

# Stereo Review®

APRIL 1975 • VOLUME 34 • NUMBER 4

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## EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

By WILLIAM ANDERSON

### A TALE OF (AT LEAST) TWO CULTURES

THOUGH religious, philosophical, political, ethical, and cultural ideas are the favorite playthings of the mind, they are as subject to the fickle winds of fashion as any other human activity. Historical accident may from time to time thrust one or another of them front and center in our mental playrooms, but we brush them aside impatiently as soon as we have exhausted our interest in them. Watergate was such an accident, focusing our attention for a while on the ancient dilemma of ends and means, but, excepting the convicted defendants and those tireless few who can no more let go of such quiddities than a terrier can a rat, most Americans have by now retreated to that particular dilemma's equally ancient "solution": the end justifies the means—if you don't get caught.

But the mind must have its playthings, even its favorite playthings, and I think I can already espy what the new Question Numero Uno will be: the place of so-called "high" culture in a democracy. It is hardly a brand-new question, but, phrased that way (as, in my experience at least, it usually is), there is a strong implication that in a "democracy" there should be no "high" culture—just one for everybody, and that one not particularly "high." It is to the credit of most recent raisers of the issue that they avoid thus begging the question—perhaps because it leaves so little room for playful argument. In any event, I have clocked the topic in regularly over the past few months on TV (educational, of course), in newspapers (*The National Observer*), in magazines (*Commentary*, *National Review*), and now in a whole book on the subject (*Popular Culture and High Culture*, by Herbert J. Gans, Basic Books, Inc., New York, 179 pp., \$10). Historical accident—specifically, bicentennialism—may have helped to bring the subject to the rostrum just now; we are in a mood to do a little bottom-lining, to tot up our national accomplishments, cultural and otherwise, and to reexamine the political institution that has brought us to wherever we are. As one with a natural respect for the power of cycles in human affairs, however, I am rather more inclined to view it as a repetition of a similar reexamination that took place in the Thirties. The country was then, as it is now, engaged in questioning some of its basic assumptions, struggling to survive a depression, trying to digest the present meaning and future implications of an explosion of mass culture. Just as the intellectuals of the Thirties attempted to deal with the cultural morning after that resulted from the excesses of the Jazz Age (when the new mass media—print, radio, and phonograph—grew like the teenagers they were), so, I think, those of the Seventies are trying, rather like dazed survivors of a holocaust, to comprehend just what took place during the recent Rock Era. Mass culture did not then, any more than it did in the Thirties, overwhelm high culture, the Beatles did not make Schubert obsolete, and Beethoven did not roll over. For a while there, however, it looked pretty grim to the guardians of high culture, and they still feel threatened—thus Question Numero Uno. It is the burden of Mr. Gans' book, however, that they should not. There was a time when sociologists were content merely to describe our flagrant sillinesses. No more. Having discovered and documented this particular cultural idiocy, he recommends that the embattled high-culture guardians—indeed, all of us—cease wasting energy attacking the other fellow's culture and instead encourage what he calls "subcultural programming," helping all taste cultures—high, middle, low, or off to the side—to grow in their own ways.

Mr. Gans is a new campaigner in this arena, but he is a welcome one, coming down as he does so firmly on the side of common sense. If you have the kind of mind that thrives on this kind of intellectual challenge, read his book and learn. If you haven't, you can still watch the idea unfold in practice: STEREO REVIEW, perhaps uniquely in any cultural sphere, has been pursuing just this "Upstairs, Downstairs" policy for years, and the response has been gratifying to our sense of what "democracy" really means—not the right to be alike, but the right to be different.

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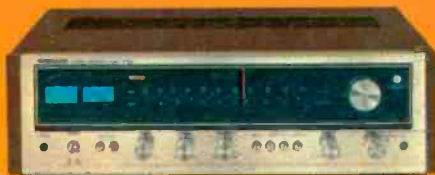
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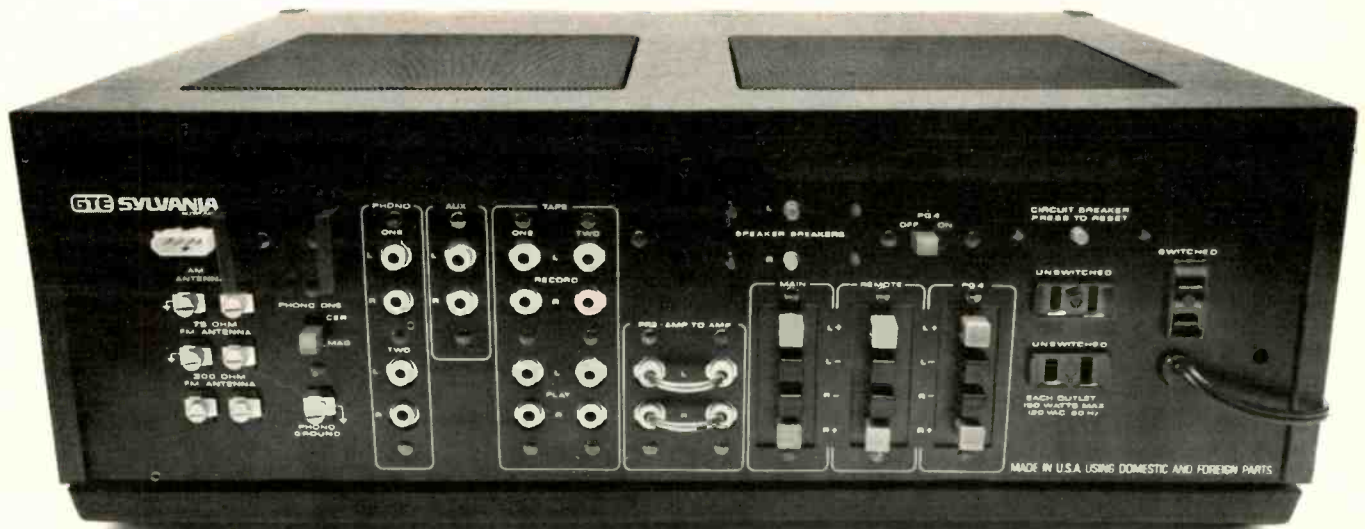
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Back or front, any way you look at it, the RS 4744 is one fine stereo receiver.

\**Popular Electronics*, December 1974 Issue.

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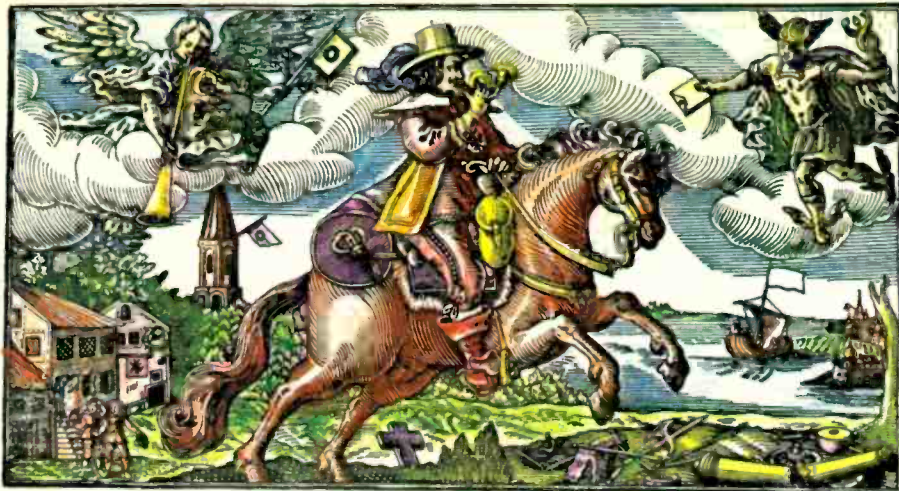
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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Mabel Mercer

● The February STEREO REVIEW is totally beautiful in both cover and content. I have not seen as beautiful a cover since the *Music Educators' Journal* used "Ruby Green Singing" by Chapin on its January 1967 cover. The articles on Mabel Mercer *et al.* made me laugh out loud. Truly wonderful.

MAURICE MURPHY  
Baltimore, Md.

● I had often heard of Mabel Mercer's art, but I hadn't really given it much more than a passing thought until I read William Livingstone's article on her in the February issue. I found it completely intriguing, and after reading it I simply had to sample one of Miss Mercer's performances. I'm glad Mr. Livingstone did not decide to become a door-to-door salesman, for if he had I'd probably have a house full of Fuller brushes by this time.

GINO FALZARANO  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

### Hildegarde

● Concerning James Goodfriend's excellent review of Stanyan's recent Hildegarde album (February), it may interest readers to know that some of her Columbia records were indeed issued in this country at the time they were recorded. The Columbia Masterworks and Celebrity Catalogue for 1936 lists six Hildegarde selections in the label's "M" series: *For Me, For You, Darling Je Vous Aime Beaucoup, Pennies from Heaven, For Sentimental Reasons, Goodnight My Love, and I Wanna Go to the Zoo*. At least one additional record was issued later, for the 1939 Columbia General Catalogue lists a Hildegarde recording of two Gershwin songs.

KENNETH L. SNOWDEN  
San Francisco, Calif.

### Lee Wiley

● Thank you for giving Lee Wiley first honors in Robert Connolly's perceptive article on cabaret singers (February). I wish Mr. Connolly had mentioned Miss Wiley's fine collection recorded for Columbia in 1952-1953 (CL 6169), unfortunately long unavailable. Lee's *Ghost of a Chance* and *I've Got a Crush on You* are the definitive versions.

Rumor has it Lee Wiley died; another that she lives in retirement; and I have heard she is part Indian. Was the Piper Laurie film based

on Miss Wiley's life honest? That story had her losing her sight.

HOWARD GILLIGAN  
Montara, Calif.

*Mr. Connolly replies: The Columbia collection is among the finest pop albums ever made and ought to be reissued; I did not mention it because it is unavailable now. Miss Wiley is part Cherokee, she did lose her sight for a time, but she is alive, well, and living in happily married retirement in Manhattan.*

### Cabaret

● Robert Connolly ("Cabaret!" February) has proved once again that nothing is smaller than the minor artist of a lesser art form such as the singing of dull ballads. I maintain that anyone can doodle on the piano with one hand tied behind his back and can provide all the back-up a cabaret singer needs. After all, none of them sing the notes, even on the rare occasion when the notes are worth singing. Program directors accept this material unaltered for airplay on Muzak-oriented FM stations. Cabaret singers alone hold this honor. Quality? Harry Nilsson isn't a convincing performer, and he makes a less convincing critic.

JEFFREY W. MORGAN  
Huntington Station, N.Y.

### Henry Cowell

● In his February letter concerning recordings of Henry Cowell's music, Henry Blumenthal said that he had a recording of Cowell's First Symphony and there seemed to be some controversy over whether or not the work was ever recorded. I myself have never heard of such a recording. I checked the timings of my tapes of Symphonies Nos. 4, 5, 7, 11, 15, and 16, but none are long enough to necessitate turning over the reels of even a 30-minute tape as Mr. Blumenthal did. (This is assuming, of course, that the recording was started at the beginning of a reel!) Perhaps the work was identified incorrectly at the time it was played or perhaps, indeed, it was the First Symphony performed live and not on record.

Those wishing to hear some of Cowell's symphonies will find Symphonies Nos. 5, 7, 11, 15, and 16 catalogued in Schwann-2. Symphony No. 5 originates from the old American Recording Society and is a product

of antique recording equipment then in use in Vienna. Symphony No. 7 also suffers from the "Viennese waver" but not as badly. The others are acceptable. The recording of No. 4 is from Mercury MG 50078 and was one of the American Music series dating from about 1954. My favorite Cowell record, and one I highly recommend, is a collection of his early piano pieces; he recorded it for the Folkways label in 1963.

ROBERT M. BRYCE  
Ellicott City, Md.

### English Bard and Stereo Reviewers

● Inasmuch as I greatly admire David Bowie both as a writer and performer, I find to my chagrin that I also greatly admire two of his most severe critics, Steve Simels and Noel Coppage, both of whom wrote of Bowie in the February issue. Mr. Simels savagely attacks Bowie and everything connected with him in precise and well-defined terms; his critiques, although blatantly subjective, are interesting if only for his devastating wit. And Mr. Coppage's comparison of Bowie to a hustler like Bobby Riggs is a sheer stroke of genius.

KENNETH W. GLEASON  
Phoenixville, Pa.

### J. J. Niles

● I thoroughly enjoyed Noel Coppage's article on John Jacob Niles in your January issue. The boxed insert on page 60 mentions only one Camden LP by Mr. Niles. I believe that Mr. Niles' first records were on Victor 78's: a single 10-inch Red Seal, numbered 2051, and three four-disc albums, M-604, M-718, and M-824. With the advent of the Camden label, there were three 12-inch LP's: CAL-219, "American Folk and Gambling Songs"; CAL-245, "American Folk Songs"; and CAL-330, "John Jacob Niles, 50th Anniversary Album." Some of these contained material apparently never released on 78's. In addition, Camden had at least two extended-play 45's: CAE-205 and CAE-206, "Folk Songs of Christmas, Vols. 1 and 2." In more recent times, Victor has issued on its Vintage Series LPV-513, "John Jacob Niles: Folk Balladeer." Finally, there was a short-lived label emanating from Lexington, Kentucky, called Boone-Tolliver, which had at least two 10-inch LP's by Niles. One was LP-22, "Folk Love Songs"; the other was BTR023, "Ballads, Vol. 1."

GAYLE R. CARVER  
Greenville, Ky.

### Dolby Broadcasting

● Concerning Julian Hirsch's February comments regarding background noise on WQXR Dolby broadcasts, all I can say is that Mr. Hirsch must move to Brooklyn immediately! My 25-microsecond reception (Dolby-demodulated) is superb. I can A-B with standard reception and there is not a shadow of a doubt that the new standard is vastly superior. A good friend and fellow hi-fi-nik telephoned me today with his results, which were exactly the same as mine, so perhaps moving to Manhattan will suffice.

EDWARD BUXBAUM  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

### The Billy Joel Fan Club

● I would like to commend Peter Reilly on his review of Billy Joel's "Streetlife Serenade" (February). For once, someone has put into writing what I feel but cannot express.

(Continued on page 8)



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Mr. Reilly expertly interpreted Billy Joel's intentions and style; he found the essential elements of the album and brought them to light. I feel that Billy Joel is one of the most talented musicians ever and that he deserves even more recognition than he is getting.

AUDREY WENGER  
New Britain, Pa.

● Please, let's not forget Billy Joel's album "Cold Spring Harbor" as Peter Reilly obviously did in his review of "Streetlife Serenade." "Streetlife" is Joel's *third* album, not his second. "Cold Spring Harbor" was released on the Family Productions label two years prior to "Piano Man." Although not as slickly produced or lavishly orchestrated as his other two, it remains my favorite Billy Joel album.

TIMOTHY G. UHRICH  
Allentown, Pa.

### The Cone Is Quicker Than the Eye

● Your article concerning speaker phasing (January) was very informative, and the tests for proper phasing were quite simple. However, the most straightforward test is simply to remove the speaker grilles and observe the forward (or backward) motions of the woofers when power is supplied to the speakers via the amplifier or receiver.

JOHN WM. COX  
Columbia, S.C.

*Technical Editor Larry Klein responds: For several reasons, Mr. Cox's suggestion is not as helpful as it might be. (1) All speaker systems do not have removable grilles. (2) If the intention is to use the initial turn-on pulse of an amplifier to judge phase by speaker-cone movement—all amplifiers don't generate such a pulse. (3) If Mr. Cox means that he can detect phase simply by comparing the motion—while listening to music—of two woofer cones, he has a better eye than anyone I know.*

### Age of Disenchantment

● Upon reading Clay Daniel's letter about Elton John (February), I find myself thoroughly horrified. Is Elton John for real? Naw . . . he's just a figment of something we ate or have been fed the past six years or so. Who paved that Yellow Brick Road in gold? It sure wasn't a handful of critics, included among them Noel Coppage. It was a multitude of people, among them millions of offbeat listeners like myself and Clay Daniel. But when Elton John said goodbye to that road just before he got there and began to perform for himself and not for his audience, he became *unReal*.

JOHN E. KLOSOWSKI  
Port Austin, Mich.

● I have just listened to *Big Yellow Taxi* from the "Miles of Aisles" album by Joni Mitchell for the millionth time and have come to the conclusion that I'm tired of it. I now realize what is missing from Joni Mitchell these days and what was missing from her performance last April when I saw her here in Memphis. First, I must hasten to add that I've been a long-time admirer of hers, having done extensive reading on her before featuring her on my radio show (WLYX-FM, Memphis) last year. I particularly remember the glowing praise of STEREO REVIEW's William Anderson (April 1971) and Peter Reilly (October 1971).

These days the glowing reviews outshine

her act. The inner sensitivity I used to identify with so much has been replaced by the shiny, unreal glitter of her pop-star image. As for all those once-great songs on "Miles of Aisles," Joni seems to be looking back at her past and her embattled city and has turned into a pillar of plastic.

ANNE MARIE TILLY  
Memphis, Tenn.

### On Common Denominators

● Referring to the letter from J. D. Norfolk in February's "Audio Questions and Answers" column: it's about time someone commented on the depressing recorded quality of many recent rock discs. Among the offenders worse than "The Beatles 1967-70" are the recent releases by Elton John, the Stones, and Eric Clapton's vinyl travesty "461 Ocean Boulevard," which I nominate as worst-engineered LP of the year. The common factors are virtually no low bass and a sometimes unbelievable boost of upper mid and high frequencies.

This is not a problem inherent in all rock recordings. Just listen to most of Cat Stevens' work, such as "Dark Side of the Moon," or even Eric Burden's "Black Man's Burden" to hear how well rock can be recorded when all participants in the chain care enough. I don't expect rock artists to record primarily for the relative minority of discriminating listeners with good equipment. But such an exaggerated lowest-common-denominator mentality is a disgrace when one considers the quality that is easily attainable with today's recording facilities.

ROBERT SPERDUTO  
Nutley, N.J.

● I enjoyed the article in your February issue on the future of the phonograph disc, especially the discussion on dynamic range. This year for my broadcast of a local high-school Christmas concert I used the Advent Dolby (Type B) noise-reduction unit, Revox A 77, Sony MX 16 mixer, and assorted microphones. I set the level for peak values and took a "hands-off" approach to the recording. Since the noise was unnoticeable at low modulation levels I felt safe in using the same settings on the final mixdown for airing. (Only the master tape was encoded—it was decoded during the mixdown.) The station ran the tape without compression but limited the peaks to keep within FCC regulations. It was disappointing. The band was great, with kettle drums, blaring trumpets, and so on, but in soft choral passages the program was barely audible.

I gave my audience a wide dynamic range with as clean a signal as my equipment could produce; however, most of us are conditioned to hearing super-compressed sounds with thumping bass. For the technical purist I succeeded, but to most listeners the program was either too loud or inaudible. Next year I'll "ride gain" and use a limiter. Give 'em what they want—that's show biz! I will still use half-track stereo at 7.5 ips along with all the other expensive components, but it won't be "high fidelity."

R. DENNIS ALEXANDER  
Greencastle, Pa.

### Late Credit

● The photograph of Kiri Te Kanawa that appeared on page 62 of our March issue should have been credited to photographer Erika Davidson.



# Keep on trackin'

© 1974 Empire Scientific Corp.

Empire's new wide response 4000D\* series phono cartridge features our exclusive "4 Dimensional"<sup>TM</sup> diamond stylus tip.

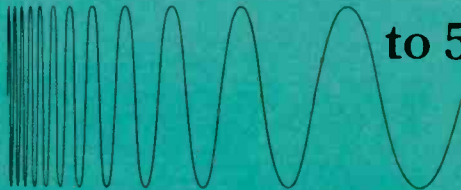


ing prevents any discernible record wear.

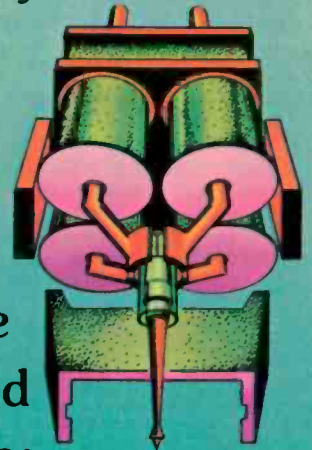
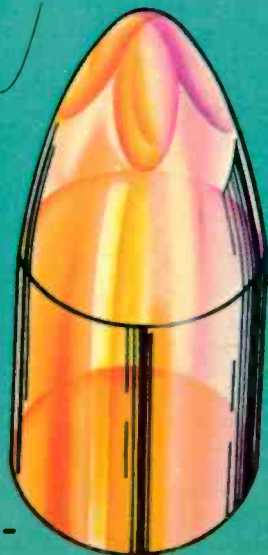
Every Empire long-playing cartridge is fully shielded with 4 poles, 4 coils and 3 magnets (more than any other brand).



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# EMPIRE

\* Plays any 4 channel system perfectly. Plays stereo even better than before.

CIRCLE NO. 21 ON READER SERVICE CARD



## IAD Dynamic Volume Expander

By expanding the gain of an audio system in a controlled manner, the Dynamic Volume Expander from IAD attempts to enhance the realism of reproduced music by restoring the dynamic range lost during recording or subsequent processing. More than 15 dB of gain is



available from the device, the action of which is triggered by the characteristics of the program material. There is no "downward-expansion" mode. Audible side effects of the expansion ("pumping," "breathing," etc.) are said to be nonexistent because of the attack and decay rates chosen: approximately 100 milliseconds and 30 seconds, respectively, during the full expansion mode.

Rated output of the expander is 7.5 volts into a high impedance. Harmonic and intermodulation distortion are less than 0.05 per cent at rated output or below, and the signal-to-noise ratio is at least 86 dB. Input and output impedances of the device are 47,000 and 600 ohms, respectively. No insertion loss is introduced. The cabinet of the IAD Expander, constructed of black and clear Lucite, measures 12 x 3 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 5 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches. Behind the black Lucite panel are LED indicators that show the expansion action in 2-dB increments up to 14 dB. A continuously variable slide control adjusts the amount of expansion available. Price: \$265.

Circle 115 on reader service card

## Philips GA-209 "Electronic" Turntable

The Philips Model GA-209 is a single-play turntable with elaborate automatic features. The two-speed (33 $\frac{1}{3}$  and 45 rpm) player employs three d.c. motors—one for platter rotation and two to move the arm during automatic operation. The platter-drive motor is feedback-controlled by a correction signal derived from the platter's rotational rate, so that speed is immune to the effects of mechanical drag and line-voltage variations. The platter is driven by means of a belt and pulley system, and playing speed is electronically switched.

In automatic operation the GA-209 senses record diameter, sets the playing speed accordingly, and cycles the tone arm to the lead-in groove of the record and back to its rest at

completion of the side. Manual operation is conventional, except that the tone arm is returned automatically to rest at the end of the record side. The viscous-damped tone-arm cueing mechanism is motor driven, activated by contact buttons that light up when touched. The rest of the manual controls are concealed by a sliding plastic panel when not in use. They include speed-select pushbuttons and speed fine-tuning controls, adjustable anti-skating for elliptical and spherical styli, and a stop pushbutton that interrupts play and returns the arm to rest. A unique feature of the turntable is its stylus-force gauge, which is built into the tone-arm rest and actually "weighs" the arm when it is in the rest position. Playing speed and mode of operation are indicated by illuminated legends on the motorboard. The platter and tone arm are fixed to an internal sub-chassis that is shock-isolated from the turntable base itself by a spring suspension.

Wow and flutter for the GA-209 are 0.08 per cent or less. Unweighted rumble is -43 dB (-65 dB with relative-audibility weighting). Stylus force is adjustable from 0.75 to 3 grams. The fine-tuning speed adjustments



have a range of  $\pm 3$  per cent. Overall dimensions of the turntable are 17 $\frac{1}{8}$  x 12 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 6 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches. The base is brushed aluminum with a hinged plastic dust cover (removable). Price: \$349.50.

Circle 116 on reader service card

## Pioneer SA-9900 Integrated Stereo Amplifier

Pioneer's recently introduced top-of-the-line amplifier, the SA-9900, is rated at 110 watts per channel continuous into 8 or 4 ohms across the full audio bandwidth, measured with both channels driven. Harmonic and intermodulation distortion are 0.1 per cent or less at any level up to rated output. The construction of the amplifier is unusual, with all input and output connectors (except the front-panel headphone jack and microphone input) mounted on horizontal platforms on either

side of the chassis. The rear of the unit is entirely given over to heat sinks and the output transistors. Internally, the input jacks are connected directly to the input printed-circuit board, eliminating the capacitance contributed by intervening cables or other leads. There are two sets of phono inputs, one of which can be varied in sensitivity over a range of 12 dB, and in input impedance from 35,000 to 100,000 ohms. Phono overload occurs at 550 mil-



livolts with maximum sensitivity and at 1 volt with minimum sensitivity. Signal-to-noise ratios are better than 95 dB for high-level inputs, 70 dB for phono inputs.

The control facilities of the SA-9900 include two sets of bass and treble controls, providing adjustment ranges of  $\pm 7.5$  dB at 100 and 10,000 Hz and  $\pm 4.5$  dB at 50 and 20,000 Hz. The controls are detented in increments of 1.5 dB; all tone-control adjustments can be canceled by means of a lever switch. The large volume control is detented (and calibrated) in twenty-two steps; printed resistors provide the attenuation at each step. There is also a muting switch to introduce preset attenuation of 15 or 30 dB. The high- and low-cut filters have slopes of 12 dB per octave, and they can be switched to act at frequencies of 15, 30, 8,000, and 12,000 Hz. The tape-monitor facilities handle two tape decks and permit dubbing from one to the other while the amplifier is handling an entirely different program. Two pairs of speakers are accommodated. The amplifier has dimensions of approximately 16 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 6 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 16 inches; its weight is just over 44 pounds. Price: \$749.95.

Circle 117 on reader service card

## Tannoy/Micro Manual Turntables

Tannoy of England and Micro Seiki of Japan are jointly marketing a line of four manual turntables, two of which employ direct drive. All four are two-speed (33 $\frac{1}{3}$  and 45 rpm) units with cast aluminum platters. The line-leading Model TM55DD (shown) has a direct-drive d.c. servomotor adjustable in speed over a  $\pm 6$  per cent range at both 33 $\frac{1}{3}$  and 45 rpm. Stroboscopic markings are cast into the edge of the platter, where they are illuminated by a neon lamp. The similar Model TM44DD has an internal strobe which is viewed through a window on the motorboard. Both models have S-shaped tone arms with balancing and tracking force adjusted by means of their counterweights, hydraulic cueing, and

(Continued on page 12)



# MODEL 301



## NEW. INNOVATIVE. BOSE.

### The first Direct/Reflecting® bookshelf loudspeaker

The Bose Model 301. The first and only system to offer the spaciousness and clarity of a Direct/Reflecting loudspeaker with the convenience and beauty of a bookshelf enclosure. Speaker design and performance from the same engineering that produced the internationally famous Bose 901® and 501 speaker systems.

The Bose Model 301 began as a unique engineering challenge: create a small, low cost Direct/Reflecting loudspeaker with maximum flexibility of placement and truly exceptional sound. The end result incorporates three significant developments not available in any conventional speaker:

- **Asymmetrical Design:** each Model 301 radiates a different spatial pattern to the left and right side of the room, providing stereo reproduction that expands beyond the spacing of the speakers. Consequently, each speaker of a stereo pair is constructed as a mirror image of the other.
- **A Direct Energy Control:** a control located at the top of the cabinet allows you to select the proportion of direct to reflected sound at high frequencies to produce the optimum spatial characteristics for your particular room.

- **A Dual Frequency Crossover Network:** a new approach to crossover design separates transition frequencies of the woofer and tweeter to provide an overlap in frequency response of over one octave. This technique minimizes localization of sound to the woofer or tweeter alone, and produces unusually smooth response through the middle frequencies.

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"It has no faults!"

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# EMPIRE

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# NEW PRODUCTS

## THE LATEST IN HIGH-FIDELITY EQUIPMENT

integral anti-skating compensation. The units are rated for wow and flutter at under 0.04 and 0.045 per cent, respectively; rumble is less than -60 and -55 dB.

The Tannoy/Micro belt-driven units, the Models TM33 and TM22, have tone arms similar in design to those of the direct-drive machines, except that the TM22 has a lever-type anti-skating system. Specifications include wow and flutter of less than 0.045 and 0.05 per cent, and rumble levels below -50 dB. All four turntables have integral bases supported by resilient feet that isolate the mechanisms from external shock and vibration. These are also adjustable in height for leveling the turntables. Hinged transparent dust covers are also supplied. The output cables have a rated capacitance of 50 picofarads per meter, making the turntables suitable for CD-4 use. The TM55DD has a laminated wood base finished on all visible sides and



equipped with a small spirit level for ensuring horizontal positioning of the platter. Its dimensions (with dust cover) are 18<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 13<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 5<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches. The other models all have metal-finish motorboards within wood enclosures; they measure approximately 18 x 13<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 6 inches. Prices: TM55DD, \$330; TM44DD, \$270; TM33, \$198; TM22, \$168.

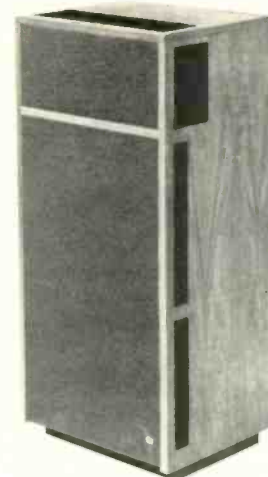
*Circle 118 on reader service card*

## Bozak Monitor-C Speaker System

The Monitor-C speaker is a decoratively styled version of a system produced by Bozak for professional applications. It is a two-way design, crossing over at 2,000 Hz at a rate of 6 dB per octave, with four 8-inch woofers and an array of eight 2-inch cone tweeters mounted on a supporting structure that angles them outward to form a spherical section. The cones of all drivers are aluminum laminated with a latex coating.

The cabinet is fully sealed, with grille-covered apertures at the front molding edges to facilitate side radiation of the system. Recommended minimum power for the Monitor-C is 40 watts per channel continuous into its nominal 8-ohm impedance. Power-handling

capability is rated at 150 watts program material. Frequency response is 30 to 20,000 Hz. A three-position switch beneath the foam grille (attached by magnetic fasteners for easy



removal) adjusts the output level of the tweeter array. The floor-standing system measures 41 x 18<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 15 inches; the enclosure is finished in walnut veneer. Price: \$514.

*Circle 119 on reader service card*

## Scotch Seven-inch Metal Tape Reel

The 3M Company has designed a high-quality 7-inch aluminum tape reel as a substitute for conventional plastic take-up reels. The flanges of the reel are warp-resistant and have been machined to eliminate rough or sharp edges that might damage tape. The plastic tape hub with three threading slots is firmly clamped between the two metal flanges; outer



aluminum plates around the hub area make the reel compatible in thickness with plastic reels. The reel is available through most dealers handling Scotch brand audio tape. Price: \$9.35.

*Circle 120 on reader service card*

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**Sansui**



**SPECIAL  
ANNOUNCEMENT  
FOR READERS OF  
Stereo Review  
MAGAZINE**

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PRE-PUBLICATION RESERVATION FORM

**AUDIO  
QUESTIONS  
and  
ANSWERS**

By **LARRY KLEIN** *Technical Editor*



**Loud Speakers**

**Q.** *Having read countless articles on state-of-the-art speakers, I'm surprised not to have seen any mention of what the sound-pressure level of some of these high-power monitors and loudspeakers can do to harm one's ears over extended listening periods—or even for short periods at loud levels. I like concert-level volume for rock and classical music, but I value my hearing more than the sensations provided by gigantic speakers delivering up to a 120-dB SPL. I can't see the point of the countless dollars spent in audio research on speakers if they destroy what they are designed to serve—the human ear.*

**GERRY CARLE**  
Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif.

**A.** As regular readers of this column should be aware, I have expressed myself on the question of excessive sound levels at live rock performances several times. But the fact that a speaker is capable of delivering a 120-dB sound-pressure level does not mean that it is putting out 120 dB at all times. It also doesn't necessarily mean that there will be a 120-dB SPL at the listener's ears even if the speakers are putting out sound at such a level.

The sound-pressure-level potential of a speaker is usually rated at a given distance. An acoustic inverse-square law operates which produces a 6-dB reduction in SPL each time the measurement (or listener) distance from the speaker is doubled—until the reverberant field is encountered, at which point reflected energy begins to predominate over the direct sound. Within the reverberant field, the SPL remains fairly constant with distance. (These figures hold only in an enclosed area such as a concert hall; entirely different rules apply for open-air concerts.)

I'm happy to report that in the past month or two I have not once had to resort to the cotton-wad ear plugs that are part of my concert-going equipment. For example, even the Jefferson Starship at a recent concert in Radio City Music Hall was playing exactly the "right" volume level (for me), which means that either things are getting more reasonable sound-level-wise, or I'm going deaf.

**SQ Cassettes**

**Q.** *There's a question that puzzles local audiophiles that I would like to pose for possible clarification. If SQ quadrasonic encoding can be broadcast over FM stereo and decoded by the proper receiving equip-*

*ment, then why is it not possible to SQ-encode cassette tapes in the same manner?*

**LEE HAMILTON**  
Lumberton, N.C.

**A.** All the major matrix systems use the phase relationships among the four channels as the matrix-encoding technique when the channels are mixed. The decoder circuits use these phase relationships as the "key" to tell it what elements in the mixed signal should be assigned to each of the four channels. If the phases in the encoded signal accidentally get shifted with respect to each other, the decoder becomes confused and there's improper decoding of the signal. The separation may diminish and/or the sound might appear in the wrong channel at the wrong time.

What bearing does this have on SQ cassette tapes? Until recently there has been no effort to maintain phase accuracy between channels in any home tape recorder, simply because there seemed to be no real reason to do so. When matrix-encoded material is recorded and played back by the same head, as in most cassette decks, there should be no problem. However, if a three-head open-reel or cassette machine is used, one in which the recording is made by one head and played back by another, there may be enough phase difference between the two heads to upset the decoding. This means that though you can dub your own encoded cassettes from SQ discs and play them on the same machine with reasonable results, it would be chancy for a mass-production duplicator to produce SQ-encoded cassettes since he has no way of ensuring that the phase performance of his duplication equipment will match that of the home user's cassette player.

Incidentally, I'm told by an engineer who has done some research on the question that it is even very difficult to maintain phase accuracy during SQ and QS FM broadcasts because of all the potentially phase-shifting elements in the broadcast chain. Therefore, it seems to be a matter of chance how accurately any particular four-channel matrix broadcast will be decoded.

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

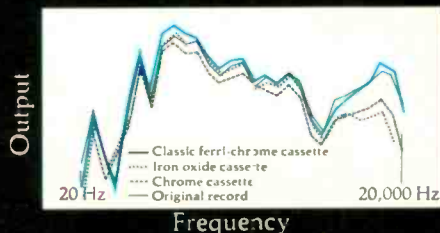


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To prove ferri-chrome's remarkable fidelity, we taped a broad spectrum piece of music from a disc recording with our Classic cassette, our iron oxide

cassette and our chrome cassette. Then we compared the output of all three with the original source on a precise Brüel and Kjaer sound spectrum analyzer. Our graph shows you the results.



Along with superior fidelity, ferri-chrome also offers you full compatibility. These Classic cassettes will deliver optimum performance on any high quality cassette machine you may own.

But there's even more from Scotch brand. Outstanding Classic 8-track cartridges and Classic open-reel tape. Both with their own improved oxide. Both super quiet. Beautifully responsive. More brilliant than even the best previous Scotch home recording tapes.

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They'll haul it back to their labs. And play it. And play with it. And in general, examine it to pieces to find out How We Did It.

## Sony's Vertical Field Effect Transistors: What our competitors are eating their hearts out about.

It's a shame the term "state of the art" has been worn ragged in dozens of "This is It, this is finally and really It" stereo ads. Because anyone in the business will tell you that V-FET's are the biggest thing since the invention of the vacuum tube. V-FET's combine all of the advantages of both triode vacuum tubes and conventional transistors. With none of their disadvantages.

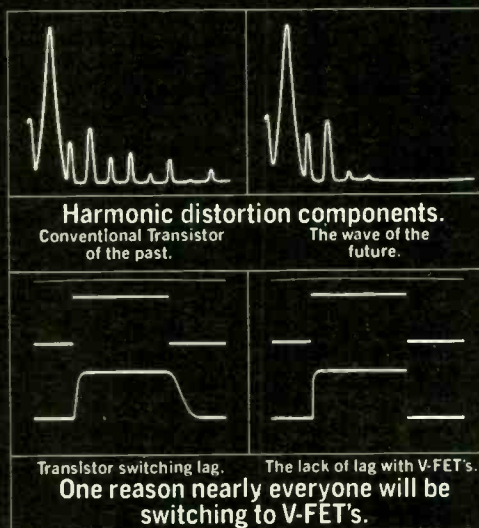
But nobody else can take advantage of these advantages yet. Ask anybody else how their V-FET's are coming. The responses will range from a forthright and candid "we're working on it," to an equally forthright and candid "buzz off." Sony is the first company in the world making commercially available equipment with V-FET's. A power-amp and integrated amp.

Herewith a partial and oversimplified explanation of just what in the world we're talking about.

### Triode vacuum tubes: Pros and cons.

To belabor the obvious for a moment, in amplifiers, the name of the game is distortion. And until now triode vacuum tubes have yielded the lowest levels around. That's because of their non-saturating voltage versus current characteristics. Also, they do not suffer from carrier storage effect (which is standard equipment with regular transistors, and causes notch distortion and deterioration in transient response).

So much for the good points of tubes. They also tend to be inefficient, begin to deteriorate as soon as you use them, and wear out. Their high impedance characteristics generally require an output transformer to drive the speakers. And there's no way you can set up a true complementary circuit with vacuum tubes, so there's no way you can get true wave form symmetry.



### Conventional Bi-polar transistors: Pros and cons.

The advantages of bi-polar transistors can be dealt with in a sentence. They're very reliable, very efficient and last almost forever. But there are a number of bugs in the ointment.

Bi-polar transistors can become saturated with current. And they all cause switching lag distortion. To obtain acceptably low levels of distortion, plus wide frequency response, you need to pump in a lot of negative feedback. Which can make the amp unstable.

Plus (at no extra charge), as they heat up, bi-polar transistors have a

marked tendency toward thermal runaway (which is a fancy way of saying they try to self-destruct).

### V-FET's: All pros. And that's no con.

First off, V-FET's are very reliable, very efficient and last almost forever. They also match the highly defined tonal quality previously provided only by vacuum tubes. V-FET's don't become saturated with current. But at the same time, they protect themselves as temperatures build up. So there's no possibility of thermal runaway. Their low impedance characteristics mean no output transformer (the less gizmos in the circuit, the better the sound). The use of V-FET's allows for better control of negative feedback, making the amp more stable. V-FET's don't have carrier storage effect to cause switching lag. And you can use V-FET's to build a true complementary circuit, thus obtaining true wave form symmetry. And isn't that what it's really all about?

One more thing. We'd be less than forthright and candid if we didn't admit that our new amplifiers are a bit pricey. As much as \$1300 a piece.

At Sony, we've always maintained that, in the end, the best way to buy equipment is to hear it for yourself. So we're making what's probably the best offer you've ever heard. Have your dealer hook up our new V-FET equipment against *anything* made by *anybody*. If we sound sure of ourselves, we are.

And we're sure your own ears will tell you we've got the best sound you've ever heard.

# SONY®



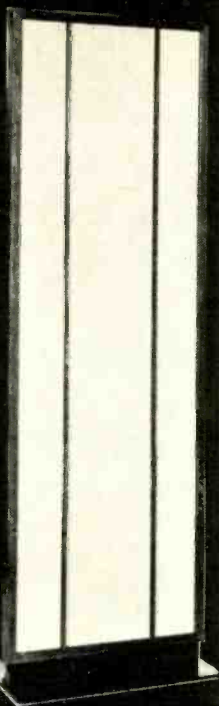
# MAGNEPLANAR®

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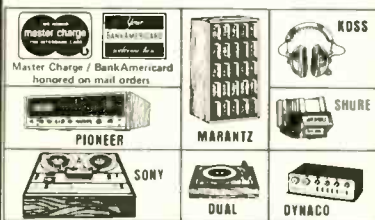
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# AUDIO BASICS

By RALPH HODGES

## WEIGHTING

No one has ever suggested that audio-equipment evaluation is simple: in fact, this column's regular excursions through the perils of defining specifications testify to its complexity. Furthermore, even when you have grasped the meanings of specs to the point where you have a *general* idea of what is going on and why, there is still often a "kicker" lying in wait for you when you start to compare some performance numbers. This kicker is the system (systems, actually) of weighting.

Weighting is a technique used during a measurement in which filters adjust (weight) the relative strengths of various frequencies involved to reflect their pragmatic importance. For example, in making a harmonic-distortion measurement on an amplifier, what if you found that a small amount of 60-Hz hum was adding to the readings on the meter? Since you want to measure distortion independent of hum, you would be justified in using an appropriate filter to reduce or eliminate the effects of the hum. This could be considered a form of weighting. But now, suppose further that the same trickle of hum was present while you were trying to make a *noise* measurement. Hum is a form of noise and therefore should be reflected in the test results. However, being low in frequency where the ear is comparatively insensitive, very small amounts of hum are often inaudible, while a much lower level of hiss, with concentrated energy at frequencies where the ear is *most* sensitive, may be quite audible. The upshot? Your measurement is dominated by hum, but all you can hear from the amplifier is hiss. Clearly, if the intent of your test is to register the true annoyance value of noise, you are off target somewhere. So, through special filters, you apply a so-called "weighting curve."

The weighting curve most often used for such noise measurements is the "A" characteristic for sound-level meters. The curve deliberately emphasizes the frequencies between 1,000 and 6,000 Hz

by rolling off all other frequencies—particularly those below 500 Hz. This roughly conforms to the frequency sensitivity of the ear for low-level sounds (and, of course, you wouldn't expect the noise from a good amplifier to be high-level). Presumably this puts the hum in its proper audible place.

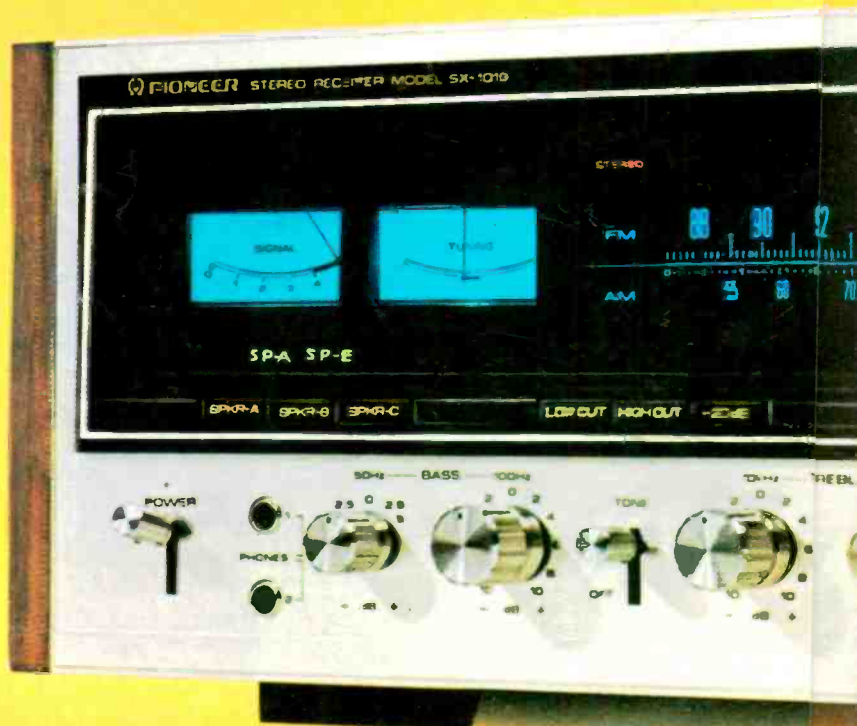
There are at least three weighting curves in common use for turntable rumble. One is the current NAB (National Association of Broadcasters) standard, which yields a virtually unweighted measurement. The purpose of this is not so much to reflect the audibility of the rumble, but to give an idea of the demands that will be made upon the system's ability to handle very-low-frequency signals without distortion. The "A" rumble standard of the DIN (the German standards-setting organization) is very similar. For audibility of rumble, the two most common standards are the CBS RRLL weighting curve and the DIN "B" characteristic. Both of these roll off low frequencies (again to correspond to aural sensitivity); the DIN roll-off begins earlier and is steeper, so it will tend to give better test numbers.

Wow and flutter can be weighted also, and usually are. This type of cyclic speed variation is considered most audible when it occurs at a rate of about 4 Hz, and thus the weighting curve emphasizes that frequency most heavily and rolls off frequencies above and below.

The trouble with weighting is that spec sheets rarely indicate in detail what kind of weighting, if any, was used. Take the case of turntables. Imported makes tend to use DIN A, B, or both. Domestic makes are frequently cited as "meeting NAB standards (a rumble level of -40 dB or better, measured with the NAB curve). Hirsch-Houck Labs gives an unweighted figure as well as an RRLL rating. Obviously, the situation borders on chaos, and, unfortunately, converting numbers from one standard to another is impossible without knowing a lot more than an ordinary spec sheet can tell you.



# There can be only one best.



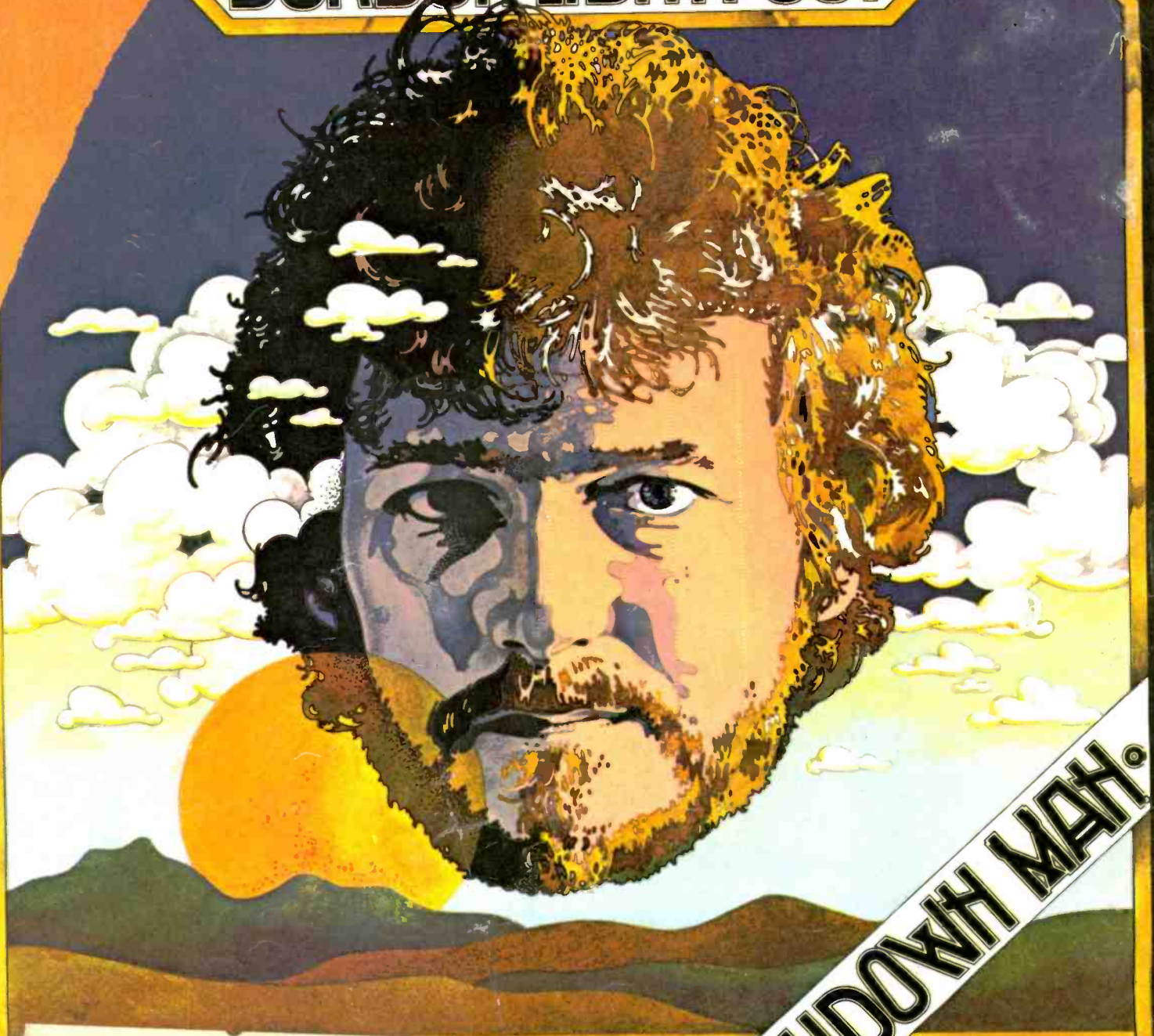


# The f...eo Review

has

APRIL 1975 • ONE DOLLAR

## GORDON LIGHTFOOT



THE SUNDOWN MAN

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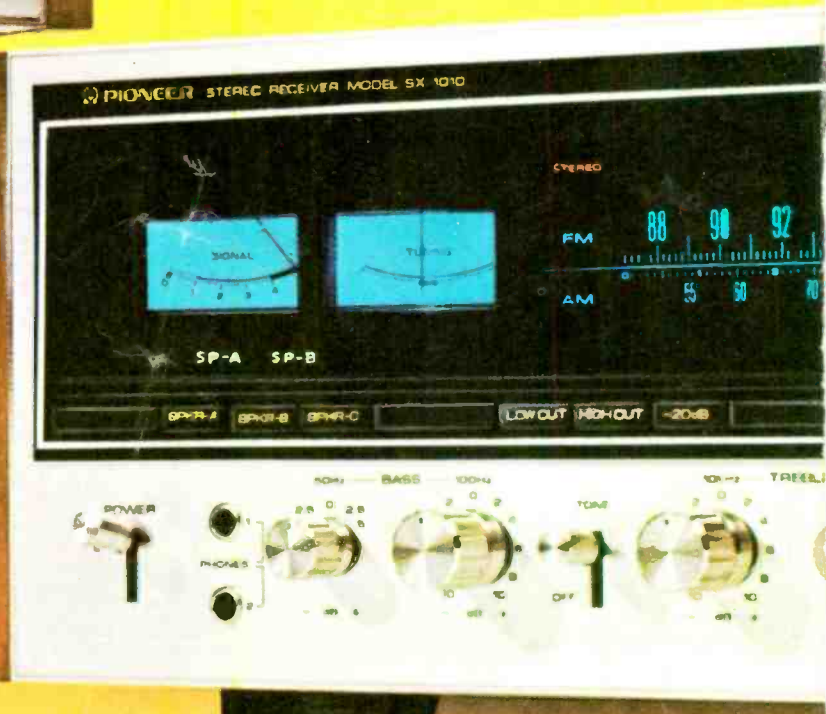
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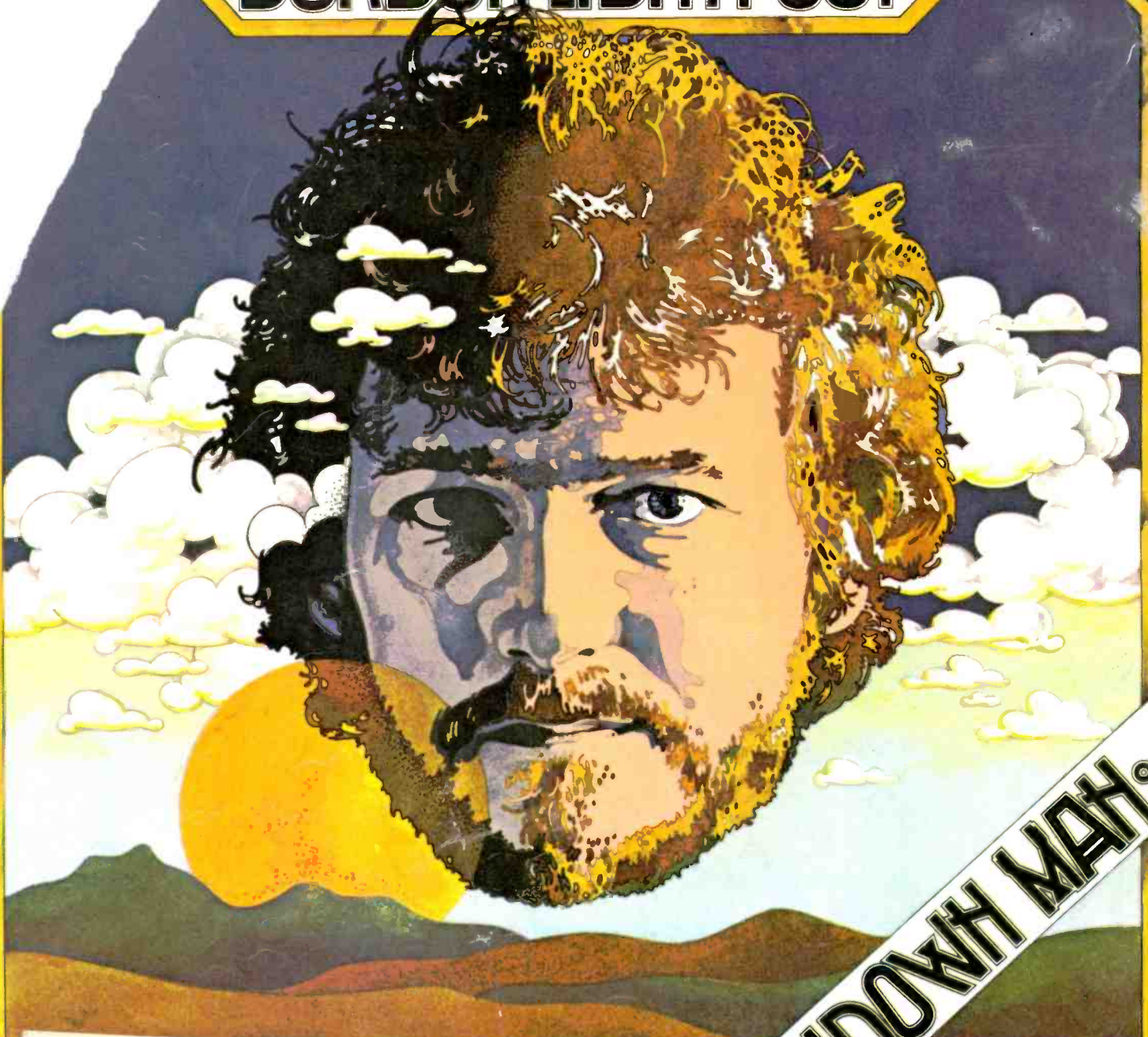




# eo Review

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# TAPE HORIZONS

By CRAIG STARK



## POLYSATURATED TAPES

LAST month I wrote about tape saturation—the attempt to put more magnetic information on the tape than it is capable of carrying. This results in gross overload distortion of the shape of the incoming musical waveform (you can even see it easily on an oscilloscope), and its audible effect can range from a mild dulling of the high frequencies, through a general muddying of the definition of the sound, to the creation of spurious buzzes. There's more to the subject than I could discuss last month, and here is some additional information.

Leaving aside the questions of how high a record level a manufacturer allows before he calls it "0 VU," as well as the variations to be found among tapes, there are two basic reasons why we habitually and unknowingly drive our tapes into saturation. The first has to do with the character of the musical signal, and the second with what the engineers call "recording equalization."

For test purposes, pure sine waves, with their regularly undulating peaks and valleys, are repeatable and easily generated. But musically they sound plain boring. In music, momentary peaks (not simply the crashing final chords of a symphony, but the instantaneous onset of what may sound like a rather soft note) may hit levels that, if sustained, would register at +20 VU—17 VU units above the top indication on your meter dial! A level of +20 VU is a ten-fold voltage increase over 0 VU, so it's no wonder the tape gets overloaded and distorts when it gets hit with a signal that brutal. As a practical illustration, when recording a harpsichord for a professional master tape, I don't let my record indicators get above a -7 or -8 VU reading, and I take -10 as if it were 0 VU.

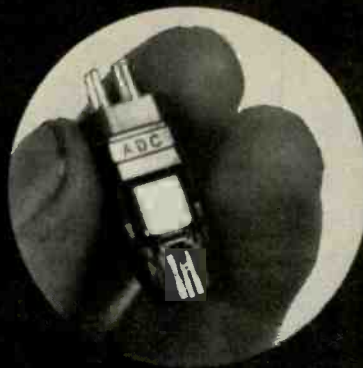
"Record EQ" (equalization) creates the other major difficulty. Depending on tape speed, the high frequencies must be boosted a certain amount before they reach the tape. This is to compensate in advance for predictable record-playback losses. I spoke with several industry

authorities to get some "ball-park" figures on the amount of boost typically required to record 15,000 Hz for various tape speeds and formats. The consensus was about as follows: at the 15-ips speed you need only about 2 to 3 dB (VU's) of pre-emphasis; at 7½ ips you'll need 6 to 8 dB; for the 3¾-ips speed the requirement rises to 14 or 16 dB; and a cassette, at 1⅞ ips, may have a 20-dB boost applied to the signal. The reason you can ever get away with hitting the tape with such an exaggerated high end is that, statistically, most music just doesn't have a great deal of energy in the extreme treble frequencies, and so only a small amount of energy is there to be boosted. However, "most" is not the same as "all," so the more treble boost you have to employ, the more frequently you will be driving the tape beyond its capacity into saturation.

New oxide formulations (such as chromium dioxide) and advanced coating processes can cut the need for treble pre-emphasis by several decibels at the very slow speeds, but it surely is obvious that the less you *have* to use, the better. The same applies to the extreme bass, where current standards call for a boost of about 4 dB at 50 Hz (NAB open-reel) or 8 dB (cassette). Again, statistically, you don't encounter that many low organ-pedal notes or contra-bassoons, but when you do, nothing on a conventional record meter will show that the tape is actually seeing a signal level that can drive it into saturation. That's why there are proposals now being made to lower the bass pre-emphasis on cassettes and to eliminate it altogether (following the European standard) for open-reel.

These discussions aren't intended as "scare talk." Yes, we all overdrive our tapes into saturation a lot more frequently than most recordists, slavishly watching their VU meters, ever imagine. But music is in the ear of the beholder, not in the meter of the technician, and what passes unperceived, like an artist's minor fluff, is best left so.





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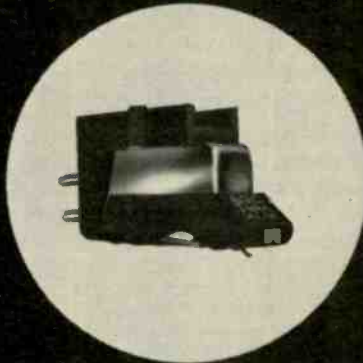
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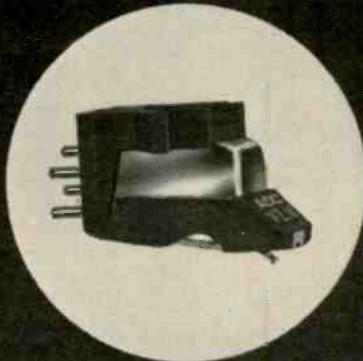
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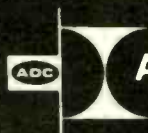
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# TECHNICAL TALK

By JULIAN D. HIRSCH

● **HOW WE TEST CASSETTE RECORDERS:** Certain measurable characteristics of a recorder, especially its frequency response, signal-to-noise ratio, and distortion, are critically dependent on the type of tape used during the measurements. A recorder is (or should be) adjusted at the factory to give optimum results with some specific type of tape. If a different tape is used during later lab tests, there is a good chance that there will be substantial differences between the manufacturer's ratings and the test lab's data.

This being so, one would expect the instruction manual of every cassette recorder to state clearly that the machine should be used with brand "XYZ" tape for best results. A few do, but most of them simply ignore the whole matter, perhaps in the hope that no one will notice the difference anyway. The consumer might not, but a test lab would find it hard to miss. For this reason, STEREO REVIEW always asks the recorder manufacturer to make a tape recommendation and, if possible, to supply as well the actual cassette(s) used to check out the machine in his own service laboratory before it is sent to us. Again, some comply, but many do not.

When confronted with a machine whose adjustments are unknown, we try several representative cassette brands, especially when the recorder has bias and/or equalization switching for more than one type of tape. These switch positions are sometimes cryptically marked, with some common nomenclature being NORMAL, STD, LH, LN EX, FeCr, and CrO<sub>2</sub>. The last three are fairly unequivocal, referring to Nakamichi EX, ferrichrome tapes, and (fortunately) any brand of chromium-dioxide tape. The first four, however, are less well defined.

It seems that no tape manufacturer likes to admit that he makes a "normal" tape, preferring to be known for his "low noise" or "high energy" formulations. Many recorder manufacturers expect

their products to be used with these premium tapes, and therefore assume that the NORMAL bias will be applied to them. On the other hand, others recognize that not all tapes are the equal of such premium types as TDK SD and ED, Maxell UD, etc., and design the NORMAL bias for normal *run-of-the-mill* tapes and the LH (or whatever) bias for tapes requiring higher than normal bias. In the absence of other information we (like any consumer) must depend on trial-and-error methods to discover the optimum combination of tape and recorder bias.

Let us assume that we have solved the tape puzzle. Because of the considerable

---

## TESTED THIS MONTH



**Nakamichi 500 Cassette Deck**  
**Micro/Acoustics QDC-1e Cartridge**  
**Sansui QRX-7001 Receiver**  
**Akai GX-400DSS Tape Deck**

---

amount of recording equalization (boost) used in cassette recording, it is very easy to saturate (overload) the tape at high frequencies. The overall record-playback frequency response is measured at a low input-signal level (usually -20 dB) to check the response below the saturation point. We also measure the response at a 0-dB recording level to judge overall susceptibility to tape saturation. It is interesting to observe that the "0-dB" curve, which begins to drop rapidly above a few thousand hertz, frequently crosses the -20-dB curve at some frequency between 10,000 and 15,000 Hz. In other words, above that frequency there is *less* playback output from a 0-dB signal than from a signal 20 dB weaker.

On a given recorder, the frequency at the "crossover" area can serve as a rough figure of merit for comparing the saturation characteristics of different tapes. When the same tape is used on different recorders, it can provide an indication of the amount of recording equalization used in a specific machine (which cannot actually be measured without getting into the machine's circuits) and thus, by inference, the high-frequency effectiveness of the recording head.

The overall record-playback frequency response of the recorder is measured with an automatically sweeping signal covering the 20- to 20,000-Hz range in about one minute. The playback response is plotted by a graphic level recorder whose chart movement is automatically synchronized to the frequency sweep. Almost all cassette recorders have a cyclic variation in their low-frequency response due to the head design. Usually beginning at about 300 Hz, this can become quite large at frequencies below about 100 Hz (although we have never been able to hear its effects on actual program material). Our frequency-response figures include this low-frequency variation, although we suspect that many manufacturers average the fluctuations to come up with a more attractive curve.

Since the recorder's own meters are generally the user's only guide in setting and monitoring signal levels, we believe that they should be the reference for other aspects of the recorder's performance. However, enough data is provided in our reports to enable the interested technical reader to convert our data to any of the other reference levels. We therefore initially measure playback distortion (at 1,000 Hz) with the recorder's meters indicating a 0-dB recording level. Then we increase the input signal until 3 per cent total harmonic distortion (THD) is measured. We also note the meter reading when playing standard Dolby-level reference tape with a stand-



ardized (200 nanowebers per meter) flux reference.

Actually, the record-playback frequency-response curve does not change appreciably when switching from one of the three reference levels to another, since they all fall within a span of several decibels. When we measure the signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) of the recorder we also use the meter's 0-dB point as a reference, but adding the meter-reading differences corresponding to either 3 per cent THD or a known flux level to our S/N figures converts them to any of the other references.

To measure the S/N ratio, we record a 1,000-Hz tone at the unit's 0-dB meter point, then remove the input signal and continue to record with only the bias current applied to the tape. On playback, the output noise in the latter portion of the tape is compared with the reference output. Since a measurement with a wideband meter includes considerable noise beyond the audible frequency range, we also measure through an IEC "A" weighting filter, which rolls off the inaudible low and high frequencies to give a better correlation with subjective effects. The same measurement is repeated with the Dolby or other noise-reduction system in use, if available.

Aside from requiring a set input-signal reference level, the Dolby-B circuits depend on having an essentially flat frequency response within the recorder over its operating frequency range. Any aberrations in the basic recorder response (and/or the tape's response) will be exaggerated by the Dolby playback processor, which continuously adjusts

the playback frequency response in accordance with the signals it receives from the tape. To judge the accuracy of the "tracking" of the Dolby record and playback functions, we repeat the frequency-response measurements at levels of -20 and -30 dB, both with and without the Dolby system in the circuit. If everything is working well, the two sets of curves should be alike within about 2 dB. In practice, there is frequently a difference at the low-level higher frequencies. Even if there are no obvious audible effects from this lack of tracking, it can reduce the effectiveness of the Dolby noise reduction by several decibels.

It is also important that the recorder's playback equalization conform to industry standards (120 microseconds for ferric-oxide tapes and 70 for CrO<sub>2</sub> tape) if it is to produce a correct playback frequency response from tapes made on other machines or duplicated commercially. The playback response is measured with a standard test tape having "spot" frequencies recorded at intervals from 30 or 40 Hz to a high of 10,000 Hz. The flux levels on these cassettes are supposed to be accurately controlled so that a correct playback-equalization characteristic will give a flat response. The azimuth of the recording head used to make these tapes (which are all first-generation, or master, recordings) is also set very accurately, so the tape can be used for adjusting the recorder's head azimuth. At present, technical limitations restrict the highest frequency of these test cassettes to 10,000 Hz, although almost any home machine can go higher than that.

We use several makes of test cassettes and find surprising differences between them. Although these differences rarely amount to more than about 3 dB and tend to occur at the frequency extremes, sometimes the various response curves they yield on the same machine bear little resemblance to each other. Since cassette-recorder manufacturers generally do not specify playback frequency response separately, this does not cause a conflict in verifying specifications, but it could explain the differences between the "playback-response" curves provided by different test labs.

Other cassette-recorder measurements involve the mechanical aspects of its operation. Ideally, flutter (a rapid, "fluttery" speed variation) should be measured with a standard low-flutter test tape. Unfortunately, most flutter test cassettes have a minimum flutter specification of 0.1 to 0.2 per cent, so they are of little value for testing recorders whose flutter ratings are at about the same percentage level. We therefore also measure the combined record-playback flutter directly on a cassette made from the 3,000-Hz signal output of our flutter meter. This type of measurement usually gives a somewhat higher reading than a "single-pass" test-cassette playback flutter measurement (assuming that the residual tape flutter in the test cassette is considerably less than that of the machine being tested) since some flutter is always introduced during recording and some during playback. However, when we get a lower figure in a combined measurement than with the test cassette, we accept it as being more representative of the recorder's true performance. Our flutter meter gives an unweighted r.m.s. reading, which is greater (by 20 to 50 per cent) than the weighted readings currently used by many manufacturers. Nevertheless, a reader can validly use the unweighted readings for comparing different recorders tested by us.

Absolute tape speed is difficult to measure without a test cassette having a precisely known frequency. Many flutter tapes have a tolerance of as much as 1 per cent on their 3,000-Hz tones, but some are more accurate and can be used with a frequency counter to give a fair indication of the recorder's speed accuracy. It is not possible to check this by recording a known frequency and playing it back on the same machine, since the same speed error would be present during both recording and playback and would therefore cancel out. Fortunately, even the 1 per cent speed error generally considered acceptable for cassette recorders is not likely to cause a noticeable pitch shift, and most of the machines we have checked appear to be much more accurate than that (0.5 per cent or better being typical).

Our other cassette-recorder tests in-  
(Continued on page 28)

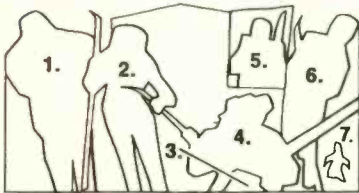




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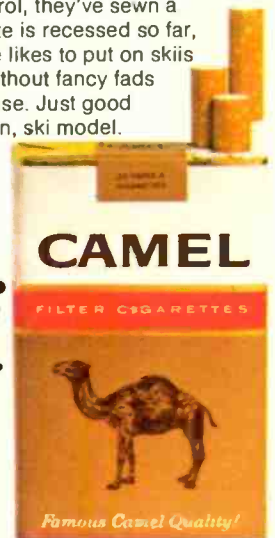


Almost every skier up here today has a gimmick. Find the one who doesn't.  
**1.** Nope. He's Sanford R. Brochure, resort owner.

Gimmick: Every weekend predicts "two inches of powder is coming!" (It's his wife—wearing heavy make-up.) Just bought some super-cool menthol cigarettes, and they turned to slush.  
**2.** She's Althea Home. Gimmick: Stretch pants so tight she mends them with spray paint. Thinks a ski pole is an athlete from Warsaw.  
**3.** An abominable snowman.  
**4.** No, he's

Boyer U. Dumm, beginner. Skis like a man being attacked by a lumber yard. Has been picked up so often by ski patrol, they've sewn a handle on his jacket. His filter cigarette's taste is recessed so far, it needs lift tickets to bring it out.  
**5.** Right. He likes to put on skis—not his fellow skiers. Wants his cigarette without fancy fads and gimmicks, too. Camel Filters. No nonsense. Just good taste and great tobacco.  
**6.** He's Gay Abandon, ski model. He's either wearing a huge fur hat—or his head is unravelling. Thinks a giant slalom is something you buy in an Italian deli.  
**7.** A pigeon, on his way to a formal dance.

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HIGH DENSITY PERMAFLUX HEAD

A rectangular window showing a cassette tape inside the deck. The tape is partially inserted and the reels are visible.

EJECT REC STOP PAUSE

TAPE RUN ONLY

A row of five buttons: EJECT (with a red indicator), REC (with a red indicator), STOP (with a double arrow icon), and PAUSE (with a double vertical bar icon). To the right is a cassette tape slot with a 'TAPE RUN ONLY' indicator.

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When we introduced the 450, it became the leader in cassette technology. (It still is.) We followed up with a less expensive version, the 360S, and it became a leader in its price category.

Now, you're going to be in for a round of so-called "revolutionary" new cassette machines two years behind the 450. There will be claims of advanced new drive mechanisms, a few new gadgets and gimmicks, and, of course, mighty hefty prices.

But there won't be claims of better *overall* performance, assuming the claims are truthful. One of the last remaining cassette problems is wow and flutter. The 360S has remarkably little—less than 0.07% WRMS. Oddly, that's the same figure all these "revolutionary" machines are skirting.



Naturally, the 360S features Dolby\* noise reduction... separate 3-position bias and equalization switches... a dual function metering system including VU meters and a peak indicator light... a memory digital counter and automatic shut-off. And, it has a hassle-free guarantee for two full years, including specifications!

If you're looking for a quality cassette deck, your nearby TEAC retailer is an excellent place to start (after all, he's had experience with the machines that started it all). You'll find that our retailers are well informed and helpful in general. Rare qualities, so there can't be many of them. You can find the one nearest you by calling (800) 447-4700.\* We'll pay for the call.

\*In Illinois, call (800) 322-4400

### **THE TEAC 2-YEAR WARRANTY.**

For two full years from the date of purchase, any TEAC TAPE DECK returned with warranty card and freight prepaid by the original registered purchaser to TEAC or its nearest authorized service station will be repaired free of charge for defects in workmanship or material. The same applies to TEAC car stereo decks for a period of one year. This warranty only covers TEAC products purchased in the U.S.A.

# **TEAC**

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\*Dolby is a trademark of Dolby Laboratories Inc.

TEAC Corporation of America, 7733 Telegraph Road, Montebello, California 90640.



clude such items as input sensitivity at the various inputs (for a 0-dB recording level), playback signal-output level from a 0-dB input-signal recording, the increase in recorded noise level through the microphone inputs, overload level of microphone inputs, and the time required to handle a C-60 cassette in fast forward and rewind. We check the meter movements' ballistic response by applying a 0.3-second tone burst and comparing readings with a constant signal of the

same level. A true "VU" meter will read within 1 per cent of its steady-state value on such a signal burst, but very few recorder meters meet that requirement.

Summarizing, until there is "complete disclosure" by cassette-recorder manufacturers of the relationship between their bias/equalization switch settings and specific tape brands, or at least of *one* brand and type for which their performance specifications can be guaranteed, there is little chance of our mea-

surements' precisely matching the manufacturer's published specifications (unless, of course, his ratings are so conservative as to represent "worst case" conditions). But, unlike the situation with some other audio components (speakers and tuners, for example), once the conditions of the tests are tightly specified in respect to the tapes and the weightings used, there is no great problem in correlating measurements made in different laboratories—or factories.

## EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories

### Nakamichi 500 Stereo Cassette Deck



● NAKAMICHI RESEARCH is best known for its three-head cassette recorders, which are generally acknowledged to be among the finest cassette machines currently available. They are priced accordingly. Much of their fine performance is due to the use of separate recording and playback heads. Nakamichi has now announced a moderately priced two-head machine that approaches the frequency response and dynamic range of their higher-priced units. This has been achieved, according to Nakamichi, by a new "focused-gap" crystal permalloy head.

The Nakamichi 500 is a top-loading cassette deck with a few unusual features. On its horizontal panel are six slider controls for left- and right-channel recording-gain adjustment of the line and microphone inputs (which can be mixed), plus a third center BLEND MIC input-level control and a single playback OUTPUT control. To the left of the controls is the cassette well, with a large clear window in its hinged cover. Nearby is the index-counter reset pushbutton and a MEMORY button that, when pressed (and when the tape has already been put into REWIND), automatically stops the tape when the counter reaches the "000" point previously preset by the user.

Along the front of the machine are the six piano-key transport controls labeled REC, REW, EJECT/STOP, PLAY/REC, F. FWD, and PAUSE. The controls are entirely mechanical in their operation, and the EJECT/STOP key must be pressed before going from any

mode—including fast forward and rewind—to any other. A light pressure on EJECT/STOP stops the tape, and further pressure ejects it from the cassette well. The transport is operated by a single servo-controlled d.c. motor with tachometer feedback to maintain a constant speed under varying line-voltage conditions—or 50-Hz European line frequency.

Along the right front of the recorder, near the level controls, are four toggle switches. BIAS and EQ switches adjust recording bias and recording and playback equalization for different types of tape. Each has positions for CrO<sub>2</sub>, EX, and NORMAL tapes. This last is used for most high-quality tapes such as TDK SD, while the EX position is intended for Nakamichi EX, a new "high-energy" tape. (The instruction manual gives suggested switch settings for many popular tapes.) Another switch turns the Dolby system on and off, and in its third position supplies a standard Dolby-level tone to the recording circuits for calibrating the Dolby level for use with any kind of tape (the adjustments are behind a cover in the rear of the recorder). The last switch turns on the recording-level LIMITER, a fast-acting circuit that goes into operation (to prevent excessive recording levels) only at signal peaks exceeding 0 dB. There is also a pushbutton power switch.

The two angled, illuminated level meters are among the most unusual features of the Nakamichi 500. They are peak-reading meters with a very fast response (150 millisec-

onds) and a slow decay time (about 2 seconds), and they effectively hold signal-peak indications for a short period rather than constantly moving, as is common for most "VU" indicators. The "0-dB" calibration corresponds to the Dolby level (200 nanowebers per meter), and is also the maximum recording level. A semi-logarithmic meter scale gives useful indications down to a -40-dB level, unlike other meters that have a range of 20 dB at most. Lights between the meters indicate record and Dolby status. Along the front edge of the recorder are the headphone jack (for 8-ohm phones; some higher-impedance units do not provide adequate volume), and three 1/4-inch microphone jacks for the left and right stereo microphones and a third center-blend microphone. In the rear of the machine are the signal inputs and outputs and a slide switch for the input filter that removes any residual 19-kHz pilot carrier when recording stereo FM programs. The 500 is finished in black with white wood side panels. It is 15 inches wide, 4 1/2 inches high, and 10 inches deep; it weighs approximately 15 1/2 pounds. Price: \$399.

● *Laboratory Measurements.* We first measured the playback frequency response with Philips TC-FR ("standard" equalization) and Teac MTT116SP (CrO<sub>2</sub> equalization) test cassettes. With the standard tape the response was  $\pm 2$  dB from the test cassettes' lower limit of 40 Hz to the upper limit of 10 kHz. The CrO<sub>2</sub> cassette measured  $\pm 1.2$  dB over the same range. A 0-dB recording level required an input of 60 millivolts (line) or 0.18 millivolts (mic) at maximum gain settings. The MIC inputs overloaded at a relatively low 17-millivolt input, so that an external attenuator may be necessary with certain microphones for recording some types of live music. The corresponding playback output, which also read 0 dB on the meters, was about 1 volt with the output control set to maximum. A reference Dolby-level test cassette gave a 0-dB meter indication.

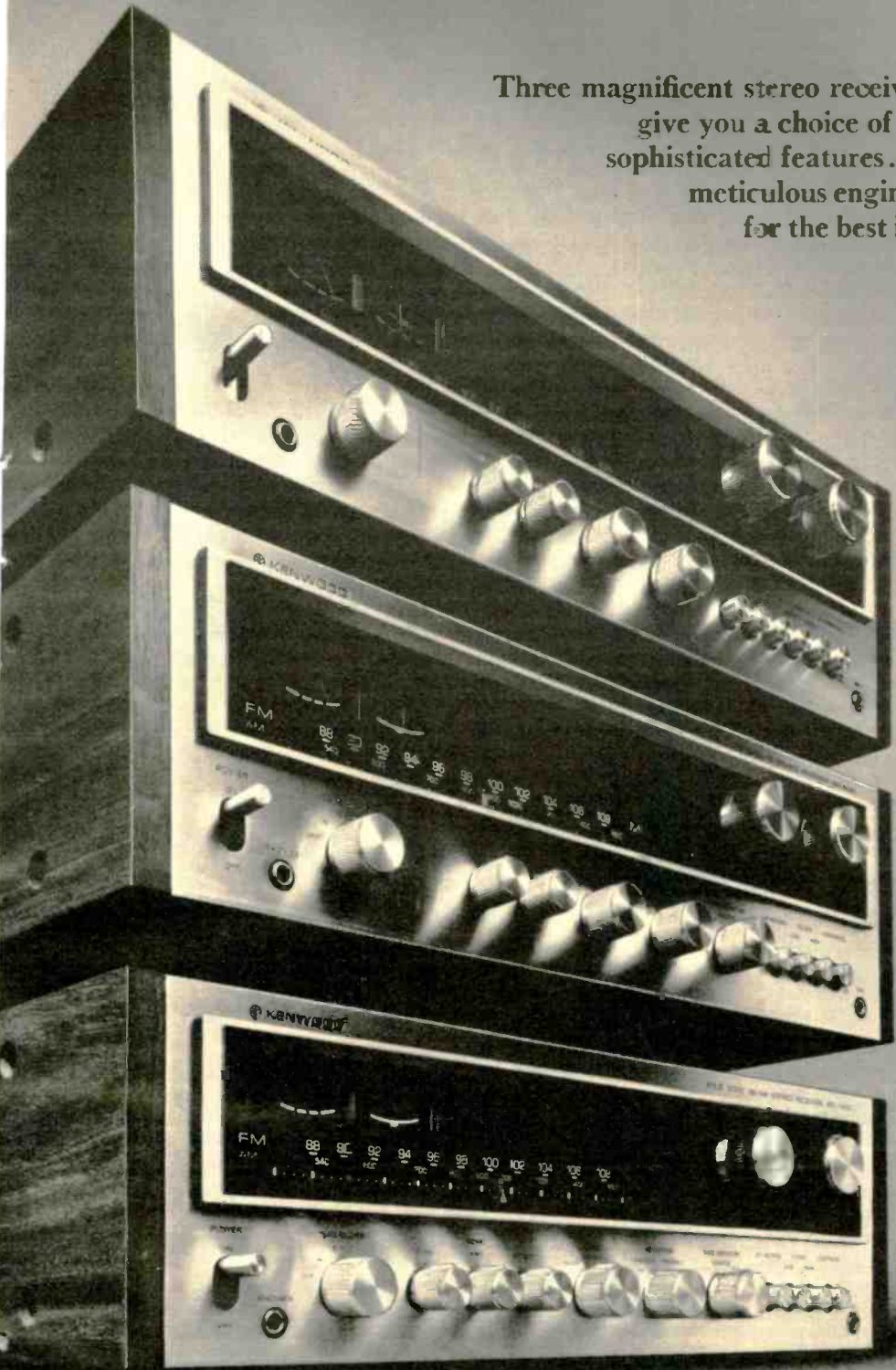
Our "normal" tape was TDK SD, for which the recorder was biased. Nakamichi EX and Chrome tapes were used for the EX and CrO<sub>2</sub> switch positions. For a 1,000-Hz  
(Continued on page 32)



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CIRCLE NO. 19 ON READER SERVICE CARD



# Belt, rim, or direct drive?

Some reasonably unbiased comments from the people who make all three.

Manufacturers of turntables with just one type of drive system—belt, rim, or direct-drive—naturally favor their own. Dual, however, makes all three, and we fully agree with Julian Hirsch who said: "It would make little difference if the platter were powered by well-disciplined hamsters on a treadmill. It is the end result that counts."

## The belt-drive system.

The main benefit of the belt-drive system is its effectiveness in filtering out motor vibration. It is a simple system that can be used with light duty motors and platters, and lends itself to low-cost manufacture.

The belt-driven Dual 601 is not compromised. It employs a high-torque 8-pole synchronous motor which drives a 4.5 pound dynamically-balanced platter, taking full advantage of a heavy platter's flywheel effect to filter out speed variations.

Thus, music lovers who prefer belt-driven single-play design can now enjoy the precision and performance of a Dual.

## The rim-drive system.

In the rim-drive system, the platter is driven by an idler wheel which disengages when not in play. Since each part must be machined and carefully quality-controlled for perfect concentricity, this system is not inexpensive to make. When correctly made, it will perform not only precisely, but reliably and durably.

More audio experts—hifi editors, record reviewers, engineers and music/equipment magazine readers—own and continue to purchase Duals (with this system) than any other make of quality turntable.

## The direct-drive system.

In direct-drive systems, the motor rotates at record speed and drives the platter directly, without need for intermediate coupling. The result is a somewhat

quieter and smoother platter rotation than is achieved with any other system. But direct-drive motors require a much more expensive technology.

The most advanced of all direct-drive systems is in the Dual 701. Among the exclusive features of its electronic motor: two sets of overlapping field coils that provide a totally gapless magnetic field that eliminates the successive pulses common to all other motor designs. Result: almost total elimination of wow and flutter.

## How drive system performances compare.

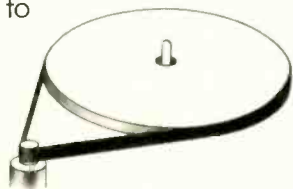
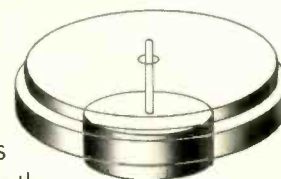
As measured by the highly conservative European standard (DIN), the performances of the rim-drive 1229Q and the belt-drive 601 are identical: weighted rumble: -63dB; wow and flutter less than 0.06%. The direct-drive 701 does even better: weighted rumble, -70dB; wow and flutter, less than 0.03%.

Although the 701 specifications are more impressive than those of the 1229Q and 601, you are not likely to detect any difference unless your other components also meet the highest possible performance standards and you are an exceptionally critical listener.

## So much for drive systems.

We now suggest you forget about differences among drive systems and simply decide which turntable best suits your requirements for total performance and convenience.

With a reasonable amount of bias, we also suggest your decision can be made quite happily from among the three types of Duals now available: Our automatic models with provision for multi-play, priced from \$129.95 to \$259.95. The belt-drive 601 at \$270. Or the direct-drive 701 at \$400.



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The electronic direct-drive Dual 701. Fully automatic, single play. \$400, including base and dust cover.

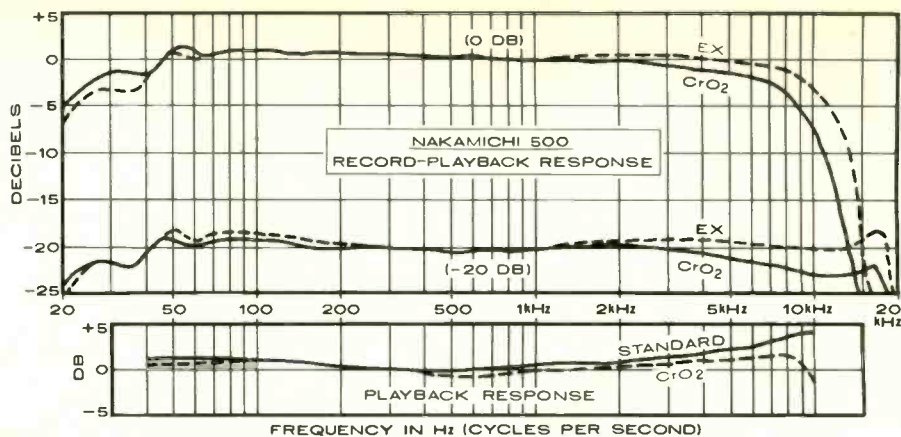


test signal at a 0-dB recording level, the playback distortion was between 2.2 and 2.5 per cent, depending on the tape. The reference distortion of 3 per cent was reached with a +1-dB input for TDK and EX tapes, and at +1.5 dB with CrO<sub>2</sub> tape. The unweighted signal-to-noise ratios (S/N) were, respectively, 49.5, 48.3, and 54 dB with these three tapes. With IEC "A" weighting, the S/N improved to 53.2, 51.8, and 58.5 dB. Using the Dolby system, the weighted S/N was 64 dB, 60 dB, and 64.8 dB, respectively. At the maximum setting of the microphone-input control, the noise increased by a negligible 3 dB.

The flutter (wow) was unmeasurable) was 0.13 per cent, and the overall record-playback flutter was 0.12 per cent (both measurements are unweighted rms). The tape speed on our sample appeared to be about 0.75 per cent fast—well within normal cassette-machine tolerances. An internal factory adjustment can be used to reset the speed if necessary. The fast wind and rewind speeds were relatively slow, with a C-60 cassette running through in about 2 minutes.

The overall record-playback frequency response was measured with the three tapes mentioned as well as with several other popular brands. The differences between the three basic tapes (with the machine set appropriately) were minor, all having an exceptional frequency response within  $\pm 2$  dB from approximately 25 to 18,000 Hz at a -20-dB level. The 0-dB frequency response coincided with the -20-dB curve between 14,000 and 15,000 Hz, which is typical of good cassette and recorder performance. We also repeated this test with the new 3M Classic cassette, a two-layer ferrichrome tape, using the EX bias and equalization. The frequency response ( $\pm 2$  dB) extended to beyond 19,000 Hz, and the 0-dB response remained strong to beyond 15,000 Hz and well above the -20-dB level all the way to 20,000 Hz. The Dolby circuits "tracked" properly over the full operating range, with less than 1.5 dB difference between the response with Dolby in and with it out. The multiplex filter introduced a slight 2.5-dB peak at 15 kHz, and then cut off sharply to about -30 dB at 19 kHz.

● **Comment.** The Nakamichi 500, in spite of its staid appearance, is an exceptional recorder. For one thing, it is mechanically the quietest cassette deck we can recall using (perhaps the Nakamichi 700 was as quiet, but we did not have one on hand for a comparison). In the fast tape speeds, only a faint whir indicated that the machine was running. Al-



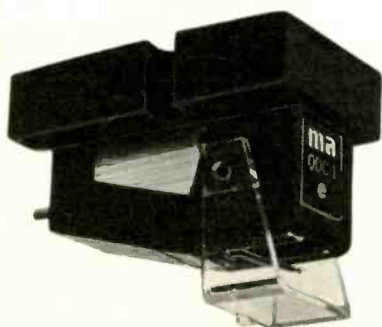
The highly refined record/playback head of the Nakamichi 500 is at center. This is the view that would be seen from the machine's rear edge, looking forward toward the transport keys.

though the functions of the six all-black piano-key transport controls are labeled in white lettering, in some weeks of use we never did feel confident that we could hit the right control without careful attention. Some color-coded symbols on the keys would help. The combined EJECT/STOP lever, which is found on some other recorders, also required finesse to operate; slightly too much pressure and the cassette pops out when you only want it to stop. The meters, however, more than make up for these minor annoyances. They are superb. We have never used a tape deck, either cassette or open-reel, whose meters gave such an unambiguous and useful indication of the program level. Since there is little "headroom" above 0 dB, it is important to keep peak levels below that point, but we found that average readings of -5 dB or so were sufficient to prevent any audible saturation effects. The limiter also worked effectively, having no apparent effect below 0 dB, but

coming into action almost instantly to keep the recorded level from exceeding that value at any time.

As for its sound, we have often stated in reviews of the better cassette decks that a number of them can dub from FM broadcasts, records, and most tapes (excluding master tapes whose dynamic range has not been restricted) with absolutely no degradation of audible quality. The Nakamichi 500 certainly does all of that, and furthermore makes it look easy. We would say that in the key specifications of frequency response, S/N, and distortion, it is at least the equal of any under-\$500 cassette recorder we have tested, and better than most. Only in its flutter measurement (which is nevertheless very good for a cassette machine) does the Nakamichi 500 fail to match a handful of the finest cassette decks we have tested, most of which cost appreciably more than \$399!

Circle 105 on reader service card



## Micro/Acoustics QDC-1e Phono Cartridge

● THE Micro/Acoustics QDC-1 is a stereo phono cartridge using permanently polarized electret elements to convert stylus motion to an audio-signal voltage. The electret is, in effect, a capacitor with a permanent electric charge in its dielectric. It responds to flexing or pressure by developing a voltage. In some respects, its action resembles that of a piezoelectric transducer, although its physical principles are quite different. Like the piezoelectric cartridge, the electret is an amplitude-

responding device, but its response can be converted to a velocity basis by using a relatively low-resistance termination built into the cartridge. (An amplitude response means the greater the stylus deflection, the higher the output; a velocity response means the faster the stylus deflection, the higher the output.)

The stylus cantilever of the QDC-1 is pivoted at the coupler that transfers its motion to the two generating elements. A symmetri-

(Continued on page 36)



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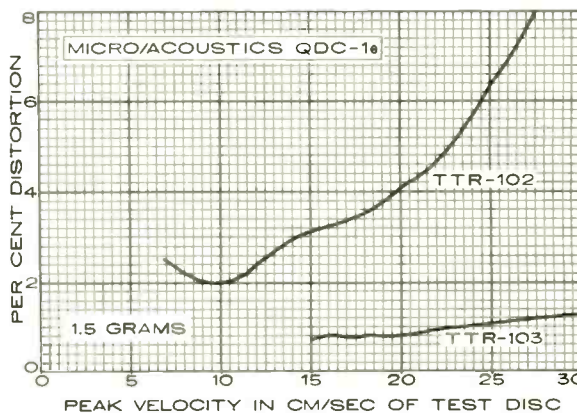
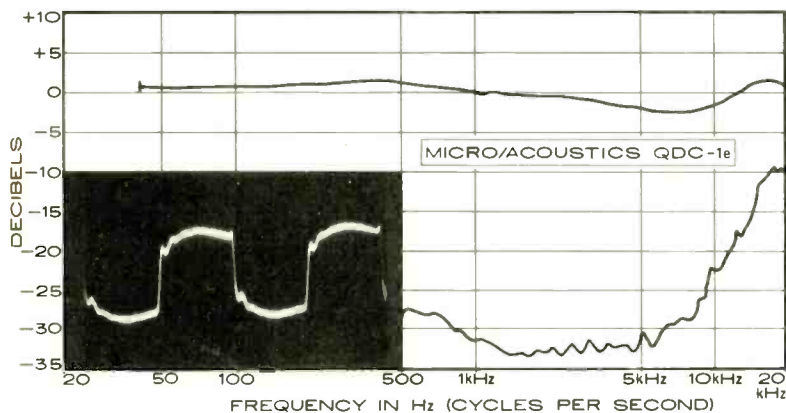


cal internal construction provides the necessary stereo channel separation. Having no inductive elements (the output impedance of the cartridge is essentially a pure resistance of about 8,000 ohms), the QDC-1 is uncritical as to the load it "sees." It is intended for operation into the standard preamplifier input impedance of 47,000 ohms, but different load resistances change only the magnitude of its output, and its frequency response is not affected significantly by load capacitances as high as 2,000 picofarads. As a further benefit, the preamplifier equalization is also unaffected by the electrical parameters of the cartridge. In the QDC-1, there are no electrical resonances; the mechanical stylus resonance is the

The low-frequency tracking characteristics of the QDC-1e suggest that its compliance is not as high as that of some of the latest magnetic cartridges, and this was confirmed by the low-frequency arm/cartridge resonance of 9 Hz (which is actually a more desirable frequency—because of its reduced tendency to interact with record warps—than the 7 Hz or so that we often measure in similar tone arms). The conventional IM distortion test, using the Shure TTR-102 record, showed acceptable distortion levels falling between 2 and 4 per cent up to a velocity of about 20 cm/sec. However, the distortion did not become excessive, even at the maximum level of 27.1 cm/sec, where it was 8 per cent (many

in the 5,000- to 8,000-Hz region, followed by a comparable rise centered at 15,000 Hz. Overall, it was an excellent  $\pm 2$  dB over the full audio range. Channel separation was better than most cartridges, exceeding 30 dB through the mid-range, typically about 20 dB at 10,000 Hz, and about 10 dB at 20,000 Hz. The crosstalk, as well as the frequency response, was virtually identical on both channels, attesting to the symmetry of the cartridge's internal structure. The output was 3.85 millivolts for a velocity of 3.54 cm/sec.

● *Comment.* A sheet accompanying the cartridge warned that ground loops can introduce hum when the QDC-1e is used in certain rec-



At left, the upper curve represents the averaged frequency response of the cartridge's right and left channels. The distance (calibrated in decibels) between the two curves represents the separation between channels. The oscilloscope photograph of the cartridge's response to a 1,000-Hz square wave is an indication of the cartridge's high- and low-frequency response and resonances. At right, the distortion of the cartridge for various recorded velocities of the TTR-102 and TTR-103 test records is shown. Note that the high velocities on these discs constitute extreme tests of cartridge performance, and the numbers cannot be compared directly with distortion of other components.

only one, and it is controlled by mechanical damping in the cartridge.

The Micro/Acoustics QDC-1 is available with a choice of user-replaceable styli that use nude diamonds. These presently include a 0.2 x 0.7-mil elliptical and 0.5-mil spherical stylus, and soon to come is a "Quadra-Point" CD-4 stylus. Each stylus assembly has a hinged stylus guard. The cartridge output (nominally 3.5 millivolts) and load requirements are compatible with any stereo amplifier, and its mounting dimensions and output terminals are standardized for easy installation in any tone arm. The rated tracking force is between 0.75 and 1.5 grams for the elliptical stylus, and between 0.9 and 1.5 grams for the spherical and CD-4 styli. Prices: QDC-1e, \$110; QDC-1s, \$100; QDC-1q (CD-4), \$120.

● *Laboratory Measurements.* We tested the Micro/Acoustics QDC-1e installed in the arm of a Dual 601 record player. To track the highest levels on our test records, it was necessary to use the maximum rated force of 1.5 grams. At this force, the 30-centimeter-per-second (cm/sec) 1,000-Hz tones of the Fairchild 101 record were reproduced with no clipping or other obvious distortion, and the high-level 32-Hz section of the Cook 60 record was played with some audible distortion but no loss of contact with the groove. The 300-Hz test bands of the German High-Fidelity Institute test record were tracked up to an amplitude of 70 micrometers, which is performance typical of some of the better cartridges made today, though not quite the equal of the best we have tested.

cartridges completely mistrack at this level). The high-frequency tracking ability was tested with the special 10.8-kHz tone bursts of the Shure TTR-103 record, and here the QDC-1e proved to be exceptionally good. The distortion was about as low as we have ever measured on this test—between 0.7 and 1.3 per cent as the velocity increased from 15 to 30 cm/sec.

The frequency-response measurement with the CBS STR100 record showed a slight dip

ord players (a simple rewiring of the ground connections to the cartridge is required to correct this condition). We did not experience any hum in our installation—in fact, we were struck by the *lack* of background noise, either hum or hiss, with the pickup on or off the record. As might be expected with a high-impedance device, the QDC-1e will pick up hum in some tone arms if one's hand is brought close to it. However, as soon as a ground is touched (or the hand removed), the hum disappears. A shielded head eliminates this effect.

Playing the Shure "Audio Obstacle Course—Era III" tracking test record gave results that correlated very well with our measurements. The highest level of bass drum was reproduced with a trace of a "rattle," but everything else on this very demanding record was played without distortion, including the highest level of the sibilance test, which has been the nemesis of almost every pickup we have tested. Playing records of all types, the QDC-1e is a neutral-sounding pickup, as would be expected. Not only is it free of audible coloration, but its tracking ability is exceptional at middle and high frequencies and is satisfactory, if not outstanding, at low frequencies. With most amplifiers (whose RIAA equalization can be significantly affected by interaction with the inductance of a magnetic cartridge coil) the Micro/Acoustics QDC-1e should give—perhaps for the first time—the correct output in the uppermost octave from 10,000 to 20,000 Hz. If the rest of the system, from records to speakers, is of comparable quality, this can significantly improve the overall sound of a system.

(Continued on page 38)

#### Correction

● Julian Hirsch's review of the Sherwood S-7110 AM/stereo FM receiver in the February issue was, as usual, straightforward and informative. However, there was an error. On page 36 he states: "One can use one or both of the speaker outputs, but they cannot be switched off for headphone listening." In fact, simply inserting the headphone plug into the front-panel jack automatically disconnects the speakers.

GARY S. ROBOFF  
Worcester, Mass.

*Mr. Hirsch replies: Mr. Roboff is correct, and my apologies to Sherwood and those readers I have misinformed on this point. The error occurred because I was misled by the lack of a "speakers-off" switch position, and I suspect that the headphones I used for a quick check so effectively isolated me from outside sounds that I didn't notice that the speakers had in fact been shut off.*





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Basically, the BELLE KLIPSCH is a domesticated version of Klipsch theater speakers installed in Radio

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A final comment is in order concerning Micro/Acoustics' claim that this cartridge will play a record with such fidelity that the sound will match, in an "A-B" test, that of the master tape from which the record was cut. Obviously, this is not a comparison that most

people will ever be able to make. Perhaps other fine cartridges can also meet this criterion of performance (we have not had the opportunity to find out), but we *can* say that such a demonstration of the Micro/Acoustics QDC-1e at their factory confirmed this claim

for me entirely. Clearly, nit-picking aside, the QDC-1e is a topflight cartridge with several notable advantages over most conventional magnetic cartridges, including instant conversion to CD-4 use via stylus replacement.

Circle 106 on reader service card

## Sansui QRX-7001 Four-channel Receiver



● THE QRX-7001 is Sansui's newest and most advanced four-channel receiver. It features the latest integrated-circuit (IC) version of their Vario-Matrix decoder for QS-encoded four-channel records and FM broadcasts. Even if only stereo material is available, a synthesizer circuit in the receiver effectively transforms two-channel programs into a QS-encoded form, from which they can be decoded into a synthetic four-channel program with separations of up to 20 dB between the channels. The QRX-7001 also has a built-in CD-4 demodulator and SQ decoding facilities.

The FM tuner section of the Sansui QRX-7001 has a field-effect transistor r.f. amplifier and an i.f. amplifier employing four ceramic filters and three IC amplifier/limiter stages. IC's are also used for the muting and multiplex functions, and a single IC contains almost all the AM-tuner circuitry. Examination of the schematic diagram of the receiver suggests that a large part of the total number of components is used in its four-channel decoding and demodulating circuits. For example, the Vario-Matrix section employs four special IC's plus fourteen transistors and a large number of other components.

The power-amplifier sections are directly coupled, both internally and to the speaker loads, and are rated at 140 watts total power. The four speaker outputs are monitored by a protective system that instantly disconnects the speakers with a relay in the presence of a

d.c. voltage. This circuit also provides a turn-on time delay to prevent noise transients from reaching the speakers.

The QRX-7001, like other recent Sansui receivers, has a satin-finish gold panel and knobs, with a black upper section containing the blackout tuning dial, meters, and tuning knob. The AM and FM dial scales light up in green, contrasting with the orange logging scale. Above the calibrations, identifying words and symbols show the operating status of the receiver: FM STEREO, SYNTHESIZER (HALL), SYNTHESIZER (SURROUND), QS, SQ, and CD-4 (the last light comes on only when a 30-kHz carrier signal is present at the phono inputs). A large numeral 2 or 4 shows the basic operating mode of the receiver. To the left of the dial are the zero-center FM tuning meter and the signal-strength meter used for both FM and AM tuning.

Below the dial area are ten pushbuttons and the three small black knobs used for CD-4 carrier-level and separation adjustments. One pushbutton is the power switch, two are the low and high filter switches, and the rest are used to select the desired stereo or quadraphonic operating mode. These include 2 CH, plus another button that feeds the front and any rear speakers on the same side with the same signal. The two synthesizer switches create a four-channel program from stereo programs and demodulate them with somewhat different spatial characteristics, identi-

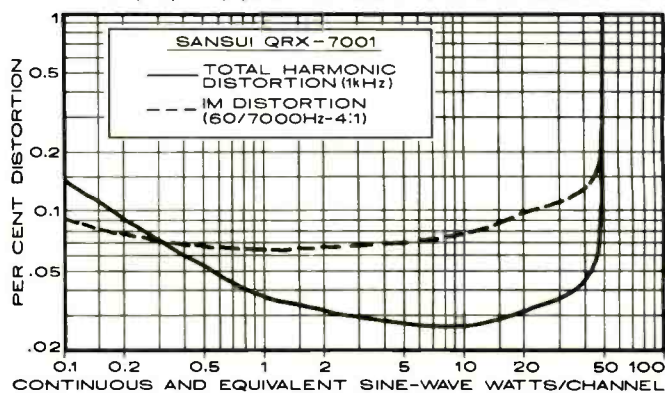
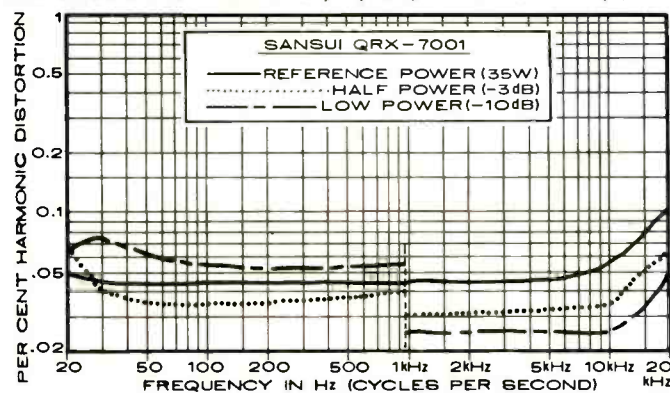
fied as HALL and SURROUND. The QS switch is used to decode QS records or FM broadcasts through the Vario-Matrix system, and the SQ button modifies the Vario-Matrix to decode SQ material with some degree of front-back logic assistance. Finally, the CD-4/4 CH DIRECT button connects the receiver's audio circuits (when the AUX input is selected) to the four discrete channel inputs in the rear or, when the PHONO input is selected, to the outputs of the CD-4 demodulator.

Across the lower portion of the panel are four small knobs for the separate bass and treble tone controls in the front and back channels (these are eleven-position detented controls). A SPEAKER switch connects either or both of two sets of speakers, or shuts them all off for headphone listening through separate front and back stereo headphone jacks. To the right of the tone controls are the balance controls, which are detented at their center settings. One concentric pair adjusts left-to-right balance separately for the front and back channels, and the other adjusts the overall front-to-back balance. A master volume control operates on all four channels.

At the right of the panel is the input selector, with positions for PHONO, FM AUTO, FM MONO (muting off), and AM. A separate pushbutton selects the AUX inputs independent of the selector switch, and another activates the loudness compensation. The remaining two pushbuttons are tape-monitor controls for two tape decks, with provision for dubbing from TAPE 1 TO TAPE 2. The rear of the receiver is fully occupied by the numerous input and output connectors, including insulated spring connectors for eight pairs of speaker outputs. There are antenna inputs for 300- and 75-ohm FM antennas and an external wire AM antenna in addition to the hinged (but not pivoted) AM ferrite-rod antenna. One set of tape-recorder connections is supplemented by a DIN socket. An FM DISC output carries the

(Continued on page 40)

The break in the distortion-vs.-frequency curves (below, left) shows where a low-frequency filter was added to reduce inaudible hum.





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S/N	55 dB
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Motors	3
Heads	3
4-Channel Record and Playback	Yes
Built-in S-O-S/Echo	Yes
Overdub	Yes
Frequency Response at 7½ ips	±3 dB, 30-23,000 Hz
S/N	58 dB
Wow and Flutter at 7½ ips	0.08%
Manufacturer's suggested retail price	<b>\$629.95</b>

Features and specifications as published by respective manufacturers in currently available literature.

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detected FM signal, before de-emphasis, for use with any future four-channel discrete FM adapter that might appear. There are two a.c. convenience outlets, one of them switched. The Sansui QRX-7001 is a relatively large and heavy receiver. Its overall dimensions are approximately 21¼ inches wide, 6½ inches high, and 16 inches deep; it weighs 53 pounds. Price: \$879.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The FM-tuner section, like the rest of the QRX-7001, easily met or surpassed its specifications in all respects. The IHF sensitivity was 1.9 microvolts ( $\mu\text{V}$ ), with a 50-dB quieting sensitivity of 3  $\mu\text{V}$  in mono and 40  $\mu\text{V}$  in stereo. The ultimate distortion was a very low 0.12 per cent in mono and 0.13 per cent in stereo, and the ultimate quieting was 67.5 dB in mono and 66.5 dB in stereo. Capture ratio was 1.5 dB at 1,000  $\mu\text{V}$  (2 dB at 10  $\mu\text{V}$ ), and the AM rejection was a very good 64 dB. Image rejection was 80 dB and alternate-channel selectivity was 82 dB—all excellent figures. In stereo FM, the frequency response was +0.8, -1.1 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz. Channel separation was excellent—45 dB at mid frequencies and better than 33 dB from 50 to 15,000 Hz. The 19-kHz pilot-carrier leakage into the output was 66 dB below the 100 per cent modulation level. AM performance was about average in sound quality, with the response down 6 dB at 70 and 3,200 Hz.

Audio power and distortion tests were made with all channels operating into 8-ohm loads (the QRX-7001 does not have a "strapped" mode for combining the front and back amplifier outputs in stereo). A one-hour "preconditioning" period at one-third power did not faze the receiver in the least. At 1,000 Hz, the power at clipping was 50 watts per

and 0.1 per cent from below 0.1 watt up to 20 watts, increasing to 0.15 per cent at 45 watts. Even at an output of about 3 milliwatts, where many amplifiers show an increase of IM because of the crossover-notch effect, the QRX-7001 had only 0.14 per cent IM.

The tone-control characteristics were conventional, with a limited but adequate range of about  $\pm 8$  dB at 100 and 10,000 Hz. The filters had gradual slopes of 6 dB per octave, with the -3-dB response points at 110 and 5,000 Hz. The loudness compensation boosted both low and high frequencies. The RIAA phono equalization was accurate to within  $\pm 1$  dB from 30 to 20,000 Hz, and was unaffected by phono-cartridge inductance. The amplifier input sensitivity for a 10-watt reference output was 45 millivolts (mV) for the AUX inputs and 1.15 mV on phono. The respective signal-to-noise ratios were 75 and 71 dB. Phono-input overload occurred at a very high 210 mV. In the CD-4 mode, the gain and overload levels varied with the setting of the CD-4 adjustments; with typical cartridges, overload took place at 30 mV, which is a usual figure for most of today's CD-4 demodulators. CD-4 cartridges generally have a rather low output, and in practice would be unlikely to overload the system when playing CD-4 records, which tend to be cut at somewhat lower levels also. The QRX-7001 also has the very desirable feature that its CD-4 demodulator is completely by-passed in the two-channel or matrix modes, so that the full dynamic range of the phono preamplifier is available whenever CD-4 records are not being played.

● **Comment.** As we have pointed out before, as of the moment the *ideal* receiver for all three current four-channel techniques (SQ, QS, and CD-4) has not yet appeared. In every

dB of separation along the sides, like a simple SQ matrix. With many records, this sounds fine, but it sounds a poor second to a QS record played through the Vario-Matrix (which, in its most advanced form as here, gives about 20 dB of separation in all directions), or to an SQ record played through one of the available wave-matching, variable-blend SQ decoders.

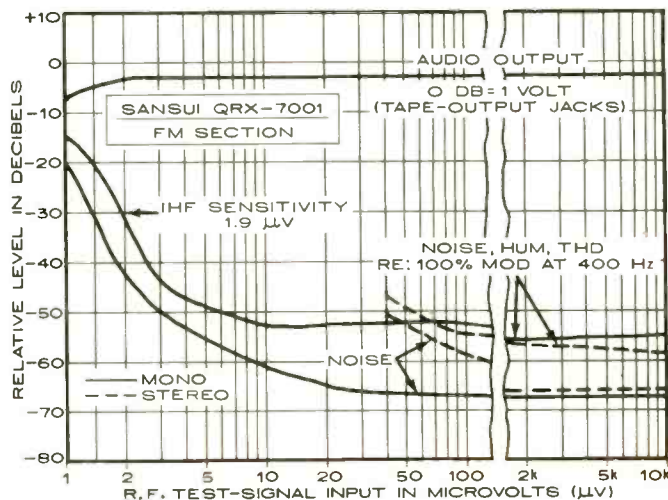
Although QS records are by no means as common as SQ records, many FM stations across the country are now using Sansui encoders to transmit quadraphonic programs, sometimes from QS discs or discrete tape sources, but more often synthesized from stereo originals. Here in the New York area, at least four such stations can be received, and the results heard through the QRX-7001 varied from good to spectacular. Furthermore, almost the same results are obtainable at home by using the synthesizer mode of the receiver with *any* stereo program source. The subjective separation was sometimes so nearly "discrete" in its character that it could easily be mistaken for a CD-4 or four-channel tape program.

In its functional aspects, the QRX-7001 is equally impressive. It is a very smooth-handling receiver, with Sansui's outstandingly quiet FM interstation-noise muting system that provides either a program or silence, with no "in-between" state. However, in our early sample of the unit the interstation-noise muting and FM stereo threshold were set at 40  $\mu\text{V}$ , thereby preventing the reception of many stations that would otherwise be heard with acceptable stereo quality. To disable the muting function, the receiver must be switched to mono reception, which is somewhat unconventional. We are told that normal production units will be set for a more sensible muting level of 10 to 15 microvolts, which



Most of the phono jacks on the 7001's rear panel are grouped arrays for the front and rear channels. The phono inputs are at lower left, while the spring-loaded speaker connectors are near the lower right.

The levels of both random noise and total noise plus distortion are compared with the audio-output level as input-signal strength increases. Both mono and stereo are shown.



channel into 8 ohms, and 69 watts into 4 ohms. The harmonic distortion was nearly independent of frequency and power over a wide range, typically measuring under 0.05 per cent at any power from full rated (35 watts) to one-tenth power, and over almost the entire audio range. The highest distortion we measured was at full power and 20,000 Hz, where it read a mere 0.1 per cent. The 1,000-Hz harmonic distortion at under 1-watt output was masked by inaudible noise. It was about 0.03 per cent from 1 to 25 watts, 0.04 per cent at 45 watts, and 0.1 per cent just below the clipping point at 50 watts. The intermodulation distortion (IM) was between 0.065

case of which we're aware, one or two of these demodulator/decoder systems are given elaborate facilities, while the others must make do with simple, relatively unsophisticated processing. The Sansui QRX-7001 is unquestionably the finest QS receiver we have seen, and it also does a fine job with CD-4 discs. The adjustment of its CD-4 circuits is very simple with the aid of the special record supplied with the receiver, and we found no flaws in its sound with CD-4 records. However, although the SQ mode of the QRX-7001 gives a satisfactory center-front to center-back separation typical of many "partial logic" SQ decoders, it has perhaps only 3

should work well without troublesome side effects.

Unless optimum playback of SQ material is of prime importance to you, the Sansui QRX-7001 could well be the single most advanced four-channel receiver you can buy today. At any rate, it delivers better four-channel sound, on more types of program material (including ordinary stereo), than any other receiver we have yet tested. And, for SQ enthusiasts, an add-on full-logic SQ decoder can be added via the four-channel tape-monitoring jacks.

Circle 107 on reader service card

(Continued on page 42)



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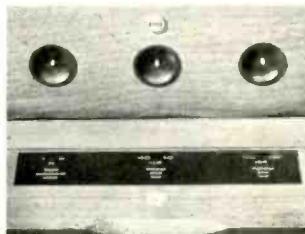
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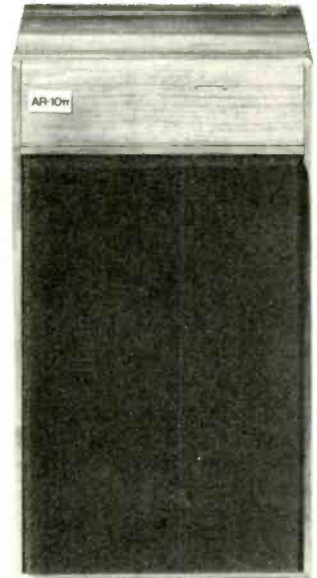
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## Akai GX-400DSS Four-channel Tape Deck



● THE Akai GX-400DSS is an exceptionally versatile open-reel tape deck with many features directed at the advanced amateur tape enthusiast. It is a four-channel machine with a synchronous dubbing system (which Akai calls Quadra-Sync) that permits any of the four tracks of the recording head to be temporarily used as a playback head while making a recording on any or all of the other three tracks. This technique can be used to "build up" a four-track recording, one track at a time, with all parts in perfect synchronization, and without the need to transfer any material from track to track.

The GX-400DSS can also be used as a conventional stereo recorder, with automatic reversal and playback of the second pair of tracks. Its three-motor transport has three operating speeds— $3\frac{3}{4}$ ,  $7\frac{1}{2}$ , and 15 ips—and can handle reels up to  $10\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter. The transport is operated by electromechanical solenoids through light-touch pushbuttons, and it has a complete "logic" system that prevents improper tape handling and permits changing from any mode of tape motion to any other without requiring the use of the STOP button.

Dual capstans and pinch rollers on either side of the head assembly drive the tape in the two directions under controlled tension, and outboard tension arms maintain proper tape tension at the supply and take-up reels. The head cover is hinged for easy access to the head-alignment adjustments. A toggle switch establishes the proper tape tension for  $10\frac{1}{2}$ - and 7-inch reels, and there is a four-digit push-button-reset index counter. Green arrows light up to show the direction of tape motion.

Below the head section are toggle switches for controlling power and for activating the automatic shut-off feature (which can be set to turn off all power to the recorder when the tape runs out). A knob selects the desired mode of automation. In the OFF position, the recorder operates normally, shutting off only when the tape runs out or breaks. The SINGLE position permits the tape to play until a piece of conducting foil attached to the back of the tape reaches a contactor in the tape path; at that point, the tape direction reverses and the second pair of tracks is played. (Although this function can be used when recording in the forward direction, the machine cannot record in reverse.) The CONT position permits indefinite repetition of a tape, or any section of one, if a second piece of foil is attached to the ox-

ide side of the tape at the beginning point. Since, in the four-channel mode, all the tape tracks are played fully in a single forward pass, the reversing system works differently during four-channel operation. When the reversing point is reached, the transport goes into the fast-rewind mode instead of normal playing speed. If the CONT mode is selected, the tape is played again after being rewound to the beginning.

The next control knob selects the desired operating speed, and it is followed by two toggle switches for the CUE and PAUSE functions. (CUE presses the tape lightly against the playback head during fast forward or rewind operation to aid in locating a recorded selection). Six colored pushbuttons (illuminated when pressed) control the tape-transport and recording-interlock functions. In addition to RECORD and STOP, they select both normal and fast speeds in both directions of tape travel. Four pushbuttons underneath these controls are used for the Quadra-Sync system. Pressing any of them converts the recording-head section for that channel to playback. A fifth button selects either four-channel or two-channel operation, disabling the rear-channel electronics and extinguishing the lights of the rear-channel meters if the two-channel mode is selected.

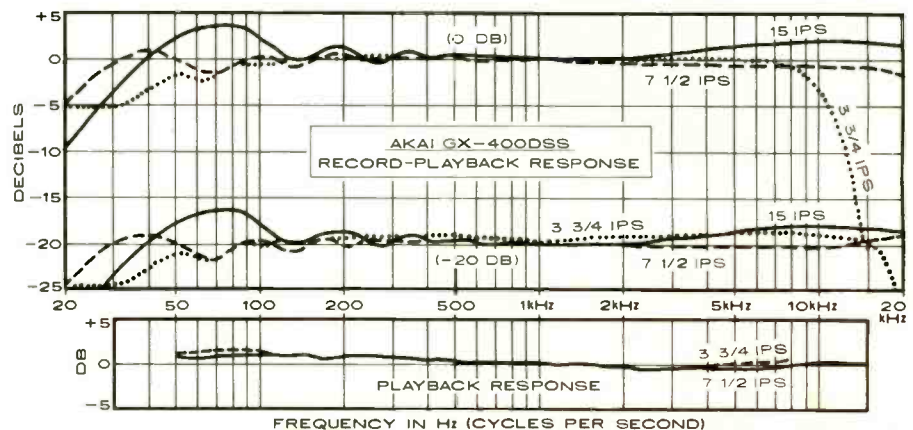
The four large recording-level meters, softly lit in blue, monitor both recording and playback levels for the four channels. A red light above each meter glows when that channel is in the record mode. In the center of the meter group is a toggle switch that connects either

the source or the playback signal to the line outputs. Along the bottom of the panel are the various level controls. Each channel has a concentric pair of knobs for separate adjustment of the line and microphone inputs (which can be mixed), and a concentric pair of playback-level controls provides separate adjustment of the front- and rear-channel levels. At the lower right are the four microphone-input jacks, and at the lower left are the two headphone jacks for the front and rear channels. Above them is a pushbutton that adjusts the recorder's circuits for standard or "low-noise" tapes (it is not stated whether this affects bias or equalization).

In the rear of the GX-400DSS are the line input and output jacks, plus two DIN connectors duplicating their functions for the front and rear channels and a slide switch to adjust the sensitivity of the DIN inputs. There is a socket for an optional remote-control accessory (\$49.95), a universal line-voltage adjustment, and two unswitched a.c. outlets. The Akai GX-400DSS is a large, heavy machine. It measures  $23\frac{1}{4}$  inches high, 18 inches wide, and  $9\frac{1}{2}$  inches deep. The weight is about 70 pounds. It can be operated in either a vertical or a horizontal position. The recorder is supplied with two reel-hub adapters for  $10\frac{1}{2}$ -inch NAB-type reels, and an empty  $10\frac{1}{2}$ -inch take-up reel. Price: \$1,495.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The playback frequency response over the range of the Ampex test tapes was very uniform—within  $\pm 0.8$  dB from 50 to 15,000 Hz at  $7\frac{1}{2}$  ips, and within  $\pm 0.6$  dB from 50 to 7,500 Hz at  $3\frac{3}{4}$  ips. All other measurements of the Akai GX-400DSS, including record-playback frequency response, were made with the recommended Akai SRT-F tape, using the "low-noise" switch setting. We measured the record-playback response at each tape speed, using recording levels of  $-20$  dB and also 0 dB (to indicate the degree of tape saturation at high frequencies, which usually reduces the high-frequency response at high recording levels). At  $3\frac{3}{4}$  ips, the  $-20$ -dB response was an excellent  $\pm 3$  dB from 20 to 19,000 Hz, and it was within  $\pm 1$  dB from 70 to 17,000 Hz. At the 0-dB level, the expected roll-off appeared above 10,000 Hz, with a loss of about 20 dB at 15,000 Hz. At the  $7\frac{1}{2}$ -ips tape speed, things were quite different. The  $-20$ -dB response was essentially within  $\pm 2$  dB from 20 to about 25,000 Hz, and at 0 dB was within

(Continued on page 46)



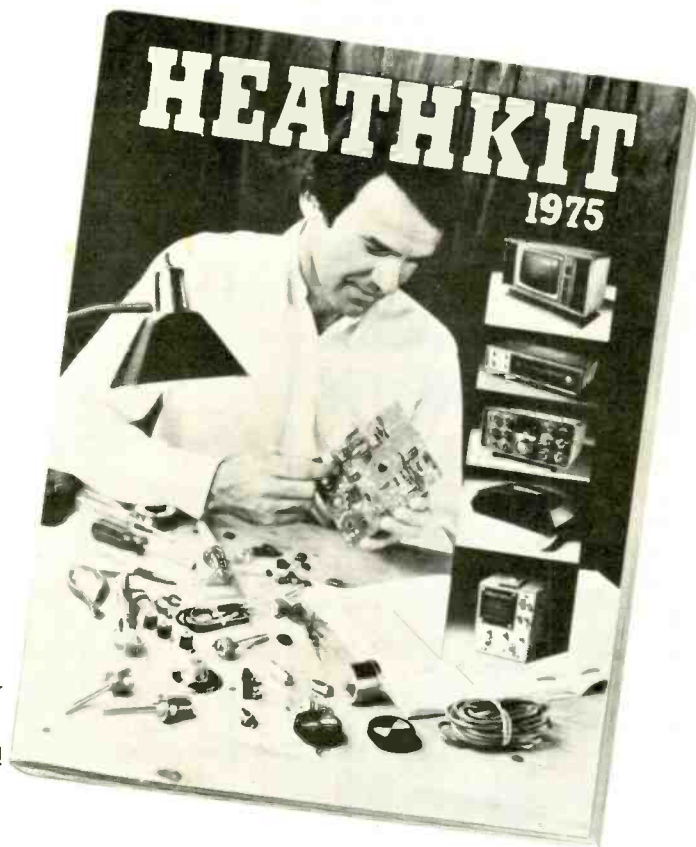


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## Akai GX-400DSS Tape Deck . . .

(Continued from page 42)

$\pm 1$  dB to 21,000 Hz! The 15-ips response was, as expected, even better at the high end, but had a broad rise in the low frequencies between 40 and 100 Hz. Response was within  $\pm 1.25$  dB from 100 to 27,000 Hz, and within  $\pm 4$  dB from 27 to 31,000 Hz. There was no detectable difference between the response curves at  $-20$  and  $0$  dB when we used the 15-ips tape speed.

The recording amplifiers of the GX-400DSS had rather high gain, requiring only 20 millivolts (mV) at the line inputs, or 0.15 mV at the microphone inputs, for a 0-dB recording level. The corresponding output on playback was 1.25 volts. The microphone inputs overloaded at a 75-mV input. At an indicated 0-dB recording level with a 1,000-Hz test signal, distortion upon playback was between 0.8 and 1 per cent, and an input of +8 dB was needed before the standard reference playback distortion of 3 per cent was reached. There was no significant difference in the distortion characteristics between the three speeds. The overall signal-to-noise ratio (S/N), referenced to the output from a 1,000-Hz signal recorded at +8 dB, was actually best at the slowest speed, with an unweighted figure of 57 dB. At 7½ and 15 ips, the unweighted S/N was 56 dB and 53 dB, respectively. With IEC "A" weighting, the S/N was 62 dB at 3¾ ips, 63 dB at 7½ ips, and 61 dB at 15 ips. The increase in noise through the microphone inputs at maximum gain was about 5 dB. At normally used microphone gain settings, there was no detectable noise increase.

The excellence of the tape transport was evidenced by its low wow and flutter figures. There was virtually no difference between the 3¾- and 7½-ips measurements, with the wow reading at the residual of the tapes (0.01 to 0.02 per cent) and flutter between 0.05 and 0.06 per cent rms unweighted. No flutter test tape was available for the 15-ips speed. In the reverse direction, the results were quite similar, the only difference being a slight increase in the 3¾-ips flutter figure to 0.07 per cent. The tape speed was slightly fast, by 0.6 per cent at 7½ ips and 0.3 per cent at 3¾ ips. In fast forward or rewind, a 1,800-foot tape reel

was handled in approximately 95 seconds.

The meter-movement ballistics were somewhat slower than the standard for true VU meters. The meters reached about 65 per cent of their steady-state readings (instead of the standard 99 per cent) when driven by 0.3-second tone bursts. A standard Dolby-level tape (200 nanowebers per meter) produced meter readings from  $-1.5$  to  $-2$  dB on the four channels. Headphone volume was satisfactory with 8-ohm phones, but too low for monitoring with 200-ohm phones.

● *Comment.* It should be apparent that even a sketchy description of the many modes of operation of the Akai GX-400DSS would require more space than is available here. Our only "problem" related to the cleaning of the heads. Although the head cover is hinged, it does not expose the head faces themselves to view—only the adjustment screws. The heads are recessed behind a mounting plate, and we found it necessary to place the recorder on its back in order to clean them, not the most convenient procedure for a machine of its size and weight.

We attempted to use the recorder under all the conditions described in the manual, and found that everything worked exactly as claimed. When we recorded interstation FM hiss and compared the playback with the incoming signal, it was no surprise to find that there was absolutely no difference at the two higher tape speeds and only a slight dulling of the extreme highs at 3¾ ips. This was true even when the recording level was in the vicinity of 0 dB (which could have been inferred from the almost total absence of tape saturation effects at 7½ and 15 ips).

Needless to say, with available program material, the GX-400DSS did a perfect job of recording and playing back. Not having a chance to use it in a "live" recording situation, we never approached the limits of the recorder's capabilities. The transport logic system was a pleasure to use, and the braking was so fast and smooth that touching either play button while the tape was in fast forward or rewind brought it to a stop in about one second and brought it back up to play speed in another second or so. In any event, the rugged construction and fine performance of the Akai GX-400DSS strongly suggest that it will provide years of satisfactory service. Like any machine with synchronous dubbing capability, its applications are limited only by the user's ingenuity and needs.

Circle 108 on reader service card



The Quadra-Sync selector buttons and mode switch are just above the four recording-level meters on the GX-400DSS.



Put a record on and walk away. The Philips 209 will automatically sense the disc size, select the speed, spin the platter and cue the tone arm electronically, all by itself.

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We minimized the 209's aluminum tone arm size to cut down mass related resonance. Tracking error is less than  $0^{\circ} 10'$ /cm. That means tracking error, for your ears, does not exist. Friction, both vertically and horizontally, is less than  $10\text{mg}$ . The tone arm assembly in its rest position provides a continuous read-out stylus force range.

Now we're working on automating the dust cover. Any ideas?

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Speeds:  $33\frac{1}{3}$  & 45 rpm —  
electronic/automatic selection  
Speed calibration range:  $\pm 3\%$   
Wow and flutter: less than 0.08% —  
(Typically 0.03%)  
Rumble:  $-65$  dB DIN B (ARLL)  
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# THE SIMELS REPORT

By STEVE SIMELS



## CONFESSIONS OF A GUESS WHO FAN

I had a rock-and-roll epiphany of sorts the other week. I came to the conclusion that the Guess Who are one of the finest bands in rock, and that their front man and keyboard player Burton Cummings is the Thinking Man's Elton John.

You don't believe me, of course, but knowing that you wouldn't is part of what made the realization sort of a Religious Experience (helped along by being alone in my room late at night, consuming half a bottle of J&B, and listening to six of their albums). As a matter of fact, *nobody* believes me. When I advanced the thesis to some of my more musically inclined friends, I received a torrent of verbal abuse unparalleled since the last time I asserted that anyone who claims he can tell the difference between an hour-long, free-form honk solo by John Coltrane and an hour-long, free-form honk solo by a second-year sax student wasted on Second is kidding himself. The kindest comment I got, actually, was "As long as you don't claim this is anything more than one of your own personal, not recently re-examined perversions."

Well, I do, but that's neither here nor there, and if truth be told, my passion for the band is not of as recent vintage as I've made it sound, although I have managed to keep it closeted. I play "So Long, Bannatyne" and "Live at the Paramount" all the time. I can do the riff from *Albert Flasher* on the piano (usually telling people it's Leon Russell, to avoid embarrassment), and last spring I even had an interview

with Burton scheduled until the poor guy got pneumonia, which development I took personally, of course.

At any rate, now that I've established my objectivity as far as they're concerned, I suppose a little history is in order. The boys are from Canada, and, as I'm sure you know, they had a healthy string of hits in the early Seventies. Randy Bachman, now head honcho of the startlingly successful Bachman-Turner Overdrive, was their original guitarist (one of the few joys of the current rock scene is reading articles in which the two bands badmouth each other), and their music has always been first-rate mainstream rock-and-roll—strong tunes, blazing guitars, and soaring harmonies. What makes them special is that Burton is a really great rock singer and a tremendous pianist adept in a variety of styles from Little Richard to Bill Evans. And as if that isn't enough, they project an endearing punk-dumb sense of humor that reminds me of nothing so much as the dopey things the Beach Boys used to do on their older records, like *I'm Bugged at My Old Man*. On "Bannatyne," for example, there's a song entitled *One Man Army* (aimed at their critics, obviously) which has a great hard-rock chorus constantly interrupted by a conversation, between two Chicanos in a club men's room, about what a rotten band is playing there that night. Their albums are usually uneven—Burton has an off-and-on penchant for coffee-house profundity, and their lyrics are too often filled with madden-

ingly personal references to specific places and people—but at least two of them are unqualified successes, and "Rockin'" in particular is as creative, moving, and funny as anything done in the Seventies by anyone. If they were English, they'd probably be legends.

Okay, then, why do all my friends think they're a joke, and why am I being so defensive? Why don't people take them seriously? Snobbery, plain and simple. They had *Top Forty* hits, you see, and too many people still feel that implies a lack of talent. Of course, so did the Beatles, and Bob Dylan, and Led Zeppelin, and Creedence Clearwater Revival, and on and on and on. There's no logic to the idea, but there it is. Some groups manage to overcome this unreasoning prejudice, for reasons that remain mysterious, and some don't: the Guess Who just haven't been lucky enough. They'll deny it (from *Sour Suite*: "Reviewers laugh at me, so I go out to sea"), but the critical razzing *has* to bother them, and when I read that they were about to do a three-day stint at the Bottom Line, an obvious media showcase, I was immediately intrigued. How would they handle themselves? Would they bow to the critics and try to be "musicians," or would they simply be themselves?

As it turned out, they opted for a bit of both. The band is four pieces these days, for the first time since Bachman's departure, and new guitarist Domenic Troiano is a cult favorite with certified musician's credentials. In a quartet context, the weight is very clearly on him, and the group went out of their way to exploit his prowess. The result was a lot of Mahavishnu-inspired trickiness and virtuoso display, mostly meaningless and dishwasher dull, but the crowd absolutely adored it, which was obviously the idea. At the same time, however, Burton carried on inimitably: mugging and singing his derriere off. He pounded away at the keyboard during the rock-and-roll numbers ("What we like to play best," he said, showing that his heart's in the right place) with manic abandon and injected his own hilarious spoken asides in the middle of some of the songs (notably *Show Biz Shoes*, whose bitterness would be a drag without Burton's quasi Beatnik-poet recitations to deflate it). And they *did* do a lot of their hits, all of which sounded as good as ever, including the oh-so-catchy *Dancing Fool*, their most recent one and my own favorite candidate for single of the year.

I went home pretty pleased about the whole business, and even the couple of nonbelievers I dragged along under duress were reasonably impressed. As a consequence, I'm now daring to hope that a bit more missionary work along the lines of this column will do the trick for them, so that perhaps my pals will stop giggling every time I mention the band. Even better, perhaps Burton and Company will feel free just to get out there and rock the next time they're in town.

In the meantime, let me suggest that if any of this has intrigued you at all, or if you feel I have hopelessly blown the last vestiges of my credibility, simply pick up a copy of "Rockin,'" which is available for a paltry \$1.99 at better bargain bins everywhere. Listen to their priceless version of that great Moldy Oldie, *Running Bear*. Listen to *Guns, Guns, Guns* and *Herbert's a Loser* and *Don't You Want Me*. Listen to *your* friends snickering when they see the record on your turntable. Then make *them* listen, and we just might have the makings of a movement.

Burton Cummings

Garry Peterson

Don Troiano

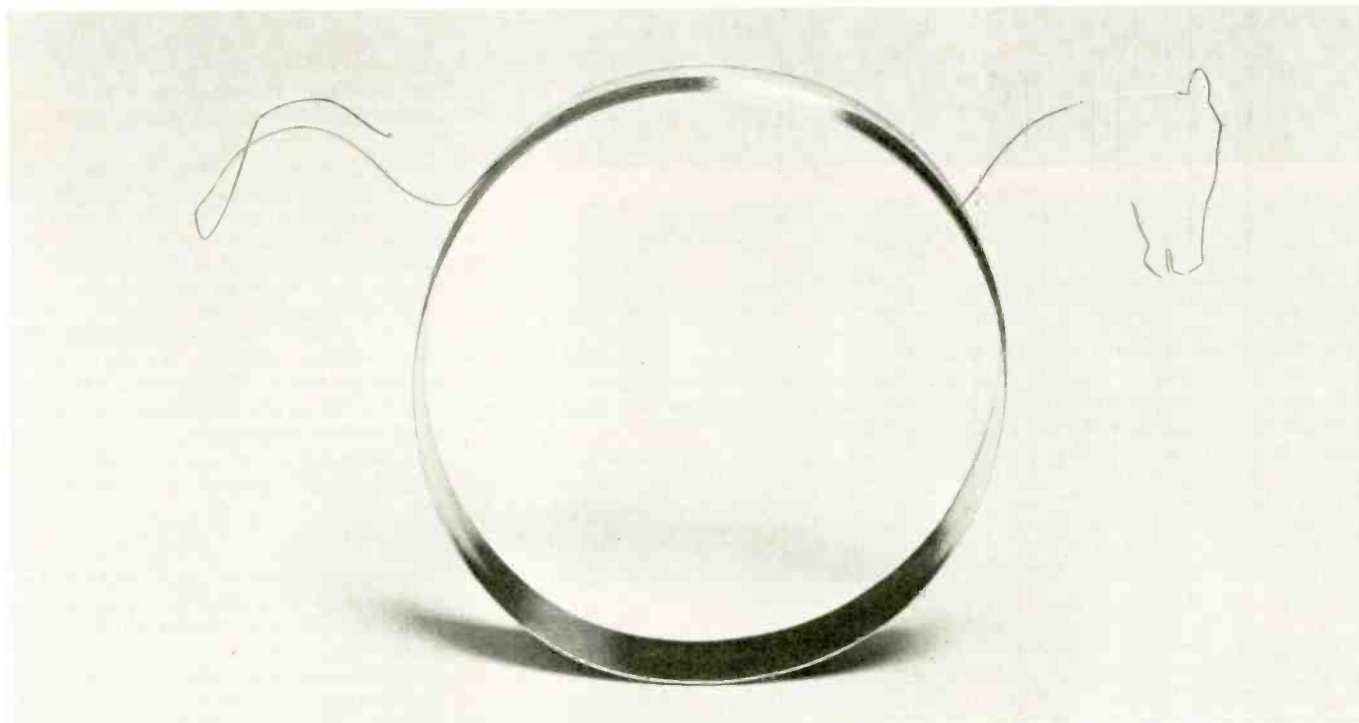
Bill Wallace



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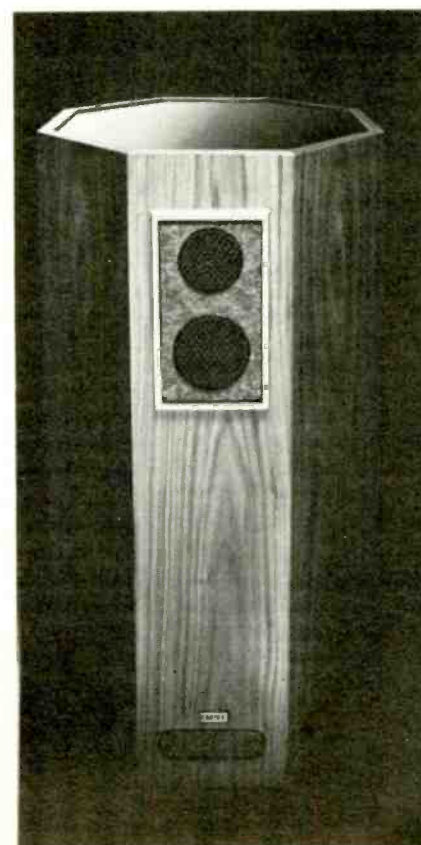
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# GOING ON RECORD

By JAMES GOODFRIEND  
Music Editor



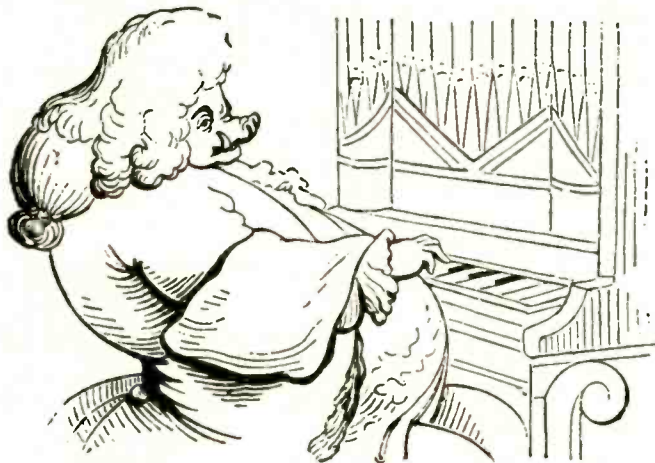
## IT'S ALL HANDEL'S FAULT

ENGLISH has for so long been considered an unmusical language that I am almost prepared to believe it myself. Almost, but not quite. The arguments that have raged about opera in English are based, it seems to me, on observations that are *not* diametrically opposed to one another: first, on the pro side, that audiences become much more involved if they know what's going on; second, on the anti side, that opera in English *sounds* terrible. Granting both, one may question just how often opera singers enunciate English or anything else clearly enough for an audience to

Is it the fact that we *do* understand the words that makes English-language vocal music sound so bad? No, it can't be, for I remember hearing just too many performances in English in which I couldn't understand a syllable, and the overall sound was quite as horrible as when I could.

Is it always so? Has it always been so? I think not, for I can find all sorts of random examples in which the combination of English (or American) words and English (or American) music sounds perfectly splendid to me, regardless of intelligibility or literary excel-

G. F. Handel, who was rather . . . um . . . heavy, in an eighteenth-century English caricature



understand, but there is no question that opera in English sounds rotten. The music being the same regardless of the tongue in which it is sung, it *must* be the language that is at fault.

One may push the matter even farther by observing that most operas originally composed to English-language librettos sound equally bad. I find the typical Menotti vocal line about as aurally pleasing as the sound of chalk scratching across a blackboard and certainly no more natural-sounding than any Italianate line of Puccini's grafted onto an English translation. And I certainly doubt that anyone has ever found Benjamin Britten's marriage of words and music to be a comfortable one, regardless of what one thinks of the music or the words separately.

And yet, it seems, any reasonably skilled composer of continental origin can blend his native tongue with music to produce a combination that at least sounds pleasing to our ears, even if we don't understand the words.

lence. Let me offer a few delightful examples:

- "Say, Love, if ever thou didst find/A woman with a constant mind. None but one. . . ." (a madrigal by John Dowland).
- "Come away, fellow sailors, come away./ Your anchors be weighing. . . ." (from *Dido and Aeneas* by Henry Purcell).
- "Someday I'll find you./ Moonlight behind you. . . ." (a song by Noël Coward).
- "Bess, you is my woman now, you is. . . ." (from *Porgy and Bess* by George Gershwin).

Not only does each one of these sound fine and natural and musical to me, but I cannot even imagine the music of one of them tied to words in another language. The fact is that in each of these examples the music has sprung from the language. It uses the rhythms of English and the accentuations of English, and so it fits quite naturally. The rhythms of music, after all, are not independent of the rest of life; they derive ultimately from the rhythms of

physical motion and those of language—and different languages have different rhythms.

By now, the reader may see what I am driving at. The examples given above date from the sixteenth, the seventeenth, and the twentieth centuries. Something must have happened in between that turned the relationship of music and English sour, producing such horrors of our everyday repertoire as:

- "Whose broad stripes and bright stars. . . ." (*The Star-Spangled Banner*).

Certainly nobody—but nobody—ever *spoke* those words in the rhythm in which they are musically set (and it doesn't matter that the tune was grafted on after the words were written; everybody then thought they fit together just splendidly—some still do).

WELL, there was something that went on in between and his name was George Frideric Handel. It's all *his* fault. Handel was born in Halle in Saxony in 1685, and studied and worked there and in Hamburg until he went to Italy, where he quickly learned how to do things Italian style. Somewhere along the way he also learned to compose French music, though he never set any texts in French. He went to England for the first time in 1710, and for the second and last time in 1712. He died there forty-seven years later.

In those forty-seven years, Handel dominated the English musical world as no one has ever dominated it before or since. You could be pro-Handel or anti-Handel, but you couldn't be independent of him. He *was* the Establishment. And he brought to England a music that spoke the rhythms of German, of Italian, and of French, but not of English, and pasted English words onto it with a dubious cement. It has been reported that he never even learned to *speak* the language properly. At any rate, he composed magnificent music which contains such accentual monstrosities as:

- "For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. . . ." (*Hallelujah Chorus*), where sense demands an accent on "Lord" or "God" or "reigneth" and not on the relatively unimportant syllable "nip." And what about
- "For unto us a child is *ho-horn*. . . .?"

But everybody lapped it up and did likewise. By the time Handel died, the friendly relations between music and the English language that had existed during the times of Purcell, the madrigalists, and before were profoundly strained. Perhaps only in folk song did they still live together in harmony, and the educated classes did not listen to folk songs (at least not as sung by folk singers). The English language lay a tattered rag, limp and ready to be twisted and wrung into whatever new shape a foreign-trained composer wanted to ram it into. For, with the dominance of Handel, the English *musical* tradition also vanished, and for almost a century and a half. English composers wrote continental music (when they wrote at all).

IN America we took our lead from England and made music an imported product, with German, French, or Italian dressing. A few composers, a lot of popular songwriters, and revivalists of the folk tradition have tried to show us the way out of this dead end, but the estrangement of music and English all too evidently continues. And *that* is why English is called an unmusical language. Canard though it may be, the burden of disproof still lies with English-speaking composers.





**pre•ci•sion** (pri-sizh'ən), n.  
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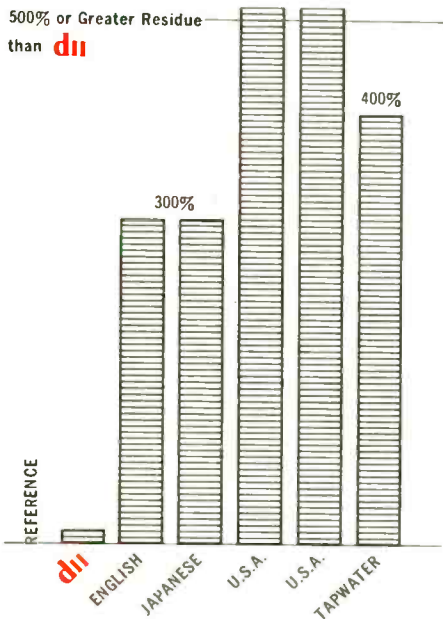
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# THE BASIC REPERTOIRE • 180

By MARTIN BOOKSPAN

## HAYDN'S SYMPHONY NO. 100

**T**HE first performance of Joseph Haydn's Symphony No. 100, in G Major, was given in London on March 31, 1794. Haydn was then on his second visit to the British capital at the invitation of the impresario Salomon, and the G Major Symphony was one of the second set of six written for London. The new symphony opened the second half of the program. A week later, the symphony was played again, and the critic of the *London Morning Chronicle* reported that the hall rang with "absolute shouts of applause. Encore! encore! encore! resounded from every seat: the ladies themselves could not forbear."

What must have particularly captured the fancy of the early audiences is the feature that continues to lend this work its special character: Haydn's use of bass drum, cymbals, and triangle—the so-called "Turkish" instruments—in the symphony's second and fourth movements. Mozart had already used these exotic instruments in his opera *The Abduction from the Seraglio* to suggest the Sultan's bodyguard; later Beethoven was to employ them in *The Ruins of Athens* and still later in the march episode in the Ninth Symphony's finale. Haydn's use of them is rather extended in the slow movement and then quite brief at the very end of the symphony.

The *Morning Chronicle* critic was reminded by the music of the charge to battle, and from then on, this symphony has carried the nickname *Military*. It opens with a grave Adagio introduction, but from the moment the Allegro arrives until the very end of the score this is a work of exuberant cheerfulness. The first principal theme of the first movement is introduced by the flutes and oboes in their high register; it is a merry, bubbling theme with an infectious rhythmic jauntiness. The second theme is, if anything, even more perky than the first, and Haydn, contrary to tradition, devoted the major part of the movement's development to manipulation of the second theme rather than the first.

The second movement is not really a slow movement in the customary sense, but rather an ingratiating Allegretto. It is based upon a French arietta, "*La gentille et jeune Lisette*," which Haydn had already employed in the *Romanze* in his Symphony No. 85—the one in the set of "Paris" Symphonies known as *La*

*Reine*. Emphasis in the *La Reine* treatment of the theme was on ornamental embellishment, but in the *Military* Symphony it is on instrumental color. Suddenly there is an unexpected trumpet fanfare and a drum roll, leading to a fortissimo chord for the full orchestra. The bass drum, triangle, and cymbals, always appearing together, punctuate each forte return of the French melody; an especially droll effect is their inclination to produce softness out of the noise. The Minuetto and Finale (*presto*) continue the mood of rollicking good spirits.

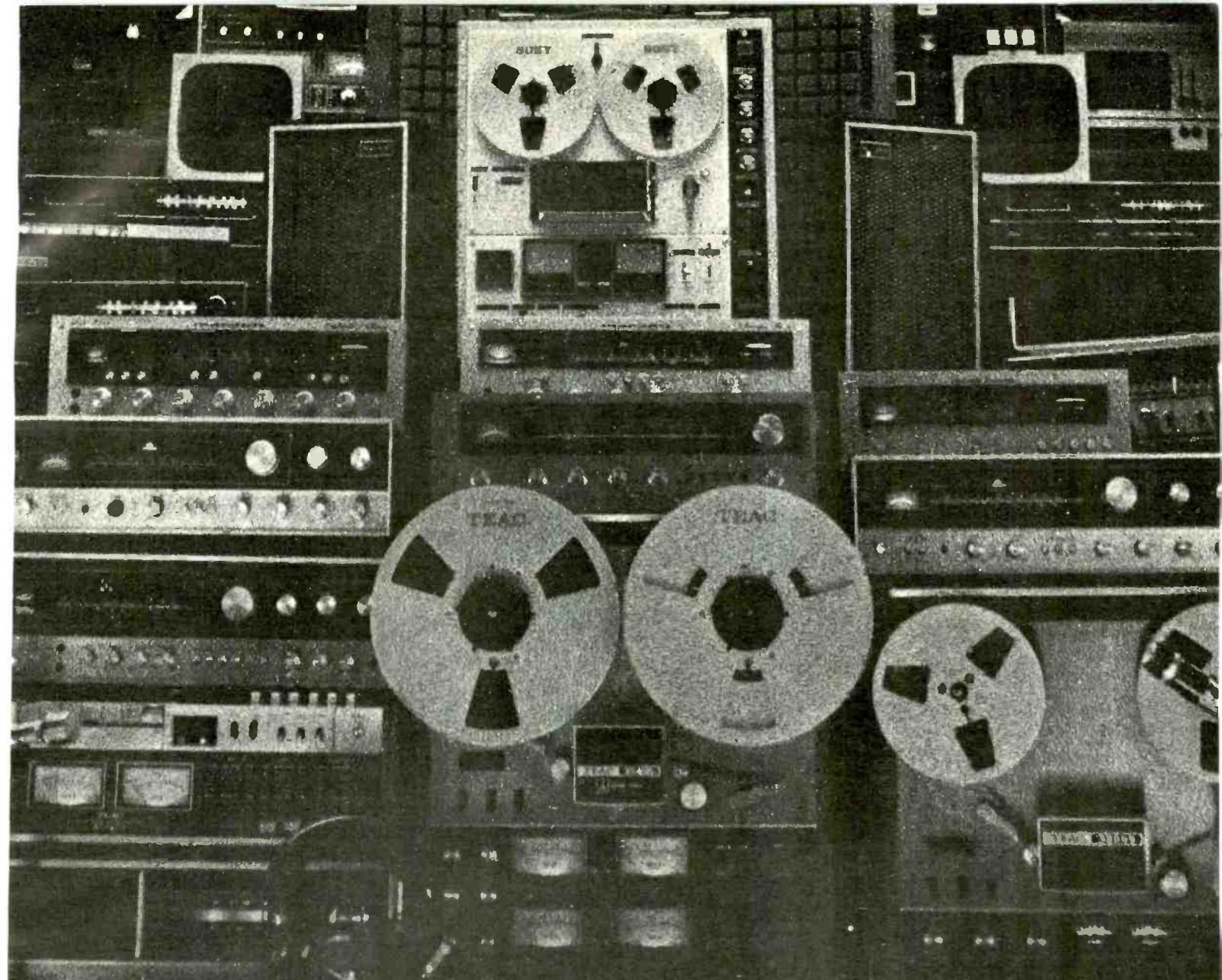
**A**MONG currently available recordings of the *Military* Symphony are two that are completely different from each other conducted by masters who come from the same German tradition: the late Otto Klemperer (Angel S 36364) and Eugen Jochum (Deutsche Grammophon 2530459). Like nearly everything he conducted, Klemperer's *Military* Symphony is robust and rough-hewn, with tempos in the outer movements rather on the deliberate side. Jochum's, by contrast, is fleet and streamlined, and the outer-movement tempos are definitely speedy. The performance by the two English orchestras (the New Philharmonia for Klemperer, the London Philharmonic for Jochum) are expert, and the sound in both cases is open and airy.

Another excellent account of Haydn's *Military* Symphony is the one recorded for Vanguard Records in the early days of stereo technology. The Danish conductor Mogens Wöldike proved himself an uncommonly responsive Haydn conductor in his recordings of the second set of Haydn's "Salomon" Symphonies; they are now available in Vanguard's budget-line catalog, and the *Military* Symphony shares a disc with its successor in the chronology, the *Clock* Symphony (S 187). The sparkling sonics are much better than would ordinarily be expected from a recording of its vintage.

The newest of the *Military* Symphony releases is the one conducted by Antal Dorati in the final installment of his integral recording of all the Haydn Symphonies (included in London STS 15319/24, six discs devoted to all twelve of the composer's "London" Symphonies). As he has made abundantly clear in his previous Haydn recordings, Dorati is the master Haydn symphony conductor of our time. There is a freshness, a vitality, and a sheer exuberance in the Dorati performance of the *Military* Symphony that are absolutely irresistible. As in the Jochum approach, the outer movements are on the brisk side, and there is a feeling of heady exhilaration to it all. The sound reproduction is a model of clarity and honest balance.

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# AKAI

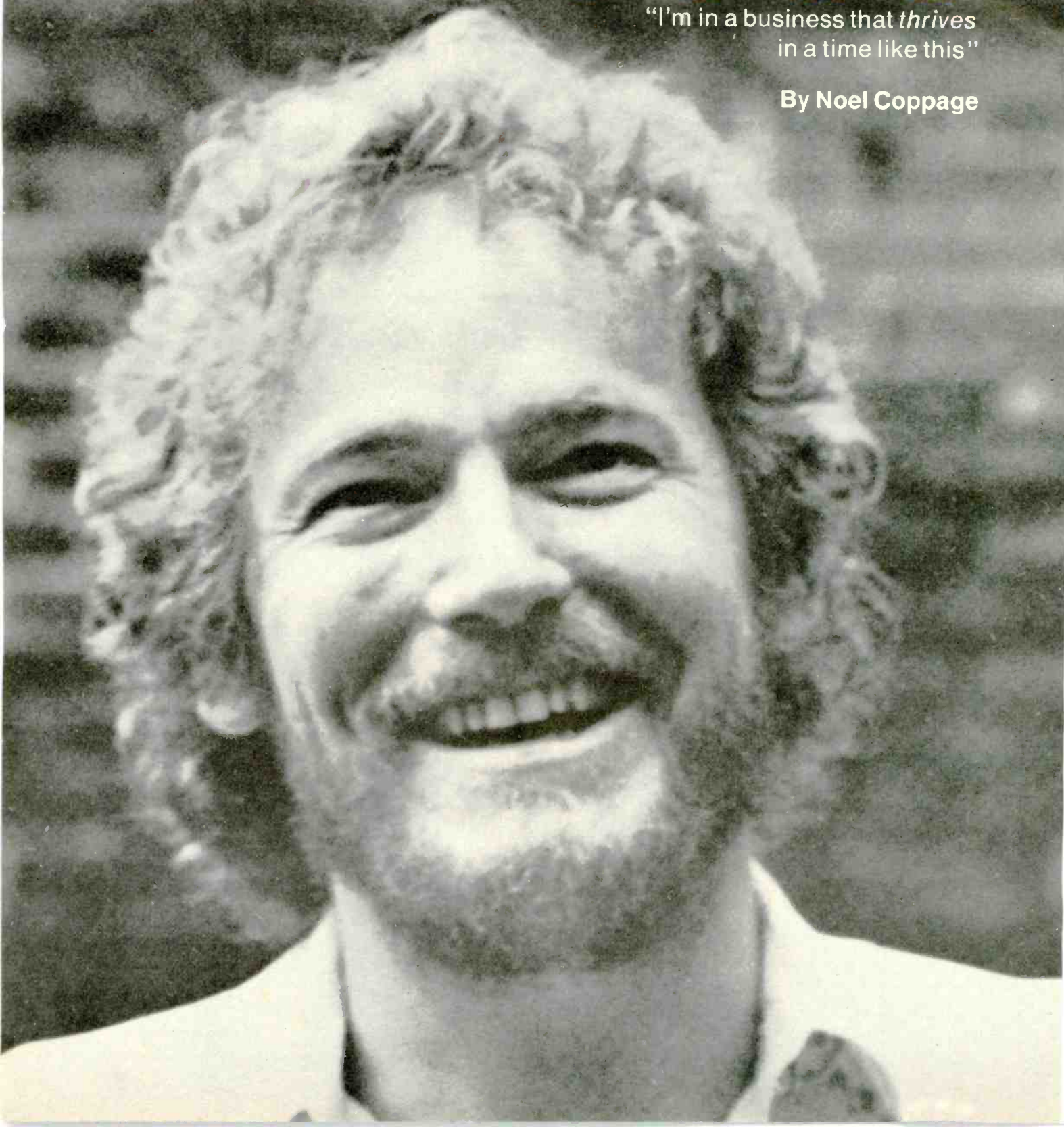
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# GORDON LIGHTFOOT

"I'm in a business that *thrives*  
in a time like this"

By Noel Coppage





TURQUOISE mounted in thickish curves of grey silver seemed to shield Gordon Lightfoot's fingers and wrists as he stabbed at the pushbutton telephone. "We're trying to coordinate the evening's activities here," he said. This seemed to involve rounding up a lot of tickets for *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and a lot of people to use them. The people, I learned through some concentrated, full-tilt eavesdropping, included one Bob Neuwirth. The bloated Trivia Division of my mind automatically kicked on, and two whirs and a crank later delivered a readout of sorts: Neuwirth had not long ago recorded his own so-so album but was better known as an old pal of Bob Dylan and a somewhat newer old pal of Kristofferson. Lightfoot said a woman's name into the phone then, and then said, "It's Gordon," and then said, "Lightfoot," and then heard he had tapped out a wrong number. I constructed a delayed double-take scenario for someone hanging up a phone somewhere in New York: "Of course, the *Sundown* man!" A wrong number of some stature. One's grandchildren might even be interested.

Lightfoot, since *Sundown* the monster single. "Sundown" the monster album, and a reasonably heavy second hit single, *Carefree Highway*, may turn out to be one of the more enduring household words of the Seventies. *Sundown* has a tip-of-the-iceberg look about it, with the new Lightfoot followers it attracted now happily finding a whole slew of his albums in the catalog—and *If You Could Read My Mind*, at least in the Northeast, has already seen a kind of mini-revival.

"*Sundown*'s a pretty hard act to follow," Lightfoot said, the plan for his evening still sketchy but left hanging. "But due to the fact that there were two hit singles on that album, I got two or three months' grace from Reprise on the next one. Was able to refine it a little more. go in and re-record four or five tunes I'd cut back in November."

The thirty-five-year-old native of Orillia, Ontario, has had hits before, but never like this, and he doesn't know exactly how it happened. "Actually, I'm more interested in making consistent albums, quality albums," he said. "A hit single is usually an accident. You just sit back and watch it take off. At least that's what I did. I had no idea in my wildest dreams a song could take off like that. It sold

over a million copies in very short order. . . . I had. I believe it was, three albums in between "If You Could Read My Mind" and "Sundown" on which there were no hit singles at all. Unless you count something like number seventy-six with an anchor. And I was back into producing albums again. I had my concert trade and everybody was happy, the fans were happy. I was going along



Lightfoot a short decade ago

thinking, well, I'll just keep on making albums and one of these days it will happen again. And it did."

It has him playing in larger places, and worrying about that a little. He is beefing up his sound system, and hiring, for some large gigs, a steel guitar player and his old friend studio guitarist Red Shea to join the regular traveling unit of himself on rhythm guitar, Terry Clements on acoustic lead, and Rick Haynes on bass. In New York's Lincoln Center, Lightfoot interrupted himself in the middle of *Canadian Railroad Trilogy* for what must have seemed to most in the audience a non sequitur: "I'll tell you one thing—I'd rather do four shows here than one in Madison Square Garden."

And it has him spending more energy these days trying to counter—or at least straighten out—public assertions connecting his relationships with women with the (usually self-critical) lyrics of his lost-love songs. "Some people are just making a big

deal out of everything," he told me.

It has seen him, according to some sources, put on a little weight, but you wouldn't call him stocky, let alone soft. He is somewhat shaggier than he used to be, and he seems looser and more relaxed on stage. "I've been doing it so long," he said, "that the only times I really get nervous are in New York, London, Los Angeles, and Toronto. Something about those really big cities kind of scares you. When I play in New York, I really get nervous. It will always be the Big Apple to me."

But it has not brought him closer by any perceptible degree to diving headlong into our politics down here in the States, or into our consuming and quickly consumed preoccupations, stylistic and otherwise, or our fantasies about revolution, or much else we have to offer in the way of fads and fancy stuff. Lightfoot's songs continue to be basic—work songs, travel songs, love songs—and if anything they've grown more personal through the years. "Lately they've been so personal that nobody else sings them," he says. He is steadily and sensibly liberal politically and that's about it. "My reading habits are atrocious," he said. "All I read is the *National Lampoon* and *Time* magazine. The newspapers are so boring. I'm not saying you don't want to know what's happening, but you know—all you have to do is turn on Walter Cronkite for a few minutes and he'll tell you what's going on in the world, and it ain't good."

Those new fans digging about in Lightfoot's earlier albums will recall that almost everyone with his kind of folkie image in the late Sixties was trying to work an electric-conversion scheme of some sort, hoping to update to the more lucrative folk-rock image—and those new fans will find nary a whit of that sort of thing in Lightfoot's late-Sixties work.

"I wouldn't know the first thing about it," Lightfoot said, laughing a wheezing, air-logged old man's laugh. "I just totally ignored it. First of all, I haven't got a rock voice—my voice is much too lyrical. And then I don't want to travel with any more people than necessary. As soon as you get into an electronic scene, by George, you've got to get a truck, two or three road men, everything. We have a compact unit here. It's easy to transport it around. The equipment manager goes by himself on a commercial airliner and we go in later on a small



plane, a four-seater. Don't even have to get there until four or five o'clock. You know, you think about the logistics of these things. . . .

"And one of the reasons I've kept it small is there's a certain charm, a certain uniqueness to it—the fact that we don't have a drummer, for instance. It's a very lyrical band, and the songs are lyrical. Any added rhythm or electric kind of thing would detract from the lyrics."

I've got to where I'm an excellent rhythm guitarist. In this band, I'm the drummer."

He is immodestly equipped for songwriting as modern cowboy-troubadours go, one of the few who can write a melody down on paper. "I start by getting the melody in shape and then I start writing the words right away," he said. "I let the lyrics dictate the melody and vice versa, so you might say it's done simulta-

all my lead sheets. That's a *big job*, takes about a week, and it's the worst week of the year. Fourteen tunes or so have to be copyrighted, registered with the Library of Congress and all that stuff, and you sit down with onion-skin paper, India ink, a three-nib pen. . . . I used to do that for a living, copying scores, when I was about twenty. I would sing in the evenings and copy scores for television, for the CBC. Worked for various arrangers



A wise neighbor (who, incidentally, once worked for one of the magazines Lightfoot reads) tells me some parts of Canada today remind him of certain regions in the U.S. twenty years ago. Lightfoot reminded me of your basic gifted Midwesterner of twenty years ago—a craftsman, mainly, proud of his workmanship and willing to talk all day about how one does this or that, proud of the good condition of his tools, inclined to let the product speak for itself . . . and, in the bargain, as time permits, trying to think about making a buck. Lightfoot is pleased with his improvement in the detail work in areas where not even critics are picky—"I've been improving on my rhythm style on the twelve-string guitar," he said. "I picked that up from Bob Gibson. He used to frail a twelve-string, but he used those National finger picks which were a pain in the ass, so I tried to duplicate it with a flat pick. Got into a sort of rolling style. Actually,

neously. I actually sit down with a piece of paper and do a rough draft, write out the notes. The ability to do that is a great help. Lots of people have to work with tape recorders, or else they've got to just write down the words and have the melody in their heads. You can do it that way, but the next time you refer back to the melody, by George, you've changed it. Very subtle changes take place unless you have a reference point.

"If I start rewriting too much, I get right off a tune," he said. "If I can get by with just changing a few lines, I figure it's all right, but when I get into heavy rewriting, I just might as well forget it."

He had piano lessons as a child, "but I was never good enough on that instrument," he says. He started playing the guitar at sixteen. "Didn't study orchestration until I was about seventeen," he said while I tried not to look astounded. "The biggest single hassle that confronts me is doing

up there. I have quite a background in orchestration and it's been invaluable to me, a great advantage."

**W**HEN Lightfoot started singing his own songs in small Toronto clubs, he attracted—or at least his songs (*Early Morning Rain*, *Ribbon of Darkness*, *The Way I Feel*, and such) attracted—the attention of someone who could help.

"Ian Tyson—Ian and Sylvia—gave me my start," Lightfoot said. "It took a lot of strength on Ian's part, too, because even though he's a very respected artist in Canada and a rancher and a really smart, intelligent guy—and I really like him—I surpassed him long ago in terms of acceptance on a national scale. And sometimes I feel bad about it. He was the guy who really helped me and then I overtook him. He has a television series up there now on a private network that is really a good show, but I don't know if it's going to stay on the air or what's



going on. I've got more respect for him, I think, than anybody I know in the business. He's just a together cat, great guy to talk to, funny. . . ."

Lightfoot laughed, sloshing his Bloody Mary. "I'll tell you a story about Ian," he said.

"He went on the Peace Train—you remember that train they had?—and they came into Calgary during the Stampede, and a bunch of rednecks got after him and two or three other

tune when you're changing capo positions around and everything. There are songs that lose their charm if you record them. After you heard one about twice, you'd have to go over and lift up the needle. That song *Partners* that we do is a nice song I wouldn't record."

Talking business, Lightfoot *really* reminded me of a Midwest shopkeeper of the Fifties. Something in the way he squinted made me notice that,

my entire accumulation of cash flow four or five years ago to buy out that catalog, and they wouldn't sell it for half a million dollars. That's what I offered."

But another interruption for evening's-activities coordination, another Bloody Mary, and another behind-the-breath laugh got him to looking younger again. "I'm getting an awful reputation as a drinker," he said. "Don't know why—couldn't be the



Heritage Records

**"Ian Tyson . . . gave me my start . . . he's a very respected artist in Canada and a rancher and a really smart, intelligent guy. . . . You ought to see him handle those horses of his."**

longhairs in a car. These guys started playing games with them, hitting the bumpers and such stuff and threatening them. They all got out of the cars in front of a hotel there, and Ian just cold-cocked one of those guys. No words said. Just stepped out and flattened him, and that was the end of the games. Ian is tough. You ought to see him handle those horses he has."

Lightfoot has, one could fairly say, become a much more skillful songwriter than Tyson has—or than most anyone else has—and that's been largely the difference. Or *perhaps* it has, anyway; Lightfoot seems also to have learned numerous other little things about his line of work that could amount to something.

"There are some songs," he said, for example, "that can be done on stage and shouldn't be recorded, and there are some you can record but can't do well on stage. I like that topical song, *Circle of Steel*, but we don't do it because it's so hard to get it in

while he *had* been looking much younger than thirty-five in his cowboy shirt with the sleeves torn off and his Levis and Indian jewelry and long, slightly curly blonde hair and short beard, he suddenly seemed crinkly and leathery and looked maybe a little *older* than that. And it registered in my mind that, all the time I'd been here, he'd been wearing rimless but, well, *chic* spectacles.

He said: "I feel I'm very fortunate when I take a look around at how things are going. I'm in a business that, to a degree, *thrives* in a time like this." And he said: "I've got several songs I'd dearly love to record again, and I could. My five-year clause is up with United Artists. Except they keep coming out with that old stuff. Every time we get a hit single or do *anything*, United Artists comes out with another album. I'll bet they've put *Early Morning Rain* out six times under different covers. You know, I tried to buy—I was ready to give up

drinking. Actually, alcohol makes you lethargic. But, nevertheless, as long as you get down to it when it comes time to do your job."

And Lightfoot still sees his job as he did before the advent of *It*, the thunderous success of *Sundown*: "Just to refine what I'm doing, to expand my repertoire. The songs can still be sung better—some nights we just sing the balls off that *Canadian Railroad Trilogy*. A really good song will just last, and it can always be improved upon."

Corny as this may sound—corny as the Midwest in the Fifties, certainly—it's the savvy and pragmatism of an old pro that marks Lightfoot. These are supposed to be anachronistic qualities, and even in their so-called heyday they were never spectacular, just inexorable. To find out if they still are, I think one need only observe how long some of Lightfoot's songs last. And, I think, one should live so long.



# Another year, another annex for the **HALL OF OBSCURITY**

A sort of a rerun by Jamake Mamake Highwater



AS we roll into yet another new musical year, and as we begin to be bombarded by the usual crew of T-shirted upstarts, I can't help glancing back briefly and with slight regret at some of the record albums that still linger on my turntable from last year. Candi-

dates for the regrind bin though they may be, there are a few noble nobodies among this motley band of underdogs, non-starts, and never-weres who truly deserve another chance, and I'd like to trot out a few of them for your inspection and possible delectation.



● For instance, there is OREGON, a quartet well received in some quarters (including this) but still not exactly in the public eye. They play oboe, English horn, classical and twelve-string guitars, piano, bass, flute, sitar, tabla, and a Christmas morning's worth of other percussion. Despite a nomination in the Sixteenth Annual Grammy Awards (last year) for Best Jazz Performance by a Group, and despite the efforts of a claque of persuaded critics, Oregon remains unpopular. Their first album, "Music of Another Present Era" (Vanguard VSD 79326) contained a stylish blend of jazz and Oriental influences. "Distant Hills" (VSD 79341) is more of the same: serious, eclectic, and non-electric. Delicious and nutritious. Try some.



● Bashful BERT JANSCH is best known (if at all) for his work with an exceptional non-hit group called Pentangle. Among guitar virtuosos, Jansch is perhaps one of the most refined—and peculiar. His style is a very personal, unpretentious blend of the medieval, the off-beat folkloric, and a backdoor approach to the blues. He sings in a pleasant non-voice and performs with the sparsest of backing. Born in Glasgow, he has also spent some time working with Donovan, another fey Celt (whatever happened to him?). Jansch has two excellent, if unheralded, albums on Reprise, the nimble and ascetic "Rosemary Lane" (RS 6455) and the brilliant "Birthday Blues" (RS 6343), both of which combine tasteful musicianship with small-scale accompaniment.



● While we're in the guitar mood we'll have to consider another Pentangle alumnus, JOHN RENBOURN, whose music is an effortlessly pyrotechnical combination of surrealistic blues and British folk strains. His Reprise album "Faro Annie" (RS 2082) takes the cake for instrumental virtuosity. "The Lady and the Unicorn" (RS 6407) is perhaps a bit too purist for pop palates, but "Sir John" (RS 6344) has abundant wit and charm. But of all the Renbourn canon, the one that stands most proudly is called simply "John Renbourn" (Reprise 2RS 6482), one of the very few two-record albums that justifies its length. Marvelous, marvelous music!





● Since the move into mass popularity of what used to be called "race music," there has grown up a notion that all black performers command the same immediacy of appeal. But there are black artists who have forged music too rare and special to be accommodated within the fad of the moment, and LORRAINE ELLISON is one of them. "Lorraine Ellison" (Warner Bros. WS 2780) is crowned by her performance of the superb *Country Woman's Prayer*, and the whole album "Stay with Me" (WS 1821) is absolutely smashing, the title tune in particular soaring into new realms of feeling absolutely foreign to the practiced stop-pulling of most of today's programmed "soul" music.



● ESTHER PHILLIPS is another black artist whose commercial impact has been minimal despite the ferocious sauciness of her album "Performance" (Kudu 18, from Motown). She launches her huge, richly ragged voice into the heavier propositions in a way that is reminiscent of a world-weary Billie Holiday. She doesn't have the porcelain polish of Lorraine Ellison, but what she does have is a large appetite for the whole truth: "O!" she wails, "you can't trust your girlfriend with your baby/I used to send him over for salt and she gave him plenty of sugar!" Don't know why she had to send him out—Esther Phillips has plenty of both.



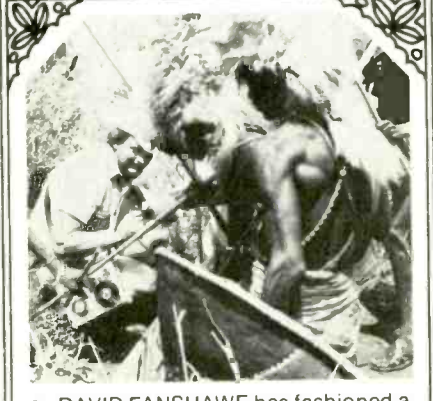
● SYLVESTER is a very different kind of black musical experience, an outrageous synthesis of Little Richard pizzazz and Harlem razzmatazz. His slinky, silver-sequins performance style is mirrored (echoed?) in the startling falsetto he lavishes on his brash, trashy repertoire. But all the audio/visual drag is merely this fine gentleman's notion of putting on the dog. What counts with Sylvester is not the transvestments but his strong showmanship and really powerful voice. "Bazaar," his album on Blue Thumb (45), is beautifully bent—some of that glitter really is gold!



● Though she comes from the West Indies, you will hear little calypso, steel band, or reggae in the world of JOAN ARMATRADING. Her real musical life began when she landed in Britain in 1958, where she later met and teamed up with Pam Nestor. The vitality and lyricism she has discovered are really quite marvelous, overlooked though they may be, on A & M Records' "Whatever's For Us" (SP 4382). The voice is bronze, not blue, and it mixes Baez, Odetta, and Elton John (!) into a fine brew.



● Perhaps what the world really needs right now is a new lyric tenor who combines John Denver's well-scrubbed sanity with Elton John's sentimental madness. DENNIS COULSON (Elektra ESK 75067) steps onto a pedestal in our little Wing of Musical Regrets and perfectly fills the bill. His *What Went Wrong* gets right to the point: it is a country hymn sung by a kid from Newcastle's red-light district. This tough/tender Geordie has all the passionate bluntness typical of the artists who have struggled out of this crummy ghetto, and the all-round musicianship he used to bring it off will give you a mighty tuneful roomful of sound.



● DAVID FANSHAWE has fashioned a peculiarly appealing African goulash called "African Sanctus" (Philips 6558 001). Somewhat in the derivative and eclectic manner of other Philips folk-mass fantasias ("Missa Luba," "Missa Criola," "Missa Flamenca"), Fanshawe's effort is a frequently successful attempt to combine different forms of native African music with the Latin Mass. Though the juxtapositions often fail to become anything more than the mere sum of their parts, at other moments, such as the opening and closing Sanctus, in-studio tape mixing produces effects that are not only impressively theatrical but musically astonishing. It sure beats Lenny Bernstein's *Mass* all to hell.





● Carl Orff is, I think, unmistakably the chairman of the board of a group of artists (Gibran, McKuen, Bèjart, Grand Funk, for quick and offhand example) whom the high-art critic abhors and the mass public unaccountably adores. Whipping-boys of the Academy though they may be, they all have their publics, their disciples, and even their "schools." MAGMA (A & M SP 4397) is, I think, of the School of Orff. A European group composed of ten cult-freaks

dressed in black robes, they quibble and jibble in a language of their own making called *Kobayan* (it comes from Kobaia, the planet where they dream their dreams). Naturally the whole album is unintelligible, though all the "words" are phonetically transcribed in the notes. What results might be called *Maglatin*, a wired and weird Orffian babble with a high level of ad infinitum redundancy. Curious, clumsy, and oddly interesting.



● The "Deceptive Electric Award for Overwhelming Oscillations" most definitely goes to TANGERINE DREAM and their Virgin release, "Phaedra" (VR 13-108). Considering the countless and tiresome attempts in the Sixties to create the ultimate "trip" disc, this one at least deserves recognition for its freshness, its virtuosity, and its imagination. It grinds, zings, pppings, and brrings as Dream members Froese, Franke, and Baumann titillate their mellotron, synthesizers, organ, sundry other keyboards, and flute. What they have created is *Eine Kleine Non-Musik* which does, indeed, make for some nice little night listening in one of the darker corners of the Hall of Obscurity.



● Perhaps VANGELIS O. PAPANASSIOU deserves an alcove in our Unhallowed Hall just for the number of letters in his name, but he is also notable in a very subterranean way as the creator of one of the weirdest cult albums of all, the almost legendary "666." More to the point, his recent album "Earth" (Vertigo VEL 1019) is a *super* non-winner. Vangie O. is capable of investing his music with enough real folk influences from his native Greece that it can stand up under the overload of gratuitous sound effects and the painfully mediocre lyrics of collaborator R. Dassin. The result is perfect ritual background music for anyone looking for primal roots in an uptown duplex. Comes with hot and cold running drums.



● CHIP TAYLOR comes from Westchester County in the State of New York, one of the epicenters of the American suburban middle class, but he grew up to become one of the most effective songwriters of the Sixties—*Angel of the Morning*, *Wild Thing*, *I Can't Let Go*—despite the handicap. His appeal on Warner Bros.' "Last Chance" (BS 2718), however, isn't owing simply to his skill as a songwriter, for the album is filled with humor, and the polish of the production has produced a perfect Midwestern patina. Some of the lyrics perceptively examine the music business, others take on the rural scene with the savvy of a New York dude. There are enough good ones to suggest that Chip deserves another chance to escape from these haunted halls.



● There ought, every year, to be at least one of those undiscovered singers with the kind of voice that gives you gooseflesh. She may look like a Jewish princess or a Polish war-bride, but it doesn't matter if she moves us when she sings. FLORENCE WARNER has given us a rather flawed album on Epic (KE 32654) which has some redeeming moments of torment. She has yet to discover who she really is, so the names of other singers keep coming to mind. But such songs as *It Wouldn't Have Made Any Difference* and *Till the Ends Meet* will help us pass the time until she finds herself, even though she does remind us (I kid you not) that "into each life a little bird must fall."

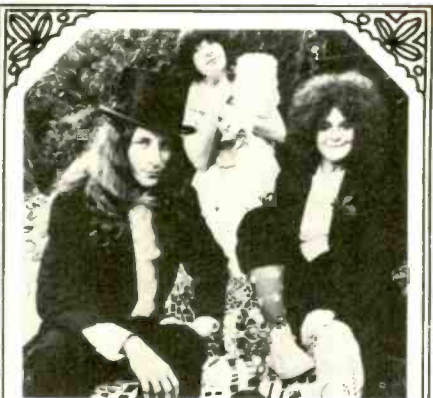




● ANDY BOWN is one of those quasi-legendary rockers who helped set British trends during the Sixties but never managed to rise above the din in America. Bown's inglorious state can't be blamed on his inaccessibility, for his two solo albums for Mercury are fine and bright, the music has instant charm and wit, and his voice slips easily into your head. "Sweet William" (SRM 1-656) is the winner of the two: *O Tarzan* is a fifty-five-second goody, *Chicago* really should have been a hit single, *Suzie* and *Who Do You Need?* are excellent, and so is the title tune. "Gone to My Head" (SRM 1-625) is less successful, but you may like *P. S. Get Lost* or *Etcetera*.



● If ever an artist did not belong in these humble halls it is DANNY O'KEEFE, whose Atlantic album "Breezy Stories" (SD 7264) simply spills over with talent. *Mad Ruth/The Babe* is an odd mélange of baseball hymn and love song, *Catfish* a ditty of impressive delicacy, and *The Edge* and *Magdalena* skirt the abyss of tragedy with nonchalance and are all the more moving for it. Donny Hathaway plays piano on most of the songs, and Arif Mardin, one of the most musical producers working today, put the enchilada together. If you buy just one more album from the 1974 harvest, make it "Breezy Stories."



● CHUNKY, NOVI & ERNIE (Reprise MS 2146) mix formal musical training with impudent, Monte Pythonesque daffiness and bizarre self-mockery. They are a delicious trio, whether knee-deep in goofiness as in *Fruits and Vegetables* ("You know it's been a year since we moved here . . . how come you're still so short?") or lilting sensuously through *Italian Sea* (in a striking John Cale arrangement). Chunky is definitely the one to watch here, for she has a voice of spectacular weirdness and wrote all the fine music and lyrics as well. This group is one of the best musical finds of 1974. How come it's still lost?



● Canada has produced some big names in music (Gordon Lightfoot, Neil Young, Joni Mitchell), and it has also given us some small names such as, well, MURRAY McLAUCHLAN. His first appearance as a performer came on Epic Records' "Song from the Street" (E 31166). McLachlan's work has enormous humor and gratifying tunefulness, and his performances ring with sincerity—a rare quality in recent pop music. Songs like *Jesus Please Don't Save Me Till I Die* and *Sixteen Lanes of Highway* ought to please those listeners with a folkish bent, and wry realists will also find much to smile at: "Only love," says McLachlan, "can break your heart . . . and only love can put it back together again. Sure makes for a lousy state of affairs."



● Among the kinkier also-rans is KEVIN COYNE, whose writing and performances strike some most passionately twisted notes. There's his utterly deranged ballad *Dog Latin*, for example, in which he stutters through part of the Catholic Mass or *Nasty*, an accelerating panic of paranoia. Coyne is something of a house hero at England's Virgin Records, where he once gave birth to twenty-six songs in only five days. The result was a double album since whittled down to one called "Marjory Razorblade" (13-106) for his somewhat inauspicious U. S. debut. Some of those cuts (ouch!) are killers.



● The death of HARRY PARTCH at seventy-three, no more a household word than he ever was, reminds us that the sidelines are not reserved solely for adolescent mumblers of the twelve-bar blues. This California avant-gardist composed his strange, rebellious 43-tones-to-the-octave music and built his equally strange instruments (*Spoils of War*, *Marimba Eroica*) to play it on for forty-odd years without noticeable public recognition. Partch was interested in ritual theater and dancing, and you've just never heard anything like the music he wrote for them. Columbia Records' "The World of Harry Partch" (MS 7207) will make you want to hear more: "Delusion of the Fury" (Columbia M2 30576) and "And on the Seventh Day Petals Fell in Petaluma" (CRI S-213).



# YOU AND YOUR HI-FI SALESMAN

How to

- get basic information
- identify a good salesman
- communicate your needs
  - build and maintain a meaningful relationship

By James R. Horstman

*Super-salesman Len Chase spends some time with a customer in New York City's Electronic Workshop.*



**T**HE process of buying a brand-new audio system—or even, in fact, upgrading some part of the one you already own—usually involves at least weeks of research, poring over ads, catalogs, and test reports, and comparing notes with other audiophiles. The research project itself should have its rewards, filling you with information you didn't know you needed until you had it, whetting your appetite for things you can't afford yet (if ever), and teaching you the importance of remaining critical, on your toes, and not easily persuaded.

All well and good, for now, at just the point where you are ready to translate your catalog dreams into hardware realities, you find that unless

you buy through mail order, your path to the acquisition of your new audio components is via The Salesman. The equipment you have in mind may have been designed and manufactured no more than half a mile from your home, or it may have come from halfway around the world and gone through a complex shipping, warehousing, and distribution procedure involving hundreds of people. But your chances of actually meeting anyone involved in this complicated process are slim—except for that retail salesman. To you, he “stands” for them all. (Although I refer to salesmen throughout, I am fully aware that hi-fi saleswomen exist as well, and that they are as competent—or even

as incompetent—as their male counterparts in the business.)

The salesman can have a great deal to do with your ultimate satisfaction—or lack of it—with the product you buy. He has access to information and facilities that you don't. He has many options in dealing with manufacturers and customers; you have only two: to buy or not to buy. You may approach him with childlike trust, skepticism, humility, paranoia, downright hostility, or any combination of these attitudes, but the fact remains that approach him you must. And if your relationship with the salesman is going to be a successful and mutually profitable one, you would be wise to choose him with





some care—with at least as much care as you would use, say, in selecting an auto mechanic, a veterinarian, or a barber.

Consider the situation in terms of mutual self-interest. *Your* goal is to buy as much quality audio as you can for the least amount of money, and to get with it a reasonable assurance of trouble-free operation and good service should it break down. The goals of the dealer and his salesman, on the other hand, are to make maximum profits with minimal expenses. If the dealer sees these goals in the short term, he will undertake to sell his products under some variation of a discount operation, eliminating such “frills” as trained (and therefore ex-

pensive) sales people and demonstration and service facilities. To make his profit on a shorter mark-up, he has to “turn over” a larger volume of merchandise and can’t afford to spend much time on any one customer. If price is your main consideration, and you choose to buy from a heavy discounteer (or a variant, such as a mail-order house or a college representative working out of a student dorm), the burden of sales information, returns, and service is usually on your shoulders. If you make a serious mistake, you have no one to blame but yourself.

An established and reputable audio store (they used to be called “salons”) tends to see you and the ser-

vice it offers in a different light. The owner probably believes that service and accommodation are a necessary part of doing business, and since he sells the equipment at only a small discount (or none at all), he can afford to provide them. His goals are longer term, and he knows that a satisfied customer will come back again and, in addition, will recommend the store to others.

If you’re an inveterate discount buyer, the rest of this article will be of only marginal interest to you. If you buy equipment without its being demonstrated or discussed, I assume that you know both your own needs and the performance of the components you’re buying, probably on the



# HI-FI SALESMAN

basis of research in this and other audiophile magazines. But if you opt instead for a service-oriented audio dealer and are eager to begin the kind of long-standing relationship I recommend, how do you find him? How do you recognize a "good" dealer?

**W**ORD of mouth—perhaps the recommendation of an audiophile neighbor—is a good place to start. Newspaper ads and "Stereo and Hi Fi" listings in the yellow pages of your telephone directory are other sources. Watch for "authorized dealers" of major brand names you know and trust; try to stay away from store locations in heavy transient traffic areas (for reasons that will be apparent later). In general, stores that sell "brown goods" (stereo-console "furniture") or kitchen appliances and stock a few audio components for customer convenience on the side won't offer much satisfaction. Like the discounters', their salesmen's expertise will be as sparse as their display of merchandise.

To determine how serious a dealer is about audio and about his reputation as an audio retailer, look for and ask about the following:

- A broad range of quality-brand products, including speakers—names you quickly recognize from their advertisements in this magazine, for example.
- An auditioning room or area that permits concentrated evaluation of a sound system: this should include an instant-comparison (A-B) switching system.
- A comprehensive display of manufacturers' literature.
- An extended warranty policy. Many manufacturers will offer a warranty of only a year or so on parts and labor, but many dealers have extended this period (perhaps with some conditions) up to three or even ten years. You'll find that if a retailer is proud of some special warranty policy, he'll boast about it in the store and in his advertising.
- A good record for after-sale service. Many major dealers maintain their own repair facilities for minor breakdowns; some will even provide a "loaner" while your defective unit is being repaired. And good businessmen will deal only with manufacturers who maintain regional service centers and can promise rapid return on repairs.

● Alert, intelligent personnel. As we suggested, the salesman is a critical link in the distribution chain, and the only one over which you can exercise much judgment or exert any control. While it's entirely possible that an excellent dealer may have some second-rate salesmen, the reverse is seldom true. The rapport you are able to establish with the salesman is the final test of a dealer and is probably more important than any other buying contact you will make.

This brings us immediately to the process of evaluating the salesperson, which sounds more difficult than it really is. There are a number of tell-tale signs, and a couple of tests you can perform. If the salesman seems to be pushing one unit or one brand over others—or if he is very critical of other brands that you know to be good—watch out! He may, of course, have excellent reasons for these pronounced preferences—in which case he should be able to document his opinions. But it may simply be that his store has a back room full of the "preferred" product or that it makes an extra profit on it.

Other facts of the salesman's life include the high-traffic paradox alluded to earlier; the better he becomes, the more customers he is expected to wait on, and the less of his time and expert advice he can give to each. So he quickly learns shortcuts, such as trying to determine in advance which customers are "worth" spending time with—which ones have cash in their pockets or look like good credit risks and appear to be ready to buy. Others, though they may be far better customers in the long run, are ignored or handled curtly. The salesman's need to be selective is the best argument for *avoiding* stores in high-traffic locations.

Lest it seem that I am being unduly critical of audio salesmen (who, after all, are only trying to do their jobs in a tough, competitive market), I should add that in my experience the majority of them are dedicated, knowledgeable professionals. Many belong to the Society of Audio Consultants (SAC), which requires that a member pass a test of technical competence before he can be certified. But, as in all fields, a few unprincipled or incompetent people can cast doubt on all.

Though a bit of buyer paranoia is perhaps inevitable, I propose, instead, a more constructive attitude: Why not turn the tables and "qualify" a salesman in just the same way he is trying to evaluate you? It shouldn't be very difficult to come up with a

couple of substantive questions you can ask, whether you are an avid or merely a casual reader of hi-fi magazines. His answers to a few leading questions, his attitude toward you, the equipment, and the sale, and the way you hit it off with him should tell you quickly whether he's a professional or would be just as happy selling used cars. Here are some specific suggestions:

● *Test his knowledge.* One good question you can ask him is "How much power do I need?" Audiophiles know that there is no "right" answer to this question. The salesman must ask *you* questions before he can provide an intelligent answer. If you get a pat reply or a snap judgment, switch to another person or another store. Other substantive questions of this kind—regarding the differences between CD-4 and SQ four-channel systems, for example—will tell you quickly how much he really knows even if you're only a novice yourself.

● *Tell him only what he wants to know.* "Aggressive silence" is a brilliant technique for flushing out the real professional. Many salesmen are past masters at letting the customer show off his knowledge and, in effect, sell himself. They'll be quite happy to listen to you and write up the sale when you finish. The true professional, on the other hand, will launch a series of pointed questions about your needs and wants. If he asks *before* he tells you, he's doing his job.

● *Establish rapport.* Chat a bit with him. Ask him about *his* sound system. Talk about a recent or exciting product development you've heard about. If he is willing to spend time talking, takes an active interest in the discussion, and abandons the selling role for even a few minutes, you've probably found a good salesman. Hang on to him.

● *Don't throw yourself on his mercy.* The salesman may pass every professional test—he may even be your brother-in-law—but the ultimate decision remains with you. If you put on a "kick-me" sign, even the most conscientious and well-intentioned person may not be able to keep his foot still! The more active the role you play in the sales transaction, the less likely you are to have second thoughts or, ultimately, be disappointed in your purchase.

● *Don't hurry.* And don't allow him to hurry *you*. If you're more than just a casual "knob-twirler," an astute salesman will recognize the fact, and

he'll concentrate on establishing a good relationship rather than effecting an immediate sale. He will invest time in you on the assumption that eventually it will pay off. If you feel you're being rushed into a decision, get out fast!

**A**LTHOUGH you may have found an intelligent, interested salesman, your job has only begun. Without *your* input, without information about you, your audio needs, and your present system, the salesman's job is difficult if not impossible. At the very least, you should bring three things to the sales floor: a description of your present system, some specific information about your listening room, and some recorded material—tape or record—with which you're completely familiar. These three tools in the hands of a skilled salesman will help the two of you make some intelligent decisions. Let's explore your contribution to the process in some detail:

- *Your present system*, described by make and model, is the most important information you can provide. It's not necessary to know all of the units' "vital statistics," because in most cases the salesman will either know them or be able to look them up easily. It also helps to have a clear idea of what you intend to do with the system—tape off the air, make live recordings, play prerecorded material, etc.—and what sort of system you envision owning, say, five years from now. Careful planning can make a difference in the long run.

- *Your listening room* is of some importance in the final design of a system, and an accurate description of it can be helpful to a good salesperson. Most people can estimate room dimensions, but they draw a blank when it comes to other acoustic-determining factors such as heavy draperies and carpets, thin walls, and high ceilings. These aspects should be described in some detail if you want the system to sound as good at home as in the showroom.

- *Your own software*, a favorite tape or record, will help you make a subjective judgment about the system—particularly its speakers. Bear in mind that you may have become *conditioned* to aberrant sound such as a booming bass or shrill treble from listening to your own system or the juke box at the corner bar. In that case, the essentially "flat" systems you hear demonstrated may sound *too flat* and unexciting. If you suspect

the problem exists, don't hesitate to tell the salesman about it and see what alternatives in equipment or adjustments he can recommend. Don't let him sway you to a sound you don't like, however, even though it may presumably be more "correct." After all, *you* have to live with it, he doesn't, and your ears—assuming some degree of training through careful listening—should be the final arbiters of quality.

So far, we haven't said anything about money. While it's a good practice to have a ballpark dollar figure in mind, remain as flexible as you can. The salesman may want to recommend that you spend more *or less*, and too arbitrary a figure often gives rise to customer dissatisfaction. A few additional bucks spent on a system—in one area or another—can make a great deal of difference.

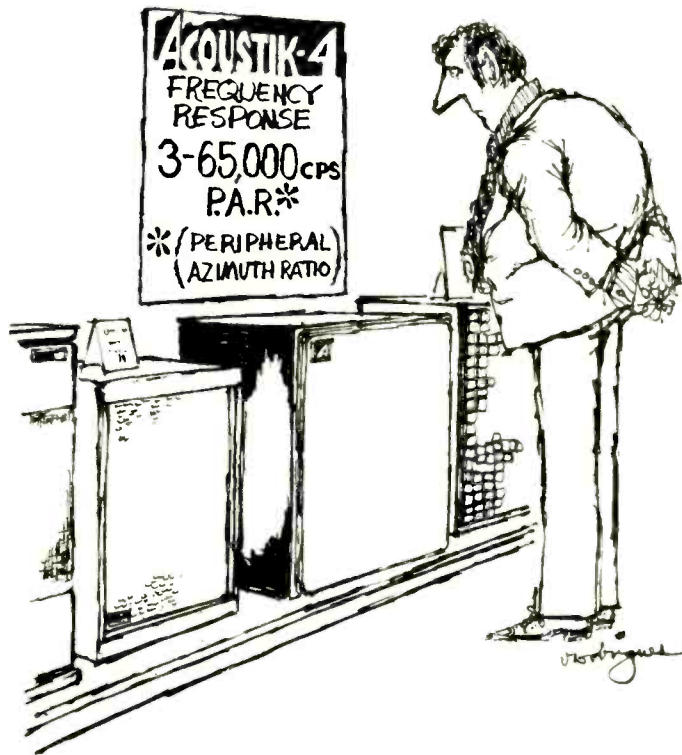
Some salesmen recommend that you budget about half your money for speakers, since they ultimately produce the "sound" of a system. This can be a problem, since advertised component "packages" often scrimp on the speakers or use private brands that range anywhere from excellent to awful. Don't rule out these packages if you're buying a complete system. Your ears—and the advice of a trusted salesman—will tell you whether or not they represent real value. And don't be afraid to shop for price among reputable retailers. Always

bear in mind, however, that a professional salesperson with your interests at heart may save you much more in the long run than a discounteer.

Once you've made your purchase, take it home and install it immediately. If it doesn't perform exactly as you expected, call the dealer. He may want to send a technician to your home to inspect it. It may be that a few adjustments or additional operating instructions are all you need. If he is non-cooperative, take it back (the same day, if possible) and demand a refund. That should get you the kind of service you expect and deserve. But if you've chosen a reliable dealer, there should be no problem.

**I**N hi-fi shopping, as in most other cases, we get what we deserve. If you have spent the time and energy to select a first-rate dealer, if you have chosen a good salesperson, and if you have given him enough information to do his job, chances are that you won't be disappointed. Your own contribution may have made the critical difference. The thrill of hearing those first few notes of your favorite selection on your new or upgraded system will make it all worthwhile. It's a precious moment, so prepare for it well.

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# The Art of Elisabeth Schwarzkopf

*A selected critical discography by James Goodfriend*

**E**LISABETH SCHWARZKOPF began her farewell tour of the United States on January 15 of this year and will give her final recital in this country on April 27 in New York. Though the number of her appearances here has been generous and they have been spread over a period of more than twenty years, many of us will feel that the farewell is too soon, that we have not yet heard enough, that we have not yet fully relished and assimilated all that she has set before us. Mme. Schwarzkopf has been an invaluable and intrinsic part not of our musical past, but of our present—and it is very difficult to say farewell to the present. She exemplifies a considerable range of what the last thirty years or so has felt to be great vocal musicianship, which in many key ways is quite different from the way the preceding thirty years defined that quality. In that sense, then, she has been and is a model of our time and for our time, for she not only reflected the way we, as opposed to, say, our grandparents, thought about music, she also helped to direct that thinking. A singer of her capabilities would have been a prize in any age: in ours she has been a unique treasure.

Retirement from concertizing in the United States is not tantamount to retiring from music, and

we may reasonably expect from Mme. Schwarzkopf new recordings for some years to come. If the sort of survey offered here of her currently available recordings seems to be a bit too forward, too much like treating her as a part of the past when she is still of the present, then it can be excused only by saying that the occasion calls for *some* kind of tribute, and that the highest and most appropriate tribute one can offer is to call attention again to those things she has already accomplished. Her present recorded repertoire is at least equal in size and scope to the life's work of many other great singers, and though it is still ongoing, it deserves examination as it is today. The following records (all, except where noted, currently available), are this writer's selection from over twenty years of listening to Elisabeth Schwarzkopf. If they stir in me some happy memories, they produce even more strongly a response to the immediacy of musical communication. They will remain for some time yet a part of music's present. And when music at last changes enough so that all our ways of thinking about it will have been replaced by others, these records will be a statement to posterity of what we thought and felt about music, and of what we loved.

**SCHUBERT: *Lieder Recital. An die Musik; Im Frühling; Wehmuth; Ganymed; Das Lied im Grünen; Gretchen am Spinnrade; Nahe des Geliebten; Die junge Nonne; An Sylvia; Auf dem Wasser zu singen; Nachtviolen; Der Musensohn.*** Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (soprano); Edwin Fischer (piano). ANGEL Ⓜ 35022.

The first solo record of Elisabeth Schwarzkopf released in this country by Angel Records was her Schubert recital with Edwin Fischer. It was part of Angel's first American release, and in over twenty years it has never been out of the catalog. It was not the soprano's first record, though, by any means. Before the advent of LP she had made a considerable number of 78-rpm records (of which more later), and at the time of her LP introduction to this country she was already an established artist in Eu-

rope. The record coincided with her first American recital, at Town Hall in New York, where this writer was fortunate enough to be seated in the second row center of the orchestra—beaming.

As with most of Schwarzkopf's recorded recitals (and live ones, too), the program is most intelligently chosen, balancing the lyrical with the dramatic, the gripping with the relaxing, the stately with the fleet. And yet she never chooses a song that is either temperamentally wrong for her or beyond her abilities. If there are a few minor, nervous-sounding slips in intonation, I am somewhat inclined to put them down to the experience of working with Fischer, who was a great pianist but not an accompanist per se. He digs into the piano parts almost as if they were solo impromptu,

and while he brings an added excitement to the performances, plus some inner voices (neither of which we customarily hear in these songs), the perfections of coordination that we get from such an accompanist as Gerald Moore are not always there. The record contains many of my favorite performances of these songs, however, and it is still one of the finest Schubert recitals available on records today.

**BACH: *Cantata 51, Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen.*** MOZART: *Exsultate, Jubilate (K. 165).* Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (soprano); Harold Jackson (trumpet, in Bach); Philharmonia Orchestra. Peter Gellhorn cond. (in Bach), Walter Susskind cond. (in Mozart). SERAPHIM Ⓜ 60013.

There is little question that Schwarzkopf's *Jauchzet Gott* is one of the



most exciting vocal records ever made. She takes the fast movements of the work at a terrific pace, immediately dismissing from our minds the theory that it may very well have been composed for a boy soprano, tears through the florid vocal writing with admirable breath control and breathtaking accuracy—as if she had been doing nothing else all her life—and, in the course of things, plants a few high C's with drama and spirit precisely where they belong. The solo trumpeter deserves a bouquet of his own merely for keeping up with her. It is truly a great virtuoso feat. But, despite some musicological grumbles when the record was first released (it was originally on 78's and once issued here on a Columbia LP), it is as well a clear-cut and clearly thought out musical statement of the soprano's understanding of Bach's intentions. Why *shouldn't* the work be exciting?



As Zerbinetta

Next to this one, virtually every other recording of the cantata pales into gentility.

The *Exsultate*, while taken at more conventional tempos, is also a splendid performance, beautifully accurate, stylish, and operatic where one wants it to be operatic. The recordings are old and restricted in range, but the record is a must.

**MOZART:** *Così Fan Tutte*. Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (soprano), Fiordiligi; Christa Ludwig (mezzo-soprano), Dorabella; Alfredo Kraus (tenor), Ferrando; Giuseppe Taddei (baritone), Guglielmo; Hanny Steffek (soprano), Despina; Walter Berry (bass), Don Alfonso; Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus, Karl Böhm cond. ANGEL S-3631 D/L.

Schwarzkopf has recorded all three of Mozart's great Italian operas, two of

them twice, as well as arias from *Idomeneo* and *Il Re Pastore*, but strangely has paid no comparable attention to his German operas. Probably her finest accomplishment in Mozartiana is her impersonation of Fiordiligi as captured in the recording of *Così* led by Karl Böhm, a set that replaced an *almost* equally fine one with her (in mono) led by Herbert von Karajan. Her "Come scoglio," with all its cruel leaps, is rock solid, but it is her work in the ensembles and her byplay with Christa Ludwig as Dorabella that mark her as a great Mozartian singing actress. Her Fiordiligi is at once sophisticated and innocent, and unwaveringly walks the tightrope between believability and stage fantasy that is at the root of this daring, risqué comedy of manners and of morals. The cast suffers at moments from the absence of a tenor of the quality of a Tauber, a Patzak, a Schiøtz, or a Wunderlich (what cast today would not?), but the recording remains, despite recent strong competition, my personal favorite among all the recordings of *Così*.

**BRAHMS:** *Deutsche Volkslieder* (forty-two songs). Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (soprano); Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone); Gerald Moore (piano). ANGEL B 3675 two discs.



As the Merry Widow

It is interesting that Schwarzkopf, certainly one of the most sophisticated singers of our time, has always had a special flair for the simplicities of folk song. Brahms' *Deutsche Volkslieder*, one of the great contributions of the nineteenth century to our knowledge and appreciation of folk song, comprises forty-nine settings, seven of which call for a chorus. All the solo settings are included in this two-disc album, eighteen of them sung as dialogues by both artists, thirteen by Fischer-Dieskau alone, and eleven by Schwarzkopf alone. Beauties there

are a-plenty in this set, and frequenters of Schwarzkopf's recitals will recognize many of the songs, especially one she has made particularly her own: "Och Mod'r, ich well en Ding han" ("Oh, Mother, I want something!"), a coy, teasing bit of fluff that never fails to amuse an audience as the soprano pouts, emotes, fools, and gushes in the most elegant imitation of a simple country girl since Marie Antoinette played shepherdess. The fact that the song is in dialect doesn't hurt a bit, as Schwarzkopf has always had the keenest ear for niceties of pronunciation and the technical and dramatic ability to deliver the words as if both she and you were conversing in your mutual native tongue.

**WOLF:** *Italienisches Liederbuch* (complete). Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (soprano); Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone); Gerald Moore (piano). ANGEL SBL-3703 two discs.

**WOLF:** *Spanisches Liederbuch* (complete). Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (soprano); Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone); Gerald Moore (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2707035 two discs.



As the Marschallin

To fanciers of voices for the sake of voices, a singer's development of an interest in the songs of Hugo Wolf has always seemed the kiss of death. And so Schwarzkopf's devotion to Wolf's songs, which has extended to the giving of all-Wolf recitals, is, in the eyes of many, a brave if eccentric stance. And yet the songs are hardly unvocal. It is just that they demand the small subtlety rather than the large gesture (with exceptions, of course), that the words are vitally important, that the piano part is too, and that the small size of most of the songs allows little room for "fine singing." But Schwarzkopf, being intelligent, has always been a word-oriented singer, and she is a past mistress of all degrees of subtlety. And still, at those times when what is called for is



**The** time has come for me to say "goodbye" to my American audiences. I have much to be thankful for. Born with what my husband maintains is the quintessential for a successful singer's career, an immediately recognizable personal timbre, I also had parents who sacrificed themselves and every luxury to ease my way. And I married a man with the eighteenth-century obsession of "quality in everything."

Having survived a series of so-called singing teachers, I had the good fortune to study with Maria Ivogün and her husband Michael Raucheisen, who laid the foundations of my technique and style. I also survived a terrible number of "cellar nights" during the Berlin bombings, and subsequent tuberculosis.

My career, deliberately divided between opera, oratorio, and recitals, was a happy one. The luxury

of working with the greatest conductors, regisseurs, and those "at the piano" began in 1946 and bids fair to accompany me to the end of my public career thirty years later.

It has been my privilege to move audiences to tears and to smiles—even to laughter—by the gift of communication of emotion: this I believe to be one of the main duties of a singer.

The week before I embarked on this farewell tour of America, my husband and I spent untold hours listening critically to my records to select the material for a series of albums of the records I have made since 1946. I must admit that I was very proud and happy. Recording has been the happiest part of my artistic life. It is my fervent hope and belief that for many decades to come my records will be a constantly recurring source of delight to music lovers, both those who have heard me and those who could not. Even more than that, I hope they will be helpful to the young and upcoming singers—perhaps in the same way as I profited from the recordings of the great singers and instrumentalists of the past.

simply beautiful sound, she has been able to supply it. Indeed, she is probably the best thing that has happened to poor Hugo Wolf since his birth. But it is not only the shade of Wolf who can be thankful that Schwarzkopf has recorded so many of his songs; these recordings are a true legacy for all of us and are certain to go down in history as choice examples of just how this repertoire is supposed to be done.

**VERDI: Requiem.** Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (soprano); Christa Ludwig (mezzo-soprano); Nicolai Gedda (tenor); Nicolai Ghiaurov (bass); Philharmonia Chorus and Orchestra. Carlo Maria Giulini cond. ANGEL SBL 3649.

**VERDI: Falstaff.** Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (soprano), Mistress Alice Ford; Tito Gobbi (baritone), Sir John Falstaff; Rolando Panerai (baritone), Ford; Luigi Alva (tenor), Fenton; Anna Moffo (soprano), Nanetta; Nan Merriman (mezzo-soprano), Mistress Meg Page; Fedora Barbieri

(mezzo-soprano), Mistress Quickly; Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus, Herbert von Karajan cond. ANGEL CL 3552.

Schwarzkopf has had something of a side career with the nineteenth-century Italian repertoire, not an entirely unexpected thing, but not exactly *de rigueur* either for a German singer known for both Strauss and Mozart, lieder and operetta. Her work in the Verdi Requiem (like that of the other soloists) is a far cry from the heavily seasoned style preferred by some Italian singers—and some audiences—but it is earnest, straight-ahead, and eminently musical. She sounds as if she is singing a ceremonial work, not an opera. Some people won't like that. No exception, however, can be taken to her Mistress Ford in Verdi's greatest and most Mozartian opera. Her assumption of character is complete, her diction elegant, her singing musicianly.

**ELISABETH SCHWARZKOPF SINGS OPERETTA.** Heuberger: *Der Opernball: Im Chambre Separée.* Zeller: *Der Vogelhändler: Ich bin die Christel von der Post; Schenkt man sich Rosen in Tirol.* Der Obersteiger: *Sei nicht böse.* J. Strauss-Benatzky: *Casanova: Nuns' Chorus.* Millocker: *Die Dubarry: Ich schenk mein Herz; Was ich im Leben beginne.* Suppé: *Boccaccio: Hab ich nur deine Liebe.* Lehár: *Der Zarewitsch: Einer wird kommen.* Der Graf von Luxembourg: *Hoch Evoé.* Angèle Didier: *Heut noch werd ich Ehefrau.* Giuditte: *Meine Lippen, sie Küssen so heiss.* Siczynski: *Wien, Stadt meiner Träume.* Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (soprano); Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus, Otto Ackermann cond. ANGEL S 35696.

Had Elisabeth Schwarzkopf chosen never to sing Mozart, Wolf, Beethoven, or Verdi, chances are she could have had an international career singing nothing but Viennese operetta. But perhaps the fact that she *did* choose to sing them made her even a



greater operetta singer than she would have been otherwise, for she is certainly the prima donna par excellence in each and every Viennese operetta she has chosen. One wishes only that she had chosen *more* of them. Schwarzkopf recorded four Johann Strauss operettas and two by Franz Lehár complete; of these, all are out of print except a second, later recording of *The Merry Widow*. One cannot let the matter pass without some sort of comment. "Damn" would, I think, be appropriate.

The selections listed above were all recorded independently of any of the complete operetta recordings, and the disc contains a wealth of melody that could not, perhaps, be found in any one of them. Still, excerpts make one yearn to know their contexts. The Nuns' Chorus from *Casanova*, for example, is a prayer in waltz time; what must the *rest* of that operetta be like? Schwarzkopf performs these little diamonds of light music with style and intelligence, with elegance and *schmalz*. I find disappointment only in the final (non-operetta) selection in which the tempo is fast and the *schmalz* missing, but apart from that, this is certainly one of the loveliest records in the catalog, performances to set alongside those of Richard Tauber of the men's arias.

**R. STRAUSS: *Four Last Songs. Capriccio, Op. 85: Closing Scene.*** Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (soprano); Philharmonia Orchestra. Otto Ackermann cond. ANGEL 35084.

**R. STRAUSS: *Der Rosenkavalier.*** Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (soprano), Princess von Werdenberg; Otto Edelmann (bass-baritone), Baron Ochs auf Lerchenau; Christa Ludwig (mezzo-soprano), Octavian; Eberhard Waechter (baritone), Herr von Faninal; Teresa Stich-Randall (soprano), Sophie; Nicolai Gedda (tenor), a singer; Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus, Herbert von Karajan cond. ANGEL S 3563 D/L.

Despite her great reputation as a Mozartean, her exquisite singing of Schubert and Schumann, and her admirable espousal of the songs of Hugo Wolf, it is probably in the works of Richard Strauss that Schwarzkopf has made her greatest contributions to music and scored her greatest artistic successes. The uniqueness of her original recording of the Four Last Songs and the final scene of *Capriccio* is underlined by the simple fact of its being still in the catalog, despite the presence of a newer, stereo version of the songs with George Szell and a complete stereo performance of *Capriccio*. The

earlier record had something that the later remakes do not: authentic, ineffable magic. It is truly one of the great recordings of all time.

Schwarzkopf's portrayal of the Marschallin is also one of the classic operatic characterizations of our time, intensified, perhaps, by the fact that not so many years earlier she sang Sophie in the same opera. Though other recordings of *Rosenkavalier* may be pre-eminent in other respects, in terms of the Marschallin only this one can be mentioned in the same breath as the classic old set with Lotte Lehmann in the role.

**ELISABETH SCHWARZKOPF AND FRIENDS: R. Strauss: *Der Rosenkavalier: Herr Gott in Himmel! . . . Mir ist die***



*In Concert*

*Ehre (Presentation of the Rose); Da lieg' ich . . . Herr Kavalier!* Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (soprano); Irmgard Seefried (soprano); Dagmar Hermann (contralto); Ludwig Weber (bass); Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Otto Ackermann cond. **Humperdinck: *Hansel und Gretel: Suse, liebe Suse; Brüderchen, komm, tanz' mit mir; Der kleine Sandmann bin ich; Abends will ich schlafen gehen.*** Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (soprano); Irmgard Seefried (soprano); unknown orchestra and conductor. SERAPHIM?

**ELISABETH SCHWARZKOPF IN RECITAL.** Anon.: *'S Schatzli, Die Beruhigte: O du liebs Angeli; Maria auf dem Berge.* Mozart: *Warnung.* T. Arne: *When daisies pied; Where the bee sucks.* Schumann: *Auftrage; Der Nussbaum.* Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (soprano); Gerald Moore (piano). Mozart: *Il Re Pastore: L'Amerò, sarò costante. Don Giovanni: In quali eccessi . . . Mi tradi quell' alma ingrata.* Bach: *Cantata 208, Schafe können sicher weiden (Sheep May Safely Graze); Cantata 68, Mein gläubiges Herz (My Heart Ever Faithful).* Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (soprano); Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Josef Krips cond. (in *Il Re Pastore*); Philharmonia Orchestra, Josef Krips cond. (in *Don Giovanni*); Philharmonia

Orchestra, Peter Gellhorn cond. (in Bach). SERAPHIM?

The two records listed above do not exist, but they are not wholly imaginary either. The selections were all recorded by Schwarzkopf and the other artists prior to 1953 and released on ten- and twelve-inch 78-rpm records in England. A very few found their way onto American Columbia LP's for a time, but they have long since become unavailable. Although Madame Schwarzkopf and her husband Walter Legge have themselves selected material for one or more souvenir albums to represent her recorded career, there is no guarantee that any such albums will be issued *here*, and, at any rate, their content is likely to be quite different from the above, for the purposes are different. The purpose of the two albums suggested above is simply to restore to the active catalog some superb recordings that have not been available for many years, and some that were never issued in this country at all.

The *Rosenkavalier* performances above have been my own particular standards for these excerpts ever since I heard them for the first time twenty years ago. I have not heard better. The four German-language folk songs were originally issued on a ten-inch disc (English Columbia LB 112) obviously meant as a tribute to Schwarzkopf's teacher Maria Ivogün, for she too, many years before, had made a famous recording of four folk songs. The two discs share, I believe, one song, but Schwarzkopf's is by far the more beautiful. The Arne songs are particularly notable for the sparklingly clear diction, and the two Schumann lieder have, perhaps, never been done better on records. The aria from *Il Re Pastore* can hold its own with performances by such as Elisabeth Schumann and Gabrielle Ritter-Ciampi, as well as the famous historical one by Nellie Melba and Jan Kubelik.

**T**HE above repertoire is suggested, then, to Angel as highly suitable for release on the Seraphim label. Since vital information about old, out-of-print discs has a way of disappearing around large record companies, I will be happy, if so requested, to aid in the project by supplying Angel with all the original 78-rpm disc numbers—and, if it should prove necessary, I will even *lend* them my copies of the discs.

# STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

# BEST OF THE MONTH



Conductor Alexander Schneider and soloist Peter Serkin: ear to ear on Mozart

## Seductive, Disarming Loveliness: Mozart Piano Concertos By Peter Serkin

THE year 1784 was a good one for Mozart. His personal affairs were in good shape and he was much in demand, both as a performer and as a composer. One result of this situation is that he wrote—for himself or for others—no less than six piano concertos within that twelve-month span. They are not small, minor works tossed off for some passing occasion, but symphonic-size pieces with virtuosic solo parts and rich orchestration that, perhaps for the first time, really brings the orchestral winds into their own. These are the concertos now numbered fourteen through nineteen, and it was the genial idea of Peter Serkin, Alexander Schneider, and RCA to put them all together in a set of performances communicating their seductive beauty from the first note of K. 449 to the last of K. 459.

I don't hold with musical scholar Alfred Einstein's view that these concertos are "as different from one another as can be imagined" (four of the six first movements, after all, are based on an identical rhythmic pattern!), and I don't think Mozart was at all times equally inspired in them. Nevertheless, it is a pleasure to hear these less familiar concertos in a most beguiling series of performances.

By 1784, Mozart was thinking about going back to an old love, *opera buffa*, and it is the delight of these concertos that they are models of the *buffa* style. This is *least* apparent in the stately first movements with their symphonic fanfare motifs, but even here the operatic stage—entrances and exits, sly commentaries, cadenzas, quasi-parlando, brusque interruptions, lyric subjects, and counter themes—is never far away from the composer's thoughts. The second movements all appear to be cavatinas for the lead soprano, and the finales . . . well, the finales are quite operatically *finalissimo*.

The secret of any good stage performance is, of course, character, and the situation with a Mozart piano

concerto is really no different. Peter Serkin's performances have a soft, even sly brilliance which has its roots in tender loving care, complete technical command, rhythmic vitality, beautiful touch and tone, taste, and, above all, *character*. The excellent English Chamber Orchestra is beautifully directed by Schneider in possibly his most impressive conducting job to date. He and young Serkin hear ear to ear on virtually every point, and everything is enhanced by excellent recorded sound.

A few comments on tempos are in order. Except for one notably fast tempo in K. 459 (based, apparently, on new information about Mozart's own wishes), most everything is on the leisurely side. In one or two cases I would have preferred a shade or two of operatic *allegro*, but these exceptions are at least arguable, and the conviction evident in the choices made by conductor and soloist here carries its own authority.

There is an historical argument of some little validity for moderating extremes of, say, tempo, in eighteenth-century music. There is, however, no really good excuse for con-



sistent misreading of Mozart's ornamental details. This really puzzles me. In this day and age it is really very easy for any musician to inform himself or herself about how to play most eighteenth-century ornaments within the general terms of the style and the performer's prerogatives. Apoggiaturas are, to put it as simply as possible, "wrong" notes that are played intentionally on the beat, with a bit of an accent, sustained about as long as you can get away with it, and then resolved gently and gracefully—like a sigh. This is perfectly standard operatic practice, and it is equally applicable to keyboard music. It is annoying that, in a series of recordings made with so much care and finesse in other areas, just a few minutes could not have been spared to get these and similar details right. Apart from this cavil, I have nothing but praise for the disarming loveliness of this Mozart. *Eric Salzman*

**MOZART:** *Piano Concertos: No. 14, in E-flat Major (K. 449); No. 15, in B-flat Major (K. 450); No. 16, in D Major (K. 451); No. 17, in G Major (K. 453); No. 18, in B-flat Major (K. 456); No. 19, in F Major (K. 459).* Peter Serkin (piano): English Chamber Orchestra, Alexander Schneider cond. RCA ARL 3-0732 three discs \$20.95.

## Vladimir Ashkenazy's Beethoven Concertos Are at Once Grand and Intimate

THE late piano sonatas of Beethoven are exalted works, and they have inspired more than a few exalted performances, several of which we are fortunate enough to have preserved in recordings. Whether these works are, as Artur Schnabel once remarked of his favorite repertoire in general, "written better than they can be played," or whether they simply contain more than any *single* interpreter can hope to glean from them, the last word has surely not been said on them—it is never really said on such music. Vladimir Ashkenazy's new London disc of the final pair, though, strikes me as leaving less *unsaid* than even the most illustrious of its predecessors, and I suspect it will be a long time before its equal appears.

As in his earlier Beethoven recordings—the 1968 *Hammerklavier*, the subsequent set of the five concertos with Solti, and the more recent disc of the *Appassionata* and the D Major Sonata, Op. 10, No. 3—Ashkenazy's conceptions of these phenomenal valedictory works of the sonata cycle are at once on the grandest scale and the most intimate one. Both impressions are intense, but neither is exaggerated and they are in no way contradictory. The first movement of Op. 111 is massive, imposing, big as life—but not bigger *than* life; the Arietta moves toward greater and greater simplicity in its rarefied atmosphere, dropping every shred of extraneous encumbrance until only the purest glow illumines the final bars. Poetry, passion, drama, introspection—all elements are realized with an unflinching sense of proportion, and nothing is taken for granted; refinement here goes hand in hand with the most restless and probing search for ultimate values. One regrets only the squandering of superlatives on past occasions, for there seem to be no words fresh enough now to describe the sense of intellectual adventure and spiritual discovery in this altogether extraordinary music-making.

For their part, London's engineers have come through with surpassingly fine piano sound, exceptionally lifelike and crisply defined. There is, unfortunately, a rather conspicuous pre-echo in the first movement of Op. 111, a flaw that can hardly fail to

make itself noticed but which cannot diminish the profound satisfactions afforded by this outstanding release.

*Richard Freed*

**BEETHOVEN:** *Piano Sonata No. 31, in A-flat Major, Op. 110; Piano Sonata No. 32, in C Minor, Op. 111.* Vladimir Ashkenazy (piano). LONDON CS-6843 \$6.98.

## The Return of Linda Ronstadt, Honeyed to a Womanly Richness

I will get no argument, I think, when I say that Linda Ronstadt has been one of the prettier fixtures around the pop scene now for six or seven years. And not *only* that, for from her earliest days with the Stone Poneys she has shared with us a gentle, warm, performing personality and dynamite musicianship as well. She's turned up with an album of her own from time to time, but mostly she seems to have spent a good deal of time helping out other, sometimes not so talented, musicians. That, and a winter that already seems overlong, makes her new Capitol album "Heart Like a Wheel" as welcome as springtime, blossoming as it is with beautiful Linda Ronstadt performances.



Take, for example, her lovely, straight-on, never maudlin or smarmy job on Hank Williams' *I Can't Help It If I'm Still in Love with You*: it's done with all the standard c-&-w trimmings, but Ronstadt's performance is so unaffected, so artfully artless, so sure and so true that it is immediately lifted above the level of whiny jukebox lament to that of a folk song about a woman's human dignity. Or try her sensitive reading of *Dark End of the Street*, illumined and made significant by the light of her musical intelligence. And there's also *Heart Like a Wheel*, to which Maria Muldaur, another lady of impressive gifts, contributes a sisterly harmony vocal, returning the compliment Linda paid her on the recent "Waitress in a Donut Shop," and proving that they know what we know.

Ronstadt's voice has honeyed into a rich, womanly thing that has the rounded femininity of a Renoir drawing. At times she sounds a bit like Mary Travers in her prime, which ain't bad, but mostly she sounds like an artist who has finally come into her own. All in all, this is a lovely album by a fine singer who obviously knew all along that she could afford to wait. Just don't know whether or not *I can*—for the next one, that is.

Peter Reilly

**LINDA RONSTADT:** *Heart Like a Wheel*. Linda Ronstadt (vocals); orchestra. *You're No Good*; *It Doesn't Matter Any More*; *Faithless Love*; *Dark End of the Street*; *Heart Like a Wheel*; *When Will I*

*Be Loved*; *Willin'*; *I Can't Help It If I'm Still in Love with You*; *Keep Me from Blowing Away*; *You Can Close Your Eyes*. CAPITOL ST-11358 \$6.98, 8XT-11358 \$7.98. © 4XT-11358 \$7.98.

## More Imported Jazz: The Paris Concert Of Circle

**T**HOUGH the quartet called Circle (made up of Messrs. Anthony Braxton, Chick Corea, David Holland, and Barry Altschul) is in the vanguard of modern American music, a broadcast of their combined efforts (such as the one called "Paris Concert" produced by Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française in Paris four years ago) would be almost unthinkable on home ground. And the fact that a recording of the concert comes to us on the ECM label (German Polydor) is testimony that this vital segment of American music is also being neglected by this country's major record labels.

From Wayne Shorter's *Nefertiti*, which is qualitatively on a par with Miles Davis' version, to the Marty Szymes-Isham Jones 1936 standard *There Is No Greater Love*, this formidable quartet generates musical electricity of enduring power and evokes from its French audience a

response akin to that enjoyed by, say, Joan Sutherland at the Met.

Sad to say, Chick Corea—brilliant on these tracks—has since drowned himself in a commercial morass he calls "Return to Forever," but I suppose we can blame that partly on a local climate that compels many of our finest artists—at least those not considered "legitimate"—to prostitute themselves for the sake of survival. This album strengthens the hope that Corea will eventually find it feasible to return to unadulterated music such as he used to make.

And what is that music? It has roots in jazz by way of John Coltrane and Ornette Coleman, but the classical influence of Arnold Schoenberg and Anton Webern is also strong, and there can be no doubt but that this amalgam more accurately represents modern American music than do the increasingly conservative-sounding efforts of Samuel Barber or the gimmick-ridden experiments of John Cage. It will probably take years before America learns to respect Braxton, Corea, Holland, Altschul, and their peers as it now does its Coplands, Barbers, and Menottis, but that day will surely come. *Chris Albertson*

**CIRCLE:** *Paris Concert*. Anthony Braxton (reeds and percussion); Chick Corea (piano); David Holland (bass and cello); Barry Altschul (percussion). *Nefertiti* [sic]; *Song for the Newborn*; *Duet*; *Look-out Farm* [73° Kalvin] [sic] (*Variation-3*); *Toy Room—Q and A*; *No Greater Love*. ECM 1018/19 ST two discs \$9.98.



A cat may look at a queen: pianist Vladimir Ashkenazy (opposite page) and singer Linda Ronstadt





# POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES

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

**PETER ALLEN:** *Continental-American*. Peter Allen (vocals and piano); orchestra and chorus. *Just a Gigolo*; *Everything Old Is New Again*; *The Natural Thing to Do*; *Pretty Pretty*; *Continental-American*; and four others. A&M SP 3643 \$6.98.

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

Peter Allen has at last found his proper milieu—the new supper clubs that, surprisingly, are popping up against the odds of a lousy economy and a new-generation audience just learning to take a drink or two with their music. Backed by guitar, bass, and drums and accompanying himself on piano, Allen has turned into the vibrant performer he has for several years showed signs of being, with an improved, strong singing voice, an endearing on-stage personality, and enough contradictions operating to make him intriguing. A combination of tough-mindedness and uncertainty makes his writing special and oddly contemporary, even though a lot of his material deals with that grand old category of lost love.

A large part of Allen's performing personality has been successfully transmitted to vinyl with his third L.P., "Continental-American." It is an album highlighted by really fine singing of some first-rate songs and lowlighted by a mundane, sometimes insensitive production that interferes with (but can't destroy) the quality of his work. Too often, the orchestra and chorus seem to be thrown in with no thought as to whether they will enhance the song, with the result that the most suc-

cessfully realized material here is that which is done most simply.

The opening track is *Just a Gigolo* (the only song in the album Allen didn't write himself or with a collaborator), and with an unadorned piano accompaniment and a solid vocal interpretation, Allen rescues it from its old-chestnut status and makes it once again a classic analysis of selling soul and body. It is a fitting companion piece to his own *Pretty Pretty*, which dissects with sympathy and clarity the life of a groupie/singles-bar swinger who has reached the end of the line. But here the orchestration lets him down, diluting most of the gritty quality of the words with a soft, sweet sound that misses the point altogether.

*The Natural Thing to Do* is more successful, for the lush string backing fits easily into the song's bittersweet mood, but *This Side-show's Leaving Town*, a stronger song on the same subject, is hampered by the relentlessly circusy backdrop it is given. And so it goes.

It seems apparent that Allen's new record company loved him enough to give him all the money he needed to produce a first-rate album. It is unfortunate that producer Joel Dorn and conductor-arranger William Eaton didn't spend it more carefully to emphasize the artist's special qualities rather than diluting them. But even so, this is an album well worth hearing. *Penelope Ross*

**GLEN CAMPBELL:** *Reunion*. Glen Campbell (vocals and guitar); orchestra. *Roll Me Easy*; *Ocean in His Eyes*; *I Keep It Hid*; *It's a Sin*; *Adoration*; and five others. CAPITOL SW-11336 \$6.98, © 8XW-11336 \$7.98.

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

Here is the usually slick-as-spit Glen Campbell in his best album in years. For once, he seems to be truly involved in lyrics, not "acting" them, and he produces a series of intelligent, graceful, and occasionally poetic (*The Moon's a Harsh Mistress*, in particular) performances. Of course, all the words and music are those of Jimmy Webb, that unique and gifted loner whose work is always interesting. Every once in a while Glen can't resist a show-biz touch or two (*Roll Me Easy*), but mostly he keeps to a sensible course of just trying to communicate. Webb has yet to find

an interpreter of his work who will bring it to active life on records—his own performances are too literal—but in the meantime Campbell has done a thoroughly respectful and tasteful job. *P.R.*

**CAPTAIN BEEFHEART & THE MAGIC BAND:** *Bluejeans & Moonbeams*. Captain Beefheart (vocals, harmonica); instrumental accompaniment. *Same Old Blues*; *Party of Special Things to Do*; *Observatory Crest*; *Pompadour Swamp*; *Captains Holiday*; and four others. MERCURY SRM-1-1018 \$6.98, © MC8-1-1018 \$7.98, © MCR4-1-1018 \$7.98.

Performance: **Continuing saga**  
Recording: **Very good**

For years, Captain Beefheart has been saying that he would "go commercial," that he would dash off some stuff which, in his peculiar and always valuable opinion, would tickle the ear lobes of the golden lads and lassies who dash out to buy rock records.

He appears to be doing it now. This is his second album for Mercury (after a long stay with Warner Brothers and some smaller, gambler labels), and in it, as in the first, he appears to have shed much of his cocoon. He allows an outsider to produce his records. He even permits the true names of the personnel of the Magic Band to be listed, whereas before he created his own names for them. (Four years ago, when I was dealing with a vault reissue of some of his classic early work, I asked him, over long-distance phone, what the real name of drummer "Drumbo" was. There was a pause, then, in a stentorian baritone reminiscent of John Barrymore dealing with a summer stock actor or Winston Churchill addressing a teenage Communist, he replied, "We will keep it at 'Drumbo,' if you don't mind.")

Beefheart is a man with an immense imagination and a child's firm but innocent sense of humor who wandered into rock because it was the most advantageous way to display his talent. At the time he began his work, the novel, poetry, and theater were in disrepute; they were too slow, too hampered by tradition and infighting, too "old." So Don van Vliet, a.k.a. Captain Beefheart, went his own pioneering way. That none of his efforts were ever hugely successful in commercial terms is

## Explanation of symbols:

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

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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



neither surprising nor a commentary on his talent. That he has now said his say and modified his music so that more people can accept it is also unsurprising. Besides, "commercial" or no, in this new album there are still a few galactic flashes, uniquely Beefheartian, that continue to identify the Captain as one of the great originals. J.V.

**LEONARD COHEN:** *New Skin for the Old Ceremony.* Leonard Cohen (vocals, guitar); Lewis Furey (viola); Ralph Gibson (guitar); Armen Halburian (percussion); Jeff Layton (banjo, guitar, mandolin, trumpet); other musicians. *Is This What You Wanted; Chelsea Hotel #2; Lover Lover Lover; Field Commander Cohen; Why Don't You Try; There Is a War;* and five others. COLUMBIA KC 33167 \$6.98, Ⓞ CA 33167 \$7.98, Ⓞ CT 33167 \$7.98.

Performance: **Spotty**  
Recording: **Good**

Getting the hang of listening to Leonard Cohen is about all there is to listening to Leonard Cohen, I'm afraid. It takes a little while, and it all seems fresh and strange at first, those drooping inflections and that preoccupation with sex in dangerous parts of town, but eventually you conclude there isn't going to be another experience to match *Bird on a Wire* or *Suzanne*, just an endless string of rewrites of *Master Song*. I'm glad Cohen is there, losing all those women and men to other men and women and writing down how it feels, but as long as it's going to turn out to feel pretty much the same way every time, I'd just as soon stick with the early "Songs of Leonard Cohen" album, which still seems as current as any and has more variety in it besides. The instrumental backing here is

reminiscent of that album, sort of spartan razzle-dazzle, and Cohen does get off a good line now and then—even makes a grim try at humor a time or two—and it should work fine for those who've never encountered Cohen before. Those who have, and have some interest in finding signs of growth, will be frustrated. *Chelsea Hotel #2* and *Take This Longing* are probably the best of the rehashes, faithful enough to his preoccupation to make you want to give him an expense-paid month-long vacation in a cold shower. N.C.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**THE JAMES COTTON BAND:** *100% Cotton.* James Cotton (harmonica and vocals); "Little Bo" (tenor saxophone); Matt Murphy (guitar); Charles Calmese (bass); Kenny Johnson (drums); others. *Boogie Thing; Creeper Creeps Again; Burner; 'Fatuation; Fever;* and five others. BUDDAH BDS 5620 \$5.98, Ⓞ M85620 \$6.95, Ⓞ M55620 \$6.95.

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

James Cotton was born in Mississippi something over forty years ago. He left there in the mid-Forties, learned more than he earned during three years with Sonny Boy Williamson in Arkansas, put in five years with Howling Wolf and joined Muddy Waters' band in the mid-Fifties. He made his first recordings in the late Forties with Howling Wolf. That was in Memphis, but—as seems to be the fate of all good blues men—he soon made Chicago his home.

James Cotton has made several recordings in the past eight or nine years, including one produced by Todd Rundgren, of all people, and "100% Cotton," like that one, is slicker

and more chart-oriented than anything he did in the first half of the Sixties. That is not meant as a put-down, because I happen to like this album very much; I am not one who believes music has to be primitive in order to be pure. Cotton's harmonica playing was heavily influenced by Sonny Boy Williamson, and he learned his lessons well. His style, though basically of the Chicago genre, still reflects that of the South, but his singing—at this point, at least—is strictly urban. The band, augmented in spots by horns, plays in an appropriately funky groove. Its members display no noteworthy virtuosity, but it serves its purpose and provides Cotton with a suitable frame. My favorite tracks are *Boogie Thing*, a composition by guitarist Matt Murphy, and *Fever*, the old Peggy Lee hit. These also happen to be the most commercially viable selections, and my choice is bound to get me on the enemies list of any self-respecting old blues fogy. But this is 1975, and though his roots are in the South, Cotton has come to Harlem, as it were. C.A.

**JOSE FELICIANO:** *And the Feeling's Good.* José Feliciano (vocals and guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *Hard Times in El Barrio; You're No Good; I've Got to Convince Myself; Stay with Me;* and six others. RCA CPL 1-0407 \$6.98, Ⓞ CPS 1-0407 \$7.98, Ⓞ CPK 1-0407 \$7.98.

Performance: **Sincere**  
Recording: **Excellent**

Feliciano is still a powerful performer. His hard-edged voice and high-strung style seem always to be struggling desperately to make contact with the listener by breaking through those automatic defenses that protect us from the effects of the sort of harsh emotional

José Feliciano and friends: breaking through with fierce sincerity



RCA Records



“booze and whoopee-cushion humor...”



Curly, Moe, and Larry

## Here's Johnny!

JOHNNY CARSON is a peculiarly American phenomenon. and, I think, a depressing one. Oh sure, in the privacy of my own living room I've been known to guiltily and surreptitiously yuk it up when he's on, just like the rest of Middle America, but it's a sleazy kind of experience. I guess what really rankles me is the obvious waste of talent involved. Though you'd rarely know it from watching the *Tonight Show*, Carson is an intelligent and witty man, with the potential to be a really superb physical comedian: it's patently obvious that what he should be doing is working in films, where there hasn't been a really great clown in years. But apparently the pursuit of the Almighty Dollar has permanently sapped his artistic ambitions, and so he contents himself with endlessly repeating the same by now no longer amusing schticks, swapping vaguely off-color stories with a series of performers possessing the lowest sort of Las Vegas mentality, and treading just this side of bad taste with a single-mindedness that has begun to resemble religious ritual, because that's what has made him successful. Like I said, depressing.

This new album is a fairly accurate capsule history of the *Tonight Show* as it and Carson have slouched their way towards Formula, but much of it is entertaining. Billie Holiday is on hand, after all, and so is Lenny Bruce (both of whom appeared on the program before Carson's tenure, which is nowhere made

clear): Groucho Marx sings *Father's Day* and ad-libs with his usual panache; Jay Silverheels appears in a very funny sketch as the Lone Ranger's not-so-faithful Indian companion, Tonto; and there are quite a few other bright spots, which shouldn't be surprising, considering there was twenty-five years' worth of material to draw on. Unfortunately, there are also innumerable jokes about Ed McMahon's drinking habits and a lot of cloying demonstrations of show-biz camaraderie, but that's the *Tonight Show* as well, when you get right down to it.

Mostly, though, this album reminded me of an eerily accurate parody of Carson and company done last year by a comedy team called the Credibility Gap. What made the routine so funny was that the areas in which it was really obviously in poor taste—Don Rickles calling Ed McMahon “a fat turd,” for example—were in reality only the tiniest bit more offensive than the genuine article. I thought a lot about that parody while I was listening to this record. I thought a lot about what Carson must think, as he sits there night after night dispensing booze and whoopee-cushion humor to the masses. I thought a lot about why Steve Allen, one of the few genuine creative talents TV has ever produced, doesn't have his own show, and why Ernie Kovacs never became an American Institution. Frankly, I'd rather not think about any of that, and if you don't want to either, you'll probably enjoy “Here's Johnny.”  
—Steve Simels

JOHNNY CARSON: *Here's Johnny—Magic Moments from the Tonight Show*. Johnny Carson, Ed McMahon, Aretha Franklin, Groucho Marx, Glen Campbell, Jack Webb, Judy Garland, and others (performers). CASABLANCA SPNB 1296 (two discs \$12.98, © I 81296 \$13.98, © I 51296 \$13.98.

message-sending in which he deals. There is a kind of ferocity in his treatment of *Chico and the Man* (the theme he wrote for the TV series) that goes beyond the sullen rage of its angry lyrics. Yet, later on in the album, he returns to reassure us, in a reprise in two languages, that things “will be better.” The sudden note of optimism is arresting in a recital that deals largely with loneliness and rejection. In ballad after ballad the singer makes up in power for foolish, banal lyrics strung out on indifferent tunes, saving the songs from monotony with his fierce sincerity and the steely vitality of his larger-than-life guitar. And once, in *Differently*, Feliciano really breaks through. He seems to be making up the song as he goes along—a plea for understanding, for this performer and all performers, as a real man whose blindness is real, whose suffering is more than an act. It provides an electrifying break in the synthetic routines of a program not otherwise worthy of its interpreter.  
P.K.

GALLAGHER AND LYLE: *The Last Cowboy*. Bennie Gallagher and Graham Lyle (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians; Brian Rogers arr. *Keep the Candle Burning; Song and Dance Man; Acne Blues; I'm Amazed; King of the Silents*; and five others. A&M SP-3665 \$6.98.

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

The sound of Gallagher and Lyle has turned oddly glossy—or even glossy, to be exact—which is not what I had in mind for them when I was first taken with their “Willie and the Lapdog” album. “The Last Cowboy” doesn't sound like it has much to do with cowboys, and of course “last” doesn't really mean last in these pop-culture adventures in hyperbole that started when Dennis Hopper was in diapers, or a little before. The album is more satisfying than the average pop album, but I'm disappointed, having high expectations for these chaps. It isn't as tuneful as it could be, the sound isn't the carefree jangle I liked so much, and the singing is a little stiff, almost careful. The lyrics are still sharp, getting at how it feels in odd lines in songs like *We* and *I'm Amazed*, and *Acne Blues* provides a less painful kind of truth: “Tried to get soul,” it says, “but my feet stayed on the ground./A well balanced childhood is hard to live down.” *King of the Silents* is another corker, about an old movie ace who's “waiting till the talkies blow over.” But even in these cases, the tunes are a bit limp, considering where they came from. The new mellowness is not all bad—the sax actually sounds soulful, a rare trait in a sax, in *I'm Amazed*. It's just that the album, compared to the last two, sounds so conservative, so hedged. I guess a lot of people are hedging these days. Still, we owe it to ourselves to rage, rage against pussyfooting wherever we find it. Like here.  
N.C.

JERRY GOODMAN & JAN HAMMER: *Like Children*. Jerry Goodman (stringed instruments, vocals); Jan Hammer (keyboards, percussion, vocals). *Country and Eastern Music; No Fear; Night; Topeka; I Wonder*; and five others. NEMPEROR NE 430 \$6.98.

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

Messrs. Hammer and Goodman, after various stints with other outfits, achieved notoriety  
(Continued on page 80)

# The Speaker.

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	ATOMIC WEIGHT	RIGIDITY (ELASTIC MODULUS) kg/mm <sup>2</sup>	SOUND PROPAGATION velocity m/sec
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MAGNESIUM (Mg)	24.32	4500	5770
ALUMINUM (Al)	26.98	7400	6420
TITANIUM (Ti)	47.90	11000	5990
IRON (Fe)	55.85	19700	5950

But because of beryllium's inherent characteristics, it resisted attempts by any manufacturer to form it into a diaphragm, let alone a dome.

Until now.

The New Yamaha Beryllium Dome, formed by Yamaha's unique vacuum deposition process, is lighter than any other speaker diaphragm found today. So it's more responsive

to direction changes in amplitude and frequency of the input signal.

Dome Tweeter Comparison			
	SIZE OF DOME	THICKNESS	WEIGHT
YAMAHA NS-1000 M (BERYLLIUM DOME)	3 cm	0.03 mm	0.03 g
TYPICAL SOFT DOME	3 cm	0.3 mm	0.1 g
CONVENTIONAL DRIVER	2.5 cm	0.45 mm	1.03 g

This is called transparency. It can be noticed best in complex musical passages and can be best described

possible for a midrange driver. It extends the linear portion of its response curve.

The midrange driver's frequency response is so wide that we can select only the choice flat section of its frequency response, thereby eliminating the peaks and valleys most competitors are forced to use.

The Beryllium Dome creates simply the flattest response; least colored, most natural sounding midrange of any speaker around.

Carefully designed acoustic equalizers flatten the frequency

system that holds the beryllium dome to the speaker frame with less contact allowing it to move more freely. It's called the Tangential Edge. (You may not hear the difference at first, but you will.)

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It's no secret that between 500 Hz and 6 KHz is where most audible differences in speakers occur.

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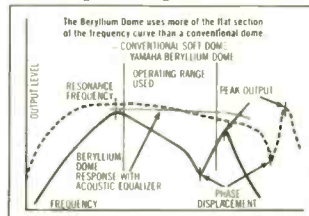
Even the very cone material itself was researched and developed and manufactured specially by Yamaha. (It's made much more dense than most cones. That means a tighter, cleaner sound.) And the frame is cast in our own foundry so we can control quality.

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*"I've just reached a place where the willow don't bend..."*

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Columbia Records

## *Bob Dylan: Trouble in Paradise?*

**B**OB DYLAN, his marriage rumored troubled, his recent tour and albums treated somewhat indifferently by a less-than-worshipful press, seems haunted and uncertain again, and that may be very good news. If meant ironically, such a statement would be both cheap and cruel, but I don't think that irony has much to do with Dylan's current marital situation, however it may turn out, or with the near-total success of "Blood on the Tracks," his best LP in perhaps a decade. Ambiguousness seems an apter word for this romantic rethink. When the adventurer Jay Gatsby finally got his Daisy alone, "He knew that when he kissed this girl and forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath, his mind would never romp again like the mind of God." What to do when ambiguity and the realization of the quest prove inseparable? Either crack up or become a sadder, wiser man. Because he is strong, Dylan has chosen the latter course.

If "Nashville Skyline," "New Morning," and "Planet Waves" were essentially about the stable joys of marriage, family, and a happy home in rich bluegrass country, much of "Blood on the Tracks" emanates from a rented room in a dark, bohemian section of town where one can listen to the trains at night. It is

to Dylan's great credit that he condemns neither circumstance: like most of us, he is an outcast who dreams of the possibility of a fusion of the two extremes. He began his career as a loner, reveling in the intangibles and uncertainties of his life, but then dropped out of contact and context into the sheltered opulence of rural Woodstock and began sending back platitudes which were as surprising, considering the source, as they were simplistic and unbelievable: "Love is all we need/It makes the world go round." The nadir of this movement was reached in "Planet Waves," wherein Dylan seemed almost to turn himself inside out in an agonizing and futile effort to convince both himself and us how incredibly content he was. The unintended effect was far from pleasant. Yet there was a single warning there, a preview: in *Going, Going, Gone*, Dylan sang in desperation, "I've just reached a place where the willow don't bend . . ." and went on to chronicle the upcoming events.

**B**UT if subterranean tension won out over an overwrought tenderness in "Planet Waves," the reverse curiously holds true in "Blood on the Tracks." There is a great deal of personal pain here, and second thoughts abound ("I can change, I swear"), but everything seems deliberately cushioned by myth, distanced by meditative rumination and an artful overview of the lifetimes of ritual staying, leaving, or being told to go which all of us inevitably experience and re-experience. This is the way it is for me now. Dylan appears to be saying in these new songs (specific), and this is the way it has been and will be again for both of us (universal): something lost, something gained. *Tangled Up in Blue* seems an appropriate phrase for this cyclical myth, the parted lov-

ers forever joined by thought, while one of them, "still on the road/Headed for a different joint," can remember "We always did feel the same/We just saw it from a different point of view/Tangled up," as we both are and shall always be, "in blue." In *Simple Twist of Fate*, one lover says of the other, "I still believe she was my twin/But I lost the ring," after confessing this ambivalence: "She looked at him and he felt a spark/Tingle to his bones/Twas then he felt alone." Similar ambiguities, combined with or disguised as playful sexual innuendos, can be found in the album's two indescribably lovely blues songs, *Meet Me in the Morning* (not unlike *It Takes a Lot to Laugh, It Takes a Train to Cry*) and *Buckets of Rain*. Consider the singer's idiosyncratic reading of "Try imagining a place that's always safe and warm" in *Shelter from the Storm*, a song which closes with these lines:

Well, I'm living in a foreign country, but  
I'm bound to cross the line  
Beauty walks a razor's edge, someday I'll  
make it mine  
If I could only turn back the clock to when  
God and her were born  
Come in, she said, I'll give you shelter from  
the storm.

Unquestionably, much of "Blood on the Tracks" reflects Dylan's feelings about his wife Sarah and their possible separation, but much of it doesn't. *Tangled Up in Blue*, *Simple Twist of Fate*, the good-humored *You're Gonna Make Me Lonesome When You Go*, *Meet Me in the Morning*, *Lily, Rosemary and the Jack of Hearts* (a rollicking, nine-minute, Western-caper movie), and *Buckets of Rain*, while undoubtedly containing some Sarahlore, seem more magnanimously metaphorical than maliciously matter-of-fact. The artist's remembrance of things past, surely one of the

album's principal themes, can hardly fail to rekindle other romances, and I would bet my life that *If You See Her, Say Hello* is about one of them. Suze Rotolo, the heroine of many of his early love songs, including *Ballad in Plain D* and *Boots of Spanish Leather*. Dylan's singing here is heartbreaking and unforgettable:

I see a lot of people as I make the rounds  
 And I hear her name here and there as I go  
 from town to town  
 And I've never gotten used to it, I've just  
 learned to turn it off  
 Either I'm too sensitive or else I'm getting  
 soft.

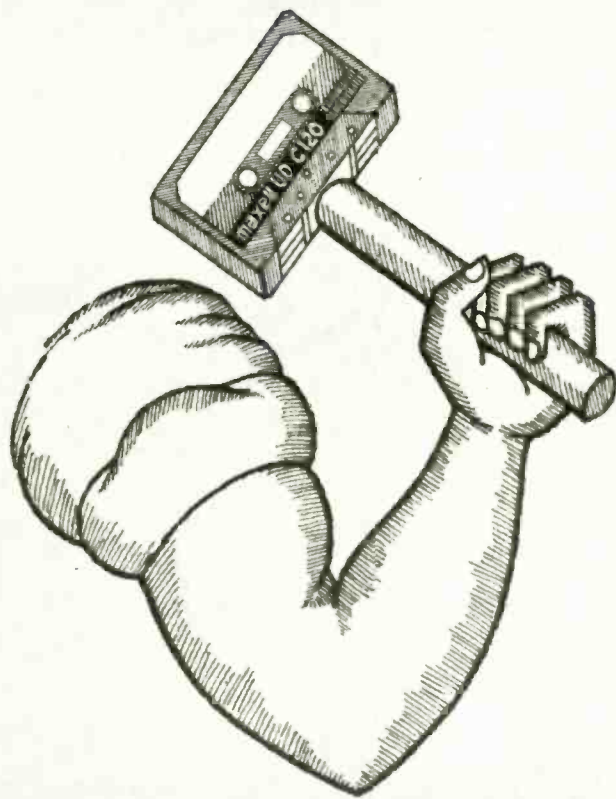
It would be difficult, if not impossible, to separate Bob and Sarah Dylan's recent marital problems from *You're a Big Girl Now* and *Idiot Wind*, although the latter certainly encompasses also the larger subject of a strong anti-media, anti-Watergate stance as well. In *You're a Big Girl Now*, the singer hears the bad news ("Our conversation was short and sweet/It nearly swept me off of my feet/And I'm back in the ring . . .") and wants a reconciliation: "I can change, I swear." In *Idiot Wind*, which follows immediately, Dylan strikes out with accumulated anger at everything connected with an intolerable situation, making some telling observations along the way: "It was gravity which pulled us down/And destiny which broke us apart/You tamed the lion in my cage/But it just wasn't enough to change my heart." This song, which is plainly and simply a masterpiece, seems a combination of *Ballad in Plain D*, *Like a Rolling Stone*, *Positively 4th Street*, *Sad Eyed Lady of the Lowlands*, and *One of Us Must Know (Sooner or Later)*. Although not entirely free of paranoia, childishness, and self-pity, it works, as Stephen Holden has pointed out, because of and not in spite of these qualities, and it achieves an anthem-like power that is overwhelming.

**A**LTHOUGH "Blood on the Tracks" is aptly named, it is hardly the bleak, desolate wasteland of pessimism and self-hatred that some critics, notably Paul Cowan in the *Village Voice*, have claimed. Far from it. Dylan's subtlety, intelligence, depth of feeling, and overall artistry have created something more flexible and complex, somehow fusing an elegiac tone with a most muscular, confident style. His imagery and his singing, moreover, have never been stronger or more expressive. Even the near-anonymous Minneapolis musicians who provide the backing do better than the more gifted but overrated Band from pseudo-utopian "Planet Waves" days. This album is (pace Cowan) vital and alive, its despair tempered throughout with the joy of being a survivor, all senses intact. Bob Dylan's dreams are still made of iron and steel, and now is not the time for our tears.

—Paul Nelson

**BOB DYLAN:** *Blood on the Tracks*. Bob Dylan (vocals, guitar, harmonica); other musicians. *Tangled Up in Blue*; *Simple Twist of Fate*; *You're a Big Girl Now*; *Idiot Wind*; *You're Gonna Make Me Lonesome When You Go*; *Meet Me in the Morning*; *Lily, Rosemary and the Jack of Hearts*; *If You See Her, Say Hello*; *Buckets of Rain*. COLUMBIA PC 33235 \$6.98. © PCA 33235 \$7.98. © PCT 33235 \$7.98.

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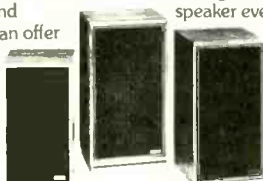
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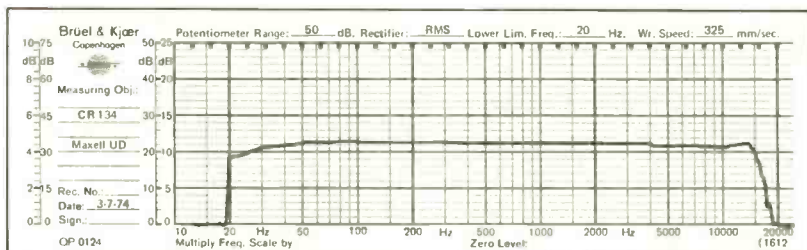
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during their association with John McLaughlin's Mahavishnu Orchestra. In "Like Children," all the instruments seem to be played by the two of them. The music, which is never jazz and not always rock, is heavily electronic, very Moogy, and often a bit too reverbed for my taste. The vocals, mostly unintelligible, are a part of the overall sound pattern—and that's really what much of this album consists of: sound patterns with Moog and violins courting on a bed of rock. It's undeniably good, if somewhat gimmicky, but we have heard this sort of thing from Weather Report, Santana, and others, and two men using multiple tracks to play against themselves must of necessity forgo that spontaneous rapport that often sparks memorable performances. That's what is missing here: human emotion. C.A.

**CLAIRE HAMILL: Stage Door Johnnies.** Claire Hamill (vocals); orchestra. *Go Now; The Luck of the Draw; Geronimo's Cadillac; Oh Daddy; Trying to Work It Out*; and six others. KONK 101 \$6.98, Ⓜ 8153-101 \$7.95.

Performance: **Some charm**  
Recording: **Good**

Claire Hamill writes most of her own material, and occasionally her performances have an unpretentious charm, as in the title song here, which mourns the passing of that often generous brigade from the current scene, or in *You Know How Ladies Are*. Her voice has some similarity to Cass Elliott's but little of the range or solidity. The production, a rare effort by Head Kink Ray Davies, is smoothly complementary to Hamill's pleasant vocal browsing. P.R.

**JETHRO TULL: War Child.** Jethro Tull (vocals and instrumentals). *War Child; Queen and Country; Ladies; Back-door Angels; Sea Lion; New Day; Bungle in the Jungle*; and four others. CHRYSALIS CHR 1067 \$6.98, Ⓜ M8C 1067 \$7.98, Ⓞ M5 1067 \$7.98, Ⓜ L9C 1067 \$8.98.

Performance: **That's show biz**  
Recording: **Very good**

I'm thinking of moving to England, provided I can get there before the government and the unions completely ruin the country—which means, I suppose, that I should leave tomorrow. At any rate, when I do get there, I'm going to pass myself off as a world-weary little clown and babble all sorts of meaningless nonsense about the state of the world and life in general. Then I'll get an arranger to write me some lead sheets in Restoration style while I busy myself writing diffuse lyrics and attaching them to non-melodies.

That done, I'll go to a wig shop for long hair and a beard. Following John Barrymore's example, I'll pop little glass cups over my eyeballs so the stage lights will bounce off them for a Svengali effect. For choreography, I'll pinch all I can from Alice Cooper, David Bowie, Toulouse-Lautrec, Muhammed Ali, and the local trade-school graduation pageant. Image-wise, I'll attempt to project a combination of Pontius Pilate, Bella Abzug, and the Reverend Sun Myung Moon.

Finally, I'll get a record contract, sell a lot of records, buy a mansion, and sit back after shows with my mates in the band to have a few laughs over some cheap wine. I'll think about my devoted audiences in Nottingham and Slutsie, in Hoppatuck, Long Island, and  
(Continued on page 82)

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Gladys Knight and the Pips: the top soul group in town

Champion's Defeat, Wyoming. I'll think about FM radio stations, television commentators, and graduate students looking for essay subjects. I'll count my money, and laugh. And laugh and laugh. What's my name? *J.V.*

**GLADYS KNIGHT AND THE PIPS:** *I Feel a Song*. Gladys Knight and the Pips (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *I Feel a Song; Love Finds Its Own Way; Seconds; The Goings Up and the Coming Downs; The Way We Were*; and four others. BUDDAH BDS 5612 \$6.98.

Performance: **Intense**  
Recording: **Excellent**

The spirit of Women's Lib manages momentarily to penetrate the soul-music business in this latest album from Gladys Knight and the Pips. The effect is rather startling. Miss Knight, with lively backing from her choral soulmates and lots of strings and horns, has been going on for some time about how love finds its way, cautioning against burning bridges, and peddling all the old clichés about the ups, downs, and rough crossings in the obstacle course of true love, when suddenly the whole tune changes. In a number called *The Need to Be*, she lashes out at some invisible lover or other that she's not going to be content to go through *this* love affair as "some reflection of a man" handy to have around for his vanity and convenience. In the next song, Miss Knight is back at the old stand, coming out four-square in favor of tenderness, but those moments of real conviction are enough to shake you up, and the singer, who is able most of the time with the sheer heat of her approach to lend plausibility to the most implausible ballads, makes you feel she really has her heart in that one. At the other extreme is the soft-sell nostalgia of *The Way We Were*, a treatment of Marvin Hamlisch's song from the movie of that name, making use of everything from sound effects of the sea to a saving

soft laugh supplied by Miss Knight, who demonstrates here, as well as in the clever novelty number *Seconds*, that she has her less ferocious, more frivolous side. By and large, Gladys and her group continue to justify their reputation as the top soul ensemble in the land. *P.K.*

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**LEO KOTTKE:** *Dreams and All That Stuff*. Leo Kottke (guitar); Bill Berg (percussion); Mike Johnson (guitar); Bill Peterson (bass); Bill Barber (piano, synthesizer); Cal Hand (steel guitar, dobro); Herb Pilhofer (piano). *Mona Ray; When Shrimps Learn to Whistle; Twilight Property; Bill Cheatham; Vertical Trees; San Antonio Rose/America the Beautiful*; and five others. CAPITOL ST-11335 \$6.98, © 8XT-11335 \$7.98, © 4XT-11335 \$7.98.

Performance: **Sugar and spice**  
Recording: **Excellent**

Leo Kottke is getting away with a lot, playing a patently uncommercial style that somehow proves to be fairly popular, managing to avoid being ground down by touring but apparently pulling down a decent wage, using all sorts of gimmicky techniques without outraging the Fahey-purists—all the kind of stuff, one supposes, that would make a man feel liberated. The trick, probably, is that Kottke already felt that way; he certainly *plays* that way. Nobody makes the twelve-string guitar sound the way he does, so there's no way of really comparing him to anyone else. It sounds mighty pleasing, though, and pretty danged difficult, even if you allow for open-chord tunings to sort out some of it. He doesn't sing at all in this album, which disappoints me; he downgrades his singing, but I like the way it booms out there and think it could amount to something if he paid a little more attention to it. What he does do here is parlay with other instruments, usu-

ally only one at a time that need concern the listener. The way he blends with everything from synthesizer to pedal-steel to piano is semi-astonishing. He even takes up an electric guitar (sounds like a hollow-bodied one), giving it a modified Kottke finger-picking treatment, and even *that* works—quite nicely, in fact, with Bill Barber's rough-edged piano to give the album a little grit in *Hole in the Day*. His acoustic work with Herb Pilhofer's lyrical piano in *Why Ask Why* is what we mostly came to hear, though, and most of the album is something but not really like that. Remember how, in the Bogart movies, Lauren Bacall was sort of gorgeous and droll at the same time? The album is something, but not really, like *that*. *N.C.*

**LOGGINS AND MESSINA:** *Mother Lode*. Kenny Loggins (vocals, guitar, harmonica); Jim Messina (vocals, guitar, mandolin); Larry Sims (bass); Al Garth (violins, horns); Don Roberts (horns); other musicians. *Changes; Brighter Days; Be Free; Move On; Time to Space; Lately My Love*; and four others. COLUMBIA PC 33175 \$6.98, © PCA 33175 \$7.98, © PCT 33175 \$7.98.

Performance: **Dry hole**  
Recording: **Excellent**

By jove, I think I've isolated the Two Guys Syndrome. Perhaps you've noticed: male duets that are technically pretty good seem to evolve into something so damned serious and formal they become a royal pain. There's the latter-day Seals and Crofts finding religious significance in every cliché they can think of and dress up with esoteric mandolin noodlings . . . Brewer and Shipley off saving the world through organic farming . . . even Gallagher and Lyle starting to Behave Respectably and file away their edge. Loggins and Messina have been *developing* style—at least a sound of their own—but this particular sound seems to grow duller the more they polish it. "Mother Lode," in fact, seems about fully automated. I'm sure a lot of thought went into it; I wish I could find some evidence that some feeling did. My head tells me the sax break in *Move On* is well done, that Messina's guitar leads throughout are as tasteful as whoever helps Peter Duchin pick out his ties, and that Loggins' scattered solo vocal work has grown almost as good as that of the *real* Danny O'Keefe, but my head does not rule the roost around here. The songs don't grab me. They're too polite to grab anything. Nor does the idea of precision for the sake of precision grab me. Maybe *Psychology Today* could take the Two Guys Syndrome and do something—which is to say talk—about it. It would get the magazine's mind off sex for a while. Of course, just *listening* to this kind of album will do that. *N.C.*

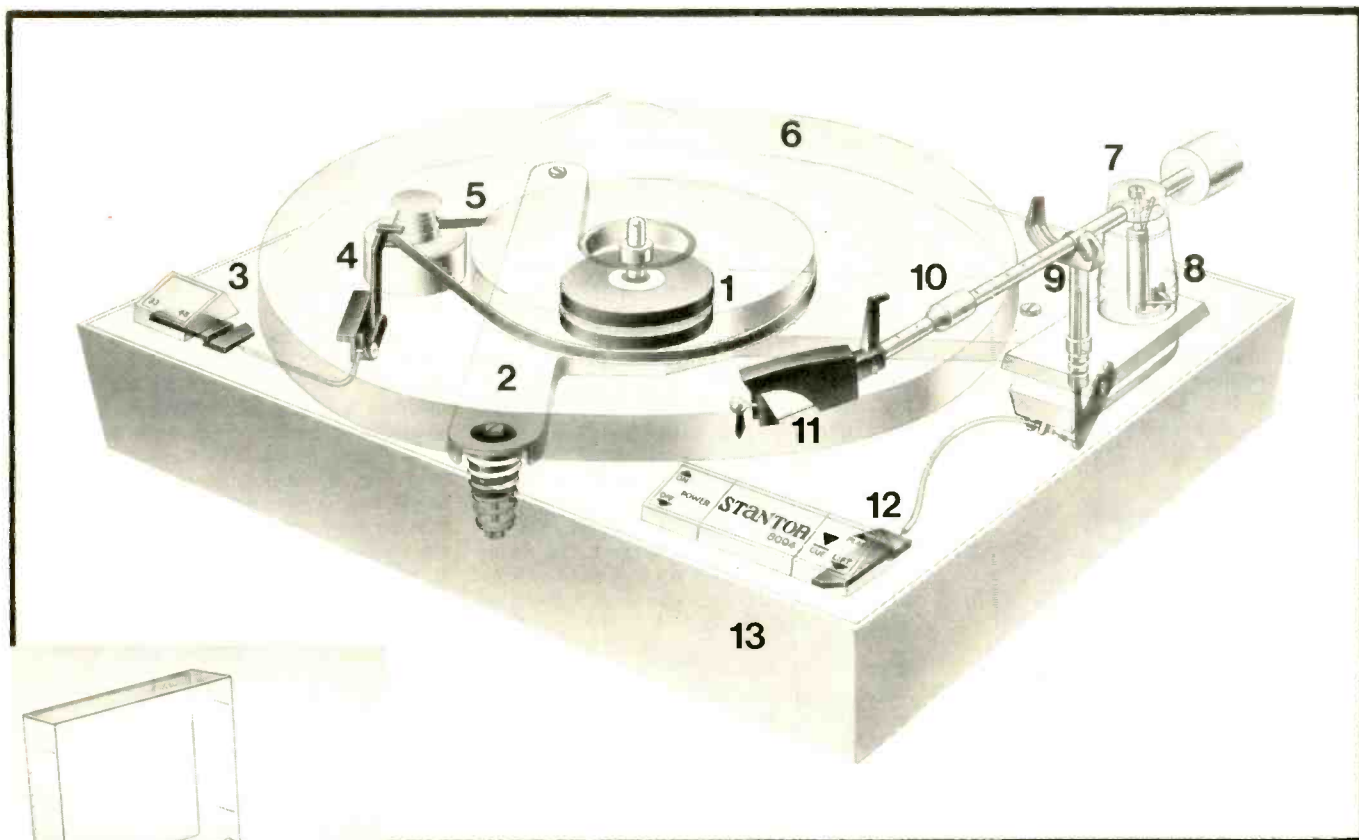
**MARSHALL TUCKER BAND:** *Where We All Belong*. Marshall Tucker Band (vocals and instrumentals). *This Ol' Cowboy; Low Down Ways; In My Own Way; How Can I Slow Down; Where a Country Boy Belongs; Now She's Gone*; and five others. CAPRICORN 2C 0145 two discs \$11.98.

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

The Marshall Tucker Band, from Spartanburg, South Carolina, is a spirited group playing that combination of blues and country that defines "white Southern" music. But while

(Continued on page 84)

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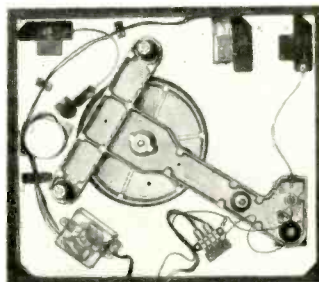
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Gregg Allman, for example, expresses the melancholy, historically ghost-ridden Scots-Irish poetic gloom of white Southern, the Marshall Tucker outfit presents the rip-roaring, braggadocio side of it. There's a lot of good music in this two-disc album: in fact, there is too much. The charms and occasional grandeurs of a regional folk style are very powerful in small doses—or even fairly generous hunks—but you should always have a sense of not having heard enough. In this case, you hear more than enough.

The set is divided into a studio record and a live record. The band should have issued one or the other but not both; either would have been good for a follow-up. But taken together they are a surfeit of delight. And that's a waste. *J.V.*

**VAN MORRISON: *Veedon Fleece.*** Van Morrison (vocals, guitar); Ralph Walsh (guitar); Joe Macho (bass); Allen Swartzburg (drums); Jim Rothermel (flute, recorder); other musicians. *Streets of Arklow; Country Fair; Cul de Sac; Linden Arden Stole the Highlights; Fair Play;* and five others. WARNER BROS. BS 2805 \$6.98, Ⓜ M8 2805 \$7.98, © M5 2805 \$7.98.

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

**THEM: *Backtrackin'.*** Van Morrison (vocals); Them (vocals and instrumentals). *Richard Cory; I Put a Spell on You; Just a Little Bit; I Gave My Love a Diamond; Half as Much;* and five others. LONDON PS 639 \$6.98, Ⓜ 08639 \$7.98, © 05639 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good stuff**  
Recording: **Reasonably good**

Van Morrison is one of the few unusual and good male singers the Sixties turned up (females, as usual, are another story), but his songwriting has not consistently showcased those slobbering and bent high-baritone vocals. Here we have a first-time-in-one-batch Them collection that suggests the old band's relatively primitive sound gave Morrison as much latitude for vocal expression as his groping, jazz-softened solo efforts have. The latest such, "Veedon Fleece," obliquely referring a few times to his Scottish origins, is an improvement over the last one, but it is, like the last really pretty good one, "Saint Dominic's Preview," at once overambitious

and hurting for detail work. Morrison seems to be counting on his singing to finish the job of writing. On the rare occasions when that works, it's grand, as about half of *Linden Arden* is, but when the melodic sketch runs embellishment ideas into blank walls—well, move over, José Feliciano. He tends to overload these albums with slow, moody songs so that an up-tempo thing like *Bulbs* wins praise that sounds suspiciously like a sigh of relief. But *Country Fair* is a nice way to be moody and a nice way to go out.

"Backtrackin'" is a collection of singles and tapes and stuff and includes only four tracks previously released in the United States. It includes one, Morrison's *Mighty Like a Rose*, previously not released anywhere. The packaging makes it clear that Morrison's lead singing in the defunct group is the thing London wants to capitalize on—no other member of Them is even identified in the credits. Them was hard-hitting and metallic, interested in staying reasonably close to the blues roots, and the album is fairly satisfying—mainly as nostalgia, but partly because the young singer was garish and exciting and often bounced rather beautifully off the plain-jane backing. Times and people change, those days are gone, that kind of band is gone, and Morrison no doubt has good reasons for being where he is musically. When I think about what time does to us, I become even slower-paced and moodier than he does. I don't record how I feel, though. *N.C.*

**MOTT THE HOOPLE: *Live.*** Ian Hunter (vocals, guitar); Overend Watts (vocals, bass); Ariel Bender (vocals, guitar); Dale Griffin (vocals, drums); Morgan Fisher (vocals, piano); other musicians. *All the Way from Memphis; Sucker; Rest in Peace; All the Young Dudes; Walking with a Mountain; Sweet Angelina; Rose;* and a medley of six others. COLUMBIA PC 33282 \$6.98, Ⓜ PCA 33282 \$7.98, © PCT 33282 \$7.98.

Performance: **No-nonsense nonsense**  
Recording: **Pretty good**

One side of this was recorded at the Uris Theatre in New York ("first rock act to appear ON BROADWAY," they boast, as if the young cynics likely to buy their records are impressed by such antiquities... which they may be, for all I know), and the other

side was recorded at the Odeon Theatre in London. Each set has its own sleeve notes, the London ones assuring us the band almost got into a brawl with stage bureaucrats before that one was over. That sort of thing is important to Mott's image, lest anyone forget what Ben Edmonds calls their "blue collar sensibilities" in his half of the notes. Musically, as I see it, the band never pretended to originate much—you can hear "influences" and other people's clichés careening all over the place—but there are subtle differences between Mott's attitude and the attitude of contrived decadence the *middle* class foisted off on us. This album is better at lighting up those differences than it is at anything else; the song selection is so-so, and not really capable of being controlled in this setting where there are obligations to include such numbers as *All the Young Dudes* (which, by the way, they still put some spark into; maybe having blue collar sensibilities means you don't get tired of something that works), and the London side slips into one of those deadly rock-and-roll medleys that, in charity to suffering humanity, shouldn't be recorded. There's lots of raunch throughout, though, and the lads do try to overcome the (American) audience's boogie-withdrawal symptoms and get some subtlety into the slow one, *Rest in Peace*. But it's not the easiest place for subtlety to make a go of it, and consequently the album is missing a certain richness that does show in Mott's best studio work. *N.C.*

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**OZARK MOUNTAIN DAREDEVILS: *It'll Shine When It Shines.*** Steve Cash (vocals, harmonica); Buddy Brayfield (vocals, keyboards); John Dillon (guitar, fiddle, vocals); Michael Granda (bass, vocals); Larry Lee (vocals, drums, guitar); other musicians. *You Made It Right; Look Away; Jackie Blue; Kansas You Fooler; It Couldn't Be Better; E. E. Larson;* and six others. A&M SP-3654 \$6.98.

Performance: **Sparkling**  
Recording: **Excellent**

I liked the first Ozark Mountain Daredevils album a lot a few times but soon got over my need to hear it at all. It could turn out that way with this one, although I don't believe it will,

**MOTT THE HOOPLE:**  
*overcoming  
boogie withdrawal  
symptoms with  
lots of raunch*



Columbia Records

but then longevity is not exactly the whole idea behind rock, even country-flavored rock. The band has a tuneful repertoire, self-created with the help of wives and friends, and a rhythm section considerably tighter than any of John Ehrlichman's alibis. The lead instruments, while far from being inept, are never quite the *most* apt you ever heard, but that only helps make it all a little funky (a quality we claim we want), and the singing is plain and functional. I am inexplicably fascinated with Larry Lee's *Kansas You Fooler*, and impressed with the way Steve Cash has—like a good fiction writer—laid in atmosphere in sneaky ways in *E. E. Larson* (and, of course, that cut is introduced by frog-pond sounds, and I'm a sucker for the sound of frogs croaking). The dead-on, driving rhythm of *Walkin' Down the Road* is an easy example of the spontaneity and sparkle that brighten *most* of the pieces. There are a few, of course, like *Look Away*, that have their sag problems, but a comparison with the first album readily shows something good: that the band is sticking with its style and improving both its material and its performances. N.C.

**PRETTY THINGS:** *Silk Torpedo*. Pretty Things (vocals and instrumentals). *Dream*: *Joey*; *Maybe You Tried*; *Atlanta*; *Is It Only Love*; *Come Home Momma*; and five others. SWANSONG SS84 11 \$6.98.

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

The Pretty Things have been together as a band for at least ten years, which must be some kind of longevity record. Back in 1964, they were being touted as homelier and scruffier (hence their name) than the Rolling Stones. Like that of the Stones in those days, their music was almost entirely based on American rhythm-and-blues, and they were pretty good at it. But unlike almost every other English band of the time, they never made much of an impression over here, and they have now become something of a cult group. They have dropped the r-&-b base and are whanging away like any other band trying to find its own style.

All this is a prelude to saying that the Pretty Things have turned in a very good and very listenable album. The performances are assured and reassuring—here, by Gar, is a band that likes to play for the sake of playing. Despite the lyrics of some of the songs—about Belfast terrorists, dying mothers, and sailors' whores—the approach of the group is so good-natured and innocent that it's easy to enjoy them. Well done, lads. J.V.

**QUEEN:** *Sheer Heart Attack*. Queen (vocals and instrumentals). *Brighton Rock*; *Killer Queen*; *Tenement Funster*; *Flick of the Wrist*; *Lily of the Valley*; and eight others. ELEKTRA 7E-1026 \$6.98. © ET 81026 \$7.98. © TC 51026 \$7.98.

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

This is one of the few times that I will recommend an album for the, ahem, intellectual pleasure of listening to it. What I mean is that, as a man who has listened to many bands and played with a few, I am downright dazzled by the skill with which Queen has put this record together. Their material, sad to say, is feeble—the standard otherworldly stuff that too many bands do in emulation of the Beatles—  
(Continued on page 88)

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HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE  
FEBRUARY, 1975

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*"Nobody, but nobody, is going to piddle on Barbra's parade."*



## Barbra Streisand's "Butterfly"

THE musical trade press is about the only thing most people in the record business actually read. Oh, they may carry *Rolling Stone* around with them and brandish it from time to time, just as others do *Town & Country* or *Partisan Review*—magazine as status symbol. But it is to the trades that they turn week after week for the stone-tablet, all-important "charts," the latest hirings and firings, the signings ("pactings"), the contract disputes, law suits, and the ads. Recently one of the trades, fired by a frenzy of investigative reporting, exercised itself about the decline of what the industry chooses to call MOR (Middle-Of-the-Road—get it?) artists. It seems that Tony Bennett, Harry Belafonte, Steve and Eydie, John Gary, Vic Damone, and Ed Ames don't even have recording deals any more. (With the exception of Tony Bennett, one might perhaps wonder why any of them had one in the first place.) But, contradictorily, the article then plunged into current events, pointing out that the Carpenters, Paul Williams, and Elton John are the new MOR stars. Saleswise, at least, one could hardly claim that represents a "decline." And what of John Denver, old Mr. White-Line-Down-

the-Center himself? He can't seem to get out the door of the recording studio after a session without someone from RCA handing him a steaming new gold record for what he has just finished recording.

All well and good, and probably hardly worth noting—except that lumped in with all the Sixties remnants in that trade-paper article are the names Peggy Lee and Barbra Streisand. Lee is ominously described as having switched labels, and Streisand, for some weird reason, is defended by her own company as having had a good commercial year in 1974. Well, Lee's switching labels is about as important to her career as Karajan's conducting at Carnegie rather than Fisher Hall is to his. And even if Streisand shares were falling right now, you know that kid has more market surprises up her sleeve than du Pont. The main point, however, is that both Peggy Lee and Barbra Streisand are unique, inimitable pop artists who wouldn't know the middle of the road if it snuck up and pinched them. There are no center lines at Le Mans.

STREISAND'S newest album, "Butterfly," is a case in point: it is easy, comfortable, and distinctly one of her minor efforts. Again she's filling in background in the large tapestry that is her ongoing life's work—the world as seen through the eyes of Barbra Streisand. A lot of people see this as arrant *chutzpah*, but what it really is is a large measure of old-fashioned Star guts. Streisand is, as anyone who has ever watched her in a recording session or on a film set knows, an endless improviser in rehearsal, constantly experimenting and searching until she finds *exactly* the right nuance. Old-line directors (usually, these days,

CBS "Stars" themselves) don't like working with her. "There can only be *one* director. . . ." as William Wellman said recently in discussing her. Producers of her albums have learned to be on twenty-four-hour duty as she considers, reconsiders, and drives them to the brink of lunacy with constant testing to see if they are getting the point of her subtle discoveries. And then she is genuinely mystified, wondering what's the *matter* with them all, as she breezes by their bent and broken bodies on her way out of the studio. She is, in short, a STAR, a *monstre sacre*, a slave-driving tyrant. Call her anything you will, but know too that she recognized early that she was uniquely talented and that she has had the courage to go on battling all these years to stay that way. Nobody, but *nobody*, is going to piddle on Barbra's parade.

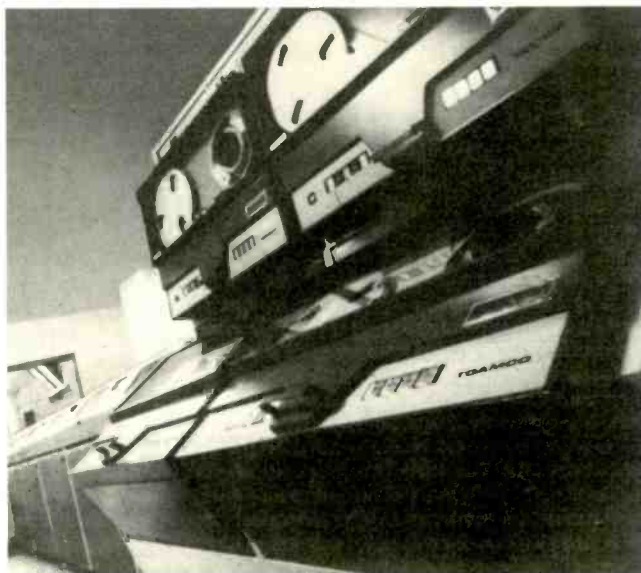
"Butterfly" is probably an album she could have lived without doing, but once committed to it, she obviously enjoyed it. She sounds at times very much like Aretha Franklin, especially in a sensuous *Guava Jelly* that has more real sexual innuendo than almost anything I've heard her do. *Love in the Afternoon* is another oddly exciting performance with an undertone of suspense—rather like trying to make love in a hammock. The best track is her smashing interpretation of David Bowie's *Life on Mars*, in which she creates again, in her matchless way, against a superb orchestral backdrop by Tom Scott, an atmosphere so alive with drama that you hang on her every word like a kid hearing one of Grimm's more devilish tales for the first time. One regret: she is still insisting on dubbing in her own background chorus, and at moments when there seem to be eight tracks of Streisand-supporting-Streisand it is just a bit much. But then again, she's *always* been too much, a just-about-to-be-overripe gardenia in the hot-house of popular music.

"Butterfly" is a pointillist landscape by an artist who is rather more at home with a house-painting brush, so perhaps we should take it on the same level as, say, Katherine Anne Porter writing a movie review, Joan Sutherland singing *Rule, Britannia*, or Margaret Mead explaining the social uses of Lee Radziwill. That is, the subject is important only because an important person—a Star—chooses to deal with it.

The album bears the large legend: "Produced by Jon Peters." That's what *he* thinks. He may be Streisand's latest light-o'-love, but by now saying that one has "produced" a Streisand album is like saying that one pumped up the tires for Henry Ford. As for all the jazz about Streisand's being an MOR artist in need of her company's support and good faith, I'd like to be a fly on the wall when they break *that* news to her. —Peter Reilly

**BARBRA STREISAND:** *Butterfly*. Barbra Streisand (vocals); orchestra. *Love in the Afternoon*; *Guava Jelly*; *Grandma's Hands*; *I Won't Last a Day Without You*; *Jubilant*; *Simple Man*; *Life on Mars*; *Since I Don't Have You*; *Crying Time*; *Let the Good Times Roll*. COLUMBIA PC 33005 \$6.98. © PCA 33005 \$7.98. © PCT 33005 \$7.98.

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**SPLINTER:**  
*Great Caesar's Ghost—*  
*it's Bill Elliott*  
*and Bob Purvis*  
*with Hari Georgeson*

but Queen dresses it up with such fascinating byplay that the content ceases to matter; one can admire the form for itself. On almost every level—instrumental virtuosity, imagination, production expertise—Queen is simply masterly; if their songwriting skills matched their other talents, they would be a truly great band. As it is, they are model performers for other outfits to study and learn from. *J.V.*

**LINDA RONSTADT:** *Heart Like a Wheel* (see Best of the Month, page 72)

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**SPLINTER:** *The Place I Love.* Bill Elliott and Bob Purvis (vocals); George Harrison (guitar, dobro, mandolin, harmonium, synthesizer); Klaus Voorman (bass); Jim Keltner (drums); Mike Kelly (drums); Billy Preston (piano); other musicians. *Gravy Train; Drink All Day; China Light; Somebody's City; Costafine Town;* and four others. DARK HORSE SP 22001 \$6.98, 8T 22001 \$7.98, CS 22001 \$7.98.

Performance: **Ghostly resemblance**  
Recording: **Excellent**

If we'd all arrived from Mars yesterday, there might be riots over how good this sounds. It sounds glorious in spots, pretty good in other places. Unfortunately, we've been here all along, some of us, and we've heard the Beatles, and this album, damn it, is going to bother us. George Harrison, who produced it and plays (under various hokey pseudonyms such as Hari Georgeson) several of the instruments, manages to make it sound like the ghost of "Rubber Soul." Bob Purvis is supposed to have done most of the songwriting, with a little help from Bill Elliott; the songs have more of a narrative quality than this many Beatles songs collected in one place might have had, and not as many sixths and ninths and other off-beat chords as Lennon and McCartney might have put into them. Given some other kind of backing they might not sound like Beatles songs at all, but George, with some help from the sound of the voices (McCartney, at least, is easy to imitate, if you can hit the high notes), is in there almost constantly reminding us. What with this and groups like Stories and all the reunions of the ex-Beatles, it does appear that if the Bea-

ties hadn't happened we'd have had to invent them—but George's work here recalls another old saw, about the guitar picker who plays only one chord, explaining, "Those other cats are still searching for it. I've found it." I am, nonetheless, mightily impressed with some of the songs, starting with *Drink All Day* and *Elly-May*, and would say only one. *Haven't Got Time*, is disappointing. But if I were innocent enough to enjoy them as much as I'd like, seeing as how they're dressed here, I wouldn't last five minutes out in the, ahem, material world. *N.C.*

**BOBBY VINTON:** *Melodies of Love.* Bobby Vinton (vocals); orchestra. *My Melody of Love; Dick and Jane; My Gypsy Love; Here in My Heart; You'll Never Know; Am I Losing You;* and five others. ABC ABCD-851 \$6.98, 8022-851 H \$7.98, 5022-851 H \$7.98.

Performance: **Definitive**  
Recording: **Groovy**

Bobby Vinton, the Rex Harrison of the Coca-Cola and aspirin set, has recently been on a round of the talk shows where, aside from lending his diminutive presence and even more diminutive personality, he has been publicly raising his consciousness about being Polish. To prove his awareness he launches into his new hit, *My Melody of Love*, which is, of course, half in Polish and half in English and probably the reason for this album. Vinton's voice still suggests a teenager of the Fifties, but by now his adenoids have a fine, ripe, middle-aged tone that only adds to the luster of his decade-long string of chart busters. The most unusual band is his performance of Alice Faye's old hit, *You'll Never Know*. Always breaking new ground, he takes it several keys higher than Alice and discards her stately lyric approach for what can only be described as a cheerful waddle. As I say, it's all most unusual, but absolutely right-on for his adoring fans who are fermenting right along with him. Saw one the other day: she was dumping a bag of empty beer cans behind her mobile home, and I could tell by her *Blue Velvet* shoes and her *Blue on Blue* clocked lisle socks that she was headed out for her favorite roadhouse to hear Bobby on the Wurlitzer stereo juke-box and re-live her glamorous-Fifties youth. Don't knock it. *P.R.*

# JAZZ



## RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**BUSTER BAILEY:** *All About Memphis*. Buster Bailey (clarinet); Herman Autrey (trumpet); Vic Dickenson (trombone); Hilton Jefferson (alto saxophone); other musicians. *Memphis Blues; Beale Street Blues; Chickasaw Bluff; Bear Wallow*; and three others. MASTER JAZZ MJR 8125 \$6.98 (available from Master Jazz Recordings, Box 579 Lenox Hill Station, New York, N.Y. 10021).

Performance: **Good cast, good show**  
Recording: **Embryonic stereo**

In 1958, when these recordings were made, Buster Bailey was contributing to the noise that nightly blared from the narrow stage behind the long bar at New York's Metropole Cafe, filling inebriated ears with Dixieland warhorses. Occasionally, moments of true inspiration managed to slip into the Metropole's music, but the joint's loud Times Square clientele measured musical quality in terms of volume and regarded the stately veterans of jazz as good "boys." I always found it sad to see such accomplished men as Buster, Roy Eldridge, Henry Red Allen, and Coleman Hawkins subjected to such working conditions, but that's survival, I guess. The Metropole has long since been taken over by the strippers, the Copper Rail (a favorite musicians' haunt across the street) is now a sexploitation movie house, and Buster Bailey has been dead eight years.

Like the rest of us who care about this music, Stanley Dance used to pop in and out of the Metropole and catch up with musicians during breaks at the Copper Rail, where contacts were made and album ideas were born. This is one such album, part of a series Dance did for the English Felsted label.

A veteran of numerous bands, notably those of Fletcher Henderson and John Kirby, Bailey had literally hundreds of recordings to his credit, but, oddly enough, this was his first album under his own name. He was a marvelous musician, capable of tremendous swing and drive, and he surrounded himself with a sympathetic crew for this outing. Herman Autrey, a trumpet voice familiar from scores of Fats Waller records, is excellent on the septet sides, as are trombonist Vic Dickenson and alto man Hilton Jefferson; the rhythm section, propelled by drummer Jimmie Crawford (who once did the same for Jimmie Lunceford's band), is just right for the occasion. Highlights are Autrey's fiery solo on *Sunday Parade*, Jefferson's work and the superb, Eldridge-ish muted Autrey solo in *Bear Wallow*, Dickenson's *Chickasaw Bluff* solo, and Bailey's work throughout. C.A.

**KENNY BARRON:** *Peruvian Blue*. Kenny Barron (keyboards); Ted Dunbar (guitar); David Williams (bass); Richard Landrum and Sonny Morgan (percussion); Albert Heath

(drums). *Blue Monk; Here's That Rainy Day; Two Areas*; and three others. MUSE 5044 \$5.98.

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

Having liked Kenny Barron's work with the Dizzy Gillespie and Bill Barron-Ted Curson groups, I was glad to see him on his own in a Muse album ("Sunset to Dawn," 5018) a couple of years ago, and this new one, recorded last year, is even better. This is partly because Kenny Barron's own playing has reached a higher point of sophistication, and partly owing to the presence—in an equal solo role—of guitarist Ted Dunbar. Until I heard this record, Dunbar's work had seemed rather ordinary to me, but his rapport with

Barron is extraordinary, and I hope further collaborations are planned. Barron and Dunbar are excellent throughout, but I would be remiss if I didn't point out their remarkable teamwork on Thelonious Monk's *Blue Monk*, which captures the essence of Monk better than any other rendition I have heard, yet becomes a highly individual statement. I hope the extraneous, scratchy noises that mar my reviewer's copy will move the Muse people to re-press. C.A.

**CIRCLE:** *Paris-Concert* (see Best of the Month, page 73)

**BILL COLEMAN/GUY LAFITTE:** *Mainstream at Montreux*. Bill Coleman (trumpet). (Continued on page 92)



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## *W. C. Fields'* *Continuing* *Legacy*

I noticed a record on the racks recently that billed itself as "the only" available recording of W. C. Fields' voice. *Caveat emptor!* Not so. The voice of that redoubtable scalliwag and child-hater born Claude William Dunkenfield almost a century ago (February 10, 1879, to be exact) and lost to us since 1946 can be heard on records that include soundtracks

from his movies, with and without Mae West, as well as dubbings of transcriptions from his many radio shows. Some time back Columbia's "Hall of Fame" series favored us with a "Radio Yesterday" album of excerpts from his famous radio feuds with the supercilious wooden dummy Charlie McCarthy in the Thirties and Forties. Since then, producer Bruce Lundvall has obtained—apparently wrested from a pair of press agents, who say they got it from the maid Mr. Fields left it to—the Great Man's entire audio library, and Columbia has issued three more albums drawn from that material.

Among the high points in these latest releases are further episodes in the celebrated Fields-McCarthy feud. The gravel-voiced dog-despiser, wearied by references by his sawdust antagonist to the roseate hue of his own bulbous nose, is said on one occasion to

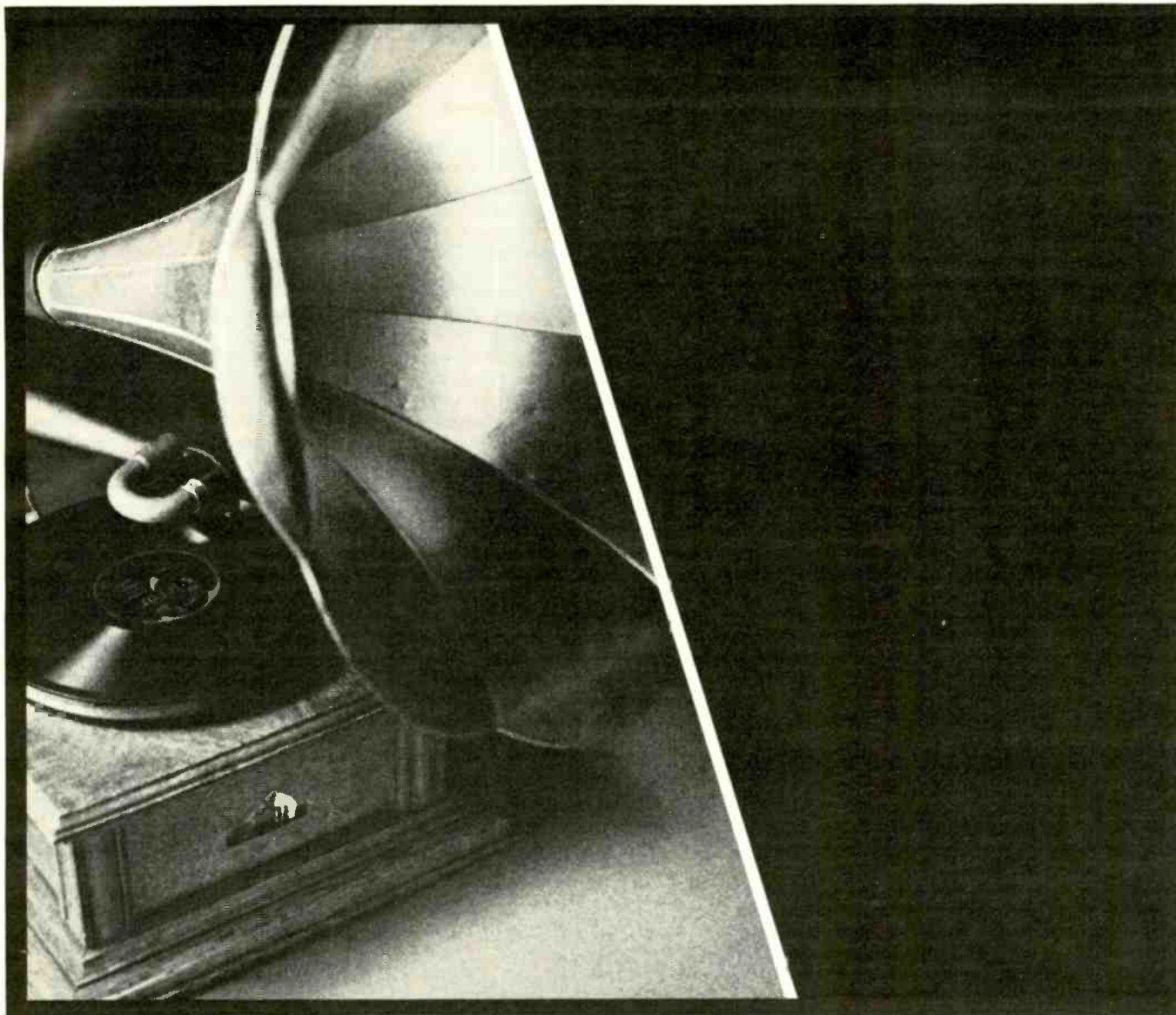
have brandished a crosscut saw he had concealed beneath his coat and reduced his opponent to so much cordwood while ventriloquist Edgar Bergen looked on in "stunned silence" and Don Ameche, who served as master of ceremonies on the show, stood by giggling. You can hear Mr. Ameche giggling a lot in the course of "The Further Adventures of Larson E. Whipsnade" and "The Great Radio Feuds." When the dummy and the professional charlatan are not exchanging insults, Mr. Fields can be heard muttering a variety of subversive cynicisms, launching into exquisitely overblown anecdotes of his dubious adventures among the Bolivians or "vacationing in Alcatraz" after an unpleasant encounter with some treacherous elephants, intoning a tuneless ballad, clamoring for "a sedative with an olive in it," or infuriating his sponsor (Lucky Strike cigarettes) with sly ad-lib references to "my son Chester."

**M**ost rewarding of the three new discs is a full-length performance of a Lux Radio Theatre treatment of Dorothy Donnelly's play *Poppy*, which, in a 1923 Broadway production, first brought Fields before the public in the role of Professor Eustace McGargle, the slick but distracted carnival confidence man the actor was to play variations on for the rest of his career. Directed by Cecil B. DeMille, of all people, *Poppy* offers Anne Shirley in the role of the dewy daughter McGargle supports by retailing his fraudulent elixirs and running his shell games at the carnival; John Payne as her wealthy suitor, Billy Farnsworth; and Skeets Gallagher as the mayor of a community that will never be the same after McGargle gets through with it. Fields starred in two movies of *Poppy*—a silent version directed by D. W. Griffith featuring Alfred Lunt as the romantic lead and the celebrated 1936 film directed by Eddie Sutherland—but this treatment for live radio, with its period bridge-music passages, sound effects, fluffs, and vintage corn, right down to the coy commercial for Lux soap at the end, has a charm entirely its own, and I enthusiastically recommend it to nostalgists young and old. —Paul Kresh

**W. C. FIELDS:** *The Further Adventures of Larson E. Whipsnade and Other Taradiddles.* W. C. Fields, Edgar Bergen, Charlie McCarthy, Don Ameche, Josephine Hutchinson (performers). *Strike Up the Band: Fire in the Home; Life Among the Bolivians; Tales of Michael Finn; Romeo and Juliet; Scurvy Among the Extras; Jabberwocky & Etcetera.* COLUMBIA KC 33240 \$6.98.

**W. C. FIELDS:** *The Great Radio Feuds.* W. C. Fields, Edgar Bergen, Charlie McCarthy, Don Ameche (performers). *Communing with Nature; Fathers' Day; The Golf Game; Elephants Et Al; Laughs Take a Holiday.* COLUMBIA KC 33241 \$6.98.

**W. C. FIELDS:** *Poppy.* Radio adaptation of Dorothy Donnelly's stage play. W. C. Fields, Anne Shirley, John Payne, Skeets Gallagher (performers). COLUMBIA KC 33253 \$6.98.



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flugelhorn); Guy Lafitte (tenor saxophone): rhythm section. *Blue Lou; Idaho; L and L Blues; Montreux Jump*; and two others. **BLACK LION** BL-212 \$6.98. ⑧ 8T-212 \$7.98.

Performance: **Old master, new licks**  
Recording: **Good**

Bill Coleman first went to Europe with Lucky Millinder's band in 1933 and worked both sides of the Atlantic until 1948, when a three-month engagement in Paris turned into a permanent residence there. His first records were made with Luis Russell's orchestra in 1929, and his most celebrated work is found on some Fats Waller and Dickie Wells sides of the Thirties. Coleman was almost seventy when he made these recordings (at the 1973 Festival International de Jazz at Montreux, Switzerland), but he is still in remarkable shape. Though steeped in a tradition from which most of his contemporaries never budged, he fell right into the bop movement with obvious affection for Dizzy Gillespie, and his playing here, with the group he co-leads with Guy Lafitte, reflects the musical thinking of a much younger man. Coleman sparkles on every track. Lafitte's robust tenor complements him, and pianist Marc Hemmeler cooks. There are a few uneven spots, but they are easily overlooked. Jazz festivals often lose their flavor when transferred to recordings, but this album is an exception. *C.A.*

**ALICE COLTRANE/CARLOS SANTANA:** *Illuminations*. Alice Coltrane (piano, organ, harp); Carlos Santana (guitar); David Holland (bass); Jack DeJohnette (drums, cymbals); other musicians. *Angel of Air; Angel of Water; Angel of Sunlight*; and three others. *C.A.*

**COLUMBIA** PC 32900 \$6.98. ⑧ **PCA** 32900 \$7.98. ⑨ **PCT** 32900 \$7.98. ⑩ **CAQ** 32900 \$8.98.

Performance: **Mantovaniity**  
Recording: **Excellent**

I'm beginning to think Miles Davis unwittingly did us all a terrible disservice by spawning the rash of pseudo rock/jazz that followed in the wake of "Bitches Brew" and continues to plague our ears. True, not all that grew from the rejuvenated Miles was meaningless, but if he pointed in a direction, few seem to have understood what it was and none have ventured much beyond that point at which he himself began to go in circles. Let's face it, jazz—or what passes for jazz these days—has reached a dead end, and rock, rather than becoming the umbilical cord for some sort of jazz rebirth, is the noose that's strangling it.

If "Illuminations" throws any light on the subject at all, it is to make us see with dismayingly clarity what the commercial success of Miles, Weather Report, and a few other groups have wrought. Carlos Santana did not come from jazz and Alice Coltrane did only by default, but their joint effort is being promoted as a jazz record and accordingly pushed on jazz radio stations. The fact is that this album is a rambling, Mantovani-ish example of the kind of precious, pretentious nonsense that is killing the very music it purports to be updating. I have previously said before that I believe that Alice Coltrane is a non-talent exploiting a name she acquired by marriage; her performance here sadly bears this out. Carlos Santana has considerable talent, but he, too, has drowned himself in the current fad of shallow Spirituality. *C.A.*

**FISCHER, ROBINSON, WHITECAGE, COOK, PAVONE:** *Poum!* John Fischer (piano and voice); Perry Robinson (clarinet); Mark Whitecage (tenor and alto saxophones); Mario Pavone (bass); Laurence Cook (drums). *Sinfonia; Moon Walk; Earthlings*; and three others. **COMPOSERS COLLECTIVE 721** \$5.99 (available from Composers Collective, 83 Leonard Street, New York, N.Y. 10013).

Performance: **Where's the door?**  
Recording: **Good**

From this album's notes: "The Composers Collective was formed in 1972 in order to produce music that is not commercially available." Obtainable for \$5.99, the album is, of course, commercially *available*; whether it is commercially *salable* is quite another question. I seriously doubt it. Much of what we hear here has as little to do with music as Charlotte Moorman jumping into a basin of water whilst playing her cello, and that which *can* be categorized as music is mostly a pitiful, strained, free-form bit of chaos that might induce Ornette Coleman to beg for forgiveness. It's too bad, for there is evidence that these five musicians *could* produce something worthwhile. I guess their muse had an off day. *C.A.*

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**MODERN JAZZ QUARTET:** *In Memoriam*. John Lewis (piano); Milt Jackson (vibraphone); Percy Heath (bass); Connie Kay (percussion); symphony orchestra, Maurice Peress cond. *In Memoriam; Jazz Ostinato; Adagio from Concerto de Aran-* (Continued on page 95)

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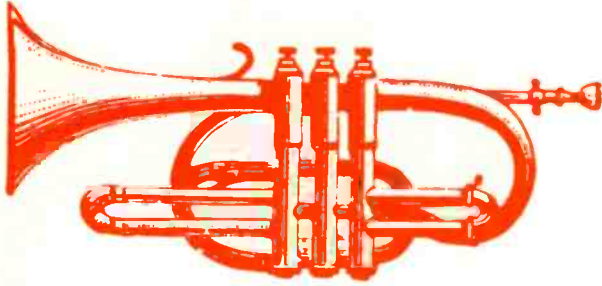
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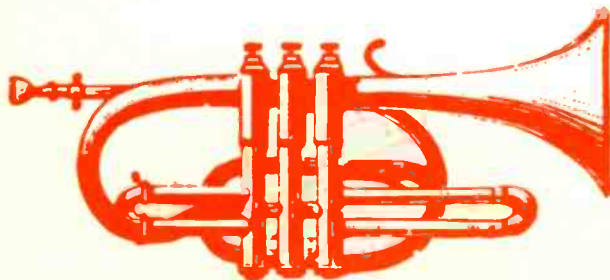
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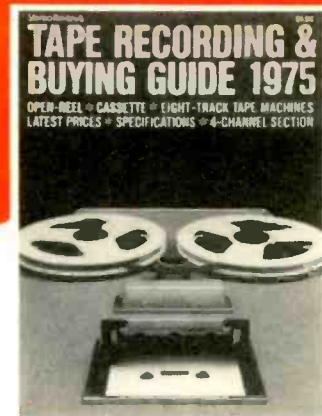
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Performance: **Grand exit**  
Recording: **Excellent**

With only one change in personnel—Connie Kay replaced Kenny Clarke in February 1955—the Modern Jazz Quartet remained intact for nearly a quarter of a century. It is equally impressive that this distinguished quartet remained modern without ever losing the characteristic sound that gained it its initial popularity. Last November, when the MJQ disbanded, the quartet had by no means exhausted its storehouse of creativity, but it was time to call it a day so that each individual member might pursue a personal career. Thus, "In Memoriam" is the MJQ writing (or playing, if you will) its own epitaph. This is, of course, only officially the group's last album; there will undoubtedly be further new releases, such as last November's farewell concert (recorded at New York's Lincoln Center), and I'm sure unissued tapes will be unearthed from time to time.

Be that as it may, this album ends an illustrious career on a fine note. Except for the Adagio from Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez*, originally for guitar and orchestra—which the MJQ has recorded twice before, alone and with guitarist Laurindo Almeida—the compositions are by John Lewis. Although it by no means supersedes the previous recordings, the new version of the Adagio is superb. *In Memoriam* is a musical eulogy to John Lewis' piano teacher the late Walter Keller, and to a number of performers and composers who won Mr. Lewis' admiration over the years. With sweeping strings and haunting themes, it is at times romantic, even sentimental, but it is never maudlin. *Jazz Ostinato*, originally written for saxophonists Eric Dolphy and Phil Woods, is the most rhythmic piece in this set. Making use of the full symphony orchestra, sympathetically conducted by Maurice Peress (a former jazz trumpeter), this is as successful a fusion of jazz group and symphony orchestra as we are ever likely to hear. The Modern Jazz Quartet has made an appropriately grand exit. C.A.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**OREGON:** *Winter Light*. Paul McCandless (oboe, English horn); Glen Moore (bass, piano, violin, flute); Ralph Towner (guitars, piano, French horn, clay drums); Collin Walcott (clarinet, sitar, tabla, dulcimer, pakhawaj, congas). *Witchi-Tai-To: Ghost Beads: Rainmaker; Deer Path;* and five others. VANGUARD VSD 79350 \$6.98, □ VSQ 40045 \$6.98.

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

Although my catalog lists two previous Oregon albums, this is the first I've heard of this interesting quartet. But Oregon is more than just interesting, it is extraordinary. Its sound is a exquisite compound of Old World and New World music past and present, a fabric woven from strands of East India, Spain, Vivaldi, and Black America, to mention a few of the influences. Yet, when the work of Oregon is unfurled, the weave has its own distinct character. I shall make it a point to listen to this fine quartet's past and look forward to its future. Given the nature of the music, the quadraphonic version adds an interesting, perhaps even necessary extra dimension. C.A.

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# CHOOSING SIDES

By IRVING KOLODIN



## LAST OF THE GREAT RUSSIAN VIOLINISTS

To describe David Oistrakh, who died in Amsterdam last October at the age of sixty-five, as “the last of the great Russian violinists” is to invite challenge if not outrage. Are there not others, including his son Igor, fully equipped to attain the position of pre-eminence he so rightfully enjoyed? In a general way, perhaps; in a specific way, not a chance. David Oistrakh was, in my view, the last of the great Russian violinists for a single overriding reason: those others, including the highly qualified Leonid Kogan, are something else. They are not, in the Oistrakh sense, *Russian* violinists; they are, rather, *Soviet* violinists, with all the world of difference the change of the single word suggests.

It is all too readily forgotten—because his international career did not begin until he was past forty—that Oistrakh was nearly ten years old when the Russian revolution swept the tsars out of power, and well on his way to a career before the philosophic framework of the Soviet system was perfected. He was, like Nathan Milstein (and Toscha Seidel, Benno Moiseiwitsch, and Vladimir de Pachmann), a native of Odessa. He shared, with Milstein, the shaping influence of the great pedagogue Pyotr Stolyarsky.

The four years that separated Milstein from Oistrakh and the wide gulf that divided their early careers did not erode the ties that developed at the Odessa School of Music in the early 1920's. Well before Milstein made his American debut in 1955, I inquired of him if he ever saw the “new” Russian master. “Oh yes,” he replied. “The last time we met in Europe I said to him, ‘David, you should come to America now, before you begin to play out of tune.’” On the American tour (1963) that carried him (and Igor) to the West Coast and as far north as Portland, Oregon, Oistrakh Sr. brought with him a photo of a bygone violin class at the Odessa School of Music, showing himself as a sub-teenager squatting in front of Milstein, four years his senior.

Had their ages been reversed, it is possible that it would have been Oistrakh who left Russia in 1925 for a long career in the West, and Milstein who stayed behind. Certainly 1939 would have been the year of Oistrakh's debut in America had not the war intervened. He was booked for a Soviet-sponsored series of concerts at the New York World's Fair of that year, but he was withdrawn by Mos-

cow—together with conductors, orchestral players, and other soloists—when the signs of approaching war became unmistakable.

It was not until sixteen years later that the New York debut occurred. Even then, it was delayed by a week—from November 13 to November 20, 1955—when, on a plea of illness, he begged off from participating as soloist in a Carnegie Hall concert with London's Philharmonia Orchestra under the direction



of Herbert von Karajan. The only time available at the hall on the following Sunday was at 5:30 p.m. Despite the unconventional hour and a public ticket sale limited to only a few days, Carnegie Hall was crowded to the limit of auditorium and stage seats.

The occasion would have been adequately memorable (as was Emil Gilels' debut a few weeks before) for the quality of art and intellect displayed by a musical master one had not seen at work before. But the day became something of a lesson in history-by-coincidence as well, for it produced a Milstein recital in the same hall an hour or so after Oistrakh had played his final encore, to say nothing of a matinee preceding both in which Mischa Elman (who also studied in Odessa) was the soloist in the Mendelssohn concerto with the New York Philharmonic.

Taken all together, it was a day that put into sharp perspective the character of the Russian violinists as learners, seekers, cosmopolitans, perhaps because they were off-center from Europe's musical sources, isolated not only by temperament but also by distance and lan-

guage. By contrast, the middle-European violinists—Flesch, Kreisler, Busch, and Schneiderhahn, for instance—had an identity relative to a central place and a broad German repertoire (Bach to Berg), as the Franco-Belgian school from Ysaÿe and Thibaud to Grumiaux and Francescatti did with their compositional lineage from Leclair to Ravel. Each shared musical neighbors with accessible cultures to absorb. If a Busch or a Flesch felt no compulsion to play the concertos of Tchaikovsky and Glazounov, he earned credit as a purist, a man of intellectual probity rather than one with technical limitations. But the Russian violinist who does not play Bartók and Hindemith, Chausson and Ravel as well as Beethoven and Brahms is not quite *comme il faut*, don't you know—there's just a hint of the wrong side of the Trans-Siberian tracks.

David Oistrakh's cosmopolitan character was defined by one factor that made his career different from the other Russians: they shed their isolation from the rest of the musical world at an early age and were free to circulate wherever their interests led them. Oistrakh spent the first forty years of his life—with a sortie now and then to a competition, or a short tour of Scandinavia—almost exclusively in his homeland. It was thus wholly by his own efforts and through association with like-minded musical colleagues that he was able to escape the throttling effects of that isolation, to dig deeply within himself and find both a philosophical disposition and an artistic identity.

His Beethoven and Brahms concertos are readily available, of course (my preference is for the version with Cluytens of the former, with Szell and the Cleveland of the latter). His Bartók (No. 1) and Hindemith are together in a pairing unfortunately no longer easily available (MK 1584). Both are splendid performances (with Gennadi Rozhdestvensky and the U.S.S.R. State Symphony Orchestra) which embody in every note and bar the distinctively virile, non-perfumed sound that is the essence of the Oistrakh art. It is a sound pure to the core, with the lingering afterglow of a great burgundy, produced for the ear by an even, superbly controlled vibrato which he could intensify or diminish on virtually any note, high or low, soft or loud. This sound serves much better for early Bartók than for middle Hindemith, a judgment in which Oistrakh inferentially concurs, for there is far less of it in one than in the other. But, as a great voice never hurt any vocal music, so the seemingly endless bow stroke, the exquisite articulation of Oistrakh do more for Hindemith than all the earnest scratching of some of his avowed partisans. A luxurious version may be found on London 6337, with Hindemith as conductor, but I wouldn't trade the Bartók of the other pairing for the Bruch *Scottish Fantasy* of this one.

By coincidence, the Chausson *Poème* and the Ravel *Tzigane* are also to be found together on a Melodiya-originated disc currently available on Westminster's Gold Label (WGM 8251). Each performance has its considerable distinctions, though I would put them in the category of those bent by the player to his own configurations rather than examples of the artist's ability to invade the composer's creative skin and fit himself snugly within it. But the same disc contains (also under the direction of Kiril Kondrashin) the most personal performance of the Prokofiev First Concerto known to me. Few contemporary



discs offer so much great music-making at so little cost per minute as this one (\$2.98 was the price tag on mine).

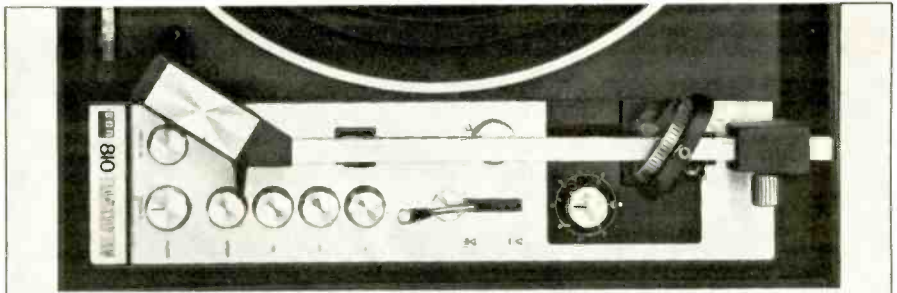
Columbia has expressed its appreciation for Oistrakh's association with the label during his first American tour not only with a four-sided re-release of concertos, but with some eloquent words of tribute by Isaac Stern to embellish a joint performance of the A Minor Double Concerto of Vivaldi (Op. 3, No. 8). Here is the Shostakovich Concerto No. 1 as it sounded in its first performances outside the Soviet Union, with Dimitri Mitropoulos conducting the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as the Bach E Major, the Mozart D Major (K. 215), and the Mendelssohn E Minor, all (as is the Vivaldi) with Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra. A commemorative collection is also under way from EMI (Angel), and it would surprise me if there were not another forthcoming from Deutsche Grammophon.

Great as Oistrakh was as a soloist, some of the greatest of his playing is to be found in such luminous works of the chamber-music literature as the Schubert Sonata in A (Op. 162) and Phantasie in C (Op. 159), in which he is a perfect partner to the excellent Frieda Bauer (Angel SR 40194), and in the Schubert B-flat Trio, Op. 99 (Angel S 35713), in which, with his longtime collaborators Lev Oborin (piano) and Sviatoslav Knushevitzky, he offers a choice alternative to the famed Cortot-Thibaud-Casals and the Rubinstein-Heifetz-Feuermann versions. As for the Brahms A Minor Concerto with cellist Mstislav Rostropovich and the Cleveland Orchestra under George Szell (Angel S-36032), it ranks equally high as chamber music, concerted literature, or merely great performance.

There is, however, still another side of Oistrakh available to those with a zest for a quest. In the browsers and low-price bins of record outlets and discount shops nationwide, diligent search will turn up such superb performances (by the two "O"'s and one "K") as the Haydn C Major Trio (a much greater work—really fine Haydn—than the G Minor Trio) and the Dvořák F Minor, Op. 65 (also very rewarding) on Monitor MCS 2071. The possible finds further include the generous-spirited performance of the G Minor Trio of Chopin, a slightly outsized one of the Ravel A Minor (MCS 2069), and, rarity of rarities, a coupling of Sergei Taneyev's beautifully Brahmsian D Major Trio, Op. 22, and Mikhail Glinka's *Pathétique* Trio (MC 2068).

**E**VERY career, even the greatest, has its mysteries, and Oistrakh's is no exception. The mystery of the Oistrakh career is: why did a musician-technician of his rare order, whose performance of the section of the Kreisler cadenza blending the two main themes of the Beethoven concerto's first movement is more contrapuntally clarifying than any other known to me, never record any unaccompanied Bach? There must be, somewhere, an Oistrakh version of the Bach *Chaconne*—but I wouldn't know where to begin to look for it.

It is a fact that, in response to an interviewer's question about some other aspects of the literature, Oistrakh answered: "What is very difficult for me, I don't play." If that is why a violinist with his hands and a musician with his brain felt disinclined to challenge the standards of others in unaccompanied Bach, he merits honor not only as a learner and a seeker, but as a man of true humility.



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# CLASSICAL DISCS AND TAPES

Reviewed by RICHARD FREED • DAVID HALL • GEORGE JELLINEK • IGOR KIPNIS  
PAUL KRESH • ERIC SALZMAN

## RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**J. C. F. BACH:** *Symphonies: No. 1, in F Major; No. 2, in B-flat Major; No. 3, in D Minor; No. 4, in E Major; No. 6, in C Major; No. 10, in E-flat Major; No. 20, in B-flat Major.* Cologne Chamber Orchestra. Helmut Müller-Brühl cond. NONESUCH HB-73027 two discs \$7.92.

Performance: **Spirited**  
Recording: **Rich**

Johann Christoph Friedrich Bach, neither the greatest nor the least of the great Johann Sebastian's sons, was born in 1732, the same year as Haydn, and died in 1795, the year in which Haydn wrote the last of his symphonies. There is little to suggest the two were even contemporaries in Friedrich's Symphonies Nos. 1 through 10, all of which were composed between 1768 and 1772; they reflect an ingratiating mixture of German and Italian influences (including that of brother Emanuel's godfather, Telemann), and in their three-movement format retain a closer likeness to the Italian opera overture than to the symphony as Haydn was by then developing it. The Twentieth Symphony, however, was composed in 1794, and was very clearly modeled after Haydn throughout its four movements (including a slow introduction to the opening one). If within this framework there is none of Haydn's melodic gift and barely a hint of his rhythmic inventiveness or subtle harmonic shadings, well, not every eight-

teenth-century symphonist could be a Haydn, nor every Bach a Johann Sebastian. What this music does offer—and abundantly—is an infectious wholesomeness, a buoyant vitality, a most agreeable feeling for color (particularly in the use of the winds in the one late work, whose minuet might be taken for one of Mozart's *Teutsche*), and, as one would expect from a son of this house, the most conscientious and thoroughgoing craftsmanship. The performances are both spirited and polished, giving the always welcome impression that the musicians are delighted with their task, and they are richly recorded. This is not an "important" release, perhaps, but it is a vastly enjoyable one. *R.F.*

**BEETHOVEN:** *Piano Sonatas Nos. 31 and 32* (see Best of the Month, page 72)

## RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**BRUCKNER:** *Symphony No. 8, in C Minor.* Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Wilhelm Furtwängler cond. UNICORN <sup>®</sup> UNI 109/10 two discs \$12.98.

Performance: **Remarkable!**  
Recording: **Good 1944 broadcast**

**BRUCKNER:** *Symphony No. 8, in C Minor.* Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin Mehta cond. LONDON CSA 2237 two discs \$13.96.

Performance: **Lacks cohesion**  
Recording: **Dull**

A great performance of the Bruckner Eighth Symphony can make of this most grandiose orchestral conception of the Austrian master an experience both shattering and irresistibly transcendent. Any realization of its vast tonal-structural vistas that falls below this level can become an exercise in boredom. The salvaging of Wilhelm Furtwängler's remarkable 1944 Vienna Philharmonic tape by the British Unicorn label has provided a singular addition to the category of great Bruckner Eighth performances. (Furtwängler, we should remember, was the *first* conductor to perform the Eighth in its restored original form as edited by Robert Haas—in Hamburg on July 5, 1939.)

Furtwängler's way with Bruckner is not heavily Teutonic, any more than it is with the Beethoven Fifth Symphony or the Mozart G Minor. One is aware, even on recordings, of his uncanny ability to keep his beat just ahead of the orchestra, so that the flow of the music becomes akin to that of a river. Although his style *can* become mannered to the point of being a kind of musical brinkmanship in elongated phrasings and fluctuating tempos, at its finest there is a kind of panther-like liteness and unpredictability that adds a unique aura of excitement. So it is with this conductor's 1937 Beethoven Fifth recording, his 1949 Mozart G Minor, and the 1944 Bruckner Eighth under consideration here.

This reading is not as intensely dramatic in its climactic moments as Furtwängler's 1949 reading (on Electrola), but it holds the music together more effectively, and there are fewer of the gratuitous touches, such as cymbal crashes in the finale, that Bruckner never indicated. The wind-swept, bell-obsessed scherzo in the Unicorn recording is a tremendously exciting affair, and so are the opening pages of the finale.

Surprisingly, this 1944 Vienna recording, though hardly hi-fi in the contemporary sense of the word, offers a far better-focused orchestral sound and internal balance of choirs than does the 1949 recording, which seems muzzy and full of harmonic distortion. Unicorn has also done a remarkable job of toning down the characteristic Magnetofon pre-emphasis in the upper violin register without diluting the basic impact of string tone so important in the Brucknerian tonal palette. Without question, this issue is a major documentation of Furtwängler's interpretive art at its peak.

I found Zubin Mehta's reading (of the Leopold Nowak edition) and London's sound to be quite a come-down after listening to Furtwängler, the sonic crudities of the mono recordings notwithstanding. Certainly, in a modern recording of this music, sonics are a major factor, and London's Mehta recording is disappointing in this department. As in the recently issued recording of the Nielsen Fourth Symphony, the orchestra emerges from the speakers as through a heavy woolen blanket: the upper end of the orchestral spec-

### Explanation of symbols:

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

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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



trum seems to be missing altogether, at least in comparison with the Solti (London) and Szell (Columbia) versions of the Bruckner Eighth. And Mehta's reading simply lacks the elemental momentum of Furtwängler's or Mravinsky's (once available on MK) or, for that matter, of Szell's (though I find Szell's Scherzo rather heavy-handed). Mehta has a distressing tendency to slow up at crucial transition points, especially in the slow movement and finale, where Furtwängler moves in just the opposite direction, effectively pressing on.  
D.H.

**CHOPIN: Mazurkas: F-sharp Minor, Op. 59, No. 3; C-sharp Minor, Op. 50, No. 3; D-flat Major, Op. 30, No. 3; F Minor, Op. 7, No. 3; E Minor, Op. 41, No. 2; D Major, Op. 33, No. 2. Etudes: C-sharp Minor, Op. 10, No. 4; E Major, Op. 10, No. 3; C Minor, Op. 10, No. 12 ("Revolutionary"). Prelude in B Minor, Op. 28, No. 6 ("Raindrop"); Waltz in C-sharp Minor, Op. 64, No. 2; Polonaise in A Major, Op. 40, No. 1 ("Military").** Vladimir Horowitz (piano). COLUMBIA M 32932 \$6.98, Ⓜ MA 32932 \$7.98, Ⓞ MT 32932 \$7.98.

Performance: **Side two a smash**  
Recording: **Variable**

Side two, a fine collection of Chopin's greatest hits, is the grabber here. The three etudes, the *Raindrop* Prelude, the C-sharp Minor Waltz, and the Military Polonaise are masterfully performed in the Horowitz old-master style. My reactions to the mazurkas on side one, however, were decidedly mixed. In principle I admire the poetic sensibility of these readings, but in practice they often sound idiosyncratic, and in certain respects—matters of phrasing and dynamics—I feel Chopin has been somewhat betrayed. Mind you, if this had been any other performer and any other music, I would probably have been suitably impressed. But the mazurkas contain certain psychic depths that are not quite plumbed here.

The recordings are not at all uniform; this is partly because a couple of concert performances were used, but even the studio performances vary quite a bit. Although the quality ranges from attractive to medium ugly, the recorded sound cannot be said to get in the way of the music—it is even sometimes quite supportive.  
E.S.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**DEBUSSY: The Children's Corner; Petite Suite; Danse; La Plus que Lente; Valse pour Orchestre; Berceuse Héroïque.** Orchestre National de l'ORTF. Paris, Jean Martinon cond. ANGEL □ S-37064 \$6.98.

Performance: **Enchanting**  
Recording: **Beautiful**

One of the nicest surprises in years is a really first-rate recording of some enchanting orchestral pieces generally considered too trivial for concert programs and therefore rarely performed and only infrequently available in orchestral form even on records. The composer is Claude Debussy, and the conductor is Jean Martinon, whose electrifying performances of *La Mer* were high points of his tenure with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in the Sixties. It is not with *La Mer* or any of the other acknowledged masterworks, though, that Martinon has begun his Debussy cycle with the ORTF's Orchestre National on An-  
(Continued overleaf)

## "Glitter, voluptuousness, and flair..."



## Wilkomirska's Indispensable Violin Recital

**F**ABULOUS fiddling! And Wanda Wilkomirska's new record for Connoisseur Society is further distinguished for a most imaginatively chosen program of short pieces (they are imaginatively laid out on the disc, too, for the most effective sequence of contrasts, not in the alphabetical order given below). It matters not at all that only the Wieniawski and Sarasate pieces were actually composed for the violin, for all nine of these works, it would seem, were written for Wanda Wilkomirska. The Bartók, in particular, gets the performance of a lifetime—incredibly brilliant in its sweep and dash but by no means short on lyrical expressiveness, and all in the most convincingly idiomatic frame. No less idiomatic is the elegant treatment of the Sarasate—the idiom, of course, being that of the master violinist at least as much as that of the Spanish composer. The glitter of the Wieniawski pieces, the voluptuousness of the Szymanowski and Debussy, the pizzicato and spiccato fireworks of the Moussorgsky are all brought off with breathtaking flair.

The Kreisler arrangement is a piece Wilkomirska has recorded before on the same label—only three or four years ago, with a dif-

ferent pianist—but the remake, with a judicious cut at the end, shows a far more sympathetic feeling for the music on the part of both the violinist and her present partner, David Garvey, who is a superb collaborator throughout. To me, this is a particularly noteworthy part of the package, because I have always taken pains to avoid what I think of as *Londonderry Treacle*, no matter whose arrangement, but here it has savour without schmaltz—there are none of the customary heavings and churnings, and it sings with the softspoken dignity of true folk music.

What makes this entire assortment really remarkable is something more than its dazzle: there is throughout this little program of encores an unmistakably felt warmth of heart, a phenomenally communicated zest in both the fiery moments and the sweet, and withal the happiest of images of an honest-to-God Artist in love with music, the fiddle, and life. The performance of any one of these little gems would make the disc irresistible; the Bartók makes it indispensable.  
—Richard Freed

**WANDA WILKOMIRSKA: Recital.** Bartók: *Rumanian Folk Dances* (arr. Zoltán Székely). Debussy: *Petite Suite: En Bateau* (arr. Gaston Choïsnel); *La Plus Que Lente, Valse* (arr. Léon Roquès). Kreisler (arr.): *Londonderry Air*. Moussorgsky: *The Fair at Sorochinsk: Gopak* (arr. Dushkin). Sarasate: *Romanza Andaluza, Op. 22, No. 1*. Szymanowski: *Krol Roger: Chant de Roxane* (arr. Kochanski). Wieniawski: *Obertas, Mazurka in G Major, Op. 19, No. 1; Polonaise Brillante No. 2, in A Major, Op. 21*. Wanda Wilkomirska (violin); David Garvey (piano). CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY □ CSQ 2707 \$6.98.



gel, but with a collection of five works originally for piano, only two of which were orchestrated by Debussy himself.

*The Children's Corner* in André Caplet's setting has not been on records in years except in the form of occasional excerpts; it has never sounded more charming or more substantial than in Martinon's affectionate but absolutely uncondescending treatment—nor has the *Petite Suite*, an astonishingly attractive work in Henri Büsser's orchestration. *La Plus que Lente*, voluptuously scored for strings by Debussy himself with a solo part for, of all things, the cimbalom, gives the veteran cimbalist John Leach an encore opportunity after his innumerable recordings of Kodály's *Háry János Suite*, and it is done to a turn. (Both this piece and the imposingly somber *Berceuse Héroïque*, also orchestrated by the composer, are to be found in Volume 1 of Louis de Froment's Debussy series—Vox SVBX-5127—which includes some otherwise unrecorded material and a particularly effective sequence from *Le Martyre de Saint-Sebastien*.) The Debussy/Ravel *Danse* as heard here reinforces my long-held conviction that this must be the most deliciously appealing work of its kind from any source—or combination of sources.

There is another surprise: the disc is one of Angel's crypto-quadrasonic releases. It is nowhere identified or announced as four-channel, but the "SQ" stamped in the surface (as on those of Previn's recent *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Planets*) raises the suspicion, and playback in the SQ four-channel mode brings rather glorious confirmation. Why Angel apparently does not want it known that these releases are encoded quadrasonically is beyond me, for the four-channel effect here is beautiful in its naturalness, and this particular disc really is handsomely compatible for two-channel playback; it is, in fact, one of the best-sounding Angel releases I've heard in quite a while, and it ought not to be overlooked by anyone with either playback facility. R.F.

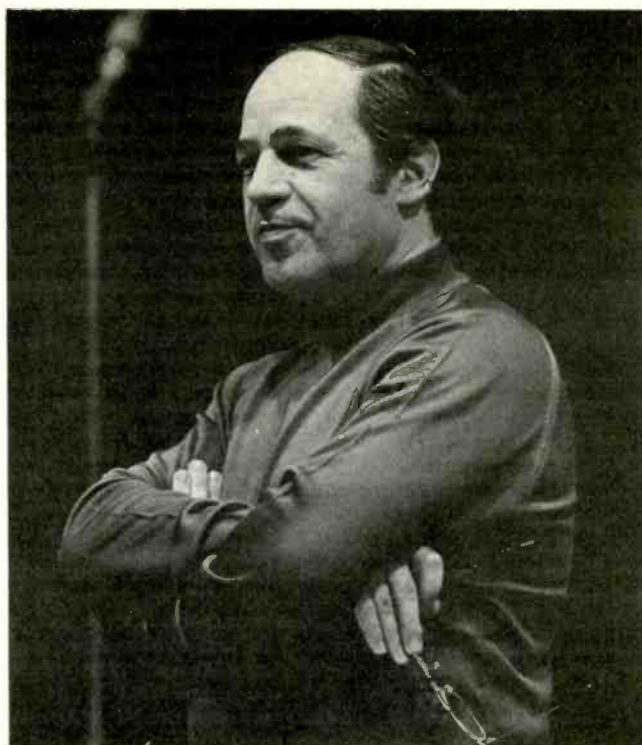
#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**DEBUSSY:** *La Mer*; *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*; *Jeux*; *Images—Ibéria, Gígues, Rondes de Printemps*; *Dances, Sacrée et Profane*; *Three Nocturnes—Nuages, Fêtes, Sirènes*; *Printemps*; *Première Rapsodie for Orchestra with Solo Clarinet*. New Philharmonia Orchestra and Cleveland Orchestra, Pierre Boulez cond. COLUMBIA D3M-32988 three discs \$13.98.

Performances: **Boulez at his best**  
Recordings: **Very good to excellent**

Pierre Boulez is the man who rescued Debussy from Hollywood and put him back up there with the handful of pivotal figures who brought about the "modernist" revolutions in twentieth-century arts. Stravinsky and Schoenberg were wild-eyed traditionalists in comparison. Whereas the Austrian and the Russian were, for all their innovations, really working well within the old Bach-Beethoven tradition, their elder French contemporary was that rare case: a true original who invented not only his own style, but his own vocabulary and form as well.

Boulez has demonstrated these points in a series of superb Debussy performances and recordings with various orchestras here and abroad, which are conveniently collected in this three-disc reissue album. By removing some of the encrustations that have appeared on the surface of over-familiar works like the



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**PIERRE BOULEZ:**  
the man who  
rescued Debussy  
from Hollywood

*Faune, Ibéria, La Mer, Nuages, and Fêtes*, and by giving new life to such less familiar works as *Sirènes, Gígues, Rondes de Printemps*, and, particularly, *Jeux*, Boulez reveals a clarity and a sparkling freshness in Debussy's music. The exotic, hothouse quality is gone, along with the meanderings and painterly smears, in favor of something sturdy and existential.

By now, Boulez has recorded virtually all of Debussy's major orchestral works and a couple of the minor ones: the early *Printemps* and the surprisingly attractive *Clarinet Rhapsody* (superbly performed by Gervase de Peyer). Most of the performances are with the New Philharmonia Orchestra: the *Sacred and Profane Dances* and the *Images*—which is very powerful here, with all three movements forming a real symphonic set—were recorded with the Cleveland Orchestra. This collection, accompanied by Boulez's own stimulating notes, is an important document in the history of twentieth-century music as well as an exceptional listening experience. E.S.

**FAURÉ:** *Quartet No. 1, in C Minor, for Piano and Strings, Op. 15*. Artur Rubinstein (piano); members of the Guarneri Quartet. *String Quartet in E Minor, Op. 121*. Guarneri Quartet. RCA ARL 1-0761 \$6.98.

Performance: **Opulent**  
Recording: **Warm**

Rubinstein's earlier recording of the C Minor Piano Quartet, made with members of the Paganini Quartet more than twenty-five years ago, was a performance I remember as elegant but rather headlong after the first movement. One need make no allowances, though, to enjoy this opulent new version. In richness of both musicianship and sonics (though the piano may seem unduly prominent in spots), it has no real competition.

The performance of the String Quartet, however, while a handsome one in its own right, strikes me as just a bit dry-sounding and less than flowing in comparison with the ex-

tremely persuasive one of the Loewenguth Quartet in the Vox collection of Fauré's chamber music (SVBX-5100, three discs), which also, of course, includes the piano quartets. The Loewenguths have probably played this quartet hundreds of times, and simply seem more "at home" with it than perhaps any other foursome can: their version is less opulent than the Guarneri's, but it gives off a greater feeling of continuity. R.F.

**GIULIANI:** *Le Rossiniane No. 1; Le Rossiniane No. 3* (see SOR)

**GRANADOS:** *Valses Poeticos; Danza Lenta; Allegro de Concierto; Seis Piezas Sobre Cantos Populares Españoles*. Alicia de Larrocha (piano). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1870 \$3.50 (plus 75¢ handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N. Y. 10023).

Performance: **Definitive**  
Recording: **Lifelike**

The *Allegro de Concierto*, a bravura piece composed in 1904, is the only part of this program likely to be at all familiar to most listeners: the two suites are fascinating discoveries. Perhaps even more strikingly than the better-known *Danzas Españolas* and *Goyescas*, the *Valses Poeticos* and *Seis Piezas* identify Granados as not only an outstanding "Spanish composer," but one of the most interesting writers for the piano to be found among Debussy's contemporaries. The succinct *Valses*, composed in 1887 when Granados was only twenty, may be said to cast a shadow in the direction of Ravel: the sequence is similar in structure and length to the famous *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales* Ravel composed twenty-four years later. (Granados even labeled the second of his waltzes "Tempo de Vals Noble" and the sixth "Sentimental.") The more expansive *Seis Piezas* (actually comprising seven pieces, not just six, the *Preludio* being omitted from the enumeration because it is only a warm-up and not based on

a song) also came quite early, while the brief and enchanting *Danza Lenta* was probably one of Granados' last works.

That Alicia de Larrocha is the master interpreter of this music need hardly be said: it was demonstrated quite specifically, in fact, when these very performances were issued on the Epic label in 1966. MHS has by now, I believe, reissued all the Hispavox Larrocha material that had been on Epic before (plus several items that had not), and has in every case improved on the sound of the original release. The piano is especially crystalline and lifelike on this disc, the only flaws being a few instances of pre-echo in the *Valses Poeticos* which I did not find really discomfiting. This is a gem in every respect. *R.F.*

**HAYDN:** *Concertos for Organ and Orchestra* (see MOZART)

**HAYDN:** *Symphony No. 100* (see The Basic Repertoire, page 52)

**JANÁČEK:** *Sonata for Violin and Piano, Op. 21* (see PROKOFIEV)

**SCOTT JOPLIN:** *Piano Rags, Volume III. Original Rags: Weeping Willow; The Cascades; The Chrysanthemum; Sugar Cane; The Nonpareil; Country Club; Stoptime Rag.* Joshua Rifkin (piano). NONESUCH H-71305 \$3.98.

Performance: **Easy does it**  
Recording: **Excellent**

**SCOTT JOPLIN:** *The Entertainer. The Entertainer; The Favorite; A Picture of Her Face; Something Doing; The Strenuous Life; Maple Leaf Rag; Peacherine Rag; Great Crush Collision; Sunflower Slow Drag; Augustan Club Waltz.* Richard Zimmerman (piano). OLYMPIC □ 7116 \$4.98.

Performance: **Too explicit**  
Recording: **Good**

Is the passion for Scott Joplin more than a passing whim? If it is, I suspect most of the credit should go to musicians like Joshua Rifkin. Mr. Rifkin, now offering us his third volume of Scott Joplin treasures on the Nonesuch label, is a classical pianist as interested in fifteenth-century music as he is in ragtime. He makes no pretense of preserving what some feel was a player-piano rigidity in the approach to Joplin's music in days past. Rifkin plays in a loose, free and easy, somewhat understated style, where the syncopation swings out but doesn't scream for attention, and where the charm and flavor of a Joplin piece is allowed to speak for itself. A bit sedate perhaps, the performances are neither steely-glinty relentless nor pound-down objectionable. In this latest volume, Rifkin goes back to the earliest rags by Joplin to appear in print—the *Original Rags* whose arrangements were credited to one Charles N. Daniels, but which sound thoroughly Joplinesque just the same. Also on the program is the sultry *Weeping Willow*, the rippling *The Cascades*, and a rather delicate, reflective piece called *The Chrysanthemum*. In an introverted and private mood too is *The Nonpareil*, while *The Country Club* evokes inevitable images of upholstered lounges and potted palms. Mr. Rifkin's latest Joplin concert ends with the high-spirited *Stoptime Rag* accompanied by the pianist's stomping foot, as the original score demands.

Mr. Zimmerman's program covers more

familiar ground: the composer's now well-known and overplayed self-portrait, *The Entertainer*, plus the *Peacherine Rag* and *Maple Leaf Rag* along with some less frequently walloped material like *A Picture of Her Face*, a sentimental tear-jerker the composer wrote before his ragtime days, and *The Great Crush Collision*, a "musical depiction of a train wreck" that originally was performed complete with a spoken descriptive program like the marches of the Nineties. The pianist (also a scholar, and the producer of the Sedalia Ragtime Festival in the Missouri town where Joplin lived in the 1890's) brings to this music the lilt but not the subtlety and the shading Mr. Rifkin does. He has the spirit right, though, and at least he isn't a pounder. What with the quadrasonic sound on this one, that could have been disastrous. *P.K.*

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**MOZART:** *Concerto in E-flat Major for Two Pianos and Orchestra (K. 365); Piano Concerto No. 27, in B-flat Major (K. 595).* Emil Gilels (piano); Elena Gilels (piano, in K. 365); Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Karl Böhm cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 456 \$7.98.

Performance: **Sublime**  
Recording: **Limpid**

Mozart wrote his Two-Piano Concerto with his sister and himself, and performances have largely remained family affairs ever since he and Nannerl played it in Salzburg in 1779. This new recording by Emil and Elena Gilels, made just after their performance with Böhm and the *Philharmoniker* at the Salzburg Festival of 1972, is the first so far by a father and daughter; more to the point, it is the first in years to challenge the long-held supremacy of the Brendel/Klien version (now on Turnabout TV-34064 S).

The Gilels duo (in which Elena evidently plays *prima*) has brilliance to burn, but it makes us aware of the subtle distinction between mere energy and inspired vitality. Neither the friskiness of the outer movements nor the sentiment of the middle one is allowed the slightest overindulgence: the unpretentious, superbly poised approach reaches beyond high spirits and surface charm to remind us that this lovable work is really a sublime little masterpiece. Brendel and Klien, of course, also registered these points effectively, but the Gilels duo is abetted by superior orchestral support and a more limpid sonic frame.

The last of Mozart's concertos for solo piano is certainly a sublime masterpiece, and by no means a little one: the performance of K. 595 by Emil Gilels and Böhm can only be called exalted. The solo and orchestral elements are meshed thoroughly, and the concept is exceptionally poetic and insightful—free of grand gestures or gratuitous underscoring, but aglow with the dignity and restraint apposite to this rather sober valedictory work. Again, there is no more persuasive version in the current catalog. Mozart's own cadenzas are played in both works on this treasurable disc. *R.F.*

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**MOZART:** *Così Fan Tutte.* Montserrat Caballé (soprano), Fiordiligi; Janet Baker (mezzo-soprano), Dorabella; Wladimiro Ganzarolli (baritone), Guglielmo; Nicolai Gedda

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(tenor), Ferrando; Ileana Cotrubas (soprano), Despina; Richard Van Allan (bass), Don Alfonso; Orchestra and Chorus of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Colin Davis cond. PHILIPS 6707 025 four discs \$31.92.

Performance: **Hearty**  
Recording: **Excellent**

*Così Fan Tutte*, the last of Mozart's collaborations with Lorenzo da Ponte, had a great deal of early popularity, then disappeared for more than a century to return as a firm repertoire item. "The geometry of love" and the sexual proclivities of women, subjects dear to the eighteenth century, have a contemporary appeal, and the autumnal, worldly simplicity of Mozart's music somehow seems just right for our own mood.

It is the good sense of this performance that it captures these elusive qualities. *Così* is the least operatic of Mozart's Italian operas, the most unreal, the most traditional, and yet, paradoxically, the most original. It involves no deep character development. Mozart, wise before his time, believed in the humanity of these comedians. In their place, we would all do the same, be equally tempted, and fall. What we want in a performance of this opera, then, is strong, beautiful, sincere singing and playing, and those characteristics are exactly what I like about this recording. No composer was more international in style and appeal than Mozart, and, fittingly, there are here a Spanish soprano, a Rumanian one, a Russian-Swedish tenor, an Italian baritone, and an English mezzo and bass, as well as English chorus, orchestra, and conductor. All of them have mastered the Italian language and the basic Mozart-Italian style, and they work beautifully as an ensemble in terms of both character contrast and ensemble togetherness. Davis is a strong director and well inclined to move things along. As is often the case, the opening has remarkable brio, but the energy slackens somewhat afterwards. The first-act Quintet—when the lovers say their farewells in a cut-time *andante*—goes too slowly: the effort to sustain it is immense and almost succeeds, but somehow the emotion

conveyed is not what we expect to get. With one other exception—a too-fast *allegretto* in the second-act tenor aria, which pushes Gedda unmercifully—the tempos are lively and consistent, and really enhance the music.

I have some complaints about the way eighteenth-century performance style is ignored here. The recitatives, although effectively paced, are weakened by the dry and prissy harpsichord playing and the lack of a cello to sustain the bass. The ornaments, written and unwritten, are incorrect or out of style most of the time. No one expects pianists to omit the cadenzas from the Mozart piano concertos, but grown-up opera singers do not emit so much as a peep in the very places where Mozart has asked them to do their thing. (The latter-day responsibility for these sins of omission must rest, not with the singers, but with the conductor.) Of course, it is Mozart, the "divine" Mozart, the "pure" Mozart, who is always accorded the dubious honor of such restraint. But remember, this is the same Mozart whose immortal operas, considered immoral by Beethoven, are basically about passion and sex. The "ornaments" in a work like this are not frivolous at all but an essential part of the eighteenth-century view of human character!

The cast generally deserves praise. The men are excellent: Richard Van Allen's Don Alfonso has just the right touch of continental world-weariness, and Wladimiro Ganzarolli and Nicolai Gedda are almost too wise for Guglielmo and Ferrando—as if they were really in on the joke all along. Ileana Cotrubas is a delightful Despina. Janet Baker is a surprising choice for Dorabella, but she is fully up to the role dramatically and musically. I blew hot and cold over Montserrat Caballé. When she is "on," the singing is sensational, but elsewhere I found her stagey and remote.

*Così* is, above all, an ensemble opera, and this recording contains the kind of ensemble singing—from *buffo* patter to that long lyric part-writing of which Mozart was the master—that opera singers often mangle. It is not mangled here. These ensembles are perfectly knit together without any loss of the individu-

ality of the parts; they all give great pleasure. The orchestral playing is vivacious, and the winds are particularly notable. Aside from the previously mentioned problems, Davis' dynamic and dramatic range is extraordinary, and he must be given the credit for weaving the voices in so well with everything else. The overall pacing, while not highly dramatic, is—again with the noted exceptions—quite satisfactory: the recording is surface-silent and gorgeous. *E.S.*

**MOZART: Piano Concertos Nos. 14-19** (see Best of the Month, page 71)

#### RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

**MOZART: Seventeen Church Sonatas for Organ and Orchestra.** HAYDN: *Concertos Nos. 1, 2, and 3, in C Major, for Organ and Orchestra.* E. Power Biggs (Mallon Organ of the Stadtpfarrkirche of Eisenstadt, Austria); Columbia Symphony Orchestra. Zoltan Rozsnyai cond. COLUMBIA MG 32985 two discs \$7.98.

**MOZART: Seventeen Church Sonatas for Organ and Orchestra.** Daniel Chorzempa (1746 Rummel Choir Organ of the Cistercian Stiftskirche Wilhering, near Linz, Austria); Deutsche Bachsolisten, Helmut Winschermann cond. PHILIPS 6700 061 two discs \$15.96.

Performances: **Both excellent**  
Recordings: **Columbia more sharply etched, Philips mellower**

Mozart's seventeen brief one-movement sonatas for organ and orchestra, played in the Salzburg Cathedral service between the Epistle and Gospel readings (hence their title, "Epistle," "Church," or "Festival" Sonatas), date from between 1767, when Mozart was eleven, and 1780. All are in the key of C Major and are representative of the cheerful (and to us sometimes incongruous) *galant* church style of that period. The use of the organ in the first nine sonatas is restricted entirely to continuo: by the tenth one (K. 244), the organ part is written out in full; and by the fourteenth (K. 278), the scoring has become more elaborate through the addition of such festive instruments as trumpets. But it is really not until No. 17 (K. 336) that Mozart wrote anything that can be construed as an organ concerto with a reasonably elaborate keyboard part. Thus, although these seventeen pieces display an intriguing growth and ability on the composer's part when heard in chronological order, the listener expecting even the kind of solo display featured in Josef Haydn's organ concertos is liable to be disappointed. That has not, of course, prevented organists from recording the Mozart sonatas. E. Power Biggs has twice recorded them complete (not to mention a 78-rpm album which contained only a selection), and his second, stereo, version has now been recoupled with three of Haydn's concertos (the previously issued single discs were Columbia MS 6682 and MS 6857). The Mozart and the Haydn take up two sides apiece.

Daniel Chorzempa's recording of the Mozart sonatas spreads out to four sides (he has also recorded the Haydn, together with Albrechtsberger and Michael Haydn concertos, as part of another Philips two-disc album). The difference is less a matter of tempos—although Chorzempa's give more of an impression of leisureliness as opposed to Biggs'

JANET BAKER AND MONTSERRAT CABALLÉ: *a Così just right for the contemporary mood*



Mike Evans for Photogram

brighter, more brilliant approach—than it is of the inclusion of all repeats in the Philips set and the exclusion of most on Columbia. There also seems to be a difference in overall concept: the Philips version is more mellow and lyrical, with a decided de-emphasis of the function of the organ (at least in the majority of the sonatas where the organ part is negligible), whereas Biggs' version stresses the organ throughout. Both points of view, it seems to me, are perfectly valid. Both sets of performances are excellent in their own different ways, the organs used are either historically original (Chorzempa) or modern tracker reconstruction (Biggs), and the church ambiances are very effectively captured. *I.K.*

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**MOZART: String Quartet in B-flat Major (K. 458, "Hunt"); String Quartet in C Major (K. 465, "Dissonant").** Quartett Collegium Aureum. BASF KHB-20344 \$6.98.

Performance: **Robustly persuasive**  
Recording: **Very good**

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**MOZART: String Quartet in C Major (K. 465, "Dissonant"); String Quartet in B-flat Major (K. 589).** Tokyo String Quartet. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 468 \$7.98.

Performance: **Elegant**  
Recording: **Excellent**

**MOZART: String Quartet in G Major (K. 387); String Quartet in D Minor (K. 421).** Guarneri Quartet. RCA ARL1-0760 \$6.98.

Performance: **Highly inflected**  
Recording: **Very good**

**MOZART: String Quartet in E-flat Major (K. 428); String Quartet in B-flat Major (K. 458, "Hunt").** Guarneri Quartet. RCA ARL1-0762 \$6.98.

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

Among earlier recordings of these quartets, I have especially enjoyed those by the Amadeus Quartet on Deutsche Grammophon, but I have regretted that group's reluctance to observe first-movement repeats, particularly in such a work as K. 465. Both the Tokyo and Collegium Aureum ensembles do take the repeats, and they do add to the appeal of their performances, which are richly satisfying in more significant respects—and so different both from each other and from the Amadeus versions as to make duplication a double delight instead of a problem.

The Collegium Aureum entry is quite the handsomest offering yet from the foursome of first-chair players from the Stuttgart-based chamber orchestra; it is also the finest-sounding domestic pressing by BASF to have come my way. Franzjosef Maier and his three associates seem extremely comfortable with the material without in any way taking it for granted or over-relaxing: vigor, no less than spontaneity and straight-forwardness, is a keynote of their approach—and it is a most persuasive one. Allegros are brisk and crisp, slow movements are unhurried but never overindulged, the themes seem to shape themselves without fuss, and rhythms once set are steadily maintained. Both ensemble and individual playing are impeccable, realizing all the natural warmth of the music without attempt-

*(Continued on page 105)*

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# Has there been any operatic age more golden than our own?



Louis Méliès/Metropolitan Opera Arch.

Pilar Lorengar as Mimi in *La Bohème*

## London's Operatic Bounty

No record company since the advent of microgroove has surpassed London Records in its devotion to opera, a cause this label has served consistently, generously, and with great success. Four new recitals from London celebrate artists who are entitled to a very large share of that success. No new material is brought to light in these collections, but they do contain several scenes, excerpted from complete operas, which would otherwise not be available.

In Joan Sutherland's "Coloratura Spectacular," the concluding scene of Bellini's *La Sonnambula* with its joyous "Ah non giunge" illustrates her triumphant way of dealing with florid music with superlative control. It is impressive, of course, but some of the other excerpts culled from such earlier Sutherland releases as "The Art of the Prima Donna" and "Command Performance" are even more so. "Martern aller Arten," with its rich tone, clean articulation, and remarkable purity of intonation, reminds us that this mistress of

Italian bel canto can on occasion be an exemplary Mozart singer as well. The two rarely heard Verdi excerpts reveal a boldness and dramatic thrust that provide welcome contrast to some of the diva's frequent displays of persistent languor. Altogether this is a well chosen and extremely effective display of Miss Sutherland's exceptional artistry, diminished only by her indifference to texts.

There are a few passing shadows—instantaneous of imperfect intonation—in "The Art of Marilyn Horne" also, but the vista it offers is bright, often spectacular. The two *Semiramide* excerpts display such formidable command of the intricacies of Rossini's writing that I doubt the composer himself ever heard this music delivered with such beauty of tone, liveliness of expression, and note-perfect accuracy. The sustained flowing line of the *Artaxerxes* air illumines the opposite side of Miss Horne's remarkable vocal artistry. At times she leans on her chest tones with an exaggerated effect (the Drinking Song from *Lucrezia Borgia* is almost campy), but for the most part this is, as W. S. Gilbert would have said, "joy unbounded."

Name your favorite "golden age" and Joan Sutherland and Marilyn Horne would have been reigning queens there, alongside "The King of the High C's," Luciano Pavarotti. His recital begins with the celebrated scene in Donizetti's *La Fille du Régiment* in which he delivers nine of these precious notes with lusty delight, and concludes with Puccini's "Che gelida manina" with its solitary climax-

ing C. These come from complete operas: in between we get familiar material rendered in a kind of luscious, effortless, and healthy tenor sound, noteworthy not only for its stratospheric thrills but also for the tender care lavished on nuances that reveals the conscientiousness of the artist.

The pronounced vibrato that is the trademark of Pilar Lorengar's vocal equipment places her below the level of these superstars in purely vocal terms. But as a committed, convincing, and versatile performer, she is of the very first rank. Certainly, few lyric sopranos soar in the high register with her kind of freedom and radiance. Her recital, a special release celebrating the anniversary of her U.S. opera debut, also rates high for the unconventionality of repertoire—the lovely aria from *Rusalka* (sung in the original Czech) is a special delight.

**R**ICH vocal bounty, this, from London. There is a surprisingly offhand treatment of the conductors involved in three of these four releases (Pavarotti's collection is the exception), consigning to anonymity Solti, Maazel, Bonyngé, and Lewis, among others. And a quixotic bit of sequencing in the Lorengar disc places Donna Elvira between Butterfly and Mimi, interrupting a straight Puccini line. But why quibble when there is so much here to enjoy?  
—George Jellinek

**JOAN SUTHERLAND:** *Coloratura Spectacular*. Arias and scenes from *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and *Die Zauberflöte* (Mozart); *I Masnadieri* and *Attila* (Verdi); *La Cambiale di Matrimonio* (Rossini); *Linda di Chamounix* (Donizetti); *Samson* (Handel); and *La Sonnambula* (Bellini). Joan Sutherland (soprano); other vocalists: various orchestras and conductors. LONDON OS 26306 \$6.98.

**MARILYN HORNE:** *The Art of Marilyn Horne*. Arias from *Semele* (Handel); *Artaxerxes* (Arne); *Meraspe* (L'ampugnani); *Lucrezia Borgia* (Donizetti); *Semiramide* (Rossini); *Norma* (Bellini); *La Gioconda* (Ponchielli); *Orfeo ed Euridice* (Gluck); and *Don Giovanni* (Mozart). Marilyn Horne (mezzo-soprano); other vocalists: various orchestras and conductors. LONDON OS 26277 \$6.98.

**LUCIANO PAVAROTTI:** *King of the High C's*. Arias from *La Fille du Régiment* and *La Favorita* (Donizetti); *Il Trovatore* (Verdi); *Der Rosenkavalier* (Richard Strauss); *William Tell* (Rossini); *I Puritani* (Bellini); and *La Bohème* (Puccini). Luciano Pavarotti (tenor); various orchestras, Richard Bonyngé, Edward Downes, Nicola Rescigno, Georg Solti, and Herbert von Karajan cond. LONDON OS 26373 \$6.98.

**PILAR LORENGAR:** *Aria Recital*. Arias from *La Rondine*, *Madama Butterfly*, and *La Bohème* (Puccini); *Don Giovanni* (Mozart); *La Traviata* (Verdi); *Rusalka* (Dvořák); *Der Freischütz* (Weber); *Die Zauberflöte* (Mozart); and *Die Tote Stadt* (Korngold). Pilar Lorengar (soprano); various orchestras and conductors. LONDON OS 26381 \$6.98.

ing to enhance it. There is no more pleasing account of the *Hunt* to be had anywhere at present. The brightness of the recording might be thought to offset, to a degree, the mellowness of the playing, but it is beautifully balanced and the surfaces are really silent (though my review copy is marred by a mild blister in the middle of the slow movement of K. 465).

The Tokyo Quartet's extraordinary disc of the first two quartets of Haydn's Op. 50 (Deutsche Grammophon 2530 440) certainly made me eager to hear more of the Classical repertoire from them, and their first Mozart offering is hardly less spectacular. Subtlety and refinement are apparently as instinctive to this ensemble as robust exuberance is to the Collegium Aureum team—which is not to suggest that the Stuttgarters lack refinement, by any means, but that here the impression is one of glowing, reflective intimacy, with nothing even faintly outdoorsy about it. The Japanese players allow themselves to caress some of the lovely phrases, but always tastefully; there is a more imaginative attention to dynamic shadings, and in general a warmer, almost voluptuous string tone. The two slow movements in particular are surely among the most beautiful things one is ever likely to hear—but there is poetry and grace in every bar of both performances, and the sound itself is outstandingly good, too.

If the Collegium Aureum's style can be characterized as "robust" and the Tokyo Quartet's as "elegant," the Guarneri's might be called "dramatic"—the drama in this case being of an unusually sober nature. Their approach is, to my ear, a more calculated, less spontaneous-sounding one than either of the others, with phrases here and there that strike me as overinflected. The first of the two discs is the more persuasive: both K. 387 and K. 421 come off convincingly within the frame of this polished, rather solemnly powerful concept. The other two works take to it less well. The dryness I have found in several of the Guarneri's earlier recordings tends to emphasize a gratuitous grimness in the usually engaging K. 428 and K. 458, and the tender melancholy of the slow movement of the latter work seems to resist being burdened with the tragic weight one associates with the corresponding movement of the Quintet in G Minor (K. 516). I suspect, incidentally, that a Guarneri set of the Mozart quintets would be a real success; in the meantime, RCA will soon be releasing a third disc on which the group completes its survey of the six quartets dedicated to Haydn.

R.F.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**PROKOFIEV:** *Sonata No. 1, in F Minor, for Violin and Piano, Op. 80.* **JANÁČEK:** *Sonata for Violin and Piano, Op. 21.* David Oistrakh (violin); Frieda Bauer (piano). WESTMINSTER GOLD WGS-8292 \$3.49.

Performance: *Sui generis*

Recording: *Good*

It was for Oistrakh that Prokofiev labored so long and lovingly on this sonata, and the late violinist's earlier recording of the work, with Lev Oborin, his partner in the 1946 premiere, has long been treasured by collectors despite dim sonics, gritty surfaces, etc. This unheralded remake supersedes it handily. Oistrakh's authority in this music remained unique to the end of his life, and Bauer was a magnificent partner, no less attuned to both Oistrakh and

Prokofiev than Oborin was before her. The equally glorious realization of the fascinating Janáček sonata, a work totally unrepresented in our catalog for the last dozen years, makes this posthumous release a doubly valuable addition to Oistrakh's recorded legacy. And the sound quality is fully up-to-date. One might question the gratuitous division of the twenty-eight-minute Prokofiev work, which leaves the final movement for side two—and with less of a pause between it and the beginning of the Janáček than one would like—but the record, in any event, is not to be missed.

R.F.

**SCHOENBERG:** *Pierrot Lunaire, Op. 21; Chamber Symphony, Op. 9 (arr. Webern).* Mary Thomas (reciter); Fires of London. Peter Maxwell Davies cond. UNICORN RHS 319 \$7.98.

Performance: *Excellent*  
Recording: *Mediocre*

First the good news. The Fires of London is an outstanding London ensemble originally founded by the composer Peter Maxwell Davies as the Pierrot Players. *Pierrot Lunaire*, performed by Mary Thomas in a Pierrot costume, has been one of their specialties, and it is this superb interpretation which is documented here.

It is, I think, the intense Expressionism of *Pierrot*—close to madness of a peculiarly Central European sort—that still riles up many listeners, particularly in this country. I have never seen Mary Thomas' theatrical interpretation, but one of the striking things about this recording is that she manages to remove some of the Expressionist *Angst* without taking out any of the expression! The trick is that she has learned every note of the music. Schoenberg indicated all the pitches precisely but then instructed the reciter not to sing but to recite in speechsong. Exactly what he meant by this is a subject of some debate, but the tradition, ever since the days of Erika Stiedry-Wagner's recording under the composer's direction, has been to ignore all but the general curve of the notes. (The value of that early recorded evidence could be questioned: perhaps Schoenberg had to settle for the best he could get.) At any rate, in the course of a highly dramatic reading, Mary Thomas manages to communicate an awful lot of the written music. One result of this remarkable achievement (she is by no means the first singer to accomplish this, but she does it extremely well) is that the work takes on a surprising lyricism. And the rhythmic precision and vitality on everyone's part give the music a surprising jauntiness and wit that are often lost amid the general avalanche of notes. *Pierrot* can actually sound poetic, surreal, nostalgic, terrified, and lyrical at the same time.

The bad news is that the recording is mediocre. Mary Thomas' voice is not always placed up front as it should be, and the softer music—of which there is actually quite a lot—sounds distant and a bit lost in the surface of the record. German texts are not supplied, and the English text—a free, poetical translation by Stephen Puslin, the excellent pianist—does not help much in following the original.

Accompanying this *Pierrot* is a real oddity: Schoenberg's Chamber Symphony, Op. 9, as arranged by Anton Webern for the *Pierrot* instrumentation: flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano. Since the chamber orchestration of the original is constricting *enough* for a work



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of this scope and ambition (Schoenberg himself later arranged it for large orchestra), Webern's "practical arrangement" must remain a historical curiosity.

Nevertheless, these excellent musicians almost bring it off, and their performance of *Pierrot* under the excellent direction of Peter Maxwell Davies is uncanny. The disc makes a very good case for recording works and performances only after they have been fully absorbed by the musicians. These players have been perfecting their *Pierrot* for six or seven years; most recordings are musically raw compared to this one. *E.S.*

**SIMPSON: Symphony No. 3.** London Symphony Orchestra, Jascha Horenstein cond. UNICORN UNS 225 \$6.49.

Performance: **First-rate**  
Recording: **Excellent**

Robert Simpson (b. 1921), a veteran of the BBC music staff, is best known on this side of the Atlantic for his pioneering book on Carl Nielsen and, more recently, for his illuminating writing on the symphonies of Anton Bruckner. He was also the editor of the excellent two-volume paperback Penguin survey, *The Symphony*.

As composer, Simpson has stuck to the nonprogrammatic instrumental forms, his major works being four symphonies, concertos for piano and for violin, and a half-dozen or so bigish chamber works. Sir Adrian Boult recorded his First Symphony for HMV in 1957, and the present recording of No. 3 by the late Jascha Horenstein dates from 1970.

In company with such composers as Peter Mennin in this country and Vagn Holmboe in Denmark, Simpson gives his symphonies the form of closely argued musical dialectic, contemporary post-Romantic in rhetoric, eclectic in stylistic roots. The scoring is spare in coloration, the texture essentially linear and highly varied in density, the rhythmic patterns essentially uncomplicated when compared with those of, say, an Elliott Carter.

The influence of both Nielsen and Holmboe is quite evident in the First Symphony (1951), but somewhat less so in the two-movement Third (1962). The first movement follows the conflict-resolution pattern, while the second is an *accelerando-crescendo* affair with a brief and quiet close, highly effective in its own way. As with Mennin's symphonies, I find myself admiring Simpson's craft and effective rhetoric, but I am not deeply moved. The recorded sound is altogether superb. *D.H.*

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**SOR: Grand Sonata No. 2, in C Minor, Op. 25.** **GIULIANI: Le Rossiniere No. 1, Op. 119; Le Rossiniere No. 3, Op. 121.** Julian Bream (guitar). RCA ARL1-0711 \$6.98. © ARS1-0711 \$7.98. © ARK1-0711 \$7.98.

Performance: **Superb**  
Recording: **Vibrant**

It was only about a year ago that the first complete recording of Sor's Second Grand Sonata, surely an important work in the literature of the guitar, was issued on the mail-order Classic Recordings for Guitar label. That performance, by Lawrence Johnson, is an eminently satisfying one, but the new one by Bream is more compelling in every respect, illumined by the subtlety, imaginativeness, and sheer relish one has come to expect from this superb musician. Whereas the earlier per-

formance was enjoyable, this one leaves me downright incredulous that so intriguing a work for any instrument could have been overlooked by the record producers for so long.

The two sets of *Rossiniere* by Mauro Giuliani are from a series of six such works, fantasies on themes from various Rossini operas. In his annotation, John Duarte informs us advises that Bream has judiciously replaced a dullish section of *Rossiniere* No. 1 with a portion borrowed from No. 2. The surgery was probably well-advised, for there is not a dull patch in either of the tuneful confections offered here. RCA has provided the most vibrant, lifelike sound, but earns a demerit for failing to list the movements of the sonata on the label or the liner—a minor blemish, to be sure, on a really outstanding addition to the discography of the guitar. *R.F.*



DIETRICH FISCHER-DIESKAU AND DANIEL BARENBOIM: *exemplary Wolf songs*

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**WOLF: Songs After Poems by Eduard Mörike.** *Abschied; An eine Aeolsharfe; Begegnung; Bei einer Trauung; Der Feuerreiter; Der Gärtner; Der Jäger; Fussreise; Gesang Weylas; In der Frühe; Nimmersatte Liebe; Peregrina I and II; Schlafendes Jesuskind; Verborgeneheit; Wo find ich Trost; Zum neuen Jahr;* and thirty others. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone); Daniel Barenboim (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2740 113 three discs \$23.94.

Performance: **Masterly**  
Recording: **Excellent**

This beautifully packaged set (the first volume in what is apparently to be a complete edition of Hugo Wolf songs) contains more of Hugo Wolf's Mörike lieder—forty-seven of a total of fifty-three songs—than any other recording up to now.

Eduard Mörike (1804-1875) was not a poet of unlimited range, but he possessed a rare combination of gifts: vivid imagination, keen observation of nature as well as of human behavior, and conciseness of expression. Schumann and Brahms set only a handful of his poems, but the restless mind of Hugo Wolf embraced them with an eagerness that bordered on obsession—the fifty-three Mörike songs were set in 1888, in little more than four months of feverish activity.

There is a wide range of moods and pas-

sions in these songs, and these distinguished interpreters bring most of them to life with remarkable poetic insight and eloquence of expression. When Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau is at his best—and more often than not he is in top form here—he is beyond competition in this literature.

In songs lying within his natural range and calling for subdued or moderate dynamics in musical expression, his interpretations are models of intelligence, control, clarity, and expressive nuance. *An eine Aeolsharfe, Gesang Weylas,* and *Zitronenfalter* are but a few examples of his art at its noblest and most serene. Even in *Verborgeneheit*, where the climactic moments compromise the sustained beauty of the musical line, the mechanical flaws seem minor when measured against the overall artistic conception and the infinite care with which the song is laid out from start

to finish. Admirable, too, are the artist's genuine simplicity in *Der Gärtner* and the dancing jauntiness of his *Fussreise*. At times, though, he is not satisfied with simplicity: *Begegnung* sounds arty and mannered, and *Abschied* would be more amusing if it were less fussy.

The problems arise when range and dynamics call for tones Fischer-Dieskau cannot command by natural means. He is artistically resourceful in dealing with the problems, but the solutions are nonetheless damaging. *Auf einer Wanderung* and *Neue Liebe* are examples of carefully thought-out interpretations distorted by explosive climaxes, and brief gems like *Er ist's* or *Seufzer* are virtually annihilated by overemphasis.

Singer and pianist work very well together. Barenboim's contribution is particularly distinguished in his powerful delivery of *Der Feuerreiter* and *Wo find ich Trost*, in which big sonorities are realized without compromising tonal beauty. The sensitive lutelike support given to *Gesang Weylas* testifies to the other side of Mr. Barenboim's pianism.

Most of the Mörike songs are topflight Wolf. Finding them all in one volume leaves me with the comfortable reassurance that the best-known ones are also the best. I did find an exquisite song, though, which may not have received its due: *Frage und Antwort*. It is one of the many interpreted here by Fischer-Dieskau and Barenboim in exemplary fashion. And exemplary is the word for the engineering too. *G.J.*

COLLECTIONS

**ANNA MOFFO:** *Arias from Italian Operas.* Donizetti: *Linda di Chamounix: O luce di quest' anima.* Verdi: *I Lombardi: Non fu sogno.* Puccini: *Tosca: Vissi d'arte.* Leoncavallo: *Pagliacci: Qual fiamma avea nel guardo!* Rossini: *Semiramide: Bel raggio lusinghier.* Puccini: *Suor Angelica: Senza mamma.* *Turandot: Signore, ascolta; Tu che di gel sei cinta.* Donizetti: *Lucia di Lammermoor: Regnava nel silenzio; Quando rapito in estasi.* Anna Moffo (soprano): various orchestras. Kurt Eichhorn, Tullio Serafin, and Georges Prêtre cond. RCA ARL 1-0702 \$6.98.

Performance: **Varied**  
Recording: **Good**

The *Semiramide* and *Turandot* excerpts here, reissued from Anna Moffo's 1961 RCA debut disc (LSC-2504) represent her art in its prime: warm, full tones, sensitive phrasing, assured technique—these are altogether winning performances. In "Regnava nel silenzio," which comes from the complete *Lucia* set issued some six years later, her approach to the technical challenges is more cautious, but her singing is still above reproach. The remainder of this program, originally issued by Ariola-Eurodisc in Germany a few years ago, clearly shows signs of decline. The artist's involvement in the music and responsiveness to textual nuances remain admirable, but her tones have lost much of their fullness and firmness, and the top has become pinched and precarious. Nor is the orchestral support by Kurt Eichhorn and the Bavarian Radio Orchestra on the level provided by Serafin and Prêtre on those earlier occasions. *G.J.*

**SLAVONIC ORTHODOX LITURGY.** Christov: *Velika Ekteniya (Great Litany); Vo Tsarstve Tvoyem (In Thy Kingdom); Kheruvimska No. 2 (Hymn of the Cherubim No. 2); Tebe Poyem (To Thee We Sing); Dostoyno Yest (It Is Fitting).* Gretchaninoff: *Veruyu, Op. 29, No. 8 (Credo); Slava I Edinorodni (Glory and Only Begotten).* N. Kedrov, Sr.: *Otche Nash (Our Father).* Archangelsky: *Blazhen Razumevayei (Blessed Are They That Understand).* Chesnokov: *Spassi, Bozhe, Lyudi Tvoya (Save, God, Our People).* S. Marcheva (soprano); N. Peneva (mezzo-soprano); Christo Kamenov (tenor); B. Spasov and Ivan Petrov (basses); Svetoslav Obretenov Bulgarian Choir, Georgi Robev cond. MONITOR MFS 757 \$5.98.

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

This collection, sung in Old Church Slavonic (the liturgical language of the Eastern Slavic churches), consists of hymns from the Divine Liturgy set almost entirely in late-nineteenth-century Romantic style by composers associated with church music. Roughly half of the liturgy is presented here, with little chant included. A number of these selections are familiar from their use in concert, and the disc is perhaps more a concert of hymns performed in liturgical order than the actual service. More contemporary Slavonic Orthodox congregations may prefer their hymns set in a less sentimental style, but the collection is exceedingly well sung by the Bulgarian choir and the respective soloists. The highly resonant recording, made in the Alexander Nevsky Memorial Cathedral in Sofia, succeeds admirably in conveying the proper church atmosphere. *I.K.*

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## Introducing the Staff...

Since readers from time to time understandably display a natural human curiosity about the backgrounds of the writers and editors who bend their ears each month in these pages, we will be offering, in issues to come, a series of capsule biographies and autobiographies designed to satisfy that expressed need and at the same time to circumvent some of the hazards of mere speculation. —Ed.



Contributing Editor

# J Marks - Highwater

"WHO." said the Caterpillar to Alice, "are you?"

Who indeed. Well, legally I'm Jamake Mamake Highwater, which has led to some confusion because I've written under the name of J Marks for several years. But that's not who I am either. *Marks* . . . that's who my stepfather almost was. I say almost because his real name was Markopoulos, and he wanted to shorten it to *Mark*. But even when I was living with him, I was the only one called Marks because he worked in the film industry under the name of Butler. So in a way, I am also named Butler . . . except nobody ever called me that.

If you think that's confusing, imagine coping with it when you're eight years old!

More confusion has arisen over the question of what exactly "J" (without a period) stands for. It doesn't legally stand for anything, as a matter of fact. It resulted from a very complicated brouhaha over my mother's refusal to give me an Anglo-Saxon name. Of course, you and I know that a Blackfoot/Cherokee Indian from Montana doesn't have a Christian name, so I stuck

with J (no period). But in my heart I was always Jamake. Whew!

The first public use of my real name was in a STEREO REVIEW article about Native American music. But that was hardly my first article for the magazine, toward which I came via a lengthy trail of tears. You see, after receiving a B.A. in music, a master's in comparative lit., and a doctoral degree in anthropology, I somehow got . . . side-tracked. I became enthralled by the cultural facade of San Francisco, where I worked amidst a fantastic array of people—scenic designer Robin Wagner, composer Terry Riley, actor Taylor Mead, and the Jefferson Airplane among others—at a commune called the Contemporary Center. Although we were both obviously in the wrong place at the wrong time, I was lucky enough to come into contact there with composer Karlheinz Stockhausen, a meeting which ultimately resulted in my "Conversations with Stockhausen," commissioned by Irving Kolodin for *Saturday Review*. It was the first article of mine to be published in a major magazine.

After that, things began to happen rather quickly. My experience in San Francisco had convinced me that, unlikely as it once might have seemed, the masses were catching up with the avant-garde (or perhaps vice versa). So when John Waxman of Bantam Books asked me if I wanted to do a book, I threw caution to the winds and decided to do the first "serious" work on rock-and-roll, which at the time was not yet taken seriously by the intellectual and academic communities. (I'm sure you all remember that innocent bygone era).

At any rate, I wrote *Rock and Other Four Letter Words* for Bantam (it featured the photographs of Linda Eastman, who astonished even me when she married Paul McCartney), and then discovered that there was now serious speculation about my age! Susan Sontag thought I was fifty-three. Stockhausen was sure I was thirty-five. Janis Joplin assumed I was twenty-six. I attempted to set the record straight by admitting, on the cover of my second book, *Mick Jagger*, that I was born Jamake Mamake Highwater on February 14, 1942. Unfortunately, this only created confusion about my gender (what is a "J," anyway?).

SINCE then, I've written travel guides for young people, some things on dance history, and a text on American Indian painting. Music, however, is my first love, and to keep my hand in, I have supplied STEREO REVIEW with a series of free-lance pieces on musical personalities. And I have also contributed what seems to have become one of the magazine's most popular annual features, the "Hall of Obscurity" and its various annexes [see page 58].

All things considered, I'm lucky to be doing what I'm doing, despite the fact that I'm living out a biographical muddle of epic proportions. "J Marks?" replied Alice. "Why, I know him very well. He's a forty-five-year-old Jewish girl who is living as an American Indian in Zurich, where he's married to Susan Sontag's son Buffy Staine-Margolis. Of course I know who he is. He's a fine painter, and I never miss any of his movies." Is there a Boswell in the house?

—J.M.H.

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# The fire started on the first floor..

...worked its way to the second floor where my Marantz 2270 was, and finally engulfed the third floor. The floors collapsed and fell into the basement where the Marantz remained buried in debris and water until March when the wrecking company came.

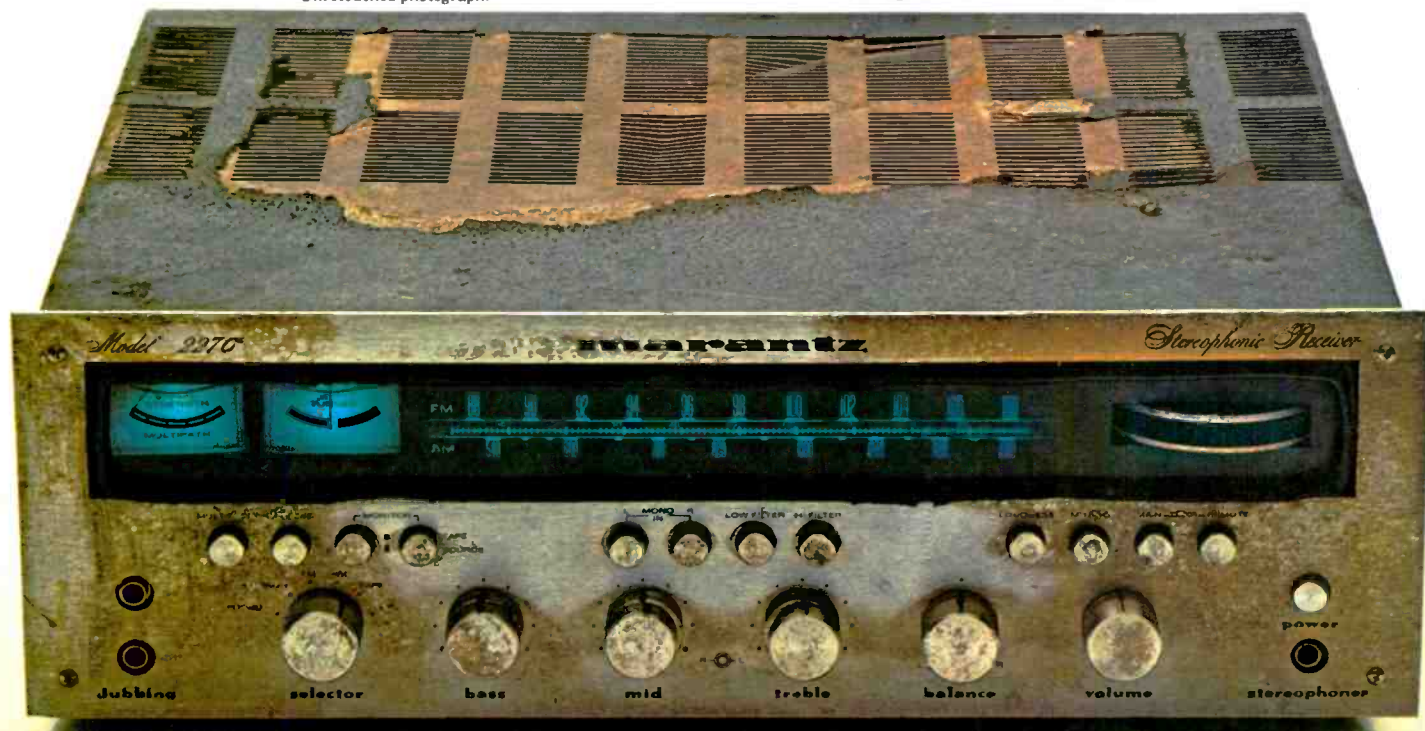
While the men were lifting the debris into trucks I noticed a piece of equipment I thought could be the Marantz. I asked the man to drop the load, and the receiver fell 20 feet to the ground.

Out of sheer curiosity, I brought the damaged receiver up to my apartment and after attaching a new line cord to it, I plugged it in. All the blue lights turned on. I connected a headphone and the FM played perfectly. I then tested it with my tape deck, and finally the turntable and speakers. They all played perfectly, too.

*Francisco Espina*

Francisco Espina\*  
Newport, Rhode Island

Unretouched photograph.



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