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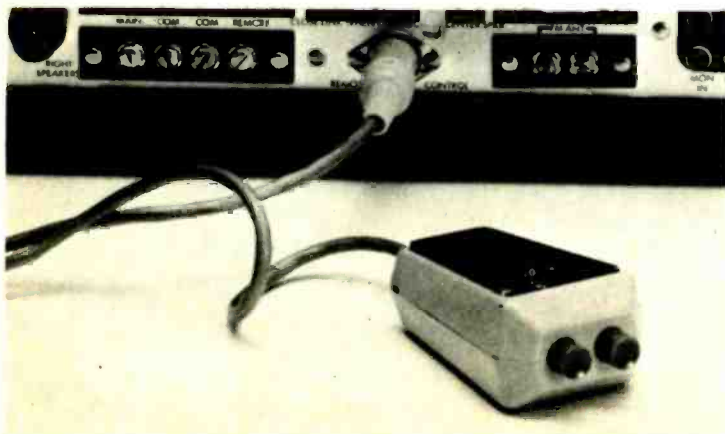
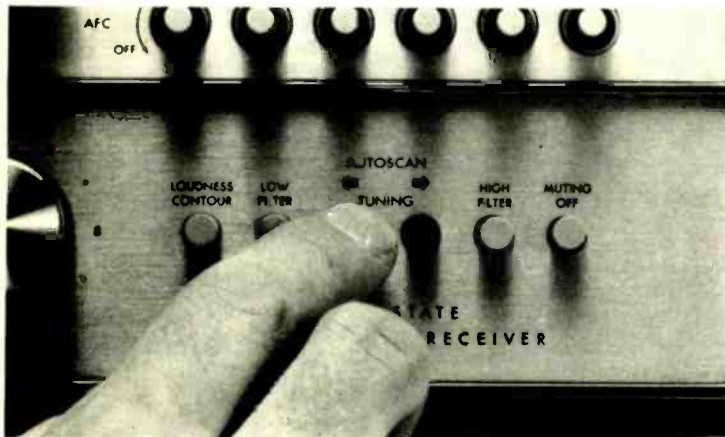
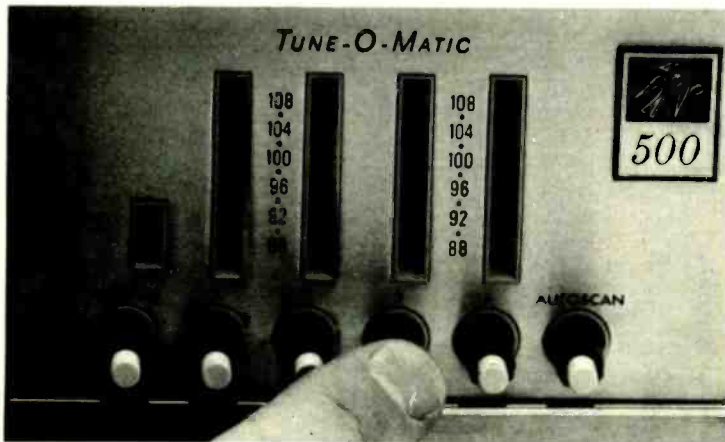
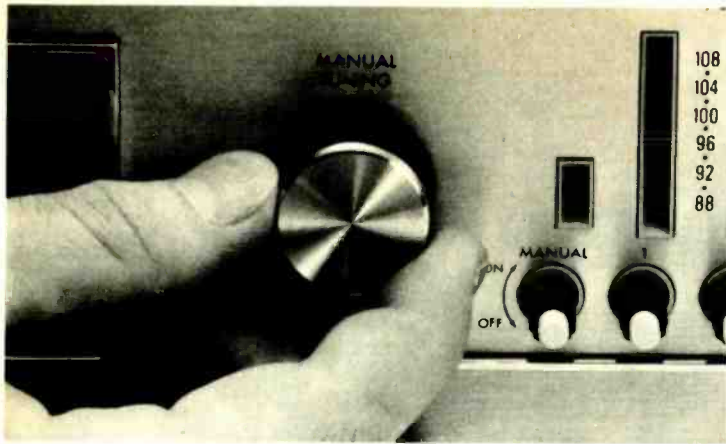
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HIGH FIDELITY

VOL. 19 NO. 4, APRIL 1969

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What Do You Do in Great Barrington?

DEAR READER:

Among the letters that enter my In Box, two seem to be eternally reappearing. One asks, "How can I become a record reviewer for HIGH FIDELITY (or a concert reviewer for *Musical America*)?"; the other wants to know, "What goes on in Great Barrington?" I shall leave to a future letter my answer to the first, which after all is mainly of interest to writers, those who think they are, music experts, those who think they are, and those who would like to be. The answer to the second, however, may enlighten all those who, like myself half a dozen years or so ago, hardly know the difference between publishing and printing.

The confusion arises when somebody who knows of my Times Square office—and those of Music Editor Peter Davis, *Musical America* Editor Shirley Fleming, and the rest of the New York staff—looks at the bottom of the adjacent column. There he sees that our main office is in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. What does go on in this rural haven?

First of all, our Audio-Video Editor Norman Eisenberg and his associate Bob Long have their offices in the big red Publishing House (and it really is a house, complete with big old barn crumbling at the foot of a mountain—none of yer fancy skyscrapers here). There they consider which audio and video problems are pressing enough to commission their solutions as articles, they edit the ensuing manuscripts, and they put together monthly columns and departments. In the office next to theirs, Our Publisher, Warren Syer, reigns, while across the hall, in a corner of our television studio (oh, yes, we run a busy place), I have my main office. From their upstairs studio (or basement darkroom) Art Director Roy Lindstrom and his associate Bob Maddocks choose type, select photos, commission artwork, lay out each month's issue, and yell at engravers and printers. Next door to them, Production Editor Ruth Dunton, a gentle soul unjustly faced with impossible schedules, sees that manuscripts get into the house, out to the printer, back as galley (long strips of paper with text printed upon them), pasted up, out to the printer, back as page proofs, and onto the presses (in Dayton, Ohio! Or maybe Washington, D.C. Don't ask why.) on time. And then there is an army of copy editors to polish the prose, proofreaders to catch gremlins, and secretaries to run the place. And that's what goes on in Great Barrington.

Now, if you are one of those catsup-bottle readers who discovered in the purposely unreadable type on the bottom of page 3 that our Subscription Department is in Cincinnati!—well, keep it to yourself for now, okay, buddy?

* * * * *

In May we will devote a major article to answer the question that most often pops up in our "Too Hot to Handle" department: "Should I get the such-and-such or so-and-so cartridge (or amplifier or speaker system or) to go with my such-and-such speaker system (or amp or cartridge or)?" We will title it "Are Your Components Compatible?" Next month we will also do for Sibelius' "Seven" what we are doing for Shostakovich's "Thirteen" this month, namely, "The Sibelius Symphonies—A Discography." A new encyclopedic series of English folk ballads inspired "Drunkenness, Incest, Murder, and Rape—Fa-la-la La" while today's new breed of anonymous virtuosos will be examined in "Dick Hyman and the Studio Men."

Leonard Marcus

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



The joy of
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The drama of
majestic
power

We could say much more about the new DC300 breakthrough amplifier, but CBS Labs has already said it, in the March *High Fidelity* Equipment Report. Just to refresh your memory though, the DC300 is the most powerful consumer amp available today. Its distortion is literally unmeasurable. Hum and noise just don't exist. Response is flat as a ruler. But don't let us tell you about it. Check the reader service card and we'll send you the *full* Equipment Report, plus detailed literature. We'll also send you the address of your local dealer, who will let you give the DC300 the roughest "lab test" of all -- the personal listening enjoyment test. Or write Crown, Dept. HF-56, Box 1000, Elkhart, Indiana, 46514.



Problems of Domestic Pressings

About ten years ago I owned a copy of Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra* conducted by Karl Böhm on Decca 79999. A short time later I replaced it with the same recording, but on Deutsche Grammophon 136001. Needless to say the surfaces of the DGG disc were far superior to the Decca; but the German-made record was also so much better than the Decca from a sonic standpoint, that I found it hard to believe that it was the same recording.

Since then I have had a number of similar experiences involving American-made discs and their European counterparts. Last year I invested in the Philips *Parsifal* (PHS 5-950). I found the general quality of the records so abysmally bad that I dashed a poison-pen letter off to Mercury/Philips. Within a couple of weeks I received lengthy testimonials asserting the excellence of their quality control and their records in general. I was also given not one but two so-called "factory-tested" sets. When these turned out to be little better than my original set, I gave up and obtained the same recording from Europe, on Dutch Philips (835220/24 AY). Not only were the surfaces ghostly quiet, but the sound was better from every angle: the highs were clearer, the bass more firm, and the whole dynamic range far wider.

A few years ago I found it impossible to buy a defect-free copy of the Karajan *Carmen* on RCA LDS 6164. Since I had a friend going to Germany, I asked that a *Carmen* on German pressings be obtained for me. The German set also bore the number LDS 6164, but was manufactured by Teldec (Telefunken/Decca). The RCA pressings sound good enough, but are no real match for the awesome brilliance and clarity of the Teldec discs. Again, it is really hard to believe that both sets are the same recording.

There was a time when I owned the highlights from *The Merry Wives of Windsor* on Angel S 36149. Now I have the complete recording on Odeon F 91265 67, and, as before, the pressings and actual sound of the German Odeon product are superior to the American Angel.

By now the drift of my complaint should be clear. The records put out by American companies are cheap and shoddy—far inferior to their European counterparts. Can anyone, critic, manufacturer, or reader, tell me why this should be so? By the time I had paid for the records and the airmail postage, my *Parsifal* on Dutch Philips cost almost \$40, but for me, the purchasing of a record is an investment in a precious document—something to be lived with and enjoyed for a long time. I would far rather spend that \$40 and get a high-quality prod-

uct than shell out \$20 for something that is not nearly so well made. But it is expensive and troublesome. I don't like having a good part of my record-buying life made up of international bank drafts and long waits; but that is the way things will be until Philips, RCA, Angel, and Columbia can produce a record that is comparable in quality to the same recordings on European pressings.

James J. Badal, Jr.
Shaker Heights, Ohio

The Philadelphia and Frederick Stock

After reading Emily Coleman's excellent article on Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra [January 1969], I felt that one or two points should be corrected. First of all, the Philadelphia Orchestra was not the second American orchestra to make recordings but the fourth. The very first was the Chicago Symphony under Frederick Stock. They made a series of eight or nine discs for Columbia in the late fall of 1916 comprising short works by Wagner, Grieg, Saint-Saëns, Von Suppé, and others. The recordings were made in New York while the ensemble was on a tour of the Eastern seaboard.

The second ensemble to make recordings was the New York Philharmonic under Josef Stransky. Their first record (Thomas' *Raymond Overture*) was also made for Columbia and was recorded on January 20, 1917. Within that week the orchestra also recorded works by Dvořák, Moszkowski, Beethoven, Saint-Saëns, and Rimsky-Korsakov. The third orchestra (which Miss Coleman noted as the first) was the Boston Symphony under Karl Muck and the fourth was the Philadelphia under Stokowski.

I would also like to comment a little about Miss Coleman's statements regarding Frederick Stock. If Stock and the Chicago Symphony had in any way been "eclipsed" during those days, it was primarily due to the difficulty that the recording industry encountered while attempting to capture the sound of the Chicago Symphony in the acoustically very live confines of Orchestra Hall. Columbia tried it and gave up. Victor made a number of excellent recordings in the early Thirties and late Twenties but they too gave up (probably because there were no adequate machines available at the time to reproduce in full the quality of the sounds they had recorded). Then, in 1941, Victor went back to Chicago and made a series of recordings with Stock that for the first time reflected the kind of warm ambience which Stock had always secured from the Chicago Symphony. The right combination had been found at last. Unfortunately, Stock passed

Continued on page 8

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AMERICAN **record guide**

(Larry Zide)

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(Bernard Jacobson)

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CIRCLE 1 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

LETTERS

Continued from page 6

away the next year; but had he remained, I am confident that he and Victor would have had many more happy meetings.

The important point, however, is that Frederick Stock remains a great conductor whose memory cannot be "eclipsed" by anyone. Under Stock, the Chicago Symphony quietly but steadfastly became the number one orchestra in the United States for performances of new music, particularly by American composers—a fact noted by Howard Hanson in the

1930s and verified by the National Music Council in 1941. Indeed, in both old and new music, Stock had the widest and most catholic repertoire of any major conductor in the United States at that time. Up to the time of his death in 1942, Stock and the Chicago Symphony could not have been better. His accomplishments over four decades are different from the other major conductors in America only in one respect: they were achieved without the ballyhoo and hero worship so generously lavished upon other conductors.

William A. Holmes
Program Director, WNIB
Chicago, Ill.

Solutions

Robert L. Blefko, who inquired about the most sensitive AM tuner now available ["Too Hot to Handle," January 1969], would perhaps be interested to know that the best solution to his problem is to get one of the really good full coverage communications receivers—the Hammarlund 180-AX, for instance, whose broadcast band coverage, with suitable adjustable antenna, will include some hundreds of stations in this country as well as abroad. These sets have full short-wave coverage as well.

Michael Scriven
Berkeley, Calif.

There are two oversights in your January 1969 "Too Hot to Handle" column I would like to point out. First, in reply to Mr. Blefko's inquiry regarding an AM tuner: there is one available—but in a kit. Check page 60 of Heathkit's 1969 catalogue for their AM Tuner Kit AJ-53. From personal experience, it is easy for a double-thumbed builder like myself to put together. Second, in reply to Mr. Barnett's inquiry regarding a walnut case for a Dynaco PAT-4 preamp: an additional manufacturer (and closer to Mr. Barnett's hometown of Virginia than El Monte, California) is Kitecraft HiFi, 248 Utica Avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y. 11213.

Don't let this nitpicking give you the impression that I am criticizing your new column. As a long-time subscriber I find it to be one of the most enjoyable parts of your monthly bill of fare.

Ronald D. Cohen
Montclair, Calif.

Conductor's Plight

Although I found his article interesting, I believe that Ernest Fleischmann ["Who Runs Our Orchestras?," January 1969] missed the point in one very central regard and presented another oversimplified misstatement, one which affects me personally.

The point Mr. Fleischmann missed is the underlying social logic behind the continental system of intendants, General Music Directors, and "subvention." Unlike the United States or even London, these continental orchestras and theaters to which Mr. Fleischmann referred are supported by municipalities, state, and national governments because they are considered to render a necessary social function. This function is neither predicated upon lay-control of a board of directors, cooperative control by the "members," nor control by the Intendant. It is, rather, the outgrowth of the proposition that the government in question has an obligation to provide its citizens with access to a type of experience that might not otherwise continue to exist. "Serious" music is considered one of the essential services of the State, even as fluoridation of the water supply is so considered by some communities in the U.S. The mere fact that music is placed in such a position gives it an enduring relevance impossible

Continued on page 10

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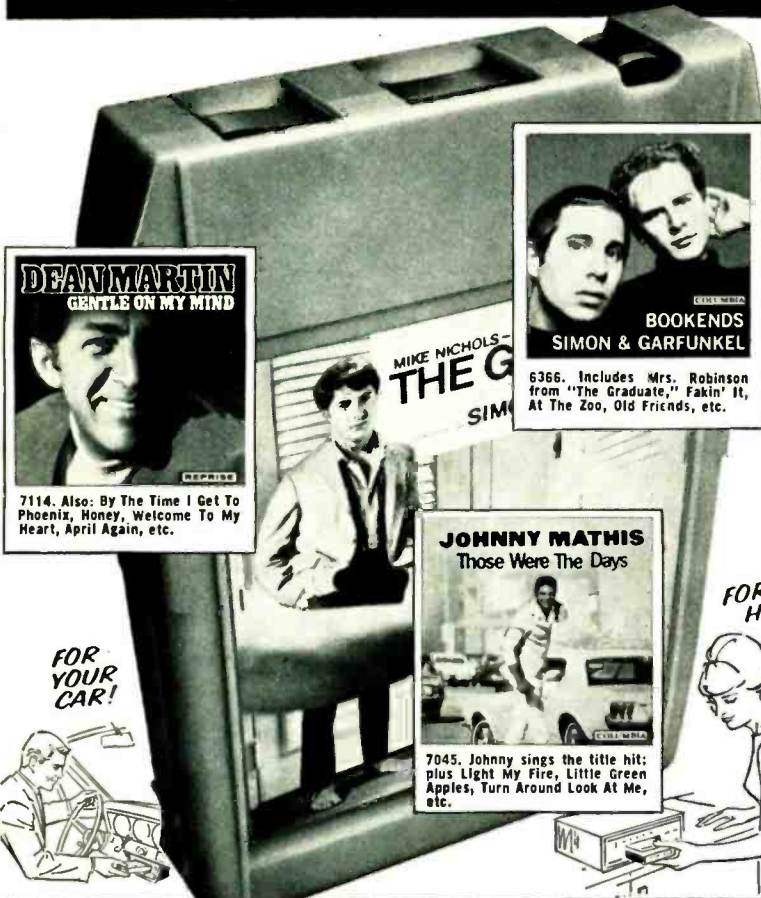
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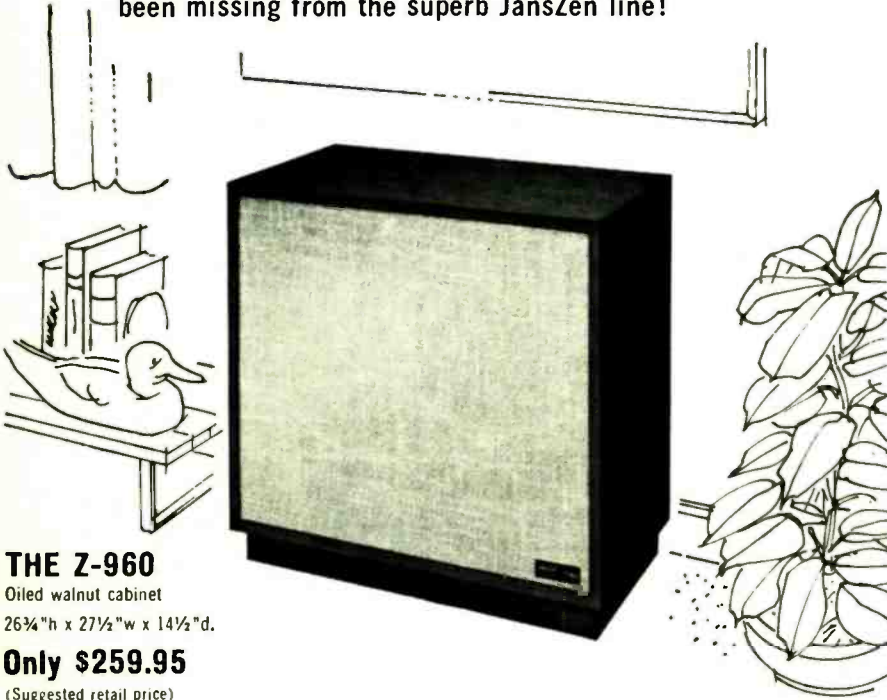
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LETTERS

Continued from page 8

in a society which supports its arts by philanthropy and the "charitable deduction." Furthermore, it enables the Intendant to pursue the breadth of available musical experience, to encourage the creativity of artistic talent both within and without the local frontiers, and to maintain the orchestra as a living organism capable of responding to the creative stresses of our own and past times. This philosophical underpinning is in no way undermined by recent (and often severe) cutbacks in "subvention."

As for the misstatement, Mr. Fleischmann speaks blithely of the young conductors who may debut with the Vienna Philharmonic and then wait while the invitations from major orchestras come pouring in. Nonsense. The reason young conductors don't learn repertoire is that they have no opportunity to learn it. We can sit and study scores until the lines disappear but we must be able to transform our studies into sound. Both technique and "expressivity," whatever that may be, are largely the result of a quantum of experience which brings ear, mind, and motion into concordance.

I am not satisfied with responses to the effect that something is lacking in the talents of young conductors, American or otherwise. The fact is that precious little relationship exists between talent or potential and instant success . . . or even the opportunity for experience. And what is lacking is experience, routine, and either any interest on the part of the orchestras here or abroad in responding to talent. There is simply no stepladder means of accumulating experience and reputation at the same time. If Mr. Fleischmann can inform me of any way to alter this situation, I am sure that I would not be alone in volunteering to bring my "young talent" with me.

Richard P. Kapp
New York, N.Y.

Mr. Fleischmann replies: Surely music performs no less of a necessary "social" function in the U.S.A. than in Europe. I did not raise this point, because it does not exist. After all, in Europe governmental and similar subsidies to the arts comes from taxes: in the U.S.A., donations to the arts are tax deductible; in the end, this is one and the same thing. However, as I pointed out in my article, the arts in the U.S.A. would be in a far healthier position if they enjoyed enlightened, large-scale governmental aid. As for Mr. Kapp's point about experience for the young conductor, there are still plenty of opportunities for gaining this all over the world. Naturally, working as a répétiteur in a minor European opera house or coaching American amateur choruses and student orchestras is not as glamorous or exciting as conducting the Vienna or New York Philharmonic. But I know of no talent that has been kept down as a result of perseverance

Continued on page 12

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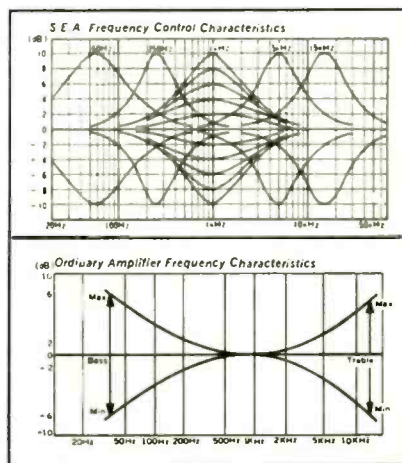
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Continued from page 10

and ingenuity: on the contrary, my complaint is that so many young semi- or non-talents are able to get away with murder because of the constant, unassuaged hunger for new faces on the conductor's podium. If Mr. Kapp is content to start working hard in Wuppertal, Newcastle, or Evansville, he will get all the experience and routine he wants. And I can guarantee that, if he possesses any kind of gift for conducting, before too long (probably far too soon) he will be "spotted" by an astute big-time management. But then, woe betide him, if he lacks the real talent when he starts telling a great orchestra how to play a Beethoven symphony.

Rossini Taken Seriously

I would sincerely like to commend Jan Meyerowitz on his article "Rossini's Serious Operas" [November 1968]. I feel it is a valuable and informative statement about a very important aspect of the music of a great composer. Mr. Meyerowitz' accurately detailed yet humorously written article should not go unnoticed by any lover of *bel canto* Italian opera.

Richard Morgenstern
Brooklyn, N. Y.

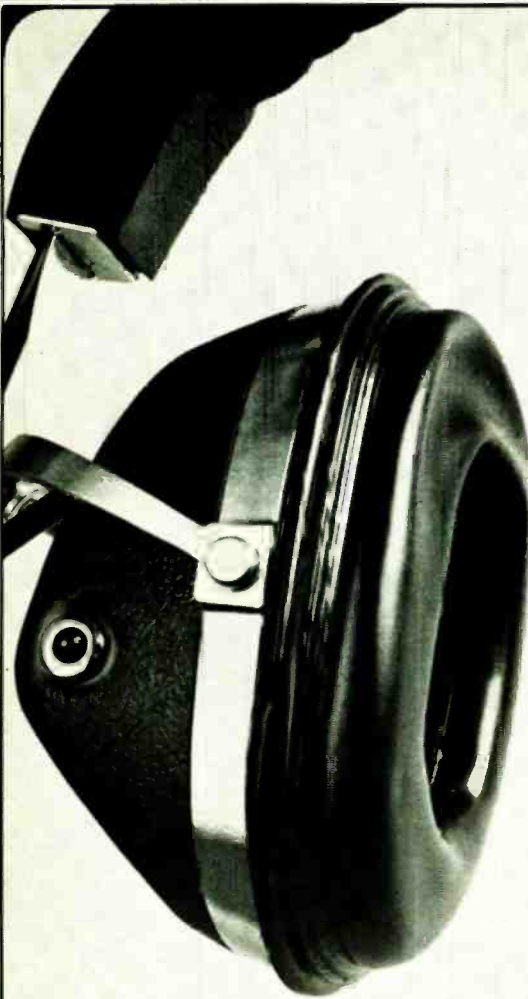
Meaning and McKuen

John Gabree's "review" of Rod McKuen's *Lonesome Cities* [January 1969] was just about the most unfeeling article that I have ever had the displeasure to read. Mr. Gabree seems to see himself as a real hard-liner on any musical selection that may have emotional content. His statement that "there are eighty million readers of the *Reader's Digest* and McKuen is sort of the bohemian Edgar Guest" more than shows his contempt for those who may, in this age, still retain what might loosely be referred to as a "soul."

Considering the absolute tripe which is placed upon the musical market these days and undoubtedly given rave reviews by those of Mr. Gabree's ilk, Mr. McKuen's poems do their little bit for those who need respite from the continual blastings of rock and the so-called folk-rock music assailing listeners from all sources.

I am a former Army officer with some four years of experience, including a year's combat tour in the Republic of Vietnam. I am presently undergoing extensive training as a new Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. I believe I have seen my share of pain and suffering in various parts of the world during my short life and while subjects like "The Open Road and Loneliness and Mankind . . ." may be banal to Mr. Gabree, they are not altogether unmeaningful to the rest of us.

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NOTES

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENTS

LONDON

Britten's Brandenburgs— Straight out of a Malt House

The onetime malt house at Snape, near Aldeburgh, which less than two years ago became the marvelous concert hall known as The Maltings, is now proving itself a first-rate recording site—probably not at all to the surprise of Benjamin Britten, who was the prime mover in the old building's reconstruction. Some time ago he and tenor Peter Pears made an Argo recording of songs by Gustav Holst there; and more recently he conducted the English Chamber Orchestra in Decca/London sessions for Mozart's Fortieth Symphony and *Serenata Notturna* under its girdered roof. And this winter The Maltings became the scene for a Britten/ECO recording (again Decca/London) of the complete *Brandenburg* Concertos.

Britten's respect for a craftsman who knows his job is very clear indeed, and on this occasion there was much discussion between conductor and recording engineer Kenneth Wilkinson regarding the right balance for the harpsichord. Even with sound rather more intimate and damped down than in the Mozart sessions, it was very hard to balance the continuo against the opulence of ECO strings (even a reduced complement). It was done in the end—and without the sort of synthetic harpsichord amplification that is anathema to recording men. This is Britten's first major Bach recording, though for some years now he has been regularly directing performances of Bach choral works both in Suffolk and in London—the *St. John* Passion, the *St. Matthew* Passion, the *Christmas* Oratorio, and so on. It is no secret that his *Brandenburg* interpretations are likely to be more warmly romantic than is common these days.

Only One Bruckner. Daniel Barenboim, during a comparatively brief "rest" in London, managed to record a work to be coupled with his last year's account of the Bach *Magnificat* (New Philharmonia Chorus and Orchestra)—not Bach, as one would expect, but Bruckner. Barenboim has promised himself to study a new Bruckner work every year (only one, mind!) and in the first half of last year he gave several performances of the *Te Deum*. By the time of the recording sessions, the musicians were well used to his interpretation, which involves an unusually brisk account of the big fugal passage. Suvi Raj Grubb, in charge of the session as usual, demurred a bit. Wasn't this *much* faster than usual, he asked? But Barenboim had thought it



Hans Wild

out very deliberately: for him, the meaning of the words in relation to the music made the tempo inevitable. The church used for the sessions (All Saints' at Tooting Graveney—well off the beaten track, in south London) was the same as that for the Bach *Magnificat*, and good opinions of its acoustics were reinforced—clarity in the separate parts but overall a big, rich sound. Grubb indicated that he would like to do Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* at All Saints' with Barenboim, but in the face of that masterpiece the twenty-five-year-old conductor feels very humble indeed. No question of his doing it in the immediate future, he says.

The Debut of Pinchas Zukerman. The Israeli violinist who as a teen-ager won the 1967 Leventritt award stepped in on very short notice for his first recording sessions, just before Christmas. CBS had hired Antal Dorati and the London Symphony to record the almost forgotten Piano Concerto by the nineteenth-century German pianist Adolf von Henselt with Raymond Lewenthal as soloist. When the latter was prevented by illness from fulfilling the commitment, CBS—naturally anxious to make use of the orchestra and conductor at its disposal—invited Zukerman to fly over to record the Tchaikovsky Concerto and Mozart Adagio. Next on his recording agenda: piano trios with Barenboim and Du Pré. The Lewenthal sessions have been rescheduled, by the way, with Charles Mackerras replacing Dorati.

No More Champagne. Rarest session of the month has been RCA's recording at Barking Town Hall of the Third Symphony of Arnold Bax, with the LSO under Edward Downes. During World War II this was one of the first works that the British Council promoted on records (78s, of course, in those days);

Barbirolli was the conductor, with the Hallé Orchestra, which he had then only just taken over. As it happens, one of the players present for that recording was also on hand for the new one—the outstanding double-bass player Stuart Knussen, who has led the LSO's bass section for some years now (and whose sixteen-year-old composer son, Oliver, had his First Symphony performed on both sides of the Atlantic last year). Knussen was one of the very young recruits through whom Barbirolli revolutionized the Hallé image in his early years as its director.

Downes was only a schoolboy when the Barbirolli record appeared, but he remembers hearing it then and recently refreshed his memory of it. His own Bax devotion goes back to the time when he was studying in Birmingham. He played all four of Bax's Piano Sonatas, and actually chose one of them (No. 2) to demonstrate his playing at his final examinations. His admiration for the Third Symphony has gone up enormously from close study. He points out that though it may on the surface seem rather rhapsodic for a symphony, it is in fact very closely organized in a way that should please the practitioners of functional analysis.

Downes is a crisp rehearser, and he likes his head clear. During the picnic lunch between sessions he refused a second glass of champagne. Engineer Bob Auger pressed him a second time, then remembered what faces any conductor: "Oh, I see, you're driving!" The coupling for this unexpected Bax record (one of a series promoted by Robert Angles of the London end of RCA) will be the tone poem *The Happy Forest*. "Sounds like plastic gnomes," Angles admits, but assures one that the music is well worth while.

EDWARD GREENFIELD

Continued on page 18

**In the
rest of
this magazine,
you'll read about
yesterday's
receivers.**

**Now
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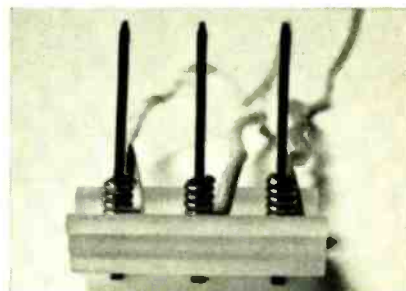
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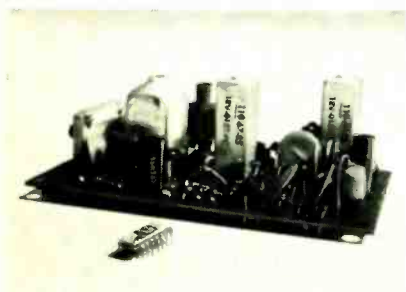
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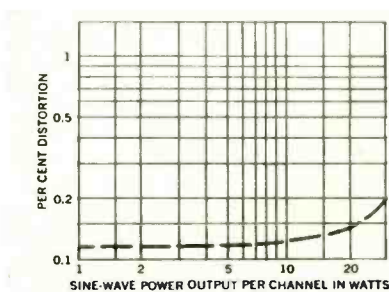
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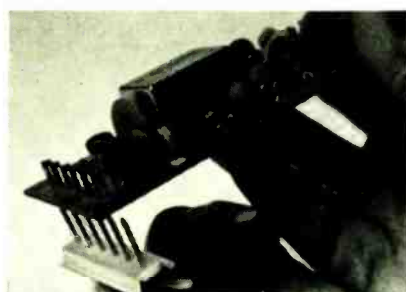


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CIRCLE 100 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Continued from page 14

VIENNA

Sophie

In the Sofiensaal

When Decca/London's record producer John Culshaw left the company to join BBC television, people here wondered what recording ventures would follow the celebrated series of Vienna-made operas for which Culshaw had been mainly responsible. It seemed obvious that the British firm would be back in town—not only is there a contractual arrangement between the Vienna Philharmonic and Decca/London but the company made a heavy investment in its Vienna studios during the Culshaw-era and the twenty-four channel mixing console set up in the Sofiensaal could hardly have been meant to serve Wagner's *Ring* and Strauss's *Salome* alone. Actually, we should have guessed the next project. With no stereo *Rosenkavalier* in the Decca/London catalogue, it was clearly time for a Sophie in the Sofiensaal.

The time in fact came during the last weeks of 1968, when Georg Solti arrived to direct the Vienna Philharmonic and a carefully picked cast of singers—the latter chosen, according to producer Christopher Raeburn, not on the basis of "great

names" but on their ability "to re-create the original conception of both Hofmannsthal and Strauss." The role of Sophie went to the young Texan soprano Helen Donath, while that of Octavian was sung by Yvonne Minton, an Australian-born mezzo who has sung the part under Solti at Covent Garden. Mr. Raeburn told me that in the Misses Minton and Donath, he felt two singers had been found whose voices would blend perfectly with that of Régine Crespin—whose appearance as the Marschallin of course requires no explanation. For the part of Ochs, those in charge insisted on a basso fully at home with the Austrian dialect; this they found in Manfred Jungwirth, an Austrian-born member of the Vienna State Opera. Other members of the cast include Otto Wiener (Faninal), Emmy Loose (Duenna), Murray Dickie (Valzacchi), and Ann Howell (Annina).

Many Mikes and No Mud. Offhand, one might think that the technical problems posed by a *Rosenkavalier* recording would be of a lesser order than those presented by a *Götterdämmerung*. According to Raeburn and his technical collaborator, Gordon Parry, the fact is quite otherwise. Clarity and definition of sound were considered essential for this opera, and they are not easily achieved in a recording. One means the Decca/London team took was to follow Strauss's own recommendation (inserted in the score) that the strings be reduced in certain passages. Mr. Raeburn mentioned, for example, the peaceful ending of Act 1 and

a few of the quieter passages in Act 2 where he and Solti reduced the number of the first violins from eighteen to twelve and the other strings proportionately. Even the Viennese glissando, which Strauss wanted to get from the "waltzing strings," cannot be permitted to result in a muddy texture. Again, there are the acoustically complicated and rather noisy passages such as the "Skandal" scene in the third act. In fact, the number of microphones used during the *Rosenkavalier* sessions surpassed the number set up for the *Ring*. A technical challenge, indeed. KURT BLAUKOPF

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CIRCLE 27 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

by Conrad L. Osborne

The Opera Reviewer Strikes Again

Being a rejoinder to "The Record Producer Strikes Back," in which former Decca/London executive John Culshaw attacked the critical positions of Mr. Osborne—and thereby sparked among our readers a controversy further ignited by the publication, in January, of a pro-Culshaw, anti-*Osborne* letter from CBS Masterworks Director John McClure.



I HAD MORE OR LESS resolved to hold myself aloof from the letters column melee occasioned by Mr. Culshaw's *contra* C.L.O. essay ["The Record Producer Strikes Back," October 1968]; far safer to hibernate in my Victorian den, alternately stroking my beard and wiping the tears of nostalgia from rheumy eyes, than to venture into the field. But the positively wild epistle from John McClure ["Letters," January 1969] poses the prospect of continuing discussion on the supposed views of an entirely imaginary C.L.O. In other words, I'm being stuck with a bum rap, and I don't appreciate it, men.

Some recapitulation is in order. In my review of the Culshaw-produced *Elektra* [February 1968] that set off all this agitation, I made the following points, in what I thought were sober tones, and in this sequence. 1) The recording is representative of efforts to establish recorded opera as a medium in its own right, not necessarily dependent on the standards or assumptions of performance in the theater. 2) While there is nothing wrong with such efforts in principle, they pose certain difficulties which must be met, since they after all involve the transference of material created for one medium into another for which it was not conceived. 3) These difficulties are analogous to those faced by a movie producer attempting transference of material conceived in dramatic or literary form, except that the operatic record producer has far fewer options open to him, since he is bound by the sequences and relationships established by the score, and may not truly rewrite or otherwise reorder his material to make it more suitable to the new medium. 4) Films made from operas invariably fall on their faces because, in the absence of the framework of the live theater, they fail to establish a stylistic basis or a performer/audience relationship that will enable us to accept operatic conventions, or the very use of the "legit" singing voice as necessary, desirable, or believable. 5) This *Elektra* seems to me to miss the boat for similar reasons, using technical expertise to a) create an impression that the events of the opera are actually taking place in the indicated locales (which, to the extent that it is successful, renders

the piece absurd—operas and plays take place on stages, not in castles); and b) reproduce the orchestral score in a manner which destroys the over-all effect that Strauss aimed for, and substitutes a kind of dissection of the score's innards. 6) Experimentation with recording techniques should nevertheless be encouraged; that this *Elektra* should be heard by all serious collectors and operaphiles; and that the obvious step for the record companies to take is the commissioning of new works composed solely for the phonographic medium. The review goes on to discuss the performances themselves, but this discussion has not been subject to dispute, except as it touched on one of the above points (as with the exit of Klytemnestra).

In his article, Mr. Culshaw made the following points. 1) Osborne has been consistently and violently opposed to all of Mr. Culshaw's efforts, painting him in blackest colors. 2) There has, too, been a successful movie made from an opera (*Billy Budd*). 3) Since the number of people that attends live opera is relatively small, it is economically advisable to make recordings in such a way as to attract people who have heretofore known nothing of, and cared nothing about, opera. 4) The listening situation at home is not the same as the listening situation in the theater. 5) What Culshaw intended in certain scenes and what Osborne heard are two very different things, and this difference is due to Osborne's eagerness to impute to Culshaw intentions he never had. 6) Strauss wrote many notes that are never heard, and it is up to the record producer to see that they are heard. 7) The best record producers are those who make full use of up-to-date technology, in a creative partnership with the highest musical sensitivity. 8) Such producers also produce the recordings that sell well; the tremendous success of the Culshaw *Rheingold* and the relative failure of the "straight" recordings of *Meistersinger* demonstrate this point. 9) Educated guesswork leads us to suppose that a wider audience can be built with this type of recording, and that this audience is perhaps 95 per cent separate from that which attends opera live. 10) Osborne is trying to clog the wheels of progress by clinging to a vanished past,

but Culshaw and a few other Brave New Types are fortunately determined to press on towards a new kind of operatic theater, unbound by conventions of the past. The *Elektra* recording is a step in this direction.

Now along comes Mr. McClure. We cannot tell whether or not he has read the original review, for he discusses none of the points it raises. But he has read Mr. Culshaw, twice, and I must in all modesty assume that his reference to "certain critics" takes in yr. humble servant. By indirection and implication he suggests the following points. 1) C.L.O. sees himself as a "Keeper of the Sacred Flame," afraid of the impact of "hustling, brash young media" on the cherished old ones. 2) C.L.O. considers the television appearances of Horowitz, for example, destructive of live music. 3) The timidity of repertory opera companies is largely responsible for the current low state of the operatic art; and Osborne to the contrary, what we need are more Culshaws and fewer Metropolitans—again, to widen the operatic audience. 4) Harold C. Schonberg [music critic of the *New York Times*] is another fuddy-duddy who doesn't want producers to have any fun.

Let us consider these points. First, to Mr. Culshaw, taking his arguments in order. 1) Demonstrably untrue. Simply refer to the reviews in question, written over a nine-year span. 2) I concede this point. 3) The economic argument may or may not be sound; sound or not, it has nothing whatever to do with the artistic merits of the product—which it is the critic's responsibility to discuss—unless it implies a deliberate downgrading for the purpose of appealing to the ignorant. 4) I also concede this point. But the Culshaw approach to recording does not necessarily follow from it. 5) I have never had any opinion about Mr. Culshaw's intentions or state of mind during recording. I only comment upon the results, and my ears tell me the same thing now that they told me over a year ago. 6) Strauss scored for the theater, and was an accomplished enough orchestrator to accurately gauge what would and wouldn't come through in the theater. The unheard notes contribute to tex-

Continued on page 24



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The Missing

The Opera Reviewer

Continued from page 20

tures and over-all effects: if Strauss had badly wanted them to be heard, he would have scored in such a manner as to make them audible. Mr. Culshaw is fascinated by the workings of the clock; we only want to know what time it is. 7) This is self-evident. But again, these qualities are not necessarily synonymous with Mr. Culshaw's philosophy. 8) Phony market analysis if I ever saw it. It is preposterous to compare the case of *Rheingold* (the first recording ever of this major work, brilliantly cast with the magical name of Kirsten Flagstad at the head of the list, released to ride the crest of stereophony's first wave and recorded in a manner to showcase the possibilities of the new technique—and, finally, a very fine job from both the musical and technical standpoints) with the case of *Meistersinger*, an opera which had already received several complete recordings at the time of its first stereo effort, including a couple of quite satisfactory ones, and whose first stereo recording was a poorish one, wretchedly cast except for the Eva and Walther, flabbily conducted, indifferently recorded *in its own terms*. Last summer, the "live" DGG recording of *Lulu* was at or near the top of the classical charts in this country for several months, topped most of the time by only one or two freaks, like the "Elvira Madigan" album or the "West Meets East" album. This, despite what we would have assumed to be a pretty limited readymade audience; despite the almost simultaneous release of the Angel recording, also "live," which also remained high on the chart for many weeks; and despite damaging reviews in several influential journals (not this one). Does this prove that "live" recordings are the answer, or "straight" recordings, or that Mr. Culshaw has been wasting his time with all those fancy studio effects? What, indeed, do the "facts" show? If Mr. Culshaw will make his sales figures available, we can analyze them together. 9) Again, this may or may not be so. Mr. Culshaw simply asserts it, he doesn't document it. And again, it has no bearing on artistic quality. 10) See below.

As to Mr. McClure: Points 1 and 2 are simply false. They bear no relation to my opinions on these matters, and cannot be inferred from my writings except (to borrow a McClure-ism) by a Don Quixote in search of a windmill. And to 3): Sure, the Met and other international companies are unadventurous, and it does none of us any good. But I hardly see this as a root cause of our difficulties, which also relate to such matters as the paucity of contemporary pieces that anyone cares to see more than once, and the easily documented (by recordings, of course) decline in the standards of singing of the sort that is required for large portions of the repertory. I might add that if I had accorded Mr. Culshaw's recordings as severe a treatment as I have the Metropolitan's new productions over the same period of time,

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he might have real grounds for complaint. 4) No comment. Mr. Schonberg can handle himself.

Now. Apart from the dubious validity of most of these points, and their very tenuous connection with anything I've ever said, in print or otherwise, there is the interesting fact that not one of them goes head-on to meet objections raised in my review on aesthetic grounds. They deal with my presumed transgressions or attitudes, or with the economic justifications for certain decisions: they quite precisely evade the artistic issues, against which Mr. Culshaw bumps fitfully and tangentially in his article. Mr. McClure not at all in his letter. These gentlemen simply declare themselves the point men of some operatic advance patrol, and cannot imagine that objections to their work may be raised on specific aesthetic grounds, rather than as products of a frozen attitude.

If the record companies are all this fired up about charging off into a new operatic sunrise, I've got three tough and serious suggestions to make:

1) Instead of encouraging and feeding on the premature exploitation of each and every loud young soprano, why not set up an industry-wide clearinghouse for such talent, for the purpose of steering it towards good teachers, level-headed managers, and the employers in the business who still have some human qualities glinting through the muck? Admittedly, it may for a time prove a bit harder to keep up with the planned-obsolescence cycle, based on extremely short catalogue life, off which the industry has been living. But in the long run, this is surely a wise capital investment.

2) What *about* the commissioning of works for the stereo medium? Why *not*? An original drama-through-song for the home music system. Perhaps not for legit voices, but for mike voices. Perhaps with a synthesized accompaniment, or extramusical soundtrack coordinated with the score. How about an industry-supported foundation to finance such projects?

3) How about an industry-supported workshop of the audio-visual arts, an open laboratory in which the artistic equivalent of "pure research" may take place, with composers, singers, instrumentalists, conductors, actors, dancers, playwrights, choreographers, scenarists, arrangers, directors, designers, artists, audio and video engineers—even a & r men and critics—experimenting creatively with any and all means of combining tape and film (audio and video), and live performance towards the evolution of a new kind of lyric theater? (But with entirely original material, of course.)

All three of these suggestions seem to me eminently sound, and full of potential. Considered as investments, any of them could enrich the industry many times over. But of course, they really *are* new, and do not sit particularly well with the financial short haul. So I suppose that the industry's idea of operatic modernity will continue to consist of slathering century-old stage works with irrelevant melodramatic sound effects.

If that's *nouvelle vague*, I'm Stanley Kubrick.



TOO HOT TO HANDLE

Your column entitled "Too Hot to Handle" is an abysmal fraud and might better be called "Too Frigid to be Interesting." The size of an audio system for Sandra's living room may be a hot topic by your standards, but not by mine. Maybe the following questions will help make the column jibe with its title: however, they are submitted not to embarrass, but to elicit information.

1. The Marantz SLT-12 turntable represents a valid principle (straight-line tracking), but I have been told it's fraught with mechanical problems. What are your views, and how would the SLT-12 rank with the Rabco SL-8 arm?

2. Many European pressings appear to be far superior to their U.S. equivalents (EMI vs. Angel, European Philips vs. American Philips, etc.), and this has even been noted by reviewers. Is this so?

3. Why is there less live music broadcast every year? Is there anything the listening public can do about it?

4. Crown demonstrated its recorders at the New York Hi-Fi Show with a new tape material, Crolyn. Is it for real? Will it damage heads, require new equalization settings, etc.? Or was it just a piece of gimmickry that is decades away from marketability?—I. A. Jaffe, M.D., New York, N.Y.

1. There has been an unusually high rate of returns on the SLT-12 because of mechanical failures. Marantz tells us that the vast majority of the complaints have been occasioned by bent arms, caused by buyers who ignored unpacking instructions—specifically, the warning against depressing the cueing button before removing all packing. The new model (SLT-12U) not only has a universal cartridge mount but also several design changes intended to protect the cueing system and the arm against damage. As a result, Marantz believes it has the problem licked. The Rabco arm is more sophisticated (and elaborate) in that it includes a servo-drive system. Direct comparison, based on lab tests, is not yet possible. The Rabco SL-8 can be bought premounted on a Thorens TD-150 turntable, which we have tested only in its original version—that is, using the integral tone arm normally supplied with that turntable. Likewise, we have tested the SLT-12 but not the new SLT-12U, incorporating the design changes men-

tioned above. So, while both turntables produced excellent specs in our tests, all we can say is that the versions you want to compare presumably are at least as good as the specs we published. Another point that may prevent direct comparison: if you don't want the TD-150 with the SL-8, you will have to mount the arm yourself on whatever turntable you choose.

2. Yes—at least sometimes, as our reviewers are not hesitant in pointing out. Careless quality control and inferior raw materials are some of the symptoms of general company disinterest that too often attend such money-losing propositions as classical records. For other specifics, see reader James J. Badal, Jr.'s letter on page 6.

3. For the past several years, there has been so little live music on radio that it appears almost impossible there could be any less. The reason, again, is money. It is cheaper to play a record or rent a syndicated tape than it is to hire live musicians. Even tapes are sometimes too expensive to syndicate; the New York Philharmonic, for example, stopped taping its concerts for broadcast when a new contract with the musicians' union called for fees the Philharmonic management considered prohibitive.

4. Crolyn is Du Pont's name for a recording tape it is developing, substituting chromium dioxide for iron oxide as the magnetic ingredient. Its introduction was reported in our January '68 issue [in "Video Topics"]. In contrast to standard tapes, Crolyn is capable of about twice the bandwidth (i.e., high-frequency response), requires greater record bias (all other factors being equal), and is relatively expensive. Du Pont has been distributing samples, first to users of data processing, instrumentation, and video recorders, and then in the audio field, for professional examination, use, and evaluation. So far, it is being sold full-scale only to the computer market in 1-inch and ½-inch widths. Chromium dioxide is harder than iron oxide; but we understand that the fine polish it will accept actually makes it gentler to recorder heads than standard formulations. For whatever use, bandwidth is the key to Crolyn's attractiveness, since it allows greater quality at slower speeds. Crown found that it could make top-quality 3¾-ips tapes on Crolyn

using 7½-ips equalization—and, since that equalization requires less high-frequency pre-emphasis than is standard for 3¾, the bias required was only slightly greater than that for iron oxide tapes. But it may be some time before all reports are in and Du Pont takes any steps in the direction of audio marketing.

Please explain your answer to B. Brown in the February issue. I would like to know how a 60-watt receiver can measure as low as 18 watts rms. I figure 60 times 0.707 would give you approximately 42 watts.—H. Hershkowitz, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Easy. The "60 watts" refers to the sum of both channels—so, right off, we're talking about 30 watts per channel. But that's music power into a 4-ohm load, with one channel disabled, and an external power supply energizing the set. By our more rigorous (and standard) lab measurement—continuous power into an 8-ohm load while both channels are driven simultaneously—that set produces 18 watts per channel. That is the power you're concerned with when matching the set to the speakers it will be driving.

In the January issue, you said (in the Equipment Report on the AR-5 speaker system) that the AR-5 sounds better than the AR-3a in a small room, the AR-3a better in a large room. How large is large?—Howard Wettstein, Spring Valley, N.Y.

Of course the terms "large" and "small" as applied to rooms are relative, but the average American living room runs about 2,000 cu. ft. (12 by 20 ft., with a ceiling height of about 8½ ft.). Increasing the room's volume by one third or more would qualify it as a "large" room; a decrease of one third or more would produce a "small" room. But acoustical properties also must be considered: heavy upholstery, carpeting, draperies, and such make a room effectively "smaller" by reducing reverberation; open doorways or passage leading to halls or to other rooms make it acoustically "larger." A detailed discussion of room acoustics is planned for a forthcoming issue, incidentally.

My Koss PRO-4A stereo headset seems to be wired wrong. That is, I hear the right channel in the left earphone and vice versa. What should I do?—Burton R. Wolder, Bronx, N.Y.

Swear a little. Someone once dreamed up a standard for which channel should be connected to the tip of a stereo plug, but when we checked those headsets with earphones labeled "right" and "left" for the report in our January issue, we found them divided almost exactly between those connecting "right" to the tip and those making it "left." We haven't tested jacks to see how electronics manufacturers view the problem, but under the circumstances it doesn't make much difference. Nor do the markings on your headset. Why not just ignore them and wear the headphones backward?

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Choose the CS-5 for its clean, modern look, or pick the CS-44 for its "decorator" accent featuring a custom-crafted wood lattice grille. But choose Pioneer. For when it comes to creating the highest quality sound and cabinetry — Pioneer is in a class by itself!

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THE CS-44 \$67.50
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CIRCLE 50 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

NEWS&VIEWS



TWENTY-TWO RECORDS, THREE BOOKS, AND A TAXI

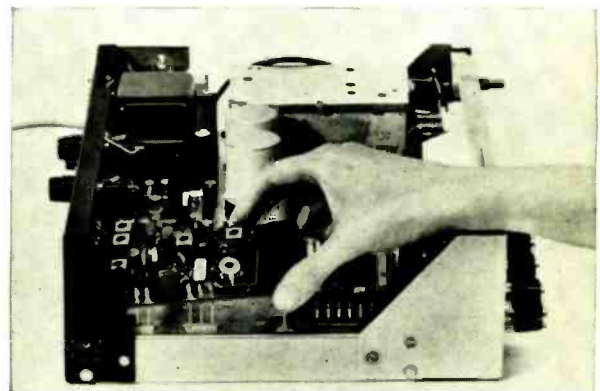
When King Record Co. Ltd., Tokyo distributors for London/Decca Records, introduced its limited edition of Wagner's complete *Ring* cycle, it was faced with a dilemma. The entire package (including all four operas, a set devoted to the leitmotifs of the tetralogy, a bilingual libretto, a commentary booklet, and a copy of John Culshaw's *Ring Resounding*) weighs in excess of twenty-eight pounds. As a letter from Japan put the problem, "How to deliver the sets, it's a matter of headache to every record store owner." One answer from inventive Japanese merchants: include a free taxi ride in the \$111 purchase price.

CIRCLE 145 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

STATESMANSHIP-OF-THE-ART

In promoting its latest stereo receiver (the 342C), Scott's selling points seem to give an unusually clear description of the direction receiver design is taking these days. Convenience features are still in (the 342C has a little light that pops on when the FM is perfectly tuned) and so are integrated circuits (now added in the multiplex and preamp sections). The quartz IF filter (a feature that made hi-fi headlines when the Heath AR-15 was introduced) is included to reduce distortion and increase selectivity without compromising audio frequency response—and it can't get out of alignment (unlike an IF transformer). And the 342C takes receivers one step closer to computer and aerospace communications design by using plug-in circuit boards and wire-wrap connection techniques. Selling price of the 342C, we're told, will be \$259.95.

CIRCLE 146 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Plug-in circuit boards are featured in Scott 342C.

WAR OF THE WATTS

For some time now there have been mumblings in the hi-fi industry about what might be called the 1-dB Power Ploy. It seems that one manufacturer rated a receiver at a particular output wattage, but added in fine print that the rating was "within ± 1 dB."

Well, another manufacturer soon discovered the 1-dB figure and became alarmed. A difference of 1 dB in a power rating, translated into watts, amounts to about twenty per cent—in other words, since 60 watts is within twenty per cent of 50 watts, the purveyor of a 50-watt amplifier can rate it at 60 watts ± 1 dB.

How can I compete, the second manufacturer asked himself, if these fellows up their ratings this way? So, figuring, it would seem, that he couldn't beat them, he joined them. Several companies now are stating power

ratings under the 1-dB system—whether or not they list them in conventional form as well.

When the Institute of High Fidelity recently announced a press conference to discuss power ratings, it was assumed that the 1-dB Ploy would be called into question. It wasn't. Instead, spokesmen concentrated on the broader (and to the prospective purchaser far more confusing) situation presented by the full spectrum of power rating systems in use in advertising—from the conservative rms wattages of professional engineers to the "squawk power" ratings possible for cheap phonographs, ratings that may be well over 1,000 per cent higher for the same amplifier.

The IHF's conclusion, apparently, is that there should be some sort of official guidelines for power output specifications throughout the home entertainment field

Continued on page 30



A 14" Woofer In A Bookshelf System Gives

Floor Speaker Sound In Less Space At Lower Cost



New Heathkit® AS-48... Only \$169.95

- Two custom-designed JBL® speakers • 14" woofer for clear, solid bass response
- 2" direct radiator tweeter delivers clean, transparent highs • Extended 40-20,000 Hz frequency response • Handles up to 50 watts program material • High efficiency permits use with lower power amplifiers • High frequency level control
- Rich pecan finish cabinet • Vertical or horizontal installation • Easy, one evening assembly

Until now, if you wanted a speaker system that performed like a floor system, you bought a floor system . . . and paid the price — in money and less living space. You don't have to anymore . . . we've taken the performance of an expensive, space-consuming floor system and put it on the bookshelf — the new Heathkit AS-48.

Two Custom-Designed Speakers . . . built by famous JBL to Heath's exacting specifications. A 14" woofer is extremely rare in a bookshelf system, but the AS-48 has one — and it really delivers. A massive 11½ pound magnet assembly and a 4" edgewound copper ribbon voice coil combine with a special inert, self-damping cone material to produce clean, crisp bass down to 40 Hz . . . without doubling or annoying distortion from overload. An RLC-type crossover network sends all frequencies above 2000 Hz to the 2" direct radiator tweeter. The combination of a 1¼ pound magnet structure and rigid cone produce natural, un-

colored highs up to 20,000 Hz. The total result is a sound no other bookshelf system can match, at any price.

Engineered For Discriminating Audiophiles. Heath engineers didn't stop with just an excellent choice of speakers for the AS-48. They included a precision, three-position high frequency level control that lets you balance the highs to compensate for room acoustics or speaker placement. A switch is used in place of the usual continuously variable control to insure exact balance between each system. The AS-48 will handle up to 50 watts of program material, making it the ideal system for use with the higher power amplifiers and receivers popular today. It also boasts very high efficiency, and will deliver creditable results when driven with as little as 8 watts. The one-piece ducted port cabinet is another example of total engineering . . . it results in an enclosure that is always "tuned" — air leakage through the back panel is eliminated. Assembly is also made easier . . . all components mount from the front of the rich pecan finish cabinet, and the AS-48 goes together in an evening. Measures only 14" high x 23½" wide x 12" deep . . . installs either vertically or horizontally. Put the superb performance of a floor system on your bookshelf now . . . with the new Heathkit AS-48.

Kit AS-48, 57 lbs. **\$169.95***

The New Heathkit AS-38 Bookshelf System also has JBL speakers . . . a 12" woofer and 2" tweeter. 45-20 kHz response . . . handles up to 40 watts program . . . handsome walnut finish.



Kit AS-38, 49 lbs. **\$144.95***



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Please send FREE 1969 Heathkit catalog.

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HF-224

CIRCLE 29 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

NEWS & VIEWS

Continued from page 28

in order that the consumer may know exactly what he is comparing. (Fisher Radio, for example, lists output in four different ways for some of its models, thus enabling buyers to make the comparison no matter what systems the competition may use.) Presumably, the Federal Trade Commission would be the agency to set the guidelines as a matter of consumer protection.

We can't help feeling it's a pity that consumers—particularly those who know little or nothing about audio—have placed such blind faith in power ratings as an index of quality. That numbers game is deceptively and attractively simple as a way of making purchasing decisions: and it's hard to blame manufacturers if, in rating their products, they tell it like we demand to hear it rather than like it is. Instead, perhaps we should blame our own slavishness to oversimplification.

GOOD MUSIC AND THE PROFIT PICTURE

It's no news that it becomes increasingly difficult to find fine music on FM. As this is being written, the FCC faces two decisions that could have a profound effect on the future of FM programming as it relates to the economics of station management and its quest for reasonable (or unreasonable) profits.

KFAC is the only full-time classical music station in the Los Angeles area. Its AM and FM operations were sold last May, although the FCC has postponed approval of the sale while the commissioners discuss a proposal to prevent sale of multiple broadcast properties in a single market (such as KFAC-AM and KFAC-FM) to a single buyer.

The purpose of the proposal is to foster diversity within broadcasting. In this case, it appears to threaten Angelenos with the opposite effect. Station officials claim that neither the FM outlet nor its AM counterpart could make ends meet independently as a full-time good-music operation: alone, each would have to seek a tried-and-true format (and lower musical standards) to stay in business. But, at this writing, the FCC was still sitting on its plans.

Likewise, the commission had not yet ruled on the case of WGKA, Atlanta. The good-music station was bought not long ago by Strauss Broadcasting, which promptly changed the format to top-40, leaving Atlanta without full-time good music although it is an increasingly culture-conscious city. The result was vociferous public reaction lead by the Broadcast Good Music! Committee, which petitioned the FCC to restore the old format on the ground that the public interest was not being served by the change.

The station's new management, on the other hand, pleads economic hardship from trying to service what it considers to be the unprofitable good-music market. In a proposal to the BGM!C, corporation president Robert Strauss has asked the committee, in effect, to guarantee the station a healthy income as the price for reversion to the classics—an income the committee claims is more than ten times what the station's own salesmen have been able to produce even with the more "competitive" format.

It may be significant that WOMN (AM only) in nearby Decatur jumped into the breach with a new format of light classics and in a short time has rounded up enough advertising to break even, according to the BGM!C.

"You see!" says the committee.

"So what?" would appear to be the Strauss reply.

Only the FCC is (so far) saying nothing.

EQUIPMENT *in the* NEWS

MORE CASSETTERY FROM SONY

Superscope has announced Sony Model TC 124 CS, a stereo cassette system with a built-in monitor speaker and two matching external speakers for stereo listening. The recorder, which runs on AC or batteries, has automatic level control and is equipped with a Model F-99S stereo microphone with its own stop-start switch. Recorder, speakers, and accessories pack into a black vinyl briefcase-style carrying case. The TC 124 CS complete costs \$199.50; minus the extension speakers and the carrying case, it is sold as the TC 124 at \$169.50.

CIRCLE 147 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

A LADY CALLED MAGNIFICENT

Altec seems to have ambivalent feelings about the word "model" these days. When it issued its newest (meaning the speaker), dimensions were listed as 44-25-32 ("the perfect shape," according to promotional copy). Known as The Magnificent, in more prosaic terms it's the Model A7-500W-11. The A7-500 refers to the model number of the Altec "Voice of the Theatre" driver system inside The Magnificent; the rest of the new model number specifies the oiled walnut enclosure. Price is \$537.

CIRCLE 155 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



SHERWOOD ADDS A RECEIVER MODEL

New to the Sherwood line is the S-7600a AM/FM receiver, rated by Sherwood at 100 watts for 4-ohm loads. Two unusual features on its front panel are the calibrated loudness control and variable muting or squelch (called "hush" by Sherwood). Other controls include bass, treble, balance, AM/FM/phono switch, monitor/aux. switch, loudness defeat switch, and separate on/off switches for main and remote outputs. The price is \$359.50.

CIRCLE 148 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

MULTIFEATURES ON A BUDGET

Lafayette has introduced a low-cost (\$139.95) stereo tape recorder with such features as sound-on-sound, sound-with-sound, pause control, built-in 5-watt monitor (two 3- by 5-inch speakers) plus provision for extension speakers, and three-speed operation. Two 600-ohm dynamic mikes are included and can be stored in the accessory compartment of the carrying case.

CIRCLE 156 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Continued on page 32

Incomparable...



Heathkit® AR-15 AM-FM Stereo Receiver

Dozens of new stereo receivers debut every year and all claim simultaneous occupation of that singular pinnacle — perfection. Admittedly, some of the very expensive receivers are good . . . at the time of their introduction. Few manufacturers would have the confidence to suggest that the same product still retains its grasp on perfection two years later.

We do.

Heath introduced the AR-15 almost two years ago, and we still advertise it as "Incomparable" . . . for the simple reason that it still is. It is so undeniably advanced that others have just recently begun to adopt some of the features Heath innovated two years ago . . . the crystal filter/integrated circuit combinations that deliver ideal selectivity and never require alignment . . . the massive 150 watt amplifier with its superb frequency response and ultra-low IM and harmonic distortion . . . the use of two accurate tuning meters for exact station selection . . . the readily accessible, but hidden secondary controls . . . the elaborate noise-operated squelch circuit that quiets between-station noise before you hear it. Many have tried, but no one has succeeded in designing a receiver with all the performance, features and value of the Heathkit AR-15.

In the next column are some of the specifications that have made the Heathkit AR-15 the world's fastest selling, most highly praised AM-FM Stereo Receiver in the history of the industry. Every leading audio critic, every major electronics editor, leading consumer testing labs and thousands of owners agree that the AR-15 represents the ultimate available today in a solid-state receiver. Compare these specifications with those of other receivers — compare the prices — compare the critical analyses made by the experts. You'll find that the Heathkit AR-15 is, in a word, incomparable.

Kit AR-15, (less cabinet), 34 lbs. \$339.95*
 Assembled ARW-15, (less cabinet), 34 lbs. \$525.00*
 Assembled AE-16, optional walnut cabinet, 10 lbs. \$24.95*

AR-15 SPECIFICATIONS

AMPLIFIER:	
Continuous Power Output	100 watts into 8 ohms (50 watts/channel)
IHF power output	150 watts into 8 ohms (75 watts/channel)
Frequency Response	+0, -1 dB, 6 Hz to 50 kHz
THD (full power output on both channels)	Less than .5% from 20 Hz - 20 kHz Less than .2% @ 1 kHz
IM Distortion	Less than .5% (full output, both channels) Less than .2% (1 watt output)
Phono Input Sensitivity	2.2 mV (overload 155 mV)
FM:	
Sensitivity	Less than 1.8 uV
Volume Sensitivity	Below measurable level
Selectivity	Better than 70 dB
Image Rejection	Better than 90 dB
IF Rejection	Better than 90 dB
Capture Ratio	Better than 1.5 dB
THD	.5% or less
IM Distortion	.5% or less
Spurious Rejection	Better than 100 dB
FM Stereo:	
Separation	40 dB or greater @ middle frequencies 30 dB or greater @ 50 Hz 25 dB or greater @ 10 kHz 20 dB or greater @ 15 kHz
Frequency Response	± 1 dB 20 Hz to 15 kHz
THD	1% or less @ 1 kHz with 100% modulation
19 kHz & 38 kHz Suppression	55 dB or greater
SCA Suppression	50 dB



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Please send FREE Heathkit Catalog.

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HF-223

CIRCLE 29 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



REVOX MARKETS A77

Revox Corp.—recently formed by the European parent company to market its new A77 tape recorder—has assigned U.S. prices to the line. There are five basic models of the A77. One is a portable with output (monitor) amplifiers and speakers. The other four models are decks: with choice of wooden or metal case, and with or without amplifiers. All are available with 4-track or 2-track heads. Features of the A77 include plug-in electronics, servo-controlled capstan motor, switchable mike input impedances. For 7½/3¼-ips deck models, the price is \$499 with metal case, \$529 with wooden case; plug-in output amps cost \$70 per pair extra. The portable model will sell for \$630. Prices for 2-track models are the same as for 4-track. High-speed models (15/17½-ips) cost \$100 extra.

CIRCLE 151 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



C/M BY THE NUMBERS

When it was shown in prototype at last fall's hi-fi shows, C/M Laboratories' Model 804 was described as an FM channel selector (as opposed to a tuner) because each channel is individually tuned and crystal-controlled, making conventional tuning (and mistuning) across the FM band impossible. Instead of the conventional dial, there is a bank of digital read-out tubes on which channel frequencies show up. Channels can be advanced manually one at a time or in fast bursts (it takes five seconds to sweep the entire band). Or the dial can be swept automatically, to stop only when a station is encountered. A remote control jack will make possible preprogramming of an entire evening's listening. Production models, now going out to dealers, sell for \$1,050.

CIRCLE 153 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

HIGHBOY FROM HARTLEY

Concertmaster VI is the latest loudspeaker system from Hartley Products Corp. It stands 40½ inches high and uses a 24-inch woofer with a 14-pound magnet. A 10-inch driver handles the midrange, and a 7-inch tweeter reproduces the highs. Cones of all three speakers are made of polymer. Crossovers are at 300 and 3,000 Hz. Over-all response is listed as 16 to 25,000 Hz \pm 3 dB. Price of the system is \$760. A two-way version is available at \$630.

CIRCLE 152 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



YOU CAN TAKE IT WITH YOU

We played with the idea of titling this item "One if by Land and Two if by Sea" because Scott has announced its new compact system in two ways: (1) for use in autos; and (2) for use in boats. Either way, it's called the Scottie and it is a 12-volt receiver/speaker combination. (It can be powered by regular 120-volt house current as well.) Program material can be derived from the AM/FM tuner section or, with an optional turntable, from records. The Scottie costs \$199.95; the turntable with a magnetic cartridge and diamond stylus, \$59.95.

CIRCLE 150 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

ROBERTS ANNOUNCES CASSETTES

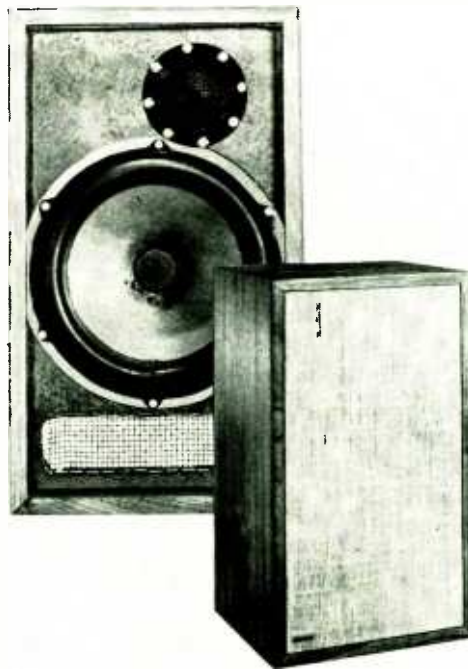
A line of cassette tape recorders has been announced by the Roberts Division of Rheem Mfg. Co., to complement its open-reel and 8-track tape equipment. The model pictured here is an AC/DC portable. Walnut-cased decks and recorders combined with AM/FM radios will also be included in the line. Complete details, including prices, have yet to be announced.

CIRCLE 154 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

FERROGRAPH REAPPEARS

Elpa Marketing Industries recently announced that it would be handling the Ferrograph tape recorder line, made in Britain and intermittently sold in the U.S. over the last twenty years. The new Series Seven recorder is the focus of Elpa's marketing plans. Details of the model and its options have yet to be announced; selling price is expected to be in the \$500 range.

CIRCLE 149 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



\$80 FOR A \$250 SPEAKER ?

Dynaco electronic components have gained wide acceptance because people recognize that Dynaco offers remarkable value—like the quality of a \$300 preamplifier for only \$90. And now we have a loudspeaker system of comparable value—the Dynaco A-25.

This new aperiodic loudspeaker system is just \$79.95, compact (20"x11½"x10" deep), and particularly easy to drive. We call it aperiodic because the Dynaco A-25 is almost literally without resonance, thanks to an acoustic impedance system which provides variable volume action rather than the sealed acoustic suspension box. The aperiodic design contributes markedly improved low frequency

transient response, reduced Doppler effects, and a substantial improvement in effective coupling of the speaker to the amplifier. The A-25's ten-inch extended excursion woofer crosses over at 1500 Hz to a new dome tweeter with a five-step level control.

We suggest an appraisal at your Dynaco dealer. When you hear a solo voice— one of the most critical tests—the articulate naturalness of this speaker will be apparent. When listening to choral groups or orchestras, you will be impressed by the feeling that this is a "big" speaker thanks to its outstanding dispersion.

Listen—and you will agree that the A-25 has all the qualities of a \$250 speaker.

dynaco inc.

3060 JEFFERSON ST., PHILA., PA. 19121
CABLE ADDRESS: DYNACO PHILADELPHIA, USA

CIRCLE 21 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

By Robert Long

TURNTABLES

Renaissance of the Manual?

FOR SEVERAL SEASONS, a look at the new turntables has shown much the same picture—added features, added refinements, added sophistication. But this year, if our own private almanac is any guide, there may be real news in the making.

The turntable field has been solidly dominated by the quality changers—or automatic turntables, as their manufacturers prefer to call them in recognition of the fact that “changers” have been made to meet specifications supposed impossible a decade ago. Cumulative critical comment on recent automatics has placed them within the circle of the elect among record-playing devices. The fact was reassuring both to the over-thirty generation brought up on 78-rpm albums and conditioned to changers, and to a newer generation of listeners seeking convenience with high performance.

And convenient the automatic is. A three-disc opera in automatic sequence requires only one trip to the changer in midstream to turn over the stack. But a great many records—be they Barbra or Beethoven—are best played manually. Original-cast show albums, for example, are generally released on two sides of a single twelve-inch LP; if you want to hear the whole show in uninterrupted sequence, you have to turn over the disc. Again, many symphonies and concertos in the standard repertoire require two record sides and thus cannot be stacked. As a result, many automatics are used mainly as manuals, and may have a replaceable single play spindle.

Still, buying an automatic is not a waste. What with built-in cueing, automatic arm return, and more refined tone arms generally (once available only on strictly manual turntables), the best of the changers do an excellent job—as manual players. Changing records, in fact, may be the one job that the serious listener requires them to do least of all—and even may make some changers falter.

While the automatics have sold well and re-



ceived the lion's share of attention over these past few years, some manuals (notably AR's) have remained popular—particularly with buyers interested primarily in good sound for a minimum investment. Perhaps encouraged by this phenomenon, manufacturers are showing a surge of interest in the manual player. Bogen, Empire, Pioneer, Sony Corp. of America, Teac, and Thorens all have brought out new models. It would appear that the manual-makers want to get back some of the business siphoned off by the best automatics. But will they succeed?

Let's look first at what they're offering. To begin with a familiar name, Bogen is introducing its B75, an updated model in the Swiss-manufactured Lenco line. In principle, the Lenco-Bogen B75 is similar to previous models: it has the infinitely variable speed control with detents for the four standard speeds and an integrated arm. The arm, however, is entirely new. It has a stylus force adjustment calibrated in half-gram increments, adjustable anti-skating, and stylus overhang adjustment—all new features for Lenco. Power switch and cueing now are controlled by separate levers, and the entire unit has been restyled. Price is under \$130.

Another grand old name in turntables is Thorens—also manufactured in Switzerland, and sold here by Elpa. While moderate cost has always been a selling point of the Lenco-Bogens, Thorens has been long identified with ultrahigh quality and prices to match. Its new TD-135 is in that tradition, costing \$185 not including a tone arm. (Like the classic TD-124, the TD-125 provides a wooden mounting board at one side of the turntable base that must be drilled to accommodate a separate arm.) The big advance in the new model is its motor, which Elpa describes as a rock-steady servo-controlled 16-pole synchronous job. The choice of speeds provided is rather unusual, incidentally: where some manufacturers have been dropping 16 rpm from 4-speed turntables for 3-speed models, Thorens drops 78.

Three names relatively new to turntables (in this country, at least) are Pioneer, Sony, and Teac—and all are showing manual turntables with integrated arms. Pioneer displayed both the PL-25 and PL-41

Our new Associate Editor Robert Long has covered the high fidelity field both as Editor of High Fidelity Trade News and as Features Editor of Electronics Illustrated.

players at last fall's hi-fi shows. The PL-25's arm included a cartridge and featured automatic arm return at the end of the record. The PL-41 was available as the PL-41F, providing neither base nor cartridge but featuring oil-damped cueing and similar hallmarks of quality design. Later this year, Pioneer is expected to introduce an updated model of the PL-41F, the PL-41C.

Sony Corp. of America has a new model: the PS-1800. Like Sony's previous turntable, it is servo-controlled. In addition it has a cueing device, anti-skating, and automatic arm return (accomplished, Sony says, without mechanical drag on the arm by use of a magnetic diode as a sensing device to trip the return mechanism—which also can be tripped manually from outside the case). Its integral arm accepts any make cartridge. Teac, on the other hand, provides a cartridge with both its models that include arms (and throws in an enclosure, even for the model without an arm, the TN-80C): the TS-80's cartridge has a 0.5-mil stylus, the TS-85's a 0.2 x 0.7-mil elliptical stylus and its arm is equipped with antiskating. All have cueing, stylus force adjustment, and other convenience features.

Other manufacturers of separate arms, too, have shown signs of new efforts to please the buying public. The lion's share of attention recently has gone to the Rabco servo-drive tangent-tracking system; other recent models include the Audio & Design mercury-contact arm from England and several models from smaller Japanese companies.

Marantz has broadened the appeal of its zero-tracking-error SLT-12 by changing the arm to accept any pickup cartridge; the model with the new arm is called SLT-12U. Other modifications have also been made (see "Too Hot To Handle," page 26).

There are indications that at least two other companies—Sansui and Goldring—will introduce manual turntable/arm ensembles later this year.

Empire has made no sweeping changes, but has added antiskating to its arm, now known as the 980A, which it offers both separately and built into its turntable models 398A, 488A, and 498A. The "A" in these model numbers specifies the anti-skating feature.

All this is not to say that nothing is happening among the changer-makers. But the upgrading of automatics in recent years seems to have found its state-of-the-art level. Dual, Miracord, Garrard, and BSR all have concentrated on adding moderate-priced middle-of-the-road models or (particularly on the part of BSR, which has, for example, damped the arm so that it lands more gently on the record surface) quietly upgrading existing models.

Garrard's line, for example, has only one recent addition: the Module SLx-2—a combination of changer, magnetic cartridge, and base apparently intended to appeal to the convenience-minded buyer on a budget.

JVC Nivico (Victor Co. of Japan) has done much the same thing with its two new changers (models 5201 and 5203—both of which include magnetic



Among the new manual turntables are (from top to bottom) the Teac TS-85, Lenco-Bogen B75, Pioneer PL-41F, and Sony PS-1800. All are shown with dust cover and base—typical of the direction the new models are taking.

HIGH FIDELITY TURNTABLES —

Manufacturer	Model	Manual (* auto. arm return)	Changer (* size intermix)	Speeds ¹ (* adjustable)	Arm	Cueing	Min. recom. tracking	Track- ing force gauge	Anti- skating	Other arm features	Price	Notes
Acoustic Research	AR-XA	X		2	Integ.						\$ 78.00	Model TA, 33 rpm only, \$75.
Allied Radio	929		X	4	Integ.	X			X		69.95	
	919		X	4	Integ.	X			X		49.95	
BSR McDonald	600		X	4	Integ.	X	1 gr.	X	X		74.50	
	500A		X	4	Integ.	X	1 gr.	X	X		59.50	
	400		X	4	Integ.	X	1 gr.	X	X		49.50	
Dual (United Audio)	1019		X	4*	Integ.	X	½ gr.	X	X	Overhang adj.	129.50	
	1009F		X	3*	Integ.	X	½ gr.	X	X	Overhang adj.	109.50	
	1015F		X	3*	Integ.	X	1 gr.	X	X	Overhang adj.	89.50	
	1212		X	3*	Integ.	X	1 gr.	X	X	Overhang adj.	74.50	
Empire Scientific	208	X		3	None ²						125.00	Model 398A, with 980A arm, \$199.95
	488A	X		3	Integ.		½ gr.	X	X	Overhang adj.	179.95	Model 498A, with base, \$189.95
Garrard (British Industries)	SL95		X	3	Integ.	X	½ gr.	X	X		129.50	
	SL75		X	4	Integ.	X	½ gr.	X	X		109.50	
	SL65		X*	4	Integ.	X	½ gr.	X	X		79.50	
	SL55		X*	4	Integ.	X		X			59.50	
	40 Mk. II		X	4	Integ.			X			44.50	
	Model 30		X	4	Integ.			X			39.50	Includes ceramic cartridge, diamond styli
	SP20	X*		4	Integ.			X			37.50	
	SLx-2		X	3	Integ.	X		X			69.50	Includes base, cover, magnetic cartridge
JVC Nivico	5201		X	4	Integ.			X			89.95	Includes magnetic cartridge, diamond stylus, base, cover
	5203		X	4	Integ.						69.95	Includes magnetic cartridge, diamond stylus, base, cover
Lenco (Bogen)	B75	X		4*	Integ.	X	½ gr.	X	X	Overhang adj.		Includes base, cover (Price not available at press time)
	B62	X		4*	Integ.	X	1½ gr.				67.95	
Marantz	SLT-12U	X*		2	Integ.	X				Tangent tracking (no skating force)	295.00	
Miracord (Benjamin)	PW-50H		X	4	Integ.	X	½ gr.	X	X	Overhang adj.	149.50	
	PW-630		X	4	Integ.	X	1 gr.	X	X	Overhang adj.	119.50	
	PW-620		X	4	Integ.	X	1 gr.	X	X	Overhang adj.	89.50	
PE (Perpetuum Ebner/Elpa)	PE-2020		X	4	Integ.	X	½ gr.	X	X	Vert. angle adj.	129.95	

A Guide to Current Models

Manufacturer	Model	([*] auto. arm return) Manual	([*] size Intermix) Changer	Speeds ¹ ([*] adjustable)	Arm	Cueing	Min. recom. tracking	Tracking force gauge	Anti-skating	Other arm features	Price	Notes
Pioneer	PL-41F	X		2	Integ.	X	½ gr.	X		Overhang adj.	199.95	
Radio Shack	Lab 24		X	4	Integ.	X		X			69.95	Includes magnetic cartridge, diamond stylus
	Lab 12		X	4	Integ.	X		X			49.95	Includes magnetic cartridge, diamond stylus
Rek-O-Kut (Koss Electronics)	B-16H	X		3	None ²						275.00	
	B-12H	X		3	None ²						175.00	
	B-12GH	X		3	None ²						124.95	
Seeburg	AP-2		X	1	Integ.		2½ gr.				695.00	Automatic record programming; includes cartridge
Sony Corp. of America	PS-1800	X*		2*	Integ.	X		X	X		199.50	Includes base, cover
Teac	TS-80C	X		2	None ²	X					144.50	
	TS-85	X		2	Integ.	X	1½-2 gr.	X			299.50	Includes magnetic cartridge, diamond stylus, base, cover
Telefunken	W-250		X	4	Integ.	X	½ gr.	X	X	Vert. angle adj.	224.95	Includes magnetic cartridge, diamond styli, base
	TW-509 Studio TV		X	4	Integ.						129.95	Includes magnetic cartridge, sapphire styli (replaceable with diamonds)
Thorens (Elpa)	TD-125	X		3* ¹	None ² (mount. board)						185.00	
	TD-124 Ser. II	X		4*	None ² (mount. board)						149.50	
	TD-150	X		2	None ²						85.00	Model TD-150AB with base and integral arm, \$99.75

GENERAL NOTES:

1. **Speeds** Single-speed turntables invariably operate at 33; two-speed models at 33 and 45. All three-speed models offer 33, 45, and 78 except the Thorens TD-125 which has 16, 33, and 45. Four-speed turntables all operate at 16, 33, 45, and 78.

2. **Separate arms** Several of the manufacturers offering turntables without integrated arms also sell separate arms; notably Empire, Rek-O-Kut, Sony, and Thorens. In addition, the following separate arms are available: ADC (Audio Dynamics), Audio & Design (IMF), Euphonic, Goldring (IMF), Olson, Ortofon (Elpa), Rabco, SME (Shure Bros.).

3. **Extras** In preparing this table, we have tried to list only the basic models — the turntable without arm, base, mounting board, dust cover, or other extras — when available. Many models are not sold in such a simple format, however; and several are available in a number of choices. Prices, therefore, cannot be compared on a model-to-model basis without careful reference to the extras each includes.

cartridges), adding Stereo-8 tape cartridge players in the base of some models. Also part of this trend towards prepackaging are the similar combinations offered by Telefunken and such retailers as Lafayette and Radio Shack.

The fact that automatics no longer are entering the market at the breakneck pace characteristic two or three years ago leads us to conclude that manufacturers believe they have caught up with each other's refinements. In fact, the upgrading in their products has been astonishing.

The success of the automatics finally seems to have destroyed what could be called the smug sense of superiority that used to characterize the purveyors (and purchasers) of manuals—transcription turntables as they were called then. Now the manuals are making a bid to catch up. If they can succeed in incorporating the engineering refinements of the best automatics, the convenience features of all automatics (less, of course, the changer function), and at competitive prices, we doubtless will be hearing much more of them.

Features to Look For in a High Fidelity Turntable

THE TURNTABLE ITSELF

Platter: Time was when rule-of-thumb suggested that the heavier the turntable, the better, since the platter acts as a flywheel to even out irregularities of motion. New motor designs and servo systems are making that concept obsolete. Good platter balance too can be achieved in a number of ways (it is something like balancing auto wheels, except that turntables usually are machined or drilled to remove metal rather than being fitted with weights). Wow-and-flutter figures tell the story better than any advertising claims about extra weight or dynamic balancing.

Drive System: Variations in speed can be introduced by belts as well as idler wheels, although belt drive has established the better reputation. Once again, specs for wow-and-flutter and rumble tell the real story.

Motor: Much the same considerations apply to motor design. The lack of standardized nomenclature and the proliferation of elaborate proprietary phrases to characterize motor design tend to obscure the real issue—steady, accurate, reliable, and quiet drive. In addition to wow-and-flutter and rumble figures, pay attention to speed accuracy specs if you want to know how good a turntable is. A high-quality turntable should not vary more than 0.5 per cent.

Speed Control: Most turntables give you a choice of speeds, each within whatever degree of accuracy the designers can manage. If the speed is off at the nominal setting chosen, you are out of luck unless the unit is equipped with a speed adjustment. Not only will the turntable distort both tempo and pitch of the music, but you will have a real problem when you try to play a piano (or other instrument that is difficult to tune) with one of those accompaniment-only records. If you do, be sure to get a model with a speed adjustment.

Automatic Features: Some automatic turntables will intermix record sizes in the same stack. Since few ten-inch LPs remain on the market, even in Europe, you may not be interested in the intermix feature. Some manuals have adopted one feature of the automatics: automatic arm return at the end of the record side, thereby eliminating the continuous swooshing of a pickup allowed to remain in the locked groove at the end, and reducing the danger of damaging records by careless handling of the arm.

THE INTEGRATED TONE ARM

Mounting: An integrated arm solves the problem of installing a separate arm. Geometry and craftsmanship of such mounting can be ticklish, especially if you want to use a turntable from company A and an arm from company B. Some manufacturers of separate turntables offer them with a mounting panel that has

predrilled holes for a separate arm, their own. This approach simplifies the job of installing a separate arm.

Cueing: A cueing control lowers and raises the arm gently but positively, without relying on your unsteady hand. It can prevent a lot of scratches, especially if you like to pick and choose among the bands on a record side.

Tracking Force: The tone arms in most quality automatics and just about all manuals will accept almost any pickup cartridge, no matter how small its recommended tracking force. In the least expensive changers, however, the extremely light tracking forces of today's best cartridges will not provide enough thrust in arm movement to trigger the change cycle. The answer is, of course, to choose a cartridge with a high enough recommended tracking force to do the job. Less obvious—and more difficult to determine with most products—is the range of cartridge weights the arm will accept. If possible, it is a good idea to try cartridge and arm together to make sure that the counterbalance system will accommodate the combination. Then tracking force should be set according to the recommendation of the cartridge manufacturer but never lower than the minimum recommended by the maker of the changer or integrated-arm manual. If you choose a model using a spring (instead of a weight) to set tracking force, be sure to check it periodically. Springs tend to stretch, changing the force they exert.

Antiskating: The drag produced by the record groove as it slides under the stylus is not in line with the axis of the arm's bearings. The result, with today's low-friction bearings, is a tendency for the pickup to move (skate) towards the center of the record, producing uneven pressures—and wear—on the two walls of the groove. [For a further discussion of this subject, see Daniel Gravereaux's article in this issue, page 39.] Antiskating applies a reverse torque to the arm, correcting the skating tendency. In some integrated arms it is set manually, according to a table of recommendations provided by the manufacturer; in some of the newer arms it sets itself automatically when you set the stylus force gauge, since skating force is related to tracking force.

Cartridge adjustments: A few of the newer arms allow for precise cartridge positioning to achieve optimum performance. Most common is stylus overhang adjustment, which permits sliding the pickup a short distance in its shell to achieve minimum tracking error. More esoteric is vertical angle adjustment, which cants the cartridge to bring the vertical tracking angle as close as possible to the ideal 15°. You will find this adjustment in very few automatics; vertical angle varies on a changer with the number of records stacked on the turntable.

HOW WE TEST

TURNTABLES, ARMS, AND CHANGERS

BY DANIEL GRAVEREAUX

The performance criteria and test methods described here are those used by the author and his associates at CBS Laboratories in preparing data for HIGH FIDELITY's equipment reports.

ALTHOUGH IT IS the stereo cartridge, or pickup, that transforms record-groove modulations into the electrical signal which eventually becomes the sound you hear from your speakers, its two "silent partners"—the turntable and tone arm—exert a significant influence on that sound. The better they are designed, the better they enable the listener to enjoy fully a modern stereo recording. Basically, the turntable must rotate the disc at constant and accurate speed in a vibrationless manner. For its part, the arm must let the cartridge track the record correctly. Anything less than complete passivity on the part of the arm can become a source of mistracking and consequently of distortion and accelerated record wear.

At CBS Laboratories we measure the factors that influence both the sound and the mechanical operation of a turntable and arm. From a high fidelity standpoint, the same criteria apply—whether these two components appear separately or are integrated. Specifically, we check for turntable rumble, wow and flutter, speed accuracy, tone-arm/stylus resonance, arm friction, and the accuracy of pressure gauges (if supplied). In addition, we check special features as applicable—such as cycling and handling of records by an automatic changer, or the effectiveness of built-in cueing devices, and so on.

Turtable Rumble

The low-pitched noise called rumble originates as a voltage generated by a turntable's vibration. It can prove very annoying: not only can you hear it, but

rumble may overload amplifiers and loudspeakers sufficiently to produce distortion.

The so-called standard method of measuring rumble (developed in 1949 by the National Association of Broadcasters) requires that the rumble voltage output be measured directly. While the pickup plays an unmodulated (or "blank") groove, the equalized voltage output from the system is filtered from 10 Hz to 500 Hz, and the rumble level is read on an rms voltmeter. The rumble is given in dB with reference to a signal of 1.4 centimeters per second peak on a test record. Since the system is flat over the bandpass stated, each rumble component, regardless of frequency, adds to the total level.

The method of measuring rumble we have developed at CBS Labs, on the other hand, describes more accurately the way rumble is actually heard. Known as the ARLL method (for Audible Rumble Loudness Level), it takes into account not only the level of a signal but also its frequency. A special filter—a composite of the equal-loudness contour and the NAB filter—is connected between the preamplifier and the rms voltmeter. As in the NAB method, the ARLL rumble is measured in dB with reference to 1.4 cm/sec peak velocity. This reading tells us how loud the rumble is. Thus, if two turntables have identical NAB rumble levels but different ARLL measurements, then you can assume that rumble voltages, although identical in level, have different frequencies. And the turntable with the lower ARLL will be a quieter unit.

We use the blank grooves on CBS Laboratories Record STR-120 to measure turntable rumble. By means of a calibrated system, the rumble voltages are passed through the filters and their dB value measured directly on the meter. A typically good turntable will have an ARLL rumble of -50 dB, which

corresponds roughly to -30 by the NAB method. In *HF Equipment Reports* we give the former figure.

Speed Accuracy

If a recording's musical pitch and tempo are to be reproduced accurately, the disc must be spun by the turntable at the correct speed (the right number of revolutions per minute). For instance, a change of 2 rpm in the playing of a 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ -rpm disc would represent a semitone change in pitch and a 7% change of tempo—which would of course distort the performer's intention.

The speed of a turntable usually is affected somewhat by the AC voltage powering it. But inasmuch as the relationship between speed and voltage is not linear, relatively large variations in AC power voltage produce only small changes in speed. In good turntables a voltage change from 105 volts to 127 volts (which approximates the normal 120-volt line supply plus 6%, minus 12%) typically produces less than 1% change in speed.

At CBS Laboratories, we clock the turntable speed at 105, 120, and 127 volts. Thus we obtain both the speed accuracy and the effects of line-voltage variations. If the turntable has a speed-adjustment knob, the unit is set to exactly 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm when the AC line voltage is 120 volts. We next measure speed accuracy with the turntable switched to any other speed settings it may have (45, 78, and 16 $\frac{2}{3}$ rpm). As a final check, we readjust the line voltage (105, 120, and 127 volts) and repeat our readings. Our test procedure involves playing a test record which has a band modulated with a precise 1-kHz tone. The pickup's output is measured on a frequency meter. If the measured frequency is 1% high, then the turntable's rpm is similarly 1% fast, and so on. This measurement, we have found, is highly accurate. As is true of any performance measurement, the lower the error detected, the better. From a high fidelity standpoint an outside limit for turntable speed accuracy would be 1%.

Wow and Flutter

Wow and flutter both describe short-term variations in the rotational speed of the turntable—that is, the average speed may be correct though the instantaneous speed is not. "Wow" aptly describes a relatively slow variation in rpm; its rate is confined to between $\frac{1}{2}$ Hz and 10 Hz, and its audible effect is the introduction of variations in musical pitch. "Flutter," a faster speed variation covering from 10 Hz to 300 Hz, can destroy the clarity of the reproduced music, and actually sounds like a form of electronic distortion.

Many factors must be very carefully considered in designing a turntable capable of achieving low wow and flutter. Most notably, all idlers, motors, shafts, and pulleys must be truly round and concentric;

bearings must be precisely machined and completely free-moving; flywheels must be balanced. Heavy turntables, with either rubber puck or belt drive, naturally tend to reduce wow and flutter by mechanically filtering out the variations contributed by the turntable motor, pulleys, or idlers; if a rubber puck is used, it must be precise and concentric to avoid creating "thumping" sounds. Pucks and other rubber wheels should be disengaged automatically from contact with metal parts when the turntable is stopped, in order to prevent the formation of a flat spot.

Wow and flutter are measured together with a frequency-change detector called the wow-and-flutter meter. A special test record, CBS Laboratories BTR-150, provides a 3-kHz tone. The wow-and-flutter meter, connected to the output of the pre-amplifier, measures the variations in speed—that is, the changes in pitch of the 3-kHz tone. Slow variations indicate wow; rapid variations, flutter. These are indicated as a percentage change of the 3-kHz tone.

On a typically good turntable—manual or automatic—the total amount of wow and flutter will be less than 0.1% rms, although some experts hold that the threshold of audibility of these speed variations is in the neighborhood of 0.3%. In any event, wow and flutter figures higher than this value indicate an undesirable unit.

Tone Arm Resonance

The term "tone arm" is one of those recurrent misnomers in audio usage. Actually it should really be "toneless arm" inasmuch as this component should contribute no sound of its own but merely permit the cartridge it is holding to generate a signal in accordance with the dictates of the record groove. Unfortunately, the laws of physics dictate otherwise; the arm mass and stylus compliance create a resonance which, if pronounced, can introduce spurious sound and distortion. Thus, an important measurement we make in the lab is of arm resonance, by means of which we can check how much "tone" it is adding to the reproduced sound.

Arm resonance, however, can be gauged only in terms of the specific cartridge used: the fact is that both the stylus compliance and the arm's mass interact to create the low-frequency peak in the response that we call the "arm resonance." Other factors influencing this resonance include the damping (if any) of the arm, and the friction in its pivots. The effects of resonance can vary from insignificant to excessive, depending on the frequency at which the resonance occurs and the amplitude it reaches.

As a rule, the resonant frequency occurs below the audio band but within the turntable's rumble frequency region (below 20 Hz). Thus, the resonance—especially if its amplitude is initially rather high, say 10 dB or more—can reinforce the rumble which, amplified through a wide-range reproducing system,



The author checks stylus force, standard preliminary to any turntable test. Signal from test record is fed through equalizer (light panel) to instrumentation that measures speed irregularities from pitch changes.

can then become intolerable to a critical listener. Whether the basic cause of the noise you hear is turntable rumble as such or arm resonance makes little difference—the noise is audible, and objectionable.

Even when the resonance or rumble cannot be heard, either effect can, if pronounced, cause overloading and distortion in the amplifier, or speakers, or both. Finally, a strong low-frequency peak—even if inaudible—can introduce groove-jumping and arm-bouncing. Under such conditions, slight vibrations or mechanical shocks near the turntable will force the arm up and out of the record groove because of the stylus' high impedance at resonance. This effect will be especially noticeable on slightly warped records, which could be played satisfactorily with an arm that had less resonance.

On the other hand, if the arm resonance is confined to a very low frequency (well below 10 Hz) and never reaches an amplitude of more than a few dB, chances are that it will have no damaging effect on the system's performance.

One of the hallmarks of good arm design, from the standpoint of low resonance, is sufficient damping built into the arm so that its low-frequency peak does not exceed 10 dB. To measure low-frequency resonance, we play back the low-frequency sweep bands of CBS Laboratories test record STR-100. A chart recorder automatically plots the low-frequency response voltage, which shows the resonance peak. We can plot such measurements as far down in frequency as 3.3 Hz.

Pivot Friction

Another measurement we make is of pivot friction, the undesirable characteristic which impedes an arm's horizontal and vertical motion. This "dry" or "static" friction (often wryly called "stiction") is very different from viscous friction, which sometimes is intentionally incorporated into arms.

Many high-quality arms have friction forces smaller than 25 milligrams (0.025 grams)—that is, when the tone arm is balanced, a force of 25 milligrams will be sufficient to move it. This exceedingly small force is negligible in determining the vertical tracking force for the stylus required to follow the record grooves properly.

At CBS Laboratories, horizontal friction force is measured by a very sensitive balance consisting of a vertically suspended swing in which the stylus rests. The suspension point of the swing is moved radially inward above the turntable until the arm "breaks loose." From the geometry of the swing, the vertical force on the stylus, and the point of arm motion, we are able to calculate the actual amount of horizontal pivot friction. Then, to determine vertical pivot friction, we add small calibrated weights to the balanced arm and calculate the force required to change its position.

Tracking Force Gauge

Correct setting of the vertical tracking force ("stylus pressure") is important for clean sound and for maximum record life. The use of small-tip radii and elliptical styli makes it imperative that the force not be excessive; but to prevent mistracking, it is equally important that vertical tracking force not be insufficient. An accurate gauge mounted on the tone arm is helpful in making proper, and repeatable, tracking-force adjustments.

There are three systems used to adjust the vertical tracking force: sliding weights, spring tension, and a combination of both. Any system may be used with equal effectiveness on a single-play turntable. On a record changer, however, the vertical position of the arm changes as a stack of records is played. If a spring is used to control the vertical force, the tension may vary from record to record, with a corresponding change in the vertical tracking force. In the better changers, the difference of force from one

disc to a full stack is less than one-tenth of a gram and is insignificant. In poorly designed changers, however, the variation can be one-half gram or more, which does become significant.

To check the accuracy of a built-in stylus-force gauge, we adjust the arm according to the manufacturer's instructions and then read the tracking force directly on a laboratory-accurate gauge. That reading is compared with the indicated marking on the arm being tested.

Antiskating Adjustments

A pivoted arm, because of the friction that develops between stylus tip and record surface, becomes subject to an imbalance of forces that tends to pull the arm in towards the center of the record. The arm thus "wants to" skate towards the spindle; it is of course restrained from doing so by the fact that the stylus is in the record groove. The main function of the stylus, however, is to extract a signal from the groove, and the coincidental restraint it exercises on the arm produces a larger force on the inner groove wall (left channel) than on the outer wall. The result can be unequal stereo response, increased distortion, and unequal wear of the two walls of the record groove, with the inner wall eroding faster.

Tone-arm bias, or antiskating force, provides an outward torque on the arm to counteract the inward skating tendency, and thereby equalizes the stylus force on the walls of the record groove. Tone-arm bias is beneficial for three reasons: first, equal force on each groove wall reduces both record wear and stylus tip wear; second, equalizing the groove force makes it possible to reduce vertical tracking force slightly; third, the operation of both channels of the cartridge under the same force eliminates at least one possible source of nonlinearity of response.

The correct antiskating force to use is determined by the tone arm's geometry and by the stylus/groove friction. The friction itself is controlled by the vertical tracking force and the type, size, and quality of the stylus tip. We assess this complex with the help of strain-gauge techniques. Our data indicates that antiskating forces of between two-tenths and four-tenths the vertical force result in best antiskating action. Thus, if a good-quality pickup can track at 2 grams without the bias, it will track well at 1.2 to 1.6 grams when bias is added.

Incidentally, we find that it is inaccurate to set the bias force by playing a blank portion of a record (no groove) and adjusting the bias for no inward motion of the tone arm. The in-the-groove bias force will be quite different because the two sides of the stylus are in contact with the groove walls and not only the bottom, as with a blank record. Although there is no easy method for adjusting the bias force on your arm without laboratory equipment, an approximate setting may be arrived at by adjusting the bias force for equal mistracking on both channels while playing extremely high-level tones. CBS Lab-

oratories Test Record STR-111 has bands that are above normal recording levels and are thus suitable for this test.

Choosing Your Equipment

When deciding what record-playing equipment to buy, take into consideration two basic questions: the mutual compatibility of the individual components; and the over-all level of performance desired.

The question of compatibility concerns the suitability of a particular cartridge for use in a particular arm. A modern, high-compliance, low-mass pickup—especially if it employs a small conical, or elliptical, stylus tip—really needs what is known as a "refined" arm, one that is capable of very low tracking forces, that has very low friction, and that has very low resonance. (Used in less than such an arm, the pickup bottom may sit on the surface of the record, causing damage both to the record and the stylus.) If the arm has an antiskating provision, so much the better. Beyond these considerations, both arm and cartridge—functioning as a unit—should be compatible with the turntable, at least from the standpoint of not reinforcing, by means of arm/pickup resonances, the machine's inherent rumble, which itself should be as low as possible. Fortunately, most high-quality components work relatively well together even when chosen at random. Correct matching, however, assures the superior level of performance demanded by the perfectionist and consistent with the expenditure of a sizable amount of money.

As for the criteria to keep in mind in order to obtain the performance level one desires, the major factors influencing turntable performance are the audible rumble, speed accuracy, and wow and flutter. The ARLL rumble value lets us know the expected loudness level or rumble; this figure is fairly akin to the signal-to-noise ratio figure given for such components as amplifiers, preamplifiers, and tuners. The lower the figure, the better the unit. In terms of dB, this means that -60dB rumble is less audible than -50 dB rumble.

Speed accuracy and low wow and flutter are also very important, since they largely determine the clarity of reproduced music. Speed accuracy of better than 1% and wow and flutter measurements less than 0.1% are obtainable in today's better equipment: lower values of course are always desirable for optimum performance.

Whether the record player consists of a separate turntable and arm or is an integrated turntable/arm combination (which category includes record changers, or—as they are more fashionably called today—"automatic turntables"), its specifications, or performance characteristics, are measurable. Whichever general type of record-playing equipment one buys, choice of a specific model should be based on the objective evaluation of those characteristics, along with personal preferences in such matters as individual features and price.



Sovfoto

Shostakovich's Symphonies

An Appraisal of the Music and the Recordings

BY ROYAL S. BROWN

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH must be considered as one of the twentieth century's major symphonists; yet—in spite of the devoted cults and rabid anticults built up around him—it is only recently that all thirteen of his symphonies have become available on recordings. (Today, in fact, the enterprising Shostakovich fanatic can, if he has access to foreign markets, obtain at least two recorded versions of each of the symphonies.)

The relative ease with which the Russian composer's entire symphonic *oeuvre* can now be heard should help greatly in bringing these works down from the level of myth to the musical level where they belong. In view of the many flamboyant biographical details that have marked their evolution, the temptation is great to treat them like episodes in a James Bond film, with the music itself providing little more than a soundtrack. But if one listens carefully to the symphonies, one becomes increasingly aware that there is a definite *musical* evolution in their language, as there is in the style of almost any great symphonist. It also

A renegade music student (he studied in Paris and received a B.A. in music from Penn State), Mr. Brown is now a member of the Department of Romance Languages at New York's Queens College.

becomes clear, furthermore, that the turning point of this evolution is the composer's Fourth Symphony and not his Fifth, as is so often assumed.

Many people have seen in the very fact of Shostakovich's musical evolution a sign of capitulation to the governmental Philistines who have so often condemned his music in the Soviet Union. But for all the almost schizophrenic variations and changes of mood that appear from one symphony to the next, and even within a single work, a totally original style underlies most of the symphonies, giving them an over-all unity that makes accusations of about-face seem greatly exaggerated.

Symphony No. 1, Op. 10

There is scarcely a technique in any of Shostakovich's symphonies that is not announced somewhere in the First Symphony, which the composer began in 1924—when he was only nineteen—as a graduation piece for the Leningrad Conservatory. It is already evident in this early work that the orchestra was to become the vehicle *par excellence* of Shostakovich's musical thought. Listening to the Symphony, one has the impression of looking through a sharply focused but off-center kaleidoscope; through the use of extremely angular and often asymmetrical melodies and rhythms, a brilliantly varied instrumentation, and any number of unexpected shifts in direction, Shostakovich maintains a state of consistent unbalance, a characteristic pervading his entire symphonic output and responsible for both the humor and the drama that so strongly distinguish it.

It is the humor, in the form of grotesquerie and irony, that prevails in the First Symphony, in spite of its rather lyrical and tragic third movement. The story is told that Shostakovich was once provoked by the last movement of the Tchaikovsky Fourth Symphony to write the word "shame" on the score, and it would seem that Shostakovich's First Symphony is, more than anything else, aggressively antiromantic. The ending of the Scherzo, for instance, with its false climaxes hammered out on the piano and its death rattle in the final notes, obviously represents a rather nasty dig at the overblown codas of the romantic symphony.

Like many of Shostakovich's symphonies, the First presents the conductor with the problem of whether or not to observe the sometimes hard-to-believe metronome markings in the score, which here often seem ridiculously fast. The over-all humor and irony of the First Symphony depend to a large extent on the detail of the work, no matter how exhilarating the tempos may be. From this point of view, the matter-of-fact performances by Ormandy (Columbia MS 6124) and Silvestri (Monitor S 2077) can be eliminated, although the Columbia version is coupled with the only domestically available version of the First Cello Concerto. The Martinon recording (RCA Victrola S 1184) is excellently recorded and played but curiously aloof, while the well-balanced Ančerl version (Artia S 710) suffers from poor engineering. Although many people are fond of Howard Mitchell's Shostakovich, I am not one of them, particularly where his humorless

interpretation of the First Symphony is concerned (Westminster 18293, mono only); nor do I care for the rhythmically uneven Kondrashin performance (Vanguard 6030/31, mono only, in a two-record set coupled with Mravinsky's version of the Shostakovich Seventh). As one might expect, Toscanini's interpretation, available in a mono-only five-record set of historic broadcasts (RCA Victor LM 6711), is extremely virile, almost overwhelmingly so, but with a Scherzo that is so quickly paced that the poor pianist just doesn't make it the second time through. Over-all, the Stokowski/Symphony of the Air performance (United Artists 8004—recently deleted), characterized by well-defined contrasts and superb attention to detail, is probably the best. Milan Horvat is one of the few conductors who really seems to dig Shostakovich's humor, and this is particularly evident on his quickly paced, well-recorded performance (Turnabout 34223), which offers a good foil to the less idiomatic Stokowski version. For a really electrifying interpretation of the first two movements, there's the out-of-print Markevitch/ORTF performance (Angel 35361, mono only) that I would be delighted to see reappear one of these days.

* * *

Symphony No. 2, Op. 14 ("Dedication to October")

In spite of the enormous popularity of the First Symphony, not only with the general public but with musicians as well, Shostakovich was obviously dissatisfied with the strict academism of the Leningrad Conservatory. After he graduated, he spent about a year writing absolutely nothing and trying to make up his mind whether to become a pianist or a composer. When he again took up composing, he half-resolved the conflict by producing a sadistically difficult, ultramodern piano sonata—which he frequently dashed off for musicians who had insisted that the work could not be played.

Yet it was not long before Shostakovich returned to larger forms, creating in the Second Symphony (1927) a work that holds a position on the extreme musical left in the canon of his symphonies. The Leningrad of the 1920s was a virtual crossroads in Russia for the numerous musical currents and countercurrents then developing throughout Europe, a circumstance Shostakovich took full advantage of, particularly after he left the Conservatory. But while he immersed himself in the work of such composers as

Hindemith, Křenek, Milhaud, Honegger, Schoenberg, Berg, et al. (not to mention Prokofiev and Stravinsky), this "new music" did not turn the young composer into a dull eclectic; rather, it provided a genuine liberation, freeing him to use his already strongly evolved musical language without any of the formal or tonal restraints imposed upon him by his academic training.

Interestingly enough, the Second Symphony was commissioned as a cantata to celebrate the October Revolution, to which the work is dedicated. This *musically* revolutionary "cantata" turned out, however, to be not exactly what had been expected. To begin with, Shostakovich relegated the choral music to a short section at the end of an otherwise purely orchestral work, whose lacerating dissonances must have made more than one Russian listener think twice about his definition of revolution. In one passage the composer piles up more than a dozen simultaneous melodic lines, and throughout the orchestral section he apparently made a deliberate effort to keep the different "lines" as rhythmically and tonally at odds with one another as possible. This extreme application of the "linear" contrapuntal technique evolved by Hindemith represented a highly original move on Shostakovich's part, and even today one has to turn to, say, the Fourth Symphony of Charles Ives, whose music is probably still unknown to Shostakovich, to find a parallel.

I cannot imagine any new recording of the Second ever making Morton Gould's dynamic interpretation (RCA Red Seal LSC 3044, reviewed in these pages last October) obsolete. However, a recent Czech Supraphon release (Gramophony Klub 1120213), with Ladislav Slovák conducting the Slovak Philharmonic, is a good deal better on detail, particularly in the opening, although it lacks the dramatic intensity of the Gould reading. As for the even more recent release, taken from a live Russian performance (MK D-017953/4, mono only) by the Leningrad Philharmonic under I. Blazhkov, this offers no competition, either in sound or interpretation, although the recording, made in 1965, probably represented the first time in over thirty-five years that the work was performed anywhere.

* * *

Symphony No. 3, Op. 20 ("May Day")
Although anticipation over the Second Symphony caused it to be scheduled at one point for performance on the same

night in several cities, the work obviously did not sit very well and rapidly descended into limbo. Just how much Shostakovich took the public reaction to heart or how much he may have been dissatisfied with what he had produced is difficult to say. In any case he began to move towards a less extreme use of tonality and counterpoint. In fact, in the Third Symphony—written between 1929 and 1930, only two years later than the Second—Shostakovich greatly reduced his use of contrapuntal technique and returned to a harmonic style reminiscent of his Symphony No. 1. But whereas that work, for all its angularity, is fairly classical in form and melodic development, the Third is a single movement fractionalized into an unbelievably large number of unrelated melodic fragments. Like the Second, the Third Symphony concludes with a choral setting of a revolutionary poem, this one dedicated to "May First." Shostakovich was apparently still unwilling to return to anything resembling a standard symphonic form. The violently disorganized character of the Third seems to maintain, at least on the formal level, the radicalism that pervades the Second.

Although neither the Second nor the Third Symphony ever aroused the direct hostility of the Soviet bureaucracy as did some of Shostakovich's later works, it is not too difficult to understand why the strident and original Second remained unknown for so many years. The relative obscurity in the composer's homeland of the fundamentally much more conservative Third is less comprehensible. Although the Third, unlike the Second, has received a handful of performances—without chorus—outside of the U.S.S.R., the 1964 Leningrad account by Blazhkov on the overside of the MK disc containing the Second apparently marks the first performance in Russia since the early 1930s. This reading too is no match for Gould's (coupled with his Second on RCA LSC 3044)

which, although poorly played in spots, does the work about as much justice as can be done it.

Symphony No. 4, Op. 43

Evidently encouraged by the early success of his second opera, the notorious *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (*Katerina Ismailova*), Shostakovich started writing his Fourth Symphony in 1935. In the five years intervening since the cool reception of his Symphony No. 3, he seems to have decided that the more traditional concepts of symphonic form and melodic development were not such bad ideas after all. The Fourth Symphony's first movement, for instance, for all its numerous themes and melodic fragments, uses an expanded version of the classical first-movement form, except that the opening thematic group is not repeated until the very end of the movement, creating a dramatic, mirror-like symmetry characteristic of almost all of Shostakovich's first movements. Again, giving up the relentlessly complicated contrapuntal structure of the Second Symphony but going beyond the rather unsophisticated language of the Third, Shostakovich returns in the Fourth Symphony to a dramatically conceived, intermittent use of counterpoint reminiscent of the First Symphony.

Ironically, the public demise of the Fourth Symphony for some twenty-five years was caused by that very opera whose success seems to have provided some of the impetus for Shostakovich's return to symphonic writing. Leading Communist Party officials had not had occasion to hear *Lady Macbeth* until the end of 1935, when the work was first performed in Moscow, and it was not long afterwards that *Pravda* came out with a scathing denunciation not only of the opera but of Shostakovich's work in general. Shostakovich, who until then had avoided any serious run-in with the government, found himself demoted from

hero to villain literally overnight. Having completed the first two movements of the Fourth Symphony, he proceeded to finish the third (and final) movement. But after only one rehearsal at the end of 1936, he withdrew the entire score and kept it completely under wraps, save for a two-piano version published in 1948 and a brief quote from the third movement in his Second String Quartet (1944). *Lady Macbeth*, like a gigantic sinking ship, pulled down with it a number of Shostakovich's most important works, a few of which, such as his first opera, *The Nose*, have still not received the attention they deserve.

The Fourth Symphony was resuscitated in 1961 after a cultural "thaw" in the Kremlin and was soon followed by a slightly revised *Lady Macbeth*. For some inexplicable reason, only two recordings have been made of the Fourth. Ormandy's version for Columbia (MS 6459) is what one might expect—sumptuous, romantic, breathtaking in its virtuosity. Kondrashin's interpretation, available on a two-disc set in Russia (MK S 0295-8) and on certain European labels, is more cerebral more restrained in its climaxes, but is unquestionably a valid performance.

Symphony No. 5, Op. 47

A good deal too much has been made of the fact that Shostakovich referred to his Fifth Symphony (1937) as "a Soviet artist's reply to just criticism." If Shostakovich wanted to remain in Russia, as he obviously did, he had to make at least a token concession after the *Lady Macbeth* debacle in order to avoid running into more ominous difficulties. The concession, I feel, was more in the composer's outward attitude than in his music. Certainly, Shostakovich must have been aware that his Symphony No. 5 would hardly offend a great many people—but then, the work was not associated with a sordid libretto, as in *Lady Macbeth*, to exacerbate the reactions of certain listeners to the music.

Unity and more concentrated expression are the key words for the so-called conservatism of the Fifth Symphony. If the work does not display the astounding proliferation of themes and the exhilarating virtuosity of the Fourth, it is a more satisfactory work as a symphony, even with its overstated fourth movement. The Fifth Symphony says very little that was not already said in the Fourth, which was two-thirds completed before the *Pravda* article—it simply says what it has to say in fewer, but longer, words.

The melodic material of the Fifth Symphony, as well as that in most of Shostakovich's work, has often been attacked as uninspired and uninspiring. It is, of course, true that most of Shostakovich's chromatic, wide-interval melodies are decidedly unhumable. Unlike his countryman and contemporary, Serge Prokofiev, however, Shostakovich is not primarily a lyricist and should not be treated as such. For Shostakovich, the context in which his themes appear and their organic function in the total conception of the work are infinitely more important than the absolute nature of the melodies themselves. Separated from their harmonic and orchestral contexts, Shostakovich's themes do indeed seem to



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In a 1963 photo: Shostakovich on holiday, in the country near Leningrad.

crumble into a heap of meaningless notes. But it is precisely because of the total, architectonic framework in which these themes are conceived that Shostakovich's symphonies have that intense dramatic unity and movement so unique to his style. And it is for this reason too that much of Shostakovich's work is not as strong in its initial impact as it is after repeated hearings.

The Fifth, like many of Shostakovich's later symphonies, is romantic in intent, fairly neoclassical in content, and it is a rare conductor who can blend these two elements into a convincing whole. Previn (RCA Red Seal LSC 2866) perhaps comes the closest. Bernstein (Columbia MS 6115) is more intense but well behind Previn in balance and detail, and his Olympic-track-record last movement is a bit hard to take. Rodzinski's relentlessly energetic performance (Westminster 14984) represents a valid approach in spite of its overly fast second movement, but there is also a nasty cut in the last movement. That last movement of the Fifth presents, in fact, a real tempo problem, particularly at the end, which, if played as indicated, is absurdly slow and pompous. Kondrashin (Melodiya/Angel S 40004) takes the whole work "as indicated" and comes up with a very singsong performance. The recordings by Mitchell (RCA Victorla S 1380), Ančerl (Parliament S 168), Skrowaczewski (World Series S 9081), and Golschmann (Pickwick S 4016) all have good moments, with Mitchell having the most and Golschmann the fewest. Stokowski's performance (Everest 3010) is not helped by poor sound and playing, while the versions by Kertesz (London 6327), Rowicki (Deutsche Grammophon 138031) and Silvestri (Angel S 35760) should all be avoided.

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Symphony No. 6, Op. 54

Having rather gingerly bowed his head to officialdom and having consequently irritated many non-Soviet critics, who were incapable of seeing beyond the Fifth Symphony's placative dedication, Shostakovich then announced that his next symphony would be a magnum opus, complete with chorus, and would be dedicated to Lenin. When, in 1939, the Sixth materialized, it turned out, however, to be a totally abstract symphony with no choral section and without the slightest hint of "programme"—it is a wonder that the whole thing was not taken as a practical joke.

Already, Shostakovich was moving away from the style and forms of the Fifth Symphony. No sooner had he returned to a classical first-movement form in the Fourth and a truncated version of same in the Fifth than he decided to use, for the first movement of the Sixth, a broad, tragically conceived Largo whose latticework of interwoven, interrelated themes makes it more like a second or third movement than a first. And the diaphanous scherzo is a disquietingly acrid movement that has no parallel in any of Shostakovich's symphonies. With the final third movement a witty, tongue-in-cheek presto full of rhythmic and instrumental grotesqueries

that mingle with a quote from Mozart's G minor Symphony and end up in a climax of unleashed hilarity, the Sixth Symphony manifests a novel and beautifully conceived approach to the dramatic progression of symphonic movements, and as an ensemble it is one of Shostakovich's most convincing works. Like the Second, the Sixth Symphony is anything but the piece of programmatic propaganda it was supposed to be.

While the opening Largo of the Sixth is one of Shostakovich's most profound statements as a symphonist, few movements in the composer's symphonies have received as many perfunctory interpretations as this one. Only Boult (Everest 3007) takes the movement as a true largo; but while there is much else to recommend this recording, much of the Symphony's detail is missing. Gauk's performance on a bassy Artia release (167, mono only) comes in second, with Kondrashin's version (Melodiya/Angel S 40064) being an evil that one has to put up with in order to get the Second Violin Concerto on the other side. A Stokowski release on RCA will be forthcoming soon.

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Symphony No. 7, Op. 70

It is one of those ironic circumstances of history that Shostakovich's Seventh—which, along with his Third, is the weakest of his first ten symphonies—generated an international enthusiasm that few works of music have known. Directly inspired by the Nazi invasion of Russia in June 1941, most of the music was written during September of that year in the composer's besieged native city of Leningrad, which he steadfastly refused to leave in spite of the pleas of a government concerned with protecting its artists. Because of the notoriety Shostakovich had already attained and because of the emotionalism inherent in the circumstances, the Symphony was treated like a conquering hero before it was even heard. A microfilm copy of the score was literally smuggled out of Russia for the U.S. premiere.

The Seventh was Shostakovich's first real "programme" symphony—he had even thought of entitling the movements "War," "Evocation," "Great Animated Spaces," and "Victory," an idea he later abandoned. However, the fact that he finally decided against assigning titles to the movements—the *Leningrad* subtitle given to the Symphony was not of the composer's invention—shows that Shostakovich was interested primarily in suggesting certain moods. In only one movement, the first, does he indulge in a kind of naive musical picture painting—the entire middle section of the movement is formed of a single, marchlike theme that is repeated eleven times in a growing crescendo and in increasingly complex textures, apparently representing the brute force of the Nazis descending upon Russia. This, of course, is the stuff fads are made of, and at the time, the Nazis could be heard, via repeated radio broadcasts of the symphony, marching into people's living rooms with a monotonous regularity—so much so that Béla Bartók, in the fourth movement of his *Concerto for Orchestra*, quotes the theme, complete with Bronx cheers from the winds that satirize the music in a way Shostakovich himself

would have been proud of had he not been the target.

Although the Seventh Symphony has lost a good deal of its vogue, there are five recordings currently available in the U.S. (The newest one, by Yevgeny Svetlanov and the U.S.S.R. Symphony Orchestra on Melodiya/Angel, was not available at this writing.) The best of the four that I have heard is by Bernstein (Columbia M2S 722), who gives the work added depth and nobility by slowing down the tempos in the first and second movements and by eliminating the puerile fourth variation of the march theme. The Toscanini performance, available in the same five-record RCA set as the First Symphony, is a recording of the first U.S. broadcast of the work and as such is of historical interest. Moreover, the surprisingly well-recorded Toscanini version is the only one to make the march theme sound like music. The rushed mono-only recordings by Ančerl (Parliament 127) and Mravinsky (Vanguard 6030/31) offer no competition.

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Symphony No. 8, Op. 65

If the Seventh Symphony marked the pinnacle of Shostakovich's success vis-à-vis the Soviet Government, the Eighth, finished in 1943, started another decline. The Eighth is a second "war" symphony but this time a totally abstract one—in spite of the "programme" many people curiously persist in seeing (but never defining). It is perhaps Shostakovich's greatest creation as a symphonist: in it, the composer combines many of the daring harmonic and contrapuntal techniques characteristic of his early work with an almost neoclassical economy of thematic development. The Symphony furthermore uses a rather unusual five-movement form, with two scherzos and a profoundly tragic passacaglia forming the three inner movements. Obviously, the work was not the four-square "masterpiece" the Soviet Government felt it had a right to expect after the Seventh Symphony.

Neither available recording of the Eighth does much justice to this magnificent work. Kondrashin's version (Everest, or MK S 221-B) is overstated, perfunctory, and rhythmically uneven. Mravinsky's (MK 219, mono only) is a good deal better, but not very well recorded (the same performance is available on a single Bruno disc—but this more-music-for-your-money label should be avoided unless you like your recorded sound squeezed into hopeless distortion by a proliferation of grooves). Why Bernstein could not have put the love and devotion he spent making the Seventh into a satisfactory version of the infinitely better Eighth is beyond my imagination.

* * *

Symphony No. 9, Op. 70

The Ninth was supposed to be the last of three war symphonies. Composed as it was at the end of the war in 1945, it was also to be the most triumphant. As with the Sixth, Shostakovich led people to believe that the work would contain

parts for solo voices and chorus as well as orchestra. Yet when it appeared, the Ninth must have seemed like even more of a practical joke than the Sixth. Instead of the mammoth victory-fresco that was expected, the five short movements of the Ninth Symphony took scarcely longer than the first movement alone of either the Seventh or the Eighth Symphonies. And instead of the histrionics of the Seventh and the intense, ominous tragedy of the Eighth, the Ninth seemed to revert to the wit and irony of the First Symphony, although in a much warmer and more extrovertedly humorous fashion.

The best recording ever made of the Ninth is, in my opinion, a long deleted Columbia release (ML 4137) with Efrem Kurtz and the New York Philharmonic. In spite of Kurtz's outrageously slow (but effective) tempo in the second movement, he captures the humor of the work better than anyone since. Of the modern versions, I prefer the somewhat rough-hewn Horvat performance (Turnabout 34223) for much the same reasons. The recordings by Koussevitzky (RCA Victor LM 2900, mono only), Kondrashin (Melodiya/Angel S 40000), and Gauk (Monitor 2015, mono only) are faithful to the score without doing much for the music, while I find Sargent's sloppy and uninspired performance (Everest 3054) a minor disaster.

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Symphony No. 10, Op. 93

In 1948, both the Eighth and Ninth Symphonies served as whipping boys for a renewed attack on Shostakovich's music. The general in this war on creativity was Andrei Zhdanov, who has been referred to as Stalin's "cultural executioner." This time not only Shostakovich but just about any Russian composer who had anything to say—including Prokofiev and the still sadly neglected Nicolai Miaskovsky—was the target. As a result, it was not until 1953 that the Tenth Symphony appeared, while the First Violin Concerto, begun in 1947, was held back until 1955, two years after Stalin's death.

Although Shostakovich played it safe and wrote a number of ideological pot-boilers, it was obvious that he did not intend to allow the official condemnation to influence his major works. The Tenth Symphony in many ways continues the mood of the Eighth but in a more expansive and less musically violent manner, and it did not escape being attacked in certain Russian circles as "pessimistic" and "lugubrious." The work is indeed personal and contemplative; it is even pervaded by a monogrammatic, four-note theme that also appears in the First Violin Concerto and the Eighth Quartet and that can be made to spell out the composer's initials. Indeed, a number of the symphony's themes are reused throughout the four movements, and this "cyclical" technique, used systematically for the first time in the Tenth, prepares the way for the Eleventh and Twelfth Symphonies.

Here is yet another of Shostakovich's greatest symphonic accomplishments that does not have the recording it deserves. Neither of the current stereo versions is particularly worthwhile. Svetlanov (Me-



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Conductor Eugene Mravinsky (in white tie) introduces the composer to accept an ovation after the first performance of his Twelfth Symphony, in Leningrad.

lodiya/Angel S 40025) seems disinterested, and the bass tones are weak on the recording. While the Von Karajan performance (Deutsche Grammophon 139020) is well recorded, it suffers from countless eccentricities: the ominous second movement, for instance, ends up sounding rather like a German march. My personal favorite is again a deleted Kurtz, conducting the Philharmonia on RCA this time (LM 2081); while it lacks the drive of the bassy Mitropoulos recording (Odyssey 32 16 0123, mono only), it is infinitely superior in orchestral and rhythmic detail. The Mravinsky reading (MK 1523, mono only) is in many ways similar to the Kurtz, but it is poorly played and horribly recorded.

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Symphony No. 11, Op. 103 ("Year 1905")

The Tenth was to be the last of the amazingly rich series of symphonies that had begun with the Fourth. With the Eleventh, completed in 1957, Shostakovich wrote the first of two programmatic symphonies, complete with titled movements (played without pause) and some rather hammy pyrotechniques reminiscent of the Seventh Symphony, which is their direct predecessor. But what sets both the Eleventh and Twelfth Symphonies apart even from the Seventh is their use of a folk or quasi-folk thematic material that waters down the harmonic idiom employed with great skill in the earlier symphonies. In these two works, a style formerly characterized by an expert—if unsystematic—use of dissonance often sinks into a dull and monotonous tonality.

If Soviet politics seems to offer a facile explanation for certain steps in Shostakovich's earlier evolution, the historical events connected with the Eleventh Sym-

phony afford no such specious satisfaction. The apparent reason for the change of direction—if reason there must be—seems to be a shift of interest on the composer's part: since the Tenth Symphony, many of his best musical ideas have appeared in his string quartets and concertos.

Of the three domestically available recordings, the Stokowski/Houston Symphony version (Capitol SPBO 8700) is by far the most exciting. The performance is an all-stops-pulled affair full of brilliant histrionics and seconded by stunning stereo sound whose wall-crumbing bass is apparently beefed up here and there by an organ. The mono-only versions by Cluytens (Angel 3586 3S) and Mravinsky (MK 201B) are also very capably handled, with the Cluytens performance having been supervised by Shostakovich himself.

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Symphony No. 12, Op. 112 ("Year 1917")

Completed in 1961, the Twelfth is a shorter symphony dedicated to a much more important historical event than the longer Eleventh. It is interesting to note that the symphony's last movement introduces a heroic theme that obviously has some "revolutionary" significance for Shostakovich, as the melody strongly resembles the one unifying motive appearing in the Second Symphony, which is also dedicated to the October Revolution of 1917.

Little need be said here. Of the two recordings, Mravinsky (MK 1580, released in this country in mono only) conducts the work as if he loved only

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Herbert Newton
Rock



What will the Protest Generation listen to now that the Professors have taken over Rock?

BY ARNOLD SHAW

WITHIN THE PAST YEAR, under-thirty criticism of rock has made a hairpin turn—or, to put it more musically, an unprepared and radical change of key. At the beginning of 1968, Super-Albums were IN. So were psychedelic-electronic-baroque-raga-atonal-and-aleatory sounds. Long tracks were preferred to short, interrelated tracks to disparate songs. And hyperbole was hurled at anything that had the classy aura of art rock—not lyrics but “poetry,” not melodies but composition: e.g., *The National Gallery performing musical interpretations of the Paintings of Paul Klee*.

To be sure, this was the consequence of the *Sgt. Pepper* challenge by The Beatles, the album whose use of a fifty-piece orchestra for a single chord drove The Rolling Stones to create an LP with a \$50,000 cover (*Their Satanic Majesties Request*) and prodded The Beach Boys into producing a monster LP (*Smiley Smile*) whose initial three-minute track cost \$40,000. But there was also Van Dyke Parks of Hollywood, who used a fifty-five-piece orchestra to record his *Song Cycle*. Not to be entirely outclassed, one of The Monkees cut an LP with a fifty-one-piece band (*The Wichita Train Whistle Sings*). Whereupon Jim Webb produced a single on which he employed a sixty-five-piece orchestra to perform the instrumental

theme of his Richard Harris hit, *MacArthur Park*. It was a zany spectacle, considering that the battle of numbers and the struggle over size are supposedly shoddy Establishment vices.

But the young critics as well as rock performers were drawn into the fray, and each issue of *Crawdaddy*, *Rolling Stone*, *L.A. Free Press*, *Eye*, etc., brought a crash of verbal accolades over a new prodigious, super-super, heady rock group. “There is more talent in The United States of America [a new group],” wrote Gene Youngblood in the *Free Press*. “than perhaps in all major American rock groups together.” You see, the U.S.A. used so much electronic equipment that it took seven hours to set up for a performance. Of Parks’s *Song Cycle*, an LP with a continuity of verbal and musical themes, a *Crawdaddy* critic panted: “*Cycle* is a milestone in the development of American popular music . . . it attains a level of complexity and subtlety genuinely comparable to that of ‘serious’ contemporary music . . .

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Parks is a genius." Not too long after the release of its debut LP, *United States of America* had a civil war and broke up. And Parks's LP did not sell very well.

Now, however, it's 1969 and the rock celebration of sophistication, complexity, subtlety, and supercreativity is at an end. Simplicity is now IN, the small group, the unpretentious album, the corny song—not Varèse, Stockhausen, *musique concrète*, Ives, Brecht, or even Leonard Cohen, but, mind you, Hank Williams, the Grand Ole Opry bard who was known as the Hillbilly Shakespeare.

The country-rock synthesis, according to the dean of rock critics, had its first major album in *Music from Big Pink*, by a group that calls itself simply The Band. Richard Goldstein writes, "There are no dulcimers or synthesizers here; just the basic rock combination. . . . There are no ten-minute flights of atonality here." As a further indication of the group's thorough commitment to the ethic of simplicity, Goldstein notes that the album jacket is "casual" and "that even a name like The Band can be construed as a slap at the ornate titles rock groups often chose for themselves."

WELL, WHAT BROUGHT this sharp reversal about? Just as *Sgt. Pepper* seemed to set the Super-Art trend in motion, so it was another album, Bob Dylan's *John Wesley Harding*, recorded in Nashville with a small, acoustic combo, that reawakened interest in the country tradition. A "reawakening" it was, for rock is, after all, the offspring of a mixed marriage between black rhythm-and-blues and white country-and-western. The Dylan album, eagerly awaited because of a motorcycle accident which kept the *Wunderkind* out of a studio for more than a year, was a Gold Record seller overnight. That this accelerated the shift is conceivable. Folkster Buffy Sainte-Marie flew into Music City and, dedicating a new album to Nashville guitarist/record exec Chet Atkins, pointedly titled it *I'm Gonna Be a Country Girl Again*. The Byrds, a psychedelic group which first flew into the Top Ten on Dylan's acid hit *Mr. Tambourine Man*, made an appearance on the Grand Ole Opry and cut a country-oriented album *Sweetheart of the Rodeo*. When Britain's Rolling Stones released *Beggars Banquet*, the under-thirty reaction was unrestrained. No less an authority than the editor of *Rolling Stone* argued that their previous LP (*Satanic Majesties*) was a disaster and lamented that the group had fallen into the *Sgt. Pepper* trap of artiness, significance, and progressivism, all now suddenly become put-down epithets. *Beggars Banquet* was hailed as a comeback and as a historical moment—"the formal end of all the pretentious, nonmusical . . . and worthless stuff that has been tolerated during the past year."

Jon Landau, a perceptive young Boston critic, thought that the recognition of rock as a valid art form had proved destructive, had given rise to a cult of the "preachy, poetical, and pretentious" and deprived the music of "joyfulness and uninhibited

straightforwardness." Rock is at its best, Landau decreed, when "it seeks to entertain as well as provoke, when it realizes that it is not primarily poetry or art, but something much more direct and immediate than either. Rock has to be body music before it can be head music." And the Boston lad hailed the debut LP of a new group, The Nazz, because it captured "youthfulness and innocence . . . so lacking from rock of the past year."

About the same time, a member of The Jefferson Airplane, the celebrated San Francisco group, announced: "It's very good to make people feel good physically as well as intellectually. And there's nothing like it when you make a couple of thousand people stand up and start jumping up and down. That's magic."

Obviously, it was more than the charisma of Dylan, potent as that may be, that occasioned this huge reversal of attitude. Two other possible explanations are, one, in the realm of economics, and the other, in the field of cycles. According to the first, the competition to create bigger and more complex albums pushed studio and production costs up to a prohibitive level where rock groups were pricing themselves out of the record market. Presumably, record company officials, who saw no way of coming out ahead, began to suggest that the boys "sing something simple," and less costly.

According to the second theory, art styles are cyclical in character. After they've gone as far as they can go in Kansas City, they turn and go thisaway instead of thataway. Complexity is superseded by simplicity. The cerebral gives way to the physical, the tightly controlled to the uninhibited, boredom and surfeit being an inevitable concomitant.

These explanations, each with a degree of validity, seem rather superficial. Can it be that the Now generation is turning its back on its musical offspring because the Establishment generation suddenly have become doting, instead of disapproving, grandparents? Several years ago, when Dylan first shook up his generation, the old generation played it cool. Poet Louise Simpson, informed of Ivy League veneration of Dylan's poetry, dismissed him as an entertainer and no poet at all. "American college students," she sniffed, "don't know anything about poetry." When W. H. Auden was interviewed, he apologized for not being familiar with Dylan's work—"One has so frightfully much to read anyway," he opined.

But now consider the following statements—and guess, if you can, who made them:

- 1) "After all, Homer was chanted and so were the Scandinavian epics. The movement [poetry-in-song of Dylan, Rod McKuen, Jerry Jeff Walker, Laura Nyro, etc.] is great."
- 2) "Rock has begun to realize one of the most cherished dreams of mass culture: to cultivate from the vigorous but crude growth of the popular arts a new serious art that would combine the strength of native roots with the beauty flowering from the highest art. . . ."
- 3) "Rock can possess quasi-religious force."

It leadeth me past myself, beyond myself, beyond my separateness and difference into a world of continuous blinding sameness—and, for a bit, it stoneth me out of my mind."

- 4) "Contributing to the merely social and satirical implications of *Baby You're a Rich Man*, the Indian sounds operate in the manner of classical allusion in Pope: they expand to the ridiculous the cant of jet-set, international gossip columns. . . . But, as in Pope, the instrument of ridicule here, the sitar, is allowed in the very process to remain unsullied and eloquent."

There can be little doubt that this is over-thirty stuff. But in its pontificating pretentiousness, it reeketh of the higher criticism of the academy. And so it is. Author of the Homeric reference is Prof. F. W. Dupee of Columbia University; of the "highest art" bit is Prof. Albert Goldman, also of Columbia; of the "quasi-religious" shtick, Prof. Benjamin DeMott of Amherst; and of the highflown allusion to Pope, Prof. Richard Poirer of Rutgers University.

Professor Poirer is not only head of the Rutgers English Department—and all of these cats are English Department radicals—but he is also an editor of *Partisan Review*, where in the fall of 1967 he let go with a twenty-one-page essay called "Learning from The Beatles." By far the most unreserved panegyric that has appeared in print by an under- or over-thirty critic, Poirer's polysyllabic study is ponderous with comparisons between The Beatles and the great figures of English literature. Quoting the group's publisher regarding its effort to write something unsophisticated in *All You Need Is Love*, Poirer comments: "But so was Shakespeare at the Globe and we know how unsophisticated he could be." Later, having suggested that *A Day in the Life* is "a song of the wasteland," Poirer pushes the allusion: "T. S. Eliot can be remembered here for still other reasons: not only because he pays conspicuous respect to the music hall but because his poems, like The Beatles' songs, work for a kaleidoscopic effect, for fragmented patterns of sound that can bring historic masses into juxtaposition only to let them be fractured by other emerging and equally evocative fragments." Whew! Of course, it is really anticlimactic that in closing his out-of-sight rave, the professor refers reverently to the group's mystical leanings as an idea that "is allowable only to the very great [!]."

In view of the years in which American pop music was derided, patronized, and considered beneath the notice of serious criticism, this attention is not to be taken lightly. It is to be applauded as a coming of age both of the form and its audience. But this is not what I am concerned with at the moment. It is the effect of this dotting embrace by the old on the young.

Absurd as their enthusiasm may be, the significant thing is that all of these pundits approach the subject of rock with the high seriousness they generally reserve for a paper to be read at an annual conclave of the Modern Language Association. They have not only done their homework and studied the re-

cordings; they have investigated and compiled elaborate notes on the history and background. They commit occasional errors, some of them serious, as when Professor Goldman, and in turn Professor DeMott, both refer to rhythm-and-blues records as being the product of "tiny record companies in the South," (Chess Records is in Chicago; King is a Cincinnati label; Specialty and Modern were West Coast companies; Apollo, National, Jubilee, Herald, Bethlehem, Savoy, Prestige, and Atlantic were all in the New York-New Jersey area. While there were r & b labels in Houston, Atlanta, and other southern cities, the style was really a product of the segregated Negro living in northern ghettos.)

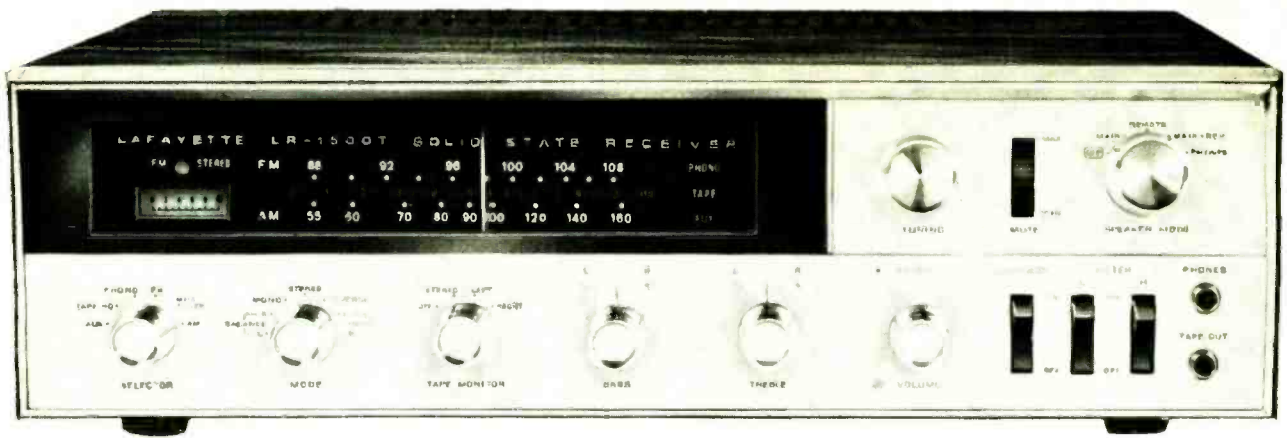
Despite the occasional lapses, the professors made a zealous effort to possess the subject, so zealous that they apparently scared hell out of the under-thirty crowd. It suspected the truckling subservience of an approach like "Learning from The Beatles" and it saw through the "pitch of awe" that Prof. DeMott himself discerned in both Prof. Poirer and Prof. Goldman. Nor was it unaware of the maneuver of absorbing an alien or threatening culture in order to preserve one's hegemony. After all, the over-thirty generation was dancing the twist and hula-hula, had donned miniskirts and Nehru jackets, was experimenting with marijuana and LSD, and was rushing to Ravi Shankar concerts and to lectures by the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

But there was still the fundamental question that a generation fighting to create its own culture had to face: *What was wrong with rock that the older generation could so readily adopt it?* The answer, my friends, as Mr. Dylan's best-known song would have it, is blowin' in the wind. The answer apparently is that rock has become too arty and has lost the raw vitality, eroticism, and simplicity of its birth phase.

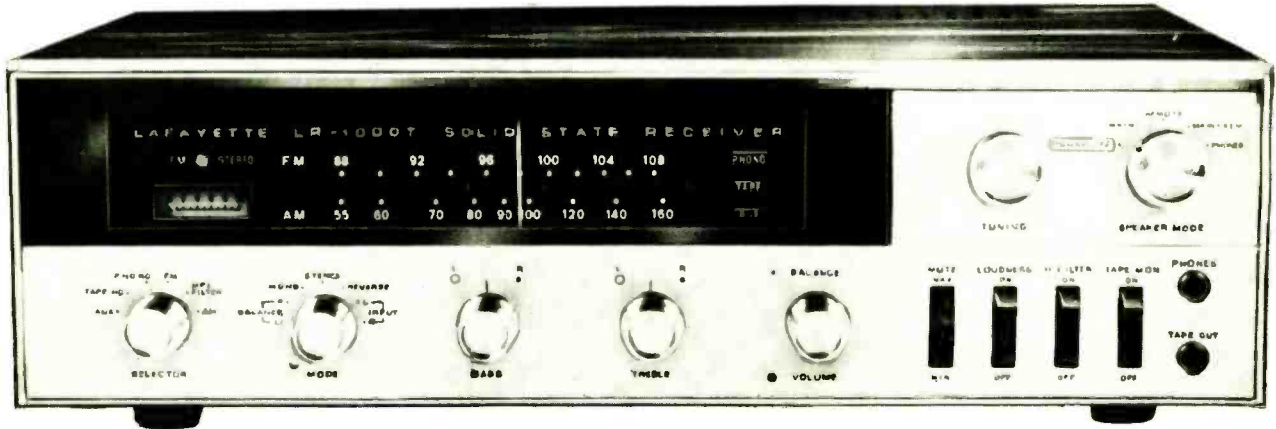
One corrective is to be found in the mounting acceptance of soul (Aretha Franklin, Otis Redding, Jimi Hendrix, et al.) and vintage rhythm-and-blues (Muddy Waters, B. B. King, Chuck Berry, et al.). Unquestionably, there is an element of defiance in the celebration of black culture implicit in this embrace and explicit in the numerous manifestations of blue-eyed soul (The Rascals, Paul Butterfield Blues Band, and other white performers who sing and play black).

The other corrective is the new retreat into the woods and the hills of mountain music. Or is it a search for roots, arising from the suspicion that if the Establishment likes something, it can't really be genuine or basic?

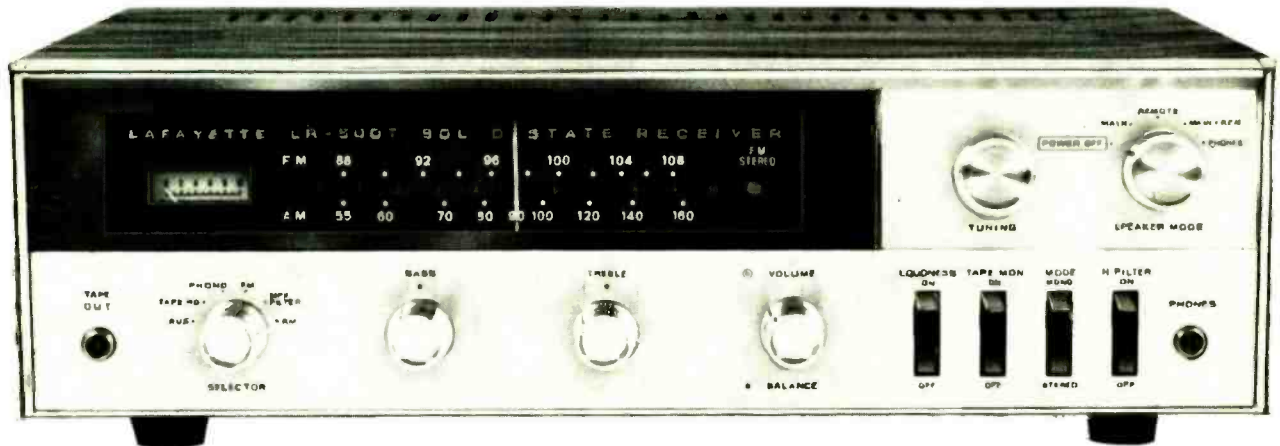




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EQUIPMENT REPORTS

THE CONSUMER'S GUIDE TO NEW AND IMPORTANT HIGH FIDELITY EQUIPMENT

COMPACT SPEAKERS BOAST OMNIDIRECTIONAL SOUND

EQUIPMENT: HK50, a compact full-range speaker system in enclosure. Dimensions: 11¾ by 11¾ by 18 inches. List price: \$110. Manufacturer: Harman-Kardon, Inc., 55 Ames Court, Plainview, N.Y. 11803.

COMMENT: Harman-Kardon's HK50, originally supplied as the speaker for the firm's SC2350 compact modular system, now is being offered on its own for use with any other equipment. This news, bolstered by our recent tests of the HK50, should interest many stereo buyers seeking what strikes us as an uncommonly good-sounding small speaker, indeed the best we've heard yet in its price class.

The HK50 offers a performance feature we have long considered germane to high quality sound reproduction—that of omnidirectionality, or spreading the sound uniformly throughout the room rather than beaming it. This characteristic applies, in design terms, to the midrange and highs (the bass naturally spreads itself in a wide circular pattern). Sound that beams not only is distorted, but can degrade the stereo image. Actually, on stereo, two speakers beaming do not provide a true stereo effect but rather two mono images. What's more, if you listen to beaming speakers from any spot other than where the two beams intersect, you miss a good deal of the stereoism. Omnidirectionality overcomes these problems: the sound is spread out naturally and it can be enjoyed from virtually any part of the room. At the same time, the spread effect does not lessen the system's ability to project directional information; you certainly can tell that the first violins are on the left, the basses over to the right, and so on. Moreover, omnidirectional speakers help fill the space between the stereo pair and seem to add a sense of front-to-rear depth. You are not limited to a small listening area to enjoy the presentation, and there are more locations in any room for installing such speakers so that they load correctly to the room. H-K's method of achieving this design goal is to use a reflecting panel in the enclosure. As a result, the HK50s work well on the floor, on a pedestal, on a shelf, and in just about any spot you care to install them. Even more interesting, they are not terribly critical of the size room in which they're used: in our tests, they sounded mighty good in a larger-than-average living room and equally at home in a much smaller den.

The walnut-and-black styling of an HK50, while visually attractive, relates directly to its acoustic design. The larger section of the cabinet, from the

bottom edge of the black grille downward, forms an enclosure which houses an air-suspension woofer (8-inch-diameter, long-throw type) and a 2¼-inch hard-surface cone tweeter. The 2,500-Hz crossover network is at the bottom, and a tweeter level control and the input connections are on the underside of the panel. Above the enclosure compartment, the speakers face upward, radiating their output against a specially shaped reflector hidden inside the surrounding grille. As a result, sound is dispersed from all sides of the grille. The system is moderately efficient, is rated to handle up to 50 watts of amplifier power, and has an 8-ohm impedance.

The pleasing, natural sound of a pair of HK50s, and their broad stereoism kept us listening to music over them for a long while. When we finally got down to business—checking response—we got very creditable results. The bass end held up firmly and cleanly to just below 70 Hz, where an apparent roll-off began. Slight doubling, evident toward 60 Hz, increased at lower tones and, as is normal, intensified as we drove the speakers harder. At normally loud



Sound spreads evenly from all four sides of the Harman-Kardon HK50. Walnut and black styling sets off this omnidirectional speaker system.

listening levels, enough to fill a very large living room with sound, the response continued to below 30 Hz, although at this frequency the ratio of doubling to fundamental bass increased markedly. We actually went beyond the manufacturer's claimed response limit—and got an HK50 to respond to 20 Hz, but it couldn't reproduce that kind of bass; it just "did something" down there. Upward from the deep bass, the mid-bass sounded full, with a slight trace of "forwardness." The midrange and highs were uniform and clear with a normal amount of amplitude variation found in systems of this price class, but with a better-than-average dispersion characteristic. No beaming effects could be discerned from any angle all around the speaker, and tones above 10 kHz were clearly audible from any listening position, even from

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an adjacent room through an open doorway. Upward from about 14 kHz the response sloped toward inaudibility. White noise response was very smooth, had no trace of harshness or discrete sonic elements, and was evenly distributed.

Back to the music: we tried the HK50s in various positions and at different heights. Nominally a floor-standing system (the cabinet actually can be used as an end table or lamp pedestal) the HK50—at least in our larger room—sounded best when we placed it on a low bench. In our smaller room, we just set it on the floor and were happy with it. In fact, of all the small speaker systems we have auditioned in this small (somewhat live and acoustically difficult) room, the HK50s pleased us the most. The over-all impression, from a pair of HK50s, was one of an easy, open, well-aired sonic presentation. These small systems manage to project a measure of real bass power combined with clean and well-dispersed treble. On orchestral music the presentation of breadth and depth is excellent. Any of today's high-quality

stereo recordings can show them off; two in particular which did so nicely were Bernstein's recording of the Nielsen Third Symphony (Columbia MS 6769) and the Ozawa/Chicago Symphony version of Britten's *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* (RCA LSC-2877). The Nielsen exemplified the speakers' ability to place instruments: there's a passage in the 4th movement where the woodwinds (smack center) and the string bass (to the right) have a little dialogue—and that's just how the HK50s presented them. The Britten opus is a real stereo showpiece that abounds in varieties of instrumental color and timbre. All the sonic color, the spacing of orchestral sections (you could almost swear at times there was a third speaker somewhere behind the pair being heard), the bite of instrumental attacks came through. For speakers as modestly dimensioned and priced as these, we feel that's quite an achievement.

CIRCLE 141 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

WORTHY FEATURES ENHANCE LOW-PRICED TURNTABLE

EQUIPMENT: Dual 1212, a three-speed automatic turntable with integral arm. Dimensions (including arm extension and controls): 14 by 12 inches; top clearance required, 4 inches; bottom clearance, 3½ inches. Price, less base: \$79.50. Manufactured in West Germany; distributed in the U.S.A. by United Audio Products, Inc., 535 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.

COMMENT: Dual's newest automatic player is its lowest priced to date, but its performance and features clearly suggest its kinship with former, higher priced Duals. The 1212 is a three-speed model (33, 45, and 78 rpm); each speed is adjustable by means of a "pitch control" knob so that you can get on-the-nose speed accuracy (or slight deviations from it, for special purposes). The platter itself weighs 3 pounds, 2 ounces—lighter than previous Duals but well-balanced and quiet-running.

The arm is a well-designed lightweight metal type, fitted at the pivot end with an adjustable, damped counterweight, and at the pickup end with a removable platform that makes it fairly easy to install a cartridge. A gauge, supplied, helps you adjust the cartridge position for precise stylus overhang. To apply tracking force you dial a knob over the arm pivot; this knob also sets antiskating force automatically. A built-in arm latch and a cue control are included.

The player comes with a short and long spindle, and a 45-rpm single-play adapter. The short spindle handles one disc at a time and offers you the option of automatic or manual start. Either way, you can use the cue control for a very gentle lowering of the pickup onto the record. You also can interrupt play at any portion of the record and resume play as you please. At the end of the record the arm returns to its rest position and the machine shuts itself off. For stacking (up to six records) and automatic-sequence playing, you use the long spindle. As before, you still can use the cue control to interrupt and resume playing of a record at will. The cycling, automation, and cueing all are very smooth and foolproof.

The Dual 1212's rumble was measured at -57 dB by the CBS Laboratories ARRL method—this is a better-

than-average rumble figure for a unit in this price class, and indicates a very quiet machine. Average wow and flutter came to a mere 0.07%; arm friction, laterally and vertically, was negligible at less than 10 milligrams each. The arm needed less than 25 milligrams to trip the automatic change mechanism, which bespeaks excellent balance and design in this area. Arm resonance occurred at 9 Hz and showed a 9-dB rise—not the best in this regard but certainly reasonable for this class of equipment. The built-in stylus force adjustment proved absolutely accurate; for settings of 1 to 4 on the dial, exactly those stylus forces were measured on the laboratory gauge. Significantly, the Dual 1212 went through its paces fitted with the Shure V15 Type II, and it proved perfectly capable of handling a cartridge of this high quality.

Some additional notes on using the 1212. Installation, on the base available from United Audio, is easy and is recommended; it makes for a highly shock-proof setup. The vertical tracking force exerted by the arm will increase by 0.15 gram for a half-inch stack of records, which really is negligible. If you set the "pitch control" adjustment for exact speed at 33 rpm, you will have to readjust it when switching to either of the other two speeds (when set for exact speed at 33 rpm, the platter spins about 2 per cent slow when switched to 45 rpm, and about 1 per cent slow when switched to 78 rpm). However, the strobe disc supplied will enable you to readjust for exact speed at 45 and 78 rpm readily. When inserting the long spindle, make certain it sits securely in the center hole or else the records piled on it will not slide down to the platter.

CIRCLE 142 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Dual 1212 offers three speeds, automatic antiskating.

SHERWOOD'S TOP-OF-THE-LINE STEREO FM RECEIVER

THE EQUIPMENT: Sherwood S-8800a, stereo FM receiver. Dimensions: 16½ by 4¼ by 14 inches. Price, less case: \$399.50. Optional cases: wood, Model W8, \$28; leatherette, Type D, \$9.00. Manufacturer: Sherwood Electronic Laboratories, Inc., 4300 North California Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60618.

COMMENT: Sherwood's current top-of-the-line stereo FM receiver combines a sensitive tuner with a clean, medium-high-powered control amplifier on a compact stylish chassis. The set may be custom-installed in a cabinet cut-out, or inserted into an optional case for shelf placement. Inasmuch as a section of the chassis behind the front panel is exposed, one of the aforementioned installation methods seems a must for this set.

In addition to high performance, the S-8800a offers an ample complement of features. The tuning dial has a pilot lamp, a zero-center tuning meter, and a stereo FM indicator. To its right are the tuning and volume control knobs, the latter also doubling as the set's power off/on switch. Below are: a phono level control to adjust gain on the phono inputs, a hush level



Sherwood's S-8800a offers a better tuner and amplifier than former model in this firm's stereo receiver line.

control to regulate the degree of muting of interstation noise, a signal selector knob (phono, FM, auxiliary), bass and treble tone controls which act on both channels simultaneously, a stereo channel balance control, a tape dubbing jack, stereo headphone jack, push buttons for mono/stereo, tape monitor, high filter, loudness contour, main speakers off/on, and remote speakers off/on. The last two switches, in conjunction with terminals at the rear, permit you to connect two independent sets of stereo speakers to the set and run either, both, or none as you opt. There's yet another set of taps at the rear for running a separate mono speaker. The headphone jack is live all the time.

Signal jacks at the rear correspond to the settings on the input selector; there's also a stereo pair of tape-feed jacks to drive a recorder, two AC convenience outlets, one switched; antenna terminals for both 75-ohm and 300-ohm lines; the set's fuse, power cord, and grounding post. The front panel tape jack, incidentally, can be used together with the rear tape jacks to dub from one recorder to another or to record simultaneously on two tape machines.

Both as tuner and amplifier, the S-8800a tested better than the last Sherwood receiver we covered, the S-7800 in March 1968. Both FM sensitivity and amplifier power are noticeably higher in the new model (see accompanying test data). In our cable FM test, the S-8800a logged a total of forty-five stations as compared to the thirty-eight pulled in with the S-7800. FM distortion, in the new set, is way down; stereo response is very linear; channel separation, ample. The amplifier section furnishes power high

POWER DATA, Amplifier section

Channels individually

Left at clipping: 41.4 watts at 0.12% THD

Left for 0.35% THD: 45.1 watts

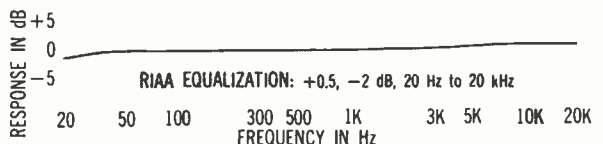
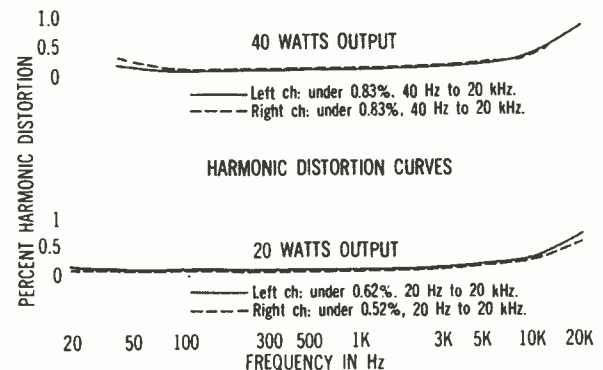
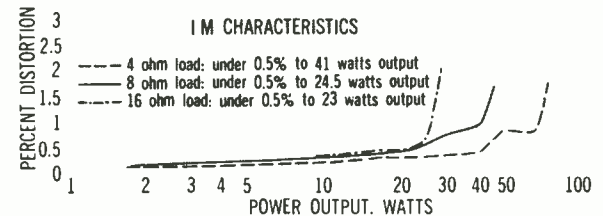
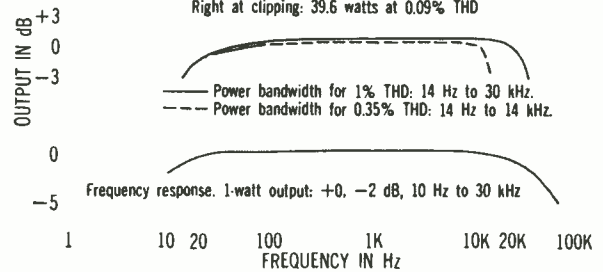
Right at clipping: 44 watts at 0.16% THD

Right for 0.35% THD: 46 watts

Channels simultaneously

Left at clipping: 36.1 watts at 0.11% THD

Right at clipping: 39.6 watts at 0.09% THD

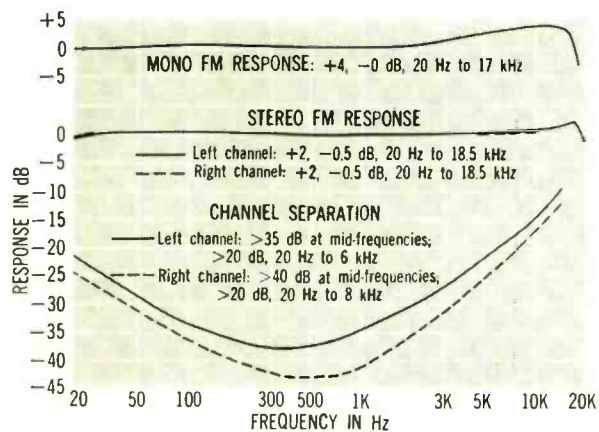


Square-wave response to 50 Hz, left, and to 10 kHz.

and clean enough to drive any type of speaker system; distortion measures very low across the band; frequency response remains flat within 2 dB from below 20 Hz to beyond 20 kHz. Bass square-wave response was average-good for a receiver, showing a normal roll-off; high frequency square-wave response was very good, indicating clean transient response. The magnetic phono input showed a better-than-average sensitivity range, with a very good S/N ratio. Figures for the other inputs were excellent.

Its competent performance and ease of operation, particularly as regards its up front push-button arrangement for controlling multiple speaker setups, should recommend the S-8800a to many stereo buyers seeking a very good, all-around receiver. Sherwood, incidentally, also offers the same set with AM built in, as its new Model 7800 (now priced at \$419.50).

CIRCLE 143 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Sherwood S-8800a Additional Data

Amplifier Section

Input characteristics	Sensitivity	S/N ratio
phono	1.6 to 5.8 mV	58 dB
auxiliary	150 mV	71 dB
tape monitor	350 mV	80 dB

Damping factor 80

Tuner Section

THD, mono 0.19% at 400 Hz; 0.25% at 40 Hz; 0.24% at 1 kHz

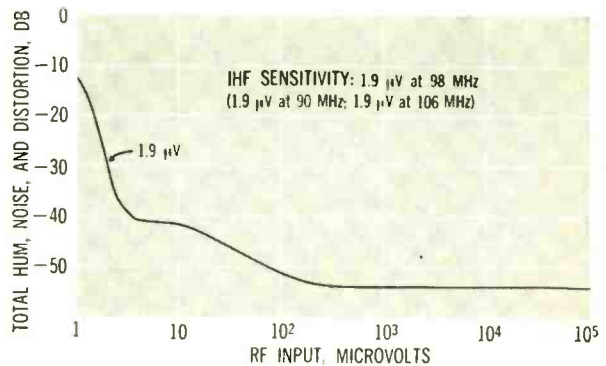
IM distortion 0.15%

Capture ratio 2 dB

S/N ratio 68 dB

THD, stereo left ch 0.24% at 400 Hz; 0.23% at 40 Hz; 0.39% at 1 kHz
 right ch 0.38% at 400 Hz; 0.24% at 40 Hz; 0.38% at 1 kHz

19-kHz pilot -51 dB
 38-kHz subcarrier -43 dB



NEW PREAMP IS SUPERLATIVELY SIMPLE; SIMPLY SUPERLATIVE

THE EQUIPMENT: CC-2 Model, a stereo preamplifier-control unit. Dimensions: front panel, 12½ by 4 inches; depth behind, 9 inches. Price: \$225. Manufacturer: C/M Laboratories, 327 Connecticut Ave., Norwalk, Conn. 06854.

COMMENT: It's fairly small, light in weight (10 pounds), and it doesn't have many of the features and flourishes usually associated with "deluxe" components, but the C/M CC-2 preamp is one of the very best audio front-ends we've yet tested. In eliminating what its designers feel are seldom used controls, this preamp achieves a basic simplicity of function combined with superlative audio performance: extremely low, virtually nonmeasurable distortion at high signal levels over a very wide frequency range and under any condition of loading.

The CC-2 is rated for 2 volts output per channel, more than enough to drive any normal power or basic amplifier. At this level, distortion never ex-

ceeded a few hundredths of one per cent across the audio band. Signal-to-noise, on all inputs, was excellent; the CC-2 is both quiet and distortion-free. The magnetic phono inputs are controlled by a rear-panel gain adjustment that lets you adjust the preamp-gain to suit a wide range of input signals, from 2.1 to 5.8 millivolts, depending on the rated output of the phono pickup in use.

The measurements and data shown in the accompanying charts document the superior performance of the CC-2: it is significant to note that they were obtained under the maximum loading conditions spelled out in the IHF amplifier standard—that is, with the preamp driving a load of 100K ohms and 1,000 pF. In practical terms, this means that the unit can be used with any length of signal cable between it and the power amp, without its specifications being limited or degraded in the least. In this sense, the CC-2 can lay claim to being a truly professional control unit, more so than many of its fancier-looking contemporaries.

As for features, the CC-2 has a four-position input selector: phono, tuner, tape (amp), and auxiliary. A mode control selects stereo, reverse stereo, mono (left plus right), right only, and left only. There's also a channel balance knob, and a volume control. Loudness contour is switchable at the user's option.

The unit also has a subsonic filter, a tape monitor function, bass and treble tone controls, and a separate power off/on switch. The bass and treble knobs operate on both channels simultaneously—which could represent the only criticizable limitation on the unit's functionalism, except that in our experience the owner of the kind of system in which a separate preamp of this quality would be used just about never makes use of the tone controls anyway. He invariably leaves them in their flat positions—a kind of "nonfunction" which, in the CC-2, is emphasized by the fact that next to each tone control is a switch that cancels the tone controls and effectively removes them from the set's circuitry. For those who opt to



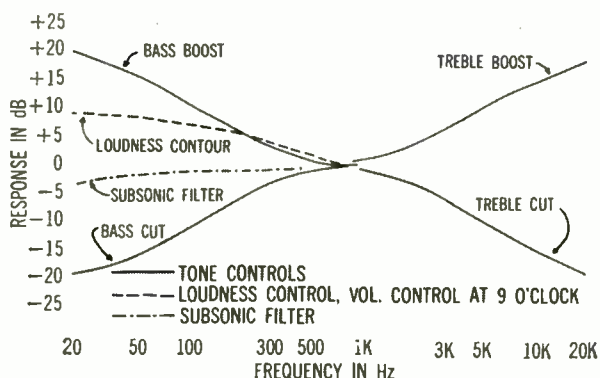
C/M Labs Model CC-2 preamp-control eschews seldom used controls but offers professional-quality performance.

use the controls, though, their action on both bass and treble ranges is perfect; the response curves for each start very close to the 1 kHz midfrequency and rise or descend like textbook-ideal curves. The subsonic filter is designed for very moderate effect, specified as 3 dB down at 20 Hz, and that's exactly how it performed under test. RIAA equalization is accurate within 2 dB over the 20 Hz to 20 kHz range. Square-wave response, to both bass and treble test frequencies, is exemplary.

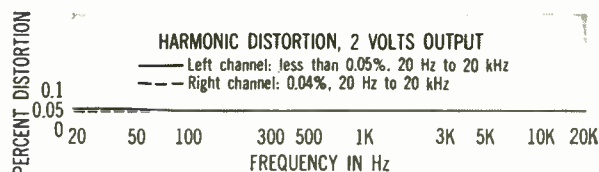
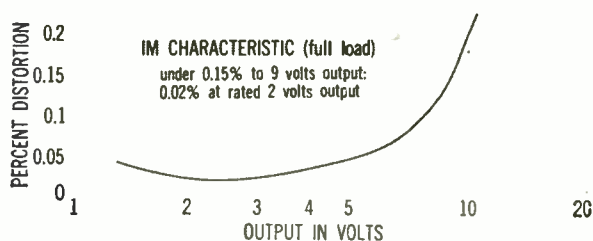
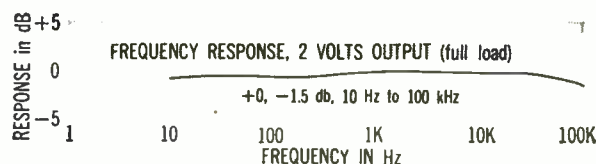
Outputs include a stereo pair of phono jacks for feeding signals to a power amplifier, and another pair to send signals into a tape recorder. Three AC convenience outlets (two switched) are provided. The set is fused and is fitted with a heavy-duty power cord. Construction and detailing are of a high order.

The CC-2, conceived as a no-frills but high-performing nerve center for a stereo system, achieves its design aims hands down. It strikes us as second to none in the separate preamplifier class of equipment.

CIRCLE 144 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



CC-2 Preamp	Additional Data	
Maximum output:		
left channel	clips at 10 V rms; 0.12% THD	
right channel	clips at 8.6 V rms; 0.17% THD	
Rated output (2 volts) various inputs	Sensitivity	S/N ratio
phono	2.1 to 5.8 mV	60 to 67 dB
tuner	66 mV	73 dB
tape (amp)	70 mV	73 dB
auxiliary	67 mV	73 dB



Response to 50-Hz square wave.



Response to 10-kHz square wave.

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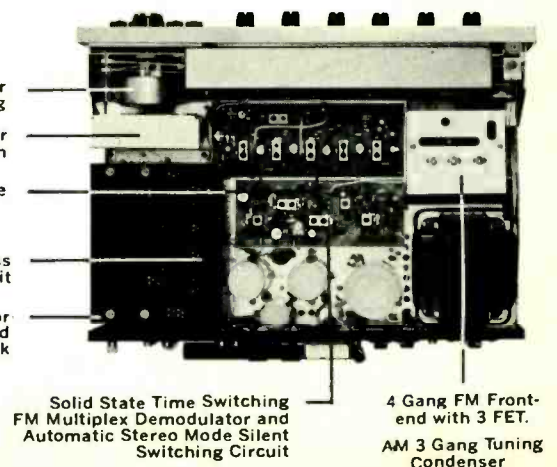
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FROM A RICH HERITAGE: THE ART OF BARITONE MATTIA BATTISTINI

by Conrad L. Osborne

THESE TWO DISCS from Cantilena bring to eight the number of domestically released LPs that have been devoted *in toto* to the art of Mattia Battistini. These embrace three separate Eterna discs, one from Scala (now Scala/Everest), one from Olympus, and one in the Angel COLH series. Of the roughly 110 sides recorded by Battistini from 1902 to 1923, some sixty-five are now on LP—and the number may be slightly higher when the count of single selections on such labels as FRP and TAP is taken.

No other "historic" baritone, not even Ruffo or Stracciari, has equaled this representation on microgroove, and even among tenors only Caruso and Gigli have surpassed it. There is justice in this, for an excellent case can be made for Battistini as the greatest baritone in the history of recording. Certainly his legitimate competitors number no more than four: Ruffo, Stracciari, Amato, and Magini-Coletti.

It is true that certain aspects of his performances must be viewed with the charitableness of historical perspective. How could it be otherwise? Battistini was born in 1856, and made his professional debut (as Alfonso in *La Favorita*) in 1878; he thus represents a tradition of performance as far removed from our own as Edwin Booth's, for example. He was fifteen to twenty years the senior of most of the singers we consider as the first recorded generation—indeed, the only other widely recorded singer whose style represents that of the same era is Fernando de Lucia, in whose vocalism we can hear the same rococo taste in embellishment, the same rebellious attitude towards tempo and dynamic markings and bar lines. We obey a stricter set of aesthetic rules, but it is as preposterous to censure the artistic preferences of a century gone by as it is to censure the handle-bar mustache or the hoopskirt.

There is no such thing as a recording of the young Battistini. The 1902 Warsaw sessions preserve the art of a baritone nearly as old as Leonard Warren at the time of the latter's death. It probably doesn't matter much. A hint or



two of change due to age crops up on a couple of the 1923 sides (hints only), but the 1921 recordings, cut when Battistini was sixty-five, are all but indistinguishable vocally from his earliest discs, and I suspect that were there 1890 Battistinis, they would show us very much the same singer. It is really astonishing to consider that a sixty-five-year-old man is giving us the fluent, vibrant vocalism of the *Maria di Rohan* and *Maria di Rudenz* arias, or that the youthful, dead-steady "*Senza tetto, senza cuna*" is the product of a baritone who is sixty-seven and has been singing professionally for forty-five years.

Apart from this now incredible longevity, the thing that fascinates about Battistini is the unequalled fluidity of the voice: its ability to spin a long sustained line and then turn into a full-voice bravura run or a sudden declamatory explosion; its chameleonlike capacity for coloristic and dynamic changes; the perfect precision and spontaneity of the attack, in any part of the range and at any volume.

Although it was not part of his normal style to sing simply, he could do so with a perfection of intonation and legato sustention, and with a purity of vowel formation, that no singer of recent gen-

erations could approach. He demonstrates this on these discs in the *Thais* scene with Janni and in the *Favorita* duet with Cartonini—in both instances, he is modulating his tone and manner to duet requirements, and the line is hauntingly simple and beautiful. Of course, this sort of line underlies all his singing; there is a balance and a sense of being "on center" with the voice that never goes out of the vocalism, and the flashes of coloratura, the refinement of the ornaments, and the quick thrust and kick of the dramatic passages all spring from that same settled, poised position.

I know that some listeners do not find the actual quality of the voice consistently attractive. The bottom notes often present difficulty, especially on the late recordings. Beyond that, Battistini frequently makes use of a very open vowel coloring to secure a kind of dramatic snarl, and often he gives the end of a top note a sudden boost, increasing the volume and driving it momentarily sharp by way of adding to the climax. This last habit strikes me more often than not as self-defeating, but I love the snarl, at least in most contexts, and consider the utter, unequivocal clarity of the Italian vowel sounds one of the great communicative values of his singing. The low-end weakness is bothersome on a few recordings, but is quickly forgotten when he moves into the middle and upper range.

The basic sound has always seemed to me noble, all core and no fuzz, a lean, manly tone. It remains virile even when he sings tenderly, and it remains beautiful even when he sings dramatically. And the ease and control, the rightness of function, is always there. *That* is beautiful.

These Cantilena discs add considerably to our LP store of Battistini, despite a large number of duplications. This is particularly true of 6211, which pulls together an entire side of Donizetti, the three excerpts from Nougues' *Quo Vadis*, and the fine *Guarany* song. High points on the Donizetti side are the gorgeously sung *Don Sebastiano* aria (this is, however, at least its fourth LP transfer) and

the "Ambo nati"—a fine aria, memorably sung. There is also the aforementioned *Favorita* duet and the *Maria di Rohan* arias, which are not very distinguished music but are sensationally performed.

The *Quo Vadis* is lousy stuff as music—one hears the origin of many a travelogue soundtrack—but it is knowledgeably written to exploit vocal effects, and it is here magnificently sung. The recorded sound is also exceptionally fine for the period; except for some of the COLH selections, no other transfers give us so good a sense of the voice's presence. The disc closes with the impossibly bad Cocchi piece, again so excitingly sung that one's reaction is a mixture of horror, amusement, and exhilaration.

Cantilena 6210 is perhaps not quite so valuable. The quality of the transfers is more uneven, and nearly all the material is available in at least one other LP incarnation, notably on *Eterna*. But this combination may be attractive to collectors missing most of the selections, and the disc is justified by the first LP transfer of the exquisite "Ah! non mi ridestar." Purists will be horrified—a French tenor aria sung in Italian by a baritone. But Battistini was famous for his interpretation of *Werther* in a rewritten version (Massenet not only didn't sue, he did the rewriting), and so far as I am concerned, this version of the mar-

velous "poem of Ossian" leaves all others in the dust. I confess a sentimental attachment: this recording (backed by the "Vision fuggitiva," still untransferred so far as I know), along with the Ruffo *Credo* backed by the Ruffo/Caruso "Si pel ciel" was a Christmas present when I was twelve or thirteen, when I complained to my father that our collection included no great baritones (Tibbett and Werrenrath didn't qualify by the high standards I then maintained). I suppose I have played it two hundred times.

Each of the available LPs holds its own attractions. The high technical quality of the COLH disc, which also offers a solid cross-section of Battistini's recordings, makes it hard to resist, and no lover of great singing should be without the complete series of five *Ernani* excerpts, all assembled in sequence on the Olympus release. As for myself, I own seven of the eight LPs, and am still awaiting transfer of some of the songs and of the *Faust* excerpts.

MATTIA BATTISTINI: *Vocal Recitals*

Hérolt: *Zampa: Perché tremar?* Flotow: *Marta: Povero Lionello.* Meyerbeer: *L'Africana: Figlia dei regi; Quando amor m'accende; Averla tanto amato.* Thomas:

Hamlet: O vin, discaccia; Come il romito fior. Rossini: *Guglielmo Tell: Resta immobile.* Berlioz: *Damnation de Faust: Su queste rose.* Massenet: *Roi de Lahore: O casto fior.* Thais: *D'acqua aspergimi.* *Werther: Ma dopo come il nembo; Ah! non mi ridestar.* Rubinstein: *Nerone: Epitalamio.*

Attilia Janni, soprano, (in *Thais*); Mattia Battistini, baritone; pianos; orchestras (from originals recorded 1907–21). CANTILENA 6210, \$5.95 (mono only).

Donizetti: *Don Sebastiano: O Lisbona.* *Maria di Rudenz: Ah non avea più lagrime.* *La Favorita: Ah! l'alto ardor.* *Linda di Chamounix: Ambo nati in questa valle; Un buon servo.* *Maria di Rohan: Voce fatal di morte; Bella è di vestita.* Verdi: *Macbeth: Pietà, rispetto, amore.* Marchetti: *Ruy Blas: A' miei rivali cedere.* Gomez: *Il Guarany: Senza teto, senza cuna.* Nougès: *Quo Vadis: Errar sull'ampio mar; O Febea pur essa; Amica, L'ora attesta.* Cocchi: *Per la patria: Bella Italia.*

Cartonini, soprano (in *La Favorita*); Maria Moscisca, soprano (in *Linda di Chamounix*); Mattia Battistini, baritone; pianos; orchestras (from originals recorded 1902–21). CANTILENA 6211, \$5.95 (mono only).

NEW MUSIC FOR SOLO TROMBONE—AND FOR VIRTUOSO TROMBONIST

by Robert P. Morgan



Vinko Globokar, a onetime composition student of René Leibowitz and Luciano Berio, now records his own *Discours II* and works by Berio and Stockhausen.

ONE OF THE MOST characteristic aspects of recent musical composition has been a renewed interest in virtuosity—not, to be sure, the kind of virtuosity associated with nineteenth-century music but a new kind concerned primarily with the exploitation of as many different timbral possibilities of a given instrument as are capable of being realized. One side effect of this has been a spate of works for unaccompanied solo instruments unprecedented in music history. Even the baroque period, during which there was some interest in this genre, must take a second place to the present development. To date, the flute, clarinet, and violin literature has particularly profited, but this DGG record now at hand reveals that the trombone has also been reached. Considering the sparsity of solo literature for this instrument, the development must bring joy to every trombonist interested in a concert career.

The earliest of these pieces is Berio's *Sequenza* of 1966, which establishes the principle techniques and sets the tone for all the other works. The main innovation is the use of vocal sound both independently of the traditional trombone sound and in combination with it, the latter producing a kind of polyphony reminiscent of the use of "multiple stops" in recent woodwind music. Different kinds of sound or color are also produced through a variety of mutes and by stamping the

feet, blowing air into the instrument while manipulating the plunger, etc. All of this is handled with the kind of flair one has come to expect of Berio, and the piece is most effective in the present recording. It is undoubtedly even more so when it is performed in concert, as the work also includes dramatic gestures designed to evoke the memory of the great clown Grock, whom Berio knew and admired as a child.

Carlos Roqué Alsina's *Consecuencia* (note the title in relation to Berio's!) is similar in its use of these instrumental techniques but to me seems much less interesting in the way in which it exploits them. More successful and original is trombonist Globokar's own *Discours II* for five trombones, here presented in a version in which Globokar first recorded the four accompanying parts in succession and then played the solo part over them. Globokar's main interest is in the gradual gradation from pure speech through the sounds of vowels and consonants to singing and ultimately to the trombone sound itself. The results are fascinating and the work is undoubtedly a highly effective concert piece.

Finally, in Stockhausen's *Solo*, a technique is used whereby the trombonist's performance is recorded as the piece progresses and then played back to him through loudspeakers after a time lag during which the music has been manipulated electronically. The soloist must continue playing the piece but he must also react to his own performance as it is returned to him in altered form. The effect must be remarkable in concert, but in a recorded version it loses much of its point. Consequently, Stockhausen decided to add a "commentary" to the recorded version and to this purpose selected material from the electronic portion of the second Region of his work *Hymnen*, which was then superimposed over the recorded version of the original piece. *Hymnen* consists largely of a sort of montage of fragments of well-known national anthems, and since the second Region deals primarily with *Deutschland über Alles*, this is what we get here. Its appearance, even in this fragmented form, makes a strange intrusion and one that really doesn't come off. If the trombone piece doesn't work in recorded form, then perhaps it simply shouldn't be recorded.

A word should be said about Mr. Globokar's performances, which are nothing short of spectacular. Once again, one unquestionably loses a lot by hearing them only in recorded form: they really should be seen, and I am told that Globokar's histrionic talents are considerable. But even so, the sense of virtuosity communicated here is irresistible. The performer also supplies the excellent jacket notes.

VINKO GLOBOKAR: *Music for Solo Trombone*

Globokar: *Discours II*. Berio: *Sequenza V*. Stockhausen: *Solo*. Alsina: *Consecuencia*.

Vinko Globokar, trombone. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 137005, \$5.79.

Bettmann Archive



The Duke of Chandos: not quite Louis Quatorze—but a pretty busy emulator.

HANDEL'S CHANDOS ANTHEMS: CEREMONIAL MUSIC THAT MAKES A GLORIOUS SOUND

by Paul Henry Lang

WHILE LITTLE KNOWN elsewhere, Handel's Chandos Anthems, written for that embezzler extraordinary, the Duke of Chandos, were always very popular in England, and are rightly considered among the most magnificent psalm settings in the entire literature. Chandos, grown rich by manipulating army funds, had the age's Versailles itch; since every nobleman wanted to emulate Louis XIV, he built a great palace and of course instituted a ducal chapel; and since Louis had a celebrated court composer, Lully, the Duke had to follow suit, and thereby installed Handel, already well known as an opera composer. By that time (c. 1717-20) there was little left in Handel of the German cantor's art in which he was reared; he was an inter-

national Italian opera composer who could beat the Italians at their own game. But now he was faced with the necessity of producing something quite different: English ceremonial music for the elite. It is almost incredible how quickly he absorbed the tone and gesture of this quintessentially English genre; Purcell's heritage was his with the very first anthem.

The term "ceremonial music" is the one to use, because these anthems, written to grace particular occasions, are not truly church music but are secular in feeling, whether rousing or introspective. Listen to the predominantly quiet and intimate charm of *As pants the hart*, the second of the two anthems in this recording. Listen to the



Conductor David Willcocks: this music he has in his very bones.

exquisite melancholy of "Tears are my daily food." or to the tenor as he tenderly "pours out his heart"; this is English pastoral *in excelsis*. Towards the end, Handel suddenly strikes a serious, even probing, tone in a duet, "Why so full of grief." He concentrates on the question, asking with growing insistence "Why?" "Why?"—the single word assuming urgency but the question being left unanswered. Even the choruses are held to intimate proportions, and there is a delicate, almost dainty, fugue the like of which can be found nowhere else in the choral literature.

The other anthem recorded here. *The Lord is my light*, is of more royal dimensions. Apparently by the time of its composition the Duke's musical establishment had been strengthened and the future oratorio composer could exert his full choral might. Here Handel does fall back intermittently on the cantor's art by using a choralelike *cantus firmus*. Always stimulated by expressive or picturesque words, he now composes a large tonal mural. "Though an host of men were laid against me"—one can fairly see the clash of hostile forces. At the words "The earth trembled," the music shakes, while in the great closing fugue, "They are brought down and fall," the sinuous chromatic melody illustrates the words with almost graphic intensity. Yet this is not program music; everything makes perfect *musical* sense even without the words. Between the great choruses there are delectable solo numbers, in some of them the recorders contributing to the pastoral tone. This is glorious music that should be better known.

The performance here of *As pants the hart* is a model of how this music should be interpreted, and I suppose it takes an all-English cast to give it the right accents. Willcocks has it in his bones, but then he is also an unusually fine musician. All conductors could learn from him how to tame the bass in a "bottom-oriented" baroque composition: the big bass fiddles never rumble, never cover the other parts, and when they enter in a fugal passage they are as clear and nimble as the violins. The chorus is well balanced and sings crisply. Ian Partridge may not have a great voice but he more than compensates with his fine stylistic sense and impeccable enunciation: a cultivated artist. April Cantelo is charming in *As pants the hart*, though in the other anthem she struggles a little. *The Lord is my light*, while still well done, is less successful, with the long-drawn choralelike melodies suffering from the boys' immature and glassy voices. The sound is exemplary, and there are excellent notes by Charles Cudworth.

HANDEL: Chandos Anthems: *The Lord is my light; As pants the hart*

April Cantelo, soprano; Ian Partridge, tenor; Andrew Davis, organ; Choir of King's College, Cambridge; Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, David Willcocks, cond. ARGO ZRG 541, \$5.79.



Tenor Eric Tappy as Orfeo.

**MONTEVERDI'S ORFEO—A TRUE MUSIC-DRAMA,
NOW COMPLETE AND IN STEREO**

by Bernard Jacobson

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS separate Monteverdi's first opera, *Orfeo* (1607), from his last, *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* (1642). They were years in which opera developed from the newest toy of a pampered and pampering court into an established form of entertainment, with tried means of dramatic and musical characterization, capable of making its way in the professional theater. Along the way, Monteverdi himself learned not only how to achieve effects of music-drama unparalleled before Mozart in their intensity and human truth, but also how to make do with modest instrumental resources tailored to commercial needs, instead of the luxurious array of variegated tone colors that court festivities could provide and pay for.

Yet if *L'Incoronazione* stands as his greatest, most economical, most astonishingly modern theatrical work—indeed, as the greatest work in the first half of operatic history—still it is amazing how large a proportion of its qualities is already present in *Orfeo*. Many later composers have essayed the tempting Orpheus theme: none of them, not even Gluck, has come even within hailing distance of the touching expressiveness and the inexhaustible musical beauty and variety that Monteverdi conjured out of Alessandro Striggio's brilliantly fashioned libretto.

So there ought always to be a good recording of *Orfeo* in the catalogue. Wenzinger's mono-only Archive version has done duty for more than ten years. Whether by luck or by judgment, the very week it was deleted from the lists, this Musical Heritage Society set arrived for review. Originally recorded by Erato in Europe, it comes in a box with useful notes by Denis Stevens, accompanied by complete text and translation. The opera occupies five sides, and the sixth is taken up by an excellent performance of half a dozen comparatively unfamiliar pieces from the posthumous Ninth Book of madrigals.

Since the Archive set is no longer available, detailed comparisons might seem academic. Nevertheless, Wenzinger has provided the standard for so long that some estimate of the similarities and differences between the two versions must be attempted.

With regard to the important matter of stylistic authenticity, the similarities are—surprisingly, in view of the time that separates the performances—more striking than the differences. Both contain about the same quantity of embellishment. For my taste, just a fraction more might have been preferable, but all the decisions made by Wenzinger and Corboz are entirely defensible, and from a positive standpoint, what ornamentation there is has been tastefully conceived and skillfully executed.

In matters of instrumentation, Corboz is rather closer to Monteverdi's detailed and complex requirements. Like Wenzinger, he uses cornetti and recorders: but unlike him, he also provides the full brass complement of five baroque trumpets and five trombones. His vast continuo section, comprising two organs and a regal, two harpsichords, three violas da gamba, three archlutes, an archcittern, a double-bass, and a harp, falls short of the list implied by Monteverdi's score only by the negligible margin of one archcittern. Unlike Wenzinger, on the other hand, Corboz has not gone to the length of insisting on two violini piccoli in the one ritornello where the composer asks for them.

The Lausanne group's exhaustive collection of winds and plucked strings undoubtedly enhances much of the music in precisely the way Monteverdi envisaged. Wenzinger's orchestra, however, aided by some faster tempos and a less resonant acoustic, generally succeeded in making *tutti* sound more Monteverdian. Corboz allows his string players to use too much vibrato, and his chorus too is less incisive than Wenzinger's.

In the important matter of completeness, the new set has it over the old one all the way. Leaving aside the question of the chorus "*Lasciate i monti*" and its succeeding ritornello, where the requirements of the score are not fully clear, Corboz gives us the work absolutely complete. In one or two places, where his own musical judgment may well be right, he even repeats ritornellos when not specifically asked to do so, and he follows the direction to play the opening Toccata three times—Wenzinger's once-through at this initial point sounded very perfunctory. Nor are there any of the

fourth- and fifth-act cuts that disfigured the older version.

Turning now to the singers, I have to acknowledge that several small roles were more strongly taken in the Archive performance. Countertenor Bernhard Michaelis was particularly good as the First Shepherd; Horst Günter was a much better Plutone than Jakob Stämpfli, who turns in an uncharacteristically slovenly performance; and the twenty-five-year-old Fritz Wunderlich did some lovely things as Apollo, Second Shepherd, and Second Spirit—though he was also occasionally careless, and, like other German members of the Archive cast, succumbed to the provincialism of pronouncing the syllable “que” as though there were a “v” in it. Archive’s Speranza and Messenger, both sung by Jeanne Deroubaix, were more impressive than their successors, but the new Euridice, Proserpina, and Spirit of Music are excellent.

It is Eric Tappy’s Orfeo, however, that finally absolves any regrets and raises the Musical Heritage performance to the level of real inspiration. Helmut Krebs was good, but Tappy is even better. His voice is wonderfully fresh and youthful, his breath control magnificent (many long phrases in the florid aria “*Possente spirito*” are taken in one unbroken sweep), his Italian diction idiomatic, his musicianship impeccable, and his imagination always at work and often profoundly affecting.

At one place in Act III—the moment when Charon falls asleep and Orfeo steals his boat—singer and recording engineers have conspired to provide a real and thoroughly appropriate theatrical thrill. So as not to waken the ferryman, Tappy really whispers his lines, and yet at the same time he manages to produce genuine singing tone; and at the end of the scene, his voice can be heard quite clearly receding across the river.

Similarly, in the last act, Theo Altmeier’s well-sung Apollo makes a very effective descent from heaven, and ascends with Orfeo no less effectively.

As I have indicated, this performance has its weaknesses. But they are negligible beside its musical, stylistic, and technical virtues. And Eric Tappy’s glorious Orfeo suggests that Deutsche Grammophon, in its search for a lyric tenor to succeed Wunderlich, has been looking in the wrong place.

MONTEVERDI: *Orfeo; Madrigals, Book IX* (excerpts)

Wally Stämpfli (s). La Musica: Laura Sarti (s), Messenger; Juliette Bise (s), Proserpina; Margrit Conrad (s), Speranza; Magali Schwartz (ms), Euridice; Eric Tappy (t), Orfeo; Theo Altmeier (t), Apollo; Jakob Stämpfli (b), Plutone; François Loup (bs), Caronte; Vocal and Instrumental Ensemble of Lausanne; Edward H. Tarr Brass Ensemble; Michel Corboz, cond. Baroque Quartet of Geneva (in the Madrigals). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 939/41, \$7.50 (three discs). Available by mail only from Musical Heritage Society, 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023.

CLASSICAL

BARBER: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 14*

†Milhaud: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 2*

Claire Bernard, violin; Orchestre National de l’Opéra de Monte Carlo, Edouard van Remoortel, cond. WORLD SERIES PHC 9105, \$2.49.

Although I have never previously thought of Barber’s widely played Violin Concerto as a major work, Mlle. Bernard and her associates are obviously of that opinion—and they are very convincing about it. The rich, melodious lyricism of the piece—or at least of its first two movements—is marvelously wrought here. These performers make it sound like a cross between Copland and Puccini, if that can be imagined; if you can’t imagine it, listen to this record. But the *perpetuum mobile* finale is, regrettably, not up to the heights of what goes before.

The Concerto by Milhaud overside is very elegant, very reserved, very violinistic, and a little dull. It is not, in my opinion, one of its composer’s most noteworthy achievements, although the opening of its slow movement is a page worth waiting for in anybody’s music. A.F.

BARTOK: *Concertos for Piano and Orchestra: No. 2* (1931/32); *No. 3* (1945)

Philippe Entremont, piano; New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein, cond. COLUMBIA MS 7145, \$5.79.

It seems strange that the Second Bartók Piano Concerto was once deemed radical and forbidding. Radical though it undoubtedly is, it sounds today quite as approachable as the allegedly accessible Third Concerto. Possibly the present performances may have a part to play in this equalizing process, for both Bernstein and Entremont, rather than pursuing the strictly Bartókian elements of either piece, tend to lay stress on the modes of expression that Bartók so adroitly assimilated into his own unique vocabulary. In the Adagio of Concerto No. 2, for example, Bernstein’s strings phrase with involvement and with a romantic inflection that exposes an uncanny kinship to the central section of Hindemith’s *Mathis der Maler*. Again, in Concerto No. 3, Bernstein capitalizes on bits of Bartók’s brass writing to the degree that they extend beyond the realm of Ravel’s jazzy G major Concerto of 1932 into the vernacular of *Strike up the Band*. Do not misunderstand me, though: I do not want to suggest that these splendidly alive performances are

interpretatively unstylistic or even unorthodox, but rather that the particular variety of eclecticism they introduce acts as tonic for the immense musical nutrients contained in the notation.

Entremont gives a good account of himself here. Tonally, his work is moderately restricted, but it is neither bleakly percussive nor overromantically inflected. His freewheeling, declamative extroversion fits in well with Bernstein’s similarly debonair point of view. If both artists miss a few niceties here and there, it must be pointed out that their generalized method for the most part pays handsome dividends.

For Concerto No. 3, I am still most moved by Peter Serkin’s raptly introspective reading with Ozawa and the Chicago Symphony for RCA, but the Entremont/Bernstein treatment of No. 2 is quite as powerful and communicative as the superb Wehner/Ferencsik/Westminster performance. Columbia’s sound is ultra-acute and boasts razor-sharp definition. Everything, though, tends to emanate from the same vantage point (i.e., right on top of the microphone); I prefer the RCA, in which just as much detail emerges but from various localities in a large hall. In other words, on that disc one finds depth as well as brilliance. H.G.

BARTOK: *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*

†Poulenc: *Sonata for Two Pianos* (1953)

Bracha Eden and Alexander Tamir, pianos; James Holland, Tristan Fry, percussion (in the Bartók). LONDON CS 6583, \$5.79.

Whether because of the recording, the instruments, or the playing, Bartók’s masterpiece has rarely sounded as tame as in this performance. Such a limited dynamic range, such monotony of tonal color in the pianos leaves the work quite without profile, although the percussion is well played and recorded with exceptional clarity.

Similar failings appear in the Poulenc, but since its amiable garrulity hardly explores the extremes of the other work, the problem is not as serious. Eden and Tamir make some notable departures from the printed score, including additional measures in the last movement, which presumably come from an authentic source (perhaps from Gold and Fizdale, to whom the piece is dedicated and whose recording is no longer available?); possibly the reduced dynamics and increased tempo (half again as fast as indicated) of the opening pages have similar authority. The language here is that of Stravinsky, the subject matter rather less substantial, and the most successful movement is the *Andante Lyrico*, with its graceful theme the subject of antiphonal discourse (stereo separation is quite good, incidentally). Perhaps someone can tell me what the theme of the Epilogue is derived from? D.H.

Continued on page 70

Anyone for Furtwängler's 1942 Beethoven Ninth in "Stereo"?

WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER never made a studio recording of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. After the conductor's death in 1954, his widow consented to the commercial issue of the concert performance that had reopened the Bayreuth Festival in 1951, a performance generally recognized as unique and especially characteristic, if also slightly flawed in detail. More recently, the Russian MK label issued another Furtwängler concert recording of the Ninth—evidently "liberated" from the Berlin radio archives—but, for one reason or another, this set (two records, with a 1943 performance of the Brahms *Haydn Variations* on the odd side) was never officially exported to the West, although individual copies have filtered through. Last year a "semiprivate" dubbing of that set—on a label called Unicorn—brought wider circulation of this performance, which apparently stems from Berlin Philharmonic concerts of March 22/24, 1942. Now Everest, which seems to have contacts, if not exactly diplomatic relations, with the Soviet Union, has dubbed it again, this time on one record and in fake stereo.

Since Furtwängler's slow tempos are proverbial, you may well wonder how Everest managed to fit this Ninth onto a single disc. Well, the engineers began by suppressing the first repeat in the Scherzo (Furtwängler didn't make the second one), thereby saving some time and incidentally bypassing a spot where half a measure is missing in the original material. Then they ran the whole thing a semitone sharp, thereby getting it in under the wire at sixty-nine minutes. (Actually, the Scherzo seems to be even a bit sharper, so that I can't get it down to pitch with the three per cent speed adjustment on the Thorens turntable.)

Since the original recording already labored under severe difficulties—low fidelity AM-quality sound, with weak bass, poor balance, distortion in heavily scored passages, a touch of wobble (slightly more pronounced in Everest's version), and a high quota of bronchial participation from the audience—this is obviously an item whose appeal will be restricted to admirers of Furtwängler's conducting. If you don't already know the 1951 Bayreuth recording (Angel GRB 4003), by all means start with that; then, if you are really impressed, you will find the 1942 version a fascinating supplement, for it is a rather different performance.

In general, the orchestral playing is not as good, although the fourth horn does not suffer from the jitters that apparently overcame his Bayreuth opposite number at a critical moment in the slow movement. The soloists in the Finale are not bad, despite a scrappy cadenza with the soprano giving out at the end; too, for some reason Anders fails to sing the end of his solo, vanishing shortly after the choral entry. The Bruno Kittel Choir sounds quite good (the performance was given in honor of their fortieth anniversary), despite variable balance in the recording, which never quite recaptures the impact of their first entry on "*Freude!*"

Furtwängler's reading is tenser, at times more exaggerated than in 1951, but still impressively coherent for most of its length. I particularly like the first movement, which is faster and more uniformly paced as well as more strongly accented (note the way that certain timpani downbeats are singled out for stress). The slow movement—very, very slow—is also beautifully controlled, with much subtle phrasing in the violin elaborations. Less successful is the Scherzo (faster than 1951 and somewhat ragged), and the latter part of the Finale fails to hang together—a problem partly of Beethoven's making, for the piece becomes very episodic after the brilliant device of



Drawing by Lisl Steiner

double exposition (concerto fashion, with the voices as "soloist") combined with theme-and-variations has been rounded out by the theme's return following the orchestral double fugue. On this particular occasion, Furtwängler compounded the structural problem with a really frantic reading of the fugue, which makes the main theme's return seem even more weighty and final—but the coda is still a long way off.

It's too bad that this important document has been issued in such a careless and casual fashion: the "perfect Furtwänglerite" would be well advised to lay hands upon the Unicorn edition, which is complete, monophonic, and properly pitched. However, it's nice to know that this performance of March 1942 will give some pleasure to many who had the good fortune to be far from Berlin at that point in history.

**Beethoven: *Symphony No. 9, in D minor, Op. 125*
("Choral")**

Tilla Briem, soprano; Elisabeth Höngen, mezzo; Peter Anders, tenor; Rudolf Watzke, bass; Bruno Kittel Choir; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Wilhelm Furtwängler, cond. EVEREST 3241, \$4.98 (rechanneled stereo only).

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CIRCLE 60 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Continued from page 67

BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 7, in E (Original Version)*

Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. RCA RED SEAL LSC 3059, \$5.98.

Fortunately there is no lack of good Bruckner Seventh's, so I shall not regale readers with a detailed list of this new version's failings.

It must be said that the sound quality is no help. In place of Columbia's big, bright, overglossy sonics, RCA has gone to the other extreme. This is a sadly subfusc recording. I turned the level up step by step until the volume was beyond endurance, and still I was unable to obtain any sense of bite or immediacy from this disc.

But the performance itself deserves no better. It contrives to be brash and feeble at the same time. Ensemble and attack are merely approximate, the brasses rarely sustain properly, and the strings sound distressingly nerveless and uninvolved.

Rosbaud on Turnabout continues to be my first recommendation, closely followed by Solti and Walter. B.J.

CHAUSSON: *Poème, Op. 25*

†Ravel: *Tzigane*

†Vieuxtemps: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 4, in D minor, Op. 31*

Arthur Grumiaux, violin; Lamoureux Orchestra, Manuel Rosenthal, cond. PHILIPS PHS 900195, \$5.79.

CHAUSSON: *Poème, Op. 25*

†Ravel: *Tzigane*

†Saint-Saëns: *Havanaise, Op. 83; Introduction and Rondo capriccioso, Op. 28*

Igor Oistrakh, violin; Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, cond. MELODIYA/ANGEL SR 40077, \$5.79.

The near-simultaneous release of this pair of discs featuring two equally celebrated but artistically very different violin virtuosos affords a particularly apt demonstration of the way in which modern recording techniques are used to complement the individual style of a given performer.

The Melodiya/Angel recording has a forthright, almost brash, ambience in every respect—from a super-closeup view of the soloist to the detailed stereo sound of a rather rough orchestra—a perfect complement to the aggressive and extroverted style of Igor Oistrakh. The Philips disc, on the other hand, presents Arthur Grumiaux's aristocratic performance with a spatial detachment and sonic diffusion that are equally valid phonographically and totally appropriate to this player's artistic conception. Both recordings, it seems to me, are completely successful, each in its own way.

The touchstones here, of course, are

the two works common to both records, the Chausson and Ravel. As might be expected, Oistrakh's violinism itself is better suited to the virtuosic fireworks of the Ravel *Tzigane*, capturing a great deal of the gypsy quality of that score. Grumiaux excels in the moody subtleties of the Chausson *Poème*, probing its introverted sensitivity and arriving at the dramatic climax much more effectively than Oistrakh, who tends to play each passage more for its own effect than as part of a whole.

In the recording of Grumiaux's Vieuxtemps and Oistrakh's Saint-Saëns the same kind of sonic appropriateness is in evidence. And, again, we have from Oistrakh a display of virtuosity, from Grumiaux a musical sensitivity that ranks his performance with those of Francescatti and Stern, if without their technical fireworks. P.H.

CHOPIN: *Polonaises*

No. 1, in C sharp minor, Op. 26, No. 1; No. 2, in E flat minor, Op. 26, No. 2; No. 3, in A, Op. 40, No. 1 ("Military"); No. 4, in C minor, Op. 40, No. 2; No. 5, in F sharp minor, Op. 44; No. 6, in A flat, Op. 53; No. 7, in A flat, Op. 61 ("Polonaise-fantaisie").

Adam Harasiewicz, piano. WORLD SERIES PHC 9087, \$2.50.

Not to be bettered—even by itself—World Series comes forth with a *second* bargain edition of the six standard Chopin Polonaises. And whereas Cziffra in the older release gave us those six only, this new one by young Adam Harasiewicz throws in the great *Polonaise-fantaisie* for good measure.

Fortunately, Harasiewicz' versions are as good as Cziffra's were bad. The Hungarian pianist, as I noted in my review of the previous collection, was at his very



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worst in these pieces, combining a woefully contrived, excessively flashy Lisztian bravura with a bloodless tone and fitful rubato. In a way, Harasiewicz' interpretations are much akin to those of Peter Frankl in the excellent two-disc Vox set of the complete Polonaises. Both these young artists bring to these pieces polished techniques geared more towards elegance and precision than towards the monumentalism of a Rubinstein or Malcuzynski, and both are thoroughly "modern" in offering the music itself, without much chest-beating rhetoric or other heart-on-sleeve editorial comments. This is not to say that either Frankl or Harasiewicz is lacking ideas—far from it, particularly in Harasiewicz' case—but only that they share a marked tendency to present the structural movement with as little fuss as possible. A little bit of Frankl or Harasiewicz sounds really lovely and impressive, but what one longs for after a whole discful of either's playing is accent: everything tends to be *too* subtle and unified, with the music's surface silken-smooth but its bone structure a bit too slender and diminutive. The F sharp minor masterpiece, possibly Chopin's most primitive and fierce creation, sounds too cool, and for all his liberties with the score, this *tour de force* is really Horowitz' private preserve. Similarly, the big A flat "*Heroic*" work, the Polonaise No. 6, Op. 53, virtually belongs to Rubinstein.

In the small pieces, though, there is a great deal to cherish in the subtle, intelligent work of Frankl and Harasiewicz. Of the two, I would give the edge to Harasiewicz on the basis of his slightly more volatile way of turning a phrase. He brings a limpid, pearly touch to these pages, and often links his paragraphs together in an impish way reminiscent of Vladimir de Pachmann at his interesting best.

For all the generous amount of music on this disc, Philips' sound remains clear and natural. Only a few ticks in the *Polonaise-fantaisie* blemished my review copy. H.G.

HANDEL: *Chandos Anthems: The Lord is my light; As pants the hart*

✓ April Cantelo, Ian Partridge; Choir of King's College, Cambridge; Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Field, David Willcocks, cond.

For a feature review of this recording, see page 65.

HENRY: *Variations for a Door and a Sigh*

LIMELIGHT LS 86059, \$5.79.

The title really should be *Variations for a Door, a Sigh, and a Saw*, for according to Jacques Longchamps' jacket notes the sound sources employed in this electronic work are the creaks of a door, a sigh uttered by a human voice, and a tone produced by a musical saw.

Pierre Henry, one of the pioneers of electronic composition, seems to have recorded the door sounds "straight," without electronic alteration. It must have been a veritable cathedral organ of a door—probably the massive oak portal of an ancient French barn, with huge bronze hinges—and Henry demonstrates great virtuosity in playing on it, with the result that it produces an incredible range of sounds: light glissandos; long chains of perfectly even dots of noise, like a beautifully played scale on the piano; sounds full of air; sounds full of tension; sounds resembling those of orchestral instruments; sounds like the end of the world.

As opposed to the infinite resources of that magnificent door, Henry uses his other sounds sparingly and entirely in electronic disguise; voice or saw may have produced them once, but here they sound mostly like delicate, distant bells, often with the remarkable ability to raise their pitch by a sliding octave or two after they have been struck and their tone is dying away.

That a composer can make you sit for the better part of an hour enthralled with the sounds of a squeaky door and a few bell-like effects is altogether astonishing, but Henry has brought it off. This is a long piece consisting for the most part of single, isolated sounds. It bears no relationship to melody, harmony, counterpoint, or rhythm; it has emancipated music from everything but finesse and sensibility, of which it is entirely compounded, and it is a masterpiece. The twenty-five short variations are provided with titles like "Slumber," "Gestures," "Fever," "Wrath," and "Snoring," but this is nonsense and should be eliminated. A.F.

MAHLER: *Symphony No. 9*

Moscow Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, Kiril Kondrashin, cond. MELODIYA/SERAPHIM SIB 6029, \$4.98 (two discs).

"It is still impossible to assess with finality the value of Mahler's contribution as a creative artist." Well, now—surprise, surprise! That incredible remark is only one of many idiocies perpetrated in the notes for the tenth current recording of Mahler's Ninth Symphony. And by the way, while I'm talking about presentation: how many times do record companies have to be told that Symphony No. 9, in common with other works that employ progressive tonality, is *not* "in D," or "in D major," or "in D minor," or indeed "in" any key you may care to name? It moves *from* D major *via* D minor to D flat major; but that is more information than any title need saddle itself with, and as a designation "Symphony No. 9" is all that is either necessary or correct.

Now that I have delivered myself of that long-meditated grumble, let me say that, especially at the bargain price, this is a thoroughly competitive version of one of the twentieth century's supreme orchestral masterpieces. Undoubtedly the



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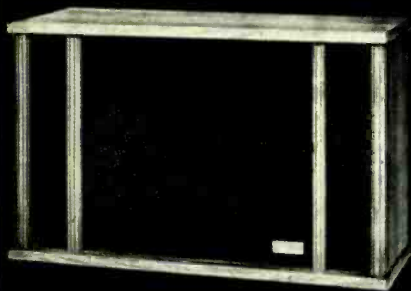
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finest performance I have ever heard from Kondrashin, it has on its side an interpretative style of powerful emotional commitment, with orchestral playing of a high standard that partakes of the same spirit: the woodwinds may not be always perfectly in tune, but the blemishes are few, and they are easily outweighed by the conviction of the whole performance, and most obviously of all, by the death-or-glory ferocity with which the violinists dig into their strings in the many vehement passages. The quality of the first horn is crucial to any performance of this work, and here the instrument is in the hands of a considerable artist, whose vibrato stays within reasonable limits even though it is wider than that of the average Western player.

No doubt I am becoming a bore on the subject of Horenstein's classic performance. Yet I have to say that Kondrashin falls short of Horenstein, both in imagination and in control, at a number of places. Nor does his handling of quieter sections, especially in the first movement, have quite the rarefied beauty that, for me, places Solti's performance first among the stereo versions. Kondrashin's highly emotional approach is more like that of Bernstein. On the other hand, he lacks Bernstein's organic flexibility, and the principal interpretative deficiency of the new performance lies in the rather square phrasing of some of the first movement transitions: after the long lead-backs to the initial tempo and thematic material, the actual resumption does not carry with it a strong enough sense of having arrived.

But Kondrashin is very successful, in an over-all sense, at integrating the varying tempos and moods of the first two movements—the performance of the *Ländler*, indeed, is one of the most strongly organized on record. Like almost everyone else, he allows the end of the first movement to run away, but the final Adagio is beautifully shaped, and here the concluding pages are controlled almost as well as they are by Horenstein and Solti.

The recording is admirably warm and full-bodied, though it could do with a shade more definition in the bass. B.J.

MENDELSSOHN: *Die erste Walpurgisnacht*, Op. 60

Vocal soloists; Choir and Orchestra of the Leipzig Bach Festival, Lorenzo Bernardi, cond. EVEREST 3229, \$4.98 (rechanneled stereo only).

To my best knowledge, this is the first domestic record of Mendelssohn's *Die erste Walpurgisnacht* (the correct title as opposed to the abbreviated designation on the record itself). Seldom heard today, it is one of the composer's most important choral works.

Mendelssohn began the score during his Italian visit at the age of twenty-one and finished it only eleven years later. The subject, not to be confused with a similarly titled scene in *Faust*, is from an early poem by Goethe dealing with the final stages in the conflict between the ancient Druidic world and the onslaught

of Christianity. Goethe's theme is renewal—and the replacement, though not annihilation, of the old order by the new. Mendelssohn, with whom Goethe had had some correspondence about the work, reflects the poet's concerns not only in the Overture. "From Winter to Spring," but also in the *Walpurgisnacht's* general musical plan.

Both the chorus and the soloists acquit themselves well here, the (unnamed) bass-baritone deserving special credit for his singing of the part of the Druid Guard with a fine rich voice and considerable musicality. Unfortunately, the orchestral sound is anemic, and the conductor (whose name I have never encountered before) hardly offers a perceptive reading.

The sound quality is extremely variable, and the listener whose interest compels him to explore this "electronically enhanced" record as a sole example of a significant Mendelssohn score is hereby warned. P.H.

MESSIAEN: *Les Offrandes oubliées; Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum*

Orchestre de Paris, Serge Baudo, cond. ANGEL S 36559, \$5.79.

The "symphonic meditation" *Les Offrandes oubliées* was Oliver Messiaen's first published orchestral work, written in 1930 and performed the following year. It is scored for normal orchestra and consists of two very slow sections framing a vigorous central portion; these subdivisions apparently correspond to the three parts of an epigraph in the composer's usual mystico-religious vein. A curious mixture of post-Wagnerism and irregular additive rhythmic development, the piece must nevertheless have made a certain impact in its day, especially because of the twenty-one-year-old composer's obvious virtuosity in handling the orchestra; today it seems pretty weak tea indeed.

Nevertheless, this early work is at least free of the pomposity and aggressively simplistic methods found in the 1964 *Et exspecto*, of which this is the second recording. Baudo, who conducted the first two performances, does a reasonable job, but the Boulez recording (CBS 32 11 0048) is even better. If one must put up with the relentless static repetitions and trivial developmental notions of this music, at least the Boulez version qualifies as a genuine sound spectacular (and its jacket provides a completer version of Messiaen's ineffable program notes, if you are a connoisseur of such things). D.H.

MILHAUD: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*, No. 2—See Barber: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*, Op. 14.





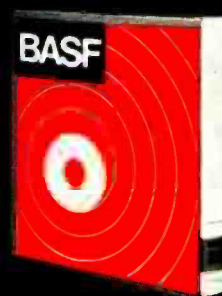
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For a feature review of this recording, see page 66.

MOZART: Arias

Die Entführung aus dem Serail: Hier soll ich dich denn sehen; O wie ängstlich; Wenn der Freude Tränen fliessen; Ich

baue ganz. Die Zauberflöte: Dies Bildnis ist bezaubernd schön; Wie stark ist nicht dein Zauberton. Così fan tutte: Un'aura amorosa; Tradito, schernito. Don Giovanni: Dalla sua pace; Il mio tesoro. La Clemenza di Tito: Se all'impero, amici Dei!

Peter Schreier, tenor; Staatskapelle Dresden. Otmar Suitner, cond. LONDON OS 26079, \$5.79.

Die Zauberflöte: Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja; Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen; Papagena! Papagena! Così fan tutte: Rivolgete à lui lo sguardo; Donne mie, le fate a tanti; Don Giovanni: Finch'han dal vino; Deh vieni alla finestra; Metà di voi qua vadano; Ho capito. Le Nozze

di Figaro: Se vuol ballare; Non più andrai; Aprite un po' quegli occhi; Vedro, mentr'io sospiro.

Hermann Prey, baritone; Dresden State Orchestra, Otmar Suitner, cond. ANGEL S 36481, \$5.79.

These two discs give us virtually all the important tenor and baritone arias from the mature Mozart operas, sung by two of the important German performers of this repertory under the same conductor and with, I presume, the same orchestra.

Since Prey has recorded nearly all his selections before, it is Mr. Schreier, the most prominent of the young German Mozart tenors, who inspires the most curiosity. The disc makes a somewhat better case for him than did his recent Metropolitan Ottavio, at least as heard over the air, but I'm afraid I cannot find him a very interesting artist, at least so far. There is an obvious musicality and sensitivity at work in his singing, and the basic quality of the sound is pleasant enough, in a pale way.

But this does not really carry us very far towards realization of these pieces. Schreier's use of the voice involves so little in the way of resonance properties or vitality that the best that can result is a neat, pretty rendition carefully skirting all difficulties and all excitements. The voice, which has a pleasing but shallow sound when used softly, tends to turn white and overly open when he tries to add volume. So it is hard to consider the results as more than routinely ingratiating, except when they are routinely uningratiating. The German-language excerpts are considerably more acceptable than the Italian ones, for Schreier's feel for the southern language is minimal; the recitatives are especially square and literal.

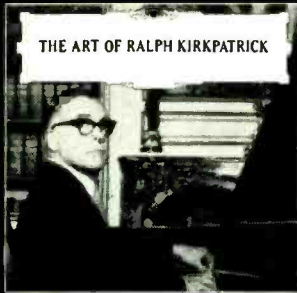
The three relative rarities ("Tradito, schernito," "Ich baue ganz," and the *Clemenza di Tito* aria) are certainly welcome in principle, but of them only the "Ich baue ganz" is reasonably enough solved to be enjoyable. The more I hear the *Così* aria, the more I wonder why it is ever deleted, except that it is difficult.

The Prey disc tends to break down along the same lines, though he is generally a more interesting and more complete vocalist than Schreier. If everything were on the level of the *Zauberflöte* selections, this would be a choice record: Prey is the finest Papagena of many a moon, and these three pieces show him at his best. The third one, incidentally, is the entire suicide scene, complete with the three *Knaben*, and deliciously done, with some genuine sadness and none of the ghastly cutesiness that so often ruins it.

The Guglielmo arias also are at least well suited to Prey's timbre and technique, and in fact the "Donne mie" is quite splendid, though not very Latin. The wonderful "Rivolgete à lui lo sguardo" is well enough sung (though the top does not have the ease or excitement one would rather expect), but doesn't have much actual bravura feeling or flavor; for this, we must turn back to

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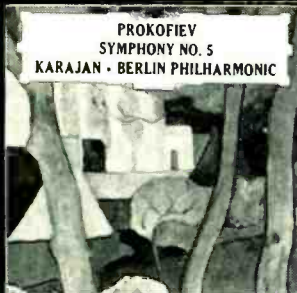
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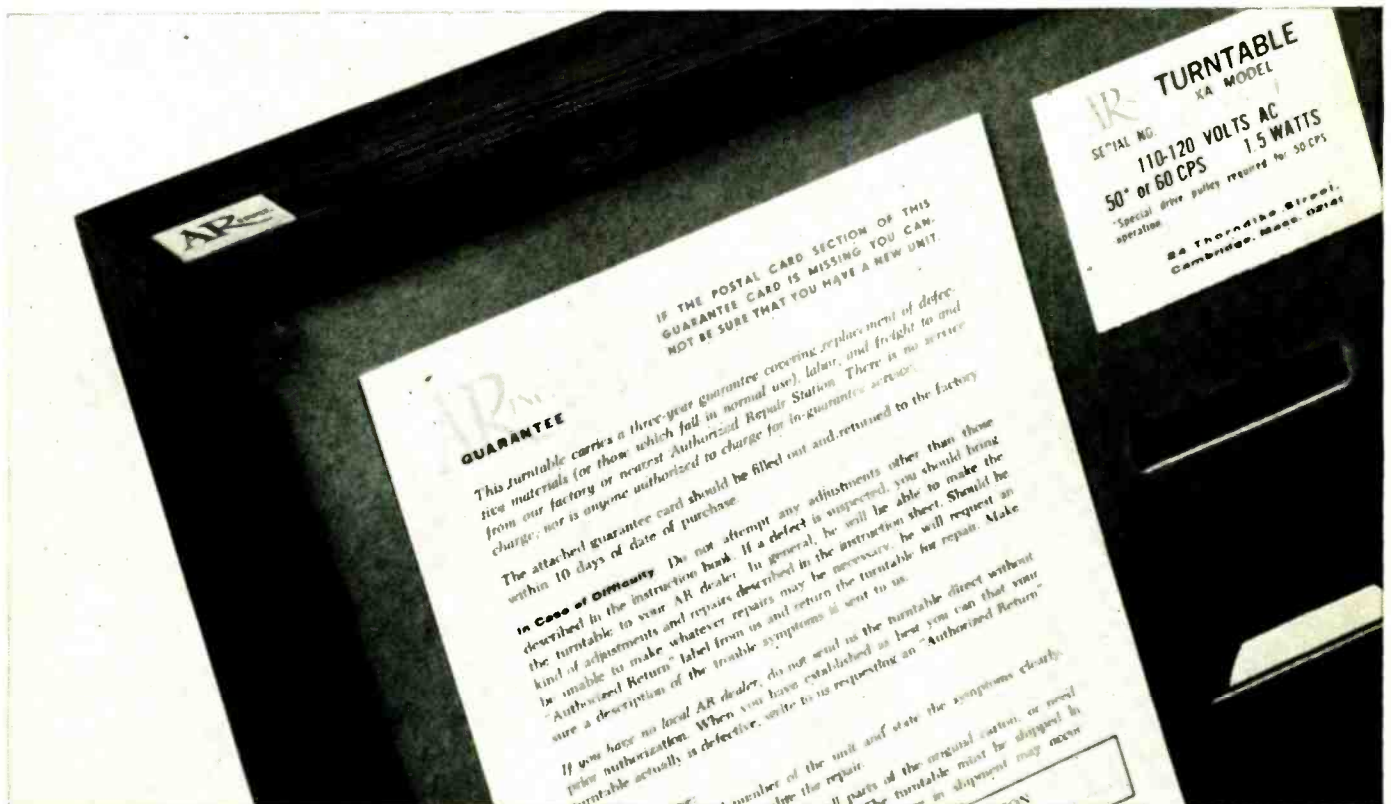
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Fernando Corena's colorful, nicely pompous version, approximately sung though it is.

The second side is mostly downhill. The Italian literally seems to deteriorate as the singer goes along; by the time he arrives at the Count, it is not only unidiomatic but downright incorrect. He somehow fails to sing Giovanni's serenade with any blandishment or charm, and even without reliable pitch, and again he runs into intonation problems in the "Aprite un po." The best thing on the side is actually Masetto's song, which one will seldom hear this well done; Figaro's arias are also listenable, with a bit more thrust than on the recent complete DGG recording. But the Don and the Count are not up to the level one

expects from so important and accomplished an artist.

In both recitals, Suitner shows himself to be a solid and sometimes quite pointed conductor: a couple of the arias on the Schreier disc are terribly staid and cautious-sounding, but this may simply be solicitude for the soloist. The sound on both records is full and alive, but each suffers from some unwanted engineering assistance, booming the voice artificially for Prey, surrounding it with empty space for Schreier. He sounds lonely. C.L.O.



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MOZART *Litaniae Lauretanae, in D, K. 195*

Soloists: Choir and Orchestra of Dresden Cathedral, Kurt Bauer, cond. EVEREST 3233, \$4.98 (rechanneled stereo only).

Mozart's four Litanies are all youthful works. The two Loretine Litanies (K. 109 and K. 195) are so named because the text is taken from expressions of contrition and prayers of supplication to the Virgin inscribed on the walls at the Mary chapel of the Casa Santa in Loreto. All four works are set for four soloists and chorus with an orchestra of two oboes, two horns, and strings; only K. 243, the last and most typically Mozartian of the four, adds to this instrumentation pairs of flutes and bassoons and three trombones.

With the present disc we are given an alternate to the mono-only Anthony Lewis recording of K. 195 on Oiseau-Lyre. While a new modern recording was certainly in order, Everest's offering is a big disappointment. A simple list of all the faults in this new presentation would require more editorial space than the misguided efforts of everyone concerned with its production deserve. However, a few comments are essential to the unwary: the chorus here sounds like a group of retired members of a provincial opera house chorus; the tenor soloist (unidentified) offers some really amusing lapses of musicianship; and the conducting of Kurt Bauer is so limp and static that every one of the many niceties in the score is either butchered or passed by unnoticed. To complete the story, an extremely primitive and unprofessional-sounding recording has been disfigured almost to the point of unintelligibility by its very crude electronic re-channeling.

One other curious aspect of this new release deserves mention: pirating of tapes and jacket notes is not exactly new to this industry, but it is nevertheless always disturbing to see it happen. Everest has here saved itself the expense of producing jacket notes by appropriating what appeared on the Oiseau-Lyre jacket several years ago. In fact, Everest did not even bother to reset the type, but simply photocopied the entire Oiseau-Lyre jacket back and pasted it onto the album, substituting its own name and credits. It seems to me the company would have done better to pirate the Oiseau-Lyre performance and hire a student to write new notes. C.F.G.

MOZART: *Quartets for Strings: No. 17, in B flat, K. 458 ("Hunting"); No. 19, in C, K. 465 ("Dissonant")*

Allegri Quartet. WESTMINSTER WST 17144, \$4.79.

The Allegri is a fine quartet, not as suave technically as other groups before the public but to be counted on for performances that are both intelligent in conception and passionate in mood. This current release falls short of the standard of earlier Allegri releases but it is not without moments of beauty.

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Of the two works represented the *Dissonant* yields the greatest pleasure and displays the major shortcomings. The odd-numbered movements are boldly stated, bristling with energy and strongly focused. The andante, however, is strangely pedestrian, and the finale hopelessly languorous. K. 458 begins well, with the Allegri indulging in an undeniably exciting, freewheeling romp, but movements two and four show little vigor. The magnificent adagio emerges with little intensity or passion.

First violinist Eli Goren's vibrato is overzealous throughout the *Dissonant*, a fault further emphasized by too close miking. For the rest, ensemble is loosely knit but not objectionably so. Westminster's engineering is less than it should be. Both sides are afflicted with noticeable pre-echo and the sound is slightly cavernous. My review copy was riddled with aggravating "splutterings" in the left channel. S.L.

MOZART: *Zaide*; *Lo Sposo deluso* (excerpts); *L'Oca del Cairo* (excerpts)

Ruth Ildeboesch (s); Erich Majkut (t); George Maran (t); Walter Raninger (bs); Richard Gotz (bs); Mozarteum Kammerchor; Camerata Academica, Bernhard Paumgartner, cond. WORLD SERIES PHC 2-015, \$4.98 (two discs, rechanneled stereo only).

A little-known and previously unrecorded opera by Mozart should be a red letter event; unfortunately, the quality of the performance here makes it only a light pink. Nevertheless, this is an important addition to Mozartiana, for to see a genius in the act of formation is always an exciting experience.

Zaide, composed in 1779-80 in Salzburg, was never finished, nor was it performed in Mozart's time—it did not even have a title. But that era's music publishers, as expert as any since at driving a hard bargain, could at least compose in a pinch, and they often exercised their talents on unfinished compositions. Johann Anton André not only completed Mozart's *Singspiel*, he supplied its title. *Zaide*, like *Die Entführung*, was one of those harem pieces which to eighteenth-century Austrians were the equivalent of our Westerns: they could not get enough of them. The librettist, an old court trumpeter by the name of Schachtner and a Mozart family friend, is described in the notes as "not entirely unsuccessful as a poet." It takes a good deal of Salzburg local patriotism to maintain the defensive prefix. We are lucky that the spoken dialogues are lost; the lyrics are made at least bearable by the music. The recording gives us the whole extant score, mercifully ignoring André's additions, but we shall never know what became of the lovers, of the sultan, and Osmin the First: when Mozart was given the opportunity to compose *Die Entführung* and Osmin II, he dropped *Zaide* and let it languish.

For a *Singspiel*, this is a curious piece because it is not comic; except for the

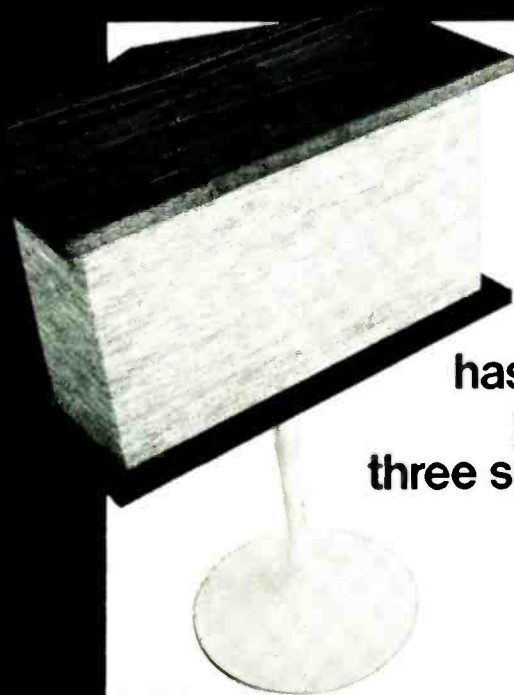
one *buffo* aria for Osmin, the rest is serious, even tragic in tone, and resembles the old *opera seria*. The arias are in the *seria* vein, there are extended ritornels, rage arias, and even the ancient "simile aria" makes its appearance. We must give Schachtner his due, for he managed to produce three of these: a "lark" or "nightingale" piece, one for a "lion," and a third for a "tiger." Our not unsuccessful poet makes the tiger aria follow the nightingale piece—who says that the old trumpeter had no sense for dramatic contrast!

But pleasantries aside, this music is interesting and at times—characteristically in the ensembles—absorbing. And there is in the score a novelty which was to acquire considerable significance in the nineteenth century: the "melodrama." The term does not mean what we understand by it today; it refers to spoken soliloquy accompanied by the orchestra. While the idea originated with Rousseau, Mozart got it from Georg Benda, a composer he liked and whose *Ariadne auf Naxos*, one of the most admired theater pieces in the eighteenth century, he heard in Mannheim. No. 2 in the score of *Zaide* is such a piece and it is remarkable indeed. The other one, No. 9, is somewhat less elaborate and venturesome but still unusual. The technique was not unlike that of the accompanied recitative but thematically less consistent, and while Mozart considered the melodrama the thing of the future, he never used it again, preferring, as usual, a purely musical procedure, the elaborate accompanied recitative. The arias are good if not outstanding, but the ensembles are first-class. The duet between *Zaide* and Gomatz (No. 5), in Mozart's gentle love-music style, is startlingly attractive with its piquant five-measure metric units. The quartet at the end (No. 15) is highly dramatic, and shows the hand of the mature master. The conflict and contrast between the four protagonists is maintained and enhanced to the very end. It is here, in the ensembles, that Mozart completely departs from the old opera scheme and is no longer dependent on any model.

In the rest we detect elements coming from French opera, notably Grétry, but Gluck and Piccini are also represented, though all of them on Mozartian terms. The characterization is not particularly penetrating, but here and there Mozart warms to the situation, as when Gomatz sings "let me kiss you, let me hug you." It is interesting to observe that Mozart's Italianate vocal line does not always suit the German text; the progress he made in this regard in *Die Entführung* is remarkable. Not that the musical prosody is incorrect, but the Italian melodic clichés often do not fit German phonetics, and the elisions, natural in Italian, seem contrived in German.

This opera—or operetta, as Mozart called it—was designed for provincial singers of modest capabilities, and the recording adheres to the tradition, though not, I am afraid, by design. The singers manage to get by, but with little to spare: low and high notes are approached cautiously, ornaments are respected from

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a distance, and in the ensembles the rather nondescript timbres do not mix well. Even so, this group of singers could have been inspired and led to a far better performance by the right conductor. Bernhard Paumgartner is a venerable Austrian Imperial-Royal Privy Councillor who not only keeps the defunct title but conducts like a dignified relic from the good old days of Franz Josef. The orchestra has no snap, the eager woodwinds are kept in the background, the dynamics are tepid, the basses merely grumble, and the violins are afraid to let themselves go. It would take a skilled hand to find Hofrat Paumgartner's pulse: and if found, it would have to be fed into the amplifier. The notes are good—Dr. Paumgartner is an old Mozartian hand—but they cause a certain eyestrain, beginning white on black, like the negative of a photostat, then switching to black on blue, like those pharmaceutical descriptions the manufacturer does not want us to read.

The two excerpts on Side 4, both composed in 1783, are also from unfinished operas, this time Italian *buffas*. Of *L'Oca del Cairo* all we have is an incomplete first act. Mozart was pleased with the music he composed but was dissatisfied with the libretto, which was probably why he abandoned the venture: he never liked to set to music a text he did not believe in. (Yes, he believed in *The Magic Flute*, whatever some people say about it.) In the case of *Lo Sposo deluso* this could not have been the reason, because the librettist was almost certainly Da Ponte, yet this opera, even more fragmentary than *L'Oca*, also remained unfinished. Both excerpts recorded here are ensembles, a quartet from *Lo Sposo*, and the first-act finale from *L'Oca*. They are fine, bubbly, and bouncy *buffa* music in Mozart's mature operatic manner. The singing here is much better than that in *Zaide*, and since the conductor picked up a little zip from them, and the orchestra wakes up, we get a much better performance. P.H.L.

POULENC: *Sonata for Two Pianos* (1953)—See Bartók: *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*.

PROKOFIEV: *Sonatas for Piano: No. 7, in B flat, Op. 83; No. 8, in B flat, Op. 84; Romeo and Juliet: Piano Suite, Op. 75* (arr. Prokofiev)

Vladimir Ashkenazy, piano. LONDON CS 6573, \$5.79.

Ashkenazy's second recording of the Prokofiev Seventh is a bit less athletically close in its reproduced sound and a bit more rarified in interpretation than his first essay, for Angel a decade ago. While he now takes the *Precipitato* finale a hairsbreadth slower than he did then (and to good effect), his treatment of the first-movement march is lighter, more gently humorous, and altogether piquant. Ashkenazy's way with Prokofiev's music is remarkably akin to that of Sviatoslav Richter, who has

also recorded these same two sonatas (though in different couplings). Both artists bring a lyrical touch, a pure—almost classical—kind of rhythmic command, and both tend to underplay (but not ignore) the sardonic implications that Horowitz, for example, stresses. As London has furnished flawless, beautifully spacious recorded tone, I can fully recommend this disc. But don't fail to hear the recent Columbia/Glenn Gould coupling of the Prokofiev Seventh and the Scriabin Third, and don't forget about Richter and Horowitz. H.G.

RAVEL: *Tzigane*—See Chausson: *Poème, Op. 25* (Philips and Melodiya/Angel editions).

SAINT-SAENS: *Havanaise, Op. 83; Introduction and Rondo capriccioso, Op. 28*—See Chausson: *Poème, Op. 25* (Melodiya/Angel edition).

SMETANA: *Ma Vlast*

Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Vaclav Neumann, cond. LONDON CSA 2222, \$11.58 (two discs).

A Czech by birth and training, and now music director of the renowned Gewandhaus Orchestra, Vaclav Neumann here combines a native immersion in one of the great scores of his own heritage with superb leadership of one of the incontestably great orchestras of Europe.

Equally worthy of comment is the fine performance—and London's reproduction, moreover, is the best I have ever heard accorded this orchestra. With a weightier sound than the Berlin Philharmonic and a less sweet one than the Vienna Philharmonic, the Leipzig Gewandhaus emerges here with a forthright projection, beautifully blended and dark-toned strings, adequate woodwinds, and magnificently ringing brass in the best German tradition. My only quibble is with a slight muddiness in the lower strings, possibly the fault of the otherwise fine recording.

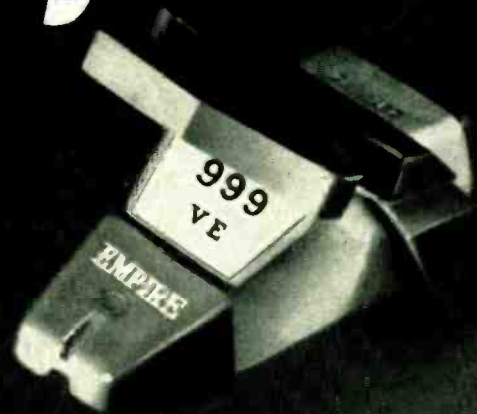
As a footnote, I must add that it is impossible to listen to this great score, inspired as it is by a patriot's devotion to his native land, without awareness of the irony involved in so fine a reading of a Czech masterpiece by an East German orchestra under Czech leadership. P.H.

STRAVINSKY: *Pulcinella Suite; Apollon Musagète*

Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner, cond. ARGO ZRG 575, \$5.95.

Heard in isolation, the performances by this excellent ensemble, which has not previously ventured into the twentieth century, are generally convincing and very neatly executed. In particular, the *Apollo* is set forth with a degree of delicacy and dynamic contrast not found in

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any previous recording—but at the same time there is a flavor of blandness pervading the proceedings, and occasionally even worse. For example, the violin solo in Apollo's Variation smacks of Viennese schmaltz, because the dotted rhythms come out more like triplets, which quickly acquire a Kreislerian (Fritz, that is) lilt that is intensified when the two violins double in thirds.

Direct comparisons with the composer's own recordings, roughly recorded and too loudly played though they be, quickly demonstrate the variety of articulation and precision of rhythmic diction missing here. Marriner's performances are more capable but also less interesting than Stravinsky's, which in the long run offer more food for musical thought; it is really too bad that the composer could not have worked with such a unified and tonally elegant ensemble as the Academy. D.H.

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

Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. RCA RED SEAL LSC 3058, \$5.98.

Ormandy and his Philadelphians have recorded the Tchaikovsky *Pathétique* four times, twice for RCA and twice for Columbia. Recently, in anticipation of this new RCA disc, Columbia remastered and renumbered its later edition (formerly MS 6160, now MS 7169) and put it on the market almost simultaneously with the appearance of its rival's product.

Comparisons are in order—and, I'm afraid, odious. In terms of performance this 1968 RCA account reminds me most of the earlier of the two Columbias; sonically, its closest kinship is with the 1936 RCA!

It would seem to take real ingenuity to use expensive modern equipment and produce 1936 sound reproduction, but whatever the cause, the result is plain for all to hear. For one thing, you get a lusterless midrange, a booming, ill-defined bass, and a constriction on top that makes the high violins scrape and the brass instruments cackle. For another, the solo oboes and clarinets obtrude like strands of hay from a scarecrow. Furthermore, I strongly suspect that RCA made a misguided attempt to add artificial reverberation to the dry acoustics of Philadelphia's Academy of Music. I, for one, would not have minded naturally unresonant sound, for it can make up in bite and compactness for whatever opulence it lacks; here, however, the dryness remains but clarity is often lost. Indeed, in this recording Tchaikovsky's busily scored passages, such as the first movement's development and the third movement's beginning, remind me of nothing so much as the subway in rush hour. I might add too that presence is minimal; there is always a disagreeable, canned dimness, a "gramophone" ring.

To be sure, the sound on Columbia's reissued *Pathétique* is of a variety I don't particularly care for. Everything there tends to be excessively creamy, legato, and souped-up. Nevertheless, that

sound—whether one likes it or not—is the product of technicians who knew exactly what they wanted and how to get it. Ormandy's interpretation remains throughout its various incarnations substantially the same straightforward thing it was over three decades ago. Despite a trifle more bracing energy in the newer RCA and in the earlier, out-of-print Columbia performances, the current Columbia edition is clearly the choice for anyone who wants an Ormandy rendition.

RCA, by the way, is offering a bonus record free with purchase of any of its six initial Philadelphia Orchestra releases. I feel compelled to say that I am much disappointed that this celebratory disc contains no memento of a Stokowski performance. What the record does offer is Marian Anderson's first (c. 1939) recorded Brahms *Alto Rhapsody*, Kreisler's playing of his thoroughly recomposed version of the first movement of Paganini's D major Violin Concerto, Flagstad's 1937 account of "Abscheulicher!" from Beethoven's *Fidelio*, Melchior's 1938 "Lohengrin's Farewell," and the final snippet from a 1940 recording of Strauss's *Don Quixote* with cellist Emanuel Feuermann. All, of course, are conducted by Ormandy, who also relates a few amusing anecdotes.

H.G.

VIEUXTEMPS: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 4, in D minor, Op. 31—See Chausson: Poème, Op. 25 (Philips edition).*

New Straussian Territory, Explored by Fischer-Dieskau

WRITING SONGS was one of Richard Strauss's favorite forms of relaxation—he used to toss them off while taking a moment away from his large-scale tone poems and operas. Songs, in fact, framed his entire career—at the age of six he produced his first composition, a Christmas carol written for his parents, and nearly eighty years later his final creative effort proved to be the beautiful *Four Last Songs*. In between came over two hundred Lieder, a handful of which have become recital staples; the majority, however, are virtually unknown even to the Strauss connoisseur.

Now, who would be the most likely candidate to explore this relatively uncharted territory? The indefatigable Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau of course, and here he is, singing Strauss's first published songs. All nineteen were written between the composer's eighteenth and twenty-first years and four of them are among his most popular: *Zueignung*, *Allerseelen*, *Die Nacht*, and *Ständchen*. The others may not have such ready appeal, but they too are typical of Strauss's

broad lyrical style and careful regard for text and mood. If one is looking for hints of the mature composer, this is the music to investigate, for these early songs are far more individual than the derivative chamber and orchestral works he was producing during these years. True, a faint odor of the salon does cling at times to Strauss's melodic and harmonic invention, preventing the songs from attaining the stature of a Schubert, Brahms, or Wolf lyric. Strauss's literary judgment was never especially keen, and most of these texts are by very minor figures: their comfortable middle-class German sentimentality occasionally finds the composer all too ready to reply in kind. Still, *Allerseelen* is a very pretty song, *Die Nacht* evokes a persuasive nocturnal mood, and *Ständchen* always makes a graceful effect. It's good too to hear these songs in perspective with their less familiar companion pieces, most of which are certainly worth reviving.

The performances here are superb—Fischer-Dieskau is in excellent form, singing the chestnuts

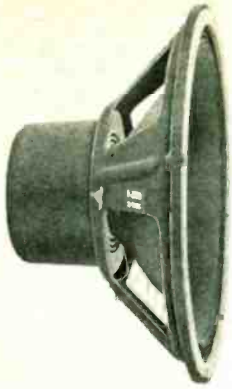
with the same fresh spontaneity and attention to nuance as the more esoteric items. Now and then one senses that Strauss's robust melodic line requires a voice more opulent if the juicy effect obviously intended by the composer is to be completed. But this reservation is minor in view of the baritone's artful delivery and, quite often, gorgeous vocalism. As for Gerald Moore, the limpid four-bar postlude to *Allerseelen* is alone worth the price of this disc.

PETER G. DAVIS

Strauss, Richard: *Songs*

Op. 10: Zueignung; Nichts; Die Nacht; Georgine; Geduld; Die Verschwiegenen; Die Zeitlose; Allerseelen. Op. 15: Madrigal; Winter nacht; Lob des Leidens; Aus den Liedern der Trauer; Heimkehr. Op. 17: Seitdem dein Aug; Ständchen; Das Geheimnis; Aus den Liedern der Trauer; Nur Mut!; Barkarole.

Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone; Gerald Moore, piano. ANGEL S 36483, \$5.79.



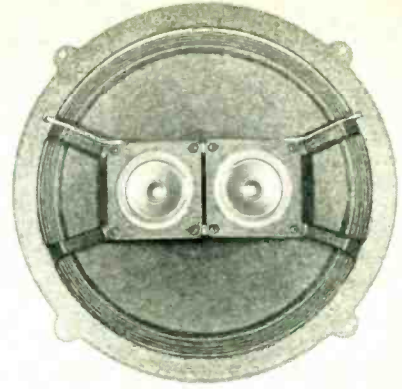
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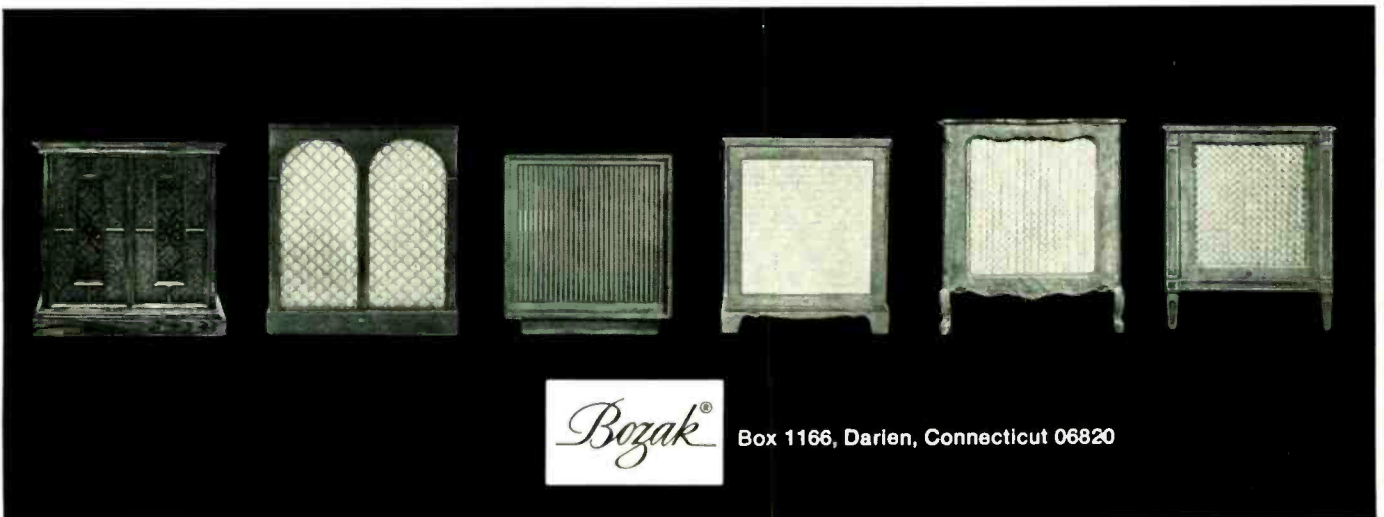
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MATTIA BATTISTINI: *Vocal Recitals*

Mattia Battistini, baritone. For a feature review of two reissues of historic recordings, see page 63.

GERAINT EVANS: *Oratorio Excerpts*

Handel: *Judas Maccabeus: Arm, arm, ye Brave; Messiah: The Trumpet shall Sound; Zadok the Priest*. Mendelssohn: *Elijah: Thanks be to God; Lord God of Abraham . . . Cast Thy Burden; Is not His Word Like a Fire?* Rossini: *Stabat Mater; Pro Peccatis*. Brahms: *Requiem: Lord, let me know mine end*.

Geraint Evans, baritone; choruses: BBC Welsh Orchestra, Mansel Thomas, cond. EVEREST 3238, \$4.98.

Wales has long been famous for its choral singing and—as in other regions of Britain—this has often meant oratorio singing. Geraint Evans was born in Cilfynydd, among the harmonizing coal miners of South Wales, and it is likely that his first encounter with classical music came in local productions of *Messiah* and *Elijah*.

Today, Evans is of course an operatic celebrity, and probably the best Falstaff, Figaro, and Beckmesser around. But (it says on this record sleeve) he recently interrupted his Salzburg season to make this record; and he certainly sounds confident and authoritative in the material, and happy in the company of his compatriots.

One listens with particular care, for strangely enough Evans has the reputation of being a "difficult" man to record satisfactorily; an artist whose talent flowers in live performance but does not always reach sufficiently phonogenic level in the studio. Yet what we hear in this record is firm and masterful singing, entirely solid in style and fully rounded in its traditional character. In the call to battle of *Judas Maccabeus*, Evans is immensely stirring; and he is serene and lyrical in the legato passages of *Elijah*. These two—"Arm, arm, ye Brave" and "Lord God of Abraham"—are the best bands on the record. In "The Trumpet Shall Sound" he punches his material rather hard and makes the ornaments less graceful than one would like them. "Pro Peccatis" sounds as though its substance lies somewhat below his most comfortable voice range. The Brahms is heavy going for all hands.

The disc is adequately engineered with nice (true) stereo, suggesting it was done in a city hall kind of auditorium with a fair amount of liveness. The disc surface was not very good on my copy and there was occasional bubble trouble.

Evans is not heard in *Zadok the Priest*, a Handel anthem for chorus, which Brit-

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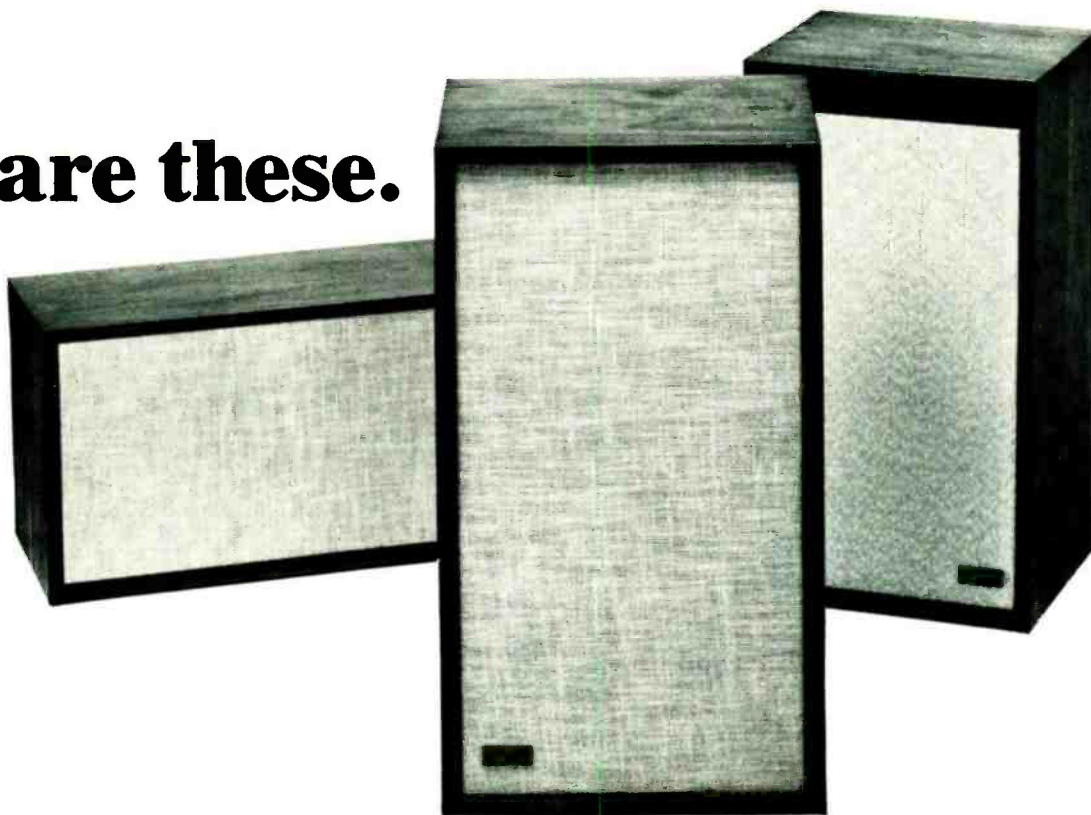
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ons hear whenever they get a new monarch: it is the official coronation anthem. There is supposed to be a burgeoning separatist movement in Wales, but you'd never guess it from the vigor these Welsh choristers put into their repeated shouts of *God Save the King*. G.M.

VINKO GLOBOKAR: *Music for Solo Trombone*

Globokar: *Discours II*. Berio: *Sequenza V*. Stockhausen: *Solo*. Alsina: *Consequenza*.

Vinko Globokar, trombone.

For a feature review of this recording see page 64.

LUCIANO PAVAROTTI: *Operatic Recital*

Verdi: *Luisa Miller*: *Quando le sere: I due Foscari*: *Dal più remoto esiglio*; *Un Ballo in maschera*: *Ma se m'è forza perderti*; *Macbeth*: *Ah, la paterna mano*. Donizetti: *Lucia di Lammermoor*: *Fra poco a me ricovero*; *Il Duca d'Alba*: *Angelo casto e bel*; *La Favorita*: *Spirto gentil*; *Don Sebastiano*: *Deserto in terra*.

Luciano Pavarotti, tenor; Vienna Opera Orchestra, Edward Downes, cond. LONDON OS 26087, \$5.79.

This is the first solo disc for this young Italian tenor, and starts with the advantage of a strong, unhackneyed program—only two or three of these arias could be termed standard, and even they are not overfrequently done.

Pavarotti shows a meaty, wide-ranged lyric tenor, and a technique that is sufficiently complete to make him the most accomplished tenor to come out of Italy in a number of years—he is a noticeably more polished singer than, for instance, Bruno Prevedi or Gianfranco Cecchele, or than the young Spanish tenor Giacomo Aragall. This is especially evident when the voice moves from the middle into the upper range, where Pavarotti manages to avoid the sudden, gulped cover that most of his colleagues seem to consider a perfectly satisfactory solution of the classic problem. He does not overweight the voice, and he preserves a true, open vowel formation, without letting it become spread and white, à la Di Stefano. Intonation is excellent, the top is secure at least through the C, and the tone even takes on, from time to time, the kind of spin and movement that bespeaks real freedom—the true vocal vibrato. (Bjoerling was the last tenor to secure it with consistency, and several passages here—e.g., the recitative to the *Ballo* aria and the opening of the *Due Foscari scena* bear a marked resemblance to Bjoerling's singing.)

Further, Pavarotti sings with a clean, well-knit line and with a relish for the words—not so much as dramatic meaning but as pure sound; the beauty of the Italian language is restored.

Aside from a very occasional bleatiness when he drives the voice at the top, he

shows a limitation only when it comes to grading down the dynamics; in this respect, he merely joins the group. (And again, we must go back to Bjoerling for any reliable demonstration of a true *mezza-voce*.) To be sure, Pavarotti can execute decrescendos and observe markings of *p* or *pp*. But the results are apt to be strained or downright ugly. At the return to the melody of the "*Spirto gentil*," for example, he sticks to the straight and narrow with a valiant attempt at genuine half-voice—but there is no trace of beauty or ease in the tone. And while he gives us a well-ordered, attractive "*Quando le sere*," he is unable to quite bring it down to the velvety *piano* that can make this piece magical. Since the voice does not sound particularly pressured or stiff, perhaps he will be able to refine this aspect of his singing in the future.

One or two notes on the arias: the *Due Foscari* passage is not the big prison *scena* but the entrance aria—a pretty one with an atmospheric use of woodwinds in the recitative; the *Duca d'Alba* aria, which is a powerful, original piece, is not actually Donizetti's but his protegee Salvi's; and the *Don Sebastiano* aria receives what I am fairly sure is its first modern recording (it is a square, uninteresting piece, and Pavarotti more or less rams it at us). The most successful numbers, for me, are the *Luisa Miller*, *Due Foscari*, *Lucia*, and *Duca d'Alba* arias. A disappointment is the "*Ah! la paterna mano*," a fine aria, which he does not phrase with sufficient profile to secure its full effect.

Certainly an important singer, potentially a great one. The conducting is on the heavy-handed side, but the playing is first-rate and so is the sound. C.L.O.

HERMANN PREY: *Song Recital*

Beethoven: *Die Himmel rühmen des ewigen Ehre*; *Bitten*. Bach: *Willst du dein Herz mir schenken*. Mozart: *Ave Verum Corpus*, K. 618. Handel: *Cantata con stromenti*; *Dank sei Dir, Herr*; *Serse*: *Ombra mai fu*. Giordani: *Caro mio ben*. Mendelssohn: *Auf Flügeln des Gesanges*. Liszt: *Es muss ein Wunderbares sein*. Martini: *Plaisir d'amour*. Böhm: *Still wie die Nacht*. Brahms: *Wiegenlied*. (All orchestrated and arranged by Frank Josef Breuer.)

Hermann Prey, baritone; chorus; orchestra: Wilhelm Schuchter, cond. LONDON OS 26055, \$5.79.

Quaint. You may call this "A Festive Evening" if you wish to—the sleeve does. Or you may think of it as a ramble in Victorian nostalgia, a program with a bit of this and a touch of that and not too much of any one thing. I guess what it really is is a song recital for people who don't like song recitals: so smooth, so easy on the ear and the mind . . . as to put you to sleep. But before you drop off, spare a little awe for Franz Josef Breuer.

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CIRCLE 37 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

ers like Bach and Handel sound richly nineteenth century. He can take a late work of Mozart, written for four-part chorus, and rescore it for solo baritone and instruments. He can take the piano accompaniment to a Beethoven song and "do it over" for orchestra and chorus. And, no kidding, he is extremely talented. The Mozart is distressing in its new guise, but the Beethoven opens with such characteristic brass and timpani that I went digging in *Grove's* to see whether Ludwig had ever refashioned any of his 1803 Gellert songs for other purposes. But the illusion vanished when Mr. Breuer's chorus came in, in late romantic style, and *Grove's* went back on the shelf.

Now that sort of arranging is downright fashionable and has been "out" for at least thirty years: we have learned to be skeptical about attempts to clothe the music of one age in the dress of another. In theory, what Mr. Breuer has done is thoroughly reprehensible; in practice, it turns out to be quite engaging. This is because the musicians and singers are obviously extremely accomplished and also because, whatever we feel about the taste of the conception, the taste of the execution is decidedly good.

Hermann Prey is an admirable artist and he guides a singularly beautiful voice with intelligence and sensitivity. It is a sound of richness and smoothness he gives us, but he knows how to avoid broad effects and he never lets things get overripe.

The playing of the orchestra (in an unidentified but certainly German city) is

impeccable, and the choir is excellent. They are recorded in an ambience that is spacious, natural, and warm.

So there you are: impossible to approve in principle; impossible to reject in practice. An enjoyable record. G.M.

JOSHUA RIFKIN: "Student Music in Seventeenth-Century Leipzig"

Krieger: *Ein Freund, ein Trunk; Der Neckarwein muss köstlich sein; Der Rheinsche Wein tanzt gar zu fein; Wer sich verliebt, wird sehr betrübt; Er ist verwundet; Die Jungfern sein nur auf den Schein; Der Schönheit Blum; Es fehlet ihr nur eine Zier; Es steigt der Wein; Die Fröhlichkeit acht' keinen Neid.* Rosenmüller: *Studenten Musik: Suite No. 2, in D minor.* Pezel: *Bullo, Ciconia and Gigue; Allemande and Courante.*

Various singers and instrumentalists, Joshua Rifkin, cond. NONESUCH H 71204, \$2.50.

German students in the seventeenth century were a lot less troubled than their present-day contemporaries if one can judge by the toasts to wine and laments over the frustrations of young love which make up the vocabulary of the songbooks from which this attractive collection was gathered. Adam Krieger, the writer of songs who died shortly after he reached thirty, is the most prominent composer. Ten of his elegant melodies and neat verses are included along with jolly instrumental dances by Johann Rosenmüller and Johann Pezel.

The performances are appropriately bouncy and light-hearted, thanks to the versatile young musicologist Joshua Rifkin who assembled the music and directed the group (and who also plays the harpsichord here). The singers are excellent and the instrumentalists from the Little Orchestra of London play with skill and enthusiasm. As usual Nonesuch provides adequate sound and superior notes and texts. S.T.S.

RICHARD TAUBER: Opera Arias

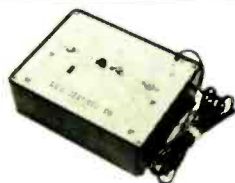
Auber: *Fra Diavolo: Pour toujours.* Verdi: *Rigoletto: Questa o quella: La donna e mobile; La Traviata: De miei bollenti spiriti; Il Trovatore: Ah, si ben mio; Di quella pira; Aida: Profferse il labbro incauto* (with Sabine Kalter, m-s); Smetana: *The Bartered Bride: Es muss gelingen.* Bizet: *Carmen: Parle-moi de ma mère* (with Elisabeth Rethberg, s); Kienzl: *Der Evangelimann: Selig sind; Der Kuhreigen: Lug' Dursel, lug'.* Puccini: *Tosca: Recondita armonia: E lucevan le stelle.* D'Albert: *Tieland: Schau her.* R. Strauss: *Der Rosenkavalier: Di rigori armato.* Wolf-Ferrari: *I Gioielli della Madonna: Madonna, con sospiri.*

Richard Tauber, tenor; orchestra. SERAPHIM 60086, \$2.49 (mono only).

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The most interesting pieces in this regard—and in any other regard, for that matter—are the two by Ligeti. Here the same musical preoccupations that led to the remarkable orchestral sonorities of his *Atmosphères* (which has become a kind of hit due to its use in the soundtrack of *2001: A Space Odyssey*) are transferred to the organ with equally remarkable results. This is what one might call "wallpaper music," music concerned almost exclusively with texture and pattern. As a consequence, structure becomes secondary; and as is the case with most wallpaper, one can start almost anywhere without affecting the over-all design. The success of such music depends largely upon the ability to create colors and textures that are sufficiently interesting in their own right to be experienced solely for themselves, independently (to a greater or lesser degree) of their position within the total structural design. I inserted that "to a greater or lesser degree" because the best of these composers—and I think Ligeti is probably *the* best—do attempt to arrange their textures in such a way that they undergo a process of transformation, no matter how gradual, and

through this transformation are given some sense of growth and development. I grant that the structural plan, as least so far as it is aurally perceptible, is simple to the point of being primitive, but it nevertheless serves to give some shape and focus to the whole.

Still, the importance of sound for sound's sake in Ligeti's work is pronounced. In these pieces the extraordinary textural effects are achieved primarily through the use of clusters which are then altered both in regard to their pitch content and their registration. The latter, incidentally, becomes of paramount importance in this music. Traditionally, organ registration has been used primarily to produce sharp color contrasts in order to articulate important structural points in the music. Here, however, the registration is constantly changing, usually in a gradual way so that one color seems to merge into the next. This requires the performer to "play" on the registration buttons much as he does on the keyboard, and thus demands an entirely new technique.

For contrast there is Juan Allende-Blin's *Sonorités*, a piece which, as the title implies, is also concerned primarily with sound, but in which the sense of structure is almost completely missing. Left only with the surface pattern, one quickly grows tired of the novel effects. Mauricio Kagel's *Fantasy for Organ with Obbligati*, on the other hand, is a different kind of piece altogether, an example of the "musical theater" genre of which Kagel, along with John Cage, has been one of the leading developers. Here the theatrical aspect is centered in the "obbligati," which consist of taped sounds representing mundane events in the performer's life. Thus one hears frying eggs, flushing toilets, trains going to the performer's place of

work, babies crying at christenings, etc.—all presumably normal features of an organist's everyday activity. The *Fantasy for Organ* is superimposed over this *musique concrète*, giving continuity by providing interludes between breaks in the taped portion and generally supplying a musical commentary on it. It seems to me that the success of such a piece depends largely upon one's relation to the performer in question. Assuming the listener is interested in his day-to-day activities, then the piece might prove to be humorous, perhaps even moving. Otherwise, I'm afraid it's a bore.

The performances by Gerd Zacher are impressive both for their virtuosity and their musicality, although without scores it is difficult to say how accurate they are. But an educated guess would be that they are quite accurate. The instrument, as one would probably assume, is a modern one (1962), located in the Lutherkirche in Hamburg-Wellingsbüttel where Mr. Zacher is the organist. Its specifications: thirty-seven stops on three manuals and pedal, with swell box shutters, mechanical tracker action, and electric control. The sound is excellent and the notes by Dieter Schnebel are helpful. They appear in both English and German, although unfortunately the portions dealing with the composers (as opposed to the pieces) are in German only.

ROBERT P. MORGAN

Gerd Zacher: *Music for Solo Organ*

Kagel: *Fantasy for Organ with Obbligati*. Ligeti: *Volumina: Etude No. 1 ("Harmonies")*. Allende-Blin: *Sonorités*.

Gerd Zacher, organ. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 137003, \$5.79.

local record store to add this palpable bargain to their shelves. They will not be deterred by the presence of some decidedly substandard items in this recital—along with several magnificent reminders of the Viennese tenor's distinctively elegant and ingratiating style. Among the bad Tauber here included is a "*Di quella pira*" transposed down a full tone (and perfunctorily sung at that), two *Tosca* arias that sound more Lehár than Puccini, and Alfredo's Act II soliloquy from *Traviata* which ends in an ungainly wobble. But the *Carmen* duet reminds us how well he made Don José's music sound—and brings us Rethberg's hauntingly beautiful singing of Micaela.

The *Aida* duet is a pearl, not only for Tauber's bold and forthright Radames but for the remarkable quality of Sabine Kalter's Amneris—she must have been outstanding. Kienzl's engaging and pious tunes seem to survive only in recital records—Fritz Wunderlich recorded the same pair—and Tauber offers them with the utmost in ease and grace.

But one band here is alone worth the whole price of the disc: a peerless account of the Italian singer's audition aria from Act I of *Rosenkavalier* (the only item on the record not sung in German). In this parody by Richard Strauss of the eighteenth-century *bel canto* style, Tauber is effortless and splendid.

Don't expect too much from the technology, for the Viennese early electricals (these were made between 1925 and 1932) are notorious for constricted tone and gritty surfaces; and the accompaniments are often ludicrously primitive. But the Tauber gleam conquers all, the freshness of style and suppleness of line ride with equal ease over tawdry playing and boxy acoustics.

Back in the EMI vaults there are some Tauber treasures even worthier of release than most of the present ones. We need his Mozart arias, please: the pair from *Don Giovanni*, others from *Zauberflöte*, *Entführung*, and *Così*. There should be enough for one more Seraph. G.M.

When this little eighty-dollar speaker speaks, the Establishment trembles.

Our new Mini-III speaker system has nothing to do with revolutionary politics. But, among loudspeakers, it's shaking up the established hierarchy quite radically.

Everybody who cares about speakers knows the Establishment. It consists of the top systems of perhaps half a dozen major manufacturers, mostly of the larger bookshelf size but a few of them floor models, nearly all with acoustic-suspension woofers plus one to four other drivers, and ranging in price anywhere from \$134 to \$330. It's a strong and distinguished ruling class, capable of a far more natural sound than the giant horn-type systems and other dinosaurs it originally succeeded (and which, incidentally, are still being sold to reactionaries at prices up to \$2250).

Now, into this exclusive group steps an upstart, measuring a puny 19" by 12" by 9½" and with a ridiculous \$79.50 price tag, and has the temerity to sound better than the whole lot of them. (Not just *different*, like certain interesting novelty speakers you may have heard lately, but *better* in the Establishment sense: smoother, clearer, lower in distortion, more natural.)

Of course, just because a manufacturer claims his product is better, you don't necessarily have to believe him. However, we feel quite secure against the skeptics because the superiority we're talking about isn't so subtle. Music lovers will hear it all right.

For one thing, the Rectilinear Mini-III

is the first box-type speaker system that doesn't sound like one. It has none of the boxy coloration you can hear, either a little or a lot, in the output of all other completely enclosed systems. In this respect, it's comparable to the large and murderously expensive full-range electrostatic speakers.

Also, the sweet-sounding top end of the Mini-III isn't the kind that comes from rolling off the high-frequency response. The highest highs are all there, just about flat. But they're nice and peak-free, so the result is realism instead of spitty "crispness."

Finally, bass distortion in the Mini-III is so low that the bass is much more

natural and impressive than the typical Establishment speaker's, whose larger woofer may go a few (just a few) cycles lower.

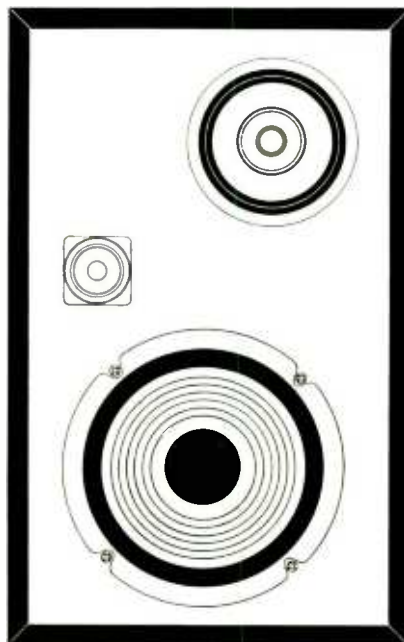
These easily audible differences are the result of some strictly non-Establishment engineering.

Wide-eyed audio enthusiasts are generally unaware that the typical hi-fi manufacturer can't attract the same caliber of engineers as, say, Boeing or NASA. We at Rectilinear try to be an exception to the rule. So far we've been able to provide the kind of unorthodox engineering environment that keeps a few music-loving NASA-type brains happy. When they make three cone speakers in a one-cubic-foot box sound better than some of the world's most elaborate systems, they feel as creative as the space capsule boys.

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by Rectilinear



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Hummel: TRUMPET CONCERTO IN E FLAT MAJOR

L. Mozart: TRUMPET CONCERTO IN D MAJOR

Henri Helaerts (bassoon), Michel Cuvit (trumpet) — L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande — Ernest Ansermet
CS-6603

Shostakovich's Symphonies

Continued from page 47

the revolution, *Prêtre* (Odeon ASP 559, now out of print) as if he loved the music.

* * *

Symphony No. 13, Op. 113

Just as Russia was heaping unctuous praise on Shostakovich for his Twelfth Symphony and Western critics were taking dead aim at what they regarded as an unfortunate turn in the composer's symphonic style, two more Shostakovich symphonies appeared that considerably changed the entire picture. The first of these was the Fourth, which was performed for the first time on December 30, 1961, more than thirty-five years after its composition and only some two months after the premiere of the Twelfth. But no sooner was the Fourth brought out into the light than the Thirteenth was precipitated into controversy. Once again, Shostakovich plunged from the heights of official approval into the miasma of ideological nit-picking, except that this time criticism was limited to the single work and did not attack the music but rather the text it set. After years of hinting at composing a genuine choral symphony, Shostakovich finally found texts that satisfied him in the poetry of Yevgeny Yevtushenko, only to be informed by the government that the use in the first movement of the *Babi Yar* poem, with its accusations of Russian anti-Semitism, was not suitable material for a symphony. After the Thirteenth's premiere on December 18, 1962, it was performed only twice, in 1963 and 1965 (after Khrushchev's deposition), using a slightly revised version of *Babi Yar*.

The musical language of the Thirteenth Symphony represents a radical departure from the bombast of much of the Twelfth. The Thirteenth is pervaded by a rather stark and brittle style also characteristic of such later works as the *Stepan Razin* cantata and the *Hamlet* film score. The work makes far less use of the orchestral resonance and variety found in Shostakovich's earlier symphonies and often relies instead on short bursts of low-pitched instrumental color. On the other hand, there is a strong, Russian lyricism in the Thirteenth—due partially to the use of voices—not found in much of Shostakovich's other symphonic work.

Everest Records and especially a young man named Joseph Cooper, who managed to obtain a tape of the 1965 performance of the symphony from a conservatory in Russia and who wrote the excellent program notes for the disc, deserve a good deal of credit for making this important work available just when Western audiences were wondering whether they would ever hear it. This coup probably inspired a later studio recording (also of the slightly revised version) recently made in Russia. But the Everest disc (3181), documenting an intense and thoroughly committed live performance by Kiril Kondrashin, will always have a historical importance and, all things considered, it is quite well recorded.

CIRCLE 40 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

CIRCLE 43 ON READER-SERVICE CARD →

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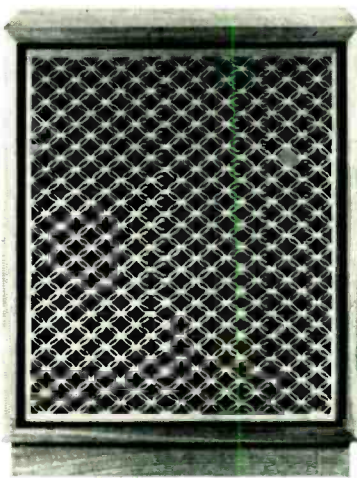
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THE SOUND OF MUSIC AT ITS VERY BEST.

IN BRIEF

DVORAK: Symphony No. 9, in E minor, Op. 95 ("From the New World"). London Symphony Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. Columbia MS 7089, \$5.98.

FALLA: El Amor brujo. **GRANADOS:** Goyescas; Intermezzo. **RAVEL:** Pavane pour une infante défunte; Alborada del gracioso. Nati Mistral, mezzo (in the Falla); New Philharmonia Orchestra, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, cond. London CS 6521, \$5.79.

GERSHWIN: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, in F. **NERO:** Fantasy and Improvisations for Piano and Orchestra, ("Blue Fantasy"). Peter Nero, piano; Boston Pops Orchestra, Arthur Fiedler, cond. RCA Red Seal LSC 3025, \$5.98.

HINDEMITH: Symphonic Metamorphosis. **JANACEK:** Sinfonietta, Op. 60. Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, cond. Columbia MS 7166, \$5.98.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: Scheherazade, Op. 35; The Tale of Tsar Saltan: March; Flight of the Bumble Bee. John Georgiadis, violin; London Symphony Orchestra, André Previn, cond. RCA Red Seal LSC 3042, \$5.98.

VERDI: La Traviata (highlights in German). Hilde Gueden (s), Fritz Wunderlich (t), Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (b); Chorus and Orchestra of the Bavarian Radio, Bruno Bartoletti, cond. Heliodor HS 25088, \$2.49.

Ormandy's first and only recording made outside of the U.S. (unless one counts the anonymously issued 1953 Prades Festival version of Schumann's Cello Concerto with Casals), this offers some glorious playing from the LSO, vivid inner-voice detail, and just about the most poetic account of the Largo movement I can recall hearing. The serenity and involvement of Ormandy's phrasing there disarms criticism. Elsewhere, and particularly in the rhetoric-laden finale, his theatricalities are, in truth, a bit "much." Ančerl/Parliament and Toscanini/Victrola make their points without so much gesticulation, and for that reason I find their versions easier to live with. Ormandy's lushly reproduced effort, though, is recommended if a change of pace is desired. H.G.

As might be expected by everyone who knows the young Spanish conductor's earlier Falla recordings for Angel, Frühbeck's *Love the Sorcerer* proves to be not only authentically idiomatic but almost as poetic as the fine 1967 Giulini version for Angel—and rhythmically even more zestful and clean-cut. His soloist, apparently making her American record debut, is no match for Giulini's Victoria de los Angeles in haunting vocal loveliness, but she makes more of the four brief solos' gypsy earthiness. Both here and in the overside Granados and Ravel pieces the recordings are well-nigh flawless examples of the most gleamingly transparent stereoism. R.D.D.

Despite the advantages of Fiedler's knowledgeable accompaniment and of pianism that is more idiomatic than Entremont's (Columbia), less languishing than Lowenthal's (Cardinal), there is nothing in this version of the Gershwin Concerto to match the dash, warmth, and dramatic conviction of the memorable Wild/Fiedler edition. Even the latter's 1962 sonics are more genuinely brilliant, less close, and far less unnaturally vivid. Nero's own *Fantasy* is shrewdly contrived to display his steely-fingered bravura in a pretentious juxtaposition of the essentially immiscible "blue" and Rachmaninoff materials. Everything's on the highly polished, ice-cold, chromium-plated surface. R.D.D.

The principal interest here centers naturally in the Hindemith work, of which Szell's interpretation was available at one time in a mono-only recording. The *Symphonic Metamorphosis*, with its healthy extroversion, its brilliant orchestral writing, and its avoidance of profundity, is precisely the sort of thing Szell does best, and this well-recorded performance is as good a one as you will find. The excellent Janáček Sinfonietta is already available in another coupling, as a filler for the Szell performance of the Bartók *Concerto for Orchestra*. B.J.

Previn's *Scheherazade* (No. 22 in the phonographic harem) is an earnest, deliberate, too-wholesome-to-be-seductive effort—qualities well enough suited for the first three *Arabian Nights* tales but quite inadequate for the frenzied excitements of the finale. The performance itself is particularly admirable for Georgiadis' pure-toned, unmannered violin solos and for the deft virtuosity of the other LSO first-desk men. And the recorded sonics are gleamingly warm, if a bit lacking in weight and low-level percussive and inner-voice score details. In short, an attractive version of this old favorite, but one that offers no real challenge to the long-time pre-eminent revitalizations by Ansermet for London and by Beecham for Angel. R.D.D.

This is an arrogant and rather offensive disc. Some bright record producer got these three stars together and persuaded them to record a *Traviata Querschnitt* in a style thought appropriate for German consumption of Verdi—to wit, an operetta manner, distinctly derived from Lehár. This means that the orchestra plays with syrup and the singers schmaltz along in half voice, only occasionally remembering that they are operatic artists. Much of the time you could take Wunderlich for Tauber in Viennese *Schlag*; Gueden, not really up to the coloratura of "Sempre libera," perks along, cute and bright; Fischer-Dieskau chops everything up into the shortest possible phrases and produces some prize antimusical (not merely anti-Verdian) effects. And Bruno Bartoletti lent himself to this? His fellow countrymen should take in hand bolognas and provolones and belabor him thoroughly. G.M.

How does the BOSE 901 eliminate audible RESONANCES?

If you have heard the BOSE 901 Direct/Reflecting™ speaker system, or if you have read the reviews in High Fidelity, in Stereo Review, and now in the December Audio, you already know that the 901 is the longest step forward in speaker design in perhaps two decades. Since the superiority of the 901 (covered by patents issued and pending) derives from an interrelated group of advances, each depending on the others for its full potential, we hope you will be interested in a fuller explanation than is possible in a single issue. This discussion is one of a series on the theoretical and technological basis of the performance of the BOSE 901.

The best known feature of the BOSE 901 is its Direct/Reflecting design, which copies the proportion of direct to reflected sound measured in the concert hall. But aiming a speaker at a wall does not magically give it greatness. What is not yet so well known is that even in conventional terms the 901 is a better speaker — a more precise instrument than other speakers for converting an electrical into an acoustic signal. The primary source of this precision is the use of an array of 9 same-size, full-range, acoustically coupled speakers in each 901.

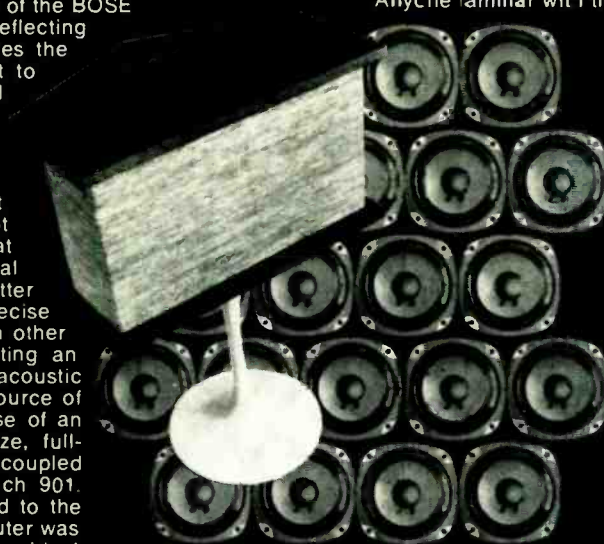
In the research that led to the 901, a digital computer was used to simulate an ideal vibrating surface "having no resonances, phase shift, diffraction, or distortion of any kind." It was then proved (and demonstrated at a professional group meeting of the I.E.E.E. in Nov. 1964) that a multiplicity of closely spaced, acoustically coupled, full-range speakers "can produce music and speech signals in a

normal listening environment that are subjectively indistinguishable from those that would be produced by an ideal pulsating sphere in the same environment." *

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*From 'ON THE DESIGN, MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION OF LOUDSPEAKERS', Dr. A. G. Bose, a paper presented at the 1968 convention of the Audio Engineering Society. Copies of the complete paper are available from the Bose Corp. for fifty cents.



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CIRCLE 7 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

REPEAT PERFORMANCE

A SELECTIVE GUIDE TO THE MONTH'S REISSUES

THE WHEELS OF INDUSTRY grind slowly. Readers with long memories may remember an announcement in "Notes from Our Correspondents" just over two years ago (January 1967 to be exact) that Columbia Records was about to put into effect a scheme of considerable value to the specialized collector. Rather than delete from its catalogue all items of limited appeal and meager sales potential, the company planned to transfer select articles of esoterica to a special collectors' series available either through orders placed with participating dealers or directly from Columbia itself. After a good deal of hemming and hawing, the project has finally gotten off the ground and some 100 titles of previously hard-to-get discs are once again within easy reach.

The American composer is the principal beneficiary here: thirty discs are devoted either in whole or in part to this uncommercial commodity. The scope is broad, containing such classic recordings as Roy Harris' First Symphony with the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Koussevitzky; the sole recording of Carl Ruggles' *Lilacs*, *Portals*, and *Evocations*; and Elliott Carter's First String Quartet as recorded by the Walden Quartet. In all, works by thirty-nine Americans appear on Columbia's initial list. Other recordings of more than passing interest include the Juilliard's long-admired and still preferred versions of the four Schoenberg Quartets, the complete music of Anton Webern, Rachmaninoff's *The Bells* (with Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra), E. Power Biggs's Little Preludes and Fugues of Bach as played on eight European organs, and a collection of eight chamber works by Stravinsky, a number of which are otherwise unavailable. In the pop, jazz, and spoken word categories, one notes such names as Frank Sinatra, Victor Borge, Duke Ellington, Edith Piaf, Marlene Dietrich, as well as the near mythic recording by Paul Robeson and José Ferrer of *Othello*. Each disc is priced at \$5.95, and none of the monolithically material will be rechanneled.

More titles will be forthcoming if collectors show enough interest to merit an expansion of the series—lack of public support, you may recall, killed off RCA's similarly designed Vault Treasury Series a number of years ago. So he who complains of yet another recording of the *Pathétique*, let him now step forward. Order forms and a complete listing of the records currently available may be obtained from Columbia Special Services Department, 51 West 52nd St., New York, N. Y. 10019.

ROSSINI: *Semiramide* (excerpts). Joan Sutherland (s), Marilyn Horne (ms), John Serge (t), Joseph Rouleau (bs), Spiro Malas (bs), et al.; Ambrosian Opera Chorus; London Symphony Or-

chestra, Richard Bonyngne, cond. London OS 26086, \$5.79 [from London OSA 1383, 1966].

"An excerpts disc, provided it concentrates on Sutherland and Horne . . . should prove worthwhile," concluded Conrad L. Osborne after turning thumbs down on both *Semiramide* and London's semicomplete recording (reviewed in the January 1967 issue). Well, here is the highlights disc and, sure enough, it's practically all Sutherland and Horne: each has her big solo scene and two extended duets together. Rouleau also is heard in an aria and duet with Sutherland, but his contributions are on a far less impressive level than the two ladies'. The two minor ensembles that fill out this disc give little idea of the opera's rather grand proportions, but since the concerted numbers were pretty flabbily performed on the parent set, their omission here is no great loss. For fanciers of the two prima donnas as well as for those who are only idly curious about the "serious" Rossini, this disc should prove more than satisfactory.

STRAUSS, RICHARD: *Don Juan, Op. 20; Der Rosenkavalier: Suite; Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche, Op. 28.* Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, Eugen Jochum, cond. World Series PHC 9106, \$2.49 [from Epic BC 1127, 1961].

Good budget versions of these Strauss staples are badly needed, but Jochum apparently isn't the man for the job. These are very refined, handsomely played performances but they lack any strong musical character. Jochum remains too elegant a gentleman-conductor to permit this brash music the touch of vulgarity it needs. Don Juan emerges as an exceedingly stolid adventurer, the *Rosenkavalier* Waltzes seem a trifle square, and Till comes off sounding a dull and humorless fellow. The sonics are sharp and clear, verging just this side of coarse and edgy.

LILY PONS: "*A Lily Pons Gala.*" Arias by Delibes, Verdi, Bellini, Rossini, Thomas, and Meyerbeer; songs by Delibes, Fauré, Ponce, Rachmaninoff, Bachelet, and Johann Strauss, Jr. Lily Pons, soprano; various orchestras and conductors. Odyssey 32 16 0270, \$2.49 (rechanneled stereo only) [from Columbia ML 5073, 1955; recorded between 1942 and 1950].

Upon reading Olin Downes's cautious review of Lily Pons's debut as Lucia on January 3, 1931, few would have suspected the long and successful Metropolitan Opera career that lay ahead of the young artist. Peering between the lines, one must conclude that the *New York Times* critic did not especially care for what he heard even while granting Miss

Pons's charm, sweet-toned voice, and theatrical stage presence. "The personality of the singer evidently gave pleasure," wrote Downes. "The audience wished to make the most of her, and did so."

Despite something less than universal approval from high critical corners, Lily Pons's audiences continued to make the most of her for twenty-five years, during which she reigned as the Met's undisputed house coloratura. No matter what the role, there was Lily, chic, petite, and utterly captivating as always. They went wild on the afternoon of her debut and they went wild at her testimonial gala exactly a quarter of a century later, and again at her last complete Met performance on April 12, 1958—once more as Lucia. Interestingly enough, the principal performer of Lucia that season was Callas, a fact which in itself seemed to signify that the lovable candy-coated operatic charm long endearing Lily Pons to millions was no longer wanted.

The selections here are fairly typical—Miss Pons was an amazingly consistent singer before the microphone from her early days with Victor in the Thirties to her later efforts for Columbia. The operatic side does convey a bit of the essential Pons stage personality and the voice is at least sweet and appealing even if the coloratura is none too clean. Side 2 is unfortunate, not so much for the corny material but for the exaggerated fashion in which it's presented. Odyssey's sound is decent enough, and the liner notes ("the image of her gracious person," etc.) are in keeping with the occasion.

ALEXANDER SCHNEIDER QUINTET: "*Waltzes from Old Vienna.*" Lanner: *Die Romantiker; Tyroler Ländler; Dornbacher Ländler.* Strauss, Josef: *Mein Lebenslauf ist Lieb' und Lust.* Strauss, Johann, Jr.: *Wiener-Bonbons; Wiener Blut.* Alexander Schneider Quintet. Odyssey 32 16 0300, \$2.49 [from Columbia MS 6316, 1962].

This disc exudes an unmistakable flavor of the rapidly vanishing world of shipboard lounges, Viennese cafés, and English seaside resorts—any place, in fact, where a small string ensemble could be heard sawing out Strauss waltzes with more energy than style. Not that Messrs. Schneider, Galimir, Wolfe, Trampler, and Levine are by any means clods, for the string playing here is exceptionally accomplished; but these performances could have done with a shade more sentiment and a bit less ferocity. The three Lanner selections are hardy specimens of the genre and withstand the onslaught somewhat more successfully than the more melting Strauss waltzes. Still, these heavily accented readings and the unpleasantly close miking are not exactly conducive to relaxed listening.

PETER G. DAVIS

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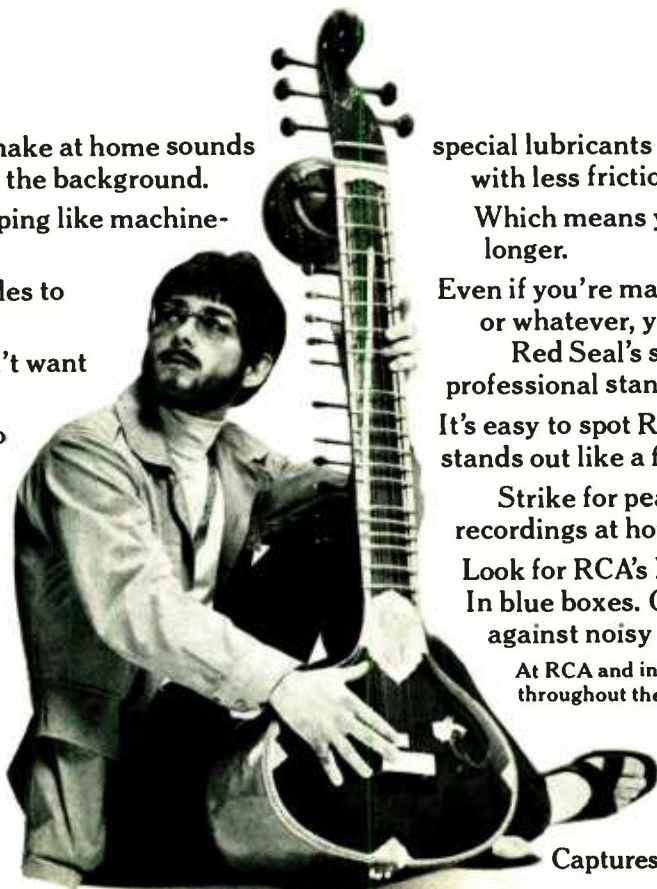
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Cycles

The men wore bell-bottom trousers, the girls wore skirts that didn't reach the knee. They were enamored of illicit intoxicants and inferior dance music in which they substituted wild gyrations for physical contact. They scorned convention, their parents, and the past; they believed they were a new and brighter breed of people, free of old moralities, involved in a sexual revolution, more aware and more alive. Yet in their bright hedonism, there was a pervasive sadness.

All right, boys and girls, who has been described here? Today's young people?

Wrong. I have described the 1920s; the generation I refer to is my mother's. They went on, of course, to marry conventionally, suppress their kids, and look shocked at what's happening today. They were called the lost generation, and maybe they were. But I think I like them better than the whining generation, which is what's around now. (Freud made it cool to feel sorry for yourself and blame your parents for everything.) What a joyless bunch of little creeps we've got these days, relieved here and there by some genuinely brilliant youngsters, for which thank God.

In that earlier miniskirt era, there was a lot of bloody horrible popular music. Gershwin and Kern and a few others broke the monotony with a real search for excellence. And then along about the end of the Twenties, jazz musicians began moving in on the pop-dance music scene. Mostly they needed the money, I suspect. It was as if they'd said, "Oh let's go and show those squares how to do it." Or whatever word they called

squares in those days. And before long, the jazz people—arrangers and players—had taken over a large segment of the pop music business.

It may be happening again. The rock people are substantially incompetent, no matter what the press agents tell you. Go to one of their record dates and watch five of these clowns trying for two or three hours to get one take that's in tune. During one recent rock date, the producer, a capable musician himself, began to turn white with anger. "Do you hear that?" he muttered to me. "The organ player's using one set of changes and the guitar player's playing another. And they wrote the goddam tune. You'd think they'd know it."

Currently a big push is on to sell us Blood, Sweat, and Tears, a jazz-rock group. Very avant-garde: they've discovered Erik Satie. Hot diggity. The thing that's getting the air play is *Smiling Phases*. You know: make a pun, no matter how meaningless, and hope that somebody will find it deep. The group is heavy-handed. The horn writing is simplistic. I like their drummer, Bobby Colomby, and their electric bass player, Jim Fielder. Their pianist, Dick Halligan, shows us where he's at in a solo on *Smiling Phases*. He's got fumbling fingers and indefinite time: it's a little embarrassing to hear him struggling through a solo beyond his skill. I tried the album (Columbia CS 9720) all the way through several times. What I once said of the Blues Project applies to Blood, Sweat, and Tears: given enough time and hard work, they might evolve into a second-rate jazz group.

The Electric Flag (Columbia CS 9714)

is a blues group. More mystiques. The blues has been discovered by the kids. But the blues is basically a nothing form: twelve bars of tonic, subdominant, and dominant, with the third, fifth, and seventh flatted in melody—a sort of slow boogie-woogie. The challenge lies in making something out of this nothingness. Charlie Parker is reported to have said that the blues is a blank slate and therefore the ultimate test of a jazzman: it's what you write on it that matters. Most of the current blues groups are only scribbling.

Rock is backward looking. Establishment classical critics may be finding goodies in it, but it's only because they don't know the tradition of American popular music and jazz: they're goodies that have been stale for years. The Electric Flag reminds me at times of Louis Jordan and the Tympani Five. If this fantastic rush of progress continues, we may be up to 1945 before you know it.

The real progress in pop isn't being made by rockers, it's being made by the jazzmen who, with a sigh, are doing what their predecessors did in the 1930s: going into pop music to make some money. It's like that period when Fletcher Henderson, who hadn't been able to make a living, began writing for the Benny Goodman band, and the kids thought something new had happened, not having heard Henderson's own failed orchestra.

Johnny Carisi recently wrote an album called *Machinations* (Verve 8759). The soloist is trumpeter Marvin Stamm—actually, it's Marv's album. Johnny uses a lot of rock devices with a big band. But instead of having rock people fiddling with jazz and getting in over their heads, we get jazz guys playing both jazz and rock devices with fiery ease. No months-long recording sessions, with 400 hours of editing to make the group look good: Johnny and Marv wrapped it up in nine hours.

Rhythmically complex, churning with a constant restless power, the album has something that is too rare in our music today: real vitality. But then, Johnny Carisi, a smallish, rather leather-faced man, is that way: he can't sit still even when he's talking. "I knew they'd have to come back to us some day," he grinned. "They'd have to say, 'Show us how it's done.'"

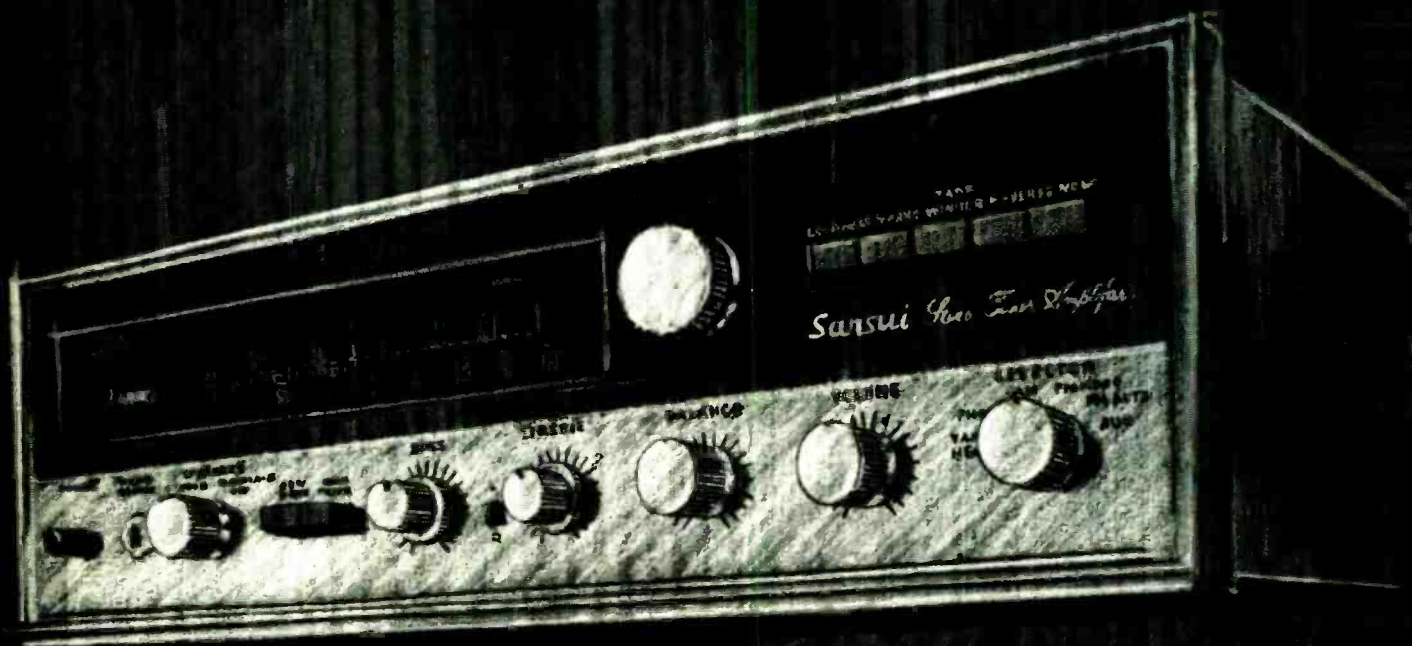
Don Sebesky is playing around with rock. Pat Williams did two delightful albums for Verve in this new hybrid idiom. And it isn't only the writers; good players are into it, too: guitarist Sam Browne, pianist Warren Bernhardt, trumpeter Randy Brecker.

It's an odd thing that's happening. Usually art is revitalized from below, by the upcoming young. American popular music today is being revitalized from above, by older masters. We may be on the verge of a new blend of pop and jazz music that parallels what happened in big bands in the 1930s. I'm told it's already happening in discothèques in Acapulco and San Francisco. And *Variety* reported recently that in France, where the go-go clubs and discothèques started, they're turning the joints into jazz clubs. We'll see. The Johnny Carisi/Marvin Stamm album may be a significant straw in the wind.

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The Deviants go "Ptooff": hard rock with nothing new but much that's fun.

THE DEVIANTS: Ptooff! The Deviants, hard rock trio. *Child of the Sky; Nothing Man; Bun; Deviation Street*; three more. Sire SES 97001, \$4.79.

LED ZEPPELIN: Led Zeppelin, hard rock quartet. *Good Times Bad Times; Babe I'm Gonna Leave You; Your Time Is Gonna Come; Black Mountain Side; Communication Breakdown*; four more. Atlantic SD 8216, \$4.79.

SILVER APPLES: Contact. Silver Apples, experimental rock group. *Water; Gypsy Love; A Pox on You; Confusion*; five more. Kapp KS 3584, \$4.79.

What with the current bustle in the industry to get as many records as possible out there in the bins before the bubble breaks, listening to new rock releases has gotten to be a dreadful chore. And so much drek comes out that you find yourself quivering in ecstasy (well . . .) at every little glimmer of originality and/or musical proficiency. I mean, just the last few months have given me (but hopefully not you) albums by Street, the Sparrow, October Country, J. P. Rags, Brotherhood, Wings, Harvey Mandel, Biff Rose, the Fool, Sandy Hurvitz, Sandy Gurley, Nancy Priddy, Diane Hildebrand, Graffiti, Thomas Hill, the Asylum Choir, the Glitterhouse, Touch, Willie and the Red Rubber Band, Leonard Schaeffer, Jeff Monn, Lynn County, the Seventh Sons, Listening, Bob Siller, and West, to name a few in no particular order. I really don't understand who is supposed to buy these discs. Sometimes

a record can be sold through company promotion, but most of these LPs haven't been given much (if any) push. I'd like to think that when the final product is in, Company X makes the realistic decision that their new masterpiece isn't so hot so why spend any more money on it. But perfectly good records—Mother Earth, Daughters of Albion, the Hello People—go unsung too, leaving me with the hypothesis that the whole business is being run on hope, or on a kiss and a prayer as we used to say upcountry.

The three albums at hand demonstrate enough originality to push them to the front of the rack. The most experimental and least rewarding is *Contact* by Silver Apples (or *Silver Apples* by Contact, whichever you prefer). The album is full of interesting effects that are repeated endlessly and would have been far more interesting if the liner notes had provided technical information (my brother-in-law the guitarist thinks they pulled tubes out of their preamp). Still, at this point I'm ready to applaud anyone who can come up with even one new noise.

It looks like Led Zeppelin is going to get plenty of promotion so you'll hear a lot about them. They are an all-star group from Britain (à la Cream, whom they don't otherwise resemble). The vocalist, Robert Plant, is a blues screamer while the rest of the band seems happier with calmer fare. The instrumentalists are solid, especially the guitarist and organist. Some of the mixing is pretty strange.

Less original but more satisfying are the Deviants, who are a thoroughly derivative but colorful trio of London rockers (they get a little help from their friends). Their heroes seem to be the Rolling Stones, the Who, the Hollies, the Mothers, and the Fugs. They've chosen well and they've put together a spirited and humorous collection of influences in *Ptooff!* I think we'll hear more from the Deviants. J.G.

✻ **ETHEL WATERS:** Miss Ethel Waters. Ethel Waters, vocals; Reginald Beane, piano. *Am I Blue?; Supper Time; Stormy Weather*; thirteen more. Monmouth/Evergreen 6812, \$4.79.

This disc is a live concert given by Ethel Waters "in the late 1950s." The tape was found in what producer Bill Borden describes as "a very round-about way" just before it was to be destroyed or, as he puts it, "permanently lost." Miracle of miracles, that tape preserves what is probably the best of Ethel Waters on records.

Miss Waters' recording career goes back to the early '20s and her best known record at that time was *My Handy Man*, a collection of *double-entendres*. But in 1925 she also recorded the song that put her in the big time, *Dinah*, and went on from there with other good songs. But in the late '20s and early '30s, as Miss Waters moved out of the show business dregs in which she had started, she tended to overplay propriety and elegance and her recorded performances had a consequent stiffness. Then, as the '30s wore on and her voice wore out, she found a new career as a straight actress.

Her recordings, starting with her appearance in *As Thousands Cheer* in 1934, reveal less flexibility at interpreting and projecting a lyric. By the '40s, it was all crafty projection and just the shell of a voice. Yet here on this disc is Waters in the late '50s using all that stagecraft knowledge and still finding vocal resources that seemingly had been drained years before. With Reginald Beane, her long-time accompanist at the piano, she is relaxed, in superb form, putting it all

Continued on page 106

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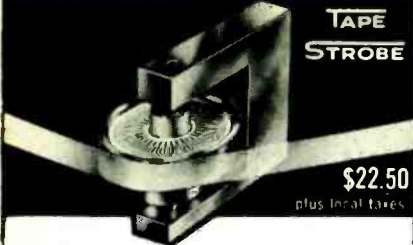
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Presley: The Product Is Sex

ABOUT ONCE A YEAR I spend some time trying to account for the seemingly eternal success of Elvis Presley. Again it becomes clear from this soundtrack TV special that Presley can't, or won't, sing. A reliable authority has reported that Presley is the owner of a quite beautiful tenor voice. If so, it is not the voice that has made him famous. On record, his singing is mildly attractive, of modest range and questionable breath control except when shouting. During occasional moments of note suspension, the voice displays a quick upward vibrato that lifts it, like a balloon, into sharpness. Presley has a solid sense of tempo, in traditional two-beat country style. His guitar playing is loud, powerful, uncomplicated. The emotional effect of his playing was evident on the TV show. Whenever he'd begin a series of pick-up notes on his bass E string, one of his hovering fans would say, "Yeah, play it dirty!" Presley, in person, is said to be incredibly handsome. On television, I did not find it so.

Presley's gift is not, and never was, musical ability. What he's selling, with astonishing flair, is a solid-gold public personality. Worshipers come to bask in its light. To put it another way, the product is magnetism, sex. At one point during his show (and this album), Presley says, "I think I'll put a strap on this [guitar] and stand up." The audience goes frantic at the prospect. Well, they should. He moves like a panther.

The Presley phenomenon is closely tied in with the entertainment tradition of the American southland, where he is king. Unlike easily distracted northerners, southerners are fiercely loyal to their own. How else could Nashville's Minnie Pearl open a country-wide string of fried chicken joints with almost guaranteed success? While the entertainment industry at large continues to preoccupy itself with this or that month's musical fancy, Elvis Presley remains an industry unto himself. With relatively little fanfare, his albums and movies are unwaveringly successful. Not only have I never seen a Presley movie, I don't know anyone who has. We're a dispensable minority.

Presley's roots show in the material he selects. Much of it is southern-gospel in flavor, and this is where he is at his best. The brief segments of dialogue on this album indicate that Presley is not a verbally communicative man. One also suspects that he is both shy

and self-conscious. His one smooth speech serves to introduce a medley of gospel pieces, including *Where Could I Go but to the Lord* and *Up Above my Head*. One is impressed: here at last is Presley's area of expertise and love. But then he proceeds with equal enthusiasm into his hit, *Blue Christmas*, although the song is hopelessly bad.

Later we find Presley's energy pouring into a brag-song called *Trouble* ("I'm evil, so don't you mess around with me"). He begins the number in a black leather suit. Midway the scene switches to a nightclub locale, with Presley in more sophisticated garb. Not until the switch occurs does one realize how fitting was the sinister black leather.

Something creepy seems to be going on. Presley is able to symbolize a violence-is-fun attitude of uniquely southern proportions. Behind him on stage during the number are a group of people, milling young men, girls waiting for trouble to start. Saturday night in town. A hootchie-cootchie girl in veils does a dance (*Little Egypt*). Presley swaggers, leader of the pack. As the camera pans the swooning faces of girls and women in the audience, one wonders what fantasies they must be having.

From raunchy to religious, Presley seems to mean every word he sings. His key is his precise, intuitive knowledge of who he is and what he's projecting on stage. His consistency is absolute. Should Presley sing a song about the guitar, he would not say "guitar player" or "guitarist." His word is "guitar man." No question of identity here, no shades of gray. All is black and, most assuredly, white.

No discussion of Presley is complete without mention of Colonel Parker, the force behind his career. It's a case of a brilliant salesman in rapport with a brilliantly clear-cut product. It would not surprise me to learn that they do business not with a contract but with a handshake.

Despite an air of not-quite-jelled spontaneity on the album, the Presley magnetism spills out. Like it or not, it cannot be dismissed.

MORGAN AMES

ELVIS PRESLEY. Soundtrack from the NBC-TV special. Elvis Presley, vocals and guitar; William Goldenberg, arr.; W. Earl Brown, vocal arr. *Lawdy, Miss Clawdy; Hound Dog; Jailhouse Rock*; seventeen more. RCA Victor LSP 4088, \$4.98.

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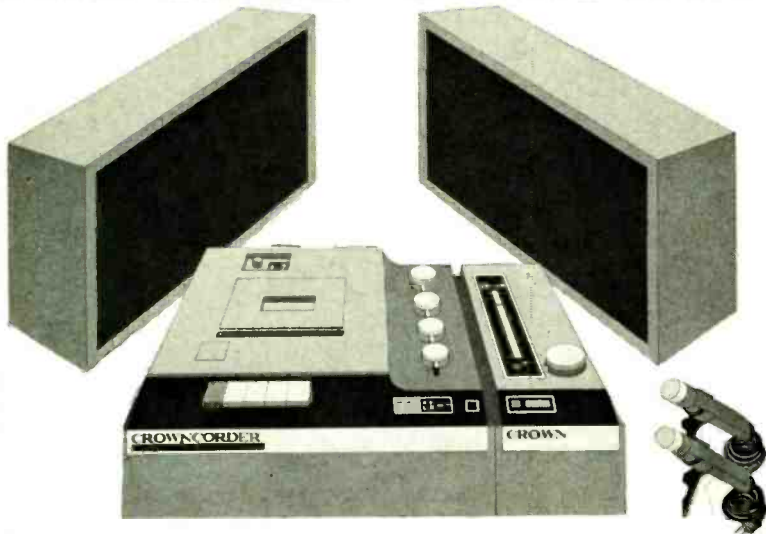
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CIRCLE 3 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Continued from page 102

together on this disc, a brilliant summation of the talents of one of the great musical and theatrical personalities of the twentieth century. J.S.W.

BEN BAGLEY'S NOEL COWARD RE-VISITED. Laurence Harvey, Hermione Gingold, Nancy Andrews, and Edward Earle, vocals; Norman Paris, arr. and cond. *Chase Me Charlie; Housemaid's Knees; Never Again*; eleven more. M-G-M SE 4430, \$4.79.

Ben Bagley is the only record maker I can think of who has fun when he works—not the slick, perspiring fun of the hopeful hit makers, but the unfettered fun of a man who doesn't give a hang about commercial appeal. How he gets away with it is a mystery in a business where awards go not to the deserving but to the marketable. Even more mysteriously, Bagley sells records. If he didn't, they'd stop him, for surely no one at M-G-M can have the least idea what he's doing, or why it's fun.

Bagley's method is to select groups of obscure works by otherwise famous songwriters. He then assembles an unexpected cast to sing them, directing their renditions with the orchestral aid of Norman Paris. Bagley's previous efforts include the "revisited" work of Rodgers and Hart, Porter, Kern, Berlin, and Gershwin.

This time Bagley chose Noel Coward. As usual, his liner notes are worth the album price. "Noel Coward was born near London. . . . The English are damp, depressing, and insincerely polite. Their towns resemble Hoboken, N.J., on a dark day. Noel is an exception. You can take him anywhere. . . ."

Many of the songs deserve the obscurity they've received. *Evening in Summer* is notable only for Bagley's remark: "This song refers to the one evening in London when it doesn't rain. It usually occurs during the month of August. The offices close and people dance in the streets and make a big fuss." The same goes for *Nothing Can Last Forever*: "This was Princess Margaret's favorite song. . . . It was sung at her wedding to Anthony Armstrong Jones by Miss Diana Dors." Other songs are marvelous. Foremost is Coward's deadly and hilarious World War II missive, *Don't Let Be Beastly to the Germans*. Equally funny is *That Is the End of the News*, a jaunty newscast of daily atrocities.

Bagley's typically unlikely cast includes Laurence Harvey (whose only other album, as I recall, is a group of readings from *This Is My Beloved* accompanied, fantastically enough, by jazz flutist Herbie Mann); Hermione Gingold ("her motion picture successes include *White Slave Queen* and Harold Pinter's *Adventures of Busty Brown*"); Nancy Andrews ("she is currently taking vocal lessons from The Sons of the Pioneers"); Edward Earle ("he is currently giving acting lessons to Princess Lee Bouvier Radziwill"); and designer/composer Harvey Schmidt, author of *The Fantastiks* (who "became a California resident merely to have the privilege of voting for Ronald Reagan . . . his next musical will be based on the marriage between Julie

Nixon and David Eisenhower and titled "A Resounding Tickle").

Miss Gingold's acidic rendition of *The Wife of an Acrobat* makes one wonder if perhaps Coward wrote it especially for her in 1932. *Green Carnations*, sung by Edward Earle and a men's chorus quaintly called The Satisfactions, is blatant camp. Bagley writes, "England is one of the few countries which doesn't consider homosexuality a crime. Their reason . . . is perhaps best explained by Harold Pinter, 'England is where we separate the men from the boys . . . with a crowbar.'"

Which brings us to the album's, and Coward's, essence: camp. Handled wrong—as it usually is—camp becomes a disaster of hokum and bad taste. Bagley's sense of humor and perceptivity, plus a genuine love for Coward's songs, saves the show.

The album is poorly recorded, making the lyrics difficult to catch. But Coward's gift for melody shines through and after two or three listenings all the words are clear.

Bagley is forty miles away from the musical mainstream. His brand of irreverence is out of vogue, but not his warmth. He makes albums full of things I hate, but he always makes me love them. M.A.

TOM JONES: Help Yourself. Tom Jones, vocals; orchestra, Ken Woodman, Johnny Harris, others, cond. *Set Me Free; Laura; So Afraid*; ten more. Parrot PAS 71025, \$4.79.

Tom Jones is a Welshman who wants to look like Richard Burton and sing like Bill Medley (who likes to sing like Ray Charles). He's a good performer and he's had a lot of hits.

For me, the way to enjoy his proposed new TV series is to turn off the sound and listen to someone else on the record player. The way to enjoy his albums is to turn off the sound and watch someone else on TV. M.A.

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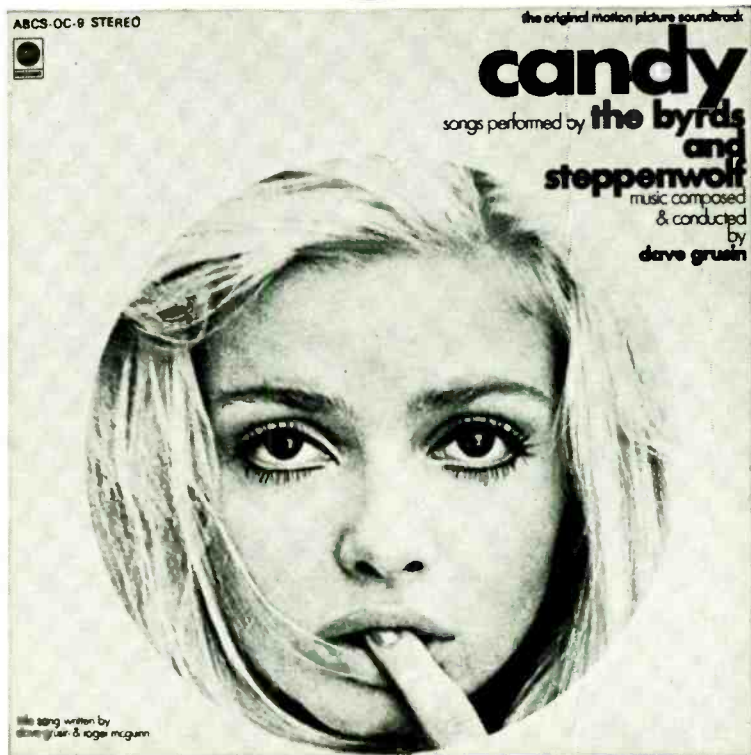
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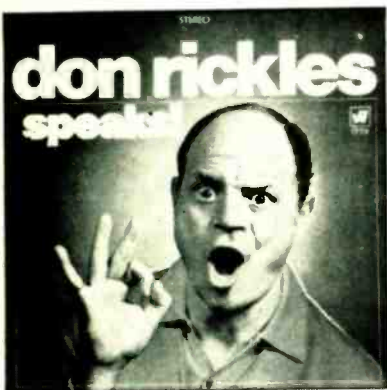


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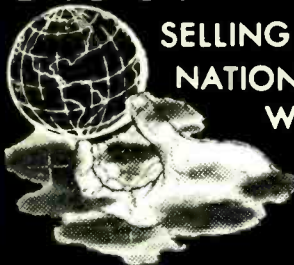
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JAZZ

THE FREEDOM SOUNDS: Soul Sound System. Wayne Henderson, trombone; Willie Gresham, tenor saxophone; Jimmy Benson, baritone saxophone, and flute; Matt Hutcherson, vibes; Harold Land, Jr., piano; Pancho Bristol, bass; Chino Valdez, Moises Oblagacion, Ricky Chemelis, Max Guarduino, Dee Allen, and Fred Hampson, percussion. *Behold the Day; Are You Sure; All You Need Is Love*; four more. Atlantic 1512, \$4.98.

When the Jazz Crusaders first appeared on World Pacific Records, they seemed to be something of an anomaly—a driving, gutty jazz group on the West Coast where jazz has traditionally had a relatively soft, sometimes smoggy sound, reflecting the period in the early Fifties when there was something that could be identified as West-Coast jazz. An important part of the sinew and virility in the Crusaders sound was trombonist Wayne Henderson. If for nothing else, one can be grateful to Henderson for joining with Jimmy Knepper and Roswell Rudd in turning the jazz trombone away from the staccato Morse code blips that J. J. Johnson's virtuosity made so lastingly fashionable twenty years ago (and the effects have still not worn off).

Henderson plays big and broad and rugged. Even his short, jittery phrases have a feeling of depth and power. This new group that he leads on its second LP reflects, as a whole, the wallop that he packs in his trombone. Henderson uses a three-horn voicing (trombone, tenor and baritone saxophones) that is muscular without losing either liteness or flexibility. Behind them he has a six-man percussion team that gives everything the group plays a strongly bridling, eruptive foundation. And the solo voices match the ensemble power—Willie Gresham, a wailing tenor man, Jimmy Benson, playing a darkly potent flute, Matt Hutcherson sprinkling bright vibes sounds through the arrangements.

But along with all this sense of power, there is variety, pace, and balance in the programming. At times, the group suggests an unusually burly and melodic Latin band. At other times it puts out straight, driving exuberance, broken with

sudden spates of drumming or ad lib solos. J.S.W.

* **LENNY BREAU: Guitar Sounds.** Lenny Breau, guitar; Reg Kelln and Ronnie Halldorson, bass and drums. *King of the Road; My Funny Valentine; Music to Watch Girls By*; seven more. RCA Victor LSP 4076, \$4.98.

George Simon's liner notes to this album radically overstate the case for Lenny Breau, claiming that he is a whole new thing on the guitar. George goes into raptures about Breau's technique, which is in effect a variant on the approach to the instrument pioneered by Chuck Wayne—a cross of classical guitar technique with that of jazz. George quotes Chet Atkins, who produced this album in Nashville, as saying "Why, he [Breau] plays the instrument like a piano." I refer both George and Chet to the liner notes of George Van Eps's marvelous Capitol album, *My Guitar* (ST 2533), wherein he says, "I always thought of the guitar as a small piano you hold in your lap." Van Eps has been playing "pianistic" guitar since the 1930s; indeed, he does more than sound like a two-handed pianist—with a seventh string on the bottom of the guitar, he plays his own bass part.

I'm sick of that preoccupation with mere newness that has infused jazz criticism for at least the last twenty years. It's the all-new-Duz! philosophy applied to art. By suggesting that Breau is something new under the sun, Simon actually shifts the attention from the central fact of Breau's work: its sheer excellence.

Lenny Breau isn't terribly original. What he is is terribly, terribly good—a brilliant young eclectic who draws on everything from Django Reinhardt through Sabicas to Chet Atkins to make his music. (I suspect he also listens attentively to Julian Bream: he has some of Bream's sensitivity to tonal color on the instrument.) Breau is, in fact, the best young guitarist I've heard since Gene Bertoncini, who, alas, remains under recognized, except by New York musicians.

Given a prodigious technique, Breau uses it with warmth and lyricism—that's another of the jazz myths that needs exploding, the idea that good technique is inimical to emotion. He draws his material from as many sources as his methods:

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current pops, old pops, country-and-western, rock. It all comes out jazz.

The most interesting track of the album is *Taranta*, a loose improvisation that starts out in flamenco territory and moves over onto that of Miles Davis. It sounds to me as if Breau is using a nylon stringed classical guitar here, but the liner notes don't clarify this point. And we hear here what may be Breau's one true innovation. Though played with classical finger technique, his lines swing. He's the first guitarist I've heard pull this off. I had been slowly coming to the conclusion that by the very nature of the articulation, "classical" guitar technique couldn't be made to swing; but Breau seems to have solved the problem. He doesn't swing hard, mind you—but he *does* swing.

Breau's arrival on the jazz scene from Canada, where he was born, is a happy event. Guitar playing has been enormously debased in recent years by the folkers and the rockers. It's a delight to come across a new young musician who's learned to play his ax, *really* play it.

One further point: big record companies don't care much about jazz anymore, they only want to make money. RCA Victor deserves credit for giving Lenny Breau a shot; more specifically, Chet Atkins is to be thanked for turning for a moment from country-and-western to produce this jazz album. That soft southern drawl masks a vast hipness. G.L.

WILLIE THE LION SMITH: Memoirs.

Willie Smith, piano and vocals. *Shine; Blue Skies; Running Wild; Ain't Misbehavin'*; thirty-four more. RCA Victor LSP 6016, \$9.58 (two discs).

Willie the Lion's colorful memories of his career as a pianist and entertainer have been set down at length in his book, *Music on My Mind*. This two-disc set serves as musical illustration of some portions of the book, presented in the form of a monologue with music by the Lion. In the course of an hour and three quarters, he talks, plays, and sings his way from his early days before World War I through recollections of the Clef Club, wide open Atlantic City, and Harlem in its heyday. He remembers his friends and colleagues—Eubie Blake, James P. Johnson, Fats Waller, Duke Ellington, and Louis Armstrong. And he gives a sampling of his own work as a composer. Although it is uneven in performance and presentation, the set is a fascinating run-through.

The Lion is warm and charming at one moment, arrogantly boastful a few grooves later. But in the course of this range, one gets the flavor of a true personality. His singing voice, which may never have been more than serviceable, is almost nonexistent now, and one often wishes he would not even try to sing some of the pieces here. But his fingers still have vitality when he is faced with a challenge. Some of his playing on these four sides is rambling and desultory, but every now and then he sits down and rips his way through a piece that gives some indication of the power he must have had when he was lording it over the piano at Pod's and Jerry's. J.S.W.

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THEATER & FILM

CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG. Music from the film. Dick Van Dyke, Sally Ann Howes, others. vocals: Irwin Kostal, cond. *You Two; Hushabye Mountain; Toot Sweets; Posh!*; twelve more. United Artists UAS 5188, \$5.79.

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang sounds like the title of a banana-packed Carmen Miranda movie. Instead, it's the name of a fabulous flying automobile created by Ian Fleming in his only children's book. Fleming borrowed the name from an auto that actually existed, the fanciful creation of an Englishman who dreamed of building the world's fastest car—with unfortunate results.

CCBB is *Mary Poppins* inside out. Only the stories are different. Both film scores were written by the songwriting team of Richard and Robert Sherman (they also wrote the songs for Disney's *The Happiest Millionaire*) and orchestrated by Irwin Kostal. Both feature Dick Van Dyke and a pair of lucky children (this team is more appealing than the little ugerlies chosen for *Mary Poppins*). Parts of the film were shot in Bavaria, in the mythical village of Vulgaria, peopled by the inhabitants of a nearby old folks home gotten up in appropriate costumes. The scenery is beautiful.

As for the music, it suits the project—light, fluffy, polished, and competent. The best songs are *Lovely Lonely Man*, a ballad sung by female lead Sally Ann Howes. It's the one moment in which Miss Howes's grating soprano edge is replaced with warmth and earthiness. *You're My Little Chu Chi Face* is a charming duet of doubtful affection between Gert Forbe and Anna Quayle.

Dick Van Dyke has said of his new extravaganza: "After *Poppins*, this has been the first musical that was right for me." Obviously. If you liked *Poppins*, you'll go for *Chitty*. They were made out of the same erector set. M.A.

PROMISES, PROMISES. Original Broadway cast recording, Jerry Orbach, Jill O'Hara, and others, vocals; orchestrations by Jonathan Tunick; musical direction by Harold Wheeler. *Upstairs; Grapes of Roth; Christmas Day*; twelve more. United Artists UAS 9902, \$5.79.

The momentum of the Burt Bacharach/Hal David success has been building for several years. Even as the team concentrated on writing the songs for this Broadway show, song hits were piling up behind them (Herb Alpert's recording of *This Guy's in Love with You*, for one). By the time *Promises, Promises* opened on Broadway, there was insufferable pressure on all to make it a smash hit.

Advance ticket sales to the contrary, the show is not a success. One reason is that the Bacharach/David energy level has flagged. In the past the team has been able to keep up with popular demand by culling songs from their back

catalogue. *This Guy's in Love with You*, for instance, was an early effort dusted off last year for Alpert. For *Promises, Promises*, the team had no backlog to count on. The material had to be new.

The Bacharach/David style, interesting as it may be, does not lend itself to the Broadway medium. On Broadway, melody is All (as proved by Richard Rodgers' success). For Bacharach, melody equals arrangement. But audiences do not leave a theater whistling an arrangement. As for David, with a few notable exceptions such as *Alfie*, his real talent has been managing to fit syllables neatly to Bacharach's trampoline melodies. He's done it here, as in the show's tedious title tune. But again, it is not enough to make a memorable Broadway show.

Broadway had to bend to accommodate the Bacharach/David style. But it could not reform. Too much besides songs is involved in such a venture—book, sets, staging, pacing, choreography, and the personalities of performers—in short, the *whole* of the thing. Bacharach and David made the mistake of writing even more strenuously than usual, making the job of communication almost impossible for its cast. The singers strain furiously out of their ranges most of the time, struggling to make sense of the whole. The cast should get a triple A, if not double hernia, for effort.

And for what purpose? *Promises, Promises* is Neil Simon's (*Barefoot in the Park, The Odd Couple*) charming adaption of *The Apartment*, a tale of love versus duty in the business world. Produced by David Merrick, it features Jerry Orbach (*Scuba Duba*) and Jill O'Hara (*Hair, George M.*).

Most of the singing weight falls on Miss O'Hara and Orbach. Orbach doesn't quite make it, pushing towards full-blown high notes and usually falling flat. Edward Winter has more luck with *Wanting Things*, but then he has only one feature song to worry about, as opposed to Orbach's six or seven. Jill O'Hara comes off better than her teammates on the album, but she also has the show's best song, a pretty ballad called *Whoever You Are*. Miss O'Hara and Orbach duet on the show's other good song, *I'll Never Fall in Love Again*, vaguely country-ish in flavor. Both have their best moment here, but Orbach sharpens out on the final "Again," then ends flat.

Broadway singers simply aren't comfortable in the Bacharach/David mold. Most show singers move to a two-beat drum, and Bacharach takes outrageous rhythmic liberties, jumping from 2/4 to 5/4 to 3/4 and back all in the twinkling of a cymbal. When controlled, this tempo device of Bacharach's is powerful and infectious. In *Promises, Promises*, the tempos have gone awry, so that for all their measure-for-measure variations, the songs end up sounding much the same. Indeed, the reason *I'll Never Fall in Love Again* works as well as it does is that for once, Bacharach casts gimmicks aside and writes straight-ahead (giving David an opportunity to do the same).

There's a lot of talent involved here. They all deserve two weeks in the country, and the less said of *Promises, Promises* the better. M.A.

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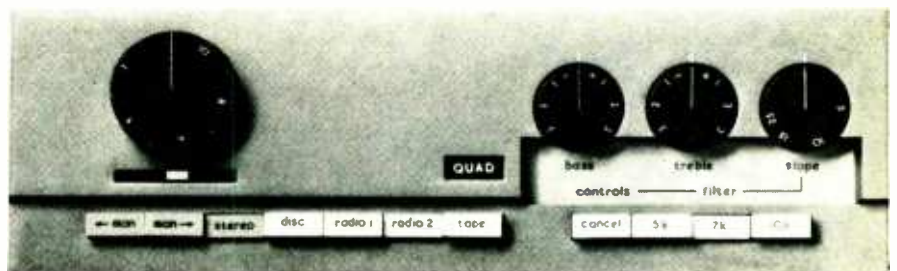
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THE TAPE DECK

BY R. D. DARRELL

Astrostereo at Home. Robert Angus' query, "Hi-Fi in the Sky?" (in *IF* last February), galvanized me into getting at once to a neglected batch of American Airlines "Astrostereo" tapes—those three-hour-long programs designed primarily for long-distance in-flight entertainment. I've sometimes found these reels exasperating for their excessively heterogeneous programming and for their practice of offering only one or two movements of larger works, but they also afford diversified attractions, including their provision of many performances not otherwise available on tape. Usually the recording and processing of these miscellanies are first-rate (in fact, my original reaction to "Astrostereo" tapes was Play Now, Fly Later), and certainly they satisfy a real need for reasonably substantial, well-varied musical entertainment to which one can listen in completely relaxed fashion.

Of the three American Airlines/Ampex examples (3¾ ips, \$23.95 each) I've just been playing, CW 211, with sixteen selections (most of them complete works from the Vanguard repertory), is the most rewarding musically; CW 214, with eighteen Deutsche Grammophon selections, features the most distinguished orchestral performances; and CW 215, with twenty-six generally somewhat shorter selections from the Mercury/Philips catalogues is the most widely varied programmatically. The last-named, I might add, is the first of the series I've heard in which the spoken announcements of titles and performers are reduced to a reasonable level vis-à-vis the modulation level of the music—a change much to be applauded.

Most of the CW 211 Vanguard recorded performances are new to tape, and three compositions are tape firsts: the Schneider/Serkin Schubert Sonatina, excerpts from Stokowski's Mozart Serenade No. 13, and Janigro's Tarantella from the Respighi *Rossiniana*. Other composers represented are Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Gershwin, Gottschalk, Hindemith, Liszt, Vaughan Williams, and Vivaldi. Of the technically outstanding DGG recordings in CW 214, a fairly large proportion have been released in individual open-reel and/or cassette editions. Twelve are mostly recent Von Karajan/Berlin Philharmonic releases; three are conducted by Kubelik, two by Maazel, and one by Maag. In the CW 215 Mercury/Philips program no fewer than eight tape firsts are featured: a Rodrigo Four-Guitar Concerto movement with the Romeros, J. C. Bach Harp Concerto with Annie Chalton, Mendelssohn String Symphony No. 9 (one movement) by I Musici, excerpts from Johann Stamitz and Pokorny Clarinet Concertos with Jacques Lancelot, dances from German's Henry VIII music and Benjamin's *Cotillon* Ballet both by Fennell, and Dohnányi's *Wedding Waltz* by Dorati. Other composers represented

in this anthology include Copland, Dvořák, Elgar, Handel, Khachaturian, Mozart, Rimsky-Korsakov, J. Strauss II, Tchaikovsky, and Wagner.

Carmen—Russian Style. I don't often predict best-sellerdom in this column, but for the latest recorded *succès de scandale*—Rodion Shchedrin's audacious strings-and-percussion metamorphoses of Bizet's *Carmen* music—I'll go way out on a limb. When I reviewed the disc version last December, I emphasized the shock effect of this score prepared for a Bolshoi Theater ballet production of *Carmen*; now, hearing again Rozhdestvensky's exhilarating performance with the full string choir of the Bolshoi Theater Orchestra and five virtuoso percussion soloists (taped as Melodiya/Angel Y1S 40067, 41 min., \$7.98), I relish the work's moments of genuine poetic eloquence (perhaps especially the rich strings-and-vibes textures of the "Flower Song") even more than its saucily amusing diversissements (such as, conspicuously, the entertaining but too fancily tricked-out "To-reador Song"). Theoretically I'd prefer a 7.5-ips taping, but this slower-speed one is so effectively processed that it seems to do full justice to the master recording's vivid, transient-rich sonics—as good as or better than any I've yet heard from Russian engineers.

For Chamber Listening. The sanctum sanctorum of string quartet music seldom opens to tape collectors except to reveal a few standard masterpieces. Those delectable introductions to modern chamber music, the Debussy and Ravel Quartets, for instance, have been missing entirely from reel catalogues for several years. Hence the warmth of my welcome for the first up-to-date reel coupling of both works (Deutsche Grammophon/Ampex EX+ DGC 9369, 51 min., \$7.95). Hence too my lack of stronger reservations about the Drole Quartet's performances—magnificently rich sonically and further enhanced by the recording engineers, but interpretatively sometimes overromanticized. There's little real Gallic tartness in the Ravel, in particular, yet it is aurally spellbinding for the admirable lucidity and equilibrium of the four parts, and especially for its liberation of the viola and cello from their too often subservient roles. And the Droles' romantic fervor is far better suited to the lovely, early Debussy Quartet—to its poetic slow movement ("Andantino, doucement expressif") most of all.

The Dutchman Flies Again. Until now, the only taping of Wagner's earliest still viable opera has been Dorati's memorable 1962 RCA version with London, Rysanek, Tozzi, and Lewis. Now there's another *Fliegende Holländer* (Angel Y3S 3730, 3¾ ips, three-play, approx. 153

min., \$17.98; notes-and-libretto leaflet on request), but one exhibiting far more controversial qualities than the older set. The distinctions of the Angel version are Otto Klemperer's magisterial if often too well-controlled reading; EMI's pure, warm, smoothly spread recording of attractive singing and playing by the BBC Chorus and New Philharmonia Orchestra; discreet yet theatrically vivid use of appropriate sound effects; and an often brilliant (if vocally uneven) enactment of Senta's role by Anja Silja. Its drawbacks are the choice of the original Dresden edition of the score, interesting enough to specialists but lacking the composer's later revisions; a vocally inadequate if often dramatically effective Dutchman in Theo Adam; and rather unconvincing performances by Ernst Kozub as Erik and Martti Talvela as Daland. I'll be one of those who will stick with the seven-year-old RCA version—which I find on rehearing to be just as fine, both sonically and interpretatively, as I had remembered it.

Operatic Highlights on the Highway. Now that I am the owner of a tape player in my car, I'll have to confess that my old prejudice against operatic potpourris is fading. Driving along and listening to thrillingly sung arias and ensembles on Stereo-8 endless-loop cartridges, one doesn't worry about material being wrenched out of its musical context; one isn't even concerned to follow a plot; one just enjoys the performance for its own sake.

Expectedly, then, RCA's highlights from its outstanding Verdi *Ernani*, with Leontyne Price, and Donizetti *Lucrezia Borgia* with Montserrat Caballé (both reviewed here last year in their complete reel editions) proffer lively delights (RCA R8S 1105 and R8S 1106 respectively, \$6.95 each). Less expectedly from my personal point of view inasmuch as I had only qualified praise for Angel's 1965 complete version, I found the current eight-track cartridge excerpts of Puccini's *Bohème* (Angel 8XS 36199, \$6.98) tremendously exciting, primarily thanks to the superlative singing and acting of Mirella Freni.

Yet my prime discovery in this domain has turned out to be the "Lehár and Other Viennese Masters" program of operetta excerpts (Capitol 8XP 8688, \$6.98) recorded in 1960-64 before Fritz Wunderlich's tragically premature death. The music (by Fall, Kálmán, Künneke, and J. Strauss II, as well as Lehár) is hard to beat; Wunderlich's exuberant singing—at least in comparison with that of any present-day young tenor—quite impossible to beat. The Wunderlich legacy contains more substantial examples of his vocal and artistic powers, of course, but surely none more immediately pleasurable.

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