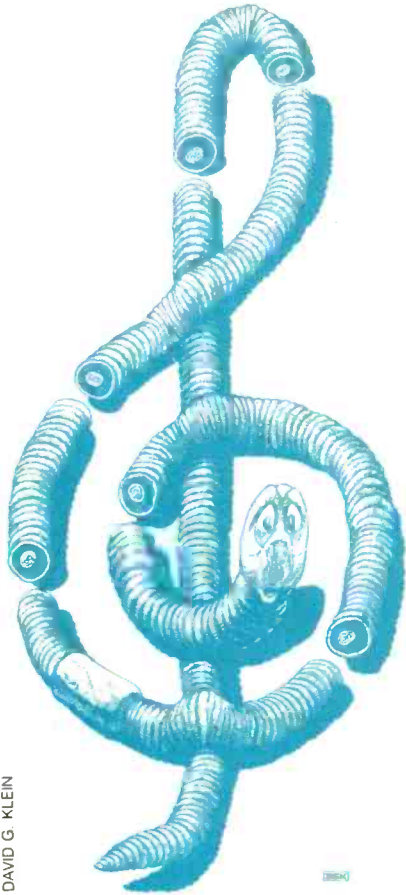
At the time of Wagner's *Rheingold* (1958), I had suggested, deadpan, that for their final lines the voices of the Rhinemaidens could be heard coming from *below* the rainbow bridge. This was picked up and observed with amazement by most of the reviewers, whereas, of course, it is an impossibility. Stereo can convey right, left, and center, and all manner of forward and backward perspectives, but it cannot possibly convey anything in the vertical plane.

Having got away with that spoof, we now tried another with Strauss's *Salome* (1961), which was to suggest that we had invented an entirely new approach to operatic recording, whereas in fact all we had done was to pay very strict attention to Strauss's orchestral textures. We called it "SonicStage," and the art department came up with an emblem that had similarities (to put it mildly) to CinemaScope. I was inclined to think we had gone too far this time, but by the time I was convinced we had gone too far, it was too late to stop the advertising. And it worked: it was greeted as a major technical development, whereas there was not a jot of difference between *Salome* and any other opera we had recorded in Vienna for the past three years—except, that is, for Strauss's scoring.

I wish now that we had not done it, because it was childish; but it was at least an oblique way of getting a kind of private revenge on those critics who persisted in parading their prejudices. When such prejudices are strong, it is sometimes difficult to maintain one's own balance, especially as management often takes the view (or Decca management did at that time) that outside opinion is less biased than that of its own staff. **HF**

Next month—2001: A Space Oddity.

# Carl Orff: Bungled Fireworks...



DAVID G. KLEIN

CARL ORFF'S *Carmina burana* has often been hailed as one of the outstanding works for chorus and orchestra produced in our century, and many have seen in it a solution to contemporary music. Its international success was entirely uncritical; doubting voices did not begin to be heard for some time. Today it is clear that Orff did not travel new paths, and his success does not rest on the creation of a new musical creed. What is proved is that studied simplicity and the immediacy of the ordinary have an easy appeal to an age tired of tragedies and problems, the intricate and the arcane.

Other composers have started twice with an Op. 1, but no other, when well past his formative years, has so radically erased a fairly voluminous previous output. In 1937, at age forty-two, Orff flatly declared, "My collected works begin with *Carmina burana*," completed that year. A specialist in music education for children, choreographer, and inventor of new percussion instruments, this well-trained musician reached the stature of

In the name of "reform," Orff scuttled cherished traditions and substituted manufactured thrills.

by Paul Henry Lang

musico-dramatist through an unusual detour. He earned his living for a time as an opera coach and conductor in the provinces and reached the conclusion that the development of opera, having ended with Wagner and Strauss, could be revived only by returning to the seminal elements of our musical culture. His goal became "the resuscitation of the musical theater by freeing it from all the exaggerated means of expression at which opera had arrived at the beginning of the twentieth century, and by reducing it to the elementary components from which it was first created."

This does, at first blush, sound very interesting, like a new Florentine manifesto, but it makes less and less sense as we continue to examine Orff's aesthetic theories. He was led to his reform of opera through his classroom techniques. The basic assumptions of the Orff method of teaching are, as he puts it, that "by re-creating the various stages in the history of mankind" he can arrive at a pristine style, unencumbered by the polluting accretions visited on music as civilization evolved; music has to be purged of "chromaticism, thematic development, counterpoint," and other traditional means of composition. But this is tantamount to leaving a poet with a working vocabulary of 200 words.

Orff eschews any and all "standard techniques and elaborations"; harmonic progressions are so minimal as to sap harmony of its inner life, modulation is banished along with chromaticism, meters are seldom varied, and dissonance is rare, occurring—when it does—mostly by chance. His endless repetitions of small phrases are like earthworms: When the worm is cut in several pieces, each piece continues to live. Though there are some tunes—even some corny ones—the melodic element consists largely of meandering melismas that float around like musical plankton. The chief means of

construction are repetition and ostinato. In the absence of self-serving expression, individual color nuances do not materialize; Orff does not use a palette, but takes the colors raw from the tubes.

Our severe reformer declares that rhythm could be the salvation of music-drama, an idea obviously derived from the Dalcroze method he used in teaching children. Rhythm, accordingly, is his chief resource, and the vitality and cumulative effect of his obstinate rhythms give his works their telling effect. Yet rhythm is a term of elusive meaning. Upon examining its outwardly extended connotations, one may find oneself talking loosely of instinct, cosmic force, and heaven knows what vaguely metaphysical notions. But we must not forget that while rhythm is psychophysiological in origin, it must have an aesthetic application before it can convey a "spiritual attitude." The ceaseless pounding of simple unvarying patterns, certainly a poor specimen of such aesthetic application, cannot remotely touch the savage grandeur—and finesse!—of Stravinsky's or Bartók's rhythmic power.

This style, devoid of the "standard techniques and elaborations" that made music an art and a spiritual force, presents a pretty barren aesthetic amorality. Listening to it, one cannot help recalling the drunken sailor in *The Tempest*. He sings a few lines, then stops: "This is a very scurvy tune to sing." Then he sings another strophe: "This is a scurvy tune too." In the case of *Carmina burana*, he could go on and on. Patently, there is little musical substance here.

Form, too, is wanting; there are only episodes added one after the other, a shortcoming that no amount of archaeological realism can cure. And Orff's historicism is as calculated as his construction is loose. The medieval spirit is conjured up by pentatonic motifs, modal  
(Continued on page 54)



# or Skillful Effects?

*Carmina burana* is highly imaginative and—given a certain restraint in the performance—inexhaustibly fascinating.  
by R. D. Darrell

I'VE BEEN QUICK, on occasion, to castigate egregious examples of musical vulgarity, even though—as demonstrated by the indignant reactions to my so categorizing the tonal characteristics of the eminent Soviet trumpeter Timofey Dokschitser—my accusations in this backyard of musical aesthetics are as debatable as those of any other apostle of the artistic unco guid. Nevertheless, I'm definitely *not* one of the many listeners, mostly professionals, who harp on the "vulgar" appeals of Carl Orff's scenic cantata *Carmina burana* while ignoring or belittling its virtues. In fact, it is highly imaginative in its dramatically powerful exploitation of percussive timbres and motoric devices: of ostinato thematic and rhythmic patterns, more sophisticated than primitivistic; and of solo and choral vocalization that stretches the ranges to their limits.

One reason this music is deemed vulgar, obviously, is that many performers yield to its temptations to indulge in exhibitionistic excesses. In addition, the often violent visceral reactions of listeners prompt them to accuse the composer of cynically exploiting their basest susceptibilities. But all this nonsense aside, and regardless of Orff's eventual historical stature, the fact remains that his *Carmina burana* is inexhaustibly fascinating to study both in score (Schott Ed. 4425) and in sound—preferably that of its most vividly kaleidoscopic, most muscicularly impactful recorded performances.

To appreciate fully the skill of Orff's evocations, one must also study the medieval texts of his *cantiones profanae*, which uninhibitedly celebrate the sensual joys of springtime, wine, and love. These texts, supplied with most, but not all, disc editions, appear in English

*Since these pieces were conceived independently, there is no attempt at specific "rebuttal" of P.H.L.'s points in R.D.D.'s more general defense.—Ed.*

translations that vary considerably: Schott's and Deutsche Grammophon's anonymous older ones are somewhat stilted: William Mann's 1965 rendering is actually singable, but Jeffrey M. Duban's freer, rhymed translation of 1980–81, included in the Telarc set, is the most poetic in its own right. Most cassette editions do not include texts (or, usually, any notes at all), but the Mata/RCA taping is a notable exception: it includes, along with the original Latin/German texts, Mann's English translation and illuminating program notes by Harvey E. Phillips. Audiophiles may well have particular need of such essential background information, since they are the ones most prone to revise the Earl of Chesterfield's dictum to say, "Take care of the sounds and the sense will take care of itself."

The twenty-four *Carmina burana* selections (the twenty-fifth is a literal repetition of the first) are so varied in both vocal and instrumental characteristics that every performance is as different as the participants and engineering techniques involved. It's no wonder, then, that nearly every version commands at least some devoted fans. But until the latest batch of new and reissued recordings came along, my own top rankings had remained stable for several years. Decisively first was the spectacularly scintillating 1975 Kegel/Philips version, for its "sheer all-around musicianship as well as galvanic excitement" (Dec. 1976 HF). Next, retained in a special place of honor, was the Ozawa/RCA version, recorded in late 1968, in my opinion the first to do as much justice to the music's grandeur as to its sonic sensationalism—although others award that precedence to the 1966 Frühbeck de Burgos/Angel version.

Now all these remain among my preferences. But don't confuse Kegel's Philips version with his 1966 DG/Helio-



DAVID G. KLEIN

dor broadcast-studio recording, with different soloists, recently reissued in the Resonance series. Even at midprice, *that* can be commended only to demonstrate how miraculously a conductor's interpretation and execution can improve in less than a decade.

Eurodisc's 1973 recording, released here for the first time, is more rewarding—primarily for its fine soloists, led by Hermann Prey, and to a lesser degree for Kurt Eichhorn's generally orthodox Germanic interpretation. Unfortunately, it is handicapped—fatally in this music—by run-of-the-mill recording. Even in SQ-quad playback the improvement is negligible. And while the disc edition has trilingual program notes, the sonically identical taping has notes in German only; neither format has texts.

Contrariwise, the far more vivid—indeed, truly spectacular—Muti/Angel version, recorded March 1979 in EMI's Abbey Road Studio No. 1, is handicapped by the conductor's exaggerated  
(Continued on page 55)



## Orff: Bungled . . .

(Continued from page 52)

passages, monotonous psalmody, and pseudo-Gregorianism. Then when he turns from Latin and German to French, he imitates Adam de la Halle but without the latter's charm.

There once was a queen of Spain who told her philandering king: "I can make princes of the blood without you, but what you can make without me has quite another name." But then Orff does not want to make princes of the blood; he prefers a new line of bastards. In the new *Gesamtkunstwerk* he thinks he has created, music has no independent existence: unable to stand by itself, it is merely part of the background, of the decor, for his imagination is purely scenic. This is an arbitrary, didactic concept—not artistic, but socioeducational. A glance at the list of his works discloses a quantity of educational pieces for children and laymen, the purpose of which is to make music easily accessible to the largest number. *Carmina burana* represents the transfer of this socioeducational idea into the realm of art. This concept originated in an era—in the Germany after 1933—when only approved and officially guided formulas and styles were tolerated, and when more "inaccessible" music, such as Hindemith's, was proscribed. One cannot help seeing here the influence of psychosocial changes. Once embarked on this socially leveled art, Orff could not turn back; the sequels to *Carmina burana* forming the triptych *Trionfi* consist of the same easily assimilable mixture of raw materials.

Orff's apologists—and he himself—often aver that he returned to the ideals of the Camerata, and specifically to Monteverdi. But the Camerata's spirit was humanistic and aristocratic, and *Orfeo* is anything but "elementary"; it makes bold use of the technical refinements of the composer's art and is steeped in very personal, but certainly not orgiastic, emotions. Opera was expressive from the moment it was born; indeed, it was born out of the need to rise above the expressive possibilities of the spoken theater. Even a cool and meticulous classicist like Cherubini could send an audience home deeply moved after a performance of his *Medea*. Not so Orff. He relies on appeals to the unconscious, a riot of uppercase rock and roll that sets the limbs in motion and the hips swinging. One could argue that this is striking only because it strays so far from our or-

dinary musical experience; in art music, we are seldom exposed to such crass appeal to primitive instincts.

But then what does the "theatrical triptych" represent? What is its message, its aesthetic, its ideological perspective? Does it call on shared experience? Are these the visions of a lost world, of a saner and simpler past? Orff is a learned man; he knows his Latin poets, both classical and medieval; and he knows the Middle High German poetry of the goliards and *vagantes*. Yet this is an imaginary, unreconstructed, bookish antiquity and Middle Ages, an archaeology that spawns overdecorated pathos and erotic frenzy. The use of the "dead" languages is fraught with danger because it

## Orff does not use a palette, but takes the colors raw from the tubes.



Carl Orff studying an archaeological artifact: His is a bookish antiquity.

compels stylization: only great artistry can carry it off, as Stravinsky does in *Oedipus Rex*. (*Oedipus*, *Le Sacre*, and *Les Noces* are always somewhere in the background of the triptych, though divested of their artistic essence.) But Stravinsky set a libretto; *Oedipus* is a neo-Attic drama. Orff moves backward and forward in time and place, in and out of different languages, rocketing to and fro like badly managed fireworks. The various texts are grouped asymmetrically and inconsistently, with more digressions than narrative structure.

No, Orff's message is supposed to be the "*Urphenomenon*," the primeval phenomenon of life, the union of the sexes. "Amor is everywhere" is the motto, and he celebrates the breaking down of virginal shackles (*vincula virginea*): "Sweetest boy, I give myself to you utterly." The triptych culminates in a paean to *Venus generosa*. Fine. This can

be very poetic. But how far does it succeed? Was it worth jettisoning nearly everything we have cherished in our music for centuries?

The first part of the triptych, *Carmina burana*, draws its material from an interesting and valuable manuscript collection of medieval Latin and German poetry of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, discovered in the Bavarian monastery of Beuren—hence the Latinized *burana*. Orff selected several drinking and love songs, and set them for solo, chorus, and orchestra. Perhaps he does some justice to the second part, "In the Tavern," yet these vagabond dropout students, the goliards, were not just wild and uncouth fellows. These spirited vagrants, though abominated by the church, were eagerly sought as entertainers not only by the denizens of the tavern, but also by princes and—secretly—by churchmen, too; the manuscript was preserved, after all, in a Benedictine monastery! They were the left-wing intelligentsia of the age, who loved to debate all issues with polished and impudent sarcasm. They did celebrate wine, women, and song, but as poets, not rowdies, and their love poetry is genuine and delectable. Their drinking songs, however robust, are polished little medieval cameos; the ex-clerics knew their classical ancestors. Orff's wildly shrieking chorus and crashing orchestra completely divest them of their grace, making their gaiety obstreperous. He does a little better with the medieval French "Court of Love," though here he gets sentimental. The genuine *amour courtois* was not sentimental, but gentle and dreamy, the chivalric, playful sweetness of a circumscribed courtly life dominated by women, who were much more cultivated than their martial knights.

Orff's greatest gaffe, however, is his misreading of Catullus' erotic love poetry, which he takes to be volcanic and orgiastic. The Roman poet, known in his youth as a man of charm, forbearance, and warmth, was neither a dissolute voluptuary nor even a mere hedonist; he addresses "Lesbia, whom alone [he] has loved more than himself." Only later, disappointed in love and friendship, does he become satirical and abusive, hostile to the world. Though they have often been taken for pornography, there is nothing obscene or even coarse in verses such as these: "My hand longs, / It really does long, / O you pointed breasts, / My hand longs / To grasp them." Every young man since Adam has experienced such longing. What emanates from this poetry is a fresh youthful nakedness, pagan yet far from orgiastic—a nakedness both poetic and in harmony with the Latin psyche. Catullus lived in a licentious society, unrestrained in its pleasures and intrigues, but a lyric

poet can turn the carnal into an almost pastoral suavity. These songs were composed by a great poet, whose language is a triumph of art, infinitely pliable, musical—and yes, innocent. Presently the picture changes, however: after the undramatic prologue, the two protagonists, Lesbia and Catullus, appear in person, and passions flare up—especially when Catullus discovers the courtesan's faithlessness. This is no longer the pastoral idyll. Love becomes agony, and agony becomes bitterness; the poet looks at the broken fragments of life that remain to him.

How does Orff treat the two sides of this poetic coin? He fails to distinguish between them and swamps all nuances with rumbling ostinatos delivered by an immense percussion band consisting of—besides four timpani and four pianos—xylophone and every conceivable drum, rattle, and cymbal. Uproarious vociferation interspersed with detonations and howls greets these enmeshed verses, and the commotion is loudest where tenderness should most prevail.

In the final segment of the triptych, *Aphrodite's Triumph*, a wedding ritual of the ancients is celebrated, with full symphony orchestra now joining the percussion band. This is the most archaizing part of the trilogy, for in addition to Catullus, Euripides and Sappho are also called upon, forming a curious literary amalgam. Interestingly, now chromati-

cism appears for the first time, not as a denial of the strict diatonicism that is Orff's trademark, but as a rather involved learned reference to ancient Greek music theory, in which the *chroma*, the half-step, was considered to express passion. It is claimed that the Sapphic portions are entirely based on the particular gait and sound of Greek prosody, but who knows how, exactly, ancient Greek was pronounced, accented, and inflected?

An awfully noisy wedding, this sounds more like an Indian war dance than a hymeneal ceremony such as Philemon and Baucis may have had. The bridesmaids and groomsmen, challenged by the outsize orchestral apparatus, nearly burst their lungs. The soprano's vaguely oriental-sounding melismatic "song" sounds perilously close to the snake-charmer's music in exotic movies. The male precentor rants a good deal. But the *pièce de résistance* is always that clangorous chorus. At any rate, the work ends triumphantly as the precentor calls on the participants to "make use of your flowering youth," which they do with alacrity to an ear-splitting accompaniment.

If Orff's arguments are valid, we must conclude that our music need never have evolved its complex life. Such determined aloofness from everything we love, value, and admire in the art can easily turn into a parody of what it wants

to represent, an anatomical specimen with no skin or flesh, just bone and teeth. Orff has not created a school. To turn Schweitzer's famous words about Bach upside down, "nothing leads to him and nothing issues from him"; he stands apart from the mainstream of the history of music.

Yet to those who do not understand modern music, he has become *the* modern composer. His success and his attraction for the public are undeniable; as Sherlock Holmes said to Dr. Watson: "We have done very well indeed; it is true that you have missed everything of importance, but you have hit upon *the method*." If there is nothing here of real artistic imagination, the whole still has a fantastic effect.

As we look at what Orff has made from the remnants of our millennial art, we are both intrigued and repelled. He succeeds in engaging the attention, and somehow his music comes across on first hearing. The unfamiliar textures, the hypnotic effect of the rattling and pulverizing ostinatos, the obsessively repeated melismas, and the percussive din of his unconventional orchestra cause a certain slippage in the brain, carrying the fresh observer away. Indeed, *Carmina burana* and its sequels can be made into a dazzling show. But with further acquaintance, Orff's intensity is felt to be self-conscious, and the flesh refuses to creep. **HF**



## Orff: ... or Skillful?

(Continued from page 53)

tempos and dynamic extremes and his often heavy-handed pretentiousness. The choral parts are sung routinely, the solo ones with more personal relish. But the prime appeal here is sheerly sonic; perhaps even more sensationally thrilling than the Kegel/Philips version. Muti's is certainly a dazzling example of the optimal sumptuousness, solidity, and power of analog technology. I haven't yet heard the cassette edition, but it's sure to lack the disc's notes and texts (with Mann's English translation).

Despite my objections to Muti's reading, I keenly regret that his is not the version Mobile Fidelity chose for its deluxe "Original Master Recording" series, rather than EMI/Angel's earlier one. Previn's 1975 Kingsway Hall recording, I never could share the wild enthusiasm of

many British and American Previnites for that reading, even though I had fewer objections to his reading then (July 1976 HF) than I do now. Mobile Fidelity's half-speed remastering and the JVC pressing effect striking improvements in sonic clarity as well as surface quietness—yet they mainly enhance the overall amiability of a performance that dilutes the work's dramatic thrills while rarely suggesting its potential grace or grandeur. And even the sound, though markedly cleaner, is still no match for the very best in the Muti and Kegel analog recordings, to say nothing of the first two digitals.

A more rewarding choice for half-speed remastering is the uninhibitedly spectacular if excessively idiosyncratic—even eccentric—Thomas/CBS version recorded in the fall of 1974 (May 1975 HF, May 1976 "Tape Deck"). The remastering improvements are again unmistakable—if somewhat less startling, where the original disc pressing was more satisfactory to begin with. Thomas' fans may find this deluxe—yet inexplicably textless—reissue well worth its premium price; however, even they may find the stereo sound-source local-

izations disconcerting. And those of us who lament the passing of quadriphony can find no substitute here for the surround-sound titillations of the old SQ-encoded disc edition and discrete four-channel taping, even though the latter was barbarously shorn of all strophic repeats.

Shaw's digital recording (November 1980 in Atlanta's Memorial Arts Center Symphony Hall), though marginally earlier than Mata's (December 1980 in Kingsway Hall, London), was not released until a couple of months later. It impressively reinforces Shaw's matchless reputation as a choral conductor: His Georgian forces give a first-rate performance, with undoubtedly the best enunciation of any choirs to date. His soloists do well, too, particularly the fast-rising Swedish baritone, Håkan Hagegård; tenor William Brown, relatively unfamiliar on records, brings ample voice to the plaint of the roasted swan, too often a pinched falsetto; and soprano Judith Blegen, who also appears in the Thomas/CBS version, is brilliant dramatically and tonally if again too tremulous for my taste or for full atmospheric (Continued on page 97)



# A Bubble Close to Bursting

*Sophisticated Ladies*, spread very thin on vinyl, still offers considerable pleasures. Reviewed by Matthew Gurewitsch

THE RECORDING OF *Sophisticated Ladies* gives rise to a curious proposition: The more completely a show relies on its songs and dances, the less of what matters will make the transfer to disc. As plot and dialogue make way for a proliferation of "numbers," original-cast albums start spilling over onto second LPs, producers evidently subscribing to the notion (and convincing their public) that an urtextually faithful documentation of every blessed sound will convey the full theatrical experience.

Producers and the public are all deceived. In a musical comedy worthy of the name, songs serve many purposes. They may set a tone, as "*Willkommen, bienvenu, welcome*," does in *Cabaret*, or sketch a character, like "I'm Just a Girl Who Cain't Say No" from *Oklahoma!* Lyric, reflective, or effusive, they may edge into quasi-operatic "arias" like *West Side Story's* "Maria." They may lend wings to key moments in the action (*My Fair Lady's* "The Rain in Spain") or even propel the story along (*The Music Man's* "Trouble in River City"). Whatever the function, they are a show's epiphanies, the spots of highest poetic concentration, blossoms on the organizing trellis (however flimsy) of the plot. Frankly anthologized, cut free, they still carry a memory with them; and heard with no context beyond the one their sequence and juxtaposition create, they float and flower (like tight, pressed-paper buds from Japan when tossed in water) into a bouquet that distills the essence of their native setting. Such is the magic of the right excerpt.

An all-singing/all-dancing diversion like *Sophisticated Ladies* may hold the stage perfectly well, even brilliantly, and still spread very thin on vinyl. It has

no tale to tell and no governing idea. That it is composed (with negligible lapses) of music by Duke Ellington is merely a pretext for a show, not a structure. The shape of the evening is the creation of director Michael Smuin (a choreographer immeasurably more valuable for his unerring showmanship on the popular stage than for his tawdry contributions to the High Art of classical ballet, which claims his chief efforts). Its excellence lies equally in the staging of individual numbers, the variety of the material, and the deft pacing through the course of each music-filled "act." But unlike the composer and lyricist of a musical comedy, an assembler like Smuin cannot decree, by introducing a song, that a chosen juncture of the show shall carry a heightened charge. When songs are everything, the special accents must be invented by other means, some of them inevitably nonmusical and unsusceptible to the microphone.

The dissatisfactions for a listener at home come both from things that are *not* seen and from things that *are* heard. A good song, well and simply delivered, may stand quite comfortably on its own. Listening to it on records, one resigns oneself to the loss of any incidental felicities of dress, lighting, and gesture. Full-scale production numbers, however—those Lucullan confections whipped up (most often) around songwriters' slightest bonbons—are apt to prove intractable. An orchestrator may have labored hard and long to puff a minute's theme into gaudy billows of variations but theatrically the results are of value only to the degree that they second the spectacle, preparing swirling entrances and exits, flashing in harmony with bespangled wardrobes, scattering stardust around the soloists as they break free from the shifting vistas of the chorus, going wild for the glamorous tempest of a finale. At the theater, whether the score can stand on its own merits is a question that does not arise. At home, with nothing to look

at but a cardboard sleeve, it is the only question. And since the music is being judged there by standards it was never designed to meet, the answer is generally negative.

Certainly this album could have benefited from trimming. Mercer Ellington, the Duke's son and the show's music



Gregory Hines and Judith Jamison: He partners her amiably in her romps.

*Music and dance critic Matthew Gurewitsch was recently named business manager of the Opera Theater of St. Louis.*

director, has a raffish band at his command, and at the Lunt-Fontanne, with the instrumentalists arrayed on a high platform across the full width of the stage, they seem more like headliners and less like accompanists than they do here. The gap is widest in all-dancing numbers, like "The Mooche," a steamy evocation of the jungles of Copacabana. It's mesmerizing at the theater, yet without feather or leopard briefs, sustained only by languid, wailing siren sounds, it winds on far too long.

Here and there, the piano, saxes, trumpets, clarinets, and all the rest apply plenty of spicy touches: the keyboard spatters of "Dancers in Love"; the screeching, gargling brass in "Echoes of Harlem," and the rude crowing trumpets; the prancing bass in "Kinda Duck-ish"; best of all, the little galloping flourishes stealing through the background of "Sophisticated Lady." But not one of the numbers has been rethought for the recording, and as the discs spin on and on, the musical zest, slavishly bound to the time scale of the theater, is watered down and dissipates. It is no help, either,

that the chorus articulates gibberish more crisply than English. In "I've Got to Be a Rug Cutter," hardly a syllable can be understood, but a phonetic transcription of the *real* nonsense would present no problems.

Still, song by song, the album has its not inconsiderable pleasures. Judith Jamison, formerly of Alvin Ailey's dancers the nonpareil, makes her bow as an entertainer and carries the day with her infectious high spirits. Her cakewalks are prizewinners, as in days gone by. Her gifts as a singer, tested here for the first time, are modest and appear completely unimproved. Her rich, throaty alto encounters little snags and catches throughout her register and is no more than approximate in matters of pitch. But Smuin fans her spark into a four-alarm fire. She is spared the exposure of a full-out vocal solo and is dealt nothing but up-tempo, good-time numbers ("Music Is a Woman," "Love You Madly," "I Let a Song Go out of My Heart," and "I'm Beginning to See the Light"), where what counts is her happy ease onstage and her delightful rapport

Hyman, Amazonian in beauty and stature, whispers her lyrics, then cuts loose; growls and purrs; ripples a caress; skates into the stratosphere, plunges to uncharted depths, then bounces straight back to the top. Her splendors, most abundant in "It Don't Mean a Thing [If It Ain't Got That Swing]" (she would know, she would know) and "I'm Checking out Goombye," lend luster even to such a selection as "I'm in a Sentimental Mood," which seems in itself trite and dated. Terri Klausner, that sleekest of vocalists, has the full palette of expressive special effects (whispers, growls, and the rest), and also flawlessly dovetailed registers, incisive diction, and a sense of phrase and accent as artful as it is instinctive. The dominant tone in "Hit Me with a Hot Note and Watch Me Bounce" is sultry; in "Imagine My Frustration," it is hopping mad. She captures these emotions, then lends them a subtle comic gloss with her air of untouchable self-absorption.

Hyman and Klausner join forces as the show draws toward its close for a double consisting of "I Got It Bad and That Ain't Good" (Hyman) and the indispensable "Mood Indigo" (Klausner). The album cut is captivating, in its way, for the ladies' singing is sumptuous, nowhere more so than where, just bars from the end, their voices blend with elegant urgency. And yet, there is something missing. At the theater, Hyman steps out, sheathed in ruby sequins, to glitter and lament by the footlights and, having finished her lyric, turns to see a brighter glow pick out Klausner, her twin in sparkling sapphire, high on the staircase that leads from the bandstand. "You ain't been blue long enough . . ." Klausner softly begins, and her triumphant, tranquil desperation floods the house like a tropical moonrise eclipsing the evening star. In live performance, the bridge is electrifying and *feels* purely musical. On the recording, the smooth, sudden, breathtaking change in the emotional weather simply does not occur.

In the life cycle of a soap bubble, there is a first instant when the film in the pipe shudders into gleaming spherical perfection. It does not last. A dry dullness quickly spreads over the surface until only tiny patches of the first gloss remain. Then — —. At the theater, *Sophisticated Ladies* is just such a bubble, fresh from the pipe. On records, it has extended dull spots. Its decay is advanced, but not quite so far that it bursts.

**SOPHISTICATED LADIES.** Original Broadway cast recording.

Music and lyrics by Duke Ellington, et al. Mercer Ellington, cond. [Thomas Z. Shepard, prod.] RCA RED SEAL CBL 2-4053, \$16.98 (two discs, automatic sequence). Tape: CBK 2-4053, \$16.98 (two cassettes).

## Not one of the numbers has been rethought for the recording.

with her colleagues and the enchanted audience. The pretentious class-act manqué, in which she coils grandly in the spotlight while Priscilla Baskerville keens "Solitude," strikes the single sour note in Jamison's ebullient performance. (On the album, the keening alone is trial aplenty.)

Gregory Hines, whose name appears with Jamison's above the title, partners her amiably in her romps, but his assignment also calls on his slinkily precise tap and his smoky cocktail-lounge parlando. It is he who evokes in song the worldly "Sophisticated Lady," unmasking her urbanity as hollowness, disappointment, and self-deception. None of the other men in the cast has a chance to display such range. Onstage, some of the dancers, notably Hinton Battle, know how to take charge, but on the record, only Gregg Burge, the radio voice of the pilot in the hypnotic "Caravan," is worth tuning in for. The insinuating, androgynous tones of featured artist P. J. Benjamin drip, no matter what the material, with sleazy traveling-salesman chumminess, and his songs are best forgotten quickly.

The leading ladies, on the other hand, are memorable indeed. Phyllis



Phyllis Hyman and Terri Klausner: electrifying and memorable leading ladies

# From Beethoven's Workshop, an Unperfected Masterpiece

Reviewed by Harris Goldsmith



EVEN AMONG PROFESSIONAL musicians and critics, there are precious few who can hear the classics incessantly and still *listen* to them as the miracles they are. Repetition tends to dull rather than enhance perception, and often a masterpiece, though recognized as such, is nevertheless taken for granted.

Every now and then, however, something comes along to stimulate our senses and jog our memories. Several years ago, the pianist and musicologist Denis Matthews sponsored a fascinating series of records that explored the sketches in Beethoven's notebooks; and along similar lines but with greater ballyhoo, the young Leonard Bernstein gave a televised lecture on the gestation of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Recently certain conductors—Erich Leinsdorf and Lukas Foss among them—have been espousing concert performances of Schumann's D minor Symphony in its original 1841 version. (What we know as his Symphony No. 4, Op. 120, is a reworking of a decade later.)

Now Laurel presents a fine edition of Beethoven's hitherto unrecorded String Quartet in F, the work that later evolved into his Op. 18, No. 1. (He titled it "Quartet No. 2," since, as his contemporaries attested, the D major Quartet, Op. 18, No. 3, came first.) As with the Schumann symphony, this earlier draft of a thoroughly revised composition not only sharpens our perception of the definitive score, but—with its sundry divergences of detail and development—sheds much light on the labors required for musical perfection.

When this quartet was composed in

1799, Beethoven, still basically a fire-eating keyboard virtuoso, was conquering new worlds as a composer. With several notable keyboard sonatas already behind him (including the *Pathétique*, the heroic Op. 7, and the six from Opp. 2 and 10), the twenty-eight-year-old titan was about to take wing as a symphonist. He was also honing his skills as a writer of string quartets. Toward that goal, he had first fashioned the String Trios, Opp. 3, 8, and 9; for all their mastery, they must have been regarded as steps in a long ap-

**Some second thoughts are merely different, not better.**

prenticeship, since he never wrote another string trio once he had written a quartet. And even after he had completed Op. 18, he undertook a revealing transcription of the Op. 14, No. 1. Piano Sonata for string quartet. He shifted the key from E major to F major, for some reason, and made many changes of detail. He added new voices and rhythmic figurations in the first movement and changed the accompanying triplets to duplets in the third; was this to make the writing more idiomatic for strings or merely because his fertile imagination couldn't help finding new facets to explore? (I suspect the latter.)

The present, unfamiliar version of

the Op. 18 F major survives in a set of manuscript parts that Beethoven sent to the violinist Karl Amenda on June 25, 1799, as a gesture of friendship. But by the summer of 1801, with the publication of Op. 18 imminent, the composer wrote to Amenda again, "Do not lend your quartet to anybody, because I have greatly changed it; for only now have I learned to write quartets properly, as you will observe when you receive them."

The Amenda version by no means represents Beethoven's first thoughts on the subject; his sketchbooks contain many earlier partial drafts. Interestingly, a few of the sketches give the famous opening theme in 4/4 rather than triple meter! Although he undoubtedly improved the score in its Op. 18 manifestation, the Amenda version nevertheless ranks as a bona fide masterpiece.

What did Beethoven change? For one thing, the voice-leading and part-writing: the earlier essay tends to be cruder, more "contrasty" in its alternations of dynamic extremes and strategic deployment of violins against viola and cello. When he revised the work, he obtained a richer, more integrated sonority and at the same time wrought many substantial improvements in the tonal balance. One example deserves mention: At the end of the finale, he extended the climactic final bars and doubled second violin with viola. The earlier form, with its more densely scored first-violin part, had the second violin and viola exchanging their material (itself somewhat changed in the new version); this presented severe problems of balance, solved in this recording only by arti-

ficially increasing the volume of the two inner voices.

Beethoven made other alterations in the material, and interestingly, these most often occur at points of transition and development. He omitted certain motivic imitations that seem redundant alongside the later, stronger, economy. But in a few cases, the second thoughts are merely different, not better. The altered intervals in the first movement's second subject represent a case in point.

Also noteworthy is the double repeat in the first movement, omitted in the later version of this quartet but retained in other comparable works—Op. 18, No. 6, and even the later Op. 59, No. 2. Beethoven must have had qualms about double repeats, a device held over from the early, one-movement sonatas of Scarlatti; he similarly deleted a second repeat from the first movement of the *Waldstein* Sonata. This equivocation is worth pondering at a time when so many literal-minded performers make a fetish of slavishly observing every last repeat.

The differences in tempo indications are interesting but probably less significant; although the present performance underlines the contrasts, Beethoven probably made the revisions only in the hope of better conveying the precise mood he imagined. But certainly, the quicker finale ("Allegro") in the later version makes a far better effect than does the original "Allegretto."

Laurel's attempt to link the Pro Arte Quartet to its famous Belgian namesake is a bit specious. (After the death of Alphonse Onnou in 1940, the group reorganized and took up residence at the University of Wisconsin; its present members are Norman Paulu, Martha Francis Blum, Richard Blum, and Parry Karp.) But the new Pro Arte plays handsomely, with sure stylistic sense, patrician musicianship, and pure intonation.

Laurel's recording tends toward large-auditorium reverberation (accentuating the contrasty quality of Beethoven's writing), yet balance and detail are exemplary, and the pressing (on virgin American vinyl) is superb. Extensive comparative score excerpts are included, and the whole presentation shows class. This is a truly valuable recording, which every Beethoven lover should own.

**BEETHOVEN:** Quartet for Strings, No. 1, in F, Op. 18, No. 1 (orig. version).

Pro Arte Quartet. [Herschel Burke Gilbert, prod.] LAUREL LR 116. \$7.98 (Laurel Record, 2451 Nichols Canyon, Los Angeles, Calif. 90046).

# New Angel Digital Spectacular!








**Bizet-Shchedrin**  
**THE CARMEN BALLETT**  
**SCHWARZ**  
Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra



DS-37337

Circle 17 on Reader-Service Card

## CONSTANTLY BETTER

 <b>Clarion</b> Indash Cassette PE683 <b>\$59</b>	 <b>Technics</b> DBX Noise Reduction 240X <b>\$217</b>	 <b>PIONEER</b> The Ultimate PLL800 <b>\$274</b>
 <b>ALTEC</b> Bookshelf Speakers 102B <b>\$43 ea.</b>	 <b>SONY</b> Light Weights MDR3 <b>\$25</b>	 <b>Portable Stereo</b> <b>\$77</b>

**TOLL FREE 800-356-9514** Weekdays 9-9  
Saturdays 9-5

Over 100 Brands like:

Technics	Maxell	Sony	Cerwin	Acutex
Pioneer	Empire	Teac	Vega	Craig
Marantz	Altec	Akai	Onkyo	Scotch
Kennwood	Sharp	Dual	Audio	B.I.C.
Sansui	Phillips	Koss	Technica	Stanton
Jensen	Shure	TDK	Clarion	Pickering

# WDS

WISCONSIN DISCOUNT STEREO

2417 w. badger rd. madison, wi 53713

608-271-6889

Circle 43 on Reader-Service Card

# Record Reviews



Listening to playback at Verdi Requiem recording session (from left): soprano Montserrat Caballé, producer David Mottley, conductor Zubin Mehta, tenor Plácido Domingo, and bass Paul Plishka—see page 74.

Reviewed by:

John Canarina  
Scott Cantrell  
Kenneth Cooper  
R. D. Darrell  
Kenneth Furie  
Harris Goldsmith  
David Hamilton  
Dale S. Harris  
R. Derrick Henry  
Nicholas Kenyon

Allan Kozinn  
Paul Henry Lang  
Irving Lowens  
Karen Monson  
James R. Oestreich  
Conrad L. Osborne  
Andrew Porter  
Patrick J. Smith  
Paul A. Snook  
Susan T. Sommer

Symphonies, Wq. 182, provide—for the first time, I think—direct competition between the two leading English baroque orchestras. It would be interesting to know how many players appear in both performances. Trevor Pinnock's sturdy, vivid performances win without doubt. Bach's surprises flash off the strings and bounce suddenly into silence, and his slow movements are wiry and tense. But Christopher Hogwood's recorded acoustic is preferable. Too many of Pinnock's Archiv discs inhabit a large, bland space in which the playing loses much of its detail; Hogwood's is closer and crisper. In this case, that only reveals a certain roughness in the playing and a lack of real conviction. The carefulness and unwillingness to take risks that have marked all too many Academy of Ancient Music recordings (including its much-lauded *Messiah*) is again in evidence.

Pinnock's accounts of the two flute concertos with Stephen Preston have real zip and stylishness; the acoustic here catches Preston's woody, soft flute sound, and projects it well.

Finally, an outstanding chamber-music record from Titanic: three of J.C. Bach's smallish, pretty sonatas and a huge, magnificent work by Emanuel at his most mature. There is surely an echo of J.S. Bach's B minor Flute Sonata in the involved, powerful argument of the first movement. Harpsichordist Mark Kroll's solo statements are strongly projected, and Carol Lieberman's thin, crisp violin tone complements his playing admirably. **N.K.**

## BACH: Secular Cantatas (5).

Edith Mathis and Arleen Augér (No. 208), sopranos; Peter Schreier, tenor (Nos. 208, 209, 211); Theo Adam (Nos. 208, 211, 212) and Siegfried Lorenz (No. 209), basses; Berlin Soloists, Berlin Chamber Orchestra, Peter Schreier, cond. [Bernd Runge, prod.] ARCHIV 2533 269\*, 364\*, 453\*, \$10.98 each. Tape: 3310 269\*, 364\*, 453\*, \$10.98 each (cassettes).

Cantatas: No. 36c, Schwingt freudig euch empor\*; No. 208, Was mir behagt, ist nur die muntre Jagd\*; No. 209, Non sa che sia do-

**BACH, C.P.E.:** Concertos for Harpsichord and Strings: in A, Wq. 8; in D, Wq. 18.

Malcolm Hamilton, harpsichord; Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Gerard Schwarz, cond. [Marc J. Aubort and Joanna Nickrenz, prod.] NONESUCH D 79015, \$11.98 (digital recording). Tape: DI 79015, \$11.98 (cassette).

**BACH, C.P.E.:** Six Symphonies, Wq. 182.

English Concert. Trevor Pinnock, dir. [Gerd Ploebach and Andreas Holschneider, prod.] ARCHIV 2533 449, \$10.98. Tape: 3310 449, \$10.98 (cassette).

**BACH, C.P.E.:** Six Symphonies, Wq. 182; Symphonies: in C, Wq. 174; in D, Wq. 176.

Academy of Ancient Music. Christopher Hogwood, dir. [Peter Wadland, prod.] OISEAU-LYRE DSL O 557/8, \$21.96 (two discs, manual sequence).

**BACH, C.P.E.:** Concertos for Flute and Strings, in A minor, Wq. 166; in B flat, Wq. 167.

Stephen Preston, flute; English Concert. Trevor Pinnock, dir. [Gerd Ploebach and Andreas Holschneider, prod.] ARCHIV 2533 455, \$10.98. Tape: 3310 455, \$10.98 (cassette).

**BACH, C.P.E.:** Sonata for Violin and Harpsichord, in B minor, Wq. 76. **BACH, J.C.:** Sonatas for Violin and Harpsichord, Op. 10: No. 1, in B flat; No. 2, in C; No. 5, in F.

Carol Lieberman, violin; Mark Kroll, harpsichord. [Ralph Döpmeier, prod.] TITANIC TI 90, \$9.00.

There has been an extraordinary wealth of C.P.E. Bach on record recently; this

selection only touches the surface.

The two harpsichord concertos have a curious history as part of a manuscript unearthed in a Toronto bookshop in 1937 by violinist Adolf Koldofsky. It contained several concertos, in whole or in part, which Koldofsky subsequently prepared for performance; Wanda Landowska broadcast seven of them on CBC in 1943. The manuscript is now at the University of California, Berkeley, and Malcolm Hamilton has made new editions for his recent performances and recordings. The works are not really discoveries, since Wotquenne listed them in his famous C.P.E. Bach catalog; but the process by which an eighteenth-century manuscript ended up in Toronto (via, at one point, a Salvation Army shop) gives them special interest.

These both date from Emanuel's early years in Berlin, and though not exceptionally original or important, they have charm and brilliance (plus a toughness that distinguishes them from the work of Johann Christian Bach). The performances are lively and forthright, yet there is something very artificial about the sound of Hamilton's (unidentified) harpsichord against the cushioning smoothness of the Los Angeles strings. This music surely requires something more incisive. The racy last movement of the D major Concerto is a success, and both first movements are pleasing. But the inner weight of the intense slow movements is only hinted at; the sound is static and unmoving.

The two recordings of the Op. 18









ments, hectors in the recitatives, and pitches erratically in the serenade. In the episode by the banks of the Elbe, the fine choral singing is almost completely covered by the giant-scaled intrusions of the soloists. Jules Bastin, with more style than voice, makes something vivid and flavorful of Brander's song.

Especially when the chorus is given its head, the score often moves well. But Barenboim can be stodgy: a moderate tempo for the Rákóczy March, in line with Berlioz' metronome mark, evinces good intentions—alas, the prosaic playing takes no advantage of the tempo to flesh out the music with enlivening detail. Marguerite's "King of Thule" Ballad and the "*Menuet des feux-follets*" are similarly neutral: at such points, comparison with the Colin Davis recording (Philips 6703 042) is illuminating.

Some similar stodginess is encountered in *Roméo et Juliette*—where, of course, the vocal parts are less crucial. "*Roméo seul*" doesn't flow consistently, and rhythmic tension in the "*Fête*" is surprisingly low. The Love Scene doesn't maintain a strong line. Though the "Queen Mab" Scherzo is neatly played, the wild violin phrases in "Romeo at the Tomb of the Capulets" are far too cautious and bland. Matters improve with the return of the chorus, and Bastin, only a serviceable voice (especially by comparison with Ozawa's José van Dam), makes a vigorous and effective Friar Laurence. Minton and Araiza do their small bits with reasonable effect.

Barenboim's recording of the Requiem is problematic in a different way, for here he espouses some curious interpretive ideas. At several spots in the opening movement where Berlioz' conception clearly involves sharp dynamic contrasts or overlaps, the fortissimo entries are telegraphed via premature crescendos. In the Dies Irae, at "*Quantus tremor est futurus*," where the unit of motion is doubled, the pulse should stay the same—but Barenboim speeds up, undercutting the steady buildup to the "*Tuba mirum*." Exaggerated dynamic touches abound: the triplet bass-drum strokes near the end of the Dies Irae and at the end of the "*Lacrymosa*" are fussily accented.

Other movements, by contrast, are quite straightforward. Again, the excellent chorus counts for a great deal, although the tenors sound a bit raw in the final movement. Domingo's Latin fullness of tone is simply not right for the Sanctus, any more than his consistent mezzo forte and his tendency to rush the beat. Again, the result is less than competitive with the Davis version (Philips 6700 019)—as, for other reasons, is Cetra's publication of a 1956 Salzburg performance led by Dimitri Mitropoulos, poorly recorded (in the Felsen-



André Previn: a cogent Requiem

reitschule) and even more exaggerated in detail than Barenboim's recording. Léopold Simoneau is the ideal tenor soloist, performing "live" just as impeccably as in the studio (with Munch, RCA Victrola VICS 6043), in liquid, unstressful head tones. Otherwise, this curious affair (the concert was, improbably enough, in memory of Wilhelm Furtwängler) has only sentimental interest.

The real competitor among recent Berlioz Requiems turns out to be André Previn's digitally recorded set, a very direct, precise, and cogent statement of the score by a first-class chorus and orchestra. It is recorded with great clarity and impact, and also with a sense of space in the climaxes that I have rarely found in digital work.

Musically, such tricky matters as the accelerando and subsequent return to the original tempo in the "*Rex tremendae*" are handled with rare security and naturalness, and the tempos are consistently within reasonable distance of Berlioz' metronomes. Just about everything in this performance is simply and unobtrusively "right," both in the literal sense of conforming to Berlioz' score and vision, and in the equally significant sense of adding up to a coherent statement in its own terms. Only the ever troublesome tenor solo disappoints—although, believe it or not, I find Robert Tear's nasal, effortful singing, recorded at a decent distance, easier to take than Domingo's misplaced proclamation.

In this movement, the digital sound gives us wonderfully subdued but tangible bass-drum-and-cymbal strokes. Many of the special effects benefit from the clarity and solidity of the sound, and there are musical rewards as well—you can distinctly hear the changes of harmony in the timpani chords, and bass lines are always solidly present without turning muddy. More's the shame, then, that the surfaces on my copy proved spo-

radically but obtrusively noisy, bursting into cannonades of pops and ticks. If you can get a good copy (imported pressings, perhaps?), this would seem now to be the Berlioz Requiem of choice: not arguably superior to the Davis set as a performance, it is surely recorded in a way that enhances the projection of Berlioz' extraordinary conception. **D. H.**

### BRAHMS: Sacred Choral Works.

Rosemary Hardy, soprano; Cherith Milburn Fryer, alto; Christopher Bowers-Broadbent, organ; London Schütz Choir, Roger Norrington, cond. [Terry Edwards, prod.] FONO FSM 53 128/9. \$21.96 (two discs) (distributed by Fonodisc International, 535 E. 86th St., New York, N.Y. 10028).

*Ave Maria*, Op. 12; *Benedictus*: *Fest- und Gedenksprüche*, Op. 109; *Geistliches Lied*, Op. 30; *Marienlieder*, Op. 22; *Two Motets*, Op. 29; *Two Motets*, Op. 74; *Three Motets*, Op. 110; *Psalm 13*, *Herr, wie lange*, Op. 27; *Three Sacred Choruses*, Op. 37.

A lifelong free-lance composer, Brahms occupied only three fixed positions, for a few years each, as chorus master in Detmold, Hamburg, and Vienna. This must have influenced his output, and indeed, the choral works without orchestra occupy an important though neglected portion of his oeuvre. Why they should be neglected is not clear, for even if church choirs shy away from such difficult but significant creations as the polyphonic a cappella motets, surely professional concert choirs should cultivate them.

As was his wont whenever approaching a new genre, Brahms boned up thoroughly, studying the choral literature from Palestrina to Bach; the earlier compositions recorded here are palpably essays and studies in counterpoint. Thus, the *Geistliches Lied* is a canonic study, while the Thirteenth Psalm is like a baroque cantata. The contrapuntal writing, even in these early works, is remarkably fluent; and in contrast to his instrumental works, full of dense and often opaque part-writing, all these choral pieces are smooth and euphonious. Several also show his preoccupation with folksong; the *Ave Maria* and the *Marian Songs* are light and attractively set, with just a modicum of counterpoint. They are delectable but moving.

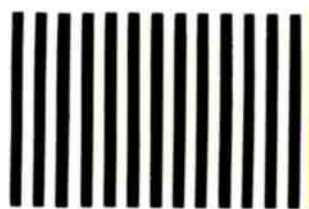
The earlier motets still reveal the imprint of either Palestrina or Bach, and though studies, they are fine compositions. But in the late motets, the mature master, having absorbed the contrapuntal art of his predecessors, speaks with his own voice. The format, if a little archaic (four-, five-, six-, or eight-part settings for mixed chorus a cappella), seems deliberately so, as Brahms tried to express himself in an ancient framework so congenial to choral music. In these works, the two poles, Renaissance and baroque polyphony, are reconciled in an

For free literature, or to order High Fidelity's Buying Guides or a subscription to High Fidelity magazine, use one of these convenient cards today.

**High Fidelity**  
 Reader Service 82  
 P. O. Box 1143  
 Pittsfield, Mass. 01202

Postage will be paid by addressee

**BUSINESS REPLY CARD**  
 FIRST CLASS PERMIT NO. 550 PITTSFIELD, MASS.



NO POSTAGE  
 NECESSARY  
 IF MAILED  
 IN THE  
 UNITED STATES

**HIGH FIDELITY CLASSIFIED  
 ORDER FORM**

RATES PER WORD: 15 word minimum  
 No charge for zip code

Regular Type: \$2.10  
 Imperial Type: \$2.80  
 Discounts for 3 times; 6 times; & 12 times.

Check one:  Regular  Imperial

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Company \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: Yetta Peltzman  
**HIGH FIDELITY**  
 825 Seventh Avenue  
 New York, N.Y. 10019  
 (212) 265-8360

Payment enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 MASTER CHARGE Card # \_\_\_\_\_  
 VISA Card # \_\_\_\_\_



USE THIS POSTAGE-FREE CARD TO SUBSCRIBE.

**High Fidelity**  
 12 issues — a full year  
 only \$6.98!

Save 61% off the newsstand rate (\$18.00)  
 Save 50% off the regular subscription rate (\$13.95)

\$ enclosed  bill me **J2617**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer a full year of HIGH FIDELITY MUSICAL AMERICA for only \$24.00 Incorporated into each monthly issue of HIGH FIDELITY is the world-renowned MUSICAL AMERICA — a magazine-within-a-magazine with lively and authoritative coverage — news, views, and reviews — of the live musical scene all over the world.  
 Outside U.S. — \$5.00 per year additional for postage.  
 Notice: Please allow 5-8 weeks for first copy to be mailed.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75
76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105
106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120
121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135
136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150
151	152	153	154	155	156	157	158	159	160	161	162	163	164	165

**J2617**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ APT. \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

1-2 2-2 3-2

(Please allow 4-6 weeks for processing and literature from manufacturer to arrive.)  
 Card void if mailed after 5/1/82

For free literature, or to order High Fidelity's Buying Guides or a subscription to High Fidelity magazine, use one of these convenient cards today.

HIGH FIDELITY CLASSIFIED

No charge for zip code. 15 word minimum charge.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75
76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105
106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120
121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135
136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150
151	152	153	154	155	156	157	158	159	160	161	162	163	164	165

J2617

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ APT. \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

(Please allow 4-6 weeks for processing and literature from manufacturer to arrive.)  
Card void if mailed after 5/1/82

1-2    2-2    3-2



NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES

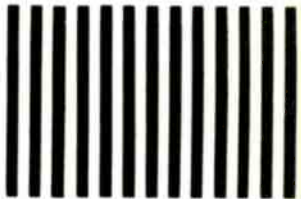
**BUSINESS REPLY CARD**

FIRST CLASS    PERMIT NO. 6930    DES MOINES, IOWA

Postage will be paid by addressee

**High Fidelity**

P. O. Box 10758  
Des Moines, IA 50349



1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35



NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES

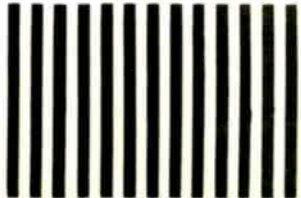
**BUSINESS REPLY CARD**

FIRST CLASS    PERMIT NO. 550    PITTSFIELD, MASS.

Postage will be paid by addressee

**High Fidelity**

Reader Service 82  
P. O. Box 1143  
Pittsfield, Mass. 01202



# SCOTT.

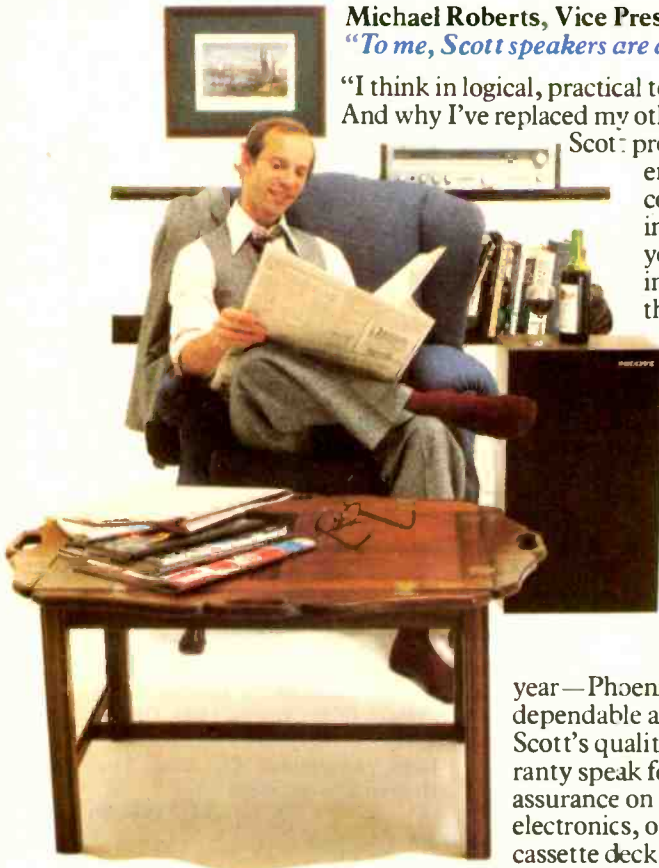
## The only stereo type in the family.

**Michael Roberts, Vice President, Finance.**

*"To me, Scott speakers are a sound investment."*

"I think in logical, practical terms. That's why I just bought Scott speakers. And why I've replaced my other components with Scott. Dollar for dollar,

Scott products are the best buy. Their variety is enormous—speakers, turntables, receivers and complete systems. And Scott offers features found in products costing a great deal more. With Scott, you get the features you really want, without having to pay for those you simply don't need. To me, that's real value."



**Ellen Roberts, sales representative.**

*"My Slimcom system and its 5-3-1 warranty fit my hectic lifestyle."*

"My Scott system is so easy. Easy to feel comfortable with. Easy to fit into a lifestyle like mine.

My company moves me around quite a bit. Next year—Phoenix. So I need a system that's dependable and durable. In that regard, Scott's quality and comprehensive warranty speak for themselves. Five years assurance on speakers, three years on electronics, one year on the turntable and cassette deck. Besides a promotion, what more could I ask for?"

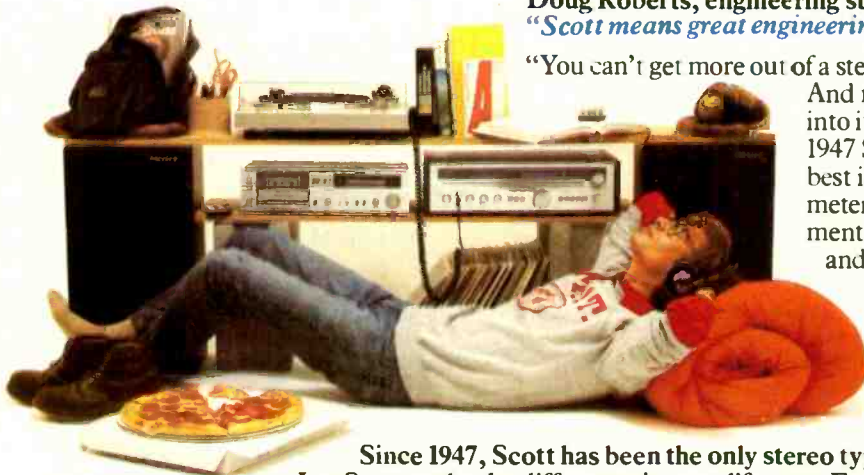


**Doug Roberts, engineering student.**

*"Scott means great engineering, superb sound."*

"You can't get more out of a stereo than the engineering that goes into it.

And nobody puts more engineering experience into its products than Scott. After all, since 1947 Scott has earned over 160 patents for its best ideas. And their new auto-range power meters are the latest in engineering developments. For me, Scott means great engineering and superb sound. Believe me—because no one knows engineering like I do. At least no one in the Roberts family."



Since 1947, Scott has been the only stereo type in the lives of countless families.

Let Scott make the difference in *your* life, too. For more information, contact: Dept. B, H.H. Scott, Inc., 20 Commerce Way, Woburn, MA 01888 U.S.A. (617) 933-8800 Telex 20-0177



The Scott warranty: Five years on speakers, three years on electronics, one year on turntables and cassette deck.

**SCOTT**  
The Name to listen to.

Makers of high quality high fidelity equipment since 1947.

Circle 101 on Reader-Service Card





# looking for...

**ORCHESTRAS, TRIOS, QUARTETS, ETC.**  
Interlachen High School Symphonic Band  
Conducted by Wilson  
Names: Benson; Helix for Solo  
Horn

**CONDUCTORS**  
Levine, James (Cont.)

**VOCALISTS**  
Lukomaka, Haina, Soprano  
Cat. No. 7170

**OPERATIC GROUPS**  
Philharmonia Orchestra  
Conducted by Ackermann  
(Schwarzkopf)

**CHORAL GROUPS**

**INSTRUMENTAL SOLOISTS**

**PIANO (Cont.)**  
Kempff, Wilhelm (Cont.)  
Beethoven: Pf Music—Bagatelles; etc. DG 138934  
Beethoven: Vn Rondo in G; Vn Son. 5; Var. in F on  
Mozart's "Se vuol ballare"; K. 40 (Mozart)

**PIANO (Cont.)**  
Kilen, Walter (Cont.)  
Mozart: Con. 16 (Vienna Sup.)

Tenth Edition  
**Schwann  
Artist Issue**



## Find them instantly in the 1982 edition of the Schwann Artist Issue

A UNIQUE GUIDE TO CLASSICAL RECORDINGS LISTED BY PERFORMER AND PERFORMING GROUP

A virtual encyclopedia of valuable information containing over 300 pages and more than 25,000 entries. Revised every 3 years, The Schwann Artist Issue is an indispensable compilation of all the classical record and tape listings—arranged by artist.

**RESERVE YOUR COPY NOW!  
FILL OUT AND RETURN THIS  
COUPON TODAY**

The 1982 Schwann Artist Issue will be shipped after Dec. 20, 1981.

### COMPLETELY SECTIONALIZED

Aids you in instantly locating any record or tape. Easy to use—an indispensable tool for the music lover.

Yours for just  
**\$7.95!**

Schwann Artist Issue 1982 • Single Copy Sales Dept. G2009  
2160 Patterson Street • Cincinnati, Ohio 45214

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ copies of the 1982 Schwann Artist Issue @ \$7.95 each (Includes shipping and handling.) My check/money order for \$\_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ APT. \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_



unmistakably Brahmsian language. The first of the Two Motets, Op. 74, *Warum ist das Licht gegeben* (1877), is among the finest examples of post-Bachian counterpoint.

Roger Norrington must have lavished much care and many rehearsals on these superb performances, which are aided by excellent sound engineering. The works in a lighter vein receive well-nigh paradigmatic readings; the tone is gentle, but not shallow, the ensemble transparent and precise, and the choral sound ravishing. A certain coolness in the motets betrays a slight obeisance to churchly traditions, yet the difficult polyphonic lines are always clear and well balanced and the performances excellent. It must be stated, though, that these works were composed for either female or mixed chorus; the titles are explicit. Since the London Schütz Choir employs boys, the aural picture differs from what Brahms intended, especially in the unaccompanied pieces for trebles and altos alone. Still, the boys are marvelously secure; they never stumble or hesitate, even though their parts are very difficult and complicated. P.H.L.

#### CHERUBINI: Requiem in C minor.

Austrian Radio Chorus and Symphony Orchestra. Lamberto Gardelli, cond. PHILIPS 9500 715, \$10.98. Tape: 7300 805, \$10.98 (cassette).

#### CHERUBINI: Requiem in D minor.

Chorale du Brassus, Choeurs de la Suisse Romande, Lausanne Pro Arte Chorus, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. Horst Stein, cond. [Richard Beswick, prod.] LONDON LDR 10034, \$12.98 (digital recording).

Czech Chorus, Czech Philharmonic Orchestra. Igor Markevitch, cond. [Hans Weber, prod.] DG PRIVILEGE 2535 404, \$6.98. Tape: 3335 404, \$6.98 (cassette). [From DG 138 795, 1963.]

Cherubini went to Vienna in 1805; when his opera *Faniska*, commissioned by the Vienna opera, was premiered there the following February, among those who greeted him were Beethoven and the aged Haydn. "Of all of contemporary composers, I have the highest regard for him," said Beethoven; Haydn admired him, as did Schubert, Schumann, and many others. Even Berlioz, who hated him personally (like Sam Johnson's Mr. Piozzi, he was a good hater), studied Cherubini's Requiems closely, with results plainly evident in his own Requiem. Yet by the end of the nineteenth century the composer, once world-famous, was pretty well forgotten, and only recently are there signs that his time may once more come.

Luigi Cherubini (1760-1842) was always an enigma. Though greatly respected, he never was close to the public, because he was a musician's musician. Exceedingly well trained, he remained a lifelong student of all manner of music.

## Even late in life, Cherubini's genius did not wane.

from Renaissance polyphony to the work of his French colleagues. Like Lully before him, he was a Florentine who settled in Paris, where he lived for more than half a century, attaining the most coveted honors and positions; upon his death he was given a state funeral. Unlike Lully, he did not become entirely Gallicized; his Italian melodic sense never left him, nor did the completely absorbed style of Viennese classicism—though he also had a Romantic streak. Still, his music has a definite and always recognizable individuality. He was one of the outstanding connoisseurs of the human voice and of the orchestra; everything that he wrote for the voice was eminently singable, and the clarity, power, and transparency of his orchestration were the envy of other composers. His great skill, cool and firm, could be abstracted and was copiously used by his contemporaries, sometimes almost literally (compare the F minor Overture to *Medea* with Beethoven's F minor Overture to *Egmont*), sometimes subtly; echoes of the C minor Requiem can be heard in Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, and the D minor reaches all the way to Verdi's celebrated Requiem.

The C minor Requiem is a remarkable work. It shows finesse, a firm formal sense, contrapuntal and orchestral mastery, but also power; and always, there is a classical clarity in the procedure. There are no tangential sallies; Cherubini always knows where he is and whither he is bound. The text is beautifully declaimed, the spirit sincerely liturgic. And there is still another quality here: a gentle resignation, an acceptance of the divine will, which casts its spell over the great work. Much of the music is majestically grave and slow, yet there are also highly dramatic prayers. The *Dies Irae*, preceded by a ghastly tam-tam stroke, simply explodes, and "*Quam olim Abraham*" is a grand triple fugue. The Introit and the Kyrie are subdued—the violins silent, the violas taking the top part, the cellos divided, and the horns and bassoons also held in their lowest registers—creating an awestruck solemnity.

The D minor Requiem, composed at age seventy-six, is at times considered a shade less accomplished than the C minor, twenty years older, but it is hard to agree with this. If it is touched by the frost of life's late autumn, that makes it even more admirable, for Cherubini had lost none of his genius, immense skill, and expressiveness. This late work was composed, rather uncommonly, for

men's voices alone, a choice of timbre that not only creates marvelous deep sonorities, but somehow also conveys the earnestness and transfused peace of an old man's farewell. (The Requiem was expressly destined to be sung at Cherubini's own funeral.) As in the earlier work, the tone is grave, but there are also dramatic sections, and once more the *Dies Irae* is almost terrifying in its wildness. Then again, the Gradual and the "*Pie Jesu*" are ineffably sweet. These works are masterpieces that may not become popular, but they will shine in *lux aeterna* after the reviewers' family trees contain dozens of begats.

The account of the C minor is not satisfactory, though the live performance was probably much better than what we hear on the recording. The sound, not bad in the quiet passages, becomes tubby, even muddy, in the powerful tutti. Don't be misled by the Philips label; this Austrian Radio recording was not supervised by the company's excellent engineers. Lamberto Gardelli has a good chorus and orchestra, but he is unimaginative and sparing with nuances.

Horst Stein's rendition of the D minor, however, is very good, and he is aided by London's excellent sound. In the a cappella section, the chorus wanders a mite from true pitch, so when the solo clarinet re-enters, there is a slight momentary embarrassment. On the whole, this recording is preferable to Deutsche Grammophon's release of the same work, although Igor Markevitch has an even better chorus, which is always solidly on pitch. Stein shows much more feeling for the liturgic spirit of the Mass for the Dead. Markevitch, more attuned to the dramatic element, does the quiet prayers just "nicely"; he is a little angular and makes the dotted rhythms too sharp. Also while DG's sound is good, there is a slight but perceptible echo. Both choruses enunciate poorly, and both recordings have Western Union-style notes, though the London release compensates with an extra two-page paean on digital recording; DG does not even bother with the text, an oversight not at all characteristic of that distinguished company. P.H.L.

#### CHOPIN: Nocturnes (21).

Arthur Lima, piano. [Heiner Stadler, prod.] ARABESQUE 6502-3, \$26.94 (digital recording; three discs, manual sequence). Tape: 7502-3, \$29.94 (three cassettes).

Op. 9: No. 1, in B flat minor; No. 2, in E flat; No. 3, in B. Op. 15: No. 1, in F; No. 2, in F sharp; No. 3, in G minor. Op. 27: No. 1, in C sharp minor; No. 2, in D flat. Op. 32: No. 1, in B; No. 2, in A flat. Op. 37: No. 1, in G minor; No. 2, in G. Op. 48: No. 1, in C minor; No. 2, in F sharp minor. Op. 55: No. 1, in F minor; No. 2, in E flat. Op. 62: No. 1, in B; No. 2, in E. Nocturnes: in E minor. Op. 72: No. 1, in C minor; in C sharp minor.

Arthur Lima, sometimes identified as Arthur Moreira-Lima, is a Brazilian pianist in his early forties, trained in Paris and Moscow (by Marguerite Long and Rudolf Kheher), who won prizes at Warsaw (1965), Leeds (1969), and Moscow (1970). He made some digital recordings in Japan (Denon OX 7118-ND, December 1978) and herewith commences the "Chopin Project," a subsidized recording of the complete music for solo piano.

Lima has many natural attributes for the Chopin style—a big technique, a velvety, caressing touch, and an instinctive feel for atmosphere and subjective drama. He is particularly adept at gauging some of the feathery pianissimo endings: the arpeggiated close of Op. 15, No. 1, is an eloquent case in point. He also senses the passion that pervades the middle part of the same nocturne, and his clean, grandly paced octave roulades, combined with a huge dynamic range, are impressive in the central episode of the funeral Op. 48, No. 1.

But "instinctive feel" is also the very quality that, at least for me, makes Lima's playing so utterly distasteful. Granted, the age-old "tradition" of Chopin performance provides a carpet under which many musical indiscretions can be swept (with impunity!), and Lima is only doing "what comes naturally." But there is no earthly reason why Chopin's rhythmic pulse must be constantly interrupted and distorted: why his clearly drawn (though sometimes intriguingly subdivided) phrases have to be manipulated and fragmented. Lima is obviously sensitive in a vague sort of way to the beauties inherent in this superb music; precisely that sensitivity, in fact, probably accounts for his restless desire to "do something." But since he apparently doesn't grasp the harmonic underpinning, much of his "interpretive" striving sounds aimless and contrived. The flowing opening phrases of Op. 9, No. 1, for example, loiter rather than linger; the stormy central climax of Op. 27, No. 1, is crippled by a strained vertical assault on every downbeat that banishes the requisite *horizontal* sweep and line. This very talented pianist should reconsider his whole musical approach before proceeding farther in this formidable assignment.

The digital sound, somewhat variable, is at its round, mellifluous best in some of the later works, such as Op. 55, No. 2, and Op. 62, No. 1; in some of the others—the three works of Op. 9, for example—the piano tends toward clattery hollowness: The pianissimos are bloodless, the fortés seemingly off-mike, with a sharp attack but no full-bodied warmth or focus to offset the reverberant diffuseness. Surfaces are excellent. Most integral editions of the nocturnes, however—even those that include the post-



CHARLES ABBOTT

Arthur Lima: disappointing Chopin

humous pieces, as this one does—occupy two, rather than three, discs. H.G.

**HARBISON: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra.\* STOCK: Inner Space.**

Robert Miller, piano\*; American Composers Orchestra, Gunther Schuller, cond. [Carter Harman, prod.] COMPOSERS RECORDINGS SD 440, \$7.95 [recorded in concert, May 13, 1980].

These two works were played by the American Composers Orchestra in the last concert of its 1979–80 season; the Harbison subsequently won the 1980 Friedheim Award. It is too easy to take for granted CRI's valuable work in making such pieces quickly and (given its policy of no deletions) permanently available on record. In England, most major new orchestral works go unrecorded (except by the BBC, whose tapes are not commercially available). The Arts Council of Great Britain has only just, tentatively, begun a system of subsidy for recordings of contemporary music: in this field, America is way ahead.

In the last few months, I have been able to acquaint myself with first-rate music by figures as diverse as Tobias Picker (CRI SD 427), Lou Harrison (SD 455), Ralph Shapey (SD 428), and William Albright (SD 449). There have been recordings of prizewinning pieces by Robert Starer and Daniel Perlono (SD 453); John Harbison's woodwind quintet and George Rochberg's *Slow Fires of Autumn* (SD 436); and reissues of important works of the 1950s by Roger Sessions and Benjamin Lees (SD 451). William Bolcorm's oddball piano quartet has just appeared alongside Ross Lee Finney's Piano Trio No. 2 (SD 447).

All these performances give a critic

the opportunity to get to know a work instead of making a snap judgment after one performance. When I heard Harbison's piano concerto in concert, I thought it attractive but formally insecure. On record, and on closer acquaintance, this matters less. The work's two-movement form—one free fantasy, one three-section sequence of march, canzona, and dance—works well. The writing for piano blossoms with a natural, impulsive lyricism (and is beautifully played here by Robert Miller, the work's dedicatee).

What suddenly strikes a record listener, without the visual presence of an orchestra, is that the irruptions of orchestral sound in the first movement are curiously irrelevant to the substance of the piece. There is little dialogue; the piano's eloquent, straining melodies are their own justification. In the perkier second movement, the give-and-take is more firmly established but the result less original.

The concerto still seems an experiment that doesn't quite succeed, but it is always lovely to listen to. Harbison has an acute ear and a real sensitivity to the outline of each phrase and harmonic sequence. If his large-scale planning doesn't yet convince, he nevertheless brims over with ideas and has the ability to communicate them; that's what counts.

David Stock's *Inner Space* sounded on one hearing a well-played jumble; on renewed acquaintance, there's even less to it than meets the ear. The noise is impressive and holds the attention for a while, but eventually one despairs of hearing a clearly expressed musical thought.

Both performances are very fine, and they sound well recorded, though the strong forward placing of the piano in the Harbison makes the orchestra sound even more irrelevant than it is.

N.K.

**HINDEMITH: Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes by Weber—See page 53.**

**MASSENET: Werther.**

CAST:

Sophie Charlotte	Isobel Buchanan (s)
Werther	Frederica von Stade (ms)
Albert	José Carreras (t)
Schmidt	Paul Crook (t)
Le Bailli	Thomas Allen (b)
	Malcolm King (bs-b)
	Robert Lloyd (bs)

Children's ensemble and Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Colin Davis, cond. PHILIPS 6769 051, \$32.94 (three discs, manual sequence). Tape: 7654 051, \$32.94 (three cassettes).

COMPARISONS:

Vallin, Thill, Cohen EMI 2C 153 10746/8  
De los Angeles, Gedda, Prêtre Ang. SCL 3736

# Now—A Record Club With No Obligation!

## Choose Any 3 or 4 Record Set

For Only **\$2<sup>98</sup>**



FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY  
**5 SYMPHONIES**  
HERBERT VON KARAJAN  
BERLIN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA  
LPs #78; Cassettes #79



**BACH** Mass in B Minor (3 LPs) Marshall, Baker, Tear, Ramey, Marriner; Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields  
LPs #81; Cassettes #91

### No obligation to buy any future offerings.

This remarkable \$2.98 offer is brought to you by The International Preview Society—a highly selective music program that does not oblige you to buy at any time. These multi-record, cassette selections—and many, many more superb choices will continue to be offered to you every four weeks. Each offering highlights a Featured Selection... plus an impressive variety of alternate selections (many available on cassettes). And all are well below suggested retail!

You'll save even more through the Society's *Half-Price Bonus Plan*. For every regular member purchase you make, you may choose a Bonus—album or multi-record set—for only *half* of the members' already-low club price. That amounts to a savings of *more than 48% off the suggested retail price!* A postage and handling charge is added to all shipments.

If you'd like to receive the Featured Selection, you need do nothing. We'll send it automatically. But if you'd prefer an alternate selection or none at all, just mail back the Notification Card—enclosed with the offering—by the specified date. You'll always have at least 10 days to decide. Should you ever have less than 10 days, you will receive full credit for returned merchandise.

#### As Many As Four Records For Less Than The Price Of One.

You may choose any one of these sets for just \$2.98 plus a small postage/handling charge. (Sales tax added for New York residents.) Remember, each set contains either three or four records (or 2 to 4 cassettes). That's a savings of as much as \$40.94... up to 93% off the suggested list price!

Send no money. We want you to judge for yourself before you decide to buy. If you are not delighted after ten days, return the set.

These are superior, silent-surfaced recordings by Deutsche Grammophon and Philips. They come in a handsome storage case with an informative, illustrated brochure.

Every recording offered by the Society must meet the rigid standards of the Carnegie Hall Selection Committee. Only albums of the most exceptional musical interest, artistic excellence and technical quality are offered.

So do take advantage of this marvelous value and mail in the coupon today. You'll also be reserving the opportunity to order other great international releases from the Society at impressive savings.



Also Available  
On Cassette

**BRAHMS** Four Symphonies (4 LPs) Claudio Abbado: Vienna Philharmonic, Berlin Philharmonic, Dresden State and London Symphony Orchestras  
LPs #82; Cassettes #92



**BEETHOVEN** The Piano Concertos (4 LPs) Claudio Arrau, Bernard Haitink; Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam  
LPs #83; Cassettes #93



**TCHAIKOVSKY** Symphonies 4, 5 and 6 (4 LPs) Mravinsky; Leningrad Philharmonic, Sleeping Beauty & Swan Lake, von Karajan; Berlin Philharmonic  
LPs #84; Cassettes #94



**MOZART** Don Giovanni (4 LPs) Fischer-Dieskau, Flagello, Nilsson, Schreier, Arroyo, Talvela, Grist, Mariotti, Karl Böhm; Prague National Theatre Orchestra  
LPs #85; Cassettes #95

### Free Home Audition Request

The International Preview Society  
175 Community Drive, Great Neck, N. Y. 11025

**YES!** Please send me, for my free audition, the multi-record or cassette set I have indicated by the number below. I may return it after 10 days and owe nothing... or keep it and pay only \$2.98 plus a small postage/handling charge (sales tax added for New York residents). This is up to \$40.94 off the suggested retail price. I will also receive, approximately every four weeks, an offering of the finest classical recordings. Of course, I may cancel at any time.

Please print selection number here:

Name

Address

Apt. No.

City

State

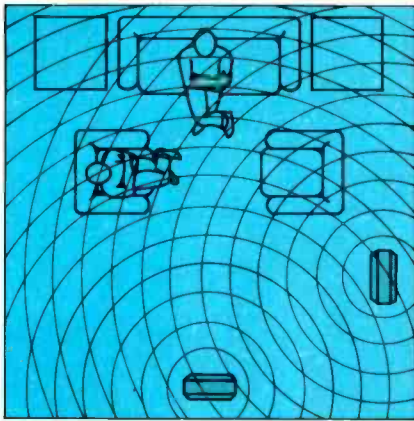
Zip

Offer limited to the connecting 48 states. Limit one membership per household. Only new members eligible. NOTE: All applications are subject to review, and we reserve the right to reject any application.



#### FREE BONUS

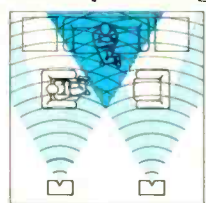
Return coupon within 10 days for valuable free gift — TCHAIKOVSKY's 1812 Overture, Bernard Haitink; Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam.



BES Speakers

## AT LAST A DIFFERENCE IN SOUND YOU CAN SEE.

Most speakers give you true stereo in just one part of the room. BES Speakers give you true



Other speakers

stereo virtually everywhere. That's because the heart of a BES Speaker is not a cone, but a diaphragm

that vibrates much like a guitar string, projecting sound in every direction simultaneously. You get 360-degree sound. True omnidirectional sound. Sound as close to live as you can get.

Listen to BES and hear true stereo. Everywhere.



## BES SPEAKERS THE NEXT DIMENSION IN SOUND

Bertagni Electroacoustic Systems, Inc.  
345 Fischer Street, Costa Mesa, CA 92626  
Telephone: (714) 549-3833 Telex: 67-8373

Circle 20 on Reader-Service Card

## CLASSICAL Record Reviews

Obraztsova, Domingo, Chailly DG 2709 091  
Trojanos, Kraus, Plasson Ang. SCZX 3894

This is an attractive performance, not least for its lively and sympathetic framework. Colin Davis' conducting, broader than Georges Prêtre's though not as drawn out as Michel Plasson's (both on Angel), is unfailingly sensitive to the circumstances and needs of the characters. His work may be less alertly articulated than Prêtre's, less illuminating than Riccardo Chailly's (DG), and less characterful than Jésus Etcheverry's (in the first stereo *Werther*—never released here, but recently available in France as Adès 7025), but it all *plays*. The Covent Garden orchestra and Philips recording team contribute their best efforts.

The supporting cast is of a quality to give British singing a good name. While the Bailli is pretty much a can't-miss role, Robert Lloyd is as good a one as I've heard—strong yet affectionate, and pleasantly free of the traditional buffo trappings. (For an uncommonly persuasive "standard" Bailli, check out Adès' Julien Giovannetti.)

Good Sophies and Alberts are harder to come by. Isobel Buchanan's full, pretty lyric soprano makes for as attractive a Sophie as we've had since the young Mady Mesplé (Adès and Prêtre/Angel), and Thomas Allen has another impressive outing with his bright high baritone and sympathetic involvement—though heavier-weight casting can make Albert a more commanding presence, as witness Gabriel Bacquier in his younger years (Adès). Even the comedy team of Schmidt and Johann is humanly rendered here, though Paul Crook minces more than I'd have expected or liked.

But you're no doubt getting impatient. What, you ask, about the principals? Well, generally speaking, they're both good. More specifically, however, they fall into the standard pattern of the stereo recordings: a satisfying Charlotte (of one sort or another) and a problematic *Werther*.

Where the title role is concerned, the discographic situation can be described simply: There's Georges Thill, and then there are the others. At every turn, Thill not only produces the richest and most beguiling sounds, but finds the urgencies of *Werther*, the poet who wants to belong to his community but can't make himself fit. Plácido Domingo's DG recording is an honorable start toward the first-rate *Werther* I think he has in him, and yet, lovely as much of his work is, it's still too externalized to set the character into compelling action. Surprisingly, the post-Thill *Werther* who comes closest is the Australian Albert Lance (Adès). Which is not to say that even he comes close, really.

Of course the role can be cast more

lightly, but the record companies haven't done so very successfully—though Alfredo Kraus might have been worth hearing ten or fifteen years before the Plasson/Angel recording. Philips' José Carreras is currently hard to type vocally, which is part of the problem with his performance. There's hardly any audible trace of the voice's former lightness and ease, but at the same time the darker tone seems to have no really solid core. If the result tends to jangle the nerves, there is at least plenty of energy in his performance.

I have no real complaint about Frederica von Stade's Charlotte, which is appealingly direct and attractively sung, within the voice's basic limitations of size and color. Of the lighter-weight Charlottes, Tatiana Trojanos (Plasson/Angel) is the most imposing vocally—the set is almost worth having just for her—while Ninon Vallin (with Thill) and Victoria de los Angeles (Prêtre/Angel), although less consistent vocally, are more touchingly personal.

My own preference is for a heavier voice, especially useful for the emotional turmoil of the later scenes. Elena Obraztsova (DG) scores some points, but her voice isn't in terribly good focus here. This leaves us with Rita Gorr (Adès), and she is something special. Even if the singing isn't as smooth as Trojanos', her poise and presence aren't duplicated elsewhere on records.

If I could have only two *Werther* recordings, they would probably be the Vallin/Thill and the Adès. A case could be made for any of the others, however, and you can mix and match to suit your preferences. For once, the diverse listings represent some real choice. **K.F.**

### MUSSORGSKY: Pictures at an Exhibition (orch. Ravel). RAVEL: Le Tombeau de Couperin.

Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Georg Solti, cond. [James Mallinson, prod.] LONDON LDR 10040, \$12.98 (digital recording). Tape: LDR5 10040, \$12.98 (cassette).

### MUSSORGSKY: Pictures at an Exhibition (orch. Ravel); Night on Bare Mountain (arr. Rimsky-Korsakov).

Concertgebouw Orchestra, Colin Davis, cond. PHILIPS 9500 744, \$12.98 (digital recording). Tape: 7300 829, \$12.98 (cassette).

#### COMPARISONS—Pictures:

Frémaux/Tokyo Met. Sym.	Denon OX 7072
Maazel/Cleveland	Telarc DG 10042
Kubelik/Chicago Sym.	Mercury SRI 75114
Giulini/Chicago Sym.	DG 2530 783

With these two digital recordings, Ravel's 1922 orchestration of Mussorgsky's 1874 piano suite *Pictures at an Exhibition* has overtaken Stravinsky's *Firebird* as the favorite showpiece for the new technology. The earliest of the four digital *Pictures*, Louis Frémaux's 1972 account, shows its age. It is by far the least refined of the group, in both sound and

execution, and Frémaux's conception, despite several attractive details, cannot hold its own with the distinguished recordings of, to name just some, Ansermet, Cantelli, Giulini, Karajan, Koussevitzky, Kubelik, Leibowitz, Mackerras, Muti, Reiner, and Toscanini. Telarc's 1978 version with Lorin Maazel and the Cleveland Orchestra, on the other hand, has been acclaimed as a landmark in the history of recorded sound. (I disagree, but more on that later.) Maazel's interpretation, though certainly interesting, is distressingly humorless and inconsistent and not very subtle, either.

Colin Davis' recording—to the best of my knowledge, his first—proves disappointing in almost every respect. It is fussy and extremely leisurely—downright eccentric, in fact. The solo trumpeter plays his opening theme with soupy vibrato; Davis exaggerates the tenuto in "The Old Castle" and is further hindered by a bland saxophonist; and in "Tuileries," his hesitations at the ends of phrases are distracting. Of course, there are effective moments, too: "Gnomus" is amply grotesque. "Chicks" emerges delicately, with lots of detail, and "Catacombs" should frighten most anyone. But Philips' sonics are a mess. Balances are awry; each orchestral section (often each instrument) emanates from its own spatial world; the strings sound glassy and deficient in tonal weight (hardly characteristic of the Concertgebouw); and indeed, the orchestra as a whole lacks body—a disastrous shortcoming in such a resplendent piece. *Night on Bare Mountain* suffers from similar sonic anomalies, fortunately not so ruinous there. Though thrillingly well played, with exceptionally precise articulation and great momentum, Davis' reading misses the devilish abandon that Giulini, Markevitch, Reiner, Svetlanov, and others have brought to *Night*. Nonetheless, it is infinitely preferable to the stiff, rather pallid Maazel/Telarc account.

Georg Solti's *Pictures* (apparently his first, too) aroused high expectations. For one thing, the Chicago Symphony has a rich recorded tradition with the piece. Rafael Kubelik's 1951, single-mike monaural disc still wins praise for its stunning sound; audio writer and pioneering record producer Bert Whyte calls it "the first hi-fi landmark of the LP era." Fritz Reiner's RCA recording from the late '50s, though deleted, remains one of the finest examples of early stereo. And Carlo Maria Giulini's 1977 account, while not a comparable sonic milestone, preserves an equally persuasive performance. Then, too, *Pictures* would seem to be an ideal vehicle for both Solti and his orchestra, now more dazzling than ever, as well as for London Records, the company that has probably

brought us more sonic spectaculars than any other.

Predictably, then, Solti's *Pictures* is a decided success. The key word is "big": This is a bold, theatrical reading of enormous power and excitement. The brass playing is absolutely stunning; listen to the deep, dark tone in "Catacombs." He proves no less felicitous in the lighter portraits: "the Old Castle" flows expressively, "Chicks" cackles along with beguiling humor, "Limoges" conveys tremendous bustle. Only in the final picture does he disappoint. After a fierce "Baba Yaga," the "Great Gate" is

exceedingly deliberate; the intent is obviously to extract every last ounce of drama and grandeur, but the result is rather heavy-handed.

London's recorded sound is brilliant and full, with some bone-chilling bass and a panoramic stereo spread if little depth. Though the balances on the Telarc classic are more natural, London's timbres seem much less artificial (cf. the opening trumpet solo), and one has the impression of far greater immediacy and life. All four digital *Pictures* are recognizably digital; all manifest the familiar aberrations of space and timbre

# Do your records sound like thiSSSSSSSSSS?

When you're listening to your favorite albums, nothing can spoil your enjoyment as much as hiss, clicks, pops and static. It's dissssturbng. It's disssstracting. And it's unnecessary.

Because with proper handling and regular Sound Guard care, your records can maintain their like-new clarity and fidelity. Even old records sound

better after one treatment with Sound Guard.

Sound Guard makes products respected around the world, to clean, preserve, protect and enhance the quality of records.

So, depend on Sound Guard to keep the hiss away from Stravinsky, Streisand, Kiss and any other record that gives you sheer satisfaction.



The best way  
to prove  
how much you  
love music.

**sound  
guard**

Facilities:  
Pompano Beach, Florida;  
Cincinnati, Ohio; Tokyo,  
Japan; Brussels, Belgium

Circle 4 on Reader-Service Card

peculiar to the process in its current public format (particularly irritating are the raspy brass and glassy violins), and all will sound worse, the better your equipment. (Listen, if you need convincing, on a good pair of electrostatic headphones or speakers, preferably fed by a top-notch moving-coil cartridge and first-rate electronics.) But if you insist on a digital *Pictures*, Solti's is your best bet.

There are of course many other options. For "you are there" realism, I've heard nothing to match my ancient copy of the 1959 Dorati/Minneapolis Symphony recording in Mercury's fabled Living Presence series (SR 90217; I haven't heard the current remastering). Simply for performance, my current favorite is Giulini's sharply characterized reading, coupled with an equally distinctive Prokofiev *Classical* Symphony, in quite good sound. For a combination of very good sound and performance, the high-powered 1979 Muti/Philadelphia version (Angel S 37539) is a reasonable choice. (I'd recommend the EMI pressing over Angel's 45-rpm mastering.) For the budget-minded, there are two desirable alternatives, both well recorded: Ansermet's poetic account (London Treasury STS 15475) and Leibowitz' galvanic rendition (Quintessence PMC 7059). Finally, no lover of *Pictures* should be without Mussorgsky's original, if only to more readily appreciate Ravel's accomplishment. My present preference is for Beroff (Angel S 37223). But for the really strapped, there is a superb bargain on *Odyssey* (Y 32223), coupling Richter's hypnotic if idiosyncratic 1958 live piano performance with Szell's magnificently played though somewhat prosaic orchestral realization.

Like *Pictures*, *Le Tombeau de Couperin* began life as a piano suite; London no doubt includes it to reveal yet another facet of Ravel's incredible orchestral wizardry. Even so, it's a questionable choice, for *Tombeau* is very poorly suited to Solti's talents. Several years ago in New Haven, I heard him conduct the Chicago in a near catastrophic performance. This recording, though significantly better, cannot disguise his lack of affinity for the style. Tempos are unusually brisk (if not as ridiculous as those in Paray's old Mercury disc), so that in the *Prélude* oboist Ray Still is hard-pressed simply for breathing space. (There is no way to achieve telling musical shaping at this clip.) Phrasing is foursquare, textures are overinflated. In short, the performance is unidiomatic. A few minutes' comparison with Boulez' marvelous CBS recording, were it available, would cinch the case. The inadequacies of London's digital system become much more apparent in this exquisite piece: Note the falsification of timbres (particularly evident as the mu-

## Tombeau proves to be a questionable choice for Solti.

sic grows louder), the lack of integration between and within orchestral sections, the odd balances. This is more than faulty microphoning. **R.D.H.**

### MUSSORGSKY: Orchestral and Choral Works.

Zehava Gal, alto\*: London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Claudio Abbado, cond. [Charles Gerhardt, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-3988. \$9.98. Tape: ARK 1-3988. \$9.98 (cassette).

Night on Bare Mountain (original version). Scherzo in B flat. The Capture of Kars; Triumphal March. MUSSORGSKY (orch. Rimsky-Korsakov); Khovanshchina: Prelude; Galitsin's Journey. Salammô: Chorus of the Priestesses.\* Oedipus in Athens; Chorus of the People in the Temple.\* Joshua.\* The Destruction of Sennacherib.\*

SCHWANN lists more than twenty performances of *Night on Bare Mountain*, all but two of which use the well-known version recomposed and reorchestrated by Rimsky-Korsakov; Stokowski and Leibowitz offer their own arrangements. Claudio Abbado alone plays the original Mussorgsky score. "Hot and chaotic," Mussorgsky's own words to characterize the piece, could also describe Abbado's performance; the composer's chaos is admirably depicted by conductor and orchestra. The excellent annotator, British conductor David Lloyd-Jones, was the first to record the original *Bare Mountain*, along with other Russian rarities, about ten years ago on a Philips disc now deleted. Not having access to the score, I simply report that his version ends quietly, Abbado's loudly. Who is more "original"?

As with *Boris Godunov*, one can only wonder why Rimsky felt it necessary to alter his friend's work. Mussorgsky's score, strikingly original and much more diabolic than Rimsky's, makes the rewritten version seem like a Sunday-school picnic. There is no reason to jettison Rimsky's version, perfectly respectable in its own right. (Most of the works on this disc are, in fact, given in his orchestration, and whatever else that may entail.) But surely there can no longer be any excuse for conductors not to program the stunning piece Mussorgsky wrote.

The *Khovanshchina* music is well sustained and sensitively played, though the familiar *Prelude* is a bit slower than usual. The early scherzo and late triumphal march (in the best Russian/quasi-Middle-Eastern manner), decidedly minor works, are stirringly rendered.

The orchestral pieces have been re-

corded before, but I believe this is the first recording of the four choruses. Though they come from different periods in Mussorgsky's brief career—two are from early unfinished operas, two are independent pieces—these magnificent works would not be out of place in *Boris*. One of them, *Joshua*, was actually completed after *Boris* but is a reworking of material from the earlier *Salammô*. These choruses seem to be Abbado's personal property. He has performed them with distinction in New York, Chicago, and elsewhere, as he does here with his London forces; that no other conductor has followed suit is mystifying. The choral and orchestral work is exemplary, and Zehava Gal is a rich-toned soloist in *Joshua*. Considering the unfamiliarity of these works, the absence of texts is regrettable.

One wonders how much thought was given to sequence. The *Khovanshchina* Act IV Entr'acte begins the first side, and the Act I *Prelude* is tucked away in the middle of Side 2. The four choruses, which Abbado performs as a set in concert, are scattered throughout the record. Be that as it may, this disc constitutes a tribute to Abbado's imagination and enterprise and an indictment of many other conductors lazily content to perform and record the same repertory over and over, ad nauseam. It should not be missed. **J.C.**

ORFF: Carmina burana—See page 53.

PROKOFIEV: Lt. Kijé; Suite, Op. 60.\* Alexander Nevsky, Op. 78.\* Ivan the Terrible, Op. 116 (ed. Stasevich).\*

Claudine Carlson, mezzo-soprano\*: Arnold Voketaitis, speaker† and bass\*: Samuel Timberlake, bass\*: St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and \*\*Chorus. Leonard Slatkin, cond. [Marc J. Aubort and Joanna Nickrenz, prod.] VOX CUM LAUDE VCL 9004X. \$21.98 (three discs, manual sequence). Tape: VCS 9004X. \$21.98 (two cassettes). [†From CANDIDE QCE 31098. 1978.]

It's an interesting idea to issue Prokofiev's major film scores as a package, though two of them are hardly rarities. Even the third, *Ivan the Terrible*, was splendidly recorded a few years ago by Riccardo Muti and the Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus (Angel S 3851). The late Abram Stasevich, who conducted the soundtrack, assembled the oratorio from Prokofiev's music for Eisenstein's celebrated two-part film of 1942 and 1945. Stasevich wanted to produce a work similar to *Alexander Nevsky*, and he succeeded up to a point, for the magnificent music of *Ivan* is every bit as exciting and moving as that of *Nevsky*.



Curiously, considering that *Ivan* is late Prokofiev, much of the brilliant and piquant orchestral writing is remindful not of the contemporaneous Fifth Symphony (1944) or the recent *Nevsky* (1938), but of the much earlier *Love for Three Oranges* (1919).

Where Stasevich failed, however, was in deciding to include a totally superfluous and distracting narrator, who describes some of the action and doubles in the role of Ivan. After all, Prokofiev didn't need a narrator for *Nevsky*, nor does *Nevsky* himself appear in that work.

This *Ivan* is more detailed and less generalized than Leonard Slatkin's previous efforts for Vox—possibly his finest work on discs. Claudine Carlson is a very affecting soloist, both here and in *Nevsky*; Samuel Timberlake sings his brief solo with great gusto. The choral and orchestral performance is exemplary.

That said, it must be noted that Muti gives a more biting, more compelling, more "terrible" reading, aided by a more vivid recording. Just as the presence of a narrator is detrimental to the work, so is Arnold Voketaitis' extremely pompous and oratorical delivery a drawback of the Vox performance. (The narration is in English, the singing in Russian.) Muti's narrator, Boris Morgunov, speaking Russian, is more expressive and less pretentious than Voketaitis, more understated at times, and ultimately more dramatic. Muti and Morgunov render the particularly beautiful and moving section entitled "Ivan's Illness" with great impact. If we must have the narration, surely that is the way to do it.

Were *Ivan* to be slightly abridged (it runs about sixty-eight minutes) and shorn of narration, it could easily become as popular as *Nevsky*. I would not, however, want to decide which numbers should be excised. Slatkin, in fact, adds one not included by Stasevich, a polonaise from the original film score.

Richard Freed's interesting and informative annotations argue that *Kizhch*, rather than *Kijé*, is the proper name for Prokofiev's lieutenant, the accent on the second syllable. Slatkin's recording offers the vocal versions of the second and fourth movements, a practice previously adopted only by Erich Leinsdorf in his two recordings, one of which is still available (Seraphim S 60209). In his element here, Voketaitis redeems himself with powerful and idiomatic singing, full of character and bravado in the sleigh ride, very sensitive in the Romance. Slatkin gives a rhythmically alert reading, though the wedding music, a trifle sedate, lacks the needed satirical bite provided by Fritz Reiner (RCA AGL 1-3881), George Szell (CBS MS 7408), and Leinsdorf.

As for *Nevsky*, this recording has

## This *Ivan* is possibly Slatkin's finest recording.

been available on its own for some time (August 1978 HF). It is certainly a worthy version, even if some of Slatkin's tempos are questionable, such as the beginning of the finale, taken at the same pace as the first chorus despite its faster marking. Reiner's version (RCA AGL 1-1966) is altogether more vivid and characterful. I'm not as bothered as some that it is not in Russian; rather English sung with feeling than Russian obviously learned by rote. In any case, two sections are in Latin.

In short, though more exciting and idiomatic versions can be found among other individual releases, this is an attractive package, with very agreeable performances. J.C.

RAVEL: *Le Tombeau de Couperin*—See Mussorgsky.

STOCK: *Inner Space*—See Harbi-son.

### SUBOTNICK: *Axolotl*\*; *The Wild Beasts*\*

Joel Krosnick, cello\*; Miles Anderson, trombone\*; Virko Baley, piano\*. [Morton Subotnick, prod.] NONESUCH N 78012, \$8.98.

Morton Subotnick's interest seems to have shifted in recent years from purely electronic composition to music that weds electronic devices and conventional instruments. Such marriages are not, in principle, unusual: composers have for decades turned out scores in which a "live" performer interacts with a prerecorded tape or a tape-delayed echo of his own playing. Subotnick's twist is that he handles the electronic parts of these mixed-media works by means of a "ghost score"—a tape of inaudible signals that trigger a small collection of simple electronic devices (apparently, an amplifier, a frequency modulator, and a pan pot), which alter the sound of the instrument as it is played.

In *Axolotl*, therefore, all one hears is the sound of the cello, but it doesn't sound much like the cello of, for example, the Bach suites. Now and again the instrument's natural rich, lyrical beauty manages to peek through the electronic haze. Elsewhere its sound is distorted beyond recognition, and for the greater part of the seventeen minutes, one hears an unearthly whinnying punctuated by a variety of attacks, all executed on something a bit like a cello. Similarly, in *The Wild Beasts*, an often flatulent mutation of a trombone is

mixed into a strange sonic brew with pianistic tinklings and janglings.

Ungenerous as these descriptions may sound, it's not the collection of odd timbres that I find distasteful. Rather, underneath the ear-tlingling surface sheen, the raw material—the instrumental writing—is absolutely threadbare. The players are given a mere handful of effects, which it doesn't take long to squeeze dry. The "ghost electronics" keep these effects artificially alive, briefly, by heaping other effects on top of them. In the end, it's like throwing different-colored lights onto a blank canvas—all very nice, but it hardly disguises the absence of a picture.

Should we expect a picture? To judge from Subotnick's past work, his annotations for these pieces, and indeed, his penchant for zoological titles, he does seem to aim at musical representation, however abstract. Sometimes he is delightfully successful, as in his last electronic piece, *A Sky of Cloudless Sulphur* (Nonesuch 78001, November 1979). *Wild Beasts* comes close to evoking its subject matter—but that's too easy, isn't it? *Axolotl* couldn't be farther from the mark. An axolotl is a Mexican salamander, "a transparent and delicate creature," according to the composer. Yet this aggressive, abrasive score brings to mind the hallucinatory scenes from *Altered States*: transparent, perhaps, but never delicate.

Juilliard Quartet cellist Joel Krosnick, who commissioned *Axolotl*, attacks his lines—such as they are—with an ex-troverted passion; trombonist Miles Anderson and pianist Virko Baley sound equally enthusiastic if, ironically, somewhat less vigorous in *Wild Beasts*. The "ghost electronics" make it difficult to judge the recording and pressing—the whooshing sound in *Axolotl* is presumably a desired effect—but there does seem to be some crackling that travels at a steady 33½ rpm. A.K.

### VERDI: *Un Ballo in maschera*.

CAST:

Amelia	Katia Ricciarelli (s)
Oscar	Edita Gruberová (s)
Ulrica	Elena Obraztsova (ms)
Riccardo	Plácido Domingo (t)
Chief Judge	Antonio Savastano (t)
Amelia's Servant	Gianfranco Manganotti (t)
Renato	Renato Bruson (b)
Silvano	Luigi de Corato (b)
Samuel	Ruggero Raimondi (bs)
Tom	Giovanni Foiani (bs)

La Scala Chorus and Orchestra, Claudio Abbado, cond. [Rainer Brock and Michael Horwath, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2740 251, \$32.94 (three discs, manual sequence). Tape: 3378 111, \$32.94 (three cassettes).

COMPARISONS:

Callas, Di Stefano, Votto Sera, IC 6087  
Price, Bergonzi, Leinsdorf RCA LSC 6179

Nilsson, Bergonzi, Solti Lon. OSA 1328  
 Arroyo, Domingo, Muti Ang. SCLX 3762  
 Tebaldi, Pavarotti, Bartoletti Lon. OSA 1398

If you enjoyed the hard-edged glint of Abbado's *Macbeth* (DG 2709 062) and *Simon Boccanegra* (2709 071), you may be disappointed by his *Ballo*, which is no less fastidiously executed but is less ostentatiously so and begins to show some interest in the human origins of notated melody and rhythm, the sort of intangible that makes music expressive. Although this development seems still in an early stage, with the result that the performance operates within an exceedingly narrow emotional range, the existence of any range at all represents a breakthrough for Abbado, who may finally have discovered how limiting it is to treat performance strictly as a matter of execution.

Fascinating as it is to hear such a precise rendering of Verdi's articulation and phrase markings (legato, nonlegato, staccato, accents), the result is not automatically expressive. Consider the conspirators' characteristic staccato murmurings: Abbado has secured excellent execution of his perfectly sound decisions with regard to tonal weight, attack, and balance; what he hasn't done is to back up and figure out what human need might be expressed by these rhythmic patterns. The result is a statement about musical notation, a statement that is intelligent but cut off from the emotional stakes of the conspirators.

I'm curious to hear what might happen if Abbado were to let himself go, yank his nose out of the score, from which he has long since learned to wring every drop of usable juice, and draw on his human reserves. There are encouraging signs here that he *has* human reserves. In "Eri tu," for example, the textural fullness of the introduction begins to suggest some connection to Renato's rage, and the flute statement of "O dolcezza perduta," marked "cantabile espressivo," does have some singing quality; now if only Abbado would pursue more precisely what problems Renato is attempting to work out and how that working-out takes the form of these musical gestures. Similarly, the dances of the final scene have the suggestion of some real dance quality; they need more, though, and the rhythms of the rest of the score also need to be generated, at least in part, by the rhythms of human movement.

The virtues and limitations of Abbado's approach are intriguingly reflected in Domingo's Riccardo. Abbado's insistence on accuracy of execution imposes a specific concentration that forces him out of his more usual generalized pleasant-result-oriented manner. Concentration is valuable for a per-

former—the more specifically he focuses on moment-to-moment reality, the less cloudy and generalized the result is likely to be—and at first hearing Domingo sounds more than usually involved. But compare his work in the Muti recording, which while overly general is also more alive. You realize that concentration of the wrong sort, on musical abstractions rather than character actions, can alienate us from rather than draw us into the dramatic event.

It's true that since 1975 Domingo's production has become more strained around and above the break, but even if the voice's former freshness can't be recovered, it retains more than enough substance for a first-rate Riccardo. This isn't it, though. Except for a rather humdrum account of the big Act III *scena*, his

## Abbado stresses precision at the cost of expression.

performance is respectable but less pleasing to the ear than Pavarotti (Bartoletti/London) or Peerce (with Toscanini) or Bergonzi (Solti/London and RCA), less involving than the cruder work of Di Stefano (Seraphim) or Gigli (Seraphim IB 6026, recently deleted). Bjoerling (MET 8, the 1940 broadcast performance issued by the Metropolitan Opera and reviewed last June) is in another class.

(Small textual note: Like Carreras in the Davis/Philips recording, in "Di' tu se fedele" Domingo makes the full indicated drop of an octave and a sixth, from the tenor's high A flat down to low C rather than the traditionally substituted middle C, on "il cielo irati" and "raccendon le forze." Traditions often develop for good reason, and this one seems sensible in the absence of a heavier-weight tenor encompassing a *sung* low C.)

The rest of the cast is listenable and unmemorable. Ricciarelli's Amelia is more flatteringly recorded, or maybe just less edgily sung, than her Luisa Miller (DG 2709 096, October 1980) or Tosca (2707 121, November 1980). Once again, she can make a pretty lyric effect when the music lies in her midrange at a comfortable tempo and dynamic. Once again, however, she is overtaxed when the music moves out of these bounds, as it almost always does. Both of her arias start well but then fall apart. Or listen to her lovely "Ahi sul funereo letto" in the Act II duet, and hear what happens when she has to rise to a fortissimo high A ("Chè non m'è dato in seno"). This is music for a Callas (Seraphim) or Price (RCA) or Milanov (in the Met broadcast

set) or Caniglia (in the deleted Seraphim set) or even a Nilsson (Solti/London).

Brunson is an earnest, conscientious Renato, and the voice stretches more plausibly up to F sharp and G than it did in the DG *Luisa Miller*, though this seems to be managed at the expense of middle-octave solidity; at times the voice verges on the hollow-core sound I associate with Aldo Protti. As suggested earlier, Brunson and Abbado work together nicely in "Eri tu," and the preceding recitative has some distinctive dignity. This is a more listenable Renato than the recent competition, but that's not much of a standard. Even with Bechi's ferocious performance out of the catalog, we can enjoy the superior singing of MacNeil (Solti/London) and Merrill (RCA) and Milnes (Bartoletti/London), while Gobbi (Seraphim) turns in one of his most finished performances.

Obraztsova's dramatic mezzo is the right sort of voice for Ulrica, but it's not terribly well focused, even apart from its tendency to wildness on top. After a rather generalized invocation, she becomes more interesting in the dialogues with Amelia and Riccardo—amazing what a difference some honest dramatic involvement can make.

Gruberová balances out neither better nor worse than the recorded competition. (I'm beginning to think that Oscar is an impossible role.) The upper part of the voice is quite listenable and has considerable cutting power—listen to her ride the big ensembles in the Ulrica scene. The lower part of the voice, however, is quite unattractive, and there's not much personality beyond the usual stock pertness. "Volta la terrea" suffers from one of Abbado's more extreme instances of obsessive rhythmic delineation. By the time he's finished dotting and slurring and otherwise fussing, the song has more or less disappeared.

The Samuel and Tom are on the weak side. De Corato has plenty of voice for Silvano but is hamstrung by another instance of Abbado's making musical decisions that exclude any other considerations. His grievances are declared in a chipper allegro brillante that passes without any intimation of what this all means to Silvano. For Pete's sake, the guy is spilling his guts.

The sound is satisfactory, the packaging adequate. For students of the score, this is a useful recording. For the experience of *Ballo*, the clear choice still seems to me the Seraphim set, with the RCA a good stereo alternative or supplement.

K.F.

## VERDI: Requiem.

Montserrat Caballé, soprano; Bianca Berini, alto; Plácido Domingo, tenor; Paul Plishka, bass; Musica Sacra Chorus, New York Philharmonic, Zubin Mehta, cond. [Da-

vid Mottley, prod.] CBS MASTERWORKS I2M 36927 (digital recording; two discs, manual sequence) [price at dealer's option].

Before this latest version of the Verdi Requiem appeared, I would have said that, among the recordings currently available, only the performance conducted by Carlo Maria Giulini (Angel SB 3649) reveals a genuine grasp of Verdi's majestic, soul-searching work. Zubin Mehta's reading leaves me of the same opinion.

Though the forces under Mehta's command, taken by and large, are a match for any to be heard on current recordings, his conception of the score is so genteel and so anonymous as to drain it of all conviction. One could, of course, quarrel over specific points in his interpretation; I find him too deliberate in the Agnus Dei, for example, so that all sense of structure disappears from the music. Yet the important consideration is not that he is wrongheaded about the Requiem, but that his conducting reveals no involvement with it. He goes through all the obligatory motions, whipping up the chorus and orchestra for the Dies Irae, and so forth, but he does so in a superficial and essentially perfunctory manner.

One indication of Mehta's unsatisfactory attitude toward the work is his failure to ensure that the soloists pay attention to Verdi's dynamic markings. Montserrat Caballé, in excellent voice, produces her (at present) incomparable high, floating pianissimos whenever they are called for. She also produces them when they are not called for, as in the sustained A flat at the end of the Offertorio, where a crescendo/diminuendo is required, and in a solo G natural of "Liberate me," where the soprano is asked to swell the phrase to fortissimo before ending it forte.

Plácido Domingo, in his third recording of this music, is scarcely more scrupulous. In the eighth bar of the "Ingenisco" he fails to observe the triple-piano marking on "canti parce" and he ignores the *dolcissimo morendo* marking in the thirteenth and fourteenth bars on "absolvisti." Yet in the "Hostias" section of the Offertorio he is much more sensitive to the composer's demands, and throughout the work he is in resplendent voice. Paul Plishka, who also tends to ignore Verdi's dynamic instructions, gives otherwise a creditable, workaday performance. Bianca Berini, however, is little short of disastrous. Though more stylistically idiomatic than Janet Baker in the Solti/Chicago set (RCA ARL 2-2476), she is in even poorer voice than her British counterpart. Her tonal unsteadiness and near-comical changes of gear as she shifts from one register to the other make her something of an embarrassment.

The Musica Sacra Chorus, though not ideally blended in sound, sings with enthusiasm, and the New York Philharmonic is in good form. CBS's digital sound seems far too clinical for this kind of large-scale, warm-blooded music. There is some pre-echo, and surfaces are somewhat prickly. Texts and translations into English, French, and German are supplied.

D.S.H.

## Recitals and Miscellany

### LILI KRAUS PLAYS KEYBOARD FANTASIES.

Lili Kraus, piano. [Seymour Solomon, prod.] VANGUARD AUDIOPHILE VA 25003, \$12.98 (digital recording). Tape: CVA 25003, \$12.98 (cassette).

BACH: Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue, in D minor, S. 903. HAYDN: Fantasy in C. MOZART: Fantasy in D minor, K. 397. SCHUBERT: Fantasy in C, D. 760 (*Wanderer*).

Vanguard's splendid audiophile pressing, with extraordinarily quiet surfaces, gives an imposing, burly weight to Lili Kraus's sonority, which on other occasions has seemed slightly brittle and unsensual. She is not, and never has been, a colorist in the Myra Hess tradition; yet in her own inimitable way, she conveys the tensions, mysteries, and grandeurs of these fantasies—only one of which (the Mozart) she has recorded previously.

Kraus is a keyboard expressionist; the shaggy edges and heavy black Rouault outlines she gives the Bach impart a power and scope that will have purists up in arms but less prejudiced listeners enthralled. If memory serves, her mentor, Artur Schnabel, played this exceptional work in a similar manner. The Haydn is not as refined and jewel-like as some have made it sound, but its playfulness and sparkle are replaced by a blunter energy and a no less high-spirited brio. (Some will call this interpretation Beethovenian.) To Schubert's treacherous *Wanderer* Fantasy (which I once heard Kraus murder in concert), she brings more than adequate technical command and a compelling stormy rigor. It's an interpretation of incontestable strength and knowledge, cognizant of the latest textual scholarship. (Note the *D natural* in the slow movement's closing measure.) Only in the Mozart, where she vehemently overrides the "pathetic," meditative qualities, is the pianist slightly brusque and ill-tempered, lacking patience as well as poetry.

Still, this is a marvelous record. H.G.

SPECIAL OF THE MONTH

PIONEER KE 5100 Hi-Fi AM FM Cassette 204 99

WRITE FOR FREE CATALOG

PIONEER CAR STEREO		JENSEN CAR STEREO	
KEX-20	219.99	RE-518	284.99
KE-5100	219.99	RE-512	259.99
KP-7500	186.99	T-418 + FQA-3000	BOTH 279.99
KP-5500	135.99	J-1033 Triax II 6x9	84.99/pr
DM-2 Power Amp	34.99	J-1037 Triax II 6x9	64.99/pr
DM-4 Power Amp	51.99	J-1065 Triax III 6x9	69.99/pr
CS-5 Equalizer	94.99	J-1069 Coaxial 6x9	40.99/pr
AD-30 Equalizer/Amp	94.99	J-1101 Triaxial 4x10	62.99/pr
AD-50 Equalizer/Amp	144.49		
TS-698 Speakers	99.99/pr		

VIDEO

PANASONIC CAR STEREO		CRAIG CAR STEREO	
CPX-900	341.99	T-690	214.99
CPX-820	266.99	T-619	189.99
CPX-790	242.99	R-200	184.99
CPX-761	222.99	R-511	149.99
CPX-742	199.99		
CPX-737	184.99		
CPX-700	177.99		

SANYO CAR STEREO		MAXELL BLANK TAPES	
FT-2200	229.99	UDXL-II C-90	3.39
FT-36	182.99	UDXL-II C-60	2.49
FT-9	140.99	UDXL-I C-90	3.39
FT-C16	149.99	UDXL-I C-60	2.49
		UD C-90	2.79
		UD C-60	1.89
		LX-35-180B Reel-to-Reel	17.99
		LX-35-180 Reel-to-Reel	15.99
		LX-35-90B Reel-to-Reel	6.79
		LX-35-90 Reel-to-Reel	5.89

ORDERING INSTRUCTIONS

All merchandise in factory fresh with manufacturer's warranty. Send Money Order, Cashier's Check or Certified Check for shipment within 24 hours and \$4.99 P&H. BONUS DISCOUNT: Please allow shipping charges of \$4.99 to Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Alaska, Canada and 10% storage. Personal Checks and/or 3 weeks Customer Service are limited to 90 days. We carry a full line of SONY RECORDERS, BONUS and MAXELL CARDNO HOME STEREO as well as BILLY'S SUPER SONY TUNING and CHANGING SERVICE.

BONUS BONUS BONUS BONUS

If you pay by Certified Check, Cashier's Check or Money Order you earn a 2% DISCOUNT on your entire order.

**Audiomatic Electronics**  
CALL TOLL-FREE 800-223-2706

In N.Y., Hawaii, Alaska, & Canada Call (212) 686-5500  
1263 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10001

Circle 24 on Reader-Service Card

INTERNATIONAL  
**FREE!**  
80 PAGE  
RECORD  
& TAPE  
CATALOG

Record & Tape Sale



- LIST THOUSANDS OF RECORDS & TAPES
- LOW LOW PRICES
- FAST SERVICE
- CLASSICAL, OPERA, POP, JAZZ, C&W AND NOW VIDEO CASSETTES

International Record & Tape Club Dept. HF 97  
315 WEST 36th St., NYC, NY 10018

PLEASE SEND ME YOUR SPECIAL 80-PAGE RECORD & TAPE CATALOG!

PLEASE ALSO SEND ME YOUR VIDEO CASSETTE CATALOG!

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

# Theater and Film

**EYE OF THE NEEDLE.** Original film score by Miklós Rózsa.

Nuremberg Symphony Orchestra, Miklós Rózsa, cond. [Tom Null and Chris Küchler, prod.] VARÈSE SARABANDE STV 81133, \$8.98.

The unflagging creative vitality of Miklós Rózsa—at seventy-four, unquestionably the dean of practicing film composers—never fails to astonish. Here, for a World War II spy-thriller-cum-love-story, he serves up another taut, brooding, vibrant score, which harks back in tone and manner to his glorious “film noir” scores for *Spellbound* and the Mark Hellinger trilogy, *Naked City*, *Breath Force*, and *The Killers*.

Though perhaps not as “major” and dramatically forceful as those classics—or the gaudier, more expansive 1979 score, *Time after Time*—the music for *Eye of the Needle* is central to the film’s absorbingly paced, efficiently tailored narrative. This is particularly true during the protracted and harrowing climactic life-and-death struggle between the two protagonists. At once romantic lovers and mortal enemies, they have come to a helpless and hopeless pass. Rózsa’s music urgently reflects the tragic tangle of ineluctable deceptions, misunderstandings, and cross-purposes.

There are two basic motifs, a relentless, driving main theme, representing the German spy—code-named “Die Nadel,” “The Needle”—and his unswerving mission, and a supple love theme replete with Rózsa’s characteristic plangency

and vulnerability. With its simple, sequential patterns and triadic modulations, the score projects the uncanny sense of emotional turbulence and eventual catharsis so typical of his idiom. His use of solo strings is very telling; often a violin or viola is paired with cello to create pensively mournful duo passages.

The Nuremberg Symphony turns in an adequate performance, though of course, it’s no match for the resplendent Royal Philharmonic, with which Rózsa has so successfully collaborated of late. No doubt the music would come across with more profile and panache if the recording had greater presence and bite. Pressing and surfaces are excellent, yet the production falls short of Varèse Sarabande’s high standards; a good deal of brightness seems to have been lost in the transfer to disc.

Nonetheless, even a comparatively minor Rózsa effort indifferently reproduced stands head and shoulders above the common run of today’s film-music mediocrities. **P.A.S.**

**HEAVY METAL:** Original film score by Elmer Bernstein.

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Elmer Bernstein, cond. FULL MOON/ASYLUM 5E 547, \$8.98.

Elmer Bernstein’s recent, unlikely affiliation with the *National Lampoon* crowd and their associates (in *Animal House*, *Airplane*, and *Stripes*) has cast him in a subsidiary role as a composer; for the most part, he merely purveys brief cues of bridge or tension music, often in a parodistic mode. But his voluntary subservience in this collaboration finally pays off in handsome fashion with this flamboyant, tumultuous score for

the animated “adult” space-opera *Heavy Metal*.

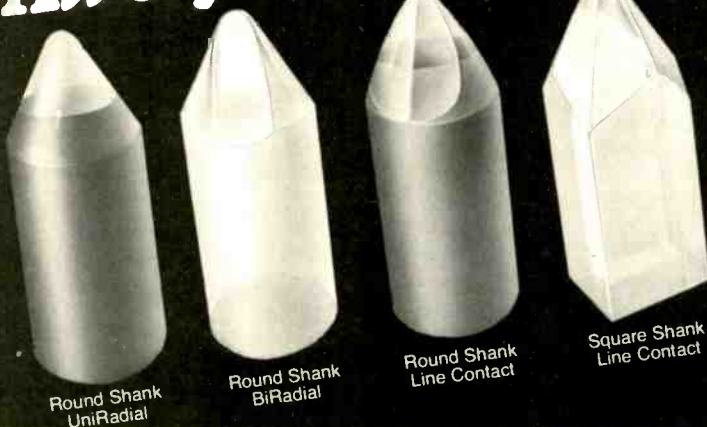
Bernstein’s achievement may very well go unheralded or even unremarked by the soundtrack-buying public, however, because Warner Brothers—Asylum’s parent company—has released a two-disc album of disco-type music also identified as a soundtrack to the film. Yet the segregation proves fortunate in the end, since it allows the serious movie-music fan to enjoy Bernstein’s intermittent contributions to the film in uninterrupted splendor.

Best described as Bernstein’s “Star Wars,” the score has all the traits of his unmistakably personal idiom: boyish forthrightness, tender modality, syncopated lullabies, bluesy inflections, and an overall rhapsodic exuberance. This large-scale, copious, well-integrated symphonic tableau contains many captivating ideas that exemplify Bernstein’s free-flowing melodic fancy and flair for dramatic evocation. And the strain of whimsicality that runs through the score makes it all the more irresistible.

The immaculate orchestrations by Christopher Palmer, David Spear, and David Bernstein, continuously on target, recall the shimmering and sonorous instrumentations of Bernstein’s erstwhile Hollywood collaborators, Leo Shuken and Jack Hayes. The Royal Philharmonic plays with customary flamboyance and panache, and the lucid, full-bodied sound is absolutely dazzling. This near-perfect recording joins *Raiders of the Lost Ark* as the best of 1981’s film-music releases. **P.A.S.**

SOPHISTICATED LADIES—See page 56.

## All styli are not created equal.



When you select a phono cartridge, the cost will be strongly influenced by which stylus design you choose. Least expensive is the UniRadial (spherical or conical). A simple design, simply made. Or you can opt for better high frequency tracing with a BiRadial (elliptical) tip. Its more complex shape takes longer to make, so costs more. Best performance comes with a Line Contact (Shibata) tip whose shape permits the best high frequency tracing, yet whose long, narrow bearing face reduces groove pressure for longer record and stylus life. Add a positively-indexed square shank, plus laser-beam alignment of micro-polished surfaces and you have the finest stylus design available today. Make your choice with Audio-Technica. You'll hear the difference.

 **audio-technica**

# The Tape Deck

Critiques of new cassette and open-reel releases by R. D. Darrell

## Recyclings

**Reissues—usually invitingly cheaper reprints—of once celebrated but now aging recordings have long been common. The latest wrinkle, inspired by the success of premium-price audiophile specials, introduces deluxe reissues at higher rather than lower cost—complete technological revitalizations of onetime sonic spectacles via half-speed disc remastering or superchrome tape processing. The new RCA Red Seal 0.5 series offers just such metamorphosed “legendary performances,” on superchrome musicassettes (Prestige Box, \$15.98 each) as well as on remastered discs pressed by German Teldec.**

The first tape examples I've heard feature Van Cliburn and Kiril Kondrashin in their famous 1958 Tchaikovsky First Piano Concerto (ATK 1-4099); Fritz Reiner and the Chicago Symphony in their pioneering stereo Strauss *Heldenleben* from 1954 (ATK 1-4100) and their 1959 Respighi *Pines and Fountains of Rome* (ATK 1-4040); and Berj Zambkochian, Charles Munch, and the Boston Symphony in a milestone Saint-Saëns *Organ Symphony* also from 1959 (ATK 1-4039)—certainly all most worthy choices for technological rebirth.

Needless to say, the sound, fine originally, now seems even more impressive, for quite apart from possible aural enhancements, the state-of-the-art processing works wonders. Cliburn's Tchaikovsky is still arresting, even if his piano seems unduly prominent by today's standards, and his reading somewhat stiffly constrained for all its dazzling bravura. The Reiner readings wear far better. Even his Respighi tone poems, which originally struck me as too objective, now seem eloquently persuasive; of course, they are eclipsed by the incomparable grandeurs of the Strauss tone poem—magnificently interpreted and performed, a historical landmark for Leslie Chase's experimental audio engineering.

The Saint-Saëns is a special case: in theory, as author of the reprinted program notes, I'm enjoined from reviewing it. But after so many years, that restriction now seems pointless, and whatever favorable bias I may have doesn't preclude reservations about the reprocessing. Whereas in *Heldenleben* a touch of original high-end stridency has been

tamed with no significant loss of brilliance, the Saint-Saëns now reveals a bit less blazing incandescence and some low-end strengthening that, though fine for increased organ-pedal weight, shifts the overall spectrum balance. However, all this shows up only in direct comparison with the original disc; heard by itself, this taping makes the memorable performance more grandly moving than ever.

• **Non-premium-price reissues** are still with us, of course; no fewer than three brand-new midprice series have appeared recently: CBS Masterworks' "Great Performances" (price at dealer's discretion); Angel's "Red Line" (\$6.49 each); and Deutsche Grammophon's "Special" (\$6.98 each). Nothing from CBS has come in yet. The two Red Line musicassettes I've heard (from an initial release of twenty-five) testify potently to that series' resources: Otto Klemperer's mighty 1962 Schubert Ninth Symphony with the Philharmonia Orchestra (4RL 32001) and one of my favorite Handel programs, the 1976 Neville Marriner/St. Martin's Academy Double Concertos Nos. 1 and 3, plus the *Agrippina* and *Arianna* Overtures (4RL 32016).

The DG Specials, unlike most reissues (including DG's Privilege and Resonance series), are "easy-listening" anthologies of favorite pieces and movements excerpted from programs that date mostly from the '60s: Romantic piano music played by Wilhelm Kempff, Tamás Vásáry, Emil Gilels, et al. (3335 608, 3335 639); a Bach organ recital by Karl Richter (3335 611); a Karajan/Berlin Philharmonic waltz collection (3335 607); and two other orchestral miscellanies, "Music of Grieg and Sibelius" (3335 635) and "Enchantment" (3335 637).

**Latest HiTech Debuts.** Aesthetic Audio offers its first British Merlin Fidelity + "direct-to-stereo" recording duplicated in real time on BASF II chromium tape. George Malcolm's 1978 Bach Suites Nos. 3 and 4, S. 1068-69, with the New Chamber Soloists (MFC 789, \$15.95 plus \$2 shipping; Aesthetic Audio, P.O. Box 478, Carlin, Nev. 89822). When one gets past the extravagant technical claims and inadequate notes, the tape actually delivers superbly airy, ringing sonics; and unlike so many boringly ceremonious performances of the suites, these "chamber" readings are among the most de-

lectable I've ever heard.

Sine Qua Non's new superchrome processings (\$9.98 each) of Digitech digital recordings feature offshoots of the Boston Symphony. The Empire Brass Quintet, alone and with a larger ensemble, combines technical bravura and anachronistic derangements in "Renaissance Brass" (SCR 002) and "Digital Hits of 1740" (SCR 001). And the Cambridge Chamber Orchestra, led by Empire trumpeter Rolf Smedvig, is heard in Vivaldi's *Seasons* (SCR 007); despite Emanuel Borok's virtuosic fiddling, I find scant stylistic authenticity in these heavy-handed, overinsistent readings. More suitable stylistically, and better calculated to display the series' processing merits, is a grippingly bravura Empire program (SCR 005) that features the little-known Op. 30 Sextet by Oskar Böhme, plus shorter pieces by Hindemith, Hovhanness, and Dvořák.

**Philips/B-C open reels** (\$10.95 each, except as noted) continue to expand three outstanding Colin Davis series. From his peerless London Symphony Berlioz cycle, there's the belated taping of the *Symphonie funèbre et triomphale*, a rhetorically grandiloquent but fascinating work, coupled with the *Hamlet* Marche funèbre and *Trovens* Prelude (c. 1970, G 802 913). From his Boston Sibelius symphony series, there are the Sixth and (my favorite) Third (c. 1977, G 9500 142). And from his current Concertgebouw Haydn symphony series, we get exceptionally vital versions of Nos. 101 (*Clock*) and 102 (G 9500 679). Then, from the Concertgebouw's more extensive catalog under its regular conductor, Bernard Haitink, there are the profoundly moving 1971 Mahler Seventh (R 6700 036, double-play, \$21.95) and—not to be missed—a Debussy program that won a 1980 *Gramophone* engineering quality award, combining *Jeux* with a magical *Nocturnes* (G 9500 674).

The first recording of Verdi's *Stiffelio*, noted here in its cassette edition in December 1980, sounds even more warmly sonorous in a double-play reel edition (S 6769 039, \$22.95). And while Claudio Arrau's vividly recorded Chopin nocturnes (S 6747 485, double-play, \$22.95) are just a bit too stiffly formalistic for my taste, they valuably add two posthumous works to the usual nineteen (Barclay-Crocker, 11 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10004).

HF

# BACKBEAT



ALL PHOTOS BY JANN ZLOTKIN

Bayshore control room: The MCI 36-input JH-536 console and autolocator are in the background; outboard rack on the right.

## Tales from Famous Producers School

Down home at the studio with Bill Szymczyk, Part 2.  
by Crispin Cioe

WHILE HIS TRACK RECORD with the Eagles and Bob Seger (see Part I, November) might indicate otherwise, producer Bill Szymczyk has been very much involved in the albums of lesser-known artists. So far, through his Pandora Productions, Ltd., he has brought drummer Joe Vitale and Jefferson Starship lead singer Mickey Thomas to Elektra Records. Vitale's album, "Plantation Harbor," was released last summer; "Alive Alone," which came out in the fall, represented Thomas' solo debut.

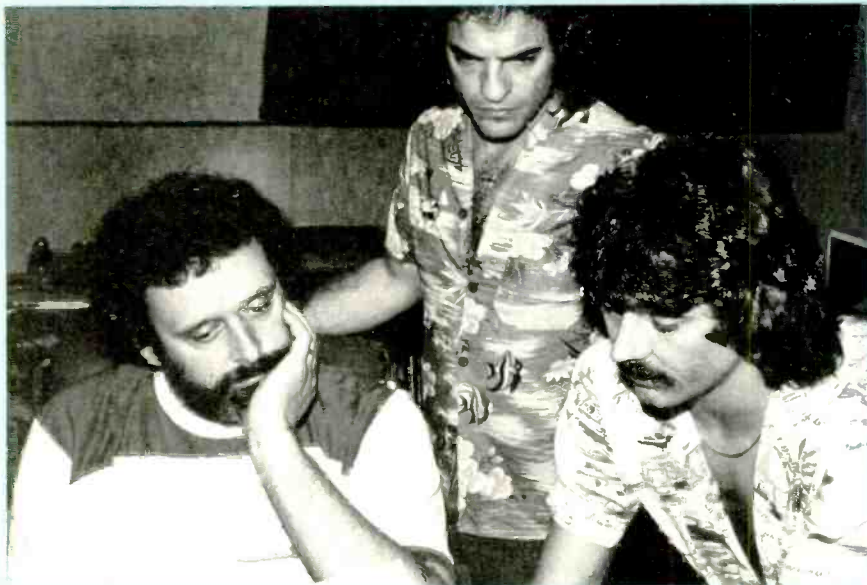
Vitale plays with Eagle Joe Walsh's band; he also toured with the Eagles last year and plays on John Entwistle's "Too Late the Hero" (see story, December).

With all of that activity, squeezing in recording sessions for his own album was not easy (it ended up taking two and half years to complete), particularly when they had to fit into Szymczyk's equally full schedule. To record the appropriately titled *Theme from Cabin Weirdos*, the two men met at the producer's cabin retreat near Mount Mitchell in North Carolina. Vitale drove south with his drums in his van and Szymczyk drove north from Coconut Grove, Florida (home base for his Bayshore Studio), with a twenty-four-track console.

"I made a control room in the bedroom," Bill recalls, "and a vocal booth in the hallway; the living room was the stu-

dio. We set the drums up on the porch, facing the mountain across the valley. Then we set up a mike in the woods below the porch, for what you might call 'room ambience.'" The instrumental, as one might guess, has an extremely spacious drum sound.

Szymczyk has known Vitale since 1972 when he produced "Barnstorm," the eponymous debut album of a group Vitale and Walsh put together in Colorado. The drummer describes his producer as "very, very musical for a non-musician. In the studio he's like the fifth member of a four-piece band. He won't let you cheat yourself out of a track. We in the band may think we've got a song



Szymczyk, Joe Vitale, Mickey Thomas: "I'm not a dictator in the studio."



Szymczyk with Pete Townshend: "I really missed having band feedback."



Vitale: "Bill won't let you cheat yourself."

down solidly, and then he'll make us do it one more time. Often, knowing that you've already got one excellent take will make you that much more relaxed for the last one, which, for that very reason, may come out as the keeper.

"In general, I'd say Bill's approach is very much like a musician's, in that his sound is so recognizable. His characteristic snare sound, for instance, is dead and fat and prints very well on tape and vinyl. Some drummers might want to hear more echo on the snare, but Bill hears things way in advance of the various processes in the recording chain, and he knows exactly how to make that drum really cut in on the record's final state and, ultimately, come through on the radio. And let's face it, his records sound absolutely great on the radio."

The airplay successes of such tunes as B. B. King's *The Thrill Is Gone*, Seger's *Against the Wind*, and the Eagles' *One of These Nights* would certainly back that statement. On the other hand, the songs' sheer diversity explains Szymczyk's feeling that he does *not* have

a "trademark" sound: "I'm not a Richard Perry or Phil Spector type of producer, where an album project is seen as 'Richard Perry presents Martha Reeves,' or whatever. I definitely consider that I'm working *for* the artist. While I like to be available to him as a sounding board and advisor, I'm certainly not a dictator in the studio.

"When it's time to mix, I go in alone, get one down, and play it back for the artist. I want him to react to it, and anything he wants to change, I'm going to do it. Nirvana, of course, is to play the mix for him and have him freak out and say, 'That's it!' But 90 percent of the time there's some little thing that he'll feel needs changing, so I'll do it again. I want to walk out of there knowing that artist and producer both agree and can honestly say to each other, 'That's it, we nailed that sucker!'"

His less-than-enthusiastic recollection of his work on the Who's "Face Dances" begins to make sense. "It wasn't exactly what I had expected," says

Szymczyk. "It was a lot more detached than I would have preferred, especially once the basics were done. Peter [Townshend] came in with completed song demos that he'd done at home with a rhythm machine, synthesizers, and all sorts of overdubs. He brought in twenty songs, we cut fifteen, and nine were released. We cut the basics live, and Peter was, of course, the most involved. But to a certain extent I was left to my own devices on the overdubs, and when it came time to mix, which I did back here at Bayshore completely on my own, I really missed having band feedback and being able to play mixes for them."

The album was recorded in England, which also presented some problems. "I'd never recorded outside of America before. I'm used to an attention to detail here that's not always found in European studios. But I took along my assistant and sometimes coproducer Allan Blazek, who kept me from going nuts about the different way they run studios in England.

"We were all quite pleased with the



The studio: drum booth is in the foreground, control room on the right.

results nonetheless; the Who wanted to get into more production and layering on the vocals, which we accomplished, and I got my little funky licks in on songs like *Another Tricky Day*, where I went directly back to Motown for the breakdown feel. When they listened back to that the first time, Peter said, "That's real dance music, then, isn't it?"

**Townshend had initially** contacted Szymczyk because he was impressed with the producers' work on the Eagles' "Hotel California" (see Part 1). That album was one of the first to be recorded in its entirety at Bayshore, which opened its doors in 1977. The studio was built to Szymczyk's specifications under the supervision of Rudy Bruer, who has designed over sixty professional recording studios, including L.A.'s Record Plant. "Rudy told me he'd build Bayshore for X amount of dollars," remembers Bill, "in X amount of time. He was a day early and twenty dollars under budget."

"Basically, I wanted a living room that was 100 percent technology," he continues. "I wanted the place to be homey and relaxed, so there's lots of green and plants and sofas around. And I like the idea that the studio is slightly off the beaten path: even though it's in town here, you've got to look to find it." I can verify that: Bayshore is in a motel complex behind a clump of palm trees. It's virtually impossible to identify from the road.

The studio is a long rectangle with the drums at one end, surrounded by a low wall of baffle boards. The grand piano is completely encased in wood for isolation, and the glass-walled vocal booth sits next to the control room, "so the singer can see both me and the band," says Bill. The room is heavily carpeted and curtained, making it dead acoustically. "I don't like real 'live' rooms," says the producer, "because if you want to get a warm, close sound you have to baffle your brains out. I like

being in control of sound; I like to close-mike the instruments and then use outboard gear to get any spaciousness I might need. Of course, I won't get a Led Zeppelin drum sound in here, but the room is perfect for most of the five- and six-piece bands I produce.

"In terms of echo and delay, my new baby is the Lexicon 224, which I used for mixing 'The Long Run.' I haven't used another echo chamber since, although I have 3 EMT plates and an AKG unit here as well. I also like to double rhythm parts a lot as a separate effect." The console is a 36-input MCI, a unit that Bill became attached to when he was working at Criteria studios in Miami. The MCI design engineers did much of their field-testing at Criteria, "and they asked us what we wanted in a board, and I loved that," he says. "There are other good boards too—the Neve has a nice sound that I could live with, but by now I'm completely acclimated to the MCI."

**It's now 10 p.m.**, and we're back at the studio about to begin an informal listening session. Bob Seger is here, having come to Bayshore to finish mixing his then-upcoming live LP. ("I'll probably listen to the mixes at least two-hundred times before we release the album," he said at one point.) Also on hand is Seger's old friend and Eagle member Glenn Frey who, with Allan Blazek, is producing his own solo LP. Frey has been waxing poetic about a singer named Lou Ann Barton, whom he's co-producing with Jerry Wexler at Muscle Shoals Sound Studios in Alabama. "She can do *anything*," he says, "and to be producing an album with Jerry Wexler, one of the great r&b producers, is like a dream come true." Blazek suggests that we listen to a track from Thomas' "Alive Alone" album. Written by Frey and Don Henley, the song is titled *Too Much Drama. Mama (and Not Enough Rock & Roll)*. It sounds like an FM radio classic.

"I wanted a living room that was 100 percent technology."

A small grin starts to pass over Frey's face: it's his first time hearing the song fully recorded, and he starts nodding his head in time with the music. When the tune's finished and all agree it's a "smoker," Seger says, "Okay, we've got a roomful of seasoned professionals here. Listen to this segue on our live album between *Nine Tonite* and *Trying to Live My Life Without You* and tell me if you think it works." We sit and listen as the ferocious groove from the first song does a beautifully synchronized downshift into the next one. Now Szymczyk is smiling too, and quietly contemplating his artists at work.

**Later in the evening** we go to a Coconut Grove nightclub, where a local band is well into its second set. As the group launches into an REO Speedwagon tune, a few patrons ogle the visiting rock luminaries bending elbows at the bar. Szymczyk surveys the scene benignly as we talk about heroes. "I guess my two biggest idols are Ted Turner and Sterling Hayden. Turner because he has broken all the rules and made it anyway. They told him he could never turn a local TV station into a national cable network, and he went ahead and did it. Sterling Hayden because he started as a fisherman in Maine, landed in Hollywood as an actor, and then quit to write books and sail around the world. Now he makes movies occasionally so he can continue to write. Creatively, he's done exactly what he wanted to do."

I ask Bill if he ever thinks about producing some of the new bands on the scene today. "Well, there are some I like a lot: the Police, the Pretenders. . . . I guess if the right one came along and I had the time, I'd be interested. And I love great pop/r&b groups like Earth, Wind & Fire and the Commodores, but they certainly don't need me to produce them. Besides, r&b is the only kind of music that I can just listen to and enjoy (Continued on page 97)



# FINALLY THERE'S A COMPACT YOU CAN DRIVE AT 15 ips.

## Introducing the Tascam 22-4.

After setting the standard for 1/4" 4-track recording, it's only logical that Tascam would be the one to introduce the compact generation. After all, we developed the format.

Which means we knew what we were doing when we designed this high-speed transport drive for 7" reels.

The 22-4 4-track multi-channel recorder with sync was built to use 1800 feet of one mil tape. At 15 ips that gives you 22 1/2 minutes of recording time.

And we didn't sacrifice an inch of quality to get you up to speed. Have a look.

### Specifications (15 ips)

Wow and Flutter (Teac Test Tape YTT-2004):  
0.07% peak (IEC/ANSI weighted), 0.10% peak (IEC/ANSI unweighted), 0.04% RMS

(NAB weighted), 0.07% RMS (NAB unweighted).

Frequency Response\* Record/Reproduce  
0 dB referenced to 1 kHz: 40Hz-22kHz  $\pm$  3dB  
at OVU, 35Hz-25kHz at -10 VU.

Signal to Noise Ratio\* at a reference of 1 kHz,  
at 10 dB above OVU, 585  
nWb/m: 61dB A weighted  
(NAB), 56dB unweighted.

The 22-4 is a hard-working, no-frills machine. Which makes it perfect for the System 20, Tascam's hard-working, no-frills manual mixer.

See them both at your Tascam dealer. For the one nearest you, plus more information, just write to us at the address below.

Then you can test drive our new compact 22-4. It's the only way to see how well it performs at high speed.

**TASCAM** CREATIVE  
SERIES  
TEAC Production Products



# Music and Recording in 1981: Bottom-Line Blues

Seasoned veterans enjoy yet another season as labels struggle to stay afloat.  
by Steven X. Rea

WHAT YEAR WAS THIS? The Doors sold well over a million albums, their singles *Light My Fire* and *People Are Strange* receiving heavy radio play; the Kinks and the Rolling Stones released new records and toured the states, playing to screaming, frantic fans; the Who had a platinum LP; the Four Tops scored a Top 10 single, as did British pop star Lulu, the Moody Blues, Gary U.S. Bonds, the Bee Gees: *Why Do Fools Fall in Love* soared high on the charts; *I Heard It Through the Grapevine* was a giant r&b seller; Cliff Richards and the Beach Boys both had smash singles. Was it 1967? 1968? Or maybe even 1970?

Guess again. It was 1981, a year dominated by seasoned veterans and—in the case of the Doors—by a dead man. Styx, a heavy metal outfit formed in the early Seventies, unleashed “Paradise Theatre,” an album that sold in excess of three million copies. REO Speedwagon’s tenth LP roared up *Billboard’s* Hot 100, going multiplatinum in the process. Performers with pop music histories of close to a quarter of a century dominated sales and airplay: Kenny Rogers, Kim Carnes (both of whom started with the New Christy Minstrels), Diana Ross (the Supremes), Marty Balin and Jefferson Starship (Jefferson Airplane), Smokey Robinson (the Miracles), Steve Winwood (the Spencer Davis Group), Bob Seger, Carly Simon, Santana. . . . Even the Chipmunks logged in a hit.

There was so little new blood in 1981 that it would have been difficult to give a transfusion to a bunny rabbit. Only a half-dozen newcomers—relative newcomers, that is—came to the fore: Canadian group Loverboy, country/pop crooner Juice Newton, Boston rocker Billy Squier, r&b performers Teena Marie and Luther Vandross, and L.A.’s chirpy girl combo the Go-Go’s. Hard hit

by double-digit inflation and a sluggish market, record companies and radio programmers chose to play it safe, opting for megaplatinum rock dinosaurs and mainstream pop purveyors, rather than chancing new talent and new ideas. But that policy didn’t improve the numbers: According to the National Association of Recording Merchandisers (NARM), retail sales in the U.S. remained as soft as they were in 1980, rising only 4.9% in cash volume during the first six months of ’81. In other words, sales didn’t keep pace with inflation.

“I know one recording artist,” reports Crispin Cioe, “who was dropped after his debut failed to take off. [Historically, it has taken at least two LPs to “break” a new act.] The company president told the singer’s manager that the money was needed to support the label’s roster of established acts.” The same story runs throughout the industry, with labels abandoning a new record at the first sign it isn’t selling. “That’s very scary,” offers Sam Sutherland. “What it tends to do is reward safe, commercial music-making at the same time it penalizes bands that really do take chances.” One temporary solution could be the four- to six-track mini album, which, at \$4.99 and \$5.99 list, offers an affordable means by which a record label can “test” a new artist. A&M tried this with Jef Left, Sire with the Unknowns, Lene Lovich, Billy Idol, and the Plasmatics all released mini-LPs this year, as did the Pretenders and the B-52’s.

Like the nation, the record business has taken a conservative turn, and it’s a conservatism that reinforces itself. Album-oriented rock stations stick with the likes of Journey, Foreigner, and Pat Benatar; that’s what people hear so that’s what they buy. At the same time, adult contemporary stations—the ones

whose playlists include Christopher Cross, Air Supply, Barry Manilow, Olivia Newton-John—are enjoying an evergrowing share of the market.

“Everybody sits there and tries to figure out what the problem is,” continues Sutherland, “both within the business and with sales. The best explanation I’ve heard—and there have been all kinds, from the state of the economy to consumer resistance to price points and so on—was from one industry executive who said, ‘Hey, it’s boring. The music is boring.’”

Despite that downbeat (albeit accurate) comment, 1981 offered a few glimmers of hope. Several acts and albums received nearly unanimous acclaim from BACKBEAT’s critics. Squeeze’s “East Side Story” was mentioned several times as one of the year’s best efforts. The Rolling Stones’ “Tattoo You” was a solid surprise, and the twenty-year-old rock supergroup’s fall concert tour (which grossed an estimated \$45 million) proved to be an invigorating, memorable experience. Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers’ “Hard Promises” received plaudits, as did the Police’s “Ghost in the Machine,” Tom Verlaine’s “Dreamtime,” and Smokey Robinson’s “Being with You.” Other favorites included Arthur Blythe’s “Blythe Spirit,” James Blood Ulmer’s solo debut “Free Lancing,” reggae outfit Black Uhuru, Steve Winwood’s “Arc of a Diver,” and “It’s a Condition” by San Francisco’s Romeo Void.

Rickie Lee Jones’s “Pirates” also emerged as a favorite and, at last count, was headed toward platinum sales status without the benefit of any substantial airplay, which is almost unheard of these days. That disc was wisely marketed through a print and media campaign that concentrated on college and urban



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Blythe: among the best



Tom Petty



Conservative Christopher Cross



Newcomers the Go-Go's



Kim Carnes at last



Costello: new outlaw

ALL PHOTOS BY EBET ROBERTS

markets. Elvis Costello took time off to do a country record, though his place at the forefront of rock & roll remains assured. And Bruce Springsteen spent most of the year giving concert-goers on two continents their moneys' worth: his return to the studio is imminent.

Country music continued to go for the broader audience in 1981. Slick TV-oriented entertainers like Crystal Gayle, the Oak Ridge Boys, Barbara Mandrell, Eddie Rabbitt, et al., monopolized the market, crossing over into m.o.r. and adult-contemporary spheres. What good country fare there was came from a small circle of players: Nashville-based John Anderson, Texan Guy Clark, husband and wife Rodney Crowell and Rosanne Cash, Emmylou Harris (whose late-year release "Cimmarron" was a deft, delightful work), and Ricky Skaggs.

Black music fared far better, its market share increasing slightly in the past year to about eighteen percent of total record and tape sales. And successful new artists in r&b easily outnumbered the pop newcomers. Roger's funky voice-box reading of *I Heard It Through the Grapevine* became a huge r&b smash. Luther Vandross switched from making commercials to making music. Prince and Teena Marie came into their own: Rick James made the switch from r&b to rock without alienating too many of his old fans. Solar Records, the Los Angeles-based custom label, switched distribution from RCA to Elektra/Asylum and in the process finally broke their flashy acts Lakeside and Shalamar. Rap music, which came out of the New York street scene and was heartily embraced by a phalanx of rock critics as "the next big thing," failed to catch on with the public. Blondie scored a hit with *Rapture* and Kurtis Blow continued to hold his own, but they were about it.

## Everyone wonders what the problem is. It's the music; it's boring.

As for jazz. Don Heckman reports that "The single event that stands out for me is the return of Miles Davis, both to recording ["The Man with the Horn"] and to performing." Former CBS Records president Bruce Lundvall launched his jazz-oriented Elektra/Musician label by announcing the January '82 release of albums by James Blood Ulmer, Freddie Hubbard (with a digital disc), Lenny White, Chick Corea, Eric Gale, and a 1953 Charlie Parker recording. And the Warner Bros.-distributed ECM label continued to prove itself both economically and creatively, issuing albums by, among many others, Pat Metheny, Keith Jarrett, and Gary Burton.

The current recession seems to be taking its toll on the recording studio business. Top outfits like New York's Electric Lady and L.A.'s Cherokee are no longer booked solid the way they were in the mid-Seventies. Most studio owners are adapting pretty well, though, adding video capability to their bag of tricks, streamlining expenses, and offering more competitive rates. More hard hit by the slowdown in studio activity are session musicians, with even topflight players reportedly taking on demo sessions and other jobs they would have turned down a few years ago.

Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab, Inner City, CBS Mastersound, and Audible Images all released the industry's first pop audiophile cassettes in 1981. And the Police's "Ghost in the Machine"

marked the first time ever that a record was released simultaneously in both conventional and audiophile formats.

But the year's loudest technological noises came from the world of home video and cable, which—from a growth perspective—seems to be picking up where the music industry left off several years ago. Such programming outfits as Warner-Amex Satellite Entertainment Company, USA Network, and even Home Box Office have been cablecasting tapes of both established and new rock acts. WASEC's Music Television (MTV) boasted 2.4 million subscribers (not including New York and Los Angeles) by year's end, an impressive figure given the fact that MTV has only been available since August. Record retailers in the areas in which MTV is on cable have reported a direct correlation between the discs their customers are buying and the rock acts that appear on MTV. A&M executives cite breakthrough sales for Squeeze in Oklahoma, Indiana, and other midwestern regions following the airing of a Squeeze video tape. The Tubes' "Completion Backward Principle" experienced a similar sales upswing after MTV exposure.

As to the artistic impact cable and home video will have on the music industry, that remains to be seen. But there are signs that a whole new medium is on the rise, what with the involvement of such performers as Devo, Michael Nesmith, Todd Rundgren, David Byrne, Brian Eno, and others. Clearly, the music industry has to take a new course if it is to stay healthy. Whatever course that may be, you can be sure it will be strongly shaped by video.

The author wishes to thank Don Heckman, Mitchell Cohen, Crispin Cioe, and Sam Sutherland for their help in preparing this story.

## **The Police: Third World Rock & Roll**

"Ghost in the Machine" is  
their finest hour.  
Reviewed by Crispin Cioe

### **The Police: Ghost in the Machine**

The Police & Hugh Padgam,  
producers.

A&M SP 3730

THE POLICE WERE FAULTED for sticking too closely to their reggae-rock formula on their last LP, "Zenyatta Mondatta." By contrast, "Ghost in the Machine" is filled with fresh, often adventurous ideas, a much more spacious rock production sound, and some overtly humanistic lyrics.

More than any other contemporary rock unit, this band has absorbed and mastered a variety of Third World rhythms and compositional techniques, and a large part of its charm lies in its adroit cross-pollination of these elements. *One World (Not Three)* combines drummer Stewart Copeland's heavily bouncing reggae beat with Andy Summers' reverberating, exemplary rhythm guitar, creating a sound that is very much in the Jamaican "dub" style of dance music. Anchoring these elements are Sting's solid bass lines: riding high above them are his authentically braying, Ivory-Coast-style saxophones. (Sting recently took up the sax.) The song's chantlike chorus mirrors its music: "One world is enough for all of us. . ."

The Police's song form, first established on the band's hit single *Roxanne*, remains intact: Verses are usually built around a half-time reggae lilt, with the chorus breaking into a doubled-up rock & roll backbeat. The innovations on this

album are mostly vertical. Intricate synthesizer parts are totally integrated in the harmonic fabric rather than glitzyly tacked on; on *Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic* they sound like Andean flutes floating behind the chorus hook. Keyboardist Jean Rousel has been added to the lineup, his contribution fitting perfectly into the trio's elemental, pared-down rhythmic precision. The level of songwriting here is impressive, with complex instrumental counter-melodies constantly interweaving with the vocals. A couple of tunes sound a little cluttered—*Demolition Man's* excess verbiage steps on the music more than once. But *Spirits in the Material World* and *Hungry for You* are among the best songs the Police have recorded: memorable melodies married to equally solid dance grooves. Indeed, "Ghost in the Machine" is the trio's finest hour yet.

### **Mike Batt: Six Days in Berlin**

Mike Batt, producer.  
Epic FE 37665

Mike Batt is the composer/creator behind the Wombles, those furry little creatures that became the rage of the kiddie set in the U.K. five years ago. Since putting the Wombles to pasture, he has pursued some peculiar paths: He produced a small batch of records for defunct pub rockers like the Kursaal Flyers and Anglo-folkie rockers Steel-eye Span; he composed the score for a whopping turkey of a movie called *Cara-*

*vans*; he wrote some misty-eyed ballads for Art Garfunkel; and he released three oddball solo albums, the latest of which, "Six Days in Berlin," is a grandiose conception that, to be kind, isn't very good.

Which is too bad, because Batt has demonstrated a lot of promise as a songwriter and performer. Two tracks from his 1977 LP, "Schizophrenia," are minor pop classics: the wry, whimsical *It Seemed like a Good Idea at the Time*, and *Railway Hotel*, which suggests Squeeze if Squeeze wrote ballads. There is nothing that comes remotely close to those on "Six Days." In fact there aren't even any songs—just *Part One* through *Part Six*, each "part" rife with sweeping orchestral flourishes, incessant African-inspired percussion, and recurring Middle Eastern motifs.

Flanked by drummer Kurt Cress, bassist Frank MacDonald, guitarists Mats Bjoerklund and Ray Russell, pedal steel player B. J. Cole, saxophonist Mel Collins, and the Berlin Opera Orchestra, Batt comes on like some would-be Jeff Lynne. His nasal whine invokes a Beatlesque specter as he sings and mumbles about "the sweet innuendo of the rain" and "the arithmetic of love" and rhymes "pharaohs" with "boleros." Occasionally a good idea emerges, like the Parisian accordion melody Batt plays in *Part One* (he also plays piano and synthesizer). When the Berlin Opera Orchestra is left to its own devices (i.e., when it is not joined by Batt's busy rock septet), the results are mildly diverting: *Part Two* is a

EBET ROBERTS



*Reggae-fied trio: Sting, Andy Summers, Stewart Copeland*



HENRIKE SCHUTZ

Mike Batt: ponderous rock

kind of stirring Prokofiev-meets-Ketelbey interlude. But mostly "Six Days" is ponderous rock-symphonic noodling at its dulllest.

Why Batt's record company keeps financing his fuzzy, overblown extravaganzas is beyond me—they certainly haven't been selling. Somebody should make this guy sit down and write some real songs. He's quite capable of it.

—STEVEN X. REA

**Lindsey Buckingham:**

**Law and Order**

Lindsey Buckingham & Richard Dashut, producers. Asylum SE 561

Lindsey Buckingham's solo debut opens with a disarmingly loopy parable of dread called *Bwana*. It boasts among its several charms a parenthetical summary of its author's musical character as revealed on Fleetwood Mac's "Tusk." Against a jaunty bass line, music hall choral chants, and nervous piano arpeggios, the Mac guitarist croons, "We all have our demons, and sometimes they escape." In Buckingham's case, that's cause for celebration.

"Tusk" was the most ambitious and least understood work by the Anglo-American pop quintet, and much of its quirky charm, as well as virtually all of its stylistic ground-breaking, could be attributed to Buckingham. His familiar assets as instrumentalist, writer, and singer were augmented by a new sense of dar-



JIM SHEA

Buckingham: unexpected twists

ing as an arranger. In that role, his forays into intricately layered studio epics were clearly influenced by the Beatles, the Beach Boys, Stevie Wonder, and other daunting models.

"Law and Order" initially seems more compact and less formal by comparison, yet much of the antic verve that powered "Tusk" shines through. Buckingham can still summon the chiming guitar harmonies and stately gait of his "Rumours" days, as demonstrated on such affecting midtempo ballads as *Trouble* and *I'll Tell You Now*. And his power as a stinging rock stylist rings true, even if its main showcase is an otherwise flawed *Johnny Stew*, encumbered by an abstract lyric that proves more sketchy than provocative.

What sets Buckingham apart from his safer Californian peers, however, are the unexpected vocal and instrumental twists he grafts onto his rich pop arrangements. No guitar player has ever placed such a preferred emphasis on drum tracks as he does here, and as a singer he regularly risks on-the-edge stylistic tics that generally work: On *I'll Tell You Now*, his reserved reading of the final chorus lapses into a murmur of choked sobs beneath the elegant fade; his manic delivery of the frenzied lyrics on *That's How We Do It in L. A.* verges on a shout; and in an unexpected, blues-drenched cover of Maxwell Anderson and Kurt Weill's *September Song*, he emotes with early rock authenticity.

That he can turn that venerable '30s

# STEREO CORPORATION OF AMERICA

## TRY & BEAT OUR PRICES!

OR CALL TOLL-FREE

**800-221-0974**  
AND LET US BEAT ANY PRICE YOU CAN FIND!

**RECEIVERS**

- PIONEER SX-7 ..... \$355
- TECHNICS SA-222 ..... \$205
- JVC RS-77 ..... \$339
- ONKYO TX-3000 ..... \$245

**TURNTABLES**

- TECHNICS SL-0202 \$104
- TECHNICS SL-01-1 \$224
- PIONEER PL-7 ..... \$135
- DUAL CS-608 ..... \$208

**CASSETTE DECKS**

- TECHNICS RS-M270X \$310
- JVC KO-D4 ..... \$215
- TECHNICS RS-M240X \$217
- AKAI GX-F60R ..... \$333
- ONKYO TAW-80 ..... \$252

**CARTRIDGES**

- SHURE V15-IV ..... \$85
- SHURE M95HE ..... \$32
- SHURE M97HE ..... \$48

**PERSONAL STEREO**

- SONY WALKMAN-I ..... \$79
- SONY WALKMAN-II \$139
- SONY WALKMAN-III \$149
- SONY TCS-310 ..... \$139
- AKAI PM-01 ..... \$149
- KOSS MUSIC BOX ..... \$59
- AIWA CS-J1 ..... \$175
- PANA. RQ-J6 ..... \$119
- PANA. RQ-J5 ..... \$73
- PANA. RF-10 ..... \$77
- PANA. RX-2700 ..... \$189

**BLANK TAPE**

- BASF PRO II C90 box of 10 \$26
- TDK SAX-C90 box of 10 \$36
- TDK SA-C90 box of 10 \$29
- MAXELL UD-XL2-C90 box of 12 ..... \$39

WRITE OR CALL FOR LOW PRICES ON SONY & SANSUI

**VIDEO**

- PANA. PV-1270 ..... \$673
- JVC HR-7300 ..... \$850
- RCA VFT-650 ..... \$1075
- PANA. PK-751 ..... \$816

**ACCESSORIES**

- SONY MDR-3 ..... \$29
- SONY MDR-7 ..... \$48
- TECHNICS SH-8030 \$265
- DISCWASHER DISKIT \$33

Call Toll-Free!  
**800-221-0974**  
(Ex. N.Y., AK., HI.)  
Monday - Friday  
9Am - 5:30 Pm  
Thurs. til 9Pm  
Sat. 9Am - 5Pm EST  
OR CALL  
(212) 253-8888

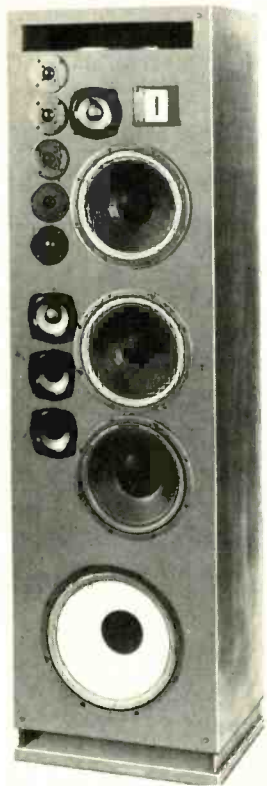
Use Our Special Night-Owl Line!  
Call Toll-Free!  
**800-327-1531**  
Monday - Friday  
5:30 - 10Pm E. S. T.

Write or call for FREE catalog!  
**AMERICA'S #1 SOUND CHOICE!**  
**STEREO CORPORATION OF AMERICA**  
Dept. 201  
1629 Flatbush Avenue  
Brooklyn, New York 11210  
MASTERCHARGE & VISA ACCEPTED

Circle 29 on Reader-Service Card

## MORE RAVE REVIEWS

For VMPS Loudspeakers



The VMPS Super Tower IIa/R, \$1499 ea (walnut). Kits \$999 ea (black), \$1199 ea (walnut). Sold in mirror-image pairs.

From England's Prestigious **Hifi News & Record Review**:

"The normal reaction of the more knowledgeable audiophile, on being confronted with the multiple drive unit, 300lb, 6ft tall speaker above, would be to smile inwardly and walk on... This reaction would have been unfortunate, however, as he would have missed out on something rather special. Designed by a Californian named Brian Cheney, the VMPS Super Tower IIa/R... has an astonishing 101db/1W/1m efficiency, has a believable low frequency -3dB frequency of 17Hz, and will give levels up to 132dB at 1m at distortion levels claimed to be less than 0.25% (1W 22Hz-40kHz). Maybe it was the low distortion, tremendous dynamic range, thunderously clean bass, the spreading out of all those driver resonances giving a surprisingly low level of coloration, or the fact that Brian was one of the few exhibitors to apply some acoustic treatment to his room—speaker end dead, listening end live—who can say, but the sound certainly set me back on my heels (and they come in optional kit form!)"

—John Atkinson, August, 1981

VMPS loudspeakers have lower distortion, wider bandwidth, and greater dynamic range than any competitors regardless of price. Kit versions also are available for the Mini Tower II (\$309 ea), Tower II (\$419 ea), Super Tower/R (\$649 ea). Write for our brochures, copies of Bert Whyte's article "Towers of Power" and full reviews from Hifi News and Record Review and B.V. Pisha. All prices include **free shipping** in USA.

### VMPS AUDIO PRODUCTS

a division of Itone Audio

7301 Rockway El Cerrito, CA 94530  
(415) 526-7084  
In California hear VMPS at Bedini Electronics, Sylmar; The Long Ears, Big Bear Lake; The Sound Room, Modesto; Sounds Unique, San Jose; Itone Audio, El Cerrito.

## BACKBEAT Records

ballad into an ironic, modernist blues without losing its emotional core is a clue to the generous spirit behind this largely self-performed studio epic. With the exception of one track featuring a guest rhythm section, Buckingham handles all the instruments, yet he achieves a spontaneous feel and moments of tension rare in such overdubbed exercises.

Production sound is as spacious and subtle as we've come to expect from Fleetwood Mac itself, and while a few of the album's more whimsical tracks—like the aforementioned *Johnny Siew* and the rockabilly *Love from Here, Love from There*—don't really work, "Law and Order" still has to be rated one of the year's most original and successful pop essays.

—SAM SUTHERLAND

### Elvis Costello and the Attractions: Almost Blue

Billy Sherrill, producer  
Columbia FC 37562

Pity the poor marketing people at CBS faced with explaining Elvis Costello's maverick path through modern rock. Between the eclectic classicism of his "Taking Liberties" anthology and the r&b-flavored "Get Happy," both released in 1980, rock's Next Big Thing has managed to gaze backwards as well as ahead. Now comes this startling collaboration with Nashville hitmaker Billy Sherrill, nothing less than a gourmet anthology of country chestnuts performed in generally authentic (and by 1981 standards that translates to downright austere) settings.

Costello isn't George Jones, one of the influences shadowing this effort, but the equation works. Like Gram Parsons, the other pole steering both the topical focus and interpretive vision behind this album, Costello's rough-edged vocal attack and brutal candor gets close to the bone, bringing forth the true power of Southern white music. Hints of his affection for the genre have been visible from his earliest records, first surfacing on *Stranger in the House*, a bonus single released overseas with his second album and later covered by Jones himself in a duet with Costello.

The Attractions hammer together lean, convincing arrangements to which Sherrill adds such initially incongruous embellishments as the Nashville Edition's creamy backing choruses and the widescreen sheen of a string section. The band's rock-edged rhythmic drive remains intact and Costello himself wisely avoids unnatural country mannerisms. He reads these lyrics as he would his own, and the soulful fervor long crucial to his singing bridges the gap to country effectively. Indeed, what proves revealing here is how naturally the songwriter



Haggard: less than his best

has made the transition.

That pairing of rock diction and bedrock country inflection serves both songs and interpreter beautifully, for country's emotional themes prove a meeting ground: Costello delves into such familiar topics as romantic frustration (Hank Williams' *Why Don't You Love Me*), cynical dissipation (*Sittin' and Thinkin'* by Charlie Rich), rejection (*A Good Year for the Roses*, a classic weeper associated with George Jones), and guilt (Parsons' *How Much I Lied*).

Hard-core country fans may find deficiencies in Costello's interpretations, and the rocker's own trendier followers will doubtless be ruffled by the more subdued dynamics and conventional imagery dictated by the material. Yet on balance, "Almost Blue" is a credible exercise in the earliest and purist conception of country/rock as originated by Parsons and the two bands he helped lead into grass roots sources, the Byrds and the Flying Burrito Bros. As Parsons did, Costello is investing country music with fresh meaning without a trace of condescension.

—SAM SUTHERLAND

### Merle Haggard: Big City Lewis Talley & Merle Haggard, producers. Epic FE 37593

There isn't much on "Big City" that's unfamiliar to the contemporary country milieu; yearning to break away from urban life and flee to "the middle of Montana," mourning the absence of traditional patriotic values, some soggy sentiment, the names of several Texas cities, shattered dreams, etc. There are no drinking songs, which is probably unfortunate since Merle Haggard's "Serving 190 Proof" was the toughest album

from what can be called his MCA period. He's now on a new label, but "Big City" doesn't mark a significant departure for Hag; it's a likable, midlevel work, about on a par with such LPs as "It's All in the Movies." Even so, Haggard at less than his best is nothing to moan about.

Unlike most of his contemporaries and the younger breed of conspicuously crossover country artists with names like Kenny, Eddie, and Ronnie, Haggard has a band that swings, and he's not afraid to give its members room to solo. The Strangers, particularly the fiddlers, horn player Don Markham, and pianist Mark Yeary, keep him from getting too slack. Furthermore, as tired as the themes are behind *Big City*, *Good Old American Guest* (which deals with freight-train fever), and *I Always Get Lucky with You*, Haggard's sincere baritone somehow lifts the songs above the mundane.

"Big City" does contain more professionalism than inspiration, and *My Favorite Memory* and *This Song Is Mine* are the kinds of ballads that Haggard should stay away from. The latter is an I-wrote-a-song-for-you song, and there never has been a good one of these. Also dismaying, in a different way, is *Are the Good Times Really Over (I Wish a Buck Was Still Silver)*, which, if the melody were jauntier, could be a Haggard anthem in its flag-waving pleas for sturdier cars and domesticated women. Fuzzy thinking does the song in: Sure, we all wish Nixon hadn't "lied to us all on TV," but what is Haggard doing connecting Elvis and Vietnam, the Beatles and unemployment? If this is his attempt at a 1981 *Okie from Muskogee*, he's trying too hard, and the strain doesn't become him.

—MITCHELL COHEN

### The Knack: Round Trip

Jack Douglas, producer  
Capitol ST 12168

The Knack's last album not only drew critical catcalls for its attempt to plagiarize mid-'60s British pop, but it failed to repeat the popular success of the band's debut LP. So for "Round Trip," the clever Los Angeles quartet went back to the drawing boards, teaming with crack producer Jack Douglas for what promised to be a careful and ambitious revision of style.

Careful it is, but the ambitions here are ironically as nostalgic as the band's original Fab Four impersonations. In an eerie studio confection that draws nearly all of its musical inspiration from late-'60s psychedelia and early heavy metal, the band plies an array of familiar studio effects as if discovering them for the first time. Druggy vocal harmonies, plump horn parts, jazz-derived rhythm arrange-

#### U.S. Postal Service STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION (Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

1. Title of Publication: High Fidelity
2. Date of Filing: September 25, 1981
3. Frequency of Issue: Monthly
- 3A. No. of Issues Published Annually: 12
- 3B. Annual Subscription Price: \$13.95
4. Location of Known Office of Publication: 825 Seventh Ave., New York, New York County, N.Y. 10019
5. Location of the Headquarters or General Business Offices of the Publishers: 825 7th Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10019
6. Names and Complete Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor:  
 Publisher: Steven I. Rosenbaum, 825 7th Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10019  
 Editor: William Tynan, 825 7th Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10019  
 Managing Editor: Susan Elliott, 825 7th Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10019
7. Owner: ABC Leisure Magazines, Inc., 825 7th Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10019 (Sole stockholder: American Broadcasting Companies, Inc., 1330 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10019)
8. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Per Cent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities: None
9. For Completion by Nonprofit Organizations Authorized to Mail at Special Rates: Not Applicable

10. Extent and Nature of Circulation	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	Actual No. of Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
A. Total No. Copies Printed (Net Press Run)	445,321	447,490
B. Paid Circulation:		
1. Sales through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors and Counter Sales	36,707	39,557
2. Mail Subscriptions	341,229	345,572
C. Total Paid Circulation (Sum of 10B1 and 10B2)	377,936	385,129
D. Free Distribution by Mail, Carrier or Other Means:		
1. Samples, Complimentary, and Other Free Copies	1,874	1,958
E. Total Distribution (Sum of C and D)	379,810	387,087
F. Copies Not Distributed:		
1. Office use, Left-over, Unaccounted, Spoiled After Printing	3,358	1,322
2. Returns from News Agents	61,653	59,081
G. TOTAL (Sum of E, F1 and 2. Should equal net press run shown in A)	445,321	447,490

11. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner (Signed) Steven I. Rosenbaum, Publisher

12. For Completion by Publishers Mailing at the Regular Rates: (Section 132.121, Postal Service Manual) 39 U.S.C. 3626 provides in pertinent part: "No person who would have been entitled to mail matter under former section 4359 of this title shall mail such matter at the rates provided under this subsection unless he files annually with the Postal Service a written request for permission to mail matter at such rates."

In accordance with the provisions of this statute, I hereby request permission to mail the publication named in item 1 at the phased postage rates presently authorized by 39 U.S.C. 3626. (Signature and title of publisher) (Signed) Steven I. Rosenbaum, Publisher

## FREE McIntosh STEREO CATALOG and FM DIRECTORY

Get all the newest and latest information on the new McIntosh catalog. In addition you will receive an FM station directory that covers all of North America.



# SEND TODAY!

McIntosh Laboratory, Inc.  
East Side Station P.O. Box 96  
Binghamton, N.Y. 13904

HF

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

If you are in a hurry for your catalog please send the coupon to McIntosh. For non rush service send the Reader Service Card to the magazine.



**Q: Why is a technological "first" ...called LAST?**  
**A: It makes records LAST longer!**

**A remarkable new product now makes true record preservation possible!**

Scientific tests show this safe and simple treatment to be unique in its ability to eliminate wear. In addition to providing archival surface protection, LAST... lowers friction... reduces distortion... inhibits static charge... increases stylus life... even rejuvenates old records! Because it is not a coating, LAST will not accumulate on the stylus. Once applied, it remains effective for over 200 plays.

The LAST Factory  
 P.O. Box 41  
 Livermore, CA 94550  
 (415) 449-9449

"... a small miracle"

International Audio Review

"... records sounded clearer and brighter"

Stereo

"You can't be without it and neither can we."

Audiogram

"... truly incredible sonic and physical benefits"

Audio Horizons

"LAST it, LAST it, we cannot tell you enough times!"

Audio Bulletin (France)

**NEW!**

For the serious collector, LAST is now available in the same institutional size used by libraries and radio stations. Ask your dealer about the LAST Industrial Kit.

LIQUID ARCHIVAL SOUND TREATMENT

Circle 25 on Reader-Service Card

## FIDELITY GOES GOLD.



In a line of real moving coil cartridges known for their incomparable musicality, Fidelity Research's 3F and MC-201 have long been unrivaled—until now.

Introducing the MC-202 Gold.

It achieves exceptional dynamic range, incredible imaging, excellent stereo separation and a silky smooth frequency response that's almost beyond comparison.

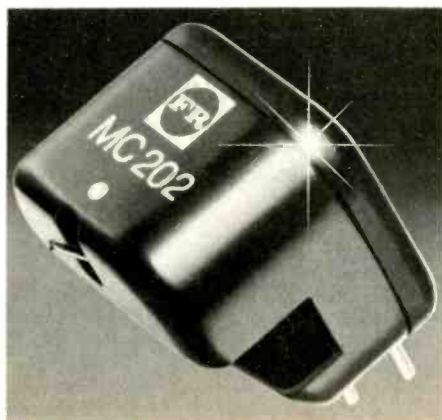
Part of the reason for the MC-202 Gold's ability to bring out the best in records, is the VITAL stylus. Its "Refined Contact" type tip increases wall contact without sitting deep in the groove, thus reducing trace distortion and scratch noise.

Audition the MC-202 Gold and know true musicality.

A free Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab Original Master Recording™ LP with your purchase of a MC-202 Gold cartridge.

Write for the name of your nearest Fidelity Research dealer who has full details. Fidelity Research of America, Box 5242, Ventura, CA 93003. (805) 642-9277.

**fidelity-research of america**



ments, and such arcana as reversed guitar overdubs are employed with the kind of overkill that was characteristic of a generation of rock bands trying to catch up with the Beatles after "Sgt. Pepper."

For a group once touted as a harbinger of U.S. new wave's potential influence, such quaint notions of innovation would be laughable were it not for Douglas' craft and the sheer cockiness of writer/leaders Doug Fieger and Berton Averre. Together, they almost pull off a face change through the confident momentum of big-beat rockers like *Radiating Love* and *Soul Kissin'*.

Having been vilified for their odious sexism and dismissed for the throwaway simplicity of their arrangements, the Knack herein tries to put forth more sophisticated musical ideas and probe more "serious" topics. But apart from a snappy chorus and some nicely cynical lyrics on *Another Lousy Day in Paradise*—a token sympathetic nod to exploited females—the results aren't very convincing.

Still, though "Round Trip" may be as pretentious as its heavy-handed title, at least Fieger, Averre, and company deserve some credit for leaving their British Invasion pose behind. Maybe we can look forward to early-'70s country/rock next time out.

—SAM SUTHERLAND

### Professor Longhair: Mardi Gras in New Orleans, 1949-1957

Reissue, Nighthawk 108  
 (P.O. Box 15856, St. Louis, Mo. 63114)

Professor Longhair, born Henry Roeland Byrd, was the seminal New Orleans r&b/rock piano player whose rolling chords, tricky cross-rhythms, and great early rock & roll compositions inspired Fats Domino, Huey Smith, Dr. John, Allen Toussaint, Roy Bittan (of the E-Street Band), and countless others. In the last few years before his death in 1980, he began to get a little of the national exposure he so richly deserved via concert appearances and several fine new releases. "Mardi Gras in New Orleans" is a compilation of his first recordings, most of which have been out of circulation for years. Not surprisingly, the album is a treasure trove of classics from the era when rhythm & blues and rock were both coming out of the same barrel-house.

Under the name Professor Longhair and his Shuffling Hungarians, Byrd cut his first sides in 1949 for the small Star Talent label. Recorded at New Orleans' Hi-Hat Club, the tracks—*Bye Bye Baby* and *She Ain't Got No Hair*, among others—are technically primitive, but do give a clear indication of his style: His stabbing, continuous left-hand bass line





The Knack: back to the drawing board

has a pronounced rumba feel: his right-hand rhythmic tumble, twist, and turn into triplets and unexpected grace notes. He hangs slightly behind the beat, creating a tension that immediately conjures up Mardi Gras dancing and festivities. His singing voice is a pleading, high-pitched blues wail that rides high above the musical maelstrom.

As reflected in the disc's sequencing, Byrd gradually moved to larger national labels like Mercury and Atlantic. The production on some of the late-'50s sides—*Tipitina*, *Misery*—is quite modern compared to the earlier jump-combo settings. The tunes use such first-rate arrangers as Fats Domino's longtime collaborator Dave Bartholomew and his young disciple Wardell Quezergue. Also included here is *Baby Let Me Hold Your Hand*, first released in 1957 and based on an old folksong; it was later rewritten and recorded by the young Bob Dylan as *Baby Let Me Follow You Down*. In its New Orleans second-line rhythms and distinctive arrangement, one can hear its influence on '60s pop music.

A final testament to Longhair's artistic resilience and lasting influence is the album's title track, the original version of his own *Mardi Gras in New Orleans*, recorded at that first Hi-Hat session in '49. Not only is the tune still the semi-official theme song of New Orleans' archetypal Fat Tuesday celebration, but it is still some of the best party music ever recorded. —CRISPIN CIOE

**The Steve Miller Band:**

**Circle of Love**

Steve Miller, producer  
Capitol ST 12121

The long silence since Steve Miller's last album isn't the first hiatus in his career, merely the longest—and, on the evidence of "Circle of Love," the most perplexing. Following a commercial peak with

1977's "Book of Dreams," the guitarist, singer, and veteran rock prankster retreated to his Oregon farm where he built an ambitious recording/rehearsal complex and reportedly began cutting, then shelving, entire LPs. Yet after four years, the arrival of what he has deemed an acceptable set proves to be a collection of the most inconsequential material he has ever committed to vinyl.

In the past he has been guilty of threadbare songs, pallid arrangements, and vocal readings that verge on after-thoughts. Yet he has elevated them with sheer cheek, with a jiving tone and wise-cracking lyrics that reassured fans that at least he knew he was fooling around. Even at its worst—an eighteen-minutes-plus grand statement titled *Macho City*—this latest project never quite dips to the low ebb reached a decade ago on "Rock Love." What's ominous about the new album is that, if his early '70s recordings included pratfalls, they came in the wake of withering popularity and personal problems. Here, he is appearing after achieving his broadest success and attaining relative contentment in his private life. It's hard to fathom how he could finally re-emerge with material that's so limited in scope.

The set's first single, *Heart like a Wheel* (a new Miller song unrelated to the Anna McGarrigle work popularized by Linda Ronstadt), epitomizes the careless tone of the entire LP. A crisp acoustic rhythm guitar leads into an embarrassingly off-pitch vocal, sleepy lead guitar figures, and lyrics of stupefying banality. The situation hardly improves, as we're treated to endless repetitions of Miller's favorite interjection, term of endearment, and rhythmic accent, "mama," some soulful choral noodling, and more wake-me-when-it's-over guitar soloing.

What he never quite achieves is a complete song. And that's the real tragedy here. At his best, this blues-rocker has managed to span both conceptual pop/rock and affable, more informal country and blues contexts. At either extreme, he excelled at memorable melodic hooks and infectious arrangements. For now, though, fans would be best off seeking "Anthology," a first-rate double-disc history Miller assembled during an earlier dry spell. Come to think of it, maybe the artist himself would profit from a fresh listen: a bald recycling of those songs would cut these false starts and indifferent riffs easily. —SAM SUTHERLAND

**Prince: Controversy**

Prince, producer  
Warner Bros. BSK 3601

"Controversy" is a presumptuous title

**For truly superb FM-stereo reception...**



- Reduces multipath problems
- Pulls in stations you never knew existed
- Up to twice the power of a dipole antenna
- Transforms fuzzy stations into "tape quality"
- Receives from all directions just 76" tall
- Sturdy, stainless steel and PVC construction
- Built to withstand weather
- May be mounted on a mast, windowsill, balcony, or just stand it in the corner

The suggested list price for Stereo One is \$69.95.

**BUY DIRECT AND SAVE \$10.00**  
Send your check or money order for \$59.95 + 3.50 (shipping and handling) to: (N.Y. residents, please add 7% sales tax)  
VISA & MASTER CARD buyers may call toll free 1-800-448-8490 (EST. Mon-Fri. N.Y. Residents please call 1-315-482-2589)

If the GAM antenna does not meet your expectations, return it within 30 days for a full refund.

Exclusively distributed by:



Dept. HF  
Holland Street P.O. Box 219  
Alexandria Bay, New York 13607

Circle 35 on Reader-Service Card

**CALL FOR THE BEST PRICE.**

Call P.R.I.C.E. for big savings on video cassette recorders, car stereo, home stereo, portable radios and tape recorders, telephone answering machines, video games, tapes, and movies.

Remember, P.R.I.C.E. will beat any legitimate offer on in-stock items.

Just pick up the phone, dial our toll-free number, and ask for P.R.I.C.E. quotes. (Or ask us to mail you our P.R.I.C.E. list.)

P.R.I.C.E. is what you want.

**800-343-1078**

[in Mass., (617) 961-2400]

**P.R.I.C.E.**™

27 Teed Drive, HF112,  
Randolph, MA 02368

Circle 49 on Reader-Service Card





as many as there were back in the Thirties and Forties. But those that are on the scene have begun to reach into areas only dreamed of by Fletcher Henderson and Chick Webb. At the very top of the list is the continually remarkable collection of players led by pianist Toshiko Akiyoshi and saxophonist/flutist Lew Tabackin. Following in the footsteps of the earlier, but equally progressive Thad Jones-Mel Lewis ensemble, Akiyoshi has demonstrated a capacity for big band scoring unrivaled by anyone since Jones was actively involved with his own group a decade ago.

"Tanuki's Night Out" is, quite simply, a brilliant album. It is also a stunning collaboration: Side 1 highlights Akiyoshi's scoring and piano playing, while Side 2 is devoted to Tabackin's mini-history of the tenor saxophone, with three successive tracks devoted to his compositional interpretations of the music of Don Byas, Sonny Rollins, and Tabackin. All the pieces were composed by Tabackin and arranged by Akiyoshi. Now that is a marriage made in heaven.

Among the virtual cornucopia of goodies are Steve Houghton's sterling drumming, especially on the title track; Akiyoshi's lovely, shimmering piano on *Falling Petal*; Gary Foster's alto saxophone on *Lew's Theme*; and, throughout the album, the overwhelmingly creative tenor work of Tabackin. He is one of those rare players (Bix Beiderbecke, Coleman Hawkins, and Sonny Rollins also come to mind) who can simultaneously trigger the emotions and the intellect.

In the past decade or so, we have become quite accustomed to the great technical proficiency with which West Coast ensembles can play. Often, however, the music is clouded by its emphasis on sheer mechanics. The Akiyoshi-Tabackin band manages to have it both ways. To cite only one example, the roaring ensemble sections at the close of *Lew's Theme* are performed by musicians who not only can play fast but who can play with the sheer joy of making music. A record not to be missed, and, without question, one of the best of the year.

—DON HECKMAN

**Bob Brookmeyer:**

**Through a Looking Glass**

Norman Schwartz, producer  
Finesse FW 37488

Bob Brookmeyer's dark, gruff valve trombone is one of the more ingratiating voices in jazz. If any instrument has a tone that is worn, experienced, and suggestive of depths of knowledge, it is Brookmeyer's. While in the past it has usually been heard as a bit of bosky col-



Bob Brookmeyer: center stage

oring, here it gets center stage.

"Through a Looking Glass" is made up entirely of Brookmeyer's own compositions. Far from being just another set of solos, it consists of segments or movements in which he and pianist Jim McNeely build pictures within pictures, breaking through and changing rhythmic backgrounds, shifting suddenly from one thought to another. Though this is Brookmeyer's project start to finish, usually McNeely has a center section in each piece in which he develops fascinating and often startling solos.

This is unconventional, lusty music that lifts the spirit and enlightens the soul. Mel Lewis on drums and Marc Johnson on bass establish a strong rhythmic and percussive foundation, and Dick Oatts's soprano saxophone in conjunction with Brookmeyer's trombone provide a colorful horn ensemble. Tommy Harrell's trumpet playing is, as usual, clear, crisp, and direct but contains few surprises. It's time he found something new to say.

—JOHN S. WILSON

**Charquet & Co.: Crazy Quilt**

Bob Erdos, producer  
Stomp Off S.O.S. 1008  
(549 Fairview Terrace,  
York, Pa. 17403)

Nobody can accuse Charquet & Co. of recording the same old stuff. Except for *Sun*, the last and least interesting number here, "Crazy Quilt" is a program of virtually unknown pieces: *Candy Lips (I'm Stuck on You)*, a Clarence Williams favorite; *Crazy Quilt*, recorded by Charles Creath, the Goofus Five, the Tennessee Tooters, and others; and Tiny

Parham's *Black Cat Moan*. Most of the material comes from the mid-'20s, except Willie the Lion Smith's lively *Streamline Gal*, which he recorded in 1935.

The group got its start in 1967 with a repertory drawn from the New Orleans bands of the early '20s; within two years it had shifted its focus to the Chicago bands of the later '20s. It was first named Reverend Sharkey's Congregation (after New Orleans trumpeter Sharkey Bonano), then changed to Sharkey and Co., and finally Charquet & Co.

The nine-piece group is comprised of three brass, three reeds, with piano, bass, and tuba as the rhythm section—no drums. On fast numbers, Charquet & Co. bounces with the elasticity once common to English trad bands, its two full-size horn sections providing an off-setting ensemble punch. On slower numbers, the voicings are rich and invitingly smooth, seasoned with some rasps and growls from cornet and trombone.

If there is any one guiding light here it is tuba player Clarence Williams, who contributes several fine tunes and some lugubriously walking solo lines. Tuba player Gerard Gervois is another one of the consistently excellent solo horns. Others are clarinetist Alain Marquet, who bursts with bubbling energy; band leader/cornetist Jean-Pierre Morel, who has a flair for muted muttering phrases; and Jack Cadieux, a trombonist in the great tradition of broad, brash smears and growls. The album is full of enthusiasm and vitality with no suggestion of labored recreation.

—JOHN S. WILSON

**Pete Christlieb: Self Portrait**

Pete Christlieb Records PC 1  
(P.O. Box 2085, Canoga Park,  
Calif. 91306)

Historically, studio musicians make less-than-exciting solo albums. Too often the music lacks direction and commitment and sounds either too slick and technically flashy or like a thrown-together, last-minute jam session. That said, Pete Christlieb's "Self Portrait" is an unexpected pleasure. Christlieb is a tenor sax player in Doc Severinson's *Tonight Show* band, and he has played several memorable solos on Steely Dan's albums. In fact, several years ago Becker and Fagen produced "Apogee," a duet LP featuring Christlieb and West Coast tenor vet Warne Marsh. Christlieb's tone is full and modern, somewhat in the same post-Coltrane mode as Mike Brecker's, but with a driving melodic sense that is all his own. For this disc he has surrounded himself with L.A. studio players Nick Ceroli and Joe Porcaro on drums and percussion and Lou Levy on piano.

His propulsive yet relaxed impro-







# Schwann!

With more than 45,000 listings of records and tapes updated each month, there's nothing like it in the entire world!

Classical, pop, jazz, rock, musical shows, country, opera, ballet, electronic.

**Schwann-1** \$1.45  
May 1981  
Revised Monthly

World's Most Consulted Guide to Recorded Music  
Classical Pop Rock Jazz R&B Musicals  
Disco Country Blues Direct-to-Disc Digital

22 Million Copies Printed    720 New Listings    180 New Cassettes  
450 New LPs    80 New Cartridges

Best Monthly Listings of Top The Best-Selling Albums

How to Use the Catalog—see page 5



As if 45,000 listings weren't enough, consider what you can learn about each of them in Schwann-1. For every composer, you'll know every recorded work and every recording artist, with label and catalog number.

What's more, you'll know if it's been recorded digitally, direct-to-disc or with high-technology. If it's vocal, you'll know which language. If it's modern, you'll know the year it was composed. And if it's to be discontinued, you'll get a month notice. All this with every listing!

Schwann-2, published semi-annually, does the same for special-interest records and tapes: spoken, documentary, humor, how-to, language, sound effects, test records, international folk and pop. You can probably sample Schwann at your record and tape dealer. But if you want your own copies at your fingertips, mail the coupon below.

Schwann Record & Tape Guides P.O. Box 2131, Radnor, PA 19089

I'd like to subscribe to a full year of Schwann-1 and Schwann-2. I'm enclosing a  check  money order for \$25.00 (\$40 outside the U.S.)

charge my credit card  Visa  Mastercard No. \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

A1041

Please allow 5-8 weeks for your first copy to be mailed.

## BACKBEAT Records

(Continued from page 93)

1945 version of *I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart*. Ray Nance sings *Just Squeeze Me* and the little-known *Hey Baby*, and Al Hibbler is at his best on *Pretty Woman*. Also included is the Duke's arrangement of the classic *Beale Street Blues*, and his bubbling joyous piano piece *Dancers in Love*, played as a duet with bassist Junior Raglin.

The lack of notes of any kind is an unfortunate oversight. But producer Ethel Gabriel is to be commended for providing a marvelous trip through the major and minor paths of the Ellington years. —JOHN S. WILSON

### Dick Hyman: Cincinnati Fats

OVC-ATOS LP 101 (O.V.C.)

Recordings, Emery Theater, 1112 Walnut St., Cincinnati, Ohio 45202)

Fats Waller was fascinated by pipe organs. Although he recorded a pair of piano solos in 1922 when he was eighteen years old, his recording career really got its start in 1926 and '27 when he did some sessions for the Victor Talking Machine Company on a church organ in Camden, N.J. It was also around that time that he was the organist at the Lincoln Theater in Harlem, providing accompaniment for silent movies. Bill Basie (later known as Count) would sit in back of him watching his fingers and, on invitation, would crawl down under the organ and press the foot pedals with his hands. In the early Thirties, Waller was on staff at Cincinnati radio station WLW, playing mood music at night on a program called *Moon River* and livelier fare during the day on a show called *Doddle Socker*.

On "Cincinnati Fats," Dick Hyman plays the theater pipe organ in the Emery Theater at the University of Cincinnati. (The instrument used to be in that city's RKO Albee.) Essentially a tribute to Waller the organist, the program draws on two of his 1927 church organ recordings and several of his piano tunes (*Yacht Club Swing*, *Black and Blue*, *Squeeze Me*, *Viper's Drag*), which Hyman adapts to Waller's organ style. It also includes *Jitterbug Waltz* and *Bond Street*, which Waller recorded first on piano and later on electric organ. Hyman is such a brilliant musical chameleon that one can trust his organ versions of Fats's piano solos. And, with a mighty Wurlitzer, he has more opportunities than his source did with the Camden church organ: For instance, on *Yacht Club Swing*—one of Waller's 52nd St. classics of the late Thirties—Hyman uses a piano keyboard effect and backs it with what could be big band riffs. They were not doing that in church in Camden in 1927. —JOHN S. WILSON

(Continued on page 97)





## Advertising Index

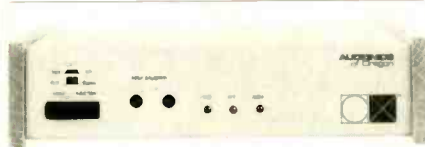
Key No.		Page No.
	Akai America Ltd.	11
	Alpine	35
24	AudioMatic Electronics	75
52	Audio Technica U.S., Inc.	76
17	Angel Records	59
19	BSR (USA) Ltd.	26
30	Blue Angel	63
	Bose Corp.	Cover III
7	Carver Corp.	6
35	Castle Marketing	89
32	Celestion International	21
51	Discount Music Club	93
53	Discwasher, Inc.	Cover IV
	Fidelity-Research of America	88
	Fuju Tape	4
46	Henry's Camera	91
31	Illinois Audio	90
45	International HiFi	91
3	International Preview Society	69
	International Record & Tape Club	75
95	International Wholesalers of Miami	50
23	JBL	31
27	J&R Music World	12
	Kenwood	10
25	Last Factory	88
13	Loranger Mfg. Corp.	18
12	Maxell Corp.	17
56	McIntosh Laboratory	87
11	Mission Electronics	14
1	Pioneer High Fidelity	Cover II, Pg 1
6	Pioneer Video, Inc.	8,9
49	P.R.I.C.E.	89
39	Sansui Electronics Corp.	23
14	Sansui Electronics Corp.	25
48	Santa Fe Express	93
50	Shure Brothers	32
18	Sony Audio	15
4	Sound Guard	71
2	Stanton Magnetics	2
29	Stereo Corp. of America	85
10	TDK Electronics Corp.	13
5	Technics by Panasonic	7
8	Teac Corp. of America	81
	United Audio	5
9	United Audio	44
21	VMPS/Itone	86
43	Wisconsin Discount	59
22	Yamaha Audio	39

### HIGH FIDELITY NEWS

(Continued from page 14)

cross-shaped coil armature. Low mass (4.2 grams) is attained by using a polyester-reinforced glass-fiber body. The DL-300's relatively high output (0.3 millivolt per centimeter per second) is attributed to the high efficiency of the magnetic system. Price is \$99.

**Circle 144 on Reader Service Card**



### Audionics Goes CX

Availability of the DX-1 CX decoder for LPs using the CBS dynamic-range extension system has been announced by Audionics. The final unit has separate front-panel calibration controls for each channel, and its switching will enable decoding of tapes dubbed from CX-processed recordings. Presence of the tape switch enables insertion into a tape-monitor loop without losing use of that loop for a recorder as well. The DE-1 sells for \$125.

**Circle 167 on Reader-Service Card**



### Rack-Mount Reverb

The latest in the Master-Room series of reverberation systems from Micmix Audio Products is the XL-121, a single-channel unit in a compact, rack-mount case. It includes a preamp gain control to tailor it to a wide variety of input levels, three-band equalization of the reverb signal, a built-in reverb/direct mixer, an output-level control, and provision for front-panel aux connections. The XL-121 sells for \$450.

**Circle 170 on Reader-Service Card**



### Atlantis for Autos

Atlantis Corporation has entered the automotive sound field with two three-way speaker models, a booster amplifier, and two booster/equalizer combinations.

The larger speaker (left) is the Award ACS-403, \$100 per pair; the smaller is the Award ACS-303, \$50 per pair. Stacked between the two speaker pairs are (from the top) the \$90 Award EQB-7060 equalizer/booster, the \$45 Award PBS-060 booster, and the \$150 Award EQB-7120 equalizer/booster. All Atlantis products are sold through Team Central stores.

**Circle 168 on Reader-Service Card**



### Realistic Synthesizer—by Moog

Norlin Industries, maker of Moog synthesizers (named after Robert Moog, who founded both the company and the industry), is supplying the Realistic MG-1 synthesizer, sold through Radio Shack stores. Its TONE-SOURCE section offers various waveforms and octave controls plus a DETUNE control for partial or full interval pitch offset. The MIXER and MODULATION sections include effects ranging from bell tones and polyphony to vibrato, tremolo, and glide. FILTER and CONTOUR sections further refine the tone quality and time characteristics. The catalog number of the MG-1 is 42-2000, and it sells for \$500.



### Wire Rostrum for Stand-Up Speakers

An airy design in speaker stands is available from Omni Research and Development. The stand, which both decouples the enclosure from the floor to reduce bass boominess and tilts it 6 degrees back to aim the treble toward the listener, is available in two sizes. The larger, Model One (right), sells for \$30, the Model Two for \$26.50.

**Circle 169 on Reader-Service Card**

## Stereophonic Imaging and the Bose® 901® Direct/Reflecting® Loudspeaker.



### Front View

Single full-range driver provides the direct sound energy necessary for realistic perception of transient detail.

### Rear View

Phased 4-driver arrays focus and reflect 89% of total system power output off interior surfaces of listening room.



**T**he "ideal" home loudspeaker system would possess the following stereo imaging characteristics:

**A sound field wider than the space between the speakers;**

**Clear center imaging from almost any listening position;**

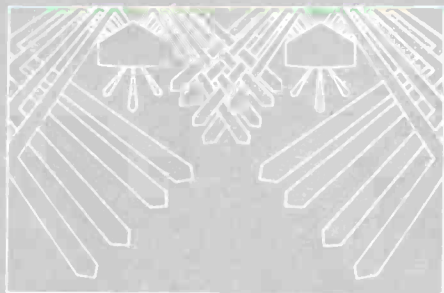
**Elimination of enclosures or drivers as point sources;**

**Natural-sounding transparency and spaciousness.**

A few speakers can meet one or two of these objectives. But no conventional design will ever be able to satisfy them all. That's why we abandoned traditional design philosophy in developing our 901 Direct/Reflecting® Loudspeaker System.

Each 901 speaker contains nine full-range drivers mounted in a proprietary multi-directional array. Sound energy is focused and reflected in a complex 3-dimensional pattern that effectively eliminates the imaging restrictions imposed by conventional speaker designs. The result is an astonishingly wide and spacious stereo presentation, without the need for special seating arrangements or signal processing.

Ask your authorized Bose dealer for a side-by-side comparison of the 901 Direct/Reflecting® Loudspeaker with any other speaker, regardless of size or price.



Bose has prepared a technical booklet on the unique engineering concepts incorporated into the 901 Direct/Reflecting® Loudspeaker System. For a free copy, write Bose Corporation, Dept. HF, The Mountain, Framingham, Massachusetts USA 01701.

# Protect Your Stereo System and Maintain Its Sound



## The D4™ Record Care System

The highly active D4 fluid and unique directionally fibered pad removes harmful microdust and debris that can cause permanent damage to your recordings.



## The SC-2™ Stylus Care System

SC-2 fluid with the exclusive nylon fibered brush effectively loosens and wipes away stylus contamination, a major contributor to record wear.



The Discwasher®  
D4 Record Care System  
and the Discwasher SC-2  
Stylus Care System are  
available separately or  
together as DiscSet™.

**discwasher®**  
PRODUCTS TO CARE FOR YOUR MUSIC

For a free copy of our "Guide To Record Care" write to Discwasher.

1407 North Providence Road, Columbia, MO 65201 USA  
A DIVISION OF JENSEN an ESMARK Company

Circle 53 on Reader-Service Card