

HIGH FIDELITY

SEPTEMBER 1970 60¢

LAB TEST REPORTS
AR 2ax speaker
H-K Citation XII amp
Heathkit AR29 receiver
Sony ST5100 AM/FM tuner
Cassette tape splicer

How to Shop for a Stereo Receiver

"Naked Carmen," Götterdämmerung Reviewed Bartók's Extraordinary Quartets

Preview of Forthcoming Recordings

HFDNQUINKEWH**DZ54020810G05002
D GUINLAN
KEWAUNEE H S
KEWAUNEE WI 54216





**120-watt
Fisher 450-T,
your best buy at
\$349.95**

Just by looking at the
a lot of receiver for the
AutoScan in addition to
wheel tuning. (Remote
control is included in the price
and has an AM section.
Fisher is extremely proud of,
sophisticated circuitry to
precision and whistles, and
ceramic filters.)
The overall performance that
you get from the 450-T won't
be anywhere near the
same clean sound as the
others with only marginally

IC's.
Manufacturers claim to have more
transistors.
S. with us.
The IC's, FET's, MOSFET's
circuitry in our receivers.
Applications they're a

Not all.
The mere inclusion
of a feature does not result in
improvement.
Judgment and discretion is
needed to get the most out of IC's,

3. Our engineers
particular application
(radio preamplifier stages)
The available IC's on the
market match the noise and
performance of our special low
noise resistors.

Not an isolated example.
No IC that many
were using and
tested by Fisher, and
subtle performance flaws.
We incorporate it in our
designs to "keep up" with our
competitors. Our engineers worked with
the tuner and were able to
improve the signal-to-noise ratio,
dynamic range. As a result,
the new Fisher receivers
used the best IC. And no Fisher
receiver is built with the inferior



**The 120-watt
Fisher 250-TX,
your best buy at
\$349.95**

Most receivers are in this price range.
But the new AM/FM-stereo Fisher 250-TX
is more powerful, more versatile, and
will bring in more clear FM stations
than any of the rest.

The Tune-O-Matic push-button
memory tuning incorporated into the
250-TX will allow you to preset your
five favorite FM stations, and then tune
instantly to any one by pushing the
corresponding button.

(Tune-O-Matic is another form of
diode tuning, and it works electronically,
without any moving parts.)

Tuning can also be accomplished
manually, of course. And with an FM
sensitivity of 2.0 μ V, you'll be able to
listen to stations that you didn't even
know existed.

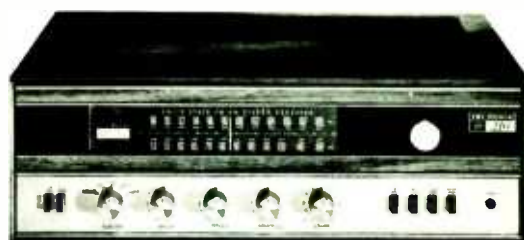
Two sets of speaker systems can be
hooked up and controlled with the
250-TX. And 120 watts is enough power
for nearly any purpose you can imagine.

Go ahead, boost the bass and treble.

Baxandall tone controls (a feature
of every Fisher receiver) allow you to
increase the very low bass and the upper
treble without affecting the mid-range.
That means no boom, or harsh side
effects at higher bass and treble
boost levels.

The overall performance of the
250-TX is up to Fisher's usual high
standards. It shares these important
specs with the 500-TX:

- FM signal-to-noise ratio, 65 dB.**
- FM stereo separation (at 1 kHz), 38 dB.**
- Harmonic distortion, 0.5%.**
- Hum and Noise, -90 dB.**



**The 110-watt
Fisher 210-T,
your best buy at
\$299.95**

This is one of the few low-priced
AM/FM-stereo receivers we know of
with real power.

The 210-T will drive even the most
inefficient, acoustic-suspension speaker
system.

The tuner section of the 210-T will
bring in more stations than many higher
priced receivers, because of its 2.0 μ V
sensitivity.

And, like the other more costly
Fisher receivers, you can hook up and
control two sets of speaker systems
with the 210-T.

Tuning is manual only.

(At this price something had to give.
And it wasn't Fisher quality.)



**The 100-watt
Fisher 202,
your best buy under
\$250.00.**

If you've got less than \$250 to spend
on a stereo receiver, you've got no choice.

Only one AM/FM stereo receiver in
that price range offers the kind of quality
Fisher considers high fidelity. And that
receiver is the Fisher 202, at \$249.95.

The 202 delivers 100 watts of power
(plenty to drive two pairs of Fisher
speakers at concert levels without strain.)
It has an FM tuner section (with muting)
that brings in stations you wouldn't
expect to receive on a \$250 receiver, and
it has the same Baxandall tone controls
we put into our more expensive receivers.
In addition, the 202 has an illuminated
program selector and a lighted dial pointer.

All in all, the Fisher 202 is probably
the best receiver value Fisher has to offer.

Which makes it the best receiver
value. Period.



**The 200-watt
Fisher 500-TX,
your best buy at
\$499.95**

We've explained the various tuning advancements incorporated in the Fisher 500-TX.

And we claimed that Fisher AutoScan would bring in far-off stations automatically, that other good receivers couldn't even manually. (Even other receivers that can match the 500-TX's remarkable 1.7 μ V sensitivity.) We can back up that claim.

Crystal filters are great—maybe.

Most good receivers today incorporate crystal filters. These filters permit a high degree of selectivity so that strong, local stations don't over-ride far-off, hard to receive stations.

Crystal filters also do away with periodic alignment—you align them once and they're permanently aligned.

or misaligned!

Fisher discovered that by tuning a crystal filter to "average" operating conditions before installing it (as is the industry custom) there's a good chance that the completed receiver will be

permanently misaligned, to some degree.

By using a 4-pole crystal filter (others use a 2-pole filter) and by tuning it after the receiver is wired, we've been able to achieve up to **six times better selectivity in production-line receivers than competitive models we've tested.**

This holds true for our least expensive receiver, and all the way up through the 500-TX. Count stations, and you'll discover that Fisher receivers bring in dramatically more stations.

As for the amplifier section of the 500-TX, it's everything you could ask for.

Power? Power!

With 200 watts of clean power you'll be able to drive a remote pair of speaker systems, as well as a big, power-hungry main stereo system, complete with a third, center-channel speaker.

Again, we quote **Audio:**

"Always we sensed that here was an amplifier section with great power reserve that could handle just about anything we fed to it at very loud levels in large listening rooms.

"...all the wonderful tuning convenience cannot obscure the fact that it's a powerhouse of an amplifier that is capable of excellent transient response... and truly 'big,' 'clean' sound."

There are many reasons why the Fisher 500-TX sounds as clean as it does, including a more discretionary use of IC's than is common industry practice these days. More about that later, when we tell you about the new 450-T.

Summing up, in the words of Audio:

"The Fisher 500-TX is a top-grade receiver whose performance might easily challenge that of even some of the better separate tuners and amplifiers."

In the words of High Fidelity magazine:

"The 500-TX is, at this writing, the top-of-the-line receiver from Fisher. It certainly strikes us as a top unit for any line."



**The 180-watt
Fisher 450-T,
your best buy at
\$399.95**

You can tell the 450-T that it's worth the money. It has a conventional fly control AutoScan (One that we're incorporating to cut out interference highly selective

But it's over really counts. A disappoint any!

It has the same Fisher 500-TX, less power.

Now, about

Other receivers IC's than Fisher

That's fine: Sure, we us and space-age (And in many applications definite asset.

Many, but r We've found of these devices superior perfor

Careful judgment required to make and the rest.

For example, discovered one (in one of the at where **none of the market could m overload perfor noise silicon tra**

And that's r

Another ne manufacturers advertising was found to have s Rather than inc equipment sim competitors, ot the IC manufac improve on its s distortion and c the 450-T and o use this improv receivers were/ version of this l



Mail this coupon for your free copy of The Fisher Handbook, 1970 edition. This reference guide to hi-fi and stereo also includes detailed information on all Fisher components.

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Long Island City, N.Y. 11101

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The Fisher

The Fisher 500-TX has made its own tuning knob obsolete.



Push-button electronic tuning without moving parts is more convenient, more accurate, and more foolproof than tuning by hand. (No matter how many meters or scopes you use!)

If you saw Audio magazine's review of the Fisher 500-TX 200-watt AM/FM-stereo receiver, you may have been surprised, and maybe a bit confused, by a statement that was made about our AutoScan® electronic tuning.

We quote Audio: "AutoScan is probably more accurate in tuning to center of desired channel than can be accomplished manually."

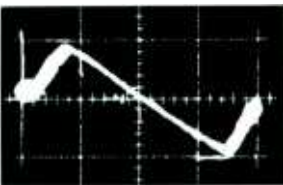
At this point in history, when other receivers are offering two and three tuning meters, oscilloscopes, words that light up, and various other devices to help you tune in stations more accurately, we thought you might like to know why we at Fisher are putting simplified push-button tuning into all our best receivers. And how our push-button tuning is more accurate than anybody's manual tuning, including our own.

For the moment, disregard its convenience. Diode tuning is dead-accurate, instantly.

AutoScan (as well as our Tune-O-Matic push-button memory tuning) is a purely electronic tuning system. There are no moving parts. Instead, devices called varactor diodes are used to lock in stations at their most powerful, most distortion-free tuning point. We again quote Audio:

"Station lock-in is flawless. That is, when the AutoScan stops on a station it stops on the exact 'center' of that channel.

"The photograph shows the detector 'S' curve obtained using the AutoScan and letting it 'home in' on our signal. Note that it locked in on the precise center of the curve. This test, by the way, is far more severe than would be encountered in normal station selection because of the extremes of modulation we employed."



Now comes the question of how important this degree of tuning accuracy is to you. Can you hear it?

We believe you can. There's a subtle distortion that creeps into complex orchestral material, at every

volume level, when an FM station isn't precisely tuned. If you've ever tried to listen to an FM concert, and felt somewhat unsatisfied with the sound as compared to records or tape, it could be a tuning problem. No tuner or receiver can be manually tuned as accurately as the Fisher 500-TX (as well as the Fisher 450-T) with AutoScan. Our engineers estimate that tuning accuracy is at least ten times greater with AutoScan than with manual tuning.

Also, AutoScan accuracy requires no warm-up. Stations can be locked in instantly, as soon as the receiver is switched on. That's important, because even some of the best manual tuning systems can't be

tuned with reasonable accuracy until the circuits are stabilized, after the tuner has been on for twenty minutes or so.

AutoScan is so automatic — does it take the fun out of tuning?

Everyone who has ever used the AutoScan mechanism has found it to be a more enjoyable way to tune than any other they've tried.

Here's how AutoScan tuning is accomplished:

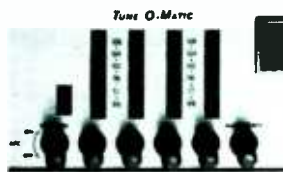
Press one of the AutoScan buttons and you automatically bring in the next station, right or left, on the dial. (Even far-off stations that are marginal or completely impossible to tune in manually on other good receivers, are brought in loud and clear, automatically, by AutoScan.) Keep your finger on the button and the AutoScan will scan the entire FM band, station by station. There's nothing further for you to do but enjoy the parade of perfectly tuned-in stations filing before you. Stop when you hear what you like.



For added convenience, a remote control option is available. You can work the AutoScan from your favorite chair.

Of course, for the psychological benefit of those who still want to tune manually, the Fisher 500-TX also has ultra-smooth flywheel tuning, complete with an accurate tuning meter. And, in addition to AutoScan automatic tuning, and manual tuning, the 500-TX has still another tuning convenience called Tune-O-Matic®.

A button for each of your favorite FM stations.



Tune-O-Matic is another form of diode tuning. It has no moving parts, and works completely electronically, just like AutoScan.

However, Tune-O-Matic is actually a simple computer with a memory. You program each of the Tune-O-Matic push buttons with the frequency of a favorite FM station. After that, you just push the button that corresponds to the station you want to hear, and that station will be locked in immediately. Perfectly tuned to center-of-channel of course.

Tune-O-Matic push-buttons can be re-programmed (set for a different station) anytime, in a matter of seconds.

Tune-O-Matic is also available in a lower-cost Fisher receiver, the new Fisher 250-TX.

Fisher receivers pull in more stations than equally sensitive, competitive receivers.

Why?

Open the flap for more information about all the new Fisher receivers.

What good is a cartridge that tracks at 3/4 of a gram but delivers less than 3/4 of the music?

Great.

For tracking.

But not for listening.

If you love music, you want 100% of the music all the time. And many cartridges just don't deliver.

Pickering's XV-15 Series does. Every time.

The trouble with many pick-ups is that at higher frequencies they experience a severe loss of output. This leads to a lack of instrumental definition in those ranges so great it may be difficult to distinguish the precise sounds of the oboe, clarinet, flute, etc.

The sounds literally blend together masking the music—and not only at the higher frequencies. When distortion takes place in

any part of the audio spectrum it can be reflected throughout the entire spectrum. The result: a masking effect over all the music.

In contrast to this, Pickering's XV-15 series delivers 100% music power 100% of the time.

Our point is simple: when it comes to cartridges, a track record doesn't count unless you sound great—at any frequency.

Pickering: for those who can hear the difference.

Pickering XV-15 cartridges range from \$29.95 to \$60. For more information write Pickering & Co., Inc., 101 Sunnyside Blvd., Plainview, N.Y. 11803.



PICKERING

"for those who can **hear** the difference"

CIRCLE 42 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

HIGH FIDELITY

VOL. 20 NO. 9 SEPTEMBER 1970

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Nostalgia

DEAR READER:

Bob Morgan's article on Bartók's quartets this month brings back a flood of thoughts from my student years. Here are a few:

The name Béla Bartók first came to my attention the day after he died, in September 1945, when I overheard one upperclassman at my high school, Music & Art in New York, sardonically predict to another: "Now that Bartók's dead they'll probably start playing his music."

Two years later, at the Berkshire Music Center, I had two roommates, Larry and Burt. Larry and I both played the violin, while Burt was a pianist; Burt and I both composed. Compared to Burt's thorny music, my attempts at "modernism" were positively tame. He wrote twelve-tone, but even Schoenberg was not strong enough a guide for him; he followed The Master's methods according to the gospel of Ernst Křenek, who had written a little book showing how one could, and must, ensure that a twelve-tone technique really *sound* atonal. According to Křenek's recipes even Alban Berg would have been too much of a backslider and most of Bartók not to be taken seriously.

I still remember our arguments, Burt insisting that mid-twentieth-century music was not valid if it either implied tonality or was tainted by romanticism, I insisting that instinct must determine a composer's technique, that dogmatism could only conflict with "sincerity," my favorite criterion. Burt, already in college—McGill University—must have thought me a callow youth, while I thought him a misguided fanatic. Larry, usually sitting on the sidelines during these matches, probably thought we were both nuts.

I don't recall Larry's last name any more. Burt's was Bacharach.

It was Bartók's string quartets that first bared for me the old canard that you can't tell a great work on first hearing. My initial exposure to them was through the Pro Arte Quartet at the University of Wisconsin, where I spent my first two college years. I remember becoming aware, in turn, of the fascinating aural patterns Bartók set up, his encyclopedic playing with them, his fluent yet determined organization of the larger sections, finally the satisfying emotional wallop of each movement. Frankly, I don't care for much of Bartók; he is too often embarrassed at his own sentiments (maybe he read Křenek?). But the quartets are a world unto themselves. And their greatness *can* get to you first time around. All you need is the right mood to maintain an open, willing mind.

Early this month the annual New York High Fidelity Music Show will be held, not in New York City this time, but in Westbury, Long Island. Late next month the only other scheduled IHF show (at this writing) opens in another suburb, Newton, Mass., near Boston. (The West Coast seems to be blanked out so far this year.) All indications for the coming season point to the greatest inundation of really new products in high fidelity history—the influence of Dolby, Scheiber, Crolyn, quadriphony, and innovations you probably haven't even heard of yet. We will cover them all in **A BUMPER CROP OF NEW PRODUCTS**. In October you will also read the incredible story of **PRISONER 1337, FORT OGLETHORPE, GA.**, who happened to be the Conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Next month's discography will examine **THE RECORDINGS OF BEETHOVEN'S PIANO MUSIC**, which I hope we can contain within one issue, as we were *not* able to do with last month's concerto discography (and, Ludwig help us!, *Schwann's* listing of the piano sonatas alone takes nearly twice the space the concertos do).

Leonard Marcus

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Circulation Director

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ADVERTISING

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Saturday Review

June 27, 1970 501

A Very Important
RAVE REVIEW (OUR 8th)

From the dean of MUSIC CRITICS

IRVING KOLODIN

In the June 27th issue of Saturday Review

Cadillac Quality in Volkswagen Space

The long-standing contention that the bigger the speaker the better the sound has, in the last decade, been fighting a rear-guard action against the clear voice of reason embodied in the bookshelf types pioneered by Edgar Villchur in his AR revolution. But the heaviness of some, the less than fulfilling extremes of range of others, have left the musical optimists vaguely or less than vaguely dissatisfied, according to their inclinations and expectations.

In the last year or so, however, aural extremists have been offered a new solution to their problems, and, after a time trial measured in months rather than weeks, this one can definitely proclaim that Bose is best, big or small, high or low. Like many top innovations, it is not the cheapest or the prettiest embodiment of its purpose, but it combines function with form in classical proportions of efficiency and compactness. For the furniture minded, the well-textured wood frame is available with a choice of four grill panel cloths.

The particular novelty of the MIT-derived design (Amar G. Bose did graduate and postgraduate work, and has held a professorship in acoustics at that institution) is the diffusion of sound from the rear of a small, cube-shaped hexagon, rather than from the front. A mere 20 5/16 inches wide, 12 3/4 inches high, and 12 7/8 inches deep, it uses the wall against which it is positioned as part of the sound-dispersing pattern. Two of them properly powered (my source is Marantz) can provide more sound than even an oversized studio room can absorb. An adapter network, housed in a less than book-sized enclosure, enables the speakers to be tuned to the specific space in which they are positioned.

As a basis of comparison, my listening ears have been attuned for more than a decade (since 1958, when stereo came in) to a pair of oversize KLHs (7s, measuring many feet of cubic content) extended in range through electrostatic mamama (high end) tweeters. Not only can I not detect any loss of response at the extremes of range in an A-B test of the Bose pair vs. the KLH-plus pair, but there is more solidity in the Bose midrange and equal smoothness through the transient response. The pair of Bose speakers list at \$476, but the payoff is comparable to Cadillac quality in Volkswagen space.

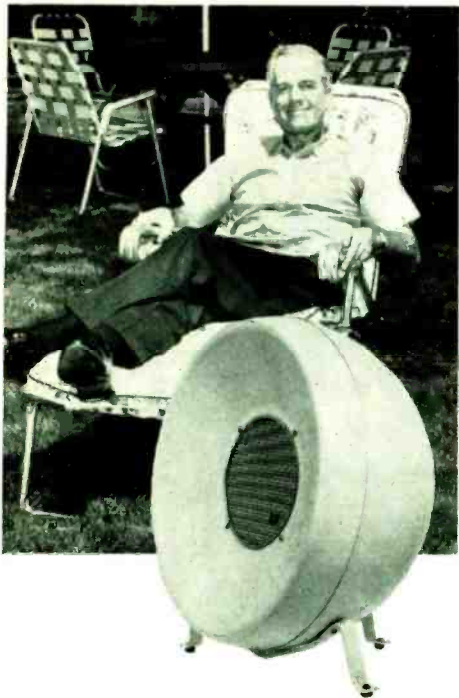
—I. K.

"You can hear the difference now."

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Bring your music with you with the Bozak *bard*

The perennial favorite of outdoor music lovers is Bozak's famous Bard—the wide-range all-weather music system.

Much imitated for over a decade, the Bard is distinguished by its —

- rugged waterproof construction
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- handsome appearance
- and above all, its incomparable musical reproduction

The Bard is unsurpassed for tonal richness and for intimate, personal sound. It is marked by a total absence of "tininess" common to so many outdoor speakers. Every component—from the wide-range B-800 driver to the modern hemispheric steel enclosure—is designed specifically for full, natural sound reproduction outdoors. (Frequency response 50-10,000 Hz; impedance 8 ohms; power handling capacity 30 watts program; diameter 18"; height 21".)

For superb outdoor music the year round, enjoy The Bard.



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letters

Rock and Drugs

Gene Lees has written several good articles on pop music and the drug scene, but none has surpassed his "A Modest Proposal" in the June issue. I hope he has the strength to withstand the slings and arrows that will undoubtedly be coming his way.

Jay Justin Numa
Seattle, Wash.

Gene Lees's view of the drug problem is far too simplistic. He does not seem to realize that the drug-oriented music of today is a product of the drug sub-culture, not a cause. Drug-oriented music is popular because drugs are, not the other way around.

True enough, large groups of children are turning on to heroin—a problem that will probably grow. The problem is due to the desire of the kids to escape from the realities of life. I cannot believe therefore that the answer lies in the record industry.

Simply look at the pressures placed on the suburban high school kid. He possesses knowledge beyond his years thanks to TV, informed parents, wider communications; yet he lacks enough experience to be able to sort this information out and apply it in a directed way. The courses taught at schools are rarely relevant to the problems that kids hear about—like race, Cambodia, sex, and the cold war. Instead, from the ninth grade on the typical high-schooler is pressured into attending a "good college," knowing that the alternatives are the draft, marriage, or a vocational school. Another alternative, it seems, is to dope yourself up and forget about it, and watch *Dark Shadows* while playing those nasty records Mr. Lees talks about.

These pressures take their toll, but in addition there are the social and sexual problems of just being an adolescent, talking to parents who don't understand that the world has changed and that their children have changed. These frustrations, coupled with the emotionally bankrupt climate that suburbia represents—what with high divorce rates, cocktail parties, social climbing, political and religious hypocrisy—all overload the high school kid. And like an overloaded speaker, he distorts.

Marijuana will not let you escape these things—if anything, it intensifies the problems—while heroin enables you to forget. Thanks to Mr. Nixon's skillful handling of the drug problem, heroin prices (which are associated with the Mafia, much more so than the marijuana traffic) are now competitive with marijuana. And kids are buying, and as Mr. Lees points out, they are dying, too.

Talking about the record industry treats a symptom of the disease, not the disease itself. The kids are dying be-

cause of our sins, not theirs. They are dying because, knowingly or not, we have created a world in which it is impossible to be a child any more. Mr. Lees's flippant approach to the problem indicates why there hasn't been a solution.

Craig Anderton
Philadelphia, Pa.

Poor old Gene. Any man who needs drugs to "get high with a little help from my friends" is in dire straits. There are a lot of us out here, Mr. Lees, who get high on music (from J. S. Bach to Steve Stills, with many stops in between), on friends, on walking in the freshened air after the Bay winds have swept away the fumes. A lot of us tried the soft drugs, a lot of us decided that life was more fun.

I'm almost twenty-five, Mr. Lees. Maybe I'm too old for the generation you speak of—but I hope I'm too young for the generation that has ten million alcoholics, that never seems to find the time to speak out against the madness . . . but why go on? Not everyone over forty is an alcoholic and apathetic; by the same token, not all persons under thirty are junkies and tasteless. The odds on the former are perhaps higher than they are on the latter, but never mind.

Life goes on. So does music. Too bad you got left behind, Mr. Lees. You must have had one heck of an ear, once upon a time.

Walter C. Crawford
Berkeley, Calif.

Although the bulk of my record collection is acid-rock, I am *not* a drug addict.

I am sixteen, and I know lots of people who have taken drugs. I would say that roughly zero per cent of them turned on because of music. Back in the Thirties did everyone go out and have frenzied sexual relationships because of Cole Porter's music?

Larry M. Nelson
Fullerton, Calif.

Divas, Expanded

In his article on Flagstad and Melchior in your July issue, William Zakariassen wonders if anyone present at the Furtwängler *Tristan* sessions could provide the definitive answer on how the two high Cs of *Isolde* were inserted in Act II.


They were *not* spliced in from Flagstad's own singing. It was a conspiracy of giants. Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Flagstad's colleague and friend (whose husband, Walter Legge, produced the recording for EMI), stood behind Flagstad during the session and stepped forward to insert the top Cs. Flagstad still had the tones in

Continued on page 10

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CIRCLE 53 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

LETTERS

Continued from page 6

her voice, but felt that Furtwängler's tempos were too fast for her to emit them properly. The source of the top Cs in the *Siegfried* duet was another soprano, whose name I don't know. Set Svanholm once asked me, "Does it matter? The important thing is whether you enjoy the performance."

I might add that a Victrola disc to be released this fall will bring back all of Flagstad's Beethoven, Weber, and Wagner material with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy; it will include her previously unissued Immolation Scene from *Götterdämmerung*. A two-disc version abridged from the complete Norwegian *Götterdämmerung*, including all of Flagstad's Brünnhilde, has just been issued in England and may follow here on Richmond.

I close with a plea to Seraphim to issue all her Grieg material with orchestra, especially *En Drom*. Probably the best record she ever made, it has never been released in the United States in any form.

Gerald Fitzgerald
 New York, N.Y.

I read with great interest your thorough discography of recordings by Flagstad and Melchior in the July issue, but was surprised to see that you had omitted Flagstad's "Hymns from Norway," London 5638. Unfortunately, this too has been deleted from the catalogue. It was a marvelous treat, in that Flagstad's glorious voice was accompanied by an organ—quite a sound! It was also interesting to hear some well-known verses sung in Norwegian. Likewise with so many other recordings by Flagstad; let's hope for a reissue!

Craig G. Rutenberg
 New Haven, Conn.

George Movshon's review, "The Fresh Appeal of Bidú Sayão" (June 1970), was most interesting. I would like to point out, however, that Mme. Sayão does not "live in her native Brazil." Residing at the Ansonia, she is very much a resident of New York City.

Your readers might also like to know that Mme. Sayão, although nearing her seventieth birthday, has the appearance and spontaneity of a woman almost half her age.

Lawrence F. Holdridge
 Amityville, N.Y.

Plucked Instruments

Rarely have I read such an outrageously misinformed, inaccurate, and tasteless piece of writing as Glenhall Taylor's article on plucked instruments in your May issue ("From Apollo's Lyre to Elvis' Guitar"). There are so many mistakes and distortions that I hardly know where to begin pointing them out.

A classical guitar has six strings, not twelve. A lute has between thirteen and twenty-three, never as few as six. Neither the koutara, the machete, nor the banjo

Continued on page 14



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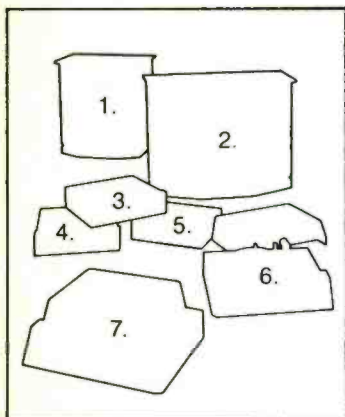


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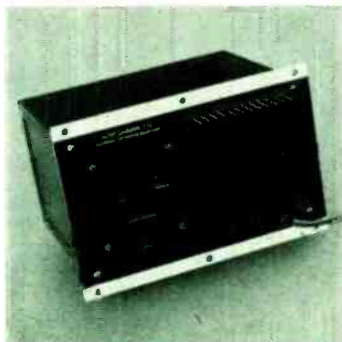
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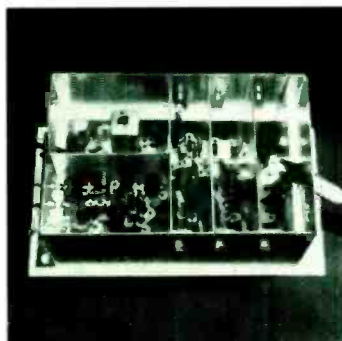
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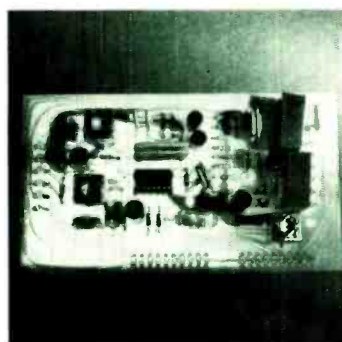
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LETTERS

Continued from page 10

is descended from the lute. The bass strings on a theorbo are not drone strings. The strings on a steel guitar are raised off the neck. Five- and six-course mandolins are obsolete, etc., etc.

Mr. Taylor does not distinguish between Hawaiian guitar, pedal steel, and "country" guitar, three totally different instruments. He makes no mention of the vihuela, twelve-string guitar, guitar-ron, oud, harp, or harpsichord, all members of the same family. He barely mentions electricity, which has done more to revolutionize stringed instruments than any other development of the past two hundred years.

All this could perhaps be forgiven if Mr. Taylor had demonstrated even the slightest amount of taste in his "selective discography." Any reviewer who thinks that Glen Campbell exemplifies country guitar, who thinks that "Fifty Guitars Visit Hawaii" and "Pop Goes the Electric Sitar" contain significant music by any standards, who has never heard John Williams, Weldon Myrick, Jimi Hendrix, B. B. King, Manitas de Plata, or Larry Coryell, and who thinks that the Ventures can stand alone to represent amplified guitars, ought to keep his opinions to himself.

Edward Freeman
New York, N.Y.

Mr. Taylor's selective discography listed "The Twelve String Story" (Horizon WD 1620) featuring Glen Campbell. This album has been deleted and re-released (along with other material from the Horizon line) on two discs: "The Anthology of the Twelve String Guitar" (Tradition 2071) and "The Guitar Greats" (Archive of Folk and Jazz Music FS 243).

Bernard C. Solomon,
President
The Everest Record Group
Los Angeles, Calif.

"Chittarone," my foot! It's a chitarrone, and it's not a small Neapolitan guitar as your staff lyre expert would have us believe, but a large, long-necked archlute. Please inform Mr. Taylor accordingly before everybody goes off thinking that there's no truth in lyres and no money in the lute (no puns intended). And in the name of Ali Akbar Khan, how can he omit the sarod from his discography?

Hang him by a fret until he recants!

Paul Hertelendy
Oakland, Calif.

Mr. Taylor replies: Mr. Freeman is, I'm afraid, guilty of generalizing. My reference to twelve strings (in the first sentence of the paragraph to which he objects) was to the development of the guitar and not, specifically, to the classical or Spanish guitar.

Regarding his statement that the lute's strings "never number as few as six," I quote from Sybil Marcuse's Musical Instruments—A Dictionary: "The Egyptian lute . . . generally had 2 strings, occasionally 3. . . . The classical lute was introduced by the Arabs in the 13th cen-

ture. . . . Early iconography shows . . . 4 strings. . . . By the early 15th century, a 5th string was added to the treble. . . . Tinctoris said . . . the lute had five and sometimes six strings."

I have some further definitions and/or quotes for Mr. Freeman: "Machete: 4 stringed guitar of Portugal identical with the cavaquinho." (Also from the book by Sybil Marcuse.) The cavaquinho, says this same source, is a hybrid of the guitar and mandolin. How lute-y can you get?

According to the Harvard Dictionary of Music, the guitar is an acknowledged member of the lute family and the banjo is merely a guitar with a drumhead body which serves to add resonance and emphasize the percussive effect.

As for the koutara (also kuitra), Betty Warren Dietz, in her authoritative book Musical Instruments of Africa, states that this is a member of the lute family, with a gourd body, a wooden neck, eight pegs, and four pairs of strings.

Regarding the theorbo, Curt Sachs, in his History of Musical Instruments, says: "In this lute the stopped strings, running over the fingerboard, were tuned by pegs in the usual pegbox turned at a right angle from the neck; the pegbox for the drones, on the contrary, formed a straight elongation of the bass side of the neck. . . ."

As to the steel guitar, I merely touched upon the origin of the technique. The technique was discovered before the introduction of the steel nut which raises the strings higher above the frets.

I heartily commend Mr. Freeman on his choices for inclusion in the discography, but I can only protest that omissions were unavoidable. The same may be said of instruments which he accuses me of omitting from the article. I respectfully refer him to the article itself in which I stated, "No attempt will be made here to list all of the mutations . . . from auto-harp to zittera. . . ."

As to Paul Hertelendy's correction of my definition of "chitarrone"—touché! I plead guilty to an oversight in copying from my rough draft, for I inadvertently transposed the definitions of "chitarrone" and "chitarrina."

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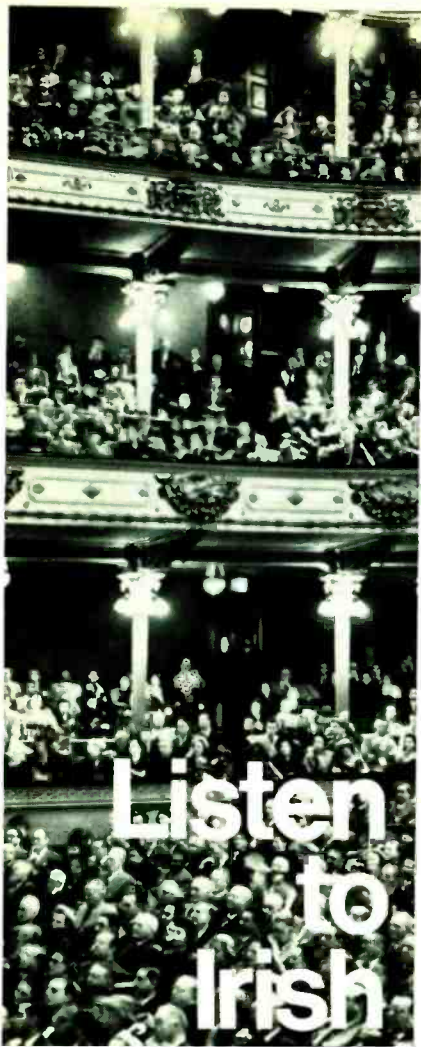
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behind the scenes



Two avant-garde favorites—Luciano Berio and Cathy Berberian.

Berio's Exhilarating Epifanie

LONDON

Luciano Berio has taken musical London by storm. In two vivid concerts—one at the Festival Hall with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the other at the Queen Elizabeth Hall with the brilliant young musicians of the London Sinfonietta—he swiftly established himself as the reigning avant-garde favorite. Thanks to RCA's enterprise, that success has now been carried through into the recording studio and eventually, one hopes, to the public at large.

The major recording project involved *Epifanie*, a massive cantata (for want of a better word) for mezzo-soprano and orchestra that Berio wrote in 1960 with polyglot words ranging through five languages. One says "mezzo-soprano," but in fact it would be more accurate to say "for Cathy Berberian and orchestra"—the first (and now ex-) Mrs. Berio is as essential to the interpretation of this pulsating music as any individual could be. The concert performance, presented by the BBC, revealed her in stunning form. She is perhaps the only singer in the world who can project such craggy vocal lines with real wit, who can jump from singing to speech and back again with natural point and without a suggestion of strain. The one thing lacking was Berio. The BBC had wanted him to conduct, but instead they settled for Michael Gielen, a careful and painstaking leader but obviously unable to draw out the last degree of commitment from the players. It sounded as though another rehearsal would have put everything right. RCA

managed much better. For their recording sessions at EMI's Studio No. 1 on Easter Monday and the following day they succeeded in signing up not only Cathy Berberian but Luciano Berio too, confounding all those gossips who have been whispering that the former husband and wife would never again appear together.

The work itself, which lasts some thirty-five minutes, should emerge with particular strength in a recorded performance. For one thing there is the obvious advantage that the listener can reorder the twelve movements himself at the touch of a stylus—reflecting the composer's contention that the movements, seven orchestral and five vocal, can be rearranged to suit any occasion. At the Festival Hall the order seemed to suggest, textually as well as musically, a development from fluttering fantasy to sharp reality. So the tremulous sound of the first orchestral piece (dominated by flutter-tongue flute) proceeded naturally to settings of Proust, Antonio Machado, and James Joyce. Then with both musical and verbal focus achieved, we had the cruelly clear visions of Claude Simon and finally Bertolt Brecht. And from first to last, Berio's joy in sound, his use of spatial balances (such as placing a row of violins behind the rest of the orchestra) proved to be an exhilarating experience even for the unskilled listener. It is good to know the piece will soon be available for detailed repeated study.

One hopes, too, that *Laborintus II*, a more recent work written in homage of Dante's 700th birthday in 1965, will be recorded. The effect of the London

HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE



Hilde Somer—special affinity for Scriabin.

Sinfonietta's performance in Queen Elizabeth Hall with Cathy Berberian narrating, three of the Swingle Singers singing, and Berio conducting was, if anything, even more striking than *Epifanie*.

Mahler's Missing Link. Pierre Boulez has directed the premiere recording of *Waldmärchen*, the long-unperformed first part of Mahler's *Das klagende Lied*. He acquired the rights last summer after seeing the score in Cleveland and presented the first British public performance at the Royal Festival Hall on the day before the taping sessions. It was a pity that CBS could not match this Boulez recording of Part I with the conductor's earlier release last year of Part II and Part III. The orchestra was the same—the London Symphony—but only one of the previous soloists, the alto Grace Hoffman, will be heard in *Waldmärchen*. Evelyn Lear was replaced by Elisabeth Söderström in the soprano role and tenor Stuart Burrows was replaced by Ernst Häfliger. Gerd Nienstedt sang the bass part.

Equally important, the venue had changed between recordings: Part II and Part III had been recorded in Walthamstow Assembly Hall but CBS went to the Watford Town Hall for *Waldmärchen*. Although a similar microphone technique did help to minimize differences, the acoustical discrepancy between the two halls made things harder for the engineers. Fortunately Watford offered a partial compensation with its unusually direct and clean acoustic. It is one of those halls where the rustle of a paper can be heard clearly from one end to the other—a feature that certainly helped the musicians give a more full-blooded performance than they had in the rather disappointing premiere the previous night.

Characteristically, Boulez spent an un-

usually high proportion of the session time in rehearsing. When I arrived halfway through the second of the two three-hour sessions the conductor was still at the stage of doing complete takes. I heard two in quick succession, the second even warmer than the first, though by that time the horns—particularly important in this score—were beginning to feel the strain. The work itself no longer needs any recommendation. One may argue that Mahler took the best ideas and used them to better advantage in later works, but every bar sounds Mahlerian to my ears with fewer Wagnerian echoes than in the two well-known parts of *Klagende Lied*. EDWARD GREENFIELD

NEW YORK

Scriabin and His Demons

Mercury's New York recording studio, located in the Great Northern Hotel on 57th Street, is a converted ballroom which thus far has maintained its original character. Crystal chandeliers on either side of the recording area proclaim a firm allegiance to the nineteenth century. But the twentieth century is here in force too, with metal cabinets, rows of standing mikes, and other items of recording equipment lined up against the walls. However, the high, handsomely papered walls still manage to dominate. The result is curious: it is the cabinets, the mikes, and the equipment—lusterless and ignored—that look like relics from the past, leftover weaponry from yesterday's war. The ballroom, with its perverse sense of time, seems an ideal place for the performance of Scriabin. And it is here that Viennese pianist Hilde Somer returned last May to make her second all-Scriabin record.

Hilde Somer has a special affinity for the Russian composer. This past season she devoted an entire recital to his works, which was given a special stamp of authenticity by two members of the Joshua Light Show group. There was, of course, no light show to accompany her recorded recital. The authentic touch this time came from an unexpected source. Scriabin, you may remember, had strong occult leanings, a fascination with demons. At one end of the ballroom, facing Miss Somer's piano, was a strange, almost grotesque creature: a frozen-yoghurt statue of a woman's figure, rendered in oil-drop curvatures suggestive of Tanguy. Where the face would be there was a television screen. This figure was a perfect gorgon for our time—Scriabin would have approved.

I met Hilde Somer in the control booth—a handsome woman, energetic and eager. Her handshake was strong: she would have no problem with Scriabin's heavy chords. Between takes, she briefed me on the other difficulties in playing this particular composer. "He's technically difficult and intellectually difficult; and most difficult of all is the emotional context. When you put all these elements together it's very hard. His pedalings are

Continued on page 20

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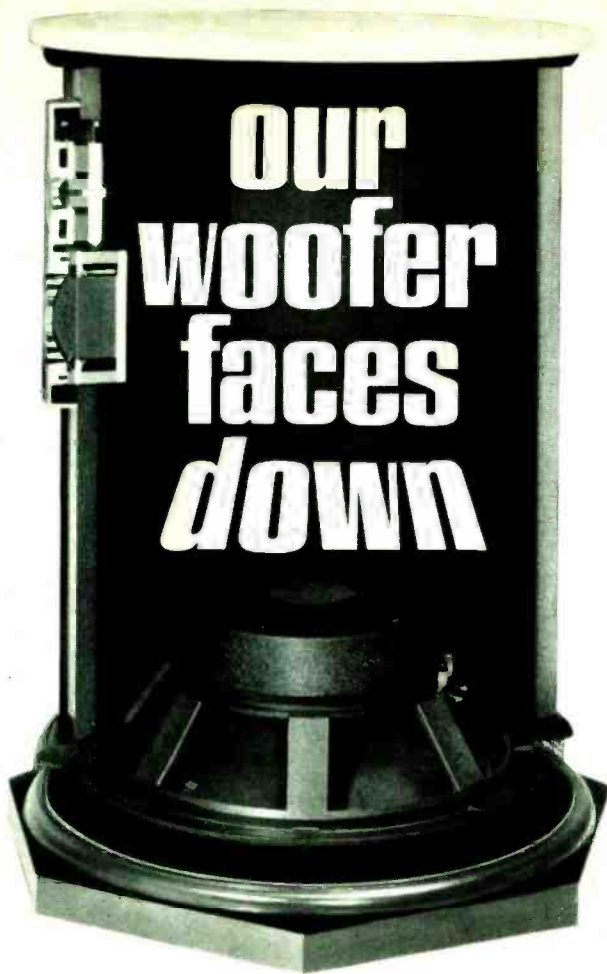
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generous. The music must be bathed in pedal, yet it must not be smothered."

As it turned out, most of the session was devoted to Scriabin's one-movement Ninth Sonata. Many retakes were involved, some for the reason mentioned by Miss Somer: finding a balance between the desired sonority and the desired clarity was indeed proving tricky.

But there were other problems as well. The first take ended when Mercury's engineer Ed Van Niel came into the booth with the news that a rock band, playing in an adjacent room, was proving all too audible. "An obbligato!" exclaimed Miss Somer.

The rock band was successfully dealt with. But soon after, one of the speakers inside the control booth began making sputtering noises whenever the piano played over a forte. Consternation was registered by the men sitting at the table: Miss Somer's coach, Rafael De Silva, and engineers Richard Campbell and George Piros. The pianist, coming into the booth, refused to be discouraged. "I think Scriabin is jinxing us today. The occult is coming out!" A call for help went out to the hotel's maintenance engineer, Ted Grossman.

Finding the source of the difficulty took time. In the interim Margaret Turner, from Mercury's publicity office, filled me in on some of the thinking that had gone into the company's Scriabin project. Mercury's programming and publicity, I learned, is being given a strong modern-American look. They have, for instance, just completed a set entitled "The Naked Carmen," wherein the Bizet opera is totally revised to include a myriad of contemporary references and connotations. And the Scriabin albums are being advertised as containing music by "The First Flower Child." The initial Somer/Scriabin disc, in fact, comes with a car-window decal picturing the composer in psychedelic poster style.

Hilde Somer then explained the album's format. "We are building it around the polarity in Scriabin, who always talked about getting out of darkness into radiance. He called his Seventh Sonata the 'White Mass,' his Ninth the 'Black Mass.' Both of these works will be included in this album. In the 'White Mass' you have what Scriabin called 'celestial voluptuousness, flashes of light and fire'; in the 'Black Mass' you have black witchcraft, you have a satanic Mass meant to evoke false sweetness and hypocrisy—and the whole thing is permeated with sulfur."

At last the difficulty was located and repaired. Back went Miss Somer for numerous more takes, ever cheerful, ever obliging. A professional. By this time I myself was feeling a sense of the occult. Scriabin had coached his pianist wife, Vera Ivanovna, so thoroughly in the performance of his music that she became his chief exponent. Could it be, I wondered, that Miss Somer was Vera's reincarnation? I looked beyond the piano, to the yogurt sculpture—but got no answer there. The TV screen was still blank.

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speaking of records

THE FOLLOWING company-by-company listing of fall releases—HIGH FIDELITY's sixteenth annual forecast of pre-Christmas goodies for the classical collector—promises once again a wide variety of musical treats for all tastes. The opera fan may soon experience, aside from the inevitable *Carmen* or *Lucia*, complete recordings—for the first time on discs—of Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*, Donizetti's *Anna Bolena*, and Simone Mayr's *Medea in Corinto*. Voracious explorers of repertory byways can look forward to such esoterica as Kalinnikov's Second Symphony, Cavaliere's *Rappresentazione di anima e di corpo*, and literally hundreds of previously unrecorded Schubert songs (a twenty-five-disc two-volume set from the insatiable Fischer-Dieskau). Nor can one overlook the brand new discs from the virtuoso superstars. Bernstein, Sutherland, Price, and Rubinstein are generously represented; perhaps the most impressive showing in this category is made by Mstislav Rostropovich who appears in the triple role of cellist (Schubert and Bridge sonatas), pianist (accompanist for his wife, Galina Vishnevskaya, in songs by Britten and Tchaikovsky), and conductor (*Eugene Onegin*). And, of course, virtually every label has something to "celebrate" Beethoven's bicentennial.

By far the majority of these records were taped, pressed, and packaged in Europe, where classical music still commands a healthy percentage of the over-all market. While Europeans continue to produce, promote, and purchase records with gusto, American manufacturers with classical commitments are currently enforcing drastic cutbacks and American customers are showing a decided lack of enthusiasm for whatever classical music is quietly slipping into stores. (For some facts, figures, and suggestions see last month's letter from the editor, "How Do You Spell *Eroica*?") RCA is now concentrating almost exclusively on its most prestigious, long-term contract stars such as Price, Ormandy, and Rubinstein, while little effort is spent on promoting new artists or commercially risky endeavors. Columbia has canceled a number of its more idealistic projects, as, for examples, the complete Schoenberg series and the integral Haydn symphony cycle on *Odyssey*, while such promising new undertakings as Raymond Lewenthal's Romantic music series have been abandoned almost before they started.

The future is at present a gloomy one for the classical collector, dependent upon many interlocking factors in America's current economic and cultural malaise. For the moment, however, he may still enjoy the fruits of an imported crop and herewith are some choice pickings.

New Recordings for the Coming Season



Angel

- Bach: *Art of Fugue*. Lionel Rogg, organ.
- Bach: *Suites for Orchestra (4)*. New Philharmonia Orchestra, Otto Klemperer, cond.
- Beethoven: *Christ on the Mount of Olives*. Christine Deutekom (s), Nicolai Gedda (t), Hans Sotin (bs); Orchestra of the Beethovenhalle (Bonn), Volker Wangenheim, cond.
- Beethoven: *Piano Trios (complete)*. Pinchas Zukerman, violin; Jacqueline du Pré, cello; Daniel Barenboim, piano.
- Beethoven: *Triple Concerto*. David Oistrakh, violin; Mstislav Rostropovich, cello; Sviatoslav Richter, piano; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond.

Berlioz: *Roméo et Juliette: orchestral music*. Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Carlo Maria Giulini, cond.

Bizet: *Carmen*. Mirella Freni (s), Grace Bumbry (ms), Jon Vickers (t), Kostas Paskalis (b); Chorus and Orchestra of the Paris Opera, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, cond.

Brahms: *Symphony No. 4*. Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Carlo Maria Giulini, cond.

Handel: *Coronation Anthems*. Ambrosian Singers; Menuhin Festival Orchestra, Yehudi Menuhin, cond.

Stravinsky: *Petrushka Suite; Firebird Suite*. Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Carlo Maria Giulini, cond.

Verdi: *Requiem*. Montserrat Caballé (s), Fiorenza Cossotto (ms), Jon Vickers (t), Ruggero Raimondi (bs); New Philharmonia Chorus and Orchestra, Sir John Barbirolli, cond.

Walton: *Viola Concerto; Violin Concerto*. Yehudi Menuhin, violin and

viola; New Philharmonia Orchestra, Sir William Walton, cond.

Elisabeth Schwarzkopf: *Christmas Music*. Chorus and Orchestra conducted by Charles Mackerras.

ARCHIVE PRODUCTION

Bach: *Cantata No. 21*. Edith Mathis (s), Ernst Häfliger (t), Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (b); Munich Bach Choir and Orchestra, Karl Richter, cond.

Bach, C.P.E.: *Sinfonias (4), Wq. 182*. Munich Bach Orchestra, Karl Richter, cond.

Cavaliere: *Rappresentazione di anima e di corpo*. Teresa Zylis-Gara (s), Sylvia Geszty (s), Edda Moser (s), Tatiana Troyanos (ms), Paul Esswood (ct), Hermann Prey (b), Theo Adam (bs); Vienna Chamber Choir;

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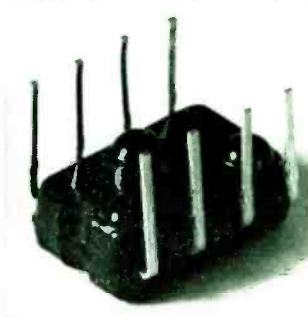
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- Foss: *Geod*. Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Lukas Foss, cond.
 Gesualdo: *Madrigals*. Cappella Vocale Hamburg.
 Lutoslawski: *Mala Suite; Overture for String Orchestra; Funeral Music for String Orchestra*. Berlin Symphony Orchestra; Hamburg Symphony Orchestra, Arthur Gruber, cond.
 Messiaen: *Organ Music*. Jean-Claude Raynaud, organ.
 Satic: *Waltzes and Cafe Tunes for Music Hall Orchestra; Violin and Piano Music; Piano Music; Songs*. Various soloists and instrumentalists.
 Scriabin: *Piano Concerto; Poem of Ecstasy; Poem of Fire*. Michael Ponti, piano; Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Donald Johannis, cond.



- Beethoven: *Piano Sonatas: Nos. 1, 2, 4, and 5*. Bruce Hungerford, piano.
 Handel: *Messiah*. Margaret Price (s), Yvonne Minton (ms), Alexander Young (t), Geraint Evans (b); English Chamber Orchestra, Johannes Somary, cond.
 Mayr: *Medea in Corinto*. Clarion Concerts Chorus and Orchestra, Newell Jenkins, cond.
 Mozart: *Divertimentos K. 138 and K. 287*. English Chamber Orchestra, David Blum, cond.
 Paganini: *Caprices for Violin (com-*

- plete)*. Paul Zukofsky, violin.
 Schubert: *Piano Sonatas D. 845 and D. 664*. Lili Kraus, piano.
 De Wert: *Music from the Court of Mantua*. Jaye Consort of Viols; Accademia Monteverdiana Consort; Ambrosian Singers, Denis Stevens, cond.



- Beethoven: *Missa Solemnis*. Martina Arroyo (s), Maureen Forrester (c), Richard Lewis (t), Cesare Siepi (bs); Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond.
 Beethoven: *Piano Trios (complete)*. Isaac Stern, violin; Leonard Rose, cello; Eugene Istomin, piano.
 Beethoven: *Sonata No. 29 ("Hammerklavier")*. Rudolf Serkin, piano.
 Beethoven: *Symphony No. 5; Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage Overture*. New Philharmonia Orchestra, Pierre Boulez, cond.
 Beethoven: *Variations for Piano*. Glenn Gould, piano.
 Bruckner: *Symphony No. 8*. Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, cond.
 Carter: *Concerto for Orchestra*. Schuman: *In Praise of Shahn*. New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein, cond.
 Copland: *Billy the Kid; Rodeo*. London Symphony Orchestra, Aaron Copland, cond.
 Debussy: *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Elisabeth Söderström (s), George Shirley (t); Covent Garden Orchestra, Pierre Boulez, cond.
 Ives: *Songs*. Evelyn Lear, soprano; Thomas Stewart, baritone.
 Mahler: *Das klagende Lied*. London Symphony Orchestra, Pierre Boulez, cond.
 Mozart: *Violin Concertos No. 4 and No. 5*. Pinchas Zukerman, violin; English Chamber Orchestra, Daniel Barenboim, cond.
 Rachmaninoff: *Piano Concerto No. 3*. André Watts, piano; New York Philharmonic, Seiji Ozawa, cond.
 Ravel: *Gaspard de la nuit; Valses nobles et sentimentales*. Alicia de Larrocha, piano.
 Strauss, R.: *Don Quixote*. New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein, cond.
 Verdi: *Requiem*. Martina Arroyo (s), Josephine Veasey (ms), Plácido Domingo (t), Ruggero Raimondi (bs); London Symphony Chorus and Orchestra, Leonard Bernstein, cond.



- Bach: *Partitas No. 1 and No. 2*. João Carlos Martins, piano.

- Bach: *Unaccompanied Violin Sonatas No. 1 and No. 2*. Wanda Wilkomiriska, violin.
 Beethoven: *Piano Sonatas No. 15 and No. 26*. Ivan Moravec, piano.
 Mozart: *Piano Sonatas No. 11 and No. 12*. Rosana Maria Martins, piano.
 Rachmaninoff: *Preludes, Op. 32*. Morton Estrin, piano.
 Scriabin: *Sonatas Nos. 5, 7, and 9; 8 Etudes, Op. 42*. Ruth Laredo, piano.



- Arel: *For Violin and Piano*. Wilson: *Piece for Four*. Stern: *Terezin*. Various instrumentalists.
 Blitzstein: *The Cradle Will Rock*. Reissue of the original cast M-G-M recording.
 Elwell: *Six Songs*. Maxine Makas, soprano; Anthony Makas, piano.
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- Brubeck: *The Gates of Justice*. Harold Orbach (t), McHenry Boatwright (bs); Westminster Choir; Dave Brubeck Trio; Cincinnati Brass Ensemble, Erich Kunzel, cond.
 Charpentier, M.A.: *La Pesta de Milan*. Musica Aeterna Chorus and Orchestra, Frederic Waldman, cond.
 Ellington: *The Golden Broom and the Green Apple; New World A-Comin'; Harlem*. Duke Ellington, piano; Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Erich Kunzel, cond.
 Ruggiero Ricci: *Violin Recital*. Accompanied by harp, guitar, harpsichord, and second violin.

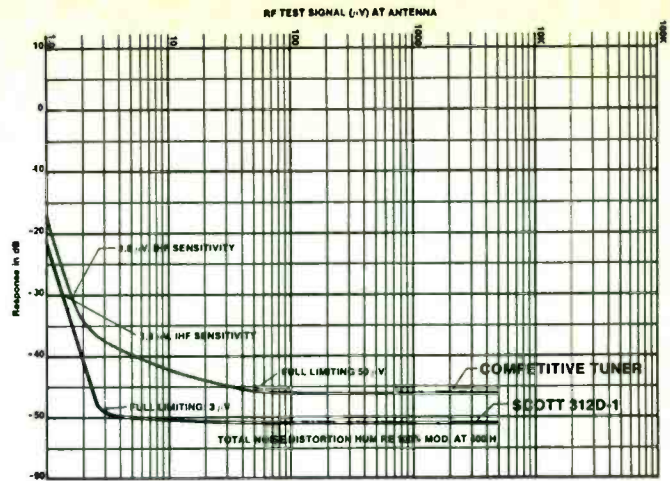


- Debussy: *Cello Sonata; Violin Sonata; Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp; Syrinx*. Boston Symphony Chamber Players.
 Debussy: *Nocturnes*. Ravel: *Daphnis et Chloé, Suite No. 2; Pavane*. Boston Symphony Orchestra, Claudio Abbado, cond.
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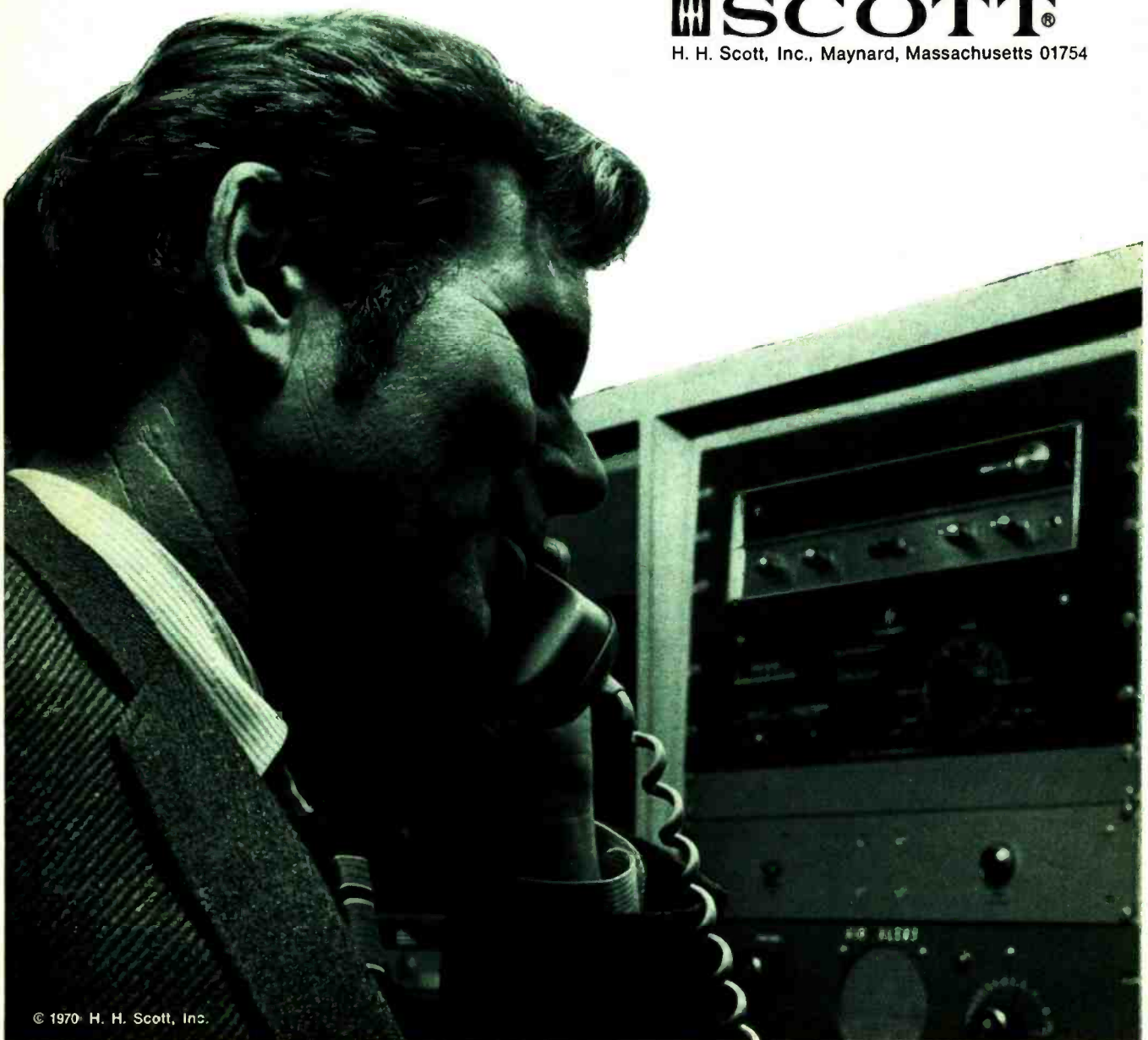


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Kagel: *Ludwig Van*. Various instrumentalists.

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Schubert: *Symphony No. 9*. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond.

Sibelius: *Symphony No. 2*. Berlin Philharmonic, Okko Kamu, cond.

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Barber: *Symphony No. 2; Medea Suite*. New Symphony Orchestra of London, Samuel Barber, cond.

Bax: *Coronation March*. Walton: *Orb and Sceptre*. Elgar: *Pomp and Circumstance Marches No. 1 and No. 4*. London Symphony Orchestra, Sir Malcolm Sargent, cond.

Bloch: *Schelomo: A Voice in the Wilderness*. Zara Nelsova, cello; London Philharmonic Orchestra, Ernest Ansermet, cond.

Brahms: *Piano Concerto No. 2*. Wilhelm Backhaus, piano; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Carl Schuricht, cond.

Debussy: *Jeux; Six Epigraphes antiques*. Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet, cond.

Rachmaninoff: *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*. Dohnanyi: *Variations on a Nursery Song*. Julius Katchen, piano; London Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult, cond.

LONDON
RECORDS

Bloch: *Schelomo: A Voice in the Wilderness*. Janos Starker, cello; Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin Mehta, cond.

Britten: *The Poet's Echo*. Tchaikovsky: *Six Songs*. Galina Vishnev-

skaya, soprano; Mstislav Rostropovich, piano.

Britten: *The Prodigal Son*. Peter Pears (t), Robert Tear (t), John Shirley-Quirk (b), Bryan Drake (bs); English Opera Group, Benjamin Britten, cond.

Delius: *Piano Concerto*. Debussy: *Fantaisie for Piano and Orchestra*. Jean-Rodolphe Kars, piano; London Symphony Orchestra, Alexander Gibson, cond.

Donizetti: *Anna Bolena*. Elena Suliotis (s), Marilyn Horne (ms), John Alexander (t), Nicolai Ghiaurov (bs); Vienna Opera Orchestra, Silvio Varviso, cond.

Grieg: *Piano Sonata, Op. 7; Nocturne, Op. 54, No. 4*. Mendelssohn: *Variations Serieuses; Capriccio, Op. 33, No. 1*. Alicia de Larrocha, piano.

Handel: *Messiah*. Joan Sutherland (s), Huguette Tourangeau (ms), Werner Krenn (t), Tom Krause (b); Ambrosian Singers; English Chamber Orchestra, Richard Bonyng, cond.

Mahler: *Symphonies No. 5 and No. 6*. Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Georg Solti, cond.

Meyerbeer: *Les Huguenots*. Joan Sutherland (s), Martina Arroyo (s), Huguette Tourangeau (ms), Anastasios Vrenios (t), Domenic Cossa (b), Gabriel Bacquier (b), Nicolai Guiselev (bs); New Philharmonia Orchestra, Richard Bonyng, cond.

Mozart: *Die Zauberflöte*. Pilar Lorenagar (s), Christine Deutekom (s), Stuart Burrows (t), Hermann Prey (b), Martti Talvela (bs); Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Georg Solti, cond.

Schubert: *Arpeggione Sonata*. Bridge: *Cello Sonata*. Mstislav Rostropovich, cello; Benjamin Britten, piano.

Strauss R.: *Symphonia domestica*. Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin Mehta, cond.

Joan Sutherland: *French Opera Arias*. Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Richard Bonyng, cond.

phase **4** stereo

Beethoven: *Symphony No. 5*. Schubert: *Symphony No. 8*. London Philharmonic Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski, cond.

Bizet: *Carmen (excerpts)*. Marilyn Horne (ms), Michele Molese (t); Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Henry Lewis, cond.

Greig: *Peer Gynt Suite; Lyric Suite*. London Symphony Orchestra, Stanley Black, cond.

Strauss, R.: *Also sprach Zarathustra*. Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Henry Lewis, cond.

Tchaikovsky: *Piano Concerto No. 1*. Ivan Davis, piano; Royal Philhar-

monic Orchestra, Henry Lewis, cond.



Beethoven: *Violin Concerto*. Leonid Kogan, violin; USSR Symphony Orchestra, Yevgeny Svetlanov, cond. Haydn: *Trumpet Concerto*. Hummel: *Trumpet Concerto*. Biber: *Sonata à 6*. Timofey Dokschitser, trumpet; Moscow Chamber Orchestra, Rudolf Barshai, cond.

Kalinnikov: *Symphony No. 2*. USSR Symphony Orchestra, Yevgeny Svetlanov, cond.

Mahler: *Symphony No. 1*. Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, Kiril Kondrashin, cond.

Prokofiev: *Cantata for the 20th Anniversary of the October Revolution*. Shostakovich: *The Sun Shines Over Our Motherland*. RSFSR Russian Chorus; Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, Kiril Kondrashin, cond.

Schubert: *Piano Sonata, D. 850; Impromptus, D. 899*. Aleksei Nasedkin, piano.

Shostakovich: *Symphony No. 14*. Moscow Chamber Orchestra, Rudolf Barshai, cond.

Tchaikovsky: *Eugene Onegin*. Galina Vishnevskaya (s), Vladimir Atlantov (t), Yuri Mazurok (b); Bolshoi Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Mstislav Rostropovich, cond.



Menotti: *The Old Maid and the Thief*. Judith Blegen (s), John Reardon (b); Orchestra of Teatro Verdi di Trieste, Jorge Mester, cond.

Scriabin: *Piano Music, Vol. 2*. Hilde Somer, piano.



Busnois: *Chansons*. Nonesuch Consort, Joshua Rifkin, cond.

Carter: *String Quartets No. 1 and No. 2*. Composers String Quartet.

Joplin: *Piano Rags*. Joshua Rifkin, piano.

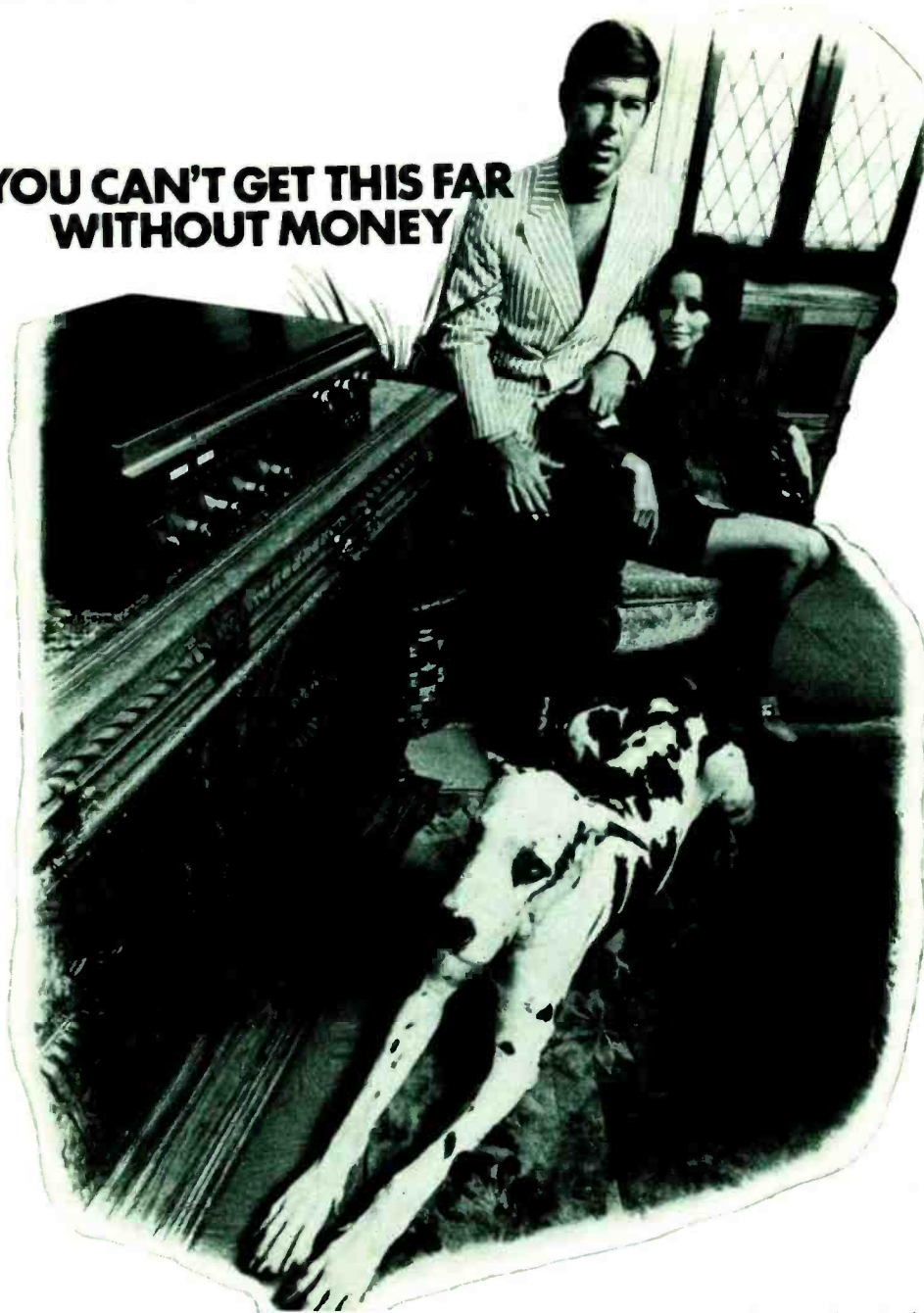
Music for the Balinese Shadow Play. *In the Shadow of the Mountain*. Bulgarian folk music; songs and dances of Pirin-Macedonia.

The Magnetic Field of Earth. Computer read-outs realized by Charles Dodge.

The Persian Santur. Nasser Rastegar-Nejad, santur.

Continued on page 70

**YOU CAN'T GET THIS FAR
WITHOUT MONEY**



Some people are only satisfied with one thing. The very best their money can buy.

They're the people we build a \$600 stereo FM receiver for.

Sherwood's SEL-200. Quite possibly the finest receiver of its kind on the market today, according to the great reviews we're getting.

The SEL-200 does everything first class. It offers 60+60 watts RMS at 8 ohms. It boasts the industry's lowest FM distortion—0.15%. Our exclusive hush control gives the quietest interstation muting available.

Then on the face of things, there are separate main, remote and mono speaker switches. Meters to gauge zero-center tuning and signal strength. Front panel tape

monitor and record-out jacks. And a full complement of well designed pushbuttons, selector switches and rear panel outputs.

On top of it all is a beautifully hand rubbed walnut cabinet (available, optional). And a 3 year warranty that covers parts and labor.

If all that doesn't sell you, take a good look at your own receiver. And then see our SEL-200. Just \$599.00.

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SHERWOOD SOUNDS EXPENSIVE

CIRCLE 46 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



too hot to handle

I have been thinking of buying the AR amplifier, but one thing bothers me: the lack of a headphone jack. Is there any way I can hook headphones into it?—Bella Hodge, Decatur, Ga.

Yes, by using one of the many headphone adapter boxes that are on the market. Most of them are designed for attachment to the output terminals of an amplifier and most have a headphone/loudspeaker switch. Other typical features are separate level controls for each channel in the headphone circuit and multiple output jacks so that more than one headset can be used at a time. The simplest device of all is a stereo headphone jack attached to a short length of cable that you can wire right into the amplifier. Both types are made by Koss but there are many other brands to choose from as well. And the Koss ESP-7 and ESP-9 electrostatic headsets come equipped with adapter/energizers that attach to speaker outputs.

I've just bought "The Band" (Capitol STAO 132) and find that Side 2 can't be played on my Dual 1009 with a Shure Super-Track cartridge unless I increase tracking beyond 1 gram. There is a visible warp running from the edge to the center of the record, and the cartridge bounces unpredictably each time the stylus reaches the warp. I bought a second copy, but it had exactly the same warp! Does this sort of flaw occur on every copy in a production run, or on one copy only? And don't the extremely thin pressings we get these days contribute to a much higher warpage rate than used to be the case? At any rate, what can I do about it?—William W. Quick, Columbia, Mo.

You are one of the numerous readers who have written us in recent months in the same vein, though these letters don't agree on the record brands that present the most problems. According to the record manufacturers with whom we have discussed the matter, basic groove parameters remain the same whether the record is thick or thin—though within those parameters there's considerable room for juggling maxima of such factors as lateral modulation, vertical modulation, pitch (the spacing of the groove), and so on. Most modern records, such as RCA's "Graveyard," have a practical advantage over

their thicker forebears in that the grooved surface is recessed, while the label area and the outer edge are all that touch the turntable—or other records in a stack on a changer—and the playing surface is thus protected from direct wear. Since thinner records have less intrinsic strength to withstand bending if improperly stored, however, they can be deformed easily and—through a process known as "cold flow"—retain a permanent deformation. The prime answer, then, is correct storage: vertically and firmly (but not tightly) packed so that there is no tendency for the record to bend, and at room temperature. If a record is warped when you buy it, presumably it was improperly stored somewhere along the distribution chain—and probably in the presence of excessive heat, which hastens deformation. Here's one solution that might cure disc warps: place the record in its inner paper wrapper (not the main outer cover) on a flat surface and leave it there for a day or two. Cold flow should return it to playing condition. You can hasten the process by putting a very flat, rigid object larger than the record on top of it. Or you can cut the time to an hour or two by raising the temperature to around 110 to 120 degrees F. But the use of any heat is to be considered an emergency measure. If several pressings of the same record bear identical warps (something that's most likely to happen with 45s because of their thin sleeves and lack of an edge-bead) don't blame the pressing plant. Probably they've been stored improperly by the distributor.

From what I read it sounds as though cassette recorders today can do a pretty fair job and I'm considering purchasing an AC/DC portable model like the Sony 124CS or Concord F400 to use with my component system. But all the ifs, ands, and buts I read about this class of equipment confuse me. What is the limiting factor in frequency range of a cassette machine: the speed, the tape itself, or both?—George Burrows, Madang, New Guinea.

The reason you read so many qualifiers in any discussion of cassettes is because transport speed, the tape's oxide coating, the recorder's bias current, its head-gap design, and its equalization all form a complex of factors that inter-

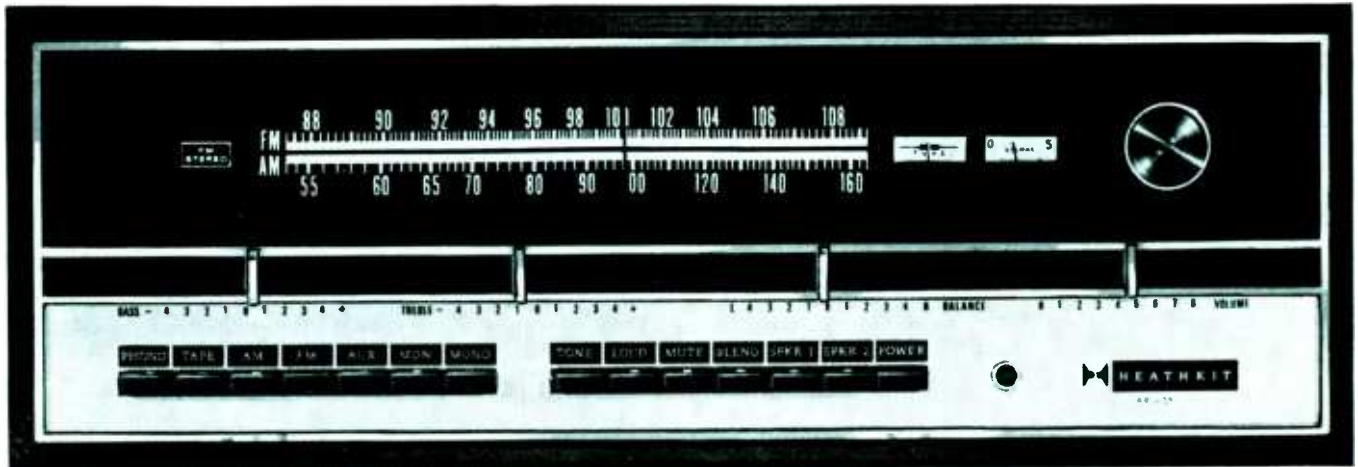
act. Change one and you influence the others. Considerable work has been done on head design to achieve current frequency specs. Tape producers (TDK, for instance) have introduced special formulations for cassette use. And one company (Concord) has introduced a cassette recorder with adjustable bias so that it can be tailored to the tape in use. But there still is so much latitude for unexpected results as you switch from tape brand to tape brand with a given recorder or from recorder to recorder with a given tape brand that any rule-of-thumb approach to the subject is unwarranted in our opinion—even without considering the potential advantages (and complexities) of such proposals as Dolbyizing and chromium-dioxide tape.

In your June issue Robin Lanier, whom you identify as a former Consumers Union "audio specialist," claims that in his own "listening tests" omnidirectional speakers help—not hinder—the stereo image. In CU's May issue their tests indicate rather convincingly that omnidirectionality, at least in the Bose speakers, does tend to damage stereo's directional properties. And I have heard from other sources that Bose-reproduced soloists tend to sound larger than life. Who's right; and is this sort of "scientific" disagreement the reason Mr. Lanier no longer is at CU?—Harold Bettmarch, Kansas City, Mo.

Mr. Lanier, who more specifically was an assistant editor of *Consumer Reports* and worked on technical evaluations provided by CU's various engineering divisions, left CU for reasons that have nothing to do with omnidirectional speakers. Mr. Lanier is now in business as an audio specialist. Anyway, Lanier is right and you are confused. The design aim of the Bose 901 is to achieve a high ratio of reflected sound to direct sound in the listening room. As is true of any type of speaker system, the Bose pair can be installed in a manner that will exaggerate stereo channel separation; our report on the unit (August 1968) said so and further explained how the 901s should be installed to control separation. The matter is covered in Bose's own literature as well. Regardless of relative channel separation, however, we doubt the validity of reports that solo instruments or voices grow unrealistically large on the 901s or that instrument localization in the stereo perspective is compromised. As long as the sound contains some direct-radiated energy, that energy will reach your ears first, thereby triggering the "precedence effect" by which we localize sounds. Since our extensive listening tests with the 901 system produced no problems of ten-foot-wide violins, wall-to-wall pianos, or wandering soloists, we conclude that these effects must be the result of improper positioning of the speakers.

**“How well does the Heathkit AR-29 perform?
Very well indeed!”...“No other receiver
in its price class can compare with it!”**

Julian Hirsch, Stereo Review magazine



Here's Why...

Here's what Mr. Hirsch says about Sensitivity: "Its FM tuner had an IHF sensitivity of 1.75 microvolts, placing it among the finest in respect to sensitivity."

About FM Frequency Response: "Stereo FM frequency response was extremely flat, ± 0.25 dB from 30 Hz to 15,000 Hz."

About Power Output: "We found the audio amplifiers to be considerably more powerful than their rated 35 watts (rms) per channel. With both channels driven at 1000 Hz into 8-ohm loads, we measured about 50 watts (rms) per channel just below the clipping level."

And this is what he writes about Distortion: "Harmonic distortion was under 0.1 per cent from 0.15 to 50 watts, and under 0.03 per cent over most of that range. IM distortion was about 0.1 per cent at any level up to 50 watts. At its rated output of 35 watts per channel, or at any lower power, the distortion of the AR-29 did not exceed 0.15 per cent between 20 and 20,000 Hz. The distortion was typically 0.05 per cent over most of the audio range, at any power level."

About Input Characteristics: "... the AR-29 can handle any modern cartridge without risk of overload, and provide low distortion and an excellent signal-to-noise ratio."

About Hum & Noise: "Hum and noise were extremely low: -90 dB at the high-level auxiliary input and -71 dB on phono, both referenced to a 10-watt output level."

About Assembly: "... the AR-29 construction made a positive impression." "... assembly has been markedly simplified."

Says Mr. Hirsch about overall performance: "The test data speaks for itself." "... no other receiver in its price class can compare with it."

Additional Features That Make the AR-29 The World's Finest Medium Power Receiver

- All solid-state circuitry with 65 transistors, 42 diodes and 4 Integrated Circuits
- 7-60,000 Hz frequency response
- Transformerless, direct-coupled outputs
- Greater than 70 dB selectivity
- Factory assembled, aligned FET FM tuner
- Mute Control attenuates between-station FM noise
- Blend Control attenuates on-station Stereo FM noise
- Linear Motion controls for Volume, Balance, Bass & Treble
- Individually adjustable input level controls for source switching without volume changes
- Switches for 2 separate stereo speaker systems
- Center speaker capability
- Exact station selection with two tuning meters
- Stereo indicator
- Stereo headphone jack
- Swivel AM rod antenna
- 300 & 75 ohm FM antenna inputs
- Massive, electronically regulated power supply
- Modular plug-in circuit board construction

Kit AR-29, (less cabinet), 33 lbs.....\$285.00*
Assembled AE-19, oiled pecan cabinet, 10 lbs.....\$19.95*



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CIRCLE 25 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

GO SEE WHAT THE BOYS IN THE BACK ROOM HAVE GOT

Last month in this column we mentioned the Consumer Electronics Show, the industry's big annual trade event, and all the goodies that appear to be waiting behind closed doors for unveiling there at the end of June. Well, at this writing in mid-June we're already bursting with news that has come our way through advance announcements. Some of that news has already altered—or at least supplemented—the picture we presented in "Tape Recording at Twenty-Five" last month. Other items throw more light on the directions that quadriphonic sound seems to be taking.

■ Fisher Radio has announced the first four-channel receiver: the AM/FM Model 701 with Autoscan FM tuning and 40 watts of output power (continuous) in each of the four channels. The FM multiplex circuit board in the 701 is designed to be replaced by a four-channel sorter-outer (obviating an outboard adapter) whenever a system of four-channel broadcast from a single station clears FCC hurdles. Note that we say "sorter-outer" and not "decoder" since the latter word is associated with the Scheiber system of compressing four channels into two in any medium—FM, tape, or disc. The Scheiber decoder—or any comparable system—can be used with the 701 too, but only via an outboard accessory. Speaker-switching can distribute quadriphonic sound to two different rooms or stereo sound to four. In addition, it's possible to derive four-channel sound from regular stereo program sources by switching to a special selector position that feeds the rear channels from the front-channel signals via spring-type time-delay circuitry.

■ Harman-Kardon is readying a quadriphonic synthesizer to turn mono program sources into stereo, and stereo—either derived or true stereo—into four-channel sound. The mono-to-stereo process involves special filtering techniques that, says H-K, open up the sound better than most systems used in commercial "electronic re-channeling." The stereo-to-quadriphony involves a combination of induced phase-shift and spring time-delay in differentiating rear signals from those that feed the front speakers. The initial unit is expected to include the necessary switching and derivation circuitry plus two 25-watt Citation power amps (to power rear-channel speakers) and to sell for \$299.95.

■ The 3-M Company has announced a quadriphonic Wollensak cassette deck—the first complete four-channel playback system for the cassette format we've heard of. This Quad-Stereo model uses the sort of four-gap

cassette head we mentioned in our July tape article, but reverses the two rear channels with respect to our diagram of configurations. If four-discrete-channel cassettes are to come (and none have been announced by the processing companies yet), they probably will follow the Wollensak layout, which in turn reflects the recommendations of a committee of the Electronic Industries Association proposing standards for four-channel formats. The deck is not expected to appear on the market until there is general agreement on format.

■ Rumor says that this fall at least one manufacturer will be offering blank cassettes using chromium-dioxide tape. A major company is said to be buying Crolyn tape from Du Pont for the purpose, and one or more of those licensed by Du Pont to produce their own chromium-dioxide formulations may perhaps follow suit. Some hardware manufacturers—notably Advent and Harman-Kardon—are expected to include chromium-dioxide/iron-oxide switches on cassette recorders.

■ Rumor—a very busy fellow these days—also says that Dolbyized (or "stretched") prerecorded cassettes are just around the corner, so that there will be something to play on the new Dolby cassette recorders from Advent, Fisher, Harman-Kardon, and perhaps other manufacturers. Ampex Stereo Tapes is expected to be one of the cassette-stretchers. At least one producer is said to be considering early discontinuation of regular cassettes on the grounds that the stretched versions will sound at least as good on most existing equipment. Presumably the real sound buff would fall into one of three categories in this regard: he would not yet have a cassette recorder, considering pre-Dolby cassette sonically substandard, and would now buy one of the Dolbyized units; he would give his older cassette deck to the kids and buy one of the new ones; or he would add the separate Advent Dolby unit to his present cassette deck.

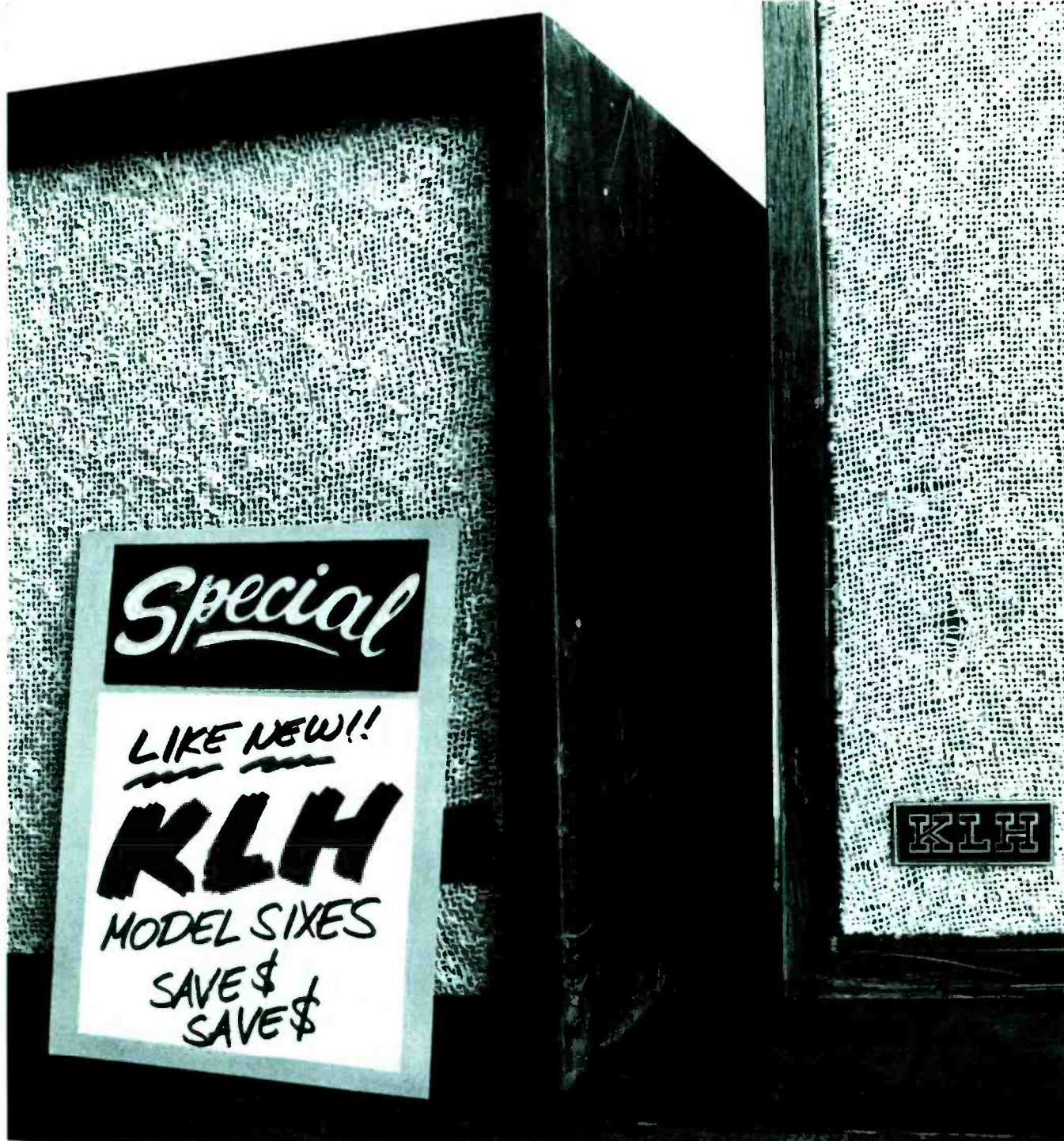
■ Advent has demonstrated prototypes of various configurations of its Scheiber decoder. Based on latest estimates, Advent sees the separate accessory decoder as costing somewhere between \$120 and \$150. Over-all costs could be reduced, Advent says, by integrating the decoder with a receiver or—for an add-on quadriphonization package to convert present stereo systems—with a dual-channel amplifier and pair of speakers.

■ Boman Astrosonics has announced what appears to be the first eight-track unit specifically for automotive use that will *record* as well as reproduce the cartridges. Though the BM-2900 is equipped with two mike inputs, most recording in the car presumably would use the built-in stereo FM tuner as the program source.

THE WAY THE BALL BOUNCES

After our special loudspeaker issue appeared last June we received a letter from Wilber Enterprises of San Diego enclosing some information about the Satellite

Continued on page 34



Buy them.

The suggested retail price of a new pair of KLH Sixes is \$268.

And we'd like to sell you a pair.

But if you can find a used pair at a savings, we won't try to talk you out of it.

Because except for a few scratches and dents, a used Six is every bit as good as one that's just come off the assembly line.

In fact, if you compared a 1958 Six (or any Six) with a 1970

model, there'd be no audible difference.

Because we've never changed the Six.

Why change something that was 20 years ahead of its time in 1958?

Especially since the Six sells as well today, if not better, than the day we first introduced it.

It has become the yardstick by which every KLH speaker is meas-

ured both for absolute performance and value to the listener.

It's our standard, and it should be yours.

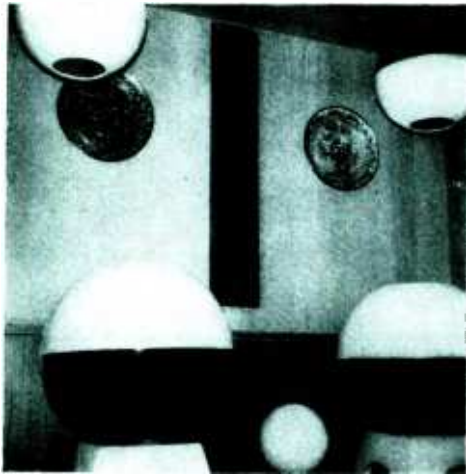
Used or new.

For additional information on the Model Six, write to KLH Research and Development Corporation, 30 Cross St., Cambridge, Mass. 02139, Dept. HF-9.



KLH RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
*A trademark of KLH Research and Development Corporation

CIRCLE 31 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



spherical speakers it offers. They come in four sizes: the six-inch Table Piece Setting complete with Moon Spoon and Satellite Saucers; the twelve-inch Mobile-homer (the space-saving advantages of ceiling mounts are expounded in Wilber's description); the eighteen-inch Americana and Zodiac series (the latter available in twelve styles, one for each astrological sign) for

"the tract home"; and the twenty-five-inch Custom-Gourmet series for the "confirmed perfectionist group seeking the ultimate."

CIRCLE 154 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

CARUSO AND THE CRITICAL COMPUTER

Using computer techniques comparable to those by which NASA's snapshots of the moon and Mars have been "enhanced," Dr. Thomas G. Stockham, Jr. of the University of Utah has been reconstructing the original sound of Caruso recordings. In the days of the acoustical horn, recordings suffered various kinds of nonlinearities—as we would call them today—that made the useful mid-range peaky and rough, and all but wiped out response at the extremes of the frequency range. As a result, the original discs have a dull, bodiless, constricted sound, and individual notes that fall at the recording system's resonant frequencies sound annoyingly obtrusive—often to the point of overloading and "blasting."

Dr. Stockham's technique, in effect, analyzes the distribution of energy across the spectrum and equalizes the sound to level out the response. He says that similar techniques can be used to differentiate between sound energy and noise with the ultimate goal of eliminating surface noise much as "snow" can be eliminated from picture transmissions through space.

equipment in the news



Harman-Kardon Dolbyizes a cassette deck

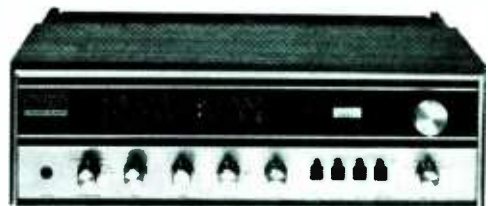
The newest cassette deck from Harman-Kardon, the CAD5, contains Dolby circuitry to boost low-level signals in the high-frequency band during recording and return them to normal levels during playback. The technique, which has been shown to suppress the tape hiss inherent in non-Dolbyized cassettes and increase the clarity of high-frequency sound, is said by H-K to extend the unit's response to beyond 12,000 Hz. An unusual feature of the CAD5 is an overload light that supplements the dual VU meters as an optimum record-level indicator. Price is expected to be \$229.95.

CIRCLE 146 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

First of a new line from Fisher

The Fisher 202, a stereo FM/AM receiver, is the first of the Futura series, planned as a moderate-priced all-receiver group. The 202 is rated at 25 watts per channel continuous power into 8-ohm loads and sells for \$250. Among its features are FM muting, connections for two stereo pairs of speakers, headphone jack, and two auxiliary inputs (plus tape-monitor connections).

CIRCLE 147 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



New from Sony: sit-upon sound

Is it a keg? Is it a tom-tom? Obviously it's neither: it's a strikingly styled omnidirectional speaker system that doubles as a stool or hassock. Six full-range drivers in the Sony SS-9500 are spaced around its periphery to spread the sound in all directions from the acoustic suspension design. Sony says that the shape is more than just styling: its curving contour makes it more rigid than flat panels, suppressing enclosure resonances. Frequency response is listed as 18 to 21,000 Hz and impedance at 6 ohms or higher at all frequencies. The price is \$149.50 in either oiled walnut or ash finishes.

CIRCLE 148 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Continued on page 36

If you can find an AM/FM stereo receiver with these specifications and features for \$199⁹⁵ —



The Nocturne 330

Power Output:	90 watts, ± 1 db. 70 watts, IHF, @ 4 ohms.
Frequency Response:	$\pm 1\frac{1}{2}$ db 7-50KHZ @ 1 watt.
Hum and Noise:	90 db.
Square Wave Rise Time:	3.5 microseconds.
Stability:	Absolutely stable with all types of speakers
Usable FM Sensitivity:	Better than 2.7 Microvolts, IHF.
Total Harmonic Distortion:	0.5%
Spurious Response Rejection:	75 db.
Image Rejection:	Better than 45 db



Illuminated call outs indicate function that is operating.

Tape Monitor Switch for instant comparison of recorded material and original program.

Headphone receptacle permits personal listening.

Extended frequency response beyond the normal hearing range gives extra realism to the sounds you can hear. Nocturne sound is cleaner, more transparent, more sharply defined.

D'Arsonval movement tuning meter shows when you have tuned to strongest and clearest signal on AM and FM.

Stereo in two rooms, separately or at once. Simple front panel switching eliminates the complexity and expense of external switching devices.

Separate power ON/OFF switch permits you to turn receiver on and off without upsetting other controls.

Contour for low-volume listening. Contour can be switched in or out, at your discretion.

harman kardon

A subsidiary of Jervis Corporation

buy it!

CIRCLE 24 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

EQUIPMENT IN THE NEWS

Continued from page 34

Marantz cites outstanding specs for preamp

In announcing the Model 33 stereo preamp/control unit, Marantz says that hand-picked transistors contribute toward such claims as these: THD and IM distortion both better than 0.02% over the audio range for 3-V output; frequency response linear within 1 dB from 5 Hz to 100 kHz and within 0.5 dB from 20 Hz to 20 kHz; a 100-dB S/N ratio on the phono input. Among its more unusual features are a center-channel output with its own level control, a separate headphone level control, six AC outlets, and front-panel jacks for both input and output of an external tape recorder. The Model 33 costs \$395; a walnut cabinet, \$32.50; rack-mount kit, \$50.

CIRCLE 151 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Moderate-priced tape deck from Uher

The Variocord 263 bears a family resemblance to recent top-of-the-line models from Uher and is to a certain extent a simplified version of the 10,000 (Uher's most elaborate). Like the latter, the 263 has a plug-in head assembly that allows the user to switch at will from the standard quarter-track heads to half-track. Among the simplifications is the single VU meter showing an integrated reading derived from both channels in the stereo mode. An unusual feature is the wiring for an optional automatic level-control device. The 263 costs \$299, operates at the usual three speeds, and is equipped with monitor amplifiers rated at 6 watts continuous power per channel.

CIRCLE 152 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Pioneer changer: two speeds, two motors

The newest Pioneer turntable is the automatic-changer Model PL-A25. It features a hysteresis motor and belt drive for the turntable (running at either 33 or 45) and a separate motor to drive the changer mechanism. The purchase price (\$129.95) includes oiled walnut base, smoked acrylic dust cover, and an induced-magnet cartridge with a diamond stylus. The cartridge is rated for 3.5 mV output at 1 kHz with a separation of better than 20 dB at 1 kHz; it tracks at 2 to 3 grams and comes mounted in a plug-in shell.

CIRCLE 149 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Advent's speaker now in utility model

The Advent Loudspeaker now is available in a utility cabinet that is finished in walnut vinyl instead of the natural wood of the standard model and lacks the trim of the original. The cabinet structure is made of 3/4-inch wood, and all internal components are identical to the standard model. The suggested retail price of the utility model is \$102.

CIRCLE 153 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



There are 202 parts in a Garrard automatic turntable.

We make all but a piddling few.

Today's automatic turntable is a beastly sophisticated device.

The Garrard SL95B, below, has 202 different parts.

That is, unless we tally the "parts" that go into such final assembly parts as the motor and pickup arm. In which case the total is more like 700.

A few of these parts we buy. Mostly springs, clips and bits of trim.

But the parts that make a Garrard perform, or not perform, we make ourselves.

To buy or not to buy

At our Swindon works, in England, a sign reads "If we can't buy surpassing quality and absolute accuracy, we make it ourselves."

E. W. Mortimer, Director of Engineering Staff and a Garrard employee since 1919, says "That sign has been there as long as I can remember.

"But considering the precision of today's component turntables, and the tolerances we must work to, the attitude it represents is more critical now than it was even ten years ago."

Our Synchro-Lab motor is a perfect example.

To limit friction (and rumble) to the irreducible minimum, we super-finish each rotor shaft to *one micro-inch*.

The bearings are machined to a

tolerance of plus or minus one ten-thousandth of an inch. Motor pulleys must meet the same standard.

"When you make them yourself," observes Mr. Mortimer "you can be that finicky. That, actually, is what sets us apart."

Mass produced, by hand

Despite its place as the world's largest producer of component automatic turntables, Garrard stubbornly eschews mass production techniques.

Every Garrard is still made by hand.

Each person who assembles a part tests that finished assembly.

And before each turntable is packed in its carton, 26 final tests are performed.

Thus, we're assured that the precision achieved in its parts is not lost in its whole.

Swindon, sweet Swindon

In fairness to other makers, we confess to a special advantage.

Our home.

At last census the total population of Swindon, England was 97,234. Garrard employs a rather large share of them, and has for fifty years.

"Not everyone has been here from the year one as I have," smiles Mortimer "but we have 256 employees with us over 25 years. Many are second and third generation.

"It's hardly your average labor force. Everyone feels a part of it."

The sum of our parts

Today's SL95B is the most highly perfected automatic turntable you can buy, regardless of price.

Its revolutionary two-stage synchronous motor produces unvarying speed despite extreme variations in line voltage.

Its new counterweight adjustment screw lets you balance the tone arm mass to within a hundredth of a gram.

Its patented sliding weight anti-skating control is permanently accurate.

And its exclusive two-point record support provides unerringly gentle record handling.

You can enjoy the SL95B, the sum of all our parts, for \$129.50.

Or other Garrard component models, the sum of fewer parts, for as little as \$44.50.

Your dealer can help you decide.



Garrard[™]
British Industries Co.

180 WATTS *of* SANSUI POWER



SANSUI 5000A

180 (1HF) watts of Sansui power are built into the 5000A—an AM/FM stereo receiver that has been created for the connoisseur who demands the ultimate in tonal magnificence and clarity of sound. The Sansui 5000A *features a new FM Pack with linear tuning for greater selectivity and pin-point station selection . . .* All-Silicon AM tuner for maximum stability . . . inputs for three separate sets of speaker systems . . . records up to 4 tape decks simultaneously . . . just a few of the features which will make the Sansui 5000A the nucleus of your most comprehensive hi-fi music system for years to come. At your Sansui Audio Dealer. \$399.95

Sansui® SANSUI ELECTRONICS CORP.

Woodside, New York, 11377 • Los Angeles, California 90007

SANSUI ELECTRIC CO., LTD., Tokyo, Japan • Frankfurt a.M., West Germany • Electronic Distributors (Canada), British Columbia

CIRCLE 44 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Four Japanese music critics rated the AR-3a best of fifty domestic and imported speakers.

① ブラインドテスト・採点表

	オー ス ト ラ ケ	室 内 楽	ピ ア ノ	声 楽	ム ー ド	ヴ ォ ー カ ル	ジ ャ ズ	コ ス ト バ ー	フ ォ マ ン ス	総 合 評 価
岡	◎	◎	◎	◎	◎	◎	◎	8	◎	
菅野	◎	◎	◎	◎	◎	◎	◎	6	◎	
瀬川	◎	◎	◎	◎	◎	◎	◎	7	◎	
山中	◎	◎	◎	◎	◎	◎	◎	8	◎	

Categories of music are across the top; reviewers at left. Two circles denote *excellent*, three circles *superior*. Overall ratings are at extreme right, following rating of value per unit cost, in which 5 is the break-even point.

In Japan, *Stereo Sound* magazine recently conducted a listening comparison test of fifty Japanese, American, British and German speaker systems. Four distinguished Japanese music critics brought their own records to test, and each spent four full days of 8 to 14 hours comparing speakers. The location of each speaker system was changed daily behind the acoustically transparent curtain which also concealed the size and identity of the tested units. The critics were asked to rate each speaker system as *superior*, *excellent*, *good* or *unacceptable* for each of seven kinds of music and were encouraged to use the volume and tone controls of the amplifier. A JBL SA600 amplifier and Shure and Ortofon cartridges were used.

The AR-3a received the highest score of all the systems tested. It was also the only speaker system rated *excellent* or *superior* in every music category by every critic. This is of particular interest since the critics were carefully prevented from communicating with each other during the test period.

Complete technical specifications of the AR-3a are available free on request.



Acoustic Research, Inc.

24 Thorndike Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02141

CIRCLE 1 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

new equipment reports

THE CONSUMER'S GUIDE
TO HIGH FIDELITY EQUIPMENT



FLEXIBILITY AND PERFORMANCE IN RECEIVER KIT

THE EQUIPMENT: Heathkit AR-29, a stereo FM/AM receiver available only in kit form. Dimensions: front panel, 16 11/16 by 5 1/16 inches; depth behind panel, 13 1/2 inches (add 3 1/4 inches if AM antenna is fully extended). Price: \$285. Manufacturer: Heath Co., Benton Harbor, Mich. 49022.

COMMENT: The Heathkit AR-29 is essentially similar to the company's high-ranking Model 15 receiver [see HF, December 1967], but just a shade below it in performance and \$65 less in cost. As such, it still stands as one of the best all-in-one sets available and, at its price, an attractive buy for the intrepid do-it-yourselfer.

Styling is distinctly contemporary and features the blackout-type tuning dial that "disappears" when the set is turned off, and glows in green when power is turned on. To the left of the tuning dial is a stereo FM indicator. To the right of the dial are two meters, one for center-of-channel, the other showing signal strength. Both meters work on FM; the latter works alone on AM. To their right is the tuning knob. Under the tuning controls and traversing the entire width of the front panel is a slot divided into four sections; each section contains a sliding control for bass, treble, channel balance, and volume. The bass and treble sliders each control both channels simultaneously; they may be canceled by pressing a push button marked "tone" in a bank of switches below. The volume control may be converted to a loudness contour control by pressing another button in that bank. The full complement of push buttons, below the sliders, includes input program selectors (phono, tape, AM, FM, aux, tape monitor), a mono-mode switch, the tone-control cancel and loudness buttons, a muting switch, a blend switch, speaker-system selectors, and the power off/on switch. The blend switch may be used to reduce high-frequency noise (and possibly some channel separation) on noisy stereo FM signals. The speaker selectors choose either, both, or none of the two pairs of stereo speaker systems that may

be connected to the rear of the set. A stereo headphone jack next to the speaker switches is live at all times.

A connection at the rear, used in conjunction with an adjacent switch, offers the option of using a single speaker system (for center fill, for instance) instead of the second pair of stereo speakers. Also at the rear are the signal input jacks corresponding to the front-panel selectors, plus a stereo pair for feeding signals from the AR-29 into a tape recorder. A built-on AM rod antenna may be swiveled for best reception; there's also a connection for an external or long-wire AM antenna. FM antenna terminals permit connecting either 300-ohm or 75-ohm lead-in; the grounding screw for the latter also serves as the terminal for a grounding lead from a turntable. The set's line cord, a fuse holder, and two AC outlets (one switched) complete the rear picture. The AR-29, incidentally, has provisions for being used on 105-125- or 210-250-volt 50/60-Hz AC power. In addition to the operational controls just discussed there are a few hidden adjustments that the kit-builder uses when initially installing the set, such as individual level controls for the inputs on each channel.

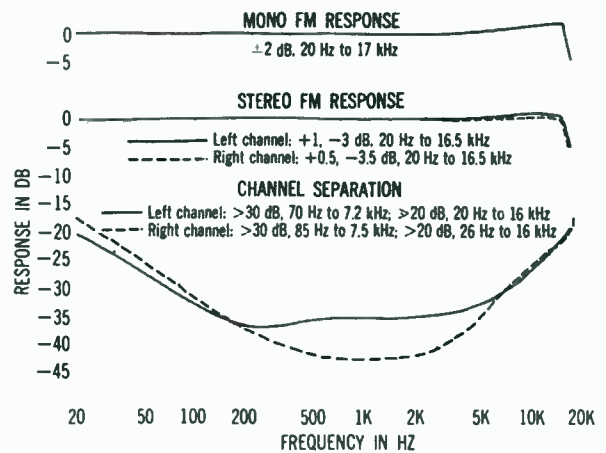
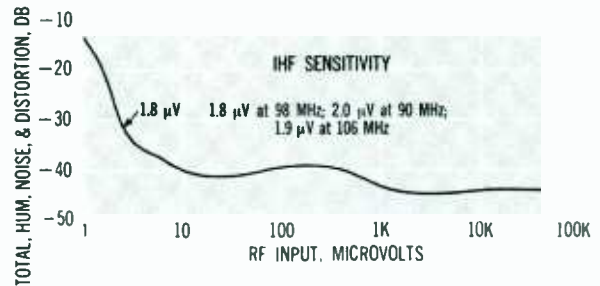
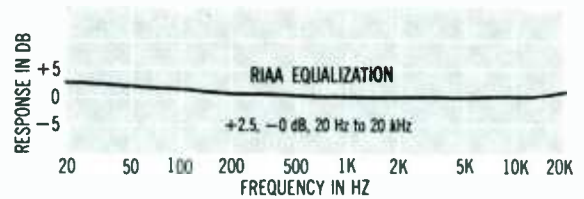
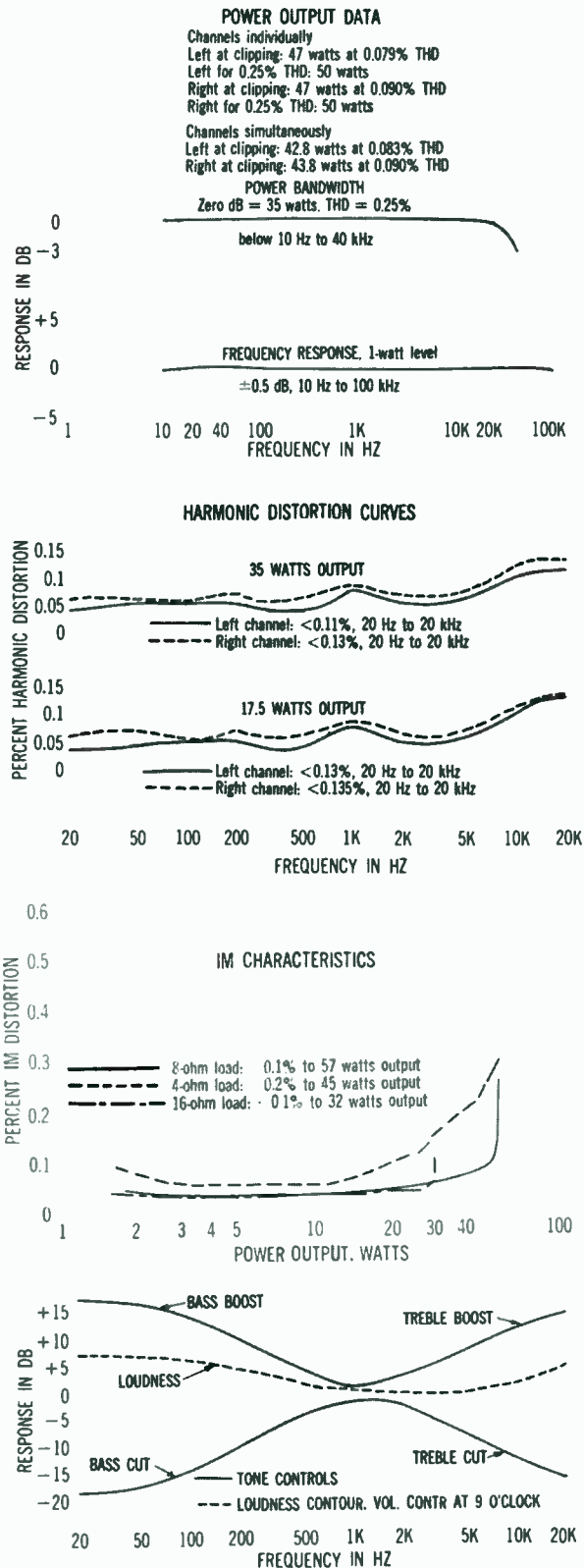
On every count, the completed AR-29 either met or exceeded its published performance specifications—and did so with only the normal adjustments spelled out for the kit-builder. No professional alignment was needed, for instance, to achieve the rated IHF sensitivity of 1.8 microvolts and no "touch-up" was required to get the set to produce more than its rated amplifier power at less than its rated distortion. In our cable-FM test, the AR-29 logged 48 stations of which 35 were considered suitable for long-term listening or off-the-air taping. This mark compares favorably with receivers costing more than the AR-29. Similarly, the 45-dB quieting mark for about 1,000 microvolts input signal is fairly representative of costlier sets. Distortion on FM—both mono and stereo—was very low; capture ratio, excellent; signal-to-noise,

REPORT POLICY

Equipment reports are based on laboratory measurements and controlled listening tests. Unless otherwise noted, test data and measurements are obtained by CBS Laboratories, Stamford, Connecticut, a division of Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc., one of the nation's leading research organizations. The choice of equipment to be tested rests with the editors of HIGH FIDELITY. Manufacturers are not permitted to read reports in advance of publication, and no report, or portion thereof, may be reproduced for any purpose or in any form without written permission of the publisher. All reports should be construed as applying to the specific samples tested; neither HIGH FIDELITY nor CBS Laboratories assumes responsibility for product performance or quality.

excellent. Frequency response was well within the norm for FM signals on both mono and stereo. In the latter mode both audio channels were extremely well balanced and amply separated for the full stereo effect. AM sound was a cut or two above average.

Complementing the tuner section is the AR-29's amplifier section: a medium-high-powered unit capable of furnishing more than 40 watts per channel at al-



Heathkit AR-29

Additional Data

Tuner Section			
Capture ratio	1.4 dB		
S/N ratio	66 dB		
iM distortion	0.4%		
THD	mono	l ch	r ch
40 Hz	0.54%	0.60%	0.58%
400 Hz	0.58%	0.44%	0.44%
1 kHz	0.50%	0.35%	0.33%
19-kHz pilot	-65.5 dB		
38-kHz subcarrier	-68 dB		
Amplifier Section			
Damping factor	72		
Input characteristics (for 35 watts output)	Sensitivity	S/N	
phono	2.5 mV	55 dB	
tape monitor	182 mV	76.5 dB	
tape amp	185 mV	77 dB	
aux	185 mV	77 dB	



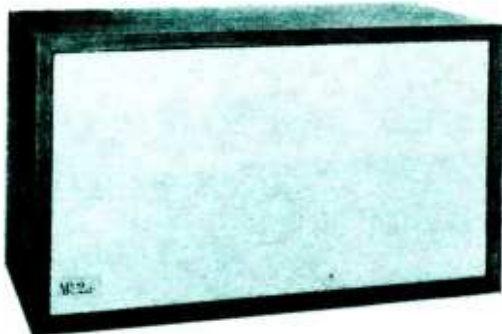
Square-wave response

most nonmeasurable distortion. For its rated output of 35 watts (sine-wave power) per channel, the set produced less than 0.1 per cent distortion across the normal 20- to 20,000-Hz audio band. Frequency response, virtually a ruler-straight line from 10 Hz to 100,000 Hz, was the best we have ever measured in a receiver. All controls worked smoothly and in an exemplary manner; input sensitivities and corresponding signal-to-noise ratios all were excellent. Square-wave response was, for a receiver, outstanding: the 50-Hz signal showed only a slight tilt and flat tops indicating rock-solid and clean bass; the 10-kHz signal was near-perfect, indicating superior transient ability and clean, smooth, extended top-end response.

All told, the AR-29—especially at its price—shapes

up as a top-performing stereo all-in-one. Our kit-builder on this project reports that the AR-29 took 40 hours to finish, of which about 3 were spent identifying and sorting parts. He didn't enjoy that chore very much but he found the wiring and assembling fascinating, despite some extra effort in tracking down a few parts that were not consistently labeled. More important, he was very impressed with the set's ability to meet or exceed all of its performance specifications after he'd finished. Supplied in a metal case, the AR-29 may be placed on any convenient surface as is, or flush-mounted in a panel cutout, or dressed up in an optional wooden case—oiled pecan, Model AE-19, factory-assembled, \$19.95.

CIRCLE 144 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



AR-2ax SPEAKER UPGRADED

THE EQUIPMENT: AR-2ax, full-range speaker system in enclosure. Dimensions: 24 by 13½ by 11½ inches. Price: \$109 to \$128, depending on finish. Manufacturer: Acoustic Research, Inc., 24 Thorndike St., Cambridge, Mass. 02141.

COMMENT: Without the fanfare of a change in model designation, Acoustic Research has made improvements in the popular, middle-priced AR-2ax speaker system. It is a three-way reproducer containing a 10-inch acoustic suspension woofer, a 3½-inch midrange unit, and a ¾-inch hemispherical dome tweeter. The woofer, which is the same as that used in the costlier AR-5, uses a new material for its cone, a new suspension, and a newly designed voice coil. The tweeter also is the same as that used in the AR-5 and, except for impedance, in the AR-3a. The midrange driver and crossovers remain the same as in older AR-2ax units—that is, those prior to serial number 125,000.

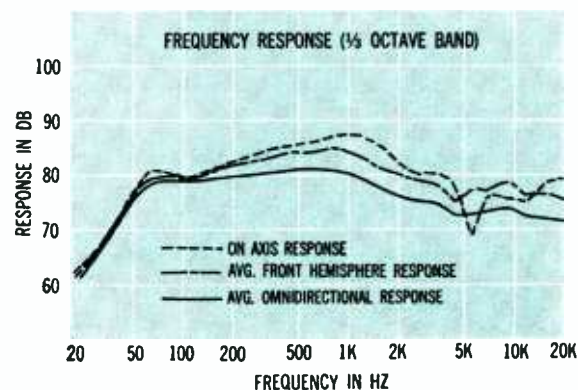
The sealed enclosure may be positioned horizontally or vertically on a shelf, or on an optional pedestal (\$7.50 from AR). At the rear are controls for adjusting midrange and tweeter drivers, plus the input terminals marked for polarity. Rated impedance is 8 ohms. Efficiency, on the low side, requires a driving amplifier capable of supplying at least 20 watts continuous power per channel.

It doesn't take long, listening to the AR-2ax, to realize that here is an excellent new speaker system with all the clarity and open sound of its costlier namesakes, and very nearly all the clean bass power of the AR-5 or AR-3a too. It offers a smooth, well-balanced, uncolored, and amply dispersed response over the full musical range. The rear controls help adjust the over-all quality to suit different room acoustics; in a medium-size room with average absorption properties we found that with the midrange control set to a shade below maximum and the tweeter a shade or three below maximum we obtained an excellent balance that permitted the music to blossom out and fill the room at any listening level. The stereo image remained firmly focused.

Lab tests clock the response of the AR-2ax as within

5 dB (plus or minus) from 40 to 20,000 Hz—a very good mark for any speaker system and especially notable for one in its price range. The bass continues to roll off below 40 Hz—but smoothly. It is down another 5 dB at 30 Hz, but still there. At 80 Hz, where the response begins its general roll-off, harmonic distortion remains under 1 per cent for output levels up to 100 dB, which probably is as loud as, or louder than, anything you'd ever listen to at home. The mid-bass and lower midrange are remarkably level and smooth, varying by no more than a few dB up to about 2,000 Hz. The response slopes gently from here upward but is still "in the ball park" as far out as 20,000 Hz. Some directional effects may be noted in the upper treble; they seem, in sum, about average for a speaker system of this type and are not, in any event, objectionable when listening in the normally off-axis position one would assume for a stereo pair. Between this characteristic and the upper-end response slope, we'd advise—when installing a pair of these speakers—to start with the rear controls turned to maximum, and then back down very judiciously on each to get a pleasing balance in your room. Backing down all the way will attenuate the response too much, in our opinion.

A ruggedly built unit, the AR-2ax can take up to



Output Level dB	Frequency			
	80 Hz		300 Hz	
	% 2nd	% 3rd	% 2nd	% 3rd
70	0.6	0.8	0.9	0.48
75	0.5	0.67	0.9	0.56
80	0.45	0.7	0.88	0.66
85	0.45	0.65	0.88	0.61
90	0.62	0.75	0.82	0.88
95	0.65	0.7	0.62	0.82
100	0.9	0.82	0.42	0.92
105	1.2	0.67	Buzzing	

*Data on all tested speakers is taken until a level of 100 dB is reached, or distortion exceeds 10 per cent, or the speaker produces the spurious output known as buzzing.

200 watts of average pulse power before distorting; fed with that much power, it produces an output level at 1 meter of 111 dB. Pulse photo tests showed a trace of resonance at 300 Hz and a little ringing at 3,000 Hz—hardly worth mentioning.

The speaker's impedance rises slowly from 7 ohms at 20 Hz to 9 ohms at 100 Hz, rises again to above 16 ohms at 1 kHz, and then returns to 8 ohms at 5 kHz and never gets below 7 ohms above this frequency. It is thus well within the "safety" area for solid-state equipment.

The AR-2ax is, in sum, an eminently honest, musical reproducer. It is nosed out, in terms of ultimate performance, only by a small margin at the very low end by systems costing considerably more. Like the AR-5, however, it seems just right for a normal-size room and very right for any kind of music.

CIRCLE 142 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

A CITATION FROM (AND FOR) HARMAN-KARDON



THE EQUIPMENT: Citation XII, a stereo power amplifier available in kit form. Dimensions (in metal cage supplied): 12 5/16 by 12 5/8 by 5 7/16 inches. Price: in kit form, \$225; factory-wired, \$295. Manufacturer: Harman-Kardon, Inc., 55 Ames Court, Plainview, N.Y. 11803.

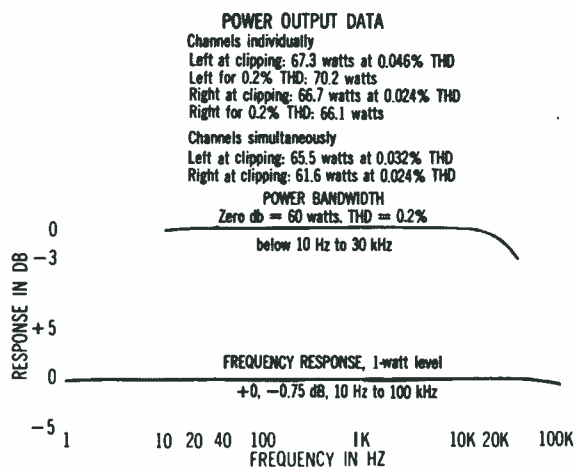
COMMENT: Harman-Kardon's Citation line, of which the first tubed models appeared about ten years ago, denoted excellence of performance and represented H-K's bid for a perfectionist-oriented market with separate components that were offered either in kit or factory-built form. The reintroduction of the Citation has a similar aim, but in solid-state rather than tubed equipment. The first of the Citation series is a power or basic amplifier; it will be followed with a preamp-control unit, a tuner, and speaker systems, all under active development as we go to press.

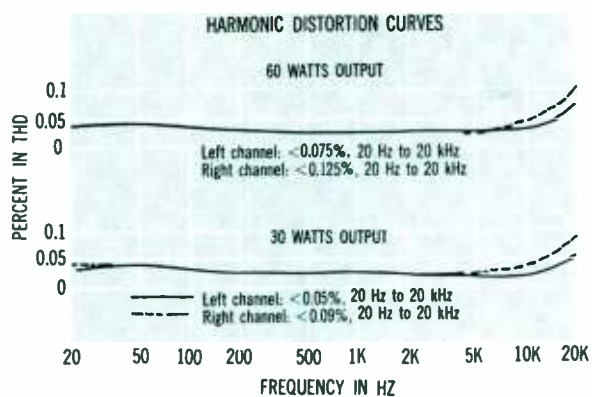
The Citation XII we tested was built from the kit, following the instructions furnished. No snags were encountered, and the unit performed as shown in the accompanying CBS Labs data—which is to say, as good as or better than H-K claims. It thus stands as the best kit amplifier we've yet tested (including the old Citation II), and certainly among the best of any type. With both channels driven simultaneously, it furnished better than 60 very clean watts per channel. Distortion—both THD and IM—was so low that to show any amounts (which, by the way, would be just about nonmeasurable on any but the most sophisticated of test gear) we had to expand the vertical gradations on our graphs. From a practical standpoint, the Model XII can be regarded as a virtually distortionless device that calls to mind the "straight wire with gain" phrase that was originally applied to the old Citation amplifiers.

Power bandwidth, for a very low 0.2% THD, extends below and above the normal audio band; frequency

response is literally a ruler-straight line from 10 Hz to 40 kHz, and is down by only 0.75 dB at 100 kHz. The 1.28 millivolt input sensitivity matches the signal output typically supplied by today's preamps, and the better-than-100 dB signal-to-noise ratio indicates that the Citation XII is a very quiet amplifier introducing no noise of its own into the reproduction. Square-wave response, at both low and high frequencies, is exemplary: near-perfect and signifying very wide-band, stable response with full bass and excellent transient characteristics. The amplifier, with its built-in "fail-safe" circuit with automatic reset, can drive any type or efficiency of speaker system. It actually employs two separate power supplies to ensure full-rated power for each stereo amplification channel.

The high undistorted power reserves enable the Citation XII to drive speakers to louder acceptable levels than you may have been accustomed to. But



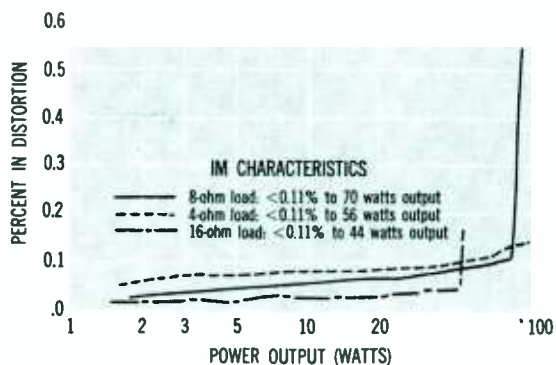


Square-wave response

Citation XII

Additional Data

Damping factor	40
Input sensitivity	1.2 mV
S/N ratio	102.5 dB



they also lend the amplifier an ability to handle normal listening levels in a "coasting" state of operation, imparting to the music a sense of utter ease, clarity, transparency, and openness—which in sum makes you feel as if you are listening through the amplifier back to the program source. Subtle nuances of definition, of attack, of inner musical fabric are more clearly presented—and suddenly you want to stay up all night rediscovering all the old recordings that you thought you had heard enough of.

It is true, of course, that the major portion of today's stereo market belongs to integrated units, especially receivers. We have a feeling that as word of the new Model XII gets around, and as more and more dedicated listeners have a chance to hear it, we may see somewhat of a shift in the audio state of affairs.

CIRCLE 141 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

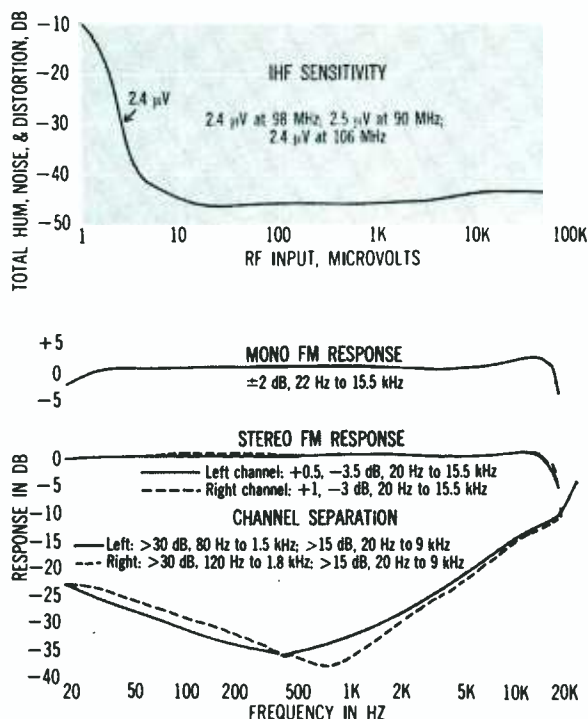
SONY'S SEPARATE STEREO TUNER



THE EQUIPMENT: Sony ST-5100, a stereo FM/AM basic tuner. Dimensions: 16 9/16 by 5 5/16 by 11 1/4 inches. With rear AM antenna extended add 2 inches to depth. Price: \$219.50. Manufacturer: Sony Corporation of America, 47-47 Van Dam St., Long Island City, N.Y. 11101.

COMMENT: Sony's ST-5100 is aimed at stereo-system owners who still don't own a tuner or who are ready to replace an old one for an up-to-date model that offers mono and stereo FM plus AM. Known as a basic tuner, this unit is designed for connecting into the "tuner" or "aux" inputs on any standard stereo amplifier. The ST-5100 actually has two sets of stereo outputs that enable you to connect it to drive two stereo systems at once or to feed it into an amplifier and a tape recorder independently. If your system ambitions are less spectacular you can use either set of outputs. One set of stereo output jacks is controlled by a pair of level adjustments that let you match the signal from the tuner to the signals from your other program sources for a given setting of the volume control on your system amplifier.

The Sony tuner also features front-panel controls for power off/on, interstation muting, "hi blend," AFC, mono/stereo mode, and the FM/AM selector. The blend switch reduces noise, and some channel separation, on weaker stereo signals. The station tuning dial, centered on the front panel, is controlled by an unusually large knob, which may have been a designer's quirk but does make for very smooth tuning. At its left are two meters: one shows signal strength, the other center-of-channel tuning. Both meters work on FM; the former meter works alone on AM. The signal-strength meter, by the way, has a small red area that corresponds almost exactly to the indicated signal strength required to override the muting action on FM. That is, with the muting switch pressed in you won't hear any signal that isn't strong enough to kick the needle beyond the red area on the scale. At the right of the tuning knob is a stereo indicator. The rear of the set contains a built-on AM bar antenna that may be swiveled down for optimum reception. There's also a terminal for connecting an external (long-wire) AM antenna. For FM, you can connect either 300-ohm or 75-ohm lead-



Sony ST-5100

Additional Data

Capture ratio	2 dB		
S/N ratio	63 dB		
IM distortion	0.9%		
THD	mono	l ch	r ch
40 Hz	0.37%	1.8%	1.4%
400 Hz	0.48%	0.92%	1.1%
1 kHz	0.44%	0.45%	0.62%
19-kHz pilot	-61 dB		
38-kHz subcarrier	-68 dB		

in. In addition to the output jacks and level controls mentioned, the rear contains the AC power cord.

Tests run at CBS Labs indicate the ST-5100 offers the kind of competent performance you'd expect from the tuner section of a very good receiver. While not as great as what you'd get from Sony's higher-priced tuner (the \$450 ST-5000F, HF, September 1968), it is nevertheless eminently satisfactory. IHF sensitivity came in a shade better than specified, and for 1,000 microvolts input the set offers 47 dB of quieting. This figure decreases by only 2 dB to 45 dB at the highest signal levels likely to be received. Other characteristics, detailed in the accompanying charts and graphs, all add up to clean reception in just about any locale except possibly the deepest of fringe areas. In our cable-FM test, the ST-5100 logged 42 stations of which 28 were deemed suitable for serious listening or off-the-air taping. This is an average mark for a tuner in the price class. AM performance was also about average, with the best response evident from strong local stations. As we've noted on all Sony products, the unit is very sturdily built of high-grade parts and with ample attention to chassis layout. It should provide long-term reliable performance.

The ST-5100, in its integral metal case, may be installed as is, or fitted into a custom-panel cutout.

CIRCLE 145 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

A HANDY SPLICER FOR CASSETTE TAPES



THE EQUIPMENT: Recoton 83TC, a splicer for cassette tapes. Price: \$4.50. Manufacturer: Recoton Corp., 46-23 Crane St., Long Island City, N.Y. 11101.

COMMENT: Often it's by the tail wagging that you know the dog. Here we have a new accessory device that suggests the arrival of the main event, a splicer made expressly for handling cassette tape. Like the cassette itself, it is a scaled-down version of a larger device originally brought out years ago for handling open-reel (1/4-inch) tape.

A small platform holds a grooved guide into which the cassette tape is placed. You then lower two spring-loaded arms that hold the tape securely in position over a splicing block. The cut-and-trim arm then is lowered with its slide-control moved to "cut" position. Press firmly and lift. The tape is now cut at a 45-degree angle, with both ends neatly abutting. Blow away any loose tape snips. Apply a small piece of splicing tape. Move the arm control to "trim" position and press down again. Lift up, and the splice is made and trimmed. Lift the holding arms, remove the tape from the block, and respool back into the cassette. The whole operation is quick, simple, and virtually foolproof.

The Recoton splicer is well suited for a good deal of editing, for splicing in sections of tape to make up one's own program, and of course for repairing broken tapes. With the continuing increase of cassette machines, we can see that an efficient little gadget like the Recoton splicer will enjoy a fair measure of popularity.

CIRCLE 143 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

REPORTS IN PROGRESS

Acoustic Research Receiver
 Ampex 1467 Tape Recorder
 Pioneer TX-900 Stereo Tuner

Sony's got a brand new angle.

Sony offers a dramatic new design concept in tape decks with the introduction of the new Model 366. Not only is its classic walnut base slanted, but it permits convertible mounting in either a vertical or horizontal position. And either end up, the Sony 366 is packed with features that make sound sound like sound *should* sound.

Three Heads. Allows monitoring of either input source or the actual recording being made on tape.

Mic/Line Mixing. Both microphone and line inputs may be mixed and recorded at the same time. Separate level controls regulate levels of microphone and line inputs.

No Pressure Pads. The incorporation of a servocontrolled back-tension regulator and hyperbolic recording head eliminates the need for pressure pads. The result—reduced modulation noise, headwear, wow, and flutter.

Automatic Total-Mechanism Shut-Off. When the tape runs out, the Automatic Total-Mechanism Shut-Off not only turns off the motor but disengages the transport mechanism completely. This is a unique feature on single motor recorders, adding longevity to transport components.

More Sony Excellence. Scrape flutter filter eliminates tape modulation distortion. Vibration-Free Motor. Three Speeds. Record Interlock to prevent accidental tape erasure. Ultra High Frequency Bias. Pause Control with Lock. Four Digit Tape Counter. Retractable Pinch Roller for easy tape threading.

Tape Equalization Selector Switch. Two position tape equalization switch allows the use of both standard and low-noise tapes without requiring internal adjustments of the recorder.

Sound-on-Sound. A professional feature that permits special-effects recording without an external mixer. You can even harmonize with yourself!

Sony Model 366 Three-Head Stereocassette Tape Deck. Priced under \$249.50. For your free copy of our latest tape recorder catalog, please write to Mr. Phillips, Sony/Superscope, Inc., 8140 Vineland Avenue, Sun Valley, California 91352.

Once and for all, let's clear up all the technical confusion about loudspeakers.

**Model for model, dollar for dollar,
Fisher speaker systems have a wider frequency range,
lower distortion, cleaner transients, better dispersion
and less overall coloration than any other brand,
regardless of design features or engineering claims.**

The number of different loudspeaker designs offered to the prospective buyer today is nothing short of staggering.

Even the sophisticated audiophile who knows his amplifiers and cartridges stands bewildered amidst the permutations and combinations of driver designs, speaker configurations, crossovers and enclosure types.

Our advice is: stop, don't panic, listen. Because the only justification for a new and different engineering feature is the sound.

Fisher takes a completely pragmatic approach to speaker design. We say yes to anything that makes a speaker sound better. We say no to anything that only makes a speaker read better. As a result, when you buy a Fisher speaker, you're buying sound, not some intangible hi-fi mystique.

Now let's examine the engineering features that are meaningful in terms of actual sound and relate them to the specific performance characteristics of Fisher speaker systems.

Big, acoustic-suspension woofers.



All Fisher speaker systems use a larger-than-you'd-expect acoustic-suspension woofer. An exclusive free-piston design, coupled with an extremely compliant butyl rubber or butyl-impregnated

surround and a specially treated cone, allows a fundamental bass response down to 30 Hz without doubling or distortion.

As an additional measure of their quality, the free-air resonance of Fisher woofers ranges from 38 Hz to a remarkable 10 Hz.

The voice coil is specially designed to handle plenty of power. Loud-music lovers appreciate that feature.

Our mid-range is better by definition.

Virtually all the definition or 'presence' of musical instruments occurs in the middle frequencies. Fisher speakers have better definition because, very simply, we use the best mid-range speakers. In addition to utilizing specially

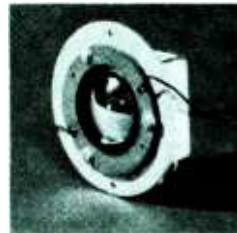
developed magnets (see further below), all of our mid-range speakers incorporate a butyl-impregnated half-roll surround for extra high compliance (and therefore extreme clarity and smoothness of reproduction).

To prevent interaction with the woofer, each mid-range driver is sealed off from the rest of the system in an airtight enclosure. This, naturally, costs more to do. But we've found that it's essential to the characteristic natural sound Fisher speakers are identified with.

Now, about transient response.

There are many people who believe that the ability of a cone to respond quickly—or transient response—is the single most important determinant of a speaker's sound. That's why we're pleased to tell you that by using newly developed super Alnico magnets, with high flux density, Fisher woofers and mid-range speakers achieve faster, more positive control of their cones than any other speakers being manufactured today. Fisher transient response is absolutely unsurpassed in the industry.

The reasoning behind our tweeters is also clear.



Specially designed, sealed-back tweeters provide excellent frequency response to beyond the limits of human hearing. By using a low-mass voice coil, highs are natural sounding as well as unusually clear and transparent. For wide dispersion, Fisher tweeters incorporate a soft dome diaphragm. Their impregnated cotton or formed-mylar construction eliminates parasitic high-frequency resonances and the resultant coloration of sound.

Even the crossover networks and the enclosures are special.

In a Fisher speaker system nothing is taken for granted. We know that unless each speaker does exactly the job it was designed to do, no more, no less, the overall sound will suffer somewhat. So we've designed band-pass filters which,

when used in place of conventional roll-off networks, assure that each speaker will handle only the frequencies within its optimum range.

Furthermore, special quality capacitive and inductive elements are used to achieve lowest losses and smooth transition at each of the crossover points. The sharp-cutoff 6 to 12 dB per octave networks prevent interactions at the crossover points.

All the time and effort we take getting the internal components of our speaker systems just right would be fruitless if we put it all into an ordinary speaker cabinet.

That's why we've designed a better cabinet. It's constructed entirely of non-resonant compressed flake board rather than vibrant plywood, to eliminate the boxy speaker sound so common in even the most expensive plywood-cabineted speaker systems. Our speaker systems are tightly sealed and completely filled with AcoustiGlas® to provide a high degree of damping.

These design innovations and this preoccupation with quality holds true for the least expensive as well as the most expensive Fisher speaker system.

The solutions to two wife problems.

Fisher has thought of everything. For the wife who insists on thinking of speakers as coffee or lamp tables, and placing them accordingly, we offer omnidirectional speakers that can be placed anywhere in a room and still sound good. The omnis come in 2-way or 3-way models (see below).

And for the wife who insists that her speakers match her formal living room in authenticity of furniture design, Fisher offers the XP-16 speakers, in three dazzlingly beautiful furniture styles. This is (as your eyes and ears will confirm) the ultimate speaker system. The best sound, in the most beautiful cabinet.

We urge you to compare the Fisher speaker in any price category with anything else you can buy at that price. Compare them on paper if you wish, but most important, go to an audio store and listen.



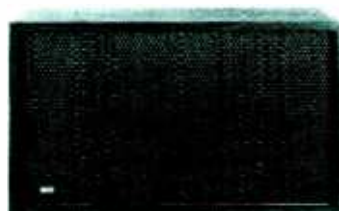
CIRCLE 30 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



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How to Shop for

by Daniel Lawrence

WELL OVER HALF of all stereo systems assembled today use a stereo receiver as the central electronic element of the installation. Though a single physical entity, a receiver may still be thought of as three separate types of components: a tuner (for detecting radio signals), a preamplifier (offering equalization, some amplification, and an assortment of control and switching features), and a power amplifier (for converting minute electrical signals into the power needed to drive a loudspeaker). Reduced to a single format, however, it is only natural in our free economy that the physical similarity between this packaging approach and that of the most inferior type of table radio has not escaped the attention of marginal-quality mass producers who often succeed in dressing up a product to look like a high fidelity component receiver but fail to build in high fidelity performance. In other words there are receivers and receivers, and the prospective buyer had better know the difference if he aspires to the real thing.

Each element in a receiver may be evaluated in terms of two broad categories: performance specifications, and the controls and extra features. Performance specifications are simply numbers denoting performance, and numbers are easily compared with other numbers once you know what they mean. Desirability of certain control features, on the other hand, is a more subjective matter often depending on your tastes and knob-twirling inclinations. Beyond knowing what the controls do, you will have to evaluate them against their cost, and make no mistake about it—they all add to cost.

to produce an ever-increasing audio output as RF signal input is increased. Instead, an FM tuner's audio output attains a given level for a relatively small RF input and does not increase in amplitude or strength beyond that. This point is known as the tuner's saturation level or its maximum quieting level. In many tuners, in fact, increasing the RF input beyond that level results in a slight reduction of usable audio output; we then speak of having overloaded the tuner.

The clue to how FM sensitivity works is found in the phrase "quieting level." As RF input is increased, the tuner's residual noise and distortion decreases. At some point it decreases enough to permit an intelligible signal to be heard. The point chosen by the IHF is a reduction of total hum, noise, and distortion by 30 dB; this reduction permits the "least usable" audio signal to emerge. The number of microvolts of RF signal needed by the tuner to produce that signal (at 30 dB of quieting) is the set's IHF sensitivity. All other things being equal, the lower this number, the more sensitive the tuner. Good FM tuners typically have an IHF sensitivity of 5 microvolts or less, with the hottest tuners boasting figures of 2 or less.

However, as the proviso "all other things being equal" suggests, there is more to sensitivity than the minimum RF signal required to produce a least usable audio signal. Actually, at minus 30 dB, the tuner's audio output has, by definition, 3 per cent distortion including hum and noise from the RF carrier and from the set's own circuitry, and has not yet achieved its full maximum quieting. We would therefore expect the audio signal to improve as the set is fed with more RF input—and indeed it does, up to the saturation point mentioned earlier. A general idea of this improvement may be had by studying the complete sensitivity curve (such a curve is presented as part of this magazine's test reports on FM equipment). The steeper this curve as it descends, and the lower on the dB scale it descends, the better the tuner. Actually, from a practical-use standpoint, it is as important to know how much quieting is achieved for an RF input of, say, 1,000 microvolts (which approximates normal FM signal strength in an average reception locale) as it is to know that at 5 microvolts or less the tuner is offering a rather minimal 30 dB of quieting.

A more specific understanding of the improvement in audio output as a result of the reduction in distortion and noise up to the inherent limits of the tuner can be had from two additional measure-



IHF Sensitivity

The initials stand for the Institute of High Fidelity, which in 1958 formalized the procedures for FM testing in its Standard No. IHFM-T-100. To understand FM sensitivity, it should be realized that an FM tuner—unlike an AM tuner—does not continue

Daniel Lawrence is the pseudonym of an audio engineer who has designed, tested, and written extensively about home entertainment products.

a Stereo Receiver

ments: ultimate signal-to-noise ratio (S/N), and total harmonic distortion (THD). Both of these tests are made with an RF input of 1,000 microvolts to assure that the tuner is being fed with all that it needs for optimum performance.

Signal-to-Noise Ratio

The S/N ratio, then, expresses the residual amount of hum and noise through the tuner when it is operating under ideal signal-input conditions, which means that the tuner has attained its maximum quieting level. The higher this number, the better. A figure of 60 dB for S/N is regarded as very good, though there are sets on the market that offer S/N ratios of 70 dB or higher.

Total Harmonic Distortion

By today's generally accepted criteria (which have been steadily pushed upward by the constantly improving quality of FM sets), a THD figure of 1 per cent is considered tolerable on mono FM. The lower this figure, the better. Some increase in distortion is virtually inevitable when switching to stereo FM, although in the better tuners this increase on either channel typically does not exceed twice the mono amount. A conscientiously rated FM tuner will include, as part of its technical description, the THD figures in mono operation and for each channel in stereo.

By relating all this data, rather than thinking only of the IHF sensitivity figure, you can get a good idea of a tuner's actual ability from a high-fidelity standpoint. That is to say, as tuner circuitry goes, it is entirely feasible to design a set that has a most impressive (i.e., very low) IHF sensitivity rating but does not provide much more quieting action or distortion reduction for higher signal-level inputs. Such a set may log a relatively high number of stations, but most of them will sound inferior to the same stations heard on another set that may have an apparently lower IHF sensitivity rating but a better S/N ratio and lower total distortion.

Drift

Although nothing is more annoying than having to get up from an easy chair every few minutes to retune a station that your set can't seem to "hold," drift is largely a problem of the vacuum-tube past; transistorized equipment is much less susceptible to

this. Many manufacturers have therefore stopped quoting drift figures altogether. Nevertheless, I would prefer to see the specification stated, however small it may be; and as a criterion I'd suggest that 30 kHz of drift after one minute of warm-up is acceptable and will usually not be audible. The lower this figure, the better.

Frequency Response

While tuners may have perfectly flat response from 20 to 20,000 Hz, broadcasting standards (set by the Federal Communications Commission) are limited to a range of 50 to 15,000 Hz. Since nothing beyond 15,000 Hz will be broadcast in any event, some manufacturers limit their statement of frequency response to the latter range. Others, perhaps intent upon showing that their product is actually capable of better response than is broadcast, will state frequency response in terms of the 20- to 20,000-Hz limits. More important in the statement of the frequency response is the amount of *departure* from flat response. If the rating is given as 50 to 15,000 Hz, you should expect a variation of no more than ± 2 dB; if the rating covers 20 to 20,000 Hz, look for ± 3 dB as the maximum deviation.

Stereo Separation

Most manufacturers list stereo FM channel separation at one audio frequency, usually 400 or 1,000 Hz. The figure, quoted in dB, represents the ability of the stereo FM circuitry to isolate the left and right channels, thereby preserving the stereo image. The higher the separation figure quoted, the better the design. A really thorough statement of the separation characteristics would include the frequency range over which a given number of dBs of separation apply. The greater the separation, and the wider the range it covers, the better. Stereo separation tends to decrease at higher frequencies and, to a lesser degree, at extremely low frequencies. Actually, stereo separation across the broad midband (say, from 200 Hz to 10 kHz) of not less than 20 dB is adequate for rendering a convincing stereo effect. Separation figures of 35 and 40 dB at mid-frequencies are not uncommon in the better sets.

Capture Ratio

The tuner's ability to select a station at a given frequency when a weaker station is transmitting on

the same frequency is known as its capture ratio. Expressed in dB, the lower the figure, the better the capture ratio. A rating of 3 dB is very good, although there are sets having capture ratios as low as 1 dB.

Selectivity

This characteristic refers to the set's ability to reject signals that are removed in frequency from the desired signal by 200 kHz (adjacent channel) or 400 kHz (alternate channel). Expressed in dB, this time the higher the number, the better the characteristic. An acceptable figure is 35 dB, although some of the newer crystal- and ceramic-filtered tuned-circuit designs go as high as 90 or 100 dB.

Spurious Response

The tuner should reject all manner of false signal responses at points on the tuning dial where they should not be. Included are various "image" responses, arising from discrete mathematical relationships between the set's own local oscillator frequency, the 10.7 MHz IF frequency and its harmonics, etc. Again, the "spec" is stated in dB, and the higher the better. Figures of 80, 90, and 100 dB are often attained.

IM (Intermodulation Distortion)

IM in a tuner is similar to IM in an amplifier: it represents the undesired audio frequencies produced by the "beating" of two or more desired frequencies contained in the program material. Measured as a percentage of the desired program, the lower the percentage (preferably under 1%), the better the design.

Hum

Hum is audible low-frequency interference directly related to the power-line frequency (60 Hz, or harmonics thereof). It often is due to inadequate power-supply filtering or poor layout of components on the chassis. The hum figure is stated in dB below a desired program level; 60 or more dB down is easily obtainable and many tuner circuits do much better.

AM Suppression

This term does not refer to picking up AM radio stations on the FM band, but rather to the ability of the tuner to reject man-made and natural electrical interference (lightning, ignition noise, arcing of nearby motor brushes, etc.) which are all AM (amplitude-modulated) in character. If FM is to

fulfill its promise of being a static-free medium, this characteristic, measured again in dB, should be as high as possible. Typical figures range from a low of 30 dB to a high of 65 dB or even better.

Meters, Muting, and Other Niceties

Because control features and added circuitry that contribute to the convenience of using a tuner are, as I said earlier, a matter of taste, they are best judged in actual use. The receiver of your choice may contain none, some, or all of them, depending upon your own judgment.

Of the two kinds of tuning meters used for FM, the "center-of-channel" type is, in my opinion, the more useful. You tune in the desired station by observing the meter pointer until it is exactly centered, indicating proper setting of station frequency. The other type of tuning indicator is a peak-reading meter: you tune to a station, observing the pointer for a highest reading. Usually, the stronger the incoming signal, the higher the reading—although a maximum signal may not always be the cleanest signal. The real use of a peak-reading meter is in providing relative indications of incoming signal strength from several stations; it thus can enable you to orient the antenna more correctly. Ideally, it would be nice to have both kinds of tuning meters, and many recently built tuners and receivers are so equipped.

Nearly all modern tuners feature some sort of stereo indicator along with "automatic switching" from mono to stereo reception of FM signals. The thing to listen for is the smoothness of switching. (Is it accompanied by plops, noise, and hesitation?) Note also whether there are any false stereo-indicator signals caused by noise or other interference.

Interstation muting (or "squell") is high fidelity's answer to noise pollution. The random noise heard when tuning between stations is raucous and unpleasant. To avoid it, circuits have been designed that suppress the tuner's output until an FM signal (of predetermined noise-free strength) is received. Unless the feature includes a means for adjusting the "turn-on" threshold (or at least a switch enabling the total defeat of the feature), muting may be a mixed blessing in that very weak stations (which for personal reasons you may want to listen to) may be totally blocked along with the noise.

The physical length of the tuning-dial calibration is often a consideration in some buyers' minds. They feel that the more expanded the scale from 88 MHz to 108 MHz, the easier it will be to pinpoint desired station frequencies. In fact, this is true only if a high level of calibration accuracy is maintained. For instance, if 98.5 MHz on the dial is really to be found at 98.8 MHz (on a poorly calibrated set), the error will "look" worse on an expanded dial scale than on one that is only four or five inches in length. In connection with tuning, by the way,

"flywheel" action, or the ability to give the tuning knob one good twist and have the pointer slide all the way from one end of the dial to the other, is a very nice feature to have but one that necessarily involves extra cost. It does not in any way increase accuracy of tuning or improve electrical performance of the unit.

Some of the more expensive tuner sections of receivers currently on the market feature such sophisticated additions as visual indicators (usually an oscilloscope cathode-ray tube) for detecting multipath interference. Multipath in FM (and more particularly stereo FM) is analogous to "ghosts" in TV, caused by reflected (and therefore time-delayed) reception of the radio frequencies transmitted by the station. In metropolitan areas (where tall buildings abound) this interference can be quite severe, causing audible distortion, sibilant speech and, in extreme cases, complete loss of stereo separation. The visual device can help you more accurately position the antenna for the least multipath interference. It is, however, a fairly costly embellishment.

Some receivers offer the option of remote tuning via an accessory that enables you to select stations from your easy chair. Nice, but extra cost too. Pre-selection of favorite stations by means of preset push buttons is another new feature of some receivers. On the other hand, AFC (automatic frequency control), once deemed an important feature for holding stations in tune, is seen less often on the new breed of receivers. Though few manufacturers used to admit it, most AFC circuits necessarily introduced some distortion. With today's solid-state circuitry so rock-stable, most manufacturers have seen fit to omit this sometimes troublesome circuit.



Assuming that an AM station is transmitting its signals with care, a well-designed AM tuner section can provide very listenable programs often not made available on FM stations in the same locale. A measure of this performance can be obtained from just a few important specifications.

Usable Sensitivity

The usable sensitivity of an AM tuner is expressed in microvolts, which represent the smallest RF signal required to produce an audio signal 20 dB greater than the background noise. The lower the figure, the more sensitive the AM circuit. For sets having built-in antennas the sensitivity is given in "microvolts per meter," and acceptable figures range from 300 down to about 150 microvolts per meter. For sets equipped with provision for external antennas the sensitivity may be stated in absolute microvolts, just as in FM. In the latter the absolute microvolt reading may be expected to be of the order of 30, 20, or even fewer microvolts for usable sensitivity.

Frequency Response

Rated frequency response of an AM receiver consists of stating the two end frequencies at which tuner output is attenuated by 3 dB. Thus, if a manufacturer states that the AM frequency response of his product extends from 60 Hz to 8,000 Hz, you can assume that the response is down 3 dB at these end frequencies. Obviously, the farther apart the two end frequencies, the better the AM frequency response. Some manufacturers will state the AM "bandwidth" which—divided in two—really means the same thing as frequency response. Thus, an AM set that has a bandwidth that is "down 3 dB" at 15 kHz will have a frequency response that is "down 3 dB" at 7.5 kHz.

Distortion

Total harmonic distortion has exactly the same meaning in AM as in FM. While, as a rule, expected figures are not quite as low as in FM, it is not unusual to find AM receivers with distortion figures below 1%—that is, within the high fidelity pale.

Lesser Characteristics

Several other specifications may be given for AM performance, though they seldom are. These include image and IF response, both quoted in dB. The higher the number, the better the set. Hum and noise are expressed in minus dB; the larger the number the better. Frequency drift is expressed in kHz, and the lower the number the better. Selectivity too has much the same meaning as it does in FM: the ability of the receiver to separate stations having frequencies which are close together. Expressed in dB, the higher the figure the better. Figures of 30 dB or more are common for this specification.



The two remaining sections of a stereo receiver which must be evaluated before purchase are the preamplifier (which involves all the control and switching functions other than those used for FM or AM tuning) and the power amplifier (which generates the power to drive loudspeakers). The IHF 1966 Standard on amplifiers (IHF-A-201) provides the basis for most of the amplifier tests and resulting performance data used for high fidelity products.

Note however that the input impedance of your speakers will have an influence on amplifier performance—notably its power output. Most speaker systems are rated at 8 ohms and amplifier power output normally is rated for 8-ohm loads. If you plan to use speakers with a different rating, it will pay you to check the amplifier specifications with that in mind.

Music Power Output

Power is described by manufacturers in several ways. Dynamic output, sometimes called music power, takes into account the fact that most amplifiers can produce greater amounts of power in very short "bursts" than they can continuously. The rationale is that music itself is made up of such bursts rather than sustained single frequencies. Techniques for making the measurement are described in the IHF Standard, but the important thing to remember is that the music power rating of an amplifier will nearly always be higher than its continuous power. How much higher for all units is impossible to say, since there is considerable option in the exact test conditions that may be used to derive music power, not to mention the variations in power-supply circuits in sets of different manufacture. So, when comparing power ratings of different receivers, remember to compare similar types of power rating. And avoid all "±1-dB" ratings, which by definition are inflated above useful values.

Remember too to relate the power comparisons to a referenced distortion. For example, one manufacturer may say that his receiver can produce 50 watts of power per channel at 0.2% distortion. A less critical manufacturer may state his power output as 60 watts per channel, but at a distortion of

1.0%. Maybe the latter amplifier also can produce 50 watts at only 0.2% distortion, but then you have no way of knowing unless you are presented with a complete graph-plot of power output versus distortion for both units. Furthermore, you also will want to know whether the power expressed (in either amplifier) represents one channel while the other was disabled, or one channel while both channels were driven simultaneously. Inasmuch as the latter situation is more truly representative of actual-use conditions during stereo playback, it is the more accurate of the two forms of measurement.

Continuous Power Output

As I have said, there is no fixed relationship between dynamic (music) power and continuous power for all amplifiers. Continuous power will be equal to, or lower than, the dynamic power, but never higher. The closer the continuous power is to the dynamic power, the better the design of the set's power supply. Similarly, the closer the power for one channel tested alone to the power of one channel when both are tested simultaneously, the better the set's power supply. In any event, a reference distortion figure is essential in making a meaningful comparison among different sets.

How much power you need in a stereo receiver is perhaps the most complex question of all and cannot be answered here. Suffice it to say that power needs are governed by such variable factors as room size and acoustical character, efficiency of the loudspeakers, personal listening tastes, type of music preferred, and a few more. [For a fuller discussion of power needs, see "Amplifier Power: How Much Is Enough," HF, November 1963, and "How We Judge Amplifiers, Part I: Power," HF, March 1968.]

Power Bandwidth

Since both power ratings just discussed mention power capability at mid-frequencies only, it is important to know what the unit's power capability is at high- and low-frequency extremes where demands for power output are often greater than at midband, and where an amplifier's ability to supply clean power relates to its ultimate stability. This ability is determined by the power-bandwidth rating, which is simply the frequency extremes at which the amplifier is capable of putting out one half its maximum power without exceeding its rated distortion. Actually, "one-half power," because of the logarithmic nature of our hearing, sounds just a bit less loud than full power, and is represented on the decibel scale by a decrease of only 3 dB. In a power-bandwidth rating, the wider the frequency range, or the lower the distortion used for reference, or the higher the power, the better.

Input Sensitivities

These specifications tell the user how much signal he must supply to the various inputs of the receiver to produce full output from its power-amplifier section. Unlike the other specs discussed, statements of input sensitivities do not denote better or worse performance. They simply describe the particular optimum operating conditions of a set and thus enable the user to purchase the most compatible associated equipment to use with it. For example, if a given receiver requires 4 millivolts of phono-cartridge signal to produce full output in the phono position of the selector switch, you would do well not to purchase a phono cartridge that produces only 2 millivolts of electrical signal. If you were to make such a blunder, a 50-watt-per-channel receiver would in effect be limited to 12.5 watts per channel when you are listening to phonograph records, for the voltage derived from the phono pickup would be half of that required by the phono input of the receiver, which results in a 6-dB reduction of output power, or $\frac{1}{4}$ the full power-output capability. A knowledge of the high-level input sensitivities (such as aux. tape, etc.), while not as critical, can help you to select the proper tape recorder or other sound sources to be used with your receiver.

Signal-to-Noise Ratio

This specification serves the same purpose as it does for tuner section evaluation, except that here we are concerned with hum and noise generated in the receiver's amplifier (and preamplifier) section. Again expressed in dB, the higher the number, the lower the hum and noise. S/N figures should be given for low-level (phono and tape-head) inputs and for high-level (aux, tape) inputs. Normally, the hum and noise spec relevant to the phono input will not be quite as good as that for the high-level inputs. A very good S/N figure for phono is 60 dB, while 70 or even 80 dB of hum and noise attenuation is not uncommon for high-level inputs.

Frequency Response

You may see amplifier frequency response figures extending far below and far above the nominal audio band of 20 to 20,000 Hz. Again, the departure from "flat" or uniform response is what counts, all other things being equal. Quoted at \pm so many dB, it should be as small as possible.

Maximum Input Signal

Just as it is possible to "underdrive" the amplifier (never attaining full output), it is also possible to

overload the early stages of an amplifier by feeding it too great a signal. In most units the volume control is located far along the circuit, where it has no real effect on the early stages—and these control stages can distort when overloaded. A statement of maximum input signal for a receiver helps again in the selection of additional program-source equipment such as phono cartridges, tape decks, and the like.

Stability

This characteristic refers to the amplifier's steadiness (i.e., its immunity from oscillation) under varying conditions of speaker and speaker-line loads. The best statement of stability is "stable under all conditions." Short of this, the manufacturer will state what unusual loads (such as capacitors or inductors) may be placed across the speaker terminals without causing self-oscillation or instability.

Output Impedance

This term denotes what speaker types will work best with the receiver. Today's solid-state receivers normally accept speakers having a nominal impedance of 16, 8, or 4 ohms. Most sets will characteristically produce their highest power into a 4-ohm load, but 4 ohms also happens to be the lower limit of speaker impedance which many solid-state amplifiers will tolerate safely. This particular point is usually explained in the set's instruction manual, which will state what multiple-speaker hookups are safe.

Damping Factor

The ratio of nominal output impedance to the amplifier's internal circuit impedance is known as the damping factor. It thus indicates the extent to which the amplifier behaves in terms of what engineers call a "constant voltage source." Translated, this means that a high damping factor lends "tightness" to the bass frequencies or, put conversely, reduces the "muddiness" often associated with poor-quality bass-tone reproduction. A damping factor of at least 10 is considered a prerequisite in a modern amplifier circuit and some circuits boast damping factors many times higher than that.

Safety Features

Early in the development of solid-state home-electronic equipment, it was realized that transistors, if properly used, could outlast vacuum tubes. However, expensive power transistors can be destroyed in less than a second should their circuit be subjected to "mishandling." In particular, shorting out the speaker

terminals while a signal is applied to a power amplifier can quickly cause enough high current to flow through its output transistors to ensure their total destruction. Lack of ventilation, or operating such amplifiers in ambient temperatures higher than those recommended will also destroy output transistors, though not as rapidly. Today's receivers are protected against such mishaps by fuses (often right in the speaker lines and invariably in the main AC power line), thermally activated circuit breakers, and current-limiting circuits of all kinds. Most manufacturers describe their particular form of circuit protection in their product brochures.

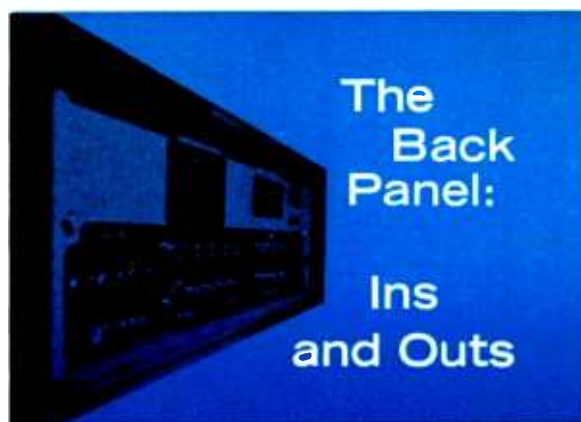


Most receivers today offer switching and connection facilities to permit operation of stereo speaker systems in two or more locations, singly or simultaneously. Also fairly common is a jack for connecting low-impedance stereo headphones. Many sets provide a "center-channel" (combined left and right) output that lets you feed a third loudspeaker directly or, in some sets, via a separate, monophonic amplifier. The choice of these features is a personal matter.

Similarly, the preamp features will be selected on a subjective basis. Audio purists may want nothing more than an off/on switch, a program-selector knob, a volume control, and a channel-balance control. They accept bass and treble tone controls as inevitable, but usually leave them in their "flat" position. Better yet, this breed of stereophile will look for the kind of tone controls that can be electrically defeated (i.e., effectively removed from the circuit) in their flat positions.

At the other extreme are the knob twirlers who will enjoy such additional control features as low- and high-frequency filters (for the elimination of turntable rumble and record scratch or other high-frequency noise, respectively), the loudness-contour compensation controls (which add varying amounts of bass and treble boost at low settings of the volume control to offset our hearing deficiencies at low listening levels), more complex mode switches (which

permit reversal of stereo channels, listening to either left or right channel through both loudspeaker systems), and so on. Some receivers include individual tone controls for each channel, the argument being that it is often desirable to adjust the tonal response of each channel separately to compensate for unusual one-sided room acoustics. Recently a few brands of receivers have appeared with multielement tone controls designed to tailor the response curve in smaller and more specific frequency segments than provided by conventional tone controls by way of compensating for imperfect room acoustics and/or inadequate speaker systems. Auditioning of these many extras, plus rigorous self-analysis (with respect to your own listening preferences and penchant for control flexibility) are the only criteria I know of for ascertaining whether or not you need any of these refinements.



You will need to consider the number of additional inputs you may some day require as you enlarge your home music system. Some listeners, for example, want both a record changer and a single-play turntable, or two of either type; accordingly, many receivers include two phono inputs. Similarly, many enthusiasts own two tape recorders, or an open-reel deck plus a cassette unit. Others may want to pipe TV sound through the system, or connect a short-wave receiver, and so on. Anticipate all your present and potential sound-interest needs and buy accordingly.

The tape-monitoring facility, almost universally included in today's receivers, is nothing more than a circuit-interrupt arrangement that feeds a signal from the amplifier into the tape recorder, and returns it to the amplifier. If the recorder has a separate playback head, you thus can monitor the recorded result over your speakers (or headphones). Normally, this circuit-interrupt point comes ahead of volume and tone controls, so that the recorded signal is "flat" when fed to the recorder. The playback signal, of course, may be varied by the receiver's volume and tone controls.

Another form of circuit interrupt has recently become quite popular with receiver manufacturers.

This circuit-break point occurs at the electrical end of the preamplifier circuitry, or just before the electrical input to the power amplifier. It allows the insertion of the many accessory devices currently available (reverberation units, separate multiple-tone-controllers, presence controls, and others). The cost of this new feature, by the way, is minimal indeed, requiring only four extra jacks and a simple slide switch, or a pair of jumpers, to interconnect the jacks when the feature is not in use.

The back panel of a receiver may have input-level controls to let you equalize the level of all your program sources. This feature eliminates the need to

readjust volume level when switching, say, from phono to FM—nice, but you'll have to decide if it's worth the extra cost.

The number of permutations and combinations of features and circuits available in integrated receivers fast approaches infinity. Still, in selecting a set that meets your needs, eschew novelty as such in favor of how well the circuit performs and how useful the features will be to you. Relate all this to your budget: as the major electronic component in your music system, and often the most expensive single item, a receiver is worth all the time and effort you spend in choosing it.

MINIMUM RECOMMENDED SPECIFICATIONS FOR RECEIVERS

These are the minimum acceptable performance criteria you should seek in a high fidelity receiver. When shopping, you may tolerate slight departures under these criteria for certain specifications, if other specifications and/or features are more important to you. Criteria are based on, but not necessarily limited to, the tests described in existing IHF Standards for tuners and amplifiers respectively. (Note: the symbol * means the higher the number the better; the symbol † means the lower the number the better.)

FM Tuner Section

IHF sensitivity—5 $\mu\text{V}\dagger$ with ultimate noise plus distortion down 40 dB* for 1000 μV
 Signal-to-noise ratio—55 dB*
 Total harmonic distortion, mono (at 400 Hz)—1% †
 Total harmonic distortion, stereo, either channel (at 400 Hz)—1.5% †
 Drift—30 kHz † after allowing 1 minute of warm-up
 Frequency response— ± 2 dB †, 50 Hz † to 15 kHz*
 Capture ratio—3 dB †
 Selectivity, alternate channel—35 dB*
 IM distortion—1% †
 Spurious response rejection—80 dB*
 AM suppression—50 dB*
 Stereo channel separation—25 dB* at mid-frequencies; 20 dB* from 300 Hz † to 8 kHz*
 Multiplex pilot and subcarrier suppression—each, 50 dB*
 Controls and features—tuning knob; accurately calibrated station dial; off/on switch; stereo indicator; tuning meter (center-of-channel or maximum-strength type); rear: antenna input for 300-ohm twin-lead (long-wire terminal for AM section)

AM Tuner Section

Sensitivity—300 $\mu\text{V}\dagger$ if given in μV -per-meter:
 30 $\mu\text{V}\dagger$ if given in absolute
 Frequency response (–3 dB points)—60 Hz † to 8 kHz*
 THD—1% †
 Selectivity—30 dB*

Amplifier Section

(Preamp and power-amp subsections are normally evaluated as one section in integrated units.)
 Power output—requirements will depend on such factors as speaker efficiency and room size; typical figures for a single pair of average-efficiency speakers might be 15 watts* music power per channel or 10 watts* continuous power per channel, with reference to 1% THD †, both channels driven simultaneously
 Power bandwidth—for rated distortion (not to exceed 1% †), from 30 Hz † to 15 kHz*
 THD vs. power output—full power, less than 2% †, 20 Hz † to 20 kHz*; half power, less than 1.5% †, 20 Hz † to 20 kHz*
 IM distortion—at any output impedance, less than 2% † up to full rated power
 Input sensitivity for rated output—phono and other low-level inputs, 2 to 6 millivolts; aux and other high-level inputs, 0.2 to 1.5 volts
 Signal-to-noise ratio, for rated output—any input, 60 dB*
 Frequency response— ± 2 dB †, 20 Hz † to 20 kHz*
 Output impedance—nominally 4 to 16 ohms
 Damping factor—10*
 Features and controls—off/on switch; input program selector; volume control; separate treble and bass tone controls; channel-balance control; stereo/mono mode switch; rear: inputs for magnetic phono pickup, plus two high-level sources; outputs for speakers and tape recorder

Bartók's Extraordinary Quartets

and why they are, according to the author, the century's most impressive body of music written for any one medium.

PERHAPS THE MOST beneficial aspect of a musical anniversary is the fact that it serves to stimulate re-evaluation. When a milestone is reached it is human nature to look back over the ground covered and ask: "Where do we stand now?" In the case of Beethoven, whose 200th birthday we are currently celebrating, the need for re-evaluation undoubtedly does not seem particularly pressing. We have lived with Beethoven's music for so long, considering it a central part of our tradition, that our conception of him seems almost fixed. Needless to say, it undoubtedly is not fixed—it will surely continue to evolve as the world continues to change—but from the present-day vantage point, it is difficult to anticipate any radical alteration in our thinking about him, at least in the immediate future.

The case with Bartók seems somewhat different. This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Hungarian composer's death (an anniversary unfortunately, if inevitably, overshadowed by that of his great forerunner) and the time seems ripe for a reappraisal of his work and the position it occupies in the Western musical tradition. Bartók's music has now been a more or less standard part of the repertoire for twenty-five years (the suddenness of its acceptance after the composer's death is well known), and we are now at a point, I think, where for the first time we can view it clearly as an integral part of that tradition.

What strikes one first and most forcefully is that of all the major composers of the first half of this century—i.e., those who may now be considered to represent the "main stream" of that period—Bartók best managed to become an accepted and unexceptional part of the standard concert repertoire. The reason for this seems apparent: his music, more than that of any of his great contemporaries, represents a clear extension of nineteenth-century musical thought. What this means, technically stated, is that Bartók weathered the crisis resulting from the breakdown of the functional tonal system with less disruptive results than his contemporaries. Yet his music reflects this crisis unmistakably—a crucial point, for otherwise we could not think of him as fully representative of twentieth-century thought but as just another of the numerous "successful" composers who managed to keep their music in the concert hall by maintaining what must now be considered an essentially nineteenth-century stance.

It is this, I believe, that accounts for the characteristic aspect of Bartók's music: its presentation of a totally original and totally contemporary mode of thought which nevertheless manages to maintain a distinct and unbroken link with the music of the immediately preceding era. One can see this readily through an examination of specific compositional matters. Bartók's solution to the tonal problem itself is indicative: the music remains, in fact, essentially tonal despite all the surface chromaticism. But the sense of the tonality has been given a completely new flavor through Bartók's use of self-invented scales and through his technique of establishing key through such purely contextual means as motivic emphasis on specific tones and the use of scalar patterns as static harmonic "fields" defining corresponding tonal regions. Yet in spite of the newness of sound achieved through these means, one can hear clear precedents in Liszt and Debussy, and embryonically, even in certain passages in Chopin (i.e., the Mazurkas). Or take the Bartókian motivic conception, so central to both the character of his work and the definition of the underlying structural components within a given piece. There is much that is new—particularly the specific intervallic configurations and the additive devices of rhythmic extension, but the over-all procedure is consistent with techniques common to the Western tradition since the early eighteenth century. Finally, the large-scale structural plan of almost all of his music is so clearly articulated and "balanced" as to suggest strong parallels with the Viennese classical school.

Although I would not want to argue that Bartók can compete with Schoenberg and Stravinsky (or Webern and Varèse, for that matter) in influence on the development of musical style since 1945, much has happened in the last ten years to bring the Hungarian composer closer to more recent musical developments. I am thinking particularly of the current interest in music organized principally on a textural basis—music that places great stress upon the purely sonic aspect. I know of no music of the first half of the twentieth century that so clearly anticipates such ideas as found in Penderecki, Ligeti, or Xenakis as do certain passages in Bartók. I have in mind such things as the second and fourth movements of the Fourth Quartet, which are both almost completely dominated by a specific kind of instrumental sound; the last section (the "coda") of the Third Quartet,



particularly the opening *sul ponticello* segment; and the slow movements of the *Music for String Instruments*, *Percussion*, and *Celesta* and the *Out of Doors Suite* for piano, whose eerie sonic quality has suggested the title "Night Music." In all of these cases there is an extraordinary emphasis on the sheer surface sound, created within what is to a large extent a static harmonic framework. This is especially remarkable when one considers how early such passages begin to appear in his work: for example, in the final, *prestissimo* section of the Second Quartet, completed in 1917. Of course I am not maintaining that there are no differences in the way these passages function in Bartók and in more recent music. Again, in the case of Bartók one can see quite clearly the traditional precedents (once more, in Liszt and Debussy), and although there is certainly no question that there is a shift of emphasis toward the realm of pure sound, there is nevertheless always the felt presence of an underlying formal structure which lends the music a strong sense of direction and development. Yet the influence on the new school seems apparent, and it is surely no coincidence that such a significant portion of the composers who have been active in writing such music have been, like Bartók, of Eastern-European origin.

The String Quartets

Bartók's six string quartets stand as the composer's greatest monument, and I would suggest that they constitute the most impressive body of music written for any one medium in the first half of the twentieth century. What makes the quartets so special? First of all—and this again points up Bartók's ties with the past—they represent a continuation of a form that has held a central role in the development of Western music since the eighteenth century. One of the most striking aspects of the musical literature of the first half of this century is the absence of large bodies of

music in the traditional media. One searches in vain for a symphonist, for example, whose work represents the most characteristic aspects of the thought of the time. Sibelius and Vaughan Williams come to mind of course, but it seems clear now that their work reflects a somewhat reactionary aesthetic. And although this does not necessarily imply an artistic criticism, it does indicate, I think, why the symphony still represented for them a viable means of musical expression. There are of course isolated examples of concertos, operas, and piano sonatas by the major composers of the time, but it is significant that there are no groups of these works in the tradition, say, of sets such as the Mozart concertos, the Verdi operas, or the Beethoven piano sonatas.

It is only in the realm of the string quartet that one can find a parallel, and here the Bartók set comes most readily to mind. His quartets, in fact, are frequently compared with those of Beethoven. Certainly one reason for this is that both sets seem to reveal the essence of the composer's creative work: and in both cases all of the important stylistic phases of the composer's development are represented. Perhaps an even more important parallel is the over-all quality of the works. In last April's *HIGH FIDELITY* I argued that the Beethoven quartets present "high points" in the various stages of his evolution, so that while they are not ideally suited to show the complete process of the composer's stylistic development, they do reveal the mature realization of its most important phases. The situation with the Bartók quartets is remarkably similar. While there are considerably fewer works, six as opposed to seventeen (which in itself is symptomatic of the modern situation), each important plateau of the composer's development is represented. Thus the quartets cover a span of thirty-two years—from 1907 to 1939, a period encompassing all but the last few years of Bartók's mature compositional life. The longest period between any two of the works (the first two) is eleven years; each one is a masterpiece and several are the most impressive representations of the period in question.

This last point is particularly significant in the case of Bartók, because the quality of his music is unusually variable. He is, to be sure, always the master of whatever he undertakes, but much in his output is essentially of a popular or pedagogical nature. Thus the various folksong settings (and also those works, such as the *Improvisations*, Op. 20, which are not actual settings but are nevertheless completely absorbed with the folk spirit) are masterpieces of their type, yet they remain curiously parochial in their final impression. Taken in this light it is significant that the quartets contain little of the folk element in an explicit way, although of course they reveal in a more general sense the composer's preoccupation with the music of his country.

The only body of twentieth-century literature which in my opinion might legitimately be evoked in comparison with the Bartók set are the four string

quartets of Schoenberg. Although these are all works of considerable influence and of great intrinsic value, they fail to reveal as complete a picture of the composer as do those of Bartók. Thus the Bartók set is a unique corpus of works, not only in regard to the composer's own output but to the general music literature of the time. And if one wishes to get a good over-all view of the composer—not a complete picture, to be sure, but one that does show what is most characteristic and permanent in his work—then the quartets are unquestionably the place to start. They invite serious study and repay it handsomely. This is the kind of music one can listen to repeatedly and each time come away with something new and valuable.

The Recordings

Fine Arts Quartet. Concert-Disc 501, \$14.94 (three discs): or 207/9, \$4.98 each (three discs).

Hungarian Quartet. Deutsche Grammophon 138650/2, \$17.94 (three discs, deleted).

Juilliard Quartet. Columbia ML 4278/80, \$5.98 each (three discs, mono only, deleted).

Juilliard Quartet. Columbia D3S 717, \$11.59 (three discs).

Parrenin Quartet. Westminster XWN 18531/3, \$4.98 each (three discs, mono only, deleted).

Ramor Quartet. Vox SVBX 519, \$9.95 (three discs).

Tátrai Quartet. Dover 7272/4, \$2.50 each (three discs).

Tátrai Quartet. Hungaroton LPX 1294/6, \$17.94 (three discs).

Vegh Quartet. Angel 35240/2, \$5.98 each (three discs, mono only, deleted).

The Bartók quartets, along with those of Beethoven, show a remarkably high quality in the available recordings. The reasons for this stem, I believe, from a common ground. In both cases we are dealing with a type of music that attracts only the most dedicated of performers. It is music that demands careful thought and infinite patience for its execution; but despite its considerable difficulties, it does not "show off" the performer in the normal sense. It is too serious in nature for that. It is rather music that demands complete dedication and a subordination of the individual to the requirements of the whole. Since the best performers are always attracted to this kind of music, it usually receives excellent performances.

Each quartet fits conveniently on an LP side, thus making a neat three-record set. Nine integral versions by seven different quartets have been released in this

country in the past twenty years (a notable statistic in itself). Before turning to a discussion of the five versions currently available, it might be well to consider briefly the four that have been deleted: the early Juilliard set, first released in 1950 and now superseded by their more recent stereo version; sets by the Vegh Quartet; the Parrenin Quartet; and the Hungarian Quartet. I have not been able to get hold of the Parrenin version (I understand it is very good), but of the other three, two deserve special consideration. The earliest complete set, the Juilliard, established a standard which undoubtedly has had a marked effect on the quality, if not the manner, of all the subsequent versions. It is amazing how well these performances stand up after twenty years. If they lack some of the assuredness of the more recent Juilliard issue, one is aware of this only occasionally and the over-all effect is totally convincing. When one considers that these recordings were made at a time when Bartók performances were still relatively rare and no clear tradition of performing this music had been established, it is an impressive achievement.

The other deleted version that stands out in my mind is the one by the Hungarian Quartet (originally released in both a monaural and stereo version). It seems to me that this group has been more successful than any other in establishing an approach to this music which although markedly different from that of the Juilliard is equally convincing, and is performed with an assurance comparable to that of the New York group. Their readings are much less aggressive, but they nevertheless communicate the essential vitality of the pieces. For many this will be the ideal version, and its withdrawal from the catalogue constitutes a real loss.

The five currently available sets (all in stereo) include the more recent one by the Juilliard (also on Columbia) and versions by the Fine Arts (Concert-Disc), the Ramor (Vox), and two sets by the Tátrai (one on Dover, the other on Hungaroton). It will be apparent from what I have said about the deleted versions that I favor the Juilliard. Before getting into the specifics of the different sets it might be useful to consider some of the general performance problems in the quartets in order to explain, and I hope to justify, my preference. The first thing that must be mentioned is that all six works are extremely difficult to perform from every conceivable point of view. They require the very highest order of musicianship, under which I include such things as technique, understanding, and a sense of musical co-operation. Considered from this rather basic point of view the Juilliard, it seems to me, holds a clear edge over the other three groups. Their personnel, consisting of Robert Mann, Isidore Cohen, Raphael Hillyer, and Claus Adam, is in a class by itself. (In their earlier version, Robert Kroff and Arthur Winograd were the second violinist and cellist respectively.) This musicianship can be heard most clearly in the explicitly soloistic passages, but in reality almost everything in the quartets is "soloistic"

in the sense that it is polyphonically conceived. Every voice must be as clearly articulated as possible, and here one really feels the superiority of the Juilliard. Each line is beautifully shaped and carefully weighted in relation to those around it. To cite only one example, in the last movement of the Fourth Quartet the cello has a series of descending parallel fifths (beginning at measure 72) against which the other parts weave a rhythmically active but harmonically static contrapuntal web. Everything depends upon the cello line coming out clearly (its arrival on the tonic C three measures later is of particular structural importance) and this can be achieved only if the other instruments allow the cello to sound through, and if the cellist is able to maneuver this extremely difficult part. Of all the cellists Adam most completely manages to bring this off.

Another important matter is the ability to play the various "special effects" called for in the quartets. By this I mean such things as the snapping of the string off the fingerboard in the fourth movement of the Fourth Quartet, the harmonics at the recapitulation of the second movement of the Sixth, and the *sul ponticello* passages in the finales of the Third and Fifth. These are more than just clever tricks. One of the primary means of clarifying structural segments in the quartets is through the use of textural contrast, and the listener's ability to hear the formal logic of many of the movements depends largely upon the ability of the performers to articulate clearly the specific textural quality. For example, the pizzicato chord that precedes the *prestissimo* at the end of the second movement of the Second Quartet, or even more graphically, the all-pizzicato fourth movement of the Fourth Quartet: only in the Juilliard version is every pitch clearly defined.

Finally, there is the question of projecting the over-all shape of the various movements and of the quartets as a whole. Perhaps the most important technique of structural development in Bartók is the gradual emergence of a specific thematic shape from an extended motivic development so that it finally bursts forth in its complete form as a culminating climax to the preceding motion. There are examples in virtually all of the quartets, and again it seems to me that the Juilliard best brings these points out in proper perspective so that they can fulfill their essential formal function.

Turning now to the Fine Arts recording, let me begin by saying that this is an excellent ensemble and one that serves Bartók extremely well. Their performances, in fact, resemble those of the Juilliard in many respects, but it is just this which makes comparison inevitable and places them at somewhat of a disadvantage. They simply do not play the works with the same force and conviction, nor do they communicate to the same extent the enormous rhythmic vitality one finds in the Juilliard. Still, the somewhat less sharp cutting edge to their sound (achieved through the use of a bit more vibrato and a generally less aggressive approach to attacks) will

appeal to some, and certainly their set can be recommended highly if taken on its own merits.

The Ramor set is also quite good, and considered apart from the other versions could also be considered more than adequate. But they do not consistently maintain the same standard of ensemble found in the other versions. Problems of intonation, attack, and textural clarity occasionally arise to mar the over-all effect, and there is also an unfortunate habit of taking tempos on the slow side. Thus they completely miss the "will-o'-the-wisp" quality of the second movement of the Fourth Quartet, while the Sixth Quartet's *Mesto* theme, which occurs at the beginning of each of the four movements and consequently affects the character of the entire performance, loses its shape due to the plodding tempo.

I have saved the Tátrai versions for last because I feel that in the absence of the Hungarian set they offer the most convincing alternative to the Juilliard. Their performances are rather similar to those of the Hungarian—which may have something to do with the fact that they are countrymen—and although I feel that the Hungarian is the superior of the two, this one is nevertheless exceptionally good. The weakest reading is of the Fifth Quartet, where they fail to do justice to the driving quality of the outer movements and also have a few uncharacteristic ensemble problems. But in such things as the fugal first movement of the First Quartet or the quiet, almost mysterious opening of the Third, the results are really striking. Of their two available sets, the one on Hungaroton is decidedly preferable, not so much because of the performances, which are quite similar despite the fact that the violists differ, but because the Hungaroton sound is far superior. The Dover discs are at times so sonically muddled as to make it impossible to discern what is happening.

All in all, this is an imposing group of recordings. (If only the Schoenberg quartets were as well represented!) And if my admiration for the Juilliard seems out of proportion in the light of the general high quality of the other versions, it is only because their readings seem more than just exceptionally good to me. I consider this set to be one of the most impressive recording achievements of our time and am certain it will endure as an essential Bartók document for many years to come.

As for the quartets themselves, it now appears that they may well represent the final example of an important element in the history of Western music: a collection of works written by a single composer for a specific medium. One should always be wary of making predictions, but recent musical developments have raised the question of the future of the string quartet as a viable compositional medium. If it should pass, at least as a primary focus for subsequent musical developments, then, as the Beatles advise us, let it be. We should rejoice that the quartet has given rise to so much music of real quality and, thanks to Bartók, has remained so long at the forefront of musical activity.



Photos by Sheila Schultz

The World's Most Complete Record Store? New York's King Karol is a Mecca for the classical collector

by Peter G. Davis

OFFHAND, IT WOULD BE difficult to think of a more unlikely location for a lavishly stocked record emporium than the corner of New York's 42nd Street and Tenth Avenue. To the east are a dozen or so decaying movie theaters that most often serve as cheap sleepatoriums for local derelicts; to the west flows the sluggish and soiled Hudson River; in the immediate neighborhood lurk numerous condemned light-industrial buildings awaiting the wreckers' block. A depressing sight, perhaps, but not for long: the area is slated for major renovations and King Karol's bright, new record shop stands proudly as one of the first arrivals, open and ready for business.

The original store, twenty years old next year, is located several blocks down 42nd Street near Times Square and a second opened a couple of years ago on upper Third Avenue. The third and latest addition to the King Karol chain is the very model of a streamlined modern record mart. Upon walking through the front door a customer is literally overwhelmed by vast quantities of records—of all makes and descriptions and all within easy reach. The display has been cleverly calculated to appeal both to the impulsive buyer and the collector who knows exactly what he is looking for. New releases, especially potential best-sellers, are tantalizingly placed full-face front on wall racks; browser bins arranged

by artist, composer, or specific musical genre line the aisles; beneath them are stock shelves filed numerically by label; and neatly housed in the center of the store is the tape department carrying reels in all four formats. After a few orientation visits, anyone can make a beeline to the record or tape of his choice.

And nine times out of ten he'll probably find it—which is the chief difference between King Karol and the average record store in other American cities. KK's genial proprietor, Ben Karol, has a merchandising philosophy that is possibly unique in the industry and one that goes counter to the generally accepted good business practice of "quick turnover." At least one copy of every new release is put into stock, and slow-moving items—usually regarded as dead merchandise to be carted away as quickly as possible—are hoarded with an eye to the future. Some one, somewhere, some time will be looking for these bypassed discs: if he locates them at King Karol, figures Ben Karol, it means one more satisfied customer who will undoubtedly be back for more. The success of this marketing approach is self-evident in KK's three-store expansion, an ever-increasing mail-order business from all parts of the country, and extensive "one-stop" servicing of smaller record dealers in the city.

Of course the entire stock is not on view: the bulk of the tapes are stored directly beneath the new west side quarters (locked and barred with bank-vault security—pocket-sized cartridges and cassettes are easy prey for shoplifters), while the discs repose on long tiered shelves in a huge warehouse next door. Teeming activity meets the eye here as dozens of stock clerks rush about filling orders; on the shipping counters stacks of packaged records wait for the mailman—over 20,000 discs move through these doors in the course of a day. When asked about the classical side of the picture, the busy overseer of these operations gave a surprising and revealing answer: "Sure, it amounts to only about fifteen per cent compared to popular sales; but fifteen per cent of a billion-dollar industry is a slice we can't afford to ignore." If classical discs make up fifteen per cent of KK's operation, it simply shows the success that can be attained when a store takes this repertoire seriously; the percentage is three times the national figure!

Talking with the enthusiastic staff of King Karol is a refreshing antidote to the Cassandra-like pronouncements of America's two major producers of classical records: Columbia and RCA. Here the complaint is one of minuscule profits (small perhaps compared to the other activities of these giant outfits, but real enough) and dwindling sales; the negative results of this thinking may be seen in the recent drastic cutback of domestic classical record production. According to King Karol, though, the market is there—if you know how to reach it. Obviously the record industry as a whole does not have the answer, for record distribution in this country—

of classical records in particular—is conducted on an alarmingly slipshod, hit or miss basis.

This magazine, like record manufacturers, is constantly besieged by mail from both large cities and less populous areas asking where they can buy classical discs—most local stores nowadays show a marked disinclination to carry any stock at all. The question usually goes begging. Obviously few record dealers can afford KK's massive inventory, but surely a comparable clearing-house system could be established in key cities to comply with the demand. Perhaps it would mean a co-operative venture by the classical labels themselves; who can tell how many sales are lost yearly by prospective buyers' helpless frustration in trying to put their hands on elusive items? The distribution tie-up has become so acute that at least one smaller company has contemplated removing its discs from the open market and setting itself up as a mail-order house.

The prospect of a number of companies combining efforts and interests to meet the common problem is about as remote as a merger of Macy's and Gimbel's department stores. In the meantime, though, the put-upon collector has recourse, in person or by mail, to the accommodating King Karol and the promise of "if it exists, we've got it."



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Beethoven on Records



Concluding Part VI: The Concertos

by Harris Goldsmith

Mr. Goldsmith herewith concludes his appraisal of the Beethoven concerto recordings. Last month he discussed the works for piano and orchestra

Works for Violin and Orchestra

Concerto in D, Op. 61 (1806).

- Christian Ferras, violin; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. Deutsche Grammophon 139021, \$5.98.
- Zino Francescatti, violin; Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Bruno Walter, cond. Columbia MS 6263, \$5.98.
- Arthur Grumiaux, violin; New Philharmonia Orchestra, Alceo Galliera, cond. Philips PHS 900222, \$5.98.
- Jascha Heifetz, violin; Boston Symphony Orchestra, Charles Munch, cond. RCA Red Seal LSC 1992, \$5.98.
- Suzanne Lautenbacher, violin; Westphalian Symphony Orchestra, Hubert Reichert, cond. Vox STPL 511170, \$1.98 (with Violin Romances Nos. 1 and 2).
- Yehudi Menuhin, violin; Philharmonia Orchestra, Wilhelm Furtwängler, cond. Seraphim 60135, \$2.49 (mono only, with Violin Romance No. 1).
- Yehudi Menuhin, violin; New Philharmonia Orchestra, Otto Klemperer, cond. Angel S 36369, \$5.98; S 3727, \$11.98 (three discs, with Elgar: Violin Concerto; other violin music).
- Yehudi Menuhin, violin; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Constantin Silvestri, cond. Capitol SG 7229, \$4.98.
- Nathan Milstein, violin; Philharmonia Orchestra, Erich Leinsdorf, cond. Angel S 35783, \$5.98; S 3712, \$11.98 (three discs, with violin concertos by Brahms and Tchaikovsky).
- Nathan Milstein, violin; Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, William Steinberg, cond. Pickwick S 4037, \$2.49.
- David Oistrakh, violin; French National Radio Orchestra, André Cluytens, cond. Angel S 35780, \$5.98.
- David Oistrakh, violin; USSR State Orchestra, Alexander Gauk, cond. Period SHO 316, \$2.98 (mono only, with Glazunov: Violin Concerto); Period 1153, \$6.95 (mono only, three discs, with violin concertos by Bartók, Brahms, Lalo, Mendelssohn, and Tchaikovsky).

- David Oistrakh, violin; USSR State Orchestra, Alexander Gauk, cond. Vox STPL 16150, \$4.98.
- Isaac Stern, violin; New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein, cond. Columbia MS 6093, \$5.98; D3S 721, \$11.98 (three discs, with violin concertos by Brahms, Mendelssohn, and Tchaikovsky).
- Josef Suk, violin; Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Franz Konwitschny, cond. Parliament S 169, \$2.98.
- Henryk Szeryng, violin; London Symphony Orchestra, Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt, cond. Mercury SR 3-9017, \$17.94 (three discs, with violin concertos by Prokofiev, Sibelius, and Tchaikovsky).
- Henryk Szeryng, violin; Paris Conservatoire Orchestra, Jacques Thibaud, cond. Monitor S 2093, \$2.50.

The published score of Beethoven's only violin concerto dedicates the work to Stephan von Breuning, the composer's boyhood friend. But the title page of the manuscript contains a rather enigmatic, multilingual pun by way of the inscription "Concerto par Clemenza pour Clement." Franz Clement, of course, was the virtuoso who gave the work its premiere. Just why Beethoven was pleading for clemency is a moot point. One explanation might be that he was, as usual, remiss in getting the music written in time (and reports have it that the composer was still frantically handing pages to copyists on the day of the intended concert!); an apology to Clement therefore was indeed in order. Others contend however that Beethoven was well aware of Clement's flamboyant streak (in between the first and second portions of the Concerto at the premiere, for instance, the fiddler amused his audience with an improvised fantasy played on one string while holding his instrument upside down); and the composer may very well have been hoping to prevent the performer in question from committing mayhem on the new score. The latter reasoning would also account for the later dedication to Stephan von Breuning!

Whether due to Clement's performance or other causes, the Beethoven Violin Concerto was a slow starter with the public. In due time, Ludwig Spohr took it up with moderate success, and in 1844 the young Joseph Joachim played the work under Mendelssohn's baton with notable acclaim (he was to make a lifetime specialty of the work). Closer to our own era, Ysaye, Kreisler, Szigeti, and Hubermann all gained renown for their interpretations of this music.

Ysaye and Joachim lived well into the recording epoch, but unfortunately both of their interpretations are lost to posterity. The Beethoven Concerto, however, does boast a rather large dossier of "historical" recordings. Kreisler's 1936 effort with Barbirolli and the London Philharmonic was until recently available on Angel's "Great Recordings of the Century" series. That performance—a pathetic mixture of wan, saccharine violinism and inept, flaccid orchestral support—can only give a false impression to those who are otherwise unfamiliar with the great Kreisler's work. It is something of a tragedy that the far more representative 1926 Kreisler/Leo Blech version—his real achievement with this sublime score—has never appeared in microgroove. Likewise, the magnificent 1932 British Columbia version, with Szigeti and Bruno Walter in their prime, has never been reissued, though in these artists' case, a 1947 remake with the New York Philharmonic—which did appear on LP—almost equaled their earlier achievement. (Szigeti and Walter, incidentally, both made even more recent recordings, though not together. More about that later.)

Other famous interpretations are Hubermann/Szell, Kulenkampff/Schmidt-Isserstedt, Schneiderhan/Furtwängler, Spalding/Loibner, and Heifetz/Toscanini. Hubermann/Szell (briefly available on Columbia) gave a performance full of biting astringency as opposed to Kulenkampff's account (a 1936 Berlin recording first available here on Capitol, then later as an imported Telefunken pressing), which was warmly lyrical and very much in the (good) Kreisler tradition. The Schneiderhan/Furtwängler effort (a live 1953 concert which appeared in Deutsche Grammophon's Furtwängler memorial album) was grandly expansive, a bit ragged in ensemble, and in general not my cup of tea (the violinist seemed rather muscular and unwieldy in his approach to the instrument). I have but dim memories of the Spalding version which Remington taped in Austria shortly before the American violinist's death in 1953. Dim memories—but pleasant. The Heifetz/Toscanini account, recorded in 1940, is the one I grew up with. Toscanini's marvelously architectural structuring of the orchestral score is unequaled in my experience and, unlike some listeners, I am not greatly disturbed by Heifetz' admittedly glossy and metronomic treatment of the solo part. Though the lyrical aspects of the piece may not be probed in a way comparable to Kreisler or Szigeti, there is a compensating classical formality which is very congenial to Toscanini's economical point of

view. A fresh transfer of this estimable version is decidedly in order. Before passing to the more contemporary recorded accounts, it is worth noting that certain collectors speak with awe of the version made by the Busch brothers, Adolf and Fritz. Recorded for Columbia in 1941 but never issued on 78 rpm, that legendary interpretation was finally pressed last year in a semiprivate limited edition for the Friends of Adolf Busch Society. Unfortunately, I was unable to locate a copy.

Yehudi Menuhin made his debut in the Beethoven Concerto, and his interpretation—rich in warmth and lyricism—has every right to be deemed “historical.” You can hear this eloquent violinist in three different recordings of the music. All are excellent, but ironically, the finest Menuhin version of all—his 1947 Lucerne Festival performance with Furtwängler—remains in limbo. Menuhin’s tone had a lusciousness and luminous appeal on those shellac discs that are not to be found on any of his later recordings. Actually, the 1961 Menuhin/Silvestri—rather than the second Menuhin/Furtwängler—most nearly approximates the flow and uncontrived romanticism of that first 1947 edition. The 1953 Furtwängler performance becomes a bit too personalized in a throbbing, heart-on-sleeve manner, while the recent one with Klemperer—which I like much better on reacquaintance—rather misses the inward quality that Menuhin brought to all his other performances. Klemperer’s support there is big, direct, and epic but also rather lethargic.

I was always fond of the discontinued Epic disc by Grumiaux and Van Beinum. Grumiaux’s new Philips version with Galliera holds a similar high place in my esteem though it is quite a different sort of performance. The Van Beinum accompaniment, dark-toned and flexible, gave the entire reading a flavor of autumnal romanticism; Galliera’s commendable work, on the other hand, draws your attention to the Belgian virtuoso’s poised smoothness and classical restraint. In the Rondo, Galliera obtains a superb kind of rhythmic lift that recalls the Heifetz/Toscanini. Some listeners may find Grumiaux a bit too bland for their taste (his smoothly bowed line makes the violin playing in the Menuhin/Furtwängler LP sound positively raspy and ulcerated), but I am tempted to place the Philips disc at the head of the list. Good sound—though the domestic pressings have an obtrusive background roar. Francescatti recorded the Beethoven twice—once in the early Fifties with Ormandy and once again in stereo with Bruno Walter at the helm. The violin playing was more letter-perfect on the earlier disc, but I prefer the less supercilious, more human phrasing on the later one. The collaboration with Walter results in a gentle, intimately romantic interpretation which nevertheless preserves cool aristocracy, finely molded line, purity of tone, and many other relevant features of classicism. Admittedly, the approach is a bit small-scaled and not especially forceful, but it is lovely and eminently easy to live with.



Heifetz: his recording of the *Violin Concerto* with Toscanini should be reissued.

The two Milstein and the Heifetz/Munch versions opt for a stringent classical severity. Symmetry is all-important here, and the tempos are thus rather brusque and unyielding. I like Milstein/Leinsdorf better than Milstein/Steinberg. Leinsdorf gets more incisive rhythm in the Rondo, and I definitely prefer his icy muscularity to the Pittsburgh conductor’s glossy, impersonal electric-blanket warmth. The drawbacks to both Milstein performances are his own flashy cadenzas and the occasionally cut-and-dried, machine-made glint of his steely patterns. Heifetz (with Munch) is rather more urbane and his cadenzas are much more discreet, but the Munch accompaniment lacks Leinsdorf’s rhythmic impact (to say nothing of the Toscanini framework on Heifetz’ far more impressive older recording). Ferras/Von Karajan go to the opposite extreme in their Deutsche Grammophon version. Here coloristic values are stressed, and the tempos—especially that for the first movement—are almost static in their deliberation. Ferras plays beautifully, though his thick vibrato sometimes makes his intonation fractionally suspect. With that proviso, I recommend his well-engineered disc highly.

On paper, the Monitor disc (from Pathé) by Szeryng and Thibaud looks interesting. In actuality, this rather drably engineered French performance fails to turn me on: it is all scrupulous and rather academic in the manner of some of Felix Weingartner’s less prepossessing Beethoven interpretations. Szeryng’s later Mercury version with Schmidt-Isserstedt is sound, well recorded, but rather stolid and brusque. There is nothing really amiss with the interpretation though, and some collectors might like it more than I do. Mercury’s other version by Szigeti and Antal Dorati was recently deleted. That disc (SR 90358) had several features that make a search well worth the trouble: for one thing, Szigeti played an attractively sedate first-movement cadenza by Busoni otherwise unperformed on records (the earlier Szigeti recordings used modified versions of the Joachim interpolations—this new one does too for the second and third movements). Secondly—and I speak as a long-time

Szigeti admirer and a minority voice—I found the performance full of breadth and profound introspection, although admittedly it is technically flawed, but not bothersomely so.

All of the remaining editions are variants on the moderately romantic, extroverted, muscular approach. To me, that point of view is not particularly apt in this inward, patrician score. If you do approve of such a performance, however, the Stern/Bernstein presents it to the best advantage. Stern plays with smooth, compact tone; it is suavely reproduced; and gets a thoughtful, individualistic accompaniment from Bernstein. You may take exception to a few fancy underscorings in the orchestra, but it is obvious that much thought went into the collaboration. The Suk/Konwitschny (which I heard in the imported Supraphon pressing, not the domestic Parliament edition) presents a broadly paced reading occasionally made choppy and episodic by the conductor’s excessive concern for detail (note, for instance, the rather picky prominence of the accompanimental triplets at bars 51 and following in the first-movement introduction). Josef Suk—grandson of the composer Suk and Dvořák’s great-grandson—plays with a smallish, pure tone and scrupulously clean intonation. Lautenbacher/Reichert are technically strong and musically uncluttered, but their playing (or perhaps it’s the recording) lacks a true dynamic range. There is no piano or pianissimo and certainly none of the hushed atmosphere one seeks in a sensitive performance of this music. Oistrakh, in his version with Cluytens, is placed so disastrously close to the microphone that his playing is actually excruciating to listen to. The Period and Vox editions by the Russian violinist are merely throbbing rather than lacerating, but the interpretations are no less coarse and stolid even granting that minimal improvement.

Romances for Violin and Orchestra: No. 1, in G, Op. 40 (1801-2); No. 2, in F, Op. 50 (1799).

- *Siegfried Borries*, violin; Northwest German Philharmonic Orchestra, Georg Ludwig Jochum, cond. Mace S 9015, \$2.50 (with Spohr: *Violin Concerto* No. 8).

- *Suzanne Lautenbacher*, violin; Badische Staatskapelle Orchestra, Kurt Cremer, cond. Vox STPL 511170, \$1.98 (with the *Violin Concerto*).

- *Yehudi Menuhin*, violin; Philharmonia Orchestra, John Pritchard, cond. Capitol SP 8667; \$4.98 (with *Chausson: Poème; Berlioz: Rêverie et Caprice; Wieniawski: Légende*).

- *Yehudi Menuhin*, violin; Philharmonia Orchestra, Wilhelm Furtwängler, cond. Seraphim 60135, \$2.49 (No. 1 only; mono only, with the *Violin Concerto*).

- *David Oistrakh*, violin; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Eugene Goossens, cond. Deutsche Grammophon 138714, \$5.98 (with *Bach and Vivaldi violin concertos*).

- *David Oistrakh*, violin; Moscow Chamber Orchestra, Rudolf Barshai, cond.

BEETHOVEN ON RECORDS

Period *SHOST* 2343, \$2.98 (No. 2 only; with Mozart: *Divertimento* No. 7; *Sinfonia Concertante*, K. 364).

• *Yoshio Unno*, violin; *Tokyo CBS Symphony Orchestra*, *Tadashi Mori*, cond. *Columbia MS 7411*, \$5.98 (with works by *Massenet*, *Sarasate*, *Saint-Saëns*, and *Tchaikovsky*).

Beethoven's brother offered both of these works to Breitkopf & Härtel for publication in 1802, which might seem baffling insofar as the G major Romance bears the date 1803 on the title page. Authorities are pretty much in agreement in assigning the composition of the first Romance to the years 1801-2 while the supposed sequel dates from 1799. Both presumably are reworkings of juvenilia, and while the G major Romance is a bit more substantial and weighty in content, neither composition—thoroughly charming though they may be—really rates as truly significant Beethoven. This is the Bonn composer at his most docile.

All the existing recordings are good. I would give the edge to Heifetz for lyrical refinement and to Menuhin for involvement and warmth. The Heifetz disc (RCA Red Seal LM 9014) also offers that sterling virtuoso's finest version of the Mozart *Turkish* Concerto and the mono sound is thoroughly attractive. This item was just cut from the catalogue but copies should still be around; it is worth looking for. Menuhin has actually recorded the Romances twice. No. 1 from his earlier set with Furtwängler has just been reissued on the Seraphim disc with the Violin Concerto (both are available on imported Odeon in conjunction with the Menuhin Furtwängler Mendelssohn Concerto). Save for a bit more breadth in the older and more line in the later, I find little significant difference between the two versions: both are superbly convincing.

David Oistrakh and Siegfried Borries are more soberly Teutonic and dispassionate—I miss the Heifetz suppleness and the Menuhin passion, but only in direct comparison. Borries' conscientious version, incidentally, deserves more careful labeling. His Mace record incorrectly gives his name as Siegfried Barries, and though jacket and disc state the presence of only the Second Romance, both are included. Igor Oistrakh's recently dropped version with Konwitschny (Heliodor HS 25071, with Oistrakh père's Dresden version of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto) is a shade lighter, more graceful, and less intense than his father's—though Heifetz tops him for sheer urbanity. Yoshio Unno, a young Japanese violinist, includes both the Romances on his Columbia debut disc. These are reliable, efficient accounts though somewhat steely in manner (and recorded in like fashion). Miss Lautenbacher's versions differ from all the others in being paced considerably faster. She plays well from a violinistic standpoint but I'm not at all convinced that the divergent tempos represent a change for the better: the music emerges a shade perfunctorily, lacking both breadth and nuance.

Works for Miscellaneous Instruments and Orchestra

Concerto for Violin, Cello, Piano, and Orchestra, in C, Op. 56 (1804-5).

• *Jaime Laredo*, violin; *Leslie Parnas*, cello; *Rudolf Serkin*, piano; *Marlboro Festival Orchestra*, *Alexander Schneider*, cond. *Columbia MS 6564*, \$5.98.

• *David Oistrakh*, violin; *Sviatoslav Knushevitzky*, cello; *Lev Oborin*, piano; *Moscow Radio Orchestra*, *Nicolai Golovanov*, cond. *Period SHO 327*, \$2.98 (mono only, with Mozart: *Violin Concerto* No. 5).

• *David Oistrakh*, violin; *Sviatoslav Knushevitzky*, cello; *Lev Oborin*, piano; *Philharmonia Orchestra*, *Sir Malcolm Sargent*, cond. *Angel S 35697*, \$5.98.

• *Wolfgang Schneiderhan*, violin; *Pierre Fournier*, cello; *Geza Anda*, piano; *Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra*, *Ferenc Fricsay*, cond. *Deutsche Grammophon 136236*, \$5.98.

• *Isaac Stern*, violin; *Leonard Rose*, cello; *Eugene Istomin*, piano; *Philadelphia Orchestra*, *Eugene Ormandy*, cond. *Columbia D2S 720*, \$9.98 (two discs, with Brahms: *Double Concerto*; *Trio in C*).

The concerto grosso—a composition basically for orchestra with groups of instruments occasionally taking the solo spotlight—was a favorite form of the baroque masters. In contrast, a typical solo/tutti concerto with the solo role assumed by double or (in Beethoven's instance) triple protagonists poses some very severe structural and aesthetic problems. For one thing, if it is to be a true concerto rather than a mere concertante work, each of the solo instruments must take a turn at stating every theme; if not handled with the utmost tact and compression, such a procedure can obviously lead to a long-winded work of unmanageable proportions. Beethoven met this challenge with masterful authority. The Op. 56 is not only a real concerto in every sense of the term, it is also a distinguished example of middle-period, sunlight-drenched Beethoveniana. In a performance that properly balances the instrumental perspectives, the strengths of the Triple Concerto would be evident to all. Those who continue to niggle and disparage the work probably never encountered a really satisfactory re-creation.

I have heard only two performances of the Triple Concerto that gave more than a mere suggestion of its inherent quality and clarity of form. The major revelation for me was a 1942 transcription of a New York Philharmonic performance conducted by Arturo Toscanini. The Maestro set and maintained some ruthlessly fast tempos (ruthless because no soloist could ever play note-perfect at such a speed, not because the tempo was aesthetically displeasing), and for once the concerto framework became crystal clear. Mishel Piastro, Joseph Schuster, and Ania Dorfmann, though to some extent sacrificed to the greater whole, acquitted themselves admirably for the most part and the sonics were entirely listenable. Public distribution of this valuable document is in order—if not on the RCA label, then perhaps under

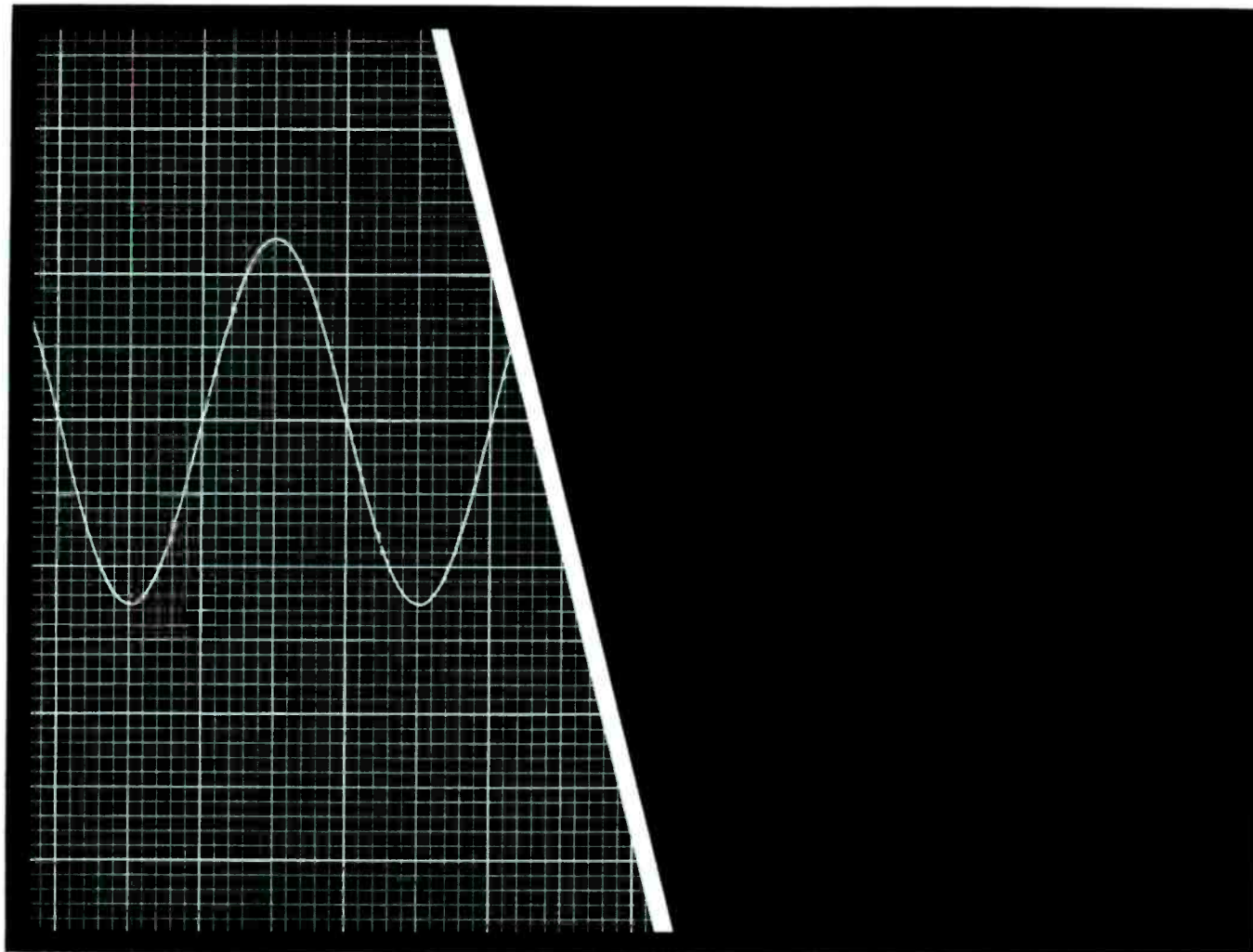
the auspices of the Arturo Toscanini Society. The second really masterful Triple Concerto is the prewar shellac set led by Felix Weingartner. If that once-reissued Columbia didn't quite dispense with questionable easygoing traditions, one did get a goodly amount of strong, unsentimental playing, both from the Vienna Philharmonic and the soloists (Riccardo Odnoposoff, Angelica Morales, and Stephen Auber). This too ought to reappear in the Columbia Odyssey series. The third "historical" reading—by Bruno Walter with John Corigliano, Leonard Rose, and Walter Hendel—was little different from what one usually hears in this music. Though certainly decent enough, that c. 1949 recording can be permitted to rest in peace.

A new all-star version with Oistrakh, Rostropovich, Richter, and Von Karajan may be expected before the end of the bicentennial year. Of those now before us, the Stern/Rose/Istomin with Ormandy is slow-moving, spacious, and impressively grandiose. This excellently recorded account is available only in a two-disc album where it is coupled with a first-rate account of Brahms's C major Trio and a questionable, overfat one of that composer's Double Concerto. Of the singles, I myself lean to the Marlboro recording which has Rudolf Serkin's consistently profound treatment of the piano part and, over-all, a little more intimacy of feeling than from Deutsche Grammophon's splendidly integrated team of soloists. Those who prefer a large orchestra here are advised that Schneider's ensemble is certainly of ample size, but that the other editions all give either more heft (the Philadelphia and the Philharmonia) or greater smoothness and warmth (the Berlin Radio Symphony). Sargent leads the Angel entry with muscular classicism, but Oborin's wooden piano playing puts that creditable effort behind the two Columbias and the DGG. The Golovanov Soviet performance antedates the Angel by a considerable span and is drably reproduced.

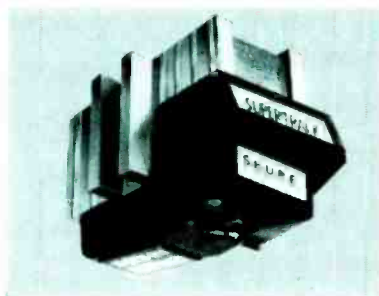
Romanze for Piano, Flute, Basson, Two Oboes, and String Orchestra, in E minor (1815?).

• *Felicja Blumental*, piano; soloists from *New Prague Chamber Orchestra*. *Alberto Zedda*, cond. *Orion ORS 7016*, \$5.98 (with *Concerto in E flat, 1784*; *Tempo di Concerto, in D*; *Rondo in B flat*); *ORS 7018/6*, \$17.95 (six discs, with complete piano concertos).

Though some musicologists have doubted the genuineness of this little piece, it does—to these ears at least—sound believably Beethovenian. It is rather like the slow movement of Haydn's *Drum Roll* Symphony in its basic mood, with what sounds like a double-theme, half in minor and half in an answering major tonality. Willy Hess filled out the incomplete orchestral parts and Blumental's brightly engineered performance presents it in that form. An earlier mono version of the music, as played by the Frankenland State Symphony under Erich Kloss (Lyricord 45), was unavailable at this writing.



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Beethoven: *Violin Concerto*. Zino Francescatti, violin; Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Bruno Walter, cond.

Dvořák: *Symphony No. 9*. Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Bruno Walter, cond.
Mahler: *Das Lied von der Erde*. Mildred Miller, (m); Ernst Häfliger, (t); New York Philharmonic, Bruno Walter, cond.
Mahler: *Symphony No. 1*. Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Bruno Walter, cond.
Mozart: *Eine kleine Nachtmusik; Overtures*. Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Bruno Walter, cond.
Sibelius: *Symphony No. 2*. Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond.



Bach: *Canatas No. 51 and No. 199*. Ely Ameling, soprano; Deutsche Bachsolisten, Helmut Winschermann, cond.
Berlioz: *Les Nuits d'été; Songs*. Sheila Armstrong (s), Josephine Veaszy (ms), Frank Patterson (t), John Shirley-Quirk (b); London Symphony Orchestra, Colin Davis, cond.
Berlioz: *Requiem*. Ronald Dowd, tenor; London Symphony Chorus and Orchestra, Colin Davis, cond.
Brahms: *Piano Concerto No. 1*. Claudio Arrau, piano; Concertgebouw Orchestra, Bernard Haitink, cond.
Holst: *The Planets*. London Philharmonic Orchestra, Bernard Haitink, cond.
Mahler: *Symphony No. 9*. Concertgebouw Orchestra, Bernard Haitink, cond.
Penderecki: *The Devils of Loudon*. Soloists, Chorus and Orchestra of the Hamburg State Opera, Marek Janowski, cond.
Schubert: *Piano Sonatas D. 664 and D. 894*. Ingrid Haebler, piano.
Viotti: *Violin Concerto No. 22*. Haydn, M.: *Violin Concerto*. Arthur Grumiaux, violin; Concertgebouw Orchestra, Edo de Waart, cond.
Vivaldi: *The Four Seasons*. Henryk Szeryng, violin; English Chamber Orchestra.
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Bartók: *Mikrokosmos (complete)*. Lorand Szucs and Kornél Zempléni, pianos.
Bartók: *Rhapsodies for Violin and Piano, No. 1 and No. 2; Rhapsody for Cello; Contrasts*. Various instrumentalists.
Bartók: *The Wooden Prince*. Orchestra of the Budapest Philharmonic Society. A. Korody, cond.
Dufay: *Missa Caput*. Lasso: *Motets*. Girl Choir of the Györ High School. M. Szabo, cond.
Mozart: *"Haydn" Quartets (6)*. Bartók String Quartet.

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Karajan Closes the Ring

by Conrad L. Osborne



The conductor commands the limelight on DGG's "Götterdämmerung."

AS MOST FOLLOWERS of operatic recordings will not need to be told, this set brings to completion the second commercially recorded *Ring* cycle. This cycle was just about half as long as the first in the making; and since there are ever-more substantive rumors that the Furtwängler-led RAI cycle of 1954, long a choice item of circulation in the inner circle of the tape/disc underground, may one day be released under the Seraphim label, we now have the prospect of three integral *Rings* on L.P. There being hardly the space or time available for a true comparison of the cycles as wholes (the one major chapter omitted from my Wagner discography in HF November and December 1966 and January 1967), I shall confine myself to a discussion of the present recording, with sufficient comment on the Solti version to give at least some orientation. (I will note, in passing, the existence of the earlier London edition, mono only, in the 1956 Norwegian radio performance starring Flagstad. It offers scant competition from the musical standpoint, and none from the engineering; its sole points of interest are the intermittent magnificence of Flagstad, who is however badly extended by the climactic moments, and the competence of Set Svanholm as Siegfried.)

It is fair to say that this performance extends and completes, with reasonable consistency, the musical viewpoint set forth from the start by Von Karajan. This is only to be expected. Still, recent reports from Salzburg (anent last year's *Siegfried* and this year's *Götterdämmerung*) had indicated that a change in course had taken place, that the "chamber opera" *Ring* had suddenly given way to great waves of sweeping, glorious orchestral sound, only occasionally breasted by the singers for whom the conductor had previously shown such solicitude.

This is not at all evident in the *Götterdämmerung* recording, which is a logical and finely detailed extension of the readings of *Rheingold* and *Walküre* (I have heard the *Siegfried* only via radio, and not complete, so I must beg off comment). The reaction to Karajan's approach has from the beginning been exaggerated. Neither on records nor at the Met were his *Walküre*

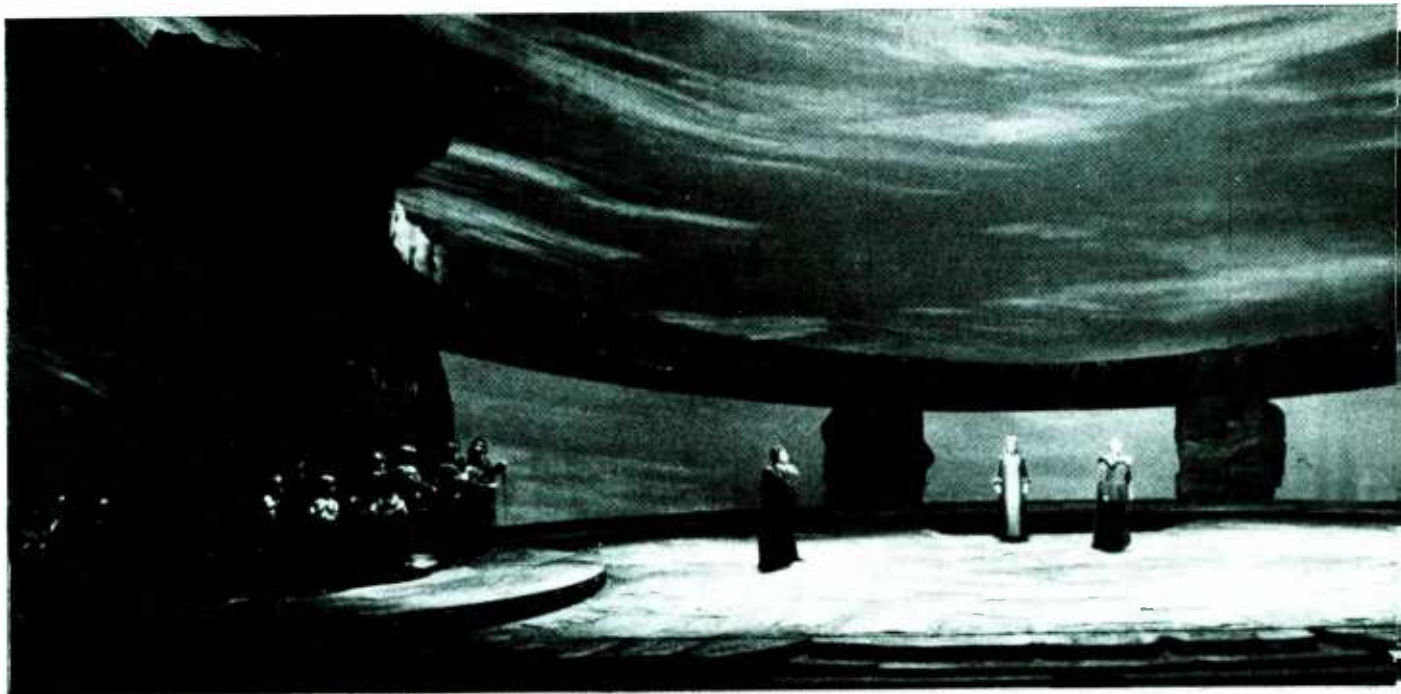
and *Rheingold* performances all that small-scaled. It is true that they were exceptionally clear and refined, and that the first act of *Die Walküre* was held to a remarkably subdued level, especially in the early performances. (Later, with the house's measure taken and Crespin the Sieglinde instead of Janowitz, things got pretty healthy.)

Given the overdramatization of this reaction, I wonder a bit about the descriptive prose arising from the later productions. Recordings are often deceptive in the matter of balances, but this still strikes me as anything but an all-stops-out-for-volume *Götterdämmerung*. And one must remember that the operas differ somewhat in their scoring and that several key singers changed over the years of the cycle's production; there are large differences between the true dramatic soprano of Régine Crespin and the full lyric soprano of Helga Dernesch, or between the true dramatic tenor (however discreetly and sometimes peculiarly used) of Jon Vickers and the voices of Jess Thomas or Helge Brilioth.

However all this may be, this *Götterdämmerung* is very much the one we might have projected from the earlier readings. The playing is of the utmost lucidity and polish. Climaxes make their effect as much through the precision of the playing and the sharpness of rhythm as through mass of sound. The quieter sections are set forth with a sheer affection and tonal beauty unparalleled, at least in my generation—the whole Norn Scene, for instance, so often a drag in the opera house, floats on a gorgeously balanced, unified silken bed.

Because of the sensibility and command of the reading as a whole, the truly dramatic passages make all the greater impact—Brünnhilde's Act II outburst at the realization of Siegfried's betrayal ("Betrug! Schändlichster Betrug! Verrat!," etc.), for example, takes on scalding intensity. (It is always a great moment, but here the orchestra is simply frightening.)

The one mild surprise for me was the quickness with which some of the bigger statements are taken. This is apparent as early as the Dawn interlude, where the first entrance of the Siegfried-as-Hero motif tends to go forward brightly, instead of, let's say, holding back



massively. (I'm not arguing markings—Wagner's indications are marvelously precise in this passage, but they are descriptive of a feeling he wants as opposed to a metronome marking. And in any case, one must always go for the spirit, not the letter.) This same tendency is noticeable in the Rhine Journey and several other important passages, and I note it not so much as a criticism (though my taste happens to lean toward a weightier conception) but as a description. The Funeral March is measured and extremely hard-edged, with the timpani giving us sharp, rather flat shots, like pistol cracks. I confess to being a bit disappointed in this and in the engineering of some passages when set beside the London recording. DGG's sound has ample range and must be accounted a very good studio job, but it does not measure up to the impact and presence of London's at the biggest moments, such as the Funeral March or the gathering of the vassals. Solti's reading, too, is more exciting at such points, though less warm and lovely at others, and more willing to aim at the supercharged effect at the expense of, sometimes, the sense of maturity and balance and proportion that is in Karajan's. As interested readers will remember, my own preference is for the Karajan interpretations of both *Walküre* (particularly Acts II and III) and *Rheingold*, with a respectful bow to Solti's undeniable dynamism. I feel the superiority is less clear-cut here, though the differences between the conductors remain essentially what they have been all along. Both are certainly superior readings, magnificently executed by two superb orchestras. Solti's is, by and large, better recorded, and that is a significant edge in this music.

As with most latter-day Wagner performances, the ice becomes a good deal thinner when we move to consideration of the singers. Again, Karajan has followed through his conception with thoroughness: it is simply that in *Götterdämmerung*, the heaviest and most heroic of the *Ring* operas in terms of principal roles, the shortcomings of his casting are, on the whole, emphasized. Karajan has from the outset opted for voices of some smoothness and tonal beauty, and has tried to secure

from them performances that embrace more genuine singing than has become the norm: he has made a real effort to ban the wobble, the bark, the ponderous bellow.

Since the production of a vocal sound that has the qualities of great endurance and exceptional volume, plus those of tonal beauty and dynamic control over a normal singing range, is one of the highest demands of vocal technique (at least as high as the production of pages of fioriture or exceptionally high tessitura, and interestingly, not at all opposed to those demands in terms of the underlying technical basis), and since contemporary standards of vocal technique are in an advanced stage of deterioration, it is not surprising that Karajan's preference for sound that is not overtly ugly and labored has led him to cast on the light side, trading one set of weaknesses for another which is superficially less offensive.

This has seemed to me a sensible and defensible position, but I am afraid that in *Götterdämmerung* this hasn't worked out well. It is not, of course, a question of volume, since the recording compensates quite nicely, and not too obviously, for that sort of shortcoming. Unhappily, the question of volume is directly related to the question of timbre and a sense of freedom in singing: the voice that is genuinely beautiful and free in its function is always a voice that carries well; the converse of this proposition is also true. That is why casting that doesn't work well in the opera house usually doesn't work well on records either: the rare exceptions are with singers whose techniques are virtually perfect, and whose tone is therefore solid and ringing and free from top to bottom, but whose natural limitations of resonance make certain roles a bit problematic in the opera house, however well they sing them (Bjoerling's Radames is a good example).

That is not the case here: the roles are simply under-cast, with a couple of exceptions. I wish I could confirm the prediction of Joseph Wechsberg, writing of the Salzburg performances in the June issue of *Opera*: "Doubtless, the recording will be perfect, since both Dernesch and Brilioth have beautiful voices, and the



Siegfried Lauterwasser

recording wizards will do the rest." Baloney! or, if Mr. Wechsberg prefers, *Weisswurst!* Sure, the recording wizards can compensate for volume, but they cannot substitute an open throat for a closed one, a free tone for a squeezed one. Listeners who are vocally knowledgeable spot the difference in two bars; others experience it only in a general discomfort and unease in listening, a vague dissatisfaction. But turning a dial does not alter it in the slightest. Voices out of whack are voices out of whack. *Punkt.*

Miss Dernesch *does* make beautiful sound much of the time, mostly in the middle part of the voice. The general timbre and caliber of her instrument would be a good match for Elsa, a fairly good match for Sieglinde. It is hardly within hailing distance of the *Götterdämmerung* Brünnhilde, except in some of the more tender and introspective moments, many of which she renders in a most expressive fashion. There can be no question of her musicality or artistic sensitivity, and these qualities command respect. But the voice is simply not of sufficient format, and in an effort to meet the demands of the role she is emphasizing the technical imbalance in her voice, driving an overheavy adjustment toward the top to secure some heft and thrust. She gets there, but there is no leeway whatever. She is obviously a fine talent and deserves a long and successful career. But she is just not cut out for this task, and there is really no proper comparison with Nilsson—one might prefer a two-door compact to a heavy tank, but not in the Battle of the Bulge.

Brilioth is even less persuasive. Again, this has nothing at all to do with his intelligence or musical instincts, or with his interpretive understanding; it has only to do with his vocal abilities *vis à vis* this role. The voice does not sound like even a potential Heldenentenor; with a revamped technique, Cavaradossi might well issue from this throat in good shape, and possibly the lighter Wagner roles, such as Stolzing or Erik. But as it is, the instrument is hampered by constriction and insufficient development of range, so that his attempts at a role which would probably be wrong for him under the best

of conditions add up to a complicated sequence of compromises which half solve first this passage, then that. As I say, he is clearly an artist of superior musical intentions, and at his best musters a bright, pleasant tone within a restricted range of pitch; when he tries to sing *piano* the voice simply drops out. For all the failings of Wolfgang Windgassen, the rival Siegfried, he must be preferred by a clear margin.

Karl Ridderbusch is a substantially more complete singer, in a technical sense; yet his Hagen too is less than satisfying. Again, the color is pleasant and light, and the temperament sounds distinctly lyric rather than dramatic. The strength of the voice is concentrated toward the top—he produces fine sustained Fs and Fs, and even a good F sharp. When the music lies above the staff, he makes an imposing effect (the Call to the Vassals, for instance, is effective). But in the long conversational passages in the octave below middle C, the effect is bland and uninteresting—the Watch on the Rhine goes by almost without incident. And again, his soft singing is an unconvincing croon.

I am sorry to keep at it, but the others don't afford much satisfaction either. Guttrune lies very badly for Janowitz; it has almost nothing of the long line on which she can let her voice out, and relatively little in the upper-middle area where she makes her best effect. She sounds terribly constrained and often inaudible—one is hardly certain she has sung some of the lines. I got little sense of character from her work, or much spark either, despite the magnificent support given her by Karajan in Act III. Thomas Stewart is at considerably less than his best as Gunther—a role which should be ideal for his baritone. He sounds rather guttural and shaky much of the time, with an awkward negotiation of the top and not much line—he seems to want to speak the role rather than really to sing through it. However, the voice does have a basic stature and vitality, and one is grateful for his attempts to pick things up dramatically—he is practically the only sign of life in Act I, Scene 1.

In this lineup, Christa Ludwig makes a towering impression. It is unlikely one will ever hear her match as the Second Norn, and she is quite splendid in the Waltraute Scene, singing it at least as well as she did in the Solti set, and bringing full stature to the casting of at least one important role. Kélémen is, as earlier in the cycle, a good Alberich, though he sounds even lighter, almost tenory, and does not capture the sinister mystery of the scene as fully as Neidlinger. Chookasian sings richly and with steadier tone than has recently been usual as the First Norn; Ligendza, though, is no match for her partners as the Third Norn. The Rhine Maidens are O.K.

I hope I need not add that one would be delirious to encounter this cast in all but the half-dozen major opera houses of the West; in this context, though, that is not the point. It does not match the music on its own terms at most of the crucial junctures. Nor does it, I think, provide clear superiority to the London set at any significant point. For practical purposes, the set rides on the shoulders of Herbert von Karajan.

WAGNER: Götterdämmerung. Helga Dernesch (s), Brünnhilde; Gundula Janowitz (s), Guttrune; Edda Moser (s), Woglinde; Catarina Ligendza (s), Third Norn; Christa Ludwig (ms), Waltraute and Second Norn; Liselotte Rebmann (ms), Wellgunde; Anna Reynolds (ms), Flosshilde; Lili Chookasian (c), First Norn; Helge Brilioth (t), Siegfried; Thomas Stewart (b), Gunther; Zoltan Kélémen (b), Alberich; Karl Ridderbusch (bs), Hagen; Chorus of the German State Opera, Berlin; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. Deutsche Grammophon 2716001 \$35.88 (six discs).

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by Robert C. Marsh

THERE IS A GREAT deal of poetic justice in Eugene Ormandy recording this music at the present stage of his career since for many American listeners his 78-rpm version from the early 1930s, made with the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra for RCA Victor (M 256), was the primary access to the work until Klemperer provided an edition for the early long play catalogue.

A new generation of record collectors may have heard of the Ormandy album as a matter of folklore, while the conductor's actual achievement with this music remained a matter of conjecture. Well, speculate no more. If a man of seventy-one can recapture his former self of nearly forty years ago, Ormandy appears to have done it. Many, I am sure, will regard this as one of the great Philadelphia Orchestra recordings of all time. Certainly few albums present in such resplendent tone and sonic fidelity the artistic likeness of the ensemble Ormandy has been leading annually for thirty-four years. Confronted with a set that you realize, intuitively, will be heard at every hi-fi show of the season, the critic has no choice but to salute producer Peter Dellheim and the engineers.

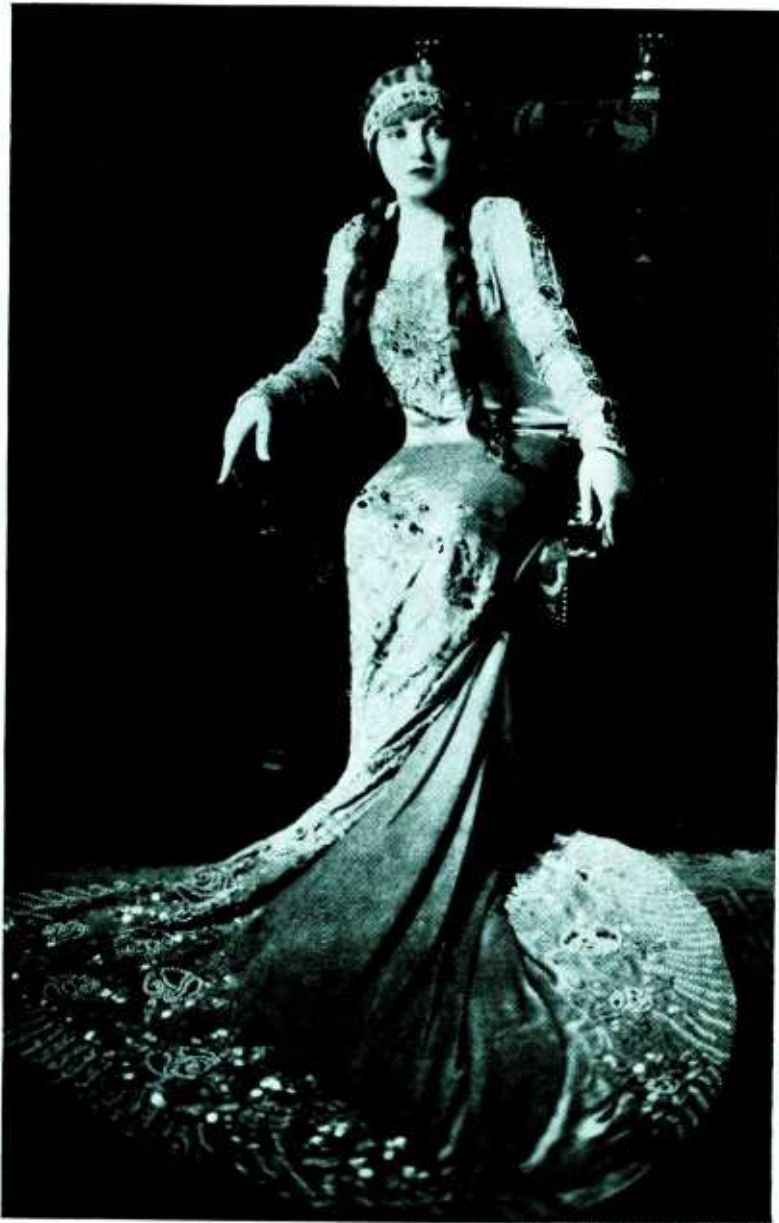
But artistically this is a strong set as well. Ormandy projects a high degree of personal involvement with this music. You can sense the empathy from the opening bars, so in addition to that fantastic Philadelphia sound there is the sweep and energy of Ormandy's finest performances, big, expanding lyric phrases that are beautifully shaded in tonal colors and shaped in strong union of rhythm and harmony. Something also must be said about the dynamics, how you can turn the volume up to formidable levels and seem to gain clarity without distortion and without losing the sensitive quiet pages that are also given a full measure of attention.

The chorus is a good one, perhaps not quite as fine as that in the Kubelik and Haitink sets, but more than acceptable. All alto soloists in this music must now face the standard of Christa Ludwig's singing of *Urlicht* in the Bernstein/New York Philharmonic set of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. Birgit Finnila is not in that class, but she is better than you will encounter in most American concert presentations of this score. Soprano Evelyn Mandac is even finer, and her voice projects forcefully and with good tone in the difficult passages of the finale.

And that grand finale. If my memory is trustworthy, the Minneapolis set used a pipe organ, real church bells, and, since it was made in concert, offered a few audience noises as additional punctuation. This time Ormandy seems to have an electric organ (quite a good one) and something between a really large bell and the usual orchestral chime. Haitink gets a little more out of these pages, but the Ormandy effect is very grand and completely avoids the anticlimactic quality of other sets with their doorbell chimes and other tonal inadequacies. I presume the text used is the third edition of the score. All I have at hand is a second edition and that does not appear to match exactly.

With the arrival of this album we are generously supplied with Mahler Seconds, so much so that you can't really call any one of them the best. But if you choose this, it's pretty sure to make you happy—provided you don't let it break the lease.

MAHLER: Symphony No. 2, in C minor ("Resurrection"). Evelyn Mandac, soprano; Birgit Finnila, mezzo; Singing City Choirs; Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. RCA Red Seal LSC 7066, \$11.98 (two discs).



For sheer sound,
Rosa Ponselle's soprano
remains unchallenged.

The Ponselle Miracle

by David Hamilton

THE PHRASE-MAKERS long ago ran out of superlatives and metaphors to describe Rosa Ponselle's vocal quality, and I won't try to compete any more than is necessary to urge this record upon those who have never heard the Ponselle voice, an incredibly fluent instrument that could range from silvery clarity to chocolate richness, with a fantastic evenness of scale, from well below middle C (cf. the "Suicidio" from *Gioconda*, unfortunately not included in the present reissue) to top C. As sheer sound, there hasn't been anything like it in this repertory since.

That's a very sweeping statement, and I don't make it lightly (although perhaps I should make clear that intonation and flexibility are for me completely interwoven with the concept of "sheer sound"). Let's take as a test case the aria from *Ernani*, comparing it with a batch of later recordings that I had at hand: Milanov (from the 1956 Met broadcast), Cerquetti, De los Angeles, Callas, Sutherland, Price. The first two ladies make rather heavy weather of the piece (Cerquetti, per-

haps wisely, did not even attempt the cabaletta for records), not because of the tempo—that's effect, not cause—but because they haven't a sufficiently well-focused sound to move around with real flexibility. There is no denying that Milanov could do many wonderful things with her voice (her floated high notes could be very beautiful indeed, something that Ponselle apparently didn't have in her vocal armory), but it wasn't the kind of lithe, well-pointed sound that the American soprano commanded.

De los Angeles comes pretty close to Ponselle in terms of sound. The voice thins out at the top, however, and she doesn't boast the fabulous trill that Ponselle unleashes at the end of the first strain of the cabaletta. It is nonetheless a very musical version, part of one of the best LP operatic recitals ever made (Odeon LALP 270).

From Callas, we hear undeniable revelations of character and musical emphasis, in the recitative as well as

The Ponselle Miracle

the aria, but we also must put up with a sound that is no pleasure. She believes in every accent that Verdi marked, and even makes an effective diminuendo on that trill—but alas, what she fobs off as the trill itself is no more than a gargling shake, and throughout, everything over mezzo *piano* is ridden with a ghastly tremolo. To be sure, this record (Angel 35763) is relatively late Callas—but even at her best, the lady's most sincere admirers (among whom I certainly number myself) could not claim that the voice, for all the variety of color and flexibility that she elicited from it, was any match for Ponselle's in richness and consistency.

Like De los Angeles, Sutherland comes close in vocal terms (a very early record, London OS 25111): a smooth, even sound that has no trouble reaching the top and is furnished with trills to a fare thee well. The mincing phrasing is another story, of course, and it is no match for Ponselle's enthusiasm. De los Angeles' sincerity, or Callas' penetration.

None of these ladies except Callas would be disposed to compete with Ponselle in such operas as *Aida*, *Forza*, or *Trovatore*; the current successor to that repertory on records is Leontyne Price, and I wish it were possible to say that she is consistently in the same league. On occasion she has been nearer than in the *Ernani* aria (from the complete recording), where the results are labored, vibrato-ridden (when she attempts the indicated *messa da voce* on "*Un Eden*" near the end of the slow aria, you think for a minute that she's attempting a trill), and clumsy at critical technical points (the release from the uneven trill in the cabaletta is awkward in the extreme).

That much-mentioned trill and the upbeat to the next phrase, skipping over a high B flat, comprise a touchstone passage for demonstrating the absolute inter-relationship of technique and musicianship; you may know that this is an upbeat, but you can't even consider phrasing it as such unless you can sing it with absolute security. Ponselle can.

But then this record is full of such touchstones. Another one is the passage in the *Aida* Tomb Scene beginning "*Vedi? di morte l'angelo*," with its perfectly poised staccatos and its graceful curve over the climactic B flat. Much of Martinelli's singing in this scene is phrased with equal mastery, and I'm only disappointed that they both sing so loudly in the unison statement of the "*O terra addio*" melody. (This theme, which I suspect owes not a little to the famous—in its day—*andante amoroso* passage, in the same key, in the fourth act of *Les Huguenots*, is not easy to sing in tune, but there are no problems with these singers.) Or there is the opening of the *Forza* aria, with the impeccable "hairpin" dynamics on the first note and the pure intonation of the descending half-steps. The *Norma* selections hardly need further advertisement at this date: they offer declamatory authority, rhythmic spine, and (in the duet) total ensemble.

Let me make clear that although I have emphasized sound and technique, Ponselle was no cipher as an interpreter. She had the born singer's natural feeling about how to wrap the voice around a phrase; she read rhythms with unusual accuracy for the period (cf. the *Miserere*); and her training was close enough to the Verdi idiom so that she never did anything unstylish. The *Norma* excerpts may be less correct historically, at least by the lights of today's view of that idiom, but they are consistent in style and always graceful.

As complete musical expressions, some of the arias

on this reissue don't quite come off. The *Forza* aria is rushed (and defaced by nibbling little cuts along the way, presumably in the interest of including the final "*Miserere pane*" section), so that her expansions at the ends of phrases tend to sound exaggerated; I rather suspect they would make perfect sense at a more reposeful tempo. Ponselle never sang *Otello* on the stage, and perhaps for that reason the two arias sound a little characterless in comparison with, say, De los Angeles (on the record mentioned above); too, the recording may not help, for these are the only acoustics in this batch.

The *Aida* arias will in themselves make this record a mandatory purchase for even the most dedicated Ponselle collectors, for these are electrically recorded versions from 1926, not previously released. The "*Ritorna vincitor*" is slightly slower and firmer in rhythm than the acoustic version recently reissued on Victrola VIC 1395, but remarkably similar in most details (a still later electric version from 1928 has never been dubbed). The reason for the non-issue of this "*O patria mia*" is likely to have been the high C, which is flat and not well produced, but the remainder is very impressive, particularly for the kind of vocal force Ponselle can bring to bear on the descending phrase from high A that follows the climax. (The Schubert *Ständchen*, sung as a duet in rather peculiar German, is also a first issue: not surprisingly, the voices of the two sisters are well matched. What "famous heroine" this piece represents—see the disc's title—I am at a loss to say.)

These dubbings are not as "live" in sound as some I have heard, but they are pitched correctly, and the side joins have been well made (previous issues of the *Aida* finale, including a better-sounding British Camden disc of several years ago, did not attempt the overlap splices). The liner notes are more enthusiastic than informative, in the style apparently favored for such reissues; however, recording dates are given and also accompaniment details (but somebody forgot to include the name of Grace Anthony, who sings Amneris in the Tomb Scene). A serious warning: like every other RCA record I received from the current release, this one was plagued by skipping grooves. Be sure you buy from a dealer who will exchange defective copies.

A final point: Ponselle was twenty-seven years old when she made the *Otello* arias, and just past her thirty-second birthday when the last of these discs (the *Norma* selections) were accomplished. In the fall of 1929 came the Great Depression, and Victor did not ever again record her in operatic material. Indeed, except for a batch of songs made ten years later in Hollywood, Ponselle did not record again commercially until the 1950s, when she taped a number of songs in her Baltimore home—pleasant and interesting souvenirs, but hardly what this voice and temperament were created for. I hope we will have reissues of the remaining Victor operatic material (arias from *Vestale*, *Africana*, *Gioconda*, and more *Aida* and *Forza* material with Martinelli and Pinza), and perhaps some day the best of the extant air-checks from the 1930s—but in the meantime treasure this record, for the singing on it is truly irreplaceable.

ROSA PONSELLE: "Norma and Other Famous Heroines." **SCHUBERT:** Serenade. **VERDI:** *Aida:* *O patria mia*; *Ritorna vincitor*; Tomb Scene; *Il Trovatore:* *Miserere*; *Ernani:* *Ernani, involami*; *Otello:* *Salce, salce*; *Ave Maria*; *La Forza del destino:* *Pace, pace, mio Dio*. **BELLINI:** *Norma:* *Casta diva*; *Mira, o Norma*. Rosa Ponselle, soprano; Carmela Ponselle, mezzo (in the Schubert); Marion Telva, contralto (in the *Norma* duet); Giovanni Martinelli, tenor (in the *Aida* Tomb Scene and *Trovatore*); various orchestras. RCA Victrola VIC 1507, \$2.98 (mono only, recorded 1924–29).

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BACH: Cantata No. 51, "Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen." SCARLATTI, A.: Cantata, "Su le sponde del Tebro." Carole Bogard, soprano; Armando Ghitalla, trumpet; Chamber Orchestra of Copenhagen, John Moriarty, cond. Cambridge CRS 2710, \$5.98.

I've often wondered what kind of voice Bach had in mind for his fireworks display piece, *Jauchzet Gott*. To expect a boy treble to do it justice is absurd, but then many other arias in the cantatas and passions also make huge demands upon the limited performing forces that were available at the time. A castrato has been suggested, but it is doubtful if Bach knew any—certainly not in Leipzig at least. A female soprano could have performed this cantata some place other than the church, but few sopranos are able to meet the tremendous demands either. Well, here is Carole Bogard to settle the matter once and for all: hers is the voice the piece was written for. Never have I heard these tortuous coloratura lines so precisely (and so rapidly) negotiated, and never have I heard a more thorough stylistic awareness brought to this piece. Miss Bogard floats with astonishing ease right up to the top of the range without a hint of a break, striking each note along the way with perfect intonation and rhythmic accuracy. Add to this a breath control enabling her to sing exceptionally long phrases in one breath and an unerring stylistic sense in matters of ornamentation and phrasing and we would have the perfect performance—almost, but not quite. Neither Mr. Moriarty nor his chamber orchestra can compete with Miss Bogard's virtuosity. The two solo violins in the chorale movement are often excruciatingly out of tune, and sloppy retards and entrances mar numerous spots in the score. The one remarkable exception is the solo trumpet playing of Armando Ghitalla, which fully equals the hair-raising brilliance of the soprano. The small ensemble does play with a good tone, however, and a very agreeable chamber-music style with which Ghitalla blends very nicely. I still like Agnes Giebel's more elegant version on Telefunken (S 9513), but Miss Bogard's Fourth-of-July approach tends to make all the competition sound more like Good Friday. Just for the record: I find nothing of value at all in Schwarzkopf's reading, which offers bravura singing in place of taste, musicianship, or content.

The Scarlatti cantata, *Su le sponde del Tebro*, makes a good disc mate for the Bach. Both are accompanied by solo trumpet, strings, and continuo, and both call for exceptional virtuosity from soprano and trumpet; but otherwise the contrasts are more apparent than the similarities. The Scarlatti is a highly dramatic work which looks back to the madrigals of Monteverdi rather than forward to the quasi-operatic style of *Jauchzet Gott*. The opening aria calls for quite as much fireworks as the Bach, but the second aria gives Miss Bogard free rein to express all the anguish and tears contained in the text. The performance is based on a forthcoming edi-

tion by Prof. Edwin Hanley and is presumably the first recording of the cantata in its complete and authentic form. It is a moving performance in any case, and might be even more so if we could understand Miss Bogard's coloratura soprano nondiction. The recording is warm and clear with the soprano and trumpet perhaps moved too far forward in relation to the more distant strings. James Weaver's interesting and appropriate harpsichord realizations also deserve high praise. C.F.G.

BACH: Suites for Orchestra: No. 1, in C, S. 1066; No. 2, in B minor, S. 1067; No. 3, in D, S. 1068; No. 4, in D, S. 1069. English Chamber Orchestra, Raymond Leppard, cond. Philips 839792/3, \$5.98 each (two discs).

Record collectors familiar with the work of the English Chamber Orchestra, especially when conducted by Raymond Leppard, know it to be one of the world's truly superb ensembles. These musicians have thoroughly mastered the art of chamber-music playing and problems of intonation, precise ensemble, and internal balance are virtually unknown to them. As might be surmised, then, this is easily the cleanest and most beautifully played version of the suites now available on records.

Furthermore, Leppard leads energetic and buoyant performances that abound in stylistic felicities, both perfectly accurate and delightful. For instance he often varies the repeats of the inner movements: in the first Gavotte of the First Suite, oboes and bassoon drop out the second time through; in the Menuet of the Fourth Suite the strings are similarly tacit in the repeats, leaving only the three oboes and bassoon. For the repeats of the Air from the Second Suite, the solo violin plays a highly embellished version of his part, making an entirely new piece out of it. When the elaborations aren't so drastic Leppard at least provides a nicely judged contrast of dynamics, sometimes bringing a different voice into prominence for the repeat.

And this brings me to one of the few complaints I have about this recording: the performances are just too perfect, too neat and precise—too clever, if you will. By the time I got through the Fourth Suite, I found that I had been playing a game with Mr. Leppard, trying to guess in advance what little trick he had up his sleeve for the next movement. Mind you, I have no quibbles with any of his surprises, but their frequency became just a bit too predictably unpredictable. This.

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-  OPEN REEL
-  4-TRACK CARTRIDGE
-  8-TRACK CARTRIDGE
-  CASSETTE

though, is a purely subjective reaction and may not be shared by all listeners. I have, however, a more concrete objection to Leppard's decision to omit almost all the repeats in the opening movements; only the repeat of the first Grave section of the First Suite is observed. This, of course, seriously robs the *ouvertures* of their large-scale importance in relation to the dance movements that follow and constitutes a rather unfortunate blemish on these otherwise intelligent performances. I might add that Leppard's handling of the thorny matter of double-dotting in these movements seems entirely suitable. Combinations of a dotted quarter and eighth note are consistently altered to double-dotted quarter and sixteenth, while dotted eighths and sixteenths are played as written. I do prefer, however, Harnoncourt's original instrument version (Telefunken SAWT 9509/10), in which the double-dotting is applied far more liberally and incisively. Harnoncourt also observes all the repeats.

Both these imported Philips discs (packaged separately) are flawlessly produced. The harpsichord, by the way, is nicely balanced throughout and adds many delightful embellishments. C.F.G.

BACH: The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book II: Preludes and Fugues: No. 9, in E; No. 10, in E minor; No. 11, in F; No. 12, in F minor; No. 13, in F sharp; No. 14, in F sharp minor; No. 15, in G; No. 16, in G minor. Glenn Gould, piano. Columbia MS 7409, \$5.98.

This is the next-to-last installment of Gould's projected six-record recording of the complete *Well-Tempered Clavier* and includes the middle eight preludes and fugues of the second volume. Once again Gould proves himself to be one of the most interesting and unusual of our Bach interpreters. For my money there is no



Glenn Gould—Bach—playing with conviction and a unique musical excitement.

one who can compare with him when it comes to bringing out the essential textural organization of these pieces, nor is there anyone who can match the originality of his over-all conception. Several of the pieces are played much faster and more staccato than is common (notably the Ninth, Tenth, and Eleventh preludes), but I am completely convinced by the conviction of these performances.

As is usually the case with Gould, there are puzzling spots. For example, the third note of the E major Fugue (No. 9), written as a half note, is here played as an eighth, at least in its first few appearances. And Gould's constant variation of the length of the dotted sixteenth/thirty-second figure in the G minor Prelude (No. 16), which admittedly has a certain fascination about it, finally seems a bit mannered and contrived. Yet there is so much that is wonderful about this disc that one shouldn't dwell on its perversities. Gould lends an excitement to these pieces which is quite unique, and listening to him play Bach is for me one of music's great joys.

R.P.M.

BEETHOVEN: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 5, in E flat, Op. 73 ("Emperor"). Stephen Bishop, piano; London Symphony Orchestra, Colin Davis, cond. Philips 839794, \$5.98.

In many ways this is a musicianly and provocative performance of the *Emperor*. Both soloist and conductor scrutinize many details glossed over by most other virtuoso teams. Note, for example, Davis' firm, ironfisted control of the orchestra and his insistence upon keeping the movement of various instrumental strands clear. The timpani and double bass in particular emerge as truly autonomous and audible forces, not the thumping, stumbling maze that one so often hears in less painstaking (and less realistically reproduced) versions. Bishop too plays with technical refinement and views many of the score's facets with classical detachment.

And yet the interpretation fails to move me. As with Solomon's well-remembered monophonic version, Bishop's cultivated account has a certain patrician cast; unlike Solomon's, though—and possibly only through the fault of a rather disadvantageous placement of the solo instrument—Bishop's work here strikes me as chilly, inhibited, and bloodless. The weighty octave passages in the first movement and the initial statement of the Rondo theme take on an icy, supercilious tonal edge, while the quiet, more meditative portions (e.g., the beginning of the slow movement) are so reticent as to be matter-of-fact. Though my initial reaction is unfavorable, I must re-emphasize that Bishop and Davis are no routine musicians: one needs a bit of time to mull over this performance before passing a final judgment.

H.G.

BEETHOVEN: Mass in C, Op. 86. Gundula Janowitz, soprano; Julia Hamari, alto; Horst R. Laubenthal, tenor; Ernst

Gerold Schramm, bass; Munich Bach Choir and Orchestra, Karl Richter, cond. Deutsche Grammophon 139446, \$5.98.

The Beethoven bicentenary is drawing attention to many of the composer's lesser-known works, among them this beautiful and most intelligently conceived Mass. Beethoven set out to write a work entirely different from Haydn's late works in the form, with their grave baroque grandeur; and indeed, there are very few "Haydnish" passages in the Mass in C—a notable exception, doubly striking because it is so unexpectedly like the music of his old teacher, is the fast part of the Sanctus. Much of Beethoven's music is deliberately, and deceptively, simple: homophonic, straightforward, and almost folksonglike in the artful simplicity of its melodic lines. It is a difficult work to project successfully, which may be why it is so rarely played. Not that the *Missa Solemnis* is an easy work—technically it is far more difficult and musically much more involved—but there never was a problem of projection as far as *Missa* is concerned. Such passages as the "*In Gloria Dei Patris*" at the end of the Gloria surge out in monumental fugal grandeur to grip the heart and imagination. Not so with the C major Mass: much of its message seems slightly shrouded, oblique, difficult to assess.

Perhaps the oblique does not lie well under Richter's baton: at any rate, there is an undefinable something missing from this outwardly beautiful record, graced by the lovely voice of Gundula Janowitz and by fabulous precision from the Munich Bach Choir. One has the feeling that Richter is not committed to the music, or that he is not entirely in sympathy with it. At any rate, one is left with a distinctly cool impression. I went back to two other versions, both of which I found preferable: the suave, sophisticated Beecham record on Angel (a slowish Kyrie, but on the whole immensely sympathetic and very musical) and the more straightforward Decca record conducted by Frederic Waldman. Although Waldman is no match for Beecham's sophistication or Richter's smoothness, the Decca record shows, in its way, a firm dedication to the score that I missed from the DGG.

H.C.R.L.

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 5, in C minor, Op. 67. SCHUBERT: Symphony No. 8, in B minor, D. 759 ("Unfinished"). Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa, cond. RCA Red Seal LSC 3132, \$5.98.

I can think of no higher compliment to pay a conductor than to say that his Beethoven Fifth reminds me of the performance by the late Guido Cantelli. Ozawa's version merits such praise: it is one of the best recordings of the mighty work to knock on this reviewer's door in many a month. As with Cantelli, the young Japanese maestro leads a carefully considered yet thoroughly ardent interpretation. There is incisiveness and weight to the leadership and the internal

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Seiji Ozawa—a carefully considered yet thoroughly ardent Beethoven Fifth.

tension does not spill out all at once, but rather is gradually gathered and finally unleashed with a vengeance in the broadly paced finale. Scrupulous attention is given to note values and antiphonal details (e.g., the string/wind part of the first-movement coda is exceedingly clear and well planned), but such premeditation is never permitted to dull the inexorable forward momentum of the music. The opening movement has weight and crispness; though there is a feeling of reserve, the climactic moments are held in check for later. The slow movement is lyrical, sensitively nuanced and, as with Cantelli, graceful, thoughtful, and a shade detached. And like Cantelli, Ozawa molds the woodwind lines with a sort of loving, almost prayerful tenuto; the music really breathes and speaks. The Chicago horns are marvelous in the Scherzo—indeed the cold, clear, unaffected sound of this orchestra is ideal throughout—and as I've already indicated, the finale erupts in a blaze of beautifully controlled glory. Note the fine detailing of the instrumental strands in the central development or the carefully judged accelerando at the very end. Everything sounds beautifully modest and natural, nothing ever seems contrived or egocentric, yet it is intensely personal, committed, and executed with high artistry. Some may find the long reverberation of RCA's recording a bit overdone, but it undoubtedly adds to the general massiveness and nowhere does it compromise Ozawa's razor-sharp clarity.

Ozawa's *Unfinished* is also thoughtful, sober, and controlled. The climaxes are galvanic and give one the impression that every instrumental detail had been assigned its proper place beforehand. The first-movement tempo is rather restrained and moderate; the slow movement sings agreeably and its con moto urgency at first makes it seem faster than the first movement. It's a fine version, though I myself find one or two others (the Casals

on Columbia and the Cantelli/Seraphim particularly) a shade more committed and intense. (RCA's paper-thin record, incidentally, is a new kind of pressing ostensibly designed to avert warpage. According to the reliable word of one RCA executive, no cheapening of their product is involved.) H.G.

BERLIOZ: Songs for Chorus: Chant guerrier; Prière du matin; Le Temple universel; Chant sacré; Ballet des ombres; La Menace des Francs; Veni Creator; Hymne à la France; Tantum ergo; Chant des Bretons; Chanson à boire. Ryland Davies, tenor; Peter Smith, piano and harmonium; Heinrich Schütz Choir and Chorale, Roger Norrington, cond. Argo ZRG 635, \$5.95.

More footnotes to last year's Berlioz centenary—in fact, we're even beginning to get some duplicate footnotes: the three choruses from *Irlande (Chant guerrier; Chant sacré; Chanson à boire)* were included some months ago in Oiseau-Lyre's complete version of that mixed bag of songs and choruses (SOL 305). That disc made use of the Monteverdi Choir, and now we have the Heinrich Schütz Chorale—both rather far from their usual line of country; as the famous line from Molière has it, "*Que diable allaient-ils faire dans cette galère?*" Actually, there's not much in the comparison, although the Schütziens sound more numerous than the Monteverdians, and Ryland Davies is a smoother tenor soloist.

For the rest, there are intimate Latin motets, fervent patriotic anthems, a setting of Lamartine's *Hymne de l'enfant à son réveil* (Liszt's version of this poem turned up last year on Qualiton LPX 11381), and a rather striking early *Ballet des ombres* from 1829, which anticipates distinctive features of later works, notably the *Queen Mab Scherzo*. The historical background of this music, which

stems from various periods of Berlioz' career, is well outlined in Hugh MacDonald's liner note, so I won't go into detail here. Without scores, it's hard to be certain that Berlioz' every wish is carried out—but I am sure that the *Hymne à la France* was a much grander affair on the occasion of its first performance in 1844. The piano accompaniment used here is not a satisfactory solution.

Come to think of it, a re-creation of that 1844 concert would certainly be the sonic spectacular to end all sonic spectaculars. Just consider what Berlioz put on, with immense choral and orchestral forces, according to his own description of the program: "the *Frischütz* Overture with the *andante* given by twenty-four horns; the prayer from *Moses* . . . in which the twenty-five [*sic!*] harps . . . played the arpeggios in four-part chords instead of in single notes"; the Blessing of the Swords from *Les Huguenots* with the solo voices multiplied by twenty—and so on. It's enough to make Culshaw feel like a piker!

Seriously, this new Argo will be welcome to those who have been carefully following the fuller and more detailed image of Berlioz as it has emerged on records over the last couple of years—nothing essential, but most of it intriguing. Texts and translations are included. D.H.

CHAUSSON: Viviane—See Schmitt: La Tragédie de Salomé.

COPLAND: Connotations for Orchestra (1962); Inscape (1967). New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein, cond. Columbia MS 7431, \$5.98.

Connotations is, of course, the work that Copland was commissioned to write for the opening concert of Philharmonic Hall in September 1962, and this is the same recording that was previously available in the "Opening Night at Philharmonic Hall" album; it is, in other words, a recording of the work's world premiere. Copland, vintage 1962, came as something of a surprise to the gala audience assembled on that occasion; apparently the world celebrities and philanthropic figures—two social categories not widely noted for their assiduous attention to the course of contemporary music—expected something dulcet and folklike, corresponding to their image of the composer of *Billy the Kid*, *A Lincoln Portrait*, and *Appalachian Spring*.

If that original audience was disappointed in its expectations, there is no reason why anyone who is aware of what Copland (and the rest of the musical world) has been up to in the years since World War II—or, for that matter, in such earlier pieces as the Piano Variations, *Short Symphony*, and *Statements*—should be similarly let down. *Connotations* is a work of considerable power, orchestral invention, and formal ingenuity. The composer speaks of it as close to "a free treatment of the baroque form of the chaconne," and the short-range articulations, achieved through generally

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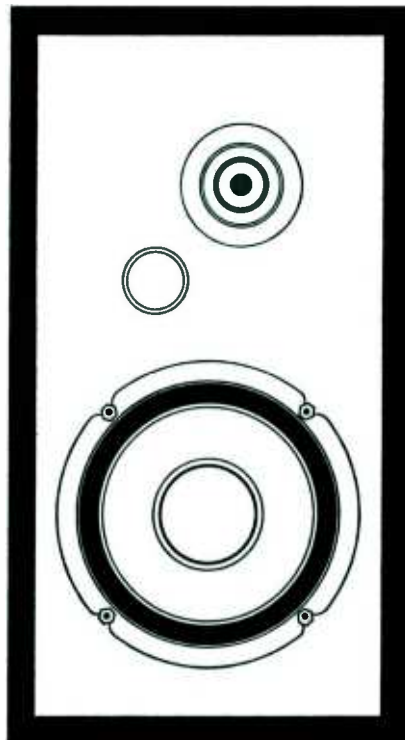
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clear-cut differentiations of scoring, are not at all difficult to perceive (if hardly as regular as in the classic examples of the chaconne).

The opening sequence of abrasive chords passes through a series of extremely various transmutations, which fall into several larger groups distinguished by tempo and expressive character, yet always returning to the memorable basic sonorities. Since that original material is harmonically rather static, the piece seems to be circling around and around, rather as if one were looking at the many facets of a rough-cut stone. In this respect, *Connotations* is quite dissimilar to the chaconnes of Bach and Brahms, with their ebbing and flowing harmonic drive, for its impetus is all rhythm and sonority. Throughout the work there are many fascinating and beautiful textural details: for example, the "variation" beginning at measure 90, with its chords of glockenspiel, celesta, and string harmonics.

Bernstein and the Philharmonic did themselves proud on this occasion: *Connotations* cannot be described as an easy job for the orchestra, but there is very little missing here, and the rhythmic and articulative dynamism of the performance is an important factor in putting the piece across. (Actually, some things are missing with respect to the published score, but the performers are not at fault; apparently several measures were added in a few places after the premiere, and I also noticed some minor retouching of the orchestration.)

Inscape was also a New York Philharmonic commission, in honor of the orchestra's 125th anniversary; completed in August 1967, it was given a "preseason tryout" at Ann Arbor during the orchestra's tour in September of that year, and the New York performance and recording session followed not long thereafter. It shares many characteristics with *Connotations*, but the emphasis is decidedly more lyrical; again one seems to be looking at a basically unchanging core of material from different aspects, but there is less variety (comparatively little fast music, for example), and somehow the total result is less impressive. Here too the Philharmonic plays well, and Bernstein handles the needed flexibility of tempo with skill.

On both sides, the recorded sound is basically good, although the "live" recording of *Connotations* seems more natural than the studio job on *Inscape*, where the perspective of such things as solo strings is a bit exaggerated. As in the past on Copland recordings, this one gives rather short measure—apparently the only result of earlier complaints along these lines is the omission of timings from the jacket of this record!

D.H.

DUPARC: *Léona*—See Schmitt: *La Tragédie de Salomé*.

JOLIVET: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra ("Equatoriales"). MILHAUD: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No.

1; *La Création du monde* (quartet version). Philippe Entremont, piano; Jacques Ghestem, violin; Trio à Cordes Français (in *La Création du monde*); Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris, André Jolivet, cond. (in the Jolivet); Darius Milhaud, cond. (in the Milhaud). Columbia MS 7432, \$5.98.

What does one say about a release such as this? In theory, it presents the sort of off-beat material record reviewers are always glad to see (and for which they are constantly making highly emotional pleas). Yet in reality, none of the works on this recording offers much to get excited about, in spite of superior performances by Philippe Entremont and excellent, if somewhat muffled, recorded sound. Certainly, any pianist who undertakes the Jolivet Concerto is assigning to himself a self-sacrificing role, for the work, while featuring an extremely difficult piano part, just does not *sound* like a piano concerto. Instead, the piano tends to get lost in an extremely busy score that owes its aesthetic to Stravinsky and its technique to a rather unpalatable combination of Ravel and Bartók (parts of the second movement seem to be directly inspired by the middle movement of the Bartók First Piano Concerto). Furthermore, the "primitivism" that represents the strength of such works as the earlier *Cinq danses rituelles* and the later Percussion Concerto is emasculated in the Piano Concerto by a bland harmonic language whose exotic element seems to come straight out of Hollywood. While there are many attractive sections which alone make the Concerto worth hearing, they do not add up to a convincing whole.

Although less eclectic and having fewer pretensions than the Jolivet Piano Concerto, the Milhaud Concerto No. 1 does not really get off the ground until the highly original and energetic last movement. However, even the first two movements are marked by an attractive lyricism typical of Milhaud, and the work is certainly quite listenable. Unluckily, this recording is somewhat marred by patches of shoddy playing from the orchestra, which fares much better in the more difficult Jolivet work. The "quartet" (actually piano quintet) version of *La Création du monde* was prepared by Milhaud at the request of his publisher. While this arrangement (which receives its first recording here) is surprisingly pleasant, it may sound strangely incongruous to ears accustomed to the work in its inventive original instrumentation.

The liner notes are almost totally worthless and tell us very little about the two relatively unfamiliar piano concertos. And the surfaces on my review disc were far from quiet.

R.S.B.

LIGETI: *Aventures*; *Nouvelles Aventures*; *Atmosphères*; *Volumina*. Gertie Charlent, soprano; Marie-Thérèse Cahn, alto; William Pearson, baritone; Inter-

Continued on page 94

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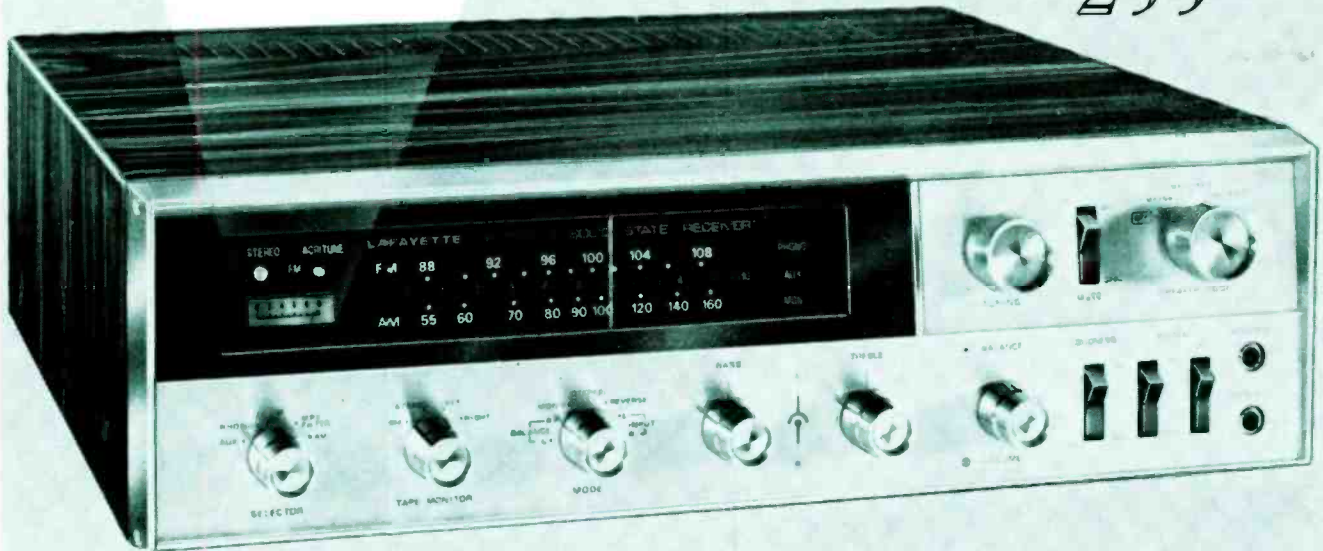
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Switzerland— Another Musical Tour Through The Cantons

by Peter G. Davis

SOME UNKIND individual—Victor Hugo, I believe—once described Switzerland as a mountainous country populated by flat people. Most historians, musicologists in particular, would seem to agree with him—a charming, picturesque region of course, but hardly a potent contributor to Europe's artistic development. While this may well be true, there has certainly been no lack of creative work in the cantons, and the Association for the Promotion of Swiss Music has set about to put the musical picture in perspective. Just four years ago, a massive thirty-disc anthology devoted to music by native Swiss composers—from medieval days to the present—was made available to American collectors [reviewed in HF, September 1966], and ten additional records have recently been added to the series which will eventually reach a grand total of fifty.

Whereas the initial installment gave a comprehensive over-all historical view of the Swiss musical scene, the present ten discs concentrate almost exclusively on music of the past one hundred years. The one exception (CTS 32) need not detain us long—three trio sonatas, a short *sinfonia*, an *Ave Maria* for female chorus, and an opera overture by six rococo-era journeyman composers; the music here is well constructed and thoroughly professional but hardly of compelling interest.

The nearest thing to a Swiss masterpiece, however, turns up on CTS 42: Frank Martin's glowing *Petite Symphonie Concertante*, a work heard with some frequency in the concert hall but currently without a listing in Schwann. This performance, led by the dedicatee, Paul Sacher, is a beauty and makes fine use of the unusual and effective scoring for two string orchestras, harp, piano, and harpsichord. Willy Burkhard's Violin Concerto does not reach Martin's level of sophistication, but this warily lyrical essay falls gratefully on the ear and makes an attractive coupling.

The music on CTS 47 and CTS 49 will likely be of more limited appeal. Two short chamber concertos, one for flute, piano, and strings by Jean Apothétoz (1900–1965) and the other for cello and strings by Armin Schibler (1920–), and a collection of brief compositions for mixed chorus (by Marescotti, Martin, Binet, and Hemmerling) are decently written, conservative works of rather parochial interest. The orchestral pieces by Jean Balissat (1936–), Hans Haug (1900–1967), and Rafaele d'Alessandro (1911–1959) on CTS 49 also leave a somewhat secondhand impression, although the virtuoso instrumental writing

in D'Alessandro's earnest *Tema variato* produces some arresting moments.

Romantic revivalists will find a pleasant discovery on CTS 35: Hermann Goetz's Piano Concerto in B flat, Op. 18. Goetz (1840–1876) was born in Germany but spent the greater part of his short life in Switzerland where he wrote his most famous work, an operatic version of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. Perhaps the Concerto's complete avoidance of showy bravura partially accounts for its neglect. Nonetheless, the work is an elegantly crafted piece of restrained romanticism, full of lovely tunes and an appealingly tender, expressive innocence. The performance by pianist Paul Baumgartner and the Bernmünster Radio Orchestra under Erich Schmid is skilled and affectionate. A piquantly scored "night piece" for string orchestra, *Sommernacht* by Othmar Schoeck (1886–1957), adds an extra fillip to this fine disc.

A large-scale oratorio by Hermann Suter (1870–1926) fills CTS 36 and CTS 37. *Le Laudi di San Francesco d'Assisi*. Opinions may well be divided over the merits of this ambitious setting for soloists, chorus, and orchestra of St. Francis' *Hymn of the Creatures*, but I find its eager open-hearted gestures, expressive melodic lines, and generous Mahlerian orchestration highly enjoyable. The text lauds in turn all of God's creations, both elemental and animate, and Suter has treated the nine contrasting sections with descriptive ingenuity, dramatic power, and a sure control of big classical forms (No. 5, in praise of fire, is a tightly written *passacaglia* movement with twenty-two variations). Evidently recorded in the Basel Cathedral, the echoey acoustic occasionally obscures details, and the fine soloists (Edith Mathis, Norma Procter, Eric Tappy, and Fernando Corena) do not always blend into a smooth quartet, but the essence of the work comes through. Anyone with a taste for late romantic choral music in the Mahler vein will find the work well worth investigating.

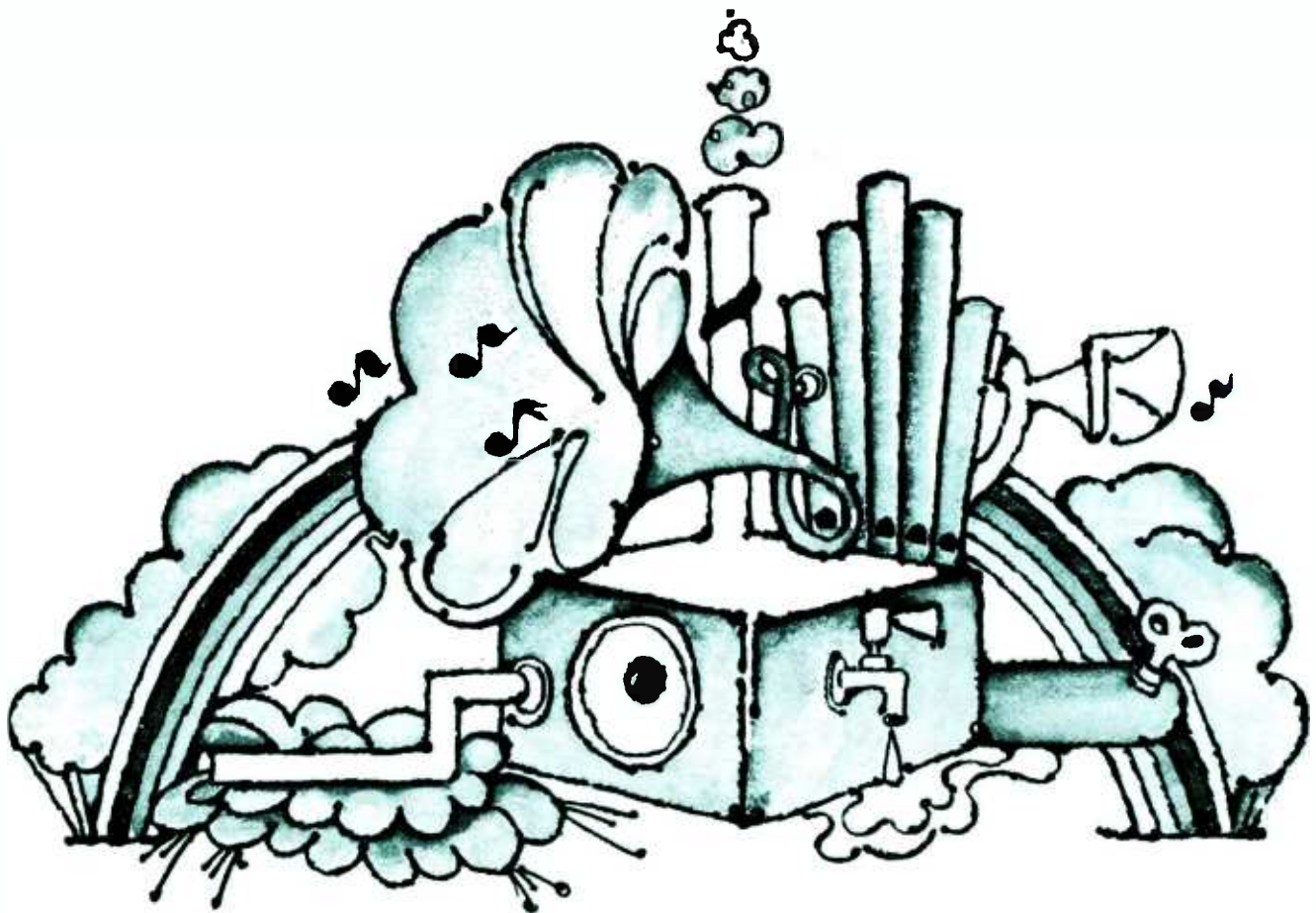
Émile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865–1950) is best remembered as a pedagogue; the Dalcroze Method based on "rhythmic gymnastics" (or eurythmics) at one time enjoyed wide international attention. His

Le Jeu du Feuillu (CTS 38), written in 1900 for children's chorus and orchestra, is a lengthy forty-five-minute paean to springtime and the month of May. Children may still enjoy singing its cloying, goody-goody, simple-minded strains, but I doubt it.

Songs to German texts by four composers comprise CTS 39—Walter Courvoisier (1875–1931), Karl Heinrich David (1884–1951), Huldreich Georg Früh (1903–1945), and Walter Schulthess (1894–). Courvoisier and David have little to offer beyond a rather pale reflection of the late Romantic lyric as practiced to far better advantage by Wolf, Strauss, and Pfitzner. Früh's exotically fragrant *Maori-Lieder*, on the other hand, are shot through with original harmonic and melodic touches reminiscent at times of Milhaud; soprano Elisabeth Speiser sings them beautifully. Schulthess (husband of the late violinist Steli Geyer) manages to sustain interest primarily through clever manipulation of his polytonal accompaniments, although the vocal lines of the five songs recorded here wander about rather aimlessly.

The Swiss avant-garde holds forth on CTS 50: these four young composers (all but one are Boulez students) are in their thirties and each exhibits individual talent. Two works by Hans Ulrich Lehmann exploit and extend the potential of solo instruments: *Mosaik* for clarinet and *Spiele* for oboe and harp, the latter in an extraordinary performance by oboist Heinz Holliger and his wife Ursula. Holliger's own *Glühende Rätsel* inhabits a moonstruck *Pierre Lu* world; but the expressive vocal lines for alto and the delicately woven instrumental score (flute, viola, bass clarinet, cymbalon, harp, celeste, and percussion) create a poetic sonority all their own. Jacques Guyonnet's *Polyphonie III* for alto flute, viola, and two pianos and Jürg Wytenbach's *Divisions* for piano and nine solo strings, both essentially built from intense and concentrated lyrical fragments, also bear repeated and careful listening.

Unlike the initial thirty-disc mono-only release, these ten records are available in excellently engineered stereo sound; as before, the pressings are immaculately processed. The presentation shows a distinct improvement: sturdy double-fold albums, detailed notes (in German, French, and English), and texts are supplied, although not always with translations. The discs are priced at \$3.50 each, but adventurous collectors may order the lot at a bargain \$24 (available by mail from Music Masters, 25 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036).



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CIRCLE 15 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Continued from page 90

nationales Kammerensemble Darmstadt, Bruno Maderna, cond. (in *Aventures* and *Nouvelles Aventures*); Southwest German Radio Symphony Orchestra, Ernest Bour, cond. (in *Atmosphères*); Karl-Erik Welin, organ (in *Volumina*). Heliodor 2549 003, \$4.98. Tape: 3313 003, \$4.98.

LIGETI: *Requiem*; *Lontano*; *Continuum*. Liliana Poli, soprano; Barbro Ericson, mezzo; Bavarian Radio Chorus; Hessian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Michael Gielen, cond. (in the *Requiem*); Southwest German Radio Symphony Orchestra, Ernest Bour, cond. (in *Lontano*); Antoinette Vischer, harpsichord (in *Continuum*). Heliodor 2549 011, \$4.98. Tape: 3313 011, \$4.98.

Doubtless we must ascribe the remarkable phonographic enthusiasm for György Ligeti's music to the film-music syndrome: both *Atmosphères* and the *Requiem* were used in the soundtrack of Stanley Kubrick's *2001*. I don't mean to begrudge this talented Hungarian composer his widespread audience, but there are other living composers who deserve similar notice: to mention only Europeans, I have heard interesting recent works by Josef Maria Horvath, Heinz Holliger, and Marek Kopelent, and of course there are even major works by Pierre Boulez that have not yet been recorded.

In fact the works on the first disc listed above are all duplications and may be disposed of rather rapidly. These performances of *Aventures* and *Nouvelles Aventures* are not nearly as accurate or secure as the ones on *Candide* CE 31009 (a different conductor, but the same singers, more experienced and confident), and that disc also includes a satisfactory version of *Volumina*, all at a lower price. Bour's recording of *Atmosphères*, an exploration of the orchestral possibilities that Berg first broached in the passage immediately following the death of *Wozzeck*, has been available, in a grotesquely bad dubbing, on M-G-M's disc of music from *2001*; happily, the Heliodor transfer is an improvement, but even so this version does not have the sonic solidity of Bernstein's (Columbia MS 6733).

The second of Heliodor/Wergo's Ligeti releases is, however, made up of new material (except for the snippet of the *Requiem* that turned up on the aforementioned M-G-M record). The 1965 *Requiem* is something of a disappointment, comprising mostly choral and orchestral tone-cluster music, interspersed with assorted shock effects: wide skips for the soloists, sudden blasting chords, long-held high notes, etc. The later *Lux aeterna*, for a cappella chorus, covers the most interesting part of this ground rather more concisely. There is certainly a lot of skillful and knowledgeable writing in this piece, but the substance of this *Requiem* seems to be all on its very slick surface. It should be noted too that the performance does not always do justice to the dynamic and intonational demands of the composer's complicated blending and fading-in-and-out effects.

Lontano, an orchestral work first played in 1967, uses some of the same orchestral ideas as *Atmosphères*, but manages to create a quite different expressive character. The texture is frequently permeated with octaves, and there are sonorities that evoke not only Berg (most obviously, the octave crescendo in *Wozzeck*) but also the whole late-Romantic orchestral tradition from *Tristan* on. A rather pretty piece, which seems to be quite well played.

The harpsichord piece, *Continuum*, transfers Ligeti's usual bag of tricks to still another instrument. Because there are no sustained tones available on the harpsichord, the composer relies on repeated notes and whirling clusters to create his "bands" of sound; thus one hears at first a rhythmic activity quite atypical of his music (in most of his works, the favorite performance instruction is "enter unnoticeably"). Eventually, however, the ear begins to "blend" the rhythmic effect into a kind of sustained tone, and the harpsichord turns into a novel, almost electronic instrument. If Miss Vischer can really play the whole piece through like this without benefit of splices, she deserves some sort of prize for endurance and steadiness. D.H.

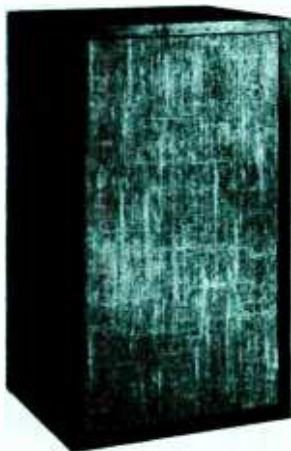
MAHLER: *Symphony No. 1*, in D. London Symphony Orchestra, Jascha Horenstein, cond. Nonesuch H 71240, \$2.98.

NIELSEN: *Symphony No. 5, Op. 50; Saga Dream, Op. 39*. New Philharmonia Orchestra, Jascha Horenstein, cond. Nonesuch H 71236, \$2.98.

Jascha Horenstein is a living refutation of the naive thesis that all conductors of high musical achievement are suitably represented by recordings. Born in Kiev in 1898, he has been making records on a limited scale for many years. This writer's first encounter with the Bruckner Seventh was in a Horenstein performance with the Berlin Philharmonic on Polydor 78s of truly ancient vintage. As I recall, it was extraordinarily fine, but there is no Horenstein version of the work in Schwann.

Horenstein belongs to an age in which many important musicians either ignored or were ignored by the recording microphone. Perhaps the most important loss is Antonio Guarnieri (1883-1952) who succeeded Toscanini as chief conductor of La Scala in 1929. As a recent Heliodor release makes clear, the limited recordings of Victor de Sabata (1892-1967) only suggest the range of his skills, while another Heliodor disc of Hans Rosbaud (1895-1962) directing the Schoenberg Op. 31 *Variations* suggests the many great performances this remarkable man might have given the microphone had the invitation been provided.

Horenstein's curse has been recordings that were either technically weak to begin with or that came into the American market past their sonic prime. The present pair offers two winning symphonic performances, but only one recording that is technically first-class.



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The Mahler is excellent. Horenstein's respect for repeats will please any purist. More important, to recall Rosbaud's rule, the music sounds Austrian: in quantity and quality the sonorities evoke the right places, the phrases sing with the proper ambience. Horenstein has an ear for this music, and very clean, open recording makes his achievement plain. There are several good Mahler Firsts in the catalogue, but this one at its modest price ought to please almost everybody.

The Nielsen is well played too and this performance proves to be an interesting foil to the Bernstein set since it reverts to the composer's original version of the score. (Horenstein has been playing this music since 1927 and familiarity here brings sympathy and interpretive insight.) But where did they hold the session? The Albert Hall? And what is the point of adding Dolby refinement when all the balances in the climactic passages are blurred with excessive resonance?

The Symphony, a twentieth-century classic, was first heard in 1922, and the filler is a brief but not inconsequential tone poem from 1907. Horenstein does all one might ask of him, and at the low price the disc is still worth having. But technically, the Bernstein album isn't even seriously challenged.

This conductor is seventy-two years old. Given the opportunity, he can produce records of notable quality as is proved by Nonesuch's Mahler release. But will the next opportunity appear?

R.C.M.

MAHLER: Symphony No. 2, in C minor ("Resurrection"). Evelyn Mandac, soprano; Birgit Finnila, mezzo; Singing City Choirs; Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. For a feature review of this recording, see page 80.

MILHAUD: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 1; La Création du monde (quartet version)—See Jolivet: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra ("Equatoriales").

MOZART: Ascanio in Alba. Ilva Ligabue, Emilia Cundari, and Eugenia Ratti, sopranos; Anna Maria Rota, mezzo; Petre Munteanu, tenor; Polyphonic Chorus of Turin; Angelicum Orchestra of Milan, Carlo Felice Cillario, cond. RCA Victrola VICS 6126, \$8.94 (three discs).

The fifteen-year-old Mozart was commissioned to write this work for a royal wedding in Milan, and the boy put it together in one month. *Ascanio in Alba* is not exactly an opera, rather a *fiesta* or serenade written to suit not only a particular occasion but to reflect the idealized but recognizable subjects of the celebration. Such works are seldom dramatic: they are decorative entertainment like latter-day masques, the recitatives and arias of the normal *opera seria* being supplemented with choruses and dance scenes. The usual *fiesta* was a one-acter, but *Ascanio* offers a full evening's enter-

tainment—and it must have been a long evening, for although this recording fills three discs, it does not contain the lost ballet music nor the entirety of the existing numbers. Still, the work as performed here is representative of its composer's youth, and is a welcome addition to the almost complete operatic *oeuvre* of Mozart available on records.

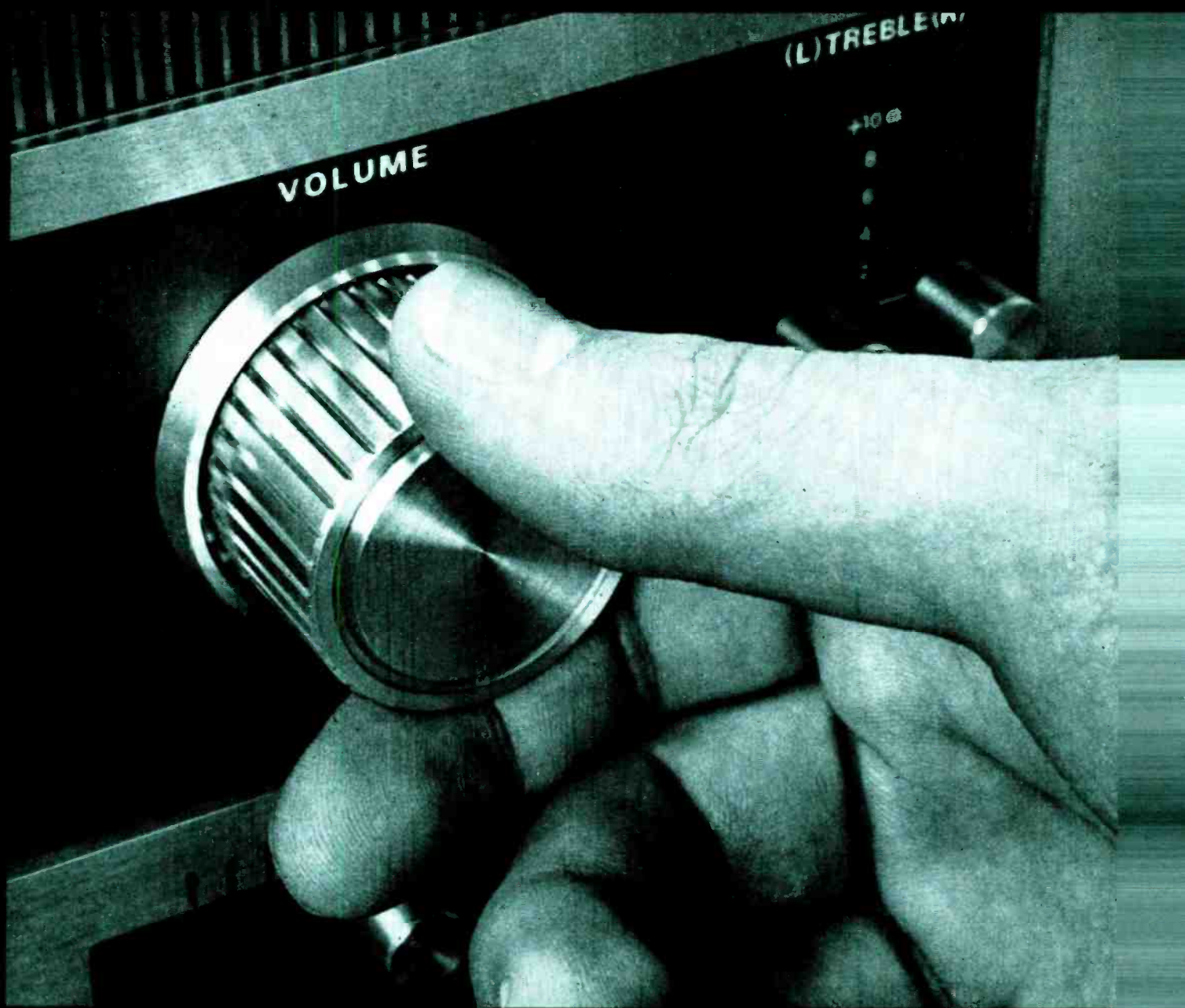
Needless to say, we cannot expect a masterpiece here, but there is the endless fascination of seeing a composer of such tender age operating like a seasoned professional. Though there is plenty of glittering vocal writing with some rather arresting moments in this score, aside from a few numbers there is little warmth. But then what could even a composer of Mozart's extreme sensitivity— a quality he possessed from childhood— do with such a text? The libretto was cobbled together in the pseudo classical tradition, with the usual mythological/allegorical/Arcadian mélange that was characteristic of these serenades. The one unusual feature of the plot is that Venus appears—as a grandmother! However, in this instance the goddess clearly stands for the Empress Maria Theresa, who was a grandmother. Mozart's recitatives, notably the accompanied ones, are very good, the choruses beautifully set, the arias, obviously custom-made to show off the capabilities of individual singers, pleasant if not weighty. On occasion Mozart displays real late baroque pathos, which he must simply have picked up from his Italian colleagues whose music he studied assiduously. After all, how could a boy of fifteen draw on his own emotional resources when called upon to set words such as these: "Within my breast I feel the flame of some other love; innocent love does not reign here alone." It was his unerring sense of style that told him what cliché and tone to use in any given situation.

With one exception the cast is first-class. Ilva Ligabue, who is billed a soprano but sounds like a high mezzo, has a good sense of pitch, and her phrasing is musicianly. Anna Maria Rota, a fine-toned mezzo who takes the castrato's role, excels particularly in the recitatives, while Eugenia Ratti's fresh soprano falls easily on the ear. Emilia Cundari negotiates the coloraturas securely and with a ringing voice. But the tenor, Munteanu, is very poor, and his colorless and wobbly voice is painfully intensified by the extremely close microphone. The chorus is excellent and well recorded, as are the female soloists; the orchestra is adequate but a little grey in color, neglected by the engineers in favor of the singers. At times, especially in the tuttis, the winds just squeal in the distance. While Cillario is not the conductor to set a score afire, everything is acceptable; and since the singing is very good, Mozart fans will be pleased.

P.H.L.

MOZART: Complete Masonic Music: O heiliges Band, K. 148; Kantate, K. 429; Gesellenreise, K. 468; Die Mauerfreude, K. 471; Maurerische Trauermusik, K. 477; Zerfliesset heut, geliebte Brüder, K. 483; Ihr unsre neuen Leiter,

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K. 484; Kantate, K. 619; Kantate, K. 623; *Lasst uns mit geschlungenen Händen*, K. 623 Anh. Werner Krenn, tenor; Tom Krause, baritone; Georg Fischer, piano and organ; Edinburgh Festival Orchestra and Chorus, Istvan Kertesz, cond. London OS 26111, \$5.98.

This disc includes all of the music Mozart wrote specifically for the Masonic service except for the two instrumental Adagios, K. 410 and K. 411, both of which were composed as processionals. Also missing are several works not originally written for the service but traditionally used for it, such as the motet, *Ave verum corpus*, K. 618 and the *Graduale*, K. 273. All of these are included on Turnabout's two-record issue of the complete Masonic music with the Vienna Volksoper Orchestra under Peter Maag. London's better sound and the superior orchestra, however, do give the new release a slight edge over the old one. Actually the performances are quite similar. One notices this particularly in the case of the two tenors (who do most of the singing—the baritone appears only in one duet); Werner Krenn (on London) and Kurt Equiluz (on Turnabout) resemble each other in vocal quality and in their approach to the music. The London version includes texts and translations, unfortunately missing on the Turnabout. R.P.M.

SCARLATTI, A.: *Cantata, "Su le sponde del Tebro"*—See Bach: *Cantata No. 51, "Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen."*

SCHMITT: *La Tragédie de Salomé*. **CHAUSSON:** *Viviane*. **DUPARC:** *Lénore*. New Philharmonia Orchestra, Antonio de Almeida, cond. RCA Red Seal LSC 3151, \$5.98.

Schmitt's *Salomé* belongs in the demi-monde of music that is not quite international repertory but is not entirely unknown. Composed as a dance poem in 1907, it was recast as a concert score in 1911 and dedicated to the young Stravinsky whose *Firebird* and *Petrushka* were the rage of Parisian music circles. Diaghilev produced the revised version (heard here) in 1913 with Pierre Monteux conducting and Karsavina (the original *Firebird*) as the princess of Judea.

As the earlier Paray/Detroit Symphony recording reminded us, this is music of extraordinary sensuousness and color, really heady, exotic stuff in which a skilled conductor can achieve sensational results. It may be both pretentious and corrupt in tone, but therein lies a good deal of its appeal! Both technically and interpretively De Almeida offers advances over the Paray disc: the sound is newer, warmer, more resonant and attractive, the melodic contours more flowing and voluptuous, and in one especially atmospheric passage the RCA record adds voices while the Paray remains within a purely instrumental framework. Why a work of such obvious appeal is

Continued on page 101

Continued from page 98

not heard more frequently in concert is one of those little mysteries of the music business, but take advantage of this opportunity to learn this music with this fine recording.

The Chausson and Duparc scores are both genuine rarities and period pieces and among the finest illustrations of the effect of Wagner's *Tristan* (first presented in 1865) on French composers during the following twenty years. *Viviane* was completed in 1882. It is filled with the disarming, gorgeous qualities so typical of the Chausson. *Lénore* (no kin of Beethoven's heroine) is a musical relative of Franck's accursed huntsman, and this score ends with a wild ride. Duparc's music dates from 1869. It is marvelous to have it in such a full-blooded performance.

Would De Almeida now turn his attention to another favorite of the same genre, Rabaud's *La Procession nocturne*?
R.C.M.

SCHUBERT: *Symphony No. 8, in B minor, D. 759 ("Unfinished")*—See **Beethoven:** *Symphony No. 5, in C minor, Op. 67.*

STRAUSS, R.: *Ariadne auf Naxos.* Hildgard Hillebrecht (s), Ariadne and the Prima Donna; Reri Grist (s), Zerbinetta; Arleen Auger (s), Naiade; Sigrid Schmidt (s), Echo; Tatiana Troyanos (ms), The Composer; Unni Rudtvedt (ms), Dryade; Jess Thomas (t), Bacchus and The Tenor; Friedrich Lenz (t), Dancing Master and Scaramuccio; John van Kesteren (t), Brighella; Gerhard Unger (t), An Officer; Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (b), The Music Master; Barry McDaniel (b), Harlekin; Heinz Friedrich (b), A Wigmaker; Richard Kogel (bs), Truffaldino; Marius Rintzler (bs), A Lackey; Franz Stoss (speaker), The Major Domo; Orchestra of the Bavarian Radio, Karl Böhm, cond. Deutsche Grammophon 2709 033, \$17.94 (three discs).

It was understandable that Karl Böhm would want to register his latest thoughts on *Ariadne*, an opera that has long been one of his favorites. DGG's historic recording of a live Vienna performance (on the occasion of Strauss's eightieth birthday in 1944) was a valuable document in its way, but the faded sonics on that deleted album hardly gave a faithful replica of the conductor's conception of this ingeniously scored opera. As a Böhm vehicle, then, this latest and most superlatively engineered complete recording has its attractive features. There is some exquisitely beautiful playing by the Bavarian Radio Orchestra first-desk men in the opera proper, and the delicate interplay of thematic details always combines with carefully balanced proportion. I also liked the conductor's over-all view, which builds to a really crushing climax at Bacchus' entrance and continues with a gorgeous blend of sonorities throughout the final duet.

Occasionally Böhm's *con amore* approach gets the better of him and there

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is some needless lingering in the early scenes—the first trio for the nymphs is so loving and leisurely that the line falls to pieces and the three ladies are left gasping. The Prologue too could be more crisply handled and lacks the hair-trigger dramatic timing that made the recently deleted Leinsdorf version so memorable (this recording, by the way, will soon be reissued on London or Richmond). On the whole, though, this is a masterfully executed account and I often found myself mentally blocking out the rather unimpressive singing in order to concentrate fully on the orchestra.

The major blot on the performance is Ariadne herself. The basic quality of Hildegard Hillebrecht's large, slightly woolly soprano is by no means inferior to the recorded competition, but her production is uneven to say the least: the middle register is thick and vaguely pitched while the top, although powerful and reasonably accurate, takes on the more unpleasant characteristics of a wailing siren. Nor does she compensate with any special musical or dramatic insights. Virtually every scene is sung at a bland, unvarying mezzoforte and very little is made of the text. There is none of Schwarzkopf's sophistication, Janowitz' cool beauty, or Rysanek's dramatic punch in this boring, lumpish performance.

On stage, Reri Grist's Zerbinetta is quite delightful, but here her interpretation seems surprisingly stiff, unalluring, and insensitive. The voice does have an attractive silvery sheen, but it all sounds too thin and brittle for my taste. Save for one misfire on a high E and some smudged gruppetti (on "Pagliazzo" and "Cavicchio"), she negotiates the treacherous "Grossmächtige Prinzessin" commendably enough, but there is precious little sparkle or wit both here and in the delicious little vamp scene with the Composer in the Prologue.

Tatiana Troyanos turns in a fine job as the Composer, although I find the current practice of casting a mezzo in this obvious soprano role unfortunate—even in the best of hands the young man's ecstatic apostrophe to music tends to sound overweighted and sluggish when sung with a mezzo's darker timbre. Still Troyanos' luscious vocalism and vivid characterization are difficult to resist.

Jess Thomas, sounding a trifle tired and strained, makes only a passable Bacchus, but the smaller roles could not have been more generously cast: Fischer-Dieskau seems almost typed for the harassed Music Master (surely he would be the perfect Beckmesser), and the four masks toss off their two comedy scenes with polish and a humorous light touch. Despite the strong orchestral performance then, this recording is badly flawed by the variable vocal work of its principals; on this score either of the two Angel versions is much to be preferred.

P.G.D.

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: *An Oxford Elegy*; *Five Variants of "Dives and Lazarus"*; *Flos Campi*. John Westbrook, speaker (in *An Oxford Elegy*); Cecil Aronowitz, viola (in *Flos Campi*); King's College

Choir, Cambridge; Jacques Orchestra, David Willcocks, cond. Angel S 36699, \$5.98.

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: *Serenade to Music*; *Symphony No. 5*, in D. Soloists; London Philharmonic Orchestra, Adrian Boult, cond. Angel S 36698, \$5.98.

An Oxford Elegy is a major work new to the Vaughan Williams discography, at least in this country. It is a setting for speaking voice, chorus, and orchestra of a poem which the composer put together from two poems by Matthew Arnold. The text deals with nostalgic emotion and idealism in an English pastoral setting, and its effect is rather like what happens when you stare at a Constable landscape for a little longer than you need to; for all the mastery of their various media displayed by composer, instrumentalists, singers, speaker, and conductor, the total effect is a bit much.

To compare *An Oxford Elegy* with *Flos Campi* is an entertaining exercise in the effect of words on music. *An Oxford Elegy* derives from an English poet, is the work of the greatest English composer of modern times, and its text is full of English pastoral imagery; more British than this it is impossible to get. *Flos Campi*, on the other hand, is tied by the titles of its six short movements to the *Song of Songs* and, inevitably, one reacts to it in terms of sensuous Biblical atmosphere, even though its choral part is entirely wordless and the style of the music is not too tremendously different from that of the other work. It is a little different, though; among other things, it is full of rhapsodic, keyless, rhythmless arabesques of sound, primarily for the solo viola. It is also, unlike *An Oxford Elegy*, beautifully shaped; its six short movements provide contrast and variety within the framework of the composer's expressive intention; it is, in short, one of his best works, and it is superbly performed in this excellent recording.

The *Five Variants of "Dives and Lazarus"* is a little piece, a set of variations on an English folk tune composed for a concert of English music which Boult conducted at the New York World's Fair in 1939. It is for strings and harps. In it the British ambassador presents his credentials and is well received.

The heart of Vaughan Williams' music is to be found in his large-scale symphonic works. The Fifth Symphony epitomizes the nostalgic, ruminative, autumnal aspect of this composer's genius and it is superbly played here. The recording is superior to the one given Sir John Barbirolli in the only other disc of the work now available, although Sir John's perkier pace in the scherzo seems to me preferable to Boult's Allegro molto moderato (it's marked Presto in the score).

The *Serenade to Music* is second only to the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* as the most popular of Vaughan Williams' shorter works. It was written in 1938 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the career of the distinguished conductor Sir Henry Wood. The first performance was conducted by Wood



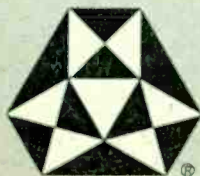
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who led his Queen's Hall Orchestra and sixteen vocal soloists who had worked with him in concert and oratorio for many years; to this day, each vocal line in the published score contains directions for these specific singers. The entire piece is not only a tribute to music but to the fellowship of musicians in London during one of the city's richest eras. The quiet ecstasy of Shakespeare's lines from the last act of *The Merchant of Venice* is marvelously translated into music and the present recording catches the spirit magnificently. A.F.

VERDI: La Forza del destino. Martina Arroyo (s), Leonora; Bianca Maria Casoni (ms), Preziosilla; Mila Cova (ms),

Curra; Carlo Bergonzi (t), Alvaro; Florindo Andreolli (t), Trabucco; Piero Cappuccilli (b), Carlo; Geraint Evans (b), Melitone; Ruggero Raimondi (bs), Guardiano; Antonio Zerbini (bs), Marquis of Calatrava; Virgilio Carbonari (bs), Mayor; Derek Hammond-Stroud (bs), Surgeon; Ambrosian Opera Chorus; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Lamberto Gardelli, cond. Angel SDL 3765, \$23.92 (four discs).

There seems to be a force of destiny that decrees we shall have new recordings of *La Forza del destino* at intervals of five years. In 1965 there appeared the RCA Victor II version (Price, Tucker, Merrill, Schippers conducting). Five years before that we were given RCA Victor I

(Milanov, Di Stefano, Warren, Previtali conducting). Two editions came along in 1955—did the finger of fate slip that year?—London's with Tebaldi, Del Monaco, Bastianini, and Molinari-Pradelli on the podium; and Angel's with Callas, Tucker, and Tagliabue, under Serafin. The cycle had started in 1951 (a year late, but it was the Verdi Year) with a much-cut Cetra version employing Caniglia, Masini, and Tagliabue, led by Marinuzzi. Around about that time there was also a Urania release—but let's not go into that.

And now, with a degree of punctuality we once used to associate with railroad operations, the 1970 model has appeared and taken its place in the line. It is, as will soon become apparent, a worthy

A Little Vivaldi Festival by Shirley Fleming

IT SEEMS ONLY moments ago that someone told me, with perhaps more than a hint of wishful thinking, that the Vivaldi boom was over. Let a whisper of that kind get abroad and you're sure to be brought up short by the next issue of the Schwann catalogue. Well, there will be few complaints from this quarter: two of these three albums are exceptionally good and the third—the Munich potpourri—is no disgrace either, if you like your Vivaldi laid out clean, sharp, and steely cold.

The news-maker here is Walter Trampler's two-disc set of the eight concertos for viola d'amore—not because most of them haven't been recorded before (a couple by this same artist), but because this is our first chance to survey them whole and to enjoy in the process so large a sampling of Trampler's skill. His gifts come out in various ways. One of the most striking is his handling of ornamentation, which becomes quite elaborate at times and which he declares in an accompanying jacket note to be spontaneous. (I can't make out what the other annotator quoted on the jacket means when he cites Vivaldi's "flashy use of ornamentation" as a particular indication of the composer's fascination with the stage and vocal music; instrumental ornamentation did of course derive from the bel canto style, but it was a universal convention and was left largely up to the performer—flashy or not, depending on the individual's taste and aptitude.) Another of Trampler's special appeals lies in his playing of those beautiful slow legato melodies that are so often Vivaldi's best moments: Trampler never overdoes them or becomes self-consciously emotive; they simply sing out, and they are a joy. One of the finest examples is the Largo of the D minor Concerto (P. 266), almost a folksong, with the lute accompaniment lending a perfect serenity.

Other things to stay tuned for: the dark low register of the viola d'amore as it is exploited in the slow movement of another D minor Concerto (P. 288); the figuration for pure sonority in the last movement of the D major (P. 166); the co-operative relationship among d'amore, woodwinds, and horns in the F major (P. 286). I don't mean to imply, in this rush of enthusiasm, that there aren't passages of pure noodling here as in almost any Vivaldi collection. Not every measure is pure gold. Nor do we savor to the full that peculiarly inhibited, slightly complaining, otherworldly voice of the viola d'amore, which—I am convinced—virtually defies recording. But RCA does as much as can be done in wooing this shy creature. Even taking into account an occasional woodenness in the accompaniment, this album adds up to one of the most interesting releases to appear in many Vivaldian moons.

The flute concertos are much more common fare than those above, but the playing of Michel Debost, a thirty-six-year-old Parisian, is in every way uncommon: a marvel of fluidity, of deft feats in tonguing and breath control, of seamless tone from top to bottom. I find his performances comparable to Rampal's (in the set of complete flute concertos on Columbia), though his orchestra is not. The Toulouse Chamber Orchestra lacks a bit in rhythmic punctuation and zest and tends to smooth the tutti contours into a fairly gentle landscape. Sometimes this simply lends an unaccustomed sweetness to Vivaldi, but sometimes it misses the boat; when the score presents you with a bare descending scale figure, as at the opening of Concerto No. 6, you have to do something *with* it. Rampal's orchestra did; Debost's doesn't manage to. Still, this is a minor complaint applied to a major display of flute-playing.

French Vivaldi vs. German Vivaldi can be sized up in no uncertain terms by comparing the Flute Concerto No. 1 (*The Tempest*) of Debost with that of the solo flutist on the DGG disc. A Munich-made tempest is a precision-drilled affair, every wave snapping smartly to attention, every raindrop pinging as sharp as a BB pellet on a frying pan. The DGG flutist doesn't match Debost, but I do like the bassoon assigned to the continuo part, where it sets up a real counter force to the flute line. The remaining concertos on the disc are all quite interesting. The one written for the Dresden orchestra gives each player solo prominence in turn, and the horns used in the two concertos calling for them are of the original valveless type to judge from occasional moments of authentic stress. Everything is consistently spit-and-polish, but I think over a period of time this kind of playing begins to pall. Close, rather edgy recorded sound emphasizes the rigorous quality of the Munich performances.

VIVALDI: Concertos for Viola d'amore and Strings: in A, P. 233; in D minor, P. 266; in D minor, P. 287; in A minor, P. 37; in F, P. 286; in D minor, P. 288; in D minor, P. 289; in D, P. 166. Walter Trampler, viola d'amore; Camarata Bariloche, Alberto Lysy, cond. RCA Red Seal LSC 7065, \$11.96 (two discs).

VIVALDI: Six Concertos for Flute and Strings, Op. 10. Michel Debost, flute; Toulouse Chamber Orchestra, Louis Auricombe, cond. Seraphim S 60128, \$2.49.

VIVALDI: Concertos for Wind Instruments and Strings: in G minor, P. 383 (*Per l'Orchestra di Dresda*); in F, P. 261 (*La Tempesta di Mare*); in F, P. 321; in C, P. 74; in F, P. 320. Munich Chamber Orchestra, Hans Stadlmair, cond. Archive 2533 044, \$5.98.

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Forza, well up to the competition; and that is no minor achievement, for the record catalogue has been remarkably lucky with this difficult Verdi opera. There is not a dud in the bunch. Each has some peerless feature unrivaled by the others, and none may be brusquely dismissed. Consider, for a start, the heroines: Caniglia, Tebaldi, Callas, Milanov, Price, Arroyo. It is, close enough, a roster of the leading ladies of the generation. Moreover, each of them has left us a Leonora of memorable quality. Tebaldi has rarely sounded better on records than she does in this role. Callas is searingly convincing, and makes you ignore technical blemishes. Milanov's long-spun phrases, particularly in the Convent Scene, bring to mind the almost hallowed achievement of those highlights recorded back in 1928, when Rosa Ponselle was surrounded by Martinelli, De Luca, and Pinza. Leontyne Price gives us a wealth of accurate, sonorous, and sculptured singing.

To join this constellation there now comes a new star, the heroine of the present release. Martina Arroyo was seasoned in the tough, competitive music world of New York City, but she reached escape velocity a few years ago and is now one of the most sought-after international stars. Her graduation to a major operatic role on records is both natural and logical. As Leonora she is all devotion and penitence—a moving and sincere characterization, complemented by her warm and ample tones which open out and soar in splendid style. The vocal texture is unfailingly rich, velvety; and if there is occasionally a question about whether some of her uppermost notes are hit plumb center, there is never a doubt about her ability to make cadences take off, sail, and spin. The Convent Scene provides her with a succession of splendid opportunities and she uses them consummately, weaving the high line in "*La Vergine degli angeli*" as though she were herself an accredited angel. In "*Pace, pace*" she is gentler, less forceful than some other interpreters; but there is no loss of tension, and a positive gain in identification. The aria can easily turn squally unless firmly controlled, and Miss Arroyo keeps a sure hand on the wheel.

Carlo Bergonzi is cast as the hero, Alvaro, and he is without question the best tenor of all the complete sets. He makes such elegant and even phrases, yet never loses involvement or ardor. He is subtler than Tucker, more consistently in control than Di Stefano, does not force like Del Monaco; his voice blends serenely with Arroyo's in the opening and closing scenes (which are the only times the lovers ever get together); and he makes a bold and effective contrast with the dark sonorities of his baritone partner in their two crucial duets.

Piero Cappuccilli has plenty of venom in his characterization, yet keeps things down and damped during the ensembles. His big voice yields many impressive moments, but there are other times when his intonation is not beyond reproach; his handling of the soliloquy "*Urna fatale del mio destino*" is disappointing in this respect. But Cappuccilli is an honest

and skilled artist, who contributes notably in the concerted passages.

Padre Guardiano's music is assigned to a rapidly rising young Italian basso of whom we are certain to hear much. Ruggero Raimondi is secure and solid most of the way, possessed of an even and rich voice of the "high bass" type: there are two or three weakish notes at the very bottom of his register. But I keep listening for more characterization and individuality than we get from him here, a more personal stamp on the part. (I can never shake out of my head the sounds that Pinza once made in this role; and that is patently unfair to others.)

It is more surprising to have to say much the same sort of thing about Geraint Evans' Melitone. Fine, sturdy singing but very little "business" for the fussy and venal friar; Evans is not known as an artist of inhibition and few have had cause to complain of restraint or underplaying in his Beckmesser, Figaro, or Leporello. But his Melitone is bland.

As Preziosilla, Bianca Maria Casoni sounds neither better nor worse than any other mezzo in this tiresome role. Her voice seems young and fresh and her manner resourceful.

Repeated hearings have tended to increase my respect for conductor Lamberto Gardelli's work in this recording. The overture is a shade slack, and he often seems too lenient with his singers. But he takes every other opportunity to build the tension and delivers, in sum, an authoritative (if not authoritarian) reading that permits the cast to shine as brightly as possible. The Royal Philharmonic works keenly for him, and the audio perspectives and stereo staging are apt and well judged, if conservative by the standards of other labels.

Which *Forza* to buy if you're having only one? *Horses* wouldn't part me from Maria, Renata, Zinka, or Leontyne. Unless you are similarly smitten with one or more of those ladies, there is no reasonable alternative to the set under review. It is note-complete, richly cast, sumptuously sung, and impeccably recorded; and it is the obvious choice. Unless you prefer to wait and see what 1975 turns up. G.M.

WAGNER: *Götterdämmerung*. Helga Dernesch, Gundula Janowitz, Christa Ludwig, Helge Brilioth, Thomas Stewart, Zoltan Kélémen, Karl Ridderbusch; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. For a feature review of this recording, see page 77.



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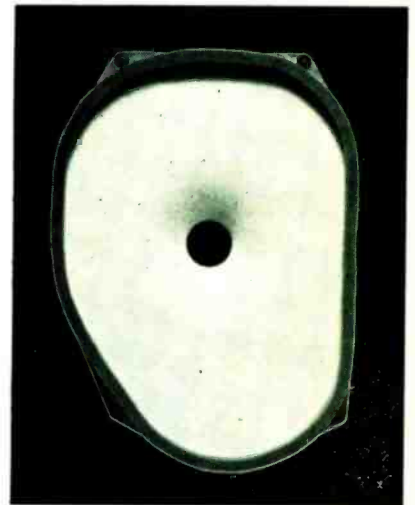
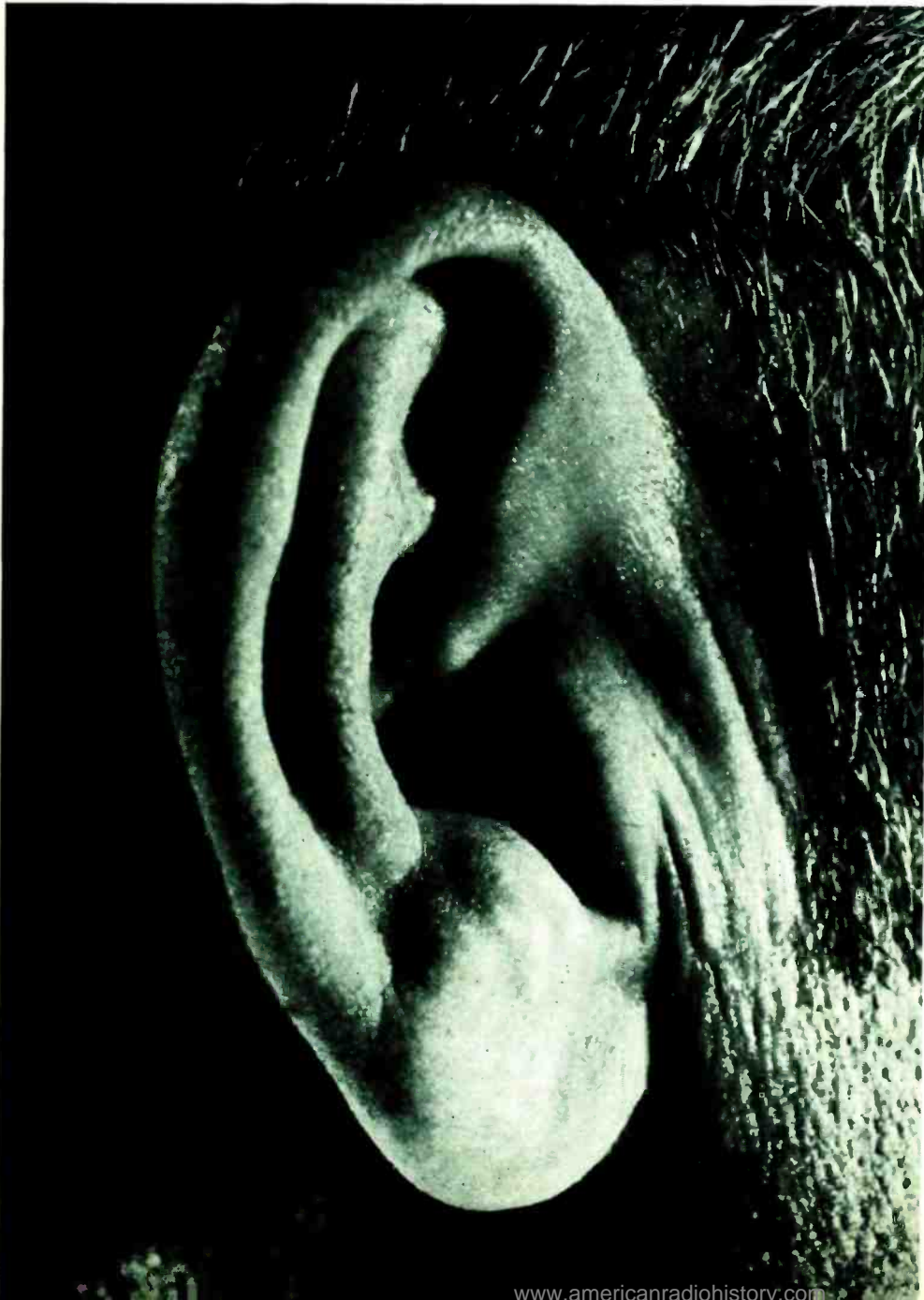
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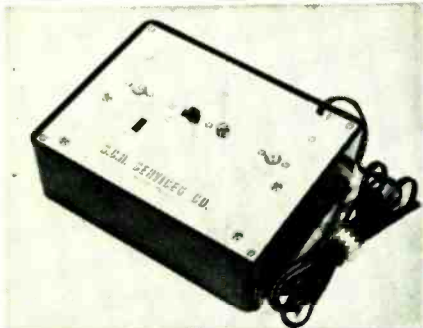
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recitals & miscellany

LAURITZ MELCHIOR: "Wagner." Die Walküre: Winterstürme; Siegfried: Nothung! Nothung!; Ho Ho! Schmiede, mein Hammer; Die Meistersinger: Am stillen Herd; Preislied; Lohengrin: In fernem Land; Parsifal: Nur eine Waffe taugt; Der fliegende Holländer: Steuermannslied; Tannhäuser: Romerzählung; Dir Töne Lob; Wesendonk Lieder: Schmerzen; Träume. Lauritz Melchior, tenor; Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. (in the Walküre; Nothung! Nothung!; Meistersinger; Lohengrin; Parsifal; Wesendonk Lieder); Victor Symphony Orchestra, Edwin McArthur, cond. (in the others). RCA Victorla VIC 1500, \$2.98 (mono only, recorded 1938-40).

If you belong to the younger generation of Wagnerites and tend toward impatience when your elders tell you about how things used to be, then you need this record. Ante up your three dollars, invest fifty minutes of listening time, and you will learn, in a manner no words can convey, what the fuss was all about. You will know why those who carry in their mind's ear a memory of Melchior in his prime and in his great roles have ever since been discontented with his successors.

You may have (as I once had) the notion that it is only lately that the breed of Heldentenor has become extinct; that the Doughty Dane was the last of a long line. This is not so. Though there were many powerful tenors (among them Schnorr von Carolsfeld, the original Tristan) in the seventy or eighty years before Melchior's ascendancy, there was no other who so fulfilled the prophecy of Wagner's notes—for the composer himself never heard his music sung as Melchior was to sing it. The man was not merely one of a number of peaks in a now receding mountain range; he was an isolated phenomenon, a Kilimanjaro rising from the level plain. Vocally he was a freak: irreplaceable, unrivaled, the thousand-to-one shot that came off. And that is why we are most unlikely to hear from other singers the sort of sounds he made in the ears of his generation, or into the microphones at the recording sessions that produced this disc; a man nearing fifty, with a voice of steel, a precision of pitch, and a mastery of line, all present together in one chunky frame.

Melchior is eighty now and is still alive and well in California; recently he established a foundation to develop new Heldentenors, for he believes that such singers are made, not born. But as William Zakariasen pointed out in these pages last July ["The Duet of the Century"], the application to other voices of his vocal method (squeezing a natural baritone up into a head voice of the tenor register) generally leads to early retirement.

The treasurable items in this record are the three *Ring* excerpts, the *Parsifal* apotheosis, and (at one notch lower) the Rome Narration from *Tannhäuser*, which Melchior had more felicitously recorded a decade earlier with a voice more pliant than he commanded in 1940. But nobody has ever sung Siegfried's Forging Scene like this, though many have tried. *Parsifal* might be judged to need a younger, freer voice, but Melchior's conviction, the way he portrays a man who has suffered and learned, banishes any misgiving. Descending one more level, the Prize Song and Lohengrin's Narration sound a little overpowered in these versions, while (at the bottom of the rating sheet) we find a very squeezed song of praise to Venus, a jackhammer version of the Steersman's reverie—it really needs Wunderlich, not Melchior—and a version of Walther's Trial Song with all lyric qualities rendered out. The *Wesendonk* recordings (presumably part of a complete version of the song cycle) here make their first public appearance. *Träume* is done with masterly mood-building (if not always enough tenderness), and its intimation of Tristan's music is haunting.

Quite irrespective of the misgivings here expressed, I would not willingly be without any of these items, even the least of them, because they evoke both a phenomenon and a noble artist—a man whose work we sorely miss every time the curtain rises on a Wagner revival. The recorded quality, particularly in the Philadelphia discs, was remarkably good for its day though the voice was microphoned more closely than necessary. Ormandy's firm and shapely accompaniments stand in marked contrast to McArthur's tentative and inhibited ones. G.M.

"MODERN WORKS FOR ORGAN."
KAGEL: Improvisation ajoutée. **CAGE:** Variations I. **OTTE:** Touches. **ALLENDE-BLIN:** Son brisés. Gerd Zacher, organ. Heliodor 2549 009. \$4.98. Tape: **DG** 3313 009, \$4.98.

Yet another disc from Gerd Zacher—this organist who specializes in avant-garde music must be a very busy man indeed! Like the others, this set is devoted to what are mainly "sound-effect" pieces. Much use is made (particularly in the Cage and Allende-Blin) of suppressing the air supply in order to alter the instrument's timbral quality, so that one hears quarter tones, overtones, glissandos, or simply wheezes. None of the pieces seems particularly impressive, unless you've never been exposed to this kind of thing before. The most interesting of the set is the Kagel which is played by, in addition to Zacher, two assistants who man the registration buttons and shout comments periodically throughout the piece (the final cadential wail is quite hair-raising). The Cage piece is not to be confused with the Variations III, recorded on Zacher's last DGG release (139442), but the idea is identical: simply a "map" intended to evoke musical action from

any number of players on any kind (or kinds) of instrument. The result, of course, is more Zacher than Cage and more diverting than substantial. The Kagel, incidentally, is available in another version, played by David Tudor on *Odyssey*; but since this piece is also largely improvised according to rather imprecise specifications, it is impossible to make any kind of valid comparison. I still feel that Zacher's first DGG album (137003) is his most interesting, mainly due to the two Ligeti pieces to be found there. R.P.M.

ROSA PONSELLE: "Norma and Other Famous Heroines." For a feature review of this historic reissue, see page 81.

"LA TROMBA SACRA." Adolph Scherbaum, trumpet; Wilhelm Krumbach, organ. Deutsche Grammophon 136558, \$5.98.

The plethora of recent baroque-era trumpet concerto recordings may have skimmed the cream of the available repertory; certainly it has dulled the first exciting impact of hearing those brilliant flights into stratospheric brass registers. With that in mind, Scherbaum is to be congratulated for revealing new aspects of the resurrected art of clarino-register trumpet playing in sonatas da chiesa and similar pieces. While they can hardly be called "sacred" music, these pieces are suitable for performance in churches on occasions of a special ceremonial or festive nature.

Except for the familiar *Trumpet Tune* which opens and closes an assembled suite of a half dozen such tunes attributed to Henry Purcell, I don't remember having previously encountered the materials here. And except for the blind English organist/composer John Stanley (1713-1786), whose long and varied *Trumpet Voluntary* features organist Krumbach in partnership rather than in an accompanist role, the other composers apparently are given their first recorded representation here. Louis-Antoine Dornel (c. 1685-1765), chiefly famous for once having beaten the great Rameau in an organ-playing contest, contributes a grandly ceremonial *Dialogue, Récit, et Fugue sur les Trompettes*. Girolamo Fantini (c. 1602-?), a Florentine trumpet virtuoso who published a renowned "method" for his instrument in 1638, provides a gravely lyrical *Sonata detta del Vitelli*. Then there are four shorter *Piezas de Clarines* by Antonio Martín y Coll, and the *Sonata No. 2*, in D, *per Trombetta sola* by Giovanni Bonaventura Viviani. These two composers are not even listed in most reference works, but the jacket notes identify them as, respectively, a late seventeenth-century Spanish organist and theoretician, and an Italian conductor/composer, mainly of operas and oratorios, who died around 1680. The notes unfortunately do not reveal the identity of Krumbach's fine, obviously baroque-era organ, nor the appropriately spacious locale in which these superb recordings were made.

Quite apart from the unusual historical and technical attractions of this release, I welcome it as a personal restoration of faith in Scherbaum's artistry and skill—he is certainly one of the pioneers in the modern renaissance of high-register trumpeting. A number of this artist's recent programs have been open to considerable criticism, but here he plays with surer control, more beautiful and brilliant tonal qualities, and with more magisterial eloquence than I've ever heard from him before. R.D.D.

PINCHAS ZUKERMAN: "Works for Violin and Orchestra." **CHAUSSON:** *Poème*, Op. 25. **SAINT-SAËNS:** *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso*, Op. 28. **VIEUXTEMPS:** *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*, No. 5, in A minor, Op. 37. **WIENIAWSKI:** *Polonaise in D*, Op. 4. Pinchas Zukerman, violin; London Symphony Orchestra, Charles Mackerras, cond. Columbia MS 7422, \$5.98.

The quality that makes young Pinchas Zukerman so outstanding as a violinist (aside from his superb technical accomplishment) is his capacity for expressive communication. This gifted Israeli-born musician makes every bar of his music-making throb and pulsate with nuance and excitement. In short, he is constantly involved with his work and the genuine freshness, brilliance, and enthusiasm assure that the listener's concentration will not be diverted for a moment. If one must quibble, it could be pointed out that Zukerman sometimes expresses himself or some aspect of his violinistic training (Galamein mostly) rather than the music per se.

The Saint-Saëns and Wieniawski items are thorough delights. Zukerman's terrific individuality and brio produce many rewarding, indeed miraculously alive, effects—all of them just right for these lightfooted, virtuoso compositions. There are certainly other ways to play the Saint-Saëns, but Zukerman's version is completely inimitable. In the Chausson's long-spun lines I felt that the wide, constant vibrato was rather indiscriminately applied and distracted from the work's repose. I fully realize that well-trained violinists these days are taught from infancy to look upon vibrato as a technical *modus vivendi*, though I am certain whoever originated this dreadfully over-worked device intended it to be used only occasionally as a musical ornament. The Vieuxtemps is played in a throbbing, warmly lyrical fashion. Zukerman's soulful approach points up the great similarity of its second subject to Schubert's *Quartetsatz*. By contrast Jascha Heifetz, on his RCA version with Sargent, makes it all sound more akin to the Italianate escapades of Paganini. Zukerman's approach is excellent, although I continue to prefer Heifetz' steely control and aloof fire.

Mackerras and the orchestra provide vibrant support and Columbia's sound (save for a bit of deterioration on the long Saint-Saëns/Chausson side) is thoroughly up to par. H.G.

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ALBERT, PRINCE OF SAXE, COBURG, AND GOTHA: "Music of Albert." Purcell Consort of Voices, Grayston Burgess, cond. Argo ZRG 597, \$5.95.

GINASTERA: Ollantay. REVUELTAS: Redes. Louisville Orchestra, Jorge Mester, cond. Louisville S 696, \$8.45.

HILLER: Avalanche for Pitchman, Prima Donna, Player Piano, Percussion, and Tape; Nightmare Music; Suite for Two Pianos and Tape; Computer Music for Tape and Percussion. Various performers. Heliodor 2549 006, \$4.98. Tape: 3313 006, \$4.98.

KOENIG: Terminus II; Funktion Grün. PONGRACZ: Phonothese. RIEHN: Chants de Maldoror. Realized at the Studio for Electronic Music, University of Utrecht, Holland. Deutsche Grammophon 137011. \$5.98.

MESSIAEN: Turangalila-Symphonie. Yvonne Loriod, piano; Jeanne Loriod, ondes martenot; Orchestre Nationale de la R.T.F., Maurice le Roux, cond. Vega 28001/2, \$13.96 (two discs).

RUDHYAR: Paeans; Stars; Granites. SEEGER: Study in Mixed Accents; Nine Preludes for Piano. William Masselos, piano (in the Rudhyar); Joseph Bloch, piano (in the Seeger). Composers Recordings CRI 247, \$5.95.

"THE COURT OF FREDERICK THE GREAT." FREDERICK THE GREAT: Sonata in E minor. BACH, C.P.E.: Sonata in D. QUANTZ: Sonata in A minor, Op. 1. Hans-Martin Linde, flute; Johannes Koch, viola da gamba; Hugo Ruf, harpsichord. RCA Victrola VICS 1503. \$2.98.

JAMES KING: "Operetta and Song." Songs by Lehar, Strauss, J., Tauber, Stolz, Meisel, Geehl, Nevin, De Curtis, Lara. James King, tenor; Berlin Symphony Orchestra, Hans Carste, cond. London OS 26153, \$5.98.

Albert had little time for composition after his marriage to Victoria and most of the songs recorded here are thought to be products of his teenage years. They all show the young prince-consort-to-be as a graceful if passionless melodist with a trace of Schubertian melancholy (German, of course, is the prevailing language). The accompaniments are correct but dull. A modest accomplishment, no doubt, but this little curio has its touching moments. P.G.D.

Slim pickings. The Ginastera is a three-movement program symphony about an Inca god. It has some nice use of Indian tunes in its first movement, a Warrior's Dance straight from the *Rite of Spring*, and rhetorical finale about death. The Revueletas on the other side is the score for a movie about fishermen in Mexico and is altogether hopeless. A.F.

Lejaren Hiller has been a figure of considerable importance in pioneering computer music and in the electronics of composition on tape; his technical capacity, however, considerably outstrips his abilities as a composer, as is all too sadly revealed in this turgid and ineffective record. *Avalanche* is a wild collage of sound satirizing the type of mentality that measures cultural achievement in quantitative terms; unfortunately it commits the very excesses against which it presumably protests. The other works involve all the clichés in the book. A.F.

Both works by Gottfried Michael Koenig, director of the Utrecht Studio, are dreary and uninteresting, but things pick up immensely on Side 2. A lively, witty, and ingenious musical personality asserts itself in Zoltán Pongrácz' *Phonothese*; one wishes that more electronic composers had his control of timing and his brevity of statement. Rainer Riehn's *Chants de Maldoror* is the longest, most impressive, and most original of the four works on the record. It is a series of aphoristic statements, often separated by long silences, wherein the coloristic invention is of the highest interest; the whole score, despite its somewhat excessive length, is full of nervous, bouncy inventiveness which one cannot help but respect. A.F.

Devotees of *Turangalila* will probably already own Ozawa's performance on RCA and can safely stand by it. But for those unfamiliar with this uneven and problematic work, this is my recommended version. While it is true that in technical matters, both in playing and engineering, Ozawa's achievement is superior, Le Roux's reading has a conviction, an élan, and, if you will, a Frenchness that tells just what this piece is about. These qualities elude the Japanese maestro, and by comparison his reading sounds clinical. While I doubt if there's room on anyone's shelf for two *Turangalilas*, those owning the RCA set might still do well to investigate this one. It's an education. R.W.S.

Here are two largely forgotten American composers of the 1920s, one of whom, Mrs Seeger, is arousing much interest nowadays some seventeen years after her death. Dane Rudhyar—composer, poet, mystic, philosopher—had a considerable following in his time. The works here recorded sound today like a curious mixture of Rachmaninoff and Ives, and one dreads to think what they would sound like in the hands of any less a master of pianistic thunder than Masselos. The piano pieces of Ruth Crawford Seeger have better claim to our attention. They are strongly compressed, aphoristic, but full of explosive potential. They remind one especially of Schoenberg's Op. 11 and the other early piano works in which he launched his freely atonal style, but they are no mere classroom imitations of the Master's masterpieces. A.F.

As the years go by I become increasingly thankful to have escaped being a courtier at the palace of Frederick the Great. If, after an extended holiday away from Frederick-type programs, I should ever find that sense of deliverance wavering, a quick spin of this recording of impeccably formulated, incredibly dull flute sonatas will instantly set me right again. (The most interesting thing about the album, in fact, is the implication in its cover illustration that the boys at San Souci played the instrument backwards.) The performances are as immaculate as the music. S.F.

Mr. King gives a lot of pleasure in the opera house and recital stage. He has a big, robust tenor voice, which shows well in such roles as Siegmund, Florestan, and Don José. But it doesn't work here. He is venturing into Tauber/Roswaenge/Wunderlich territory, lacking the ease and flair which have given these songs life in the past. By and large, they are here played straight, punched too hard, and put across without much apparent enjoyment. And if you don't enjoy singing this material, it's not very likely your listeners will. G.M.

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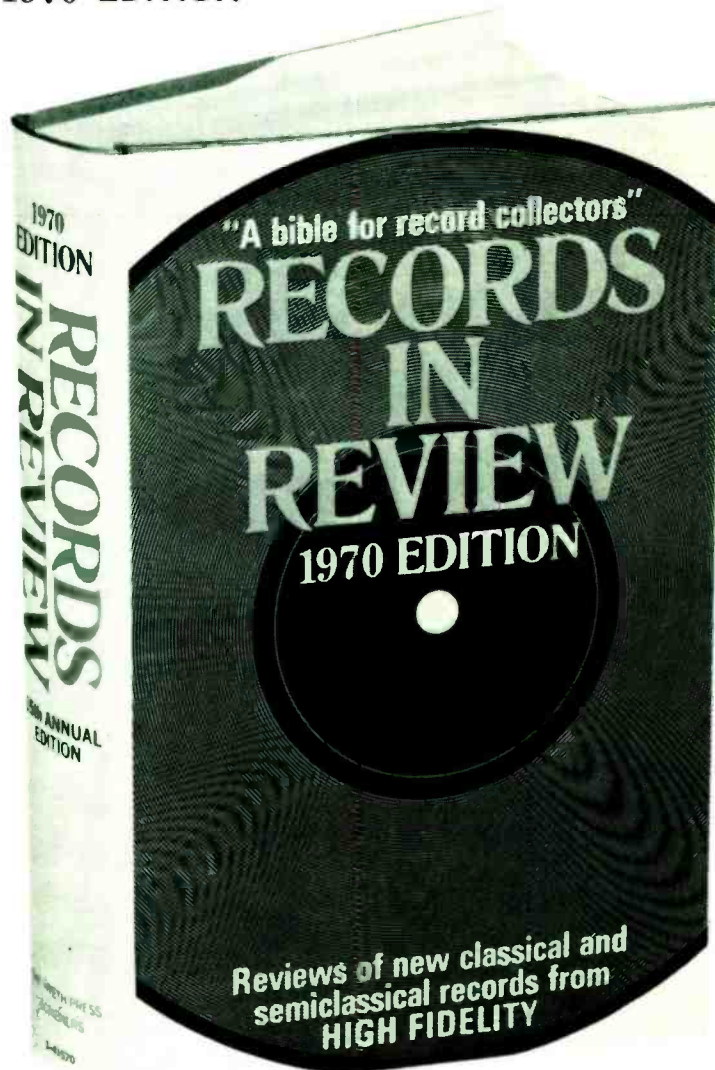
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A SELECTIVE GUIDE TO THE MONTH'S REISSUES

BEETHOVEN: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 1, in C, Op. 15; Sonata for Piano, No. 22, in F, Op. 54.* Sviatoslav Richter, piano. Boston Symphony Orchestra, Charles Munch, cond. RCA Victrola VICS 1478, \$2.98 [from RCA Red Seal LSC 2544, 1962].

Recordings by microphone-shy Sviatoslav Richter are not plentiful and I suppose we should be grateful for what we have. This ten-year-old collaboration (recorded in November 1960) with Munch and the BSO, however, is not one of the pianist's happier efforts. The outer movements are overtense and hard-driven, while the slow movement gets rather unsympathetic off-the-cuff treatment. Munch's blowzy accompaniment veers out of control on more than one occasion and there never seems to be any real rapport between orchestra and soloist.

The filler, one of Beethoven's less frequently played sonatas, provides more congenial material for Richter's assertive, extroverted approach, but this interesting performance is hardly sufficient to give the disc full endorsement.

BELLINI: *Beatrice di Tenda (excerpts).* Joan Sutherland (s), Josephine Veasey (ms), Luciano Pavarotti (t), Joseph Ward (t), Cornelius Ophthof (b); Ambrosian Opera Chorus; London Symphony Orchestra, Richard Bonyngue, cond. London OS 26140, \$5.98 [from London OSA 1384, 1968].

GOUNOD: *Faust (excerpts).* Joan Sutherland (s), Margreta Elkins (ms), Monica Sinclair (ms), Franco Corelli (t), Robert Massard (b), Nicolai Ghiaurov (bs); Ambrosian Opera Chorus; London Symphony Orchestra, Richard Bonyngue, cond. London OS 26139, \$5.98 [from London OSA 1433, 1967].

London's complete *Beatrice* has a rather better supporting cast than most of the Sutherland/Bonyngue bel canto vehicles. Aside from Sutherland herself (who, for all her vaunted coloratura technique and lovely vocal quality, is still far too rhythmically lax and swooningly indulgent), there is some rather good singing to be heard here from Josephine Veasey and Luciano Pavarotti. The opera itself is not really top-drawer Bellini and falls down lamely in the dramatic trial scene. Neither of the two big soprano solos recorded here are especially distinguished either, but the mezzo's opening off-stage cavatina and the trio "*Angiol di pace*" (launched by the tenor, also off stage) are two of the composer's loveliest melodies. Two large ensembles and a soprano-baritone duet complete this generously filled disc.

The great virtue of London's *Faust* was its completeness (including passages omitted in the published score), but from that material only Marguerite's seldom-heard spinning aria ("*Il ne revient pas*")

is included with these highlights. The rest of the music is familiar enough: the opening sequence of Act II with the various choruses, Valentin's aria, and "*Le Veau d'or*"; the Faust/Marguerite meeting and Waltz; from Act III the love duet and arias by Siebel, Faust, and Marguerite (the "Jewel Song" only); the Soldiers' Chorus, Mephisto's Serenade, and Duel Trio from Act IV; and the final trio. An excellent and comprehensive selection, although there is some awkward fading in and out between the bands. The singing is something else again and, to be frank, neither Sutherland nor Corelli is at all suitable for this music: the former simpers rather than sings and the latter is stylistically off in left field. Ghiaurov has trouble with the low notes but his swaggering devil is still the most commendable performance on the set.

DEBUSSY: *Nocturnes.* **RAVEL:** *Rapsodie espagnole.* BBC Women's Chorus; London Symphony Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski, cond. Seraphim S 60104, \$2.98 [from Capitol SP 8520, 1960].

Stokowski gives some predictably succulent readings here. While the Ravel flashes and glitters most persuasively, Debussy's three night portraits seem a bit too humid and self-indulgent notwithstanding the ravishing sounds made by the LSO. Monteux's budget-priced Victrola version is still the preferred version of this piece.

DVORAK: *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra, in B minor, Op. 104.* Mstislav Rostropovich, cello; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult, cond. Seraphim S 60136, \$2.49 [from Capitol SG 7109, 1959].

No less than five different Rostropovich versions of the Dvořák Cello Concerto are now listed in Schwann. The best is probably Parliament's 1953 mono-only release with Talich and the Czech Philharmonic—the cellist's two Russian-based performances with Khaikin (Monitor) and Rachlin (Period) are now rather difficult to come by. The most recent disc, for DGG, might have swept the field were it not for Karajan's mannered accompaniment; but now we have Rostropovich's 1959 disc for EMI once again, a reasonable compromise since it offers robust stereo sonics and excellent orchestral backing from Boult and the Royal Philharmonic. Rostropovich is also somewhat less of an individualist here—his playing does not quite match the edge-of-the-ledge incandescence of his earlier Parliament performance—but for ripe tonal amplitude and sheer technical dazzle, the present reading should satisfy anyone's needs in this particular work.

MARTINU: *Concerto Grosso; Serenade; Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra; Partita for String Orchestra.* Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Winterthur Symphony Orchestra, Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Henry Swoboda, cond. Westminster W 9736, \$2.49 (mono only) [from Westminster XWN 18079, 1952].

These four pieces have a kind of historical interest, demonstrating the deadly effect neoclassicism had on lesser compositional talents in the Thirties. Martinů thinks in clear linear terms, his energy never flags, and occasionally he even hits upon an engaging theme or instrumental texture. But it all rattles along in an obsessive machinelike fashion without any real vitality or arresting invention. The performances are appropriately relentless and grim-faced, but the scrappy string playing and uncertain ensemble leave a lot to be desired—as does the sound which wavers in and out rather badly on Side 2.

PUCCINI: *Tosca.* Leontyne Price (s), Giuseppe di Stefano (t), Giuseppe Taddei (b), et al.; Vienna State Opera Chorus; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. London OSA 1284, \$11.96 [from RCA Red Seal LDS 7022, 1963].

Certainly one of the strongest modern recordings of *Tosca*, this performance makes a speedy and welcome return on the London label. Karajan paces the score leisurely—occasionally a bit too deliberately, in fact: the dramatic tension often slackens and the luxuriant orchestral textures do not always jibe with Puccini's diamond-hard scoring. Still, the conductor brings out many interesting details and such passages as the bell-laden Roman nocturne that open Act III are really quite gorgeous.

Price sings the title role with splendid full-toned opulence, giving a sensible characterization that is effective if not overwhelmingly imaginative. Apart from a strained top note here and there, Taddei's powerfully inflected Scarpia very nearly equals Gobbi's classic performance; in terms of over-all vocal quality he clearly takes top honors. The fly in the ointment is Di Stefano's effortful Cavaradossi, a sad reminder of a once magnificent voice.

The lavish Soria booklet contained in RCA's original release is here replaced by a comparatively Spartan production consisting of the usual cast photographs, libretto, translation, and an essay by Mosco Carner. London's transfer seems a trifle less bright than the RCA pressing, although the surfaces are far quieter.

SCHUBERT: *Symphonies: No. 4, in C minor, D. 417 ("Tragic"); No. 5, in B*

flat, D, 485. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Karl Münchinger, cond. Stereo Treasury STS 15095, \$2.49 [from London CS 6378, 1964].

There have been more elegant versions of these two teenage Schubert symphonies, but Münchinger's budget-priced coupling (only directly rivaled by Menuhin's rather anemic readings on top-dollar Angel) yields decent value. Schwann lists very little competition for the *Tragic*, although if it's the Fifth that interests you, Beecham's beautifully shaped performance is still available on Capitol. The present versions are impeccably played by the Vienna Philharmonic, but Münchinger's interpretations incline toward the prosaic. Even so, he never actually inhibits the melodic flow of Schubert's young ideas, and the recording itself is faultless.

SMETANA: Má Vlast. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Rafael Kubelik, cond. Stereo Treasury STS 15096/7, \$4.98 (two discs) [from London CSA 2202, 1959].

If you can find it, Talich's old mono-only version of this popular cycle of tone poems celebrating the beauties of Czechoslovakia is still tops. The best of the stereo performances was Ančerl's on a pair of deleted Crossroads discs, but in lieu of that there is Neumann's generally vital reading, well played by the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra on a premium-priced London record. Neither of the current budget editions, Sir Malcolm Sargent on Seraphim and Kubelik's reissue, really have a great deal to offer. The VPO sounds a trifle tired, and Kubelik, who should be a natural for this music, seems relatively uninvolved. Furthermore, Stereo Treasury's sound is deficient in the bass department and rather glaring. A superior modern recording is still badly needed.

FRANCO CORELLI: "The Magnificent Tenor." Arias from Andrea Chénier, Lodoletta, Pagliacci, Fedora, Mefistofele, Cavalleria rusticana, Carmen, and Werther. Franco Corelli, tenor; RAI Orchestra of Turin, Arturo Basile, cond. Everest 3276, \$4.98 [from Cetra originals, released in 1959].

The Corelli heard on this disc is that of circa 1955—virtually indistinguishable from the tenor that sings and records today. Few singers have altered so imperceptibly over a comparable fifteen-year span: here is the same thrilling, open-throated metal and direct, from-the-heart approach that one hears in his current work. As usual there are some half-formed interpretive touches, almost instinctively applied but rarely convincingly executed—the "*Giunto sul passo estremo*" from *Mefistofele* almost makes sense and the pathetic falsetto in Werther's aria is at least a gesture in the right direction. The artistic stagnation of such vocal promise, though, is really very sad.

PETER G. DAVIS

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Infinite Riches in a Little Room. Even after sampling the first complete cassette operas earlier this year (and the four-cassette *Rosenkavalier* only last month), I continue to be amazed by further examples of such large-scale works in miniature format—perhaps because I remember the abridged first recording of Wagner's *Tannhäuser* which ran to no less than eighteen 78 rpm shellac discs. And while the most recent recording of the complete opera requires only four LP discs, that still seems bulky compared to its appearance on four tiny 1 $\frac{7}{8}$ -ips cassettes. Moreover, since these cassettes are stacked together rather than spread out flat (as in the special album for the London/Ampex *Rosenkavalier*), the small package that contains this three-hour grand opera seems more than ever a technological miracle.

The only previous *Tannhäuser* on tape, the 1962 Bayreuth Festival version conducted by Sawallisch for Philips/Ampex, was not really satisfactory. It is easily outclassed by the new performance, despite the continued lack of a satisfactory Heldentenor in the title role (here it's Windgassen again) and the dubious advantage of Birgit Nilsson's assumption of both Venus and Elisabeth (neither role seems particularly suited to her talents). But her voice sounds superb as always; Fischer-Dieskau is both vocally and dramatically ideal as Wolfram; the Deutsche Oper Chorus and Orchestra sing and play very well indeed under Otto Gerdes; and the over-all recording is first-rate (Deutsche Grammophon 3372 001, four cassettes, boxed, \$27.92; libretto on request). My words of praise for the present recorded performance perhaps gain added weight by an admission that the work itself is, to my personal taste, the most static, indeed dulllest, opera in the entire standard repertory!

This month DGG also brings us the first three-cassette package release: the genuinely dynamic, melodramatically exciting 1964 *Rigoletto* with Fischer-Dieskau in the title role, Renata Scottò as Gilda, and Carlo Bergonzi as the Duke, with the Chorus and Orchestra of La Scala, Milan, under Rafael Kubelík (3371 001, three cassettes, boxed, \$20.94; libretto on request). In this case there have been three earlier tapings, not one of which offers any serious interpretative or technical competition to this version.

The latest entry in London's pioneering cassette-opera series must be acclaimed *hors concours* for a quite different reason: it is devoted not to a single work but to a single singer. With her "Tebaldi Festival" the great soprano, in better voice than of late, demonstrates her versatility as well as her vocal and interpretative gifts in a wide range of

French, German, and Italian arias. There are also several Spanish and Italian encores, plus Richard Rodgers' *If I Loved You* sung in English. The accompaniments, by the New Philharmonia Orchestra, are conducted in part by Richard Bonyngé, in part by Anton Guadagno (London/Ampex D 31163, two cassettes, boxed, \$14.95; text leaflet on request; also K 90163, 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ -ips reel, \$11.95; text leaflet enclosed).

Oases in the Desert. While taking regretful note of the recent dearth of open-reel releases, I certainly don't share the pessimistic fears voiced by some of my correspondents that cartridges and cassettes will shortly replace the open-reel format altogether. True, only an occasional reel or two has been released in past months, but there are portents that the drought may be relieved before long. Meanwhile, two new reels offer convincing proof that for certain musical works, as well as for optimum technical excellence, the open-reel format remains incomparable.

In one case, a triple-format release of Shostakovich's long-banned Symphony No. 13 (*Babi Yar*) lets us discover for ourselves just why the 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ -ips reel edition (RCA Red Seal TR3 1008, \$6.95) is to be preferred over both the 8-track cartridge (R8S 1151) and cassette (RK 1181) editions issued at the same \$6.95 list price. In the first place, apparently only the reel edition is accompanied by the full texts (Russian and English) of the five Yevtushenko poems set here. Almost as important, neither mobile nor alfresco cartridge/cassette performances are appropriate for music as grimly tragic yet as dramatically absorbing as this masterpiece. Also, the jolting breaks in cartridge playback and the technical inadequacies of the usual auto-installation speakers—scarcely less than the over-all limitations still inherent in cassette playback—simply cannot do adequate justice either to the powerful sonics captured by the RCA engineers or the gripping interpretation by baritone Tom Krause, the Philadelphia Mendelssohn Club Male Chorus, and the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy. In any format, this is not a work to which one should listen casually, but, rather, with one's sensibilities fully attuned.

The other present instance of open-reel superiority is the latest Astrostereo classical program prepared primarily for American Airlines' in-flight entertainment. This particular example (Ampex/Philips/Mercury/World Series CW 230, 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ -ips reel, \$23.95) is outstanding on two counts. For one, the presence of announcer Bill Watson of WQXR in New York City guarantees not only first-rate enunciation and a relaxed manner, but

far more musically intelligent commentary than is normally the case. For another, the programming is exceptionally attractive for serious listeners. There are long sections from Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* (conducted by Eugen Jochum) and Wagner's *Parsifal* (led by Hans Knappertsbusch), and no less than four complete works by Beethoven: the Op. 78 Piano Sonata (Claudio Arrau); Op. 1, No. 1 Trio (Beaux Arts Trio); Op. 25 Serenade (Larrieu/Grumiaux/Janzer); and Op. 102, No. 2 Cello Sonata (Rostropovich/Richter). Six other selections feature Gina Bachauer, Antal Dorati, I Musici, et al.—adding up to some three hours of uncommon musical substance and variety.

A Dark Horse From the Bargain Stables.

The first low-priced cassette series of classical and romantic symphonic "standards" is drawn from the Polyband catalogue of Munich, processed and distributed in this country by Cassette Music Corporation, 220 East 23rd Street, New York, N. Y. 10010. One of the two examples I've received for review proves to be about what one would expect from South German orchestras, conductors, and soloists of only local renown. Soloists Conrad van der Goltz, Jan Polacek, and Kirste Hjort, with the Nuremberg Symphony under Othmar Maga, give us a routine, if earnestly expressive, reading of Beethoven's Triple Concerto, in a darkly robust, rather bottom-heavy stereo recording (CMC CS 519, \$4.95). The engineering shows to much better advantage in the *Parsifal* Act I Prelude and *Good Friday Spell* (on the "A" side of CMC CS 515, \$4.95), but Maga and the South German Philharmonic hardly command much stylistic and sonic distinction.

The surprise in this Wagnerian program (and perhaps in the whole CMC Polyband series) lies with the "B" side performances of the *Faust* and *Flying Dutchman* overtures by the Nuremberg Symphony under conductor Hanspeter Gmür. Mark that name well; judging by these exciting readings and an ability to inspire his players to transcend their normal limitations, Herr Gmür is sure to acquire fame before long. Any fears I had of overestimating him on the evidence of only two performances were dispelled when I heard him again (in a CMC sampler cassette not on general sale) in Haydn's *Orfeo ed Euridice* Overture. The lilt, piquancy, and infectious zest he brings to this very different music proves that Wagner is not his only forte. This, and another Gmür-led Haydn overture, *L'Isola disabitata*, along with Mozart's *Linz* Symphony and K. 138 *Divertimento* conducted by Alexander von Pitamic, are included for regular release in CMC CS 513, \$4.95.

the lighter side


reviewed by

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TEMPLETON TWINS: Trill It Like It Was. With Teddy Turner's Bunsen Burners. (Hey Jude; Everybody's Talkin'; Something; eight more.) Vault 134, \$4.98.

If you have any humor left at all, you owe yourself this album. It is one of the great moments in recorded madness. Or, to quote from Chuck Blore's hilarious liner notes: "If the purpose of an album is to please, to amuse, to arouse all manner of inner pleasures, this is an album to watch . . . and, perhaps, even to listen to."

The project was conceived and produced by a man named Stan Hoffman, who is very busy in the world of commercials, jingles, and so on. While Hoffman appears to be perfectly sane, as well as productive, in reality he is the Templeton Twins (Terry and Tippy), and this album is his long but not lost dream.

Hoffman has taken the biggest of the current hits and couched them, with brilliant authenticity, in musical settings of the 1930s. The incredible, zany arrangements are by Bob Alberti and Jimmy Bryant, who were instrumentally aided by Danny Gould, Hermine Hilton, and El Sayyad Alfie (nearly all of whom are too young to be this good at the music of the '30s). Occasionally the announcer adds his bit, "And now, stepping up to the vocal microphone, the Templeton Twins pose the musical question, 'By the Time I Get to Phoenix,' Twins . . .?" In come the Twins (Hoffman overdubbed his voice in perfect thirds all the way), surrounded by "three moaning saxophones, crying violin, and stuttering trumpet."

Frank Sinatra's hit, *My Way*, is sung, of course, as *Our Way*. Lennon-McCartney's *Yesterday* receives a hot little time twist to warm your cockles. But the tunes that really kill me are the dramatic ones: *Spinning Wheel*; *McArthur Park*; *Light My Fire*. The Twins trill blithely through all with a sense of delight ordinarily reserved for such experiences as eating a dish of vanilla ice cream. Engineer Rob Clayton has somehow managed to get a stereo sound that still smacks of Orrin Tucker—all treble, no bass.

This album has to be the sleeper of the year. Needless to say, Los Angeles disc jockeys such as Gary Owens are in love with it already. It may even land on the charts. All of which restores my faith in insanity at its best. Oh do it again, you adorable tomcats. M.A.

BOB DYLAN: Self Portrait. Bob Dylan, vocals; vocal, rhythm, and instrumental accompaniment. (Early Morning Rain; Let It Be Me; Like a Rolling Stone; Copper Kettle; Gotta Travel On; Blue Moon; The Boxer; The Mighty Quinn; Take A Message to Mary; She Belongs to Me; Alberta; twelve more). Columbia C2X 30050. \$4.98.

Since I don't believe art is self-justifying, or that it is unrelated to its context, I can't take this album seriously,

even though it is quite entertaining and even though it is by one of the most significant pop creators of the era. On the evidence of this and "Nashville Skyline," his last outing, Dylan has become irrelevant. This album is the pop equivalent of a painting by Grandma Moses, amusing, entertaining, immensely popular, but as deep and lasting as an April snow.

"Self Portrait" is nothing if not professional. The twenty-four cuts feature fifty sidemen (listed alphabetically on the liner) in various combinations. The support they offer is flawless. About half the compositions are by Dylan, including some oldies caught at the Isle of Wight and the long-awaited *Mighty Quinn*. On *Days of 49* and a few other cuts, Dylan shows he can still get it on when he wants to, but there is something undeniably flabby about most of the release. I think most Dylan fans will be disappointed, except perhaps those who liked "Nashville Skyline."

Singers and songwriters, even of proven genius, have no more obligation than the rest of us not to turn their backs on the world, but should they decide to do so, we have no obligation to take them seriously. We can regret Dylan's loss, enjoy as we can the entertainment he provides, and pray that someone comes along to fill the place he has vacated. J.G.

FAIRPORT CONVENTION: Liege & Lief. Fairport Convention, folk-rock sextet. (Come All Ye; Matty Groves; The Deserter; Crazy Man Michael; four more). A & M SP 4257, \$4.98.

FAIRPORT CONVENTION: Fairport Convention. Fairport Convention, folk-rock sextet. (Chelsea Morning; Sun Shade; The Lobster; One Sure Thing; Decameron; Portfolio; six more). Cotillion SD 9024, \$4.98.

It's amazing the number of different styles to which we affix the name "rock" these days. A while back Dick Goldstein said facetiously, "If it's good, it's rock, if it's bad, it isn't," and I see what he means. By that standard, Fairport Convention plays rock, but otherwise I don't know what to call their music. It is a mixture of both folk ballads and highland dancing and good old electrified rock-and-roll. The musicianship is first-rate, even given some pretty significant personnel shifts between these two LPs.

Of the two, "Liege & Lief" is the more overtly folk-oriented; most of the tunes are traditional and Sandy Denny's pure voice emphasizes their origins. Dave Swarbrick's fiddling is inspired, especially on the medley of jigs. On the other hand, the Jefferson Airplanish *Tam Lin* would sound like rock in any other context.

The Cotillion release features more amplified instruments, but the music is still only marginally rock. More of the tunes are originals and the remainder are the products of the likes of Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, and Harvey Brooks. Ian MacDonald and Judy Dyble now share

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the lead vocals, and though neither is the equal of Denny, they sound more like they belong with the band.

Both these releases are excellent; I think the Cotillion gets the nod for originality, though perhaps not for musicianship. Either way this is a major band, whatever you call its music. J.G.

GOSPEL MUSIC, Vol. 1: Soul Stirrers. Soul Stirrers, vocals. (Glory Hallelujah; This is My Prayer; Jesus Prays for You and Me; Life's Journey; One Day; seven more). Imperial LM 94007, \$4.98.

RHYTHM 'N' BLUES, Vol. 2: Sweet 'n' Greasy. Various artists. (Dear Lori; Miss Lucy; Down in Mexico; Feeling Sad; Is It Too Late; I Do Believe; Love Me; seven more). Imperial LM 94005, \$4.98.

URBAN BLUES, Vol. 2: New Orleans Bounce. Various artists. (Help Me; Stay Away; Slide Me Down; I'm Thankful; Lucille; Travelin' Mood; seven more). Imperial LM 94004, \$4.98.

RURAL BLUES, Vol. 3: Down Home Stomp. Various artists. (Jump the Boogie; Mean Ol' Train; Bad Dog; Play-boy Blues; Hush Oh Hush; I'm Tired; Rock & Rollin' #2; seven more). Imperial LM 94006, \$4.98.

The record business has almost come full circle in the past three decades. At the end of World War II a few big companies controlled most recording activity, in the same way, alas, that a few big manufacturers control most of the recording going on now. Just after the end of the War, small independent record companies began to blossom in every city in the country. Usually specializing in local fare, these companies would record artists too avant-garde (or too reactionary) to interest the big outfits. How many there were will probably never be known, but together they were responsible both for preserving some of the most important folk, blues, and country artists and for producing some of the biggest pop hits, especially in the '50s. The four albums here are part of a re-release program from Imperial, of a West Coast label that was once one of those important little industries, and judging by the LPs in hand the series is ambitious and successful.

I suppose that for many listeners, recordings such as these are interesting or important because of the influence they have had on modern pop music. Soul music, for example, is hardly more than secularized gospel, and it is revealing to hear the first stirrings of modern soul in the early cuts (like these 1947-48 sides by the Soul Stirrers) of the great gospel groups. But many of these recordings are more than historical documents. The sounds collected on these LPs were widely imitated because, after all they were some of the most exciting music ever recorded.

Of the releases at hand, the best is the Soul Stirrers' collection of traditional gospel tunes. Groups like the Stirrers are noted for their longevity; when these recordings were made they had already been in existence about a decade and

they are still together, though there have been changes in personnel over the years. Although most of the material is traditional, all of the best-known gospel groups rework traditional material so extensively that many tunes are almost unrecognizable no matter which group plays them. The album also includes two interesting secular compositions, *Pearl Harbor* and *Why I Like Roosevelt*, which point up the association with modern soul.

"Sweet 'n' Greasy" features classic '50s r & b by groups like the Crystal, the Pelicans, and the Robins. It is hard to remember now perhaps, but for a lot of us it was a moment of liberation the first time we heard a side by the Robins or the Jewels.

"Down Home Stomp" features both famous bluesmen like Roosevelt Sykes and Lowell Fulson and lesser-known figures like Boogie Bill Webb and Little Son Jackson. "New Orleans Bounce" stars Fats Domino, both through his own recordings and those of imitators like Smiley Lewis and Fats Mathews. Others from the postwar New Orleans revival include Joe Turner and Amos Milburn. The sound on all the albums is excellent and many of the sides have not been issued previously.

Imperial deserves a lot of praise for digging in to its vaults this way. If the rest of the series is anything like these samples, it will be a gold mine of fine and interesting performances. J.G.



GEORGE BENSON: The Other Side of Abbey Road. George Benson, vocals and guitar; Don Sebesky, arr. (Come Together; Something; Golden Slumbers; seven more.) A & M SP 3028, \$4.98.

Here is an album where a strong artist works with a good-idea setting and is surrounded by principals who understand the goals. From artist Benson to producer Creed Taylor to arranger Don Sebesky and the best musicians in New York, the project worked like a dream, and is surely producer Taylor's finest moment since Quincy Jones's "Walking in Space."

George Benson has been acknowledged as a first-rate guitarist, but other than his friends, no one really knew what a fantastic singer he was—warm and real, no tricks, straight ahead.

As the title implies, the album is a re-interpretation of the Beatles' "Abbey Road." Please take note that this is *not* a "cover album," such as Andy Williams doing a second generation version of Stevie Wonder's *For Once in My Life*, same tempo, same arrangement and all. That's a whole other bag.

George Benson and friends have put "Abbey Road" in another dimension here, as unique as the original itself. Tracks such as the lovely ballad, *Golden Slumbers*, are built upon the jazz equivalent of a chamber quartet plus harpsichord. Every track is beautifully threaded into the next. *I Want You (She's so Heavy)* is jazzman's rock—funky, driving, and full.

Something builds up from cellos and flutes into a lovely one-line guitar solo, and later into a beautiful vocal.

I can't choose a favorite track, but I almost guarantee that this album will delight you. M.A.

ARLENE HARDEN: Songs Roy Orbison. Arlene Harden, vocals; rhythm accompaniment. (Crying; Running Scared; It's Over; I'm Hurting; Mama; six more.) Columbia CS 9939, \$4.98.

MAC WISEMAN: Sings "Johnny's Cash and Charley's Pride." Mac Wiseman, vocals; rhythm accompaniment. (Ring of Fire; Big River; Crystal Chandelier; Ballad of a Teenage Queen; The Easy Part's Over; six more.) RCA Victor LSP 4336, \$4.98.

Of all the problems faced by singers, probably the roughest is finding enough good songs to make up an interesting album. The usual solution is to rely on a big single (and maybe a follow-up) and to forget about the quality of the rest of the record. Another answer is to choose traditionally popular material or recent hits by other artists—but except for a few especially talented vocalists like Sinatra and Peggy Lee, most performers' versions are less interesting than the originals.

Two new c & w albums illustrate the problem. Someone has gotten the bright idea of turning Mac Wiseman, a famous bluegrass singer and guitarist, into a country star. Wiseman kicked off his new career with *Johnny's Cash and Charley's Pride*, a gimmicky novelty number that puns on the names of a number of famous c & w stars. He has wisely chosen to go straight for the rest of the album with a number of good well-known songs that were hits for Johnny Cash and Charley Pride. Jack Clement, the producer, also worked with Cash on most of the same tunes, but he rightly builds on Wiseman's sweetness rather than aiming for some reflection of Cash's dark romanticism. Perhaps because Wiseman is basically a folksinger, perhaps because the rhythm section is very together, the album is less like a production-line item than is usual in recent Victor Nashville releases. There was some distortion on the copy I reviewed.

Arlene Harden, meanwhile, comes up with a collection of Roy Orbison tunes. Orbison was one of the great heroes of early rock. Like Buddy Holly, he was both unattractive and unhip-looking; but also like Holly, he was able through brilliant songwriting and a forceful personality to command a vast audience. Arlene Harden has a clean, unforced approach (similar to but fuller than Skeeter Davis'). Producer Frank Jones and arranger Bill McElhinney have done their best to reduce the excitement of the material, but they fail because Orbison is one of the best songwriters in pop or country (if a country album lists an arranger, it's usually time to get suspicious).

Both of these albums are quite entertaining. But neither performer, at least here, is quite up to the originals (es-

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pecially to Cash and Orbison; I've never liked *Pride* much). Still, of all the solutions to the album-content problem (short of finding or writing twelve brilliant new songs) this is the best. A lot of these songs are like old friends. And it is always interesting to see how another artist solves the same problems. J.G.

GRATEFUL DEAD: Workingman's Dead. Hard rock sextet. (Uncle John's Band; High Time; Dire Wolf; New Speedway Boogie; four more). Warner Bros./7 Arts 1869, \$4.98.

TOM T. HALL: I Witness Life. Tom Hall, vocals; rhythm accompaniment. (Chattanooga Dog; Girls In Saigon City; Hang Them All; Coming to the Party; America the Ugly; That'll Be All Right With Me; five more). Mercury SR 61277, \$4.98.
COUNTRY JOE McDONALD: Tonight I'm Singing Just For You. Joe McDonald, vocals; rhythm accompaniment. (Ring of Fire; Tennessee Stud; Tiger By the Tail; Crazy Arms; Oklahoma Hills; six more). Vanguard VSD 6557, \$4.98.
JESSE WINCHESTER: Jesse Winchester. Jesse Winchester, vocals; rhythm accompaniment. (Payday; Biloxi; Snow;

Rosy Shy; Black Dog; The Nudge; five more). Ampex A 10104, \$4.98. Tape: ●● 1004, 3¾ ips, \$5.95; ●● 81004, \$6.95; ●● 51004, \$6.95.

Country-and-western continues to be the source of some of the best contemporary pop and these four releases demonstrate some of the possible contexts.

The Grateful Dead are best known as the West Coast's most uncompromising street band and their albums and concerts have tended to emphasize extended improvisation on blues-derived compositions. "Workingman's Dead" is much

The Naked Carmen Laid Bare

by Conrad L. Osborne

YOU HAVE EVERY right to inquire as to why this recording should be paid any serious attention. My answer would have to be that a) I'll only give it a *little* serious attention, and b) there are a few things that ought to be kept straight.

In terms of evaluation, there's no problem: *The Naked Carmen* is a hunk of junk. Such small interest as attaches to it lies in the matter of why it is junk, and perhaps in speculation as to the album's intent.

To describe it, straight: *The Naked Carmen* consists of a few passages from the score of an opera, *Carmen*, by Georges Bizet (French composer, 1838-1875). Some of these passages are played as written (though in rather elephantine style) by a symphony orchestra. Generally, however, something else is going on by way of a superimposed track at the same time, and usually the Bizet melody is taken as a basis for a variation or elaboration in any one of a number of directions, most of them constructed on forms usually associated with certain varieties of commercial music. There are also noises of sundry sorts, and lyrics in contemporary pop idiom. Plus elaborate liner notes and other presentational impedimenta, campy in tone but asking, rather plaintively, for respect and love.

I think it is of some importance to separate principles from execution. That is, we do not need to throw up our hands in horror at the defilement of a Masterwork—it is defiled nightly in the opera house. In fact, the notion that contemporary interpretive artists may make what they will of the materials of the past (*Carmen* should serve us in some real way, rather than our serving *Carmen* in some imaginary way) badly needs affirmation in a form which has become so frozen to the text (or rather to a particular notion of the text) that it sticks. There are bound to be some attempts along these lines in the near future, and they should not be legislated out of existence on grounds of puristic theory.

All the more important, then, to observe that *The Naked Carmen* fails for the most usual of reasons—it has no central artistic statement to make,

and most of the work that has been done on it is mediocre in quality, or worse. The liner notes, disarmingly enough, point out that the album was conceived not out of the expressive needs or wishes of any artist or group of artists, but out of the intent of a couple of record company executives to create "a record from all worlds of music." There's my review, prewritten: this is a record from all worlds of music (oh, possibly not *quite*), with the selections controlled by record company executives. They have had the co-operation of a number of musicians, some of them very talented. But either these musicians have somehow temporarily reduced their abilities and sensitivities to the level one would expect of record company executives, or their choices have been betrayed and distorted in the processes of editing, mixing, and otherwise mutilating their statements. On the evidence, I suspect it is mainly the former.

Thus, you may hear on this record, briefly, imitations of virtually every pop music style of the past fifty years, plus a dash of French romantic grand opera, and a surfacy survey of recording techniques. But in no instance is the quality sufficient to engage the attention—almost uncanny here is the dead accuracy of aim at the watered-down cliché, the unimaginative formula solution, in all the adopted forms and styles. And if one's attention wanders, as it soon does, from the music to the lyrics (I realize the average pop/rock listener's attention flows in the other direction, but it makes no difference), it soon wanders away again, for the goopy pretentiousness of the words is as boring as the cheap eclecticism of the notes.

The performances aren't very interesting, either. I was surprised to find Melba Moore thoroughly dull, laboring away without a spark of conviction. David Hess periodically heaves into earshot with the goopiest of the lyrics, sort of a theme song set to the Act III entr'acte; his emasculate sound does preserve some flavor of the original by sounding a bit like a primitive woodwind. George Turner brings some energy, at least, to his one song, and I think the beginnings of a personal style, though that's a bit

hard to tell on the basis of this assignment.

Actually, the most persuasive work is turned in by the "legit" contingent—Robert White, a tenor normally associated with The Old Music Scene, and William Walker, a baritone normally associated with roles like Silvio at the Met. Each carries off his role to good effect, which means that the former manages to make the "Flower Song" sound like an old operetta record (it's not just the engineering—listen to his vowel formation) and the latter's Toreador is like a sort of blown-up Johnny Cash, with a touch of operatic swagger.

There remains only the intent. There are just two possibilities: 1) this is merely another commercial record, entirely cynical and exploitative in conception, or 2) maybe it isn't. No. 1 is more likely, but No. 2 is scarier, for it would imply that promotion and manipulation have been confused with the creative act in some final way, and that the crafts of the editor and arranger have at last been taken as acceptable substitutes for the arts of the composer and author.

In lieu of the old listening-booth hearing test, you can make your own judgment about *The Naked Carmen* by taking a good gander at the album's back cover—antique cigar bands rampant, with label names like "Joint La Joya" and "Acapulco Gold." That about sums up the marketing motivation and the level of inventiveness of the piece itself, the motivation being to establish identification with the group-acceptance yearnings of teenies of all ages by whatever means, however cynical, and the inventiveness being that of a back-of-the-class prep school sophomore. You are also given fair warning that you'd better be at least half spaced-out before dropping the needle (stylus, that is) into the first groove (vinyl, that is).

BIZET-CORIGLIANO-HESS: The Naked Carmen. Melba Moore, Anita Darian, Robert White, David Hess, George Turner, William Walker, vocals; Mary Bruce and her Starbuds; Pig Iron; John Atkins, piano; Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Paul Paray, cond. Mercury SRM 1-604, \$5.98. Tape: ●● MC8 1-604, \$6.98; ●● MCR 41-604, \$6.98.

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tighter than most of their previous work and much of the discipline is imposed by the country-inspired material. I'm inclined to think that this is the Dead's best album, but at the least it is the group's most accessible and I commend it to you.

Tom T. Hall is the author of *Harper Valley PTA* and a string of other (and better) country hits. More than most of his contemporaries, he invests his material with a genuine sense of moment; he is inclined to write little short stories and many of the characters he creates really stay with you. He reminds me of John D. Loudermilk, though if anything he is even better, both as a singer and a songwriter. The performance on "I Witness Life" is Hall's best yet, though some of his more interesting songs are on his first two LPs.

Joe McDonald is the lead singer of Country Joe and the Fish and "Tonight I'm Singing Just For You" is his second solo LP (his first was devoted to the songs of Woody Guthrie). All of the tunes are country standards and McDonald journeyed to Bradley's Barn near Nashville to make sure that he would receive the right support. He does. The album is most satisfying in its effortlessness and he gives flawless readings of the tunes. Unfortunately, Vanguard is shortchanging the buyer somewhat, offering 15:06 on Side 1 and only 13:29 on Side 2.

Jesse Winchester is an American draft-dodger living in Canada and if he is any measure of the kind of talent we have lost to expatriation because of this dismal war, we've lost more than we think. The nearest thing we have to compare with Winchester's style is that of The Band, whose Robbie Robertson produced this LP. Winchester is a better vocalist, however, and his songwriting is highly personal and inventive.

C & W seems to be having a greater influence than ever on pop today, but less directly than through music like Winchester's or the Dead's. It is about time this much-maligned music got the attention it deserves, because for my money it has as much soul as its more highly touted compatriot, r & b. J.G.

EUGENE McDANIELS: *Outlaw*. Eugene McDaniels, vocals; rhythm accompaniment; William Fischer, musical director. (Silent Majority; *Outlaw*; Reverend Lee; six more.) Atlantic SD 8259, \$4.98.

Gene McDaniels has done some long, hard, emotional traveling since he was a promising young pop star a decade ago with hits like *A Hundred Pounds of Clay*. It took the whole ten years to come up with this album, and the singer's dues show up crystal clear.

McDaniels always sang like a bird and he still does. He used to sit in with admiring jazz performers such as Miles Davis and Les McCann. McDaniels would name a tune and they'd ask what key he wanted and he'd say, "Wherever you play it, man." And it was always right.

I ran into Gene McDaniels again in

New York about five years ago. He was beginning to write songs. They were strong, strange, interesting. Les McCann recorded one of them twice (*Compared to What*) and the second recording became the basis of a hit album called "Swiss Movement."

Now McDaniels (this time he's Eugene) makes his re-entry in the market place, singing all original material in a highly personal style. The album is a culmination of talents and instincts which came to him, perhaps, too soon. He's had ten years to develop them and the market has had ten years to get ready. Things look good for Gene McDaniels this time out.

McDaniels' songs, like Laura Nyro's, are disjointed, but he gets so far into them that they work. *Cherrystones* displays the singer's awesome sense of time and intonation. The song is all over the place at once, with McDaniels on top of it all the way. *Outlaw* sings with wry humor of a young lady who goes around breaking rules. *Welfare City*, one of the strongest songs in the set, has sociological overtones. This is a more expressive age than some—for those who are simultaneously black and talented. McDaniels is making well-deserved mileage on this fact.

The album is backed by some of the best jazz players alive—bassist Ron Carter, guitarist Eric Weissberg, drummer Ray Lucas, and pianist "Mother Hen" (in real life she's Jane Getz).

Nevertheless, this is not specifically a jazz album, nor pop, nor r & b, though it includes all those elements. It is rather Gene McDaniels' album, made as much for himself as for those of us out here. The musical director is William Fischer, the producer is Atlantic's Joel Dorn, and the engineers are Dean Evenson and Bob Liftin. Everyone did a superb and committed job in making this more than a passingly meaningful album. Note to Gene: you've found your beginning, so keep on keeping on. Only I think you looked better before you grew a beard like everyone else. Love. M.A.

SHANGO: *Trampin'*. Richie Hernandez, Malcom Evans, Joe Barlie, and Tom Reynolds, vocals; rhythm accompaniment; Jimmie Haskell, arr. (You Got Something; That's My Bag; Blue One, Blue Two; seven more.) Dunhill DS 50082, \$4.98.

Considering how many rock groups barely survive success (Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young immediately come to mind), one has to hand it to the Shango. Their first year in the record market was only barely successful, but they survived even that. Here they are again, with a new label and producer, all original material, and a vigorous new sound.

Shango is the group that had some success last year, particularly on the West Coast, with a single which began, "Day after day, the whole earth's slippin' away. . . ." (Californians were focusing their all-purpose neurosis on the Great Earthquake at that time, as you may recall.) Shango followed up the single

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Bill Walker makes his living in sound. He writes and produces music for television and radio advertisers. Chevrolet. Kraft. Oldsmobile and Continental Airlines. He pioneered in the uses of the Moog Synthesizer. And has written songs for Peggy Lee, Dean Martin, Gordon MacCrea and others. Over the years, Bill produced more than 5,000 sound tracks for radio and television.



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CIRCLE 7 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

with an album of calypso-oriented pop, featuring steel drums. Sometime later, they parted with A & M Records.

This is their second effort, but musically—for me—it's their first. Dunhill Records, producer Steve Barri, and engineer Phil Kaye have gotten the very best out of the group. And Shango are much further into playing their instruments (sans steel drums) than they were a year ago. They're going their own way and they're doing it with original rock material. All this is enhanced by the fact that they have been produced right.

Among the more interesting tunes are Tom and Diane Reynolds' *Brotherhood*, Richie Hernandez' and L. Lundgren's *Some Things A Man's Gotta Do*, and Joe Barile's *The Time Has Come*.

Congratulations to Shango for enduring the storm and finding a beginning place at last. M.A.

DAVE MASON: Alone Together. Dave Mason, vocals and guitar; rhythm accompaniment. (Waitin' On You; Just a Song; World in Changes; five more.) Blue Thumb BTS 19, \$4.98. Tape: ♀♂ 8075-19, \$6.95; ♂♂ 5075-19, \$6.95.

In the past couple of years rock has formed an elite in a sought-after direction of sound and sense. Artists within or hovering near this elite are those who command most interest, whose emotional impact is felt most quickly by the mature listener. Its ranks include Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young; James Taylor; Delaney, Bonnie, et al; the Beatles; Creedence Clearwater; Joni Mitchell; Laura Nyro; and several others.

With this album, it looks as if another heavy has entered that special arena in pop music. His name is Dave Mason. While this is his first major solo effort, he's not new. Mason was formerly with Traffic, most of whose material he wrote. He is also the composer of Joe Cocker's hit, *Feelin' Alright*. A native of Birmingham, England, Mason now resides in Los Angeles. Several important friends came to support him in this album: Leon Russel, John Simon, Jim Gordon, Larry Knechtel, Bonnie and Delaney Bramlett, and others. The record burns from beginning to end. All material is by Mason, who is also a first-rate guitarist and singer.

Graphics fans, note that this album displays a new design concept called "Kangaroo-pac." It folds out three ways to reveal a multicolored disc that turns superpsychedelic as it spins on your turntable. The whole thing was designed by Barry Feinstein and Tom Wilkes for Camouflage Productions, and it's quite a trip. (Feinstein also did the beautiful photography.)

Good things come in good packages. Any one of the elements here would be pretty interesting. All of them combined have produced one of the most worthwhile albums of the year. Look out for Dave Mason. M.A.

jazz



DUKE ELLINGTON: 70th Birthday Concert. Cat Anderson, Cootie Williams, Rolf Ericson, and Mercer Ellington, trumpets; Lawrence Brown and Chuck Connors, trombones; Johnny Hodges, Russell Procope, Norris Turney, Paul Gonsalves, Harold Ashby, and Harry Carney, reeds; Wild Bill Davis, organ; Duke Ellington, piano; Victor Gaskins, bass; Rufus Jones, drums. (Tootie for Cootie; Perdido; In Triplicate; thirteen more.) Solid State 19000, \$5.98 (two discs).

This disc makes up to some extent for the incredible neglect shown by recording companies—all recording companies—during Duke Ellington's seventieth birthday year, 1969. Not a single Ellington record was issued that year. And even this set, recorded at concerts in Manchester, England on Nov. 25 and 26, 1969, was the result only of a last-minute impulse by the concerts' producer to have them recorded. The result is two superb LPs which not only show off the continuing quality of the Ellington orchestra (even with a sixth saxophonist sitting in what would normally be the third trombonist's chair) but which also get several new and satisfying Ellington tunes on record as well as offering some of the Duke's continuing revisions of old pieces.

As is usually the case in Ellington concerts, there is a good deal of tried and still true material here—*Rockin' in Rhythm*, *'A' Train*, Cat Anderson's sky-high *El Gato*, *Things Ain't What They Used to Be*, *Satin Doll* (the Ellington medley, long version).

But there is also a gorgeously lush bit of Ellingtonian atmosphere, *4:30 Blues*, opening with a fascinating clarinet trio and developing into a warm, dark solo for Russell Procope's clarinet; *Laying on Mellow*, a relaxed riff for the Duke's piano and suave Johnny Hodges' alto; and *Black Swan*—Ellington with a slightly Latin touch and featuring two new members of the band, Wild Bill Davis on organ and Norris Turney on flute.

Davis also revives his lovely *Azure-Té* (not *Azure*, Duke's tune, as it is listed on both the record label and the album liner) while Duke's composition of forty years ago, *Black Butterfly*, is turned into a very fitting vehicle for Johnny Hodges' inimitably exotic playing.

The vitality of both Ellington and the band have been caught here as they rarely are on records. The band plays with fire and enthusiasm that suggest it was at one of its peaks. Even after all these years of playing *Satin Doll*, the band puts it across with a tremendous surge of joy, driven by Cootie Williams' biting trumpet, buoyed by Wild Bill Davis' expansive organ, and climaxed by a dizzying Cat Anderson solo. J.S.W.

DIZZY GILLESPIE: The Real Thing. Dizzy Gillespie, trumpet; James Moody, tenor



HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE

saxophone; Mike Longo, piano; Nate Edmonds, organ; George Davis or Eric Gayle, guitar; Phil Upchurch, Paul West, or Chuck Rainey, bass; David Lee, Candy Finch, or Pretty Purdie, drums. (Matrix; Alligator; Closer; six more). Perception 2, \$5.98.

Although Dizzy Gillespie leads three different groups in the course of this disc, there is an over-all sense of unity and cohesion that does not usually appear on an LP made up of as many as nine separate selections. Rhythmically, melodically, and stylistically, one piece relates very closely to the next with only slight adjustments of color and accent giving each selection its own character. It is a particularly interesting development of a relatively small but fruitful area, filled with sparkling solos by Dizzy and pianist Mike Longo, and glimpses of the guitars of George Davis and Eric Gayle as well as James Moody on tenor saxophone. Within this context, Dizzy parades his comic sense (on the loudly smacking *Soul Kiss*), his warm lyrical feeling (on *High on a Cloud* and an unusual *Summertime*), as well as his finely honed jazz sense. His playing is consistently fresh yet completely within the idiom that he has been polishing and perfecting for years and years—and is not squandered on empty material. J.S.W.

LEE KONITZ QUINTET: Peacemeal. Lee Konitz, alto, tenor, and Multivider (electric) saxophones; Marshall Brown, valve trombone and baritone horn; Dick Katz, piano and electric piano; Eddie Gomez, bass; Jack de Johnette, drums. (Thumb Under; Lester Leaps In; Subconscious-Lee; seven more). Milestone 9025, \$5.98.

The first thing that strikes you about this disc is the programming: three short pieces from Béla Bartók's *Mikrokosmos*, two adaptations of classic jazz solos (Lester Young's *Lester Leaps In*, Roy Eldridge's *Body and Soul*), two Lee Konitz originals—one old (*Subconscious-Lee*), one new (*Fourth Dimension*)—and three pieces by pianist Dick Katz. That's stirring up quite a mixture in one pot. The next thing that strikes you is that it all works, although not always in the ways you might expect. And the third thing that strikes you (me, at least) is that the electric saxophone produces a persistently bland, bloodless sound (like a wistful bicycle horn) that has a deadening effect. But point two holds despite point three. In fact, the ability of the electric saxophone to divide itself into two unison lines makes it possible on *Lester Leaps In* for Konitz by himself to produce a genuine bop ensemble that once required four hands and two horns. Otherwise I was grateful when Konitz unplugged himself.

The Bartók pieces are very happy choices, coming through with color and charm in Marshall Brown's arrangements. Katz's three compositions have a lean, vital, individual quality to which his clean, positive playing makes an important contribution. J.S.W.

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in brief

CHARLES WRIGHT & THE WATTS 103RD STREET RHYTHM BAND. Warner Bros./7 Arts 1864, \$4.98.

This group owes its career to Bill Cosby. But for all Cosby's good intentions and the group's evident sincerity, I'm pretty tired of listening to them learn how to play and become professionals on the public airways—that is, on our time. M.A.

MARK LINDSAY: Arizona. Columbia CS 9986, \$4.98. Tape: ☐ 18 10 0886, \$6.98.

Mark Lindsay, formerly lead singer with Paul Revere and the Raiders, has revived a pop formula of the early '60s: tuneful and, usually, familiar material given careful but colorless readings. Tommy Sands lives! J.G.

MOSE ALLISON: The Best of Mose Allison. Atlantic SD 1542, \$4.98. Tape ☐ M 81542, \$6.95; ☐ M 51542, \$6.95. *Your Mind Is on Vacation, Seventh Son, New Parchman, I Love the Life I Live*, etc. In other words, the best of Mose Allison. J.G.

JIM SULLIVAN. Century City CCR 5000, \$4.98.

Here's another interesting new singer-songwriter, a country-tinged natural man. Jimmy Bond's sensitive arrangements strongly support Sullivan's haunting effect. Best track: *Rosie*. M.A.

THE EVERLY BROTHERS: Original Greatest Hits. Barnaby BGP 350, \$4.98. These twenty songs by the Everlys make up one of the most remarkable careers in pop music. All your favorites. J.G.

BERT SOMMER: Inside Bert Sommer. Eleuthra ELS 3600, \$4.98.

This is the second disappointing album by singer-songwriter Bert Sommer, one of the best around if you judge by his live act. Still, worth hearing for the glimmer it offers of what he can do. J.G.

IT'S A BEAUTIFUL DAY: Marrying Maiden. Columbia CS 1058, \$4.98.

No group with a name like this has a chance, which is a pity because *It's A Beautiful Day* is one of the best bands around. Another group comfortable in folk, country, and hard rock—or a mishmash of all three, to be more precise. You'll like it. J.G.

IDES OF MARCH: Vehicle. Warner Bros./7 Arts 1863, \$4.98.

Accepted theory says that the truly distinguished artist cannot be imitated. Really? Blood, Sweat, and Tears has reason to be nervous about this group, including lead vocalist, Jim Peterik. Title track, *Vehicle*, got much airplay, and many presumed it was BS&T's follow-up single. Ides of March may not have been first at the starting gate, but they may well end up being the more vital of the two groups. M.A.

BLUE CHEER. Philips PHS 600333, \$4.98.

Blue Cheer has inspired adoration and derision, but not much in between. Their new album is a big improvement on the past, mediocre being way ahead of incompetent. J.G.

FREDDIE KING: My Feeling for the Blues. Cotillion SD 9016, \$4.98. Tape: ☐ M 89016, \$6.95; ☐ M 59016, \$6.95.

Blues veteran Freddie King, a good vocalist and a great guitarist, is showcased against a first-rate studio band (George Coleman, Frank Wess, King Curtis, Marty Banks, etc.) on a program of blues standards (*Yonder Wall, Stormy Monday, What'd I Say*, etc.). Solid. J.G.

THE MOTHERS OF INVENTION: Burnt Weeny Sandwich. Bizarre 6370, \$4.98.

Frank Zappa's garden continues to bloom, although some of the blossoms are starting to resemble each other (like petunias, Zappa's records are all different and all alike). There is a lot of inventive improvising here, but it is nowhere near as tasty as "Uncle Meat," his last entree. Strictly for Mother lovers. J.G.

EL CHICANO: Viva Tirado. Kapp KS 3632, \$4.98. Tape: ☐ 7632, 3¾ ips, \$5.95.

Revitalized racial pride is not the exclusive domain of the American Negro. It extends to Mexican-Americans, who now call themselves *chicanos* with pride, even as Negroes call themselves blacks. Much of that feeling shows in this ably performed and produced album featuring a group of Mexican-Americans performing "titles" (big chart songs) from Bacharach to Beatles. The title track, written by Gerald Wilson, is fast becoming a hit. *Viva Chicanos*. M.A.

JERRY BUTLER: The Best of Jerry Butler. Mercury SR 61281, \$4.98.

Ironically, when Jerry Butler finally gets around to putting out the album worthy of him it turns out to be a collection of singles. Recommended to anyone who wants to find out what soul is all about. J.G.

HOT TUNA: Hot Tuna. RCA LSP 4353, Kaukonen and Casady of the Jefferson Airplane plus one=drek. J.G.

ROD STEWART: Gasoline Alley. Mercury SR 61264, \$4.98.

If anything, gravel-voiced Rod Stewart's second LP is even better than his first. The tunes are excellent and Stewart, Wood, and Quittenton are perfect. J.G.

HERBIE HANCOCK: Fat Albert Rotunda. Warner Bros./7 Arts 1834, \$4.98.

Pianist Herbie Hancock wrote, arranged, conducted, and produced this beautiful album based on Bill Cosby's character, Fat Albert (Hancock also wrote the music for the Fat Albert TV special). Always a superb pianist, Hancock has become one of the most compleat artists in jazz. The high point, for me, is a gorgeous ballad called *Jessica*. M.A.

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