

FIRST TEST: DOLBY BX

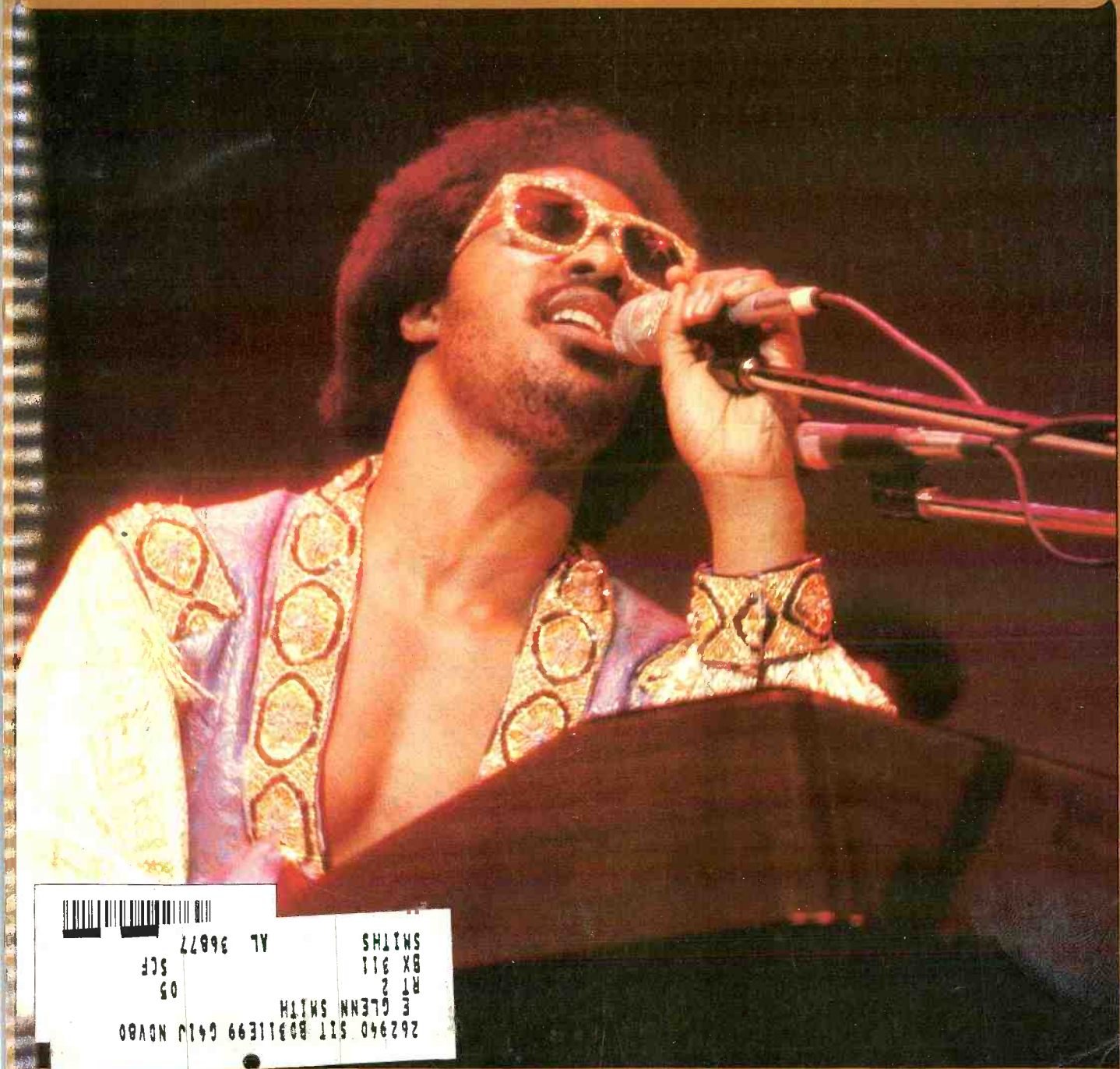
MAY 1980 • \$1.25

Stereo Review

WHAT'S NEW IN AUDIO EQUIPMENT: Las Vegas Show Report
Julian Hirsch Discusses IHF AMPLIFIER MEASUREMENTS

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS: Harman Kardon hk 705 Cassette Deck
Vector VRX-9000 AM/FM Stereo Receiver • Jensen System C Speaker
Audio Control C-101 Equalizer/Analyzer • SAE Model A7 Integrated Amplifier

STEVE WONDER: Tuning Up for the Eighties



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AND SO IS THE FIGHT ABOUT TUNERS.

At one time the struggle between amplifiers was won by the amp that had the most muscle. And the tuner that brought in the most stations also brought in the most acclaim.

Today, there's one series of amplifiers whose technology has put it in a class by itself. And now, with Pioneer's new TX 9800 tuner it's met its match.

While other tuners offer features that just sound great, every feature in Pioneer's TX 9800 helps to produce great sound.

Unlike ordinary tuners that are content with ordinary circuitry, the TX 9800 has a new Quadrature Discriminator Transformer that works with Pioneer's exclusive PA 3001-A integrated circuit to reduce distortion to 0.05% at 1 KHz and raise the signal-to-noise ratio to 83 dB. Whew!

Many of today's tuners use sophisticated low pass filters to remove the 19 KHz pilot signal that's present in every stereo broadcast. But while they're effective in removing the pilot signal, they're also effective in removing some of the music.

The TX 9800 has Automatic Pilot Canceling Circuitry that makes sure every part of the music is heard all of the time. And that distortion is veritably unheard of.

The crowning achievement of most tuners today is the sensitivity of their front end. And though it's much to their credit to bring in weak stations, it means nothing unless they can do it without spurious noise or other interference.

The TX 9800's front end has three dual gate MOSFET's that work with our five gang variable capacitor to give you an FM sensitivity of 8.8 dBf. And also make sure that your favorite music is not disturbed by what's playing elsewhere on the dial.



SIGNAL STRENGTH AND CENTER TUNING METERS FOR A DRIFT-FREE PERFORMANCE.



INSTANTANEOUS FLUOROSCAN METERING THAT LETS YOU WATCH EVERY PERFORMANCE WHILE YOU HEAR IT.

And while most tuners today give you one band width for all FM stations, the TX 9800 gives you two. For both AM and FM. A wide band that lets you bring in strong stations loud and clear. And a narrow one that finds even the weakest station on a crowded dial and brings it in without any interference.

All told, these scientific innovations sound mighty impressive. But they wouldn't sound like much without an even more impressive tuning system.

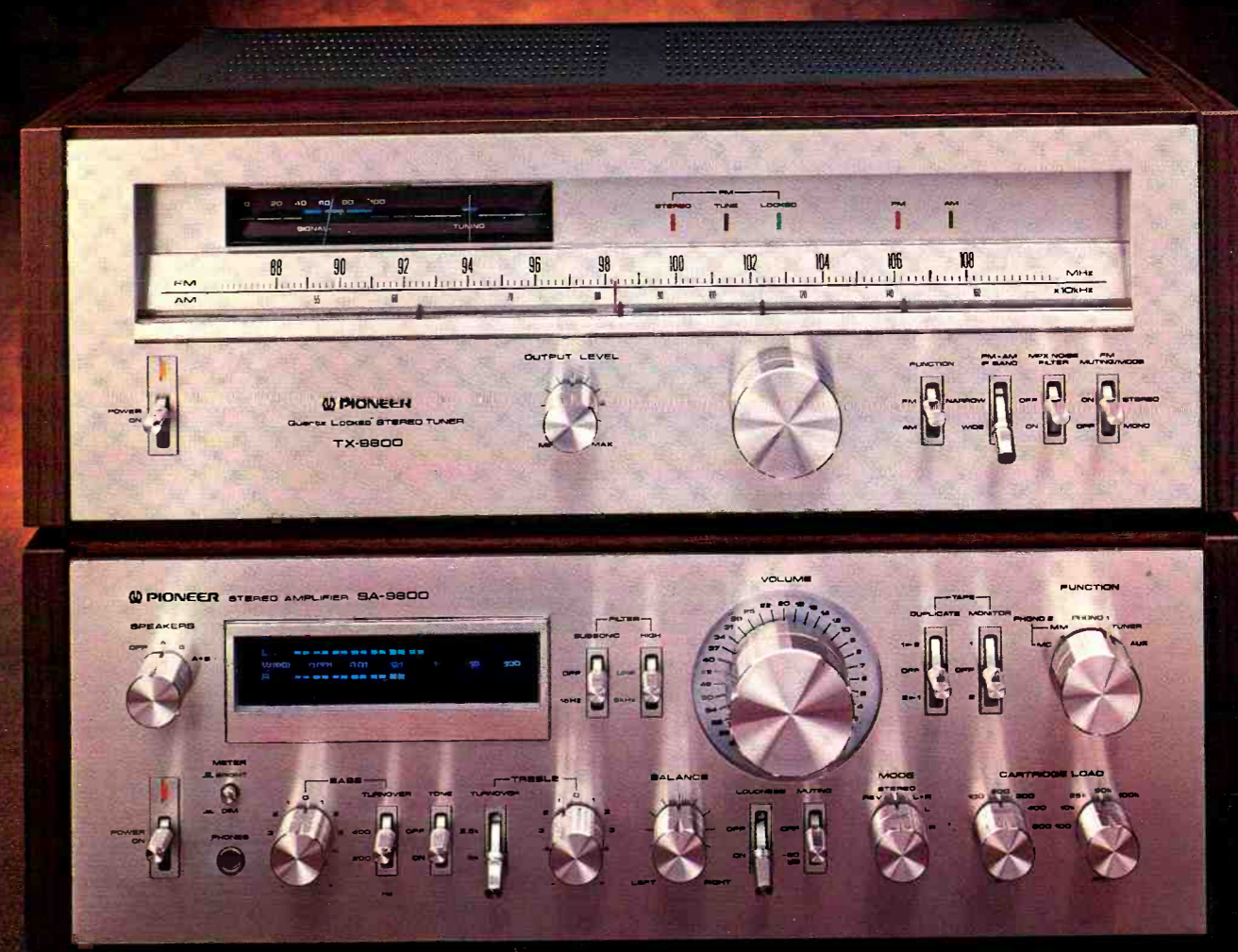
The TX 9800 has a specially designed Quartz Sampling Lock Tuning System, that fortunately, is a lot easier to operate than pronounce.

Simply rotate the tuning dial to your desired station. When the station is tuned exactly right a "tune" light comes on. By releasing the tuning dial you automatically lock onto that broadcast. And automatically eliminate FM drift.

By now, it must be obvious that the same thinking that went into Pioneer's new amplifiers has also gone into their new line of tuners.

So just as Pioneer ended the class struggle between amps, they won the fight between tuners. With a technical knockout.

PIONEER®
We bring it back alive.
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High Fidelity Components,
85 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, N.J. 07074.



THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE CLASSES IS OVER.

For years people have clashed over which amplifiers are best. Class A or Class B.

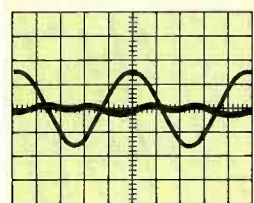
Expensive Non-switching Class A amplifiers are known to offer the lowest levels of distortion. At the same time, they also offer the highest operating temperatures.

And while Switching Class B amplifiers increase efficiency, they also increase distortion.

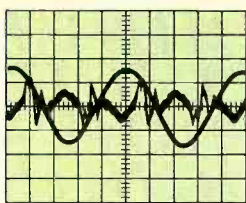
So if you're not paying through the nose for a heat-producing Class A amplifier, you'll be paying through the ear for a distortion-producing Class B.

At Pioneer, we believe most of today's Class A and Class B amplifiers are pretty much in the same class. The class below Pioneer's SA 9800.

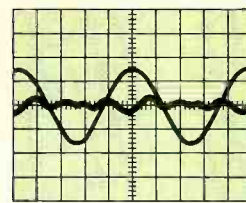
Pioneer's Non-switching SA 9800 offers the efficiency found in the finest Class B amplifiers. With a distortion level found in



CLASS A AMPLIFIER.
LEAST DISTORTION
BUT MOST HEAT.



CLASS B AMPLIFIER.
MOST DISTORTION
BUT LESS HEAT.



SA-9800.
LESS DISTORTION, LESS
HEAT, AND MORE POWER.

the finest Class A. An unheard of 0.005% at 10-20,000 hertz.

And while you're certain to find conventional power transistors in most conventional amplifiers, you won't find them in the SA 9800. You'll find specially developed RET (Ring Emitter Transistors) transistors that greatly increase frequency response. So instead of getting distortion at high frequencies, you get clean clear sound. Nothing more. Nothing less.

Instead of slow-to-react VU meters that give you average readings or more sophisticated LED's that give you limited resolution, the SA 9800 offers a Fluorscan metering system that is so fast and so precise it instantaneously follows every peak in the power to make sure you're never bothered by overload or clipping distortion.

And while most amplifiers try to impress you with all the things they do, the SA 9800 can even impress you with the one thing it simply doesn't do. It doesn't add anything to the sound it reproduces. An impressive 110dB S/N ratio is proof of it.

While these features alone are enough to outclass most popular amplifiers, the SA 9800 also offers features like DC phono and equalizer sections and DC flat and power amps that eliminate phase and transient distortion. Cartridge load selectors that let you get the most out of every cartridge. And independent left and right channel power supplies.

Obviously, it took revolutionary technology to build the SA 9800. But the same technology and skillful engineering that went into the SA 9800 also goes into every amplifier in Pioneer's new series.

At Pioneer, we're certain that others will soon be entering the class of 9800. And though they all may be built along similar lines, in terms of value Pioneer will always be in a class by itself.

PIONEER®
We bring it back alive.

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M U S I C

THE KLIPSCH HERESY:

The biggest sound in a small speaker is two-thirds Klipschorn at less than half the price.

Klipsch Heresy is one of the most efficient small speakers in the world. Only one watt of power will deliver 96 dB of sound pressure four feet into your room and it can take 100 watts if your ears can. Response range is from 50 to 17,000 Hz plus or minus 5 dB.

This lowest priced Klipsch Heresy comes in unfinished birch plywood for exceptional durability, so if you want great sound without the furniture finish, this is the one for you.

The Klipsch Heresy cabinet is shown here in beautiful, hand-finished walnut. Built to the highest quality construction standards in the industry, you can also choose oak, teak, rosewood, ebony, zebra wood and other exotic wood veneers.

The Klipsch Heresy is a sound investment because, unlike every other aspect of today's component hi-fi systems, it will not be obsolete ten years from now.

In 1957 Paul Klipsch designed a small loudspeaker that utilized the same tweeter and mid-range driver as the legendary Klipschorn. He added a 12" woofer and maximized the cabinet volume for exceptional bass response. Until that time, Klipsch had built only corner speakers and the new design was for "against the wall" placement. When he described this accomplishment to a sales representative, the man said it was "heresy" to put so much Klipschorn in such a small speaker that didn't even require a corner.

Because of its high efficiency, the Klipsch Heresy doesn't require expensive, high-powered amplifiers to reproduce the full bandwidth of dynamic sound. This helps you afford a better cartridge, turntable or tape deck.

For tonal detail, definition, imaging, transient response and durability, the Klipsch Heresy has no equal in its size. It will put you front row center, feeling the thunder of the bass, the impact of the drums, and the exhilaration of each crescendo.



Klipschorn, Belle Klipsch, Klipsch LaScala, Klipsch Cornwall and Klipsch Heresy are registered trademarks of Klipsch & Associates
CIRCLE NO. 28 ON READER SERVICE CARD

A Legend in Sound.



Please send me free information on the Klipsch Heresy and the entire line of Klipsch loudspeakers. Send me the name of the nearest dealer too.

Name _____

Address _____

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State _____

Zip _____

Mail to: Klipsch and Associates, Inc.
Box 688 Hope, Arkansas USA 71801
Or Call: 501-777-6751

SR

FORMERLY HI FI/STEREO REVIEW (ISSN 0039-1220)

Stereo Review®

MAY 1980 • VOLUME 44 • NUMBER 5

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COVER: Steve Wonder, photo by Kwame Brathwaite

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HOW NOT TO RUIN YOUR RECORDS

PART I

Don't "play" over micro-dust

THE PROBLEM:

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

COMMON ERRORS:

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

AN ANSWER FROM RESEARCH:

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

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

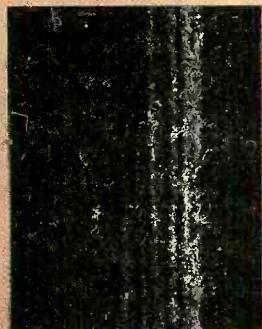


Fig. 1 Line of micro-dust removed from a "clean" record.

UNFETTERED PHOTOS
OF DISCWASHER BRUSH

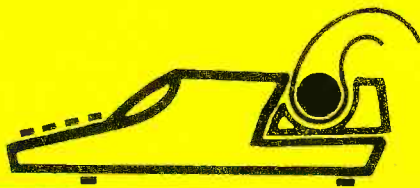


Fig. 2 Accumulated micro-dust from long, effective use of the Discwasher System.



 Discwasher Group

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COLUMBIA, MISSOURI 65201
CIRCLE NO. 16 ON READER SERVICE CARD



Edited by William Livingstone

- THE FIRST DIGITALLY RECORDED OPERA set to be released in the U.S. is Beethoven's Fidelio on London Records. Hildegard Behrens and Peter Hofman head the cast, and Sir Georg Solti conducts the Chicago Symphony. The set should be in stores this spring. Polygram used 3M equipment for what is claimed to be the first multitrack digital operatic recording: Wagner's Parsifal conducted by Herbert von Karajan. Analog tapes were also made at the Parsifal sessions, and this summer Polygram officials will decide which to use. Parsifal is due in 1981 on Deutsche Grammophon.
- ZENITH AND RCA HAVE SIGNED VIDEODISC technology agreements that give each company access to the other's patented videodisc-player developments. Both Zenith's and RCA's units will be able to play the same videodiscs in the capacitance format. Zenith plans to have its player on the market by the middle of next year at a retail price under \$500. Zenith dealers will also sell videodiscs--all mono. Ho, hum.
- MAY I HAVE THE ENVELOPE, PLEASE? The Avery Fisher Prize for a young American instrumentalist has been awarded this year to pianist Richard Goode....The National Academy of Popular Music has given a Lifetime Achievement in Popular Music Award to Ethel Merman....The American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters has awarded Goddard Lieberson Fellowships (\$10,000 each) to young composers David Chaitkin, of New York City, and Robert Xavier Rodriguez, of Dallas.... The name of Edwin Howard Armstrong, inventor of FM radio, was added to the roster of the National Inventors Hall of Fame.
- LONDON RECORDS WILL CEASE TO EXIST as a separate company. The London catalog and certain other assets, such as master tapes, have been sold by English Decca to Polygram, which owns Philips and Deutsche Grammophon. In the United States and Canada, London recordings will now be marketed by Polygram side by side with its other classical labels.
- A FIXED-HEAD DIGITAL CASSETTE DECK has been developed by Sanyo. Using a ten-track, single-crystal ferrite head, the stereo unit records on metal tape in the large Elcaset format (3 3/4 ips, 1/4-inch tape). The system emits less mechanical noise, Sanyo claims, than a comparable adaptor/VCR system and yet permits easy editing. Neither production nor marketing plans have been announced.
- BARCLAY-CROCKER AND PHILIPS RECORDS have signed a contract permitting the former to release recordings from the Philips and Mercury Golden Imports catalogs on open-reel tapes. Fifteen tapes are expected during the first year of the two-year contract, among them Berlioz's Symphonie Fantastique conducted by Sir Colin Davis and Holst's The Planets conducted by Neville Marriner.
- DIGITALLY MASTERED CLASSICAL DISCS are catalogued in Classics Only, which costs 50¢ and can be ordered from Classics Only, Box 14196L, Columbus, Ohio 43214. All recordings listed in the catalog can be ordered from its publishers. Labels include Angel, Delos, Denon, London, RCA, Sound 80, Telarc, Varèse-Sarabande, and others.
- NEW VISTAS IN TAPE PIRACY: English heavy-metal rockers Judas Priest have fallen victim to what is apparently the first-ever kidnapping of a master tape. The Priest's new album was being mixed at Electric Lady Studios in New York City when it was stolen during a recent break-in. Faced with the prospect of having to rerecord the entire album, the managers of the group rejected police advice and shelled out the demanded \$100,000 in ransom. The tape was returned with only minor damage.
- ENGLISH ROCKER BRAM TCHAIKOVSKY completed his second album just prior to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, but its release has been delayed by executives at American Polydor. It seems Bram, not known for political convictions, wanted to call the disc "The Russians Are Coming."

Speaking of Music...

By William Anderson



THE ORIGINAL-INSTRUMENT RAG

TIME was when I would have run miles to keep a shawm, a rackett, a sackbut, or any number of other ancient instruments from assaulting a pair of ears that had grown up to more modern sounds, more recent musical conventions. That was back during the Early Musicological Period, when scholars, having just discovered phonograph records and some of the profitable academic uses to which they might be put, were intent on improving them into the ground by subjecting them to rediscovered performance-practice rules as rigid as an amendment to Mosaic law. The result of an awful lot of good scholarship was, in short, a lot of awful music, and the listening public grew wisely wary of anything smacking too much of "research."

We've grown even more wise since then, having learned in most cases to put scholarship in the service of making music rather

than the other way around. "Ancient Instrument Syndrome" lingers on in some quarters, however, still characterized by the onset of a headache (and the previously cited urge to run) at the mere mention of "original instruments." I would like to assure fellow sufferers that such responses are entirely uncalled-for in the case of (steady!) the Academy of Ancient Music's new series of unusual original-instrument performances of Mozart symphonies for L'Oiseau-Lyre (the first-released volume, containing eleven early works, is reviewed in this issue, page 72).

These symphonies are, in fact, so unusual that I find them a little difficult to characterize justly in purely musical terms. Perhaps visual ones will do the trick: they sound to me the way Stanley Kubrick's breathtakingly beautiful movie of Thackeray's *The Luck of Barry Lyndon* looked—

brilliantly colored, filled with graceful, hypercivilized figures moving against sublime vistas in a transparent yet softly radiant atmosphere. Thackeray subtitled his satire *A Romance of the Last Century*, which is to say Mozart's eighteenth. To put it in terms of one of those grand generalizations my mind finds congenial, the nineteenth century was in thrall, intellectually and artistically, to the heart, the eighteenth to the head. Musically, at least, we have not, even this far into the twentieth, moved all that far from nineteenth-century Romanticism, so when we think of "symphonies" we think largely in terms of Beethoven, Brahms, and (lately) Mahler—bulky, weighty works of Dimension and Import. Some of these heavy expectations have, I think, insensibly crept into many Mozart performances, and to our loss.

AND so, if these symphonies have not satisfactorily engaged my attention before this, I am inclined to blame performances too richly opaque with the sound of modern instruments to admit that lambent eighteenth-century light, too busy looking for dark-browed passion to discover graceful wit. Granted that the very *idea* of a "symphony" was still in the process of development, and that Mozart was but a feisty teenager (sixteen to eighteen years old) when he wrote them, these early symphonies are not like that at all. The music is written—and here *played*—with a contagiously effervescent, lighthearted, and thoroughly intellectual *clarity* that simply sweeps the listener away. Example, you say? Try the Symphony in E-flat Major (K. 132), especially for the extraordinary juxtaposition of moods between Minuet and Trio—and even within the Trio itself—and come away convinced. For myself, I have resolved to be kinder in future to musicology and to original instruments as well (oh, those juicy gut strings, those sonorous natural horns!). □

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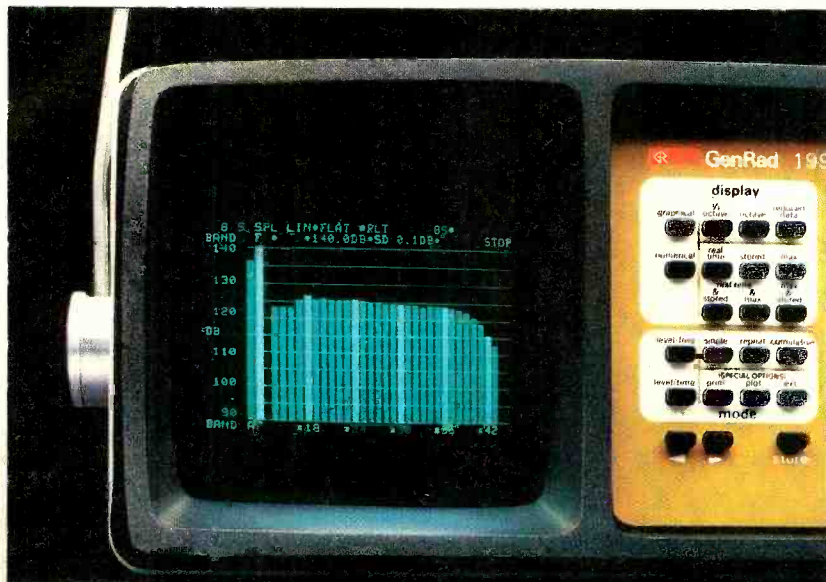
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MEMOREX HIGH BIAS TEST NO. 5.

WHICH HIGH BIAS TAPE STANDS UP TO A GENRAD REAL-TIME ANALYZER?



The GenRad 1995 Real-Time Analyzer is among today's state-of-the-art devices for accurately measuring and displaying audio signals. That's why we used it to show that MEMOREX HIGH BIAS is today's state-of-the-art high bias cassette tape.

When tested at standard recording levels against other high bias tapes, none had a flatter frequency response than MEMOREX HIGH BIAS.

And, the signal/noise ratio of MEMOREX HIGH BIAS proved to be unsurpassed at the critical high end.

Proof you can't buy a high bias cassette that gives you truer reproduction. And isn't that what you buy a high bias tape for?

Is it live, or is it
MEMOREX



CIRCLE NO. 34 ON READER SERVICE CARD

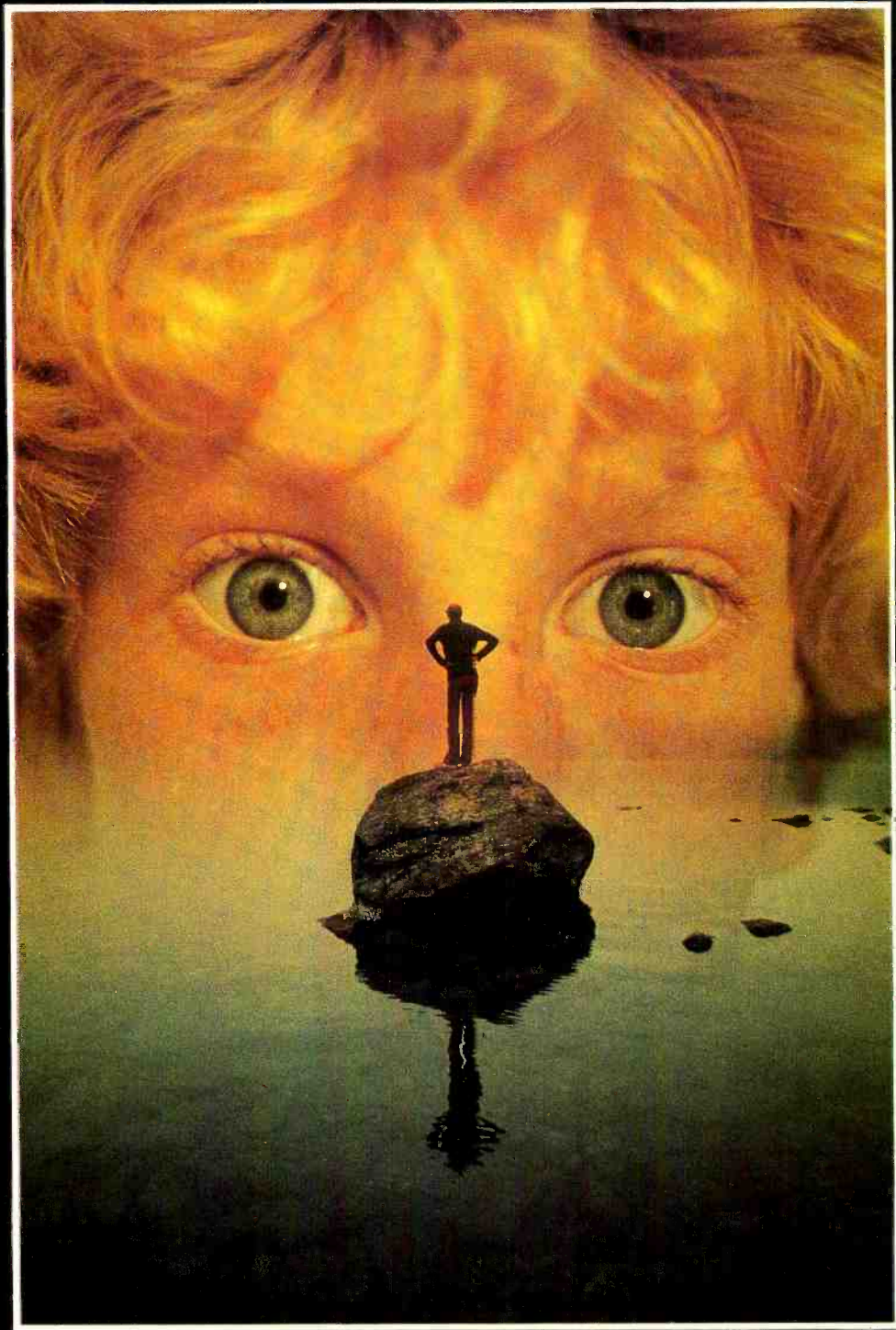


The GenRad 1995 Integrating Real-Time Analyzer measured signals from a Nakamichi 582 cassette deck. Input signal source was "pink noise" at 0dB (200 nanowebers—standard record level). If you'd like a copy of the test results, please send a self-addressed, stamped business-size envelope to the address below. Ask for the GenRad Test.



For unbeatable performance in a normal bias tape, look for Memorex with MRX₃ Oxide, in the black package.

The secret of Onkyo.



An incredible sound experience awaits you. An experience that technology alone finds hard to explain. You'll hear music of such stunning purity and sensual richness, that you'll wonder how any audio system could make that much of a difference.



The Onkyo CP-1030F

That's the secret of Onkyo. The unique ability to take you several steps beyond pure technology ... to a world of more exciting sound. And we provide it in all our components ... beginning with turntables.

■ The Onkyo CP-1030F Fully-Automatic Turntable is an outstanding example. It takes far greater advantage of today's most sensitive high-compliance cartridges ... providing more precise record groove tracking, while silencing out vibrations from record warp, the turntable motors, even sound



The Onkyo TA-2080

waves produced by your speakers.

The CP-1030F is rich with important new concepts ... a low mass, straight line carbon-fiber tonearm ... infrared sensors for smoother automatic tonearm control ... Quartz-locked direct-drive accuracy ... and a new triple-insulated suspension. All combine to produce purer sound. And the CP-1030F is just one of five advanced new turntables from Onkyo.

■ In stereo cassette tape decks too, Onkyo achieves more perfect sound. The Onkyo TA-2080, for example, provides a computerized

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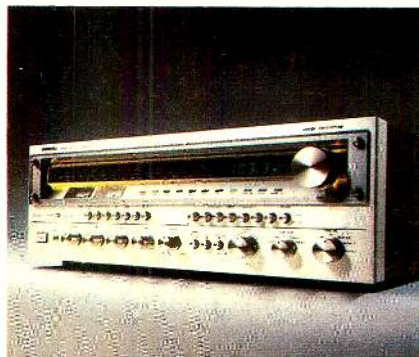
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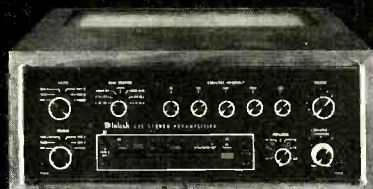
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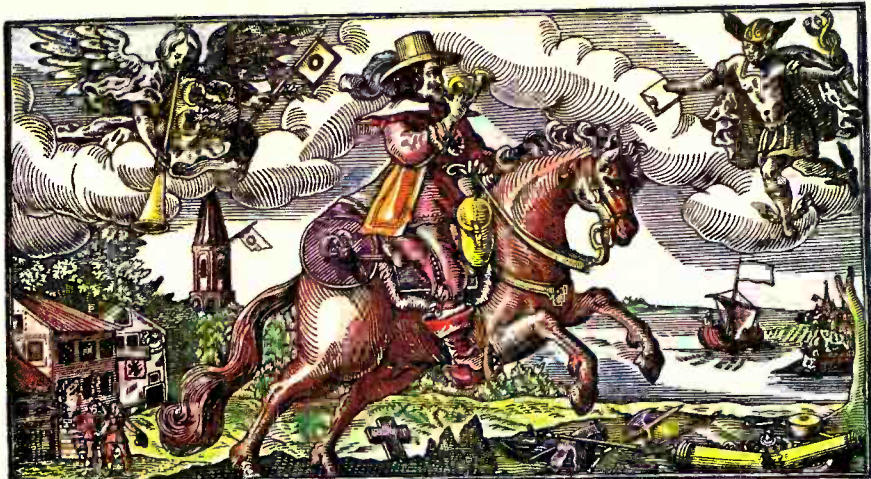
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Pink Floyd

● I was very impressed with Noel Coppage's review of Pink Floyd's "The Wall." I am a great fan of theirs, and I think it is about time this fine group got some credit for their excellent performances.

AHMAD REZAI
Wichita, Kan.

● I question the sanity of Noel Coppage. Comparing Pink Floyd's "The Wall" to the Who's "Tommy" (in the March issue) is like comparing a compact stereo system to a \$15,000 component setup. The album in no way goes beyond Fleetwood Mac's "Tusk" but struggles to stay five laps behind it. Mr. Coppage's definition of a "rock" album is obviously a bit distorted. Pink Floyd may make good music to pop reeds to, but calling "The Wall" or even "Dark Side of the Moon" rock music is insane. I would buy even a Kiss album before I would buy "The Wall." Many Pink Floyd fans claim that the best thing about them is "the great sound effects, man." I suggest that anyone who really wants a sound-effects album can get one for around \$1.99 at his nearest hi-fi dealer.

WILLIAM L. PAGE
Raleigh, N.C.

● I was delighted with Noel Coppage's review in March of Pink Floyd's latest masterpiece, "The Wall." These four musicians are true audiophiles at heart, as Mobile Fidelity Sound Labs will confirm. Congrats to these gentlemen for topping the national charts.

May I suggest, though, that Mr. Coppage give another listen to *Empty Spaces* on side two; play it backwards and there's a secret message.

JOHN JESSE CARO
San Gabriel, Calif.

Lulu's Last Word

● In his March review of the first complete recording of Berg's *Lulu*, Eric Salzmann raised a question about the word the Countess Geschwitz utters at the very end of the opera. Indeed, it does not appear in

the libretto; nevertheless, I believe I know what the word is. It is the adjective *verflucht* (cursed). We are familiar with this word within the context of *Lulu* because in the countess' short aria toward the end of the final *uncompleted* scene [in older, fragmentary productions], she sings several times the phrase "*Verfluchtes Leben!*"—literally, "Cursed life!" (in Angel's libretto booklet accompanying the recording of the incomplete Hamburg production this is translated as "I curse my life!").

In any case, it remains a mystery why this utterance was included in the opera and even more why Deutsche Grammophon did not include it in its libretto booklet. Still, I cannot think of a better word to describe the pitiful Geschwitz's life.

RICHARD DEANE
Richmond, Ky.

Fuzzy Mac

● My advice to Russ Rawlings, who claimed in his February letter to have bought a "fuzzy-sounding" copy of Fleetwood Mac's "Tusk," is that he should not have delayed a minute returning it to the record dealer for a full refund or another copy from a fresh batch. My copy of "Tusk" is almost flawless, so there must be *some* good ones out there, although it may require a little effort to obtain one.

If the record companies think they can pass off inferior discs stamped out with a worn master, then we must just pass them back to them—at \$12 to \$15 for a double-disc album we'd damn well better! So don't smile when you return a bad record; you're miffed, right? And getting "raped," as you put it, is no laughing matter. Demand a good copy of "Tusk," go directly home, set the volume for loud, and hear the Mac as they were meant to be heard.

JOSEPH C. DESY
Burlington, Iowa

Direct-cut Hines

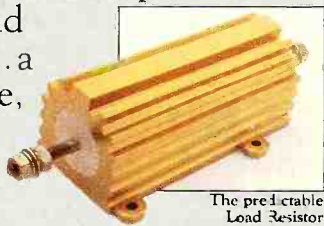
● My compliments on STEREO REVIEW's choice of Earl Hines as recipient of its 1979
(Continued on page 13)

At last, an amplifier that listens to loudspeakers.

You buy an amplifier to drive loudspeakers. If you're like most people, you rely heavily on distortion "specs" to make a buying decision. SAE found that today's specs don't tell you everything. How could they when the tests for these specs don't even require an amplifier to drive a loudspeaker!!

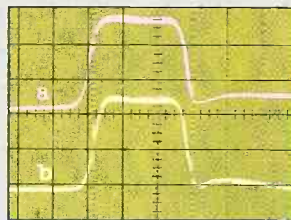
They use a load resistor instead... a static, predictable, unchanging representation of the dynamic, unpredictable, ever-changing loudspeaker. As a result, specs can't tell you how well an amplifier is going to handle your loudspeakers. SAE has researched this problem and developed a test which actually measures the amplifier while it drives a loudspeaker.

Chart I shows the response of our all new 250



The predictable Load Resistor

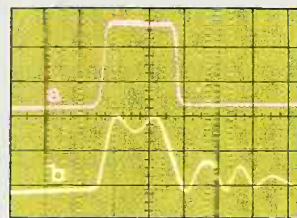
watt/channel* 2401 Dual High



SAE 2401 Driving:
a) a load resistor b) a loudspeaker

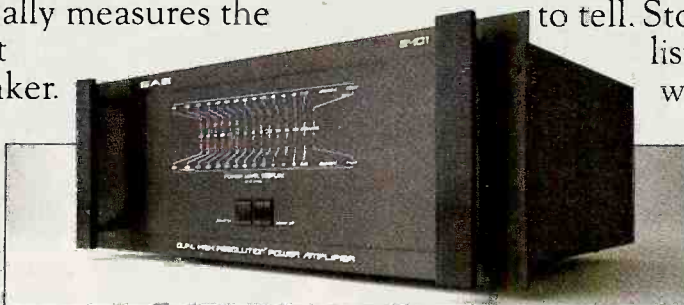
Resolution Power Amplifier under conventional tests and under SAE's new "real world" tests. As you can see, this amplifier performs much the same whether connected to a load resistor or a loudspeaker. It really listens to your speaker's needs.

Chart II shows how a conventional amplifier attempts to handle the same situation.



Conventional Amplifier Driving:
a) a load resistor b) a loudspeaker

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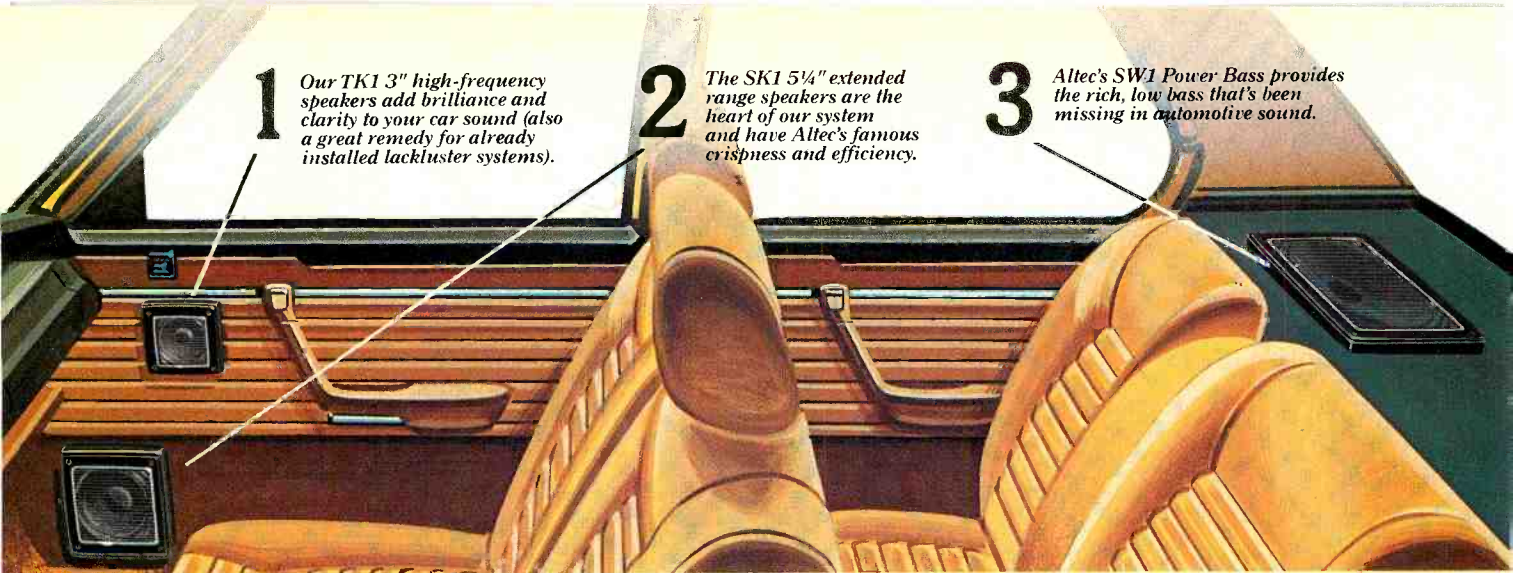
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Before we get to number one, a word about our whole Voice of the Highway™ system (the ALI). It's extremely modular. So much so, you can buy any part of it and enhance what you've got now. Of course, it's best to get it all and listen to car stereo as it's supposed to sound. A system designed exclusively for the road, but engineered to rival the one in your living room.

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Certificate of Merit. Earl Hines is truly one of the giants of American music and is most deserving of this award.

However, I was disappointed that the accompanying article on Hines in the February issue failed to acknowledge his contribution to the world's audiophiles by not including his direct-to-disc recording, "Fatha" (M&K RealTime RT-105), in the "Hines on Disc" section. An occasional complaint about direct-to-disc and digital recordings is that too few major artists are represented on these records, which makes Earl Hines' album all the more significant. Few recordings combine musicianship of his stature with such high technical quality.

CHUCK BACK
M&K RealTime Records
Culver City, Calif.

Discussion

Concerning "Discophiles and -phobes" in the March "Letters," I was pleased to note that someone shares my views on disco but very disappointed to read that rock and classical music are "dead." *Dead?* How can STEREO REVIEW print such a fallacy without at least responding to it? Not only has classical music been around for *hundreds* of years, but it certainly isn't losing popularity either. Disco is but a short-lived star in the *eternal* firmament of classical music. Mozart was four years old when he wrote his first symphony, which is four trillion times more than I can say for Giorgio Moroder, Donna Summer, or Gino Soccio.

TY C. M. HOFFMAN
Crestline, Ohio

The best comment of all on rock-lovers' detestation of disco is the fact that disco clubs are now playing more and more rock music. They couldn't lick 'em, so they joined 'em. Dance on, baby!

ANGIE BIANCO
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Donna and Tonio

I couldn't help noticing an irony in STEREO REVIEW's 1979 Record of the Year Awards (February issue). A few years down the road, Tonio K.'s "Life in the Food-chain" will, from all indications, be an expensive collector's item, while Donna Summer's "Bad Girls" will probably be held in as high a regard then as Pat Boone LPs are today. Thanks to Steve Simels' rave review last year, I've put a few copies of Tonio's disc on ice.

JOHN H. SMITH JR.
Danville, Ill.

Know-it-alls

I subscribe to STEREO REVIEW to keep up on the newest innovations in the audio world, but I also thoroughly enjoy "Letters to the Editor." I just have to smile when I read a letter concerning a review of an album that has offended someone. The writers attempt to dazzle fellow readers with facts, history, and opinions that virtually turn them into the kind of narrow-minded hypocrites that they accuse the critics of being.

STEREO REVIEW's critics are professional journalists. As such their job is to get a reaction from their readers. Nowhere in the magazine does it state that they are music-making know-it-alls. And who would read reviews that make every album out to be the potential best seller of the year?

RANDAL POCOCK
Alexandria, Va.

Big Ten Bands

I have been recording Big Ten bands at football games with the crowd sounds, cheers, etc. It's a great hobby, and I think tapes of this sort may have commercial po-

tential. There are hundreds of bands to record, and the musicians and students alone would be a pretty good market. What can I do with this idea? Can I buy a tape duplicating machine and make copies of my recordings? What do you suggest?

PAUL GORDINIER
Chicago, Ill.

The Editor replies: As I see it, this proposal presents three kinds of problems.

(1) *Legal: When you buy a ticket to a football game, the contractual obligation by the seller involves only the "live entertainment"—the game itself and whatever half-time divertissements he cares to include. He has not sold you the right to re-*

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cord the sounds on tape or the sights on film, even though no big deal would likely be made about it, both recording and filming being so hard to police in a stadium seating up to 100,000 people. He would get hard-nosed about it, however, if any such free-lance operation threatened to interfere with his selling film or broadcast rights to commercial interests.

(2) *Ethical:* That same football ticket entitles you in actual fact only to one-time performances by members of the team and the band. They might not mind too much if, for reasons of sentiment, you wished to extend your own enjoyment of the occasion by taping a few memories for later playback. They would be properly outraged, however,

if you set up an enterprise to market and sell their talents to someone who did not buy a ticket without reimbursing them for this exploitation. Such an operation might easily find itself classified under "theft of services."

(3) *Practical:* The number of people who might be interested in the sounds of the marching bands of the Big Ten, crowd roars included, is probably rather small—and if they are demon hobbyists they will probably be making their own tapes anyway. (The size of the market, incidentally, would do nothing to mitigate the ethical crime of using the work of others without their consent.) I suggest that you abandon this enterprise.

Silly Season

● Thank you for Paulette Weiss' very humorous and insightful February column, "The Silly Season." In these days of world-weary and bizarre rock megastars, it's refreshing to read that there are still plenty of loonies around.

BILL SCHUBERT
Orangeburg, N.Y.

Audio Accessory?

● After reading about Jeffrey Greenberg's protective sign, "This equipment is worth more than you are; please don't touch," in January's "Installation of the Month," there was no way I could resist sending you a copy of the sign I use for the same purpose [see below].

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* Quoted by permission, *Stereo Review*, April 1979, and *The Complete Buyer's Guide to Stereo Hi-Fi Equipment*, November 1978.



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 So Relaxen Und Watchen Das Blinkenlights.

What's in a Word?

● I'm trying to broaden my knowledge of classical—or should I say "serious"?—music, but my progress is hindered by the ubiquitous occurrence of foreign words and phrases that I don't understand. For instance, in the December 1979 review of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* are "Non più andrai," "Voi che sapete," and "Venite inginocchiatevi." Now how in the world am I to know what those mean? How much trouble would it be to offer translations in parentheses after all foreign words or phrases used in STEREO REVIEW?

GLEN E. WHITTINGTON
Anthony, N.M.

Music Editor James Goodfriend replies: The examples given are all quotations from the text of the opera and were used only to identify particular arias. Translations would not be of any great service ("Venite inginocchiatevi," for example, means "Come, kneel"). More general foreign-language musical terms are usually included as "loan words" in any large English dictionary, but learning the titles of works and (particularly) arias in the major (and some minor) European languages takes a little work (anything worthwhile does). Such knowledge is far from being an affectation; perhaps refusing to deal with any language but English is.

Archivists, Attention

● I have a complete set of STEREO REVIEW back through 1967. Anyone interested?

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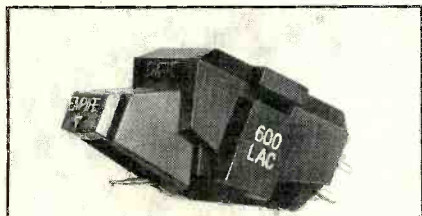


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ing-coil transformer that plugs into the C-5000A. The A-weighted signal-to-noise ratio is more than 80 dB through the moving-magnet phono stage and greater than 100 dB through the tuner and auxiliary inputs. The bass and treble tone controls offer a choice of nine turnover frequencies each, and there are switchable infrasonic and high-frequency filters. Three tape recorders may be connected to the C-5000A, each with separate dubbing and monitor controls. The unit measures 20 x 14 x 7½ inches and weighs 25 pounds. Price: \$1,395.

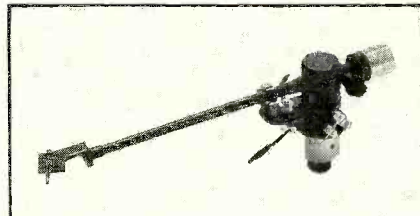
Circle 121 on reader service card



Audio Pro's Self-powered Speaker System

□ The A4-14 biamplified speaker system from Audio Pro contains an amplifier to drive a dual 5-inch-driver version of the Audio Pro B2-50 subwoofer. A separate amplifier drives the unit's 4½-inch midrange driver and 1-inch soft-dome tweeter. Frequency response is given as 30 to 20,000 Hz ± 3 dB. The speaker has a control to compensate for system placement and distance from room boundaries. Distortion is rated at less than 0.5 per cent within the stated frequency range, with an 86-dB sound-pressure level (SPL) at 1 meter into a half-space. The self-powered systems plug directly into a wall socket and automatically turn on when fed a signal from a preamplifier (or receiver). A sensitivity control adjusts the speaker's internal power-amplifier sensitivities from 0.1 to 50 volts for a 96-dB SPL output at 1 meter into a half-space. Dimensions are 12½ x 10½ x 20¼ inches and weight is 35 pounds. Price: \$1,600 per pair.

Circle 122 on reader service card



Ultracraft Unipivot Tone Arm with Damping Adjustment

□ The Ultracraft AC-30 tone arm from Osawa uses a viscous-damped, unipivot support. A variable-damping control allows the user to select damping for a cartridge so as to produce an arm-cartridge resonance in the optimum 8- to 11-Hz range. The arm's counterweight is calibrated in grams to indicate stylus pressure, and it is decoupled from the arm to minimize resonance effects. Other features include a lateral-balancing adjustment, antiskating control, a cue/pause lever with height adjustment, and a large mounting nut to provide stabilizing mass at the base. Price: \$299.95.

Circle 123 on reader service card



dbx Noise Reduction For Tape Recording

□ The dbx Model 224 Type II noise-reduction system contains four compander circuits for simultaneous stereo encoding and decoding of tapes as they are recorded. It is claimed to provide up to a 40-dB increase in usable dynamic range through fixed 2:1 compression and 1:2 expansion. The rack-mountable Model 224 will also decode dbx-encoded discs. The device has a dynamic range (the ratio of the peak-signal level to the weighted background noise) of 110 dB. Frequency response is ± 1 dB from 30 Hz to 20 kHz, total harmonic distortion is less than 0.5 per cent (less than 0.1 per cent from 30 Hz to 14 kHz), and intermodulation distortion measured by the SMPTE method is less than 0.2 per cent. Nominal input level is 300 millivolts (6 volts maximum). Dimensions are 1¾ x 17½ x 6½ inches. Price: \$275.

Circle 124 on reader service card

(Continued on page 18)

"Most cassettes are afraid of me."

-Stevie Wonder-

A lot of cassette makers have probably considered asking Stevie's opinion about their performance. But he's such a perfectionist, they may have been scared off. Stevie won't make excuses for a cassette. He wants big studio sound out of it. And for many cassettes, that's asking a lot.

Not for TDK SA. The surface of this high bias tape is packed with a specially treated particle called Super Avilyn. With it, TDK has revolutionized the way you hear recorded cassette music. No rock is too hot to handle. Classical music keeps all its dynamic range. Jazz sizzles without a hiss.

There's headroom for all the challenge and drama of music. And all the delicate overtones in between.

Stevie says, "It's a little music machine that delivers the best sound, for its size, I've ever heard." And TDK SA will keep delivering.* Its 250 components go through thousands of checks. There are 1,117 check-points for the shell alone. It was 1,060, but our engineers never stop making improvements. Which is what you'd expect from a perfectionist.

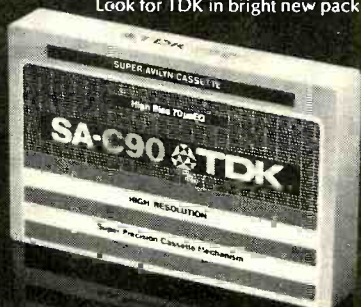
* In the unlikely event that any TDK cassette ever fails to perform due to a defect in materials or workmanship simply return it to your local dealer or to TDK for a free replacement.



Supplier to the U.S. Olympic Team

©1980 TDK Electronics Corp.,
Garden City, N.Y. 11530

Look for TDK in bright new packages

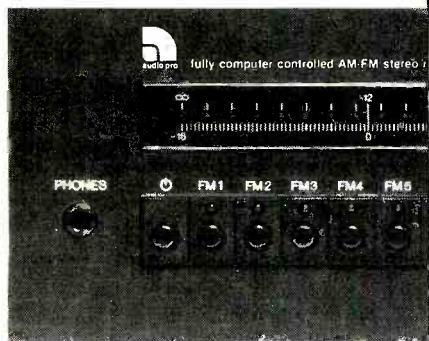


TDK
The Amazing Music Machine

CIRCLE NO. 52 ON READER SERVICE CARD

New Products

latest audio equipment and accessories



THE AUDIO PRO TA-150
AM/FM RECEIVER

**The finest
audio component
must do more
than merely
sound good.**

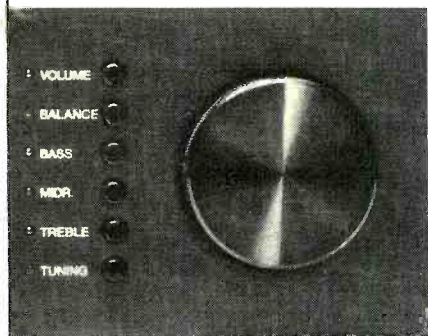
For an audio component to be the absolute finest, it must satisfy all design parameters.

Audiophiles tell us the ideal component is a straight wire with gain. The TA-150's all-electronic design comes closest, which helps explain why its sound rivals the finest separates.

Scientists tell us the perfect machine would have no moving parts. The TA-150 has but one, a single programmable knob.

Designers tell us that form must follow function. The beauty of the TA-150 is that the world's most sophisticated receiver is also the easiest to operate.

Sound, science, and style. The total design approach to audio.



For more information and
your nearest dealer
CALL TOLL FREE 800-638-0228.
Maryland: 0-459-3292 COLLECT.
Metro D.C. 459-3292



CIRCLE NO. 67 ON READER SERVICE CARD



Digital-audio VCR
Adaptor Comes with
Software Sample

□ Sanyo includes with each of its Plus 10 digital-audio VCR adaptors a digitally recorded Beta-format videocassette of Ry Cooder's "Bop Till You Drop" album. The Plus 10 adaptor converts analog audio signals at line level or from microphones into a pseudo-video signal for recording on any U.S.-standard videotape machine. Encoding is according to the EIAJ digital-audio-adaptor standard. The complete adaptor-plus-VCR digital-audio recording system has a frequency response of 20 to 20,000 Hz, +0, -1 dB, harmonic distortion of 0.03 per cent, unmeasurable wow and flutter, and a dynamic range of at least 85 dB. Features of the Plus 10 include a high-performance, low-noise stereo-microphone preamplifier; 50-dB-range LCD level meters switchable between peak or peak-holding ballistics; switchable EIAJ-standard pre-emphasis to reduce high-frequency noise; and an error-rate display to show the operation of the Plus 10's digital error-correction circuitry. Price: \$3,995.95.

Circle 125 on reader service card



Celestion's New
Four-model
Speaker Line

□ The four acoustic-suspension systems in Celestion's CS series have walnut-grain vinyl-covered enclosures and use many of the drivers from the Celestion Ditton series together with a new midrange and new cross-

over networks. The CS 7 (left) measures 30 1/2 x 14 3/4 x 10 1/2 inches. Frequency response is stated as 45 to 20,000 Hz ± 3 dB into a half-space. Crossover frequencies are 800 and 4,000 Hz. Sensitivity is 87.5 dB sound-pressure level measured at 1 meter with a 1-watt input signal. Driver complement is a 12-inch woofer, a 1-inch dome tweeter, and a 4-inch cone midrange. The CS 5 (center) uses the same tweeter and midrange but has a 10-inch woofer. Its frequency response is from 55 to 20,000 Hz. The CS 5 measures 22 1/2 x 13 1/4 x 11 inches and weighs 28 1/2 pounds. The CS 3 (right) has a dome tweeter and an 8-inch woofer; frequency response is 62 to 20,000 Hz. The C121 (not shown) measures 15 1/2 x 10 1/2 x 9 inches and has a 1 1/2-inch tweeter and a 7-inch woofer. Frequency response is 60 to 18,000 Hz. Nominal impedance for all models is 8 ohms. Prices: CS 7, \$329.50; CS 5, \$239.50; CS 3, \$139.50; C121, \$99.50. Celestion Industries, Dept. SR, P.O. Box 521, Kuniholm Drive, Holliston, Mass. 01746.

Circle 126 on reader service card



Apres Audio's
"Elegant" Plexiglas
Audio Furniture

□ The "Elegant" stereo cabinet from Apres Audio provides record-storage space on a shelf suspended from crescent-shaped Plexiglas panels. The upper cabinet has a drop-latch Plexiglas door as well as a vented rear panel. The wooden parts of the cabinet are either oak or oak veneer. Overall dimensions are 33 1/4 x 46 x 18 1/8 inches, and internal dimensions of the upper cabinet are 8 x 42 3/8 x 17 7/8 inches. Some assembly is required. Price: \$579. Apres Audio, Dept. SR, 7 Revere Court, Suffern, N.Y. 10901.

Circle 127 on reader service card

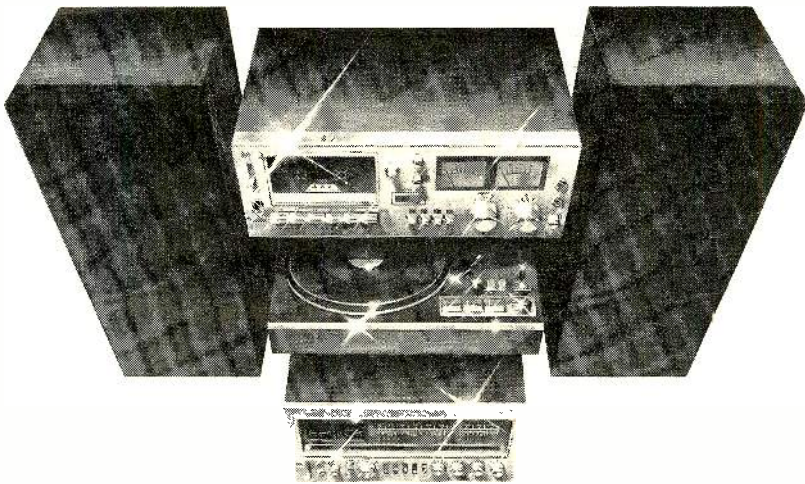
(Continued on page 20)

SCOTCH[®] CASSETTES.

THE CRUCIAL LINK



BETWEEN HERE:



AND HEAR.

THE ONE COMPONENT THAT MAKES ALL YOUR OTHER COMPONENTS SOUND THEIR BEST.

Every tape that carries the Scotch name is made with the same kind of care and precision

that went into your other components. And that makes it a component in its own right. Perhaps the most important one of all. Because if the cassette doesn't deliver, neither can the rest of your system.

SCOTCH METAFINE[®] FOR PURISTS WHO DEMAND THE ABSOLUTE PUREST IN SOUND.

When Metafine metal particle tape was introduced, it was so advanced most decks couldn't record on it. Now, metal-compatible decks are available and Metafine is stretching cassette recording almost to the limits of the audible range.

Metafine gives you higher highs and lower lows than chromium dioxide tapes. In fact it actually delivers twice the output of those tapes.

The same dedication to technological perfection that made Metafine possible is part of every Scotch Cassette you buy. You'll hear it in all three of our Master[®] Series formulations: Master I[®] (normal bias) for recording at high volume without distortion. Master II[®] (chrome bias) for quiet music where tape hiss could interfere. Master III[®] (FeCr) for outstanding clarity and high-end brilliance.



NO TAPE COMES CLOSER TO THE TRUTH THAN SCOTCH.[®]

More than 30 years of research, technology and innovation go into each one of our cassettes. What comes out is the truth. No more. No less.

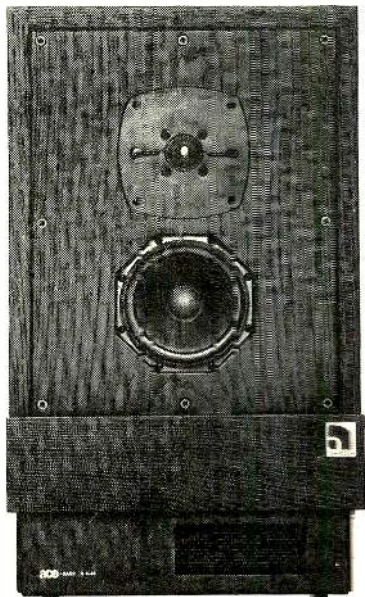
SCOTCH[®] RECORDING TAPE. THE TRUTH COMES OUT.

3M

CIRCLE NO. 30 ON READER SERVICE CARD

New Products

latest audio equipment and accessories



THE AUDIO PRO A4-14
BIAMPLIFIED LOUDSPEAKER

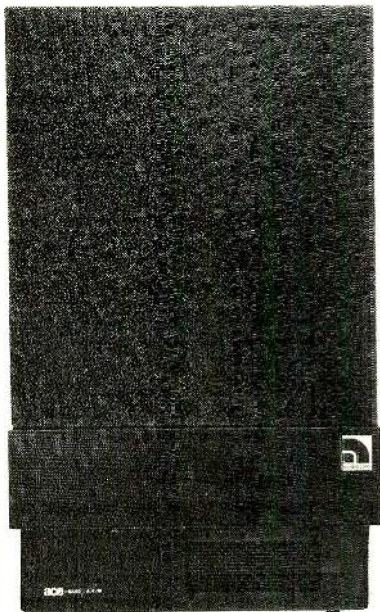
The only bookshelf-size* speaker with a built-in subwoofer.

Audiophiles tell us the ultimate speaker system uses bi-amplification and subwoofers. The bi-amplified A4-14's, with their built-in "ACE BASS" subwoofers are an entire audiophile system in bookshelf-size enclosures.

Acoustical engineers tell us that the ideal loudspeaker would be a single radiating point. Because of its built-in subwoofer, the Audio Pro A4-14 comes closer to this ideal than any other full range loudspeaker—without sacrificing bass.

Designers tell us that speakers should be heard and not seen. Due to their compact size and full complement of room balancing controls, the A4-14's can deliver their optimum performance—wherever they are placed.

Sound, science, and style. The total design approach to audio.



*Optional floor stands: available.

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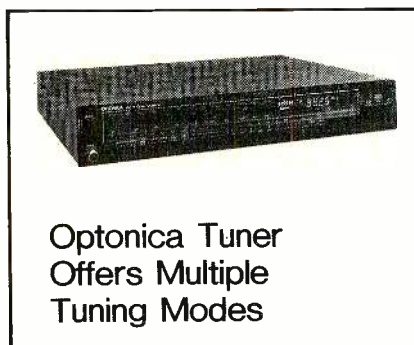
CIRCLE NO. 5 ON READER SERVICE CARD



Heathkit Receiver
Has Digital
Frequency Display

□ The power-amplifier section of Heathkit's AR-1650 receiver kit is rated at 125 watts continuous minimum per channel into 8 ohms with less than 0.05 per cent total harmonic distortion from 20 to 20,000 Hz. The FM selectivity is 1.8 microvolts. The i.f. bandwidth is switchable, with selectivity varying from 40 to 80 dB. Although it does not use digital synthesis, the tuner in the AR-1650 incorporates a precision tuning system said to correct for mistuning. A digital frequency display shows AM and FM station frequency. The receiver's bass, mid-range, and treble tone controls can be bypassed with a front-panel switch. A low-frequency filter has a -3-dB point of 30 Hz with a 12-dB-per-octave rolloff. Switching facilities handle two phono inputs and two tape decks. The kit is available with either anodized black or natural-aluminum front panels. Prices: with anodized black panel, \$799.95; with aluminum panel, \$779.95.

Circle 128 on reader service card

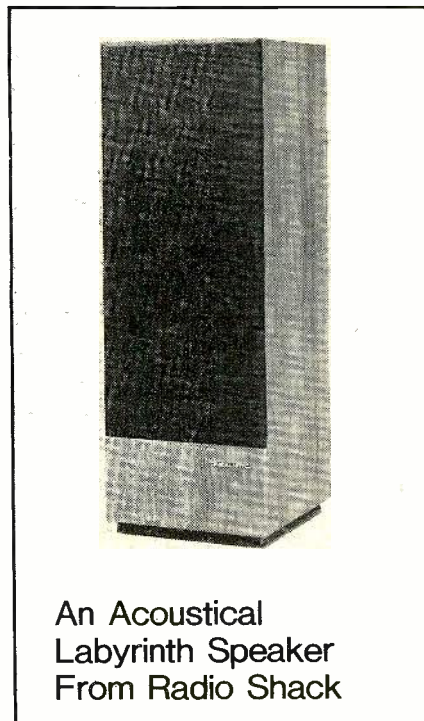


Optonica Tuner
Offers Multiple
Tuning Modes

□ The Optonica ST-9405 digitally synthesized AM/FM stereo tuner offers several alternative tuning methods. A sweep mode indicates station location with LEDs along a horizontal scale. A zone-scan system allows selection of a 1-MHz (FM) or 50-kHz (AM) zone, displays the number of stations in that zone, and automatically tunes to the lowest-frequency station in the zone. An auto-search mode scans the entire broadcast band at a selected speed and stops at

each station. Finally, direct frequency-entry tuning is possible. The frequencies of ten selected stations are maintained in the tuner's memory circuits even if the power is removed. Bandwidth of the i.f. section is adjustable, and there is a high-frequency blend switch to reduce noise in stereo broadcasts. FM sensitivity is 1.7 microvolts, and total harmonic distortion is 0.2 per cent in stereo in the wide i.f. mode and 0.3 per cent in the normal i.f. mode. Frequency response in FM is 30 to 15,000 Hz, ± 1.5 dB. Dimensions are 3 x 17 x 15½ inches. Price: \$1,000.

Circle 129 on reader service card



An Acoustical
Labyrinth Speaker
From Radio Shack

□ Radio Shack's Realistic Optimus T-70 speaker system uses an acoustically tuned labyrinth enclosure which is said to reinforce bass response and to provide high efficiency. The speaker uses an 8-inch long-throw woofer and a high-efficiency soft-dome tweeter with a crossover frequency of 2,000 Hz. Frequency response is given as 55 to 20,000 Hz ± 8 dB. The unit will accept up to 75 watts of continuous power and will produce a 90-dB sound-pressure level at 1 meter with a 1-watt input. To assure continuity of grain pattern and color, the cabinet has a mitre-folded walnut veneer machined from a single panel. The floor-standing speaker measures 29¼ x 10¼ x 10⅞ inches. Price: \$129.95.

Circle 130 on reader service card

(Continued on page 22)

Speaker for higher.



Unique qualifications.

For example, a tweeter mounted directly in the grille.

It's the Jensen 6½" Coax II car stereo speaker. And by putting the 2" tweeter where it is, we've improved the high frequency dispersion. And slimmed down the speaker.

Experienced treble-shooter . . . for better dispersion.

High frequencies can be tricky . . . they usually just want to travel straight forward. But the up-front position of this direct radiating tweeter helps disperse those highs throughout the whole car.

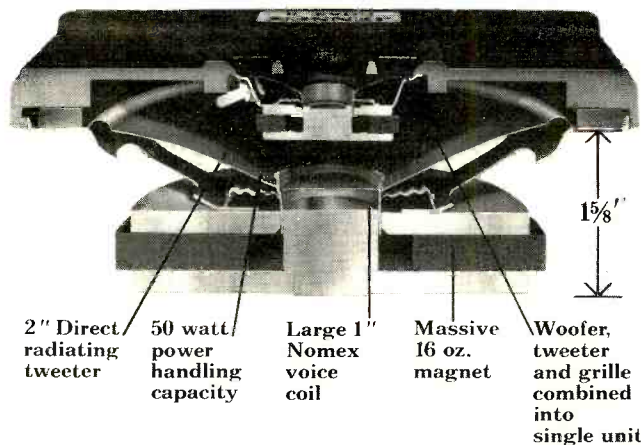
So whether you install these speakers low in your front doors or back in the rear deck, you can be sure you're going to hear all of the treble this unique speaker has to offer.

Beefed up music.

That's what you'll get from the 6½" Coax II. Music with plenty of meat on its

bones. Music with a frequency response that stretches from 50 Hz to 40,000 Hz.

Not only from the tweeter in the grille. But also from the 6" woofer behind it. This woofer's hefty 16 oz. magnet and large 1" Nomex® voice



coil serve up a second helping of full, balanced bass. While a responsive rim suspension and meticulous cone design give this speaker extra sensitivity.

This highly efficient, 4 ohm Coax II will handle up to **50 watts** of continuous power. And make the very most of it.

A slimmed down speaker.

No extra fat on this speaker . . . it's only 1½" deep and it fits your current 5¼" cutout. So it will fit in more car doors, more rear decks, and more tight spaces than ever before.

The Jensen 6½" Coax II is also easier to install, thanks to its new uni-body construction. The grille is permanently affixed to the speaker unit. Which not only makes installation easier, but also means a sturdier speaker with less vibration.

Excellent references.

Give a listen to the new Jensen 6½" Coax II's. The speakers with the grille-mounted tweeters.

We think you'll agree that they're just the right speakers to fill the position in your car.

JENSEN
SOUND LABORATORIES
AN ESMARK COMPANY

CIRCLE NO. 25 ON READER SERVICE CARD

FREE

details... A DIFFERENT KIND OF RECORD CLUB

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

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

Look at these benefits:

TREMENDOUS SAVINGS

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

DISCOUNTS OF 43% TO 73% off mfg. suggested list... special catalog features hundreds of titles and artists.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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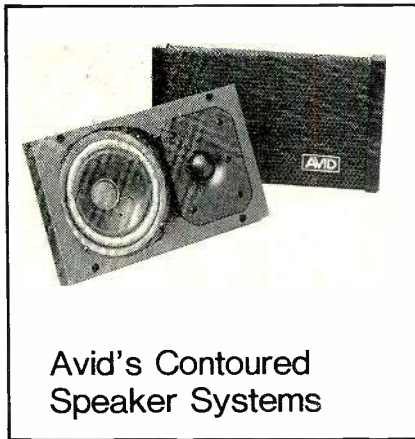
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CIRCLE NO. 14 ON READER SERVICE CARD

New Autosound Products

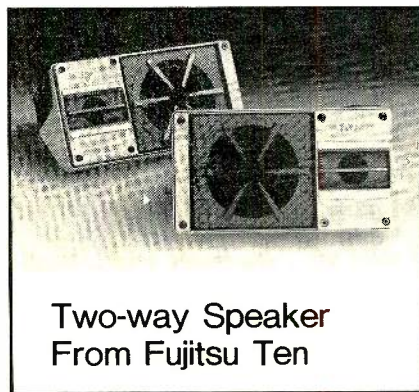
latest audio equipment and accessories



Avid's Contoured Speaker Systems

□ Next to the top of Avid's new line of car speakers is the Model 5 two-way system intended for either surface or subsurface mounting. Employing a 4½-inch woofer crossing over at 5,500 Hz to a 1-inch soft-dome tweeter, the Model 5 is said to have a midrange response specially contoured for car listening. It can handle up to 75 watts continuous program material, and nominal impedance is 4 ohms. Sensitivity is 1 watt for a 95-dB sound-pressure level at 1 meter, and frequency response is 60 to 20,000 Hz ± 5 dB. Measuring 9¾ x 1 x 5¾ inches, the Model 5 is supplied in pairs. Price: \$175.

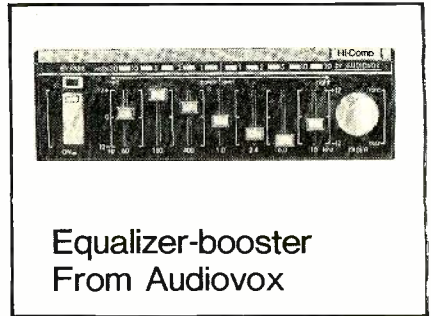
Circle 131 on reader service card



Two-way Speaker From Fujitsu Ten

□ The Model SSB-4B37 is a new two-way car speaker system from Fujitsu Ten. With a maximum power-handling capacity of 40 watts, the system utilizes a 4-inch woofer with an 8-ounce magnet and a 1-inch high-frequency driver having a magnet weight of 3½ ounces. Frequency response is 70 to 22,000 Hz, with a sensitivity of 1 watt for an 87-dB sound-pressure level at 1 meter. Nominal impedance is 4 ohms. The system drivers are hermetically sealed in a rectangular die-cast-aluminum enclosure measuring approximately 9½ x 5½ x 6⅞ inches. Price: \$149.95 per pair.

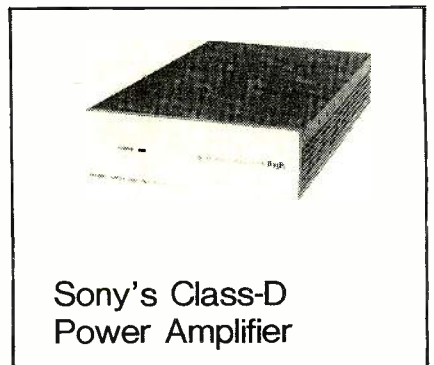
Circle 132 on reader service card



Equalizer-booster From Audiovox

□ Announced by Audiovox as part of their Hi-Comp series of car-stereo components is the new HCE-707 equalizer-booster. A seven-slide graphic equalizer provides a 12-dB boost or cut at 60, 150, 400, 1,000, 2,400, 6,000, and 15,000 Hz. The booster section is rated at 30 watts per channel. The HCE-707 includes bypass switching, a fader control for adjusting front/rear volume levels, and LED power-level indicators. Price: \$124.

Circle 133 on reader service card



Sony's Class-D Power Amplifier

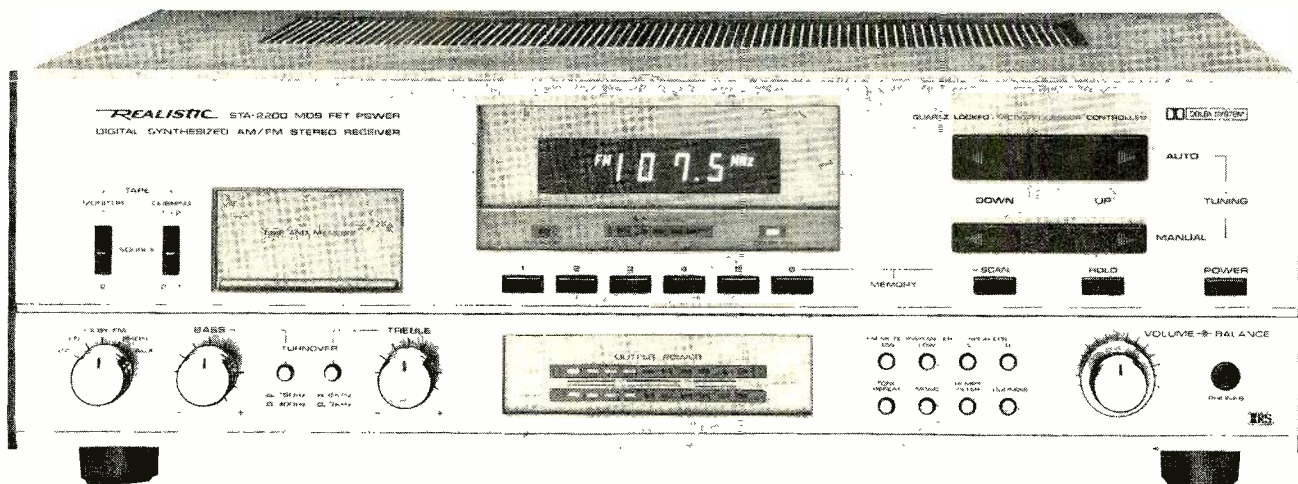
□ Sony's XM-1 car-stereo power amplifier employs pulsewidth-modulation (class-D) circuitry for high efficiency. With a current draw of 8 amperes from the car battery, the unit can produce 70 watts (continuous) per channel into 4-ohm speaker loads. Total harmonic distortion at a 40-watt output is 0.8 per cent. Frequency response is 20 to 25,000 Hz, +0, -3 dB into 4 ohms at 1 watt; signal-to-noise ratio is 100 dB. The XM-1 measures 5⅞ x 1¾ x 10¼ inches and weighs just under 4¼ pounds. Price: \$229.95.

Circle 134 on reader service card

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

Domestic inflation and fluctuations in the value of the dollar overseas affect the price of merchandise imported into this country. Please be aware that prices quoted in this issue are subject to change.

“The Realistic® STA-2200 is a highly advanced stereo receiver which sounds every bit as good as its specifications and our measurements suggest... an impressive value for the money.”*



Computerized All-Digital Tuner

Breakthrough is a word Realistic seldom uses, but nothing else describes the STA-2200. And the critics agree. The heart of the tuner is the quartz-locked, microprocessor circuitry that ends mechanical tuning problems.

Radio Electronics magazine puts it this way: *“On the whole, the receiver embodies a great many design features, most of them concerned with the ease of use and convenience of accurate tuning.”*† Bright fluorescent digits display each station’s frequency with absolute accuracy, and computer-type tuning automatically scans up or down the FM and AM bands. You can store any six FM and any six AM stations in the microprocessor for instant touch-button recall.

Radio Electronics also says: *“The STA-2200 is a joy to use.”*† For example, you can command the receiver to sample each station in the memory, then touch-select the one you want. There’s also Dolby® FM Noise Reduction, LED signal level indicators, and the display doubles as a quartz clock.

Stereo Review summed up the STA-2200’s tuner by saying it *“worked to perfection.”** And Radio Electronics said *“... because of its clever design and pleasing layout, we have assigned a VERY GOOD R.E.A.L. rating to the STA-2200.”*†

Advanced MOSFET Amplifier

The STA-2200 uses a new breed of power transistors called MOSFETs. Their ultrahigh-speed operation brings you stunningly accurate sound reproduction through superior linearity, superior slew rate and inaudible TIM.

Radio Electronics says *“The unit seems quite conservatively rated in terms of power output, as well as rated distortion, delivering a clean 72 watts per channel at mid-frequencies and just under 70 watts per channel at the 20 Hz and 20 kHz frequency extremes for its rated total harmonic distortion of 0.02%.”*† You can monitor the output with the 10-step, dual range output LED power indicators.

Stereo Review reports *“There are no signs of skimping in any area of its design or construction.”** The amplifier features go on and on. We’ve included 11-step bass and treble controls with turnovers for controlling ranges below 150 Hz and above 6 kHz, tone defeat, monitor and dubbing controls, Hi-MPX filter. And more!

Says Stereo Review: *“With the STA-2200, Radio Shack has made it perfectly clear that the technical sophistication responsible for the overwhelming success of the TRS-80™ computer system has been applied very effectively to their high fidelity products.”**

We couldn’t have said it better. Thanks, guys!

Radio Shack®
The Nationwide Supermarket of Sound

* Quoted by permission from Hirsch-Houck Test Labs Report, Feb., 1980, Stereo Review. (Copyright Ziff Davis Publishing, all rights reserved)

† R.E.A.L. Sound Audio Lab Report by Len Feldman, Jan., 1980, Radio-Electronics, Gernsback Publications Inc., all rights reserved.

The STA-2200 is \$99.95, at participating stores and dealers, price may vary. Dolby® is a trademark of Dolby Laboratories.

**WHAT'S
HAPPENING
ON THIS PAGE
SHOULDN'T
HAPPEN
ON YOUR
RECORDING
TAPE.**

IT'S WORTH IT.

© 1970. All rights reserved. Mastered and printed in the U.S.A.

It's called print-through.
And if you think it interferes with your reading, you should hear what it does to your listening.

It happens on tape that has low magnetic stability. Music on one layer of the tape is transferred to music on an adjacent layer, causing an echo.

At Maxell, we've designed our tape for superior magnetic stability. So what's happening to the opposite page won't happen to your music.

You see, we believe you should only hear the music you want to hear.
Nothing less, and nothing more.



IT'S WORTH IT.

Maxell Corporation of America, 60 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, N.J. 07074.

CIRCLE NO. 32 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Interface:C

Series II It sounds like music.

Interface:C Series II is the fulfillment of our six-year association with optimally vented speakers based on the theories of A.N. Thiele—speaker designs first introduced by Electro-Voice in 1973. The Interface:C offers you a unique combination of high efficiency and high power capacity—the only way to accurately reproduce the 120+ dB peak sound pressure levels found in some types of live music.

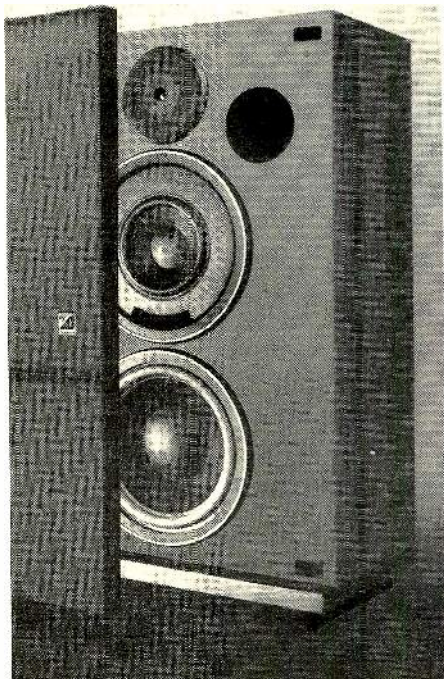
The SuperDome™ tweeter, an E-V exclusive, and the VMR™ vented midrange driver, the first to apply optimally vented design to mid frequencies, ensure your music is reproduced without the coloration normally found in other high-efficiency drivers. An honest 30 Hz low end totally eliminates the need for expensive subwoofer assemblies.

When you spend \$1,000 for a speaker system, get your money's worth. Audition the Interface:C Series II at your nearest Interface dealer. If you want a speaker that sounds like music, the Interface:C Series II is the one you'll buy.



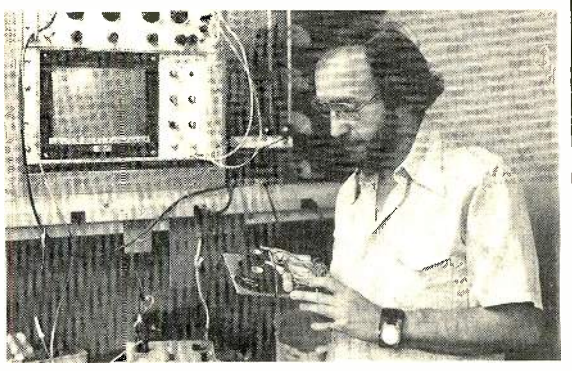
Electro-Voice
a gulton company

600 Cecil Street, Buchanan, Michigan 49107



Audio Q. and A.

By Larry Klein



TV-FM Coupling

Q. *I have installed a small color TV set in the same cabinet that houses my hi-fi system and would like to use the same antenna to feed both my FM tuner and my TV. I have been told (1) that there is no problem in doing this and (2) that there is a severe loss of signal with a two-set coupler. What do you say?*

AL PARNELL
Laredo, Tex.

A. There is *no* problem if the coupler used is adequately designed. I recently made the mistake of buying an under-\$3 house-brand coupler from an "electronic supermarket" chain. When I hooked it in, my FM signal strength fell to a fraction of its former level. I opened up the coupler to see what the problem might be—and found it to be inherent in the design. Inside the coupler was a network of resistors which might work well in preserving the 300-ohm match between the antenna, FM tuner, and TV set, but at the cost of a considerable signal loss. When I substituted a Winegard CC-33 "color-coupler," which employs more complex inductive coupling, only a barely detectable loss of signal strength showed up on the tuner's meter and everything worked fine. The most annoying part of my misadventures with two-set coupling is that the very effective Winegard coupler has a list price of about \$3.25, only about \$1 more than the virtually useless resistor type. *Caveat emptor!*

Amplifier Power / Load

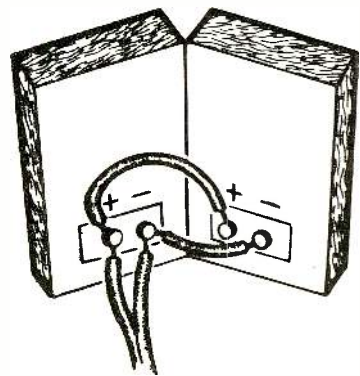
Q. *I have been told that I could change the impedance presented to my amp by installing a resistor across each of the speaker-output terminals in parallel with the speaker wire. Will 8-ohm resistors across my 8-ohm speakers provide 4 ohms to each channel of my amplifier and thus make it more powerful?*

FRED ROSETTA
Chapel Hill, N.C.

A. Yes, 8-ohm resistors connected across 8-ohm speakers will provide nominal 4-ohm impedance loads to the amplifier.

And yes, 4-ohm loads for most amplifiers will produce some increase in the maximum power available at a given distortion level. However, since the resistors will also absorb half the power output of the amplifier, the net result will be *less* power available to your speakers than before you started fooling around.

A practical way to achieve what I think you are trying to do is to buy another set of speakers of the same model you now use and connect them in parallel with your present speakers as shown in the accompanying sketch. It's important that the pluses (+) and commons (−) of each new speaker be connected to the equivalent terminal on the older speaker units. And if you wire each additional speaker side by side with the original right- or left-channel unit as shown, you'll achieve a greater power-



handling capacity and more bass. (The bass won't go *lower* in frequency, but there will be more of it because of coupling between the systems.)

The improved power handling will enable you to play your speakers louder—or add equalization—without excessive distortion. You might also achieve enhanced high-frequency dispersion if you set up each pair of speakers slightly canted away from each other as shown. However, if you have 4-ohm speakers or if their nominal 8-ohm rating falls much lower at certain frequencies, your amplifier may not be able to take the resulting lower-than-4-ohm load. Incidentally, the reason for using the same model

for your new speaker pair is to ensure that the impedance curves of the two systems match so the amplifier power is divided between them equally at all frequencies.

Warped Discs

Q. *I am finding, to my great consternation, that some of my older records are warped in the outer 1/4 inch or more. The warp is bad enough that the stylus (with less than 1 gram of tracking force) simply jumps out of the groove while going over the hump on each revolution. My records are stored in the usual vertical rows. What could be the cause of it? What could I do to straighten them out or at least restore them to playable condition?*

YONG J. KIM
Thousand Oaks, Calif.

A. As far as the cause of your problem is concerned, look for anything that could result in uneven heating of your stored discs. For example, are your record cabinets near a radiator or a wall with a chimney or steam pipe running through it? Does strong sunlight pass across your record cabinet at certain times of the day? And sometimes, even with normal storage, molded-in stresses that originate during pressing will be released, causing warps.

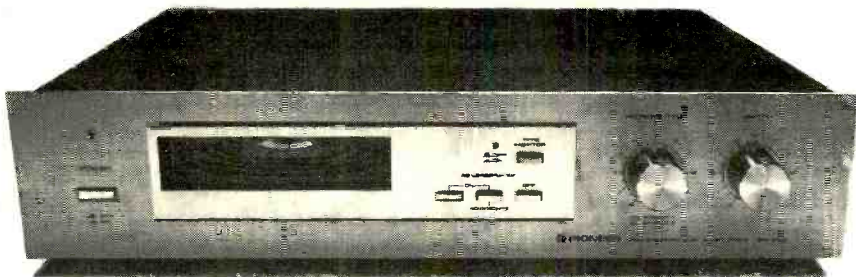
As far as dewarping is concerned, the old-standby technique is to clean the disc carefully and sandwich it between two 13 x 13-inch sheets of clean, heavy plate glass. The sandwich should be heated to about 135 degrees Fahrenheit for about 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and allow the sandwich to cool for 24 hours while being pressed under a set of heavy books, weights, or whatever. An electric heat lamp is the preferred source of the required 135 degrees, although a warm stovetop or bright sunlight will also work. I'm told that two or three tries may be necessary in order to get the heating correct and even.

The mistracking or groove skipping produced by warping occurs because the total mass of the tone arm plus cartridge body is such that the arm is literally *thrown* out of the groove through inertia by the undulating record surface. A lighter arm/cartridge combination or one with some kind of a "shock-absorbing" damper is much less subject to warp effects. In addition, if the arm/cartridge mass interacts with the stylus compliance to resonate mechanically in the 4- to 10-Hz area (statistically the frequencies at which most record warps occur), warp sensitivity will be worsened.

It's likely that your discs may be playable, warps and all, if the proper equipment is employed. The built-in damper brushes in the new series of Shure cartridges do very well in assisting tracking of warped records. Other aids to warp tracking are the add-on DiscTracker, the lightweight cartridges from Ortofon and Micro Acoustics, and the ULM low-mass tone arms on Dual record players. Many of the radial-tracking players should also do well on warped discs, assuming that their arms are low-mass as a result of their short length. And, lastly, your records, warped or unwarped, would probably be happier being tracked at a gram or *more* rather than *less*.

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Even the world's finest stereo equipment can't reproduce the realism of a live concert, unless your living room happens to be built like Carnegie Hall. But when you add Pioneer's SR-303 Reverberation Amplifier to your existing hi-fi system, you can bring that same sense of spaciousness back to your music. And you can bring it back without any "echo howling" and other distortions, thanks to our newly developed Bucket Brigade Device. Unlike similar units, the SR-303 won't cost more than your entire system. It'll just sound like it did.



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Are your records really clean? vac rec, the sure way.

There are plenty of record cleaning products around, but none of them can match the Vac-O-Rec system. Vac-O-Rec rotates the record past a metalized mylar brush which discharges static electricity. This in turn loosens the dust. Then, separate super soft mohair brushes gently reach into the grooves to loosen and effectively remove micro dust. Finally, all dust and dirt is vacuum cleaned away.

The result — a really clean record free of dirt and surface noise. Vac-O-Rec is UL and CSA listed. Don't put up with noise, or risk damage to your priceless records. See Robins Vac-O-Rec at your dealer. Manufactured in U.S.A. by Robins Industries Corp., Commack, N.Y. 11725.



CIRCLE NO. 47 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Audio Basics

By Robert Greene



AUDIO EDUCATION

READERS frequently ask us how they might go about becoming recording engineers, but it is not always perfectly clear from their letters just what kind of picture of the profession is in their minds. For some young people, a job as a recording engineer may be a realistic professional goal; for others it may represent only the living out of a power fantasy of sitting behind a glass window at an enormous mixing console, creating a new hit for the Eagles or Fleetwood Mac. But a career as a recording engineer involves the investment of a good deal of time, money, and effort, and it is rather more of a nuts-and-bolts affair than an opportunity to keep company with the rich and the famous.

Unfortunately, one can't (yet) go to college for a degree specifically in recording engineering, as one can, say, in mechanical or electrical engineering. There is an increasing number of institutions, however, that do provide appropriate training. A logical first step is to get as much information as possible on the many various facets of engineering in the audio field (not everyone will be a knob-twirler) and on where specialized training is available. The Audio Engineering Society (60 East 42nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10017) has a committee specifically devoted to this, and among the materials they have put together is a geographical listing of colleges and other institutions that offer even a few audio courses. They also have booklets describing the different areas of audio engineering and the hiring practices in the industry. Write to them and they will send you, without charge, their complete packet of information on audio education.

THERE are also two schools that do specialize in recording engineering. One is the Institute of Audio Research (64 University Place, New York, N.Y. 10003). It has its own classroom facilities, control room, disc-cutting room, and testing/maintenance shop. The curriculum is extensive, with courses offered on all levels. The Recording Institute of America (15 Columbus Circle, New York, N.Y. 10023) works mainly through affiliated recording studios in forty-one cities throughout the U.S. and Cana-

da where the studio personnel serve as instructors. Its basic offering is a ten-week once-over-lightly program in multitrack skills and tape-recording theory. It could be considered as not only basic audio training but also a way of learning, with a relatively small investment of time, what the field is about and whether it's for you. Both schools will send you full information on request at no charge.

Both of these schools teach the basic mechanics, but they can give you only the training, not the talent. And even both of these together won't provide an automatic pass into a top job. Remember that no school can *guarantee* employment—particularly in a field as competitive as that of recording.

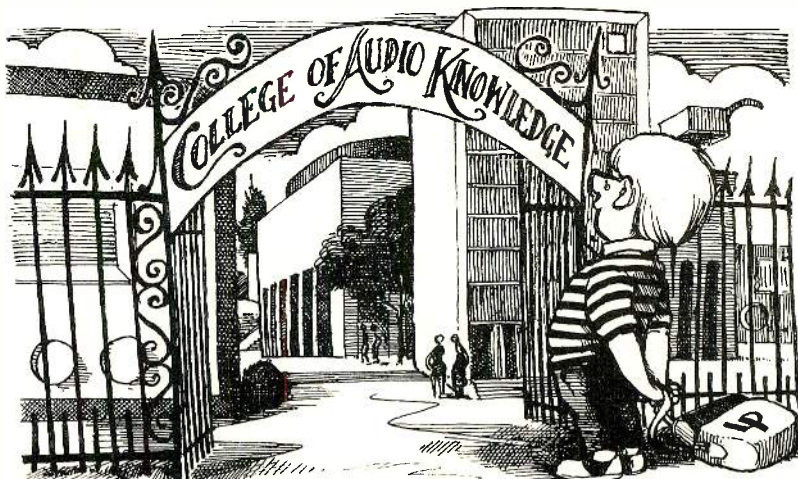
For every pair of hands operating a recording console, however, there are many others performing equally satisfying if less celebrated functions. And not everyone in the field of audio is involved in recording; there are also the people who handle sound reinforcement in churches and at rock concerts, for instance. Then there's the design engineer, the product-merchandising specialist who tells that engineer what features and specs are salable, and on through a variety of sales and advertising levels. And if

you happen to be talented with tools, don't forget about *servicing* all that equipment. As products become progressively more complicated, good service people are in increasingly short supply and can command surprisingly high salaries.

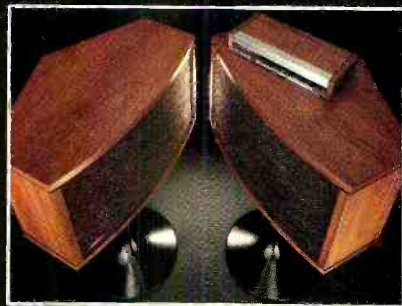
Someone who is interested simply in learning more about audio as a hobby, rather than in pursuit of a profession, has limited opportunity, unfortunately, for any form of organized education. Short audio courses given by local audio dealers, schools, or clubs can do the job nicely, but they're rare. If this is your interest, perhaps you could persuade a local retailer to initiate a short, simple audio course on a trial basis. It might result in greater sales for him, and it certainly should produce good will. This presupposes, of course, the availability of someone qualified to teach such a basic course. An experienced salesman or even a long-time hobbyist ought to be able to handle it.

Then there's the Society of Audio Consultants (P.O. Box 552, Beverly Hills, Calif. 90213), which offers a ten-lesson correspondence course for \$75. Each of the lessons explains a particular aspect of hi-fi equipment. This is not aimed primarily at consumers but rather audio sales people. The Society also has a course for \$200 that includes about two hours of videotaped material. Consumer Associate Memberships are offered to the general public; details are available on request.

FOR anything beyond the basic consumer level, some electronics know-how is helpful. One way to acquire a modest grasp of electronics is to read up on it (I'll be tackling the subject of appropriate introductory books in a future column). For something more thorough, I suggest a course at a technical school. Many people don't have such schools in their immediate vicinity, but there are many correspondence schools with courses in electronics, equipment servicing, computers, etc. For a free directory of accredited home-study schools, write to the National Home Study Council, 1601 18th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009. The same organization also offers a 136-page paperback entitled *There's a School in Your Mailbox* (\$3.50 plus 50¢ postage and handling) a consumer's guide to home studies in general. □



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BOSE
Better sound through research.

By Craig Stark



Contributing Editor Stark examines a Memorex tape-testing setup.

Tape Technicales

Q. I've recently read ads for "quartz-locked PLL servo-controlled direct-drive capstan" tape recorders. I didn't know what all that gobbledegook meant when they were talking about turntables, and now it's come to recorders. Can you please supply a translation?

ADAM NESSLER
Chevy Chase, Md.

A. Since I am myself probably sometimes guilty of the same kind of ad-talk technicales you complain of, let me try to discharge some of my guilt by attempting an explanation.

Working backwards in your description, virtually every tape recorder has a rotating shaft, called a *capstan*, which pulls the tape forward by pressing it against a rubber "pinch-roller." The tape moves forward because it is caught in the middle and "wrung out" like a shirt in an old-fashioned laundry wringer.

What drives the capstan? A motor, obviously, whose rotation is transmitted to the capstan either (a) directly, when the capstan shaft is an extension of the shaft of a relatively show-running motor (this is "direct drive"), (b) by a belt-and-flywheel combination, or (c) by a system of rubber-rimmed drive wheels. In these last two examples, the motor turns at a different rate from the capstan.

Regardless of how the capstan is driven, the motor speed must be stabilized against variations in the load, the line voltage, or the line frequency. Some method of speed regulation is needed, and this is where *servo-controlled* comes in.

In a servo-controlled capstan drive, the rotating capstan generates a voltage or frequency that corresponds to the speed of rotation. This voltage or frequency is compared to a fixed reference voltage or frequency. The difference between the two is used to make the motor go faster or slower. When the motor-generated voltage or frequency matches the reference, the difference disappears and the motor speed is stabilized. This whole compare-to-a-reference process is called a *servo loop*.

If the servo uses frequency changes to stabilize capstan speed, and if the circuit is

designed in a particular way, you have a *phase-locked-loop* (PLL) servo system. The PLL's fixed reference frequency can be generated using a quartz-crystal oscillator (as is done in "quartz" watches), thus creating your "quartz-locked PLL servo-controlled direct-drive capstan."

Such a system reacts not only to the overall rotational speed of the capstan, but actually to minute portions of a single revolution, keeping the drive motor on exact speed. This is about as accurate a method of ensuring proper tape speed as is currently known. It is able to correct for not only long-term speed inaccuracies (which cause tapes to run consistently too long or too short) but the more important short-term inaccuracies (that is, wow and flutter) as well.

Whether this sort of ultra-precise regulatory mechanism is "worth it" is, of course, a question I can't answer. Mozart, it is reported, had not only "absolute pitch," but was able to say that a particular instrument was tuned one half a quarter tone lower than he had heard it the week before. That's the *kind* of difference you might find between a direct-drive system with all the additional regulating electronics and one that is not aided by such technological achievements.

Microprocessor Control

Q. Now that microprocessors are being used to set the bias and equalization of recorders, when can we expect to get cassette decks that will "listen" to a passage of music and then automatically choose an appropriate recording level?

RICHARD WIGGINS
Lansing, Mich.

A. As I'm sure you're aware, there have been various kinds of "automatic level-setting" circuits available in tape recorders for years, even before the increasingly widespread utilization of microprocessor chips. A "switchable limiter" feature on a deck, for example, holds the maximum record level to a given point, and an "ALC" or "AGC" automatically raises the level (or "gain") of soft signals to some minimum value and lowers that of loud signals to a set

maximum. Such circuits, however, modify the dynamic range of the signal, and so they have been considered unsuitable for high-accuracy music recording—although they might be an advantage for car-stereo playback to help circumvent the effects of the masking of low-level signals by road noise.

Your suggestion, however, would seem to go a step beyond these familiar circuits. Why not a microprocessor circuit that is programmed to determine the peak signal level that is not exceeded, say, more than 1 per cent of the time over a predetermined period (user-selectable?) and which would then set the record level for "0 dB" accordingly? I see nothing intrinsically impossible about this, and I'd love to hear from any manufacturers who have such an idea in the works.

Phono/Tuner Levels

Q. When I tape from FM I never have to increase the preamp and cassette gain controls past their 12 o'clock settings, but when I dub from phono I find I have to turn the cassette control well into the second half of its rotation. Is this normal?

RAMON E. VILLAFANE
Astoria, N.Y.

A. My guess is that you have nothing to worry about. It is not unusual for the output level of separate components to differ reasonably widely. Indeed, the only purpose of putting a volume or output-level control on an FM tuner (and not all manufacturers do) is to allow you to *match* its level to that of other music sources in your system.

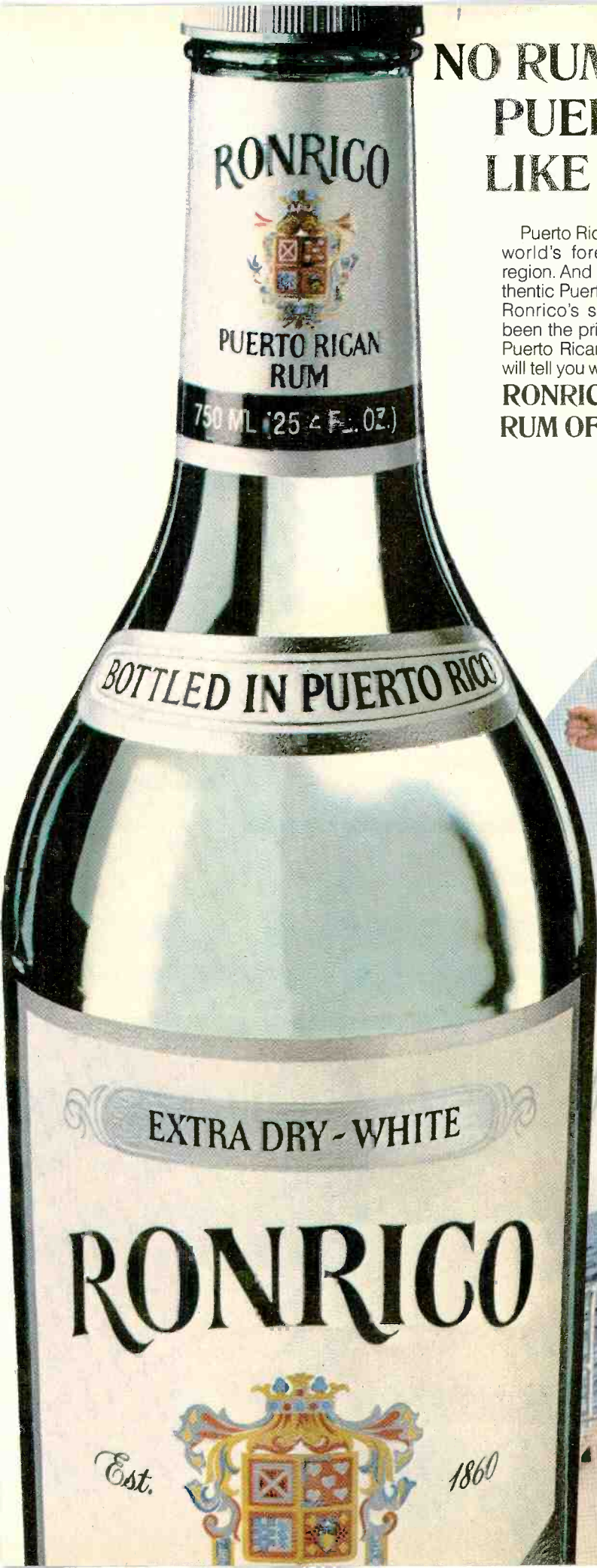
Your question does contain one confusion, however, and clearing it up will show you how to check the matter out definitely. You suggest that the setting of your preamp's volume control affects the signal level that is being fed to your cassette deck. It doesn't. The signal at the "tape-out" jacks of your preamp—whether you are using FM or phono as a source—should be unaffected by the setting of the preamp volume control, whose *only* function should be that of varying the loudness you hear from your speakers. Put on a disc, therefore, and simply switch between "phono" and "tuner" positions without recording anything and without changing your *preamp's* volume control. If the tuner sounds softer or louder on most stations, adjust *its* level control until phono and tuner levels are roughly the same. If you can achieve a loudness-level match at the speakers, you'll automatically have a signal-level match at the "tape-out" jacks. If you can't get a matching level at the speakers with the preamp's volume control unchanged, there will always be an inherent difference in level at your "tape-out" jacks, but that shouldn't bother you since you'll find large differences in peak level from one *program* to another anyway.

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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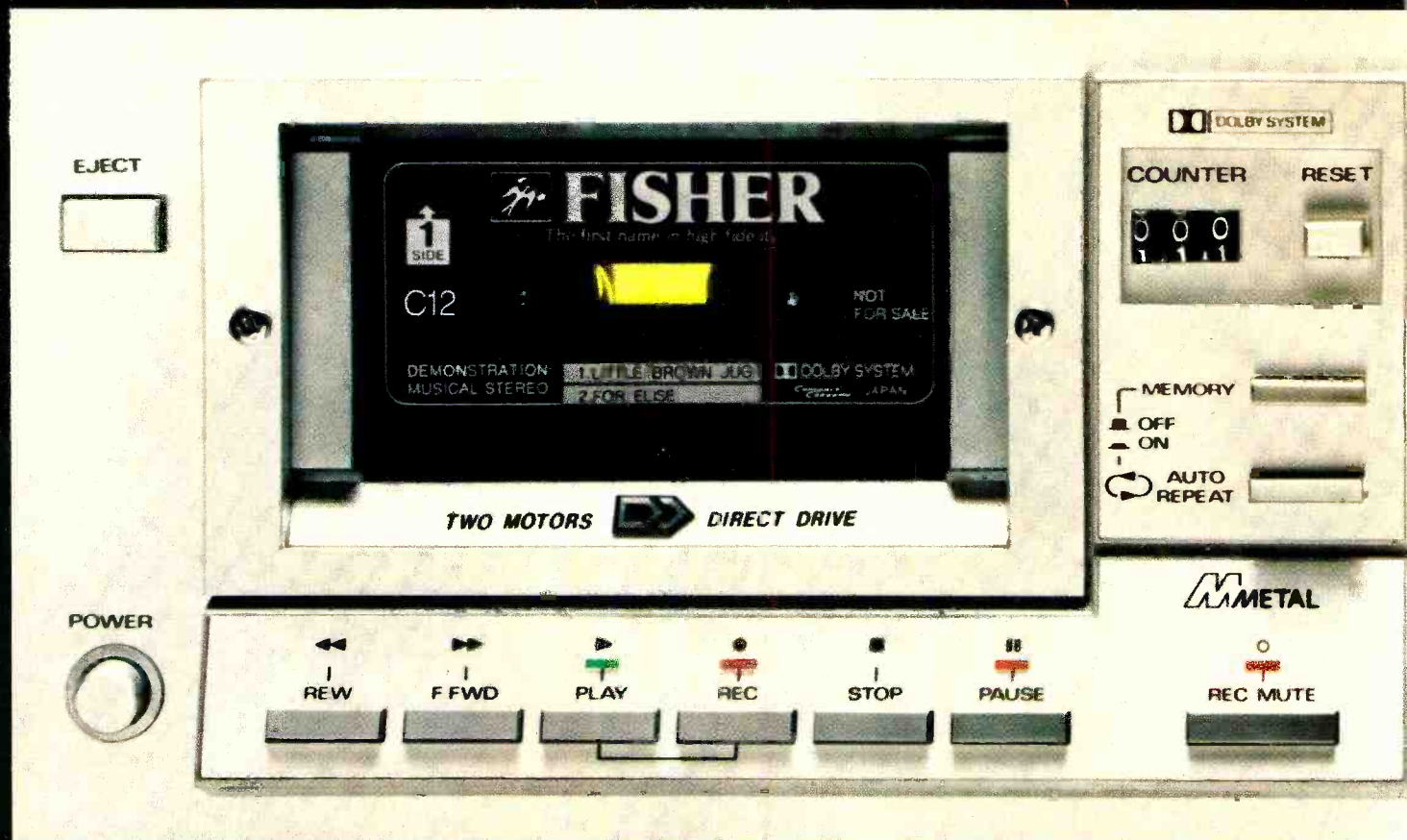
Puerto Rico is the Rum Island, the world's foremost rum-producing region. And Ronrico is *the* rum—authentic Puerto Rican rum since 1860. Ronrico's smooth, light taste has been the pride of six generations of Puerto Rican rum masters. One sip will tell you why.

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The new



Direct Drive and solenoid controls in a new cassette deck.

Here is the very latest cassette deck technology. The new Fisher DD300 Cassette Deck has direct drive tape transport for lasting, unvarying performance, feather-touch solenoid electronic controls for superior operation and metal tape compatibility for the ultimate in frequency response. There's an incredible amount of advanced engineering packed into this new Fisher cassette deck.

Direct Drive tape transport.

The rugged capstan on the DD300 is directly driven by a high-torque 18-pole brushless, coreless DC flywheel motor, optimized for the critical record and play transport functions. It glides silently at a steady 360 RPM. And, it eliminates the problems of conventional high speed DC brush motors and drive belts. Wow and flutter are down to an amazingly low 0.04%. A separate motor is provided for fast forward and rewind. No compromise.

Feather touch electronic controls. Goodbye to the old "clunk-clunk" of

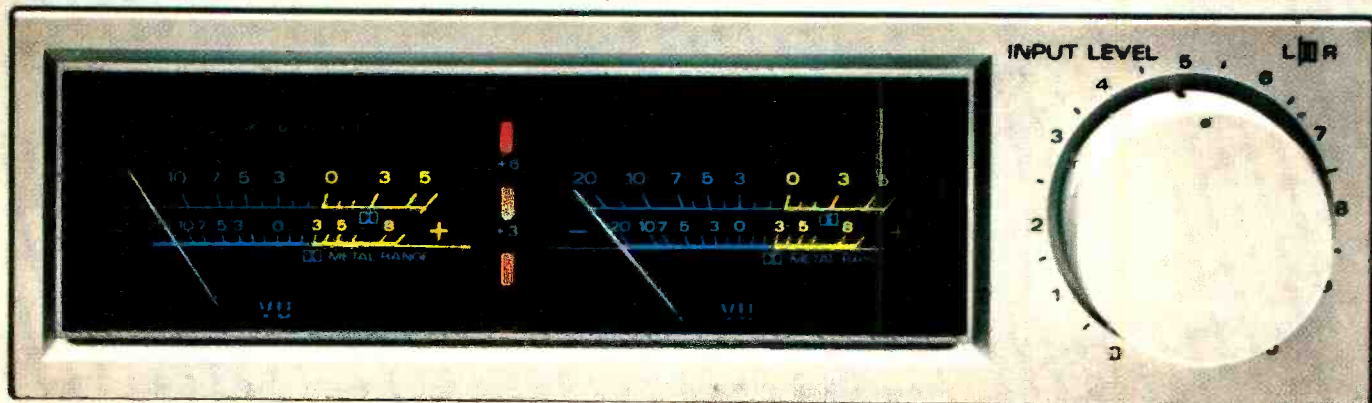
manual controls. A feather-light fingertip touch sets the DD300 in motion. An IC logic circuit actuates the solenoid transport function for instant, silent, positive action. LED's light up to continuously display what functions are in operation.

Metal tape compatibility. If you want to try the new metal particle tape you've been hearing so much about, the DD300 is ready. Get set for an astonishing improvement in signal-to-noise, dynamic range and a frequency response of 30Hz-18kHz \pm 3dB. Get set, too, to make recordings that rival studio-produced tapes.

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Studio-Standard BY  **FISHER**

DD-300



OUTPUT LEVEL

TIMER STAND-BY

DOLBY NR

TAPE SELECT

INPUT SELECT

MIC



REC OFF PLAY

MPX
ON OFF
ON OFF

NORMAL FeCr
METAL CrO₂ EQUAL

LINE MIC

LEFT MONO

PHONES



RIGHT

Drive coils provide pulsating magnetic field to propel flywheel.

18-pole permanent ring magnet is bonded to back of flywheel.

Separate motor operates fast forward and rewind functions.

Sensing coil between driving coils and flywheel magnet continuously monitors speed in DC servo circuit.

Dynamically-balanced flywheel weighs over 1/2 lb., helps maintain speed accuracy, low wow and flutter.

Capstan shaft is directly connected to, and is part of the flywheel. There are no belts, no pulleys.

Instant, silent, positive tape transport functions are operated by solenoids.

It's what you'd expect from the new Fisher. We don't have the space to list all the other features of the new Fisher DD300. Features that are indicative of the high technology of the new Fisher. We invented high fidelity over 40 years ago. And we've never stopped innovating. If you're ready for the latest cassette deck technology, see the new DD300 at your Fisher dealer.

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The first name in high fidelity.®

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The facts are stacked for Sony's metalists.

Metal's mellow. Metal sings. Metal soars in frequency response and rockets the dynamic range upwards.

The new metal tapes are a multi-decibel boost to serious ears. But it takes a very special cassette deck to give you this higher-fi.

Two special "metalists" from Sony: The new TC-K65 and the new TC-K55II.

Head Facts

Sony's new Sendust & Ferrite heads in our new decks are uniquely composed of ideal electro-magnetic properties to give you maximum performance with any tape. Regular-fi, chrome, FeCr or metal.

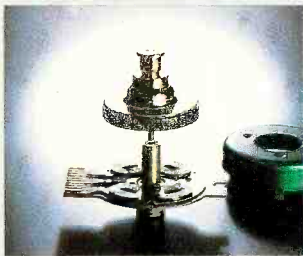
Sendust, Ferrite and a head gap spacer of extremely hard quartz are engineered together for a mirror-like surface, long head life, sharp gap edges and no asymmetrical wear.



Two-Motor Facts

A linear-torque BSL (Brushless & Slotless) motor precisely maintains the all-important capstan speed. And an FG Servo-controlled motor drives the supply and take-up reels.

The BSL motor, in a major design breakthrough, has no slots to cause uneven torque distribution.



Microcomputer Facts

Sony's new microcomputer logic control lets you speed through any operation sequence by merely pressing the appropriate feather-touch bar.

This digital technology in each of our



decks even allows you to record at any moment during playback.

Other Facts

Other distinguished features: The TC-K65 has a Random Music Sensor (RMS) that lets you preprogram any desired selections in any desired order.

A computer-like display signals your selections in bright LED lights. Clearly revolutionary LED Peak

Meters display recording and playback levels with sixteen digits per channel. These new meters "hold" peak levels and respond instantly for truer recording.

The TC-K55II utilizes two large VU meters, and a five-element LED display indicates peak levels for more accurate recording.

The new Sony TC-K65 and the new Sony TC-K55II. The facts are in.



TC-K65

TC-K55II

SONY®

Technical Talk

By Julian D. Hirsch



• IHF Amplifier Measurements •

THE current Institute of High Fidelity *Standard Methods of Measurement for Audio Amplifiers* (IHF-A-202, 1978) has been in effect for nearly two years, but, as expected, it has been adopted only slowly and partially by most component manufacturers. Since our product reviews began to use the new tests defined by this standard almost immediately, there may still be some discrepancies between our numerical test results and the published specifications of many hi-fi amplifiers.

Some of these, like the use of 1 watt as the reference power level for sensitivity and signal-to-noise measurements, are not a problem since a simple numerical conversion can transform our figures to those of a manufacturer who bases his specifications on an amplifier's full rated power output (or vice versa). A couple of the tests in the current standard are new, however, and their significance may not be appreciated.

Most amplifier measurements in the new standard are based on the manufacturer's chosen "full-power" rating for the amplifier. If it is rated at 100 watts, we use that as the full-power level for determining many of its distortion characteristics. Good practice requires that a product be able to *surpass* its minimum ratings in order to allow for component tolerances. Thus, any amplifier should be able to deliver somewhat more power than its rated maximum output.

How much of a "safety margin" to allow is a decision made by each manufacturer. Since his advertised power rating is linked by Federal Trade Commission regulations to a *frequency range* through which it applies and to a *distortion level* that must not

be exceeded, it is to the manufacturer's interest to design a product that will easily produce its rated power at a distortion level safely below the rated maximum. This means that any given sample of that amplifier will almost certainly be able to give a higher output if one is willing to accept higher distortion, and even more power if measurement is made in the midrange of frequencies (most amplifiers show a rising distortion level at very low and/or very high frequencies).

Clipping Headroom

The IHF clipping-headroom rating is a simple expression of how conservatively the manufacturer has rated his amplifier. Suppose that an amplifier is FTC-rated to deliver "100 watts per channel continuous power from 20 to 20,000 Hz into 8-ohm loads with no more than 0.05 per cent total harmonic distortion." At 1,000 Hz, it might be able to deliver 120 watts at 0.05 per cent distortion. If the drive level were to be further increased, actual output-waveform clipping might occur at 140 watts. This effect normally comes on very suddenly, so that one need merely watch the output waveform on an oscilloscope and read the output voltage at the point where the tops and bottoms of the sine wave flatten out, or "clip."

The IHF standard conditions for this test are the same as those for the continuous-power-output measurement with both channels driven simultaneously into the amplifier's rated load impedance (usually 8 ohms). To place the continuous-power and clipping-power output levels in proper perspective, the difference between them is

expressed in decibels rather than watts. In the example above, the power ratio is $140/100 = 1.4$, which is equivalent to about 1.5 dB. The use of the decibel rating makes it easy to compare amplifiers having very different power-output ratings.

To the consumer, the clipping power indicates the actual maximum continuous power-output capability of an amplifier freed from the somewhat artificial restraints imposed by market competition and the FTC advertising rules. Since it is expressed relative to the advertised power, it is nothing more or less than an indication of the conservatism of the manufacturer's specified power ratings, and the higher the clipping-headroom rating the greater the degree of that conservatism.

The level of distortion is the major distinction between the FTC power-rating condition and the amplifier's performance at a higher power just below clipping. However, there is no significant audible difference *under normal listening conditions* between 0.005, 0.05, or even 0.5 per cent distortion, and it is doubtful that anyone can distinguish between amplifiers which are alike in all respects except for the differences in their distortion at full power.

When comparing amplifiers of the same power rating, the IHF clipping-headroom figure gives a clear picture of the actual differences between the units in respect to continuous power-output capability. Most of the time the clipping headroom will be less than 1 dB, which is hardly significant. If it is much larger than that, the reader can infer that the manufacturer has chosen to understate his amplifier's true power ability, perhaps to be able to claim a lower distor-

Tested This Month

Harman Kardon hk 705 Cassette Deck • Vector VRX-9000 AM/FM Stereo Receiver
Jensen System C Speaker • Audio Control C-101 Equalizer/Analyzer
SAE Model A7 Integrated Amplifier

IHF STANDARDS

YOU can obtain a copy of IHF-A-202, 1978, *Standard Methods of Measurement for Audio Amplifiers*, by sending \$7 to the Institute of High Fidelity, c/o EIA, 2001 Eye Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. A copy of the standard for testing FM tuners (IHF-T-200, 1975, *Standard Methods of Testing Frequency Modulation Broadcast Receivers*) costs \$6.

tion rating, a higher clipping-headroom rating, or simply to be more conservative. On the other hand, a very low clipping-headroom figure may indicate that the published power rating of the amplifier is close to its actual maximum output. This does not necessarily mean there is a design weakness. The manufacturer may be deliberately cutting it fine to gain a marketing advantage over other more conservatively rated amplifiers by appearing to offer "more watts per dollar."

Dynamic Headroom

Another new rating is the IHF *dynamic headroom*. This is a successor to the much-abused "music-power" rating of a few years ago. It is based on a valid premise: that music waveforms contain high-amplitude peaks of brief duration and irregular occurrence. Most amplifier power supplies are loosely regulated, so their output voltage is high under conditions of light load (no signal or low average power output) but drops appreciably when the amplifier is made to deliver a large continuous power output. On a music waveform, such an amplifier can deliver a higher power during brief program peaks than it can on the continuous basis that is FTC mandated for its advertised power rating.

The test for dynamic headroom in the current standard requires an easily generated test signal consisting of a low-level 1,000-Hz tone which, for 20 milliseconds out of every 500 milliseconds, is increased in amplitude by 20 dB. This signal is fed to the amplifier and slowly increased while the output waveform is observed on an oscilloscope. When clipping is seen on the peaks, the voltage of that peak signal is converted to an equivalent continuous power in watts. This dynamic power is then compared to the amplifier's rated power and the result (dynamic headroom) is expressed in decibels, as is clipping headroom.

To the user of a high-fidelity amplifier the IHF dynamic-headroom rating is more significant than the clipping-headroom rating (this is recognized in the IHF standard, in which the dynamic-headroom rating is a *primary* specification, while the clipping headroom is a *secondary*—optional—rating). Dynamic headroom can help explain why some amplifiers can be played "louder" than others of the same or higher power ratings without excessive distortion.

Returning to our hypothetical 100-watt amplifier, suppose that a tone-burst signal drives the amplifier to 200 watts at the clip-

ping point. Since this is twice the amplifier's continuous rating, the IHF dynamic-headroom rating is 3 dB. Because of the nature of music waveforms, an amplifier is called upon to deliver much more power during program peaks than an average or continuous power measurement made during the playing of music would suggest. It is the clipping of those peaks that signifies amplifier overload in a real-world listening situation.

This might lead one to conclude that, given its 3-dB dynamic headroom, the amplifier we have described could be the audible equivalent of a 200-watt amplifier *despite its 100-watt rating*. In many cases, this *would* be a correct conclusion. Although it might be cheaper and lighter than a 200-watt amplifier with limited dynamic headroom (say less than 1 dB), it could play at least as loud and possibly louder without sounding distorted. Exceptions to this rule would include musical circumstances in which the amplifier is called upon to deliver high power continuously while simultaneously reproducing short-duration high-level music peaks (as in many works for organ or full orchestra).

To sum up the meaning of the dynamic- and clipping-headroom ratings to the average user, we can say that, all else being equal, amplifiers with larger dynamic- and clipping-headroom ratings are preferable to those with appreciably smaller ratings (*small* differences are not important). However, "all else" is almost never equal, and other factors may be of greater importance in any individual case. Of the two, dynamic headroom is the more important since it has the more direct relationship to the audible performance of the amplifier with real music programs.

The dynamic-headroom measurement is also very convenient for determining how much power an amplifier can deliver into very low load impedances, such as 2 ohms. Although there are no 2-ohm speakers made for home use, one encounters paralleled pairs of 4-ohm speakers, and the impedance of most speakers falls below their

rated values at some frequencies. Given all this, it is useful to know how an amplifier behaves when driving such a low-impedance load. Most amplifiers are specifically *not* rated for very-low-impedance loads and are protected against them by relays or fuses that cut off the outputs at a safe level when the load impedance falls too low. At H-H Labs we currently measure distortion versus power output into 2 ohms regardless of the amplifier's ratings.

By using the dynamic-headroom test signal, we can safely drive almost any load without damage to the amplifier and without triggering its protective system since the *average* power is very low. The output level at clipping into 2 ohms makes it very clear whether the amplifier's maximum current output is limited by protective circuits or simply by the internal impedance of the power supply or the output transistors. In the latter case we sometimes find that the amplifier can deliver huge short-term power outputs to low-impedance loads without damage or serious distortion. In our view, this is a very desirable characteristic for any high-quality amplifier to have, assuming that it will be used to amplify *music* and that its reliability and safety have not been compromised by this capability.

IN closing, we would like to comment on the discontinuation of the use of tone-burst photographs with most of our loudspeaker test reports effective immediately. We have been using tone bursts for years in hopes of finding some useful correlation between the acoustic-burst waveform and the quality of the speaker's sound. As most other testers have found, if a speaker is very good or very poor, a tone burst is not required to confirm that fact. And for the majority of systems that fall between those limits, the *interpretation* of tone-burst waveforms is so difficult that publishing a few sample waveforms does no service to the reader. We will continue to employ tone-burst testing as before, but we will generally not publish any photos unless they appear to be particularly illuminating or exceptional. □



"... We now come to the end of our service day. This oscilloscope operates on a frequency of"

tech talk:

45 Watt RMS minimum per channel into 8 ohms.
From 20 to 20,000 Hz. With no more than 0.03% THD.

explained.

The tech talk you just read is a set of amplifier specifications, or specs. Specs for the remarkable MCS® Series Model 3248 45 Watt receiver. Most people think they need an engineering degree to understand specs so they usually don't even try. That's a mistake. Specs are intended to inform and protect you. With that in mind, we'd like to end some of the confusion.

The first sentence above tells you that 45 watts are the least amount of continuous (RMS) power the amplifier portion of the 3248 will deliver to each speaker channel when hooked up to 8 ohm speakers.

The second sentence states that at least 45 watts of power will be delivered over the entire audible range of sound frequencies. From 20 to 20,000 vibrations per second (20 to 20,000 Hz).

The last sentence contains the most important information of all. It tells you that under these conditions the unwanted overtones or harmonics will not exceed three hundredths of one percent of the output signal (0.03% THD or total harmonic distortion).

Prices higher in Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico.

When you consider that THD of up to 3% is considered virtually inaudible you can understand just how remarkable the MCS Series 45 Watt receiver really is.

So come to your nearest JCPenney and see for yourself. See the LED power meters. The tape monitoring system that lets you compare what you're recording to the program source while you're recording. The tape dubbing control that lets you record from one tape deck to another, and back again, at the flick of a switch. The loudness switch that boosts bass and treble ranges when the volume is low. See all these features and much more. Or just come in and listen to the MCS Series 45 Watt receiver. You won't have to look any further. The MCS Series 45 Watt receiver only \$379.95* and only at JCPenney.

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MCS® Series Audio Components sold exclusively at JCPenney



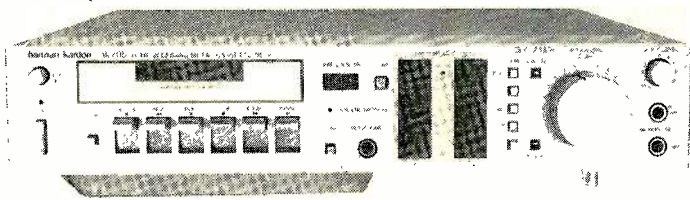
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Equipment Test Reports

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories



Harman Kardon hk 705 Cassette Deck

SA, which should result in performance substantially equivalent to that shown for the 120-microsecond Maxell UD XL-I.

Playback equalization was checked using our new Teac MTT-216 (120-microsecond) and MTT-316 (70-microsecond) calibrated tapes, which extend the test range from 31.5 to 14,000 Hz. As the graph indicates, the hk 705 proved exceptionally accurate in playback response over this range, well inside a ± 2 -dB tolerance. The Dolby-level calibration, tested with both Teac and TDK reference tapes, was also accurate, within the resolution (± 1 dB) of the LED indicators on either side of the 0-dB marking.

Overall record-playback frequency response (measured at the customary -20 -dB level) did not drop by more than 3 dB at approximately 33 Hz and 18 kHz with most tapes. At the 0-dB level the advantage of the TDK-MA metal formulation was strikingly apparent, giving vastly increased high-frequency headroom.

Distortion at 1,000 Hz, measured at the 200-nWb/m Dolby 0-dB level, was 0.7, 2.2, 1.7, and 1 per cent, respectively, for our ferric, CrO₂, ferrichrome, and metal reference tapes. Listed in the same order, these tapes required input levels of +5, +2, +3, and +4.5 dB before distortion reached the 3 per cent third-harmonic point used for signal-to-noise ratio measurements. Unweighted S/N without Dolby-B was 52.8, 54.4, 55.7, and 55.8 dB for the four tapes, respectively, and these figures increased to 65, 66.6, 67.7, and 67.8 dB, respectively, with Dolby noise reduction and standard IEC "A" weighting. The S/N with Dolby plus CCIR/ARM weighting was 63.2, 66.1, 67, and 66.5 dB.

Wow and flutter measured 0.035 per cent with the usually specified weighted-rms method, and 0.046 per cent when using the DIN peak-weighting scale. Both of these figures are exceptionally good, especially for a single-capstan deck. Fast-forward and rewind times for a C-60 cassette averaged 76.5 seconds.

A line-input signal level of 45 millivolts
(Continued on page 41)

THE Harman Kardon hk 705 is the first available cassette recorder that incorporates the new Dolby HX "headroom-extension" system. The HX process (described more fully in Craig Stark's "Tape Talk" in the September 1979 issue of STEREO REVIEW) extends the high-frequency overload capability of a Dolby-B equipped cassette deck during recording by reducing both the record bias and equalization at those moments when strong treble content is present in the music. By lowering the bias, the high-frequency capacity of the tape is enhanced; though this is at the cost of some increase in low-frequency distortion, this distortion is less than would be generated by treble overload (saturation). *HX-processed tapes are playback-compatible with all Dolby-B recorders*, and the claimed benefits in high-frequency headroom are roughly equivalent to those provided by the new metal-tape formulations.

The hk 705 is a slim, front-loading deck that uses a single Sendust record/playback head and a capstan driven by a d.c. servomotor. A second motor is used to pull the cassette inside the deck after it is laid onto a tray that pops out from the front of the unit when the eject button is pressed. When the cassette is locked into place, an angled mirror permits viewing the amount of tape remaining on a side through a window in the entry slot. Access for routine cleaning is provided by a removable tab on the top of the deck.

Control of the tape motion is provided through a series of mechanically interlocked piano-key levers. A RECORD MUTE button is provided for inserting a quiet space between selections, and a TAPE END light begins to blink when approximately three minutes of tape remain on a side. The three-digit counter contains a "memory rewind" feature that works with the zero setting, permitting quick return to a selected spot on the tape.

Twelve peak-reading LEDs per channel (green below 0 dB, red above) form the vertically oriented level indicators, which are calibrated from -20 to $+8$ dB with the 0-dB point marked as Dolby level (200 nWb/m). A vertical row of pushbuttons adjacent

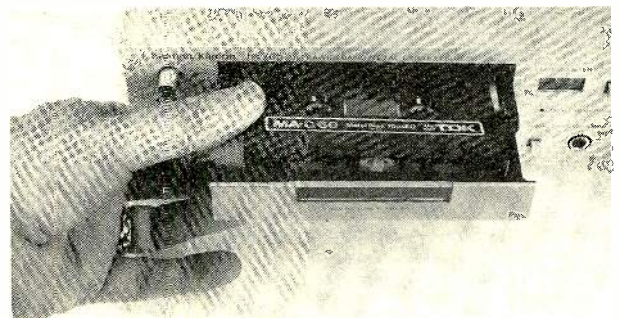
to the LED indicators provides bias and equalization switching for four tape types: metal, CrO₂, ferrichrome, and ferric. Additional front-panel pushbuttons are provided to insert a subsonic (below 20 Hz) filter and to activate either the regular Dolby noise-reduction system or its HX version. These latter two buttons are illuminated.

The large record-level control uses concentric knobs to permit independent adjustment of the left and right channels. An output-level control, which affects both channels equally, also varies the level at the headphone jack, one that is designed to accept headphones with 8-ohm (or higher) impedance. The front-panel microphone jacks are intended for use with medium-impedance (600-ohm) mikes.

The rear panel of the hk 705 has phono-jack input and output connectors, an FM-multiplex switch, and a ground post. Overall, the unit measures 15 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 3 x 12 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches and weighs slightly under 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. Price: \$449.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Our sample of the hk 705 was factory-aligned for TDK-MA (metal), Sony FeCr (ferrichrome), Maxell UD XL-I (ferric), and—because it was an early model intended for evaluation at Dolby Labs—for the DIN 70-microsecond reference tape (a formulation most closely matched by BASF Professional II). Production models will be set up with TDK

The withdrawal mechanism of the hk 705's cassette loading tray is motor driven.



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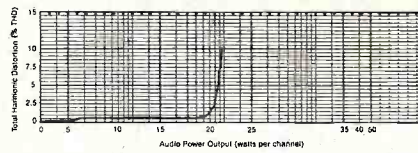


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mance high fidelity in the "purist" sense. Sparkomatic equipment, like the High Power Series SR 3400 Digital Cassette AM/FM Stereo with Clock, has one thing in common—uncommonly spectacular specs. Sensitivity, separation and a distortion-free (less than 1% THD) 40 watts of power. Effortless feather-touch instrumentation. And the epitome in tape deck sophistication.

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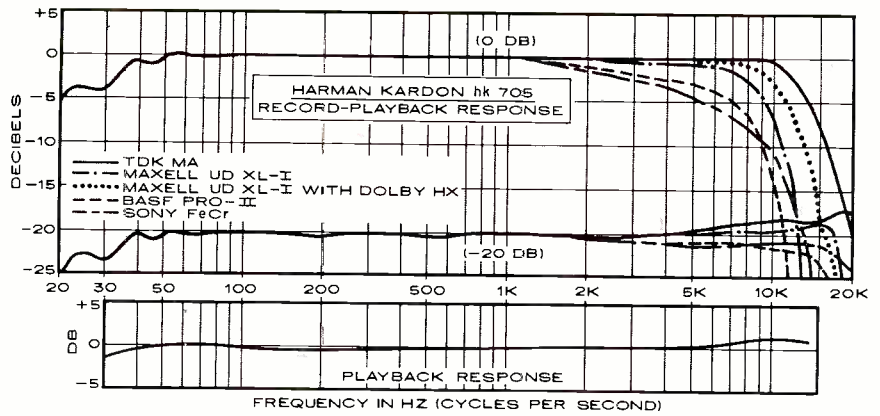
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(mV) was required to produce a 0-dB indication on the LED string, and the corresponding output (maximum) was a very high 1.5 volts. Microphone sensitivity, using our 600-ohm generator, was 0.15 mV, and the microphone overload level was reached at 15 mV—not an overgenerous margin, but undoubtedly adequate for the medium-impedance microphones that would be used for anything but the recording of music with a very wide dynamic range. Headphone listening level was more than adequate with both 600-ohm and 200-ohm (nominal 8-ohm) phones.

The tracking accuracy of the regular Dolby-B circuits, measured at -20- and -30-dB levels, was very good (± 1 dB or better) up to 15 kHz, above which levels the curves tended to diverge somewhat. We were naturally more interested in the performance of the Dolby HX “headroom-extension” system, however. The best way to illustrate its effectiveness in terms of measurements is to refer to the 0-dB level curves for overall record-playback response. With Maxell UD XL-I tape, the high-frequency overload point using the HX system fell almost exactly halfway between the curve shown for Maxell UD XL-I and that shown for the metal TDK-MA.

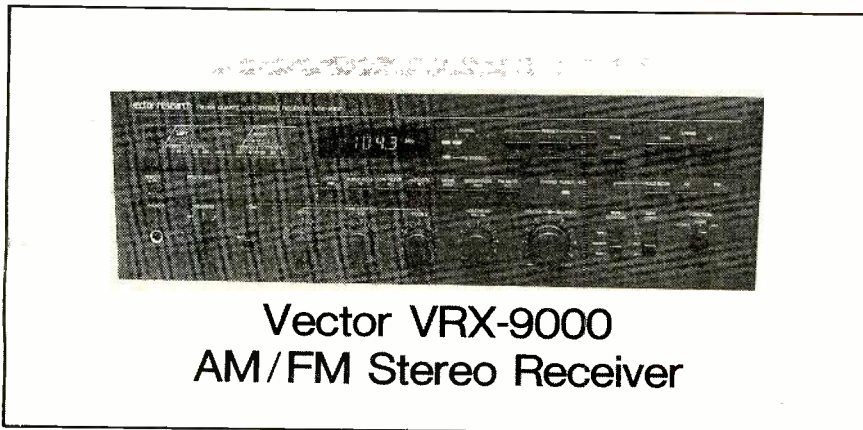
● **Comment.** The audible benefits of the Dolby HX system in the hk 705 are clearly evident in direct-comparison listening tests,



though they depend considerably, like the benefits of metal-alloy tape, on the material being taped. On straight FM material and on most regular discs we did not hear a “night-and-day” difference, but on the most demanding material (FM hiss and master tapes with substantial high-frequency content) the difference was very clear. In normal recording of such material, the highs can often be dulled because of tape saturation. The HX system (or metal tape) dramatically alleviates this problem. The effect of the HX process was most noticeable with less-than-premium cassettes, which

can cost one-fourth as much as metal cassettes yet sound very nearly as good. Most important, we could hear no unwanted side effects when using the HX system; if any are there to be heard, it is probable that they could be spotted only with a three-head machine capable of instant direct comparisons. With its overall high performance, sleek styling, and the HX feature, the Harman Kardon hk 705 represents a more than worthwhile value at what, in today’s market, is not a very high price.

Circle 140 on reader service card



ALTHOUGH Vector Research is a new name on the U.S. audio scene, the Vector hi-fi component line already consists of four receivers and three cassette decks spanning a broad range of prices and operating features. The top-of-the-line receiver, the VRX-9000, features digitally synthesized tuning plus a full array of control features. The power-output ratings of the VRX-9000 are 80 watts per channel into 8-ohm loads (or 90 watts into 4 ohms) from 20 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.08 per cent total harmonic distortion.

The dark-gray panel of the receiver has clearly visible yellow-white markings that

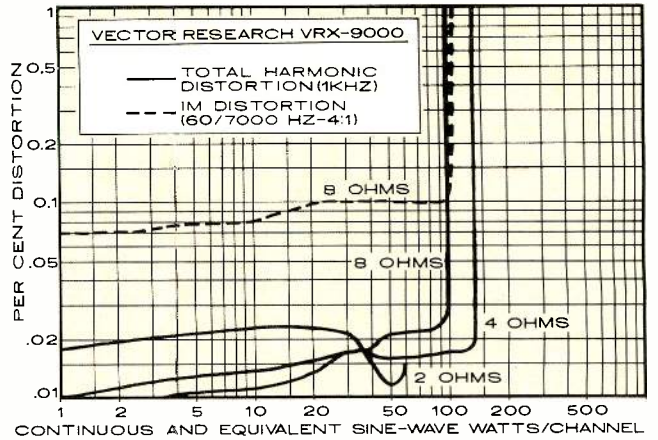
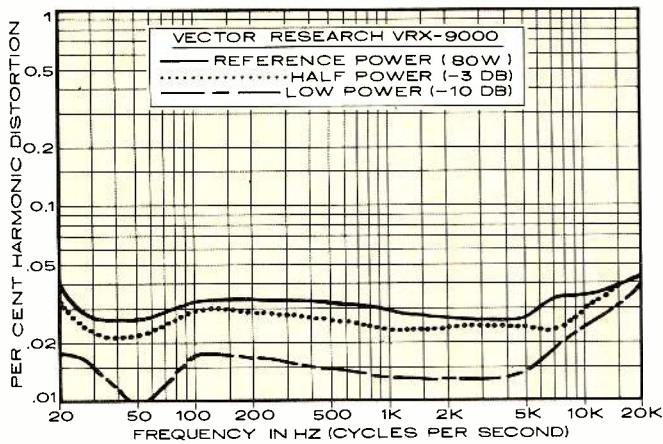
contrast with its black control knobs and switches. Most of the controls across the bottom of the panel appear conventional. The PHONES jack at the lower left is followed by a SPEAKERS selector that controls two pairs of speaker outputs. Each of the three tone-control knobs (BASS, MID, and TREBLE) has eleven detented positions, and a small toggle switch bypasses all tone-control circuitry. A continuously variable LOUDNESS control (engaged by pulling the knob out slightly) operates independently of the VOLUME control. With the loudness knob fully counterclockwise, frequency response is nominally flat; rotating it clock-

wise produces a bass boost that increases with the rotation.

The VOLUME and BALANCE controls are mounted concentrically, with a number of lightly detented positions for the former and a center detent for the latter. Two toggle switches control the tape-recording functions. The TAPE MONITOR switch connects the playback output from either of two tape decks or the selected program source to the receiver’s amplifiers; TAPE COPY cross-connects the tape decks for dubbing from either one to the other. The FUNCTION knob selects PHONO, TUNER, or AUX inputs. (Incidentally, all the round knobs could benefit from a more clearly marked index “pointer.”)

A single row of control buttons and lights across the middle of the panel includes a pushbutton power switch and a “protector” light that glows for a few seconds after the receiver is turned on and until the power-supply voltages have stabilized, after which the receiver’s protective circuits connect the speakers to the amplifier and the light goes out. If the amplifier should be overloaded for any reason, the outputs cut off and the light goes on. To reset the circuits, the receiver must be shut off; after a few moments it can be restarted.

The AUDIO MUTE switch reduces the volume by 20 dB, and there are separate LOW FILTER and HIGH FILTER switches. The MODE button selects mono or stereo operation, and the DEEMPHASIS button changes the FM de-emphasis from 75 to 25 micro-



seconds for use with an external Dolby FM decoder. Another button controls FM interstation muting. Colored lights identify the selected program source. Two pushbuttons select either AM or FM reception, and the final control is a HOLD SCAN button (with a red LED indicator) that is used in the tuning of the receiver.

Across the top of the panel there is a pair of illuminated power-output meters, each with two scales—0.05 to 5 watts and 0.5 to 120 watts—which can be selected by a METER button. The tuned frequency is displayed on a digital readout with large yellow-green numerals flanked by AM and kHz, or FM and MHz, to show the band in use. To their right are five signal-strength LEDs that light up in proportion to the strength of an AM or FM signal, and below them is a red stereo-FM indicator.

Since the tuning is completely electronic, the Vector VRX-9000 does not have a tuning knob. Two large flat buttons, marked UP and DOWN, are the tuning controls. A momentary touch on either one shifts the receiver frequency by 0.1 MHz in the corresponding direction for FM, or by 1 kHz for AM. (The manual erroneously states that the AM tuning interval is 10 kHz.) If the button is held in for a few seconds, the receiver begins a rapid scan, stopping only when the button is released.

Between the tuning buttons and the frequency readout are six PRESET buttons and a STORE button. The VRX-9000 has memories for six FM and six AM station frequencies which are stored indefinitely as long as the receiver is left plugged into an a.c. socket. They will be retained even if power is lost for as long as 24 hours, but for longer disconnect periods there is a compartment in the rear of the receiver for two AA cells that power the memory circuits.

To store a frequency in the memory, the STORE button is pressed, lighting a nearby LED for a few seconds. While the light is on, touching one of the preset buttons transfers the frequency information to that location. At any future time, touching that button will instantly tune the receiver to that frequency. Each button can be used for one FM channel and one AM channel. A light next to each preset glows when it has been selected.

The VRX-9000 has a band-scanning mode of operation: if the HOLDSCAN button is engaged, a touch on one of the tuning buttons will cause the tuning to scan rapidly in

that direction, stopping when it reaches a signal whose strength exceeds the muting threshold. The receiver then unmutes and remains on that frequency for several seconds before again muting and proceeding to the next station. To lock onto any of the acquired signals, one releases the HOLD SCAN button with a second press.

On the rear apron of the VRX-9000 are the various signal connectors and insulated speaker terminals for two pairs of speakers. One of the two a.c. outlets is switched. There is a hinged, pivoted AM ferrite-rod antenna. An octal socket is provided for connection to an optional remote-control accessory, the VRC-1. With this, the tuning operations, including selection of preset channels, can be done from a remote point. However, there are no preamp-out/power-amp-in connections. The Vector VRX-9000 is about 17¼ inches wide, 14½ inches deep, and 5½ inches high. It weighs about 31 pounds. The suggested retail price is \$750.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Although the power transistors and their heat sinks are located within the cabinet of the VRX-9000, ample ventilation is provided through openings in the top and bottom of the cabinet so that it does not become unduly hot during extended high-power operation or

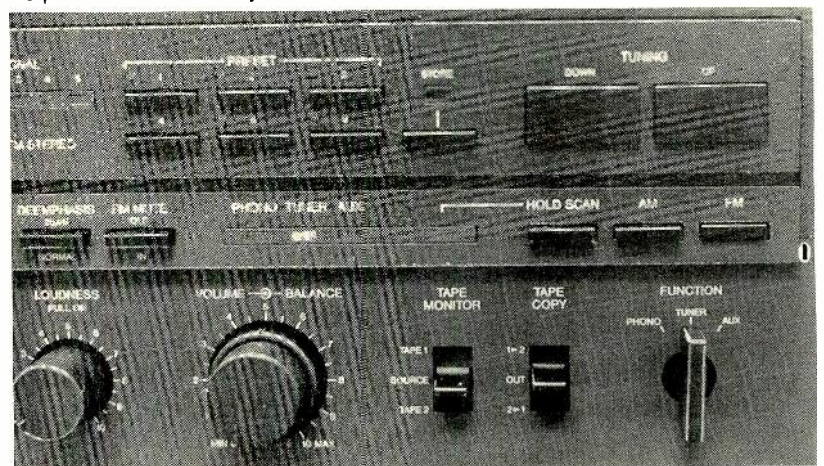
during the one-hour FTC preconditioning period.

The 1,000-Hz power output at clipping into 8-ohm loads was about 101 watts (IHF clipping headroom was 1 dB); with 4-ohm loads the outputs clipped at 136 watts (clipping headroom 1.78 dB). Although the receiver is not rated for operation into lower load impedances, we drove it to just over 60 watts output into 2 ohms before the protective circuit tripped and shut off the outputs. Dynamic power measurements were made at all three load impedances. Into 8 ohms the maximum unclipped power during a 20-millisecond tone burst was 128 watts (equivalent to an IHF dynamic headroom of 2.04 dB); with 4-ohm loads, the maximum output was 193 watts (IHF rating 3.31 dB). When we used 2-ohm loads, the protective circuit was triggered even by these short bursts, shutting down the amplifier at about 204 watts output.

With 8- or 4-ohm loads, the distortion at 1,000 Hz was typically about 0.01 per cent at low levels, rising to about 0.02 per cent just below the clipping point. With 2-ohm loads the distortion was about 0.02 per cent at most power levels, decreasing slightly to less than 0.015 per cent just before the protective relay operated. The IM distortion

(Continued on page 44)

The VRX-9000's electronic tuning mechanism for FM and AM has pushbuttons to enter frequencies in the memory or to recall them from it and to control the band scanning.



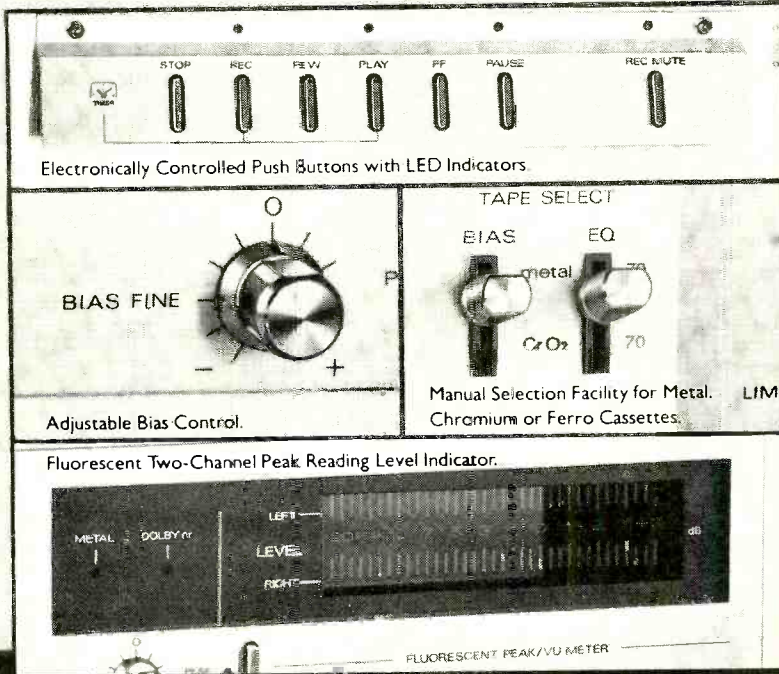
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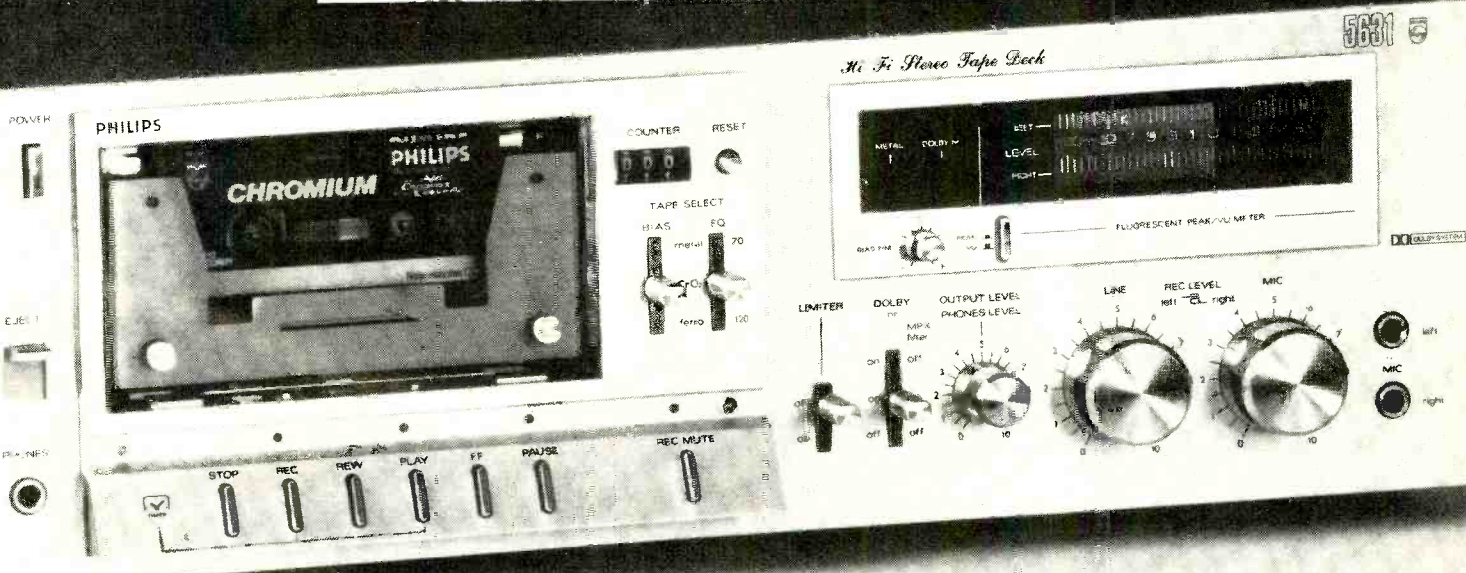
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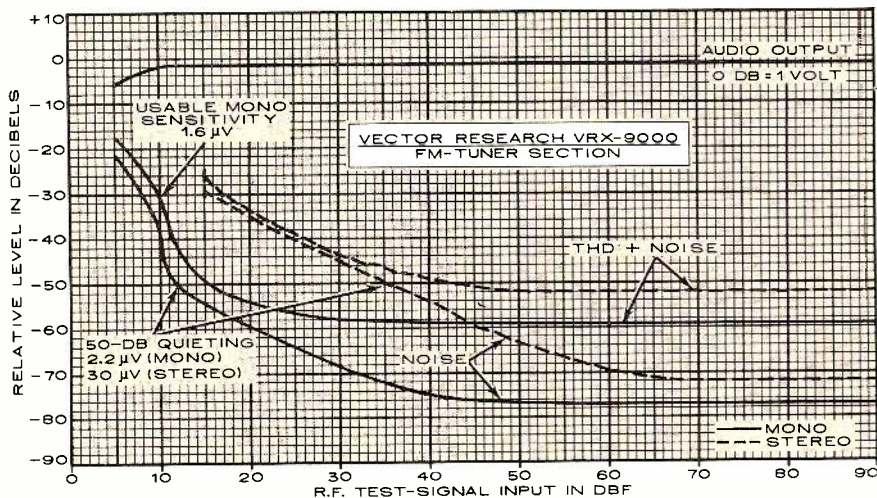


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(at 8 ohms) was between 0.07 and 0.1 per cent at power outputs up to 100 watts.

The distortion was only slightly affected by frequency. The rated-power and half-power distortion readings were between 0.02 and 0.04 per cent from 20 to 20,000 Hz. At one-tenth rated power, the typical reading was 0.015 per cent, reaching a maximum of 0.04 per cent at 20,000 Hz.

For a reference output of 1 watt, the amplifier required 23.5 millivolts (mV) at its AUX input, or 0.42 mV at the phono input. The respective A-weighted signal-to-noise ratios (S/N) were 75 and 71 dB. The phono input overloaded with 330 mV at 1,000 Hz, 314 mV at 20 Hz, and 257 mV at 20,000 Hz (the last two referred to the equivalent levels at 1,000 Hz). The phono-input impedance was 50,000 ohms in parallel with 50 picofarads.

Measured through the AUX input, the amplifier's rise time was 7 microseconds and its slew rate was 14.3 volts per microsecond. The IHF slew factor exceeded our measurement limit of 25. The calibration of the power-output meters was typically within 10 to 15 per cent of the actual output into 8 ohms, although the errors were much larger at some points near the lower ends of the scales.

The tone-control characteristics were conventional, with a sliding bass-turnover frequency and the high-frequency curves hinged at about 1,500 Hz. The midrange control had its maximum effect between 1,000 and 1,500 Hz with a total range of about ± 6 dB. When the tone controls were switched in (at their flat settings) the overall gain of the amplifier dropped about 1.5 dB. The low filter increased response by about 1.5 dB between 30 and 40 Hz and cut off sharply below 25 Hz. The high filter had a 12-dB-per-octave slope with a response 3 dB down at 6,000 Hz. The loudness contours were not affected by the volume-control setting, and the LOUDNESS knob produced an effective boost of about 13 dB below 50 Hz. There was a slight fixed high-frequency boost (about +3 dB at 20,000 Hz) when the LOUDNESS knob was pulled out. The RIAA phono equalization was flat within 0.5 dB overall from 20 to 20,000 Hz and did not change detectably when measured through the inductance of a typical phono cartridge.

The FM-tuner sensitivity was a very good 9.8 dBf (1.6 microvolts, or μV) in mono and 17 dBf (4 μV) in stereo. The stereo switching threshold was 14 dBf (2.7 μV) and the muting threshold was an unusually low 9.8 dBf (1.6 μV). This was sufficient to exclude interstation noise without preventing the reception of very weak signals.

The more important 50-dB quieting sensitivity was 12 dBf (2.2 μV) in mono with 0.8 per cent total harmonic distortion (THD). In stereo it was 35 dBf (30 μV) with 0.5 per cent THD. At 65 dBf (1,000 μV) the distortion was 0.11 per cent in mono and 0.26 per cent in stereo. The respective S/N readings were 76.5 and 71 dB. The signal-level lights came on at inputs from 19.8 dBf (5 μV) to 64 dBf (900 μV).

The stereo frequency response was ± 1 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz and the 19-kHz pilot carrier in the tuner output was at a low -72-dB level. Tuner hum was also low, at -70 dB. The stereo channel separation was a maximum of 43 dB between 1,000 and 1,500 Hz, falling to 20 dB at 30 Hz and 27 dB at 15,000 Hz.

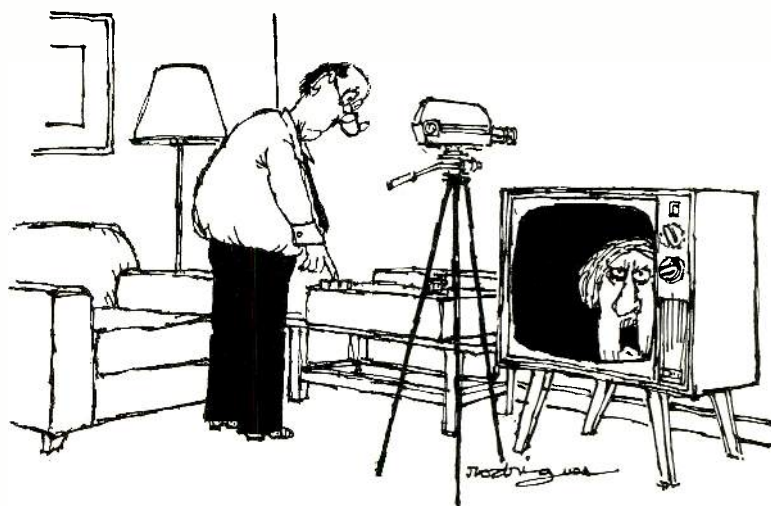
The FM capture ratio was a very good 1 dB at 45 dBf (100 μV) input and 0.8 dB at 65 dBf. The respective AM-rejection fig-

ures were 53 and 56 dB. The FM tuner of the VRX-9000 had exceptional image-rejection ability: it is rated at 100 dB and measured at the extreme of our signal generator's capability at 107 dB. The alternate-channel selectivity of 67.5 dB surpassed the 65-dB rating, and the adjacent-channel selectivity was 3.3 dB. The only measurement made on the AM tuner was of its frequency response, which was unusually flat though not particularly wide. It was within ± 1 dB from 33 to 3,000 Hz, and down 6 dB at 4,000 Hz.

● **Comment.** The Vector VRX-9000 is a distinctively styled receiver whose "businesslike" appearance is consistent with its fine performance. It handles smoothly, with the complete freedom from noise that seems to be typical of digitally synthesized receivers and tuners. We were impressed not only by the exceptional IHF usable sensitivity of the FM tuner section (which is really not its most important characteristic) but by the manner in which the receiver surpassed virtually every one of its performance specifications in our tests. The few instances where our measurements failed to match the ratings were in that "gray area" of testing where r.f. and low-level audio measurements become very tricky.

The Hold-Scan feature is a nice way to cover a frequency band and sample every signal one comes across, although it is not quite as fast as "old-fashioned" manual tuning. In less populous areas served by only a moderate number of stations, it might well be as fast as manual tuning, but in the New York area, with more than fifty FM stations and an uncountable number of AM stations on tap, patience is called for when scanning the bands. In the case of AM, it certainly would be much easier and faster if the tuning scanned in 10-kHz steps as the manual states. However, there is the benefit of noise-free tuning between stations (the receiver is muted in AM as well as FM when scanning), a feature not often found in AM tuners. And should the AM channel spacing be changed to 9 kHz, as has been discussed, the tuning of the VRX-9000 would not be made obsolete.

The fact that the loudness control is sep-
(Continued on page 46)



"... And how much, may I ask, did this gadget cost?"

Technics

If you want a frequency response with more dynamic range and more high-end extension, you'll want nothing less than metal tape. And for about \$380 there are many metal tape decks to choose from. But if you want more than just metal, you'll want what most other comparably priced decks don't give you. The 3 heads and double Dolby† in Technics RS-M63.

The RS-M63's 3-head configuration lets you do what most other comparably priced decks don't: Monitor your recordings while you're recording. And, since our separate HPF record and playback heads are precisely gapped and enclosed in a single housing, you won't get azimuth error. What you will get is an extremely wide frequency response with CrO₂ tape and an incredibly high response with metal tape.

| Wow and Flutter | Frequency Response | S/N |
|-----------------|---|--------------|
| 0.05% WR/FS | 20Hz-20kHz(metal) 20Hz-18kHz(FeCr/CrO ₂) 20Hz-17kHz(normal) | 67 dB Dolby† |

As good as that sounds, double Dolby will make it sound even better because there are separate Dolby circuits for recording and playback. So you can monitor your tapes with the full effects of Dolby Noise Reduction. That means a lot when it comes to accurate recordings.

So do the RS-M63's fluorescent (FL) bar graph meters. Especially when it comes to dynamic range. Because with their device attack time of just 5-millionths of a second, they can respond to the most sudden musical transients.

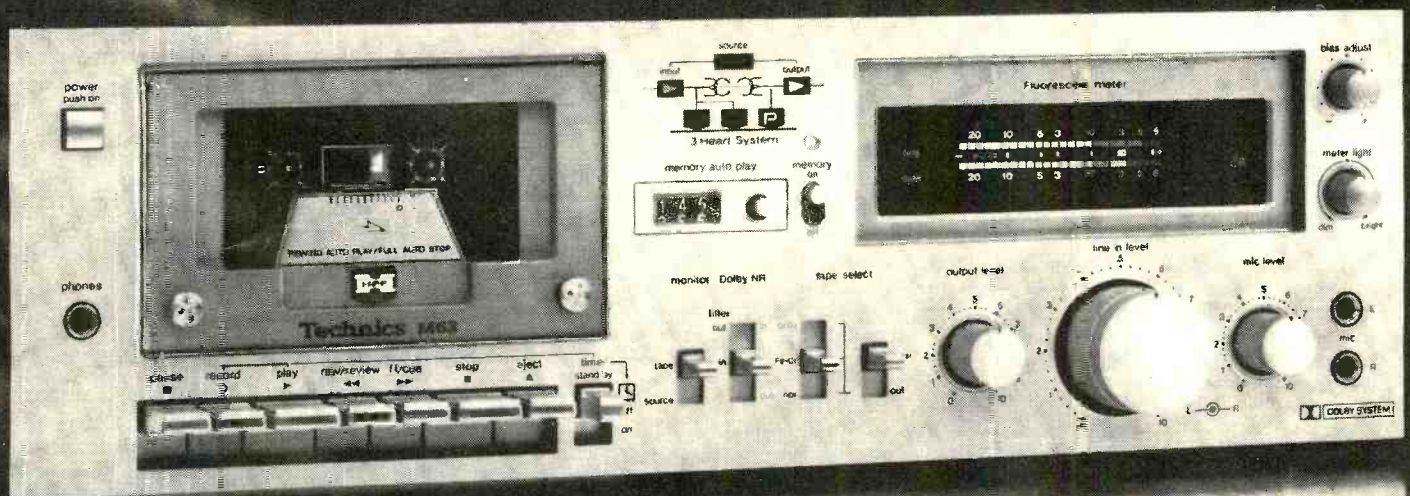
To help you make the most of all this performance, the RS-M63 has a fine bias adjustment, so you can get the most out of all kinds of tape. And you'll spend more time listening to music and less time searching for it, because we include the memory features you need. Like auto-rewind, auto play and rewind auto play.

Technics RS-M63. The only deck to consider when you consider what you get for the price.

*Recommended price for Technics RS-M63, but actual price will be set by dealers.

†Dolby is a trademark of Dolby Laboratories. CIRCLE NO. 59 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Before you spend \$380* on a metal tape deck, make sure it has 3 heads and double Dolby.

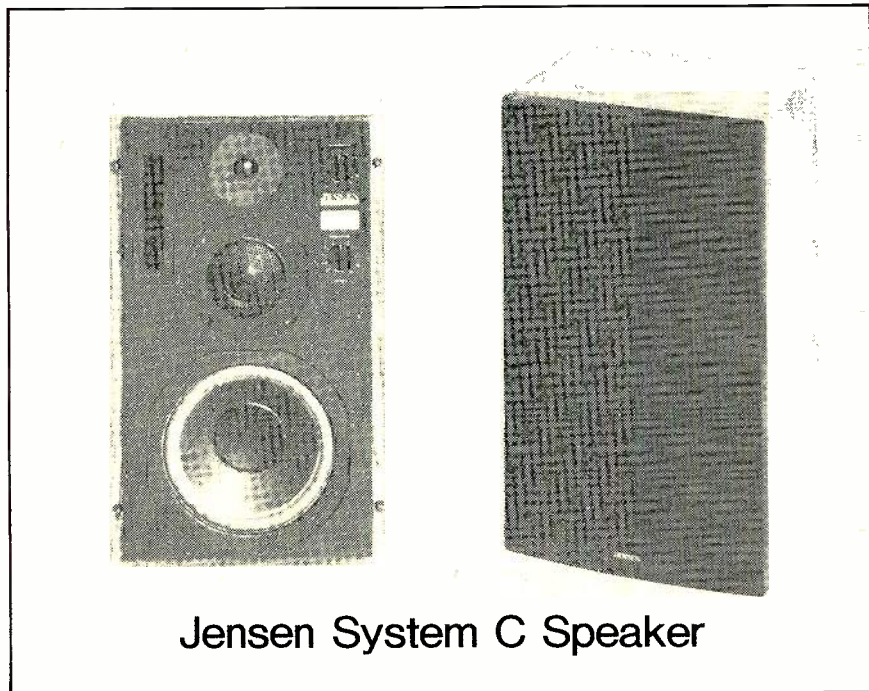


arate makes that feature really useful on the VRX-9000. Unlike most loudness compensators, the Vector's control works very well and sounds fine. As a matter of fact,

such a statement could be made about the receiver as a whole. Despite its "black on black" motif, the Vector VRX-9000 manages to avoid a starkly functional, institu-

tional appearance. It sounds and handles as good as it looks, which is saying a lot.

Circle 141 on reader service card



Jensen System C Speaker

JENSEN'S System C is a compact, floor-standing, three-way speaker system with three vertically aligned front-radiating drivers plus a second rear-facing tweeter to enhance its high-frequency diffusion by means of reflections from the rear wall. The handsome oak-veneered cabinet has a snap-on grille of dark brown cloth. Removing the grille reveals the 10-inch woofer plus a 2-inch soft-dome midrange driver and a 1-inch soft-dome tweeter above it. To the left of the high-frequency drivers is a long vertical slot for the bass-driver vent, and to their right are two controls giving a continuous adjustment of the midrange and high-frequency driver outputs. They are calibrated to give a flat acoustic-power output at their 0-dB (12 o'clock) positions and can vary the outputs of their respective drivers over a +2- to -8-dB range.

The rear-facing driver is a 2-inch cone tweeter located near the top center of the cabinet. The recommended placement of the Jensen System C is from 1 to 2 feet from the back wall, which should be a hard surface for best scattering of the rear-radiated high frequencies. The speaker is designed primarily for vertical installation on a low stand, table, or shelf, but it can also be placed horizontally.

The nominal system impedance is 8 ohms, with a 5-ohm minimum rating. Amplifiers delivering from 9 to 125 watts per channel are recommended for use with the System C. It has a protective relay with-

in its crossover circuit that prevents driver damage from prolonged high-power operation and does not interfere with high-level transients. The System C has a frequency-response rating of 47 to 21,000 Hz (+2, -4 dB). Its crossover frequencies are at 51 (acoustic), 900, and 5,500 Hz.

The overall dimensions of the System C are 23 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches high, 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, and 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep. It weighs 52 pounds. The system has a five-year transferable warranty, covering shipping costs to and from an authorized repair station. Suggested retail price of the Jensen System C is \$399.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Splicing the reverberant-field frequency-response curve to the close-miked bass curve resulted in an unusually wide, flat, and smooth overall frequency-response curve. Determination of the optimum splice frequency was simplified by the speaker's obviously flat frequency response—it was immediately apparent when we listened to it.

Including a slight "jog" in the response curve at 900 Hz (presumably attributable to the crossover to the midrange driver at that frequency), the overall frequency response of the speaker was within +3.5, -2.5 dB from 33 to 20,000 Hz (and apparently well beyond that frequency, although we did not make measurements beyond 20,000 Hz). The actual acoustic-power response of the System C is probably more uniform within the audio band than our

measurement method is able to resolve. The high-frequency dispersion was excellent up to 10,000 Hz, with no significant difference between the left and right speaker-response curves (and only a moderate difference between 10,000 and 20,000 Hz). This measurement was made on the axis of one speaker and about 30 degrees off the axis of the other. The speakers were placed on 7-inch-high stands about 1 foot from the wall for both measurements and listening tests.

The woofer's response was very flat over most of its operating range, with a rise of about 3 dB at 65 Hz and a gradual fall in output below that frequency. However, the output at 20 Hz was only 5 dB below the midrange level, which is impressive performance for a compact vented system. The bass distortion at a constant nominal input of 1 watt (2.83 volts) was about 0.5 per cent or less from 100 to 60 Hz, rising to 1.5 per cent at 50 Hz, 5 per cent at 40 Hz, and 11 per cent at 30 Hz. A ten-fold power increase made little difference in the shape of the distortion curve, but it increased distortion to 1 to 1.5 per cent from 100 to 60 Hz and 8.5 per cent at 40 Hz.

The midrange- and tweeter-level controls were able to cut off their respective drivers completely when set to their LO markings beyond the -8-dB calibrations. The midrange control affected frequencies between 1,000 and 6,000 Hz, boosting the output by the indicated 2 dB or cutting it by as much as 15 dB. The tweeter control boosted the output between 1,500 and 8,000 Hz by about 1 dB and by 2 to 2.5 dB above that frequency. At its minimum setting it reduced the output by about 3 dB above 2,000 Hz and attenuated it steeply above 10,000 Hz. Our basic measurements were made with both controls set to 0 dB, and that setting also gave us the best sound.

The system impedance was about 30 ohms at 20 Hz (and still higher at lower frequencies), dropping to 9 ohms at 40 Hz before rising to a peak of 27 ohms at 60 Hz. The next minimum of 8 ohms at about 150 Hz is the basis for the system's nominal 8-ohm rating, and the impedance remained above 8 ohms up to about 1,400 Hz. The minimum impedance in the audio range was 4 ohms between 10,000 and 20,000 Hz. In general, we would agree with the advertised 8-ohm rating, but paralleling a couple of these systems on an amplifier with limited high-frequency current-output ability might not be advisable.

The sensitivity of the System C was exactly as rated, with an 87-dB sound-pressure level measured at a 1-meter distance when we drove the speaker with 2.83 volts of random noise in the octave centered at 1,000 Hz. The tone-burst response was good throughout the speaker's range, with the ex-

(Continued on page 48)

YOU ALREADY KNOW THAT DENON

OFFERS THE FINEST LINE OF TURNTABLES AND
CARTRIDGES IN AMERICA.

The DP-30L turntable and the DL-303 cartridge



WHAT YOU MAY NOT KNOW IS THAT WE
OFFER THAT SAME LEVEL OF QUALITY IN
CASSETTE DECKS.

WE INVITE YOU TO COMPARE OUR MODEL
DR-250 TO ANY MACHINE IN ITS PRICE RANGE.



Consider these advantages:

1. Two motors, servo-controlled
2. Two heads (yes, this is an advantage*)
3. Auto-rewind and play
4. Full logic solenoid controls
5. Metal tape capability
6. Denon's unique pause/mute mechanism
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All this adds up to better sound. See
your Denon dealer and hear it for
yourself.

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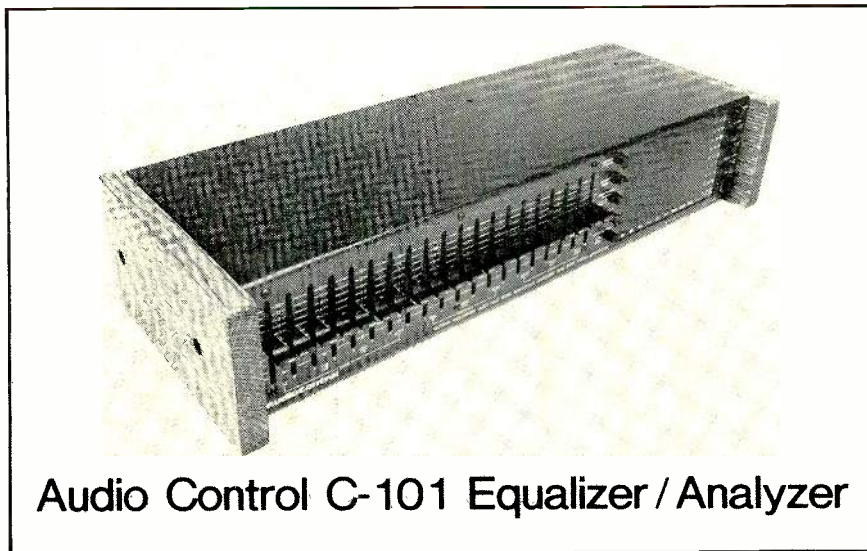
pected interference effects between the drivers in their crossover regions.

● **Comment.** Our overall impression of the sound of the Jensen System C in our fairly "dead" listening room was of uncolored neutrality and an "all-there" quality. In

other words, it had ample highs and deep bass as well as everything in between, all in the correct balance. It did not sound at all bass heavy but left no doubt of its considerable bass potential when driven with appropriate program material. The sound produced by the Jensen System C is free of col-

oration, and it is clearly a speaker we would be glad to live with—which is not a statement we would make about *every* system that has passed through our laboratory and listening room in the past several years.

Circle 142 on reader service card



A GRAPHIC equalizer allows separate adjustment of the level in each of a number of frequency bands which are normally contiguous and which, in combination, cover the full audio range. A typical graphic equalizer has ten or twelve individual octave-wide filters with level controls for each (in duplicate for the two stereo channels). Simpler equalizers have only five to seven bands averaging two octaves in width.

Equalizing a music system by ear with an octave-band equalizer can be very difficult for the inexperienced. The inevitable interaction of the controls and the problem of locating the specific frequency band that contains some perceived sonic flaw contribute to the difficulty. A successful room or speaker equalization requires a suitable test-signal source (*not* a musical program) and a detector or display instrument that measures the sound-pressure level at some preferred listening location in the room. A convenient and widely used test signal is "pink noise," which is random noise containing equal energy in each frequency octave. It is usually created by passing the output of a white-noise generator (which has equal energy in each *unit* of frequency) through a filter that attenuates the high frequencies at a 3-dB-per-octave rate.

Since the pink-noise test signal covers the entire audio range simultaneously, the room-equalization process requires some form of frequency-selective meter or spectrum analyzer that can measure the sound-pressure level (SPL) in each segment of the audio range as the equalizer controls are

adjusted. An alternative is to have the signal itself separated into octave bands by filters (sometimes this is done by recording such a signal on a disc for playback through the system) so that the output of the microphone can be read on a simple wideband meter as the equalizer is adjusted.

The Audio Control C-101 is one of the few instruments that combine a ten-band equalizer with a real-time spectrum analyzer whose bands coincide with those of the equalizer. It also has a built-in pink-noise generator and comes with a wide-range microphone, so the C-101 is a complete room/speaker equalization system.

Across the panel of the C-101 are twenty vertical sliders with adjacent controls covering the left and right channels for each frequency band. They are center-detented and have an adjustment range of ± 15 dB marked on the panel at 3-dB intervals. The center frequencies of the filters are 32, 60, 120, 240, 480, 960, 1,920, 3,840, 7,680, and 15,500 Hz. To the right of the equalizer sliders is a rectangular window framing the spectrum-analyzer display. This consists of ten vertical columns, each displaying the output of one of the analyzer filters on nine red LEDs. Spaced at intervals of 4 dB (switchable to 2 dB), these lights glow in accordance with the level in each frequency band. The center row is marked "0 dB," so the display range is either ± 16 or ± 8 dB about the reference level.

To the left of the display are pushbuttons, marked EQUALIZER PROGRAM and EQUALIZER TAPE, which connect the equalized signal

to either the line or the tape outputs at the rear of the unit. The two buttons are mechanically interlocked so that only one can be engaged at a time. Since the C-101 is normally connected in the tape-monitor loop of an amplifier or receiver, the tape-monitor function is duplicated on its panel by a TAPE MONITOR pushbutton. Below it are two buttons that control added features that are not directly connected with the equalization functions. The SUBSONIC FILTER cuts off at an 18-dB-per-octave rate below 20 Hz, and the RUMBLE REDUCER achieves a somewhat similar result without affecting the frequency response of the system. It blends the stereo channels at frequencies below 200 Hz to cancel any out-of-phase (vertical) rumble that may be present. Since there is usually little or no stereo information at those frequencies anyway, not much is lost by converting them to mono.

The controls at the right side of the spectrum-analyzer display include a POWER button and a FUNCTION switch that converts the readout from a spectrum-analyzer display (marked RTA) to a LEVEL display. In the latter mode, all ten columns of LEDs vary simultaneously in accordance with the overall program level. The RANGE button below it changes the amplitude display intervals from 4 to 2 dB for a more detailed presentation. The next control is DISPLAY ACTION, which affects the response time of the display. The SLOW position is convenient for equalizing with pink noise since it smooths out the rapid, random level fluctuations associated with that type of signal. The FAST mode is preferable for following musical program peaks. The bottom control is a small knob, marked INPUT LEVEL, with a center detent marked CAL. It varies the input sensitivity of the analyzer and display section. When the microphone is plugged into a jack in the rear of the C-101, its output replaces the input from the amplifier. With the INPUT LEVEL control at CAL, the display reads directly on a third amplitude scale, in acoustic SPL, from 60 to 92 dB (A-weighted). With the LEVEL control the sensitivity can be increased or decreased to cover a total range from 40 to 127 dB.

The microphone supplied with the C-101 is a miniature (1/4-inch diameter) condenser microphone powered by a 5-volt supply through the signal cable. Because of this voltage, other types of microphones should not be plugged into the C-101, nor can its microphone be used in other applications, such as tape recording. The Audio Control microphone is flat within ± 1.5 dB from 30 to 20,000 Hz, well beyond the quality level

usually found on conventional moderate-price microphones.

On the rear apron of the C-101 there are the inputs and outputs for line and tape, the 1/4-inch microphone jack, and two phono jacks carrying the pink-noise signal at a 100-millivolt level suitable for driving any amplifier. The C-101 is finished in a dark brown color with contrasting gold panel markings. Its panel, slotted for rack mounting, is 19 inches x 3.5 inches, and the depth of the whole unit is 6.5 inches. It weighs only 6 3/4 pounds. The suggested retail price of the Audio Control C-101 is \$549.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Measurements of the frequency response of the equalizer section confirmed the claimed filter response characteristics, and the control range was approximately ± 14 dB. With all controls set to flat, the equalizer distortion was between 0.003 and 0.006 per cent at 1,000 Hz for all outputs from 0.1 to 7 volts (the output clipped at 7.3 volts). The C-101 had unity gain with its controls set to flat. With the equalizer filters bypassed, the frequency response was down 0.1 dB at 5 Hz and 50 kHz and down 0.3 dB at 100 kHz. The unweighted noise in the output was less than 80 microvolts, our measurement limit. A 0-dB reading on the level display required an input of 0.575 volt with the INPUT LEVEL knob set to CAL. At maximum sensitivity only 15.6 millivolts gave a 0-dB indication, and the control was able to cut off the display section completely at its counterclockwise limit.

The center frequencies of the spectrum-analyzer filters were well within 5 per cent of their indicated values. The SPL readings on pink noise were in error by 4 to 10 dB at

the CAL setting when compared to the readings of a Scott 450-B sound-level meter at the same position. Typically, the C-101 read about 6 dB higher than the Scott meter. However, the *relative* level readings, using either the LEVEL or the RTA modes, were as accurate as the 2- or 4-dB display intervals would allow.

● **Comment.** The special qualities of the Audio Control C-101 are directly related to how rapidly and accurately one can equalize one's room and speakers with it. In the past we have found this to be a laborious and sometimes even unrewarding process with other equalizers not accompanied by a spectrum analyzer. A scanning spectrum analyzer such as the H-P 3580A we use for many measurements is not well suited to pink-noise measurements, nor is it as convenient to use as a real-time analyzer that displays all frequencies simultaneously.

With the C-101, the complete equalization took no more than 5 minutes. We were able to obtain an essentially flat response from 32 to 15,500 Hz from almost any speaker we used, including some small ones that one would hardly expect to cover that range under any conditions. Of course, one cannot get more from a speaker than it is able to deliver, and care must be used to avoid overdriving the speaker if a large equalizer boost is needed in any part of its range. Still, it was a revelation to learn how much improvement could be made in the overall sound of almost any speaker, large or small.

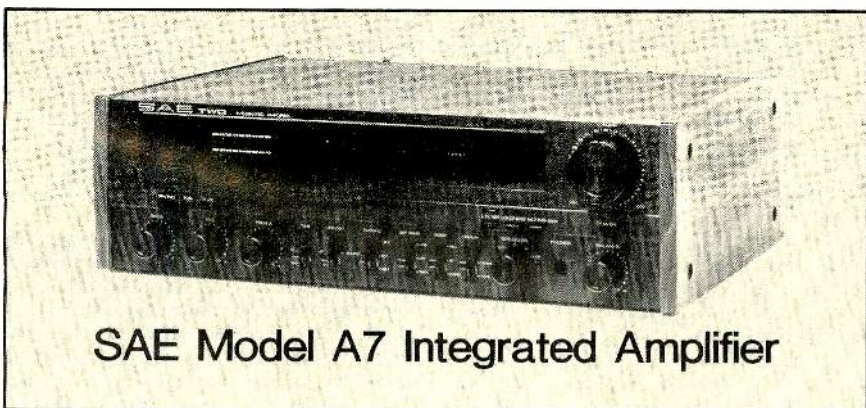
A full room equalization normally requires finer control than is possible with an octave-band equalizer (1/3 octave or even smaller intervals are really necessary). Nev-

ertheless, the C-101 makes a worthwhile improvement, probably because it eliminates the notoriously untrustworthy human ear from the process—which is, after all, one of objective *measurement* and not one involving subjective quality judgments. If the instrument did not do its job properly, the end result would almost certainly be worse than the unequalized sound, but since it was in every case a significant improvement, we can only conclude that the C-101 was equal to the task.

Once the room was equalized, we pulled out the microphone plug and found the spectrum analyzer display of the electrical program to be highly informative. As the unusually detailed instruction manual states, the C-101 is "one heckuva light show" and one can learn a great deal about the actual frequency and energy distribution of music by watching it in action. The manual, which was only in preliminary form at the time of test, was one of the best we have ever seen for a consumer product; written in a breezy, conversational style, it leaves no question unanswered about how the Audio Control C-101 should or should not be used.

This equalizer/analyzer is, in short, an impressive package of electronic capabilities priced at a level that would have been unthinkable only a year or two ago. No doubt semiconductor developments have had much to do with this, but we sense also a considerable engineering talent behind the C-101. Maybe not every audiophile *needs* one, but everyone who has a chance to use and enjoy this intriguing product will surely *want* one.

Circle 143 on reader service card



THE SAE Model A7 integrated amplifier is one of that company's "SAE Two" line of moderately priced components manufactured in Japan to SAE designs and specifications. Like the other SAE Two units, the Model A7 is finished in satin black with walnut-finish wooden side plates. The Model T7 digital tuner is a matching companion piece.

The SAE Model A7 is rated to deliver 70 watts per channel to 8-ohm loads from 20 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.05 per cent total harmonic or intermodulation distortion. The upper portion of its front panel appears to be a conventional tuner "dial window," with a single large knob to its right where a tuning control is usually located. In this case, however, that knob is the volume

control, and it is lightly detented at forty positions.

Much of the area behind the window is devoted to the amplifier's fluorescent level display, two parallel rows of light segments that form blue lines proportional in length to the instantaneous power output in each channel. The lights are calibrated at 3-dB intervals over a 30-dB range. Adjacent to each row of lights is a scale calibrated in watts (delivered to 8-ohm loads) from 0.07 to 70 watts, and beyond the 70-watt indication is a red PEAK light that presumably indicates an overload condition.

The power display can be switched to read the signal voltage at the tape-recording outputs (in which case the display reading is not affected by the volume-control setting). The words POWER and TAPE appear in red behind the window to identify the display mode. Two other illuminated indicators, marked TAPE 1 and TAPE 2, show the tape-monitor-switch settings.

Just below the window are a number of small pushbutton switches with a red LED above each of them. The four at the left—marked PHONO 1, PHONO 2, TUN, and AUX—are input selectors; the three at the right are

marked L. FILTER, LOUDNESS, and MUTING (-20 dB). The remaining button, which does not have a LED associated with it, is the power switch.

The remaining controls form another row across the bottom of the panel. There are center-detented knobs for the bass, mid, and treble tone controls and the balance control. The SPEAKERS knob activates either, both, or neither of two sets of speaker outputs. A headphone jack is located between the SPEAKERS knob and the BALANCE control.

The remaining controls are six lever switches. The TONE switch bypasses the tone-control circuits, and the DISPLAY switch selects either the power or the tape readout on the fluorescent display. The tape-monitor switch connects the amplifier to the playback output of either of the two

inches high, including the knobs and feet. It weighs 22¼ pounds. Suggested list price is \$400.

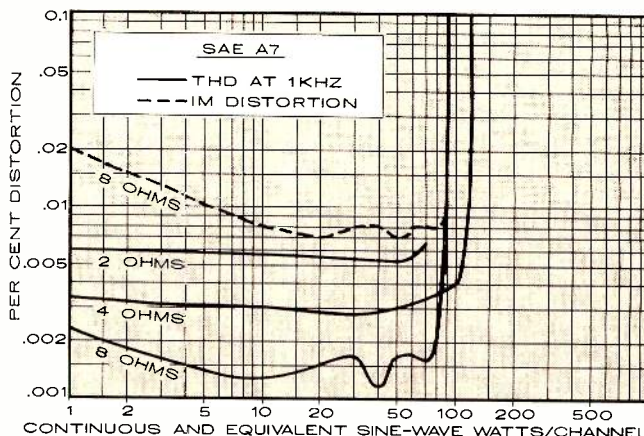
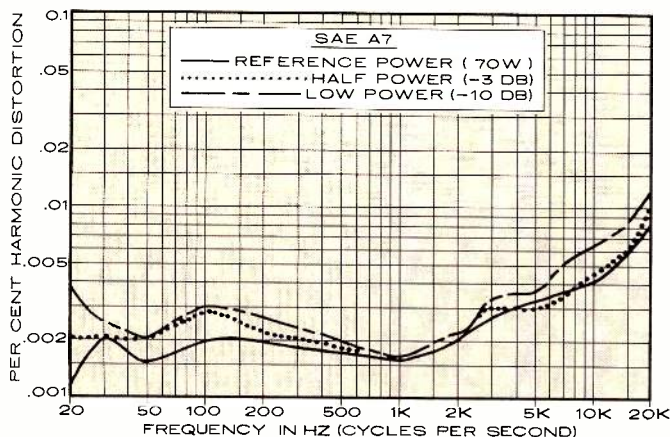
● **Laboratory Measurements.** The one-hour preconditioning period at one-third rated power left the top of the SAE Model A7 moderately warm directly over the power-transistor heat sinks (which are enclosed within the cabinet and cooled by convection with air that enters the bottom of the cabinet and exits at the top).

The output at clipping into 8-ohm loads at 1,000 Hz was 90 watts per channel, for an IHF clipping-headroom rating of 1.09 dB. Although the amplifier carries no power ratings with other load impedances, the clipping-power outputs with 2-, 4-, and 16-ohm loads were 78, 128, and 51 watts per channel, respectively. The short-term maxi-

and 0.0068 per cent at 70 watts. The amplifier's protective relay cut it off at about 80 watts with 2-ohm loads.

The excellent low-distortion characteristics of the SAE Model A7 were maintained across the full audio-frequency range. At full power or less, the distortion was about 0.002 per cent from 20 to 2,000 Hz and rose smoothly to about 0.01 per cent at 20,000 Hz. The slew rate of 20 volts per microsecond is perfectly satisfactory for its power rating (or even for a considerably more powerful amplifier), and the rise time was 3 microseconds. The IHF Slew Factor was 5 as a result of the protective relay's shutting down the amplifier when it was driven by a "full-power" 100-kHz input signal. A high-power signal at that high a frequency would never be encountered in normal use.

The bass tone-control turnover frequency



tape decks the amplifier can handle or to the selected source, and next to it is a dubbing switch that connects the decks for copying tapes from either one to the other. The SAE Model A7 has a third insertion point in its signal path, for accessory signal processors such as equalizers or noise reducers, so that the tape-recording control features need not be sacrificed for those purposes. The switch marked EXT PROS connects such a device into the line (where it will operate on the signal being heard) or into the tape outputs for modifying a signal before it is recorded. The remaining switch (MODE) provides stereo, reversed stereo, or mono operation.

The speaker terminals in the rear of the amplifier are insulated spring clips marked to indicate that two sets of 4-ohm speakers can be used with the Model A7, from which we infer that it is one of the few amplifiers for which 2-ohm loads are permissible (although it carries no specific rating for that load). In addition to the various signal-input and -output connectors, there are PRE OUT and MAIN IN jacks joined by removable jumper links so that devices such as electronic-crossover networks can be connected between the preamplifier outputs and power-amplifier inputs. There are two unswitched a.c. outlets and two switched outlets, the latter rated for a total load of 550 watts.

The SAE Model A7 is approximately 18¼ inches wide x 13¼ inches deep x 5⅞

inches high, including the knobs and feet. It weighs 22¼ pounds. Suggested list price is \$400. The output at clipping into 8-ohm loads at 1,000 Hz was 90 watts per channel, for an IHF clipping-headroom rating of 1.09 dB. Although the amplifier carries no power ratings with other load impedances, the clipping-power outputs with 2-, 4-, and 16-ohm loads were 78, 128, and 51 watts per channel, respectively. The short-term maxi-

mum output with the 20-millisecond tone bursts of the IHF dynamic-headroom test signal was 208, 139, and 90 watts for 2-, 4-, and 8-ohm loads. The IHF dynamic headroom (8-ohm) therefore was 1.09 dB, making the Model A7 one of the very few amplifiers having identical IHF clipping-headroom and dynamic-headroom ratings (which indicates exceedingly tight power-supply regulation).

A reference power output of 1 watt required a high-level input of 17.5 millivolts (mV) or a phono input of 0.25 mV. The A-weighted signal-to-noise ratios were identical at 77 dB for all inputs (referred to 1-watt output). The phono input overloaded at 205 mV at both 1,000 Hz and 20 Hz. At 20,000 Hz, the equivalent overload input was 178 mV. The phono-input resistance was 41,000 ohms, shunted by a relatively low 70 picofarads.

The distortion at 1,000 Hz with 8-ohm loads was very low, between 0.001 and 0.002 per cent for all power outputs between 1 and 80 watts. The IM distortion was about 0.007 to 0.008 per cent from a few watts to 80 watts, rising at very low power levels to 0.02 per cent at 1 watt and 0.055 per cent at 0.1 watt.

When driving 4-ohm loads, the Model A7 had a distortion of 0.003 to 0.004 per cent from 1 to 110 watts. Even 2-ohm loads did not cause an appreciable rise in distortion, which measured 0.005 to 0.006 per cent from 1 to more than 50 watts output

varied from about 100 to 300 Hz as the tone control was adjusted, while the treble curves were hinged at about 2,000 to 3,000 Hz. The midrange tone control had its maximum effect between 1,000 and 2,000 Hz, although it affected almost the entire audio range. The loudness compensation boosted both low and high frequencies at reduced volume settings. The RIAA phono equalization was perfectly accurate from 70 to 20,000 Hz (any error was less than the width of the pen trace of our graphic recorder) and dropped an insignificant 1 dB at 20 Hz. It was completely unaffected by the inductance of a magnetic cartridge connected to the PHONO input.

The fluorescent power display responded very rapidly to program peaks. Although it was bright and easy to read, the location of the display behind the plane of the front panel makes it visible only from a rather narrow vertical viewing angle in front of the amplifier. At most power levels, the display indications were quite accurate. Since the lights are switched on and off abruptly, there is little ambiguity in the readings, and the error is typically 10 to 15 per cent at power readings above 4.5 watts and somewhat greater at the lower readings. The final PEAK light did not come on until the waveform was severely clipped.

● **Comment.** The SAE Model A7 is an excellent example of the "new breed" of ultra-
(Continued on page 52)

HEAR WHAT YOU'VE BEEN MISSING!

*Listen with an 801 Omnisonic Imager™,
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OMNISONIC IMAGERY™ IS HERE!

Our innovative state-of-the-art electronics create a totally unique sound environment never before possible. With an 801 Omnisonic Imager™, you can now experience the physiological sensation of what amounts to three-dimensional sound reproduction — what we call omnisonic imagery™ — from just two speakers! Sound appears to come from many sources in the listening area, depending on the quality of the signal source. A common reaction is to look about for other speakers. *And you don't have to sit rigidly fixed at a focal point between the speakers to enjoy omnisonic imagery™!*

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P.O. Box 307
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(203) 237-4203/265-9753



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Even after 100 plays your records will sound BETTER THAN NEW with Lifesaver!

Introducing LIFESAVER™ with DiscProtec™ formula, the multi-purpose record treatment from Audio-Technica. It's a long-term antistatic agent which lasts 100 plays or more. And a record preservative which protects against environmental attack and improves the effectiveness of any wet or dry record cleaner.

But LIFESAVER is also a dry lubricant which sharply reduces record-stylus friction. Tests* prove lower harmonic distortion from a disc treated with LIFESAVER after 100 plays than from the first play of an identical untreated record!

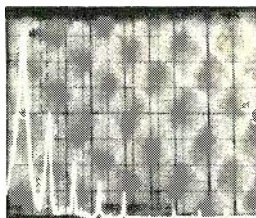
Your records will sound cleaner and quieter from the very first play with LIFESAVER. And 50 or even 100 plays later they'll still sound better than new. Just one easy application protects your library for years.

Enjoy better sound today and tomorrow with LIFESAVER! See dramatic proof at your Audio-Technica dealer today. Audio-Technica U.S., Inc., 33 Shawassee Ave., Dept. 50F, Fairlawn, Ohio 44313. In Canada: Audio Specialists, Inc., Montreal, P.Q.

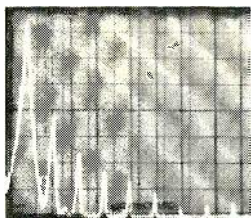
* From independent lab tests reported by Len Feldman in *Audio Magazine*, February, 1980. Write for your free reprint.



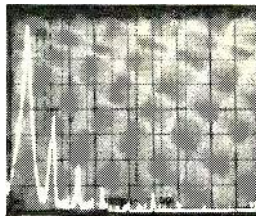
LIFESAVER LS-1 with DiscProtec™ formula. Treats 60 sides. \$12.95



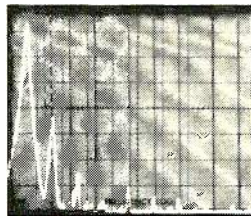
Harmonic distortion of an untreated disc during first playing.



Harmonic distortion of an untreated disc after 100 playings.



Harmonic distortion of an identical disc, first playing after LIFESAVER treatment. Distortion is immediately reduced.



Harmonic distortion of a LIFESAVER-treated disc after 100 playings. Distortion remains lower than a new, untreated disc.

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SAE Model A7 Integrated Amplifier

(Continued from page 50)

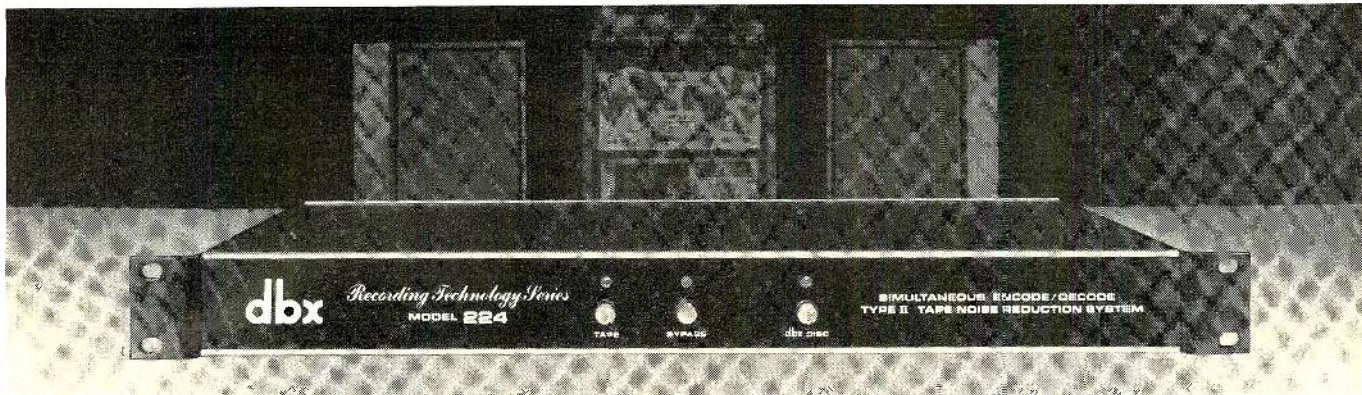
low-distortion amplifiers that are difficult to measure even with good laboratory instruments. While it is generally agreed that there is no intrinsic audible advantage in such vanishingly low distortion levels, they do indicate the ability of the engineers to meet their precise design goals.

Although the Model A7 does not present a technically overwhelming appearance from the front (possibly owing to its all-black motif, which tends to downplay the number of controls), it has a surprisingly high degree of flexibility. Provision for two high-level and two phono inputs is not unusual in amplifiers at this price level, but the combination of two tape-monitor loops, the external processor loop, and the interruptible preamplifier/power-amplifier connection makes possible rather complex system combinations using some of today's signal-processing accessories. It should be possible to connect expanders, noise reducers, time-delay devices, electronic crossover networks, and the like without even giving up the amplifier's basic tape-recording and dubbing capability. The unusually high switched a.c. load capacity of 550 watts means that extra power amplifiers (as required for bi- or tri-amplified systems or time-delay ambiance-enhancement systems) can be controlled from the Model A7 as well.

We do not generally go into detail about the "sound" of amplifiers since we find that when their power and loading limitations are observed they simply do not sound different one from the other. What makes a more immediate (and lasting) impression on us as we test an amplifier is how well (or poorly) it copes with unusual signal and loading conditions. Nothing we did to the Model A7 had any lasting effect on it or even required replacing a fuse (which was perhaps fortunate, for the fuses are inside the cabinet and not accessible to the user). When the Model A7 shut down due to excessive current demands from a 2-ohm load, service was automatically restored in a few seconds. It was never unstable (again, bursts of ultrasonic oscillation under certain conditions of drive and load are more common than many people would suppose, and they could well account for some of the sonic differences heard when listening to an overdriven or overloaded amplifier).

We could go on at some length about all the bad things the SAE Model A7 did not do. What it *did* do was amplify and control the signals we fed into it, contributing no audible noise or distortion to the program. It drove speakers of all kinds with ease, never calling attention to its presence by a click, thump, or other unwanted sound. As we see—and hear—it, that is what an amplifier is supposed to do, and that is what the Model A7 does so effectively. In brief, the SAE Model A7 is a fine medium-price, medium-power, very-high-performance amplifier with exceptional control versatility.

Circle 144 on reader service card



FOR \$275*, DBX TECHNOLOGY BRINGS YOUR HOME RECORDING SO CLOSE TO DIGITAL, IT'S ABSURD.

INTRODUCING THE DBX RECORDING TECHNOLOGY SERIES MODEL 224. THE BEST PERFORMANCE YOU CAN BUY FOR UNDER \$50,000.

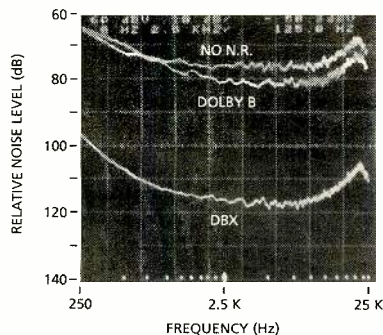
Digital recording means two things. No noise, and a full dynamic range of 90dB.

But until now, only recording engineers have been able to enjoy that incredible sound using studio recording systems costing \$50,000 or more.

Now, however, there's the new dbx Recording Technology Series Model 224, the state-of-the-art in home recording. It hooks right into your present tape system. And it lets you do almost everything you could do with a digital system, but for a whole lot less.

THE QUIETEST SOUND ON TAPE.

As for noise reduction, nothing on the market comes close to the Model 224.



Dolby reduces noise by only 10dB at best, and only in the high frequency range. dbx virtually eliminates tape hiss, reducing it by more than 30dB across the entire frequency range. (Unretouched laboratory photograph. Data from "The Importance of Dynamic Range," Audio Magazine, January, 1980. For a copy of the article, write dbx.)

The Dolby[®] system you've been putting up with certainly doesn't. It only reduces tape noise by 10dB at the most, and only in the high frequency range.

Compare that with the dbx Model 224, which reduces tape noise by more than 30dB across the whole frequency range. It virtually eliminates tape noise, without adding any audible distortion or changing the tonal character of the sound.



The result is a difference you can easily hear. In fact, you'll be able to record quiet music passages that would be lost in tape noise with any other system.

The result is a difference you can easily hear. In fact, you'll be able to record quiet music passages that would be lost in tape noise with any other system.

Conventional tape recorders limit dynamic range. With the dbx Model 224, you can get the dynamic range approaching that of a live performance.

DYNAMIC RANGE APPROACHING DIGITAL.

The Model 224 also gives you something else you've never heard before from a tape recorder: full dynamic range.

Dynamic range is the difference in volume between the loudest and quietest passages in a piece of music. It's just as important to the realism of music reproduction as flat frequency response, or accurate spatial perspective.

And although live performances—and digital master tapes—go up to 90dB of dynamic range, even the best home recordings have been limited to only about 50dB. So no matter how good your recorder is, you've been missing at least one third of your music's dynamic range.

Well, the Model 224 gives you the capability to record an unprecedented 85dB on open reel and 80dB on cassette.

So for the first time, you can make live recordings that capture virtually all the dynamic range of the original music.

In addition, the Model 224 is the only system that lets you tape fine audiophile records without losing any of their dynamic range.

And you can use the extra head room provided by the 224 to dramatically extend frequency response and minimize distortion during recording.

As if all that weren't enough, you can use the 224 to play dbx Discs, the Full Dynamic Range Recordings that deliver up to 90dB of music dynamics with negligible surface noise. Because the 224 includes the decoding system that makes your present stereo compatible with these phenomenal new discs.

HEAR IT TODAY.

The sound of digital recording really is here. Dynamic range approaching a live performance. Music heard against a background of virtual silence. And a purity of sound that's never been possible before in home tape recording.

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We think you'll agree with us. For \$275, you'd be crazy to pass it up.

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*Manufacturer's U.S. suggested retail price: actual price set by dealers; rackmount kit available at additional cost.

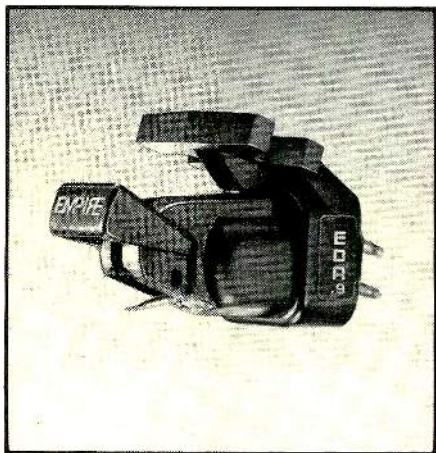
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In order to capture all the benefits of these recordings, you should have a phono cartridge specifically designed to reproduce every bit of information with utmost precision and clarity and the least amount of record wear.

The Empire EDR.9 is that cartridge. Although just recently introduced, it is already being hailed as a breakthrough by audiophiles, not only in the U.S., but in such foreign markets as Japan, Germany, England, France, Switzerland and Sweden.

At \$200, the EDR.9 is expensive, but then again, so are your records.

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EMPIRE



CIRCLE NO. 17 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Going on Record

By James
Goodfriend



MAIL-ORDER MOZART

TIME-LIFE RECORDS, the people who brought to those who buy their records through mail order the Beethoven Bicentennial Series (seventeen volumes), have now decided to bring us Mozart (number of volumes unspecified). Mozart is obviously (see Igor Kipnis' review of a group of his symphonies on page 72) getting "hot."

Time-Life's Beethoven set was an extensive selection from Deutsche Grammophon's "complete" Beethoven. The Mozart set will also be selective rather than complete in any sense, but it will include five operas (name 'em; you can't be wrong), large numbers of symphonies, piano concertos, sonatas, wind concertos, and string quartets, plus a selection of serenades, divertimentos, concert arias, and violin sonatas. Violin concertos, string and other quintets, variations, and sacred music were not mentioned in the information available to me, but presumably they will play some part in the whole. The performing artists thus far cited show the source of the recordings to be London Records, with occasional contributions from other companies.

The series will be available by mail from Time-Life Records, 541 North Fairbanks Court, Chicago, Ill. 60611. The price per volume is \$24.95 plus shipping and handling costs, or \$29.95 for Dolby-encoded cassettes. With the first volume you buy you get a copy of Arthur Hutchings' *Mozart, The Man, The Musician*, a large, impressive-looking, and erudition-filled book of almost three hundred pages (the page-numbering system is unorthodox) and multitudinous illustrations (many of which, oddly, have nothing to do with Mozart).

The contents of the first volume of the series—"The Late Piano Concertos"—very likely indicate some of the directions the series will follow and how the approach will differ from that of the Beethoven set. The five-record album contains Concertos Nos. 18 through 27 (K. 456, 459, 466, 467, 482, 488, 491, 503, 537, and 595) in performances by six different pianists, six different conductors, and six different orchestras. Such variety is categorically different from the approach of the Beethoven set and, to my mind, far preferable. Many listeners have simply never learned to differentiate

between the style of the performer and the substance of the music, and their perceptions, therefore, become frozen. For all the advantages of the "integral set" (and I would not deny there are some), repeated exposure to *one* performer's way with Beethoven or Mozart or Bach leads to a stultified, perhaps even false view of the music and its range of performance possibilities.

So there is in this set the sheer joy of some of the greatest and most delightful music Mozart or anyone else ever composed, but there is something else too. After having heard the vivacity of the playing of Daniel Barenboim (English Chamber Orchestra) and Vladimir Ashkenazy (Philharmonia Orchestra) in Concertos Nos. 18 and 19, respectively, the large-scale drama of Julius Katchen (Münchinger, Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra) in No. 20, and the four-square objectivity of Karl Engel (Hager, Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra) in No. 22, to come upon Clifford Curzon's (Kertész, London Symphony Orchestra) laid-back, understated, exquisitely subtle performances of Nos. 23 and 24 is a mind-expanding experience. This is not to say that Curzon's performances are necessarily the best in the set, but simply that *his* Mozart is so different from the others that it makes one that much more aware of the range of this music. Actually, my own favorites here are Katchen's D Minor (which may be too *big* a performance for some tastes) and Alicia de Larrocha's No. 27, in B-flat (Solti, London Philharmonic), a less earthy and more subtle performance than one might expect from her of this subtlest of all Mozart piano concertos.

But *most* of the performances here are admirable (Ashkenazy also plays No. 21 and Larrocha No. 25). Only Engel's rather pedantic-sounding Nos. 22 and 26 (probably the two most difficult to bring off) seem to me less than that, and there may be listeners who like those as well as any.

The recording quality is variable but nevertheless than adequate, the pressings good. The set comes with an eighteen-page booklet of excellent notes by Richard Freed, Alan M. Kriegsman, and Klaus G. Roy—and, of course, there is that bonus book. □

The only car tape that eliminates the car.

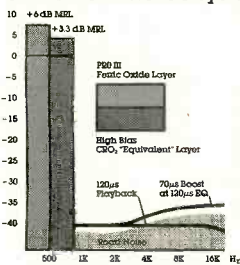


BASF PRO III is the only one for the road.

Today's more sophisticated car tape systems are every bit as good as many home sound systems - until you start your engine. Then, engine noise, wind, tire whine and car vibration all begin to compete with the sound of your stereo. Until now, the listening environment of a moving car was something less than a moving experience. PRO III has changed all that.

There's an "extra" in every cassette.

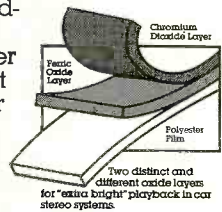
Since the playback equalization of most car stereo systems is 120- μ s, we designed PRO III at 70- μ s. This gives you an "extra brightness" during playback, and it gives your high frequencies an added boost that stand out dramatically above ambient car noise.



Two different layers make all the difference.

PRO III has two separate tape layers for peak performance even under the most difficult listening conditions. The top layer is pure chromium dioxide for unsurpassed highs and low background noise. The bottom layer is ferric oxide for superior lows and great

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Like every BASF Professional Tape, PRO III comes with a lifetime guarantee that covers everything. Should any BASF cassette tape ever fail for any reason, we'll replace it at no cost. PRO III also comes with our patented "Jam-Proof" Security Mechanism - a BASF exclusive that provides smooth, exact winding, alleviates wow and flutter, and puts an end to tape jamming.

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PRO I normal bias.
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Motown Records

IN a clearing surrounded by lush green foliage and covered by the soaring glass dome of the New York Botanical Gardens in the Bronx, Stevie Wonder stands surrounded by an attentive crush of press, paparazzi, groupies, and traveling companions. The occasion is a promotional party, part of Motown Records' media blitz in support of Wonder's just-released, long-awaited new album, "Journey Through the Secret Life of Plants." Buses full of members of the Fourth Estate have been carted to this appropriately secret destination, and the noise and confusion as they scramble for seats is drowning out Stevie's opening remarks. He falls silent, fingers the cordless silver microphone, and waits.

"Can we hold it down, please!" shouts Ira Tucker, the slender black man standing to Stevie's right. "Can we please show the host some respect!" The noise subsides. Tucker smiles like the veteran of press wars he is. He's been with Stevie since the 1972 Rolling Stones tour/extravaganza, which turned out to be a kind of baptism under fire. "The guys handling press for the Stones figured, 'Why let anybody know about Stevie?' After all, he was just the opening act and the tour was completely sold out up front." But Tucker helped his client get considerable publicity mileage out of the grueling month and a half of one-nighters, and he stayed on as his inventive, innovative press agent. In 1973, for example, Tucker daringly blindfolded the press for an "Innervisions" listening party (and later helped pull Stevie out of a two-week coma after a near-fatal auto accident by continuously humming Stevie's *Higher Ground* in his ear). In 1976, he helped fly a plane-load of reporters to a farm in Massachusetts for the premiere of "Songs in the Key of Life." Tonight's horticultural blow-out is similarly his brainchild.

It is also something of an anomaly in the middle of the record industry's current economy binge, but then Stevie Wonder is something of an anomaly himself. Conventional wisdom has it

that to sell records you must tour regularly and release albums at nine-month intervals. Not Stevie. It has been three years since his last album or live performance. Before that, it was two years. These long silences have become almost legendary, and Stevie has started writing little explanatory notes about them on his album jackets. The one on "Journey" reads "Each life has its own beat, moving through space at its own pace . . . waiting is not what I meant for you . . . I will move as swiftly as life demands, but never so fast as not to give you my very best."

This kind of intense, one-to-one audience rapport is rare in pop music (though it has been noted that Stevie's influence on the pop audience in the Seventies was as pervasive as Bob Dylan's was in the Sixties), but it is no rarer than the music that inspires it. No matter how carefully you sift through the extraordinary history of Lulu Hardway's third child, Steveland Morris (born, as he says, "blind, black, and bowlegged on May 13, 1950 in Saginaw, Michigan"), you'll find no direct models for the sounds he has created nor hints of the direction his career would take. Which is not to say that Stevie Wonder *has* no musical influences or that his is not a classic American rags-to-riches tale, but rather that there has never been anyone quite like him before.

THE saga of Wonder's rise to international superstardom is fairly well known, but the details bear recounting. When Stevie was eleven years old, a cousin introduced him to Ronnie White, then (as now) singer with Smokey Robinson's old group the Miracles. Stevie, weaned on rhythm-and-blues, already knew his way around a piano, could also play drums and harmonica, was, as a matter of fact, pretty much a prodigy. White set up an audition at a small-time record company headed by a frustrated singer/songwriter named Berry Gordy Jr., and Stevie was signed almost immediately. There were a few local hits (including

STEVE WONDER

"The Eighties are just wide open, waiting for someone to take them. I think that someone is Steve."

By Zita Allen

STEVE WONDER...

"Everyone has a special part or place in my life, and I thank them for that....It's a kind of spiritual collaboration."

the immortal *Contract on Love*), and then his career exploded with a raunchy harmonica number, recorded live, called *Fingertips*. The record sold 1.6 million copies, and Little Stevie Wonder, billed as "the twelve-year-old genius," was well on his way to becoming a household word. So, quite naturally, was Motown Records (named, of course, for Detroit, America's "Motor Town"), Gordy's by-now not so small-time label.

Throughout the Sixties, Stevie churned out hits for the fledgling Motown empire: *Uptight*, *Nothing's Too Good for My Baby*, *Signed, Sealed and Delivered*, *If You Really Love Me*, and several others (including, oddly enough, an innovative cover version of Dylan's *Blowin' in the Wind*). Most of these were written for Stevie by the writers of Motown's sizable pool of "house" composers, just as others were written for the Supremes, the Four Tops, or the Temptations. Occasionally he was allowed to write or produce for other artists in the corporate stable (indeed, he spent every free minute, when he wasn't attending the Michigan School for the Blind, getting under foot at other people's sessions), but as a rule the company had him locked into the role of a performer. And there were, of course, the usual blunders. Motown, even then, had a hungry eye on the Las Vegas scene, with the results that Stevie was assigned not only a cover of Tony Bennett's *If I Ruled the World* but an all-harmonica version of *Alfie* as well.

When Stevie reached the age of twenty-one, however, his contract with the label had to be renegotiated, and this kind of handling just had to change. "I had gone about as far as I could go," he said at the time. "I wasn't growing; I just kept repeating 'the Stevie Wonder Sound,' and it didn't express how I felt about what was happening in the world. I decided to go for something else besides a winning formula: I wanted to see what would happen if I changed." And so he went into seclusion at a Howard Johnson Motor

Inn on Manhattan's West Side, hired a lawyer named Johanan Vigoda, and attempted to come to grips with Motown's benevolent but stifling patriarchy. After six months of haggling, Stevie emerged with a virtual Declaration of Independence: he got possession of a million dollars that had been held in trust for him by Gordy, higher royalties, publishing rights to his own songs, and, most important, an unprecedented degree of artistic control. The ink was hardly dry on the 120-page contract before Stevie released "Music of My Mind" (an album edited down, at a cost of \$200,000 of his own money for studio time, from over two hundred self-produced and self-written tunes he had in the can). His second decade in the music business, this time as a full-fledged, independent pop creator, had begun in earnest.

WONDER'S Seventies music, a prodigious mix of r-&-b, rock-and-roll, jazz, electronics, and general razzmatazz, was almost alarmingly successful both commercially and critically. By mid-decade, as lofty a voice as *Time* magazine decreed that Stevie was "a 'monster,' a star who can automatically fill any arena or stadium and whose records, both in the stores and on the radio, transcend musical categories in their appeal." The facts bear this out. All the Seventies albums went platinum, each spawned (at the very least) one gold single, and their creator won a total of fourteen (!) Grammys. *You Are the Sunshine of My Life*, which won Best Song in 1974, is already a standard and may well be the most covered song of the last decade. Perhaps not since Lennon and McCartney has a songwriter been so widely admired (McCartney, for his part, drove the point home by putting "We Love You, Stevie" in Braille on the cover of a Wings album).

Stevie has won much of this immense respect from both industry and public by consciously ignoring the artistic boundaries critics are so fond of. Pigeonholes, says Wonder, give him a serious case of claustrophobia. He bristles at the merest mention of such musical labels as r-&-b because they suggest to him the crippling restrictions once wrapped up in the old euphemism "race music." "It implies that if you're one color you make one kind of music, and if you're another color you make a totally different kind. Music is supposed to be colorless." Colorless or not, there is clearly something very unusual about *his* music. Just before the release of "Plants" he negotiated yet another landmark contract with Motown, one giving him even more artistic control and a rumored \$13 million.

I chatted with Wonder several weeks after the New York Botanical Gardens party. The reviews for "Journey" were in, and with a few exceptions they were overwhelmingly positive. Steve (this "Little Stevie" business has got to stop somewhere for this very grown-up man) was on a break from a hectic concert schedule, and he took time between an appearance at Madison Square Garden and another in Nassau, the Bahamas, to talk about his music.

It's well after five o'clock, but the plush Manhattan office suite of Black Bull, Steve's publishing company, is all hustle and bustle. Steve and Ira Tucker shuck and jive a few minutes, telling jokes that would make Redd Foxx blush, before Tucker gets down to business and outlines Steve's itinerary. Cal-

Kwame Brathwaite



Steve Wonder backstage with son Keita

vin, one of Steve's brothers, flips on a color TV in the spacious white-walled conference room and boasts to a reporter that his wife designed Steve's concert wardrobe. Yolanda, the shy, big-boned mother of Steve's two children, Aisha and Keita, rummages through the refrigerator and chats with a secretary. A cousin dashes from room to room taking care of odds and ends. The bustling activity of this tight-knit circle of family and friends is clearly designed to surround Steve, on stage and off, like a buffer protecting him from outsiders, some of them well-meaning, but others mere con artists.

Now, though, for a brief moment he is relatively alone. Perched on the edge of a beige sofa in the office's cozy piano room, he says "my life is surrounded by love" in a manner sincere and direct enough to dignify the most mundane of utterances. His eyes are hidden behind tortoise-shell sunglasses, and he talks openly about his blindness: "One eye is blind because of a dislocated nerve, the other has a cataract." A secretary brings Steve a mug of hot herb tea and closes the door on the way out so the interview can be conducted in an oasis of calm.

Steve leans forward and immediately tackles the subject of why some critics were so surprised at his choice of a symphonic structure for "Journey." "I chose that structure because I thought the album demanded to be done that way. It might surprise some people, but not my fans. The people who will be shocked are the ones who haven't listened to me consistently. You see, I've been working on this all my life, really." He pauses, sipping from the mug and carefully placing it on the floor by his right foot. "Maybe it does sound different, but the point is, every step I've taken so far has been an influence on this album. For instance, I use synthesizers here just as I used them on *Pastime Paradise*. I use the dream machine here that I used on *Village Ghetto Land*. *Black Man* on 'Songs in the Key of Life' has a lot in common with the ballad *Same Old Story* on this album because both talk about the various people who've made contributions to our American culture. And, just as I used a chorus of black children on 'Songs in the Key of Life,' I have a chorus of Japanese children singing the lullaby *Ai No Sono* on this album. If the critics listen—if they really listen—to 'Journey' and put their hearts into it, then I can respect their opinions, but if they haven't listened, well, I don't want to hear a word they have to say."

THIS same feisty spirit is doubtless what made Steve take on the remarkable task of writing a motion-picture score in the first place. The project originated several years ago when Ira Tucker introduced Steve to Michael Braun, who was making a film based on the best seller *The Secret Life of Plants*.

"Braun wanted me to write a song for the closing of the picture, so I did what was to be called *Tree* on the album. Well, that tune wasn't compatible with the rest of the music someone else had already scored for the film, so they asked me to do the whole thing. I didn't really feel comfortable with the idea at first. I felt that I couldn't do it, but then I decided, well, it was a challenge. And,

Kwame Brathwaite



Wonder and friends: singer Al Jarreau (left), flutist Bobbi Humphrey, "vitar" player Jon Blair, singer/keyboardist George Duke, and TV actor Ralph Carter (Good Times).

too, the more I heard people ask, 'How will Steve, being blind, be able to write music for a film?', the more of a challenge it became. I just knew I'd have to figure out some way to do it.

"So we used headphones. In the left headphone Michael would explain what was happening in the film visually, and in the right headphone my engineer Gary [Olazabal] would give me the time of the actual frames. He would tell me the starting time of a sequence and count the frames till it would end. They put it all on this four-track tape: the sound of the film, the sound of Michael explaining, and the sound of Gary counting on three of the tracks; the fourth would be used for the music whenever I finished it. Then they made me a copy. I'd take it home, listen to it a few times, and work the music out on a

tape cassette. I would play along with it, and get the time signature I felt was conducive to the sequence. That's how we did it."

At first it wasn't as simple as it might sound, however. "You've got to remember that I worked with this quite a while. The first stuff I did I didn't like, so I did it over again. But, in the end, you know what it was really? God just gave it to me. He gave it all to me, he truly did.

"I was staying at my mother's house one day, just listening. For the first time I was by myself and I was listening. I came up with this thing. [He hums the opening bars of the first tune on the album, the instrumental *Earth's Creation*.] You know, it was like a big monster plant growing. Well, from there I began to feel more and more

Kwame Brathwaite



STEVE WONDER

“... the more I heard people ask, ‘How will Steve, being blind, be able to write music for a film?’, the more of a challenge it became.”

comfortable, and I let my creativity go free. I just said, ‘Let me try this. It’s different!’ And I tried, and I felt real good about it, and it just got easier and easier.”

That is, as “easy” as it can be when you have to produce a double album almost singlehandedly. Wonder must be used to it by now. Look at any one of his album jackets and most of the time you’ll find he’s written both words and music, played most of the accompanying instruments, and sung lead and back-up vocals on most of the tunes. This might lead some to conclude that Wonder is a sort of Rundgrenesque technocrat maverick running indulgently amuck through the recording studio. They would be mistaken, for he does have a very special kind of help. Take another look at those album jackets and you’ll find a list of family and friends he thanks “for giving one of the greatest gifts that can be received—your time and your kindness.” On “Songs in the Key of Life” the list seems endless, running the gamut from A (his daughter Aisha) to Z (Frank Zappa), with the likes of David Bowie, Natalie Cole, Roberta Flack, and David Sanborn in between. “Everyone has a special part or place in my life, and I thank them for that because whatever they have given has been part of whatever my creativity has come to. It’s a kind of spiritual collaboration.”

“Journey” has a list of collaborators too. Steve wrote the single, *Send One Your Love*, at Roberta Flack’s house. “We were working on a song for the album [*Don’t Make Me Wait Too Long*] and I said, ‘Ooh, Roberta, I’ve got to get this song finished.’ She sat right there writing down the lyrics while I tinkered at the piano.”

The late Minnie Riperton inspired the haunting instrumental cut *Ecclesiastes*. “That was her favorite chapter in the Bible.” Steve shakes his head from side to side, murmuring her name over and over again.

“I was in love with her. When I heard her album [*Come into My Gar-*

den] I said, ‘Oh, I’m going to marry her.’ Syreeta and I had just broken up, and I said, ‘Oh, that’s the one, that’s it, buddy.’ Minnie was so elegant.” His voice trails off.

“I dedicated *Ecclesiastes* to her. I wrote it, and then I found out that she was really, really worse. She heard the whole album on tape before she died—I wanted her to hear everything.”

“Journey” has actual artistic collaborators as well as inspirations. “I collaborate with people because they might have something to say and can say it better than I can,” he admits. In



A younger Wonder with the instrument that first made him famous.

this case this means his ex-wife Syreeta Wright and friends Yvonne Wright and Michael Sembello. “I just give them the basic idea of a song on tape. I might have words here and there and the basic feeling. I sing it, but I don’t finish it either because I don’t have the chance or the inspiration isn’t coming fast enough. Or I just feel they could write a better lyric.”

“For example, Michael: he wrote one of the songs on “Key of Life,” a song called *Saturn*. I was about to write something like . . . [he leans over and sings into my tape recorder] . . . Packing my bags/Going away ‘cause you don’t treat me right/‘Cause you treat me like a dog, a dirty dog/Going back to Saginaw where the grass is green. . . .” He stops and chuckles. “Michael’s lyric is much better.”

Another important factor in the creation of Steve’s music is his engineer. For “Journey” Gary Olazabal not

only set things up so that Steve could compose music for a movie he couldn’t see, but he dashed around taping the roar of a Concord jet taking off in L.A., the explosion of a ’59 Ford in Mexico, an elephant in the zoo, the shush of waves lapping against the hull of a ship, and countless other sounds Steve mixed in with the instruments (using a new gadget called the digital melodian). Steve himself used to carry a tape recorder around with him all the time, sometimes stopping in mid-conversation to record musical doodling that he would later develop into full-blown songs. “I’m going to start doing that again,” he says. “There’s so much *music* in the air.”

And other places. “You hear this music in your mind first; that’s the way it is for me, anyway. Then I go after getting it exactly the way I imagined it. If it doesn’t come out the way it is in my mind, it has to come out either better than that or equivalent to it. If it’s in a different fashion, it’s got to be just as good.”

So far, Steve’s prolific output has taken him through two decades and into the beginning of a third. Tucker insists, “The Eighties are just wide open, waiting for someone to take them. I think that someone is Steve. He’s still here, he’s still available, still accessible. Not many artists made it through the Seventies. Where is Al Green? What happened to Barry White? What happened to Peter Frampton? One minute you see them, the next minute they’re gone, buried in the Seventies. Steve has survived two decades already, and he started out the beginning of the Seventies as just an opening act for the Rolling Stones. Why, by the mid-Eighties he’ll have been in this business for twenty years and he won’t even be thirty-five.”

Steve, on the other hand, just looks at the future with an air of wonder, patience, and gratitude for what he’s already received. Life, after all, has been good to him.

“As I look back on my life,” he says philosophically, “I know I could not have known the good without the bad I’ve had. We’ve traveled a long way and well.” He breaks off, and then, with a sly grin, he parodies a toothless old man. “Stebe ain’t dead yet. He’s still hot.”

As if he had to tell us. □

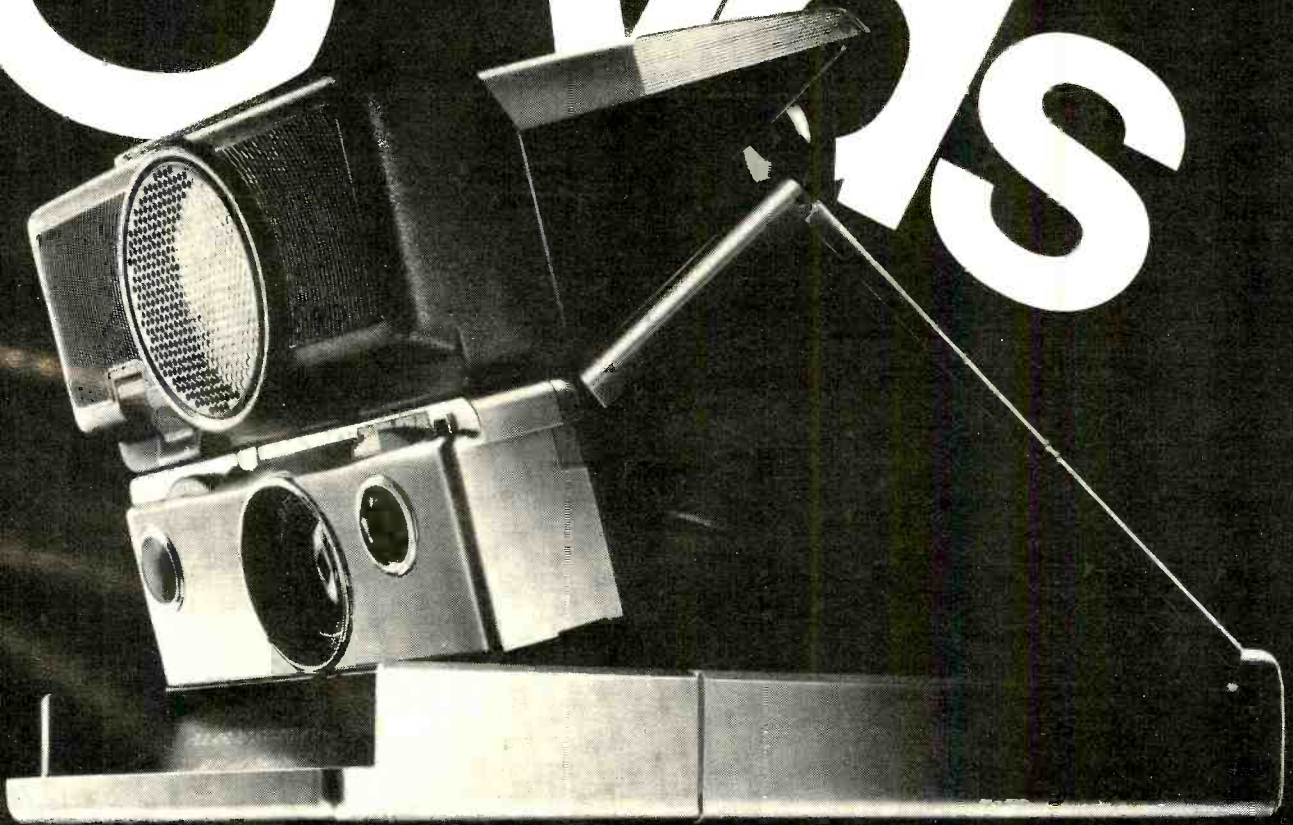
Zita Allen, formerly on the staff of Rolling Stone, has contributed to the Amsterdam News, the New York Times, and the Village Voice and has also been a TV commentator.

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Our technical staff reports on
NEW PRODUCTS
AT THE LAS VEGAS 1980
WINTER CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SHOW

As many audiophile readers must by now be aware, the Electronic Industries Association stages a pair of Consumer Electronics Shows each year. For the past several years, the smaller winter CES has taken place in Las Vegas, the larger summer show five months later in Chicago. Despite the use of the word "Consumer" in its official title, the show is consumer-oriented only in the sense that the products displayed are ultimately employed and enjoyed in the home (or, increasingly, in the car) rather than in a factory, a space shuttle, or an aircraft carrier.

The attendees at the shows, moreover, do not qualify as "consumers." You can't, in fact, even get in unless you are a member of the "trade," meaning that you are a manufacturer, importer, wholesaler, retail dealer, or manufacturer's "rep" for the equipment being shown (the "press," needless to say, gets a special dispensation). The attendees are there essentially to buy and sell, and many measure a show's success by the dollar value of the orders written—or at least by the buyer interest expressed in the

quantity of warm bodies flowing through the exhibit area.

For the exhibitors, the Winter Consumer Electronics Show (WCES) has always been slightly problematical: just how big a splash should they try to make? Obviously, if the attendance is going to be significantly smaller than that at the summer show (or if the economy is slow, dealer cash flow is constricted, or whatever), then the introduction of important new products will be held off until then. On the other hand, if orders can be diverted from the competition by an early-bird announcement of a new product, or if dealer reaction to changes in features or styling is being researched, or if new dealers or reps are being sought, then the high price of an exhibit at the WCES may be worth the investment in time, money, and hard work.

In any case, the number of both exhibitors and attendees at the WCES over the years has been growing, and this year's show was the biggest yet: the sponsors claimed an attendance of more than 50,000.

The Jockey Club, a smallish hotel located at about the center of the Las

Vegas "strip" action area, housed the exhibitors of "high-end" or "esoteric" components. The concentration of audio equipment in a single locale had substantial advantages for those footsore seekers—and sellers—of equipment representing the ultimate audio truths. Those who had to brave the main show in the cavernous expanse of the Las Vegas Convention Center were forced to seek out the audio products amidst a potpourri of calculators, home computers, electronic watches, telephones and accessories, TV, CB, radios, and video (cameras, recorders, games, and tapes—both blank and prerecorded, with ratings from G to XXX).

Among the new audio products (to be covered in detail below) there could be discerned a trend toward a mild upgrading of the dollar/performance ratio and a more sensible approach to the power race that has in the recent past produced unlistable and even uninstalleable 200-watt-per-channel receivers. Given the inflation that has troubled the U.S. and Japan for the past decade, the fact that today one can actually buy a product

with improved performance over last year's models for about the same number of *inflated* dollars is a tribute both to the hi-fi industry's innovative talents and the tumbling costs of high-grade semiconductors.

The performance improvement in amplifier distortion is a nebulous thing, being far more measurable than it is audible, but it is very easy to get a handle on just what power has to cost. By the time you read this, both the Adcom and the Carver power amplifiers will have broken through the "dollar-per-watt" barrier, the Adcom through clever application of existing technology, the Carver through a radically new approach to power-supply/output-stage design.

As far as appearance is concerned, most of the new products seen were a joy to behold. They are slim, sleek, and low-profile, and they make extensive use of LEDs, fluorescent meters, and digital station readouts. The "slide-rule" dial scales that have been a very visible feature of all tuners and receivers since hi-fi's early days are being replaced slowly but irrevocably by the digital readouts. (The interim silliness of having a digital readout *plus* a mechanical dial is apparently coming to an end under the pressure of the increased cost of mechanical—rather than electronic—assemblies.)

A FINAL word: the conditions of show coverage as well as space limitations make it impossible to provide catalog-type coverage of every product in every manufacturer's line. We have therefore restricted ourselves to the *new* products that caught our attention; readers should remember, of course, that listings do not constitute approval nor omissions indicate disapproval. We apologize to those manufacturers who showed important products we somehow missed and assure our readers that they will be covered in the "New Products" columns in months to come.

The consensus of press and other show attendees seems to be that most manufacturers were holding back all, most, or at least some of whatever audio wonders they currently have in the works. Which means that the relative trickle of new products shown at the winter CES will probably swell to a flood by summer. In the meantime, what follows represents what we saw and heard in the Las Vegas Convention Center and the various hotels during the four days of the WCES in early January. And now . . . on with the Show!

Receivers

On the evidence of the units introduced at the January WCES, there seem to be two major developments in the receiver market. The first is the almost universal use of complex integrated circuits to perform some or most of the functions required of a stereo FM tuner. These ICs range from the somewhat "old-hat" ones that perform the stereo demultiplexing function to sets of chips for complete digital-synthesis FM and AM tuning.

The second major trend, as mentioned earlier, is toward lower power. Abandoning the "watts race" of a few years back, the largest receiver manufacturers seem to have stabilized their product lines with output powers reaching 100 watts per channel or so. Ironically, this comes at a time when wide-dynamic-range software is just becoming widely available and appreciated. Direct-to-disc, digitally mastered, and dbx-encoded discs generally require much higher peak powers than conventional recordings for clipping-free reproduction. Unfortunately, the specification most revealing of an amplifier's performance in this area, HIF dynamic headroom, is rarely given in data sheets, much less in press releases.

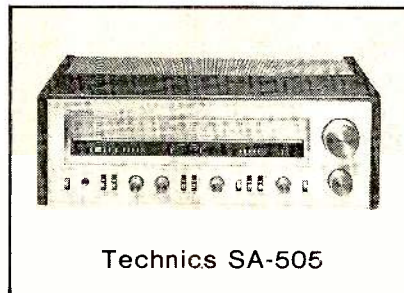
Both of these trends can be seen in new introductions by Sony. Receivers in their STR-V series have output powers ranging



Sony STR-V55

from 28 to 55 watts per channel and prices from \$260 to \$500. The two bottom-of-the-line models, the STR-V25 and STR-V35, each use servo-lock tuning. The multiplex decoding is performed by a phase-locked-loop (PLL) integrated circuit. Mechanical meter movements have been replaced by LED displays in these models, although tuning is still accomplished with a knob-and-dial system. But even this has been replaced in the two top-of-the-line models, the STR-V55 and STR-V45. Both of these units use frequency-synthesis tuning for AM and FM reception. Frequency-synthesis tuning simplifies—indeed, almost mandates—the use of automatic, preset, and scanning station selection in addition to digital station-frequency displays. The Sony units, along with quite a few other manufacturers', have all these features.

Technics' five receiver introductions have output powers between 18 and 63 watts per channel and prices from \$180 to \$420. All of them use an IC for their AM-tuner sections. Distortion at half-power



Technics SA-505

output, even for the 18-watt-per-channel SA-101, is specified as 0.009 per cent at 1,000 Hz. Interestingly, the phono-input signal-to-noise ratios given for this product line improve with decreasing receiver cost, from 73 dB for the SA-505 to 76 dB for the SA-101.

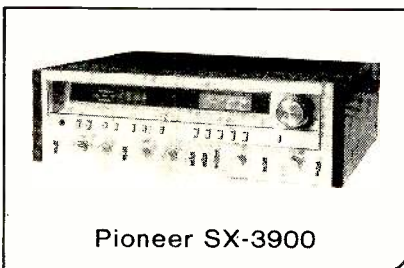
Marantz also introduced five receivers, with output powers from 88 watts per channel down to 25 watts into 4 ohms and prices from \$695 to \$275. The flagship model SR 8000 features frequency-syn-



Marantz SR 8000

thesis tuning, seven AM and seven FM presets, and electronic station searching. The FM tuner allows tuning in 50- and 100-kHz steps in addition to the normal 200-kHz divisions. This provides compatibility with cable-TV systems as well as the possible change in FM channel spacing now under consideration by the FCC. On the AM side, the SR 8000 will also tune in 9-kHz steps in addition to the conventional 10-kHz steps and is therefore compatible with the proposed change in AM channel spacing.

Pioneer announced four new models, all featuring Fluorocan meters to display output power (from 30 to 150 watts per channel, depending on the model). Prices range from \$800 to \$275. None of the models have station presets, but the top three models (the SX-3900, SX-3800, and SX-3700) have quartz servo-locked FM-



Pioneer SX-3900

LAS VEGAS 1980 WCES

tuning circuitry. The two top-of-the-line models have AM i.f. output jacks which, along with a suitable adaptor, will provide AM stereo if and when a standard system is approved.

Toshiba announced three new receivers with output powers from 50 to 25 watts per channel. All have DC power amplifiers and slim-line styling. The two higher-power units, the SA 5000 (50 watts) and SA 3500 (35 watts) have "feather boa" die-cast heat sinks with curved fins for efficient heat dissipation.

Onkyo displayed the 30-watt-per-channel TX-20 with servo-lock tuning, slim-line design, and a retail price of \$330. And NAD was showing their 7020 receiver, also priced at \$330. Although rated at 20 watts per channel, the unit has a 3-dB dynamic headroom and can, it is claimed, put out 72 watts into 2-ohm loads on an

intermittent, transient basis. It has infra-sonic and ultrasonic filters, and the power-amp section can be separated from the preamp and tuner sections.

Revox' B780 is claimed to have the world's highest suggested retail price for a receiver: \$2,699. The 75-watt-per-channel unit has electronic tuning, eighteen station presets, and digital readout of station frequency.

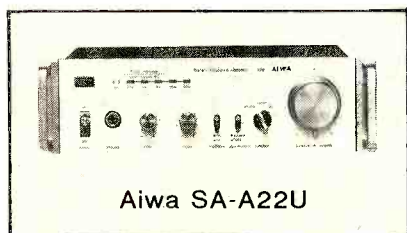


Onkyo TX-20

Amplifiers

The generalizations we made about receivers hold true for integrated amps as well: there's a trend toward lower powers, and creeping integrated-circuit featureism is much in evidence. Marantz showed three new integrated amplifiers, two of which (the PM-700 and PM-500) have five-band equalizers (the PM-700 has separate tone controls for each channel). The \$420 PM-700 delivers 87 watts into 4 ohms (or 70 watts into 8 ohms) with less than 0.05 per cent total harmonic distortion (THD). The amplifier is cooled by "heat pipes" using Freon fluorocarbon. The LED power meters on the two top-of-the-line units are calibrated in terms of peak-output power, so the PM-700's full-scale reading is 280 watts into 4 ohms.

Aiwa introduced two minicomponent integrated amps priced at \$160: the SA-A22U and the AA-16BH. Both measure



Aiwa SA-A22U

approximately 8 1/4 x 2 3/4 x 6 3/4 inches, but the former has a LED output-power display (from 0.1 to 40 watts) while the latter can be powered either from the a.c. line or by a car, boat, or camper battery.

Akai showed three integrated amps with output powers from 37 to 68 watts per channel and prices from \$230 to \$350. All have fluorescent power indicators with a range switch to monitor low output levels. Each amp can switch up to two tape decks and two loudspeaker systems, and each has a switchable infrasonic filter and a clipping indicator. Nikko's new units, the NA-890 to NA-590, deliver from 70



Nikko NA-890

to 35 watts per channel and are rack-mountable. They too have infrasonic filters. Denon's PMA-530 (60 watts per channel) has moving-coil and moving-magnet inputs; Rotel's RA-1010 has the same features plus LED power meters.

Kenwood's KA-80 (a match for their KT-80 tuner) delivers 48 watts per channel. Kenwood contends that the iron parts of a component's chassis cause some sort of distortion, and so their L-01A integrated amplifier eliminates this "magnetic distortion" by the use of polymers in the panel and chassis, nonmagnetic switch housings, and a power transformer separated from the amplifier. Output power of this \$1,500 unit is 100 very clean watts per channel.

Lux showed the L-580 (\$795, 100 watts per channel) and L-480 (\$495, 70 watts per channel) integrated amps, each incorporating their "duo-beta" double-feedback-loop circuitry; NAD showed a proto-



Lux L-580

type of their Model 3040 integrated amplifier. The unit has a projected price of about \$350 and will put out 40 watts per channel, but with a 3-dB dynamic headroom and higher outputs into low-impedance loads. Also, it will include a "speaker-lead-compensation" circuit and a bass-equalization circuit to extend the useful range of an acoustic-suspension speaker by a full octave at the low end. This feature will be adjustable for speakers of several different bass-resonance frequencies and will incorporate a 12-dB-per-octave bass boost with a Q of 0.7 and a steep infrasonic rolloff.

In separates, preamps seem to be getting more attention from manufacturers than power amplifiers. And power amps are also following the low-power trend common to integrated amplifiers and receivers, though at a slightly higher average power level.

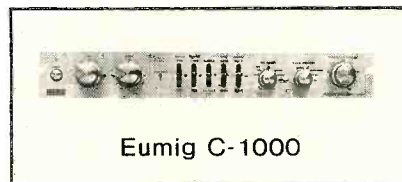
Self-contained moving-coil pre-preamps are becoming more common with preamplifiers. An example is Nikko's Beta 40 preamp (\$450), which has a moving-coil pre-preamp, switchable moving-magnet input resistance and capacitance, subsonic filter, and gold-plated connectors. Optonica's slim-line SO-9205 also has these features and sells for \$350. Both



Optonica SO-9205

of these units were designed before the current high prices for gold.

Eumig showed their \$580 C-1000 preamp (also with moving-coil preamp) and Phase Linear introduced the low-profile Model 3300, Series II preamp (\$399.95). Lux had two new models, the



Eumig C-1000

C-5000A (\$1,395) and the C-120A (\$445). Both had switchable tone-control frequencies. Beveridge had the RM-1/RM-2 two-chassis tube/transistor preamp using passive RIAA equalization with a claimed accuracy of ± 0.05 dB. Audio Research's SP-6B is also a transistor/tube unit with a new power supply, greater headroom, and automatic output muting (\$1,295). Tandberg showed a slim-line TCA-3002 preamp with moving-coil input and no more than 0.004 per cent THD on any input (\$1,000). MTI demonstrated their Model 500 (\$895) and Model 200

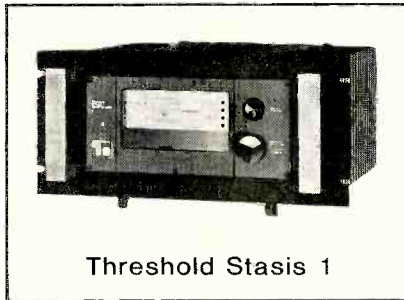
Tuners



MTI 500

(\$445) preamps, both with moving-coil pre-preamplifiers and switchable moving-magnet loading. The Model 500 can drive loudspeakers to moderate levels.

Among the new power amplifiers shown were the Lux M-4000A (180 watts per channel, \$1,495), the Eumig M-1000 (100 watts per channel, \$795), the Nikko Alpha 400 (220 watts per channel, "less than \$1,000"), the Nikko Alpha III (80 watts per channel, \$480), and the MTI Model 245 (45 watts per channel, "10-dB headroom," \$595). The slim-line Optonica SX-9305 (100 watts per channel, \$850) includes a ten-octave, 35-dB-dynamic-range spectrum analyzer in addition to LED output-power meters. Adcom had their dollar-per-watt GFA-1 200-watts-per-channel power amp (\$400), and at the other extreme, Threshold demon-

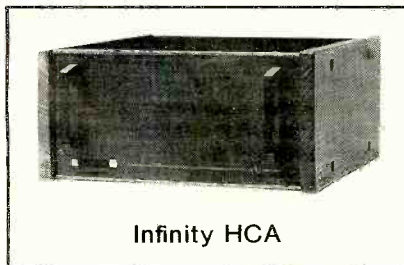


Threshold Stasis 1

strated their Stasis 1 power amplifier (\$3,850), a single-channel, 200-watt unit.

SAE brought out three models in their new "01" series, the 2401 (250 watts, \$950), the 2301 (175 watts, \$750), and the 2201 (100 watts, \$550).

Infinity, known for their loudspeakers, showed their HCA (hybrid class-A) power amp using a tube input stage and a transistor output stage. It had an output-power rating of 150 watts per channel (280 watts into 4-ohm loads) and is \$4,000. Conrad-Johnson's tube power amp is rated at 75 watts per channel into 4, 8, or 16 ohms (\$985). Tandberg's \$1,200 TPA-3003 power amp is rated at 150 watts per channel.



Infinity HCA

Automatic features made possible—and practical—by digital techniques and integrated circuits have taken over at all the price ranges of FM tuners. An example of this is the \$900 Sony ST-J88B. The unit incorporates quartz-locked digital frequency-synthesis tuning, seven station presets, phase-locked loop (PLL) multiplex decoding, active 19-kHz pilot-tone-cancellation circuits, and metal-nitride-



Sony ST-J88B

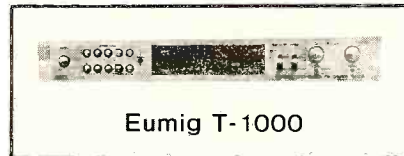
oxide-semiconductor (MOS) memory ICs. Akai's AT-V04 (\$280) also has seven station presets and performance specifications claimed to be better than most FM broadcasts. This level of performance is typical of most new tuners, especially those using advanced circuit techniques. Indeed, in several areas, such as signal-to-noise ratio, present-day FM tuners are close to the theoretical limits of performance determined by the modulation sys-



Akai AT-V04

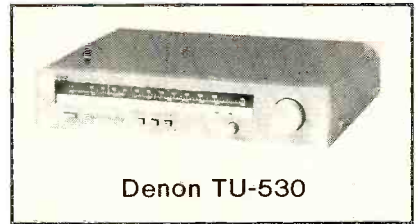
tem and the broadcast frequencies. Most of the innovations, therefore, will have to come in the way of features.

Eumig's T-1000 \$795 tuner, for example, will store ten stations in a complementary-metal-oxide-semiconductor (CMOS) memory maintained by an automatically



Eumig T-1000

recharging nickel-cadmium battery. The T-1000 also has switchable i.f. bandwidths to suit normal or crowded-dial tuning conditions. Rotel's RT-1010, for another example, has seven FM and AM presets, and Marantz's \$375 ST-500 AM/FM tuner can memorize fourteen stations and tune the FM band in 50- or 100-kHz steps. It also has a LED signal-strength/multipath indicator, selectable



Denon TU-530

i.f. bandwidth, PLL multiplex decoder, and automatic pilot-tone cancellation. Marantz also showed the less feature-full ST-400 (\$280) and ST-300 (\$225) tuners. Denon displayed the TU-530 with servo-lock tuning and pilot-tone canceler.

Toshiba had quite a few tuners, most of which featured digital frequency-synthesis tuning. The newest model was the \$260 ST-445 AM/FM tuner with a twelve-station memory and a calibration-tone switch to help set off-the-air recording levels.

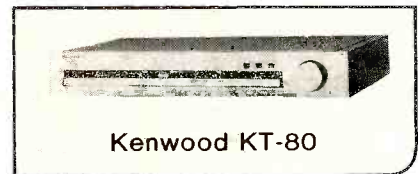


Toshiba ST-445

Optonica's ST-9405 has, in addition to a digital frequency display, an analog tuning "dial" of forty-four LEDs (\$1,000).

Lux's T-450 (\$395) employs a "closed-locked-loop" system for tuning. It is claimed that this system offers more accurate and stable tuning than quartz-locked and synthesizer systems. In addition, an Accutouch system in this model detects the exact center tuning point and temporarily locks the tuning knob as it reaches the correct point. JVC's T-X5 (\$300) uses a phase-tracking-loop detector with a quieting-slope control to lower noise.

Tandberg's TPT-3001 stores eight presets and has a selectable i.f. bandwidth. Kenwood announced two tuners using their pulse-counting detection system, which results in 80-dB stereo signal-to-noise ratios for both the \$199 KT-80 and the \$1,000 L-01T. The less expensive of the two models has servo-lock tuning and a recording-calibration switch. The high-end model has a rated stereo separation of 60 dB at 1,000 Hz and THD less than 0.08 per cent in stereo between 50 and 10,000 Hz. *(Continued overleaf)*



Kenwood KT-80

Phono Cartridges

Phono cartridges (as well as loudspeakers) have thus far escaped the invasion of digital integrated circuitry, and the WCES therefore presented no great technological surprises. Some attention has been paid, however, to the cartridge/head-shell interface, and the typical solution was integration, designing the cartridge and head shell as a single unit. Sony, for instance, introduced the XL-44 (\$200) moving-coil cartridge and integrated head shell. It utilizes a "figure-eight" coil said to result in low distortion and high efficiency. ADC showed their Integra series of cartridges integrated with carbon-fiber head shells. The series combines an ADC XLM-type cartridge with a low-mass head shell to reduce the effective mass of the combination by 25 to 50 per cent. The top-of-the-line Integra XLM III has a stated frequency response from 10 to 20,000 Hz \pm 1 dB and a suggested retail price of \$130.

Shure showed their M97 series of cartridges which incorporate the viscous-damped dynamic stabilizer/brush and telescoped stylus-shank structure introduced in the V15 Type IV. The series includes five models with tracking forces ranging from $\frac{3}{4}$ to 3 grams.

Osawa brought out four new cartridges, two of which were moving-coil designs. The \$129.95 Satin M-117ZE moving-coil unit has a high output level, obviating the need for a pre-amp or step-up transformer. The stylus has a 0.2 x 0.8-mil elliptical shape and tracks at 1 to 2 grams. It is user-replaceable. The M-117Z, a spherical-stylus version, costs \$99.95. The MP-50 and MP-10 are moving-magnet designs. The MP-50 tracks at from 1.1 to 1.5 grams and has a super-elliptical stylus shape. The MP-10 has a 0.5-mil spherical stylus and requires from 2 to 5 grams of tracking force.

Nagatronics has three new cartridges, the 9600 (\$225), the 244DE (\$64), and the 300DJ "disco" cartridge (\$65). The cantilever of the Model 9600 is of crystalline boron to which is attached a super-elliptical stylus tracking at from 0.9 to 1.3 grams. The disco cartridge has a heavy-duty stylus-cantilever-suspension assembly intended for commercial service and DJ back-cueing. Four Dynavector moving-coil cartridges were introduced, the top two in the line employing diamond and ruby cantilevers. The diamond cantilever model has a most impressive \$2,000 price tag.



Garrard DDQ650

GT120AF turntable (both about \$100). Hitachi displayed two fully automatic single-play turntables with photo-sensor return mechanisms, the HT-464 (\$200) and the HT-466 (\$240). Both are direct-drive, though only the HT-466 has a quartz-locked speed-control system. JVC had a \$220 quartz-locked, direct-drive model, the QL-A5, and a low-cost (\$150) direct-drive unit, the L-A55.

Kenwood had three new fully automatic single-play units at the show. The top-of-the-line KD-850 (\$549) is a quartz-controlled-PLL direct-drive unit with a 5.7-pound platter and a separate tone-arm motor. The output cables are low-capacitance, with gold-plated contacts. The \$249 KD-4200 can be controlled by the RC-500 remote-control system. The KD-2100 (\$169) is a belt-drive turntable with a servo-controlled DC motor.

Three new Marantz turntables all have low-mass, straight tone arms and front-panel controls. The fully automatic TT6000 (\$310) has a quartz-locked-servo direct-drive motor, as does the auto-return TT4000 (\$250). The semi-automatic TT2000 has a d.c. servo-controlled direct-drive motor. Onkyo's CP-1280F also has a straight tone arm and direct drive with quartz regulation. The effective tone-arm mass is 8.7 grams, effective length is $9\frac{3}{8}$ inches, platter weight is 4.85 pounds.

Optonica showed the RP-9705 unit with remote control. Its automatic programmable music selector enables the listener to enter up to ten different and separate functions and to program the turntable to repeat those selections up to five times. The remote control can also select speeds, preprogrammed selections, and record cueing.

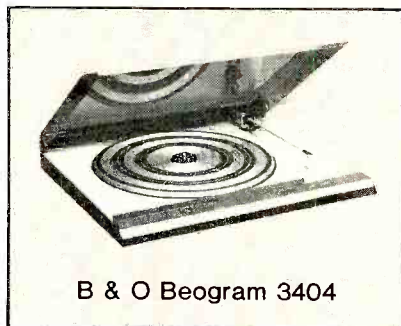
Pioneer introduced five direct-drive turntables with what they consider to be the "optimum"-mass tonearm. The flagship model PL-600 (\$399) has the classical suspension system in which the platter, motor, and arm are mounted on a single plate isolated from the cabinet by springs. The rest of the Pioneer line has prices ranging from \$299 to \$150. Revox had their new B795 Linatrack turntable on display. It had a tangentially tracking tone arm and a crystal-controlled, PLL direct-drive motor with speed accuracy of 0.01 per cent and a start-up speed of less than two seconds (\$599). Sanyo's Plus Q60 dual-motor, direct-drive turntable with straight tone arm includes a digital stylus-wear timer and a digital tracking-force gauge. Scott had a \$130 belt-drive semi-automatic turntable, the PS18. It

Turntables

The turntable field is also becoming "integrated," what with microprocessor turntable control, quartz-locked direct-drive platters, and all manner of other remote-control and automatic features. Styling has also shifted completely toward a low-profile look, with all the necessary turntable controls located outside the dust cover.

In alphabetical order: Aiwa showed the AP-2100 (\$150), a belt-drive unit with auto-return tone arm. The turntable will connect to selected Aiwa cassette decks for transport control linked to record cueing. Akai added three semi-automatic

AP-Q50 (\$190) is a direct-drive model with variable-pitch control. Speed accuracy is given as +0.04 per cent with wow and flutter of 0.05 per cent. B & O had two models with integrated low-inertia

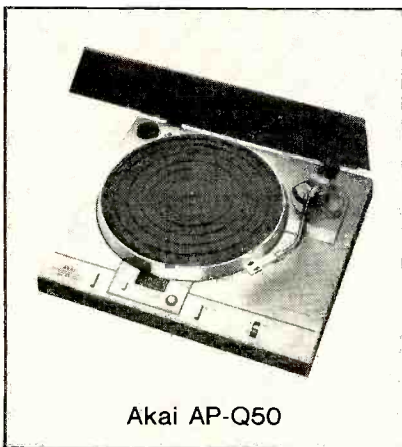


B & O Beogram 3404

arm-cartridge combinations (the Beogram 3404 and 1700).

Denon had their DP-30L(S) direct-drive, auto-lift model on display, and Fisher had their MT-6360, a remote-controlled, programmable turntable. It counts bands on a disc and plays only those selected (\$350).

Garrard introduced three direct-drive models, the DD450, DDQ550, and DDQ650. The latter two have front-panel electronically operated controls, straight tone arms, and carbon-fiber head shells. Prices range from \$150 to \$250. Garrard also had the GT12 MkII belt-drive, single/multi-play unit and the single-play



Akai AP-Q50

models to its product line, all with d.c. servo-controlled motors. The top-of-the-line

too had a straight tone arm, plus a low-Q, anti-resonance tone-arm counterweight.

Toshiba had the honor of introducing more new turntables at the 1980 WCES than any other manufacturer. All had front-panel controls; four were direct-drive, four belt drive. Prices range from \$300 for the top-of-the-line fully automatic SR-Q300 quartz-controlled direct-drive unit with carbon-fiber tone arm to \$115 for the belt-driven and semi-automatic SR-A100.

Armless models came from Scotland's Strathclyde Transcription Developments and from ADC. The STD-305M was specifically designed for reduced audio feedback: the base plate is coated with a vibration-damping material and the dust cover is of heavy-gauge plastic. The ADC 3001 (\$250) direct-drive turntable has a "universal" mounting hole and ± 5 per cent speed adjustments. The most interesting separate tone arm came from Dennesen Electrostatic. It was a straight-line-tracking (tangential) design using an air bearing. There were no mechanical servos or mechanisms to move the cartridge across the disc; instead, the arm floated on a cushion of air emitted from a guide rail. Although the model we saw was of hand-tooled brass, the technique lends itself to very-low-cost plastic molding.

For those still unsatisfied, there was Kenwood's L-07 turntable (\$1,700). It naturally incorporates a direct-drive, brushless d.c. motor with quartz-PLL-servo speed regulation. It was engineered for "maximum rotational accuracy and minimum acoustic and mechanical vibration," so it weighs more than 68 pounds, the "cabinet" being a frame of die-cast aluminum and the base an anti-resonance resin concrete bonded to a thick layer of high-density mahogany board. The tone arm is made of "aircraft-grade" aluminum coated with boron and graphite fibers in a resin. The platter weighs 12 pounds and the controlling electronics are in a separate enclosure to minimize mechanical vibration and electromechanical coupling. Weighted flutter is specified at 0.02 per cent and rumble is better than -94 dB (DIN B weighted, of course).



Strathclyde STD-305M

Tape Equipment

Tape recorders seemed to be the hottest subject at the show, with many manufacturers showing a multitude of metal-compatible cassette decks. Also shown were several new open-reel models, a sure sign that that venerable format is still alive. But the most technologically significant introductions at the WCES were several EIAJ-standard digital-audio adaptors for videotape recorders. Hook one of these units up to any videotape recorder which can record U.S. television signals and you can record two channels of super-high quality digital audio. By high quality we mean a dynamic range of 85 dB, unmeasurable wow and flutter, frequency response flat to within a few tenths of a decibel from d.c. to around 20,000 Hz, and distortion less than 0.03 per cent at maximum recording level. Of course this performance does not come cheap; prices start at around \$4,000 (*without* a videocassette recorder). The units shown came from Sanyo (the Plus 10, which includes a sample digitally recorded Ry Cooder video-



Toshiba PCM-Mark II

cassette), Toshiba (the PCM-Mark II), and Sony (the PCM-10 and semi-pro/pro PCM-100).

Digital technology has also impinged heavily on the analog cassette-machine field. Several manufacturers offered decks with versatile, digitally controlled features. Marantz, for example, showed six new two-speed cassette decks (four of which were metal-compatible) ranging in price from \$775 to \$235. The top-of-the-line SD 9000 Compudeck has its own programmable timer, digital clock, and programmable playback sequencer for up to nineteen selections. The transport uses two motors with a servo-controlled capstan drive.

Similar operational flexibility is available with B&O's Beocord 8000, whose microcomputer can, among other things, keep track of tape usage in minutes and seconds. The \$995 unit was certainly more distinctive in appearance than any of the other decks shown, having an angled, top-loading rectangle 21 inches wide and 12 inches deep. Soundesign had a programmable deck with a noise-reduction system called NRC.

Several decks were introduced with only slightly less sophisticated functions. Sanyo's Plus D64 (\$390) will search for selections by sensing and counting gaps between recorded selections. Solenoid op-



Sanyo Plus D64

eration, metal capability, and fluorescent peak-level meters are provided as well as connectors and switching for external noise-reduction devices instead of the internal Dolby-B circuits. Sony's TC-K88B (\$1,200) has similar features (minus the noise-reduction switching and with LCD meters instead of fluorescent ones). The Sony transport is a three-motor, direct-drive design. Some automatic search-and-play capability is provided by Teac's CS-370 (\$279). A less sophisticated version of



Teac A-510 Mark II

the CS-370, the CS-350, costs \$229 yet offers metal compatibility, Dolby noise reduction, and a 0.05 per cent wow-and-flutter specification. Teac has also upgraded their logic-controlled decks to accept metal tape (A-500MkII, \$260; A-510MkII, \$295).

Nakamichi revealed (slightly before the WCES) three decks with an automatic azimuth-alignment feature; the models 660ZX, 670ZX, and 680ZX are priced

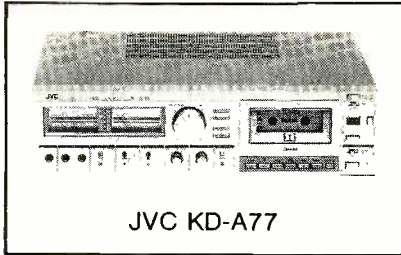


Nakamichi 670ZX

from \$995 to \$1,550. The machines record a test tone on the tape and adjust the azimuth of the record head until the phases of the tone from each of the playback heads' channels match. All three decks have three discrete heads, four-motor transports, and dual-capstan drive, but only the 680ZX provides half speed (15/16 inches per second) operation. Nakamichi also introduced the 481 and 482, each with three heads. The primary difference between the two is that the 482

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(\$775) includes electronics and Dolby circuits for off-the-tape monitoring while the 481 (\$655) does not.



JVC KD-A77

JVC's KD-A77 metal-capable deck has off-the-tape monitoring and optional remote control (\$570). Their KD-A7 deck (\$500) includes a seven-band spectrum analyzer.

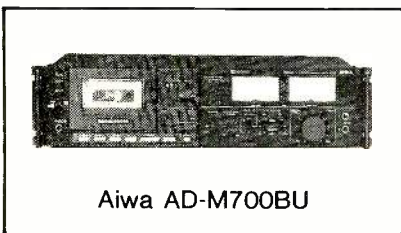
Kenwood had two new decks, the \$599 KX-2060 and the \$225 KX-500. The first is a three-head design with a d.c.-servomotor in addition to fine-tuning controls for bias and equalization. The second has fluorescent meters and a "soft-touch"



Kenwood KX-2060

transport control that simulates the feel of solenoid operation. It too has a variable bias adjustment.

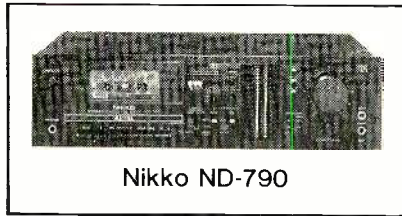
Aiwa showed four new decks priced from \$500 to \$220. The two top decks (the AD-M700BU and AD-M700U) have two motors, three heads, double Dolby cir-



Aiwa AD-M700BU

cuits, and a fine adjustment for bias. Akai presented three new units, two with metal capability (the GX-M10, \$300; and the CS-M02, \$230). Scott had their \$250 metal-compatible deck, the 671DM, on display; it includes a rack-mount option. Sharp showed a metal-ready deck with a suggested retail price of \$129.95 (the RT-10). Its frequency response is given as 40 to 14,000 Hz, ± 3 dB with metal tape. Both Denon and Rotel showed Sendust-head, logic-controlled, metal-compatible cassette decks.

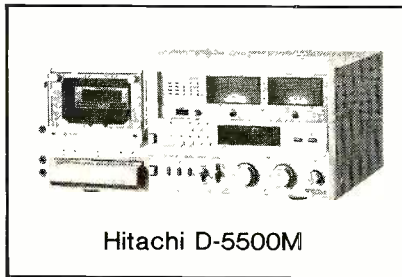
Nikko has entered the cassette-recorder field with the ND-790 (\$330), a model with metal capability, LED peak meters,



Nikko ND-790

and a bias control. A less elaborate deck, the ND-490, sells for \$250.

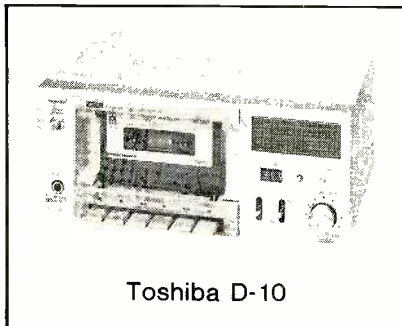
Hitachi introduced four metal-capable decks: the new D-3300M and D-90S and the metal-upgraded Models D-980M and D-5500M. The D-3300M (\$750) contains Hitachi's Automatic Tape Response System, which automatically optimizes bias



Hitachi D-5500M

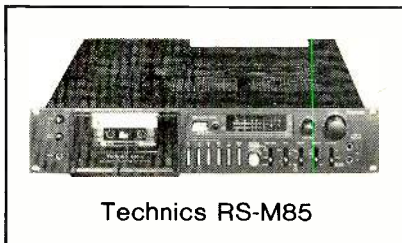
and equalization to suit the cassette being used. The deck uses a direct-drive motor for a stated wow-and-flutter specification of 0.024 per cent.

Toshiba had six models on display, ranging in price from \$400 to \$170 and including a \$270 mini-component deck (the D-10). The flagship model PC-X60 has metal capability, logic-controlled sole-



Toshiba D-10

noid operation, a Sendust record/play head, and a ferrite erase head. Technics also presented a mini-component deck, the direct-drive M-02 (\$500). It has solenoid controls, two motors, two heads, metal capability, and fluorescent meters. The company's Professional Series was



Technics RS-M85

enlarged by the RS-M85, a two-head, two-motor, quartz-locked direct drive deck (\$700). Technics also had a low-cost metal-ready deck (the \$200 RS-MII Mk2) and one of the few non-metal-compatible new decks (the \$150 RS-M6).

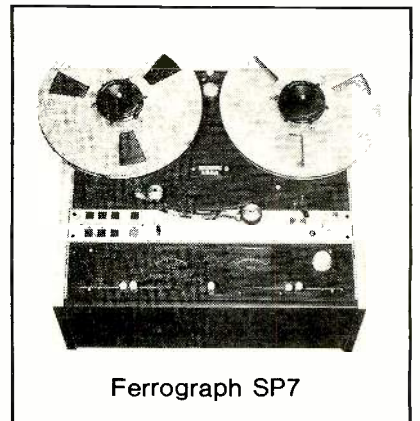
There were at least four new open-reel decks shown at the WCES, three of which came from Sony. Sony's TC-766-2 (\$1,300) and TC-765 (\$1,200) are three-head, half- and quarter-track machines,



Sony TC-766-2

respectively; both take 10½-inch reels. The TC-766-2 includes an extra quarter-track playback head and runs at 7½ and 15 inches per second. Both machines use a dual-capstan drive system, electronic speed regulation, logic control, and front-panel bias and equalization settings. A mechanical-transport, three-head, 7-inch-reel deck was also introduced (the TC-399, \$500). It has ferrite heads, bias and EQ controls, and a scrape-flutter filter.

Neal Ferrograph, a British company, was offering to custom-build their SP7 open-reel tape deck for studio, semi-pro,



Ferrograph SP7

industrial, and educational uses. Options include full- or half-track mono, half- or quarter-track stereo, high, medium, or low tape-speed selections, CCIR or NAB equalization, Dolby B circuits, rack-mount kits, and power-supply variations.

Blank Tape

The most interesting blank-tape developments at the WCES concerned metal tape, its pros and cons. There was skepticism expressed concerning its cost effectiveness, particularly in light of the new Dolby-HX system of headroom extension, which is almost certain to be universally adopted. Some of these doubts were even expressed by the tape manufacturers themselves. Such opinions notwithstanding, there were quite a few metal-tape introductions from a number of manufacturers. In alphabetical order they included: Aiwa, Ampex, Fuji (who announced a C-90 at \$12), Hitachi, Maxell, and TDK. Prices for a C-60 metal cassette ranged from about \$9.50 to \$12.50. BASF is expected to introduce their metal tape shortly.

New coating formulations for chrome tape also occasioned some announcements. RKO introduced their "second-generation" chrome tape, Ultrachrome, in C-60 and C-90 lengths. Empire showed their "EMI Superchrome II," which has a formulation exclusive to EMI. It is said to give better high-frequency response, lower background noise, and greater dynamic range.

TDK introduced a new cassette tape, Optimum Dynamic, designed for normal ferric bias levels and claimed to deliver higher sensitivity and maximum output levels than any other normal-bias tape currently available. Coercivity is 370 oersteds and remanence is 1,550 gauss for both C-60 and C-90 lengths. The TDK Audua tape series has undergone a change of name; it is now called "Acoustic

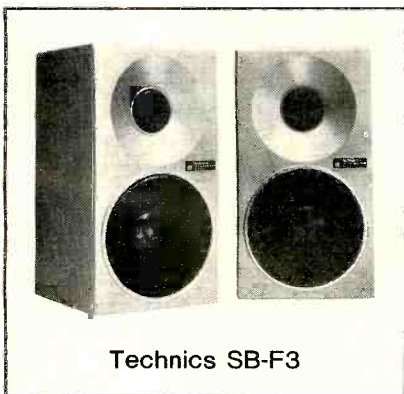
Dynamic" (the "AD" abbreviation remains the same, however).

Open-reel tape saw some action too, with new products from 3M and BASF. The BASF entry, Ferro LH DP 26, is a high-output, low-noise, ferric formulation which comes on 7-inch reels in plastic library boxes. Lengths from 1,800 to 3,600 feet are available with prices from about \$13 to \$22. "Scotch" Master XS open-reel tape from 3M moves to the top of their consumer tape-product line with 3 dB more low-frequency headroom and 2 dB greater high-frequency headroom than the tape it replaces. It is said to be bias-compatible with most high-end open-reel decks. A 7-inch reel (1,800 feet) costs about \$14; a 10½-inch metal reel (3,600 feet) about \$36.

And the videotape market had its share of announcements as well. TDK revealed the successful development of Avilyn HG (an improved version of their existing video line), which is now being test-marketed in Japan. Maxell also announced an HG formulation for the VHS format. It is available in four lengths and is designed for better results with 6-hour machines. Claimed are improved audio performance, increased video and chroma signal-to-noise ratio, and higher video output. Approximate list prices for the 30, 60, 90, and 120 lengths are, respectively, \$19, \$22, \$26, and \$30. Beta-format tapes in two lengths (L-256, \$17, and L-500, \$22.50) were also announced. Also, Dupont has entered the consumer field with chromium-dioxide Beta- and VHS-format cassettes.

Speakers

Reflecting the continued interest in small (or mini) speakers, Technics introduced three units, the SB-F1, 2, and 3. They have, respectively, 4-, 5-, and 6½-inch woofers plus horn tweeters and power-handling capacities ranging from 60 watts for the F-1 to 90 watts for the F-3. Also



Technics SB-F3

shown by Technics was the conventional bookshelf-size SB-L50, a three-way sys-

tem employing a 9-inch woofer, 4-inch midrange, and 2½-inch dome tweeter. Power-handling capacity is 75 watts.

Although known mainly for sophisticated electronics, Phase Linear displayed three speaker systems. Two of them are three-way, so-called "bookshelf" units (for large, *strong* bookshelves only). The P-530 (\$500) employs a 12-inch woofer, a 5-inch midrange, and a 1-inch tweeter, both of the latter being boronized-dome units. Frequency range is 30 to 30,000 Hz with maximum input power of 120 watts (rms). The P-560 (\$750) also uses a 12-inch woofer, but the midrange is a 2½-inch beryllium dome and the tweeter is a ribbon unit. Frequency range is claimed to be 30 to 120,000 Hz (yes, that's right) with a maximum power input of 200 watts. The P-580 (\$1,200) is only a few inches larger than the others but weighs 103 pounds. The woofer in this one is 15 inches, and there is a 2½-inch beryllium dome midrange and a ribbon tweeter. Frequency range is 28 to (again) 120,000 Hz, with a power-handling capacity of 200 watts. All three systems are vented.

Another manufacturer, known here more for high-end equipment than for speakers, has now entered the U.S. loudspeaker market. Revox's four-way system is called "Triton" and sells for \$1,599. The system is designed around a subwoofer unit containing two 10-inch drivers and includes a pair of satellites, each containing a 7-inch low midrange, a 1-inch dome midrange, and a ¾-inch dome tweeter. Frequency range of the Triton system is 30 to 25,000 Hz, and it is recommended for use with amplifiers of 20 to 110 watts per channel. Impedance is nominally 4 ohms.

In contrast to the previous two manufacturers, Wharfedale is one of the oldest names in the loudspeaker field. They've come up with a series they refer to as the Total Sound Recall (TSR) line. The smallest of these, all of which bear a strong family resemblance—vertical, with slightly tilted grille-covered fronts—is the



Wharfedale TSR 112

TSR 108. Its bass/midrange driver is just under 8 inches and has a cone made of a new mineral-filled homopolymer to reduce cone breakup and resonance problems. The tweeter is a 1-inch soft-dome unit. Frequency range is 35 to 25,000 Hz and amplifiers of 15 to 80 watts per channel are recommended. The next unit is the three-way TSR 110, made up of two nominal 8-inch drivers and a 1-inch soft-dome tweeter. The two bass/midrange drivers operate together up to about 300 Hz, from which point energy is fed to just one of them—up to about 3,500 Hz, where the tweeter takes over. The material in these drivers is the same as in the TSR 108; frequency range is also the same, but power-handling capacity is up to 140 watts.

Finally, Wharfedale's TSR 112 incorporates four drivers. Its two nominal 10-inch low-bass drivers operate together up to 100 Hz, where one is attenuated and the other continues on to about 600 Hz; at that point the 8-inch upper-bass/mid-

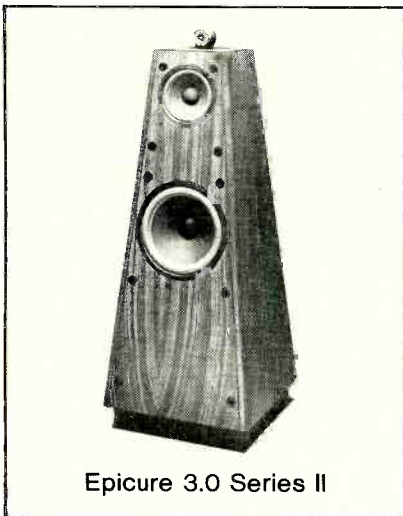
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range unit picks up and continues on to 3,500 Hz, where the 1-inch dome tweeter takes over. Frequency range is 30 to 25,000 Hz and power-handling capacity is up to 190 watts.

From JVC come three new speaker systems. The Zero 3 is a new, small member of their Zero Series. It features a lightweight ribbon tweeter for fast, accurate response. The other two units are in JVC's SK line. The SK-400II (\$150 per pair) is a two-way system that will take a peak input of 80 watts; it has an 8-inch woofer and a 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch tweeter. The SK-600II (\$240 per pair) is a three-way system with peak input of 120 watts; it uses a 10-inch woofer, a 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch midrange, and a 2-inch tweeter.

The Boston A100 (\$170) is a new two-way system from Boston Acoustics. It employs a 10-inch woofer and 1-inch soft-dome tweeter, and the rather shallow (8 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches) cabinet permits optimum performance even when the unit is on the floor against a wall. Nominally rated at 8 ohms, the A100 can be used with amplifiers of 15 to 150 watts output.

The Epicure 3.0 Series II (\$475) is a refined version of the company's original 3.0 speaker system. It incorporates two



Epicure 3.0 Series II

improvements: a new acoustical-loading spherical tweeter for less coloration and a midrange/tweeter crossover lowered from 2,600 to 2,000 Hz for a smoother transition. The system employs a 10-inch woofer, a 6-inch midrange, and a 1-inch tweeter. Frequency range is 32 to 20,000 Hz. The cabinet is a truncated pyramid just over 41 inches high and 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches square at the bottom. Nominal impedance is 4 ohms.

From KEF comes an updated version of the Model 105, the Series II (\$1,100). The new unit has a rated frequency response of 38 to 22,000 Hz \pm 2 dB and a power-handling capacity of 200 watts. In this three-way system, the woofer is housed in a 70-litre enclosure and the mid- and high-frequency drivers in their own 8.5 litre unit, which is pivot-mounted

on top of the woofer enclosure. LED indicators are used to orient the high-frequency module and also to monitor power levels. The unit is mounted on wheels and weighs 80 pounds.

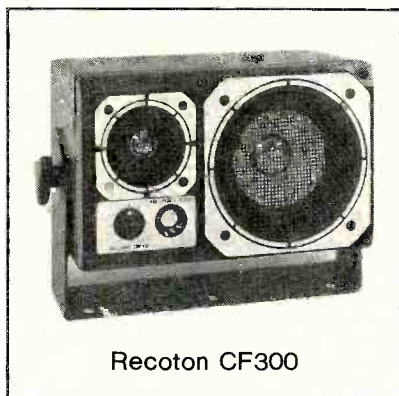
Infinity has introduced three new speaker systems, the top one being the Reference Studio Monitor (\$300). The



Infinity Reference Studio Monitor

three-way system employs a 12-inch woofer, a 5-inch midrange, and Infinity's etched planar-diaphragm tweeter; it can be used with amplifiers of up to 250 watts per channel and has a high-frequency response to 32,000 Hz.

Going from the very large to the very small, there was Recoton's new minispeaker, the CF300 (\$159.95 per pair). It's a three-way system in a 4 x 4 x 7-inch



Recoton CF300

enclosure, and it will handle up to 60 watts input power. More new minis come from AudioSource, the smallest of a group of three being the LS-One



AudioSource LS-One

(\$89.95). With a frequency range of 100 to 20,000 Hz and power-handling capacity of 40 watts (peak), the LS-One measures only about 7 x 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

For use with their minicomponents, Aiwa has the SC-61R two-way reflex system with a frequency range of 50 to 18,000 Hz. It's an 8-ohm unit able to handle up to 40 watts.

A new line being imported from West Germany by Osawa bears the name Heco. There were four systems, the top of the line being the Precision 400 (\$599.95) made up of a 12-inch woofer, a 2-inch midrange, and a 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch tweeter. It's an acoustic-suspension system with a frequency response of 20 to 25,000 Hz, and it can handle up to 120 watts.

Onkyo has added a new unit to the line they refer to as "Phase Aligned Array" speakers. The F-3000 incorporates an 11-inch planar woofer, a 4-inch planar midrange, and a membrane tweeter. An acoustic-suspension system, its frequency



Onkyo F-3000

range is 35 to 20,000 Hz. A minimum power of 40 watts is needed, maximum 80.

In its latest addition to a growing line, Mesa Electronics has brought out the Mini-Mesa 75 (\$175), a three-way system made up of a 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch woofer, a 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch midrange, and a 1-inch soft, hemispherical dome tweeter. Capable of handling up to 75 watts, the Mini-Mesa 75 measures about 9 x 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Jensen showed a smaller version of their System B; the System C is reviewed in this issue. At the top of Dynaco's speaker line is the Model A 350, a four-way, floor-standing system. A passive-radiator design, the A 350 includes a 10-inch low-frequency driver, a 3-inch midrange, a 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch tweeter, and a vertically mounted supertweeter. With a nominal impedance of 8 ohms, the system will accept up to 110 watts; frequency range, 35 to 25,000 Hz.

Among the Equation series of speakers from American Acoustics Labs (AAL) is the EQ 21. A floor-standing unit, it has two 10-inch woofers, a 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch midrange, and a 2-inch phenolic-ring tweeter. With a frequency range of 25 to 22,000 Hz, the system, nominally rated at 4 ohms, will accept up to 75 watts of program material.

Accessories

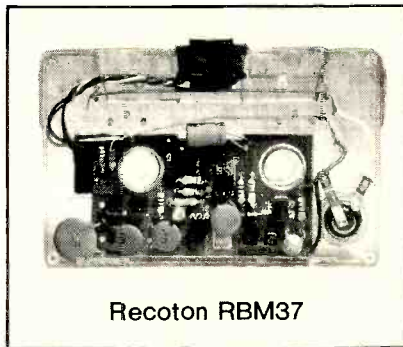
The most important "accessories" in any component system are the recordings it plays back. At the WCES there were quite a few manufacturers of what have come to be known as "high-technology" or "audiophile" discs. They not only exhibited their wares but also started talking about forming their own trade association. Such an association could help assure the availability of high-quality vinyl, lacquers, and better disc processing and pressing for this growing market.

Should your high (or low) technology discs have slight pops and scratches (heaven forbid!), there were several accessories shown at the WCES which could alleviate the problem. Keith Monks showed a home version of his \$700 CR500 record-cleaning machine. Like the professional version, the CR500 employs a scrubbing action utilizing a nylon brush and a mixture of alcohol and distilled water. A vacuum arm traveling above the surface of the record sucks off the liquid and dirt. The liquid also neutralizes static charges. A similar unit was shown in prototype by TMA enterprises of New Canaan, Conn. They claim that their \$695 unit is more effective than others because it blows clean air into the grooves to dry the record.

A new record preservative called LAST (liquid archival sound treatment) was shown by Gamma Omega Associates of Livermore, California. Metrocare of England had their M105A turntable-mounted antistatic record cleaner on display. The cleaner uses a carbon-fiber brush and has a preset counterweight and a variable pivot-height adjustment. Other manufacturers such as Discwasher and Audio-Technica showed previously released products. Empire, now importing the Cecil Watts disc-cleaning products from England, had a "Record and Stylus Care Kit" containing several of the Watts devices. Osawa is bringing in several accessories made by Nagoaka. In addition to the "standard" disc brushes, Nagoaka has several static-charge-removing products. The N103 Kilavolt sprays "positive ions" generated by a battery-powered circuit at the disc surface and is claimed to leave a disc totally free of static electricity. Nagoaka's N101 Stat tissue will remove dust and static charges from turntable dust covers, TV face plates, photographic slides, and movie film.

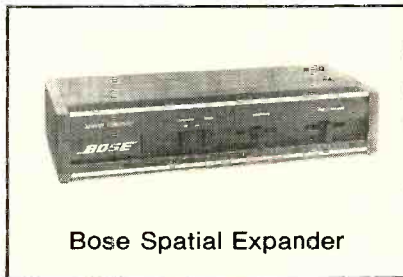
For those ticks and pops that have still escaped all this attention, SAE has announced a second generation of their "Click and Pop" machine, the SAE 5000A. It is claimed that the \$225 unit will electronically excise pops and clicks even smaller than those its predecessor dealt with while maintaining THD and IM values of less than 0.1 per cent and a signal-to-noise ratio greater than 90 dB.

Other electronic accessories include a cordless cassette-head demagnetizer from



Recoton RBM37

Recoton (the RBM37, \$21.95); it is powered by a 1.5-volt cell and is shaped like a cassette for insertion into a tape machine. Aiwa had the MT-22 electronic digital audio timer for making unattended recordings or for standard clock-radio functions (\$120). Both Koss and Bose introduced signal-delay units. The Koss K/4DS (\$500) has several environmental settings (small club, theater, concert hall, auditorium) and includes isolated headphone amplifiers and a 15-watt-per-channel ambiance-speaker amplifier. Bose's Spatial Expander operates only with the



Bose Spatial Expander

company's Spatial Control receiver, a pair of 901 speakers, and a second pair of direct/reflecting units. It is priced under \$600. Marantz had a ten-band equalizer (the EQ-10, \$200) on display, as did Rotel (the RE-1010). Rotel also showed their RY-1010, a ten-band spectrum analyzer.

Several new headphones were shown, the most interesting being Sony's MDR-3; they weigh only 1.8 ounces. An open-air design, they have a frequency response rated from 20 to 20,000 Hz and a sensitivity of 96 dB/milliwatt. The cord is of "ox-



Sony MDR-3 Headphones

xygen-free litz wire" (\$50). Mura demonstrated two units incorporating a stereo-separation control claimed to eliminate the "inside-the-head" sound so many headset users find annoying. Both a high-velocity version (the HV-300, \$50) and an isolation-style model (the SP-805, \$80) were shown. JVC also showed lightweight headphones, including the 7-ounce HP-1100 (\$80), the 6-ounce HP-880 (\$65), and the 5.8-ounce HP-550 (\$40), the last designed specifically for monitoring recording sessions. Superex had a 4-ounce model, the TRL-88 (\$50). Finally, Koss presented their HV/X series with variable-density, contoured ear cushions. They are said to combine the hear-through transparency of the open-air units with the full bass impact of a closed type.

Microphones also received some attention, manufacturers realizing that an amateur recordist can often make recordings far superior to those he can buy. Recoton had their MM-660 dual-cardioid electret stereo microphone on display. Sony



Recoton MM-660 Microphone

introduced four cardioid dynamic microphones for professional and semi-professional use. The \$100 F-520 is meant for vocal and instrumental reinforcement, and the F-400A (for pop and rock vocals) comes in a charcoal-colored, non-reflective housing (\$50). Beyer had a lavalier mike, the M-111, designed to have a flat frequency response when worn over the chest (\$169). The Beyer M-130 is a bi-directional (figure-eight) ribbon mike engineered for professional use under extremes of temperature and humidity (\$389). Lastly, Crown International announced its entry into the microphone field with its pressure-zone microphones. These units place the mike diaphragm very close to a "boundary surface," usually a metal or plastic plate on the floor or stage, in order to eliminate directional discrimination characteristics.

A GREAT deal of the new equipment mentioned here is already in your local store or will be appearing there shortly. And if you're prepared to wait until autumn for your audio shopping, the Summer CES show holds the promise of even more exciting new products. Finally, if you missed coverage here of car-stereo equipment, watch for next month's issue—it will be a special devoted to that subject. □

STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEST OF THE MONTH



• Mozart's Symphonies as Mozart Heard Them •

RECORDINGS of Baroque music featuring original instruments (or modern reproductions of them) are nothing new, and there are many elegant examples in the catalog by ensembles that use such instruments, the *Concentus Musicus* of Vienna, Germany's *Collegium Aureum*, England's *Academy of Ancient Music* and the *English Concert*, and the *Aston Magna* and *Smithsonian Chamber Players* in the United States being some of the better-known ones. As far as the music of the *later* eighteenth century is concerned, however, such idiomatic excursions have been relatively rare. Now, with one blockbuster presentation—nothing less than all the sixty-one symphonies (yes, sixty-one) of Mozart—the performance of post-Baroque music on period instruments has decisively come into its own.

The first release in L'Oiseau-Lyre's *Florilegium Series* of the Mozart symphonies is actually Volume 3, and it contains eleven works that date from the Salzburg period, 1772-1773. Altogether, there will be seven albums containing not only the usual forty-one symphonies but all the extra works as well—symphonies, three-movement overtures, movements from serenades—those not included in the symphony category in Köchel's original catalog of 1862. There will even be two versions each of Symphonies Nos. 31, 35, and 40, plus any extra movements (such as, for example, the second slow movement for Symphony No. 19, K. 132, contained in the present volume) that may exist. This kind of completeness is a significant scholarly plus for the series.

Equally significant is the evident care devoted to matters of performance practice and musicological background. The conducting duties are shared, as they would have been in Mozart's time,

by the concertmaster (Jaap Schroeder) and the keyboard continuo player (Christopher Hogwood), and comprehensive research and program notes have been supplied by Prof. Neal Zaslav of Cornell University. The use of period instruments has already been mentioned, and that means a more transparent and articulated sound. First and second violins have been separated so that one can more easily hear Mozart's antiphonal intentions. Ornamentation is handled according to the latest scholarship (*appoggiaturas*, for instance, are played for expressive values rather than as short, blipped grace notes, and trills start clearly on the upper note). When there are trumpets in

the score, timpani parts have been added (if they were not there already). Bassoons double the bass line, and a harpsichord is used (discreetly) for continuo; it is mainly a rhythmic effect—a time-keeper, if you will—rather than a harmonic one. Finally, repeats are observed in the *da capo* sections of the minuets and, when indicated, in most (if not all) of the other movements as well. In other words, just about every scholarly "i" has been dotted, every "t" crossed.

If that were all, one might be able to summon up no more than a respectful salute for this project at best. Fortunately, there *is* more: the performances themselves are all first-class *musical* ones, with the emphasis very much on sparkle and *galant* entertainment. In many of his letters Mozart talks about the way his music should be played. He always wanted it to make a grand "effect," and in describing the *Haffner* Symphony in particular he emphasized that the first allegro must be played "with great fire." The *Haffner* is not among the symphonies in this first-released volume, but that is precisely the way the performances in it strike me: they have tremendous vivacity, they are filled with fiery energy.

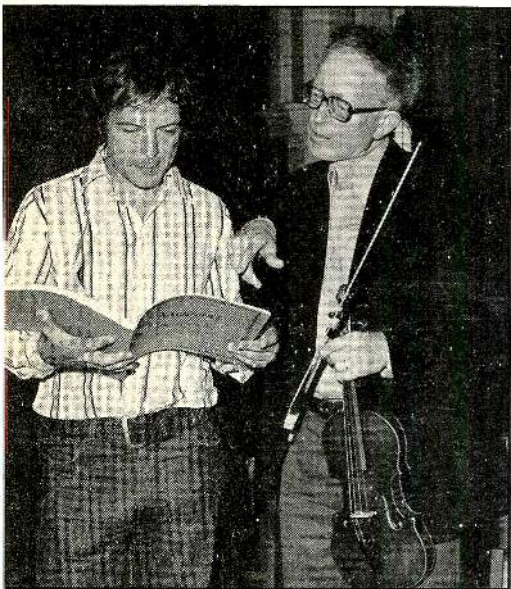
Those listeners who are put off by the sound of, say, an "under-strength" orchestra or the absence of string vibrato will, I think, be rather surprised by these recordings. In the first place, the size of the orchestra is commensurate with Mozart's own forces at the times the symphonies were performed: nine first violins, eight second violins, four violas, three cellos, two double basses, the usual winds (including three bassoons), brass, and timpani, plus harpsichord—this is hardly the dreaded "one person per part"! Second, string vibrato is not entirely absent; rather, it is used only (with discretion) for expressive

"... that is precisely the way the performances strike me: they have tremendous vivacity, they are filled with fiery energy."

MOZART: *The Symphonies, Volume 3.* No. 18, in *F Major* (K. 130); No. 19, in *E-flat Major* (K. 132); No. 20, in *D Major* (K. 133); No. 21, in *A Major* (K. 134); *Symphony in D Major* ("Lucio Silla," K. 135); No. 22, in *C Major* (K. 162); No. 23, in *D Major* (K. 181, K. 162b); No. 24, in *B-flat Major* (K. 182, K. 173dA); *Symphony in D Major* ("Il Sogno di Scipione," K. 161/3, K. 141a); No. 26, in *E-flat Major* ("Lanassa," K. 184, K. 161a); No. 27, in *G Major* (K. 199, K. 161b). *Academy of Ancient Music*, Jaap Schroeder (concertmaster) and Christopher Hogwood (harpsichord continuo), co-conductors. L'OISEAU-LYRE D169D3 three discs \$29.94, © K169K33 \$29.94.



The Academy of Ancient Music
at Kedleston Hall, Derbyshire
(courtesy BBC TV)



London/Decca

Co-conductors in Mozart: Christopher Hogwood and Jaap Schroeder

purposes—on longer-held notes, for example. No, there is nothing in any way anemic about the sound here, only great clarity and transparency, and the period instruments supply an extra in the particularly piquant coloristic effects that cannot be had from their modern counterparts.

The overall sonic picture is very bright and resonant, though not as sensuously rich as, for example, what Telefunken manages with its *Concentus Musicus* recordings. One might wish for a little closer microphoning too: the harpsichord is *too* discreet, and the timpani sound just a little woolly. But these are minor reservations. How does the album compare with the recorded competition in this repertoire, Böhm or Marriner, for instance? Most favorably, even on points of polished ensemble. I look forward to whatever symphonies the next volume will contain with great pleasure. —Igor Kipnis

Scott Ross: Some of The Best Scarlatti Playing Available On Disc Today

LOVERS of the keyboard works of Domenico Scarlatti should not be put off by the term "*Essercizi*" on the jacket of Telefunken's new two-disc album,

for these are actually sonatas which Scarlatti very modestly *presented* as exercises. And don't be fooled by the low Kirkpatrick numbers either; K. 1-30 are not the first thirty sonatas he wrote, but rather his first *printed* collection (it appeared in 1737 when Scarlatti was fifty-two). The music has great variety, ranging from extrovert pieces to more personal, inward-looking ones and including some old favorites such as the D Minor *Pastoral* Sonata. If Scarlatti had written only this collection, he would still have to be considered one of the major keyboard composers of all times.

Harpsichordist Scott Ross plays a magnificent 1968 copy (by Jean-Pierre Batt) of an instrument built by Antonio Baffo in 1569. Although it is limited in its registrational possibilities, its sonority is so rich and full that one is completely satisfied with the sound throughout the length of the four sides. Besides, good harpsichord playing depends on phrasing, articulation, and a sense of timing, not on clever registration. Ross has a superb grasp of what these ingredients are and in what proportions they should be mixed. Basically, his approach is strong and straightforward; there is no fussing over early mannerisms. They are all there, but they are kept in their proper perspective so that the larger design is emphasized rather than obscured. The same kind of balance is to be found in his rhythmic approach; rubato is used to shape phrases and underscore melodic and harmonic niceties, but the overall drive is never lost in the fluctuations. Brill-

iance, too, is under control because it is the result of musical thought rather than unbridled technical excess.

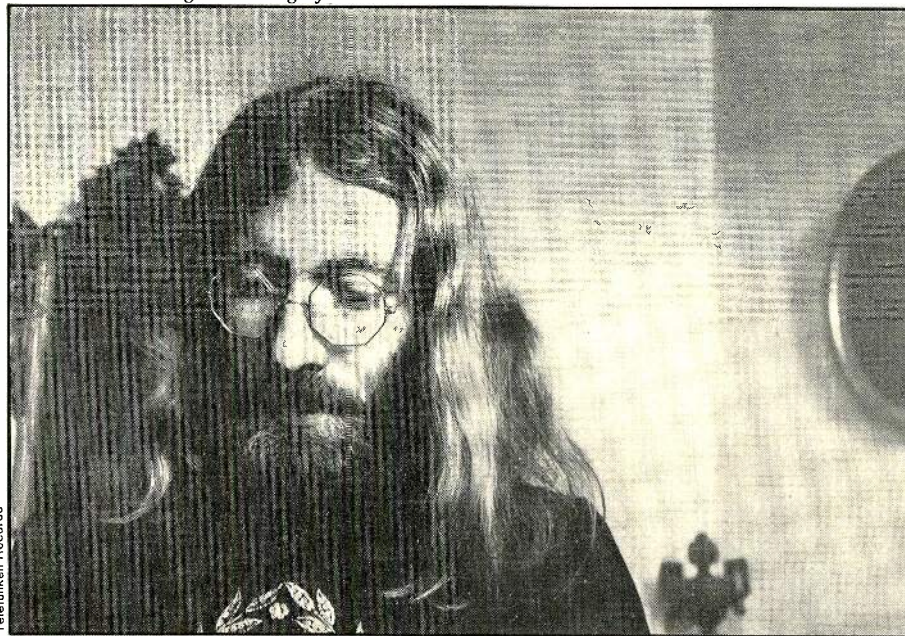
This is some of the best Scarlatti playing available on discs today. Let us hope that it is the first album of a series, for this promising start suggests what might eventually be a monumental collection. —Stoddard Lincoln

SCARLATTI: *Thirty Essercizi per Cembalo* (K. 1-30). Scott Ross (harpsichord). TELEFUNKEN 26.35487 two discs \$17.96, © 24.35487 \$19.96.

The Searchers: Pushing Forty, but Aggressive, Ambitious, And Up-to-date

THOSE for whom the advent of secondary sex characteristics coincided with the British Invasion of the early Sixties probably have fond memories of the Searchers, and for good reason: in some ways they were the quintessential band of the period, at least in terms of influence. After those of the Beatles, the group's superb singles (rock-and-roll with one foot in folk and one in pop) are still among the most consistently impressive artifacts of the whole Merseybeat explosion, and to

SCOTT ROSS: *strong and straightforward*



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THE SEARCHERS:
left to right, Mike Pender,
Billy Adamson, John McNally,
Frank Allen

this day you can hear echoes of their sound in people as superficially dissimilar as Bruce Springsteen, the Eagles, and Elvis Costello. Had they been better produced (their hits still sound great in punchy mono, but the stereo album versions are pretty limp) or songwriters themselves, they probably would have avoided the career decline that set in around 1966, but since then they've recorded only sporadically, done the occasional nostalgia show, and in general attracted very little attention.

But now the times have finally caught up with these doyens of what has come to be known as power pop, and the result—their first album in almost a decade—is something of a small miracle: a thoroughly modern, utterly captivating record that rocks like mad, retains the essence of their original sound, and in general is as fully (if not more) satisfying as anything churned out recently by the group's younger heirs. The album's high points include the hard-edged twelve-string chiming of *Hearts in Her Eyes*, an exquisite song given to the group by the Records' Will Birch and John Wicks; an appealingly bluesy performance of Mickey Jupp's oft-covered *Switchboard Susan* that may, as the liner notes suggest, be superior to the Nick Lowe version; and some excellent unfamiliar stuff from the likes of Bob Dylan and Tom Petty. The Big Knockout, fittingly, is the single *It's Too Late*, which has "Jukebox Classic" written all over it. Glorious and densely textured, it has the goosebump-raising impact of all your favorite teen records of the Sixties rolled into one. Once you've heard it, you'll think you've known it all your life.

In short, this is amazing stuff, not

least because it offers conclusive proof that, despite conventional wisdom, rock-and-roll is not the exclusive province of the very young. In fact, if the Searchers (pushing forty hard) can make an album as aggressive, ambitious, and up-to-date as any being done by kids half their age, then there's hope for the rest of us. This has to qualify as the greatest comeback since Buddy Holly's.

—Steve Simels

THE SEARCHERS. The Searchers (vocals and instrumentals). *Hearts in Her Eyes*; *Switchboard Susan*; *Feeling Fine*; *This Kind of Love Affair*; *Lost in Your Eyes*; *It's Too Late*; *No Dancing*; *Coming from the Heart*; *Don't Hang On*; *Love's Gonna Be Strong*. SIRE SRK 6082 \$7.98, ©M8S 6082 \$7.98, ©M5S 6082 \$7.98.

Ray, Goodman, & Brown: Romantic Realism From an Old Established Firm

THERE has recently been a swing back to the smooth sound of a *capella* ballads in black vocal music, a sound somewhere between doo-wop and the kind of polished pop singing generally associated with night clubs. I, for one, heartily welcome its return, especially in the persons of Messrs. Harry Ray, Al Goodman, and Billy Brown. After ten years of success as the Mo-

ments, a career highlighted by various hit singles such as *Love on a Two Way Street*, the vocal trio of Ray, Goodman, and Brown has "modernized" its style—by returning to the past. The prominent bass and the tenor/falsetto have not been in fashion for over a decade, but RG&B restore them to their original roles.

In their new identity, Ray, Goodman, and Brown are already making a name(s) for themselves with their solid hit single *Special Lady*, which boasts the kind of tune you find yourself singing snatches of on your way to work. The medley *Thrill/Friends* starts out up-tempo, talking about sexual excitement, and then segues into a sentimental, who'd-ever-think-pals-would-be-planning-their-own-wedding-day finish, complete with a spoken interlude by Goodman in the seminal style of the Ink Spots. Puppy-love excess—the hallmark of Fifties doo-wop—is gone from the current style, and it will probably be missed only by archivists. In its place is a romantic yet realistic attitude toward sex more palatable to grownups than the juvenile carnality of ubiquitous disco.

RG&B's ability to mix past and present is evident not only in their singing—which is just wonderful—but in the disarming programming of the album as well. Side one opens with spoken dialogue not meant to be heard so much as *overheard*. Although this material has almost certainly been carefully rehearsed, the listener gets the impression that the mike was left open during the recording session between takes and studio chatter somehow wound up on the master tape. As side one progresses, it becomes clear that



Left to right: Harry Ray, Al Goodman, Billy Brown

this "accidental" intimacy was indeed no accident, since the rhythm track is deliberately faded out to bring up more of the conversation. The effect is convincing and the sentiments are real: "You got your note?" "Yeah, I got my note." "You got *your* note?" "I'm straight—I been doing this for a long time." "Get down, Billy Brown." "Put some of that pretty tenor in there!" And so on.

After more than a decade together, RG&B obviously think of themselves as something more than just a vocal group; they seem more a kind of family firm with a rock-steady sense of tradition. This is not unusual among old established r-&b groups. After Curtis Mayfield left the Impressions, the remaining two members told me that they hoped there would always be an Impressions group playing somewhere after they'd retired, and the present Drifters, which contains only one original member, say that they are carrying on a tradition and keeping an honored name alive.

The production here (by Vincent Castellano) is excellent, and the arrangements (by Lou Toby) are constructed so that the rhythm and orchestral tracks defer to the singers—just as they should in the case of Ray, Goodman, and Brown. These guys know what they're doing, and what they know and do is pure pleasure to hear.

—Joel Vance

RAY, GOODMAN & BROWN. Harry Ray, Al Goodman, Billy Brown (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Inside of You; Special Lady; Slipped Away; The Way It Should Be; Treat Her Right; Thrill/Friends; Déjà Vu; Another Day.* POLYDOR PD-1-6240 \$7.98, © 8T1-6240 \$7.98, © CT1-6240 \$7.98.

The Melodies of Gene Parsons: Emotional Honesty Without Solemnity

■ TRY to keep reminding myself that life is desperate but not serious. Considering how I live, you'd think I'd remember it every time I look in a mirror, but in fact I forget it for months at a stretch. Gene Parsons' new album "Melodies" on the Sierra/Briar label

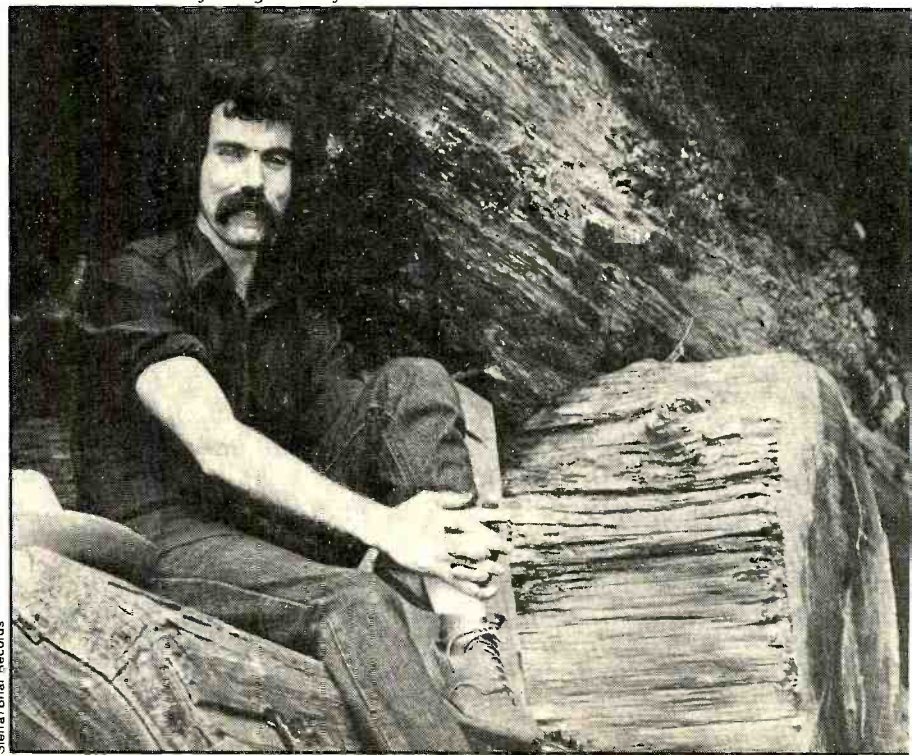
was the latest reminder, so I appreciate it for that as well as for other reasons. If you'd like an album that is emotionally honest and has no truck with cheap tricks or gimcrackery—not to mention pumped-up solemnity—you might appreciate it too.

Parsons, a former Byrd, has a serviceable plain voice, but he sings with feeling, and in this case he sings only songs he obviously cares about. He also knows his way around; ordinary as his voice may be, when he overdubs harmonies he does it right. He and his helpers (I love Roger Bush's way with the string bass) play with the same attitude—that the feeling the song is trying to express comes first—and I don't have to tell you how rare that is.

The songs are a mix of unremarkable but sturdy new ones and a wacky and delightful selection of old ones, including Phil Ochs' late and little-known *My Kingdom for a Car*, Bob Nolan's classic tumbleweed yodeler, *Way Out There*, and Mickey Newbury's 1969 throwaway that refuses to fade away, *Why You Been Gone So Long*. There are even a couple of instrumentals, in part to break up patterns (which they do beautifully) but also in part, I suspect, to further celebrate how nicely the instrumentals were going.

Throughout the thing, people like Greg Harris, Bush, and Parsons himself (especially on drums and the "string-bender" electric guitar he and the late Clarence White patented) repeatedly are *right there*. Again, look for the intangibles of mood and attitude behind

GENE PARSONS: *the feeling comes first*



Sierra/Briar Records

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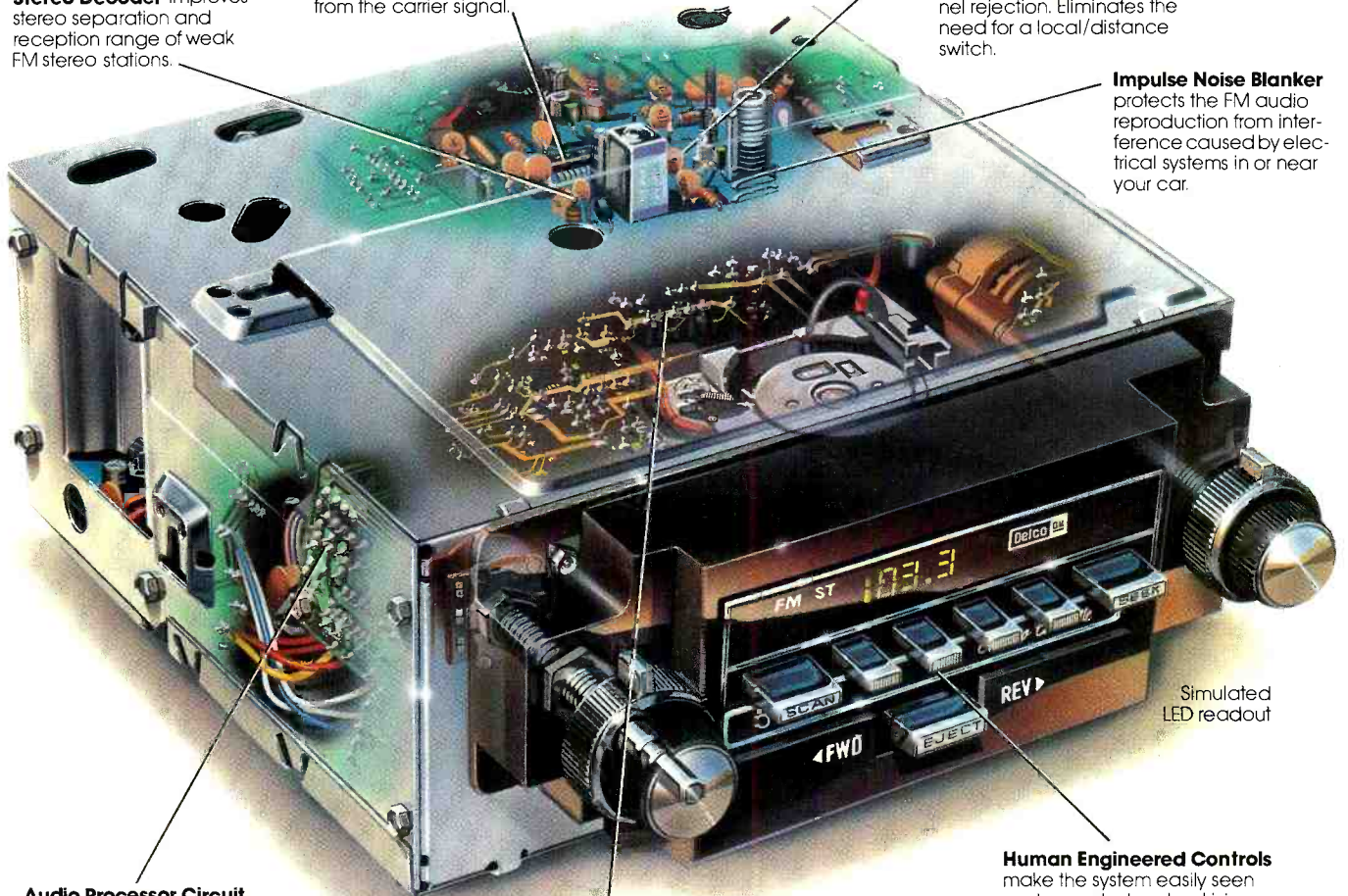
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PANOCHA STRING QUARTET: left to right, Jiří Panocha, Pavel Zeffart, Jaroslav Kulhan, and Miroslav Sehnoutka

it all. This is an album by musicians, not one by would-be stars or other types of businessmen. And it sure does make a difference.
—Noel Coppage

GENE PARSONS: *Melodies*. Gene Parsons (vocals, drums, guitar, bass, banjo); Albert Lee (guitar); Greg Harris (guitar, mandolin); Roger Bush (acoustic bass); other musicians. *My Kingdom for a Car; Melodies from a Bird in Flyght; Won't Last Long; Way Out There; Mama, Papa; Pastime; Hot Burrito #1; No Fire Tonight; Little Jewels; Why You Been Gone So Long.* SIERA/BRIAR SRS-8703 \$7.98.

The Panocha Quartet: Another String Ensemble to Be Reckoned With

IN the last dozen years or so we have come to know several important quartets made up of young string players in our own country and England—the Cleveland, Tokyo, Concord, Fitzwilliam, and others. Thus alerted, it seems incredible that we could have

been unaware of so fine a foursome as the Panocha Quartet formed in Prague in 1968. First violinist Jiří Panocha and his three associates—Pavel Zeffart, second violin; Miroslav Sehnoutka, viola; Jaroslav Kulhan, cello—were students then. Even now they may not have reached the age of thirty, but they have been performing together for a dozen years and have developed an ensemble to be reckoned with, according to those who heard them during their little-publicized and so little-noticed American debut visit last fall. Now Supraphon has sent us a striking debut record, on which they perform Haydn's *Lark Quartet*, Schubert's *Quartettsatz* in C Minor, and Dvořák's so-called "American" Quartet in F Major. The assortment may strike some discophiles as odd, for we are accustomed to having sets of complete Haydn opus groups, Schubert coupled with Schubert, etc. This, however, is the sort of mix we find in actual recital programs, and it serves to demonstrate the group's proficiency in different areas of the repertoire.

These are all ingratiating, highly competitive performances—least surprising, perhaps, in the Dvořák, which is illumined by an individual and collective sweetness of tone as well as the seeming spontaneity born of idiomatic acquaintance. The Haydn is hardly less idiomatic, the sweetness in this case balanced by a wit and warmth of heart

that are the more affecting for their subtlety and restraint. *Balance*, indeed, is evident in every sense—balance of moods, balance of the four voices in the actual playing—and to a degree possible only among musicians who have worked together so intimately that they have learned to breathe together. The Schubert is marginally less successful than the two longer works: here the fast passages go splendidly, but the slower ones tend to come off as just a little matter-of-fact, as if the performers were concerned about overdoing the sweetness. Still, the rhythmic firmness and the sheer lusciousness of the sound (the cello's pizzicato in particular) make me eager to hear this group in Schubert's full-length quartets and the big Quintet in C Major.

The recording, one of the best-sounding I've come across from Supraphon, was taped back in the spring of 1974. I can only wonder why it has taken so long to reach our shores and hope we shall not have to wait quite so long for the next one from this really first-rate ensemble.
—Richard Freed

DVOŘÁK: *String Quartet in F Major, Op. 96 ("American")*. **HAYDN: *String Quartet in D Major, Op. 64, No. 5 ("The Lark")*.** **SCHUBERT: *Quartettsatz in C Minor (D. 703)*.** Panocha Quartet. SUPRAPHON 1 11 1683 \$8.98 (from Qualiton Records Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

Classical Discs and Tapes



Reviewed by RICHARD FREED • DAVID HALL • GEORGE JELLINEK • PAUL KRESH
STODDARD LINCOLN • ERIC SALZMAN

BEESON: *Dr. Heidegger's Fountain of Youth*. Carol Wilcox (soprano), Rachel Lockhart; Judith Christin (mezzo-soprano), Hannah Moody; Grayson Hirst (tenor), Reuben Waterford; Robert Shiesley (baritone), Colonel Killigrew; Alfred Anderson (bass-baritone), Dr. Heidegger; chamber orchestra, Thomas Martin cond. CRI SD 406 \$7.95.

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

Jack Beeson is one of the most prolific and successful American opera composers, and no less than five of his seven operas have now been recorded. Sheldon Harnick, the librettist for this one, is a famous figure in the Broadway musical theater (*Fiddler on the Roof*, *Fiorello*, *The Rothschilds*). *Dr. Heidegger's Fountain of Youth* is based on a Hawthorne story about a flask of water from the Fountain of Youth. Old Dr. Heidegger tries the stuff out on some of his elderly friends, who not only instantly become young again but promptly go into paroxysms of rivalry and jealousy leading to inevitable fisticuffs. The precious elixir is knocked over and spilled, and the four friends lose their recovered youth and decide to go to Brazil in search of the Fountain. Dr. Heidegger declines to accompany them; he has, he says, earned the wisdom and peace of old age.

Beeson's music is organized on a simple, effective premise: the music is twelve-tone until the elixir is quaffed, and then everything falls back into a youthful C Major. This has the effect of creating a rather dry and uninviting first part succeeded by an engaging and extended musico-dramatic second part. Even after the four friends grow old again, the sound of C Major hangs on like a distant hope.

The cast here is excellent. There are some of the usual problems of American English vs. the high-class elocution of well-schooled opera singers, but in this case the discrepancy is perfectly suitable for these somewhat pretentious characters. *E.S.*

DVOŘÁK: *String Quartet in F Major, Op. 96* (see Best of the Month, page 81)

DVOŘÁK: *Symphony No. 9, in E Minor, Op. 95 ("From the New World")*. London Philharmonic Orchestra, Mstislav Rostropovich cond. ANGEL SZ-37719 \$8.98.

Performance: **Darkly Slavic**
Recording: **Big, spacious sound**

DVOŘÁK: *Symphony No. 9, in E Minor, Op. 95 ("From the New World")*. Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, Zdeněk Košler cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 4084 \$5.20 (plus \$1.25 postage and handling from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

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

These two performances represent the polar opposites of Dvořák interpretation. I wonder if Rostropovich has not confused the *New World's* opening pages with those of Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique*, so lugubrious and slow-paced is his treatment. In the allegro, he makes the *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* tune a reverie rather than emphasizing its buoyant tunefulness. The same deliberateness prevails in the largo, which here runs a full three minutes longer than in Zdeněk Košler's reading and almost five

minutes more than in Toscanini's. Things are more normally paced in the two final movements, though Rostropovich adopts an unusually elongated phrasing for the finale's main theme. The recorded sound is expansive and brilliant.

Following Rostropovich's *exaggeré* handling of the music, Košler's seems a stiff antidote. The reading is no-nonsense, straightforward, and sinewy, without the first-movement exposition repeat that Rostropovich favors. The sonics—1973 vintage—are unusually fine in richness, felicity of detail, and agreeable ambiance. The Slovak Philharmonic is not quite the equal of the world-class orchestras that have recorded this music, however, nor is Košler's conducting any great shakes when it comes to the score's poetic nuances. Kubelik's Deutsche Grammophon disc remains for me the best of the Czech-oriented readings, while Karajan's is among the best of those in a more cosmopolitan tradition. *D.H.*

GOUNOD: *Requiem*. Claude Saneva, Eliane Durand, Françoise Laurent (sopranos); Nadine Ruthembourg (alto); Michel Martin (tenor); Michel Marret (bass); Elisabeth Havard de la Montagne (organ); Jacqueline Bender (harp); Chorus and Instrumental Ensemble of the Church of the Madeleine, Joachim Havard de la Montagne cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 4068 \$5.20 (plus \$1.25 postage and handling from the Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

Performance: **Loving**
Recording: **Pretty good**

"Goo-Goo Gounod," we used to call him, but this work has none of that sentimentality one associates with both the operatic and religious music of Charles Gounod. The Requiem was consciously written to be his last composition, and so it was. It is an extremely introverted, often very beautiful, but finally lugubrious work composed only in shades of grey.

The Requiem has special associations

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = open-reel stereo tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- ⓐ = stereo cassette
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The first listing is the one reviewed; other formats, if available, follow it.

with the Church of the Madeleine in Paris—it was performed there on the first anniversary of the composer's death—and it was thus appropriately chosen for revival there. But even the best efforts of these schooled performers cannot lift this music out of its intense gloom. *E.S.*

HANDEL: *Alexander's Feast*. Helen Donath, Sally Burgess (sopranos); Robert Tear (tenor); Thomas Allen (bass); Choir of King's College, Cambridge; English Chamber Orchestra, Philip Ledger cond. ANGEL SZB-3874 two discs \$17.96.

Performance: **Brave**
Recording: **Resonant**

Although *Alexander's Feast* has moments of supreme beauty, the work as a whole seems to be more of a grand gesture than one of consistent musical depth. It's effective, yes, but there is a great deal of bustling formula writing. Philip Ledger's reading fits the music very well: brave and full of heroic thrashing. Both chorus and orchestra make a splendid noise, but there is nothing remarkable about this performance.

The soloists, too, fit into this scheme. Helen Donath's voice is well focused and her coloratura agile; Robert Tear sings with dramatic intent; Thomas Allen's lusty voice brings rage to the battle music; and Sally Burgess' small bit at the end is well done. But again, there is nothing really remarkable, no moments of great subtlety or inspiration. What would undoubtedly come off in public as an exciting performance of an exciting work does not quite make the same impression when it is heard at home through loudspeakers. *S.L.*

HAYDN: *The Creation*. Heather Harper (soprano); Robert Tear (tenor); John Shirley-Quirk (bass); Choir of King's College, Cambridge; Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Sir David Willcocks cond. ARABESQUE 8039-2 two discs \$13.96.

Performance: **Fine**
Recording: **Too reverberant**

This recording, issued in England by HMV about six years ago but just now appearing here, is one of only two *Creations* currently available that are sung in English, the other being Frederic Waldman's (with Judith Raskin, John McCollum, Chester Watson, and the Musica Aeterna Chorus and Orchestra, on MCA 2-10001). Both are really fine performances, but Willcocks has a stronger trio of soloists—conspicuously stronger in the case of his bass, John Shirley-Quirk—to offset the slightly more persuasive choral singing in the Waldman set. What may prove to be a more decisive factor for many listeners is sound quality. The Waldman set, originally released on U.S. Decca about fifteen years ago, sounds clean and well balanced, if a little dryish, but the new set is afflicted with a reverberance that works against the performance. While one may enjoy cavernous effects in massive early choral works designed for such acoustic settings, such as the Charpentier *Te Deum*, the spaces of King's College Chapel serve to muddy things here, and this apparently has affected the pacing as well, for the conductor has to wait for a sound to die away before he can proceed (or else allow sounds to overlap). If I were determined to have *The*

Creation in English, I think I might be a little happier with the older recording, but one of the German versions is a safer bet all around. With Münchinger's London set gone now, my choice among the remaining ones would have to be Karajan's (Deutsche Grammophon 2707 044). *R.F.*

HAYDN: *String Quartet in D Major, Op. 64, No. 5* (see *Best of the Month*, page 81)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LISZT: *Two Concert Studies (G. 145): Waldesrauschen; Gnomenreigen. Three Concert Studies (G. 144): Il Lamento; La Leggerezza; Un Sospiro. Réminiscences de Don Juan—Mozart (G. 418)*. Jorge Bolet (piano). L'OISEAU-LYRE DSLO 41 \$8.98, © KDSL 41 \$8.98.

Performance: **Marvelous**
Recording: **Realistic**

About a dozen years ago Vanguard issued a Liszt record (VCS-10041) on which Earl Wild plays the longest and shortest of the pieces in Jorge Bolet's new collection—the *Don Juan Fantasy* and *Gnomenreigen*. It is a marvelous record (Wild's program is filled out with the *Mephisto Polka*, the *Me-*

phisto Waltz, and paraphrases on themes from Gounod's *Faust* and Donizetti's *Robert le Diable*), but so is this new one. Surely Wild's flair for this material is matched only by Bolet's, and Bolet's is matched only by Wild's. If I had to choose between the two records, though, I would choose Bolet's, for his is the more substantial program. It is a great advantage to have the two sets of concert studies intact, especially when all five pieces are played with such sensitive regard for the composer's every wish (including, it need hardly be said, all the brilliance one could imagine). The seamless dramatic flow of the *Don Juan Fantasy*, the delicacy of the coloring in *Waldesrauschen*, the awesome mystery in *Il Lamento*, the all but incredible combination of spontaneity and polish which enables Bolet to leave us aware, throughout both sides, of Liszt's inventiveness rather than the challenges he created for latter-day pianists—all these make this a record to treasure, no matter how many duplications it may represent. *R.F.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MAHLER: *Symphony No. 4, in G Major*. Edith Mathis (soprano); Berlin Philhar-



P. D. Q. Bach: Cantata "Blaues Gras"

WHAT will that Herr Professor Peter Schickele uncover next? It is now a quarter of a century, by his own reckoning, since he first unloosed upon a dazed world a composition by P. D. Q. Bach, the "last but not least" of J. S. Bach's children. He discovered that greatest of Baroque soporifics, *The Santa Cantatas*, and now his researches have led to the discovery of nothing less than the *Cantata Blaues Gras*, "deep in a Kentucky coal mine, where it was being used to stuff up a hole leading . . . to a vein of methane gas."

The text of *Blaues Gras*, for which an English translation credited to Ursula Eastman is supplied, is by an unknown author who was obviously well versed not only in the German of his own land but in the vernacular of the eighteenth-century Southland as well. Such passages as the journey up Cripple Creek ("Go I now up Cripple Creek") and the intermittent motif of hankering—for the old Kentucky home, for the charms of Savannah, Georgia, for "blue grass and green sky"—inspired the composer to heights of Baroque invention that must be heard in order to be disbelieved. And that is not all. P. D. Q.'s *No-No Nonette*, "one of the earliest pieces written during the Soused Period," makes remarkable use of a doggie pull toy, a crying doll, an ice pick, two inflated balloons, and the jawbone of an ass as well as conventional instruments of the period. The concert concludes with a Baroque singing commercial for a dishpan-hands cure that was peddled by P. D. Q. when he was traveling over much of Europe "in search of a fast pfennig." The enrichment the treasure-house of music has suffered through these discoveries is simply beyond calculation, and the performances are no less incredible. —Paul Kresh

P. D. Q. BACH: *Black Forest Bluegrass. Cantata: Blaues Gras (Bluegrass Cantata)*. John Ferrante (tenor); Peter Schickele (bass); New York Pick-Up Ensemble, Robert Bernardt cond. *No-No Nonette, for Assorted Winds and Toys*. Wind octet and percussion, Peter Schickele cond. *Hear Me Through, from Diverse Ayres on Sundrie Notions*. John Ferrante (bargain-counter tenor); Peter Schickele (snake); instrumental ensemble, Peter Schickele cond. VANGUARD VSD-79427 \$7.98.

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monic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 205 \$9.98, © 3301 205 \$9.98.

Performance: **Top-drawer**
Recording: **Very good**

In the setting forth of the line, texture, nuance, and detail of Mahler's delectable Fourth Symphony, this latest in Herbert von Karajan's Mahler cycle for DG approaches perfection. From the very opening pages, there is no doubt that every element is under total control. The end result may lack the humanity and spontaneity of Previn's remarkable realization with the Pittsburgh Symphony for Angel, but the polish and effortless agility displayed by Karajan's Philharmonikers are enthralling. Still, I think Previn has the interpretive edge in the second movement, with its *scordatura* solo violin, for Karajan tends to gloss over the sinister undertones and the special harmonic ambience.

Like Previn, Karajan excels in the great slow movement, but in a very different way. Where Previn searches out the special character of each variation, Karajan, adopting a very measured pace, goes for the big line and an extraordinarily wide dynamic range. Only in the 1946 Bruno Walter recording, still available on Odyssey, have I heard the mighty outburst toward the close sound forth with such apocalyptic intensity. And Karajan's closing *niente* is almost literally breathtaking. In this movement, too, the Berlin Philharmonic string playing is of a quality that brings back memories of the Philadelphia and Boston orchestras of the Thirties. Karajan's reading of the "*Himmlichen Freuden*" finale with its soprano solo is more than usually fascinating in that he takes a meditative, even nostalgic approach rather than giving it the open, child-like naïveté one usually expects. Edith Mathis, in purest voice, achieves an almost disembodied quality here, and the final stanza of the song takes on the feeling of epilogue rather than fulfillment—oddly moving and provocative. The sonics, if not quite as rich as those on Previn's London-recorded disc, are very fine. For myself, I would want *both* recordings. *D.H.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MAHLER: Symphony No. 9. Philadelphia Orchestra, James Levine cond. RCA ARL2-3461 two discs \$15.96, © ARK2-3461 \$15.96.

Performance: **Exuberant**
Recording: **Brilliant**

James Levine is more than two-thirds of the way through his Mahler cycle with the symphony orchestras of London, Chicago, and Philadelphia. Even during a time when Mahler symphonies are virtually a glut on the market, these performances and recordings have been impressive, and this latest, in some ways the most challenging, is exceeding fine. The Ninth is Mahler's biggest and darkest canvas in intensity and largeness of vision if not in actual length; it is the testimony of a dying man. But this is a youthful, almost exuberant performance that revels in the complications, in the twists and turns, even in the doubt and anguish, with undisguised delight. If you like your Mahler tortured and neurotic, you may find Levine's

reading entirely too healthy. But I believe that Mahler's musical vision is large enough to take a variety of interpretations.

The first Mahler we heard was that of Bruno Walter, cozy, almost *gemütlich*, ultra-Viennese. Bernstein gave us the contemporary, urban, neurotic side of Mahler—and helped make him seem more relevant for our time. Levine is in still another place. Here the virtuoso aspects—conducting, playing, and recording—are truly spectacular, and the youthful exuberance is appealing. But I don't think that Mahler's profundity or spirituality is seriously diminished. The size and range of Levine's music-making are consonant with the dimensions of the music. The musical connections, the long lines, the sense of phrase and articulation building to Olympian heights are entirely compatible with the ultra-clarity, the crystalline textures, the rhythmic energy, the controlled power and excitement; the neuroticism just takes care of itself. *E.S.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MENDELSSOHN: Die Erste Walpurgisnacht, Op. 60. Horst Laubenthal (tenor); Tom Krause (baritone); Alfred Sramek (bass); Margarita Lilowa (contralto); Chorus of the Vienna Singverein; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Christoph von Dohnányi cond. **Symphony No. 2, in B-flat Major, Op. 52 ("Lobgesang").** Sona Ghazarian (soprano); Edita Gruberova (soprano); Werner Krenn (tenor); Chorus of the Vienna State Opera; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Christoph von Dohnányi cond. LONDON CSA 2250 two discs \$17.98.

Performance: **Revelatory**
Recording: **Splendid**

As I suspected after hearing the recent digitally mastered recording of the *Italian* Symphony on London, we have in conductor Christoph von Dohnányi someone with a real flair for Mendelssohn. From the most magical fairy scherzo to the grandest Victorian ceremony, Dohnányi brings this music to life.

Mendelssohn was in his early twenties when he set Goethe's ballad evoking the survival of Druid rites amid an atmosphere of Christian hegemony. For *Die Erste Walpurgisnacht* he produced a marvelously fresh Spring Chorus, a stirring episode full of choral antiphony in which the Druids vow to hold their ceremony, and some enchanting, dramatic witch-goblin music—a sinister quickstep merging into a diabolic dance—all magnificently scored. If the rather conventional closing chorus is a bit of a letdown, everything that comes before it is topnotch.

The Symphony No. 2 is actually a symphony-cantata that Mendelssohn completed, almost a decade after he composed *Die Erste Walpurgisnacht*, for the four-hundredth anniversary of printer Johannes Gutenberg. The *sinfonia* proper is in three connected movements, beginning with a proclamatory trombone motto that threads its way in varying guises and fragmentations through much of what follows. For me the high point of the orchestral section is the exquisite *Allegretto* intermezzo episode. But the greater part of the *Lobgesang* (*Hymn of Praise*) is the cantata section, composed on Biblical texts. It contains a

wealth of fine writing for both chorus and soloists, individually and in duet, and the music is grandly ceremonial. The most effective moment in this part is the dramatic tenor recitative, "We cried in the darkness and said: Watchman, is the night high spent?", which leads into the stirring "Let us put on the armor of light" chorus. Brahms must have had Mendelssohn's use of timpani pedal in mind when he set down the "Souls of the Righteous" episode in the *German Requiem*.

The *Lobgesang* is a little less than a perfect masterpiece, but Dohnányi, with the help of first-rate soloists, fine choruses, a superb orchestra, and rich, spacious recorded sound, makes this and its youthful companion piece convincing and often stirring experiences. London's production team deserves extra credit for the effective handling of the all-important organ timbre in the cantata section of the *Lobgesang*. All told, a most recommendable album. *D.H.*

MOZART: *La Clemenza di Tito*. Peter Schreier (tenor), Titus Vespasianus; Julia Varady (soprano), Vitellia; Edith Mathis (soprano), Servilia; Teresa Berganza (mezzo-soprano), Sextus; Marga Schiml (mezzo-soprano), Annius; Theo Adam (bass), Publius. Leipzig Radio Chorus; Dresden State Orchestra, Karl Böhm cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2709 092 three discs \$29.94, © 3371 049 \$29.94.

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

Mozart's last opera has come in for a thorough re-examination during the past two decades with results for which we can all be grateful. The formulas of the old-fashioned *opera seria* no longer blind us to the magnificent sweep of this music, the rich melodic wealth and adventurous harmonic imagination of this final burst of Mozart's operatic genius. In the right hands, *La Clemenza di Tito* emerges as a vital and exciting masterpiece.

Fortunately, its recordings do the opera eminent justice. The earlier London OSA 1387 (István Kertész conducting, 1968) and Philips 6703 079 (Colin Davis, 1978) are highly recommended, and so is DG's new version under Karl Böhm, though I have more reservations about this one than about its predecessors. Böhm conducts with his customary vigor and involvement at comfortable and logically related (if at times too deliberate) tempos. His performance is rather generalized, however, not always alert enough to reflect the emotional ups and downs of the action.

The singing is good, at times exceptionally so. The role of Vitellia, with its spectacular extension from low G to high D, demands almost too much from its interpreter. As a rule, it lies more comfortably for mezzos, and it was sung extremely well by Maria Casula (London) and Janet Baker (Philips). Although DG's Julia Varady is a soprano, she has no trouble encompassing all the notes; moreover, she is an intelligent and musical singer who knows how to emphasize Vitellia's driven, neurotic character with her tense, at times breathless delivery. Teresa Berganza is the Sextus, repeating her performance on the London version. Her tones are less sumptuous now, but she

(Continued on page 88)

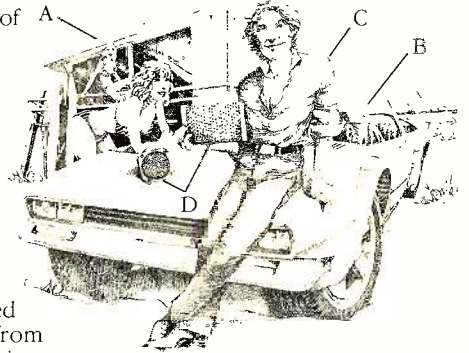
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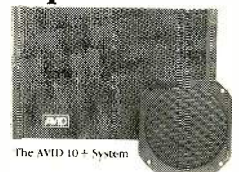
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ACCORDING to my Irish great-grandmother, who emigrated to the New World at the age of sixteen, "If Ireland gave no more to the world than Jack McCormack, that is quite enough." Quite enough indeed, for it is a fact that since John McCormack died in 1945 we have not had *any* singer, "Irish tenor" or otherwise, with his power to inspire, unmixed, the admiration of the entire musical world.

The McCormack mantle was trimmed down and recut in an effort to make it fit his pupil Christie Lynch, but it soon slipped from those shoulders. Dennis Morgan

he was only four or five and later appearing with such singers as Bea Lillie (!) and Bing Crosby on the shows of Fred Allen and Paul Whiteman.

After getting his B.A. from New York's Hunter College and his M.A. from Juilliard, he taught at the Manhattan School of Music and at Hunter, continued to study voice, continued to perform (sometimes as a countertenor). His solo recording career was launched in 1976 with "When You and I Were Young, Maggie" (RCA ARL1-1698, reviewed in November 1976 STEREO REVIEW), followed by "I Hear You Calling

clear, high tenor voice, precise diction, an innate musicality, a talent for producing full, open vowels that gives the lie to any claim that English is not a singable language, just a hint of a brogue (mostly around the "r"s), a hatful of idiomatic appoggiaturas and other musical ornaments, and, especially, an instinctive realization that behind the music, beyond the words, lies another music altogether, that of the ancient Gaelic language.

I SUGGESTED this to White recently, and he agreed that it is indeed true, that some inner atavistic impulse often dictates a subtle shift of tonal emphasis, an imperceptible quickening of a rhythm, a slight alteration of a phrase. The album is full of examples, but a particularly good one is the reading given the word "scattered" in the line "the children are scattered/The old folk are gone" in the song *The Old House*. The proper reading cannot be garnered from the music as written, for it places the two syllables on two equal notes; White compresses them and seems almost to pile them on one—a small thing, but crucial.

The Old House is a typically melancholy Irish song bound to pluck at the heart-strings, especially in those disposed to remember, with a pang, a happy childhood. But it is more too, for the "old house" is a metaphor for Ireland itself, which practically bled emigrants in the last half of the nineteenth century, probably as many as five million of her children being scattered across the globe from Canada to Argentina to Australia and beyond. Little wonder that the country's songs are so haunted by farewells (" 'tis you must go/And I must bide"). That may also be why it is so difficult to resist the persuasive tug of sympathetic patriotism that some of these songs inspire—Balfé's *Killarney*, Loughborough's *Ireland, Mother Ireland*, and Claribel's *Come Back to Erin* being particularly potent examples here.

Perhaps the most impressive song, both in its composition and in its performance, is *My Lagan Love*. It is described in the notes as an "Ulster Air," with words by Seosamh MacCathmhóil. Its modal strains sound as old as its name ("Lagan" is probably pre-Christian in origin) and seem to bear a message from the other side of the beyond. McCormack did not sing in Gaelic, but I would like to hear White, for my grandmother's sake, try it again some time in the language that has long been the root of Ireland's stubborn sense of national unity—and accompanied by a proper harp (the less said about the overblown arrangements here the better).

If you still have any doubts that this album is for you, just listen to *Danny Boy* and be convinced. I doubt that you've ever heard it better done, and any song that has suffered what this one has proved that it is indestructible and therefore worthwhile.

LIKE McCormack, White has a classical side as well; he can be heard in several operas rather too far off the beaten track for anyone but specialists (he appeared at Ireland's Wexford Festival last year, for exam-



Tenor White with Ireland's president, Patrick Hillery, and Mrs. Hillery

Irish Tenor Robert White: The Colonial Boy Returns

played around for a while with the idea of being a singer (we have the film *My Wild Irish Rose* and others to prove it), but the opportunity to be a lightly comic (Cary Grant did it better) Hollywood leading man was too tempting, and he was lost to music. Dennis Day had a slender lyric instrument that might have been bent to the requirements of the repertoire, but he was really a pop singer with hardly enough Hibernian feeling to stretch over the length of *Danny Boy*. And so we've been out of truly accomplished Irish tenors for some time now—until Robert White came along, that is.

American-born and classically trained, White is the son of Joseph White, the "Silver-masked Tenor" of mid-Twenties radio (and Victor records—he is listed in my 1930 catalog singing *The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls*, *Kathleen Mavourneen*, *Little Bit of Heaven*, and *Mother Machree*). Young White therefore came to show-biz early, singing on the radio when

Me" (ARL1-2450), John Corigliano's *Poem in October* (ARL1-2534), an album of Beethoven folk-song settings (ARL1-3417) that we will get to in a moment, and this year's "Danny Boy" album, released, interestingly enough, just in time for St. Patrick's Day.

It is something of a mystery why the Irish genius for song no longer produces world-class tenors in the McCormack mold—something to do with great suffering being needed to produce great art, perhaps, though the Battle of the Boyne does seem to be going on still some three hundred years later. At any rate, Ireland is not too foolishly proud to import a colonial boy to do the job. According to the *Irish Examiner*, commenting on a concert in February at Cork's Connolly Hall, "Robert White is probably the finest living example of a traditional Irish tenor." Who would know better?

What it takes to make a traditional Irish tenor is, I think, no mystery at all: a sweet,

ple, in Smetana's *Two Widows*). But he can be heard also in rather more accessible material, a collection of Irish, English, Scottish, and Welsh ballads arranged by that popular chart-master Ludwig van Beethoven. I knew that I was fond of this repertoire, but I didn't know just *how* fond until I went to my shelves and came up with three more: Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Victoria de los Angeles in an album of duets (Angel 35963), Fischer-Dieskau with Edith Mathis and Alexander Young (Deutsche Grammophon 2530 262), and Fischer-Dieskau by himself (DG 138 706). I promptly wallowed in them all, then returned to White's album to compare a couple of songs: *Come Draw We Round a Cheerful Ring* and *The Pulse of an Irishman*. I have concluded (from *The Pulse*) that baritone Fischer-Dieskau will never make an Irish tenor; you wouldn't even know he was singing in English, though diction is but part of the problem—the song is simply taken much too fast, at a flagrantly virtuosic clip. The same is true of *Come Draw We*, too fast not only for Fischer-Dieskau (he sings in German) but for wizard accompanist Gerald Moore (though the strings manage well enough).

THE larger difference, however, is an idiomatic one: White sings with a straightforward folk (Irish, of course) charm, uninhibited by the shade of Beethoven and confident that the strength and beauty of the songs can make their points without virtuoso emphasis. Which is not to say that the Fischer-Dieskau versions do not have their own recommendations, but if I had to choose (I don't) between favoring Beethoven and favoring the folk, the folk would win. White is splendidly accompanied on the album; I was particularly taken with the playing of Yo-Yo Ma (I'm a sucker for the cello) and pianist Samuel Sanders—who, speaking as we were of mantles, may have inherited that of Gerald Moore.

—William Anderson

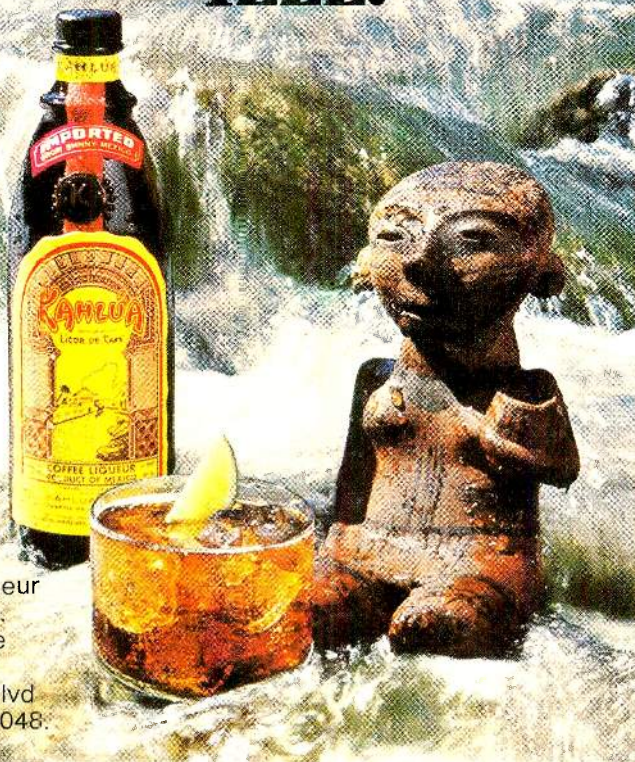
ROBERT WHITE: *Danny Boy*. Robert White (tenor); National Philharmonic, Charles Gerhardt cond. *The Old House; Trottin' to the Fair; The Harp That Once Thro' Tara's Halls; She Moved Through the Fair; The Bard of Armagh; The Fairy Tree; Ireland, Mother Ireland; Danny Boy; The Next Market Day; Believe Me, if All Those Endearing Young Charms; My Lagan Love; Killarney; The Irish Emigrant; Come Back to Erin*. RCA ARL1-3442 \$8.98, © ARK1-3442 \$8.98.

BEETHOVEN: *Scottish, English, Irish, and Welsh Songs*. Robert White (tenor); Ani Kavafian (violin); Yo-Yo Ma (cello); Samuel Sanders (piano). *When Mortals All to Rest Retire; 'Tis Sunshine at Last; The Kiss, Dear Maid, Thy Lip Has Left; Cease Your Funning; The Return to Ulster; O Mary, at Thy Window Be; Sally in Our Alley; Cupid's Kindness; The Pulse of an Irishman; On the Massacre of Glencoe; O Harp of Erin; Come Draw We Round the Cheerful Ring; The Soldier; The British Light Dragoons; The Vale of Clwyd; Good Night*. RCA ARL1-3417 \$8.98.

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is always dramatically apt and her technique is virtuosic. Edith Mathis shines in Servilia's relatively small role; Marga Schiml is a bit too Germanic in her recitatives but does her aria ("Torna di Tito al lato") very well.

As the Emperor Titus, Peter Schreier combines solid technique with regal authority in the arias, but, alas, this opera abounds in recitatives, where his Italian is simply too grating for aural comfort. I therefore prefer the smoother overall achievements of Stuart Burrows (Philips) and Werner Krenn (London). Though Theo Adam is authoritative in the small role of Publius, his sound is un-Mozartian and it is evident that he must have learned his Italian from the same coach Schreier did.

DG's recorded sound is excellent, the album presentation once again exemplary. As for textual fidelity, Böhm permits a liberal approach to appoggiaturas and makes several cuts in the recitatives—not to the detriment of the overall result. G.J.

MOZART: Piano Concertos Nos. 18-27 (see *Going on Record*, page 54)

MOZART: Symphonies (see *Speaking of Music*, page 6; *Best of the Month*, page 72)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MOZART: Violin Concerto No. 1, in B-flat Major (K. 207); Serenade No. 3, in D Major (K. 185). Thomas Zehetmair (violin); Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra, Leopold Hag-

er cond. TELEFUNKEN 6.42537 AW \$8.98, © 4.42537 CX \$8.98.

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

Last year Deutsche Grammophon introduced us to Anne-Sophie Mutter, the young German violinist who recorded Mozart's Third and Fifth Concertos with Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic (2531 049) at the age of fourteen and subsequently confirmed the fine impression she made in that recording with appearances in New York and Washington. Now Telefunken brings us the debut record of another exceptional young violinist, also playing Mozart. Thomas Zehetmair, born in Salzburg in 1961, made his home-town debut three years ago in the Salzburg Festival and has since performed in several other European centers and received support from numerous state and private foundations, among them the Mozarteum International Foundation, which bought him a Guaragnini and sponsored this recording. From the sound of it, he, like Mutter, is not merely a youngster who can play well, but a musician with mature insights as well as fine technical equipment and a big, pure tone (if not quite as ripe as Mutter's). He plays with style, spirit, and an all-round persuasive feeling for the Mozart idiom—at about the same age as Mozart's at the time these works were composed. He performs in only three of the seven movements of the big D Major Serenade—the two that constitute a miniature concerto (II and III) and the second minuet

(VI)—but has supplied his own tasteful cadenza for the first of these, as he has for the concerto. Hager sets off the seldom-heard serenade a little less brightly than Willi Boskovsky (London STS-15171), but in an agreeably warmhearted frame; in the concerto he provides impeccable partnership, and Telefunken has come through with very good sound, also characterized more by warmth than by brightness. R.F.

PUCCHINI: Suor Angelica. Joan Sutherland (soprano), Suor Angelica; Christa Ludwig (mezzo-soprano), the Princess; Anne Collins (mezzo-soprano), Mother Superior; Elizabeth Connell (mezzo-soprano), Sister Monitress; Enid Hartle (mezzo-soprano), Mistress of the Novices; Isobel Buchanan (soprano), Suor Genovieffa; Marie McLaughlin (soprano), Suor Osmina; others. London Opera Chorus; Finchley Children's Music Group; National Philharmonic Orchestra, Richard Bonyngue cond. LONDON OSA-1173 \$8.98, © OSA5-1173 \$8.98.

Performance: **Well conducted**
Recording: **Good**

Suor Angelica is not my favorite Puccini opera, and, judging from the paucity of performances and recordings, it is not other people's favorite either. Actually, the wonder is that it is done at all. Not only is this an opera about a convent full of unbearably cute nuns, but it ends with the most mawkish moment in all of opera: Suor Angelica's dead infant son surrounded by the hosts of

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heaven welcoming his mother who has just killed herself and ought to be on her way to eternal damnation. Well, that's what it says in the libretto, that's what Puccini wrote music for, and I've actually seen it done on the stage.

Puccini, of course, was a high-living, liberal free-thinker who no more believed in this claptrap than in Shintoism. So there is inevitably an air of insincerity and hokiness about *Suor Angelica*. But Puccini wasn't the only good theater man to exploit the drama of the Catholic church for effect. Nineteenth-century and turn-of-the-century opera composers and impresarios, beginning with Meyerbeer and including Massenet, loved to put religious spectacles on the stage in a manner that seems to us entirely sacrilegious.

But Joan Sutherland as *Suor Angelica*? And Christa Ludwig as the terrible Auntie? What are *they* doing here? This is an odd, very un-Italian recording with fresh, young, vibrato-less English female voices in sharp contrast to the mature, high-culture sound of Sutherland and Ludwig. In the case of Auntie Princess, the one character from outside the convent and definitely the heavy, the contrast is appropriate. But most of the time I am happier with the innocent and pure tone of Isobel Buchanan than with Sutherland's pushed sound. Once or twice in the big scene with her aunt she catches fire, but she is not really the mistress of the long, rising, passionate *verismo* line. It is understandable that, as the highs and the technical control begin to go, she would choose a lower, "easier" repertoire. But the *verismo* repertoire is easy only in a superficial sense. I do not mean to imply that Sutherland's singing is without merit—her fans will probably enjoy her in these new and melodramatic surroundings—but only that a unified conception of a role, a difficult one for contemporary audiences, is not present.

A feature of this recording that surprised me was Richard Bonyng's conducting. The shaping of this work is controlled almost entirely by the conductor, and without sensitivity and skill the delicate balance between dramatic dialogue and impassioned line (much of the latter is in the orchestra anyhow) falls apart. Not here. Bonyng's success with a work in which larger musical issues—not just a subservience to one or more singing superstars—count for so much is an indication of how he has developed over the years.

The sound is excellent, but the English translation in the libretto is notably inaccurate and misleading. *E.S.*

D. SCARLATTI: *Thirty Essercizi per Cembalo* (see Best of the Month, page 74)

SCHUBERT: *Quartetsatz in C Minor* (see Best of the Month, page 81)

SCHUBERT/LISZT: *Der Leiermann; Täuschung; Die Junge Nonne; Ave Maria; Der Erlkönig; Wohin?* (see SCHUMANN)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SCHUMANN: *Piano Sonata No. 2, in G Minor, Op. 22; Fantasiestücke, Op. 12, Nos. 3 (Warum?) and 4 (Grillen).* **SCHUBERT/LISZT:** *Der Leiermann; Täuschung; Die*

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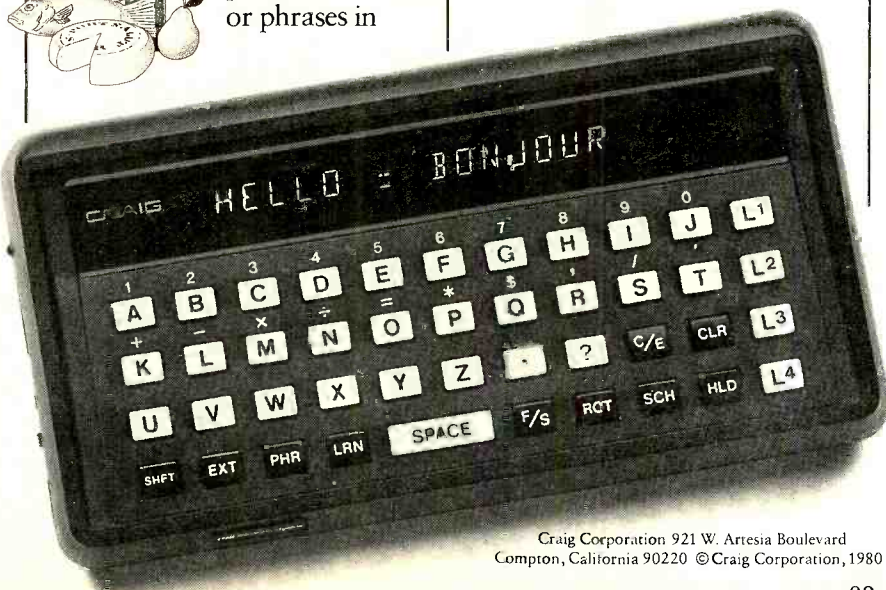
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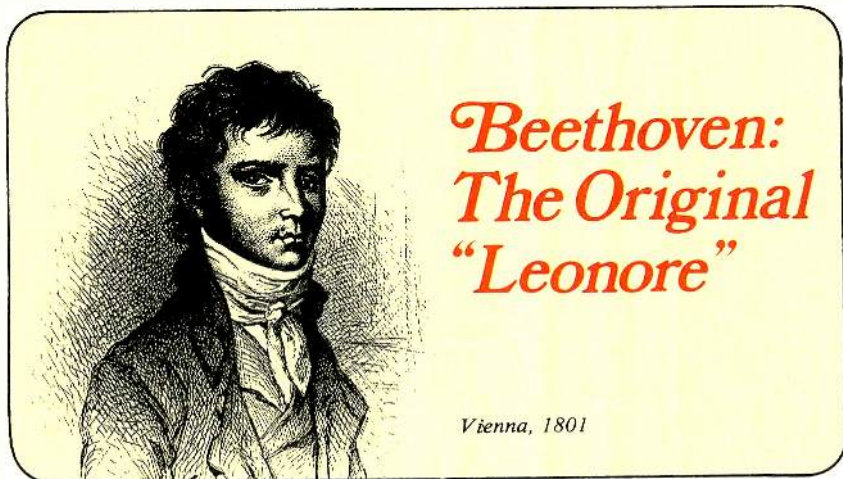
Junge Nonne; Ave Maria; Der Erlkönig; Wohin? Lazar Berman (piano). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 4066 \$5.20 (plus \$1.25 shipping, from Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

Performance: **Berman at his best**
Recording: **Good enough**

It is hard to be certain whether or not this performance of *Der Erlkönig* is the same one that is on Columbia M 34545 (a program of encore pieces), because the sound

characteristics of the two discs are so different, and I can't say whether this is the same version of the Schumann sonata that is paired with that composer's First Sonata on Columbia M 34528, since I do not have that disc available for comparison. In any event, both sides of this new release give us Berman at his best, responding with great sensitivity to the sort of music with which he seems to identify most fully. The sonata goes with the vigor and spontaneity that suggest the music must have made its way directly from Schumann's brain to Ber-

man's fingers, the two brilliantly realized pieces from the *Fantasiestücke* suggest a complete recording of that suite as a priority item on Berman's agenda, and the Schubert/Liszt sequence on side two is touched more than occasionally by the sort of poetry Berman has given us in the most exalted of his Liszt performances (the *Transcendental Etudes* on Columbia, the two concertos with Giuliani on Deutsche Grammophon). Those who were disappointed, as I was, in Berman's performance of Schumann's First
(Continued on page 92)



Beethoven: The Original "Leonore"

Vienna, 1801

mension compared with their later transformations. But Beethoven made the biggest changes at the end. In *Leonore* the ecstatic duet between the lovers has not yet achieved the tremendous impetus that it has in *Fidelio*; with its conventional recitative and endless repetitions, it is not yet the entirely original and breathless moment that it was to become. Instead of switching scenes at the end, Don Fernando, his entire retinue, and all the minor characters crowd right into the dungeon to sing a number mostly different from the one with which we are familiar. There is a lot to be said for this continuity of scene. For one thing, it does not offer meddling conductors any chances to insert *Leonore* Overtures in between (the overture at the top here is the *Leonore* No. 2). For another, it avoids that awkward tacked-on feeling that is, for me, the greatest weakness of the final version.

Certainly I would not put this recording on anybody's required list. The performances are solid without being especially inspired. These singers—all well known—exemplify the strengths of German opera production, which only occasionally reaches vocal, musical, and dramatic heights but nearly always embodies the solid, middle-class virtues of Germanic culture. Even the presence of an American—Richard Cassilly—in the cast is characteristic of Central European operatic performance.

BUT what this recording provides is, above all, an insight—a series of insights, really—into the creative process, something usually available in music only to scholars studying sketches. We are so used to thinking of the music of the classical masters as immutable, inevitable, made in heaven, that it comes as a shock to hear it another way—to realize that it was conceived differently and might actually have turned into another kind of artistic inevitability than the one we know. Fascinating.
—Eric Salzman

BEETHOVEN: *Leonore*. Edda Moser (soprano), Leonore; Helen Donath (soprano), Marzelline; Richard Cassilly (tenor), Florestan; Karl Ridderbusch (bass), Rocco; Theo Adam (baritone), Don Pizzaro; Eberhard Büchner (tenor), Jacquino; Hermann-Christian Pollster (bass), Don Fernando; Rainer Goldberg (tenor), First Prisoner; Siegfried Lorenz (bass), Second Prisoner. Leipzig Radio Chorus; Staatskapelle Dresden, Herbert Blomstedt cond. ARABESQUE 8043-3L three discs \$20.94.

BEETHOVEN'S *Leonore*? Surely somebody has got that wrong, haven't they?

Beethoven wrote his opera *Leonore* between January 1804 and the summer of the following year. It opened in the fall of 1805 at the Theater an der Wien—and flopped. An attempt was made to revise and revive it the next season, but the revised version also failed. Finally, a new edition was prepared in 1814, and it is that version which passed into history and the operatic repertoire.

This is, of course, the story of Beethoven's only opera, *Fidelio*, for "*Leonore*" is nothing more than the original title and the recording at hand is nothing less than a presentation of Beethoven's first thoughts on an extraordinary subject—the original opera of 1805!

The world of opera is not a place where original editions and authenticity are at home. The mania for returning to the composer's "original" intentions has touched the opera house only lightly, and versions, editions, and revisions abound, even for many of the standards. But who is to say whether a composer's revisions represent his final thoughts on the subject or merely the exigencies of working under pressure in the theater?

Perhaps it is some kind of extravagance to record discarded ideas on a subject—even by so great a master as Beethoven. Or perhaps this is the "authentic" opera before commercial interests intervened. Well, not quite either. *Leonore* is, for anyone already familiar with *Fidelio*, an extraordinary document that throws light on the thinking

processes of a great musical mind. In comparing *Leonore* with *Fidelio*, it becomes perfectly clear that Beethoven, never one to accept criticism lightly, took the revision quite seriously, transforming a stock eighteenth-century melodrama into a work of music theater.

It is important to realize that this work was written by Beethoven *not* as a grand opera but in the form of a popular musical play; there is no doubt that he wanted to reach a popular audience rather than just the sophisticated musical public. With this in mind we can understand why he started out in the vein of a Viennese musical comedy and why he kept revising the work in the direction of tightness and dramatic thrust.

At first the changes don't seem all that great. The first two numbers are transposed, and a trio is dropped from the first act; later, a pretty duet with solo violin is omitted. In these numbers, the character of Rocco and the "serious musical comedy" aspects of the work are clearer than in the version we know. But this is almost the least of it. Gradually one becomes aware of other changes Beethoven made in *Fidelio*. A little vocal run that has been taken out or transformed. A few measures—sometimes a single bar—omitted. Repetitions canceled. The old eighteenth-century symmetries altered in favor of something more dramatic, less balanced, more directional. In *Leonore* the Prisoners' Chorus is followed by an old-fashioned thud-and-blunder scene for villain with chorus. The big arias of *Leonore* and Florestan are relatively modest in di-



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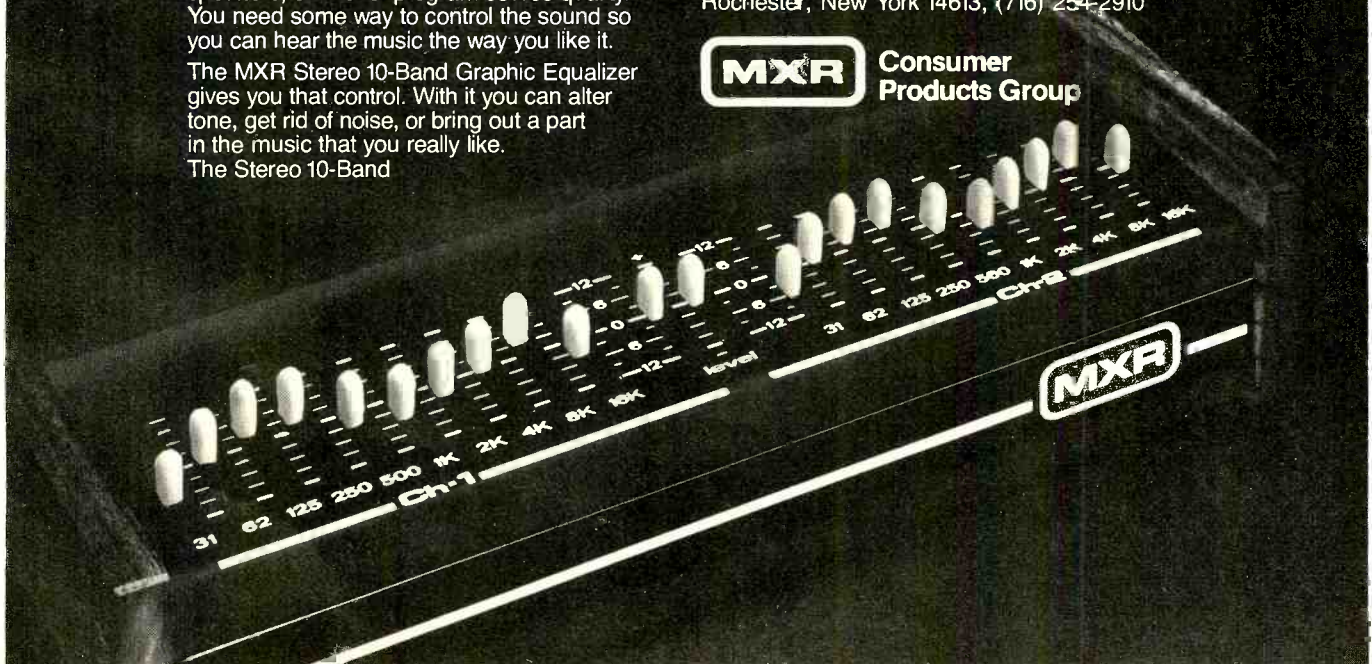
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Sonata should be happy to find the G Minor separated from it and coupled with such attractive material. The sound is nothing special, but it's good enough. R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SCHUMANN: *Symphony No. 3, in E-flat Major, Op. 97 ("Rhenish"); Konzertstück in F Major for Four Horns and Orchestra, Op. 86.* Gerd Seifert, Norbert Hauptmann, Christoph Kohler, Manfred Klier (horns); Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Klaus Tennstedt cond. ANGEL SZ-37655 \$8.98.

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

Strange as it may seem, this is the first Klaus Tennstedt disc to have graced my turntable, and from my point of view it has been a most auspicious encounter. Tennstedt has an unfussy way with Schumann, and I like his response to the essential manly aspect of the *Rhenish* Symphony opening movement and his insistence on working for the big line from beginning to end of the work as a whole. There is a sense of continuous flow and just proportion in his treatment of this structurally somewhat problematic score that I find very much to my taste. The second movement has a fine swing all the way. The intermezzo-like third movement seems a little lacking in detailed nuance, but the Cathedral Scene that follows has a near-Brucknerian majesty. From the dark, Gothic quality of this movement, Tennstedt moves to light-handed exuber-

ance in a performance of the finale that ranks among the best I have heard. The *Konzertstück*, as I noted in my review of the Barenboim/Chicago Symphony recording, provides a real workout for any orchestral horn section, and the Berliners, like their Chicago counterparts, are gloriously equal to it. The final pages have a terrific zest. The sound throughout is just fine, and there is an admirable balance between the horns and orchestra in Op. 86.

D.H.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Symphony No. 1, in G Minor, Op. 13 ("Winter Dreams"); Marche Slave, Op. 31.* Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin Mehta cond. LONDON CS 7148 \$8.98.

Performance: **Brisk**
Recording: **Bass-heavy**

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Symphony No. 1, in G Minor, Op. 13 ("Winter Dreams"); Symphony No. 2, in C Minor, Op. 17 ("Little Russian"); Symphony No. 3, in D Major, Op. 29 ("Polish").* Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2709 101 three discs \$29.94, © 3371 053 \$29.94.

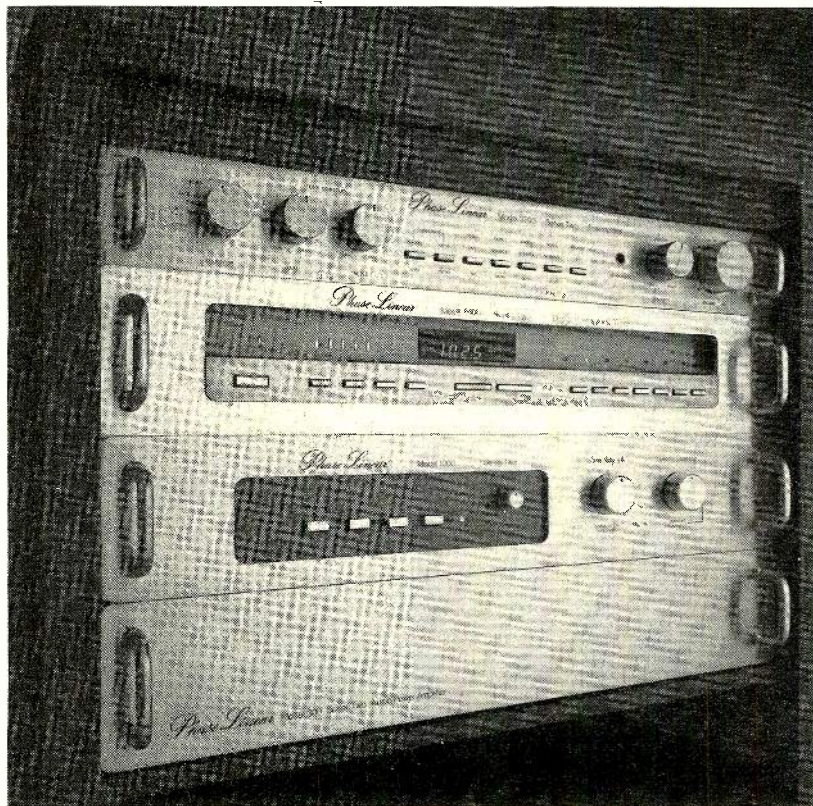
Performance: **Needs more verve**
Recording: **Excellent**

There are nine or so recordings of each of the early Tchaikovsky symphonies currently listed in Schwann, considering both individual releases and parts of integral sets. Zubin Mehta's recording of No. 1 is the first of his boxed Tchaikovsky symphony

cycle to become separately available, with the *Marche Slave*, recorded at a later session, thrown in by way of bonus. Mehta's way with the music is dynamic, even a bit brusque, thereby depriving the score of some of its innate poetic element. The finale has a nice rhythmic "spring" here, but the percussion is a bit on the slam-bang side. The recording is somewhat bass-heavy, like many of Mehta's other Los Angeles discs. *Marche Slave* gets an excellent reading and also fares better sonically: there is more air around the full-orchestra episodes and the overall balance gains accordingly.

The Deutsche Grammophon package marks the completion by Herbert von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic of their current traversal of the six Tchaikovsky symphonies. I wish I could summon up more enthusiasm for Karajan's readings of the early symphonies. The lyrical parts come off beautifully, with all the refinements of balance and color that we have come to expect from this maestro and his marvelous orchestra, but the rhythmic verve inherent in the balletic movements of these works is lacking much of the time. Michael Tilson Thomas with the Boston Symphony has more to offer in No. 1. Dorati's remains my favorite *Little Russian*, but it is unavailable as a separate disc. I like Maazel's vital and gutsy reading of the *Polish* Symphony for London with the Vienna Philharmonic, even though the otherwise excellent sound is troubled by obtrusive low-level hum. I would definitely recommend consideration of the Igor Markevitch

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recordings of all three symphonies, done in the middle Sixties and recently reissued on the Philips Festivo label. *D.H.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Symphony No. 4, in F Minor, Op. 36.* Philharmonia Orchestra, Vladimir Ashkenazy cond. LONDON CS 7144 \$8.98, © CS5 7144 \$8.98.

Performance: **Passionately committed**
Recording: **Very good**

Vladimir Ashkenazy's reading of the Tchaikovsky Fourth Symphony follows hard upon the heels of the one by Bernard Haitink. Both readings are outstanding, but they differ sharply in character: Haitink is more architecturally minded but does not in any way slight the drama inherent in the music—indeed, the drama gains, if anything, from his approach. Ashkenazy by no means ignores the architecture, but he is keenly attuned to the special kind of nervousity in Tchaikovsky's musical speech, and this is what gives his recorded performance its special character. The Fate motive, as it should, blares mercilessly at the opening, and the subsequent ebb and flow in the first movement reflect unerringly the polarities of blissful escapism and uncontrollable terror. Like Haitink, Ashkenazy does wonderfully different things with the slow movement—I don't think I've ever heard such pathos in the second strain of the main theme—but it's all in perfect taste. The famous pizzicato movement sails along brilliantly, with an extra dash of color in the drunken-muzhik central episode. The finale is properly wild, yet firmly controlled. Special plaudits should go to the first-chair clarinet of the Philharmonia for exquisitely sensitive work in the opening movement.

As with earlier recordings in Ashkenazy's Tchaikovsky cycle, London's sound is impressively spacious in both depth and breadth, if not as remarkably well focused or quite as full-bodied as that accorded Haitink by Philips. In any event, I'm keeping both records. *D.H.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35; Sérénade Mélancolique, Op. 26.* Itzhak Perlman (violin); Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy cond. ANGEL SZ-37640 \$8.98, © 4ZS-37640 \$8.98.

Performance: **Rich, extroverted**
Recording: **Very good**

Three of the two dozen recordings of the Tchaikovsky violin concerto currently listed in Schwann happen to feature Itzhak Perlman—he recorded it in 1963, 1968, and 1979—and it is fascinating to compare them, particularly his 1963 "whiz kid" performance with this latest one. The exuberant, extroverted character is constant in both, as is the unerring violinistic technique, but, as the slower timings for the 1979 recording imply, Perlman has developed a more imaginative fantasy in working with the concerto's elaborative elements. The result is a reading that offers maximum contrast between the virtuosic elements on the one hand and lyrical fantasy on the other. In the slow movement and in the rather slight *Sérénade Mélancolique* that comes as

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THREE recent releases provide, for the aficionado or the merely curious, a fine selection of keyboard music from the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries played on modern copies of historic instruments. The widest selection is on a Telefunken disc by Bradford Tracey that includes works in a variety of forms by Continental as well as English composers; there are dances, fantasias, a toccata, and even a highly ornamented transcription of a work by Lassus. Trevor Pinnock's Vanguard disc is limited to dances and variations by English composers, and Joseph Payne's Musical Heritage Society release, apparently the first in a series, consists entirely of music by Orlando Gibbons.

Tracey's instrument is the most interesting, being a double virginal made by John Koster after a 1591 original by Hans Ruckers. The "mother" instrument houses a "child" pitched an octave higher, with the smaller keyboard placed above the larger; they can be played either separately or together, affording a variety of registrations. Even more variety is introduced by a stop that produces an intriguing buzzing sound. Tracey's playing itself is characterized by a wonderfully warm, improvisatory feeling. Even in such a display piece as the Sweelinck *Praeludium Toccata*, he searches out the meaning of each run and molds his minute articulations into long, sinuous phrases. However, although this approach is extremely effective in the contemplative works, the dances suffer from it, seeming to lack starch. The recorded sound is very good.

Trevor Pinnock alternates between a mellow-sounding Muselar virginal copied from a 1611 original by Andreas Ruckers and a copy of a harpsichord "in the Ruckers tradition" dating from around 1638; both handsome instruments were built by Adlam Burnett. Pinnock's performances here are breathtaking, his playing the most rewarding to be found on these three discs. Both the selection of works and his approach to them make the most of the virtuosic aspects of this difficult genre of music. Rarely does one hear Thomas Tomkins' *Barafostus' Dream* or John Bull's *The King's Hunt* played with such dash and rhythmic drive. The touching simplicity of Tallis' *Ye Tender Babes* and the brooding poignancy of



Pinnock: breathtaking performances

Pavins, Dumpes, and Galliards

William Randall's transcription of one of Dowland's *Lachrymae* are also brought out. Indeed, each piece is individually interpreted in readings unencumbered by the almost mechanical mannerisms of what often passes for "authentic performance practice" today. And the recording itself is superb.

For his "The English Virginalists, Volume I," Joseph Payne uses two harpsichords built by Frank Hubbard, one a rather nasal-sounding affair after an original by Hans Moermans and the other a mid-eighteenth-century-style instrument after one by the obscure Baker Harris. The performances display an arresting musical freedom as Payne lingers on the passage work and savors the harmonic piquancies of Gibbons' compositions. Unfortunately, the

approach is so similar for each piece that they all come out sounding the same. A work such as *The Woods So Wild* cries out for brilliance in its many figurations, and to caress them all equally leads only to listener frustration. The several pavans and fantasias, however, come off very well indeed.

—Stoddard Lincoln

ORIGINAL INSTRUMENTS: THE VIRGINAL. Sweelinck: *Praeludium Toccata*. Morley: *Lachrymae Pavane and Galliard*. Lassus: *Susanne un Jour*. Tisdale: *Coranto*. Anon.: *Two Almains; The Irish Dance; The Lord's Masque; Coranto; Miserere; The King's Morisck*. Bull: *Lord Lumley's Paven and Galliard; The Prince's Galliard; Praeludium and Fantasia*. Gibbons: *Fantasia in A Minor; Ground in A Minor*. Scheidt: *Bergamasca*. Bradford Tracey (virginal). TELEFUNKEN 6.42074 AP \$9.98, © 4.42074 CR \$9.98.

KEYBOARD MUSIC OF SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND. Byrd (attrib.): *Watkin's Ale*. Byrd: *Lavolta/Lady Morley; Rowland, or Lord Willoughby's Welcome Home; The Carman's Whistle*. Anon.: *My Lady Careys Dompe*. Tallis: *O Ye Tender Babes*. Gibbons: *The Woods So Wild; The Fairest Nymph; The Lord of Salisbury His Pavin and Galiardo*. Bull: *The King's Hunt; My Grief; My Self*. Dowland (arr. Randall): *Can She Excuse, Lachrymae and Galliard*. Farnaby: *Muscadin, or Kempe's Morris; Loath to Depart*. Tomkins: *Barafostus' Dream*. Trevor Pinnock (harpsichord, virginal). VANGUARD VSD-71262 \$7.98.

THE ENGLISH VIRGINALISTS, VOLUME I. Gibbons: *Prelude (Tone 3); The Italian Ground; Ground; Fantasia (VIII); The Woods So Wild; Pavan and Galliard (Tone 1); Prelude (Tone 8); Whoop, Do Me No Harm Good Man; Alman, The King's Jewel; Alman; Pavan (Tone 3); Lady Hatton's Galliard; Two Fantasias (Tone 1); Mask, The Fairest Nymph; French Air; Alman; French Coranto; Coranto; Mask, Welcome Home*. Joseph Payne (harpsichord). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 4090 \$5.20 (plus \$1.25 postage and handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

a filler on this disc, Perlman plays with an almost Elmanesque tonal lushness. The splendid success of this performance is due in no small measure to the very solid and vital backing of Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra. D.H.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ZEMLINSKY: String Quartet No. 2, Op. 15. LaSalle Quartet. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 982 \$9.95.

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

Alexander von Zemlinsky was Arnold Schoenberg's brother-in-law and only

teacher. He was a protégé of Mahler, a successful opera conductor, and one of the leading members of that extraordinary circle of fin-de-siecle Viennese musicians. Zemlinsky's posthumous fame was a casualty of World War II. He made it to America in 1938 but died, a forgotten man, four years later.

There is no doubt that Zemlinsky was a very important and influential composer in the first couple of decades of the century. Working in the post-Wagnerian, post-Mahlerian vein—that is, in an intense, expanded, contrapuntal tonality—he was in the forefront of the younger composers pushing out to the frontiers of the known tonal world. But he did not follow Schoenberg &

Co. over the edge to atonality, and his later music is said to be conservative.

The Second Quartet has been generally considered his masterpiece. It was dedicated to Schoenberg and was obviously influenced by Schoenberg's First Quartet—a remarkable case of the pupil influencing the master (but they were only three years apart in age). Like Schoenberg's quartet, Zemlinsky's is a huge one-movement work that incorporates all the elements of the symphonic cycle while creating unity out of thematic transformation. It is, in spite of its connections and influences, an extremely original and deeply felt work, full of ideas and inventions, skillful, highly expressive, and, to tell the truth, easier to listen to than

the Schoenberg. The high aims, techniques, and styles are similar, but Zemlinsky has more chiaroscuro, more color fantasy.

In any case, this is a post-Romantic work that is very much worth rediscovering, especially in this first-rate and stylistically perfect performance. *E.S.*

COLLECTIONS

HARP OF JOY. Anon.: *March; A Prayer for the Captive; Supplication; Love Is Little.* Bates: *Come Life, Shaker Life; Mount Zion; Rights of Conscience; Ode to Contentment.* Hampton: *Doxology.* Eades: *A Dream.* Brackett: *Simple Gifts.* Russell: *Millennial Praise.* Rupe: *Gentle Words.* Tufts: *100 Psalm Tune New.* Croft: *149 Psalm Tune.* Tans'ur: *Westerham Tune (Psalm 81).* Holden: *The Lord Is Good to All.* Billings: *The Bird; Thanksgiving Anthem, O Praise the Lord of Heaven (Psalm 148).* Bourgeois: *Psalm 8.* Sternhold and Hopkins Psalter: *Psalms 7, 85, 115.* Bay Psalm Book: *Psalms 23, 100.* Christina Price (soprano); Carolyn Dickson (mezzo-soprano); Edward Anderson (tenor); Leonard Hart (bass); Barbara Denison (organ); Chancel Choir of Plymouth Church, Shaker Heights, Ohio, John D. Herr cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 4070 \$5.20 (plus \$1.25 postage and handling from the Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

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

The principal interest of this recording derives from the collection of Shaker hymns on side one. The best-known is, of course, *Simple Gifts*, and it is sung here in its original, typical form; a cappella, unison, lively tempo. The Shakers made—make—song and dance an integral part of their life and worship. The dancer/singer used movement and song to express and create a mood of ecstasy. Naturally, the Shaker repertoire was dominated by tunes of a lively, joyful character.

Side two holds a more solemn variety of music: Psalm settings from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As on side one, most of these are unaccompanied, but a few of the later ones are part songs and fuguing tunes. The material is more interesting than its presentation. Shaker Heights near Cleveland was indeed an old Shaker settlement, but local music making seems to have settled down into a more conventional mode. This is good suburban church-choir singing without the fervor and open, deep feeling that this music must have had. Listen to the Word of Mouth Chorus on None-such if you want to get an idea of how strong and thrilling this early music can sound. *E.S.*

MASONIC MUSIC. Giroust: *Le Deluge.* Mozart: *Three Masonic Songs (K. 148 and 468, K. Anh 623); Cantata "Dir, Seele des Weltalls" (K. 429), Tenor Aria.* Beethoven: *Masonic March; Opferlied.* Himmel: *Maurerlied.* Taskin: *Masonic Funeral March.* S. Hamilton, P. Gianotti (tenors); R. Terrasson (bass); A. Lacombe (speaker); J. ver Hasselt (fortepiano); Les Chantres de la Tradition; Les Musiciens de Paris. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 4030 \$5.20 (plus \$1.25 postage and handling from the

Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

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

Freemasonry started as a guild of stonemasons but grew into one of the most important intellectual forces in seventeenth-century Europe. Today it claims some six million members all over the world. Freemasons were always expected to be persons of high moral character, and in the eighteenth century they also had to have some social standing. Many a successful composer was among them: Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven were all Masons. The symbolism and rituals of the secret society have always been involved with the acceptance of death and belief in a realm of light beyond our material world, preoccupations reflected in the music written by Freemasons in the eighteenth century, of which a generous sampling is included on this fascinating record. A Masonic funeral rite by François Giroust, with a French text declaimed against a solemn instrumental background, is followed by three Masonic songs by Mozart plus an aria he wrote in praise of the sun as the giver of "fertility, warmth, and light." Beethoven is represented by a Masonic March and an *Opferlied (Sacrificial Song)* in praise of freedom. There are also funeral marches by W. F. Himmel and H. J. Taskin that reflect resignation without grief. In all, an unusually interesting concert, well sung and well played. *P.K.*

SUSANN McDONALD: *The World of the Harp.* Salzedo: *Song in the Night.* M. Albéniz: *Sonata in D Major.* I. Albéniz: *Rumores de la Caleta.* Watkins: *Fire Dance.* Ortiz: *La Guabina; Llanos.* Trad. (arr. McDonald): *Believe Me if All Those Endearing Young Charms; Irish Gigue; Greensleeves.* Francisque: *Courante; Pavane et Bransles.* Tournier: *Étude de Concert; Jazz Band.* Debussy (arr. McDonald): *La Fille aux Cheveux de Lin.* Zabel (arr. McDonald): *La Source.* Alvars (arr. McDonald): *La Mandoline.* Grandjany: *Siciliana.* Susann McDonald (harp, Irish harp, Paraguayan harp). DELOS ◉ DMS 3005 \$17.98.

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

A solo harp might seem an improbable instrument for showing off on a digital recording, but the point of improving sound reproduction, after all, is not merely to accommodate decibels but to preserve every musical sound as naturally and cleanly as possible. The fine Soundstream recording on this Delos disc does this admirably well, and the JVC pressing is all we have been accustomed to from that source. Susann McDonald, whom I've admired ever since I encountered her fine performance of the Castelnuovo-Tedesco concertino on Klavier KS-515 a few years back, performs all these pieces with ingratiating fluency, opening and closing her program with endearing tributes to two distinguished harpists of the recent past and including demonstrations of the sonorities of the Paraguayan and Irish harps. It is all beautifully done, but the nature of the program and the price would suggest that this is something for a rather special audience. *R.F.*

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Reviewed by CHRIS ALBERTSON • EDWARD BUXBAUM • NOEL COPPAGE • PHYL GARLAND
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DAVID ALLYN: *I Only Have Eyes for You*. David Allyn (vocals); orchestra, David Terry cond. *Get Out of Town*; *Just As Though You Were Here*; *You Go to My Head*; *You're Laughing at Me*; *I Only Have Eyes for You*; and five others. DISCOVERY DS-803 \$8.98.

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

The graveyards of popular music are being plundered so relentlessly that pretty soon there won't be a worn-out ballad left to rest in peace—or a record album, for that matter. David Allyn (he's known, like most vocalists you never heard of, as a "singer's singer") made this record twenty years ago. It was pretty much out of date even then, but now Discovery Records has disinterred it from the Warner Bros. vaults and once again we can be haunted by the ghosts of dearly departed hits like *You Go to My Head*, *You're Laughing at Me*, *I Only Have Eyes for You*, and *Drifting*, which you may have some trouble recalling from the movie of *Auntie Mame*. There is no question that twenty years ago Mr. Allyn had one of those "warm and intimate" voices, in the Tony Bennett tradition, that could make strong men weep, but if this is a "collector's item" one begins to feel sorry for collectors. Some sleeping dogs simply must be let lie!

P.K.

THE BABYS: *Union Jacks*. The Babys (vocals and instrumentals). *Back on My Feet Again*; *True Love, True Confession*; *Midnight Rendezvous*; *Union Jack*; *In Your Eyes*; and four others. CHRYSALIS CHR 1267 \$7.98, © 8CH 1267 \$7.98, © CCH 1267 \$7.98.

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

The Babys started out as a quartet playing hitsie-ditsie pop stuff, then shrank to a trio while adding some bravura to their sound, and have now expanded to a quintet playing material that touches on such subjects as ambivalence about being British. Despite the personnel changes and shifts in direction over a relatively short period, the Babys have consistently had commercial success; their most recent single hit, included here, is *Back on My Feet Again*.

Though I prefer the Babys' latest incarnation to their earliest one, neither is wholly convincing. The mid-youth malaise they are currently dispensing isn't interesting to anyone who has passed through it unless it's expressed in an unusual or startling way. But who knows? With all the changes the group has been going through, they may be an octet by next year and release an album that surprises the world.

J.V.

DAVID BROMBERG: *You Should See the Rest of the Band*. David Bromberg (vocals, guitar, fiddle); Peter Ecklund, Curtis Linberg, John Firman (horns); Dick Fegy (guitar, mandolin, fiddle); Hugh McDonald (bass); Lance Dickerson (drums). *Key to the Highway*; *Helpless Blues*; *Sharon*; and three others. FANTASY F-9590 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good but routine**
Recording: **Mostly good**

Recorded live in Minneapolis, Denver, and San Francisco, this will serve as a reasonably good sampler if you've never heard David Bromberg and his band. It touches such bases as urban blues, put-on Dixieland, and pre-Bluegrass acoustic mountain music, but it does not, as they say, add to the literature.

Chances are you've got a lot of records that sound better overall, and, if you like Bromberg as much as I do, you've got several more satisfying Bromberg records. The only real gaffe in it is the rambling, ten-minute, twenty-one-second length of *Sharon*. Otherwise, there's a definite average-program/average-night feel to it.

N.C.

THE BUGGLES: *The Age of Plastic*. The Buggles (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *Living in the Plastic Age*; *Video Killed the Radio Star*; *Kid Dynamo*; *I Love You (Miss Robot)*; and four others. ISLAND ILPS 9585 \$7.98, © M8-9585 \$7.98, © M5-9585 \$7.98.

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

Well, the Buggles' single, *Video Killed the Radio Star*, really is cute: a catchy, intelligent mating of melodic and instrumental ideas out of late-Sixties "progressive" rock with up-to-date lyrics about VTRs and a vaguely futuristic New Wave pose. It's impeccably produced, a great radio record (deservedly a hit in England), and if I prefer the rawer version by the song's co-composer Bruce Woolley, that's my problem.

The Buggles' problems show up on the rest of the album. They can't sing worth a lick, their technological obsessions are already clichés, and for all their studio tinkering, they finally come off about as modernist as, say, the Electric Prunes. In short, if your local record store has a New Wave bargain bin, "The Age of Plastic" will be there in about three weeks.

S.S.

D. L. BYRON: *This Day and Age*. D. L. Byron (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *Listen to the Heartbeat*; *Love in Motion*; *Lorryanne*; *Today*; *Big Boys*; and five others. ARISTA AB 4258 \$7.98, © A8T 4258 \$7.98, © ACT 4258 \$7.98.

Performance: **New but familiar**
Recording: **Good**

Newcomer D. L. Byron isn't any more or less an imitation Bruce Springsteen than

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = open-reel stereo tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- ⓐ = stereo cassette
- Ⓛ = quadrasonic disc
- Ⓛ = digital-master recording
- Ⓛ = direct-to-disc

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

the Brothers Four, years ago, was an imitation Kingston Trio. It is now and was then a situation in which every label has to have one of those. Byron's songs are mostly the expected nonsense about scrounging around in the streets—him and his version of Wendy, they were born to run, you can bet your tee-shirt on that—and his singing is projected from the same physical spot as Springsteen's, the voice gathered up in the top of the throat and squeezed out at ya. If you'd never heard it done before, you'd probably be impressed with this album; it has several of the moves down pretty well and a tight little combo doing the back-up. If you've never heard it done before and would like to invest in something more substantial than record albums, I've got a nice selection of bridges you ought to see. *N.C.*

FELIX CAVALIERE: *Castles in the Air*. Felix Cavaliere (vocals, keyboards); instrumental accompaniment. *Good to Have Love Back; Only a Lonely Heart Sees; All or Nothing; Castles in the Air; People Got to Be Free; Dancin' the Night Away*; and four others. EPIC JE 35990 \$7.98.

Performance: **Too shiny**
Recording: **Ditto**

Felix Cavaliere's was a prominent voice in the Rascals, the semi-official blue-eyed-soul group of the late-Sixties anti-establishment establishment. I guess what bothers me about this comeback attempt, remembering the late Sixties as I do, is the lack of anything radical about it. Cavaliere seems to picture himself coming back the way a male Dionne Warwick would, "modernizing" the sound left and right with intermittent blasts of orchestration borrowed from disco, allowing engineers and producers to run amuck technologically, and correspondingly bringing most of his singing to the area where all this other modern work is going on: the surface.

Naturally, a surface with practically all of an album's elements trying to occupy it at once becomes mighty hard. And slick. Even bringing back 1968's *People Got to Be Free*, with co-writer and co-ex-Rascal Eddie Brigati to sing harmony on it, fails to break up the album's basic monotony, as the old song's hooks are underplayed in favor, again, of modern techniques, and Cavaliere does a token job of singing it. That said, you still ought to hear Cavaliere sing *Don't Hold Back Your Love*, a new song he wrote with Dan Beck. There's nothing radical about this, either (except relative to the rest of *this* album), but it shows what an expressive singer Cavaliere can be when he's interested. His voice really does have blue-eyed soul. The radical thing, in this day and age, would have been to feature that. The conservative thing, which was done in spades, just about buries it under the semi-official formulas of today's pro-establishment establishment. Makes you wonder about labels, doesn't it? *N.C.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BLOSSOM DEARIE: *Needlepoint Magic Volume V*. Blossom Dearie (vocals, piano); Bill Takus (bass). *The Ballad of the Shape of Things; Lush Life; I'm Hip; Sweet Surprise; Peel Me a Grape; Two Sleepy People*; and five others. DAFFODIL BMD

105 \$7.98 (from Daffodil Records, Box 21, East Durham, N.Y. 12423).

Performance: **No one does it better**
Recording: **Good**

Here's another addition to the Dearie canon, this one recorded live at Reno Sweeney's. For a long time now, Blossom Dearie has been one of our most uniquely valuable artists. Unselfconsciously, superbly, imperceptibly, she sings and plays pop songs as if she were working within a recognized art form. Even her own material—she's included four of her songs here, the best of which is probably *I'm Shadowing You*, which she did with Johnny Mercer—is given that extra edge of definition that separates everything she touches from the average fill-your-ears-with-pretty-sounds approach that plagues so many performers of standards. Not that her worldly-wise, whispery vocal style is any way unpleasing, only that it is used in the service of the material and she doesn't hesitate to run short of breath or off pitch if it increases the communication. To listen to her performance here of Sheldon Harnick's *The Ballad of the Shape of Things* or Billy Strayhorn's classic *Lush Life*, or even to hear her doodling through *Baby It's Cold Outside* with Bob Dorough, is to be given a painless les-

son in how very fine popular singing can be when it is practiced by a real artist. When you add to it Dearie's wit, style, musicianship, and shrewd whimsey you have a one-of-a-kind listening experience. No one does it better than Blossom Dearie. *P.R.*

THE DUKES. The Dukes (vocals and instrumentals); instrumental accompaniment. *Hearts in Trouble; Leaving It All Behind; All in a Game; Billy Niles; Crazy Fool; Who's Gonna Tell You*; and four others. WARNER BROS. BSK 3376 \$7.98, © M8 3376 \$7.98, © M5 3376 \$7.98.

Performance: **So-so**
Recording: **Average**

One lousy good line once in a while isn't too much to ask, is it? I mean, if you're going to have lyrics anyway. Here's a sort of middle-ground rock album that suggests—as such sometimes do—that its perpetrators may have a little something to say but see no reason, at, ahem, this point in time, to bother. In fact, the album keeps reminding me of Foreigner. Like that group, the Dukes are a bunch of experienced musicians who have had ties with other groups. Guitarist Jimmy McCulloch, for instance, was fresh from Paul McCartney's Wings. (This was McCulloch's last effort before his death last



THE very great Peggy Lee is recording on a new label, but she hasn't changed much else; she still sounds superb. On her new DRG album, "Close Enough for Love," her voice may seem a mite frayed in spots, but the production by Hugh Fordin is bias-cut around her so that it drapes flatteringly like heavy satin. There is a vague disco tinge to the arrangements, but that interferes only about as much as an up-to-date setting for a really important diamond would; Peggy Lee's style is instantly recognizable and still one of the seven wonders of the world of popular entertainment (list on request).

As a kind of interesting little parlor game, I suggest you play this record not just for yourself but, as I did, for someone young enough not to know the difference between Pinky and Peggy Lee. I think you'll get an unexpected reaction. The one I got, after all the oohs and aahs had died down, is one that says it all about the "relevance" of really great entertainers: "Outsight! Really oversight! Was she with a group before?"

The Mont Blanc among the lesser peaks in this collection is a performance of *Just One of Those Things* that convinced me that Cole Porter is still alive and well (and probably hiding out in Biarritz). This is an album of pure gold—and you know what that's worth these days. —Peter Reilly

PEGGY LEE: *Close Enough for Love*. Peggy Lee (vocals); orchestra, Richard Hazard arr. and cond. *You; Easy Does It; Close Enough for Love; A Robinsong; Just One of Those Things; I Can't Resist You; Come In from the Rain; In the Days of Our Love; Through the Eyes of Love; Rain Sometimes*. DRG SL 5190 \$7.98.

year.) And, like Foreigner's, the Duker's language seems purposely cliché-filled, and so, in a less obvious way, do their instrumentals. Technically the album is okay. Conceptually, nothing's happening at all. *N.C.*

THE FLYING BURRITO BROTHERS: *Live from Tokyo.* The Flying Burrito Brothers (vocals and instrumentals). *Big Bayou; White Line Fever; Dim Lights, Thick Smoke; Six Days on the Road;* and six others. REGENCY REG79001 \$7.98.

Performance: **Variable**

Recording: **Variable**

This is a good cross section of Burritos-type songs, and the boys seem energetic enough,

but it comes off rough for my taste. Through continuous personnel changes (Sneaky Pete Kleinow is the only original member left), the Burritos have aspired to a rakish way with a country repertoire. I appreciate their dedication to being not-slick, but if you listen to the various hard-country originals of these songs you'll find them a lot smoother and just as soulful. Often it sounds as if the band doesn't quite have a center. It's hard to fault many of the solos the various members play—especially those on steel guitar by Kleinow, who's as smooth as they come, and Gib Guilbeau, who's stretching out on the fiddle these days—but there seems to be no catalyst holding it all together. A full-time rhythm guitar would

help, and it would help more if they'd do some radical surgery on the vocals. Again, individually they aren't bad, but the so-called harmonies are terrible. The live recording, in addition to giving everything a slightly metallic sound, doesn't do anything to make the vocal harmonies sound any better than they are, which *can* be done in a studio. The thing has some charm when you listen to what a particular instrument's doing here or there, but if you back off it sounds slapdash. Without needing to. *N.C.*

JANIE FRICKE: *From the Heart.* Janie Fricke (vocals); Chalmers Davis (keyboards); Ralph Ezell (bass); Roger Clark (drums); other musicians. *But Love Me; A Cool September; Pass Me By (If You're Only Passing Through); This Ain't Tennessee and He Ain't You;* and five others. COLUMBIA JC 36268 \$7.98, © JCA 36268 \$7.98, © JCT 36268 \$7.98.

Performance: **Still unfocused**

Recording: **Very good**

It isn't that producer Billy Sherrill is doing something to Janie Fricke but that he's doing too much for her. Sherrill does what he does with consummate skill, but here's another album that tells us too much about Sherrill and not enough about Fricke. She's presented as an all-purpose warbler somewhere in the grey area around Anne Murray and Rita Coolidge; in this particular instance, side one is strictly pop and side two is country-flavored, but on neither side does enough of the impetus, the *raison d'être*, seem to come from Fricke herself. What I think she should do is get away from Nashville and put her own sound together—her own *whole* sound, her own band, her own taste in songs—and tinker with that until it feels right and then record it. Janie's reluctant to do that, as she still identifies with the studios and back-up singing and still seems to regard (or half regard) a solo career as something to do on the side. And of course it is a drag, having an organization, with all those hirings and firings and logistics. But the present method is not working.

Even if I did want Janie Fricke to be the next Anne Murray, this particular album wouldn't work. With all the good songs that are going unsung, it ought to be against the law to waste a voice like this on such inconsequential junk as you mostly find here—*But Love Me, Fallin' for You, My World Begins and Ends with You.* They should've called it "Lightweights Anonymous." Too bad, but Fricke herself is going to have to show us, as we said in the Seventies, where she's coming from. Sherrill, no matter how skilled he is, can't really know that. *N.C.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ROBERT GORDON: *Bad Boy.* Robert Gordon (vocals); Chris Spedding (guitar); Rob Stoner (bass); Howie Wyeth (drums); other musicians. *Sweet Love on My Mind; The Worrying Kind; Bad Boy; A Picture of You; Torture; Crazy Man Crazy;* and five others. RCA AFL1-3523 \$7.98, © AFS1-3523 \$7.98, © AFK1-3523 \$7.98.

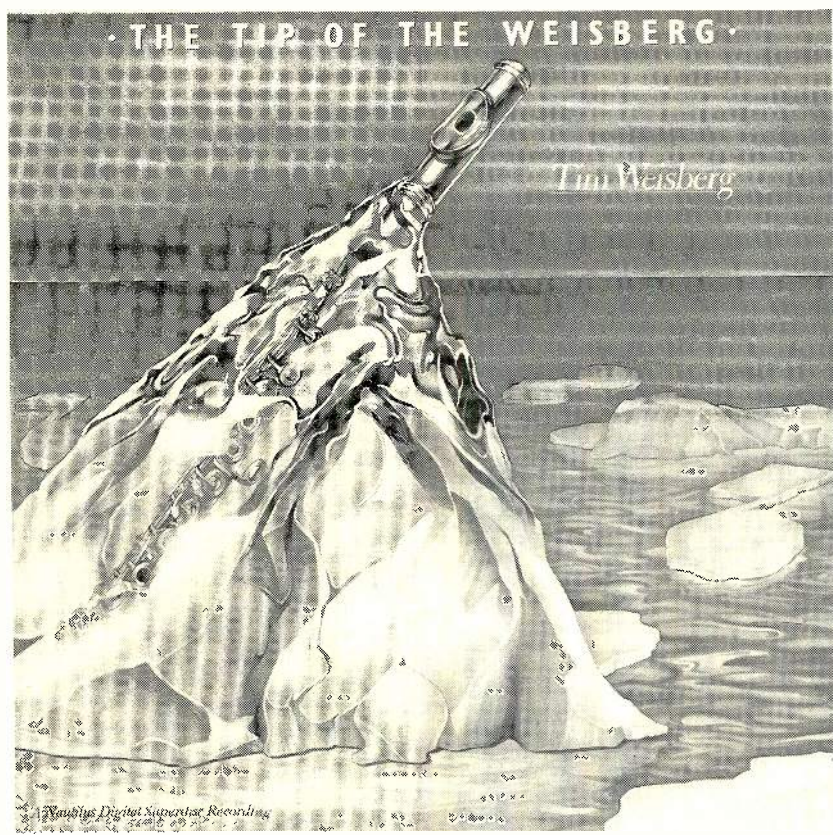
Performance: **Coming of age**

Recording: **Excellent**

It's easy to dismiss Robert Gordon as some kind of sappy nostalgia merchant along the

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lines of Sha-Na-Na, aping the style of vintage rockabilly without apprehending its spirit, but I think that's wrongheaded. Fact is, Gordon knows this stuff cold, comes to it naturally, and sings it because it really moves him. The original Southern rebels who created the genre by and large either died (Elvis) or became country stars (Jerry Lee Lewis, Conway Twitty), so I see no reason why this upstart with the big ears can't carry on the tradition if he wants to.

"Bad Boy" is probably the best album Gordon's done, a near flawless mix of period re-creation (*Sweet Love on My Mind*) and rockabilly/New Wave fusion (*Born to Lose*). It proves that what he has been saying all along is true, that this stuff is as vital now as it ever was and that within its admittedly narrow stylistic restrictions there is still room for innovation and growth. The band is the most sympathetic he's ever used (guitarist Chris Spedding is nothing short of awe-inspiring), the song selection is terrific, and Gordon's singing is more assured and convincing than ever. The result is cheeky, intelligent, danceable rock-and-roll. If it's also mindless nostalgia, I can live with it without guilt. S.S.

HEART: *Bebe le Strange*. Heart (vocals and instrumentals). *Down on Me; Silver Wheels; Break; Rockin' Heaven Down; Even It Up; Strange Night*; and four others. EPIC FE 36371 \$8.98, © FEA 36371 \$8.98, © FET 36371 \$8.98.

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

There are three basic subjects for rock lyrics: sex and love, the search for personal identity, and the music itself. The quality of writing and performance may vary among successful groups, but you can count on those three subjects. The rest is packaging and merchandising. Heart's package of these basics is sure-fire. Two attractive, talented young women (Ann and Nancy Wilson) with capable backing musicians—the kind of packaging that has been sure-fire since the days of the Ronettes.

All the material on Heart's new album is written by the Wilson sisters, with assists from others, and it is uneven. The title tune, *Bebe le Strange*, has a mediocre melody line for the verses, but the interesting chorus is modulated and ends on a minor-key resolution. *Down on Me* has a guitar figure that conjures up George Harrison as he was in the late Beatles period. Its title (though not its content) is probably a deliberate duplicate of that of the Janis Joplin/*Big Brother* and the Holding Company standard; anyway, it gives the Wilsons an opportunity to indulge in some fancy hollering à la Joplin. *Silver Wheels* is a pleasing guitar solo written and played by Nancy Wilson, but then we are back with the hysterical folderol on *Break*. The song *Raised on You*, also written by Nancy and featuring her on piano, is an homage to Carole King, and *Pilot* sounds as if the Wilsons have been listening to Abba and getting some tips on song construction and arrangement.

Parts of the album are interesting, parts are dull, and parts are silly; some skill and talent do show through now and then. The subject matter and packaging can't miss, though—Heart's wrapped in gold paper and tied up with platinum twine. J.V.

THELMA HOUSTON: *Breakwater Cat*. Thelma Houston (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Suspicious Minds; Down the Backstairs of My Life; Something We May Never Know; Breakwater Cat; Long Lasting Love; Before There Could Be Me*; and four others. RCA AFL1-3500 \$7.98, © AFS1-3500 \$7.98, © AFK1-3500 \$7.98.

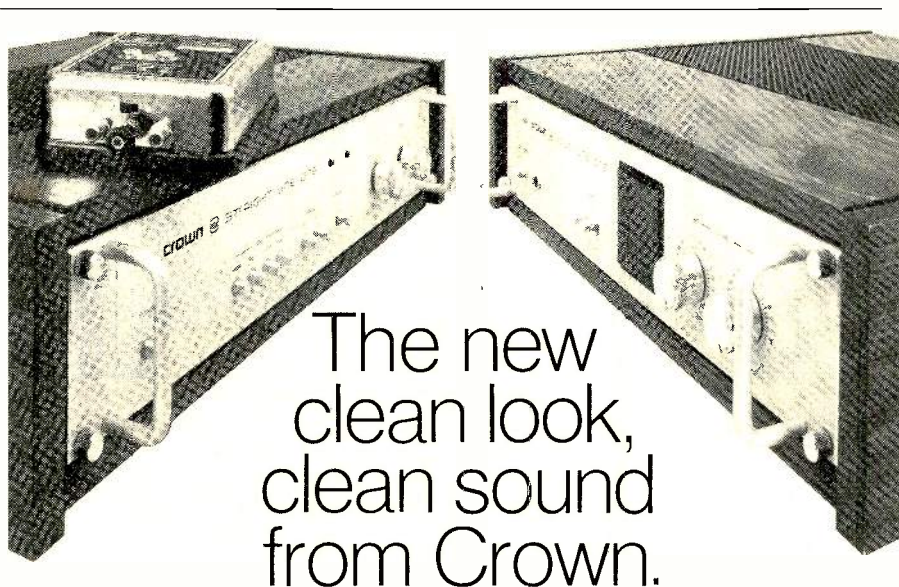
Performance: **Looking up**
Recording: **Good**

After being stuck in a mire of sound-alike records over the last few years, Thelma Houston has shifted labels and come up with an album that highlights her talents as a quality soul singer rather than trying to

make her a roller-disco queen. While some of the songs on "Breakwater Cat" still aren't as distinctive as they might have been, they are pleasant to hear and a few have lyrics that are almost intelligent.

The executive producer for this one was Jimmy Webb, the same Jimmy Webb who lifted the Fifth Dimension *Up, Up and Away* into the popular mainstream and sent Richard Harris strolling through *MacArthur Park*, though the music here bears no resemblance to Webb's. The better numbers are *Down the Backstairs of My Life*, which sparkles with interjections of gospelish keyboards, and *Something We May Never Know*, a finely wrought and musical-

(Continued on page 102)



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Linda Ronstadt

ALL together now, and not too loud:

*The word is not the thing,
The word is not the thing;
Hi ho the derry-o,
The word is not the thing.*

Or, as somebody else said, the map is not the territory. But, as Kin Hubbard said about poverty not being a disgrace, it might as well be. Consider the ramifications of the words "New Wave" as opposed to those of "punk." Deferring to the British—as we tend to do, especially in matters rock-and-roll—we let them have "punk," which left us having to shoulder the more pretentious and more broadly influential (in the word-molding-thought sense) "New Wave." When, in fact, our Iggy Pop and our Bruce Springsteen were punks, pure and simple, in strict-constructionist street language.

Since wearing a label means trying to live up (or down) to it, thinking of themselves as members of the New Wave has already gotten our American practitioners into all sorts of silliness, with art-school "intellectuals" threatening to become as theatrical—and as musically irrelevant—as the glitter rockers were, quickie-commerce groups like Blondie "merging" New Wave and disco (as if such a thing were possible), and various other deeds being done to obscure the basic thing the music represents, which is a new shot of adolescent rebellion, the essential stuff of rock-and-roll.

Living up to the label "New Wave," I think, is hastening the day when these "rebels" wind up palling around with over-age rock entrepreneurs or playing golf with Bob Hope—being "co-opted," in a (Sixties) word. America loves rebellions. It eats them

for breakfast. Good source of energy. If you want the Establishment to clasp you to its breast, rail against it louder than the surrounding noise, show some fire and outrage, and you've got a shot at the good life. As individuals, we may not have gotten the hang of turning the other cheek, but as institutions—commercial ones, especially—we do it pretty smoothly. Sooner or later we put that rebellious energy to work at *selling* something.

In a sense, Linda Ronstadt—partly because she is almost an institution herself—has hastened this process by going all the way (more or less) with the New Wave in her new pink-and-black-jacketed album "Mad Love." Ronstadt is popular not only across party lines, but across regional frontiers, color barriers, and age brackets as well. To a huge crowd from age nine to the age of the youngest members of the Streisand mob, Ronstadt is thought of as Ms. Pop Music. And so, whatever she does, she institutionalizes it to some degree. What she does in this case includes three Elvis Costello songs (Elvis, who is British, is as New Wavish as Iggy is punk), three by Mark Goldenberg and one by Billy Steinberg (both of the Cretones), a couple of 1965 rockers she makes sound vaguely New Wave, and a Neil Young song that fits here because it has the grace to fit most anywhere. How she does them ranges from expertly to not quite convincingly, although my strongest impression is that the program—and maybe the subgenre or whatever it is—wastes too much of her uniqueness. To put it in easy pop terms, Ronstadt's a melody singer and what this music needs is a beat singer.

I don't question her sincerity. I remember a few years ago how enthusiastic she was about reggae and at that time I was able to satisfy myself that these enthusiasms are genuine. And here she's gone and got one of those New Wave haircuts (from a blind barber using hedge clippers, from the look of it). That's a commitment of sorts. True, her dislike for disco could have nudged her toward its alleged opposite, a reactionary move, but she sounds genuinely attracted to some things about this music—its vitality among them.

But New Wave's main attraction may be its romanticism. She is romantic, and so is the process of adolescent rebellion. Scratch either and you find idealism. But Ronstadt does not have your basic punk *attitude*, as I insist on calling it; she is a softer, warmer person than that, and simply not that angry. This shows most vividly when she isn't quite able to fake the toughness called for in Goldenberg's *Cost of Love* (which is catchy but sounds basically like a Springsteen out-take). In other places, such as Costello's *Talking in the Dark* (an odd way to end an album), she seems to identify with the words but to be indecisive about how seriously to take them. And a time or two she subtly teases a punkwave song into one of the farther reaches of her own musical attitude.

RONSTADT and producer Peter Asher are such pros that many a nuance is picked up and embellished by a new (read: different) array of back-up musicians (including only Dan Dugmore from her regular band) with a better feel for how it's done than most outsiders could hope to muster. Russ Kunkel gets an interesting snap-boom effect that anchors much of the beat, which gets a pretty energetic pounding from all hands. Still, the romantic connection, Ronstadt's reason for being there, stretches a mite thin over this attitude gulf, and the thing sounds like something Ronstadt did just this once rather than what she does regularly. There's also the simple aesthetic problem of getting mileage out of talent: when you have a voice this good, you want to hear it hold notes for some length of time, and this program doesn't often allow that.

So, although it seems sincere enough (I wouldn't bet my life she's taking it *too* seriously), it also seems like a project or an exercise. In lesser hands such a venture would have gone belly-up on the New Wave, but this—to the degree anyone can take it on its own terms—is a well-intended, spirited, almost plucky little album. The thing is, Linda Ronstadt can go back to being Linda Ronstadt any time she wants to, and the rest of the New Wave can't.

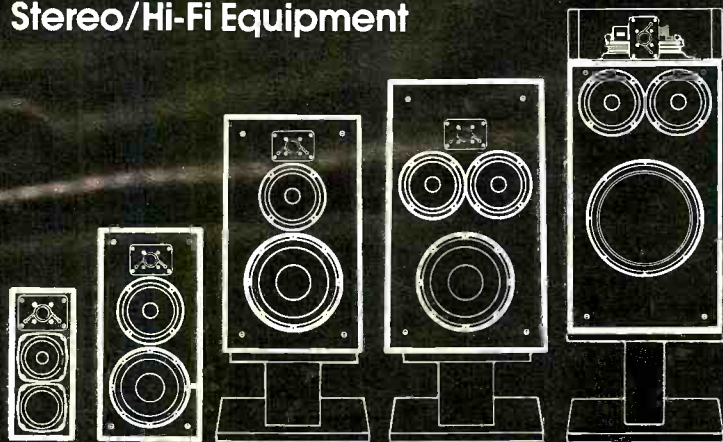
—Noel Coppage

LINDA RONSTADT: *Mad Love.* Linda Ronstadt (vocals); Dan Dugmore (guitar); Bob Glaub (bass); Russ Kunkel (drums); Bill Payne (keyboards); other musicians. *Mad Love; Party Girl; How Do I Make You; I Can't Let Go; Hurt So Bad; Look Out for My Love; Cost of Love; Justine; Girls Talk; Talking in the Dark.* ASYLUM 5E-510 \$8.98, © ET8-510 \$8.98, © TC5-510 \$8.98.

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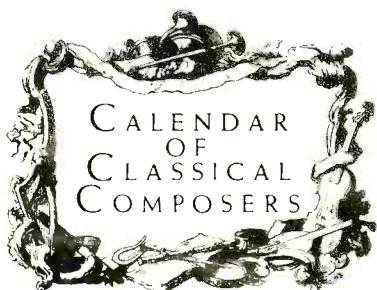
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ly interesting ballad that does justice to Ms. Houston's stylistic abilities. She is moving in the right direction now, and maybe next time she'll hit the mark. P.G.

CON HUNLEY: *I Don't Want to Lose You.* Con Hunley (vocals, keyboards); instrumental accompaniment. *You Lay a Whole Lot of Love on Me; Fire in the Morning; Lover's Lullaby; Take It Easy*; and six others. WARNER BROS. BSK 3378 \$7.98, © M8 3378 \$7.98, © M5 3378 \$7.98.

Performance: **Moony-Juney**
Recording: **Good**

There are several New Breeds of country at any given time. At the same time you have

your Rodney Crowells and Billy Joe Shavers and Roseanne Cashes, you also have your Jacky Wards, Eddie Rabbitts, R. C. Bannons, and other softies who would be old-time MOR pop singers if that category weren't officially deemed commercially dead. Con Hunley, basically a crooner, is one of this latter breed, but he's head and shoulders above the aforementioned members of it. He does sing with some feeling, and he does have a lot more voice to work with than most. If this album were a little less overproduced and if three or four of the songs weren't so grindingly dull and if Norro Wilson's production weren't so buttoned-down in what few uncrowded moments it has—if, in short, they'd take advantage of

the fact that the guy can sing instead of covering it up, we might have something here. You get a sample of what it could be in the simplified beginning of the very last song, Delbert McClinton's *Take It Easy*, in which Hunley shows that a good singer, most of the time, just needs Production to leave him the hell alone. Well, good singers, needing it and getting it are two different things, right? N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

J. GEILS BAND: *Love Stinks.* J. Geils Band (vocals and instrumentals). *Just Can't Wait; Come Back; Takin' You Down; Night Time; No Anchovies, Please*; and four others. EMI/AMERICA SOO-17016 \$8.98, © 8XOO-17016 \$8.98, © 4XOO-17016 \$8.98.

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

J. Geils is probably the ultimate in blues-derived rock bands. Few other groups manage to embellish the two simple and limited forms without overloading them. Their last few albums for Atlantic were pretentious, but they went back to basics for EMI/America with their original energy completely restored.

A good portion of the credit for the group's ability to put meat on the bones of blues and rock goes to keyboardist-arranger-producer-writer Seth Justman. His "frames" for the tunes (co-written with vocalist Peter Wolf) set them up nicely and clue the listener what to expect in a given song. For instance, the frame for *Desire*, a semi-ballad, has some light jazz flavoring, while the setup for *Till the Walls Come Tumblin' Down* swaggers and swings. Among Justman's most valuable assets is his sense of humor, as in his arrangement of the title cut, an affectionate parody of Eddie Cochran's original *Summertime Blues* complete with spoken insertions of the title. The lyrics are generally literate—more than they need to be for either blues or rock—and it's evident that Justman and Wolf have had the advantages of a college education. Their post-graduate perspective is displayed on *No Anchovies, Please*, a comic narrative seemingly inspired by memory of the Dada-ist efforts of the now defunct Firesign Theatre. It's about a housewife who discovers a phone number at the bottom of a can of anchovies and as a result is whisked away to suffer a fate worse than death and not as good as sex; the punch line works only once, so I won't reveal it. You'd better go hear it yourself. Singing, playing, or talking, the J. Geils Band is good to hear. J.V.

THE JAM: *Setting Sons.* The Jam (vocals and instrumentals). *Burning Sky; Smithers-Jones; Saturday's Kids; The Eton Rifles; (Love Is Like a) Heat Wave*; and six others. POLYDOR PD-1-6249 \$7.98, © 8T-1-6249 \$7.98, © CT-1-6249 \$7.98.

Performance: **Uncomfortable**
Recording: **Equal to the task**

The Jam topped last year's fans' polls in Britain. That in itself is not sufficient cause for criticizing the band. But I agree with a friend of mine who accuses the Jam of singlehandedly reviving the "mod" scene—as



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if England hasn't enough problems as it is—with their carbon-copy replicas of the early Who.

They work in two time-honored British traditions: writing sardonically witty lyrics that strike right at the soft white underbelly of the bourgeoisie and affixing to these clever lyrics a barrage of noise from which the conventional musical elements of melody, harmony, dynamic variation, and rhythm seem to be absent. There is a reasonably steady beat, and because the guitars do occasionally move up or down an interval or two, some have seen fit to categorize this as "music." If your definition of music accommodates this rather narrow description, you may enjoy the Jam, but a band whose album has more picture credits than music credits on the liner is probably working in the wrong medium altogether.

—Mark Peel

EDDIE KENDRICKS: *Something More.* Eddie Kendricks (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *I Just Want to Be the One in Your Life; I Never Used to Dance; Pleasure Man; Something More;* and three others. ARISTA AB 4250 \$7.98, © AT8 4250 \$7.98, © ATC 4250 \$7.98.

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

Over the years, Eddie Kendricks has managed to hold down a comfortable but distant third place, trailing behind Michael Jackson, in the triumvirate of high-voiced male soul singers headed by Smokey Robinson, the champ on any accounting. That's pretty swift company in which to travel. Kendricks has maintained his identity by adhering to the funky and basic r-&-b lane of the road, swerving only slightly from time to time to accommodate a passing fad. On this album he moves with confidence through territory quite familiar to him and his fans. Though one up-tempo track, *Pleasure Man*, may appeal most to those who like his "trucking" side, my favorite is *Something More*, which focuses on his mellowness of interpretation. Modest, but good listening. P.G.

THE KNACK: . . . but the little girls understand. The Knack (vocals and instrumentals). *Baby Talks Dirty; I Want Ya; Tell Me You're Mine; Mr. Handleman; Can't Put a Price on Love; Hold On Tight and Don't Let Go;* and six others. CAPITOL SOO-12045 \$7.98, © 8XOO-12045 \$7.98, © 4XOO-12045 \$7.98.

Performance: **Nuke 'em**
Recording: **Deliberately low-budget**

When Howlin' Wolf sang *Back Door Man*, the great blues tune whence this record's title comes, he could hardly have imagined that someday the phrase would be lifted to grace an album of wimpy, formulaic teen glop dished out by a group of aging Beatlemaniaics. Ah, but history is just chock full of little ironies like that, isn't it? And, though this is one of the most thoroughly repellent bits of commercial cash-in to cross my desk in some months, I have decided to be fair. It is not the Knack's fault that *My Sharona* became the monstrous AM annoyance that it did. Nor is it their fault that only they, out of a horde of more deserving power-pop bands in 1979, became multi-platinum overnight sensations.

But it *is* their fault that they've achieved all that by being charmless and cynical. If you don't believe that's the case, then I suggest you check out their new LP, which consists largely of versions of *My Sharona* played sidewise—a move, I submit, that says less about their collective inspiration's drying up than it does about their wanting to make a good fast buck. Great composers steal, said Stravinsky, while mediocre ones borrow. Well, the Knack borrows like crazy here (*The Feeling I Get* gets 1980's Lamest Phil Spector Rip-off award, for example), and the recorded results prove that Igor was right on the money. There isn't a note here that suggests an original idea.

None of that would matter if either the

band or its currently considerable audience realized that Knack music is merely a better-marketed version of Shaun Cassidy teenage schlock. Or maybe they do. S.S.

COUNTRY JOE McDONALD: *Leisure Suite.* Joe McDonald (vocals, guitar, harmonica); the Persuasions (vocals); other musicians. *Private Parts; Take Time Out; La Di Da; Sure Cure for the Blues;* and three others. FANTASY F-9586 \$7.98.

Performance: **Still plucky**
Recording: **Clear**

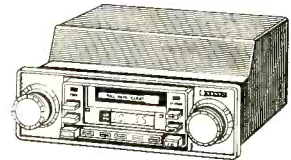
I don't know. I kind of like having Country Joe McDonald around. Maybe his time has
(Continued on page 105)

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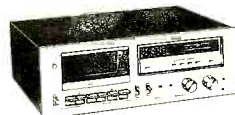


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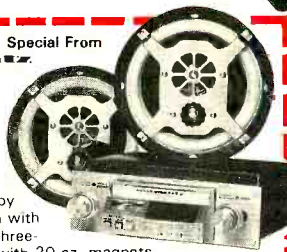
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Ariola Records

Encore: Mireille Mathieu

MAKE this little addition to your list of Things I Never Knew Before: Mireille Mathieu is, and has been for the last couple of years, the top-selling female recording artist in the world. Mireille who? Mireille Mathieu, dummy, the same Mireille Mathieu over whom I—*moi-même*—flipped in these pages over a decade ago, that's who ("A Bright New Star Is Born," March 1967, page 77). At that time she was a very young girl from one of those humble, gritty Zolaesque backgrounds the French seem to prefer for their female celebrities (think of Madame du Barry, Chanel, or Piaf). She had already electrified audiences at Paris' Olympia, attracted the attention and patronage of the great Maurice Chevalier, and made a series of recordings that hit me like a *coup d'assommoir*. I raved on about her, but, America, you didn't listen to me. And you didn't listen much to little Mireille, either. Your loss, for little Mireille is now big, smooth, glossy, *rich* Mireille Mathieu, and she has enough awards, critical acclaim, and sales reports *de rose* to permit her to ignore us comfortably for another ten years.

However, in a burst of untypical Gallic generosity, Mathieu has decided to give us another chance, so let's not muff it again. She is just as wonderfully exciting as she was years ago, and, though she may not have refined her art or fancied up her technique all that much, there really wasn't much need to: she's one of those rare performers who come on like gangbusters, work you over whether or not you are particularly willing or ready, and then leave you limp, happy, and smiling into the sunset after she's gone. Like Piaf, like Garland, like Streisand, her combination of torrential emotion and fierce conviction can singe the

ears of anyone willing to give her a listen. "Mireille Mathieu Sings Paul Anka" is a somewhat mixed blessing, though. Anka has provided a gorgeous production with a variety of full-size orchestras so beautifully recorded that they would make the Berlin Philharmonic sound woolly. He has thoughtfully provided English words for some good songs by Eddie Marnay (Mathieu has obviously worked hard on her English, and she's now comfortable enough with it to let 'er rrrrip just the way she's always done in French). And as producer he has given the whole album the kind of glittering velocity and super-professional glamour (oh, them strings!) a superstar deserves. It all works gloriously on a couple of tracks, notably *Paris, Is Something Wrong?* and the truly virtuoso *Closing Doors*.

ON the debit side is Anka's apparent conviction that Mathieu needed his actual performing presence on the recording, so we get far too many duets here as Paul does it *his* way on second choruses. Does Wonder Woman need Tweetie Pie to keep her out of trouble? Even so, this is an album well worth having. Mireille Mathieu will eventually, I believe, be as great a star in the United States as she is in the rest of the world whether or not this particular release makes it. But please, let's not have another ten-year wait before we get the next one.

—Peter Reilly

MIREILLE MATHIEU: Mireille Mathieu Sings Paul Anka. Mireille Mathieu, Paul Anka (vocals); various orchestras. *You and I; A Man and a Woman; After You; Life Song; Bring the Wine; Paris, Is Something Wrong?; Andi; Closing Doors; Leave It All to Me.* ARIOLA SW 50073 \$7.98.

passed, but what the hell. Maybe mine has too. Maybe everybody's has. Joe himself is having to make his longest and most ambitious song here, *Reaching for the Stars*, live in the future in order to have the political context a Joe McDonald song really needs. Otherwise, he bobs around good-naturedly, trying to shock the younger members of the audience with outrageous language, goofing with the Persuasions, trying his hand at this and that. He is of course a reasonably good singer, and he can write a reasonably good, straightforward, apolitical love song or whatever, but what he really has going is a kind of credibility that there isn't much demand for right now. Here's old Joe, that is, whose strong suit is bullshit detection, trying to make albums at a time when people not only spend their time watching *B. J. and the Bear* but will labor all weekend making banners praising Howard Cosell just in case ABC might train a camera on them on Monday night. That is, people not only don't want bullshit detected—they want to be up to their ears in it. No wonder Joe McDonald's albums don't have much of a sense of direction these days. All things considered, he still sounds pretty plucky, though, as if he might even last long enough to see his specialty put to use again. *N.C.*

GARY NUMAN: *The Pleasure Principle.* Gary Numan (vocals, keyboards); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Airline; Cars; Engineers; Metal; Films;* and five others. Atco SD 38-120 \$7.98, © TP 38-120 \$7.98, © CS 38-120 \$7.98.

Performance: **Ho-hum**
Recording: **Good**

Gary Numan has had a lot of radio play on his single *Cars*, and he's had a spate of reviews, pro and con. The pros claim his dehydrated sound is accessible punk that retains the form's studied alienation without alienating the listener; the antis dismiss him as meandering and meaningless. He doesn't move me very much either way. Nobody so far has figured out how to use the synthesizer as an instrument instead of as a machine, and Numan certainly isn't a contender for the solution. He doesn't play notes and barely plays chords; mostly he plays unconnected modulations. His vocals are hollow, his lyrics typical juvenile stuff about the futility of life. I just can't see what all the fuss is about. *J.V.*

WILLIAM OZ. William Oz (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *She's Mine; Stop! In the Name of Love; Work Out Tonight; Star Dreamer; New York; Take Us to the Rock;* and four others. CAPITOL ST-12015 \$7.98.

Performance: **So-so**
Recording: **Good**

William Oz is an energetic and ambitious Georgia kid who will need a second album—and possibly a third and fourth—before he decides how he is going to do what he apparently wants to do, which is to knock 'em dead. Whether his present label or a subsequent label will be willing to invest the time and money it will take for Oz to either flower or flop is unpredictable. The problem is, as with any new young artist, that one can't be certain whether a banal first album

(Continued on page 107)

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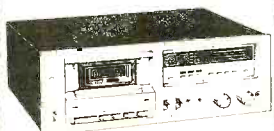
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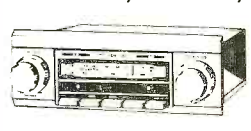
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Chico Freeman

IF I were asked to name artists whose current work gives me hope for the future of jazz, Chico Freeman would top my list. From his seemingly bottomless bag of ideas, he continues to pull the most wondrous, multifaceted sounds, not pale Xerox copies of the past, but sounds that come from within his own bright soul and colorful imagination. Freeman's music gives me hope because it is original without being absurd, because it gets its tonal character from the inherent qualities of the instruments and its direction from his own distinct personality. Three recently released records demonstrate why, in times when even some of the most accomplished jazz musicians have been reduced to purveying broadly acceptable tinkles, Freeman and the dedicated performers with whom he surrounds himself deserve our special attention and heartfelt gratitude.

"Music from the Source" (Inner City) was recorded during a 1977 performance at Sweet Basil, a small restaurant in New York's Greenwich Village that continues to feature first-rate jazz. Although the leader here is bassist Cecil McBee, Freeman's presence is very strong. Actually, McBee and Freeman often exchange their roles as sideman or leader, if for no other reason than to satisfy the terms of either one's contract. They are perfect musical partners, two strong individuals who can channel their musical thoughts along the same avenues to whip up excitement that conjures up the image of another dynamic combination, the Gillespie/Parker team of over three decades ago. The sensitivity with which

Freeman and McBee interact is especially evident in the two different settings of *Agnez*, a McBee composition dedicated to drummer Roy Haynes. In the opening choruses, flute and bass establish a soft cushion from which spring spirited boppish sounds—with Freeman on tenor—as exciting as any that ever rattled the ashtrays at Minton's or the Royal Roost. And if you think rhythmic excitement was put to rest forever with the advent of free-form jazz, listen to the work of percussionists Steve McCall and Don Moye. I know virtually nothing about trumpeter Joe Gardner, but his work here, particularly on *First Song in the Day*, makes me want to know more.

"NO TIME LEFT," an Italian import on the small Black Saint label, was recorded in Milan last June by a Chico Freeman quartet featuring vibist Jay Hoggard, bassist Rick Rozie, and Don Moye. This set so strongly emphasizes Freeman's performances that the rest of his quartet tends to become mere accompaniment; only Don Moye seems able to approach Freeman's music with parity. The two long-time associates display their mutual rapport on *Uhm-la* and, to some extent, the title selection, but this is not as satisfying an album as one might hope for, even if it does contain some excellent work by Freeman, especially on tenor. Because of his work and the short final track, *Circle*—a slightly fragmented abstraction—I rather like "No Time Left," and I have a feeling that I could grow even fonder of it, but I will never love it the way I do "Spirit Sensitive."

If you bought only one album of modern jazz this year, you could not go wrong with "Spirit Sensitive." Here is music even the lady from Dubuque could love, yet it is current jazz of the highest order. Throughout this superb album, Freeman gently delivers a full-throated tenor sound with reverence for the material, which is of a kind not usually associated with him. His authoritative, deep-rooted treatment of such familiar ballads as *Autumn in New York* and *It Never Entered My Mind* should prove to gone-are-the-days-of-mellow-reeds skeptics not only that the tradition is still alive, but that it is possible to keep it alive without resorting to imitation of past performances and styles. In his own kind of neo-Classicism, Freeman here does precisely what Prokofiev set out to do with his *Classical Symphony* in 1916: create music that is at once classical and contemporary. And, lest there be those among you who believe good ballads emanate only from the pens of Brill Building habitués or Stephen Sondheim, there is Cecil McBee's *Close to You Alone*; it is a hauntingly beautiful melody that inspires appropriate performances from all concerned.

UNLIKE the quartet featured on the Italian album, this group generates a truly cohesive sound. Pianist John Hicks—whom I remember best for having helped Cecil McBee save an unfortunate Lester Bowie album ("Fast Last!" Muse 5055) from becoming a complete disaster—seems to be quite comfortable in this contrasting ballad milieu; McBee is of course completely at home with Freeman, and drummer Billy Hart continues to fit in wherever quality and good taste abound. Hart is replaced by Freeman regular Don Moye on Ellington's *Don't Get Around Much Anymore*, the track that brings "Spirit Sensitive" to a stunning and seemingly premature close. Enough! you say—does Albertson have some special interest in this album? Of course I do. So will you when you hear it.

—Chris Albertson

CECIL McBEE: *Music from the Source.* Cecil McBee (bass); Joe Gardner (trumpet, flugelhorn); Chico Freeman (flute, tenor saxophone); Dennis Moorman (piano); Steve McCall (drums); Don Moye (conga drum). *Agnez; First Song in the Day; God Spirit.* INNER CITY IC 3023 \$7.98.

CHICO FREEMAN: *No Time Left.* Chico Freeman (clarinet and tenor saxophone); Jay Hoggard (vibraphone); Rick Rozie (bass); Famoudou Don Moye (drums). *No Time Left; Uhm-la; Circle.* BLACK SAINT BSR 0036 \$8.98.

CHICO FREEMAN: *Spirit Sensitive.* Chico Freeman (tenor saxophone); John Hicks (piano); Cecil McBee (bass); Billy Hart, Famoudou Don Moye (drums). *Autumn in New York; A Child Is Born; Peace; It Never Entered My Mind; Close to You Alone; Don't Get Around Much Anymore.* INDIA NAVIGATION IN 1045 \$8.98 (from India Navigation, 60 Hudson Street, New York, N.Y. 10013).

is a complete definition of the inherent talent (or lack of it), or whether the new artist is merely going through an apprenticeship that will lead to individuality and better things. But I can assure you that at least *this* album doesn't make it. J.V.

GENE PARSONS: *Melodies* (see Best of the Month, page 78)

RAY, GOODMAN & BROWN (see Best of the Month, page 77)

RUSH: *Permanent Waves*. Rush (vocals and instrumentals). *The Spirit of Radio; Freewill; Jacob's Ladder; Entre Nous*; and two others. MERCURY SRM-1-4001 \$7.98, © MC8-1-4001 (D) \$7.95, © MCR4-1-4001 (D) \$7.95.

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

I don't know why I have a soft spot for Rush. Loud groups that play overblown material at great length irritate me, but I'm inclined to be charitable with Rush. I suppose what I like about them is that they are personally modest, work hard for a living, and entertain rather than manipulate their audiences. Though I find their long cuts hard to take, they usually include one song that is relatively brief, to the point, and more subdued than their usual fare. This time it's *Different Strings*, for which lead vocalist Geddy Lee wrote music and lyrics and which he sings in a mild manner. J.V.

THE SEARCHERS (see Best of the Month, page 74)

BOB SEGER AND THE SILVER BULLET BAND: *Against the Wind*. Bob Seger (vocals, guitar); Silver Bullet Band, Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section (instrumentals). *The Horizontal Bop; No Man's Land; Betty Lou's Gettin' Out Tonight; Against the Wind; Fire Lake; Good for Me*; and four others. CAPITOL SOO-12041 \$8.98, © 8XOO-12041 \$8.98, © 4XOO-12041 \$8.98.

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

At the risk of sounding like a Philistine, I've always appreciated rock-and-roll artists who lump their songs onto "fast" sides and "slow" sides. Musicians generally write songs for one of two reasons: either they have some message to communicate or they want to raise a little hell. I bring this up only because Bob Seger may be many things to many people, but for me he is principally a hell-raiser. Listening to "Against the Wind," I found myself too often on the sofa and not enough on the rug.

There are four knock-'em-down-and-leave-'em-for-dead rockers on this album, four soul-wrenching ballads, and two songs that fall somewhere in between. They are not arranged into "fast" and "slow" sides. The fast songs—honky-tonk boogies, red-hot boppers, sleazy struts, and Motor City rockers—celebrate a number of my favorite hobbies: dancing, drinking, and checking out the action. The ballads—at times stirringly soulful, at times just laid-back—are usually either love songs or reminiscences, as ballads tend to be.

(Continued on page 109)

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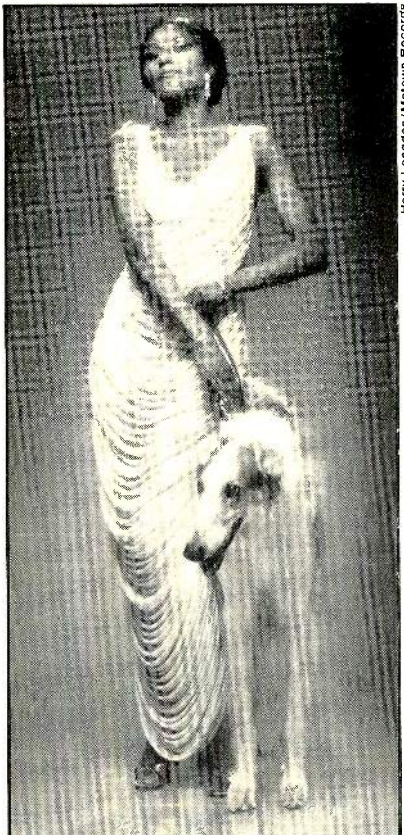
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Bonnie Pointer

BONNIE POINTER's second album makes it quite clear that she would never have been content to remain just one of the Pointer Sisters, no matter how successful that group might have become. The highly stylized, almost life-size portraits that meet our eyes from the covers of both albums certainly suggest a rather hefty ego, as does her decision once again to use only her name as the title. Moreover, in trying to establish a separate identity she has severed all stylistic ties with the music she and her three sisters made in the Seventies, when their thick-soled platform shoes and flowered dresses with padded shoulders à la Rosalind Russell campily recalled the Forties. At their most exciting, the Pointer Sisters fused pop singing with jazz scatting; their music stood out boldly against the blandness of that anticlimactic decade when popular music seemed to have exhausted the impetus of the late Sixties.

Having left the group she is credited with forming, Bonnie Pointer is assuming a new personal image and musical style. On the cover of her new album she looks like an Egyptian Dorothy Lamour, but the music inside is old-fashioned rhythm-and-blues

that has nothing to do with the sarong set. Bonnie Pointer is, in fact, a very new-fangled r-&-b troubadour who uses the most up-to-date recording technology to multiply her presence, cloning her voice electronically so she can sing back-up to her own lead. She has become a one-woman group: the Shirelles in the first-person singular, the Supremes as a triple Diana Ross. It's a very ambitious procedure, for Bonnie Pointer does not have one of the best voices around today. However, she compensates for her vocal limitations with musical imagination and a keen sense of what works.

The album is cleverly programmed, consisting almost entirely of golden oldies from Motown (her current label) subjected to a spirited reworking. These well-worn hits, once vehicles for such Motown stalwarts as the Supremes and Martha & the Vandellas, are old enough to have been off the air for several years yet not so ancient as to be totally unfamiliar to anyone who's had even a casual exposure to American popular music over the last eighteen years. For the really young, they may seem brand new, but for buffs in their early thirties and beyond tunes such as *Come See About Me*, *Jimmy Mack*, and *Nowhere to Run* should recall rumpus-room parties or stealthy "parking" in the years before the pill.

Bonnie Pointer, now twenty-five, was herself just a kid when these songs were new, but she pays them the respect of remaining largely faithful to the originals interpretively while extending their length. A disco beat is used to spruce up *Nowhere to Run* and *I Can't Help Myself*, and the instrumentals generally are sprightly, with Sly Stone sitting in on a couple of tracks as Arp-ist, guitarist, and foot-stomper.

As a collection of golden oldies, the album is a tribute to the songwriting gifts of Motown's old Holland/Dozier/Holland team, but there is also one new song, and with it Bonnie Pointer really makes this record her own. This is the opener on side two, a haunting ballad called *Deep Inside My Soul* that she wrote with David Baldwin (who was responsible for much of the material on her first album). While the other selections are full of nostalgic charm, this one, with its more flexible structure and interesting chord changes, reflects some of the changes in popular music since those golden days in the mid Sixties.

THE new "Bonnie Pointer" album is based on a formula that is almost bound to work, since nearly everything in it went gold in the past, but it may well do more than just establish Bonnie Pointer's credibility as a solo artist. It could also usher in an r-&-b revival by sending other singers to the vaults.

—Phyl Garland

BONNIE POINTER. Bonnie Pointer (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *I Can't Help Myself* (Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch); *Jimmy Mack*; *When the Lovelight Starts Shining Through His Eyes*; *Deep Inside My Soul*; *Come See About Me*; *Nowhere to Run* (Nowhere to Hide). MOTOWN M7-929R1 \$7.98, © M8-929H \$7.98, © M75-929H \$7.98.

I am more sympathetic to Seger's reminiscences. At their most affecting—Seger is often a very affecting songwriter—they deal with the choices made, the friends left behind, the incidents of experience that must certainly weigh heavily on someone like Seger, now looking back down a long hard road. Songs like these permit a weary musician to pause and sift the litter from the memories, and I don't doubt for a minute that these are songs Seger felt *had* to be written. None of this mitigates my impatient fidgeting, however, while I wait for him to get back down to the dirty business of rock-'n'-roll.

Two songs don't fit neatly into the "fast hell-raising" and "slow-message" groups, and neither one sounds entirely like Bob Seger—not to say he didn't write them, only that his inspiration is thinly disguised. One, *Fire Lake*, is a cantering narrative that was probably chosen for single release because it sounds so much like the Eagles (Don Henley and Glenn Frey sing backing harmonies). Like Seger's best ballads, it succeeds not so much because of what it says as because of what it suggests, sketching a vivid but fragmented scene and leaving the listener to fill in the details. The second, *Shining Brightly*, might have been lifted straight from the Van Morrison songbook. From the song's "rough times are over and the future's lookin' good" lyrics to the bluesy saxophone and gospel chorus—well, it's like daybreak in old Woodstock. This is not the first time Seger has borrowed from Van, but it's the first time I've actually looked up to see if someone had changed the record on me. Both songs serve their inspiration well.

—Mark Peel

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THE SPECIALS. The Specials (vocals and instrumentals); Rico Rodriguez, Dick Cuthell (horns). *A Message to You Rudy; Do the Dog; It's Up to You; Nite Klub; Doesn't Make It Alright; Concrete Jungle*; and nine others. CHRYSALIS CHR 1265 \$7.98, © 8CH-1265 \$7.98, © CCH-1265 \$7.98.

Performance: **Fiery**
Recording: **Deliberately murky**

The Specials play a faithful though politicized version of bluebeat and ska, the Jamaican pop music of the early Sixties that ultimately developed into reggae. It's a music that got next to no hearing in this country when it was being made, except as an occasional novelty hit (Millie Small's 1964 *My Boy Lollipop*, for example), but in England it was apparently very influential: Mod kids, like those portrayed in *Quadrophenia*, liked it almost as much as the Motown or Who stuff also around at the time. Which is not hard to understand, since it's danceable, upbeat, infectious stuff with a working-class edge.

The Specials do it very well; they know that, as with reggae, the sound is as important as the notes, which means some raggedness around the edges is necessary or the stuff degenerates into Sergio Mendes/Martin Denny island exotica. But I'm not sure about a mass audience here for this record: the Jamaican patois is thick enough that getting beyond it and figuring out what social outrages are bugging these guys is fairly difficult, and in any event the concerns

the Specials are expressing will be as incomprehensible to many Americans as those that gave birth to punk. Still, though the Specials' brand of ska does not have the lush, languorous psychedelic intensity of contemporary reggae, its debt to American r-&-b of the Sixties is even more explicit, and on that level it's hard not to respond to it. Me, I think it's refreshing. S.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TAVARES: Supercharged. Tavares (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Bad Times; We Both Tried; Can't Get Enough; Why Can't We Fall in Love; Got to Have Your Love*; and three others. CAPITOL ST-12026 \$7.98, © 8XT-12026 \$7.98, © 4XT-12026 \$7.98.

Performance: **First-rate**
Recording: **Very good**

From the opener, a rousing and imaginatively arranged medium-tempo number called *Bad Times*, it is evident that this album truly is "supercharged." Creative style and cohesion of performance infuse every groove. The male vocal quintet named Tavares has been moderately successful over the years in making the r-&-b charts, but they've never attained the level of stardom their talents merit. In my opinion, their albums have been more consistently appealing (better sung and better sounding) than those of the Commodores, the Spinners, and even the O'Jays.

This album is even better than Tavares' previous sets, which I have enjoyed without exception. One secret ingredient here might be the behind-the-scenes input of Bobby Colomby and Benjamin Wright Jr. (who have produced Earth, Wind and Fire and Michael Jackson), working in concert with David Foster (who has performed similar chores for Hall & Oates and the Average White Band). At any rate, the ear-catching arrangements and instrumentals are deftly interwoven with the voices, which are employed with polished flexibility. The range of material is from the urban strut of *I Don't Want You Any More* to the ethereal passages of *Paradise*, though *Bad Times* is the best track out of many fine ones. Unreservedly recommended. P.G.

BRUCE WOOLLEY & THE CAMERA CLUB. Bruce Woolley (vocals); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. *English Garden; Video Killed the Radio Star; No Surrender; You Got Class; Goodbye to Yesterday; Flying Man*; and five others. COLUMBIA NJC 36301 \$7.98, © CT 36301 \$7.98.

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

Too much is enough. I am tired of British bands who strike a New Wave pose when they are not New Wave, of lead singers who try to sound like computers, and of "songs" that have no merit or purpose except as excuses for anti-singing. I am weary to the bone of expedient, shallow, cynical crud that pretends to be "socially significant" to please the marketplace. Ah, Britannia! In the days of the Empire anybody who attempted such fraud would have been packed off to the colonies. J.V.

(Continued on page 111)



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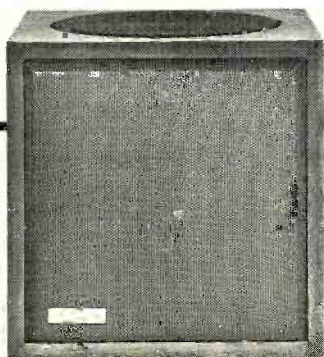
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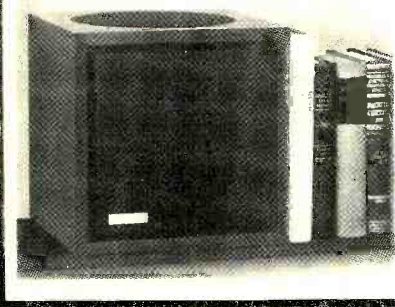
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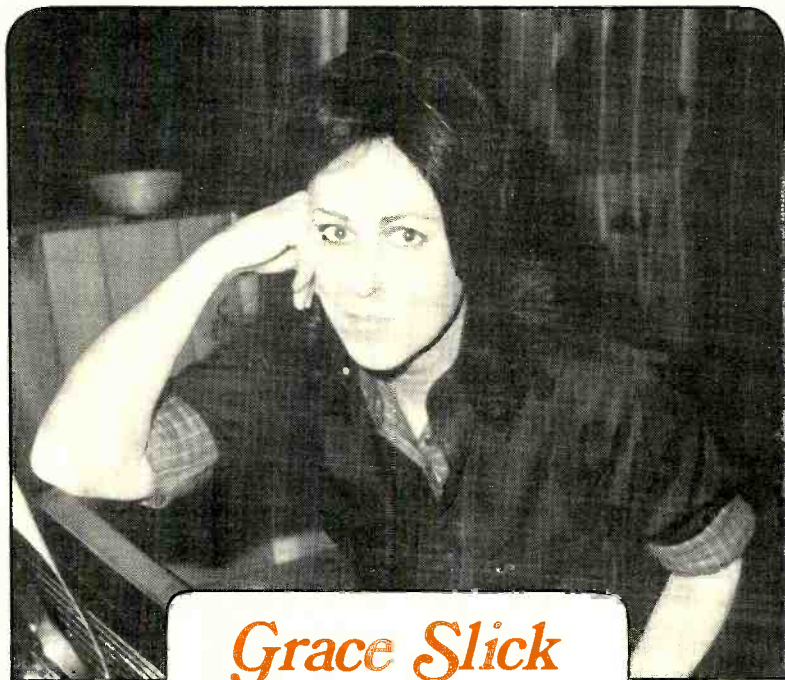
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Grace Slick

THERE is always a risk, when an artist associated with a group leaves a band for other than strictly musical considerations, that his or her solo work may lack the distinctiveness, the clearly forged personality, and especially the focused *intent* that are the *sine qua non* of the individual performer. In fact, unless a deliberate break is made to give expression to some area of the performer's art that has been submerged or suppressed within a group, such solo efforts rarely rise to the level of the group's work. As the record labels that have indulged one-man albums by members of Kiss, the Rolling Stones, the Who, the Grateful Dead, and a legion of other supergroups can attest, such albums tend to be comparatively slow-moving at the cash register. Yet they are as much a fixture in pop marketing strategies as greatest-hits packages.

As a member of the Jefferson Airplane and its later, more aerodynamically advanced incarnation the Starship, Grace Slick contributed a distinctive vocal instrument and a spaced-out sex-goddess side-show to a band whose identity has been undergoing any number of changes in recent years. Judging from her new solo album, however, it was not a repressed musical vision crying out for release that dictated her departure from the band. "Dreams," in spite of Grace Slick's unmistakable voice and five of her own compositions, is largely the creation of producer Ron Frangipane—a man whose arrangements are as rich and fattening as his name suggests—and a collection of skilled studio musicians whose repertoire embraces practically every lick, riff, and fill known to man; they manage to use them all on this album.

Naturally enough, when the creative reins are handed over to a record's producer, the focus tends to shift away from musical ends toward musical means—the instru-

mentation, the arrangements, the "sound." Indeed, the appeal of "Dreams" derives solely from its purely sensual elements—a lavish sixty-piece orchestra (several cuts, including the title track, are given the kind of apocalyptic orchestral treatment usually reserved for the entrance of the gods in Wagnerian opera or the arrival of Elvis Presley on stage in Memphis), splendid studio musicianship (the precision and agility of the guitar playing give the up-tempo songs a remarkable momentum), and, of course, Ms. Slick's voice (savagely and seductively by turns). But these rich elements gallop grandly over sparse musical terrain. "Dreams" washes the listener in a Lethan bath; when it has passed, there is no lasting impression—save for the unfortunate one left by *Seasons*, the single embarrassingly *bad* song on this record, a daisy-chain of borrowed, alternately pastoral and tormented images that would not be out of place with the songs left out of *The Sound of Music*.

Listening to "Dreams," I hear a dozen or more familiar bands—from Journey to the Eagles to Elton John—and songs whose styles range from *War of the Worlds* to *Those Were the Days*. I hear Grace Slick's voice. What I do not hear is the Grace Slick who contributed to such Airplane successes as *Greasy Heart* and *Somebody to Love* and who, most important, contributed something that was, for better or for worse, recognizably and memorably hers.

—Mark Peel

GRACE SLICK: *Dreams*. Grace Slick (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Dreams*; *El Diablo*; *Face to the Wind*; *Angel of the Night*; *Seasons*; *Do It the Hard Way*; *Full Moon Man*; *Let It Go*; *Garden of Man*. RCA AFL1-3544 \$8.98, © AFS1-3544 \$8.98, © AFK1-3544 \$8.98.

DISCO



RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DON ARMANDO'S SECOND AVENUE RHUMBA BAND. Don Armando's Second Avenue Rumba Band (vocals and instrumentals). *Deputy of Love; I'm an Indian Too; Winter Love; Para Ti*; and three others. ZE ZEA 33005 \$7.98.

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

Deputy of Love is what will sell this album to dance enthusiasts. This version of that giant hit, while a disappointing abbreviation of the original release, is top-drawer disco music. Lead vocalist Fonda Rae gets into some effective Cory Daye stuff; there are at least three different melodic sections, one integrated into the other, to provide energy-producing excitement; and there's a big orchestral arrangement with a solid beat. But there is much more to Don Armando's Band than this disco hit reveals.

Most of the album's best is on side two. Do yourself a favor: before you dance your way through these songs, sit down and listen. Listen to the terrific disco of *Goin' to a Showdown*, with its jazzy "re-mem-ber, remember-member" refrain. Listen to *Para Ti*, a romantic, middle-tempo dance production with a memorable tune and loads of charm. Listen to Irving Berlin's *I'm an Indian Too* (yes, "a Sioux-oo-oo"), with its startling classical cello figure. And listen most of all to the totally danceable rumba rendition of Lerner and Lowe's *How to Handle a Woman* from *Camelot*. This is a mind-boggler. It is sung simply and with captivating warmth by Don Armando Bonilla himself, and it is pop music of a high order indeed. *E.B.*

CLAUDJA BARRY: *Feel the Fire.* Claudja Barry (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Get Your Mind Made Up; One Night Queen; Everybody Needs Love; Wake Up and Make Love with Me*; and four others. CHRYSALIS CHR 1251 \$7.98.

Performance: **Variable**
Recording: **Munich magnificent**

This album by the *Boogie Woogie Dancin' Shoes* lady starts out all wrong. The opening song, *You Make Me Feel the Fire*, is a ripper, with heavy bass chords and an almost metal-hard drive. But Claudja Barry can't do this kind of thing. She strains with a discomfort that is all too audible, and her back-up ladies simply outsing her. The "real" Ms. Barry shows up in the three-song set that follows. It's sung in the old velvet-voice style, not pushed beyond her natural limits by the need to go rocky. Unfortunately, though, despite Jörg Evers' superbly produced arrangements, only one of these

good-humored, middle-tempo songs—*It's So Nice*—is worth all the effort. Side two contains the album's one great cut: *Stop He's a Lover* doesn't push, it just flows out; and the classy arrangement has just enough of those typically European embellishments to let you dance to it either full tempo or at a dreamy half-tempo.

I must add that the engineering throughout is everything we have come to expect from Jürgen Koppers and his Munich co-workers. This album, shortcomings aside, is good to dance to and sonically wonderful.

E.B.

BEVERLY JOHNSON: *Don't Lose the Feeling.* Beverly Johnson (vocals); orches-

tra. *Don't Run for Cover; Under My Thumb; Can't You Feel It; Ain't Givin' Up No Love*; and three others. BUDDAH BDS 5726 \$7.98.

Performance: **Confidently sexy**
Recording: **Disco de luxe**

They keep trying to tell us that disco is fading away, so it's something of a surprise to come across Beverly Johnson's lavish new album. Scavullo photos, two hairdressing credits, make-up man credit, wardrobe credit, six producing and arranging credits. Whew. Ms. Johnson survives all of the preening and the patent-leather production, however, and goes on to deliver a capable performance in a sexy, confident style. It is

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that breathing-in-your-ear approach that sees her safely through such bombs as *Gonna Tell Your Momma on You* and leads her on to eventual minitriumph in the title song and *Can't You Feel It*. Beverly hardly needs all the glp she's been surrounded with here, but then all things tend ineluctably to excess. P.R.

LIPPS INC.: Mouth to Mouth. Lipps Inc. (vocals and instrumentals). *Funkytown*; *All Night Dancing*; *Rock It*; *Power*. CASABLANCA NBLP 7197 \$7.98, © NBL8 7197 \$7.98, © NBL5 7197 \$7.98.

Performance: **Potentially hot**
Recording: **Wearingly imbalanced**

Talk about *movin'*! There may not be much real funk in Lipps Inc.'s (lip-synch—get it?) *Funkytown*, a deservedly successful single that opens this album, but it certainly does move. It is a true novelty, too, characterized by a weird sound created by setting voices and electronic synthesizers one atop the other. Better yet, lead singer Cynthia Johnson delivers some high-powered, soulful vocal work, and the arrangement contrasts the hypnotic rhythm with a lightning-like intrusion of violins.

But in the album's second song, you begin to wonder if producer Steven Greenberg is too enamored of sound effects that have little to do with the music. *All Night Dancing* has tremendous potential: a good, if trite, lyric ("All night dancing/Think about it all day long"); an imaginative mid-section with a wonderful jazz piano solo (bravo Ivan Rafowitz); and an exciting two-part back-up vocal refrain that comes out like a *Three Blind Mice* round. But it doesn't build. It's like a good skit that needs a punch line.

Side two, which includes a souped-up rock-'n'-roller called *Power*, is marred by the same ill-advised arrangements. It's a shame, because Johnson has the, er, power to put this kind of heavy energy across, and the back-up vocals have the right intensity. Somebody's got to get in there and pull the vocal tracks and the strings forward from time to time, to refocus our attention away from the thumping monotony of the beat. The potential is certainly there. E.B.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CHERYL LYNN: In Love. Cheryl Lynn (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *I've Got Faith in You*; *Hide It Away*; *Feel It*; *In Love*; *I've Got Just What You Need*; and four others. COLUMBIA JC 36145 \$7.98, © JCA 36145 \$7.98, © JCT 36145 \$7.98.

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

That Cheryl Lynn is the new Cinderella of the disco world is now generally known among those who follow the music. They eagerly recount her tale, from her debut in a road production of *The Wiz* to her appearance on the *Gong Show*. But those who avoid disco at all costs are missing out on a good thing, for this young singer has talent that extends beyond constricted categories.

Her splendid new album, the second of her short career, is enough to propel even the stodgiest soul to his feet; it explodes with volcanic force, generating enough en-

(Continued on page 115)

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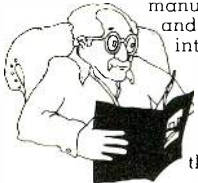
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ergy to fuel a cross-country bus. But the power comes not so much from the expertly conceived and driving instrumental backgrounds as from Cheryl Lynn's spectacular voice and musical thrust. There is an unusual clarity to her attack, and she can soar through the vocal stratosphere with thrilling ease. The incendiary songs to be heard here, especially *Feel It* and *I've Got Just What You Need*, are certainly the best disco numbers I've heard lately, but Lynn is more than just another pop singer; she is an excellent technician. To demonstrate that she can be just as exciting at slower tempos, the producers have included a quality ballad, *In Love*, which showcases her softer side.

Disco may be on the way to foundering, but I'm betting that Cheryl Lynn will be around for a long time. *P.G.*

PARADISE EXPRESS: *Let's Fly*. Paradise Express (vocals and instrumentals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Let's Fly; Nowhere to Run; You Set Me on Fire*; and three others. FANTASY F-9589 \$7.98.

Performance: **Promising**
 Recording: **Fine**

Herb Jimmerson, who is listed as arranger and co-producer for Paradise Express and as composer or co-composer of most of the songs on this album, may be his own worst enemy. As arranger and producer, he's a talent to be watched. There is a wonderfully heavy, sexy texture to these fast-paced disco songs—a solid carpet of bass embroidered with Jimmerson's own flickering keyboards and with beautifully mixed string and horn sections. And featured vocalist Vi Ann is set into these arrangements perfectly.

But the songs! The only ones that work at all are *Nowhere to Run* and *Love Is a Flame (It Won't Burn)*—which happen to be the two songs Jimmerson didn't write—and *You Set Me on Fire*, the album's best number. The last uses Vi Ann to advantage. Hers is not the typical disco voice: it's a rich chest voice, almost husky, with echoes of Carmen McRae. With excellent support from a group of back-up vocalists, she rides this galloping arrangement perfectly.

So the raw material is there; the arrangements are full of goodies, and the lead vocalist has a distinctive, memorable sound. Next time, let's have some better songs. *E.B.*

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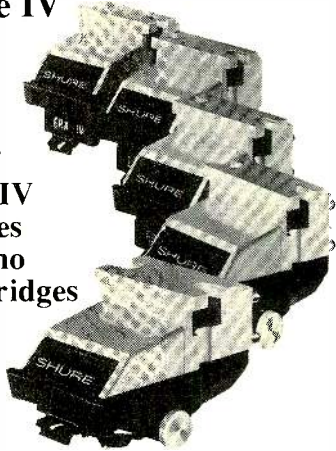
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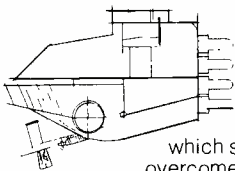
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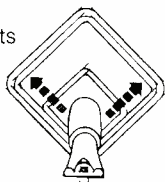


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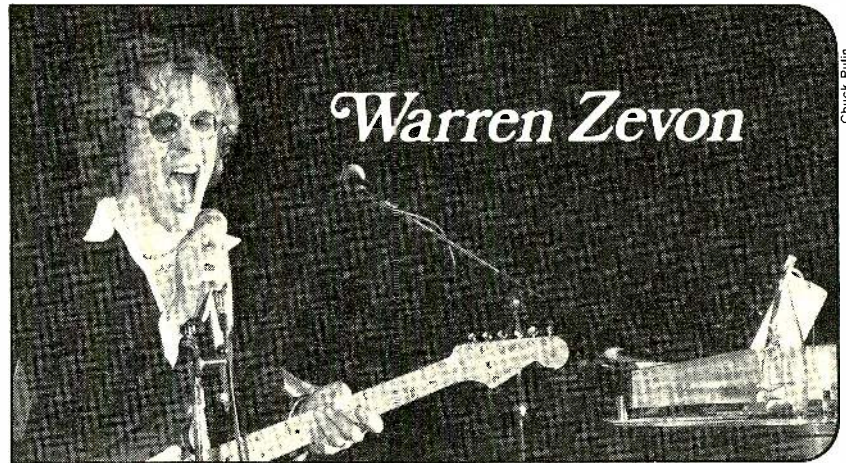
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WARREN ZEVON, like the Shadow, knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men. His songs are eloquent testimony to his grasp of the seductive power of mindless sex and violence. At their best (parts of his first album and nearly all of "Excitable Boy"), they hit the listener with the impact of one of Sam Peckinpah's balletic film shoot-'em-ups. Zevon has a problem, however: he was born too early to be a punk, at least in the late-Seventies sense of the word, which means that no matter how often he flirts at the Edge of the Permissible or encores with a Sex Pistols number, he will re-

when you consider that half the fun of "Excitable Boy" was that it was an evocative jukebox grab-bag). The title tune, for example, has only the sketchiest of lyrics, a truly annoying riff, and not much else. *Jungle Work*, a lurid ode to the world's mercenaries, is so outrageous that it may (or may not) be kin to some of Randy Newman's oblique vignettes. In any case, the music isn't nearly compelling enough to set up the irony. *Empty Handed Heart* is rather touching in a hardboiled-hero-wounded-by-love-but-not-despairing way, but it's a tuneless and fairly obvious rewrite of *Hasten*



main typecast as an aging hippy with a closet full of liberal biases and old Nehru jackets. That evidently bugs the hell out of him, as does the fact that he will never be either Igor Stravinsky or Ross Macdonald, and these depressing truths are writ large all over his new "Bad Luck Streak in Dancing School."

The themes he tackles are, to be sure, potent ones: being seduced by myth, the price one pays for rocking into maturity, and the like. And when he connects with them he pulls off something quite impressive: *adult* rock about *adult* frustrations, a trick Pete Townshend has been trying to turn without much success. But most of the songs seem only partly developed; there's a tentativeness about the big numbers that does them in. The best songs, in fact, are the ones that don't really deal with the Serious Stuff at all. *Jeannie Needs a Shooter* (written with Bruce Springsteen) is a good example: it's a beautifully done, dead-pan Western send-up, a Romeo and Juliet story in which the star-crossed lovers do not elope. Instead, Dad shoots Boyfriend and rides off into the sunset with Daughter and Boyfriend's money. Even better is *Play It All Night Long*, an impressively bent effort about a white-trash family so mired in depravity that all they can relate to is Lynyrd Skynyrd's plane crash ("Play that dead band's song," indeed). And there are some other successes, including a wonderful, sinister version of the obscure 1961 New Orleans r-&-b hit *A Certain Girl*; it ought to be a single.

Much of the rest, though, falls flat lyrically and musically (especially musically,

Down the Wind from the first album, which was no great shakes to begin with. And *Wild Age*, the most explicit thing thematically on the record (it could almost be the Sid Vicious story), reads well enough but simply doesn't take off and soar in the big Byrdsy way it's clearly intended to.

The band is generally in good form, but there's a hint of affected New Wave toughness about the arrangements that doesn't really make it: Zevon has in the past gotten most of these guys to play grittier behind him than they do behind, say, Ronstadt or Jackson Browne, but this time their styles are simply too elegant for the task at hand. In any case, slickness is not the problem with "Bad Luck Streak." Chalk it up instead to a creative dry spell, celebrate the not inconsiderable virtues of the best things in it, and then hope that Zevon does what he promised he'd do after "Excitable Boy"—move to New York City. My guess is that a change of scene would result in a record to make that one look like a warm-up.

—Steve Simels

WARREN ZEVON: *Bad Luck Streak in Dancing School*. Warren Zevon (vocals, keyboards, guitar); Joe Walsh (guitar); Rick Marotta (drums); other musicians. *Bad Luck Streak in Dancing School*; *A Certain Girl*; *Jungle Work*; *Empty-Handed Heart*; *Interlude No. 1*; *Play It All Night Long*; *Jeannie Needs a Shooter*; *Interlude No. 2*; *Bill Lee*; *Gorilla, You're a Desperado*; *Bed of Coals*; *Wild Age*. ASYLUM SE-509 \$8.98, © 5T8-509 \$8.98, © 5C5-509 \$8.98.

JAZZ



RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JACK DEJOHNETTE: *Special Edition*. Jack DeJohnette (drums, piano, melodica); David Murray (tenor saxophone, bass clarinet); Arthur Blythe (alto saxophone); Peter Warren (bass, cello). *One for Eric; Zoot Suite; India*; and two others. ECM ECM-1-1152 \$8.98, © M5E-1152 \$8.98.

Performance: **Special indeed**
Recording: **Very good**

Inconsistency has plagued Jack DeJohnette's recorded output in recent years; each album has contained aesthetically pleasing or downright brilliant moments, but none has measured up to what many of us expected of the drummer who helped put Miles Davis into a new orbit ten years ago. Before joining Miles, DeJohnette's working experience had taken him from the earthy blues of T-Bone Walker's band to the innovative Chicago free-form arena and on to the New York scene where he allied himself musically with outstanding colleagues ranging from the well-established John Coltrane and Thelonious Monk to the up-and-coming Keith Jarrett and Chick Corea. Caught up in the fusion fever that followed in the wake of Miles' "Bitches Brew" album, DeJohnette took his career on an unfortunate detour with Compost, a souped-up, watered-down group that recorded for Columbia and aimed the barrel of its pop gun at the Love Generation. It missed.

I am happy to report that DeJohnette's latest ECM release, "Special Edition," is indeed special. Qualitatively, this is the fulfillment of DeJohnette's promise in previous albums, but I think it goes even beyond that; it is like a mirrored globe reflecting the many facets of his eclectic background and wide listening experience. Sinfully rich in textures, DeJohnette's music captures the essence of jazz past, twirls it around whimsically, and hurls it deep into the Eighties. His bold arrangements make full use of saxophonists David Murray and Arthur Blythe, men whose considerable talents have often been obscured by ill-advised associations and neglected by misguided music-industry decisionmakers. Blythe, of course, has been signed by Columbia, but, welcome as that is, it continues to smack of tokenism, and his most interesting work is still to be found on such side trips as this. Here, he and Murray reverently and skillfully translate for the Eighties the reed language that once echoed through Storyville streets and Chicago speakeasies. There is exquisite cello and bass support from Peter Warren, a player new to me, but one whose talent certainly deserves more exposure. As for Jack DeJohnette himself, he has long ranked high on my list of favorite drum-

mers, and his performances here enhance that standing, but my regard for him as a writer has been given a considerable boost with this release. His own three compositions are impressively structured and original, and he has also taken two Coltrane pieces, *Central Park West* and *India*, and turned them into personal statements without obscuring the flavor of the originals.

In this "Special Edition," Jack DeJohnette has given us a wonderful surrealistic portrait of jazz itself. I predict that this album will be around for a long time. Its release at the start of a new decade is most appropriate. *C.A.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CHARLIE HADEN/JAN GARBAREK/EGBERTO GISMONTI. *Magico*. Jan Garbarek (saxophones); Egberto Gismonti (guitars, piano); Charlie Haden (bass). *Bailarina; Silence; Spor*; and two others. ECM ECM-1-1151 \$8.98, © M5E-1151 \$8.98.

Performance: **E-ccc-eminent**
Recording: **Excellent**

I don't recall ever having said a disparaging word about Charlie Haden, Jan Garbarek, or Egberto Gismonti, and, dazzled by the beautiful way they interact on an album called "Magico," I am not about to begin doing so now. This music has all the earmarks of an ECM session: a clean, soulful sound that seems to sweep across the vinyl like gently blown tumbleweed. If you are one of this world's many ECM addicts, you have probably already heard Garbarek's reed cut paths through the misty air of a Norwegian fjord, and Gismonti has undoubtedly lifted you to lofty peaks of imagination. And if you have followed jazz at all through its development over the past twenty years, you should be well acquainted with the exquisite bass work of Charlie Haden, a prime force in the Sixties' avant-garde movement who exploded on the scene with Ornette Coleman in 1959. With that kind of listening experience behind you, all you have to do is imagine the Garbarek/Haden/Gismonti combination—that ought to send you scrambling for the nearest record shop. If you have not been so blessed, perhaps the time has come to open your door to a new experience. *C.A.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

WARNE MARSH/LEW TABACKIN: *Tenor Gladness*. Warne Marsh, Lew Tabackin (tenor saxophones); John Heard (bass); Larry Bunker (drums). *Basic #2; Hangin' Loose; Easy*; and three others. INNER CITY IC 6048 \$7.98.

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

When pianist/bandleader Toshiko Akiyoshi set out to produce these 1976 sessions, she had in mind giving the old, tried-and-true two-tenor concept a new twist. Popular teams of the past have included Dexter Gordon and Wardell Gray, Al Cohn and Zoot Sims, Gene Ammons and Sonny Stitt, and Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis and Johnny Griffin, but all these represented the same school of tenor playing as their partners. Warne Marsh and Lew Tabackin, on the other hand, are tenors of disparate tonal



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shadings and style, which is why Akiyoshi thought combining them might be both interesting and divergent. She was right. "Tenor Gladness" is a superb amalgam of saxophone expressions from two jazz temperature zones once considered to be incompatible. Tabackin's is the warm, raspy, mellifluous sound of the Coleman Hawkins school; Marsh's the frostier, more ethereal sound associated with Lennie Tristano's music. The contrast is obvious only if one is looking for it, though, for otherwise the blend seems as natural as a shower in April.

Bassist John Heard and drummer Larry Bunker are heard to everybody's advantage on all but one track, *New-ance*—a lovely ballad that bears more than a casual resemblance to *What's New* and is played by Tabackin alone—and an unidentified pianist (presumably Akiyoshi) appears on *Easy*, Marsh's ballad track, which is actually a thinly veiled variation on *Easy Living*. The remaining four selections feature the two-tenor/two-rhythm instrumentation. You will undoubtedly find some of this material familiar, even if such titles as *March of the Tadpoles* and *Basic #2* actually are new, but in such capable hands the basic material easily takes a back seat to what is done with it. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JAY McSHANN: *Kansas City Hustle*. Jay McShann (piano). *Round Midnight*; (*Since I Lost My Baby*) *I Almost Lost My Mind*; *Kansas City Hustle*; *Willow Weep for Me*; *Don't Get Around Much Any More*; and five others. SACKVILLE 3021 \$7.98 (from Coda Publications, P.O. Box 87, Station J, Toronto, Ontario M4J 4X8, Canada).

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

Jay McShann is a versatile, vastly experienced, and highly entertaining pianist who's been active for close to fifty years. These solos are taken from the same two-day session in 1978 that also yielded the tracks used in the earlier "Tribute to Fats Waller" album for Sackville. Two months later McShann cut the "Big Apple Bash" session for Atlantic, about which I raved when it was released last year, and I am happy to rave about "Kansas City Hustle" too.

Since McShann started playing jazz when the music was supposed to please instead of instruct or obfuscate, he is happily free of contemporary jazz's sociopolitical shtick. (You can safely ignore the ideological liner notes; McShann is too busy having fun doing what he knows to care about theories of blues poetry.) He fuses a lifetime of playing, his confidence in his own ideas, and his references to pianists he admires into a program of sheer pleasure. You will hear some bows to Art Tatum, Fats Waller, Thelonious Monk, and Erroll Garner, but that's because McShann likes what they played, not because he thinks he has to sound like them. He is eminently his own man, and his choice of material is strong for melody and harmonic construction. It'll be a long time before you take this album off your turntable. Hooray for Jay! J.V.

ART PEPPER: *Straight Life*. Art Pepper (alto saxophone); Tommy Flanagan (pi-

ano); Red Mitchell (bass); Billy Higgins (drums); Kenneth Nash (cowbell, reco-reco). *Surf Ride*; *Nature Boy*; *September Song*; and two others. GALAXY GXY-5127 \$7.98.

Performance: **95% pure**
 Recording: **Good**

This could easily have been just another quartet blowing session, the kind musicians so often throw together when their pecuniary need is immediate. But Art Pepper obviously poured a good measure of his soul and more than passing thoughts into "Straight Life," the album that bears the title of his recently published, brutally frank autobiography. I am not surprised, for the fifty-five-year-old California alto saxophonist has always played his music attentively, despite the magnitude of his personal problems.

Fortunately, Pepper surmounted his problems. His descriptions of his ten-year ordeal in San Quentin almost make even his lost years in the tight grip of heroin seem bearable. One wonders how any human can survive such torment, and one cannot but admire Art Pepper for not only surviving but also bouncing back into a successful (artistically, at least) musical career. "Straight Life" is a fine album, but, like Pepper's last Galaxy release, "Art Pepper Today" (GXY-5119), it suffers from a lapse in taste on one track, the overproduced, overdubbed title selection. I detect the not-so-fine hand of producer Ed Michel here, and I hope it is merely a case of Pepper's having been momentarily misled by Michel's penchant for technical trickery. I can recommend this release, but Art Pepper's albums on the Contemporary label are more thoroughly satisfying. C.A.

JUDY ROBERTS. Judy Roberts (vocals, keyboards); Phil Gratteau (drums; percussion); Tony Carpenter (congas, percussion); Neal Seroka (guitars); Sean Silverman (bass). *Never Was Love*; *Thumbs*; *Yes Indeed*; *Dandelion*; *Watercolors*; and four others. INNER CITY IC 1078 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good but unvaried**
 Recording: **Excellent**

Judy Roberts and her band make an impressive showing here. For at least one side, anyway. But then Roberts' distinctive voice, and her dramatic and moody keyboard work begin to sink slowly into a placid sea of pretty-pretty sounds. Roberts' voice bears a striking and warming resemblance to that of an old idol of mine, Jeri Southern, and her treatment of even such substandard material as *Thumbs* and *Dandelion* leaves no doubt that she's a serious and well-trained musician. What's lacking here is any real risk-taking, anything beyond what she has obviously found to be a formula that works. Too bad, because the album shows glimmers of a major talent. I'd like to hear more from Ms. Roberts. P.R.

SONS OF BIX: *Ostrich Walk*. Tom Pletcher (cornet); Don Ingle (valve trombone); John Harker (clarinet, alto saxophone); Dave Miller (guitar, banjo); Don Gibson (piano); Russ Whitman (bass saxophone); Wayne Jones (drums). *Davenport Blues*; (Continued on page 121)

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Wa Da Da; Cryin' All Day; Da Da Strain; At the Jazz Band Ball; I'm Comin' Virginia; and four others. JAZZOLOGY J-59 \$6.98.

Performance: **Excellent**

Recording: **Good**

What distinguishes the Sons of Bix is their confidence in the music they play and their enjoyment in playing it. The group has re-discovered the delights of small-band white Midwestern jazz from the classic period of the 1920s. The music of Bix Beiderbecke is their focus, but though most of their repertoire is drawn from tunes he recorded, they make no attempt to re-create the recordings note for note, nor does their admiration for Bix turn into worship or slavery. The Sons of Bix like to swing with their own ideas, and swing they do on "Ostrich Walk."

Cornetist Tom Pletcher has a tone that comes close to Bix's, but his ideas are original, as is demonstrated on *I'm Comin' Virginia*, in which Bix's solo is paraphrased by trombonist Don Ingle and then followed by Pletcher's chorus. It's easy to enjoy what Pletcher plays but even more refreshing to hear how he *thinks*. This is especially true of *Da Da Strain*, which Bix never recorded and in which Pletcher takes a hi-de-ho muted solo that the Davenport Kid himself would have admired.

There have been imitators and appropriators of Bix's tone and technique for fifty years, but Pletcher has come closest to understanding how Bix *thought*—which determined his total sound. Pletcher uses that understanding to celebrate Bix's musical achievement while maintaining an independent imagination. Russ Whitman, the group's bass saxophonist, does the same with his model, Adrian Rollini. This independence not only allows the Sons to have a fine time, but in one case—*Susie*, taken at a less frantic tempo than that of the Wolverines' 1924 performance, and with a freer arrangement—it makes their version better than the original. That's only appropriate, since the Sons, as they clearly indicate, are sons, not clones. J.V.

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Performance: **Smooth**

Recording: **Good**

In times when record producers often feed even the best vocalists kindergarten material dressed in some overzealous arranger's idea of appropriateness, it is a relief to hear Sarah Vaughan's laid-back, mellifluous voice travel in suitable company through a well-chosen selection of Ellingtonia. There; I have just described Miss Vaughan's new album. I'll skip details on the solos by Zoot Sims, J. J. Johnson, Waymon Reed (Miss Vaughan's husband), and the Franks Foster and Wess, and the Billy Byers big-band charts heard on some of the tracks. I'll skip them because you will hear them for yourself—that is, if you know what's good for your ears. C.A.

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Simels Live

By Steve Simels

The Young Rascals, the Way They Were: left to right, Felix Cavaliere, Gene Cornish, Eddie Brigati, and Dino Danelli



RETURN OF THE COVER BAND

ONE of the most telling indications that disco is now distinctly unfashionable is that the live cover bands playing the stuff can't find much work these days. All across the country, professional musicians are now being told by cigar-smoking club owners that they've got to buy some skinny ties, add *My Sharona* to their repertoires, and start rocking. Meanwhile, on Manhattan's fashionable Upper East Side, the number of live music clubs featuring that kind of nouveau rock band is growing at an absolutely astonishing rate. It appears, in other words, that the great tradition of the rock-and-roll cover band is making a comeback of major proportions. I bring all this up because the other night I heard a new band featuring some heroes of my youth, and it brought back memories of the commercial heyday of that tradition.

If I may digress for a moment, I happen to be old enough to remember the Young Rascals in the days when they were wearing knickers and newsboy caps, and if you are too, you will recall that for quite a while back in the Sixties they were the Band Most Likely to Be Imitated by your local cover *artistes* (in that sense, their most obvious musical descendants as we enter the Eighties would have to be the Cars). For about two years there it was all but impossible to enter a bar without finding a four-piece band with a Hammond organ and a maracas-shaking singer grinding out faithful versions of *Good Lovin'* or *You Better Run*, and more white kids learned about soul music from playing the Rascals' version of *Mustang Sally* than ever did from catching Wilson Pickett at the Apollo.

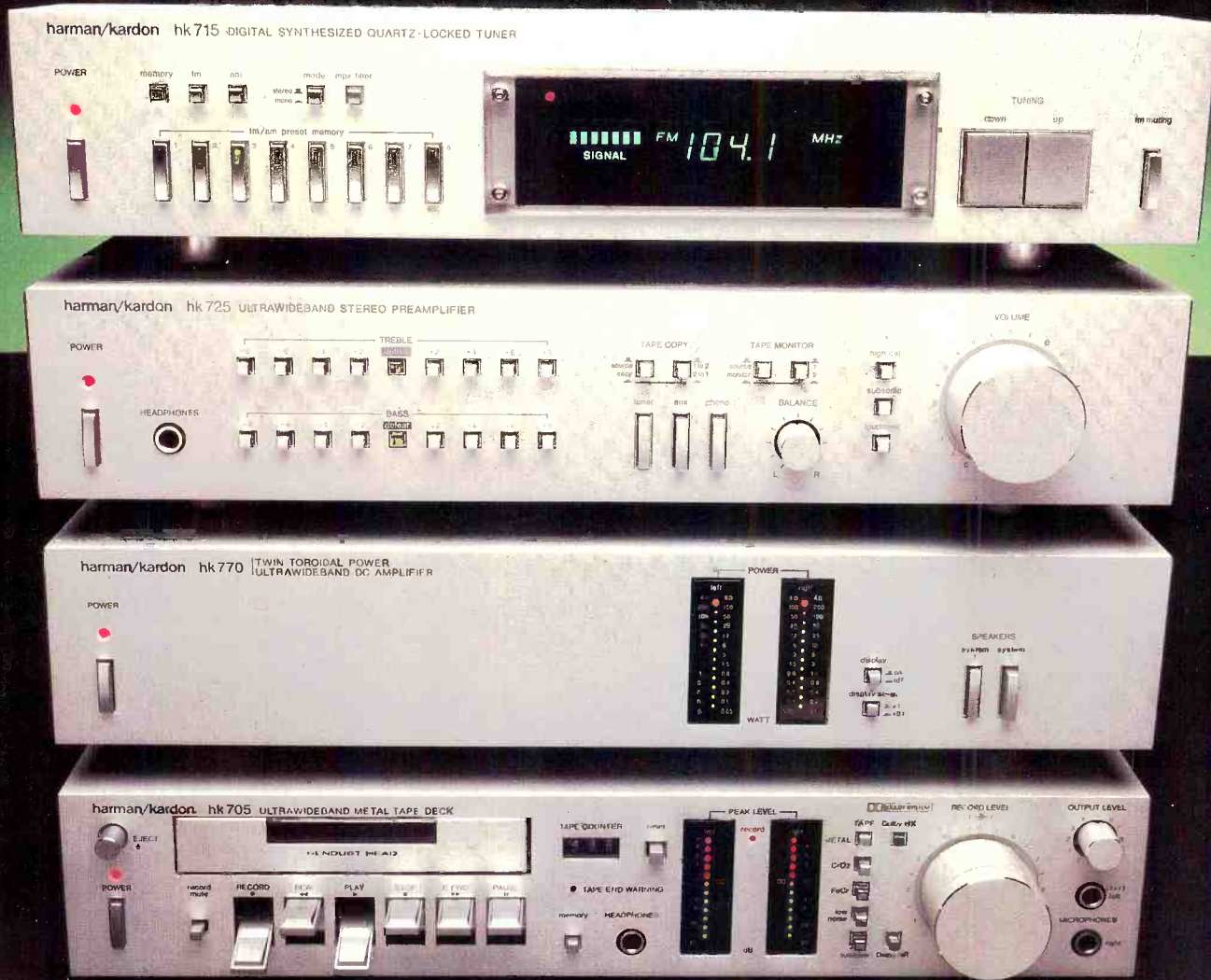
Which was not altogether a bad thing, because at their peak the Rascals were one of the most exciting rock acts ever to tread a stage, and, though the hippies didn't like them particularly, even a cursory listen reveals that their records hold up far better than those of most of the groups you might have seen in *Monterey Pop* or *Woodstock*. The reasons for this are twofold: gut-level street smarts and really exceptional musicianship. You might recall that (*pace* the Blues Project and Paul Butterfield) they were the first American rockers to really flaunt their instrumental skill, and, while

Felix Cavaliere, the singer and keyboard player, was the nominal star (in many ways he was the real Stevie Winwood, for which he has never gotten credit), we knew that the secret genius of the outfit was drummer Dino Danelli.

Danelli was an absolute powerhouse, and in those days there wasn't anybody who could kick a song along like him; in fact, for combining prodigious technique and showmanship, the only other drummer in the world worth speaking of in the same breath was the Who's Keith Moon. So it's not surprising that an entire generation of musicians cut their teeth imitating the Rascals for \$250 a night at teen clubs from Maine to California. Face it: they were great.

IMAGINE my surprise, then, when I caught *Frozen*, a new band featuring Danelli and Gene Cornish (the Rascals' guitarist), and the music they were playing and the look they were affecting was exactly what you'd expect from a typical 1980 cover band sneaking in their own originals between currently fashionable hits: a flawlessly executed pastiche of the Cars (!) with a hint of Devo and Talking Heads thrown in for good measure. Not an r-&-b influence within hearing range, and Dino Danelli playing with such self-effacement as to be almost invisible.

Actually, underneath the usual tick-tock rhythms and lyrics about androids on TV there were some clever little songs in the set. Calculated as it all was, it was certainly a vast improvement over the pop mush of *Fotomaker*, the last group featuring Cornish and Danelli. In fact, I wouldn't be at all surprised if the band has a solid commercial shot, and I wish them luck; on the basis of their past achievements they certainly deserve it. But I can't help wishing they would cudgel some sense into Cavaliere (currently diddling with bland disco and an infatuation with Alice Coltrane's music), go back to doing what they do best, and proceed to make an album of the kind of r-&-b-influenced rock-and-roll that the New Wave has made it possible to play again. Though they don't seem to realize it, the time is certainly ripe. And it *has* to beat being an aging cover band. □



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