

HIGH FIDELITY®



Sinatra- End of a Giant?

SPECIAL TAPE ISSUE

Cassettes, 8-Track Cartridges, Open Reel



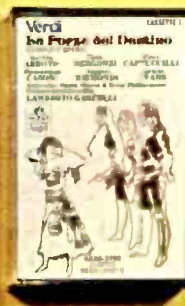
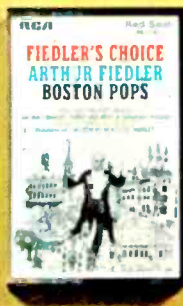
The new tapes—fad or improvement?
Dolby's System—does it work?
"Professional" tape recorders—do you really need one?

A Radical Way to Get LPs and Tapes see page 4

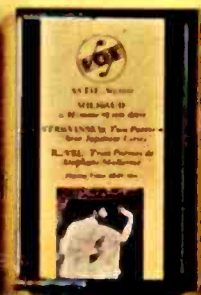
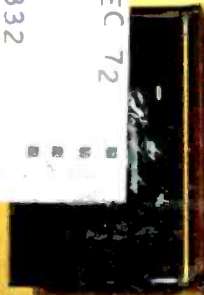
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Cassette Sound-Spectaculars





-420 converter is all 2-channel el.

two channels of amplification needed to convert from 2 to 4-channel. And it provides the input and output facilities, plus the controls you need.

What's more, the TX-420 provides you with a high-fidelity source of 4-channel program material: a built-in 4-channel, 8-track cartridge player.

And, in addition, the TX-420 will extract 4 channels of information from 2-channel program material, using the exclusive Fisher 2 + 2 decoder system.

How compatible is the TX-420?

The new unit is compatible with any existing 2-channel stereo equipment, whether it's a receiver, an amplifier, a compact or a console. As for quality, the new Fisher is comparable with the other Fisher amplifiers and receivers on the market, which means it's as good as anything you can buy. (People who are using the converter with other than Fisher equipment may discover that the two channels they're adding sound better than the two they started with.)

What about power?

The TX-420 has plenty of power: 50 clean watts, to be exact. It will drive your two rear speakers as loud as you'd ever want to, without any sign of stress.

What about controls?

The converter has a full complement of controls, including bass and treble, balance and volume, loudness contour, plus tape monitoring facilities and front-panel headphone jack.

Incidentally, the bass and treble controls are of the Baxandall variety. They cost a little more to include than the kind a lot of other manufacturers use in their equipment, but are worth it. At normal settings, the controls affect only the extremes of the frequency range, leaving the midrange untouched.

Now, for the 4-channel, 8-track cartridge player.

Fisher has included a 4-channel, 8-track player in the new converter for a number of very good reasons.

First of all, it's the most practical source of true 4-channel. It plays 8-track cartridges with several 4-channel programs on each cartridge. And there's quite a repertoire of cartridges available, from rock through pop to classical. (It will also play the standard 8-track stereo cartridges.)

The 8-track stereo player in the TX-420 is built to Fisher standards. So wow and flutter are extremely low. Frequency response is 50 to 12,000 Hz, which compares favorably even with open-reel machines. And it's extremely versatile. It will play one program after another, repeat one program as long as you want, or you can skip to whatever you want to hear.

The Fisher 2 + 2 decoder system. 4 channels out of 2.

A switch activates a special circuit that lets you create 4 channels out of 2-channel material. The circuit extracts ambiance information from the channels that you otherwise couldn't hear,

and feeds it into the two rear channels. This information, which represents the sum of the reflected signals from the original recording source, enhances the stereo effect. The result is as close as you can get to true 4-channel sound, without actually starting with four separate signals.

4 rock channels or 4 classical channels?

Since not all 2-channel material is recorded the same way, you want some flexibility when you create 4 channels out of 2. So Fisher provides a 2-position Classical/Popular control that gives you two choices: You can add the 2 extra channels at a reduced volume level, simulating the acoustics of the concert hall. Or you can have all 4 channels at about the same volume level, giving the new information equal importance with the standard 2 channels. This latter position might be more suitable for the reproduction of rock music.

The Fisher TX-420 is like insurance.

Now that the Fisher TX-420 exists, you can hold on to your old 2-channel stereo system, if you like. Or you can even buy new 2-channel stereo equipment.

Whatever you do, you now have the assurance that your 2-channel stereo equipment is no longer obsolete.

The Fisher 
We invented high fidelity.



Introducing the Fisher TX-420 and tape player. It converts stereo into true 4-channel

4-channel has come a long way since last year, when Fisher introduced the world's first 4-channel receiver.

Audiophiles now agree that 4-channel sound is an even more dramatic improvement over stereo than stereo was over mono.

Other manufacturers are starting to get on the bandwagon. There will be more and more 4-channel equipment. More 4-channel source material. And eventually, 4-channel may replace 2-channel entirely.

Which brings us to the important question, "What's going to happen to all the 2-channel equipment that people now own?"

In a sense, that equipment has been obsolete since last year. Because it's been impractical to attempt converting your 2-channel system to 4-channel. (Conversion meant doubling everything you now own, so that starting from scratch with a 4-channel receiver made more sense.)

But now, 2-channel stereo is no longer obsolete.

At Fisher, we've given this problem a lot of thought. And we decided to come out with a piece of equipment that would let the audiophile make full use of his 2-channel equipment, while converting to 4-channel.

Introducing the Fisher TX-420. \$299.95.

The TX-420 is a unique piece of equipment. It provides the additional



Only 25¢! \$2 value! Send for your copy of The Fisher Handbook, a fact-filled 80-page guide to high fidelity. This full-color reference book also includes complete information on all Fisher stereo components. Enclose 25¢ for handling and postage.*

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Long Island City, N.Y. 11101

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City _____

State _____

Zip _____

*Please glue or tape coin on picture of handbook above.

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(Lift flap.) →

**Thanks
to Fisher,
2-channel
stereo is
no longer
obsolete.**

Choosing the wrong cartridge for a record player is like putting low octane gas in a high-performance car.

Here's how to choose the right cartridge.

Matching stereo cartridges to turntables and record changers is as important as putting the right kind of gas in your car. Low octane gas just won't work in a high performance car. And high octane gas in an economy car is a waste of money. It's the same with cartridges. In fact, a cartridge that's great for one system could be disastrous for another.

So, we've developed a simple way for you to precisely match one of our XV-15 cartridges to whatever kind of record player you have

or plan to buy. It's called the Dynamic Coupling Factor—DCF for short.

DCF is a numerical index, like an octane rating, that our engineers have assigned to the XV-15 cartridges by pre-analyzing all the electrical and mechanical specifications of all major record changers and turntables. The more sophisticated the record player, the higher the DCF number.

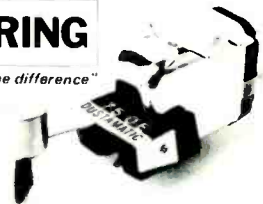
But how we devised the DCF rating system isn't as important to you as knowing what it does. Using

our DCF chart to choose your XV-15 makes sure that you get optimum performance when you play your records. And that you can walk into your high fidelity dealer and know just which XV-15 to ask for.

After all, you don't just drive into a gas station and ask the man to "fill 'er up", do you?

PICKERING

"For those who can hear the difference"
101 Sunnyside Blvd.
Plainview, N.Y. 11803



Cut out this handy DCF Guide.

IF YOU OWN	MODEL NUMBER	Use a Pickering XV-15 cartridge with this DCF Number	
		ELLIPTICAL	SPHERICAL
Acoustic Research	XA	750, 400	350
Benjamin Miracord	50H, 750, 770H	750	350
	40H, 40A, 40, 630, 620, 610, 18H, 10, 10F, 10H	400	
Dual (United Audio)	1219, 1209, 1019, 1215, 1015, 1015F	750	350
	1009SK, 1009F, 1009	400	
	1212, 1010A, 1010	200	150
Garrard (British Industries)	SL95B, SL95, SL75B	750, 400	350
	SL75, LAB80MK11, LAB80	400	350
	SL72B, 70MK11, A70, 60MK11, SL65B, SL65, SL55B,	200	150
	SL55, SP20B, SP20, A, AT60, AT6		
	40, 40B, 50MK11, 50, 40MK11, 40Autoslim, Autoslim/P, T11, RC98, 210, 4HF, 301, RC80, RC88	140	100
Lenco	L-75	750, 400	350
McDonald (BSR)	600, 610, 500A	200	150
	510, 500, 400, 310	140	100
Pioneer	PL-30	750	350
	PL-25, PLA-25, PL-41C, PL40F, PL-41A	400	
Perpetuum-Ebner	PE-2018, PE-2038, PE-2020, PE-2040	750, 400	350
Sony	TTS 3000, PS 1800A	750, 400	350
Thorens	TD 125	750	350
	TD 150AB, TD 124	400	

Elliptical styli, because of the way they rest in the record groove, track with less radius distortion, and therefore are capable of playing records in good condition with less overall distortion.

Spherical styli are more rugged and can be used with higher tracking forces.

music and musicians

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HIGH FIDELITY



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FIND—A Radical Solution

DEAR READER:

Everybody talks about the lousy state of the classical record business, but nobody does much about it. Except maybe to put pop material on a classical label to bolster the monthly P/L statements of a company's most embattled department (cf. the Mormon Tabernacle's Stephen Foster or Eugene Ormandy's "Love Story"); or to put classical material in a pop series hopefully to get it into record stores (cf. Virgil Fox's Bach); or to camouflage the classics in pop arrangements (see S.F.'s review of "Sinfonias" in our popular recording section). But on what is probably the major problem, making the classical—or slow-moving pop—recordings physically available to those who want to buy them (pop hits of course can be bought in every Sears, A & P, and Rexall's browser box), little work has been done.

Until now.

In an effort to clean the dirty bottleneck for those many record buyers who *do* know what records they want, but are continually frustrated in their efforts to buy them, HIGH FIDELITY has been working with a newly created division of our parent company, Billboard Publications, Inc. The solution we have come up with is necessarily radical. Here is how it will work.

We are placing orders with virtually all record companies for every LP, cassette, 8-track cartridge, and open-reel tape they have commercially available. Note the last two words. We will not be using Schwann's monthly catalogue, but our own. If a record company announces a cassette, but does not actually duplicate and release it, it will not be in our catalogue; if a manufacturer still has an LP "in the catalogue," but hasn't had a physical product for five years, Schwann may list it but we won't. If it's in our catalogue, it will exist to the extent that we can get it from the manufacturer into our warehouse, which we are establishing in Terre Haute, Indiana for its central location. We will add video cassettes as they become a viable home-entertainment medium; if somebody markets a music-reproducing system that uses chopped liver as a medium, we will install a refrigerator in the warehouse.

Don't send any orders to us, however. The service will be available only through participating dealers. Nor will you be able to buy the catalogue; instead, it will be on display at any dealer who signs up for the service. Along with the catalogue there will be order forms. The whole service will operate under the name of Full Inventory National Dealer, a mouthful of words selected for their acronym.

Target date is this September 1. After that, if you want Donovan's "Hurdy Gurdy Man," or Haydn's Cello Concerto played by Fournier, a FIND dealer won't have to tell you, "We just sold the last copy five minutes ago," or hope his distributor can dig one up within the next nine months. Instead, he will refer you to the FIND catalogue. If it's listed in there, he or you can fill out the order form. He then sends the form to our warehouse and—assuming that everything goes well; you know computers—within 48 hours your records are on their way to him (or you, if you so designate). The cost? The dealer pays regular dealer price for the record plus 50¢ postage and handling on the first item, 10¢ for each additional item. He will probably pass the mailing cost on to you, but that's his decision, as it is his decision whether to charge you list or discount prices on the special-order records.

If the above sounds like a self-serving commercial plug, so be it. Something has to be done to help the customer get the particular record he wants, the dealer to make the extra sales, the industry to move its products faster. The distributors can supply the hits to the stores (although we will of course stock them). They can even supply any special orders they want or are able to. FIND is a last resort, for the dealer and for the customer. It may also be the last resort for the classical record business in America, because if it doesn't work, I don't know what will.



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Out of the Research that Produced the 901

BOSE brings you the Second DIRECT/REFLECTING[®] Speaker System



The BOSE 901*

DIRECT/REFLECTING[®] Speaker System

THE 12 YEARS OF RESEARCH

Twelve years of research into physical acoustics and psychoacoustics produced this unconventional speaker that has met with unprecedented success. Copies of the Audio Engineering Society paper, by Dr. A. G. Bose, describing this research, are available from BOSE Corp. for fifty cents.

THE RAVE REVIEWS

The 901 is the most highly reviewed speaker on the market, regardless of size or price. Circle number 5 on your reader service card for reprints of the reviews.

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Ask your franchised BOSE dealer for an A-B comparison with the best conventional speakers he carries, regardless of their size or price. You will only appreciate why we make this request after you have made the experiment.

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THE DESIGN GOAL

Our objective was to produce a speaker in the \$125 price range that would audibly outperform all speakers costing less than the 901.

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We preserved as many of the features of the 901 as possible to produce a speaker that sells for \$124.80.

Circle No. 6 for information on the design of the BOSE 501.

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You are the judge. If we have succeeded in our design goals, the result will be obvious to you when you A-B the 501 with any speaker selling for less than the 901.

"You can hear the difference now."

BOSE[®]

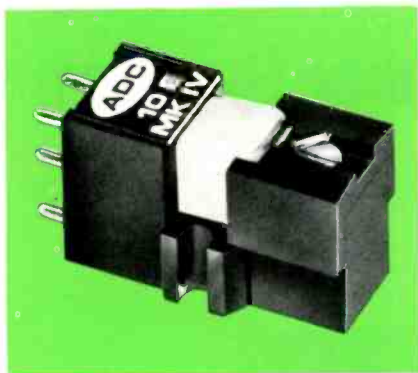
Natick, Massachusetts 01760

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issued or applied for

Circle # 5 for information on the BOSE 901

Circle # 6 for information on the BOSE 501

NOW— THE ADC 10E MK IV



The latest version of the famous ADC 10E is better than ever, for it incorporates many of the refinements found in the acclaimed ADC 25 and 26. It takes full advantage of ADC's unique induced magnet system, where the heavy moving magnet found in most other high fidelity cartridges is replaced by a hollow tube weighing at least 60% less.

This arrangement also allows the generating system to be placed close to the stylus tip, thus virtually eliminating losses and resonances introduced by a long cantilever.

Coupled with the economies inherent in Audio Dynamics' latest manufacturing techniques, these features make the new 10E MK IV probably the finest value in high performance cartridges available today.

10E MK IV SPECIFICATIONS

Type . . . Induced Magnet
Sensitivity . . . 4 mv at 5.5 cms/sec.
recorded velocity
Tracking Force . . . 0.7 grams
Frequency
Response . . . 10 Hz to 20 kHz \pm 2 db
Channel
Separation . . . 30 db from 50 Hz to 12 kHz
Compliance . . . 35×10^{-6} cms/dyne
Vertical Tracking
Angle . . . 15 degrees
Recommended Load
Impedance . . . 47,000 ohms (nominal)
Suggested Retail Price . . . \$50.00



AUDIO FOR AUDIOPHILES

CIRCLE 10 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

letters

Rock and the Sixties

Gene Lees presents some notions in his survey of great pops recordings of the decade [April 1971] that I find debatable. For one thing, he complains that much rock music is about death. Does he realize that half of the world's great art and poetry is about death? Has he ever heard of *The Pardoner's Tale*, *Paradise Lost*, *Hamlet*, or *The Waste Land*?

Further, he says that popular music has taught young people to take dope. Isn't the reverse true? It can be argued that dope has taught young people to appreciate a certain kind of popular music, i.e., hard rock. Thus, it would be reasonable to say that acid and pot inspired the music, not the other way around.

Finally, the fact that Mr. Lees chooses the Jefferson Airplane as an example of a noisy group (among rock groups they are in fact one of the least noisy and most lyrical—Grace just sings loud) implies that groups like the Rolling Stones are beneath contempt. This prejudice might possibly have been valid in 1963 but in a music review of 1971 it emerges as simple and unabashed snobbery.

E. L. Dachslager
Houston, Tex.

Gene Lees's article on the popular music of the 1960s did a great disservice to the music of the decade and to the people involved with it.

If the 1960s were angry times, then how could the music be otherwise? I fail to see how Mozart and Beethoven could have written such dainty chamber pieces, such classical "truffles" one might call them, when Europe for the past 300 years has been in angry times. At least the people of the 1960s had the nerve to look at the world around them and to call it ugly. There were no more lies, no more cover-ups. People in the '60s finally saw the world as it *was*, not as it *should* be. But they also saw it as it *could* be, and there is popular music to support this as well.

Without exception, Mr. Lees (and Miss Ames) managed to pick music which was at least tokenly acceptable to people outside of the generation they grew up in. Where were the Moody Blues, Buffalo Springfield, Quick-silver Messenger Service, and Spirit? If the 1960s were ugly, Mr. Lees, then the people were ugly, including you and me. Look back and tell me how many people of the past even knew Mozart existed while he was alive? But how many more know that Grace Slick is alive today, and how many more are familiar with what she is saying? Today we have no court composers, the favored who write beautiful classical music for the enjoyment of the cultured and wealthy. Instead, we have The Who, writing a rock opera that anybody with ten dollars, a record player, and ears can listen to and understand.

In 200 years, Mr. Lees, history will be judging our society by what we *ourselves* made; our bridges, our buildings, our paintings, and our music. People looking back will not judge us on the basis of the Haydn symphonies we were still playing, but by the Beatles, Steppenwolf, and Elvis Presley. What goes into a time capsule today will not be Bernstein conducting

Handel, but Burt Bacharach and Stevie Win-wood. Good or bad, this is our legacy. And no minority of contemporary classical composers and critics can ever hope to change this fact.

Chuck Peizel
Salem, Ore.

Warped Cause

Regarding the correspondence about warped records in your columns, may I add my observations to those already expressed? I think I can point to the reason for warpage because we are, so to speak, between two sources—the U.S. and Europe—and we do a fair amount of importing from both.

I have noticed that most records from the U.S. are warped whereas those from Germany and England are seldom so. The reason, I feel, is the inner paper sleeve. All records are contained in a paper sleeve of course, but the American packers turn the edge of one corner over to make it easier and quicker to insert the disc into its jacket. This extra thickness tends to warp the disc, especially when there are twenty to twenty-five tightly packed LPs to a box. European packagers have an easier time packing their records because the inner sleeves have had their top edges trimmed, and there is no need for the fold.

J. Bavis
The Record Hut
Paarl, South Africa

Re "slimmed-down" discs, this listener was lucky (or unlucky) enough to purchase several of the "slimmed-down" discs being marketed by RCA (Dynaflex) and Columbia (C 30500 series). It is quite obvious that the Columbia "thin" disc is much superior to the Dynaflex. The complaint is not one dealing with sonic quality, but of record warp.

The major difference between the Dynaflex disc and Columbia's product is the amount of vinyl in the groove area; the latter has more material. In playing these discs, it is quite evident that there is much more warp in the former. The RCA Dynaflex discs have warp to such a degree that tracing them with a light-tracking cartridge in a professional tone arm becomes impossible. (In one Dynaflex record, I have measured the stylus jumping about 4 mm. above the mean record surface while tracking at 1 gram.)

Even if RCA claims that warp may be the result of the retailer's improper storage, is it not also true that we, the consumers, must purchase through a retailer? Although the Dynaflex process is a good and beneficial one from the engineering standpoint, it should be obvious to RCA that laboratory standards are beyond its control once these discs leave the plant. And not making allowances for this is unforgivable. Furthermore, since all of my Dynaflex discs are Red Seal, which uses virgin vinyl in the first place, why not at least restore *this* series to its excellent quality and playability?

Thomas Hsu
Baltimore, Md.

Audio Angels

Ray Daniloff's grateful letter [May 1971] recounting his experience with Acoustic Research is not an isolated one. After nearly five years of use, the motor shaft on my AR



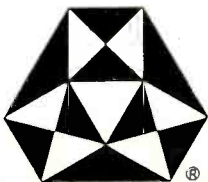
remember PANDORA'S BOX?

Remember the lady whom Zeus sent down to earth with a little box full of plagues and troubles? Next time you buy a tape cassette remember Pandora's box; unless it says TDK on top, you never know what problems you are bargaining for. Sticking. Jamming. Tape tangling and breakage. Wavering pitch due to uneven speed. Noise. Signal dropouts. One way or another, the sounds you want to capture and keep are spoiled or irretrievably lost.

Only with a TDK Super Dynamic cassette can you be sure, sure that you have a cassette that will never let you down.

And that gives you ultra-wide frequency response, high output and extended dynamic range, negligible noise and distortion and, overall, the world's finest quality.

Next time you buy cassettes think of Pandora's box—and buy a box of TDK. Reliability is no hit-or-myth proposition.



TDK World's leader in tape technology.
TDK ELECTRONICS CORP.

LONG ISLAND CITY, NEW YORK 11103

CIRCLE 54 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



For cartridges that can track as low as 0.1 gram



- Features all new Empire 990 . . . world's most perfectly balanced playback arm.
- No acoustic feedback even when you turn up gain and bass.
- World's finest turntable motor—hysteresis synchronous type maintains speed accuracy with zero error.
- Lowest rumble of any turntable tested, 90dB (RRLL), wow and flutter, .01%.
- Exclusive pneumatic suspension lets you dance, jump or rock without bouncing the stylus off the record.
- Tone arm floats down or lifts up from a record surface bathed in light. Pick out the exact selection you want, even in a darkened room.



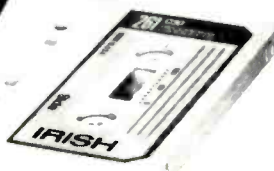
New Troubador 598 record playback system

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I concur completely with Mr. Daniloff's appraisal of AR. Not only are they a responsive, concerned, respectable firm, but they exhibit a faith in their products that more than reinforces the favorable reviews they invariably receive.

Burton A. Spielman
Chatham, N.J.

I would like to second Ray Daniloff's praise of Acoustic Research as a company that is really concerned about its customer, and add another. Sherwood Electronic Laboratories. I had similar difficulties and was equally well treated by Sherwood. May both companies and their kind long flourish.

Alfred R. Fregly
Gulf Breeze, Fla.

E-V vs. Dyna

As co-inventor of the Electro-Voice Stereo-4 quadraphonic system, I should like to point out that although the Dyna Quadaptor can (as you say in the May "News & Views" column) "be used to play recordings prepared via the E-V encoder," it must not be assumed that the results will be the same as those using the E-V Stereo-4 decoder.

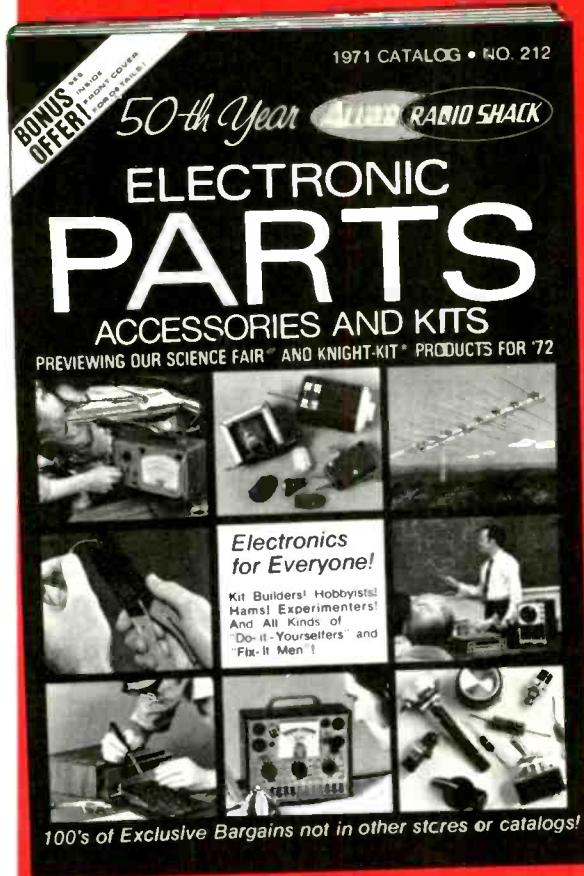
The E-V system as a whole enables recording studios to encode four-channel information into two (more complex) channels of "matrixed" information suitable for conventional stereo recording and/or broadcast media. From such two-channel signals, the Stereo-4 decoder extracts four signals for subsequent reproduction on a four-channel sound system. Source localization in the four-channel sound is totally predictable and is governed by the recording and encoding process as well as the artistic desires of the record producer or program director.

Dyna's so-called "system," on the other hand, is a connection scheme for third and fourth loudspeakers, which reproduce random out-of-phase information recorded in normal two-channel stereo program material. It has been suggested that recording engineers might record out of phase deliberately, so that rear information could be recovered in a predictable manner by the Dyna hookup. No engineer we know of would dream of committing such an error on purpose, for to do so would render the resultant recording incompatible in terms of monophonic playback—that is, the rear information would be lost altogether in mono. Thus the Dyna proposal is, and must remain, a novel way of adding speakers to an existing stereo installation for the sole purpose of experimenting with existing stereo recordings. As such, it certainly is an interesting hookup technique and well worth the effort if one is interested in such experimentation, but this hardly qualifies it as a "four-channel system."

While the Electro-Voice decoder also ex-

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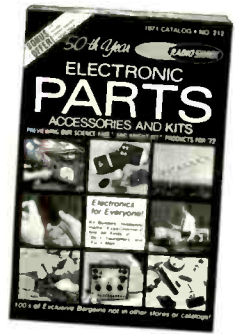


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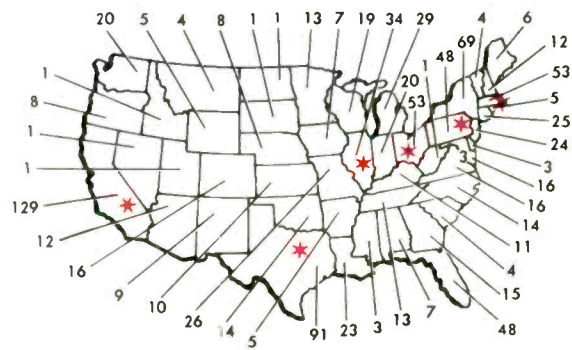
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tracts rear information from existing two-channel program sources (and perhaps it is this "bonus" feature that tempts comparison with the Dyna hookup), this feature certainly was not the primary reason for its development. Recognizing that a practical and economical way of cutting four "discrete" channels in a record groove was still a thing of the future and that the FCC was not about to change its rules governing FM broadcasting to accommodate any of the several discrete four-channel transmission methods proposed so far, we set out to provide a means whereby four-channel programming could be enjoyed by listeners at once.

The fact that the Dyna hookup "recovers" rear information from E-V encoded discs is of little or no significance. An E-V disc is, of course, a fully compatible stereo disc and will therefore behave much as any other stereo disc would when subjected to the Dyna speaker hookup: that is, the recording will produce some output to the rear speakers, though not necessarily the four-channel effect designed into it by the record producer and his engineer. That effect can predictably be reproduced only by using the E-V decoder.

This decoder contains active as well as passive devices. Comparing it with the passive Dynaquad connection box on the basis of price alone is akin to the proverbial "apples and bananas" comparisons. Anyone who has had the opportunity to play the Stereo-4 encoded discs through an E-V Stereo-4 decoder and four channels of amplification (required

for any true four-channel system) will, I think, conclude that the results are far more satisfying than those obtained when playing the same disc with the Dyna hookup. Respected manufacturers, recording companies, and broadcast stations all have opted for the E-V system and are producing equipment and offering programming based on its principles.

Leonard Feldman
Great Neck, N.Y.

Mr. Feldman understandably draws the line between "true four-channel" concepts and those that are not (and are, therefore, "false four-channel"?) in such a way as to include his matrixing system within the former group. In so doing he emphasizes a current semantic dilemma: since concepts of the nature and purpose of quadriphony still are in a state of flux, "true four-channel sound" is a phrase subject to a wide spectrum of interpretation. Proponents of "discrete" four-channel systems, for example, could with equal justice claim that the compromises implicit in matrixed systems put them beyond the pale. Is this quibbling? Not at all in our view. The discrepancies stem from differences in vision: each man sees in his own way what quadriphony could and should be. And it is on the vision—as well as the ingenuity—of Feldman, Hafler, and many others that the future of four-channel sound will depend.—Ed.

Aid for the IPL

The International Piano Library, 215 West

91st Street, New York, N.Y. 10024, is deserving of support from all your readers who love classical music. For six years this nonprofit organization has been doing an outstanding job in collecting, preserving, and disseminating through recordings of unusual value the great performances and forgotten literature of the piano. Just as we are becoming more aware that we must save our environment for future generations, we must also rally around those who are gallantly trying to save our culture, or it too will surely be lost. Many priceless performances, as well as compositions, are now on the verge of this fate. The IPL has suffered devastating losses in recent months due to fires and theft. They held a benefit concert last fall, but the proceeds were not enough to put them back on their feet.

I wish to make an appeal to all HF readers who care about our culture, especially about classical music, to help save this worthy organization by becoming members, ordering their records, and making donations.

Charles E. Carranza
Fullerton, Calif.

The Piano Record of the Year

I was very sorry to read Harris Goldsmith's pan of the Victrola Josef Hofmann record [March 1971]. Where Goldsmith hears a "cheerful, bouncy" version of the Chopin sonata movement, I hear a varied and imaginative approach to a work which is certainly not unremittingly or even primarily "stark and brooding." To my ears, Hofmann's ac-

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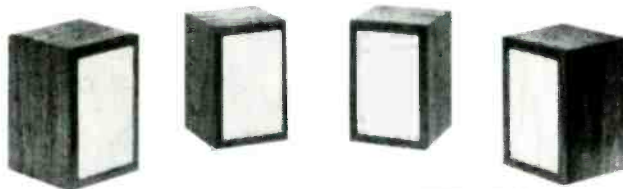
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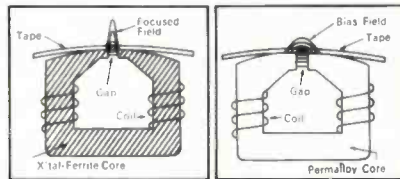
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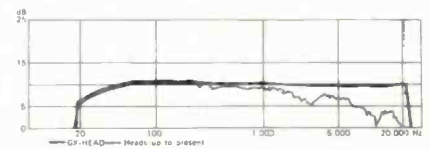
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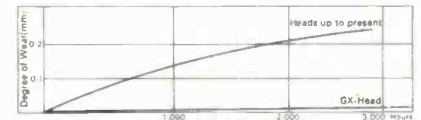
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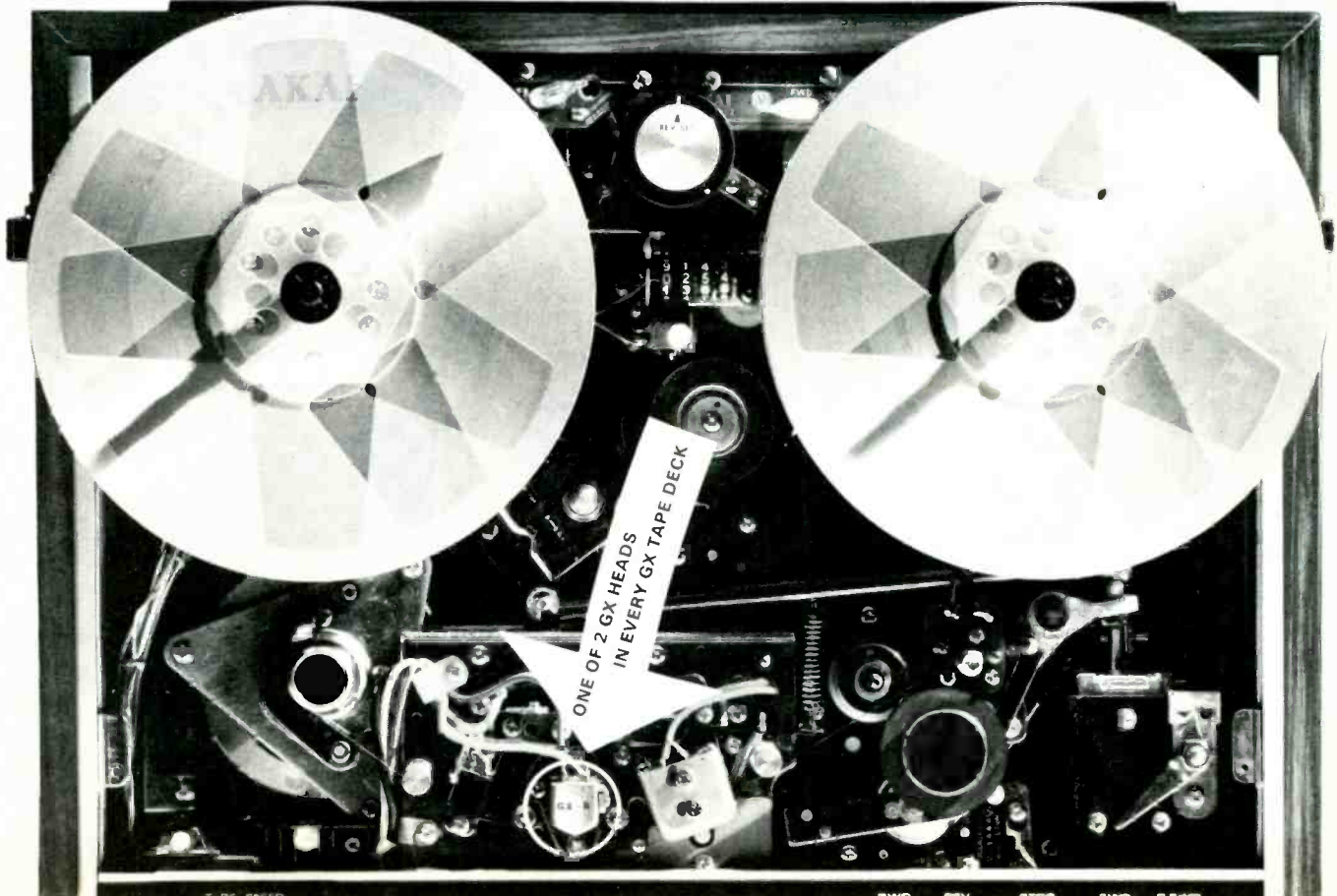


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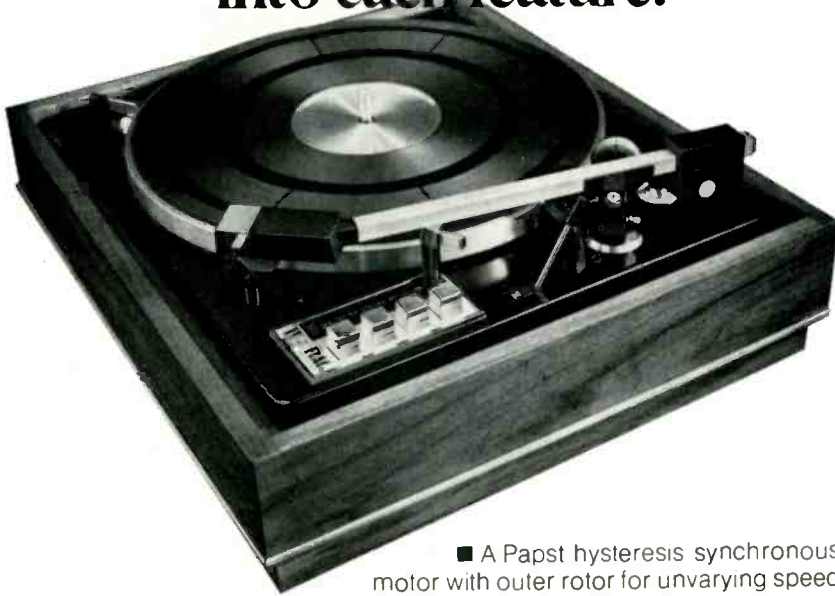
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count captures the work's rhapsodic qualities perfectly. Goldsmith hears the *Military Polonaise* as "clipped." But I hear the thrill that comes from a secure rhythm.

Admittedly the 1938 items do not represent Hofmann in top form. But even here there are some great readings. Is it really necessary for the *Grande polonaise brillante* to lumber along like a Sherman tank to be considered musical? Hofmann proved not. And any "nasty, blasting" sound comes from the recording technique, *not* Hofmann.

I recognize the right of any critic to express his views, but I regret that Mr. Goldsmith chose this particular opportunity to debunk Hofmann in such hyperbolic terms. It is no way to encourage EMI and Columbia to release their Hofmann material at bargain prices—or any prices. In fact, if sales are slow enough, RCA will not release the Bauer and Paderewski discs that Mr. Goldsmith desires.

I, for one, think that the Hofmann record is *the* piano record of the year. Thank you, RCA. May we have some more?

Charles J. Schlotter
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Touching Up Schumann

Philip Hart's review of the four Schumann symphonies conducted by Georg Solti [April 1971] takes cognizance of the fact that attempts at revisions of the composer's original orchestration abound in live and recorded performances. But he errs when he states that "None of the records by Szell, Bernstein, Kubelik, or Solti reveals any greater adjustments in instrumentation than are normally made in modern performances of Beethoven's nine symphonies."

I have not yet heard the Solti performances, but casual hearings of the Bernstein recordings and careful ones of the Szell reveal noticeable reworkings. In particular, there are large sections in the Szell performances where the entire wind section (or substantial wind lines) is completely deleted; conscientious comparison with scores yields the details of an obviously sophisticated re-orchestration. The Szell versions are not unsuccessful, but they must not be confused with Schumann's.

Robert D. Levin
Brooklyn, N. Y.

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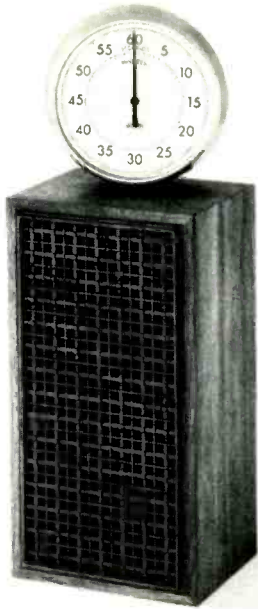
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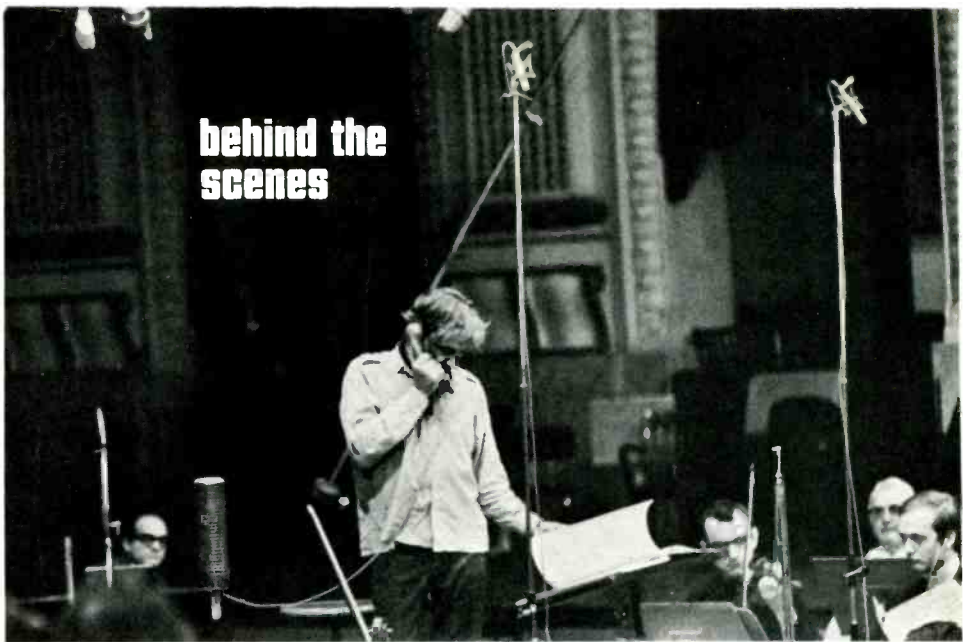
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Bernstein clears a point with Culshaw via intercom telephone.

Der Rosenkavalier— A Bernstein/Culshaw Production

VIENNA

Lovely Vienna, city of whipped cream and waltzes, has the distressing habit of becoming drearily grey when the weather is not just right—not only the sky, but buildings, streets, and people. So it was at the end of March and the beginning of April, when Columbia Records rented the Decca Studios (engineers included) in Vienna's Sofiensaal to record another all-star edition of Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*. With such a colorful group as Leonard Bernstein, Christa Ludwig (as the Marschallin this time), Walter Berry, Gwyneth Jones, and Lucia Popp, Placido Domingo dropping in as the Italian Tenor, and producer John Culshaw in charge, things were bound to take on a brighter hue. The visual sense of the word turned out to be as important as anything else: Columbia's staff, desperate to outdo the sumptuous libretto issued with the competing Decca/London set, hit upon the idea of filling the book with color photos of the recording sessions. Consciously or not, the ladies complied by sporting a variety of pants suits and midi-dresses that inspired numerous murmurs and whistles of approval from the otherwise blasé Vienna Philharmonic. The musicians added their own variety, not only in style of dress from mod to Tyrolean garb, but in daily personnel changes, detrimental to consistent playing, and an understandable cause for Bernstein's frustration.

Bernstein's mood, in fact, was often gloomy in spite of the fact that all was proceeding well enough to permit recording with a minimum of rehearsals. He was exhausted from a whirlwind conducting tour he had just completed with the Wieners, depressed by the "bad air" of Vienna, and disappointed that the recording atmosphere was not more cheerful and relaxed. "Lenny is an idealist—he wants everyone to be happy and love each other," said one insider. "but this is just like any recording session, lots of affection and good humor and impassioned music-making, but also lots of tension, and too much squeezed into too little time. Lenny's idea of interspersing staged *Rosenkavaliers* with the same singers, between the sessions, is a good way to keep the ensemble and family feeling, but it's also very tiring." A Philharmonic violinist took me aside to assure me, "We have no complaints except 'too much Strauss'! At the Staatsoper we have *Ariadne*, *Capriccio*, and *Rosenkavalier*, and here every day *Rosenkavalier* again!"

And the singers? From the looks of the enthusiastic work and the sounds of the playbacks, if anyone was sick of Strauss it didn't show. Lucia Popp looked like a fashion model and often sounded indeed like the "best times of Gueden," as one Viennese critic had said several days before; she appeared quite relaxed, except for an occasional raised eyebrow at some excessively slow or fast tempos. Emmy Loose, having already recorded

Marianne for Decca/London, was the most consistently cheery and energetic of all, carrying on animated fashion chats with Miss Popp during the breaks of the Act II taping. In spite of the fact that his role was being recorded almost entirely in the eye-bleary morning sessions, Walter Berry remained in excellent voice and spirits: "I'm surprised, too! It must be my honey-and-water," he replied, waving a small flask, to Bernstein's "Walter, that was wonderful! I never expected such results so early in the morning!" Added Christa Ludwig, "Why don't we change, Walter; you take my afternoon white wine and I'll take your morning honey-water!" The relative merits and amounts of chlorination in Viennese and Manhattan water were then discussed; Gwyneth Jones remained neutral, concentrating on the removal of cucumber slices from half of a sandwich left by Ludwig. ("Cucumbers are the worst thing you can eat while you're singing. You burp!")

Perhaps the recording studios should have supplied vitamin C instead of food. The first session went extremely well (Act I up to Ochs's entrance), with Octavian and the Marschallin singing and acting as expressively and using almost the same gestures as they had in the excellent performance at the Staatsoper the night before. Berry added his expert Ochs the following morning, and Miss Jones brought out some muffled laughter with her Mariandl: Ludwig slunk about in languorous waltz-time, a relaxed attitude that belied her serious concentration and certainly did not interfere with the luscious sound of her voice. That afternoon's takes of the crucial Presentation of the Rose proceeded beautifully, with a number of stops to correct orchestra tempos and dynamics—but the voices were near perfect. It was the next morning that the first danger signs appeared: Jones had a cold and felt a sore throat coming on; by the time the next section of Act II had been completed, it was obvious that she was too ill to tape the final duet of Act I, scheduled for the afternoon. Ludwig was anxious to record her Monolog immediately, instead of on the specified day a week later: "I don't want to break my Act I mood!" So the decision was made that Ludwig would tape the Monolog and, without Octavian, the duet; Jones would add her part to the tape when her cold was gone—a process tiresome both for singer and technicians, and far from the desired "ensemble" feeling. And in fact, after the entire section had been completed, with a nonstop Monolog that can only be termed magnificent and some retakes for details, Culshaw and Bernstein decided to re-do it all, with Jones, the next week. "All? Even the Monolog?" I asked Ludwig. "Yes," she replied, "because it's impossible to feel as the Marschallin feels when

Octavian returns without going through the sentiments of the Monolog." I remarked that my familiarity with her own interpretation of Octavian made me half expect to hear her sing "*Weiss nur, dass ich dich lieb hab!*" during the Jonesless duet-taping, adding, "What is the effect of doing so many Octavians on your portrayal of the Marschallin?" She laughed, "I come in on his cues! Really! He is not very interesting, rather stupid, but the Marschallin is such a beautiful role: she says such wonderful things, and you can do so much with her. And unfortunately, every year it is a bit easier."

Miss Jones returned the next day, still not in the best of health, but got back to work with the same intensity and earnestness as ever, with very good results. Then Walter Berry caught the bug, but the show went on. The beginning of Act III produced an unforeseen problem: the singers could not hear the pre-recorded off-stage band and found it all but impossible to know from the scattered plinks and plunks of the orchestra where to come in. A problem easily solved, however: earphones were distributed, and all continued smoothly.

Placido Domingo arrived from Hamburg—where he had sung in *Lucia* the night before—just in time for a rehearsal of *Ballo* followed by a performance of *Tosca*. He was thus not too happy to learn that his taping of the Italian Tenor's aria was planned for the very next morning. Fortunately, the schedule was modified, so the Italian Tenor will not sound as if he is exhausted.

Regretfully I had to leave Vienna before the sessions were completed: everyone at the Sofiensaal, depressed by the delayed arrival of spring, envied me my return to "sunny Italy." When I arrived in Florence, it was raining and cold and grey. And nobody was recording *Rosenkavalier*.
SUSAN GOULD

LONDON

Colin Davis' Second Marriage

No sooner had Philips released Sir Michael Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage* under Colin Davis' direction [reviewed this month in the feature section] than they began taping another operatic marriage—Mozart's *Figaro*—with the same conductor. The opera was recorded in Wembley Town Hall, an acoustically magnificent building with enviable facilities in the outer suburbs of North London. The building is typical of some half-dozen postwar municipal palaces in the London area, where record companies have found ideal studios. Business commuters come and go and



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busy housewives pass by, oblivious of the fact that assembled in their midst for over two weeks is a galaxy of international stars engaged on a masterpiece of the rococo; even the architects of these popular temples, which indeed echo the very sounds of "pop" on Saturday nights, would have been surprised.

On one Saturday afternoon the most distinguished sound was heard coming from a brand new star in her first major recording: Jessye Norman from Augusta, Georgia via Howard University of Washington, the Peabody Conservatory of Baltimore, and the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. At twenty-five Miss Norman is currently under contract with the Deutsche Oper in Berlin, has sung Handel and Meyerbeer at the Maggio Musicale in Florence, and goes to La Scala as Aida next year.

On stage for an hour and a half as the Countess, she made each repeat of "*Dove sono*" sound more ravishing than the last. After the final take she was accorded an extremely rare tribute from the string players of the BBC Orchestra who tapped their desks with their bows in acclaim—the highest compliment from seasoned professionals. Miss Norman may be looking forward to Isolde, but as she said to me afterwards, "Mozart is the real challenge." Earlier this year she had sung Idamante in *Idomeneo* for Colin Davis in a Rome broadcast, and now here she was heading a cast in a much-recorded opera that must challenge the world's best.

With her were Wladimiro Ganzarolli (*Figaro*), Mirella Freni (*Susanna*), Ingvar Wixell (*Count*), and Yvonne Minton (*Cherubino*). This is a young cast under a young conductor, whose Mozart is no less idiomatic than is his Berlioz. Davis is not the first English conductor to bracket these two composers; they were also the twin gods of Hamilton Harty, some of whose classic recordings are shortly to be reissued here.

Driving back to central London where he was to continue into the night with piano rehearsals, Davis talked to me about his response to Mozart. He has a lively appreciation of the composer's musical jokes, such as the sly emphasis given to the horns while *Figaro* is singing about the faithlessness of women (an allusion to the horns supposedly sprouting from the head of a cuckolded husband). *Così fan tutte*, as Davis was quick to point out, is full of such "in" jokes. One also senses that the Davis *Figaro* will be a strongly dramatic performance: the string section is a generous one and there will be neither continuo nor many vocal embellishments. Davis feels that Da Ponte, by softening the political implications of the Beaumarchais play and by giving the composer the opportunity to write some of opera's most wonderful



Jessye Norman and Colin Davis during the *Figaro* session at Wembley Town Hall.

ensembles, helped Mozart to compose an opera of universal appeal—one capable of an immense range of interpretation. Obviously Davis' recording will be very different from Klemperer's controversial new reading.

London Miscellanea. Lined up for a future CBS disc are Philippe Entremont and the New Philharmonia under Ozawa in the Liszt *Hungarian Fantasia* and the Khachaturian Piano Concerto. A new shuffle of the Pinky-Danny pack features Pinchas Zukerman playing the viola with Isaac Stern (violin) in the Mozart *Symphonie concertante*; Daniel Barenboim conducts the English Chamber Orchestra. Then Decca/London promises a Tebaldi popular recital for Christmas, also with the NPO under Anton Guadagno. The new year will bring Scriabin's Piano Concerto (Ashkenazy/LPO/Maazel) coupled with *Prometheus (The Poem of Fire)*, neatly marking the centenary of the composer's birth in January 1972.

When EMI decided to record Delius' *A Mass of Life* they planned to wait until Fischer-Dieskau would be available, for it was in this work that the great baritone made his London debut under Beecham in 1951. When all was prepared after two years of postponements, a telegram arrived on the morning of the recording to say that Fischer-Dieskau was confined to bed with laryngitis. The more than adequate substitute is Benjamin Luxon, and his performance will add substantially to a fast-growing reputation. The other soloists are Heather Harper, Helen Watts, and Robert Tear, with the LPO under Charles Groves—now regarded as our leading Delius conductor, and who worked closely with Beecham. Producer: Christopher Bishop.

ROGER WIMBUSH

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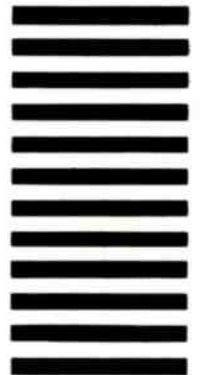
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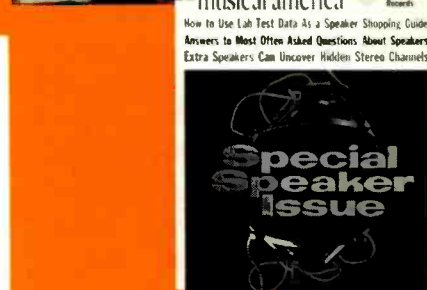
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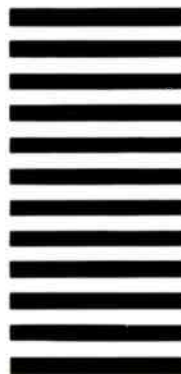
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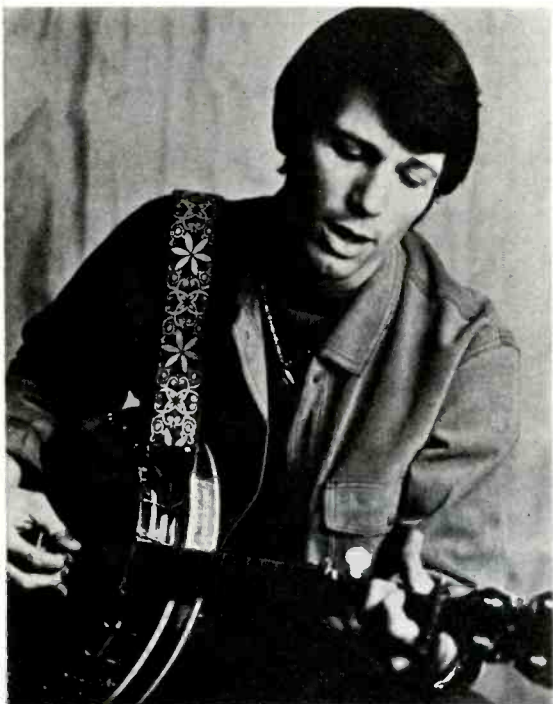


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Hartford—in his pre-beard days.

RECENTLY I SPENT A COUPLE OF DAYS and evenings hanging out with old John Hartford. I use the word “old” advisedly. John still is in his early thirties, but it’s hard to tell his age through that mask of face moss and all that shaggy hair. John looks these days, in his jeans and faded blue work shirt, like something out of *Li’l Abner*—a slim Earthquake McGoon, perhaps.

I don’t know what he’s protesting. Everything, I guess. I suspect he’s shrugged, somewhere down in his soul, and said, “The hell with it,” to the image as the glamour boy of country music which the record companies and the television people were building for him.

Anyway, he quit the Glen Campbell show, got himself a little country band, and went on the road with it, and he’s happy as a clam out there, playing his banjo, his guitar, his fiddle, and singing his odd, witty, obtuse, wry little songs. Indeed, one of the songs contains lines about getting a country band and getting back to the place where he started, and the statement is right there.

John trimmed it all down, cut away the excess—including, apparently, even clothes. In his hotel room, all you’ll see in the way of luggage is a beautifully made old U.S. Mail bag that he picked up somewhere, and on which he has deftly lettered his name. (He originally intended to be an artist.) Apparently he can carry all he needs in that bag.

I’d never met him before. But I love his songs. “Ah-hah,” he laughs—a dry, two-stroke laugh; again, all excess has been trimmed away. “Well, I didn’t really intend to be a songwriter. I started writing songs because I thought it might get me more gigs.” The banjo is his love. Country music is his love. But he hears and likes all sorts of music.

I had no idea Hartford was as good a country musician as he is. I once wrote, in this column, a paean to his lyrics. “You said my melodies were pretty much all the same,” he said. I squirmed a little. “Well, uh, er . . .”

“No, no. You were right. It set me thinking. Since then I’ve been writing melodies first. I carry a tape recorder on the road, and I get a little idea, and I tape it.”

That night I went to hear Hartford’s group, a quartet, in a folk-music cellar club: people were lined up down the street, waiting to get in. It’s a true country

band. Everybody doubles everything else: guitar, banjo, fiddle, dobro. No amplification. “Back to the roots,” John says.

Hartford opens each set alone, perched on a stool, picking his banjo and singing the one big hit he’s had, *Gentle on My Mind*. He sings it better than anyone I’ve heard, and his banjo accompaniment is poignantly appropriate to it: that falling line against the chord as each chorus begins.

Later, he does that hilarious *Washing Machine Song* of his, in which he imitates vocally, with eerie evocativeness and a crunchy spastic rhythm, the sound of an antique washing machine. “I could always make those kind of noises,” he says. “but it’s only lately that I’ve felt free enough to do it in public.” He also does a thing with rhythmic and frankly lecherous breathing; a lot of Brazilian musicians do something like it.

Hartford sings fewer and fewer songs as the set wears on and he brings out his musicians. He gets deeper into the playing, obviously relishing it. He says he’d rather play, really, than sing. The group needs a bass player: there’s a lack of bottom to it and it floats too high. Also, the inversions common to unaccompanied guitar bother my ear a little. “I’d like to have a bass player,” John says. “But I’ve got to find the right one.” This band is a new thing for him, and it’s still growing. The music is harsh, acerbic, and yet somehow fun. To Hartford, this is the real country music.

Tammy Wynette and all those Nashville ladies who wail about broken hearts and ah-luv-yew? “That’s not country music,” John says. “That’s suburban music.”

Hartford was born in St. Louis. His father is a doctor there, now immersed in research—into what, John isn’t quite sure. His sister is a biochemist. Hartford’s songs are superbly literate, even when he’s fooling with vernacular (Robert Burns fooled with it too; so does Johnny Mercer) and those oddly elided sentence structures. We live in an age of astounding pretentiousness and self-glorification, and even those who reject “middle-class morality” are constantly if unconsciously expressing it. Whereas plumbers are now sanitary engineers, songwriters proclaim themselves poets. Most are just songwriters, and hacks at that. Hartford claims nothing for his work, but the fact

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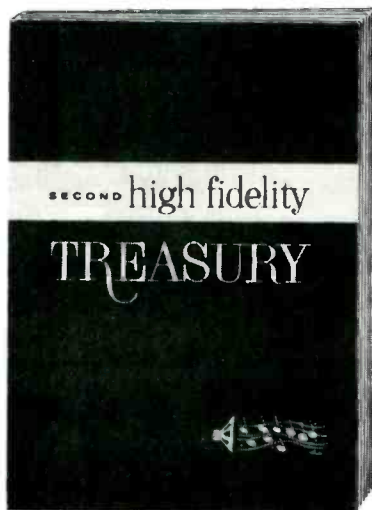
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is that he *is* a poet. Doubleday has just published a volume of his poetry and lyrics, illustrated with his witty little pen drawings.

Where did the poetry come from? Well, if you believe in the genetic run in families—and I do—you may be startled to learn that Tennessee Williams is Hartford's father's cousin; Williams and John's father grew up together. Examine the way Hartford and Williams use language and I think you'll hear similarities. Somewhere back there, the family line divided and one arm of the V contains Williams, the other arm Hartford. The language resemblance may be a matter of social conditioning, or even unconscious imitation, but the talent for it is, I'm sure, genetic.

Hartford is essentially a city boy. He rebelled against all that. "I went through the south, got religion, married a sharecropper's daughter, the whole bit." He got caught up by the army. He doesn't say much about it, but implies that he can't get too morally righteous toward those who do go into the army and do what the nation calls their "duty." And he says he was "a pretty bad guy in those days," whatever that means. I didn't press it; it is respect for the other person's private agonies that make me a lousy journalist. After the army, Hartford put in a few years as a disc jockey, meanwhile playing in country bands. Then he became a studio musician in Nashville, finally a songwriter, and last a singer.

He's against the war. Do you know anybody but generals who isn't? He went with the other ex-GIs to Washington, to hear Spiro say they probably *weren't* ex-GIs. Hartford was slightly hurt in the uproar that followed. "I got hit in the leg by a flying purple heart," he says. "Ah-hah," that short, odd laugh.

John is businesslike. He turns up on time for gigs and interviews. I tagged along with him on two or three of the latter. He always gives the same answers, virtually verbatim; but then, he's always asked the same questions. John is guarded, but more secret than secretive. He claims to have no particular ambitions, and I think he's telling the truth. "I never was much good at planning."

The thing is that Hartford *is* those songs, sardonic, detached, gentle, a little guilt-ridden, selfish, honest, good, and bad.

It's knowin' that your door is always open and your path is free to walk that makes me tend to leave my sleeping bag rolled up and stashed behind your couch.

He's a sort of elegant bum, or perhaps a sloppy aristocrat, roaming his troubled and tangled America with its wheat fields and its clotheslines and its junk yards—and its flying purple hearts.

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*IHF standard constant supply method at 8 ohms. **Suggested retail price.





too hot to handle

Why don't you level with your readers and admit that HIGH FIDELITY and all such publications are in business mainly to boost low-priced Japanese receivers, which—while they may seem like bargains—have amplifiers that can't take it? I have two such widely acclaimed receivers, the Lafayette LR-500TA and the LR-1000T, the first hooked to Criterion 50 speakers and the other to Criterion 100s. The LR-500TA has been in the repair shop three times already and just blew the left channel again last night. I can't play it much louder than a \$50 table radio without worrying about it. The bigger system seems more durable, but I have never played it more than about half volume and it still had to be repaired once.—John Kalus, Cleveland, Ohio.

Some months ago we tested the top-of-the-line Lafayette LR-1500T and found that it was, indeed, an excellent buy. Other, really low-priced dealer-imported receivers we have examined reconfirm our impression that budget imports are not necessarily a good buy and are not generally speaking the sort of equipment with which our readers are primarily concerned, judging from their correspondence and our audience research program. Since we have not tested either of the models you complain of, your impression that these units are "widely acclaimed" certainly didn't come from our pages. But it doesn't seem to occur to you that the speakers or the way you have hooked them up may be at fault, for example. The sort of thing you describe generally is the result of a combination of two factors: insufficient circuit protection in the amplifier, and excessively low impedance in the speaker hookup. Paralleling loudspeakers is a common cause of the latter. But giving a receiver insufficient ventilation or (God forbid!) placing it on a radiator can have the same effect. Forgive us for pointing out the fact, but we must take your letter with a grain of salt when you say, for example, that the LR-500TA "already" has been in the repair shop three times. Since it (like the LR-1000T) hasn't been available for over two years, it could not have been the recent purchase you imply. And if you're so down on your one Lafayette receiver, we can only wonder how come you decided to buy a second one.

Just ten years ago hi-fi was the greatest thing ever to happen in music. Then came stereo. Last fall I spent what to me is a large sum of money on a component system and was looking forward to adding a tuner and a cassette deck. Now with all the talk about four-channel stereo I'm afraid to

do so. When will all records be produced for four-channel sound? When will FM stations start broadcasting in four channels? Should I go on with my plans or wait until I can afford a four-channel system?—J. Jones, Miami, Fla.

Don't panic. It will be a long time until all new recordings are in four-channel sound; there's no iron-clad assurance it will ever happen. The companies involved must agree on "how" before they can agree on "when." And in the meantime all the proposed methods are claimed to be compatible—usually to the extent that the quadriphonic product will reproduce properly in stereo when played on regular stereo equipment. Some (matrixed) four-channel broadcasting has begun it's true; but these broadcasts can be received in regular two-channel stereo on any stereo FM tuner you might buy. Any other form of four-channel broadcasting requiring special receiving equipment is at least a couple of years away, the pace of the Federal Communications Commission being what it is. So our advice is to go ahead with the tuner purchase, at least. If doubts about four-channel cassettes still worry you (and remember, the equipment isn't even on the market yet), we suggest that you try to buy a stereo unit from a dealer who will allow you to trade it in for a four-channel unit if and when they become available and you decide you really want one. Get him to put the trade-in terms right on your sales slip. Some dealers would rather make such an offer than lose a sale on equipment that is already on their shelves.

I have a Revox A-77, which I use largely for mono recording. I have been using Dyna-range (Scotch 203) tape with it, since the dealer told me that type was best for the A-77. When I asked him what tape would give me the best possible signal-to-noise ratio, he suggested that I record on both tracks simultaneously, still using the Dyna-range tape. Does this make sense, or is he just trying to sell me twice as much tape?—Earl Greene, St. Louis, Mo.

He presumably means exactly what he says. The A-77 is delivered optimized for Scotch 203. For best possible performance with any other tape—even the Agfa type that Revox has suggested as the ultimate for the A-77—a rechecking of bias and equalization adjustments is in order, and even then no more than a marginal improvement should be expected. But by the simple expedient of using twice the tape width in making your recording you may be able to gain as much as 3 dB in S/N. Sound incredible? It's quite simple. Twice the track

width (and by using two tracks for the mono recording, you're in effect doubling the track width—tantamount to exchanging your quarter-track stereo model for a half-track mono version) means twice the oxide particles passing the head at any given instant. Since the noise generated by these particles is a random affair, it does not build up proportionately to the track width. Result: a moderate increase in noise. The recorded signal, however, is in-phase all across the track width, and does act cumulatively. So total signal output from the heads is proportional to track width, or twice as great in this case. The net relative change in S/N ratio is some 3 dB of improvement—no more spectacular than you should hope for by switching tapes, but simpler to achieve.

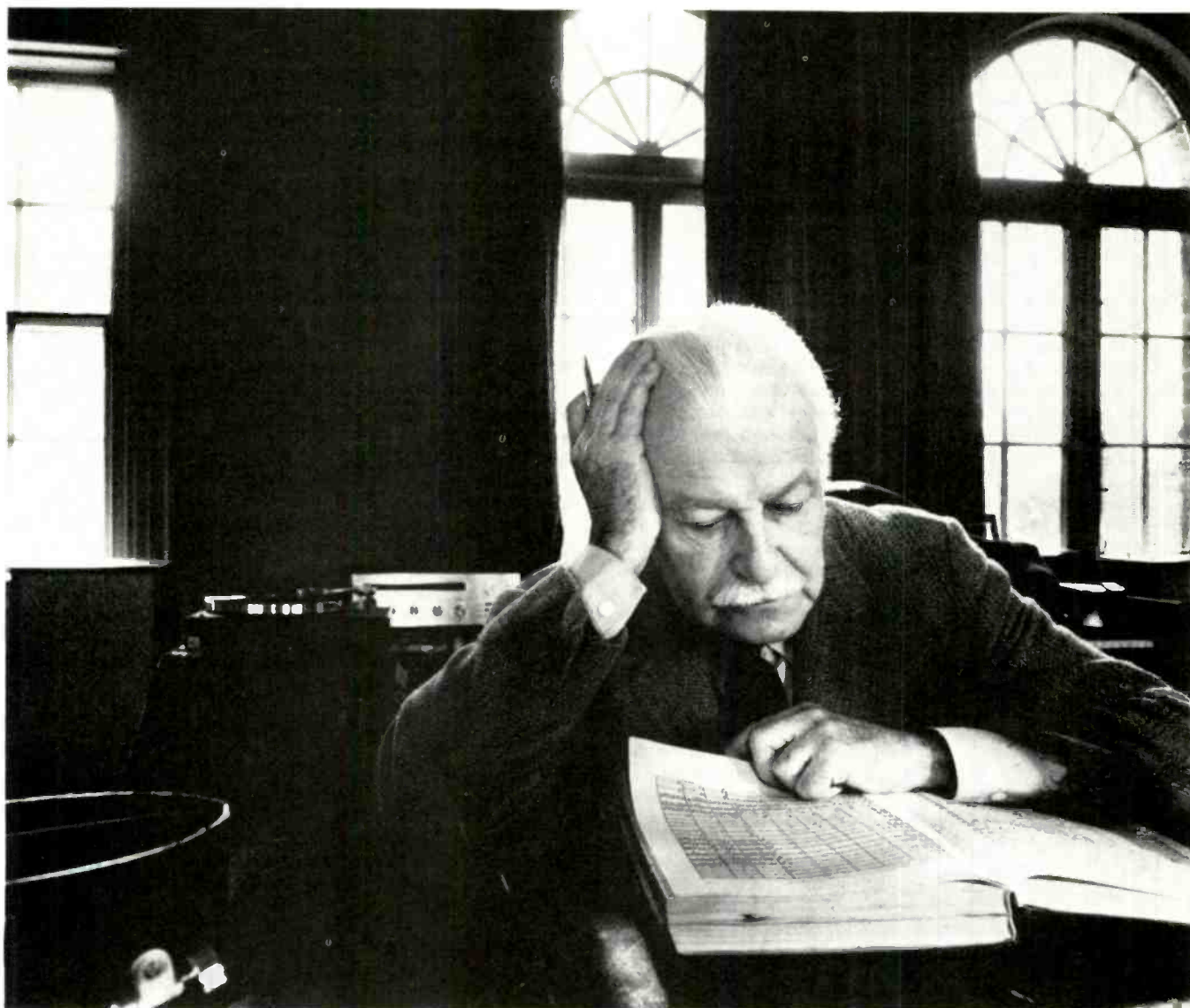
My present system consists of an Advent 100 Noise Reduction System, a Dynaco PAT-4 preamp and Stereo 120 power amplifier, Empire 598 turntable, Teac 6010 tape deck, and University 312 speakers. Will I be able to use this system—particularly the Advent Dolby unit—with encoded four-channel sound, putting it on tape and still benefiting from the noise reduction?—Scott C. Lewis, La Feria, Texas.

Yes. Once the signal is encoded into two-channel stereo, you can handle it just as you now handle regular stereo signals—whether they come from discs, stereo broadcasts, or tape. The broadcasts or discs can be taped in the normal way, through the Advent 100, with the decoder (to reconstruct the four-channel sound from the two-channel signal) placed in the circuit following the playback end of the Dolby unit. All you would have to add to your present system is a decoder plus an extra Stereo 120 (or its equivalent) and an extra pair of speakers. You would, of course, need this extra equipment for four-channel listening with matrixed signals whether you also plan to record them or not.

I'm trying to make up my mind what receiver to buy. Most of the units I look at (except for the ones I can't afford) don't seem to offer much beyond what you'd find in the electronics of a console, for example. Would you think the Realistic STA-120 is a good choice? When you reported on it (August 1970) you commented particularly on all the features it includes.—Morgan Moran, Long Beach, Calif.


It all depends on what you're looking for "beyond what you'd find in the electronics of a console." At \$269.95, the STA-120 does offer a lot of features for the price. But that doesn't mean that it even approaches state-of-the-art equipment—nor, at the price, should it be expected to do so. You'll note, for example, that intermodulation distortion came in at 2% for an output of 35 watts per channel into 8-ohm speakers, and only 11.5 watts per channel into 4-ohm speakers. These figures would be more typical of consoles than of components, as would the FM performance: IHF sensitivity of 4 microvolts and quieting at 1,000 microvolts of around 42 dB. So if your complaint with consoles is their sound, you may find the STA-120 no great improvement; if it's the flexibility of control and the added features, it may be just what you want.

Arthur Fiedler has chosen AR-5 speaker systems for use in his home.



For over 40 years, Arthur Fiedler has been conductor of the Boston Pops Orchestra. His recordings with the Pops have made him known to music lovers all over the world. Mr. Fiedler has chosen AR-5 speaker systems because their advanced design contributes to accurate reproduction of the original program

material. Here, in his Brookline, Massachusetts, home, he auditions his latest Polydor recordings over an AR music system consisting of two AR-5 speakers, an AR FM receiver, and an AR turntable with Shure V-15 type II cartridge.

	ACOUSTIC RESEARCH, INC.
	24 Thorndike St., Cambridge, Mass. 02141, Dept. HF-8
Please send me a free copy of your illustrated catalog, as well as technical specifications and measured performance data for the AR-5 speaker systems.	
Name _____	
Address _____	

The Four-Channel Eruption

At the moment—and viewed from the perspective of a high fidelity editorial desk—the inexorable, seething, restless mass inching down Etna's flank seems but the dribble of syrup down a pitcher spout by comparison to what's happening in four-channel sound. New quadriphonic hardware is tumbling into view with such rapidity, and with so much attendant drumbeating, that we hardly know which way to turn for the comfortable security of familiar two-channel stereo.

Unlike Etna's rampage, however, the four-channel eruption was largely predictable. The summer solstice is marked in our industry by the Consumer Electronics Show, that annual rite during which the trade gets its first look at the new products for the coming season. In the tumult that attends it, each manufacturer is hard put to draw what he deems to be adequate attention to his latest and best, and competitive hawking reaches a climax. Four-channel sound being the headline maker it is, there should be no surprise at the attention it is receiving.

At last year's show there were some four-channel sound products, of course, but generally they represented single products added to stereo lines; and some were branded "only experimental"—prototypes whose commercial availability might depend in large part on the reaction of the trade to those first demonstrations. This year whole lines of quadriphonic products are being introduced. Well in advance of CES both Allied Radio Shack and Lafayette announced four-channel product groups, the former centered around the Electro-Voice Stereo-4 circuit and the latter around the Dynaco speaker hookup. Almost simultaneously word began to filter in from Japan that a number of manufacturers were readying "Sansui-type" four-channel equipment.

Just how literally that phrase should be taken is still difficult to determine. A year ago Sansui first demonstrated a prototype of a unit (the QS-1) that could be used in three distinct ways: to derive quadriphonic effects—several *different* quadriphonic effects, as a matter of fact—from stereo recordings; to decode appropriately matrixed recordings; or to serve as a control center for reproduction of "discrete" quadriphony (spe-

cifically, at the moment, tapes with four independent recorded signals: RCA Q-8 cartridges or Vanguard Surround Stereo open-reel tapes, for example). How many of these functions are to be expected in Sansui-type equipment, and whether the decoding circuitry is identical (or only similar) to the Sansui design, remains to be seen.

The decoder/synthesizer/control unit that JVC has been demonstrating for some months is, indeed, quite similar to the QS-1 in terms of the functions it will perform, as is the SC-410 introduced recently by Toshiba. It is important to note in this context that all three units use phase and amplitude relationships in deriving four-channel effects from stereo sources, and decoding units like the Electro-Voice EVX-4 can likewise be used for this purpose.

Some synthesizers operate quite differently. A year ago Harman-Kardon showed a prototype of a device that would act as a four-channel switching center but also was capable of deriving stereo from mono sources (via filtering circuits) and four-channel effects from stereo via equalized delay lines. A newer version of this device has been demonstrated recently, and a West Coast company—International Quadraphonic—has shown equipment that meets a similar basic description in terms of operating functions. Therefore while the Sansui, JVC, and Toshiba devices can be used to dematrix, the H-K and IQ equipment is not intended for that purpose.

JVC is not exclusively committed to matrixed quadriphony, of course. Its multiplexed recording system is usually regarded as the only one yet announced as of this writing capable of putting four independent (discrete) channels of information on disc. More four-channel equipment has been announced by its parent company in Japan recently; among the new units are components appropriate for handling discrete four-channel signals, Q-8 (four-channel, eight-track) cartridge playback equipment, and open-reel recorders. Panasonic also recently announced a discrete-quadriphonic open-reel unit, as well as a stereo compact system with dematrix/

Continued on page 30

The Ideal Record?

Recently we were shown a sample of a record format that exhibits some extremely desirable properties and seems to make a significant attack on problems that are the bane of the record industry. The record is not made of vinyl, but of a relatively hard plastic that is both more rigid and less subject to wear from abrasion. Further protection is afforded by the cutter design, which puts the modulation into the bottom of the groove, so that only the deepest gouges across the surface will produce audible clicks—or so we are told. And the record is said to be so sturdy that it is immune to warpage, even if carelessly stored. An additional claim is that the plastic produces noticeably quieter surfaces than any previous material.

Perhaps the most significant contribution of this record format, however, is its total elimination of pinch

effect—the inherent problem of inner grooves on a record, in which the modulation is "pinched" together by the shrinking circumference of each revolution. This pinching produces a loss in high-frequency information and an increase in distortion. Such developments as RCA's Dynagroove system and the adoption of elliptical playback styli have ameliorated the results of pinch effect, though none has abolished it. But in the record at hand the groove circumference is constant throughout the record so that there is no pinch effect whatever.

We would be remiss if we did not report one drawback of the present sample: it holds only about 4½ minutes of continuous music, since it is designed to be played at 160 rpm. Perhaps with further development the figures can be improved.

We found this marvel in a local antique shop. It is called an Edison Blue Amberol Record, and it's a type of cylinder that appeared on the market in 1912.

If you've been saving up for a Pioneer AM-FM receiver you just got a break.

A price break that is. On the Pioneer SX-1500TD and SX-990 AM-FM stereo receivers. Two of our most sought-after models.

The versatile SX-1500TD, with a powerful 180 watts, offers the unique microphone mixing facility. It provides six sets of inputs and accommodates three speaker systems. Sensitivity is a superb 1.7 microvolts. The new price, including microphone and walnut cabinet is \$359.95. That's a saving of

forty dollars off the regular price.

Or, you may wish to select the SX-990. Its 130 watts of IHF power is ideal for the most sophisticated stereo system. Providing many refinements found only in much more expensive units, it's completely flexible with inputs for 2 phono, tape monitor microphone, auxiliary and main amplifiers. Regularly priced at \$299.95, it can be yours for only \$269.95, including a walnut cabinet.

Your Pioneer dealer has a limited allotment of these two receivers at these attractive new prices. So visit him now for a demonstration while his supply lasts.

U.S. Pioneer Electronics Corp.,
178 Commerce Road,
Caldwell, New Jersey 07072

 **PIONEER®**



synthesizer circuitry built in. Koss has even introduced quadriphonic headphones. And Sony keeps adding to its four-channel products: components (to be sold here through Sony Corp. of America) and tape equipment (available through Sony/Superscope). Quadriphonic open-reel equipment also is said to be in preparation for the American market by Akai in Japan.

In tape equipment, perhaps the most interesting news is the recent announcement, sponsored jointly by RCA and Fisher Radio, that the latter would be entering the Q-8 cartridge field. Until that announcement, Fisher had offered only cassette decks in the tape field and only the 701 receiver in the four-channel electronics field. According to one Fisher spokesman the company sees eight-track cartridges as a more reliable and trouble-free tape format than cassettes (and obviously more convenient than open-reel tapes), and therefore particularly attractive as a route to four-channel sound—"true four-channel sound" as the official announcement calls it, presumably in contrast to synthesized or even matrixed systems. The line will include both components designed for the assembly from scratch of a four-channel home system, and add-on units intended to convert present stereo systems to quadriphony.

For RCA's part, it is talking of widened horizons for the Q-8 market. Until the Fisher unveiling, few Q-8 players had been announced by companies that had established themselves among the makers of quality components. (There are exceptions: most obvious is Telex—née Viking—which last year unveiled prototypes of a varied line of Q-8 equipment.) Not only that; RCA is proposing to use thinner tape in the cartridges so that they can hold some 25 minutes of music per pass—50 minutes total with only one break for track change in the four-channel format, or roughly the equivalent of

a full LP side per pass, both sides per cartridge. For the first time, this would make eight-track cartridges suitable for symphonic works, for example. (Stereo cartridges generally have run about 10 to 15 minutes per pass, with three breaks before the total content is played, making it impossible to fit symphonies with unequal movement timings into the cartridge without allowing long and awkward pauses between some of the movements or placing breaks even more awkwardly within the movements.) But whatever the program content, RCA says it plans to prepare new Q-8 recordings on a regular basis from now on.

Perhaps even more significant is the release of details on the long-awaited CBS (Columbia Records) encoded four-channel disc system in an announcement sponsored jointly by Sony Corp., which is making the first playback equipment for the records. Pundits have been saying for some time that the introduction of four-channel discs by a major record company would overcome an important barrier to the advance of quadriphony. If they're right, the eruption could take on even larger proportions.

Printing schedules being what they are, these words are being written, of necessity, well in advance of the CES itself; and what we have said surely represents only a fraction of the news about quadriphonic equipment that is bound to come out of that event. Indeed if half of what we hear is true we may have done little more than scratch the surface. A full report on the new products announced at CES will appear in our October issue.

Price Correction

The Koss Red Devil headphones sell for \$29.95—not \$49.95, as stated in the July issue.

equipment in the news



Stereo-4 decoder in kit form

The Heath company has announced the Heathkit AD-2002, a kit version of the Electro-Voice EVX-4 four-channel decoder, used in recovering four channels of information from appropriately encoded discs or broadcasts, or for deriving quadriphonic effects from stereo program sources. The \$29.95 kit—which can be completed in a single evening according to Heath—contains circuitry identical to that in the E-V wired version.

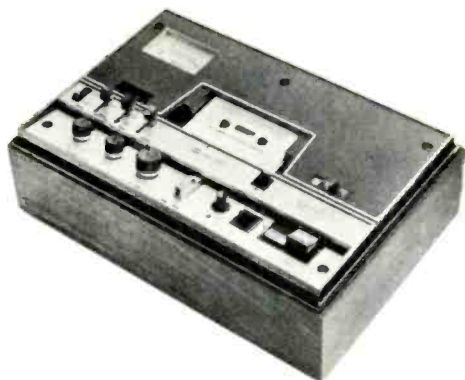
CIRCLE 146 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Akai announces open-reel recorders

Except in the U.S., where until recently distribution was handled by others, the Akai name is well established throughout the world. The first audio tape recorders to be announced here by the recently formed American office are the GX-280D (shown here) and the GX-220D—a pair of open-reel stereo decks using glass and crystal heads guaranteed by the manufacturer for a service life of 150,000 hours (some 17 years of continuous use!). The "focused field" heads are said to increase frequency response of the system by contrast to those with conventional heads, while the glass surface is said to remain cleaner during comparable use. Both models have monitor facilities, automatic reverse, stop, and shutoff, sound-on-sound, three motors, and similar features. The GX-280D uses a servo-controlled capstan motor; that in the GX-220D is a more conventional synchronous design. Prices are \$499.95 and \$399.95, respectively.

CIRCLE 147 ON READER-SERVICE CARD





Advent's new Dolby cassette deck

The Model 201 is the latest stereo cassette deck from Advent. Among its special features is an automatic-stop system that disengages the pinch roller and shuts off the heads at the end of the cassette side. Advent-built electronics are specially designed for low-noise performance, with the Dolby circuitry further improving S/N ratios. As a result Advent claims that the unit will outperform any tape you presently can buy to use with it. That range includes Crolyn and similar chromium-dioxide tapes, since appropriate compensation switching is included. The metering circuit reads peak values and makes allowance for record equalization to prevent overload in passages containing an unusual concentration of high-frequency information. The Model 201 costs \$280; an accessory low-noise mike preamp costs \$20.

Versatile receiver from Pioneer

The front-panel controls of the new SX-9000 stereo FM/AM receiver offer an unusually wide range of possible uses: inputs, outputs, monitor switching, and dubbing capability for two tape recorders; two mike inputs with separate level controls, allowing mixing with other inputs or selective loudspeaker feed; outputs for two stereo headsets; two "aux" inputs; two phono inputs; a variable control for a built-in reverb unit that adds delays of from 0 to 2 seconds to alter the "liveness" of the sound; a special frequency contouring control; switching for three pairs of speakers (choosing any one alone or any combination of two); and a pre/main switch that allows use of the receiver with accessories such as electronic crossover, special equalizers, four-channel decoders, and so on. The deluxe unit sells for \$499.95.



Teac announces new component line



Teac (the tape-recorder people, of course) have upgraded several models in their component line. The AZ-201 Total Performance Indicator shown here can be used as a tuning aid in FM reception, for signal and separation analysis with any program material; or as a peak VU meter. It sells for \$199.50. Other models in the new line include an integrated amplifier, a power amplifier, an AM/FM tuner, an electronic crossover, and a three-way speaker system.

CIRCLE 148 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

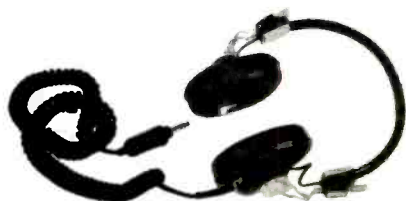
Top tuner from Kenwood

The new KT-7001 stereo FM/AM tuner is designed as a companion piece to the recently announced KA-7002 amplifier; together they constitute the top-performance models in the Kenwood line. Internal circuitry of the tuner features such things as crystal filters and four ICs in the IF (intermediate frequency) stage. On the front panel there are dual meters, one of which can be switched for use as a multipath indicator, a two-position FM muting control, and multiple filter to remove noise in tuning to weak stereo FM stations. The tuner sells for \$279.95.

CIRCLE 149 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Ercona offers stereo/mono headphones



The new Ercona RDF-224 dynamic headset has a mono/stereo switch built into the stereo phone plug that terminates its 8-foot coiled cord, allowing convenient switching of mono signals to both earpieces—for instance, in monitoring a mono tape recording. Rated impedance is 8 ohms; the price is \$24.95.

CIRCLE 152 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Have the high notes on your records become only a memory?

When Jascha Heifetz plays a high note on your favorite violin recording, are you actually hearing it? Or are you just remembering it?

That's something to think about when you consider how many hundreds of dollars you've invested in your records. And what can happen when you play them.

As soon as the stylus touches down in the groove, a running battle begins. The stylus is violently tossed up, down and sideways, thousands of times a second. These motions are either producing beautiful high notes, or expensive memories. It all depends on the tonearm.

How the tonearm should work.

If the tonearm does its various jobs properly, your records can last a lifetime. So we think it is worth investing a few minutes of your time to understand the essentials of what a tonearm is supposed to do.

The tonearm must apply just the right amount of pressure to the stylus, keep this pressure equal on both walls of the groove, and follow the stylus without resistance as the groove spirals inward. Then the stylus will be able to respond freely to all the twists and turns in the record groove, without digging in or chopping away.

And the pending four-channel records are likely to require the stylus to perform even more complex gyrations.

It takes some engineering.

Dual tonearms do all these jobs extraordinarily well. For example, the tonearm of the 1219 works like a gyroscope. It pivots up and down on one ring, left and right on another.

And all four pivot points are identical. This suspension system is called a gimbal. And no other automatic tonearm has a pivot system like it.



Twin-ring gimbal system of Dual 1219. Arm pivots vertically from inner ring, horizontally from outer ring. All four suspension points have identical low-friction bearings.

It takes extraordinary precision.

Every stylus is made to apply even pressure on the groove walls. But during play, the groove pulls the stylus against the inner wall. Better tonearms have a special setting to compensate for this "skating" effect.



Anti-skating system of Dual 1209 and 1219 has separate calibrations for elliptical and conical styli.

However, for an anti-skating system to be effective, bearing friction must not only be low, but consistent. If you can imagine fifteen thousandths of a gram, that's the maximum bearing friction of the 1219. Guaranteed.

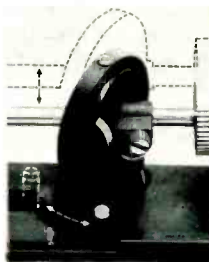
And some other angles.

Apart from preventing record wear, tonearm design should prevent distortion. This largely depends on the angle of the stylus in the groove. Which depends in some cases on tonearm design, in others on the way the cartridge fits into the tonearm head.

The longer the tonearm, the lower the tracking error. The 1219 is 8¾" from pivot to stylus tip, longest of all automatic tonearms.

The angle of the stylus in the groove alters during play depending on whether you are playing one record

or a stack. The Dual 1219 is an exception because its tonearm can be set for the correct angle in either single or multiple play.



Mode Selector of Dual 1219 lowers tonearm base for single play. Stylus tracks at correct 15° angle.

The professionals' choice.

Dual turntables have been the choice of professionals for many years because of their precision, ruggedness and simplicity of operation. And not always the most expensive Dual, either.

If you'd like to know what independent test labs say, we'll send you complete reprints of their reports. Plus an article on what to look for in record playing equipment reprinted from a leading music magazine.

But if you're already convinced and can't wait, just visit your authorized United Audio dealer and ask for a demonstration.

Dual automatic turntables are priced from \$99.50 to \$175.00. When you think about it, that's not very much to pay to keep your records from becoming a costly memory.

United Audio Products, Inc., 120 So. Columbus Ave., Mt. Vernon, N.Y. 10553.

Dual



1215, \$99.50

1219, \$175.00

1209, \$129.50

Sony Uses Revolving Heads for Bidirectional Record/Playback



The Equipment: Sony TC-440, an open-reel, three-speed, quarter-track stereo tape deck with built-in record and playback preamps, bidirectional record and playback, and automatic reversing. Dimensions (including wood case): 16½ by 16 by 18¼ inches. Price: \$369.95. Manufacturer: Sony Corp. (Japan). U.S. Distributor: Sony/Superscope, 8150 Vineland Ave., Sun Valley, Calif. 91352.

Comment: The Sony TC-440 seems to pose the question of how many features can be built into an under-\$400 tape recorder without making major concessions in performance characteristics. A good many, as it turns out. First, some orientation. With the deck standing upright, the reel spindles are, as usual, at the top and have built-in twist-to-lock hold-downs: no spare parts to chase under the easy chair. Below the reel turntables are, from left to right, a four-digit tape counter and the speed switch (7½, 3¾, and 1⅞ ips), the left tension arm, the head cover (we'll discuss in a moment what's under it), right tension arm, and stop button. The tension arms are adjustable to minimize tape scrape, incidentally—an unusual nicety. Along the top of the bottom panel are the headphone jack, pause control, record buttons,

and tape motion buttons: rewind, reverse record/play, forward record/play, and fast forward. Across the bottom are the mike inputs (miniature phone jacks), a normal/special tape switch (more on this later), switching and level control for sound-on-sound and tape echo, left-channel input level controls "aux" and mike), the VJ meters, right-channel input level controls, source/tape monitor switches for each channel, and the power on/off switch. Input and output connections for use with a component system are in a well on the left side of the case, along with a ground connection that can be interconnected with the ground connection on your receiver should you encounter hum problems. The power cord emanates from a similar well on the right.

Now for the details. Most interesting is the head configuration, which uses four heads to provide the equivalent of six-head performance, including monitoring from the tape in both directions. Beginning at the left side of the head cover, the tape passes the sensor that trips the automatic-reverse feature, a tape guide, the forward-direction erase head, the first capstan, the record head and playback head, the second capstan, reverse-direction erase head (inoperative, of course, when the tape is moving in this direction), and a final

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tape guide. The record and playback heads are mounted in a solidly built chrome-plated structure that is pivoted at the top (rear, when the unit is placed horizontally). When the direction of tape travel is reversed, this entire assembly swivels through 180 degrees so that the record head is to the right of the playback head and the gaps are aligned with tracks four and two (rather than one and three) on the tape. Sony describes this action as the Roto Bi-lateral Head.

A 2-inch (or longer) foil strip in the tape or affixed to its inner (oxide-coated) side will trip the automatic reverse feature in either record or playback; however, because the head rotation takes a couple of seconds there would be a slight interruption in a recording made that way. Most users probably will want to change directions manually during some natural pause in the program material and add the foil at the appropriate spot at a later time. The automatic reverse feature works only to change right-bound tape motion to left-bound; a continuous-repeat feature is not included.

Also under the head cover are a pair of tape lifters, flanking the record/playback head assembly. They are activated only by the fast-wind modes and the stop button—not by the pause control. As a result, tape can be "rocked" across the live playback head for precise cueing. Among other features of interest primarily to the "specialist" are the sound-on-sound and tape echo circuits. The former involves unusually simple circuitry: just a pair of links between the playback preamp of one channel to the record amp of the other. The user determines which of the two links is in use by his choice of position for the source/tape switches and record buttons. The system takes a little longer to master than it does on machines with a multiposition, multicontact special-function switch, but these complex switches often are less versatile and in our experience are prone to malfunctions. The tape echo feature can be used for stereo recordings. (In many machines it is operative in mono only.)

The tape selector switch is somewhat unusual. Its function is like that of the bias selector switch on some other recorders, only it does not alter record bias. Instead it alters record equalization for the same end purpose: to adapt the deck's characteristics for use either with "standard" or "low-noise" tapes. The markings on the faceplate are "normal" and "special," the latter referring specifically, according to the owner's manual, to Sony's own Super Low-noise High-output tape. Since this SLH tape is recommended by Sony and Superscope for use with the TC-440, it was the tape used by CBS Laboratories for evaluation of the unit.

The lab tests revealed the deck to be well above average in its price class for one so loaded with features. Since perfect tape-to-head alignment is more difficult to achieve with movable heads than it is with fixed heads, we were particularly interested in a comparison of the record/playback curves. There are differences, to be sure; but though they are easily seen on the curves, they are relatively insignificant in terms of audible quality—which is excellent at all three speeds. In other words Sony seems to have solved the problems inherent in a movable-head recorder.

Particularly impressive were the speed accuracy figures: not only are the speeds close to true, but they are barely influenced by changes in line voltage. Credit for these figures presumably must go to the servo-controlled AC drive motor system used in the TC-440. Wow and flutter too are particularly good—even outstanding for this price class. Credit here seems to belong to the

dual capstan drive, which appears to give the tape extra support and stability. In all other respects performance of the TC-440 can be characterized as acceptable or better.

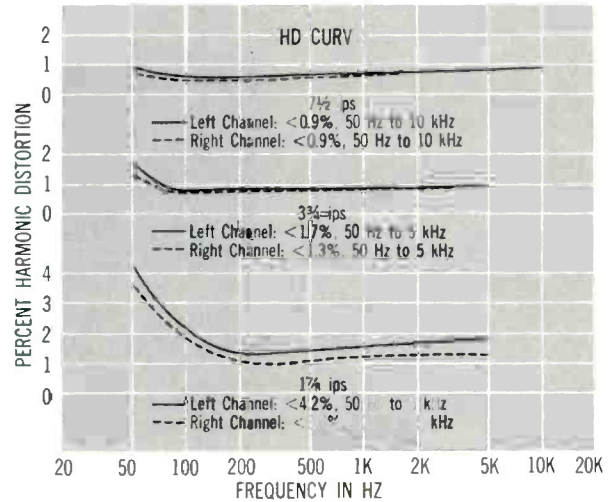
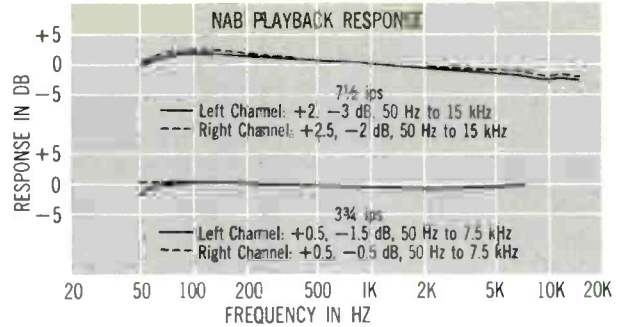
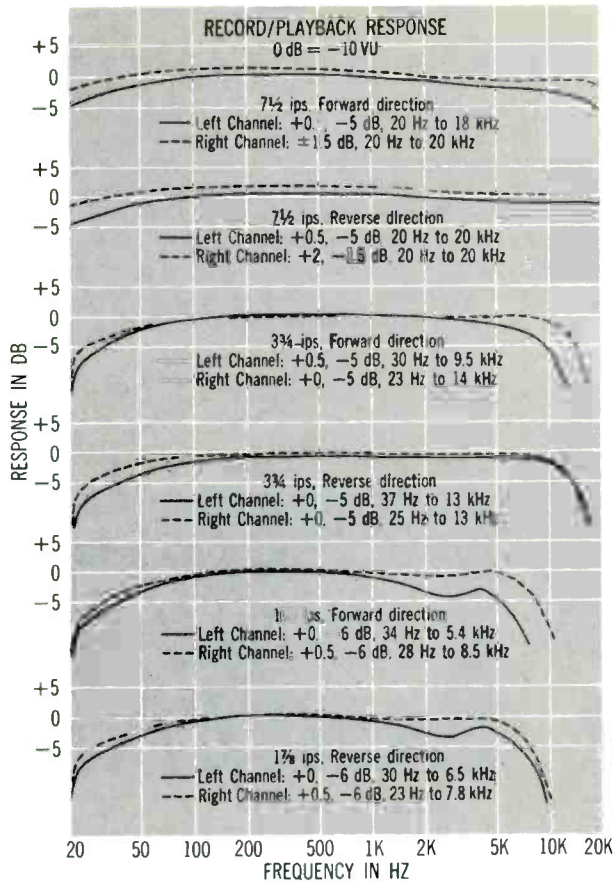
The general handling and "feel" of the unit is solid and responsive. Being of fairly conventional mechanical design, the controls require a somewhat firmer hand than the more expensive solenoid controls do, of course; but their sturdiness is all to the good with respect to long-term reliability.

In brief, then, the TC-440 combines the convenience of automatic reversing with an unusually wide range of capabilities and high over-all performance. As such it must be reckoned as one of the most interesting auto-reverse decks in the medium-price open-reel class.

CIRCLE 144 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Sony TC-440 Additional Data

Speed accuracy		
7½ ips	105 VAC: 0.33% slow	
	120 VAC: 0.30% slow	
	127 VAC: 0.23% slow	
3¾ ips	105 VAC: 0.36% slow	
	120 VAC: 0.30% slow	
	127 VAC: 0.30% slow	
1½ ips	105 VAC: 0.20% slow	
	120 VAC: 0.20% slow	
	127 VAC: 0.20% slow	
Wow and flutter		
7½ ips	playback: 0.04%	
	record/playback: 0.05%	
3¾ ips	playback: 0.07%	
	record/playback: 0.07%	
1½ ips	record/playback: 0.25%	
Rewind time, 7-in., 1,800 ft. reel		2 min. 14 sec.
Fast forward time, same reel		2 min. 14 sec.
S/N ratio (ref 0 VU, test tape)		
playback	L ch: 54.5 dB	R ch: 55.0 dB
record/playback	L ch: 54.0 dB	R ch: 53.5 dB
Erasure (400 Hz at normal level)		58.5 dB
Crosstalk (400 Hz)		
record left, playback right		58.0 dB
record right, playback left		58.0 dB
Sensitivity (for 0 VU recording level)		
aux. input	L ch: 80.0 mV	R ch: 72.0 mV
mike input	L ch: 0.30 mV	R ch: 0.27 mV
Accuracy, built-in meters		left: 2.5 dB high right: 2.5 dB high
IM distortion (record/play)		
7½ ips, -10 VU record level	L ch: 3.5%	R ch: 3.5%
3¾ ips, -10 VU	L ch: 5.0%	R ch: 5.0%
1½ ips, -10 VU	L ch: 15.0%	R ch: 10.0%
Maximum output, preamp or line (at 0 VU)		L ch: 1.0 V R ch: 1.0 V



New Troubador Performs In Utter Silence

The Equipment: Empire Troubador Model 598, a three-speed manual turntable with tone arm. Chassis dimensions: 16 by 13 1/2 inches; clearance required above mounting surface, 3 1/4 inches; below, 3 1/2 inches. Price: \$199.95. Walnut base and hinged wood/plexiglass cover, \$34.95; over-all dimensions, 17 1/2 by 15 1/2 by 8 inches. Tone arm separately, as Model 990, \$74.95. Manufacturer: Empire Scientific Corp., 1055 Stewart Ave., Garden City, N.Y. 11530.

Comment: Everything about the new Empire turntable/arm combination is right. Its appearance gives it an impression of being "handsome, rugged, and dependable," and this feeling is quite borne out in an examination of its carefully machined parts and by its performance under test and in the home. A belt-driven unit, the Model 598 runs at three speeds (33, 45, and 78 rpm). To change speeds you remove the triangular cover at the lower lefthand corner (it is held by a knurled nut), and move the belt on its stepped shaft. Speed accuracy is outstanding, the best yet measured (indeed the best that can be measured) for a fixed-speed turntable (i.e., one without a vernier adjustment). Absolutely no speed error could be found at any of the three speed settings, even with the input line voltage varied from 105 to 127 volts AC. Flutter was insignificant at an average value



of 0.04 per cent. Rumble by the CBS ARLL method was among the lowest ever measured; its -63-dB figure rivals the S/N ratio of a good amplifier. From a practical, listening standpoint, this translates to a truly quiet turntable. Arm resonance, showing a 5-dB rise at 6 Hz, was well below the audible band. The platter—weighing 6 pounds, 11 ounces—is well balanced, beautifully machined, and covered with a ridged rubber mat surrounding a three-speed strobe disc (which shows accurate speeds constantly). The center spindle is surrounded by an optional pop-up adapter for playing 45-rpm doughnuts.

Empire's tone arm is an excellent metal tubular design. Its bearing friction, both laterally and vertically, is negligible at less than 20 milligrams. The built-in stylus force gauge is dead accurate, matching CBS Labs'

gram gauge exactly for its notched settings. The built-in antiskating dial, while difficult to read, does apply correct amounts of bias for different stylus forces selected. The geometry of the arm, including its offset head-angle and stylus overhang positioning, is optimum for its 9-inch length. A built-in cueing control makes for gentle arm lifting and lowering with no side drift. The arm rest holds the arm securely, and as an added convenience, contains a small lamp that comes on when you press the turntable's start button.

The arm's head will accept any make of cartridge

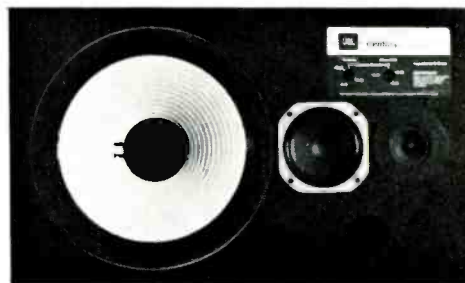
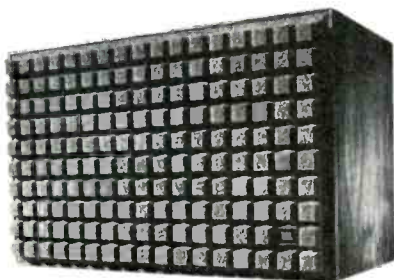
via its removable platform. The cabling at the opposite end is secure and hum-free. An improved suspension system (a combination of pistons and springs, said by Empire to be an exclusive development) makes for excellent stability and a high immunity to external shock.

Obviously, a great deal of engineering skill and manufacturing care have gone into Empire's new turntable/arm ensemble. A precision-crafted machine that runs smoothly, silently, and dependably, it should be of interest to the stereo system owner who wants the best.

CIRCLE 142 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

JBL Dresses

Up a Monitor Speaker



The Equipment: JBL L-100, a compact full-range speaker system in enclosure. Dimensions: 24 by 14 by 13 inches. Price: \$273. Manufacturer: James B. Lansing Sound, Inc., 3249 Casitas Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. 90039.

Comment: The decorator-colored, nubby-textured grille on this JBL bookshelf system lends a new look to a product that, according to JBL, has been in use for some time now as a compact professional monitor. The grille, which heralds its being made available to the consumer market, dresses up the system and—since it is removable and comes in a choice of three colors (ultra blue, russet brown, and burnt orange)—lends the system a unique adaptability to interior decor plans. Acoustically, the grille is neutral and does nothing to the sound which emanates from the three speakers mounted on the baffle board behind it. These include a long-throw 12-inch woofer, a smaller midrange cone, and a very small tweeter with a hard-dome center. Nominal crossover frequencies, provided by an internal network, are at 2,500 Hz and 7,500 Hz. A duct, opening onto the front baffle, helps load the woofer. Level controls also are found on the front baffle: a pair of continuously variable pots marked "presence" and "brilliance" (for midrange and tweeter, respectively), and each providing more than 9 dB of attenuation, marked in steps of 3 dB. Color-coded, press-to-connect inputs to the L-100 are at the rear.

The L-100 is fairly efficient, producing—in CBS Labs tests—a level of 94 dB for a minimum average input power of 2.8 watts. Comfortable listening levels can be reached in a normal size room with lower average power than that. The speaker also is quite rugged: it did not begin to produce buzzing (severe distortion) until driven with steady-state power of 70 watts; it also could handle instant pulses (without distorting) of 300 watts average (600 watts peak) power. This data indicates—in addition to robust construction—very good dynamic range, and an ability to project very large sound volumes.

Rated impedance is 8 ohms. The measured impedance, following the characteristic bass rise and dip,

was 6 ohms; the impedance then rises to above 12 ohms at about 1,700 Hz and comes down again to about 6 ohms to beyond 15,000 Hz. In all, it maintains an average value of 8 ohms across the band.

The measured response curves, reproduced here, show an average omnidirectional response of plus or minus 6.5 dB from 50 Hz to 16,500 Hz, which is a good average mark. Across most of the range the response is quite smooth, with no serious dips or peaks. The peak found in the on-axis response, together with the several dB that separate this curve from the bottom curve in our graph, indicates a fairly bright upper midrange, with some directive characteristics. This effect can be lessened by backing off on the two controls, with the midrange control having more effect than the tweeter control. Measurements show that the midrange control adjusts the range from about 2,000 Hz to 15,000 Hz, while the tweeter control handles frequencies from 8,000 Hz to 15,000 Hz—and so the former should be expected to exert greater control over what you hear, which indeed it does.

In listening tests, we found that the bass held up well to about 50 Hz; the slight doubling that began here was not any more pronounced at 40 Hz. Below 40 Hz, response seemed to roll off smoothly; it could be brought up (with more doubling) to respond to 30 Hz. The middles begin getting directive above 4,500 Hz and this effect increases gradually up the range, although 11,000 Hz still is audible well off-axis of the system. Response continues with a slight audible dip beginning at about 13,500 Hz, and a dip toward inaudibility beginning at 16,000 Hz. White noise response varied from smooth to harsh, depending on how the level controls were set, with the midrange control again having the most audible effect.

We'd say that the L-100 is a system that has a definite "personality." Our listening panel agreed on how it could be characterized, but not on whether they all liked it. Specifically it was felt that the upper middles and highs were strongly projected and had plenty of

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KOSS STEREOPHONES

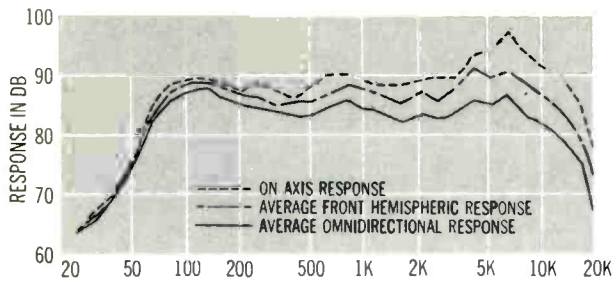
Koss Corporation, 4129 N. Port Washington Ave., Milwaukee, Wis. 53212
Koss Corporation S.r.l., Via Vallorta, 21 20127, Milan, Italy
CIRCLE 59 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Live and let live



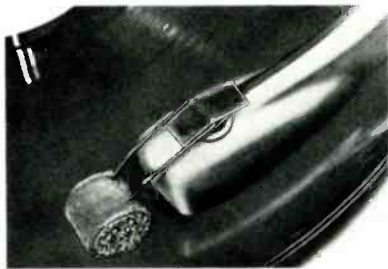
10-20,000 Hz

400-2,500 Hz



"bite," but while some listeners admired this sound, an equal number felt it was on the edgy side. About the only generalization that could be made in light of this would be that the L-100 is capable of furnishing a "big" sound relative to its size. What "big" may mean to any listener, however, is best judged by that listener auditioning the L-100 with familiar program material.

CIRCLE 141 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



A New Record Cleaner— Not For Our Records, Thank You!

The Equipment: Velvettouch Record Cleaner, an accessory for cleaning records during play. Price: \$1.50. Manufacturer: Falcon Products, Inc., P.O. Box 331, Hialeah, Fla. 33011.

Comment: This device is an obvious—and inferior—imitation of the Watts Dust Bug, adapted for use on either manual or automatic record-playing equipment. It consists of what appears to be a short length of velvet ribbon wrapped around a small cylinder fitted with a wire bracket. The other end of the bracket passes through a swivel or hinge on an adhesive-backed plastic strip. To use the Velvettouch you peel the protective paper from the adhesive surface and attach it to the top of the cartridge shell on your tone arm in such a way that the ribbon touches the record surface ahead and a little to one side of the stylus.

Though the device is light and most of its weight is borne by the contact between the cleaning surface and the record, there is a slight downward force on the cartridge shell due to the weight of the bracket and hinge. We measured this force at a little under 1/2 gram—enough to require readjustment of the arm balance with modern equipment of medium or high quality, but not enough to make that compensation difficult to achieve. (Note, however, that if you use more than one cartridge and must rebalance the arm for each, the Velvettouch adds to the nuisance. Its cleaning pad must be supported by the turntable platter or a record during the balancing process. Since the stylus also will touch this surface, it's hard to tell when correct balance has been achieved and therefore it is easy to damage delicate styli.) With older (or cheaper) equipment that tracks at more than about 3 grams the compensation is largely academic even if arm balance is adjustable. On a record changer you will have to take care in position-

JBL L-100 Harmonic Distortion*

Output Level (dB)	Frequency			
	80 Hz		300 Hz	
	% 2nd	% 3rd	% 2nd	% 3rd
70	0.2	0.11	0.09	0.1
75	0.25	0.15	0.1	0.12
80	0.27	0.18	0.12	0.14
85	0.35	0.5	0.24	0.16
90	0.45	0.8	0.48	0.2
95	0.9	1.3	1.0	0.27
100	1.9	2.1	1.9	0.48
105			3.0	0.65

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

ing the Velvettouch on the cartridge shell. If it is too far back, the pad will not touch the record; if it is too far forward, the pad may snag on the top record as the arm swings over it in the change cycle.

The Velvettouch did indeed pick up a good deal of dust, even from records that looked clean to the naked eye. But though the shape of its cylindrical pad is similar to that of the Dust Bug, the resemblance ends there. The Dust Bug's cylinder rotates around its bracket, allowing all portions of its circumference to contact the record; the Velvettouch has a fixed cylinder. Since only one small portion of the circumference contacts the record, that area must itself be cleaned fairly often. The remaining velvet on the pad's circumference (it is some 3/4-inch in diameter) contributes nothing to the cleaning process.

A much more severe disadvantage of the Velvettouch, in our opinion, is its "decor": both ends of the cylinder are embedded with bits of colored tinsel-like material that not only looks like something left over from a dime-store party favor, but actually flakes off onto your fingers. It's not the sort of thing we'd like to see floating around loose near our records and styli.

All things considered, we figure the Velvettouch may create more problems than it solves.

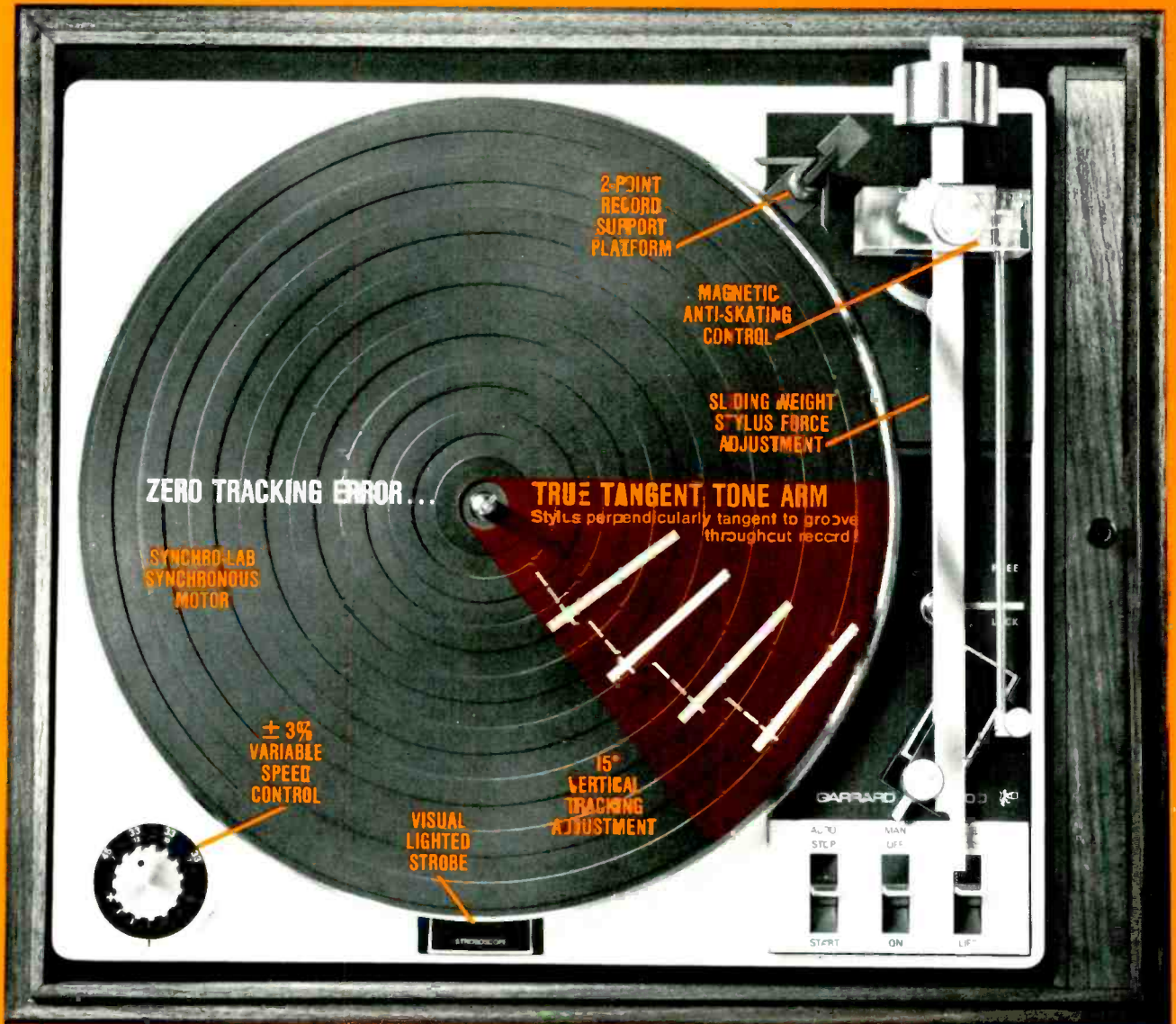
CIRCLE 143 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

REPORTS IN PROGRESS

Garrard Zero-100 Turntable
Teac A-24 Cassette Deck
Bose 501 Loudspeaker System

CIRCLE 103 ON READER-SERVICE CARD →

VIEW FROM THE TOP



This is the Zero 100—the newest, most advanced automatic turntable. The name stands for Zero Tracking Error—up to 160 times less than any conventional tone arm... new freedom from distortion... new life for your records. The diagram shows how the tone arm articulates, keeping the stylus perpendicularly tangent to the grooves throughout the record. It also points to some of the other major features.

□ There's an interesting presentation booklet on the Zero 100... with 12 pages of illustrations and diagrams, giving a full, clear explanation. Let us send you a copy

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GARRARD ZERO 100

Two-Speed (33 $\frac{1}{3}$ and 45 rpm) Automatic Turntable **\$18950**



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An advanced cassette for specially designed

Introducing Memorex Chromium Dioxide Tape.

New Memorex Chromium Dioxide Tape has a totally different composition from conventional cassette tapes. It extends frequency response and delivers a clarity and brilliance of sound never before possible on cassette. Chromium Dioxide is so drastically different, you'll need a specially designed cassette recorder to use it.

You've probably read about conven-

tional cassette tapes that claim to be so improved it's not necessary to switch to special Chromium Dioxide equipment.

Let us simply say this:

Equipment manufacturers recognized the Chromium Dioxide breakthrough, and designed cassette recorders to take advantage of it.

Listen to a Memorex Chromium Dioxide



The tape that will change your whole opinion of cassettes.

Cassette on the new specially designed equipment. Compare it to any cassette that claims equal performance on standard equipment.

You'll find there's no comparison.

MEMOREX Recording Tape
Reproduction so true it can shatter glass.
CIRCLE 35 ON READER-SERVICE CARD





by Larry Zide

Tape Up to Date

IN 1943 Allied intelligence officers were mystified by broadcasts coming from Germany being made by men whom they knew could not possibly be at a broadcast studio. When V-E day came, the "secret weapon" was uncovered—tape. The Germans had been recording on ribbons of iron oxide while the rest of the world was still playing with poor-sounding wire recording. The German Magnetophon used reels of ferric-oxide-coated paper (and later acetate motion-picture film base) to re-create a lifelike sound image in a way that transcription discs could not.

A couple of army officers with an engineering bent brought a Magnetophon back to the States and reassembled the unit in California. A working engineer named Alexander M. Poniatoff then formed a company to make an improved version of the Magnetophon. The company name was derived from the founder's initials A.M.P. and the suffix "ex" for excellent, and Ampex became the first U.S. tape recorder manufacturer. Those first machines were for broadcast use: Bing Crosby needed a method of re-creating his show in delayed broadcast. Thus the tape recording field as we know it was born. It would have taken a Nostradamus of that day to predict how much and in what ways tape would later be used.

Improved recorders, better coatings, quadriphonics, video—all are making tape the prime medium for quality home entertainment.



Formats

THE TAPE RECORDIST of the early 1950s enjoyed a relatively simple world. All tape was ¼ inch wide. Moreover, it came in one thickness, and so a predictable amount of tape could be held on the standard home reels of 3-, 5-, or 7-inch diameter. The introduction of "high output" and low noise tapes, and the use of thinner backings which permitted more tape to be spooled onto a given sized reel, caused very little confusion. All machines were mono and used either the full width of the tape on which to record in one direction only, or half the width for each direction, which meant of course that you flipped the reel for the second pass across the deck.

Stereo, which appeared first on tape, ended tape flipping since it required the use of both "half-tracks" for left and right channels in only one direction of tape motion. This change required some mental readjustment on the part of tape users, but they managed it well enough and soon found that the new configuration did have a very good response and signal-to-noise ratio. Tape speed was standardized at 7½ inches per second (3¾ only for limited-quality recording) and all was at peace once more.

Toward the end of the 1950s RCA introduced a giant-sized (by today's standards) cartridge using two internal spools to hold the tape. Its novelty was enhanced by dividing the width of the ¼-inch tape into *four* tracks—that is, using quarter-track heads. In stereo mode, this meant two in one direction (tracks 1 and 3, counting down from the top), two more in the opposite direction. For mono use, you could make four passes through the machine with the same cartridge. The RCA cartridge itself didn't last—it was premature—but the system of quarter-track recording caught on and was adapted to reel-to-reel tape configurations. It is, of course, very much a part of today's tape scene as the high fidelity standard for serious home recording and playback.

Meanwhile, a re-entrant type (i.e., closed-loop) cartridge originally used in broadcasting (at 7½- and 15-ips speeds) was introduced in modified form to the consumer market. The Fidelipac cartridge used the same four-track arrangement as on reels, but it reduced tape speed to 3¾ ips. The design aim was essentially a foolproof system for automobile use. How truly foolproof some of those early cartridges were can be debated. But the Fidelipac-type cartridge seemed to prosper.

Then along came aircraft wizard Bill Lear with an idea and the money to back it up. Take the re-

entrant cartridge, alter the case design slightly, and put *eight* tracks of sound on it using the same 3¾-ips speed. This resulted in four stereo pairs instead of two—twice as much stereo as on a Fidelipac cartridge. Left and right channels start on tracks 1 and 5 and continue, via the closed-loop arrangement, onto tracks 2 and 6, then onto 3 and 7, and finally onto 4 and 8. Of course, each track was narrower than in the four-track version, so machines suffered from heads that wouldn't align properly and hence played a bit of an incorrect track along with the required tracks. The narrower tracks also meant about a 3-dB increase in noise. The alignment bugs, at least, were eventually eliminated, and "Stereo 8" cartridges became the automotive way of life, almost totally wiping out sales of Fidelipac systems in the process.

In the mid-1960s there was another major happening: the giant firm of Philips of Eindhoven, Netherlands (Norelco here) developed a miniature reel-to-reel system encased in a plastic cartridge that resembled a scaled-down model of the earlier RCA cartridge. The new baby, called a "cassette," used tape approximately ⅛ inch wide (instead of the ¼-inch standard) that ran at a mere 1⅞-ips speed. The original cassette machine was a battery-operated portable mono-only machine, which proved to be a wise choice of product format for introducing this new development. Just as with the old half-track mono reel machines, the mono cassette recorder used half the width of the tape in one direction and the other half for the return trip.

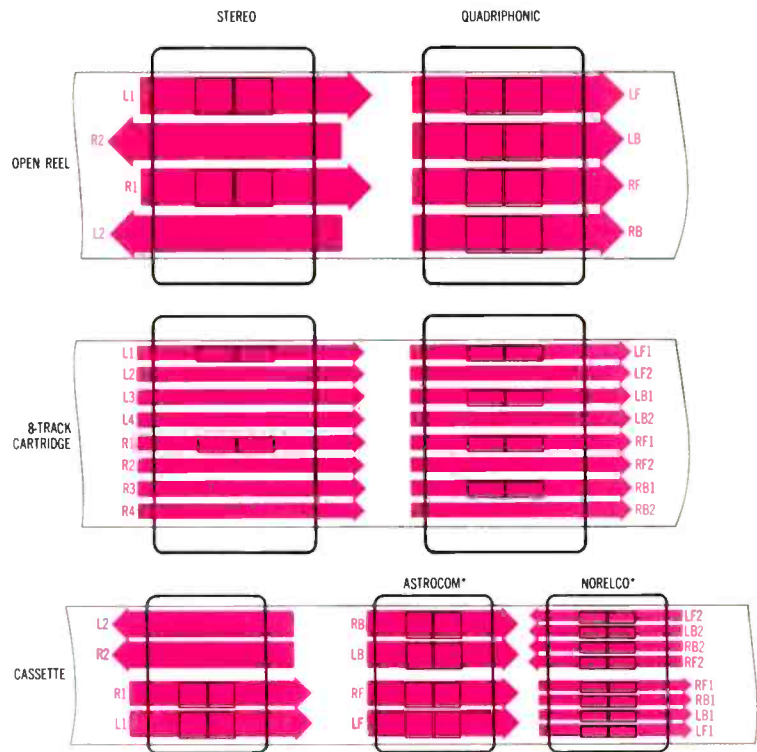
Adding stereo to the cassette was a simple and logical next step. Each of the mono tracks was divided in two, making a total of four tracks on the tape. This time, tracks 1 and 2 served as the first pair, and 3 and 4 (running in the opposite direction) as the second pair. Philips has insisted on this track arrangement so that the system can be fully stereo/mono compatible. That is to say, the stereo track configuration assures that a mono cassette machine can play a stereo tape—in mono of course—but without loss of any information. Similarly, a mono tape can be played with no difficulty on a stereo machine. This emphasis on compatibility is affecting the destiny of the cassette, as we shall see presently. Of course, whatever the track arrangement, the narrow width of each track on a cassette tape creates as much of a signal-to-noise problem as it does for eight-track cartridge tapes.

Of the three major tape formats, quarter-track open reels and stereo cassettes have made the strongest bid for attention in the high fidelity mar-

WHERE THE TRACKS GO

These diagrams represent the head and track configurations that remain of major interest in home tape equipment today. For purposes of clarity the cassette formats are shown somewhat more enlarged than the 1/4-inch tape formats (open-reel and cartridge); note that track width in a stereo cassette actually is the same as that in 8-track cartridges.

*Quadriphonic cassettes are not yet available. These two formats should be considered as proposals only, for reasons explained in the text.



ket in terms of the products offered by the industry. Until recently the closed-loop cartridge system was known mainly as a mass-media product primarily for noncritical playback—though there are some recording decks in this format too, and very late word from some high fidelity manufacturers indicates a “new generation” of quality cartridge decks,

with particular emphasis on their ability to play the new four-channel cartridge tapes. These developments may change the picture, but as of now the proliferation of cassette equipment among high fidelity component manufacturers demonstrates that this format has become a major product development.

Dolby

NO DOUBT the widest publicity in tape today has been given to the use of Dolby-designed noise-reduction circuitry. The technique and its related devices originate from the laboratories in London, England that bear Ray Dolby's name. For the professional recording fraternity there's a costly system that uses four specific frequency bands to attack the problems of hiss, scrape flutter, midband noise (including print-through), and hum. Each band functions independently. The fact that most recording companies now use Dolby equipment explains why we no longer hear master-tape hiss in the background of quiet discs.

For home use, a simpler, less costly system has been designed by Dolby Labs and licensed out to various manufacturers. Only the top end of the frequency spectrum, where hiss occurs, is affected. To distinguish it from the professional “Dolby A,” the

consumer version is called “Dolby B.” By a sophisticated method of sensing volume and frequency, the circuit reduces hiss while affecting the music only in a way that you cannot hear. The net result can be as much as 10 dB of noise reduction, which often makes the difference between a low-level but annoying background hiss and its utter inaudibility.

Make no mistake about it: the Dolby system works. Its most effective use to date has been to improve the sound of cassettes (which have a severe hiss problem because of their narrow tracks). A number of cassette machines that have Dolby circuitry built in for both recording and playback are now available. They not only let you make quiet cassettes with improved high-end response, but they also can play prerecorded cassettes which themselves have been Dolbyized. Ampex/London and Vox released the first of these cassettes, Musical

Heritage and British-made London cassettes followed more recently, and other recording companies are expected to follow suit. Dolby equalizers also are available as separate units (so far, only from Advent and Teac) for use with all types of existing tape recorders.

Dolby circuitry was intended to improve *well-designed* equipment. Shamefully, there is some evidence to suggest that it may be used instead to conceal product deficiencies. A well-designed cassette deck, in which design engineering has not

been skimped, can provide a 50-dB S/N. With Dolby, the same deck's S/N can be improved to 60 dB. But poorer designs that are less costly to manufacture only provide 40 dB of S/N; their use of Dolby can get no more than 50 dB S/N—which explains why a particular non-Dolby deck might sound better than one with Dolby. The use of Dolby in a tape deck (cassette, cartridge, or open-reel) cannot be taken as a cure-all for, or a reason to ignore, the host of complex factors that add up to good tape performance.

Tape Formulations

ALTHOUGH it reduces noise, Dolby circuitry does nothing to frequency response. And few cassette recorders, using conventional tapes, offer record/playback response that is flat within 2 dB to much beyond 10 kHz. Quiet or noisy, this limit falls short of high fidelity standards. The problem lies partly in the design limitations of the machine but mostly in the tape itself.

Enter the new tape formulations, of which the most publicized has been Du Pont's Crolyn. Originally designed for computers and broadcast video recorders, Crolyn is now entering the audio field. This tape uses a chromium-dioxide base instead of the hitherto universally used ferric oxide. Crolyn has demonstrated an ability to hold more "bits" of information in a given length of tape than standard tapes. This ability can be translated to mean higher signal output (better S/N), wider bandwidth (particularly at slow speeds), and/or lower distortion. These three parameters, as with conventional tapes, are traded against each other. That is to say, you cannot simultaneously have the least noise, the extra 3 to 5 kHz of top end, and the lowest possible distortion. You can have most of one, with relatively less of the others, or you can have a little of all three. Whatever the combination, however, it is an improvement.

The reason you can't have the most of all three characteristics simultaneously is due to the interaction between tape, record bias, equalization, and signal level. Correct bias is always set at a compromise level that favors what is most important to the user. That is why, for instance, you can buy reel-to-reel machines that will give you flat response, at 7½ ips, to 25 kHz, but whose distortion and noise figures at normal recording levels are not equally spectacular. Reset the bias in such a machine for better S/N and you find that the maximum frequency response may drop to 21 kHz, while the distortion won't be any lower. Raise the signal level to increase S/N ratio, and distortion will rise. Or, set the bias for lowest distortion *and* best S/N and you may end up with flat response to no higher

than 18 kHz. Professionals, armed with this knowledge as well as with tape machines that permit adjustment of bias and equalization, can and do decide—for specific recording chores—what is most important. Home tape users, with equipment that does not readily permit bias changes or without the know-how to change bias on machines that do permit it, have to settle for whatever compromise has been built into their units by their manufacturers—and by definition, this compromise is always with reference to a particular class of tape: in most current models, one of the "low-noise" types.

Be that as it may, Crolyn does seem to offer advances on all fronts when compared to conventional ferrous formulations. However, Crolyn does demand unusually high bias currents and some changes in record equalization. Both of these are manufacturer-required changes, and many existing recorders cannot be modified, except by major circuit work—not to be undertaken by the average owner. Crolyn tape is being introduced in both cassette and reel formulations, and some new cassette machines offer switches that alter bias.

Manufacturers of ferrous tapes have not been caught napping by Crolyn. TDK was the first to market a premium "high-density" cassette tape and lately has announced its availability in open-reel form. Capable of holding more "bits" of information for a given length than former tapes, it thus offers low noise and extended high-end response. It too requires a modified bias setting that is within the range of most recent cassette units. On our hypothetical machine, with its "normal limit" of 10 kHz, the TDK tape could extend the response to 12 kHz or beyond—with no loss of S/N and no increase in distortion. But again, you don't get it all for nothing: what is gained in the improved high frequencies is somewhat offset by a smaller loss in the bass.

The 3M Company (Scotch brand), which introduced the first recording tapes in the U.S., is marketing a new cassette tape that supposedly offers the low noise, extended frequency response, and

reduced distortion characteristics of TDK-type and Crolyn tapes but which requires no change in recorder bias to achieve at least some of this improvement. 3M claims further that its new tape will result in no loss of bass and will offer wear characteristics comparable to its present Dynarange tapes.

At this writing my limited experiments with the new Scotch tape (called High Energy) indicate that some tape machine modification will be needed to realize its full potential. But that potential is impressive indeed, suggesting cassette performance of ± 2 dB from 40 to 14,000 Hz at low distortion and with a S/N of better than -50 dB.

Add Dolby circuitry and a good low-flutter cassette transport mechanism to this kind of audio performance and suddenly you have cassettes that sound as good as the best discs. I know this can be done because I have heard A/B comparisons of

Crolyn/Dolbyized cassettes and the discs from which they were recorded and I was unable to hear any difference between them.

Recording on a reel-to-reel machine with existing $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch tape at $3\frac{3}{4}$ ips, you can now get a 20- to 20,000-Hz response ± 3 dB, with 55 dB S/N. An add-on Dolby processor such as the Advent unit will get you another 10 dB of S/N and a 0-VU distortion of well under 1%. Whether you will get extended high-end response using the newer tapes remains to be determined. But it is obvious that the open-reel format still remains a step or two ahead of other formats in terms of audio performance.

The newest tape coating to be announced, but not yet available as a product, is Graham Magnetics' Cobaloy. It uses cobalt as its main magnetic ingredient, and it claims dramatically superior response vis-à-vis existing tapes.

Four Channels

A MAJOR QUESTION of quadriphonic sound on tape is that of compatibility: will any system of laying down four simultaneous channels of sound still be able to live nicely with existing two-channel systems? The problem is stickiest with cassettes: Philips, the company that introduced cassettes, still holds the string to all the cassette manufacturers by virtue of having granted them licenses. The string's strength has yet to be fully tested, but so far Philips has insisted that any four-channel cassette system be fully compatible. That is, the same tape must play four channels on a quadriphonic machine, provide full two-channel stereo (an integration of the four) on present machines, and full mono (all four integrated into one) on mono machines. Philips has shown a prototype cassette system utilizing these concepts. The cassette had a total of eight supernarrow channels on it: four in each direction of tape motion. Its stereo head would be wider to permit it to scan more of the tape (left front and left rear would become the *left* channel, right front and right rear, the *right*). A mono head would, by virtue of its greater width, scan across all four tracks, thus integrating a full mono signal. Alternately, Philips is leaving the door open to a possible encoded quadriphonic system that could work satisfactorily with existing heads.

Regarding the possibility of using narrower heads in a cassette machine, many commercial tape processors insist that present duplication equipment cannot reliably produce these supernarrow tracks, and there would be a worsening of the S/N. And one company—Astrocom/Marlux—has demonstrated but not released a quadriphonic cassette system using all four tracks, uncoded, for four channels in one direction of tape movement. Pending an industry-wide resolution of this problem, I

don't see an immediate major wave of quadriphonic sound in the cassette format.

As an aside, I must point out that the disc is still the prime playback medium. And FM broadcasters still demand a product that will play well in compatible mono and stereo. These two facts of audio life seem to mean that if quadriphonic sound succeeds commercially it will do so first on discs, and specifically by a form of matrixing to get the four channels onto their two groove walls. I believe that a successful matrixed disc will beget a matrixed cassette and the two will then be capable of delivering matrixed stereo-FM quadriphonics. [Some present opinion to the contrary, we generally agree with this analysis of the quadriphonic situation.—Ed.]

If this is admittedly speculative, it's even less certain how $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch tape (in open-reel or in cartridge form) will end up vis-à-vis quadriphonics. It seems likely that a discrete system (four individual tracks across the tape in a semicompatible configuration relative to present machines), such as is now being offered by several recorded-tape producers and machine manufacturers, will continue. This system, first advocated by Vanguard Records, does offer a degree of compatibility. A present two-channel (quarter-track) recorded tape can be played on a quadriphonic-equipped deck, just by shutting off sound to the rear channels. However, this compatibility does not work in the opposite way. That is, if you wanted to play a quadriphonically recorded tape on your present stereo machine with quarter-track heads, you would hear the information on the left- and right-front channels on the tape, but miss entirely any information from the two rear channels. That might not be too bad when the rear tracks contain only ambience information, but some of the newest recordings are putting prime informa-

tion on all four channels. How the public takes to this sound-field kind of presentation is anyone's guess, but the techniques for recording and playing such sound already exist in both open-reel and closed-loop cartridge form. With regard to the latter, RCA has proposed using its existing eight channels in a new way: make them quadriphonic by using two sets of four discrete channels (instead of four sets of two), and do so in a manner that makes for at least a "semicompatibility" with present equipment. Companies such as Motorola have produced quadriphonic car players. At a recent press conference held by Motorola to introduce this and other systems, a station wagon parked outside was fitted with such a system. I entered and listened. No doubt about it. Quadriphonic sound is overwhelming in the acoustic confines of a car. Front speakers were in the front doors, rear speakers in the rear doors. (What do you do in a two-door car?) I do wonder, though, if as a driver I ought

to be overwhelmed while driving. Anyway this system works—and it is available.

There is as yet no commercially available four-channel format for cassettes. Probably the matter will be decided by whatever method finally is adopted for quadriphonic discs. The strongest push in this particular area is currently coming from the Electro-Voice/Feldman matrixing system, but the Dynaco system is running a close second. [See last month's "Four Channels on Discs."] Both systems have seemingly convinced some record manufacturers and broadcasters to experiment with the new sound. E-V, in fact, has lined up some major labels, notably Enoch Light's Project 3. Interestingly, Project 3 also has recently announced discrete four-channel stereo tape on reels. And I'll bet that we will have E-V matrixed cassettes from Project 3 soon. And there are other systems under development—notably JVC's—that could emerge on commercial discs, if not cassettes, in the very near future.

Video in the Home

NO MATTER WHAT the promotional literature from some quarters seems to indicate, home video recording is still in the promise rather than the product stage. At stake are a number of different and mutually incompatible systems. There are, however, some interesting possibilities among them.

One major effort is concerned with offering a playback-only system for audio/visual information. Already on the market is CBS' Electronic Video Recording (EVR) system. It uses special film and electronics for its picture and magnetic-stripe track for the audio. This playback system requires its small machine to be connected to a television set; the new machine accepts the recorded EVR cassettes for playback through the set. Simple to operate, the program material costs \$20 or more for 30 minutes of color.

Newly announced and expected on the market in 1972 is the Teldec Video Disc, which also involves a special playback machine attached to your TV set. The cost of a 12-inch disc offering up to about 30 minutes of total playing time in color is still undetermined, but it could come to less than that of present-day audio discs. (This price and the quoted EVR price will actually be higher because talent royalties and other costs have not been included.) EVR and the Teldec Video Disc are *playback-only* systems—video phonographs if you will. It is still the exclusive domain of tape to function as a medium that both *records* and *plays*. Within the tape field, however, there still is no agreement on standards. Tape is available for the (nonbroadcast) present helical-scan record systems in various widths up to one inch. Further, the speed at which

the tape travels through the machine, and the speed used to rotate the helical-scanning heads, varies from one brand of machine to another. A number of Japanese companies have agreed to color and black-and-white standards using ½-inch tape, but acceptance is by no means universal.

Ampex's Instavideo system follows these ½-inch standards in cassette format. It fits their own machine, but the tape in it can be removed for use on open-reel video decks that adhere to the same standard. The tape in the Avco Cartrivision cartridges also is ½ inch wide, but its transport speed is different. And the speed used by Philips in its video cassette recorder (VCR) system, recently announced in this country by Norelco, differs from both the Avco and the Ampex standards. The Sony Videocassettes look much like the familiar audio cassettes (long and thin, since the "reels" are set edge to edge, rather than side by side within the case), only larger. They hold ¾-inch tape instead of the usual ½-inch variety. Teac has a similar system, only scaled down to the ½-inch tape of the Japanese standard and compatible with it, at least in black and white.

At the moment these appear to be the front-runners in the race for international acceptance, though other companies (including Arvin, JVC, and Panasonic) also have announced proprietary systems. While it is impossible to predict which (if any) of the existing standards will prevail, it does seem certain that there is in our future some form of tape cassette or cartridge for both recording and playback of video, perhaps with stereo sound, regardless of the developments that may take place in video discs or film media. ●

by R. D. Darrell

Nine Cassettes to Show Off (and Test) Your Tape Playback System

There's only one way to convince dubious or downright skeptical discophiles, open-reel connoisseurs, and complete laymen that cassettes actually have come of technological age: demonstrate to them the overwhelming sonic evidence provided by today's best-recorded exemplars. Our "Tape Deck" editor's demo choices not only may suggest the enticing variety of current music cassette repertoires, but also their usefulness as convenient check-ups for maintaining playback systems in optimum operating condition.

Alfresco Beginning

1 Trout Quintet (Schubert); Peter Serkin, Alexander Schneider, Michael Tree, David Soyer, Julius Levine; Vanguard/Ampex M 51145.

2 Royal Fanfares at Versailles; Kuentz Orchestra; Deutsche Grammophon 923 101.

Even in their infancy—the days of mono-only playback via battery-operated portables—musicassettes were capable of liberating chamber music from formal listening rooms. My own first alfresco experience was this delectable *Trout* Quintet, and it still remains irresistibly persuasive when heard outdoors, even though home stereo systems now can better exploit its sonic warmth and lucidity. Its cleanly delineated piano tones, incidentally, provide a sure test of playback-speed steadiness—a desideratum too often lacking in cheap players and improperly maintained good ones.

The more technically up-to-date "Versailles" program is thrilling enough in open-air mono, but it's incalculably more so in indoor stereo if one's player, stereo amplifier, and speakers can do full justice to its bold timpani and dazzling high trumpets. Recorded in a big-hall ambience worthy of the music's original presentations before the *Roi Soleil* himself, these nobly ceremonial works by Delalande, Charpentier, Lully, and Philidor are profoundly impressive, while the engaging rococo-era banquet divertissements composed and arranged by Francoeur make an effective contrast.

Sheerly Spectacular

3 Fabulous Broadway; Fiedler/Boston Pops Orchestra; Polydor CR 5003.

4 Fiedler's Choice; Fiedler/Boston Pops Orchestra; RCA Red Seal RK 1143.

5 Bolero (Ravel); other selections by Masenet, Falla; Ormandy/Philadelphia Orchestra; Columbia 16 11 0172.

In first luring visitors into a home sound-system demonstration, extremely loud, big displays will likely antagonize (if not deafen) rather than impress your captive audiences. You have to grip their *musical* attention before they possibly can appreciate *sonic* authenticity and grandeur. And if you don't know their musical tastes, it's often best to play safe with, say, the symphonic epiphanies of familiar hit tunes from *Hair*, *Company*, *Man of La Mancha*, and *Fiddler on the Roof*. From the arresting opening gong roar through the later revelations—soft as well as loud—of superb solo and ensemble timbres, and above all in what well may be the richest brass-choir sonorities ever recorded, this first Fiedler program for DGG miraculously transports you right into Boston's Symphony Hall.

A slightly earlier yet scarcely less sonically dramatic RCA Pops program proffers more substantial musical content. While there are quasi pop enticements in Gold's Eric Coates-style *Boston Pops* March and the Gershwin tunes and rhythms of Bennett's *Symphonic Picture of "Porgy and Bess"*, one also finds the full-blooded heroic romanticisms of Glazunov's *Carnaval Overture* and the spicy acerbities of Shostakovich's incidental music for *Hamlet*.

Perhaps only sophisticated listeners will fully appreciate the tone-tinting subtlety of the woodwind solos, the rock-steady tempo, and the precisely controlled crescendo of Ravel's *Bolero* in the Ormandy program. But the dynamic range of this recording and the fabulously high modula-

tion level and dazzling incandescence on Side "B" are calculated to dumbfound any audiophile who still denies that musicassettes have completely burst their original frequency- and dynamic-range limitations. Interpretatively, the *Cid* and *Three-Cornered Hat* excerpts are brutally over-vehement for my taste, but for almost palpable solidity and powerful knock-'em-down impact the sound here is sensational in the primary sense of the term—you can really *feel* it!

Grand Opera in Microcosm

It's one thing momentarily to stupefy sophisticated as well as inexperienced listeners with blazingly brilliant sound spectaculars: it's quite another not only to stimulate but to hold their fascinated aural attention over longer periods. An ultimate test of musicassettes is how well these tiny sound sources can transform one's listening room into a spacious opera house, suspend our disbelief in unseen characters and events for a couple of hours, and leave us completely satisfied by the catharsis of an unforgettable dramatic experience. Two outstanding multicassette opera sets can triumphantly pass all these tests: first, Gardelli's stirring, often near-melodramatic, but always exuberantly vital version of Verdi's *Forza del destino*; then Solti's incomparable distillation of the Viennese sentiment and nostalgia in Richard Strauss's *Rosenkavalier*.

Hearing these, alone or in the company of a few congenial friends, and preferably with the librettos at hand, are you aware of any lack of vivid presence in the leading characters? any blurring of timbre differentiations in either the vocal or orchestral tonal qualities? or of any failure at all in the potentially magical ability of recorded and reproduced music to hold you enthralled? Indeed, if Leonora's Convent and Death Scenes don't truly move you, or if the radiant climaxes of the *Rosenkavalier*'s final trio and duet don't twist your heart or even raise a goosebump or two, there's something seriously wrong with your cassette playback system—or with your own sensibilities!

Dolby, the Quiet Revolution

Even the most passionate evangelist must admit, however, that one thing *is* wrong not only with the demo cassettes I've cited so far but with most others—a variably apparent fault that's easily ignored by some listeners but which is anathema to others. This is "surface" noise, often called "hiss," although it's actually more of a susuration or "hruuussh!" Technological advances in cassette processing have reduced it considerably, but at present it can be practically eliminated only by Type-B Dolby noise-reduction circuits in both production and playback equipment. For dramatic proof of how the music can sound when heard against a velvety background of silence (rather than through a veil of noise-smog), listen both with and without Dolbyization to the serene light-textured pellucidities of Satie's *Socrate*, and to the frequent low-level passages of the exotic percussion effects in Milhaud's evocations of a primitive world in his *L'Homme et son désir* ballet.

Yet even the most spectacular sonic showpieces, in which loud tutti generally conceal the existence of surface noise, include contrastingly low-level passages where that noise suddenly becomes distractingly (or intolerably) evident. Thus, even a warhorse like the Richard Strauss *Also sprach Zarathustra*, with its now almost hackneyed *Sunrise* opening, benefits from Dolbyization—partly in the subtly enhanced luminosity of the fortissimo sections, but even more so in such quieter ones as the *Wissenschaft* fugue beginning pianissimo in the subterranean depths of the double basses, and in the spaced-out *ppp* bitonal ending of the entire work.

Cassette Test Tape—A Home-Made Substitute

The best materials I know that do not require special measuring equipment or technical training are those in the CBS Laboratories' stereo disc, "Seven Steps to Better Listening." Unfortunately, they're not available in cassette form. If you own a good cassette recorder (particularly one including both Dolby circuits and bias-switching provisions for chromium dioxide or other new premium quality tapes), it will pay you to buy a copy of the CBS Labs STR 101 and carefully copy onto a blank cassette—for your personal use only, remember!—its entire "A" side, possibly plus Band 2 of the "B" side. (The other materials are superfluous for tape-system testing.) A collection of test cuts was announced recently by GC Electronics: the Audiotex 30-212 test cassette, which I've not yet seen. In the meantime you'll find the home-dubbed substitute invaluable not only for testing your over-all cassette playback system, but also for the regular quick-and-easy check-outs that show up audio troubles *before* they become serious. ●

La Forza del destino (Verdi); Martina Arroyo, Carlo Bergonzi, et al.; Gardelli/Royal Philharmonic; Angel 4X38 3765.



Der Rosenkavalier (R. Strauss); Régine Crespin; Yvonne Minton, et al.; Solti/Vienna Philharmonic; London/Ampex 131165.



Selections by Satie, Milhaud, Stravinsky, Ravel; Friedrich Cerha, Darius Milhaud/ various orchestras; Vox 678 030.



Also sprach Zarathustra (R. Strauss); Lewis/Royal Philharmonic; London/Ampex M 94053.



What Makes a Tape Recorder "Professional"?

by Herbert Friedman

TIME AND CIRCUMSTANCES really determine whether a recorder is a "professional" or "semipro" machine. Back in 1950 when radio stations and production studios were making the transition from the 16-inch transcription to tape, the Ampex 300 was *the* professional machine, though there were several other brands that also were in professional use because they were portable and relatively inexpensive.

By 1971 standards, except for the Ampex 300, the 1950 professional recorders couldn't be described as even "acceptable budget quality." The cheapest portable recorders could have as much as a ten- to thirty-second error in thirty minutes of running time, had totally unacceptable wow and flutter by modern standards, and worst of all, their speeds were only relative: running a little fast at the beginning of the reel and a little slow at the end.

The fact is that except for mastering and multitrack recorders for studio work anything a little better (sometimes *very* little better) than the average performance of home recorders has been termed "professional quality." Such claims are better ignored unless documented by actual performance characteristics.

The first thing that goes into a professional recorder is the electrical performance. A few standards typical of this class of equipment are:

1. A frequency response (± 3 dB) of 20 to 15,000 Hz or better.

2. A signal-to-noise ratio (referenced against the maximum recording level representing 2 or 3 per cent total harmonic distortion) equal to or better than 60 dB for full-track mono and half-track stereo, 58 dB for quarter-track mono and stereo.

3. Wow and flutter less than 0.25 per cent, with 0.1 to 0.2 typical of modern equipment.

4. Calibrated VU meters whose 0-VU point corresponds to a level at least 6 dB under tape saturation, with a 10-dB headroom preferred—or a peak (saturation) recording-level indicator such as an "eye" or "bar" tube, or peak-indicating meters.

5. A maximum speed error of 3 seconds per 30 minutes at 7.5 ips using 1.5-mil tape.

6. Adjustable bias accommodating every recording tape in common use, and complete record and play equalization adjustments.

7. As a general rule (portables excepted), three heads to provide simultaneous playback monitoring during recording, line-level input(s) and line-level (600-ohm) output(s).

That's the whole electrical bit, and the list of recorders that can meet all seven points is as long as your arm. But it's really the mechanical characteristics that separate the professional recorders from the semipro and home models. Purely mechanical characteristics of professional recorders are:

1. Three-motor drive, which approaches ideal tape tensioning from beginning to end of the reel. (Mastering recorders use computer-style closed-loop tape drive for optimum tensioning and tape-to-head contact.

2. Solenoid operation of all functions, eliminating rubber drive wheels that will wear, spring tension adjustments, extra mechanical parts, and trouble in general. (Some semipro machines use a solenoid-mechanical movement in the capstan drive.)

3. Usually, 10½-inch reel capacity without extension adaptors, and a tension switch to adjust for reel size.

4. Often, a means of releasing the brakes so the tape can be "rocked" by hand for editing.

5. Usually, an open tape path so the tape can be marked directly at the playback head for editing. (Some of the best professional machines have the heads blocked by a cover, however.)

6. Extreme ruggedness of construction: a deck that cannot possibly be bent (distorting the tape path from reel to reel) even with the roughest handling, extra-heavy-duty motors, and moving parts such as solenoids and switches that can go through thousands of operations without failure.

Again, the list of recorders that meet these mechanical standards is very long. Often the take-up and supply motors might not be quite up to the quality standards you would expect in a studio recorder because motors represent a large part of a deck's cost, but in general when three motors are provided in combination with solenoid operation the overall quality is high.

Extraneous features intended to provide the flexibility of recorder control-consoles have no bearing on whether a recorder is or is not a professional model. For example, Ampex "pro" recorders have built-in microphone preamplifiers: some RCA models do, some don't. If a manufacturer decides to include an equalized magnetic phono input, sound-on-sound, reverberation effects, or sound-with-sound for multitrack effects, he is simply adding selling features to the basic package. These features might be of value to some users and of no value to others; but they have no direct bearing on whether a machine is of professional quality.

Quite obviously many recorders of the semipro class appear to meet most electrical and mechanical standards for a professional recorder. They are, in fact, professional recorders in a very real sense of the term. While they might be mechanical lightweights when compared with a \$2,000 console or rack-mounted studio recorder—and might be unable to work eight hours a day, week after week, month after month—when handled with reasonable care they will deliver longer and better performance than the many so-called professional machines that are suitable only for use as boat anchors. Sheer weight does not guarantee professional performance, as evidenced by a recent model that sold well until the word got around: it was an electrical disaster. Another heavyweight was a smash hit for "professional" school installations until the frequent service bills for a critical capstan roller adjustment began to accumulate.

Whether a recorder continues to be classed as a professional depends on the state of the art. If tomorrow should bring forth a tape capable of a 70-dB S/N ratio, any professional machine that could not deliver the 70-dB figure because of inherent electrical (preamplifier) noise would forthwith lose its professional rating. A similar upgrading of present standards in any respect can spell instant oblivion for equipment that cannot meet the new specs. In short, assuming highest electrical performance and solenoid push-button operation, the term "professional" implies long-term mechanical performance equal to the highest *present* performance level. ●

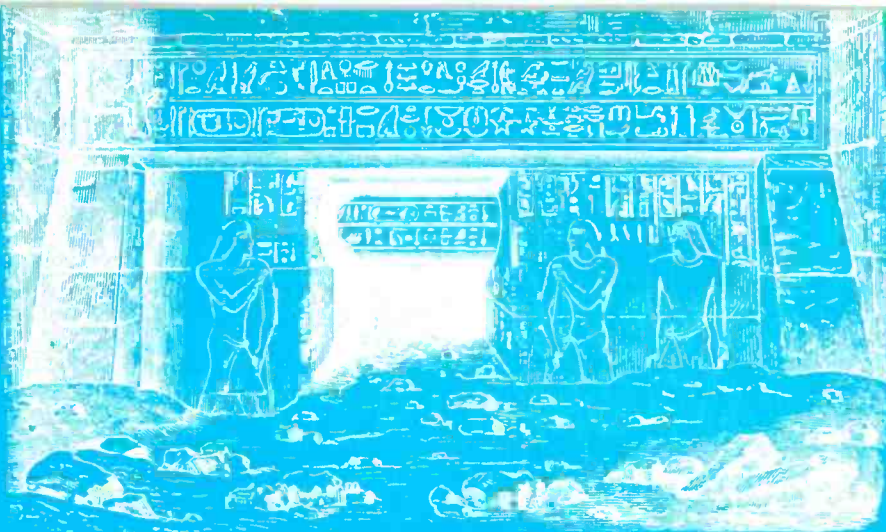
Mr. Friedman, a professional engineer, has written and published extensively on technical audio matters.

IF YOU CAN'T FIND SOMETHING YOU WANT ON THIS PAGE, GO BACK TO THE RECORD SECTION.



Because when you get right cown to it, Columbia has every kind of recorded music in every type of tape format.

Columbia Tapes



Aida's Creator Auguste Mariette

Did the French archaeologist base his story on an ancient historical incident? Or was he just bucking for Pasha-hood?

by S. J. London

"And what, pray, would be less inappropriate *this* year than cabbages and kings, or even tweeters and woofers?"

"Why, archaeologists and operas, of course."

"The devil you say!"

"No—*Aida*, I say."

—*Cassiopoia Unchaired; A Cryptic Triptych in O Acts, but a Prelude, an Interlude, and a Postlude.*

WELL, NOW—this bizarre little British pseudo opera notwithstanding, nothing could be more appropriate in this year of 1971: come Christmas Eve *Aida* will have been on the boards for a hundred years, and if there hadn't been an archaeologist around to conceive the action there would have been no *Aida*. Besides, with the faithful still not recovered from the overexertions of last year's Beethoven bicentennial what better way to raise a small, relatively exertionless "hurrah" for *this* centennial than by a quiet remembrance of the man who was the old dowager's *ur*-progenitor.

Especially since he was by way of a phenomenon, not only in his time but in ours as well, and in more ways than one. Or could you possibly suggest another characterization for the only archaeologist ever to have written a story line for an opera, considering the sheer numbers of operas whose librettos have been culled from ancient history. Which

means that *Aida* stood fair to be the first such opera based on hard archaeological fact rather than on historical software like the Bible and *The Histories* of Herodotus, or the pap (but poetic!) of mythology. The irreproachability of archaeological data was certainly what impressed a hardheaded history buff named Giuseppe Verdi when Auguste Edouard Ferdinand François Mariette, the most distinguished archaeologist of the day, crossed his horizon with the germ for *Aida*. Sixteen of Verdi's total output of twenty-six operas take place in times well removed from his own, but after *Nabucco* he joined those composers who eschewed ancient history for the firmer ground of medieval and modern history. The records of the ancients, he said, were too tartuffish to yield him the life-sized characters he wanted. But the name of the game in his day was Romanticism, under the spur of which fact was often dissembled for the sake of a story. Thereby hangs another phenomenon, for Auguste Mariette was, if anything, a Romantic.

Mariette was born in Boulogne on February 11, 1821 (add now his sesquicentennial to the proceedings!) and early on conjured for himself the free-

*S. J. London, a physician, has written extensively on the relationship between music and medicine. His literary pursuits have led him down the path of archaeology and the role it played in *Aida*.*

form life of a writer à la George Sand and Stendahl. Then he entered the university where he encountered the great French Egyptologist Jean François Champollion and the feat of the Rosetta Stone's deciphering, and the issue was resolved in favor of archaeology and a staff position at the Louvre. Came 1850 and a decision by someone somewhere in the Louvrian hierarchy that in order to survive the museum needed ancient Coptic Christian documents from Egypt, and Mariette found himself its delighted representative with orders to proceed to Cairo posthaste and exhume himself a few ancient papyri.

But what is an ambitious young Romantic, bursting at the lapels to become a full-fledged field archaeologist, to do when he finds himself forced to sit idle while waiting for contacts in the Cairo underworld to flush out appropriate dealers in historical contraband (still one of the best ways to conduct archaeological business in the Middle East)? In Mariette's case he took to prowling the pyramids and other ancient tomb sites in the desert west of Cairo where Memphis had once spread her grandeur, and while poking about the many sphinx heads that protruded above the sand he found one that seemed to have an interesting attitude. With a congeries of thirty *fellaheen* as hired hands he gouged away at its secrets and before long was down to a broad and stately concourse stretching invitingly to the north. What followed was a year of backbreaking work, but at the end Mariette and his *fellaheen* had uncoiled not only the full length of the broad concourse but a magnificent subterranean mausoleum which just happened to be the fabled Memphite Serapeum where the Pharaohs had been wont to bury their sacred bulls. With, naturally, the sarcophagi of sixty-four taurines to prove the point.

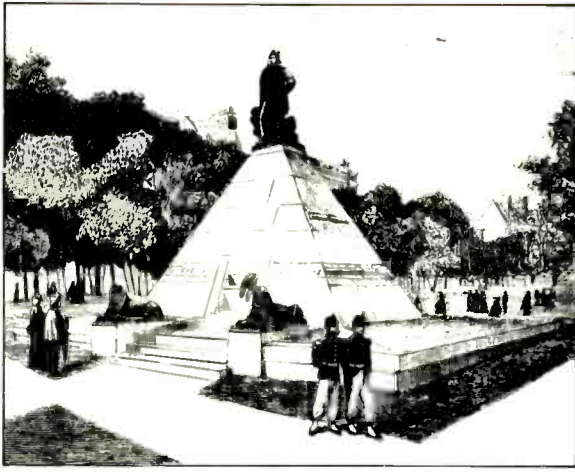
The Louvre was so overwhelmed by this archaeological windfall that it forgot Mariette's original mission and allowed him to continue his digs until 1854, when he was recalled for a promotion to Curator of the Egyptian Department. But only for four years: in 1858 the khedive, Mohammed Saïd, decided that Egypt had been plundered of her ancient heritage long enough and that he needed a Director of Historical Excavations to preserve these glories. No one, he felt, was better suited to the task than this enterprising young Frenchman "of the Ancient Bulls," to which Mariette was most agreeable. This trip, however, he prowled not only the Cairene desert but the whole length of the Nile up to the Fourth Cataract, over a thousand miles rich beyond the most extravagant imagination in Egyptian archaeology. The Great Sphinx, among others, is his, excavated down to its bedrock foundation. The splendid temple compounds of Karnak, now under the waters of the Aswan High Dam, and of Luxor are largely his, as are the tombs of many of the great XVIII and XIX dynasty Pharaohs at Abydos and Dendera.

To say nothing of the many stelae—the slabs of rock that many Pharaohs preferred over papyrus for inscribing accounts of their achievements—he discovered that told of Egyptian encounters with the Hittites, the Assyrians, the Hebrews, the Ethiopians. The most important of these rock inscriptions was the Great Stela that Mariette stumbled upon atop Gebel Barkal, the "Holy Mountain" towering above Napata, the city of the Fourth Cataract that was once the capital of the Egyptian province of Nubia. The Stela is relatively late, dating only to circa 730 B.C., but it reveals what is probably the climactic point in Egyptian history.

It was written by an Ethiopian warlord of truly Napoleonic proportions, one Pi'ankhy, who boasts in it of how he captured Napata, advanced from there to conquer first Upper then Lower Egypt, and how, when Memphis had finally fallen into his hands, he crowned himself Pharaoh. Also skulking through this Great Stela is an Egyptian general named Tefnekhte, a difficult character for the writing because he stubbornly refused to stay as thoroughly defeated as Pi'ankhy would have liked. Among the factors that make this Stela climactic as well as Great is Pi'ankhy's remarkable prescience in characterizing himself as the death knell of Pharaonic Egypt—to which could be added its effect on Mariette's imagination and thence on the fortunes of grand opera.

For it was then that the unrequited novelist in Mariette awoke and uncorked an appealing rondo of historiographic prose: *Le Sérapéum de Memphis* (1857), the four-volume *Aperçu de l'histoire d'Égypte* (1864), *Abydos* (1868), *Dendérah* and *Karnak* (1870), in addition to a yeasty harvest of articles in both popular and learned journals. Unaccustomed to having their ancient history spun out like a plotted novel, or having their historical characters sketched in lifelike strokes, Romantics of all persuasions suddenly found themselves excited witnesses to the spirited goings-on of a long-dead people, the most ancient civilization in their ken. As a result the infant science of archaeology had lost its swaddling clothes by the end of the 1860s and become one of the most popular forms of fireside Saturnalia, with M. Mariette as its undisputed champion. For which the khedive, Mohammed Saïd, appointed him to the directorship of the new Egyptian National Museum, elevated him to the noble rank of bey, and then died.

The khedive's successor was his cousin Isma'il, a foresworn Francophile who had to be hunted down on the boulevards of Paris in order to be told that he had inherited the throne of Egypt. Nevertheless, he was as devoted to the Westernization of his country as his predecessor, particularly the preservation of Egyptian antiquities and most portentously to the construction of the Suez Canal, begun by Mohammed Saïd in 1858 on the expert advice and engineering genius of Ferdinand de Lesseps. Isma'il was perhaps more enthusiastic for this big



A memorial to Mariette at Boulogne, France

dig than his late cousin, for as the canal neared completion he became obsessed by a desire to celebrate its opening with an appropriately grand event. By late 1868, with the canal a little less than a year from completion, he had decided what he wanted: a grand opera based on a theme from ancient Egyptian history, to be performed in a spanking new opera house. Mariette, still not sated despite the success of his historiographic works, volunteered to find his boss an appropriate theme and in a matter of weeks delivered a closely written four-page manuscript with the heading "Based on a historical incident in the time of the Pharaohs."

And a melodramatic tale it was, of the love and high passion between a captive Ethiopian princess and an Egyptian general, so well spiced with pomp, circumstance, jealousy, treason, and death that it immediately enthralled the khedive. A greater tribute to Mariette's wordsmanship was, however, the equally stimulating effect the scenario had on two thoroughgoing and unimpressionable professionals—Camille du Locle, director of the Opéra-Comique in Paris and one of Isma'il's boon companions, and his good friend Giuseppe Verdi.

When the khedive had decided that Mariette's mini-novelette satisfied his grandiloquent needs, he had Du Locle meet with Verdi in Paris in late April 1869 and offer him the opera as a commission from a "powerful personage" in Cairo. But Verdi, who was an unreconstructed democrat with little love for Oriental potentates, refused the offer out of hand. There was only a strangled silence from Cairo when Du Locle relayed the refusal. The Suez Canal was opened to shipping six months later—on November 17, 1869—with no new Italian grand opera to mark the event. Du Locle tried again in April 1870, and again the hard-bitten Maestro refused. It was only when the Frenchman was inspired to send Verdi a copy of Mariette's précis with a note suggesting its true authorship that the composer finally accepted the commission. It was, he said, an "incomparable little jewel of historical drama" and its author "a sage among men."

There was, of course, the not inconsiderable fee

of 150,000 francs (roughly \$200,000 in today's money) and the rights to score and libretto for the entire world except Egypt. Additionally, the premiere performance was to take place in Cairo January 1871, failing which, Verdi would have the option of a premiere in another city. No composer had ever before had the temerity to demand such terms, but the khedive granted them without boggling. With little time to lose (it was now June 1870), Verdi immediately set Du Locle to expanding Mariette's brief into a respectable French prose libretto while he himself set about snaring Antonio Ghislanzoni—physician, novelist, journalist, opera baritone, librettist, and all-round bohemian scamp—for the conversion of the French prose into Italian verse. By August composer and librettist had engaged each other in a harrowing relationship which, as it waxed, dragged Mariette into the arena to settle disputes of a historical nature: how many priestesses should properly be written into the first act Temple Scene? should there be bulls and ancient straight trumpets in the second act Triumphal Scene? were the ancient Ethiopians as black as their modern counterparts? Mariette, who was happily at work in Paris supervising the fabrication of sets and costumes, settled the disputes with a loving plethora of detail, but when this was done the composer and his librettist returned to their wrangling and forgot all about the archaeologist.

Until mid-December that is, when with the score completed and fully orchestrated and *Aida's* appointed debut only a month away, Verdi and Ghislanzoni bethought themselves of production plans and discovered that the scenery and the costumes were still in Paris with Mariette. And Paris, alas, was locked tightly behind a German siege, the calamitous consequence of the Franco-Prussian War and Louis Napoleon's surrender to Bismarck at Sedan on September 2 last. Whereupon Verdi promptly informed Isma'il that he would not exercise his contractual option of producing the opera elsewhere but would postpone the Cairo debut and await the liberation of *Aida's* heroic archaeologist, as well as his supercargo, from under the German guns.

The unquenchable Romantic in Mariette had, of course, done it again. Although the war had begun in July and started to go badly for the French almost immediately, it failed to deter Mariette from domiciling himself in Paris on behalf of his beloved opera. When the German siege began (on September 19) he had had any number of chances to escape but had steadfastly refused, electing to stand guard over his precious reproductions of ancient Egypt despite the hardships. These eventually turned out to include the coldest Parisian winter in over a century, a famine so complete that Parisians were forced to fight each other over the rapidly diminishing street livestock—dogs, cats, and rats—and the bitter revolt of the Paris Commune.

Even then, when the khedive had made clandestine arrangements for Mariette to escape this gelid inferno via an aerial balloon, he refused to leave without the sets and costumes. It was only after the city's surrender on January 28, 1871, that he finally consented to hie himself back to Cairo with his treasured freight.

Which fact became a prime component of the publicity campaign Du Locle instigated at the khedive's behest as soon as the principals had set a new date in December 1871 for the opera's premiere. If, he trumpeted over the next ten months, General MacMahon was the tragic hero of Sedan and Léon Gambetta the fiery hero of the Fourth (French) Republic, Auguste Mariette was the true hero of the siege of Paris for his refusal to abandon his opera to the vicissitudes of war and chaos. And the opera was his as much as Verdi's; "Mariette Bey," cried Du Locle, "has brought his formidable archaeological knowledge to bear on this opera. He has revived Egyptian life and history in the time of the Pharaohs; he has rebuilt ancient Thebes, Memphis, and the Temple of Ptah; he has designed the costumes and the scenery. He is, in short, the historical *daemon* of Verdi's latest masterpiece..."

So it was that on Christmas Eve 1871, when a supposedly third-rate cast of singers and musicians opened *Aida*'s career with a performance that has never been equaled (it is said), an archaeologist became the going-rate hero of the Romantic movement. There were no Emperor Franz Josefs, no Empress Eugénies, no Crown Prince Fredericks (of Prussia) to emblazon the opera's inauguration as they had that of the Suez Canal two years earlier, but there was a house packed with scientists, scholars, and other assorted intelligentsia from all over Europe. With, of course, musicians, critics, professional opera buffs, and the khedive Isma'il with his well-stocked *hareem*. (Verdi chose to sit it out beside his fire at Sant' Agata because his stomach refused to contain itself during a sea voyage.) When the audience swept to its feet in a noisy salute at the end of the Triumphal Scene, a considerable segment of the gallery could be seen turning as one

man toward the khedive's box where Mariette stood behind his boss, fidgeting with ecstasy.

For a time, in fact, it seemed as though the archaeologist might just accrue more credit for the opera than the composer, especially when the khedive saw fit to dub him pasha. These operatic huzzahs reached their climax with Mariette's death in 1881 and some of his eulogists actually made sounds as if he alone had been responsible for the opera. But then Verdi's genie reasserted itself and Mariette's role in the birthing of *Aida* gradually slipped into its conventional obscurity.

There is a possibility, however, that something less esoteric than the Verdian genie may have had a hand in the obfuscation of Mariette's heroship. Thereby, in fact, may hang the phenomenon of the archaeologist and the opera.

The hanging began sometime near the turn of the century when a small internationale of acerbic literati decided to ask why Mariette had failed to leave any notes explaining the historical identities of the characters and events in *Aida*. Inadmissible neglect, they thundered, for a man who had been so meticulous about the memorabilia of the Pharaohs to have left none about a world-famous opera and thus forced hapless opera buffs into a hopeless wandering through 4,000 years and 32 dynasties of Pharaonic Egypt in a vain quest for these identities. In a fit of pique at these impertinent questions Dr. Etienne Amélineau, one of Mariette's former students, leaped to his teacher's defense with an article in a scholarly journal. Unfortunately, Amélineau was as ignorant as anyone else about what and whom Mariette had had in mind when he wrote the *Aida* précis, and could manage only a hypothesis pieced together from a few remarks Mariette had dropped here and there and from what Amélineau labeled "internal evidence" within the opera. As it turned out, this patchwork did his beloved mentor more harm than charity.

Taking it da capo, he reasoned that since an Ethiopian war figures so prominently in the opera's action the historical *mise en scène* could be narrowed down to a period when Ethiopia loomed

Louis Melançon



The current Met production with Leontyne Price, Robert Merrill, Richard Tucker, Raymond Michalski, Irene Dalis, and John Macurdy.

large in Egypt's destiny, which would be sometime between 900 and 730 B.C. Furthermore, the whole plot hinges on Radames' unwitting treason in Act III, when he betrays to Aida and an eavesdropping Amonasro his plans to invade Ethiopia through "the pass of Napata." Now, many battles of Napata had been fought during those 170 years of Ethiopian wars, but the Aida-Radames-Amonasro triangle was so reminiscent of what Amélineau had read in the Great Stela that he was certain the battle fought by Pi'ankhy was the one Mariette had had in mind; ergo, the wily Amonasro would have to be Pi'ankhy and Radames his gadfly enemy Tefnekhte. As for the women, the good doctor concluded after a considerable struggle that Aida could have been Pi'ankhy's queen sister rather than his daughter and Amneris a virago Egyptian queen who may also have been Tefnekhte's sister.

At that point, however, history began to hoist poor Dr. Amélineau with his own petard. Amonasro and Radames are both executed, one in the battle of Napata and the other shortly afterward by a vengeful Ramfis, but not so with Pi'ankhy and Tefnekhte. This team went on to greater things—one to become a Pharaoh of the XXIII dynasty, the other a Pharaoh in the XXIV dynasty. Thus ahoist, Amélineau had no choice but to concede bafflement with a circuitous admission that the otherwise peerless Mariette may have found his characters not in Egyptian history but in the lively byways of his own imagination.

No sooner had this flurry subsided (in 1905, to be exact) than one of the internationale's American members, a Silas Gamaliel Pratt, reopened the breach. Pratt was a musician-of-all-trades from Vermont who also managed to support an avocation of amateur historian, and because of this dual identity Pratt felt called upon to issue a pronouncement scarifying Mariette for having allowed Verdi and Ghislanzoni to slip certain historical inconsistencies into the action. How, for example, could Ramfis have boomed his basso in rites for the goddess Isis in a temple of Vulcan when 1) Egyptian deities were known to have been extremely jealous of their territorial prerogatives, and 2) Vulcan was a Latin god who had never strayed in any direction from his Italian preserves? Or how could Mariette have allowed Verdi to use six straight (and expensive, courtesy of Pelatti of Milano) brass trumpets in the Triumphant Scene under the misapprehension that they were authentic replicas of ancient Egyptian instruments when brass trumpets were unknown in pre-Ptolemaic Egypt? Or how could the Maestro have been permitted to write a Moorish ballet when the Moors as such were not scheduled to appear on the North African scene for at least another thousand years after *Aida et al.*?

Following this contretemps there was quiet until 1950, when the internationale took to the ramparts once again but this time with a most devastating

enfilade. Not only had Mariette *not* based the Aida story on actual history, roared a Mexican critic by the name of F. Pérez de la Vega, but he had gone so far as to plagiarize the libretto written by Pietro Metastasio for *Nitteti*, an opera by one Niccolò Conforti which was produced in 1756. Metastasio's libretto had in turn been plucked from Herodotus' reportage of an incident that led to Egypt's conquest by Persia. Various echoes of this have since rumbled through the internationale's current American wing, including the eminent musicologist/critic Joseph Kerman, but the only objective evidence linking *Nitteti* to *Aida* are two female characters vaguely resembling Aida and Amneris, a triumphal scene in Metastasio's first act, and an entombment scene in the fourth.

As a result, an attempt has been made more recently by the English critic Charles Osborne (in his recently published study of the Verdi operas) to redeem the Mariette escutcheon by attributing the plagiarism to Du Locle. Fortunately, the Opéra-Comique's quondam impresario already enjoys a considerable reputation as one of the prime rogues of opera history, so this is not an unlikely story, particularly since he had an excellent opportunity to gild Mariette's lily while he was expanding the précis into a libretto. In point of fact, an extra onion has been thrown into the pot by accusing Du Locle of plundering his esteemed countryman Jean Racine (from the tragedy *Bajazet*) as well as Metastasio in his efforts on *Aida's* behalf.

Although all of these issues are mere conjecture and none has ever been satisfactorily resolved in the seventy-odd years since they were first raised, anyone attempting to raise Mariette's ghost as an *Aida* memento must still deal with his shroud of suspected fraud. But since there is no way to confirm or dispel the suspicion, the only recourse is to make a phenomenon of Mariette. The poor lad was no more than, may you excuse the cliché, a product of his times: he was so driven by his genie that he simply refused to let the matter of strict historical truth stand in the way of either the writing or the musical incarnation of his deathless prose.

This also could have been Verdi's feeling. The Sage of Sant' Agata died in 1901 and so may have been aware of what was transpiring in that teapot of critics, but if he had come to the conclusion that he had been bilked in his expectations of hard historical reality for *Aida* there is no trace of it in the recorded memorabilia of his last years. Still, Verdi was always a man to hold his opinions close to his vest and such a hold would not have been surprising in this instance, not only out of respect for a dead colleague but out of a deep regard as well for Shakespeare's First Law.

The play's still the thing and—cliché, phenomenon, or what you may—the memory of Mariette is still worth rehabilitating for any celebration of an *Aida* centennial. ●



Milestone Aida

Leontyne Price and RCA
celebrate the opera's centenary
with a splendid new recording.

by George Movshon

"CRAFTSMANSHIP RAISED to the power of genius." The phrase was intended for something else but it fits *Aida* well enough. For the hand was seasoned and sure that made this opera, now a hundred years old, and the way of making it was a craftsman's way rather than the prescribed blaze of passion and insight that we like to imagine produces works of genius. Mariette roughed out the story in a page or two [see "Aida's Creator," this issue], Du Locle touched it up here and there, then sent it on to Verdi. The composer liked it and brought in his friend Ghislanzoni to be the librettist. The music was written in less than a year though some months more were to pass before contracts and commitments were straightened out for the Cairo premiere.

Aida opened the Cairo Opera House in December of 1871 and went on to sweep the entire operatic world. The ill-used Ethiopian princess sang of her love and went freely to the tomb not only at La Scala, the Metropolitan, and Vienna, but also in Malta, Melbourne, Yokohama, and Tel-Aviv (where she was heard in Hebrew in 1924). No opera has traveled more widely, none is so well known to people who know almost nothing else at all about opera. *Aida* has been filmed, novelized, made into ballets, copied, kidded, parodied, butchered, jazzed, digested into sixty minutes, and staged in night clubs. Each contortion has served mainly to demonstrate the integrity and economy of story and score, to underline the central place that this wonderful composition holds in the repertory. "It is," said Conrad Osborne in writing about *Aida* on records [HF, October 1963] "the most perfect grand opera ever written." It is also, arguably, the last, for it effectively climaxed Meyerbeer's age of historical spectacles and brought the entire genre to a rounded close.

So our little *Aida* is now a hundred years old, and how better to mark her birthday than by a fine new complete recording? Records, ever since they started, have carried Verdi's melodies to an audience many times greater than the opera-going public. The phonograph catalogues, past and present, preserve memories of many great singers in this music: Boninsegna, Destinn, Rethberg, Ponselle, to name a few Aidas of the past; Caruso, Pertile, Gigli, Martinelli, among those who have sung Radames. In the LP age we have had complete versions with Callas, Tebaldi, Milanov, Nilsson, and Price (among others), while recorded conductors of the complete opera include Toscanini, Von Karajan, Serafin, Solti, Mehta, and Perlea. The field is a strong one and any new entrant is likely to find the going fast.

For a thoroughgoing review of past recorded *Aidas* the reader is referred to Osborne's 1963 discography, previously cited. Only one more complete recording has appeared between that day and this: a 1967 Angel version conducted by Zubin Mehta (ardently but not always subtly) with Birgit Nilsson in the title role (nobly projected, if a little short on legato) and Franco Corelli as a persuasive Radames. (Those who look up Osborne should also know that the recording he calls RCA IV, done in 1962 with Price, Gorr, and Vickers, under Solti, has undergone a change of allegiance and is now to be found on the London label as OSA 1393.)

With that much prelude, let the curtain now rise on the present release. The cast, you will notice, is one of the utmost authority and renown. Leontyne Price has

owned the role of Aida this past decade, not merely at the Metropolitan but wherever she has chosen to sing it. Those who have been fortunate enough to hear her in it (on an evening when some of the other things are right as well) know that she takes fire with this character and music, making unforgettable evenings in the opera house. It is enough to report that the new RCA set captures her somewhere near peak form, singing with memorable beauty and relevance. Comparing her present performance with the one she made nine years ago, one notes a definite maturing of the voice, a certain caution now and then where she was formerly more free; but there is a compensating degree of command, of mastery not always present in the earlier version, and the same meticulous respect for the finer shadings and markings of the score. Time and again there are details (accents, dotted notes) that she observes scrupulously though other singers ignore them.

Her two great scenes—"Ritorna vincitor" and "*O patria mia*"—are done with deep intensity and beauty, though I find myself wishing she had slowed up a little more at "*Numi, pietà*"; and that she had not quite so readily accepted the conductor's metric emphasis of the 6/8 time in "*O cieli azzurri*" for it serves to diminish the emotional impulse by a shade. But taken all in all, it is a performance in the great tradition, a worthy representation of the work of the singing actress who is the foremost Aida of our time. I prefer it not only to the 1962 recording but also to any other on records, though there remains an enduring affection for Tebaldi's 1952 version now on Richmond.

Plácido Domingo rises to his greatest heights in the Trial Scene and the tender moments of the closing duet, where his style and the score mesh most happily. Though this fine tenor is unfailingly musical and tasteful, he is simply not as convincing as the competition: Vickers, Tucker, or Corelli bring an intensity to work that Domingo does not yet command. "*Celeste Aida*" is tentative, uneasy; and he of all tenors might have been expected to sing the final B flat *morendo*, as marked, instead of forte. In the Nile Scene his bewildered despair in the repeated cries of "*Io son disonorato!*" do not make sufficient impact, though this may be a fault of the recording balance rather than the tenor.

The silken Grace Bumbry does even better with the music of Amneris than she did in the 1967 set with Mehta. She makes Pharaoh's daughter sound like a nubile young woman, instead of the nagger so often heard in the role. But in the Act II duet with Aida one wants to hear more "stuff" from Amneris, more tension and characterization; as singing, however, it is impeccable. A similar want of tension takes something away from her strong phrasing in "*Già i sacerdoti*," her duet with Radames before the trial.

His very first words ("*Non mi tradir*") give notice that Sherrill Milnes is going to do something extraordinary with the part of Amonasro; and so it proves. With luscious tone, clarity of word, and total intensity, this is a performance that dwarfs all others on record. No doubt at all, Mr. Milnes is a Verdi baritone to compare with any in living memory, and his skill is manifest in this recording.

Luxurious casting gives us the noble tones of Ruggero Raimondi and Hans Sotin as Priest and King respectively. (I could have used a little more "bite" from isai-

mondi, but who can complain when such timbres are offered as compensation?) Bruce Brewer is a paragon among recorded Messengers and Joyce Mathis is a sinuous, secure Priestess. The men of the chorus are more precise and sonorous than their lady colleagues and the London Symphony Orchestra plays with fine precision and polish. (In the realm of orchestral playing, choral singing, and ingenious production for stereo, no other recording approaches the accomplishment of the 1959 London recording with Karajan and the Vienna Philharmonic. The sounds in this edition are not always *echt* Verdi, but their bloom and succulence are not to be show what the opera is all about dramatically. Unfortunately this set has a Tebaldi past her best, a major flaw unredeemed by the set's over-all quality.)

Erich Leinsdorf must be mellowing, for I have rarely heard him as yielding and pliant with his singers as on this recording. There is commendable vitality in his view of the score and a firm hand on the ensembles at all times. But every now and then his beat strikes me as overly academic, making points that are just as well let go; and there is an inescapable feeling that he tends to treat an extended piece of drama (the Nile Scene, for example) as a sequence of components rather than one major unit. Each component is just fine by itself, but you also want a sense of planning, of long range control; and this (whether because of the Leinsdorf outlook or of the "Take 64" method of recording operas) you don't get. But the conductor's work is somewhere near the top among recorded *Aidas*, with perhaps only the old Toscanini and the Karajan records showing clear superiority.

The recording is robust, technically right up to snuff, and (for 1971) remarkably unimaginative. *Aida* is an opera that cries out for acoustic as well as musical sensitivity; it is an out-of-doors opera, into which Verdi has put many perspectives, orientalisms, gentle touches of atmosphere. These are largely lost. The producer and his engineers are intent on delivering standard studio quality all the time. The Temple Scene sounds much like the opening scene, which in turn sounds much like the Nile Scene; singers are placed "on mike" and taped. Now this is controversial ground, and many listeners will prefer a recording of the straight "studio" type; but listen to the London/Karajan set if you want to hear what else is possible. More serious is the kind of dramatic insensitivity that puts the arriving army instantly at center stage (in Amneris' quarters) during the first scene of Act II when it should by rights be heard way off. And the decision to give microphone prominence during the big Act I ensemble ("*Guerra!*") to Aida's descant rather than to Radames, who is carrying the main melody, is sheer musical distortion and makes Miss Price sound bad.

Nevertheless, and taken all in all, the new RCA *Aida* is inescapably the one to buy if you propose to mark her birthday with a purchase. It has the matchless heroine of Leontyne Price, the awesome Amonasro of Sherrill Milnes, and many other good things besides.

VERDI: Aida. Leontyne Price (s), Aida; Joyce Mathis (s), Priestess; Grace Bumbry (ms), Amneris; Plácido Domingo (t), Radames; Bruce Brewer (t), Messenger; Sherrill Milnes (b), Amonasro; Ruggero Raimondi (bs), Ramfis; Hans Sotin (bs), King; John Aldis Choir; London Symphony Orchestra, Erich Leinsdorf, cond. RCA Red Seal LSC 6198, \$17.94 (three discs).

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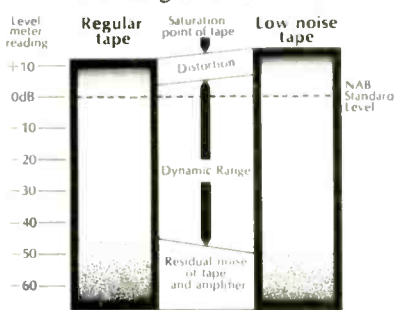
Meet the revolutionary Superior Sound/Low Noise (SL) Series by TEAC, the only tape decks in the world designed to fully exploit the superior recording characteristics of the new low noise/high output tapes. As such, they are the most advanced, most professional tape decks that money can buy.

To understand what makes them so different from past tape decks, it is necessary to look at the recording requirements of the new low noise/high output tapes. These tapes require greater recording bias current, higher recording signal level, wider frequency range and residual preamplifier noise to perform to their full potential.

Until now, these requirements were beyond the capability of virtually all recorders. Here's how TEAC's industry-leading engineering has changed all that in the new SL Series.

New front panel bias switch

Controlling both bias and recording equalization, this front



panel switch reduces noise and hiss to a level below audibility, permits a greatly improved signal-to-noise ratio, wider dynamic range and lower distortion when used with the new type tapes. The results are a new clarity and brilliance of tone never before possible. It also maintains full compatibility with your present tape library.

(Relation of noise to recording tape)

Run your favorite tape through an SL Series decks and you'll notice a vast improvement in performance.

New meter level switch

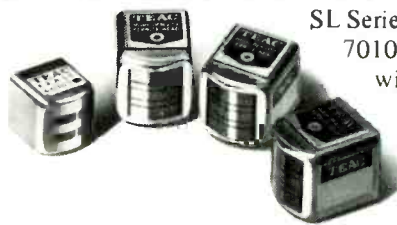
To handle the higher recording signal levels demanded by the new type tapes, this control permits expanded scale operation by an additional 3 dB to ensure a better signal-to-noise ratio and dynamic range expansion. This is TEAC's new engineering innovation developed exclusively for low noise tapes.

Large expanded scale VU meters

Tied in with the meter level switch, a pair of professional, semi-linear, expanded scale

VU meters is used on all SL Series decks. Meter accuracy and sensitivity are assured when recording or playing back at higher recording signal levels.

New high density ferrite heads



SL Series tape decks (6010SL, 7010SL, 7030SL) are equipped with newly developed high density ferrite heads that are so good they carry an original-owner lifetime guarantee. Composed of an extremely hard ferrite

material impervious to wear, they permit TEAC engineers to design and manufacture heads to a degree of mechanical precision not possible with laminar construction techniques. This extends all the way down to polishing. With their sparkling, mirror-like finish, the heads prevent dust and tape oxides from adhering to head gap thus assuring continued high frequency response over extended periods of time.

New low noise preamplifiers

Designed for the low noise concept, SL Series tape decks incorporate new record and playback preamplifiers built to professional standards with wide dynamic margins of performance. Selected low noise IC and silicon transistors are used throughout to reduce residual noise to new lows.

These revolutionary SL Series features are available in the following models: 4010SL \$499.50, 6010SL \$699.50, 7010SL \$899.50, 7030SL \$799.50.

If you're ready to make the move to the new generation of recorded sound, audition one of these great new tape decks today at your nearest TEAC dealer.



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TEAC Corporation of America: 7733 Telegraph Road, Montebello, California 90640 Phone: (213) 726-0303

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CIRCLE 55 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

TEAC **6010** **SL**

SPEED

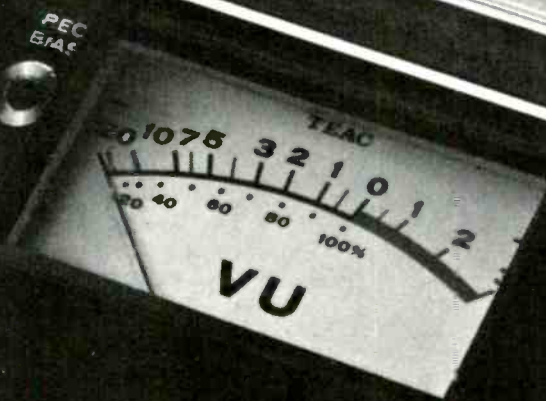
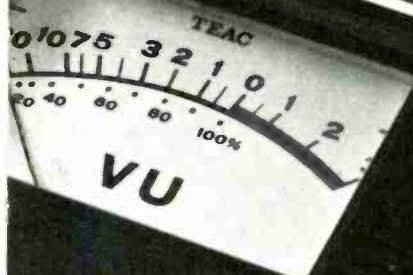
TAPE

REGULAR
 THIN

AUTO REVERSE
 OFF
 ON

SIGNAL
RECORD

STOP



REC
LEVEL

MONITOR
 TAPE

SOURCE

MODE
L R

RECORD
BIAS
HIGH

MIN

LEVEL
HIGH

OUTPUT

MAX

NORMAL

NORMAL

New from TEAC: The 3300 semi-pro tape deck.

TEAC

The 3300 deck has all the specs normally found only on professional tape decks. But at a price considerably lower. \$499.50. Here are a few of the pro features the 3300 has to offer.

Thanks to highly dependable electrical and mechanical precision, the 3300 will accept a 10½-inch reel for providing up to 6 hours of recorded material.

The new 3300 incorporates a front panel bias switch for selection of proper bias current and recording equalization for either the new low noise/high output tapes, or for conventional tapes, which will be essential for the enjoyment of hi-fi tape recording at home. A control switch will make your present tape library fully compatible with the 3300. As a matter of fact, your conventional recordings will sound even better.

Individual channel professional type expanded scale VU meters add to the ease of operation of the new 3300. The wide excursion scales allow recording at higher (up to 6 dB) signal levels, when using the new tapes, thus assuring a better signal-to-noise ratio and an expanded dynamic range.

Another feature usually only found on professional decks is the electrical pause control. TEAC's is unique and it's called Edi-Q. With this control, you can interrupt taping and still leave the recording amplifiers on. (Real convenient when recording from an FM tuner and you wish to omit the commercials, etc.) This control also eliminates recording clicks and tape bounce from quick starts and stops.

And of course the 3300 has all the crafted quality that the world of sound has come to expect from TEAC.

Such as:

Three-motor drive mechanism with long-life stability. Three heads including hyperbolic record and playback heads. Human engineered control mechanism. Source/tape monitoring. Mike line mixing. Quick lock reel holding devices. Optional sound-on-sound and echo.

And if you check the specs (S/N: 58 dB, wow and flutter: 0.06% and frequency response: 25 – 24,000 Hz (±3 dB, 30 – 20,000 Hz) at 7½ ips), TEAC engineering is still on top with home tape decks. Because TEAC engineering that goes into home decks is the same TEAC uses for industrial and professional data process equipment.

The 3300 is available in three models according to your need.

The 3300-10 is a standard 4-track 2-channel 3¾ and 7½ ips for home use. \$499.50.

The 3300-11 is a half track 2-channel 7½ and 15 ips operation for master tapes and professional use. \$529.50.

The 3300-12 is a half track 2-channel 3¾ and 7½ ips for original recording of master tapes for dubbing. \$499.50.

The 3300 is the first semi-pro tape deck for home use with so many outstanding features.

But prove it to yourself.

Spend ten minutes with your nearest TEAC dealer.

That ten minutes could change the sound in your life . . .

For the rest of your life.

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CIRCLE 56 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



TEAC 3300

0000

TAPE SPEED
R L
FUEL
LARGE
SMALL

MIC LINE OUTPUT
MIN MAX MEN MAX MIN MAX
L R

TEAC TEAC

STOP
FAST PAUSE PLAY

L MIC R PHONE MONITOR TAPE SOURCE RECORD MODE REC BIAS RECOPE POWER
OFF NORMAL

When he gives you the signal, you should give a listen.

Lud Beethoven can spot a hit a mile away.

And these are all hits. By him and by some other songwriters with pretty good credentials.

In fact, each of these albums is an instant collection of a great composer's masterpieces.

The music of the heavies as performed by the heaviest recording artists ever. On RCA Red Seal, records and tapes.

Conductors like Ormandy, Reiner, Munch, Fiedler, Leinsdorf. Soloists like Horowitz and Cliburn. The voices of Price, Domingo, Milnes. The symphony orchestras of Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston. And the Boston Pops. And more.

Instead of turning a deaf ear, listen to Lud.

He knows.



RCA Records and Tapes

CIRCLE 38 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

A Sinatra Retrospective

"Puppet, Pirate, Poet, Pawn, and King"

by Arnold Shaw

THOSE WHO WERE moved by Sinatra's recent announcement of retirement to cry out regretfully, "The King Is Dead! Long Live the King!" are advised to hold their nostalgic hosannas. There is nothing about "Sinatra & Company," his latest album, to suggest that the king of pop singers is ready or required to retire. The voice has vigor, the style has nuance, the delivery is evocative, and he sings with a depth of feeling that passeth understanding—just listen to that unbelievable, Neapolitan-waltz tribute to "Lady Day," the tragic blues balladeer of whom he once said: "It is Billie Holiday whom I first heard in the clubs on Fifty-Second Street in the early Thirties who was and still remains the greatest single musical influence on me."

This is not a retirement album for still another reason. Much of Sinatra's recording is imbued with a degree of autobiographical immediacy that invests his discs with great emotional plangency. "Sinatra & Company" is not, however, an expression of a situation, feeling, or state of mind, as "September of My Years" and "Ring-A-Ding Ding" were of earlier developments in his life.

One side consists of bossa novas composed by Antonio Carlos Jobim—he is the "Company"—whose work Sinatra has previously explored in two albums, the earliest in 1967. Neither the well-tailored arrangements of a countrypman, Eumir Deodato, nor an attractive, low-register duet of Jobim and Sinatra on *One-Note Samba* lift this side out of the low-keyed tedium inherent, perhaps, in a series of bossa novas. On the other side, Sinatra presents songs that are part of the bios of other songwriter/artists. With the exception of *Lady Day* and the lyrically contradictory *I Will Drink the Wine*, they have no temporal or personal pertinence to him. In short the immediacy of the "new" album is record-company promotion, not Sinatra emotion.

But this is a good moment, even if he makes other albums, to pause and look back over a span of more than thirty years, more than 400 record sessions, and close to 1,500 sides. Sinatra cut his first solo recordings in January 1942 when he was still singing with the Tommy Dorsey band. Even though one of the Bluebird sides was Cole Porter's exotic *Night and Day*, later a Sinatra perennial, his recordings failed to evoke the excitement he and his handlers had hoped for. Yet they were just a baby's delivery date away from his emergence as a solo singer. Bobby-soxers had already begun reacting to his erotic charisma, sometimes to the irritation of the Sentimental Gentleman in the steel rims. For those more interested in sound than sex, Frankie Boy's heady tenor on top of Dorsey's Pied Pipers—remember *I'll Never*

Smile Again and *There Are Such Things?*—added an iridescence like the enriching clarinet on top of Glenn Miller's sax section.

Once the band vocalist became the bedroom balladeer, his remarkable record career unrolled itself neatly on three labels—Columbia, Capitol, and Reprise—each of whom has provided comprehensive anthologies. Columbia's three-disc "Essential Frank Sinatra" excerpts the years from 1939, when he began singing with the Harry James band, to 1952, when he suffered a breakdown, emotionally and professionally. It is not nearly as essential as the two-disc "Frank Sinatra Story in Music" now deleted. His Columbia contract was set in June 1943, almost a year after he left Dorsey. But during the Petrillo recording ban of '43-'44, Columbia discovered the ten sides he had cut with the James band, beginning with the July 1939 *From the Bottom of My Heart*, his very first appearance on wax.

The re-release of *All or Nothing at All*, a torch ballad that had originally sold about 8,000 copies, ignited The Voice's wax career at the same time that it signaled a major shift in pop music. Whereas in 1939, at the height of the big band era, F. Sinatra received secondary billing, now Harry James and his Orchestra were subordinated to FRANK SINATRA. The era of the big baritones and the big ballads—and for The Voice of the oversized bowties, the oversexed swooners, and the Paramount panics—had arrived.

Regardless of whether the swooning was spontaneous or contrived, another type of extreme female response is not to be questioned. When I was researching my biography of Sinatra, I was assured by several guardians of the defunct New York Paramount that excitement ran so high there was scarcely a dry seat in the house. The theater management was partly responsible for this. In an effort to prevent youngsters from sitting through more than one show, which many of them did, nobody could return to a vacated seat. The liquid benefaction, however, was basically the result of something that The Voice brought into pop singing.

Many years later Sinatra was to say, "You can be the most artistically perfect performer in the world, but an audience is like a broad—if you're indifferent, ends-

Author of Sinatra: 20th Century Romantic, Arnold Shaw has also written The Rock Revolution: What's Happening in Today's Music and The World of Soul: Black America's Contribution to the Pop Music Scene. He has just completed the manuscript of The Street That Never Slept: New York's Fabled Fifty-Second Street.



The RCA Years
With Tommy Dorsey and the Pied Pipers.

ville." Rudy Vallee, Bing Crosby, and the hit singers before and around him were not indifferent. But they operated on the impersonal and impassive level of the entertainer. As the language and sentiments of song were removed from reality, they remained remote, shielding their audiences from the underlying and tantalizing touch of the flesh.

Sinatra not only sang with conviction—a supercilious critic once chided him for believing the words he sang—but with overwhelming intensity. To call him a crooner, as critics once generally did, was a misnomer. Neither was he a bel canto singer, as he typed himself, since he was always more concerned with emotional expressiveness than beauty of tone or ornament. The impact of his style was once aptly suggested by actress Loretta Young when she asked Elsa Maxwell, "What is there about that boy that makes you feel he is singing to you—and you alone?"

A million girls felt that way. Sinatra never sang *for* but always *to* his listeners. And in live performances he used a pair of hypnotic blue eyes to reinforce the enchantment of his voice. To cap it all, he was "an artistically perfect performer" as well as involved. He had a painter's feeling for contrasting textures and a dramatist's sense of structure. His phrasing was not merely impeccable, as critics have noted, but it was a study in suspense. From Dorsey's trombone he had learned how to breathe *through* a held note. The technique allowed him artfully to handle a long line and to sing at tempos—sneeringly characterized as *à la funèbre* by an unfriendly critic—that built enormous tension.

In a theater all he had to do was turn his head or move slightly back from the mike—to avoid popping a *p* or a *b*—and the response was like a hurricane roaring in. The caterwauling screams, the waving of handkerchiefs and underthings, and the panting and swooning were the libidinous reactions of a love-hungry generation of World War II girls. The provocation came from him. He had brought into pop music something it had not known until then—sheer sex, an overpowering eroticism. As with Presley, the Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix, and other recent ecstasy singers, adults were bewildered, troubled, or outraged. He was controversial before he was a star. So fantastic was his impact that the *New Yorker*, which then sniffed at pop music, ran a three-part profile in which it typed him a "Phenomenon." Almost immedi-

ately, like Humphrey Bogart, he became a man with a past. And that past freighted all his work with an extra charge of emotion.

Even in these early days he began fusing his microphone moods and turntable tunes with his off-stage personality. In a sense, the fusion was unavoidable. He was not a method actor, always preferring spontaneity to practiced evocation. But he was a method singer who performed, like blues singers of old, out of his feelings. At times one can trace an almost absolute correlation between what was going on inside him and what was going on to wax. When he first fell in love with Ava Gardner, he recorded songs like *Nevertheless*, expressive of his feeling that he had no choice. When Ava left him with the ultimatum to stay away until he had his divorce, he recorded *Love Me* in a voice numb with the fear of losing her. The words "right or wrong" kept appearing in songs of this period (*I'm a Fool to Want You*) as he struggled to reconcile his desire for Ava with despair over "deserting" his children and breaking up his family. It was a dichotomy that unquestionably contributed to the early breakup of his marriage to Ava. In 1952 however, after they were wed, he was singing *Walkin' in the Sunshine (of Your Love)* in a voice effervescent with happiness.

In those troubled days much was made of the deterioration of his voice. Audible in several in-person appearances—once when he lost it completely on the floor of the Copa in New York—the Columbia compendia reveal no vocal debility. The downward dip in Sinatra's popularity and record sales had started in 1947, partly as a result of a bad press but due largely, in my opinion, to a change in the pop music market. In place of the sensi-



The Columbia Years
With Alec Wilder.



The Capitol Years

With Nelson Riddle, ex-Dorsey trombonist/arranger.

tive, internalized reading that he gave to songs, buyers opted for the belting, hard-driving, sock-it-to-me projections of Frankie Laine, Johnnie Ray, and other white rhythm-and-blues singers. By 1952 Sinatra's star had sunk so low that Columbia did not renew his contract, he was snake-bitten in Hollywood, and even his management agency dropped him. Nevertheless, that year he recorded a roistering, jazz-inflected version of *Birth of the Blues* that remains one of the best renditions of the song.

If Sinatra was a man of alternating moods in private life, in public he was an image-maker who used his recordings to reinforce myths created by adroit publicity or to soft-focus others projected by public escapades. During the Columbia years, he came through as a contradictory combination of vulnerability and toughness, an appealing polarity he was able to maintain throughout much of his career. The women were touched by the one and the men by the other. The little people applauded his moxie. At a time when performers were wary of taking political positions, he boldly supported President Roosevelt and vigorously fought racism. The Oscar he accepted at the recent Academy Awards as a humanitarian was a reminder of the citation he received in 1946 for the film short *The House I Live In*, a tolerance-ballad he also recorded.

The image of ambivalence continued into the Capitol years, 1953-60. Not long after he made his first sides for the Hollywood-based label in April 1953, he had one of the biggest records of his career, *Young at Heart*, in the grooves; he was playing the Oscar-winning role of Maggio in *From Here to Eternity*; and the star was exploding into a superstar. The buoyancy was reflected in rocking sides like *I've Got the World on a String*, *Come Fly with Me*, and *High Hopes*. Flaxen-haired Axel Stordahl had been the architect of the Columbia Sinatra, woodwinds and strings dominating a lush forest of sound in which the beat was a panther's tread. Now Nelson Riddle, and to a lesser degree Billy May, charted a swinging ballad style marked by the massive roar of brass, a driving beat, and a jazz, finger-snapping spontaneity.

But there was another side to the Capitol Sinatra, as "The Great Years" (three discs) and "The Deluxe Set" (six discs) reveal. Gordon Jenkins, writing soulful Tchaikovsky-inflected backgrounds, set the mood for *Autumn Leaves*, *Baby Won't You Please Come Home*,

and a new *weltschmerz* version of *I'll Never Smile Again*. Riddle, and briefly Axel Stordahl, also contributed to the image of the songbird of yearning become the bitter-sweet balladeer of heartbreak. In songs like *It's a Blue World* and *There Will Never Be Another You*, and in albums like "In the Wee Small Hours" and "Point of No Return?" Sinatra touched female hearts, despite his fantastic success, with the image of a man carrying a torch for a lost love.

The conflicting emotions helped create a tough-and-tender, laughing-on-the-outside-crying-on-the-inside musical style that was basic Sinatra, the irreconcilable romantic. In a large sense it was the one intrinsic pop style developed in the pre-rock era and the summation of what is now nostalgically called "good music."

"Ring-A-Ding Ding" was the title of Sinatra's first album on the Reprise label he launched in 1961. The image now was of the uptempo swinger, seeking solace and finding excitement in rhythm-and-broads. The chartmaker was Johnny Mandel, a West Coast jazz arranger/conductor whose appearance was an omen of a new music. In succeeding recordings Sinatra used former Dorsey arranger Sy Oliver, former Basie composer/arranger Neal Hefti, jazz arranger Quincy Jones, and he also made albums with Duke Ellington and Count Basie. Climax of this phase of his music was an appearance, backed by Basie and batoned by Jones, at the Newport Jazz Festival. It was an electrifying moment, even though it provoked controversy more than it convinced aficionados that he was a jazz singer.

Newport was just months away from his fiftieth birthday, which he memorialized in a moving, retrospective ballad, *It Was a Very Good Year*, and in an introspective album titled "September of My Years." Reprise commemorated the occasion with a two-disc set, "A Man and His Music" in which he reprised favorites through the years, some of them for a third recording. By this time, the silken baritone of 1943 was like torn velvet. Critics were jawing about the widened vibrato and narrowed range of his voice when, late in 1966, he came up with *Strangers in the Night*, an old-style movie ballad that yielded a Gold Record and the first No. 1 single of his entire recording career. He had been an outspoken critic of rock-and-roll, but in 1965 he tried working with Eric Freeman, an outstanding r & b arranger (*Softly as I Leave You*). Now with *Strangers* at the top of the charts.



The Reprise Years

With Antonio Carlos Jobim.

he tackled *That's Life*, a hard-rocking blues. It too went to No. 1. The following year, a duet with daughter Nancy, *Somethin' Stupid*, also zoomed to No. 1. By then the teenagers who had made a hit singer of Nancy for her recording of *These Boots Are Made for Walking* were not unimpressed by her Old Man, now fifty-one years of age.

Within the past three years, his recordings have taken two searching directions. As rock-and-roll matured into rock, he recorded the works of new gifted writers like Jim Webb (*By the Time I Get to Phoenix*), John Hartford (*Gentle on My Mind*), Rod McKuen (*If You Go Away*), Paul Simon (*Mrs. Robinson*), Joni Mitchell (*From Both Sides Now*), Bobby Russell (*Little Green Apples*), and Gayle Caldwell (*Cycles*). He has also made a number of albums with Antonio Carlos Jobim, including "Sinatra & Company," exploring the jazz beat and offbeat—sometimes monotonous—melodic line of bossa nova. Increasingly, he has turned for charts to arranger/conductor Don Costa, a master painter whose impressionist sound pictures in "Sinatra and Strings" (91004)—listen to his *Night and Day*—"Cycles" (S 1027), and "My Way" (S 1029) have contributed to making these among the best of Sinatra's Reprise recordings.

In a sense Sinatra could have stopped recording with *My Way*, the dramatic French ballad he cut in 1969. What an epitaph! Through the years many songwriters have been inspired by the hope of Sinatra recording their work to reach for the impossible lyric. No one has caught the Sinatra mystique *qua* balladeer and human being as has young Paul Anka in his moving and powerful lyric. Like it or not, Sinatra always "stood tall," said the things he felt, and "when there was doubt, he ate it up and spit it out."

Billie Holiday, the mother of his style as Tommy Dorsey was the father, once said, "I've been told that nobody sings the word 'hunger' like I do. Or the word 'love'." Sinatra could do things with these words too. But no one could convey, with his abysmal sense of terror and longing, the void of "the wee small hours of the morning."

If any word or note is his, it is *loneliness*—the alienation of a man who had to do things his own way (*Call Me Irresponsible*), the isolation of the performer at the top (*It's Only a Paper Moon*), and most of all, the ache, despite adulatory crowds and Rat Packs, of just being lonely (*All Alone*). The emotive fruition for which he searched all his days, with endless frustration and passing satisfaction, he attained only in song.

So "make it one more for my ba-a-by and one more for the road. . . ."

SINATRA & COMPANY. 14 songs with guitarist Antonio Carlos Jobim. Orchestra conducted by Morris Stoloff, arrangements by Eumir Deodato and Don Costa. Reprise S 1033, \$5.98. Tape ● M 81033, \$6.95 ●● M 51033, \$6.95.

THE ESSENTIAL FRANK SINATRA. An anthology of 48 selections, from his first recording with Harry James in 1939 to his last Columbia side in 1952. Accompaniment by Harry James & Orchestra, Bobby Tucker Singers, Ken Lane Singers, Page Cavanaugh Trio, Alvy West & the Little Band, Phil Moore Four, and mostly by Axel Stordahl & his Orchestra. Includes a 12-page booklet by George T. Simon and photos. Columbia Hall of Fame Series S3S 842, \$17.98 (three discs).

SINATRA: THE GREAT YEARS. 36 selections covering the years from 1953 through 1960. Arranged and conducted by Axel Stordahl (1 selection), Gordon Jenkins (4), Billy May (4), and Nelson Riddle (27). Capitol STCO 1762, \$11.98 (three discs).

THE FRANK SINATRA DELUXE SET. 70 selections recorded between 1957 and 1961. Duplicates 13 cuts of STCO 1762. Orchestra conducted by Axel Stordahl (12 selections), Billy May (12), and Nelson Riddle (46). Capitol STFL 2814, \$23.98 (six discs).

FRANK SINATRA: A MAN AND HIS MUSIC. An anthology of 32 selections, commemorating his 50th birthday, recorded between 1961 and 1965. Some of the songs were in the earliest albums, providing an opportunity to study the changes that have occurred in his voice and style. Narrated and sung by Sinatra. Orchestras conducted by Nelson Riddle, Gordon Jenkins, Billy May, Sy Oliver, Count Basie, Ernie Freeman, Johnny Mandel, and Don Costa. Includes a complete discography from his first recording session in July 1939 through November 15, 1965—also excellent photos, particularly of the early years, in a 24-page booklet. Reprise S 1016, \$11.96 (two discs). Tape: ● J 81016, \$9.95; ●● J 51016, \$9.95.

A Multilayered Vision

Michael Tippett's *Midsummer Marriage* is an ecstatic musical experience.

by Peter G. Davis

GENERALLY SPEAKING, musical composition over the past fifty years has been on a strictly economic level in more ways than one: large-scale projects such as Wagner's *Ring* cycle could hardly have been conceived in the twentieth century which has fostered neither the financial resources nor the aesthetic inclination to sponsor massive, multilayered visions of this sort, especially in the world of opera. Michael Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage* is one of the few exceptions (Henze's *König Hirsch* is another, coincidentally composed at about the

same time in the early to middle Fifties). This opera is an extraordinary eruption of unbridled creativity—the prodigality of its musical invention is a perfect reflection of the libretto (the composer's own) and its fascinating wealth of literary/philosophical associations.

Given the temper of the times, it is understandable that *The Midsummer Marriage* was greeted with incomprehension, suspicion, and even derision at its English premiere in 1955. Since then the opera has been given a BBC broadcast production, a 1968 revival at Covent



Garden, and now this splendid recording from Philips. The critical reception in England has completely reversed as a result, and Tippett's first opera is now rightly regarded as a major contribution to the contemporary lyric stage.

Tippett's music has always been slow to take root even on his native ground where he and Britten are at present the most highly respected senior British composers. In America he is virtually unplayed save for the early Concerto for Double String Orchestra, a situation that this new recording will hopefully help to alleviate. It's odd how these current twin peaks of English music are paralleled in the musical past by a pair of composers roughly the same age. Take Stravinsky/Schoenberg, Strauss/Pfitzner, Handel/Bach for instance: in each case one was a cosmopolite, immediately successful, and a facile writer; the other remained a relatively iconoclastic stay-at-home, received only modest contemporary acclaim, and toiled laboriously over his scores. History always wins out in the end and Tippett's reputation and performances of his music will surely increase with the coming years.

By the composer's own admission *The Midsummer Marriage* is a comedy, although like everything else about the work it is a highly unconventional one. The theme is traditional enough—"the unexpected hindrances to an eventual marriage," to quote Tippett—but in this contemporary treatment the hindrances are "our ignorance or illusions about ourselves" (a topic the composer explored earlier in the cantata *A Child of Our Time*). Most simply stated, the plot traces the gradual individual self-awareness of two couples, the "spiritual" pair Mark and Jenifer, the "social" working-class pair Jack and Bella (already the references to *Zauberflöte*, *Entführung*, and *Frau ohne Schatten* are clear). The obstacles are Mark's excessive earthiness, Jenifer's unrealistic highmindedness, Jack and Bella's subservience to their employer, King Fisher (a sentimental and materialistic businessman who, as Jenifer's father, opposes his daughter's choice for a mate). During the twenty-four hours of a midsummer day, the four young people discover their true selves through the aid of a group of mysterious beings, the Ancients. The dramatic and musi-



Philips Records

At recording session, producer Erik Smith and conductor Colin Davis check scores as composer Michael Tippett and, behind him, Helen Watts, smile at the camera.

cal highpoint of each act is a visionary sequence. In Act I Mark and Jenifer, partially transfigured as Athena and Dionysus, describe their respective spiritual experiences in the under- and over-world; in Act II it is the Ritual Dances, an extended ballet that depicts the mating rituals of the hound and hare (earth), the fish and otter (water), and the bird and hawk (air); in Act III we are presented with the spiritual and artistic kernel of the opera by the clairvoyant Sosostriis, followed by the fourth Ritual Dance of purification and fertility (fire) in which Mark and Jenifer are the principals.

It is impossible to detail here the myriad influences that Tippett has adapted to fashion his singularly original libretto. The verse plays of T. S. Eliot, the Jungian anima/animus principle, Greek and Indian mythology, and above all the idea of the artist as a conjurer (Sosostriis is surely Tippett himself speaking to us), a concept that Ingmar Bergman examined in his film *The Magician*. All of these diverse themes are brought together in a dramatic counterpoint of incredible complexity and richness—puzzling and disturbing at first perhaps, but the more one hears the work, the more the individual strands become clarified and purposeful. Exception has been taken to Tippett's language, and it is true that certain phrases seem awkward and occasionally even unintentionally humorous. Several lines have been altered for the recording (Bella, for instance, is no longer directed to ring a doorbell on the Ancients' temple); whatever the literary shortcomings may be, there's no question that the composer's text has drawn forth a flood of glorious music.

The musical influences are almost as great, yet here again Tippett has absorbed them all into an unmistakably individual idiom. Appropriately enough for this ecstatic, life-giving story, rhythmic vitality and a profusion of melody abound on every page of the score—one actually must strain to catch all the melodic material and ornamental flourishes woven into the orchestral writing. The harmonic fabric is highly chromatic but rarely tonally ambiguous, thanks in part to the dominance of fourth and fifth intervals in both the vertical and horizontal lines. That the opera stands in a logical line of development of English music from Purcell to Elgar seems to me to be self-evident: the over-all mid-



Philips Records

In the foreground, Joan Carlyle and Alberto Remedios.

summer day atmosphere conjures up an aural picture of Tippett's Wiltshire countryside just as vividly as Wagner's *Meistersinger* and *Parsifal* capture the flavor of a green Bavarian meadow. But in the end it is the lyric potency of the music that magnetically draws us into this dream world where we are both entertained and instructed—the ultimate goal of any great work of art.

Philips' sonic realization would be difficult to improve upon. Colin Davis' superbly paced reading has all the vibrancy and lyric intensity suggested by the notes; the cast, identical to the recent Covent Garden revival, is an excellent one. Alberto Remedios sings Mark with impetuous virility, while Joan Carlyle's silvery soprano is perfect for Jenifer (the part was created by Sutherland in 1955); both are a bit swamped by the final duet perhaps, but here is the one instance where Tippett's musical practicality seems to have been abandoned in his effort to communicate the lovers' final floridly ecstatic transfiguration. Elizabeth Harwood's pert Bella is indeed "beautiful," while Stuart Burrows as the stalwart mechanic/handyman Jack (of all trades, as the chorus dubs him) gives the most polished vocal performance of all. The bullying King Fisher might well have

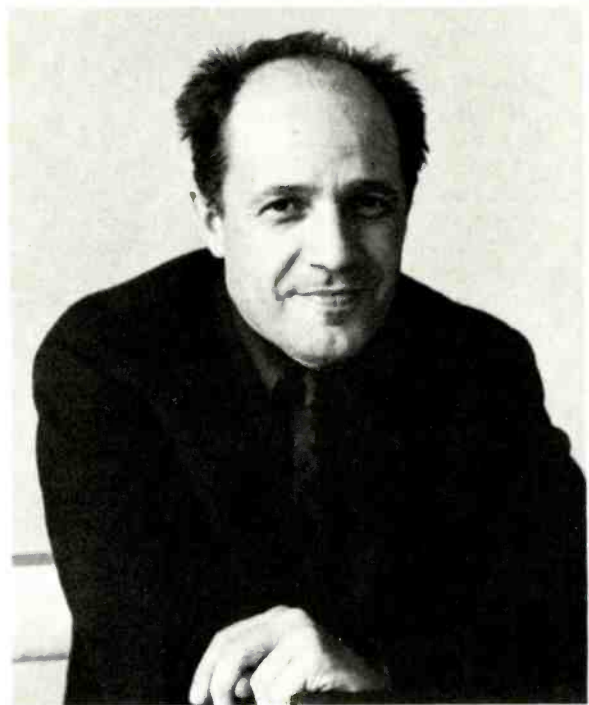
come straight from Dickens and Raimund Herinx projects this unsavory character with forceful presence. Sosostris has only one aria but it is one of the most gorgeous sections in the score and Helen Watts's rich-toned contralto savors every moment. The chorus plays an extremely important (and exceedingly difficult) role throughout and the Covent Gardeners do a virtuoso job of it. Several cuts have been made in the Ritual Dances and the Act III ensembles with Tippett's blessing; the score does tend to proliferate a bit too generously at these points and I believe the excisions are probably wise. Erik Smith's fluid production has a lively immediacy and the entire project has been framed in magnificently full-bodied sound. Don't postpone getting acquainted with this endlessly fascinating, immensely rewarding opera.

TIPPETT: *The Midsummer Marriage*. Joan Carlyle (s), Jenifer; Elizabeth Harwood (s), Bella; Elizabeth Bainbridge (ms), She-Ancient; Helen Watts (c), Sosostris; Alberto Remedios (t), Mark; Stuart Burrows (t), Jack; Raimund Herinx (b), King Fisher; Stafford Dean (bs), He-Ancient; Chorus and Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Colin Davis, cond. Philips 6703 027, \$17.94 (three discs).

by Robert P. Morgan

A Masterwork by Boulez

The composer conducts
his *Pli selon pli*.



Pli selon pli, Boulez' hour-long "portrait of Mallarmé" is unquestionably one of the major compositions of the postwar period. Conceived in the late 1950s, the work has undergone a curious development: it has passed through numerous revisions of one kind or another, has been performed frequently in various partial and tentative versions, and even today is not completely available in score, presumably because the composer refuses (or is unable) to commit it to fixed and final form. Thus the

present disc, despite the fact that it carries the authority of the composer's own direction, can perhaps best be considered as representing simply a further stage of a "work in progress."

For the critic this poses an obvious problem, vis-à-vis which there would seem to be two possible positions. One is that the work is only another (if extreme) indication of Boulez' compositional hesitancy and indecision, a view held even by some of the composer's most ardent admirers and one which explains Boulez' almost complete abandonment of compositional activity in recent years. A second, more generous view—and one toward which I personally incline—is that the work, so inherently ephemeral in nature and improvisatory in conception, simply does not lend itself to ultimate fixation. One feels it is a composition that could take on a thousand different shapes, whose parts could be rearranged in almost endless combinations, and whose ending could easily become its recommencement. (As to this latter point, one need only note the similarity between the opening and closing chords, separated by some sixty minutes of highly eventful musical time, and yet so clearly suggestive of one another that the listener is forced to make an immediate association.) The work, in short, is a masterpiece for our time—tentative and provisional, in keeping with current conditions, but despite that (or perhaps rather just because of it), no less accurate a musical reflection of the postwar years than was the *Eroica* of the period of the French Revolution.

Pli selon pli ("Fold by Fold") consists of five movements, the middle three of which are formed by the well-known *Improvisations sur Mallarmé*. The *Improvisations* are settings of three poems by Mallarmé for soprano and chamber ensemble, the make-up of the latter varying somewhat from movement to movement but in each case consisting predominantly of percussion instruments. Although the first two have been frequently and effectively performed as independent pieces, they acquire new weight and significance in the context of the larger work, gaining considerably in richness as a result of their multifaceted relationships with the surroundings. The two outer movements are essentially instrumental and are scored for large orchestra.

Despite these instrumental movements, the entire work is very much under the spell of Mallarmé. The title itself is taken from a poem (not used in the work as such) which describes the visual effect of the city of Bruges gradually emerging "fold by fold" from a morning mist, and Boulez' composition is in many respects a kind of auditory analogue to this visual image. The opening movement, entitled *Don*, is, in fact, rather like a latter-day impressionistic tone poem based on Mallarmé: the orchestra is divided into three sections (reminiscent of Stockhausen's *Gruppen*, a work which seems to have influenced Boulez considerably, at least from a technical point of view) and the ambiguities which result from the merging, separating, and overlapping of these layers create a veiled unfolding of musical space not unlike the unfolding in the poetic description. The title is also suggested by the way the movements are inter-related: specific passages from the vocal sections are anticipated in varied and fragmentary form in the first movement, set into it like windows looking toward the future. Thus the entire work seems to grow out of the opening movement, again through a process of gradual unfolding and delineation.

Indeed, the permeation of Mallarmé's ideas within the work is everywhere apparent and has been emphasized by the composer himself. The influence is most clearly evident, of course, in the three vocal movements, where the structure of the poem—its strophes, number of syllables per line, etc.—determines quite specifically the structure of the music. Also, the sound of the poem, what might be called its "musical" component (an element greatly stressed by Mallarmé), seems to have directly influenced musical choices, particularly those affecting the timbral disposition of the chamber ensemble. Significantly, Boulez does not appear to have been particularly interested in the literal, verbal meanings of the poems—the texts are, with few exceptions, set in such a way as to be virtually incomprehensible—but rather in their formal procedures. Thus even the purely instrumental passages show Mallarmé's influence: e.g., the series of short, interchangeable segments at the end of the first movement bring to mind the multiple orderings of the poet's *Livre*.

The musical style is one of extraordinary refinement, characterized by a sense of delicacy and understatement imparting to the work an almost Debussyan flavor. Many of the figures are constructed like lacy arabesques, moving quickly to sustained chords enunciated by sharp and metallic percussive attacks. As a result, much of the work seems literally to "ring" with sound; indeed, the play of these resonances against one another constitutes one of the primary musical resources of the piece. Another persistent technique is the retention of certain fixed pitches while others change constantly around them, creating a sense of gradual transformation again recalling Debussy. Yet despite such obviously static, "coloristic" procedures, Boulez has managed to shape the whole structure through a convincing sense of growth and direction. The changing instrumental forces play an essential role in this process. Whereas the middle *Improvisation* remains in its original version for soprano and nine instrumentalists, the first and third have been altered for inclusion in the larger work through the addition of doublings and new instrumental parts in certain passages. Thus there is a gradual pairing-down of forces from the first to the third movement, and then a building-up again thereafter, which finally reaches its climax at a sort of instrumental apotheosis near the end of the last movement.

A word about the performance: as one might expect when a conductor of this stature turns to his own music, it is excellent, although there are a few ragged edges in spots—particularly in the orchestral sections, suggesting that there may have been inadequate rehearsal time. In general the pacing is quite relaxed, and Boulez tends to emphasize the improvisatory nature of the work, especially in the middle three movements. Particularly striking is the almost rhapsodic quality created by the constantly changing tempos. The instrumental soloists are uniformly good, although why certain of these are signaled out for mention on the jacket at the expense of others is not clear to me. The soprano, Halina Lukomska, sings with remarkably sure intonation and an impressive stylistic grasp of the music.

BOULEZ: *Pli selon pli*. Halina Lukomska, soprano; Maria Bergmann, piano; Paul Stingl, guitar; Hugo D'Alton, mandolin; BBC Symphony Orchestra, Pierre Boulez, cond. Columbia M 30296, \$5.98.

classical

reviewed by

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BACH: *Art of Fugue*, S. 1080. Lionel Rogg, organ (Metzler organ of St. Peter's Cathedral, Geneva). Angel SB 3766, \$9.96 (two discs).

Toward the end of his life Bach involved himself in several "summing-up" projects. He had set down everything he knew about canons in the variations on *Vom Himmel hoch* and the *Musical Offering*, and the *Art of Fugue* was clearly intended as a compendium of all the available techniques of fugue writing (and incidentally, this was at a time when *nobody* was writing fugues any more—the high baroque had now all but been pushed aside in favor of the vapid charms of the galant). Bach was working on the *Art of Fugue* right up to his last days, and his death came before he could finish it or make his ultimate intentions known to anyone else. Even his son Carl Philipp Emanuel seemed to have only a vague notion of what his father was up to, and as a result the publications in 1750 and 1752 were filled with errors and misrepresentations which fostered the confusion that attends this work even today.

Particularly since that original publication was in score form, on four separate staves to emphasize its learned character, many scholars have been misled to the improbable assumption that Bach was writing "ideal" music, not intended for any specific performance. Quite aside from the fact that this would be uncharacteristic behavior indeed on the part of that invariably practical musician, most modern scholars can cite an impressive body of evidence to support their claim that Bach clearly had keyboard performance in mind. For instance, the autograph manuscript was written on two staves, not four, and throughout the set the range of the parts never exceeds what can be handled by the two hands with

occasional assistance from the pedals—a restriction Bach would never have imposed upon himself if keyboard performance were not his specific aim.

Nevertheless, most of the currently available recordings of the work are in various orchestrations ranging from string quartet through various chamber groupings of strings and winds to full orchestra. Donald Tovey wrote in his analysis of the work: "Orchestrate the *Art of Fugue* by all means; but only for the same reasons that would induce you to orchestrate the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. If you think the task necessary you show that you understand neither orchestration nor keyboard style." Schwann also lists piano versions (for which I can find no justification whatsoever) and organ versions by Glenn Gould and Helmut Walcha. Gould's reading of the first nine fugues is unacceptably willful and Walcha's is accurate and a huge bore. That leaves the field wide open for Lionel Rogg, who is, in my estimation, the finest of Europe's current generation of organists specializing in Bach. His imaginative registrations, varied tempos, and cleanly articulated playing are completely successful in making this didactic work a thoroughly satisfying musical experience—provided, of course, you have the interest and take the trouble to dig into the architectural complexities Bach has provided.

For the final unfinished fugue, Rogg has provided us with a choice of versions. First he plays it as Bach left it, ending mid-measure, mid-phrase just where Bach stopped writing. Then he plays it again with his own short (about forty measures), tasteful, and convincing suggested conclusion. In my opinion, this final fugue should either be completed or omitted from a performance altogether. The idea of playing half a piece of music simply because it is Bach's last composition is, to me, a distastefully sanctimonious excess. Rogg's completion provides a suitably magnificent conclusion.

The organ used here is a four-manual tracker built in 1965 by the firm of Metzler and Sons and was designed by P. G. Andersen. It is one of the most successful modern classic instruments I've heard. The booklet enclosed with the records gives full specifications plus a detailed list of all Rogg's registrations. The sound is every bit as good as the original EMI pressings, which is to say very fine indeed.

C.F.G.

BACH: "Christopher Parkening Plays J.S. Bach." *Jesu, joy of man's desiring* (Cantata No. 147); *Gavotte* (Partita No. 3 for Unaccompanied Violin); *Preludes I, VI, and IX* (*Well-Tempered Clavier*); *Sheep may safely graze* (Cantata No. 208); *Prelude and Allegro* (Prelude, Fugue, and Allegro for Clavier, original for lute); *Gavotte I and II* (Cello Suite No. 5); *Gavotte I and II* (Cello Suite No. 6); *Sleepers awake* (Cantata No. 140). Christopher Parkening, guitar. Angel S 36041, \$5.98. Tape: ●● 4XS 36041, \$7.98

You may be inclined to blink at the rubric on

Christopher Parkening's latest recording—"America's Greatest Guitar Virtuoso"—for the lad is only in his early twenties. But sober reflection (and a hearing of the record) will probably bring you around to accepting even so bold an example of press-agentry. Parkening really does belong up there with the Spaniard, the Australian, and the Englishman. His technical grasp is so obvious that one hesitates to point it out; and his musicianship makes itself felt not by any self-conscious preciousness but by a kind of bigness of view: it is superbly straightforward. There is not the least sentimentalizing of *Jesu, joy of man's desiring*, for instance, and therefore no trivializing. Parkening sometimes takes rather brisk tempos, as if urgently wishing you to sit up and take notice of the music; he can also be extraordinarily soothing, as in the *Prelude No. 1* from *Well-Tempered Clavier*, and in addition he can achieve some astonishing contrasts of tone. In the transcription of the *Cello Suite No. 6*, the second *Gavotte* is an entirely different color from the first, and *Sleepers awake*, which happens to follow, goes into yet another gear entirely—it is positively organlike. I didn't like *Sheep may safely graze*; it seems too softened, too smooth, and emphasizes the wrong things. But transcriptions are a tricky business, and most of these (including four by Parkening) are very successful. "America's Greatest"? I'll buy it. S.F.




BARTOK: *Suite for Two Pianos*, Op. 4b; 14 Pieces from *Mikrokosmos*. Richard and John Contiguglia, piano. Connoisseur Society CS 2033, \$5.98.

The novelty on this disc is the *Suite*, Op. 4b. Although this suite is available in an orchestral version as part of the Qualiton Bartók series, it has not, as far as I know, been previously recorded in the version for two pianos. The orchestral suite (actually the *Second Suite for Orchestra*) dates from 1907, but it wasn't until 1941 that Bartók returned to the work, re-fashioning it as a concert vehicle for himself and his wife. The two-piano version is, however, not so much an "arrangement" of the original as a complete reworking of it, and the orchestral version that is now normally played (on the Qualiton disc, for example) is in reality an orchestral transcription of this two-piano version made by Bartók in 1943.




It seems fitting that a work with such an odd

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history should itself be a rather peculiar piece. It was originally written during a transitional period in Bartók's career, which was to bring about fundamental changes in his compositional style; and in the suite one has the strange sensation of hearing the music both "backwards and forwards." Much of the work still seems to belong to the nineteenth century, yet the suggestion of things to come is often pronounced. Quite apart from such historical questions, the suite has considerable musical merit and represents an important contribution to the rather limited two-piano literature. The Contiguglia brothers play extremely well: and although I find their readings a bit on the subdued side for a piece like this, they compensate with clarity of execution and the musicality of their over-all conception.

The remainder of the disc consists of all the

two-piano selections from the *Mikrokosmos* (there are fourteen). Some of these appear in two-piano form in the original, but seven are arrangements made by Bartók himself from solo versions. These latter are particularly interesting, since they invite comparison with the earlier versions and in some cases represent what are in effect entirely new pieces (i.e., the *Chord and Trill Study* and the *Ostinato*). Again, all of the performances are excellent.

R.P.M.

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 5, in C minor, Op. 67. **SCHUBERT:** Symphony No. 8, in B minor, D. 759 (*Unfinished*). London Philharmonic Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski, cond. London Phase 4 SPC 21042, \$5.98. Tape: M 95042, \$6.95; M 94042, \$6.95.

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A different Dane.

In 1940, a young professor-turned-singer toured his homeland, performing only Danish songs. The Danes, desperately fighting the Nazi occupation, responded enthusiastically. After the war, he went on to win worldwide acclaim. In 2 volumes, Aksel Schiøtz has recorded songs by his countryman, Carl Nielsen, and Schubert's complete "Die schöne Müllerin."

Even London's Phase-4 technique cannot faze Maestro Stokowski who is, in his eighty-seventh year, as maddeningly unpredictable as ever. The Beethoven gets a broad, warm statement—tonally luxuriant to be sure, but reasonably succinct and ungimmicked. Tempos are on the slow side (particularly in the second movement, taken at a near adagio rather than the prescribed andante con moto; and in the scherzo, a leisurely paced reading that does not require the usual slowing-up for the "double-bass" trio), but there is a decent amount of sinew and force to propel the music onward. There is no first-movement repeat, but its omission here didn't bother me as much as it usually does in a swifter, leaner, more punching interpretation. In sum, a good standard performance, with a few customary reorchestrations but nothing untoward or in bad taste.

The *Unfinished*, on the other hand, is almost finished off. Stokowski has his players wallowing in voluptuous sonority. The reading achieves its sensuality, moreover, by the dishonorably simple device of ignoring pianissimo markings and by slurring phrases into an overblown mush. All the drama and mystery vanish in this turgid, underarticulated statement.

Anything left undone by the maestro himself is tended to by the overmiked recording.

H.G.

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 6, in F, Op. 68 (*Pastoral*). Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Wilhelm Furtwängler, cond. Turnabout TV 4408, \$2.98 (mono only).

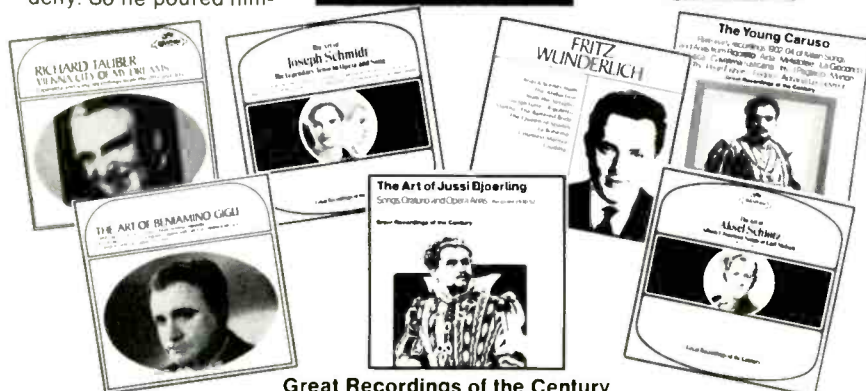
I am not sure that the current proliferation of Furtwängler broadcast tapes is entirely a good thing, especially in the case of works that he recorded commercially. Some of them (e.g., the Turnabout *Eroica*) have been very fine, to be sure, and others, while probably not up to the standards the conductor set for himself, have allowed us to hear his conceptions of works that he did not record.

The present *Pastoral*, apparently dating from 1944, does not really fall into either category. It is not very neatly played, and the characteristic variations of tempo are not very smoothly executed. Furtwängler was an erratic conductor, and this recording stems from one of his less good days: typically slow, but untypically nervous. A limited edition for cultists might have some point, but given the availability of the superb 1952 Vienna studio version (now listed as Odeon SMVP 8038, a "stereo wide-sound" reincarnation), there is no obvious reason (save capitalization on the conductor's name) to spread an inferior performance around. For those who haven't heard it, the 1952 recording is leisurely but never slack, full of beautifully pointed details (especially by way of articulative clarification of the contradictory rhythmic layers in the first movement), and shaped with a classic sense of the "long line." It is, moreover, quite handsomely recorded.

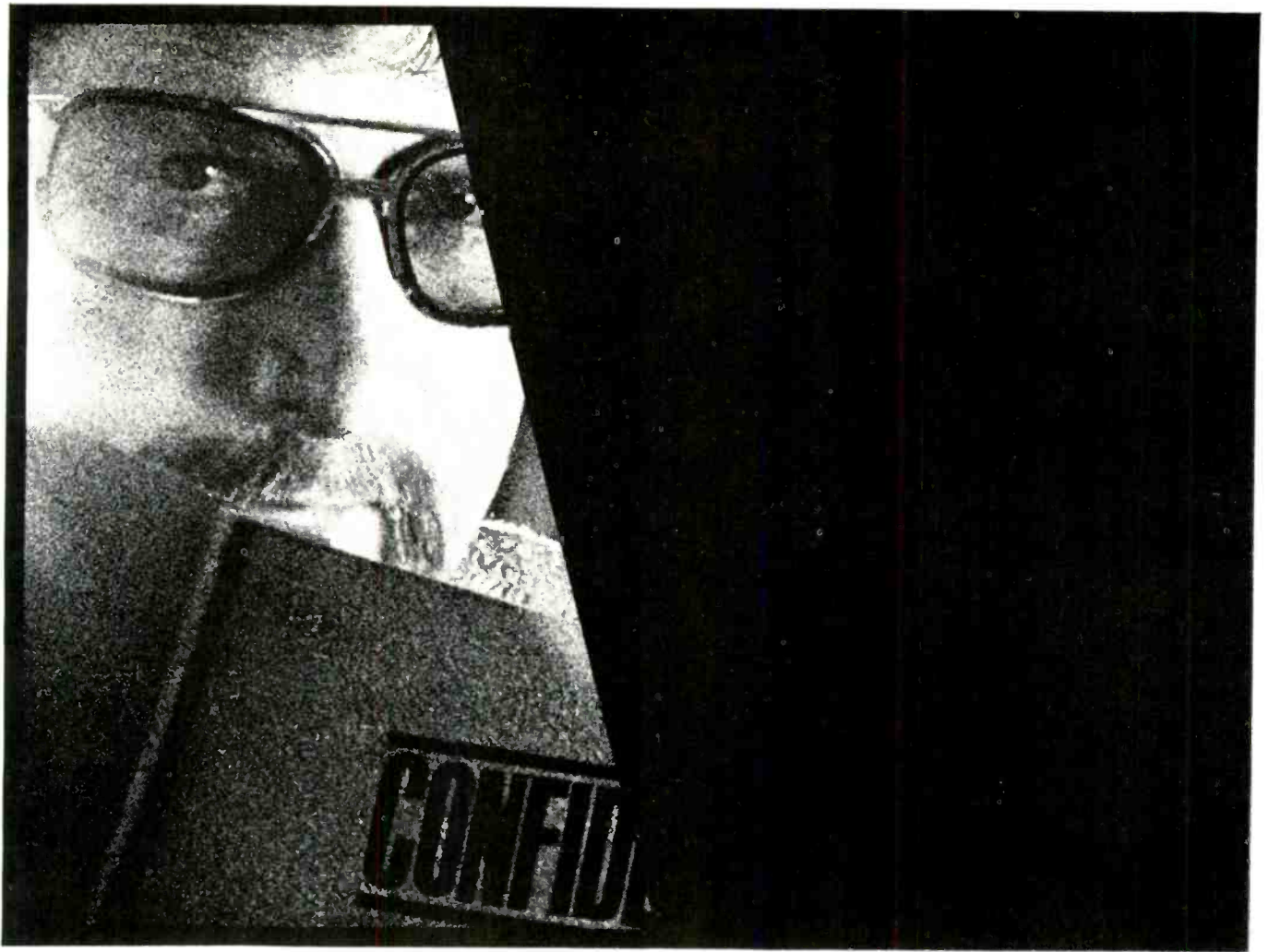
The Turnabout version is surprisingly well engineered, despite slight grinding from the surfaces of what I take to have been 78-rpm broadcast acetates; the pickup is on the distant side, however, and finer details in the winds are sometimes hard to detect.

D.H.

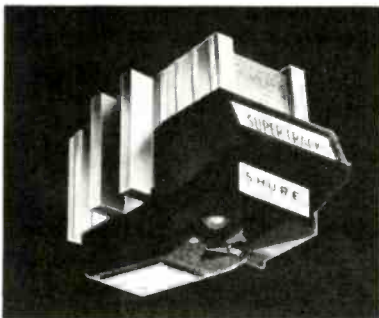
BERWALD: Septet (*Stor*) in B flat—See Kreutzer: Grand Septet, in E flat, Op. 62.



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BOULEZ: Pli selon pli. Halina Lukomska soprano; Maria Bergmann, piano; Paul Stingl, guitar; Hugo D'Alton, mandolin; BBC Symphony Orchestra. Pierre Boulez, cond. For a feature review of this recording, see page 70.

BRAHMS: Symphony No. 3, in F, Op. 90. Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam, Bernard Haitink, cond. Philips 6500 155, \$5.98.

Critics like to apply the word "structural" to characterize certain musical performances and I often wonder what, precisely, they mean by the term. Most often it is used to describe performances by such "classicists" as Szell, Schnabel, or Toscanini, presumably to point up how diverse musical devices—rhythmic and harmonic tension, tempo and expressivity, among others—are employed to dramatize such major structural "joints" as important modulations or the return of melodic material.

But there is another kind of "structural" musical interpretation—often employing some of the same devices in a quite different way and to a totally different final effect. Haitink's new record of the Brahms Third is a good case in point, and I can think of no better example of the differing types of "structural" interpretation than to suggest comparing his new recording with those of Szell or Toscanini. One of many typical passages in this symphony is the first-movement transition from the development section to the recapitulation: Szell and Toscanini, each in their own characteristic way, treat this with a dramatic sense of anticipation through a slight slackening of tempo combined with an emphasis of those harmonic components that determine the modulatory shift of musical perspective. Haitink, on the other hand, indicates this transition primarily by broadening the tempo almost to a standstill, creating a sense of relaxation rather than of tension. Such an approach, consistently applied throughout this symphony, sharply differentiates Haitink's performance from the more strictly "classical" ones of Szell and Toscanini.

The Brahms Third is one of those works which almost invites such completely differing interpretations. It is a curiously paradoxical work combining "heroic" and "sentimental" elements in a way that permits either to dominate in a performance, but seldom can a conductor achieve a really consistent over-all balance. Especially when approached with intensity, as it is here, the Brahms Third is either a "heroic" symphony with expressive interludes, or a mellow and sentimental expression with occasional outbursts of energy. By and large the choice of a recording rests in the listener's preference: he will like that performance which best suits his preconception of what Brahms was aiming for in this symphony.

Haitink's is an opulent recording both in its sound and expressive concept. With unusually leisurely and frequently changing tempos, he extracts from the score a maximum of expressive sentiment to a degree that will repel many listeners. But it is, by and large, a completely musical conception, carried out with great artistic consistency. Due to leisurely pacing and to the first-movement exposition repeat, the symphony fills both sides of the record, leaving no room for a filler. The Concertgebouw cultivates an appropriately full, rich sound; though generally well balanced and

tonally attractive, the playing is not always precise: the players seem at times to have some difficulty in following the conductor's frequent changes of tempo. P.H.

BRANT: Kingdom Come; Machinations. Henry Brant, organ; Oakland Symphony Orchestra; Oakland Youth Orchestra. Gerhard Samuel, cond. Desto DC 7108, \$5.98.

Kingdom Come is a piece for two orchestras each of which occupies a separate stereo channel in the recording. Orchestra No. 1, the standard big orchestra of the tradition, is assigned an immense, striding, striving, heaven-storming role; orchestra No. 2 is rather like a circus band: it raucously goes about its own business of raising hell and, incidentally, mocking the heaven-stormers on channel one. The idea is a little obvious, and so is its indebtedness to Ruggles and Ives, but it is entertaining enough: although brilliantly performed and recorded here, the work is probably more impressive in the concert hall than on discs.

Machinations is a more or less improvisatory piece wherein the composer plays no less than ten different instruments—four instruments of percussion, four flutes of different varieties, organ, and harp. These were originally recorded on separate tracks and then brought together for the published result. The tapes were run at varying speeds, producing an effect like that of playing a disc with an off-center spindle hole. There is much twittering, and the piece as a whole is a deadly bore. A.F.

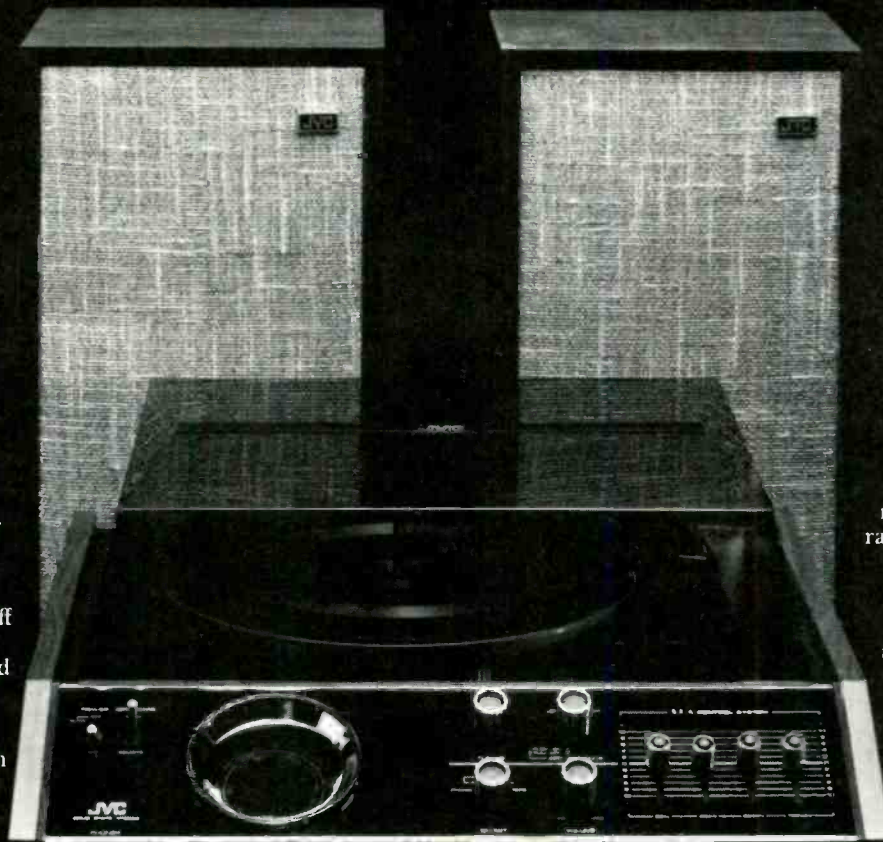
BRITTEN: The Poet's Echo, Op. 76. **TCHAIKOVSKY:** Songs: Why?, Op. 6, No. 5; At the Ball, Op. 38, No. 3; Silence descends on the golden cornfields, Op. 57, No. 2; Serenade, Op. 63, No. 6; Night, Op. 73, No. 2; Why Did I Dream of You?, Op. 28, No. 3. Galina Vishnevskaya, soprano; Mstislav Rostropovich, piano. London OS 26141, \$5.98

Setting a Russian text for the first time, Britten achieves once again a distinctively characterized set of songs. I'm not qualified to judge how much justice he has done to the accentual patterns of Pushkin's poetry, but the flow and security of Vishnevskaya's delivery of the rhythms surely say something favorable on this score. As always, the composer's gift for inventing figuration is something to admire as is his divination of musical metaphors to match the verbal imagery. Particularly striking here is the opening song, *Echo*, where rhythmically irregular canons are built up with the sustaining pedal into impressive resonating structures, and—despite the improvisatory character of the individual lines—the whole is bound together by a firm meter. Only one song seems to me at a slightly lower level, the setting of the famous *Rose and the Nightingale*, which loses focus in its insistence on the bird-call accompaniment.

The performers, to whom the cycle is dedicated, do an admirable job. Vishnevskaya's vibrato is only rarely a problem: perhaps she is being extra careful, out of an awareness of the crucial significance of pitch clarity in the music. The versatile Rostropovich is simply superb: accurate, always sensitive to the rhythmic details without sacrificing forward

Continued on page 80

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Toy Pianos, Musical Saws —and a Great Vocal Tour de Force

by David Hamilton

AT THE OUTSET of George Crumb's new cycle of Lorca songs, *Ancient Voices of Children*, we hear the cool and enormously flexible mezzo of Jan DeGaetani carving resonances out of the strings of an amplified piano with a series of elaborate melismas formed around various phonetics—nominally meaningless, but highly evocative of the intensely nostalgic color that surrounds the verses to follow. If Crumb's earlier recorded works in his Lorca cycle (*Night Music I*, on CR1 S 218, and the four books of *Madrigals*, on Acoustic Research 0654 085) often seemed to be almost more the "echoes" of pieces than the actual substance, a music so tenuous and fragile that the decaying resonance of each note had to be attended with care as if heard for the very last time, *Ancient Voices* brings its substance much closer to the surface, representing both a simplification and a theatricalization of the composer's style. (This tendency may already have been visible in the other two works, *Songs, Drones, and Refrains of Death* and *Night of the Four Moons*; let us have recordings of these as soon as possible!)

Whereas in the earlier works the voice was part of the ensemble, one instrument among several, which happened to have a verbal "overtone" focusing what the total structure evoked, here it is without question the leading and organizing force. There is no less of Crumb's intensely imaginative use of sheer sound, but the Lorca texts used here are more extensive, less epigrammatic, with the primary musical thread carried by the soprano voice and its yearned-for, never-to-be-recaptured youthful ancestor, represented by the boy soprano. And even when the voice is silent (as in the two instrumental dances, which follow the first and fourth of the five vocal movements), the substance is essentially melodic. This is, in fact, very close to monophonic music, with the varied but essentially percussive ensemble functioning primarily in an articulative fashion.

Don't misunderstand that term "percussive"; this is Crumb-percussive, not *Rite-of-Spring*-percussive, and only in the central movement, a setting of a song from Lorca's 1935 play *Yerma*, declaimed rather freely against a dramatically approaching

and then departing bolero rhythm, is there anything resembling the forward propulsion that has been so central to the Western musical tradition. Of course there are many short-range rhythmic patterns, some of them similarly suggestive of Iberian local color, but they are static rather than directional in their effect.

This kind of simplification, almost a return to monody, carries with it very real dangers (as anyone who has sat through Peri's *Euridice*, for example, can attest), for everything depends on the composer's sensitivity to the nuances and possibilities of his text. Crumb's resourcefulness in this respect is considerable, for he can surround his line with an infinity of divers colors (merely listing the instruments and special usages employed here would exhaust the remainder of the space available), and he continually alters his textural dispositions. Thus, the second poem is whispered rather than sung, against a melody alternating between the electric piano and a musical saw, while the short fourth piece ("Each afternoon in Granada, a child dies each afternoon") becomes an intense arioso against a sustained marimba chord.

Later in that piece, a toy piano faintly offers the opening of Bach's *Bist du bei mir*: "If you are near me, I go joyfully towards death and eternal rest" (the text is not sung, only implied)—an ironic incongruity that seems to me one of the work's less successful moments. Another quotation, the oboe line from Mahler's *Der Abschied*, manages successfully to inhabit both the world it evokes and its new setting, but the Bach jars, for its sole excuse is literary.

I have mentioned a theatricalization of Crumb's style, evident not only in the more specifically narrative and dramatic character of the texts and their juxtaposition, but also in the more explicit reliance on the element of executive virtuosity—which is, after all, a theatrical matter, whether in a piano recital or an operatic display piece. *Ancient Voices of Children* was written especially for Jan DeGaetani, who can "tune" a timbre as accurately as she can tune a pitch, make a *messa di voce* on changing vowels, sing the most elaborate melismas, interspersed with tongue-clicks and flutter-tonguing, and even play the

glockenspiel when some additional tone is needed for the big chords that start the last song. She can, in fact, do just about anything, and here she gives one of the great vocal performances of recent years. The instrumentalists are equally fine, and Arthur Weisberg has put us once more into his debt for an impeccably prepared and brilliantly executed presentation. Few composers today can rejoice in such persuasive advocates.

Some musicians of my acquaintance found this piece of little interest—"no 'music' in it" seemed to be the gist of the reaction—and one can see to what they refer: the absence of counterpoint, the dearth of simultaneities, the overt theatricality (manifest also, in live performance, by the performers' occasional changes of position—an element obviously less operative in the context of a recording). All this is true, but hardly germane, for Crumb attempts something quite different. I have my reservations—about the Bach quotation, about the bolero movement (which "comes on" at a rather more obvious and trivial level than the rest of the piece)—but there is an expressive subtlety and sophistication here that will not be gainsaid. The means may be simple, but they are not simplistic: the musical language is secure and enormously distinctive. To those who traffic in aesthetic or historical imperatives, this work will doubtless be misunderstood, and misused as a weapon in journalistic pseudo-dialectics to prove that modern music is now heading in some direction or other—but with such matters the listener need not concern himself, nor does the composer, who has something very individual to say and a very special way of saying it. There aren't many such composers around today (there never have been enough), and I urge you to attend to what George Crumb is saying.

The recorded sound (as heard on a test pressing) is almost literally translucent, the Dolby quietness especially appreciated in such a work. Texts and translations.

B **CRUMB:** *Ancient Voices of Children*, Jan DeGaetani, mezzo; Michael Dash, treble; Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, Arthur Weisberg, cond. Nonesuch H 71255, \$2.98.

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Regrettably, the Vishnevskaya vibrato is much more in evidence on the reverse side, although the opening bars of the first song are superbly controlled and lead one to hope for the best. When the crescendo begins to build, the tone, alas, spreads, the Slavic edge creeps in, and the pitch loses focus. It's a shame, for that performance and several others are really distinguished conceptions—sometimes rather freely drawn, but always with imagination and commitment. I don't much care for *At the Ball*, which is picked at rather than sung, but of that, at least, we have ample recordings; the others are less common, so the record may be accounted a useful one despite the vocal flaws—and of course the Britten cycle is sufficient reason to acquire it anyway.

London provides its usual text and translations. D.H.

B **CHOPIN:** "The Great Horowitz Plays Favorite Chopin." Ballade in G minor, Op. 23; Waltz in C sharp minor, Op. 64, No. 2; Impromptu in A flat, Op. 29; Nocturne in E flat, Op. 9, No. 2; Etude in C sharp minor, Op. 10, No. 4; Scherzo in B minor, Op. 20; Mazurka in C sharp minor, Op. 50, No. 3; Andante Spianato and Grande Polonaise brillante in E flat, Op. 22. Vladimir Horowitz, piano. RCA Victorla VIC 1605, \$2.98 (mono only) [from RCA Victor originals, recorded in the Forties and early Fifties].

RCA's extensive Horowitz catalogue is almost entirely a mono-only affair which means that the six discs proudly listed on the back of this reissue are virtually unobtainable. All the more reason to welcome the present Chopin collection recorded at the height of the pianist's first performing career.

This may be steely, structural Chopin playing, with lean, rugged linear clarity; but there's plenty of expressive nuance too, and generous amounts of typical Horowitz fire-eating bravura and deft digital magic. The recital is beautifully arranged for maximum variety, beginning with a hair-raising account of the G minor Ballade, progressing through a half-dozen polished miniatures (which surround a slightly too brittle reading of the Op. 20 Scherzo), and winding up with the brilliant *Andante Spianato and Grande Polonaise*. RCA gave Horowitz excellent sound in those days and the plangent, ringing piano tone still comes across with fine impact. P.G.D.

DEBUSSY: Nocturnes; Printemps; Premiere Rhapsodie. Gervase de Peyer, clarinet (in Rhapsodie); John Aldis Choir (in Nocturnes); New Philharmonia Orchestra, Pierre Boulez, cond. Columbia M 30483, \$5.98.

The third disc in Boulez' series devoted to the orchestral works of Debussy brings back into action the New Philharmonia—which because of the quality of its winds, is certainly ideal for the *Nocturnes*. The level of ensemble and intonation in *Nuages* is simply remarkable and is surpassed only by the choral intonation in *Sirènes*, always the most difficult of these three works to bring off. Indeed throughout a fantastic clarity is brought to Debussy's textures; entire sections of the or-

chestra play as one single instrument—from the standpoint not merely of temporal unanimity but also of articulation and accentuation so that the over-all rhythmic verve of *Fêtes* is beautifully sustained, the harmonic subtleties etched with unimpeachable clarity.

The same qualities are found in the other works, although De Peyer produces a few notes that are (unexpectedly) not quite perfect. *Printemps* (a work for which the original orchestration was lost and then reconstructed by Henri Büsser, with the strange inclusion of two pianos in the orchestra—odd that Boulez does not mention this circumstance in his liner notes) is something less than characteristic Debussy, but constitutes an interesting glimpse into what interested the youthful composer.

The recorded sound has the characteristic CBS-London acoustic, clear but somewhat overresonant in the lower registers; the perspective is that of viewing the orchestra through a tunnel, when one would rather be in the same room. D.H.

DRUCKMAN: *Animus II*. **ROUSSAKIS:** Night Speech; Sonata for Harpsichord. Jan DeGaetani, mezzo; Richard Fitz and Gordon Gottlieb, percussion (in the Druckman); Macalester Concert Choir (in Night Speech); Harold Chaney, harpsichord (in the Sonata). Composers Recordings CRI SD 255, \$5.95.

Jacob Druckman's *Animus II* is for solo voice, percussion, and electronic tape. According to the composer's notes, no small part of his intended effect derives from the actual presence of the performers, and in a recording it is all flattened out into a single dimension of electronically re-created sound, but the work is strong enough to survive that falsification

and may even gain an effect or two in the process.

The main glory of the piece is the vocal part, which might be described as *Sprechstimme ohne sprechen*; it employs some of the diving, looping vocalisms that Schoenberg invented in *Pierrot Lunaire*, but there are no words at all and the voice exploits an incredibly wide gamut of nonverbal communication. Everything is in it—irony, laughter, rejection, pretense, and, if I am not a dirty old man, the sleepy contentment that comes after a thoroughly satisfactory sexual experience. How does Miss DeGaetani utter all this, and sing as well in areas of musical expression not readily tagged with any descriptive label? She does it with subtle intonation, beauty of tone, and alluring command of nuance—the whole thing is one of the wonders of the year if not of the decade or the century. The rich, chiming, occasionally very dense and strong role assigned to the instruments and the tape is also of major importance in the success of the whole. Druckman is a great master of color, and this is one of his most completely realized achievements.

Nicolas Roussakis' choral piece, *Night Speech*, exploits the "sibilants, fricatives, plosives, etc." of speech, along with sounds made by gongs, wind chimes, sandpaper, and plain paper; "at the climax, all the members of the chorus play harmonicas." The whole thing is short and kind of nice. The same composer's harpsichord sonata, performed by Harold Chaney, is somewhat gnarled and academic and not likely to make anyone's must-list. A.F.

B **DRUCKMAN:** *Animus III*; synapse; Valentine. Arthur Bloom, clarinet; Alvin Brehm, double bass; electronic tape. Nonesuch H 71253, \$2.98.

Electronic music has taught both composers and performers a great deal about new effects obtainable with standard instruments, and none has caught the message more successfully than Jacob Druckman. In *Animus III* and *synapse* (no capital S, please) he combines "live" instruments with tape. *Valentine* is for double bass alone, and is perhaps the most important work of the three.

This piece, to quote the composer's jacket notes, "demands that the player attack the instrument with bow and timpani stick, both hands alternating percussive tapping on the body of the instrument with pizzicato harmonics, while the voice sustains tones, sings counterpoints, and punctuates accents." The work also demands a great deal of microtonal sliding about, but it all adds up to a kind of epic; it does for the string bass what the Bach unaccompanied sonatas do for the violin, especially when there is a Heifetz of the big box, like Brehm, to do the playing.

Animus III involves the clarinet and tape, the two intertwining in very complex and fascinating ways, reflecting each other's character, bending each to the other's nature, and employing an enormously rich palette of timbres. It is a big, dynamic piece as well as a colorful one, and it leaves one's ear and mind so full that *synapse*, on the start of the flip side (for double bass and tape), seems a little too much of a good thing. The sound throughout is superb. A.F.

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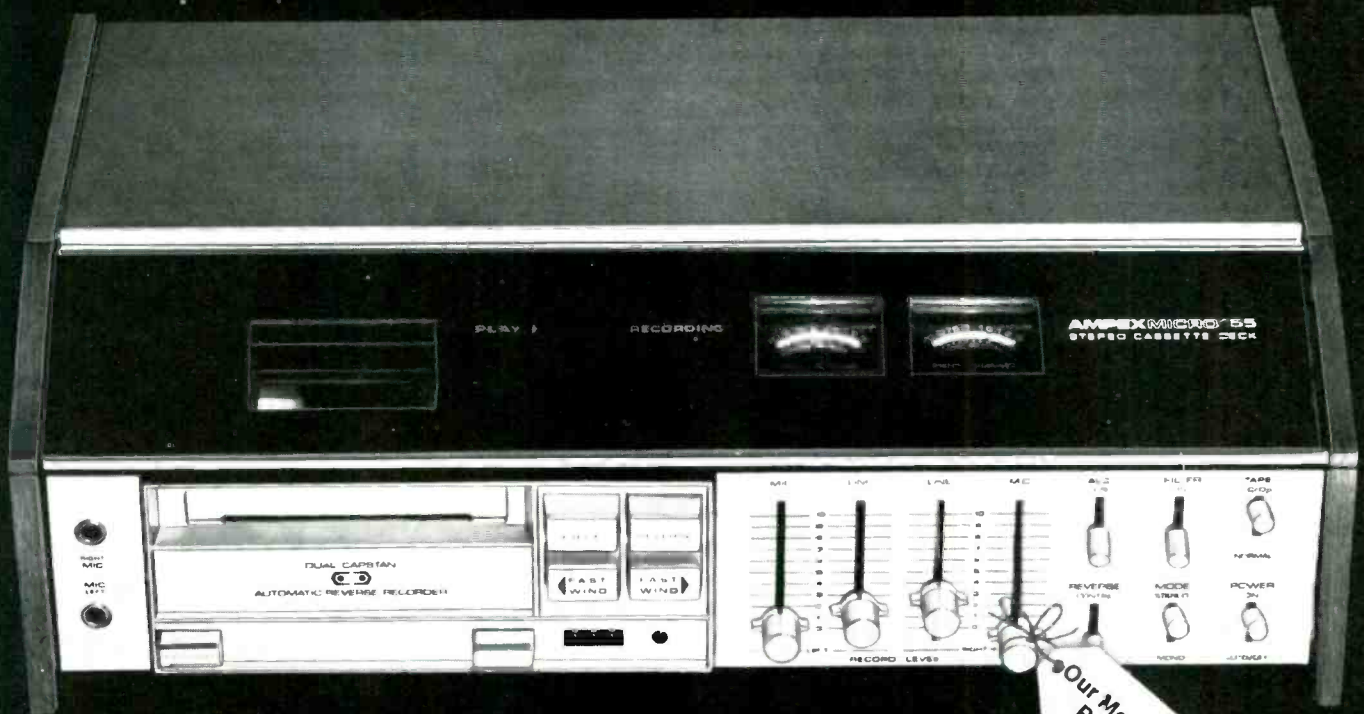
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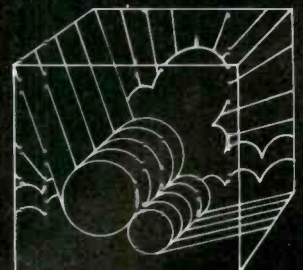
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B **GIBBONS:** "Thy Celestial State;" Prayer of Hezekiah; Behold Thou hast made my days; Royal Pavan; O Lord in Thy wrath; The secret sins; Great King of Gods; Song of Moses; Ah dear heart; Dainty fine bird; In nomine; The silver swan; Fantasy; What is our life. Deller Consort; Jaye Consort of viols, Alfred Deller, dir. RCA Victrola VICS 1551, \$2.98.

The real discovery here is the verse anthem for voices and viols. *Behold Thou hast made my days*, composed in 1618 for the dying Dean of Windsor. The Dean himself selected a part of Psalm 39 from the Burial Service as the text, closing with the words "O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength before I go hence and be no more seen." Orlando Gibbons' setting is a masterpiece. The sensitive declamation, subtly modeled melodic shapes, and elastic intertwining lines which characterize his greatest works are nowhere used more effectively than in the hesitating descent of the final line. As viol consorts and counter-tenor soloists are not found on every tree, I suggest you get this disc if you hope to hear this marvelous work.

Unfortunately I am not so enthusiastic about the other selections which range from inoffensive through dull to just plain awkward. *O Lord in Thy wrath* is a splendid anthem, but it needs a full, rolling sound to sustain the passion of the sentiment and the music. *The secret sins* is probably by William Mundy, a pedestrian contemporary of Gib-

bons, and the intriguingly named *Prayer of Hezekiah* and *Song of Moses* turn out to be simple hymns. *Great King of Gods* is the kind of piece you would expect a good composer to produce for a minor state occasion, in this case a visit to Scotland by James I—professionally competent and rather dull. I don't suppose most of the audience were paying much attention in 1617 and their present-day counterparts will probably tune this one out too.

The Deller consort brings its familiar brand of crystal polyphony and colorless tone to Gibbons' masterful madrigals. Performing Sir Walter Raleigh's stern *What is our life?* as a consort song for soprano and tenor with instrumental accompaniment helps clear up the clutter of Gibbons' polyphonic setting, but the preponderance of consonants in Raleigh's magnificent sonnet probably precludes any really effective musical setting. Viol consorts were not Gibbons' strongest suit. The *Royal Pavan*, which was restored by recomposing the missing two of five voices, might well have been left to rest in peaceful obscurity. Although the Jaye Consort labors industriously, only sections of the six-part Fantasy ever come to life. S.T.S.

HAHN: *Le Bal de Béatrice d'Este: Ballet Suite*—See Messenger; *Isoline: Ballet Suite; Les Deux Pigeons: Ballet Suite.*

HANDEL: *Orlando.* Graziella Sciutti (s), Angelica, Carole Bogard (s), Dorinda; Sofia Steffan (ms), Orlando; Bernadette Greevy (ms), Medoro;

Marius Rintzler (bs), Zoroastro; Martin Isepp, harpsichord; Vienna Volksoper Orchestra, Stephen Simon, cond. RCA Red Seal LSC 6197, \$17.94 (three discs).

The libretto of *Orlando* may be a little confused and confusing—Ariosto would certainly find it so—but then librettos are usually quite different from their sources. Clothed with Handel's music, it serves well enough as an allegorical fairy tale, here serious, there sentimental or humorous, but always made delectable by the score. The work is one of the glories of baroque opera, its music fresh, strong, dramatic, and unfailingly poetic and inventive. We must be grateful for this recording, even if it is a somewhat pale image of a masterpiece. This is due partly to the absence of the theater, partly to the performance itself. Baroque opera in general, and *Orlando* in particular, requires a sumptuous stage setting; Handel's spatial and visual imagination was highly developed (he was a connoisseur and collector of paintings) and eighteenth-century stagecraft could measure up to this imagination. Since a recording is solely for the ear, perhaps we should enjoy the fine music and forget about the stage; perhaps in a recording we could even pass over the absurdity of two females taking the men's roles, though it means that for the major portion of the opera we are listening to women's voices. But our indulgence would be misplaced, for this is in its very nature theater music, the very special kind of dramatic music that even some of the finest lyricists, from Schubert to Wolf, could

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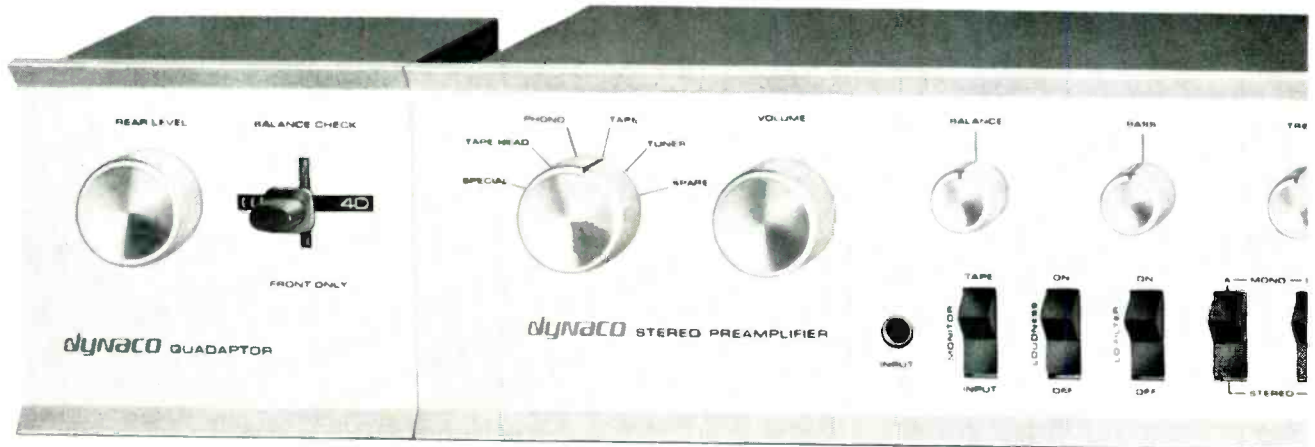
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Graziella Sciutti—a pretty Queen of Cathay.

not create, and at least a modicum of these qualities should come through even with the absence of the stage. When the rich masculine voice of Marius Rintzler is heard, Orlando and Medoro are instantly reduced to mere singers rather than the characters they must be.

All the performers are serious, able, and conscientious artists, and on the whole they sing well—but the women are not bel canto singers and are not used to this style. They cannot—as Rintzler does—“bend” the large inflections so typical of baroque dramatic music and after a while a sameness settles down on the performance. Graziella Sciutti has a charming, light soubrette voice and sings prettily, but prettiness is not enough to portray the Queen of Cathay. Carole Bogard as the Shepherdess is better cast and holds her own. Both of the altos, Sofia Steffan and Bernadette Greevy, are working under the severe handicap of not even appearing on the stage clad as men, which in theatrical performances at least indicates what and who they are. They too sing well, though their color scale is not varied. Yet *Orlando* does not really come to life. The whole thing is too subdued, genteel, and cautious; one feels that everyone is conscious of the stylistic requirements and wants to do justice to them, but this anxiety rounds all the sharp edges. There is too much *Empfindsamkeit*; all the women swoon a little (musically speaking) and the appoggiaturas are a bit “sacred.” Stephen Simon conducts with obvious care and everything is neat, but only too often the work sounds like an oratorio—that is, the way we sing oratorios. The sound is excellent, the overture and the longer ritornels sounding crisp and nicely balanced. The final *coro* is a model of how voices, orchestra, and the harpsichord should sound in an ensemble, but as soon as the voice enters in an aria, the orchestra, in the usual recording “tradition,” is shoved into the background. Martin Isepp’s harpsichord continuo is first-class, but he too

is often held on a sonic leash. In sum, this is another praiseworthy attempt to restore some of the priceless treasures of this rich literature, but we still have a long way to go before baroque opera will come to life. Nevertheless, with all its shortcomings this recording affords a good deal of pleasure. There are excellent notes by Winton Dean. P.H.L.

HENZE: *El Cimarrón*. William Pearson, baritone; Karlheinz Zöller, flute; Leo Brouwer, guitar; Stomu Yamash'ta, percussion; Hans Werner Henze, cond. Deutsche Grammophon 2702 050, \$13.96 (two discs).

Those who have been curious about the possible implications of Henze’s recent attempts to break away from the essential conservatism of what may now be called his “operatic period” (i.e., that of the 1950s and early ‘60s) will be particularly interested in this new work. For *El Cimarrón*, premiered in June of 1970, represents by far the composer’s most successful effort to find a cogent musical expression for his currently radical political views. In the two major “departures” which preceded this one, *The Raft of the Frigate “Medusa”* and *Essay on Pigs*, one was struck by a curious sense of contradiction between the idea of the work and the musical means employed to express it (the latter revealing a not insignificant residue of compositional devices left over from the earlier Henze); here there is an impressive correspondence between specific musical techniques and expressive ends. To be sure, there is still a strong dose of the old eclecticism—which I suspect to be so totally part and parcel of Henze’s musical language as to be nondisposable—but the diverse gestures now seem to be more successfully under control, integrated by a total conception spanning the entire composition.

El Cimarrón is scored for baritone, flute, guitar, and percussion and is subtitled “a recital for four musicians.” Considering its length (some seventy-five minutes), it must have been tempting for the composer once again to use the large instrumental forces of the *Raft* and *Essay*. Yet I suspect that Henze’s decision to limit himself to four performers played a crucial role in bringing about a real rethinking of his previous compositional attitudes and a fresh approach to certain basic musical questions. And I also suspect that it was a necessary step if his future development was not completely to stagnate, a step which in *El Cimarrón* has enabled him to avoid for the most part the stock musical responses that so frequently marred the earlier works.

It is primarily in the instrumental writing that the new Henze makes himself heard. Although the highly theatrical voice part is constructed along lines already essentially set forth in *Essay on Pigs*, the instruments are handled with a freedom and spontaneity unprecedented in the composer’s work. This undoubtedly results in part from the fact that most of the score is not rigidly specified, many of the details being fixed only by the performer’s momentary decision. But Henze’s aleatory methods seem more the symptom than the cause of a fundamental musical transformation. They are always sufficiently controlled to allow for careful regulation of the over-all musical impulse, thus assuring a clear sense of phrase and articulation and

enabling the results to be closely tied to specific textural meanings. Another important resource is the use of various “irregular” performance techniques (e.g., stroking the rim of the suspended cymbal with a bow, and overblowing the flute), and there is considerable doubling (all four musicians make use of a truly fantastic array of percussion instruments at one time or another, and the flutist plays not only the four different instrumental types within the flute family but also harmonica). As a result there is a constant sense of timbral renewal, and it is a measure of Henze’s achievement in this regard that, despite the limited number of performers, the great length of the work never becomes oppressive.

Much of the character of the composition stems from its text, which is based on the autobiography of Esteban Montejo, a runaway Cuban slave. In fifteen sections, the work contains excerpts covering virtually the entire span (some 100 years) of Montejo’s life: his experiences as a worker, the unspeakable cruelty of his Spanish owners, the exhilaration of his first taste of freedom (as a fugitive in a forest), the “false freedom” after the so-called “liberation,” etc. The text literally explodes with life, ranging in mood from intense pain to overwhelming joy, from profound anger and hate to a remarkable tenderness. It is a moving document, to which Henze has brought an almost equal musical vitality.

This sense of vitality is in no small measure attributable to the extraordinary performances by the four musicians. William Pearson’s reading of the vocal part, in which shouts, wailing, and the like predominate over normally pitched sounds, is a veritable tour de force, and the three instrumentalists manage to match him step for step in intensity and virtuosity. (I am told that Henze wrote the work especially for these players; it certainly sounds like it.) The trilingual notes give general information about the composer and executants but, inexplicably, there is nothing about the piece itself other than brief descriptions of the fifteen individual sections. Unfortunately for American listeners, the work is performed in German, but text and translation are included. R.P.M.

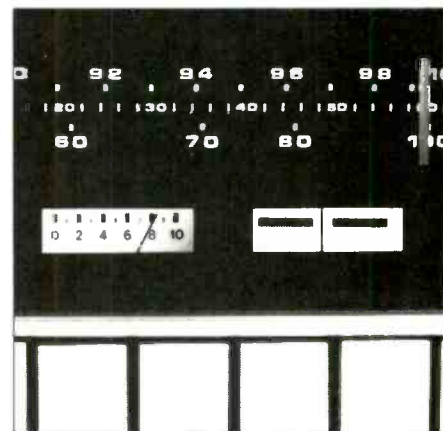
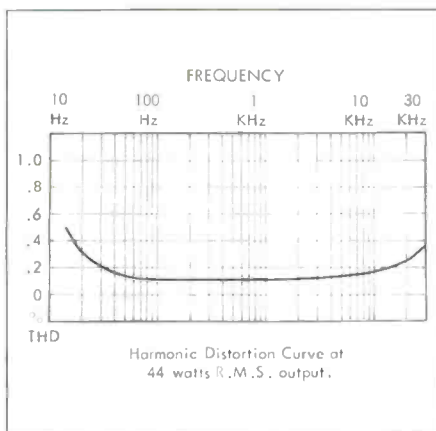
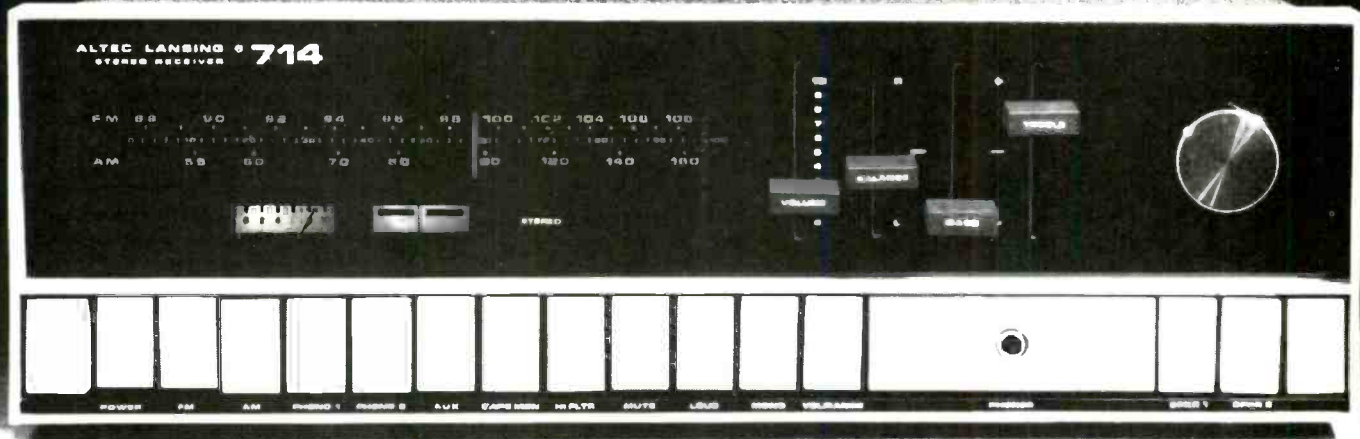
KREUTZER, K.: Grand Septet, in E flat, Op. 62.

BERWALD: Septet in B flat (“Stor”). Members of the Vienna Octet. London CS 6672, \$5.98.

The Kreutzer here, be it noted, is Konradin—not the Rudolphe of Beethoven sonata fame. Konradin (1780-1849) was an opera composer and opera-house director of some renown in his time: his septet is modeled on Beethoven’s but in musical tone reminds one more of Haydn. The piece is full of variety, uses the instruments to good independent means, boasts a lovely adagio and achieves some especially cheerful percolating in the scherzo. It is a happy addition to the chamber music catalogue.

I wish I could say as much for the Berwald. London’s jacket notes speak confidently of “the present revival of interest in Berwald”—I don’t know whose interest, certainly not mine. Berwald was born in Stockholm in 1796 and spent much time in Germany, becoming a respected orthopedic surgeon in Berlin; later he moved back to Sweden and directed a saw-mill and glassworks, finally dying content, one hopes, after a belated appointment as profes-

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sor of music at the Stockholm Conservatory. The septet runs in length far past any interest in content: it tends toward shortwindedness—particularly in the first movement where there is a continual change of gears—but the second movement gets by with much cheerful doodling and sentimental melodizing. The Vienna group plays both works with vim, fervor, and good intonation—in short, superbly. S.F.

MESSAGER: *Isoline*: Ballet Suite. **Les Deux Pigeons**: Ballet Suite. **HAHN:** *Le Bal de Béatrice d'Este*: Ballet Suite. Orchestre de Paris, Jean-Pierre Jacquillat, cond. Angel S 36769, \$5.98.

Ballet music was born in France and over the

years French music for the dance has remained the paradigm, even in Russia. And apart from its masterpieces, French ballet music is exceptionally rich in works that may be ranked no higher than "minor" by the loftiest aesthetic standards, yet these items remain consistently entertaining by virtue of their engaging tunefulness, kaleidoscopic coloration, infectious vivacity, and, perhaps above all, elegant gracefulness. Characteristic exemplars are the present excerpts from stage works by André Messager (1853–1929), long famous as a conductor as well as a ballet and operetta composer. *Les Deux Pigeons* of 1886, based on a fable by La Fontaine, is the better known nowadays, thanks in good part to the British Royal Ballet Company's revival production, brought to the United States in 1965.

But the fairy tale *Isoline* of 1888 has a similarly attractive combination of immediate theatrical and musical effectiveness. Both works were once well represented on records, but the present selections are the first recent ones, originally released by French Pathé a year or so ago. And for good measure the disc is filled out with a later (1909) neoclassical ballet suite by Reynaldo Hahn (1875–1947), best known—when he is remembered at all nowadays—as a composer of *chansons* and operettas. This music (recorded for the first time, to the best of my knowledge, since the composer himself led a 78-rpm version in the mid-Thirties) is notable partly for its lavender-and-old-lace atmospheric evocations but mainly for its subtly piquant scoring for only fourteen instruments—winds, two harps, piano, and percussion.

I can't pretend to remember how Hahn and Messager conducted their own works, but I'm willing to bet that they never had players who matched the virtuosos of the Orchestre de Paris under the talented Jean-Pierre Jacquillat: this conductor reinforces the fine impression he made in his first domestically released disc, Angel's "Favorite French Showpieces" program of December 1968. And back in the 78-rpm era audio technology was incapable of achieving the appropriately French brilliance and transparency that make the sound as well as the music here so appetizing to both one's ears and mind. The engineers even have the ingenuity and good taste to shift aural perspectives from well back in the auditorium for Messager's full orchestra to sharper focused close-ups on Hahn's chamber ensemble. R.D.D.



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CIRCLE 33 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

MOZART: Serenades: No. 6, in D, K. 239 (*Serenata notturna*); No. 9, in D, K. 320 (*Posthorn*). Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Karl Böhm, cond. Deutsche Grammophon 2530 082, \$6.98. Tape: ●● DGG 3300 102, \$6.98.

MOZART: Divertimentos: No. 3, in E flat, K. 166; No. 8, in F, K. 213; No. 9, in B flat, K. 240; No. 12, in E flat, K. 252. Netherlands Wind Ensemble, Edo de Waart, cond. Philips 6500 002, \$5.98.

It is puzzling and unfortunate how little the large repertory of classical serenade music is explored and understood. Even the latest edition of *Grove's Dictionary* has nothing but the most perfunctory and erroneous entries for this music, which engaged the attention of some of the greatest composers of the eighteenth century. The reasons for this neglect are a basic socio-cultural misconception which places all "entertainment" music at a lower level of creation, and the reliance on "form" as the principal criterion of evaluation. This simplistic approach ignores the question of who was entertained by this music, as well as the fact that it follows no standard in the choice of form. The serenade-divertimento (also interchangeably called cassation, nocturne, even sinfonia) uses all forms of instrumental music: sonata, rondo, variation, concerto, as well as various dances. Nor is there any uniformity in the number of movements or in the number or kinds of instruments. Even the etymology is more complicated than *Grove's* has it. Obviously "sera" (evening) is one of the sources of the serenade, but it can also be "sereno" (serene, cloudless sky), or

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"*al serena*" (out of doors); and indeed, these attractive, "cloudless" compositions were often performed in the evening out of doors. While "serenata" may also designate certain kinds of operas and cantatas, it has been generally understood since the Haydn/Mozart era to refer to a distinct kind of instrumental music. The early serenade (to use this as the generic term for all the others) was a sequel to the baroque instrumental suite, standing somewhere between chamber music and the symphony. Then the species begins to be more differentiated. The Salzburg serenades of Michael Haydn and the two Mozarts, father and son, are mostly light and brief chamber music pieces, but the large-scale serenades composed by Wolfgang after 1780 belong to the highest sphere of "serious" music. Mozart wrote few works that are more profound than the C minor Serenade, K. 388; and the *Posthorn* Serenade, recorded here, is a full-blown symphonic work.

Yes, this was entertainment music, "functional" music, or to use a more recent term, *Gebrauchsmusik*; but its function should not be confused with that of the subculture represented by most entertainment music of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The vast difference is caused by the absence of the fine points of the craft of composition in the latter-day entertainment music, whereas the serenade music of the eighteenth century satisfied the most exquisite requirements of the *métier*. This music, with all its lightness and accessibility, was composed for the delectation of connoisseurs, for discriminating and knowledgeable intellectuals, and not for the populace. The change, under social compulsion, as the composer depended less and less on aristocratic patrons, came in the Beethovenian era. The last examples of highly artistic serenade music, Beethoven's Septet and Schubert's Octet, became serious chamber music, while the role of entertainment was taken over first by the salon, then by an organized industry that long since has lost contact with music as an art.

Though the serenade, its tone, sound, and technique, formed an indispensable part of Mozart's art to the end of his life, one did not encounter these works in the concert hall or on recordings until fairly recently. Why? God only knows, because when well performed they are a sheer delight. The *Posthorn* Serenade—so named because in the trio of the second minuet the well-known postillion calls are heard played on a posthorn—is a larger work than any of Mozart's symphonies. The first movement has a spacious sonata structure, solidly symphonic and using the full classical orchestra of the times. Very interesting is Mozart's moody use of a pre-emptory figure that seems to object to the procedure. It vetoes, quite harshly, every attempt at development, but Mozart skillfully reconciles the antagonists. The first minuet is also uncommonly elaborate and serious; then in the Concertante and Rondo (third and fourth movements) Mozart turns to real serenade music with ravishing solos. (The serenade often contained little concealed concertos.) The Andantino gives up the banter; it is a deeply felt, aching, and disquieting movement. The second minuet is in turn festive and delicate, and the Presto finale is resolutely symphonic, with contrapuntal elaborations. This major work, which should be known to all Mozart

devotees, receives a warm, vigorous, euphonious, and unsentimental performance; Böhm knows the style and understands the work. The sound is excellent.

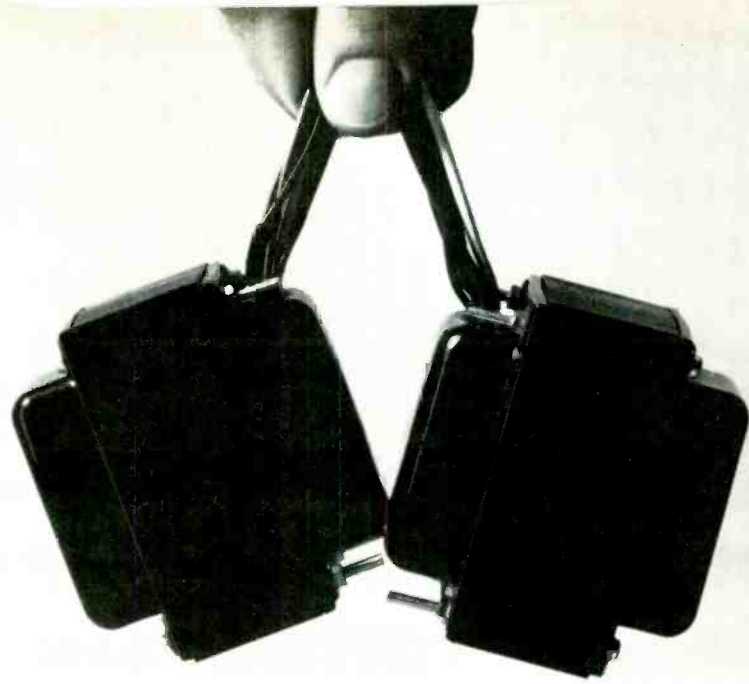
The little *Serenata notturna* (K. 239, 1776), filling out the second side, is a dainty, capricious, miniature concerto grosso, a solo quartet in opposition to a string orchestra with a pair of drums. The confrontation is not dramatic; rather the young composer wants to assure us, with melting Neapolitan cantilena, mandolinlike pizzicato accompaniments, and so forth, that the night is not filled with terror. Böhm again finds the right tone and pace, and is well seconded by his engineers. This is a fine recording.

The wind divertimentos in the Philips recording fascinate with their wondrously idiomatic writing. Nowhere in his symphonies does Mozart demand so much of his woodwinds and horns; the wind divertimento was unquestionably the proving ground for his elaborate use of these instruments in the piano concertos and the operas. The Netherlands Wind Ensemble consists of first-class instrumentalists who not only play well but form an exceedingly well-balanced entity. Their phrasing, though, is a little finicky and their staccatos too *sec*: the airiness and charm of this music are built in and should not be underlined. Nevertheless, these are fine performances and the sound is exceptional. An amusing novelty is presented by the cover photo, which shows the ensemble rehearsing, genially *alfresco*, in a woodsy glade. Some of the players and the conductor are shirtless and shoeless, a rather pleasant departure from the often pointless "art work." P.H.L.

ORFF: Catulli Carmina. Arleen Auger, soprano; Wieslaw Ochman, tenor; German Opera Chorus, Berlin, with piano and percussion ensemble, Eugen Jochum, cond. Deutsche Grammophon 2530 074, \$6.98.

Jochum was the first to record, in 1953-56, the complete Orff scenic-cantata trilogy, and his reading of the opening *Carmina Burana* (remade in stereo a couple of years ago) still ranks as the interpretative paradigm of that popular showpiece—hence one would expect that his current stereo remake of the second work in the series might well be the definitive version. Unfortunately, it isn't. Jochum's executant control is as taut as ever, but either he relishes this work less than its predecessor or he fails to infect his performers and listeners with any special enthusiasm. The present release's primary handicaps, however, are its relatively distant miking and markedly dry acoustical ambience. DGG's crystalline sonic transparency does ensure sharply delineated score-details, but it fatally weakens the sensorially dramatic impact this music can—and should—make.

The well-known Ormandy/Columbia version of 1967-68 remains much more successful as a "sonic spectacular," yet neither that nor Jochum's is as attractively sung, by both soloists and chorus, as the more recent version conducted by Roger Wagner for Angel. *That* one is recorded with uncommon vividness as well, if with less sonic weight than Ormandy's, and so still ranks as my first choice in every respect save that of annotations. Angel inexcusably fails to provide texts



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and translations of the Latin poems by Catullus—texts commendably supplied by both Columbia and DGG. R.D.D.

B **PROKOFIEV:** *Peter and the Wolf*, Op. 67; *Classical Symphony*, Op. 25. Sir Ralph Richardson, narrator (in *Peter and the Wolf*); London Symphony Orchestra, Sir Malcolm Sargent, cond. Stereo Treasury STS 15114, \$2.98 [from RCA Victor LSC 2783, 1965].

This disc has a rather unusual history. First released in England around 1959, it initially appeared here six years ago on RCA when that company still had international agreements with English Decca. Presumably to give the *Peter and the Wolf* side a bit more commercial oomph, Ralph Richardson was edited out of the U.S. version and the then popular figure of Lorne Greene, from TV's *Bonanza*, took over the narrative duties. Now here it is again, but in the original format with Sir Ralph once again entrusted with the story line.

Whether it was all worth the trouble is something else again. I'm not sure that Richardson's talents are put to best use—he sounds a bit like an unwilling grandfather roped into telling a bedside story. Nor does Sargent seem particularly interested in the music's grace, delicate scoring, or wit; a rather stuffy performance in short (ditto for the overside *Classical Symphony*). Although not really aimed at the kiddies, Bea Lillie's delightfully mad recitation on London 6187 remains unbeatable, as does Skitch Henderson's lively direction. P.G.D.

RAVEL: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*, in G—See Roussel: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*, in G, Op. 36.

ROUSSAKIS: *Night Speech*; *Sonata for Harpsichord*—See Druckman; *Animus II*.

B **ROUSSEL:** *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*, in G, Op. 36. **RAVEL:** *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*, in G. Maria Littauer, piano; Hamburg Symphony, Alois Springer, cond. Turnabout TVS 34405, \$2.98.

Roussel's Piano Concerto, written in 1927, is one of those busy pieces, typical of the composer's later style, in which the primary interest lies in the extraordinary vitality of the rhythmic language and the scoring. Indeed, one of the piano's main roles in this work is to define and highlight the rhythmic structure, and in this way Roussel's concerto falls into much the same category as the early piano concertos of Prokofiev and Bartók. A striking difference, however, is that Roussel develops his material along the lines of a concerto for orchestra with a piano obbligato—the relatively difficult piano part functions here chiefly as a coloristic element rather than a solo instrument. Most effective in this concerto are the toccatalike first movement and the rather dirgelike second movement: the latter in particular occasionally reminds one vaguely of the same movement in Bartók's First Piano Concerto (although there is no question of

influence here) and also foreshadows the opening of Roussel's own Fourth Symphony.

Pianist Maria Littauer has an appropriately brittle style and an admirable rhythmic sense that are well suited to the music, and she integrates her performance with great skill into the general orchestral context. Furthermore, Alois Springer constantly attends to the instrumental balance and to the concerto's structural tensions, and the result is an unusually convincing collaboration between soloist and orchestra. The Hamburg Symphony, unfortunately, seems to have a particularly bad woodwind section, and this occasionally mars the otherwise capable, if not virtuoso, performance by the orchestra. At any rate, this is the only recording of the Roussel Concerto currently available in the U.S. Although there is an excellent version by Claude Helffer (with Serge Baudo conducting) available in France, this Littauer/Springer collaboration offers a vital and carefully conceived alternative that fills an important gap in the Schwann catalogue.

I must say I have never heard such a calculated performance of the Ravel G major Piano Concerto. Every crescendo, every ornamentation, every rhythmic detail, every trombone glissando seems to have been planned out in advance with a slide rule. Let me hasten to add, however, that this approach is not at all foreign to the manner in which Ravel apparently conceived his compositions, if one is to judge by the composer's highly mechanical interpretations of his own music. Indeed, the startling, if cold, precision of this version sheds a hard, classical light on the concerto that is a far cry from the virtuoso sheen usually associated with it. And here, even more than in the Roussel, the really dismal tone quality of the solo woodwinds detracts from the over-all performance.

On the whole, the recorded sound on this Dolbyized disc is extremely impressive. However, I have the feeling that Littauer has been cheated in certain solo passages which seem to be annoyingly muted. Littauer's tone is never really allowed to sing: one has the impression that she has played all of the works with the soft pedal down, which is obviously not the case. However, the efforts of both pianist and conductor are well worth listening to, both for their novel conception of the Ravel concerto and for the rarely heard Roussel. R.S.B.

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

SHOSTAKOVICH: *Symphony No. 12*, Op. 112 (1917: *In Memory of Lenin*). Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra, Yevgeny Mravinsky, cond. Melodiya/Angel SR 40128, \$5.98.

In the midst of one of those self-critical moods during which I asked myself why I enjoy Shostakovich's Twelfth so much, it occurred to me that this symphony stands in relationship to the composer's greatest work in much the same way that Alfred Hitchcock's *North by Northwest* does to his greatest films. Both the symphony and the movie give the impression of being self-parodies that contain all of their respective artists' various aesthetic, technical, and emotional tics, but in a wildly exaggerated context. And for this reason both works are



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apt to appeal equally to sophisticated aficionados, who revel in watching their heroes do their thing, as well as to the general public, who find such endeavors exciting in themselves. On the other hand, that school of critics which insists upon judging a work of music by an arbitrary standard of "modernity" (one that could just as easily be used to consign many earlier masters to limbo) will forever rant and rave not only over such a work as the Shostakovich Twelfth but over many of the composer's truly outstanding works as well.

In a sense, of course, it is regrettable that Shostakovich indulged in quite so much sabrerattling in the Twelfth Symphony, as it has turned off many Western listeners who are unable to see beyond the work's ideological implications. Actually, this work is perhaps the best constructed of the composer's symphonies, with the exception of the Sixth. The Twelfth is a cyclical symphony whose thematic unity throughout its four uninterrupted movements is a far cry from the almost total melodic disparity characteristic of such symphonies as the Second, Third, and Fourteenth. Even the three-note motive that forms the backbone of the Twelfth Symphony's pompous and drawn-out coda in the last movement appears subtly in the first movement and again in the second. And within the movements, too, the formal construction is exceedingly effective. It might also be added that the main theme of the last movement is one that seems to have a special significance for Shostakovich. Not only does it appear in almost exactly the same form, although well hidden, at two or three points in the Second Symphony (which is also dedicated to the October Revolution), but various modifications of this melody also appear in the Tenth and Fourteenth Symphonies, as well as the cantata *The Sun Shines Over Our Motherland*.

The recorded sound on this disc is gorgeous; with the symphony's many fortissimo histrionics and its brilliant orchestration, this release has definite possibilities for showing off your stereo system. To be sure, Mravinsky's interpretation does have some strong competition, both from Prêtre's lyrical performance on Odeon (now deleted) and from an absolutely brilliant and beautifully recorded rendition (recently released in Europe) by Ogan Durjan and the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra. Nonetheless, Mravinsky conducts the symphony with extraordinary spirit and movement, and it is performed with true virtuoso skill by the Leningrad Philharmonic. Melodiya/Angel's excellent stereo engineering (of the same performance previously available in the U.S. in mono only on MK) greatly enhances the efforts of Mravinsky, who brings out many harmonic and instrumental details that add great depth to the symphony. Melodiya should really give us additional Mravinsky performances in recordings of comparable quality, for he is surely one of Russia's most gifted conductors. As for Shostakovich's Twelfth—great art, it isn't; great fun definitely!

R.S.B.

SLONIMSKY: *Studies in Black and White*; Suite for Cello and Piano; *Variations on a Brazilian Tune*; *Songs*. Nancy Bramlage, soprano; Nicolas Slonimsky, piano; Jerome Kessler, cello. Orion ORS 7145, \$5.98.

Everybody knows Nicolas Slonimsky as musi-

cologist and conductor, but he is very little known as a composer, and this appears to be the first disc of his works ever issued. Their general tone is one of gentle whimsy. The first side is given over to instrumental works, the second to vocal.

Studies in Black and White is a series of pleasant bagatelles wherein the right hand plays only on the white notes of the piano and the left hand only on the black. This results in something very complex from a theoretical point of view, but it doesn't sound complex at all. The same is true of the six short movements of the cello suite (one of which is based on cowboy tunes: Casals in the corral) and of the *Variations on a Brazilian Tune*; this doesn't sound in the least Brazilian, and it is inflected toward such different things as the Brahms *Wiegenlied* and a circus march.

Whether or not Mr. Slonimsky has consciously written a set of variations in the style of different composers I do not know, but he skirts that invariably amusing gag in all the instrumental pieces on Side 1 and comes even closer in the only good thing on Side 2—a cycle of six songs on texts taken from gravestones in Hancock, New Hampshire. These are in such styles as a Handelian aria, a sentimental ballad of the mid-nineteenth century, and a Civil War martial song à la Henry Clay Work. The five other songs on Side 2 are commercial encore pieces. Everything is very deftly performed and well recorded.

A.F.

STRAVINSKY: *Dances concertantes*; Four Norwegian Moods; *Ode*; Concerto in D for String Orchestra. Columbia Chamber Orchestra (in the *Dances*); CBC Symphony Orchestra (in the Moods); Cleveland Orchestra (in the *Ode*); Columbia Symphony Orchestra (in the Concerto); Robert Craft, cond. (in the *Dances*); Igor Stravinsky, cond. (in the other works). Columbia M 30516, \$5.98.

Purchasers of this record who may already have compared it with my Stravinsky discography (published in the booklet accompanying the Columbia "silver-box" Stravinsky album, D55 775) will be puzzled to note that this recording of the *Dances concertantes* is not listed therein, although the jacket of the present release credits the composer as the conductor of the performance. The answer is that someone at Columbia has apparently slipped up: according to extremely reliable information I accumulated while compiling the discography, the *Dances* were recorded under Robert Craft's direction, in Hollywood during January 1967.

Despite this factual error, the record remains a desirable one—not least for the fine performance, with the Cleveland Orchestra, of the gravely beautiful *Ode* written in 1943 as a tribute to Natalie Koussevitzky. The *Ode* has always been a stepchild around CBS—the original New York Philharmonic recording had to wait some seven years for publication, and so has this one (it was made in March 1964). It is lovingly played by the excellent orchestra, and its coincidental release during the very week of Stravinsky's death is altogether appropriate.

All these pieces stem from the 1940s, and fall under the general rubric of "neoclassic," but they are very different. The important thing here is not that Stravinsky "adapted" other styles (as the annotator has it), but that

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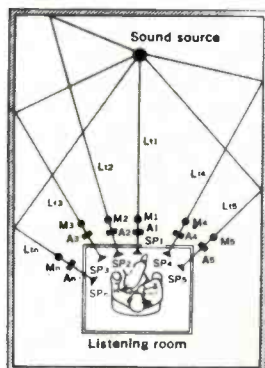
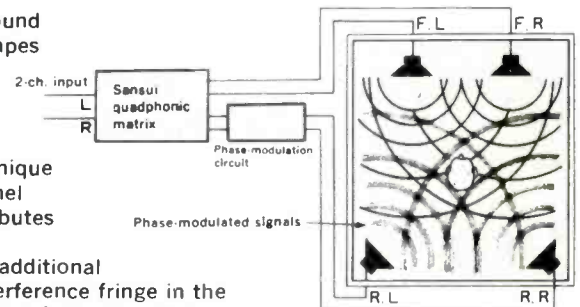
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his own style at this time involved the conscious "layering" of other styles within his own. The *Norwegian Moods* are not, perhaps, one of his stronger scores, but to regard them as "Grieg with wrong notes" is to miss the point: the "Norwegian" style is retained as a coherent presence, and the juxtaposition of the materials takes into full account the contrast between it and the Stravinskian disjunctions. (This performance is not as good as the *Ode*, but it will serve; there is no other current version.)

Like the *Norwegian Moods*, the *Dances concertantes* seem rather less dense, more relaxed in their unfolding than, say, the Concerto in D; the spirit is that of a divertimento and although not intended as such, the score has since served appropriately for ballet purposes. The performance, well disciplined if tense, is occasionally marred by a raucous trumpet, and there is a puzzling repeat of the seventeen measures beginning at No. 153 in the score. Is this a revision, or merely a tape-editing slip?

The Concerto is much involved with concerns of pitch (the F-sharp/F-natural alternation in the first movement) and counterpoint (the intriguingly doubled line in the slow movement that separates and comes together again). Here, too, I find the performance a shade on the grim side—it's a difficult score and everyone seems preoccupied with getting the notes. As at other times in these performances, some niceties of dynamics go unobserved.

The recorded sound is variable, given the assorted locations (Hollywood, Toronto, Cleveland, and New York), but generally acceptable. Both the *Ode* and the *Norwegian Moods* are otherwise unavailable at present. Let us hope that Columbia will soon let us have the remaining unreleased Stravinsky material in their files, and reissue some of the important things that are currently out of print—including *The Nightingale* and *The Flood*, both major scores. D.H.

TCHAIKOVSKY: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2, in G, Op. 44. Igor Zhukov, piano; U.S.S.R. State Radio Symphony, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, cond. Melodiya/Angel SR 40097, \$5.98.

This is a Tchaikovsky Second Concerto for people who like Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto! I have usually considered the sequel a much more civilized, lyrical work (I enjoy them both). Zhukov piles into this work as if he were driving a mighty bulldozer. His octaves roar like the winds of doom, his runs pelt like hail, and by the time you have gotten to the first-movement cadenza I dare say that you have experienced the cruelest kind of Russian winter. I don't know whether the clangorous recorded sound is responsible for Zhukov's ferocious, metallic piano tone, or whether he simply likes to whang the day-lights out of the poor instrument. Anyhow, the effect is the same—and if you are a devotee of sensuous cantabile, this performance is not for you. As always, Rozhdestvensky provides a strong, closely knit accompaniment even though his orchestra is rough-toned and woefully murky in timbre. The Rondo doesn't take off as it did on the splendid old (deleted) Cherkassky/Decca recording: it sounds a bit too lusty and heavily accented in the present

statement. The billing "original version" differentiates this text from the unsanctioned one by Siloti which spruces up some of the passagework and cuts most of Tchaikovsky's lovely piano-trio music from the second movement. There is, nonetheless, a small cut in the first movement here (which Tchaikovsky himself is reputed to have made when he conducted the piece).

This record, as I have said, does have a certain strenuous "bash power" which many think ideally suited to all Russian music. One certainly couldn't call Zhukov's performance unidiomatic, but one couldn't call it subtle, either. I would sooner have the World Series version by Nikita Magaloff and Colin Davis if you desire Tchaikovsky's original text. True, the playing there is a bit aloof and the recorded sound a bit boxy. Still, more detail comes through, and the execution, whatever its faults, is more thoughtful and sensitive. If you are not a stickler for textual purity, Gary Graffman's disc with Ormandy—a composite of Tchaikovsky's original in the slow movement and Siloti's reworking elsewhere—is efficiently, if a shade unsmilingly, played and best recorded of all. That Columbia disc, by the way, also throws in the one-movement Third Concerto as a bonus. H.G.

TCHAIKOVSKY: Songs—See Britten: *The Poet's Echo*, Op. 76.

TCHAIKOVSKY: Symphony No. 4, in F minor, Op. 36. New York Philharmonic, Daniel Barenboim, cond. Columbia M 30572, \$5.98.

I was somewhat nonplused by Columbia's ad for this one: "Tchaikovsky's No. 4 for those who already have it," and then the candid admission that Schwann already lists fifteen versions of the music. (My own count gives me eighteen, or fourteen if you exclude the ones in complete Tchaikovsky symphony cycles.) Since Schwann lists alphabetically by conductor, Barenboim's account "will be on top where [according to the ad] it should be." Such cutesy press-agentry ought not to go unrewarded, and I do hope that Claudio Abbado will lose no time making *his* views on the subject available!

Even if you aren't put off by the hard sell, some idiosyncracies in Barenboim's performance might do so: a rather schmaltzy *tenuto* over the first note of the *moderato con anima* in the first movement; his fussy overpointing of the phrasing in the bassoon solo at bar 109; the rather crassly gauged *piu mosso* coda; the languorous treatment of the slow movement's central section; the violent-sounding and totally unnecessary *attacca* at bar 149 of the finale. As Toscanini once wrote, "blessed are the arts that can survive without the aid of interpreters."

That said, it must be admitted that Barenboim errs no more than a good many other maestros, and for all its affectations, I enjoyed this recording immensely. It is rather obvious that the interpretation is patterned on Furtwängler's recording with the Vienna Philharmonic, but the paradigm is far surpassed by the disciple. For one thing, the New York Philharmonic is a much more exciting, idiomatic orchestra for Tchaikovsky than its Austrian counterpart. Its strings have greater luster, the woodwinds have more opulence, the

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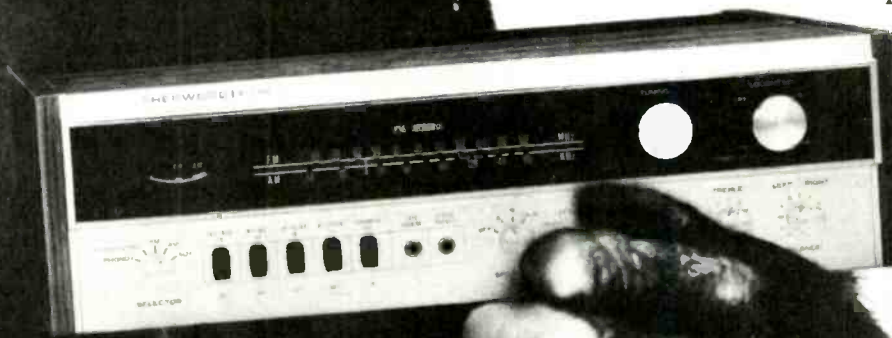
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brass are less strident. But the real hero is Barenboim. For all his occasional excesses, he is a real conductor—with ideas, intelligence, and above all, the ability to bend even the notoriously blasé Philharmonic musicians to his will. The playing is simply gorgeous—sleek, well integrated, and judiciously balanced. The recorded sound is exceptionally close and detailed: sometimes (as in the very prominent soft drum beats in the first movement's second theme) a bit uncomfortably so. In sum this is not quite a "straight" reading, but very definitely a sane, enthusiastic, generally tasteful, and very dynamic one. H.G.

TIPPETT: The Midsummer Marriage. Joan Carlyle (s), Elizabeth Harwood (s), Elizabeth Bainbridge (ms), Helen Watts (c), Alberto Remedios (t); Chorus and Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Colin Davis, cond. For a feature review of this recording, see page 68.

VERDI: Aida. Leontyne Price (s), Grace Bumbry (ms), Plácido Domingo (t), Sherrill Milnes (b), Ruggero Raimondi (bs); John Alldis Choir; London Symphony Orchestra, Erich Leinsdorf, cond. For a feature review of this recording, see page 57.

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The Ives is a short, early, tuneful piece. It shakes no mountains, but it is clearly the work of a major composer. Just as clearly—and quite sadly—the quintet by Quincy Porter is not the work of a major composer, even though mighty and major players are here involved in its interpretation. The recording is flawless. A.F.

SIEGFRIED BEHREND: "English Guitar Music." **CUTTING:** Greensleeves; Galliard. **BATCHELAR:** Monsiers Almaine. **ROBINSON:** Merry Melancholie; Galliard; Almaine. **DOWLAND:** Lachrimae antiquae; The King of Denmark's Galliard; Melancholie Galliard; Captaine Digori Piper's Galliard; Queen Elizabeth Her Galliard. **CAMIDGE:** Sonatina for Two Guitars, in G. **DUARTE:** English Suite, Op. 31. **MCCABE:** Can-

by Peter G. Davis

Tchaikovsky's Joan of Arc

THIS DISC is an exciting addition to the catalogue, and my only grumble is that Angel did not see fit to give us the complete recording from which these excerpts are drawn.

The *Maid of Orleans* was Tchaikovsky's sixth opera. Unlike his popular *Onegin* and *Pique Dame*, it shows the composer working on a grand-opera scale with massed ensembles and larger-than-life heroic characters. One would think that Tchaikovsky's lyrical talents and easy command of intimate miniatures would automatically rule him out as a successful proponent of historical epic. One would be wrong. The most impressive aspect of the *Maid* is the sweeping grandeur and solid structuring of the biggest scenes. Take the conclusion to Act I, for instance, presented here in its entirety. A chorus of villagers bewail the sacking and burning of their homes by the oncoming English army; Joan rallies the mob together by prophesying the enemy's defeat, and a messenger arrives with the news that the English general has indeed been slain; the people acclaim Joan, who leads them in a choral prayer of thanksgiving; left alone, Joan now realizes her true mission and bids a reluctant farewell to her pastoral life (this is the well-known aria, "*Adieu, foyers!*"). It lasts about twenty-five minutes in all, a masterful blending of musical declamation, choral writing, theatrical know-how, and superb lyrical inspiration.

The other big chunk of music included here is the extended scene between Joan and Lionel, who meet as foes and eventually (and not altogether

convincingly) fall in love. We are also given the splendid prelude (contrasting the Maid's feminine and martial character) and the charming opening chorus of peasant girls, the short entr'acte to Act II, and an attractive arioso for Agnes Sorel, the dauphin's mistress. If all this whets your appetite for more, a search for the complete MK edition or even Ultraphone's domestic pressing of the ancient Kirov recording will well repay the effort.

All the singers are more than adequate on the Melodiya disc, Rozhdestvensky molds the grand line with passion and vigor, and the sound has magnificent impact. As the Maid herself, Irina Arkhipova makes it abundantly clear that she is one of the most thrilling singers to be found on any opera stage today. The gleaming thrust of her powerful mezzo is absolutely right for Joan's intense exhortations, while the sense of heartbreak that runs through her Act I aria and her despairing confusion in the Lionel confrontation bespeak a dramatic sensitivity as highly developed as her natural vocal gifts. All in all, a stunning record and not to be missed.

TCHAIKOVSKY: The Maid of Orleans (excerpts). Klavdiya Radchenko (s), Agnes; Irina Arkhipova (ms), Joan; Andrei Sokolov (t), Raimond; Sergei Yavkovenko (b), Lionel; Vladimir Valaitis (b), Dunois; Yevgeny Vladimirov (bs), Thibaut; Viktor Selivanov (bs), Bertrand; Vartan Mikoelyan (bs), Soldier; Chorus and Orchestra of the Moscow Radio, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, cond. Melodiya/Angel SR 40156, \$5.98.

to for Guitar. **MUSGRAVE:** Soliloquy for Guitar and Tape. Siegfried Behrend, guitar; Takashi Ochi, guitar (in the Cambridge). Deutsche Grammophon 2530 079, \$6.98. Tape: ●●DGG 3300 103, \$6.98.

Siegfried Behrend has done it again—produced a guitar recital that has something special to offer in the way of repertory and proves that, really, we don't need any more Giuliani concertos for a while yet. As in an earlier disc, Behrend salutes tradition on Side 1, and does a good job of it: some of the best perennials are here, from Batchelar's *Monsiers Almaine* through several of Dowland's most famous pieces, all of them landmarks in the lute/guitar territory. The guitarist brings to them all a healthy kind of overtness, a style that is masculine and sure rather than subtle, with strong contrasts of tone to mark sectional boundaries

and a steady, ongoing rhythmic pulse that never wavers. Rounding out Side 1 is the sonatina for two guitars by one Michael C. Cambridge—no-nonsense, foursquare classical fare with a pleasing sonority.

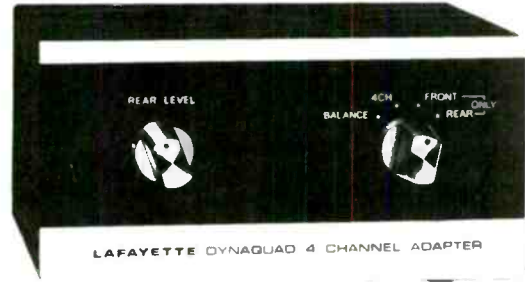
Variety is the keynote of the contemporary works on Side 2. Duarte's Suite, which the fifty-two-year-old composer dedicated to Segovia on the latter's wedding day, is conservative, idiomatic, fun to listen to, and worthy of its recipient. The *Canto* by McCabe (b. 1939) was written on commission from the Cardiff Festival of twentieth-century music in 1968. It is a strong, adventurous, individual piece, full of subtle colors and delicate tone effects, and I found it engrossing throughout its five movements. The *Soliloquy* by Thea Musgrave (b. 1928) was composed for Behrend in 1969, and the niceness of its title comes from the fact that the guitar converses with a prerecorded tape

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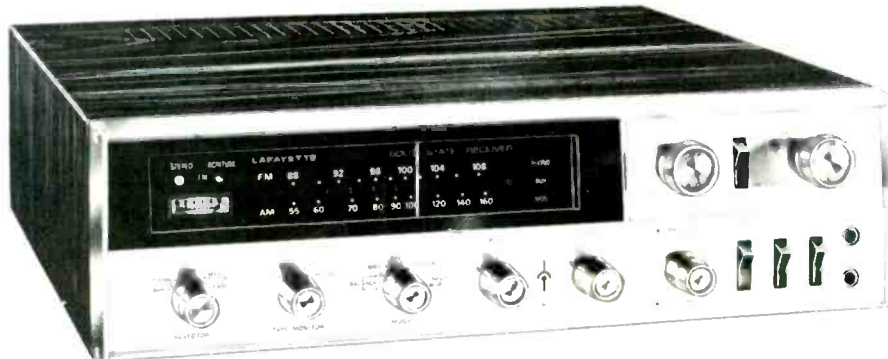
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contrived solely from guitar tones—modified, of course, to greater or lesser degree. *Soliloquy* is low-keyed in spirit, with solo and tape gently interlocking rather than meeting in out-and-out confrontation, and the whole is peculiarly oriental in effect. Yes, the guitar can lend itself to contemporary idioms, and Behrend is the man to prove it. S.F.

B **JUSSI BJOERLING:** "The Art of Jussi Bjoerling." **BEETHOVEN:** Adelaide. **STRAUSS, R.:** Cécilie; Morgen. **SJOEBERG:** Tonerna (in English). **BEACH:** Ah, love, but a day! **SPEAKS:** Sylvia. **CAMPBELL-TIPTON:** A Spirit flower. **ELGAR:** Salut d'Amour (in Swedish). **GODARD:** Jocelyni; Berceuse (in English). **TOSTI:** L'Alba separa dalla luce l'ombra. **ROSSINI:** Stabat Mater: Cujus animam. **VERDI:** Requiem: Ingemisco; Rigoletto: E il sol dell'anima; Trovatore: Ah! sì, ben mio; Ballo in Maschera: Di tu se fedele. **PUCCINI:** Fanciulla del West: Ch'ella mi creda libero. **FLOTOW:** Martha: M'appari. Jussi Bjoerling, tenor; Hjoerdis Schymberg, soprano (in the Rigoletto); various accompaniments. Seraphim 60168, \$2.98 (mono only; from originals recorded 1930-52).

The major portion of EMI's Bjoerling recordings were reissued some years ago, first on Capitol (G 7237, G 7248, G 7249) and later on Angel (COLH 148/50), but there were still a number of interesting items, from which the present release is culled. The original set—especially the first and third records, devoted

to operatic material—remains indispensable, the "basic Bjoerling," and I'm sorry to see that it is now unavailable (except for a selection on the odd side of the complete *Pagliacci*, Seraphim 6058). But there are some fine things on the new record; much of the material was duplicated in later remakes for RCA, but the young Bjoerling, in his thirties rather than his forties, had a degree of flexibility and sweetness in the voice that remain unique.

There is no question, for example, that the staccato articulation in the Barcarolle from *Ballo in maschera* is more precise and clearly pitched in this 1944 version than in the 1957 performance (RCA Victor LSC 2570, deleted); there are few tenors of forty-nine who could manage the piece at all, of course, but the earlier version is less strenuous, more pleasurable. Bjoerling's technical command nearly always carried him through in later years, but there is something special about these youthful records, a spontaneity of vocal utterance, that is exceptional.

Exceptional too is the rapt concentration of the "Ingemisco" from the Verdi Requiem, and the assurance of the "Cujus animam," which culminates in a ringing high D flat—to my knowledge the only one Bjoerling ever put on discs. The *Rigoletto* duet is perhaps overly hearty, and Miss Schymberg a slightly acidulous partner; there is an awkward breath in the *Martha* aria that Bjoerling avoided when he redid it later; but why carp?—most of this is impeccable singing.

The songs are less interesting, for this tenor was not a natural recitalist like McCormack. Nobody was ever so well equipped to shape the arching phrases of *Cécilie*, but the result,

while impressive, could not be called impassioned. *Adelaide's* Italianate quality is better suited to this delivery, but the pacing is often insensitive to harmonic and melodic matters. In *Morgen*, the voice sounds slightly unhappy, and in all the German numbers the piano of Harry Ebert is far too discreet (these songs date from 1939).

The songs in English (vintage 1952) are pretty thin stuff, but written to be performed narcissistically, they stand up better to the treatment. The diction here is perfectly fabulous, and Seraphim is quite justified in omitting the texts of these songs from the otherwise complete insert leaflet. The Tosti song is splendid, the Elgar in Swedish a curiosity from the singer's twenty-fourth year. Question: if a tenor of that age and with that sound were discovered today by the managers and the record companies, what chance would he have of singing as well thirty years later as did Bjoerling? D.H.

CRISTINA DEUTEKOM: "Opera Recital!" **VERDI:** Attila: Oh! nel fuggente nuvolo; I Lombardi: Se vano è il pregare; La Battaglia di Legnano: Voi lo dicesti . . . Quante volte come un dono . . . A frenarti, o cor; La Traviata: Ah! fors' è lui. . . Sempre libera. **ROSSINI:** Armida: Se al mio crudel tormento. **BELLINI:** I Puritani: Son vergin vezzosa. Cristina Deutekom, soprano; Chorus and Orchestra of the Monte Carlo Opera, Carlo Franci, cond. Philips 6500 096, \$5.95.

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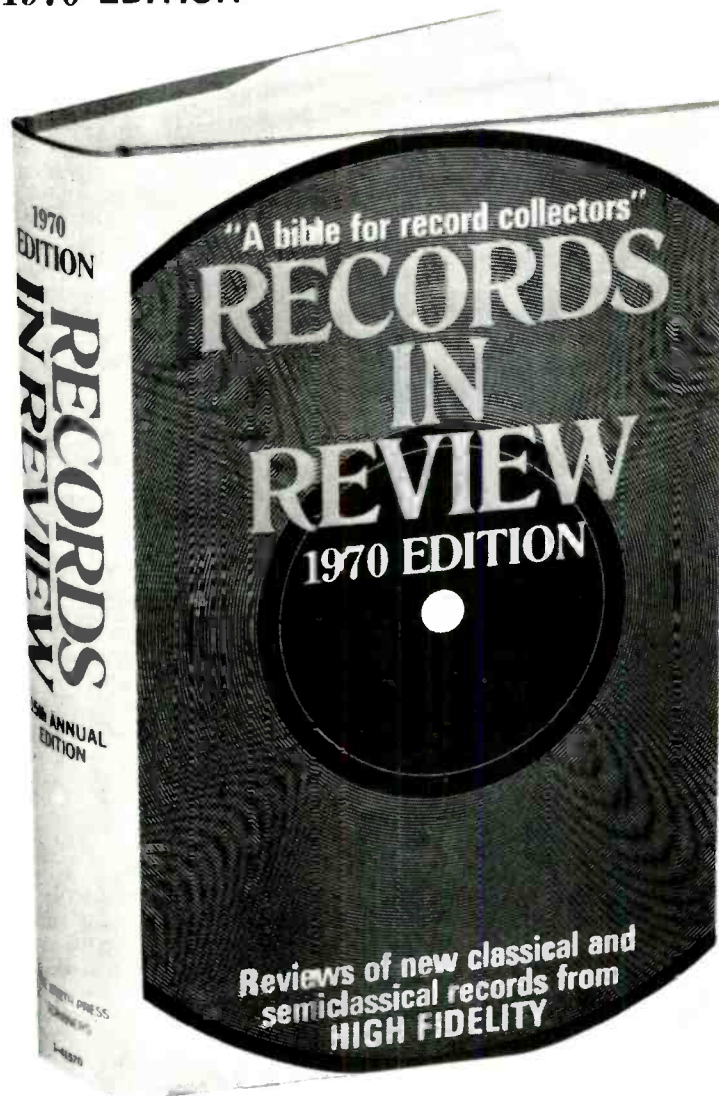
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tura department. All the evidence, both live and recorded, suggests that Miss Deutekom may indeed be that rare and genuine article. She has both power and agility—and these are often competing qualities—to make her invaluable in just such music as she chooses here, particularly the early Verdi soprano roles which lie dormant until a Callas brings them to life. It is remarkable that someone capable of releasing the ballistic energy present in the *Attila* aria here can also manifest the delicate filigree of Elvira's *Puritani* aria—but she does both commendably.

The trouble is that she is just not a very imaginative or winning artist. There is insufficient magic or charm in her work to quicken the listener's pulse, though he will not withhold admiration. Nowhere is this more clear than in the big scene from *Traviata* which is handled as a problem-solving lesson (and solved they are with great competence) while the emotional content goes by the board.

That's the rub. Miss Deutekom phrases sumptuously, sings up to high E, and commands the necessary style: but (for me, at any rate) she needs some further quality of charm or insight or sparkle to complete the specification for a finished major artist. G.M.

PLACIDO DOMINGO and SHERRILL MILNES: "Great Operatic Duets": **PUCCINI:** *La Bohème*: O Mimi, tu piu non torni. **VERDI:** *La Forza del destino*: Solenne in quest'ora; *Invano, Alvaro*; *I Vespri Siciliani*: Sogno, o son desto?; *Don Carlo*: Dio, che nell'alma infondere; *Otello*: Si, pel ciel. **BIZET:** *Les Pêcheurs de perles*: Au fond du temple saint. **PONCHIELLI:** *La Gioconda*: Enzo Grimaldo, Principe di Santafior. Placido Domingo, tenor; Sherrill Milnes, baritone; London Symphony Orchestra, Anton Guadagno, cond. RCA Red Seal LSC 3182, \$5.98.

Never let it be said that the Victor Talking Machine Company and its corporate successors don't follow up on a good thing when they discover it. Ever since March 13, 1906, when Enrico Caruso made his first duet recording ("*Solenne in quest'ora*" with Antonio Scotti), the pairing of the day's famous tenors and baritones has been a staple of the Victor Red Seal catalogue. Over the next dozen years, Caruso was paired with Ancona (an exceptionally fine version of the *Pearl Fishers* duet), Amato, Ruffo (just once, in the *Otello* duet), De Luca, and McCormack with Sammarco. After Caruso's death, Martinelli and De Luca were teamed, and Gigli was matched first with Ruffo (this didn't turn out well, and the recordings were not released at the time) and then with the ever-reliable De Luca. After the Second World War a few 78s with Peerce and Warren were succeeded by some sessions with Bjoerling and Merrill. And here we are in the 1970s, with the Met's rising tenor and baritone stars, working once more through the same repertory.

Despite the traditional grouping of these pieces (except for the *Vespri*, of which I know only one other version, a German one by Roswaenge and Schlusnus), they do not by any means present similar vocal or interpretive problems. Some are basically contemplative pieces, in which legato line and vocal blend are the primary challenges: the first

Forza piece, and the Puccini and Bizet. Two more are also basically static, but of a proclamatory nature: *Don Carlo* and *Otello*. Finally there are the duets that embody a more complex dramatic progression: the fourth-act *Forza* piece, the *Vespri*, and *Gioconda* (although this last is neither as elaborate nor as penetrating as the Verdi examples).

One thing that is immediately evident on a first hearing of the new record is the relative nonsuccess of those two complex Verdi duets; they are not well paced or shaped, nor is the declamatory material delivered with sufficient *intenzione*. For example, Milnes gives us his full power right away in the opening recitative of "*Invano, Alvaro*" which makes it hard to build a bigger climax later; how much more canny was De Luca, who soliloquized quietly, with careful verbal emphasis! Tone is no substitute for vocal acting however useful it may be at the appropriate time—and Domingo's admittedly lovely sound simply cannot command the precision and clarity with which Martinelli attacks the final presto of this piece (alas, the De Luca-Martinelli recording was last seen more than a decade ago, on Camden CAL 320; it would be a worthwhile Victrola resurrection).

In the more static pieces, the new disc is generally more satisfactory, although you cannot persuade me that Domingo's legato line is of the same evenness and consistency as Bjoerling's; too often the attack is slow, with the tone only developing slowly, so that each note has a "hairpin" dynamic swell. The heroic note does not come easily to him; he's a shade flat in the recitative preceding the *Otello* duet, and then overshoots the proper altitude on the final "*Sangue!*" Much of this is capable singing by today's standards, of course; but the disc begs to be compared with its predecessors—and I am not the sort to pass up such an invitation.

As a rehearing of those "classic" recordings reminded me, the baritone is usually the weaker of the pair, with the notable exception of De Luca, who never falls into the unfocused pitching that besets most of his colleagues. Milnes too has his moments of mushiness, and his constant reliance on tonal splendor can become wearing; but what one misses most here is the kind of vocal blend and absolute ensemble that has characterized the best recordings of these pieces—Martinelli and De Luca even sacrificed tempo in favor of unanimity when they recorded the *Don Carlo* duet, and the Bjoerling-Merrill team compensates for a certain mismatch of tonal quality by their ensemble.

I can't say that modern recording techniques represent an unalloyed blessing, either: this recording suffers from those cavernous, over-resonant sounds that presumably are supposed to emerge impressively from low-priced setups. But of clarity and orchestral definition it offers very little (I can't hear pitches in the bass line of the *Otello* duet that are perfectly clear in the twenty-year-old Bjoerling-Merrill recording). You may be inclined to put these views down to ancestor worship—but I earnestly urge comparison with Red Seal LM 2736 (Bjoerling-Merrill), or even LM 2337 (Gigli-De Luca), both of which are still available, to establish some aural standards for this repertory. Texts and translations are included. D.H.

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VIRGIL FOX: "Heavy Organ" BACH: Fugue in A minor, S. 543; Trio Sonata No. 6, in G, S. 530; Vivace; Now Thank We All Our God; Prelude and Fugue in D, S. 532; Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor, S. 582; Suite No. 3, in D, S. 1068: Air for the G String. **MIDDELSCHULTE:** Perpetuum Mobile (arr. Fox), Virgil Fox, organ (Rodgers electronic Touring Organ). Decca DL 75263, \$5.98.

On December 1 of last year Virgil Fox hit upon yet another way to bring culture to the great unwashed: namely, to move his Rodgers electronic Touring Organ into Bill Graham's Fillmore East, that hip mecca of rock musicians in New York's East Village, brush up on his hippy-ese, and play Bach for the natives. Lest those natives would be bored with mere aural stimulation, he also enlisted the aid of Joe's Lights to accompany the Bach with a psychedelic light show. The venture was such a financial success that a repeat performance had to be scheduled a couple of weeks later, and Fox's appointment book is now overflowing with dates for next season to do the same "Heavy Organ" concert-with-light-show across the country.

Decca Records recorded the auspicious event live and is now offering "portions" of that concert as a memento for those who were in attendance or to assuage the curiosity of those who were not. The art of recording being limited as it is today, they were able to record only the "mere aural stimulations," leaving it to the consumer to set up his own light show at home if he wants to re-create the excitement of that evening. My purpose here, of course, is to comment only on this recording, the viability of organ music with light show in a concert situation being of little interest to prospective purchasers of this record. In a word, Decca is offering the most ineptly thrown together commercial hoax I've ever encountered inside a record jacket.

I'm not referring at all to Fox's style of playing Bach. Frankly, I don't approve of his inappropriately orchestral approach to the instrument or of his superromanticizing of the music, but I recognize that a number of people still do. Rather, I am appalled principally by two other factors. First, Mr. Fox seems to have had a very bad night indeed last December 1. All performers have up and down nights, and any live recording is going to have more bloopers than a studio job, but never have I heard so many botched rhythms, wrong notes, and registrational goofs (like a full reed chorus bouncing in and out again in a single measure) from Fox or any artist of his stature. Whole measures are frequently improvised after a memory slip, and many of these goofs are going to be quite a jolt even to a listener who has never heard a single piece of Bach organ music.

The second and even more devastating insult to the record-buying public is the wholesale and totally nonsensical cutting in several of the pieces. I am told by a reliable source that though Fox played all his pieces complete Decca decided to "shorten" several of them to make room for Fox's dialogues with the audience between numbers. If that was really the case (and I'm not convinced that some of the excisions didn't result from memory slips during the performance), then Decca must be employing deaf chimpanzees as tape editors these days. In all but a few places the cuts join two totally unrelated harmonies and com-

pletely upset the rhythmic pulse as well: the two cuts in the D major Fugue, for example, both jump from the third beat of one measure to the second beat of another, sixteen or seventeen measures away.

The D major Prelude suffers the greatest butchery, as you'll see if we go through it in detail: we hear measure 1; measure 2 is cut; we hear 3 to 6; 7 and 8 are cut; 9 is in; 10 to 14 are cut; 15 is in; 16 to 96 are cut (this is the entire *alla breve* middle section); measure 97 through 107 are of course in, so that the piece ends in the same key in which it began. In other words, out of 107 measures we hear only eighteen. The Fugue loses only 33 measures, while the A minor Prelude and Fugue loses its entire prelude and 20 measures of its gigue.

The Passacaglia and the first movement of the sixth trio sonata fare much better here, because Fox plays them both remarkably well, and because the editors have kept their hands off. One last point concerning the Rodgers organ, which I consider about the best of the modern electronic instruments. When heard "live" in a room with excellent acoustics (this last is an important point), it *sounds* like a recording of a rather good organ. However, the exercise of setting up microphones in front of its speakers, for the purpose of recording and eventual playback through another set of speakers, impresses me as nothing more than a waste of time. If ever there were a record to avoid, this is it—unless, of course, you have a light show in your living room that will dis-

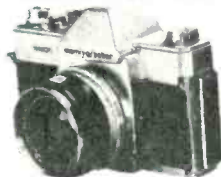
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C.F.G.

"LIVE ELECTRONIC MUSIC IMPROVISED!" MEV: *Spacecraft*. AMM: *Untitled*. Mainstream MS 5002, \$4.98.

One of the most significant developments in recent music has been an interest in the use of electronic instruments as a medium for live performance. The desire to get electronic music out of the studio and into the open air is, of course, hardly surprising: it brings such music back into the realm of the performing arts, with all that this implies in the way of complexity and flexibility.

There are various ways in which electronic instruments have been used as performing instruments. One has been to regard them as a kind of "super instrument" for which pieces are specifically written (whether for electronics alone or in combination with conventional instruments and/or voice), and are learned and performed by a musician much as he would any other piece for an ordinary concert situation. John Eaton's music is a good example of this (although it is significant, I think, that to date only Eaton himself seems to be able to perform his own works). Another approach has been to conceive of the electronic medium as a means of manipulating conventional instruments, taking their sounds as a source and "interpreting" them through various kinds of electronic transformation. In this music the improvisatory element plays a significant role; such composers as Stockhausen, who has been associated with this approach, are concerned with developing loose, highly generalized compositional structures which can be realized explicitly—but differently each time—by a specialized group of performers.

An offshoot of this latter approach has been the emergence of groups that are interested in *total* improvisation—i.e., no rules or guidelines are set up to control the players. Rather, each performer is allowed (indeed, encouraged) to "do his own thing," the assumption being, however, that the various players will listen to and interact with one another, thus molding their own efforts to fit a common result shaped by a shared conception.

This recording brings together performances by two of the most prominent of these improvising groups: the MEV (*Musica Elettronica Viva*) of Rome and the AMM (initials unexplained) of London. Of the two, the MEV side is more conventional in its "organization." *Spacecraft*, the title given to their labor, seems to be constructed as a sort of gradual crescendo of activity, finally reaching its culmination (greatest textural density, highest level of rhythmic complexity, highest level of volume, fastest rate of rhythmic turnover) at a point somewhat more than halfway through the piece, followed by a gradual liquidation until the end. Whether this was intentional or just happened I have no way of knowing, but it does have its effect on the kind of piece one hears. Don't be misled, however, if this sounds awfully old-hat: the sounds are radically new. I think one can assume here that due to a desire to create a new kind of music, a conscious attempt has been made to avoid so far as possible any sounds apt to evoke, or draw comparison with, traditional music. Thus pitch, when it occurs, is rarely "fixed," but rather fluctuates within a limited continuum. Also, the

type of timbres chosen—such as scraped glass and springs—have the effect (even when not electronically altered) of placing the listener in a quite special aural context.

The AMM side consists of excerpts from a concert given in London in 1968. The original tape has been edited so that several excerpts are presented, separated from one another by intervals of silence (some of which are amazingly long, considering that they take up recorded time), the idea being to give a "representative cross section of a concert lasting over two hours." As a consequence, this side differs radically from the other: where in the former case one sensed at least some attempt to achieve musical continuity, however primitive, here one is bombarded with fragments of sound apparently connected with one another only through their common nihilism in the face of traditional musical material.

How is one to evaluate this? Certainly in recorded form the efforts of these two groups ultimately seem uninteresting and, above all, musically unsophisticated. But I wonder if a recorded version can even begin to tell the whole story. To quote an article by Cornelius Cardew, a musician active in the AMM group: "Documents such as tape recordings of improvisation are essentially empty, as they preserve chiefly the form that something took and give at best an indistinct hint as to the feeling and cannot convey any sense of time and place." What one hears on disc, then, is "divorced from its natural context." In other words, this is what might be described as "environmental music" music which is completely a part of its surroundings. It is thus intimately bound to its context, and it has an essentially ritualistic quality which is completely lost in recorded form. I must say that I am very much attracted by the *idea* behind this music, but I confess that to date the results I've heard have been most disappointing. (I once heard the MEV in "concert" at Haverford College and was quite disillusioned; the whole thing turned into a kind of musical free-for-all in which the audience participated, its role appearing to be to make as much noise as possible through any means available.) But I am optimistic by nature and am not giving up on it yet. Certainly the idea of loosening up the concert situation is a good one, and who knows what may yet come out of it.

R.P.M.

H **ARTURO TOSCANINI:** "Toscanini at La Scala." **ROSSINI:** *William Tell*: Coro dell'Imeneo; *Passo a sei*; *Ballabile dei soldati*; *Mosè*: *Pregghiera*. **VERDI:** *Nabucco*: *Overture*; *Va pensiero*; *I Vespri Siciliani*: *Overture*. **PUCCINI:** *Manon Lescaut*: Act III. Renata Tebaldi (s), Mafalda Favero (s), Jolanda Gardino (ms), Giovanni Malipiero (t), Giuseppe Nessi (t), Mariano Stabile (b), Tancredi Pasero (bs), Carlo Forti (bs). Chorus and Orchestra of La Scala, Milan, Arturo Toscanini, cond. Arturo Toscanini Society ATS 1010 (mono only). Available from the Arturo Toscanini Society, 812 Dumas Ave., Dumas, Texas 79029.

Three years after an Allied bombing raid had completely demolished its auditorium, La Scala presented a gala reopening concert on May 11, 1946. The occasion, bound to be an

emotional one in any event, was further intensified by the presence of Toscanini on the podium—the fiery Maestro, who had first conducted at La Scala in 1898 and acted as the company's artistic director from 1921 to 1929, had been absent from Italy's operatic life for seventeen years. Fortunately the concert was broadcast and the Arturo Toscanini Society has now issued a commemorative disc containing approximately half of the program (also performed were Rossini's *Gazza ladra* Overture, Verdi's *Te Deum*, and Boito's *Mefistofele* Prologue—all items that Toscanini later recorded in America).

Major interest here centers on Act III of *Manon Lescaut*—an odd choice for such a festive evening perhaps, but this scene is really a beautifully structured unit: the music builds brilliantly to the ship-boarding ensemble which Puccini characteristically tops with Des Grieux's impassioned entreaty. The singing may not be especially remarkable, but Toscanini galvanizes the performance with superbly judged pacing, taut control, and revelatory detail—the tensely drawn lead-in to "Guardate, pazzo son!" for instance, or the searing string phrases in the Intermezzo are really extraordinarily effective. Also outstanding is the lovely Prayer from *Mosè*, with the aging but still impressive Tancredi Pasero and a very young Renata Tebaldi. The sound is pretty wretched on the whole: balances are poor and there is a good deal of fading in and out; but both the flavor of the occasion and the conductor's intent manage to penetrate the sonic murk.

The Toscanini Society, by the way, has been busily building up an invaluable collection of hitherto unreleased material that will be of immense interest to admirers of the conductor. The latest issues number three boxed sets. *ATS 1005/9* contains the Verdi Requiem with Milanov, Castagna, Bjoerling, and Moscona (11/23/40), Mozart's Symphony No. 38 (2/4/39) and Sinfonia Concertante (2/15/41), Brahms's Fourth Symphony (6/5/35), Wagner's *Faust* Overture (6/5/35), Sibelius' Fourth Symphony (4/27/40), and Atterberg's Sixth Symphony (11/21/43). Highlights from *ATS 1011/5* include Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 27 with Serkin (2/23/36), Dvořák's Cello Concerto with Kurtz (1/28/45), Dukas' *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue* Suite (3/2/47), Debussy's *Faun* (3/27/48), Roussel's *Spider's Feast* (4/7/46), Schumann's Second Symphony (3/29/41), and Strauss's *Don Quixote* with Feuermann (10/22/38). Finally, we have a Beethoven bicentennial package (*ATS 1016/24*), drawn in large part from Toscanini's New York Philharmonic broadcasts during the '30s: six symphonies (Nos. 1,3,4,5,8, and 9), the Piano Concerto No. 3 with Hess (11/24/46), the *Choral Fantasy* with Dorfman (12/2/39), the Triple Concerto (5/1/42), and the *Missa Solemnis* with Milanov, Castagna, Bjoerling, and Kipnis (12/28/40) comprise the major works. Quite an incredible list of mouth-watering treasures. The Society has understandably been swamped with orders over the past year and many members may have experienced delays in receiving their records: the logistical problems have been ironed out, Society president Clyde J. Key confidently informs us, and there should be no further difficulties filling future orders. P.G.D.

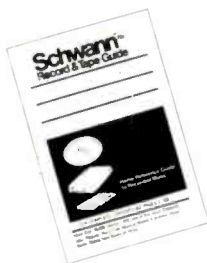
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in brief

BACH: Concertos for Harpsichord and Orchestra: No. 5, in F minor, S. 1056; No. 7, in G minor, S. 1058; Concertos for Two Harpsichords and Orchestra: No. 1, in C minor, S. 1060; No. 2 in C, S. 1061. George Malcolm, harpsichord; Simon Preston, harpsichord (in the double concertos); Menuhin Festival Orchestra, Yehudi Menuhin, cond. Angel S 36762, \$5.98.

Menuhin, Malcolm, Preston, et al. turn in lively, energetic, and extremely well-played versions of these appealing concertos, but somehow they just miss being great. Both Malcolm and Preston play stylishly and with all the requisite vigor and excitement suggested by these pieces, and Menuhin sets conservatively brisk tempos that seem to match the soloists' inclinations very well. The problem is one of texture (both as performed and as recorded). I don't know the number of string players—it's not overly large, though it is clearly more than the one-player-per-part distribution of the superb Leonhardt recordings on Telefunken. Menuhin simply has not insisted firmly enough that his string players observe Bach's phrasings scrupulously and articulately. The group plays with good ensemble and expression but without the clean-cut incisiveness that this chamber style demands. Moderation in the use of vibrato would have helped, as would an avoidance of the upper positions on the strings where the tone becomes soft-edged and mellow. A slightly constricted, slightly boomy recording takes its toll as well. Gustav Leonhardt seems to have solved all these problems and his recordings of all the single and multiple harpsichord concertos still take top honors in my book. C.F.G.

BACH: Prelude for Lute, in C minor, S. 999; Partitas for Solo Violin: No. 1, in B minor, S. 1002; Sarabande and Double; No. 2, in D minor, S. 1004; Chaconne. **WEISS:** Fantasia in E minor; Suite in E. Narciso Yepes, guitar. Deutsche Grammophon 2530 096, \$6.98.

Yepes gives sensible, serious, charmless performances of Silvius Leopold Weiss (1686-1750) and Bach, his more famous contemporary, doing an earnest job without managing to create the special magic that comes from an absolutely inevitable rhythmic pulse and perfect control over nuance of line. The tiny unevennesses of rhythm and tone are microscopic, but they are there. The chaconne still commands our attention—this is a good workmanlike study. S.F.

B **BEETHOVEN:** Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 1, in C, Op. 15; Sonata for Piano, No. 9, in E, Op. 14, No. 1. Glenn Gould, piano; Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Vladimir Golschmann, cond. (in the concerto). Odyssey Y 30491, \$2.98 [the concerto from Columbia MS 6017, 1958; the sonata from Columbia MS 6945, 1967].

Both the concerto and the sonata receive tremendously vital readings from Gould. At his best, the pianist brings a marvelous dashing brio and crystalline textural clarity to these early works. Of course, some of his ideas are a bit peculiar to say the least, most notably the two self-composed "contrapuntal potpourri" cadenzas, which Gould gleefully describes as "a rather Regerian fugue" (movement one) and "a rhapsody" (movement three). However perplexing these and other individual touches may be, the performances as a whole are delightfully fresh and always keep the listener actively engaged. P.G.D.

BORODIN: Symphony No. 2, in B minor. **RIMSKY-KORSAKOV:** The Tale of Tsar Saltan; Suite. Monte Carlo Opera Orchestra, Roberto Benzi, cond. Philips 839 744, \$5.98.

Despite his Italian-sounding name, Roberto Benzi is one of the more prominent young French conductors. But he is ill served by this record with the inferior Monte Carlo Opera Orchestra. In the Borodin Second Symphony, my longtime preference has been for the now deleted Ansermet coupling with the Third Symphony; from currently available records my somewhat reluctant choice would be that of Varviso with the Suisse Romande. Rimsky-Korsakov's *Tsar Saltan* Suite offers appreciably lighter musical interest, its attraction lying mainly in the possibilities it offers for orchestral virtuosity. Though Ansermet's Suisse Romande sometimes falls short of these demands in his rather aged record, the music is better played under impeccable idiomatic direction. P.H.

B **BRUCKNER:** Symphony No. 5, in B flat. **WAGNER:** *Götterdämmerung*; Dawn and Rhine Journey; Funeral Music. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Hans Knappertsbusch, cond. Stereo Treasury STS 15121/2, \$5.96 (two discs) [from London CSA 2205, 1957].

Knappertsbusch could be a notoriously diffident conductor under studio conditions, but the mood was evidently upon him when he taped this Bruckner symphony. The ensemble is not always ideal perhaps, but the leisurely, methodical pacing and warm, ideally weighted instrumental glow make the reading an eminently attractive one. As might be expected, the VPO plays magnificently, the early stereo still sounds splendid, and the two *Götterdämmerung* excerpts make an appropriate filler. Schalk's now largely discredited version, with its large excision from the finale, will disqualify these discs for Bruckner purists, but others should take advantage of a fine bargain. P.G.D.

DEBUSSY: *La Mer*. **RAVEL:** *Daphnis et Chloé*; Suite No. 2. **BERLIOZ:** *Damnation de Faust*; *Danse des Sylphes*. London Symphony Chorus (in *Daphnis*) and Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski, cond. London Phase 4 SPC 21059, \$5.98.

More mustaches on the Mona Lisa: the ends of both the Debussy and Ravel have been grotesquely rescored by Stokowski; he seems unable to keep his hands off tempos, dynamics, and articulations as well. This aside, the *Daphnis* is a brave if unnatural noise, the Debussy a polluted vision of, perhaps, the Caspian Sea. And a bouquet of stinkweed to whoever tucked the poor little *Danse des Sylphes* in at the end of the *Daphnis* side while the final spurious sonority of the latter work is still bouncing around the room. In short, an all-round horror. D.H.

HANDEL: Sonatas for Flute and Continuo, Op. 1: No. 1a, in E minor; No. 5, in G; No. 9, in B minor; Sonatas for Flute and Cembalo: No. 1, in A minor; No. 2, in E minor; No. 3, in B minor. Hans-Martin Linde, flute; Karl Richter, harpsichord; Johannes Koch, viola da gamba. Archive 2533 060, \$6.98.

Handel's grab bag Op. 1, published in 1731, includes fifteen sonatas, of which eight are for flute (three are included here). His other flute sonatas are three without opus numbers, always listed as "with cembalo" rather than "with continuo," and they round out this very respectable recital. Linde commands sufficient rhythmic vitality to keep us interested, though he might have done more with dynamic shaping—everything is a comfortable mezza voce. The flute is placed very much forward, and as a result, the occasional imitation and other happy bits of interplay between it and the continuo instruments are not as emphasized as they might be. S.F.

B **LISZT:** Piano Works: Polonaises: No. 1, in C minor; No. 2, in E; *Années de pèlerinage*, *Deuxième Année* (Italie): *Après une lecture de Dante*, fantasia quasi sonata; *Consolations* (6). Peter Katin, piano. Stereo Treasury STS 15123, \$2.98 [from London CS 6106, 1960].

Peter Katin brings a typically English reserve to this far from hackneyed Liszt recital. Unless you are looking for the last word in pianistic devilry, these performances are extremely satisfying for their digital clarity and scrupulous musicality. He does seem a trifle baffled by the almost orchestral scope of the *Dante* Sonata which is perhaps too tonally anemic and restrained. But the shorter pieces, the six *Consolations* especially, are sensitively shaped and the disc as a whole is well worth any Lisztian's time and money. P.G.D.

MUSSORGSKY: *Khovanshchina: Prelude; Persian Dances; Marfa's Divination and Song.* **RIMSKY-KORSAKOV:** *Tsar's Bride: Overture; Lubasha's Unaccompanied Song and Aria.* **TCHAIKOVSKY:** *Pique Dame: Prelude; Pauline's and Countess' Aria.* Anne Ayer, mezzo; Vienna Tonkünstler Orchestra, Brian Priestman, cond.; Vienna Volksoper Orchestra, Willard Straight, cond. Famous Records FAM 501, \$4.98.

PROKOFIEV: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 3, in C, Op. 26.* **RAVEL:** *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, in G.* Alexis Weissenberg, piano; Orchestre de Paris, Seiji Ozawa, cond. Angel S 36785, \$5.98.

PROKOFIEV: *Sarcasms, Op. 17; Sonata for Piano, No. 5, in C, Op. 38/135; Visions Fugitives, Op. 22.* Yekaterina Novitskaya, piano; Melodiya/Angel SR 40164, \$5.98.

B
R

STRAUSS, R.: *Till Eulenspiegel, Op. 28; Don Juan, Op. 20; Tod und Verklärung, Op. 24.* Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, cond. Odyssey Y 30313, \$2.98 [from Epic BC 1011, 1958].

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: *Symphony No. 7 ("Antartica").* Norma Burrowes, soprano; London Symphony Chorus and Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult, cond. Angel S 36763, \$5.98.

IMPERIAL BAND CONCERT: "Nineteenth-Century Waltzes and Marches." U.S.S.R. Defense Ministry Band, Nikolai Nazarov and Nikolai Sergeev, cond. Melodiya/Angel SR 40161, \$5.98.

"THE BIRD FANCYER'S DELIGHT" HILL: *The Bird Fancier's Delight (1717).* **FRESCOBALDI:** *Canzona per canto solo.* **TELEMANN:** *Partita No. 5, in E minor.* **VIVALDI:** *Sonata No. 1, in C, Op. 13 ("Pastor Fido").* Works by Van Eyck, Nörmiger, De Koninck, Palestrina, Widmann, and from the *Victoris Codex.* René Clemencic, Renaissance and baroque recorders; Christiane Jaccottet, spinet and harpsichord. Cardinal VCS 10086, \$5.98.

GRACE BUMBRY: *"Casta Diva."* **CHERUBINI:** *Medea: Dei tuoi figli.* **VERDI:** *La Forza del destino: Pace, pace, mio Dio; Don Carlo: O don fatale; Macbeth Nel di della vittoria . . . Vieni! t'affretta!* **BELLINI:** *Norma: Casta diva.* **PONCHIELLI:** *La Gioconda: Suicidio!* **GIORDANO:** *Andrea Chenier: La Mamma morta.* **MASCAGNI:** *Cavalleria Rusticana: Voi lo sapete.* **PUCCINI:** *Tosca: Vissi d'arte.* Grace Bumbry, mezzo; Bavarian State Opera Orchestra, Aldo Ceccato, cond. Angel S26717, \$5.98.

The good intentions of this interestingly programmed disc are not matched by the performances. Most of the orchestral excerpts have been recorded to better advantage elsewhere and the six arias are disappointingly sung. Anne Ayer (not, I presume, to be confused with Ann Ayars who sang Antonia in Beecham's *Tales of Hoffman* film) possesses an attractive reedy quality—amazingly similar to Magda Olivero's at times—and it is well suited to the music. But whenever the line ascends, the tone becomes progressively thinner, more tremulous, and unsteadily pitched. Furthermore, on an interpretational level, her singing is uniformly bland and lacking in any kind of individual character. P.G.D.

Weissenberg plays both of these concertos with immense brilliance and steely hardness. The music responds rather well: the opening solo in the Prokofiev in particular is delivered with staggering speed and propulsion (even Kapell, in his famous, and recently reissued, Victrola recording, is surpassed at his own game). If you look for lyricism, you might have to look a little harder than usual, but you'll discover a trace of that here, too. The Ravel has a formalism and sobriety in Weissenberg's interpretation that is somewhat similar to Michelangeli's approach in his classic fifteen-year-old version. Ozawa's participation is a model of clarity and control, and the Orchestre de Paris is improving. Brilliant sound, not quite as boomy and overresonant as is the norm for Paris EMI. H.G.

Miss Novitskaya—a recent winner of the Belgium Queen Elizabeth Competition—has a formidable technique and immense assurance. Assurance and interpretive authority, though, are not quite the same thing. That excellent old mono version of the *Visions Fugitives* by Neuhaus on Monitor 2064, so much less impressive in sheer digital accuracy and velocity, was incomparably more distinctive and interesting than Miss Novitskaya's tight, brittle, unyielding readings. Similarly, the *Sarcasms*—given superficial bite but lacking interpretive character—sound more like diatribes, and the *Fifth Sonata* (played in the revision made by Prokofiev in his last year) could stand more breadth and singing whimsy. The piano tone on the review acetate is thoroughly unpleasant—perhaps Miss Novitskaya was handicapped by a below par Russian instrument. H.G.

Szell's precise, even-tempered approach to Strauss pays off handsomely here: scrupulous attention to written detail rather than fancy interpretative ideas almost always work best with this composer, whose scores generally characterize themselves if a virtuoso orchestra is on hand. It goes without saying that the Clevelanders remain well on top of the notes and all three tone poems are as vividly presented and recorded as any versions in the catalogue. At a budget level there is simply no comparison. P.G.D.

The *Sinfonia antartica* is derived from music which Vaughan Williams wrote for a 1949 film, *Scott of the Antarctic*. It is more like a symphonic poem in four sections than a symphony, and as such is a weaker work than its companions. The slow movement is the strongest—a magnificent tonal description of an antarctic landscape, with wind machine, wordless chorus, and soprano solo to set forth the endless emptiness and cold. Sir Adrian, the world's foremost Vaughan Williams interpreter, turns in one of his invariably great performances, and the subtleties of sound in which the score abounds have been beautifully caught. The recent RCA Victor recording of this work by André Previn is decent enough, but Boult is the man from headquarters. A.F.

Unlike the Soviet ensemble's stimulating November 1969 recording (SR 40108) of band works by Rimsky, Prokofiev, and Tchaikovsky, this disc offers scant musical rewards to compensate for often coarse-grained performances and sonics. Major General Nazarov conducts routinely hard-driven performances of several anonymous marches. Colonel Sergeev's blowsily sentimental treatment of the waltzes (including the Roumanian Ivanovici's *Danube Waves* and other tuneful items by Dreizen and Andreyev) may possibly evoke some "Cherry Trees" nostalgia among ultraromantic White Russian expatriates; but I suspect that there's a deliberate attempt here to satirize schmaltzy provincial band concerts of the Czarist era. The recording itself is robust and open but minimally stereoeistic; the processing is afflicted with more noise and pre-echoes than should be acceptable nowadays. R.D.D.

I am told that recorder sales are at an all-time high, so there must be a tremendous market out there of amateur players who are looking for just such a record as this. There's a good balance here of lightweight and more serious Renaissance and baroque fare. Outstanding in the former category is the early eighteenth-century collection from which this record takes its name: a delightful set of short character studies of the woodlark, the East India nightingale, the bullfinch, the canary bird, etc. for unaccompanied recorder. Other pieces feature Renaissance descant, treble, and tenor recorders made by Martin Skowronek and baroque soprano, descant, treble, and bass recorders by the Dolmetsch family and H. C. Fehr. Clemencic's lively and capable performances are supported admirably by Miss Jaccottet playing on a Wittmayer spinet and a Skowronek harpsichord. Recording is fine, but the surfaces of my copy were rather noisy. C.F.G.

"Because it's there" may be adequate reason for climbing a mountain, but it doesn't justify a mezzo trying "Casta diva" unless she has something very special to offer. Miss Bumbry negotiates the notes—just—but sounds breathy, hard-pressed, and emotionally uninvolved. The silken-voiced mezzo has given us many reasons to be grateful for her work in her own home territory; and we are reminded here of how splendid she is as Eboli, Santuzza, and Lady Macbeth, roles equally accessible to soprano and mezzo. She also does well by Gioconda and Tosca. But her Leonora (in *Forza*) lacks intensity and, in one passage, accuracy of pitch: Medea sounds even more distressed than her dilemma with Jason might suggest. G.M.

the tape deck

BY R.D. DARRELL

Reeling 'Em In Again! Evidently I was overly impatient a couple of months ago in bewailing the lack of progress in the expected revitalization of open-reel production. The mills of Ampex, like those of most large corporations, grind slowly, but at last they're beginning to turn out a substantial flow of new—and appetizing—reel releases. Particularly encouraging to veteran collectors who have difficulty in finding a well-stocked dealer is the news that Ampex's trial "Reels-by-Mail" service has been a great success: not only has it been established on a regular basis but Ampex has expanded the service to cover their entire open-reel catalogue of some 3,800 releases. Moreover, the service is being extended, again on a trial basis at first, to include all 8-track cartridges and musicassettes as well.

As emphasized earlier, Reels-by-Mail is not intended to compete with the all too few dealers who carry comprehensive stocks. The idea is to provide a supply source for potential buyers lacking convenient access to such dealers—or indeed to any dealer at all. And of course every tape collector will want a copy of the 1971 all-format AST catalogue, available on request to Jack Woods, Ampex Music Division, 2201 Lunt Avenue, Elk Grove Village, Illinois 60007.

Appropriately enough, one of the first of the new reels to reach me is the revised and now truly complete edition of Beethoven overtures by the Berlin Philharmonic under Von Karajan (DGG/Ampex H 7046, two 7½-ips reels, \$12.95—superseding the *Egmont*-less single reel, K 7046, discussed here last February). Heard at last, the *Egmont* proves to be one of Von Karajan's most powerfully effective performances, and again the recordings of the ten other overtures are impressively robust. The set as a whole is so essential to every Beethoven library that most listeners will overlook the retention of the earlier edition's pre-echoes as well as some occasional new whispers of reverse-channel spillover.

There is even a barely perceptible whiff of "spill" in the otherwise technically ideal taping of one of the most imaginatively novel programs in years: "An Evening of Vocal Duets," four examples each by Purcell, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms, and—most surprisingly—Peter Cornelius. These one-time favorites of professional and amateur singers alike are beautifully sung by Janet Baker and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau to deft piano accompaniments by Daniel Barenboim (Angel/Ampex L 36712, 7½-ips

reel, \$7.95; texts included). Would you believe that these exceptionally pure and transparent recordings were made at a live concert in London's Queen Elizabeth Hall? Only quickly faded-out bursts of applause at the end of each group and an occasional rustle or cough after one of the livelier songs betray the presence of what must be the best-behaved audience in the world.

Klemperer's Backward Bach; Solti's Tragic Mahler. It's impossible not to respect so eloquent and indomitable an artist as Otto Klemperer, still productively active at eighty-six. But I can't conscientiously commend his stubbornly nineteenth-century "traditional" approach to Bach—except, of course, to similarly minded listeners who still cling to big-orchestra Bachian romanticizations. But I must admit that even those of us who quarrel with such treatment of the four suites (or overtures) must admire at least the superbly colored and reproduced tonal qualities of his New Philharmonia players (Angel/Ampex H 3763, two 7½-ips reels, \$12.95).

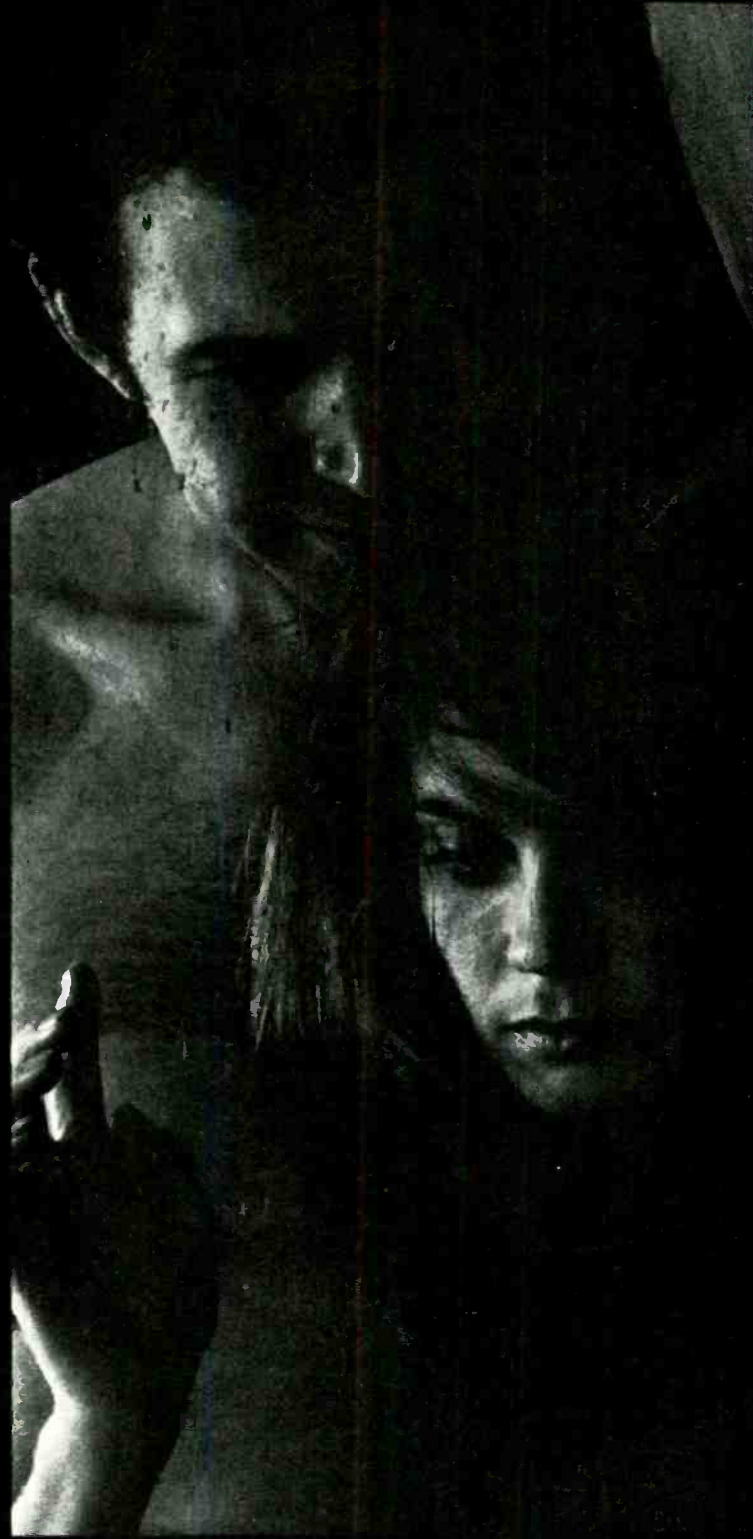
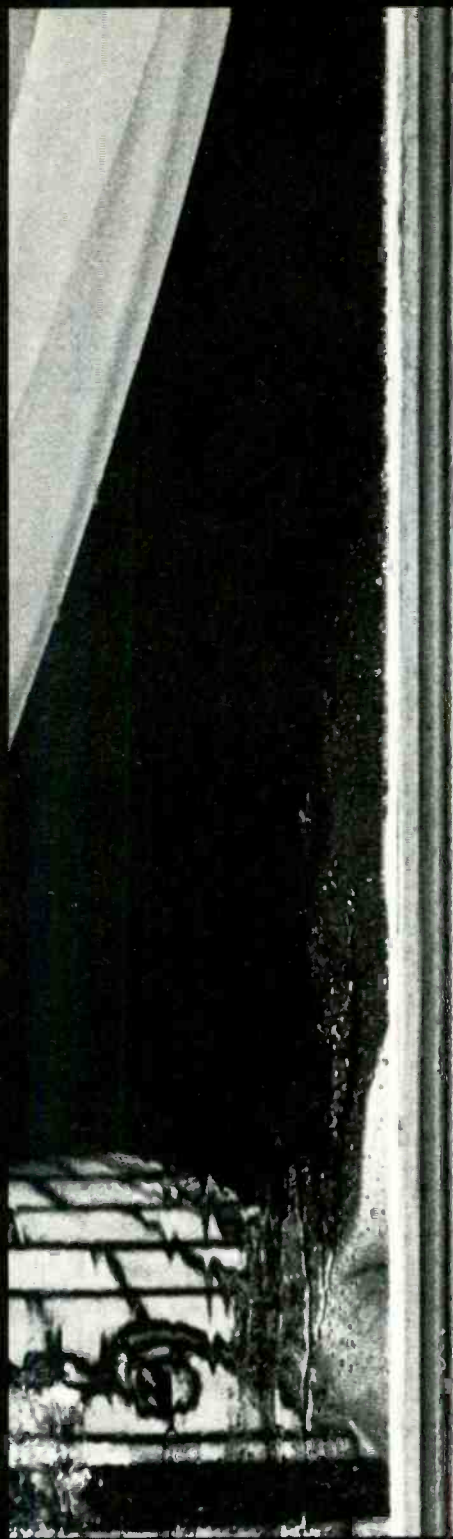
Like every other Solti fan, I've been anticipating the tape editions of his first Chicago recordings. Both the Mahler Fifth and Sixth Symphonies have been announced, but only the latter has reached me so far (London/Ampex K 80231, double-play 7½-ips reel, \$11.95). It is no disappointment, for the performance throws revelatory new light on this rather strange work, not unjustly subtitled *Tragic*, and provides an emotional experience no less overwhelming than many of us found in the Bernstein/Columbia taping of 1968. If Solti is perhaps less passionate, he is more magisterially eloquent; and while the visiting British engineers obtain somewhat less realistic sonic "presence," their less-close miking and the Chicagoans' tonal artistry combine to achieve a darkly robust evocation of the quintessence of this extraordinary work. The London reel also boasts an added attraction: the four *Songs of a Wayfarer* appealingly sung (if scarcely with Schlusnus' conviction in a recent Heliodor cassette version) by Yvonne Minton. And throughout this reel it's a pleasure to report that the well-nigh ideal processing is unflawed by surface noise, pre-echoes, or spillovers.

Bel Canto Music Drama. Another admirably processed, more vividly recorded release is the first taping of Donizetti's earliest operatic success, the long-neglected *Anna Bolena* (London/Ampex V 90177, two 7½-ips reels, \$25.95, notes-and-libretto booklet included). If you have read American or British reviews of the disc edition, you might think that this performance is fatally handicapped by the apparent vocal deficiencies of

Elena Souliotis (as she now prefers her name to be spelled) in the title role. I can't argue with the experts' diagnoses, but to my surprise the undeniably highly erratic star—as well as her vocally more gifted colleagues Marilyn Horne, Janet Coster, John Alexander, and Nicolai Ghiaurov—proves to be capable of considerable dramatic power. But in any case the prime attraction here, for me at least, is the astonishingly bold and picturesque writing for orchestra and chorus, magnificently realized by the Vienna State Opera forces under Silvio Varviso. And what amazed and delighted me most of all is the young composer's cohesive integration of the traditionally devised solo and ensemble set pieces into a true music drama. Yet *Anna Bolena* was first produced in 1830, almost a decade before Verdi's first opera, and a dozen years before Wagner's *Rienzi*. Once again recordings enable us to learn for ourselves rather than to blindly accept what music historians have taught us.

Big Stage Works Through Tiny Opera Glasses. Switching formats, the rise of musicassettes toward technological parity is impressively demonstrated by one recent release that successfully matches the manifold appeals of a 1965 reel triumph in every respect save that of nearly complete freedom from surface noise. The music is Brahms's mighty *German Requiem*; the performance is Herbert von Karajan's profoundly moving one with the Vienna Singverein, Berlin Philharmonic, and soloists Janowitz and Wächter; the recording is one that was and still is outstanding for sonic warmth, stereoistic buoyancy, and perhaps above all for a dynamic range extending not only up to thunderous *fffs* but also down to true, and enchanting, *ppps*. This cassette edition omits the *Haydn Variations* included on the open reel, but costs a dollar less (DGG 3581 002, 2-LP cassette, \$10.98; texts included, *mirabile dictu!*).

The operatic Siamese twins, *Cav & Pag*, are usually coupled in tape as well as in disc editions, or separately combined with filler materials. So it's good to get them more conveniently in individual cassette editions, even though their claim to two-LP length is slightly exaggerated. The present Scala/Von Karajan productions (originally taped together in a 1966 two-reel edition, DGG/Ampex G 9207) may seem mighty tame interpretatively and no more than routine where the individual singers are concerned; but where and how often will you ever find in an opera house choral singing and orchestral playing of the quality achieved here? (DGG 3581 003, Mascagni, and 3581 004, Leoncavallo; 2-LP cassettes, \$10.98 each; librettos presumably available on request.)



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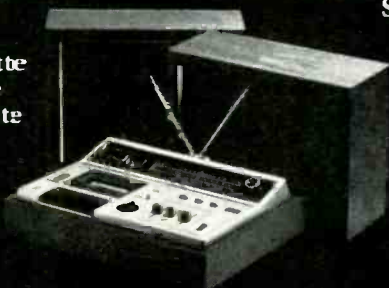
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 **JAMES TAYLOR:** Mud Slide Slim and the Blue Horizon. James Taylor, vocals and acoustic guitar; rhythm accompaniment and background vocals; horns arranged and played by Wayne Jackson, Andrew Love, and the Memphis Horns. *Let Me Ride; Highway Song; Hey Mister, That's Me Up On the Jukebox*; ten more. Warner Bros. BS 2561, \$4.98. Tape  M 82561, \$6.95;  M 52561, \$6.95.

I had the rare pleasure of attending one of the dates for this album. The first thing that struck me was the simplicity of mechanics. Those who are accustomed to the business of recording are used to seeing studios full of mikes, wall-to-wall wire cables, elaborate equipment, and so on. Equally familiar are modern recording methods, wherein music is formed in layers—first the rhythm, then the strings or horns, and finally the vocalist adds his part, using earphones.

Now here we are in 1971 at James Taylor's late-night session in Hollywood, at a small and comfortable studio called Crystal Recorders. Few people were there—engineer Richard Orshoff, producer Peter Asher (late of Peter and Gordon and long-time associate of James Taylor), Taylor's sister Kate (who participates in a few vocal backgrounds), Taylor's friend Joni Mitchell (whose unique vibrato also appears in the background from time to time), a few others.

After coffee and a little quiet friendly talk, Taylor goes into the studio with his basic group: pianist Carole King, bassist Leland Sklar, drummer Russ Kunkel. They recorded *Soldiers*. That was it. I mean, there was no laying down of tracks, no rhythm first, then guitar, then vocal. It all happened at once, with Taylor sitting near the piano to hear Miss King better. The drummer, further away than the others and somewhat isolated to prevent leakage, used earphones. Everyone else depended on their natural musical responses. Taylor sang and played simultaneously with the others and stopped a few times to get various sections together. There were perhaps five complete takes, lasting about an hour in

all. So far as I know, one of these takes appears on the album, as is.


People haven't worked like that since the early days of recording. To do so today requires the kind of intense professionalism that James Taylor possesses: natural, at ease, completely sure, straight ahead. (It should be noted that touches were dubbed in later, from song to song, but minimally).

If Peter Asher has one particular gift as James Taylor's producer (and the two work so closely that I hesitate to single out one aspect), it is Asher's instinct for what is appropriate to one or another of Taylor's songs. Take a haunting song called *Riding On a Railroad*—it has a lonesome, country feeling. To capture the mood, only two instruments are added to the basic group, and both are perfect. One is banjo, played beautifully by John Hartford. The other is fiddle, played by Richard Greene, who finishes the tune with one of the loveliest, most fitting fiddle solos you'll ever hear.

This album may boast the best group of James Taylor songs yet (and how he writes so prolifically and so well is a wonderful mystery). Some say that Taylor's harmonic limitations are beginning to wear thin. Maybe so. Yet his instincts are so right that I never tire of them. As for the lyrics, they are all but perfect. If there were space, I'd quote them all, including one song by Carole King (*You've Got a Friend*) and one by Taylor's guitarist, Danny Kootch (*Machine Gun Kelly*).

Instead, I suggest you buy the album and relish the experience for yourself. This is more than an album: it's a friend. M.A.

ROGER TILLISON: Roger Tillison's Album. Roger Tillison, vocals and guitar; rhythm accompaniment. *Good Time Gal; Yazoo City Jail; Lonesome Louie; Old Sante Fe; Get Up Jake*; six more. Atco SD 33-355, \$4.98.

 **LINK WRAY.** Link Wray, vocals, dobro, guitar, and bass; rhythm accompaniment. *La De Da; Juke Box Mama; Ice People; Crowbar; Tail Dragger*; six more. Polydor 24-4064, \$4.98.

Despite vast differences in their origins, the new albums by Roger Tillison and Link Wray are quite similar, and surprisingly good. Tillison's is another in the endless stream of LPs featuring the West Coast's nepotistic studio men. I'm not entirely certain why this one works. Perhaps it's because of Tillison's middle-Dylan vocalizing and better-than-average songs, or the guitar and banjo support of Jesse Davis (also the recent victim of overexposure in a similar Atlantic outing), or Stan Szeleste's piano and the excellent efforts of the rest of the band. The flavor is relaxed, almost folksy, and finds its summation in a countrified reading of Stevie Wonder's *Loving You Is Sweeter Than Ever*. A first-rate piece of work. Recommended.



Link Wray makes an exciting reappearance.

Link Wray had his first million seller with *Rumble* in 1954. Then he disappeared only to turn up in 1959 with *Rawhide*, another big hit, after which he disappeared again. Your Compleat Rock-and-Roll Career. Well, here he is back again after only twelve years and it has been worth the wait. "Link Wray" is the best pop album of 1971 to date and I'll wager it will hold that designation for the duration of the year. It is simply superb.

Wray, one of the original guitar greats in rock, proves here that he is just as good on dobro and bass. His sidemen—Billy Hodges, piano and organ; Bobby Howard, piano and mandolin; Doug Wray, drums—are a perfect team; one mind seems to inform the whole record. Although he is apparently from North Carolina and now lives in Maryland, Wray's music resembles Texas rock, with echoes of Cajun blues, more than it does any Eastern variety. The menu offers one tune by Willie Dixon, five by Y. Verroca, and five, including several of the best, by Wray himself (it is typical of the whole enterprise that all the songs sound as though they came from the same pen). The liner notes imply that there were production difficulties on this effort and they may account for the nearly perfect looseness of the sound, not unlike all those garage-made recordings we used to love in the '50s (I can't think, for instance, of a recent rock record on which the background "chorus" has worked so well). This is the kind of album we might have expected from Ronnie Hawkins or Sam the Sham or Dion, all of whom are "legendary" and recording again. "Link Wray" is as exciting as it is unexpected. J.G.

FOLLIES. Original cast recording with Alexs Smith, Gene Nelson, Dorothy Collins, John McMartin, Yvonne De Carlo, et al. Capitol SO 761, \$6.98.

Stephen Sondheim has arrived at such a high plateau among the musical theater's contemporary composers (and lyricists—he usually does both words and music) that any new

show of his raises the kind of expectations that would not usually be applied to others in the field. The brilliant score of *Company* was such an integral part of the over-all production that not all of its fine points could be isolated on a recording. And therein Sondheim set a standard from which there was almost nowhere to go but down or, holding his own, sideways. *Follies* is no *Company*—although the show has its moments, the score is very uneven.

The plot is built around a reunion, in a theater about to be torn down, of former "follies" girls, and focuses principally on the post-follies developments in the lives of two couples. This gives Sondheim an opportunity to write in three different veins: songs in the style of revues from the '20s and '30s, songs for peripheral characters reflecting their lives during the intervening years, and songs for the principals to implement the "plot," such as it is. His observant re-creations of the period styles come off best, capped by a superb torch song, *Losing My Mind*, sung with an appropriately grim sense of heartbreak by Dorothy Collins. In the second category, Sondheim's lyrics are far better than his music. Although *Who's That Woman?* and *I'm Still Here* are interesting songs, Mary McCarty's years of experience make the first seem a bit better than it is, while Yvonne De Carlo's lack of musical theater experience cuts some of the spirit out of the second. As for the "plot" songs, they range from better-than-average (*Could I Leave You*) to awful (*The Road You Didn't Take* and *Too Many Mornings*).

There are no very positive musical personalities in the cast. Dorothy Collins has the best voice and Alexis Smith reveals a pleasant, capable singing style, although she makes a better effect when you can see her as well. But the other principals—Gene Nelson and John McMartin—project an anonymity appropriate to (and possibly conditioned by) the songs they have been given to sing.

J.S.W.

GENE MACLELLAN: *Street Corner Preacher*. Gene MacLellan, pop-country singer/songwriter. *Thorn in My Shoe*; *Pages of Time*; *Snowbird*; *Isle of Saint Jean*; *Face in the Mirror*; five more. Capitol ST 660, \$5.98.

ANNE MURRAY: *Straight, Clean and Simple*. Anne Murray, vocals; instrumental accompaniment. *It Takes Time*; *People's Park*; *Child of Mine*; *Sing High, Sing Low*; *A Stranger in My Place*; five more. Capitol ST 6359, \$5.98.

TOMMY GRAHAM: *Planet Earth*. Tommy Graham, vocals, instrumental accompaniment. *Right On*; *Things Ya Say*; *Sahajiya*; *Long Way From Home*; *Show Me the One*; six more. Capitol SKAO 6356, \$5.98.

Gene MacLellan wrote two of the year's most recorded hits. *Put Your Hand in the Hand* and Anne Murray's *Snowbird* sensation. As a singer MacLellan can be enjoyed regularly on local Halifax TV's *Singalong Jubilee*, but the odds are that MacLellan and his first U.S. album, "Street Corner Preacher," may remain one of Canada's best-kept musical secrets—from the U.S., that is. Considering the commercial devastation of the rock scene in the States, keeping to Canada may be a necessity for these private people.

The common denominator between these two MacLellan and Anne Murray discs is a

third Halifaxan, producer Brian Ahern, who likes to refer to his music as a movement which he calls "The Maritime Mafia." Ahern, the general of this salvation army, operates out of Toronto where his is the clearest, cleanest sound around, and he backs artists who have the same qualities. (Bob Carpenter and Brent Titcomb, singer/songwriters, are next in line for recording recognition.) But it is these two musical marriages—between Ahern and MacLellan, and Ahern and Murray—that make these collections a recording event rather than an excuse to float an album on the market. But what's news anyway about a Canadian country singer who may never cross the border to get into the game?

MacLellan's own version of *Snowbird* is so light and bouncy that it keeps right on going past the last note. His songs are vital, breathless moments of clear insight; they are simple statements on universal themes. Like an apostle of the obvious, his language becomes poetry, and the tone suggests agelessness and experience, though he is barely past thirty.

Ahern's production punctuations double the positive and triple the drive and drama, while the mix of instruments is perfectly balanced and savors of the purity of high spirits on parade: a puffy, one-note bass cotton-mouthing an ever-up line; sitars and guitars slicing and picking; vibrant violins praying high and low with the steel guitar.

In *Pages of Time* and *Thorn in My Shoe*, MacLellan exhibits his eternal country soul, but the songs are something new on the music scene. The same refreshing formula animates Ahern's other recent production, Anne Murray's "Straight, Clean and Simple." Miss Murray is the cleanest-sounding belle in Canada, and Ahern, always on the lookout for a quality vehicle, weds the songbird to the inspirations of Brent Titcomb's *Sing High, Sing Low*, *People's Park*, and the delightful ragtime number *Sycamore Slick*.

Tommy Graham, who plays sarode and sitar on both the Murray and MacLellan LPs, will possibly become the most popular of these easy-rock artists in the U.S., since his "Planet Earth" album is slick and has been geared to compete in the floods and rapids of commercial rock. His own material, plus Titcomb's *Sahajiya*, makes this disc one of the most cheerful and pleasant rock experiences of the year. Rockin' versions of Gene Pitney's *Twenty-Four Hours from Tulsa*, Donovan's *Celeste*, Van Morrison's *Brown-Eyed Girl*, and David Britten's (of *Whole Earth Catalog* fame) *Long Way From Home* all indicate that something's happening here. What more could one ask for? Canada's *RPM* magazine recently honored Ahern as the country's top producer and Anne Murray as Canada's top female artist. It's only a matter of time before it all sinks in, and time to these fellas seems better spent looking into the mirror of music rather than at the blank face of a watch. E.O.

DONNY HATHAWAY. Donny Hathaway, vocals and keyboards; Arif Mardin and Donny Hathaway, arr. *She Is My Lady*; *Little Girl*; *Giving Up*; five more. Atco SD 33-360, \$4.98. Tape: M 833-360, \$6.95; M 533-360, \$6.95.

Here we are, stuck forever in the war between natural optimism and acquired cynicism. The critic wants to find the best in music and keeps getting slapped with the worst. So about once a year, having crawled through hundreds of useless new albums, a reviewer despairs of

ever finding another exceptional new talent. Just when you give up, along comes a stranger with a wide-open talent, and you're turned on again.

This time it's a young man named Donny Hathaway, twenty-six years old, from Chicago. Hathaway arrives heavily endorsed. His album is produced by two strong Atlantic energies: Jerry Wexler (who went so far as to write cheering liner notes) and Arif Mardin (who wrote half the album's arrangements as well).

Donny Hathaway sings, plays keyboards, composes, and arranges. So natural is his musical instinct that all avenues of its expression blend into an easy whole. But for me, Hathaway is first a singer. His sound is warm, emotional, full, and flexible. His playing is equally romantic and relaxed, rooted in gospel but refined with harmonic richness. He wrote only one song in the set: a pretty thing called *Take a Love Song*. His four arrangements (strings, horns, voices) are all powerful.

The highlight of the album, I feel, is Leon Russell's beautiful *A Song For You*. Please note that Hathaway, who is black, performs the song more romantically than funky Leon Russell, who is white. While both artists' versions are brilliant, it is Hathaway's that stirs the heart. The exquisite arrangement is by Arif Mardin.

For Donny Hathaway, fame is only a matter of time—this is an instantly communicable talent. It's a pleasure to see him in such rewarding surroundings. Congratulations all around.

M.A.

THE JOHNNY OTIS SHOW: Live At Monterey! Johnny Otis, piano and vocals; Shuggie Otis, guitar; Esther Phillips, Joe Turner, Roy Milton, Roy Brown, Margie Evans, and Delmar "Mighty Mouth" Evans, vocals; Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, alto saxophone and vocals; Ivory Joe Hunter, piano and vocals; Pee Wee Crayton, guitar and vocals; rhythm and instrumental accompaniment. *Kidney Stew*; *R. M. Blues*; *Goin' Back to L.A.*; *Plastic Man*; *The Time Machine*; *I Got a Gal*; *Willie and the Hand Jive*; *Since I Met You Baby*; eleven more. Epic EG 40473, \$9.96 (two discs).

The Johnny Otis Show was one of the most successful road acts of '50s' r & b, with occasional hits like *Willie and the Hand Jive* to push things along, and despite the presence of youngish performers (like sixteen-year-old Shuggie), "Live at Monterey!" is a trip down memory lane. Highlights include Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson's 1945 hit, *Kidney Stew*; Roy Brown's *Good Rockin' Tonight* and *Cry Me a River*, and a blues medley by Esther Phillips, who isn't so "little" anymore. Well recorded and nicely packaged, this collection from last year's Monterey Jazz Festival is a pleasure from beginning to end. Not as good as being there, I'm sure, but almost. J.G.



LERoy CARR: Blues Before Sunrise. Leroy Carr, vocals and piano; Scrapper Blackwell and Josh White, guitars. *Corn Licker Blues*; *Shady Lane Blues*; *Southbound Blues*; *Bobo Stomp*; *Shining Pistol*; *It's Too Short*; seven more. Columbia C 30496, \$4.98.

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Columbia CL 1799—one cut is from a different take). Leroy Carr was probably the most commercially successful blues singer of the 1930s, perhaps of all time. These recordings, caught at the apex of his career, were made for the Vocalion label between March 1932 and December 1934 (he died in April 1935 at thirty). Carr's warm piano and wry, somewhat melancholy vocals and Blackwell's strident guitar were a superb means for expressing urban blues, certainly the best before the introduction of electrified instruments. A milestone. Be thankful it's available again. J.G.

SINATRA & COMPANY. For a feature review of this and his other recordings, see page 65.

SINFONIAS. Pop arrangements by Waldo de los Rios of symphonic excerpts of Beethoven, Schubert, Mozart, Brahms, Dvořák, Haydn, Tchaikovsky, Mendelssohn. Orchestra of Manuel de Falla, Waldo de los Rios, cond. United Artists UAS 6802, \$4.98.

As a social analyst I'm a flop. Wandering unhappily about the room during the forty-three minutes of Waldo de los Rios' album "Sinfonias," the latest essay in popularization of the classics, I felt quite clearly that this thin soup would never win new friends for those poor old has-beens Beethoven, Schubert, Mozart, et al. (Only the day before, a New York record store was urging WQXR listeners to come in and enjoy the "sweet anachronisms" of a Beethoven symphony, so the burial service seems now almost complete.) Rios has retained more or less the original scoring of movements of the Schubert Eighth, the Brahms Third, the Mozart Fortieth, among others—and, yes, the choral movement of Beethoven's Ninth in four-plus minutes—and has added percussion accompaniment, swinging along in sambalike rhythms and other more with-it beats. So Mozart comes out boom-tiddy, boom-tiddy; Beethoven achieves oom-pah-pah, oom-pah-pah; Schubert is poom-patty-patty, poom-patty-patty; Brahms is—well, I'll spare you. The percussion is delicately handled, and if you are going to geld the greats I suppose it should be done deftly, as this is. But I couldn't imagine a rock fan (and according to the album notes that is the intended customer) giving this recording the time of day, for it has neither the harmony quota of rock nor the rhythmic guts of the originals.

Well, so much for the crystal ball—as it turns out, decidedly cloudy. *Billboard*, the *Pravda* of the record industry, reports that Rios' product is "selling big" in many parts of the world and that within two weeks of the first issue of the Mozart Fortieth on a single in Madrid, sales of the real Mozart were up fifty per cent. The album notes here ask the question: "Who's to say that if Beethoven were alive today, rock would not be the context in which he would express himself?" So forget about that silly *Heiligenstadt Testament* and groove it, man. S.F.

JIM PEPPER: Pepper's Powwow. Jim Pepper, vocals and tenor saxophone; rhythm accompaniment. *Now War Dance; Senecas; Rock Stomp Indian Style*; nine more. Embryo SD 731, \$3.98.

There are many releases these days dedicated

to the culture of the American Indian. One of the recent discs was simply a series of tapes of authentic Indian chants by authentic second- or third-generation Indians. As deeply as one must feel the plight of the abused Indian, these albums miss their mark—for records are designed to entertain, no matter what their form. I sat down with the authentic Indian album and tried. But it was neither music nor a trip in the delightful sense of a recent album of authentic whale "songs," recorded underwater.

This album by Jim Pepper is a different story. Pepper is an Indian of Kaw and Creek descent. The difference is that Pepper is also an accomplished musician. He has combined these two sources of pride into a cohesive, humorous, and interesting album. Two other family members (presumably) are featured—Ravie Pepper on C flute and Gib Pepper on narrations and some percussion.

I first heard of Jim Pepper several years ago, as the composer of a memorable song on a Harpers Bazaar album. The song was titled *Witchitai-to*, and it is now featured by its author in this album. Apparently it was originally a chant and is briefly included in original form here, described as "Religious Peyote Chant—Kaw Tribe; arranged by Gilbert Pepper." The original is followed on the disc by young Jim Pepper's song version, on which the composer sings and plays tenor sax. Together, these two tracks provide an interesting hint of history—the winding path of the Indian from plain to reservation to city street. It's a truly beautiful song, moving from dialect to the lines, "Water spirit feeding springing round my head; makes me feel glad that I'm not dead," and back again. The chords are simple, dronelike, lovely.

Like the above section, the rest of the album integrates chants and stories with music and songs, mostly by one Pepper or another. A jazz influence is evident in Jim Pepper and in his choice of sidemen, including bassist Chuck Rainey and guitarist Larry Coryell.

Jim Pepper has perspective as well as a trait that I, as an outsider, find somehow lacking among American Indians: humor. Pepper has found a way to blend the many forces of his life and his blood into an album that, in the end, sounds like fun. M.A.

BLACK OAK ARKANSAS. Jim Mangrum, Wayne Evans, Rickie Reynolds, Pat Daugherty, and Stanley Knight, vocals and instrumentals. *Uncle Lijah; Hot and Nasty; I Could Love You*; five more. Atco SD 33-354, \$4.98. Tape: ● M 833-354, \$6.95. ●● M 533-354, \$6.95.

This is one case out of countless others: a group that was recorded too soon. Black Oak Arkansas shows too much potential to be lumped with the nothing groups, but the potential has not flowered. You can hear it just under the surface but it keeps getting away, leaving the listener with no clear impression. The album is full of unjustified instrumental sections, and the group's singing is too often ragged and hasty.

Albums such as this can do more harm than good. For one thing, they not only crowd but confuse the market: people who buy on face value may be disappointed enough to avoid a second release. Even worse is the effect on the group itself: a first flop can create bitterness which in turn curtails further growth. Thus do countless too-soon groups disband with

the cop-out: "We had a dumb producer," or "They wouldn't let us do it like we wanted to." In short, they invariably blame the record company for their failure.

The fact is that a stable, ready rock group is far less vulnerable to production interference. A self-knowing group tends to attract a similar producer. Together they come up with a good album for the simple reason that everyone knows what he is doing.

Atlantic/Atco makes fewer mistakes than many, and when it does goof, the mistakes are at least honest ones—such as with this group, because at least there is potential here. If Atlantic will underwrite one or two more projects, Black Oak Arkansas may come up winners and the label may recoup its losses. So far the whole is little more than a business risk.

There is one striking aspect to the album: its visual design. The front cover features a richly toned photograph of the group centered on a map of Arkansas. On the back are five separate but related photos of group members, all interestingly composed and processed. The cover design and photos are by someone named Eve Babitz. The album business is densely populated not only with hustling producers but with minimally accomplished photographers. This lady, like Guy Webster, is a rare exception. M.A.

JIMMY CAMPBELL: Half Baked. Jimmy Campbell, vocals; rhythm accompaniment. *In My Room; I Will Not Mind; Dulcie; Forever Grateful; Don't Leave Me Now;* six more. Vertigo VEL 1000, \$4.98.

CLIVE SARSTEDT: Freeway Getaway. Clive Sarstedt, vocals; rhythm accompaniment. *Into Your Station; Joey Friendship; Six Feet Under; Thanks Anyway; Shelby Farm;* six more. RCA Victor LSP 4509, \$5.98.

Jimmy Campbell and Clive Sarstedt are two British singer/songwriters who are influenced more by pop music, rock, and the British music halls, and less directly by blues, and most not at all by c & w. They are, like most Englishmen, also obsessed with Americana (one of Sarstedt's songs resolves itself in a chant of American place names). In a sense, what we have here is a more sophisticated go at the sort of ambience that Elton John aims at with his ersatz country music (in fact, Sarstedt's *Indian Boy* could have been penned by John and his partner, Bernie Taub).

Although both Sarstedt and Campbell are interesting songwriters, it is the performances that set off these albums from the ordinary run. Campbell sounds like a British male version of Melanie a lot of the time (if you can imagine that) and Sarstedt like a pre-Beatles rock-ballad singer; but both break out into very fine rock shouting when the occasion demands. Sarstedt benefits from the production efforts of Ray Singer and Simon Napier-Bell, who are among the best British producers (Singer and Napier-Bell are witty, talented, and somewhat unscrupulous: last year, you remember, they tried to foist Borstal rock on you—they always bear watching).

Clive Sarstedt's first album (RCA Victor LSP 4375) has several fine moments, but suffers, fatally I'm afraid, from foolishness with intros and finales and such, and a Side 2 that runs 13:45. "Freeway Getaway," however, is a fully realized effort and well worth attention. On "Half Baked," Campbell is

backed by a versatile band named Rock 'n' Horse who follow him through various musical incarnations without missing a note. All the more remarkable for being a first album. J.G.

WHERE'S CHARLEY? Original London cast recording with Norman Wisdom. Monmouth-Evergreen 7029, \$5.98.

Where's Charley? was first produced in New York in October 1948, four years after Jack Kapp of Decca Records had opened up the bright new world of original cast albums with *Oklahoma!* and the musical theater quickly got on board the original-cast bandwagon. Yet, despite a long run (the tenth longest-running musical in Broadway history at the time), no recording was ever made of *Where's Charley?* with its original cast, the prime member of which was Ray Bolger. Ten years later, the musical reached London with Norman Wisdom, appearing in a musical comedy for the first time, playing the Bolger role. This London cast was recorded but another thirteen years went by before the disc was released in the United States.

Now that it is finally here, we can be grateful but with slight qualifications. Frank Loesser's score (both music and lyrics) still has charm and spirit—charm in such ballads as *My Darling, My Darling, Lovelier Than Ever*, and *At the Red Rose Cotillion*; spirit in the bright *New Ashmolean Marching Society and Student Conservatory Band*. And of course there is the brilliant high point of the score, the lovely, lilting *Once In Love With Amy*—and there's the hitch. Ray Bolger filled *Once In Love With Amy* with so much of his warm performing personality that any other singer is at a disadvantage. Norman Wisdom not only lacks the Bolger qualities but brings nothing adequate of his own to replace them. He sings in a rather nasal croon which seems inappropriate to the role. The rest of the cast, however, is strong of voice—the men sometimes overly strong but the women on a high, consistent level. J.S.W.

*** MICHAEL NESMITH & THE FIRST NATIONAL BAND:** Nevada Fighter. Michael Nesmith, vocals and guitar; rhythm accompaniment. *Grand Ennui; Here I Am; Only Bound; Rainmaker; Rene;* five more. RCA Victor LSP 4497, \$5.98. Tape: ●P8S 1636, \$6.95; ●●PK 1636, \$6.95.

Michael Nesmith, the former Monkee, continues to expand his odd, rich country-pop style. His career has been rather like a novelist's in fact, a flashy first effort, rather too busy but full of ideas; a more careful second album, deeper and with a greater emphasis on technique. With "Nevada Fighter," his third release, Nesmith has found his groove. The songs are mostly excellent, especially his own on Side 1 (*Propinquity* is already well known and widely recorded; *Grand Ennui* is in his best fun-with-words style; and the title tune is a gay romp), but he has also rounded up nice tunes for Side 2 from Eric Clapton, Nilsson, and Bob Nolan (whose *Tumbling Tumbleweeds* is the nod at c & w tradition that Nesmith always includes on his LPs).

As a child of the studio, having grown up in a group that wasn't so much recorded as

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manufactured, Nesmith is able to get a very full sound out of simple guitar-piano-bass-drums combinations. No one else in Nashville uses the studio the same way. Usually heavy production numbers obscure the inherent funkiness of the music, although Nesmith uses everything to heighten emotional effect. His sound is one of the most pleasant in pop but it doesn't lose any punch—the kind of effect I imagine Mickey Newberry was looking for and couldn't find. Dynaflex may be improving or this may be an exception; there were no warps or skips. The amount of music is a little disappointing—ten tunes, only about fifteen minutes per side—but don't let this keep you away from the record. A pleasure.

J.G.

jazz



LOUIS ARMSTRONG. Louis Armstrong, trumpet and vocals; Bobby Hackett, cornet; Jack Teagarden, trombone; Peanuts Hucko, clarinet; Bud Freeman, tenor saxophone; Ernie Caceres, baritone saxophone; Fats Waller and Dick Cary, piano; Jack Lesberg, bass; Cozy Cole, drums. *I Got Rhythm*; *Jeepest Creepers*; *Some Day*; six more. Up Front 143, \$1.98.

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA. Buck Clayton, Ed Lewis, and Bobby Moore or Harry Edison, trumpets; Benny Morton, Dan Minor, and Eddie Durham or Dickie Wells, trombones; Earl Warren, Herschel Evans, Lester Young, and Jack Washington, saxophones; Count Basie, piano; Freddie Green, guitar; Walter Page, bass; Jo Jones, drums; Jimmy Rushing, vocals. *Study in Brown*; *Dinah*; *Every Tub*; six more. Up Front 142, \$1.98.

DUKE ELLINGTON. Orchestra circa 1937. *Harlem Speaks*; *Tootin' Through the Roof*; *Sophisticated Lady*; five more. Up Front 144, \$1.98 (Up Front Records, 1135 W. Elizabeth Ave., Linden, N.J. 07036).

These records, listed at \$1.98 each, are an incredible bargain. The Louis Armstrong disc, in particular, is a rare and invaluable bit of jazz history primarily because of the first side, taken from a broadcast on New York radio station WNEW by disc jockey Martin Block in 1939. It brings together Armstrong, Jack Teagarden, Fats Waller, Bud Freeman, and possibly Sid Catlett. They are in happy fettle and the conjunction of Waller and Arm-

strong is delightful. Waller's piano is a buoyant back-up to Armstrong's trumpet and Fats's shouts of encouragement are infectious, boosting Teagarden and Freeman to some of their most rewarding playing of this period. As for Armstrong, he seems overjoyed to be freed from the heavyhanded routines he was doing then with his big band. The second side, taken from a 1947 concert at the Winter Garden Theater in New York by the group that was on the verge of becoming Armstrong's All-Stars, is in a vein that the group soon made familiar. There is a particularly good version of Louis' lovely *Some Day* on which Armstrong and Teagarden play with a sensitivity that makes the whole piece sing.

The Basie and Ellington discs are taken from radio broadcasts in the 1930s and have the tubbiness seemingly inherent in such off-the-air recordings of that time. But once the ear adjusts, which happens quickly, the sound quality is of little consequence. One side of the Basie set is a broadcast from the Meadowbrook in November 1937, when the band was young and hungry and jumping; the second side is a somewhat more staid studio broadcast a year later. Highlights are a zinging *Dinah* with Jimmy Rushing shouting the lyrics and a few more Lester Young solos to add to those you may already have. The source of the Ellington disc is vague except that it seems to have happened in 1937. Most of the tunes are Ellington standards of that time, including a marvelously relaxed *Caravan*, but there are also two tunes never commercially recorded by the Duke—*Day In, Day Out* and *One, Two, Button My Shoe*, the latter with one of Ivie Anderson's coolly swinging vocals. J.S.W.

CHET ELY AND BUTCH THOMPSON: Mr. Jelly Rolls On; Butch Thompson, piano; Chet Ely, vocals. *Winin' Boy*; *Mr. Jelly Lord*; *Aaron Harris*; seven more. Jazzette 1004, \$5.00 (Jazzette Records, 796 Reddoch, Memphis, Tenn. 38117).

At first glance, this record is apt to strike terror in the heart of anyone who has ever agonized through the attempts of latter-day jazz fans to capture the style and sound of early jazz musicians. For what we have here is a college student (normally a clarinetist) at the piano, with an industrial engineer (an old-timer who has never sung professionally) singing Jelly Roll Morton's songs. Incredibly, Butch Thompson and Chet Ely make this project work. Ely does not try to imitate Jelly Roll's singing style. He follows Jelly's phrasing and inflection, and his voice, fortunately, has a



Armstrong and Ellington—their old dubs now an incredible bargain.

naturally worn, grainy quality that suits the songs superbly. Thompson knows the Morton piano style inside out and so he plays it easily and with relaxation, giving Ely just the kind of background necessary to complement and underline his own feeling for Jelly's songs.

So far, so good. But what's the point of a record like this when Jelly Roll himself recorded all these songs? Actually, except for the Library of Congress recordings made by Alan Lomax, Morton sang relatively few of his songs on records. Only *Michigan Water*, *Winnin' Boy*, *Mamie's Blues*, and *Don't You Leave Me Here*, of those sung by Ely, fall into that category and he justifies their inclusion by singing additional verses that are not on Jelly's commercial recordings. Ely's other songs—*Aaron Harris*, *Murder Ballad*, *Mr. Jelly Lord*, *Whiskey and a Duck*, and *Low Down Blues* (with Jelly's "Spanish tinge")—were only sung by Morton under the primitive recording conditions of the Library of Congress series so, in a sense, Ely and Thompson are bringing them out in the open. Of course, it would be preferable to have Jelly Roll himself singing these songs in as good a recording situation as this. But, since that is impossible, this disc is as close to that ideal as we can reasonably expect to come. J.S.W.

TEN GREATS OF JAZZ: Jazz in the Troc 1969. Yank Lawson and Billy Butterfield, trumpets; Lou McGarity and Carl Fontana, trombones; Bob Wilber, Peanuts Hucko, and Bud Freeman, reeds; Ralph Sutton, piano; Clancy Hayes, banjo and vocals; Bob Haggart, bass; Gus Johnson, Jr., drums. *Willie the Weeper*; *In a Mist*; *Mood Indigo*; *After You've Gone*; sixteen more. Jazz in the Troc 1969, \$10 (two discs) (Elich Gardens Co., 4620 W. 38th Ave., Denver, Colo., 80212).

The band that is now known as the World's Greatest Jazz Band got its start during an annual series of summer jazz concerts at Elich Gardens in Denver, running from 1965 to 1969. All the concerts were recorded except the first, and excerpts from the 1966, 1967, and 1968 concerts have already been issued on single LPs. This double-disc set winds up the series. It's a strong farewell to Elich Gardens, foreshadowing the brilliance and power of the World's Greatest once it got over its early panic efforts to be commercial.

The star of the occasion is Bob Wilber who adds something special to practically every tune on which he is heard. He does it with his soprano saxophone in setting and building the mood of *Mood Indigo* and in turning Clancy Hayes's lively version of *Willie the Weeper* into a real romp. He does it with his clarinet on *Limehouse Blues*; on a tremendously forceful treatment of *Original Dixieland One Step*, in which the band manages to catch the feeling of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band's recording of the tune while raising it through several levels of vitality; and on a clarinet duet with Peanuts Hucko on *Undecided*.

But Wilber's major triumph here is a gorgeously serene development of *Lazy Afternoon* (which is obstinately listed as *Here's That Rainy Day* on the label, in the liner, and in Dick Gibson's notes). There's a lot more in addition to Wilber, of course, but he is so ubiquitous and so superbly good that his contributions are inescapable. Yank Lawson and Lou McGarity project a brilliant lustiness on

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Tin Roof Blues, Ralph Sutton rolls through a pair of piano solos. Bud Freeman takes off on *Lady Be Good*. But nobody else in the group is in quite the same class as Wilber.

J.S.W.

SAM WOODING AND HIS CHOCOLATE DANDIES.

Bobby Martin, Maceo Edwards, and Tommy Ladnier or Doc Cheatham, trumpets; Herb Fleming or Albert Wynn, and Billy Burns, trombones; Gene Sedric, Garvin Bushell, Willie Lewis, and Jerry Black, reeds; Freddy Johnson or Sam Wooding, piano; John Kitchell, banjo; John Warren or King Edwards, bass; George Howe or Tom Fields, drums. *Alabama Bound*; *Bull Foot Stomp*; *Krazy Kat*; thirteen more. Biograph 12025, \$5.98.

To American jazz fans, Sam Wooding's band is one of the most celebrated but least known of the early jazz groups because he spent almost all of his career overseas. He took his band to Germany in 1925 and, except for a decade during and after World War II, has remained out of the United States since then. This collection opens with that 1925 group in Germany which, on the basis of the four pieces included here, could stand with the Fletcher Henderson band of that period (Wooding's band had followed Henderson into the Club Alabam in New York before he took off for Europe).

The bulk of the disc, however, is made up of recordings by Wooding's 1929 band, cut in Barcelona. This is a polished, powerful, and swinging group, again equal to its contemporaries in the States. It is slick, showmanlike, studded with good soloists, bristling with novel ideas, and occasionally burdened with the stiff vocals that were in style then. But this is a band that deserves to rank in recorded anthologies with Ellington, Henderson, Moten, Hines, and Charlie Johnson. As an addendum, the set includes a piano solo by Wooding, recorded in Paris in 1963 which shows him, at the age of sixty-eight, as a vital and agile pianist, drawing on the same Harlem roots that still show in Duke Ellington's playing.

J.S.W.



DUKE ELLINGTON: *New Orleans Suite*. Mercer Ellington, Al Rubin, Fred Stone, Cootie Williams, and Money Johnson or Cat Anderson, trumpets and flugel-horns; Booty Wood, Julien Priester, and Dave Taylor or Chuck Connors, trombones; Russell Procope, Johnny Hodges, Norris Turney, Harold Ashby, Paul Gonsalves, and Harry Carney, reeds; Duke Ellington, piano; Rufus Jones, drums. Atlantic SD 1580, \$5.98.

The *New Orleans Suite*, commissioned for the 1970 New Orleans Jazz Festival, is one of Duke Ellington's most completely realized long works, his best since *Suite Thursday*. It is quintessential Ellington, beautifully played with emphasis on the ensemble and solo characteristics of the band and a rich evocation of the land of jazz. The recording gains added poignancy because it represents the last recorded work of Johnny Hodges. Happily, part of that representation is a superb Hodges solo, with the band rocking solidly behind him on a long opening section. *New Orleans Blues*. The Rabbitt went out with all his colors flying—he died between the two recording sessions required for this disc. As a result, a *Portrait of*

Sidney Bechet, which Ellington had written expressly for Hodges' rarely used soprano saxophone, was turned over to Paul Gonsalves, who plays it in warm, moving fashion on tenor saxophone (a welcome change from those grinding, god-awful marathon solos he has been put through ever since *Crescendo and Diminuendo in Blue* at Newport in 1956).

After the strong start it gets with the *Blues* and Hodges, the suite holds up unusually well through a bristling and perceptive performance by Cootie Williams on *Portrait of Louis Armstrong*; an agile recollection, by Joe Benjamin, of that tower of strength bassist Wellman Braud, who played in the Ellington band of the Thirties; and a delightful characterization of the spirit of New Orleans' traditional Second Line built around Russell Procope's mellow clarinet. Striking colors and textures flow all through the suite—in the dark power of *Thanks for the Beautiful Land on the Delta*, the unexpected tranquillity of *Bourbon Street Jangling Lollies*, and the dazzling flugelhorn display by Fred Stone on *Aristocracy à la Jean Lafite*. This recording is one of the landmarks in Ellington's career.

J.S.W.

in brief

HENRY AND LEONARD CROW DOG: Crow Dog's Paradise. Elektra EKS 74091, \$4.98.

I have no real criteria to judge this collection of Sioux Indian songs, most of which are religious in origin and about peyote, but I was fascinated from beginning to end. The album is beautifully produced and packaged, and I suppose Elektra's reputation is such that we can be sure they wouldn't offer a shuck. An interesting record.

J.G.

BREAD: Manna. Elektra EKS 74086, \$4.98. Tape: ● ET8 4086, \$6.98; ●● TC5 4086, \$6.98.

The star of Bread is singer/composer/arranger David Gates, whose latest hit is a lovely song called *If*. Bread is perhaps the prettiest and most romantic of all the soft rock groups. This second album beats the first, which was good too.

M.A.

TOMMY CASH: Cash Country. Epic E 30556, \$4.98.

Tommy Cash is gaining assurance as a performer and beginning to sound less like his brother Johnny. Most of the songs on this album suit him very well. Unfortunately, the effort is marred by overproducing. "Rise and Shine" is still his best record.

J.G.

DOTTIE WEST: Careless Hands. RCA Victor LSP 4482, \$5.98. Tape: ● P8S 1693, \$6.95.

Dottie West, by now an old-timer to c & w fans, is inching toward an updated repertoire. This time she adds the likes of *Snowbird*, *Rose Garden*, and *Help Me Make It Through the Night*. Ten tunes.

J.G.

GRAND FUNK: Survival. Capitol SW 764, \$5.98. Tape: ● 8XW 764, \$6.98; ●● 4XW 764, \$6.98. Survival was meant to be Grand Funk's relevant album. It's not.

J.G.

HOWLIN' WOLF: Message To The Young. Chess CH 50002, \$4.98. Tape: ● 8033-50002M, \$6.98; ●● 5033-50002M, \$6.98.

It is always good to have another Howlin' Wolf album, even one that presents him in such inhospitable circumstances. Chess keeps

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searching for a format that will bring a wider audience to its deserving blues superstars. This, a nondescript rock band, is not it. J.G.

A CHILD'S GARDEN OF GRASS: A Pre-Legalization Comedy. Elektra EKS 75012, \$5.98. The title tells the story which is based on a book by Jack Margolis and Richard Clorfene. A large, singularly relaxed cast wanders in and out of the spacial narration. The writing is sometimes predictable, more often funny. Depending on your head, the album is a trip. M.A.

HEADS HANDS & FEET. Capitol SVBB 680, \$11.96 (two discs). Tape: ● 8XVV 680, \$8.98; ●● 4XVV 680, \$8.98.

One part Guess Who, two parts Grand Funk, three parts hype: this, I suppose, is meant to be Capitol's hottest new group. I'd give it an 85, Dick, because it has a good beat. J.G.

JOHNNIE LEWIS: Alabama Slide Guitar. Arhoolie 1055, \$5.98.

Johnnie Lewis is a Chicago house painter and sometime blues performer who offers a collection of tunes played in the slide style of his native Alabama. His sound is light and appealing on both vocals and guitar. J.G.

CROSBY, STILLS, NASH, & YOUNG: 4 Way Street. Atlantic SD 2-902, \$9.96 (two discs). Tape: ● M82-902, \$6.95; ●● M52-902, \$6.95.

Be ready for the fact that this in-person album is far different from CSNY's studio-made discs, with their cascading overdubs. The effect here is more like the CSNY selections on the Woodstock concert albums. No matter which style you prefer, this double set is worth owning, partially for the new material it presents and partially for the group's combined tonnage of talent. M.A.

THE DOORS: L.A. Woman. Elektra EKS 75011, \$5.98. Tape: ●● 85011, \$6.98; ●● 55011, \$6.98. A sterile, puny bag of echoes and rip-offs. The Doors always sounded like they'd rather be doing something else. Maybe now they will. Good cover, though. J.G.

JANIS IAN: Present Company. Capitol SKAO 683, \$5.98.

"Present Company" is a very pleasant surprise. After three or four mediocre albums and a couple of silent years, Janis Ian has come through with a very good LP. The songwriting is excellent, the singing more assured, and she gets first-rate support from producer Jerry Corbitt and company. J.G.

SAM MCGEE: Grand Dad Of The Country Guitar Pickers. Arhoolie 5012, \$5.98.

From the liner: "Sam McGee was born May 1, 1894 in . . . Tennessee . . . commenced picking about 12 . . . pretty well formed his style by 1910 or 1915 . . . certainly first of the hot country pickers to record (. . . 1926) and broadcast (about same on WSM's Opry) . . . continues to appear on Grand Ole Opry every Saturday night . . . the oldest member of the Opry." Another excellent and important Arhoolie release. J.G.

ELTON JOHN: 11-17-70. Uni 93105, \$4.98. Tape: ● 8-93105, \$6.95; ●● 2-93105, \$6.95.

Britain's Elton John went into a New York studio last year and recorded this album live as a radio concert on WABC-FM. It roars, particularly on *Take Me to the Pilot*. M.A.

MOTHER EARTH: Bring Me Home. Reprise 6431, \$4.98. Tape: ● M 86431, \$6.95; ●● M 56431, \$6.95.

The albums by Mother Earth, starring Tracy Nelson, are almost boringly excellent. Here's another. J.G.

TOM PAXTON: The Compleat Tom Paxton. Elektra 7E 2003, \$9.96 (two discs). Tape: ● T8 2003, \$6.98; ●● C2 2003, \$6.98.

Well, here it is gang, just what you've been craving: The Compleat Tom Paxton. Endless. J.G.

JERRY REED: When You're Hot, You're Hot. RCA Victor LSP 4506, \$5.98. Tape: ● P8S 1712, \$6.95; ●● PK 1712, \$6.95.

Every previous Jerry Reed release has received favorable comment in these pages, so it is with some surprise that I find myself disappointed with his newest L.P. Part of the problem is the program (including the millionth recording of *Ruby, Don't Take Your Love to Town*); then too some of the cuts are much too busy (RCA Nashville tends to confuse chorales with class), and Jerry just isn't hot. The disc does include *Amos Moses*, his big hit, but even that compares unfavorably with some of his earlier favorites. J.G.

EUGENE MCDANIELS: Headless Heroes of the Apocalypse. Atlantic SD 8281, \$4.98.

Gene McDaniels is a superb singer who has begun to take himself too seriously as a social commentator. The result is a pretentious album with too much lecturing and too little good singing. M.A.

THE ROLLING STONES: Sticky Fingers. Rolling Stones Records COC 59100, \$4.98. Tape: ● M 859100, \$6.95; ●● M 559100, \$6.95.

It may seem a little late for scatological record covers to do much for the revolution (or even for album sales), but the Stones don't seem to think so. The music inside isn't earth-shattering either, but most rock fans and all Stones fans will dig it. J.G.

STRAWBS: Antiques and Curios. A & M SP 4288, \$4.98. Tape: ● 8T 4288, \$6.95; ●● CS 4288, \$6.95.

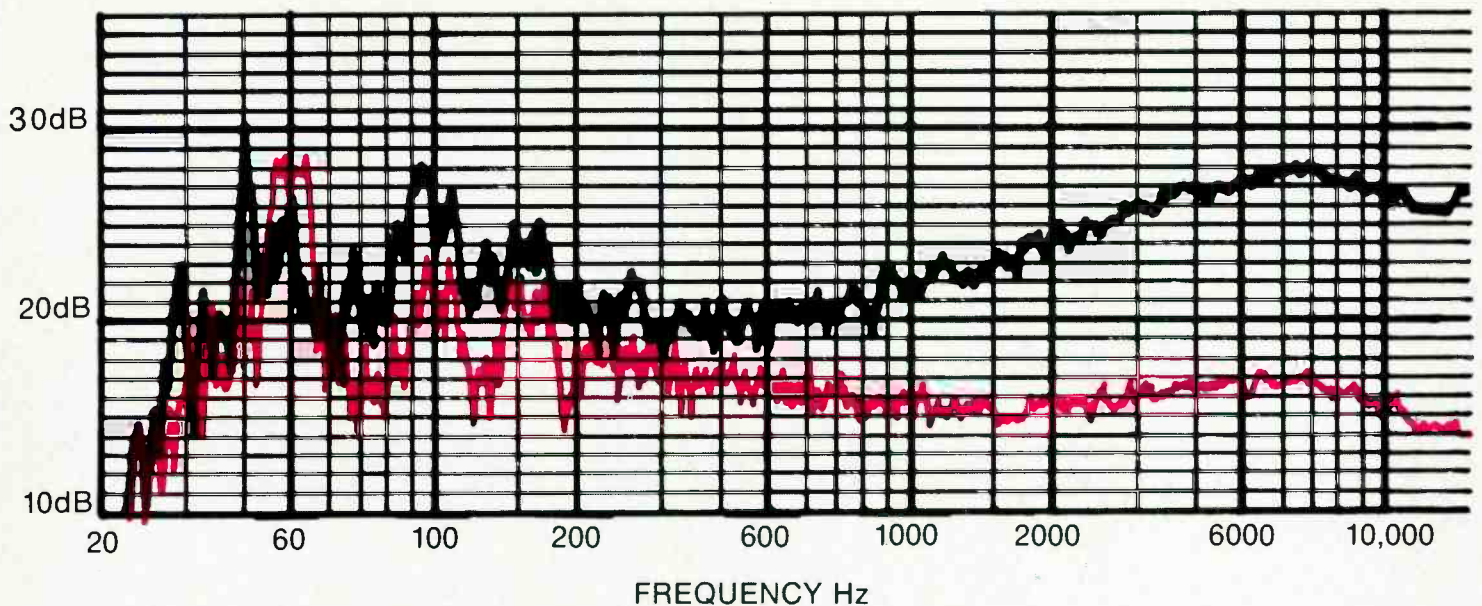
Strawbs is a quintet of British traditionalists on the order of the Incredible String Band and Fairport Convention, though they are not without originality. An exciting live concert. J.G.

EDGAR WINTER'S WHITE TRASH. Epic E 30512, \$4.98. Tape: ● EA 30512, \$6.98; ●● ET 30512, \$6.98.

Though brother Johnny is constantly and expensively hyped, Edgar Winter may yet turn out to be the heavier of the two. The band is hopelessly derivative, of course, especially of Ray Charles, Sly Stone, and Leon Russell; but when has that ever been a criticism? Let's give it an 85, Dick, because it has a good beat. J.G.

REDWING. Fantasy 8409, \$4.98.

Redwing, a John Fogerty discovery, is a disappointment after what we've learned to expect on Fantasy. The tunes are good, but the band is untogether. Skip it. J.G.



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