

# High Fidelity & audiocraft

*the magazine for music listeners / december / 60 cents*

# PUCCINI

*PUCCINI*

*the man and his music  
by Ronald Eyer*

*PUCCINI*

*on records - a discography  
by David Johnson*

# use this check list when selecting the record changer for your stereo/mono high fidelity system

**RUMBLE, WOW AND FLUTTER**—These mechanical problems, especially pertinent to stereo reproduction, require maximum attention to design and engineering for suppression. Check the new GS-77.

**RECORD CARE**—Dropping record on moving turntable or disc during change cycle causes grinding of surfaces harmful to grooves. Check Turntable Pause feature of new GS-77.

**STYLUS PRESSURE**—Too little causes distortion; too much may damage grooves. Check this feature of the new GS-77: difference in stylus pressure between first and top record in stack does not exceed 0.9 gram.

**ARM RESONANCE**—Produces distortion and record damage. Cause: improper arm design and damping. Check new GS-77 for arm construction and observe acoustically isolated suspension.

**HUM**—Most often caused by ground loops developed between components. Check new GS-77 and note use of four leads to cartridge, separate shields per pair.

**MUTING**—To maintain absolute silence during change cycle both channels must be muted. Check new GS-77 and note automatic double muting switch, plus R/C network for squelching power switch 'clicks.'

**STEREO/MONO OPERATION**—Stereo cartridge output signals are fed to separate amplifier channels. Record changer should provide facility for using both channels simultaneously with mono records. Check new GS-77 Stereo/Mono switch.

These are just a few important criteria to guide you in selecting the best record changer for your stereo and monaural hi-fi system. Some of these features may be found in changers now on the market, but only one changer incorporates them all—the modern Glaser-Steers GS-77. Only \$59.50 less cartridge.

Dept. HF12.  
**GLASER-STEERS CORPORATION**, 155 Oratton Street, Newark, N. J.  
In Canada: Alex L. Clark, Ltd., Toronto, Ont. Export: M. Simons & Sons, Inc., N. Y. C.



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Miller's best, including *Moonlight Serenade*, *In the Mood*, *Tuxedo Junction*, *String of Pearls*, *American Patrol*, *Little Brown Jug*, *St. Louis Blues*, *Pennsylvania 6-5000*, (*I've Got a Gal in*) *Kalamazoo*, *Boulder Bluff*, *Farewell Blues*, *King Porter Stomp*.



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PHOTOGRAPHED BY MORT WELDON

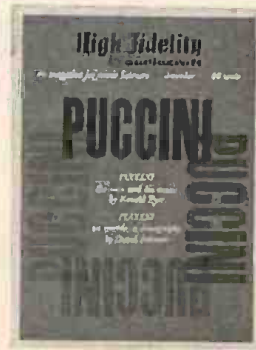


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Address Dept. B128 for a free copy of IT TAKES TWO TO STEREO by Walter O. Stanton.

This month's cover, celebrating the hundredth anniversary of Puccini's birth, was designed by René Sherat.



DECEMBER 1958  
volume 8 number 12

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An Ideal Quality System For Listening To The New High Realism Stereo Sound!

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Lafayette LA-90 28-Watt Stereo Amplifier	72.50
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LA-90



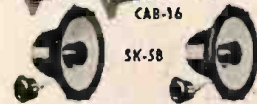
NEW GE GC-7 STEREO CARTRIDGE WITH DIAMOND STYLUS



RC121/II



CAB-16



SK-58

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HF-376 Stereo FM/AM-Phono System ..... Net 237.00  
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## NEW! LAFAYETTE 28-WATT STEREO AMPLIFIER

Superlative Features and Low Cost make it easy to GO STEREO NOW!



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- 28 WATTS MONAURALLY WITH 1 OR 2 SPEAKER SYSTEMS
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A new, versatile stereo control center preamplifier-amplifier whose excellent performance and low cost make it easy to start enjoying stereo sound right now! Power output is 14 watts per channel for stereo, or—by placing the Stereo-Monaural Switch in "Monaural" position and connecting the output transformer taps in parallel—28 watts are available to drive a single speaker system monaurally; or—each individual amplifier output may be connected to a separate speaker system for 28-watts total monaural output with the amplifier used as either an electronic crossover, feeding

low frequencies to 1 speaker system and highs to the other, or to create a pseudo-stereo-phantom effect with monaural program material. Response is 20-20,000 cps; distortion is below 1% at 12 watts; hum is 75 db below full output, either channel; output taps are 8, 16, and 32 ohms 14, 8 or 16 ohms when strapped together; controls include 6-position selector switch (Aux, Ceramic or Crystal, Tuner, LP-RIAA, POP, Tape Head), Balance Channel A, Balance Channel B, Master Level, Treble A and Treble B (dual concentric), Bass A and Bass B (dual concentric), Channel Reverse Switch, Stereo-Monaural Switch, Tape Monitor Switch, Speaker Phasing Switch. Inputs include dual Tuner, Crystal/Ceramic, Mag. Phono, Tape Head, Tape Monitor Output. Tubes are 4-12AX7, 4-EL84, 2-EZ80 Rectifiers. Size is 4-11/16" h x 14-9/16" w x 9-1/4" d. Shpg. wt., 22 lbs.

LAFAYETTE LA-90 Stereo Amplifier ..... Net 72.50

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- FM-AM STEREO RECEPTION
- FM OR AM MONAURAL RECEPTION
- FM MULTIPLEX RECEPTION (REQUIRES DECODER)
- FOR SIMULTANEOUS FM & AM LISTENING IN DIFFERENT ROOMS
- 3 MICROVOLTS FM SENSITIVITY
- ARMSTRONG FM CIRCUIT
- AUTOMATIC FREQUENCY CONTROL

An excellent unit with many outstanding features whose low cost and high degree of flexibility combine to make it practicable to enjoy stereo FM/AM broadcasts NOW without fear of obsolescence. The Lafayette LT-99 Stereo Tuner may be used for standard AM or FM (monaural) or for FM-AM stereo listening. Or, you can use it as a 2-channel receiver and feed FM to one room and AM to another at the same time. Outputs are provided for stereo or monaural tape recording directly off the air. Styling is modern and designed to please the style-conscious modern young homemaker.

Circuitry is of the Armstrong FM type, with limiter and discriminator; sensitivity is 3 microvolts (on FM) for 20 db quieting, 75 microvolts loop-sensitivity on AM; frequency response is, for FM, 20-20,000 cps  $\pm$  1 db, and for AM 20-5,000 cps  $\pm$  2 db; output voltages are: FM—2 1/2 volts for 100% modulation, AM—1 volt average. Output jacks include AM-FM Monaural, AM Stereo, AM Tape Recording, FM Tape/Multiplex. Controls include Stereo-Monaural switch, Selector Switch (AM, FM-AFC, FM, Off), AM Tuning, FM Tuning, Multiplex-Tape switch. Built-in FM and AM antennas. Tubes are 6BE6, 2-6BA6, 6U8, 12AT7, 6AU6, 6AL5; diode AM detector, selenium rectifier. For 105-120 volts, 50/60 cps AC. Size 8-1/2" d x 13-5/16" w x 4-1/4" h. Shpg. wt., 16 1/2 lbs.

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## AUTHORitatively Speaking

Ronald Eyer, whose portrait of Puccini leads off this issue—on page 34, went to the source for his material, and sent us a postcard picture of Puccini's study at Torre del Lago to prove it. Eyer is editor of *Musical America*, as everyone knows, and has written for nearly all other musical publications there are. He was inveigled into this field of endeavor, incidentally, by the late H. L. Mencken and Senator Arthur Vandenberg, than whom one could hardly find more illustrious inveiglers. HIGH FIDELITY readers will remember him for a brisk essay on humor in music called "The Musical Funny-bone."

C. J. LeBel initiates our new AUDIOCRAFT section (see page 130) with a knowing article on the future of tape as a home-music medium. He wrote it, incidentally, in a summer hotel in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, where he repairs each year for a fortnight in order to hear no music at all, live or reproduced, except for a few unavoidable bird songs.

As will be evident from Jim Cost's horrifying article, "Have Casket, Need Corpse"—which you can shudder over on page 43—he spends a great deal of time constructing loudspeaker enclosures, which he then surreptitiously disposes of. (Who doesn't?) His other occupations include teaching physics at a high school in Enfield, Alabama, driving (and, he says, nursing) a Volkswagen, leading a Great Books discussion group, reading Melville, and playing music, whereat he has been an amateur practitioner for ten years. As to what instrument he plays, apart from the phonograph, deponent saith not.

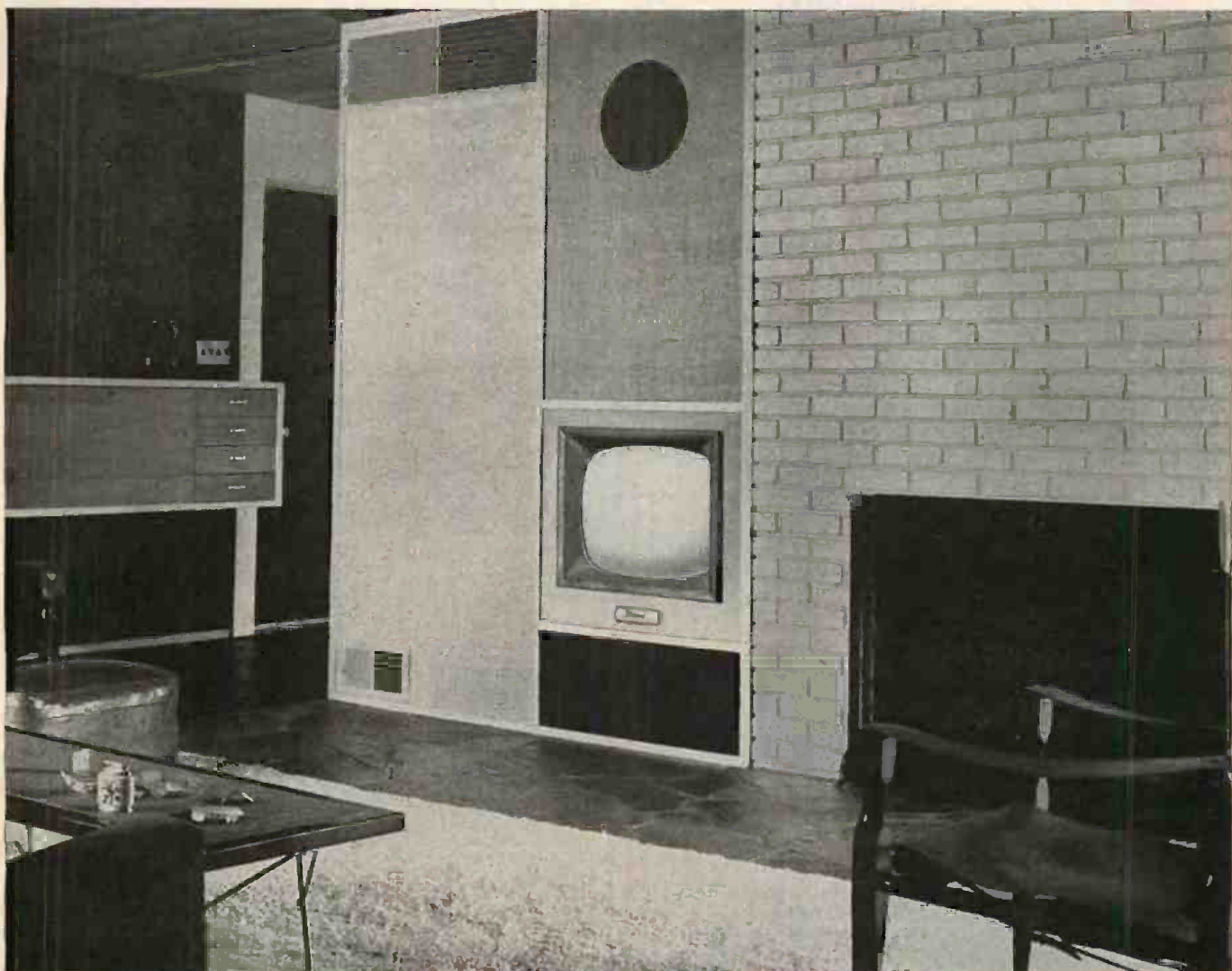
John S. Wilson is well known by name, of course, to all our readers with any interest in jazz. He is also something of a wit: he points out that he had the grace to listen to jazz for twenty years before venturing to write about it, and that even after this he remains (as does Louis Armstrong) a Guy Lombardo fan. His contribution to this issue: "Twenty Years in a Jumping Groove," page 40.

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**F**LEETWOOD Custom Television is the only system built and built-in to complement your home high fidelity sound system!

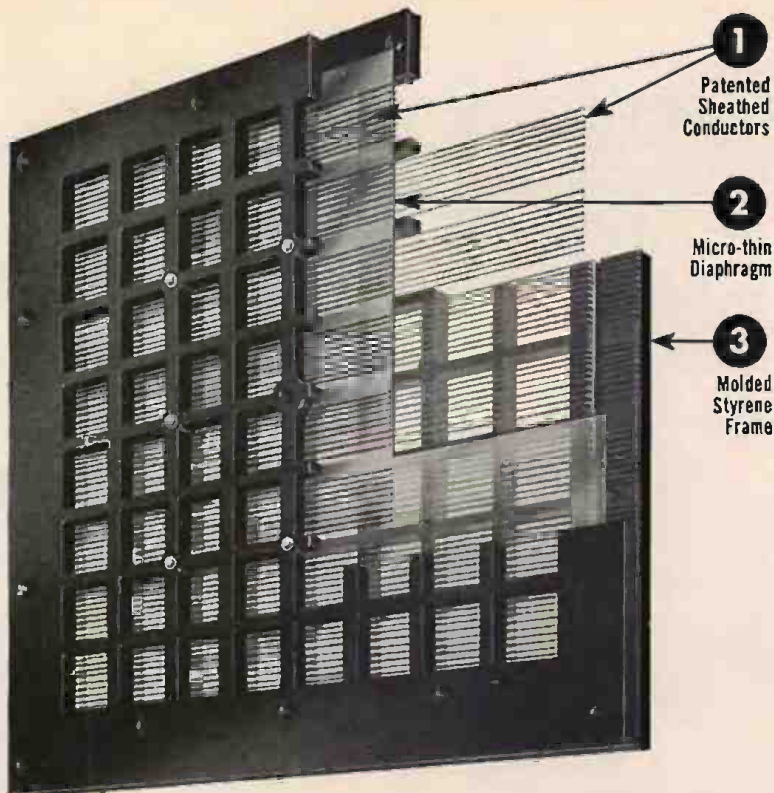
High and low impedance audio outputs furnish distortion-free sound . . . Fleetwood's fully electronic remote control provides not just channel selection and volume control — but contrast, brightness, volume, channel selection, fine tuning and the exclusive Definition Control that tailors picture texture to individual taste. (Non-remote Fleetwoods also available.)

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**Fleetwood<sup>®</sup>** CUSTOM TELEVISION      Crafted by CONRAC, INC.



### Woman's Place?

SIR:

I am all in favor of girls, but we have to find ways and means to educate them in the ground rules of high fidelity. It is bad enough that nature has endowed them with such sensitive ears that they resent any reasonable volume in our music systems. The reason for this letter, however, is their habit of having their pictures taken draping themselves gracefully over a loudspeaker.

Somebody should tell them they are probably getting too close to the speaker. At least that is the impression created by so many advertising agencies. Look at page 1 of your October issue. A high-class lady caresses a Jensen speaker which, admittedly, is a nice piece of furniture but cannot give the lady any enjoyment unless she gets some distance away from it.

Between pages 16 and 17 a classy minx associates intimately with an RRL speaker. On page 38 two members of a high-fidelity family are practically crawling into a Legato speaker. On page 157 there is another beauty, rubbing shoulders with an Oxford speaker system. And on page 164 a provocative girl in a brief nightgown has gotten out of bed to embrace an X-100 speaker.

May I suggest to these misguided ladies that, if they feel like caressing something, they sit far away from the speaker, with a more animate object?

John J. Stern, M.D.  
Utica, N. Y.

### America's Musical Heritage

SIR:

My question is very simple: what has happened to American music other than the contemporary or near contemporary?

Not so many years ago, the American contemporary had almost no chance of having his work recorded. That has all changed, and many laudable efforts are made in his behalf. While these may be only a fraction of what is necessary, everyone will agree

Continued on page 9

## UNMATCHED MUSICAL CLARITY

delicately balanced by 176 "strings"

Each radiating element of JansZen Electrostatic Speakers contains 176 push-pull sheathed conductors. This dual array of "strings" is the most durable and efficient ever patented. Without any chance of electronic breakdown, it provides uniform opposing forces to move the sensitive diaphragm with the same amplitude and in the same phase over its entire area. Like a true piston, the diaphragm behaves as if it had neither stiffness nor mass—in short, as if it were not there at all. This enables the JansZen to precisely recreate the acoustic pressures recorded by the microphone without unnatural coloration.

### Model 65 Electrostatic Mid/High Range Speaker

Using two of the JansZen Electrostatic elements with a built-in high-pass filter, this remarkable new speaker combines all of the advantages of the model 130 but with 60° dispersion. Gives absolutely clean response to 30,000 cycles. \$86—\$91.50 depending on finish. Slightly higher in West.

**NEW!**



### Model 130 Electrostatic Mid/High Range Speaker

For those who insist on the most gracious sound attainable, only this original JansZen model will suffice. Excellent for multiple woofer systems. Contains four Electrostatic elements individually tested for distortion and matched within 1 db for output. Room-filling 120° dispersion to 30,000 cycles. \$161—\$188 depending on finish. Slightly higher in West.



# JansZen\*

\*including designs by Arthur A. Janszen  
made exclusively by NESHAMINY ELECTRONIC CORP., Neshaminy, Pa.  
Export Div., 25 Warren St., New York 7, N. Y. Cable: Simontrice, N. Y.



1955

The recording tape industry introduces the new "double play" tapes, made on 1/2-mil Mylar® polyester film base, making available twice the normal length of tape on any given reel size and effectively doubling the normal playing time. *Problem:* The new tape is "twice as long," to be sure, but quite fragile, requiring special care in handling.

1957

The recording tape industry introduces the new "tensitized" or "fortified" double play tapes, now made on a special type of reinforced 1/2-mil Mylar® base that is twice as resistant to stretching and breaking as in the 1955 kind. *Problem:* The new tape is indeed "twice as long and twice as strong" now (just as strong as normal tape, in fact), but the price is astronomical.

1958

Beginning November 1, 1958, all **irish** "Double Play" recording tape on the market will be of the reinforced, 1957 kind — *but* at the moderate price of the older, 1955 kind. *End of Problem:* This latest **irish** "Double Play" tape has the length (2400 feet on a standard 7-inch reel), it has the strength (6 lbs. tensile force) — and you can afford it!

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**recording tapes**

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# why a Rondine turntable is a must for stereo!

"A problem that often shows up on conversions from monaural to stereo systems is that of turntable rumble. Borderline turntable, meaning those which are acceptable in a monaural system, may prove to have too much rumble for use in a stereo set-up. The reason for this is that stereo utilizes both vertical and lateral groove etchings (unlike monaural recording which uses only the lateral etching). Thus, a stereo cartridge must respond to both motions and will respond to rumble both laterally and vertically... This problem seems to be most severe with record changers. Good turntables are more apt to be free of excessive vertical rumble."

— Reprinted from THE AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE

**GEORGE NELSON**, one of America's great industrial designers, created the new fashion-keyed Rondines.

The result: you can point out to the lady of the house that Rondine is not only the finest performer, but also the most beautiful!

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The new Rek-O-Kut hysteresis synchronous motor has an extremely small external stray field—a unique advantage where magnetic recording heads are in the vicinity of the motor. High efficiency and exclusive fan shape rotor surface insure a cooler running motor. Extremely accurate dynamic balancing for each motor, minimum stray field in the air gap and use of large surface sinter-metal bearings assure smoother, quieter operation year after year.

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Provide instant mounting... fasten with single nut. Correct mounting position is pre-set on Rondine deckplates.

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## LETTERS

Continued from page 6

that his opportunities have increased many fold. . . . But from about 1850 on, there were hundreds of United States citizens who wrote serious music. One realizes that this country did not have the heritage and tradition of European countries and one can understand that our writers could not be favorably compared to the best European composers; but within our own country, there must have been a few who wrote music equal to some lower grade Liszt, some Liadov, or Smetana. I realize that there is some MacDowell, a Chadwick item, and one or two others on records, but the proportion is so far off as to make it appear that either the present generation had no native forebears or that we are ashamed to acknowledge that we wrote anything less than "modern" music.

To restate my question: Is American music written before 1915 so completely dull that no one is willing to listen to it? . . .

Leslie Robert Maze  
Fond du Lac, Wis.

Mr. Maze might be interested in High Fidelity's discography, "Americans on Microgroove," Part I published in July 1956.—Ed.

### An Appeal for Texts

Sir:

My congratulations to Mr. David Johnson for taking occasion, in the first paragraph of his August review of *Goethe Songs*, with Irmgard Seefried as soloist (Decca DL 9974), to deplore the inexcusable failure of Decca to provide the texts of the songs. Such an omission is, as your reviewer points out, especially bizarre in a recording which gets its unity from the identity of the poet, though it is of course a very common malpractice.

May I urge all your reviewers, especially of songs (as distinct from other vocal music like opera selections), to mention regularly in their reviews whether or not texts have been provided. It seems to me this will have very salutary effects on the companies concerned. Decca, incidentally, has been consistently bad in this respect, which is especially painful in view of the superb Lieder singers on their list and the often excellent recordings made by them. Other companies have been consistently good with texts, notably Westminster and Vanguard. Decca should take a leaf from the

Continued on next page

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**TD-134 \$60.00 net**



**TD-184 \$75.00 net**

Here's good news for budget-minded hi-fi aficionados. These two new Thorens turntables (with integral tone arm) give you the same basic drive mechanism you get in the ultra-precise TD-124 transcription turntable, but they're streamlined for economy. See the new TD-184 and TD-134 at your authorized Thorens hi-fi dealer's today.

**TD-134 Manual Player.** 4 speeds. It has the same precision-machined, adjustable-speed drive as the Thorens TD-124 transcription turntable for minimum wow, flutter and rumble. Turntable floats on nylon bearings. Integral tone arm equals tracking performance of separate arms costing as much as half the price of this entire unit. Plug in adapter for standard stereo or monaural cartridges. 15" x 12", extends 2½" below panel, 3" above.

**TD-184.** Same as TD-134 with semi-automatic operation: One dialing motion selects 7", 10" or 12" record size, starts motor. Arm literally floats down into first record groove on air; adjustable piston controls lowering speed. Absolutely no connection between arm and table during playing. Featherweight position trip shuts off player at end of record, idler disengages and arm lifts. Manual reject control permits shut-off, interruption or manual operation.



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HI-FI COMPONENTS • LIGHTERS  
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**LETTERS**

*Continued from preceding page*

Archive series of Deutsche Grammophon, which they distribute in this country.

There are many like myself who can read one or more of the relevant European languages (mostly German, French, Italian) but who do not have a good enough aural comprehension of them to recognize the words directly from the singing. After all, even English is often hard to follow in song. Our enjoyment of songs, especially German Lieder, is considerably enhanced by our being able to read as we listen. And for the sake of the texts we would be glad to dispense with the usual inane "program notes" on the backs of the record envelopes.

My own firm practice is to refuse to buy any Lieder recordings without texts, however much I may like the songs and the singing—not because I want to be stuffy about it but because I don't like to be tantalized. For Decca's information, this has caused me to pass up a number of their records, especially the recent Fischer-Dieskau releases, which I otherwise would certainly have bought.

*Bernard Brodie*  
Pacific Palisades, Calif.

**Berlioz by Beecham**

Sir:  
Within a period of a few months there have appeared on the market two sets of stereophonic recordings of Berlioz's *Requiem*, the third and fourth recorded performances of this great work. However, in my opinion, neither of these two versions is anywhere near perfection. Scherchen's performance, of course, is the better of the two; but the choir in this recording becomes instrumental, and Dr. Scherchen's reading of the score is sometimes quite liberal.

Another of Berlioz's great pieces, *Te Deum*, has been recorded only once—by Sir Thomas Beecham—and that recording is nearly perfect. I sincerely believe that only Sir Thomas has clear understanding of Berlioz's idea and has the power and ability to make a best recording. I do hope that he will find time to record Berlioz's *Requiem*. Who will be able to do it after him?

*James C. Chang*  
Los Angeles, Calif.

From EMI we learn that the idea of a Berlioz *Requiem* recording has been broached to Sir Thomas. The gentleman, it appears, is interested, but no definite date for the recording has yet been set.

—Ed.

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Monaural Integrated Amplifiers:  
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Over 1 MILLION EICO instruments in use throughout the world.

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**MONAURAL PREAMPLIFIERS (stack 2 for Stereo)**  
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**HF32:** 30-Watt Integrated Amplifier. Kit \$57.95. Wired \$89.95. Both include cover.

**HF20:** 20-Watt Integrated Amplifier. "Well-engineered" — Stocklin, RADIO TV NEWS. Kit \$49.95. Wired \$79.95. Cover E-1 \$4.50.

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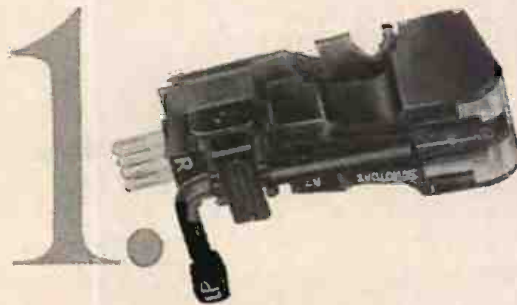
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Start with Sonotone 8T ceramic cartridge to **\$14<sup>50</sup>** play both stereo and regular discs, costs only

- Plays all 4 speeds—does *not* obsolete your present equipment!
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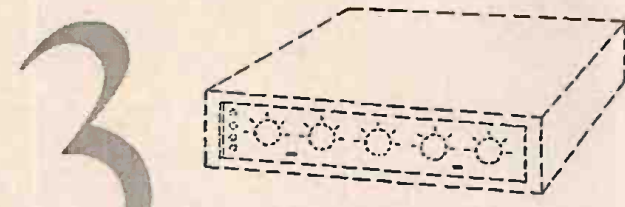


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- Brilliant reproduction of full fidelity spectrum from 55 to 15,000 cycles!
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 Flux Density . . . . . 12,000 gauss  
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**New 8-inch speaker.**



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# Sonotone

Electronic Applications Division, Dept. CH-128

**ELMSFORD, NEW YORK**



## Le Mot Juste

We read from time to time of the remarkable feats performed by giant electronic brains such as Univac. Not only are their memories far superior to those of just plain human beings, but some are now able to exercise a considerable degree of judgment.

The wielder of the pen—or perhaps, in these modern days, we should translate this to pounder of the typewriter—has so far received little help from Univac and his brethren. But word recently received from the Alto Scientific Company in California has given us hope. They have developed a portable squib tester. We are not familiar with the place of the squib in science, but in the pseudoliterary world inhabited by writers of such columns as "Noted With Interest," a squib has a definite literary significance. Though we don't dare hope our prose is deathless, sometimes we fondly think that some of these NWIt items may at least qualify as squibs.

Now, at last, we shall find out. Furthermore, with Alto Scientific's new instrument we apparently will be able to determine the degree of squibness . . . or something.

We would appreciate it if readers would let us know (a) what a non-literary squib is, and (b) how strongly they feel we should invest in a portable squib tester.

## Revamped TITH

After many years of going it alone, the "Tested in the Home" department is now reinforced and reinvigorated by the inclusion of the Audiolab Test Reports. These, as readers of AUDIOCRAFT Magazine have known, constitute the modern version of the famous Audio League's Reports. They are prepared by the same people, with even more scrupulous care, and with complete freedom from the fear of a blue pencil. Once a manufacturer submits a piece of his equipment to Messrs. Hirsch and Houck for their examination, the report on the equipment will be published.

Continued on page 14

HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE

**HEAR THE MUSIC ITSELF!**

To the listener, the unmatched specifications of the X-101 are most evident in the complete, *self-effacement* of this unit from the program it is reproducing. When you listen to the X-101, you hear the music **INTACT**— *the music ITSELF!*

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Photo from *Hi-Fi Music at Home* (March, 1958)

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Where natural, musical quality is required, without pseudo-hi-fi exaggerations, AR-2 speaker systems are a logical choice. They are used in recording studios, in broadcast stations, and in the homes of leading figures of the musical world—including Louis Armstrong above, and John Hammond, director of the Newport Jazz Festival.

AR speaker systems, because of their patented acoustic suspension design, must use small cabinets. These small enclosures mean an advance rather than a compromise in quality, particularly of the bass range.

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# AR-2

ACOUSTIC RESEARCH, INC. 24 Thorndike St., Cambridge 41, Mass.

## NOTED WITH INTEREST

*Continued from page 12*

In the "Tested in the Home" section heretofore we have permitted manufacturers to cancel the report or to defer it pending changes in his equipment. This practice grew up over the years and was based partly on our own feeling of immaturity in the testing business, and partly on the somewhat ambiguous position in which staff-written articles are sometimes regarded. Now, however, we feel we have grown up. We have worked with enough equipment over the years to have a fairly good idea of what high-fidelity equipment should be, and which equipment is poor or only so-so for good reason and which is just poor for no reason. We are, therefore, changing the TITH policy so that it agrees with that of the Audiolab Reports. This may reduce the number of TITH reports but it will most certainly increase their value to readers.

### Standards

One of the reasons that we, and other organizations in the field, can take a more stringent attitude toward high-fidelity equipment is that gradually the industry is moving toward standards of measurement. The Audiolab Reports, mentioned above, use for tests on FM tuners those recommended by the standards committee of the Institute of High Fidelity Manufacturers.

These standards are still in the recommendation stage but steady progress is being made. The committee presented a final draft to the membership of the Institute, and it seems very likely that these standards will be adopted. If—and this may be a very big if—agreement can be reached by the Institute of Radio Engineers, The Audio Engineering Society, and the Electronic Industries Association, as well as by the IHFM, then the standards will be presented to the American Standards Association for acceptance as an official standard. This would be an enormous step forward. But meantime, we all have something more or less concrete to work with. Readers should note that these are not standards of performance but rather standards of measurement. Obviously, standards of measurement must be agreed upon before standards of performance can be considered.

### Multiplex

At time of writing—mid-October—the multiplex situation had not been resolved. There is little doubt that mul-

*Continued on page 18*

HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE



**MOST SENSITIVE TUNERS BY FISHER**

**MOST SELECTIVE MOST FLEXIBLE**



Model 101-R  
FM-AM Tuner

**STEREOPHONIC HIGH FIDELITY**

**Most sensitive.** THE FISHER Gold Cascade tuners are at the theoretical limits of sensitivity—only 0.75 microvolts needed for fine reception.

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**Most flexible.** THE FISHER TUNERS, both stereophonic and monophonic, boast the greatest number of advanced features and are the first choice for every high fidelity application.

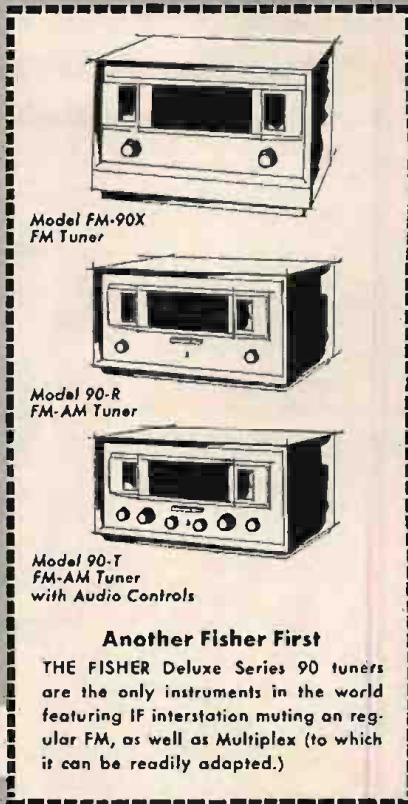
**THE FISHER**

*Plug-in conversion, when desired,  
for Multiplex stereo reception!*

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Model 90-R  
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and preamplifiers with the  
infinitesimal harmonic distortion  
of 0.1% at full rated power!*

This Leak development now raises stereophonic reproduction to the same level of quality as the finest monaural sound. This means more realistic, satisfying music on both channels... enjoyed without fatigue!

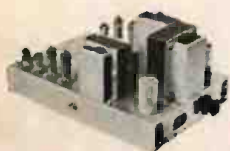
**IF YOU ALREADY OWN  
A LEAK AMPLIFIER COMBINATION  
PLEASE NOTE ESPECIALLY:**

**1** You will need the new Leak Stereo Preamplifier. This may be used either with one of the new Leak Stereo Amplifiers, or, just as well, by simply adding another Leak monaural amplifier to the one you already have. But, in either case, the stereo preamplifier is required.

**2** The new "Point One Stereo" Preamplifier has all the controls and inputs required for stereo reproduction. You can play stereo, stereo reverse, left channel only, right channel only, and a monaural. There are ganged bass, treble and volume controls, rumble filter; and...a balance control adjusts for any differences in sensitivity between loudspeakers.

**3** In order to keep your investment in stereo as reasonable as possible, Leak has inaugurated the industry's first manufacturer-sponsored trade-in program:

Regardless of model, your Leak monaural preamplifier is worth \$30.00 toward any Leak stereo preamplifier/amplifier combination! Bring your old preamp with you when you come for a demonstration. We have made arrangements so that any Leak dealer will be pleased to give you this allowance. This trade-in program is now in effect, and available to you immediately when you decide to convert to stereo.



**STEREO 20 AMPLIFIER**  
12 watts each channel  
\$149.00



**STEREO 50 AMPLIFIER**  
25 Watts each channel  
\$189.00



**STEREO "POINT ONE"  
PREAMPLIFIER**

for use with either of the two Stereo Amplifiers or two Leak Monaural Amplifiers.  
\$109.50

BRITISH INDUSTRIES CORP., PORT WASHINGTON, N. Y.

**IF YOU DO NOT OWN A  
LEAK AMPLIFIER  
PLEASE NOTE ESPECIALLY:**

**1** In 1945, England's Harold Leak presented the world's first amplifier with a 0.1% (1/10 of 1%) distortion content. This great achievement explains the "Point One" trademark and Leak's world-wide professional acceptance. Now, it is important to realize that among stereo amplifiers, *only* the Leak can reproduce music with the natural sound which results when distortion is kept to such a minimal figure at full rated power.

**2** Though moderately priced, Leak Stereo Amplifiers provide the benefits of professional components and workmanship in home equipment. Study the photograph. Generally, such circuit-board construction is found only in expensive scientific apparatus... not in high fidelity home equipment.

Furthermore, the components built into the Leak triple-loop negative feedback circuit are all used far below their maximum ratings, insuring great stability and very long life.

**3** Leak durability is traditional...tubes may wear out but the Leak Amplifier itself simply will not! Leak stereo units are covered by the industry's longest guarantee...an unconditional five year guarantee on all parts except tubes. Leak is a permanent investment, and the music it reproduces will sound as well many years from today as it does when the amplifier is new.

**WHERE TO SEE AND HEAR  
A LEAK STEREO AMPLIFIER**

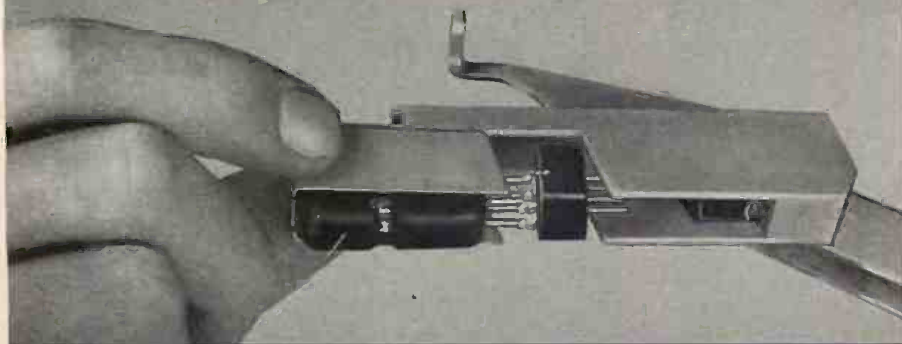
The selection of Leak dealers is considered a matter of great importance. The very first requirements are an established reputation for selling quality high fidelity components and first class demonstration facilities. Mail the coupon for list of Leak dealers and new illustrated Leak Comparator Guide.

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Exclusive GRAY slide-clip feature interchanges 2-wire monaural, 3 or 4 wire stereo cartridges easily, without rewiring!



**all-new GRAY STEREO TONE ARM**  
Model 212-SP, 34.00. Model 216-SP, 36.50

Your cartridge will sound best in a GRAY tone arm. Dual viscous damping absorbs noise and vibration on widely separated vertical and lateral pivots, thus reducing tone arm resonance. Other features include static balance, stylus pressure control, slide-clip for quick cartridge switching, multiple wiring for monaural *and* stereo applications, simple installation, and overall precise metallurgy to insure freedom from distortion and life-long operation without wear. Get the "easy feel" and superior performance of a GRAY tone arm now at fine High Fidelity showrooms everywhere.

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 • Owners of GRAY 212 and 216  
 • tone arms may switch easily  
 • to SP series with new GRAY  
 • STEREO CONVERSION KIT  
 • Only 3.95.  
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 write to:

**GRAY** High Fidelity Division

DEPT. H • 16 ARBOR STREET, HARTFORD 1, CONN.  
 See page 109 for new GRAY record player.

**NOTED WITH INTEREST**

*Continued from page 14*

tiple FM broadcasts will become a primary medium for stereo broadcasting. But it is not certain at this time which method of multiplexing will be adopted by the Federal Communications Commission.

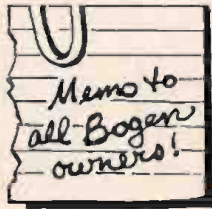
To review this as briefly as possible: when the FCC set up channels for FM broadcasting, each station was assigned a channel which we might call very, very wide. As it turned out, absolutely adequate high-fidelity broadcasting could be achieved on a channel that had to be only very wide. That left in effect a second very wide channel available to the FM station.

Since most FM stations have been having a rough time making ends meet, the stations were quick to use the first very wide channel for their public service broadcasting and many went into storecasting and other services with the second very wide channel. This was achieved by multiplexing, which means the transmission of more than one signal on a given assigned channel. Engineers then divided the second very wide channel into two halves so that a station could have a very wide channel for broadcasting and a wide channel for storecasting plus a third channel available for miscellaneous applications. For example, one radio network operates a series of slave transmitters—untouched by human hands—by means of supersonic signals which are transmitted over this third channel. The first and principal wide channel in this network is used to relay programs from WQXR in New York City; the second channel is used by many of the stations for storecasting and the third channel for the supersonic operational signaling.

The multiplex confusion arises out of the fact that if the first system discussed—a very wide channel plus a very wide channel—is used with the second system—a very wide channel plus two narrow channels—both narrow channels will be heard. Most of the discussion centers on the question of whether or not the narrow channel in the three-channel arrangement is adequate for high-fidelity transmissions.

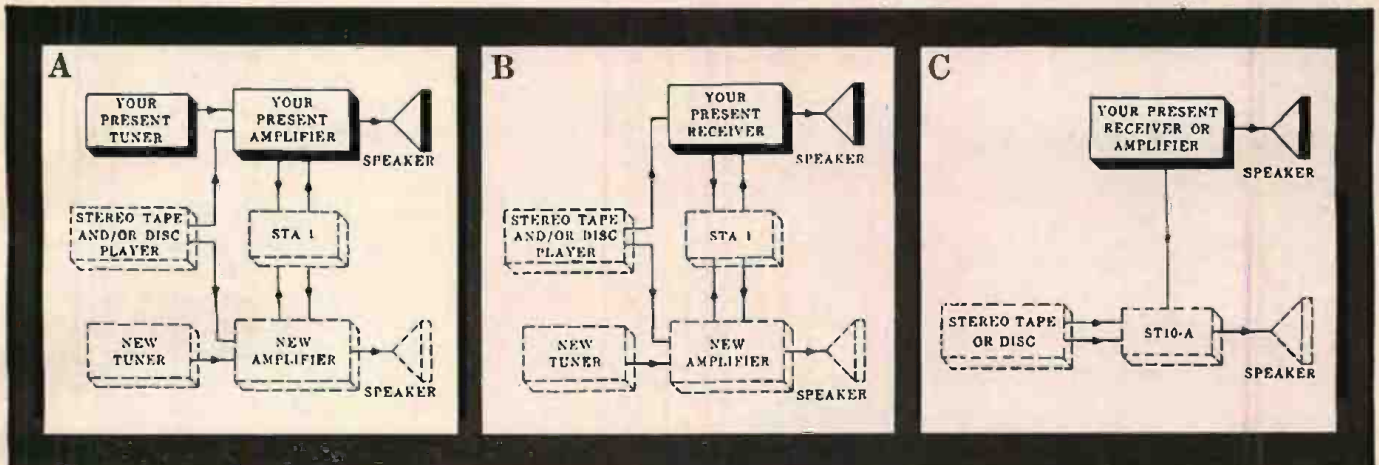
Until the FCC settles this question, we feel readers would do well to go into multiplex adapters very slowly. Some stations are broadcasting stereo by means of multiplex and certainly some readers will want to invest the few dollars necessary to hear what these stations are doing. But you may have to scrap your adapter if the FCC votes the other way . . . whichever way that may be. **CHARLES FOWLER**

# YOU CAN CONVERT TO STEREO THE RIGHT WAY ... RIGHT NOW!



## Even 18-year-old Bogen systems ADAPT EASILY WITH NEW SINGLE-KNOB VOLUME CONTROL

There's stereo in your future if you own a Bogen system (or plan to buy one). In fact, stereo conversion can be made right now on any Bogen high-fidelity system made since 1940! *Not just an added second channel*, but completely integrated, balanced-sound stereo. You pre-set tone and volume controls only once, from then on regulate volume of both channels simultaneously from a single volume control. That's the right way to convert to stereo. Here's how:



**STA1 STEREO ADAPTER** offers combined volume control plus a control for balancing output of both speaker systems; it permits channel inversion and provides for monaural listening as well. Price: only \$13.50\*\*

**ST10-A STEREO ADAPTER-AMPLIFIER** and a second speaker system give you an economical single-control stereo system. This superb new adapter-amplifier combines two-channel preamplifier and 10-watt amplifier, and of course it has simultaneous volume control. Accommodates stereo tape or the new stereo discs. Price: just \$52.50 (with case as shown, \$59.50)\*\*

\*Series B or later \*\*Slightly higher in the West

- A.** You can convert to single volume control and easily balance your system with the Bogen STA1 Stereo Adapter if you own any of these Bogen or Challenger high-fidelity amplifiers: AC10\*, DB10, DB114, DB125, DB130, PR100, PR100A, PX10, PX15. Simply add the STA1, your choice of speaker and a DB130, DB125, DB114 or AC10\*.
- B.** If you own either the Bogen RB115\* or the Bogen RB140, you can convert with the Bogen STA1 Stereo Adapter and the necessary second-channel components, including a DB130, DB125, DB114, or AC10\* amplifier.
- C.** If you own any Bogen or Challenger high-fidelity amplifier manufactured since 1940 or a Bogen high-fidelity receiver, you can convert with the Bogen ST10-A Stereo Adapter-Amplifier and a second speaker system.

**EASY AM-FM STEREO CONVERSION:** To receive stereo broadcasts from simultaneous AM-FM transmission with your present tuner, add the following Bogen tuners: with any AM tuner, the new Bogen FM51; with any FM tuner, the new Bogen AM91. With any Bogen AM-FM tuner or receiver, add either the AM91 or FM-51.

Your Bogen dealer is ready now with complete information on how to convert your system to stereo. See him today!

**Bogen**  
HIGH FIDELITY  
...because it sounds better

David Bogen Co., P.O. Box 500, Paramus, New Jersey • A Division of The Stegler Corporation

Manufacturers of High-Fidelity Components, Public Address Equipment and Intercommunication Systems.

if  
it's  
Fairchild,  
it's worth  
the  
difference

new  
**FAIRCHILD**  
stereo  
cartridge  
model  
232



The owner of a Fairchild Stereo Cartridge takes justifiable pride in its possession, for it reflects in tangible form a quarter century's consistent policy of building up to a high quality standard—cost remaining a secondary consideration.

He is sure that the new Model 232 Stereo Cartridge is an investment in the finest record reproduction—both stereo and monaural. He knows that its superb performance is the natural result of advanced engineering—the very same engineering which produced the first Stereo cartridge ever demonstrated to the public (December 1957). Its phenomenal tracking ability, absence of distortion, and gentle treatment of records, are taken for granted by the Fairchild owner, although they are often a revelation to those accustomed to ordinary cartridge performance. Its transparent, shimmering sound quality, so faithful to the original, as well as its full range channel separation, are further evidence of Fairchild's engineering leadership.

Therefore, he is not surprised to learn that many major recording studios are using Fairchild cartridges to test the quality of Stereo and other high fidelity recordings. His pride of ownership, in short, stems from the added satisfaction which only a quality product can provide, and from his secure knowledge that the name Fairchild is synonymous with integrity of manufacture. Price of this superbly engineered cartridge... \$49.50.

Hear the Stereo 232 at your hi-fi dealer. Write for booklet K-1, the complete Stereo Disc Story.

**FAIRCHILD RECORDING EQUIPMENT COMPANY** 10-40 45th Ave., L. I. C. 1, N. Y.

Fairchild "Sound of Quality" Components include:  
cartridges, arms, turntables, pre-amplifiers and amplifiers.

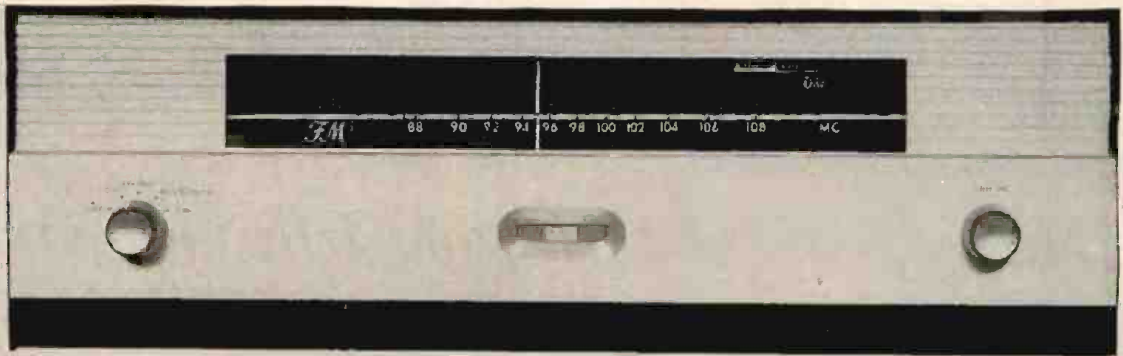


Books in Review

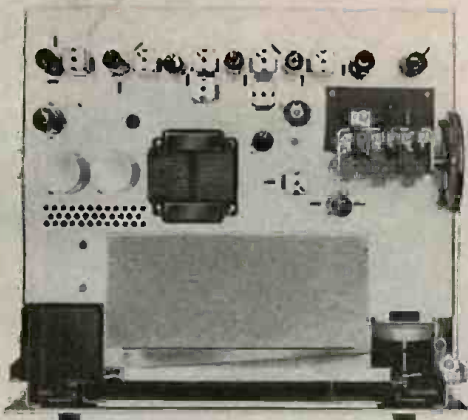
*Bizet and His World*. Some years ago, when Mina Curtiss was doing research for her translation of Proust's correspondence, she uncovered a fabulous cache of holograph letters from and to Bizet and his father-in-law Halévy which had never before been seen by anyone other than the correspondents themselves and their heirs. "The experience," she writes in the preface to the present work, "was breathtaking and disturbing to someone who, having in childhood been severely punished for delving into a trunkful of her parents' love letters, has retained the notion that the clue to the creative process, the secret of life, lies in letters." And, fired by this discovery, she began a long "pursuit of the truth about Bizet." Readers of this journal were given a taste of the excitement of that pursuit, in the excerpt from the book which appeared in these pages last September. Now, we are enabled to share in the whole breathtaking and revelatory experience, for we are given here not only the first fully documented biography of Bizet himself (an infinitely more complex personality than even the most fervent devotees of *Carmen* have ever dreamed), but an incomparably vivid panorama of his turbulent era and its luminaries—among them, in the domains of music alone, Berlioz, Wagner, Rossini, Halévy, Gounod, Offenbach, Massenet, and many others. Mrs. Curtiss makes no attempt to reevaluate these men and their achievements: she is content to portray them in their own words and those of their contemporaries. But in that self-portrayal they take on the vitality which animated the creation of the masterpieces we now know so much better than the men who achieved them. *Bizet and His World* is at once a monument of modern scholarship and the most exciting of historical "novels." And to make it wholly irresistible, it has been designed, printed, illustrated, annotated, and indexed with a distinction that matches its author's own research and writing (Knopf, \$7.50).

*Schubert: Memoirs by His Friends*, collected and edited by Otto Erich Deutsch, evokes the milieu—incalculably remote from us today—of the little group of dilettantes who gathered together in "Schubertiads" to sing and dance to the music of an obscure Viennese schoolmaster. Yet reading these painstakingly unearthed documents

Continued on page 24



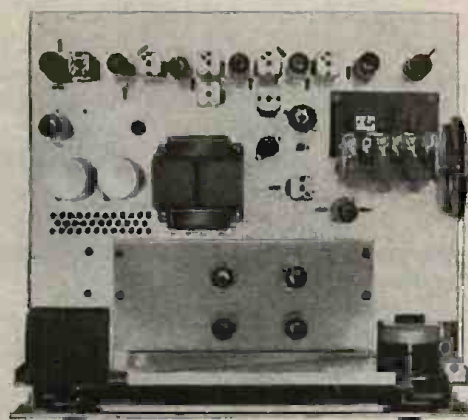
## today's ..... high fidelity tuner has its future built in! .....



Top view of T250 showing provision for multiplex adapter (MA250)



MA250, Plug-in multiplex adapter



Top view of T250 with MA250 adapter installed.

Inspired is the word for the new Harman-Kardon Ode, AM-FM tuner. (illustrated) and for the new Lyric, FM only tuner. They are superb single channel (monophonic) tuners—and they are the only high fidelity tuners which fully anticipate multiplex stereo broadcasts. Such broadcasts are already in process and substantial programming is expected early in 1959.

The FM front end in each tuner is a new "Shaded Grid" VHF tetrode which combines the low noise characteristics of a triode with the great sensitivity of a pentode. Both models incorporate the new Harman-Kardon "Gated Beam" limiter with zero time constant grid circuit and wide band Foster-Seeley discriminators. As a result, each boasts uniquely low distortion, superior impulse noise rejection plus uniform limiting and output at all signals. A new bridge type power supply permits the lowest modulation hum yet achieved and excellent signal to noise ratio. Incidentally, all of these characteristics are essential for consistent and stable multiplex stereo reception.

*The Ode (Model T250) and Lyric (Model F250) are the only tuners designed to be completely integrated multiplex receivers. Each provides built-in signal, power supply and space to accommodate and operate a multiplex adapter. The Harman-Kardon MA250 multiplex adapter plugs directly into the tuner chassis. With it installed, the tuner becomes a one piece instrument, providing complete single channel plus compatible multiplex stereo reception. No external or additional adapter of any type is required.*

A new electronic tuning bar is dramatically framed in the massive body of the tuners' escutcheon. It functions on both AM and FM signals. The tuners match the handsome brushed copper and black design of the new Harman-Kardon Epic (Model A250), fifty watt stereo amplifier. A combination of one of these tuners and the Epic represents high fidelity engineering and design in its furthest advance. It is the one system certain to be up to date years from today.

We invite your most critical examination of the new Ode and Lyric compatible multiplex stereo tuners at your Harman-Kardon dealer today. Prices of these new units are: Model T250, The Ode AM-FM tuner—\$149.95 • Model F250, The Lyric, FM only tuner—\$129.95 • Model TC50, enclosure for T250 or F250—\$12.50 • All prices slightly higher in the West.

**harman kardon**



For complete information on these and other fine Harman-Kardon instruments, write to Harman-Kardon, Dept. HF-12, Westbury, N. Y.

MISCHA ELMAN, June 11, 1958, speaking at Combs College of Music, Philadelphia:

*"As an artist who has been recording for 50 years, I am aware of the difficulties inherent in the recording process . . . only the concert hall can give you the proper perspective."*

MISCHA ELMAN, October 5, 1958:

*"Now, I must tell you, I have heard a speaker system that approaches the authenticity of concert hall performance"*

**What so impressed Mr. Elman?** The sound he heard from a radically new stereo speaker system designed to utilize the acoustical properties of the surrounding walls of the listening room. A system that literally adds a third dimension to stereophonic sound . . . the perception of depth. A compact, single-cabinet system that for the first time lets any number of listeners enjoy the thrill of stereo practically anywhere in the room . . .

# UNIVERSITY'S TOTALLY DIFFERENT 'TRIDIMENSIONAL' STEREO SPEAKER

# THE NEW TMS-2

PATENT  
APPLIED  
FOR



*With the deflector: doors closed for monophonic use, the incredibly compact TMS-2 is only 30" wide, 25" high, 12½" deep.*

Laboratory tests of the TMS-2 had greatly surpassed all design and performance specifications. Under normal circumstances, this would have been more than sufficient proof of its complete success. But so extraordinary was the nature of its sound, so intriguing its versatility, that it was decided to further subject it to critical listening tests under at-home conditions by leading artists, musical authorities and audio experts.

Mischa Elman, now celebrating the 50th anniversary of his American debut, acclaimed throughout the world for his supreme virtuosity . . . is an artist whose belief that only in the concert hall can the true quality of actual performance be realized, is a matter of public record. His enthusiastic response after hearing the TMS-2 in his home . . . that it approaches the authenticity of concert hall performance . . . was certainly remarkable, but no more remarkable than the concept of the TMS-2 itself.





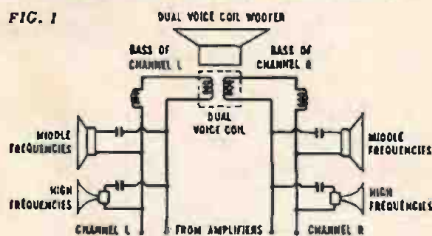
Internationally celebrated violinist Mischa Elman, at home with his University "Trimensional" Stereo Speaker, the TMS-2. Renowned for his legendary "golden tone," Mr. Elman is currently celebrating the Golden Anniversary of his American debut at Carnegie Hall at the age of 17. Since then his artistry has been acclaimed all over the world and his recordings have passed the 2 million sales mark.

**Here, at last,  
is a speaker system  
that combines:**

**UNPRECEDENTED COMPACTNESS**

Two complete speaker systems in one enclosure only 30" wide, 25" high, 12½" deep... solving all space and placement problems. By utilizing the exclusive *dual voice coil* feature of the C-12HC woofer, only one bass enclosure and woofer are required to handle the entire low frequency range of both stereo channels. Extended, undistorted bass is superbly reproduced by using the RRL enclosure design so successfully employed in University's Ultra Linear Response systems. See fig. 1.

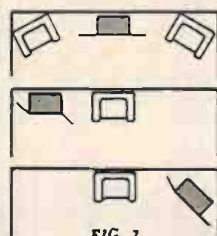
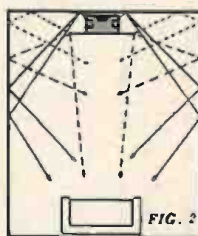
FIG. 1



**A THIRD DIMENSION TO STEREO SOUND**

The breadth, depth and clarity of stereophonic sound is accomplished by utilizing the walls of a room, just as the symphony orchestra uses the acoustical properties of the concert hall. The woofer sound emanates at the rear of the enclosure; one mid-range and one high frequency speaker for each channel project sound from each

side of the cabinet. By thus deflecting all frequencies, in proper relationship, to the rear and side walls of the room, multiple stereo sound sources are created that not only provide the otherwise missing dimension of depth, but also preserve the stereo effect virtually throughout the room. See fig. 2.



**PLACEMENT ANYWHERE IN A ROOM**

The unique design of the TMS-2 provides you with two distinct advantages: it is possible to place it in a corner or *anywhere* along a wall, by merely positioning the deflectors as shown in fig. 3, and since there are *no particularly critical listening positions*, you, your family, your friends—any number of listeners—can enjoy the TMS-2 from most anywhere in the room.

**MONOPHONIC OR STEREO REPRODUCTION**

With deflectors closed, the TMS-2 is an outstanding, wide-range monophonic speaker system. "Presence" and "brilliance" controls are provided for both sets of mid and high frequency speakers. In addition to being used for balancing the system to room acoustics and personal taste, these controls and the deflectors may be adjusted to

produce a pseudo-stereo effect with monophonic program material as well. Whether you start your high fidelity system with monophonic equipment, or go right into a stereo setup, the TMS-2 is the best investment you can make, because it is equally "at home" with any kind of program material, and *no further additions* to the speaker system are ever required.

**DESIGNED RIGHT—PRICED RIGHT**

Flawlessly designed along simple, classical lines, beautifully proportioned to compliment the most exacting taste, the TMS-2 will enhance any decor. In fact, it looks more like a piece of fine furniture than a typical speaker cabinet. Breathtaking in its performance... beyond the scope of conventional monophonic or stereophonic reproduction, the engineering concept of the TMS-2 eliminates redundant components; makes use of the latest, most advanced acoustical principles. RESULT: the ultimate in uncompromised value. In Mahogany—\$258, Blonde or Walnut—\$263 User Net.

See and hear the TMS-2 at your dealer... NOW! You too, will agree with musical and audio experts that it marks one of the most extraordinary advances in high fidelity and stereo history!



UNIVERSITY LOUDSPEAKERS, INC., WHITE PLAINS, N.Y.

Continued from page 20

# Convert to Tomorrow's Stereo Today

## ...with Weathers

Once again, Weathers Technical Magic has produced equipment which is years ahead in performance—this time with Stereo Cartridges which will play both monophonic and stereophonic records without damage. These cartridges are compatible with stereophonic record cutting methods of today and new cutting methods still in the experimental stage. The Weathers Cartridge you buy today will still be modern for years to come.



### The Weathers StereoRamic Cartridge

A new development in ceramics which out-performs even the finest magnetic pickups. Fits all standard tonearms. Its low 2 gram tracking force protects delicate stereo record surfaces.

- 25 db channel separation • flat frequency response 15 to 30,000 cycles • output 0.25 volts 7 cm/sec • low distortion • completely shielded against hum • completely protected jewel 0.7 mil stylus • comes complete with pickup leads and connectors • With Diamond Stylus \$17.50; Sapphire \$9.75.



### The Weathers FM Stereo System

Unquestionably the World's finest, designed exclusively for the Weathers Micro Touch Tonearm. Utilizes frequency modulation to produce smooth reproduction comparable to the original master tapes from both monophonic and stereo records.

- .6 to 1 gram tracking force • 30 to 40 db channel separation—the highest known • flat frequency response 10 to 30,000 cps • output 1.0 volts 7 cm/sec • comes complete with dual oscillator • With Diamond Stylus \$114.50; Sapphire \$99.50; MT-3 Tonearm.

### And the Weathers Turntable

12 pole synchronous motor attains correct speed in  $\frac{3}{4}$  revolution and maintains exact speed regardless of variations in line voltage or normal load. Noise level 25 db less than that recorded on today's finest records. Practically eliminates rumble, flutter, wow, and acoustic feedback. \$59.95.

See your dealer or write for booklet number 658H.



**Weathers Industries**, 66 E. Gloucester Pike, Barrington, N. J.  
DIVISION OF ADVANCE INDUSTRIES, INC.

Export: Joseph Plasencia, Inc., 401 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

**WEATHERS TECHNICAL MAGIC IS SOUND**

(most of them drawn from diaries, correspondence, periodical articles, and drafts of books that never were to be completed or published), we marvel anew both at the warmth inspired in his friends by the certainly unprepossessing young Schubert and at their failure to realize how much more there was in his music than the inexhaustible gift of lyricism alone. This is a heartbreaking book: perhaps less for its now familiar retelling of the composer's tragic history than for its evidence for the genesis of an almost wholly misleading myth. Unfortunately, the testimony of Schubert's few true friends has been submerged in the apocryphal anecdotes of the many hangers-on who attempted to capitalize on the composer's posthumous fame by inventing popular legends—so successfully that these persist even today. Yet, fact and myth alike make fascinating reading for both Schubertians and period specialists; and Professor Deutsch wins new laurels for having filled in so satisfactorily this last gap in his monumental project of Schubertian documentation (Macmillan, \$10.00).

Schubert: A Critical Biography. Although solidly based on Professor Deutsch's great source works plus some even newer data, Maurice J. E. Brown's full-scale portrait of the man and the musician is confessedly no objective study, but an attempt to depict a true picture of Schubert as he appears to the mid-twentieth century. And it is "critical" in the broadest sense of that term: not only in its re-appraisals—in the light of present-day sensibilities—of the works themselves, but also in its excoriations of "authorities" content to permit romantic mythology to cloud the evidence of their own ears and to delude themselves that the composer of the great C major symphony was indolent, unprofessional, and totally dependent on heavenly inspiration. As he emerges so persuasively in these pages, Schubert is at once far more human and even more miraculous; no one should miss this first generally available opportunity of learning better what he was, how he actually worked, and how much of his fabulous legacy still awaits a fair chance to speak for itself and for its creator (St. Martin's Press, \$6.75).

Problems of Art. Everyone who has treasured Susanne K. Langer's *Philosophy in a New Key* (recently issued in a third, cloth-bound edition—Har-

Continued on page 26

2 NEW  
SARGENT-RAYMENT

Stereo Reproducers

for advanced high fidelity installations

SR-380<sup>o</sup> FM-AM TUNER WITH STEREO  
PRE-AMP AND TONE CONTROL \$189.60

This Hi-Fi instrument represents the full accomplishment of a challenging objective — the combining on one chassis of a dual channel professional stereo pre-amp and tone control with that of a Deluxe FM-AM Tuner.

Some of the outstanding features are:

- Stereo (dual) inputs for tape heads with 3 positions of equalization for 15 (NARTB), 7½, and 3¾ I.P.S., phono cartridge (both magnetic and ceramic), tape recorder, and aux. The FM position has a stereo channel input for use with the future FM multiplex transmission. It may now be used for stereo FM-FM or FM-AM by inserting another FM or AM source.
- Extremely stable FM sensitivity of 3 uv for 20 db quieting, which

- is unaffected by a mismatched antenna.
- Push-button operated rumble and scratch filters.
- Stereo balance control.
- Push-button type channel reverse and monaural-stereo switches.
- Elimination of hum and heat due to absence of power supply.

SR-534 34 WATT  
BASIC STEREO AMPLIFIER \$106.60

The SR-534 offers clear cut superiority in design, construction, endurance and, most important, performance. The design is that of two independently controlled and terminated 17 watt sections. Each section is capable of delivering power beyond usability in the average home installation with distortion characteristics found only in the most expensive basic amplifiers.

Some of the outstanding features are:

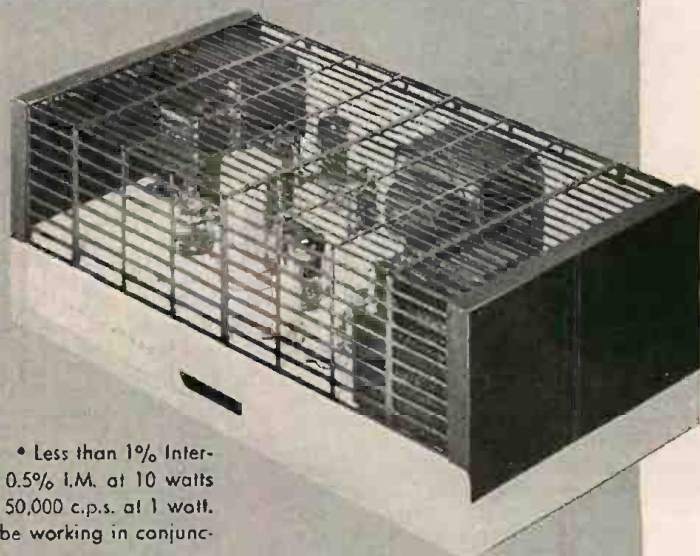
- 17 watts power output each section, 34 watts output for combined dual channel monaural use.
- Less than 1% Inter-modulation Distortion at rated output. Less than 0.5% I.M. at 10 watts output.
- Frequency response of ±0.5 db 10 to 50,000 c.p.s. at 1 watt.
- Ideal regulation with the new GZ34 rectifier tube working in conjunction with an extra large transformer.

Write for complete brochure on all SR Stereo Reproducers.

**SR**  
**SR**

SARGENT - RAYMENT CO.

4926 East 12th Street, Oakland 1, California



# A worn needle ruins records

*just as surely*



You can't see the damage, but a worn needle ruins records just as surely as a cigarette burn. Any needle that's been played too long develops chisel-like edges that grind away the delicate sound impressions. But your ear can't hear the damage until it's too late — the change in sound quality is too gradual.

That's why it's wise to check your needle often. When it's time to replace, be wise again—replace with a Fidelitone Diamond.

## FIDELITONE LASTS LONGER

A Fidelitone Diamond is your soundest needle buy. It gives you more hours of safe record playing time for your money than any other type of needle . . . costs you less than 1¢ an hour.

Every Fidelitone Diamond point is cut from the heart of a true gem stone. Then Fidelitone takes an extra step to give you extra hours of playing time. The Diamond point is oriented in the stylus to put the hardest planes of the Diamond in contact with the

record grooves. Then a precise, ball-like point that fits your record grooves exactly is ground on the point. The point is then polished to mirror-like smoothness to minimize friction wear. Next, the point is Pennolite mounted to keep its precise position throughout the life of the needle.

## DON'T GAMBLE WITH YOUR RECORDS

Take your present phonograph needle to your Fidelitone Dealer and ask him to check its condition. If it's worn to the point of damaging your records, don't gamble with substitutes — be sure to replace it with a new, genuine Fidelitone Diamond — the quality needle that gives you more hours of true hi-fidelity sound.

**FREE** Fidelitone will send you without charge a pamphlet that helps you determine the type of needle you need. Plus important information on record and needle care. Send name and address to: FIDELITONE — RECORD CARE BOOKLET, Chicago 26, Illinois.

# Fidelitone

*"Best Buy on Records"*

## BOOKS IN REVIEW

*Continued from page 24*

vard University Press, \$4.75) should relish this more informal exposition of her aesthetic approach not only to music, but to the dance, the literary and visual arts, and the basic relationships among them. These "ten philosophical lectures" of course present no such comprehensive statement of Miss Langer's theories as her great *Feeling and Form*; but since they originally were prepared for oral delivery before nonspecialized audiences, they are much more easily grasped, yet scarcely less rewarding in their revelations of the fundamental kinships among "what is created, what is expressed, and what is experienced" in the seemingly diverse media, forms, and symbols of artistic activity (Scribner, \$3.50).

**Tonality, Atonality, Pantonality: A Study of Some Trends in Twentieth Century Music.** The formidable title may well affright even the most dauntless modernist, but anyone who has read the late Rudolph Reti's earlier study of *The Thematic Process in Music* (Macmillan, 1951) will know in advance that however difficult this author's subject matter may be, he brings to it superb powers of organization and articulateness. Comparatively slim (166 pages) as the present posthumous volume may be, it throws a powerful beam of light on the procedures of contemporary composers working both inside and outside the twelve-tone technique. Even more significantly, however, Reti proves what many others have suspected—that both approaches are currently headed into inescapable dead ends. Whether or not his suggestions for reconciling their differences by setting out in a new direction are likely to be realized in actuality, they certainly contain many vital clues for disoriented young composers—and listeners—of today (Macmillan, \$5.50).

**Electronic Hobbyists' Handbook**, by Rufus P. Turner (Gernsback Library, paperback \$2.50). The first two chapters on safety precautions and shop practices should be required reading for every audiocraftsman. The rest of the book is mainly concerned with the construction and use of communications, control, photoelectric, and location devices, of more interest to experimenters in other electronic fields than that of audio alone.

R. D. DARRELL



# Easy-to-build



- style
- performance
- quality

## costs you less!



### PROFESSIONAL STEREO-MONAUURAL AM-FM TUNER KIT

MODEL PT-1 \$89<sup>95</sup>

The 10-tube FM circuit features AFC as well as AGC. An accurate tuning meter operates on both AM and FM while a 3-position switch selects meter functions without disturbing stereo or monaural listening. The 3-tube front end is prewired and prealigned, and the entire AM circuit is on one printed circuit board for ease of construction. Shpg. Wt. 20 lbs.

MODEL SP-2 (stereo)  
\$56<sup>95</sup> Shpg. Wt. 15 lbs.

MODEL SP-1 (monaural)  
\$37<sup>95</sup> Shpg. Wt. 13 lbs.

MODEL C-SP-1  
(converts SP-1 to SP-2)  
\$21<sup>95</sup> Shpg. Wt. 5 lbs.

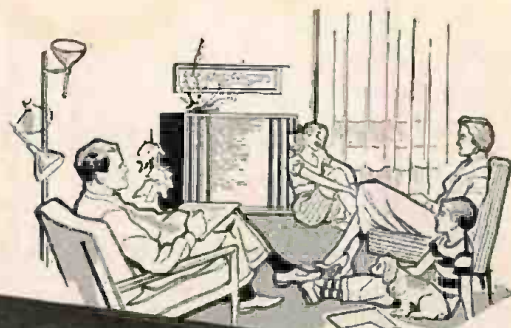


### STEREO EQUIPMENT CABINET KIT

MODEL SE-1 (center unit) \$149<sup>95</sup>  
Shpg. Wt. 162 lbs. (specify wood desired)

MODEL SC-1 (speaker enclosure) \$39<sup>95</sup> each  
Shpg. Wt. 42 lbs. (specify R. or L. also wood desired)

Superbly designed cabinetry to house your complete stereo system. Delivered with pre-cut panels to fit Heathkit AM-FM tuner (PT-1), stereo preamplifier (SP-1 & 2) and record changer (RP-3). Blank panels also supplied to cut out for any other equipment you may now own. Adequate space is also provided for tape deck, speakers, record storage and amplifiers. Speaker wings will hold Heathkit SS-2 or other speaker units of similar size. Available in 3/4" solid core Philippine mahogany or select birch plywood suitable for finish of your choice. Entire top features a shaped edge. Hardware and trim are of brushed brass and gold finish. Rich tone grille cloth is flecked in gold and black. Maximum overall dimensions (all three pieces); 82 3/4" W. x 36 1/2" H. x 20" D.



World's largest manufacturer of electronic instruments in kit form

## HEATH COMPANY

Benton Harbor, 8, Michigan

 a subsidiary of Daystrom, Inc.

### MONAUURAL-STEREO PREAMPLIFIER KIT (TWO CHANNEL MIXER)

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Model RP-3-LP with MF-1 Pickup Cartridge \$74.95



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MODEL TR-1A \$99<sup>95</sup> Includes tape deck assembly, preamplifier (TE-1) and roll of tape.

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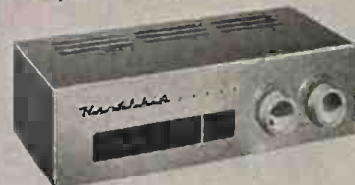
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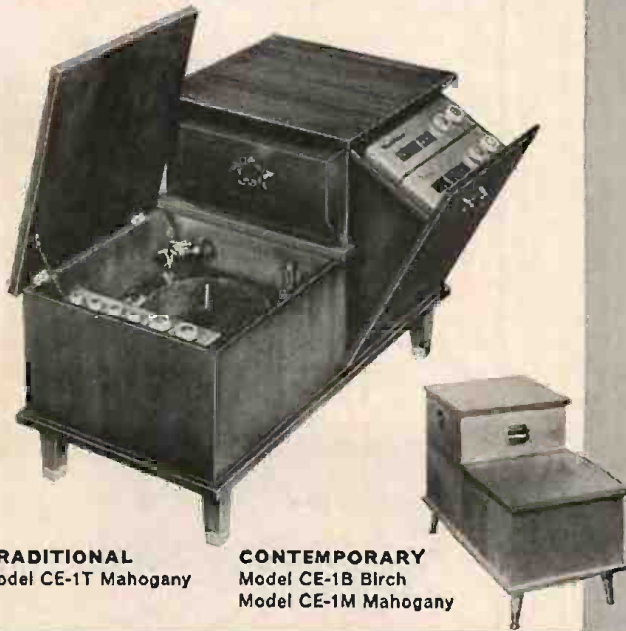


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**"BOOKSHELF" HI-FI 12 WATT AMPLIFIER KIT**

MODEL EA-2 **\$28<sup>95</sup>**

An amplifier and preamplifier in one compact unit, the EA-2 has more than enough power for the average home hi-fi system and provides full range frequency response from 20 to 20,000 CPS within ±1 db, with less than 2% harmonic distortion at full power over the entire range. RIAA equalization, separate bass and treble controls and hum balance control are featured. An outstanding performer for the size and price. Shpg. Wt. 15 lbs.




**"EXTRA PERFORMANCE" 55 WATT HI-FI AMPLIFIER KIT**

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MODEL UA-1 **\$21<sup>95</sup>**

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**"MASTER CONTROL" PREAMPLIFIER KIT**

MODEL WA-P2 **\$19<sup>75</sup>**

All the controls you need to master a complete high fidelity home music system are incorporated in this versatile instrument. Featuring five switch-selected inputs, each with level control. Provides tape recorder and cathode-follower outputs. Full frequency response is obtained within ±1½ db from 15 to 35,000 CPS and will do full justice to the finest available program sources. Equalization is provided for LP, RIAA, AES and early 78 records. Dimensions are 12¾" L. x 3¾" H. x 5¾" D. Shpg. Wt. 7 lbs.



**HEATHKIT**



**"HEAVY DUTY" 70 WATT HI-FI AMPLIFIER KIT**  
**MODEL W6-M \$109<sup>95</sup>**

For real rugged duty called for by advance hi-fi systems or P.A. networks, this high powered amplifier more than fills the bill. Silicon-diode rectifiers are used to assure long life and a heavy duty transformer gives you extremely good power supply regulation. Variable damping control provides optimum performance with any speaker system. Quick change plug selects 4, 8 and 16 ohm or 70 volt output and the correct feedback resistance. Frequency response at 1 watt is  $\pm 1$  db from 5 CPS to 80 kc with controlled HF rolloff above 100 kc. At 70 watts output harmonic distortion is below 2%, 20 to 20,000 CPS and IM distortion below 1% 60 and 6,000 CPS. Hum and noise 88 db below full output. Shpg. Wt. 52 lbs.

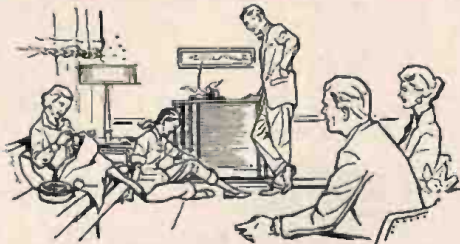
**"ADVANCE DESIGN" 25 WATT HI-FI AMPLIFIER KIT**

**MODEL W5-M \$59<sup>75</sup>**

Enjoy the distortion-free high fidelity sound reproduction from this outstanding hi-fi amplifier. The W5-M incorporates advanced design features for the super critical listener. Features include specially designed Peerless output transformer and KT66 tubes. The circuit is rated at 25 watts and will follow instantaneous power peaks of a full orchestra up to 42 watts. A "tweeter saver" suppresses high frequency oscillation and a unique balancing circuit facilitates adjustment of output tubes. Frequency response is  $\pm 1$  db from 5 to 160,000 CPS at 1 watt and within  $\pm 2$  db 20 to 20,000 CPS at full 25 watts output. Harmonic distortion is less than 1% at 25 watts and IM distortion is 1% at 20 watts (60 and 3,000 CPS, 4:1). Hum and noise are 99 db below 25 watts for truly quiet performance. Shpg. Wt. 31 lbs.



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**GENERAL-PURPOSE 20 WATT AMPLIFIER KIT**  
**MODEL A9-C \$35<sup>50</sup>**

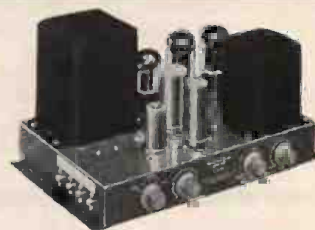
The model A9-C combines a preamplifier, main amplifier and power supply all on one chassis, providing a compact unit to fill the need for a good amplifier with a moderate cash investment. Features four separate switch-selected inputs. Separate bass and treble tone controls offer 15 db boost and cut. Covers 20 to 20,000 CPS within  $\pm 1$  db. A fine unit with which to start your own hi-fi system. Shpg. Wt. 23 lbs.

**ELECTRONIC CROSSOVER KIT**  
**MODEL XO-1 \$18<sup>95</sup>**

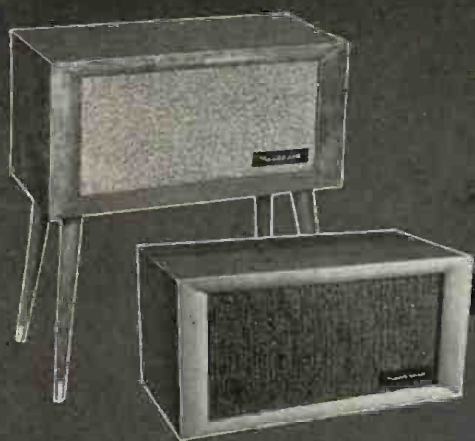
This unique instrument separates high and low frequencies and feeds them through two amplifiers to separate speakers. It is located ahead of the main amplifiers, thus, virtually eliminating IM distortion and matching problems. Crossover frequencies for each channel are at 100, 200, 400, 700, 1200, 2,000 and 3,500 CPS. This unit eliminates the need for conventional crossover circuits and provides amazing versatility at low cost. A unique answer to frequency division problems. Shpg. Wt. 6 lbs.

**20 WATT HI-FI AMPLIFIER KIT**  
**MODEL W4-AM \$39<sup>75</sup>**

This top quality amplifier offers you full fidelity at minimum cost. Features extended frequency response, low distortion and low hum level. Harmonic distortion is less than 1.5% and IM distortion is below 2.7% at full 20 watt output. Frequency response extends from 10 CPS to 100,000 CPS within  $\pm 1$  db at 1 watt. Output transformer tapped at 4, 8 and 16 ohms. Easy to build and a pleasure to use. Shpg. Wt. 28 lbs.







**"BASIC RANGE" HI-FI SPEAKER SYSTEM KIT**

MODEL SS-2 **\$39<sup>95</sup>**

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Outstanding performance at modest cost make this speaker system a spectacular buy for any hi-fi enthusiast. The specially designed enclosure and high quality 8" mid-range woofer and compression-type tweeter cover the frequency range of 50 to 12,000 CPS. Crossover circuit is built in with balance control. Impedance is 16 ohms, power rating 25 watts. Cabinet is constructed of veneer-surfaced furniture-grade 1/2" plywood suitable for light or dark finish. Shpg. Wt. 26 lbs.



**"LEGATO" HI-FI SPEAKER SYSTEM KIT**

MODEL HH-1 **\$299<sup>95</sup>**

Words cannot describe the true magnificence of the "Legato" speaker system . . . it's simply the nearest thing to perfection in reproduced sound yet developed. Perfect balance, precise phasing, and adequate driver design all combine to produce startling realism long sought after by the hi-fi perfectionist. Two 15" Altec Lansing low frequency drivers and a specially designed exponential horn with high frequency driver cover 25 to 20,000 CPS. A unique crossover network is built in. Impedance is 16 ohms, power rating 50 watts. Cabinet is constructed of 3/4" veneer-surfaced plywood in either African mahogany or imported white birch suitable for the finish of your choice. All parts are precut and predrilled for easy assembly. Shpg. Wt. 195 lbs.

**"RANGE EXTENDING" HI-FI SPEAKER SYSTEM KIT**

MODEL SS-1B **\$99<sup>95</sup>**

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## Audiocraft—An Experiment Continues

SCIENTISTS INSIST that no well-conducted experiment can be unsuccessful, since at its end the experimenter knows more than he did at its beginning. To this we are inclined to say amen. Glance at the cover, or at page 129, and you will note that we have just completed an experiment (or rather a phase of an experiment) involving the magazine *AUDIOCRAFT*. As some readers may recall, *AUDIOCRAFT* began as an offshoot of *HIGH FIDELITY* three years ago. Now it has been reincorporated as an integral section of *HIGH FIDELITY*. How this happened constitutes the story of the experiment. It was an experiment that involved some inconvenience and expense, but the results are gratifying. The story may interest you. In part it depicts a publisher and a group of editors pursuing their own good intentions rather in the manner of a cat chasing its tail. (So expect a sort of circular story.)

In 1951, when *HIGH FIDELITY* was founded, there was heard on all sides an urgent clamor for information about high-fidelity componentry and its installation. Charles Fowler, first editor, now publisher, responded to this by filling the early issues of the magazine (then a quarterly) with disquisitions on air-couplers, variable equalization, and hum loops, presented in how-to-do-it style. A part of his purpose thus was realized: the magazine became viable. The next part of his purpose became evident with the fourth issue. Its cover was cleared of installation photographs, and displayed instead the challenging visage of one Ludwig van Beethoven. The corresponding feature inside was a complete LP discography of the works of this composer, by C. G. Burke. Subscribers were not affronted, and did not defect. Indeed, Vol. I, No. 4 became at once, and remained for years, a collector's item, bought and sold at premium prices. This was when *HIGH FIDELITY* began its bid to become a music magazine.

Still, the bid was in a special direction, and towards a special reader. We have respect for the urban concert-goer, but he doesn't take guidance from monthly magazines. It is the living-room listener who does. We envisioned this latter as a man bound eventually for devotion to the musical communications of Handel and Brahms, but interested in getting there through his own efforts—shopping among record reviews for masterpieces on unfamiliar labels; plying his screw driver, soldering iron, and spirit level to make himself finally a participant in the delivery of the music. This is adventure, and creative adventure, too. Here was our reader.

So far, so good. The only trouble was, the musical content began to force the audio content out. It had an aesthetic advantage, in the way it could be presented. There was much more of it available, too, and in greater variety. Which is to say, bass reflex theory explained once is interesting; but the third time you read it, twice seems to have been enough.

Probably this was progress, but there were complaints. Too much Stravinsky; not enough schematics. We took these complaints to heart. (Nearly all the editors here are audio tinkerers, in various degrees.) If some readers wanted decibels without Debussy, they would have them. The answer was another publication, so *AUDIOCRAFT* was launched.

Again (to begin with) so far, so good. The new magazine picked up readers in a rush, largely from among defecting readers of *HIGH FIDELITY*. Fine: that was the way we planned it. But what happened next we hadn't planned at all.

This was, that when *AUDIOCRAFT* had attained a quite substantial readership, its readers began also, in large numbers, to subscribe to *HIGH FIDELITY* as well. And vice versa. They got no encouragement from us, but they did it just the same. In other words, we had been right in the first place and wrong in the second place. This was confirmed by readers reluctant to pay 95 cents a month for two publications. The *AUDIOCRAFT* readers demanded more record reviews and other musical matter. The *HIGH FIDELITY* readers continued to ask for more "practical" home-audio guidance (especially as stereo made its appearance). In point of wants, they were getting together.

It was time for us to get together, too. For a while we resisted, mostly, and simply, because we were proud of *AUDIOCRAFT* as an editorial entity. And, consequently, we didn't want to hide it.

I don't think we will be hiding it. In its three years of independent existence, it developed an attractive personality (if the word is permissible), and one too strong to submerge. It also developed its own unique style of audio coverage, and this (not unnaturally) fits well in taste and direction with the rest of *HIGH FIDELITY*'s content. Three years ago we could not have afforded the space and staff for this kind of coverage without squeezing something else out of *HIGH FIDELITY*. Now we can. We admit to feeling a little excited at the prospect. So, we hope, will you. Because, you realize, you're part of the experiment.

J.M.C.

AS THE EDITORS SEE IT



The Squire of  
**TORRE DEL LAGO**  
GIACOMO  
PUCCINI  
The man and his music

---

by Ronald Eyer

Culver



AT HIS DEATH in 1924 Puccini left an estate valued in the neighborhood of four million dollars. This single circumstance speaks volumes about the man and his music.

It establishes at once the fact that he was fabulously successful in his own time. He made more money out of his work than any other composer of record (Verdi left about a million and a half); and behind this awesome achievement stand two towering verities: he had got hold of the formula for writing music of universal and almost instantaneous appeal—to use the banal phrase appropriately for once—and, in a creative life spanning fewer than forty years, he maintained an extraordinarily high average of hits and suffered relatively few misses.

This was, furthermore, no flash in the pan. A generation later, the main body of his output continues to be indispensable to the operatic repertoire everywhere in the world; his publisher, G. Ricordi, and his stepdaughter, Fosca, continue to garner the fruits of his labors. (In the United States, at least, *Madama Butterfly*, *Turandot*,

and the operas of the Tritico — *Il Tabarro*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Suor Angelica* — are not in the public domain.)

What sort of man was this tycoon among opera composers, this unerring musical marksman?

Born Giacomo (for his great-great-grandfather) Antonio (for his great-grandfather) Domenico (for his grandfather) Michele Secondo (for his father) Maria (for the Virgin) in the little city of Lucca, near Pisa, on December 22 or 23, 1858, he was one of eight children. His father died when he was five, and his mother, with the aid of a modest pension, managed to keep her brood alive in a not too dismal flat in the Via di Poggio, not far from the public square. The house still stands there, marked with a small plaque, but not many present-day Luccanians seem to know of its existence. To them Puccini's house means the cozy Villa Puccini at Torre del Lago, a still smaller town on nearby Lake Massaciucoli where the composer spent much of his affluent adult life.

It was no surprise to the townspeople that the elder of the two Puccini boys was scheduled from birth to become a musician — specifically, an organist. The Puccinis had been the leading town musicians and organists of the cathedral longer than anybody could remember, like the Bach family in Thuringia, and they also had been composers of no little ability.

Always a poor scholar and, at first, an indifferent apprentice at the organ, Giacomo was a morose, brooding youth whose only real interests were trapping birds, playing macabre practical jokes, and smoking cigarettes behind the barn. There was general despair for his future until he came under the tutelage of Carlo Angeloni, a teacher at the Pacini Institute in Lucca, where Giacomo started studies in his early teens. Angeloni was a sympathetic soul, who understood about bird trapping and jokes, and the boy's latent musicality suddenly flowered.

In his latter years at school, Giacomo picked up a little money playing the organ and the piano, and teaching. He even did a bit of composing — mostly church music. It was a performance of *Aida* in Pisa, to which he and some cronies walked from Lucca (even as Bach walked to Lübeck to hear Buxtehude), that convinced him on the spot that he wanted to be a composer of opera. To this end his mother wangled a Queen Margherita scholarship for him at the Milan Conservatory, and at the age of twenty-two he stood for the first time before the operatic Valhalla where he was to become one of the reigning gods — La Scala.

"A mighty hunter of wild fowl, opera libretti, and attractive women" was Puccini's own characterization of himself in later years. We can only observe that he knew his man. Despite the accretions of wealth and fame Puccini never suffered the delusions of grandeur about himself or his work which often beset creative people. He was a matter-of-fact, sometimes crassly sensual man with bourgeois tastes, a coarse sense of humor, and a casual indifference to intellectual and philosophical concerns. Except for the spark of something that animated him when he sat down before a piece of scorepaper, he could just as well have been an ordinary Tuscan tradesman — anybody's *paisan*.

He showed little interest or discrimination in arts other than music, and his concern with literature was limited to an unceasing search for usable libretto material. Even his musical appreciations appear to have been more professional and technical than spiritual. He doffed his hat to Beethoven and Wagner; he recognized the impressionistic novelty of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*; he liked some of Richard Strauss and some of Stravinsky; the early Schoenberg puzzled but did not bewilder him.



New York Public Library

*Puccini in his study at Torre del Lago. He could always think easily of tunes; it was the "little things" that gave trouble.*

## PUCCINI



Bestmann Archive

His youthful passion for bird hunting never left him, and the villa at Torre del Lago still houses his small arsenal of guns, boots, and other trappings of the sport. He also loved motorboating and, on one occasion, his typically Italian enthusiasm for driving automobiles at breakneck speed almost cost him his life.

Despite his wealth, he did not live ostentatiously. Villa Puccini is a charming retreat set in a small garden directly on the shore of the lake and surrounded by a high iron fence. But, even by middle-class standards, it is a modest house, consisting of only a few rooms, comfortably but certainly not elegantly furnished—more like a hunting lodge than a millionaire's mansion.

Along with a hodgepodge of mementos of the composer's musical and sporting life the house contains two upright pianos, one presented to him by Steinway & Sons, the other an instrument made by August Forster at which he did most of his work. Set at a right angle beside the Forster piano is his writing desk, an arrangement indicating that Puccini composed at and from the piano and possibly accounting for the unusually pianistic quality of much of his orchestral writing.

Puccini's third abiding interest—women—probably would have been a harmless enough diversion had it not been for the almost insane jealousy of his wife, Elvira. Elvira had fallen madly in love with him while still married to his boyhood chum, Giuseppe Gemignani, and had become his partner in an illicit affair. Their son Tonio was born out of wedlock. Puccini loved his wife dearly from the moment they met in his twenty-sixth year, and his final thought on his deathbed was of her. Yet she drove him frantic throughout their life together with her constant suspicions, however well founded. She even caused the suicide of one of their servant girls by accusing her publicly of being her husband's mistress. A post-mortem revealed the girl to be a virgin, but the tragic mistake did not deter Elvira. The marital relations of the couple often were strained almost to the breaking point; but, with age, Elvira softened somewhat and they remained together to the end.

Except when he was hunting or in the throes of composition, Puccini was an unaccountably restive and fitfully melancholy man, with many acquaintances but almost no friends. He took a peculiarly objective view of his music, evaluating it almost impersonally, though occasionally he expressed surprised delight when it came off well. Because of the seeming ease and spontaneity

with which the typical Puccinian melody wells up and flows along, some notion has prevailed that he was a slapdash, "inspirational" composer who simply wrote down whatever came into his head. The truth is quite the reverse. He labored hard and painstakingly over his scores. He was a perfectionist who strained his admittedly limited talents to the utmost. He never had trouble thinking of a "tune," he said; but the "little things," such as the connective tissue, sometimes created difficulties. Fortunately, he seems to have been tireless.

He was well aware of the trend towards dissonance and an expanded palette of musical colors, and he began to experiment with them in his last opera, *Turandot*. But he was too canny to discount his own mastery over a species of musical theater that people in droves would pay money to witness time and time again. This knowledge, quite rightly, made him cautious. Innovation is most attractive to people who have little to lose by it.

With his librettists—including Illica, Giacosa, and Adami, and even the formidable Victorien Sardou, with whom he had to negotiate the adaptation of *La Tosca*—Puccini was tyrannical and exacting. His sense of theater (or, more properly, melodrama, with which he dealt for the most part) was unerring, and he knew it. There were many stormy sessions and endless revisions of text; but the composer almost invariably carried his point and was proved subsequently—at the box office—to be right. If he made a mistake, he was quick to see it, as in his one serious blunder in the original composition of *Madama Butterfly*, which he had divided into two overlong acts, the first running about fifty-five minutes, the second nearly ninety minutes. This was too unorthodox for the opinionated Scala public and contributed in part to the opening-night fiasco. Puccini recognized his error and reverted to the conventional three acts, the form in which the opera is always given today.

Kindly Amilcare Ponchielli, who had been one of his teachers at the Milan Conservatory, and the young poet-librettist, Ferdinando Fontana, virtually propelled Puccini into his first opera and his first taste of public success. His little *Capriccio Sinfonico* for small orchestra, performed at the school, had stirred some favorable reactions. But, with the completion of his studies at the conservatory at the age of twenty-five, and with the automatic "Maestro" firmly attached to his name, there seemed nothing for him to do but go back to Lucca, set up as a teacher, and assume his inherited post as cathedral organist. He was as certain as ever that he wanted to compose operas, but he was as destitute of ideas as he was of money.

At this point Ponchielli took a firm hand. Overriding all objections, he persuaded Fontana to suggest and compose a libretto (on speculation) for a one-act opera to be entered in a competition sponsored by the paper *Teatro illustrato*. The subject chosen by Fontana and meekly accepted by Puccini—about the only time Puccini ever was meek with a librettist—was the mystical

doings of those Germanic sprites of the Black Forest, the Villi (also the subject of the ballet *Giselle*).

The little opera did not win: it did not even receive an honorable mention (some think it was never considered because of Puccini's illegible handwriting). But Fontana, Boito, and several other influential persons had heard the music and decided the opera was worthy of production. With the aid of private subscription it was given an auspicious performance, along with two other operas, at the Teatro dal Verme in Milan on May 31, 1884. A remarkably indulgent public and press accepted it as a miniature masterpiece and, overnight, Puccini became a man to be reckoned with in the Italian theater, to the envy, in no sense malicious, of his roommate and colleague, Pietro Mascagni.

*Le Villi*, of course, was nowhere near as good as these enthusiasts made it out to be. At best it showed portents of things to come—the gift for spontaneous titillating melody, the ability to create the musical mood and setting for dramatic action, the mastery of orchestral sonorities. At worst it was empty, cliché-ridden, shallow in characterization, and unperceptive of its subject. *Le Villi* almost never is given anywhere, any more, though there does exist a recording of it. Its most important function, perhaps, was to bring the young composer to the attention of Giulio Ricordi, head of the Italian publishing house which harbored most of the great among nineteenth-century Italian composers. Ricordi was to become, over the years, Puccini's closest friend and most valuable adviser.

Living impecuniously on the meager proceeds of *Le Villi*, Puccini did not produce another opera until *Edgar*, in 1888, the one authentic disaster of his career. The librettist again was Fontana, and the failure was due more to him than to the composer. Somewhat like *Le Villi* in plot, *Edgar* is a pastiche of all blood-and-thunder Italian opera librettos at their most vulgar; and, though Puccini labored over four years on the score, the music reveals little if any evolutionary progress over *Le Villi*. But it was the last time he was to work at the behest of someone else on material with which he was not really in sympathy, and he was free at last to seek his own métier.

With Puccini operas, however, failure must not be taken to mean one disastrous performance and then oblivion. Neither of Puccini's early operas was a failure in that sense. Both received many performances in Italy and elsewhere, they were by no means universally condemned, and the proceeds from them kept bread in the mouths of the family which now included, besides Elvira, a daughter Fosca, and the son Tonio. Puccini was poor in these days, but Ricordi saw to it that he never went hungry.

The time had come, however, for a solid hit. Puccini was now thirty years old, and he had not yet made any resounding noise in the world. That sweet sound was to come with *Manon Lescaut*. For the first time the com-

poser had a subject of his own choosing, a heroine with whom he was personally in love, and a determination to get exactly what he wanted out of his librettists (there turned out to be six of them!).

*Manon Lescaut* contains the ingredients of all Puccini's successful operas. Due, no doubt, to his natural preoccupation with the female sex, the central character is a woman, "the first," as George Marek says in his admirable biography, "of the faulty, simple, but appealing young girls whose sisters are Mimi, Musetta, Tosca, Cio-Cio-San, and Liù." Puccini's men—Des Grieux, Pinkerton, Cavaradossi—are rarely more than foils for these charming pathetic females. Around these ladies he entwines ardent, often bittersweet melodies of love and passion, basically similar in inspiration but saved from being mere variations of each other by Puccini's rare ability to stamp every one with its own sharp profile and to impart to each the indefinable ear-catching quality that is the secret of all music of the "hit" variety.

Astute man of the theater that he was, Puccini made sure that every act had at least one of these sure-fire melodies. *Manon Lescaut*, Act I, has Des Grieux's "Tra voi, belle" (in addition to his "Donna non vidi mai"); Act II has Manon's "In quelle trine morbide"; Act III has Des Grieux's "Guardate, pazzo son"; Act IV has Manon's final despairing aria, "Sola, perduta abbandonata." *Tosca*, Act I, has Cavaradossi's "Recondita armonia di bellezza diverse"; Act II has Tosca's famous "Vissi d'arte"; Act III has Cavaradossi's "E lucevan le stelle." And so it goes.

Underlying and connecting these highlights runs a solid but supple body of lush *Continued on page 157*



Bettmann Archive

Portrait of a "tycoon among opera composers."



by Philip C. Geraci

## Christmas Tactics for Golden Eared Husbands

**A**UDIOPHILES across the length and breadth of the most music-saturated nation in history now are throwing frost-covered logs in the fireplace, switching on mellow backgrounds of soothing stereo, and settling down, chin in hand, to ponder again one of the most formidable of Problems Which Plague the Fi-Fancier.

I don't mean hum, nor yet balance. Weighty upon the soul as these maladies may be, they haven't quite the urgency of the one I have in mind.

And what is this problem? Well, behold yon calendar. See that circle of grease pencil way down in southeastern December? Now backwards count the shopping days.

Ah, the upgoing eyebrows . . . the protruding lip . . . the drumming of the fingertips . . . the sudden glow of understanding. That's right, Christmas is coming!

Now is the time when all we harassed married men begin wrestling with a dilemma which has plagued us since the day we first twiddled the treble knob on a dealer's amplifier. And I don't mean that we're wondering what sort of useful little thing we can give to the neighbor next door to fix up his horrible-sounding system, either.

Oh, no. The problem we harassed husbands face every year about this time is how in the world to get our *wives* to give *us* something useful.

It isn't easy. I thought I had the problem licked last year. Shrewdly and industriously, I assembled fifteen audio catalogues. Painstakingly, I cut out of them pictures of all the enticing little items I'd like to own but was afraid to get caught buying. Skillfully I planted these around the house in strategic places (for instance, in her favorite cereal bowl, for three weeks running). I happily settled back to await the fateful dawn. You know what I got? A bathrobe (my third). A new set of TV rabbit ears ("the old ones are so *ugly*"). A can of No-Rub waxing compound for the car.

The year before I had been even less fortunate. Week after week, I had enthused over the brilliant array of new recordings lined up like Scots Guards on the top shelf of the local record shop, making special if subtle reference to some of the more exciting ones ("for example, talking offhand, you understand, *LM 1076*") in the hope of bringing at least a few Boston Symphony members into the cozy cubicle we call our living room.



Results? A bathrobe (my second). And, about the third week in January, Harry Martin, a bachelor and therefore understandably curious, stopped me on the street to ask what my spouse had had in mind when she came into his record shop the week before Christmas to ask for an "orthopedic" record!

And so it goes. With hat respectfully right-handed three degrees below left shoulder, I bow in dedication towards the worthy ranks of those who sit in captain's chairs at dinner, rise then dutifully to answer dish-towel-enlistment, and hope thereafter for an hour or so of spiritual communion with Peter Ilich and Johann Sebastian or with the fearsome mysteries of acoustic feedback. To them is devoted this terse tactical guide-list to conveniences no deserving audiophile should be without, come Yuletide. Put *this* in your wife's cereal bowl.

Titles are in bold face; prices are given when possible. They're for her. The rest of the stuff is ammunition for you fellows when you close ranks for the charge.

**A new tweeter.** This is something that *you* ought to give to the guy next door. Really. Anyway, they can be had for as little as \$4.00. There's no point in mentioning the more expensive ones because your wife wouldn't buy you one of them anyway.

**A credit slip from the lumber shop.** This is a good idea, but watch out for hidden implications. *You* may want to build a new speaker enclosure, but *she* may want new closet doors. Be firm.

**A child's water-color paintbrush.** You may actually get one of these, because they only cost about a dime. Really, they're extremely useful for flicking dust off your phono stylus after each play. If you're a finger flicker, prepare to break the habit.

**A record rack.** If you're like most collectors, you have piles of unsorted discs lying around collecting all sorts of evil precipitations. Appeal to her instinct for order. Attractive, modern fifty-album racks cost less than \$4.00.

**A pocket spirit level.** Often overlooked, turntable leveling can be enormously important to good record performance. *Especially is this so with stereo.* Furthermore, levels can be purchased at the corner hardware store, which should make your wife extremely happy. They cost in the neighborhood of a dollar, more or less.

**Lamp wire.** This might not be one of the most exciting gifts you could receive, but it could certainly be one of the most useful, especially if you're planning to string up a new stereo speaker. Price: five cents a foot in better stores everywhere.

**A subscription to HIGH FIDELITY/AUDIOCRAFT Magazine.** No undue influence operating here, but it is a bargain this year: two books for the price of one.

**Spare output tubes.** Milady, please note: these are the only two big tubes in the amplifier that are absolutely alike. The number is printed on the side of the glass envelope, near the top. Nine chances out of ten, if you get milord a new set (they're available at almost

any radio-TV repair shop) you will at some future time figure as savior of a musical evening. It is always on an important occasion that output tubes choose to go sour or start gobble-gobbling. Price: roughly \$3.50 per tube.

**A stereo adapter.** If you are going stereo, this is a handy gadget which has dual volume controls, channel reversing switches, and multiple inputs and outputs. It gives you a single control panel to accommodate most of your stereo switching needs. Price: from \$10 to \$35, depending upon equipment to be used with it.

**Stereo balance meter.** This is a type of output level meter which has *two* needles in a single window. To set levels, you adjust the gain until the needles point to the same number, and your system is, theoretically at least, balanced. Yes, you *could* do the job by ear, of course, but this method is much quicker and somewhat more impressive, especially when uninitiated **guests** are on hand. Price: \$8.95.

**A stereo cartridge.** Not everyone who **has** been Thinking About Stereo has yet *done* anything about it. A stereo cartridge would be just the thing to precipitate the rest of the action, so to speak. The prices range from \$9.95 for a good ceramic cartridge to more money than anyone cares to think about. You'll have to check the catalogues on this one.

**A second speaker.** A multitude of ideas have been advanced about speakers for stereo, most of which have had substantial merit. The fact is, you *can* make do with smaller (and less expensive) speaker systems in stereo than you can in monophonic reproduction. Just why this is so remains a bit of a mystery—and will, until someone in the business compounds a simplified explanation too complicated for anyone else in the industry to understand and thereby disprove. Although ideally your stereo speakers should be identical, you *can get away with* a smaller second system until such time as you decide to go whole hog and invest in two big enclosures. Small systems designed as "stereo seconds" begin as low as (unbelievably) \$15, and run up to something over \$100.

**A stereo test record.** In most cases, test records are of doubtful value to anyone who doesn't own at least one of the test instruments necessary to interpret precisely their effect. In stereo, however, since the grooves contain *two* sets of information which must be perfectly balanced for optimum results, you *may* find that you can put a stereo test record to very good use indeed, gauging the effects of your system by ear. Price: about \$6.00.

**A stereo tone arm.** Take it *Continued on page 166*



**Twenty years in a Jumping Groove...**




*Alfred Lion and Francis Wolff*

**A**NY RECORD COLLECTOR who thinks he knows his field would probably have little difficulty in naming the three oldest American record companies among those active today. The three ancients are, of course, Victor, Columbia, and Decca. But who comes next?

The name in fourth position might surprise even collectors who specialize in jazz. For the fourth oldest record company in the United States still in business is a jazz label—Blue Note. On January 6, 1959, when Blue Note celebrates its twentieth anniversary, it will be not only the oldest record company in this country specializing in jazz, it will also be the oldest independent record company of any kind.

Blue Note has reached this eminence despite the fact that it is run by a pair of extremely reluctant businessmen. Alfred Lion and his partner, Francis Wolff, are first and foremost jazz enthusiasts, who record only the



## **THE Blue Note STORY**

by John S. Wilson

musicians *they* like and only the type of music *they* enjoy—with scarcely any concern for its sales potential. (Lion's normally twinkling expression reflects a complex of shock, affront, and bewilderment at the mere mention of profits.) Beyond this, they like to concentrate on unknown musicians. By most laws of economics, this is a direct route to bankruptcy. Yet Lion and Wolff, relying heavily on instinct and a lively curiosity, have made their unorthodox methods turn a hobby into a very stable business indeed.

One of the few things that Lion, who started the company, has in common with master minds behind other successful purveyors of recorded jazz is that he too staggered blindly, almost unconsciously, into the recording business. Jazz labels have grown out of such unlikely events as the floor fight between the Taft and Eisenhower forces at the 1952 Republican convention (River-

side), the need for decorum in the Turkish Embassy in Washington (Atlantic), and a salesman's desire to demonstrate a disc-cutting machine (Savoy). Blue Note emerged from a teen-ager's interest in skating.

The skater was sixteen-year-old Alfred Lion. The place was Berlin, the year 1925, when he encountered an apocalyptic sight—an illustrated poster in front of the Admiral Palast, a part-time skating rink, which advertised a show featuring Sam Wooding's orchestra. Young Lion was intrigued, although he hadn't the faintest idea who or what Sam Wooding's orchestra was. Anyway, that evening, he sat in the Admiral Palast, his skates stuffed under his seat, listening enraptured to a strange music that he felt but could not quite understand. When the program was over, he wandered out into the night in a sort of ecstasy.

This might have been a typical adolescent fancy but it wasn't. Fate had obviously started to weave a web of coincidence around Alfred Lion. A few days later, his mother put on the family phonograph a newly purchased recording of the big hit song of the moment, *Oh, Katarina*. Alfred was unimpressed. Later, glancing at the label, he noticed that the record was by Sam Wooding's orchestra. But it didn't sound like the Sam Wooding he had heard. The boy turned the record over and found that the other side was called *Shanghai Shuffle*. He played it, and almost immediately he was transported back to the Admiral Palast. This was what he was looking for, and now he knew where to find it—on records.

Then began a sort of blind hunt. The young Lion knew what he wanted, but exasperatingly, he didn't know how to ask for it, and he was not able to make clerks in German record shops understand his desires. When he came to the United States on business, some years later, he felt that he would surely have no trouble finding here the music he was looking for. In fact, however, he had no more success in New York than he had had in Berlin, until one day he heard a Louis Armstrong recording being played over a sidewalk loudspeaker. He rushed inside—only to find that the shop, like others he had tried, carried almost nothing except "pop" and classical records. But here a friendly clerk gave him a valuable clue: records like Louis Armstrong's were called "race records."

Lion seized on this crumb of information. He popped in and out of record stores all over midtown New York demanding "race records," and finding none. He was beginning to think that his new password was useless when another shopper obligingly told him that the place to get "race records" was uptown—Harlem.

Uptown went Lion. As he climbed out of the subway at 125th Street and Seventh Avenue, he saw a record store straight in front of him. He ran in and, almost desperately, asked if they had "race records."

"Then, for the first time in my life," Lion recalled recently, "I saw the Victor and Brunswick race catalogues. I saw the names of the people who made these records—Duke Ellington, Jelly Roll Morton, Charlie Johnson, Mary Lou Williams."

In his exuberance Lion ordered a huge stack of records, more than he could possibly pay for. He took as many as his pocket-money would cover, told the storekeeper to hold the others, and returned to bail them out, a few at a time, whenever he had any spare cash.

Even though he now knew the names of the orchestras which made the records he liked, Lion was still flying almost blind as a jazz fan. He began to recognize the styles of some of the soloists and to sort them out mentally—"this trumpeter sounds like the trumpeter on that other Ellington record; must be the same man." Soon he had a new set of idols to whom he could assign no names. But as he grew more familiar with New York and learned about the Savoy Ballroom, found Fletcher Henderson's band playing in a spot on Union Square, discovered that Duke Ellington might be included on the vaudeville bill at the Palace, he began to associate musical styles with faces and, finally, with names. When Lion returned to Berlin in 1930, he took with him more than three hundred records, the beginnings of a collection—growing steadily larger and heavier—that he totes all over the continents of Europe and South America for the next eight years.

It was back in the United States in 1938, however, that Lion encountered his next major adventure in his jazz education. At a jazz concert in Carnegie Hall he heard John Hammond's boogiewoogie protégés Albert Ammons, Meade Lux Lewis, and Pete Johnson, and

All photos by Francis Wolff



Sidney Bechet



Jimmy Smith



Meade Lux Lewis



Clifford Brown

discovered that he liked them much better on the concert stage where they could play at whatever length they chose than he had on their 10-inch 78-rpm records. His curiosity piqued, he walked into a recording studio on 47th Street the next day and, in all innocence, asked why records were not longer. He was gently advised that you could only get so many grooves to an inch, and was sent on his way.

Some time later Lion became friendly with Lewis and Ammons, and asked them if they would make some private recordings for his own pleasure. There promptly followed a session at that same 47th Street studio where Lion had learned about grooves. Ammons and Lewis played nine selections that afternoon, alternately wandering soulfully through a blues or churning up a scorching set of boogiewoogie choruses.

When Lion received the transcriptions of the session, it dawned on him that they were the same size as standard 12-inch discs. Once again his curiosity sent him looking for information, this time in a record store. No, he was told, 12-inch was for classical records only, no one would buy 12-inch jazz discs. Possibly this was the beginning of Lion's scorn for conservative business thinking. But, not trusting his own judgment completely, he cautiously had fifty copies of his two discs pressed, one by Lewis, one by Ammons. He sent a few out to reviewers, and received encouraging reactions from Irving Kolodin of the *Sun* and Howard Taubman of the *Times*. Then, from a Philadelphia store, the illustrious H. Royer Smith, came an order, his first. With that, the die was cast. Lion was in the record business.

A few months after this recording session, he made his second batch of discs, this time featuring trumpeter Frankie Newton, who led the band at Café Society, and saxophonist Sidney Bechet. Lion had first heard Bechet many years before at the Café Vaterland in Berlin where, incongruously dressed as a cowboy, he led a three-piece band. In the time since, Bechet had gained some repute and following as a jazz recording artist. However, he wanted to branch out, into popular ballads and the like, and no major company would take a chance on this.

Thus, when Lion made him a *carte blanche* offer, Bechet snatched at it. What eventuated was a record which was to become perhaps Bechet's most famous: *Summertime*. And Blue Note had what Lion now refers to as his "first little hit." Parenthetically, Frankie Newton was supposed to have been in *Summertime* with Bechet and would have shared solo space with him. But just before the recording began, Newton excused himself to go to the men's room. The instant the door closed behind him, Bechet said to his rhythm section, "All right, let's go," and started playing. As the music ended, Newton returned, but it was generally agreed that Bechet's solo version was so good that there was no point in cutting it over. Alfred Lion is still not certain whether or not Bechet's stratagem was deliberate.

By this time Lion had learned—through a little re-

search in a record store—how to pack shellac records for mailing, and was doing his own wrapping and delivering. Before Bechet made *Summertime* this was no great strain. But as news of the Bechet disc got around, Lion found himself spending the better part of his day delivering records to the post office and to stores in New York (the Commodore Music Shop, for instance, though it specialized in jazz, would not order more than ten copies at once, so that Lion sometimes had to make deliveries several times a day to keep up with the demand).

Fortunately for Lion's weary arches, Francis Wolff, an old boyhood friend in Berlin, came to the United States at this time and joined the burgeoning recording venture. Although both men had full-time jobs elsewhere—Wolff in a photographic studio and Lion with an export firm—they opened a sales office and staggered their hours so that one of them could usually be there. During the war years, Lion continued to record Bechet and other such traditionalists as Wild Bill Davison, Art Hodes, and Edmond Hall, along with prominent practitioners of Swing—Ben Webster, Buck Clayton, Sidney De Paris, and others.

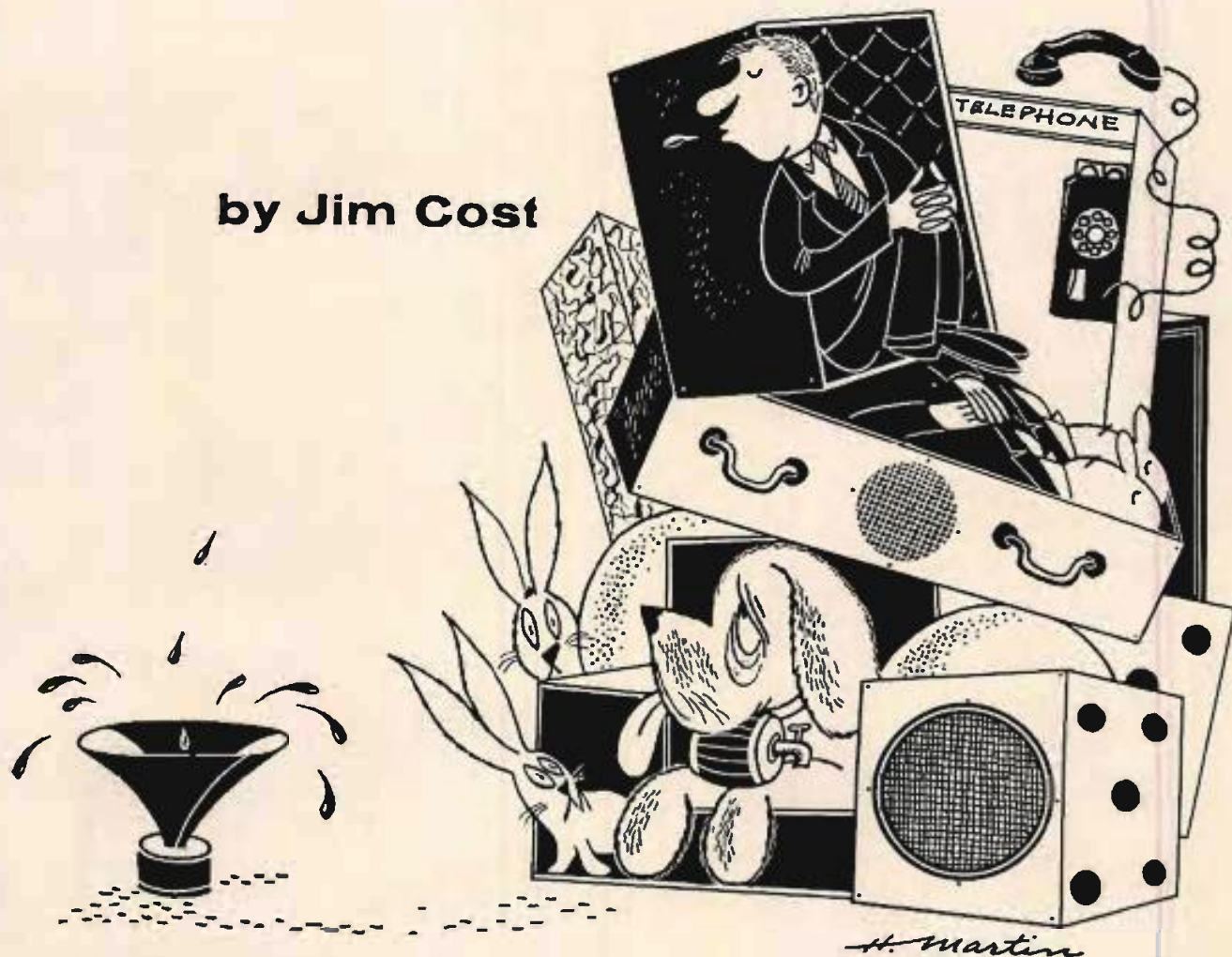
By the end of the war Blue Note had become sufficiently profitable for Lion and Wolff to quit their outside jobs. At this time, too, Lion began to record modern jazz. His first session was in September 1947, with a group led by Tadd Dameron. In the next few years the balance between modern and traditional jazz on the Blue Note label shifted more and more towards the modern side; and since 1950 Lion has all but stopped recording the older jazz styles.

"All the old stuff has been done," he says, "and new Dixieland groups don't appeal to me. What they play seems very mechanical—it doesn't have the real feeling it needs. What I like of the old jazz is the masters, the men who really know how to do it and have done it all their lives, men like Bechet and George Lewis." (Bechet and Lewis, incidentally, are the only traditionalist band-leaders listed in Blue Note's current LP catalogue.)

In shifting the company's emphasis from Dixieland to modern, Lion changed the appeal of his records in more than musical style alone. During Blue Note's first decade, the musicians he used were usually well established, at least among jazz fans. But when he first turned to modern jazz he had no choice but to record men who were scarcely known beyond a very small clique of enthusiasts. This set Lion on a policy, which he still follows today, of searching out and giving opportunity to new talent. As a result, an impressive number of modern jazz musicians have had their first chance to be heard as leaders on Blue Note discs. The list includes Thelonious Monk, Bud Powell, Clifford Brown, Art Blakey, and Horace Silver. More recently Lion has had great success in developing another of his debutants, organist Jimmy Smith, and he now has high hopes for his latest discovery, another Smith—Louis, a trumpeter.

One of the two principal *Continued on page 164*

by Jim Cost



## Have Casket, Need Corpse

*... or what to do with your surplus speaker enclosures*

A DEDICATED high-fidelity craftsman balks at little. He will not hesitate to tackle a super de luxe, knee-action, triple delayed ultra-Flugelhornloaded speaker enclosure if it means moving a step nearer sound perfection. In various stages of his hi-fi development he may try a number of widely different enclosure types. And why not? Building speaker boxes is his best chance to exercise creative talent. Few are qualified to design and build electronic equipment. Constructing amplifier kits is a lot of fun — but someone else has done all the planning. Housing speakers, however, is something the handy man can get his saw teeth into. Heaven knows, a man needs something he can do for himself in today's world. Then too, expert opinion is sharply divided among schools of speaker baffling. This is the least settled aspect of high fidelity. There is always the chance, how-

ever slight, that even the veriest amateur may hit promptly upon that one enclosure which is perfect for his speaker, amplifier, and listening room.

All this hive of experimentation throughout the land leaves one problem unsolved. What does the hi-fi addict do with his outmoded enclosures? A speaker enclosure, properly built, is almost indestructible; and salvage of reusable materials is difficult. It is wasteful just to cast such solid boxes aside; they do not have much sale value unless the maker is unusually expert; they make poor Christmas presents, ranking roughly below plaster dogs and silver salvers. Other fi addicts will not even take them off your hands, since they usually have a different baffling philosophy. No, what is needed is a plan whereby such unused cabinets may be turned to some other practical use around the house. I hope in this article to

pass on the benefits of my own experience by making helpful suggestions for utilizing unused speaker cabinets.

When the high-fidelity hobby first began to ripple from city, to suburb, to backwoods, and finally to me, I decided to build my first enclosure. A bass reflex, of course. Experts call this the "cheapest and easiest to build" of any enclosure type. They should have cautioned the beginner to check the price of all the tools he happened not to own, to take out medical insurance, and to consider carefully his aptitude for cabinet making. One gold-plated phrase guided me in my first efforts. "The bigger, the better." Two grown men could have been buried in my first reflex box. (One almost was, when my wife found that the sarcophagus was to be placed in *her* living room.) The whole thing was braced and girdered like a skyscraper. Nothing so flimsy as wood blocks secured the joints. Angle iron was the stuff. (It does not hold wood glue very well, but it sure holds machine bolts.) Padding was just about mattress thick.

Came the day when, with a quiet glow of pride, I fitted my single eight-inch speaker and wired in a jukebox amplifier, preamp, and magnetic cartridge. Magnificence! The emotion attending consummation obscured my initial reaction to any faults. But when this first fine frenzy faded, a suspicion arose that all was not quite right. *La Mer* came through with a distant, hollow sound, vaguely reminiscent of the ocean; but Beethoven's Fifth was around the next corner and his Quartet in A minor placed at the far end of a train tunnel. I made a further study of speaker baffling.

Chapman's *Homer*, stout Cortez, and all that. I read another expert, and found my golden rule refuted. This authority insisted there should be a definite relationship between speaker size and size of enclosure. Included in his article were plans for one of those cute little ducted port cabinets about the size of a large cigar box, recommended for all eight-inch speakers. There was sufficient material left over from the sarcophagus to begin construction immediately.

But what to do with the big box? I suggested to my wife that we install windows and a telephone so we could have our own private phone booth. This idea was received, well, coldly. Several alternative suggestions followed: a rabbit hutch (we had no rabbits); a home for homeless St. Bernards; a receptacle for her mother's presents. All of these met with kindred enthusiasm. Finally, I said I would fit a rustic door, saw out a quarter moon, and thus produce a sure-fire conversation piece for the living room. Her calm response to this consisted of fragments of plywood, crockery, and stray tools. At the present time, after years in high fidelity, the box serves as my own private padded cell.

Meanwhile, back in the den, the small enclosure had been put into operation. Hearing what was wrong with this one did not take long. It sounded as though Sousa had never heard of the Sousaphone. Strictly .22 caliber. I gave up on undersized baffles.

Our cat Cello solved the problem of utilizing this shoe box. I left the front panel off when the box was set aside and she discovered that the Ozite made a good bed. From then on, the enclosure was Cello's private retreat.

By now firmly resolved to strike a happy medium in cabinet size, I found that mathematics could be applied to enclosure design. At last, I was on my own. Never again did I have to depend upon someone else's word for the proper size baffle. By way of practice, I calculated the resonance points of both my previous efforts. One formula indicated that both would resonate at the same point; minus 10 cycles per second. I finally found a formula that would result in a cabinet of reasonable size.

More study of acoustic theory gave me a boxphobia about nonresonant panels. This led to a consideration of brick, plaster, sheet steel, Keene's cement, and cast concrete. I do not know how any of these might have been reused had I decided to salvage them, although I once had a passing thought that a cast concrete reflex might be made into a septic tank; and at one point I considered a cylindrical baffle made of heavy gauge sheet aluminum, but decided that it would look too much like a garbage can.

At the time, another source of nonresonant materials presented itself. One of the local banks, in remodeling, discarded some marble panels. Scrounging some of these, I built a carefully computed corner reflex; built it with a cold chisel. Sonic results were excellent within the limitations of an eight-inch speaker. For some time this enclosure was highly satisfactory (to me *and* my wife). I was permitted back in the living room, and the only reason finally for abandoning it was a growing preoccupation with multiple speakers. I have found no immediate reuse for the marble enclosure, but when the time comes I shall have an absolutely unique tombstone — a hollow prism. The epitaph shall read: "Here lies a baffled man."

My first step towards multiple speaker ownership was the purchase of another eight-inch speaker and construction of twin infinite baffles of a cubical shape. The cube, experts assure us, gives a well-rounded bass and there is only one inner resonance to take care of. These boxes provided a rather pleasing musical effect, except in one respect. The experts had overlooked the resonance from corner to opposite corner of these baffles. Twin speakers reinforce each other and so do twin resonances. I now own the only pair of eight-cubic-foot dice in the world. Unfortunately, cutting the speaker holes "loaded" them, and the throw invariably comes up "snake eyes."

The sphere, experts assure us further, is the only true Helmholtz resonator. I made mine out of papier-mâché, using shellac instead of paste. Before the reader laughs, let him remember that paper has a density of 1 and shellac of 1.7, both greater than plywood. A weather balloon served as the form. *Continued on page 165*



by Fritz A. Kuttner



# THE Stuttgart

## VOLUNTEERS

*Being the story of how young Karl Münchinger  
created an orchestra because he wanted one to conduct.*

IF YOU WATCH late television, it is almost inevitable that at one time or another you have been lured into witnessing at least the beginning of one of Hollywood's Musical-Career Epics. One has to think of these in capital letters, because they were Great Human Documents. There was a spate of them in the late 1940s—all exactly the same, especially in their incredibility, whether they purported to depict a real character or a fictitious one.

We would be shown first the incipient Maestro either as a child or as a youth. As a child, he would be distinguished by a coiffure too long and a penchant for gazing at birds when he was supposed to be doing his homework. As a youth, he would be shown in bad need of a haircut and with a certain inclination to watch

pigeons through the window instead of minding the delicatessen. What followed next came with a horrid inevitability. Despite his almost disabling lassitude, a sort of imbecilic stubbornness would carry him to the heights. By this is meant that we would see him soon in a structure vaguely resembling Carnegie Hall, conducting a strange orchestral arrangement of Liszt's *Liebesträum* to the ecstatic plaudits of an audience all dressed up like movie extras. Next we would see a wheeling sequence of concert-hall marquees, marking a triumphal passage through Paris, Berlin, London, Milan, and New York, while the sound system rendered pleasant railroad noises, chuck-chuck-chuck, and there was an occasional upward cascade of champagne bubbles. If we stayed with our hero any longer, we would soon see him spurn his

childhood sweetheart in favor of a heavily mascara'd debutante. But we don't. We rouse ourselves and switch channels. His success has been simply too swift and complete for belief. Things don't happen that way in real musical life.

Don't they?

Here is the story of Karl Münchinger and his Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, and I do not know how Hollywood could ever hope to top it.

As the script starts, the child Karl is just one year old. His father, an architect, dies, leaving the mother alone with the task of supporting her family. Fade-out. The little boy now is six, and we see him building himself a sort of box fiddle strung with strands of twine, and trying to play it with a small homemade bow. We see him, too, singing in the school choir and, at age eleven, taking part in a performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*. This experience shakes the child with an excitement so violent he has to stay in bed for several days with high fever; neither his mother nor the family doctor can find out what ails him.

When the youngster climbs out of bed, his mind is made up: he is going to be a musician. His mother understands. At some sacrifice, she arranges for piano and violin lessons, and later for instruction in harmony. By the time Karl gets his school diploma, at age nineteen, he has made a further decision: he wants to be a conductor. This time he is overruled; the Münchingers are deeply religious people, and practical as well. Where musical jobs are found is in the church. The son is going to be an organist and choirmaster. He enters Stuttgart State Academy of Music and takes his final examinations in 1938 with concentration on organ, choir work, and Protestant sacred music. His first professional assignment is to the post of organist and choir director at St. Martin's Church in his home town of Stuttgart. He serves there conscientiously. Now it is 1941, and there is a war on. The Army eyes him, but rejects him.

Though young Münchinger really studied church music and worked hard as an organist, there was always the same aim and longing in the back of his mind: I must save some money to pay my way through conducting school. He did, entering Leipzig Conservatory and beginning studies under Hermann Abendroth. Upon graduation his dream was fulfilled: he landed a conducting position with the Niedersachsen Symphonie Orchester in Hanover. This was a seventy-man group of modest distinction in a typical provincial setting and of German provincial competence. Did its new conductor promptly develop this Hanover orchestra into a unit of truly international distinction? No, he did not.

In 1944 the orchestra is bombed out, the concert hall destroyed. For a while Münchinger lives, with some of his musicians, in a ruin. When it becomes clear that no other hall can be found, the orchestra disintegrates. The next chapter is nothing but misery, hunger, and illness. In the spring of 1945—the fighting had just

ended—he goes back to Stuttgart, only to find the town a heap of rubble. With no music being made, the young man can do little but hard thinking. Münchinger spends days simply thinking about orchestral performances in general. He comes to the conclusion that rehearsal time is the crux of the problem of orchestral merit. There isn't enough of it, except for the most famous and financially secure symphonic organizations. Like a scientist conceiving an experiment, he decides to establish a chamber orchestra of his own, if he possibly can, and to train it toward the kind of near-perfection only the great metropolitan orchestras have been able to aspire to.

This would seem, of course, a fantastic and Utopian idea, since the support of even a small symphonic body calls for a millionaire's resources. Normally, the salaries of twenty men would have to be paid, plus considerable overhead expenses. What makes the project feasible is its timing. Germany, at the end of the war, has lapsed into a sort of stupor. There are only two things left that really matter: digging out from under the ruins and finding food to keep body and soul together. Münchinger scavenges an elderly truck, and drives around Stuttgart and the countryside, hunting young musicians. He wants men willing to put in unlimited and unpaid rehearsal time and practice because music means more to them than the struggle for sheer physical survival. After two and a half months he has assembled fifteen men. Since the whole city has been bombed out, they start rehearsing in an empty shed on the outskirts. They have no heat, but they also pay no rent. Nobody receives wages, and how they all managed to stay alive, Münchinger cannot recall; he remembers only rehearsing all day and spending his nights—often all night—copying out scores and parts for the next day's schedule.

Some months go by before the conductor feels that his group is ready for public appearance. Then this lean and somewhat unkempt band of players set out for the nearby villages, giving their first performances in country churches (no admission fee, of course). Maestro Münchinger himself carries the music and music stands—all sixteen of them. Again, fade-out.

The next scene opens with Münchinger and his men in the role of Pied Piper. Word of the wandering minstrels has spread around the countryside. Music-starved villagers follow them from place to place, the townsfolk flock out from Stuttgart. At this point, early in 1946, enters Everett Helm, then a cultural attaché with the local United States Occupation Forces. Helm helps Münchinger find something like a concert hall in Stuttgart. Next, he persuades Ralph Kirkpatrick, the brilliant American harpsichordist, to appear as a soloist with the orchestra. Münchinger still remembers the emotion compounded with hunger with which they first met their guest soloist: Kirkpatrick appeared bearing as a gift a big box of chocolates, the first candy the men had eaten in several years.

During all this period the *Continued on page 160*



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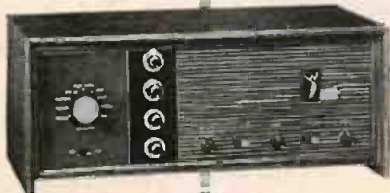
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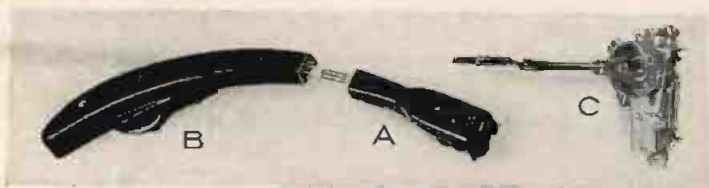
Ralph Bellamy, starring in "Sunrise At Campobello", listens to stereo on his Collaro changer and Goodmans Triaxonal Speaker System.

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by Roland Gelatt

# Music Makers

MISCHA ELMAN is to violinists what Maurice Chevalier is to entertainers—an old pro of seemingly limitless endurance. You will encounter few concertgoers whose memories reach back to the pre-Elman era. This month the violinist celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of his American debut in Carnegie Hall, and he is observing the date quite properly by playing a recital in Carnegie Hall. At sixty-seven, Mr. Elman is in no wise prepared to retire.

When Mischa Elman first came to this country in the palmy days of Theodore Roosevelt, he had already enjoyed a spectacular success throughout Europe. In 1904 he went straight from Leopold Auer's classroom in Saint Petersburg to Berlin and set the whole town talking of a fabulous new *Wunderkind*. Elman was the first Auer pupil to achieve fame outside of Russia; Zimbalist, Seidel, Heifetz, and Milstein followed later. As a talented cherub dressed in a white sailor suit, the young violinist became the darling of audiences in Germany and England; but by the time he came to New York, on the eve of his eighteenth birthday, Elman was eager to be judged as a musician rather than as a prodigy.

The critics—unpleasant creatures—were not overwhelmed by that first Carnegie Hall recital half a century ago. Richard Aldrich in the *New York Times* characterized Elman as a fine fiddler and an imperfect musician. Indeed, he has never been a particular favorite of the music critics. That fact, however, has not at all hindered Mischa Elman's career. During his first season he set a record, still unsurpassed, by performing in twenty-two concerts in New York alone. Since then he has been touring the American music circuit without respite and is said to have given more concerts in the United States than any living instrumentalist.

The other day we visited Mr. Elman

in his New York apartment, high above Central Park, and got him to talking about the changes he has observed in fifty years as a concert performer. He told us that the biggest change has been in the violinist's repertoire. "I remember the time when it seemed perfectly normal to play a recital without putting a violin-piano sonata in the program. Today a sonata is obligatory. There are many reasons for this, of course, but one of them you may perhaps not realize. As the years have piled up, the violinist's repertoire has been steadily shrinking. Many of the pieces played by artists fifty years ago just don't go over now." We asked Mr. Elman to give an example. "I'd rather not," he countered, "because I might decide to play one of the old pieces. All right, I'll mention one—the 'Othello Fantasy' by Ernst, a marvelous theme and variations. There were dozens of effective violin pieces like this in the repertoire when I made my debut. Every great violinist played them. Now nobody wants to hear them." We detected a note of regret in Mr. Elman's voice as he spoke of these deposed monarchs of the repertoire and a note of quiet satisfaction when he told us that he would play one of them—Wieniawski's *Souvenir de Moscou*—in his anniversary recital.

What of Mischa Elman himself? How had he changed in half a century? "In



many ways," he replied, "but most importantly in self-assurance. I always wanted to emancipate myself from influences—the influences of teachers, critics, friends. It took a long time. I used to be

very sensitive. Too sensitive. I still am often dissatisfied, but I know now what I want and where I'm going. My aim is to make the violin sing as beautifully as possible. Many young violinists no longer treat the violin as a singing instrument; they play, but they don't sing."

PABLO CASALS returned to New York after a thirty-year absence late in October to participate in an international United Nations Day Concert that was broadcast to forty-eight countries and had the largest audience of any musical event in history. From the U.N. General Assembly Hall in New York listeners heard the Boston Symphony under Munch perform Honegger's Fifth Symphony and Casals and Horszowski play Bach's D major Sonata. Then the program switched to the Salle Pleyel in Paris, where Ravi Shankar played classical Indian music on the sitar and Oistrakh and Menuhin collaborated in the Bach Double Concerto. The final part of the concert came from Geneva and was devoted to the last movement of Beethoven's Ninth, performed by the Suisse Romande Orchestra under Ansermet, a Swiss chorus, and four British soloists.

Underwater phone cables were used for transmission across the Atlantic, and there was none of the fading and "lumping"—unavoidable concomitants of short-wave relays—that used to make the international music broadcast more of a curiosity than a pleasure. The sound was admittedly low fidelity compared to FM at its best (those underwater phone cables, though recently laid, were designed twenty years ago), but it was clear and strong; and the thrill of hearing a concert simultaneously with listeners in Moscow, Milan, and Montreal more than made up for any sonic deficiencies. There should be many more such broadcasts.



# December

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dence of divine grace" (*Gramophone, London*). (*Illustrated brochure  
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the beautiful "Gia Nella Notte Densa" (Act I, *Otello*). "It is  
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Miss Carteri" (Alfred Frankenstein, in *S. F. Chronicle*, on  
her debut). Milan Symphony Orchestra, Antonio Tonini,  
Conductor. Angel 35601

### BIRGIT NILSSON and HANS HOTTER sing WAGNER

Excerpts from *Die Walküre* and *The Flying Dutchman*

In her London debut as Brünnhilde (*Götterdämmerung*) at  
Covent Garden, Birgit Nilsson was termed "the great thing of the  
evening... she sang superbly" (Critic Ernest Newman). Of Hans  
Hotter, a real bass-baritone and one of the few in the world,  
Howard Taubman (*N. Y. Times*) said, "He makes Wotan every  
inch a god." Here Soprano Nilsson and Baritone Hotter sing the  
"first meeting" duet from Act II, Scene 3, *Flying Dutchman*;  
and the entire Finale from Act III, *Die Walküre*. With Philhar-  
monia Orchestra, Leopold Ludwig, Conductor. Angel 35585

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national Contest (the "Davis Cup of music")—and has made  
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# Records in Review



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## CLASSICAL

BACH: *Brandenburg Concerto No. 3, in G, S. 1048; Chaconne* (arr. Vardi)  
Paganini: *La Campanella; Caprices Nos. 9, 20, 24* (arr. Gusikoff)

The Concert-Masters of New York, David Broekman, cond.

• • DECCA DL 79955. SD. \$5.98.

The *Brandenburg* is a wonderful argument for stereo. The violins come from the left, the violas from the right, and the cellos seem to be in the rear center—an ideal setup for this work. Musically, the performance lacks only a continuo and a cadenza between the movements to be first-class. These, as Paul Affelder pointed out in his review of the monophonic version, are all excellent players. Mr. Broekman is a much better conductor than annotator (his naïve notes mention "David Mendel" and "his Bach-Reader"). N.B.

BACH: *Brandenburg Concertos, Nos. 1-6, S. 1046-51* (complete)

Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, August Weinzinger, cond.

• ARCHIVE ARC 3105/06. Two LP. \$5.98 each.

Like the Haas and Horenstein sets, this

one uses the exact instrumentation prescribed by Bach throughout. Unlike those sets, however, and any others known to me, this one solves the problem of balances with complete success. Wenzinger treats these works as chamber music, and with expert aid from the engineers achieves perfect transparency. Even in No. 2, trumpet, recorder, oboe, solo violin, and strings playing together can all be heard. From the standpoint of interpretation there is much to commend here.

Two things keep this set from surpassing Prohaska, Sacher, and Münchinger—the top three, in my opinion. One is the quality of the trumpet-playing in No. 2: it is pinched and insecure. The other results from what seems to be an excess of musicological zeal. All the works are played in what in Archive's quaint English is called "old deep tune." This turns out to be a half-tone lower than our normal pitch. But, as Arthur Mendel has shown in a brilliant article, pitch in Bach's time varied from place to place and even from church to church in the same place. We don't know what pitch, if any, was standard at Cöthen, where Bach wrote these works, or in the Margrave of Brandenburg's orchestra. On the other hand, there is no reason to suppose that Bach would have objected to performances at our normal pitch. These performances at a lower pitch are therefore musicologically unsupported; but worse, they impart drabness to much of the music. N.B.

BACH: *Concerto for Clavier and Orchestra, No. 5, in F minor, S. 1056—*  
See Beethoven: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 1, in C, Op. 15.*

BACH: *Organ Works*

Vol. 4: *Fantasia in C, S. 570; Fugue in C minor, S. 574; Prelude and Fugue in F minor, S. 534; Prelude and Fugue in D minor, S. 539; Trio in G, S. 1027a; Fantasia and Fugue in G minor, S. 542.*

Anton Heiller, organ.

• Epic LC 3462. LP. \$3.98.

The first two works listed above, both early ones, do not seem to be otherwise available on microgroove. The Fugue is particularly welcome; here a sharply defined theme by Legrenzi is given a rich working out, rounded off by an improvisatory end. Heiller plays these well and conveys the power, if not the poetry, of the great G minor Fantasia, but as in other volumes of his series he does not always choose registrations that would present Bach's counterpoint with sufficient clarity. N.B.

BARBER: *Vanessa*

Eleanor Steber (s), Vanessa; Rosalind Elias (ms), Erika; Regina Resnik (ms), the Baroness; Nicolai Gedda (t), Anatol; Robert Nagy (t), a Footman; George Cehanovsky (b), the Major-domo; Giorgio Tozzi (bs), the Doctor. Metropolitan

Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Dimitri Mitropoulos, cond.

• • RCA Victor LSC 6138. Three SD. \$17.94.

The singing per se was one of the unequivocally good qualities of this opera, reviewed in its monophonic edition in these pages last month, although the vocal writing itself is sometimes open to question. I had hoped that the separate strands of the last act quintet ("To leave, to break . . .") would come clear in the stereo version but they do not. This is undoubtedly partly Barber's fault: after the lovely opening phrase the parts grow thick-textured and rather unvocal. But the engineers could have helped out here and elsewhere by following a less conservative plan of placing the singers. The voices are not exactly bunched together but they do hover in a rather constricted area about the right channel. Not once in the recording did I detect a clear-cut instance of left-channel vocal activity.

Actually, Barber's best is to be found in his orchestral textures, and here a great deal of imagination has gone into the recording. A rich, spread-out effect is achieved, and the incisive sound Victor's engineers have drawn from the oboes and clarinets is particularly admirable. From a purely instrumental point of view, then, the stereo *Vanessa* is a distinct improvement upon its monophonic counterpart. D.J.

BEETHOVEN: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 1, in C, Op. 15*

†Bach: *Concerto for Clavier and Orchestra, No. 5, in F minor, S. 1056*

Glenn Gould, piano; Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Vladimir Golschmann, cond.

• COLUMBIA ML 5298. LP. \$3.98.

However you may describe this performance, the adjective won't be "dull." Gould, adding the eleventh to the currently available editions of the Beethoven, offers an approach that mixes wonderful—and exasperating—things. Those who want orthodoxy will stick with Serkin in the Beethoven, Haskil in the Bach; but perhaps you don't want to be orthodox?

Gould is at his best in the two slow movements, which are eloquently probing and really slow. He is at his worst in a dreadful cadenza for the final movement of the Beethoven. Between those extremes there is a great deal of lively variation, worthy of attention. R.C.M.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 3, in E flat, Op. 55 ("Eroica")*

Boston Symphony Orchestra, Charles Munch, cond.

• RCA Victor LM 2233. LP. \$4.98.  
• • RCA Victor LSC 2233. SD. \$5.98.

One of the best recordings to come from the Bostonians in a long time, representing in the slow movement some of Munch's most powerful work on discs, this reading of the *Eroica* even so cannot be given a blanket recommendation.

There is too much competition, and too much of it can make claim to recognition.

The opening movement is taken at a very fast pace, the unrelenting drive of which is thrilling but at the cost of subordinating other elements in the score. The slow movement, in contrast, runs to sixteen minutes, a tempo even slower than that of the Furtwängler recording. Because of its length, the movement is here broken between sides, which some will find objectionable, however necessary. This treatment of the *Funeral March* is the finest thing in the reading, though.

Munch plays the Scherzo quite fast, and takes a moderate approach in the finale, bringing to both movements a lightness and animation often lost in more dramatic versions.

The monophonic version is typical of Symphony Hall recordings in its sonic picture of a large orchestra in highly resonant space. Nothing is very close, but all important detail registers with acceptable clarity. Because of the reverberant auditorium, the stereo channels are largely blended together. Heard over dual speakers there is really not a great deal of difference between the stereo and monophonic versions. R.C.M.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 6, in F, Op. 68 ("Pastoral")*

Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Bruno Walter, cond.

• COLUMBIA ML 5284. LP. \$3.98.

• • COLUMBIA MS 6012. SD. \$5.98.

"In Los Angeles, not too far from my home, is a wonderful American Legion Hall. It is not wonderful to look at, but it is wonderful acoustically. And in Los Angeles there are so many fine musicians from the film studios and the Philharmonic. It is a pleasure to work there. If I have the opportunity I shall do everything once more, all of Beethoven and Brahms, and much Mozart, Schubert, and Schumann. So far I have recorded six Beethoven symphonies, and next year I do the rest."

So, as we spoke together last spring, Bruno Walter described the project, the first fruit of which is now in our hands. For a conductor of eighty-one to undertake a systematic re-recording of his basic repertory is remarkable enough in itself. When he is a man of Walter's achievements, it becomes a historic event. For in this series we shall have documented in stereophonic sound the mature readings of one of the great interpreters of the German tradition.

This first performance is one of the finest I have heard from Walter, spacious, lyric, and noble with true spiritual rapport between composer and conductor. The engineering provides clear orchestral lines, well balanced with just the right amount of hall resonance. Monophonically it is a fine disc; but the stereo, a distinct two-channel affair, adds greatly to the presence.

The album liner, incidentally, is by a famous music critic named Hector Berlioz. R.C.M.

BERLIOZ: *Le Carnaval romain, Overture, Op. 9*—See Tchaikovsky: *The Nutcracker: Orchestral Suite, Op. 71a*.

BERLIOZ: *Harold en Italie, Op. 16*

William Primrose, viola; Boston Symphony Orchestra, Charles Munch, cond.

• RCA Victor LM 2228. LP. \$4.98.  
• • RCA Victor LSC 2228. SD. \$5.98.

This is William Primrose's third disc interpretation of what started out as a viola concerto for Paganini and ended as Berlioz's second symphony, a work in which the viola acts as an obligato commentator rather than an out-and-out soloist. His first recording, made with Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony for RCA Victor, was an altogether satisfying job for its time, both musically and technically. Five or six years ago he made a second *Harold*, a superb collaboration with Beecham and the Royal Philharmonic for Columbia; to this disc the two new Victor editions must take second place.

Once again, the violist plays in his customary suave and eminently listenable manner, one which provides both tonal sublimities and interpretative depths. Munch, however, here seems to lack the insight into this music that Beecham displayed. In the second movement the present conductor almost has the pilgrims tripping the light fantastic; and in the finale his tempo is much less steady than Beecham's. The soloist stands out very prominently from the orchestra in both the Victor and Columbia recordings, but the orchestral definition is better and the quality somewhat brighter in Columbia's reproduction. And though RCA's stereophonic version is a bit more dramatic than the single-track release, the sound does not compensate for the interpretative shortcomings. P.A.

BRAHMS: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 1, in D minor, Op. 15*

Leon Fleisher, piano; Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, cond.

• • EPIC BC 1003. SD. \$5.98.

The performance itself is exciting, but I think the monophonic version is preferable to the stereo. Fleisher's big style becomes too big when spread over two speakers; and in the second movement, when he takes a pedal on a bass note, the sound booms through the room. The solo instrument has been pretty evenly divided between both channels, and thus a slight shift in the listener's position will remove the focus of the piano from one speaker to another. This is a shame, for Fleisher's brilliant and powerful performance deserves more than it has been given on this disc. H.C.S.

BRAHMS: *Symphony No. 1, in C minor, Op. 68*

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Paul Kletzki, cond.

• ANGEL 35619. LP. \$4.98 (or \$3.98).

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twenty available versions of the Brahms First. It's positively sinful. Kletzki's new disc is a good one. He goes through the proper motions and his orchestra makes the proper sounds. Although he can be very much the virtuoso conductor at times, here he sticks conscientiously to the text. The only thing missing is the feeling of stature that Klemperer brought to the music in his Angel disc. The Kletzki version can be listened to with admiration; the Klemperer inspires awe. H.C.S.

**BRUCKNER: Symphony No. 8, in C minor**

Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond.

• ANGEL 3576 B. Two LP. \$9.96 (or \$7.96).

Like his other symphonies, Bruckner's Eighth has undergone numerous revisions, executed both by the measure composer himself and by well-meaning colleagues. [A summary of its history may be found in the *High Fidelity Record Annual*, 1956, p. 69.] The notes for the present recording indicate simply that one of the several so-called original versions is used. This matter will interest Bruckner specialists only, however, since the performance itself is not a distinguished one. Although Karajan's interpretation of the third movement is exceptionally probing, it cannot outweigh the deficiencies of the first two movements, taken at such a snail's pace and so legato that they lose all interest.

Angel's sound is exceedingly well rounded and wide-range; but Van Beinum's Epic set, though sonically inferior to both this new Angel and Horenstein's Vox version, is the most judiciously paced—and, at a lower price, also includes a delightful performance of Schubert's Symphony No. 3, in D. P.A.

**CHERUBINI: Medea**

Maria Meneghini Callas (s), Medea; Renata Scotto (s), Glauce; Lidia Marimpietri (s), First Maidservant; Elvira Galassi (s), Second Maidservant; Miriam Pirazzini (ms), Neris; Mirto Picchi (t), Giasone; Alfredo Giacomotti (b), Captain of the Guard; Giuseppe Modesti (bs), Creonte. Chorus and Orchestra of the Teatro alla Scala (Milan), Tullio Serafin, cond.

• • MERCURY SR 39000. Three SD. \$17.85.

Until Side 3 nothing much happens in the stereo *Medea* that didn't also happen in the monophonic version (reviewed here last September) played through two speakers. Indeed there is a certain edge and shrillness to the sound I did not note earlier. But after *Medea's* first aria some exciting things are done to suggest dramatic verisimilitude: Jason rejects her plea, she seems to move away from him, and the two launch into their great duet, hurling their hatred and threats at one another like thunderbolts from opposite corners of the sky. The exciting stage illusion continues through the long, pyrotechnic scene in which *Medea* employs



Pianist Firkusny: Debussy with urbanity.

her skill at dissembling to convince Creon to grant her one day longer at Corinth. After this the stereophony returns to the less spectacular earlier procedures. The naïve wind-band that accompanies the nuptial chorus, "*Dehl posa al crin*," emerges with a crispness less marked monophonically, but the opportunities for off-stage effects when Glauce's death is discovered are not taken advantage of.

On the whole, the stereo at its best reaffirms Cherubini's great skill as a symphonist and creator of thrillingly dramatic vocal declamation. It also tends to emphasize how vastly superior Callas is to most other members of the cast. D.J.

**DEBUSSY: Images: No. 2, Ibéria**

[Ravel: *Miroirs: No. 4, Alborada del gracioso; Valses nobles et sentimentales*

Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Fritz Reiner, cond.

• • RCA VICTOR LSC 2222. SD. \$5.98.

If you want a stereo demonstration disc, this one should amaze the friends and neighbors. *Ibéria*, an orchestral showpiece, is conducted with extraordinary brilliance by Reiner, and the stereo sound is dazzling. One hears all kinds of details in the scoring that hitherto have been obscured. Part of this is due to Reiner's knack for clarifying orchestral texture, but the recording itself must take a large share of the credit. H.C.S.

**DEBUSSY: Piano Music**

*Images*, Set I: No. 1, *Reflets dans l'eau*. *Images*, Set II: No. 3, *Poissons d'or*. *Préludes*, Book I: No. 8, *La Fille aux cheveux de lin*; No. 10, *La Cathédrale engloutie*; No. 12, *Minstrels*. *Préludes*, Book II: No. 6, *General Lavigne*, *Eccentric*; No. 12, *Feux d'artifice*. *Deux Arabesques*. *La Plus que lente*. *Réverie*.

Rudolf Firkusny, piano.

• CAPITOL P 8451. LP. \$4.98.

This is as elegant Debussy-playing as you are likely to hear. Firkusny approaches the music with urbanity, spirit, and even wit. He has a very fluent technique, and thus need not resort to the cloudy pedaling that many less gifted pianists have used, in the name of impressionism, to hide inadequate fingers. The recorded sound, too, is exceptionally lifelike—one

of the finest examples of piano tone I have heard in some time. All of the music on this disc represents the popular side of Debussy, from the salonlike *Arabesques* and *Réverie* to the virtuoso fireworks of *Feux d'artifice*. Anybody who wants an introduction to the piano music of Debussy need look no further. H.C.S.

**DOHNANYI: Konzertstück, Op. 12—See Kodály: Sonata for Cello Solo, in C, Op. 8.**

**DONIZETTI: Lucia di Lammermoor**

Ruberta Peters (s), Lucia; Miti Truccato Pace (ms), Alisa; Jan Peerce (t), Edgardo; Piero de Palma (t), Lord Arturo Bucklaw; Mario Carlin (t), Normanno; Philip Maero (b), Lord Enrico Ashton; Giorgio Tozzi (bs), Raimondo Bide-the-Bent. Rome Opera House Chorus and Orchestra, Erich Leinsdorf, cond.

• RCA VICTOR LM 6055. Two LP. \$9.96.

What I was reminded of in attempting to follow this *Lucia* with the score was Verdi's definition of the word "tradition." "Tradition," he said, "means the last bad performance." In this case tradition means the last fifty or so years of bad performances at the Metropolitan. The Lucy that Miss Peters re-creates is more the handiwork of Nellie Melba, Marcella Sembrich, Amelita Galli-Curci, and, above all, Lily Pons than of Gaetano Donizetti. I don't know the complete recording made by Pons with Metropolitan forces some years back; but the present album seems to me, almost note for note, the version that Pons has been doing at the Met for over a quarter of a century. Miss Peters' apparently fine careless raptures are anything but unpremeditated. The same, of course, is true of all the other singers' lapses from the original text; and if Jan Peerce does not outrage Edgardo's music quite so much as is the custom, that may be because he can no longer thrust the notes up an octave with any grace. His is now a tight, inflexible voice, further troubled by a characteristic nasal production. Piero de Palma sings the part of his rival, Lord Arthur, with markedly pleasanter tone, and one regrets that it is not De Palma doing the tomb scene.

Part of the "tradition," of course, is the making of innumerable cuts, small, medium, and huge, the last including an aria and a duet, all the music between "*Ardon gli incensi*" and "*Spargi d'amaro pianto*," and the dramatically necessary recitative after the Mad Scene. Tradition, too, demands that many passages be altered from duos to solos to appease the vanity of this singer or that; in other passages the voices are done away with entirely so that the orchestra can lead up to a climax with greater éclat.

To return to Miss Peters, she sings with an efficiency that leaves one, finally, indifferent. Her high Ds and E flats come with clocklike regularity, are held the proper number of seconds, then are dropped. I need not invoke the great Angel recording to prove that the Mad

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Scene need not be so mechanical as this: Pons demonstrated that fact time and again. But to play Peters and Angel's Callas one after the other is almost to have the impression that one is hearing two different operas. The one Callas sings, though not quite Donizetti's, is infinitely the finer. The American baritone Philip Maero, here making his recording debut as Henry Ashton, proves as unrewarding as Miss Peters. His voice is thick-textured and his phrasing insensitive.

I must sound another grumpy note in talking of Leinsdorf's leadership. There is hardly a tempo that seems to me right. He drives the singers at a furious rate, ignoring such markings as *meno mosso* and altering such others as *allegretto* and *moderato* to *presto possibile*. Furthermore, the engineering of the monophonic set is extremely sharp and overmiked. If you want to test it at its worst, try the brass *tutti* at the opening of Act II. Last of all, there is a thin trail of pre-echo that plagues voices and orchestra from start to finish. D.J.

**DVORAK:** *Symphony No. 5, in E minor, Op. 95 ("From the New World")*

Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Fritz Reiner, cond.

• • RCA Victor LSC 2214. SD. \$5.98.

Los Angeles Philharmonic, Erich Leinsdorf, cond.

• CAPITOL P 8454. LP. \$4.98.

Victor released its monophonic version of the *New World* not long before the stereo disc. Comparison of the two reinforces the belief that a good monophonic record will sound even better in stereo. The surges of tone in the stereo edition are handled without any difficulty, and the enhanced realism makes this version easily as good as the London stereo disc with Kubelik and the Vienna Philharmonic. Kubelik, in his interpretation, is free-swinging and colorful; his is a very fine job. Reiner is more precise and handles his orchestra with more virtuosity; my own preference is with him.

Leinsdorf's new version comes hard on the heels of the Reiner-Chicago, and is quite a good performance. The tempos are orthodox, the orchestral playing spotless, and the rhythm never flags. As usual, Leinsdorf tends toward the propulsive rather than the meditative, but he does not overdo it. In short, this is a thoroughly reliable *New World*. The "best" available version? Well, there have been at least thirty performances of this symphony since 1948; the present Victor and Capitol releases can join the company of Ormandy and Toscanini. H.C.S.

**FRANCK:** *Variations symphoniques—See Saint-Saëns: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2, in C minor, Op. 22.*

**GIORDANO:** *Andrea Chénier*

Renata Tebaldi (s), Madeleine; Maria Teresa Mandalari (ms), Countess de



*Gavazzeni: new dimensions for Giordano.*

Coigny: Fiorenza Cossotto (ms), Bersi; Amelia Guidi (ms), Madelon; Mario del Monaco (t), Andrea Chénier; Angelo Mercuriali (t), the Abbé; Mariano Caruso (t), the "Inevitable"; Ettore Bastianini (b), Carlo Gérard; Dino Mantovani (b), Fléville; Vico Polotto (bs), Roncher; Fernando Corena (bs), Mathieu; Dario Caselli (bs), Schmidt and Dumas. Chorus and Orchestra of Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome), Gianandrea Gavazzeni, cond.

• • LONDON OSA 1303. Three SD. \$17.94.

This is easily the most successfully engineered of the half-dozen complete operas I have heard on stereo discs, the one that takes fullest advantage of the medium and yet handles it with the greatest imagination. The sound of the monophonic set, as I noted here in July, was everything it should have been, but now Gavazzeni's splendid orchestral leadership takes on dimensions of richness, solidity, circumambience hardly to be guessed at before. And for the first time I have actually heard that much-discussed "middle," which I was almost ready to relegate to the world of mythology. Not only do the wood winds seem to emanate from between the two speakers but so, often, do solo voices and chorus.

The soloists are very mobile, though never distractingly so (they don't move about while singing arias and ensembles). Only once would I take exception to the excellent taste of London's sound men—when they split the soprano and tenor parts in the second-act love duet (Tebaldi on the left, Del Monaco on the right). The idea is chaste but hardly suited to this hot-blooded music. Fortunately, the same method is not reverted to in the final "*Vicino a te.*"

I might add that Del Monaco benefits considerably from stereo reproduction. The orchestra, for one thing, wages a more equal battle. D.J.

**HOLST:** *The Planets*

Women's Voices of the Roger Wagner Chorale; Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski, cond.

• • CAPITOL SP 8389. SD. \$5.98.

Gustav Holst's suite of astrophysical impressions, scored for a large orchestra and, in the final movement, for a light wordless double chorus of women's voices, adds up to some beautiful stereo sound. Not only are the strings where they belong on the aural stage, but the wood winds, brasses, and percussion can be definitely placed at the center and rear of that stage. From this crystal-clear recording, in fact, one could, with reasonable accuracy, draw a seating plan of Stokowski's orchestra. The advantages of stereo distribution on this disc are obvious, and I can heartily commend them. I suggest, however, that prospective purchasers listen also to Sir Adrian Boult's excellently recorded LP performance for Westminster, playing both versions through a two-channel system. P.A.

**HOVHANESS:** *Mysterious Mountain*

† Stravinsky: *Le Baiser de la fée: Divertimento*

Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Fritz Reiner, cond.

• RCA Victor LM 2251. LP. \$4.98.

*Mysterious Mountain* is the kind of piece Hovhaness does very well—modal, full of long chantlike lines, with great stress on the dark colors of the orchestra relieved by the high, tingling sounds of harps and bells. It is a work of considerable nobility and strong philosophic implication, and it is magnificently played in this excellent recording.

The *Divertimento* from *The Fairy's Kiss* has been recorded several times before, but all previous versions of it have been withdrawn, leaving the present disc to compete only with the whole score of the ballet as recorded by the composer and the Cleveland Orchestra. In the *Divertimento*, Stravinsky's self-conscious borrowings from Tchaikovsky are to the fore, and the result seems decidedly stilted; in the complete score, the Tchaikovsky borrowings take their proper place and there is far less conflict of style between the two composers. But if anybody wants the *Divertimento* alone, here is an excellent edition. A.F.

**KODALY:** *Sonata for Cello Solo, in C, Op. 8*

† Dohnányi: *Konzertstück, Op. 12*

Janos Starker, cello (in the Kodály); Philharmonia Orchestra, Walter Susskind, cond. (in the Dohnányi).

• ANGEL 35627. LP. \$4.98 (or \$3.98).

Starker regards the Kodály sonata as the most important contemporary work in the cellist's repertory and its finest showpiece. Few sonatas exploit the total resources of an instrument while presenting music of significant content. (The Beethoven *Hammerklavier*, like the Kodály a work by a composer who was himself a virtuoso on the instrument for which he writes, is perhaps the best example from piano literature.)

*Continued on page 58*



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# COLUMBIA

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Starker's old version on Period was a sensation when it appeared, and this one is even better. He realizes the special effects Kodály desired, with an unbroken melodic flow that testifies to the greatest technical security. His Hungarian background provides the needed insight into the psychology, and musical substance, of the composer's idiom.

The Dohnányi is a lyric work dealing pleasantly with matters of no great weight. Starker and Susskind do it full justice. R.C.M.

**KUHNAU: *Musikalische Vorstellung einiger biblischer Historien: Sonatas for Harpsichord* (3)**

Fritz Neumeyer, harpsichord; Fritz Uhlenbruch, speaker.

• ARCHIVE ARC 3095. LP. \$5.98.

Of the six Biblical Sonatas by Bach's immediate predecessor as cantor of the Leipzig Thomasschule, there are presented here the first, *The Battle Between David and Goliath*; the third, *The Marriage of Jacob*; and the fourth, *Hezekiah,*

*Sick Unto Death and Restored to Health.* As program music they are naive but not laughable—notice the slightly irregular trajectory of the stone as it flies from David's slingshot. And regardless of program there are passages of unusual interest and expressivity, such as the section in the first sonata that, describing the trembling of the Israelites before Goliath, places over the tremulous bass a remarkable paraphrase of the chorale *Aus tiefer Not.* The sonatas are very well played.

*Continued on page 60*

## By Sir Thomas, Six of the Salomons in Splendid Renaissance

IF there is anyone to give us a magnificent edition of the twelve symphonies Haydn composed for the London impresario J. P. Salomon, it is the redoubtable Sir Thomas. This album, containing the six works Haydn wrote for his concerts in 1791-92, will be followed presently by a second with the scores from his visit of 1794-95.

Stylistically, the Salomons are more complex, more highly developed, and more freely written than Haydn's ninety-two earlier scores in symphonic form, and modern listeners have found them the most consistently attractive of Haydn's works. One would have thought that the group's obvious attractions would have led to several complete recorded editions. It was, however, left to Westminster to produce the first set of the magnificent dozen, and theirs is a compilation of recordings made by Hermann Scherchen with Viennese orchestras over a period of years. Vanguard promised us the twelve by Mogens Wøldike and the orchestra of the Volksooper, Vienna, but only Nos. 99-104 have been released to date. Capitol may yet be the first to present the series as recorded with one group of players under consistent acoustical conditions within a relatively short span of time.

Approaching the project in this systematic fashion, Sir Thomas has made up for earlier sins of omission by offering here three symphonies which he has been playing for decades without having previously committed to discs: Nos. 95, 96, and 98. Furthermore, his No. 97, recorded nearly twenty years ago, has had no duplicate in the current LP catalogue. Volume two of the present undertaking will contain a pair of even more astonishing Beecham "debuts": No. 100 (*Military*) and 101 (*Clock*).

At least half the symphonies of the first Salomon group were in need of new recording through the continual process in which one year's concept of sonic superiority becomes another's standard of sonic adequacy. Yet the hesitation of conductors and record companies to do some of these works is difficult to understand. Take No. 98, for example. When it finally made the 78-rpm list, it was represented by two rather pale versions until Toscanini (who loved it) recorded a superb performance in 1945. Issued on shellac, the Maestro's edition never survived The Great War of Speeds. In a decade of longplay records, there have



Franz Josef Haydn

been three versions, only one of which remained in print when this new Beecham appeared. Why? Certainly if anyone can make No. 98 popular, it is Sir Thomas, for his gift of projecting Haydn is one of the rarest of his accomplishments as the Grand Seigneur of music.

Distinguished as his achievements have been in playing later composers, I am convinced that Sir Thomas is most at home with the eighteenth-century masters. Many conductors have an ear for the Wagnerian type of orchestra and draw upon its range of color and texture with dramatic abandon. Beecham's natural inclinations seem to run the other way. His ear is tuned to the small band for which Handel, Haydn, and Mozart normally scored, a choir of strings which (following true rather than mythical eighteenth-century practice, Sir Thomas keeps fairly large), three or four pairs of wood winds (there are no clarinets in the first six Salomons), two horns, two trumpets, and drums. There is a lot of sound—and a lot of artistic variety—in these resources, and Sir Thomas knows how to get every potentiality out of the score. Where some conductors find Haydn limited, Beecham discovers gold, not so much because the others are bad musicians, but because they are in unfamiliar territory where their efforts at seriousness and reverence produce drab results. Beecham can glorify Haydn merely by following a natural bent. Sir Thomas' Haydn reflects the

security with which he acts, knowing exactly what is in the music and how it can best be set off through the medium of Haydn's orchestra.

Moreover, Sir Thomas is the match of any conductor in his feeling for a phrase or his ability to let a legato passage sing with ravishing tonal elegance. These things are here, recorded with an excellence that will keep them alive indefinitely; but also present are the vitality, the brisk humor, the powerful rhetorical inflection of the most cherished Beecham discs of the past. Never have Haydn's jokes been better told, his surprises more adroitly prepared, or his themes stated in tempos more unassailably right. In all the years of Beecham's Haydn recording, he has never been more sensitive or spirited.

Just to refresh your memory, No. 93 contains the best of all the slow movement jokes and an elaborate finale of great vitality and charm. This is the third Beecham edition of the score. No. 94 is the familiar *Surprise*—here given its second Beecham recording. No. 95 is the only one of the Salomon group to explore the possibilities of a minor key. However odd the circumstances that gave No. 96 its title, *The Miracle*, it is musically no less than justice, with Beecham's lilting pace in the finale a complete delight. In No. 97 we have one of Haydn's most powerful utterances, while No. 98 offers an exceptional slow movement, recalling *God Save the King*, and an unconventional finale with violin solos to provide contrast.

The recording is rich and bright, with the quality of sound possibly the most satisfactory representation of a Beecham orchestra yet heard on records. The balance between clarity and hall resonance is a fine example of fullness without fuzz. In short, the set cannot be regarded as anything less than one of the greatest releases of the year.

ROBERT CHARLES MARSH

**HAYDN: *The "Salomon" Symphonies, First Series: No. 93, in D; No. 94, in G ("Surprise"); No. 95, in C minor; No. 96, in D ("Miracle"); No. 97, in C; No. 98, in B flat***

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Thomas Beecham, cond.

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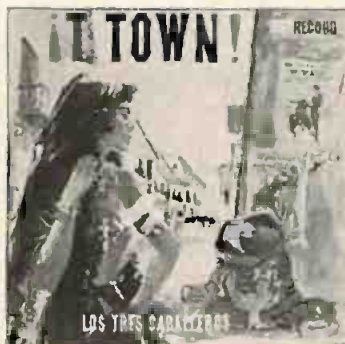
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Gueden: Lehár's "unhappy Giuditta."

Mr. Uhlenbruch reads the German rubrics that Kuhnau carefully supplied with the sonatas to make sure that his listeners would know what the music was supposed to represent. These rubrics are also printed in the notes, but still in German, and no translation is supplied. N.B.

#### LEHAR: *Giuditta*

Hilde Gueden (s), Giuditta; Emmy Loose (s), Anita; Waldemar Kmentt (t), Octavio; Murray Dickie (t), Pierino; Walter Berry (b), Manuele; Oskar Czerwenka (bs), Martini. Soloists, Chorus and Orchestra of the Vienna State Opera, Rudolf Moralt, cond.

• • LONDON OSA 1301. Three SD. \$17.98.

*Giuditta*, Franz Lehár's last musical stage work, was first produced at the Vienna Staatsoper in January 1934 with Tauber and Novotna in the leading roles. It was an immense and immediate success, and remains today one of the established works in the repertoire of Austrian and German operetta theaters. Yet it is scarcely known in this country, except by way of the two or three records made by Tauber and Novotna for English Parlophone and once available here on American Decca.

Whether *Giuditta* actually fulfills Lehár's long-cherished dream of writing a "Grand Opera" is questionable; but it is undeniably a work of immense musical charm, abounding in pretty melodies, a lovely and very typical Lehár waltz, lavish orchestration, and some extremely interesting orchestral detail under the spoken dialogue. Although the book is almost standard operetta material, except for the unhappy ending, it is a formula Lehár had found extremely effective in *Land of Smiles* and it serves equally well here. The action of the plot shifts from a Mediterranean fishing town to North Africa, but with the exception of Octavio's lovely serenade in the first act, "O Signora, O Signorina," and the verse of Giuditta's waltz song in the third act, Lehár seldom attempts a number in the rhythm, or of the atmosphere, of the locale in which the action occurs. Manuele's song in the first act, "Alle Tag nichts als Mühl und Plag," is certainly more Hungarian than Italian in spirit, and the remainder of the big numbers are in the true Viennese operetta manner.

I frankly cannot imagine this charming work being better sung, even in Vienna. Gueden is in wonderful voice and gives an extremely effective and poignant portrait of the unhappy Giuditta. Her

vis-à-vis, Waldemar Kmentt, is a first-rate tenor, who understands the role of Octavio and projects the rather shiftless aspects of his character with considerable skill. Emmy Loose makes a pert and vivacious soubrette, singing with delightful coquetry; and Murray Dickie provides an admirable foil for her. A long cast of supporting artists seem to me to be just right for the roles allotted them. In particular, I cannot resist mentioning the short, but quite delicious work of Omar Godknow as Lord Barrymore. German actors who speak German with an English accent are almost as funny (but not quite) as English actors who speak American with an English accent.

As for the sound, London's stereo is certainly an eye opener. Now, as one listens to this operetta unfold, one not only hears, but also sees (and I do mean sees) the action unfold. Characters move, and as they move, one's eyes can follow them. If a character enters stage left, and must cross to stage right to converse with someone already established in the listener's mind as being placed there, one can easily and readily follow the cross. The bustle, the action, the excitement of the night-club scene emerge with great depth, much as one would see and hear it in an actual performance. Yet, as far as I can detect, no gimmicks have been used. The big arias, which for stage presentations come from stage center, emerge exactly from that spot. So, have yourself a seat in the best of all possible locations, in front of your stereo speakers, and sit back and enjoy to the full this melodious work. I have only one minor complaint; London provides a reasonably good résumé of the story, but the listener needs a real libretto in order to follow the plot. J.F.I.

LISZT: *Hungarian Rhapsodies: No. 1, in F minor; No. 2, in D minor; No. 3, in D; No. 4, in D minor*

Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Anatol Fistoulari, cond.

• VANGUARD SRV 108. LP. \$1.98.  
• VANGUARD SRV 108SD. SD. \$2.98.

Both of these are "demonstration records," hence the low price. They are good buys, full and brilliant in sound. In the stereo version, I had to pick up one channel to bring the elements into correct proportion; but that done, the results were well worth hearing. Vanguard has gone in for a good deal of separation in this disc. The solo of the concertmaster at the end of the *Hungarian Rhapsody* No. 2, for instance, is confined almost entirely to one speaker. Curiously, the monophonic edition seemed to have more brilliant highs; but the stereo was much better balanced and more realistic. All of the rhapsodies played here are familiar. In the piano versions they are, respectively, Nos. 14, in F minor (also known as the *Hungarian Fantasia*); 6, in D flat; 2, in C sharp minor; and 12, in C sharp minor. Fistoulari directs with plenty of drive and color, and listeners should get a lot of pleasure from the music. H.C.S.

MASCAGNI: *Cavalleria rusticana*

Renata Tebaldi (s), Santuzza; Lucia

Dani (ms), Lola; Rina Corsi (c), Mamma Lucia; Jussi Bjoerling (t), Turiddu; Ettore Bastianini (b), Alfio. Chorus and Orchestra of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Alberto Erede, cond.

• RCA Victor LM 6059. Two LP. \$9.96.

A realignment in recording company affiliations brings about this partnership between a great tenor and a distinguished soprano. The results are almost everything one could have hoped. Tebaldi has never done Santuzza on the stage, according to Francis Robinson's notes. Perhaps that is why she sings the part as though it were new, original, and exciting. It is none of these things, of course, but for the moment one is carried away by her conviction. Indeed, I finished listening to the recording with the feeling that *Cavalleria rusticana* still had a good deal of life in its vulgar old bones. There are matters to cavil about, true enough. Tebaldi still breaks phrases in very awkward spots. Bjoerling does the drinking song (marked *Larghetto*) at breakneck speed, and he holds the A flat at the end of his "Addio alla madre" a full eight bars, despite the specific instruction "trunca" (cut short). Mamma Lucia has such an alarming wobble that one suspects she may have drunk up all that "vecchio vino" she was unable to supply to Alfio. And the *Regina Coeli* chorus—on the whole very fine—doesn't mark the distinction between those singing from the church and those singing "on stage." Finally, the recording is a bit overbrilliant and Side 2 suffers from groove-crowding.

But there is far more good to be found here than otherwise: the exquisite calm with which Tebaldi floats her "inneggiamo" into the Easter Scene; the deliciously projected little chorus, "A casa, amici" (which generally gets lost in all the dull melodrama); the second pianissimo "un altro baccio" in Turridu's *Addio*; Bastianini's handsome if somewhat phlegmatic Alfio; and a Lola so effective that one regrets she doesn't have more to do.

Bjoerling recorded six arias from other operas with the same orchestra and conductor in order to fill up Side 4. RCA Victor calls them a "bonus," but they are much more than that: they are an eloquent testimonial to the art of one of the greatest lyric tenors of our time. D.J.

MOZART: *Concertos for Horn and Orchestra: No. 1, in D, K. 412; No. 2, in E flat, K. 417; No. 3, in E flat, K. 447; No. 4, in E flat, K. 495*

James Stagliano, horn; Zimmler Sinfonietta.

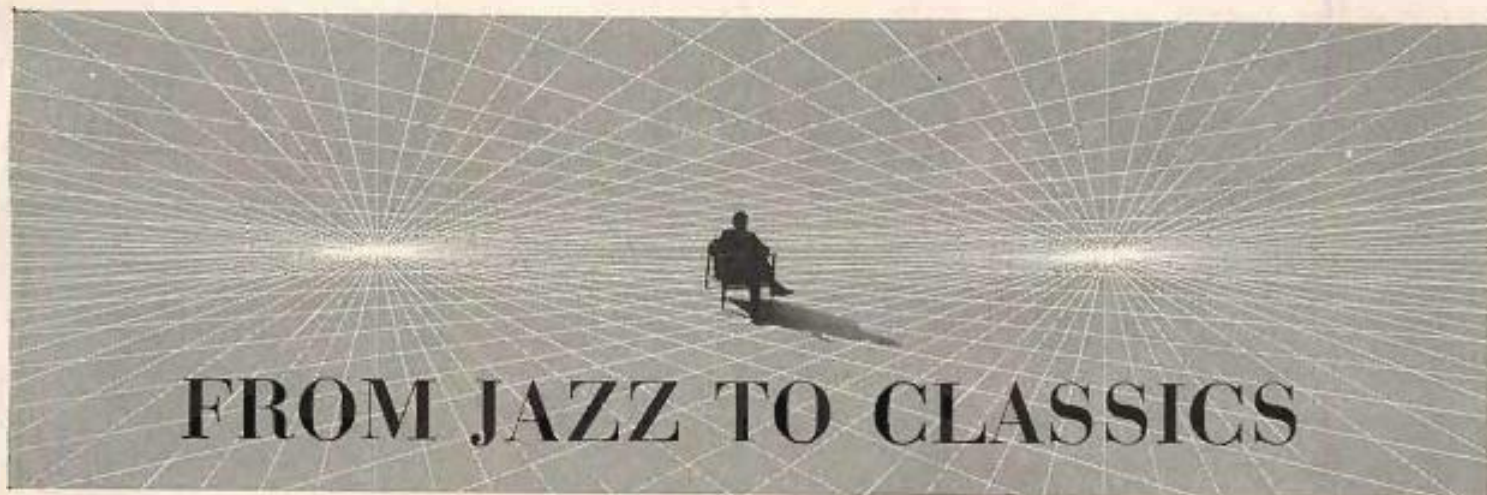
• • BOSTON BST 1002/03. Two SD. \$11.90.

Mr. Stagliano, first hornist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, is of course a splendid artist, and these performances only confirm what anyone who has heard that orchestra in the last dozen years already knows. Only in a few sixteenth-note figures in the first movements of K. 447 and 495 are we reminded that the horn is one

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The sound is live, with the highs more pronounced on BST 1003 than they need to be. I am not yet convinced that stereo is a particular boon to a solo concerto. Although the orchestral sound is spacious, the horn (on my equipment, at least), seems to come sometimes from one speaker, sometimes from the other, as though Mr. Stagliano were skipping lightly and silently at irregular intervals from one side of the stage to the other. Anyone who owns the very fine Angel recording of these works by the late Dennis Brain (where all four concertos are comfortably ensconced on one disc) has no need, in my opinion, to replace it. N.B.

**MOZART: *Divertimento for Orchestra, No. 1, in E flat, K. 113; Serenade No. 3, in D, K. 185 ("Andretter")***

M-G-M Orchestra, Arthur Winograd, cond.

• M-G-M E 3652. LP. \$4.98.

This is the third volume in this group's traversal of all the serenades and related compositions of Mozart. Both of the works presented here are early and lightweight, but neither is devoid of an occasional passage, or even movement, that proclaims the genius to come. Winograd is especially good in the *Divertimento*, which he gives the alert but at the same time relaxed, easy treatment required but seldom received by this type of music. The work is performed in its original version, with clarinets and horns, not in Mozart's later revision, with double reeds.

The annotator, who quotes Einstein in connection with the *Divertimento*, apparently neglected to consult that authority with respect to the *Serenade*, else he would not have gone astray concerning the circumstances of the *Serenade's* first performance. N.B.

**MOZART: *Don Giovanni***

Suzanne Danco (s), Donna Anna; Lisa della Casa (s), Donna Elvira; Hilde Gueden (s), Zerlina; Anton Dermota (t), Don Ottavio; Walter Berry (b), Masetto; Cesare Siepi (bs), Don Giovanni; Fernando Corena (bs), Leporello; Kurt Boehme (bs), the Commendatore. Vienna State Opera Chorus and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Josef Krips, cond.  
• • LONDON OSA 1401. Four SD. \$23.92.

If this stereo release of the *Don Giovanni* London issued on LP in 1955 is not a completely brilliant affair, the fault rests with the performance rather than the engineering. Conductor Josef Krips tends to let nice things like the *sfp* attacks in Don Ottavio's first aria get away from him, and the high string tone in the ballroom scene (when the Don is singing "*Ma non manca in me coraggio*") is painfully sour. These blemishes show up in stereo with a starkness they never had in monophonic reproduction, as do Anton Dermota's embarrassing failure of breath

in the reprise of "*Dalla sua pace*" and the absence of numerous tied quavers that Siepi doesn't manage to fit into the presto tempo of the *Champagne* aria.

But the stereophonic effects are very finely detailed. To draw some examples from the instrumental forces alone: the perfectly separate and clear sounds of the three orchestras in the ballroom scene, the obbligato solo cello in Zerlina's "*Batti, batti*" (not a note of which gets covered up by the soprano), the stark power of the three trombones that accompany the music of the stone guest. As to the voices, a further directional device is added in this recording: one might call it the "peripatetic technique." The singers, instead of remaining stationary during the course of a given recitative or concerted number, sometimes move over the "stage" area (consisting of the two speakers and the space between) much as they would in the opera house. This particular device ought to be, and is here, used sparingly: the ear, unaided by the eye, needs anchorage. The best example of these vocal peripatetics is in the duet for Don Giovanni and Zerlina, "*Là ci darem la mano*," in which the Don remains securely placed on the left while Zerlina coyly moves to the right, singing "I would and yet I wouldn't." She reaches her farthest point away from him just before the two of them break into "*Andiam, andiam, mio bene*," and then makes a rather precipitous trip back. It is all most charmingly done. D.J.

**MOZART: *Le Nozze di Figaro***

Lisa della Casa (s), Countess Almaviva; Hilde Gueden (s), Susanna; Suzanne Danco (s), Cherubino; Amy Felbermayer (s), Barbarina; Hilde Rössl-Majdan (ms), Marcellina; Murray Dickie (t), Don Basilio; Hugo Meyer-Welfing (t), Don Curzio; Alfred Poell (b), Count Almaviva; Cesare Siepi (bs), Figaro; Fernando Corena (bs), Doctor Bartolo; Harald Prügghöf (bs), Antonio. Vienna State Opera Chorus and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Erich Kleiber, cond.

• • LONDON OSA 1402. Four SD. \$23.92.

For people who share my taste for listening to Mozart with their noses buried in the orchestral score, this stereo *Figaro* (its monophonic version was reviewed in these pages just about three years ago) is a disconcerting thing. How can one sit there calmly turning the pages while Susanna and Cherubino and Figaro and Count Almaviva are running all about the parlor? I finally capitulated in the middle of Susanna's and Marcellina's hilarious duettino, closed up Breitkopf and Härtel, and settled back to watch the goings on. "Watch" is the right word because I found my eyes constantly shifting not merely from speaker to speaker but from one nice gradation of space to another *between* the speakers. I don't think I'm allowing my enthusiasm to run away with me when I say that I was able to assign a distinct aural locus to each of the singers of the *Madre-Padre*

sextet. The secco recitatives are ideally suited to stereo treatment. It used to be very difficult to tell one soprano from another in rapid parlando, unless one followed the libretto or had a very quick ear for sung Italian: this problem is completely solved by London's engineers. You cannot mistake Susanna for the Countess when they are standing several feet apart.

Certain reservations I have about the casting of this *Figaro* are not, of course, altered by the brilliant format. But that format is so thrilling a thing in itself that it quite tips the balance in London's favor. This is the *Figaro* I would get if I weren't lucky enough to have it already. D.J.

**MOZART: *Sonatas for Violin and Piano: No. 32, in B flat, K. 454; No. 34, in A, K. 526***

Yehudi Menuhin, violin; Louis Kentner, piano.

• EMI-CAPITOL G 7123. LP. \$4.98.

Mozart violin sonatas, in recital and on records, often present a curious study in balances. His earliest works in this category are mere keyboard sonatas with violin accompaniment. His later ones, however, are true duets, both instruments being equal partners. They are *never* mere violin sonatas with piano accompaniment, and yet that is how they are often performed, especially when the violinist is a world-famous virtuoso and the pianist his regular accompanist. A sonata like K. 454 is usually played in such a way that insignificant accompanying figures are sung out with all the glorious tone for which the fiddler is celebrated, while the really important material is heard dimly in the remote background on a subdued piano.

None of this, I am happy to say, takes place here. Each artist moves smoothly in and out of the spotlight, and neither upstages the other. In other respects, too, these are impressive performances. They should be thoroughly enjoyed by those who do not share my own lack of enthusiasm for Menuhin's tone. To me, it does not seem refined enough for this music; sometimes it grows too intense; and to raise or lower the pitch of a tone markedly for expressive purposes is fine in César Franck but not, I think, in Mozart. N.B.

**PAGANINI: *La Campanella; Caprices Nos. 9, 20, 24* (arr. Gusikoff)—See Bach: *Brandenburg Concerto No. 3, in G. S. 1048; Chaconne* (arr. Vardi).**

**PONCHIELLI: *La Gioconda***

Zinka Milanov (s), La Gioconda; Rosalind Elias (ms), Laura; Belen Amptan (c), La Cieca; Giuseppe di Stefano (t), Enzo Grimaldo; Giacomo Cottino (t), Isepo; Leonard Warren (b), Barnaba; Plinio Clabassi (bs), Alvise; Fernando Valentini (bs), Zuana and a Pilot; Virgilio Carbonari (bs), a Singer. Chorus

*Continued on page 64*





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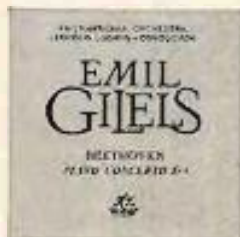
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Let's consider this *Gioconda* according to the descending degree of its merits. Its two finest assets are the singing of Rome's great Saint Cecilia Chorus, which is to Italy what Berlin's Saint Hedwig's Choir is to Germany, and the Enzo Grimaldo of Giuseppe di Stefano. It is not

merely by comparison with Mario del Monaco's performance in this role on the London *Gioconda* that Di Stefano makes so favorable an impression. He has, for another thing, the perfect voice for Enzo, something between the flexible lyric tenor who can float the pianissimos of "*Laggiù nelle nebbie*" and the heroic voice needed for the ensembles and for "*Cielo e mar*." This latter song he takes very slowly, starting with a rapt apostrophe to sea and sky, and building gradually to the impassioned anticipation of

Laura's arrival; the B flat in the final bars is a joy of itself, open, melodious, perfectly controlled. Belen Amaran is no less exciting in her smaller part. For once we have a contralto voice worthy of the music La Cieca has to sing in the first act. "*Voce di donna*" is a little marred by the close microphoning that picks up Amaran's somewhat Junoesque inhalings, but the plenitude and quality of her tone will have people going back to

*Continued on page 66*

## Mussorgsky's Songs Complete: Confrontation with Genius

MUSSORGSKY may well be the nineteenth century's greatest song composer outside of the German Lieder world, and the confrontation with sixty-three songs by him is an ear-opening experience. I have not yet lived with the new Angel album very long, but it already seems clear that knowledge of Mussorgsky's entire body of songs provides more illumination about the Russian genius than one would have expected from acquaintance only with particular masterpieces like the three song cycles, long known and well loved. The songs are milestones that chart the road of genius, comparable with Beethoven's quartets as landmarks of a career. Through the years, Mussorgsky's perception of the uses of folk material grows sharper; from the first tentative experiments with unconventional chord progressions he proceeds to the entirely confident and masterful application of his inelegant, mysterious, emancipated harmony in *Stainless* and *Songs and Dances of Death*; his lyric style, largely neglected by singers who have made the dramatic and humorous songs their own, leaves the salon entirely behind. In a few of the early songs the writing is very conventional, and in some of the satires the humor is too topical to provoke a really spontaneous reaction; but on the whole, the level of achievement is extraordinarily high. In the two tragic cycles, in *The Nursery*, and in a good dozen of the single songs, Mussorgsky achieves nothing less than perfection.

To bring all this material together in one album was a superb idea. The effort will hardly be duplicated; indeed, I imagine that many of the individual songs will not be recorded soon again. The songs appear in chronological order, and it is in deference to this scheme that *Songs and Dances of Death* and *The Nursery* (in which the songs also do not come in correct order) are interrupted by extraneous songs. On the other hand, the editors are willing to let chronology go hang in the last two songs, presumably in order to end the album with the brilliant *Song of Mephistopheles* rather than the somber (and later) *On the Dnieper*.

In some ways Boris Christoff is the ideal interpreter. His magnificent voice is used with almost limitless coloristic virtuosity, he has a really exciting flair for drama, and his diction is unsurpassed. In three hours of singing, there is not a carelessly produced or casually conceived



Boris Christoff

sound; every move, every painstakingly projected detail attests to the dedication and to the gifts with which the singer approaches his task. It is easy to believe Christoff when, in his album notes, he writes of his profound admiration for Mussorgsky.

In those same notes Christoff goes on to say: "Whatever liberties I have allowed myself in interpreting his melodies, romances, or dramatic scenes proved necessary to conform to Mussorgsky's dramatic intentions." As one listens to the records one's worst fears as to what this statement might mean are confirmed. Tempos change startlingly, sometimes for one unaccountable measure in mid-song, sometimes for whole sections; Mussorgsky writes a phrase with a quarter note and two eighths, but Christoff finds it more effective to sing a dotted quarter and two sixteenths; he sings clear through rests; his dynamics are all his own, often exaggerated so as to turn certain songs into studies in pianissimo and others into orgies of shouting. To be sure, in the middle of this willful virtuosic display there is the occasional song that is done marvelously, and simply!

In the annotations we read further: "Mussorgsky had planned to orchestrate *Songs and Dances of Death*, *The Winds Are Howling*, and *The Song of Mephistopheles*, but did not carry out the project. In these songs I have decided to use the orchestrations of Rimsky-Korsakov, Glazunov, and Labinsky, believing that the orchestrations enhance the richness

and color of these compositions." Victor Belyayev heard the composer play *The Song of Mephistopheles* ("A flea, ha-ha!") and wrote: "Here Mussorgsky's skill in picturesque accompaniment was vividly demonstrated, and at times one could almost hear the flea jump. The arpeggios in the middle of the song resounded splendidly, smacking of something positively Rubinsteinesque." Although it is true that often Mussorgsky's accompaniments are not conventionally pianistic, the very sense of strain in their performance can convey a feeling of powerful poetic expression that the correct and drab orchestral prose of Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov—and the orchestral affectations of Labinsky—cannot come close to replacing. The orchestra is in any case recorded so far in the background that it disappears behind Mr. Christoff's singing, and the songs become unintelligible because of the resulting lack of rhythmic definition. Except for *Gopak*, the songs which Mussorgsky himself orchestrated are recorded with piano.

And, need I say it, Rimsky-Korsakov's compositional revisions have been used in place of what Mussorgsky actually wrote. It is now thirty years since Pavel Lamn began his edition of Mussorgsky's music, unimproved, unenhanced, unglamorized; but—except for Christoff's comment on the orchestrations quoted above—in the 84-page brochure that accompanies these records there is no way of inferring that one is being offered anything other than Mussorgsky's music as he himself composed it.

Over 200 years ago, the Venetian composer Benedetto Marcello wrote *Il Teatro alla moda*, a satirical book of instructions for all connected with the operatic world. As part of his advice to composers, Marcello wrote: "In walking with singers, the composer will always place himself at their left and keep one step behind, hat in hand." This album leaves no doubts concerning Boris Christoff's supreme skill as a performer, but it perhaps creates a few about his status as an interpreter of another musician's intentions.

CARL MICHAEL STEINBERG

### MUSSORGSKY: Songs (complete)

Boris Christoff, bass; Alexandre Labinsky, piano; Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Française, Georges Tzipine, cond.

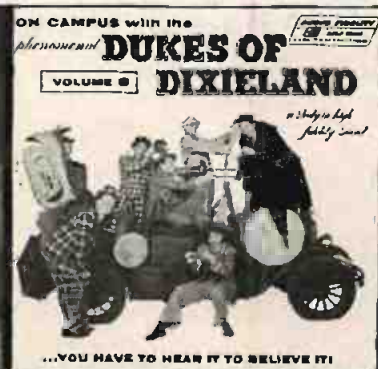
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Louise Homer for a fitting comparison. Still on the credit side is Previtali's conducting, especially in the Furlana and the preludes to the first and last acts. London's Gianandrea Gavazzeni, however, does better with the ballet music of Act III and his approach in general is rather more imaginative.

There can be no doubt that Rosalind Elias is a vocally secure Laura, but her approach has as yet very little to distinguish it, either in color, musical phrasing, or dramaturgy. Her "*Stella del marinaio*" is an example of pretty mezzo-soprano singing but not much more. Leonard Warren is a Barnaba of very big and very empty gestures. The part is so intolerably laden with Grand Guignol (it occurs to me that Boito missed an opportunity of adding one horror more and providing the opera with a happy ending of sorts by not making Barnaba a necrophile) that the baritone who sings it has to use a great deal of understatement if he is to be at all credible. And understatement has never been Leonard Warren's strong point. Furthermore, the voice has by now a prominent wobble in all notes above the staff. The same is true of Madame Milanov, to whom at length we come. She has been doing Gioconda at the Metropolitan for almost twenty years; her campaign in the role has been, on the whole, an honorable one, but it is time for her to step aside and give someone else a shot at it. The "*Suicidio*" is, puzzlingly enough, quite wonderful—as good almost as the one she made for Victor years ago. Nothing else she does in the recording approaches it. The voice is at times quite small-sounding, even feeble, and five out of every six high notes are a misfortune. Last and least is Plinio Clabassi, who sings Alvisè with thick, covered tones and imperfect intonation.

The engineering in this monophonic set is defective: Side 4 and all of Side 5 except the *Dance of the Hours* are recorded at a much lower level than the rest. D.J.

**PROKOFIEV:** *Peter and the Wolf, Op. 67; Lieutenant Kije: Suite, Op. 60*

Boris Karloff, narrator (in *Peter and the Wolf*); Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Mario Rossi, cond.

- VANGUARD VRS 1028. LP. \$4.98.
- • VANGUARD VSD 2010. SD. \$5.95.

Both performances are elegant, for Rossi is an excellent conductor and he has a good orchestra to work with. The differences between the two versions are precisely what you would expect: the stereo has more realism and in it the sounds of the percussion instruments fairly lift the roof. Karloff's voice sounds a little drier in the stereo than the monophonic, and the stereo has a marked needle hiss. A.F.

**PUCCHINI:** *Madama Butterfly*

Anna Moffo (s), *Madama Butterfly*; Rosalind Elias (ms), Suzuki; Cesare Valletti (t), Pinkerton; Mario Carlin (t), Goro; Renato Cesari (b), Sharpless; Nestore Catalani (b), Yamadori; Fernando Co-



Anna Moffo: a tender *Butterfly*.

rena (bs), the Bonze. Soloists, Chorus and Orchestra of the Rome Opera House, Erich Leinsdorf, cond.

- RCA VICTOR LM 6135. Three LP. \$14.94.
- • RCA VICTOR LSC 6135. Three SD. \$17.94.

The intention of this performance, according to George Marek's introductory remarks, is to restore *Madama Butterfly* to the slender lyric dimensions which Puccini gave it and of which subsequent years of mishandling deprived it. One might quibble about some of the methods of achieving this praiseworthy end: why, for instance, retain the bad old tradition of making Prince Yamadori a baritone when Puccini made him a tenor? And why is the handful of girl friends who accompany Cio-Cio-San when she appears in Act I sung by a chorus of at least two dozen women's voices? But these are quibbles, because in effect this *Butterfly* is indeed an intimate and small-scaled thing—and on the whole a captivating one. The American soprano Anna Moffo obviously has a bright musical future in store for her. The timbre of her voice is startlingly like that of De los Angeles, although she has as yet little of that singer's reticence and interior glow. Her occasional overemphasis and flamboyance are amply compensated for, however, by the skill with which she inflects most of her role and by the really exciting way she rises to the great lyric moments. And the ease and tenderness with which she floats the high D flat in her entrance scene and the almost equally difficult B flat of the third-act lullaby ("*Tu sei con Dio, ed io col mio dolor*") suggest that she may some day be a memorable Marschallin. Cesare Valletti is rather elegant for the "Yankee Vagabond," but one cannot complain very earnestly, his voice being the charming little instrument it is except when he tries to force big things from it in "*Addio fiorito usil*." Rosalind Elias, though she makes handsome sounds, is too sophisticated and assertive for the humble and self-effacing Suzuki. In minor roles Mario

Carlin and Fernando Corena must be singled out, the one adversely for his lisping and nasal Goro and the other with praise for a Bonze who for once really sounds angry.

Puccini's debut on two channels proves auspicious. As was to be expected, orchestral details emerge with a clarity and copiousness that no monophonic engineering and few live performances can duplicate. To single out an instance that particularly delighted and instructed me: when Cio-Cio-San in Act I confides to Pinkerton that she is now a Christian, having secretly visited the Mission on the previous day, Puccini accompanies the beginning of her narrative with two oboes and English horn only—not, I discovered, to suggest Oriental sounds but to imitate the sound of the Mission's reed-organ. One has to thank the etchinglike precision of stereo for such insights; Erich Leinsdorf's excellent handling of detail doesn't suffice of itself, as a comparison with the monophonic version will indicate. Another revelatory and completely successful effect is the call of birds heard during the long prelude to Act III. Most of the monophonic *Butterflies* avoid these bird calls because they sound pretty silly when divorced from their theatrical surroundings; but enveloped in the full circle of orchestral texture, they come off most pleasingly. My one reservation is about the placing of the voices almost exclusively in the right channel; a more flexible and realistic approach is desirable here. D.J.

**RAVEL:** *Miroirs: No. 4, Alborada del gracioso; Valses nobles et sentimentales*  
—See Debussy: *Images: No. 2, Ibéria*.

**RIMSKY-KORSAKOV:** *Scheherazade, Op. 35*

Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Mario Rossi, cond.

- • VANGUARD SRV 103SD. SD. \$2.98.
- Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Thomas Beecham, cond.
- • ANGEL S 35505. SD. \$5.98.

Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris, Ernest Ansermet, cond.

- • LONDON CS 6018. SD. \$4.98.

London Symphony Orchestra, Pierre Monteux, cond.

- RCA VICTOR LM 2208. LP. \$4.98.

*Scheherazade*, with its infinitely varied instrumental colorings, is an ideal vehicle for stereo, and we have now three versions in the new medium. Rossi's is offered by Vanguard as a demonstration record at an irresistibly low price. The conductor has a first-rate orchestra at his disposal and he gets through the music without undue fuss, yet without either rushing or glossing over important details. What is of prime importance here, though, is the distribution of the stereo sound. It was altogether superb on stereo tape at \$14.95, and it is almost as good on a stereo disc for only \$2.98. Not only is there the desired illusion of right, left,

Continued on page 68

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Rubinstein: Saint-Saëns with gusto.

and center but there is unusual depth as well—particularly noticeable in the echo play between the trombone and muted trumpet in the second movement. In this respect, it is one of the most successful stereo discs I have heard.

If I had high praise for Beecham's interpretation in the monophonic version, that praise can be nearly doubled for the stereo recording. Spreading the sound does wonders in bringing out each minute detail, each subtly phrased passage, hallmarks of almost any Beecham performance and especially refreshing in this often overplayed work. Just to hear what the conductor does with the delicate dancelike middle section of the third movement is alone worth the price of the disc. Angel's sonics may not be quite as startling as Vanguard's, but the clarity and separation of its reproduction are mighty satisfying.

When Ansermet's monophonic version appeared three years ago, I lamented the fact that he had underplayed the score, giving a dry, almost offhand performance. Stereo has helped the sound, which is now richer and more brilliant than it was on the mono edition; but it doesn't equal that of either the Vanguard or Angel pressings—and Ansermet here is no match for Rossi, much less Beecham.

Victor promises a stereo edition of Monteux's present monophonic release for early in 1959. Meantime, it can be said that the octogenarian master has not lost his ever-youthful touch. In the third movement he pushes the tempo to the point where the music sounds a bit perfunctory, but elsewhere—especially in the second and fourth movements—his approach is as dynamic as one would expect. The London Symphony plays very well, and the big recorded sound has admirable instrumental definition and separation. P.A.

**RODGERS: *Victory at Sea: Suite No. 2***  
(arr. Robert Russell Bennett)

RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra, Robert Russell Bennett, cond.  
• RCA Victor LM 2226. LP. \$4.98.  
• • RCA Victor LSC 2226. SD. \$5.98.

Anyone who wants a real aural thrill should hear the stereo edition of this recording. It is a magnificent job of acoustical placement, definition, directionality and perspective in depth, with just the right amount of hall resonance. We have had this sort of thing on stereo tape, but seldom has the stereo effect been as con-

vincingly achieved on discs. Robert Russell Bennett, who arranged, coordinated, and orchestrated Richard Rodgers' material for the NBC-TV series *Victory at Sea*, has compiled a second and entirely different concert suite from the score, one that conveys much of the drama of this twenty-six-installment film saga of the Allied navies in World War II. The monophonic version is a good job, but it pales miserably beside its stereo counterpart. P.A.

**SAINT-SAËNS: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2, in G minor, Op. 22***  
† Franck: *Variations symphoniques*

Artur Rubinstein, piano; Symphony of the Air, Alfred Wallenstein, cond.  
• RCA Victor LM 2234. LP. \$4.98.  
• • RCA Victor LSC 2234. SD. \$5.98.

Rubinstein piles into both works with enormous gusto, playing with a big sweep and his characteristic authority. He may miss a note or two in the Saint-Saëns, but so exciting is his work here (including a finale taken at a furious tempo that leaves one breathless) that only sheer pedantry would take objection. The engineering is also a successful job. Because the signal in the stereo version is much stronger in one of the channels, the piano remains well focused. It has been recorded with a strong, clear tone and plenty of presence, and its relation with the orchestra in matters of balance is excellent. The monophonic disc is also a superior recording, even if, towards the end of the Franck, there is a little distortion. H.C.S.

**STRAUSS, RICHARD: *Don Quixote, Op. 35***

Lorne Monroe, cello; Harry Zaratzian, viola; Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond.  
• COLUMBIA ML 5292. LP. \$3.98.

The emphasis here is on a long lyric line, the unfolding of which carries us along in the half-dreaming state of the protagonist, until sanity and death bring the work to resolution in the everyday world. It is an effective interpretative point of view, resulting in a performance with many lush, flowing phrases shaped and colored with great beauty. What this conception fails to provide is the impact that comes when the lyric element is sacrificed to more powerful inflections of the melodic line and bolder strokes of sound.

The Decca recording by Strauss himself, the snics of which are not seriously inferior to the new Ormandy, still provides the best balanced statement of this complex and magnificent score. R.C.M.

**STRAVINSKY: *Le Baiser de la fée: Divertimento—See Hovhanness: *Mysterious Mountain****

**TCHAIKOVSKY: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in D, Op. 35***

Erica Morini, violin; Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of London, Artur Rodzinski, cond.

• • WESTMINSTER WST 14017. SD. \$5.98.

This is one of the works that Erica Morini has made particularly her own, and it is always a pleasure to hear her either in concerts or on discs. To some violinists, the Concerto may be a virtuoso show-piece; to Morini, it is a vehicle for romantic outpourings, delicately turned phrases, and beautifully warm tone—all of this, however, without distortion of the basic outline of the music. Now this playing has been exquisitely set off with stereo. There isn't a distorted note on the disc, and the soloist is nicely placed just to left of center. There she stays, except for a few spots of heavy spiccato bowing, when a bit of the sound wanders over to the right speaker. Rodzinski's accompaniment, extremely clean and just as finely phrased as the violinist's solos, is sometimes kept by the engineers a little too much in the background, but when it is allowed to come forward in tutti passages, the stereo effect is first-rate. Many will prefer Heifetz's more virtuosic approach to the concerto, also recorded with fine stereo sonics, by RCA Victor; but for those who want a carefully thought-out romantic performance, cleanly reproduced, this one is worth investigating, even though there are some sizable cuts in the finale. P.A.

**TCHAIKOVSKY: *The Nutcracker: Orchestral Suite, Op. 71a***

† Berlioz: *Le Carnaval romain, Overture, Op. 9*

† Wagner: *Die Meistersinger: Prelude*

Symphony of the Air, no cond.  
• • CONCERT-DISC CS 25. SD. \$6.95.

At the time of its transformation from the NBC Symphony to the Symphony of the Air, this orchestra, created for the late Arturo Toscanini, presented a conductorless concert at Carnegie Hall. About the same time, it made a series of conductorless recordings, including the three works listed above, which were issued under several different labels. I am assuming that this stereo version came out of those same Carnegie Hall sessions. If so, it is about four years old, which makes doubly remarkable the fine quality and distribution of stereo sound. In view of the fact that there was no guiding spirit on the podium, the unity and spirit of the performances are very good indeed. P.A.

**TCHAIKOVSKY: *Symphony No. 4, in F minor, Op. 36***

Philharmonia Orchestra, Thomas Schippers, cond.  
• ANGEL 35443. LP. \$4.98 (or \$3.98).

For the dynamic young conductor that he is, Schippers seems to take an old man's view of this dramatic symphony. In the second subject of the first movement, Moderato assai, quasi Andante, he forgets the "quasi" and drags the whole section both times it appears. The second movement also sounds slow and unduly heavy. There is more vitality and a great

Continued on page 70

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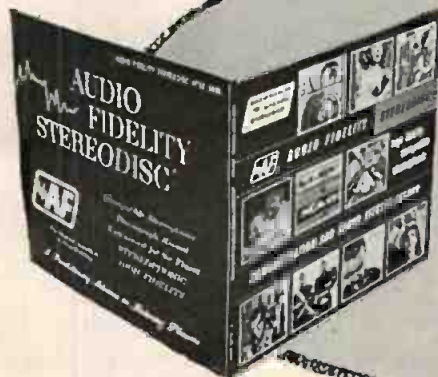
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deal of refinement in his treatment of the Scherzo, and in the Finale he really comes to life, while still carefully making each instrument and section articulate clearly and precisely. Angel's reproduction is good, but much of it is at an inordinately low volume level. P.A.

**TCHAIKOVSKY:** *Symphony No. 6, in B minor, Op. 74 ("Pathétique")*

Philharmonia Orchestra, Rudolf Kempe, cond.

• EMI-CAPITOL C 7128. LP. \$4.98.

Kempe takes a broad, relaxed view of the *Pathétique*. Though expressive enough, he never allows himself to become emotionally involved in Tchaikovsky's musical histrionics. There is certainly nothing lackluster about his reading—far from it; he simply lets the first two movements go along at a leisurely pace, with plenty of musicality but no excessive drama. The March-Scherzo has ample fire; and in the Finale, he picks up the tempo just a bit and allows the music to speak for itself as music instead of sobbing out a maudlin "program." The sound is first-rate. P.A.

**WAGNER:** *Die Meistersinger: Prelude*  
—Sec Tchaikovsky: *The Nutcracker: Orchestral Suite, Op. 71a.*

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Pamplona Choral Society, Luis Morondo, cond.

• COLUMBIA ML 5278. LP. \$3.98.

Robert Shaw used to have in his large chorus a small cadre of picked singers who performed without the rest when anything requiring special finesse was on the program. I was reminded of that group by this Pamplona Choir, which consists, the notes tell us, of sixteen carefully selected singers. That they rehearse for three hours five nights a week one can well believe. The group sings with lovely tone and astonishing virtuosity. They have an extremely wide dynamic range, perfect precision, and never falter in pitch. The five soloists heard here are without exception worthy of the choir—there is no let-down when one of these voices soars out above the rest. The material they sing ranges from the tricky *Venerabilis barba Capuccinorum* of Padre Donostia to the gaunt, ascetic *Songs of the Cabin Boys* by Eduardo Gran. The rest consist mostly of arrangements, including five of Falla's *Siete Canciones populares españolas* and Teobaldo Power's *Songs of the Canary Islands*. There is much imitation by the choir of guitars and such, very well done but hardly worth the doing. One looks forward eagerly to performances of real choral music by this remarkable group. N.B.

**DON COSSACKS: Recital**

*Song of Prince Oleg; Snow Covered Russia; Two White Russian Songs; Borodino; Selections from Tchaikovsky; Christmas Carol; Song of the River Kama; The Golden Bee; Cherubim Hymn; Kalinushka.*

Don Cossacks, Serge Jaroff, cond.

• COLUMBIA ML 5296. LP. \$3.98.

• • COLUMBIA MS 6013. SD. \$5.98.

This typical Don Cossack program, perhaps just a wee bit less colorful than some earlier ones, is characterized principally by full-throated solo and choral passages, with few deep bass or high falsetto parts. On the monophonic disc it all sounds just a trifle cramped. Stereo shows its big advantage here by spreading out the voices, giving them individuality and clarity. But the recording lacks something; it has width without depth. The singers are deployed across the wall of the living room when they might have sounded more dramatic had their music come from a more distant stage with a greater three-dimensional effect. P.A.

**PIERRE FOURNIER: "The Cellist's Hour"**

Pierre Fournier, cello; Gerald Moore, piano.

• ANGEI. 35599. LP. \$4.98 (or \$3.98).

The name of this disc, "The Cellist's Hour," sounds like a radio program, and it is the kind of music that a cellist would play on a radio program. Nearly all of the pieces are transcriptions of well-known, Muzak-like favorites. Fournier plays with considerable style, though his intonation goes off in the higher positions. He always has had trouble in the upper stretches. Not many music lovers will be interested in this disc, which has a minimal musical content. H.C.S.

**GREGORIAN CHANT: "A Child Is Born"**

Trappist Monks of the Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani (Gethsemani, Kentucky).

• COLUMBIA ML 5310. LP. \$3.98.

This is a companion album to the same group's "Hail, Holy Queen" in its array of excerpts from a specific aspect of the Cistercian liturgy—this time that for the Advent-Christmas season. Included are parts of the Mass *Rorate Coeli*, the "O" Antiphons, First Vespers of Christmas, Christmas Night Office, and Midnight Mass. The singing is simple and loving in manner, comforting and serene. Of the great music inspired by the coming of Christ, none equals these chants in appropriateness and true beauty. R.E.

**AASE NORDMO LOEVBERG: Grieg and Strauss Songs**

Grieg: *Med en primula veris; Hytten; Ragnhild; Lys nat; Fra Monte Pincio; Ved Rundarne; Det første møde; Millemosor; En svane.* Strauss: *Traum durch die Dämmerung; Ich liebe dich; Zueig-*

*nung; Cäcilie; Du meines Herzens Krönelein; Meinem Kinde; Allerseelen; Befreit.*

Aase Nordmo Loevberg, soprano; Robert Levin, piano (in the Grieg); Gerald Moore, piano (in the Strauss).

• ANGEI. 35590. LP. \$4.98 (or \$3.98).

Aase (pronounced Ossa) Nordmo Loevberg is the latest in the series of Northern European sopranos who have presented their credentials to us by way of LP recitals. As a Norwegian, Madame Loevberg will inevitably have to bear comparison with Kirsten Flagstad, especially since a majority of the songs in this recital have already been recorded by Flagstad. But, in everything except the seriousness with which they take their art, the two sopranos are quite unlike. Flagstad is marmoreal, static, impersonal, authoritative; Loevberg porcelaneous, flexible, warm in a curiously timid sort of way, and—as yet—quite tentative. To those who are familiar with the way Flagstad makes *Befreit* a great, abstract declaration of faith, Loevberg's version may well seem negligible. On the other hand, Flagstad even in her younger years (when she recorded it) was incapable of the soaring, impassioned *Cäcilie* of Loevberg. And if one could forget momentarily Elisabeth Schumann (one can't), the *Traum durch die Dämmerung* in this record would seem unalloyed gold. The Grieg songs, despite a certain awkwardness in the triplet arabesques of *Hytten*, are done exquisitely well. I prefer them, I think, to Flagstad's renderings, although they strike me as less *echt-Norwegisch*. I would call attention to the subtle changes in mood conveyed in *Fra Monte Pincio* with its evocations of musical instruments at the words "*glødende Hornmusik*" and "*Cithrer og Fløitespil*." Let's hope that Angel gives us lots more of Madame Loevberg.

The sound is slightly better in the Strauss side, and Moore is decidedly the finer accompanist. Robert Levin has the exasperating habit of playing grace notes differently from the way his partner sings them—one of the cardinal sins against good piano accompaniment. D.J.

**MORMON TABERNACLE CHOIR: "The Lord Is My Shepherd"**

Mormon Tabernacle Choir of Salt Lake City, Richard P. Condie, cond.

• COLUMBIA ML 5302. LP. \$3.98.

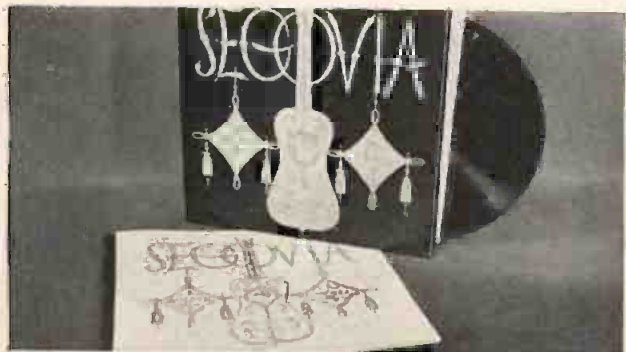
The Mormon Tabernacle Choir's recordings continue to include a hodgepodge of sacred music, with a few secular pieces thrown in. No small pleasure is to be derived from its undiminished excellence as a choral ensemble; but the music here ranges from commonplace, sentimental hymnlike settings to the more complex and dignified works of Healey Willan and Randall Thompson. Musical gold there is here, but in minute quantities. R.E.

**MUSIC OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
Choir of the Cathedral of St. John the

*Continued on page 72*

HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE





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**DECCA**  **RECORDS**  
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Divine (New York City), Alec Wyton, cond.

• WORD W 4014. LP. \$4.98.

Word Records has specialized so strongly in the music of nonconformist sects that this gesture towards the more austere and ritualistic music of the Anglican communion comes as a pleasant surprise. This survey represents, as it must, but a hop, skip and a jump through four centuries, from chants and fauxbourdous to modern motets.

The English-born and -trained Alec Wyton, who has been organist and choir-master of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine since 1954, is responsible for the sampling, which seems at once fair and complimentary to Anglican history. Episcopalian churches go outside their own denomination for some of their music, but the works here are peculiar to the Anglican communion.

The record stresses the familiar glories of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with the works of Fayrfax, Tye, Byrd, Morley, and Purcell, and the twentieth-century renaissance, of which Vaughan Williams was a leading exponent; but there are honorable representatives, too, of the Victorian period, notably the works of Goss and Stanford. Of particular interest are the Rubbra excerpts, for the contemporary English composer finds fresh things to say in an ultraconservative style. It is also good to have an example of the work of a pioneer in this country for good church music—Leo Sowerby. The performances by a choir of forty boys and eighteen men are musically honest, the engineering serviceable. R.E.

#### PAUL ROBESON: *Recital*

Paul Robeson, bass; Harriet Wingreen, piano; Chorus and Orchestra.

• VANGUARD VSD 2015. SD. \$5.95.

This disc contains one or two nice demonstrations of the superior clarity that stereo can achieve. For example, I discovered that the low D at the end of the first verse of *Water Boy* is not sung by Robeson but by a remarkable basso profundo in the chorus. The note continues to rumble out of the right channel while Robeson begins the next verse in the left; in the monophonic version (reviewed here in November), with Robeson's big tones emanating from the same source, this *fermata* was covered up, giving one the impression that Robeson himself sang the note (he is quite capable of doing so) and cut it off just before launching into the words "You jack of diamonds, oh you jack of diamonds."

Nevertheless, I prefer the monophonic version played through two speakers to this stereo edition. The engineers have isolated the solo voice completely and monotonously in the left channel; and, since chorus and accompaniments are little more than skeletal, there is a decided overweighting of values. If Vanguard had succeeded in giving a wider spread to the sound or at least had managed to center Robeson's voice more effectively, the extra dollar would be perhaps worth paying. As it is, I suggest that owners of

two speakers had better investigate the monophonic version as well as this one before making up their minds. D.J.

#### ROBERT SHAW CHORALE: "*Deep River*"

Robert Shaw Chorale, Robert Shaw, cond.  
• RCA VICTOR LM 2247. LP. \$4.98.

In these sixteen Negro spirituals, the Shaw Chorale not only maintains its superbly suave tone and command of dynamics but suggests the color and vitality of Negro choruses. It may not have their full measure of exuberance, nor does it seek to—nor could it—reproduce the wonderfully metallic timbre in many Negro voices; yet the approximation of the style is uncanny. The use in many instances of choral arrangements that are standard fare among all ensembles probably helps the resemblance.

Clayton Krehbiel, soloist in *There Is a Balm in Gilead*, adopts the soft, almost quavering tones of a gentle old man, which makes this version uniquely affecting, and there is some lively pianism from John Wustman to back up a hypnotic performance of *Dry Bones*. Authentic folk singers will always be most communicative in this music, but in its own kind of sophisticated interpretation the Shaw Chorale remains preëminent. R.E.

#### LUISA TETRAZZINI: *Recital*

Arias from *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *La Sonnambula*, *Lakmé*, *Les Vêpres Siciliennes*, *Un Bullo in maschera*, *Rigoletto*, *Les Pêcheurs de perles*. Songs by Tosti, J. Strauss, Chapi.

Luisa Tetrazzini, soprano.

• ROCOCO R 13. LP. \$5.95.

Luisa Tetrazzini, one of the greatest vocal virtuosos of the century, is an almost perfect example of the overwhelming virtues that can stem from the defects of an era. Today, a singer like Tetrazzini would fit badly into the quasi-symphonic conception of operatic presentation. And yet—who would want to clip the wings and cage such a human nightingale?

Tetrazzini, who inspired chefs into naming dishes in her honor, was the reigning coloratura between the decline of Sembrich and Melba and the advent of Galli-Curci. Like all very great vocalists, this rotund, amiable lady sounded like no other singer. Her voice, far stronger, rounder, more highly colored than most coloraturas, tossed off scintillant cadenzas with disdainful nonchalance. Her trills and descending chromatic runs are not remotely approached in our day, nor is a sense of sudden, joyous improvisation. Her attack had the same "hit the bulls-eye" effect characteristic of Babe Ruth when he lined one into the bleachers.

All these phenomena are present in this admirably produced Rococo disc—thirteen selections recorded in London during 1908-09. Inequalities of scale and a few inaccuracies of pitch are to be found, for Tetrazzini was not a perfect vocalist; but she was, in her own distinctive way, a genius. The voice sounds very forward and brilliant, thus providing a valuable

document of a legendary singer and a particular era. MAX DE SCHAUSENSEE

#### VIENNA ACADEMY CHORUS: "*On Tour*"

Vienna Academy Chorus, Günther Thenring, cond.

• WESTMINSTER WP 6088. LP. \$3.98.

The Vienna Academy Chorus has been touring the United States more or less regularly since 1953, and this recording was drawn from the repertoire for the 1958-59 tour. The ensemble comprises twelve female and twelve male voices, "chosen from the ranks of the most talented graduates of the Vienna Academy of Music."

Since this probably can be considered a "souvenir" record, it is idle to wish that it were everywhere as good as its best portions. But the choir's range is on exhibition, and the frivolous must be taken with the worthwhile. On the whole, though, the balance is on the worthwhile side.

There can be no question of the ensemble's virtuosity, and tonally it has clarity and a brightness in the female section that is sometimes tiresome. The most probing of the scores, Lotti's eight-part *Crucifixus*, shows the group at its best; it gives a transparent, sensitive reading of this familiar, beautiful work. Sustained floating legatos from the women mark the lovely Schubert work, and the rarely heard, delicious pieces of Mozart are sung with the lusty good humor they deserve. The arrangements of Johann Strauss waltzes and polkas have their pleasant as well as repellent side, but the vocal (or nonvocal, really) fireworks make the ensemble tone grow thin and constrained. The more normal humors of the folk songs return the singers to more comfortable ground.

Most of the singing is a *cappella*; some of it is accompanied by Norbert Selierlich at the piano, Mozart's *Ave Verum Corpus* by a string ensemble. R.E.

#### LEONARD WARREN: "*On Tour in Russia*"

Leonard Warren, baritone; Willard Sektberg, piano.

• RCA VICTOR LM 2266. LP. \$4.98.

Recorded in Leningrad and Kiev last May, presumably with Telefunken equipment recently acquired by the Soviet radio, these fourteen songs document Warren's tour of four Russian cities. The engineering is good, and the performance provides a sense of concert-hall immediacy that is conveyed by more than the intrusion of applause and random noise.

The weakest element is the singing: Warren's lead-heavy approach to Ford's aria from *Falstaff*, his crude sentimentality in *Mattinata*, his graceless approach to French songs.

Comparing the musical content to the glowing liner notes, one wonders what the fuss was all about. R.C.M.

Continued on page 75

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# Records for the Younger Set



THE INEXPENSIVE NEW phonograph had been in the playroom two weeks at least, and it was time that we acquired a nice lot of records for the children to play on it. The problem was where to start, for the catalogues are not fat with discs designed specifically for children. I suppose the competition of television has discouraged their production: in front of the screen a child can use his eyes and his ears both. However, those of us who are old-fashioned and believe in the virtue of simply listening can find some records which the junior brigade should enjoy as well as profit by.

Children's records (all those mentioned here are monophonic) still are produced in three speeds: 78 rpm, 45 rpm, and 33%. I think that for the lad or lass who can put a record on and turn it off the 78s are a great advantage. There's many a child whose attention span is not long enough for an LP, but he might sit absorbed for the duration of a 78. The Children's Record Guild has quite a handful of worthwhile 78s—several containing excerpts from the classical repertoire, performed by full orchestras: Tchaikovsky, *Waltz of the Flowers* (CRC 9012); Prokofiev, *March from Love for Three Oranges* (CRC 9013); Wagner, *Ride of the Valkyries* and Chopin, *Waltz from Les Sylphides* (CRC 9016); Grieg, *From the Hall of the Mountain King* (CRC 9014). There are also several discs of songs: *Around the Campfire* (CRC 438); *American Pioneer Songs* (CRC 301); *Silly Lies!*, a collection of nonsense songs (CRC 5011).

Then there are the records which our budding fi-fanciers call oversized doughnuts—the 45 rpms. These also have a relatively short playing time and are easy for any child to handle. Unfortunately, many of them are hardly worth putting on the spindle. There are several, however, containing stories, in most cases with musical background, that are fairly well told. Of these one might keep in mind *Dick Whittington* (RCA Victor WBY 41) and *Uncle Wiggly and the Pirates* (RCA Victor WBY 47). All the tales are told in a modern way, and although in my opinion they're not improved by the musical accompaniment, they are unharmed by it. One 45-rpm disc you can happily share with the kiddies is a collection of folk songs by the well-known Peter Seeger, who accompanies himself here with some marvelous guitar playing (Folkways EPC1). Children learn these songs easily and sing right along with Mr. Seeger.

Records at 33% of course have their advantages for junior, as well as adult, discophiles. Enrichment Records has a series of 10-inch discs which tell in dramatic form (with songs) of various historical events and personages. Besides being entertaining, they are informative and could be used to reinforce a history lesson or such. To list a few that I listened

to: *The Panama Canal* and *Robert Fulton and the Steamboat* (ERL 112); *John Paul Jones* and *D-Day Invasion of Europe*—the latter particularly interesting (ERL 113); *Ben Franklin, Lincoln, and Douglas* (ERL 111). Another thoroughly interesting 10-inch record with a real ring of authenticity is *The Story of the Klondike*, written and narrated by Pierre Berton (Folkways FP 108). This is the story—not dramatized but simply narrated—of the Yukon territory in the famous Gold Rush days. Berton also adds a brief description of the same spot as it appears today.

In the musical vein are two 10-inchers which will add to any child's library. *Jean Ritchie Sings Children's Songs and Games of the Southern Mountains* (Folkways FC 754) comes with a pamphlet giving the texts of the songs and instructions as to how to play the games. *Golden Slumbers* (Book Records Inc.) is a lavishly produced selection of lullabies—the record accompanied by a booklet containing words, music, and illustrative reproductions of well-known paintings. Although the performances are uneven and the lullabies are not of equal appeal, some lovely pieces are included.

By far the largest number of discs for the younger generation are 12-inch 33% rpm, most of them offering narration of some sort often punctuated with songs or background music. To deal first with the musical offerings, Decca has produced a full-length disc, *Circus in Town!*, played by a real circus band (DL 9058). The pieces are full of rhythm (mostly in march time), and many a child who has had or is anticipating a trip to the big top should enjoy this one. Counterpoint has a bit of esoterica which will surely appeal to some child and which adults may find interesting too: *Children's Songs of Shakespeare's Time* performed by Russell Oberlin and the New York Pro Musica Antiqua (CPT 540). These are lilting rounds and madrigals, well performed. The words of each song are printed on the back of the jacket. For the Western-minded there are two records: *Great American Folk Heroes*, stories of Jesse James, Wild Bill Hickok, and others told by Will Rogers, Jr. and sung by Tom Scott (Judson J 3013); and *Wyatt Earp, Cheyenne and other TV Favorites* (RCA Victor LBY 1004), all theme songs from various popular TV programs. They are good Western tunes sung by a chorus—here's one adult who enjoyed them too.

In a different mode, there is a nice introduction to classical music played by the duo-pianists Whitemore and Lowe, *Major Classics for Minors* (RCA Victor LBY 1016). The performers here explain the music before they play it—all selections are thrice familiar tunes from Brahms, Chopin, Bach, etc.—and though the shortness of each excerpt gives the record a choppy effect, it is still worth-

while if you do not want to sit your young listeners down to a whole record of Brahms or Bach. For variety we have a record of *Gobbledegook* songs sung by Stanley Holloway (Judson J 3026). You can guess that these delightful songs are well done, and they are tuneful enough for children to pick up and join in with Mr. H. For quieter moments such as nap-time or bedtime Victor has a large collection called *Lullabies for Sleepy Heads* (RCA LBY 1003). Here are charming familiar melodies, for the most part well played and sung.

And we have proceeded this far without mentioning Mother Goose. In fact there are several presentations of this children's staple, and they run the gamut from sophisticated interpretations (Caedmon TC 1091) to simple straightforward ones (Gene Kelly, *Nursery Songs and Stories*, Columbia CL 1063). Mr. Kelly does not have a wonderful voice but he seems to enjoy singing and to boot he tells, very well indeed, the story of the *Shoemaker and the Elves*. Then there's also George Feyer playing on the piano all the Mother Goose tunes you can remember (Vox 25410).

Now for the spoken word, in several cases also including songs. *Uncle Remus Stories* are read by the author's grandson and very well read, too (Jubilee JLP 1065), as are the *Rootabaga Stories* told by their author, Carl Sandburg, on Caedmon TC 1089. Two LPs worthwhile whirling around on any turntable are *The Reluctant Dragon* (Caedmon TC 1074), written by Kenneth Grahame, and *The Just So Stories* (Caedmon TC 1088), both discs read by Boris Karloff and both excellent. For older children Mr. Karloff has done *The Hunting of the Snark* and the *Pied Piper of Hamelin* (Caedmon TC 1085). There is also a good recording of Michael Redgrave reading *The Emperor's Nightingale*, *The Tinderbox*, and other Hans Christian Andersen tales (Caedmon TC 1073).

No child's library is complete without Mark Twain and fortunately there is a good reading by Walter Brennan and Brandon de Wille of the *Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* and two episodes from *Huckleberry Finn* (Caedmon TC 1027). Of the equally indispensable fairy tales, one might note *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* *Forty*, told in very contemporary language by Bing Crosby with songs by Mary Rodgers, tuneful and swinging. Mr. Bing has a wonderful reading voice (Golden Record A 29820).

At this Christmas time there is one last record I might mention. It is a typically American story, among the best of that tradition: *A Christmas Story—An Axe, An Apple and A Buckskin*. The story and music are nice, and Bing Crosby seems to enjoy performing it (Golden Masterpiece Recordings A 29821).

MIRIAM D. MANNING

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## Here at Home

"Broadway Cavalcade." Fred Waring and the Pennsylvanians. Capitol WBO 1079, \$9.96 (Two LP).

Fred Waring's "Broadway Cavalcade" is a truly bounteous collection of songs from musical shows of the past fifty years. Of the twenty-nine tunes, twenty-one are by American composers—a gratifying tribute to the immense contribution our native songsmiths have made to the American musical-theater scene. The earliest number is from George M. Cohan's 1906 *Forty-five Minutes from Broadway*; the latest are Bernstein's *Tonight* from *West Side Story* and *Seventy-Six Trombones* from Meredith Willson's *Music Man*, both produced in 1957. In between, but not in chronological order, are songs both by name composers and by composers now almost forgotten. The latter include Harry Tierney, whose *Irene* was a smash hit in 1919, Herman Hupfield (*As Time Goes By*), and Peter de Rose, a writer of pop songs who gets in here with his *Wagon Wheels* from the 1934 New Ziegfeld Follies. Everything is presented in the now customary Waring style, in which careful adjustment and manipulation of vocal groups are the main feature. Individual soloists do not seem to me to be quite the equal of the singers he once used, though many have been with him for some time. Apart from one glaring error, the allocation of Lehar's well-known tenor aria "*Dein ist mein ganzes Herz*" to a soprano, I can most heartily recommend these records as bound to delight the listener.

"Christmas Holidays at Radio City Music Hall." Richard Leibert, Organ; Radio City Music Hall Choral Ensemble; Radio City Music Hall Symphony, Raymond Paige, cond. RCA Victor LOP 1010, \$3.98 (LP); LSO 1010, \$5.98 (SD).

The eye-catching double cover of this record is merely a sort of visual *hors d'oeuvre* to the palatable feast of Christmas music enclosed. Here is a re-creation of Radio City's fabulous yuletide show, an extravaganza that has been delighting its audiences for almost twenty-six years. The program is a skillful amalgam of religious and popular music appropriate to the festive season, plus a dance routine for the Rockettes and a charming performance of Eric Coates's winning little ballet score to *Cinderella*. The only dull spot in an oth-

erwise sparkling show is the rather commonplace production number *Chances Are*. Impressive as the sound is on the monophonic version, it becomes almost pale beside that of the stereo recording. On the latter the theatrical atmosphere is so heightened that you might easily be sitting in the twelfth row center, with the entire panorama spread before you, while bathed in sound from all quarters—in the case of the organ, even from above.

"Christmas with the Salvation Army." Salvation Army New York Staff Band and Male Chorus. Westminster WP 6096, \$3.98 (LP).

If you like your Christmas music bold and full, with plenty of brass and drums, this record should suit you admirably. The excellent all-brass band hews closely to the musical line, plays with much spirit, and makes a really brave sound. If you've visualized the Army's musical contribution to Christmas in terms of a harmonium and a tambourine, this record will very quickly change your point of view. The male chorus contributes some solid versions of carols, including an Old German echo hymn that is most delightful. Their singing is both enthusiastic and emphatic.

"Destination Moon." Ames Brothers; Sid Ramin's Orchestra. RCA Victor LPM 1680, \$3.98 (LP).

Taking off from *Beyond the Blue Horizon*, the Ames Brothers continue their journey *East of the Sun* until they are *Clear Out of This World*. On their trip they can *Count Every Star*, and though

*It's Only a Paper Moon* (and sometimes *No Moon at All*) they can still observe the *Moonglow*. As the boys describe it, the trip's an enjoyable one. No wonder that, unlike some recent efforts in the same direction, they achieve their objective, *Moon*, ably abetted by the splendid vocal arrangements of Al Semola and the support of Sid Ramin's orchestra.

"Hot Cargo." Ernestine Anderson; Harry Arnold and His Orchestra. Mercury MG 20354, \$3.98 (LP).

Why a singer of Ernestine Anderson's caliber should have to go to Sweden to be discovered is one of those mysteries only booking agents and record executives can answer. On this record, made in Sweden with the excellent radio orchestra of Harry Arnold, she proves that she can sing rings around a great many of the female singers now riding the crest of the wave in this country. Her warm, dark-colored voice, impeccable phrasing and articulation, and highly charged emotional style are just perfect for this set of fine ballads. You won't find a more compelling version of *Little Girl Blue* or a more moody rendition of Harold Arlen's *Ill Wind* in the entire record catalogue. My only complaint is the ill-advised slow tempo she adopts for Cole Porter's gay injunction *Experiment*; otherwise this is tops.

"Let's Get Away from It All." Patti Page; Jack Real and His Orchestra. Mercury MG 20387, \$3.98 (LP).

This is not one of Miss Page's better records. While she confines herself to a few ballads, she is on pretty safe ground; but when she essays numbers with jazz overtones, her limitations are rather harshly exposed. Songs like *Way Down Yonder in New Orleans* and *Mississippi Mud* are not really her métier, despite her effort to be bright, brash, and carefree. The recorded sound seems to me to be coarse, and below today's accepted standards.

"Only the Lonely." Frank Sinatra; Orchestra, Nelson Riddle, cond. Capitol W 1053, \$4.98 (LP).

It must have taken considerable courage on Sinatra's part even to consider making a record of such consistently mournful material. That he manages to bring off successfully a program of unrelieved sadness speaks well for his artistry, taste, and imagination. The liner notes suggest that the singer is, basically, a lonely man. If so, the emotions that this plaint has generated have had a particularly stimu-



Ernestine Anderson: Sweden's Hot Cargo.

lating effect on his work. Each song is projected to wonderful effect, each one a little cameo of masterly phrasing and sincerity. Even the grim cover art will not deter the ardent Sinatra fan from acquiring this excellent record.

"Pat." Pat Harrington. Epic LN 3494, \$3.98 (LP).

No Flanagan, Dooley, or Malone could warble these Irish come-all-ye's with more beguiling persuasiveness or Hibernian relish than the ex-burlesque musical-comedy man, Pat Harrington. Without resorting to the usual stage-Irish accent, he gives every ounce of blarney to the comedy numbers and every touch of romance to the ballads. It's true that the

voice is not the greatest, but it handles all the material with both ease and charm.

"Piano by Starlight." Liberace. Columbia CL 1091, \$3.98 (LP).

The gentleman with the sequin jacket and the expansive smile can, when he has the mind to, turn out a really good record. Liberace has done exactly this with "Piano by Starlight," in which a dozen standard tunes are handled with taste and a certain amount of musical integrity. The usual (or should one say the unusual?) embellishments, the wrong notes, and other annoying mannerisms are mercifully absent, and the pianist's large and admiring public should readily take to this enjoyable disc.

"Rebound." Jackie Gleason and His Orchestra. Capitol W 1075, \$4.98 (LP). This is (by Capitol count) the fourteenth Gleason-directed album to enter the catalogue. Few of the previous issues have impressed me as favorably as this latest edition. For one thing, I am happy to be free of the Hackett horn, which always struck me as being an interloper in a sea of strings. Here Gleason has replaced it with the smoother-sounding *oboe d'amore* of Romeo Penique, which blends felicitously with the lush string tone of the Gleason orchestra. As usual, Gleason relies on old and trusted favorites, handsomely arranged for his particular style and quite beautifully played.

"Resort Favorites." Harry Marshard and His Society Dance Orchestra. Bel Canto 1006, \$5.95 (SD).

Where society dance orchestras are concerned, it's usually a matter of paying your money and taking your choice. To be frank, they all sound pretty much alike. The Marshard group is as good as any around, and thanks to the excellence of Bel Canto's stereo sound, seems to be even better than most. One very definite factor in their favor, at least on this record, is that they get reasonably well away from the old staples: no *Night and Day*, no *Smoke Gets In Your Eyes*, not even *Tea for Two*. This borders on the adventurous, and certainly deserves some reward. For those who want a record of dance music but fear the eternal duplication that is so often the bane of these discs, this can be safely recommended.

"Reunion in Hi-Fi." The Former Glenn Miller Singers (Marion Hutton, Ray Eberle, Tex Beneke, The Modernaires with Paula Kelly). Coral CRL 59104, \$3.98 (LP).

It hardly seems possible that it is fifteen or sixteen years ago that college kids and GIs on furlough were breaking their necks to get to the Pennsylvania or into the Roxy to hear the Miller Band and to revel in the vocal stylings of the Modernaires, the sweet-voiced tenoring of Ray Eberle, to say nothing of the gravel-voiced Beneke. The vocalists, in a sentimental get-together, have re-created those exciting days, and you can once more enjoy *Chattanooga Choo Choo*, *Elmer's Tune*, *Kalamazoo*, and the other old favorites. You'd hardly expect the voices to be quite as youthful as they once were, but the years have been surprisingly kind to all the singers. A reasonable facsimile of the Miller band is on hand to supply excellent support; and if you are at all in a nostalgic mood, you won't be able to resist this record.

"The Star Carol." Tennessee Ernie Ford. Capitol T 1071, \$3.98 (LP).

Ford's fine robust baritone voice, his obvious reverence for the music, and the straightforward honesty of his singing make this one of the best of the new Christmas recordings. In a program of fourteen carols the singer relies mostly on the traditional songs of the festive season, but he has also included three

## Here Capitol Comes A-Caroling

CONTINUING its series of carols from around the world, Capitol offers a lyric revelation in "Christmas in Poland." The Schola Cantorum of Saints Cyril and Methodius Seminary have selected an inspired program of *kolendy*, or church carols, and *pastoralki*, or folk songs. The freshness and loveliness of the songs, however, are the disc's only virtues. The choral group, inflexible in its approach, tends to bog down in monotony, and the thick, turgid recorded sound is an insuperable sonic obstacle. Capitol has compounded its errors by failing to provide texts, translations, or even summaries of the songs. With material as beautiful and as unfamiliar as these Polish carols, such an omission is inexcusable.

Havana's Coro de Madrigalistas merits a hosanna for a scintillating yet reverent recital of Cuban carols on "Christmas in Cuba." Vocalist Fernando Albuerno chips in with four solos; among them is *Blancas Navidades* (*White Christmas*), which proves to be no less banal in Spanish than in English. Faithful sound. Again, neither texts nor translations.

The songs of "Christmas in Australia" were all composed by William G. James and John Wheeler. Textually and melodically, they fall into the rather staid mainstream of English hymns. However, the fact that Australia celebrates the Nativity in high summer lends a certain piquancy to the texts: "As you sit by your wide open window. . . . As you gaze through the bright summer moonlight." In their scant two selections, the Hurlstone Choral Society displays far greater musicality than the uninspiring ABC Adelaide Chorus, which sings the remaining ten.

Brazil also observes a hot-weather Noel, but the recorded tribute, "Christmas in Brazil," falls as flat as the soloists' voices. The choral backdrop provided by the orphan girls of the Coro das Meninas da Casa de Lazaro is, in all charity, embarrassingly bad. This disc probably aimed at capturing the spontaneity of young, untrained voices, but the outcome is woeful.

Brazil's mother country fares far better on "Christmas in Portugal," largely due to the remarkably effective *a cappella* singing of the Coro Salesiano de Mogo-



Vienna Boys Choir

fores and the burnished harmonies of the Trio Odemira. The Portuguese songs are unusually melodic and one of them, *Salve Menino Jesus*, is a minor classic.

The unquestioned gem of the series, however, is "Christmas in Austria." Xaver Mayer conducts the highly trained, fresh-voiced Vienna Boys Choir in a rich tapestry of German carols—*O Tannenbaum*, *Stille Nacht*, Bach's *O Jesulein Süß*. Our American Christmas, with its tinsel tree and the smell of evergreen, is partially derived from Germanic tradition and these carols strike up nostalgic echoes. The record also features the exultant chimes of Vienna's St. Florian Church. In their brassy peals is the distillation of all Christmases—past, present, and future.

O. B. BRUMMELI

"Christmas in Poland." Schola Cantorum of S. S. Cyril and Methodius Seminary, Rev. Henry A. Waraksa, cond. Capitol T 10198, \$3.98 (LP).

"Christmas in Cuba." Fernando Albuerno; Coro de Madrigalistas. Capitol T 10165, \$3.98 (LP).

"Christmas in Australia." ABC Adelaide Chorus, Norman Chinner, cond.; Hurlstone Choral Society. Capitol T 10167, \$3.98 (LP).

"Christmas in Brazil." Coro das Meninas da Casa de Lazaro. Capitol T 10168, \$3.98 (LP).

"Christmas in Portugal." Trio Odemira; Coro Salesiano de Magofores. Capitol T 10166, \$3.98 (LP).

"Christmas in Austria." Vienna Boys Choir, Xaver Mayer, cond. Capitol T 10164, \$3.98 (LP).



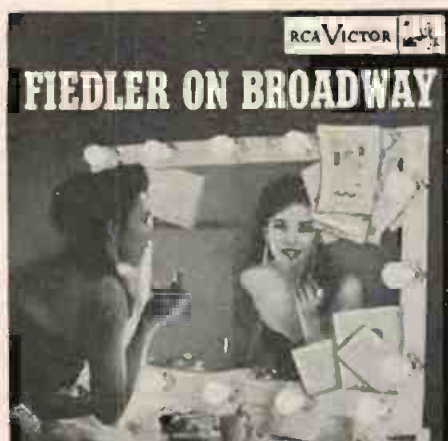


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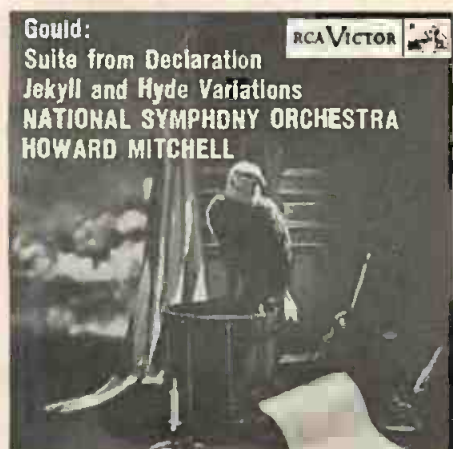
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excellent, and almost unknown, carols by the late Alfred Burt. It is one of these carols, *Some Children See Him*, that I find the real gem of the entire collection.

**"A Sure Thing."** David Allen sings Jerome Kern; Orchestra, Johnny Mandel, cond. World Pacific Records 1006, \$5.98 (SD).

Here's a record that you simply have to listen to a number of times before you realize how good it is. The Allen voice is not so wonderful and the Mandel arrangements not unique, but they complement each other beautifully in some of the loveliest songs ever written by Jerome Kern. As a matter of fact, there are times when Allen sounds more like Sinatra than Sinatra sounds like himself. But is that bad? The stereo sound does not impress me greatly, sounding more like a worked-over monophonic job than a true stereo recording, but it is kind to the vocalist and easy on the ears.

**"Theatre Party."** Andre Kostelanetz and His Orchestra. Columbia CL 1199, \$3.98 (LP).

This is decidedly not the Kostelanetz mixture as before. True, the basic ingredients—two parts Lehar (*The Merry Widow*, *The Count of Luxembourg*), one part Kern (*Music in the Air*), and one part Porter (*Anything Goes*)—are familiar enough, but missing is the musical spice the maestro used to add to excess. Its absence, or at least more temperate use, makes for an altogether more agreeable musical meal. The arrangements are brilliant and inventive enough, but no longer the mannered affairs they used to be. Of the two American scores, I find the Porter less successful than the Kern music. In any case both are outclassed by the vivid readings of the two Lehar works, which are most persuasively done.

**"To Wish You a Merry Christmas."** Harry Belafonte; Orchestra and Chorus, Bob Corman, cond. RCA Victor LPM 1887, \$3.98 (LP).

The Belafonte voice now seems to me to have a much lighter, more feminine quality, and to sound less pure, than it did, say, three years ago. But Belafonte is still a compelling singer, one who brings a good deal of musical thought and feeling to these carols. I find him happiest in the less familiar pieces, and particularly in one or two that sound as if they might be spirituals. I think he loses the charm of *The Twelve Days of Christmas* by taking it at too rapid a pace, and for some odd reason he sounds suspiciously like Nat "King" Cole in the setting given to Longfellow's *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day*.

JOHN F. INDCOX

**"On Stage with Robert Shaw."** Robert Shaw Chorale; RCA Victor Orchestra. RCA Victor LM 2231, \$4.98 (LP); LSC 2231, \$5.98 (SD).

The most substantial musical attraction here is the long dramatic scena "Gone, Gone, Gone" from *Porgy and Bess*, but the more immediate popular appeal of this program lies in its inclusion of eleven musical-comedy favorites, effectively con-

trasting such exuberant pieces as *Okla-homa!* and *Wintergreen for President* with richly sentimental ballads like *Dancing in the Dark* and *All the Things You Are*. All are given new life by Robert Russell Bennett's stunning recordings and the communicative warmth of Shaw's zestful performances. The monophonic edition is brilliant, but it is only in the stereo disc that the reverberant acoustics of Manhattan Center, the ingenious details and antiphonies of Bennett's arrangements, and the lyrical freshness of both the singing and playing achieve full theatrical persuasiveness. R. D. DARELL

Anna Russell: "A Practical Banana Promotion." Columbia ML 5295, \$3.98 (LP).

Although this is not one of Anna Russell's funniest efforts, one thing can be said for it: two of the three skits are more timely and topical than most of her acts. "A Practical Banana Promotion" is Anna Russell's reaction to Vance Packard's *The Hidden Persuaders*. What the motivational research boys have done for the prune, Miss Russell proposes to do for the banana. And in her exaggerated Eleanor Roosevelt voice she sets out to rediscover the banana by, among other things, giving it a symbol—a grand piano, because the piano has eighty-eight keys and the banana has eighty-eight calories. Still keeping up with the times, Anna also gives her version of a beat poet reading poetry in a cellar to the accompaniment of a jazz combo. It's pretty good, but almost too close to the real thing to be effective parody.

The third skit on this disc, "The French Horn"—which, as she says, is German and not to be confused with the English horn, which is English and, furthermore, sounds horrible except in an orchestra where you can't hear it—is another chapter in Miss Russell's well-known series "Instruments of the Orchestra." The main drawback to this, as to all the Russell pieces, is that the lady is so much funnier in person. Still, the record presents its share of laughs. ROY H. HOOPES, JR.

## Foreign Flavor

**"Guitars at Twilight."** Cuelo Sanchez, baritone; guitar and harp accompaniment. Columbia WL 133, \$4.98 (LP).

Sanchez is prone to the catch in the voice and the muffled sob as he threads his way through these melting Mexican ballads. In fact, this splendidly engineered disc will be far too saccharine for some tastes, but the Niagara of Sanchez's tears typifies the overblown musical emotion that some of our southern neighbors dote upon.

**"Gypsy Fire."** Boris Sarbek and His Orchestra. Columbia WL 136, \$4.98 (LP).

Strings sob and wood winds weep as Boris Sarbek leads his excellent orchestra—veterans of Columbia's Volga-ori-

ented *Dark Eyes* (WL 118)—in a passionate recital of gypsy themes. These range in authenticity from the folk-rooted *Chiockerly* to a Liszt *Hungarian Rhapsody* and excerpts from Kalman's operetta *Countess Maritza*. Sarbek, obviously on familiar musical terrain, pulls out all the stops, and Columbia's spacious, resonant sound provides a handsome frame for a handsome performance. Rarely has Romania been better served on vinylite.

**"Hebrew Melodies in Popular Dance Time."** Pierre Spiers and His Dance Orchestra. Westminster WP 6091, \$3.98 (LP).

From France, by way of the Vega label, comes this grouping of highly atmospheric—and highly danceable—Jewish tunes. Despite the "Hebrew" appellation, half of the songs, and by far the more interesting half, are in the Yiddish-speaking, central European mold; the Israeli efforts such as *Song of the Palmach* and *Commando Song* are somewhat on the synthetic side. Spiers wisely allows the melodies and rhythms to make their own musical points. The results are admirable.

**"Latin Airs."** Luis Arcaraz and His Orchestra. RCA Victor LPM 1712, \$3.98 (LP).

Mexican maestro Arcaraz neatly straddles the border in this hoe-down of North and South American favorites. He has no compunctions about reshaping a tune with the propensities of his big, brassy, beat-conscious band in mind; he even manages to impart a delightful Latin aura to the likes of *Ain't Misbehavin'*. If you like pops performed with zest and rhythmic drive, lend Arcaraz your ear. RCA's sound is stunning.

**"Lisbon's Great Celeste Rodrigues."** Celeste Rodrigues, Aminda Vidal, and Jorge Silva, singers; viola and guitar accompaniment. Capitol T 10153, \$3.98 (LP).

Background noise predominates on this disc, taped from a live performance at the *Viela*, a Lisbon night spot. Celeste Rodrigues, spelled less effectively by Vidal and Silva, limns the peculiar sadness of the *fado*, the gloomy, fatalistic idiom that is the musical currency of Portugal's cafés. Although Celeste lacks the intensity of her more famous sister, Amalia (Angel 65039), she is blessed with incomparably better reproduction.

**"Domenico Modugno Sings Nel Blu Dipinto Di Blu and Other Italian Favorites."** Decca DL 8808, \$3.98 (LP).

During the late summer and autumn, airwaves and jukeboxes throbbled with the choked shouts of *Nel Blu Dipinto Di Blu*—known in some quarters as "Mussolini's Revenge." Fortunately for the eardrums of a generation, the fall of *Nel Blu* has been almost as meteoric as its rise. But the man behind the song, singer-composer Domenico Modugno, is no one-shot success. To prove it, Decca here-

Continued on page 82

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"Orient Express." Liane, soprano; Bar Bohème Trio. Vanguard VRS 9025, \$4.98 (LP).

On this, her sixth LP for Vanguard, Liane once again displays her sure musical taste and velvet vocalise. The Viennese thrush is a popular singer in the best continental tradition, and one who wears amazingly well. In fact, with repeated exposure to her art one wonders if perhaps Liane isn't the finest *chanteuse* of the postwar era.

Her voice, small but true, possesses an intimate, throaty quality ideally suited to her specialty—sophisticated heartbreak. Her way with a song is also uniquely of her time and place. When she sings of love lost, for example, she does so with an undertone of wry self-deprecation that is typically European. There is joy, too; but it always leads to another sorrow, another invasion, another inflation. If you don't know the bittersweet world of Liane, it is high time you investigated it. "Orient Express" will take you there.

"Norrie Paramor's Jet Flight." Norrie Paramor and His Orchestra. Capitol T 10190, \$3.98 (LP).

Norrie Paramor makes full and generally effective use of sound effects such as rain, traffic, and running water in etching these impressions of a dozen cities

from Rome to Sydney. Sometimes, as with Johannesburg, Paramor shapes valid portraits; in other cases, notably Tokyo and Barcelona, he strikes out completely. Still, this is an eminently listenable release, and Capitol has recorded it with breath-taking realism.

"Spain Revisited." Miguel de Molina, baritone; Barcelona Pop Orchestra. Capitol T 10162, \$3.98 (LP).

Made in Barcelona, this disc suggests some of the cool clarity of Cataluña, although the songs (*Trinia, Te Quiero, Quintilla Gitana*) are of the smoldering south. Molina's style is typical of the non-Gypsy approach; however, he prevails over—rather than benefits from—his ineffective choral and orchestral accompaniment. All in all, an accurate reflection of the state of Spanish popular song.

"The War Years." Eve Boswell, contralto; Reg Owen's Orchestra. Capitol T 10140, \$3.98 (LP).

If any veterans of World War II are seeking an aural aphrodisiac, it is at hand. Sultry-voiced Eve Boswell sighs her way through a collection of nostalgic gems such as *I'll Be Seeing You, I'll Walk Alone*, and *As Time Goes By*. The unalloyed sensuality of her delivery—and its attendant hint of millions of manless boudoirs on both sides of the Siegfried Line—is guaranteed to convince anyone of the ultimate folly of war.

O. B. BRUMMELL



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<div style="text-align: center;">  <h3 style="margin: 0;">Siobhan McKenna</h3> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: x-small;">Plays the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future in Dickens' immortal classic, with ANEW McMASTER as Scrooge and stars of the Irish theatre.</p> <h2 style="margin: 0;">DICKENS A Christmas Carol</h2> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: x-small;">Monaural VRS-9040</p> </div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <h3 style="margin: 0;">THE BABY SITTERS</h3> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: x-small;">An enchanting program of folk songs that children will "live" and grown-ups will love</p> <h2 style="margin: 0;">Folk Songs</h2> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: x-small;">FOR BABIES, SMALL CHILDREN, PARENTS AND BABY SITTERS Monaural VRS-9042</p> </div>
<div style="text-align: center;">  <h3 style="margin: 0;">DENIS MATTHEWS</h3> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: x-small;">The distinguished pianist, making his Vanguard debut with BEETHOVEN in the grand manner.</p> <h2 style="margin: 0;">Beethoven:</h2> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: x-small;">VARIATIONS Op. 34, Op. 35 (Eroica); 32 Variations in C minor Monaural VRS-1032 Stereo VSD-2017 BAGATELLES (Complete) Op. 33, Op. 119, Op. 126 Monaural VRS-1033 Stereo VSD-2018</p> </div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <h3 style="margin: 0;">ANTONIO JANIGRO</h3> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: x-small;">Conducting I Solisti di Zagreb, in Christmas works by Corelli, Torelli and Bach, and Haydn's Toy Symphony</p> <h2 style="margin: 0;">An 18th Century Christmas</h2> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: x-small;">Monaural BG-569 Stereo BGS-5006</p> </div>

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"Joy to the World." Roger Wagner Chorale. Capitol SP 8353, \$5.98 (SD).

Nineteen traditional Christmas carols are here presented for the holidays by Roger Wagner's infallibly professional choristers. Though the monophonic version was the next thing to stereo without actually being double-channeled, the stereo disc itself is close to the *ne plus ultra* as far as widespread harmony, flawless blending and hugely open atmospherics are concerned. Surface noise is, unfortunately, a problem; but if it can be discounted, the remaining sound is as sweet a mixture of Christmas vocalizing as you're likely to find.

"Marches in Hi-Fi." Boston Pops Orchestra, Arthur Fiedler, cond. RCA Victor

Continued on page 84

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No fewer than fifteen marches make up the two sides of this Boston Pops program. They range from the *Grand March* from *Aida*, to *Yankee Doodle*, to Berlioz's *Rakóczy March*, to *Seventy-six Trombones* from Meredith Willson's *Music Man*. All are played with rousing spirit and wide dynamic gusto. The monophonic disc is rather bright but nonetheless evenly proportioned. The stereo disc achieves considerably more depth, resonance and, more important, *size*. Here's a delightfully zestful Pops matched by a wondrously vigorous recording.

"The Military Band." Felix Slatkin, cond. Capitol W 1056, \$4.98 (LP).

Slatkin, himself a former conductor of an Air Corps band, has here assembled seventy Hollywood musicians, some of whom saw service in military bands in Washington, for this rousing salute to the United States armed services. In fact "rousing" may be an understatement; the band plays as if inspired by victory in the last of all wars. Service marches occupy almost all of Side 1, with Side 2 given over to eight other well-known marches, including Sousa's famed *Stars and Stripes Forever*. Capitol has spared nothing in the way of recording technology to achieve a thunderous, fiery, and awe-inspiring testimonial, which in my opinion ranks as the very best recording of American military marches yet to grace vinyl grooves.

"Moon, Wind and Stars." Morton Gould and His Orchestra. RCA Victor LM 2232, \$4.98 (LP).

Here Morton Gould goes again, this time applying his "variations" technique to such staple fare as *All Through the Night* and others of similar vein. The title of the disc indicates the dreamy mood the music evokes (an arrangement of Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata* adds to the pensive glow). The recording is highly transparent, full-bodied, and basically distortionless, despite (though happily concurrent with) a moderately high volume level.

"The Music of Christmas." Hollywood Bowl Symphony Orchestra, Carmen Dragon, cond. Capitol SP 8393, \$5.98 (SD).

Carmen Dragon's music of Christmas is, first, the music of Carmen Dragon and the Hollywood Bowl Symphony Orchestra. Secondly, it is a presentation of Christmas carols, given Dragon's expected orchestral embellishments. The traditional flavor has not been lost, and for some tastes the old favorites may be enhanced. Though surface noise is pronounced, the recording is sweetly blended, spacious, and nicely defined.

"Orientale." Capitol Symphony Orchestra, Carmen Dragon, cond. Capitol P 8453, \$4.98 (LP).

The selections hereon are "Oriental" by virtue of title, arrangement, or simply public concept. They include, among others, Tchaikovsky's *Arabian Dance*, Lui-

gini's *Ballet Egyptien*, and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Song of India*. Dragon has fired the Capitol Symphony to staggering heights, and spirit abounds throughout each of the ten selections. The recording is downright splendid, full of the warmth of sumptuous balance, sparkling with the exuberance of tinkling castanets, and providing some of the most hair-raising Chinese-gong reproductions on discs.

"Re Percussion." David Carroll and His Orchestra. Mercury MG 20389, \$3.98 (LP).

"Melody in Percussion" could be an equally apt title for this record; unlike many discs featuring percussion instruments almost exclusively, its arrangements are tuneful and catchy. Carroll uses practically every known instrument that can be hammered, struck, or plucked—plus a very few from the wind and string sections. The recording is of the very first water, outstanding in every aspect.

"The Scots Guards Play Gilbert and Sullivan." Angel 35025, \$4.98 (or \$3.98) (LP).

This renowned group of fur-hatted marchers is here recorded to perfection; but the musical content (which includes selections from *Iolanthe*, *The Mikado*, and *The Pirates of Penzance*), though performed flawlessly, eventually becomes monotonous. Gilbert and Sullivan just doesn't seem to be the Guards' métier; they're more at home with traditional Highland airs.

"Stars and Stripes." Boston Pops Orchestra, Arthur Fiedler, cond. RCA Victor LM 2240, \$4.98 (LP); LSC 2240, \$5.98 (SD).

Hershy Kay's *Stars and Stripes* is (to the ears, at least) one continuous march from start to finish, with its themes taken from Sousa's immortal melodies—primarily from *The Stars and Stripes Forever*. *Stars and Stripes* is a deluge of smashing sound from outer to inner groove, cleanly, if loudly, recorded on the monophonic release, less riotously so in stereo. *Cake-walk*, the other ballet suite on the record, is more dancelike and structurally more interesting. It is generally more conventionally recorded in both versions, of which the stereo disc is somewhat less crisp, considerably more reverberant, and definitely more realistic.

"Where's the Melody?" Morton Gould and His Orchestra. RCA Victor LM 2224, \$4.98 (LP); LSC 2224, \$5.98 (SD).

Gould finds melody here in six themes from popular classics and plays them, believe it or not, as originally written. All of the selections (which include, for example, the second movement from Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony) have been better performed in their entirety elsewhere, however. The sound is better elsewhere, too, for both stereo and monophonic versions have a most peculiar strange, hollow middle range. PHILIP C. GERACI

Continued on page 86

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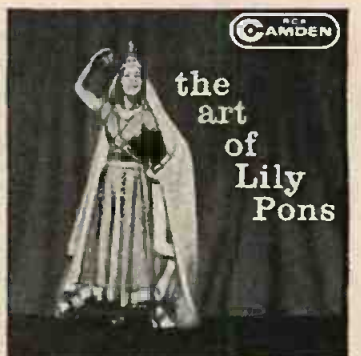
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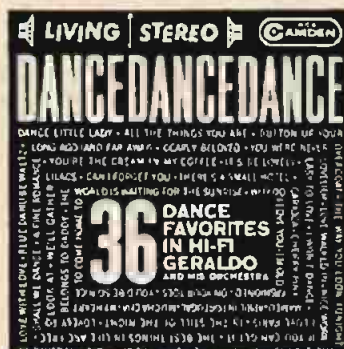


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## JAZZ

**JULIAN ADDERLEY: *Somethin' Else***  
 • BLUE NOTE 1595. LP. \$4.98.

Despite the fact that Adderley is listed as leader of the group on this disc, it is undoubtedly Miles Davis' record. Among the increasingly impressive recordings Davis has made lately, this is one of the best. Not only does he hit his notes cleanly and positively, but he ventures out to a broader range than he normally works in, even rising on one selection into some neatly projected Dizzy Gillespie runs. At the same time he is filling out his ideas more than he has in the past so what once was, at times, a form

of tentative musical shorthand has become a firmly buttressed essay. Adderley's playing is somewhat of an enigma here, for while he succeeds in varying his usual whirligig loops with some warm playing, he also gets involved in more banality than one expects from him. The material (three standards and two originals) is approached with a heartening display of imagination and thought.

**LOUIS ARMSTRONG: *Louis Under the Stars***  
 • VERVE 4012. LP. \$4.98.

Louis returns here to the kind of thing he used to do with Gordon Jenkins for Decca. There's a slight difference in that Russell Garcia's arrangements are not quite as trite as Jenkins' were and his band has a rhythm section that shows

occasional signs of life. The tunes are reasonably sturdy ballads (*Stormy Weather, East of the Sun, Home, Body and Soul, etc.*); and although Armstrong as a vocalist can't always overcome his stringy surroundings, when he picks up his trumpet he usually manages to blow them into the background.

**EVANS BRADSHAW: *Look Out for Evans Bradshaw!***  
 • RIVERSIDE 12263. LP. \$4.98.

Bradshaw is a Detroit pianist (originally from Memphis) who makes his recording debut accompanied by George Joyner, bass, and Philly Joe Jones, drums. He is an obviously disciplined performer with a good touch and great facility. The surface elements of his playing are impressive, but there seems to be relatively little under this surface. Occasionally, when he is less concerned with technique—on portions of *Love for Sale* or *Angel Eyes*—there are suggestions of emotional communication. But much of his work here is dominated by that faceless quality typical of the glib West Coast school of pianists.

**KENNY BURRELL: *Blue Lights***  
 • BLUE NOTE 1596. LP. \$4.98.

Burrell's capacity for developing guitar lines that have a dark, compelling flow is well displayed here, supported by a strong rhythm section (Duke Jordan, Sam Jones, Art Blakey). But one also gets a pair of rather drab, still unformed saxophonists, Junior Cook and Tina Brooks, and an erratic trumpeter, Louis Smith. Burrell, fortunately, does not seem to be at all disconcerted by his colleagues.

**DIRTY JAZZ FROM DOWN SOUTH**  
 • COOK 1188. LP. \$4.98.

Those familiar with Emory Cook's hyperbolic manner of annotating his recordings should not be surprised to find that his entertaining essay accompanying this disc, despite reference to "brothels" and an abandoned use of such adjectives as "shocking," "voluptuous," "sultry," "wiggling," and "wanton," never really clarifies what is dirty about this music. For that matter, neither Cook nor the record clarifies why it should be called jazz. It is, essentially, dance music played by several West Indian bands, most of it lively and eminently foot-tempting but scarcely jazz except for a warm, confident trumpeter in Cyril Diaz's orchestra and possibly the shuffling sinuosity of Johnny Gomez's band. But it is livelier dance music than most of the dance bands in this country put out, so if Cook feels he has to call it "dirty jazz" to draw attention to it, I don't suppose there is any real ground for complaint.

**DUKE ELLINGTON'S SPACEMEN: *The Cosmic Scene***  
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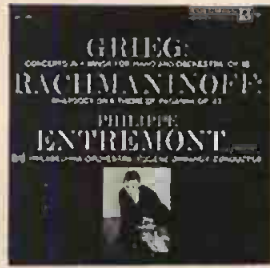
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a quartet from the current Ellington band, revives heartening memories of those earlier groups of Dukelings led by Cootie Williams, Johnny Hodges, Rex Stewart, and Barney Bigard in the Thirties and Forties. This Ellington small group is quite different from its predecessors, however. On one hand, the Duke himself is at the helm instead of one of his sidemen; and on the other, the style is not strongly Ellingtonian, as that of the early small groups was, but reflects the modern jazz orientation of Duke's current men. This group is made up of the Ellington rhythm section plus the trombone section which serves as a cushion for solos by Clark Terry, Jimmy Hamilton, and Paul Gonsalves. Only trumpeter Terry is a consistently attractive soloist. Hamilton, as is his habit on clarinet, is polished but

pale; while Gonsalves, playing tenor saxophone, has some good moments balanced by turgid trudging in search of an idea. The performances are loose and swinging, but one can't help wondering why Duke chose to feature some of the least interesting (Terry excepted) members of his band.

**DOC EVANS AND HIS BAND: *Muskrat Ramble***

• AUTOPHONE AP 56. LP. \$5.95.

The two-cornet team of Doc Evans and Bob Gruenenfelder, who played with exhilarating precision and spirit on an earlier Doc Evans release, are back at it again on one side of this disc. The *pièce de résistance* on this side is a *Fantasy on Muskrat Ramble* in which Kid Ory's old

tune is developed in enough different ways to make unnecessary any recording of this overdone piece more than once or twice a year in the future. Despite these pleasures, the major merits of this disc appear on the other side—two tunes from Evans' favorite source, Jelly Roll Morton (*New Orleans Joys* and *Georgia Swing*) and a fascinating pair by the generally neglected Clarence Williams, *Black Snake Blues* and *Organ Grinder Blues*. Both *Black Snake* and *Organ Grinder* are especially noteworthy for the wandering tuba work of George Tupper, a device which Williams used very effectively in his small recording groups in the late Twenties and early Thirties. If nothing else, the revival of these Williams pieces suggest that there is still a lot of worthy material in the traditional field that is being ignored. Evans' playing is, as usual, bright and imaginative, and pianist Knocky Parker plays with a more consistently rugged authority than he has shown on past recordings.

**ERROLL GARNER: *Paris Impressions***

• COLUMBIA C2L 9. Two LP. \$7.98.

Although Erroll Garner made a trip to Paris last year, this two-disc set proves that not every song with a French reference in its lyric is proper fodder for his piano. Fortunately, his program is well seasoned with Garner originals—equipped with French-reference titles—and these he rolls out in the expected bright, hush, and sturdily swinging Garner colors (one of these, *Farewell to Paris*, includes the most heartfelt Garner groan yet recorded). Even among the pop tunes, he finds an occasional empathetic source such as *La Vie en Rose* and *The Man I Love*. He also plays the harpsichord on four selections, producing a mighty clangor which echoes back and forth through some empty ideas. A little judicious editing might have produced an excellent single disc from all this material.

**BENNIE GREEN: *Soul Stirrin'***

• BLUE NOTE 1599. LP. \$4.98.

Bennie Green is a member of what seems to be a disappearing breed—the lusty-voiced trombonists. The various facets of his talent are given a magnificent showcase on this disc, where he has the complementary support of two tenor saxophonists with similarly virile but disciplined tendencies, Billy Root and one who is identified only as "Jug." Green's playing is, by turns, assertively huge-toned, crisp and concise, and strongly lyrical. The high point of the disc is a furiously swinging *We Wanna Cook*, on which Green punches out a long stirring solo that is a model of neat, yet tremendously forceful, playing. When he descends into some impressively dark explorations of the nether regions of the blues, he shifts to a rough-edged sweeping style that is extremely effective; and, in playing a ballad, he infuses the same style with a rhythmic lyricism that keeps him out of the customary ballad bogs. Although the disc is essentially a blowing session, these blowers have a rare sense

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of group direction and of individual discipline.

**BOBBY HACKETT FOUR:** *At the Embers*  
 • CAPITOL T 1077. LP. \$3.98.

Hackett gets on board the light, bright, bouncing, polite jazz train which was set on its successful way by Jonah Jones. He has been working on the fringes of this sort of thing for twenty years and he takes to it readily, although—surprisingly in view of his long experience—he indulges in a few very direct reflections of Jones's style. On the whole, Hackett's work is prettier than Jones's but it has plenty of swinging virility. The disc introduces an able pianist in the Teddy Wilson tradition, Peppi Moreale.

**STAN KENTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA:** *The Ballad Style of Stan Kenton*  
 • CAPITOL T 1068. LP. \$3.98.

Kenton abandons his triple-forte leanings on this disc to concentrate on suave renditions of ballads. There is a prevalence of lush ensembles which provide a rich background for Kenton's one-finger piano meditations. This is only peripheral jazz, but these performances show more taste and sensitivity than have come from Kenton in a long time.

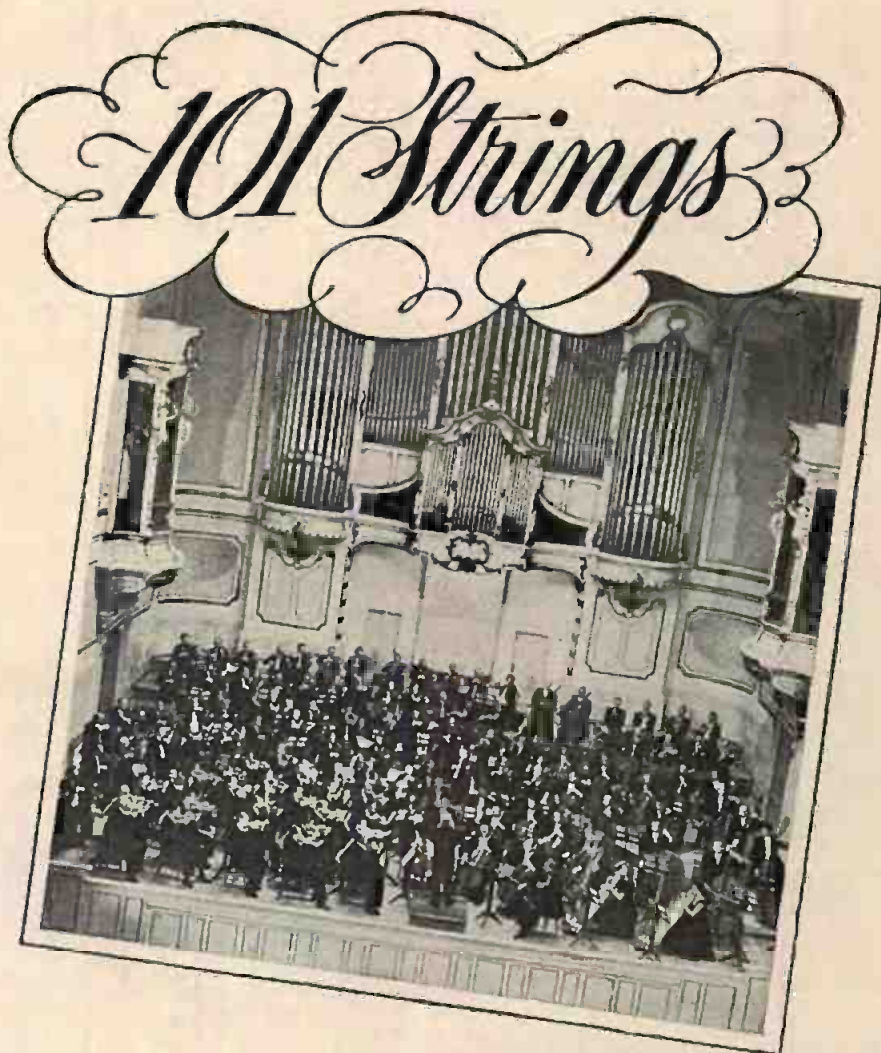
**GEORGE LEWIS:** *The Perennial George Lewis*  
 • VERVE 8277. LP. \$4.98.

Lewis' band has finally been balanced properly for a recording date and that fact, combined with the presence of Thomas Jefferson's hot, confident trumpet, makes this an unusually satisfying Lewis disc. Jefferson sharpens the ensembles appreciably and in one singing appearance, *Mack the Knife*, he manages the difficult feat of using Louis Armstrong's vocal mannerisms as if he were creating them himself. Lewis' clarinet work is consistently excellent—warm and rich in the deep-toned slow numbers, singing joyously at faster tempos. The program is a mixture of Lewis standbys (*Yaaka Hula, Take My Hand Precious Lord, Careless Love*) and less overdone things (*Tipperary, West End Blues*) all of which come out with a shining new sparkle.

**JOHN LEWIS AND MEMBERS OF THE STUTTGART SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA:** *European Windows*  
 • RCA Victor LPM 1742. LP. \$3.98.

This disc falls somewhere between jazz and non-jazz. Lewis, who is musical director and pianist of the Modern Jazz Quartet, has orchestrated five of his compositions from the Quartet's repertory (a sixth is orchestrated by Gunther Schuller) for a thirty-four-piece orchestra. He has said that he did not plan this record "for jazz consumption" but, in a broader sense, "for people who like to listen to melodic music." Lewis is one of the most consistently melodic composers in current jazz, and although his enlarged orchestrations emphasize this melodiousness

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and frequently diminish the jazz qualities that the pieces had in their Quartet versions, this record nevertheless is primarily a jazz disc and an unusually striking one at that.

The reason lies almost entirely in the presence of one of the two principal soloists, the English baritone saxophonist, Ronnie Ross. Ross has a full-toned fluency, a feeling for shading, and a singing quality that are unique among baritone saxophonists. In addition, he has an innate rhythmic flow never pointedly pronounced but an integrated part of everything he plays. His solos are fascinating examples of mature, thoughtful, and emotionally vigorous jazz.

The other soloist, flutist Gerry Wein-kopf, a Czech who now lives and works in Germany, has moments when he does as well as anyone has playing a jazz flute, but even the best parts of his perform-

ances pale beside those of Ross. As for the orchestrations, the broadened scope has enabled Lewis and Schuller to fill out aptly the Quartet versions of *The Queen's Fancy*, *Midsummer*, and *Three Windows*. But on the remaining three selections—*Cortège*, *Two Degrees East Three Degrees West*, and *England's Carol* (which is *God Rest Thee*)—Ross is such a dominant and enlivening force that one tends to lose sight of the orchestrations.

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The Venerable Bede might as well start sharing his adjective with Kid Ory who turns seventy-two on Christmas Day and is still blurring out his gusty trombone figures with youthful vigor. On this disc, in fact, he even shows an unexpected lyric style with a mute. But despite his more than satisfactory performance, Ory

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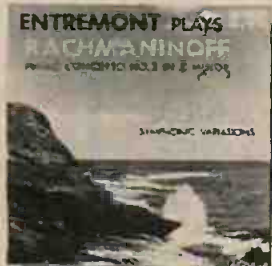
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is a point of minor interest here, overshadowed by Marty Marsala, who plays a clean, bright trumpet with frequent references to Muggsy Spanier's spearing, jabbing attack, and by Darnell Howard, a clarinetist who is a mere sixty-six and full of warm soaring flights of fancy. This is a much looser group than Ory normally records with, and the pleasures of their high spirits are tempered only by the inclusion of a tasteless, adolescent vocal on *The Shiek*.

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There is no denying Shorty Rogers' talent for writing and playing (trumpet and flugelhorn) tightly voiced, smoothly swinging pieces. But he keeps covering the same ground so frequently that his work becomes dully repetitive. On the Atlantic disc he works with a variety of small groups that play with a loose ease, pleasantly propulsive in a Basie-like fashion at times and, on *March of the Martians*, intriguingly perky. But, aside from this selection and a slow, sly reworking of *Molten Swing*, one is left with the feeling that the listening foot has been induced to tap in a vacuum. Rogers' big-band writing on the Victor disc has this same faceless quality, this time played by a seemingly listless group of men.

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by David Johnson

# THE PUCCINI OPERAS

## ON RECORDS

The hundredth anniversary of Puccini's birth has not been marked by mammoth festivals. There has been no need; three of his twelve operas are staples of the world's opera houses, three others are only slightly less popular, and of the remainder, four receive frequent European revivals. Puccini's star is at its apogee. Whether it will decline from its exalted height by the year 2058 is anybody's guess. If a masterly sense of theater, a generous gift of melody, and a technique that broadened and improved from opera to opera can insure continuing popularity, the future of Puccini's operas is as bright as their present. What will count most heavily against them, I think, are the shallow sources from which so many of their librettos derive. Unlike Verdi, who early and late caught fire from the dramas of Schiller and Shakespeare, Puccini rarely looked outside of contemporary stage pieces for his plots. From Verdi's Shakespeare, Schiller, Byron, Hugo, Dumas the younger we must descend to the world of Victorien Sardou, John Luther Long, and David Belasco. Even the forays into the outskirts of the classics in *Manon Lescaut* and *La Bohème* are hampered by episodic librettos. Perhaps only in *Turandot* and *Gianni Schicchi* did Puccini find subjects with roots deep enough to survive the shifts in intellectual

climate characteristic of each new generation.

But this is 1958, not 2058, and the record collector as well as the operagoer can revel in a rich harvest. All the operas except the apprentice ones have at one time or another made full-length appearances in the domestic catalogue. The hiatus caused by the disappearance of the Cetra *Panciulla del West* will soon be filled generously with two new recordings, and it cannot be long before the recording companies realize that they are missing out on a gold mine (in more senses than one) by letting *Gianni Schicchi* go unrecorded. *The Swallow* took a rapid flight and may not return again, but for some of us it has left rich memories. The other operas are to be had in constantly increasing numbers, and the advent of stereo discs will undoubtedly encourage re-recordings by artists who have already contributed distinguished performances to monophonic sets.

In order to give this discography general applicability (and myself the opportunity to mention a few works I am fond of) I have listed deleted recordings of operas not presently represented in the catalogue. Otherwise, only current issues are included. Operas are discussed according to chronological order of composition, and versions are listed in descending order of preference.

## LE VILLI

There is no recording of Puccini's first opera in the domestic catalogues, but the adventurous can send to Henry Stave and Company for the British Cetra version, complete on a single record. The three members of the cast, winners of a competition held at Spoleto, are pretty awful—particularly the lachrymose tenor—but the chorus and orchestra are passable. *Le Villi* is based on a legend variants of which have occupied other opera composers (including Dvořák and Dargomizsky). The version that Fernando Fontana provided for Puccini tells of how Roberto, abandoning his betrothed Anna for a "siren" of Mainz, causes said Anna to die of a broken heart, and how after death she returns to earth with the Willis, supernatural beings pledged to avenge those who die of love. They intercept Roberto as he wanders in the Black Forest and force him to dance until he drops dead of exhaustion. Most of this idiotic business takes place between the acts. Puccini contents himself with setting the first and last scenes and describes the rest in two orchestral intermezzos. In view of the facts that the piece was written when he was already twenty-six and that he had composed his delightful *Mass in A* flat eight years before, *Le Villi* is a curiously inept composition. There is little in it to mark Puccini as its creator; the influence is largely middle Verdi much watered down. Some of the tunes do grow on one, however, particularly those of the intermezzos and of the tenor aria "*Torna ai felici di*." Perhaps a first-rate performance would reveal that the work has more stature than now appears.

—E. Fusco (s), Anna; G. dal Ferro (t), Roberto; S. Verlinghieri (b), Guglielmo Wulf. Radio Italiana Chorus and Orchestra, Arturo Basile, cond. CETRA N 1251. LP.

## EDGAR

This is the one Puccini opera never to have been recorded. I know little about it, save that its libretto is by the same vain poetaster who concocted *Le Villi*, that it portrays a good heroine named Fidelity and an evil one named Tigrana, that Puccini labored over it for four years, and that it was the only one of his stage works of which he was thoroughly ashamed.

## MANON LESCAUT

Listeners usually get to *Manon Lescaut* well after they have become familiar with *Bohème*, *Tosca*, and *Butterfly*. The scorching ardor of the work, its prodigality of melody and swiftness of pace mislead some into supposing it Puccini's chef-d'oeuvre. It is very far from that. The libretto is a shambles, having been taken up and abandoned by three literary hands before Giacosa and Illica patched the final version together. Even more than *Bohème* it is a series of detached acts in which

the characters have hardly a chance to declare themselves, far less to develop. The vital section of Prévost's novel describing Manon and Des Grieux's poverty-stricken life together, so beautifully realized in Massenet's opera, is condensed to a few lines of exposition sung by the baritone in the second act while everybody is absorbed in watching Manon apply her rouge and beauty patches. As to the music, Puccini had not yet completely discovered his artistic personality and he leaned heavily on the procedures of his master, Ponchielli (compare the scene in Manon's boudoir with the scene of Alvisé's ball in *Lu Gioconda*). Furthermore, he was slow in mastering the potentials of the orchestra; in this opera we are treated to wholesale doublings of the voice part that a second-year music student would blush to acknowledge.

If these remarks suggest that I don't like *Manon Lescaut*, they have been misleading. How can one help liking an opera that contains four such tenor arias as "*Tra voi belle*," "*Donna non vidi mai*," "*Ah, Manon, mi tradisce*" (the noblest if least typical song Puccini ever wrote), and "*No! pazzo son?*" This is not to mention Manon's two arias, the second-act love duet, and that puzzling and haunting orchestral interlude that sets the scene for the third act. But, at least since Chick and his librettist Calabigi, a series of beautiful set pieces does not make a great opera. Neither of the complete recordings is satisfactory. The London would have to be counted out on the score of its inferior sonics even if the performance were better than it is. The Des Grieux, Mario del Monaco, is one continuous stentorian bleat. It may be said with the utmost sobriety that he does not observe a single piano marking from start to finish, singing the delicate "*Tra voi belle*," for instance, as though it were a cross between "*Vesti la giubba*" and Otello's third-act monologue. Furthermore, he has trouble with pitch and note values. Tebaldi does some very pleasing things with Manon's music—a high piano attack on the G flat in "*In quelle trine morbide*," for one, or a half-whispered "*dolcissimo soffrir*" at the end of the long love duet (spoiled in part by Del Monaco's joining in a half beat too late). But one feels that she is more concerned with making beautiful sounds than in projecting even the minimal psychology that the part affords. There is little coquetry in her boudoir scene and no terror in her death scene. Another serious shortcoming is her lack of a trill, an absolute necessity in the second act. She is reduced to a measured shake, which even without the score is recognizably a last resource. The roles of Lescaut and Geronte are sung creditably by Borriello and Corena, and what one can hear of the orchestra suggests that Molinari-Pradelli was doing his duty even if the engineers weren't doing theirs.

The handsomely packaged Victor set is sonically much better than London's, but it is not free from the overmicrophoning that seems to be one of Victor's besetting sins. Everything is there, right enough, including the indefatigable harp, which hardly has a dozen bars of rests from one end of the score to the other; however, it

is all twice as big as life. And although the two principals are admirable artists, Albanese is well past her peak and Bjoerling at times sounds as though he were, too. Manon, after all, is an eighteen-year-old girl and her youthfulness is a cardinal matter; Albanese does not convince us of it even on phonograph records. In spite of occasional glorious moments, including a love duet that gets better and better as it swings along, her voice, particularly in its lower register, is tremulous and breathy. She gets into serious trouble with the second act's "*L'Ora, o Tirsi*" even though she comes out of it honorably enough with a nice, ringing high C; and the last act, though dramatically the least unconvincing (she always was at home with the phrase "*tutto è finito*"), is dragged out unmercifully. Bjoerling's Des Grieux is so enormously better than Del Monaco's that one is inclined to ignore a certain raggedness of tone and stolidness of acting. He seems to save himself for his four arias; these he brings off as can very few tenors now in the arena. Merrill is an excellent cynical Lescaut and has just the right kind of solid, handsome baritone to cut through the mass of voices and make his important words heard in the third-act roll-call scene. The other important parts are shared between them by Mario Carlin and Franco Calabrese, a practice heartily to be condemned. In short, this is a good interim *Manon Lescaut*. I await a better.

—Licia Albanese (s), Manon Lescaut; Jussi Bjoerling (t), Des Grieux; Mario Carlin (t), Edmondo, Dancing Master, Lamplighter; Robert Merrill (b), Lescaut; Franco Calabrese (bs), Geronte, Sergeant of the Royal Archers. Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra of the Rome Opera House, Jonel Perlea, cond. RCA Victor LM 6116. Three LP. \$14.94.

—Renata Tebaldi (s), Manon Lescaut; Mario del Monaco (t), Des Grieux; Piero di Palma (t), Edmondo; Adelio Zagonara (t), Dancing Master; Mario Borriello (b), Lescaut; Fernando Corena (bs), Geronte. Soloists, Chorus and Orchestra of Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome), Francesco Molinari-Pradelli, cond. LONDON A 4316. Three LP. \$14.94.

## LA BOHÈME

*La Bohème* went into the Metropolitan repertory in 1900 (Melba singing Mimi) and, except for the 1901-2 season, has never been out of it since. Following Melba as the consumptive seamstress were such dazzling stars as Cavalieri, Farrar, and Bori. (Maggie Teyte, whom some think the greatest Mimi of all, sang the role in Philadelphia, Chicago, and Boston.) The Rodolfos have included Caruso, McCormack, and Martinelli—and of course Gigli, who sang in a complete recording now available in England on the HMV label. Even in pre-LP days there were two complete *Bohèmes*, as well as a complete Act IV conducted by Beecham, and innumerable discs of excerpts. At this writing there are eight complete *Bohèmes* on the American market, two others having been deleted. No other opera can



boast so many recorded versions—a fact which means that *Bohème* is not only a remarkably popular opera but one that has accommodated itself, willy-nilly, to many approaches.

I confess that the descending order of preferences I've indicated for the eight available *Bohèmes* is a pretty tentative thing. I know which version I like best, and I think I know which one I like least; but in between, the varying virtues and defects do not always add up to a clear-cut case of one edition's superiority to another.

To my mind the Beecham reading seemed on first hearing to rise so far above its competitors in so many ways that it took first place easily. Subsequent listening has revealed flaws but has not altered my enthusiasm. The most significant effect this *Bohème* had upon me was to rekindle my interest in a score that is only occasionally distinguished. Here is an example of the art of a great conductor. Beecham never misses a chance Puccini gives him. Clarity, order, restraint which never lacks passion are the characteristics of his reading. Note the incisive muted trumpets of Act II (the famous parallel fifths), the brilliant staccato wood-wind run just before the entrance of Parpignol, the ironic comment of the oboe at the end of Act III, while Mimi and Rodolfo promise to wait until spring before leaving one another. For me the effect this oboe passage is intended to have was a complete revelation, although I'd seen the notes in the score often enough. As for the singers, De los Angeles uses her beautiful voice and equally beautiful intelligence to great effect as Mimi, even if at times she sounds a bit phlegmatic. In her first-act aria she barely marks the difference between the words "*ma quando vien lo sgelo*" and what has gone before, although most sopranos make a great point of observing Puccini's directions (*con molto anima*) here. But the fact is that she *does* mark the difference, in her own subtle, delicate way. In the second-act septet (the one satisfactory performance of this unsatisfactory bit of ensemble writing on records) Mimi, for once, does not try to make her A sound more brilliant than Musetta's B flat. Bjørling is in fine voice and makes a convincing Rodolfo—more convincing on records, perhaps, than he has ever been on the stage. Of the others, Corena must be singled out for a very funny Alcindoro, and Tozzi for a handsome-voiced Colline. This is not a very Italian *Bohème*, but more moving than many that are more flamboyant.

The Angel edition is a highly interesting partial success. It has the distinguished sonics that are characteristic of all the Puccini operas done by this company, and the conducting is conscientious and painstaking, if rarely inspired. Callas, of course, does not have the kind of voice one associates with Mimi. The pure and simple she is not able to do as well as De los Angeles. Her first two acts, despite a ravishingly quiet and convincing first-act entrance and the unremitting pains she takes over Puccini's markings, fail to convince. We have to wait long to get her at her best, but she catches

fire as Mimi takes on some complexity. When she launches into "*Donde lieta usci*"—which, after all, is Mimi's greatest moment—the wait seems worthwhile. In the last act she captures perfectly the dying Mimi's final glints of coquetry and naïve acquisitiveness ("*Ma costerà!*") and the consuming love which alone lends the role some tragic stature. (Note how she renders the phrase "*O una sola, ma grande che l'amore.*") Di Stefano, after some explosive bellowing in "*Che gelida manina,*" settles into a pleasing Rodolfo, capable of insights all his own—as for instance the quick change from passionate response to an anxious, whispered "*Tacil il parlar ti stanca*" ("Quiet! Talking makes you tired"). Panerai is one of the most individual-sounding baritones going, but I don't much care for his overstudied Marcello. Anna Molfo is on the whole a successful Musetta, her voice offering a nice contrast with that of Callas.

The sound of the London version is older and less brilliant than Angel's, and it makes little attempt at the necessary distancing of off-stage voices. Prandelli offers some nice B flats and high Cs as Rodolfo. (Both he and Di Stefano, like most tenors, insist upon singing a C at the end of the first act. Only Beecham and Toscanini see to it that their Rodolfos sing the modest E flat that Puccini wrote). But he frequently gets the syllabification wrong, and at one point he forgets his words and has recourse to the artful dodge of repeating the words he has just sung ("*Mimi è tanto malata*" instead of "*Mimi di sera è fiore*"). He also has a tendency to ham up his acting and inserts a highly improbable-sounding "Oh no!" before blubbering out his final, repeated cry of "Mimi!" Tebaldi is too generous with portamentos—so is Callas, for



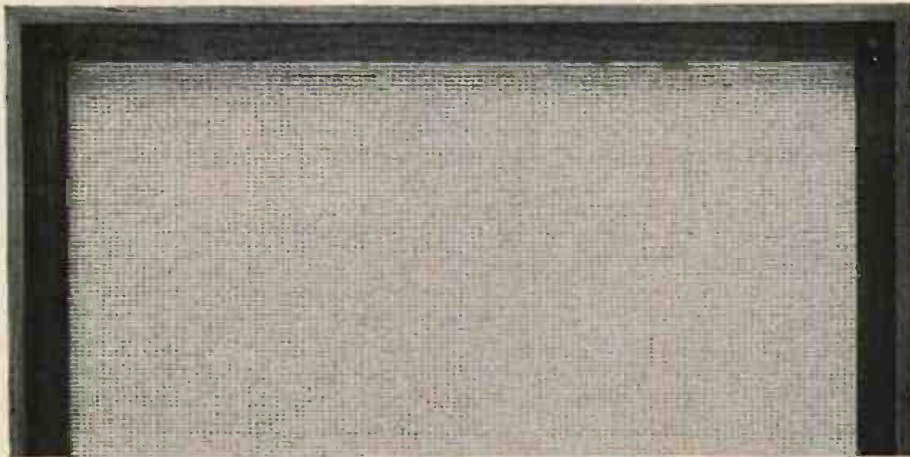
that matter—and too sparing of appoggiaturas. Her first act tempos are dragged, and she drops the final high C disconcertingly sooner than Prandelli (whose fault this is, is a moot point). There are many nice things in her performance, particularly in the last act. But these are isolated phenomena and they do not add up to a convincing or memorable Mimi. The pompous Marcello (Giovanni Inghileri) ruins Tebaldi's efforts in the first part of Act III. Corena is, on the other hand, easily the best Schanard on records, managing to make even the first-act parrot narrative (generally a bore) come alive. Gueden is badly miscast as Musetta. She distorts her voice in trying to sound sly and witty, and fails in the effort. Her waltz song is, bluntly, awful, and her Italian pronunciation none too good.

The Metropolitan Opera *Bohème*, on Columbia SL 101, is copyrighted 1951. The sound is adequate, though one misses the kind of brilliant effects that more re-

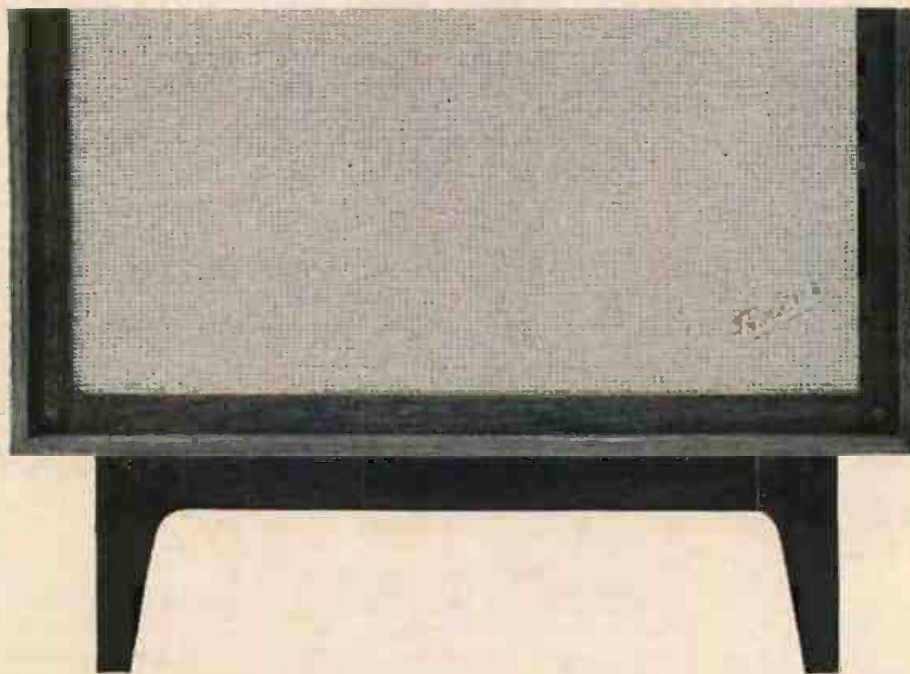
cent recording technique lends to the gayer parts of the score. Again there are no distancing effects; Parpignol and the crowd are on top of us in a moment; and Mimi and Rodolfo, at the end of the second act, sound not as though they were walking off-stage but rather into the audience. The conductor is very cavalier about dynamics. Admittedly, Puccini's fondness for quadruple and quintuple piano markings is absurd, but that is no reason why one should give up altogether and play everything a uniform mezzo-forte. Tucker was in superb voice when he recorded this Rodolfo, and his is perhaps the lushest "*Che gelida manina*" of all; he also shows a genuine interest in the psychology of his part. Occasionally this enthusiasm backfires, as in the last scene, where he attempts to answer Colline's "How is she?" with easy assurance ("You see? she's sleeping quietly") but succeeds only in sounding flippant and slightly bored. Sayao is a curiously disappointing Mimi. Not only does she commit breaches against Puccini's score (e.g., a "*rancor*" held for a good twenty seconds despite the express direction "cut short") but also against Mimi's personality. Mimi is not making a joke, as Sayao seems to think, when she tells Rodolfo that she doesn't go much to church but often prays to God. Still, as with Tebaldi, there are isolated moments that remind us that the soprano is capable of far better things, perhaps the finest of them being when she says to Rodolfo in a scared little voice, "*Tu non mi lasci?*" ("You won't leave me?"). Besides the marvelous Tucker voice the best asset of this performance is the Musetta. Whatever reservations one might have about Mimi Benzell's ultimate musicianship, she was temperamentally and vocally a charming Musetta, and we have not seen her equal in the role since she left the Metropolitan. Baccaloni unfolds the whole doubtful tradition of buffoonery that has grown up around Benoit, quite independently of the score—nasal tones, exaggerated scoops, stops, stutterings, and all. But he gets away with it more successfully than his rivals.

And what about the Toscanini *Bohème*? Alas, the late great maestro sings—not just an uncontrollable phrase here and there, but whole arias, whole duets. He makes duets of the arias and trios of the duets. And not that alone; he also shifts from the soprano to the tenor part at will, preferring one or the other according to its juiciness. I can sympathize, but I cannot in conscience recommend. This is a pity, because Toscanini conducted the world premiere of *Bohème*; and if anyone knew the work, it was he. Besides there is much to recommend this recording: a Mimi as temperamentally right for the role as De los Angeles and with something of the wide dramatic scope of Callas; a tenor who was always at his best under Toscanini; sonics better than those of most Toscanini broadcast performances; and all kinds of orchestral subtleties that only Beecham approaches. The Musetta, Ann McKnight, on the other hand, is barely adequate; and her Italian is sheer mawl-

Continued on page 97



**IS HALF ENOUGH?** How small can a speaker system be? That depends on your standards of musical quality. Certainly a small enclosure is desirable in many living rooms—but there is a point of diminishing returns at which you must make a choice between compactness of the cabinet and quality of the sound. The laws of physics are stubborn—and so are music-listeners who insist on musical realism! That is why the Bozaks are built to standards of maximum quality, not minimum cubage—let the chips fall where they may! The R. T. Bozak Sales Co., Darien, Conn.



ing of that mellifluous tongue. This is a recording not for the average *Bohème* lover but for the doggedly devoted—and for all conductors who have led or ever will lead a performance of this opera.

The Allegro-Royale is a decent, inexpensive version. The orchestral playing is quite as good as that of most of the competing versions, and the engineering is excellent when the inferior vinyl surfaces allow it to be. The veteran Lauri-Volpi can no longer manage notes above the staff without shrill effort, but his singing gives ample evidence of former glory. The American soprano Frances Schimmenti has a great deal of style (much of it rather homespun), but she rivals Lauri-Volpi for shrillness in her upper register. There is no libretto.

Columbia's San Carlo *Bohème* is the newest and possibly the worst in the offering, characterized by a poorly recorded chorus, a razor-voiced Musetta, a Mimi who refuses to cough (in its way an admirable assertion of independence), an easygoing conductor leading a sloppy orchestra, and—in addition—Gianni Poggi.

Finally, there is Remington. Remington offers the only German recording of *Bohème*. That is, the singers are singing Italian, but it might as well be German. Electronically, the recording is a punishment to the ears. The two principals, Ratko Deloreo and Daniza Ilitsch, are experienced vocalists and not entirely to be dismissed, but the engineers don't give them a chance.

—Victoria de los Angeles (s), Mimi; Lucine Amara (s), Musetta; Jussi Bjoerling (t), Rodolfo; Robert Merrill (b), Marcello; John Reardon (b), Schaunard; Giorgio Tozzi (bs), Colline; Fernando Corena (bs), Benoit, Alcindoro. Chorus and RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra, Sir Thomas Beecham, cond. RCA VICTOR LM 6042. Two LP. \$9.96.

—Maria Meneghini Callas (s), Mimi; Anna Mollo (s), Musetta; Giuseppe di Stefano (t), Rodolfo; Rolando Panerai (b), Marcello; Manuel Spatafora (b), Schaunard; Nicola Zaccaria (bs), Colline; Carlo Badioli (bs), Benoit, Alcindoro. Chorus and Orchestra of La Scala (Milan), Antonino Votto, cond. ANGEL 3560/B. Two LP. \$10.96.

—Renata Tebaldi (s), Mimi; Hilde Gueden (s), Musetta; Giacinto Prandelli (t), Rodolfo; Giovanni Inghilleri (b), Marcello; Fernando Corena (b), Schaunard; Raphael Arie (bs), Colline; Melchiorre Luise (bs), Alcindoro, Benoit. Chorus and Orchestra of Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome), Alberto Erede, cond. LONDON A 4209. Two LP. \$9.96.

—Bidú Sayão (s), Mimi; Mimi Benzell (s), Musetta; Richard Tucker (t), Rodolfo; Francesco Valentino (b), Marcello; George Cehanovsky (b), Schaunard; Nicola Moscona (bs), Colline; Salvatore Baccaloni (bs), Benoit, Alcindoro. Chorus and Orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera Association, Giuseppe Antonicelli, cond. COLUMBIA SL 101. Two LP. \$7.96.

—Licia Albanese (s), Mimi; Ann McKnight (s), Musetta; Jan Peerce (t), Rodolfo; Francesco Valentino (b), Marcello; George Cehanovsky (b), Schaunard; Nicola Moscona (bs), Colline; Salvatore Baccaloni (bs), Benoit, Alcindoro.

NBC Symphony Orchestra, Arturo Toscanini, cond. RCA VICTOR LM 6006. Two LP. \$9.96.

—Frances Schimmenti (s), Mimi; Mafalda Micheluzzi (s), Musetta; Giacomo Lauri-Volpi (t), Rodolfo; Giovanni Ciavola (b), Marcello; Enzo Titta (b), Schaunard; Victor Tatzozzi (bs), Colline; Piero Passerotti (bs), Benoit, Alcindoro. ALLEGRO-ROYALE 1542/43. Two LP. \$5.96.

—Antonietta Stella (s), Mimi; Bruno Rizoli (s), Musetta; Gianni Poggi (t), Rodolfo; Renato Capecechi (b), Marcello; Guido Mazzini (b), Schaunard; Giuseppe Modesti (bs), Colline; Melchiorre Luise (bs), Benoit; Giorgio Onesti (bs), Alcindoro. Chorus and Orchestra of the Teatro di San Carlo di Napoli, Francesco Molinari-Pradelli, cond. COLUMBIA M2L 401. Two LP. \$7.96.

—Daniza Ilitsch (s), Mimi; Ruthilde Boesch (s), Musetta; Ratko Deloreo (t), Rodolfo; Theo Bayle (b), Marcello; Marian Rus (bs), Colline; Georg Oeggel (b), Schaunard; Emil Siegerth (bs), Benoit, Alcindoro. REMINGTON R 199-99. Two LP. \$7.96.

## TOSCA

*Tosca* followed *Bohème* in 1900 and proved a startling change of pace for Puccini, who had undertaken the work with some misgivings over its brutal plot. It belongs with *Il Tabarro* as the most "veristic" of his operas and, like that work, has come in for much stricture. Quite true, the play of Sardou from which it derives is unalloyed melodrama, offensive not because it contains scenes of torture, attempted rape, murder, execution, and suicide, but because those scenes exist without reference to a personal vision of life, without any philosophic conviction that man's destiny is ugly and that fate takes a cruel pleasure in the ironic tricks it plays upon him. Sardou's one intention, outside of making money and providing a starring vehicle for Bernhard, was to give his audience goose flesh. He succeeded. But goose flesh is a passing excitation, and Sardou's play is now quite dead. To say, however, that *Tosca* lives *only* because of Puccini's music would be unfair and untrue. Giucosa and Illica provided a remarkably well-constructed libretto which rises to moments of lyric intensity that called from Puccini the best music he had within him. And if the three main characters are really mere puppets, they yet have a surface complexity that, ignited by the flame of Puccini's genius, has consistently attracted great singing actors to them and held audiences spellbound for nearly sixty years.

Even people who intensely dislike the singing of Maria Callas grant that her recording of *Tosca* is not entirely negligible. Those who admire her as a singer and actress are likely to place this very high indeed among recorded operatic re-creations. Possibly Muzio was as great a *Tosca*, but so completely does Callas absorb the role that it is difficult to imagine any other approach as being equally right. Certainly other contemporary *Toscas*, some of whom give praiseworthy

performances, are but pale competitors. The role, of course, makes great demands upon the singer's voice. When the Angel album was done, in 1953, Callas' voice was in excellent condition. The unprepared leaps and thrusts into the stratosphere that must be negotiated in climactic moments are not done with ease (nor ought they to be) but with remarkable control. In the second-act inquisition scene, Callas alone manages the series of rising semitones to the reiterated cry of "Ah!" without producing an effect more painful than exciting; and having traversed and descended from G, G sharp, A, and B flat, she produces an electrifying high C that is very different from Caniglia's screech or Milanov's squeal. A few moments later she gives an equally impressive display of chest tones at the other end of the scale, in the utterly tired sickened-at-heart repetition of "*non posso più*" ("I cannot bear any more"). I make a point of this sheer vocalism in contradistinction to the opinion that Callas is a great Tosca despite her vocal limitations. As an actress, of course, there is no doubt of her complete command, from the moment we hear her calling "Mario!" from off-stage to the moment of her final apostrophe to Scarpia. The two qualities which win my respect most of all are her absolute, note-by-note faithfulness to Puccini's score and her ability to build a scene, to make of it an ever-widening arc of dramatic tensions. As an example of the former quality, notice that she alone of recorded *Toscas* sings the great epitaphium for Scarpia ("*E avanti a lui tremava tutta Roma*") as it is written, in strict rhythm and to reiterated C sharps. The others resort to half-speech and exaggerated pauses, accenting the contempt of the words but destroying the pity inherent in them as Callas does not. As to the other quality, the ability to keep tension rising over a considerable period of time, she shares honors here with the superb Scarpia, Tito Gobbi. Together they make of Act II—starting with Scarpia's "*Ed or fra noi parliam da buoni amici*," page 235 of the Ricordi orchestral score—an object lesson in dramatic planning. It all goes with such logic that "*Vissi d'arte*" seems but one element in the whole, rather than the annoying though beautiful action-stopper it in fact is. Maestro De Sabata, of course, has his large share in all this, choosing the right tempo every time, supporting the singers with admirably disciplined orchestral sound. The Cavaradossi of Giuseppe di Stefano is a joy to the ear, but beyond the beautiful voice is a fund of honest musicianship. If anything, there is perhaps too much restraint in his big moments. He doesn't, for instance, "burst into tears" after his rapturous "*E lucevan le stelle*"—for which most of us can only have gratitude. The sound is not Angel's best and details get lost that would not if the recording were of 1958 vintage, a fact which I cannot bring myself to lament very earnestly. There is too much else to rejoice about.

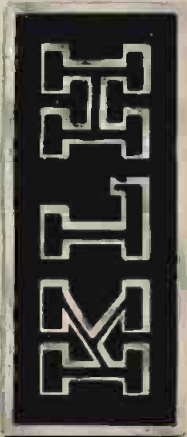
If I give second place to the venerable Gigli-Caniglia version, it is to be understood that we have now descended from stratospheric regions to distinctly earth-

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bound realms. If one turns up the volume a good deal, the sound is, at times, not inferior to London's (which is only so-so). There is a good deal of variation, however, in volume level. The voices, curiously enough, suffer more in transference from 78s than does the orchestra. The Gigli bloom is considerably thinner and paler than originally. Caniglia is a powerful-voiced Tosca, capable of dealing with a good many of the role's difficulties but often in a shrill, hullyng sort of way. Most annoying is her carelessness about note values, with a fondness for turning crotchets into explosive semiquavers as a means of underlining a word or phrase. At best, however, she makes an exciting diva, and her fabulous *voce di petto* tells strongly in the stabbing scene. Gigli, too, sometimes rewrites Puccini to serve his own ends: notice the characteristic double forte in the ninth bar of "Recondita armonia" where Puccini indicates a change from pianissimo to piano. In order to make himself heard above basso and orchestra, he even shoves his part up a sixth at the point where Cavaradossi offers to accompany Angelotti back to his farm ("con voi ferro"). What I like best is not his two arias (both are taken mercilessly slowly) but the great, masculine outburst to liberty in the second act. His words ring like a clarion through the protests of Tosca and Scarpia, and he is so carried away that he sings one more defiant "carnefice!" ("hangman!") than is to be found in the score. Indeed, what is best about this recording is the sense of spontaneity, of a real stage performance, that pervades it. The Scarpia is a thick-voiced and obvious one, but both he and Caniglia make the near-rape business sound uncomfortably convincing. Besides the traditional four-bar cut after Tosca's aria (only London is guiltless of this bit of senselessness) there is an entirely unjustified five-bar cut at the point where Tosca finds out that she has been duped. And this is the only version which gives us a soprano instead of a "ragazzo" in the shepherd's song of Act III.

The Victor album conducted by Leinsdorf has what should be the advantage of the most modern engineering of all competing sets. Unfortunately, however, its sound is its worst drawback. Over-microphoning produces serious distortions in forte sections. Then, too, Leinsdorf often loses himself in a maze of petty detail and fails to realize that his orchestra is producing some ugly string or brass tone. The three principals are Metropolitan idols and have had distinguished pasts. They are not, however, precisely in their prime, and two of them at least (Milanov and Bjoerling) are not well suited to their roles. Milanov's high notes are a trial; she is capable of an occasional good A flat but above that reigns chaos and dark night. Her abilities as an actress were always modest and do not help much here. Bjoerling's voice sounds thin, and he forces tones in a manner uncharacteristic of his best singing. And he is far too passive a Cavaradossi even if the screams from the torture room (are they his?) are quite bloodcurdling. In the end, however, he gives us a lovely "E lucevan le stelle" and "O dolci mani."

As Scarpia, Leonard Warren gives Gobbi some serious competition, despite the fact that his voice seems rather frayed and less innately Scarpia-like than Gobbi's. The second-act monologue ("Ella cerra") is an impressive bit of heroic-satanic declamation. I notice here as so often in Warren's singing, however, a tendency to overemphasis which on occasion approaches affectation. Corena is a far better Sacristan than he is on the London set—the best, indeed, on records. He makes the part crackle with sly caricature.

I should like to see London scrap their present *Tosca*, which is fairly old and poorly recorded, and give Tebaldi the opportunity of recording it anew, with far better assistance than she gets in the present set. The singing she contributes here, as well as her stage performances, proves that she has much to offer in the role. But surrounded as she is with a dull-average Cavaradossi, a bungling Scarpia who sounds hored rather than menacing in the *Te Deum* scene, and the thoroughly uninspired musical direction of Alberto Erede, she wages a losing battle.

—Maria Meneghini Callas (s), Tosca; Giuseppe di Stefano (t), Cavaradossi; Angelo Mercuriali (t), Spoletta; Tito Gobbi (b), Scarpia; Franco Calabrese (bs), Angelotti; Melchiorre Luise (bs), Sacristan. Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra of La Scala (Milan), Victor de Sabata, cond. ANGEL 3508/5. Two LP. \$10.96.

—Maria Caniglia (s), Tosca; Beniamino Gigli (t), Cavaradossi; Nino Mazziotti (t), Spoletta; Armando Borgioli (b), Scarpia; Ernesto Dominici (bs), Angelotti; Giulio Tomei (bs), Sacristan. Soloists, Chorus and Orchestra of the Rome Opera House, Oliviero de Fabritiis, cond. RCA VICTOR LCT 6004. Two LP. \$9.96.

—Zinka Milanov (s), Tosca; Jussi Bjoerling (t), Cavaradossi; Mario Carlin (t), Spoletta; Leonard Warren (b), Scarpia; Leonardo Monreale (bs), Angelotti; Fernando Corena (bs), Sacristan. Soloists, Chorus and Orchestra of the Rome Opera House, Erich Leinsdorf, cond. RCA VICTOR LM 6052. Two LP. \$9.96.

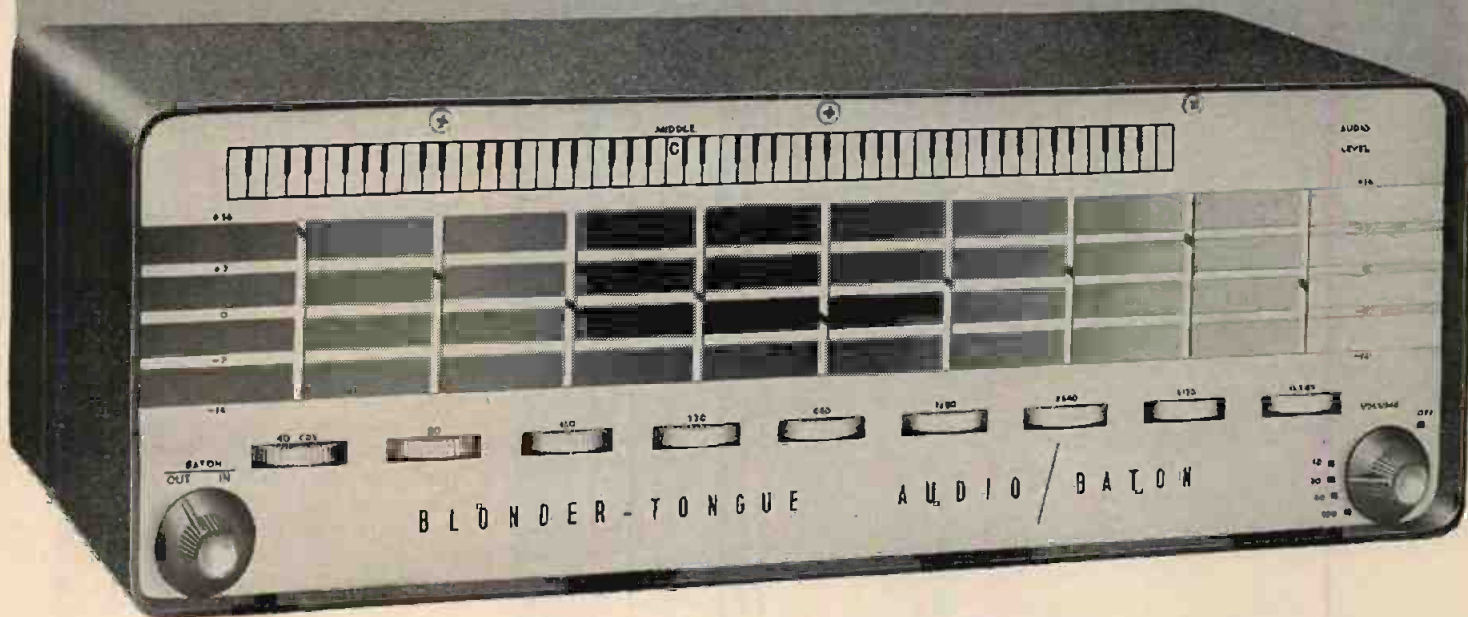
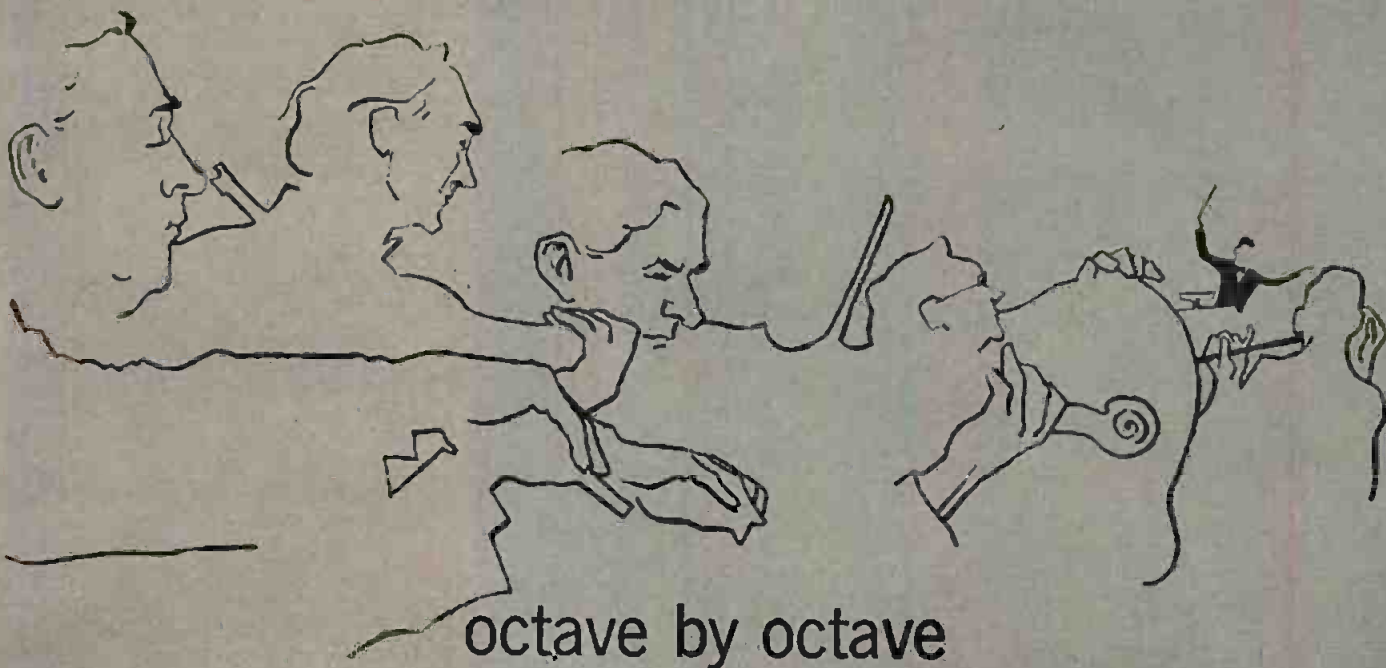
—Renata Tebaldi (s), Tosca; Giuseppe Campora (t), Cavaradossi; Piero di Palma (t), Spoletta; Enzo Mascherini (b), Scarpia; Dario Caselli (bs), Angelotti; Fernando Corena (bs), Sacristan. Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra of Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome), Alberto Erede, cond. LONDON A 4213. Two LP. \$9.96.

#### MADAMA BUTTERFLY

One of the critical commonplaces of current musical journalism is that Puccini's music is always Italian, no matter where he sets his operas. *Madama Butterfly*, according to this gospel, is "full-blooded" Italian opera, "spiced" with some Oriental-sounding phrases which the critic looks at with smiling condescension. He has seen through the attempted fraud and knows that under Cio-Cio-San's white kimono beats the heart of Tosca, or at least of Suor Angelica. Contrary to this point of view, the significant fact is that

Continued on page 100

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by whatever means, Puccini does manage to create the illusion that his little geisha is Japanese and not Italian. The whole fabric of the work depends upon that illusion, upon the conflict between Oriental and Western values, the sense that Butterfly's tragedy is chargeable to Pinkerton's ignorance of a code so rigid, so ancient, so inbred that, once invoked, Butterfly acts upon it as automatically as her father did. The great farewell to her child before she kills herself is, or should be, implacable, ritualistic, priestesslike. The fact that most sopranos bathe this scene with mandolin sentiment is not Puccini's fault nor that of his librettists, as a glance at the score will show.

Since Rosina Storchio we have had very few sopranos who have really understood this role. The standard mistake, in line with the standard criticism, is to make of Butterfly a heavy, tragic, Italianate figure. Almost equally common is the tendency to make her a mincing little figure of fun. The first approach is given a classic illustration in the Tebaldi recording, the second in the performance of Toti dal Monte. Most of the other sopranos I shall discuss fall somewhere between these two kinds of Butterflies, although Victoria de los Angeles manages to avoid the excesses of both without actually emancipating herself from either.

And this leaves Maria Callas. The consensus seems to be that Callas' *Madama Butterfly* is the least successful of her Puccini recordings. This judgment can only be based upon the undeniable fact that her top notes are, to put it kindly, unfortunate. She insists upon taking the D flat alternate at the end of her entrance scene (Tebaldi and De los Angeles have the modesty and good sense to leave that note alone), and always chooses the higher passage when Puccini gives her the choice. The results are always the same: very unpleasant aural sensations. But to dismiss the performance on the grounds of five or six poorly sung notes is to deny oneself the experience of hearing a Butterfly very close to the one Puccini had in his mind and heart when he wrote this music. From the moment when we hear her first phrase ("*Ancora un passo or via*") floated towards us from off-stage, to the last quiet, unsobbed command to her son ("*Va, gioca, gioca*"—"Go, play, play") we recognize in this Butterfly the real thing. Callas sings most of the music at half voice, using coloristic effects sparingly and conforming to the shapes of phrases, expressive markings, and Puccini's constant dramaturgic hints (which appear in bracketed monosyllables above the voice part) with a microscopic fidelity. And though she subordinates the humorous touches in the first two acts, she does not neglect them: see the way she re-creates the sound of the pompous American judge who sends all erring husbands to jail, or her delicious interruptions of Sharpless' letter reading and subsequent repentance ("*dice proprio così? . . . taccio, taccio, più nulla*"). When she is required to pull out the stops, she does so superbly. *Butterfly*, more than any other Puccini opera, belongs to the soprano (the tenor isn't al-

lowed a complete, uninterrupted aria to himself), but the Angel recording is also richly endowed in its Pinkerton and Suzuki. Nicolai Gedda does not have the regulation Pinkerton voice. He makes smaller, more cautious sounds, and his first-act quasi-aria "Dovunque al mondo" is admittedly disappointing—partly because Von Karajan takes the *Allegro sostenuto* tempo too slowly. But he is superb in the love music and the third-act trio, and his sense of style is refreshing indeed. Lucia Danieli, besides being an excellent executant, has the perfect Suzuki voice, light and soprano-like. For sheer vocalism the Cherry Duet, with its two voices melting into one another, is perhaps the high point of the recording. Angel is also to be commended for restoring the part of Yamadori to a tenor. The tradition of a bass or baritone doing the part, reflected in all the other recordings, stems from the purely extramusical reason that it is convenient for the same singer to double in the roles of Yamadori and the Commissioner. Despite the slow tempos, Von Karajan gives a fine account of the orchestra writing.

The first stereo *Butterfly* I have not yet had a chance to live with very long, but I tentatively put it in second place for the brilliance of its engineering and the outstanding Cio-Cio-San of Anna Moffo. She succeeds in giving such stature to the almost-never-excerpted second aria of Act II, "E nato quando egli stava in quel suo gran paese," that one almost thinks it a finer thing than "Un bel di." She does not lend the role the kind of overarching unity-in-variety to be found in Callas' *Butterfly*, but except for the completely misinterpreted final scene hers is a performance very much to be reckoned with. Cesare Valletti has even a smaller voice than Gedda's, but it goes well with the generally reduced size and intimate gestures of this reading. Leinsdorf is to be commended for restoring a charming passage (pages 94 through 104 in the Ricordi orchestral score) quite senselessly cut in all rival versions.

Despite its age (1949) the Columbia set seems to me to deserve third billing. The sound is remarkably good, Max Rudolf's conducting is painstaking, and the Metropolitan Orchestra plays with a *brío* rarely met with in Angel discs. Eleanor Steber's *Butterfly* is musical, her voice in 1949 was of pristine loveliness (see the stunning D flat in the entrance scene), and she inflects much of the music convincingly. What her performance lacks is individuality and spontaneity; she follows the most correct models and never allows instinct to obtrude its dangerous head. There is much to admire in her *Butterfly* but one remains somehow unconvinced and, in the end, indifferent. Tucker is in resplendent voice; one marvels that he avoids the high C in the love duet. One also regrets that "Addio fiorito asil" is so teasingly short and inconclusive when it is sung as well as it is here. Giuseppe Valdengo makes the tiresome Sharpless a bit less tiresome than usual, and the two faithful Metropolitan *compromissarios*, Alessio de Paolis and George Cehanovsky, do their usual competent jobs as Goro and Yamadori. Jean Ma-

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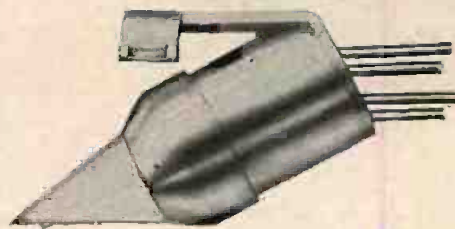


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deira is a bottom-heavy Suzuki; she is a contralto and by no stretch of the imagination a mezzo. A good deal of annoying stage business is to be heard in the recording, including a resounding smack as Butterfly kisses Pinkerton's letter, and an unconscionable amount of sobbing in the final scene.

The London *Butterfly*, as I have already indicated, presents Tebaldi in one of her least satisfying Puccini characterizations. Not only does she fail to project the illusion that Cio-Cio-San is a Japanese, but her mature tones and big gestures make Butterfly's claim that she is just fifteen seem the most outrageous of fibs. The personality that she presents is simply miles away from the character who says to Pinkerton "Love me please . . . with a love to suit a child. We are people accustomed to little things, humble and silent." It goes without saying that Tebaldi does some lovely singing, and there will always be those for whom lovely singing is enough. Giuseppe Campora is not in the Gedda-Tucker class; he uses his voice without much style and shows an indifference for note values. Nell Rankin is another contraltolike Suzuki, whereas the singer who has the thankless role of Kate is really a rather light soprano. The sound (1951) is faded, and Erede turns in a mediocre job as conductor. This is one of the few recordings to attempt ornithological effects in the prelude to Act III, but the bird calls sound more like ill-oiled springs.

The EMI-Capitol set, with De los Angeles, Di Stefano, and Gobbi, would have taken precedence over the London except for the raucous, ugly engineering. The singers sound at times as though the microphones (very much a plural noun) have been shoved down their throats. *Lontano* or distancing effects, so important in the first act and in the sailors' calls of the third, are nonexistent. It is difficult to make a judgment about the orchestra since the aural perspective is so muddy; in quieter passages the playing seems competent but not up to Scala standards. De los Angeles sings engagingly as Butterfly but rather too much all one way. The "humble and silent" she does very well, but there is also the Butterfly who threatens to kill Suzuki and very nearly does kill Coro. This aspect, as well as the ritualistic suicide scene, eludes her. Di Stefano is at his least satisfactory here, treating us to explosive singing, high-handed treatment of text, and behaving in general in the tradition of the bad operatic tenor which he is not. Gobbi is one of the best baritones going, but his voice is all wrong for Sharpless, too dark-hued and intense. He accepts Pinkerton's offer of another glass of whisky as though it were a challenge to mortal combat. Still he rises to the trio most effectively—when Di Stefano doesn't drown him out.

The *Butterfly* in Victor's Collectors' Series has two names to conjure by, Toti dal Monte and Beniamino Gigli. But the original 16-record complete recording on 78s has been pared to a two-record cut version for LP. Gigli, in excellent voice,

*Continued on page 104*



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fills Pinkerton's part with subtleties not to be found among his rivals, although Gedda provides subtleties of his own. Toti dal Monte's superb sense of humor is interesting quite independently of the score, but her tiny voice cannot really cope with the music Puccini has given Butterfly. And she somehow thinks that since she is supposed to be Japanese, she ought to sing through her nose—which she does, maddeningly. The conducting, by Karajan standards, is slapdash, and the sound is of course faded.

The Remington version, valiantly bringing up the rear, has one thing only to recommend it: the singing of Hilde Rössl-Majdan as Suzuki.

—Maria Meneghini Callas (s), Madama Butterfly; Lucia Danieli (ms), Suzuki; Nicolai Gedda (t), Pinkerton; Renato Ercolani (t), Goro; Mario Carlin (t), Yamadori; Mario Borriello (b), Sharpless; Plinio Clabassi (bs), the Bonze. Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra of La Scala (Milan), Herbert von Karajan, cond. ANGEL 3523/C. Three LP. \$15.94.

—Anna Moffo (s), Madama Butterfly; Rosalind Elias (ms), Suzuki; Cesare Valletti (t), Pinkerton; Mario Carlin (t), Goro; Renato Cesari (b), Sharpless; Nestore Catalani (b), Yamadori; Fernando Corena (bs), the Bonze. Soloists, Chorus and Orchestra of the Rome Opera House, Erich Leinsdorf, cond. RCA VICTOR LM 6135, Three LP, \$14.94; RCA VICTOR LSC 6135, Three SD, \$17.94.

—Eleanor Steber (s), Madama Butterfly; Jean Madeira (ms), Suzuki; Richard Tucker (t), Pinkerton; Alessio de Paolis (t), Goro; Giuseppe Valdengo (b), Sharpless; George Cehanovsky (b), Yamadori; Melchiorre Luise (bs), the Bonze. Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera Association, Max Rudolf, cond. COLUMBIA SL 104. Three LP. \$11.94.

—Renata Tebaldi (s), Madama Butterfly; Nell Rankin (ms), Suzuki; Giuseppe Campora (t), Pinkerton; Piero di Palma (t), Goro; Giovanni Inghilleri (b), Sharpless; Melchiorre Luise (bs), Yamadori; Fernando Corena (bs), the Bonze. Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra of Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome), Alberto Erede, cond. LONDON A 4306. Three LP. \$14.94.

—Victoria de los Angeles (s), Madama Butterfly; Anna Maria Canali (ms), Suzuki; Giuseppe di Stefano (t), Pinkerton; Renato Ercolani (t), Goro; Tito Gobbi (b), Sharpless; Arturo La Porta (bs), Yamadori; Bruno Scabichiero (bs), the Bonze. Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra of the Rome Opera House, Gianandrea Gavazzeni, cond. EMI-Capitol GCR 7137. Three LP. \$13.98.

—Toti dal Monte (s), Madama Butterfly; Vittoria Palombini (ms), Suzuki; Beniamino Gigli (t), Pinkerton; Adelio Zagonara (t), Goro; Mario Basiola (b), Sharpless; Gino Conti (b), Yamadori; Ernesto Dominici (bs), the Bonze. Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra of the Rome Opera House, Oliviero Fabritius, cond. RCA VICTOR LCT 6006. Two LP. \$9.96.

—Daniza Ilitsch (s), Madama Butterfly; Hildegard Rössl-Majdan (ms), Suzuki;

Continued on page 106

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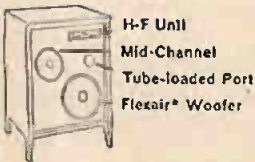
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### LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST

At the moment there is no available edition of *The Girl of the Golden West*, but two new recordings are slated for release in the not distant future, one with Birgit Nilsson and the other with Renata Tebaldi in the title role. Perhaps the time has finally come for a reassessment of this Cinderella among Puccini's major operas. In Europe *Fanciulla* has always maintained a modest popularity, but, as everybody knows, it failed to retain its initial success when it was given its premiere at the Metropolitan in 1910 with a cast headed by Destinn, Caruso, and Amato. The Metropolitan tried again in 1929, this time throwing Jeritza, Martinielli, and Tibbett into the breach. Then they gave up. The vision of a stage filled with people in cowboy suits singing Italian to one another was simply too farcical to be overcome by even the most talented singing and acting—especially when the Italian was liberally sprinkled with such local-color phrases as dooda-dooda-day, hip-hip-hooray, whisky, ugh (Indian talk), Jack Johnson di Sacramento, and "Hallo ragazzi." But I wonder whether our perspective may not have changed sufficiently to make the opera acceptable at last. The world that Puccini intended to be contemporary and realistic is now remote and romantic. I saw recently a handsomely stylized remounting of the David Belasco play from which the opera derives, and I found that the audience, while not for a moment taking its melodramatics seriously, enjoyed it as thoroughly as they might have enjoyed a drama by Ford or Webster. Puccini's score, as always, strengthens rather than weakens the original play. There are glorious things in it, even if it does not consistently maintain the level of the three works that preceded it. The role of Minnie makes as many demands on the voice and histrionics of the prima donna as does Tosca. She must rise to the stature of a Duse or a Magnani in the grim and powerful card game of Act II. The deleted Cetra had in Carla Cavazzi a magnificent actress whose voice was not always able to keep pace with her insights. Ugo Savarese was a convincing Jack Rance, at once despicable and pitiable. The Johnson-Ramirez, however, could not have been worse and the large supporting cast sang with more enthusiasm than accuracy.

—Carla Cavazzi (s), Minnie; Jone Farolfi (ms), Wowkle; Vasco Campagnano (t), Ramirez; Tommaso Soley (t), Harry; Giulio Scarinci (t), Joe; Ugo Savarese (b), Jack Rance; Dario Caselli (b-bs), Ashby, Jake Wallace; Aristide Baracchi (b-bs), Jose Castro; Giovanni Privitera (b-bs), Larkens. Soloists, Chor-

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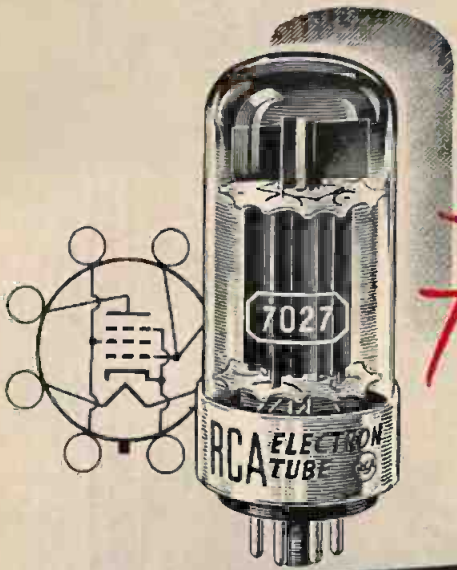
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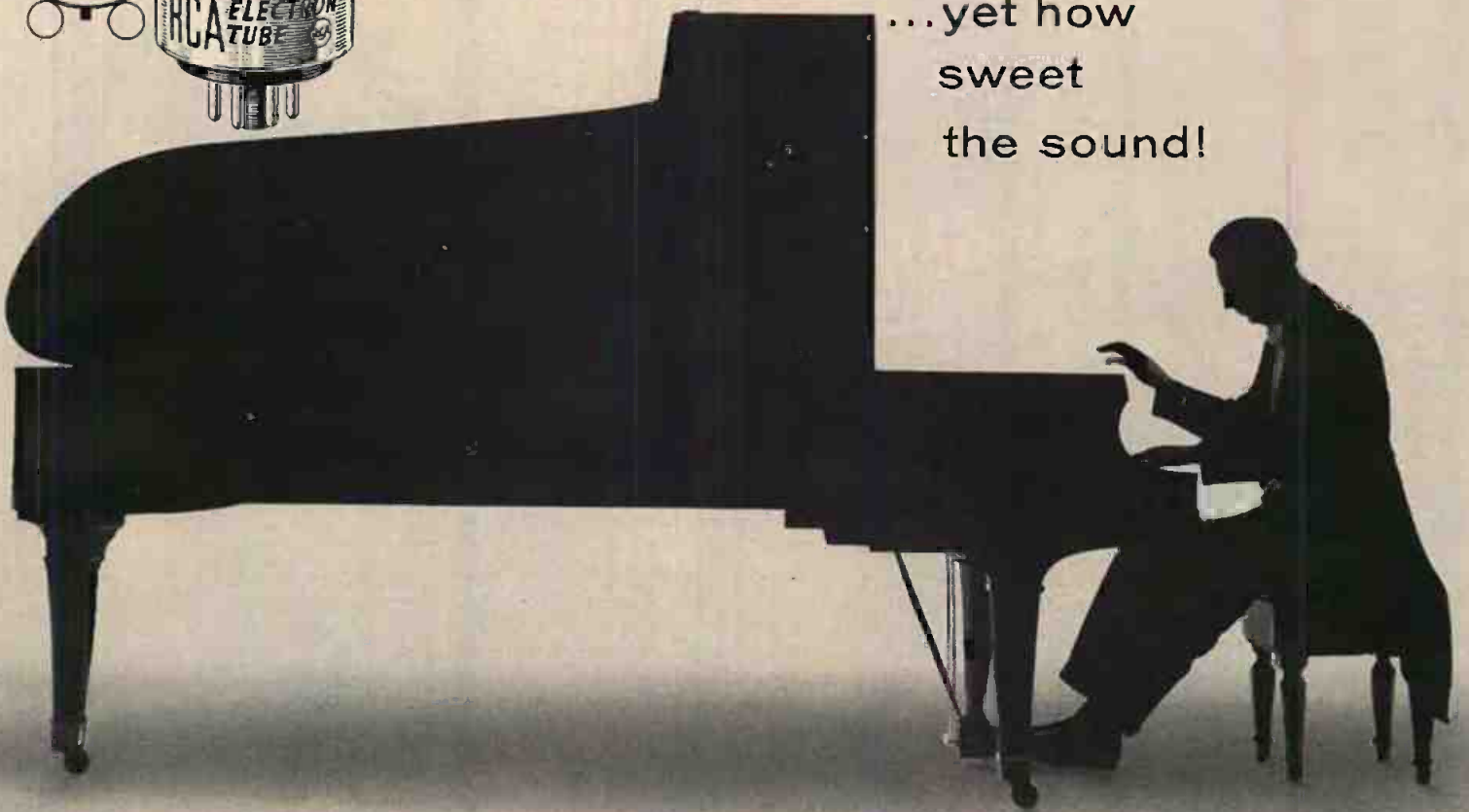
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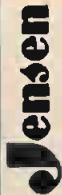
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## LA RONDINE

Columbia rendered a brave and generous service to Puccini admirers when it issued *La Rondine* in 1955. The handsome two-record album sold for only \$3.98. But the reviews were harsh, the public didn't buy, and the delicate "lyric comedy" was soon withdrawn. A great pity, I think. My copy of this recording is one of the most prized items in my record collection. Not that the performance is superb; except for the Magda, the cast hovers on the borders of mediocrity. But the Magda (Eva de Luca) uses her Albanese-like voice exquisitely, the orchestra and chorus are very decent and well recorded, and—above all—the music is utterly captivating. Puccini started out to write a gay operetta in the Viennese mode, but half-way through—apparently sobered by the violence of a world at war around him—he obliged his librettist to turn the work into a kind of twentieth-century *Traviata*. Magda reads the naïvely generous letter from Ruggero's mother and realizes that her shady past prevents her from ever marrying him. The opera closes with the rather weak young hero weeping quietly as his mistress bids him good-by. If this is comedy, it is comedy in Dante's sense of the term. The confusion of genres seems to be one reason why the opera has not succeeded. Another is that Puccini himself spoke contemptuously of it while at work upon *Turandot*. But anyone who has heard the wonderful recording of "Ore dolci e divine" by Lucrezia Bori (the Metropolitan's Magda in 1928) can testify that Puccini was not completely right; and anyone who is thoroughly acquainted with the Columbia-Entré recording can testify that he was dead wrong. *The Swallow* is a fountain of lovely melodies—Magda's two first-act arias, the love music of the last act, above all the stream of lilting waltzes in the Café Bullier scene, which is very nearly the equal of its prototype, the Café Momms act of *Bohème*. Let's hope that the opera gets another chance on discs. And with a cast worthy of it.

—Eva de Luca (s), Magda; Ornella Rovero (s), Lisette; Giacinto Prandelli (t), Ruggero; Luciano Della Pergola (t), Prunier; Vladimiro Pagano (b), Rambaldo. Soloists, Chorus and Orchestra; Antonio Guarneri, Federico del Cupolo, conds. COLUMBIA-ENTRE EL 12. Two LP. \$3.98.

## IL TABARRO

*The Cloak* is the first opera of the *Tritico* and was the first to be written. In it Puccini returned to the violent subject matter of *Tosca*, but the lapse of sixteen years had brought on significant changes in musical approach. With the exception of *Gianni Schicchi*, *Il Tabarro* is the most

Continued on page 110

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tightly woven fabric in the Puccini tapestry. Leitmotifs, with which he had carried on a flirtation since *Le Villi*, become the very blood and sinews of this music. The orchestra does not reminisce but comments ironically. When Giorgetta tells Luigi and the other longshoremen that she loves gay music, music one can dance to, she is accompanied not by a dance tune but by the death music that is to come into prominence towards the end of the opera. And the whole score is unified by the Debussy-like motif of the flowing Seine, which we hear even before the curtain goes up. There are no hit tunes like "O mio babbino caro" or "Senza mamma, bimbo" in *Il Tabarro*, not because Puccini had run dry of them but because he avoided them. The creation of the right atmosphere for this sordid little tragedy was what he was after, and what he brilliantly attained.

I would prefer to discuss the deleted Cetra version of *Il Tabarro* rather than the available Victor one. But I shall exercise restraint. Let it only be said that the engineering of the 1949 Cetra is bigger, brighter, and more detailed than that of the 1956 Victor; that the orchestral playing is better; that foghorns and the various street and river sounds called for in the score are to be heard only in the Cetra; and that all the singers except the Michele surpass their Victor counterparts dramatically and vocally. But Victor's Michele, Tito Gobbi, fits the part as perfectly as Chaliapin fitted Boris or Muzio fitted Tosca. His rendering of the great monologue "Nulla, silenzio" is itself worth the price of the record; and the final scene, when he strangles Luigi to death while forcing him to repeat over and over "I love her, I love her," is almost too effective. Margaret Mas is pale indeed as compared with Clara Petrella's flaming Giorgetta, but she makes nice round sounds. A word of praise is due to the singing of Renato Ercolani who, in the minor part of the Song Vendor, can be heard in the distance doing snatches from Puccini's own *Bohème*.

—Margaret Mas (s), Giorgetta; Miriam Pirazzini (ms), Frugola; Giacinto Prandelli (t), Luigi; Piero de Palma (t), Tinca; Tito Gobbi (b), Michele; Plinio Clabassi (bs), Talpa. Orchestra of the Rome Opera House, Vincenzo Bellezza, cond. RCA VICTOR LM 2057. LP. \$4.98.

**SUOR ANGELICA**

The plot of *Sister Angelica* concerns a noblewoman who, having borne an illegitimate child, is sent to a convent. There for seven years she agonizes over the fate of her son. When finally she is brutally told that the child is dead, she kills herself. Both Puccini and his librettist here indulge in melodrama and sentimentality; but not to know this opera for women's voices is to be unaware of an aspect of the composer's musical temperament that does not show itself elsewhere—or at any rate not to this extent. If we think of the *Trittico* as analogous to a symphonic structure, like Wagner's Ring cycle, *Suor*

Continued on page 112





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Angelica, occupying the middle position, would be the slow movement. But the style of the work has the intimacy and carefully matched sonorities of chamber music rather than symphony. Its orchestra is at the furthest remove from the chunky doublings of *Manon Lescaut*: it is really an orchestra composed of soloists, as in Strauss's late operas. Each time I have played the new EMI-Capitol recording since reviewing it in the October HIGH FIDELITY I discover some new loveliness. I am convinced there will not be a better *Suor Angelica* than this—unless Capitol releases a stereo version of the same performance.

—Victoria de los Angeles (s), Suor Angelica: Lidia Marinpietri (s), Suor Genoviella; Santa Chissari (s), Suor Osmina; Anna Marcangeli (s), Suor Dolcina; Federa Barbieri (ms), the Princess; Mina Doro (ms), the Abbess; Corinna Vozza (ms), the Sister Monitor. Soloists, Chorus, and Orchestra of the Rome Opera House, Tullio Serafin, cond. EMI-CAPITOL G 7115. LP. \$4.98.

## GIANNI SCHICCHI

One of the anomalies of the LP catalogue is the absence of *Gianni Schicchi* from its pages. I have not heard the deleted Cetra for a number of years and cannot recall it well enough to discuss its qualities. But I do remember that I held off from buying it because I trusted that a better performance would soon come along. In company with a great many other people, I am still waiting. Since the Metropolitan currently has this masterly little pendant to Verdi's *Falstaff* now in its repertory (with Fernando Corena a superb Schicchi, Laurel Hurley a charming Lauretta, and Belen Amporran a Vecchia to end all Vecchias) dare we hope . . . ?

—G. Rapisardi (s), Lauretta; R. Ferrari (s), Nella; A. Dubbini (a), La Vecchia; G. Savio (t), Rinuccio; G. del Signore (t), Gherardo; G. Taddei (b), Gianni Schicchi; P. Latinucci (b), Betto. Turin Radio Chorus and Orchestra. Alfredo Simonetto, cond. CETRA 50028. LP. \$4.98.

## TURANDOT

Reading the orchestral score of *Turandot* brought to mind a remark Ferruccio Busoni made when he opened the score of Strauss's *Domestic Symphony* for the first time: "It looks like the sidewalks of New York." The battery of percussion instruments includes—besides timpani—triangle, side drum, bass drum, wooden blocks, cymbals, gong, Chinese gong, glockenspiel, xylophone and bass xylophone, bells, celesta, and two harps; and these instruments are not used occasionally, for a bit of local color, but are constantly brought into play in all kinds of unique combinations. The rest of the orchestra is enlarged by the addition of organ, saxophones, and an on-stage brass band. The choral writing is on a scale

Continued on page 114

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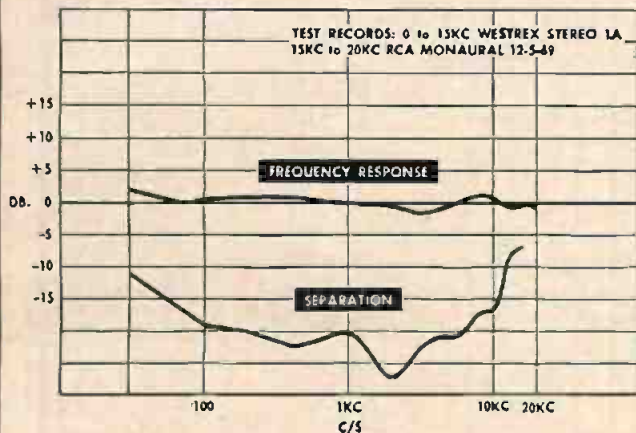
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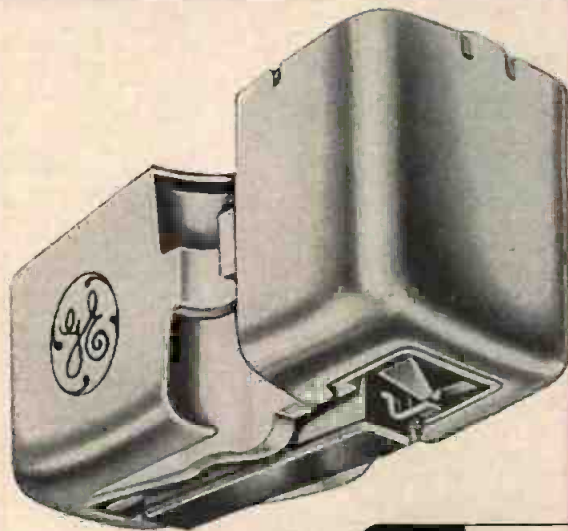
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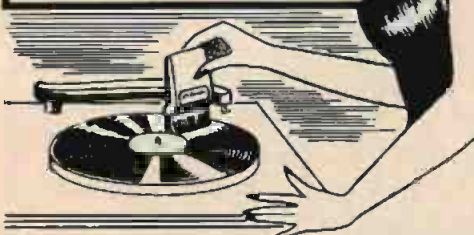
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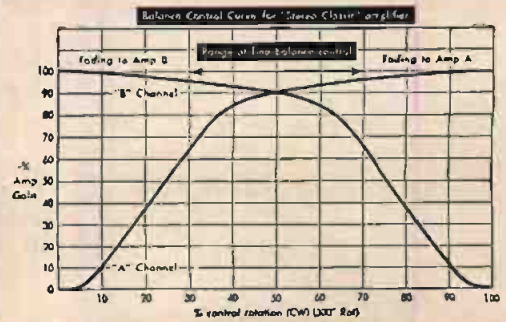
not even hinted at in previous works. All this suggests a calculated change in Puccini's approach to operatic composition. It is no accident that Princess Turandot does not utter a note until half the opera is over nor that, after the opening scene, Liù is not heard from again until the third act. The drama of private passion cedes place to the epic of a whole race, no less compelling because that race is more literary than historic. *Turandot* takes a fuller measure of Puccini's depth and breadth as a musician than any of his other operas; it would have been his greatest if he had lived to finish it.

The Angel *Turandot* belongs with that company's *Tosca*, Victor's Beecham-conducted *Bohème*, and EMI-Capitol's *Suor Angelica* at the head of this discography. The problems the opera presents to the sound engineer are multitudinous, but none of them goes unsolved in this recording. The "lontano" effects, the gradual dying off of big sounds to smaller and yet smaller ones as the choral forces recede in the distance, are at once bold and brilliantly successful (see the barely audible "Questa notte nessun dorme in Pekino" just before the Prince's third-act aria). The percussive sounds Puccini lavished such care upon are equally well handled, and the masterly orchestral leadership of Tullio Serafin, a miracle of shapeliness and intelligent pacing, comes through with hardly a blurred detail. The decision to cast Angel's two leading sopranos as Turandot and Liù was undoubtedly made over a large mahogany table, but it might just as well have been made in heaven. Several reviewers, including my colleague Carl Michael Steinberg, complained that Schwarzkopf was stylistically and linguistically out of place as Liù, but I cannot go along with them. To me, she is Liù. The Turandot of Callas is just the "soprano with piercing tones" ("soprano a note acute") that Puccini described, but the sound she makes, while it pierces, never lacerates. She has the difficult tessitura securely in her throat (*pace* Philip Hope-Wallace of *The Gramophone*); and if anyone ever sounded "engirdled with ice," it is she. The three grotesques, Ping, Pang, and Pong, are sung with humor but also with musicianship. The ancient, paper-thin voice with which Giuseppe Nessi (the Pong of the 1926 premiere) projects Emperor Altoum must be precisely what Puccini had in mind. And if Eugenio Fernandi's mammoth-sounding tenor would not please me in other roles, it does (with reservations) in that of Calaf.

London's *Turandot* is the most recent of their Puccini-Tebaldi series (1956) and sonically the best of all, though no match for the broad plangency of Angel. Early commentators complained that the Turandot was too far away from the microphone and the Liù too close; but if this was indeed true, the balance has now been restored, to judge from the review copy. Nicola Zaccaria is a more moving Timur in the Angel than he is in the London set, but London has by far the finer Ping in Fernando Corena,

Continued on page 116

# New G-E 40-watt "Stereo Classic" Amplifier



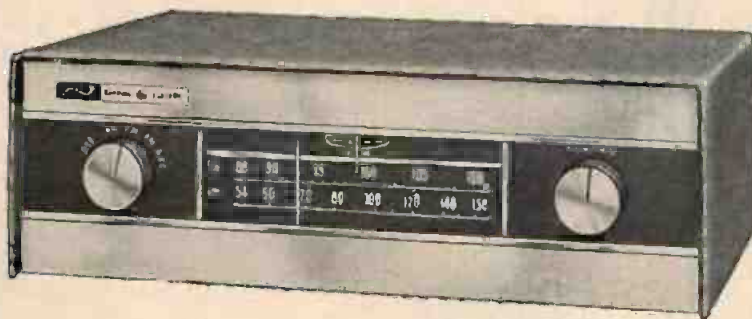
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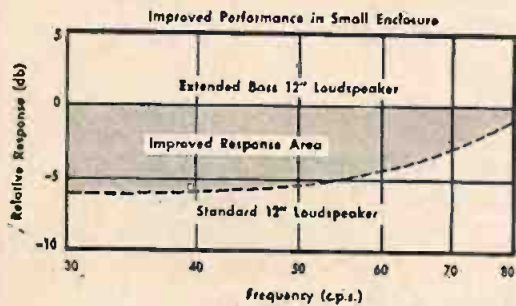
whose "Ho una casa nell'Honan" is equally remarkable for its elegant phrasing and sly humor. The choral singing is superb in both versions. In its principal singers, however, Angel's superiority becomes clear-cut. Nothing is more important than that Turandot and Liu should have distinctly different vocal timbres, but Borkh and Tebaldi do not or cannot make that difference felt. During their interchanges in the third act they might easily be mistaken for one another—large, round, womanly voices ideal neither for the slave girl nor the princess. Furthermore, Borkh produces that slight cold-in-the-nose sound characteristic of many German sopranos singing Italian opera, and she swallows two-thirds of her vowels. Tebaldi is often cavalier with the score; e.g., her B flat at the end of "Signore, ascolta" is perfect of itself (Schwarzkopf's, for once, isn't) but she spoils it by swelling out to a double forte. The same fault is ingenerate with Del Monaco. Yet much of his Calaf pleases me. Even more than Otello, this is his kind of role, calling as it does for a tenor with lungs composed of equal amounts of brass ("No! No! Gli enigmi sono tre, una è la vita!") and gold ("Nessun dorma"—his singing of which is perhaps the high point of this recording).

The Remington dates from 1953. Its sound is better than might be supposed, although there is an amplitude of pre-echo and noisy surfaces. The orchestra of Venice's La Fenice is a fine one, not to be condescended to, and the excellent chorus sounds almost as big as the 120 on Angel. The Liu has a touching little voice, very much like a boy soprano's; her first aria is an example of how much can be accomplished with the simplest, most direct expressive means. But the *commedia dell'arte* court officials are, one and all, far inferior to Angel's; Norman Scott's Timur is bottom-heavy; and the German Turandot makes her appearance on Side 4 singing, in a wobbling nasal voice, "In kvesta redcha." Side 4 is as far as I got.

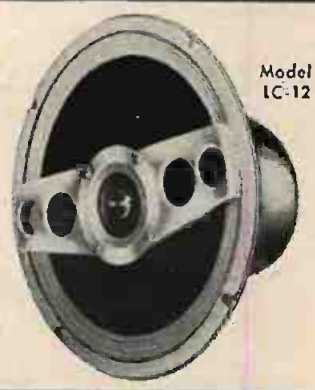
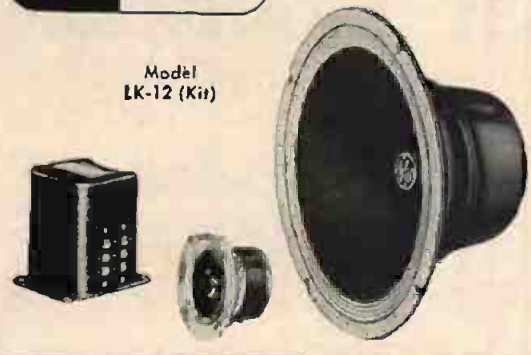
—Maria Meneghini Callas (s), Turandot; Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (s), Liu; Eugenio Fernandi (t), Calaf; Renato Ercolani (t), Pang; Piero de Palma (t), Pong; Giuseppe Nessi (t), the Emperor; Mario Borriello (b), Ping; Nicola Zaccaria (bs), Timur. Chorus and Orchestra of La Scala (Milan), Tullio Serafin, cond. ANGEL 3571/C. Three LP. \$15.94.

—Inge Borkh (s), Turandot; Renata Tebaldi (s), Liu; Mario del Monaco (t), Calaf; Mario Carlin (t), Pang; Renato Ercolani (t), Pong; Gaetano Fanelli (t), the Emperor; Fernando Corena (b), Ping; Nicola Zaccaria (bs), Timur. Chorus and Orchestra of Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome), Alberto Erede, cond. LONDON A 4230. Three LP. \$14.94.

—Gertrude Grob-Prandl (s), Turandot; Renata Ferrari Ongaro (s), Liu; Antonio Spruzzola Zola (t), Calaf; Angelo Mercuriali (t), Pang and Emperor; Mariano Caruso (t), Pong; Marcello Rossi (b), Ping; Norman Scott (bs), Timur. Chorus and Orchestra of Teatro La Fenice (Venice), Franco Capriana, cond. REMINGTON R 199-169/3. Three LP. \$11.94.



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# the **Tape Deck**

Reviewed by R. D. DARRELL

**BEETHOVEN:** *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 5, in E flat, Op. 73 ("Emperor")*

Rudolf Firkusny, piano; Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, William Steinberg, cond.

• • CAPITOL ZF 62. 38 min. \$14.95.

Obviously much has been done here to correct the faulty balances and dynamics which seriously marred the monophonic version. The orchestra now speaks out far more holdly when it plays alone and it adds considerably greater weight to its accompaniments. Unfortunately, however, even the most skillful editing cannot conceal the evidences of remonitoring, the basic impression of sonic turgidity, or the fatal failure of the nobly planned and propulsively rhythmmed Firkusny-Steinberg reading to achieve communicative warmth. There are moments of genuine grandeur, but there are too many others of heavy-handedness and excessive deliberation. Neither the Rubinstein-Krips stereo tape nor the Curzon-Knappertsbusch stereo disc is seriously challenged.

**ERICH LEINSDORF:** *"Portraits in Sound"*

Chabrier: *España*. Rimsky-Korsakov: *Easter Overture, Op. 36 (Grand Pâque Russe)*. Smetana: *My Country, No. 2, Vltava*. Dukas: *L'Apprenti sorcier*.

Concert Arts Symphony Orchestra, Erich Leinsdorf, cond.

• • CAPITOL ZF 96. 42 min. \$14.95.

If this ultrasensational stereo recording of familiar showpieces had been released in time for the New York High-Fidelity Show, it certainly would have been the favorite "demonstration" tape of every exhibitor. Leinsdorf, who has provided such matchless accompaniments in recent concerto releases, lacks the fully extroverted qualities of showmanship (or charlatanism) for the ultimate in interpretative sensationalism, and his present performances are in themselves perhaps no more than extremely competent, if somewhat heavy-handed, concert-hall versions. But as recorded here, with dynamic and frequency ranges that are fabulous even in this era of technological miracles, they not only transform one's home listening room into an authentically big auditorium, but capture the full sonic breadths and crashing climaxes of a symphony orchestra more realistically—and with more electrifying drama—than even the most brilliant engineering feats of the past. Not for tender-eared listeners or easily overloaded playback equipment, this tape is

at once an audiophile's dream of sonority in excelsis and overwhelming evidence of stereophony's most potent powers.

**FELIX SLATKIN:** *"The Military Band"*

Sousa: *The Stars and Stripes Forever; Semper Fidelis; El Capitan; Washington Post; The Thunderer*. Bagley: *National Emblem*. J. F. Wagner: *Under the Double Eagle*. Meacham: *American Patrol. Salute to the Services Medley. The Star-Spangled Banner*.

Military Band, Felix Slatkin, cond.

• • CAPITOL ZD 88. 39 min. \$12.95.

Here is another of Capitol's tapings characterized by superb tonal lucidity, effortlessly broad dynamic range, and perfect equilibrium between foundation-shaking lows and scintillating highs (and seamlessly blended stereo channels). We have had before nearly as brilliant wind-and-percussion-band recording in Mercury tapings of Frederick Fennell's Eastman-Rochester programs, but even that some-fifty-man ensemble has seldom seemed quite big enough to encompass the full effect of the greatest military bands heard "live." Here, however, though we still are given only six of Meredith Willson's ideal of seventy-six trombones, the present muster of topnotch West-Coast instrumentalists totals—and sounds like—seventy men over-all, including a battery of eleven percussionists whom I trust were paid double union scale for efforts over and above the call of duty! At any rate, the sum effect is indeed that of an enormous as well as extremely able band and one never before captured as stirringly

on records. Best of all, Slatkin not only rigorously sticks to the original or "official" scores of the familiar marches chosen here, but plays them perfectly straight, except for a welcome rhythmic animation and toe-tickling lilt. It is salutary to be so persuasively reminded of the quite incomparable emotional thrills that military marches command at their best.

**STRAVINSKY:** *Fire Bird: Suite*

Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris, Pierre Monteux, cond.

• • RCA VICTOR BCS 88. 20 min. \$6.95.

Even in the stereo enhancements so essential to music like this, the evidence of my own ears reluctantly forces me to acquiesce with my colleagues who gave the monophonic version of this performance such mixed—and mostly cool—reviews. I can't easily analyze, even after several hearings, what has gone wrong. Perhaps the competent-enough recording is too sharp-focused for properly impressionistic color blending, or the dual channels themselves do not merge as completely as they should . . . perhaps the Parisian orchestra and even Monteux himself are too familiar with the work to recapture its original freshness . . . but at any rate this *Fire Bird*, for all its moments of genuine beauty and power, sparks only erratically and never bursts into flame. The definitive stereo version is still to come; meanwhile the best available choice remains Ansermet's stereo disc of the complete ballet score.

## Memorable Stereo Tapes of 1958

This compilation is not intended as a "best" list or even one of "outstanding" releases. It is, rather, a citation of those works that I have found myself replaying most often for my own pleasure and that of my friends. R.D.D.

**Bach:** "Organ Programs." Carl Weinrich, organ. Westminster SWB 8025; SWB 7057.

**Chadwick:** *Symphonic Sketches*. Eastman-Rochester Symphony Orchestra. Howard Hanson, cond. Mercury MDS 5-24.

**Debussy:** *La Mer* (with Ravel: *Daphnis et Chloë*; Suite No. 2). Los Angeles Philharmonic, Erich Leinsdorf, cond.

**Handel:** *Messiah*: Excerpts, Vol. 2. Handel and Haydn Society; Zimmler Sin-

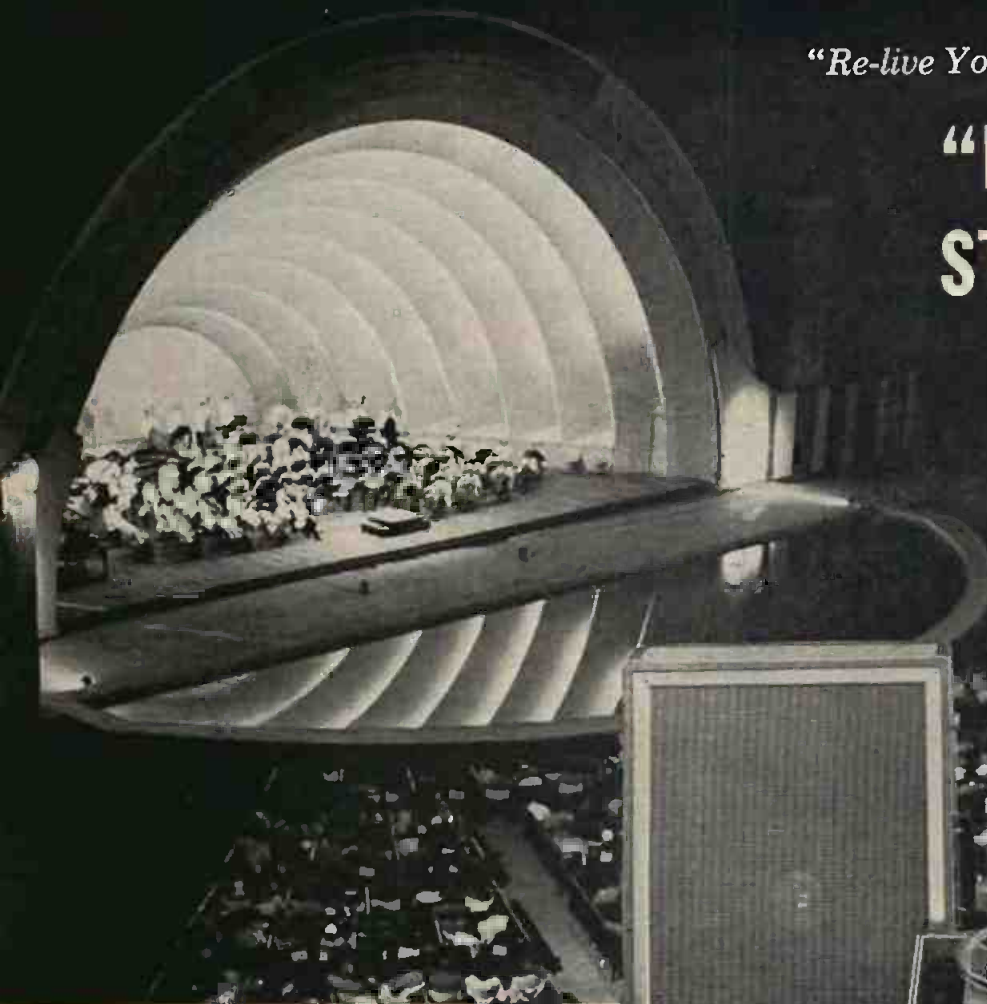


Slatkin leads seventy in sonic salute.

Continued on page 121

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foniatta, Thompson Stone, cond. Boston (via Livingston) BO 10 F.  
 Holst: *The Planets*. Los Angeles Philharmonic, Leopold Stokowski, cond. Capitol ZF 75.  
 Ibert: *Divertissement*. Boston Pops Orchestra, Arthur Fiedler, cond. RCA Victor ACS 54.  
 Mozart: Quintet for Horn and Strings, K. 407; Quartet for Oboe and Strings, K. 370. John Barrows, horn; Ray Still, oboe; Fine Arts Quartet. Concertapes 24-10.  
 Orff: *Carmina Burana*. Hartford Symphony Orchestra and Chorale, Fritz Mahler, cond. Vanguard VRT 2011/2.  
 Prokofiev: *Lieutenant Kije*: Suite, Op. 60. Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Fritz Reiner, cond. RCA Victor BCS 96.  
 Ravel: *Boléro*. Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Hermann Scherchen, cond. Westminster SWB 7006.  
 Stravinsky: *The Rite of Spring*. New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein, cond. Columbia LMB 24.  
 Tomkins: "Miscellany." Ambrosian Singers; In Nomine Players, Denis Stevens, cond. Expériences Anonymes EA 0027/8.  
 Vivaldi: Concertos for Violin and Strings, Op. 8: Nos. 1-4 ("*Le quattro Stagioni*"). I Solisti di Zagreb, Antonio Janigro, cond. Vanguard VRT 4002.

Leonard Bernstein: *West Side Story*. Original Cast, Max Goberman, cond. Columbia TOB 13.  
 Frederick Fennell: "Music of Leroy Anderson." Eastman-Rochester Pops Orchestra, Frederick Fennell, cond. Mercury MVS 5-30.  
 George Feyer: "Music of Jerome Kern and Cole Porter." George Feyer, piano; Orchestra. StereoVox ZTV 1; ZTV 2.  
 Fletcher Henderson All-Stars: "The Big Reunion." Concert Hall DX 71.  
 Thelonious Monk: "Monk's Music." Thelonious Monk, piano; et al. Riverside (via Livingston) RT 20 F.  
 Cootie Williams: "Jazz at Stereoville, Vol. 2." Cootie Williams, Rex Stewart, et al. Concert Hall EX 50.  
 Willson: *The Music Man*. Original Cast, Herbert Greene, cond. Capitol ZF 41.

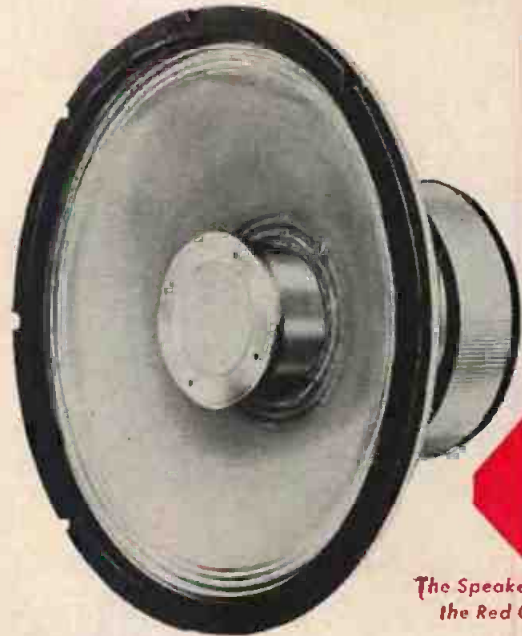
The following brief reviews are also of stereophonic tapes.

Julie Andrews: "Julie Andrews Sings." RCA Victor BPS 123, 20 min., \$6.95.  
 The original Eliza of *My Fair Lady* brings a pretty little voice and some schoolgirl charm to *We'll Gather Lilacs* and seven other salon and pops ballads (including the Kurt Weill *My Ship*, which demands far more than Julie can provide). This is considerably more successful a program than the Andrews debut tape ("*Lass with the Delicate Air*," BPS 85), but the soloist still is too closely miked and mawkishly accompanied by Irwin Kostal's Orchestra.

Ray Anthony: "Young Ideas." Capitol ZC 34, 27 min., \$11.95.  
 The trumpeter-leader shares the spotlight with an augmented cello section in a suavely romantic big-band program of twelve standards topped by *Lonely Night*



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in Paris. Except for the ingeniously arranged *Button Up Your Overcoat*, there isn't a great deal of variety in the treatments; but they all are danceable, and the well-blended recording makes the most of the warm tonal coloring.

Les Brown: "Composers' Holiday." Capitol ZC 32, 29 min., \$11.95.

A well-varied batch of nine originals by as many West-Coast tunesmiths, paced by Elmer Bernstein (with a jauntily 5/4-rhythmed *Topics at Five*) and George Duning (with a plaintively meandering but poetic *Lament for a Key*). Bobby Stiles on trumpet, Jay Hill on trombone, Abe Aaron on sax, Don Bagley on string bass, and other sidemen are given prominent solos.

Tony Cabot: "Dancing on Park Avenue." RCA Victor BPS 117, 21 min., \$6.95.

Billed as ultrasophisticated society dance music, this program of four smooth but animated medleys, plus an exceptionally fast and exciting *Park Avenue Samba*, actually is by no means *outré*, and certainly not *blasé*, in either performances or arrangements. The former are infectiously danceable throughout and the latter ingeniously designed to capitalize on the antiphonal effects possible only in stereo with as marked channel differentiations as the engineers provide here.

Nat "King" Cole: "Just One of Those Things." Capitol ZD 28, 31 min., \$12.95.

The engineers still insist on far too much presence, but the combination of close miking and added reverberance is far less annoying here than in Cole's first taping — perhaps largely because the singer himself brings so much rhythmic zest and buoyancy, as well as personality, to such sentimental ballads as *The Song Is Ended*, *These Foolish Things*, *Who's Sorry Now?* and eight others.

Perry Como: "Saturday Night with Mr. C." RCA Victor CPS 153, 26 min., \$8.95.

Mr. C, TV's Master of Relaxation, sings very attractively indeed, especially in the jauntier pieces (*Gypsy in My Soul* and *It Had To Be You*) of his present program. Yet I still wish he had not tried to emulate the memorable Rudy Vallee in *The Whiffenpoof Song* and that Mitchell Ayres's Orchestra had backed him up as effectively as the recording engineers have done.

"Dancing Through Space." RCA Victor CPS 143, 26 min., \$8.95.

A stereo sampler featuring ten of Victor's "name" bands, most of them big and loud, and—except for Eddy Heywood's *Heywood's Beguine*—lacking any marked distinction. The tape will be of particular audiophile interest, however, for its direct comparisons among a wide variety of stereo-pickup techniques.

Sam Donahue: "Body and Soul." Livingston 2012 C, 16 min., \$6.95.

Big-band versions, featuring the leader's florid tenor-sax solos in gleaming stereo recordings of the bouncy *Roses of Picardy* and *Livingston Leap*, together with three

less distinctive slow, but still danceable, numbers.

**Carmen Dragon:** "Serenade." Capitol ZF 71, 37 min., \$14.95.

The latest of Carmen Dragon's summer-concerts-for-the-masses embraces (besides one originally titled Serenade, that by Drigo) Grieg's *Ich liebe dich*, Saint-Saëns's *The Swan*, Rubinstein and Tchaikovsky *Romances*, Mendelssohn's *On Wings of Song*, and other familiar masterpieces of the tear-jerking school. Somehow these faded *Albumblätter* come remarkably to life in the luxuriant tonal finery and widespread stereoism Dragon lavishes on them so prodigally.

**Esquivel:** "Other Worlds, Other Sounds." RCA Victor CPS 171, 24 min., \$8.95.

Happily there are here no theremins or other instruments of extraterrestrial music making, although a wordless chorus, side-slipping guitar, and glissandoing timpani do contribute some fairly weird effects. The leader provides mildly exotic dance fare, topped by an atmospheric *Adiós*, distinguished by the delicacy and stereogenic effectiveness of his not-too-fancy arrangements, as well as by the pronounced stereoism of the clean, dry recording itself.

**Bud Freeman:** "The Bud Freeman Group." Stere-O-Craft TN 103, 26 min., \$10.95.

The Austin High School jazz spirit *redivivus* with alumnus Freeman's sax solos backed up by Al Hall (bass), George Wettling (drums), and Dick Cary (piano) in eight swinging pieces, the best of which are the high-strung *Three Little Words* and the easygoing but extremely catchy *Hanid*. The recording is dry, but very brilliant, and with strongly marked channel differentiation.

**Jackie Gleason:** "Oooo!"; "The Torch with the Blue Flame." Capitol ZD 33, 29 min., and ZD 57, 42 min.; \$12.95 each.

Mood music to drowse to. Throughout the first reel a wordless choir or "vocestra" hums richly along with the band (at best, in *Can This Be Love?* and *Willow Weep for Me*) quite hauntingly; the second reel pairs the odd combination of Lawrence Brown's trombone with no less than eight marimbas in soporific schmaltz.

**John Graas:** "Coup de Graas." Mercury MVS 3-8, 18 min., \$7.95.

Four rather frantic novelties, redeemed from complete turgidity by Art Pepper's bold if raucous saxophonizing, Buddy Collette's piquant if piercing fluting, and the impressively broadspread stereoism.

**Lenny Herman Quintet:** "For Me and My Gal." Livingston 1103 F, 29 min., \$11.95.

Indefatigably jaunty and corny, the "Mightiest Little Band in the Land" plays and is recorded as brightly as ever, but, as always, just as it begins to delight me with its naïve zestfulness. Lenny cuts loose with his throbby accordion or Charles Shaw with his even throbbier "organo."

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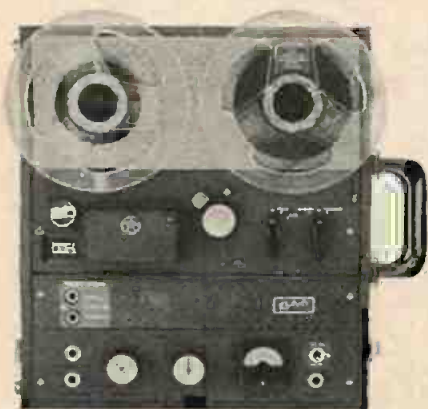


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"The Jazzpickers." Mercury MVS 3-7, 20 min., \$7.95.

An uncommonly odd jazz experiment in plucked-string sonorities (cello and guitar) combined with flute, vibes, and traps. Not all of the seven pieces come off with complete success, but the vibrant timbres are fascinating throughout, and in the jaunty *Clap Hands, Yardbird Suite*, and *Rapsallian* quite irresistible. They're also infinitely more effective in the beautifully balanced stereoism here than in the monophonic LP.

Henry King: "Viva Stereo." Bel Canto STC 41, 15 min., \$7.95.

Somewhat exaggerated, but here quite effective, stereoisitic recordings of five spirited Latin-American dances, topped by a catchy *Mambo Cien* and a rakish, if raucous, *Mambo Gallega*.

Kenneth Lane: "Thanks for the Memories." Manhattan MRC 108, 15 min., \$6.95.

One of the mightiest Wurlitzers yet is the recently reconstructed four-chamber monster: of the Metropolitan Theatre in Boston, heard here in fairly straightforward versions of six popular songs. The recording (originally in eight channels, with some of the mikes actually located within the pipe chambers) is impressively spacious, but unfortunately Lane's registrations, mostly for full organ with heavy pedal tones, scarcely begin to explore the available sonic resources.

Paquitin Lara: "Cha Cha Me Baby."

Manhattan MRC 107, 15 min., \$6.95. This band's slapdash performances, glittering vibes, and crisp percussion make the most of the extremely clean and spacious recording in *Charlie Fantasy* (sic) and *Meringue Madness*, but the other four selections are so overburdened with routine Spanish vocals that even the spirited direction and instrumentalists cannot save them from monotony.

Joe Marsala: "Chicago Jazz." Stere-O-Craft TN 102, 25 min., \$10.95.

The clarinetist-leader shares honors here with Adele Girard's piquant harp plucking and Rex Stewart's rhapsodic trumpeting in a bouncy *Sweet Georgia Brown*, a more bluesy *Via Rex*, and six vivacious others, all recorded with more acoustical warmth than usual for such well-differentiated stereoism.

New World Theatre Orchestra: *Silk Stockings* and *Pajama Game* Selections. Bel Canto STB 40, 25 min., \$9.95.

Very high-level, broadspread recordings of Broadway hit-tune medleys, played with exceptional gusto and precision by a big theater orchestra whose able conductor deserves more than the labeling anonymity he receives here.

Jan Peerce: "Jan Peerce in Las Vegas." RCA Victor CPS 119, 26 min., \$8.95.

As might be expected, the famous tenor provides effective competition for the slot machines with a melodramatic "*Vesti la giubba*" and a batch of eight salon and pops favorites (*Because, Granada, You'll Never Walk Alone*, etc.). Most of this is

sheer ham, but of the very best grade; and even in his more serious releases Peerce has never been in better—or bigger—voice, nor more dramatically and reverberantly recorded.

**Tito Puente:** "Top Percussion." RCA Victor APS 120, 16 min., \$4.95.

Much more novel and sonically fascinating than Tito's earlier taping ("Mucho Puente," CPS 110) with his full orchestra, this brief program of *divertissements* for timbals and cowbells (played by the leader himself), with a five-man Latin-drum group and string bass, is a frantic but often exciting panorama of percussive-transients, particularly notable for the crispness and openness of the stereo recording.

**Felix Slatkin:** "Strings by Starlight." Capitol ZF 95, 38 min., \$14.95.

Despite the come-on title, Felix Slatkin's program reaches out to the Borodin *Nocturne* and Barber *Adagio*, as well as to the more expected Tchaikovsky Waltz (from the *Serenade for Strings*) and *Andante Cantabile*, Grainger arrangement of the *Londonderry Air*, and Bach-Wilhelmj *Air for the G String*. They are played with rich expressiveness, but well within the bounds of good taste, and the luminous sonorities of the Hollywood Bowl Symphony's string choir float magically in truly superb stereo recording.

**Vienna Boys' Choir:** "Christmas in Stereo." Omegatape ST 2028, 20 min., \$11.95.

**St. Cecilia Children's Choir:** "Christmas Eve in the Cathedral." Westminster SWB 7014, 12 min., \$6.95.

**Liane:** "Liane Sings Christmas Songs." Vanguard VRT 3016, 30 min., \$11.95.

The best of these Christmas programs is easily the Omegatape reel shared by the Boys' Choir of Vienna with the Vienna Concert Society Orchestra under Karl Etti (in four traditional German Christmas favorites, charmingly if childishly sung, and recorded with appropriate cathedral spaciousness) and with Justin Kramer, playing the 100-bell Maas-Rowe Symphonic Carillon (location unspecified). The latter is unique to my ears as the first of its kind which really sounds in tune and which provides the most brilliantly recorded carillon qualities I have yet heard.

The Westminster Sonotape is a brief, amateurish re-creation of a local church program (at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Atlanta, Georgia) with jangly chimes and conventional organ playing and choral singing, but given momentary distinction by the ethereal voices of the St. Cecilia Children's Choir and Haskell Boyter's entirely unaccompanied baritone solo, *What Child Is This?*. The Vanguard reel is a strictly pops release of mostly German seasonal songs, but including *Jingle Bells*, *White Christmas*, and *Winter Wonderland* in English, together with a trilingual *Silent Night*—done with characteristic charm and rhythmic animation by that most versatile of *chanteuses*, Liane, accompanied by a salon orchestra appropriately augmented here by both a harmonium and celesta.

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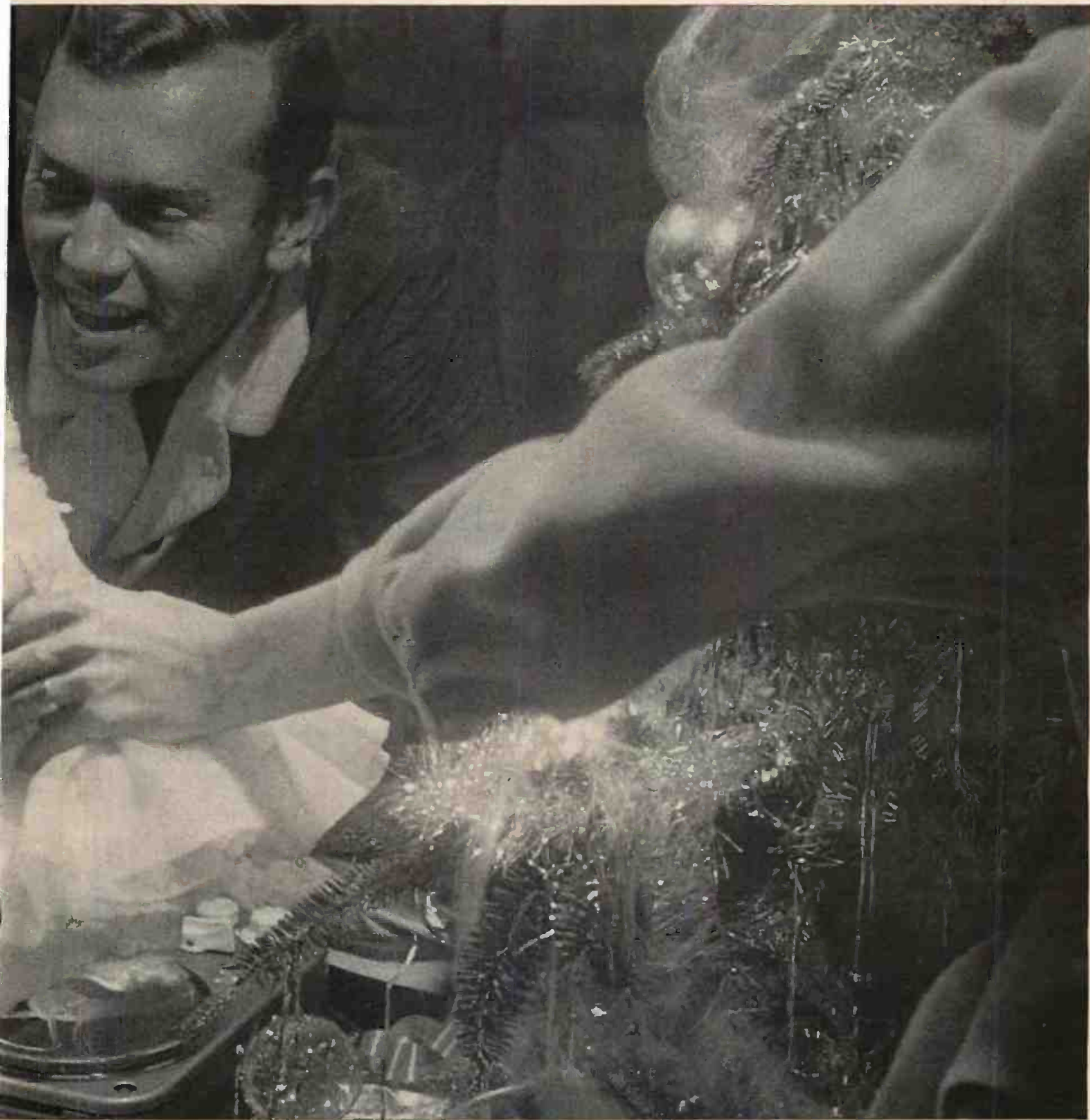
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## Scanning the Section

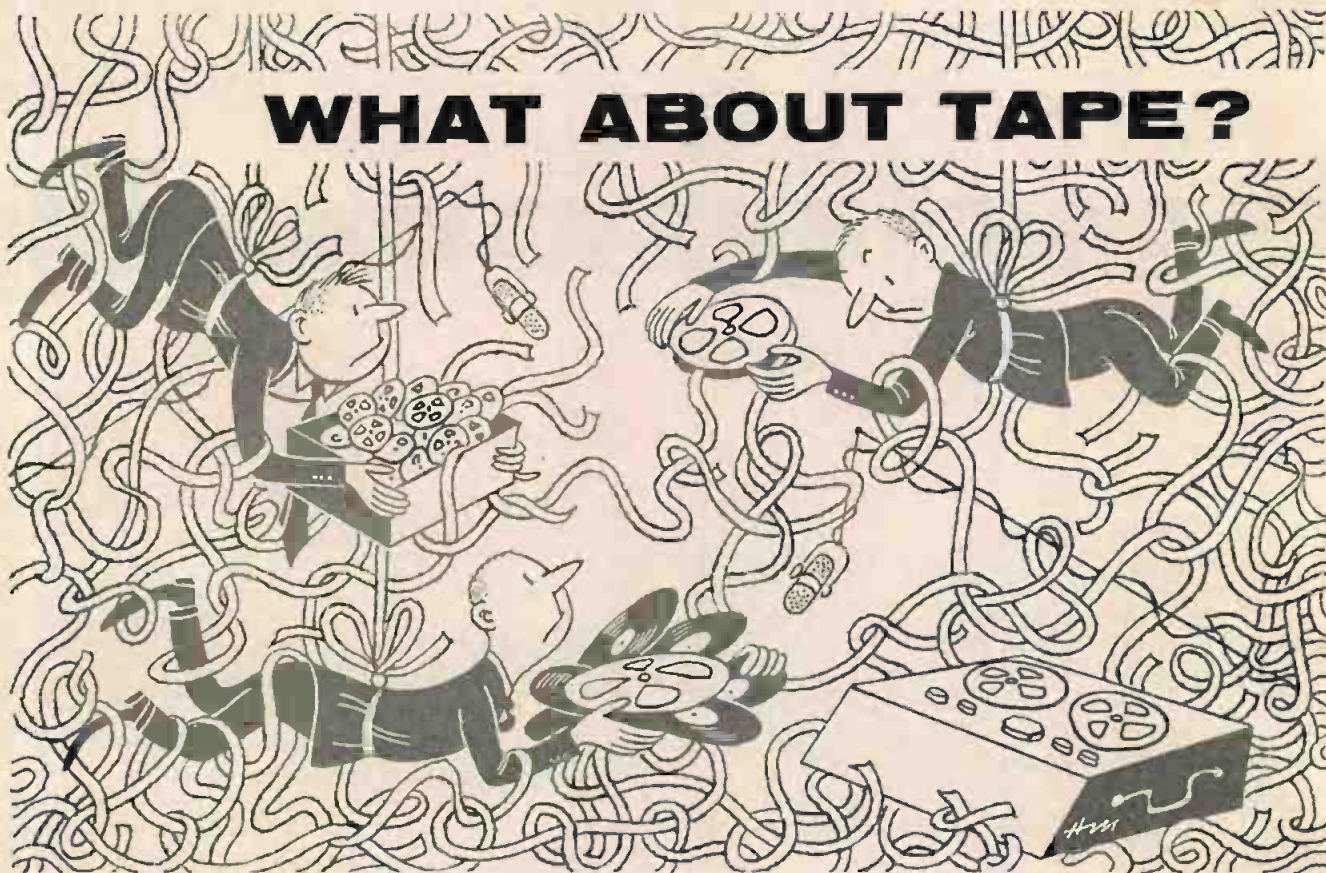
**I**N THIS SECTION you will find substantially more audio material than has appeared in *HIGH FIDELITY* Magazine heretofore, and several new features. We have endeavored to combine the best of what was formerly published separately in *AUDIOCRAFT* and *HF*. It should be noted that this represents an actual increase in the total of *HF*'s editorial material. Music and record coverage remains unchanged; we have simply added space for a more thorough treatment of high-fidelity equipment.

The consolidation has resulted in some changes which will become more apparent in future issues than they are in this, the first combined issue. Beginning in January, for example, "Audio Aids" (an *AUDIOCRAFT* department) will appear under a single head with what has been *HF*'s "Audio Forum." We will have regular articles on how to buy wisely and how to install equipment; these will replace the "Hi-Fi Primer" articles. Kit construction and kit-equipment performance will be treated separately, in "AUDIOCRAFT Kit Reports" and in "HF Reports," respectively. Finally, there will be an important change in the "Tested in the Home" department.

*AUDIOCRAFT*'s "Audiolab Test Reports" (written by Hirsch-Houck Laboratories) will be carried over into the new "HF Report" section. As is pretty well known now, these are no-nonsense objective evaluations which neither we nor manufacturers of the equipment concerned can change or withhold from publication, once Hirsch-Houck's tests are under way. We will retain *HIGH FIDELITY*'s "Tested in the Home" label for reports on speakers, pickup cartridges, and such items which require more subjective evaluation. *TITH* will continue to be staff-written, although we will make use of whatever test data are applicable in writing the reports. The major departure from former policy, however, is that manufacturers no longer will have the privilege of requesting that a *TITH* Report not be published. We will operate under the old *TITH* policy for those items that had been accepted as of October 1; such reports should all be published by February, and in the March issue the new policy will be in full effect.

Comments on this section will be welcome. You can be sure that they will be given most serious consideration by all staff members. Our intention is to make *HIGH FIDELITY* more than ever the *complete* magazine for music listeners; you can help us do so by telling us exactly what you want.

R.A.



*The author is Vice-President of Audio Devices, Inc., supplier to both the tape and the disc industries, and a pioneer researcher in the field of sound reproduction. What he has to say will be of special interest to thousands of people who bought tape recorders when tape was the sole medium of stereo.*

by C. J. LeBel

THESE LAST SIX MONTHS have seen wild commotion in the record field—more excitement than we have had since the advent of micro-groove records. There is a different contender in each of the four corners of the ring: monophonic disc vs. stereo disc vs. twin-track 7½-ips tape on reels vs. four-track 3¾-ips tape in magazines. The listening public has been sitting with bated breath trying to make up its mind as to the future of tape and disc. The more gullible (and/or cautious) have stopped buying either tapes or discs, awaiting the advent of nonexistent miracles.

As was suggested in a previous article of mine in these pages<sup>1</sup>, it really isn't that complicated. There isn't a single future for recording, as there hasn't been one in the past. We can envision four different futures, with the problem now becoming how to select the specific future that pleases you. A satisfactory selection can result only from a systematic analysis of the va-

rious things that one expects of a tape or disc record.

What do we expect of a record, be it either tape or disc? First, we want a record to be compatible with our present equipment so far as possible. The compatibility need not be perfect—look at the number of users who have lately bought two-track stereo adapters for their monophonic tape machines.

Next, we expect an artistically pleasing performance, with pleasing acoustical perspective. To get these we are sometimes willing to sacrifice, but in the long run we insist on the following good technical characteristics:

1. Adequate frequency range.
2. Good signal-to-noise ratio.
3. Low wow and flutter.
4. Minimum extraneous sound (print-through, interchannel leakage, or rumble).
5. Good durability.

Let us deal first with choice No. 1, namely: monophonic disc vs. stereo anything. A great deal of material exists only in monophonic form, material of great historical and artistic value. An excellent example would be the

collection of Arturo Toscanini recordings, existing as pressings or as transfers (by the Walter Toscanini staff) from the original lacquer discs to low print-through magnetic tape. These are irrevocably monophonic.

It will take a long time for all of the present phonographs to be replaced by stereo systems or fitted with compatible monophonic cartridges. A combination of all of these factors, plus the artistic, suggest that it will take a long while for monophonic discs to die. As confirmation of this, remember how long it took microgroove to overcome the old 78-rpm records.

So much for the artistic merits of performances; the other prime requisite is acoustical perspective. Good stereo recording and reproduction do, at best, give greatly improved perspective, as compared to monophonic. However, stereo records will vary greatly in perspective, depending on the recording staff's philosophy on separation. The following philosophies have all been heard lately in recordings:

1. Tenth row third balcony.
2. Fifth row orchestra center.

### 3. Middle of the orchestra itself.

The last named, unnatural splitting of an orchestra into two groups, is spectacular on the salesroom floor, but fatiguing in the home. Some of the first material released, particularly by opportunists in the disc field, is actually two-source, not stereo, the separation is so excessive.

Even with the best of intentions, there will be big variations in acoustical perspective for the next year or so, till the engineers and a&r men get a better command of their new techniques. The complex possibilities of a four-channel stereo mixer are almost beyond belief.

Now for what I suppose we must call high-fidelity requirements, the first of which is, of course, frequency range. From what we know of the equipment, both stereo disc and 7½-ips twin-track tape can offer the full frequency range generally recorded, 30 to 15,000 cps. We have said *can*, not *do*, for many of the stereo discs thus far produced seem to be lacking in the higher frequencies. Is this a wear effect? On the other hand, the quality of 7½-ips recorded tape has not always been as uniform as could be desired. Is this the result of inadequate quality control, or is there a certain inherent loss in high speed mass duplication?

The latter remarks presage even greater worry about the quality of four-track 3¾-ips tape, for the frequency range per inch of tape speed has doubled from that available at 7½ ips. The means of doing so, a one-tenth-mil gap in the reproducing head, is an effective means of minimizing *reproducing head* limitations, but it cannot reduce a number of other effects. At 4 kc per inch of tape speed, the effect of dirt on the head is greatly enhanced, as is the effect of tape defects. Little attention has been paid to tape characteristics at such short wave lengths in the past, and we may expect considerable variation in response from one batch to the next. Also, a given amount of azimuth error—inaccuracy in the vertical setting of the tape head—will do much more harm to high-frequency response at the lower speed. In short, we may expect much greater variation in frequency range from day to day, minute to minute, and reel to reel. These effects will be enhanced because some faults will affect duplicating as well as home reproduction.

Equally important, to the purity of sound reproduced, is the factor of signal-to-noise ratio. We are concerned with not only the measured signal-to-noise ratio, but also the miscellaneous effects which are usually not included in the measurement: disc ticks and pops, turntable rumble, tape print-

through, and leakage between channels. If we disregard some of these side effects, then 7½-ips twin-track tape and stereo disc are on a par at the start. Dust and wear can raise the disc noise level very rapidly, sometimes; magnetized heads on a tape recorder can also prove harmful.

Four-track 3¾-ips is inherently noisier, for a given level of engineering, due to the slower speed, the narrower track, and the smaller gap. Each of these factors disposes of about 3 db, so that in round numbers this system would be about 9 db poorer than two-track 7½-ips when both are played on equipment of the same quality. Any design improvement which would improve the former would also be helpful if applied to the latter, so that for a given level of engineering the 9-db degradation is fixed.

The effect of the 9-db injury should be to reduce the probable 50-db ratio of a home machine to perhaps 40-42 db. This figure can be improved on, but only at some cost.

A special kind of noise is print-through, manifested as preëcho and interpolated noise. This is mainly a tape problem, though it exists also on discs which are cut from tape masters. However, record companies' master tapes may be of the low print-through type, and their storage conditions can be well controlled, which minimizes our chances of getting preëcho on discs. Neither of these precautions is likely to apply to a prerecorded tape in the home. The higher cost of low-print tape makes unlikely its use by the duplicator, and few people will install tape storage vaults alongside the wine cellar, where cool prevails.

Some help to tape collectors may be a new print-through eraser which (if it is no breach of taste to say so) the company I work for developed recently.<sup>2</sup> It reduces print-through by 6 to 18 db. Using no tubes, it is simply fastened in place on the tape deck, in the tape path. This should reduce an otherwise substantial problem.

Another hazard in stereo recording and reproduction, against which for the time being tapes seem to fare slightly better than discs, is inter-channel leakage. The effect of this is to dilute the stereo effect, reducing separation.

In tapes the effect occurs during both recording and reproduction, due to adventitious magnetic effects. The separation is presently an effective 25 db or more, and we may expect it to be increased still faster as better home machine head structures are developed.

In discs the leakage can occur in the cutting head, in the pickup, or in

failure to align the axes of the two channels<sup>3</sup> the same in reproduction as in recording. And, of course, there must be added to this the slight leakage in the tape original. The problem seems to be at its worst in pickups, where the separation may range from a good 25 db down to a pathetic 6 db.

Then there is the question of durability. The mechanical durability of tape is good, and the magnetic durability is adequate, subject to the chance encounter with a magnetized head. The durability of magazine-loaded tape under home conditions is, naturally, still in doubt; magazines are too new.

The durability of a stereo disc is presently uncertain, too, for a number of reasons. First, the groove wall surfaces carry a three-dimensional pattern instead of the basically two-dimensional pattern on the walls of a monophonic disc. We intuitively would expect more of a wear problem with the more complex surfaces—finer detail should rub off easier.

Secondly, the stereo pickup uses a 0.7-mil radius for the stylus tip instead of the hitherto standard one mil. The tip area is therefore half as great, and for equal wear we would call for half the pressure, i.e., the old average of 6 grams pressure must be replaced by 3 grams with the smaller tip. We do not see this happening in more than a few of the new designs.

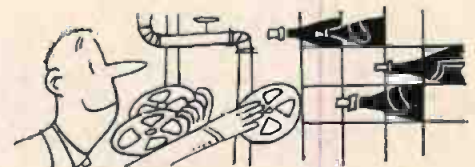
Also, present record changers generally require 6 grams or more pressure for proper operation; this will be quite excessive with the stereo stylus. Will the new changers operate satisfactorily at 3 grams pressure?

All of these factors raise questions still unanswered on the wear of the stereo disc.

There exists another tape possibility, not yet tried. Four-track tape looks quite interesting when divorced from the quality problem of the 3¾-ips speed and the size, cost, and compatibility problems of the magazine. After all, the narrower tracks taken alone spell only a 3-db loss in signal-to-noise ratio, which is a lot better than the 9-db loss of the 3¾-ips version.

*Continued on page 163*

<sup>2</sup>C. R. Bastlaans, *Some Thoughts on Geometric Conditions in the Cutting and Playing of Stereo Discs and Their Influence on the Final Sound Picture*. AES 1958 Convention (Preprint No. 79). H. Redlich and H. J. Klemp, *Checking the Axes of Operation of Stereo Cutter Channels*, AES 1958 Convention (Preprint No. 59).



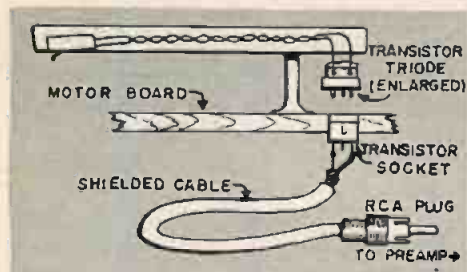
<sup>3</sup>The Audio Devices Echanser.



### Pickup Connection

It is difficult to do a satisfactory job on the wiring between the phono pickup and the preamp, because the wires leading from the pickup are usually light, while the preamp input always takes an RCA plug requiring rather heavy wires. A transition point is needed where the small wires may be joined to a heavy microphone cable. This is especially true for three- and four-terminal stereo cartridges.

One good way to accomplish this is to make a plug out of a burned-out transistor and connect the small pickup wires to it. The plug is made from the transistor by cutting off the upper one third of the case with a file and unsoldering the semiconductor bar from the transistor pins. The wires are



soldered to these pins, and the case may be filled with wax. The mike cable going to the preamp is then connected to a standard three- or four-terminal transistor socket (Cinch-Jones 5PC or Eleo 3301), which may be mounted conveniently in a hole through the motor board.

This method is convenient for removing the pickup arm from the motor board without disturbing the preamp input wiring, and it allows most of the interconnecting cable to be shielded wire.

*Eugene H. Griffin*  
Dallas, Tex.

### Salvaging Components

The surplus equipment market provides a cheap source of quality components to the home audio constructor. The problem remains, however, as to how the components can be salvaged without being damaged. Components mounted on terminal boards require the use of a soldering iron. Place newspapers on the floor first;

then, holding the soldering iron in the left hand (if you are right-handed) and the terminal board in the right hand, heat the terminal just long enough to make solder flow. A sharp snap of the right wrist will flip excess solder from the joint onto the floor. The remaining solder does not have much strength and the connecting lead can easily be peeled from the terminal post with a sharp-edged screw driver. Once an end has been loosened it can be gripped with pliers and unwound.

*Alan M. Palmer*  
Brooklyn, N. Y.

### Reduce Head Wear

On many tape recorders no provision is made for lifting the tape off the heads during the fast-forward and rewind operations. Considerable head wear can result from the friction of the tape passing over the heads at high speeds. This can be avoided on tape recorders whose front-panel design permits leading the tape directly from reel to reel, bypassing the heads. To rewind a tape, slack it sufficiently to permit removal of the tape from the heads, and then take out all slack before switching to rewind. This procedure is most valuable with inexpensive tape recorders, but it can also be used to advantage with more expensive machines such as the Ampex 601. Even though the 601 is designed to rewind at greatly reduced tension, a slight amount of wear is inevitable, and taking the tape off the heads will be worthwhile.

*R. D. Dickson*  
La Mesa, Calif.

### Straightening Grille Cloth

Usually the pattern on plastic grille cloth is insistently rectilinear, drawing attention to every warp, twist, or creep when it has been tacked on. An easy way to make a perfect installation involves using a piece of string with a loop tied at one end and a heavy nut at the other. Position the cloth, drive the first tack at the center of the top edge, but don't drive it quite all the way in. Hang the string over the tack by the loop, and use it as a plumb line to get the nearest vertical stripe on

the grille cloth perfectly straight all the way to the bottom. Now install the middle bottom tack, remove the string, and drive both tacks home. Repeat the process about 6 in. to the left and right of the center, and continue in this way to the edges, finishing up with the four outside corners.

*Hugh Kenner*  
Peterborough, Ont.

### Miniature Bellows

When a tiny but strong jet of air is needed around high-fidelity equipment for cleaning a stylus tip, or between the blades of a variable capacitor in a tuner, take a look in your medicine cabinet. An empty plastic squeeze bottle of the type usually used for cosmetic spray lotions—with a slightly enlarged opening—makes an excellent bellows. It also precludes any danger of damaging the stylus with a brush held in an unsteady hand, or bending the capacitor blades with a clumsy pipe cleaner.

*Alex Thien*  
Milwaukee, Wis.

### Tuning Indicator for Heathkit

For owners of Heathkit FM-3A tuners who may wish to install a 6E5 Magic Eye tuning indicator, the following procedure has worked well for me in over a year of use.

Mount a Magic Eye assembly (Amphenol 58-MEA6) on the top of the tuner cover and secure it with a bolt through the ventilating slot. Then bring the wires through a grommet in a similar slot on the rear of the cover. The wiring should then be completed as follows (do not follow Heath's instructions for this): solder green and blue wires brought through grommet L to pins 3 and 4 of socket F; dress the red and yellow wires over the edge of the chassis between points J and G to terminal strip S, where the red wire should be soldered to S-1 and the yellow to S-2; bring the black wire through grommet L also; the 6.8-k resistor attached between TT-2 and TT-3 should be lifted at TT-2 only, and a 680-ohm 1/2-watt resistor added between the free lead of the 6.8-k resistor and TT-2; attach the black wire at the junction of these

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two resistors. I found experimentally that the 680-ohm resistor gives the best eye closure.

*F. M. Sturtevant*  
Media, Pa.

#### Add a Pilot Light

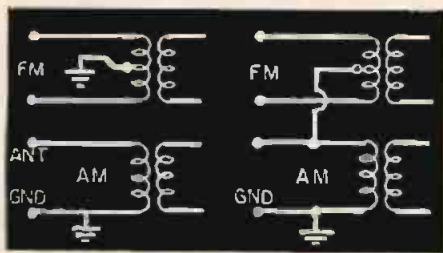
Adding a pilot lamp to an amplifier or preamp is often difficult because of the possibility of inducing hum. I added one to my Heathkit WA-P2 and W-5M by using the switched AC accessory outlet on the chassis apron. The light is of the panel type, for 117 volts, and is mounted through the panel of my equipment cabinet. It is controlled by the switch at the pre-amp.

*Franklin K. Rommel*  
Maplewood, N. J.

#### Simplified Antenna Connections

Some people may have an antenna problem similar to the one I encountered in connection with an FM-AM tuner. The tuner has a four-point terminal strip with a pair of terminals for each service. The requirement for separate antennas (a wire for AM and a dipole for FM) is bothersome. Also, I like sensitive, noise-free DX reception, so indoor antennas are out.

The drawing shows the antenna circuits of my tuner simplified. If some



way can be found to remove the ground from the center tap of the FM coil, the FM dipole can be used for AM also. The only purpose of the ground connection, I believe, is to accommodate a 72-ohm unbalanced coaxial lead-in. Since the 300-ohm balanced lead from a dipole is most commonly used, this ground can be removed.

The next step is to connect the center tap of the coil to the AM post marked "Ant," out of sight if possible. The FM dipole with its lead then does the job for both FM and AM.

Do not try this, however, unless a study of your schematic shows it to be possible. Also be sure to test the arrangement fully before making a final decision; signal loss or interaction might result with some tuners.

*Harry L. Wynn*  
Derry, Pa.

#### Warped Tape Reels

To overcome the annoyance of rhythmic scratching of tape against the side

of a warped plastic tape reel, I purchased several 8-mm. metal reels (they are sold in every photography shop) and put them on my machine. The reels have a width of 9 mm., slightly wider than the width of the usual plastic reel (by less than 1 mm.), and 2½ mm. wider than ¼-in. tape.

At any event, the reels are resistant to warping and appear to be better balanced than their plastic counterparts. On many machines, the reels can be used without alteration; but, since they have keying slots on only one side, it may be necessary to cut a slot on the other side for those machines that have a key extending to the top of the reel spindle.

The reels come in the 7-in. size, and will just barely hold 1,200 ft. of 1½-mil tape.

*W. R. Abbott II*  
Ann Arbor, Mich.

#### Stick 'em in Styrofoam

Breadboards (experimental circuit assemblies) have always been a problem to the hobbyist, and the time consumed often discourages much variety in the types of circuits experimented with.

A novel and time-saving method, which I saw used recently in a physics lab at Stanford, involved building up hardware on a block of Styrofoam. Blocks 1 in. thick and about 6 by 18 in. are sold at Christmas time for decorating purposes. These make excellent foundations into which components can be "plugged."

Connections are made by direct soldering or with hookup wire, and substitutions are easy. A few tube sockets can have sharpened legs soldered onto the mounting lugs and be placed as desired. Pigtails are tucked safely away in the Styrofoam so that they need not be cut. After the circuit has been worked out, components can be used again in the actual construction. The Styrofoam holds components with surprising tenacity and can be reused many times.

*Daniel B. DeBra*  
Mountain View, Calif.

#### Making Panel Cutouts

It is not easy to make perfectly fitting cutouts in panels unless you have the proper power tools or are expert in the use of hand tools. For the neophyte woodworker who wants professional-looking panels for his hi-fi equipment, there is a material which will expedite the task greatly. It is called half-round stock and is available in many sizes, the most useful of which I have found to be ¾-in.

The cutout should be made slightly larger in all dimensions than the actual panel opening will be. Lengths of the half-round stock are then cut to

fit around the cutout, neatly framing it. They should overlap the edge enough to make up for the difference between the actual size of the cutout and the size of the finished panel opening. The resulting job looks better than many professional custom installations I have seen.

*Alan Kushmir*  
Chicago, Ill.

#### Sealing Speaker Cabinets

Every audio craftsman has a favorite method of sealing speaker cabinets, ranging from Scotch tape to second-hand chewing gum; but one that has unique advantages has thus far escaped notice in the literature. This is aquarium cement, a puttylike substance sold by most pet shops in one-pound tins at fifty cents.

To apply aquarium cement, heat the can in water, work the cement into a rope, and press it into the wood joint. The surface of the compound dries quickly to a rocklike hardness, while the interior remains plastic and maintains a positively airtight seal.

Some other commonly used substances transmit vibrations through the plasticity of the material itself. Such is not the case with this, because of the surface rigidity.

*R. A. Ruth*  
Alturas, Calif.

#### ERRATUM

We received a letter from David Hafler, of Dynaco Incorporated, pointing out an error in the discussion of the Dynaco 120-watt amplifier circuit in "The Grounded Ear" in the October issue of *Audiocraft*. The author of this department described a method of obtaining extremely low distortion by underbiasing the KT-88 output tubes. The following paragraph from Mr. Hafler's letter will set the record straight.

"We do not show the circuit with the KT-88s drawing 90 ma each. We have them biased for a drain of 70 ma each, and the unit will put out 120 watts at between 0.5 and .75% IM. The distortion at low levels (below about 50 watts) is way down. However, for special uses where expense is not important, the IM can be cut to as low as 0.1% at full power, while tube life is shortened somewhat. If you were cutting master discs, for example, you would not worry about using up to \$20 worth of output tubes every few months as long as you got really low distortion. However, for normal home use, we have never suggested or intimated that you should run tubes at 10% above the book rating."

# HF reports

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**Tested in the Home**

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TTH

### Stephens Trusonich 120-FR, 150-FR, 5-KT Speakers

**SPECIFICATIONS** (furnished by manufacturer): full-range loudspeakers and supertweeter. **MODEL 120-FR**—a 12-inch full-range loudspeaker. **Frequency range:** 30 to 15,000 cps. **Impedance:** 16 ohms; 8 ohms optional. **Power rating:** 30 watts program. **Free-air cone resonance:** 40 cps. **Price:** \$60. **Model 150-FR**—a 15-inch full-range loudspeaker. **Frequency range:** 20 to 14,000 cps. **Impedance:** 16 ohms; 8 ohms optional. **Power rating:** 35 watts program. **Free-air cone resonance:** 23 cps. **Price:** \$87. **MODEL 5-KT**—a compression-type horn-loaded supertweeter. **Crossover frequency:** 5,000 cps. **Frequency range:**

5,000 to 25,000 cps. **Required crossover slope:** 12 db/octave. **Impedance:** 16 ohms. **Price** (including 5,000-cps crossover network and level control): \$49.50. **MANUFACTURER:** Stephens Trusonich, Inc., 8538 Warner Dr., Culver City, Calif.

The "Free-Cone Suspension" system utilized in Stephens wide-range speakers is based on a highly flexible cone suspension system and a lightweight cone and voice coil assembly—a combination which, Stephens says, gives the cone a low natural resonance frequency as well as the ability to respond cleanly and easily to transients or heavy bass signals.

We received two of these free-cone speakers for testing, and they are the finest-sounding units I've heard from Stephens to date. Both are unusually free of inherent coloration; they are able to reproduce equally well all of the instruments in the orchestra, and also the human voice (the latter is much more difficult to reproduce naturally than might be expected).

The 120-FR and the 150-FR are quite nondirectional at high frequencies, so are well suited for stereo use. Both are designed for use in horn- or reflex-type enclosures. Installed in Stephens' Model 1216 enclosure, the 120-FR produced sound that was at once naturally balanced and remarkably clean and smooth. It should be used with an auxiliary tweeter in order to realize the full transient response and overtone content of available program

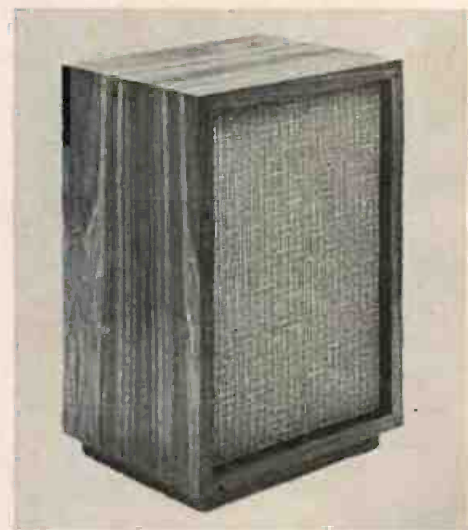
material. Its over-all sound, without an additional tweeter, was smooth, soft, and well defined. Balance was excellent, and low-frequency response was full and musically adequate although not startlingly extended. Its low-frequency range in a listening room of moderate size was good to perhaps 50 cycles, and started to slip gradually below that. Bass definition was very good, and no audible traces of doubling could be detected anywhere throughout the speaker's bass range.

The 150-FR speaker proved to have much the same over-all sound as the 120-FR, although its larger cone resulted in less impressive high-frequency range and noticeably superior bass per-

*Model 1216 enclosure for 12-inch units.*



*Stephens 1516 enclosure for the 150-FR.*



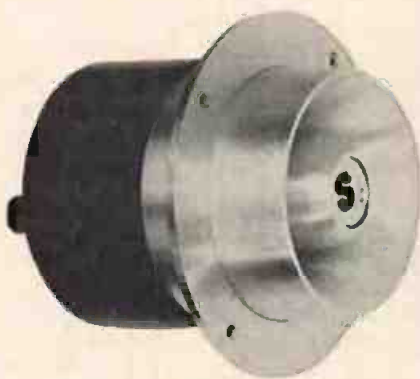


formance. This unit, in its model 1516 enclosure, produced firm, solid bass to around 38 cycles, with rapid loss below that. Because of its unusual bass clarity and solidity, as well as its refreshing lack of boominess, it shared with the Model 120-FR a quality of bass that was quite a bit more musically satisfying than the suffocating bass heaviness of many speakers which extend deeper but produce greater amounts of distortion.

The 150-FR's middle range was, if anything, even smoother than that of the 120-FR. It had little coloration, reproduced all kinds of sounds with a high degree of naturalness, and was capable of handling surprising amounts of power without audible strain. Its high-frequency response, however, was quite restricted, tending to minimize high-pitched sounds and, particularly, the guttiness of string tone. A tweeter is a necessity with this speaker if its robust and solid low

end is to be matched by a comparable top.

The Stephens Model 5-KT compression tweeter is supplied with a compact combination crossover network and



*The Stephens 5-KT compression tweeter.*

attenuator control, which provides the necessary 5,000-cycle 12 db/octave crossover and tweeter level adjustment. It is extremely efficient, as evi-

denced by the fact that its optimum balance (to my taste, anyway) with the 120-FR and 150-FR was obtained with its level control set barely  $\frac{1}{4}$  way up. This tweeter has a quality of razor-sharp crispness which can become metallic and spitty if the tweeter is turned up to the point at which it is heard as a separate entity above the sound from the main speaker (an undesirable operating condition for any tweeter). The 5-KT's high-frequency range is extraordinary, but much of its extreme upper range is masked by a 10,000- to 12,000-cycle output rise. It is quite directional and performs best when operated facing upwards. J.C.H.

**MANUFACTURER'S COMMENT:** Model 5-KT tweeters of more recent manufacture have a diaphragm material modification that has eliminated the masking effect described, without in any way adversely affecting the other characteristics of the tweeter. This same modification has resulted in a decrease of the "spitting" characteristic when the tweeter is being driven at excessive level.

## ATR Garrard 301 Turntable

The first impression we had of the Garrard 301 turntable when unpacking it from its carton was of its completeness. The unit comes with a stroboscope disc, 45-rpm record adapter, a tube of special grease, spring suspensions, template, and a most complete 23-page manual, bound in hard covers. Manuals of this sort sometimes are furnished with the better British equipment, and rarely if ever with American equipment.

Each turntable is provided with an inspection report showing the measured wow and flutter at each of its three speeds, plus a check-off form to indicate that rumble has been found negligible, operating speeds correct, and that a playing test has been performed.

The Garrard 301 is attractively finished in ivory, with the heavy cast-aluminum turntable finished in flat black. Its three operating controls are conveniently located at the front of the unit. At left is the ON-OFF switch, which also operates a mechanical brake to stop the turntable quickly when it is shut off. At the right is the speed-change lever. In the center is a knob which provides a variation of approximately  $\pm 3\%$  about each nominal speed. This is accomplished by means of an eddy-current brake which moves the pole pieces of a magnet so as to surround the edge of an aluminum disc turning on the motor shaft.

The motor is a four-pole induction type, mounted on a set of six springs.

This floating mount effectively isolates the motor from the turntable proper. The only point of contact with the motor is between the motor shaft and the rubber idler wheel. Speed changes are accomplished by means of a stepped pulley on the motor shaft, with the idler moving up or down as the speed selector is changed.

The turntable is quite compact: 13 $\frac{1}{2}$  in. wide by 14 $\frac{1}{2}$  in. deep, extending only 3 $\frac{1}{2}$  in. below the motor board. No provision is made for mounting an arm on the turntable base plate, and a motor board at least 18 in. square is recommended. Our test unit was mounted



*Garrard's 301 transcription turntable.*

on a standard Garrard base, finished in black. This is 21 in. wide by 16 in. deep and incorporates a bubble level to aid in leveling the turntable. It is large enough to accommodate practically any arm.

The stroboscope disc furnished with the turntable fits rather snugly on the spindle, and one does not feel encouraged to use it too often. The instruction manual states that a stroboscopically engraved turntable is available at

extra cost, and we would consider it a worthwhile investment if the cost is reasonable.

### Test Results

Garrard specifications call for a maximum wow and flutter of 0.2% and .05% respectively, at 33 $\frac{1}{3}$  rpm. The inspection card accompanying our test unit listed wow and flutter percentages of 0.15 and .02. Our measurements indicated 0.1% wow and .085% flutter. We have no way of knowing exactly what the inherent flutter on our Components 1106 record is, but we have measured flutter percentages as low as .05% in the past. In any event, there can be no doubt that the Garrard 301 is as free from these objectionable qualities as any turntable we have seen, for all practical purposes.

Garrard has wisely refrained from claiming any specific rumble level for this turntable. The many variables involved in rumble measurements make it nearly impossible to reproduce this sort of data in different test environments. We mounted our Fairchild 225A cartridge in a Fairchild 281 arm on the Garrard wooden motor board in the proper location. The output was amplified by a Dynakit preamplifier (RIAA equalization) and the rumble level was referred to a stylus velocity of 7 cm/sec at 1,000 cps. The resultant rumble was -32 db, practically all 30-cps (the basic rumble frequency of a four-pole motor). Other arm and cartridge combinations yielded rumble figures from -30 db to -36 db under similar conditions. We then mounted the Fairchild pickup system on a separate base, mounted on vi-

bration isolators, and obtained a figure of  $-42.5$  db. This figure probably is representative of the true performance of the turntable, but a user would probably obtain somewhat more rumble with his pickup mounted on the Garrard base. Probably a heavier or more rigid base would reduce the rumble.

Measurement of the hum field encountered by a magnetic cartridge in normal playing position was made by using a typical magnetic cartridge as a probe and measuring its output relative to a velocity of 7 cm/sec at 1,000 cps after RIAA equalization. The hum level was  $-51$  db at a 6-inch radius and  $-45$  db at a 2-inch radius. These are purely arbitrary figures, but will

serve for comparison of this turntable to others measured in the same manner. This hum level is quite low, and would not be audible in an ordinary listening situation.

#### Summary

The Garrard 301 turntable is a very ruggedly built, flexible unit with performance of professional caliber. It is honestly rated by its manufacturer, and at its price of \$89.50 is a very good value. Its wow and flutter, as well as flexibility and operating convenience, are equivalent to a number of turntables selling at considerably higher prices.

Its rumble level is also quite low—actually low enough to justify Gar-

rard's claim of "virtually nonexistent." However, when mounted on the Garrard base the rumble level was increased some 10 db. It may be advisable to use another type of motor board or mounting, though we have found that a rumble level of  $-30$  db, provided it does not contain appreciable energy above 30 cps, is not audible even with extended-bass speaker systems at reasonable volume levels.

The remarkably complete instruction manual deserves special mention. It contains complete mechanical diagrams and service instructions, including exploded views and a parts list. It could serve as a model of what the manual should be for any piece of hi-fi equipment.

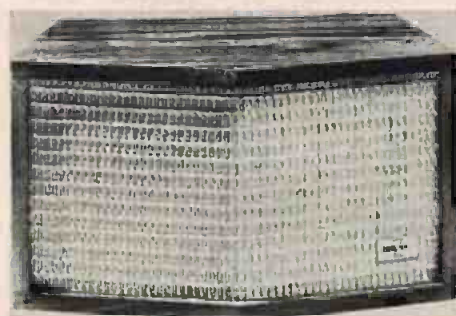


### JansZen Model 65 Electrostatic Tweeter

**SPECIFICATIONS** (furnished by manufacturer): a self-powered two-element push-pull electrostatic tweeter. **Frequency range:** 700 to 30,000 cps; built-in 700-cps high-pass filter. **Power rating:** 100 watts program. **Impedance:** 8 ohms only. **Power requirement:** 105-125 v, 50-60 cps AC, 2 watts drain, for tweeter power supply. **Dimensions:**  $6\frac{1}{4}$  in. high by  $12\frac{3}{4}$  wide by  $8\frac{1}{2}$  deep, over-all. **Price:** \$89.00 in birch or mahogany; \$91.50 in walnut; \$86.00 in utility painted dull black. **MANUFACTURER:** Neshaminy Electronic Corp., Neshaminy, Pa.

The original JansZen electrostatic tweeter, which was very favorably reviewed in "Tested in the Home" in November 1955, contained an array of four flat, sandwich-shaped radiating elements which provided broad high-frequency distribution and linear response down to around 800 cycles. The Model 65 tweeter is a smaller version

of the well-known Model 130 tweeter, but uses two instead of four radiating elements, and costs only about half as much as the 130.



*New JansZen two-element electrostatic.*

Sonically, there is little difference between the Model 65 tweeter and its larger counterpart. It is equally smooth and extended in range, it seems capable of handling an equal amount of power without strain or breakup, and it has the same transparently crys-

talline quality as the Model 130 tweeter.

The Model 65 presents less capacitive load to an amplifier than does the 130, and thus puts less stringent demands upon the high-frequency stability and high-frequency power capabilities of the amplifier. Its high-frequency distribution is only about half as wide as that of the four-element tweeter, and its efficiency is not maintained quite as fully down to its rated low-frequency limit. As a result, it has somewhat less warmth than the four-element model. Its sound, when coupled to a complementary woofer, has that combination of coldness and lucidity that has come to be known as "electrostatic sound"—a quality of analytical accuracy that reproduces every bit of music and distortion delivered to it by the associated equipment. This is an excellent tweeter, at a price that belies its quality.—J.C.H.

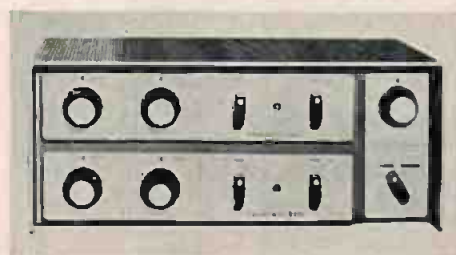


### Fairchild Model 248 Stereo Preamplifier

The Fairchild Model 248 Stereo Preamplifier is actually a combination of two Model 245 preamplifiers and a Model 247 Stereo Attachment. The Model 247 Stereo Attachment acts as a stereo/monophonic control system, with a master gain control and optional loudness compensation. This report therefore applies equally to the Model 245 and Model 248 Preamplifiers.

The control functions of the Model 245 are conventional, consisting of bass and treble tone controls, an uncompensated volume control, and a single function selector, which selects inputs and the various types of equali-

zation. Equalization is provided for the RIAA recording characteristic, RIAA with low frequency rolloff for use with record changers, a POP characteristic with more lows and highs than the RIAA, a FLAT position with



*Fairchild stereo control preamplifier.*

RIA low-frequency equalization and no high-frequency rolloff, and NARTB tape playback equalization for  $7\frac{1}{2}$ -ips and 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ -ips speeds. Inputs are pro-

vided for a magnetic cartridge, a second magnetic input marked CNGN for which the rumble filter is effective, a low-level TAPE input, and high-level TUNER and AUX inputs. Two parallel-connected OUTPUT jacks permit driving one or two power amplifiers from a single preamplifier, and a TAPE output is provided ahead of all level and tone controls. Two switched AC outlets can supply up to 200 watts to other components of the system. A nine-pin accessory socket, normally supplied with a jumper plug, allows the Model 247 Stereo Attachment to be plugged into the Model 245 to convert it to a stereo control system.

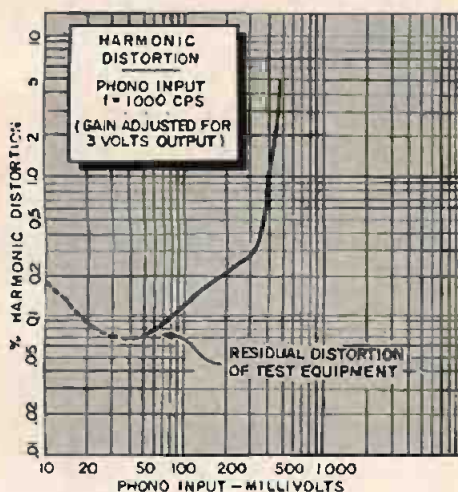
The circuit of the Fairchild 245 has several interesting features. The high-level inputs go through the first half of the dual volume control and

the tone controls without any vacuum-tube circuits intervening. The TAPE output also comes before any amplification stages. The main portion of the preamplifier is a two-stage amplifier with over-all negative feedback to provide a low output impedance and low distortion. One half of the dual volume control is at the input to this amplifier, and the other half is in the feedback loop. As a result, it is impossible to overload the preamplifier with strong signals; and, in fact, the increased negative feedback at low gain settings, as compared to maximum gain settings, slightly reduces distortion.

The phono/tape preamplifier stage is a two-stage feedback amplifier using two 6F86 low-noise pentodes (the first one is triode connected). These are also designed to handle large input signals without overloading.

Each Model 245 has its own power supply. All heaters are DC-operated for low hum.

When the Model 248 is purchased as a unit, the two Model 245 pre-



amplifiers and the Model 247 Stereo Attachment are fastened together and enclosed in a single black anodized-aluminum cover. The final result, though somewhat bulky and heavy, is attractive in styling and flexible in operation.

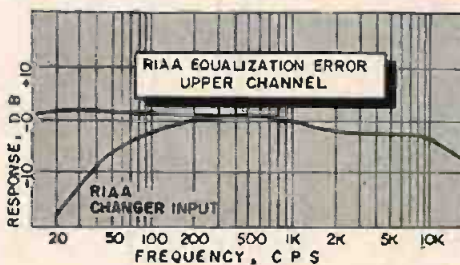
### Test Results

The characteristics of the two parts of the 248 were so nearly identical that we have plotted curves for only one preamplifier (Model 245).

The tone-control curves reveal the only significant variation between our measurements and the specifications of the 245/248. In the flat setting of the controls, there was a falloff of highs above 10 kc, amounting to over 6 db at 20 kc. This did not appear to be the result of any minor misadjustment of the tone controls, and the droop was evident on all settings of the tone controls and on all the equalization characteristics we measured. The test

equipment was checked carefully and was definitely not the cause of the loss of highs. The capacitance of the cables from the output of the preamplifier was less than 200  $\mu\text{fd}$  and should not have produced such an effect.

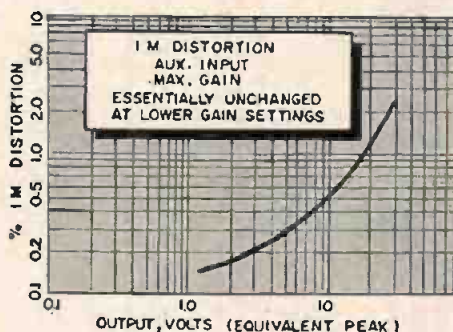
Actually, this departure from a flat response is negligible and cannot be heard under any listening conditions we applied. Nevertheless, the specified response of the preamplifier is 20 to 20,000 cps within 1 db. The response below 10 kc is very smooth, with a gentle rise of about 2 db below 1,000



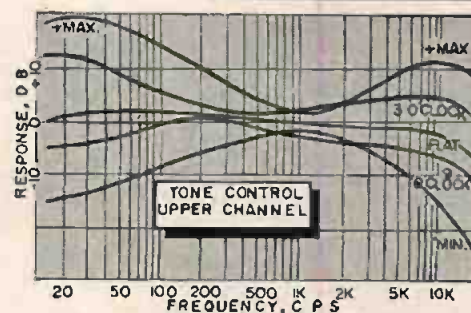
cps. This over-all characteristic can be seen impressed on the tape and record equalization characteristics.

Apart from the over-all response of the preamplifier, we found it to be remarkably good in every respect. The RIAA equalization error is a virtually exact duplicate of the over-all response characteristic. If the latter were flat, it could be seen that the equalization error would be almost immeasurable. As it is, it is better than most we have seen. In the case of the NARTB tape equalization, allowing for the preamplifier response indicates an accuracy of the order of 1 db over the 20- to 20,000-cps range, which is excellent. The 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ -ips equalization is similar to the 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ -ips characteristic except that there is a relative boost of high frequencies.

The record changer input has a rumble filter which rolls off below 100

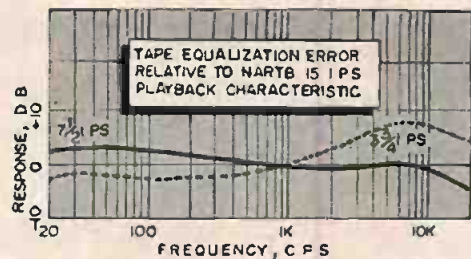


cps. This is certainly effective in removing rumble, but removes nearly as much music. It seems to us that anyone using a preamplifier of the caliber and cost of the Fairchild 248 should be able to invest in a record changer with a reasonably low rumble level. Such a drastic cut of low-frequency response is not compatible with the over-all quality of this unit, in our opinion.



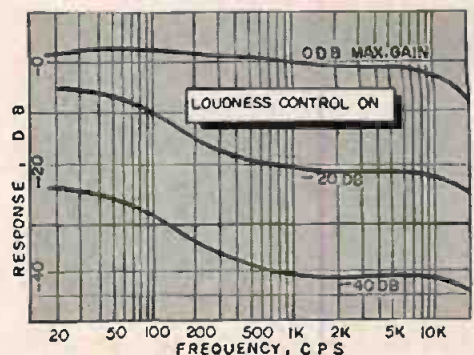
The loudness compensation, which can be switched in or out at will, affects only the low frequencies. Under most conditions, we found it a bit too bassy for our liking.

The true mettle of the 245/248 becomes evident in distortion measurements. As was mentioned earlier in this report, the circuitry of these units was designed to minimize the likelihood of overloading them with strong signals. We would go so far as to say that it is impossible to overload them with any signal sources we have encountered in hi-fi systems. The IM distortion of the preamplifier (exclusive of the phono preamplifier stages) is truly negligible at any output up to several volts, and only reaches 2% at



27 volts output. In the region up to 2 volts, which is adequate for driving any amplifier we know of, the IM distortion is under 0.2%. This is entirely independent of the input level or gain control setting.

The Fairchild specifications point out that although the phono input is intended for signals in the 5- to 10-millivolt region, it will not overload with up to 200 millivolts. The harmonic distortion we measured through the phono input (including the entire preamplifier) shows this to be a most conservative statement. The harmonic distortion for signals up to 50 millivolts was less than the residual distortion of our test equipment (about



.07%). At 200 millivolts it was only 0.2%, and reached 1% at 400 millivolts. The distortion with any magnetic pickup, no matter how high its rated output or how heavily modulated the record may be, should be entirely negligible.

Hum and noise on phono and high-level inputs were very low at normal gain settings. At maximum gain they rose somewhat, due to noise more than to hum. On the tape equalization positions the signal-to-noise ratio was appreciably worse, though listening indicated that the output was predominantly hiss. Crosstalk between chan-

switch on the Stereo Attachment is set at MONAURAL, paralleling the two channels, the gain of each unit is reduced by 6 db. This causes a noticeable drop in level when switching between STEREO and MONAURAL.

#### Summary

The Fairchild 245 appears to be an almost starkly simple preamplifier with an extremely high order of performance. Although it has no individual input level setting controls or loudness control, it has the lowest intermodulation distortion under any conditions of input level or gain setting

perfection of this unit. The response from 20 to 20,000 cps, referred to the 1,000-cps level, is +2 db, -6 db, instead of the rated 1-db limits.

When the Stereo Attachment and two Model 245 preamplifiers are connected as a Model 248 Stereo Preamplifier, all the preceding comments apply, except that loudness compensation is now available, and the combination may be operated as a stereo or monophonic system at will.

We found it easy to use, flexible, and—not too surprisingly—very clean-sounding. Our chief operational criticism is directed against the unusual taper of the volume controls, both individual and master. Over most of the rotation of the control, there was practically no effect on the level. Most of the audible change occurred in the last 45° or so (at the clockwise limit). In addition, the master level control was unable to reduce the volume to zero. A certain amount of output was always audible.

**MANUFACTURER'S COMMENT:** We are pleased to find that Hirsch-Houck Laboratories confirmed our claims, since it is our policy to state specifications which will be met by all production units, when measured by accurate instruments.

The frequency response noted in the FLAT position of the tone controls must be due to production variations affecting the FLAT setting of the bass and treble controls. This might even be caused by accidentally replacing the knob at the wrong position on the shaft. As the report implies, the units are all tested to meet all published specifications and this is, of course, true also of the frequency response.

With regard to the unusual taper of the volume control, this is brought about by introducing a fixed resistance, primarily for the purpose of insuring accurate tracking between the volume controls in the two channels. By this means, maximum tracking error in production units is held to 5%, as compared to commonly encountered errors of up to 20% with commercial components. We have found in actual use that the taper is, to most people, a pleasant and practical one.

#### Hum and Noise

Reference Level: 0 db = 1 v

Input	Upper Aux	RIAA (TT)	Tape 7½	Tape 3¾
Sensitivity	0.36 v	.0021 v	.004 v	.0023 v
Hum and Noise				
Max. Gain	nil	-51 db	-46 db	-41 db
Min. Gain		Unmeasurable (less than -70 db)		
Max. Gain (Input shorted)	-51 db	-51 db	-51 db	-51 db
Standard Gain Setting	Unmeasurable	-66 db	-46 db	-45 db
Crosstalk from Radio or Aux	Below Noise			

Note: Gains are affected by second amplifier settings. Measurements made with second amp off. On monophonic, gains are reduced by 6 db.

nels of the same preamplifier and between the two preamplifiers was unmeasurable.

Due to the rather unconventional circuitry in which many control functions are combined without isolating stages between them, there is a certain amount of interaction between the tone and volume controls of the two units when they are coupled with the Model 247 Stereo Attachment. This interaction may be as much as a decibel or so at certain times, but cannot be heard in use. When the selector

that we have ever measured. It has equally low distortion characteristics in its phono preamplifier section and is able to handle very large signal peaks without significant distortion.

Its hum level is extremely low, and its noise level is negligible at ordinary gain settings. Equalization for RIAA-record and NARTB-tape characteristics is very precise.

Somewhere in the system there is a lack of flatness of frequency response which, though not serious from a practical standpoint, mars the near

## Dynaco Stereo Power Supply Kit

**SPECIFICATIONS** (furnished by manufacturer): a compact power supply unit for one or two Dynakit preamplifiers. **Output voltages** (with two Dynakit preamplifiers connected): 350 v DC B+; 6.3 v AC heaters. Two octal sockets pro-



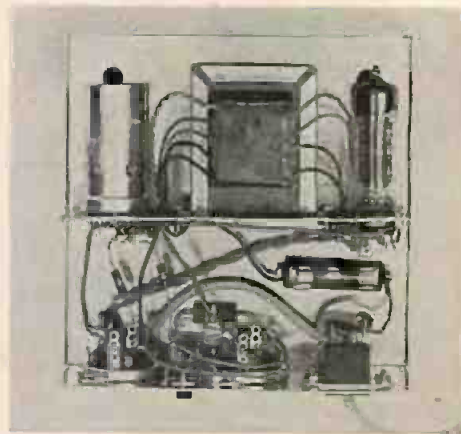
Dynaco's power supply for two preamps.

vide preamplifier power. AC outlet provides switched AC. Slide switch provides proper operating voltage for one or two Dynakit preamplifiers. **Dimensions:** 2½ in. high by 5½ wide by 5¾ deep, over-all. **Price:** \$8.95. **MANUFACTURER:** Dynaco Inc., 617 N. 41st St., Philadelphia 4, Pa.

This unit is intended to supply operating power to one or two Dynakit preamplifier-control units, or to any other preamp or preamps without built-in power supplies and having similar voltage and current requirements, when they are to be used with power amplifiers that are not equipped with preamp power-supply sockets. The power supply, which is available only in kit form at the time this is written, plugs into a switched AC outlet on the main preamplifier

unit, and has a single AC outlet that provides switched AC power.

There are two octal sockets on the



Anyone can do this simple wiring job.

power supply unit to match the octal plug(s) from the preamplifier(s). It has a slide switch to compensate for the difference in load between one and two preamps, so that the proper operating voltages are supplied whether one or two preamps are being used. The unit is rated at up to 1 ampere at 6.3 volts and up to 15 milliamperes (total of both sockets) at 350 volts,

and will operate properly with any preamplifier or pair of preamps that does not draw a greater total amount of current. The 6.3-volt supplies to the two sockets come from separate transformer windings; consequently, hum-null adjustments on the two preamps can be made individually.

As a kit item, this is one of the simplest construction projects I've en-

countered. Total construction time ran to a little over an hour, and the unit worked precisely as it was supposed to as soon as it was turned on.—J. G. H.

**MANUFACTURER'S COMMENT:** We should like to point out that the Dynakit power supply is, at the time of this writing, the only such unit available for powering a pair of preamps as are needed for stereo.

TTH

## United Speaker Systems X-100

**SPECIFICATIONS** (furnished by manufacturer): a two-way three-speaker system. **Frequency range:** 40 to 18,000 cps. **Power rating:** 30 watts. **Impedance:** 8 ohms. **Dimensions:** 24 in. wide by 24 high by 15½ deep, including 5-in. legs. **Price:** \$109.50 in mahogany or birch; \$114.50 in walnut. **MANUFACTURER:** United Speaker Systems, 192 William St., East Orange, N. J.



The X-100: 3 speakers at moderate cost.

Considering the small size of the X-100 system, it is surprising to learn that it houses two 12-inch woofers plus a 5-inch cone tweeter. The system's size and price are rather misleading, however; it is capable of producing some of the nicest sound I have lent an ear to for some time.

We received two identical X-100s for stereo testing. Their tweeters are specially-designed duo-cone units, whose nondirectionality suits them very well for stereo use. When so used, there was no detectable tendency for sounds to jump arbitrarily back and forth from one speaker to the other, and it was not necessary to sit in a limited area of the room in order to obtain the full stereo effect. Good stereo recordings were reproduced as they should be: as an evenly spread curtain of sound extending between the speakers. This was true even with recordings whose center fill had not been "improved" by cross blending between the two channels.

The X-100s we received were very smooth throughout the entire range. Their high end was soft and musically unobtrusive, and they handled strings, wood winds, brasses, and lower-range percussion with equal naturalness. And even though I did not get the impression that they were reproducing very far into the deep-bass range, they produced very satisfying balance and, within their power rating, a full, solid bass foundation. At high listening levels they showed a mild tendency to boom on heavy bass passages. Their over-all lucidity was good, definition—notably in the bass range—was very good, and they had a great deal of the openness of sound which gave the

illusion that the sound was originating from behind the loudspeaker rather than from inside it.

The high end, while silky smooth, subdued the guttiness of string tone and the sharp attack of high-pitched percussion instruments. Many music listeners would choose this quality of sweetness over the harsh or zippy sound of speakers with wider range but with treble peaks or exaggerated treble response.

These are very natural reproducers of music. Although they may not have enough projection to fill a very large, heavily absorptive listening area, their efficiency is high enough that they do not require vast amounts of amplifier power to drive them at full room volume, and they are unusual in that they sound as good from a distance of two feet as they do from twenty-five feet away. At \$109.50, the X-100 should be high on the auditioning list of any speaker shopper who is more interested in musical veracity than in audio demonstrations.—J.G.H.

**MANUFACTURER'S COMMENT:** Since most stereo cartridges and amplifiers produce less output than their single-channel counterparts, the high efficiency of the X-100 is an important consideration in stereo reproduction.

While stereo was a factor in the design of the X-100, it will perform equally well as part of a monophonic system. An identically matching equipment cabinet and second X-100 can be added at any time as modular units.

TTH

## Sargent-Rayment SR-17-17 Stereo Amplifier

**SPECIFICATIONS** (furnished by manufacturer): a completely integrated stereophonic control amplifier. All specifications refer to each channel unless otherwise stated. **Rated power:** 17 watts. **Frequency response:** ±1 db, 20 to 15,000 cps. **Distortion:** below 1.5% 1M at 17 watts; below 0.5% at 10 watts. **Hum and noise:** high-level inputs, 70 db below 17 watts; low-level inputs, 60 db below 17 watts. **Inputs:** tuner, auxiliary, tape recorder preamp output, magnetic phono, ceramic phono, tape head. **Controls:** input selector (TUNER; AUX; TAPE; PHONO 78; PHONO 33-45; TAPE HEAD NARTB, 7.5 ips, 3¾ ips); stereo-monophonic selector button; stereo normal/stereo reverse selector button; balance control; bass (±15 db, 40 cps); AC power and treble (±15 db, 10,000

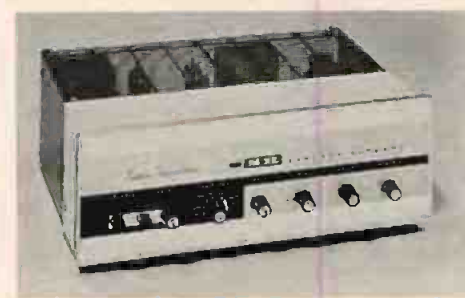
cps); volume (both channels, ganged); loudness contour (F, 1, 2, 3). **Outputs:** one at low impedance from each channel to stereo speakers; one at high impedance from each channel to stereo tape recorder. **Dimensions:** 15 in. wide by 5½ high by 13 deep, over-all. **Price:** \$189.60. **MANUFACTURER:** Sargent-Rayment Co., 4926 E. 12th St., Oakland 1, Calif.

Sargent-Rayment's SR-17-17 is a completely integrated stereophonic control amplifier comprising a pair of pre-amplifier-control sections and two 17-watt power amplifiers, all on a single and surprisingly compact chassis. All inputs and outputs are duplicated in each channel, and the input selector, volume, bass, treble, and loudness controls are ganged so as to affect both channels simultaneously. The

control panel is simple, well planned, and plainly marked.

A pair of push buttons at the left of the front panel selects normal stereo or reversed stereo (left-to-right and right-to-left operation), or monophonic

Complete stereo amplifier/preamp unit.



operation. When reproducing monophonically, the left- and right-hand channels are combined and fed equally through both power amplifiers, a provision which is almost a necessity to anyone intending to play monophonic LP discs with his stereo cartridge. The balance control, which is effective in stereo or monophonic modes, increases the level of one channel while decreasing that of the other. Its middle setting provides equal amplification through both channels, and the control has more than adequate range of adjustment to cope with the most extreme discrepancies in signal level or loudspeaker efficiencies. Once set for proper balance from an average stereo program, the channel balance remains set when the unit is switched to monophonic operation; consequently it is possible to use a monophonic signal as test material for audible balancing of the stereo channels, adjusting channel balance until the monophonic signal appears to come from midway between the speakers.

RIAA phono equalization in our

sample SR-17-17 was very accurate. The 78-rpm equalization setting combined a 500-cycle turnover with a sharp high-frequency cutoff, presumably to suppress surface noise. This curve would not accurately equalize any existing disc, and it could be almost perfectly duplicated by combining the RIAA setting with some treble tone control cut. Tape equalization was unusually flexible: three TAPE HEAD settings (for use when a tape deck without a playback amplifier is being fed into the SR-17-17's pre-amps) give a close approximation to the NARTB-RIAA tape curve that is required for use with high-quality playback heads, and two compromise curves for 7½ ips and 3¾ ips operation through lesser-quality playback heads. Deviation from the NARTB curve is in the usual direction, causing NARTB-recorded tapes to play with a slightly exaggerated high end.

Hum from our SR-17-17 was below audibility under all conditions of operation. It had enough gain to operate at full volume and acceptably

low noise from a 5-millivolt magnetic cartridge, and all switching functions were free of clicks and pops. The volume control's tracking was excellent throughout most of its range, maintaining both channels at their relative preset volume balance except during a short rotational range in which a sudden volume change was observed. Here the channel balance was thrown badly out of adjustment until the control had passed above or below the critical 5 degrees of rotation, which occurred between the 12 and 1 o'clock settings.

The SR-17-17's sound was crisp, finely grained, and a little veiled rather than crystalline. Balance was very good; bass was full, a little heavy, and acceptably well defined.

The unit appears to have durable, high-quality parts throughout, so it may be reasonably expected to give long, dependable operation without significant deterioration of performance. All in all, a very good buy in an attractively styled and well-thought-out stereo amplifier.—J.C.H.



### Stentorian HF-1016U Speaker and T-359 Tweeter

**SPECIFICATIONS** (furnished by manufacturer):  
**MODEL HF-1016U**—a full-range single-cone 10-inch loudspeaker. Frequency range: 30 to 15,000 cps. Impedance: 4, 8, or 16 ohms, selectable at taps on speaker. Power rating: 15 watts. Free-air cone resonance: 35 cps. Voice coil: 1 in. diam. Magnet: 2 lb., 16,000 gauss. Price: \$36.50.

**MODEL T-359**—3½-in. cone tweeter. Frequency range: 3,000 to 17,000 cps. Power rating: 15 watts at 3,000 cps. Impedance: 16 ohms. Magnet: 9,000 gauss. Price: \$14.95.  
**DISTRIBUTOR:** Barker Sales Co., Audio Division, 339 Broad Ave., Ridgefield, N. J.

These speakers are manufactured in Great Britain by Whitely Electrical Company, and are distributed in the United States exclusively through Barker Sales Company. The Model HF-1016U 10-inch speaker is a full-range single-cone unit with a universal voice-coil winding. The voice coil is double wound and both ends of the windings are brought out to four terminals on the frame of the speaker. Selection of different combinations of terminals, as described on the identification plate at the rear of the speaker, enables the user to operate the speaker as a 4-, 8-, or 16-ohm unit. This facilitates coupling to any amplifier, or connecting together multiple systems of these speakers.

When installed in a carefully tuned bass-reflex enclosure, the HF-1016U's bass response was excellent; full, deep, well defined, and unusually free of



Stentorian multi-impedance loudspeaker.

boom or tubbiness. Its middle range was smooth and clean, although there was a pronounced output rise centered around 5,000 cps which emphasized record surface noise, produced what was in my opinion entirely too much brilliance, and gave the impres-



Companion T-359 tweeter is brand new.

sion that the unit's bass response was less impressive than it actually was.

The T-359 cone tweeter was designed as an adjunct to the Stentorian line of wide-range speakers and woofers, although its efficiency is high enough to permit its use with practically any direct-radiator woofer having usable response to beyond 3,000 cycles. It is remarkably smooth within its operating range, and when properly balanced against a good woofer, it adds a very nice silkiness and crispness to the sound. Its output rises very gradually between about 4,000 and 10,000 cycles, and falls off progressively but smoothly above that. It is very nondirectional, and since the entire rear surface of the tweeter frame is enclosed, it may be set right into the woofer cabinet without risk of damaging the cone through exposure to the high air pressures that are built up in a woofer enclosure. For the price, this tweeter is going to be hard to surpass; it is one instance of a component whose low cost is not reflected in frequency response irregularities.

J.C.H.

**MANUFACTURER'S COMMENT:** The Stentorian HF-1016U was designed as a "Super" unit with a heavy magnet structure, and is intended to function as an extended-range speaker with excellent transient and wide over-all response. On program material which is "toppy," adjustment to taste can readily be made by using treble or filter controls on the amplifier.

The HF-1016U is also suitable for incorporation in speaker systems as a woofer/midrange unit.

# TAPE NEWS AND VIEWS

by J. GORDON HOLT

## A splice in time . . .

**M**OST home recordists are content to limit their splicing activities to the occasional repair of a broken tape. The more advanced recordist has found splicing to be an excellent way to delete the trash that is almost invariably preserved along with desired recordings—things like the beer commercials and live-it-up cigarette ads punctuating off-the-air recordings of the Sunday Symphony, audience sounds during the pauses in live-performance recordings, and some of the louder clicks dubbed along with the music from prized 78-rpm discs. After some practice, the recordist can learn to use editing the way professionals do, for correcting fluffs in speech recordings, for assembling smoothly continuous programs, and for building perfect musical performances from a number of imperfect attempts (also known as retakes).

To paraphrase a discredited thesis of child rearing, a splice should be seen but not heard. A perfect splice cannot be detected by ear, even by someone who knows exactly where the splice occurs in the program; a satisfactory splice can be heard only if you know where to listen for it, and concentrate on hearing it. If a splice is to be completely undetectable, it must be technically as well as programmatically perfect.

A technically perfect splice is one which, if inserted into a tape recording of a continuous test tone, will not cause any audible interruption of the tone. To meet this requirement, the splice must be able to pass through the tape

guides and over the heads without catching on anything or losing intimate contact with the playback head, and must be able to pull free of the supply reel without sticking to adjacent layers of tape.

Smoothness of the oxide coating requires that the tape ends be butted snugly against one another but *not* overlapped. If there is a gap between the tape ends, or if the cuts are not parallel, some of the splicing tape's sticky surface will show through and will tend to adhere to the underlying layer of tape on the reel. Then when the tape is unwinding, the adhesion will jerk free, causing a burble—a momentary fluctuation in tape speed.

There must be no projections from either edge of the tape that might catch on guides or head covers. The spliced tape ends must either be perfectly aligned or must be trimmed off so that no sharp corners are left projecting, and the splicing tape itself should be no wider than the splice it covers.

Programmatically perfect splices are ones which do not in any way interrupt the smooth flow of the program material, either by mutilating natural sounds, by creating sudden changes in background noise, volume, or tonal balance, or by upsetting the normal rhythm of the recorded sounds. Choosing the proper place to splice a tape is an art in itself, which is why editors who can make programmatically as well as technically perfect splices are treated as valuable property at recording and broadcast studios. Although a

splice cut is made at an angle to the direction of tape travel, the splice itself will not provide a smooth transition from one length of tape to the other; consequently it should be made at a point where the characteristics of the recorded sounds themselves are conducive to smooth blending. More about this at a later date, however.

A special kind of gummed tape is available for tape splicing, and this is the *only* kind of gummed tape that should ever be used. Ordinary cellulose tapes won't do at all, because their adhesive tends to creep when subjected to the pressure that is built up between tape layers on a reel, causing adhesions between the tape layers. Splicing tape is sold in rolls  $\frac{1}{8}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$ , and  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. wide. The proper width for the job depends largely on the type of splicing jig being used. Some splicers such as the Alonge and the de luxe Robins models are equipped with dispensers, and most of these units accept the  $\frac{1}{8}$ -in. tape. The  $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. tape can be used on practically any other type of splicer, but because it spans slightly less length on the magnetic tape it may not produce as mechanically strong splices as the wider type. The  $\frac{3}{8}$ -in. size is ordinarily used with Edit-Tall blocks.

Splicers come in all shapes and sizes, ranging from cheap and imprecise little gadgets costing half a dollar or so, all the way to complicated and expensive thermobonders which fuse the tape ends together under heat and

*Continued on page 154*

# The Acrosound

An audiocraft kit report

## Ultra Linear

**K**IT building, a pastime which the veteran looks upon with anticipation but which the neophyte may ignore with stubborn disinterest, is becoming less of a time-consuming chore these days as new techniques are evolved which speed assembly time and minimize errors. Printed circuit boards, subassemblies prewired at the factory, and circuits which are just plain simpler in design (although more efficient) are combined in varying degree to reduce to a minimum the unpacking-to-operation time.

The Acrosound Ultra-Linear II 60-watt power amplifier is a prime example of the lengths to which kit manufacturers will go to help make construction of their products a breeze. And what are these lengths? Well, for one, the printed circuit board (in itself a timesaver) is completely assembled. Every single resistor, tube socket, and capacitor is soldered to the board

when you receive it. What's more, the unit has been factory tested in a special rig to make absolutely certain that it will work in your own amplifier.

As a result of this careful predesign planning, the U-L II goes together in something under two hours. When it is finished, and after its electrical circuits have been balanced, not only do you have an amplifier which is a beauty to behold in the aesthetic sense, but one which holds its head high in the quality bracket as well.

### Construction

A hint to its simplicity is given by the U-L II instruction manual, in which but a single page (front and back) is devoted to assembly directions.

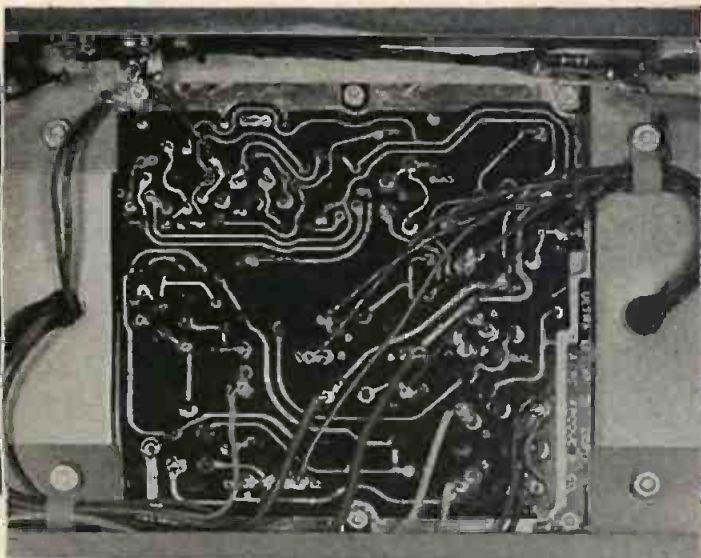
Four pieces of brown-painted metal are joined at the corners to form a rectangular base. One of the longer pieces supports the few switches, sockets, and taps necessary to incorporate the U-L

II into a high fidelity system. These are attached mechanically to the front panel, and wired immediately.

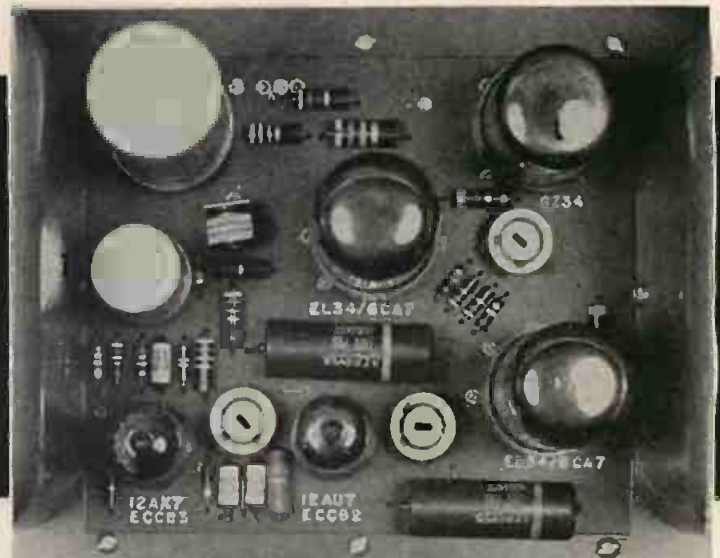
The two transformers (power and output) are identical in appearance and size, but the color coding on the wires quickly establishes which one is which. They are mounted on the base, at the extreme ends. Between them goes the prewired printed circuit board, held in position with four bolts.

At this point the amplifier is about half completed, and just a bit over an hour has elapsed since the parts from the packing box were sorted and the soldering iron heated.

The assembly (quite heavy by now) can be opened on the bench, to permit access to its innards where the final wiring operations will be conducted. These involve little more than soldering the ends of wires from both transformers and the already completed front panel to designated points on the



The underside of a fully wired printed-circuit board is shown above. A total of about 20 soldered connections must be made.



This view shows the front of the printed-circuit board. All parts (except tubes) shown here are installed at the factory.



*Building a kit can be a rewarding task, especially if the finished product is as easy on the eyes and ears as this one.*

## amplifier kit

printed circuit board. All transformer leads are supplied cut to proper length, a fact which delights the veteran kit builder and immeasurably assists the beginner. And since leads from the front panel were cut to the right length when they were attached, the wire strippers can be laid aside and final wiring accomplished with no more equipment than a soldering iron and a pair of needlenose pliers.

### Adjustment

Clever design can minimize the need for several electrical balance adjustments in a power amplifier. On the other hand, no one will dispute the obvious fact that precise balancing with instruments can reduce distortion to the absolute minimum for any given design. The U-L II has within its electronic framework the adjustable devices necessary to achieve top quality amplification with little fuss,

and with few instruments; but two of these adjustments can be set to their middle positions and left there, if necessary, with the assurance that performance will still be excellent.

Three screwdriver-adjustable potentiometers appear on the top of the printed circuit board. One of these is used to regulate the operating point (bias) for the output tubes. Another is connected between the output tubes, and may be set to the position which guarantees identical current flow in each tube, for optimal low-frequency performance. The third control can be used to balance perfectly the phase inverter stages which supply the output tubes with audio signal.

Theoretically, the output tubes and phase inverter should operate best with the balance controls set at mid-position, where the resistance affecting each tube is identical; and the amplifier will work very well that way. But

tubes are intricate devices. The chances of two being absolutely alike mechanically are slim. Consequently, these balance pots permit the user to compensate for mechanical differences between tubes and operate them under electrically matched conditions.

If you have a voltmeter and a distortion meter you simply set the bias to 36 volts, and adjust both balance controls according to directions in the instruction booklet.

Setting the bias control is a tricky task for anyone without a voltmeter. In extreme emergencies, the bias can be set temporarily by eye, but only by an experienced eye which recognizes the proper color of the output-tube plates. Our suggestion to those without test instruments is that the completed amplifier (and instruction book) be taken to a radio/TV serviceman for final adjustment. The service will require only about five minutes, and will cost but a few dollars. To the high fidelity listener who has gone this far in the assembly of a U-L II, this extra cost is definitely worth it, if the full potential of a very fine piece of audio equipment is to be realized.

### Test Results

All tests indicated that the Acro U-L II is a superb amplifier. Its intermodulation distortion is below the residual level of most distortion meters up to about 25 watts; and at 60 watts, which is the maximum power rating on this amplifier and the point at which IM would be expected to approach 1%, it is only 0.3%. The amplifier does not reach 1% until about 65 watts.

The amplifier contains a damping control, and a switch to throw it into the circuit or out, as desired. When the

*Continued on page 156*



*The printed-circuit board mounts on the base assembly between the output (right) and power transformers, as pictured above.*



*Positioning a protective metal cage over tubes is final step in U-L-II construction. Completed amplifier looks like this.*



# Audionews

## HARTLEY ENCLOSURE

A new enclosure, the *Cameo*, has been introduced by Hartley Products to house their 217 full-range speaker. It can be used as a single system for monophonic purposes, or as the second speaker in a stereo arrangement. Six-inch legs are furnished for vertical or horizontal mounting of the enclosure. In unfinished birch, the *Cameo* sells for \$63, or \$128 with speaker. Finished walnut, mahogany, or blond models are \$80, or \$145 with speaker.

## KARG TUNER CATALOGUE

A catalogue is now available from Karg Laboratories describing its *Tunematic* line of crystal-oscillator FM tuners. Each tuner is equipped with crystals cut to the frequencies of FM transmitters in the listener's range, and a simple click of the dial is said to tune the receiver to within .025% of the transmitter's carrier.

## ESL DUST BUG

The *ESL Dust Bug* is a device for cleaning record grooves and eliminating static buildup automatically while a record is playing. Two models are available complete with fluid in a replaceable dispenser. The moist pad is wide enough to clean each groove one hundred times during a single playing of a record. The unit intended for use with manual players and transcription turntables mounts directly on the turn-

*Dust Bugs for turntables and changers.*

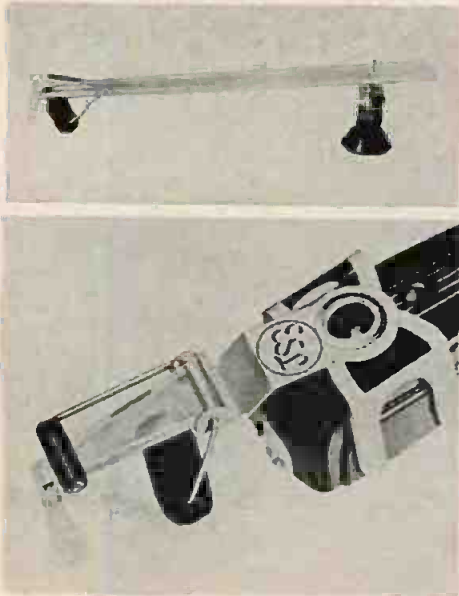


table base by means of a suction cup; the one for changers clips on the pick-up arm. Price of the former is \$5.75, and of the latter, \$4.75.

## HEATHKIT TAPE RECORDER

Heath Company has announced a new tape recorder kit, the *TR-1A*, providing monophonic record/playback, fast forward, and rewind functions. Two speeds of operation, 7½ and 3¾ ips, are selected by changing belt drive. All functions on the tape deck are switch-controlled by one lever, simplifying operation. The Model *TE-1* record/playback preamplifier, supplied with the mechanical assembly, provides NARTB equalization. According to the manufacturer, flutter



*Tape recorder kit from Heath Company.*

and wow are less than 0.35%, and frequency response at 7½ ips is  $\pm 2$  db from 50 to 10,000 cps. Signal-to-noise ratio is said to be better than 45 db below normal recording level with less than 1% total harmonic distortion. Templates and instructions are provided to cut out panels for mounting. Price of the tape recorder kit is \$99.95.

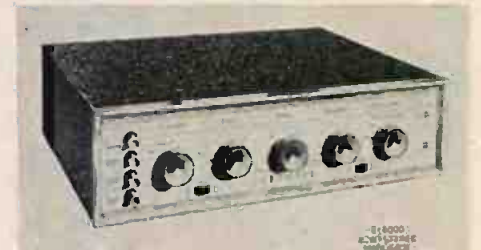
## RONDINE TURNTABLE

Rek-O-Kut is marketing a new Rondine turntable, Model *N-33II*, designed for playing at 33¾ rpm. A self-lubricating hysteresis-synchronous motor is used with special braking for reduction of coasting. A tension adjustment is provided for the belt-drive system, and a built-in strobe disc for checking speed. Claimed noise level is -53 db. Price of the turntable is \$69.95.

## SHERWOOD AMPLIFIER

The Sherwood Model *S-4000* 20-watt amplifier/preamp is designed for con-

verting existing monophonic systems to stereo. It matches all other Sherwood units in size and style, and sells for \$109.50, less case. In addition to control features found on all Sherwood monophonic models, controls important for stereo operation are provided: dual loudness control, stereo normal/reverse switch, phase inversion switch, and provision for either channel to be used monophonically. Frequency response is said to be within 1½ db from



*S-4000 stereo preamp, mono power amp.*

20 cps to 20 kc. The unit measures 14 by 10½ by 4 in., and its shipping weight is 23 lb.

## ALLIED 1959 CATALOGUE

More than 32,000 items are listed in Allied Radio's 452-page-thick 1959 catalogue. In addition to Allied's Knight line of high fidelity equipment, components and electronic equipment from the major manufacturers and a section on stereophonic prerecorded tapes are included. Free on request.

## TURNOVER STEREO CARTRIDGE

Recoton is offering a magnetic turnover cartridge for use with 78-rpm records and stereo and monophonic LPs. As the *RG745-3SD*, it is equipped with a 0.7-mil diamond stylus for LPs and a 3-mil sapphire for 78s; as the *RG745-1SD*, it has a 0.7-mil diamond and a 1-mil sapphire. Manufacturer's specifications: frequency response—20 to 15,000 cps,  $\pm 2$ db; channel separation—more than 20 db; output voltage—4 millivolts; lateral and vertical compliance— $4 \times 10^{-4}$  cm/dyne; tracking force—3 to 5 grams; four terminals. Price is \$29.95.

*For more information about any of the products mentioned in Audionews, we suggest that you make use of the Product Information Cards bound in at the back of the magazine. Simply fill out the card, giving the name of the product in which you're interested, the manufacturer's name, and the page reference. Be sure to put down your name and address too. Send the cards to us and we'll send them along to the manufacturers. Make use of this special service; save postage and the trouble of making individual inquiries to several different addresses.*

**Now! The Most Important  
Product Announcement  
in the History of H. H. Scott!**



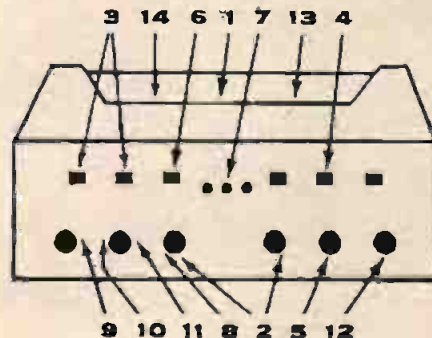
Here are the exciting  
details on

**The Stereo  
Amplifier that  
sets the  
Standards for  
the Next  
Decade!**



M. H. SCOTT, INC. 111 POWDERMILL RD., MAYNARD, MASS.  
EXPORT: TELESCO INTERNATIONAL CORP. 36 W. 40TH ST., N. Y. C.

The H. H. Scott engineering laboratories proudly introduce the new Model 299 40 watt stereophonic amplifier and control center. It contains many advance features that not only meet the needs of today's stereophonic program sources, but anticipate the requirements of the future. Check the details of this new amplifier, and see for yourself why the new 299 is superior to any other amplifier available.



1 40 watt power stage consisting of dual 20 watt power amplifiers. You need this much power to meet the requirements of today's speaker systems. 2 Completely separate Bass and Treble controls on each channel so that different speakers may be matched. 3 Provision for connecting both a stereo phono cartridge and stereo tape heads. 4 Phase reverse switch to compensate for improperly phased tape recordings or loudspeakers. 5 Special balancing circuit for quick and accurate volume balancing of both channels. 6 Separate record scratch and rumble filters. 7 Unique visual signal light control panel. Instantly indicates mode of operation. 8 Can be used as an electronic crossover (bi-amplifier) 9 Special compensation for direct connection of tape playback heads without external preamp. 10 Special switching lets you use your stereo pickup on monaural records. 11 You can play a monaural source such as an FM tuner through both channels simultaneously effectively doubling power. 12 Loudness compensation. 13 Stereo tape recorder output. 14 D.C. filament supply for preamp to virtually eliminate hum (80 db below full power output). 15 Distortion (first order difference tone) less than 0.3%.



Size in accessory walnut case: 15 1/2" w x 5" h x 12 1/2" d. Price \$199.95. (West of Rockies \$204.95)

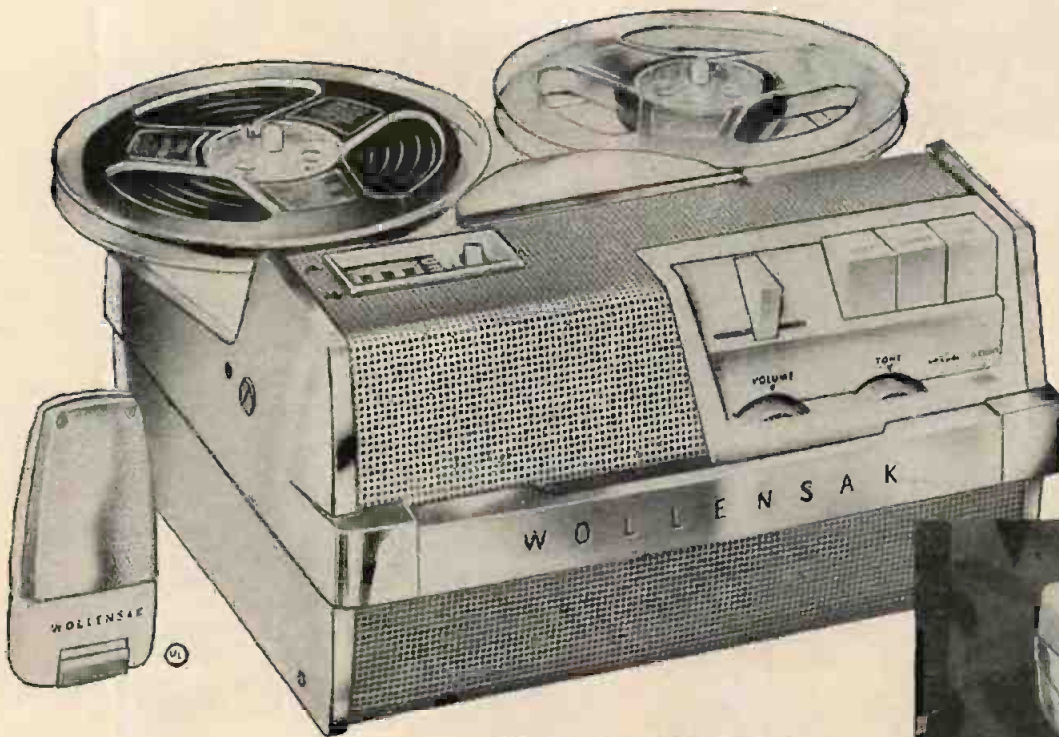
Write for complete technical specifications and new catalog HF-12.

Announcing the Magnificent New

# WOLLENSAK "1515"

STEREOPHONIC HI-FIDELITY TAPE RECORDER

WITH BUILT-IN PRE-AMPLIFIER



The thrilling presence  
of a live orchestra  
in your home... full  
third dimensional sound!



**ULTRA LIGHTWEIGHT**  
Measures only 6½" x 10¼" x 11¾";  
weighs scant 20 lbs. Distinguished  
design harmonizes with every decor.



**EASY OPERATION!**  
Simplified key-board  
controls. Handy,  
strikingly beautiful  
operating panel  
provides the utmost  
in operating ease.

**ULTRA-POWERFUL!**  
10 watts push-pull  
audio output—four  
times greater than  
larger, less portable  
recorders. Ideal for  
auditorium use.



**CONSOLE PERFORMANCE!**  
Tape live music or  
use in conjunction  
with a hi-fi speaker  
and tuner for a fine  
hi-fidelity system.



Now you may enjoy the realism of three-dimensional sound in a truly portable stereophonic tape recorder! Two separate *in-line* sound channels bring the living presence of a full orchestra into your home. The upper channel permits you to record and play back monaurally. The lower channel, in line with the upper, plugs in directly to the Phono input of your radio, high fidelity system or your television. No auxiliary pre-amp is necessary as the pre-amp is built right into this WOLLENSAK Tape Recorder. Dual speeds, two-level recording indicator, keyboard controls, index counter, high speed rewind lever, etc. MODEL T-1515, complete with microphone, 2 reels (one with tape), cords, \$229.50

**GUARANTEED SPECIFICATIONS** Frequency Response—Upper Channel. 40-15,000 cps. ± 3db. at 7½ ips.; 40-8,000 cps. ± 3db. at 3¾ ips.; Lower Channel. 40-15,000 cps. ± 3db. at 7½ ips. (NARTB Standard Equalization). Wow and flutter less than 0.3%; Signal to noise ratio greater than 50 db.; Signal from lower channel pre-amp output 0.5 — 1.5 volts; Crosstalk — 50 db.



"1500" HI-FIDELITY DUAL-SPEED TAPE RECORDER  
Only 6½" x 10¼" x 11¾"; weighs 20 lbs.  
10 watts push-pull output is four times  
greater than ordinary recorders.  
"Balanced-Tone" high-fidelity; key-board  
control. Accepts 7" reels; tape speeds of  
3.75 and 7.5 ips.; index counter, etc.  
Complete with microphone, 2 reels,  
tape and cords, \$199.50

**FREE DEMONSTRATION**—Your authorized Wolleksak Dealer will be glad to show you the "1515" and other fine WOLLENSAK Cameras and Projectors. See him now!

WOLLENSAK OPTICAL CO. • CHICAGO 16, ILL.

# AUDIO FORUM



## The Second Channel

SIR:

I own a Magnavox "Magnasonic" phonograph with two 12-inch speakers and two 5-inch speakers. I have been using with this a compact bookshelf-type speaker system at the other side of the room, to add spread to the sound.

I would like to convert to stereo, but I don't have room for another big loudspeaker. Could I use the bookshelf speaker as the second channel in my stereo system, and the speakers in the "Magnasonic" as the main channel? The speakers don't sound the same, and I was wondering what sort of results I might get.

I have heard conflicting reports about stereo speakers, some claiming that the speakers don't have to be the same, others saying that they must be identical. I have also heard that monophonic records played through two loudspeakers give almost the same effect as stereo.

Robert C. Engel  
Duluth, Minn.

*Best results are obtained from stereo material when both channels of the stereo reproducing system, and particularly the loudspeakers, are identical in all respects.*

*It is possible to obtain a pseudo-stereo effect by feeding two loudspeakers from a monophonic source, but the better suited the speakers are for this purpose, the less effective the speakers will be for stereo. This is because if you use unlike loudspeakers for monophonic material, the differences between the speakers will tend to locate instruments at different places across the area between the speakers. However, if you use identical speakers with monophonic material, the sound will all seem to emanate from a point midway between the speakers.*

*Identical speakers reproducing stereophonic material will place all of the instruments in their proper locations between the speakers, and these instruments will, so to speak, stay put during the entire performance. If the stereo speakers are dissimilar, the instruments will not stay in their proper locations but will seem to shift back and forth in a manner that the aver-*

*age listener finds quite disconcerting, and which makes it impossible to balance properly the volume from the stereo channels.*

*There is much more to be gained from stereo than just directionality, however, and whether or not you decide to convert to stereo will depend on whether or not you place sufficient value upon the enhancement of realism that is provided by stereo's depth and spaciousness.*

*How does the bookshelf system sound by itself? If it is acceptable without the assistance of the main speaker in your phono unit, perhaps you could assemble your stereo system from a pair of the bookshelf models. Otherwise, your best bet would be to scrap the bookshelf speaker system altogether and find room for another system that is similar to that in your "Magnasonic." The bookshelf system will work as a second stereo channel, but not ideally.*

## Groove Jumping

SIR:

Recently I have noticed that my pickup, when it gets into the inner grooves of a disc, sometimes starts jumping grooves, repeating the same passage over and over again. I suspect that the grooves in this area are placed too close together and my stylus cannot seat itself properly.

What is your opinion of this situation? Is there any simple solution to this problem?

William Hartmann  
Chicago, Ill.

*The most likely causes of the groove-skipping trouble you are having are as follows: a worn stylus, binding of the horizontal bearing in the pickup arm, a defective cartridge or stylus assembly, acoustic feedback from loudspeaker to turntable, and inadequate stylus force.*

## Stereo Disc Wear

SIR:

I recently purchased a viscous-damped tone arm in which I mounted an E-V stereo cartridge.

The stereo record that I used for trying the cartridge was severely dam-

aged on the first play. Now I hear that viscous-damped tone arms are not recommended for stereo cartridges because of the compliance factors involved. Can you help me?

Harold T. Flartey  
Dover, N. J.

*There are several things that could account for the excessively rapid wear of your stereo discs:*

(1) *Excessive stylus force at the record surface. Measure the stylus force at a height where it just clears the record grooves.*

(2) *Excessive damping. Adjust the viscous damping control until the pickup arm, when dropped onto the turntable from its fully lifted position, takes a little less than one second to land.*

(3) *A defective stylus cartridge. Try another stylus assembly or cartridge.*

## Speaker Enclosures

SIR:

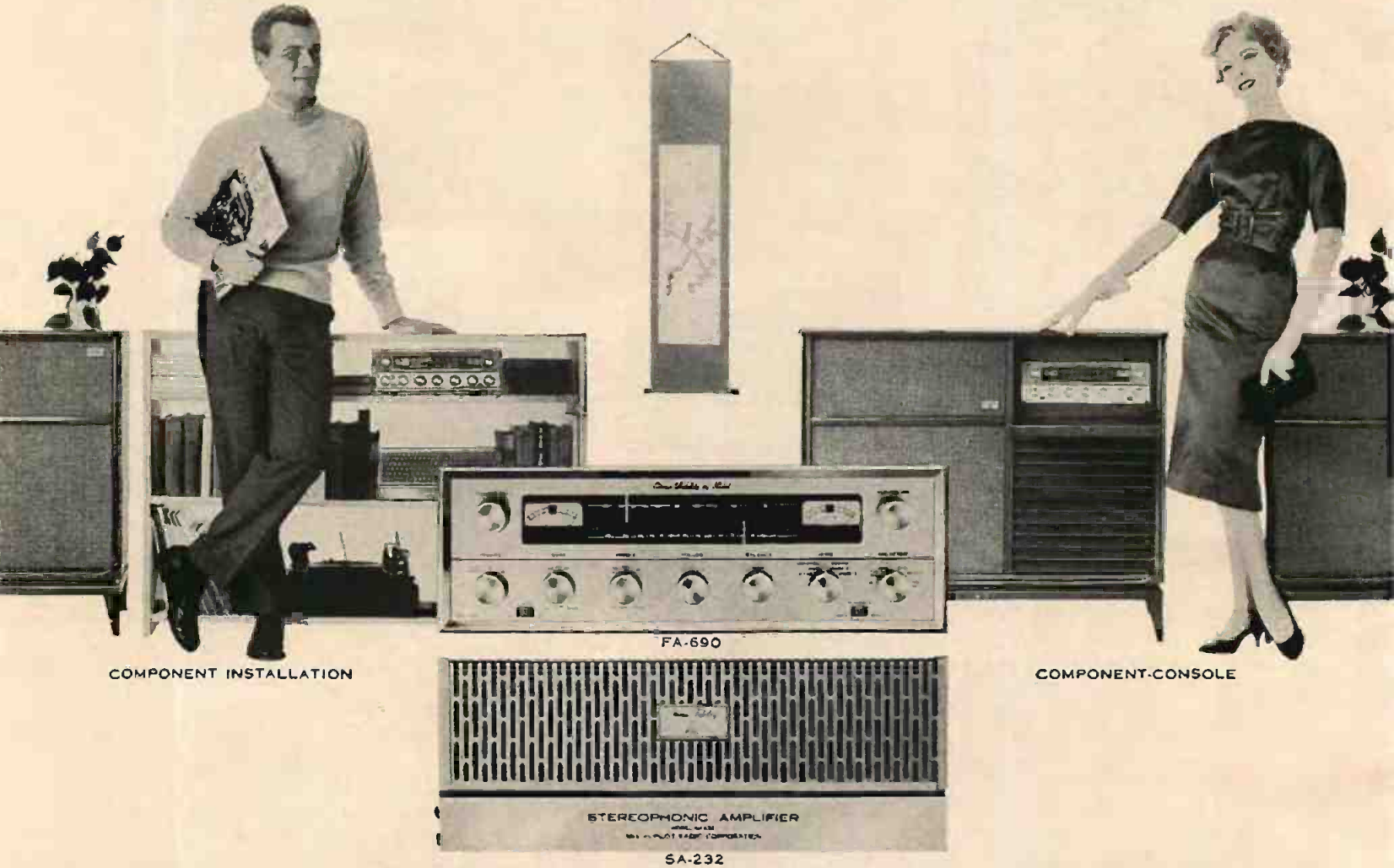
Could you tell me if there is any place where I can obtain plans for making speaker enclosures of different styles and sizes, to accommodate one, two, or three speakers? I am not particularly interested in the plans put out by speaker manufacturers, for they are usually interested in presenting plans which will accommodate their speakers only. I understand that it is important to a degree to have the enclosure made to volume specifications, if at all possible.

Edward A. Bartel  
Milwaukee, Wis.

*You cannot simply construct a loudspeaker enclosure for any loudspeaker. The characteristics of the enclosure should be matched to those of the speaker, and failure to do so will result in poor bass performance and possibly poor middle-range performance too.*

*If you've decided on the speaker or speakers you wish to use, get your enclosure plans from the speaker manufacturer. If you have not chosen any specific speakers, you might do best to purchase an integrated system in which the speaker and enclosure are available as a single matched unit.*

assures the true quality of living music through the use of authentic components



COMPONENT INSTALLATION

COMPONENT-CONSOLE

# STEREO FIDELITY

by



If you are like most audio enthusiasts, the pleasure you derive from your music system, or share with friends and family, means a great deal to you. Your perception is critical, and you can accept no compromise with quality.

Consequently, your plans for stereo will involve the use of high quality stereophonic components. For you know that only through components can you fully enjoy the thrilling quality of stereo and the enhanced performance which good stereo equipment also provides for your monophonic records.

**COMPONENT INSTALLATION**—In selecting your components, you will discover in Pilot stereophonic components the very qualities which led you to components in the first place: brilliant engineering, meticulous design—performance that will gratify your most critical demands. And the styling you will find equally satisfying: graceful proportions, simple lines, the judicious use of gold in the escutcheons, contrasted with the rich vinyl black of the enclosures.

There are nine Pilot components which form the basis for several superb stereophonic systems. Illustration shows the FA-690 FM-AM Stereo Tuner with built-in Pre-amplifier, \$269.50; and the SA-232 Basic Stereo Amplifier with total dual-channel output of 40 watts (80 watts peak), \$89.50—both units complete with enclosures.

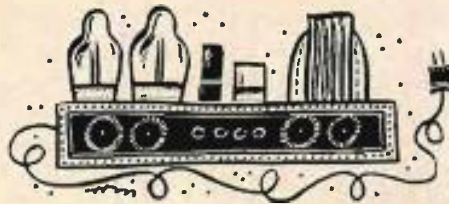
**CONSOLE CABINET**—This may represent the preference of your family or the decor requirements of your home. Does it mean that you must sacrifice the quality, the fidelity, the performance of components which mean so much to you? By no means!

Pilot engineering has combined the quality of components with the beauty and convenience of the console. Every Pilot stereophonic console is a complete system of authentic, identifiable components—the very same used in custom installations. The Pilot 1090, for example, utilizes the FA-690 Stereo Tuner Preamp and the SA-232 Stereo Amplifier. In addition, it includes a Garrard Stereo Changer and a Pickering stereo magnetic diamond cartridge.

Also built into the 1090 is a 4-way, 5-speaker system, acoustically identical to the companion 190 matching stereo speaker system shown alongside. There are eight Pilot stereophonic consoles to serve every need. The model 1090 in mahogany, \$750; in walnut, \$760. Model 190 companion speaker in mahogany, \$189.50; in walnut, \$199.50. Prices slightly higher in West.

For complete details see your Pilot dealer or write: Pilot Radio Corporation, 37-02 36th Street, Long Island City 1, New York.

electronics manufacturer for over 39 years



# The How and Why of Watts

by J. Gordon Holt

*How much amplifier power should you have for best results with your speaker-system/listening-room combination, and what is the minimum you can get by with? The difference may be substantial.*

ANYONE who has watched musicians in action will have observed that instrumental playing is pretty strenuous exercise. Thinking of the total effort expended by an orchestra playing *fff*, we can begin to understand why an amplifier, which must produce from a loudspeaker the sound of a full orchestra, has to be able to deliver considerable electrical power to the speaker.

But when we come to the point of specifying precisely how much power is needed, we are likely to find ourselves in a state of confusion. The intensity of a sound can be measured, and thus divorced from personal opinion, by means of a sound-level meter. Electrical power can also be measured, on a wattmeter. But, although there are theories galore about the correlation between objective measurements and human hearing, no one has yet found any way of measuring a person's subjective reactions to anything as complex as a musical tone. Consequently, engineering techniques can suggest—but they cannot establish—the requisite minimum amount of amplifier power.

A power amplifier fed by a small voltage produces a large amount of power. As its input voltage is increased, its power output continues to rise until it reaches a point at which the amplifier is delivering all the power it can. This sets the amplifier's power output capability; any attempt to get more power from it (by feeding it more input voltage) will simply overload it, causing extreme distortion of the signal passing through it. If this distortion is to be avoided, it is essential that the amplifier have enough reserve power

that it will never be driven to overload under normal listening conditions.

In theory, it should be possible to establish with precision the amount of power necessary to meet this need, by measuring the volume of orchestral sound in a concert hall (on the sound-level meter), and then finding out how much amplifier power is needed to generate the same amount of loudness in the home. It isn't all that simple, though, for sundry reasons.

To begin with, the loudness of a musical sound in a concert hall diminishes as we move ourselves (or our recording microphone, or our sound-level meter) away from the orchestra. To the conductor, a full fortissimo sounds almost as loud as a crew of riveters building a boiler in a tile bathroom. Yet the same sound, heard from a first-balcony seat, may scarcely be able to drown out the whispered conversation in the seats behind you. A recording that was closely microphoned (to give the illusion of a front-row vantage point) will sound most convincing played at very high volume, whereas a distantly miked recording, or a recording of a small chamber-music ensemble, will sound most convincing at a much lower playback level. Since there is no "standard" microphone distance, there can be no "proper" location for a sound-level meter, and no single "correct" playback volume. Consequently, there isn't any absolute minimum amplifier power requirement.

High-fidelity enthusiasts in general are notorious for playing their systems at ear-shattering volume, but there is at least one valid reason for this. In a conventional monophonic system, ev-

erything seems to be coming from a virtual hole in the wall. While this may lend realism to reproductions of solo performers, its effectiveness diminishes as the size of the original performing group increases. A second loudspeaker placed to one side of the main system can help to offset this constriction, but even the largest and best monophonic systems are unable to convey all the impact and impression of great size that is so much a part of choral and dramatic orchestral music. The monophonic medium itself limits the breadth of reproduced sound, and one way of offsetting this loss to some extent is to reproduce grandiose music louder than life; that is, play it in the home at a volume level *higher* than would be measured on the sound-level meter in a good concert hall seat. Obviously, the power requirement needed to do this will be greater than would be expected purely on the basis of sound-level meter investigations.

It is commonly believed that if a certain amplifier power is needed for monophonic reproduction, two amplifiers of half that power will be equally adequate for stereo. Subjectively, however, the total power requirement for stereo is actually *lower* than that for monophonic listening of equivalent quality. It doesn't pay to take too much advantage of this generality, because there is an important distinction between the amount of power that is *needed* to avoid overload on peaks, and the amount that must be available for maximum sonic quality. These two criteria yield substantially different answers.

An amplifier's maximum power output can be rated in several ways: for

maximum power output without regard for distortion, power output for a given amount of harmonic distortion, or power output for a given amount of intermodulation distortion.

While an absolute power rating can give an impressive-looking specification, it is of dubious value to the catalogue reader. An amplifier rated at "30 watts with negligible distortion," or just "Power output: a full 30 watts!" may put out 30 watts cleanly or it may distort audibly at levels from 20 watts up.

Power specifications that are related to distortion will look less impressive, but they are much more indicative of performance. Power-versus-distortion specifications may read "30 watts at 1% harmonic distortion," or "30 watts at 1% (or 2%) intermodulation (1M) distortion." Since there is a very approximate 4-to-1 relationship between measured intermodulation distortion and harmonic distortion, the first specification may be interpreted as meaning 30 watts at approximately 4% IM distortion. A power specification related to an unidentified type of distortion (such as "30 watts at 2% distortion") is almost invariably a harmonic distortion rating.

In most amplifiers, distortion decreases as the power output is reduced, down to a point. At the maximum-power limit, distortion is quite high, and increases very rapidly with a small increase in the driving voltage going into the amplifier. Below the overload point, distortion diminishes rapidly, and as power output is further reduced, the reduction in distortion starts to level off. Finally, by the time the amplifier is running at a small fraction of its maximum output power, its distortion decreases very little as the power level is decreased still further. This minimum-distortion (or residual-distortion) point is reached in most amplifiers at and below about  $\frac{1}{10}$  of the maximum rated power output. Consequently there would seem to be no good reason why a 50-watt amplifier operated at an average level of, say,  $\frac{1}{2}$  watt, should sound any better than an otherwise-identical 10-watt amplifier operating at the same average level. But perhaps because something is wrong with the theory, or perhaps because typical 10-watt amplifiers are not "otherwise identical" to the best 50-watters, there are many who insist that the best-sounding amplifiers are high-power units. When it is observed, this superiority is mainly in the low-frequency range, although some high-power proponents claim that the entire audible range becomes clearer.

In other words, the fact that 40 or more watts of power may never be needed in the home does not neces-

sarily mean that a high-power amplifier would be wasted if sonic excellence is more important than budgetary considerations. The average speaker system is safe (under normal circumstances) when connected to an amplifier whose power rating is up to two times that of the speaker, but greater disparities in favor of the amplifier are not recommended unless some provision is taken to protect the speaker (by fusing it, for instance).

The question of amplifier power cannot be separated from the question of maximum speaker power output. There may be some advantage in using an overpowered amplifier, but an inadequate speaker will never provide clean crescendos, no matter how good the amplifier is, and it may be irreparably damaged if called upon to fill a room with more volume than it can cope with.

Sound-level meter investigations (which appear to be valid for stereophonic reproduction) show that the full peak volume of an orchestra as heard from a close seat can be reproduced in an 8'-by-12'-by-15-foot room by an acoustic power of about  $\frac{1}{4}$  watt. In a room having three times this volume (cubic content, that is), three times the power will be required to fill it with the requisite playback volume. If the room is highly absorptive of



sound (because of numerous over-stuffed chairs, heavy drapes, carpets, and open doorways), the power requirement is further increased, perhaps by as much as a factor of two.

Note that these figures are for acoustic power. Loudspeakers convert electrical power into acoustic power; while they may on occasion do this with some proficiency, they do it with widely varying efficiency. The most efficient systems (some fully horn-loaded ones) are only about 50% efficient, which is to say that they will need

$\frac{1}{2}$  watt of electrical power to produce  $\frac{1}{4}$  watt of output. The least efficient system (one of the acoustic suspension types) is less than 1% efficient, and consequently will need 25 watts of amplifier power to generate the same  $\frac{1}{4}$  watt of acoustic power. Thus, a loudspeaker's suitability for use in a room of a given size depends upon whether it is able to handle enough electrical power to produce the requisite maximum acoustic power in that room.

For example, a speaker for use in an average-size listening room (10 by 15 by 30 feet) should be able to produce cleanly about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an acoustic watt. A suitable speaker of 1% efficiency would have to have a minimum power-handling capability of 75 watts; since we are discussing stereo, this would mean a pair of speakers rated at 38 watts or more apiece. (These, remember, are maximum speaker power ratings and are not to be confused with manufacturers' ratings of the power needed to drive the speakers properly.) The amplifiers for each speaker may then be rated up to 75 watts apiece (up to twice the speaker rating). A 50%-efficient speaker system, on the other hand, will need only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  watts to drive from it the nominal  $\frac{1}{4}$  acoustic watt, but since it would be extremely risky to connect even a 10-watt amplifier to such a speaker system most are designed to handle at least 5 watts of amplifier power. The choice of speaker power here will depend upon the ultimate sound quality that is desired, and 25 watts is considered about average for use in moderate-size rooms with high-quality amplifiers.

These are stereo power ratings. For monophonic reproduction of maximum quality, the power figures arrived at by the above computations should be increased by a factor of approximately  $1\frac{1}{2}$ .

It should not be assumed from the foregoing that a high-power amplifier is always better than a low-power one simply because it has more power. Some sound worse than low-power amplifiers because of inferior stability or distortion, or because of inability to produce the full rated power at frequency extremes.

For less hypercritical listeners, moderately efficient speakers (of 6% efficiency or better) may be driven satisfactorily with amplifiers of as little as 10 watts rated power. There is likely to be a gradual deterioration of sonic quality as amplifier power is lowered, partly because of the imponderables mentioned earlier. But 10 watts is the absolute minimum power that should be used in any high-fidelity system, if for no other reason than that the distortion and frequency response of most lower-powered units are not up to par.



for Ultimate Fidelity

# 60 WATTS

by **SHERWOOD\***

Over 200 record companies, each with its own impresario guiding variations in recording method and technique; but only one amplifier with the flexibility and capacity to give you a uniformly high plateau of reproduction:

Sherwood's new 60-watt amplifier!



\*outstanding honors bestowed, unsolicited, by most recognized testing organizations.

The Model S-1060 features six 7189 push-pull output tubes; 60 watts at 1½% IM distortion; silicon rectifier power supply; "tube-saver" delay relay; DC preamp filaments. The most compact 60-watter ever, it consumes less power (only 110 watts) than many 20 watt amplifiers. Eleven front panel controls include presence rise, tape playback, scratch and rumble filters, 12 db/octave, tape monitor, etc.

Model S-1060—60 Watt Amplifier, Fair Trade \$149.50; Model S-1000 II—36 Watt Amplifier, Fair Trade \$109.50; either unit readily adapted to Stereo by addition of Model S-4000—20 Watt "Add-Stereo" Amplifier, Fair Trade \$109.50.

For complete specifications, write Dept. H-12

## SHERWOOD

ELECTRONIC LABORATORIES, INC.  
4300 N. California Ave., Chicago 18, Illinois

The "complete high fidelity home music center"—monophonic or stereophonic.



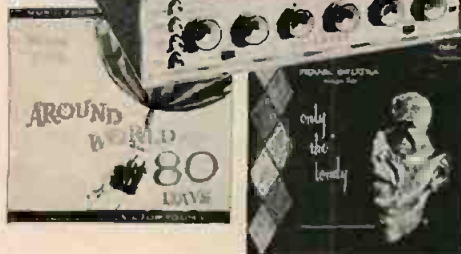
for Ultimate Fidelity

# STEREO

by **SHERWOOD\***



\*outstanding honors bestowed, unsolicited, by most recognized testing organizations.



If your choice is stereo, Sherwood offers The Ultimate—a dual 20+20 watt amplifier for stereo "in a single package"; or a 20 watt "add-stereo" amplifier.

Basic coordinated controls for either stereo or monaural operation include 10 two-channel controls, stereo normal/reverse switch, phase inversion switch, and dual amplifier monaural operation with either set of input sources. The five modes of operation (stereo, stereo-reversed, monaural 1, monaural 2, monaural 1+2) are selected by the function switch which also operates a corresponding group of indicator lights to identify the selected operating mode.

Model S-4000—20 Watt "Add-Stereo" Amplifier, Fair Trade \$109.50

Model S-5000—20+20 Watt Stereo Dual Amplifier, Fair Trade \$189.50

For complete specifications write Dept. H-12

## SHERWOOD

ELECTRONIC LABORATORIES, INC.  
4300 N. California Ave., Chicago 18, Illinois

The "complete high fidelity home music center"—monophonic or stereophonic.



## WHAT'S THE MEANING OF AN AWARD?



Those illustrated above mean everything!

But some awards mean little—only that the manufacturer shook hands in the right place, or paid the right price.

Fortunately, for the audiophile, this sort of meaningless award "giving" has never been a part of the High Fidelity industry. Here, awards come the "hard way" for outstanding performance based on high technical standards.

Therefore, Sherwood is justly proud of its many outstanding honors bestowed, unsolicited, by most recognized testing organizations, plus many other special recognitions.

For the American Pavilion at the Brussels World's Fair, the only tuner selected was the Sherwood S-2000.

Undoubtedly the most commonly displayed seal in the United States is the "UL" of Underwriters Laboratories—commonplace except in the Hi-Fi field! Only Sherwood and two other popular Hi-Fi tuners bear this seal of acceptance—your guarantee of safety from the hazards of shock and fire.

And when the editors of Hi-Fi Music at Home created their performance commendation seal, Sherwood's S-2000 AM-FM tuner was the first to be chosen for the honor.

Wyeth Engineering, Inc. just one of many, many testing laboratories (one in particular must remain anonymous) recently tested Sherwood tuners and certified their adherence to F.C.C. and I.R.E. standards of conducted and/or radiated interference.

Just ask High Fidelity dealers—you'll find a majority recommend Sherwood as "the best buy" in a complete High Fidelity Home Music Center.

Edward S. Miller  
General Manager

new deluxe  
manual player 4HF



famous 4-speed  
changers RC88  
& RC98

## Let us Show You Which Garrard Is Best for Your Record Playing



turntable 301



economy  
manual player T II



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One of his most valuable inventions was not filed with the patent office, a mistake in judgment which wasn't characteristic of him. This was the idea of vibrating the phonograph needle in a magnetic field to generate electrical impulses. He first used the magnetic pickup in 1916.

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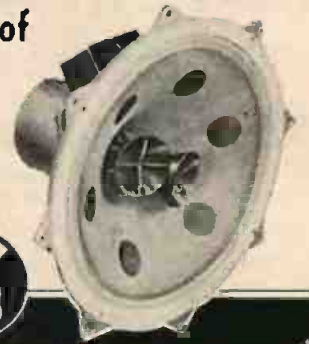
First to patent a system for recording sound on film, in 1904. Called phonofilm, it was developed into a practical system during the 1920s.

First disc jockey. In 1907, he broadcast the *William Tell* Overture from his laboratory in the old Parker Building, New York City, using an arc transmitter. At that time he suggested the idea of radio broadcasting.

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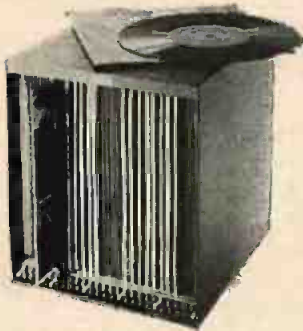
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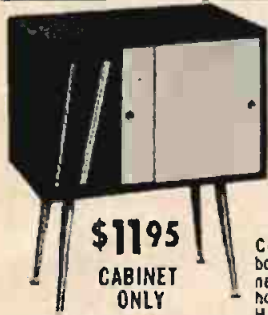
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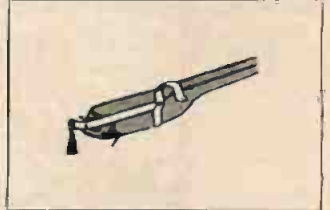
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Continued from page 141

pressure. The simplest devices do nothing more than hold the tape in alignment, and provide cutting guides for the razor blade used to slice the tape and trim off the excess splicing tape. These splicers require a certain degree of manual dexterity, but the method by which they hold tape can have a great deal to do with their ease of operation. Some splicers use pressure pads to hold tape firmly in a channel that is quite a bit wider than the tape itself. This works fine as long as both ends of the tape which are to be spliced are put in the splicer together, because the same razor stroke cuts both tapes at the same place and leaves their ends accurately aligned for splicing. However, if it should be necessary to lift one or both of the pressure pads (to use the splicer for cutting another section of tape, for instance), the tape ends will shift and it will be difficult to line them up again accurately. For this reason it is advisable to select a splicer whose aligning channel is exactly the same width as, or even slightly narrower than, the tape itself. This will allow a cut length of tape to be lifted from the splicer if need be and then replaced at a later time, in perfect alignment with the other length of tape on the splicer.

The more ambitious splicers, such as the Alonge and most of the Robins Gibson Girl types, require less dexterity of the user. But they are often a little less versatile for the reason mentioned above. Choose a splicer on the basis of your own evaluation of your ability to manipulate small objects, but try to get one with a fairly long and snug-fitting guide channel.

The Tech Labs EdiTall block has many features professionals consider to be important. It has no moving parts, no cutting edges to wear out, and a pretty good potential for unlimited life in normal use. It consists of a long, narrow block of cast aluminum with a shallow polished channel slightly narrower than the tape surface. The edges of the channel are undercut by a small fraction of an inch, so that a length of tape pressed into it will be gripped by the edges of the channel and will remain firmly in place. Two narrow grooves cut across the channel serve as guides for the cutter (a razor blade), and provide for a right-angle cut (for instrumentation recordings such as Sputnik transmissions) or the 45-degree cut that is pretty much standard for sound recordings. The main advantage of this friction-grip arrangement is that it enables tapes to be aligned with ex-

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treme accuracy, longitudinally and at the splicing point, and that either length of tape can be slid back and forth until it butts snugly against the end of the other tape. A secondary advantage of this splicer is that its length enables the recordist to use a displaced marker system for accurate editing of tapes on a recorder whose heads are not readily accessible.

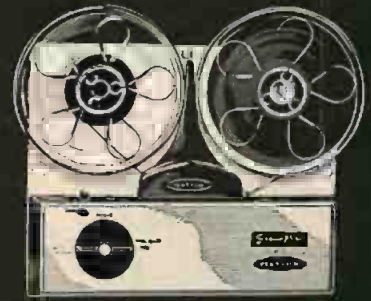
The standard technique for editing tapes is to expose the playback head (by removing the head cover, for instance), locate exactly the desired cutting spot by listening to the tape as it is shuttled back and forth across the head by hand, use a bright-red grease pencil to mark the tape where it lies across the pole piece, and cut the tape (on the splicing jig) at the marked point. The displaced marker technique permits the same procedure to be followed without uncovering the heads.

To establish the marker, take a sewing needle and magnetize it by wiping it several times across the magnet on a loudspeaker. Now put a blank reel of tape on the supply spindle, unwind about three feet of tape, lay it oxide-side up on a flat surface, draw two closely spaced grease-pencil lines across the tape, and lay a ruler across the tape at right angles to it, with its ruling edge midway between the pencil marks. Using a single, even stroke, run the pointed end of the needle along the ruler firmly but lightly across the tape. Now thread the tape through the head slot, set the recorder for **PLAYBACK**, and turn its volume up to normal. Shuttle the tape back and forth past the heads by hand; a loud click will be heard when the magnetic line passes across the playback head pole pieces. Using progressively shorter shuttling motions, locate the magnetic line directly on the head gap, and then put a grease-pencil mark on the tape, either right where it comes out of the head cover, or where it passes over a guide on its way to the takeup reel. Now lift the tape off the recorder, lay it on the splicer so that the two grease-pencil marks are centered on the diagonal cutting groove, and make a permanent mark on the splicing block next to the displaced marker corresponding to the edge of the head assembly or the tape guide.

Then when editing tapes, instead of putting the grease-pencil mark on the tape right at the head pole-piece gap and aligning this with the angled cutting slot on the splicer for cutting, the grease-pencil mark on the tape will go on the displaced marker spot to one side of the head assembly and will be lined up with the corresponding mark on the splicing block when the tape is to be cut.

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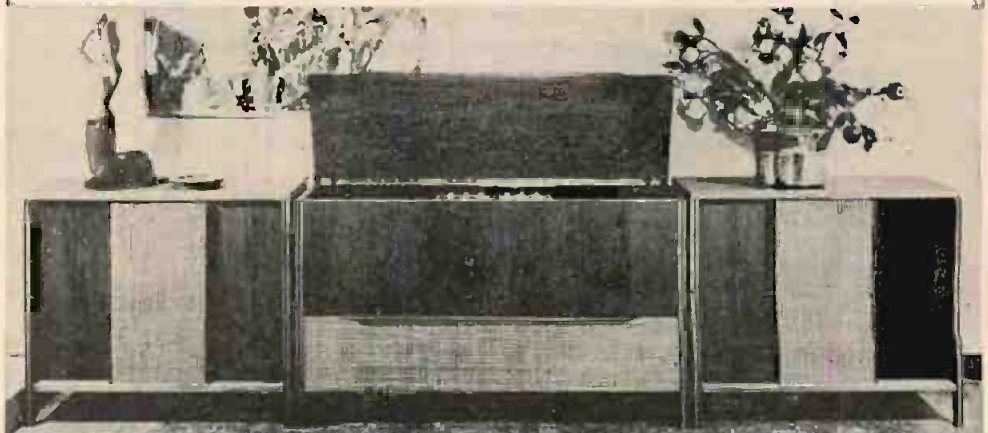
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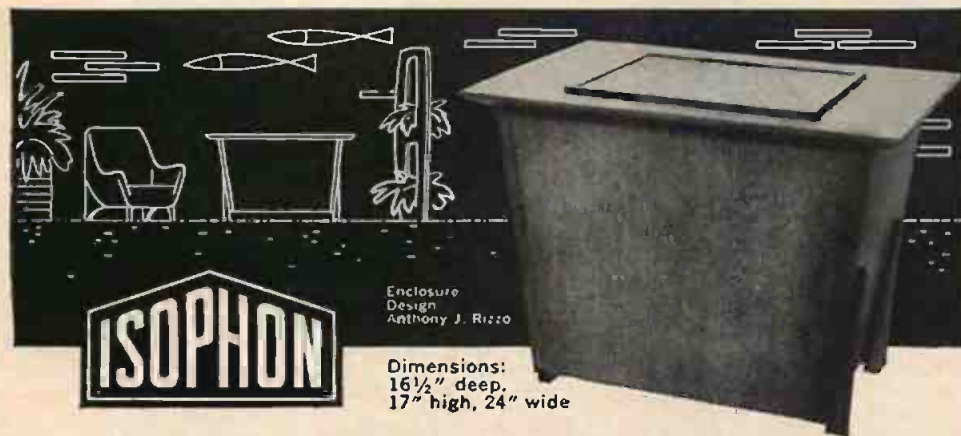


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ACRO KIT REPORT

Continued from page 143

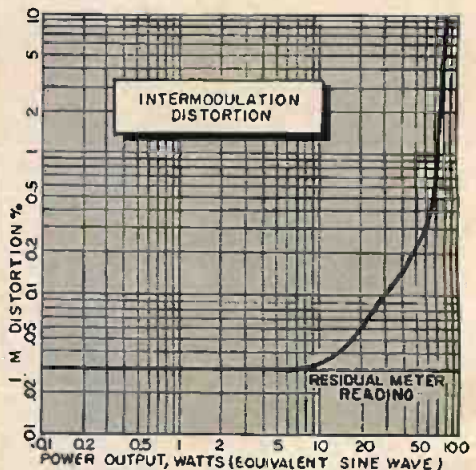
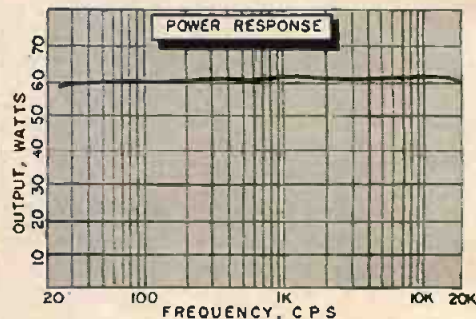
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## PUCCINI

Continued from page 37

orchestral accompaniment that sets scenes, characterizes individuals, and contributes vividly to the dramatic development of the story. Puccini was an expert in piquant, yet simple and lucid orchestration, although, like Verdi, he was also capable of some of the most unconscionable gaucheries. One can criticize his too frequent paralleling of the vocal line with strings, as well as the prosaic—not to say unartful—way he has of introducing local color, as in *Madama Butterfly*, *Girl of the Golden West*, and *Turandot*, by means of flat-footed quotation of folk material. The crass appearance of *The Star-Spangled Banner* in *Madama Butterfly* is probably one of the most embarrassingly naïve things in opera, at least to American ears.

The sensational success of *Manon Lescaut* at Turin on February 1, 1893 landed Puccini securely at the head of all Italian opera composers and earned him the unwelcome laurel "Successor to Verdi," who was not yet dead. Nobody seemed disturbed in the least by the fact that this obvious rival to Massenet's very popular *Manon* (both operas based upon the novel of Abbé Prévost)—having been put together with shreds and patches by an incredible succession of writers beginning with Leoncavallo and proceeding, disagreement by disagreement, through Praga, Oliva, Giacosa, Illica, and even Ricordi himself—was dramatically much less effective than its French predecessor. The music was the thing. People went home whistling the tunes, and in that kind of competition Massenet was no match for Puccini. *Manon Lescaut* soon was a favorite throughout the operatic world, though it cannot be said, even now, to have displaced *Manon* in the estimation of the *cognoscenti*.

Having hit his stride, Puccini went on to a series of triumphs with *La Bohème*, in 1896; *Tosca*, in 1900; *Madama Butterfly*, in 1904; and *Girl of the Golden West*, in 1910. These were not all unqualified successes at first, and each was accompanied by the now habitual uncertainties about the book, wrangles with the librettists, and interminable rewritings of the text. Librettists Giacosa and Illica were the luckless, if willing, victims in the first three operas, Civinini and Zangarini in the fourth.

*La Bohème*, which had its first performance under Toscanini at Turin, was coolly received by an Italian public unaccustomed to such earthy sub-

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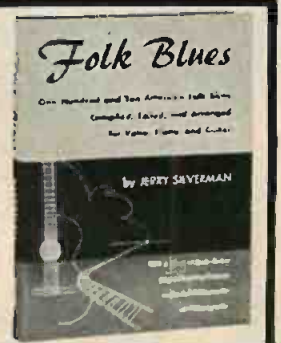
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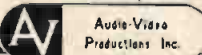


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**PUCCINI**

Continued from preceding page

jects as the immorality of Parisian Bohemians as envisaged by Murger in his *Scènes de la Vie de Bohème*. Moreover, Puccini was treading on the toes of Leoncavallo, who, he knew, was also composing an opera on the same subject. Leoncavallo's *Bohème*, though a work of some merit, was quickly effaced by Puccini's, and the incident led to a break between the two old friends. Leoncavallo's complaint was a familiar one. He had been robbed.

Another rather odoriferous trick—this time with the connivance of Ricordi—was put over on another fellow-composer, Alberto Franchetti, in the case of *Tosca*. Puccini had thought vaguely about the famous Sardou play as long ago as when he was composing *Edgar*, but had done nothing about it. However, when he heard that Franchetti was under contract to do it for Ricordi, his old enthusiasm returned, and he conspired with Ricordi to talk Franchetti out of the idea. Ricordi was quick to see that a *Tosca* by Puccini would be a far more valuable property than a *Tosca* by Franchetti; so, assisted by Illica, who knew on which side his bread was buttered, he persuaded the unsuspecting Franchetti that, because of the malevolence and wantonness in which the plot was saturated, the opera would have no chance of success. The same day, or the next day, Puccini signed his *Tosca* contract with Ricordi.

Because of its Roman setting, the opera had its premiere in Rome. It was a momentous occasion, attended by the Queen of Italy and a throng of Roman sophisticates, most of whom were prepared to look down their noses at this upstart composer from the northern provinces. Trouble was expected, and indeed the curtain did have to be lowered almost immediately after it had risen because of shouts and tumult in the audience. But the disturbance turned out to be nothing more serious than an altercation between standees and late-comers who were unable to find their seats in the darkness. The reception by the press was thoroughly mixed. Some critics did object to the unseemliness of the book, but audiences didn't. Like *La Bohème*, *Tosca* soon endeared itself to the public and its popularity has never flagged.

The initial calamity of *Madama Butterfly* already has been mentioned. It was a bad-luck opera for Puccini from the beginning, although the composition itself had gone unusually smoothly. In the midst of it, one night on a foggy road he had an accident in which he was pinned beneath his car



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and almost asphyxiated. His only real injury was a broken leg, but during the very slow healing process it was discovered that he had diabetes.

The succeeding operas came along at Puccini's usual leisurely pace (leisurely, not because of indolence, but because of the eternal libretto problem) anywhere from four to seven years apart. *Girl of the Golden West* which, though a travesty to most Americans, still is taken seriously in Europe, had an ostentatious premiere at the Metropolitan in 1910 with the composer present. *La Rondine*, which started out to be a waltz-operetta in the Viennese manner but ended as a conventional—and thoroughly second-rate—opera, was given at Monte Carlo in 1917. The three one-act operas—*Il Tabarro*, *Suor Angelica*, and *Gianni Schicchi*—had been in process for several years and were brought out at the Metropolitan hard on the heels of *La Rondine*. One of these short works—*Gianni Schicchi*—is a brilliant jewel of the Puccini collection. It is the only opera in which he fully developed a central male character, and it is his only comedy. (His extraordinary success here with humor makes one wonder why he did not write more in that vein.)

The last work, *Turandot*, Puccini himself never finished. He approached its composition with the doubts and fears of a neophyte. It was to be his finest work. It embodied, for him, new conceptions of operatic writing and he was using for the first time some latter-day musical innovations, especially in the harmonic construction. He agonized over it. It was good; it was bad. It was going well; it was going wretchedly. He could and he couldn't continue. But he was fascinated, and in the end he could not escape the wiles of the Princess Turandot. When the opera was nearly finished, Toscanini reassured him with a pat on the back and the words, "It is a fine work."

But Puccini was sick. Severe pains in the chest had become severer pains in the throat. The diagnosis, unbeknown to him, was cancer. He went to Brussels, accompanied by his son, for radium treatments. These were unavailing and a long, exhausting surgical operation, with only a local anesthetic, was resorted to. The operation apparently was successful, but the strain proved too much. He had a heart attack a few days later, and early on the morning of November 29, 1924, he died.

The formidable and thankless task of completing *Turandot* fell to Puccini's friend and an able composer, Franco Alfano. Unhappily for him, the

*Continued on next page*

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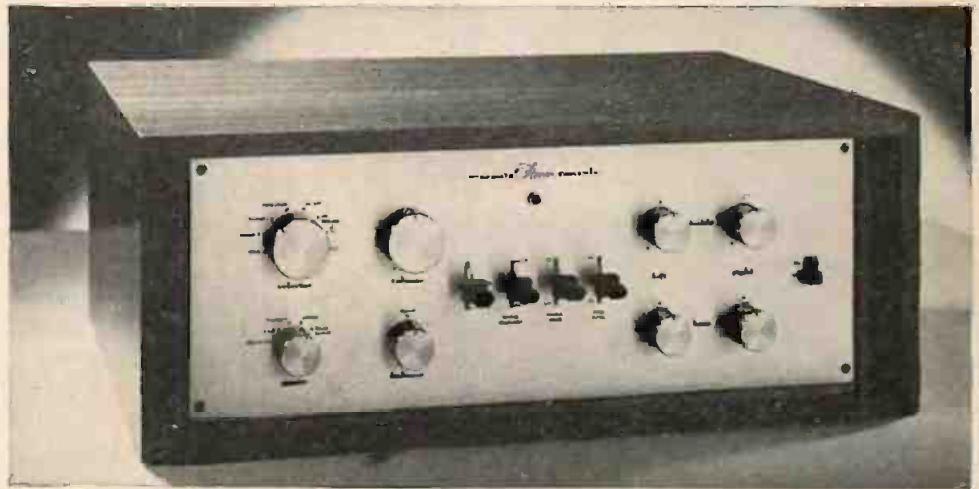
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Are tape recorder manufacturers ready for the stereo boom? How much has stereo impressed the people who make recorders? Probably the best source for this information is the authoritative Tape Recorder Directory, now in its tenth year. The latest issue lists over 300 models. Of the basic models, 113 are completely monaural, 39 have stereo playback, and 29 have stereo record and playback. In other words, about a third of them have some stereo feature. The 1955 Tape Recorder Directory listed only six stereo machines out of 110 total—that's how far stereo tape recorders have come in three years.

Another clue to the trend is provided by a leading tape recorder manufacturer who has recently been selling three stereo machines to every 2 monaural units. A year ago the ratio was reversed. And 2 years ago, the company didn't even make a stereo machine.

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## PUCCINI

Continued from preceding page

assignment included writing the final duet between Turandot and Calaf, by which Puccini had set great store and which he had intended to be the grand culmination—a kind of apotheosis—of the entire work. Alfano did what he could in an intelligent and musicianly manner. But there can be no doubt that, had Puccini written them himself, the duet and the conclusion of the opera would have been quite a different matter.

The first performance of *Turandot* did not take place until April 1926, at La Scala. Toscanini conducted, and at the point in the third act where Calaf appeals to Turandot to descend from her icy realm to the warmth of earth and human love, he stopped, turned to the audience and said, "Here the Maestro laid down his pen." It was a dramatic moment in the best Puccini tradition.

*Turandot* bears many evidences of being a pivotal, prophetic composition for its composer. He was on the threshold, it seems, of a whole new creative period, such as Verdi entered with *Otello* and *Falstaff*. He was vigorous, keen, and alert to what was going on around him in the musical world of the twentieth century. At sixty-six, the mighty hunter fell prey to a mightier one, all too soon.

## STUTTGART VOLUNTEERS

Continued from page 46

personnel of the orchestra is constantly changing. Even artists have to eat. The musicians' pay is sometimes several months overdue, and on repeated occasions the men declare at certain time that there will be no performance unless they get a small advance against their back wages. Usually Münchinger empties his own pockets. Further, orchestra members from outside the city have to get an official permit to live in Stuttgart. Once having gotten it, they often aren't able to use it: there just aren't enough miserably dingy rooms to go around. (If all the players who ever joined Münchinger had stayed with him, his present fifteen-member group would number over seventy.) Hardly half of the orchestra have any previous ensemble or concert experience. By the time they are polished into a cohesive group, they—naturally—leave for some employment which will at least provide bread, if not cake. And if concerts

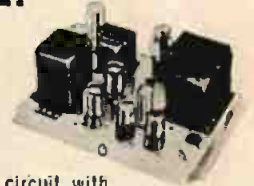
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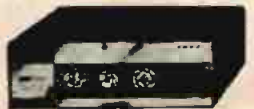
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aren't canceled by reason of the sudden departure of the performers, they are because there is no fuel to heat the concert hall.

Yet the reputation of the orchestra continues to grow. In a way entirely too unspectacular for the connoisseur of success stories, Münchinger shapes his offspring's career—by patience, perseverance, plain hard work, and the absolute conviction of the rightness of his approach. First, he practices with



each individual musician, then, after this painstaking preparation, with individual groups: first violins alone, second violins alone, violas, cellos. Only after each group of instrumentalists achieves near-perfection does he call the first rehearsal of the whole ensemble. For the performance of Honegger's Second Symphony they practice three weeks, six hours a day; preparing an orchestral arrangement of Bach's *Art of Fugue*, they spend a full month in study and rehearsal. The technical precision and interpretative insight of Münchinger's men begin to attract well-known German soloists. Soon foreign artists follow suit—first the Americans, engaged through the cooperation of the military authorities; later, the French. In 1947 representatives of the municipal and state governments, prominent Stuttgart residents, and Münchinger himself form a committee to manage the orchestra and its finances. A small government subsidy is furnished, but it's far from adequate. It becomes clear that in order to earn its keep the orchestra will have to travel farther than to adjacent hamlets. The time is at hand for a bona fide concert tour.

This, remember, is in the Germany of 1947. Rail transportation for sixteen people (musicians encumbered with instruments as well as ordinary gear) is a feat for a quartermaster corps. To get a bus involves weeks of correspondence with officials of one ministry after another in an effort to procure the official document called "Transportation Order." Then comes the struggle for gas, oil, tires—the same nerve-racking procedure all over again. Somehow the tour comes off. The obscure Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra is recognized as a national cultural possession of major significance.

Later, the triumph of the German tour is repeated abroad. The orchestra appears prominently every year at all

*Continued on next page*



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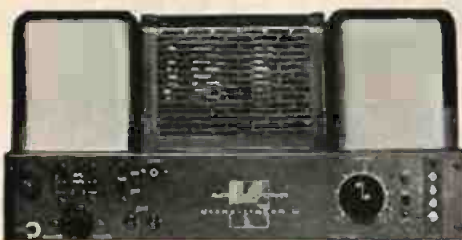
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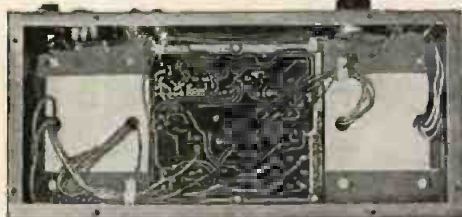
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## STUTTGART VOLUNTEERS

*continued from preceding page*

the great European music festivals—Edinburgh, Salzburg, Lucerne, Granada, Menton, Strasbourg, Besançon. Royalty makes its wishes known, and they play command performances for Emperor Hirohito in Tokyo, for Pope Pius XII in the Vatican. In 1953 they give thirty concerts in South America; 1954 marks their first great tour of the United States and Canada. Some seventeen hundred concerts, in thirty countries in three hundred and fifty



cities—a total to stagger even a script writer. There are recording sessions, too: about thirty discs for English Decca (London Records in this country) since 1949.

Other orchestral associations want to avail themselves of Münchinger's magic touch. He is retained as guest conductor by the Vienna Philharmonic, the Orchestre National and the Orchestre du Conservatoire de Paris, the Suisse Romande, the Orchestre National de Belgique, among others. With some of these, too, he makes recordings. Speculation grows as to whether the conductor may be separated from the Stuttgart unit he has created with so much labor and sacrifice. Now orchestra managements on both sides of the Atlantic are lying in wait. On January 3 of this coming year Münchinger and his fifteen Stuttgarters will arrive in New York for their second tour of the United States and Canada, with thirty-six concerts scheduled. It is certain that attempts will be made to lure him from his first allegiance. What he will do, everyone wonders; nobody knows.

My guess is that Olga Münchinger (née Rockenhaeuser) will be instrumental in any decision that's made. Mrs. Münchinger is a pretty, vivacious woman who's also possessed of a good deal of solid common sense. A professional singer, she and her future husband met in Münchinger's first Stuttgart performance of the *St. Matthew Passion*, in which she carried the solo part and sang the great violin aria "Have Mercy." (For a second time, but for different reasons, Karl Münch-

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inger develops a mysterious fever after a public performance of this oratorio!) Since their marriage in 1948, Mrs. Münchinger has managed the family finances and has, in general, been the indispensable "best friend and severest critic" to her artist-husband. On all his long concert tours she travels with him—as guide, mentor, and protector against all the incursions a public personality is heir to.

She is right to do so. Actually, Münchinger is not temperamentally suited for the starring part in a movie scenario. He is a shy person who avoids crowds and can't conceive of himself as the conquering hero. His unpretentious charm and good humor animate any small congenial group, but probably he's happiest when he's walking in the woods or skiing in the mountains. He adores birds; when he's at home he feeds hundreds every day in his garden and accompanies their chirping with his own whistling. Some of his friends maintain that he practices hard with the birds to make them sing perfectly.

This pastoral scene provides a last fade-out. The saga of the young man with a mission reaches a happy ending. It's only one chapter, though; as the old serials used to flash on the screen, "to be continued."

## WHAT ABOUT TAPE?

*Continued from page 131*

The conversion problem would be relatively simple, involving only the substitution of a new head and switch assembly in present machines. Selling price should be only two-thirds that of 7½-ips twin-track.

We believe that design study should be given to a 4-track 7½-ips system using tape on a standard reel.

And so to conclusions:

There are many reasons for listening carefully before leaping into stereo. The conversion will come gradually, as to microgroove, over a period of years.

We believe that the ordinary low-fi listener will retain discs, unless the wear problem proves annoying.

The almost ordinary low-fi listener, if bothered by ticks and pops, will consider four-track 3½-ips magazine tapes.

The serious listener will modify his turntable for stereo discs, for selections of ephemeral value. We believe that he will prefer 7½-ips tape for more significant material, in either two- or four-track version. Since he probably already has a large library of two-track tapes, he may want a dual 2/4 track machine.

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## BLUE NOTE

Continued from page 42

factors in keeping Blue Note on an even keel has been the fact that everything the company does is an uncompromising reflection of Lion's personal taste. He chooses musicians for his recording sessions because he likes them (musically) and because he thinks they will play together. His indifference as to whether the end product will sell might seem dangerously casual, if he were not able to point to a catalogue in which the percentage of steadily selling discs is unusually high.

The other prime element in the Blue Note success story has been Lion's insistence on being a jazz en-



thusiast rather than a recording company executive. In twenty years of recording, Lion has produced nothing but jazz.

"I prefer to concentrate on one thing and do it well rather than split myself up," he explains. "I did the best that I honestly could—and," he adds, "maybe by not worrying too much about all the commercial aspects."

Whether he has worried about the commercial aspects or not, Lion has found that jazz recording can be a very profitable investment if a label can be kept going for a few years. Although the original market for Lion's early modern jazz recordings was so slight that it would have discouraged anyone of lesser faith, the records he made in the middle and late Forties, featuring Monk, Howell, and Fats Navarro, still account for a substantial part of his current sales, and seem likely to keep on so doing for many years to come. A similar experience has been that of such worthy rival outfits as Prestige and Savoy. They have sought out new talent as eagerly as Blue Note, and with equally happy and enduring results.

Whether a jazz label holds strictly to jazz and a modest schedule of releases (Blue Note averages thirty-eight a year) or branches out furiously in all directions, one rule of thumb for survival enunciated by Alfred Lion applies to every jazz-based company that has been able to stay alive for a few years.

"It's not how many records you have in your catalogue," Lion says. "It's how many good ones."

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## HAVE CASKET

Continued from page 44

This job was a secret project carried out in the garage of a sympathetic friend. I never did find out how to reuse these baffles or even how they sounded. There must have been a security leak somewhere. After completion, but before installation, someone took an ax to them. I do not know whom to suspect, but my wife had a set of calluses. So I cannot really offer constructive advice on how to reuse a pair of acoustic balls.

Next, the two speakers were mounted in the wall—of the den. I did not find the results particularly impressive. More and different speakers might have made a difference, but I did not try them, being ready for the plunge into a real multiple speaker system with woofer and tweeter horns. Frankly, I cannot suggest any further use for holes in a wall. Mine cost me a new paneling job and some more brick.

With the full set of multiple speakers came horn loading. I followed someone else's plan for the bass horn but, determined to be creative, I calculated and built the tweeter horn on my own. Carving out a suitably exponential form on the lathe, I spun the horn out of sheet brass. This was fitted to a homemade driver. I had the driver plated to match the horn. You know the old craftsman's feeling: no one will see it, but I'll know it's there. Finally, both horns were joined with a proper crossover network.

Her Majesty's Grenadier Guards and *Pétrouchka* sounded fine, but the Debussy Quartet in G minor had a touch of *Light Cavalry Overture*. The touch was just too much, so the bugle had to go. It was replaced with a commercial (horror of horrors) tweeter made of plastic. It so happened that I left the old assembly lying on the floor, horn up, when a friend dropped in. Over a man's beer, he offered congratulations.

I asked what for.

"That's a fine den ornament. Where did you get it?"

"Get what?"

"That cuspidor."

I left it right there from then on. Fortunately, few of my friends chew tobacco.

This brings to an end my little history. I feel confident that it has been instructive. As anyone can see, it's just a little imagination that's needed to make sensible use of stray speaker enclosures that mark the hi-fi hobbyist's natural progress in the art.



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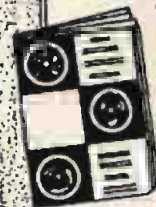
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LOUDSPEAKERS

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**CHRISTMAS TACTICS**

*Continued from page 39*

from one who, of necessity, has installed several stereo cartridges in monophonic tone arms, a very real boon is an arm outfitted with *two* separate sets of those skinny little wire leads. In terms of money, these cost from \$15 to about \$35. In terms of blood pressure, they add about two years to your life expectancy.

Connecting cable. Few of us ever have enough of this stuff. It can be bought by the foot or by the roll; and for those who explode after three hours of trying to flow solder into a tube the size of a hypodermic needle-tip it comes already attached to plugs, in various lengths. The price is just a few cents a foot, which makes it one of the best bargains in high fidelity. Be sure you order "Single Conductor Shielded Cable"; that's its proper name.

A soldering iron. This will come in handy when making up those connecting cables referred to above. Soldering irons now are made in sizes suitable for use on intricate devices like phono plugs, tube sockets, watches, hair dryers, and so on; and they're no budget breakers, either. Pencil-style irons cost slightly over a dollar, and tips (of

several sizes and shapes, which screw into position) cost about 50 cents. An assortment of tips would make an ideal stocking stuffer.

Tools. Even if you are the veriest tyro among high-fidelity listeners and are about as technically inclined as an untrained seal, you absolutely *cannot* put together or service a high-fidelity system without a screw driver. The huge red-handled job you use to repair screen doors and leaking sinks won't do, either. What you might really be tickled pink with on Christmas morn would be a set of jewelers' drivers of several sizes, ranging from tiny to medium. I bought a wonderful set on December 26 last year and use them constantly. Mine cost \$1.50; others are available at various prices up to about \$15.

Stylus pressure gauge. Here's an item that always appears on Christmas gift lists, probably because it's such an obvious choice that it's the first thing to come to mind. Admittedly, a large percentage of us initiates don't use one because we think it's unnecessary. This is, of course, holly folly. (Christmas joke—get it?) I was without one (I'm ashamed to say) for several months, which was the ill fortune of about twenty-three LPs. And the gauge costs only a few dollars. Ridiculous, isn't it, not to own one? Hint, man, hint.

Splicing tape. This stuff is of the essence if you make tape recordings. Not only does it help you make clean, even, and goo-free splices, it's also useful for mending shower curtains, sticking notes to walls, and sealing Christmas packages wrapped in white paper. Cash needed: 60 cents for a roll.

A stroboscopic disc. Strobe discs sell for a few cents apiece and are used for checking turntable speed. You really should use one of these regularly. Then, when friends complain about your records sounding off key, you'll know that they're either right or wrong—not all record companies use stroboscopes as conscientiously as they should, either. To pursue this subject further would lead to our suggesting that you buy a piano. Short of this, we stop.

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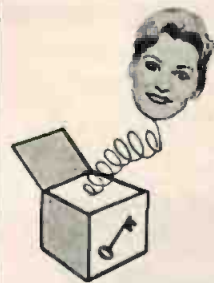
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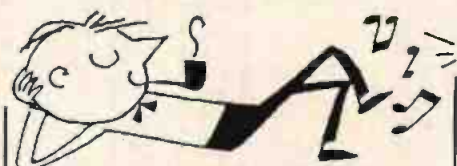
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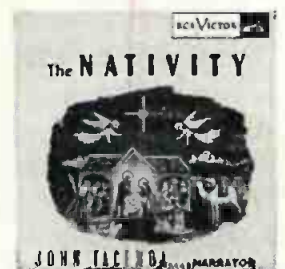
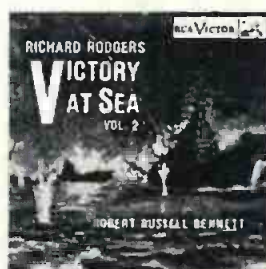
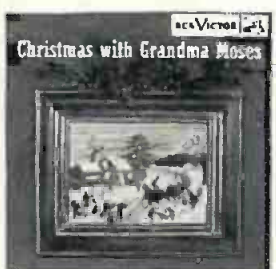
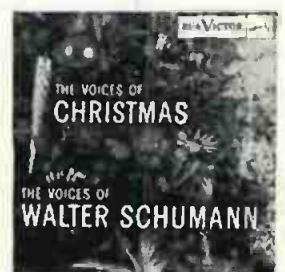
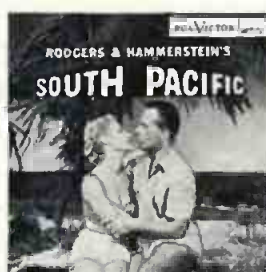
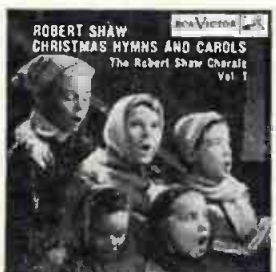
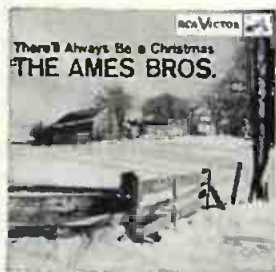
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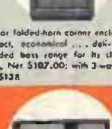
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